

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 19, Edition 1  
January, 2014  
Editor: John D. "Mickey" Mark  
E-mail: [mark325@prodigy.net](mailto:mark325@prodigy.net)

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

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again our annual **October Historical Society Reunion Luncheon** was very well attended; and everyone seemed to have a really good time, especially those from the honored class of 1963. Somewhere around 240 persons attended the luncheon. This year will be the last year we will be having the luncheon at the **Community Center. Michelle Smith, Pearland Parks and Recreation Director**, has advised that the **City of Pearland** will be designing the renovations of both the **City Hall and Community Center** to accommodate additional staff and office space needs for the **City**. After this year, we will have to find another location for the luncheon. After **Hurricane Ike** because of damage to the **Community Center** we had to use the cafeteria at **Jr. High West**. We do want to sincerely thank the **Parks and Recreation Department** for the wonderful co-operation and service they provided to help make our luncheons so enjoyable.

In the past I have commented on how fast the years are slipping by. Here we are starting another year; and it seems like **New Year's 2013** was just a month or so ago. Reminds you of **Willie Nelson's** famous song "*Ain't it funny how time slips away.*" What really made me aware of time "slipping away" was that this is the 20<sup>th</sup> year I have been doing the **Pearland Historical Society Newsletter**. The first issue was June, 1994. A little further in this **Newsletter** we

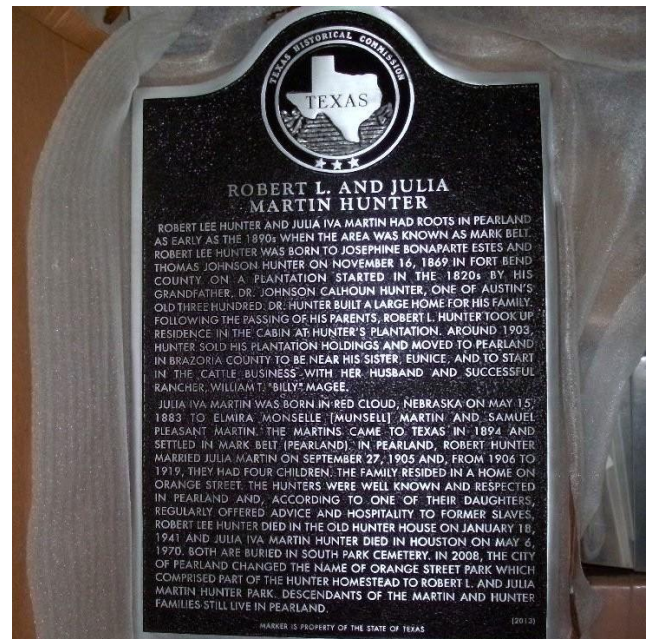
will discuss some interesting stories from **Newsletters** of the past 20 years and do a bit of reminiscing about what has happened in **Pearland** in the past twenty years.

Mickey Mark

\*\*\*\*\*

## What's Happening

We have received the metal "**Texas State Historical Marker**" for **Hunter Park**. Next step is to coordinate with the **City of Pearland** and the **Brazoria County Historical Commission** to plan a dedication ceremony.



Texas Historical Marker for Hunter Park



**Hunter Park on Orange St. Home next to park is present home of Kenneth Carter and was originally the home of Earl and Lois Hunter Bundy**

After a holiday vacation our **Wednesday** work group will again start working to complete the time line on the wall of our **Historical Society** headquarters. **Carl Talbot, Karen Corron and Ray Kliesing** have put in a lot of time on this project. Recently **Carl, Luther Cunningham** and I visited with the owner of a company in **Houston** called “**Que Imaging**” to get ideas and pricing for reproducing the time line posters so they can be displayed at **City Hall** or other sites. The owner of the imaging company showed us many different methods. The one we all thought best was to reproduce the posters as 1/8” board with plastic on front and a fiber backing. This would give us a very durable and easily portable display. The estimated cost was around \$3300.

Our thanks go out to Society Member **Ray Kliesing** for his work on maintaining the **Pearland Historical Society** website.

([www.pearlandhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.pearlandhistoricalsociety.org)) We get quite a few comments from persons in other parts of the **United States** about **Pearland** history. Ray also has set up a “**Facebook**” account for the **Historical Society**. It is listed on **Facebook** as “**Pearland Historical Society**.” If you go on **Facebook** and visit **Pearland Historical Society** you will also see comments from visitors about the site. There are also around 115 pictures there taken by **David DeHoyos (Peggy Long’s son-in-law)** at our **Reunion Luncheon**. Thanks, **David**.

At the last **Historical Society Meeting** it was voted to have meetings once every two months instead of every three months. Starting with our **January** meeting we will give it a try. That means our next

meeting after the **January 21<sup>st</sup>** meeting will be **March 18<sup>th</sup>**.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Among our Members**

**Drenda Tindall**, daughter of **Society Member Willene Tindall**, passed away **Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>**. Our sympathies and prayers go out to **Willene** and family.

**Society Member Winnie Borden Weaver's** older sister, **Alberta Borden Salisbury**, passed away **Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>**. **Winnie** and **Alberta** are granddaughters of the **Howard/Long** family and the nieces of **Dorothy Long Cook**. **Alberta** lived in **Bulverde, Texas**.

**J. C. "Cotton" Cook** passed away **November 14<sup>th</sup>**. **Cotton**, a **1952 PHS** graduate, was the only son of **Clayton and Allie Mae Cook**. The **Cook** family is a very old **Pearland** family. Many of you remember their residence was on **Orange Street** west of the railroad long before **Orange Street** was opened beyond **Highway 35**. **Sisters Betty Jane and Gloria Jean** preceded **Cotton** in death. **Sister Geri** resides in **Pearland** and sister **Pat** is in **Louisiana**. Our sympathies go out to all of **Cotton's** family.

**Mrs. Esther May McNabb** passed away **October 20<sup>th</sup>**. **Mrs. McNabb**, who was 102 and a resident of **Alvin**, was the Mother of **1954 PHS grad. Shirley McNabb Riggs**, who is married to **Carlos Riggs**, also a **1954 PHS** grad. **Mrs. McNabb** was born in **Manvel** and was a lifelong resident of the **Alvin/Manvel** area.

**Jimmye Dean Gatewood Chenault** passed away **Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>**. **Jimmye Dean** was a **1951 PHS** graduate

**Society Member Joan Baker's** brother-in-law, **Gerald Morris**, passed away **Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>** in **Oklahoma**. **Gerald** was the husband of **Joan's** sister, **Elaine Recker Morris**. **Elaine** passed away a little over a year ago.

A touching moment each year at our **Reunion Luncheon** is the candle lighting ceremony remembering our members and old time **Pearlanders** who have passed away since the last reunion. At the luncheon this year, candles were lit for members **Alma Nolen; Clarence Oliver; Eunice “Suzy” Martin Jones; Millie Rutherford Hood; Helen Ferri; Dorothy “Dot” Miller; Margurite Massey Smith; Mary Helen Miller; Betty Lynn Stevens; Wanda Shannon Jamison; and John Massey** They will be remembered and missed. Let’s all hope we don’t have that many candles to light this year.



The memorial candle holder was designed and made by Society member **David Scott, Pearland’s** oldest native born male citizen. Pictured above are **David** and **Luther Cunningham** at the candle lighting ceremony last **October**. **David** turned **94** on **January 16<sup>th</sup>**. **Happy Birthday, David.**

It was great to see **Mary Lee Smith Miller** at our luncheon. **Mary Lee**, who is 103 years old, is our oldest **Society Member**. In one of the early editions of the **Newsletter** back in the fall of **1994**, **Mary Lee** did an interview and one statement she made still stands out in my mind. She said that when she and husband, **Jack Miller**, built their home on the corner of **Austin and Orange** they thought they were way out in the country!!! How times have changed.



**Mary Lee Smith Miller at Reunion Luncheon**

Another one of our older members who was missed at our luncheon is **Bill Bradley**. **Bill**, who turned 96 **December 12<sup>th</sup>**, had attended every luncheon we have had up until last **October**. He was in the hospital with respiratory problems. His daughter, **Carolyn Bradley Collmorgan**, reports **Bill** is living at his home in **Plantersville**, with a caregiver. **Carolyn** says he is on oxygen and has problems walking without getting out of breath. You were missed, **Bill**.

### Looking Back

As mentioned previously, we are in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of publishing the **Pearland Historical Society Newsletter**. The first issue was June, 1994. It is very interesting to go through the old issues and remember the controversies going on and the action by our **Historical Society** and members of the **Historical Society**. There is also an element of sadness as one reads about the passing of persons who contributed so much to our community.

The first issue featured a story about **Josie Frankenberger Heflin**. Most of us remember **Josie** and the story of her and her **Mother** planting the historic oak tree on **Main Street**. **Josie** told of planting the tree in **1927** in memory of her father **William Frankenberger**. Today most people who see the oak tree assume it is probably over 150 years old.



**Josie's Oak Tree – Planted 1927**

In the **August, 1994** issue we learn about **Society Member Margie Lawrence**, who was at that time the music teacher at **Pearland**, putting together a booklet entitled “**Early Days in Pearland 1894 to 1994**” – a booklet which is now treasured in our **Historical Society** files. **Margie**, who will be 93 **March 27<sup>th</sup>**, also put together a delightful musical to celebrate **Pearland's** centennial year.

Through the last 20 years we have also learned a great deal more about **Pearland** history. Thanks to the dawning of the computer age and historical research done mostly by **Dwight Bittick** and **Tom Hunter**, we learned that **Witold Zychlinski** actually was a **Polish** count and that **Mark Belt** was a real man and not a railroad term; and we do have pictures and life stories on both men. Also thanks to a lot of work on the part of **Margurite Massey Smith** in those last 20 years we have added **Texas Historical** markers for the “**old depot**”, the **1937 Pearland High School**, and **Zychlinski Park**

A lot of history has passed under the bridge in those 20 years; and today if you talk about something in **Pearland** that occurred 20 years ago you are considered a really old time **Pearlander**. Hopefully, our members will continue to document **Pearland** and family history and events so that twenty years from now **Pearlanders** will enjoy reading them.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the story below, **Kathleen Childress Holt** adds a bit more history with her memories of the **Childress** family in **Pearland** and **Brookside**.

\*\*\*\*\*

*This is a story of daddy, William Charles "**Bill**" Childress, and his move to Pearland with my mom, Annetta Parker Childress, and other family members; he was a game warden in the Pearland area for many years..I wanted to share a little about daddy's work and their lives as I remember; I refer to them as Bill and Annetta instead of Mom and Daddy in my story..... by daughter Kathleen Childress Holt*



**Annetta Childress** with daughter **Kathleen Childress Holt**, **Kathleen's** son **Adam** (bottom) and **Kathleen's** husband **Denny** (Standing)

**Bill and Annetta Childress Move to Pearland**

***WILLIAM C. "Bill" CHILDRESS** moved to the Pearland community in 1947 from the Heights of Houston with his wife of two years, **ANNETTA PARKER CHILDRESS** and daughter **Kathleen** . Pearland became home for their married life. He was a Game Warden for the state of Texas for 33 years, but when he first arrived in Pearland he got a job with a man who had cattle near the area that is now Walmart at **Dixie Farm and FM 518**. This was all open range and he helped pen the cattle which ran free. They then had a cattle drive and drove the cattle to a shipping point, which was near where the **Astrodome** is located. He had ridden in many rodeos and worked ranches and farms as a teenager.*

*Bill also worked for Mr. Barnes on his rice farm, in the community between Pearland and Friendswood. After a short time working there, he worked as a Brazoria County Deputy Sheriff. That seemed natural to him as he had been a Marine only a few years earlier, and received a Purple Heart for serious injuries, after action in Bougainville Island, the South Pacific.*

*They lived in what is now Woodcreek Subdivision in a small frame house, that was Mr. Brown's (of Friendswood) on the other side of Mary's Creek; there were very few families and homes in the 1940's in that area, and this was near the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mays. (The Mays house is still there where Mrs. Mays sells many yard decorations across from Walmart near Dixie Farm Rd.) After renting homes in Pearland, the Childress' built a home on the shell road known as Brookside Road, and lived there from 1953 onward. Their three children grew up there, Kathleen, Clay and Kenneth.*



*Annetta & Bill Childress*

*Leo and Icea Pearl Parker, Annetta's parents, and her brother Leo "Butch" Parker lived near them during these years. Leo first moved his hog farm to Yost Road, and drove from what is now 290 and Mangum in Houston, each day to tend to his hogs with his boy, Butch; he moved in with Bill and Annetta, and moved Icea Pearl and Butch to Pearland shortly. The four other Parker girls had married and left home by then. One of Annetta's sisters, Bernadine Parker McQuiller, and her husband Jack, however, also moved to Brookside, as did her Uncle Buddy and Aunt Annie Parker Boyd. Annie was one of Leo's sisters and he was a*

*favorite brother. Uncle Buddy delivered the Houston Chronicle and was seen driving his station wagon, rolling the papers with string, using his elbows to drive his car, and throwing them into the yards of customers. He drove all of Pearland, up toward Alvin and over to Friendswood, and out in the county. They lived on Garden Rd. around the corner from the Childress' and were lots of fun. Annie was proud of having worked in Houston at the Post Office. Leo got a job with the Brazoria County Drainage District and enjoyed many good friendships there, giving up the hog business.*

*Brookside became the home of family and friends! The families living near them included the Roy and Elsie Krell's, Bill and Mary Ellis', the Inez and Milton Farmer family, the Johnson's (who had the local swimming pool), and Fred Mitchell families; the Carter's, the Newman's, and Mr. Hatfield who sold the Childress' the land on Brookside, and lots of other 'good neighbors' became part of their lives. Later other relatives moved to Pearland, the Thornhills, Norman and CeeCee, and their family, another of Annetta's aunts and uncles. CeeCee Parker Thornhill was a sister to her daddy Leo and Aunt Annie Boyd. Annetta really enjoyed having her own mother as a neighbor. All she had to do was walk through the cow pasture and climb through the barbed wire fence to see her own Momma and Daddy. Bill and Leo loved talking about Rice University football and baseball, all Pearland athletics, and shared tales of mutual friends and family in the area. Butch kept laughter and stories coming, and was a practical joker, like his daddy Leo. It was a good life for the family as they settled into living in Pearland.*

*A family story of a joke Leo played on his co-worker was that after he had been working on a drag line one day, he took a dead snake and put in over the visor on the big county drag line. The next man working flipped the visor down and had a dead snake in his lap! That story stayed for years at the Drainage District barn and told over and over. Yes, Leo and Butch were always playing jokes.*

*Bill and Annetta helped with the organizing and incorporation of Brookside Village as a separate community, and it still is today. This took lots of planning, mapping, working with the county and state, and hours of time. Annetta not only worked for Brookside Village as secretary but she became*

*a city council member, president of the civic club and the seniors organization; they both worked to help build Brookside Civic Club. They were proud of being from Pearland and Brookside, being Texans, and patriotic American citizens. Leo Parker was active in the Pearland community supporting the schools. He followed the teams, went to practices, and was even allowed to ride on the bus with the football team and coaches. That was pretty unusual! In 1956, after his passing that came too early in life, the school dedicated the Gusher Yearbook to Leo, saying it was in appreciation of his untiring efforts, his support and his willingness to assist in any and all school activities. His life had revolved around the school and all the important events such as ball games, the Coronations, barbeques and oyster fries, and the carnival--the school was the social center of the family's activities and lives, like many others. The three Childress kids went to the Pearland schools, as did Butch, and their cousins, Mark, Bobby, and Sara McQuiller, and Michael Boyd.*



**Leo "Butch" Parker**

*Bill worked for the Texas Game and Fish Commission that was later called Texas Parks and Wildlife from 1947 to 1980. His friends and family knew if they saw him he would just as easily give them a ticket if they were hunting or fishing, as he would anyone else without a license. He was known for his strong character, being fair, and his commitment to his job; he spent many long hours searching for hunters who were hunting at night, killing deer illegally or hunting quail or dove out of season or over the limit; he would be out in his state boat looking for those using the wrong kinds*

*of nets fishing in Galveston Bay; he dealt with many situations with shrimpers and oystermen. His area was very large, driving from Pearland to Alvin, to Dickinson, to Seabrook and Galveston--everything along the bay! This was Harris, Fort Bend, Galveston, and Brazoria Counties and there was only one other game warden, Mr. Frank Mebane of Alvin during those early years.*

*Annetta was very involved as she often answered the base radio that broadcast the wardens talking to one another from their cars. He was often not at home and someone would call needing a warden, with hunters on their property or other problems. She could communicate with the wardens in their cars. That was pretty exciting and interesting to know what was happening in the pastures, fields, creeks and woods around Pearland, as well as Galveston bay.*

*One place Bill stayed was " Mr. Jimmy Martyn's" property, which is now part of Armand Bayou Nature Center; Mr. Martyn's story is still part of the center's history. Bill and Mr. Martyn struck up a friendship, and the game wardens spent nights there watching for deer hunters; Mr. Martyn had turned many of the deer into pets and they would walk up to him. He fed them cigarettes out of his hand and they would stand up on their hind legs to get one; there were many interesting people Bill met along the way. NASA still has deer on their property from those early days, when it was all open area and only Webster was a town, before Clear Lake developed. On Sundays the family sometimes drove with Bill, driving the oyster shell road to Friendswood, and taking a long road over toward the bay and visit Mr. Martyn and his deer.*

*The men who worked together as wardens were a close knit bunch and got along well...and they had to be ready to protect one another. Not everyone who was stopped appreciated the efforts of the wardens, and sometimes it was dangerous for them, especially with hunters. Another friend and visitor of Bill's was Deputy Sheriff Dawson who lived in Pearland, as well as Justice of the Peace, Mr. Segelquist, who worked with Bill on his arrests. Henry Whitt also became friends. He was also good friends with Mr. E.E. Martin where he always got his gas for his state car. All officers worked together, sheriffs and wardens, sharing information. Hughie Raney rode at night*

sometimes with Bill to help out and was a good friend. Staying awake, talking and drinking coffee, was how they spent the night work looking for hunters. Bill sometimes helped in searches for people when someone was missing, but he didn't share much about these times.

There was also a bay camp house in West Bay, Chocolate Bayou, where they could stay over night and go out in their boats and check for illegal netting, and fishing. The first camp was built with his friends from the Brazoria County Drainage District, where father in law Leo worked. This was on an oyster reef, and was a very small place but was a great location. Some of Bill's friends were the Johnston's, Tunney, Buck and Gene and their dad, Tud, and Pat O'Day. He also enjoyed time with Ed Keonitzer and Lloyd Yost who worked for Brazoria county. That bay house was blown down in Hurricane Carla, but good friends of Bill's from the Pearland schools helped rebuild it using "Carla" scraps. Bill's friends from the schools were Coach Backhaus, Mr. Al Isacson- the band director, Mr. J. D. Gray the superintendent, Coach Buster Lawhon, and others. Mr. Shannon also was a friend. All great guys that liked to hear the stories of hunters, arrests made, and activities going on in the counties that Bill shared with them! One of them wrote on the back of his boat "Drag Net" as a practical joke!

Bill visited the Gray's when they moved to Rockport, and the family took some vacations with Gene and Margie Johnston. Annetta enjoyed the wives, and had many good friends including Margie Johnston, Rosemary Raney, Ola Carter, Mary Ellis, Elsie Krell, Retha Mitchell, Maxine Johnson, who later married Mr. Williams; also, Inez Farmer, Dee Trevillion, Barbara Maynor, Mrs. Klopp, Evelyn Mikulin, Gayle Gaddis, and Nancy Green. Great ladies! Annetta was known in her family for always putting them first, and asking for very little; she served delicious food, and liked volunteering at schools as room mother. She worked the polls during elections and called people to remind them to vote! Very active in her politics and the local community. She even kept attendance for Principal C.J. Harris at the elementary school for a while. She especially loved being with family at Thanksgiving and Christmas and having Easter egg hunts in the big yard. She had the American and Texas flag hanging off their porch to show their love of country. She was a history buff and knew the

stories of Texas and WWII very well, and enjoyed that Pearland began a Historical Society.



Picture from Reunion Luncheon in the past. Back row: Nancy Green, Annetta Childress, Kathleen Childress Holt. Front: Norma Rae McCormick Kelly and Marjorie McCormick Johnston.

Bill also enjoyed hunting, but had very little time to enjoy the sport. He did hunt deer and quail, which Annetta prepared as wonderful meals. He had bird dogs for years, along with having horses and cows, just like he was raised with as a child. Sometimes Bill would take an illegal deer from a hunter and take it to the Boy's Home on Clear Lake where the cooks could prepare several meals for the kids. There were some families near the airport in Pearland who did not have very much, and he would give them geese and ducks to help during their difficult times.

Bill later became District Chief with an office in Houston, and did more paperwork than he liked, but, he deserved the promotion. He did briefly work in LaGrange, Beaumont, and Victoria his later years as a game warden but came back to Brookside. Jay and Nancy Green bought land from the Childress' and built a house next door, where they spent many hours talking, and enjoying retirement next door to one another. They had very good lives and enriched the community.

\*\*\*\*\*

A note from Kathleen: It was good living in Brookside in the 1950's and 1960's; I will never forget the year I was burned, and was in the hospital four months in 1956. Daddy missed lots of work, but many wardens donated their

*vacation time so he would not lose pay. The wonderful neighbors of Brookside showed up at our back door one night, when I returned home from the hospital. They gave Momma and Daddy over \$500 they collected among neighbors to help our family! Amazing, kind and caring neighbors! That was a lot of money back then. That is such a vivid memory, looking outside and seeing all the neighbors standing in the yard; they said very little, just that they wanted to help as neighbors, and left. Those years in Pearland bring memories and feelings of community, love and friendship, and respect for one another. That hardship brought a bond with my parents as times like that can do in families. Every year they called me the date of that day I was burned and always said, "do you remember what today is?"*

*Daddy passed away in 1998; and Mom lived until 2009. In those later years, we continued to travel Texas towns, antiqued and visited bed and breakfasts, things mom loved to do. She sat out in the yard, talked with Nancy, and visited her nine great grandchildren . Her passing leaves a big void in our lives each day. Maybe writing memories or stories for family and friends, who might like to know, helps keep their memory alive, and shares the character of those who moved to Pearland. Thanks for reading and remembering.*

.....

Editor's Note: Thanks, **Kathleen**. There is a lot of **Pearland/Brookside** history in your story. Many of us older members remember duck hunting in areas around **Pearland** and **Brookside** which are now upscale sub-divisions. I think most of us will certainly agree with one particular sentence in the story. That sentence was "*His friends and family knew if they saw him he would just as easily give them a ticket if they were hunting or fishing, as he would anyone else without a license.*" A lot of times not only did we not have a license, but most of us really didn't worry about whether it was actually duck season or not. We knew that if the local **Game Warden Bill Childress**

caught us we were going to go before the local **Justice of Peace** and pay a fine - - regardless of whether we were friends of the **Childress or Parker** family.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Be careful about reading healthcare books.**

**You could die from a misprint.**

**Mark Twain**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Just a reminder. Historical Society yearly membership dues became due on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Please see the membership form at the end of this Newsletter.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Don't forget our quarterly Historical**

**Society Meeting, Tuesday night,**

**January 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 P.M. at Historical**

**Society home on Galveston Ave. As**

**usual homemade cookies, coffee and**

**cold drinks and visitation follows the**

**meeting. We will have nominations for**

**Historical Society officers. See you**

**there.**



