



SPRING AT THE MUSEUM!



The deep freeze doesn't seem to have harmed our plants and shrubs at West Bay Common School Children's Museum. Spring is here!



Remembering when.....

Can you guess when these pictures were taken? The answers are on page 8.



Historic Homes Tour Meeting



Teddy Bear Parade Participants



Living History Dinner w' Abraham Lincoln

WALKabout Old League City!

The League City Historical Society announces our WALKabout for April will be a stroll through the heart of Old League City along 3rd Street. WALKabout Old League City will be on Saturday, April 17th from 10am to noon. This will be a WALKabout of approximately 1 mile so bring your walking shoes, water, and sunscreen.

Tickets will be available at www.leaguecityhistory.org or click here: <https://leaguecityhistory.org/past-present-events>. Space is limited and no day-of tickets will be available. Tickets are \$8 and reservations are necessary.

*If you would like to volunteer to docent, direct crowd control or are interested in creating a WALKabout, email Katie at leaguecityxhistory@gmail.com.



THE FORGOTTEN FEMALE CODEBREAKER

By Joyce Zongrone

Codebreaker and cryptanalyst Elizebeth Smith Friedman isn't a woman you're likely to hear about during Women's History Month. She created the basis of codebreaking which ultimately brought down Al Capone, a Nazi spy ring and laid the foundation for the National Security Agency. Sadly, she was never acknowledged because J. Edgar Hoover took credit for her work.

Born in Indiana, Quaker Elizebeth Friedman felt she never fit in because she wanted an adventurous life. Her Civil War veteran father gave her the money to go to college, but made her pay it back. After college she settled in Chicago in 1916 and went looking for a job. One fateful day she visited the Newbury Library to see a first edition of Shakespeare's first printed 1623 folio. She was a Shakespeare aficionado. The librarian, noticing her intense interest in the bard, referred her to a wealthy industrialist, George Fabyan, who was looking for someone to decode Francis Bacon's supposedly embedded messages in Shakespearean works. Bacon's 1623 book, *Fundamental Principles of Baconian Ciphers*, fueled a mid-19th century Shakespearean-Baconian movement. The theory was that Bacon's status in society and ascent to high office might have been hindered if it were known he wrote plays for the commoner's stage. Crediting the plays to Shakespeare would shield Bacon's identity.



Fabyan, hired William Friedman to photograph and enlarge Shakespearean passages for Elizebeth to decode, hoping to find proof Bacon wrote everything. No proof was ever found. However, the quest not only developed Elizebeth's intuition for breaking ciphers, but in a romantic relationship with William Friedman, resulting in marriage.

When World War I erupted, it became a war like no other due to the invention of the radio which transformed the value of codebreaking messages. At the time, The United States had no codebreaking bureau.

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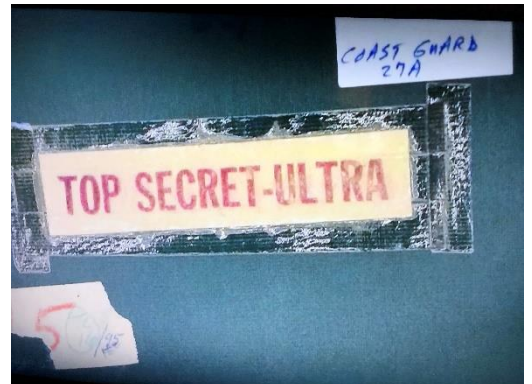
(The Forgotten Female Codebreaker – continued)

Fabyan established the first codebreaking unit on his Riverbank Estate in Geneva, Illinois, hiring Elizebeth and William to encrypt Morse Code radio messages. Both husband and wife later joined the Army Signal Corps which was responsible for military codebreaking.

In 1925, Friedman became a Special Agent of the US Treasury Department as a cryptanalyst.

The Coast Guard, an arm of the treasury department, was responsible for catching rumrunners smuggling bootleg liquor into the US during Prohibition. Rumrunners stored millions of gallons of liquor in the holds of ocean-going vessels. Smaller ships would meet them and divvy up the alcohol and bring it in to the US. Most of the contraband came from a tiny archipelago off the coast of Newfoundland. Elizebeth decoded 25,000 intercepts of their highly sophisticated codes, some newer and more complicated than she'd seen in World War I.

In 1927 she went to work for the US Bureau of Prohibition and Customs. Her work made her a key witness in the 1933 trials of Al Capone's gang members arrested for boot-legging. She was given bodyguards during the trial because of threats against her life. Thirty-five boot-legging ringleaders directly linked with suspected vessels as a result of the information arising out of her analysis, were convicted for violating the Volstead Act.



Elizebeth 's Declassified Secret Work 2008

During World War II, Friedman's Coast Guard unit was transferred to the navy where they were the principal U.S. source of intelligence on [Operation Bolivar](#), the clandestine German network in [South America](#). Elizebeth's greatest contribution to World War I was to crack the Nazi's infamous, first of its kind, sophisticated Enigma encryption machine. She solved numerous cipher systems used by the Germans sophisticated, first of its kind, Enigma machine. These machines were transmitting encrypted messages between South America and Germany. She decoded 4,000 messages sent over 48 different radio circuits.

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(The Forgotten Female Codebreaker - continued)

After World War II, Hoover began a public media campaign that claimed that the FBI led the code-breaking effort that resulted in the collapse and arrest the German spy network in South America, when it was actually Friedman's Navy team who was responsible for the victory, a unit she was not allowed to command, because in 1941, the Navy did not allow women to lead men.

Elizebeth's methods created a powerful new science of codebreaking which has since been transformed and mathematized, now done on computers. This laid the foundation for what happens every day in American intelligence agencies. She died in 1980 at age 88, but her work wasn't declassified for 28 years, until 2008.

Finally, in 2002, eighty-six years after she broke her first code, NSA's OPS1 building was dedicated as the William and Elizebeth Friedman Building during the Agency's 50th Anniversary Commemoration.

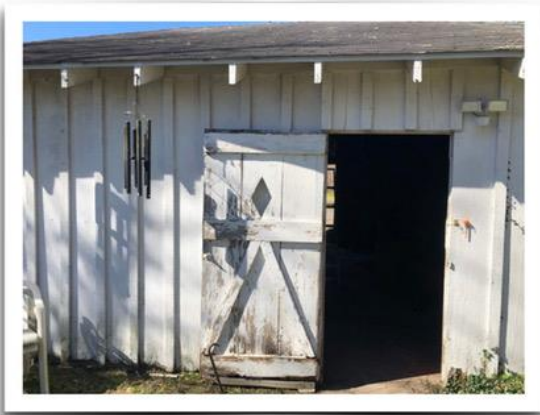
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If you have a bird feeder put out a little extra.....

The hard freeze Texas had in February destroyed many of the insects, plants and tiny fish that supply our birds with food. After the freeze, on one of my walks along Robinson's Gulley, I noticed many dead fish floating on top of the water. There were fish of all sizes; however, I was surprised when I counted 26 large ones (7 to 10 inches) and lots of tiny ones. This took me by surprise!. I was not aware that this small bayou that runs through League City and out to Clear Lake, had so many fish....and I live right beside it! I then realized that the birds who live here year- round and the ones just stopping by on their way back up north are looking for food and that is why we are having so many more birds at our feeder lately. So,.. we are buying more bird seed, corn and other bird goodies to make sure the birds have plenty to eat all until their regular food sources replenish.



Diana Dornak



New acquisitions to the museum.

Thank you to Janet Marsh Millimet and the Brittnacher family for their recent donations to LCHS. The old Brittnacher farm was a farmhouse and acreage situated along what is now I-45, Calder Road, and Highway 96/League City Parkway/Brittany Bay Boulevard. The old farmhouse had been moved to the back of the property but the old barn (pictured on the left) was still intact. This old board and batton structure with cypress walls and fantastic doors had been used as Mr. Arnold Brittnacher's machine shop and storage. The family graciously allowed us to look for items to add to our museum collection and we found some gems. A few of the donated items are pictured below - great pieces of League City history to be displayed in the Barn Museum!



From The Collection



This is a picture of a board saved from the wall of an old garage here in League City. It was donated to the Museum many years ago and has been on display a few times over the years, but is now in the Archives.

In July of 1926 some local League City (we presume) “men” decided to document the members of their club or “gang” using their initials. They even had Officers like a President and Secretary. Interesting for what we today would call a “gang”. **Recognize any of the initials?**

I am a member of a local church men’s group that met on Tuesday mornings at a local restaurant. That was until the pandemic caused us to cease meeting. A few months ago, as things progressed with the social norms of the pandemic we started to meet again but this time in a form of “outdoor” setting, in the leaders garage with the door open.

When he started calling us the *Garage Gang*, I immediately thought of this artifact. About a century later, the *Garage Gang* is meeting again in League City.

Richard Lewis

League City Historical Society

2021 Officers

Doug McKee	President
Richard Lewis	Vice President
Amber Murphy	Secretary
Katie Benoit Hake	Treasurer

2021 Directors

Diana Dornak	Director
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Darryl Krogman	Director
Catharin Lewis	Director
Linda Michael	Director
Michael Peterson	Director
Susan Pierce	Director
Ronnie Richards	Director



An Old English Children's Poem.



March

A Spike of Green

When I went out
The sun was hot
It shone upon
My flower pot.
And there I saw
A spike of green
That no one else
Had ever seen!
On other days
The things I see
Are mostly old
Except for me.
But this green spike
So new and small
Had never yet
Been seen at all!

Barbara Baker

from *All Day Long*
compiled by Pamela Whitlock

Answers to:

“Remembering When”

*The Historic Homes Meeting happened in May 2011.

*A bicycle group in the Teddy Bear Parade in July 2012.

*Living History Dinner with Abraham Lincoln in October 2012.

Thank you for all the 2021 Membership Renewals!

If you haven't renewed yet there is still time and now it is easier than ever. Simply go to our website at www.leaguecityhistory.org, click on "membership" button, pick your level of membership, fill out your information, and pay online. Please make sure you update your information so that you keep receiving your informative LCHS newsletter and notices of any upcoming events. Thank you for your continued support of local history!



Complete the [PDF Membership form](#) and mail it with payment to us at League City Historical Society, P.O. Box 1642, League City, Texas 77574



Student /Military
\$20



Senior (60 & over)
\$25



Senior Couple \$35



Single (Individual)
\$35



Family \$50



Supporting
Member \$100



Business Member \$100



Business Partner \$200



Business Leader \$300



Lifetime Membership \$400

Another great way to support League City Historical Society is to [Donate!](#)



If You Are Not A Member, We Are Hoping You Will Join!!

League City Historical Society

Thank you for being a member. The various types of memberships with the associated dues are listed below. To renew your membership or become a new member, select the membership level that is best for you, complete the form and mail to:

LCHS, PO Box 1642, League City Texas 77574

CATEGORY

- | | |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/ Active Military | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60 and over) | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single (Individual) | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Patron | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership | \$400 |

BUSINESS CATEGORY

- | | |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Member | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Partner | \$200 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Leader | \$300 |

Please update your membership information here:

Name _____

(For family membership, please include names of family members)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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- 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 postage.
- Check if we may list your name and address in our membership directory. This publication will only be distributed to LCCHS members and will not be used on our website.

Please Note: Membership is for one year and covers you until January 2022.