

JANUARY 2015 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 typically open: Thursday-Friday-Saturday, 10-2 p.m.
Evening meetings at 7 p.m. on the 2nd Monday • Monthly luncheons are typically on the 4th Monday of the month.

January 8, 2014

Dear Friends & Members,

Happy New Year and Burr! Its in the twenties as this letter goes to press, but the weather is almost certain to be warmer by Monday when we hold the first meeting of our new year.

We want to thank Amy Wood for hosting that wonderful Christmas Party, and also Nancy Calder, Martha Feidman, and Marian Verlander for coordinating refreshments (and indeed all of you who brought refreshments). If you were unable to make the party, and have not yet renewed your membership for 2015, we hope you will do so now.

Today, January 8th is one of the most important dates in American History being a two-fer: 200th Anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, and of course Elvis Presley's birthday. Being a Historical Society, our bit of history commemorates the bicentennial of the Battle of New Orleans.

Finally we want to congratulate our new officers. (List below)

— The Board of Trustees

Upcoming Events

Monday, January 12, 7 p.m. Bob Fairbank will talk about the Wolf River Preservation Association and the work they are doing along the river. Virgil Harris, our newly elected President will also speak about plans for the coming year

Thursday, January 16, 10:30 a.m. at Church St. and Hwy 90. The DAR will rededicate an historical marker, recognizing Francis Parke Lewis Butler, a



“BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS And Defeat of the British under the Command of Sir Edward Packenham By GEN^L ANDREW JACKSON 8th Jan^y 1815”

grand niece of Martha Washington, who was born at Mount Vernon just 17 days before Washington's death on Dec 14, 1799. According to family tradition, she was the last person to have received the General's blessing. And at her death in 1875, Mrs. Butler was the last living relative to have seen Washington. After the marker dedication there will be followup activities at Live Oak and Trinity.

Monday, January 26th, 12 noon Jim Montgomery will share his experiences about growing up in China in the 1930s as a child of Presbyterian missionaries. Reservations required. A \$10 (\$12 non-members) admission fee, which includes lunch is payable at the door. Please email your reservation to president@passhistory.org to reserve a spot or call 228 452-7254

New Officers

- President - Virgil Harris
- Vice President - Joy Burke
- Treasurer - Keith Voigts
- Corresponding Secty - Wilma Rizzardi
- In addition, while stepping down a president, Tom Shellnut continues as board chairman, and Henry Laird was elected to the board at our November meeting.

Time to Renew Memberships

- Individual \$25
- Family \$35
- Contributing \$60
- Sustaining \$100
- Patron \$500
- Benefactor \$1000

A British soldier's recollection of Cat Island following Battle of New Orleans (1815)

Rev. George Robert Gleig's recollections
A Narrative of the Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans (London, 1821)

American Troops were stationed at Pass Christian in the days leading up to the Battle of New Orleans and remained to keep an eye on the defeated British who remained at Cat Island several weeks after the battle before departing the area. Below is a description of Cat Island in January 1815 by British soldier George Robert Gleig

“...This is a spot of sandy soil at the mouth of the lake [the Mississippi Sound was then often considered part of Lake Borgne], remarkable for nothing, except a solitary Spanish family [Juan Cuevas], which possesses it. Completely cut off from the rest of the world, an old man, his wife, two daughters and a son, dwell here in apparent happiness and contentment.

Being at least 120 miles from the main [i.e. ship lanes] it is seldom that there little kingdom is visited by strangers, and I believe that till our arrival, the daughters, though grown up to womanhood, had seen few faces besides those of their parents and brother. Their cottage, composed simply of a few boughs, thatched and in-woven with straw, is beautifully situated within a short distance of the water. Two cows, and a few sheep grazed beside it, while a small tract of ground covered with stubble, and a little garden well stocked with fruit-trees and vegetables at once gave proof of their industry, and showed from whence they supplied themselves with bread.

“ It may appear childish, but I confess that the sight of domestic peace flourishing, as

it were, in the midst of wars and tumults, extremely delighted me. While we were anchored [for 3 days], therefore, I paid frequent visits to this cottage, and forming sort of acquaintance with the old man, soon possessed myself of his little history.

He had emigrated from Spain many years ago, and married in America. Having been unsuccessful in business, he had saved from the wreck of his property only enough to hire labourers, by whose assistance his present cottage was erected, and his little farm cleared; when, with his wife and three children, then very young, he had withdrawn from society, and settled himself here, where he had remained ever since. Once a year, he or his son visited the main to sell their wool, and purchase such necessaries as their island could not produce; but excepting on these occasions, or when a fishing-boat arrived in his bay, which rarely occurred, he had his own family, for a great lapse of time. As may be imagined, I found this tribe as simple in their ideas as in their mode of living. Of reading and writing all except the patriarch himself were ignorant, nor did they seem to waste a thought upon any subject not immediately connected with their bodily wants. They professed, indeed, to be Christians, and would have been probably shocked, had I questioned their claim to sound Catholicism, though I much doubt whether they in the slightest degree understood the meaning of either term.

“Having remained here till the 7th [of February 1815] we again took advantage of a fair wind and stood to sea.”