

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Pearland Historical Society  
P. O. Box 1333  
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Dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of "Old Pearland"

## President's Message

Once again here it is **October** and once again we are looking forward to the **Reunion Luncheon on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>**. In thinking about our luncheon and about honoring the **PHS Class of 1964** we realize the truth in the statement "everything is relative." The members of the **class of 64** are probably saying, "wow, 50 years, where have the years gone." Meanwhile many of our older **Historical Society** members will look at the names of the **class of 1964** and be thinking they are all a group of "**youngsters**". It is great to get together each year and reminisce about those good ole days and catch up on what has gone on with old friends. A significant but sad part of the luncheon is the lighting of the candles to honor and remember **Historical Society** members and old time **Pearlanders** who have passed away since our last luncheon and also for the members of the **class of 1964** who are no longer with us. The old saying "**time flies**" certainly comes to mind. Don't forget to send in your request for luncheon tickets; and please remember tickets are \$10 each in advance and \$15 each at the door.

Once again **Pearland** was in the national limelight with our **Little League** team again in the **Little League World Series**, just as was our team of **2010**. Many of the members of the **class of 1964** were on the first **Little League** teams when **Little League** first began in **Pearland** back in **1957**. I am sure there will be

a lot of reminiscing about those early **Little League** years at our luncheon. Looking forward to seeing everyone there.

**John D. "Mickey" Mark**

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## What's Happening?

It looks as if we will have a very good turnout at our luncheon from the class of 1964. As of Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 36 tickets had been bought by 1964 class members.

Our **Wednesday night work group** continues to meet most weeks trying to get the **Pearland Historical** home site ready for opening up for visitors. The historical time line has been completed. The timeline ends after the decade of **1970**. Below is a copy of the poster for the **1970's**. As many will recall the population of **Pearland in 1960 was 1497**. By **1970** it had grown to **6444** persons. After the **Beltway and Highway 288** were completed, as our timeline poster illustrates **Pearland's** population literally exploded to a current population of around **102,000**. Also during that period of time our city limits expanded until today we are taking in parts of **Harris County**. We thought the depiction of an atomic explosion pretty much captures the growth of **Pearland** starting in the 70's.



**Pearland's Population Explodes**

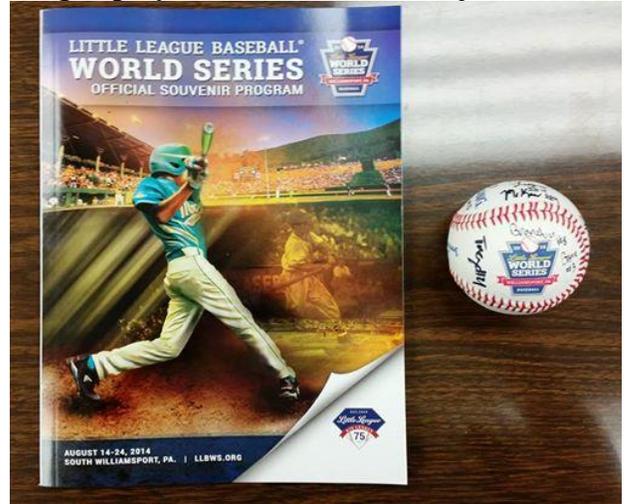
With the timeline and **Pearland** school history now completed, we are anticipating opening up at times for the public to view the timeline and school history along with other documents and memorabilia. Our **Wednesday** night work group will be working to get the room ready. We did receive a couple of interesting donations recently. Retired school teacher **Bette Wright** made of various documents and also a framed, glass enclosed white blouse which old time **Pearlander Josie Frankenberger Heflin** sewed by hand around 1913 when **Josie** was 15 years old.



**Blouse hand sewn by Josie Heflin – 1913**

Another donation is the program from the **2014 Little League World Series** along with a baseball signed by all of the **Pearland** players and coaches. Donation was made by **Rusty** and

**Dawn Smjastrla**, parents of **Pearland Little League** player, Cole “Smash” Smjastrla.



**Program and baseball from L.L. World Series**

If you haven't visited the **Pearland Historical Society Facebook** page, you need to take a look. Thanks to members **Ray Kliesing** and **David Dehoyos** for posting the interesting information and pictures on our **Facebook** page.

**AMONG OUR MEMBERS**

**Society Member Veora Hunter of Denver, Colorado** passed away July 22 at the age of 90. **Veora** and husband **Robert** lived in **Pearland** until **Robert's** death in **1970**. **Veora** was the Mother of members **Tom Hunter** and **Carol Hunter Reardon**.



**Veora Hunter (right) with daughter Carol Hunter Reardon at one of our luncheons.**

**Don Gum**, husband of **Society Member Florence Jamison Gum**, passed away **Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> in Lubbock, Texas**, just one day after **Florence** had celebrated her **90<sup>th</sup>** birthday. **Don** had just entered an assisted living facility about a week before his passing. We had a story in the **April** issue of the Newsletter about **Don's** service in the **Marine Corps**. in **WWII**. Our condolences go out to **Florence and family**.

**Peggy Farthing Long**, our **Historical Society Treasurer** who does a great job, had surgery in early **August** to remove a polyp from her colon. Although she lost 2 inches of her colon, **Peggy** was given an "excellent" prognosis and has made a good recovery. Way to go, **Peggy!!**



**Peggy Long and Margie Lawrence at PHS Luncheon**

**Society Members Kathleen and Nolen West** have been going through some difficult times healthwise the last few weeks. **Kathleen** spent more than two weeks in **Methodist Hospital** with an intestinal infection after having exploratory surgery. **Kathleen** is doing very well now but did have to return to the hospital briefly recently. Also **Nolen**, who had a heart valve replacement sometime back, has had to spend some time in the hospital with problems of fluid on the lungs. Keep **Kathleen and Nolen** in your prayers.

In early **August Society Member Barbara Christofferson Maynor** went into the hospital with very high fever. After a couple of weeks

in the hospital her doctors were still unable to diagnose her problem and she was released to the **Friendswood Healthcare Facility** for therapy. It is good to report **Barbara** is now out of the nursing home and doing well. Please continue to keep **Barbara** in your prayers.

We have lost a number of long time **Pearlanders** during the last 3 months. Long time **Pearlander Henry Uresti** passed away **June 30<sup>th</sup>**. **Henry and Celia Uresti** were long time neighbors to **Carleen and me**.

The day after **Henry** passed away another of our neighbors, **Charles Fox**, passed away. **Charles** was the husband of long time **Pearland** school teacher **Margaret Fox** who retired just a year or so ago.

Long time **Pearland** resident, **Georgia Gifford**, passed away **July 6<sup>th</sup>**. Many of you will remember **Georgia** owned the **Pearland Florist** shop for many years; and had been in a skilled nursing facility for several years. Her children, **Audrey, Theresa and Dennis**, all attended and graduated from **Pearland High School**

**On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1956 PHS grad Joe Saenz** passed away. Long time **Pearlanders** and former classmates of **Joe** will remember him as being an excellent **PHS** athlete who excelled in track and field, football and basketball.

**On July 16<sup>th</sup> longtime Pearlander Jean Griffin** passed away at the age of **90**. **Jean** was the widow of the late **James Griffin** and mother of **Michael Griffin and Candi Griffin Brantley**

Longtime **PHS science teacher Don Curry** passed away peacefully in his sleep on **July 16<sup>th</sup>**. Many of our members were privileged to have had **Don** as a teacher. He taught at **Pearland** from **1957** until he retired in **1995**. He taught **7<sup>th</sup> grade** his first year and **biology, chemistry and physics** at **PHS** until his retirement in **1995**. The picture below was

taken at one our **Historical Society** luncheons. Sitting with **Don** are his sister, **Hazel**, and his **father**.



**Don Curry with sister Hazel and Father**

.Former **Pearland** council member and longtime resident, **Richard Tetens**, passed away **Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>**.

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Now for some good news. In early **September Society Member David Smith** was presented with his 17<sup>th</sup> great grandchild – “**Walker Lee Bateman**.” **Walker** is the son of **Chip and Vanessa Bateman** and grandson of **Leah and Dwight Bateman**. The name “**Walker**” has a special meaning to the family. **David’s** deceased wife, **Frankie Smith’s** maiden name was **Walker**. Congratulations to all.

Also congratulations go out to **David’s** sister, **Mary Lee Smith Miller**, who had her 104<sup>th</sup> birthday on **August 22<sup>nd</sup>**. **Mary Lee** is the oldest **Historical Society** member.

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In the **July** issue of the **Newsletter**, we mentioned our **Wednesday** night workgroup was working to identify roads in **Pearland** named for pioneer **Pearland** families and mark them on a really large map of **Pearland** on the front wall of our **Society Headquarters**. We are working to find pictures and family stories about the families for whom the roads are named. We also mentioned that **Luanna**

**Concha** had sent a family history and pictures of **John Lizer** and families to use in a story about **John Lizer Road**. **Luanna** is the great granddaughter of **John and Bertha Lizer**, granddaughter of **Clyde and Kathleen Oblinger** and daughter of **Warren and Kathleen Keneaster Oblinger** (both 1943 **PHS** grads.) The **Lizers** and **Oblingers** are very familiar names to those familiar with **Pearland** history. Thanks, **Luanna**, for the story.

*Lizer-Oblinger Family History  
By: Luana Oblinger Concha  
Great Granddaughter of John Lizer*

*In 1910, John Lizer read an advertisement in an Ohio newspaper which read “Large fig and orange orchards on good land in Pearland, Texas.” As a result of this article he packed up his wife, Bertha Jane Cummings and their only daughter, Kathleen Ferguson (born August 3, 1901) and moved to Pearland on Sept. 10, 1910. They temporarily moved in to the Suburban Gardens Hotel, and then later purchased a lot on the east side of the hotel. They lived in a floored tent before building their home.*

*John worked at road building, as well as any other odd job that became available. He built a two-room house on the lot where the tent was and later opened the Lizer Café. The family began to thrive and purchased nine lots on San Antonio Street in 1914 where John built a four room house on one of the lots for his family. There he raised hay, baled and sold it from the land he had purchased. He was fondly remembered as one who could build, repair, farm, or do almost any type of work. The family also raised mules to work the hay fields, planted and canned vegetables to sell. Because the Lizer family were hard workers and frugal with their money, they were able to purchase their first automobile in 1918*



*John and Bertha Lizer*

*Later, John was appointed as Drainage Commissioner, a position which he held for many years. In 1928, he opened the Monarch Garage on Highway 35 (Main Street at the time). The garage was operated by my grandfather, Clyde Elsworth Oblinger (born July 15, 1898), where he pumped gas and repaired small engines. After World War II ended in 1945, he added a welding business that he maintained until 1984. The Pearland Volunteer Fire Department was formed by a small group of local men and my grandfather, Clyde, assisted in the construction of a fire truck with a tank to which they attached a pump and hose. He also allowed them to use the Garage as the firehouse until another facility could be found. By the year 1947, Pearland's Fire Department was officially chartered and recognized by the State of Texas.*

*The only known historical facts about my grandfather's parents can be found in an excerpt from the 1984 book written by Rosalie Ferguson. It states that the father of Clyde Oblinger was a member of a band formed in 1906 along with a Mr. York and Otto Shaw. The book further states that these men led parades, played for dances and entertained*

*spontaneously. I am sad to say that there are no other Oblinger descendants remaining who can substantiate this story.*

*Clyde and my Grandmother, Kathleen, were married in 1920 and had two sons. The oldest son was John Elsworth Oblinger (Sonny), who was tragically killed at the age of 22 in an accident inside the garage in 1943. He left behind one son, Curtis Oblinger, of Spring, Texas. Curtis and his wife Joy had two daughters, Anja and April and one son, Curt.*



*Clyde & Kathleen Oblinger*

*Clyde and Kathleen's second son, born on May 20, 1925 was my father. Warren Harwood Oblinger (Bud) or Bucky as his Grandmother Lizer called him. In February Bud married my mother, Mary Luana Keneaster.*

*Clyde and Kathleen lived in the same quarters attached to the Monarch Garage, where my uncle was killed until 1984 when they became too ill to stay along. They celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 1971. My grandfather served on the Drainage Commission, School Board and was a volunteer fireman. Clyde died on October 1, 1984. My grandmother, Kathleen, followed him on June 15, 1985. I miss them every day of my life.*

*Recognition of the contributions of my great grandfather, John Lizer, made to the growth*

*of Pearland came in the 1990's when a road off Highway 35 was named in his honor.*

*Luanna Oblinger Concha*

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### **What Became of Charles T. Davidson**

Those who have been to the **Pearland City Hall** know that there are several pictures related to **Pearland** history hanging in the lobby. One picture is of **Mark Belt**, someone who through research by **Dwight Bittick** we just discovered in recent years actually was a man. Also hanging there is a picture of **Count Witold von Zychlinski** looking very elegant in fancy clothing. From **Dwight's** research we know that **Mark Belt** left this area before **1890**; and all of his ancestors were in Missouri. The first post office in the area was called "**Mark Belt**"; but so far as anyone knows the **Belt** family left no roots in **Pearland**.

The second picture is of **Witold von Zychlinski** who was certainly well known to all of us as the man who platted the original townsite of old **Pearland**. Early pioneers told of his supposedly "**Polish nobility**"; but until a few years ago when **Society Member Tom Hunter** found **Zychlinski's** great grandson in **Chicago** nothing about the man could be verified. What we did know was he platted the town site and virtually disappeared thereafter. His great grandson, retired **Major General William Willoughby**, wasn't even aware **Witold** had founded **Pearland**. So far as anyone knows there are no **Zychlinski** ancestors in **Pearland**.



**Charles Treat and Luella Davidson**

The third picture hanging in the lobby of **City Hall** is of **Charles Treat Davidson** and his wife **Luella Jarrett Davidson**. **Charles Treat Davidson** has a place in **Pearland** history as the man who established the first telephone system in the **Pearland** area. If you are fairly new to **Pearland** you might wonder about not hearing the name **Davidson** except to see the picture in **City Hall** and read **Pearland** history about his founding of the first telephone system. The fact is **Charles Treat Davidson's** descendents not only remained in the **Pearland** area but also had a major impact on local politics, schools and churches; and although the exact number of descendents still in the **Pearland** area is not known, there are many, many of them. None are named **Davidson** however. **Charles Treat and Luella Davidson** had 9 children – 7 girls and 2 boys. The first born girl, **Mary**, died as an infant. **Charles and Luella** came from **Oklahoma** to **Almeda, Texas** where he established a telephone system. In **1917** he extended the system to **Pearland** with the name **Suburban Garden Telephone Company**. An interesting bit of **Pearland** history trivia is that **Telephone Road** was so named because the first telephone line ran alongside the road. **Charles Treat Davidson** died in **March, 1925** from complications of pneumonia he got from working on the telephone lines during the terrible historic ice storm of **December, 1924**. Two months later, 17 year old **Ellsworth "Bud" Davidson** also died from typhoid fever. The older son, **Ray**, was in the military when the **Davidsons** moved to **Pearland**. He made his home in **Alvin** later. I don't believe he ever lived in **Pearland**.

After **Charles Davidson** passed away in **April, 1925**, **Luella Davidson** passed away in **January, 1927** also from pneumonia. This left **Gertrude, Marie, Dora, Nell, Ida, and Zella** in **Pearland** with no parents. **Gertrude and Marie** were married; but the other 4 girls lived for a period of time with relatives or friends. The four younger girls, **Dora, Nell, Ida and Zella** all grew up here in **Pearland** and raised

families whose names are very well known. **Dora married Ernie Long; Nell Married Cal Garner, Ida married Jimmy Nichols and Zella married Splon Lane.** As mentioned earlier, when you read **Pearland** history except for seeing that **Charles Treat Davidson** established the first telephone system in **Pearland**, there are no other mentions of **Pearland Davidsons.** **Ida Long Munday** sent the **Historical Society** a **Davidson** family history back in **1987.** At that time **Ida** noted **Davidson** ancestors living in **Pearland** were 4 children, 10 grandchildren, 19, great grandchildren and 4 great great grandchildren – 37 in all.

Back to the statement that **Davidson** girls who remained in **Pearland** had a major impact on local politics, schools and churches here is a little more information. **Dora, Nell, Ida and Zella** were the four girls who married local men and raised families here in **Pearland**; and each of them was active in community activities in a big way. **Dora** married **Ernie Long** and had six children (**Ernest, Jr. “E.L.”; Wayne; Charles Edwin; Delores; Donna; Mary; and Ida.**) **Nell** married **Cal Garner** and had four children (**Leon; Carolyn; Darrel; and Dale**) **Ida** married **Jimmy Nichols** and had four children (**Carleen; J.C; Charles; and Armilda**) **Zella** married **Splon Lane** and had two children (**William Francis, died 1945; and Patricia**)

As their children grew and attended school and church the **Davidson** girls became very active in the community. **Nell** worked in the school cafeteria as did **Dora** (I believe). **Ida** had a beauty shop at her home and **Zella** worked at the post office. So each one of the **Davidson** girls came in contact with a large number of people and they didn't hesitate to let people know who they thought should be elected to the school board, the city council, the drainage district or county commissioner. In some instances one of them might actually go around

town campaigning; and they did influence a lot of votes.

They were all avid baseball fans. **Zella's** husband, **Splon Lane**, played for the **Pearland** town team. **Zella** was the scorekeeper. **Ida and Nell** played for the **Pearland** women's softball team back in the late forties and early fifties as did **Dora's** daughter, **Delores Long Stevenson.**



**Davidson Sisters L.R. Zella Lane, Ida Nichols, Nell Garner, Dora Long, Gertrude Czolbe, and Marie Roberts.**

So now you know that **Charles Treat Davidson** whose picture hangs in **City Hall** never did leave **Pearland** and was never heard from thereafter as did **Mark Belt** and **Witold von Zychlinski.** The **Davidson** last name is gone but the **Davidsons'** legacies live on. Take a look at our **Historical Society** roster over the last few years and you will see many names that are not **Davidson** but who are descendents of **Charles Treat** and **Luella Davidson.** They include **Mary and Alfred Borm (granddaughter and grandson in-law; Robert Bristow (grandson in-law); Lisa and David Dehoyos (great granddaughter and great grandson in-law; Ida Munday (granddaughter); Pat Lane Flanakin (granddaughter) ; Dale Garner (grandson); Armilda and Bill Hall (granddaughter and grandson in-law); Peggy Farthing Long (granddaughter in-law); Carleen and Mickey Mark (granddaughter and grandson**

in-law); Carolyn Garner McCoy (granddaughter); Delores Long Stevenson (granddaughter). I hope I haven't left anyone out.

So if you happen to be down at City Hall looking at the portrait of Charles Treat Davidson and someone happens to say "whatever happened to the Davidsons around here?" Tell him to look around and he will probably see one pass by.

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**Reunion Luncheon**

*Please see the reservation form attached to the Newsletter and be sure to get your tickets for the annual Pearland Historical Society Reunion Luncheon Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Pearland Community Center. Tickets are \$10 per person if purchased prior to the luncheon. Tickets purchased at the door are \$15 each. Fill out the attached reservation form and mail soon to make your reservations for the fun day. See you there.*

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As you are all aware at our luncheons we always light individual candles for Historical Society members who have passed away since the last luncheon and one large candle each for old time Pearlanders and members of the honored class who have passed away. Society Members who have passed away are: Bill Bradley and Roy D. Mark

Class of 1964 members who have passed away are as follows:

- Gary Arnold –02/09/1981 Jefferson, Tx.
- Ray Bell – 06/30/2012 Pearland, Tx.
- James Kagy – 10/6/1980 Pearland, Tx.
- Conrad Kowis – 10/17/1994 Galveston County
- Bonnie Stark Mobley – Galveston, Tx.
- Andy Nelson – 09/06/1982 – Houston, Tx
- George Olin – 01/05/2002 –
- Wayne Rains – 12/15/2006 – Houston, Tx.

Beatriz Ann Vierling Bull – 4/17/1996 Galveston, Tx.

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*...Grieve not, nor speak of me with tears, but laugh and talk of me as if I were beside you...*

*I loved you so - 'twas Heaven here with you. -Isla Paschal Richardson*

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**Some Advice from Albert Einstein**

*You never truly understand something until you can explain it to your grandmother. -- Albert Einstein*

*Creativity is knowing how to hide your sources" — Albert Einstein*

*"Never memorize something that you can look up." — Albert Einstein*

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**DON'T FORGET OUR NEXT**

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14<sup>TH</sup> AT**

**7:00 P.M. AT OUR HISTORICAL**

**SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS.**

**COFFEE, COLD DRINKS, HOME**

**MADE COOKIES AND**

**VISITATION WILL FOLLOW THE**

**MEETING. SEE YOU THERE.**

**MEMBERSHIP FORM - - - - PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ covering membership dues of \$15 per person for the following persons for the year 2015. Is this a gift membership?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Cash Payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: Dues paid in the last quarter of the year cover the following year:**

**Mail to: Pearland Historical Society, P.O. Box 1333, Pearland, Texas 77588**

**Please note: If you are paying for a gift membership, please give the name and address of the person who presenting the gift so we can notify the recipient.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

