

# Loxahatchee River Historical Society Quarterly

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Coast Guard Station Lake Worth Inlet visits  
Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum

# The Pennock School (1911-1927)

In 1911, Jupiter got its first substantial school building - more than a little one-room or two-room schoolhouse. James Hall, who built quite a few of Jupiter's buildings in the early 1900s, constructed the two-story school of locally-made concrete blocks. Officially, the school was known throughout its existence as "Jupiter Junior High School" because it offered classes up to tenth grade. However, it deserves to be remembered as the Pennock School, in honor of the local family who donated the land on which it stood. Today the site is known as Old Town Hall Park.



The Pennock School not long after its completion.  
(Courtesy of L. A. Bailey)

The Pennock School opened with about 70 students. Through sixteen school years of use, it usually had 4-5 teachers, each teaching 2-3 grades simultaneously. The principal usually taught 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. If the principal was married then his wife often worked as one of the other teachers. The principals were always men, but most of the other teachers were women. The bigger, better school did not provide much more stability amongst the staff than the earlier rural schools. None of the principals and very few of the teachers stayed more than two school years.

With the opening of this new school, the school board decided to close the on-again off-again one-room school in Hobe Sound and bus the students to Jupiter for the next several years. (Martin County was not created until 1925 so Hobe Sound was still part of Palm Beach County.)



Principal W. C. Bailey outside the Carlin House.  
(Courtesy of L. A. Bailey).

The first principal was William C. Bailey from Madison County in North Florida. He was only 25 when he took the job. Bailey boarded at the Carlin House during his two years as principal and took several photos of the area. Bailey's family recalled that he always spoke fondly of his time in Jupiter, but despite this he chose to marry and settle down back in Madison County.



# The Pennock School

continued

Tony Cleveland Pitchford was principal for two years during which time Margaret, his wife, taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The Pitchfords took class photos during their two years at the school. After revisiting Jupiter in 1962, the Pitchfords provided these photos to local historian Bessie Wilson DuBois, who later donated them to our historical society.

After the Pennock School closed in 1927, the building became the Jupiter Town Hall. It was always too big for the little town's needs and purportedly had issues with deteriorating mortar between the blocks. The former school was

demolished during the winter of 1950-1951, primarily by members of the local Rood-Williams American Legion Post 271. Some blocks were used to build a new town hall in the southeast corner of the former school lot, a building that still exists today. The rest of the blocks were used to construct the legion hall on



Principal Tony Pitchford with the 9th Grade class in 1921.  
Back Row (L-R): Jack Wilson, Robert Hepburn, Harry Griffen, Frank Shufin, Edgar Sims.  
Front row (L-R): Mildred Rood, Ruth Ham, Bernice Rood, Casilda Tomasello.

US Highway 1 in what is now Tequesta. Jupiter Town Hall relocated to its current location on Military Trail in 1980. Old Town Hall served as Jupiter's first public library in the 1980s and is now used as meeting space for homeowners associations and other civic groups.

## Pennock School Principals 1911-1927

1911-1913	William C. Bailey	1920-1921	L. Langdon Riley
1913-1914	Mr. A. B. Hoag	1921-1923	Tony C. Pitchford
1914-1915	Martin C. Padgett	1923-1924	H. Earl Browning
1915-1916	Mr. A. L. Roberts	1924-1925	Glenn Martin
1916-1918?	Roy R. Hodge	1925-1927?	Lee Cleveland
1918-1920	Omer E. Lannom		

# Williams-Roundtree School (1911-1928)

As noted in our last issue, Bristow Williams constructed the first purpose-built schoolhouse for Jupiter's African American community in 1909. William and Anne Roundtree donated an acre for the school from their homestead - now the eastern part of The Shores subdivision. However, in the ensuing years the community's center of population shifted away from the school's original location toward Indiantown Road and Limestone Creek Road. In 1915, William C. Davis moved the wooden building to a new location along what is today Limestone Creek Road and L. M. Davis (no relation) donated an acre of his 160-acre homestead grant to the school board. The schoolhouse remained in use until 1928 when it was destroyed by the Okeechobee Hurricane.

School segregation remained in force during this time, with Jupiter's two schools separate but very much unequal. Although a third of Jupiter's population in 1920 was African American, the "Jupiter Colored School" continued to have only one teacher, used a disproportionately smaller building than the Pennock School, and did not include any high school grades. The school year also remained shorter and in flux. As African Americans provided the bulk of Palm Beach County's agricultural labor it was not unusual for the county to schedule the academic calendar for its Black schools not only separate from White schools, but based around local labor needs. For example, one school year ran from July 1922 to January 1923 and the next from June 1923 to November 1923!

The early teachers in Limestone Creek not only struggled with large classes across too many grades, but were also usually the lowest paid in the county. In 1922, rather than hire a second teacher and either expand or replace the school building, the school board instead authorized double sessions. The situation improved in 1925 when Joe Youngblood became Palm Beach County school superintendent and Francis J. Laird Sr. became one of the school's trustees. With Laird's advocacy and Youngblood more receptive than his predecessors, the

We have been unable to find any photos of this school, its teachers, or its students. Please contact us if you can help us better preserve this part of Jupiter's history.

## Williams-Roundtree School Principals/Teachers, 1910-1928

Efforts to Compile a complete list of the school teachers has not yet been successful. The following is derived from school personnel files in the Sam Hay Collection supplemented by newspaper sources.

1910-1912	Ethel B. Harris
1912-1915	Woodie Williams (Dellinger)
1915-1917	unknown
1917-1918	Rosa Stafford
1918-1921	Woodie Williams Dellinger
1921-1922	unknown
1922-1923	Bertha Bush (Sharpe)
1924-1925	Elmira Ashley
1925-1926	Fannie Smith
1926-1927	Pearly Roberts Johnson
1927-1928	Hilda Bizzelle & John A. Reddick

overdue second classroom and second teacher were finally added.

The school board also started paying for transportation from the Limestone Creek community to Industrial High School, the nearest high school for African Americans until desegregation in 1965. However, the local residents had converted a truck into a school bus themselves. L. M. Davis usually drove the bus, from 1925 through the 1930s.

A teacher of particular note during this period was Woodie Williams Dellinger who had a substantial teaching career in Palm Beach County. She taught at Riviera Beach's Industrial High School between two three-year stints in West Jupiter. In the 1920s, she taught at Washington High and Kelsey City, then was principal of Pleasant City in the 1930s and 1940s. Jupiter was Dellinger's first teaching job, during which time she still lived with her parents in West Palm Beach. Her typical commute consisted of riding her bicycle to the FEC Railway station and sitting in its segregated waiting room until she could take the morning train to Jupiter. The walk from the Jupiter station to the school was another four miles, usually on foot. After a heavy rainstorm her route might require passing through knee-deep water.

# Sam Smith: The Man Who Got Jupiter Wireless Station Back Online

In October 1910, a Category 4 hurricane battered western Cuba for five days. Continuing north, it struck Key West then made landfall in southwest Florida and passed up the peninsula. Jupiter caught the east side of the storm. Far worse than the wind was the endless rainfall: 6 inches in ten days, followed by more than 20 inches in two weeks. Jupiter Inlet had closed earlier in the year and the result was some of the worst flooding in Jupiter's history. Jupiter Inlet Light Station, perched twenty feet above sea level, was largely unscathed. The Navy's Jupiter Wireless Station was not so fortunate. Located along a low section of riverfront, floodwaters ruined the station's generator and radio equipment. The hurricane was also strong enough to snap the wooden mast serving as the station's antenna.



Naval Radio Station Jupiter as it appeared shortly after Sam Smith served there. View is from the lighthouse.

Enter Samuel Thomas "Sam" Smith (1883-1962). He was officially an Electrician; radio was so new that the speciality rating of Radioman rating didn't exist yet. Smith had only been in the Navy since 1906 yet he was tasked with putting the wireless station back in service. Despite the challenge, decades later he recalled the time fondly: "I spent two happy years, perhaps the happiest of my life." During his time in Jupiter, Smith and his first wife lived just west of the

station in a "bungalow" rented from the Ziegler family. He recalls the center of town being the Bowers and Ziegler Stores at Sawfish Bay. "Everybody gathered at the two stores, especially on Saturday, to trade and exchange community news and happenings."

After moving on to his next duty station, Sam Smith only returned to Jupiter once: a vacation in 1957. Fortunately, Hy White of the *Palm Beach Post-Times* was on hand to interview the veteran.

Smith's service in Jupiter was only two years out of his life. He was born in Maine and grew up in New England. Besides Jupiter, he served on several battleships, in Panama, and at Norfolk. He was placed on inactive duty in 1925 at his own request, and retired from the Navy in 1936. According to the *Oxford County Citizen*, Sam Smith tried to reenlist the day after Pearl Harbor. Rejected because he had recently broken his foot and ankle, Smith underwent eight weeks of treatment at a veterans' hospital so that he could be cleared for duty. He spent most of World War II as the Communications Officer at the Naval Torpedo School in Newport, RI. He retired again in 1946 as a Chief Warrant Officer.

In civilian life, Smith operated several hotels and taverns in Maine and was very active with the Lions International service organization. Sam remarried in 1927 and had a son and two daughters with his second wife. His final resting place is a family plot in Andover, Maine where he shares a large but simple granite marker with five other family members.

Special thanks to William Chapman at the Bethel Historical Society in Maine for sharing two articles from their local newspaper. Unfortunately, no photo of Sam Smith is available.



# The Senseless Death of Bill Brooker: Murder, Insanity, and Naval Radio Station Jupiter

Few people know the story of one of the earliest recorded murders in Jupiter history. The sad truth has been muddled by time and retelling. The circumstances have been misremembered as a poker game and the murderer as a lighthouse keeper. So what really happened the night Bill Brooker died?

William Joseph Brooker was the oldest of 12 children of William Charles Brooker and Dora Leola Barfield. Longtime residents remember W. C. Brooker for his pineapple farm on Indiantown Road – now the site of The Shoppes at Jupiter Creek. The 1943 Brooker House survives on nearby Cherokee Street and recently received a local historic structure designation from the Town of Jupiter.

Florida had a close call with a hurricane in early October 1933. The storm hit Havana, Cuba and narrowly missed Miami before crashing through the Bahamas as a Category 4 hurricane. Bill Brooker and a friend, James A. Johnson, drove from Lake Worth to Jupiter to check on Bill's parents, arriving around 8 PM on Tuesday October 3. They headed over to Naval Radio Station Jupiter around 11:30 PM to get a weather update. Less than half of all households in the country at the time owned a radio, and television was still largely in the future. A naval radio station was a good place to learn the latest about a hurricane churning offshore

since it would broadcast weather reports for the benefit of ships at sea. Naval Radio Station Jupiter was located on the riverfront just west of Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse.

Radioman Paul R. Drinkard was on radio watch. According to Johnson, Brooker and Drinkard stepped outside to chat for a few minutes then came back inside. Drinkard offered some ice water and the two men went behind a partition to the water cooler. Moments later, Drinkard drew a .45-caliber pistol and shot Brooker three times.

Johnson heard the shots then saw his friend stumble out. Bill exclaimed "My God, he's killed me!" The two



Naval Radio Station Jupiter as it appeared in the 1930s, viewed from the US 1 bridge. The shooting occurred in the operations building, the white two-story building in the center.

## The Senseless Death of Bill Brooker continued

young men tried to get to their car, but Drinkard followed. Johnson ran to the nearby station chief's quarters for help. His pounding on the door was futile because CRM John Gorman was away on leave. Drinkard went back inside the radio building and dutifully recorded in the station logbook "23:50 Have just shot a guy." Radioman O. F. Shearer arrived just after the shooting, expecting to take over the radio watch at midnight. Shearer persuaded Drinkard to call for the police and an ambulance. Brooker was taken to Good Samaritan Hospital in West Palm Beach, the nearest medical facility, where he died in the early morning of October 4, 1933. He was a few weeks short of his 25th birthday.

Paul Drinkard was arrested and taken to the county jail. His crime seemed to come out of nowhere. Drinkard was born in California and raised in Texas. He had been in the Navy for seven years and had been assigned to Jupiter for 13 months.

Bill Brooker's funeral was held Friday October 6 at the People's Congregational Church on Center Street. Reportedly about 200 people crammed into the church - more people than lived within the Jupiter town limits at the time! Burial followed in the Jupiter Pioneer Cemetery, now part of Riverside Memorial Park. Johnson, who had accompanied Brooker the fateful night, was a pallbearer along with Jupiter residents Charles B. Freeman, John H. Freeman, E. C. "Shorty" Root, and James A. Bozeman, plus Roy L. Isaacson, senior radioman at Naval Radio Station Jupiter.

In the hours between the shooting and his death, Brooker said he had no idea why he was shot. Drinkard was unable or unwilling to explain his actions. The Navy let the case play out in the court system rather than initiate court martial proceedings.

Before the week was out, a grand jury ordered Drinkard held on the charge of first-degree murder. He received two court-appointed attorneys and entered a

plea of Not Guilty. The attorneys unsuccessfully attempted to have the case transferred from state to federal authority because it occurred on federal property. The defendant was reportedly very calm as his day in court approached just over two months after the shooting and showed no remorse. Drinkard's parents came to West Palm Beach from Fort Worth, Texas to attend the trial. If convicted, the radioman would likely face the electric chair.

In the days before the trial was set to begin, Drs. C. W. Schelford, T. D. Gunter, and Earl Moore examined Drinkard's mental condition. The trio unanimously agreed the radioman was unfit to stand trial. Moore, who had examined FDR's would-be assassin earlier in the year and was considered an expert alienist, testified that Paul Drinkard was likely suffering from "dementia praecox" i.e. paranoid schizophrenia. Drinkard had shot Brooker because of a delusion involving imagined gossip. James Johnson's testimony to the grand jury about Drinkard's nonsensical statements in the immediate aftermath of the shooting supported this conclusion. In addition to the imagined gossip by Brooker, Drinkard had also been convinced the radio station's cook was spying on him and, while in the county jail, became obsessed with the idea that one of the other inmates was secretly a government agent planning to kill him. Based on this testimony, Judge C. E. Chillingworth ruled Paul Drinkard legally insane. After some consideration of sending Drinkard to a naval hospital, he was instead committed to the Florida State Hospital in Chattahoochee.

Following his committal, Paul Drinkard's parents moved to Chattahoochee to be near their son. Paul was released by the state after a decade and moved to Panama City, Florida with his parents. After both parents passed away, he moved back to Texas, presumably to be near his two sisters. Paul Raymond Drinkard lived to be 79 years old, thrice as long as the man he'd senselessly murdered.

# The Fickle Jupiter Inlet, 1883-1923

Jupiter Inlet was originally a natural inlet serving as the outflow of both the Loxahatchee River and the South Indian River, likely several thousand years old. It has always been a dangerous and difficult inlet prone to closing at the whims of the weather.



The earliest photo of Jupiter Inlet, viewed from the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse circa 1879. The inlet's width is deceptive as the only channel was at the south end. Most of the "open" space in this view is actually a long sandbar stretching south from Jupiter Island.

(Photo by Melville Spencer / LRHS Gladwin Family Collection)

Writing about Florida in the 1830s, John Lee Williams described Jupiter Inlet as "opened and closed so often that it is impossible to know the depth of the water. It has had five feet and at other times not one." Pioneer settlers would learn the accuracy of Williams' assessment.

In 1883, the Lighthouse Service had little difficulty rafting lumber through Jupiter Inlet for construction of a new head keeper's dwelling at Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse. The inlet had mostly been open after the American Civil War two decades earlier. That would not last.

A storm closed Jupiter Inlet in December 1885. It took three attempts to reopen it by hand, using the combined efforts of the keepers of Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse, the crew of the new Jupiter Life Saving Station, and pioneers from the Lake Worth area. There were almost no residents of Jupiter at the time except the lighthouse and life saving stations. The reopened inlet only lasted a few years. In April 1888, Jupiter Inlet was only 16 inches deep. It closed completely over the summer due to a drought and once again had to be opened by hand.



Construction of the original south jetty at the modern Jupiter Inlet in 1922.



## The Fickle Jupiter Inlet continued

In 1894, the *Tropical Sun* newspaper reported the Jupiter Inlet was 7.5 to 9.0 feet deep - perhaps the deepest it had ever been. Yet a mere two years later it closed during the summer of 1896. Fred M. Cabot of Jupiter received a contract from the county government to reopen the inlet. He succeeded that fall using hired convict labor, with some additional help from local residents.

Local residents had to turn out for more reopening efforts in 1901 and 1904. The Jupiter Inlet closed in 1910 in time for the area be to be deluged by a tropical storm. The ensuing flood had water up to the countertops of local stores and ruined the equipment at the Navy's wireless station. The *Tropical Sun* reported that "During the progress of the storm, with a big sea running on the beach and high water inside the inlet, the citizens of Jupiter, with shovels, went to the inlet and made a ditch across the bar so that water could run through. The swift current quickly cut the sandbar away and left the inlet open" to a width of 500 yards.



Jupiter Inlet viewed from the DuBois House in the 1930 after improvements to the jetties.



Jupiter Inlet circa 1953. The angular groin was added to the south jetty as part of reopening the inlet to navigation after World War II.

A 1913 report regarding options for draining the Everglades had this to say: "Jupiter Inlet is very uncertain as to its closing or being open, and the entrance is as changeable as it can be, no two tides leaving the bar the same." A dipper dredge was hired in 1916 to further open the inlet, but even at the time this wasn't seen as a long-term solution. Jupiter Inlet closed twice in the fall of 1918. Both times residents managed to quickly reopen it, but a third closure around New Years Day 1919 proved more problematic. Residents weren't able to reopen the inlet until October 1920 and even then it remained too shallow for navigation. It was the final straw.

Extraordinarily frustrated after 10 closures in 35 years, the residents of the Jupiter area held a meeting on February 8, 1921 at which

## The Fickle Jupiter Inlet continued

they organized the Jupiter Inlet District. This was a special taxing district originally covering almost 200 square miles. District commissioners were elected, bonds issued, and contractors hired. The natural inlet was written off as

hopeless. Instead, an artificial inlet was cut through the glorified sandbar forming the southern tip of Jupiter Island to create a fairly straight channel from the ocean to the main embayment. Western Hempsted and the tug *Salvor* built jetties for the new inlet. The last step was dredging a navigational channel. Jupiter Inlet, as we know it today, was officially open in early 1923.



Jupiter Inlet, 1971. The jetties were straightened and extended in 1967, and the north parking area added to Jupiter Beach Park around the same time. The jetties would be extended to their present size in the late 1990s. (LRHS Gladwin Family Collection)

Established in 1921, the Jupiter Inlet District celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. In addition to dredging the inlet and maintaining the jetties, in recent decades the District has also collaborated with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) on several Loxahatchee River improvement projects.

The board that manages the Jupiter Inlet District was originally comprised of three elected at-large commissioners. Early commissioners included prominent Jupiter pioneers E. F. Bowers, J. T. Ziegler, Herbert Pennock, John DuBois, and Roy Rood. One of the longest serving commissioners during the first 60 years was R. F. “Bud” Gladwin Jr., on the board from 1963 to 1981 and chairman for half of that period.

The board expanded to five seats in 1981 which were reorganized into five geographical districts in 1986. The board has had remarkably low turnover since then. Mike Martinez and Tom Howard have been commissioners since 1988 and George Gentile since 1992.

The District hired their first Administrator, Cal Christian, in 1974. Mike Grella was the first Executive Director, from 1991 until his retirement in 2019. Grella was succeeded by Joe Chaison.



# Jupiter's US Highway 1 Bridge

With the project to replace the US Highway 1 bridge over the Loxahatchee River in Jupiter getting underway, let's look back at the bridge's history. The Florida State Road Department spent much of the 1920s constructing a new highway down the Florida East Coast. The road was originally called the New Dixie Highway since it paralleled and effectively replaced much of the nearby (Old) Dixie Highway.



The first US 1 bridge at Jupiter was a two-lane double-leaf bascule span completed in 1927. South of the bridge US 1 originally followed Beach Blvd. The current four-lane bridge was completed in 1958, along with the modern alignment of US 1 through Jupiter and Juno Beach. Part of the original bridge was left as a fishing pier until being demolished in 2010.

The original US 1 bridge in the 1930s, viewed from McGinnis Fishing Pier at Shuey's.

On August 24, 2007, Jupiter's US 1 bridge was named in honor of William Carlin White on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was a local pioneer, mayor, Navy intelligence officer, author, and history advocate.



The current US 1 bridge nears completion in late 1957.  
Photo by Ernie Histed.