The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 1st at the Zephyrhills Depot Museum, 39110 South Avenue. The business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

**Speakers**

Our speaker for September was Bob Howell, retired Police Chief of the Zephyrhills Police Department. He talked about his early years in high school, but spent most of the time talking about his experience in various positions with the department. He described his time, spanning forty years, as rewarding and enjoyable. See the Zephyrhills Free Press article on Bob’s presentation on page 3.

Our speaker for October will be Brantley Smith, lifelong resident and businessman. He’s the creator, owner, and operator of Silverado Golf & Country Club in Zephyrhills, and he has proven always to be a great friend of the Zephyrhills community and Zephyrhills High School. We’re quite confident that he’ll have some stories to relate in regard to all the changes that have taken place in the time he’s been around, and he’s likely to share with us some interesting facts about Silverado. We look forward to it!

**Thursday, September 26th, is our Ruby Tuesday Scholarship Fundraiser**

We are meeting up at 5 p.m. on that day, but you can come anytime.

Contact Clereen Brunty for flyer (20% of sales goes to scholarship fund)

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**Jeff Miller**  
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My email address is on the opening page

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**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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I Enjoyed Every Minute

*Zephyrhills Free Press September 5, 2013*

*Story and photos by Geoff Fox*

There was a catch in Bob Howell’s throat.

The former Zephyrhills Police Chief, who retired in 2002, was talking to the Zephyrhills Historical Association on Tuesday evening about his friend and mentor, former Police Chief Bill Eiland when Howell’s voice cracked and he paused briefly.

Eiland had hired Howell, after Howell twice left behind football scholarships at The University of Tampa, and the men had become close. Howell was recalling when Eiland was stricken with cancer in 1995.

“He was the best boss I ever had,” Howell said. “He let you do your own thing.”

Howell’s presentation to about 20 members of the historical association was mostly light-hearted.

“(Howell) had a long history with the city and with the police department,” said Jerry Pricher of the historical association. “I admire him, and I’m just glad to have him here tonight.”

An Augusta, Ga., native, Howell said his family moved to Zephyrhills in 1954, just before his junior year in high school, because his mother didn’t like the harsher Georgia weather.

After quitting the University of Tampa football team, Howell said that he spent two years in the U.S. Army before returning to work for his father’s plumbing company in Zephyrhills. Unfortunately, he said, there wasn’t much building going on.

One idle afternoon, Howell and Chief Eiland struck up a conversation. “He asked me if I’d come to work for the police department, and he had a job opening,” Howell said. “I went over there and I was intrigued. I’d never in my life thought of it.”
Howell started his career with the Zephyrhills Police in 1962. At the time, he said, there were about five officers on the force, some of whom worked part-time.

Back then, there two traffic lights in town, he said, one at South Avenue and one at Fifth Avenue. He said that his training consisted of an officer showing him how to turn the traffic lights off and on. “That was the beginning of my police career,” he said.

Throughout Howell’s chat, he showed pictures of old police department staff line-ups, which grew steadily through the years. He also had mementoes that had been dutifully cut out and saved by his wife Barbara.

Howell remembered one occasion when one of the dispatchers wanted to see what it was like to be a police officer. The dispatcher kept bugging him to let him drive a squad car, Howell said.

Finally, Howell relented one evening. “I told him he could drive the car around, but not to pull anybody over,” he said.

Several minutes later, the man called. “He says, ‘I have somebody pulled over,’” said Howell. The “suspect” was drunk and wouldn't follow the dispatcher’s orders.

“Well,” Howell said, “can you physically get him and put him into the patrol car?”

“Oh, no,” the dispatcher said. “He's bigger and stronger than me.”

Howell eventually got “one of the town drunks” out of his holding cell and had him sit by the phone, while Howell went out to secure the scene. The crowd laughed at the story.

Through his years at the department, Howell worked about every job. “I was a dispatcher, police officer, road sergeant, detective, captain and then chief,” he said.

He said that Zephyrhills Police Department was one of the first to use computers. “Computers were a good thing,” he said. “In the ‘80s and ‘90s, we were one of the best (agencies) in the county as far as being friendly and our response times. If someone stole your geranium off your front porch, we responded, talked to you and tried to solve the crime. We had a good rapport with the community.”

Howell said with pride that there never has been an unsolved murder in Zephyrhills, and he lauded the work currently being done by Police Chief David Shears and his force.

“I just feel blessed to have been involved with the police department,” Howell said. “I love retirement, but I had a wonderful career. I enjoyed every minute.”
I spent some time going through microfilm of Zephyrhills News articles at the City Library to try to uncover the mystery behind our town’s lawmen. There have been many stories as to who was the first Chief of Police, but in reviewing not only the articles printed in the Zephyrhills News over the years and reading the first City Council minutes, I find a varying list. In the early years when Abbott Station was founded, Federal Marshals were appointed to defend our town but may have only held the positions for a short time when someone else would be appointed.

So this story is going to be based on what was printed by Bernie Y. Wickstrom, Editor of the Zephyrhills News. It also includes the Open House of a new facility on 9th Street where our longest standing Police Chief, William R. “Bill” Eiland, gives us an overview of his tenure with the department and how quickly the community grew over the years.

Zephyrhills News — July 9, 1981

Although Abbott Station changed its name to Zephyrhills in 1910, it did not officially become an incorporated town until 1914. Prior to that date law enforcement, what there was of it, was by a Federal Marshal such as Marshal Dillon of “Gunsmoke,” although his activities were much less exciting and of such little note that there is almost no history of law enforcement of the time.

Since 1914 City Council annually appoints a Town Constable or Chief of Police to serve for one year. It has been only recently recalled in detail that Zephyrhills was once a “walled” city – well, not actually walled, but fenced in. That was because in the early years and into late in the 1920’s, Florida had an “open range” policy similar to that in the wild west, cattle grazing virtually at will and livestock ownership determined by the brand.

One of the primary jobs of the Town Constable – in addition to providing overnight housing for those tempted by demon orange wine to overindulgence – was the impounding of stray cattle which might happen to wander into town, either breaking down the perimeter fence or by coming in through one of the four compass gates. According to Mrs. Rosemary Trottman, local historian, at one time in the early 20’s there was a bitter dispute as city officials aired the complaints of cattlemen that the Zephyrhills Constable was actually driving cattle into town, inside the fence, just so he could collect the fees for their later release.
There were two hold-ups of the American State Bank in 1914... The role of the Constable changed title in the decades which followed. As automobiles became faster and speed control arrived, the Constable was permitted to deputize certain citizens to help maintain the peace during celebrations, or in case of some larger problem, and many began to call him “Chief.”

Our Community’s Top Lawmen — 1910 to current

1910 – 1913 Federal Marshals  
1914 – 1924 Constable Peter E. Bobb  
1924 – 1929 Constable “Chief” Jack “Hawkshaw” Jackson  
1930 – 1937 Constable Jimmy Boggs  
1938 – 1940 Constable Frank Forbes  
1941 – 1944 Constable Jack Shernau  
1945 Chief of Police Jim Marlow  
1946 Chief of Police D. K. Lafferty  
1947 Chief of Police Henry “Hank” Taylor  
1948 – 1951 Chief of Police Frank Forbes  
1951 Acting Chief Frank Norton  
1951 – 1952 Chief of Police Frank Eiland  
1953 Chief of Police Paul McQuadie  
1954 – 1959 Chief of Police R. W. Wells  
1959 Chief of Police Lance Edgeman  
1960 Chief of Police N. N. Chamberlain  
1960 – 1961 Chief of Police Ed Wiseman  
1976 (7 weeks) Chief of Police Phil Ratliff  
2002 – 2003 Chief of Police Jerry Freeman  
2003 – 2008 Chief of Police Russell Barnes  
2008 – current Chief of Police David Shears

In Memory of
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And Great Parents  
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From son James  

God Bless America
Zephyrhills Police Department

Medford Griffin, Jim Pollock, Preston Strickland, Paul Davis, Glenn Miller, Bob Howell, Bill Eiland, Larry Rickard

Photo courtesy of Polly Gill

Chief Wells’ car in front of Station

Lance Edgeman and Frank Norton

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Zephyrhills City Council Highlights
The First Few Years
By: Margaret Seppanen

**November 1914** – Meeting to incorporate the town attended by 77 registered voters living within the proposed corporate limits. Sixty-five men voted FOR, 12 voted AGAINST. Election held immediately naming W. C. Boggs as mayor, five aldermen – Nathaniel Lester Wright, S. J. Lyons, Adrean D. Penry, S. G. Allen and W. J. McLaughlin. Peter O. Bobb appointed as Marshal.

P.T. Williams – City Clerk

**December 1914** – P. T. Williams (clerk) will act as Town Assessor at 25c per hour.

**February 1915** – Town census complete – 552 inhabitants – P. T. Williams paid $28.50 (114 hours) for taking census. Marshal will be furnished with revolver and handcuffs - $9.00. Floyd Gibson appointed night watch for Town, will be paid $3 the first of each month.

**April 1915** – Paid George Pomeroy 75c for hog trough. Clark & Fuller paid $39.20 for building jail and pound.

**May 1915** – Marshal to collect town taxes

**June 1915** – Adrean Penry paid $1.50 for quilt at jail

**August 1915** – G. B. DeWers paid $3 for painting four ten-mile per hour signs

**September 1915** – Marshal to notify Thomas Bill that his bull has been declared dangerous to public safety and he must take care of it.

**November 1915** – Council members, City Clerk, and Marshal will all receive $1 a night for attending meetings (2 meetings each month).

**January 1916** – S. J. Lyons to investigate the matter of a water system for the Town.

**February 1916** – John Bennett asked to close his poolroom saying it has become objectionable.

**March 1916** – L. G. Chancey paid $3 for setting out three oak trees

**April 1916** – Property owned by H. G. Turner unsanitary and a menace to health of Town. Marshal to confer with Mr. Fiksdale with reference to punishing his boys inhumanely.

**November 1916** – Polls open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**May 1917** – Floyd A Gibson appointment Marshal. Dr. W. C. Rice appointed City Health Officer – will be paid $4 a month for services.

**June 1917** – Appoint two guards to guard City Jail at night. Mr. Epler asked for electric light to be placed at corner of 5th Avenue and 12th Street – a 60-watt light will be placed there. A street bar door bought for City Jail.

**July 1917** – Purchase stop watch and badge for Marshal. Mayor instructed to remit $5 fine imposed on Mrs. Annis L. Boggs for speeding. (Mayor Boggs wife or mother?)

**November 1917** – 100 ballots printed for election.

**February 1918** – Council wants to pay for lights in City Hall each night they are used instead of paying a fat rate of $1.50 per month.

**March 1918** – Petition presented to council signed by 240 citizens against the sale of cigarettes or cigarette material in the City. Reward of $2 offered for conviction of party or parties who removed the speed limit signs.

**June 1918** – Petition to prohibit stock running at night signed by 64 citizens.