

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 15 – Number 11

November 2013

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 7th at the Zephyrhills Depot Museum, 39110 South Avenue. The business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. Refreshments are always served. There will be no scheduled meeting in December. Our Christmas get-together is set for Monday, December 9th, 5 p.m., at the Wedgewood Manor Community Clubhouse, 37420 Wedgewood Drive (off Geiger Road).

Speakers



Our November meeting was held at The Commons on Pretty Pond, where we were treated to a question-and-answer session with Christine Krusen Douglas and Raybelle Surratt. In our last newsletter they were referred to as our special guests, but in reality we were their guests. Instead of asking them to come to the Depot Museum to meet with us we went to their residence for our meeting. The Commons was a beautiful place to hold a meeting, and we were treated to quite a trip down memory lane listening to these two wonderful ladies.

From the Desk of the Editor *Membership and Advertising*

It's time again to ask for your monetary support in regard to our organization and this newsletter. Dues are \$15 per year, advertising for members is \$15 (non-members is \$25), Boardwalk Booster is \$5, and contributions to the scholarship fund are welcome in any amount. If you are renewing and nothing has changed you can simply mail your check to me or bring it to a meeting. If something is different you are welcome to send me an email to keep the records straight. Thanks in advance.

Thursday, January 30th, is our next Ruby Tuesday Scholarship Fundraiser

We are meeting up at 5 p.m. on that day, but you can come anytime.
Contact Clereen Brunty for flyer (20% of sales goes to scholarship fund)

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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.

 <p>Garage Doors, Inc. Kerry Ryman President</p> <p>36413 SR 54 • Zephyrhills, Florida 33541 Telephone: 813-782-5926 • Fax: 813-788-6773 E-mail: kerry@rymanconstruction.com License # GDI 09084</p> 	 <p>ABBOTT STATION RESTAURANT</p> <p>813 322 3686</p> <p>5327 Gall Blvd. Zephyrhills, FL 33542 www.AbbottStation.com</p>
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Feature Article – Krusen, Douglas, & Surratt

by Clereen Brunty

On November 5, 2013 members of the Zephyrhills Historical Association were honored with the presence of two outstanding women in Zephyrhills – Christine Krusen Douglas and Raybelle Britts Surratt. The talk was held in the Community Room of The Commons at Pretty Pond where both ladies reside. The open question-and-answer sessions about their growing up brought back a lot of great memories of what Zephyrhills was like in the earlier years and how both families contributed a lot to the growth of Zephyrhills. Now we give you a bit of history of these ladies and their families...

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHRISTINE KRUSEN DOUGLAS

Partial Interview posted in the Zephyrhills News


March 10, 2011

Written by Clereen Morrill Brunty & Madonna Jervis Wise

What do we mean by family love and commitment? Well, to spend time with the Krusen and Douglas family, you undoubtedly encounter the colorful and colloquial list of pet names they have for each other—there is “Boo, Buck, Toad, Booty Boot, Mitzi Moo, Mammy, Da, Bear, Titter, Grammy and so forth...” Each of the names comes with a historical reference point (sort of a frozen-in-time tribute to a special family milestone), but the pet names also depict the compassion and gentleness of the role that each member contributes within the family. In fact



the group is apt to impart a nickname on you as well. (That is another story!) We heard some of the origins of these names during the interview. I.A. Krusen called his only daughter, Christine--‘Mitzi Moo’....Grandson, Christopher, called his beloved Grandfather Henry by the pet name of Da...his interpretation of ‘Doug,’ the name he heard his grandmother use. Granddaughter Julie coined the name, Grammy for her beloved Grandmother Christine...and the list goes on and on...

<p>Shirts & Caps, founded in Zephyrhills in 1982, is now an internet-based national supplier of custom screen printed t-shirts. Still family owned and operated; find us online at www.ClassB.com!</p> 	<p>Artistic Expressions Custom Picture Framing specializing in the framing of needlework 5906 7th Street Zephyrhills, Florida 33542</p> <p>(813) 783-7731 Beverly Koehler Barnett, Owner E-Mail: aeframer@aol.com</p>
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BACKGROUND: Throughout the 1920's and 30's, Zephyrhills was agrarian with one major industry—lumber and farming was the basis of the economy. I.A. Krusen arrived in 1932 and purchased 13,000 acres, mostly on credit for \$2.75 per acre. This was the beginning of Krusen Land and Timber Company. Krusen (known as 'Andy') built a sawmill and paid off the land by selling lumber. In addition to lumber, of course, the family developed the Krusen Grove and Cattle Co. (K-Bar Ranch) which the Krusen's and son-in-law, Henry, pioneered for breeding award-winning Charolais, Charbray and Brahma cattle for many decades. Well-documented, Krusen was a patriarch of the area's development but many may not know his history before Zephyrhills.

Mr. Krusen who was born in Western New York attended Alfred University where he played football. He was very interested in the building industry and Alfred University was known for its ceramic engineering which Krusen studied. While at Alfred, he met and married Dorothy Barron who was a nursing graduate from the prestigious John Hopkins University. They made their way to Florida in search of the right clays and soils for the creation of state-of-the-art 'bricks' for improved construction. He settled in the Daytona area and was Mayor of Holly Hills, Florida before moving to Zephyrhills. En route to Zephyrhills, Krusen did some work in Sanford and Deland and saw the potential of the timber industry and upon finding Zephyrhills; he saw the untapped potential of the area for timber.



Christine related that when the family relocated to Zephyrhills in 1932, she was 5 years old and the family composed of her two older brothers, William and Charles, as well as her maternal grandmother, lived in the apartment house behind the First Baptist Church for a while. She recalled that the town was rural and somewhat primitive in the day. She described the band concerts by Nattie Storms' grandfather



at the bandstand downtown, Neukom's Drug Store (& the iconic proprietor, Neukie, in her lovely starched dress and complimentary jewelry), the first ZHS football team and the laborious one-hour excursions to Tampa via the dirt road (Morris Bridge). She said 'you knew everyone' and the sense of community was so alive and trustworthy that not only did they not lock their house, no key even existed. Christine attended Mary Granger's school and was later head majorette while at ZHS in the squad of four and recounted the members of the first football team by name—Billy Parsons,

Richard Kelly, etc. She finished out her high school years at St. Leo in Dade City. As a teen, the USO dances at the American Legion Hall were community events for the youth and Christine recollected the great chaperones, Libby Peel and friends, Mary Hart and others.

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CIVIC INVOLVEMENT: I. A. Krusen was of the philanthropic tradition and he certainly ‘gave back to the community’ which had helped him prosper in business. He served as the Mayor from 1951 to 1953 and was Chairman of the Pasco County School Trustees for a whopping twenty years (undoubtedly a record not equaled in 2011!) In fact in 1960, ZHS Principal Charles Henderson paid tribute at the ZHS graduation stating that Krusen had presented diplomas to 23 of the last 24 graduating ZHS classes—prompting the audience to give him a standing ovation! This is undoubtedly another record—not equaled to this day! Look around town, and you will see his name on the football stadium, hospital wall and just about anywhere there is a place to acknowledge service to his town. The public athletic field built in 1940 by Mayor I. A. Krusen is an everyday term in our area—*Krusen Field!* Christine affectionately recalled the naming of the field. Friend Vance Forbes who worked at the Krusen Commissary at the mill told her that there was to be a dedication of the athletic field in honor of her ‘Buck.’ (Buck was the pet name for her older brother, Charles, who loved sports and passed away prematurely in 1945 at age 23.) Krusen Field hosted not only the ZHS football team for over three decades but also the annual community Easter Sunrise Services sponsored by the Ministerial Association and was the hub of recreational events—still quite utilized in 2011 by youth! Christine affectionately recalled that the family’s longtime friend, Sam Surratt, was annually in charge of transporting the wooden cross to the field for the community Easter service. Faithfully he would take it out there and each year when they reminded him of his duty, he would reply, “Well, you just do the best you can!” (A bit of a mantra for Sam and an example of his steadfastness, quipped Christine!)



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**A GLIMPSE OF RAYBELLE BRITTS SURRATT
AND HER REMARKABLE HUSBAND, SAM W. SURRATT, JR.**

By Clereen Brunty and Zephyrhills Free Press



Raybelle Surratt...what a beautiful lady that everyone greatly admires. As a long time prominent resident of Zephyrhills most of us remember her as the Zephyrhills High School secretary to Principal Charles A. Henderson who worked for him for several years. She also enjoyed being a member of the Woman’s Club and other local organizations. She was on the committee when the Woman’s Club sold trees & palms for donations that still grow down Main Street, around Zephyrhills Park and Oakside Cemetery. I bought two in memory of my parents.

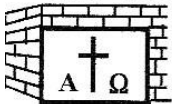
Raybelle married Sam W. Surratt, Jr. in 1941 after he move to Dade City in 1940 to work for Pasco Packing as a welder. In 1945 he joined the Army and served in France as a ships welder. In a news article in the Zephyrhills Free Press dated August 16, 2012, Sam served on the Zephyrhills City Council for over 20 years starting 1953-54 and then from 1957-1976. During his tenure he saw the building of City Hall and Zephyr Haven Nursing Home, the establishment of a city sewer system and the sale and development of the right-of-way that belonged to the Seaboard Railroad that ran right along the U.S. Highway 301 corridor.



OFFICE ASSISTANTS
Betty Sanford, Faye McCallister, Merrily Baggett, Sarah Downs, Beatrice Pringle, Frances McKee, Sandra Pricher, Mollie Pope, Wayne Turner, Shirley Temples, Shirley Griffin. Secretary – Mrs. Surratt

In those years the city didn’t have a budget for the city department heads, so the city’s responsibilities were parceled out to the individual city council members. The council members served as heads of committees. One member had parks; another had streets, another finances and on it went. At city council meetings members would report on their committee to the rest of the council.

Surratt’s son, Sam, recalls driving down the streets in a truck with cold mix and tamping the repair material into potholes when his father was in charge of streets. “He was so dedicated to this community and the people of this community,” the younger Sam said, “He had a passion for this community.” In the earlier days the council meetings were held in the Police Chief’s office at the City Hall building on 5th Avenue where McClain & Alphonso, P.A. is located today. When they started to build the original portion of the City Hall on 8th Street, they sold certificates to pay for it and it cost \$450,000. The land for the retention pond across the street cost \$47,000. The retention pond was part of the land that belonged to the Seaboard Railroad. When the railroad pulled out of Zephyrhills, the railroad right-of-way went right through town.

<p>CornerStone  Baptist Church 7th Street & 8th Avenue Come be our special guest Coffee & Donuts 10:30***** Worship 11:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. Dr. Neal Resue—Pastor * NealDoe1956@verizon.net</p>	<p>In Memory of Ryals Furniture Exchange And Great Parents Powell & Maude Ryals From son James God Bless America</p>
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Surratt was approached by a man that told him the city could purchase the land for \$350,000. Surratt was in favor of the proposal but the majority of the council “didn’t want to get into the real estate business.” “We lost out on that thing,” Surratt said. He felt that way because, besides the city having to purchase the retention pond property, later the land was purchased by individuals and sold as prime property that now sports fast food restaurants and other businesses. He thinks that cash should have gone into the city’s coffers.

The city’s Oakside Cemetery is a beautifully kept historical site. An historical marker touts the cemetery as a “hallowed tract” which is the “burring ground of veterans of six wars...the Civil War, Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict and Vietnam.” It was not always so beautiful. “Our cemetery was really run down,” Surratt said. “There wasn’t anyone to care for it.” Surratt made a motion to charge a fee that would cover the cost of upkeep and the cemetery got a makeover.




Mayor Willa Rice has the distinction of being the only female mayor of Zephyrhills, and she served from 1957 to 1960. In the photograph, Mayor Rice (standing) addresses, from left to right, city councilmen Paul Shultz, Sam Surratt, Bernard E. Burns, James Jarrett, and Albert C. Hooks. (Courtesy of ZHA.)

When Surratt first took his seat on the council, the city was not on a city sewer system. The city was growing and the septic systems were not meeting the needs. Believe it or not, city sewers were not a popular idea. “When we started talking about sewers, the people went up in the air. We had to just go ahead and do it and it turned out to be one of the best things we ever did. People don’t like change.” Surratt didn’t just serve in government; he got his hands sooty spending 21 years as a member of the volunteer fire department.

Standing behind him in all those decisions was his wife Raybelle (nee Rachael Britts). Every Monday night for over 20 years he was somewhere either the city council or the fire department,” Raybelle said. Surratt met her at the old Crescent Theatre in Dade City. “I went in there one time and Raybelle, she graduated from Pasco High, she was selling tickets there. “I wanted a date but I didn’t get very far.” Their marriage of 71 years would seem to prove that he got far enough. “I guess I worried her to death,” Surratt chuckled.

The Surratt’s had two children, Sam, III, who operates Lee Reed Insurance and an older daughter, Judy, who passed away when she was 51. He left quite a legacy of names as there are currently five Sam Surratt’s, Raybelle said.

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When he retired, Surratt spent some time on his hobbies of hunting, fishing and gardening especially raising orchids, and went to “Scratch” at Barb’s Restaurant faithfully until his health prevented him from doing so. Surratt’s service was honored by him being chosen to be one of 10 grand marshals in the Centennial Founders’ Day Parade in 2010.



If there was anything he regretted in the changes he helped direct, it was the loss of the small town atmosphere. “If you went down West 54 and you met a car, you would wave at them because you knew them,” Surratt said with a twinge of sadness. “That’s no more.” Sam belonged to several organizations including the Zephyrhills Masonic Lodge #98 where he was a member for over 50 years, a member of the First United Methodist Church and was active in the Zephyrhills Democratic Club, Zephyrhills High School Booster Club and served on the Zephyr Haven Nursing Home Board from 1987-1991. He received the distinguished Citizenship Award in Government Affairs, was an honorary member of the Zephyrhills Garden Club and a member of the Zephyrhills VFW Post #8154. He was also an owner/operator of a welding shop.

Pasco County Place Names
courtesy of fivay.org

LEHEUP HILL. According to information provided by Loren Fry, this hill was named for William A. LeHeup (the elder), who was born in Kingston, Ontario.

He came to Florida from Wisconsin in 1911. A son, William A. (Bill) LeHeup, died on April 13, 2003, at age 98. According to his obituary, the son was born in Wisconsin “and came here 93 years ago.” According to a local researcher, census records show the LeHeup family lived in the town of True, Rusk County, Wisconsin, in 1910 before moving to Pasco County with their 8 children.

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