

PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

President's Message

This is a busy and interesting time for the **Pearland Historical Society**. Since we now have an "official" **Pearland Historical Society** home, we can move forward on several projects. At the present time we have a group of members who are meeting weekly to work on building a pictorial time line of **Pearland** history. You will read more about this further in the **Newsletter**. **Webster's** dictionary describes progress as "moving forward or onward" and also as to "move forward toward completion, a goal, etc." **Webster** doesn't set a time frame in his definition of progress so we can honestly say the **Pearland Historical Society** is making progress.

I hope everyone had a safe and happy **4th of July**. How many attended the **City's** celebration at the **Pearland Stadium ("The Rig")**? We used to attend but the traffic has got so bad it is really not worth the trouble anymore. (Maybe age has something to do with that.) Many of our members can remember earlier days in **Pearland** when you could walk into the old drugstore and buy a pack of "blackcat" firecrackers for weeks before and weeks after the **4th** of July. Sometimes the days before and after the **4th** would sound as if WWII were still going. How times have changed. With or without the fireworks, we all need to give thanks to those who went before us and who kept this country free and great. Let's pray it continues that way.

Be sure to make plans to attend our annual "**Reunion Luncheon**" on the **4th Saturday in October**. It is always a great time to see old friends and reminisce about the days when you knew everybody in town and everyone pitched in and helped those in need. We will be honoring the **Class of 1962**. Sure hope you can make it.

Mickey Mark

What's Happening

We had our **April Historical Society** meeting at our new facility (old tax office) which is where we will also be having our **July 17th** meeting. It was agreed the **Society** needed a computer and scanner to use in scanning and filing of old pictures and documents. It was agreed the **Society** would spend up to \$1500 for a computer and scanner. **David Scott** made a very generous donation toward the cost of the equipment. A computer and scanner have been purchased.

Thanks go out to **Brenda Martin Riggs** for her 17 years of serving so competently as the **Historical Society Secretary**. **Brenda** decided to retire from the position in **January**. Our **Society** is certainly indebted to **Brenda** for the great job she did for those 17 years. Her replacement is **Karen Kliesing**, who was nominated and accepted the nomination at our **April** meeting. **Karen** has been very active in

our **Society** working with the decorations committee each year for the annual reunion luncheon. Also the **Kliesing** family is one of the pioneer **Pearland** families and contributed greatly to **Pearland** history.



Brenda Martin Riggs and Karen Kliesing at January meeting.

A group of **Society** members has been working weekly to set up files, and identify pictures and documents and start preparing an historical pictorial timeline for the **City of Pearland**. Regular workers have been **Karen Corron, Carl Talbot, Dwight Bittick** (before he left for the **Villages**), **Ray Kliesing, Patsy Burkett, Luther Cunningham, Corky Segelquist and Karen Kliesing**. Work is progressing but we still have quite a ways to go. Special thanks to **Dwight Bittick** for donations of computer, printer, scanner and various other equipment for use in copying and cataloging historical photos and documents. Below is **Dwight** entering data in the donated computer on a work day.



Pictured above are Historical Society members at a weekly work session. L.R. Patsy Burkett, Dwight Bittick, Carl Talbot, Luther Cunningham, Corky Segelquist and Karen Corron.



Thanks to **Pearlander Jim Long** who donated the very nice sign above which identifies the building as the home of the **Pearland Historical Society**. A very nice contribution.

Among our Members

It is always a sad part of the **Newsletter** to report the passing of **Society** members, old time **Pearlanders** and long time friends.

Society member Doyel Raney passed away **May 8th**. **Doyel** had fallen and broke his hip **April 16th**. He came through the hip surgery in good shape but passed away suddenly three weeks later. **Doyel** and **Esther** lived in **Alvin**; but the **Raney** family has been active in the

Pearland area since the early 40's. **Brothers, Hughie Sr., Fred, Earl and Bud** preceded **Doyel** as did sisters **Dorothy Jo, Nelda, Doris and Trudie**. Still with us are **Herman Raney** and **Gail Raney Saffle (wife of David Joe Saffle)**. Our sympathies go out to **Esther** and all the **Raney** family.



Doyel Raney

Society member and longtime **Pearland** resident, **Inez Farmer** passed away **April 27th**. **Inez** had just turned 94 years of age on **April 23rd**. Although **Inez** was pretty much homebound, she did maintain her interest in what was happening in **Pearland**. Our sympathies go out to all the **Farmer** family.

Those of us who knew him were very shocked to learn former **Pearlander Buddy Rozell** took his own life on **May 11th**. **Buddy** was a **1952 PHS** graduate and was a regular attendee at our **Reunion Luncheons**. **Buddy** lived in **Brenham, Texas**. He was a quiet, upbeat sort of guy who always had a smile on his face. Our sympathies go out to all of **Buddy's** family.

Raymond Reber, PHS class of **1958**, passed away **June 28th** after a long battle with cancer. **Raymond** is survived by his wife **Jean Reber**; sister, **Ruthie Reber**; two daughters **Pam Cochran** and **Cathy Ripple**, the children of **Raymond** and first wife **Margie Wells**.

Long time **Pearlander, Ben Taylor**, passed away **July 1st**. **Ben**, who was our next door neighbor, was a great neighbor and all around

good guy. Many of you will remember **Ben** as one of the original managers when **Little League** started in **Pearland** back in 1957.

Society Member Ray Bell died **June 30th** of pancreatic cancer. **Ray** was a **1964 PHS** graduate. Our sympathies go out to all of **Ray's** family.

Some of our members are also going through some very rough times health wise.

Many of you are aware that **Society Member Gloria Jean Cook Klonaris** has been in poor health for quite some time now. She is currently in **Pasadena Care Center, 4006 Vista Road, Pasadena, Texas, room 108**. Her sister, **Jerri**, says **Gloria** gets quite lonesome and enjoys visitors and if you are in the **Pasadena** area **Gloria** would enjoy your visit.

Society member, Marilyn Bowers Maglitto, PHS class of 1965 is really going through a tough time. She was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, cancer of the blood and bone about 2 years ago. She is currently taking a chemo treatment and shots for platelets. Her sister, **Society member Sandra Gaidosek Jones**, reports **Marilyn** is going through a really rough time with severe pain. **Sandra** says it really brightens her day to get a card from friends. Her mailing address is: **1850 Hewitt, Houston, Texas 77018**.

Society member JoAnn Suttle Mark, who lives in **Victoria, Texas**, fell sometime back and fractured her tailbone. She has been pretty much confined to bed since sitting or standing is quite painful to her. Her neurosurgeon, after looking at her MRI's, tells her that her spine is in such a bad shape that surgery is out of the question. A rough time for **JoAnn and Roy**.

Society member David Smith had a pacemaker installed **May 17th**. **David** had passed out while he and **Ben Lenamon** were loading a pick-up truck. He came to and finished the job; but daughter, **Susan Lenamon**, insisted he get

checked at the hospital. Turned out **David** wound up with a pacemaker.

Many of you have inquired about **Edwin Long's** health condition. He is now in **Autumn Leaves**, a memory loss facility out near **Highway 288**. He also has hospice assisting with his care. **Peggy** goes out to see him every day; and he does enjoy having company. **Peggy** says it is a struggle for him to talk sometimes and he needs assistance to get around. She also says **Edwin** still has his sweet tooth and likes to have milkshakes or cookies brought to him. **Peggy** and children, **Lisa and Ken**, have expressed their appreciation for all the support and prayers from his friends.

Please keep **Edwin** and family and all of our members who are going through some rough times in your prayers.



Peggy & Edwin Long & family with Historic Long Home in background

Congratulations to **Taylor Michelle Harder** who graduated **Magna Cum Laude** from **Pearland High School** in **May**. She received a scholarship and will attend the **University of Houston**. **Taylor** is the daughter of **Society Member, Laura Martin Vuittonet**; granddaughter of **Society Member, Jacqueline Watts Martin** and the late **Roy Forrest "Buddy" Martin III**; Great-granddaughter of **Society Member, Claudia Meade Martin** and the late **Roy Forrest "Dude" Martin, Jr.** **Taylor** is a sixth generation **Pearlander** and is the **Great-Great Granddaughter of Samuel Pleasant** and

Elmira Munsell Martin. Her family is extremely proud of her



Taylor Michelle Harder

Roy and JoAnn Mark celebrated 62 years of marriage on **April 30th**. They were married in the old **Pearland Methodist Church** which now sits out on **Highway 288**. The picture below was taken in front of the church after the wedding. Congratulations **Roy & JoAnn**.



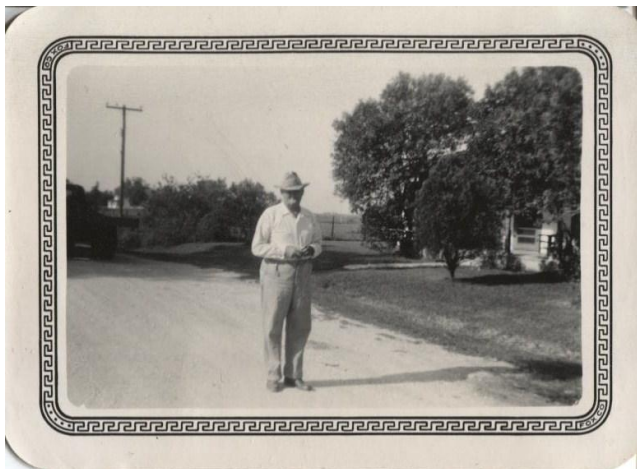
Roy & JoAnne Mark – April 30, 1950

Mary Lee Smith Miller will be celebrating her **102nd** birthday on **August 22nd**. When her niece, **Susan Smith Lenamon**, was asked how **Mary Lee** was doing she replied, "as of yesterday she told **Daddy (David Smith, her younger brother)** that she was going to live long enough to celebrate his **100th** birthday." That will be in another 14 years! **Mary Lee** has been living at **Holly Hall** near the **Astrodome** for the past 18 years or so; and up until just a few years ago was still driving the **Loop 610** and **Beltway** to get

back to **Pearland** for activities here. In **1995** **Mary Lee** was interviewed for a story in the **Newsletter**. She recalled at that time that when she and husband **Jack Miller** built their home on the corner of **Austin and Orange** in **1935**, they were out in the country. What a change **Mary Lee** has seen in her lifetime.

Dwight and Celia Bittick are again spending the summer at the **Villages in Florida**. **Dwight** says their rental home comes with a golf cart which is the primary mode of transportation at the **Villages**. From all the reports about the storm which passed through the area, let's hope it also came with a canoe. Enjoy your summer **Dwight and Celia**.

From all I have heard, the 100th reunion of **O'Day Drilling Co.** had a big turnout and everyone had a great time. Unfortunately, I had a last minute conflict and was unable to attend. Many of our members worked for **O'Day** during the years and have some great memories and some funny stories about our times helping the **O'Day** family supply water for South Texas.



Mr. Pat O'Day standing in front of his home on North Washington (Note: Street is shell)

Old Pictures Needed

As previously mentioned a group of **Historical Society** members have been working weekly at our new home site to scan, catalog and file old documents and old pictures and also to create a pictorial timeline of "**old Pearland.**" We have a

great number of pictures; but unfortunately there are very few pictures of old downtown **Pearland**. If any of you have pictures of the old downtown area, we surely would like to borrow them to scan them into the computer. **Brenda Riggs** sent the picture below, which was taken in front of the old "**Wander Tavern**" which was part of the building housing the old **Kliesing Motor Company** on **Main Street**.



Dude Martin in front of Wander Tavern. Charldyne, Sandra and Brenda on horse.

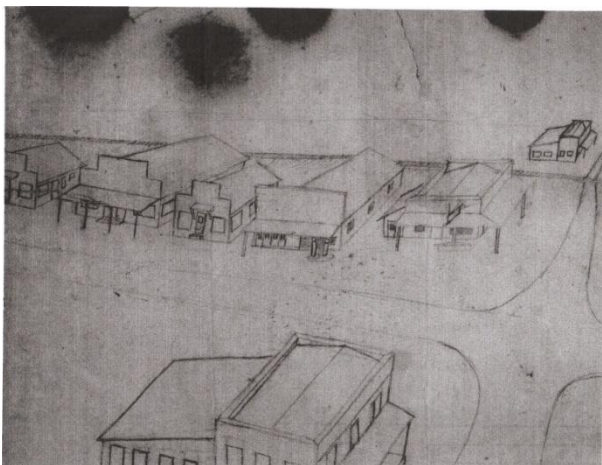
It is not very legible in the picture but the sign on the building says "**Wander Tavern – Steaks**". It is doubtful if anyone who recalls the old **Wander Tavern** would think about steak. More likely their response would be, "oh yeah, the old beer joint." **Pearland** old timers used to say about the **Wander Tavern** - - "**wander in, stagger out.**" According to **Splon Lane**, the **Wander Tavern** got its name because the "**Texas Wanderers**" country western band played quite often at the dance hall upstairs over the **Wander Tavern** and **Kliesing Motor Company**. Some may recall in later years shortly before **Kliesing Motor Company** burned that it was also a skating rink. **Corky Segelquist**, who played with various country music bands and who personally knew **Cliff Bruner**, the leader of the "**Texas Wanderers**" sent me an e-mail with a website where you can go and hear the **Texas Wanderers** and if you are old enough maybe can remember dancing to his music at the **Wander Tavern**.

Here is the website:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIHfiND14lc&feature=related>

Be prepared, if you go there and listen to the music, you will probably want to get up and do a few jigs. !!!

Although we do not have pictures of the old downtown **Pearland**, in our **Historical Society** files we do have a drawing made by a young **Pearland** man of the age eleven or twelve some 72 years ago which does bring back memories of **Pearland** in the 30's and 40's. That young man was **Historical Society** member **Corky Segelquist**.



Corky says that as an 11 or 12 year old he wanted to remember what downtown **Pearland** looked like from above. Not having a camera, **Corky**, who grew up to be a very talented artist, made this drawing of the old downtown as he imagined it looking west. From left to right, **Corky** identifies the buildings as **Jim's Barber Shop, Jess and Mabel Kliensing's Red and White Store, Red and White Feed Storage, Ransom Bill's Garage and the Cross Roads Inn**. Looking west across the railroad tracks was **George Long's Grocery**. In the foreground was what had been **Robey Burkett's Barber Shop and Pool Hall, Rozell's Ice Cream Parlor and then later the Pearland State Bank**. **Corky** says that he would have liked to have had the old drugstore in the drawing but couldn't figure out how since it would have made it all too small. The dark spots on the top are from old age of the

paper. Thanks, **Corky**, for the drawing and for bringing back old memories.

Thank You to Two Early Pearland Lady Historians

For those who enjoy reading the history of **Pearland**, we all owe a big "thank you" to a couple of ladies whose pioneer families came to the area in the early days and who fortunately wrote interesting stories about those early days.

Who were those two ladies? They were **Emma Jarisch Coppinger and Julia Martin Hunter** (commonly known as "**Grandma Hunter** by old time **Pearlanders**.) Many historical stories have been handed down from previous generations. The stories written by **Emma Coppinger and Julia Hunter** are first hand memories of life in **Pearland** as they actually knew it and lived it in those early days.

Julia Martin Hunter's parents, **Samuel Pleasant and Elmira Martin** moved from **Red Cloud, Nebraska** to the **Pearland** area in **September, 1894**, the same year **Witold von Zychlinski** platted the **Pearland** old town site. According to **Grandma Hunter's** grandson, **Pearland Historical Society** member **Tom Hunter**, she often told stories of **Zychlinski**, who was reportedly a **Polish** knight, riding around the **Pearland** area in his fancy buggy pulled by a pair of shiny black, high stepping horses.

This was about all that was known about **Zychlinski** until just a few years ago when **Grandson Tom Hunter**, who lives in **Denver Colorado**, traced down **Zychlinski's** great grandson, retired **Air Force Major General William Willoughby**, in **Chicago**. **General Willoughby** who was researching the **Zychlinski** family did confirm the **Polish Knight** story; and he furnished a picture of his great grandfather which now hangs in the **Pearland City Hall**.

The **Zychlinski** story, however, is still an unfinished story since no one has any trace of

him after he platted the **City of Pearland** and left the area. **Grandma Hunter**, not only provided information about **Zychlinski**; but she also has provided invaluable information about the early history of school and church life in those early years. One story from **Grandma Hunter** which has often been repeated and always is a source of amusement is the story of a contest around 1895 or 1896 to determine the most beautiful lady and most handsome man in **Pearland**. Apparently streets in old **Pearland** had just been graded and there was a big auction sale to attract prospective home owners from the **North**. When the bidding began to lag, the auctioneer announced that a city lot would be awarded to the persons judged the most handsome man and most beautiful lady in **Pearland**.

Julia Martin's father, **Samuel Pleasant Martin**, won as the most handsome man and was awarded a lot on the corner of **Park and Jasmine Streets**. The lady who was deemed the loveliest was a **Miss Jennie Hutchison**, a person whose name does not appear anywhere else in **Pearland** history. **Julia Martin** married **Robert Lee Hunter** in **Pearland** on **Sept. 27th, 1905** and had four children: **Lois, Billy, Elmira and Robert Jr.** The family lived on a 10 acre tract on the north side of **Orange Street**.



Robert L. and Julia Martin Hunter

After **World War II** the tract was divided into four 2-1/2 acre tracts, one of which is the city park which was named "**Hunter Park**" and for which the **Pearland Historical Society** is applying to the **Texas State Historical Commission** for **Hunter Park** to be designated a **Texas Historical** site. Members of the **Hunter** family have lived in and continue to live in **Pearland** since the early 1900's and have contributed greatly to our history.

Emma Jarisch, who was born in **Comal County** in 1884, came with her family (**the Anton Jarischs**) to **Pearland** in 1898 settling on a tract of land on **Highway 35** about where **Ace Hardware** now sits. Her father died when **Emma** was 16 years old. **Emma** went to business school and soon went to work for the law firm **Baker/Botts** in **Houston**.

In 1906 she married **John Coppinger**, one of four **Coppinger** sons. **John Coppinger** died in 1948; but **Emma** lived until 1979. In 1941 she wrote "**A History of Pearland**" which has become the reference for many of the historical tales of early **Pearland** days. She did a great job of telling exactly what "**Old Pearland**" was like back in those early days.

One story she tells does illustrate a problem the old **Pearlanders** experienced and one which is still being experienced in 2012. That is the problem of drainage. **Mrs. Coppinger** wrote that "the great need of the country was good roads and drainage"; but the first town meeting to discuss the drainage problems ended with a fist fight among the men present; and **Mrs. Coppinger's** brother suggested that some women should attend the second meeting "in the interest of peace among the men." She went on to say that she and **Mrs. Frankenberger (Mother of Josie Frankenberger Heflin)** were among the women who attended the next meeting "but the drainage problem lagged for many years." **Editor's note: And so it continues today.**



John and Emma Jarisch Coppinger

Mrs. Coppinger had four daughters, **Frances, Hattie, Ruth, and Johnetta** and three sons, **Victor, John Edward and Denny**. As most know, **Victor** served as **Mayor of Pearland** back in the 90's and contributed a great deal to **Pearland**. He was very instrumental in establishing the **YMCA** which is appropriately named **Victor Coppinger YMCA**. His sister **Ruth Coppinger Knapp** and husband **Melvin Knapp** also made great contributions to **Pearland**. The **Knapp Senior Center** was named in honor of **Ruth and Melvin Knapp**.

The **Coppinger** family is another family who will long be remembered in **Pearland** history. Thanks to **Emma Coppinger**, who kept the peace at early town meetings, and to **Julia (Grandma) Hunter**, whose Father was the most handsome man in Pearland, for recording our early history.

Editor's Comments: The story above also appeared in the **July/August** edition of "**Pearland Focus Magazine**" for which I write a **Pearland** history article in each edition. In writing this article and also while sorting through old documents and pictures in our work sessions, it occurred to me the importance of first hand stories of our history. I think about how most of us talk about the great hamburgers we got at the old **Pearland Drug Store**. We personally ate the hamburgers just as **Mrs. Coppinger** personally went to town meetings to prevent fist fights. When we tell about life in **Pearland** in the 30's, 40's, 50's etc., we are talking about

things we experienced firsthand. A good example also is the story about the beer drinking buffalo. We saw it and we remember it. Who knows, 50 years from now some of our ancestors might be sitting around telling old tales and recollect his great grandpa or grandma telling about some kind of animal saying "let's see I think grandpa said it was a zebra."

So I encourage each of our members, if you have a story about life in old **Pearland**, whether it is about an incident, a person, or simply a way of life in small town **Pearland**, please send it to us to put in the **Newsletter**. Thank goodness **Emma Coppinger** and **Grandma Hunter** did take the time to record their stories.

Some wise person, maybe Milton Berle, once made this wise observation.

"The trouble with history is every time it repeats itself, the cost goes up."

Those of you who do the grocery shopping certainly can appreciate the wisdom of that statement.

DON'T FORGET OUR QUARTERLY MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 17TH AT THE NEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOME ON GALVESTON STREET. AS USUAL HOMEMADE COOKIES, SOFT DRINKS AND VISITATION FOLLOW THE MEETING.

