

TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 21 – Number 9

September 2019

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

Speakers

Our speaker for the September meeting was supposed to be Julia Richards, owner and operator of The Gentlemans Quarter on 5th Avenue. Unfortunately, Julia apparently suffers with vertigo on occasion, and she had a serious enough episode the weekend before her scheduled appearance to require hospitalization, so it proved to be unwise for her to attempt her presentation. We certainly plan to try again in future months, since I remain convinced that she will be an excellent speaker for us.



Our presenters for the October meeting will be Maria Spoto and Barbara Bales Moore, who along with Maria's sister, Christi Spoto, are responsible for the huge mural on the wall of the Hynes building at the southwest corner of 5th Avenue and 301. The mural was done as part of the Centennial celebration in 2010. The mural is in need of work, and we've asked the ladies to come and let us know how we can help. Come join us!

Tuesday, October 15th, 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.



38461 County Road 54
Zephyrhills, FL 33542
813-788-5969

Email: zephyrhillsmgr@patriotstorage.com

5x5 | 5x10 | 10x10 | 10x15 | 10x20 | 20x20 | RV | BOAT

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.

<u>Executive Board</u>		
President	.....	Jerry Pricher
Vice President	.....	Rod Rehrig
Secretary	.....	Anna Boone
Treasurer	.....	Andrew Nagy
<u>Board Members</u>		
		Clereen Brunty
		Polly Gill
		Beverly Holmes
		Patty Thompson
<u>Committees</u>		
Hospitality	.....	Clereen Brunty
Refreshments	.....	Polly Gill
Newsletter	.....	Jerry Pricher
		Clereen Brunty
Programs	.....	Jerry Pricher
Scholarship	.....	Louie Holt
		Jerry Pricher
Archivist	.....	Louie Holt
Depot Museum	.....	Carolyn Dean
Jeffries House	.....	Clereen Brunty
Fundraisers	.....	Patty Thompson

Boardwalk Boosters

Carolyn Dean
 Maryhelen Clague
 Greg First
 Bill Kustes
 Jackie & Terry Lindsey
 Andrew Nagy
 Rod & Carol Rehrig
 Margaret Seppanen
 James Schultz

Scholarship Boosters

Ray Alvarez
 Elsie Burgess
 Maryhelen Clague
 Carolyn Dean
 Greg First
 Thea Johnson
 Bill Kustes
 Dr. Richard Moore
 Andrew Nagy
 Anna Poe
 Jerry Pricher
 Linda Sante
 Margaret Seppanen
 James Shultz

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Raymond Alvarez	Duke Chadwell	Beverly Holmes	Andrew Nagy	Mary Ann Sanders
Darlene Bamberger	Vera Chenkin	Louie Holt	Margie Partain	Tim Sanders
Beverly Barnett	Margaret Cherry	Thea Johnson	Hal Perdeu	Linda Sante
Elaine Benjamin	Maryhelen Clague	James Kaylor	Shirley Pillow	Margaret Seppanen
Art Besinger	Jeffrey Cook	Jean Kaylor	Anna Poe	James Shultz
John Bolender	Carolyn Dean	Connie Kirkland	Bob & Penny Porter	Steve Spina
Anna Boone	Irene Dobson	Bill Kustes	Jerry Pricher	Al Stone
George Boone	Vicki Elkins	Jackie Lindsey	Carol Rehrig	Patty Thompson
Lori Brightwell	Greg First	Terry Lindsey	Rodney Rehrig	Steve Turner
Clereen Brunty	Gail Geiger	Anne Mester	Sharon Reisman	Terry Turner
Elsie Burgess	Nathan Geiger	Jeff Miller	Jim Ryals	Dave Walters
Kathy Burnside	Polly Gill	Barb & Rick Moore	Tammy Kay Ryman	Ernie Wise
Rosemary Carrigg	Betty Hall	Dr. Rick Moore	Kim Sanders	Madonna Wise

 <p>Clereen Morrill Brunty ZHS Alumni Contact clereen@tampabay.rr.com 813-782-8763</p>	 <p>chalet flowers Kim|Tim| Maryann Sanders owners Ph: 813-788-2874 chaletflowersfl.com 5002 7th Street Zephyrhills, FL 33542</p>
---	--

Editor: Jerry Pricher, 5138 20th Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542
 Phone: 813-788-2547 email: jerry@pricher.net

PASCO COUNTY HISTORY
From Jeff Miller's site at fivay.org

LACOOCHEE

Editor's Note: Jeff has a tremendous amount of material about Lacoochee at his site, so I suspect you will see more articles in the coming months. I have a special place in my heart for this little community because of my father, who talked quite a bit about the Florida Power customers he served in the area. He talked often about "Mudcat" Grant, for instance. He had tremendous respect for him as a baseball player. I am not sure whether Daddy ever actually met him, but he knew his mother pretty well, and always spoke highly of her.

"Mudcat" Grant Recalls Lacoochee Days

This article appeared in the St. Petersburg Times on April 9, 1989.

By BRYANNA LATOOF

LACOOCHEE — In the darkened Lacoochee theater, where spectators basked in the glow of Roy Rogers and Gene Autry flicks, Jim "Mudcat" Grant was in his glory.

He and other children growing up in Lacoochee couldn't wait for the weekend serials — the horses, the Indians and wild chases through vast deserts — that offered a respite from the stark reality outside.

The only adventure that topped the show was the trek to the theater itself.

"We had to go through the white area and down by the railroad depot and we always encountered them. The white kids would hit us upside the head all the way to the movie. As soon as we were on that side of the track, there wasn't much we could do.

"But when they'd come on our side to sell fruits and rabbits, we'd duke them too. I remember that very distinctly," said Grant, who grew up to become a famous baseball pitcher who garnered various honors during his career.


Grant, a retired player who owns the Black Golfers Association Tournaments, a professional black golf tour based in Los Angeles, frequently visits his family and friends in this rural Pasco community just north of Dade City. He recalls with fondness his childhood days spent growing up in Lacoochee.

"My life as a boy there in those days, we were really poor. Like not having any shoes until you were somewhere around 9-years-old. We went barefoot to school.

"I remember the teachings of my mother and the concept of survival as a little boy . . . despite the fact that it was as bad as it was in terms of not having electric lights or a bathtub. We didn't even know anything about bathtubs then," he said.

Mudcat — so dubbed by fellow players — often went to the Withlacoochee River to catch fish or hunt wild game to put something on the table.




Zephyrhills Museum of Military History
A City of Zephyrhills Facility
Open Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
39444 South Ave. (813) 780-0078

Artistic Expressions
 5906 7th Street
 Zephyrhills, Florida 33542
 813 783-7731
 Custom picture framing
 Prints Needlework Photos Paintings
 Computer photo editing
 Beverly Koehler Barnett, Owner aelframer@gmail.com

Grant, along with his twin sister, Johnnie Mae, and his brother Julious, grew up never really knowing their father James Grant Sr., who died from pneumonia when his children were young.

“He was a lumber mill man like everybody else at the time. I remember what he stood for, because every time I got in trouble there was a peach switch, the kind that didn’t break.

Of all Grant’s memories, the weekend movies he saw made some of the most lasting impressions.

“We went to the theater on Saturdays and sometimes on Sunday. It cost 9 cents. I used to remember all of the Gene Autry and Roy Rogers serials. Serials were big in those days. We used to keep up with them,” he said.

It was an even bigger thrill when, years later as a professional baseball player, he got to personally know Gene Autry, the current owner of the California Angels. “Every time I go to Angel Stadium, Gene comes through and we get a chance to speak,” said Grant. “The first thing he says is: How is everything in Lacoochee?”

Lacoochee in the Beginning

By *NELL MOODY WOODCOCK*

Lacoochee. A town with a funny name that thrived in west central Florida for nearly 40 years. This is where Cummer Sons Cypress Company, a giant in the logging and lumber industry, made their last stand near the Withlacoochee River. It was the ideal location for the harvesting of timber.

The Withlacoochee begins in the heart of the Green Swamp and flows north before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico at Yankeetown in Levy County. Our little town in Pasco County is miles inland from the gulf. It is located on the northern edge of this vast swamp which stretches south toward the Everglades. The Green Swamp is the headwaters of several other major rivers in Florida.

In the 1920s the Green Swamp was a vast reservoir of 100-year-old virgin cypress trees.

Our story is about families who lived in Lacoochee and surrounding areas. Some were born here long before Cummer came to town. Some followed Cummer looking for work. And new families were started.

I, Nell Moody Woodcock, was introduced to Lacoochee in 1926 shortly after my birth in Baxley, Georgia. My parents, Emma Jane and F. E. Moody, had returned to my maternal grandmother’s home in Baxley, Georgia, for the birth of their second child. My father was back at Cummer’s crate mill before the end of that summer.

Among the early settlers was a business man named Charles Jenson (1859 - 1948) and his wife Texas Jenson (1874 - 1931) who helped make the town tick around the turn of the century. Another was E. F. Dutton who owned a turpentine company draining sap from the area’s pine forests. We will come back to them in a minute.

The story of the family and descendants of Jacob Cummer whose lumber dynasty began in Canada before moving into Michigan in 1876 is another matter. Theirs is a tale of the scalping of vast forests of ancient trees. Some, like the cypress had bell bottoms with “knees” that anchored them to river bottoms and swamps. Hardwood and cypress were needed to provide building material and livelihood for the nation’s growing population. Cummer made a trek through North Carolina and Georgia, before settling in Florida. They chose Jacksonville’s seaport on the St. John’s River near the Florida-Georgia line for their corporate headquarters. From here they supervised their vast logging operations as they crisscrossed the state from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico inching south from one river swamp to the next. Eventually they hit Lacoochee and built one of the states largest sawmills in central Florida.

WATSON CLINIC LLP

Dermatology at Zephyrhills

Rick L. Moore, M.D.
Dermatology

6901 Medical View Lane
Zephyrhills, Florida 33542
www.WatsonClinic.com

Office: 813-788-7867
Fax: 813-783-7187

In Memory of

Ryals Furniture Exchange
And Great Parents
Powell & Maude Ryals

From son James

God Bless America

From there they sent their logging crews into the Everglades and rail cars brought train loads of logs back to the mill in Lacoochee. But nearing the end of the state didn't spell the end of Cummer's operation. Before it was over, they had dipped into Honduras in South America with their eye on that country's vast forests of virgin mahogany. They harvested mahogany for a while but eventually the loggers' saws and axes were silenced by that country's government in the late 1950s. Mahogany trees could no longer be shipped from their port to one in the United States, loaded on rail cars in Tampa and delivered to Cummer's mill in Lacoochee.



One writer has described Cummer's reign over the logging industry in Florida and the growth that followed their mills similar to the gold rush but more subtle.

Now back to Jensen. In the 1920s Jensen was sitting pretty. He was the man with his eye on a community of less than 100 families. Jensen was postmaster, express agent for a railroad company and owner of a large tract of land. Charles and Texas lived in a large house with a wrap around porch on a little hill behind the post office.

Trilby, a thriving railroad junction, was located about a mile west of Lacoochee. The county seat of government in Dade City was six miles to the south and these rural communities were connected by State Road 575. Families to the east in the Clay Sink area were engaged in ranching, farming and the turpentine industry.

Jensen knew Cummer was coming to town and would build a small community for its workers. Electricity for those homes and the mill operations would be produced on site from waste product at the sawmill. And the homes would have indoor plumbing.

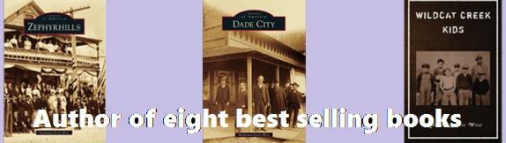

He subdivided part of his land and began selling lots to new merchants eagerly awaiting the arrival of these families and Cummer's payroll. He knew that a two-story hotel with spacious dining room for employees and guests would be built. The community's first school followed Cummer's arrival.

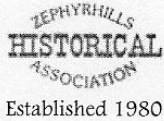
Cummer had a two-story bungalow built within walking distance of the railroad station in town for officials who came by rail from corporate headquarters in Jacksonville. A cook and caretaker, who lived in a cabin behind the bungalow, took care of their needs when they were in town.

The buildings were painted a bright red, in stark contrast to the drab gray of the two railroad stations.

The sawmill opened and the logging of timber began on tens of thousand of acres of land in the area known as the Cumpressco Swamp. A railroad tram and dirt road connected the Cumpressco camp with the mill in Lacoochee. Families at the camp used Dade City's River Road to access that town with its schools, churches and courthouse. The town of Lacoochee soon resembled those in Zane Grey novels — a line of frame buildings of different shapes and sizes connected by a boardwalk located across a dirt road and railroad tracks from the train station.

Our next story will tell about the first merchants to purchase property from Jensen. We will introduce two of them now. Elias Abraham and his brother Joseph Abraham moved to Lacoochee from Newberry, Florida, in Alachua County. Elias, nicknamed "Abe," was more outgoing than his younger brother Joe. Abe's friendly manner and the drug store he built with its soda fountain and sundries soon made him one of the most popular men in town. Joe built a pool hall a couple of doors down from Abe's Drug Store. A few years later, Joe's wife Marvin opened a restaurant in the building in between the two men.

 <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>License # GD1 09084</p>  <p>Garage Doors, Inc. Kerry Ryman Owner</p> <p><i>Residential/Commercial & Gate Openers</i></p> <p>4622 Gall Blvd. • Zephyrhills, Florida 33542 Telephone: 813-782-5926 • Fax: 813-322-8343 kerry@3rgaragedoors.com</p>
--	---



ZEPHYRHILLS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 3RD, 2019

The Regular Business Meeting of the Zephyrhills Historical Association was called to order by President Jerry Pricher at 5:37 P.M. He gave the Invocation then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Printed Minutes of the August Meeting were in the newsletter. There was a motion made to approve the Minutes by Rod Rehrig, seconded by Al Stone and agreed to by the members.

Treasurer Andy Nagy read the Treasurer's Report with a motion to approve made by Al Stone, seconded by Jim Shultz and accepted by all.

In welcoming new members and guests, Jim Shultz is present and is already a member of our group.

Old Business: For our Fundraiser, Patty Thompson says we will be going to Sergio's on September 24th. at 4 P.M. and she has passed out flyers.

Rod again brought up the 9/11 Ceremony to be held at the Zephyrhills Park flagpole at 11 A.M. Mayor Whitfield and Danny Burgess will be speaking and members of various military organizations will participate. Rod added that there will be a spaghetti dinner for \$5 over at the American Legion Hall afterward.

Rod also reminded everyone of the raffle tickets he is selling which are for a drawing for two to attend the Cowboy Troy Show concert and dinner on September 19th. It will benefit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, The Thomas Promise Foundation, the Boys and Girls Club of Lacoochee and others.

Al Stone mentioned again that the Daughters of the American Revolution Dade City Chapter have an event coming up on November 14th. There will be an open house for 3 homes in Dade City and 3 in Zephyrhills, one of which is Al's. He will get the information to Jerry to announce the particulars.

Jerry passed out copies of the proposed changes to the By-Laws which include striking the provision of the 2 year limit for officers, as well as the Budget and Finance Committee, adding "the Jeffries House" for docents, striking "Education" from Article V, section e. just reading "Scholarships", adding to the language "end of each school year" regarding previous Scholarship recipients. Also, the Scholarship Committee will decide on the number and amount without having to ask the Board. The first Scholarship given to a senior will be titled the Rosemary Trotman Scholarship and any further ones will be titled the Zephyrhills Historical Association Scholarship.

The Gift Shop will be left as is. There was a proposal to strike "Publicity" but Jim Shultz asked why and has offered to talk to the newspaper. Clereen suggested we leave Publicity in for now. There was a motion made by Rod to approve the proposed changes to the By-Laws with the exception of Article V, j. "Publicity". This was seconded by Jim Shultz, and the motion carried. Jerry says he will update and send out copies and that the Board can sign the new one at the next meeting.

Other Old Business: None

New Business: Rod announced that he has raffle tickets for \$1 each, 6 for \$5 to benefit the Marine Corps League Scholarship Fund. First prize is \$5,000 and there will be 26 gift card prizes. This is state wide.

Jerry brought up the annual Christmas Party, asking if we want it as previous years, giving Clereen \$5 per person to get the meat and everyone signing up to prepare the rest or shall we get Gail Fisher to cater as she did for the Christmas in July event. The cost will be \$15 per person which should cover her cost and that of renting the room. Clereen made a motion to have Gail Fisher cater our Christmas Party, Rod seconded it and the motion carried. December 5th at 5 P.M. will be the date if Gail is available for that date, as well as the room.

Other New Business: The Board had talked about having a dinner night out at Tubby's since our Fundraiser will take place later in the month than usual. It was agreed that we meet at Tubby's at 5 P.M. on September 12th.

There was a motion to adjourn made by Jim, seconded by Rod and agreed to by the group. The meeting ended at 6:04 P.M.

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