

# From the Collections

## Recent Acquisitions

By Steven Erdmann



This has been an important ‘catch up’ year for collections at the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. With the addition of the staff position of Curatorial Assistant a large backlog of material has been cataloged. Additionally, the majority of 3-dimensional objects are now stored at the same location. While much work remains to be done over the next year,

the environmentally safe storage of our collections was the overwhelming motivation for this change.

Of the many object collections accessioned over the past year, several stand out. From Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office Deputies John Costello and Michael Gauger we received over sixty items in use from the 1960s through last year. The collection includes officers’ uniforms, badges, a motorcycle helmet with the Sheriff’s star on it, and photo documentation of the first in-car police computers. Much of this material might be on display in the future if we mount a temporary exhibit on Palm Beach County law enforcement.

After helping with a temporary exhibit on IBM computers at the Boca Raton Historical Society and Museum, an important relationship was forged with the IBM South Florida Quarter Century Club and Alumni Association. Over the past year, with the help of club member David Johnson, this group of retired IBM engineers has donated three working early IBM personal computers to the Society. An IBM XT computer with the software game Jeopardy loaded on it was used on display when retired

engineer Dr. David Bradley (inventor of the control-alt-delete sequence) lectured for the Society this past April. Very soon this computer will be added to the People Gallery in our own Richard and Pat Johnson Palm Beach County History Museum.

Recently former Society board member John Riddle donated a collection of archival material along with a Civil War era officer’s wooden field desk and two brass surveyor’s compasses from the same period. The compass pictured here was manufactured by Benjamin Pike’s Son & Company in 1860. Used in the 19th century by geologists and engineers to measure the altitudes of structural features, this device is in beautiful condition.

In February Robert Stalling donated over sixty pieces to the Society’s early glass bottle collection. With the help of Larry Smith, a local individual with expertise in glass bottles from the area, the majority of these pieces have been identified. The donation included fifty-two glass bottles from the early 1900s as well as several bottle stoppers and ceramic pots. An example from the collection, a glass ballast bottle shown here, was stored in racks to keep the cork moist and prevent it from drying out, maintaining the carbonated beverage inside. Once opened it was very hard to put down on a flat surface, thus the consumer was very likely to finish its contents in one sitting.



Top to bottom, left to right: Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office Honor Guard campaign hat, circa 2009. #2012/003.009. Photograph by Tom Neighbors; IBM XT computer, circa 1986. #2012/077.001; Brass surveyor’s compass, circa 1860s. #2012/107.002. Photograph by Tom Neighbors; Glass ‘ballast’ ginger ale bottle, circa 1900. #2012/033.020. Photograph by Tom Neighbors.