

# JANUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER

www.passhistory.org • Post Office Box 58, Pass Christian MS 39571 • Society Building 201 East Scenic Drive  
228 452-7254 • info@passhistory.org • passchristian.wordpress.com • Building typically open: Thur. to Sat. 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 6, 2016

Dear Friends & Members,

Happy New Year!

Many thanks to all who made the Christmas Party a huge success especially the Wingfields who volunteered their home for the event.

A new year is upon us and we need to hit the ground running. The Mardi Gras parade in the Pass is February 7, 2016. The cost is \$20 per person and \$10 for children under the age of 13. There is some limited parking behind the building. Please call the Society to make reservations. Further details below.

—Virgil Harris and the Board of Trustees

## Upcoming Events

**Monday, January 11, 7 p.m.** Bob Fairbank will speak on the "History and Purpose of the Wolf River Conservation Society."

**Monday, January 25, Luncheon** Jim Matthews will speak about the "History of Barbecue." And lunch will be a sample BBQ recipe!

**Pass Mardi Gras Parade, Sunday, February 7,** beginning at 9 AM. until



"Africa" Float from a Pass Mardi Gras Parade during the Reign of King Arthur II. (1916)

30 minutes after the parade. Sandwiches, soft drinks and ice will be provided by the Society, Entry is \$20 per adult, \$10 age 12 and under. Reservations strongly suggested, and much appreciated so that we can adequately prepare.

Looking further ahead our **February Luncheon** will feature author Dave Plater speaking on "The Butlers of Iberville Parish and Pass Christian."

## Our Bits of History from 100 and 150 years ago...

This year we mark the centennial of the 1916 Pass Mardi Gras Parade (apparently the first with photos to come down to us) with two photos from that event. We also look back 150 years to 1866 and the aftermath of the Civil War.

## Abuses at Pass Christian of the freeman labor certificates February, 1866

Bureau Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands

Office of Asst. Commissioner for St. of Miss.

Vicksburg, Miss. March 12, 1866

Maj. Gen. T. J. Wood Comdg. Dept.

General:

I have the honor to return the enclosed papers from the Magistrate at Pass Christian with the following remarks:

Lieut. Hemingway has made a mistake in ordering the civil officers not to require of the Freedmen any kind of pass or license. In his report to me he

called my attention to the fact that the Mayor and Board of Police were charging each Freedman five dollars [\$5.00] for such a paper, and that they were being arrested and fined as vagrants under the Vagrant Law when they were without it.

It is my belief that Lieut. Hemingway was trying to correct this matter when he wrote the enclosed letter.

Lieut. Hemingway is right in asking that the Vagrant law be applied to whites as well as blacks and a failure upon the part of the civil officers to so execute the law places it within the power of the Military authorities to remonstrate against such discrimination.

Mayors or Magistrates have no possible right to arrest Freedmen for Vagrancy because they have no "labor certificate," and take that neglect on their part as evidence that the Vagrant Act has been violated. The Vagrant Law is clear as to what constitutes vagrancy, and no Freedman can be fined or punished until he has been duly convicted in a proper court of one of the crimes enumerated in the Vagrancy Act.

Freedmen are required to have a license to Labor from Mayors or Boards of Police under Section V of the "Bill conferring Civil Rights upon Freedmen;" Officers empowered to grant such papers are not authorized to charge anything for them, and the law gives no officer or court power to fine the Freedmen for not having such a certificate. Yet we hear of Freedmen paying for such papers, being convicted of vagrancy, and fined because they did not obtain them.

Lieut. Hemingway will be instructed not to interfere or involve the Military Authorities in any conflict without permission from this office, and to report no cases for action, where the civil officers grant Freedmen "labor certificates" with-out charge; and do not make it an offence under the vagrant law for them to be without them, or where they apply the Vagrant law to whites and blacks without distinction and fine Freedmen only after conviction under one of the heads defining vagrancy in the vagrant law.

I am aware of the sensitive feelings of the Magistrates with reference to all interference on the part of the Military authorities, out hope they will remember that our relations are delicate that we have duties that we must discharge, as sacred as theirs, and that there is great need of caution in the execution of their duties towards Freedmen if all conflicts are to be avoided.

SAMUEL THOMAS, -Colonel

Asst. Com. Bu. R. F. & A. L.

State of Miss. —Transcribed by M. James Stevens ■



*King Arthur II (Julius Hayden) on his float in a badly damaged photo. The early parade route was from the den at Railroad and Davis Avenue, south to Scenic Drive then to City Hall (Market and Front) where the mayor presented the keys to the city to the king, according to Caire's History of Pass Christian.*