

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 19 – Number 6

June 2017

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> in the meeting room of the *Zephyrhills Public Library*, 5347 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

***There will be NO meeting in July!  
The first Tuesday of the month is Independence Day!***

### Speakers



Nancy Massey Perkins was our speaker at the June meeting. She basically repeated a presentation she had given in March for the Pioneer Museum. “The Life and Work of a Home Town Barber” is Nancy’s tribute to her dad, Bud Massey. Nancy was a teacher and media specialist in Pasco County for 35 years. We worked together at Raymond B. Stewart Middle School. She is also a member of our organization. Although her discussion mostly concerned her father and the barber shop, she also talked about other members of the Massey Clan in

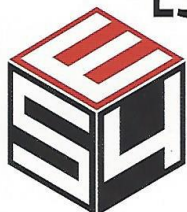
Zephyrhills. Her presentation, and the discussion which followed, was very interesting. Those who attended were definitely not disappointed.

Shelbie Pollock and Sarah Duffy will be coming in August to talk about their studies abroad this past semester. We’ll be having a demonstration in September of the newly digitized Zephilsco Yearbooks recently completed courtesy of the Zephyrhills Public Library.

### **Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto:pattycakeclown1@aol.com)) for information.



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**Pasco County Historian**

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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Editor: Jerry Pricher, 5138 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542  
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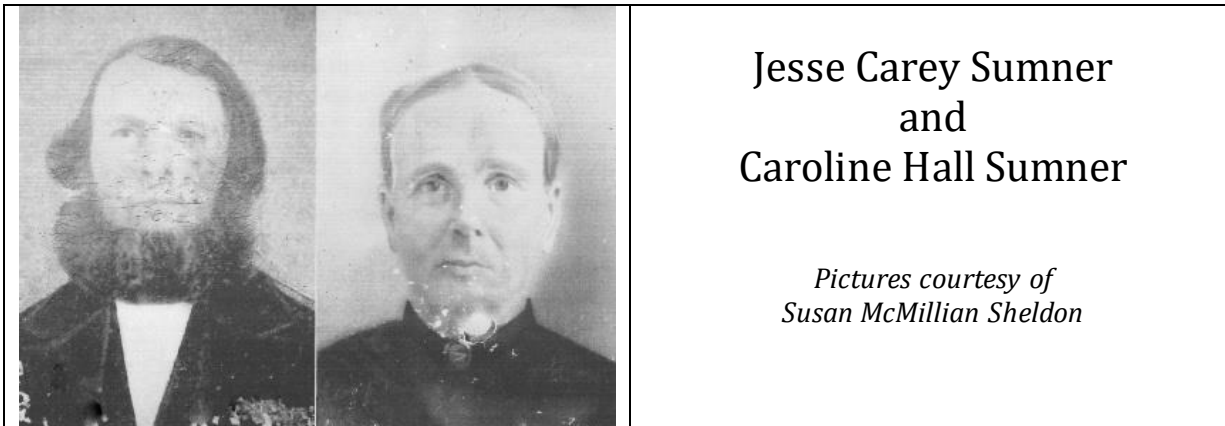
**From the Desk of the Editor:**

I present another familiar Dade City history name this month. These folks are not relatives of mine as far as I can tell. In all likelihood, however, we do share some cousins. I have Sumners and Halls in my database from Emanuel County, Georgia, on my mother’s side. I surmise that we are related to some of the same people, but we are not related to each other.

**The Sumner Family of Pasco County**



*from Jeff Miller’s Pasco County History site at fivay.org*

*Two great granddaughters of Jesse Carey Sumner, who settled in Pasco County near Clay Sink in 1838, are sharing the results of their research about the Sumner family. The authors are Joann Sumner Bandy and Susan McMillan Sheldon. Joann is the granddaughter of David Edwin Sumner and lives in Clearwater. Susan is the great-great granddaughter of Nancy Elizabeth Sumner and lives in Dade City. Susan works as substitute school teacher and is a volunteer at the Pioneer Florida Museum. Joan Sumner Bandy used these sources: a letter on the early history of Pasco County by her grandfather, David Edwin Sumner; information given to the Pioneer Museum by Judge Robert Sumner; the book Jake Summerlin, King of the Crackers, by Joe Akerman, Jr. and Mark Akerman; and interviews with Susan McMillan Sheldon, great-great granddaughter of Nancy Elizabeth Sumner. This article first appeared on the EPHS web site.*



Jesse Carey, the second son of John Sumner and Mary Hogan, was the first Sumner to come to Florida. He was born in 1819 in Emanuel County, Georgia. When he was 21 in 1838, he heard that there were cattle in Florida free to any man that could corral and tame them. So, he left home, a working plantation with 160 slaves, and unwittingly located in the northeastern part of (now) Pasco County. But, alas! Things were not as he had dreamed. Cattle, yes, the woods were full of them - there were also five wild Indians for every cow in the woods.

His nearest neighbor lived twenty miles to the north. There were a number of cattle herders in the state but none had located near him since the area was considered an Indian Rendezvous. His place soon became the headquarters for other cattlemen since there was a large quantity of cattle in that section, and the fine grass range.




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His nearest neighbor lived twenty miles to the north. There were a number of cattle herders in the state but none had located near him since the area was considered an Indian Rendezvous. His place soon became the headquarters for other cattlemen since there was a large quantity of cattle in that section, and the fine grass range. The Indians were not happy with their new neighbors and trouble started in earnest. The Indians would do whatever they could do to torment them. They particularly liked to torment the settler's family whenever the man was away from home since that hurt the husband more than tormenting the man himself. After living in such torment for two years, Jesse was forced to go to Ft. Marion in Ocala to get away from the Indian atrocities for a year. Jesse found love when he retreated to Ft. Marion in Ocala. He married his sixteen year old neighbor, Caroline Hall in February 1845.

After returning to the Clay Sink area, they acquired a neighbor ten miles away. Unfortunately, the father died and the mother asked the Sumners to take care of their son. The Indians had been friendly and peaceable; all seemed well. Their fears vanished. Those days rope for lassoing cattle was extremely scarce and cost a great deal. Therefore, it was necessary to own the rope together. His neighbor ten miles away needed the rope on a certain day. He placed the boy, Dan Hubbard, on the horse and directed him to take the rope to the neighbor. The start was made in early morning. When night came, the boy had not returned. Jesse set out to find him and upon arriving at the neighbor's house, he learned that the boy had not been there. They immediately started a search and tracked the horse to the Little Withlacoochee River. This is the spot where the Indians had hidden beside a large tree and had taken the boy and the horse. In the meantime the horse came in with boy's suspenders platted in its mane, which was a message from the Indians to Jesse that they had the boy. During this time, men gathered from far away and a general search was made.

In their book *Jacob Summerlin, King of the Crackers*, Joe and Mark Akerman said that Jake "gathered" three unbranded ponies that were with his herd on open range territory. The ponies actually belonged to three Indians. The Indians claimed that the horses had been stolen and that the child had been kidnapped in reprisal. The Seminoles living in the area assisted in finding the three Indians. The three Indians confessed that they were present when the boy was killed and his scalp taken, later, to be presented to their chief. They were given an ovation for taking the scalp of a white man. The three Indians captured were placed in a temporary log jail for keeping until further investigation. During the first night, they stripped their buckskin clothes, made rope and hung themselves and were all dead when found the following morning. It was a custom in those days with the Indian never to die by the hands of a white man if he could avoid it. This ended the search for the boy and a general drive was made upon the Indians.

Summerlin was so distressed over the kidnapping that he wrote to Governor Thomas Brown complaining about the activities of the Indians in his area. "They are on our ground there is no doubt, and you may suppose our feelings when we send a child on an errand or to school. We are getting tired of waiting to see what the government will do, and we calculate to scout until we are satisfied what has become of the child, and I fear if we find that child in there (sic) possession there will be a fight if they don't give him up."

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The scalping of his foster son was one of the events that lead to the third Seminole War. Jesse served with distinction in Captain William H. Kendricks' division. It also caused the final removal of most of the Indians to the Everglades, and the clearing out of Indians brought several new settlers into the Pasco County section.

The first dedicated school house ever built in Pasco County was erected by Tony Sumner, John Sumner, Cary Sumner, Alec Sumner and King Joseph Sumner. Their ages ranged from 18 to 24 years at the time they built the school and attended school three months which was all the schooling any of they received, each paying the teacher his portion. The teacher was paid \$35 for the session. Jesse's younger sons attended Emory University.

### **The Sumner Family in Dade City**

*This article was contributed by David E. Sumner*

"Sumner" is an old English name based on the occupation of "summoner"—a sheriff's messenger who served summons and citations to appear in court proceedings. Dade City, Florida, has historically been home to at least three branches of the Sumner family. Growing up in the 1960s, I knew the other two as the Edsel Sumner branch and the Robert Sumner branch.

Among eight pioneer Sumner families recognized during the re-dedication of the Pasco County Courthouse on Dec. 5, 1998, three of them were part of our branch: David Edwin (hereafter referred to as "D. E.") and Frankie Thrasher Sumner, Jesse Cary and Caroline Hall Sumner, and King Joseph and Susan McMinn Sumner.

My great-great grandfather, Jesse Cary Sumner, was born in Richmond, Virginia, and came to Dade City in 1838. His brother Alexander Chestnutt Sumner came here in 1841 and half-brother Robert Lawton Sumner moved here around 1864. A History of Pasco County, which was edited by J. A. Hendley, contained an article written in 1927 by my grandfather D. E. Sumner (1874-1937). I will quote from the most interesting parts.

He wrote: "My grandfather Jesse Cary Sumner [1820-1871] was born near Richmond, Virginia. His father moved to Georgia where my grandfather lived until about 1838, at which time he heard of Florida as a country full of wild cattle free to any man provided he could corral and tame them. But alas! Things were not has he had dreamed. Cattle, yes, the wood were full of them—there were also five Indians for every cow in the woods," he wrote.

"Of course, the white man's activities soon provoked the Indians into hostilities and trouble started in earnest. It was necessary for my grandfather to keep a large pack of vicious watch dogs on hand at all times for his family's protection."

D. E. Sumner goes on to describe several brutal skirmishes and killings that occurred in the 1840s between the white settlers and the Indians. "The Indians had a way of scaring women and children...they preferred to capture and kill his children, as the Indian seemed to realize that such persecution was more effective than killing the man," he wrote.

"At the time the Indians were driven out, my grandfather decided to move and located two miles east of Dade City, where he acquired a large body of land, at which time he had six sons and four daughters and they all entered into farming," he wrote.

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The father of D. E. Sumner was King Joseph Sumner (1850-1920). King Joseph's brother, William Chestnutt Sumner, was publisher of the *Fort Dade Messenger*, Pasco County's first newspaper. According to *Webb's Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida* (1885), the newspaper was established in 1882.

When King Joseph Sumner died on July 23, 1920, the *Tampa Tribune* obituary named ten surviving children: D. E. Sumner of Dade City; Marion Earle Sumner of Clearwater; Lawrence Sumner, Yancey Sumner, Miss Ella Sumner and Mrs. E. L. Randall, all of Tampa; Mrs. A. J. Drew of Homestead; Mrs. W. L. Fulton of Savannah; Mrs. J. W. McDonald of Wauchula, and Mrs. A. E. Edwards of Los Angeles.

A copy of the "Manual of the College Street Baptist Church" (now First Baptist Church) dated Jan. 1, 1907, indicates that John R. Sumner, William Chestnutt Sumner, J.D. Sumner, and G.N. Sumner were all deacons. Other deacons included David O. Thrasher (my great-grandfather), O.L. Dayton, M.F. O'Neal and Fred Hack. Other historic Pasco names included in the 1907 directory were: Coleman, Dayton, Embry, Hendley, Larkin, Mobley, Sistrunk, Tait, Touchton, and Thrasher.

At the time of his death in 1937, D. E. Sumner lived in Winter Haven, where he was district sales manager for the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Corporation. His obituary was published in Dade City on April 26, 1937, and read: "Mr. Sumner was born sixty-two years ago in a log house a mile east of the present site of Dade City. . . He received his schooling in this county and entered the citrus business here when a young man, raising a large acreage of groves known as some of the finest in the county. ...

"He was first married to Miss Frankie Thrasher [1880-1922] of South Carolina who passed away a good many years ago (see separate article on Thrasher family). Their three children are Edwin M. Sumner [1897-1963], Joe Sumner [1913-1959] and Mrs. Susie Bugbee [1902-1989], all of Dade City." D. E. Sumner left about 150 acres of land to each of his two sons, who spent their lives as citrus growers. Edwin Sumner's land was located on Duck Lake Canal Road (off River Road about four miles east of the city) while my father's land, where I grew up, was located off of River Road and Sumner Lake Road about two miles east. My father, Joe Sumner, lived from 1913 to 1959 and died young due to lung cancer.

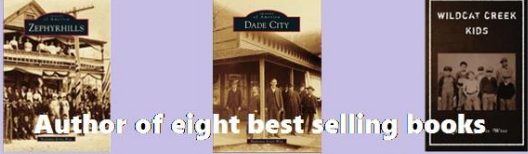
My mother, Ruth Sumner Hoffman, died May 11, 2011, at the age of 92. My two sisters, Joann Bandy and Frankie Goldsby, now live in Belleair Bluffs near Clearwater. I left Florida to pursue a college teaching career. The only remaining members of the family living in Dade City are Frankie's son, Joey (and Lisa) Wubbena, and his daughter, Lyndsi (and David) Greim, who have homes on the property that have been in our family for more than 80 years. Joey has been a firefighter, city official, and served two terms as president of the Dade City Chamber of Commerce.

### Sumner Descendants Honor Ancestor At Tombstone Dedication

*This article about Jesse Sumner (1814-18701) appeared in the Tampa Tribune on Feb. 21, 2009.*

By KEVIN WIATROWSKI

DADE CITY - The evidence of Jesse Sumner's presence in Pasco County is everywhere, from the names of streets to the names of thousands of people descended from him.

 <p><b>Author of eight best selling books</b></p> <p><b>Madonna Wise Books</b> Author, Research &amp; Consulting Madonna Jervis Wise Zephyrhills, Florida Murphy, North Carolina</p> <p><b>813-469-8627</b> MadonnaJWise@gmail.com <a href="http://madonnawisebooks.wordpress.com">http://madonnawisebooks.wordpress.com</a></p>	<p>Joni Gauger owner</p> <p><b>Cutting Edge Beauty Salon</b></p> <p>813-782-4001 cell 813-469-3437</p> <p>6132 Ft. King Rd. Zephyrhills, Fl.</p>
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The question gnawed at Brian Sumner for two decades.

“Twenty years of research, and we finally found his grave last year,” said Sumner, a retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel from Okaloosa County.

Brian Sumner is the great-grandchild of Jesse Sumner, who fought in the third Seminole Indian War in the 1850s while settling what was then the frontier.

Jesse Sumner’s descendants gathered this morning at the city cemetery on the east side of town to remember their Georgia-born progenitor.

Two new marble headstones marked the side-by-side graves of Jesse Sumner and his wife, Caroline Hall Sumner. Jesse Sumner’s stone came from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. Family members raised money for Caroline’s.

“If there was a way for Jesse and Caroline to be looking down from Heaven, I’m sure they’d be happy to see us all here,” Susan McMillan Shelton told the dozens of relatives who assembled for the service. They sat on folding chairs surrounded by earlier generations of their family.

According to Shelton, Jesse Sumner was born on an east Georgia plantation in the second decade of the 19th century. As a young man, he struck out for Florida, drawn by the promise of building his fortune by capturing the wild cattle left behind by Spanish settlers a century before.

Sumner and people like him came to be known as “crackers” for the sound of the whips they used to round up the cattle.

Sumner settled first in the Clay Sink area near the Withlacoochee River in what is now far northeast Pasco County. Conflicts with the Seminole Indians forced him north to Ocala for a time. It was there he met and married Caroline Hall, a decade or so his junior.

Eventually the couple and their burgeoning family — they had 11 children in all — settled in the Dade City area along River Road. Jesse Sumner’s two brothers also settled in the area.

When he died in 1871, Jesse Sumner was one of the first people buried in the cemetery where his relatives gathered nearly 140 years later to honor him.

Grave markers for Jesse and Caroline Sumner vanished long ago, leaving behind the mystery of their graves’ locations.

That mystery was solved after Brian Sumner met his distant cousin Susan Shelton through a message posted at the Pioneer Florida Museum just north of town.

Over two years, and with the help of a grave dowser — a person who finds graves the way a stick-wielding water dowser finds underground water - they tracked down the spot they believe Jesse and Caroline were laid to rest.

For Brian Sumner, today’s ceremony fulfilled a quest that was partly about finding an ancestor and partly about learning more about himself. “I don’t know why some people care about their roots, and some don’t,” Sumner said. “It’s wonderful to understand your history.”



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**Obituary of David Edwin Sumner (1874-1937)**

*This obituary appeared in the Tampa Tribune on April 26, 1937.*

David Edwin Sumner, a life-long resident of Pasco County, died early Wednesday morning at the home of his son, E. M. Sumner, in Dade City. He had been in poor health since last May when he suffered a stroke. Mr. Sumner was born sixty two years ago in a log house a mile east of the present site of Dade City. His parents were Joseph Sumner and Mrs. Susan Q. McMinn Sumner, members of some of the oldest Pasco County families. He received his schooling in this county and entered the citrus business here when a young man, raising a large acreage of groves known as some of the finest in the county. He was first married to Miss Frankie Thrasher of South Carolina who passed away a good many years ago. Their three children are E.M. Sumner and Joe Sumner and Mrs. Susie Bugbee of Dade City. About thirteen years ago he married Mrs. Alice Williams of Fort Meade, who survives him. Although Mr. Sumner always claimed Dade City as his residence and spent a great deal of time at his country home near here, he lived for some years in Tampa and later in Winter Haven where for the past fifteen years he has had his headquarters as district sales manager for the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Corporation. He was one of the most valuable members of the company's sales force and very active up until the time of his illness. His ambition, industry and splendid character made him a highly respected citizen of this community and he will be greatly missed both here and by associates all over the state. He was a member of the Dade City Masonic lodge and former members of the Knights of Pythias and Woodmen of the World. At the time of his death in 1937, D. E. Sumner lived in Winter Haven, where he was district sales manager for the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Corporation. Funeral services were held at the Methodist church Thursday afternoon with the Rev. C. M. Cotton officiating and burial was in the Dade City cemetery. The active pallbearers were Fred L. Touchton, Joe Perry Smith, John S. Burks, Guy Fountain, Stanley Cochrane, and A.J. Burnside. Acting as honorary pallbearers were J.F. Revels., W.V. Gilbert, J.A. Carper, W.S. Cochrane, John Bryant and Col. J.A. Hendley. Besides his wife and children, Mr. Sumner is survived by three brothers: H.L. Sumner and Y.E. Sumner of Tampa, M.E. Sumner of Clearwater; and six sisters, Miss Nora Sumner and Mrs. Neta Edwards, San Francisco; Mrs. Addie Drew, Clearwater; Mrs. Liddie Fulton, Savannah, Georgia; Mrs. Mary Randall, St. Petersburg, and Mrs. Stella McDonald, Wauchula.

**JESSE SUMNER** (1814-1871). On Feb. 18, 1871, the *Florida Peninsular* reported that Jesse C. Sumner died at his residence in Hernando County on Feb. 12. See the *Tampa Tribune* article about him elsewhere on this page.

**JEFFERSON DAVIS SUMNER SR.** (1862-1911) was born at Fort Dade on Oct. 26, 1862. On April 20, 1887, he married Mildred Roberts (1866-1941) at Dade City. He died at Dade City on June 12, 1911. On June 15, 1911, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported that Dade City "is mourning the death of J. D. Sumner, one of the oldest merchants here.... Mr. Sumner's three sons, J. D., Jr., Wamboldt, and Mabry, came up from Tampa." J. D. Jr. was killed in Kansas City in April 1927.

**W. C. SUMNER** (d. 1915). On March 23, 1915, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported: "W. C. Sumner, familiarly known as Tony, one of Pasco County's pioneer citizens, residing near Dade City, passed away this morning [Mar. 22] at 8 o'clock. ... The interment will be at the City Cemetery Tuesday at 3 p.m., under the auspices of the Masons."

**DAVID EDWIN SUMNER** (1874-1937) was born in a log house a mile east of Dade City. His parents were Joseph Sumner and Mrs. Susan Q. McMinn Sumner. As a young man he entered the citrus business. He married Frankie Thrasher of South Carolina. Their three children were E. M., Joe, and Mrs. Susie Bugbee. After his first wife died, he married Mrs. Alice Williams of Fort Meade. He later lived in Tampa and Winter Haven, where he was sales manager of the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Corp. He died on March 24, 1937. His obituary is elsewhere on this page.

**ROBERT HUGHIE SUMNER** (1884-1942) was born in Dade City and lived most of his life there. He was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex C. Sumner, pioneer residents of Pasco County. He was survived by his wife Katherine and two children by a former marriage, Robert L. Sumner of Dade City and Mrs. Corinne Peoples of Zephyrhills, a brother John C. Sumner of Tampa, and five grandchildren. A son of Robert L. Sumner was Robert Sumner (b. June 17, 1934; d., May 25, 2011), who was a county attorney for Pasco County.