



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

March 2024

Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Rachel Carson: Their Books Changed the World Monday, March 25, 2024 @ 7-8pm Eastern via Zoom

For emails in our files, 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.

Betty Jean Steinshouer will focus on two of her "Scribbling Women in Florida," **Marjory Stoneman Douglas** and **Rachel Carson**. Because of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, we still have flora and fauna that would have been lost to DDT and other poisons in the environment back in the 1960s. Because of *The Everglades: River of Grass*, by Marjory Stoneman Douglas, we still have the only Everglades in the world. If there is time, Steinshouer will also touch a bit on **Connie May Fowler's** *A Million Fragile Bones*, which brings "scribbling women" writing about the environment into this century, with Fowler's coverage of the effects on Florida's Gulf Coast from the Deepwater Horizon explosion in 2010.

Betty Jean Steinshouer is 35-year veteran of the Chautauqua circuit, touring 43 states and Canada since 1989, when she brought "Willa Cather Speaks" on a 10-city tour of Florida that March, with funding from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities, as it was known back then. In 2000, the editors of the History and Culture Series then being published by University Press of Florida, convinced her to begin a book on a dozen women authors who had important relationships with Florida over the years, adding Constance Fenimore Woolson, Rose Wilder Lane (Laura Ingalls Wilder's daughter), Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elizabeth Bishop, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Rachel Carson, and Zora Neale Hurston. Most recently, she's made it a Baker's Dozen, adding Connie May Fowler. Steinshouer was named a Fellow in Florida Studies at the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg in 2004 and received the International Book Aware in Biography from BookFest for *Long Road from Red Cloud*, her book about Willa Cather, in 2020.



Left: R Carson. Center: B Steinshouer. Courtesy B Steinshouer. Right: M Stoneman Douglas. Courtesy FL Memory State Archives



Boynton Beach Historical Society

~ Since 1968 ~

2023-2024 Board of Directors

OFFICERS Elected Annually

President – Anne Rimler

1st Vice President, Programs, Interim – Robert Taylor

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 - open

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, reaching you when you're away, eco-friendly, arrives faster than print, and links in articles are active.

Become a Member or Renew your Dues

Membership runs Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 with dues expiring annually on Dec 31st (except for Life Memberships). To pay securely online via PayPal, go to the **Membership** tab at our website www.boyntonhistory.org and add a membership option to the cart. To pay by check, complete the membership form and mail your check to the PO Box above. 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 Monday Evenings via Zoom

Mar 25: M Stoneman Douglas & R Carson: Their Books

Changed the World – **B Steinsouer**

Apr 22: Annual Meeting, (tentative) History of Lake Worth Drainage District

Zoom Program Meetings are Recorded

Find us on YouTube at "BBHS Programs"



The following represents our Membership Roll to date & Dues received from 1/30/2024 to 3/04/2024:

Thank You to our Life Members

Vickie & Anthony **Barbar**

Doug & Ruth **Besecker, EasyPay Tire**

Michael & Gloria **Bowden**

Candy & Doug **Brueggemann**

Linda & Mike **Callaway**

Robert and Jeanne **Gayler**

M Randall **Gill**

Robert & Carrie **Parker Hill**

Robert & Christian **Oyer Macoviak**

Cliff & Rick **Melear, Melear Bros**

Wayne & Eva Brooks **Knuth Netzler**

Susan **Oyer**

Anne **Rimler**

Sandy A **Simon Jr**

Voncile **Marshall Smith**

Scott & Camilla **Smith Richardson**

Robert & Sheila **Rousseau Taylor**

William & Gaye **Weaver**

Marion **Weaver Wester**

George & Christine **Weaver Ternenyi**

Elsie **Winchester**

Thank You to our Corporate Sponsors

Donald & Regina **Day, Delray Awning**

Laura **Hinzman, Scheurer's Chocolates**

Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

Dan & Lisa Ames **Suiter**

Thank You to our Patrons!

Sarah & Ron **Bollenbacher**

Marcia **Crossman**

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Alan **Molle**

James **Pitts**

Billie Jo **Swilley**

Sarah **Williams**

Suzy **Winchester**

Membership Renewals Thank You for Your Support!

Pam **Traylor Amwyll**

Mike & Lucy **Brown**

Richard **Castagnol**

Donald & Regina **Day Delray Awning**

Jay **Erlichman**

Judith **Musgrave**

Barbara **Ready**

Michele **Walter**

A big SHOUT OUT to our Newest Members Welcome!

Angela F **Budano**

Carmelann **Powell**

Greg **Traylor**

Special Thanks for a Memorial Donation

From Richard **Castagnoli** in memory of Kathleen **Mayberry Castagnoli**, a 2nd-generation Boynton Beach native, daughter of Zoll Oliver **Mayberry** & Elizabeth **Harper Mayberry**.

Funding for Florida Humanities Florida Talks

This Speaker's Program is supported in part by the State of FL, Department of State, Division of Arts & Culture, Florida Council on Arts and Culture & the National Endowment for the Arts.





The Historian

Robert H Rousseau - My Grandfather, My Mentor

Part I

Daniel R Suiter



Left: John N Suiter, at 19 yrs old. Right: Robert H Rousseau and Wilda Shipp-Rousseau. Photos Courtesy – D R Suiter

From 2000 to 2003, **John N. Suiter** (1931-2008), son of Verna H. Rousseau (sixth of seven children, born in Boynton in 1907 to **Robert H Rousseau** and **Wilda Shipp-Rousseau**), wrote 36 short stories of life growing up in Palm Beach County beginning in the 1930s. The following is an excerpt from one of his short stories.

My grandfather, **Robert H Rousseau**, was born in north Florida in 1870. He was raised in that area and later in west central Florida around Clearwater and Tampa Bay. He worked as a drover during his teens, rounding up wild cows and driving them to market. He later married **Wilda Rae Shipp** in DeLand, circa 1892, and moved to Glenwood, which is a short distance north of DeLand in east central Florida, to raise citrus fruit. During the terrible freeze of 1895, which lasted for weeks, his orchards were wiped out, along with everybody else's trees and farms down to south of Lake Okeechobee. He tried again, but in 1899 he moved his family, including 2 children, south to a new farming community called Boynton. There were only about 40 people in Boynton at that time, all of them farming families.

Some families were farming pineapples, but he decided to farm beans, peppers, tomatoes, etc. since there was a local market that was shipping them by rail to markets in the northeast part of the country for fresh winter vegetables. He usually leased land for farming, since with a growing family he never got far enough ahead to buy it. At one time he leased the fertile land east of Spanish River, now the Intracoastal Waterway, in what is now the Town of Ocean Ridge and Town of Gulfstream. He had to lease easterly all the way to the ocean, including the sand ridge and the ocean beach. The ridge and the beach were considered wasted money because he couldn't grow anything in the sand.

Verna Rousseau and her son, **John Suiter**, and his wife, **Kathleen T** and their only daughter, **Kathryn M**, are buried in Palm Beach Memorial Park (off Seacrest Ave in Lantana); **Robert H Rousseau** is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery across from the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach. His grave is on the right side, about the 3rd row inside the gate.



Boynton Beach Historical Society Membership Form

Select One: ___ **New** Membership or ___ **Renewal**.

My Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone # _____

New Member? Welcome! How did you hear about us?

Select Membership Type:

- ___ **Individual \$25**
- ___ **Family \$35**
- ___ **Patron \$50**
- ___ **Corporate \$150**
- ___ **Student* \$10** (with a valid student ID)
- ___ **Life** (one-time payment) **\$500**

Special Offer: Give a free one-year membership to a friend!
 Buy One. Give One. BOGO! **Mail with payment to:**
 Boynton Beach Historical Society
 PO Box 12
 Boynton Beach FL 33425-0012
 Pay via PayPal at www.boyntonhistory.org/membership/ and
 send an email to BBHSMembership@gmail.com with your
 BOGO recipient's info.
 *BOGO Recipient must be a new member.

Select Gift type and indicate amount:

___ **Gift** ___ **In Honor** ___ **In Memory** \$ _____

For(name): _____

The Society is a 501(c)(3) Organization; dues are tax deductible. Membership year runs Jan 1 to Dec 31.
THANK YOU!

Did you already renew membership? THANK YOU! In case you forgot to provide your BOGO recipient, email their contact information to BBHSMembership@gmail.com.

Are you a Life member? THANK YOU! You are eligible to give a one-year membership too! Email their contact information to BBHSMembership@gmail.com

I'm taking advantage of the BOGO* Special Offer! Please send a free one-year membership to:

BOGO Recipient's Name _____

BOGO Recipient's Street _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

BOGO Recipient's E-mail _____

BOGO Recipient's Phone # _____

THANK YOU!



The Historian

Boynton Beach Historical Society – Open Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking for volunteers! We have an opening for someone with some technology experience (e.g. Google mail, Zoom, YouTube). If interested, email us at bbhsprograms@gmail.com. Tempted but aren't sure? We can teach you and will work closely with you. Do you have something else in mind that you would like to do? Let us know! Full disclosure: we have grand expectations for our volunteers. Bring a team-oriented attitude of historical proportions and a good sense of humor. You may just find the extraordinary within yourself.

Boynton Beach Historical Society – February 17, 2024 History Stroll

About three dozen attendees were treated to a narrated tour of East Ocean Av, SE 1st Av and SE 3rd St in Boynton Beach on a recent delightfully cool Saturday morning. The narration was provided by **Janet Naughton**, librarian, and history professor at Palm Beach State College, who educated us with tales of people, places, and facts. The free 90-minute stroll covered dozens of historical locations and stories of the town pioneers including the Schoolhouse Children's Museum, the Oscar Magnuson house, Doc Weems' office, the Ruth Jones cottage and the Andrew's house. Thank you for joining us. The Historical Society is making plans to hold additional strolls in the fall. Stay tuned for more information!

Left: Dewey Park. Center: Magnuson House. Right: Andrews House. All Photos Courtesy Boynton Beach Historical Society



Boynton Beach Garden Club Meeting

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

The Boynton Beach Garden Club extends a gracious invitation to Historical Society members to attend the **Tuesday, March 26** meeting, time tbd. The Garden Club will be visiting two of their spectacular gardens: the **Butterfly Garden**, located on the east side of the Schoolhouse Children's Museum 129 E Ocean Av, Boynton Beach, and the **Community Garden**, located off Seacrest Blvd. Call **Toni Cvetko** 908-757-0116 for further info and the meeting time and place. Looking ahead: the **Tues, April 23 1pm** meeting will be a demo of Ikebona flower arrangements by **Lynn Jones**.

Boynton Beach Woman's Club Meeting

Thursday, March 21, 2024

The Boynton Beach Woman's Club extends a gracious invitation to Historical Society members to attend the **Thursday, March 21 @11:30a Boynton Woman's Club Annual Scholarship**. It will be held at the Quail Ridge Country Club at 11:30 a.m. The cost of the cold buffet lunch includes a drink, ice cream, and tip, is \$15.00. If you choose to have hot soup, the cost will be \$19.00. Please bring cash or check. Reservations are necessary so either call or text **Michele Walter** at 314-306-4490.



The Historian

On the Gulf Stream

By Randall Gill, Past President Boynton Beach Historical Society

Doretha Keeps History Alive!



Left: Ann Gill, Doretha Hair Truesdell and GS Troop 24514. Right: Doretha Hair Truesdell original. Photos Courtesy R Gill

The late **Alfred Hair**, the original Highwayman, was known as the heart of the Highwaymen artists. I believe his wife **Doretha Hair Truesdell**, could be known as the soul of the group. At each Highwaymen show that we have presented as the Boynton Beach Historical Society, she arrives early in the morning carrying her paintings with grace and gratitude. She continues to travel the road as a Florida Highwaywoman.

In her early twenties, Doretha helped Alfred paint blue skies and shorelines on Upson board. Alfred would then quickly brush in the wind-swept palm trees, Spanish moss, and other details. Doretha had the gift of hospitality and invited several young African American artists to join them to paint Florida landscapes together at their home on Dunbar Street in Fort Pierce during the 1960's. The music of **James Brown** on the radio would keep everybody moving at a good pace all night long. It was a time for laughter and a glorious time for creating art. Alfred's mentor, **A. E. Backus**, tried to get him to slow down, but he liked to paint fast. That way he could get the paintings out to sell quickly. Unable to display and show their work in galleries, they traveled the roads to sell their work to local business owners. This is how they came to be known as the "Highwaymen" artists. Carefully, Alfred and Doretha would put the wet paintings in the trunk of their car, and they would travel from Fort Pierce to Miami, stopping at small towns along the way to sell their paintings. The Alfred Hair painting that I have in my living room still has blue fingerprints from the wet paint on the back.

Boynton Beach was a favorite place to stop, with a growing population of 10,467 in 1960. In the South, there could be great prejudice and racial discrimination. Doretha says they were warmly greeted by people who liked their artwork. In the time of segregation, the paintings helped to break down barriers. In Boynton Beach, people loved the dreamy tropical scenes. **Steven's Drug Store** had paintings on display which decorated their store. These paintings were also for sale. **Harvey Oyer** collected paintings for his insurance agency office and even today the paintings are on display at the agency. Highwaymen art can be found today on the walls of the **Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home**. Alfred spread out his paintings in the lobby of **First Bank of Boynton Beach**. I asked Doretha, "How in the world would someone be allowed to set up paintings for sale in a bank lobby?" She replied, "They invited him in!" ALL the paintings were snapped up by customers and bank tellers. In a newspaper from 1969 the bank advertised, "Want to start the day right? Stop in and chat...you'll always find a friendly ear!" Alfred and Doretha certainly found a friendly ear.

When Doretha comes to Boynton Beach for our Highwaymen show, she is living Black History. Today, the paintings are treasured and highly collectible. She continues the journey of the Highwaymen legacy. **Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida Troop 24514** from **St. John Missionary Baptist Church** gathered around Doretha as she talked to them about the Highwaymen artists and how they had to overcome many obstacles in life. She encouraged the girls and asked, "Which of you would like to be an artist?" She told them to be strong and to always have faith and persevere.

When I look at the small painting by Doretha in my bookcase, I am reminded of her courage and her place in Florida history. The bright scarlet royal poinciana tree brings me immense joy.