January 2017 Newsletter

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Calendar of Events

January 26th

Doryn Danner Glenn
Director of Governmental Affairs
Galveston County District Clerk

Galveston County’s Historical Immigration and Naturalization Records

February 23

Joyce Zongrone, Member
League City Historical Society

The Joseph P. Giacchino Home.
Italian Blacksmith

March 31st

Doryn Danner Glenn
Director of Governmental Affairs,
Galveston County District Clerk

Galveston County’s Historical Court Records

January 26th Speaker

LCHS’s guest speaker Doryn Glenn will present...

Galveston County’s Historical Immigration and Naturalization Records

Doryn Danner Glenn was born and raised in Galveston, graduating from Ball High School in 1984. All of her children are third generation students at that school.

She attended Galveston College, 1984-1985 and went on to graduate from the University of Texas at Austin in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with double majors in History and Sociology. Glenn also attended the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University graduating in May of 1992 with a Juris Doctor.

After graduation, she returned to Galveston to practice law in the Office of James Schweitzer. She later went on to practice with Yarbrough, Jameson and Gray, specializing in Family Law. In 2002, she started a family law section for Mills, Shirley, Eckel and Bassett Law Offices.

In 2007, Glenn left private practice and began her career in judicial support in the Galveston County District Clerk’s office, serving in a number of roles and as the District Clerk in 2012. She currently serves as the Director of Governmental Affairs for District Clerk John D. Kinard.

She held a variety of offices in local groups and organizations: President of the Galveston County Bar Association, the Galveston County Young Lawyers Association and the Junior League of Galveston County, Texas. She is a charter member of the Galveston County Adoption Day Foundation, currently serving as the Treasurer and the Event Chair. An active member of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Galveston, Glenn most recently served as the Director of Christian Education. Doryn is also the Secretary of the Innovation and Entrepreneur Community at Ball High School and Treasurer of the Ball High Band Booster Club. Glenn is married to a local attorney, Bill Glenn, and the proud mother of two beautiful children: Bailey, a sophomore at the University of Texas Austin and Jackson, a sophomore at Ball High School.

A Special Welcome to our New Members

Cipriano Romero, Esq & Armando Castaneda Family
&
W.T. Martin
Meeting Minutes  
Susan Pierce, Secretary

November 17, 2016

In Doug McKee’s absence, Mike Peterson welcomed everyone. We met at Old St. Mary’s Church. There were a large number of guests at this meeting, and Mike told them about the upcoming Historic Home Tour. He then introduced the candidates for next year’s officers and directors: Doug McKee, President; Mike Peterson, Vice President; Katie Benoit Hake, Treasurer; Susan Pierce, Secretary; Phyllis White, Corresponding Secretary. Diana Dornak will assume Katie Hake's Director position. Kathie Nenninger made the motion to elect these candidates by acclamation, Kathy Weisskopf seconded, approved.

Because we experienced technical issues, the meeting was delayed. During this interlude, Garet Nenninger discussed the wonderful restoration of Old St. Mary’s.

Joyce Zongrone introduced our speaker, Lisa May, Director of Archives and Records for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Ms. May said our Old St. Mary’s is the last standing mainland mission church. The mission churches were started to serve poor Catholics, many of whom didn’t have a church or a priest available nearby. It is thought that the first “official” mass in Texas was said in Galveston. In 1838, the Vatican sent priests to Texas to survey the Catholic parishes. In May 1847, Pope Pius IX established the first diocese in Galveston, making it the first and oldest diocese in Texas, and St. Mary Church in Galveston was designated the cathedral, making Galveston the “Mother Church of Texas.” In 1959, the Diocese name was changed to Galveston-Houston, and Sacred Heart Church in downtown Houston was named co-cathedral for the Diocese. The Diocese outgrew Sacred Heart and the much larger Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart was built in 2008. This Co-Cathedral’s existence, however, does not affect the status of St. Mary Cathedral Basilica in Galveston. A church is named a basilica in recognition of its historical or artistic significance, and only the Pope can designate a basilica. Pope John Paul II elevated St. Mary Cathedral to a basilica in 1979.

The archives of the Galveston-Houston Diocese are incomplete because so many records are missing. Very early records are missing because so many areas in Texas did not have a church and had only visiting priests. What records the Diocese has often came from the census, various church newsletters, membership rosters, and yearly reports, and published histories of area churches. Bishop Christopher Byrne was the fourth Bishop of Galveston, serving from 1918-1950, and was the first Bishop to live in the Bishop’s Palace. All of Bishop Byrne’s papers are missing. Meeting adjourned.

Walter Osterman, a life member of LCHS passed away on December 18 in Poteet Texas at age 94. He is survived by his son Dan Osterman and wife Helen, grandson Dustin and numerous nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by first wife Lucy Osterman and his second wife Lexus Osterman; brother Emery Osterman, sisters Mary Jean Brooks and Ruth Butler.

Walter was a cattle rancher in League City for many years and had cattle on several properties around the area. He was one of League City’s “real cowboys” who was as comfortable on his horse and working his cattle as he was in his favorite chair at his home for many, many years on Texas Ave. After his wife Lucy passed away he sold that property and moved to Moore, Texas to be near his son and help him with his ranch. Walter never lost touch with our area as he called frequently to check up on everyone and visited friends here also.
As we reflect on the past twelve months to see where we have been and where we hope to go in the months ahead, we could say we have been opening doors. We used the gate door to a new place. We joined a group called Engage Houston, for professional development to improve our management capacity and serve the community more effectively. We used the front door to the growth of our schoolhouse program with the new Garden Classroom. We used the back door in teaching the community and sharing League City's historical past. We now use the bus door to plan for the future. Even though the past year has been quite a year with a mix of personal struggles and making things happen here at the museum, we opened doors.

Through the gate door, the Engage Program, a program of Mid –America Arts Alliance has given us opportunity to be one of twenty-five groups around the Houston area participating in the program. We have had the chance to assess what we are doing financially and the methods we use. We have been given time to network and learn from others in the field and we have been working with our board and the professional staff of Engage to review our mission. We will be continuing with the program in 2017 – 2018 to Learning Cycle Two: Governing for what matters and Learning Cycle Three: Community Engagement.

Through the front door, we expanded our present schoolhouse program with the development of our Garden Classroom program. We developed a program about simple machines, League City Oak trees and butterflies. We added storyboards to hold information about these topics which can be changed as new programs are developed.

Through the back door, we reached 36 communities in the Houston Galveston area. Groups came from Friendswood, Galveston, fourteen zip code areas in Houston and Humble, two areas of Kingwood, League City, Nassau Bay, New Caney, Pasadena, two areas in Pearland, Richwood, Santa Fe, Seabrook, Spring, Sugarland, Sweeney, The Woodlands, Webster and West Columbia, Texas. We had a good year with almost four thousand visitors and over one hundred schoolhouse sessions. Visitors continue to be delighted about our museum and are still amazed that they did not know about the place. We are still the “best kept secret in League City”. We had over 1200 walk-in visitors from Austin, Mission, Dickinson, Cypress, San Leon, El Largo, Baytown, Richmond, Brownwood, Liberty, Victoria, Alvin and places like Ohio, Michigan and Russia to just name a few. We shared exhibits of early school desks and supplies, simple machines and the airing of the quilts. We especially want to thank Evelyn Garland for sharing her wonderful collection of quilts, quilted pillows and animals on a temporary exhibit. Other people continue to make cash donations or donate artifacts to help our museum grow. We want to thank again Lynora Linkenhoker, Kathy Hillman, Billy Sneed, Marion Fuller, Andrea Dickerson, Mike Conwell, Ellie Rhodes, Bert Schroder, Doris Teets, and Robert Jones for their books, documents and clothing items this past year.

We especially want to thank our staff of teachers and volunteers for their help and support around the museum or behind the scenes. Melissa Aguilar, Catherine Gill, Sarah Eubanks and Linda Michael have spent over 400 hours teaching our schoolhouse programs. Barbara Vermillion, Richard Lewis, Bertha Adams, Joyce Zongrone, Kathie and Garet Nenninger, Diane Kerkhove, Mike Peterson, Diane
Dornak, Laura Lewis and Katie Benoit Hake, Patricia Thomas, Sherry Frankovich, Evelyn Garland, Mike & Pat Conwell, Joan Peeples, Joanna Sharp Dawson, Janice Hallisey, and Krish & Steve Balton volunteered more than 250 hours of their time and talents behind the scenes.

We will now venture through the bus door to plan where we are going from here. We will be needing lots of help and are asking you to join a committee or two.

**A Volunteer Training Session** is set for February 1st at 10:00am. Volunteers are needed at the museum to work three hours in the morning or in the afternoon. This session will introduce you to behind the scenes work at the museum. We do need your help.

**A big celebration is being planned and we need your ideas, help and time.** The museum will be celebrating it’s 25th Anniversary in 2018. We want to make to make that year really special with unique exhibits, special events and a full calendar of visitors. We are looking for a committee to help work on these plans. The committee will meet on Wednesday, February 1 at 2:00pm. Please come and help plan this special event.

**Research Helpers** are needed on the homes here in League City. We are working to update our files and we need more help. If you are interested in helping in this manner, please contact Catharin at 281-554-2994 to give you two houses to research.

**Repair and Painting Helpers** needed for the Barbershop Icehouse. We are still looking for a date that suits everyone to get the necessary work done. If you are interested in this kind of work, please contact Catharin at 281-554-2994.

Doors are opening and we are heading in that direction. We look forward to you joining us too on all our new adventures.

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**Highlights of our Museum Gift Shop**

Melissa Aguilar, Education Director

**Have you visited our gift shop lately? You might be surprised by the treasures you could find.**

**The Three Little Cowgirls; Home on the Range** by Brian W. Kechie, Jr.

This lovely story is about three little ladies enjoying all of the blessings of living on a ranch. They spend time with horses, sheep, kittens, and border collies and they even sing around a campfire while their daddy picks an old guitar. It’s the perfect story to rope spirit for your little cowgirl or cowboy.

**American West Cookin’** by Bob Kerby’s Longhorn Studio

Robert E. Kerby, a real cowboy has shared his life’s experiences with us in this unique cookbook that contains a variety of delights. Exploring this book you will find receipes for ‘old-time ranch standbys’ as well as dishes like Trail Blazer’s Pepper Steak and many more that are aptly named for their Western flair. This cookbook also contains unique chapters on beverages, candy, and wild game. Between sections of the book are pen and ink illustrations as well as full color reproductions of Mr. Kerby’s beautiful oil paintings based on his memories of time spent out in the American West.
Historic Homes Tour - Thank you

...Mike Peterson, Chairman

The LCHS Home Tour Committee would like to express our appreciation for your involvement in this year’s 2016 Home Tour event. It was great seeing everyone at the spectacular Walding Station on Friday evening for the appreciation party and then again on Saturday for the home tour throughout the League City Historic District. Everyone had a chance to see all the historical homes, airing of the quilts, the amazing Victorian Dancers, and Steve & Kristi Baltunis while they sang beautiful Christmas songs to set the season off for all of us.

We want to express appreciation for all the support from:

- Our League City employees (Chien Wei, John Orsag, Kenny Walsh and many more) for allowing us to showcase the Station Master’s Home. Plus, for Angel Lopez taking time to visit the tour & capture so many wonderful pictures.

- Gary Walding for the Appreciation Party at the Walding Station along with his hardworking staff.

- J’Nean Henderson and her Victorian Dancers as they encouraged many of us to dance. It is more difficult than you would expect and they make it look so easy/elegant.

- This year’s Directors & Docents. We continued to hear from our visitors, "I gain so much history about League City from the LCHS Home Tour which is different than other home tours I've attended".

- Steve and Kristi for the beautiful music on Friday evening and then again on Saturday.

- Special thanks to Mark and Kiloni, Rodney and Lea, J’Nean, Marge and Jim for all the work preparing their beautiful homes for the tour. All of the homes received so many positive remarks.

- The League City Chamber for supporting the event by selling many tickets this year.

- The League City HOT Board for all their support as we all encourage others to visit our beautiful city.

The 2016 LCHS Home Tour was a success due to all the support we received. Thank you again.... We look forward to 2017 Home Tour with homes already being selected for next December.
**Did you know that ...?**

by LCDR Joyce Zongrone, USN (Ret.)

**Did you know that** two days after Galveston’s 1900 storm, a steamship agent, a city resident and a local rabbi sent a telegram to the governor of Texas, begging for help?

The 1900 Storm, accompanied by 120 mph winds and 15 feet of flooding, destroyed two thirds of the buildings in what was then the third wealthiest city in the United States.

This iconic yellow-paper Western Union telegram, which survived as an artifact, was sent to **Governor Joseph Sayers** and signed by Galveston residents, J.H.W. Steele, H.S. Murray and Rabbi Cohen. Unfortunately, if there was a telegraphic reply, that artifact did not survive. We can only imagine the plea for help was answered.

**Governor Joseph Sayers**, an attorney, served as Governor of Texas from 1899-1903. During his tenure he not only oversaw the 1900 storm, but also two other notable 1899 disasters, the Texas State Penitentiary Fire and the Brazos River Flood.

In February 1899, the Texas State Penitentiary Fire started in a defective flue between the ceiling and the roof of the school building which joined the prison hospital and the cell building. The fire raged for 48 hours. The unusually cold temperature of zero degrees caused the hydrants and the boiler pipes to freeze. They had to be thawed out before the water could be used to fight the fire. Miraculously, there was no loss of life. In fact, according to *The House and Senate Journals of the Texas Legislature*, four convicts testified to the heroism and professionalism of their prison staff. Convict Estevan Garcia, spokesman for all the Mexican convicts, universally thanked the guards for saving them. Convict J.A. Wright stated he owed his life to those guards.

Convict Will Sides, who worked as a mechanic, was “anxious to prove my appreciation.”

Finally, a convict named Lewis went on record as saying, “the prisoners is in the hands of men of humane hearts and cool heads.” He closed his testimony with “Love and kisses, I remain Lewis.”

Almost four months later, to the day, Governor Sayers found himself in the midst of the June 1899 Brazos River Flood. Within eleven days, the river overflowed its 43 foot flood stage level, flooding 66,000 square miles. A record rainfall of 8.9 inches destroyed 12,000 miles of fertile and profitable farmlands.

This natural disaster was the catalyst for the migration of some of the Italian tenant farmers living in the area. In the late 1800s Italians along the Brazos numbered almost 3,000. Following the flood, many headed for mainland Galveston County, joining other Italian farmers with established vegetable and fruit farms.

**J.H.W. Steele**, first signer of the telegram, owner of The J.H.W. Steele Company, was a steamship agent and a ship broker. His headquarters was at 2101 Strand, with offices in Texas City, New Orleans, Savannah, New York, San Francisco and Havana, Cuba.

**H.S. Murray**, the second signer, has remained in obscurity.

**Rabbi Henry Cohen**, the third signer, was the prelate of the Temple B’Nai Israel, then located at 2128 Church Street until 1950. Founded in 1868 by German Jewish immigrants, it is the oldest Reform Jewish Congregation in Texas. Rabbi Cohen came to the Temple in 1888 and oversaw its expansion in 1890, when it became a landmark designed by Galveston's famous architect, Nicholas Clayton. Following the hurricane, Cohen became a member of Galveston's Central Relief Committee which kept law and order with the “help of shotguns,” while ministering to people of all religions.

This 8” by 5” piece of paper is a gateway to an infamous day in history.
The Clear Creek Tragedy

by LCDR Joyce Zongrone, USN (Ret.)

Green Butler, the 30-year-old son of League City's founder, George Washington Butler and uncle of G.I. Butler, was gunned down in cold blood at the gate of his ranch house on a Saturday night, between 7 and 8 PM, May 19, 1872, by cowhand Andrew Jackson Walker, while his partner Jeff Black watched. The Galveston News dubbed it, “The Clear Creek Tragedy.”

According to the coroner’s inquest, Butler died lying on the ground, in his wife’s arms within fifteen minutes of being wounded, of a single gunshot wound to the upper right breast. His last words were, “Yes, Annie, I am dead. Annie, Andrew Walker shot me.”

Walker was a cowhand for neighboring rancher Sam Allen, no relation to the Allen brothers who founded Houston. Allen’s ranch extended from Clear Lake to Harrisburg (in modern east Houston). The cattle range covered much of southeast Harris County and Galveston County including many of the communities now around Galveston Bay. The Allen Ranch was one of the first and longest running ranches in Texas, started in the early 1840s in what is now southeast Houston and Pasadena. It influenced the early development of Houston and Pasadena contributing to Galveston's economy in the 19th century.

Green Butler’s ranch included all the property west of the G.H. & H Railroad to Alvin and Friendswood. His house was on Cowards Bayou just past Chigger Creek. He ranged his cattle from the railroad tracks as far west as Friendswood and Alvin.

Although the reason for the killing was never revealed, the prevailing theory was that it stemmed from a conflict over cattle rights in the years following the Civil War. Both Allen’s and Butler’s cattle passed back and forth between 1855 and 1870. There were periodic conflicts over who owned which cattle. Between 1866-1890 Texas ranchers followed the open-range tradition, the practice of unregulated grazing which was codified in the laws as they developed into written statutes.

Cattle roamed freely regardless of land ownership. Where there was “open range” laws, those wanting to keep animals off their property had to erect a fence. Land in open range was designated as part of a “herd district” requiring an animal's owner to fence it in or otherwise keep it on the person's own property. Unbranded cattle were called mavericks. Cows would give birth in the wild and could not be located in an annual round up. Their calves would mature without having been captured and branded for ownership. While it was legal to put your brand on a maverick, it was illegal to put your brand on any animal that followed a mother. The term derived from Samuel Maverick, the fourth mayor of San Antonio, notorious for not branding his cattle.

A Coroner’s Inquest was held in Clear Creek, (one of League City’s former names) the day following the murder, May 20. Four days later, May 24, Walker and Black were arrested by Galveston County Sheriff’s Deputies at Sam Allen’s Ranch. The pair was indicted July 25. Their first trial began on July 27. Jurors deliberated for one hour and both were found guilty of murder. Walker was convicted of First Degree Murder and sentenced to hang on December 6, 1872. Jeff Black was sentenced to life.

The Defense argued a motion for a new trial based on possible jury improprieties, but was denied on August 6, 1872. Their case was appealed. A second trial in February 1874 both found both men guilty again.

On Friday April 4, 1875, around 2 pm, in the Galveston County Jail, Jeff Black was struck by lightning in his cell and suffered slight burns on his hip.

In August 1875, the trial venue was changed to the Chambers County Court in Wallisville where both were again found guilty and another motion for a new trial was overruled and another appeal was filed. Appeals for Walker and Black were argued before the Texas Supreme Court in 1875 and the convictions were upheld.

In December 1875, Andrew Walker tried unsuccessfully to escape from the Galveston County Jail.
Three years later in the spring of 1878, the Court of Appeals granted bail, six years after the original trial. Walker's bail was $15,000 ($378,734 in 2016 dollars); Black's, $10,000 ($252,491 in 2016 dollars). Both made bail, Black immediately; Walker in November.

Black was acquitted on September 10, 1878 and was lost to obscurity.

While out on bail, Walker was arrested for the 1868 murder of Daniel Graham, a man who seduced his sister. He escaped from the Bryan Jail in May 11, 1880, but was apprehended 9 days later. May 20, in Trinity County where he had married Azalean Dial and was living under the name of Adams and in 'imbittered health.' In January 1881, his only child, Charlotte, was born,

His murder conviction was upheld on his October 1882 appeal and the third appeal, March 1883, affirmed the life sentence.

Nineteen years later, Governor Joseph Sayres pardoned Walker for Butler's murder on December 22, 1903, after serving 30 years of his life sentence. Since the beginning of the Texas prison system, the governor had the power to pardon deserving or politically well-connected inmates as he saw fit. In the nineteenth century, about 6 to 12 prisoners were pardoned each year. Before 1911, about 300 convicts received pardons each year. Governors Oscar Colquitt, William Hobby and James Ferguson issued more than 500 pardons a year. In 1917, James "Pa" Ferguson was impeached for misapplication of public funds. When he became ineligible to run for office, his wife Miriam "Ma" Ferguson," served two terms and during her four-year tenure, issued 4,000 pardons, many of them to those convicted of violating prohibition laws. In 1936, an amendment to the state constitution stripped the governor of the power to issue pardons and granted it to the politically independent Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Despite the pardon, Walker ended up in jail again and tried unsuccessfully to escape while awaiting his third trial for the 1868 Graham murder.

By 1910, Walker was no longer a jailbird and was living in Trinity County with his wife and daughter. He died January 19, 1923 and is buried in Saro Cemetery in Trinity County. His daughter applied for a military marker in 1938. It reads: “Private Co. G 13 Texas Volunteers Confederate States Army.” Ancestry.com’s Fold3 lists Walker as enlisting on May 15, 1862 as a Substitute for Willis Coward. Under the Confederate conscription law, a draftee could evade service by hiring someone who was exempt from the draft to replace him. The "principal," as those supplying substitutes were called, paid a fee to the government as well as a large sum to his substitute. Prices for hiring substitutes in the South reportedly ranged as high as $3,000 in specie ($71,418 in 2015 dollars) and even higher in Confederate currency. At such prices, only the wealthy could afford substitutes. The substitute laws reinforced the perception that the war was "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." The Coward families were relatives of the Butlers and came with them from Louisiana to Texas in 1854. The irony here is that Walker was paid to go to war for the relative of a man he would later murder.

**Editor’s Notes:** Ancestry.com’s Fold3 is the military records arm of Ancestry.com and is named for the third fold in the American flag folded over a coffin, made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing the ranks who gave a portion of his or her life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

**Governor Joseph Sayers**, who pardoned Andrew Walker, was an attorney and served as Governor of Texas from 1899-1903. During his tenure he not only oversaw the 1900 storm, but also two other notable 1899 disasters, the Texas State Penitentiary Fire and the Brazos River Flood. (See LCHS Jan/Feb 2015 Newsletter)
WORLD WAR I 100TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION
AFTER CEREMONY THERE WILL BE A TOUR OF WWI VETERANS’ GRAVES

FAIRVIEW CEMETERY
N. KANSAS ST., LEAGUE CITY

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2017
10:00 A.M.

Hosted by:
Sam Houston Chapter,
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
2017 Dues Form
League City Historical Society

Thank you for being a member of the League City Historical Society. It is time to renew membership for 2016. Dues for various types of memberships are as listed below.

To renew your membership, choose the membership level that is best for you, complete the form below and mail to LCHS, P. O. Box 1642, League City, TX 77574. You may also bring renewal and check to the next meeting.

Note: If you have paid your dues in October 2015 or later, you are current for the year 2016

**CATEGORY**
- Student/Active Military $20
- Senior (60 and over) $25
- Senior Couple $35
- Single (Individual) $35
- Family $50
- Supporting Patron $100
- Life Membership $400

**BUSINESS CATEGORY**
- Business Member $100
- Business Partner $200
- Business Leader $300

Please update your membership information.

Name: _________________________________________________________________

(If Family Membership, please include names of family members.)

Address ________________________________________________________________

City________________________________________State_________Zip_____________

Phone: Home Phone_________________________Cell Phone: ______________________

email address: ___________________________________________________________

☐ Check if your name, address or email has changed recently.

☐ Check if you would like to receive your newsletter, meeting minutes and/or meeting notices by email, to help save on postage.