



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.

Recipient of the 2021 Judge James R Knott Historical Contribution Award

Recipient of the Schoolhouse Children's Museum 2023 Spark Award

October 2023

Weeki Wachee: City of Mermaids **Monday, October 23, 2023 @ 7-8pm EDT via Zoom**

For emails on file, check your inbox for an invitation from BBHSPrograms@gmail.com. Remember to set reminders in your calendar. If your email isn't already on file with us, simply send a request to join to BBHSPrograms@gmail.com and we'll send you an invitation.

When Newt Perry sank a theater into the edge of Weeki Wachee Springs in 1947, he had no idea his mermaids would become world-famous Florida icons. Tonight's presentation covers the fascinating history of Weeki Wachee Springs told through vintage photographs of the resident mermaids from their earliest days performing silent ballets to their pinnacle of popularity.

Lu Vickers was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship for fiction as well as two Florida Book Awards and three Florida Individuals Artists Fellowships. In addition to writing *Remembering Paradise Park* with C. Graham, she has written *Breathing Underwater*, a novel, and three other Florida history books: *Weeki Wachee*, *City of Mermaids*, *Cypress Gardens*, *America's Tropical Wonderland*, and *Weeki Wachee, Thirty Years of Underwater Photography*.



Left: Nancy Tribble Benda wears the Mr. Peabody tail, 1948 Courtesy: Florida Press. *Center:* Lu Vickers Courtesy: Lu Vickers. *Right:* Advertising Postcard featuring old cars.

Funding for this Florida Humanities Florida Talks Speaker's Program is supported in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



All Programs of the Boynton Beach Historical Society are FREE and OPEN to the Public
Boynton Beach Historical Society The Historian October 2023



Boynton Beach Historical Society

~ Since 1968 ~

2023-2024 Board of Directors

OFFICERS Elected Annually

President – Anne Rimler

1st Vice President, Programs - Barbara Ready

2nd Vice President, Membership - Sheila Rousseau Taylor

Secretary – John Shelly

Treasurer – Robert Taylor

TRUSTEES 3-Year Term

2024 - Donna Artes

2024 – Chadda Shelly

2025 - Virginia Farace

2025 - Ben Lowe

2026 – Linda Allen

2026 – Nora Gallagher Michuda

Non-Elected

Editor, *The Historian* - Anne Rimler

Archivist/Facebook/Webmaster – Janet Naughton

Facebook Admin/Webmaster – Ginger Pedersen

Promotions/Publicity/YouTube – Nora Gallagher Michuda

Boynton Beach Historical Society

PO Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425

We are on the web www.boyntonhistory.org, and on Facebook [@HistoricBoyntonBeach](https://www.facebook.com/HistoricBoyntonBeach). Questions or comments:

Programs bbhsprograms@gmail.com

Membership bbhsmembership@gmail.com.

The Historian

The Historian, the newsletter of the Society, is sent six times a year, between October and April, to dues-paid members (one per paid membership). Previous issues are on our website. If you would prefer to receive *The Historian* via email, let us know by emailing bbhsmembership@gmail.com. Benefits include saving postage & printing costs, reaches you when you're away, eco-friendly, arrives faster than print, and links in articles are active.

Become a Member or Renew your Dues

Dues expire annually on Dec 31st (except for Life Memberships). Go to www.boyntonhistory.org; on the **Membership** tab, pay securely via **PayPal** or download the form and mail in with your check. Membership runs Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Our Program Season runs from Oct to Apr. Thank you for your support!

Historical Society Bylaws

Society Bylaws: www.boyntonhistory.org/membership/

2023-2024 Season Programs via Zoom except Jan 20

Mon Oct 23: Weeki Wachee Springs, **Lu Vickers**

Mon Nov 27: Picturing Paradise, **Keri Watson**

Sat Jan 20: Florida Highwaymen Art Show; Arts & Cultural Ctr

Mon Feb 26: stay tuned for further information

Mon Mar 25: stay tuned for further information

Apr Annual Meeting & Program: stay tuned!



Zoom Program Meetings are Recorded

Find us on YouTube at "BBHS Programs"

The following represents our Membership Roll to date & Dues received from 04/03/2023 to 10/06/2023:

Thank You to our Life Members

Vickie & Anthony **Barbar**

EasyPay Tire, Doug & Ruth **Besecker**

Michael & Gloria **Bowden**

Candy & Doug **Bueggemann**

Linda & Mike **Callaway**

Robert and Jeanne **Gayler**

M Randall **Gill**

Robert & Carrie **Parker Hill**

Robert & Christian **Oyer Macoviak**

Melear Bros., Cliff & Rick **Melear**

Wayne & Eva Brooks **Knuth Netzler**

Susan **Oyer**

Scott & Camilla **Smith Richardson**

Anne **Rimler**

Sandy A **Simon Jr**

Voncile **Marshall Smith**

George & Christine **Weaver Terenyi**

William & Gaye **Weaver**

Marion **Weaver Wester**

Elsie **Winchester**

Thank You to our Corporate Sponsors

Donald & Regina **Day, Delray Awning**

Laura **Hinzman, Scheurer's Chocolates**

Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

Thank You to our Patrons

Tim **Bednarz**

Charles & Mary Theresa **Bilthuis**

Ron & Sarah **Thomas Bollenbacher**

George & Gayle **Kranz**

Chas & Elizabeth **Miner LaBella**

Billie Jo **Swilley**

Robert & Sheila **Rousseau Taylor**

Anne **Watts**

Suzu **Winchester**

Membership Renewals Thank You For Your Support!

Kay **Baker**

Roy **Lush**

Christine **Sarno-Olson**

Mary **Scheitler**

Rebecca **Spilman Caloosa WaterWear**

Special Welcome to BOGO Recipients & New Members!

Michelle **Sewell**

Cynthia **Thuma**

Nicholas **Young**

Special Thanks for a Memorial Donation

From Billie Jo **Swilley** in honor of **Al Lautenschlager**

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Florida Humanities & Boynton Beach Historical Society

Would you please take a moment to complete a brief survey about today's program? Your feedback will help shape future programming. Search for 'Florida Humanities Program Survey' or click this link: <https://floridahumanities.org/grantee-resources/forms-and-resources/survey/>

What do you remember about Boynton Beach c1960's?

Would you like to see your recollections in a future issue of the *Historian*? Let us know! bbhsprograms@gmail.com



The Historian

Historical Society Receives Schoolhouse Children's Museum 2023 Spark Award

The Spark Award was presented to the **Boynton Beach Historical Society** at the **Schoolhouse Children's Museum's** Back to School 70's Bash on Friday, September 22, 2023. The award recognizes a business or organization that supports the museum's effort to inspire creativity and the desire to learn through hands-on exploration, play and discovery.

'School Principal' and master of ceremonies for the evening's event, **T.A. Walker**, Executive Producer and Segment Host for Channel 5 WPTV's "Shining a Light." Principal Walker explained, "The award recognizes that this year's Spark Award recipient was instrumental in the founding of the Schoolhouse Children's Museum. The Boynton Beach Historical Society was (and is) a group of individuals who were passionate about their community and motivated to preserve its history and the building whose days as a schoolhouse had ended. More than a few of these individuals had attended the Boynton School themselves or sent their children there...or both. They had fond memories of days gone by, an awareness of the speed at which Florida was growing - and the past receding. As one early Board Member said, 'If we don't do something to preserve our history, our children won't understand the events and concepts that have been so important to our community.' "

Suzanne Ross, Executive Director, presented the award to members of the current Board of Directors, **Anne Rimler**, President, **Barbara Ready**, 1st Vice President, **John Shelly**, Secretary, **Ben Lowe**, Trustee, **Chadda Shelly**, Trustee, **Nora Gallagher Michuda**, Trustee, **Linda Allen**, Trustee, and **Janet Naughton**, Archivist/Facebook Admin/Webmaster.

The Historical Society is honored to receive this recognition and thanks the Schoolhouse Children's Museum. We also recognize the contributions of those who could not accept the award in person. Although we could not mention them all, those visionaries include **Virginia Farace, Arleen Dennison, Susan Berman, Mary Lou Riccio, Judi Garity, Nanie and Curtis Weaver, Voncile Smith, Harvey Oyer, Carrie Parker-Hill, Stanley and Erna Weaver, Joan DuBois, Judith S. Rogers, Barbara Traylor, Cia Mooney, Hilary Lynch, Kurt Bressner**, and so many others.

The Boynton Beach Historical Society is proud to serve the Community. THANK YOU for your support.



Photo Courtesy: Boynton Beach Historical Society



The Historian

Boynton Beach Historical Society Welcomes New Officers

We held our **Annual Election of Officers and Trustees** at the Members meeting on April 24, 2023, and elected our Officers and Trustees. Please join us in congratulating **Anne Rimler**, President/Editor The Historian; **Barbara Ready**, 1st VP/Program Chair; **Sheila Rousseau Taylor**, 2nd VP/Membership Chair; **John Shelly**, Secretary; **Robert Taylor**, Treasurer; Trustee **Linda Boone**; and, Trustee/Promotions & Publicity Chair **Nora Gallaher Michuda**. Welcome! We look forward to delivering a great Season!

Downtown Boynton Beach History Stroll

On Saturday, April 22, 2023, Boynton Beach Historical Society sponsored a narrated, guided walking tour of Ocean Ave, Town Square, and vicinity. The exclusive tour was led by historian **Janet Naughton**. The group of 35 participants, some from as far away as Miami, toured and listened as she shared information about the history of Boynton Beach, historic sites, buildings and homes. Points of interest included the post office, churches, 1926 high school (Boynton Beach Culture and Arts Center), 1913 elementary school (Schoolhouse Children's Museum), City Hall/Library, Centennial Park, The Gables, Charlie Pierce/Barefoot Mailman, Magnuson House, Henry Flagler's East Coast Railroad, Murray House, Capt. Kenny's House, Andrews House (Boynton's oldest house), Ruth Jones Cottage, Oyer block (Hurricane Alley).

The Historical Society is working on plans for future strolls. Stay tuned for announcements.

Boynton Beach Historical Society Notes with Sadness

Alvin A Lautenschlager passed away in March 2023. Alvin and his lifelong sweetheart, **Sandra Sullivan**, and their family, lived in Boynton Beach and Lake Worth. He was involved in the Civilian Club of Boynton Beach, the *Jubileers*, and supported Sandra's work with the Boynton Woman's Club.

The Society notes the passing of **Bill Winchester** in April 2023. Bill's father operated Flatwoods Plantation, a pineapple farm in Boynton Beach. Bill worked on several area dairy farms and raised cattle. Bill made significant contributions to the Community and was President of the Delray Beach Florida Farm Bureau, member of the Rotary Club and the Masonic Lodge, and with his wife, **Ann Klatt Winchester**, were Life Members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

Virginia "Ginny" White Foot, died peacefully in June 2023. Ginny, and her husband, **Robert Foot**, were owners of The Art of Framing, Inc., a cutting-edge community business for 29 years. The studio taught, helped, and allowed customers to frame pieces themselves. Ginny also served as President of the Chamber of Commerce of Boynton Beach, participated in many other Boynton organizations, and together with Robert, were longtime members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

Don deLora Reagan, wife of Florida Highwaymen Artist **Willie Reagan**, passed away in July 2023. Don was a passionate supporter of all the Highwaymen artists and of the Highwaymen Museum, in Fort Pierce, FL.

The Historical Society offers our deepest condolences to family and friends.

Boynton Beach Garden Club

Meeting Tuesday, Oct 24 @1pm

The Boynton Beach Garden Club is extending an invitation to Historical Society members to attend its next meeting on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 1pm. The meeting takes place at First Presbyterian Church of Boynton Beach, 235 SW 6th Ave, Boynton Beach. For more information, go to <https://boyntonbeachgardenclub.org/>

Save the date! The Garden Club's annual **Fashion Show** will take place on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at the Westchester Country Club. This year's theme for the Fashion Show will be "Blossoms and Butterflies."



The Historian

A Message From the Historical Society Membership Chair – Sheila Rousseau Taylor

Greetings Boynton Beach Historical Society Members and Friends!

The Society's Board of Directors held the first and very productive Board meeting of the 2023-2024 season via Zoom in September. We are fired up and ready for a new and exciting year!

To recap the Annual Meeting in April, we said a fond farewell to long time Trustees **Steve Anton** and **Heidi Bell**. Thank you both for your many years with us. We are happy to announce that our Promotions/Publicity chair, **Nora Gallagher Michuda**, was elected to a Trustee position and will continue with Society publicity. We also elected **Linda Allen** to a Trustee position. Linda is a long time Hypoluxo resident and three-term Town Council member. Please extend a warm welcome to Nora and Linda.

Membership continues to grow even with the sad loss of members. On that note, we appreciate the notice of the loss of departed members so we may honor them in the *Historian*.

Thank you for supporting the Boynton Beach Historical Society. We hope that you renew your membership today. We are offering "Buy One Give One" with your paid membership. When you become a member or renew your membership, you may give a FREE one-year membership to a friend, family member and fellow historian! The membership form and a self-addressed return envelope are included in this mailing. If you prefer to sign up electronically, a link to PayPal is on the Membership tab www.boyntonhistory.org. Your membership expiration date is on the mailing label or if you receive the *Historian* by email, your membership expires December 31, 2023. We also offer gift options for memberships, gifts in honor, or in memory.

Please consider signing up to receive the electronic version of the *Historian*. The benefits include:

- Substantial savings on printing and mailing costs,
- Never miss an issue, even while traveling,
- Email is eco-friendly, and
- Links in articles are 'clickable.'

To convert your print version to electronic, email us at bbhsmembership@gmail.com.

Thank you and best regards,

Sheila

Boynton Beach Historical Society Program Recordings

[YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

We are happy to announce that the video recordings of programs from our previous three seasons are now available on our YouTube channel. Search for our channel "**BBHS Programs**" on YouTube. Each of the seasons has its own playlist or pick and choose which topic you'd like to learn about. We appreciate any views, likes, shares, and subscriptions. Thanks to **Nora Gallagher Michuda** for her efforts to get this project completed.



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Boynton Beach Receives Historic Marker Poinciana Elementary "Boynton Colored School"

A dedication ceremony for an historic plaque honoring **Julius Rosenwald** was held in Boynton Beach, Florida, on May 12, 2023. The plaque was donated by the **Jewish American Society for Historical Preservation**, with support from the **City of Boynton Beach**, the **City of Boynton Beach Historic Resources Preservation Board**, and the **Boynton Beach Historical Society**. The historic marker is located at the City of Boynton Beach Heritage Park, on the southwest corner of N. Seacrest Blvd. and NW 10th Ave, also known as Martin Luther King, Jr Blvd.

The City of Boynton Beach Historic Resources Preservation Board has recognized the Poinciana Elementary "Boynton Colored School" as a significant part of Boynton Beach history by awarding it an Official Historical Marker. "The plaque illustrates our City's history, increase awareness of the historic preservation program, and promote appreciation and civic pride in our community's history," according to the Historic Resources Preservation Board's website. The two-sided marker has text on one side and images on the reverse.

During the Progressive Era in 1912, philanthropist Julius Rosenwald partnered with African American educator and activist **Booker T. Washington**. They went on to build thousands of schools in 15 Southern states for black students. The schools became known as "Rosenwald Schools" and were frequently the first schools in a black community, helping progress education throughout the South. Jerry Klinger, President of the Jewish American Society for Historical Preservation, explained "Dr. Washington and Mr. Rosenwald had a partnership for good centered on mutual respect and purpose. They both understood that education for all was key to transforming the future."

Janet DeVries Naughton added "The Boynton 'Colored School,' located on the west side of Green Street (now Seacrest Blvd.) and today's NE 12th Ave, was the first Rosenwald funded school in Palm Beach County. In 1925, at the height of Florida's great 1920s land boom, the Rosenwald Fund contributed \$900 in seed money toward a new four-room, three teacher Boynton Colored School. The fund also provided architectural plans and specifications for the schoolhouse." For the history of Boynton Beach's Poinciana Stem Elementary School see <https://www.boyntonhistory.org/boynton-beachs-poinciana-school-history/>



Photos: Land to Sea Photography

Left: Commissioner Woodrow L Hay/District II, City of Boynton Beach Mayor Ty Penserga, Barbara Ready City of Boynton Beach Historic Resources Preservation Board and 1st VP Boynton Beach Historical Society, Tanya McDowell Principal Poinciana Elementary, Janet Devries Naughton Boynton Beach Historical Society Archivist and Board member, Jerry Klinger President Jewish American Society for Historical Preservation, Michael Rumpf City of Boynton Beach Development Services Director, Anne Rimler President Boynton Beach Historical Society

Center: Tanya McDowell Principal Poinciana Elementary and son

Right: Janet Devries Naughton Boynton Beach Historical Society Archivist and Board member, Carmela Norfus-Pitts, Dr Martha Meeks Light, Victor Norfus