

PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Pearland Historical Society

P. O. Box 1333

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

President's Message

Anytime a couple or more **Historical Society** members get together, the topic of conversation invariably turns to the growth of **Pearland** and usually to comparing growing up in **Pearland** today with growing up here in earlier years. In almost all instances the conversation turns to what a hard, tough life it was like growing up back in those days when an ice cream cone cost a nickel and a soft drink was a treat and not just something for washing down a sandwich at meal time. But also in almost all instances the next sentence is about how that person wouldn't trade growing up in those days with growing up in today's society. It is hard to imagine what the children of today will be talking to their grandkids about and comparing their lives growing up in the 2000's as compared to life in the 2050's. One thing for sure, the **City of Pearland** in the 2050's will look as different from the **Pearland** of the 2000's as the **Pearland** of the 2000's looks from the **Pearland** of the 1950's or 60's. At our January **Historical Society** meeting **Mayor Tom Reid** said **Pearland** now has a population of around 90,000 and will exceed 100,000 by the end of this decade. Just seven years ago in the April, 2001 **Newsletter** we quoted **Mayor Reid** saying our census was then 37,600; and of course we were amazed that the old rice fields out west of town were then filling up with businesses of all sorts as well as upscale housing sub-divisions. As each of our **Historical** members pass on, a bit of early **Pearland** history is erased. Hopefully the **Historical Society** will be able to maintain that history. I think with the historical markers at the "Old Settlers Cemetery", the old depot, the **Methodist Church**, the old high school and now at **Zychlinski Park** a great amount of history has been preserved. Of course in the year 2057 the then

citizens of **Pearland** will open the time capsule and perhaps enjoy some more **Pearland** history.

In this issue of the **Newsletter**, you will find a couple of articles which contain a lot of **Pearland** history. One is a history of **Pearland** by **Dorothy Long Cook** and the other is a story **Lester Hood** wrote when his good friend **LeRoy "Red" Watson** passed away. **Lester**, who just recently also passed away, wrote the story for **Red's** son. It describes what life was like growing up in **Pearland** back in the 30's and the sort of things so many of us talk about when reminiscing about days past.

Don't forget to circle **Saturday, October 25th** on your calendars. That is the day of our annual **Reunion Luncheon**. That is the day also when we all will get to reminisce about those early days of **Pearland** and to renew old friendships.

Mickey Mark

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Don't forget our regular Quarterly Historical Society meeting, Tuesday, April 15th at 7:00 P.M. Kyler Cole, "Old Townsite Coordinator" will be our guest. Please note this meeting will again be at the Pearland Church of Christ on Grand Boulevard. The remodeling of the Knapp Center is almost complete so we can look forward to our July meeting there. Coffee, soft drinks and homemade cookies and visits with old friends follow the meeting. See you there.

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Thinking of our Society meeting on April 15th brings to mind the big event of April 15th - - income tax payment day. Recently I received an e-mail which gave a very good description of the IRS. It said "the IRS". Put the words together and it spells "THEIRS".

What's Happening

Thanks once again to the **Pearland Church of Christ** for allowing the **Historical Society** the use of one of their class rooms for our **January** meeting. Although the night was a miserable, rainy and cold one, we had a pretty good turnout.

Treasurer Peggy Farthing Long reported a balance of \$39,113.18 in our treasury as of Dec. 31, 2007.

Pictures of old **Pearland** homes are needed for posting on the **Pearland Historical Society** website. If anyone hasn't visited the website the web address is www.pearlandhistoricalsociety.org **Ray Kliesing** has done a great job in setting up and maintaining the website.

Also old pictures of downtown **Pearland** are needed for the cover of the membership books which hopefully will be forthcoming this spring.

In discussing the luncheon for this year, the consensus was to continue to use **Central Texas Barbecue** for our caterer and to hold the price at \$8.00 per person. It was also decided that since 08 is an election year the decoration theme will be patriotic - - red, white and blue.

It was also agreed that our **Historical Society** will pursue a **Texas Historical Marker** for the new park on **Orange Street** if it is named "**Hunter Park**" as requested by our **Society**. At this time the **Parks Board** has approved the name but it will not be brought before the **City Council** until sometime in April.

Members present voted to send a letter to the **Pearland Parks Department** requesting the **Veterans Memorial Marker at Zychlinski Park** be moved to another location. It was felt that the monument looks more like an advertisement and is not appropriate for the "**Old Townsite Zychlinski Park**".

(Editor's Note: The letter to the Parks Dept. has been sent.)

Mayor Tom Reid gave an interesting update as to what is going on in the **City of Pearland**. As previously mentioned, **Mayor Reid**, says our population is now 90,000 and will exceed 100,000 by the end of this decade. **The Mayor** also reported there are 460 medical doctors who now reside in **Pearland** and approximately 4200 residents who work at the medical center in **Houston**. Another item of interest discussed by the **Mayor** concerned the **Presidential Park** which is located just off **Highway 288** on the banks of **Clear Creek**. The park features large busts of U.S. presidents. They are the creation of an internationally acclaimed artist **David Adickes**. The park will be in an area called the **Waterlights District** which is a \$600 million planned urban development which will feature residential condos, luxury apartments, office buildings, retail boutiques, restaurants, a couple of luxury hotels and a grand canal waterway.

(Editors Note: Yes, this is Pearland the Mayor is talking about and for \$600 million I don't think they are planning on using an existing rice canal.)

We appreciate the **Mayor's** interesting update. **Mayor Reid** has been a real friend and ardent supporter of the **Pearland Historical Society**.

Among our Members

Society Member Lester Hood passed away **February 27th**. **Lester** was a member of the class of 1942 and played end on the championship undefeated 6-man football team of 1941. **Lester** served in the **Army** during WWII. When he returned to civilian life, he went to **Sul Ross University** and earned a bachelor's and master's degree. He taught school and coached for 25 years. **Lester** was the youngest of the **Hood** children and was preceded by sister **Mildred Hood Bradley** and brothers **Bob and Claude**. **Lester and Lillian** were regular attendees at every **Historical Society luncheon** and kept up with all the goings on with the **Society**. Our deepest sympathies go out to **Lillian** and family. Further in the Newsletter you will see a story about growing up in **Pearland** written by **Lester**.

As mentioned in the last **Newsletter**, **Society Member Nancy Phillips** has been having a tough battle with Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma. Since that time she has undergone radiation treatments, blisters in her mouth which necessitated a feeding tube and countless other side effects from the radiation. Husband **Larry** has kept those of us on the e-mail circuit updated on **Nancy's** battle; and it is good to report this tough lady is once more able to eat, has discarded the feeding tube and she and **Larry** are even planning trips to **Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Nebraska**. **Larry** and **Nancy** have sent their thanks for all the prayers. They surely did help.

Cooper Gartrell, three year old son of **Lacey and John Gartrell**, grandson of **Leah and Dwight Bateman**, and great grandson of **David Smith** is undergoing chemo therapy for leukemia. He goes 4 days a week. He is in and out of **Texas Children's Hospital** with various complications such as infection, bronchitis and reactions to the chemo. Please keep **Cooper** and family in your prayers.

Another **Society Member** needing your prayers is **Wanda Shannon Jamison**. Back in early February, **Wanda** fractured her knee cap on the knee which she had a knee replacement 3 years ago. She has been in a knee brace from the ankle to the thigh. She will be going back for further x-rays in May and possibly will face more surgery.

Also please keep **Society Member James Hefner** in your prayers. A year or so ago, **James**, who lives in **Kerrville, Texas**, had a melanoma removed from his face. At the time the doctors thought they had got all the cancer; but it has returned in **James'** brain. At this time the doctors are doing MRI's to determine the method of treatment. **James** is a 1948 **PHS** graduate. He holds a doctors degree from **Texas A&M** in agriculture; and those of us who were his 1948 classmates remember him as one of the really good guys. We are praying for him.

Some Good News

Brenda Martin Riggs, **Secretary of the Historical Society**, will be on another fascinating mission trip this summer. On July 1st she will be traveling to the city of **Save (pronounced Saavay) in Benin, West Africa**. She will be on the mission for 19 days. **Brenda** has been on some really interesting mission trips in the past: and we will look forward to

reading about this one in a future issue of the **Newsletter**.

Quinton & Wanda Jamison's twin granddaughters will be graduating from college in May. **Haley Addison Polak** will graduate from the **University of Texas In Austin** with a degree in Theatre Arts and **Ashley Jamison Polak** will graduate from **Baylor** with a degree in Psychology. **Ashley & Haley** are daughters of **Quinton and Wanda's** daughter **Cheryl "Jamison" Polak** and her spouse **Randy Dale Polak**

Society Members Roy and JoAnn Mark, down in **Victoria, Texas** have reason to be proud of their daughter. **Glynda Mark Martin** received the honor of being named "**Woman of the Year**" in **Pleasanton, Texas**.



Glynda Mark on the right receiving plaque as Woman of the Year in Pleasanton, Texas

Members Sidney and Reba Kliesing also can be proud of their granddaughter, **Rhiannon Kliesing**. **Rhiannon** opened up the **Texas A&M Lady Aggies** softball regular season Big-12 Conference play with a win over **Texas Tech** on 03/22/08. **Rhiannon**, who is in her freshman year at **A&M** was an All American high school pitcher for the **Pearland Oilers**. A look at the Aggie softball web site shows **Rhiannon** at this time has pitched 89 innings with a 1.337 earned run average while winning 9 games and losing 4 and has struck out 82. She also is batting .271; and just think she is only a freshman. Watch for **Rhiannon's** name on the sports page of Texas newspapers.

PHS Class Reunions

Society Member Mickey Scott advises that he will be hosting a reunion of the **PHS class of 1957** at his home in **Bellville** on April 27th. **Mick**, who has hosted a reunion the past 7 years, says class members attending can look forward to breathing fresh country air, rehearing tales of the old days, catching up on current events, pitching washers, eating barbecue and hopefully enjoying the bluebonnets. Sounds like a great day for you 57 grads.



Mickey Scott (r.) with Rudy Sandoval at Reunion Luncheon

Also **Society Member Phil Curry** advises that the **PHS class of 1978** will have a reunion on Saturday, August 23rd at the **Houston Hobby Marriott Hotel**.

For more information on the reunion, you can check out this website:

<http://www.pearlandclassof1978.com/>

Who Are the Oldest Native Born Pearlanders?

In the year 2007 we unfortunately lost both **Pearland's** oldest native born citizen, **Lois Hunter Bundy**, 101 and the oldest native born male citizen, **Roy F. "Dude" Martin**, 91. With the passing of **Lois and Dude**, the question was who were the oldest male and female native born citizens residing in **Pearland**? As best we can determine, our oldest native born citizen is **Historical Society Member Emma Jamison Wells** who was born November 1, 1913 thus making her 94 years old. In one of our previous **Newsletters** there were excerpts from the **Jamison Family History** written by **Florence Jamison Gum**. **Florence's** well written story certainly illustrated the tremendous change **Emma**

Jamison Wells has seen in all those years she has lived on **Yost Road** which now has become the four lane **Yost Boulevard**.



Emma Jamison Wells – Pearlard's Oldest Native Born Citizen

It appears that **Society Member David Scott** is now the oldest native born male citizen. **David** was 88 years old on Jan. 18. **David** was raised on a dairy on **Scott Lane** which in those days was way out in the country. Besides now being the oldest native born male **Pearlander**, **David** has another spot in the history of **Pearland**. As the quarterback on **Pearland's** first football team in 1937, **David** scored the first touchdown ever scored by the **Pearland Oilers** in **Pearland's** only game of 1937 against **LaMarque**. In years to come we may have older native born **Pearlanders**, but **David's** name will always remain in **Pearland's** sports history books.



David Scott, Pearlard's Oldest Native Born Male with teachers Oleta Campbell Hawkins and Hazel Skinner Muetz

The following story was written by **Society Member Dorothy Long Cook** in 1984. **Dorothy**,

who was a 1939 PHS classmate of **David Scott**, was the **Pearland City Secretary** for many years. **Dorothy** not only witnessed many historical changes in our city, as **City Secretary**, she was involved in many of them. She is now living in an assisted living facility in **Houston**. **Dorothy** recently had a stent placed in her heart. By all reports she is doing very good. Her story takes us from the 30's through the 70's. She tells an interesting story about the changes she witnessed

A Traditional View of Pearland

By Dorothy Long Cook

Most articles about **Pearland** begin with the development of the **Santa Fe Railroad** in 1882; however, my first recollection of **Pearland** was in the 1920's. That was when the prairies had wild violets, horned toads, and walking paths instead of sidewalks. The town had a doctor named **Dr. Long**, who operated the drug store located on the northeast corner of **Broadway and Highway 518**. The drug store was the hub of the community since it dispensed castor oil, pink pills, general merchandise, automobile tires (very narrow) and a variety of penny candy out of a magnificent display case. It also had a section for banking, complete with teller cage and bars. Outside of the drug store was a bench where men gathered on Sunday morning to smoke their pipes and cigars and tell tall tales.

Other buildings included the **fig plant, IGA store, telephone office, post office, school house, hotel and depot**. The depot, now serving as offices for the **Chamber of Commerce**, was located on the east side of the railroad tracks. A dipping vat was located north of the depot along the tracks and livestock were driven across the area of the **Old Townsite** to this vat, dipped and loaded onto the rail cars and sent to market.

The road to **Houston** was shell; however, some of the **Old Townsite** roads were dirt and when it rained it caused quite a problem for the people who owned cars. A jury summons would require a train ride to **Angleton** and if you missed the train back you had to stay in **Angleton** until the next day.

The thirties brought us a little shell on the roads in the **Old Townsite**, plus a paved road into **Houston**. It brought us additional school buildings including a

high school with the first graduating class in 1938. **Pearland** had two large dance halls, one called the **Old Style Inn** located where **Pancamo Moving & Storage** is now (*Editor's Note: Building was torn down in 2007*) and the other known as the **Wander Tavern** and located above the **Red & White Grocery Store on Main Street** and later across the street above the **Chevrolet** dealership. We seemed to be famous for our honky-tonks and a super sized **Justice of the Peace** who administered justice out of the telephone office.

The 40s brought us ration stamps, rice fields and dry water wells, or at least wells pumping air and sand. **The Water Control and Improvement District No. 3** was created by vote of the people in 1949. **The District's** boundaries were basically the **Old Townsite**, excluding one block on the west side of town. In **December, 1949**, the **District** called a bond issue for \$260,000 for the purpose of constructing a waterworks and sanitary sewer system. The **District** rented a portion of the **Fire Station**, located in the esplanade of **Grand Blvd at Highway 518** for its business office. A five-acre tract of land was purchased at **Orange and Old Alvin Road** and the first sewer plant was constructed. The **District** obtained the land where the present **City Hall and Police Station** are located (*Editor's Note: Now the Neighbor Hood Center*), drilled a water well and erected a 50,000 gallon **Horton Watersphere**, presently a landmark in the City.

In **February 1964**, through mutual agreement, the **City** abolished the **Water District** and assumed all its liabilities and assets. At that time, the **City** had a **Chief of Police** and two patrolmen as employees. The **Water District** had five employees, two outside and three inside employees.

The **City** operated under **General Law** form of government until 1971 when a proposed council manager home rule charter was presented to the citizens of the **City**. The election adopting the Charter narrowly passed and the election was challenged in the courts; however, it was held to be a valid election. The Charter has been amended four times since adoption, with only minor amendments to the original.

The **City** suffered two devastating floods in 1979 and **Hurricane Alicia** in 1983; however, it has survived and continues to grow with the outlook for

the future bright for the estimated population of some 17,500 citizens now living in the 23 square miles inside the city limits. A 50 acre park, and a new community center and library grace the **Pearland** scene, with a new police station, city hall and other improvements to be constructed with the next five years.



Dorothy Long Cook at left with Lola Mae Long at Reunion Luncheon

Lester Hood wrote the following story for **LeRoy "Red" Watson's** son when **LeRoy** passed away several years ago. It is a tribute to **LeRoy** but it also is a great story about the life so many of us remember from those years of the 30's and 40's when life was much simpler and when a couple of young boys could get on their bicycles and ride to **Hobby Airport** to watch the planes.

Some Early Memories of Pearland by Lester Hood

Dear Chris,

I enjoyed your web page about your father and want to share with you some childhood memories. Since I was also born in **Pearland** in 1923, we shared many of the same experiences while growing up in a small town. My family lived in **Friendswood** during my elementary years, so that first recollection of knowing **Le Roy** was in **Faye Brookshire's** fifth grade class. He made a lasting impression on his classmates with his entertainment skills. He was not shy about standing in front of the room and singing interminable verses of the song, "**There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea.**"

Mr. Dempsey taught us in the sixth grade. That was the year we began playing softball. Our team won the county meet by defeating **Alvin** in a game

played in **Pearland**. Prior to that, we had won three games in one day in **Freeport**.

While in **Mrs. Brigham's seventh** grade class, we continued to play softball. It was in 1937 that **Pearland** acquired its first affiliated high school. A new building was constructed, and high school students began attending classes there rather than in **Webster**. The original school was converted into a gym-auditorium with a raised roof.

Since a good deal of lumber was discarded during remodeling, **Le Roy** and I were able to collect boards, shingles, and crate-type siding. We transported our materials on a little wagon to a vacant pasture, where we erected a clubhouse. It was probably about six by eight in size. The sides of the roof did not quite meet at a peak, but we shingled it and were proud of our results. A few years later, we moved the building to a vacant lot behind my home. **Denny Coppinger** found an old wood-burning stove, so we had a comfortable hideout. **Donald Halik** brought Satsuma oranges (which he had probably raided from an orchard) and we enjoyed eating them while sitting on the dirt floor of our little building.

My older brothers, **Bob and Claude Hood**, were on the new high school basketball team. **Le Roy** and I wanted to watch them play in a game, but did not have the admission price of a quarter. We stood by the door looking forlorn. When **Coach Hawkins** entered, he said, "Aw, come on in." We were thrilled to attend a high school game.

One of the excursions **Le Roy** and I made was a bicycle trip to **Hobby Airport**, where we watched planes land and take off. I remember riding bikes with your **Uncle Alan** to a creek where we went swimming.

One of the best opportunities **Pearland** students had was the **Travel Club**. Most of us were from families who, during the **Great Depression**, could not take children to see the wonderful sights of our country. Several teachers sponsored the trips, which were managed on a shoestring budget. Each student paid about fifteen dollars for expenses. School busses were used and most gasoline was purchased with vouchers from oil companies.

The first trip we boys had was a lengthy one to **Yellowstone National Park** and many other parks

along the route. We prepared meals ourselves. The menu was mainly cereal with condensed milk, bread with apple or peanut butter, and sometimes chili heated on a **Coleman** stove.

Le Roy and I were “travel mates” that year. We each carried a duffel bag containing clothes and one blanket. At night, we slept along a roadside or in a national park. We placed one blanket on the ground and used the other as a cover. One of the last stops was at **Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico**. I recall that **Le Roy** was among those who got into some sort of mischief and had to run through the “belt line” as punishment.

We were privileged to attend the **San Francisco World's Fair in 1939**. That trip included a tour of the **California** redwood forests. In 1940, we traveled to the **New York World's Fair**. This was a country wide excursion, with five schools and five school buses involved. While in **Washington D.C.**, our **Congressman** met us and a picture of the group was taken on the steps of the capitol Building. I understand that a copy of this photo is framed and hangs in the **Court House at Angleton**.



On the steps of the capitol

Most of us boys, within a very short time after these summer trips, were enlisted in various branches of the armed services and were traveling all over the country and throughout the world. The experience of having already seen at least part of the **United States** made the wartime moves to various camps and bases seem less forbidding. We had at least a slight acquaintance with places outside our own little village. **Pearland** high school girls also had trips. They were on a much smaller scale and of shorter length, since motels were used.



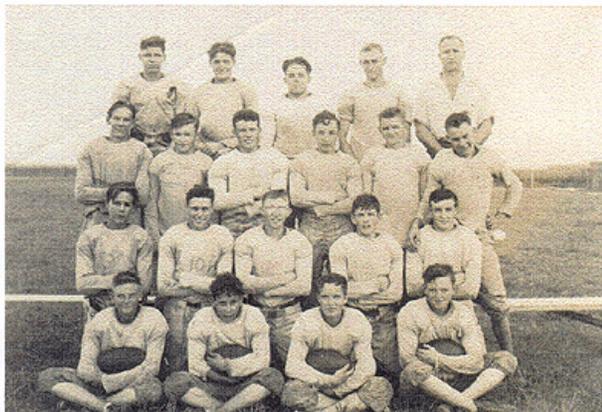
Lester Hood at Reunion Luncheon

Life for **Le Roy** and the others in our class became more exciting in our junior year and senior years of high school. It was a custom for the junior class to treat the senior class to a banquet at **San Jacinto Inn**. In order to do this, fundraisers were necessary. The project for us as juniors was to stage a “**Womanless Wedding**.” This was quite a comedy. I was the mother of the bride, and continually squeezed water from a handkerchief to simulate my tears. **Le Roy** was father of the bride. Dressed in “**Beverly Hillbilly**” attire, he followed the bride and groom down the aisle while carrying a real shotgun.

Besides the junior-senior banquet, those students also enjoyed a day at the beach in **Galveston** each spring. During senior year, our civics teacher, **Mr. Ainsworth**, took us to **Austin** while the Legislature was in session. We toured the **Capitol** and the the **Governor's Mansion**, where we saw **Mrs. W. Lee O'Daniel**, the governor's wife. We stayed overnight in an **Austin** motel.

Our **Pearland** football team during the 1941 season was probably the best six man team in the state. **Le Roy** was the quarterback. While calling plays in the huddle, he sometimes told jokes and stories to loosen us up. We went through the schedule undefeated and won every game in our bracket.

PEARLAND HIGH SCHOOL
Bi-District Champions 1941



Front row: Eugene Johnston, David Coker, Roy Mark, Orlen O'Day,
Second Row: Eugene Garner, Lester Hood, Nolan King, Harold D. Johnston
Ray Watson
Third Row: Lloyd Mahaney, Warren Oblinger, Le Roy Watson,
Owen Maynor, Billy Brocker, Charles Logan
Back Row: Dan Paulk, Ray Flannery, Victor Shore, Edgar A. Lawhon,
Coach Lloyd Hawkins

A highlight of senior year included attending the **Cotton Bowl Game**, where **Alabama and Texas A&M** played. One of the mothers had knitted caps in school colors for each of us team members to wear at the game. Unfortunately, a bitter cold spell arrived on Jan. 1, 1942. None of us had warm jackets or blankets and we finally had to retreat to the car and listen to the game on the radio.

As you probably realize, the **Pearl Harbor** attack occurred on **December 7, 1941**. By the time we were about to graduate, the war was in full gear. We boys knew what we would be doing soon after graduation. **Le Roy** and I both held jobs with **Precision Aeromotive at Hobby Airport** until we left for the service.

Your **Uncle Archie** worked for **Shell Oil Co.** and located the chassis of an old wrecked **Model A** that **Le Roy** purchased for five dollars. **Le Roy** soon had that jalopy up and running and then up-dated to a more serviceable **Model A** roadster. When I broke my collarbone during football practice, **Le Roy** took me in that roadster to a doctor in **Alvin**.

I have enjoyed recollecting some of these early-life experiences which I shared with your Dad. After WW-II, I was no longer in close contact with "**Red**." He remained in the **Air Force** and I went to college and became a teacher. We did see one another at a reunion held in the mid-90s for all graduates of **Pearland High School** from 1938 through the war years. Then a few years later, he attended the appreciation banquet for **Coach and Mrs. Hawkins**. He seemed to really delight in seeing old classmates. "**Red**" was a dear friend. It was a privilege to grow up with him in **Pearland**.

Editor's Note: Lester's letter to LeRoy's son captured a lot of the memories so many of us cherish and reveals the sort of things we all say about growing up in that era. Lester's letter and other tributes to LeRoy Watson can be read at this website:

<http://www.thebicyclingguitarist.net/dad/cbi.htm>

Pearland "Old Townsite Cordinator to speak at Historical Society Meeting

Kyler Cole, "Old Townsite Cordinator", will be a guest speaker at our April 15th meeting. You don't want to miss hearing what Kyler has to say about plans for the old townsite. Old Townsite Cordinator is a new position in the business development department of the City of Pearland. Kyler is a native of Florida and a West Point graduate. Meeting will be at the Pearland Church of Christ at 7:00 P.M .

Please use the attached form for dues payment and to get your tickets for our annual Reunion Luncheon on Saturday, Oct. 25th.

God gave us memories

So we may have roses in December

Emily Dickinson

See you at the meeting on the 15th

