




The Historian

The Newsletter of the Boynton Beach Historical Society 

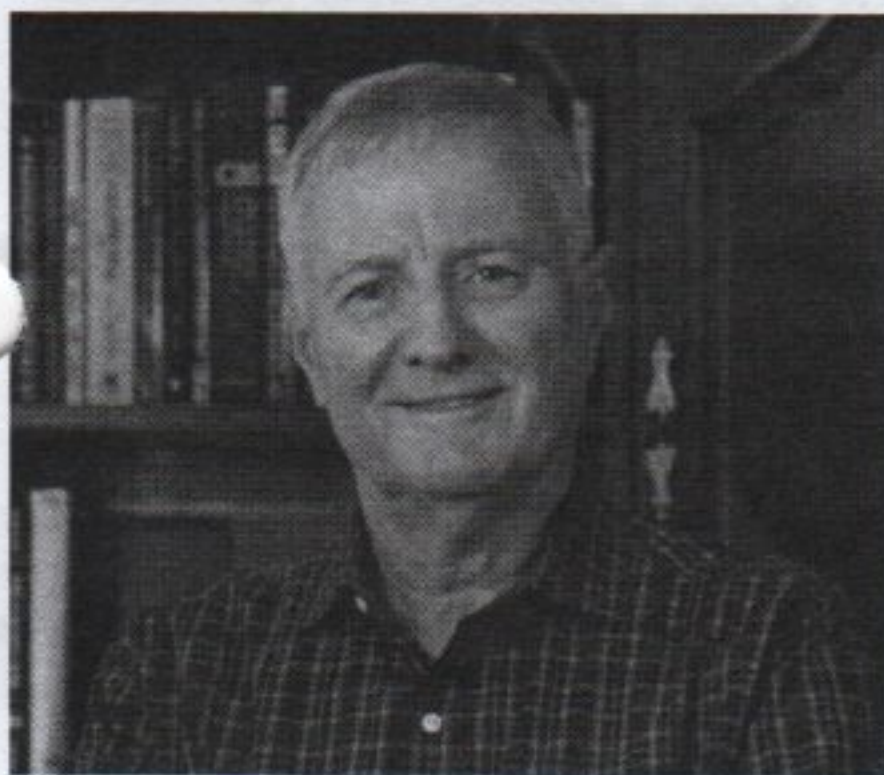
Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Briny Breezes, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton, in addition to supporting the preservation of the history of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida as a whole.

2018 Numbers 1 and 2

January and February 2018

FEBRUARY PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

Donn R. Colee, Jr. will present THE HISTORY OF FLORIDA BROADCASTING during which he will discuss the history of the industry in Florida beginning in 1922. He will tell of the people who brought radio and television stations to life and the events that saw Florida grow from boom to bust and back again on its road to becoming the nation's third most populous state.



Donn R. Colee, Jr.



Donn R. Colee, Jr. is the author of "Towers in the Sand," the definitive story of the people, the radio and television stations, and the events that built an industry and a state. Colee is a seventh-generation Floridian and second-generation broadcaster who began his career as a teenage disc jockey at Orlando's top-rated rock 'n' roll radio station. After service in the United States Navy, he joined his father's advertising and public relations firm and resumed his broadcasting career at WPEC CBS 12 in West Palm Beach.

Monday, February 19, 2018

NEW LOCATION!


First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall
235 S.W 6th Avenue (Two blocks west of Seacrest Blvd.)

Boynton Beach, Florida 33435

Meet & Greet 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Program 7:00-8:00 p.m.

All programs are FREE and OPEN to the Public

Like us on  HistoricBoyntonBeach

Follow us on  @BoyntonHistory

www.boyntonhistory.org

**SAVE THE DATE for our next program! Monday, March 19, 6:30p
@ First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall**

RESUMING the HISTORIAN A Note from the Editor



Voncile Smith

In May, 2017 I had assumed I was submitting the last copy I would edit of "The Historian." This month, however, I decided to resume the responsibility simply because, unless I did so, there would be no newsletter. So, I am back.

This issue is Number 1 & 2, January and February, 2018. Since there was no issue in January, I decided to make this a combination issue and a little bit longer than what we usually represent in one month.

February is Black History Month, and I am fortunate to have an article about three women important to the history of the Black community in Boynton Beach written by BBHS member, James Pitts. James' article lays the foundation for my decision to resume this editorship. We worked together on its final composition, and through it, he has given me the tinder to start again. Thank you, James.

And to all of you who read "The Historian," thank you for your support and encouragement. I hope I please you in the months to come.

Sincerely,
Voncile

JANUARY PROGRAM ONE OF OUR BEST "Aaron Burr, Jr. His Life and Time"



The Burr-Hamilton Duel

The largest audience for any of our programs to date sat fascinated as enactor **Peter Wise** assumed the role of U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr, one of our most ambitious and controversial Founding Fathers. The program, "Aaron Burr, Jr., His Life and Time," carried us through Burr's early years, his professional and political successes and failures, and his ultimate duel with Alexander Hamilton which created a controversy which is still unsolved today about who fired first and resulted in Hamilton's death.

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2017-18

OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Randall Gill
1 st Vice President, Programs	Anne Rimler
2 nd Vice President, Membership	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
Recording Secretary	Ginger Pedersen
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]

2018	Heidi Bell
2018	Virginia Foot
2019	Tim Bednarz
2019	Judith Merkel Howard
2020	Steven Anton
2020	Barbara Ready

TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2018	Diana Dennis
2018	Voncile Marshall Smith
2019	Susan Merkel Shaffer
2019	Virginia Farace
2020	Janet Hakala
2020	Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher

Our website is www.boyntonhistory.org. The e-mail address is boyntonhistory@gmail.com

Please email inquiries or information to our local address

P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

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
Wayne and Eva Brooks Knuth Netzler
Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson
Alexander "Sandy" Simon
Ernest G. Simon
Voncile Marshall Smith
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi
Dorian Beck Trauger
Charlotte Tatum Weaver
Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

CORPORATE MEMBERS - 2018

BMark Properties, William and Gaye Weaver
Boynton Memorial Chapel, Stormet Norem
Boynton Woman's Club
Easy Pay Tire Stores, Inc., Doug Besecker
Florida Coalition for Preservation
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

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Repeat

THE CENTENARIANS OF THE ONE HUNDRED BLOCK OF NORTHEAST 12th AVENUE, BOYNTON BEACH, FLORIDA

By James H. Pitts



Geneva Green Russell



Queen Esther Phelps McClendon



Hilda Girtman Pitts

This is a small part of the story of three amazing women who lived in close proximity to each other as neighbors and friends. For more than sixty years these ladies cultivated and nourished the lives of their offspring and so many others in the 100 block of N.E. 12th Avenue. They shared their wisdom, kindness and provisions as if we were one family.

Mrs. Geneva Russell (November 24, 1916 – May 6, 2017): first on the block in 1940

Geneva Green was born November 24, 1916 in Savannah, Georgia. Her family moved to Delray Beach in 1924. The fourth of six children, she was educated at the Delray Public School headed by Professor S.D. Spady.

She was married to Milton Russell, Sr. of Abaco, Bahamas. To this union seven children were born, resulting in the births of 15 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren and 8 great-great grandchildren.

Her hobbies included reading, completing word puzzles and watching quiz shows. She was a charter member of the Boynton Beach Church of God where she was in the Women's Ministry, Church Musician, Church Secretary, and more importantly, she assisted her husband in ministry as he pastored churches in South Bay, Labelle, Jensen Beach, Sharpes, Port Salerno and Boynton Beach. She also provided medical transportation for elderly citizens. She was the designated driver for the trio we called the "Golden Girls" for their weekly social outings. Not only was she the only one in the group that could drive, she had an excellent driving record. She made the best yeast dinner rolls in the country and always made enough to share with us all.

Recently Mother Geneva Russell was listed into the Congressional Record of the United States Congress by the Honorable Alcee Hastings, Member of Congress. This speaks volumes regarding her life and legacy.

Mrs. Queen Esther McClendon (May 4, 1916 -): moved to the block about 1944

Queen Esther Phelps was born June 4, 1916 in a small town in North Georgia. She graduated from Lamson High School where she excelled in basketball and track. She also spoke a second language: French.

She was married to Edward McClendon and they had one son who blessed them with 10 grandchildren, and as a result, she has 53 great grandchildren, 63 great-great grandchildren and 5 great-great-great grandchildren.

Queen Esther McClendon is a long-time member of St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Boynton Beach where she was a Sunday School Teacher and President of the Missionary Society. She was also a member of the Boynton Community Women's Auxiliary.

Her hobbies included cooking, playing card games and checkers and watching the Game Show Channel. The older kids in the neighborhood remember Mrs. Queen would challenge them to foot races on our unpaved roads. She would give them a head start and still win.

Mrs. Hilda Pitts (December 8, 1913 – August 20, 2016): moved to the block about 1945

Hilda Girtman was born December 8, 1913 in Boynton Beach, Florida. She was married to Solomon Pitts of Waycross, Georgia and to this union 8 children were born, resulting in the birth of 9 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren and 5 great-great grandchildren.

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[Continued from Page 3 – THE CENTENARIANS OF THE ONE HUNDRED BLOCK]

Mrs. Hilda was recognized as a Gold Star Mother after her son Cleveland made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in combat in the United States Army. During the Centennial Celebration of the City of Boynton Beach, she was found to be the City's oldest living native. On November 14, 2016, through the efforts of Vice Mayor Mack McCray, she was honored posthumously with a Congressional Award from the United States House of Representatives 114th Congress by the Honorable Alcee Hastings, Member of Congress.

She was a long-time member of St. Paul African Methodist-Episcopal Church and later became a member of New Christian Life Church. She served faithfully as a Missionary and as an Intercessor. Her missions work included visiting the sick and the incarcerated with her friend Minister Viola Thompkins. They also collected, purchased and packaged clothing and other items to ship to needy families overseas.

Her hobbies included reading her Bible daily, pencil and ink drawing, cooking, gardening and greeting customers (along with Mrs. Russell at times) at her shop, "Mrs. Hilda's Antiques," which was located in Boynton Beach on East Ocean Avenue.

As children, young adults and now senior adults, we realize that we all have been blessed to have had these matriarchs in our lives and to have grown up in the 100 block of N.E. 12th Avenue.

Addendum

In 1958 we welcomed Thomas and Bloneva Williams and their family to our little block. We were excited because her brother James (Bill) Butler was the first African American to join the Boynton Beach Police Force. Our families all became very good friends and we are still to this day. They were a great addition to the block.

[Data sources: Evelyn Russell, Elizabeth Pitts, and Y. Diane McClendon Lester]

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE IN APRIL NOMINATING COMMITTEE TO BE NAMED AT FEBRUARY MEETING

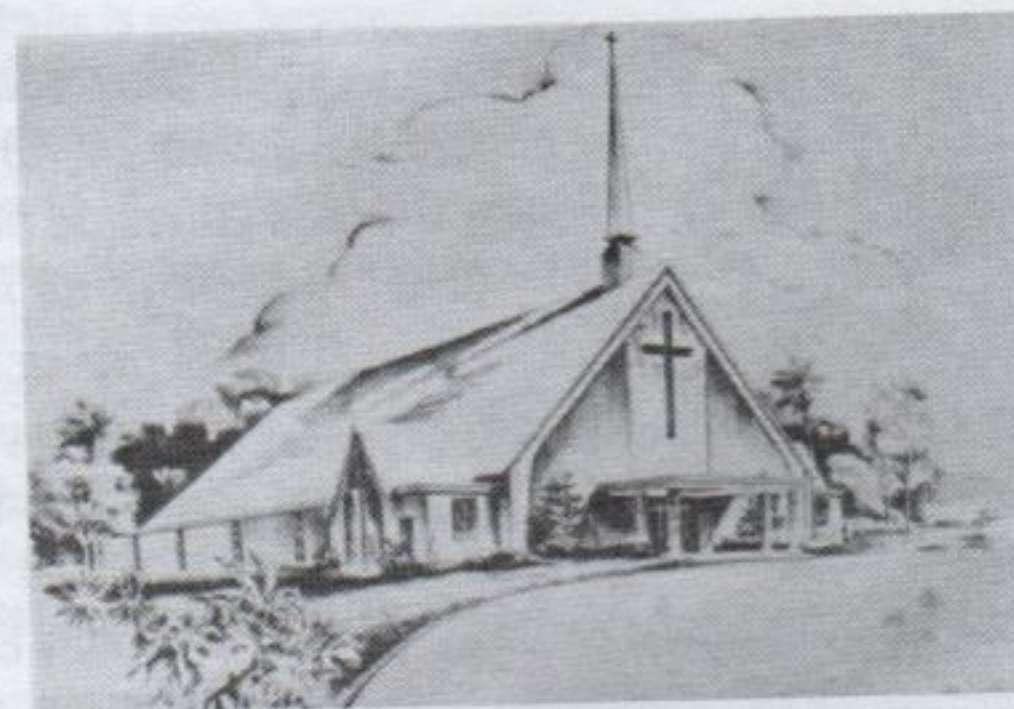
According to our Bylaws, we hold our Annual Meeting as part of the April program meeting. At that time we usually take a few minutes at the start of the meeting to hear a report from a Nominating Committee, provide for additional nominations from the floor and elect our officers, directors and trustees for the coming year.

Ordinarily this takes no more than 15-20 minutes. The newly constituted Board of Directors are installed at the May meeting.

The Bylaws require the President of the Society to name a Nominating Committee two months prior to the Annual Meeting. President Randy Gill will announce the names of the members of the Nominating Committee at the first part of the February meeting.

If any member is interested in serving on this committee and/or wants a copy of the BBHS Bylaws, contact Randy as soon as possible.

NEW MEETING LOCATION



**The First Presbyterian Church of Boynton Beach
235 SW 6th Avenue**

Because of changes in building ownership and construction plans within the City, the BRHS has had to make new arrangements for locations for our meetings.

The City Library will close in a month and is scheduled to be razed. Construction will begin on a new combined Library and City Hall to be completed in 2019. The Woman's Club is now owned by the CRA and scheduling is more complicated than previously.

We have obtained the use of the Fellowship Hall in the Presbyterian Church and will hold our meetings there for the next several months.

2018 MEMBERSHIPS

The Boynton Beach Historical Society has the following memberships listed as of February 1st. The membership year runs from January 1 to December 31 of each year. There is a notation on your mailing label to this copy of The Historian which indicates when your membership expires. There is also a membership form on the cover and, for your convenience in sending in your dues, an addressed envelope is enfolded within the pages. If you are a renewing member, unless your address has changed, you do not need to send in a new form. Your check amount will indicate which membership you are requesting.

Those memberships received between February 1st and March 1st will be listed in the March issue.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:

Steven M. Anton
Pam Traylor Anwyll
Patricia Atwater
Katherine Baker
Ruth Besecker
Marjorie Bynum
Brian D. Combs
Gillian Davis
Ramona Somerford Davis
Diana Dennis
Lois Oyer Dooley
Barbara DuBois
Donald Edge
Robert W. Ganger
Larry Grosser
Mary Miner Haggard
Janet Hakala
Nancy Hogan
Sally Hood
Marie J. Horenburger
William G. James
Gladys Baker Knuth
Suzanne Kruse
Carol Kuenzel
Mildred Hackle Lofley
Jayedda Marsh
Sandra L. McGregor
Frances Tuite McKeral
Jeff Morgan
Ted Murray
Ralph E. Myers
Marjorie W. Nelson
Lillian Ostiguy
Harvey E. Oyer III
Richard E. Philpott
Sandie L. Pike
James H. Pitts
Anthony Rawson
Anne C. Rimler

John I. Rogers
Mary Patricia Ryan
Mary Lou Muster Ryder
Fred Senior *
Joanne Miner Shoemaker
Linda Louise Stabile
Susan Swiatosz
Sue Thaler
Kandy Thompson
Gloria Partin Turner *
Michele Walter
Anne Watts
J.H. "Gym" Weeks
Randy K. Weeks
Raymond E. Weeks
Dorothy F. Whittaker
Herbert Zobel

FAMILY MEMBERS:

L. Don and Jeanne Combs
Bob W. and Jeanne Gayler
Richard and Judith Merkel Howard
Diane C. and James McCracken
John A. and Rannie Melear
Anne Weems Michael
Charles and Elizabeth Miner LaBella
The Eleanor Murray Sala Family
Michael and Janet DeVries Naughton
Ward and Martha Parker
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J. Robert and Jayne Rousseau
Barbara G. and Wyman H. Scott, Jr.
John and Chadda C. Shelly
Robert B. and Sheila Rousseau Taylor
Barbara S. Traylor

PATRON MEMBERS:

Ron and Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher
Michael and Linda Martin Callaway
Delray Awning, Inc., Don and Regina Day
Robert and Virginia Foot
Evelyn C. Howell
Fred W. Love
Billy Jo Swilley
Bill R. and Elsie Winchester
Suzy Winchester

STUDENT MEMBERS:

Julianne, Marisol and Carolyn Amaya

CORPORATE MEMBERS:

BMark Properties, William and Gaye Weaver
Boynton Memorial Chapel, Stormet Norem

• = deceased

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Message from Boca Raton Historical Society President Randall Gill
THE BLESSING OF LIBRARIES AND BOOKS



Randall Gill

It's fascinating to learn more about the library history of Palm Beach County in the new book ***Overdue in Paradise***. This book was written by Janet DeVries, Graham Brunk, Ginger Pedersen, Shellie Labell and Rosa Sophia. It includes a team of other contributors that help us appreciate how libraries have changed our Florida history and culture.

The back of the book has this splendid quote by Desiderius Erasmus, "Your library is your paradise." My book shelf at home is my paradise. It includes children's books, history books, art history, novels and poetry. I have an autographed copy of ***Jaws*** signed by Peter Benchley. He even drew a picture of a shark next to his name. A treasure I found at a church sale! I also have a copy of the novel ***When Elves Attack*** by Tim Dorsey. He autographed it for me when he visited the Boynton Beach library, wearing his shorts and tropical shirt.

I have well-worn Bibles and hymn books from the 1800's. One of my favorite books is a leather bound book I bought from an elderly woman at her farm house sale in Northern New York, ***The Life and Times of Abraham Lincoln***. It contains his speeches and proclamations and is dated 1865, the year he died. The book concludes with the following quote about Lincoln, "The heavens are his home, but the world and its records will take care of his fame." How true!

Google and the internet are fine tools for finding information, but books still have a magical quality for me, knowing that other people have touched and read their contents. I am connected to history as I look at crushed dried flowers between the pages and the splattered ink from a pioneer child learning to write.

The appeal of books is that there is no end to them. The end notes, indexes and table of contents lead me down new roads. The stacks on my night-side table never get smaller, the books rotate as one gets read and a new title takes its place. Books take me to new places and I never know when I might receive an unexpected blessing.

I am grateful for the libraries mentioned in ***Overdue in Paradise*** which contain collections and reference materials that are making a difference in people's lives today. They are a golden treasure for all who enter!

The Boynton Beach Historical Society relies on generous friends like you to help us preserve the legacy of Boynton Beach and to have great programs and educational events. If you haven't renewed your membership, please renew your membership today! Thank you very much. Your generous gift means so much as we celebrate our 50th anniversary.

Sincerely,
Randall Gill

THE BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMORIAL FUND

We have a Memorial Fund which we maintain separate from our other accounts. Members and other friends have contributed to it to honor special events or in memory of a friend or family member.

Sometimes we receive gifts in small amounts for special recognition of a child's birthday or even a good report card. Other times circumstances such as the passing of Harvey Oyer, have led to larger sums which cumulatively may reach several thousand dollars.

Some of the money, for example in honor of Harvey, was used to have a 1976 video on the History of Boynton Beach reprocessed, printed and made available for purchase by our members and the public. A gift from the Neff family led to their request that we have the South Palm Beach (Boynton) Inlet declared an historic site with the erection of a marker so designating. Other examples of how we use memorial gifts have included having a collection of paintings by nationally acclaimed artist Bernard Thomas, which he had contributed to Forest Park School, cleaned, repaired and relocated. We have presented a number of books on Florida history to local school libraries.

We mention this fund and some ways we have used it with the hope that you will think about helping us to memorialize someone or some event in your life.

[Continued from page 5, 2018 Memberships]

Boynton Woman's Club

Easy Pay Tire Store, Doug Besecker

Florida Coalition for Preservation

Robee-Combs- Bowden Funeral Home and Crematory

Life Members:

Lenore Benson Raborn Boonstra

M. Randall and Ann B. Gill

Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak

Cliff and Rick Melear

Wayne and Eva Brooks Netzler

J. Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson

Alexander "Sandy" Simon *

Ernest Simon

Voncile Marshall Smith

George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi

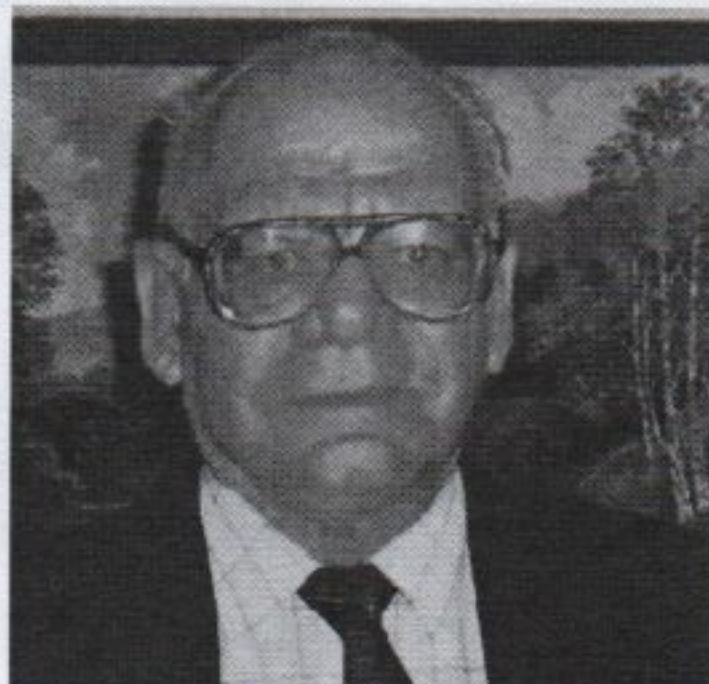
Dorian B. Trauger

Charlotte Tatum Weaver

Curtis and Alice Nain Weems Weaver

IN MEMORIAM

FREDRICK IRVIN SENIOR. Freddie, as we knew him in elementary school, began first grade at the Boynton School in 1937 with classmate Gloria Partin whom we mention below and several other members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, namely your editor and Alice Nain Weems Weaver.. Fred, as he was called as an adult, was born in Boynton to parents who were very active in the community, Charles Herbert Senior, Sr. and Laura Jensen Senior. Fred had two siblings: Helen Louise who died in 1913 and a brother, Charles, Jr., who died in 1915. Fred also has three nieces, children of his brother Charles.



Fred Senior

Fred graduated from Seacrest High School in 1950 and continued to live in Boynton Beach until the mid-1960s when he moved to Fort Lauderdale. He loved plants and nature and was an honorary member of the Bromeliad Society of Broward County. He was also a devoted member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. We send our condolences to his friends and workmates in Broward County and to his surviving family members.

DELMA WAYNE SWILLEY. Delma attended elementary school in Boynton and graduated from Seacrest High School in Delray Beach where he met and fell in love with his wife-to-be, Billie Jo McFee. After graduation he attended Florida State University where he joined Phi Delta Theta fraternity. He entered the United States Air Force and retired as a Major in 1971.



Delma Swilley

After leaving the Air Force, he became a General Contractor in Delray Beach until he retired again in 1999 after which he and Billie Jo spent their time fishing and golfing in Florida and the north Georgia mountains.

He and Billie Jo have been long-time members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society where he served on the Board of Directors for a term.

LOIS GLORIA PARTIN TURNER. Gloria passed away in Macon, Georgia in December with her children at her bedside. She was the 6th and youngest child of early Boynton residents Mott Hall Partin and Lois Jones Partin.



Gloria Turner

Gloria attended Boynton Elementary School and graduated from Boynton High School in 1949. She attended Florida State College for Women (now Florida State University) after high school. She married Bernard "Nardy" Turner, former Mayor of Boca Raton and co-owner of Turner Nursery and Landscape Company in Boca Raton, in 1950. She and Nardy were founding members of St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Boca Raton. Gloria was active in a number of organizations including the DAR, the Boynton Womans Club, the Boynton Beach Book Club, and the Boynton Beach Historical Society. We send our condolences and best wish to her children, grandchildren and many other family members.

Boynton Beach History Society Membership

The Society is a 501(c)(3) Organization; dues are tax deductible

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone # (____) _____

Membership Year is Jan 1 to Dec 31.

Dues are not pro-rated.

Membership Expiration Date on mailing label.

Complete above and mail with payment to:

Boynton Beach Historical Society

PO Box 12

Boynton Beach FL 33425-0012

Or pay online using PayPal at

www.boyntonhistory.org/membership/

Indicate Membership Type:

____ Individual \$25

____ Family \$35

____ Patron \$50

____ Corporate \$100

____ Student \$10

____ Life (onetime payment) \$500

Thank you for your support!



Boynton Beach Historical Society

PO Box 12

Boynton Beach FL 33425-0012

