

**TEXAS SESQUICENTENNIAL
1986**

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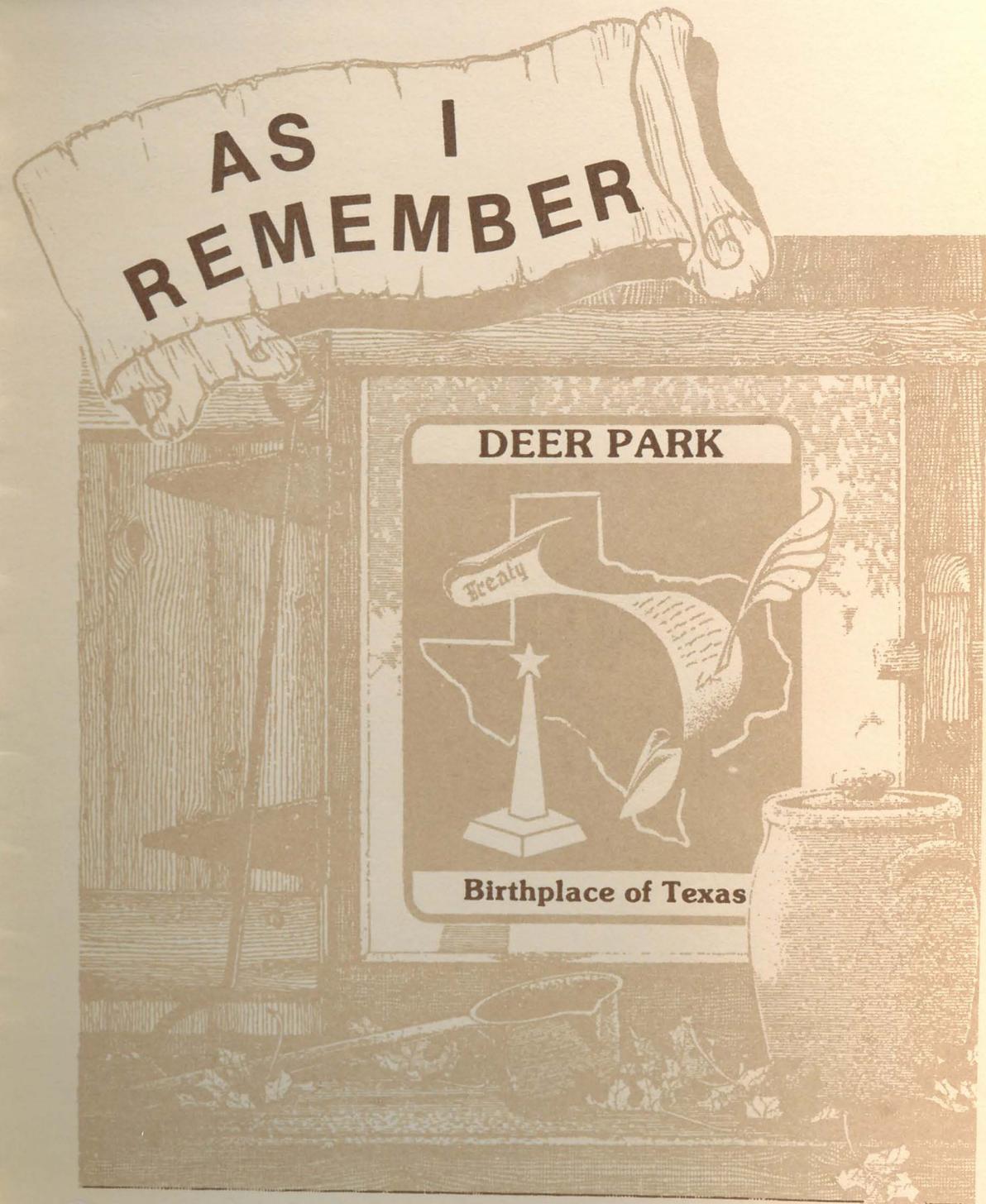


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From Indians To Industry...

Sounds Of Progress

Once these flat prairie lands rang with the laughter of the Karankawa Indian children. Their childish voices echoed across open fields dotted only with myriad colored flowers, and through thick moss-draped oak woods along the banks of the stream named by the Indians, Buffalo Bayou.

The Indian began his retreat from the area as Stephen F. Austin carried out his father's plans and brought settlers to this area under a contract with the government of Mexico in the 1820's. The sounds echoing across the fields and woods were the sounds of the ax as settlers cleared homesites and built their log cabins. Slave laborers, who could not speak English, chanted in their native tongues. At nighttime the prairies were silent except for the howls of the wild animals.

In April 1836, Sam Houston met Santa Anna near Lynch's Ferry. Rifle fire and the thuds of the rifle stocks crushing the skulls of the Mexican soldiers were the sounds heard that year. Patrick's Bayou, named for an early settler, ran red with the blood of the enemy. Burnet and his cabinet, Sam Houston and his officers, Santa Anna...a cabin on the banks of Buffalo Bayou...a treaty drafted on land that would become Deer Park, an Independent Texas, a Republic.

By 1858 hard times...an auctioneer's voice echoing across the flat prairie lands, "what am I bid for this land?" Going once, going twice, sold to the highest bidder for five cents an acre." And then, the Civil War and deeper depression. Reconstruction.

And then good times...the ringing of hammers as a hotel, a post office and a depot became a part of this land in the 1890's. The singing of convicts as they built the country roads, the thud of the picks striking the

black gumbo as shining rails were laid. The chatter of excited new residents of the new city of Deer Park as they arrived by trainloads from the north.

...and then the quiet blanket of deep, white snow in 1895.

...and the crackle of thick ice four years later.

...and the raging winds and swift flooding waters of the 1900 Galveston hurricane.

The deer, for whom the town was named, grazed quietly amid the pear trees planted by the northerners who could not adapt to the strange Texas weather and who did not stay to replant their tobacco fields, to replace their livestock or to harvest the fruit from their trees in orchards they had scattered across the fields of the new town.

Deer Park, deserted until 1905, when the first big rancher moved into the abandoned hotel and Deer Park sent its first representative to the state legislature. Cowboys and round-ups, horse-drawn crushers extracting sweet juice from sugar cane grown in the fields. Slow fires smoking hams and bacon. Children carrying lunches to school in tin buckets. A bell and rope to call them to class in the one-room schoolhouse. Buckboards and buggies. Long dresses, iron washpots, kerosene lamps, and wood-burning stoves. And then the chugging of the first automobile in the area. Frightened chickens, startled horses, and excited children squeezing the horn.

The roar of the 1915 hurricane which destroyed some of the original buildings in Deer Park. The ice storm of 1924, more snow and the pitiful sounds of cattle freezing stiff against the fences, ending the ranching era. Deer Park deserted for a second time. Quiet fields of flowers and gentle prairie breezes until 1928. The rains came. Men and mules built a refinery in spite of the mud and the struggling city of Deer Park got

another chance.

Neither the Texas weather nor the deep depression of the thirties defeated the settlers of that decade. They were hardy people and they came to build homes and stay on this land. Their determination and their willingness to work together for a better community resulted in the present school system. Their efforts to provide an adequate water and sewer system brought about the incorporation of the city and the many services enjoyed by residents today.

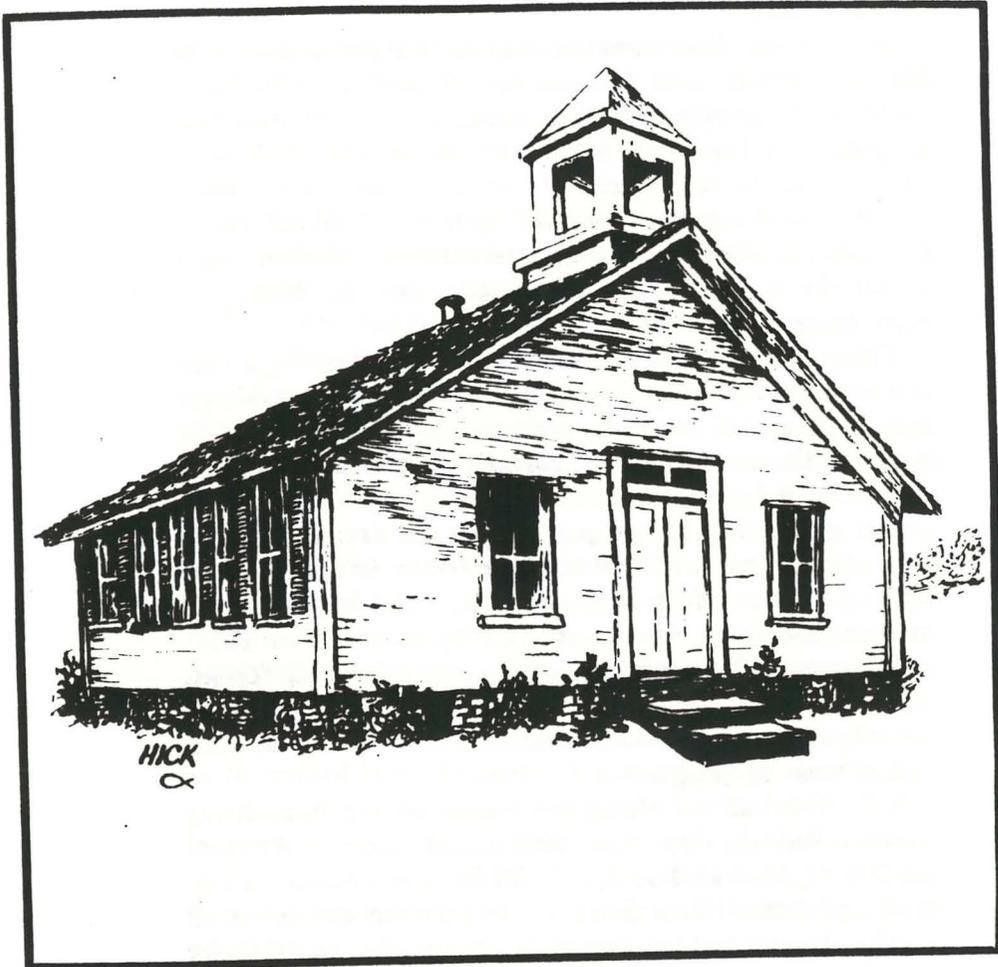
The artesian wells, which once spouted so high that trains took water by simply channeling the stream, no longer flow, but every household has an abundance of water at the turn of a tap. Fire-fighting equipment and well-trained firemen have replaced the individual homeowner protecting his property from the dreaded prairie fire, armed only with a wetted tow-sack to beat out the flames. Door-to-door mail delivery, a vast improvement over the hilarious "do it yourself" post office of 1917.

The way of life is different; the sounds are different. Our history is an accumulation of the sounds of laughter, of war, of neighborliness, of good times, and bad, and sounds of progress.

S.H. West stood along the banks of the beautifully wooded Buffalo Bayou in 1892, gazed southward across the flat prairies and said, "I will lay out a town on this land and call it Deer Park." He planned the town. It was his dream; but his dream of a thriving industrial city died once in 1900, and again in 1920. It was those who came in 1930, and every year thereafter, who stayed to put down roots and make West's dream a reality.

This collection, As I Remember, is Deer Park's most recent 50-year history. Those who contributed their stories have not only left their mark on our city over the years, they have also permanently recorded their place in the dream of S.H. West, founder of Deer Park.

Barbara Wells
Editor



Deer Park School — 1910

By Lillian Arrington and Lena Daniel

Since we both came to Deer Park within a year of the same date, 1940 and 1941 respectively, and lived on the same street at that time we have similar memories.

After having lived in Houston we knew we had really moved to the country when we got our first glimpse of the small community south of the railroad tracks.

As newcomers travel on Center Street today after four o'clock in the afternoon during the week they don't realize that in earlier days this was only a narrow shell street full of pot holes. Traffic was very light because Deer Park's population was small.

Our children had fun growing up on the open prairie. There were only five houses on our dead end street, which was James Street off of Thirteenth Street. They never had to worry about traffic as Thirteenth Street was not much more than a country road with some shell on it and also coke from the furnaces at the Shell refinery.

Speaking of streets, the residents on our particular one had to get together to have shell hauled in so that we could get in and out to go to work at Shell Refinery or to teach at the San Jacinto Elementary School.

There was a County Stock Law but cows and horses were always running loose and trampling down shrubs, flowers, and vegetable gardens. We even got St. Augustine grass started in our yards by setting it out in the cow tracks and pushing it down into the black gumbo. The grass clippings were brought from Houston when Mr. Walker, our landlord, trimmed them from the curb at his home.

We remember Mr. Carlisle's small farm near the drainage ditch back of the school. He always loved to share his fresh vegetables with his neighbors. The kids were delighted to have a chance to ride with him in his wagon loaded with vegetables.

Every year from April until the last of October the prairie was in bloom with pink buttercups, wine cups, wild larkspur, rattle weed, purple thistles and black eyed Susans. Each month there was a different flower to enjoy.

It was delightful to step outside and see the San Jacinto Monument clearly. There was no smog or pollution and few buildings to obstruct the view. It was a treat to go to the Battleground on a family or neighborhood picnic under the big trees on the well kept grounds. This was a favorite spot for end-of-school picnics.

During the summer the Chapman family always cut the prairie hay and stacked the bales. The haystacks then became a great place for the boys to romp and play.

The kids dug fox holes and played war games on the prairie just south of the present Deer Park Junior High School. They caught horned toads and watched the prairie chickens that were numerous at that time. They fished, swam and camped out at the two reservoirs which were nearby, one east of Center Street and the other west of Center. The boys hunted doves, rabbits and ducks with no interference from anyone as long as they were not near any houses.

We can remember the small post office on Center and remember that we had the contract to pick up the mail bag when it was left hanging on a hook near the railroad track as the train made its run to Galveston. The outgoing mail was then picked up on the return trip.

There are pleasant memories of the little Baptist church located on Sixth Street. At that time the Methodist church was meeting for services at the San Jacinto Elementary School.

We remember when Deer Park became an incorporated city and our part of serving on the first Tax Equalization Board. With the help of Mose Hendricks this was not such a big chore because there were not too many homes at that time and few property owners.

Nothing can erase from our memory the torrential rain we had on a certain date in the early 40's. We

thought we would surely all float away. We even marked the high water level on the side of our houses.

Despite the rains, hurricanes and black gumbo the people of Deer Park were warm and friendly. Residents were like one big happy family. In the early and mid 50's practically everyone in the town took to the highways to follow the football team to the games. Rain or cold didn't keep the fans away even when the State Finals were played as far away as Wink, Texas at Christmas time. Everything came to a standstill and everybody left town to cheer the team on its way. We didn't even bother to lock our doors in those early years. There was peace and trust among all the townfolks. We knew when people were away from home, where they had gone and when they would return.

There is a lot of good to be said about Deer Park in its early days and it has been rewarding to witness and be a part of its growth from a small community to the thriving city of today.

By Audrey Bailey

When we first moved to Deer Park in the summer of 1964 our children were sad and glum because they had left all their friends in San Antonio. I tried to cheer them up by saying, "Look, we live out in the country — you can see for miles as you look toward 'downtown Deer Park.'" You could see for miles. We moved to the fairly new Ridgeway Addition, and there were almost no houses between our house and town. Jennifer, our youngest, said, "Huh, you call that country, where are the trees?"

Believe it or not, we could see the San Jacinto Monument from our back patio window. We were thrilled about that.

By Margaret Benfer

My first trip to Deer Park was late in 1956. My husband and I were driving around trying to become familiar with our new area. We had moved to Pasadena from Kansas in June, 1956. My husband had gone to work for Shell Oil in Deer Park and I gave notice on my job and moved here several weeks later.

We came to Deer Park looking for an apartment or a house to rent because we wanted to settle in a small community with good schools. There was only one apartment building in Deer Park, the white one on West First Street. Houses to rent were just non-existent.

Center Street was a divided shell and gravel road down to the "new" city hall and fire station at Thirteenth Street. From there it was a fairly good two lane shell road on to Pasadena Boulevard and then the road dwindled down the farther south you went towards Spencer Highway with a lot of "Hardy's" holes along the way.

The telephone building, San Jacinto Elementary, Deer Park State Bank (Allied), the Methodist Church, First Baptist Church on Center Street, and the shopping center at Eighth Street and Center were all new. The shopping had Dalmes Grocery, Deer Park Hardware, Deer Park Post Office, and the Deer Park Drug Store and probably several others that I don't remember. Mrs. Sneed was the postmistress. The population was less than 3,000 and everyone went to the Post Office to pick up their mail. It was where everyone congregated to talk and find out each day's news. Caldwell's Grocery flourished on the corner of East Third and Center. Nearly all the homes were between Thirteenth Street and Highway 225. The housing subdivision south of San Jacinto Elementary was just being built. Deer Park Terrace had about eight or 10 lots left to be built on. Chloe Dunn was the realtor who sold us on a lot in the terrace.

Our house was built during the summer of 1958 and we moved in during September.

Dr. Tom Simpson was the dentist in town with his office on East Eighth Street close to the water tower. There was no medical doctor in Deer Park. There was a water storage tank on West 3rd Street with a fire siren on it. When there was a fire or emergency nearly everyone was outside to see where it was. The community had a fine school system, volunteer emergency corps, fire department and police department.

The neighborliness of the residents made newcomers immediately feel at home. The small town feeling and the loving and caring attitude of the people gave each block an extended family atmosphere. It is not surprising that "our" town has flourished and continues to be a family oriented, outstanding, caring community.

By Iris Bond

AS I REMEMBER DEER PARK

Our dreams were not the same Deer Park.

Yours

And mine.

I'm too old fashioned I guess.

I balk at progress.

I didn't want your paved streets and smoke stacks.

And your stores lined up in parking lots.

I even remember how it saddened me

When they tore that old wooden Post Office down.

And every dozer that cut its path thru grasses waving

And every field of wild flowers scraped away for paving

Seemed more loss

Than gain.

I remember a Mulberry tree

WAY OUT in the field where rabbits ran.

I used to there years ago and pick berries

In a coffee can.

I go down a paved street now

Past that Mulberry tree.

It is on Minchen street.

But it doesn't seem that far away to me

Anymore.

I think I knew even back then

That Deer Park couldn't end there at a barbed wire
fence

At the end of a dirt road

By the Mason's house.

It's a good thing

That towns like you

With dreams to fulfill

Don't pay attention to the one's of us

Who would hold you still

And hemmed in

At the end of a dirt road.

By J.P. and Velma Bonnette

Velma and I came to Deer Park from Pasadena in 1949 with one child, Vicki. Terry was born later. The sign at the city limits said 700 or over. Anyway, we added three more to the population.

In coming to Deer Park we had an option of two lots on First Street or five acres on Center between X Street and San Augustine — both were the same price. Since I was employed at Shell doing shift-work, the decision was First Street.

The post office was at Center and Ninth and looked like it would collapse at anytime. The city hall had been moved on Eighth Street between Center and Ivy. The only thing on Center, besides a few residences, was Caldwell's grocery and Gailey's one-pump Shell station. Some streets were shelled. Center was shelled to Pasadena Blvd. The school had less than 500 enrolled. This is how we remember Deer Park as it was some 35 years ago.

Our children have grown, married and have children of their own. Vicki is now Vicki Thompson and has two daughters, Alison and Courtney. Terry has two sons, Terry, Jr. and Cody.

By Claude Burgess

When I came to Deer Park in 1937, there were two businesses on Center Street. Shelby's grocery store was located where Bobby's Garage and Deer Park Sporting Goods is now located. It blew away during a hurricane in 1941 or 1942. Directly across the street, Mose Hendricks owned a service station. The Post Office was housed in a 10 foot by 20 foot building that stood on the southeast corner of Eighth and Center. Mr. Sneed was the postmaster and he picked up mail twice a day from the depot that stood approximately 150 yards west of Center Street. He also delivered Shell's mail to them in their main office. In exchange for that service, Shell bought all of their stamps from Deer Park to upgrade the post office.

The school was an elementary school only and stood at Second and Ivy. The Deer Park students were bussed to Pasadena for high school. The boilers used for heat in the school were coke fired. Shell gave the school the coke and Mr. Hendricks hauled it with a Model "T" Ford. Shell also furnished all the supplies needed for the school such as brooms, mops, soap, paper towels, etc. They were picked up once a week. There was also a one-room school house that stood on the north side of Highway 225 at South Avenue. Mrs. McNay was the teacher. The students were predominately Latin-Americans whose parents were strawberry farmers in the area. Later, Mrs. McNay's classes were housed in a temporary building east of the main school building.

All the streets on the west side of Center, Dutch, Elm, Cedar and Twelfth Streets, were dirt. In the winter time the neighbors would get coke and old fire brick from Shell to fill the ruts. Shell would furnish the equipment, providing there was a Shell employee that would operate it. Most of the time, Hugh Chapman drove the dump

truck and Mr. Miller drove the bulldozer.

There were no telephones in Deer Park at that time, and everyone used the Shell switchboard that stayed open from 8 a.m. until 12 midnight. If you had an emergency phone call, Shell would send a driver to deliver the message. Later on, the Sneeds got a phone and they charged 10 cents for messenger service.

There was no church in Deer Park, but there was a church building where the main office of Shell's chemical plant is now. It was called the Union Church. The entire community moved that building to Sixth and Center, which was later to become the First Baptist Church.

Just west of the depot, there were large stock pens. Harry Blankenfield and Ike Gross ran thousands of head of cattle on the prairies of Deer Park and shipped them in and out by rail. The community stock dipping vat was along where the main entrance is to Rhom & Haas, and there was a herd of wild horses that roamed on the prairie just east of town.

The site where Allied Deer Park Bank now stands was owned by a family by the name of Humphries. They owned property from Ivy to Center and they raised and sold chickens.

By V.B. Calvert

We moved into our house in the 500 block of East X Street in time for Christmas in 1955. Then our driveway was the end of X Street. There was an iron pipe across the road and nothing beyond that pipe but grassland. There were no houses from X Street to Thirteenth Street on the north side.

We had to put down our own shell to get from Center Street to our house — a long driveway. To get water we just laid our own galvanized pipe on top of the ground and ran the line from Center Street to our house.

We bought five poles from the Light Company to get electricity. Sold them back one at a time as the area built up. Man, we were on the "edge of town." We could look from the southwest 'round to the north and see nothing but grass.

I counted 23 prairie chickens in the side yard one day. As the area expanded, the prairie chickens went to the Ellington Field area. They became a hazard to the planes and were trapped and transported to other areas. After our horses were fed, quail would come in single file to eat the grain on the floor. It seemed when we came home at night, the jack rabbits lined up to watch us. 'Possums were common as well as rabbits.

But, what really surprised me were the wolves. Yes, wolves. When they were running they traveled from the West ranch, through Deer Park towards Lomax and La Porte. When they were running our dog stayed in a corner of the front porch.

The police killed two on Center Street at different times. Our pup ran out into the grass yapping one night. We heard one yelp later and she didn't return. Rode a horse to find her next morning, found her quickly. Her neck was broken. Later that morning one of our son's friends came by and asked for a hatchet. Said a car had

killed a wolf and he wanted the ears to collect a bounty. Went with him to see for myself.

Those were the open space days. The kids would come out to the house and leave on their horses and be gone all day. No worries. The Lynchburg Ferry men would let them through on the ferry with their horses. That stopped one day when a horse named Rex jumped off the ferry with one of the boys and swam to shore. That group of kids and others would go over to the reservoir and camp out all night.

Our neighbor boy started out to meet them there and came back to the house for someone to go back with him. He had come face to face with a wolf. Yes, Deer Park was not so crowded in 1956. The police even captured an "atomic frog" here once — at least that's what the newspapers said it was.

By Odis L. Chappell

I remember we, my wife Edna Earl, our three daughters, Libby, Sandy and Carole, moved to Deer Park in 1950. Our son, Mike, was born in 1954.

We moved into a new house, the second one east of Ivy on East Second Street approximately April 1950.

I remember it was a fine new home. Three bedrooms, a living room, a dining room and kitchen but only one bathroom. Boy, do I remember that precious bathroom. With four women in the house, my son and I had to make an appointment about three days ahead just to wash our faces. It also came with a one-car garage, no carpet, no dishwasher, no garbage disposal, no air conditioning and no washer or dryer. I wonder how many young couples would consider a new home like that today?

The population in Deer Park was about 550 when we moved here. I remember everyone knew everyone else, what they did, whose side they were on in politics and just about what they had for breakfast.

I remember some fine next door neighbors, Louis and Nelda Heinze and children. I remember after we moved to Alyse Street Louis said, "You thought you would get away from us as neighbors but we've just bought the cemetery plots next to yours in Grandview."

I remember about the only hard top street was Center from 225 to Tenth or Eleventh Street. The rest were covered with shell, no curbs, just open ditches.

I remember the first time I drove to Deer Park to look for a house, and Mr. Miller, the city marshal, pulled me over and said, "Son, that stop sign means 'stop', not just 'slow down' ". I had crept by the stop sign at First and Center. It was probably the only one (or one of a few) stop signs in Deer Park. I did not get a ticket but I did receive a good lecture on safe driving.

I remember we got all the "news" when everyone went to the post office for their mail. The post office was in half of the little wooden building, with the barber shop, at about Ninth and Center, or we talked to Mr. Cecil Cummings. "Pardner" Cummings is a great man. He would do anything for anyone. He loves people and he knew everyone in town.

I remember I was called back into the Navy for the Korean War after we had been in our new home for about four months. I remember too, that after two months, the Navy decided it was too expensive to keep people with three children, so we moved back to Deer Park. The people that had rented our house weren't too happy, but we sure were glad to get back.

I remember the few people in Deer Park that had telephones and how long it took to get one. There were not very many lines to our city. I remember too, our first Deer Park telephone book. I may still have a copy some place.

I remember my wife telling me I should join the volunteer fire department so I would have something to do. I also remember how many times she regretted that before I retired after 27 years of service.

I remember back then, the Deer Park business district consisted of two grocery stores, Caldwell's at Third and Center, Dalme in the building where Mayor Burke's sporting goods is now, the post office and barber shop, Mr. Gailey's Shell service station by the post office, the city hall on Eighth where the chiropractic clinic is now, the small fire station by city hall under the watertower, and Kesterson's Cafe on Center between First and Second Streets.

I remember the fine homeroom and other teachers our children had in school. I remember school plays, the Deer Escorts and other things our children participated

in as they grew up in our school.

I remember there was only one school building for all grades at Second and Ivy across the street from our home. I remember the school building was used for about all civic activities.

I remember Deer Park as almost a ghost town on Friday nights. When the football team played away from home almost everyone went to every game. I remember some champion teams, some fine coaches too, like Red Hendrix, Shorty Hughes and others.

I remember helping to build little league fields, mowing grass, raking and drying out pitchers mounds. I also remember my wife working in the concession stands.

I remember helping to reroof the scout house, teaching scouts first aid and fire prevention, and the scouts participating in city-wide civil defense drills.

I remember when I was civil defense director during the Cuban crisis and how so many volunteer citizens helped set up an airplane spotting station on the Battleship Texas for the Air Force. As I remember, it was known as KQLO-45 Blue.

I remember hurricane Carla and how so many people worked to help others. I remember my wife and several other ladies received certificates of merit from the Red Cross for helping to feed the many people that had taken shelter in the school buildings.

I remember some good kids that grew up in our city and are now fine adults that continue to work in keeping Deer Park a great place to live and raise our children and grandchildren.

I remember, also, that Shell has been a good employer for almost 37 years, making it possible for us to live a good life in a fine community.

I hope I will always remember how God has blessed my family and Deer Park, and to give thanks to him each day.

**Remembrance Of Days
By Mary Masterson Cole**

I remember celebrating Texas' centennial in 1936 as President Franklin Roosevelt got off the train on Center Street, which now intersects Texas Highway 225. Now Texas is going to celebrate its 150th birthday. I did not think I would live to see it.

We were used to the wolves and coyotes howling at night. I also recall the cows, goats and stallions running loose in the daytime, tearing our fences down.

During the early years we never locked our house at night. We had three land owners back then. Since we lived in the Walker addition we had our own water facilities.

William and Katherine Grey started the boys' and girls' scout troop 268. The little boys had nothing to do, so they went to the Houston scout office and got supplies and started their own club. The scouts had a big building on Thirteenth Street which was donated to us by Shell, but a storm wrecked it.

Mr. Grey left for the Marines so J.B. Masterson took care of the scouts. We had three boys that made Eagle Scout, including Earl and Archie Masterson and Billy East. I was a proud mother.

Then we started a Methodist church with the help of Brother Lehmborg. Local residents had signed a petition giving the little white building to the Baptists.

During football season, parents saved C coupons for gas so the Deer Park team could travel. At that time, the government would not give the school any gas allowance, so we used our tickets and cars. We all enjoyed it. There were 58 students in high school, 13 of whom were boys. They all played on the team. Those were good days.

By Lita Cook

We now live in Frankston, East Texas, but called Deer Park our home for 29 years. We bought our home on First Street in 1949 and lived in the same house until my husband retired from Shell Oil Company in 1978.

During that time many changes came about. Our house was the last one between Deer Park and La Porte and at the time none of the streets were paved. There was only one school for all grades, which was located behind our house on Second and Ivy Streets.

Cattle roamed the pastures surrounding Deer Park, and a drive to Pasadena meant leaving one town and driving a distance before coming to another town.

One of my most humorous memories is of the time the phones were installed. When we moved to Deer Park, everyone in our neighborhood used the phone at Caldwell's Grocery Store, located on the corner of either Second or Third and Center. It had been a while since we had a phone and I had lost all concept as to how one operated.

A few minutes after ours was installed, I received a call telling me it was the phone company and for me to cover my phone, they were going to blow out the lines to clean them. I rushed to cover our phone with pillows and a blanket. Needless to say, it was one of our dear neighbors playing a trick.

By Mary Cutrer

We moved to Deer Park in 1947. My husband had been working for Shell Oil Company for three years and we had come to Deer Park several times in search of a house to purchase.

All the streets were shelled; there was one telephone in the neighborhood, at the Ralph Stillingers, and they were gracious enough to let all of the neighbors use it for emergencies. Their phone was an extension from Shell. There was also a pay phone at the Shell gate.

There were about 350 people living here then, and we were soon acquainted with all of them. The only school building was at the corner of Second and Ivy Streets. We did not have kindergarten when our son was five years old in 1950, so Mary Doris, along with nine other mothers, organized a play school for our children for one week with a different mother planning the activities each week.

No one bothered to lock their doors or close the garage when away from home. The children could leave their bikes at school or on the street for two or three days and find them in the same spot.

We all paid our three dollars per month water bill to Mrs. Van Trease on West Second Street. We have enjoyed the 37-year membership with the oldest church in Deer Park, which is now First Baptist, and our five children, Tommy Jr., Cheryl, Debbie, Kevin and Tammi have graduated from one of the best schools in the state.

Needless to say, we have seen much growth and change in our city since we moved here; nevertheless, I'm sure our friends and neighbors will agree those were "the good old days."

By Daisy McLean Dishongh

Having lived here in Deer Park all my life, except for about 12 years that we lived in Pasadena and Houston, there are countless memories stored away in my mind.

I remember Center Street as a dirt road and then shell — that ran as far as about where Thirteenth Street is now. When it rained, you could hardly navigate within the city.

I remember the little post office where we used to gather, that was the big thing of the day — especially in the summer — to pick up the mail at 9:00 a.m.

I remember strawberry patches that were located about where Maxwell Center is and getting to go out to pick the strawberries.

I remember that Deer Park was divided into three different sections. The newer homes where the more affluent lived was close to La Porte Road, and we termed it Shell City.

Then the area from what is now Eighth Street, but was then a large drainage ditch with a wooden bridge over it, to about where Maxwell Center is now, was what we called Shelby Addition.

Then down the last road — about where Thirteenth Street is to what is now James and Ivy, was called Minchen addition because everyone got their water from Mr. Minchen's water well. I believe some referred to this as Walker Addition, but this, I remember, as later.

I remember there being no telephones, no TV sets, and the kids always walked as there weren't many bikes. If any emergency news had to get to someone in the city, the call usually went to the post master's house.

I remember the Baptist church as the only one and all the fun parties and meetings we had.

I remember mostly our school because it seems everything was centered around the school.

I remember all 12 grades being in one school building

(now the museum), only one bus to pick up and deliver the children.

I remember the afternoon football games because there were no lights.

I remember the dances we used to have after every football game, and on most Friday nights that included the entire family, and the drinks we iced down in the large sinks in the cafeteria and sold for five cents.

I remember the summer camping trips that the school sponsored for training and conditioning to Garner State Park for the boys. The girls were taken on the trip a few years later.

I remember a bunch of us getting together on a Saturday and walking to Pasadena to the movies. We would usually spend the day as there were two features and six or eight cartoons. All this on a quarter yet, with enough for popcorn and a Coke.

Sometimes we would walk to the San Jacinto Monument the back way and spend the day with our skates and a picnic lunch.

I remember the hay rides we had on real hay wagons and real mules or horses pulling them. I remember the fun Halloweens we had when all the pranks were fun things. Just about every house we would go to we were invited into and everyone had a party. We were always pooped and stuffed by the end of the night.

I remember a little man on Second Street that had a cute little white bridge in the front of his house over the ditch. My mom, who was a very popular lady with the kids, wanted a bridge like that over the ditch in front of our house. Well, lo and behold, the morning after Halloween my mom looked outside and she had her little white bridge. How those boys got that bridge down to our house, which was at least a half mile, with no car yet, we will never know.

My mom was the popular lady, as she ran the school cafeteria and she spent all her time cooking and stuffing the teachers, coaches and kids, if not at the school, then at our house. In those days, if a boy's parents were moving out of the city, and the boy was an athlete, as most were, in they moved with us until they finished the year and sometimes school. My dad was connected with the school also, being the keeper and driver of the only bus, on top of being a janitor and helping mom in the cafeteria.

Our childhood was very interesting, and we were always in a home that was running over with people.

I remember when Center Street was black-topped, when the city got telephones, when we got indoor plumbing in our house.

I remember the football teams we had back then, our first band and the out-of-town games to far-away places, such as Sugarland, Missouri City or Angleton. These trips were what made it all happen.

Yes, I remember oh, so much more that it would fill a book. I have reminisced about my life here in Deer Park to my children ever since they were young. I am glad they had the opportunity to grow up here also, even though things are changed. They had the opportunity to be taught by some of my teachers and to know a lot of the people here in town that I have known most of my life.

Deer Park, I love you.

By Charles Dorris

In the year 1933, when I first saw Deer Park, it was a settlement of scattered homes, chiefly located along First, Second and Third Streets, east of Center and south of Eighth Street. There were two small stores, a small frame post office building and the recently constructed brick San Jacinto Elementary School building facing Ivy Street. Junior and senior high school students were bussed to Pasadena for classes. By the railroad track, about a block west of Center Street, stood a small box-like building which marked the place where mail bags were dropped off and picked up by two-a-day (one each way) passenger trains.

In 1933 Center Street extended a few blocks south of Thirteenth Street. Center and some other streets were adequately (for the traffic of the time) surfaced with crushed oyster shell. However, on some streets the shell surfacing was both thin and spotty. In the spring of 1934 a Sunday afternoon visitor from Galveston and his car briefly stuck in the mud on Ivy Street near its intersection with Second Street.

In early years, springtime in Deer Park, which was largely open prairie, was beautiful with wild flowers of many colors.

In these early days all the people of Deer Park tended to know each other, observe their neighbors' daily lives and gossip freely, but they helped one another sincerely in times of trouble or need.

By Susan Lemma Dreher

When the country was still struggling through the depression, we moved to Deer Park in late June of 1936.

The population of Deer Park was small and there were a small number of houses — probably 25 in all.

We'd lived here about two weeks when the ice man told us a man was abusing his wife and his father-in-law frightened him away. He of course, was drunk and his wife was in labor with their second child.

There was one small church here. In church I met Mrs. Mason, Mrs. Nealey, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Fricks, and Lester and Anna Beth Harvard. I had already met Mrs. Sneed.

The post office was a very small building located on ground near where the present post office is now and was open two hours daily.

There was a nice new brick school in which grades up through tenth grade were taught.

There was no telephone service and shopping was done in Houston.

Space is too scarce for one to tell many things about our town but Deer Park has really grown.

By Lorna Garrett

I, too, remember going to the San Jacinto Monument in the thirties and waiting all day for a glimpse of President Roosevelt. But what I remember most about the day was how we were all covered with chigger bites and how Mother picked them from us with the head of a pin! Those were the days. Deer Park was small then. So was Pasadena, where I grew up after Dad brought us down kicking and screaming from Michigan during the depression. I missed the snow.

I graduated from Pasadena High School in 1940. I met and married a Galena Park boy, Mervin Garrett, and we soon had five children and moved to the Deer Park Independent School District in Deepwater, a month before the fifth child was born in October 1950.

Deepwater was a mighty crowded subdivision for anyone with five wild ones so we found five acres way out in the country. So far out in the sticks that there was no road to the property, only a small wooden bridge about a block away and a grassy trail. The Garnetts who sold us the property didn't want to live this far from civilization but we loved it. We went on a Sunday afternoon and paid down on the place so we would not lose it.

We found an old funeral home on Thomas and Shaver Streets in Pasadena for sale that we were interested in rennovating, and Olshan's cut it in half and moved it out one night. My Dad, Dad Chapman, stayed with them all night and saw to it that the funeral home arrived here in one piece, or two pieces as it was.

We bought the shell and Harris County spread it so we could have a road to the house. We fixed it up a bit and moved here in the summer of 1956. We didn't have water since our well went dry but, no matter, we just went to the Frio River for three weeks as we did every summer for 30 years.

We made daily trips to my brother, George Chapman's house in Deer Park for baths and clothes washing for six weeks until we got another well drilled. We had a horse named Nancy for the kids. What fun they had! Of course, Ray got a broken leg riding Nancy and Jon took a bite out of the clothesline when Nancy bolted under the line and he didn't. Jon wore two silver front teeth for years after that.

Susan got a whipping from her Dad for leaving Nancy tied up too short out in the field all day while she played in the stock pond enjoying the water.

Our dogs enjoyed the run of the prairie between here and Highway 225. One dog even had pups that were part coyote.

My niece told me recently that all the high school kids parked at the end of our street, which ended at our driveway.

Pasadena took us in first, then traded us to Deer Park. We had very few neighbors at first, including the Zalesaks down by the boulevard. Later, the Lees moved on Georgia St.

Carl Lee has lots of movies of Deer Park the way it looked when he delivered the Houston Post, with very few houses.

But, now Deer Park has grown and we are surrounded by subdivisions on both sides of us again.

Oklahoma Street is not as far out in the country as it once was.

My husband just came in laughing about the time Carl Lee backed his tractor into his lake in the middle of winter and the time I drove his truck out in the middle of the prairie and got stuck when Carl Lee told me that Ken Lee was stuck out there. I drove headlong out across the field to rescue him and got stuck up to the cab. My sons, Ray and George were riding in the back of the truck and left me alone out there surrounded by

mooring cows while they ran home to get Dad and our tractor. Carl came with his tractor and it took both of them to pull the truck out of the mire.

Meanwhile, Mary Lee was standing in her upstairs window laughing her head off.

One time, Susan and Carolyn Lee set the prairie on fire playing with matches in someone else's barn. I'll bet the five Garrett kids and the five Lee kids and the four Zalesak kids could add a lot to this story, but maybe that's another story!

By La Fond Ghormley

In 1947 our family moved to Deer Park. We bought a new home on Second Street, just built by Frank Van Trease. He was on one of the first home builders in the community.

There were several young families with pre-school age children living in this close neighborhood. The public school did not have kindergarten at this time. We mothers realized a need and decided to organize a little private one.

The children met three days a week at different homes for half a day in the morning.

Each mother was responsible for one week at a time, and planned her program. The program consisted of games, crafts, short field trips and (always) snacks. Our aim was to teach the pre-schooler how to play and get along with other children the same age.

Most of the children lived within the boundaries of First, Fifth, Center and Ivy Streets, so transportation was not a problem.

Some of the more memorable "learning activities," as one of the ex-students related, were butterfly collecting on the empty fields west of Center Street.

One of their best times was learning to make change at Caldwell's grocery store, located at that time on the corner of Center and Second Streets — now the upholstery shop.

Picking berries near the railroad track and crawfishing in the ditches on either side of Center Street between Second and Third Streets were fun field trips.

The students involved in this first kindergarten were: Garry Van Trease, Susan Dorris, Carolyn Wheeler, David Crocett, Judy Pearce, Janie Simmons, Mike Madison, Sammy Dreher, and Elaine Ghormley.

By Hickman Green

Ruby and I moved to Deer Park in 1950. We can verify the reports of progress the other writers have given. Please let me share some things they did not mention.

Deer Park had no police department. We lived next door to Ben Royal, the city marshal.

The attic fan was wonderful except for the deposit of oyster shell dust. When the streets were paved it was hard to believe the depth of the excavation. The concrete storm sewer pipes for Center Street arrived ahead of time. Someone tied a cow at Sixth and Center Street and she would use the pipe for shelter from the sun. Some people really complained about the wideness of Center Street - "big wide race track that don't go nowhere."

We saw the water tank between Sixth and Eighth Streets go up. A man fell and lost his life during construction.

We saw the construction of many buildings but the bank vault is the structure that stands out in my mind.

Deer Park has always been a football town. There used to be huge bonfires in front of our house by the water tank.

People used to sing Christmas carols at city hall. Easter sunrise services were well attended at the football stadium.

We had an art show in The Community Center but a "twister" blew off the roof and we hauled the oils to the school. The water colors were ruined.

I hope some of you can laugh now about the news item in one of the Houston papers about our police officer who allegedly pistol whipped a gigantic frog. He claimed the frog grew so large because of atomic fallout. It seems his transgression came after an unauthorized news release was given out.

Politics: I painted signs for all of them, voted my convictions, and kept my mouth shut. We have had some people who have served quite well under adverse conditions. I thank all of you!

We have seen our five daughters and three of our grandchildren graduated from one of the best schools in the world — Carol, Sandra, Gaye, Hope and Faith Green, Michael Jr., Richard, and Tamara Delaney. Thank you, good teachers.

Ruby was bedfast with rheumatic fever when Faith was eight months old. She was so sick we did not know if she would live. People in and around Deer Park took care of Faith, Gaye and Hope. It is at a time like this when you find out people are created in God's image. Carol and Sandra took good care of their mamma and little sisters.

After eight long months in bed, the prayers of many people, (including our good doctor), were answered in the affirmative. You were great, Deer Park.

Ruby had a stroke last year. The police and paramedics responded so promptly and gave her oxygen and such good care en route to the hospital. She has been making a good comeback. Thank you fellows.

By Helen Mason-Guetgow

Coming from the big city of San Antonio in 1946, to the very small town of Deer Park, I was quite shocked when I stepped off of the bus.

I had expected a small town community, but was not prepared for the wide open prairie that I saw. My husband and I followed the main street, Center Street, for what seemed like miles of dirt road.

We traveled past the wooden post office and Dalme's grocery store and finally turned the corner to the left. We walked a few more blocks to the Walker addition.

The Gaines Mason house was on the corner on the right. On the left, to the north, was "Pappy" Judge Masterson's house. Again, I was surprised when I walked into the Mason house and they had electric lights. Since the postmaster was the only one with a phone, I assumed there were no lights. That was a dumb assumption.

Across the street, to the south, was the water well. Dewberry picking was a thing our family loved to do on the prairie.

The schools were small. Our oldest daughter went to the first grade in the same room her father did when he was in the first grade. The fields were spangled with wild flowers. The friendship of the town's people was fine and beautiful.

The drugstore had a soda fountain where you could have a sandwich and malt while your prescription was filled. I could go on and on, but after raising two daughters here and not seeing much growth for a few years, I was reminded of the article I once read about the little rosebud. It seems a little rosebud held its pink petals tightly wrapped in their tiny green case. It would not give away its perfume. The other rosebuds bloomed and made people glad with their beauty and fragrance. The selfish little rosebud withered.

Then the little bird, who became peeved and would not sing, and its roommate did. He became ashamed and sorry.

The little brook that did not give away its wavelets, afraid it would not have enough left. It kept all its water in a hollow, protected place and became a filthy little pool.

When a small boy heard of the rosebud, the bird and the brook, he decided he wanted people to like him and would share all the things he had.

When Deer Park opened its heart and shared, it became a prosperous, thriving community full of warm-hearted citizens with a sense of pride and civic duty.

Thank goodness Deer Park did not stay like the rosebud, the bird or the brook. Yes, it has definitely changed and I hope it continues to change.

By Joan Hanks

Milton Runciman Hanks, son of Jack Hubert Hanks and Lester Hazel Byley of Houston and San Augustine, Texas, and Joan Wright Hanks, daughter of Floyd Ervin Wright and Hazel Louise Wright of Houston and Candler, North Carolina came to Deer Park to build a home and raise a family. They had two daughters, Mona Danette, who was born March 10, 1962 and deceased April 16 of the same year and Anna Renee, born January 21, 1970.

From May 1960 to June 1961 the Hanks constructed a house at the northwest corner of Kingsdale and Havana. They move in on June 10, after they were married on June 8, 1961.

Mr. Hanks was employed at Celanese Polymer, which is now Soltex. In the fall of 1965, Mr. Hanks began teaching at San Jacinto College. He holds the degrees of AS, BAS, and Med. Mrs. Hanks served as president of the San Jacinto College Faculty Women's Club in 1970. She obtained her A.A. degree from San Jacinto College. She has also served in various church and civic projects.

Mr. Hanks became the first international professor at San Jacinto. He taught school in Chandigar, Punjab, India in 1966.

In the fall of 1981 Mr. Hanks taught at Rice University and in the spring of 1982 he taught at the University of Houston.

Mr. Hanks was a local surveyor in Deer Park and in August 1966, began the first and only surveying instrument company in Deer Park, located at 2822 Kingsdale, where it still exists.

In 1984 Mr. Hanks became a member of the Texas Board of Land Surveying, and also a board member of the Allied Deer Park Bank.

The Hanks remember Hurricane Carla as the worst happening in Deer Park and the building of the civic center as the best improvement.

By Gladys Harmon

It was on a Sunday afternoon that we made the decision to move closer to Mr. Harmon's work. He was having to leave two hours early to get to work because of the traffic when crossing the ferry.

On a Monday morning, about 10 o'clock, we were parked in front of the Deer Park post office. As I got out to seek information I approached a young lady coming out of the post office. She informed me that Mr. Sneed had property to sell and also Mr. Minchen. We purchased two lots from Mr. Sneed for \$200, (\$10 down and \$10 a month). Ten dollars would buy a 4-wheel trailer full of lumber from a Dayton, Texas saw mill, so we were on our way.

Center Street was a very narrow runway of oyster shell covering. There was no drainage, and when it rained it seemed like sheets of water poured through the prairie like a giant river that was overflowing.

With the money allotted for payment on the land and that for lumber, we finally moved into our home on Center Street. It was only a shell, no inside work done at all. No lights, no gas and a very stately outhouse.

The people were not very friendly. I lived there six months before becoming friends with the Lambs who lived across the street. I would lay awake at night and listen to their battery operated radio — my special memory is of the Joe Lewis fights. We had kerosene lamps and a kerosene stove.

Eventually we became a member of the community, and during one of the hurricanes the community gathered together at the school. The children were put to bed on pallets, while the grown-ups talked, drank coffee and played dominoes. From the camaraderie of the storms, the tragedy of the Texas City explosion, and the love of our football team, we grew to be a very close-knit com-

munity.

The young people were a great blessing in those days. Each year we welcomed spring by flying kites and playing soft ball on the Sneed's vacant lot next to our house. Mr. Harmon and I would gather some children in our 1930 Model A Ford (we had built a small bed on the back) and go rabbit hunting in the late evening. On one of those occasions, as Mr. Harmon sat on a fender ready to kill a rabbit, a deer happened across our path.

The people were always behind our football team. We followed them from a B school until it was 2A. For 23 years we went to all but two games.

After retiring and being away for 20 years, I went back and got completely lost on Spencer Highway. Those were good years with many wonderful memories, but time and progress must go on.

By Maureen Hodge

We moved to the Deer Park area in 1954. We traveled bumpy old Center Street on our way to Diamond Shamrock where my husband was employed. Finding such lovely new homes in Deer Park Terrace, the new development then, we decided to select our lot and build our new home. We located at 310 Irene and lived there twenty-three years. Deer Park Terrace was a grand place to live, with friendly people, lots of beautiful trees and near the churches, schools and stores.

I remember the old post office, the one gas station that was sometimes closed, and the Caldwell and Dalme stores. I might add that my eldest son, Gary, worked at Dalme for 45 cents an hour in order to help send himself to George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

We made lots of friends at school. All six of our sons attended Deer Park schools, with five graduating from the high school. I don't know of another family so well represented in the school.

One thing that always caught my eye traveling Center Street was the home way out in the pasture, looking east. I couldn't imagine anyone living in such a desolate-looking area. Later, I learned that this was the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Vic Calvert.

I remember meeting with a group at the Deer Park Bank to organize Chapter 1063, Order of the Eastern Star.

Deer Park will always have a place in my heart. I have lots of happy memories while rearing my six sons at 310 Irene.

By Virginia Miller James

They say, as one grows older, memory for immediate things fails but old times become vividly etched in one's mind. At this stage of my life, I find I'm experiencing both, so if you will bear with this "Miller girl", I will do a bit of reminiscing.

My first real memory of Deer Park was when I was about five years old and we lived "up on the hill". Ask any old-timer where "the hill" was and they will tell you it was the area between Spencer Highway and the Tolars' on X Street.

In 1937, we moved to the house on the corner of Dutch and Shell (now Twelfth) Street. My brother and I spent most of our growing-up years there. Our mother lived there until this past year when she found it necessary to move to San Jacinto Manor.

Growing up in Deer Park was sometimes dull, but, of course, I now realize how fortunate we were to live in an area where we knew absolutely everyone, and even their animals (pets). We had the usual dogs and cats and even a milk cow at one time. The day the cow kicked my dad while he was milking her was the day Dad sold her.

My brother had a horse at one time. He delivered the *Houston Press* on that horse. Some people didn't appreciate the extra effort he made by putting their paper on their front porches for them, especially after a rain when the yards were wet.

We walked to school. We lived "in town" and couldn't ride the bus. Occasionally, when it was raining very hard, or was exceptionally cold, Frank McLean would stop for us and let us ride the bus. "Mum" was the word!

I remember learning to drive our car by keeping the tires in the ruts in the road from the Tolars' house to Spencer Highway. Center Street was shelled from La

Porte Road to Thirteenth Street. The rest of the road to Spencer Highway was dirt.

I remember the fields of wildflowers everywhere. Also, the scattering of a few pear trees that yielded pears that were small and green. I am still amazed that anything as beautiful as a wildflower can smell so bad in a vase of water and that pears that were so crispy and tart and good could cause so much discomfort in the middle of the night.

I remember how hot the nights could be. I would stick my foot outside of the window screen in the window by my bed to catch a cool breeze and couldn't understand why my dad was so upset to find the house full of mosquitoes. I am now so thankful for air conditioning.

Hurricane weather was exciting. Everyone in town went to the school, now the museum and administration building, to wait it out. We kids loved that time and encouraged our parents to go at the earliest hour. We played games, and made pallets on the floor to sleep on, and had communal eating, usually all by candlelight. Now I realize the real danger involved!

After a big rain, we kids found swimming in the big ditch along Center Street lots of fun. The fact that many people still did not have inside plumbing and septic tanks drained into that ditch meant that our parents discouraged this — when they caught us. Normally, we swam at Morgan's Point or Sylvan Beach in the summertime — both places were wonderful and had nice, sandy beaches.

I remember stopping at the post office every afternoon, thrilled when box 344 had a letter in it. That was before junk mail, but we kids did write off for lots of samples. I also had pen pals across the country that started out as an English project. I still correspond with a girl from Pennsylvania at Christmastime. I hope in the near future to meet her and her family in person. She

lives in New Jersey now.

I remember when Mr. Hendricks sold gas and kerosene in front of his house on Center Street. Mr. Shelby owned the little store across from Mr. Hendrick's place and that was the entire business section. Helen Fricks and I decided to make candy and sell it one summer. We bought sugar from Mr. Shelby for five cents a pound and our mothers furnished the other ingredients. We didn't sell very much and went out of business with an upset stomach, I might add.

I remember fishing for crawdads after the rains in the open prairies where my home is now. We caught lots of them and sometimes would make a fire and with an empty tin can and some lard would break off their tails and fry them and dare the others to eat them. Ugh!

I remember attending school and knowing the name of every student from the first grade through the twelfth grade.

I remember my father carrying me from our car to the steps of the original Baptist church on Center Street when I got married. It was cold and wet and the only sidewalks were at the school where we went roller-skating when we were younger.

I remember attending football games and having to stand along the sidelines. Home games were played only during the day as we had no lights on the field. We did have a beautiful gymnasium that was one of the nicest in the state. It had bleachers and beautiful hardwood floors that no one walked on with regular shoes.

I remember having to use the pay telephone at Shell's refinery — the only phone in town belonged to the postmaster, and we felt it was for emergency calls only. I remember anxiously waiting outside that booth for my brother to call our family from California at an appointed time the first minute he could call after graduating from boot camp.

I remember kids gathering outside in summertime to

play "Annie Over" and other games. We had no television, but the radio was exciting entertainment for us. Our parents took us into Houston or Pasadena or La Porte to see a movie.

I remember so many things before 1948 when I married and moved away. It was always a thrill to see each change as we frequently returned to visit family and friends. I don't ever remember coming home for a visit that Mrs. Mason didn't invite me over for a visit and fried apricot, peach or apple pies. She made them while we talked. Even after I moved back to this area, I recall those times with her.

I love to think back over old times but believe me, I like and appreciate progress. I am happy to be back living in a progressive town such as Deer Park. I don't always see an old friend in town while shopping — but nearly always! I am fortunate to be living in the "now", but I love the "then".

By Frances and Reginald Knowles

The Knowles family, Frances, Reginald, Sandy and Reggie, who was 15 months old, arrived in Deer Park in January 1957.

Leaving the cold and snow of Oklahoma City behind, the warmth of Deer Park was welcomed. As a new employee of Shell Oil, and wanting to avoid a long drive to work, settling in Deer Park seemed the proper thing to do.

We, mostly Frances, looked around for a house we could afford to buy. Someone mentioned Deer Park, a small community with good schools. Frances said when she drove out from Pasadena to look around she thought Deer Park was the end of the world. True, there was very little to look at — few houses, less trees, and a table-top terrain to provide scenery.

There were a few businesses. Dalme's grocery, Caldwell's grocery and Newton's drug store were some of the early ones. Mr. C.M. Caffey was also active in the community early on.

Stopping at Caldwell's, Frances asked the checker, Mrs. Caldwell, if she knew of any houses for sale or rent. The reply was yes, she knew a customer wanting to sell their house. Receiving directions to the house, about four blocks away, Frances had no trouble finding the address. Frances asked two questions; how much is the equity and how soon can we move in? The answers to both were what she wanted to hear.

An agreement was reached on the sale of the house, and three days later we began making 210 Maxie into a home. With the city growing, Sandy in school, and involvement in church and community activities, it did not take long for Deer Park to truly become our home town.

By Mrs. W. J. Knox

I can remember when we first moved to Deer Park in July of 1948. There were not many people out here. There was Mr. Caldwell's store and Dalme's store and the Sneeds ran the post office.

Center Street was fair up to Thirteenth. From there to X Street, where we bought, was rocks as big as your two fists and from X Street to Spencer Highway was just dirt. If it rained it was almost impossible to travel.

It rained a lot that fall and we had to park our truck on Center Street and wade the mud down to our house.

Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Hendricks moved out here the same year we did. Mr. Hendricks was building his first house the same time we were building ours.

The Baptist church was a little white building on Sixth Street. We joined in July of 1948. I can't remember what year it was, but it was when Truett Parker was pastor, that we named it First Baptist Church. I guess it was a good thing because we have six Baptist churches out here now.

People would ask us why we moved way out on the prairie, and my husband would tell them the town would be up here some day.

When we first moved here X Street was just a cow trail. Now it is four lanes and hard to cross in the early morning and lots of afternoons.

For awhile we didn't really know where we lived; part of the time they would say we lived in La Porte, then in Pasadena, then out in Harris County. Finally Deer Park incorporated and they took us in and we finally got a street up here.

We had to dig our own well, and the water wasn't very good. We finally got city water by putting it in ourselves.

We got electricity in October of 1948. I don't remember what year we got the telephone or what year we got gas, but we felt like we lived in the city then.

The school was small when we moved out here. J.D. started to school here. Jimmie played football. I believe it was in 1952 that Deer Park went to state in football.

When they started building the houses on Boston Street my husband did the electrical work on them. Then he was the electrical inspector for the city. He served for 23 years.

We talked about leaving Deer Park when my husband retired, but he has been retired for thirteen years now and we are still here. We plan to stay until we pass on, then we plan to go back to Polk County.

By Janet Koctar

When we moved to Deer Park 28 years ago this month, it was for some of the same reasons people move here today. The schools and the small town atmosphere, among other things.

Our son, Randy, started kindergarten in the old high school and moved to the new San Jacinto Elementary after the Christmas holidays. Now we have three grown sons who started and graduated from the Deer Park schools. In those days it was not uncommon to wait in line to buy tickets to the football game since everyone went to the game.

The old stadium behind the north campus had little parking space, so most fans would just walk to the games. Almost everyone in town knew each other, so the ladies would carry pies and cakes, drop them off in the old Emma Dreher school cafeteria, so after the games we would have pie, coffee, and good conversation. As best as I can remember, the band had about 15 members, counting the drum major and twirlers. Times certainly have changed.

Some friends bought property out on the southeast side of town on a dirt road. We told them they were crazy, but the dirt road is now Luella and they have a nice home on a large lot.

We thought Deer Park was a nice little town. We had Dalme's and Caldwell's grocery stores, a fire department, police department, city government, good schools, two little league ballfields, a post office, and a drug store.

What else could you want in a little town that you intended to raise a family in?

By Lorene Lucas

When we moved to Deer Park in November 1948, it was almost like moving to the country. We limited our trips to Pasadena and La Porte because we had two little grocery stores in Deer Park on Center Street — Caldwell's and Dalme's. Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell started our first charge account after the kids lost so many pennies and nickels along the trail where McBroom's Automotive is located now. Mr. and Mrs. Sneed had a little white post office on Center Street, and the city hall was on Eighth Street. The Methodist church on Fourth Street was a little white building made of concrete blocks, and First Baptist Church was on Center at Sixth Street. The school was small, and school visitation and football games drew almost everybody in town. The elementary classes on Ivy Street, where the museum is now, would hike to our house on Fourth Street during recess for hot chocolate and cookies, and thought they had a real outing.

The only telephone was at the store, and Mrs. Caldwell would send after someone if they had a phone message.

We always kept oil lamps and candles handy because electricity went off often. We all knew Deer Park was a city when we had our utilities, telephones and paved streets.

By Dottie Martin

When our family decided to move to Deer Park, we felt like we were moving to the country. It was in the late 50's and Deer Park was close to 2,000 population. We were excited, as the schools were known to be the best around, and it was a nice quiet town, a good place to rear children and become a part of the community.

Deer Park was open spaces when we arrived. Center Street ran to where the police station is now, leaving a black-topped street to run into a shell trail beyond. Luella Street did not exist and a new subdivision was just beginning to rise out of the prairie near there. Just beyond the city limits wild life could be found in abundance. Quail, prairie chickens, rabbits, and wolves could be seen from time to time.

School activities were the focal point of most family activities until a riding club was formed for those who had horses and still dreamed of country living. Because there were so many who owned horses, a group of citizens gathered together on a small plot of land owned by the city, and erected an arena where these boys and girls could meet and ride. Out of those gatherings the Deer Park Riding Club was organized. The building of the arena brought people to Deer Park for rodeos and to watch the club's performances and stirred up the community spirit beyond the founders' expectations.

The riding club went on to become well-known, representing the city throughout south Texas, performing at the Huntsville Prison Rodeo, Houston Fat Stock Show and Rodeo and for the prime minister of Belgium and his party of royalty, as well as rodeos and fairs. For years a Saturday night rodeo was held in Deer Park where many a cowboy came to show his prowess and move on to the big time.

Saturday nights were big in Deer Park because of the rodeo and the riding club's performances. As the city grew, the horse pastures disappeared to make way for residential areas. The need for the arena was gone, and as my family had been a part of that era, we were deeply saddened when the arena was demolished to make way for progress in our town.

Having been associated with the city for many years, I can remember when we had only one registered republican, and Deer Park was not exactly a two party town back in the 50's, but it was definitely a political town with two factions — those that were "for" and those "against". In December of 1960, by a vote of the people, the city adopted a charter, became a home rule city, and hired their first administrator.

The transition from a general law city to a home rule city had its turmoil, and it was several years before the two factions were resigned to working together. As time moves on, and leaders come, contribute, and go, Deer Park has become one of the best developed cities in south Texas. I am proud to call it home.

By Kin Mason

Although our family would later ascend to the luxurious level of electricity and a radio-phonograph console, the prairie boredom of the early 1930's was alleviated by an inverted spade-shaped, table-top radio attached to a car battery that rested on the floor.

The amenities found in the rented house in front of San Jacinto Elementary School were left behind in 1931 when we moved out on the prairie where 13th Street and Ivy Avenue would later come together. When Mr. Carlisle moved us with his horses and wagon, we did not take the standup victrola and the stacks of 78 r.p.m. records. My dad had sold them to Granpa Hendricks and bought the battery radio.

After an early supper on Friday afternoon, the battery would be left for a recharge at McMurray's Shell station in Pasadena while we went for groceries at DeFee's red and white store.

On our return to Deer Park, the battery would be attached in anticipation of an evening's enjoyment. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, the choice of programming was left to my dad. The choice was always southern country music such as Uncle Dave Macon and his Fruit Jar Drinkers (*Sail Away, Ladies. Sail Away!*) or Bill and Joe Callahan ("Near a quaint and country village stood a maple on the hill...")

When the young Gene Autrey sang *That Silver-haired Daddy of Mine*, I could see my dad's eyes cloud over a little, and I would feel a closeness to him, knowing he was thinking about his own silver-haired daddy back in Mississippi.

I will never know what my parents really thought about Dr. John R. Brinkley of the Brinkley Hospital in Del Rio, Texas. Dr. Brinkley claimed he could restore one's masculinity with a "goat-gland operation."

("Why, since my husband got Dr. Brinkley's operation, he's made me feel like a sixteen year old again!") My parents would always laugh at these testimonials that were interspersed with country music.

The problem with the radio was that the volume was so loud over the weekend that we had to move outside for the Friday and Saturday night concerts (and sometimes on Sunday night as well).

Sunday evening would often find us lounging under the shady, chinaberry trees, drinking iced tea, and listening to Kate Smith, "the Songbird of the South". This appellation was later dropped. With "God Bless America," Kate became too important to the nation to be identified with only one region.

There was a near fist fight down at the post office one morning when some boor remarked that a crane was needed to lift Kate Smith onto the stage. One just didn't talk that way about our Kate.

By Monday the volume could be tolerated indoors, and the decorum displayed while listening was much the same as when watching television today. Members of the family would sit and look at the radio. It was considered a breach of etiquette to stand between the radio and the listener.

Because of the rapidly depreciating energy in the battery, the length and frequency of listening times became shorter and were rationed to certain periods of the day. Certainly, our custom of blowing out the kerosene lamps and retiring at 8 p.m. made the job of conserving the power less onerous. Yet, the Noon-hour programming, directed toward the depression-troubled homemaker, was a must for listening pleasure. On a paper route or a trip to the store, one could keep up with *Ma Perkins* or *Stella Dallas* because the houses were opened to the summer heat. These were the original soaps, all being sponsored by the various soap companies.

Besides the soaps, one heard the *Crazy Crystal Program* from Mineral Wells, Texas that featured a teenaged singer, Mary Martin, who went on to Broadway and Hollywood fame, and bore a son named Larry Hagman (J.R. Ewing).

W. Lee O'Daniel and his Light Crust Dough Boys came on daily at 12:30. Later, when "Pappy" O'Daniel began selling his own Hillbilly Flour, the band's name was changed to the Hillbilly Band. He directed his homilies of motherhood and God to the housewives, their children, and to the poor in general. A few years later, running on a platform of motherhood, old age pension, and the Ten Commandments, he would become the governor and then senator, leaving the long-suffering, dust-bowl Texans with little more than memories and a song — "Oh, Beautiful, Beautiful Texas, Where The Beautiful Bluebonnets Grow".

On weekdays after school, we would run home to listen to *Little Orphan Annie* and *Jack Armstrong, The All-American Boy*.

"Have you tried Wheaties, the best breakfast food in the land? Have you tried Wheaties? They're whole wheat with all of the bran. They're crispy, they're crunchy, the whole year through. Jack Armstrong never tires of them, and neither will you! So, just try Wheaties, the best breakfast food in the land."

Ted Nabors would read the *Houston Chronicle* funnies on KTRH, and I would follow along with the comics in front of me, making sure I learned any new words.

Wednesday's weaker volume would cause us to sit closer to the speaker, and Thursday would find our ears pressed against the radio with the volume turned as high as it would go. We knew that *Little Orphan Annie* would give a secret clue — a hint to the current denouement, or an insight into the forthcoming adventure. The task for us was to get our mother to buy Ovaltine so we could send the lid to Peterborough, Ontario, and get that secret-code ring they had hidden away in a frozen

vault. The code on the ring would help decipher the clues. But Mama was not one to spend her money foolishly. However, the three nagging boys eventually got the Ovaltine, and after many trips to the post office, the code ring!

Many Thursdays were lost. And Friday afternoons were lost as well because that was when we were in the Model A Ford en route to Pasadena. The battery would again be left at McMurray's Shell station where, like the ancient Egyptian bird, the Phoenix, it would rise from its death with new life and boundless energy, and another weekly cycle of life (and radio) would begin.

By James Edward McShane

We first moved to Deer Park in 1941. Houses for rent in Deer Park were almost non-existent. Our first house was on Center Street next to a tiny grocery store. This store had maybe a total of a dozen or so items for sale. This store was in the rear of a small house that stood on the back of the site of Dalme's grocery. This building was destroyed in the hurricane. As you will remember, we had neither car nor bicycle at this time. Life in Deer Park was very difficult — no telephones, very little inside plumbing — some parts of town did not have any water.

Entertainment was very simple, consisting of "Forty-Two" parties. The Yearys built a large house that was the site of these neighborhood gatherings. They were also held in the old elementary school. While the adults played "Forty-Two", the kids would listen to a radio in a dark classroom. It was popular for older kids to tell ghost stories.

Deer Park, at this time, was divided into two areas; First through about Sixth was called Shell City and was separated by a very large drainage ditch.

The hurricane of about 1942 was unbelievable. The eye passed over Deer Park and damage was extensive.

We spent the first part of the storm in the Harbuck's house. During the passing of the eye we went to the elementary school.

Redwood was very popular for every sort of building, tables, etc., due to the destruction of Shell's water cooling system.

A big activity on Saturday morning was to go to the post office and wait for the mail to be posted. Most people had a box. Ours was number 336.

The hurricane heavily damaged the post office. Papers and letters were scattered over a wide area.

The neighbors around our second house, also on Center Street, included the Nordstrands, Suttons, Lambs, Harbucks, Elliots, as well as six or eight others that I do not recall. This was the Minchen addition. Water was supplied from a well owned by the Sneeds, (Mr. Sneed was also the postmaster).

I can remember cutting Christmas trees from a heavily wooded area that is now part of Shell's chemical plant.

When we moved to Fourth Street, it was vacant from our house to Center Street. Except for the Reins, the other side of the street was totally vacant. Johnson grass, three feet high, was all that you could see from our front yard. An open drainage ditch ran in front of the house beside the shell road. When we moved there Mrs. Pelata lived in the house next to the school. I am not sure if the Holitzkes were there then. Next were the McElhaney's, where the Wolters live today, and next to us were the Jones, (later the Odoms and Velunas). On the other side of us, I think the Swaffords built the house (Lucas). The next house to be built on Fourth Street was built by Preston and Helen Crockett. They were the parents of Robert Lee and Marilyn. They built their home out of scrap lumber from Shell's scrapyard.

The Methodist church met in the Latin-American school building behind the old elementary school. I remember every Sunday going to Mrs. Sneed's Sunday school class that met under a tree on the north side of the school building.

This is unrelated, but I remember when they finished the "catcracker" at Shell and they celebrated with an open house. Trucks full of ice cream, drinks, food, etc. were unloaded by handing out boxes and cartons to the crowd. Someone would open the box and it was a free-for-all until the truck was empty. Shell discontinued the open house and created the S.E.R.A. in its place.

By Ollie McShane

My husband, son James Edward and I moved to Deer Park in August of 1941. There were no houses available for rent or to buy. There was a shack with one bedroom and a kitchen that we rented for nine months. We had an outside toilet. After nine months some people separated and we bought their house. It was four small rooms, but we were glad to get it. We had an outside toilet there. When the hurricane came in 1942 it blew the garage down and turned the toilet over.

Center Street was just a dirt road when we moved here. Some mornings when we got up, the houses, what few there were, would be pink from some kind of chemical from Shell.

There was a small depot off to the left of Center Street. The Cub Scouts rode the train to Huntsville for a day. Some of them had never had a train ride.

There were wide open spaces from Fourth Street on — as far as you could see, nothing but grass and weeds.

I have enjoyed watching it grow. Both of my sons, James Edward and Jerry, started to school here for their first time. They both graduated from Deer Park High School.

I have enjoyed watching it grow for 40 years. Jerry became a doctor and has a practice on San Augustine. He has a partner, Dr. David Spinks, who grew up in Deer Park also.

When it would snow, which was very seldom, we would pull the kids on a ladder behind a car. They had fun, but could have gotten hurt.

By Ray Meza

I was born in a two-room house on the end of West Third Street in Deer Park, on August 8, 1935. I was fifth out of six boys. We had no electricity; my mother cooked by firewood and all we had for light were kerosene lamps. It was like the country then, there were no houses close to us; the nearest being half a mile away.

My father moved our family to this house in 1929, when he went to work for the Oldstad Restaurant on Highway 225 that served as the cafe to Shell's refinery.

But a year after I was born my father started gradually losing his eyesight and supported his family by selling newspapers outside the gates of the Shell Refinery. He continued to do so until 1962, when he moved to Laredo.

My brothers and I had to attend a school exclusively for Mexican-American children located at South Street and Highway 225, where the old cow pasture is now. All Mexican-American children from the first to sixth grades had to go to that school. This building now sits behind the North Campus High School, used for the school buses.

The woman who taught us was Mrs. McNay, and she taught all the grades in that little two-room school house. She was a sweet and dedicated person. During the war, she got us to be real patriotic and had us go through the fields looking for scrap metal to help with the war effort. Somewhere, there is a picture of all us kids saluting the flag of our country.

About 1940 my brothers started delivering the Houston Press Newspaper. Later, I started helping and we also delivered the Houston Post and Chronicle from a Model A Ford. I was about 13 years old at this time, and without a drivers license and no insurance we delivered about 48 papers to the area.

In 1947 we moved to the end of L Street near Lomax. At that time the biggest part of Deer Park was located around 225. We had a small post office about 12 by 12 feet where Center and Eighth Street are now, and it was run by Mr. Sneed.

The most memorable thing about Mr. Sneed was when a bunch of football players went up and painted his house bright red as a prank after a game. When he found out who did it, they had to go back and repaint the house.

I can remember that in 1942, the gymnasium caught on fire and the whole community used buckets of water from different personal wells to put it out.

We used to dig our own water wells with hand augers to about 15 feet deep. We thought that water was the best tasting stuff, but looking back, it probably was the raunchiest.

There was the Kesterson's Cafe on Second Street and Center, it had the best fifteen cent hamburgers, in Deer Park. Of course, it was the only cafe in Deer Park at that time. The Oldstad Restaurant my father worked for went out of business when Shell opened its company cafeteria.

The Gailey Gas Station was a little lean-to behind where K.C.'s Restaurant used to be, just behind where Deer Park Sporting Goods is presently located.

That was about the time I entered the seventh grade and went to school on Ivy Street where Deer Park High School North Campus is now.

When I was about 14 years old, I won a bicycle from the Houston Press for selling the most newspapers. A man brought the bicycle over and was assembling it when a lamb my brother Jesse taught to butt with its head came up behind him and butted him through the bicycle. The man was so mad that I almost won and lost the bike in the same day.

I can remember fishing in Patrick's Bayou near where

Lubrizol and Rohm and Haas are now. Childhood tales said there was a headless horseman that rode across the bridge back then.

We used to roll our newspapers at the old train depot where Railroad Avenue and Center Street are today. That was the depot that Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a speech from after being elected President. My brothers and I sold lemonade and strawberries to the people who came to hear Roosevelt speak.

My mother must have delivered close to a hundred babies throughout the area when she was a mid-wife. Kids would walk from as far as Deepwater to get my mother to deliver their new brothers and sisters. I would, at times, go with my mother to help as much as I could.

We left Deer Park in 1954 to live in West Texas for a while. I returned in 1962 to a house on east Third Street, one of the six streets that were across Center from my home years ago. Just down the street from me was the place I was born. I've lived there ever since.

By Ronald R. Meza

There it was...I could see it through the rain-blurred windshield of the old Ford. It appeared clearly and then faded with the rhythmic sweep of the blades as they pushed the torrents of water away. My heart gave an ever-so-slight nostalgic twinge that welled into a lump in my throat. I guess I was really hoping to see the old depot with the peeling yellow paint, and glad to find it still there — a sentinel, a shelter for the young traveler.

The depot, long obsolete, had continued to serve its purpose well long after it was abandoned, but for an entirely different traveler, the wandering Huckleberry Finn types that lived in and around the loosely organized community called Deer Park. This was the gathering place on lazy Saturday afternoons where we met to daydream. We didn't plan it that way, it just happened. We would sit for hours, counting cars that sped by on the highway to the east, and wondering where they were going and where they came from. We would speculate on what make of car we would some day drive. In our fantasies, we would drive to Galveston or Houston, or maybe even to Corpus Christi. That was really far. To the west side of the depot, on rare occasion, a train would roar by. The nearness of the wheels, the smell of burning coal, the shear power of the engine mesmerized and set off a whole new daydream.

That was long ago. Now I was driving back home — back from the war — the great war that inspired so many patriotic songs which I did not understand. So many slogans which inspired hate for the enemy, but did not question. It seemed to somehow fit.

I pulled off the road and slogged to a stop near the old depot. I sat in the car for a moment drinking in the nostalgia...listening to the rain. It was a Texas kind of rain — no wind...no lightning...no thunder...just sheets of

heavy rain. It was the kind of rain that separates you from the rest of the world — from reality — and afforded the most solitary kind of privacy. It did not appear as if it would let up. I opened the door and dashed to the protective roof on the east side. The banister on the steps was broken; floor boards were rotted; the roof leaked. No one had made any effort to repair it. Apparently the railroad could not afford the upkeep. I wondered how long it would be before it was torn down. I sat on the oft carved bench. I read the initials and cryptic graffiti of the small town. A new phrase had become popular; Kilroy was here. I looked up and scanned the horizon...the rain shrouded the flat townscape. But I could make out the old railroad crossing signal where the tracks crossed Center Street. The bell began to ring and the red light flashed on and off. A train was coming. It roared past in an instant with only the swirling mist to betray its visit as the echo, muffled by the rain, died. No car came...no car to obey the signal. The light stopped blinking...the bell stopped ringing...the ghostly image burned in my conscience mind momentarily, then faded into the distant recesses of memory for recall at some unknown and unspecified future day.

I walked to the west side of the depot and read more initials. From here I could see the silhouette of the old water tank and cattle loading corrals. It was really the only use for the siding anymore.

A strange sensation, a strange force, drew me to the tracks and it became five years earlier in the summer rain. I raced as I had done many times before, balancing with arms outstretched on the narrow rail, three hundred feet to the water tank. I was back breathless and wet.

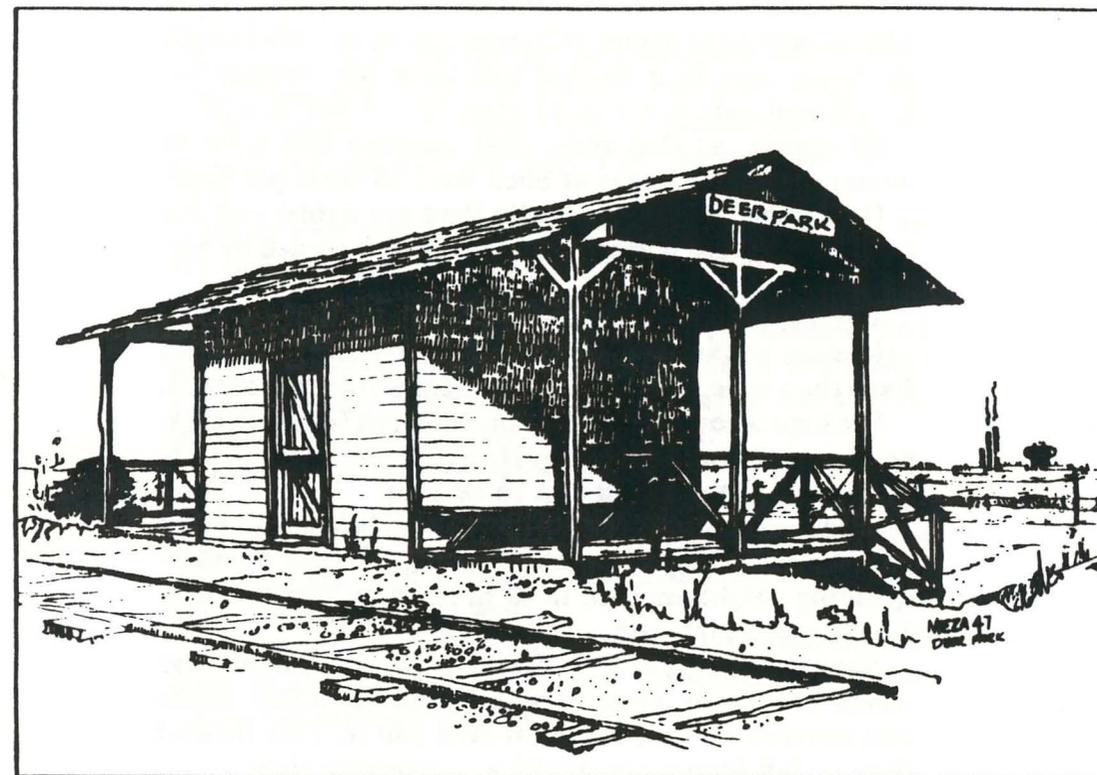
The rain let up for a moment...someone had turned the tap...I could see the old homestead now. The little white cottage where I had started this journey. I wondered if Mom was seated by the kitchen table peeling

potatoes or busy with one of the endless chores which occupied her time, her mind, her soul....

I crossed back to the east side again. The rain seemed to be getting heavier. A car went by. I wondered, if besides the appearance of Kilroy on the yellow wall, the town had changed much in the two long years I had been gone. I sat back on the bench and let the tide of nostalgia take me deeper into the past. The depot had been shelter for the weary traveler in that fantasy world of ours, which the war could never destroy. It also had been shelter in our real travels. Hiking in Mr. Carlisle's pasture. Hitchhiking to the movies in Pasadena — that was real travel, wasn't it!

Trains and planes and tanks and ships were locomotives. The fantasy of a youngster is travel.

I opened my eyes and took in the insistent pour of rain. I brushed the water beads off my sweater, shivered a little, raced back to the car, and started the motor. I pulled out back onto the highway, drove a few yards, and made a right turn onto Center Street. I stopped at the railroad crossing, looked to the right and saw the ghostly image of the old depot sitting moodily in the rain — a shelter for the weary traveler. I would be there for a long time....



The Deer Park depot, captured in an artist's sketch in 1947 shortly before the building was demolished, aided Shell personnel in locating the refinery site. Other than this cream-colored structure, there was a schoolhouse, an old hotel and a few shacks comprising the town of Deer Park in 1928 when construction began on Roxana's refinery.

By John Lee Mustin

My wife Marion, son Pete, and I moved to Deer Park in 1935, into a house we rented from Harry Walker, at what is now 1218 James at Thirteenth Street. We bought the house and four 50-foot lots from Mr. Walker for \$2,400 and paid it off in 15 years at \$15 per month.

Of course, at that time, that sounded like a lot of money, since my wages at Shell were 55 cents per hour.

Our house had no electricity (had gas lights) and our water came from a gasoline-powered well owned by Mr. Walker.

The Riggs, Mason and Fricks families were our only neighbors at that time. The only other houses in Deer Park then were those in the area across from the school.

We kept a cow for fresh milk, chickens for fresh eggs, and a goat to entertain Pete. However, the goat got a little bit out of hand and had to be sold.

We raised our vegetables in a garden beside the house and sometimes sold vegetables and eggs to our Spanish-speaking neighbors who lived in the area which is now Luella and Thirteenth.

Next to our garden, I started a row of Easter lilies which eventually grew to number about 5,000 plants and covered an area of about 50 x 100 ft. This field of lilies in full bloom was really a spectacular sight.

There really was not much to Deer Park in those early years. The Sneed family had the post office and the only telephone. Mr. Shelby had the only grocery store, which was on Center where Deer Park Sporting Goods is now located.

The school and the single community church were located at the northwest corner of Center and 225. Shell wanted to use that property and donated land so the school could be built on Ivy and the church just across the street, where the Methodist church is presently lo-

cated.

The only public transportation was provided by Texas Bus Lines, which passed by on 225 a couple of times a day. Center Street and the side streets were either shell or just dirt.

Center Street just ran up to Thirteenth and ended, and Thirteenth ended at James. The area where the south campus now stands was a jackrabbit hunting ground for me and my dog, Pal, during those early days.

When Pete started school in 1936, the new school on Ivy was open and his first grade teacher was Floy Goodwine, (later Floy Enochs). Of course, he went on to graduate from Deer Park, as did his wife, Bonnie, and all four of their children, Gay Lynn, John Eric, Merrilee, and Greg. Merrilee's daughter, Sarah, has also attended school in the Deer Park system.

Needless to say, the timespan covered by three generations has seen a lot of growth and changes in the schools here in Deer Park. Pete graduated in a class of ten students, and I believe the graduating classes are now pushing the 500 mark.

I could go on, I have lots of memories about our life here in Deer Park, but I guess I'd better leave some space for some of the other oldtimers.

By Myrtie Muecke Plant

My folks came here in the early 1900's (1910 or 12) and settled by the San Jacinto Battleground close to the ferry. I was born there and attended the Lynchburg school my first year of school.

Lynchburg was in the Deer Park schools even then. Early in 1930, Deer Park built an elementary school. The children from Lynchburg, Deepwater and Deer Park all attended there. My first teacher was Mrs. Praether. Others who taught me were Clyde and Lo Abshier. Dr. Watts, Charles Dorris and Frances Smith.

The highlight of my childhood was to go trick or treating on Halloween in Deer Park. There were only about 15 houses and they were all strung out. The school activities were our only recreation. The PTA would have box lunches where the lunches were auctioned.

At Christmas there were always Christmas plays and then a big Christmas party where all the children were presented with Christmas stockings filled with fruit, nuts and goodies. Our whole family attended these parties.

I can remember we had only one grocery store and a post office and the 15 scattered-out homes. There was only one telephone and it was in a private home.

Ray and I were married in 1942 and lived in Houston for two years. Then we came back to Lynchburg where Ray went to work at the San Jacinto Inn. We moved into Deer Park in 1949. Center Street was the main street in Deer Park and it was a gravel road. We bought two lots on what was to be Elm Street. We bought a house from a Mr. Carlisle, located behind where San Jacinto Elementary was to be built. Before we got it moved they had dug a big ditch and the movers couldn't get it across the ditch.

Ray went to Mr. Abshier and he was kind enough to

get the contractor to close the ditch long enough for us to get the house across. Judge Masterson and son wired our house for us. The street was first named Royal, then changed to Ivy, and then they decided to name it Elm. We got our water from Mr. Minchen and we paid \$4 a month for it. You couldn't use the water to water flowers and yards. If you did, the whole neighborhood got cut off from the use of the water, so you had better not be caught running the water. As much as I loved plants and flowers, it really put me in a bind.

I was in the first class to enter the new Deer Park Elementary School and I graduated in the first class to go all the way through Deer Park Schools. When we got to the seventh grade they added the eighth and ninth grades. When we got to the ninth they added the tenth, eleventh and twelfth. One class of eleventh graders was brought back from Pasadena and graduated a year before us, but we were the first class to go all the way through. There were 13 in our graduating class of 1941. My son, Ray, Jr. was the first descendent of the original graduating class to also graduate from Deer Park Schools. All of our children have graduated from Deer Park and our first grandson will graduate this year — Donnie Plant, class of '85. All but two of our 16 grandchildren have attended Deer Park schools.

I have attended and been a member of the First Baptist Church in Deer Park all my life. I have always been proud of our Volunteer Fire Department. To the best of my memory Mr. Schindler was the first fire chief. When we started our Emergency Corps., Paul Bond, H.A. "Chuck" Willis and Kenneth Green were some of the organizers. We incorporated and elected our first mayor in the very early 1950's. Judge Masterson was our first leader. Ben Royal was one of our first constables.

I started Plants Florist in 1954 and added the nursery after opening. I always wanted to work with flowers. I

talked to a lot of florists in Pasadena and they told me that I didn't know what I was getting into and that it was a hard job. Sure enough it was, we have worked through many a night.

Floy Enochs was my first customer. She ordered flowers for the First Baptist Church and I was thrilled to death. We ran our business on the theory that honesty is the best policy. You may not get rich, but you sure sleep good at night.

It seems to me that only the best people have settled in Deer Park. I feel like everyone here is my friend. I grew up in this town, married and raised my family here, owned my own business here and I feel like I belong to this town and this town to me.

By Thelma Olsen Rolke

My family — Isak Olsen, his wife Mary, daughter Thelma, sons Herbert and Sigurd moved to Deer Park in 1929.

I was five years at the time and the oldest child.

I remember my mother telling me that we first lived in Tent City across from the site where Shell was building a refinery.

It seems my father was working with the construction of the refinery. She told how they used mules and how muddy it was.

I remember living in a house that still stands at the corner of Cedar and Twelfth where my sister Etta was born in 1932.

When I was six years I walked from there to a school that was on Shell property across 225.

At mid-term we were transferred to a beautiful new school made of red brick that had marble floors and steam heat, and open windows to cool us.

There I started a friendship with Myrtie Muecke that has lasted a lifetime. The children from Lynchburg were bussed to our new school. I feel Center Street must've been a shell road at the time, but it wasn't as long as it is now. In later years I remember a rock road from about X Street toward Spencer Highway, or at least Pasadena Blvd. There were a few other houses and a few streets, so there must have been some development.

My family moved around a good deal in those days. I remember living on the Battleground Cutoff Road in a house belonging to Neils Esperson. It was on property where Diamond Shamrock now stands.

My brother Neils was born there in 1937 and was named after the owner of the property.

We had to walk from there many times to go to the store in Deer Park or the post office. There was a depot at Center and where the railroad tracks are.

If you wanted to go somewhere you would take the train or catch a bus. My memories of 225 have always been asphalt.

I remember pear trees in the open fields and berry bushes on the railroad tracks and ditches, and on the Battleground Cutoff Road there were some wild grape vines.

We benefited from all these fruits. We had many things to keep us busy. There was usually a cow to milk, a garden to tend to, chores like washing clothes on a rub board or pumping water out of a pump. We had to use our hands to build, or repair, or sew. We had to trim wicks on lamps to see by at night, cut wood for cooking or warmth, even catch fish or crabs to have something to eat.

There are many here today who are offspring of the old-timers. They are scattered throughout the city. The city grew so slowly for so many years. It seems only yesterday....

Nelda East Sanders

As I recall our family moved to Deer Park in October 1942. There were about 50 families here then. Center Street was shell to Thirteenth Street, rock to Pasadena Blvd., and dirt to Spencer. There was a post office, grocery store, two churches, a Methodist and a Baptist, and the annex building of the school.

There was only one phone, so news traveled as everyone met at the post office and visited while the mail was being placed in the boxes. The mail was thrown off the train at the depot on 225 in the morning and the outgoing mail was thrown on the train on the return trip in the evening.

If anyone needed to go into Houston or Pasadena you could catch the bus at 225 and Center in the morning and take the return trip in the afternoon.

We walked most everywhere we went in Deer Park — to school, to church and to the store. There were many times that a group of us walked to the San Jacinto Monument, carried our skates and spent the day. There were no sidewalks to skate on in Deer Park until one was poured at the school.

I remember picking berries for pies from the vines that grew along the drainage ditches. And when it rained we “crawfished” in the ditches that ran in front of the houses.

In the summertime we looked forward to the arrival of the bookmobile from Harris County.

Another thing that we looked forward to in the summer, once we reached the seventh grade, was going to Garner State Park. The school provided camp for a week for the girls and two weeks for the boys. The cafeteria workers went along to do the cooking.

The Mexican-Americans had their own school at 225

and South Avenue. Later on, they attended school in a two-room frame building built behind the annex. After several years we all went to school together.

Football games were played in the afternoons because there were no lights. We stood along the sidelines to watch the games because there were no bleachers. Eventually we got lights and bleachers.

The Baptist Church had a bell that someone rang every Sunday morning at 9 a.m. I remember another time that it rang and everyone went to the church to see why. World War II had just ended and the whole town met together and had a prayer meeting.

We didn't have air conditioning at church in those days, and I remember in the book racks on the back of the pews were hand-held cardboard fans, compliments of the funeral home in La Porte.

I remember the white footbridge that was across the ditch in front of the school. Every Halloween it got moved in front of the McLean home.

These are just a few of the memories I have of growing up in Deer Park.

There were twenty-nine of us that graduated in May 1950. Those same people who had encouraged me through the years continued to do so as I went away to college. I am thankful for the opportunity of having lived in a town like ours. I am proud to be from Deer Park.

By Billy J. Sealy, D.O.

A guy with a bug in his ear was my first patient twenty-five years ago when Deer Park Clinic was new. The guy was John Poole, the fire marshal, who later became a good friend.

Deer Park Clinic was so new that I was not even in the building in the summer of 1960. My office equipment had been ordered and the building was due to be finished any day, but the rains had come and stayed most of the summer. We were running way behind schedule; instead of just sitting, I had opened my office in the house we had rented on Fourth Street.

Besides getting a new office, our first child, Billy, was born. Chris was a mother for the first time and I was a physician for the first time. I had interned in Houston but it is not quite as exciting as having one's own practice.

Deer Park Clinic was staffed with one nurse-receptionist, Chris. She was a good employee but within a year she had grown weary of the job. We were also our own janitorial service after office hours.

Everybody knew everybody else here and we were all friends. We brought our groceries at Cafey's where Deer Park Sporting Goods is now. We did not have a variety store so if you needed anything like that it meant a trip into Pasadena.

We have had a lot of experiences here — like the night Shell had an explosion and soon afterward a barge blew up on the channel. That was a noisy night.

Of course there have been hurricanes, too. We kept the clinic open all during Carla in September of 1961. The Fire Department brought people to

the office and we also made emergency calls. Water was running through the clinic like a river and power lines were down all over town.

We had a good supply of snake serum and bottled water should the need arise. I had read all I could find about medical care during a hurricane. The business of snakes being washed up on land from the bayous was something we had to prepare for.

I remember a fast trip down to the high school shelter to see an expectant mother. The baby was born during Carla and her parents named her Stormy.

I can think back about so many people and the closeness that we have developed over the years. The time 1960 to 1985 has been eventful and interesting for me and my family.

By Thomas M. Simpson III, D.D.S.

When I looked at Deer Park in 1957, I evaluated her as I would one applying for a job, as I intended to serve as well as be served. How did the applicant's application read?

Name: Deer Park.

Age: (Would any proper woman tell her age to a stranger?) Young heart, young people, some "old heads" to govern.

Position: She was a community of three schools, five to six churches, and beauty parlors (no less than five).

The most active service organization was the Optimist Club whose main occupation was the sponsorship of little league baseball and softball for boys.

The first real person I met to help me fill out the application was in the local drug store in the shopping center at Seventh Street and Center, one of the few places serving lunch. Bill Newton was the pharmacist as well as comptroller of the business office of San Jacinto Junior College. I asked Bill if he would direct me to any spaces available for a dental office, as I thought I would like to see if I could be of service to the community. The directions were to the new Deer Park Bank on Eighth Street and Center, and to Chloe Dunn, Deer Park's only full time realtor.

To make a long story short, my dental supply house finally shook Jimmy Carey out of the bushes as my landlord. I took a place on Eighth Street, right under the can-type water tower. During construction, I was to meet Earl "Bat" Masterson, Tom Records, D.J. Sutton, and Ed Watson, who acted as "sidewalk superintendants" to the construction and "father advisors" to a newcomer babe. Word of mouth was becoming instant advertising. One man's gossip is another's advertis-

ing.

So on April 15, 1958 Deer Park and Thomas M. Simpson began a mutual and shameless love affair.

The commerce in Deer Park was as listed: four gas stations — two independents and two Shell stations, one owned by Oscar Wilson and the other by Ralph Kennedy.

There was one shopping center which included a Rاندalls Supermarket, Wilson's Hardware Store, the post office (Mrs. Sneed), Petro Tex Engineering Office (predecessor of U.S.I.), a drug store, a barber shop, and a Western Auto store owned by Ann White.

There were other stores — Dalme's store, Caldwell's store, Sheffield's store, Cates convenience store at Ninth and Center, Deer Park Lumber owned by W.D. Lawther, Cleaner Pick-up Station at Fourth and Center, and Deer Park Garage behind the police station, which was owned by Mill Holland and Lofgrin.

Services provided in Deer Park consisted of four beauty shops, Kesterson's restaurant, Besaw's cafe on 225 and Battleground Road, and a bank.

By Wanda Slaughter

Before Archie and I moved to the Houston area from Austin in 1951, we were aware of the good schools in Deer Park. Our neighbors had been transferred from Galveston to Austin the year before and they both talked often of the Deer Park school system. So, when we got the opportunity to go to work for the "new" chemical company, Lubrizol Corp., naturally we hoped to be able to live in Deer Park.

We moved to Deepwater and Alana started to kindergarten at Deepwater Elementary in September of 1954. One wing was not yet finished when school started. Charles Dorris was principal. We moved to Deer Park Terrace on June 1, 1956. This was the first real subdivision on the west side of Center Street. What I mean by real is that "the terrace" was the first subdivision to have curbs and gutters. There were lots of houses, both singles and groups, on the east side of Center. Some, maybe all, had curbs and gutters; but the terrace was the first on the west side.

When we moved to Deer Park, the main entrance to town was Center Street off what was then La Porte Road. You could come in on Pasadena Boulevard, but it was mostly shell. Most people just came out La Porte Road. Center actually ended at about X Street, but you could drive on a shell road out to Spencer Highway.

At that time there were three small grocery stores and a sort of drive-in convenience store on Center: Caldwell's at Third and Center, where D and D Photography just recently moved from; Dalme's, just past Eighth Street, where Deer Park Sporting Goods is presently located; and Sheffield's at the corner of Thirteenth and Center, where The Jug and The Muffin is now. The drive-in was owned by a Mr. and Mrs. R.P.

Cates and was located just north of Twelfth on the west side of Center, sort of between the car wash and C and W Television and Electronics. The Cates sold to a Mr. Rollins or Robinson about 1959 or 1960.

One of the things that has always fascinated me about those days in Deer Park was the fact that things were so equal, the population in 1956 was 2,700 people, houses were priced within \$400 or \$500 of one another, and \$12,500 was about the top of the line. Everyone made within \$50 to \$100 dollars of each other salary-wise, so there really wasn't a social class in Deer Park at that time. Everyone did the same things. There were no entertainment centers. We went to Pasadena to the picture show, to bowl or to eat out. We could also eat out in downtown Houston. There were, of course, church and school activities. Football games were the number-one activity. Everyone went to every game, no matter where the team played. It was very much like one great big family.

When we moved here the post office was on Eleventh Street in a small building, just behind Bill McDonald's shop. The city hall was in a small building on Eighth, about where the entrance to Sunny apartments is, just east of where the post office is now. The post office moved to the brick building on the west side of Center, between Seventh and Eighth Streets. Next door to where Mr. Caffey's store is now. This move was made sometime around 1960. The new city hall was built on Center at Thirteenth Street at about the same time. A short while later, the city hall expanded and a recreation hall was added to the south end of the city hall. A larger council chamber was added. Later the new fire station and police buildings were added to the city hall complex.

We belonged to the Methodist Church, Burt Condry

was pastor at that time. The church was just an old building, although plans were being made and monies pledged for a new red brick church to be built on the same location. The Baptist church was fairly new at that time and was located at the corner of Sixth and Center. I don't believe that there were any other churches in Deer Park in 1956, although the Church of Christ and Assembly of God were built soon after.

When we moved from Deepwater to Deer Park, Alana went to the second grade in what is now the museum. She started third grade in San Jacinto Elementary, and one wing was not yet finished when school started that year. Mrs. Floy Enoch was principal. Both our girls went to kindergarten through graduation from Deer Park. We found the school system and the community to be everything we had heard and hoped them to be.

We have come full circle as far as the schools are concerned. Both our girls have returned to teach in the system. Donna as a substitute for a semester before she married and moved to San Antonio, and Alana as a regular teacher for the past several years.

Twenty-nine years later we still live in the terrace. Many things have changed over the years. The population has grown to almost 24,000, but Deer Park still retains that Texas small-town atmosphere. We still must go to Pasadena or Houston to the picture show or to bowl, and our family and friends still ask us about the good Deer Park schools.

A good reputation is forever, I guess.

By Wayne Slovacek

In August of 1962, my family and I received our first glimpse of Deer Park. Our company had just purchased a 640-acre tract of land fronting on the Houston Ship Channel and Highway 134. We were going to construct a grain export elevator.

As our family was considering whether we would move to the area and where we wanted to live, we looked at Deer Park. The town was small. One shopping center, no restaurants, with the exception of Carl's Malt 'N Burger and a small eating place on the north end of Center Street. Center Street was a two-lane thoroughfare. The population of Deer Park was around seven thousand and five hundred.

One of the main things that impressed us about Deer Park was the school facilities. At that time Deer Park had four elementary schools including San Jacinto, Carpenter, Deepwater, and Lynchburg, and the Junior High through twelfth grades were housed in the Ivy Street facility.

San Jacinto College was just starting construction of its Central Campus. The Manned Spacecraft Center, now Johnson Space Center, was being built and the Astrodome was getting ready for construction.

When we decided to live in Deer Park we built our house on the corner of Eighth Street and Luella. It was the only house fronting on the west side of Luella from Eighth Street to Spencer Highway.

The Southern Pacific Railroad that did run parallel to Highway 225 was being relocated to make ready for the improvements to be made to Highway 225.

The Deer Park Post Office was located on Center Street in what was Deer Park's first shopping center, across the street from the Deer Park National Bank, now Allied Deer Park Bank. Highway 225 was a two-lane highway thru Deer Park, as was Highway 134 leading to the San Jacinto State Park.

The 640-acre tract of land our company had purchased was being used to graze cattle on. It was raw land covered with wild rose bushes and various types of trees that made good homes for wolves and other animals. Quail were numerous as were other kinds of birds.

Industry in the area had not started its major expansion in 1962. In fact, when we purchased our land there was no industry fronting on the west side of Highway 134 and only one on the east side.

The first Chamber of Commerce Banquet we attended was at the Besaw Cafe near the San Jacinto State Park.

By Mazia Sneed

In the spring of 1928, when the Shell Oil Company began excavation for the Shell refinery at its location north of the town site of Deer Park, Robert E. Sneed quit his job at the Baytown refinery to become a real estate salesman for the town, under Nathan Minchen of Houston, Texas.

Robert Sneed believed, and said so then, that the town of Deer Park would become the industrial hub of Harris County, but he did not live to see his belief fulfilled.

The Southern Pacific Railroad depot stood on the north side of the railroad and on the west side of Center Street. The section foreman's house stood north of the La Porte Road, not far from the two-room school house that was on the northwest corner of the intersection of La Porte Road and Center Street.

On the northeast corner of this same intersection stood the Farmer Brown Hotel. It housed the first established U.S. Post Office in Deer Park, Texas for a number of years. It was dissolved in 1918 during World War I. After the Post Office was reestablished, we kept the former records for many years.

The family of L.A. Rein lived in a house which stood south of the railroad and almost opposite the depot. They lived in that house for several years in the early part of the depression.

East of Center Street, on First, Second, Third and Fourth Streets, a portion of land was secured by Mr. Seybold of Fort Worth, Texas for a housing development. He built 11 nice frame houses. Mr. Seybold also built a concrete structure for a grocery and a drug store located at the corner of Second and Center. Immediately in front of this building, looking westward, there

were a few small cabin-type houses. These were emergency housing for the people who were constructing the Shell refinery. Beyond these cabin-houses there was absolutely no development of any kind. There was only bald prairie with a few old pear trees left from the orchard that the founder of the town, S.H. West, had planted in the early 1890's.

People had come from the north hoping to get rich from the land. They were brought down to homestead it and they set out pear trees. In Deepwater they put out strawberry plants. The strawberry farms were still doing fairly well when we moved to Deer Park in December 1929.

Old settlers told us that the railroad personnel said the town was named Deer Park because there were so many deer feeding over the site. They said that was the main reason that the northerners failed in homesteading it — the deer ate up everything they tried to grow!

Mrs. Grace Magee's father was one of those men from the north who came down and tried to settle here in Deer Park. She inherited her property from her father.

On Kentucky Street there were several frame houses. One, a two-story house, was the home of the Henry Cortez family. South of there, somewhere in the vicinity of Norwood Street, there were three houses that Negro families lived in. These houses seemed miles away because of the wide prairie with no houses. Some older residents of Deer Park may remember Aunt Bell Cleveland, Cornelius Wilkins and his family, and a man known as "The Preacher." His little son attended the Negro school in La Porte.

On the corner of Ninth and Center Streets, where Fred Gibson's family lives now, Robert Sneed built a

frame duplex in the latter part of 1928. We lived there. On the west end of Ninth Street Pete Prieto and his family occupied a small wooden house.

Deer Park had only freshly graded streets when the Sneeds moved from Baytown to Deer Park over frozen ground on December 29, 1929.

Houston Lighting and Power Company promised us electricity in six weeks. It was exactly six years when they delivered it, even though the house was wired for it when it was built.

The gas company told us that we got the first gas meter in Deer Park, installed soon after we moved in. We used coal oil lamps and an oil stove until the gas was installed. During the wait for gas, the weather turned cold and the temperature went down to 17 degrees in early January of 1930.

Some time in early January 1930, a Houston Post reporter came out and asked Robert Sneed if he knew that Deer Park was in danger of losing its Consolidated School District to La Porte. He didn't know it. The same reporter gave him the full story of what was happening and told him what to do to combat La Porte's action.

There was a small group of small homes in the area of Twelfth, Elm and Dutch Streets. Mr. Q.B. Davis and his family lived on Elm Street. Mr. Sneed asked Mr. Davis and Tom Inghram, one of the school teachers, to help him circulate a petition among the district's families in hopes of getting them to sign. The petition could then be presented to the Harris County judge to see if Deer Park could get the election that La Porte had succeeded in getting slated on January 18, 1930, put off until enough people of the Deer Park School District people paid their poll taxes so they could vote. The election

had to be put off until after January 31, 1930. The efforts of these men were successful, as the present school system stands as evidence.

The voters of the school district never stopped working and fighting to save what they had, and voted a bond to build the school system's first unit that stands at the end of Second, Third and Fourth Streets on the east side of Central. (I believe Central is now called Ivy Street).

The consolidated system included Lynchburg, Four Corners, Deepwater and Deer Park proper. It still has the geographical boundaries that it had in the 1930's. That particular January was a cold wet period of severe weather. There were no paved roads then, but the cold, wet, boggy surface of the land didn't prevent Robert Sneed, Q.B. Davis and Tom Inghram from contacting every family and eligible voter in the district. They succeeded in showing these people that their children would have to attend school in La Porte if they did not take immediate action to save the Deer Park system. Today's great Deer Park Independent School District has grown from the two-teacher school to what it is now because of the faith and efforts of these three men, prompted by an unknown newspaper reporter who cared about things being done right, and the fact that the families living here then simply got up and did something about it.

There were not many women voters then because Women's Suffrage had been in only a few short years and few women had paid poll taxes in order to vote.

When the families of Shell's staff row realized what the Deer Park school meant to them and their children, they put their efforts toward helping save the school district. Their decision to help was perhaps the one thing

that influenced the county court to grant an election for Deer Park after January 31, and at the same time postponing the election granted to La Porte Independent School District's voters.

Some of the people among the Shell staff row families were the Dubendorffs, the Steward Mitchells, the Keegans, the "Red" Marshalls and the family of W.A. Carpenter. Mr. Carpenter served as president of the Deer Park School Board many, many years. There were other families whose names have slipped my memory.

I believe the new school building was completed and opened for the school year in 1931. Mr. Benjamin Watts was hired as superintendent and Mr. Clyde Abshier was hired as principal. Mr. Watts served several years, then left to teach at Southern Methodist University at Dallas. Mr. Abshier served until his retirement. The system prospered and grew from the very first year.

The present post office was re-established and opened for business on January 17, 1931. Robert E. Sneed served as postmaster for 17½ years. His compensation, or pay, was the amount of postage stamped or cancelled each day. That amount ranged from one dollar a day to four or five weekly for several years. The compensation did not rise until the strike at Shell's refinery in 1937. The oil company personnel could not leave to take their mail to the Houston Post Office, so Mr. Sneed went to the refinery and picked up their mail daily. This raised stamp collections suddenly, and compensation accordingly.

When Robert retired from the post office, he named me to fill in until the U.S. Postal Service saw fit to put in another postmaster. I told them I would take it for six months, which turned into 18 months. By then I was ac-

quainted with the duties and decided to keep it. I served as postmaster for 12 years and as a clerk over 12 years; in all nearly 25 years in the Deer Park Post Office.

By Bob Staton

I remember Deer Park as a small, friendly town of about 500 people. At least that is what it was when we moved to our "new" house on Second Street.

There were about 300 kids in school, first through twelfth grade, all located in one building (now called the annex or museum).

The summer before my senior year, all the boys were treated to a free trip to Garner State Park for about two weeks, as a physical conditioning camp, prior to football season. It only took one school bus for us and all our gear. Frank McLean drove the bus for us and his wife, Johanna, did the cooking. I understand this was the practice for some years after that, even including the girls in a trip.

We had lights for the football field, but no stands or bleachers. So, even though we could play at night, the fans walked back and forth along the side lines following the line of scrimmage.

After the football games, we usually had a dance in the school auditorium. Everyone went to these, including parents. If someone was lucky enough to get a car we went to the Shell refinery cafeteria for ice cream, in those days they had a large soda fountain, or went to the Battleground to eat at the San Jacinto Inn. Well, not exactly, if one of our friends was working that night we got free food out the back door, and ate in the car.

Deer Park had police coverage in those days too, in the form of Jim Miller. He worked at Shell during the day and was appointed to keep the peace in Deer Park as a marshall or constable for a dollar a year. His largest police effort was riding herd on the high school boys. Miller drove an old green De Soto and one Halloween we painted a large yellow star on the trunk lid. It became the first marked police car in Deer Park.

The area where we lived was called "Shell City" and was made up of Second through Fifth Streets, all located on the east side of Center Street. Caldwell's Grocery Store was at the corner of Second and Center and they lived behind the store. About the only other thing in that area was the lumber yard on Center Street, eventually purchased by W.D. Lawther.

Further down Center was the church, post office and a small gas station with a two-story house. I believe the Holland family lived there. The house is now painted pink and is alongside the sporting goods store on Center.

Clyde Abshier was superintendent of schools and also taught high school mechanical drawing. Our coach, Floyd Crouch, taught high school math, drove the school bus, coached football, basketball and track, and was principal of high school. That year Mrs. Vick also taught home economics to the high school boys.

There were 13 members of my graduating class and our senior trip was to Austin for several days of sight-seeing and to watch a member of our class, Don Mitchell, run in the state track meet. Transportation was two station wagons, furnished by Shell.

There were 62 kids in high school that year, who were under the control of ten teachers.

Most of my memories seem to revolve around the school, but in those days it was the center of everything in Deer Park, educational and recreational.

After high school I left Deer Park, living all over these United States. I returned in 1967 and am now proud to, once again, call Deer Park home.

By Mary E. Stephenson

We moved to Deer Park in 1948 after my husband was discharged from the Air Corps and went to work for Shell Chemical Corporation. We were anxious to get away from the post-war crowding of Houston, and had heard so many fine things about the Deer Park School District.

So many have written about the physical setup of early Deer Park, but it is the people I remember most.

Mr. Carlisle, who had a truck farm about where San Jacinto Elementary school is now located. He would head for the stores on Center Street, and like a pied piper, would pick up every kid along the way to ride in the wagon.

Mrs. Maybin, who still lives near where the boys camped out in a clump of trees, and would send them hot biscuits in the mornings.

The Bartletts, who hired every boy in town to work the hay fields and then fed them huge meals to keep up their strength.

Clyde Abshier, superintendent of schools, who never missed a school activity and knew every student by name.

Mr. Miller, who was the constable and spent as much time helping kids as he did reprimanding them.

Grandma Lumpkin, who was never too busy to help a child, whether it be looking for pictures for a school project, baking gingerbread men for the first graders, cooking chili every Saturday knowing someone would drop by for a visit, drying the tears of a misunderstood teenager, or giving encouragement and love to anyone who came her way. I was lucky enough to have her as my mother.

Stuzie Van Trease, Ladine and Clarence Wolters, Doris and Waymon Penny, and myself, who published

the first phone book and the first weekly newspaper.

The Civic Club Members, who obtained street lights for the town — who went door-to-door to get enough people to sign up in order for us to get phone service in Deer Park, and who planted two Arizona Ash trees in front of each existing house in an almost treeless town.

Elsie and Harry Moore, who moved here from Ohio with Lubrizol and became staunch Deer Park supporters and “Texanized” faster than one could imagine. They, incidentally, are still very active in Senior Citizen and community affairs.

Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell, who had the grocery store. Mr. Caldwell spent endless hours helping young men with their Masonic work, enabling them to be better citizens.

Mr. Gibson, who seems to never change, and can still be seen around town on his huge tractor.

All of the people in this, then, small community who supported their churches, their school and their community, who found time to fix Christmas baskets and toys for the less fortunate, and who banded together in times of sickness or sorrow to aid their neighbors.

The entire population that supported the football team’s treks across Texas, whether they had kids or not.

Yes, I remember Deer Park as it was then, and have enjoyed watching it grow and prosper, but the memories dearest to me will always be the countless people who have enriched my life during the 32 years I have been with the Deer Park School District.

By Donna Thomas

My first memory of Deer Park was in the late thirties, going through on the way to Houston from Baytown in my family's 1933 Chevrolet. My father always noted that President Franklin Roosevelt came to Deer Park by rail to dedicate the San Jacinto Monument. Little did I realize that when I grew up I would bring up my family in Deer Park.

In 1956 my husband began his employment with Diamond Alkali on Highway 225. On the theory that everyone had to live somewhere, we sought the nearest subdivision of new homes in contemplation of a lifetime of suburban bliss. The subdivision was Deer Park Terrace, surrounded by undeveloped land. Deer Park Lumber was at the corner of West Fourth and Center (or was it West Third); there was no home mail delivery, and the post office was in the shopping center where Caffey's and The Boot Barn are now.

Center was paved with shell, and later in the sixties, the paving design of Center became a hot political issue: from Highway 225 to Thirteenth Street, would it be a palm-studded esplanade or solid pavement?

Also in the sixties, the city purchased a site at Center and P Streets for the construction of the Deer Park Public Library. At that time, the site location was in the middle of nowhere; now, of course, it is in the center of development.

I remember seeing a community gradually grow from less than 5,000 population to more than five times that now. There were two population concentrations: one at each end of Center with nothing but raw land between. Land planners told us that by 1990 there would be development to the point of saturation — it did not seem possible.

When the Deer Park telephone directories were delivered recently, I was reminded that the first books in the fifties were a few mimeographed pages stapled together between construction paper covers. I also remember the Deer Park Ladies Civic Club's first \$500 scholarship in 1960 from funds generated by the telephone directory.

I remember a city with a rabble-rousing personality that made bond rating companies shudder. Now our tamed ways do us proud.

By D.H. Tolar

The time is late summer of 1937 as the Tolar family with their latest and eighth addition, now three weeks old, along with their two milk cows and one shaggy dog leave Houston and drive eastward on a narrow two-lane asphalted highway known as Highway 225.

After driving what seemed a considerable distance we passed a small yellow train depot and turned right to cross over a set of train tracks. We were now entering the community of Deer Park via Center Street which was a narrow shelled road. As we continued south we had to pass over a narrow wooden bridge which spanned a drainage ditch. This is now the location of Eighth and Center Streets.

A small wooden building which served as the post office was located on the left. The mail, which was tossed from the passing Galveston bound train at the depot each morning, was picked up by the postmaster then distributed to the people as they came to the post office; there was no door to door delivery at this time in Deer Park. Each evening the postmaster would put all outgoing mail in a bag, take it to the depot and attach it to a hook from which the porter would grab it as the train made its way back from Galveston and on into Houston.

Just past the post office at 827½ Center was Shelby's Grocery Store, which carried a limited variety of groceries. You could walk up to the counter, tell Mr. Shelby what you needed and he would take the groceries directly from their boxes and place them on the counter for you. Shelby's was also a great place to get a soda pop in exchange for a buffalo nickel!

Across the street on the west side of Center you would see Mose Hendrick's gas station with its two pumps with glass reserve tops. Since at that time there was a drain-

age ditch which ran north and south along the west side of Center, you had to cross over one of the two wooden bridges to get in and out of the station.

As we continued south we made a right turn onto a small 'coal' coated road known as Shell road. Today it is West Twelfth street. After crossing yet another wooden bridge, we arrived shortly at our new home which was located at what is now the area of Twelfth and Dutch.

We were really in high cotton! Our new home had running water and electric lights — a first for the Tolar family. Our fancy living was short-lived, though, because of the high cost of rent — \$30 per month. These were still depression years for us. Dad, who was a baker by trade, worked in Houston when there was work to be found. However, much of the time he was unemployed.

Our more economical accommodations were an old frame box house situated on five acres of land which was purchased for a total price of \$1000 and payable at \$15 per month. This is now the location of Center and X Streets. We were now back to the outside pitcher pump for our water supply and the kerosene lamp was brought out of retirement so we could have lighting. Back then our place was called "on the hill" since the lay of the land dipped in both directions north and south from that point.

As the fall of 1937 began, I found myself entering the fourth grade class with my new found friends in the red brick school house located at Ivy and Second Streets. As one of our after-school-hours, pass-time activities, we boys would wander over to Chris' mule barn. Now, this was a large barn located across from the train depot (which was another of our hot spots!). This barn housed the mules owned by Chris Christensen which were used in the construction of the Shell refinery. Each afternoon it was a common sight to see around 20 mules all in a

single line making their way slowly back from the refinery and crossing 225 heading to the barn. The last mule in line was ridden by a black man who would unharness and feed the mules each evening.

In the early years, Center Street continued on north of Highway 225 and down to the ship channel which at that time was not polluted and was, therefore, a great place to swim or fish. These were the days when the Shell refinery was in its infancy and was just being built. The top management personnel or staff were provided residences which were built on what was known as "staff row" and was situated along the ship channel. If you were lucky enough to become friends with one of the kids from staff row, you just might get an invite to go swimming in an honest-to-goodness real swimming pool or to play tennis on their tennis court!

The Baptist church, which was the only church located in Deer Park at this time, was situated at the northwest corner of Center and Highway 225. It was a one-room wooden building which served to meet the social as well as the spiritual needs of the citizens of the community, which boasted of around 65 homes, and 300 to 400 people. These were the times when the church community would have their "Sunday dinner on the grounds." These were held in a large wooded area which is now occupied by the Lubrizol Corporation and part of Shell. These woods abounded with squirrel and rabbit. This area also served as a source of firewood for the Deer Parkians.

Since Deer Park only had approximately 65 homes which were fairly widely scattered there were vast areas with open prairies which served as the nesting grounds for numerous prairie chickens. During the fall and winter months it wasn't in the least uncommon to have large prairie fires. In order to control these it was necessary to "back burn" the area so that fire was met and fought with fire.

Even though our community could boast of a filling station, a small country grocery store and a post office there were many services such as variety stores, pharmacies, clothing stores, etc. which were not available. Since our dad spent all week in Houston and only came home on the weekends if we needed anything from Pasadena or Houston we had to find other ways of procuring them. Our supplier was the man we came to call "Mr. One O'Clock". He was none other than Mr. Kit Maybin Sr. who worked a straight four to 12 shift for Hughes Tool Company. He passed by our house faithfully each day in his model A Ford at 1:00 on his way to work — thus he became "Mr. One O'Clock". Anytime we needed something during the week Mom would instruct us kids to watch for him and wave him down.

As to growth, Deer Park remained rather stagnant until it became an incorporated city in 1949. After this, water and sewer systems made the area more attractive for developers, and by mid 1950 our first planned subdivision, Deer Park Gardens, came into being. Growth was still fairly slow but steady, so that by mid 1960 the community which we had entered some 30 years earlier had grown from around 300 to approximately 6,000 people, but still remained as it is today, a city built for families by families.

By Stuzie Van Trease

First perhaps I should say why we ever came to Deer Park in the first place! We lived next door in Ft. Worth to the woman who owned Deer Park from Eighth Street to Railroad. Her husband, Elmer Seybold, had gotten the contract to do the excavation work when Shell Oil was going to build the refinery, he saw a potential for a little town, and bought the land that I mentioned. The first thing he did was build a huge barn on the west side of Center Street to house his equipment and provide stalls for his horses. Back then excavation work was done with horses or mules and they pulled these large metal shovels to dig out the earth.

While Mr. Seybold was working at Shell, he was also building some small houses on the streets he had layed out for his town. He also donated the land for the present school building which stands today (where the museum is located). Mr. Seybold called his town Shell City and we have his original plan of the streets and his water and sewer system. He even had sidewalks and walkways to each house, but when Mr. Seybold had built 12 houses, he suddenly passed away and left things as they were when we arrived. His wife returned to Ft. Worth and tried to decide what to do. When we arrived the big wagons, harnesses, and scoops (shovels) and the large hay barn (which held feed for his teams) stood just as Mr. Seybold had left them.

Mrs. Seybold asked Frank and me if we'd consider going to Deer Park and finish what her husband had started. They asked Frank's parents if they would go and collect her house rentals and water bills (\$2.00 per house and no meters!). Frank and I were depression kids, young, and thought this a great adventure!! We had a new baby and Frank went ahead of me and wrote

that he thought it would work out fine and that I would like it!! Are you kidding? Young and having grown up in Ft. Worth and just out of college, I almost fainted when I saw the place!! I cried for months! I began to get "leery" after we left Pasadena on our way to Deer Park. It was then a two lane hot top road and there was nothing between Pasadena and Deer Park, but strawberry fields and a corn field or two! Then we went over the railroad onto Center Street!! Center Street was nothing more than a grassy road with one set of ruts!

The only trees that I saw were perhaps three dead or dying pear trees, a willow tree and a crepe myrtle tree that was around the old farm house that was on the property when Mr. Seybold bought it. By the way the first post office was in this farm house by Railroad Avenue. A few shrubs were around some of the 12 houses and the only other greenery was very tall Johnson grass and weeds! Mr. Seybold had built a store building on corner of Center and Second Street that had at one time housed a grocery store, barber shop and cleaners, but when the depression hit, all the businesses went broke and moved out. It was in this store building that we were to stay (camp I called it) until Frank could take Mr. Seybold's real estate office, which consisted of two rooms and bath, enlarge it for his parents and build us our house. Our first little house burned during the war due to no fire department. We built it back later and it still stands at 126 East Second Street.

I'm not sure, but I think the first post office was abandoned when the farm people sold their property to Mr. Seybold, but Mr. Sneed secured the right to open another one at Center and Eighth Street. It was there when I went to Deer Park. A very deep drainage ditch was on the Eighth Street side and the little building must not have been more than 12 feet wide and 20 feet long.

It was a fourth class office and I think I recall Sneed telling me that he had to buy the mail boxes himself. He picked them up second hand from some old office. Being fourth class, he didn't have to keep it open but so many hours a day and had to close when we went down to the railroad station stop to either get the mail or take it for the train to pick it up. Almost directly across from this "depot" on what is now Shell Chemical property stood several "section houses," but I don't believe any section hands lived there when we moved there. I know some white people lived in two or three of them anyway. Of course, the "depot" and the section houses were still painted the traditional yellowish-orange. If Mr. Sneed needed to go to town or fishing, he simply put up a sign to that effect and told about when he'd be back!

Shell City Addition extended from Eighth Street to Railroad Avenue and had shell on the streets at one time, but the shell had long since turned to powder. Center Street never knew what shell was, as it was only a grassy lane. I don't recall ever trying to get through to Spencer Highway unless it was very dry, (and that wasn't often). The furthest I recall going was Thirteenth Street when I walked up to see Mrs. Mason. Thirteenth Street was also a grassy lane, but it led way out in the prairie and ended at two shacks where two colored families lived. I'd guess these houses were about where Tenth and Luella would be (maybe not quite to Luella). I can't remember the negro family's name, but the wife was named Tempe. When Tempe got drunk and went reeling up Center Street and on up Thirteenth to her house, everyone kept inside in the area!

When we had a really big rain, the people who lived on either side of Center, south of Eighth had to park their cars just out of the ruts and walk to their house.

And woe be to the first driver to go up Center after a big rain if he were drunk! For days after, the only way to drive up Center would be to get in that rut and one just hoped that the person that made them drove straight! If our streets were bad, our drainage was worse! There was none! Of course the kids loved it, because they could crawlfish! Furthermore, every time we had a big rainstorm, our lights went out and so did our water system!

Another familiar sight was to watch Grandpa Hendricks go down Center to his Model "T" Ford truck with several people who wanted to go into Pasadena or Harrisburg to grocery shop. You see, we didn't have much happening and this was amusing to see Grandpa "putt, putt, putting" along in his truck. I don't think he drove over 15 miles an hour. He only went on Saturday and only then if Center was passable. Tempe, and any one else who didn't have a way to town, could go with Grandpa and they only gave him a little for gas. However, his old truck didn't use much gas! About 1 p.m. they would all come over the railroad track and groceries piled in the back of the truck that had high home-built sides to it! Grandpa Hendricks also hauled trash off for people for a small fee. He wasn't a very good driver, especially backing. Once he was hauling off some trash for our neighbors, the Abshiers, and backed into their bay window. His only comment was, "Well, they had no damn business building their house out over the driveway!" He just drove on off!

There was absolutely no entertainment in Deer Park and all life centered around the church and school. Our church didn't look like much, as it was the old original school building, until Mr. Seybold gave the land and a new brick building was built. We were so proud of that new school building. In fact, that was the show place of Deer Park. The people in the community would go for

walks in the evenings and just walk around the grounds — it was so pretty. For a while the school board allowed the patrons to have dances on Saturday nights in the auditorium which acted as the gym and lunch room, but one morning some whiskey bottles were found in the hedges and soon the dances were banned. I recall one family had several kids and they did as the others and brought quilts and put them to bed while the parents danced. But this one family got home one night only to discover that they hadn't picked up all their kids! They had to go back and scoop them up from the floor of the gym! Frank and I didn't go, as we only did ballroom dancing, and I don't know just what you called what they did. I think it was square dancing part of the time.

I don't recall what the church said about its members dancing all night Saturday night, but I don't suppose anyone told the minister, as the minister didn't always come out on Sunday anyway, as he had to come from Houston. As I recall, the church was non-denominational, and served as a Community church. It wasn't until the building was moved from Shell property to Sixth and Center that it later became a Baptist Church.

Naturally, we had no phones in Deer Park. If we wanted to use one, we went down to the Shell office. The nearest hospital was in Houston. Even Pasadena didn't have one, and I only recall one or two doctors being in the area. Most people went to La Porte to their one and only doctor. At least he made house calls on rare occasions! However, by 1942 Mr. Sneed had a pay phone put in his living room and we could go there to call. He would also come get one if they had an emergency call and the phone company reimbursed him according to how many blocks he had to go to reach the party!

Before World War II, Shell Oil permitted the foreign

sailors that were loading oil on their docks to cut through the plant and go across the road to a beer joint. Remember this was when Shell was down near the channel and Shell Chemical had not been built. When foreign ships would dock at Shell dozens of Houston taxis would park by the beer joint and take these sailors into town. Also "ladies of the evening" would drive out in their fancy cars and pick up "dates!" Once in a while the Abshiers, my husband and I would drive down to this place to buy hamburgers. A Mr. Olsted owned the place, and I called it a beer joint for want of a better word, but it did look pretty shabby, and especially if no ships were in. At least it was some place to go, and if we needed to make a phone call, we'd kill two birds with one stone. However, this was stopped as Frank was sitting in the place one day eating a hamburger and a bullet went right through the counter by him!! Some drunk sailor had a fight with another one! Then Mr. Olsted's son-in-law built a nicer eating place up the road and nearer Highway 225 and we felt safer going there. Then another place was built on Highway 225 about where the Beltway crosses Highway 225 (a little back towards the chemical plant, really). Many of the men stopped off and spent a great deal of their pay checks here before going into Houston.

Along with Grandpa Hendricks, we had another older man who never owned a car I don't suppose, but strictly drove a wagon. His place was just about where the elementary school on Eighth Street is today. Mr. Carlile had hogs, chickens, cows and a garden. He also had a garden down in the pine trees on the channel across from Shell Oil. They gave him permission to garden there and his spot had pine trees all around and was protected from the winter winds and he grew things year around, almost. Everyone loved Mr. Carlile and espe-

cially the kids, as he'd let them ride with him on the wagon. I never heard of his having to scold one of them. Our kids loved to go to his house and play. But when they were small, we worried they might fall in the pig pen!

I guess that's the only thing Mr. Carlile cautioned us about was if he weren't home our kids might fall in the pig pen, and some of his hogs were mean! Of course, we could look out our back door and see where our kids were most of the time. Our kids learned to swim in the same bayou that runs in front of the Baptist church now, although we didn't know that at the time. Other than the school, there was nothing east except Mr. Carlile's house and prairie, so the kids took their BB guns and hunted rabbits and snakes and brought them home to put in our fruit jars, so they usually ended up near Mr. Carlile's. Many mornings I've gone out on my front porch and there would be a bunch of vegetables. He'd never let anyone pay a penny for them. He just raised them to have something to do. He would also bring his plow and team and plow up anyone a garden spot, and again never take any pay. See why we loved him!

In the late 1920's and early 1930's Deer Park boasted of a hotel. It stood on the right corner entering Shell property and was two stories, no less. However, it had burned a short while before we moved there. It was built to take care of construction of the refinery and I've seen pictures of it and it may be in Barbara's book. The first school stood directly across the road on the other corner. After the hotel burned, Shell permitted some people by the name of Mitchell to park their trailer there, (we called them camp houses then). Since another family by the name of Mitchell lived in Deer Park, we called these Mitchells "The Camphouse Mitchells".

I'm almost sure we only had one school bus in the 1930's and an old man by the name of Chapman drove this bus. He lived on a small farm about where the back of Rhom and Haas is now. It was very wooded and a pretty road to drive, and we often took it going to the Battleground. We called it the back way. In the early to middle 1930's we didn't have a high school and our seniors had to go to Pasadena. There weren't all that many, probably three seniors a year. Shell Oil sent a station wagon with the staff row kids and even came and picked them up for lunch.

The staff row was a beautiful row of houses just north of the refinery and right on the channel. Shell kept the spot beautifully gardened and it was full of pine trees, just like a park. But after the refinery grew so large the chemicals killed the pine trees and the staff was moved out later. After Mr. Chapman died there was no one to drive the bus, so Clyde Abshier took over. You see, the school was so small that Mr. Abshier was the principal, coach of all sports, taught all the math courses, science and, I believe history as well as drove the school bus. I have forgotten the enrollment, but we did not have more than 150 or maybe 200 people living in Deer Park at that time. I don't think there were more than six teachers when we moved here because the single ones roomed at Mrs. Evans, which was the only house on Fourth Street at that time, and took their meals there. She was an excellent cook and used only peanut oil to fry. I think I remember one of the teachers saying she paid \$30 per month room and board! This sounds about right as the salary was something like \$125 per month.

The reason I remember this is because I substituted. Leola Abshier and I were the only substitutes at that time and I remember teaching for a lengthy period at the

Mexican school for Hilda McNay when she was seriously ill one spring.

Speaking of the Mexican school, it was a wooden building painted gray that was down the highway, almost across from South Street in Deepwater; more east toward Shell really. I'm not sure who owned the property or the building, but it was in our school district. The reasoning of Superintendent B.C. Watts, now Dr. Watts, was that the Mexican children would do much better in public school if they were able to speak and write English before they were put in with the other students at Deer Park School. It was a one room school, as I recall, and went to the fourth grade.

Another reason was that all the land between Deer Park and Pasadena was strawberry fields, other than some corn on the south side of 225, and the Mexican children helped their families pick during strawberry season. They didn't come to school every day, by any means, and if they did it was part time. The children also stood out on the highway and sold crates of strawberries to the public. Later, a building was built behind the main structure at Deer Park and the Mexican school was moved to Deer Park. But the students still went through a period before coming into the main school, because it was very hard to get the children to speak English when all they heard at home was Spanish. They simply couldn't keep up with the English-speaking students until they spoke and understood English. We would admonish them when school was out to go home and not only speak English themselves, but teach their parents. When the strawberry fields were abandoned most of the Mexican families moved on, and I only remember two Mexican families that lived in Deer Park.

I must give you a little history of the land that was west of Center from Eighth, north and south to about

Tenth. Old Man Brown, (that's all I've ever heard him called), had come to Shell to work on the construction and bought this vacant land and built three or four houses. One was larger than the others and he took in boarders, other men on the construction site, and hired a housekeeper to cook, clean and wash for the men. Mrs. Brown didn't come until much later, and as I recall, they were from Arkansas. At any rate, the story was told that Old Man Brown built the houses out of apple boxes, although this was a joke, of course. I do know that the material was mostly scraps from concrete forms and other waste lumber from the construction site. None were ever painted.

Mr. Brown was the first man to retire from Shell Oil after the pension plan was instituted, (I'm not speaking of the provident fund now). I remember how much talk there was about how the retirees would have this pension for life and they all wanted to stay until this would come about.

At any rate, Old Man Brown ran his boarding house and built a few more houses. They all had outside "privies" and no electricity. The streets, if one could call them streets, were of grass, and mud if it rained. I can't remember the name of the housekeeper, but I've heard some of the men say she was cross-eyed and not exactly a beauty. But she catered to the men and cooked them anything that they wanted, unless Old Man Brown thought she was getting too extravagant. I heard the story that one night Mr. Brown asked her why she cooked a certain dish so often. The housekeeper said replied that Mr. So-And-So liked it, to which Mr. Brown said, "I'll have you know that I run this place, and you'll cook what I like." Mr. Brown was another of the characters of Deer Park and he spoke his mind, but everyone liked him. He had pretty gray hair and a mustache.

After Shell was built, his wife came to live in Deer Park, and they stayed there until he retired from Shell. However, at his age he retired soon after the pension plan was begun and, of course, he hadn't built up much to his retirement. I heard him say he would never have permitted the company to take his picture if he had known how small the check was when they handed it to him. Mr. Brown was like that. If I remember correctly, he was to receive something like \$25 per month. Now, he had planned on much more than this. His picture was on the front page of the *Shellegram* and I'm sure it was because he was the first retiree on this plan.

We had another thing to be proud of in Deer Park besides our school, church and post office, and that was our little store that was run by an old bachelor, Mr. Shelby. His store was the typical country store front with a shed-like porch and wooden steps. It was very small, maybe 12 feet wide and 20 feet long, but only about 10 feet was store and the back was his living quarters.

As you entered you saw the small, second-hand glass showcase that held candy, cigars, ready-rolls and little incidentals. Ready-rolls were what cigarettes were called then, as many people rolled their own. On the left wall were a few very narrow shelves, and on the right wall was an old time ice box. I do mean an ice box, (or chest might be a better word), that lifted from the top, and in this ice box was maybe two kinds of lunchmeat like bologna, which he handsliced and weighed on some out-dated scales.

Mr. Shelby didn't have a car, so Grandpa Hendricks picked up ice for him at the ice house in Pasadena. He also kept one kind of bread and canned goods. The shelves were inadequate, so most of the few of each canned goods were kept in big cardboard boxes.

Mr. Shelby was along in age and rather heavy. When he would stoop to hunt the can one asked for, he would puff and blow. He would usually find it, providing one didn't ask for anything more exotic than a can of corn or beans. Our morning treat was driving, or walking if Center were too muddy, to the post office after we heard the mail train run. Then we took our kids to Mr. Shelby's for a treat. Everyone loved him, especially the kids, because he would always give them an extra stick of candy. Mr. Shelby had a charge account, and he would write each item in his little charge tablet and give the customer a carbon copy. His store was across from Grandpa and Mose Hendricks, between Eighth and Tenth Streets, and never had a coat of paint. It stood about where the pink house stands now.

The old-timers would go to Mr. Shelby's and whittle and swap tales in his living quarters in the back. If he didn't hear you come in, you just called out. Of course, Shell employees worked shift work, and someone could be found at Mr. Shelby's at all hours. He kept his money, for the most part, in a trunk back in his living quarters, and sometimes he would have to go back there to make change. He didn't have to worry about being robbed, as that sort of thing didn't happen then.

Mr. Shelby was in good health until once we had a hurricane. It blew most of his store away, and even his trunk was blown out back and money was found all around. After that, Mr. Shelby was never the same, and I believe soon after he went to live with some of his relatives in Baytown. Of course, we didn't depend on him for our main groceries, but we missed that old man terribly, and mostly because we all liked him. Most of us shopped at Mitchell's Grocery in Pasadena.

After Mr. Shelby was gone, a little grocery store was opened up in the original store building that Mr. Sey-

bold had built on the corner of Center and Second Streets by two college boys, Watts and another boy. They sold out to Jack and Virgie Watts. Jack was the brother to the first Watts boy. Next, they sold to the Sandels who came from Houston. Each time the store changed hands it became better stocked and had more choices. Then the next owners at this same building were the Caldwells, who kept the store for many years, and even built a new one on the corner of Center and Third Streets. Then, of all things, Deer Park got another grocery store. Rowdy Nichols put in a store about the same place that Mr. Shelby had been! Then Herman Dalme bought from Nichols and Caffey bought from Dalme, and it's history from there.

Deer Park had begun to grow a little before World War II. When we got into the war, things slowed down somewhat. But, even in 1938, some of the Shell workers felt they should get nearer work, but Deer Park had little to offer at that time. We young ones were getting uneasy as the papers had front page news of the war clouds over Europe, and we knew we'd get into it sooner or later. I recall after Coventry, England was bombed, a woman came to Deer Park to talk to us about home defense, and a group went into Houston and took workshops on gases and other dangers. Only a few went to the course and brought the information back to the citizens. Frank was to be the block captain on our street. I don't remember who the other block captains were, but we'd meet at the school and exchange ideas. As the speaker from England reminded us, we were so close to Shell that we needed to be prepared. Since we weren't a city then and had no alarm system or phones, we felt pretty helpless. We knew whatever was to be done, we had to do it ourselves.

Just before the war, a few houses had been built. Af-

ter the shipyard was put on the channel and Shell was building up the chemical plant, we didn't have near enough. People came from the farms and nearby states to work, and we got a few characters in, but many of them left after the war. I don't recall their names, but one family moved in with some rowdy boys. One got drunk one night and rode his horse into the office of the shipyard. He got fired.

Frank had tried to get FHA to extend loans in Deer Park so some decent, affordable houses could be built, but FHA didn't seem interested. A contractor from up north had tried it, but all he could get was on a "lot lease plan" where the buyer didn't pay for the lot until after the house was paid off. Many people didn't like this because interest was paid on the lots all this time. Mr. Armstrong moved onto California after he quit building in Deer Park. Frank tried again to interest FHA. One excuse they used was that Mrs. Seybold's water and sewer systems were inadequate. So Frank went to Austin to try and find out just what they wanted. The trip wasn't very satisfactory, as Frank got the subtle hint that some pay-off might be needed.

We decided to try the Houston office again. First we had 15 or 20 house plans drawn up and built a large house on Sixth Street for ourselves, to try and prove that we meant business. But FHA said the plans had too many square feet, that Deer Park would always be just industrial worker's homes that would not require over 1,000 square feet. Can you believe this?!

I was with Frank that day, and I must say I wasn't too charitable toward him when we left. We came back and had all the plans redrawn and, although they were too small, we saw that Deer Park would have to prove itself before FHA would come in full force. I think that every one of those houses that we built that small have been

added to now.

In the meantime, the citizens south of Eighth Street were badly in need of water and sewer systems, and Mrs. Seybold's needed enlarging. The town had a meeting, and we voted to apply for a loan for a water system. Frank was put on a committee to go study other fresh water districts and report. We applied for and got "Harris County Fresh Water District Number 15". Although we later abandoned the idea, my thinking is that we were always to have that number, even if it were never used.

After forming the water district, officers had to be selected. I was made tax assessor and collector. Mose Hendricks was something, but I'm not sure which office he held. All I can remember was that I went every day for weeks to the court house and pulled down those heavy tax ledgers, all of which is on microfilm now, and got the size, owners and locations of all the outlots surrounding Deer Park. Most of these were speculators from up north that had bought them sight unseen before the depression. Many had almost forgotten they owned them. None of us got any pay. I only got money for stamps to write the owners. I didn't even get money for gas, parking or lunch. It was all "for the cause".

We soon saw that to collect taxes from these outside owners was going to be a big bite to chew. We didn't have enough residents that would make the payments, and we had no reason to tax industry. So, we thought "Aha," we'd just incorporate and form a real city, and this way we could get help from industry. So we called another meeting at the school auditorium and voted to incorporate. Only a few people were against the idea, as they knew that would mean city taxes, but they were voted down and soon everyone got "into the act." I feel that even those who opposed were glad to do something,

even if it were wrong!

Now Shell Oil had always been our kind of "Mother/Father" image, as 99 percent of the residents in Deer Park worked at Shell for many years. Despite what some might say, Shell kept an eagle eye on Deer Park, especially the school. And why not? Shell Oil was the principle tax payer, and we really never would have had the new building but for Shell. But at the same time, there was always an official of Shell on our school board who naturally looked out for the company's interests. Not that we suffered at the school. The students and the system in general had more than most school districts in Texas. In fact, for years Deer Park ranked as the richest school district in Texas, second only to New London, Texas, (or was it the other way around?) Not that Shell Oil suffered either, because had it been a larger district, they would have had to pay much more!

Just to prove my point, (as if it is needed), when we first got on the idea of San Jacinto Junior College, Shell very subtly objected. One could tell by the overtones. They went so far as to say that they would be willing to pay for Junior College for each high school graduate, as it would be much cheaper on them. You see, at that time we had about a dozen graduates each year, perhaps less. My question to Shell's objection was, "Well then, would you be willing to sign a paper to that effect?" I never got a straight answer, and you well know what stands on Spencer Highway today.

Again, I'm not here to knock Shell Oil. All those years Shell did many nice things for our little community, but just for the record, you know! In all fairness, I'll have to say that now Shell Oil doesn't have the influence that it once had. We now have so many other industries along the channel that contribute to taxes.

However, when we incorporated, Shell still had some

hold and they knew what was coming next. Of course, we tried to take them in the city limits right at first, but this turned out to be a drawnout affair. You see, Center Street once went right down to the channel as a country road, but Shell had worked with the commissioners to close it as a county dedicated road from 225 to the channel. They had a very good argument for safety because of the chemical plant. It also acted as a barrier for Deer Park to take Shell in the city limits to some extent.

While we were working out a deal with Shell, Frank was trying to get FHA to come across. As I said, they consented to some houses if we'd cut down the square footage, but we also had to have sewer lines, water, electricity and so many inches of shell on the streets. Mrs. Seybold's lots weren't all serviced with these, even though she had a sewer system and water well.

The city knew sometime, somewhere, Shell would finally close a deal, so they told Frank to go ahead and put in these utilities and the city would pay him back when Shell came through. They never paid. This was back in the days when subdivision contractors didn't have to put in their own utilities. However, we didn't argue with the city because we were like the others, we just wanted the city to have some decent streets. Of course we did not make much on the houses, but at least we got FHA into Deer Park, which was a start.

Finally, Shell came through with a proposition, and I'm not sure of the settlement, but \$600,000 sticks in my mind. I don't recall if this were a flat payment and then so much a year or just what. Of course, city records should show this. Whatever the amount, we howled for joy, as this seemed a fortune compared to what we had to run the city. I know when it was reported back to the committee, we jokingly said "Oh, now we can pave our streets with gold!" Of course now, this amount would

hardly pay the street light bill and electricity for the lighted sports fields and city buildings. We wanted a water system with a big tower, a fire department, street lights, shell on our streets, and just a host of things. We still had no phones.

About this time, some of us hit on the idea to communicate with the citizens by a little newspaper as we had no phones. So the first Deer Park newspaper was born. It consisted of one mimeographed sheet of typing paper. The staff consisted of Clarence and Ladine Wolters, Doris Penny, Mary E. Stephenson and me. We met in the Wolters dining room and made up the news and ran it off on a secondhand machine. Then we used our cars and our kids rode on the fenders, jumped off at each house and put the paper in the door after knocking and saying, "Deer Park News!" This paper was one of the most fun times as we announced such things as what was going on at the city and what would be done next, such as street lights.

We were still in business when the next city election came up, and then we did have fun. We printed letters from the candidates and then an opposing candidate would answer. One election got hot and the candidates got kinda nasty with each other. One of us had a lawyer friend who advised us to stop printing the letters if they were derogatory, but we had the last word. We came out with an editorial that said that due to the language in some of the candidates' letter, they were unprintable, but if anyone wished to come by the staff office, we would permit them to read the letters. I don't think anyone came by, perhaps one or two. If we thought some of the councilmen were proposing something, and we felt we needed something else worse, we'd come out with an editorial again. We put news boxes in the stores and asked for opinions from the citizens. From this we'd know how most of the citizens felt on an issue and we'd print it.

What we needed most was telephones. Some of us on the newspaper staff decided to go after Southwestern Bell in Houston for an exchange in Deer Park. Doris Penny and I went to Houston and talked to some official. They agreed to send someone out to Deer Park for a survey. The man came to my house on Sixth Street and Doris and I met with him over coffee and cake. We gave him a song and dance about how we were sure that Deer Park was going to grow, and said "Why, even Frank is going to start 200 houses."

The official took all this down. He had Frank show him our plan which proved the houses and we assured him other builders would come in after that. When he left, we had no idea that our dream would come through so soon, but before too long, we were notified that plans were being made for a building on Center Street. By now, our little paper had gained a sheet or two, and we happily announced our coming phones.

Now, this group not only put out the Deer Park paper, but we instituted other projects such as the "Welcome Wagon." No one gave us permission, we just did it and no one objected. Why should they? It wasn't costing the city anything. We made our own expenses by running little ads for the grocery stores or whatever business wished to take out an ad with us. We didn't have any problems getting the ads, because we didn't charge much — just enough to buy our paper, etc. No one got paid for working on it. We got businesses to give a little gift to newcomers. For instance, a grocery store would give a coupon good for five pounds of flour or sugar. We made the little coupons and put them in an envelope and gave a set of them to all who moved in. We went in person to see the newcomers and welcome

them into the city. The businesses loved the idea because it would introduce the newcomers to their businesses, and so we got great cooperation there.

Then one spring we organized a beautification drive. We called it the "Clean-up, Paint-up, Fix-up Drive" and it was announced through our paper. Many people had junk stacked out behind their houses and many vacant lots had junk and paper strown over them. We urged people to clean up that vacant lot next door even if they didn't own it. Some of the school kids got in on the act and had fun doing it. We urged people to do something about peeling paint and unpainted buildings — just anything to make the city look better. As I recall we got the mayor, (I think it was Mr. Dunn), to officially declare us the Beautification Committee." We called ourselves that anyway, but we wanted it to be official. We felt it gave us more authority to run these drives in our paper I guess.

About this time we were certain of our telephone building and the Beautification Committee decided to put out the first Deer Park telephone book as Southwestern Bell told us that we'd only be listed in the Greater Houston book. I'm not sure about this, but I think the telephone company gave us their list so we could make up our book. At any rate I know we asked them and if they didn't give it to us, I don't know where we could have gotten this first list.

Now talk about work, we really got into a job. I suppose we thought if we could put out a newspaper, we could put out a phone book. When I think of it now, I realize that we were gutsy to try such a thing. First we checked about having it printed — too high. Then we checked on paper weight — all too high. Then we checked on some kind of cover paper — too high. We checked on binding — all too high.

In the meantime, we were getting ads for our phone book, but still didn't have enough to cover expenses. We decided if we could do the newspaper, we could do the book ourselves. Nerve! In our travels to supply offices, some one sold us some gray paper for the inside and a heavier paper for the cover. I don't know if they felt sorry for us, but it seems they said something about it being out of use. Then we found a place that had made up some maroon binding tape that the people didn't take, and they sold us a roll of it cheap. Now we were in business! Mary Stephenson was our best typist and I think she typed most every page. We ran it off, put the pages together with staples and bound the back by hand, using a wet rag to moisten it. We worked the last few nights, which were on a weekend, in my kitchen. It was nearly 4 a.m. when we quit one morning and went right back the next morning. We took ads from Pasadena for our phone book as well as La Porte and Deer Park, of course, and we did very well.

After the expenses were paid we decided to further beautify Deer Park. After all, weren't we the Beautification Committee? Trees came to mind first, as there were no trees in Deer Park. We began to comb nurseries for prices and finally found one out of La Porte that would dig and ball eight to ten foot Arizona ash trees for \$1.25 each. Of course we had contacted the agricultural agent about what tree would best stand those prairie winds and he suggested the Arizona ash. The nursery wouldn't deliver for this price, but this didn't bother us because Frank had a panel truck. Frank also took his transit and went to each house and put a stake where each tree should be; taking into consideration that house may someday have a sidewalk.

Our paper came in handy again as we ran an editorial that would make homeowners feel like criminals if they

didn't take advantage of this opportunity to make Deer Park beautiful with trees, especially at such a ridiculously low price. All they had to do was plant them at the stake. We also got rose bushes for something like 25¢ each. Now there was no excuse for any yard in Deer Park to be bare. We bought shrubs and planted them around the church and the city hall, which was a barracks-type building on Eighth Street right by the water tower.

I don't recall how many years we put out the Deer Park telephone directory, but from our humble beginnings the Ladies' Civic Club took it over and it's history from there. They do a professional and superb job, but I wonder how many people in Deer Park know about those first phone books? As for our little newspaper, we finally sold our equipment, such as it was, to a little young couple on Second Street. I can't remember when they gave it up.

One Saturday a Mr. Maxwell came to my door and said he was thinking of starting a newspaper in Deer Park and asked what I thought about it. I don't recall if he said who told him to come see me. I do recall asking him if one of the political factions had asked him to come to Deer Park and start a paper. He said no. I told him I thought it would be real progress for Deer Park to have a *real* newspaper, but I hoped he would continue what our first paper had done and print both sides. He assured me that he would.

You see, in our "growing pains" Deer Park had divided into two political factions and our elections had sometimes gotten pretty bitter. We older citizens knew what we had gone through to get the things we had, and we wanted our tax money spent on things we really needed; things we felt should come before the "trimmings." Some younger people had moved to the city

and wanted to do too much too fast, some felt. Thus, the Tax Payers' Association had been formed and we let them meet at our house to hear their side. In situations like this, one has to weigh one side against the other. One can get into just as big a mess by changing, if you know what I mean. If I recall correctly, we first voted for a strong mayor and weak council government, but changed to a weak mayor and strong council later. Of course, all this can be checked out by the city records. To say that we had our ups and downs at first would be putting it mildly.

About the time we started the first newspaper, the mayor appointed a street-naming committee. I can't remember all the people on the committee, but Carol Watts, sister-in-law to our first school superintendent, Ray Thompson and myself were on it. We finally decided that since Mr. Seybold had already laid out his streets with First, Second, Third, etc., we would just begin where he left off since his property started at Railroad Avenue and went south. Someone, perhaps Mr. Brown, had named Boston and Dutch, so we decided to go with the alphabet north and south so we could retain the present street names. There was one street west of Boston, so we started with Avon. From there the names were Boston, Cedar, Dutch and Elm. Then came Center, which ruined our alphabet system, so we decided to leave Center as is and resume the alphabet from there. That made the first street east of Center Fairfax. From there they are Grove, Harvard, Ivy, James and Kentucky. I think we stopped there as we figured Deer Park would be many years growing beyond that street.

There was one funny thing that happened at the street-naming meeting. Someone said they thought that one street should be named Van Trease as Frank had done

so much to develop the town. Jealousy reared its ugly head, and one said they didn't think so. I jumped up before anyone else could offer an opinion and made a motion that no street be named for anyone, living or dead! However, this vote has been disregarded several times since our first days of "cityhood." Of course, all our street names were reported in the paper. At this time we had no phones, so if not for the paper how would the average citizen know anything?

Of course, at first we didn't have a police department but rather a City Marshal. We had several, as no one liked to take the job. The pay was certainly no incentive. In fact, the very first ones probably didn't get anything other than expenses. We had so many that I hope I can remember their names. Some of them were Herman Dalme, Mr. Jim Miller, Claud Burgess (I'm almost sure), and I believe the last one was Ben Royal. Now these city marshals had a time trying to teach the citizens that we had to have some laws, and for the "old heads" who had never experienced a law in Deer Park, it came as a shock. For instance, one woman who had lived in Deer Park since I had was indignant when Ben Royal told her he would have to give her a ticket if she didn't stop when she approached Center from Fourth Street where she lived. Her favorite byword was "toot" and she said to Royal, "Toot, Royal, if you think that I'm going to come to a stop when I can see both ways — all the way to Shell to the north and all the way to Spencer Highway to the south, you're crazy. And you better not try to give me a ticket, because I'll tear it up!" Do you begin to see what "growing pains" we had when we became a city.

We had some more problems when we got our tax money and began to put water and sewer lines in the old parts of town that had never had either. If they had

them they didn't work. Two or three didn't want to pay to tie onto the sewer line, but continued to use their outhouses. The city didn't get too impatient for a while because there was so much to do anyway. They kinda let some of them ride for a while.

Finally, the day came when it became a law that everyone had to have at least a commode in the house. Now, I can't prove this because I never saw it, but persons who were reliable swore that one old man said, "By ---, if I have to have one of these ---- things in my house, I'm going to have it at a convenient place, and that's at the foot of my bed!" Legally, he didn't have to put in a bath tub, so he didn't. The family has long since moved, so don't try to figure out who it was! Oh, we had some strange ones when first we were a city, but it all came out in the wash. I don't have to prove that point though. Just look at Deer Park now — a sophisticated city with citizens from all walks of life. And not one out of 10,000 know the secrets that lie beneath those paved streets they drive on everyday!!

By Johanna McLean Webb

The first time I ever saw Deer Park (or where Deer Park is today), I was just a child. My family would go to Sylvan Beach, Seabrook and Kemah during the summer. We would come down La Porte Road (225 now). When you got to where Center Street is, there was a deep curve and the road would go nearly to the channel. Then there was another curve which went through where Lubrizol is now and on in front of Diamond Shamrock and so on.

When you turned at Center, there was a large two-story house. It was a sort of boarding house. Then we knew we were getting close to where we were going. I remember across the railroad there were lots of pear trees and a few barns and not over two or three houses. I never dreamed I would live there someday.

In 1936, my husband Frank, my daughter and I moved to Lynchburg and Frank went to work driving the only school bus in Deer Park. The bus route went across the channel at Lynchburg and clear to Highlands. About three fourths of the students came from across the channel. Frank made one trip in the morning and one in the evening. About three nights a week he made extra trips as there was always something going on at the school. This was the only entertainment the people in Deer Park had.

In 1940 we moved to Deer Park and rented a three-room house for \$25 a month. There was almost no such thing as rent property. You were lucky to find a chicken coop to live in. It had outside toilets but we did have gas and lights. There were two telephones in Deer Park. Of course, there was one at the school.

You could buy property in Deer Park if you had any money at all. We could have bought five acres about where the junior high school is now, for \$1200. It had no road to the property, no lights, no gas or water.

In 1944 I took over the cafeteria at the school. There had been two other ladies in Deer Park who had the cafeteria and had kept it for just one school term each. Frank still drove a bus and we had two children in school, so it worked out just fine for me.

I have lots of lovely memories of the students who went to Deer Park. A lot of them remained here and helped make Deer Park what it is today.

Deer Park was a very close community. The only thing we had was at school and at the Shell refinery. It wasn't a very pretty place — sitting on top of a bald prairie — a few houses, dirt roads. If it rained you couldn't get to where you lived. Center, Second and Third were the only shell streets. When someone asked you where you were from, you almost hated to say "Deer Park" because they would look at you with a dumb look and ask, "Where's that?" But there are a lot of people who will always remember Deer Park, as the school put us on the map and out in front — rather, the students did.

It is a good place to live now. There is a lot of good to be said about Deer Park — it has come a long way.

By Jimmie Weidig

What I Remember about Deer Park:

Steps from the old hotel; going to church in the first school; ringing the bell; the cattle round-ups; seeing cattle driven into dipping vats; the branding of calves and cows every spring; cattle pens in Deer Park used for loading cattle onto box cars; the rice fields; working in the fields for \$1.50 a day; Center Street extending to the ship channel, making a circle at the bottom of a steep hill; and cypress trees growing in the channel. The water was clear. You could see the sandy bottom, or the red clay. There were lots of large blue crabs everywhere.

I remember flounder in the channel, just to the right of Center Street; large magnolia, pine, oak and cypress trees lining both sides of the channel; the Oldsteads, Ellis's Cafe across the entrance of Shell; the baseball field behind the Oldsteads; beautiful staff houses with tall pine trees, a swimming pool, tennis courts and a paved, winding road.

I remember fishing in Patrick's Bayou for bass, perch and large alligator gars; walking under the cement bridge; learning to swim in its clear water, later spending most of the time at the mouth of the bayou, catching blue crabs with sticks and swimming out in the channel to the markers from the sandy mouth of the bayou. The rest of the bayou to the bridge was one big marsh. There were lots of ducks there in the winter.

I remember seeing the prairie burn day and night, from Deer Park to La Porte and Pasadena; picking strawberries on the halves from the sharecroppers that worked for Jessie Jones' ranch; the beautiful house and lake which is now part of Tenneco. After the fires burned off the grass in the spring, the prairie would come alive with beautiful flowers of all colors and varieties.

I remember the small ponds scattered all over Deer Park's prairie were full of wild ducks; a large population of Attwater's prairie chickens, doves and quail. Very few people hunted these birds.

I remember the first rodeo built near the Carlisle home and how it was quite a drawing card for a few years. Most of the stock came out of Carlisle pastures and was very wild.

I remember the dance hall, located next to the post office on Center and Eighth Streets, on Saturday nights; seeing the train pick up the mail on a platform and throwing it off at the small depot which housed most of the tools and a small trolley; the section house for the railroad crew that serviced many miles of track; one large house, surrounded by six or eight small homes, on the north side of 225, directly across from the depot.

I remember helping my father build a fence around where the courthouse and fire department now stand, at Thirteenth Street and Center, for the small herd of cattle we raised.

I remember seeing the WPA dig a very deep ditch with picks, shovels and wheel barrows. It extended from Thirteenth on the west side to Eighth, then east to the present drainage ditch, and on to 225. This took many months and supplied work for a large number of men. It also stopped most of the flooding of Center Street.

There were two stores and one barber shop. The barber shop was on Center and Second Streets. The building is still standing. The other store stood on the west side of Center at Third. It either burned down or was torn down. The grass fires took their toll on many a house and barn. The other store was Shelby's which seemed to prosper better than all the others.

I remember the old bootleg house out in the prairie. It

was two stories and built rather well. It was located near where Deer Park's intermediate school is now. At one time, Deer Park had about a dozen houses no one lived in. They were left over from the boom of building the Shell plant. They were scattered all over Deer Park, which started on 225 and just about ended on Thirteenth Street. There were five houses from there to Spencer Highway. The shell also stopped on Thirteenth.

I remember there were quite a few pear trees scattered all over Deer Park. These were probably planted by Simeon H. West, since a lot of the trees were all by themselves. The fires took their toll on the pear trees; probably only one is still around. Very few trees of any size existed in Deer Park. It was one big prairie from La Porte to Pasadena.

I remember the school in Deepwater that was used to teach the small Mexican children and their teacher, who was an excellent one. The children were very good students.

I remember the Seaman house, the Marsh home, barns and fruit trees.

By Barbara Wells

When I was a child
I saw senna beans and cow trails
where you see paved streets and sidewalks...
and I saw wild flowers where you see asphalt.
I picked berries beside scattered pools of prairie water
pushing the heavy vines aside with long sticks
to get to the black-red fruit.
I saw spring rains wash away the dust of dancing devil
winds
and felt the early morning dew soak into my bare feet.
I heard cricket sounds, and locusts,
and croaking frogs,
and cows lowing as they made their way home across the
pastures.
I knew the joy of an unleashed dog at my heel,
free to run the open fields.
I knew the meaning of a long summer day,
a country school,
a little church,
ice cream socials,
close friends
and home.
I knew the sounds of quiet
and what a star lit sky looked like.
I heard the whistle of a lonely train
and traveled down drainage ditches on homemade rafts.
I spent long hours watching green winged dragonflies
going nowhere,
and big red ants scurrying over hardened white sand
dunes going somewhere.
The Deer Park of my childhood
was shelled roads,
open prairies,
birds,
flowers,
butterflies
stillness
and time...precious dreaming time.

Bookmobiles bringing past, present and future,
and a country post office
where home folks found excitement
watching the mail being "put up."
My children grew up here
and even then, they were allowed the joy of sun
drenched fields
and wild baby rabbits,
'possums,
and armadillos
and wading ditches with black gumbo squishing
between their toes.

But the roots of concrete are stronger than the roots of
senna beans,
and bulldozers eat away at the parched earth with more
vigor than big red ants,
and brick walls grow faster than prairie flowers,
and open ditches curl into underground pipes,
absorbing my past
and denying my grandchildren the opportunity to run in
open fields
where box turtles play
and crawdads work
and fragile maypops flutter in soft breezes.
Relative? Maybe.
Perspective? Possibly.
But I don't think so.

By Dr. Leon Wolters

I remember Deer Park when Deer Park Independent School District consisted of the present Administration Annex Building, a small wood frame building at the rear for students of Mexican heritage, and the small gymnasium located at the end of Fourth Street. The football field, which had no bleachers, was in almost the same location as the present North Campus stadium.

Center Street was then, as it is now, the backbone of the community. Many potholes marred the shell surface from what is now Highway 225 to Thirteenth Street, with gravel extending from that point to Spencer Highway. Most of the residential section was located on First through Fourth Streets, between Center and Ivy, which deadended to the south at what is now Thirteenth Street and to the north at what is now Eighth Street. There were three houses on a short street that extended east from Center to where Pate's nursery is now located on X Street, and another house at the end of a dirt road that ran from Center to a deadend at Ivy. A few more houses were located on Boston and Elm Streets.

The "new business district" was almost nonexistent, with a small depot near Center and Highway 225 and a post office in a small frame building where Sparky's Cleaners is now located. The city's water system was housed on Second Street, west of Center; and the town's one small grocery was operated in the building that still stands on the corner of Center and Second Streets.

The Baptist church met in a small frame building on the corner of Sixth and Center, which is now Allied Deer Park Bank property. The congregation of the Methodist church gathered in the local school building until they were able to construct their first small building on the site of their present location on the corner of Fourth and Ivy.

School and church activities accounted for a great deal of the community activity. A weekly highlight was the dances which were held in the school building for junior and senior high students. Square dance lessons were offered in the same location for adults and children. Weekly forty-two parties attracted most of the adults, while the kids chose to play outside.

The Deer Park I remember was small enough that everyone knew everyone else, and a true feeling of family unity existed within the entire community.

By Mrs. G.D. Yeary

I was 29 years old when we moved to Deer Park on December 4, 1941. Three days later, Pearl Harbor was bombed and the two events are closely linked in my memory. We moved into an unfinished house and it seemed that everything we needed required either a ration stamp or a trip to Houston and the ration board for a permit to purchase it. Ration books limited the amount of certain food products allowed per person and many times I've seen neighbors exchange surplus stamps of one kind for another. Gasoline was rationed according to need on an individual basis, but only necessary driving was allowed. New tires called for a trip to Houston and the ration board, but recaps could be purchased, and many people used those. At first, our house had neither water, gas or electricity. A wood-burning stove was used for heating and cooking was done on a kerosene range. Kerosene lamps provided light and water was carried by the bucket-full from the nearest hydrant, located about 50 or 60 feet away. The water was pumped from a well at the Sneed home on the west side of Center across from the old post office.

The land was flat and drainage was poor. The soil was a black gumbo and I remember the never-ending struggle with mud in the winter. Then it dried out and cracked in the heat of summer. Prairie grasses grew tall and a few scraggly pear trees, (remnants of an old orchard) bloomed and bore fruit on the vacant prairie back of our house. Crawdads built curious structures from light colored subsoil brought to the surface and molded in a circle around the opening to the tunnel. They were everywhere and I pushed them loose and gathered them into a basket and used them to fill in low spots in the yard. We kept a cow for a while but the effort was too

great and we sold her.

There were 42 houses in the little settlement at that time. The people were friendly and helpful. The war brought us together in a common cause. There was no television and radios were a must. It brought us the news while "Ma Perkins" and "Our Gal Sunday" entertained us. A daily trip to the post office for the mail and a bit of gossip was the highlight of the day. Domino games helped to fill the evening hours. We made a trip into Pasadena once a week for supplies since there was only one small grocery store in the settlement. We made lists of everything we needed to avoid an unnecessary trip back to town for a forgotten item.

It was a good place to bring up children. The school was a good one and we were proud of it. We had no fear of drugs or crime. New people were moving in and our little community was growing. A bookmobile made trips from Houston. I watched for its arrival and a supply of new reading material.

It was a good life and we were proud to be a part of it. Step by step we watched our little community grow into a town. Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Benbo and I were the judges at the polls when the town became incorporated and we knew the die was cast and time would see Deer Park grow into the thriving city it has become.