

# 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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This recently acquired photo shows the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse as it appeared 60 years ago, in 1962.

# L. M. Davis School (1945-1965)

Jupiter's African American community, Limestone Creek, continued to be served by a racially-segregated school until the mid-1960s. In 1956, the Palm Beach County School Board approved a petition from local residents to rename "Jupiter Elementary School (Negro)" to L. M. Davis Elementary School in honor of the school's longtime patron. As noted in previous issues, Davis donated land for the school and was an early school bus driver.

Valerie Williams Sanchez served as the school's principal and teacher from 1943 to 1964. This was by far the longest any faculty served at any Jupiter school prior to 1965. Her career spanned 45 years in Palm Beach County schools. Until 1954, Sanchez was the only teacher, handling all six grades offered. The White population of the Jupiter area increased rapidly in the late 1950s, and the Black population grew too. The Palm Beach County School Board finally resumed having a second teacher at L. M. Davis Elementary for the 1954-1955 school year. Portables and additional teachers were added for the 1957-1958 school year. During the last year of operation (1964-1965), under Principal William C. Balloon, the school had six teachers for 135 students.

Until 1965, all Limestone Creek children attending 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade were bused to West Palm Beach. Black students in the northern part of the county attended Industrial High School until 1950 when Roosevelt Junior-Senior High School opened to replace it. The southern part of the county was served by George Washington Carver High School in Delray Beach.

Starting with the 1965 Fall semester, all students in the Jupiter-Tequesta area, regardless of race, attended the same public schools. Palm Beach County school desegregation came a decade after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.

In 1967, the school district sold the former L.M. Davis Elementary to Thelma Doswell. The former school buildings were later demolished. The county reacquired the property in 1989 and it is now Limestone Creek Park.

According to Bobby Culpepper, the Palm Beach County School District acquired property in West Jupiter in the early 1960s in preparation for a new, larger school to replace L.M. Davis, but these plans were scrapped due to desegregation. As a County Commissioner, Culpepper persuaded the School District to sell the unused property to Tri-Southern Utilities for a much-needed Jupiter water plant. Town of Jupiter public utilities later acquired this facility which remains in operation today behind Chasewood Plaza.

The Loxahatchee River Historical Society sponsored a historical marker at the former site of the L.M. Davis School. Community members, county and town officials, and historical society members joined to dedicate the marker in 2016. (Photo by Kathleen Glover)



# The Loxahatchee Drive School (1945-1965)



This photo shows all the teachers and students at the Loxahatchee Drive School for the 1947-1948 academic year. Principal Clyde A. Canipe stands in the center. (LRHS Alden Dubois Collection)

By the end of World War II, Jupiter's student body was the smallest it had been in 35 years, thanks the effects of the war and the Great Depression that preceded it. For two school years (1945-1947) high school classes were discontinued entirely at the all-White Loxahatchee Drive School; a mere 3 teachers covered Grades 1-8. Louise Southard, at the school since 1943, served as Principal during these two lean years while also continuing to teach Grades 6-8. She was the first White female principal in Jupiter since 1910.

Louise lived on what was then known as Southard Point - now Anchorage Point. Her husband, George E. Southard Jr., later served as Jupiter's postmaster.

After appeals by parents unhappy with the 20-mile drive to the nearest high school in West Palm Beach and with the population slowly growing again, high school classes resumed for the 1947-1948 school year.

By 1952, more than 100 students were attending the Loxahatchee Drive School for the first time in almost two decades. However, the small school lacked full accreditation until the late 1950s so college-bound students often attended Palm Beach High School. The Jupiter Senior Class of 1955 consisted of only two students: Raymond Baird and Rose Viola Grooms.

Starting in the mid-1950s, the development of Jupiter Inlet Colony, Tequesta, and parts of the former Pennock Plantation in Jupiter caused the local population to surge. The 1961-1962 school year was the first with more than 1,000 students – a six-fold increase in six years! The Class of 1965 had 99 graduates, compared to only two graduates a decade earlier.

The Loxahatchee Drive School had to expand to accommodate the rapid influx of students. There were 7 teachers in 1955; this had grown to over 40 in 1965. Three additional classroom buildings, a combination



# The Loxahatchee Drive School continued

science and home economics building, an industrial arts building, and a cafeteria were constructed adjacent to the original 1927 structure.



Audrey Jordan warms up the first Jupiter school band, probably before the 1956 Christmas parade.

A growing student body also meant more electives and athletics. Jupiter had high school basketball and baseball teams on and off starting in the 1920s. The modern football program began in the fall of 1957, although the roster remained so small that for at least a decade most of the team had to play both offense and defense. In 1956, Joan Vogt established the first Chorus program and Audrey Jordan established the first official school band.

1961 saw the beginning of school integration. Iris Hunter braved race-based harassment, including threats of violence, to become the first Black student to attend a White school in Jupiter. More Black high school students followed in the subsequent years.

Jupiter's legal school segregation came to a complete end in 1965 when Jupiter Junior-Senior High School, on Perry Avenue (now Military Trail), opened to students of all races Grades 7-12. L. M. Davis Elementary closed and the Loxahatchee Drive School became Jupiter Elementary School for all students Grades 1-6.

## Loxahatchee Drive School Principals, 1945-1965

1945-1947	Louise Southard
1947-1948	Clyde A. Canipe
1948-1949	Renice M. Lansing
1950-1955	H. Robert Alexander
1955-1963	Paul L. Phillips
1963-1965	Howard B. Swyers

Additionally, Victor H. Schott served as Assistant Principal for Elementary Grades, 1961-1963.



The school after it expanded in the late 1950s. The main 1927 building has been preserved, but the 1950s buildings were later demolished to construct the modern Jupiter Elementary School buildings.

# What the 1950 Census Tells Us About the Jupiter Area

The federal government has conducted a national census every ten years since 1790. Under rules established in the 1950s and 1970s, the records are released to the public 72 years after the census date. Accordingly, the 1950 Federal Census became available on April 1, 2022. This is the last census before major growth and development began in the Jupiter area, including the creation of Tequesta and the incorporation of Juno Beach. What can we learn from this census?

The recorded population of the Jupiter area in 1950 was 906. This includes 314 within what were then the municipal limits of the Town of Jupiter. The total population was 239 Black residents (26%) and the remainder White residents.

Dorothy Tower DuBois recorded the census data for Palm Beach County Election District 1. The District included not only Jupiter and Juno Beach, but also Riviera Beach, Singer Island, Lake Park, Monet, and Prosperity Farms. North Palm Beach and Palm Beach Gardens did not exist yet. William C. Barr Jr. enumerated Martin County Election District 3 which included Gomez, Hobe Sound, Jupiter Island, a handful of residents along US 1 just north of the county line, and a few farmers on Old Jupiter-Indiantown Road north of the county line. The recorded population of the Hobe Sound district was 853, which excludes Jupiter Island winter residents recorded at their primary residence in another state.

Street names are given for most residents, especially those within the municipal limits, although house numbers are not. Notable exceptions are the African American communities of Limestone Creek in West Jupiter and Banner Lake in Hobe Sound. Most residents of both areas were simply noted as living in a “Negro Settlement” with no street names recorded.

One interesting discovery involves the former Naval Radio Station Jupiter (Station J). The station’s apartment building and duplex were occupied by seven Coast Guard families - five assigned to Coast Guard Station Lake Worth Inlet on Peanut Island and two from Loran Station Hobe Sound on Jupiter Island. Confusingly, only the wives and children were recorded at Jupiter! The servicemen at Peanut Island were enumerated at their station, but unfortunately it seems the Loran station crew were missed entirely.

The Coast Guard crew of Jupiter Inlet Light Station are recorded normally with their families in the regular Jupiter enumeration: BMC Charles Gardner, EN Donald D. Tucker, SN Willis W. Edwards, and SA Samuel W. Erwin.

Two Florida East Coast Railway maintenance teams were enumerated in Jupiter. Six “railroad section houses” were located east of the railroad and south of Indiantown Road. (Alternate A1A did not exist yet.) Residing in these houses, along with their families, were African American railroad laborers known as a “section gang” because they performed maintenance and repair work on the local stretch of railroad. Similar laborers are recorded on earlier censuses, but sharing a single bunkhouse north of the river. Additionally, seven Black members of a “bridge gang”

## The 1950 Census continued

were recorded living in two converted box cars near the railroad station, with their White foreman living in a third train car with his wife. This written evidence combined with oral history indicates the FEC Railway stationed a bridge gang at Jupiter for over a decade.

There were few residents enumerated in Jupiter Farms, but this is not especially surprising. While the area had a small boom in the 1910s and 1920s, especially Philo Farms and Jupiter Farms & Groves, early drainage efforts were inadequate. The collapse of the Florida Land Boom and flooding from two hurricanes in 1928 exacerbated the problems and the Rood Post Office in Jupiter Farms closed in 1934. Another major hurricane in August 1949, only eight months before the census, may have driven off new residents too. New drainage projects, especially the C-18 Canal, and the construction of the modern, paved Indiantown Road in the 1950s were catalysts for renewed interest in Jupiter Farms.

Some other Jupiter trivia from the census:

- The 1898 DuBois House, a rental property at the time, was recorded as vacant.
- George Southard gave his occupation as “acting postmaster.” Harry Aicher was still officially postmaster until 1953, when Southard permanently succeeded him.
- Vince “Trapper” Nelson, the legendary local figure who operated a camp on the upper Loxahatchee River, gave his occupation as “farmer.” This supports oral history from Trapper’s relatives that he kept three goats and grew pineapples for tax purposes and not just for the benefit of his visitors.
- Residing in Jonathan Dickinson State Park were the park’s first Superintendent, C. F. DeLoach, with his family, and one park ranger, Francis M. Durst.
- Three residents were employed by the state government in conservation roles. Louis F. Gainey Sr. as wildlife biologist, Herbert Wells as a “state conservation agent,” and Jimmie Lanier gave his occupation simply as “conserving wildlife.”
- Jupiter had one barber and no doctors. The only dentist was a seasonal resident who stated that he only practiced six months of the year, likely up north. Medical care meant a trip to West Palm Beach or Stuart.

The 1950 census confirms the general understanding we had about Jupiter circa 1950. Most residents were engaged in some kind of agricultural work, the majority at Pennock Plantation. There were a number of tradesmen, especially carpenters. Several small “tourist courts” (motels) were in operation along US 1, especially in Juno Beach. The area had several estate caretakers and a small but growing number of out-of-state retirees. censuses, but sharing a single bunkhouse north of the river. Additionally, seven Black members of a “bridge gang” were recorded living in two converted box cars near the railroad station, with their White foreman living in a third train car with his wife. This written evidence combined with oral history indicates the FEC Railway stationed a bridge gang at Jupiter for over a decade.

LRHS maintains several local genealogy databases.  
Work is underway to update them with information from the 1950 census.



# On Top of the Lighthouse

We are saddened by the passing of “The Brick Lady” Evelyne Bates, a longtime volunteer with the Loxahatchee River Historical Society and former longtime staff and volunteer for the Lighthouse ArtsCenter in Tequesta. For more about Evelyne’s life [please see page 12 of the second issue of this newsletter](#).

Evelyne started as a LRHS volunteer in 1994 and was one of the first lighthouse docents. She was inspired to write a song titled, “On Top of the Lighthouse”:

While on duty on top of the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse this melody came to me from the tune of “On Top of Old Smokey.” As I looked around, these words came to me...

On top of my Lighthouse,  
I look to the East  
The bright rays of sunshine  
dazzle the beach.

On top of our Lighthouse,  
I turned to the South  
With white clouds and sunshine,  
I gasped open mouthed.

The beauty beholds me to  
think of the past,  
That the beaches below me  
forever will last.

On top of the Lighthouse,  
I look to the West  
My heart’s full of riches  
For truly I’m blessed.

Below me looks busy,  
but not here for me  
As I sit on this Tower  
for a Sunset to see.

The North wind is blowing  
And it feels very cold.  
But it brings all the snowbirds,  
the young and the old.

The FOUR WINDS are faithful  
you will visit them all,  
On top of our Lighthouse  
that stands out so tall.



# “Get Involved in Your Community:” The Lives and Legacy of Red and Marylou Shirar

Robert “Red” Shirar (shy-rah) and Marylou Waymire were born and raised in Indiana. They met while attending Ball State University’s Teachers College. Both completed their bachelors: Red in Education, and Marylou in Vocational Home Economics.

After graduation, Red Shirar served in the US Army. He spent almost his entire tour of duty at Fort Benning, mostly playing on the post football team against other military teams. Red said he declined invitations to try out for the NFL because he wanted to become a high school coach. Red and Marylou married the day after Christmas, “during a snowstorm” as Marylou recalled.

While living on base at Fort Benning, the Shirars took weekend leave to Panama City and from that decided to move to Florida. Red was discharged on a Friday; that Monday they were in Gainesville. Over an eight-year period, Red taught and coached in Macclenny, Orlando’s Edgewater High School, and Brandon (near Tampa) while the Shirars also welcomed two daughters to their family. Marylou was also a substitute teacher during this time.



Robert Shirar 1953  
(Ball State Teachers College  
senior yearbook / Ancestry.com)

In August 1963, the Shirar Family moved to Tequesta where Red and Marylou both worked at the Loxahatchee Drive school, then still serving grades 1-12. They recall Jupiter as a very small town when they arrived: one stoplight, no turn lanes, no banks, “one supermarket with super high prices.”

Red taught history and social studies in Jupiter, and coached football and track; Marylou was a substitute teacher. As an assistant and later head coach Red sometimes doubted whether he would have enough players to field a football team. The difficulty wasn’t just the size of the school; the football team required its players to keep their hair cut short and some students weren’t willing to give up the popular long hair of the day. In the 1960s, Jupiter High usually had only about 20 players who had to play both offense and defense. Red was proud that he helped get scholarships for several players to his alma matter. As much as he loved coaching, Red ultimately resigned from the position to finish his Masters degree in school administration. He spent the latter part of his education career as Assistant Principal of Jupiter Middle School.

Red’s coaching wasn’t limited to the football field or classroom. He taught private swim lessons in the pool at the Shirar house, summer swimming classes at Salhaven, and water safety classes at the Jupiter Marine Science Center. As a lighthouse docent, visitors most often remembered him not as their coach or teacher, but as the person who taught them how to swim.

Arriving in the midst of integration, Marylou recalled being confronted with the racial divide in her own house. Marylou’s African American housekeeper set out dinner for Marylou and the two Shirar girls on the main table, then



Marylou Waymire 1950  
(Anderson High School  
senior yearbook / Ancestry.com)



## The Lives and Legacy of Red and Marylou Shirar continued

sat with her own plate at the breakfast bar. Marylou asked why and was told “Colored folks don’t eat with the White folks.” It was just the way things were, in Jupiter and countless other places at the time. Marylou was having none of that: “If you can take care of my children, you can eat at my table.” Red likewise didn’t care about the skin color of the players on his football team. He would often provide rides home to the Limestone Creek community after practice and games for players who didn’t otherwise have transportation.

Marylou had been President of the Brandon Junior Woman’s Club. Within months of moving to our area, She helped start the Jupiter-Tequesta Junior Woman’s Club and served as one of its first Presidents. The new organization quickly became very active in the local community, supporting a variety of civic and charitable causes. The club would help start the Loxahatchee River Historical Society less than a decade later.

Marylou completed an Education, Counseling, and Guidance M.A. through Florida Atlantic University. She left behind traditional classroom teaching to spend 29 years with the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS). Her official title was Extension Home Economics Agent for Palm Beach County, a position equivalent to an Associate Professor. Much of her work involved giving home economics lessons via community outreach. Her job included hosting weekday morning public TV shows, Kaleidoscope and Today’s Homemaker, for 18 years. In addition to TV, Marylou wrote a weekly food column for the Palm Beach Times. Marylou had been part of 4-H in Indiana and she worked with that organization in Florida as part of her IFAS job, including a term as President of the Florida Association of Extension 4-H Agents. Marylou’s stellar work was recognized with several awards, the most prestigious being her 2002 induction into the Florida 4-H Hall of Fame.

Although her work with IFAS took up too much time to continue with the Junior Woman’s Club, Marylou was involved with the local Girl Scouts when her daughters were members. She was an early member of the Loxahatchee Guild and later accepted an invitation to join the P.E.O. Sisterhood, an international organization supporting women’s education.

Red and Marylou were both members of the Palm Beach Sailing Club, with Marylou becoming the organization’s first female Commodore. They liked to start sailing trips before dawn so they could see the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse shining out to sea. The Shirars later traded their sailboat for an RV in which they visited every state except Hawaii and every Canadian province, plus one visit to Mexico. They particularly enjoyed visiting lighthouses, although only Red was able to climb them (Marylou had vertigo). As RVers they were active members of the Good Sam Club, including serving as Assistant State Directors for Florida.

Red Shirar had two stories he was fond of telling about his encounters with notable local residents. The first involved an early haircut to the only barbershop in Jupiter where he chatted with the man getting a haircut ahead of him and the barber. When the other customer left, the barber asked Red if he realized he had been talking to Trapper Nelson. Trapper’s camp had closed to the public before the Shirars arrived so they knew him only by reputation. Red hurried outside and asked Trapper about visiting his camp, and Trapper said okay. Months later, while fishing on the Loxahatchee River with his fellow coaches, Red suggested they visit the camp. The moment Red set foot on Trapper’s dock he heard a familiar voice call out, warning Red visitors were no longer welcome and that a shotgun was pointed in his direction. “But it’s me: Red!” Trapper didn’t care. The boat hastily cast off. (Trapper likely would have assented to the visit with advance warning, but with the camp closed he didn’t take kindly to anyone showing up unannounced – even people he knew.) A few years later, Red was standing in line at Publix behind an elderly man who wanted to cash a check, but lacked the necessary ID to do so. Red recognized the man and stepped in; it was his turn to ask “Do you realize who this is?” The clerk didn’t know John DuBois, local pioneer and fishing camp proprietor. With Red attesting to John’s identity, the check got cashed.

Because of his fair complexion, early on Red Shirar took to wearing a pith helmet to protect against the Florida sun. That choice of headgear once combined with his stately mustache to get him preferential treatment in the

## The Lives and Legacy of Red and Marylou Shirar continued

Bahamas, having been mistaken for a retired British army officer. He continued to wear the iconic headgear as a lighthouse docent.

Red also had the ability to whistle quite loudly without the aid of an instrument. This skill was not just useful at getting the attention of his football players or a classroom of unruly students; he also made use of it as a docent. Red had become acquainted with famous entertainer Perry Como. During his early years as a docent, when Red took a tour to the top of the lighthouse and someone said they were a fan of Como's, Red would give his trademark whistle. If Como was at his home just across the river, the retired celebrity would step out on his back porch and wave.

In retirement, Red and Marylou decided to volunteer together with the Loxahatchee River Historical Society (LRHS), mostly as part of the daily operations at Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse. They were volunteers here for over 25 years, until their respective health issues forced them to stop. Red was a tour guide and Marylou worked the Gift Shop counter. They were fixtures of the Wednesday afternoon shift. In 2008, the Shirars received the Bessie DuBois Award for outstanding volunteer service. In addition to their weekly shifts and some events, Marylou helped found the LRHS Docent Organization (DOOR), to promote fellowship among the volunteers. She served two terms as DOOR President; Red also served a term. Both Shirars also served on the LRHS Board of Directors: five years for Red (2005-2010) and 17 years for Marylou (2003-2020), the latter including five years as Board Secretary. LRHS President Jamie Stuve praised Marylou's advice and insight for being invaluable. "She never steered me wrong," recalled Jamie.



Marylou and Red receive the 2008 Bessie Award at the LRHS Annual Volunteer Luncheon. They are flanked by guest speakers Rep. Rob Klein and Rep. Tim Mahoney.



Marylou and Red at a Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum event with a few feathered friends.

Marylou summed up hers and Red's lives in simple but poignant words a few years before their passing: "We've had an interesting life. Living in Jupiter has been very fulfilling. We've met many wonderful people through volunteering. As teachers, it's nice to have kids you taught remember you as adults."

After 90 years of life, more than 68 of it together, Red and Marylou passed away this spring less than two weeks apart. This extraordinary couple left behind a legacy: a family they loved, many friends, and the countless lives they touched through their professional careers and volunteerism.



# New North Trail Opens at JILONA

For many years visitors to Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area (JILONA) have been able to enjoy a half-mile sidewalk from the parking lot through the scrub to the mangrove lagoon overlook along the Indian River. After a lot of work by AmeriCorps interns and Bureau of Land Management site staff, an additional mulched trail is now available forming a loop with the existing sidewalk. The new trail passes through a sand pine forest that dominates the northwestern portion of the ONA.

There are two varieties of Florida sand pine (*pinus clausa*): Ocala, found in the sand pine scrub of the Atlantic Coastal Ridge and parts of central Florida like the Lake Wales Ridge; and Choctawhatchee, native to the coastal ridges of the Florida panhandle. These areas are remnants of ancient beach dunes. Only species that have adapted to the dry, sandy, nutrient-poor soil can grow there. Jupiter Hills Country Club and most of eastern Tequesta, eastern Jupiter, and Juno Beach were sand pine scrub prior to development. There are many plant, animal, and lichen species found only in scrub environments.

Sand pines have smaller cones, rougher bark, and shorter needles than Florida's better-known slash pines and longleaf pines. They also tend to grow shorter and denser. Unlike most other pines, sand pines are not considered good lumber.

JILONA's sand pine forest is an uncommon sight. Sand pine scrub is a fire-dependent ecosystem. Periodic fire kills sand pines (which have a limited lifespan, especially near the coast), but opens their seed cones, starting the next generation of trees. Fire also keeps the palmettos, sand live oak, and love vine in check. While larger public lands such as Jonathan Dickinson State Park conduct prescribed burns, this is difficult for small properties like the ONA.





# Keepers' Update



Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum is currently open Tuesday-Sunday. Admission is sold each day 10AM-4PM and the Gift Shop is open until 5PM. Daily access is now through the former PX gate on the east side of the parking lot (pictured above).

The summer means extra sun, heat, and humidity. Please be sure to be well-hydrated when climbing the Lighthouse. The Lighthouse and grounds may close temporarily due to rain or thunder and lightning, especially in the afternoon.

The historic first-order Fresnel lens in the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse remains secured against vibrations from the US 1 bridge project. The Lighthouse remains an active public aid to navigation with a temporary LED beacon on the east side of the Lighthouse lantern, installed by the U.S. Coast Guard. The Lighthouse also remains open for climbing as part of daily admissions and sunset/moonrise tours.

The historic World War II Navy housing building on the waterfront is closed until further notice, also due to the US 1 bridge project. Lighthouse Park, operated by the Town of Jupiter, remains open normally.

Please pardon our dust! A Bureau of Land Management project is underway on site to remove most of the old asphalt from the Historic Corridor and replace it with an environmentally-friendly permeable surface. Water and sewer lines are also being installed on site as part of the project.

In addition to Evelyne Bates and Red & Marylou Shirar, we are also saddened to learn of the passing of Lorraine Lovgren of Juno Beach, a dedicated volunteer for our organization from 1996 to 2013. We are honored by the donations received in their memory. Thank you for helping us continue the important work they all believed in: preserving the past for future generations.

## Newsletter Credits

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