

# TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 22 – Number 10

October 2020

**There will be NO scheduled meeting in November.**

### Future Meetings

I have been in contact with the library staff, and I am of the opinion that we will, in all likelihood, not have any meetings this year. In fact, it appears to me that the earliest we might attempt to have an in-person meeting would be in February of 2021. The State of Florida seems to be in a place concerning this virus that is no better than it was back in March. I also spoke with Bill Kustes, and the Clubhouse at Wedgewood Manor remains closed. I think it best that we not plan to have our annual Christmas Dinner this year. So I will make no effort to try to do so. We are all in this together, and I certainly hope all of use are playing it safe. I will continue to produce these newsletters each month to keep us in contact.

### *From the Desk of the Editor Membership and Advertising*

It's time again to ask for your monetary support in regard to our organization and this newsletter. Dues are \$15 per year, advertising for members is \$15 (non-members is \$25), Boardwalk Booster is \$5, and contributions to the scholarship fund are welcome in any amount. Please mail your checks to **Andrew Nagy, 5548 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542**. Thanks in advance.

**There will be NO fundraisers for the time being.**



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**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.

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## HISTORY OF PASCO COUNTY

Jeff Miller's [fivay.org](http://fivay.org) website

## Blanton

**1883.** J. G. Blanton, for whom Blanton is named, acquires property here and builds a log cabin east of Blanton Lake.

**1884.** A post office is established east of Blanton Lake. Horace J. Charles was the first postmaster.

**1886-87.** The *Florida State Gazetteer* lists these residents: H. J. Charles, general merchandise; J. W. Charles, general merchandise; Evans Bros., shingle mill; A. F. Newkirk, physician; and farmers James Miller, J. M. O'Berry, F. E. Blocker, and S. O. James.

**1887.** The Orange Belt Railroad comes to Blanton. The community relocated from the west side of Blanton Lake to where it is today.

**1900.** L. B. Bessenger comes to Blanton and buys the turpentine business. See the recollections of his daughter Lillian Bessenger Hines [here](#).

**1910.** The Blanton Packing Co. opens, according to a 2004 *Tampa Tribune* article.



**Jan. 1, 1913.** The *Tampa Morning Tribune* reports, "The Tampa Bay Land Company is very busy at this season driving prospective buyers over its lands in autos. It has sold fifteen hundred acres in the vicinity of Blanton and the Jessamine Grove to Germans from Minnesota, who expect to soon settle on the tract with people of their own nationality from the north."

**Nov. 13, 1914.** The *Dade City Banner* reports, "Mrs. Raymond Hitchcock, wife of the noted actor, and her brother, arrived in the city

Tuesday and are making their headquarters at the Edwinola for the present. Mrs. Hitchcock bought the old Blanton tract, consisting of 300 acres, last year, from Mr. Stewart, manager of the Hippodrome, of New York, who was here last winter, and expects to spend the winter here in improving her property, setting out a large orange grove on it in the near future. The Blanton estate is about six miles from town, and Mrs. Hitchcock and brother, should they decide to stay here, will probably buy property and build a winter home in the city, managing their grove from this place."

**Dec. 24, 1914.** The *Tampa Morning Tribune* reports, "Blanton is now becoming famous as a heavy shipping point of kumquats, the lovely little 'gold orange,' some 400 crates of this fruit having moved out last week by express. The crop this season is larger than ever before, the fruit is bright and exceptionally large in size. C. J. Nathe, Messrs. Blocker and Dowling and Jessamine Groves are all heavy shippers of the kumquat fruit. The Jessamine Groves report shipments of 250 crates of 'gold oranges' last week."

WATSON CLINIC<sup>LLP</sup>

Dermatology at Zephyrhills

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## Artistic Expressions

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**June 19, 1915.** The *Tampa Morning Tribune* reports that the community was shocked and saddened by the death of James Berry Miller, a prominent resident of Blanton.

**Feb. 7, 1919.** The *Tampa Morning Tribune* reports, “The fruit growers here are shipping a car of fruit every day from the Blanton packing house. They bought the fruit of the Jessamine grove. There has already been shipped over 40,000 boxes of fruit from Blanton this season. The Jessamine Grove’s Nurseries are very busy shipping citrus fruit trees, roses and ornamental plants from their large nurseries near Blanton.”



**Mar. 4, 1921.** The *Dade City Banner* reports: “J. M. O’Berry, the pioneer of Blanton, has deeded to Sanford Blocker and Fred O’Berry as trustees, to hold in perpetuity as a public park, the triangular piece of land in the village of Blanton between the station, the post office and the street.”

**Dec. 20, 1923.** The *Tampa Morning Tribune* reports:

BLANTON-JESSAMINE, Dec. 19.—Fire of an unknown origin destroyed the packing house belonging to Capt. George Warner of Tampa between 2 and 3 o’clock Sunday morning. Two Atlantic Coast Line cars loaded with rock for the hard road to the county line were badly damaged, and but for the heroic efforts of the people of the community, who kept dashing water on it, the large packing house of J. R. Jeffords of Clearwater would also have been destroyed. The fire was first discovered by E. W. Dansby, a local merchant, who was awakened shortly after 2 o’clock by the crackling of the flames. He immediately began firing his pistol and shouting until he had awakened all of the other people of the town. There was no chance whatever to save Capt. Warner’s packing house, which was a galvanized iron structure, as the entire interior was a mass of flames, and every effort was put forth to prevent the flames from spreading. The origin of the fire is a mystery.

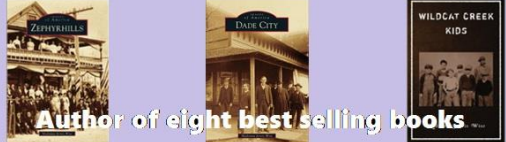
**July 14, 1924.** The Blanton Packing Co. begins work on a modern packing house which is expected to be ready for business on Nov. 1.

**Oct. 29, 1926.** The *Dade City Banner* reports, “Frank Simpson, colored fireman on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, was instantly killed and six other employees of the road were injured, one of them probably fatally, when extra freight train No. 815 collided with Work Train No. 273 on a curve one mile north of Blanton, six miles from Dade City, about 11 o’clock Thursday morning.”

**Aug. 5, 1927.** Mary F. O’Berry, wife of John M. O’Berry, thought to be the oldest female resident of Pasco County, dies at her home in Blanton. On Aug. 14, Mr. O’Berry died.

**Feb. 11, 1932.** S. J. Ansley, age 92, dies. He was thought to be the oldest resident of Pasco County.

**Sept. 27, 1932.** The Parker & Compher store in Blanton is destroyed by fire.

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