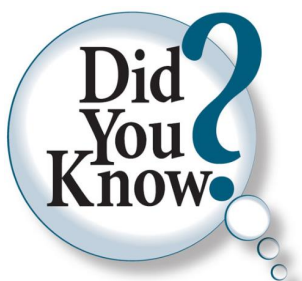




May 2023 Newsletter



Look on page three for a fascinating question about a picture. See if you know the answer. If not, you just learned something.

**RENEW YOUR
SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP
TODAY.**

Join or renew your LCHS
Membership/Dues
online at
leaguecityhistory.org
or send a check to
League City Historical Society
P.O. Box 1642
League City, TX. 77574

**We appreciate your
membership & support**



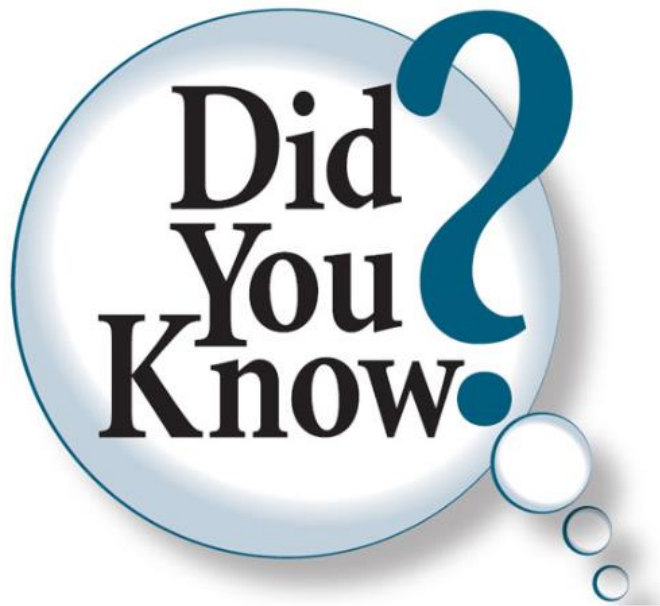
What an exciting start to the summer. The LCHS has been busy with meetings, greetings and preparing for several events for the months ahead. We have been working with City of League City and local art leaders to prepare for the 2nd annual White Linen Night that will take place on June 10th (4pm-8pm) under the century old oak trees. The streets will be closed allowing everyone to walk freely through the historic district. With the museum open, guests will have the opportunity to stop by and see all the recent enhancements to the Barn Museum and One-Room Schoolhouse. We will also have the League City Folk Association showcasing some of the best musicians in the Garden Classroom.

(Continued next page)

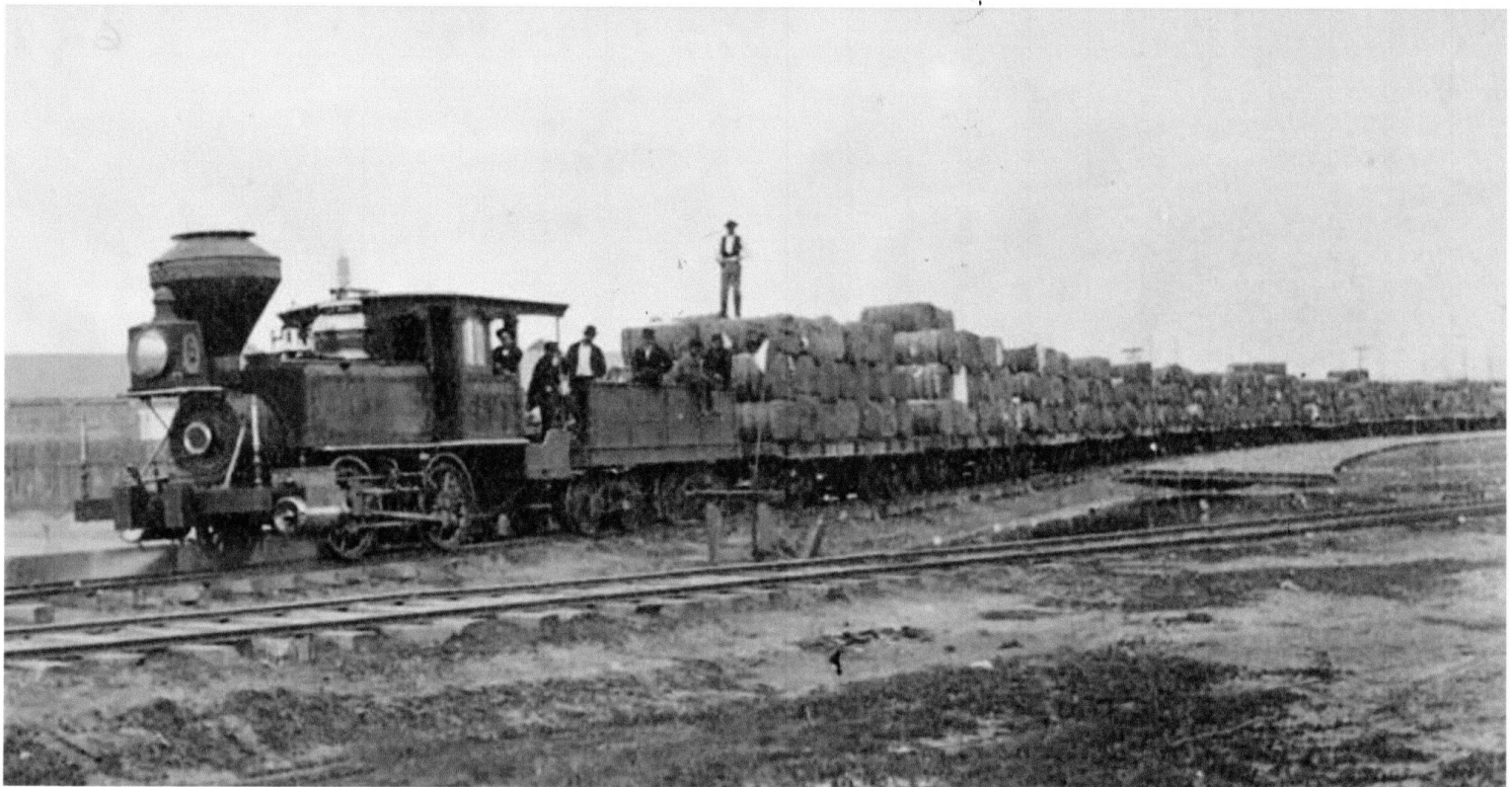
The society has also started meetings to discuss future WALKabouts with new ghost tours being scheduled for later in 2023. Plus, a few weeks back I meet with Scott Livingston, Director of Economic Development for LC and Betty Russo, East TX. Regional Representative Economic Development & Tourism. They both toured the grounds of the museum understanding all we're doing to support the community. Betty mentioned how other towns throughout Texas could truly benefit from what the LCHS has accomplished. In closing, I would like to thank CCISD Ross Elementary for supporting our schoolhouse program. The week of May 15th, we had two days of learning while their 3rd graders stepped back in time as students from 1898. It was a pleasure watching what our teachers (MARMs) do to provide lasting memories for all the wonderful children. See pictures below.

As a reminder, starting on June 11th we'll have six LCHS leaders/teachers attending the County School Association of America (CSAA) in Lancaster County, PA. We look forward to their return to discuss their experiences with such a unique event related to One Room Schoolhouses across America. Here is to a very safe and rewarding trip for the members that will be attending.





Why are there 8 men on the crew of this small yard engine train when most train crews consist of only 2 or 3?



Courtesy: civilwartalk.com

You can find the answer when you see this picture again in the story near the end of this newsletter.

Volunteer @ Museum



4-8 PM

Let us know if you can help

To sign up EMAIL:

LeagueCityTXHistory@gmail.com

Music at the Museum



April 28th "Music at the Museum" was an interesting evening. The weather was a little challenging while ensuring everyone was safe as the night progressed. Kudos to the dedicated musicians that stuck with us till the end. If you can believe the rain started while we were wrapping everything up at 10pm. Dan Young impressed us all by playing till the last minute. How exciting. Special thanks to all the artist that shared their great music throughout the evening:



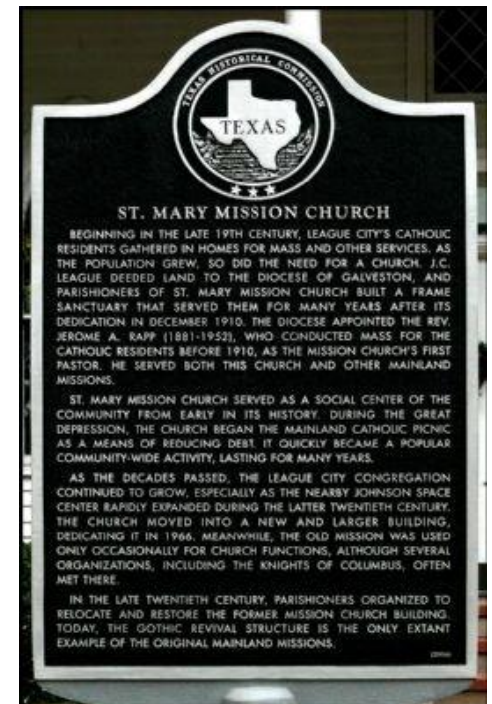


Please plan on joining us on June 10th from 4-8pm at the citywide ***White Linen Night*** event. Tucker and Rachel Hart have once again arranged for many talented musicians to play. What a special family focused event for the historic district of League City sponsored by the LCHS and LCFA.

Can't wait to see everyone.



As for our tradition, the evening kicked off with a history lesson. As we know, League City has a few historically marked locations that were important to the building of our “once” little town. We discussed three key priorities/needs for a community in the early 1900s: a school, a park, and a church for worship. One of our beautifully marked locations is the St. Mary Mission Church on Main Street. Being such a critical gathering place for residents back in the early 19th century (dedicated in 1910), the church served a critical role for League City and the local Catholic residents for many years. With the growth of our community, due to the Johnson Space Center, a new facility off Walker Street was dedicated in 1966. The original structure was moved for the widening of Main Street and renovations of the iconic building began in the late 20th century. As printed on the historical plaque out front, the Gothic Revival Structure is the only example of an original mainland mission left. With the lightning strike in early March, we almost lost a piece of our history. Special thanks to the quick response from our incredibly dedicated League City Fire Department as well as surrounding communities.



Getting On The Right Track, Back in the Day

By Richard Lewis and Joyce Zongrone

In the early 1800s, while railroads were operating in the northeast, pirates were still coming and going through the port of Galveston.

Early settlers in Texas faced major problems getting around. By the 1850s, most of the populated areas centered around the east and south Texas rivers and the Gulf Coast. Some rivers, such as the Rio Grande, the Brazos, and the Trinity, had steamboat transportation, but most were not deep enough for riverine transportation. Dirt roads were low capacity and impassable in bad weather. Carts pulled by oxen could only hold three bales of cotton and travel a few miles a day at the cost of twenty cents per ton per mile. Things got better from 1836 to 1846 when Texas went from a republic to a state, and canals and plank roads were built.

The Galveston Houston and Henderson Railroad, GH&H, was chartered in February 1853, but the first rail was not laid until 1857 and in 1859 the company finally reached Houston, where it terminated at the corner of Main and McKinney. A trestle across Galveston Bay, built from the proceeds of a Galveston County bond issue, was finished in 1860, thus completing the rail line between the two cities. It has been said that GH&H was the longest running railroad in Texas, from 1853 to 1989, 136 years.

Seven months later, in September 1853, Texas got its first railroad, a twenty-mile rail segment from Harrisburg (now a part of Houston) and Stafford's Point (now Stafford) became the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railroad (BBB&C). It became not only the first operating railroad in Texas, but the second railroad west of the Mississippi River and the oldest component of the present Southern Pacific Railroad.

Simultaneously in 1853 the first “union station” in the world was opened in Indianapolis connecting the Terre Haute & Richmond, Madison & Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroads.

Three years later, in 1856, the BBB&C Railroad added the first twenty-five-mile segment between Houston and Cypress and became the Houston and Texas Central Railway Company (H&TC). By the end of 1861 there were nine railroad companies with 470 miles of track in Texas. Five of the railroads were centered in the Houston area, and all but one ran from either a seaport or river port, resulting in major changes and improvements in Texas’s travel and transportation

Local newspapers documented railway trips. Houston’s *Tri-Weekly Telegraph* reported a thirty-five-mile trip by stagecoach in December 1854 from Houston to Hockley, following ten days of rain, as taking one and a half days and with an overnight stop. Five months later in May 1857, a similar trip aboard the Houston and Texas Central took one hour and forty minutes.

Three railroads, the Texas and New Orleans Railroad Company, the Eastern Texas Railroad Company, and the Washington County Railroad Company, were completed and opened after the outbreak of the Civil War .

Although most of the Texas railroads did not suffer the destruction inflicted elsewhere in the South during the Civil War, all were in bad physical condition after four years of constant use without materials or manpower for repairs.

In the North, in 1865, George Pullman’s luxury sleeping cars were becoming famous after he loaned one of them to carry the coffin of Abraham Lincoln 1,654 miles to Springfield.

Although it wasn't until the decade of the 1870s before any significant new mileage was constructed in Texas, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad was able to resume construction in 1867.

In 1873, since the Galveston, Houston & Henderson Railroad (GH&H) was the only rail link between the two cities, Galvestonians decided to build their own railroad line reaching across Texas to Santa Fe, New Mexico, bypassing Houston. The Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railway Company (GC&SF), headquartered in Galveston was operational for 94 years before merging into the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company.

In 1867, the Houston and Great Northern Railroad Company, the first major new railroad to start construction after the war, created strong competition between Houston and Galveston. Construction also began on the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway Company as well as on several shorter railroads, including the Houston East and West Texas Railway Company and the East Line and the Red River Railroad Company

By the end of 1879 railroad mileage in Texas reached 2,440 miles. The railroad system in eastern Texas was becoming well developed, but there were less than 100 miles of track west of Denison through Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Cuero.

During the 1880s, the first railroad systems developed as independently owned Texas companies but were later bought by outside interests who controlled railroads in other states.

The Southern Pacific acquired an interest in the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio and ownership of the Texas and New Orleans and the Houston and Texas Central, while the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe became a subsidiary of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company and the Galveston, Houston & Henderson became part of the International & Great Northern Railroad.

At the beginning of 1900 there were still less than 10,000 miles of railroads in Texas, representing five percent of United States railroad mileage. Twenty-five percent of the national rail system, which peaked in 1916, was built after 1899; however, nearly forty-five percent of the Texas rails, 17,078 miles, were built between 1900 and 1932.

Over the next thirty years, new railroads were constructed and in 1911 Texas became the state with the most railroad mileage, a position it still holds today.

As of 2020, **Texas** was the U.S. state with the largest railroad mileage, reaching over 10,400 miles. It represents about 7.6 percent of the total mileage for the United States, which is total 91,773 miles. Illinois and Ohio come second and third in the ranking, with the rail industry recording under 6,900 and over 5,300 miles in these respective states.





Courtesy: civilwartalk.com

GH&H yard switcher engine building a cotton train in Galveston for shipment out of the port.

In the early years of railroading they burned wood to power their steam engines. Unlike coal or oil that was used later, burning wood created a lot of sparks. It was necessary for the railroads to develop a very large “spark arresting” smoke stack like you see above. This smokestack helped, but did not prevent all sparks from escaping into the air. These sparks created problems with passengers and cargo. Especially flammable cargo like the cotton you see above. These trains had to carry extra crew members that rode on the top of the cargo to put out the fires.

1930s trains on
tracks in Taylor, TX
Courtesy: Portal of
Texas





Save your items
Annual LCHS Yard Sale
Saturday, SEP 16th 8a - 2p

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