

Peek family namesakes,
Oda and Ola



PEEK FAMILY LEGACY

EIGHTY-NINE-YEAR-OLD TWIN SISTERS AND PEEK ROAD NAMESAKES
SHARE HOW THEIR FAMILY BECAME A PIECE OF KATY'S HISTORY

Written by Kirsten Cornell | Select photography by Sara Isola

Oda and Ola Peek have shared many fond memories together. Growing up on a dairy farm, seeing Peek Road developed and named after their family, and watching the City of Katy thrive and become the popular destination for families that it is today. Their favorite memory however, was their shared wedding day on September 14, 1947.

“There was no real reason for the double wedding, we just decided to since we had been together all those years,” says Ola. She met her love Buddy Meier at the Methodist Church on Addicks, and Oda met Richard Madden at Sherman Weaver’s Steakhouse. The foursome exchanged vows at the old Baptist Church. “Dad even walked us both down the aisle at the same time,” shares Oda.

SETTLING IN KATY

The Peek family made their way to Katy in the early 1900s. A.J., his brother Perry, and their father, Christopher

Columbus Peek, took the train to what is now known as Katy to scout out the area. “After seeing it, they gathered up the family in Iowa and headed to Texas,” says Ola.

The men traveled by cattle car while the women and children rode in the passenger cars of the train across the country to their new home. Upon arriving, they bought 640 acres of land to be split between the two brothers, and began their farming legacy. Today the acreage is known as Stockdick School Road and Peek Road.

Perry and A.J. settled in and took on their new role as dairy farmers, soon developing the largest dairy farm in the area. A.J. married his betrothed, Elizabeth, and they raised their four children. Elizabeth passed away a few years later while giving birth to another daughter.

A.J. later married Cora Jordan, sister of Hank Jordan, linking two known Katy legacy families. Together they

had six more children, including their twin daughters, Ola and Oda.

LIFE ON A FARM

The dairy farm was a family business and everyone pitched in. "We raised mainly Jersey cattle because they had the highest butter fat output," explains Oda. "The more cream that would rise in the milk, yielded more money for the family."

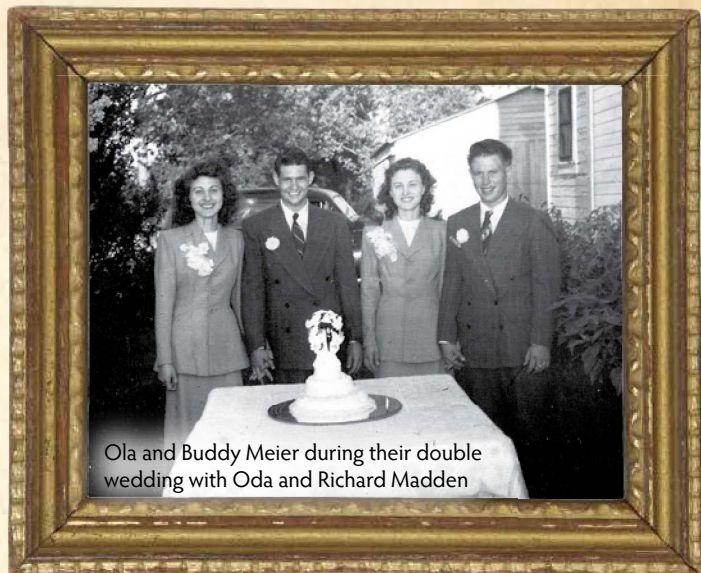
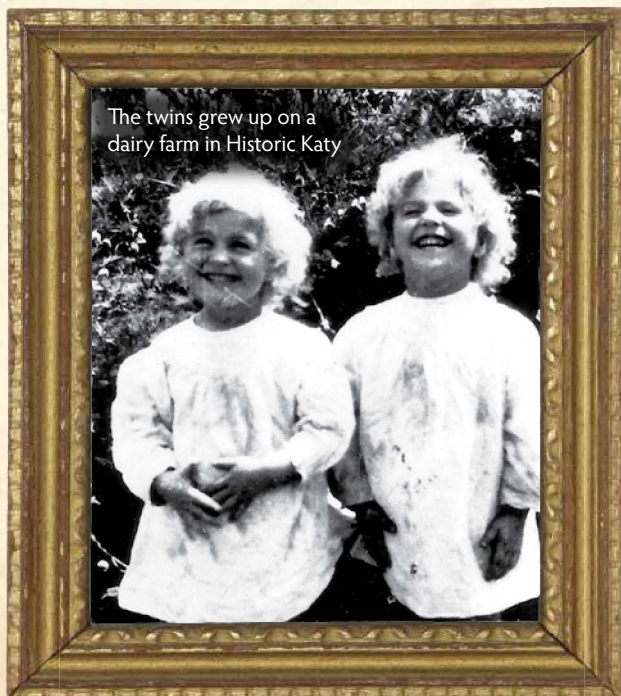
Oda recalls that roughly 40 Jersey cows were milked twice a day. "When we were seniors in high school, we got electric milking machines," adds Ola. "That was in 1944. Before then it was a lot of hard work."

"Dad believed in hard work and honesty," says Oda. "Vacations and time off were not an option - ever."

Even though there was a lot of work required to maintain the family farm, they also made time for fun and created lots of memories. "Around 1934 we started having family reunions at the farm with all 11 kids," Oda recalls. "It was a day where you could work half as hard." Although they still woke up at 4 a.m. to milk the cows, during the day they were allowed to play with their siblings. "We set up baseball games and pitched washers, those were our favorites," adds Ola. "But that afternoon when everyone left, it was back to work."

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- OLA PEEK MEIER



COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

The family needed a way to get their dairy products to town, so they began building a road from their land into town; a road which is now aptly referred to as Peek Road.

A.J. had his hand in communications and education as well. "The original phone system in that part of Katy was installed and maintained by Hank Jordan and my father," Ola recalls. "They did not work for the phone company, but if you wanted a phone line, you had to install and maintain the system. Our home phone number then was '906.'"

A.J. also partnered with William Chester Stockdick and became one of the original trustees for the Stockdick School, which was built in 1914.

BUILDING ON A DREAM

Ola, who now lives outside of Pattison, and Oda, who still resides in Historic Katy, find Katy almost unrecognizable from the city of 150 people that they grew up in. "When we were young, you went to town once a week to get staple items you couldn't make at home, and the first time we went to the movies was when we were 11 years old," Ola adds. "The convenience of having all of that right there for you now is nice for families in the area."

However, the core principles that the town was built on - family values, hard work, and staying together - still resonate. Oda loves seeing Katy's rich heritage preserved through the Katy Heritage Society, Rice Harvest Festival, and others that keep the names of Katy's original families recognizable. "They keep the burning spirit of the town alive, and help people know who those original families were that built this great town with a dream." KM

KIRSTEN CORNELL is the lead associate editor for Katy Magazine. Her great-grandfather Ham was known for his dairy farm and delicious homemade ice cream.