Abstract:  John Elbert Pirtle

While John Pirtle is not famous, nor is there a street named after him like his father, Jess Pirtle, he was born in Sugar Land in 1931 and enjoyed a front row seat to the lives of its residents in this company town. Sugarland Industries, the parent company of Imperial Sugar Company, formed the town known as Sugar Land. Most of its residents worked for the sugar company or served those who did.

Mr. Pirtle lived a charmed life growing up in this quaint town where boys were boys without worry of danger. His tale of setting a hay barn on fire where an escaped prisoner was hiding out will put a smile on your face as well as other stories of those who resided or passed through Sugar Land.

34 Pages

Scroll down for Key Words from the Interview.
Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)
I. G. Wirtz – city engineer, county commissioner
Martha White Abernathy Pirtle – mother
Jess Reynolds Pirtle – father, city engineer
Jess Reynolds Pirtle, Jr – brother
Sara Jane Lemmons – great grandmother
Polk H. Pirtle – grandfather
President Polk
George M. Dallas – Vice-President under President Polk
John Pirtle – great grandfather
Ann Chambliss Pirtle – wife
John Mark Pirtle – son
Stephen Elliott Pirtle – son
James Reynolds Pirtle – son
Martha Elizabeth “Betty” Pirtle – sister
Benton Reynolds – Betty’s son
I. G. Wirtz, Jr – veterinarian & county commissioner
Jack Aymonds – city engineer
Reggie Wearman – city engineer
Jimmy Hall – friend
Reverend Easterly
Syb Fowler
Jack Olive
Leaseman family – neighbors
Kirkwood family – neighbors
Edward Hastings – Alief Postmaster
Arlene Hastings – mother’s best friend
Mrs. Schumann – teacher
Ms. Mitt Webb – teacher

Mrs. McLaughlin
Eva Beth Keyes – 3rd grade teacher
Jane Webb – author
Byron Webb – P38 pilot in World War II
Corky – wire haired terrier dog, Pirtle pet
Rudy Pierce – neighbor
Arthur Hill – neighbor
Sonny Topolanek – neighbor
Robert and Joe Bowen – neighbors
Lillian Seeber – neighbor
Jimmy & Johnny Miller – neighbors
Mr. & Mrs. Scarborough – dairy operator
Old Man Blair – carpenter
Vernon Blair – carpenter
Esther Vavrecka – owned exotic chickens
Kempner – business family
Walter & Mrs. Prikryl – hotel owner
Martin Agronsky – radio newscaster
Mrs. Worthington – newspaper customer
Willie Worthington – Mrs. Worthington’s son
Jimmy Miller – Imperial Sugar employee
Charles Kelly – mechanic at Imperial Sugar, Chuck Kelly’s grandfather
Dr. Slaughter – family doctor
Aunt Collins – John’s step-aunt
Wyatt Collins – FBC Sheriff in the 20’s
Bill Stinnett – bookkeeper
Curtis Hall – worked for Stinnett
Mr. Briscoe – extended the Dinky train route
Old Man Eldridge – unsuccessful date farmer
Eileen Blair Petrosky – John’s dad’s secretary
Willard Petrosky – married Eileen
M. R. Wood – educator
Ms. Johnson – teacher
Kenneth Scarborough – Baylor football player
Ms. O’Neil – teacher
Nell Edith LaBatte – teacher
Ms. Wiley – teacher
Blas Rodriguez – friend
Ignacio – best school friend
Ms. Dix – teacher
Miss Booth – teacher
Edith Head – dashion designer
Frances Jean Kuhn Tice
Mr. Daniels – teacher
Hoot Gibson – early cowboy actor
Bob Steele – cowboy actor
Ken Maynard – cowboy actor
Buck Jones – cowboy actor
Roy Rogers – famous cowboy actor
Skeet Gunther – student
Bill Krehmeier – student
Mr. Bardon – teacher
Kenwin Nelson – student swimmer
Ken Hall – star Sugar Land football player
Larry McMurtry – western author

**Places / Businesses**
Laura Eldridge Hospital, Sugar Land
Sugar Land, TX
El Campo, TX
Houston, TX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alief, TX</th>
<th>Char House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugarland Industries</td>
<td>Imperial Sugar Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish-American War</td>
<td>Territory of Oklahoma, Indian Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Worth Medical School</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albermarle County, Virginia</td>
<td>Pulaski County, TN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. G. Wirtz Bridge, Sugar Land</td>
<td>Texas A &amp; M, College Station, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Texas State University</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Bend County</td>
<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Land Methodist Church</td>
<td>Pulaski, TN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey Island, TX</td>
<td>Spindletop, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alief Post Office</td>
<td>Hastings High School, Alief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Quarters Mexican Elementary</td>
<td>Sartartia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Richmond, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg, TX</td>
<td>Sugar Land Railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Butter Creamery</td>
<td>Sugar Land Mercantile Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobo jungle, Sugar Land</td>
<td>Galveston, TX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Events

John Elbert Pirtle was born at the Laura Eldridge Hospital in Sugar Land on March 8, 1931 and raised in this company town until he joined the military in 1954.

His parent, Jess Pirtle and Martha Abernathy, met in El Campo as teachers and moved to Alief to teach for one year before moving to Sugar Land.

He has a sister Betty and a brother Jess, Jr.

John began his working career at the Imperial Sugar Company boxing powdered sugar and brown sugar quickly rising to Foreman.

John’s father Jess surveyed land in and around Sugar Land until he retired at age 65. He also served on the School Board and the Board of Equalization. He was well-dressed and his signature bow ties are remembered by all. His mother, Martha was a beloved teacher who inspired many students including Hispanic students at Sartartia Elementary.

John and his wife, Ann Chambliss, had 3 boys. He substituted for his mother in her First grade class when he was only about 13 years old mainly playing games including “Still Water” which kept the kids quiet.

John shares several stories of his childhood including setting a hay stack on fire when a prisoner was hiding out and his dog, Corky, messed with a skunk that sprayed the dog, John, and his friends.
His mother was kind to and fed the homeless (called hobos at the time) during the Depression. They were ‘marked’ by the homeless as good people.

He shares the layout of Sugar Land as to the names of each family that lived on various streets including “rats row” on Imperial Blvd, Ulrich, Brooks, Main, Guenther, and Hwy 90.

John produced numerous photos of old Sugar Land, family, and friends from his childhood.