

# FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

www.passhistory.org • Post Office Box 58, Pass Christian MS 39571 • Society Building 201 East Scenic Drive  
228 452-7254 • info@passhistory.org • Building open: Thursday-Friday-Saturday, 10-2 p.m.  
Evening meetings at 7 p.m. on the 2nd Monday • Monthly luncheons are typically on the fourth Monday of the month.

## February 6, 2021

Dear Friends and Members,

What with Mardi Gras, Valentines Day and various Historical Society activities, February promises to be a busy month. Details of upcoming Historical Society events appear below and attached is a membership renewal application for those of you who may not have put off renewing.

If your membership has expired, we regret that we will soon need to remove you from our mailing list. So please keep the newsletter coming and support your Society.

Finally congratulations to Jessie Heitzmann (Citizen of the Year), and newly elected Society officers: Jack Kelly—Vice President and Mary Helen Schaeffer—Recording Secretary.

Tom Shellnut and the Board of Trustees

P.S. Unfortunately postal regulations require that our newsletter mailings be identical, and accordingly, if you have recently renewed your membership or are a life member, we apologize for the need to include a membership application.

### Meeting Monday Feb.13, at 7 p.m

We are thrilled to have Thomas Simmons speak about **John C. Robinson** at Monday night's meeting. Colonel Robinson is a local hero and early aviation pioneer. Born in 1903 (Robinson saw his first plane when John Moisant visited Gulfport in 1910) Robinson's accomplishments included serving in the defense of Ethiopia against the invasion by Mussolini, creation of a private



*We never tire of our Mardi Gras Mermaids. We want to thank Patricia Wells for the donation of two books showing the floats of the 1915 parade taken from a photo album of William D. Robinson who had moved his family to the Pass in 1901. (Incidentally, we had lost our original photos of the parade in Katrina so this donation is especially appreciated.)*

aviation school, and serving as the guiding force behind the Tuskegee Airman program that would win so much fame in World War II.

Our speaker **Thomas E. Simmons** is the author of *Brown Condor: The True Adventures of John C. Robinson*, as well as an article on Colonel Robinson in this month's *South Mississippi Living* magazine. Refreshments and socializing as always after the talk.

### Monday February 27th Luncheon

Abby Eisen, Pass Christian's City Planner is our featured speaker later this month and will talk about the history of our "Smart Code." The cost is ten dollars which includes lunch. We regret that due to space limitations, we cannot accommodate members who have not made reservations. So please contact us (452-7254 or info@passhistory.org) if you would like to attend this \$10 event.

### Mardi Gras Banner Donated

If you should pass by our building you will notice a Mardi Gras banner in the window next to our main entrance.

The banner was donated by the St. Paul Carnival Association Board of Directors to the Pass Christian Historical Society. The Board consisted of Robin Rafferty President; Lisa Dufrene Vice President; Kerry Wittmann Treasurer; Shari Negrotto Secretary; and directors Fr. Dennis Carver Pastor of Holy Family Parish, Fr. Louis Lohan Pastor of St. Thomas; Elizabeth Fortenberry St. Vincent de Paul Principal; Mimi Brown, Amanda Broome, Shannon Kelly Connelly, Charlotte Logan, Kathy Rogers, Stacey O'Connell and Rene Lemoine St. Paul.

Although carnival balls at the Pass date back to at least the late 1800s, the first parade may not have occurred until 1913. And Robin Rafferty tells us that the St. Paul Carnival Association banner

was not introduced until 1963 when it was designed and handmade by Julia Hanson Cerra (Queen Christiana 1941). Julia continued making the banner until suffering a stroke in 2004. Since 2004, Julia's daughter Anne Shirley has made the banners. According to Robin, the satin banner is made of the traditional Mardi Gras colors of gold, green and purple and the symbols consist of the following. The upper left consists of the Letter C representing King Christian and Queen Christiana, the crown in the middle representing their rule and purple cross representing our faith in the risen "Christ." The Roman Numerals in the bottom right represents the number of carnival royalty. The official 2012 banner for example will show LXXXII marking the 82 year of the Association. Incidentally, this year's King Christian is Courtenay Hanson and Alyce Keel is Queen Christiana. Last year's king and queen were Eric Brown and Brandy Schruff.



Jessie Heitzmann with former Society president A.C. Smith at the grand opening of the new Society building in December 2010.

### Thanks & Congratulations to Jessie Heitzmann-Citizen of The Year

We want to thank Jessie (a former board member of the Society) for speaking at January's luncheon and extend our congratulations to her on her selection as Pass Christian's Citizen of the Year. It is impossible to know how much of our local history would have been lost if Jessie had not worked tire-

lessly with Billy Bourdin in digitizing so much of Billy's historical collection both before and after Katrina. In addition we want to thank Jessie for donating copies of so much of her work to the Society. (We have some 22 ring binders that Jessie has donated in the downstairs reading room at our building.) So congratulations & thank you!

### Membership Corner

The Pass Christian Historical Society is filling a much needed place in our community. It has long been the guardian and champion of our historical, cultural and architectural identity.

The Society is currently bringing excitement to downtown Pass Christian with fascinating speakers, impressive exhibits, home tours, parties — and the soon-to-happen 2012 Home Tour and Garden Party.

Last year's excitement only happened because of you — your interest, support and attendance restored our Society! The Christmas Party was great fun and many of you came and renewed for 2012. To date, 148 memberships have been paid for 2012 comprising 206 members. That's only half of last year's membership. We need your renewal! We can't make it without you. Renew now.

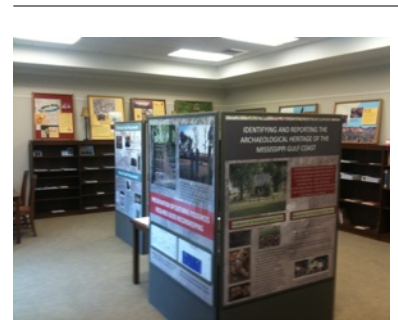
Thank you for your help in making 2011 such a great year!  
—Mary Helen Schaeffer

### PassHistory.org updated



Please visit our improved and updated website! Thanks to the generous support of the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Pass Christian Historical Society has been able to create a website that allows us to provide an online home for photographs, documents and

texts of historical significance to Pass Christian, as well as the room and resources to grow our online collection. We hope you'll take the time to visit the website, look around and let us know what we can do to make it even better. If you have historical photos and documents that you'd like to share, we'd love to give them a home! Phone 228-452-7254 or email [info@passhistory.org](mailto:info@passhistory.org).



Our special exhibit on DeSoto continues at the building in our downstairs reading room though February 24th.

### Battle of Pass Christian Commemoration Dinner?

No southern town worth its salt lacks a Civil War Battlefield and we are glad to say Pass Christian is no exception. Early April marks the 150th Anniversary of a series of local naval engagements and our very own battle.

In addition to a talk at our March meeting, the Society is exploring ways to commemorate the events of 150 years ago with a dinner or other activity. The whole concept is under discussion, and with this year's Easter holiday being so close to the actual anniversary of the battle we are considering having an event in mid-April shortly after Easter or alternatively sometime after the Tour of Homes in May.

We would be glad to know who of our members might be interested in attending a special dinner say. Please let us know your thoughts.