

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 18 – Number 10

October 2016

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 1st in the meeting room of the *Zephyrhills Public Library*, 5347 8th Street. The business meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. and the program is at 6 p.m. Refreshments include drinks, which are provided, and food brought in to share by members.

Speakers



Al Stone, as General Robert E. Lee, entertained us all at our October meeting. He was quite believable in this role, and he took the opportunity to give those in attendance a history lesson on the first hundred years of our nation from the perspective of Lee. The Union of the Sovereign States making up our country during Lee's time was quite different from what it is today. It may be hard for some of us to understand, but General Lee felt very strongly that his first allegiance belonged to his State of Virginia. I thought Al did a terrific job explaining this to me, among other things. Robert E. Lee is an interesting man, and Al brought him to life.

Our presentation for November will be from another of our newest members, and will again be an interpretation of a famous historical figure. I am not at liberty to divulge who the historical figure is, but I can tell you that Buck Winslow is going to play the part. You'll need to come and join us to find out who he'll be portraying.

Tuesday, November 15th, is our next Give-Back Scholarship Fundraiser
at **Chili's in Zephyrhills**. We are meeting at 4 p.m. on that day.
Contact Patty Thompson (813-780-8559 – pattycakeclown1@aol.com) for information.

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Jeff Miller

Pasco County Historian

For a walk down memory lane visit

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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Turpentine Industry

from Jeff Miller's Pasco County History website at
fivay.org



Turpentine still near Chipco, 1929. Photo courtesy of Jeff Cannon

The following article appeared in the *New Port Richey Press* on July 9, 1964, and in the *Dade City Banner* on Dec. 12, 1963.

The History and Archives committee of the Pasco County Pioneer Florida Museum Association traveled down Memory Lane recently, passing along what was once forests of pine in the days when "Pine was King" in Florida.

About the turn of the century, turpentine enterprises were numerous in Pasco County and turpentine stills were located in the depths of the forests. Stills were located at St. Thomas, operated by a Mr. Lucas. Later he purchased one at Gasque and also Emmaus. Stills were located at Pasco Station, West Sagano, So. Sagano, and Needmore in the west section of the county, and at Kalon, near Trilby, Richland and Lumberton, Ehren, Odessa, Dutton and Sharp, near Lacochee.

The resinous sap of the pine tree was extracted by chipping off the bark in narrow strips, beginning a few inches above the ground and exposing a large face of the sapwood from time to time as the operation progressed. cups of metal or earthenware were placed at the lower end of these incisions and the gum sap flowed into them. Hundreds of thousands of trees were tapped in this fashion to provide gum (known as dip or crop) depending upon the methods of its removal from the tree for turpentine still.

A single "crop" of cup numbers 10,000. When a turpentine operation spoke of having ten crops under operation, it meant that he had 100,000 pine trees tapped for turpentine. The still itself was a crude structure, redolent of the spicy aroma of the pine. The cups were emptied into barrels by crews of men who traveled the forest continually, and as the barrels were filled they were placed on platforms by the side of the road and later were collected, usually by four mule-hauled wagons equipped with skids to help in the loading and taken to the still.

The crude gum, as it came from the forest, was emptied into a large boiler from which a spiral pipe led to the vat in which the turpentine was to be collected. As the gummy matter was brought to the boiling point, turpentine was given off in the form of steam or vapor that passed through the coiled pipe.

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A stream of cold water flowing around the coils condensed the vapor which dripped into the vat as pure spirits of turpentine. The twigs, bark and dirt which rose to the surface of the boiling mass was skimmed off, and the remaining liquid was drawn off into barrels, in which it speedily solidified into resin.

These resin and turpentine products found their chief market among the manufacturers of paint and varnishes, while resin was used in the manufacture of hard soaps, paper, and 100 commodities of daily use. The Florida pine was so full of resin, especially in its roots and the lower portion of the trunk, that it burst into flame at the touch of a match.

That characteristic gave it the local name of "lighterwood" also sometimes called "fatwood" and frequently "fat lightwood." When the railroads were put through the county, many pioneers sold "fatwood" to the railroad company.



The pine forests vanished under pressure of settlement and demands for farm and homes on the one hand and under lumbering operations of the sawmills on the other.

A letter received from Lillian Bessenger Hines, an early resident of Pasco County, gives an interesting report about the turpentine industry in Pasco County. She writes:

To fill in one the turpentine industry I have to write of our family life, so please excuse the personal side of the story. I will try to tell you about the turpentine industry in Pasco County and South Florida which my father operated. He came to Blanton in 1900 and bought out the turpentine business there and moved the family and about 20 negro families down there, building a house for his and set up quarters for his help.




There were only three or four houses in Blanton when we moved there. After the sawmill was built, there were at least 25 families to come in and make a community. There was not an active church nearer than Trilby or Townsend House, so the people met in homes for Sunday School. My mother led the Baptist group and the other group was Methodist.

My father gave the lumber and helped build the church in Blanton. Mother made a survey and found there were more Methodists there, so she helped to get the Christian people to all worship together and she joined the Methodist Church and raised us up as Methodists. I joined the church at age seven and we enjoyed being a part of God's family in Blanton.

The schoolhouse was a very old building east of the lake. My first year of school was in that old building and we were all so proud of the new two-story schoolhouse that was built about 1905. There were about 50 shanties built southwest of Blanton, for colored people and a church built for them.

A store was next, and since the post office was in the Granny Johnson house she was postmistress. As Blanton grew, a new store was built and the post office was moved to the store building with Sanford Blocker appointed postmaster and Blanton was a booming town. Next a parsonage was built.

The telephone was put in about 1906 with the Ellsworths and Bessengers having a phone. The next year the Millers had a phone put in. All the phones rang every time a call came but different rings for each house, so my best fun was to listen to see who was being called.

 <p>Garage Doors, Inc. Sales & Service</p> <p>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>ARMY STRONG <i>Airborne-Ranger, "All The Way"</i></p> <p>MICHAEL J. COCKILL Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)</p> <p>8469 Maybelle Dr. (352) 596-9751 (h) Weeki Wachee, FL 34613 (352) 584-0758 (m) mcockill@tampabay.rr.com</p> <p>ZHS JROTC Bulldog Battalion, GO FOR IT!</p>
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My father put a “dummy” track on which operated a narrow gauge railroad wood burner for many miles of the country around Blanton to haul the logs to the saw mill after the turpentine industry was out of existence. This “dummy” track was also enjoyed by the boys. On Sunday evenings a group would take the hand cart and push it to the top of the hill and all jump on and coast own for quite a ways.

In turpentineing each tree was sliced (cutters, the men were called), and a cup hung to catch the gum. Then there were scrapers who went yearly to cut trees. With mules and wagon the cups were carried and emptied into barrels on the wagons and taken to the still. Near the still was a copper shop where the barrels were made for raw gum and also for the processed tar, rosin, and turpentine to be put in.

This shop was dangerous and a no-man's land for children. So on Sunday afternoons we would slip down and look around as no work was done on Sunday. With about 600 negro workers and 100 white, Sunday was the day of rest. The still and sawmill were between the lake and the railroad, so the depot hid us from view at our house, so we felt safe.



The rosin was put into the new barrels for shipment, but left open during the weekend to harden and then tops put over the barrels. The boys dared my oldest brother to see how hard the rosin was and one day he tried a barrel and his entire hand went into the hot rosin and just cooked his hand. They had to take him home, and the Sunday exploring ended then and there.

Ed Gasque was the only other turpentine man in that section. His business was down near the old Pasco depot. He later moved into Dade City and built the Edwinola Hotel. They became very good friends of ours and we often exchanged views on the turpentine business.

Every railroad man, salesman, and doctor tried to make it to the Bessengers about meal time. We never knew how many would eat at our table before the day was over. Dad later built a large boarding house but the free meals at Bessengers never stopped.

There were no weather reports, only a weekly paper from Tampa, so the only weather news was by the ACL telegraph at the depot. That became the gathering place for the news. Many a deer hunt was planned by Berry Miller, Charley Dowling, and L. B Bessenger on the depot steps. The only amusement in the little sawmill town of Blanton was the croquet ground my dad made in the center of things.

He put clay down and kept it rolled, built high stands on the four sides up for the court and filled with sand and piled dross on each to burn for lights. The dross was the shaving from the pine trees as they were cut with trenches for the tar to drip in and run into the cups, and was full of tar and pine needles so would burn and make a bright flame to see by. At dark on Friday and Saturday nights these were always full and lighted for the public. There were many hours of croquet enjoyed by the adults.

The children were put to bed at dark. The only road to travel was very sandy and horse and wagons were the only transportation then. The first car in Blanton was brought out by Mr. Sparkman to try to sell to my dad. He took mother and dad for a ride and we children were scared pink until they returned. They didn't buy the car and were we glad. My dad drove his rig 25 to 50 miles to attend to his business and would take the train in Dade City to get to Jacksonville and Tampa real often.

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There were over 86,000 acres of land in Pasco county and South Florida owned or leased by my father, L. B. Bessenger, when I was about 12 years of age. We moved into Dade City in 1914. We children drove a horse and buggy into school before we sold our house in Blanton to the ACL Railroad for a section foreman house.

We had six different turpentine places in South Florida and operations ended with World War I. The war changed many things and lives.

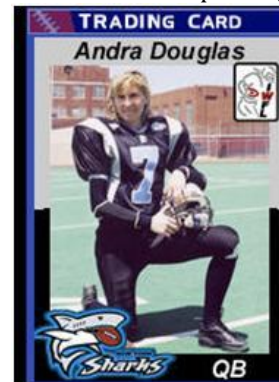
Signed Lillian.

A Review of Stars—Some Personal Reflections too!

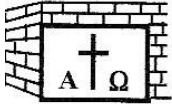
by Madonna Jervis Wise

Excerpts from Celebration of Generations, Article #83 – Published in The Zephyrhills News September 2, 2010

“Boys of Fall” causes me ironically to think about ‘the girls of fall’ and with over 37 years in education, I may be ailing from a bit of nostalgia, but here goes! Recently as I was meeting with a high school student to compile her 10th grade schedule, I asked her as I usually do, about her goals for the future and what she saw herself doing as a career. She could not readily produce a vocational focus, so I asked some probing questions (as guidance counselors/principals often do)...*What are your interests? How do you spend your time?* Well, she said after some hesitation (giving me a look as if I would not find it believable), ‘My real love is football and I play pretty well but that is not something “I” can do, obviously.’ Well, with a bit of surprise I said to the young lady, ‘I know a young lady who has been a professional quarter back for a Women’s Professional football team and has quite a resume in professional sports—she is a former student of mine.’ Let’s see if we can connect with her and I fired off an email. Perhaps, you know the rest of the story if you’ve lived in Zephyrhills for any time and heard of one of our local legends—“Toad” none other than Andra Douglas. I’ve had the pleasure of knowing Andra Douglas since 1974 and throughout the years I have watched her grow. After graduating with honors from Florida State University where she was a member of the two-time National Champion Women’s Rugby Team, she began playing semi-pro golf. In 1983 she moved to New York City where she received her Master’s degree in Communications Design from the Pratt Institute. Twenty years later, she resides in her 1837 brownstone in the heart of New York’s Greenwich Village. After leaving Time Warner as a Vice President, she works from her rooftop studio as a creative consultant for the entertainment industry doing packaging, advertising, and copywriting. In August of 2000, Andra purchased the New York Sharks Women's Tackle Football Team. Her roles on the New York Sharks have included owner and one of two quarterbacks on her 40 player roster. The Sharks, after only three years in existence were ranked number one of over seventy teams across the nation. Two of Andra’s favorite professional accomplishments include writing a novel about her childhood passion of football, and the National Title won by the Sharks in 2003, in Ashland Oregon.



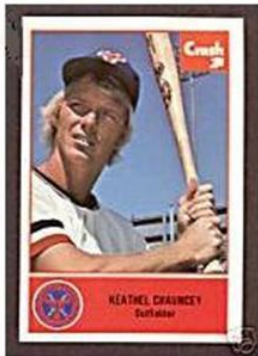
Coincidentally she is from a historical Zephyrhills family. Her mother and father, Christine Krusen Douglas and Henry Douglas have contributed much to the community. You will undoubtedly make the link to ‘Krusen Field’ where football was played in our community until the new stadium was opened in 1975. The Krusen Field was donated in memory of Andra’s Uncle, Charles B. Krusen by I.A. Krusen as a generous gift to Zephyrhills sports and the school. So many historical events have taken place at Krusen field-games, band programs, events and yes, uncountable memories!

<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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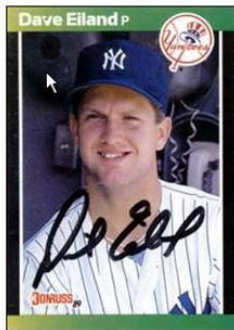
For a quick overview of this historical group...The Krusen family arrived in Zephyrhills in 1932. Andra's grandfather, I.A. Krusen bought 13,000 acres for \$2.75 per acre and developed Krusen Land & Timber. At its height it employed three hundred people and produced a million feet of lumber per month. Soon after, the family was involved in ranching and established K-Bar Ranch. Andra's father, Henry, was a B-17 fighter pilot in the Air Force and met Christine when he and Ed Madill started a flying school at the Zephyrhills Airport. (Christine was one of his first students.) I.A. Krusen also served for 22 years as a school trustee, and one can hardly find a graduation ceremony or event from about a thirty year span of history that does not include Mr. Krusen's name (hosting or presenting awards.)

Back to Andra, and women in sports, it is noteworthy that women in athletics have had some challenges in the USA as while as in Zephyrhills. In the first few decades, women were prominent in school athletics at ZHS. Historians brag that the ZHS Women's basketball team was actually established before the men's. However, as sports became money-making events and the Depression and other events impacted schools, women's sports were discontinued at ZHS as they were in most locales. Until the passing of the federal legislation, commonly known as Title IX in 1972, girls just did not have an opportunity to compete in school athletic events. Enter Andra Douglas in the early 1970's (pre-Title IX), and the only sports available for her were golf and tennis, perhaps deemed in those days to be feminine-acceptable. I had the pleasure of serving as Andra's golf coach (although she taught me more about golf than I ever knew). I watched her after she graduated and marveled at her success. So when my 10th grade student needed a role model, who other than Andra. Andra affectionately dubbed me as "Wise Owl" back in 1975 and there is not a time that we run into each other, when she doesn't say, "Hi Wise Owl." Seeing as though I was 23 when she gave me the moniker, I feel like I may have grown into it, so I just smile and feel thankful for having known her. We are privileged in Zephyrhills to call her one of our own!

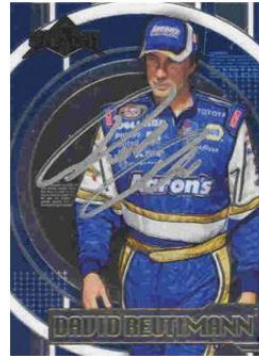
As for photos for the week, I pulled out one of Andra's trading cards. I thought it might also be nice to view some of the other game trading cards from Zephyrhills High School's finest--note Andra Douglas, Keathel Chauncey, Ryan Pickett, David Reutimann, David Eiland, Missy Mikolajczak, and Brett Cimorelli. Perhaps we want to establish a 'Zephyrhills' game trading card project. For keeping the historical record accurate, we wonder who else from our historical archives has a trading card. Please let us know.



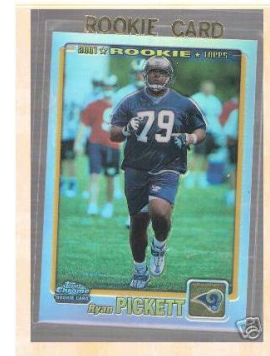
Keathel Chauncey – 1970
Los Angeles Dodgers



David Eiland – 1984
New York Yankees



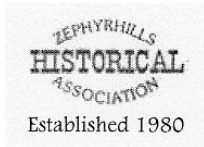
David Reutimann – 1988
NASCAR



Ryan Pickett – 1998
NFL Rams, Packers, Texans

Cards not shown for Missy Mikolajczak, 1987 graduate, who played with the Colorado Silver Bullets Professional Baseball Team and Brett Cimorelli, 2000 graduate, who played with the Anaheim Angels and the Midwest League Baseball Teams.

<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 6132 Fort King Rd. Zephyrhills, Florida 33542</p>
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ZEPHYRHILLS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 4TH, 2016

The Regular Monthly Business Meeting of the Zephyrhills Historical Association was called to order by President Rod Rehrig at 5:35 p.m on Tuesday, October 4, 2016. Rod led in the Pledge of Allegiance and followed with the Invocation.

The minutes of the September 6 meeting were read by Secretary Anna V. Boone. A motion to approve was made by Jerry Pricher, seconded by Al Stone and accepted.

Jerry Pricher read the Treasurer's Report, which had been typed and submitted to him by Treasurer Clereen Brunty. It was approved by a motion from Bill Kustes, seconded by Patty Thompson and agreed to by all.

Old Business: Patty reported that \$46 was made from the August 23 Scholarship Fundraiser at Beef O'Brady's and \$50 from the September 27 dinner at Sergio's Italian Restaurant. The next Rosemary Trotzman Scholarship Fundraiser will be at Beef O'Brady's on Tuesday, October 25th at 4 p.m. Flyers were passed out. Patty asked whether or not our scholarship fundraising dinners will continue during the holiday months of November and December. The majority agreed, by show of hands, to continue.

Margie Partain and Patty will be checking out more restaurants next week.

Other Old Business: None

New Business: Dining out for the October birthdays will be at the Sunrise Restaurant on October 14th. at 4 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Bill and seconded by Jerry. The meeting concluded at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Anna V. Boone, Secretary, Zephyrhills Historical Association

Our speaker for the evening will be Gen. Robert E. Lee as presented by Al Stone, Living Historian.

