

TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 17 – Number 5

May 2015

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 2nd in the meeting room of the *Zephyrhills Public Library*, 5347 8th Street. The business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. Refreshments include drinks, which are provided, and food brought in to share by members.

Speakers



The Zephyrhills High School Chorus, under the direction of Luan Gore, once again brought us a wonderful performance at our May meeting. They always do a tremendous job when they perform for us, and this year was no exception. I think the acoustics in our new setting made their music even more memorable and entertaining. Luan does such a great job with these students. Zephyrhills High School is lucky to have her. She's a gifted musician, in addition to being a wonderful teacher.

Our speaker for our June meeting is Kara Hardin. Irene tells me she is an attorney. She was not one of my students, but some of her friends on Facebook were, so I bet I'm going to recognize her when I see her. I look forward to her presentation. We hope you'll join us.

And don't forget, coming in June:



*45th Annual ZHS Alumni, Faculty & Friends
Reunion Luncheon*

Sunday, June 28, 2015
Zephyrhills Lions Club
5827 Dean Dairy Road

11 a.m. – Registration Begins
1 p.m. – Luncheon
2 p.m. – Announcements & Recognitions

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Pasco County Historian

For a walk down memory lane visit

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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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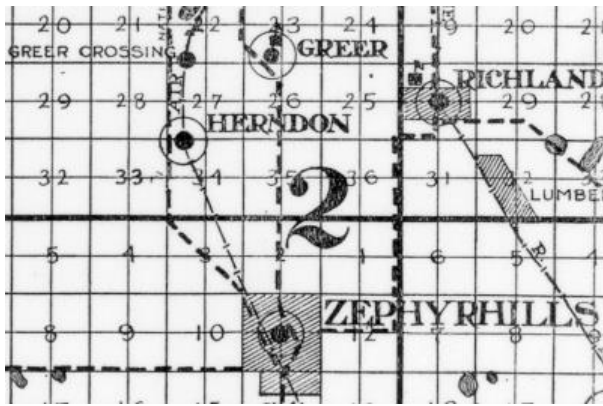
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FEATURE ARTICLE*History of Pasco County***Greer**Compiled by Jeff Miller for www.fivay.org

On June 22, 1900, the Greer post office was established, with James L. Greer the first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were: Lee Monroe Hamilton, Mattie B. Greer, Winfield W. Fresher, James I. Stanford, and Olive T. Greer.

By 1903 a school was established at Greer

On Sept. 28, 1909, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported, "J. L. Greer left Abbott last night for Jacksonville to transact business. Mr. Greer is the lumberman who recently transferred 35,000 acres of land in Pasco and Hillsborough counties to eastern capitalists for colonization purposes."

On April 1, 1912, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported, "Mrs. Mattie B. Greer, wife of J. L. Greer, the well known lumber and naval stores magnate, died at home in Greer, Fla., at 1:40 o'clock Saturday morning after an illness of several weeks." The newspaper also reported, "Recently J. L. Greer, Jr., contracted a serious illness. The mother nursed him and was herself stricken. Dr. W. P. Adamson was summoned Friday afternoon but when he arrived Mrs. Greer was beyond human aid." Mrs. Greer died of smallpox.

On Jan. 7, 1921, the *Dade City Banner* reported, "The saw mill of the Greer Lumber Co. at Greer, five miles south of Dade City, was destroyed by fire last night."

On April 29, 1922, the Greer post office was discontinued.

On May 8, 1922, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* carried an advertisement of a public auction sale of the bankrupt property of James L. Greer, to be held at Greer on May 18-19, "to sell the personal property, consisting of Rough Cut Lumber and Uncut Timber amounting to approximately 100,000 feet; also the stores of commissary consisting of Clothing, Shoes, Patent Medicines, Groceries, Hardware, Household Utensils and Machinery Parts. Also destroyed were a large quantity of miscellaneous mill parts and hardware. Also approximately 2000 Acres of Cut-Over Land Situated in and around Greer, Pasco County, Florida."

Greer Saw Mill Destroyed by Fire (1921)

This article appeared in the Dade City Banner on Jan. 7, 1921.

The saw mill of the Greer Lumber Co. at Greer, five miles south of Dade City, was destroyed by fire last night together with a large amount of number around it.

The planing mill, dry kilns and other buildings were saved through the hard work of many men aided by a favorable breeze.

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The plant is provided with a pumping station, tank, hose and a chemical outfit, to fight a fire, and these were put to good use in confining the fire to the saw mill. Some fire hose were taken from Dade City to be used if needed.

The fire was discovered at about half after eight o'clock by two workmen who were making repairs in the mill. They found a small fire under the saw and dashed two pails of water on it, but it seemed to increase the fire and in a few minutes it had made such headway that there was no hopes of saving the building. The whistle of the planing mill and the fire lit sky attracted people from many miles around.

A band saw and other new machinery had been installed recently. There was more lumber on hand than at any time in the last two years. All of which increased the loss. The amount of loss was not to be had this morning. It is partially covered by insurance.

J. L. Greer established his mill in Greer over twenty years ago and this is the first fire he has had in the plant. The mill has employed as high as 175 to 200 men, and had a pay roll of about 130 at the time of the fire. The average output was near 40,000 feet of lumber a day. Mr. Greer had a large tract of timer in the Wesley Chapel neighborhood, and smaller tracts elsewhere, enough to keep the mill busy for two or three years.

It is too early to state Mr. Greer's intention in regard to his business, but it is expected that he will rebuild. Should he not, the loss of the mill will be felt, not only in the immediate community but throughout east Pasco county.

The following is excerpted from Pine Cones by Frankie Daniel Sellas (1908-2006). (Provided by Nathan Geiger)

Greer (1999)

Greer was the sawmill town on the sandy road between Dade City and Zephyrhills, owned by Mr. J. L. Greer from Georgia. The sprawling mill sawed tall virgin pine trees into lumber and permeated the air with the smell of turpentine.




Railroad tracks divided the mill town. Colored folks lived in plain unpainted wooded houses on one side of the tracks. White folks lived in plain unpainted wooden houses on the other side of the tracks. Most of the workers had come from Georgia to work for the mill. Sweating men labored six days a week and then spent loud and spirited Saturday nights in the town. This revelry often led to injury or death.

Frank Daniel, new to the yet raw, lightly settled area turned to a familiar type of work, timbering. We lived at Greer close by the large unpainted two-story house of Mr. and Mrs. Greer, near neighbors of the families of Mr. Myrick the commissary keeper and of Mr. Leroy Smith.

A plank walk led from our house to the gate and a paling fence enclosed the yard. A chinaberry tree in the back yard shaded the wash house and the battling block. The yard was swept with a brush broom and periwinkles and phlox bloomed bravely in the dry sand.

Memory began for me among Georgia Crackers. Lighthearted colored folks flashed smiles of gold teeth or shiny white ones in ebony faces. White neighbor women wore long starched aprons and kept their "spit can" by the rocker as they dipped snuff and talked over fat lower lips stuffed with snuff.

The first day I remember was December 11, 1910 in Greer Florida. Sleepy eyes opened to a bright fire in the fireplace with flames licking up from burning pine logs, popping and sizzling rosin as they burned. Papa sat in the rocker by the fire and helped me into long black stockings and buttonup shoes. He tenderly told me that while I was asleep the doctor brought me a baby sister.

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It was a very strange day without Mamma. I stayed close to Papa as he lit a fire in the kitchen stove. The coal oil lamp on the wall shelf beamed a circle of mellow light that flickered into the wavering shadows of the room.

Papa took an iron pot off the back of the stove and put it on the floor with an emphatic “Don't bother that.” A little imp on my shoulder whispered “What is that?” I tiptoed over but could not see the bottom of the deep black pot.

I pulled at the heavy pot as it rolled slowly on its side. Frozen solidly in guilt I watched a trickle of “pot liquor” creep slowly down the wood floor. Papa stepped back and plopped his foot in the slender stream. Surprised blue eyes opened wide as I saw him look from the stream to the pot laying on its side. I got spanked.

Miz Taylor showed me the fat red baby she said was going to live at MY house. I bristled and asked “Who ordered her?” Oh me, Mamma seemed to like her. I told Miz Taylor to put her back. She said “I think I'll take her home with me if you don't want her.” I flew to Mamma and said “No, no she's our baby.” Winnie Belle Daniel, my sister, joined our family. I crawled under the covers at the foot of Mamma's bed and fell fast asleep.

The Mill Town (1999)

The pond on the south side of Greer's mill was solid with floating logs. The logs went from the pond through the mill and finished up as stacks of lumber. The scrap went a long way out on an overhead endless chain to the slab pit that burned day and night. At night its eerie glow could be seen for miles around. Passing in the buggy we saw a barefoot boy in overalls jumping from log to log spearing frogs. Papa said “If that boy slips, he will be killed.” The boy leaped in complete abandon all the way across the pond and walked out on the other side.



The commissary was across the road from the mill. It was a long wooden building. Behind the U-shaped counter was the ample stock of a general store. Mr. Myrick presided behind the counter. He wore garters on his arms to shorten his sleeves and held his pants up with gallosies (suspenders).

Across the lane from the commissary was the large unpainted boarding house with long porches where single hands boarded. Tall wooden fences on either side of the lane formed the corridor that was used by shuffling foot traffic.



In memory's wake I walk in the soft sand of that lane uphill to the schoolhouse. It was a plain little pine wood building standing high on log piers, and I go up the steps to the little porch where teacher stood and rang the bell for the “taking in” of school. On cold days the big boys brought in armloads of wood and started a fire in the heater.

Teacher sat on the platform in front and faced her eight grades of pupils. Some of the desks were “doubles” and two children sat together. Some of the desktops had been carved into by the knives of rambunctious boys, who'd had enough of school and would soon be part of the tobacco chewing work crew. The schoolyard was lightly shaded by struggling blackjack oaks. The outside “privy” was where the granddaddy longlegs lived and spit “tobacco juice” when you scared them. Under the school house the white dry sand was pock marked with the little holes of doodlebugs.

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I did not go to school at Greer except for the year I was in seventh grade and was taught by Mrs. Mickler, but I have many memories of that building and the times we attended meetings, programs, etc. there. The schoolhouse was the social center of the town. On Sundays it was used for church meetings.

The first time I saw Santa Claus was at a community Christmas program at Greer school. We walked in dry cold sand that spilled into our shoes to the wonderful event. The one-room building was decorated with crepe paper and the candles on the cedar tree winked and sizzled. A bucket of water with a dipper sat on the floor for throwing water on the tree when it caught fire from the candles. Homes were not decorated and no Santa's helpers diluted the scene. This was the one magical night of nights.

School children recited their pieces and sang the age old carols. What the music lacked in quality it made up in pure spirit. At long last we heard Santa's bells. I believe I was three. I sat on the edge of my seat, heart pounding, excited enough to explode. Then Santa stepped out in plain view with his fat tummy and fine red clothes. In the long years since that night I have never again known the ecstasy of that moment. Santa Claus knew all our names and called each child up to get a bag of candy.

The mill shut down two weeks for Christmas. All was silent and lifeless except for the ever smouldering slab pit where scrap lumber rode out on an endless chain to be burned.

At our house food was prepared for "drop-in" company. A fresh pork ham and a country cured ham Uncle Bob sent from Tennessee were standard. There was a wonderful colored cake baker who came to our house to bake several kinds of cakes for us a few days before Christmas. I remember the many thin layers of coconut cakes, iced with freshly grated coconut. I believe this is a specialty of Georgia cooking.

On Christmas Eve we hung our stockings at the mantle and knelt by the fire. Papa said a Christmas prayer for people who had less than we did. On Christmas morning we found the standard orange, apple, nuts and hard candy in our stocking. We got one or two toys from Santa Claus and were very thrilled. We took careful care of that once-a-year gift.

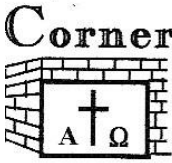
When Christmas morning broke firecrackers exploded all over town, with now and then a pistol shot. This continued sporadically throughout the day. People visited house-to-house and that was Christmas.

Greer had a smallpox epidemic about 1912. Many people had the pox and several died. We wore asafetida (a foul smelling drug) in a bag around our necks. We stayed home. Papa took his "clo's" off and washed up in the wash house before he came in the house. Providentially our family escaped the dreaded pox.

Once we sat on Mrs. Myrick's porch and saw a coffin taken out of the boarding house across the lane. Fellow boarders bore the coffin to the wagon and sat on the coffin. Mamma was horrified that they sat on the coffin but in time of epidemic, the fewer exposed the better. Mr. Greer's wife died of smallpox. Later he would marry Miss Olive Tucker.

When the wash woman came to our house she washed the clothes and put them in the pot to boil. There was a running battle between the wash woman and Mamma over her sneaking lye in the pot so she wouldn't have to rub so much. Mamma said it rotted and faded the "clo's" and watched the woman like a hawk. When the clothes came out of the pot they were put on the "battling block" (that looked like a butcher's block) and beat with a "battling stick" (that looked similar to the oar for a boat), then rinsed and hung to dry.

We had chickens, a few ducks and a bad tempered Jersey cow named Gladys. When the mother hen hatched the duck eggs we loved the little balls of yellow fluff. My sister took a baby duck and hugged it tight. Before they could loosen her hold the little duck was limp and dead, killed by her childish love. Gladys had a bull calf. Wobbling on unsteady legs he put his head down and butted my sister flat. She was hurt that her new friend knocked her down and that Papa laughed so hard.

 <p>CornerStone <i>Baptist Church</i> 7th Street & 8th Avenue</p> <p>Come be our special guest Coffee & 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>Ryals Furniture Exchange And Great Parents Powell & Maude Ryals</p> <p>From son James</p> <p>God Bless America</p>
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Belle the bulldog took care of her family. Papa was spanking sister Belle and Belle the bulldog growled at him. He stopped the spanking and had the child put the dog in the house. Then continued the spanking.

Papa was away from home, and a drunk man came one night, to pay Papa money he said he owed him. Mamma was afraid of him and ordered him not to come in the yard. He did anyway. Mamma let old Belle out and she charged at him like a tornado. The poor man was so scared he found the strength to pull up a board nailed to the walk and backed out, hitting at Belle all the way, arriving sober at the gate. He did not



know Belle was so old she had lost her teeth and was “all bark—no bite.”

Another day old Belle got out of the yard and barked at a wagon she disliked. She jumped up in the wagon and the driver jumped out and let her have it. She then jumped up on the wagon seat and rode along like Cleopatra on the Nile.

In 1912 Papa’s beloved only brother Bobby died in Houston County, Tennessee. Just prior to his death he wrote saying he was anxious to see us. My father was so pleased with this climate and the opportunities in the developing state that Uncle Bob planned to move his family here. After Uncle Bob’s death the family sold the

farm and his widow, Aunt Winnie, and the single children Clyde, Leonard, Blanche and Elmer, came to Florida with another Tennessee family, the Kelly Wilsons. The arrival of our kinfolk was a wonderful time for us. Clyde, the oldest of the group, was a very aggressive young man. They bought a piece of land about a half mile south of Greer’s Mill and set about building a house. Clyde and the carpenter batched in a shack near the site of the house. Aunt Winnie, Blanche and Elmer stayed at Wilsons.

Leonard stayed with us and started to work in the mill. At the end of the first day he was given a Time Card worth \$1.25 with 15 cents punched out, paying him \$1.10 for an eleven hour day and he worked six days per week.

Clyde Daniel died of typhoid fever in 1915. The other brothers and sister lived a good portion of their lives in Pasco County.

When Mrs. Wilson died Aunt Winnie was with the family. Mamma took us two little girls and went to see about Mrs. Wilson early in the day. When we got there Aunt Winnie said they needed something of Mamma’s. Mamma said “Keep the younguns and I’ll run back quick and get it.” We were to stay outside in the porch swing. Within minutes the family gathered around Mrs. Wilson’s bed. An instinctive knowing drew us to them. My sister and I stood at the end of the bed unnoticed and watched Mrs. Wilson return to her Creator and solemnly observed the sorrow of the family. Young as we were we were never sheltered from the realities of life. We saw the helpfulness of country neighbors in time of trouble.

About this time I remember the death of a mill hand’s baby. My father and another man got pine boards from the mill and made the little coffin and placed it on our kitchen table. Aunt Winnie and Mamma padded it with cotton batting, then shirred white voile and lined the inside and made a little pillow with white ribbon rosettes on it. The outside was plainly covered with some heavy white cloth. Papa took it to the parents of the child.

Mamma and Aunt Winnie were quilting. I was about four. I wanted to sew. Aunt Winnie cut little squares for me and threaded a large needle with heavy black thread. I struggled with zeal until I had a little quilt pieced for my doll bed. Mamma kept that crude little quilt among her treasures.

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2015 Zephyrhills Historical Association Scholarships

by Jerry Pricher

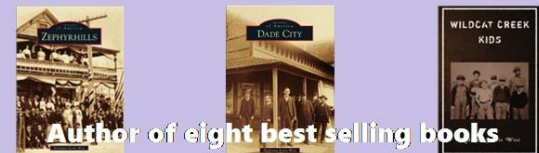

It was my great pleasure to present this year’s scholarships at an assembly held at Zephyrhills High School the evening of Monday, May 18th. Clereen was there, of course, to snap some pictures. Margie Partain and her committee, consisting of Polly Gill, Carolyn Dean, and Louie Holt, made their selections at the end of last month from those students who had applied. Polly did not vote in the first round, because her granddaughter was one of the applicants. She did take part in the second round, however. Her granddaughter, Shelbie Pollock, was chosen to receive the Rosemary Trottman Scholarship by the other members of the committee. Dylan Kinsman was selected to receive the Zephyrhills Historical Association Scholarship. Both these students are outstanding choices. I am hopeful that they will be in attendance at our June 2nd meeting, so that the members present will have a chance to meet them.



Shelbie Pollock, Jerry Pricher, and Dylan Kinsman



ZHS CAPS Scholarships presented by Nancy Lail (Class of 1974)
Ligia Castaneda, Kelsey Bishop, Shelbie Pollock, Bradley Schultz, and Dylan Kinsman

 <p>Author of eight best selling books</p> <p>Madonna Wise Books Author, Research & Consulting Madonna Jervis Wise Zephyrhills, Florida Murphy, North Carolina</p> <p>813-469-8627 MadonnaJWise@gmail.com http://madonnawisebooks.wordpress.com</p>	<p>Cutting Edge Beauty Salon</p>  <p>813-782-4001 813-469-3437</p> <p>Joni Gauger owner/stylist</p> <p>6132 Fort King Rd. Zephyrhills, Florida 33542</p>
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