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# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 25, Edition 1  
January, 2020  
Editor: John D. "Mickey" Mark

Pearland Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1333  
Pearland, Texas 77588

E-mail: [mark325@prodigy.net](mailto:mark325@prodigy.net)

Dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of "old Pearland"

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy 2020 everyone. Once again we had a great turnout for the annual luncheon honoring the class of 69, They seemed to really enjoy themselves and told some great stories. This year we will honor the class of 1970. Thanks to Joshua Lee, communications director City of Pearland, for the framed gift of the proclamations from Gov. Abbott and Representative Ed Thompson read at the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday event. The restore the depot project continues, just not as fast as we would like. Come visit us at the next meeting. We are always glad to see you!

Jerry Johnston

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## Editor's Message

Sorry I missed part of the luncheon. I did get to see **Mayor Reid and Florence Jamison Gum** cut the cake. They are both quite amazing 90 plus years old and going strong,

I imagine most of you have seen in the news that **Mayor Reid** will not be running again after the end of his term in **May, 2020** after nearly **44 years** of service to the **Pearland** community. He oversaw **Pearland's** rapid growth from **6,644** in **1970** to an estimated **130,00** in **2019**, One

thing he did which I have not seen in the Newspapers was during his administration back in the 80's he wrote **Victor Coppinger** a letter saying **Pearland** should start a **Historical Society**. **Victor** took the ball and ran with it and formed our **Pearland Historical Society**.

He also started **Pearland's** first library in what had been a pool hall on **Grand Boulevard**. I believe he worked with the **Presbyterian Church** in getting the library built. If my memory is correct **Betty Alexander and Alma Nolen** worked with the **Mayor** to get the library started,

Thanks, **Mayor**, for your 44 years of service and the great job you have done in making **Pearland** a great place to live.

It was great visiting with "old time" **Pearlanders** at our luncheon Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>. Thanks go out to **Brenda Riggs** for several pages of information she wrote for this **Newsletter**. One thing we all realize how much older we are. This year we will be celebrating the **50<sup>th</sup> year** of the graduating class of **1970**. In recalling some of the people we visited with started me thinking about old memories and came up with some thoughts about "You know you are an old time **Pearlander** if."

## YOU KNOW YOU ARE AN OLD TIME PEARLANDER IF

*If you referred to the 1969 grads as youngsters.*

*If you either played six man football games in  
Pearland or remember going to the games when  
they were played at the field where our Society  
home now stands.*

*If you remember walking from school to eat lunch  
at the old corner drugstore.*

*If you or your family bought a new Chevrolet at  
Kliesing Motor Company on Main St. and  
remember the old building with a dance hall  
burning*

.....

Those were just few of the things I heard discussed  
at our luncheon. It is always great to get **old timers**  
together for the luncheon. Make your plans to  
attend this year.

Speaking about the **Kliesing Motor Co.**, when I  
came out of the service in 1954 and started working  
at a chemical company in **Pasadena**, nearly every  
worker when he/she found out I lived in **Pearland**,  
they would immediately say how well they  
remembered going to Saturday night dances at the  
old **Kliesing Motor Co.** building or they  
remembered getting a good deal on the purchase of  
a new **Chevrolet** there. As I recall there was one  
year **Kliesing Motor Co** sold more new **Chevy's**  
than any other agency in **Texas**. That is hard to  
believe; but the **Kliesing Motor Co.** and dancehall  
certainly did put the tiny town of **Pearland** on the  
map.

.....

## AMONG OUR MEMBERS AND LONG TIME PEARLANDERS

Long time member Sarah Nell January Phillips  
passed away **December 13<sup>th</sup>**. Sara Nell, a 1954  
**PHS** graduate, moved to **Belle Glade, Florida**  
with her family shortly after graduation. She was a

cousin to **Carleen, J.C. Charles and Armilda  
Nichols**;

.Sarah Nell never forgot her roots in Pearland. She  
stayed in touch with family and friends and loved  
attending our annual luncheons. She is survived by  
her daughter **Kimberly Underwood**, son-in-law  
**Michael Underwood** (**Ponte Vedra Beach, FL**),  
granddaughters **Morgan** (**Jacksonville, FL**) and  
**Kendall Underwood** (**Ponte Vedra Beach, FL**),  
She was preceded in death by her Husband **E.T.**  
"Pony" Phillips



**Sarah Nell January Phillips**

**Society Member John Joyce** passed away  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>** at the age of **93**. He and **Willene  
Tindall** married a short time before **John's** death.  
**John** was a **WWII veteran** and a flyer of **B-25  
bombers**. **John** was a likeable guy very interesting  
to talk with. Our deepest sympathies go out to  
**Willene** and also to **John's** family. His obituary is  
on the **Clayton Funeral Home** website.

**Gail Gaidosek**, wife of **Larry Gaidosek** passed  
away **Sunday Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>**. **Larry and Gail** had been  
married 63 years and have 2 children, **Johnny &  
Tina**. Our sympathies go out to **Larry** and family  
and to sister in law, **Historical Society Member  
Sandra Gaidosek Jones**.

Local longtime lawyer and landman, **James Coates**,  
passed away recently. He was a long time member  
of the **First Methodist Church**.

(More about members on page 7

## **NATIVE SON.....**

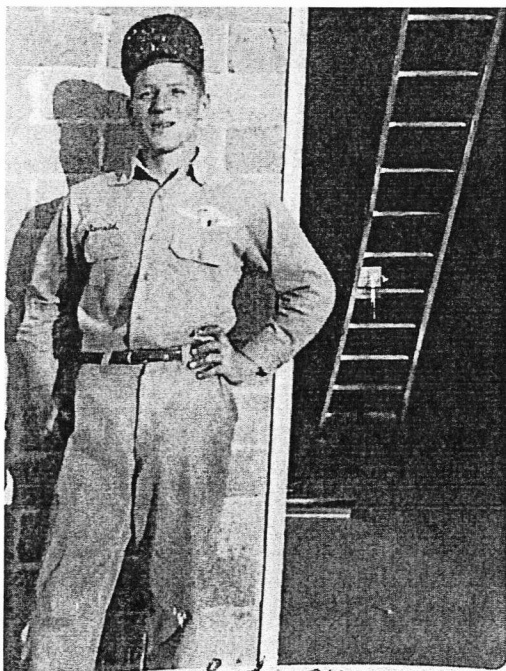
*by Brenda Martin Riggs*

**Sidney Ray Kliesing** was born April 28, 1930 to Raymond Virgil Kliesing and Lillie Mae Whitley Kliesing - delivered in the old home place in the Pearland Townsite by Dr. William E. Long, local physician for many years.



*Sidney and grandmother Effie Riley Kliesing*

Sid attended Pearland schools and began working at Kliesing Motor Company about 1949.50. He advanced to become General Manager /Sales Manager.



1949 Sidney

July 29, 1950, Sid married the love of his life, Reba Jean Eddings [PHS 1949] at First Baptist Church of Pearland.



*Sid and Reba in front of Kliesing Appliance*

Sid served two years in the Army [1952-53]. He was in Officer Candidate School; graduating in the top 10% of his class and promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

After his Army years, he has continually resided in Pearland. Many thanks to Sid for his service!

He later worked for Pearson Chevrolet in Alvin. In the mid-1970s Sid obtained his *pilot license* and first plane – a two-seater Cessna 152.. He later purchased a four-seater Cessna 182. Sid and Reba often made recreational trips .He also acquired a Piper J3 Cub which he had strictly for his own fun!

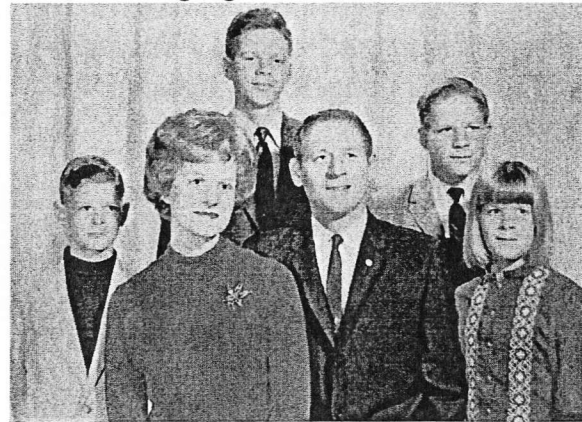


He was a “free-lance” pilot by 1980 and had earned his *Instrument Flight Certification*. In the mid-1980s he was a *commercial pilot* for Continental Express – a short range commuter service of Continental Airlines. Receiving his *Instructor Certification* by 1990, he was an instructor for Fletcher Flight School at Hobby Field; later working for D & N Flight Services at Clover Field Airport until his retirement in 2005 at the age of 75!



One student Sid instructed was Kalpana Chawla, astronaut, that died in the 2003 Columbia space shuttle disaster.

Sid and Reba had four children: Ray [Society], Robert, Karen [Secretary of the Pearland Historical Society] and Larry – all Pearland High grads.

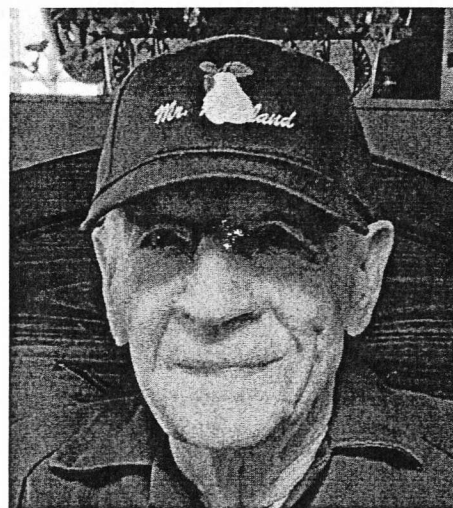


ake  
ring,

siblings:

Charles Edwin Kliesing	[PHS 1943]
Evelyn Louise McAninch	[PHS 1946]
Donald Alfred Kliesing	[PHS 1951]
Bernadine Robertson	[PHS 1957].

Congratulations Sidney.....  
the oldest Pearland Native Son!!!



**Sidney wearing his  
“Mr. Pearland” cap.**



## Florence Myrtle Jamison Gum -

oldest female Society Member.

*by Brenda Martin Riggs*

Florence was born September 23, 1924 to Bert Means Jamison and Martha Helmecke Jamison at the old home place in Pearland on Yost Road. She is the youngest of 12 children.... siblings were: Sam, Jake, James, Bert Jr., Jean Puls, Verna Yost, Emma Wells, William, Allen, Herbert and Quinton.

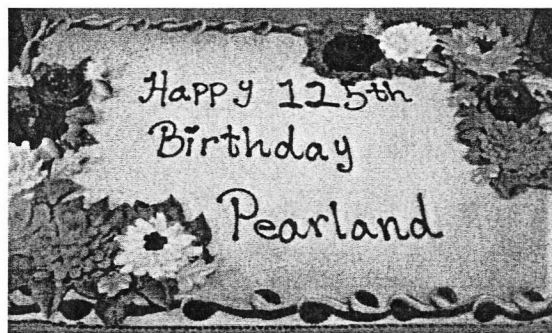


The family moved to Tarkington Prairie, TX in 1931; returning to Pearland in 1939. Florence graduated from Pearland High School in 1941.



Below: In 1946 she married Donald Gum and moved to Lubbock in 1950.

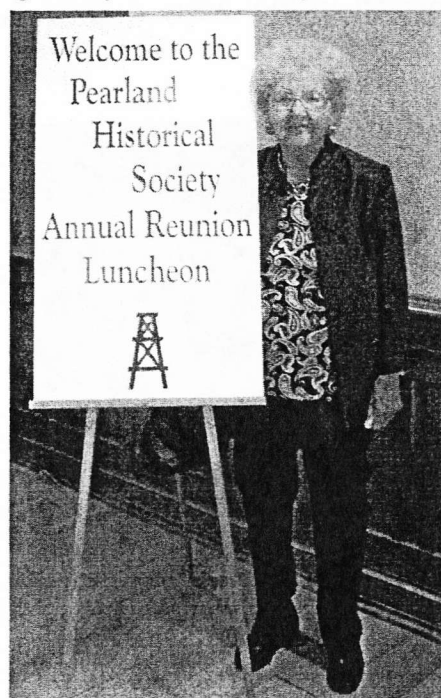
They have two children, Susan and Brian.



The annual Pearland Historical Society Luncheon was held October 26, 2019.



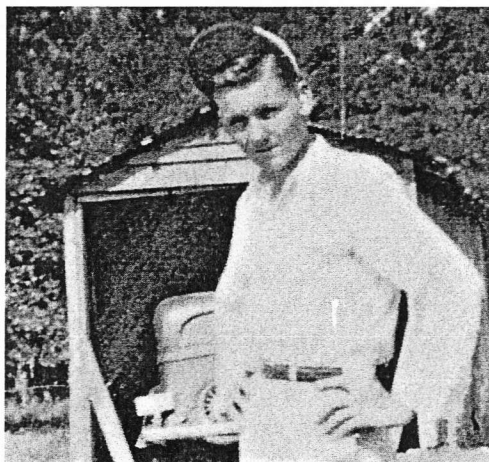
Florence and Mayor Tom Reid presided over the cutting of the cake celebrating the 125th year of the platting of the Pearland Townsite. Florence is the **oldest female Society member**. Looking forward to Florence attending many more Society Luncheons!



## **William Earl Spurgeon - Oldest Society Member**

*by Brenda Martin Riggs*

Earl was born September 11, 1924 in Alto, Texas to John William Spurgeon and Annie Pitts Spurgeon.



He had a sister Audrey Griffin, and a brother Eddie Lee Spurgeon. Earl's father passed away in 1932 and his mother married Robert Edward Tindall, a widower with six children - Myrtle Adelle, Ellis Arnold, Robert Leonard, Lecher Buland, Ola Dee and Esta Jewel. Robert and Annie had two sons: Edward Bryant and George Tindall.

Earl enlisted in the Army August 3, 1940 about a month shy of his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday!



He was a Corporal, Field Wire Chief, serving in four major campaigns including the Battle of the Bulge! Earl received numerous medals including:

Purple Heart

Bronze Star

Good Conduct Medal

American Defense Service Medal – and others!

He qualified as a Rifle Marksman

*Many thanks to Earl for his service in WWII.*

Upon his release from the Army – July 6, 1945, Earl moved to Pearland and worked for Amoco. In 1956 he married LaVerle Hill [PHS 1953 - daughter of Verral and Nina Hill].



In 1967 they moved to Carthage Texas and have remained in that area.

They raised four children: Linda, Diane, William Earl Jr., and Renee. ***Earl is the Oldest Historical Society member!***

Society President Jerry Johnston sent the following story after finding a packet of minutes from the **Pearland Volunteer Fire Department** meetings from 1952 – 62. How times have changed.

**Pearland Volunteer Fire Department 1952 – 62**

*Brenda Riggs and I recently visited the fire administration office to look at photo albums from the early days. We found a packet of meeting minutes from 1952 – 62 which were of real interest to me as my Dad, Buck Johnston was the Chief. It was a fledgling operation, averaging 15 or so steady members, finally getting up to around 30. Dues were \$1.00, A lot of time was spent planning and holding fund raisers, as the old fire truck was broken down a lot and a new one was needed badly. There were yearly dances and the ladies make pillows to sell at football games. The most well known event was the BBQ held at the Lions Club turkey shoot. Donations were always welcome and post cards were sent out soliciting same. There was a meeting most every Mon. night (except during rice harvest) with at least 2 hours training. A couple of members were sent to the A&M fire school each year also. The following are som excerpts from the meetings which I think a lot of the old timers will remember.*

*4/53 vote to incorporate. 9/53 R S Bill of the Mercy Corps teaches first aid class. 10/53 vote to get overalls and badges. 12/53 five cent fine if you misbehave at meeting. 2/54 buy band calendar and vote to get the Chief a spittoon. 3/54 vote to park cars at football games. 5/54 fire phones and put in a few homes so when whistle blew 3 times firemen could find out where to go. One person was to stay on the line until all clear. 5/55 driving the fire truck through "the" traffic light at more than 15 mph resulted in clean up detail. 7/57 Alvin State Bank finances new fire truck purchased from Kliesing Chev. For \$2641.*

*9/57 Monarch Garage furnished material, time and machinery to set up new fire truck, much of the welding done by Chief Johnston. 10/58 failure to write location of fire on the chalk board results in clean up detail. 4/59 Drake gives each fireman a case of figs. 2/60 Buddy Ellis elected City of Pearland Fire Marshall. 9/60 Vote to take the emergency car to all home football games and the oxygen mask to revive any injured players. 10/60 Pearland State Bank donates \$25 in appreciation for quick work on bank fire. 1/61 Fire Dept. accepted kas a Civil Defense Unit.*

*A lot of fires in those days were grass fires. I remember as a 12 yr old or so kid beating out grass fires with a gunny sack. If Buck went to a fire and you happened to be with him, you were an automatic volunteer.*

.....  
Please continue to keep our members who are going through health problems in your prayers.

Dwight Bittick continues with colon therapy.

Carl Talbot continues to make his daily trips to Alvin to check on his wife, Jenny, whose condition seems to vary from day to day.

Carleen Mark continues to struggle with her congestive heart condition; but her cardiologist did feel like she has improved over the last 3 months.

Brenda Riggs reports that Peggy Long is now at the Lakehouse on Dixie Farm Road in Pearland.

Keep them all in your prayers.

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**Don't forget our quarterly meeting Thursday night, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 at our home on Galveston Ave. Cookies, cold drinks, coffee 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 2020:

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. Bo 1333, Pearland, Texas  
77588

