

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Pearland Historical Society  
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Dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of "Old Pearland"

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am working on this issue of the **Newsletter** on **New Year's Eve** and wondering where in the world does the time go. Seems like no time ago when we were honoring classes from the **40's and 50's** at our **annual luncheon**. Now here we are going into **2017** and will be honoring the **1967 PHS** grads. One of the interesting moments of our luncheon last **October** came from a suggestion from our **Treasurer, Peggy Long**. **Peggy** had suggested it would be interesting to ask persons to stand up by the decade in which they graduated from **PHS**. We didn't have any from the **30's** but we did have several from the **40's** including **Mildred Cogbill Hinds** from the class of **1940**. **Mildred** was the oldest **PHS** grad at the luncheon; but as you will see in the pictures further in the **Newsletter** she certainly didn't look like it. It really was interesting to see the grads from the various decades as they stood up.

We will need help again this year in contacting the **1967** grads. Last year I believe the **66** grads were more scattered across the country than any class in the past. We didn't have a big turnout from that class but they certainly did seem to enjoy the reunion. Further in the **Newsletter** is a list of the **67** grads taken from the **67 PHS Yearbook**. If you know an address for a **67 grad** please let us know.

Don't forget our regular quarterly meeting coming up **Thursday, Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.** As usual coffee, soft drinks, cookies and visitation follow the meeting. Hope to see you there.

Mickey Mark

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## What's Happening

Once again our annual **Reunion Luncheon** went well and seemed to be enjoyed by all. Thanks to **David DeHoyas** for the many pictures he took at the luncheon and for posting them on the **Pearland Historical Society Facebook** page. If you will go to the **Pearland Historical Society Facebook** page, **David** has posted over 70 pictures he took at the luncheon. **Great job, David!!!**

Once again we also want to extend our sincere appreciation to the **Pearland School District** and to **Keith Ordeneaux** for the use of the school district's **Administration Building**. It is certainly a very nice and convenient facility. Also once again **Central Texas** barbecue provided a really good dinner.

The committee to save the old **Pearland Depot** will be meeting **Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>**. We will be discussing this project at our meeting **Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>**. **Kim Sinistore, Don Hayes, and Buck Stevens** are working on a program to try to find grants to save the old historic depot which sits next to **City Hall**.

Another item we need to be thinking about which will be on the agenda is whether or not our **Historical Society** would like to have a table at the **Pearland Town Center's** monthly **Farmer's Market**. **Nicole Brown** with the **Pearland Town Center** sent out a call for vendors to participate. **Don Hayes** says the cost would be a \$300 fee for the year plus we might want to purchase (or perhaps find) a 10 x 10 canopy and table cloth with our **Historical Society** name and logo on it. **Don** felt like it would be a good opportunity to get new members (hopefully younger ones) and also to sell the **Pearland History** books. This also will be on the agenda at the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Another item for discussion comes from **Ray Kliesing** who says that **Dianne Kliesing Day** has taken a on a project herself to extensively research the "**Old Settlers Cemetery**" concerning unrecorded or unidentified burials there. **Ray** says there are a lot more resources available to **Dianne** than were to **Diane Kropp** when she did her research in the 80's. Thus far as a result of her work, **Dianne** has been able to add several more names to the list of those buried in the **Old Settlers Cemetery** on the "**Find-A-Gravee.com**" website.

**Dianne** is a 1976 graduate of **PHS**. She is the daughter of **Clifford and Mary Rachel Kliesing**.



**Dianne Kliesing Day**

**Ray** would like to discuss the possibility of the **Historical Society** sponsoring a project to have a ground penetrating radar analysis done on the **Old Settlers** to document which plots are occupied or not. **Ray** will try to get the cost of such a project for our meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

*Editor's Note: ( Splon Lane said many times that graves would appear overnight in the cemetery and no one would have any idea who had been buried there.)*

Try to make the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Some interesting items to discuss.

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### AMONG OUR MEMBERS

**Society** member **Glois Massey** passed away **December 6<sup>th</sup>**. **Glois** was the widow of **John Massey** who passed away in **Sept. 2013**. Although **John and Glois** lived in **Houston**, they kept an active interest in what was happening in **Pearland** and were regulars at our luncheon. **Glois** is survived by her daughter **Lisa Massey Padget**.

As reported in the last **Newsletter**, **Society** members **Jennie Talbot and Carleen Mark** are still both going through some rough times. **2016** was not a good year for either. In the past year **Jennie** has gone through heart surgery, a stroke and a broken hip. She still has major problems with putting weight on the hip that was broken.

Starting last **March Carleen** has been hospitalized four times with various problems – atrial fibrillation, heart enzyme problems, gall bladder surgery and water in her lungs. She is still very weak and short winded; but she is getting home therapy twice a week and hopefully will progressively get stronger.

Keep **Jennie and Carleen** in your prayers.

Society member **David Smith** is now a permanent resident of **Trinity Oaks Village**. **David**, who turned **90** last **August** made the move at the end of **November**; and apparently is enjoying his times there. **Daughter Susan Smith Lenamon** sent the following e-mail regarding **David's** move to **Trinity Oaks**.

*“When Daddy first went to Trinity Oaks ,it was for him to get physical therapy and get stronger. He has come to like it and told us after his colon surgery, he wanted to stay. He has made many new friends and already knew some of the residents. He is the Chicken Foot domino King and plays bridge, bingo and participates in many activities. He is the official "prayer" before meals and has many visitors. If he were at home, he wouldn't be so active. We will be selling his gun collection, boots, and hats plus tools that go back as far as Grandpa Smith.”*

It's great to hear **David** has made the adjustment.

We have lost several long time **Pearlanders** since the last **Newsletter** was mailed out. **Ed Adams**, father of **Society** member and **County Commissioner Stacy Adams**, passed away **October 23rd** at the age of **85**.

**Lesley Hood** passed away **November 3**. Many of you will remember **Lesley's** parents, **Claude and Millie Hood** living on **Park St.** right across from the school. **Lesley** had been a member of our **Historical Society** in the past and stayed in touch with what was happening here in **Pearland**.

Long time **Pearlander** and an **Isla Drive** neighbor, **Vaughan Gibson** passed away the first week of **November**.

Since **Christmas** we lost two more long time **Pearlanders**.

On **Monday, Dec. 26th**, **Peggy Matocha** passed away at the age of **87**. **Peggy** is the **Mother of Suzanne Matocha**.

Another long time **Pearlander, Johnnie Mae Garner**, passed away **Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>** at **Windsong Nursing Home**. As many of you will remember, **Johnnie Mae** suffered a stroke quite a few years ago; and her husband, **Larry Garner**, took care of her at home for about 10 years. **Johnnie Mae** had been in **Windsong** for approx. 5 years. For all those years she was bed ridden and virtually helpless.

Please keep the families of **Peggy and Johnnie Mae** in your prayers.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **PHS Class of 1967**

Below is a list of the **67 grads** taken from the **67 yearbook**. We will be sending out invitations to class members in early June. If you know an address please e-mail it to me at [mark325prodigy.net](mailto:mark325prodigy.net).

**Cindy Alexander, Wayne Alsup, Shirley Darlene Bailey; Velenia Gwen Baker, John Bass; Wayne Bethune; Steve Bodine; Janet Bost; Peggy Jean Bramlett; John Brooks; Don Carbone; Linda Sue Cockerell; Barbara Lynn Coley; David Collins; Barbara Coppinger; Carolyn Kay Corbett; Christine Crawford; Jacqueline Dickerson; Joe Vince Durrett; Sharen Ellison; Brenda Sue Evans; Donna Farmer; Frank Fernandez; Joe Gonzales; Karen Lynn Griffin; Kathy Guild; Wesley Haltom; David Hokanson; Dana June Hoke; Don Holmes; Carol Ann Irwin; Yvonne Kay Jeffries; Jeni Jenkerson; Jerry Buck Johnston; Calvin Jones; Ronny Julian; John Kegley; Lester Kegley; Nancy Yvonne Lesser; Richard Lozez; Mark Matocha; Janel Meade; Arthur Miller; Jayne Ann Miller; Wayne Milton; Danny Ray Mobley; Sara McQuiller; Ronald McWhirter; Charles Neff; Cynthia Nolen; Ramon Nujstas; Mary Ann Pinales; Genevie Ponce; Tommy Lee Ray; Jennifer Remy; Beatrice Rosales; Diana Rosales; Bruce Sallee; Les Sallee; Dennis Sconyers; Karan Scott; Betty Shannon;**

**Barrett Smith; Thomas Smith; Larry Wayne Stanford; Madora Jean Stinson; Marolynne Swann; Marsha Swensen; Larry Tierney; Estella Uresti; Michael Fount Wade; Susan Ann Walthers; Ruth Ann Warren; Candy Wells; Mallory Wilburn; Elton Williams, Jr.; John Duncan Williams III; Kathryn Williamon; Mike Williamson; Kathy Wilson; Wilda Elaine Wilson; Nancy Clare Worrall; Phyllis Jean Wright**

It is always interesting to look through old yearbooks.

**Valedictorian was Larry Tierney  
Salutatorian was Cynthia Nolen  
Homecoming Queen was Brenda Evans escorted by Don Carbone  
Mr. and Miss PHS were Barrett Smith and Sara McQuillaer.  
Brazoria County Queen Candidate was Cindy Alexander.**

Hopefully we will have a good turnout of **67 grads** at our luncheon in **October**.

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**A GREAT IDEA!!!!**

Recently **Society member Karen Corron** sent me an e-mail with a suggestion that really is a great idea. **Karen** said that she had read the memories of earlier days in **Pearland** in the last issue of the Newsletter. As you may recall we had stories from **Donald Ray King, Tom Hunter, Rachal Scott Dahse, Kathleen Childress Holt, Wayne Jones and Gene Brantley** – each recalling memories of growing up in the small community of **Pearland**.

Although **Karen** is not a long time **Pearlander**, she said that she really did enjoy reading the stories; and she offered this suggestion. She suggested we ask each of our members to submit a short story about things they remembered from their earlier days here in **Pearland**. She then said we could get a binder and put all the stories into a binder to keep at our **Historical Society** site. I guess we would

call it “**Memories of earlier days in Pearland**” – or perhaps someone might have a better suggestion.

Thanks, **Karen**. This certainly was a great idea. Everyone please be thinking about your earlier days in **Pearland** and about the memories you could share. I would suspect that very many of the stories will have something about the old corner drugstore and the great hamburgers and malts we got there.

**Karen** was a regular when we were having **Weds. night work nights** creating a time line and a history of the **Pearland** school.. She did a great job covering one wall with school history, photos and also of the superintendents who have been here.

Below is a story with my memories of **Pearland** when our family moved here in **1940**.

**First Impressions of Pearland from a 10 year old in 1940**

As **President of the Pearland Historical Society**, from time to time I do presentations on the “**history of Pearland**”. Invariably at the conclusion of the presentation I am asked the question “how long have you lived in **Pearland**?” ; and when the questioner hears my answer “since **1940**”, the next question is “what was **Pearland** like back at that time?”

My family moved to **Pearland** in **1940**. My **Dad** worked for a small oil company out of **Dallas** as a driller; and the **Pearland** area was in a semi boom with drilling going on in **Manvel and Hastings**. He drilled several wells in the **Manvel** field and decided to take the job of looking after the production of the wells rather than continue to travel to oil fields over **Texas**

.We moved from **Celeste, Texas**, a small town in **Hunt County in North Texas**. At the time **Celeste** was a farming community with cotton fields surrounding the town. It also was still suffering from the economic depression of the

30's and was a "dry" town with no beer or liquor being sold in the entire county. It was a very staid, conservative community where as my **Dad** used to say "**the sidewalks downtown rolled up at dark**" and everything closed down.

What a difference **Pearland** was. As kids my brother, **Roy**, and I were fascinated with the **Manvel/Pearland** area. It was totally opposite that of **Celeste. Pearland** with a population of **360** was even smaller than **Celeste**; but what a lively little town. The mini-boom provided jobs and the beer joints and dance halls stayed open late every night.

Town center meant the crossroads of **Highway 35 and 518**, which by the way is still considered the town center by old timers. **Pearland Drug Store** sat on one corner, a café and beer joint called the "**Crossroads Inn**" sat on another corner and a two story building which had been the "**Livesay**" store sat on another corner. The edge of town was **Orange Street** to the **North**, **Walnut Street** to the **South**, **Galveston Ave.** to the **East** and **Austin Ave.** to the **West**. To the west of **Pearland** were rice fields as far as the eye could see. Most of the fields between **Pearland and Friendswood** were covered with fig fields.

The few businesses scattered along **Highway 35** were an **Humble** service station run by **Rufus Warner**, who would later be a long time **Postmaster**, and a **Gulf Station** run by **Ernest Martin**. Next to **Warner's** station was a small café run by **Lila Warner** where for 35 cents you could get a fantastic chicken fried steak dinner with ice tea and banana pudding. Other businesses were **Clyde Oblinger's "Monarch Garage"** which was a welding shop, an ice house (a real ice house not a beer joint) run by **Mrs. Thelma Cunningham, Kliesing Chevrolet Company** run by **Raymond Kliesing** and the **Red and White Grocery Store** run by **Raymond's** brother, **Jess Kliesing**. On **518** was a lumber yard where the **Busy Bee Café** now stands and an **IGA Store** run by **George Long** where **Central Texas**

**Barbecue** now stands. That was about it as far as businesses were concerned. Of course the depot sat right next to the railroad tracks beside the lumber yard. I believe the only building in the old **Pearland** area still standing from that time is the building where **Mrs Cunningham** had her ice house and her home. I am not sure what is now in the building.



**Cunningham Ice House**

What gave **Pearland** the reputation as a "**honky tonk**" town however was the dance halls and beer joints where folks from **Houston and Pasadena** came to hear country music, dance and drink beer. The "**Old Style Inn**" was a big dance hall, beer joint near the corner of **Orange and Highway 35**. Big name country western bands including **Bob Wills** played at the **Old Style Inn**. Another big dance hall, beer joint was above the **Kliesing Chevrolet** building and was called the "**Wander Tavern**". A group called "**The Texas Wanderers**" was often the feature band there and also **Floyd Tillman**.

What my brother and I really found exciting about **Pearland** was the beautiful baseball park which was on **Galveston Ave.** now where our Historical Society home sits. **Pearland** has always been a big baseball town; and as a kid I thought the **Pearland** ball park was near major league. It had a covered grandstand, dressing rooms under the stands and a wooden fence all the way around the field. It really was a fine ball park; and **Sunday** afternoon games were a must for our family. Unfortunately a hurricane in **1941** destroyed the park and baseball in

**Pearland** was suspended until after **World War II** in **1946**.

I started to school in **Pearland** in the fall of **1940** amazed at the activities in the school. Dance classes in the gymnasium one night a week, wood shop classes and an energetic young teaching staff. At the time we didn't realize that the **Pearland High School** students had been going to **Webster High School** from **1915** when a hurricane destroyed the **Pearland** school until 1937 when Pearland got a new high school.

One last comment. When you talk with a **Pearland "old timer"** he will invariably talk about how there were no trees out west of **Pearland**. My family lived in the **Manvel** oil field on Old Chocolate Bayou Road. Our house was six miles from the intersection of **35 and 518**. We were the only house in the neighborhood with electric lights. My **Dad** had a generator which ran off natural gas. At night when we left downtown **Pearland** and got to the intersection of **Walnut and 518**, we could see the lights of our house on **Chocolate Bayou Road**. No trees to block the view. There is no end to the stories about early days in **Pearland**, but at least maybe that will give you a glimpse of "**old Pearland**" from the eyes of a 10 year old kid in **1940** to an old guy in **2017** who has spent most of his life right here.

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#### **TROUBLE IN PEARLAND - 1947**

When most long time **Pearlanders** think about the disaster of **1947**, we are remembering the **Texas City** disaster which occurred on **April 16, 1947**. It was the deadliest industrial accident in the **U. S.** history and one of the largest non-nuclear explosions. Many **Pearlanders** rushed to **Texas City** to offer aid and transportation to residents there who needed hospitalization. **Texas City** was truly a disaster to be long remembered.

Less than two months later, the community of **Pearland** had an eruption (not an explosion) but

a situation that divided our small community and almost caused us to lose our high school. Some of you may remember it; but it is something which is seldom talked about.

In the fall of **1944**, **Mr. H. L. McAninch** came to **Pearland** as our high school principal and coach. Our superintendent at that time was **B. B. Ainsworth**. As a coach **Mr. McAninch** took over the group of players we have written about when **Constable Roy Green** coached the team and players took smoke breaks at half time of the games. Discipline was to say the least very sparse. **Mr. McAninch** was exactly the opposite. He was a very strict disciplinarian and several of the smokers decided to quit the team. After another losing season in **1944**, our team had a winning season in **1945**, winning 6 games.



**H. L. McAninch**

After the **Japanese** surrendered in **1945**, **Coach Lloyd Hawkins** and teacher **J. D. Satterwhite** returned to **Pearland** to teach. Those of us who were sophomores at the time were really looking forward to our junior year and football season with **Coach Hawkins** back.

Also at the end of the **1945** school year, **Mr. Ainsworth** resigned as **Superintendent**: and the **school board** named **Mr. McAninch** as **Superintendent**. Our **46** fall football season ended with **Pearland and Sweeny** playing to a **14 – 14** tie for the district championship. In a play-off game played in **Alvin** before **5000** fans, **Sweeny** won the game **21-19**.



**Coach Lloyd Hawkins**

Near the end of the school year in **May, 1947** several of the school teachers notified the school board that they would like for **Mr. McAninch** to be replaced because of his “hard nosed” attitude. I don’t remember if it was a school board meeting or simply a public meeting which was held in the auditorium to discuss the situation. As word spread through the community about the meeting, people became very agitated and some expected violence to occur. The school board members at that time were **J. W. Hubbell, Howard Suttle, Jack Miller, L. L. Barnes, O. B. Burkett and President P.E. Segelquist.**

My parents would not let me attend the meeting; but I understand it did get very near violent with accusations being hurled back and forth. As a result the school board fired **Mr. McAninch** and all the teachers who had protested against him. **Pearland** was very shook up over the decision.

I am not sure what time passed before the board hired a new **Superintendent, Mr. J. D. Gray,** from the **Klein school district.** **Mr. Gray** hired **G..E.. Thigpen** as principal and also brought in several new teachers. The school board could not have made a better choice for superintendent. **Mr.Gray** had a very likeable demeanor and he immediately established himself as both a likeable and efficient **Superintendent.** He also brought in an excellent group of teachers including **English**

**teacher Jewel Gibson and coach Buck Brooks..**

So those of us who would be seniors in the fall of **1947** were anxiously awaiting and looking forward to our football season. I am not sure exactly when it happened but sometime during the summer, **Mr. Gray** and the **school board** got a message from the **State Board of Education** that they were considering shutting down our high school and transferring us to **Alvin High School.** What a shock and disappointment.

As soon as he heard the news, **Mr. Gray** got in touch with four of us would be seniors and said he would like to take us to **Austin** to appeal our case. Soon **Corky Segelquist, Bobby Burkett, Ed Olin (I believe) and I** got in **Mr. Gray’s Oldsmobile** and headed for **Austin** to meeting with the **State Superintendent of Education.**

I can’t remember the name of the **State Superintendent;** but all four of us made our individual pleas to him to please, please, please do not shut down our high school. The **State Superintendent** was very attentive to our pleas. He told us he would consider our plea and would let **Mr. Gray** know shortly the decision. Less than one week later **Mr. Gray and our school board** got the message that we would keep our high school but would be on probation for some period of time. What a happy day for us seniors.



**J. D. Gray**

This is an episode which has not been talked about very much. It certainly was not something our citizens were proud of. I can’t

remember what year **J. D. Gray** left **Pearland**; but we will all remember him as a **Superintendent** who did a magnificent job and one who healed a community which was definitely in a state of turmoil.

Our **1947 football team** did go undefeated and won the **bi-district championship**. We were happy we were not playing for the **Alvin Yellow Jackets**.



**Front Row: Herbert Alexander, Bill Stone, J. C. Nichols, Edwin Long, John Saffle, Irvin Baggett: 2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Lee Scott, Wayne Long, Ed Olin, Carl Talbot, Mickey Mark, Bob Burkett, Coach Brooks: 3<sup>rd</sup> Row: Charles Baggett, Happy Williams, Jack Best, Corky Segelquist, Charles Burton (Manager)/ Water boys up front: Charles Nichols & Milton Garner**

As mentioned previously our annual luncheon was once again well attended with a lot of members of **PHS** going all the way back to the **40's**. We actually had a graduate or two from the **2010's** – so we pretty well covered the decades when we had graduates stand with the decade they graduated. **Mildred Cogbill Hinds**, who graduated in **1940** was the oldest graduate in attendance and as you can see from the picture below you certainly would have never guessed it.



**Mildred Cogbill Hinds (1940 and Gertrude Gotcher Logan at 2016 Reunion Luncheon**

**Don't forget our regular quarterly Historical Society meeting Thursday, night, Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. at our Historical Society home on Galveston Ave. As usual cookies, coffee, cold drinks and visitation follow the meeting. See you there.**

**\*\*\*\*\*  
Historical Society membership dues for the year 2017 became due Jan. 1st .  
Dues paid in the last quarter of 2016 cover membership through 2017.**

**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 2017. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

