



# 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 3

March 2016

## COBWRA: MAKING a DIFFERENCE for 35 YEARS

### [The Coalition of Boynton West Residential Associations]

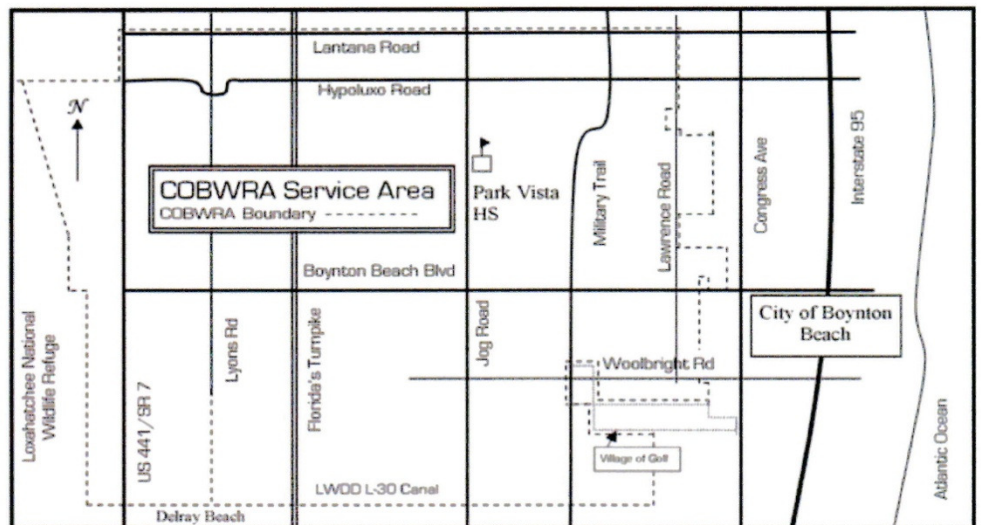
The Boynton Beach Historical Society returns this month to the Boynton Beach City Library to hold its program meeting on Monday, March 21 at 6:30. The meeting will feature Ken Lassiter, Past President of COBWRA, who will discuss COBWRA from inspiration when it was founded in 1981 to the COBWRA of today. He will discuss the founder, how COBWRA grew to 109 member communities, the West Boynton Area Community Plan, the Design Guideline, COBWRA's accomplishments, and the Ag Reserve story. COBWRA is a volunteer led civic organization representing the residential communities of West Boynton Beach in unincorporated Palm Beach County whose mission is to protect, preserve and enhance property values and the quality of life in the West Boynton area.

#### About Ken Lassiter—

Ken was born in Richmond, Virginia, graduated from Virginia Tech University with a degree in Civil Engineering. He was employed by Eastman Kodak Company until 1993 when he moved to Florida. He first became active in COBWRA in 1997, first as an alternate delegate, then a delegate, 3 years as Secretary, 3 years as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, 2 years as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, and 3 years as President until 2012. He is currently still active as Past President.



Ken Lassiter



The **COBWRA Service Area** is bordered on the east by the City of Boynton Beach, on the west by the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, on the south by the Delray Beach L-30 Canal, and on the north by Lantana Road.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2015-16

### OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Randall Gill
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Anne Rimler
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Voncile Marshall Smith
Recording Secretary	Diana Dennis
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
Treasurer	Frances Tuite McKeral

### [Non-Elected]

Editor, <i>The Historian</i>	Voncile Marshall Smith
Archivist/Facebook/Webmaster	Janet DeVries
Facebook Administrator/Webmaster	Ginger Pedersen

### DIRECTORS [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2016	Tim Bednarz
2016	Judith Merkel Howard
2017	Steven Anton
2017	Barbara Ready
2018	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
2018	Diane Gerino

### TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2016	Virginia Farace
2016	Susan Merkel Shaffer
2017	Ginger Pedersen
2017	Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher
2018	Janet DeVries
2018	Vacant

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  
Melear Bros., Inc. - Cliff and Rick Melear  
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  
Pearce Windows & Doors, Inc. – Glen Pearce, President  
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

### **2016 MEMBERSHIP**

Again, a special thanks to all of you who have renewed your membership for the year. Those of you who have joined us but who have not previously been acknowledged are listed below:

### Life Member:

Melear Bros. Inc., Cliff and Rick Melear

### Corporate Member:

Pearce Windows and Doors, Inc. – Glen Pearce, President  
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home and Crematory

### Patron Member:

Christine Callandar  
Fredrick Callandar  
Robert L. and Virginia W. Foot  
Bob and Cynthia Lyman Jamison  
Wayne F. and Eva Brookis Netzer  
Suzy Winchester

### Family Member:

Charles and Elizabeth Miner LaBella  
Harvey E., III and Monique M. Oyer  
James "Topsy" and Georgie Raulerson  
J. Robert and Jayne Rousseau  
The Eleanor Murray Sala Family – Juan, Rosemary and Teresa  
Robert B. and Sheila Rousseau Taylor

### Individual Member:

Beverly G. Agee  
Steven Anton  
Fred Barch  
Heidi Bell  
Doris Braunworth  
Ellen Curtin  
Sally Dye  
Robert Ganger  
Audrey Gerger  
Carl V. "Chuck" Hackle  
Mary Miner Haggard  
Edris Hatch  
Nancy Horan  
Gladys Baker Knuth  
Emilie Jones Little  
Dorothy Mann McNiece  
Ted Murray  
Marcia Voss Norman  
Barbara Ready  
Mary Lou Muster Ryder  
Susan Swiatosz  
Kandy Thompson  
Jean Ann Thurber  
Gloria Partin Turner  
Cynthia "Cindy" Weeks

We are so pleased to have the Melear brothers, Cliff and Rick, join our roster of Life Members and to welcome Pearce Windows and Doors and Scobee-Combs-Bowden as Corporate Members. A special welcome to newcomers Christine and Fredrick Callandar, Kandy Thompson, and Suzy Winchester.

Thank all of you for your support!



## MISCELLANEOUS PHOTOS—



Buddy Partin with dead rattlesnake behind Boynton High School, ca 1940. Where the snake was found is unknown, but it may have been on the school grounds.



The Methodist Parsonage with minister's wife Nona Roy standing before it in January 1957. It stood facing Seacrest Boulevard on the block where City Hall is now located. The old First Baptist Church, a frame structure with wooden shutters for windows, stood behind it.



The Boynton Casino was a bathing pavilion owned by the City. This picture was taken in 1967 was just before the City razed it. A Spanish style structure built in the 1930s it had dressing rooms and other facilities which featured considerable use of pecky cypress. At one time it housed Lucille and Otley Scott's restaurant before they built a new restaurant on South Federal Highway that was sold to the City after they retired and was converted by the City to a Senior Center.



A 1930 photo from the *Miami Daily News* showing the relatively new Seaboard Railway Station. This beautiful building was torn down a few years ago and had stood just south of west Ocean Avenue in an area that was blocked off when I-95 was created. It was one of two train stations in Boynton. The other, was for a different rail line, the Florida East Coast, whose station was also just off Ocean Avenue but west of the Oyer buildings housing their insurance offices and Hurricane Alley restaurant.



From a postcard, the Boynton Womans Club as it looked about 1950. Note the curving driveway which goes in front of the porch, the coconut palms, and the absence of a curb along Federal Highway which runs in front of it. Few coconut palm trees remain anywhere in southeast Florida. Most have died from a disease commonly named "lethal yellow." Federal Highway has since been widened and the Club lost a part of its street front footage.



## IN MEMORIAM

**TRAYLOR, Philip Bryan "Flip"**—Both Flip and his wife Barbara Spinks Traylor have been long time members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. Flip died on March 1, 2016 at the age of 86 at the VA Medical Center. He loved the outdoors and had been a boat captain, a commercial fisherman, a seaplane pilot and a hunter.



Flip Traylor ca 1960 with a bonefish caught in the Florida Keys

Flip was born where his father was working in a bridge tender's house in Deerfield Beach in 1929. Soon after his birth the stock market crash brought on the Great Depression. Fishing around the Boynton Inlet helped Flip feed his family when he and his friends fished with makeshift rods on the jetties. During the winter months his father gathered fresh oysters from the west side of the Intracoastal Waterway where the Palm Beach Yacht Club is located today.

Flip attended high school in Key West where he learned to play drums and started in Key West bars at age 15. Because his mother objected to his work in bars, she sent him to a parochial school in Mount Vernon, GA for 4 years. He briefly attended the University of Florida in the 1950s, but for financial reasons he returned to Palm Beach County to work on boats in the Boynton Inlet charter fleet. He met his wife Barbara in the mid 1950s. Barbara, who founded a Boynton Beach accounting firm in 1974, is now a retired CPA.

He is survived by his wife Barbara, daughter Pamela Anwyll [Brad], son Gregory P. Traylor, granddaughter Ashton Krauss and great grandson Landon. He is survived by his sister Mary Ann Wilson, who is a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

**LAUTENSCHLAGER, Alexandra Kaye**—Alex spent her childhood in Boynton Beach where she graduated from Park Vista High School in 2011. She received her bachelor of science in Health from the University of North Florida in 2015. She was employed at Bethesda West Hospital. She was the daughter of Bruce and Darbe Lautenschlager and the granddaughter of Boynton Beach Historical Society members Delma and Billie Jo Swilley. We send our condolences and best wishes to all her family members sharing sadness that such a promising young life should end so early.

## BOYNTON CHURCH CELEBRATES 111 YEARS

This year the First United Methodist Church of Boynton Beach is celebrating its 111<sup>th</sup> birthday as one of the oldest churches in the City. Founded in 1905 the congregation first shared a minister with the Methodist Church in Delray. About 1908 they moved into a new building on the northwest corner of what is now Ocean Avenue and Federal Highway.



The 1908 building pictured ca 1920

Named the Methodist-Episcopal Church, South at that time, it was changed to the United Methodist Church when a number of denominations combined in the 1930s. Frances Tuite McKeral is heading the celebration committee which recently had a celebratory dinner and a special service featuring a sermon by the Area Superintendent. The church plans to have other functions honoring its years of service to the community throughout the year.

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## A PIONEER SON at SEA

[Editor's note: Gilbert Voss was a world renowned marine biologist who taught marine biology at the University of Miami and was one of the major spokespersons for establishing John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park in the Florida Keys. Like other Voss and Pierce family members in this area, he kept detailed accounts of life around him. After his death, his son Robert S. Voss compiled these notes into a book which has just been published by the University Press of Florida.]

*A Pioneer Son at Sea: Fishing Tales of Old Florida* is available at \$19.95 from the University Press of Florida 15 NW 15 St., Gainesville FL 32603-1933, 352-392-1351 or [www.upf.com](http://www.upf.com).

Gilbert Voss recounts his early days of fishing on both coasts of the peninsula during the Great Depression and World War II. Here are vanished scenes from Old Florida, almost unimaginable to modern residents of the state: gill-netting for mackerel off Jupiter, the early days of charterboat fishing for sailfish out of Stuart and Boynton, the snapper fleet of Carrabelle, sponge-fishing at Tarpon Springs, the oyster fishery at Crystal River, and mullet fishing from airboats at Flamingo.

Oversized personalities inhabit these pages, including Voss's brothers, who were themselves seminal figures in the early days of Florida big-game fishing. Voss's anecdotes feature Crackers, rum runners, murderers, Conchs, wealthy industrialists, now-legendary charterboatmen, Greek spongers, and Cuban *vivero* captains. These stories are not just spirited portraits of fishermen from a bygone era. They are also remarkable tales of the formative years of a scientist and conservationist who later worked tirelessly to preserve our dwindling marine resources. 4-16

## FOOD FOR SETTLERS

By Charles Stanley Weaver

[Editor's Note: C. Stanley Weaver died in 2010, but he left a number of unpublished manuscripts about life in this area. His daughter, Christine Weaver Terenyi has graciously provided the Boynton Beach Historical Society with copies of these. The one from which this excerpt is taken was titled "Dairies in and Around Boynton Beach," and that is what the second half of the article deals with. The first half, which is presented here, is about life in general, particularly crops. We will continue Stanley's discussion on dairies in a later issue of *The Historian*.]

As in all pioneer areas, the first thing the settlers had to do in order to begin a permanent home was to find accessible, arable land which would produce at least part of their food. Transportation was by ship or small boats through the salt water lagoons called rivers along the coast from Jacksonville to Biscayne Bay—some connected by wagon trails—later by small railroads, and eventually the FEC Railroad, and the Dixie Highway, now U.S. 1.

In order to get fresh fruit, vegetables, and meat, it was necessary to raise your own, or find it in the woods and streams of the area. Trade with the Indians also provided meat, berries, cabbage palm and other native foods.

In Palm Beach County, the most accessible land was that along the dunes area and just inland around Lake Worth. Some of this land was low-rich muck and marsh, which would grow almost any vegetable or fruit planted—and in abundance (this was before the artificial inlets brought in salt water and changed the production of the soil). The areas further inland, the "Flatwoods," were a combination of cypress swamps, piney woods, palmetto flats, and sloughs—too wet to farm, too far from waterway and trails, and mosquito infested. Establishment of active drainage districts in later years would change all of this.

Vegetable gardens and groves of citrus fruit began to develop on Hypoluxo Island and along the muck land south of the Lake through the area what was to become Boynton and Delray. The small farms and groves were by no means large enough at first to support the families of the pioneers, so some took employment with the government as Refuge House keepers, barefoot mailmen, etc. Others applied themselves to carpentry contractors, road building, working for the railroad, when it reached this area, commercial fishing, and other pioneer trades. There was also a good career in freight shipping to and from the settlements via small boats through the lakes and rivers, and, after the establishment of the inlets, along the coast.

Almost 100% of all settlement was within 1 to 1 ½ miles of the coast and around Lake Worth. Mosquitoes were a great problem, both to humans and to their animals. Cattle, pigs and chickens were hard to keep because of the onslaught of these pests, especially in the rainy season. Until the land was cleared and drained there would be little relief, and practically no commercial endeavor in any area except along the coast where breezes did offer some protection against mosquitoes.

To become more explicit to location for the purpose of this record, the area under discussion will be from the southern end of Lake Worth to a point approximately 5 miles south and from the ocean to the flood control dike to the west.

The beginning of the famous vegetable farms was made to supply the hotels and winter visitor who came with the development of the railroad. The desire for fresh winter vegetables in the north added to the demand, and the area could begin to produce tomatoes and beans for shipment to cars cooled by ice shipped from the north especially to be used by the vegetable growers. Before this happened only pineapples, oranges and grapefruits could be shipped by ship or rail since they were not as perishable as the rest.

Pineapples—the area just east and west of I-95 right of way, 1 to 1 ½ miles wide from Boynton to Delray was one large pineapple field, with packing houses located near the railroad and on Woolbright road at about SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The advent of the Cubans entering the market and the Florida Land Boom ruined the pineapple industry in Florida.

The Cubans were able to produce cheaper, and the Florida land was too valuable to farm. The last commercial farm was "Flatwoods Plantation" on North Military Trail owned by Oscar Winchester. World War II saw the end of Mr. Winchester's commercial pineapple farm.

Oranges and other citrus was planted first along the western side of Lake Worth and in a line along the Dixie Highway, east to the Intracoastal. Small groves were also planted on the "hill" area—all of these were abandoned during the boom or failed due to the "blight" when the trees had to be destroyed as the only effective way to eradicate the pest. In the area of Sterling Village in Boynton Beach, some of these last trees lived as late as 1935. In the south Hypoluxo area, an explorer may possibly still find an old tree east of U.S. 1.

Coconuts, planted from nuts floating from a ship wrecked off Manalapan and just drifting on ocean currents, never really became an important crop. They did become a great symbol of the area and added much beauty to the landscape. They were sold as souvenirs to tourists. They were sometimes mailed with just the name and address of the sender and receiver written on the nut itself.

The only truly tropical fruit beside the pineapple to ever become a commercial item in this area is the mango. The guava was canned, jellied and preserved by the people who lived here, but never on a truly commercial basis. The mango, however, developed into a fairly important item. The hybrid types—Hayden, Williams, Kent, Keith and others are grown commercially still, but usually in connection with other business because of the erratic production of the tree, and its susceptibility to crop loss due to late cold snaps and other causes. The "Hill" area—higher ground—seems to be the best location for mangos.

A side light to the mango industry is that trees were planted inside the slat houses of the ferneries. As the trees grew large enough, the slat houses were removed and the trees gave natural shade to the ferns as well as fruit. The ferns were an important source of income in the Boynton area to several families—Fred Benson, J.J. Williams, Oscar Magnuson, Charles Tatum and their employees.

As the land boom developed, subdivisions crowded farming out of the intracoastal area except for the ornamental nurseries—"Rainbow's End," "Boynton Landscape Co.," "El Pastor" and others produced much of the material used in landscaping Boca Raton, Palm Beach and all points in between. Many exotic trees and flowers were introduced into the area through these enterprises.

Since the land boom inflated prices, the attempts to reclaim for use other than hunting, fishing and logging became more intense, and the Lake Worth Drainage District, begun years before, became important in that it made it possible to control the water levels by pumping on or off or by improving natural drainage. So the land boom caused a removal of vegetable farming from the original areas along to coast to the more famous area that are farmed today. Beans were the foremost vegetable in the '30s or '40s. but squash, bell peppers, eggplant, peas, okra and tomatoes became more important as frozen foods grew in use. More and more techniques have become mechanized, so that it is not unusual to see a farm of 1000 or more acres in one operation.

Raising gladiolas, mums and other flowers was attempted west of Boynton, first in the mid 1930s, but no efficient means of shipping made the attempt unprofitable. In the mid 1940s a group of farmers with the know-how and the facilities began to raise these beautiful flowers, and their production remained an important factor in the farm economy until the 1990s.

In the truest sense of the word, chicken and pig farms never became an important factor in the Boynton-Delray area. There were chicken yards in back of most home in Boynton until about 1950. By then it became cheaper to buy chickens and eggs at the super market than to raise them at home.

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Member's  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Historical Society  
Post Office Box 12  
Boynton Beach FL 33425-0012



Wedding Photo of Rebecca Partin and Norman Merkel, ca 1940

**WHAT:** COBWRA: Making a  
Difference for 25 Years, a  
Presentation by Ken Lassiter

**WHEN:** Monday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Boynton Beach City Library  
208 Seacrest Boulevard  
Program Room

ALL PROGRAMS OF THE  
BOYNTON BEACH  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC