

# Baker Family Legacy



Photo by Sara Isola

## CORNERSTONE FAMILY OF KATY CREATES A LASTING HERITAGE

*Written by Kirsten Cornell | Select photography courtesy of the Baker family*



Christine T. Baker pictured in front of her property on Baker Road which her home still stands on today



Baker family pictured at a gathering in the 1940s



Thomas J. Baker with his sons, James, Donald, and Alva

In the 1840s, John Baker and his wife Sarah Ann packed up their life in Jefferson County, Tennessee and settled in the rice fields of Katy, Texas. In a time where most listed their occupation as farmer, John made his living as a general contractor and set to work creating several buildings in Katy.

This type of work has transcended through many generations. “My grandfather, James M. Baker Jr., and my dad, Alva Baker, were builders as well,” says Craig Baker, John’s great, great, great-grandson. “James built 42 homes in the early 1940s. Alva built many homes in 1960s through 1970s in and around the Katy area.” Craig and his cousin D. Bruce Baker have also been building and remodeling together for the past three decades.

## FAMILY HISTORY

Baker Road still preserves pieces of the family’s history. “There is a home my great-grandfather built in the 1930s and one that my grandfather built in the mid-1940s that my grandmother lived in for over 60 years,” Craig says.

In the 1960s Alva built what used to be called Longhorn Town and the Barker Post Office. “These sat for many years on the Katy Freeway access road south of IH-10 between Fry and Baker Road,” Craig explains. “The buildings were saved and moved out to the Cat Springs area for preservation.”


In the 1940s, much of the Baker land was taken by the U.S. Corp of Engineers for the Addicks Reservoir, which is now known as George Bush Park. The Baker family was paid \$3 per acre, although the land was valued at \$200 an acre.

## DEDICATION TO EDUCATION

The Baker family tree can be traced back to early settlers such as John Foster and Robert Beckendorff, both documented for having been instrumental in the building of both Katy and Fort Bend school districts. They both donated land for some of the first schools to be built in the area, and several campuses carry on the family names.

Their educational influence doesn’t stop there. “After graduating from Sam Houston University, my great, great-aunt Christine Baker taught school in Houston. She would travel by horse and buggy each week from her home on Baker Road to the Heights area to teach,” Craig says.


Craig’s oldest daughter, Brooke, is now a fourth-grade teacher at Wolman Elementary. “Coincidentally, Ray Wolman was my biology teacher in 1975 at Katy High School,” Craig adds.



# FOUNDATIONS Academy

Private Preschool & After School Care

Because these years are the most critical season of a child's life, we strive to teach the whole child using a well rounded curriculum.



- Hands-on learning
- Academic concepts
- Character development
- Problem solving skills
- School readiness

Accredited by the Association for Early Learning Leaders

Kindergarten Readiness System

© 2015 Katy Magazine

Hours 6:30 am -- 6:30 pm

2 Katy Locations:

20817 Westheimer Pkwy.  
281-599-1200

906 Ave. A  
281-371-2224

FoundationsAcademy.com

- Preschool & Childcare  
6 weeks and up

- After School (to 6th grade)

## LIFE IN KATY

Alva married Joyce Beckendorff, joining two well-known Katy families. Together they had three children, Craig, Gayla, and Brenda. "My very first memory is when my parents took me to watch a Katy football game and my aunt, Linda Baker Rasbury, marched in the band," says Craig. "I remember as clear as day on kickoffs, all of the fans stood and joined small pinky fingers while the band played."

From that day on, the only thing Craig wanted to be was a Fighting Katy Tiger. "I was, and still am to this day," he adds. While Craig and his siblings were growing up, there were only three elementary schools, one junior high, and one high school - compared to the 60 campuses there are today.

One of the annual highlights in Katy has always been the Katy FFA Stock Show and Rodeo. "Of course I went every year, no exception," recalls Craig. "My grandfather, Howard Beckendorff, was a butcher and for many years he processed all of the animals. I loved being around the auction, rodeo, and parade."

During Craig's three years of taking agricultural science at Katy High School, his teacher was none other than his cousin Glenn Beckendorff. "That was both a blessing as well as torture for sure," he laughs. "I bet Glenn felt the same as he didn't teach long after that."

*"Katy is a fabulous place to raise a family. There are still a huge number of people who grew up here with our value system."*

- Craig Baker

## FAMILY VALUES

When Craig was young, there were only three families other than his on Baker Road: the Crutchers, the Frys, and the Stephens. Now thousands have come to Katy to raise families and build memories of their own. The Baker's contributions to early Katy have given back threefold to the growing community.

Craig and his wife Kelly raised their three children in Katy ISD: Brooke, Jaime, and Thomas. While Thomas is a Fighting Katy Tiger like is dad, both girls grew up cheering for the Taylor Mustangs. "Katy is a fabulous place to raise a family. The schools are some of the best in the nation," says Craig. "There are still a huge number of people who grew up here with our value system." **KM**



*KIRSTEN CORNELL is proud of her own family legacy and Ham Lane, which is named in honor of her paternal grandparents.*

# UT ORTHO

A Part of UT Physicians

UT Ortho at Katy has moved!  
New address, same high quality orthopedic care

## UT Ortho at Katy

23960 Katy Freeway Suite 150  
Katy, Texas 77494  
Phone 281-392-6797

With the ability to schedule appointments online, the best care for you and your family has never been more accessible.

[www.ut-ortho.com](http://www.ut-ortho.com)

- Specializing in all digestive conditions
- Preventive colonoscopy screening
- Women's digestive health
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Crohn's disease & Ulcerative colitis
- GI nutrition counseling



© 2015 Katy Magazine



- Board Certified in Gastroenterology & Hepatology
- Johns Hopkins trained

**Welcoming New Patients**

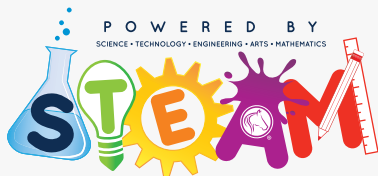
At Houston Gastro Institute, we incorporate up-to-date technology and integrative nutrition to provide state-of-the-art-care.

Evening clinics until 7 pm and Saturday scopes offered. All major insurances and private payors accepted.

We treat patients ages 16 & up Se habla Español

**Vivian Asamoah, M.D.**

777 S. Fry Road, Suite 206 (at S. Fry & Kingsland Blvd) HoustonGastroInstitute.com 832-304-2004



POWERED BY  
SCIENCE • TECHNOLOGY • ENGINEERING • ARTS • MATHEMATICS

The Goddard School® uses its play-based F.L.EX.® Learning Program (Fun, Learning Experience) to introduce STEAM concepts (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) to help children develop a strong foundation for their future education and a passion for STEAM learning.

Enroll today!



INFANT THROUGH PRE-K • AFTER-SCHOOL • SUMMER CAMP



THE  
**GODDARD SCHOOL**  
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**NOW ENROLLING!**

KATY (CINCO VILLAGE CENTER) • 281-392-1912\*  
KATY (RANCH POINT) • 281-392-1200

GoddardSchool.com



The Goddard Schools are operated by independent franchisees under a license agreement with Goddard Systems, Inc. Programs and ages may vary. Goddard Systems, Inc. program is AdvancED accredited. © Goddard Systems, Inc. 2015



**Move In Today!**

*Carriage Inn* 

Independent Living  
Assisted Living • Memory Care

Are you ready to  
**LIVE LIFE WELL™**  
*Carriage Inn is!*

At Carriage Inn, you don't move here just to live. You move here to LIVE LIFE WELL™ and we have everything you need to exceed your expectations. Where we don't just care for you - we care about you and want to help you live the retirement of your dreams! Discover the difference for yourself.

Call TODAY! 281-392-2800

1400 B Katy-Flewellen Rd. • Katy, TX 77494

www.rcmseniorliving.com



RETIREMENT CENTER MANAGEMENT

Locally Owned & Managed



License #141146