

HISTORY OF ZEPHYRHILLS – Part 2

1911 - 1920

Oct. 5, 1911. Vol. I, No. 1, of the newspaper the Zephyrhills Colonist appears.

1912. The Grand Army of the Republic Hall is constructed in Zephyrhills.

1912. The First Methodist Church traces its founding to this year, when 30 members met with the Rev. N. J. Hawley in the dining room of a home.

Aug. 1, 1912. The First State Bank of Zephyrhills begins operations, having bought out the McCormick, Stapleton, & Co., bankers, of Zephyrhills. [On July 16, 1915, the Dade City Banner reported that the banks in Zephyrhills have consolidated, with the American State Bank of Zephyrhills purchasing the assets of the First State Bank of Zephyrhills.]

Aug. 8, 1912. The Atlanta Constitution has: "Zephyr Hills, Fla. August 7.—Richard A. Burke, vice president and general manager of the Homestead Land company of Crystal Springs, near here, jumped in front of a fast moving passenger train today and was instantly killed. ... Burke came here two years ago from Milwaukee, Wis., and was one of the foremost citizens in this section. No reason is known for the rash act."

Jan. 5, 1913. The Tampa Morning Tribune reports, "The Colony Company is putting up a stand in the park for the band boys."

June 27, 1913. An advertisement in the Tampa Morning Tribune states that Zephyrhills is a new town, three years old, and now has a population of nearly 2,000. It is on the main line of the Seaboard Railway.

Sept. 11, 1914. The Dade City Banner reports:

School opened Monday morning with eight teachers and 185 pupils. All the children were not out the first day; will probably run to two hundred and fifty, as many of our settlers have not yet returned from their visit to the north.

This school opened with eleven pupils the fall of 1909, did not keep the average up to 10, so the school was disbanded. The fall of 1910 school opened with 61; this was the first year of the colony. The fall of 1911 opened with 79. The fall of 1912 opened with 103. The fall of 1913 opened with 171. The fall of 1914 opened with 185. This is a very good showing for a town only four years old. There were 206 pupils enrolled last year and this year will go away beyond that number as quite a number of families have been added to our colony since last spring.

Zephyrhills is to have a new depot. The Seaboard people are unloading brick and other material just north of their old depot. We are very glad to see this move taken by the Seaboard. The present depot has been very inadequate to serve the people of Zephyrhills. It is one of the best paying depots between Tampa and Jacksonville, and we feel we are entitled to some consideration from the Seaboard people. We are not kicking much, as they have treated us pretty well.

The Methodists have commenced on their new \$5,000 building, contract for which has been let to Clark & Fuller. It is located on the corner of Fifth avenue and Tenth street; it is to be a fine building and the Methodists can justly feel proud of their endeavors.

Sept. 13, 1914. The Tampa Morning Tribune reports that on Sept. 18 there will be a celebration of the laying of the cornerstone of the First Methodist Church. The bricks have arrived on the ground belonging to the S. A. L. for the new depot.

Sept. 18, 1914. The Dade City Banner reports, "Tuesday the citizens of Zephyrhills showed their progressiveness by voting in favor of good roads. They voted to create a special road and bridge district No. 4, and to build 20 miles of hard roads at a cost of \$30,000, to be paid for in warrants of the district. The county Commissioners met Wednesday for the purpose of canvassing the returns and declared the election carried in favor of roads—and progress. With these roads and the Richland roads that have just been voted for and the good roads we already have this county will be in the front rank when it comes to good roads."

Oct. 30, 1914. The Dade City Banner reports, "We have just instituted a new G. A. R. Post, 'Farragut, No. 41, Dept. of Florida.' The officers of Farragut Post are: Commander, Benjamin Franklin Gilbert; Senior Vice Commander, H. W. Kirby; Junior Vice Commander, L. A. Barnett; Adjutant, Samuel E. Nyce; Quartermaster, J. C. Percival; Officer of the Day, C. G. Hopkins; Officer of the Guard, Rev. J. A. Ball; Chaplain, Rev. E. T. Gray; Patriotic Instructor, Lemuel P. Stovens. They already have between 25 and 30 members, with more coming. They have pledged themselves not to proselyte the members of Garfield Post—from which the members of this new Post have chiefly withdrawn—or in any way antagonize the welfare of that Post, preferring rather to cultivate the spirit of true fraternity, charity and loyalty towards all comrades, and thus give to these words meaning more than of "Sounding brass of a clanging symbol." We are building a fine M. E. Church, which, it is expected, will be ready to occupy sometime in December."

Nov. 13, 1914. The Dade City Banner reports, "O. N. Williams & Son, popular owners of the Dade City Racket store, announce that they will open up a racket store at Zephyrhills Saturday of this week. The store is to be run in connection with their racket store of this place and will carry a complete stock of dry goods, toys, novelties, and a general line of five, ten, and twenty-five-cent goods. The Dade City Racket Store is one of the progressive business houses of this city, and has enjoyed a liberal patronage from an appreciative public during its existence here, and while the store at this place will be kept up to its high standard, the proprietors will put in a first-class establishment at Zephyrhills."

Nov. 17, 1914. The vote to incorporate Zephyrhills is held at the G. A. R. Hall. [It passed 65 to 12. W. C. Boggs was elected Mayor, and the five aldermen elected were N. L. Wright, S. J. Lyons, A. D. Penry, S. G. Allen, and W. J. McLaughlin. Peter O. Bobb was chosen marshal and P. T. Williams was chosen city clerk.]

Dec. 4, 1914. In an article about Zephyrhills, the Dade City Banner reports:

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has been very inadequate to serve the people of Zephyrhills. It is one of the best paying depots between Tampa and Jacksonville, and we feel we are entitled to some consideration from the Seaboard people, as they have treated us pretty well. The Methodists have commenced on their new \$5,000 building, contract for which has been let to Clark & Fuller. It is located on the corner of Fifth avenue and Tenth street; it is to be a fine building and the Methodists can justly feel proud of their endeavors.

Jan. 29, 1915. The Dade City Banner reports, "J. M. Harvey, president of the Bank of Commerce, of Tampa, and the Latin American Bank, of Ybor City, in company with E. W. Stapleton, was in the city Monday, making arrangements to put a new bank in this place. The name of the new one will be The American State Bank of Zephyrhills. The capital stock will be \$15,000, and it was virtually all subscribed before they arrived in town, except that which they were holding for resident stockholders. The preliminary moves have all been made, and the institution will be in running condition at the earliest possible moment. L. D. Stapleton, who is now at Ellenton, looking after the bank at that place, will be cashier. The Stapleton boys are well known and well liked at Zephyrhills, and will be intensely welcomed back in the financial world of Zephyrhills.—Colonist."

Feb. 26, 1915. The Dade City Banner reports, "Rev. J. A. Davis, who has just recently accepted the pastorate of the Baptist Church of Zephyrhills, was in the city Saturday."

March 26, 1915. The Dade City Banner reports, "The American State Bank of Zephyrhills opened for business Tuesday morning with pleasing ceremonies. A social reception was held in the bank, during which refreshments were served and carnations presented to the ladies and cigars to the men. J. M. Harvey, a leading banker of Tampa, is president of the new institution, and L. D. Stapleton, of Zephyrhills, is cashier, with E. W. Stapleton, assistant. With the opening of the new bank, this gives Zephyrhills two state banks, which should take care of the situation in that city for some time to come."

May 14, 1915. The Dade City Banner reports, "A deal was consummated this week in Zephyrhills whereby Mr. Len Gilbert of that city became the owner of the Zephyrhills electric light plant, he buying the business from Mr. W. M. Francisco. Mr. Gilbert came to Zephyrhills from Grand Rapids, Mich., about a year ago. Mr. Francisco was compelled to sell on account of his engineering business, which consumes the greater part of his time."

Nov. 28, 1915. The Tampa Morning Tribune reports, "The dedication of the new Christian Church last Sunday was a grand success. A large crowd was in attendance at all the different meetings during the day, and a satisfactory program was rendered, according to published schedule. Rev. McHargue, of Jacksonville, was the speaker of the day. The solos of Mrs. U. L. Wright and Mrs. A. H. Harvey were fine, as they always are. The church starts out with good prospects ahead and its future is enthusiastically predicted."

Dec. 13, 1915. The Tampa Morning Tribune reports, "There are three church buildings here, the Methodist Church North, which was completed this year at a cost of over \$7,000, is one of the finest in the State, considering the size of the town; the Christian Church, which has been partially finished on a few months, will cost about \$2,000 when completed, and the Union Tabernacle, where different denominations hold services, also a Catholic Church in the north part of town."

July 16, 1916. The Tampa Morning Tribune reports, "This city is to have a real hotel. The Zephyrhills Hotel Company was organized here yesterday, to construct a two-story hotel building, with four storerooms and hotel lobby on the first floor, and twenty-five rooms, parlor and other necessary rooms and convenience on the second floor. The structure is to be of concrete blocks with stucco finish and modern in every respect. It is to be completed in time for the winter tourist business. The cost will be about \$12,000." [A 1971 newspaper article reporting on the demolition of the hotel has: "Built in 1917, the hotel was operated for several years by Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Wrennick who leased it from the Zephyr Hotel Co. It was owned by a time by Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Hosburg, who sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Howard Powell. They later leased it to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Richardson. It was again taken over by the Powells until Powell's death. Their son Lawrence Powell then operated it until his death in an automobile accident two years ago."]

Nov. 26, 1917. The Tampa Morning Tribune reports, "The new Hotel Zephyr is now open for guests. There has been quite a delay in opening the hotel on account of getting furniture caused by the congested condition of the railroads."

Jan. 18, 1918. The Dade City Banner reports, "The council of this city did itself proud and greatly benefited the town by providing the people with a commodious city hall, located on Ninth street between Sixth and Seventh avenues. The council traded some property which the city owned for the building heretofore known as the 'Tabernacle,' a spacious hall 30 by 50 feet, provided with stoves for heating purposes and electrically lighted, and in the best possible location. The hall will not be rented for any purpose whatsoever, but will be for the use of all public meetings to be held by citizens of Zephyrhills. The council is to be commended for providing the citizens of this city with such a substantial public meeting place, and at the same time without expense to the town. Several public meetings have already been held at the new hall."

Mar. 22, 1918. The Dade City Banner reports: "Zephyrhills was completely terrorized Tuesday morning shortly after one o'clock when a band of bank robbers blew the safe of the American State Bank and attempted to rob the bank of about \$5,000. In the melee following the first explosion in the bank, in which twenty or more shots are said to have been exchanged between the robbers and citizens, Mr. A. B. Storms, a baker and prominent citizen of Zephyrhills, was killed by one of the bandits. Failing to gain entrance into the inner door of the safe, the bandits escaped in an automobile, which they had stationed in the edge of town, after cutting the telegraph and telephone wires, to prevent the alarm being given."

May 25, 1919. The Tampa Morning Tribune reports, "Floyd Hennington has sold his grocery business to J. F. Stebbins, and will move to Wauchula to engage in the lumber business. Mr. Hennington was in the firm with his father, L. F. Hennington, the first business house in pioneer days, before the colony company was organized."

Aug. 6, 1920. The Dade City Banner reports, "Col. H. B. Jeffries of Zephyrhills, Republican candidate for Congress from this district, was a caller on the Banner yesterday, and recalled that it was eleven years ago today that he bought the land for the Zephyrhills colony, which developed into one of the most

successful colonies of the state and has the second largest town in the county today. Col. Jeffries is in dead earnest in regard to his candidacy and asserts confidence in his election.”