

PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

President's Message

My, my, where does the time go? Here it is with one half of the year **2014** gone. For many of us older members of the **Historical Society**, it certainly seems that time does fly by at a faster rate these days. There are quite a few of us who when we hear about our **Historical Society** honoring the class of **1964** at our annual luncheon still think about the class of **64** just being a bunch of young kids. It is hard to think about those "kids" now being 50 years out of **PHS** and being grandparents and even great grandparents maybe. That is one good reason to make sure you get your ticket and attend the **luncheon**, which will be **Saturday, October 25th**. Further in the **Newsletter** will be a list of "**old timers**" who have passed away in the last quarter. You probably talked with one or two of them at our **2013 luncheon**. Don't miss the chance to reminisce with "**old friends**" this year.

I think **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 out any time frame in his definition of progress; so I suppose with those definitions in mind our **Society** can be said to be making progress with our various projects.

We finally had the dedication ceremony for the **Texas Historical Marker for Hunter Park**. This was after a long wait for submitting historical data to the **Brazoria Historical Museum** and the **Texas Historical Commission**. (Story further in **Newsletter**) Also our **Weds. Night** work group continues to meet weekly and the **Pearland historical time line** is just about complete (thanks primarily to **Carl Talbot** who

did the cutting and pasting of **Pearland** history by the decades). Our historical timeline ends with the decade of the 1970's with a depiction of an atomic bomb exploding with **Pearland** sub-divisions scattered everywhere. **Karen Corron** has finished the history of **Pearland** schools photo exhibit on the east wall of our headquarters. So according to **Webster** we are making progress.

John D. "Mickey" Mark

What's Happening



Hunter and Martin Family Members at Hunter Park Dedication Ceremony

As earlier mentioned the **Texas Historical Marker for Robert L. and Julia Martin Hunter Park on Orange St.** in old **Pearland** was unveiled with a nice unveiling ceremony on **May 3rd**. The **Pearland Parks and**

Recreation Dept. did an outstanding job in preparing for the ceremony, particularly **Carry Capers** who worked with us to set up the program. We even had fried chicken nuggets and soft drinks following the ceremony. Fortunately the weather was perfect; and everyone in attendance seemed to enjoy the ceremony.



Unveiling of Historical Society monument by Evelyn Martin Lawhon (in wheelchair), Brenda Martin Riggs and Tom Hunter

Invitations to our luncheon have been mailed to members of the honored class of **1964** for whom we have current mailing addresses. We still need addresses for the following members:

Roger Bailey; Marty Bratton; Gloria Ferrier; Elizabeth Holden; Tommy Leard; Michael Ray Moser; Tony Ponce; and David Williams.

If you have an address for any of these class members, please e-mail to mark325@prodigy.net

We encourage our members to visit the **Pearland Historical Society Facebook** page and to add any comments, pictures, etc. **Society Members David DeHoyas and Ray Kliesing** have done a great job in setting up the page and **David** has posted a lot of great pictures there. Any additions any of you submit will be appreciated.

AMONG OUR MEMBERS

A sad part of writing this quarterly **Newsletter** is reporting the deaths of **Society** members and old time **Pearlanders**. Unfortunately, in the last quarter we have lost more members and old timers than usual.

On **April 22nd**, **Wanda Palmer Nichols** passed away after several years in **Windsong Nursing Home**. Although **Wanda** did not graduate from **PHS**, her family moved to **Pearland** shortly after her graduation in **1947**. She and **Jay Nichols** married in **1953** and had made their home on **Orange Street** for probably 55 or so years. Their home was part of the original **Hunter** family estate. **Wanda** and her **Mother, Jessie Palmer**, were both members of the **Pearland Women's Softball** team which entertained **Pearland** residents of the **40's** and **50's**. Our sympathies go out to daughters **Janelle Nichols Currin, Jamie Nichols Schuelke, and Jodie Nichols Maniet**.

Pearland Historical Society member **Bill Bradley** passed away **June 9th** at the age of 96. **Bill** lived in **Plantersville, Texas**; but his interest in **Pearland** and **Pearland** history never diminished. Up until **2013**, **Bill** was a regular attendee at our **Historical Society** luncheon. He contributed several very interesting stories about early **Pearland** for our **Newsletters**. Up until the last year or so **Bill** was very active. He will be missed and remembered every year at the **October** reunion. Our Sympathies go out to son **Tom Bradley** and daughters **Carolyn Bradley Collmorgen, Charlene Bradley Rice and Liddie Bradley Henderson and families**.



Bill Bradley at Reunion Luncheon

On **May 30th**, my brother and **Historical Society** member **Roy D. Mark** of **Victoria** passed away after having a stroke back in **March**. **Roy**, who would have been **88** in **July**, was a **1943 PHS** graduate. He played football and basketball at **PHS**. **Roy** attended **U of H** for 2 years studying **geology**; and spent his career in the oil field industry. He retired as **district manager for Dia-Log Well Service Company**. After retirement he and wife, **JoAnn Suttle Mark**, enjoyed spending cool summers in **Grand Marais, Mn.** on the banks of **Lake Superior**. **Roy** always also enjoyed our **Reunion Luncheons** and was at our luncheon last **October**. **Roy's** son, **Roy Suttle Mark** preceded **Roy** in death. He is survived by **JoAnn Mark** and daughter **Glynda Mark Martin** and son **Boyd Mark** and families.



Roy Mark at 2013 Luncheon

Sadly, there were several other deaths of old time **Pearlanders** or **ex-Pearlanders** who are still well remembered by most of us.

Marilyn Howard Johns passed away **April 14th**. **Marilyn** and her twin sister, **Carolyn**, were **1958 PHS** grads. Those of us who are longtime **Pearlanders** have fond memories of **Marguerite and Gay Howard** and family when they lived in a home which was located on the area which is now the parking lot of the **Pearland State Bank**. Our sympathies go out to **Clarence Johns** and family.

Long time **Pearlander**, **Jay Johnson**, passed away **April 18th**. **Jay** was a member of the **PHS** class of **1957** and a lifelong **Pearland** resident. Many will remember his love for flying; and our **Historical Society** has copies of pictures of “**old Pearland**” which **Jay** took from his plane.

Other longtime **Pearlanders** who passed away since the last **Newsletter** are **Roy Krell**, **April 20th**, **Ramona Huckabee**, **May 16th**, **Gene Kliesing**, **June 18th**, **Weldon Rogers**, **June 6th**, **Henry Uresti**, **June 30th** and **Charles Fox**, **July 1st**.

Also a couple of former **Pearlanders** whom most of you will readily remember also recently passed away.

Don Keefer, class of **1956** passed away **June 9th**. **Don** was living in **Michigan** at the time of his death.

Carylon Livesay Bardwell passed away **June 18th** in **Carthage, Tx**. **Carylon** was the daughter of **Lester and Barbara Livesay** which was an early pioneer **Pearland** family. She was preceded in death by her husband **Jimmy Bardwell** and brother **Wayne Livesay**.

Carylon's husband, **Jimmy Bardwell**, was the younger brother of **Jessie Palmer**, mother of **Society Members Carolyn Palmer Christianson and Peggy Palmer Marasckin**.

Also please keep **Veora Hunter**, mother of members **Tom Hunter and Carol Hunter Reardon** in your prayers. **Veora**, who is 90, had a stroke recently and is in critical condition.

We have mentioned in the past that we would welcome stories from our readers about their memories of earlier days in **Pearland**. We have had some very interesting stories in the past. In this issue, **Society Member Tom Hunter** sent the following story about his favorite teacher, **Mr. Grant Tidwell**. I am sure many of the members of our honored class of **1964** will remember **Mr. Tidwell** and enjoy **Tom's** story as will our other members.

Mr . Tidwell

The 2014 Major League Baseball All-Star Game in Minneapolis on July 15th will celebrate remarkable current and former teachers who had a positive influence on their students and communities. The man who was my favorite teacher also took me to my first major league baseball game. His name appears under the Gusher faculty photographs as Mr. Elgin G. Tidwell, and he was known to students at Pearland High School as Mr. Tidwell or Coach Tidwell. To his family and friends, he was Grant. Grant Tidwell.



Grant Tidwell

By any measure, he was a remarkable man. He taught history, coached football and basketball, was popular with his students, and later served as a school administrator. I took his world history course and when we studied World War I, he had me draw a map of Europe on the blackboard and we color coded it. As we read each section in the book and his lectures progressed, the colors were altered to reflect advances by the Central and Allied powers. One time, he conducted a history "bee." Everyone in the class stood up and fielded questions. If you answered incorrectly, you sat down. The last student standing won the contest. In addition to his regular tests with multiple choice and essay questions, he once handed out a quiz in the form of a crossword puzzle.

On Thursday, April 12, 1962, Mr. Tidwell gathered a group of students--Mike Coppinger, Robby Moffett, Donald King, and me--and took us to Colt Stadium for the third game ever played by the new National League franchise, the Houston Colt .45s, against the Chicago Cubs. It was the first official big league baseball game any of us had attended. I suppose it was considered a school field trip; otherwise, we were all playing hooky and being led by our ringleader, Grant Tidwell. I wanted to buy a blue Houston cap with the orange .45s logo, but was short of cash. Mr. Tidwell spotted me the money for the cap, which I still have. Incidentally, Dean Stone pitched a three-hit, complete-game shut out to beat the Cubs, 2-0, and sweep the inaugural three-game series.

His talent for instruction was not limited to the classroom. He also coached our 9th grade basketball team. We played a team that beat us by more than 30

points. Coach Tidwell worked with us on fundamentals, especially on how to break the full-court press. Just before our second meeting with the team that trounced us, he had to leave town for a funeral. We played them to a tie in regulation and lost in triple overtime by a basket. Everyone on the team was disappointed we couldn't "win one for the Gipper." But when he returned and heard what happened, he was proud of what we had accomplished--in spite of the loss. While many old-school coaches motivated their teams through fear and intimidation, Coach Tidwell inspired his players to perform better because of their respect and affection for him. I lost track of Mr. Tidwell after high school, but later got his address and visited him and his family in Center City, Texas in 1968. It was the last time I saw him.

9th Grade Basketball



Front Row L/R: Tommy Hunter, Travis Black, Roy Johnson, Mike Coppinger, Presley Hood, Coach Tidwell, 2nd Row: Ronald Farmer, Lesley Hood, Huey Raney, Harry Thompson, Robbie Moffett

When I decided to write about Mr. Tidwell, I went on the Internet and was shocked and saddened to find the only reference was to a cemetery near Blanket, Texas. He died in 1992 at age 56. I wrote to his widow, Dollie Tidwell, and asked about his early life and his career after leaving Pearland. Within the week, I received an e-mail from Mr. Tidwell's sister, Oneale Tabor, who said she would send me material about his life as well as her personal memories.

Elgin Grant Tidwell was born on December 6, 1935 in Brownwood, Texas. His parents, Dorothy Mary Brewster Tidwell and Elgin Thomas Tidwell, grew up on farms near Blanket. In high school, Grant played all sports and made good grades "without cracking a book." His sister, Oneale, wrote, "He helped his dad haul hay every summer and made enough money to buy an old car. He had lots of friends who always came home with him on Fridays before football games

and Grant's grandma, Alice Brewster, cooked steak, gravy, and potatoes for their pregame meal. His mother worked in a sewing factory and his dad drove a cattle truck, so money was tight."

Grant Tidwell married his sweetheart, Dollie Lou Ryan, on stage after their high school graduation on May 28, 1954. He joined the Army and did his basic training at Fort Bliss in El Paso. Dollie joined him there until he was sent to Seoul, South Korea, where he served as an MP. His wife returned home during his enlistment. After his discharge in 1956, he got a job driving a school bus and with money from the G.I. Bill, enrolled at Howard Payne College in Brownwood, Texas, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in social science and a minor in physical education. His first assignment was in Pearland.

While in Pearland, the Tidwells' first two children were born: a daughter, Ramona Lynn, in 1961; and a son, Jamison Grant, in 1963. The children's poor health was complicated by the humid climate. And the stress of doing graduate work at the University of Houston and taking an administrative position at Brookside may have contributed to Mr. Tidwell's first heart attack in 1964. It was at this time, his sister said, that "things began to spiral out of control for him."

Dollie and Grant decided to move back to Blanket, and Grant got a job working with the Soil Conservation Service, but soon realized he missed teaching and being around kids. He found a job at a tiny school in Star, Texas. In 1968, the Tidwells' third child, a son, Gannon Ryan, was born. Bill Hart, of the Abilene Reporter-News, wrote, "When Grant Tidwell applied for the Star High School coaching vacancy in 1966, he told administrators that he'd like to stay there two years, then become an assistant coach at a larger school. He got the job, but never left Star except for a couple of years when he went into business. In all, he was head coach at Star for 24 years."

Hart continued, "According to 'Spirit,' a book written in 1973 by former Abilenian Carlton Stowers, Tidwell coached at Pearland for three years before applying for the Star opening. He said at the time that he had never seen a Six-Man game, but was willing to give it a try. According to the book, Tidwell was hired to coach all boys and girls sports in junior high and high school, teach world history, American government, and girls physical educational classes, and drive the school bus.

Although it was not in his contract, he lined the football field, cleaned the gym, and did other chores before going home to his farm duties. He was also the sports correspondent for several newspapers, including the Reporter-News. One of the highlights of his early career came in [school year] 1971 [fall of '70] when his football team won the Region II championship with a 72-36 win over Carbon. His teams won three straight district titles in those early years and he later turned out other winners."

"Heroes in the Hinterland" originally appeared in Southwest Scene, the Sunday magazine of the Dallas Morning News, and was cited by the Headliner's Club as one of the best sports features of 1971. It was included as a chapter in "Spirit," and was reproduced in another Carlton Stowers book, "Friday Night Heroes." It is the story of Texas six-man football with a profile of Star Tigers coach, Grant Tidwell. In "Heroes in the Hinterland," Carlton Stowers chronicles Game Day to open the season on September 9, 1971. Coach Tidwell ate breakfast before dawn and by 7 am "was behind the wheel of a yellow school bus, grinding down a country road en route to pick up the first of 21 youngsters on his 16 mile route." Tidwell made conversation through the rear view mirror and commented on the lack of discipline problems at small schools, "Take the kids on the team this year, for instance: Ten of them work on the farm or ranch every day when they get home from practice. The other boy helps his dad run the service station over at Center City and hauls hay. Football isn't all that hard for them-- it's an escape from work for an hour or so. It's fun and it means something to them."

Just after 8 am, Tidwell pulled the bus up to the school, dropped off his students, and then prepared for his morning classes. After his one afternoon class, he changed clothes and headed to the football field for junior high practice, then lined the playing field, checked to see that the game uniforms were in the lockers, and made a call to confirm that night's game officials. Later, he gathered his players in the dressing room for a skull session and then addressed all the students at a pep rally, "I can't tell you what kind of team we'll have this year, but I can tell you this: We've got the kind of players who will give everything they've got. I think you will be proud of them tonight."

At 3:30, he boarded the school bus and retraced the same 16-mile route he had taken that morning. After

dropping off all his students, he made it home by five o'clock with just enough time to clean up, put on his "good luck red shirt," have a glass of iced tea, and drive back to school--with a stop to pick up ice to treat minor injuries during the game. Before the 8 o'clock kickoff, he taped his players' ankles, then welcomed the opposing coach from Oglesby, and spoke with the game officials.

Stowers wrote that once the game began, "Tidwell is almost passive, a marked contrast to the rival coach across the way who constantly paces, yelling instruction to his players. Throughout the game, Tidwell methodically went about his duties, sending in plays, giving a quick rubdown to a player who had limped off the field with a leg cramp, and nodding approvingly to players who carried out their assignments well."

Star beat Oglesby 34-20, and after the game, Coach Tidwell accepted congratulations and then trotted back to the dressing room. Stowers noted, "There he talked quietly with his victorious players, conservative in his praise, pointing out that there was still a long season ahead. He waited until everyone had showered, dressed and left, and then turned out the lights, locked the door and returned to the field to pull the switch that turned the stadium to darkness." After returning home he made long distance calls, giving the score and rundown to the sports pages of the Abilene and San Angelo newspapers, and then sat at his dining room table to record the statistics from the game. "By midnight, he had eaten a sandwich his wife had prepared, washed it down with a glass of milk, and was relaxed, ready for bed. Game Day, all 18 hours of it, had been both satisfying and successful."

Mr. Tidwell's health problems that began with his first heart attack in Pearland, when he was in his late twenties, eventually led to a massive heart attack at age fifty. He had a triple bypass, but still experienced angina and had to return frequently to the hospital. His friends and family held benefits for him. On February 1, 1992, he suffered another heart attack, and was taken to the hospital in Abilene, but nothing could be done as a result of muscle damage to the heart. From there he was taken to an ICU in Lubbock to await a heart transplant. On Thursday, March 12, 1992, Grant's wife and sister went to the cardiac unit and met a doctor wheeling him to the cath lab to see if he could open up an artery. Grant was awake, but in

pain and told them not to worry. His last words were, "Just take care of yourself." He died a short time later.

A service was held for Grant Tidwell at a chapel in Brownwood on Saturday, and then he was taken home for burial. His sister, Oneale Tabor, wrote, "He was laid to rest beside his mother and daddy in Moro Cemetery, a little country cemetery southwest of Blanket just off Highway 377. His service was typical of his life. As the sun was setting, it was such a peaceful place with all his students, former students, and friends gathered to say goodbye. A little yellow school bus had brought all of the Star students to the funeral and burial. Grant is still lovingly remembered by his former students. Some still show up at Dollie's house to tell her and Jamie how much they miss him and what knowing him meant to them."

Mr. Tidwell is also fondly remembered by his former students in Pearland. Cathy (Coppinger) Lewis wrote, "I remember Mr. Tidwell as a very 'alive' person, passionate about American history, and interested in igniting his students' interest in the world around them. He, like my father, encouraged me to develop a responsibility for giving back to my country and fellow man and to use my specific talents to do so. I always felt that he and Mr. Curry were my best teachers; and I often thought back to their classroom mien when trying to temper and hone my demeanor with my own students."

Joseph L. Rachel holds a doctorate in psychology. He lives in France and wrote, "My memory of Mr. Tidwell is of the time we spent on World War I. I think it was his master's thesis. Fantastic learning. As good as anything that came later. WWI is in the press and on TV everywhere now in France with the 100th anniversary of the war coming up. Every town or church in France has a memorial to the men who were killed in the War to End All Wars."

Mike Coppinger remembered going to Colt Stadium in a group and said that he wouldn't have been able to go were it not for our teacher's generosity. "I really liked Mr. Tidwell. Maybe it was because he didn't hit us with a whistle strap like other coaches did."

Several classmates commented that the television series "Mr. Novak," starring James Franciscus, reminded them of Mr. Tidwell. When Billie Jo (Jones) Moffett

responded to a request for stories about Mr. Tidwell, she asked, "Does 'I had a crush on him' count?"

I've enjoyed a life-long love of history, instilled by my parents and further encouraged by teachers like Mr. Tidwell. The experience of traveling through forty-nine of the fifty states, parts of Mexico and Canada, as well as much of western Europe was enhanced by visits to museums, battlefields, cathedrals, and even old ballparks. When I tune in to the baseball all-star game this year and watch the ceremonies honoring outstanding teachers, I'll take a moment to visit in memory with a remarkable man, who was also my favorite coach, Grant Tidwell.

Tom Hunter, PHS '65

Reading Mr. Tidwell's experiences after he took the job at Star, Texas coaching 6-man football will bring back a lot of memories about Coach Hawkins and Coach Brooks back in the days when Pearland played 6-man football. One thing Hawkins and Brooks didn't have to do however was "drive the school bus." That was Bud and Sam's job. Coach Hawkins told of his coming to Pearland in the fall of 1937 to take on the coaching job at the brand new Pearland High School. Hawkins was recruited by Supt. B. B. Ainsworth; and he had never been to Pearland. He understood Ainsworth to say he would have around 45 boys out for football. He had misunderstood Mr. Ainsworth. What he had said was there were about 45 students in high school. So when Hawkins arrived to start the football program in the fall of 1937 he had 13 boys, no equipment, no football field and no schedule. He did lay out a field on Galveston Street, got uniforms and equipment and managed to schedule one game with LaMarque. That is the game where David Scott scored the first touchdown ever made for the Oilers. Pearland dropped football in the fall of 1938 and started 6-man football in the fall of 1939 which they played until the fall of 1949 which was the Oilers first year in eleven man football. Tommy's story about Mr. Tidwell's experience sounded very familiar.

HISTORIC ROADS

Our Weds. Night work group currently has a project going to identify roads in the Pearland area named for

old time Pearlanders and to mark them on a big map of Pearland on the front wall of our Society Headquarters. Thanks to Cory Vardaman, GIS Technician with the City of Pearland, we now have several different maps of Pearland. One is a map about 3' x 6' which we will use to mark the historic roads. Another maps show areas of annexation and the dates of the annex which is very interesting.

Our project for the historic roads is to find pictures and family stories about the person/persons for whom the roads were named. Just a few are Massey Highway, John Lizer Road, Knapp Road, Hatfield Road, Scott Lane, Yost Road, O'Day Road.

Luana Oblinger Concha, at my request, sent me pictures of Mr. John Lizer and family to use in the story about John Lizer Road. Luana is the great granddaughter of John and Bertha Lizer, granddaughter of Clyde and Kathleen Oblinger and daughter of Warren "Bud" and Mary Keneaster Oblinger. In the next issue I will print the full story which Luana sent. It certainly contains some very interesting "old Pearland" historical facts. Mr. Lizer, like so many early Pearlanders read about Pearland being a garden paradise in a paper in Ohio in 1910 and sold out and moved here. It is a very interesting story and brings back a lot of memories to those of us who have lived in Pearland most of our lives.



John & Bertha Lizer



David Scott, State Representative Ed Thompson, Mayor Tom Reid, County Commissioner Stacey Adams and Councilman Greg Hill at Hunter Park Dedication May 3rd.



Attendees at Hunter Park Dedication

Looking Back to 1964

We previously wrote about 50 years slipping by so quickly. It is interesting to take a look at what was going on when our honored class had just graduated. In 1964 average cost of attending a public university was **\$965** per year which included tuition and room and board. (**Per Digest of Education Statistics**). What is the cost today?

- Other 1964 costs.**
- Gallon of milk: 93 cents**
 - Gallon of gas: 25 cents**
 - Stamps: 5 cents**
 - Bread: 21 cents/loaf**
 - Coffee: 79 cents per lb.**
 - Movie Ticket: \$1.00**
 - Ford Mustang: \$2300**

DON'T FORGET OUR QUARTERLY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING IS THURSDAY NIGHT AT 7:00 P.M AT OUR SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS ON GALVESTON AVE. COME AND MEET OUR SPECIAL GUEST PEARLAND'S NEW CITY MANAGER, CLAY PEARSON. AS USUAL HOMEMADE COOKIES, COFFEE, COLD DRINKS AND VISITATION FOLLOW THE MEETING. SEE YOU THERE.

Have you paid your dues for 2014 yet? Yearly dues cover January through December. Dues are \$15 per year.

Keep Oct. 25th marked on your calendar and attend our annual reunion luncheon. Reservation form is attached to Newsletter.

A FEW QUESTIONS OF LIFE

Why isn't phonetic spelled the way it sounds?

Why do we drive on parkways and park on driveways?

Why is it that when you transport something by car it is called a shipment; and when you transport something by ship it is called a cargo?

If a firefighter fights fires and a crimefighter fights crime, what does a freedom fighter fight?

If they squeeze olives to get olive oil, how do they get baby oil?

If con is opposite of pro, is Congress the opposite of progress? (Editor's note: I think the answer is "yes".

