



# The Historian

*The Newsletter of the Boynton Beach Historical Society*

Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Briny Breezes, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton, in addition to supporting the preservation of the history of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida as a whole.

2016 Number 2

February 2016

## “The DAYS to REMEMBER”

a lively and fact filled presentation by Helen Vogt Greene, Historian, is scheduled for Monday, February 15, 2016, 6:30 p.m. at the Boynton Woman's Club, 1010 S. Federal Highway. Among other historic information, Helen will share the beginnings of the Lake Worth Historical Museum. This Museum is dedicated to preserving the history and culture of Lake Worth by collecting, organizing and exhibiting artifacts, books, photographs and other materials which record the development of Lake Worth and the cultural history of the immediate surrounding area. The extensive collection of exhibits ranges from the very large—such as the switchboard from a hotel—to the much smaller such as collections of cameras or medical instruments.



The Museum is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Lake Worth City Hall Annex at 414 Lake Avenue, in Lake Worth. Hours are Wednesday and Friday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tours by appointment. Telephone 561-533-7354.

### About the Speaker:

Helen Vogt Greene founded the Historical Museum of the City of Lake Worth in 1980. She is a 50 year member, a past president and current secretary of the of the Pioneers of the City of Lake Worth; she is a 44 year member and Past Honorary Regent of Garcilaso de la Vega, Daughters of the American Revolution; a member and current president of the GFWC Woman's Club of Lake Worth; and she is also a 20 year County Board Member and the chair of the Historic Resources Review Board [HRRB]. She writes for *The Lake Worth Herald*.



Helen Vogt Greene, in center, poses with two associates

**WHAT:** “The Days to Remember” by Helen Vogt Greene, Historian

**WHEN:** Monday, February 15, 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Boynton Woman's Club  
1010 South Federal Hwy  
Boynton Beach

**OPEN FREE TO THE PUBLIC**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2015-16

### OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

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2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Voncile Marshall Smith
Recording Secretary	Diana Dennis
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### [Non-Elected]

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2016	Judith Merkel Howard
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2017	Ginger Pedersen
2017	Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher
2018	Janet DeVries
2018	Audrey Gerger

Our website is [www.boyntonhistory.org](http://www.boyntonhistory.org). The e-mail address is [boyntonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:boyntonhistory@gmail.com)

Please mail inquiries or information to our local address P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425. Voncile can be reached at 561-734-5653.

Boynton Beach Historical Society number is 561-327-4690.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

[www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach](http://www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach)

[www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory](https://twitter.com/boyntonhistory)

*The Historian* is mailed eight times a year—September, October, November, January, February, March, April and May—to all members. No copies are produced in December, June, July and August. Copies from past years are posted on the website.

### LIFE MEMBERS

Lenore Benson Raborn Boonstra  
Randall and Ann B. Gill  
Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak  
Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson  
Alexander "Sandy" Simon  
Ernest and Norma Simon  
Voncile Marshall Smith  
Dorian Beck Trauger  
Charlotte Tatum Weaver  
Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

### CORPORATE MEMBERS – 2016

Florida Coalition for Preservation  
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi  
Marion Weaver Clark Wester

check the mailing label on your copy of this issue. If you are paid through 2016 a line above your name on the label will read "Dues expire 12-31-16." If you still have a question call Voncile at 561-734-5653.

The members who paid dues between January 1 and February 1 are as follows:

### Corporate Member:

Marion Weaver Clark Wester

### Patron Member:

Michael and Linda M. Callaway  
Heather Frazer  
Evelyn Howell  
William P. Suiter  
Delma "Del" and Billie Jo "B.J." Swilley

### Family Member:

Ron and Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher  
Anne and Elizabeth A. Michael and Michelle Michael DePollo  
William H. and Laura K. Orlove  
Wyman H., Jr. and Barbara G. Scott  
John W. and Chadda C. Shelly  
Philip B. and Barbara Traylor  
Stephen H., II and Gay Voss and Kathleen Voss Woolrich

### Individual Member:

Beverly Agee  
Sophie Amichai  
Tim Bednarz  
Rick Chesser  
Emme Cortelyou  
Richard H. Curtiss  
Barbara DuBois  
Marie J. Horenburger  
Mildred Lofley  
Sandra McGregor  
Rosalie A. Morrissey  
Gerald Murray  
Marjorie Nelson  
Marianne Nitzsche  
Lillian Ostiguy  
Sue Revie  
Joanne Miner Shoemaker  
Linda Stabile  
James H. "Jim" Weeks  
Randy K. Weeks  
Raymond E. Weeks  
Dorothy Whittaker  
Michael Wilson

Thanks to everyone who has committed to the 2016 membership year. We are especially happy to welcome new members Emme Cortelyou and John and Chedda Shelly.

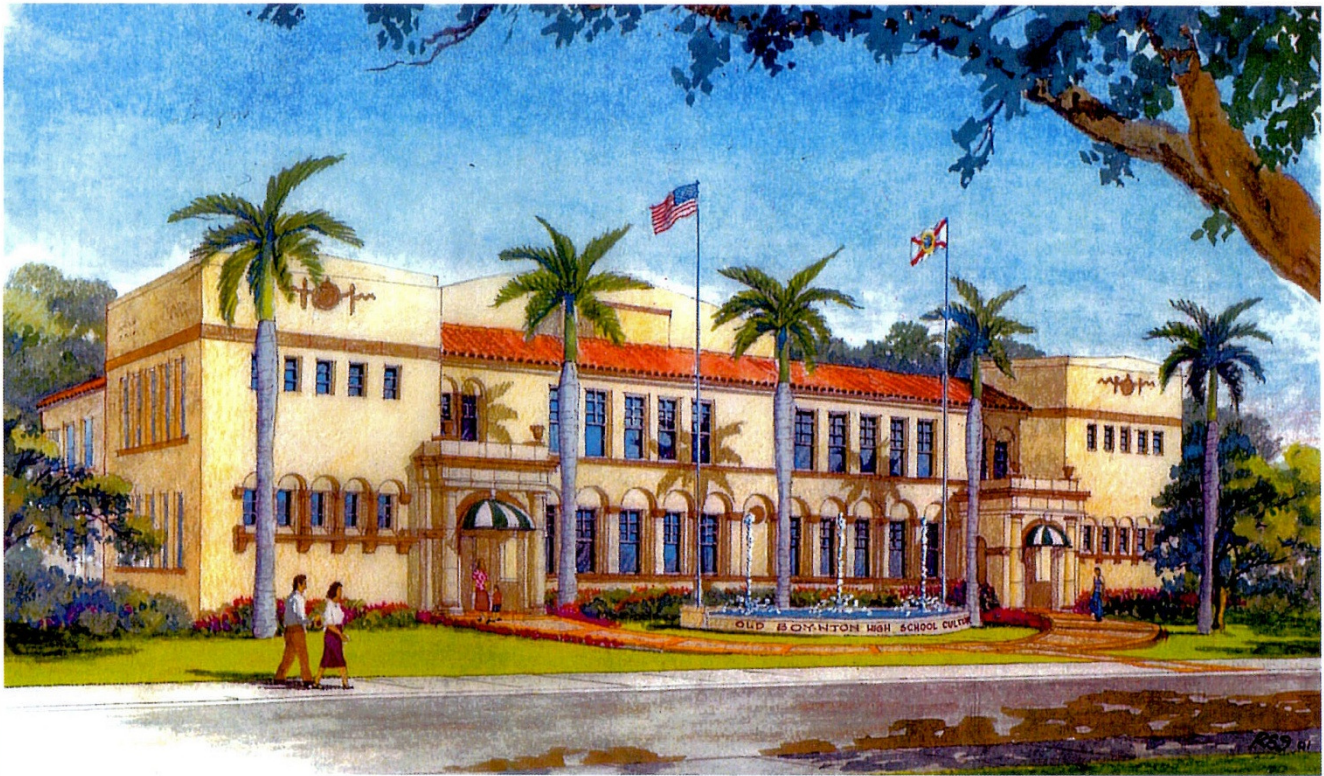
Those of you who receive this newsletter who have not yet sent in dues will find an addressed envelope and a letter of invitation tucked into this issue.

2-16

## PAID MEMBERS – 2016

Below we have listed the dues we have received between January 1 and February 1. Members who paid before January 1 were listed in the November and January *Historians*. Thank all of you who have joined without our having to send you a special notice. If you have any questions about your membership status,





**Artist's Rendering of Restored 1927 Boynton High School Building**

[Courtesy REG Architects]

### **ARCHITECT'S PLAN MAY SAVE HISTORIC SCHOOL**

At the February 2 meeting of the Boynton Beach City Commission Architect Rick Gonzalez presented his plan to restore the historic building by developing it into a cultural arts community center worth about \$6 million. He is partnering with Jeff Hardin of Straticon Construction to commit \$4.5 million and requests that the City through the Community Redevelopment Agency [CRA] contribute the remaining \$1.5 million.

According to the plan, all the programs and activities currently housed in the Art Center, the Civic Center and theater would be moved to the restored building. There would also be commercial uses on the first floor, one of which would probably be a café. A proposal is under consideration to move the CRA into the building by renting space on the second floor for about \$66,000 per year. Other uses envisioned include summer camps, art programs, art galleries, and other children's and adult activities. Gonzalez suggests that the first floor could provide space for adult dance classes and space for the Gold Coast Band which currently performs at the Civic Center. The old gymnasium would provide space for a variety of programs, including a green market under air-conditioning and concerts. Gonzalez asks that the City pay about \$300,000 per year with a 3 percent annual increase to lease space in the building that would be used for the community programs described above.

Vice Mayor Joe Casello commented that the total money committed from Boynton Beach, if the City chooses to lease the building for 20 years, would be \$11.7 million..

All five Commissioners voted to move forward with the plan which will entail 30-90 days of discussion and research to determine where, if at all, the City's share of the money will come from. If details can be worked out, Gonzalez said the building could be finished by December 2017.

As *The Historian* has reported in the past, the City has wavered for years on threats to demolish the building, and there have been a number of failed plans for restoration considered in the past. The members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society and other residents and friends have urged during the 20+ years that the City has owned the building that it be preserved for its historical significance. Last August a majority of 3 of the City Commission voted to demolish the building, but Rick Gonzalez stepped forth and asked for four months to come up with a plan to save the building.

Gonzalez's credentials as an historic restoration architect are noteworthy. Some of his works on successful rehabilitation include the Harriet Himmel Theater, the 1916 Palm Beach County Courthouse in West Palm Beach, Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach and the Lake Worth Casino. He has spent months formulating plans for the high school at no cost to the City.

Straticon Corporation, a family run company, has 25 years of experienced and preservation construction and governmental projects.

The Historical Society and others committed to saving the school are elated that the City officials seem enthused, but we will continue our watchfulness until the plan is fully accepted. After all, we have a City election in March, and new Commissions have a history of sometimes reneging on agreements their predecessors have made



## IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to report that in recent months we have lost two long time members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society:

### Robert Kraft



In the photograph above taken in 2007, Bob Kraft is shown outside his residence at Briny Breezes where he had lived most of his life. Bob died in September, 2015.

Bob attended Boynton Schools (the 1913 Schoolhouse and the 1927 Boynton High School) and knew many of the long term residents of the area. He, with friends from Briny Breezes, attended meetings of the Historical Society for many years.

His wife predeceased him by a short period of time. They had no children. We are sorry to lose this man who was almost an institution at Briny.

### Margaret Shepard Brown

Margaret Persis Shepard Brown died peacefully at age 90 in her home in Ocean Ridge. She was born in West Palm Beach to one of the first teachers at the 1913 Schoolhouse in Boynton, Mary Annie Streeter Shepard. Annie Shepard and her husband Alfred Clayton Shepard reared their three children, Margaret, Clayton and Marie, in Boynton Beach. Margaret graduated as the valedictorian of her class from Boynton High School in 1942.



Margaret Shepard in 1942

After graduation she attended Florida Southern College in Lakeland where she became a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority. She lived in Georgia for a while then moved to New York City to work for the IBM Corporation. There she met her husband of 52 years, Beverley Brown. She was an avid tennis player and fan and attended the U.S. Open several times as well as Wimbledon and the French Open. She was a staunch supporter of the United Methodist Church and the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. She played the piano and at one time sang in the church choir. She belonged to the P.E. O. sisterhood, Chapter EX and was also a member of the Boynton Woman's Club.

She is survived by her husband Beverley, her sister Eleanor Marie Shepard of Boynton Beach, her five children—Terry Brown, Amy Brown, Nancy Kauffman, Janet Helm, and Anne Marie Schur—and eight grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, her nephews Craig and Mark Shepard, and two great nieces.

She, her husband Beverley and her sister Marie Shepard have supported the Boynton Beach Historical Society since it was first organized.

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## GOLD COAST BAND CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

Founded by James E. Butler in 1976, the Gold Coast Band is holding a special concert to mark its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The theme for the concert is "Crossing the Pond to the New World" and is scheduled for Sunday, March 13, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. at the Boynton Beach High School Auditorium. Some of the featured music includes New World Symphony by Dvorak, Second Suite in F by Holst, Amazing Grace featuring bagpipes, Dashing White Sergeant featuring dancers, and more. The Gold Coast Band is sponsored by the City of Boynton Beach Parks and Recreation. General admission is \$7.00 and \$3.00 for those under age 17.

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## 6<sup>th</sup> American President JOHN QUINCY ADAMS FLORIDA'S FIRST ENVIRONMENTALIST

In the early 1800s much of north Florida was covered by huge live oak trees. As new settlers moved into Florida, they discovered how profitable oak wood could be. Shipbuilders prized oak lumber and the forests began to disappear. Adams who was a lover of trees felt compelled as President to take action. He proposed a bill to Congress which they passed to establish a 60,000 acre reservation near Pensacola to protect the trees. But in the election of 1824 Adams was defeated by Andrew Jackson who was no lover of trees and considered conservation worthless. Jackson's aides accused the Adams administration of making illegal profits in the buying of reservation land despite that a governmental investigation found no wrongdoing. Congress did pass a law in 1831 to ban the cutting of trees on U.S. land, but the population of Florida was so sparse that it was impossible to enforce. Only a small fraction of Florida's once great oaks remain.

## A 1928 TRAGEDY

In the October 2015 *Historian* we printed several pictures sent to us by Herb Zobel that he had found among his late wife's papers. He was married to Betty Magnuson, and we included a 1926 photograph of the Magnuson house which still stands on Ocean Avenue. It was purchased several years ago by the Boynton Beach CRA for a very large sum. The City had considered converting the building into CRA headquarters, but more recently have negotiated to turn it into a restaurant. At this writing it is still unoccupied.

In the picture, which is reproduced again below, are two people, a boy Kendall and his father Oscar Magnuson.



Recently, Boynton Beach Historical Society Archivist Janet DeVries, in looking for stories about the Magnuson family, sent a copy of the 1928 Palm Beach Post news article on the right to one of our members, Barbara Scott, who is a granddaughter of Oscar Magnuson.

Although we have reproduced the picture of the framework of the Cassandra Hotel before, we include it here to add to the context.



This picture, taken soon after the 1928 hurricane, shows some of the damage from the storm. The steel framework for the proposed Cassandra Hotel is behind the 1919 building that currently houses "Hurricane Alley" and other rentals of the Oyer family. The builders of the hotel went bankrupt, defaulting on their mortgage to the Methodist Church which had sold them the land. The Church tried to sell the steel, but the manufacturers of the steel beams said they had not been paid by the builder, so they won the lawsuit for ownership of the metal. Stories prevail that they in turn sold the steel to the Japanese government.

## BOY, 5, DROWNED IN ELEVATOR PIT

### Companion Terrified, Brings Aid Too Late to Save Life of Boynton Child

Five feet of murky water in an elevator pit of the uncompleted First National Bank building of Boynton, claimed the life of a five-year-old boy yesterday noon.

The child, Kendall Magnuson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Magnuson, was playing in the building with the five-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Corwin Van Epp. The building is a relic of the boom of 1925. The foundation and steel framework are all that were constructed. It stands in the center of the town on the Dixie highway.

Said to be a favorite spot in which several of the children played, the little boys amused themselves in the skeleton of the building.

They wandered near the elevator pit, which is partly surrounded by a low fence. The Magnuson child, it is understood, saw a log floating in the rain water which had collected in the pit. Thinking the log would support his weight, he stepped upon it.

A gurgle and the log sank. The water smothered a strangled scream of the little boy.

At seeing his playmate disappear, the Van Epp child became terrified and ran to the house of his grandmother, about three blocks away. People who thronged the streets and stores which surrounded the building knew nothing of the accident until a quarter of an hour later.

Immediate search in the water of the pit by several volunteers, produced the body of the child. Efforts to revive the little boy were abandoned as hopeless after half-hour of work.

Mr. Magnuson is a retired farmer, and has lived in Boynton for a number of years. Mrs. Magnuson is The Post correspondent at Boynton.

Frances Tuite McKeral, whose mother was Mabel Rousseau, said that her mother who had been born here and had grown up knowing all the families and their children had been so distressed by this tragedy and spoke of it often. Mabel told her that the police and the parents had warned all the little boys in the town repeatedly to stay away from the structure and had frequently chased them away from it.

Although the article refers to the structure as the uncompleted First National Bank Building, the Methodist Church history indicates the building was to be the Cassandra Hotel. The size of the structure in the photo suggests it was much too large for a bank of the day for a little town like Boynton. A bank might have been planned for part of the first floor, or the reporter could have been in error.



## BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 2nd Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

THE SOCIETY IS A 501 © 3 Organization so dues are TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: (Check one)

INDIVIDUAL	(\$25.00)	_____
FAMILY	(\$35.00)	_____
PATRON	(\$50.00)	_____
CORPORATE	(\$100.00)	_____
STUDENT	(\$10.00)	_____
LIFE	(\$500.00) One time	_____

Payment only.

The membership year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year.  
 Dues are not pro rated.

Complete this form and mail it with a check for the appropriate amount to  
 Boynton Beach Historical Society, POB 12, Boynton Beach FL 33424-4012,  
 You may pay by PayPal at [www.boyntonhistory.org](http://www.boyntonhistory.org)

*The Historian*

Boynton Beach Histor  
 Post Office Box 12  
 Boynton Beach FL 33

## First Rosenwald School in Palm Beach County

### Boynton School



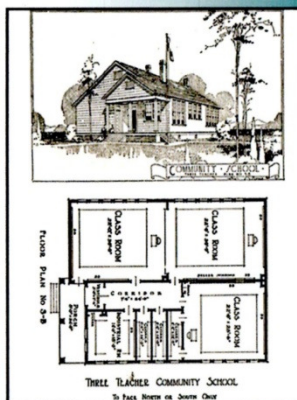
**Boynton School**

The Boynton School, constructed in 1925-26 for \$17,150, survived the devastating 1928 hurricane.



**Blanche Hearst Girtman,**  
 (shown left) taught classes at the  
 Boynton School, also known as Boynton  
 Colored School and later  
 Poinciana School, for nearly  
 three decades.

#### Community School Plans for the Boynton School



The Boynton School, constructed according to the Tuskegee architect's blueprints for the *Three Teacher Community School*, only suffered \$600 in damages from the 1928 hurricane. Most other schools in Palm Beach County were highly damaged or completely leveled by the storm. After the devastating hurricane, school officials and community leaders looked to the Rosenwald Fund school building program to help rebuild Palm Beach County schools.

Information and images courtesy of Fisk University Archives, State Archives of Florida and the Boynton Beach Historical Society

In honor of Black History Month, Janet Devries shares some information about a display on the Rosenwald School in Palm Beach County which she has completed for the gallery at Palm Beach State College. The exhibit runs through the month of February.

A Rosenwald School was the name informally applied to over 5,000 schools, shops, and teachers' homes in the United States which were built primarily for the education of African-American children in the South in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The landscape of schools for Black Students in Palm Beach County began to change in the 1920s. Until that time, little had been done in the name of formal education for Black students. When it came to building public schools and paying teachers to educate Black youngsters, separate and unequal treatment still reigned in the South . . . Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears Roebuck Company . . . was the impetus that created better schools, longer school years and school libraries for southern Black children . . . Between 1925 and 1931, his Foundation provided money to erect 11 much needed public schoolhouses for Black children in Palm Beach County. The buildings ranged in cost from \$2,491 to \$17,160 to erect. . . Though none of the original school buildings are still in existence, the new schoolhouses provided not only a place for Black students to get an education, but the new structures provided space for community events and provided a haven for peace, order and cleanliness in their lives. . the end result was a longer school year, more Black students attending high school, and a sense of pride and self-esteem for the Black community. When Palm Beach County schools integrated in the 1960s, the Rosenwald schools were phased out and replaced by newer school buildings.

