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Old School Museum

Old School Museum: The Old School Museum is located next to Parker Hall at 111 West Houston St. in Dayton and is open Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Dayton Historical Society: The Society has reconvened its monthly meetings effective June 28, 2021 at Parker Hall at 6 P.M. (the last Monday of each month) for a historical program presented by guest speaker(s). The program is preceded by a Society business meeting and followed by refreshments.

Dayton History News

Brighteyes Legacy

Ever seen a truck with the words “**Brighteyes**” emblazoned on it and wondered why in the world did the owner choose that name?

You would need to know a member of Dayton’s Neuman family to learn the secret.

The answer is that it is a middle name legacy that began 5 generations ago with the birth of Eric “Lett” Neuman Sr. (1897-1977) in Moss Bluff, Texas.

The 3rd born child of parents Felix Jesse Oner Neuman (1871-1927) and Dora Rebecca Watson (1875-1951), Eric Brighteyes Neuman Sr. was the first to be bequeathed the Brighteyes middle name.

Born in Moss Bluff (Wallisville), Texas on 14 April 1897, Eric Neuman Sr. became legendary in Dayton for his

mechanic skills and car dealership that sat on the northeast corner of Hwy 90 and North Main St. where Zippo Liquor Store is currently located.

In Dayton Mayor Caroline Wadzeck’s book, *The Streets of Dayton, Texas: History by the Block*, the dealership was listed as “Neuman’s Sinclair Garage & DeSoto dealership”.

The first affirmation of Eric Neuman Sr. living in Dayton is found in the 1930 U.S. Census which validates his being a Daytonite for at least 47 years.

His death certificate was initiated by Dr. Reginald Wilson who dated his death as April 30, 1977 and listed Eric Sr. (age 80) as an automobile dealer and mechanic who had served in World War I.

He was living at 306 Marblehead in Dayton at the time of his death and was buried at Eminence Cemetery in Wallisville as was his wife Ada Gertrude Hooper and several other Neuman family members.

The property and home of Neuman Sr. on Marblehead is still owned by Neuman descendants.

Eric Brighteyes Neuman Sr.
(1897-1977)
Ada Gertrude Hooper-Neuman
(1906-1993)



**Eric Brighteyes Neuman, Jr.
(1932-2016)**

Eric Brighteyes Neuman, Jr. was born October 23, 1932 in Dayton, TX to Eric Brighteyes Neuman, Sr. and Ada Gertrude Hooper. He had 7 siblings which included 2 sisters (Dora Ada and Agnes Louise) and 5 brothers (Jesse, Bert, Franklin, Larry and Ronald) of which he was the 3rd son.

A graduate of Texas A&M College in 1968 with a Bachelors degree in Agriculture Economics, E.B. worked for Riviana Rice Company in Houston for nearly 15 years and then for Baker Hughes & Huntsman Chemical in Dayton for the remainder of his career – retiring in 1998.

Although a lifelong resident of Dayton, he did spend some time living in Venezuela and Louisiana.

An avid pilot, he was a civil air patrolman for 33 years. Ranching, cowboying and deer hunting were ways he spent his spare time.

The most pivotal moment in his life was in the early 1980s when he initiated a personal relationship with Jesus Christ – about which he loved sharing with others and encouraging them to seek Jesus.

He sustained that commitment with consistent involvement at First Baptist Church of Dayton where his funeral services were held on March 29, 2016.

Eric married Shirley Joyce Preston in 1952 with whom they had 2 sons – Kyle Neuman and Eric Brighteyes “Nandy” Neuman III.



**Eric Brighteyes
(E.B.) Neuman Jr.
(1932-2016)**



**E.B. Neuman &
wife Shirley**

**Newman/Neuman American Heritage
(1st Generation – 1815)**

The local Neuman “Brighteyes” family genealogy can be traced back to the birth of Francis Newman on 16 August 1786 in France. His official title was Captain Jean Elizabeth Francois Georges Newman.

Francis Newman arrived in New Orleans from France where he met and married Barbara Antonio Ronquillo who was born in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana on 20 September 1785.

They were the parents of Felix Neuman who was subsequently born in 1815 in St. Martin Parish, LA.

There was a transition from the surname of Newman to Neuman with Felix – the 1st generation born in Louisiana.

Felix met and married his wife Julia in St. Martin Parish and they moved to southeast Texas at some point prior to the birth of their son Jesse.

Their son Jesse C. Neuman was born July 28, 1835 in Harris County. He married Lucy Johnson who was born in Catahoula Parish, LA.

Jesse preceded her in death at the age of 32 on July 1, 1868 in Anahuac. Lucy survived him by 58 years with her death at age 82 subsequent to having moved to Fort Worth.

Their son Felix Jesse Neuman, who spent his entire life in Chambers County from birth to death, initiated the ‘Brighteyes’ naming convention with his 2nd son Eric Brighteyes Neuman Sr. (1897-1977) who is featured in the article on the front page of this newsletter.



The Brighteyes name legacy recently achieved 5 generations with the birth of Eric Brighteyes “Quinton” Neuman V on January 18, 2022 – the son of Eric Brighteyes “Dusty” Neuman IV and grandson of Eric Brighteyes “Nandy” Neuman III.