

Loxahatchee River Historical Society Quarterly

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The Loxahatchee River Historical Society (LRHS) is the 501(c)3 non-profit organization that operates Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum

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Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse 1884
Colorized version of a Melville Spencer photo

Early Jupiter Schools

Part 1: 1886 - 1902

Jupiter had no formal school prior to 1886. The children of early lighthouse keepers, like Charlie Pierce, were homeschooled by their parents. The first paid teacher was Henry Archibald of the Jupiter Inlet Life Saving Station crew. He was hired as a private teacher for the Carlin and Armour children during his off-duty hours during the 1886-1887 season.

The first local public school teacher, Mr. Ammonette, was hired by Dade County, which then extended all the way to Stuart. He ran a one-room school at the Carlin House for the 1887-1888 school year, which was only five months long! In 1888, lighthouse head keeper James Armour converted a riverfront shed near to the lighthouse dock into a one-room school. Belle Ernest, John Bright and Susie Brown taught for one school year each there. Capt. Armour served as the school's

schoolhouse initially doubled as Jupiter's first church. A. J. Mitchell, Head Observer at the Weather Bureau & Signal Station, was the school supervisor and ran the Sunday school with his wife. When Mitchell transferred from Jupiter he was succeeded as supervisor by Nelson Cowles (a lighthouse keeper and life saving station surfman for short periods of time) then Capt. Armour. In 1895, Fred Magill moved the Octagon School to where Barons Landing is today, along Lake Worth Creek. After closing in 1902, the school building was sold in 1905 and the lot in 1910.



This William Henry Jackson photo shows the Lighthouse School (by the palm tree) at or shortly after the end of its short use. (Library of Congress)



The only known photo of the Octagon School. Some of the children are from the Armour family, but most are unidentified. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

supervisor, which included maintenance duties. Jupiter's first purpose-built school opened in 1891 in what later became Suni Sands on a donated half-acre lot. The one-room schoolhouse was an eight-sided structure nicknamed the Octagon School. Pioneer children living along the Loxahatchee River were brought to the nearby Celestial Railroad wharf by boat. The

Teacher turnover was common during the early pioneer era of Jupiter. The teachers were mostly young, single women and rarely local residents. They boarded for the school year with a local family then returned home for the summer and taught somewhere else the following year. Octagon School teachers in chronological order: Stella Widmeyer, J. Witter, Mary E. Lewis, William M. Greenleaf, Mabel Fullerton Freeman, Henrietta Hobbs, Susan Sanders, Addie Lee Damon, Sarah P. Williams,

Early Jupiter Schools continued

and Lula Bell. Only Lewis, Hobbs, and Williams taught more than one school year. Witter, Greenleaf, and Sanders only taught for one semester each.

A few Octagon School teachers merit further mention. Henrietta Hobbs was removed by Supervisor Armour for unknown reasons. The decision was perhaps the first great controversy in pioneer Jupiter. Local residents filed a petition for Armour's removal as Supervisor while a counter-petition supported Armour's decision. The school board retained Armour and swapped Hobbs with the teacher at Leesville, a pioneer community in what is now Palm City. That is how Susan Sanders came to teach in Jupiter, resulting in her meeting Harry DuBois on a blind date to the top of the lighthouse. Harry and Susan married and raised their family in the 1898 DuBois House that still stands today. Addie Damon also found love through her teaching job, marrying Charlie Carlin, son of the Carlin House's owners.

Jupiter's second purpose-built school was located at Sawfish Bay. When it was in use, it was usually called the Neptune School after the nearby post office. The school was built in 1894 by Fred M. Cabot II who owned the Sawfish Bay area at the time. Cabot was an entrepreneur and enthusiastic developer of the

community that grew around the new FEC Railway station. The Cabot family lived in the building for a short time before moving into their new Cabot House hotel on the west side of the railroad tracks. Fred Cabot died in a railroad accident and was originally buried under the massive Cabot Oak at Sawfish Bay, although he was later reinterred at the cemetery on County Line Road. His hotel burned down a few years later due to sparks from a passing train and his family moved away.

The Neptune School opened in 1895. Teachers for the first two school years are unknown. Teachers for 1897-1902: Irene Rickards, Annie Metcalfe, Addie Lee Damon Carlin, unknown, and Fannie Parks each of whom taught for one school year.

For the 1901-1902 season, Jupiter had a third school: a converted one-room shed at the Barfield homestead on the Loxahatchee River North Fork. Dr. Charles P. Jackson, who also had a homestead on the North Fork, was the teacher. Although officially called the North Jupiter School, it was nicknamed the Barfield School. The area was not called Tequesta until the 1950s.

Florida public schools were segregated during this time. All of the aforementioned schools admitted Whites only.

Although settlement of western Jupiter began in the 1890s, Dade County would neglect to provide a school for Jupiter's African American community until 1905.

The story of Jupiter's early schools will continue in the next issue with the establishment of Jupiter's first Black public school and the consolidation of the three White schools into one.



Illustrations of the Octagon School and Neptune School
by B. Roberts Marsh in the 1980s. (LRHS Gladwin Family Collection)

This information has been derived in a large part from research in the Florida Star, Tropical Sun, and Miami Metropolis newspapers. This research expands and updates information from Elsie Jackson's manuscript and the Bessie Wilson DuBois Collection.

An Account of the 1872 Shipwreck of the Victor

On October 20, 1872 the Mallory Line steamship *Victor* wrecked at what is today Carlin Park. Although reported in newspapers of the day, the event was largely forgotten until the publication of Charlie Pierce's memoirs, [Pioneer Life In Southeast Florida](#) in 1970. The digitization of historic newspapers gives us access to contemporary accounts of the event. The following excerpt is from an account given by Capt. Gurdon Gates and published in numerous newspapers including the New York Times.

At 6 PM made Jupiter Light. At 8:10, the light bearing west, broke the shaft even with the stuffing box. The ship commenced to fill rapidly. Ship heading off southeast under fore and aft sails. The ship had three feet of water in her, with every available pump at work. About this time (9 PM) succeeding in stopping most of the leak that was in sight. Let go the port anchor...

...she continued to pound until she was full of water. The sea making a clean breach over her, the balance of the night was spent in making every preparation for getting on shore. At

daylight she was broken in two amidships. Got a boat down under her lee, and succeeding in getting a line to shore, there being two men on the beach from the [Jupiter] lighthouse.

We first got the women and children on shore, and then the men. At 2 PM all hands were safe on the shore, after swamping three boats in the breakers. At 5 PM, the water being somewhat smoother, the mate and chief engineer, with a boat's crew, succeeded, after swamping in the first attempt, in getting off the wreck, and threw overboard some provisions

and got back in safely, the ship breaking up fast. After night the gale increased and at midnight she broke up. At daylight on Tuesday the wreck was piled on the rocks, with nothing offshore but the steam chimneys and cylinders in sight.

The cargo was nearly all destroyed with the debris of the ship. The gale continued, with increased violence, until Wednesday morning. At 3 PM, the steamship *General Meade*, Capt. Simpson, came along and very kindly took us off. As there was nothing to save, we concluded to leave.



Ballast stone and coal recovered from the wreck of the *Victor* and recently donated. (LRHS Thomas Gidus Collection)

Contrary to Gates' appraisal, much of the cargo was still salvageable. As recounted by Charlie Pierce, the lighthouse keepers and a group of Seminoles recovered many items for their personal use including butter, clothing, perfume, alcohol, and a sewing machine. The passengers continued to New Orleans aboard the *General Meade*. Capt. Gates and his crew transferred to the City of Austin off Key West to report the *Victor's* loss from that city. Surprisingly, while Gates thanked the captains and crew of the other two steamships in his report, he did not thank the lighthouse keepers for the aid they offered.

On display in the Keeper's Workshop are a lead seal and bottle fragment from French perfume. They were found by archaeologists near the lighthouse and are believed to be salvaged from the *Victor*.

Bessie Wilson DuBois

Jupiter's First Historian

The first person to attempt to compile a history of the Jupiter area was Elsie Dolbey Jackson. She wrote a 22-page typescript circa 1914 that was not published until The Loxahatchee Lament, Vol. II. Elsie lived in the Jupiter area for less than a decade and our area lacked a local historian...until Bessie.

Bessie Mabel Wilson came to Jupiter with her family around the time Elsie Jackson wrote her manuscript. She married John DuBois in 1924. John and Bessie raised four children in a home on the western edge of DuBois Park. Until the 1970s, DuBois Park was privately owned and operated by the DuBois Family. John also ran a fishing camp on the waterfront and,

until World War II, Bessie ran the Jupiter Inlet Inn restaurant on the property. John DuBois had been raised in the 1898 DuBois House atop the park's shell mound. Although Bessie never lived in that house, she appreciated its historical significance. John had salvaged Native American artifacts from the DuBois Mound when it was extensively mined for Lake Park road fill in the early 1920s. Many of these artifacts were later donated to our historical society and some are on display in our museum.

Bessie DuBois served two terms as a Palm Beach County school trustee. She was a charter member of the People's Congregational Church of Jupiter. At

various times she was on the board of directors for the Florida Historical Society, Lake Worth Pioneer Association, and Historical Society of Palm Beach County. She was a charter board member of the Loxahatchee (River) Historical Society and the inspiration for its formation. During World War II, Bessie DuBois baked 3,346 pies for Camp Murphy.

Mrs. DuBois went on to become an author in her own right. She contributed four articles to *Tequesta*, the journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida. Her articles were also published in *Florida Outdoors*, *Florida Illustrated*, *Gateway*



John and Bessie DuBois in the Jupiter Inlet Inn circa 1940. With them are 3 of their 4 children: Dodie, Louise, and Harry. Their other child, Dorothy, probably took the photo. In the 1950s, John and Bessie converted this building into their new home.

Bessie Wilson DuBois continued



Judge James R. Knott and Bessie DuBois at the 1967 dedication of the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse historical marker.

Magazine, The Beacon News Historical Edition, and The Stuart News Historical Edition. Bessie also self-published four booklets: Shipwrecks in the Vicinity of Jupiter Inlet; A History of Juno Beach & Juno, Florida; The History of the Jupiter Lighthouse; and The History of the Loxahatchee River. In addition to published material, she wrote several unpublished short articles and some of her personal reminiscences of pioneer Jupiter.

In praising Bessie's abilities as an author, Judge James R. Knott had this to say: "She is careful and thorough in her research, and writes with clarity, precision, and charm." Knott served as board president of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County for more than a decade and wrote the popular Brown Wrapper history supplement to the *Palm Beach Post*.

Bessie DuBois amassed a vast collection of nonfiction books (over 700), artifacts, archival material, and especially photos. Much of this material would have been lost if not for her efforts. She corresponded with pioneers, collecting stories and reminiscences. In the early 1990s, this collection became the core of the archives of the Loxahatchee River Historical Society (LRHS). She donated other material to the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, Florida State Archives, and University of Florida P.K. Yonge Library.

In addition to her significant efforts to collect local history, Bessie DuBois was also a frequent and popular public speaker on the subject of history. In this way she helped inspire countless local residents, and in some cases elected officials, about the importance of history. She spoke at four local historical marker dedications. By her own count, she had given 118 history presentations by 1978. (She did not give many presentations after that time, due to her failing eyesight and other health issues.) She spoke to a wide range of civic groups including Kiwanis, Rotarians, Jaycees, Boy Scouts, and Girls Scouts as well as local public and private schools.

Bessie Wilson DuBois continued

Examples of the Thank You letters that Bessie DuBois received:

"I wish that I could find words to express our appreciation for bringing to our members such a fascinating program. The wonderful slides and interesting comments gave many of us an insight into the Jupiter area that we had never realized before. Palm Beach County is indeed fortunate to have someone like you, who loves it and has collected such a wealth of history."

-Mrs. Dorsey, Junior League of the Palm Beaches, 1966

"I want to thank you again for all that you did in making the ceremonies and reception at the dedication of the Jupiter Lighthouse [historical] marker a success – and for all your help in the planning and the preliminary work. I really do not know enough words to fully express my appreciation."

-Fannie Lu Fisher, Florida State Regent, Daughters of the American Colonists, 1967

"We learned a great deal about our community through the slides, as well as your fine commentary. Your visit will long be remembered with pleasure."

-Marshall J. Benjamin, Headmaster, NPB Private School (now The Benjamin School), 1968

"Your presentation of Jupiter & its history is something all of us shall remember for a long time."

-Lutheran Church Women, 1968

"The girls and leaders of Junior Girl Scout Troop #58 from St. Claire School wish to thank you again for your very interesting historical talk. We all enjoyed every moment of it, and are now much more aware of the history of our area."

"The time and effort to collect so much material and your generosity in passing it on to others we greatly appreciate!"

-Roland E Copeland & S. Barry Jennings, Suni-Sands Park

"I think I speak for the whole membership when I say it was not only the outstanding program this year, but perhaps the most so since the club was founded ten years ago. I thought I knew a good deal of the history of the region, but you told us facts I had never known before, and I was fascinated."

-Agnes Campbell, North Palm Beach Garden Club, 1969

"So many parents have told me their girls were bubbling with enthusiasm after your talk about early Jupiter."

-Pat Kloiber, Jupiter Girl Scouts, 1972

"The girls came back quite inspired by your stories."

-Sherry Bridgewater, Palm Glades Girl Scout Council, 1974

"Palm Beach Countians are lucky to have the adventure and history of the Jupiter Inlet area preserved and kept alive thanks mostly to your efforts and generosity."

-John F. Dance, Director, Palm Beach County Parks & Recreation, 1980

"Thank you for opening your house to us and teaching us about the history of Jupiter. You really made the times come alive for us."

-Boy Scout Troop 751, 1989

Bessie Wilson DuBois continued

Among the awards Bessie DuBois received in her lifetime: Jupiter Business and Professional Women's Club "Outstanding Professional Woman" in 1965; a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History in 1983; the Historical Society of Palm Beach County's inaugural Judge Knott Historical Contribution Award in 1989. The Loxahatchee River Historical Society's annual outstanding volunteer award is also named after Bessie DuBois. In nominating Bessie (and her husband John) in 1983, UF history professor Samuel Proctor described the couple as "the most significant non-professional historians active in South Florida."

As Isaac Newton famously said: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Bessie Wilson DuBois is the little giant on whose shoulders all subsequent Jupiter historians stand.

Special thanks to Lisa Jefferson who donated her grandmother's scrapbook containing the Thank You letters quoted above and other details of Bessie's awards.



Bessie and John DuBois

From Railroads to Steamboats



This cyanotype shows the railroad passenger wharf in West Palm Beach in early 1895. Note the Pullman passenger car on the left.

In the foreground is the *Rockledge*, a former Indian River steamboat converted into a Vaill's Floating Hotel. After several winters at Jupiter, the *Rockledge* followed the new Florida East Coast Railway to West Palm Beach in 1895 then to Miami in 1896.

At the end of the dock (right) is the *Santa Lucia*. This steamboat was originally based out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where it operated as the *Nellie Hudson*. Sold and renamed in 1892, it traveled to Florida via the Mississippi River. *Santa Lucia* carried construction material for the Royal Poinciana Hotel and other freight on the Indian River before moving to Lake Worth in 1894. The steamboat was sold in 1903 and spent several years in Key West as a hospital ship.

The third steamboat on the far side of the dock is uncertain but probably the *St. Augustine*, one of the last and greatest Indian River steamboats and designed specifically for that river. Newspaper accounts mention this steamboat as being on Lake Worth at least briefly in early 1895.

The *Rockledge*, *Santa Lucia*, and *St. Augustine* were among the many steamboats that operated between Titusville and Jupiter in the 1880s and 1890s.

The cyanotype was invented by Sir John Herschel in 1842. It uses an iron-based chemical solution to develop blue-tinted images. Peak popularity for cyanotype photographs was in the 1890s, being less expensive to produce than cabinet cards. The process remains in use today for artistic photography. The best-known use of cyanotypes is for copying architectural drawings i.e. blueprints.

Photo courtesy of the LRHS Gladwin Family Collection.

Marion Rose DuBois Hughart

Marion Rose DuBois (1927-2021) was the second of four children of Henry Sanders DuBois and Dorothy Tower. Her father had been raised in the 1898 DuBois House and her mother's family were pioneers in Homestead, Florida. Marion was raised in Jupiter, graduated Jupiter High School, and attended the Florida State College For Women (now Florida State University).

Henry and Dorothy worked with the local USO during World War II. Marion played ping-pong and danced. She was quite popular with the young men training at Camp Murphy, receiving seven marriage proposals. The one that caught her interest was John F. "Jack" Hughart, a Marine radar technician. They corresponded while he served overseas and married at the People's Congregational Church of Jupiter in late 1946.

Marion and Jack had four children before his untimely death in 1967. She wrote poetry and was active with the First Baptist Church of Jupiter-Tequesta for three decades. Marion passed away earlier this year and is buried in Tequesta's Riverside Memorial Park.



Marion DuBois, with brothers Alden and Arthur, 1940. (LRHS Alden DuBois Collection)



A [full obituary from her family](#) can be found online. A future article in this newsletter will give more history about the family of Henry and Dorothy DuBois.

Jack and Marion Hughart with son Cecil, circa 1950. (LRHS Alden DuBois Collection)

Mrs. Arrington's Chickens

guest column by Marilyn Dexheimer Lawrence

According to a *Jupiter Courier* article on June 1, 1978, Mrs. Betty Arrington, of Hepburn Road, was breaking the law. Mrs. Arrington's two little boys had pet chickens, but under Jupiter's Animal Control ordinance, only cats and dogs (and no more than 5 of those) were permitted as pets in residential areas. "Live Chickens Not Wanted," read the banner headline.

Apparently, on May 24th, there had been a lively debate on this issue by the Jupiter Town Council. "People do have a choice: the town has agricultural zones and people can reside in them", observed one Commissioner. "Can't people leash them?" asked another member of the Council, who said he saw no difference between having dogs and chickens as pets. "What about allowing 2 chickens as a 4-H project?" was another suggestion. One Council member suggested leaving the ordinance as it is, because "The majority of people in a residential area don't want to wake up to the sound of a rooster crowing."

The reporter assigned to this Council meeting obviously loved the debate. "Chickens stewed with dumplings, fried, broiled with mushrooms, or barbequed in sauce, are yummy. But the feathered, crowing, scratching, egg-laying variety have got to go, especially when they haven't the sense to stay home and cluck in their own coop." After much debate, the town council voted that the ordinance should not be rewritten, and went one step further and said that violations which had been issued and then suspended pending investigation, would be re-issued.

But this issue would not be cooped up! On June 29th, the *Courier* reported: "Initiative Petition to Permit up to 5 Chickens at Homes in Jupiter Being Circulated." Mrs. Arrington said she already had 3 pages of signatures on her "pro-chicken petition", with more to come. As she

pointed out, only one word needed to be changed in the town ordinance: "No more than 5 mature dogs, cats, **chickens**, or any combination thereof may be kept on a lot in a residential district." Mrs. Arrington further noted that in making her rounds, she had encountered some very odd pets indeed, including one woman who said she was glad the Town of Jupiter hadn't checked on her two boa constrictors!

An initiative petition, if the signatures prove valid, can either be adopted as presented, or put on the ballot as a referendum at the next election. On July 27th, the Jupiter town clerk, Jean Beck, returned from vacation to find on her desk 3 initiative petitions favoring chickens as pets, and she set to work trying to determine the validity of the signatures. A review of the Town of Jupiter's current ordinance makes it clear how much support there was for a more flexible standard. Under today's law, everything from gerbils to those boa constrictors may be kept as pets, and the number is now 20, not 5. The only prohibited species are "hooved animals" and "wild animals. Everything else, as long as it stays at home, is an acceptable pet. Betty Arrington's bantam chickens won their case – big time!



Jim Branch feeding chickens circa 1930 at his parents' estate at what is now the intersection of Loxahatchee River Road and North Pennock Point Road.

Keeper's Update

Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum is now open Wednesday through Sunday at 10 AM. Last admission is 4 PM on weekdays and 3 PM on weekends. Masks are required. The latest information can always be found on www.jupiterlighthouse.org

This is a great time of year to take in the view on our Sunset and Moonrise evening tours. Check our [Calendar of Events](#).

On Saturday, May 8 we will celebrate the 13th Anniversary of the Congressional designation of Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) that protects the lighthouse and surrounding 120-acres in perpetuity! Did you know that our ONA is a part of the [National Conservation Lands](#)? We are offering a fun and safe "ONA Family Day" with free admission for children from 10 AM until 2 PM. Each child will receive a free Kid's Kit to use while exploring the site. As always, children must be 48" tall to climb the lighthouse.

During the coming weeks you will notice some construction activity along the south shoreline. This is a project by the Bureau of Land Management and the Jupiter Inlet District to construct a living shoreline along the Loxahatchee River between our Museum and Lighthouse dock. The living shoreline will help prevent further shoreline erosion problems and provide an enhanced habitat for marine life perfect for educational programs. This project is scheduled to be completed in August.

Christina Kenny has joined our Visitor Services staff. We also welcomed back Tristan Serra, one of our exceptional former interns. They have all been a big help during our busy winter season. [We always welcome more volunteers to our vibrant Lighthouse family](#), especially those who can volunteer on weekends.

For safety considerations, we held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon outside on the Lighthouse Deck. Joe Namath and Charlie Modica made a special appearance to personally thank our dedicated volunteers. We are especially thankful for our docents who were able to help out during this challenging year.

Our 7th annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival streamed online on Saturday April 10 with an exciting lineup of inspiring environmental films. We are looking forward to next year when we can once again present this wonderful festival outside under the stars.

Looking for some virtual educational programs for children? Check out [Lighthouse Story Time For Kids and other programs on our website](#).

#DidYouKnow: Our social media features daily posts, including news and events. History buffs will particularly want to watch for Throwback Thursdays for short historical vignettes. Also keep an eye out for Mystery Mondays where you can help us identify photos in our collection.

We are looking forward to hosting the next [Florida Lighthouse Association](#) meeting in mid-May. This wonderful group raises critical funding for lighthouse restoration in Florida through the sale of the State of Florida "Visit Our Lights" license plate – featuring Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse! Please consider one of these beautiful plates when it's time to renew yours!

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