

Jack Feagins Thomas Jackson Feagins Biography

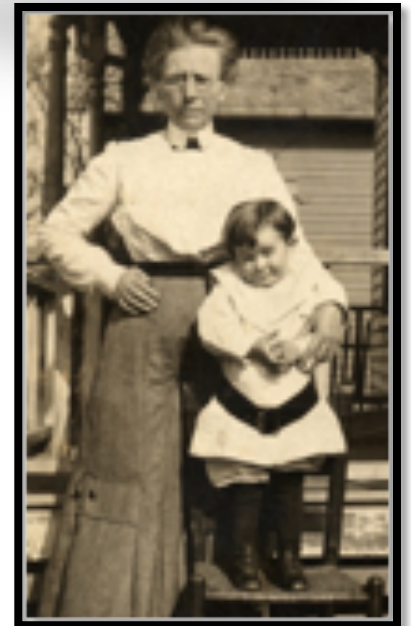
Jack was born July 18, 1909 in Ennis, Ellis County, Texas. His young life went well until November of 1912, when he was 3 years old and his mother, Jennie Mayranda Lemmon Feagins, died while giving birth to his sister, Jennie V.



His mother had unknowingly been suffering from acute appendicitis. Her appendix burst during her labor, and she died shortly after giving birth. Years later, Jack said that he had tried hard to go in and see his mother while she lay dying, but that his family would not allow him in her room at such a time. Fortunately, Jenny V was born healthy and lived for many more years.

Jennie hand crocheted the frame around the picture of her baby boy on the left.

Jack's father, Samuel Tilden Feagins, eventually remarried, to Retta Moore, sometime before 1918, and the family moved to Dallas. Sam worked as an accountant, for the Maxwell Automobile Company and also Mosher Steel Company



This picture is three year old Jack and Elah Lemmon, his grandmother. Elah opened her house up to roomers after her husband died, and Jack's parents lived with her there.



Retta was a stern disciplinarian, and Jack did not get along with her. She did see to it that he attended her Christian Science church, and he did learn to understand and appreciate religion from her.

Around 1925, they were struck by a house fire. Jack and Jenny V found themselves trapped in the second floor of their house. After trying unsuccessfully to get Jenny V to jump, in desperation, Jack pushed her out of a second floor window, then jumped after her. Neither was injured.

Jack attended Heights High School (Class of 1927) in Houston where he played football, his team winning the City Championship in that year. He was one of the "Golddust Twins" on that team, the other being E. A. "Squatty" Lyons who served for many years as the County Commissioner for Harris County. They both remembered that time as a high point in their lives. Jack later attended Texas A&M College (Class of 1931), studying structural engineering until the economy crashed and the Great Depression started. He found work in Houston and supported himself while learning about the business world.

By the time of the 1930 census, Jack, Sam, and Jenny V were each living in separate parts of the Heights area, in Houston, and Jennie V had married Travis Barto Kennedy. Retta was no longer living with Sam. Years later, Sam said that Jack had run off more than one good wife. Sam had three more wives after his first wife died, Retta, Clara, and Emma.



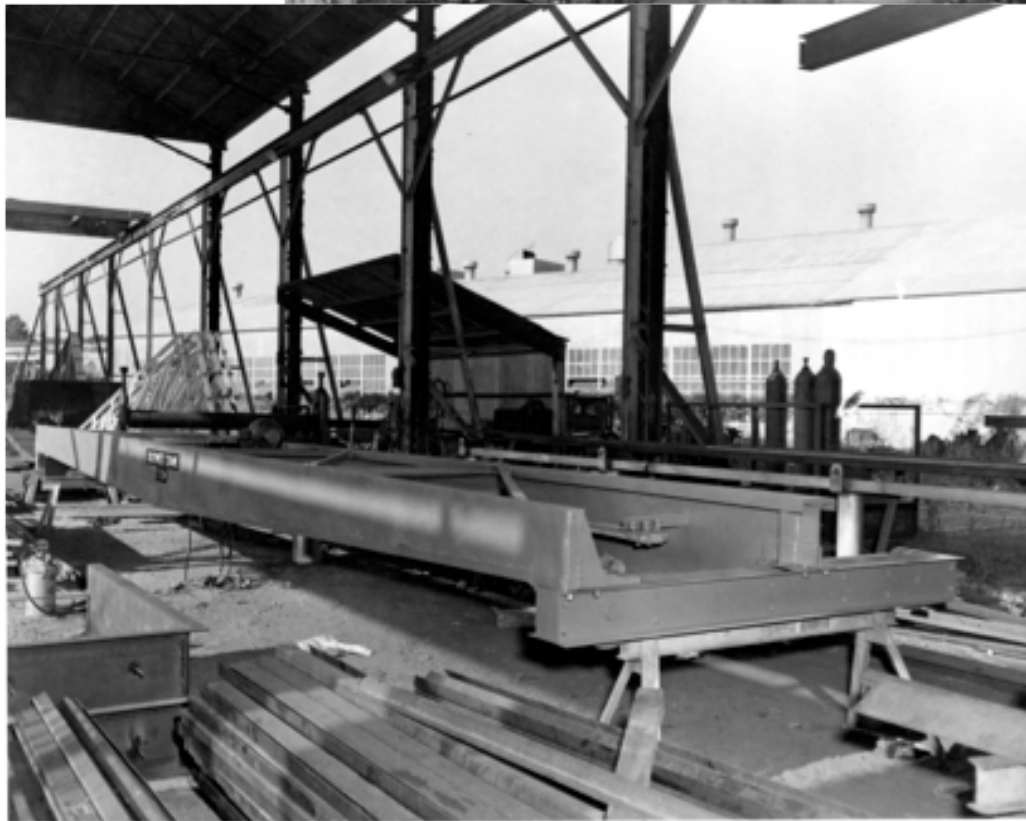
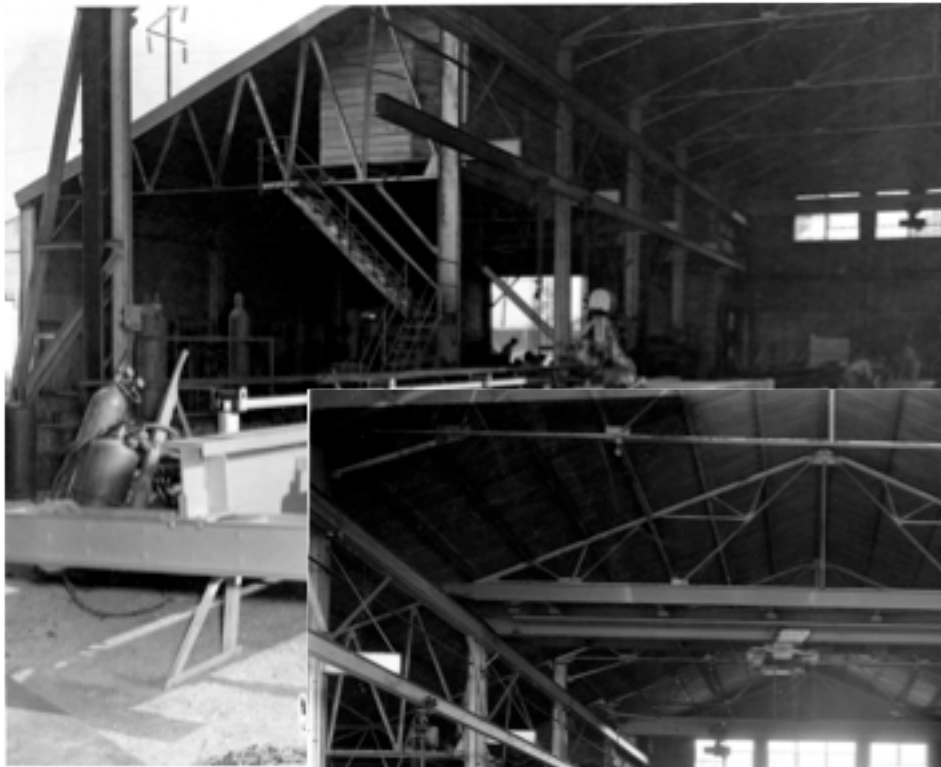
1936 was a big year. On Valentine's Day, 1936, Jack married Lillian Johnson, whom he had met on a passenger train on which they were both travelling from Houston to College Station, Texas (for him) and Temple, Texas (for her). Her father was the conductor for the railroad, and she had a generous free travel pass, and she was going to visit her mother's family. They took up residence at 1536 Hawthorne, apt 1, Houston, Texas. They learned that they were expecting their first child in 1936, and she was born on January 2, 1937.

Their children were Betty Jean (1937), Thomas Jackson Jr. (1938), Patrick Johnson (1942), and Margaret Ann (1945).



Jack received his professional engineer's license (Number 914) from the State of Texas on February 26, 1936. Also in 1936, Jack and an investor bought B.A. Riesner & sons Co., where he had been employed. It was a structural steel fabricating business that had been founded in 1875. The company became profitable and Jack remained president and operated it until it closed in 1963.





“I don’t care anything about being rich; I just want to live like a rich man”. Jack said it many times and pretty much lived that way. Jack and Lillian soon moved to the new area of town called West University. It was an up-and-coming area. Later they owned homes in Morgan’s Point, River Oaks, and Tanglewood, some the nicest areas of Houston



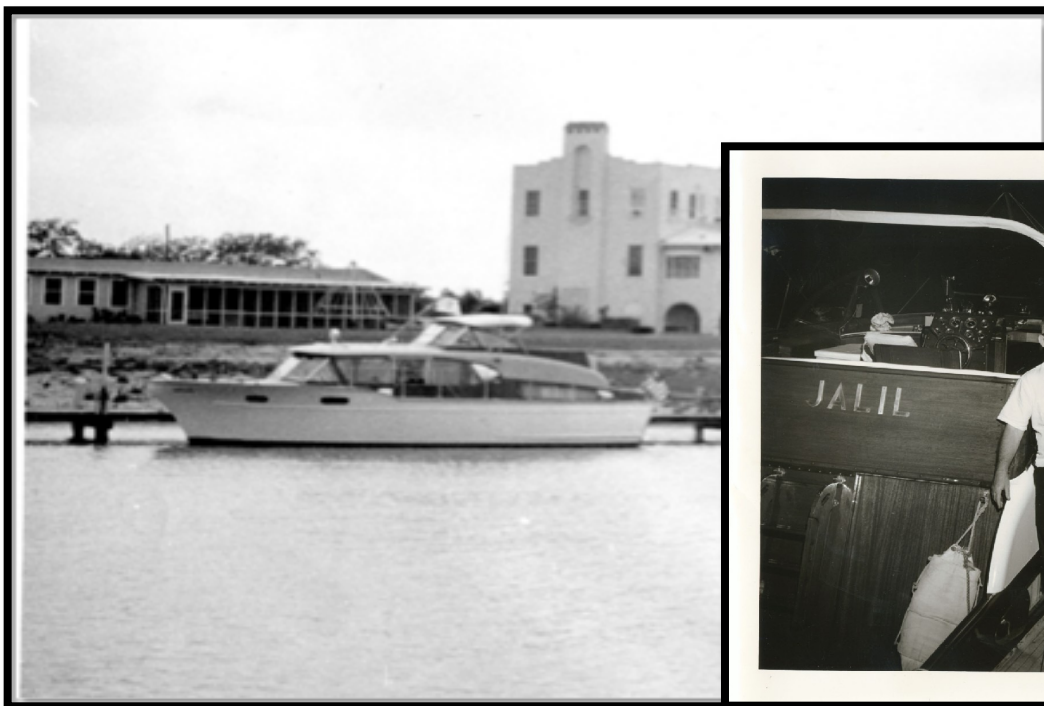
Jack and Lillian belonged to the Houston Yacht club, and then were some of the founding members of Lakewood Yacht Club. They were both members of the Houston Power squadron and enjoyed many hours on Clear Lake and Galveston bay.

The Feagins family were early members of St. Luke’s United Methodist Church and founding members of Westminster Methodist Church.



The Toot was purchased in Rockport when Tommy Feagins, David Carothers, Durell, and Jack began to chug along towards LaPorte and the Houston Yacht Club. It had a gasoline inboard engine coupled with a center mounted direct drive and three sails. The engine caught fire halfway across Matagorda Bay, and Jack put the fire out with a life preserver. It was a 4 cylinder engine and the boat was slow under power from the small engine –probably why it overheated and caught fire in rough seas. All of the above was a great adventure to a sixteen year old kid – Tommy Feagins





Supplies go aboard as the family of Jack Feagins prepare to spend the day on the waters of Galveston Bay. That's skipper Feagins at the stern, while his wife, Lucille, passes the gear to son Pat and daughter Betty. Daughter Margaret and son-in-law Jack Parker adjust the colorful banners. (Color photos by Bob Salms.)



Skimming away, the Jull leaves the shore behind.



The family enjoy a hearty meal after the sea breezes have sharpened appetites.

A Day on the Bay

BY PETE GILPIN

TAKE it from boating enthusiasts, Galveston Bay, offers a sure cure for those long, weary drives to far-off vacation spots this summer. In fact, nearby waterways offer an easy access to off-duty relaxation the year round. Just head for the bay, grab on to your boat and cut out for a favorite

fishing spot either in the bay or the Gulf if your boat can take it. Take a case in point. The work week had been rugged, nerve-racking and tiring for Jack Feagins. The city was stifling. He called his wife, Lucille, told her it was time for a day on the bay.

He would drive down that night to the family cruiser and prepare it for the trip. "I'll spend the night on board," he told her, "then meet you and the youngsters at the Houston Yacht Club tomorrow morning."

Next morning the family arrived, Mrs. Feagins, with

son, Pat, daughter, Margaret and Betty, and Betty's husband, Jack Parker. After stowing the gear aboard, the 28-foot, two-crew Jull headed for the open water. Cool breezes sent "Hugs away" that cranked-up hip-city sailing as the shore line was left farther and farther behind.

Pat took turns with his dad and brother-in-law handling the wheel as the trim ship headed for Buffalo Reef, off San Leon. A ship-to-shore radio allowed skipper Feagins and his crew to chat with other friends out boating.

"You never know when you'll contact a friend and arrange a trip with two or more boats to Seadrack, Progress or even Corpus Christi," Feagins said.

What to do on board is no problem. Pat and Margaret covered about the boat, both young salts with plenty of sea knowledge. The young Parkers contented themselves with conversation for a time and Mrs. Feagins busied herself in the galley preparing the noon meal and supplying any of the thirsty ones with a cool drink.

Arriving at their destination, they dropped anchor and took turns trying to land a fish. Despite a guarantee from Parker, it proved to be a dry haul but that's not the usual case, they say.

Then Pat donned his swim trunks for a dip before it was time to eat. Salt air does wonders for your appetite and skipper and crew wanted no time proving it.

After the meal, it was a case of just relaxing, a mighty fine pastime after hectic upstate days. The cruise back to home port was breezy, a fitting climax to a family outing with no hassle or hassle, just fun. Like other boating fans of our region, the Feagins and their friends spend most of their weekends in the bay or Gulf, often spending the night aboard.

"In fact, we spend as much time as we can on the Jull," Feagins says. "I don't know of a finer way to keep the family together and happy."

There are bigger and swifter boats than the Jull, motor and sailer ones, also. But you'll find each owner is pretty proud of his craft, regardless of size or cost.

And what if you don't own a boat but still like the idea of spending a day on the bay?

Best suggestion: Know a man who owns one.



The skipper handles the wheel while Pat watches a passing tanker.



Time for fishing but luck wasn't good. You should have seen the one that got away.



Refreshments are served by Mrs. Feagins and Margaret for a thirsty crew.



A dip in bay waters is enjoyed by Pat as his two sisters watch.

In his later years, Jack branched out into general construction, specializing in small office buildings, auto dealerships and shopping centers. Among buildings he engineered and built were.... DeMontrond Buick, Avalon Shopping center- still standing, Delhomme Boatworld, and Highams Cadillac.



Shortly after appearing in the above ad for Buick, Jack was awarded the contract to design and build the Buick Zone office in Houston.

"PEOPLE ASK ME, 'WILL THAT BUICK PERFORM AS WELL AS IT LOOKS?'"
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER JACK FEAGINS, 7730 RICHMOND, HOUSTON, SAYS:

"My answer is an emphatic YES! Having driven it 9000 miles, I like especially the smooth



Jack was an accomplished amateur photographer and won a photo contest with this picture of his adorable daughter Margaret.

Jack and Lillian were divorced in 1962, and he later, in 1964, married Erma Marie Faw. They shared their time in semi-retirement and tinkering around with his boats and RV until he had his first stroke in 1970. He had another in 1976. Erma stood by him as his health declined over the following years. He died from a third, massive, stroke on September 13, 1982.

He is buried in Memorial Oaks Cemetery, Houston.