

# TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 14 – Number 6

June 2012

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Zephyrhills Depot Museum, 39110 South Avenue. Business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and program at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

## Speakers



Our guest speaker for the June meeting was Vivian Johns, retired science teacher from Zephyrhills High School and long-time resident. She talked about her upbringing in California, her relocation to Zephyrhills, and her years as a classroom teacher at ZHS. She spoke also of her community activities since her retirement. Those present enjoyed her presentation immensely.

Our speaker for July is Jeff Miller. We've been looking forward to this presentation for awhile now. You notice Jeff's ad at the bottom of this page. He is a historian by nature and responsible for maintaining the Fivay.org site. It's a great site to visit on the

Internet. In fact, we suggested making Jeff an honorary member of our organization because your editor was stealing so much information from his site. Actually, Jeff told us we were welcome to it. His own sources are varied, and he considers it a shared enterprise. He also sends along any pictures he comes across to an interested group of folks from Zephyrhills on Facebook. He's sent along some great pictures there. We look forward to hearing from him. Come and join us.



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For a walk down memory lane visit

[www.fivay.org](http://www.fivay.org)

Please consider contributing old photos for the website.

My email address is on the opening page

#### 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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**Monthly Dinner Out**



Several members meet for dinner at a local restaurant once a month. We meet at 5 o' clock on Friday, a week and three days after our regularly scheduled meeting. This past month we met at Sonny's. We enjoyed both the food and the service immensely. Our meeting place varies each month. Usually whoever is having a birthday in that month gets to decide where we meet. It's great fun! Come join us.

 <p><b>Clereen Morrill Brunty</b>                  ZHS Alumni Contact  <b>clereen@tampabay.rr.com</b>  <b>813-782-8763</b>                  www.zhsalumninews.websiteanimal.com</p>	<p>All types of repairs Over 30 yrs experience</p> <p><b>JIM'S MANUFACTURED HOME SERVICE INC.</b>                  MOBILE HOME SPECIALIST</p> <p>James Brunty, owner                  (813) 782-8763 Insurance Claims</p>
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## Member Profile

By Clereen Brunty

This month I had the pleasure of talking with Cris & Jo White about their lives growing up and how their love has stayed strong after 56 years of wedded bliss.

**Dougald Eugene White, Jr.** was born on June 28<sup>th</sup> in Mexico, Missouri to Dougald Eugene White, Sr. and Martha Ellen White. Wonder how he got the nickname 'Cris'? Dougald was a family name but was hard for folks to say. The time period was when Crystal White Syrup and Crystal White Soap was a popular commodity. Some of his friends started calling him Crystal and he shortened it to Cris and the nickname stuck. Cris has a sister, Ann, who is 3 years younger.

Growing up, Cris' family moved to several towns in Missouri, possibly for his Dad to follow where the work was, including Jonesburg, New Florence, Bellflower and Montgomery City. He is a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to attend Montgomery City Elementary and High School and graduated in 1949. While in school he played trombone in the band and enjoyed basketball and baseball. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery and was a member of the Royal Ambassadors (RA's) and church choir.

In 1952 Cris was drafted into the Army. He completed his basic training at Fort Bliss US Army Base in El Paso, Texas and attended the Radar and Fire Control School. Fort Bliss is the home to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Army Air and Missile Defense Command, 11<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery Brigade, 31<sup>st</sup> Air Defense Artillery Brigade and 204<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion. The Fort is named for Lt. Col. William Wallace Smith Bliss, son-in-law of Zachary Taylor, the twelfth President of the United States.

Cris was then transferred to Camp Stewart, Georgia where he earned the rank of Sergeant and was fire control section leader for "B" battery 549<sup>th</sup> AAA gun battalion. While at Camp Stewart he took speed reading classes and went from 400 wpm (words per minute) to 900 wpm. He was then shipped out to Thule, Greenland and was stationed at Thule Air Base where he trained in Chemical, Biological & Radiological Atomic Warfare. Thule Air Base is home to the 21st Space Wing's global network of sensors providing missile warning, space surveillance and space control to North American Aerospace Defense Command and Air Force Space Command. The base hosts the 12th Space Warning Squadron who operates a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System designed to detect and track ICBMs launched against North America. He said he literally froze there as the temperatures reached +38 degrees for the high and -72 degrees for the lows! They were stationed approximately 500 miles south of the North Pole. After a year he was transferred back to the states and was discharged at Fort Chaffee a/k/a Camp Chaffee in Arkansas.

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The camp was named after Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Jr., an artillery officer who, in Europe during World War I, determined that the cavalry was outmoded and, unlike other cavalry officers, advocated for the use of tanks. It took only sixteen months to build the entire base.

Cris returned to Missouri and enrolled in Hannibal LaGrange Junior College to study Pre-Engineering for two years. Hannibal is the birthplace of Mark Twain. Then he enrolled in the University of Missouri to get his Civil Engineering degree. In 1954 Cris met a beautiful young lady by the name of Wilma Jo Lee. You will hear more about this love connection at the end of the story!



While in high school, Cris worked at Montgomery Locker Plant as a meat cutter. He was also a clerk at several small grocery stores. After high school he went to work for Missouri State Highway Construction Dept. building new highways and bridges. Retiring 42 years later as Senior Construction Engineer with time out for college and army.

He has an amazing collection of bottle openers that he has collected over the years. He has some 300+ with unique designs, engraving and colors including cooking utensils such as a spatula and spoon with an opener on the end. We will have to get him to bring a few to our meeting for “show and tell”. Most have been acquired from flea markets and yard sales. He enjoys woodworking and did all the woodwork for his wife’s craft shop. Cris enjoys fishing, hunting and mostly motorcycle riding. He and Jo have traveled 40 of our 50 states, across Canada and some into Old Mexico on a motorcycle!

His favorite color is blue, his favorite song is My Mother’s Eyes by Tab Smith, his favorite book is anything written by Louis L’Amour. He would have to say his favorite movie is Blazing Saddles directed by Mel Brooks and his favorite restaurant in Golden Corral in Zephyrhills.

**Wilma Jo Lee White, known as Jo**, was born on March 14<sup>th</sup> in New Florence, Missouri to Thomas and Annie Lee. She comes from a family of 9 siblings; a brother, Eugene and sisters, Ruby, Meta, Ina, Goldie, Alta, Anna, Jo and June, in that order. Jo is the only one still living.

Moving to Warrenton, Jo attended Warrenton Elementary and High School, home of the Warriors and graduated in 1952. In high school she was involved in all kinds of organizations including secretary of her Freshman Class, member of the Honor Society her Sophomore, Junior and Senior years and held treasurer position her Senior year.

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She was also secretary of FHA (Future Homemakers of America) her Junior year, song leader of FHA her Senior year, Junior Play and Speech Play her Junior year and Senior Play her Senior year. She was in Publications her Sophomore, Junior and Senior years, Sextet her Sophomore year, Chorus her Freshman thru Senior years, Cheerleader all 4 years, Yearbook Staff her Senior year and even was delegated to design the Indian head for the cover of the 1952 annual/yearbook. She was also in the Radio Club her Junior year. Not sure how she had much free time, like to date??

Her first job was working at the soda fountain in Ludwig's Drugstore. She also worked in Carps Department Store selling clothing, a payroll clerk at Edison Brothers in St. Louis where they purchased shoes from the Brown Shoe Company, Warren County Tax Collector as clerk, cashier at the Missouri Power and Light Company, secretary to the division manager of GTE phone company, payroll clerk at the University of Missouri at Columbia and ASC office clerk in Fayette, Missouri. Jo attended Warrenton Baptist Church and taught Sunday School and was a member of the choir.



She has a great passion for quilting and has made several quilts and wall hangings. Jo also "hand stitched" our fundraiser quilt – Blooming Scholar – for the historical society in 2010 that was raffled off. She puts a lot of time and love into her craft. She also has a beautiful collection of glassware. Her favorite color is red, she didn't have a favorite song as she likes all of them, her favorite books are those written by Eugenia Price as she writes about historical lives of the South particularly during the Civil War so needless to say her favorite movie is Gone With the Wind. Jo's favorite restaurant is Sonny's BBQ in Zephyrhills. Jo says she really enjoys learning the history of Zephyrhills and the funny stories about hogs running wild in the early days and seeing all the changes of today.

### The Couple

Jo met Cris in 1954 while visiting her older sister, Meta in Montgomery City, Missouri. They had been shopping in Krogers Grocery store and on the way out, Cris, who knew Jo's sister and had eyes on her niece, Fran, ran up to Jo thinking it was Fran and gave a great big hug. To his surprise it wasn't Fran and so the romance began between Cris and Jo. In May of 1956 Cris and Jo married in Montgomery, Missouri and enjoyed their Honeymoon at Lake of the Ozarks which was a popular spot at this time. Over time Jo gave birth to 2 sons, Richard and Jeffrey. Richard and his wife have a daughter, Katie and live in Maryland while Jeffrey and his wife have a son, Brandon and still live in Missouri. The grandchildren are the love of Cris & Jo's lives.

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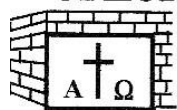
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While Cris worked for the Missouri State Highway, Jo was taking on the role as leader of the Cub Scouts from 1965-67 in Camdenton to be involved with the boys. Jo also worked in a fabric store. They were members of the Camdenton New Home Baptist Church where Cris was a Choir & Music Director, Training Union Director and Jo was a Sunday School Teacher and President of the Baptist Women’s Group as well as a member of the choir. In 1972 they moved to Hallsville and Jo owned and operated a Day Care until 1984 and then opened the Stitch Craft & More store showing her talent in cross stitch and quilting. Cris was very helpful in doing the wood work for the craft store.



They became members of the Hallsville Baptist Church where they held all positions available except being a janitor! We were the only members with 7 jobs as it was a small church. Cris taught Sunday School to the ladies group and was Deacon for many years. Jo was a GA (Girls Auxiliary) teacher and Hallsville Baptist Women’s leader . The church had weak floors so Cris being a Civil Engineer was able to draw plans to design a new church which would include a basement for Sunday School classes. The old church was torn down in 1976. In 1997 Cris and Jo moved to Zephyrhills and became members of the New Hope Baptist Church on Chancey Road. Again Cris held positions as

Chairman of the Deacons and Song leader while Jo was a Sunday School teacher to the children, was treasurer and member of the choir. They transferred their membership to the new CornerStone Baptist Church located on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Cris continued to be on the Deacon Committee, Pastors Council and Music Director. Jo hasn’t taken on any specific positions YET! Cris and Jo became members of the Zephyrhills Historical Association in 2006 and he is currently our President for the 2012 term. He has been on the Nominating Committee and served two years on the Scholarship Committee. Jo is currently the treasurer, a position she has held for 2 years.

<p><b>CornerStone</b></p>  <p><b>Baptist Church</b> 7th Street &amp; 8th Avenue</p> <p>Come be our special guest Coffee &amp; Donuts 10:30***** Worship 11:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.</p> <p>Dr. Neal Resue—Pastor * NealDoe1956@verizon.net</p>	<p>In Memory of</p> <p><b>Ryals Furniture Exchange</b> And Great Parents <b>Powell &amp; Maude Ryals</b></p> <p>From son James</p> <p><b>God Bless America</b></p>
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Here's an example of the types of articles featured at Jeff's Pasco History site on the Internet, at fivay.org:

**Building a Town Among the Hills (1910)**  
**Zephyrhills Colony Has Wrought Transformation**  
**Seven Months Ago, There Were Only Three People There—Now a Hustling Little City Exists**

*This article appeared in the Tampa Morning Tribune on July 17, 1910.*

ABBOTT, July 13.—(Special.)—Seven months ago when the rising sun shot its rays over the hills at Abbott only three people were awakened. There were only three to awaken, Mr. and Mrs. Hennington and their son Floyd.

They looked up and down the street, the only street in town, the one leading from their store to the depot. Not a soul to be seen, not even a dog. Three dilapidated houses, inhabited by bats and owls. A more desolate scene could not be imagined. How a family like the Hennington's could be contented here is past all comprehension. It could not be anything man had done for the place, so we looked about to see what nature had done. We saw beautiful hills, more than 200 feet in height, their long, sloping sides dotted with beautiful oak and pine trees.

We went to the top of one of the hills, said to be 230 feet in height. What a beautiful panorama was spread out. Hill after hill could be seen rising one after another for miles. While, nestling in the valleys, and on the lower hill tops, were farm houses surrounded by fields of corn, peach orchards and orange groves, small herds of milch cows. Some large droves of cashmere and Angora goats were seen on some of the hillsides. It was a grand sight.

When we read many years ago that story of Jules Verne, how he was shot from a cannon planted in the mountains east of Tampa to the moon, we did not believe it, we had never seen mountains east of Tampa, but what are these great piles of sand, clay and rock if not mountains? At any rate they look like mountains to one who has lived the past thirty years in the flat, piney woods of Florida.

This morning when the sun shot its rays over the hills at Abbott, several hundred people awakened. On looking out, up and down the streets and avenues, there are now over three miles of streets cleared up. One, Fifth Avenue, is 90 feet in width, all others are 60. Men, women and children are seen going in every direction; some to their work, some to their places of business, while others with rod and reel to the Hillsborough River or some of the nearby lakes, returning with a string of trout (black bass). What has brought about this great change?

Last fall, Capt. H. B. Jeffries, of New York City, bought through the Stebbins Realty Company, from J. L. Greer, a large tract of land. A company was organized, called the Zephyrhills Colony Company, with Capt. H. B. Jeffries as its president. The land was divided into five acre tracts and placed on the market. One section one mile square was laid out into town lots. The name of the town is Zephyrhills. The advent of this company was not heralded by a brass band or great magazine articles. The company had a few thousand papers printed by the Tampa Tribune Publishing Company, called the "Zephyrhills Colonist," setting forth the facts about the land that they were placing on the market with a few letters from prominent citizens of Hillsborough and Pasco counties, making honest statements of the healthfulness and resources of this section. From this simple and straightforward manner of advertising, thousands of acres have been sold, and several hundred settlers have come and are building their homes. All seem to be contented, many of them buying more land and writing to their friends to come, that they have found a place where they can spend the sunset of life amid scenes of pleasantness.

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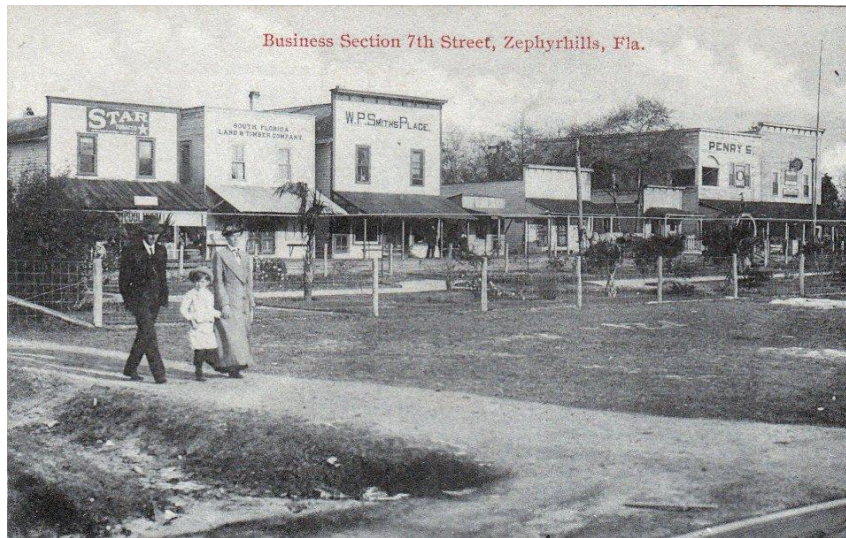
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The great majority of the settlers are old soldiers and draw a pension so their welfare need not be feared while they are bringing their farms and orchards to a paying basis. Since March 1, about seventy houses have been built, many of them on their acreage tracts. Those who have bought represent not less than 4,000 people, the majority of whom will be here by Christmas. Tampa had better look well to the east. This we judge is being done as we see Tampa people on the streets every day.

In some future article, I will make more personal mention of what is being done and who are doing it.

A VETERAN.

And here are a couple of pictures shared by Jeff to our Facebook group:



Jeff thinks this was taken about 1915. Fifth Avenue is to the left, so I think we are looking at the block where the Tourist Club now is situated.



Probably taken in the early twenties.

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