



**LCHS May Meeting**  
**Thursday, May 26 – 7pm**

**West Bay Common School Children’s Museum**  
210 North Kansas - League City, Texas

**Program: FLY GIRLS of WWII**  
with: Eleanor Barton, Curator  
Lone Star Flight Museum

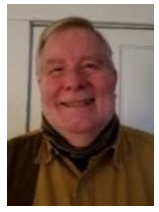


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**Above:** Waters Davis IV and Nancy Gray Dunn by the newly dedicated statue of JC League. Both are great, great grandchildren of JC League.

**From The President**



Dear LCHS Members & Friends,

This past week we had a “once in a lifetime” experience. On the evening of May 13, the family of JC League, including great-great grandchildren Nancy Dunn and Waters Davis, visited our museum for a short tour and then they were welcomed at the T. J. Dick home for what turned out to be a wonderful party. Thanks to Mike and Dee Peterson. On Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> the city held a dedication for the statue in honor of JC League, League City’s founder, along with a wonderful party at League Park. An awesome weekend to celebrate League City’s 60th Anniversary. Next up is our “May Meeting” on May 26 and “Music at the Museum”, on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

There are so many wonderful things going on in League City. It’s all very wonderful and exciting!

Well now....I guess I need to go dig through my closet and see if I have a white suit for the “White Linen Night” being held in the historic district on June 25. ☺

Thank you, FAITH AND SERVICE,  
Doug McKee, LCHS President

## The JC League Family Visit – May 13, 2022

The League City Historical Society had the pleasure to work with the City of League City to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our once little town. On May 13<sup>th</sup> the LCHS opened their doors for the JC League family that came in from around the United States for the special event. Doug McKee, President of the League City Historical Society, welcomed the family to the museum. Several of the wonderful LCHS teachers helped by sharing the amazing history of League City along with showing the family many of the items archived and collected at the museum. We also had several of the City of League City employees join to show their appreciation for JC League. Mayor Pat Hallisey and his wife Janice, John Baumgartner (City Manager) and Sarah Osborne (Executive Director of Communications, Community Engagement and Cultural Affairs) all showed their support by helping LCHS with the event at the museum. Janie Mitcham, who is currently restoring the home/mansion in Galveston, Texas, was also able to join and share all that she has uncovered during the restoration. This amazing undertaking by Janie and her sister Carla will keep the JC League legacy alive.



**Here are just a few items held at the museum that date back to the beginning of League City and were shared with the JC League Family.**

**In the Bus Barn** there are 4 items of interest that were pointed out. 1) His official picture on the wall at the front door. 2) The diamond shaped window from the little Clear Creek Schoolhouse that he built for the town. 3) A wooden fence post from the original wire fencing around that little Clear Creek Schoolhouse that was found with Ditch Witch archeology in the first year. 4) The large Plat/Map JC League had surveyed and drawn up to sell the various small townsite plots and 10 ac. in-the-city farm properties. These townsite blocks were each divided into 50x140 parcels. The schoolhouse and museum are on 2 of them.

**In the Schoolhouse** there is the handwritten deed by JC League showing this property. It has a 1901 date, (later than the 1894 Clear Creek schoolhouse building) because he recorded the “donation” after it was destroyed and the “relief society”, made up of townsfolks, had to replace it with the Little Green Schoolhouse.

**In the schoolyard** our flagpole was installed in the original location of the 1894 flagpole currently behind the Garden Classroom. JC League’s original Clear Creek Schoolhouse was facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

(Continued on next page.)



(The JC League Family Visit – Continued)

Special thanks to the *Butler's Courtyard* and *Lelia Southern Settings* for their contribution to such a successful evening with the family. The LCHS could not offer many of these unique programs without the support of our members. We want to thank everyone involved to show the JC League family how much we love League City. As we know, this level of dedication is so important to protect the rich history we have to offer so we can share with many generations to follow.

**(Pictured Below: The JC League Family, LCHS Teachers, Staff and City Leaders)**



**Left to right: Back row:** Catherine Gill, Janie Mitcham, Sally LaRoca, Amy Schemelz, Alexandra Dunn, Nancy Gray Dunn, Waters Davis IV, David Dunn, Doug McKee, John Baumgartner. **Front Row:** Mayor Pat Hallisey, Kitty & Sarah Eubanks.

**Note** the Diamond Shaped Window hanging above the group. This window came from the little Clear Creek School that JC League built for the town. It was one of the treasures that we wanted the JC League Family to see. **(Continued next page)**

(The JC League Family Visit – Continued.)

After the visit to the LCHS West Bay Common School Children’s Museum, the JC League Family were special guests at the T. J. Dick Home. This prestigious historic home is owned by Michael & Deeann Peterson and is now “*Lelia Southern Settings*”, a special event venue, where a lovely party was held in their honor.



Waters Davis, DeeAnn Peterson, Nancy Dunn & Other family members enjoyed the lovely evening.

***A Day To Remember*** - Dedication of the JC League statue in League Park and the pleasure of meeting members of the JC League family - ***Saturday, May 14, 2022.***



**Above:** LCHS President, Doug McKee, Catherine Gill, Statue of JC League and his dog Scout and Deborah Gammon.



**Above:** Alexandra League Dunn and her mother, Nancy Gray Dunn.





## J C League: *The Man In the Shadows*

By *Joyce Zongrone* and *Deborah Gammon*

The man who listed his occupation as a capitalist on 1900 Census, bought land, founded a city, but never lived there.

John Charles League's family hailed from Maryland, but he was born January 31, 1850, in Galveston TX.

J. C. was the last son of Thomas Massey and Esther Yarral Wilson League who moved to Galveston in 1846. Both parents were born in Baltimore, Md. Four years later, in 1854, the family returned to Galveston.

League was educated by private tutors as a young child and later attended preparatory school in Baltimore, Md. A family member tells a story of the young J.C. being smuggled out of Galveston, back to Baltimore, during the Civil War, aboard one of George Ball's ships that ran Union blockades, to avoid conscription. During the Civil War, merchant George Ball aided the Confederacy by getting goods shipped through Mexico, avoiding Union blockades. J.C. would later marry Ball's daughter, Cornelia "Nellie" Ball, in 1874.

Once back in Baltimore, League attended a preparatory school. He was 13 at the time, the age when wealthy children entered prep schools. The year would have been 1863. Following his prep school, he spent 2 years travelling in Europe and continuing his studies. He returned to Galveston in 1872, to assume management of his late father's estate. The estate included many investments in real estate and land purchases throughout the state which were converted into ranching and later oil prospecting.

Two years after his return to Texas, J.C. married Cornelia "Nellie" Ball in October 1874 in Kings County New York. His daughter, Sarah Catherine Ball "Daisy" League was born two years later in 1876. She married Waters Smith Davis Jr., a Galveston merchant in 1898. Daisy's husband, Waters Smith Davis Jr.'s family traces its roots to Mayflower descendent John Alden, who was a crew member on the historic 1620 voyage of the Mayflower.

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The Davis family also has a storied past. The League's in-laws were the first family of Key Biscayne Florida. In 1848, the Davis family emigrated to Texas as a result of ongoing wars between the Seminole Indians and the US Army and the unresolved future of their property. Davis opened a general store in Galveston. In 1870, the son of William Goodwin Davis, Edmund Jackson Davis became Governor of Texas, during Reconstruction. He became known as "the most hated governor in Texas." He established military rule and created a "carpetbag constitution." His nephew, Waters Smith Davis Jr, son of his younger brother, Waters Smith Davis, married Sarah Catherine Ball "Daisy" League, child of J C League, securing the Florida connection in the League family legacy.

At age 40, on December 15, 1890, J.C. League purchased one thousand acres "in a solid body" adjoining Clear Creek Station on the GH&H Railroad and on Clear Creek. For this land he paid \$30,000; \$947,815.00, in today's dollars.

The Galveston County Deed Record Book, in the Galveston County Clerk's Office, Galveston, TX has the following entry regarding his purchase:

***"During January 1893, League paid for weekly advertisements in the Galveston Daily News, offering to sell 6000 acres from Clear Creek Station on the railroad along Clear Lake to Galveston Bay. He had 1000 acres platted into town lots with five-, ten- and fifty-acre tracts available for purchase. An 1893 map shows the original townsite with 42 blocks south of Clear Creek on the railroad tracks. Just south of the town was George Washington Butler's ranch with the rail station at the boundary of the town and the ranch. The remaining 5000 J. C. League acres were located on a new railroad connecting Galveston and Houston via the towns of La Porte and North Galveston (later San Leon). This land was also for sale with acreage sized to suit the buyer."***

Although League never physically lived in League City, he frequently visited the new community named in his honor. He platted and oversaw the development of residential lots, roads, parks, schools, churches and a commercial district. He had a hand in everything. In 1896 he rebuilt the Railroad Depot after it burned the year before. He also built an artesian well next to it. The Depot is now located at the Historic Railroad Center in Dickinson TX.

He built a one-room public school in 1894 that was called the Clear Creek School and was destroyed 6 years later by the 1900 storm.

He befriended the Butlers, the patriarchal ranchers of the Clear Creek area, who initially settled in the Friendswood area in 1854 and later to the League City in 1873, then called Clear Creek. He dined with them often.

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In 1982, Mary Butler Singletary, daughter of George W. and Mary Butler, gave an oral history interview to Helen Hall Library. In it she said JC and his wife would come to the Butler house often and always had dinner. League also brought his daughter and grandchildren along to later inspect their cattle in San Leon and Kemah. She described him as “just a real nice person” with white hair, white suits and so neat and clean.

J.C. League lost family members in the 1900 Storm. Sarah Davis Hawley (1876-1952), Water Davis Jr.’s sister, described her storm experience in a letter, while staying in her brother’s home, the Waters Smith Davis Jr. and Daisy Ball League Davis’s house, while they vacationed in Europe with their unmarried daughters, Emma and Mary. Sarah and her husband, John Henry Hawley, worked during the storm from sunrise to 6pm, trying to keep the house dry.

Thomas Jefferson League, J.C.’s great uncle, lost his wife, Lillie, and their three daughters; Lillie, age 9; Laura Mae, age 5; and Esther, age 3; during the devastation. His son Richard, JC’s great-nephew and great grandson of Samuel May Williams, was devastated by the storm into adulthood and later left Galveston in the 1930s to study art in Chicago.



In 1907, League had two railroad flatcars of live oak trees left by the railroad tracks for residents to plant on their property. He paid for the trees planted around the park. Butler and his son, Milby, supervised the planting of these trees, now known as the Butler Oaks. Many of them line Main Street to this day.

Although he met an early death in 1916 from appendicitis, people never forgot him. Oral histories are full of anecdotes.

His ancestral home on the famed Broadway Street in Galveston was recently purchased and is being fully restored.

So now, three centuries later, John Charles League is finally out of the shadows!

N.B. The author also wants to thank, **Melody Hauch**, Vice Chairperson of the Galveston County Historical Commission, for her contributions to the history of J.C. League.





LEAGUE CITY  
WHITE LINEN  
*Night*  
ART CRAWL AMONG THE OAKS

**Saturday, June 25 | 4 to 8 p.m. | League City Historic District**

Walk among the majestic oak trees at League Park and the Historic District for an art crawl and auto show while enjoying live music, performances, and artists at work.

**Plus, don't forget to dress in white!**

Over 120 artists displaying their work

See live art demonstrations

Enjoy theatrical vignettes by performers

Listen to live music



Food trucks, drinks, and dessert tents

Classic cars on display  
(from the 1920s to the present)

Open house and tours of Butler's Courtyard,  
the League City Historical Society Museum,  
and One Room School House







## “April Music at the Museum”



For the evening of April 29<sup>th</sup>, the LCHS once again partnered with the LCFA to provide our 2<sup>nd</sup> “Music at the Museum” event for the community. We were blessed to have beautiful weather as many guests enjoyed listening to the talented musicians under the moon light of League City. Tucker Hart worked his magic to pull together twelve incredible artists that played a variety of music for everyone. From younger musicians learning so much to other very talented artist that have been playing for many years. It was such an enjoyable evening for everyone including a very special guest. Mr. George W Bulter was able to join us while having his hair trimmed at the historical League City Barber Shop dating back to early 1900s. The April 29<sup>th</sup> “Music at the Museum” event brought in over 100 guests from around the Galveston and Harris County area. It was a special event for all that had the opportunity to join. Now we look on to our next event that will take place on Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup> from 7pm to 9:45pm. We look forward to seeing everyone.



**Special thanks to these amazing and talented musicians:**

**Brightwire, Emma Halliburton, Bree Nelson, Austin Nelson, Jay Rudy, Rudolph, Chili, Clay Duggan, Scotti Fraser, Angela Guidry, Laura Kovacevich, Carl Brainerd, Scotti Fraser, Tucker Hart.**



**Put These on your calendar and come out and support our upcoming Meetings**

May 26 at 7pm - Eleanor Barton will speak on the history of *Fly Girls of WWII* that were located at Hobby Airport!!!

Our June Meeting will feature Trenton Hooker of *Hook, Line and Sinker Productions* With a 25 minute documentary with a time for Q&A on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Texas City Disaster.

### **DUES**

**If you have not paid your 2022 dues you can go online and pay at**

**[LeagueCityHistory.org](http://LeagueCityHistory.org)**

**Or just send a check to  
League City Historical  
Society**

**P.O. Box 1642**

**League City, TX. 77574**

**We appreciate your membership and support.**



### **League City Historical Society 2022 Officers**

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

### **2022 Directors**

Diana Dornak	Director
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Linda Michael	Director
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