

# TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 22 – Number 1

January 2020

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> in the meeting room of the *Zephyrhills Public Library*, 5347 8<sup>th</sup> 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

We were treated to a slide show of the Mural created by Christi Spoto, Maria Spoto, and Barbara Bales Moore in 2010, which was recently coated with a protective sealant by Danny White. Clereen did the honors. Barb was in attendance, along with her husband, Rick, as well as Elaine Summerhill, friend and supporter. Although Danny contributed his work, our association spent some of the money we had collected for this project to provide him with some gift certificates for local eateries. He was very appreciative.



Cliff McDuffie, former Mayor of Zephyrhills, will be our speaker for the February meeting. He was scheduled to speak last year but was unable to make his appearance due to a family emergency. He's back, and we are excited to have him as our speaker. I informed him that our current mayor had already given us a history of Zephyrhills mayors, but I left it up to Cliff to decide on his topic. I told him we were interested in hearing anything about his own personal history or anything having to do with Zephyrhills. I also told him that he would be among friends, which he certainly will be. Come join us.

**Tuesday, February 18<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.



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

Email: [zephyrhillsmgr@patriotstorage.com](mailto: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](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.

<u>Executive Board</u>		
President	.....	Rod Rehrig
Vice President	.....	Jerry Pricher
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
Fundraisers	.....	Patty Thompson

Boardwalk Boosters

Elsie Burgess  
 Jeff Cook  
 Jackie & Terry Lindsey  
 Andrew Nagy  
 Anna Poe  
 Rod & Carol Rehrig

Scholarship Boosters

Elsie Burgess  
 Maryhelen Clague  
 Jeff Cook  
 Carolyn Dean  
 Polly Gill  
 Louie Holt  
 Bill Kustes  
 Anne Mester  
 Dr. Richard Moore  
 Andrew Nagy  
 Anna Poe  
 Jerry Pricher  
 Linda Sante  
 Steve Spina

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

**HILLSBOROUGH RIVER STATE PARK  
AND PARK RANGER ARTHUR “ART” FISH**

*Written by Art Fish and given to Clereen Morrill Brunty  
Saturday, July 10, 2010*


I began my eleven years working at Hillsborough River State Park the last week of December of 1947 laying up rock foundations for the concrete slab picnic tables. April 1, 1948 I became a Park Ranger and continued building the rock tables along with helping with the upkeep of the park. The rock consisted of Florida lime rock as seen in many places in the area including the Women’s Club, Chris Bahr’s Plumbing building, the old band shell, bridge and water fountains that use to be in Zephyr Park as well as other places you will see as you ride around town.

I was chosen to operate the concession stand on Saturday, Sunday and Holidays. I had never sold anything in my lifetime and was a bit nervous about giving the correct change in money on a sale. I had a good person who had been running it continue working with me for about one year.

Cold drinks sold for a nickel in glass bottles only and we collected a nickel deposit on each bottle to get the bottle back. We would lose money if we didn’t get the bottle back. The second year price of soft drinks was raised to a dime and “boy” did the griping ever take place. People just quit buying it knowing it took almost two years for people to fully buy it. Candy was a nickel, one cent for a paper wrapped piece of candy and salted peanuts were a nickel. The glass bottles were still being used when I left the park in 1959.

The year 1950 when I was 29 years old, I was asked if I would take a water lifeguard course with Wendell Milton that wanted to be a lifeguard at the park. I said I would so we went to the YMCA gym in Tampa during the night hours and took a shortened course. Just the two of us was instructed. Wendell got married soon afterwards and never was the lifeguard. So for the next nine years I was, as I called it, the assistant lifeguard. Students that were in college swim sports were hired during the summer months and I would leave my job at the concession stand and go to the swimming area and take their post for an hour while they at dinner. If there was no lifeguard besides me then I would be the lifeguard for the whole day and I would eat my noon meal sitting on the life guard stand. Oh yes, I almost forgot, the swim area was in the Hillsborough River, which was 12 feet deep.

The water was the color of tea from the tannic acid from the tree leaves. The bottom of the river could not be seen and almost impossible to see more than three to four feet below the surface.

<p><b>WATSON CLINIC<sup>LLP</sup></b> Dermatology at Zephyrhills</p> <p><b>Rick L. Moore, M.D.</b> Dermatology</p> <p>6901 Medical View Lane Zephyrhills, Florida 33542 www.WatsonClinic.com</p> <p>Office: 813-788-7867 Fax: 813-783-7187</p>	<p><b>Artistic Expressions</b> 5906 7th Street Zephyrhills, Florida 33542 813 783-7731</p> <p> Custom picture framing Prints Needlework Photos Paintings Computer photo editing</p> <p>Beverly Koehler Barnett, Owner      aeframer@gmail.com</p>
--	---

So this meant don't let anyone go under to where you had to find him or her. Get them before by noticing if they are in trouble and hit the water and got them out in which I did a few times. No one ever came back and thanked me so being a lifeguard is a thankless job. All I ever pulled out were young kids just learning to swim or a little bit better. The river water was declared unfit to swim soon after I left and the above ground swim pool was built where it is now.

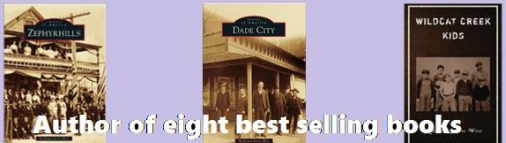

The year 1950 I began doing tree work for people in Zephyrhills on my days off from the park. My first job was for Mary Granger that had the Kindergarten on the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. My grandparents lived directly across the street and my grandpa did small repair jobs on the playground things. I used a borrowed ladder and saw to do the work from my grandpa. So this is how I got to know Mary Granger. I gradually built up my working equipment and know-how and it got to be a full time business on my day and half off from the park. The park was a forty-four week day job.



Either in the year of 1953 or 1954 I was asked by city Councilman Bernard Burns to give a price to remove the ten oak trees on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to 9<sup>th</sup> Street so the wide island could be narrowed. I gave the city a price of fifteen hundred dollars to remove them all by the roots and haul away to the city dump. They accepted the offer and then I made arrangements with the State Park for vacation time to do the work. The work took me ten days from Monday through Friday for a two weeks' time.

Only one person came to me and objected to removing them. I told her that the city came to me and asked for a price and I gave one and I did not give my opinion about removing them, and that I was asked. That was all to that chat. I was about to start the job and a man came walking up the sidewalk that I thought I knew and said to me, "my name is Larry Powell and I own the Hotel down the street in the next block and if any one comes and objects to taking these trees down, you send them down to see me as I've wanted these trees out and the island narrowed from the first day I got here and bought the hotel." That is how I got to know Larry Powell.

The tree at the west end by 7<sup>th</sup> Street was split apart in the hurricane that came through the day of the first Founders Day celebration. I was told by three or four people that they helped cable it back together and poured cement in the hollow center of the trunk of the tree. This was the last tree to be taken out so I had two weeks to think about the cement in it and how I was going to avoid hitting the cement with my chain saw. I did it by cutting the tree off as close to the ground as possible and hauling the whole length of the log in one piece. I did not hit or full the saw on any cement.

 <p><b>Author of eight best selling books</b></p> <p><b>Madonna Wise Books</b>  <b>Author, Research &amp; Consulting</b>  <b>Madonna Jervis Wise</b>  <b>Zephyrhills, Florida</b>  <b>Murphy, North Carolina</b></p> <p><b>813-469-8627</b>  <b>MadonnaJWise@gmail.com</b>  <a href="http://madonnawisebooks.wordpress.com">http://madonnawisebooks.wordpress.com</a></p>	<p>License # GDI 09084</p>  <p><b>Garage Doors, Inc.</b>  <b>Kerry Ryman</b>  <b>Owner</b></p> <p><i>Residential/Commercial &amp; Gate Openers</i></p> <p>4622 Gall Blvd. • Zephyrhills, Florida 33542  Telephone: 813-782-5926 • Fax: 813-322-8343  <a href="mailto:kerry@3rgaragedoors.com">kerry@3rgaragedoors.com</a></p>
--	---

This last tree was in very loose sand that the sand would slide back in the hole when you threw a shovel out so just at quitting time at the end of the day, I hooked up several garden hoses to run water down into the hole to wet it down so the sand would not slide back in the hold. Cecil McGavern had his electric business right near and someone



went in his place and asked him “what do you think Art Fish is doing watering down that tree?” Cecil said I don’t know what Art Fish is doing out there but I do know that Art Fish knows what he is doing! All the digging had to be done by hand because there is a city main water line there.

Just about every Saturday morning during the Fall, Winter and Spring months from the day I became a Park

Ranger, we would take the ton and a half flatbed truck up to just south of Bushnell on highway 301 and load the rock on the truck that were left there when 301 was graded up. About the year 1956 or 1957, Arthur Austin, the architect in Zephyrhills, drew up plans for a 90 foot long rock boat dock to replace the old wooden boat dock. So we had a huge pile of rocks to do the job. Arthur Austin got in touch with Paul Beatty and Ed Horneker to ask them if they would help lay up the rock boat dock. Paul and Ed were block layers and Paul told Arthur Austin he never laid rock in his life and knew nothing about how to do it. Austin told him there is a man that works at the park that knows how and will be helping you and he knows how by the name of Arthur Fish. We had known each other since I came to Zephyrhills in 1947 to live. Paul said he would do it and they very first thing that Paul said to me when we began laying up the first rock was, “Art, I am a block layer not a rock layer and I don’t know a thing about how to do this”. I showed him and Ed by picking out a big rock with a flat side and stood it on end facing the front side and then taking the next rock right next to it and putting cement between the rocks and continue on down the line. That was all of the instructions that I had to give them. They were both doing it like an old pro by the end of the first day. The three of us built it in three weeks’ time. Paul told me that he would have never got it done without me.



This dock was seven feet wide at the bottom and nine feet high. The rock structure was rough on the bow of boats by chewing the wood bumping against it. The building by the dock with the four rock corner pillars laid up all by myself, taking my time, and mixing my own cement.

The first of January 1958 we the Rangers began a task that seemed to me to be impossible because we had not a bit of equipment to do the job. It was replacing the four large wood columns that held up the suspension bridge. I said to the person that was to be the foreman of the job “I don’t know if we can do this” and his reply was “we are going to do it even if we drop the damn thing in the river!” A winch truck with lots of feet of one half inch steel wire cable was rented to do the power lifting. Two large pine trees were cut down and cut to the correct length and then stood on end beside the two to be replaced. Then one was cut to correct length and put on top of the two and a little bit higher than the ones to be replaced. Four large one inch steel bolts were made by a machine shop to hook on to the cable and tighten the nuts and raise the cable about one inch, just enough to remove the old columns and the cross piece. This was the easiest job of the whole think tightening the nuts!

The new columns and cross piece was then raised and put in place and nuts screwed and cable was lowered into its place. This completed the job on the south side. The columns were drug across the river with the winch. The job took three months to complete so all went in slow motion and no mistakes were made. The hardest work was digging the dirt out from around the four pillars that was ten feet into the ground resting on a big cement foundation.

I am still in awe as to how easy it was to do the job without dropping the thing in the river. We never stopped visitors from crossing the bridge until we took up the wood boards and put down new ones. The old pillars were about twenty five years old and the ones we put in have now been there for fifty two years!

Crystal Springs that flows forty million gallons of water per day furnished all of the river water except the rain from flood water. The Hillsborough River starts at Green Swamp when the swamp is filled. When the swamp dries up, the water stops flowing out and the river dries up and then there is no water flowing above Crystal Springs and the springs then becomes the whole source of the river.

The river rapids has an overall drop off of about eight feet in a distance of about the length of two football fields. The main rapids where the rocks are, the drop is about five feet deep in distance of 20 to 30 feet. Above this five foot drop for the length of two football fields, the drop is a slight drop, just enough to see the water ripple. From the rapids to where the river empties into Tampa Bay, the river is 40 miles long as it has many twists and turns. The elevation is 40 feet at the rapids so this means that the river drops one foot per mile which is a very slight drop. A bee line from the rapids to Tampa Bay where it flows into the Bay is 24 miles so the river has 15 miles of turns.

After we replaced the bridge columns, a bulldozer was hired and the North boundary of the park was leveled off and we dug post holes by hand and a fence was built with cement posts and barbed wire. This was the last big job that I helped do.

There was a few other jobs that I did, a lot of moving with a walking gravely mower and a ford tractor, grading the one mile loop dirt road, grubbing out palmetto bushes for camping area, manned a booth at the State Fair located in Tampa by the University of Tampa, repaired 12 foot cypress fishing boats and bailed water out of boats after a rain. I also painted the 29 boats, oars and many garbage cans. The park did not furnish us with a uniform. We each bought a gray pair or two of gray trousers at Sears in Tampa. I helped move Park Rangers that lived in the park from one park to another in a ton and a half flatbed truck. The park service was on a low amount of finances and could not hire a moving van.

The men rangers were called Uncles and their wives, Aunts. There was Uncle Joe, Uncle Carl, Uncle Dan and me, Uncle Arthur along with Aunt Betty, Aunt Cynthia and so on. Oh yes, I learned to like this southern cooking as I was raised in Gillingham, Wisconsin in a family of six sisters and four brothers and graduated in 1936 from English Ridge School. After marrying my wife, Betty, and moving to Zephyrhills, we raised a daughter, Mary Fish who graduated from Zephyrhills High School in 1966. I was a big supporter to the ZHS Quarterback Club which later became the ZHS Booster Club and helped to give out many awards to graduates. I was awarded a plaque for "Member of the Year" 1983-84 by the ZHS Booster Club which was a great honor. My motto "I took myself out of the park but I didn't take the park out of me!" When Mary and her family visit Zephyrhills, they try to make it a point to take me to Hillsborough River State Park which brings back lots of fond memories.