

# TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 13 – Number 9

September 2011

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 4 at the Zephyrhills Depot Museum at 39110 South Avenue. Business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and program at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served.



KNEELING: Coach McKinney, Manager: Jimmie Dungan. STANDING: Bob Price, Frank Overhuls, Fletcher Padgett, Tom Porter, Nelson Spoto, Jed Wilkinson, Jack Bentley, Ronnie Cherry, Mike McGinnis, Ron Carroll, Ray Bolt, Larry Turner.

## *Bulldogs Take State Championship*

*Photo scanned from 63-64 Zephilsco and posted on Facebook by Susan Bucey McKee*

### Speakers

Our speaker at the September meeting was Ron Cherry, former student, teacher, and administrator at ZHS. Part of his talk centered on his long association with Coach Chuck McKinney, pictured above with the state championship basketball team. (Coach McKinney is front and left. Ron is second to the right of center in the back, #22.) This was a great team, McKinney was a great coach, and Ron Cherry was a tremendous player, teacher, administrator, and friend at Zephyrhills High School for many years. Those in attendance were treated to a fine presentation.

Our speaker for October was not definite at press time.

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### ZHA Mission Statement

The mission of the Zephyrhills Historical Association is to research, gather, and share local historical information with all generations, through our literature, programs, and scholarships, and to volunteer assistance to the Zephyrhills Depot Museum and WWII Barracks Museum.

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| Ed Woodstuff | ----- | December 2011 |
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**Clereen Morrill Brunty**  
ZHS Alumni Contact

**clereen@tampabay.rr.com**

**813-782-8763**

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| Editor: Jerry Pricher, 5138 20 <sup>th</sup> Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542<br>Phone: 813-788-2547 email: jerry@pricher.net |
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**Recollections of Mrs. Melville Hall**

*This article appeared in the Tampa Tribune, date unknown.*

On the eve of Zephyrhills Founders' Day celebration pioneers are recalling the good old days. Fifth Avenue, where the festivities will be held, was a sand street and the only sidewalks were wooden. Horses and oxen were hitched to oak trees where the Chamber of Commerce building now stands and wagons and buggies parked in the shade. The large oak in front of City Hall was a mere switch way back when. Electricity was provided by a one cylinder gas engine with belt-driven generator, operated by Waldo Francisco. Plumbing was in the Chic Sale manner, and the pure water for which Zephyrhills is now famous was pumped by hand. There was no telephone service. Copies of the Zephyrhills Colonist, printed by the father of present Mayor Floyd Gibson, who is also publisher of the Zephyrhills News, on a plant brought here from Nebraska, wended their way back North to tell kinsfolk in wintry climes of life in sunny Florida, and gave folk on their homefront the news. There were no radios then, either. The Seaboard Railroad, which came through in 1896, had a whistlestop north of town called Herndon. Part of the present depot was built in '96. Greer's Mill, north of town, was a major industry and Jim Greer had sawmilled the townsite and sold it to Capt. J. B. Jeffries to start the Zephyrhills colony. Grand Army hall, Garfield Post, now the American Legion hall, was an imposing porchless edifice on 8th Street where the town's few Model Ts had difficulty negotiating the deep sand. The Zephyrhills Cornet Band, forerunner of the Citizen Band, cut a figure in parade circles from St. Petersburg to St. Cloud. Without uniforms for two years, they blossomed forth in spic and span white shirts, pants and caps in the third year as they continued to tootle their way into the hearts of a music loving citizenry. Young couples spooned 'neath the moss hung oaks by Zephyr Lake and Professor Morris' Museum was a cultural center. Mrs. Ruth Isadora Marsh, who will be 94 years of age October 10, and who is active in church, Chamber of Commerce and civic circles as well as in the management of her apartment properties, related interesting sidelights on the area as she first knew it to the Tribune. Aunt Dora, as she is affectionately known, is credited by Earl Hart—himself a pioneer, a realtor and presently serving as publicity chairman for the Lions Club which sponsors the annual celebration -- as having started Zephyrhills on its way up following the collapse of the boomtime era. Coming to Pasco County from Lawrenceville, Ill., in 1913, Aunt Dora first settled in Dade City and lived in the old Lanier house. She later operated restaurants at the present site of the Dade City hotel and in the Wettstein building. Urged by Dr. Parker, a retired dentist, to reopen Hotel Zephyr, which had been closed for two years, she decided to cast her lot with the struggling town of Zephyrhills. With the town's only bank closed and drummers off the road because of the economic situation, this gentlewoman pioneer, assisted by her nephew James Fyffe, renovated the hostelry and opened for business. A Dr. Sanburn, connected with the University of Florida at Gainesville and owner of grove property in the Lake Pasadena area near the present Jim Hammett grove, was the first customer of the new venture. At the time the Lake Pasadena area, located between Zephyrhills and Dade City on historic Fort King Road near LeHeup Hill—the brow of Florida, overlooking the sea—was a flourishing Winter resort with large lakeside hotels. The Ernestville store and post office, located on the hillside where Henry Bozeman is presently building his home, was the community shopping center where another pioneer, Mrs. Reese Knapp, recalls buying her first pair of shoes.

(Story continues on Page 5)

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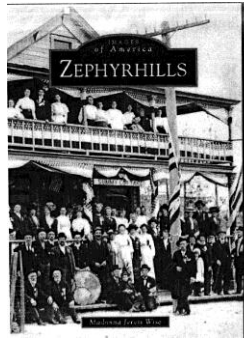
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Recollections of Mrs. Melville Hall (continued from Page 3)

Having boarded at Aunt Dora's in Dade City, Dr. Sanborn advertised her good cooking along Fifth Avenue and Mrs. L. M. (Neukie) Neukom, who with her son, George Neukom, presently operates the oldest business in Zephyrhills, was one of the first local customers. Through Dr. Sanburn's good offices a crew of ten Florida Power workmen came to put up at the hotel. From that time on the business has prospered. Earl hart had a grocery store in the hotel building where Roy Kaylor now has his hardware business, and the late beloved Uncle Jim Geiger operated a general merchandise store on what was later to be Gall Boulevard, named in honor of Walter R. Gall, former State Road Board member, and now a prominent grove owner, realtor and operator of a sand and silica business. History of Zephyrhills, Pasco County, Florida <http://www.fivay.org/zephyrhills.html> 10 of 23 6/17/11 12:48 PM Gall arrived in Jacksonville with his wife and children from Edwardsburg, Mich., on Thanksgiving Day, 1922 after making the trip in a Model T Ford. It is related that what with struggling through deep sand and fording unbridged streams the trip from Jacksonville to Lakeland, where his father, the late Edward Gall, wintered, consumed two days. On this two-day jaunt the dream to build highways in the state of his adoption, which was later to reach fulfillment, was born. Aunt Dora recalls having gone by train to Tampa from Dade City to buy groceries. She described the trip, when ventured by automobile, as arduous. There seemed to be more rain then than now, she said, and as we went the 12th Street route by Greer's Mill through Crystal Springs we were always glad to reach Hillsborough County and travel on their fine eight-foot paved road. Emil and Amalie Reutimann had come over from Switzerland and settled in Tampa. It was recalled that in moving here to open the town's first garage they stopped their car on the Crystal Springs road to put water in the radiator. The family cats jumped out and disappeared into Six Mile swamp. After being retrieved by the children, who balked at the thought of leaving their fine pets to be killed by bobcats licking their chops atop cypress stumps, the cats were hauled aboard and the family came on to Zephyrhills, where the garage they established is still being operated as a modern automobile dealership by their son Emil "Buzz" Reutimann, former city councilman, who is also well known in auto racing circles. Reese Knapp, another pioneer who knew Zephyrhills when, came here from West Virginia in 1899. He recalled that the first general store here was run by a man named Moates; that Downing and Blount ran a turpentine still where Herman Chenkins' big Natural Food Products building now stands, and that there was a sawmill where Walter Vogel has his Standard Oil station. Floyd Hennington ran the old general store on the corner where the Gall real estate office is now located. Time has marched on and Zephyrhills is a progressive little city now. Many of the oldtimers still take active parts in business, civic and church affairs. Civil War veterans with flowing beards, chin whiskers and handlebar moustaches no longer parade down Fifth Avenue. In their stead tomorrow will march Legionnaires, Veterans of Foreign Wars, United Spanish War Veterans and many young and not-so-young citizens, all proud to be a part of community life in the town that grew from A to Z—Abbott to Zephyrhills."



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