

TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 19 – Number 4

April 2017

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 2nd 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



Our speaker in April was Andrea Figart, Head Librarian at Zephyrhills Public Library. Andi is no stranger to us, but she appeared this time in her official capacity as Director of the Library which hosts our meetings each month. She began by giving a brief history of the Zephyrhills Public Library. Then she described many of the exciting programs taking place now, and she talked about many of her plans for the future here and at the Depot Museum. Those in attendance truly enjoyed her presentation.

Our program in May will be a return performance by the Zephyrhills High School Chorus, under the direction of Luan Gore. This has become a tradition for us. I believe this will be the fourth May appearance for the group. The members of the group, of course, have changed, but Luan remains, and we have never been disappointed by their presentation. We enjoy ourselves each year. We'll have pizza and drinks for the students, as we have other years, but folks still need to bring in the usual food for our meeting. We hope you'll join us.



Tuesday, May 23rd, is our next Give-Back Scholarship Fundraiser

at **Sergio's Italian Restaurant** on Hwy. 54 West in **Zephyrhills**. We are meeting at 4 p.m.
Contact Patty Thompson (813-780-8559 – pattycakeclown1@aol.com) for information.

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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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From the Desk of the Editor:

Clereen informs me that March was “Women’s History Month,” and I missed it. Fortunately, Madonna Wise did not and gave a presentation for the Pioneer Museum and repeated it at the Zephyrhills Public Library. What follows is an article about that presentation. Some women we know quite well are included.

Sharing the Story of Women’s Progress

March 22, 2017

by B. C. Manion — *The Laker/Lutz News*

Madonna Jervis Wise, a local author who writes primarily about history, has been making the rounds lately, talking about women in the work force and “East Pasco Women Who Rocked.”



Women played an important role in munitions factories during World War 1. —*Courtesy of Madonna Jervis Wise*

Her talks, which have been delivered at the Pioneer Florida Museum and Village in Dade City, at the East Pasco Networking Group’s breakfast meeting and at the Zephyrhills Public Library, have traced the evolving role of women in society. The essence of her presentation traces the progress that women have made since ancient times to the present.

First, she delivers an overview of women in history and then she focuses on the contributions of seven East Pasco women.

While delivering her talk at the East Pasco Networking Group, Wise said she keeps her mother and grandmother in mind.

Irene Davis Dobson was a founding member the Head Start Early Childhood program in Pasco County, and also active in programs aimed at creating awareness of contributions of African-Americans throughout Florida



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Census data from the 19th century shows blank spaces for occupations because women’s work was not recorded, Wise said.

Women’s role in the world of work has evolved over time, she said.

“By the 1820s, women were starting to go into the textile mills. Pay was about \$3 a week.

By the early 19th century, women still were mostly involved in domestic services, laundry, cooking, cleaning, some teaching, nursing, she said.

But she noted, women’s opportunities have expanded significantly — even during her own lifetime. “I remember when I was in school. They’d say, ‘Are you going to be a secretary, nurse or a teacher?’” Wise said.



Madonna Jervis Wise has been giving talks about women’s progress at various venues during Women’s History Month
— photo by B. C. Manion

Women now have more career choices. They can belong to civic clubs that once banned them. And, there are more opportunities in athletics and the military, Wise said.

“My mother was Depression-era woman who worked most of her life. My grandmother was equally as industrious,” she said.

“As we go through the presentation, please stop and think about the women in your life.

“Right now, we have 72 million women in the American workforce. That’s 30 million more than 1984, and women roughly make up about 50 percent of the workforce,” she said.




Despite their large numbers in the work force, women still trail men in terms of pay, Wise noted. Women receive approximately 81 percent of what men are paid, she said. And, only 14 percent of the executive positions in Fortune 500 companies are held by women.

There has been progress, however, compared to opportunities for women in the past.

“Women weren’t allowed to participate in any capacity, throughout most of history —in terms of speaking, political involvement, certainly not leadership,” Wise said.

“In the American colonies, women didn’t own property and certainly didn’t vote,” she said.

“I do a lot of genealogy. Sometimes you don’t even find the woman’s first name in genealogy.”

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Bernice Rooks was in the first class at the University of South Florida. She was student number 18. After graduation, she taught for 29 years.



For generations, East Pasco women have played pivotal roles in expanding opportunities for the entire community, Wise said. She singled out these seven:

- **Irene Dobson:** She came from a large family and picked cotton as a child. She taught school in Georgia and later in Dade City, and was a founding member the Head Start Early Childhood program in Pasco County. She has been very active in the community and has helped to organize African-American programs to teach new generations about the contributions of African Americans in Florida and across the country.
- **Bernice Rooks:** Even at age 94, she remains active in the community. She was the valedictorian of the 1940 class at Zephyrhills High School. She worked at MacDill Air Force Base and was a school bus driver. When the University of South Florida opened in 1958, she enrolled, becoming student No. 18. She graduated and taught for 29 years. She is also known for the family business, the Crystal Springs Roller Skating Rink which opened in 1939 just before World War II. For 35 cents, you could skate all day.
- **Lorena Leatherman Neukom:** Known as Neukie and her husband, Charles, opened the iconic Neukom’s Drug Store drugstore in 1921. The store closed in 2001. She was in charge of payroll, buying and keeping the books until she was 93. The drugstore was a popular place for politicians, snowbirds and local residents.
- **Rosemary Wallace Trotman:** She was a widely known educator and researcher. She published “The History of Zephyrhills; 1821-1921.” She founded the Zephyrhills Historical Association. Her research revealed the effects of the railroad on the community and detailed the colonial years of East Pasco, in which the day-to-day activities of the settlers involved log-rolling, sugar-caning, subsistence farming and the beginning of unique institutions. Her father was a pioneer settler of Abbott Station.



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- **Willa Rice:** She has the distinction of being first and only female mayor of Zephyrhills. After being voted into office in 1958, she revamped the police department by firing two of the department’s five policemen and accepting the resignation of the police chief.



- **Margarita Romo:** Her work to champion the causes of farmworkers in Pasco County and around the state led to her being named to the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2012 & Hispanic Woman of the Year. She is founder of Farmers Self-Help, Inc., and has worked diligently for more than 40 years to help farmworkers help themselves.

- **Jean McClain Murphy:** Most recently she was the 2017 Zephyrhills Founders’ Day Grand Marshal. She was an educator with Pasco County Schools. Known for her beautiful singing voice, she taught “Glee Club” at the high school level for six years. She remains the singing director at her Rotary Club, and has served as choir director for five different choral groups at the First Baptist Church in Zephyrhills.



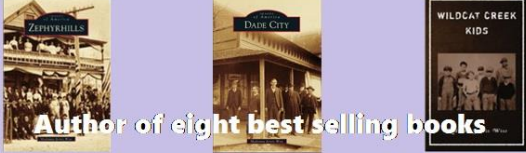
*More Women in Florida History, courtesy of The Museum of Florida History.
museumoffloridahistory.com*



Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry
Politician

Miami native Gwen Cherry (1923–1979) earned her law degree at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College, and served as Dade County's first black female attorney. In 1970, she became the first black woman elected to the Florida legislature. She won re-election three times. Tragically, she died in a car accident in Tallahassee in 1979.

Gnw

 <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>Joni Gauger owner</p> <p>Cutting Edge Beauty Salon</p> <p>813-782-4001 cell 813-469-3437</p> <p>6132 Ft. King Rd. Zephyrhills, FL.</p>
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Ethel Santiago

Seminole Traditional Artist

Ethel Santiago (1938–1993) grew up on the Big Cypress Reservation and later lived on the Immokalee Reservation. A tribal representative, she directed the Native Arts and Crafts Center at Immokalee. Santiago made baskets, beadwork, basketry, doll making, patchwork, and traditional cooking.



Claribel Jett

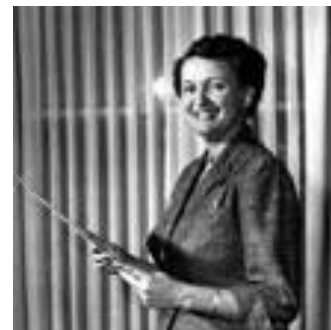
Artist

Texas native, Claribel Jett (1907–1996) painted historical portraits and scenes. She became interested in Tallahassee and its history after she moved here in the 1940s, and used that history as subject matter for her paintings. Jett also created historical portraits of early Florida governors.

Olie Brown McCarty

Businesswoman

Olie Brown McCarty (1914–1976) ran the family citrus and cattle business after her husband, Dan McCarty, passed away during his term as Florida governor.



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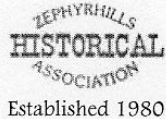
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ZEPHYRHILLS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 4TH, 2017

The monthly Business Meeting of the Zephyrhills Historical Association was called to order by President Rod Rehrig, commencing at 5:33 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Invocation.

Secretary Anna V. Boone read the minutes from the March meeting, with a motion to accept made by Art Besinger, seconded by Louie Holt and approved

The Treasurer's Report from March was presented by Clereen Brunty, Treasurer. The current Sun Trust CD balance is \$6,809.95 and the checking account ending balance is \$4,619.53. A motion to accept the report was made by Jerry Pricher, seconded by Al Stone and approved.

Tonight we welcome our new guests, Audrey McGuire, who is the History Preservation Officer with the City and Beulah Zeller, who saw our ad in the newspaper.

Old Business: Patty Thompson announced that the next Rosemary Trottman Scholarship Fundraiser will be at the Fresh Country Café on April 25th. We will be there as a group at 4 P.M., but anytime from 11 A.M. - 8 P.M. is acceptable for the flyers to be honored. Margie Partain will pass out more flyers.

Clereen reported that from June until this March, \$973.50 has been raised for the scholarship fund and that the ZHS Alumni Association will donate at least \$900.

Patty reported that Commandough's Pizza donated a gift certificate, which will be used in our 50/50 drawing, and Village Inn donated 3 pie certificates the first of which will be used in a silent auction tonight. Commandough's is good until May and the pie certificates are valid until July.

Andy Nagy suggested that scholarship updates be added to the Treasurer's Report. Clereen made a note of this.

Al Stone announced that the Chamber of Commerce has had only one person apply for the Chamber's Scholarship funds and wants to get the word out. Mel at the Chamber is the contact person and the deadline is April 14.

Regarding Founders' Day, Clereen thanked all who participated in the Parade making special mention of Bob Porter's vintage car contribution to making our unit a success.

Other Old Business: Margie announced that there will be a meeting of the Scholarship Committee here at the library on Thursday morning at 10 A.M.

New Business: Jerry and Clereen have discussed and are proposing we make Steve Spina a lifetime Zephyrhills Historical Association member, as he is the only surviving charter member. Bill Kustes made the motion to make Steve Spina a lifetime member, seconded by Clereen and approved by those present. Clereen reported that Steve had copies of "Days Gone By" made for the Depot Museum Gift Shop and also that he is a big supporter of the Zephyrhills Library. Andy Nagy suggested a plaque be presented to Mr. Spina, and there will be further discussion of this topic, including whether or not to wait until the Zephyrhills Historical Association's 40th anniversary.

Other New Business: Clereen mentioned that the Depot will be turning 90 years old.

Rod announced that the Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce will have their 12th Annual Golf Tournament on May 5th at Silverado and that it costs \$75 to sponsor a hole. Bill made a motion that we sponsor a hole in the number 1 spot, seconded by Jerry with all in favor. Rod said they will also be selling golf balls for \$5 apiece.

Rod has raffle tickets for the Marine Corps League Scholarship Fund.

For April's birthday dinner, Al Stone has chosen the Sunrise Eatery. The date is Friday, April 14th at 4 P.M.

Jerry made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Clereen and approved by all. The meeting concluded at 6:02 P.M.

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

Our guest speaker will be Andrea Figart, City Librarian