

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 Edition 3

Pearland Historical Society

July 2020

Box 1333

Editor: John D. "Mickey" Mark

Pearland, Tx 77588

President: Jerry Johnston jerryjo15@aol.com

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

## NOTICE THE JULY MEETING IS CANCELLED

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again, the Covid 19 situation has made it necessary to cancel the meeting for July. As far as this years' reunion luncheon, it's not looking too promising. I hope all of you have stayed safe and healthy. This issue includes a story by Tommy Hunter about Dwight Bittick. There is an update on the Depot project by Donald Hayes. Mickey Mark supplied some remembrances of old. Brenda Riggs put together a list of PHS grads and old timers who have passed away. As was reported earlier, the brick sale monies for the depot project have been returned. I am needing an address for Jerry Coffey who lived in Stevensville, Md. but has moved. If anyone knows, please email me. I am glad to report that my aunt, Lorraine Johnston Crouch has come home from rehab after breaking a hip. If you would like to contact her, the address is 7929 FM 1733 Crockett, Tx.75835. The south building of Pearland High School was recently named the G. P. Bullard Building in honor of past superintendent Preston Bullard. I'm anxious to get back to Crockett. The pine trees don't care whether you wear a mask or not. My wife and daughter are working from home. Number two daughter is doing on line college and grandson was high schooling on line. Too much quiet for me. Jerry

From: donalddhayes@swbell.net,  
To: jerryjo15@netscape.net,  
Cc: jerryjo15@aol.com,  
Subject: Depot Update for Newsletter  
Date: Fri, Jun 19, 2020 8:09 pm

---

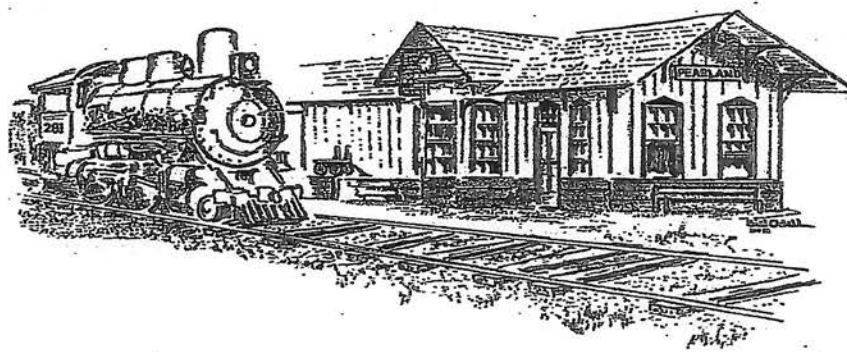
The project to restore Pearland's historic train depot has been put on indefinite hold. According to an interview with Deputy City Manager Jon Branson that appeared on the Chronicle's website on June 16, "Because of COVID-19, (the Depot project) has been put on the back shelf. We did work with the consultant to revise the cost estimate, and right now, we are just in a holding pattern until further notice until we determine what is the best course of action."

Branson has acted as the City of Pearland's liaison for the project since the departure of Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director, Kim Sinistore, last August. To date, the city has not successfully hired Sinistore's replacement.

The Depot Committee, under guidance from the Pearland Historical Society, chose to refund nearly \$10,000 that had been raised from private donors through the sale of engraved brick pavers. The committee felt that, with no clear path forward, or timeline for completion, that donors' contributions should not be kept indefinitely. The Pearland Historical Society remains able to accept donations for the project, in accordance with a memorandum of understanding with the City of Pearland.

We can be very proud of our accomplishments up to this point on the project. We were able to successfully fund and produce a professional quality documentary about the Depot's history, through the support of Allegiance Bank. We were able to open the depot building to the public for the first time in a decade during the city's 125th Anniversary celebration. And finally, the preservation of the Depot continues to be a talking point among Pearland City Council members. In the future, we hope that fresh eyes and renewed enthusiasm for Pearland's history will once again bring life back to Pearland's birthplace, our Depot.

---



1920  
RAILROAD DEPOT

---



## Dwight Bittick, the man who found Mark Belt

While doing research in October of 2010, Dwight Bittick discovered a reference in the Galveston Daily News dated March 16, 1887 about a man staying at the Tremont Hotel in Galveston, who registered as Mark Belt of Mark Belt, Texas. He found another reference to Mark Belt from the May 24, 1887 issue of the newspaper under new arrivals at the Beach Hotel, and thereby solved one of the great mysteries of Pearland history.

Although it was known that the original name of Pear Land was Mark Belt, questions remained about whether the name referred to a man or to a railroad term. Dwight's discovery in the newspaper's archives determined that Mark Belt was indeed a person and inspired his further investigation.

Dwight's extensive research turned up a trove of information on Marcus Lindsey Belt, who was born in Lebanon, Kentucky on September 16, 1837 and died in Higginsville, Missouri on August 27, 1921 at age 83. During his long life, he worked as a coal miner, soldier, merchant, developer, politician, and railroad man, but it was his time with the Brazoria Land and Cattle Company of Missouri that brought him to Texas and to a section of the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad between Alvin and Houston, where a siding and switch station was established along with a nearby ranch house. In 1882, this became Mark Belt, Texas on the site that was later platted and rechristened Pear Land in 1894 by Witold Zychlinski.

Witold Zychlinski was the other man of mystery in Pearland history. He filed the plat for record in Angleton on September 26, 1894 and renamed the town Pear Land. Shortly thereafter, he vanished. In January of 2005, I contacted the great-grandson of Pearland's founder in Chicago, Illinois: William F. Willoughby. He sent me a photograph of Witold Zychlinski that I forwarded to Mickey Mark at the Pearland Historical Society along with my story, "Finding Zychlinski," which was published in the April 2005 edition of the Newsletter. No one was more happy or excited for me than Dwight Bittick.

Five years later, Dwight Bittick found Mark Belt in the newspaper archives and wrote a story, "Mark Belt, Texas," which appeared in the January 2011 edition of Pearland Historical Society Newsletter. Using this story and other information collected and cataloged by Dwight, including the fact that Mark

Belt had once been mayor of Higginsville, Missouri, I contacted a woman in Higginsville who graciously sent me a copy of his mayoral portrait, which I forwarded to the Pearland Historical Society. Dwight congratulated me, but nothing would have come to light without his original spadework.

I met Dwight Bittick in 1956, when he was a freshman left fielder for the Pearland Oilers baseball team, and I was in the third grade and served as the team's batboy. It was 40 years until Dwight and I met up again at a historical society reunion. We shared our research and interest in Pearland history, especially after Witold Zychlinski's portrait was placed on a wall in the lobby of Pearland's City Hall in 2006.

In 2011, Dwight sent me an email saying that Mickey Mark had scanned the photograph of Mark Belt and placed it a frame with a note explaining his connection to Pearland, and added that the portrait would be hung in city hall next to Zychlinski. He said when that happened, he would take a picture of both and send it to me. I had asked that he have his picture taken in front of the portraits.

He wrote, "I'll wait for your return trip this fall for our picture. You don't find a historian and an accomplished 'Batboy' just anywhere. Thanks Dwight." You don't find a friend like Dwight just anywhere.

Dwight Bittick, September 27, 1940– April 17, 2020.  
-Tom Hunter, PHS '65



**DWIGHT BITTICK**  
Left Field



**TOMMY HUNTER**  
Bat Boy



## DRIVE BY CELEBRATION

by Brenda Martin Riggs



April 28, 2020 - **SIDNEY KLIESING**

celebrated his **90th birthday!**

Previously, his children had planned a get-together with family and friends at a local restaurant.

Foiled by COVID-19 - a police escort – “drive by parade” was organized with signs, balloons and cars honking as we drove past his home honoring the oldest male born in Pearland!!!

Happy Birthday Sid - many many more!

**NOTE:** Sid took a tumble about a week after his birthday. He was at Memorial Southeast Hospital, but has been transferred to Faith Memorial Nursing Home in Pasadena.

Please keep Sid in your thoughts and prayers!

## PEARLAND TAXES

Brazoria County Appraisal District recently mailed the proposed appraisals for the Pearland area 2020 Tax Year. Many residents may have been surprised!

The current rates for the Pearland area are:

Pearland ISD	\$1.395600
City of Pearland	\$0.741212
Brazoria County	\$0.365233
Brazoria Co DD#4	\$0.146000
Road and Bridge	<u>\$0.050000</u>

**Total =** **\$2.698045**

An article in the 2000 Society Newsletter reflects info from one of Josie Frankenger Heflin's scrapbooks - Property Tax receipts for the years 1901, 1902 and 1903, for Lots 41, 42 and 43, Block 12 of the Pearland Townsite.

The lots were valued at \$100.00 each.

Total tax for the three lots in 1901 was \$3.97; and 1902 and 1903 the tax was reduced to \$3.22. Do you think citizens complained about “high taxes” in those days???

We've come a l.o.n.g way!

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEAR

How many Presidents do you **remember** during their tenure in office?

-Franklin Delano Roosevelt 1933 – 1945

.....I do not remember FDR during the time he served, but read a lot about him.

- Harry S. Truman 1945 – 1953

- Dwight D. Eisenhower 1953 – 1961

- John F. Kennedy 1961 – 1963

- Lyndon B. Johnson 1963 – 1969

- Richard M. Nixon 1969 – 1974

- Gerald R. Ford 1974 - 1977

- James Carter 1977 – 1981

- Ronald Reagan 1981 – 1989

- George H. W. Bush 1989 – 1993

- William J. Clinton 1993 – 2001

- George W. Bush 2001 – 2009

- Barack Obama 2009-2017

...and our 45<sup>th</sup> and current President

-Donald J. Trump 2017 – present

WOW! Many of us remember most of these Presidents!

God Bless America !

Land that I love !

stand beside her -

and guide her -

through the night -

with a light -

from above!!!



## Ah... do you remember these:

-The **"tent" skating rink** that came to town each summer. Closed Wednesdays and Sundays for everyone to attend Church.

-Dr. Wm. E. Long owned the corner **drugstore**. He passed away in 1940. B.B. Ainsworth, Superintendent of Schools, owned the drugstore until 1945 when he sold to Luella and Smitty. Luella sold the Pearland Drugstore in 1980 [but not before Bill King drove his Dad's Oldsmobile through the building] Memories!

-Lester and Kathleen Williams owned the only swimming pool in town. However, many kids learned to swim in the **"Main Canal"** on FM 1128. No need for canals today since there are no longer any rice fields and the **Rice Drier** was demoed in 2019.....

-**Square Dances** were held in the Rice Drier. Entire families attended - Doors open, big fans blowing - **Vernon "Banjo" Halik** was the "caller." Lots of yummy BBQ!

-Dances were also held in the **'Old Gym'** on Grand Boulevard. The building was originally the two-story 1912 High School. The second floor was destroyed in the 1915 storm and the first floor was renovated to the Elementary School - and then converted to a gym. It was demoed in December 1965 for additional classrooms at Pearland Elementary School.

-Passenger trains stopped at the Pearland Depot. W. B. Bretherton was the Station Agent. Loved to watch him tap a message in Morse Code!

--Gas flares lit up the Manvel sky!

-Pearland ISD "Summer Recreation" and Travel Clubs.

-Berry Miller graciously taking all elementary students to the Shrine Circus.

-Old Alvin Road intersecting with SH 35.

**Sadly, several PHS graduates and Pearland Oldtimers have passed away:**

## **LEONARD DWIGHT BITTICK**



### **PHS 1959**

passed away April 17, 2020 in Pearland, Texas - the fourth of six sons born to Albert Elijah and Elizabeth Waller Bittick. He retired from Schlumberger

in 1992. An active member of the Pearland Historical Society, Dwight loved research and genealogy. Preceded in death by his parents; brothers: Gene, Guy, Garland and Richard; he is survived by his wife Cecelia; sons: Steve and Guy David; daughter, Ann; brother Sammy; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Burial was at South Park Cemetery, Pearland, TX.

## **RACHAL SCOTT DAHSE**



### **PHS 1962**

passed away April 12, 2020. She worked for Humble Oil/Exxon 33 years, retiring in 1999. Preceded in death by her parents, David and Anna Scott,

survived by her husband Ron; son Lance; sister, Karan Wheelock; four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. *Many will remember David Scott was a 1938 Pearland High grad; Anna Scott was the first and only PISD nurse for many years.*



## **HERBERT ALEXANDER**



### **PHS 1951**

passed away April 18, 2020 in Alvin, Texas. He served in the US Army. Herbert retired from Monsanto in 1985. Preceded in death by his parents Ramah and Walter

Leston Alexander; son, Christopher Crosby; brothers, Joe [PHS 1956], Don [PHS 1959], he is survived by his wife, Phyllis; children: Lisa Gosner [Chris], Sharon Ross [Dan], Scott Alexander [Sharon], Darrell Alexander [Ann Marie], Chuck Crosby, Christy Ostrowski, Selina Castillo; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

---

## **TIMOTHY ARTHUR HOOD**



### **PHS 1976**

passed away April 7, 2020. A graduate of Texas A & M University, he was a Fort Worth teacher for many years. Preceded in death by his parents, Claude

and Millie Rutherford Hood and brothers Leslie and Presley Hood. He is survived by his wife, Julie; daughters Sarah and Amy; step-daughter Briana and six grandchildren.

*Many will remember the Hoods lived on North Park Avenue.*

---

## **LUCILLE ANTHONY COX**



LUCILLE ANTHONY  
Basketball (4 yrs.); Spanish Club (3 yrs.); Homecoming Queen Candidate; Choir (4 yrs.); Class Officer

### **PHS 1966**

passed away April 9, 2020 in Pearland, Texas. She graduated from Sam Houston State Teachers College and was a Pearland ISD librarian for 35 years. Preceded in death by her

parents Ben Anthony, Jr., and Laura Del Walker Anthony; she is survived by her son David Cox [Savannah] and grandchildren Cason and Callie Cox.

*Many will remember the Anthony's lived on the corner of FM 518 and Woody Road.*

---

## **JOHN TRENT KLOPP**



### **PHS 1961**

passed away March 24, 2020. He was a graduate of South West Texas College – attending on a football / track scholarship.

Trent was a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the U. S. Army, serving in Vietnam –earning the Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal and Bronze Star. He retired from Amoco in 1998.

He is survived by his wife, Pat and brothers Gary and Richard.

---



## ELIAS GARCIA III

**PHS 1964**



passed away  
March 12, 2020.  
He served in the  
United States  
Air Force.  
He had a lifetime  
career as a  
barber.  
Elias was preceded

in death by his parents Eufemia and Elias Garcia, Jr., brothers Gregory and Ector Garcia.

He is survived by his daughters: Stacy, Lacie and Tammy; son Justin; nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

---

## LARRY CHRISTENSEN, DVM

**PHS 1966**



passed away  
June 14, 2020.  
He received his  
degree from  
Texas A & M and  
opened Baytown  
Animal Hospital.  
Preceded in death  
by his parents  
Donald and Mary  
Christensen, he is

survived by his wife Betty Hart Christensen; son, Larry Jr. [Julie]; grandchildren: Jack, Carter and Charley; brothers: Donnie, David and Bob; and many nieces and nephews. *Many will remember Betty is also a 1966 PHS graduate; and Donald Christensen was the proprietor of the Gulf Station on the corner of Main Street and Jasmine.*

---

\*\*\*\*\*Recently made aware of the following:

## JACK D. "JAD" MCGUFF III

**PHS 1976**



passed away May 15, 2020. He received his Bachelor degree from the University of Texas Masters degree from the University of Houston and Doctor of Jurisprudence from South Texas College of Law. He was

a certified financial planner. Preceded in death by his parents Jack and Joyce McGuff, he is survived by his wife Lyn, daughter Erin Pennington [Shane]; son Jack McGuff IV; sister Jill; granddaughter Saoirse Pennington.

---

## LESTER EMMETT WILLIAMS JR

**'RUSTY' PHS 1962**



passed away  
September 17,  
2019 in Colorado.  
Rusty was the  
son of L. E. and  
Kathleen Williams.  
He is survived by  
his wife, Teresa  
son Cody;  
daughter Mollie

and several grandchildren.

*Many will remember L. E. Williams was the co-owner of Suniland Furniture Co. in Houston. They lived on FM 518 East [later named Dunbar Estates]— moving to North Grand Blvd. approx. 1960.*

---



\*\*\*\*\*Recently made aware of the following:

### **SHARY DAVIS - PHS 1958**



passed away September 27, 2019. She received her degree from Sam Houston State Teachers College and was a Psychotherapist in Houston. Preceded in death by her

parents, Roland Jefferson Davis and Elizabeth Meredith Davis and sister Janean Davis Albert; Shary is survived by her sister, Darla Kay Pate, numerous nieces and nephews. Burial was at South Park Cemetery, Pearland, TX

*Many will remember J. R. Davis was the proprietor of Davis Grocery Store, located in the Old Style Inn building on North Main. Elizabeth was employed at the Pearland Rice Drier.*

---

### **JUD ALEXANDER 1931 – 2020**



passed away May 21, 2020. The eighth of ten children of Charles and Helen Alexander. He attended Alvin ISD and Baylor University. He served in the US Marine Corps during the Korean Conflict. He farmed in the Brazos River Bottom and later was the Gulf Oil Distributor in Brenham.

Preceded in death by his parents; brothers Charles F., John, Thomas and Robert; sisters Martha Crouch and Elizabeth Nesbitt. He is survived by his wife Bobby Jo Alexander; daughter Alison Stewart [Mike]; sons Jud Jr., [Jody], Jay [Cheryl], sisters Mary Bartlett, Sue Morrison, Patricia Wood; seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Burial was at Prairie Lea Cemetery, Brenham, Texas.

### **CARMEN CORDOVA LOPEZ**



**95**, passed away April 6, 2020. She was born in 1924 and lived in Alvin, moving to Pearland when she married. Preceded in death by her parents Nicholas and Lucy Cordova and her

son Robert Lopez, she is survived by her husband of 77 years, Jessie Lopez; sons, Richard and Pat; daughters, Lupe, Jessica, Ramona and Teri; seven siblings; six grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

*Many will remember the Lopez lived on Dixie Farm Road.*

---

### **JESSIE L. NAIL**



A long time Pearland resident - passed away April 25, 2020 in Sweeney, Texas, 87 years of age. Preceded in death by her parents, Dale and Edna Eberhart, she is survived by her husband

James "J.R." Nail, daughters Sherry and Julie; sons Mark, Stuart and Derrick, 19 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren. *Many will remember the Nails lived on the corner of Plum Street and Old Alvin.*

---

Our sincere sympathy is extended to every family member of each of these dear friends.