

JULY 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 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.

July 2, 2012

Dear Friends & Members

Happy Independence Day! We hope you are having a great summer and are finding time to make our monthly evening and luncheons. (If you missed last month's luncheon, you missed an outstanding talk by author Chet Nicholson on the Dixie Mafia!) Details of July's meeting and luncheon appear below.

We devote this issue to newspaper accounts of three 19th century Fourth of July celebrations at the Pass: An 1838 drinking party with 13 toast to the 13 colonies. A Washington Artillery celebration in 1857. And a Henderson Point picnic celebrating the coming of the railroad in 1870.

—Tom Shellnut, & the Board of Trustees

July Events

Monthly Meeting—Monday July 9, at 7 p.m.

Monday night Marshall Willet will speak about her very recent medical mission to Haiti.

Luncheon June 23 at 12 noon. As we go to press with this newsletter, our speaker for the 23rd has not been confirmed. Closer to the luncheon date Evelina will be sending out an email with details.

A Bit of History

July 4, 1838 - 13 Toasts

New Orleans Daily Picayune, Saturday, July 14, 1838

Through the polite attention of a friend at Pass Christian, we have been favored with an account of the manner in which the anniversary of Independence was celebrated at that watering place.

It seems that "upwards of a considerable number of the inhabitants besides divers loafers," held a meeting on the 3d, "to take into consideration the propriety, expediency convenience, economy, etc., of celebrating the glorious fourth," and a committee of arrangements was appointed, "consisting of the Mayor and three hard colts."

This committee resolved itself into a supreme body for the exclusive celebration of the day, and accordingly met at the Hotel on the morning of the Fourth and proceeded heart and soul to business, the Mayor being the ringleader.



"The Little Fisher Maidens of Pass Christian Miss." reads the caption of this delightful Hanson drugstore postcard from about 1906. Catherine Meyers has identified the young girls as Dora and Ellen Hanson whose dolls were featured in June's newsletter.

The scene was materially enlivened by the presence of Mr. Hornblower's fine band of music, consisting of a fiddle and a jew's-harp, which executed some fine and delicate touches "at the swallowing of each sentimentaler," as given below.

The celebrators were so happy as to attract the attendance and elicit the smiles of divers of the softer sex, [and negroes?] who, fascinated by the mellifluous tones of horse hair combined with the Hebrew harp, poked their kinky heads into the windows, as all negroes will do, and grinned their approbation of the patriotic scene.

The following spirited toasts, characteristic of the company, were drank or rather washed down by bountiful libations of potent drinks, suited to the occasion, and cooled with ices.

1st The Day we Celebrate —Not to be sneezed at.
Air, "Capering a shore."

2nd The President of the United States —"Little but oh! oh!"
Air, "Though I'm but a very little lad." [Martin Van Buren —5 feet 6 inches tall]

3rd Abolitionists—
Air "Your way is dark and leads to death,
Why will ye persevere?" —Watts

4th Things in General—About the same as usual at this season of the year.
Air, "There's nae luck about the house."

5th Our Hotels, Society, etc.—Those who pay us a visit this summer will find they have come to a "Pretty pass."
Air, "There is a land of pure delight."

6th The Louisiana Elections—The foremost horse takes the purse.
Air, "The devil take the hindmost."

7th The Twenty-six Stars—They are all in the ascendant.
Air, "Sich a gittin up stairs."

8th The U. S. Treasury and the Banks—"Studious of change"
Air, "Turn about and wheel about."

9th The Militia—The bull-work of the country.
Air, "Father's got a great bull calf."

10th The Mail Robbers and the Sub-Treasurers—
Air "Still so gently o'er me stealing."

11th John Q. Adams—One of the has beens.
Air, "In the down hill of life."

12th The Exploring Expedition—Discovered to be a hum-bug.
Air, "Humming all the trade is."

13th The Fair Sex—No joking manner.
Air, "I have a sweetheart in dis town."

At this stage, according to our correspondent, one of the colts became so fractious that the jew's harp could not be heard, and all the fiddle strings were broken from excessive friction.

They had to quit, one half of the company wanting the "tide in the affairs of men" that they might navigate—the other half, finding the wind in their teeth, were compelled to take such long tacks that midnight found some of them reclining quietly in the sand.

July 4, 1857 - Washington Artillery

New Orleans Daily Delta, Friday, July 3, 1857

The steamer Creole will leave New Orleans at 4 P.M. Friday, July 3, 1857, for Biloxi and all intermediate landings.

The Washington Artillery, with their fine band, will be on board on their way to Pass Christian. . . .

New Orleans Daily Delta, Tues. July 7, 1857, and July 8
Pass Christian, July 5, 1857

It is as difficult to find news here as virtue among the Mormons, true piety in New England, or patriotism among placemen [political appointees-ed].

The Fourth, the glorious Fourth, has come and gone and with it the First Company of the New Orleans Battalion of Artillery, Capt. [Colonel] Walton. What with their fine military appearance, their gentlemanly bearing, their handsome uniform, their excellent discipline—as witnessed in their marching and drill, both in infantry and artillery tactics—they greatly enhanced the amusements and displays of the day.

And the elegant music which the band ever and anon discoursed was not among the least attractive of them.

They arrived in the Creole on Saturday night, and before going to bed joined in the mazes of the dance in the parlor of the hotel [McDonnell's] where they made their quarters.

32 Cannon Shots in Morning

In the morning they promptly answered the reveille call, just as Sol's radiant rays in the East bespoke his

coming; and in 32 charges, each following quick and close upon his fellow, lock-step fashion, from their loud and brazen mouthed cannon, they bade him welcome and the day he ushered into existence.

Suspected of Theft

I should not wish in this connection to make any charge, individually or as a body, against the First Company of the New Orleans Battalion of Artillery, Capt. Walton, which would not be susceptible of the clearest proof; but it is said that several of them—and the best looking among them too—have been guilty of pilfering: aye, of stealing; stealing the hearts, all vulnerable and sensitive as they must have been, of several young ladies....

I am growing too prolix on the subject, and lest I should do so, were I to mention any others, I will reserve what else I have to say for another missive.

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July 4, 1870 - Railroad Nearly Complete

PICNIC TO CELEBRATE RAILROAD PROGRESS, EIGHT MILES COMPLETED IN VICINITY OF THE PASS (1870)

New Orleans Times - July 10, 1870

SOMETHING OF A RAILROAD BASKET PICNIC

... Pass Christian is what it was last year, and what it will be for many years to come, unless, indeed, that indomitable Chattanooga railroad, which, after passing victoriously through so many perils, both pecuniary and legislative, now succeeds in throwing its iron lines toward all points of the compass, shall, in its practical consummation, change it beyond recognition.

As it is, Pass Christian sits on the Gulf Coast hidden, as usual, in her trees, and vouchsafing the coolest of breezes in the hottest of days.

Henderson Point July 4 Railroad Picnic

What we have just said apropos of the Chattanooga Road brings to mind the picnic given on the Fourth of July at Henderson's Point by such of its officers as are stationed at the Pass. There was no reason why this picnic should not have been given on the 3rd as well as on that special day of "glorious, immortal memory," except that the employees of the road has been granted a holiday on that day—[a Monday], and it was therefore deemed the best fitted for the purposes of a festivity organized in their behalf.

Perhaps there was another consideration which induced the gentlemen in charge of the affair to unite their friends on this day. It will not have been forgotten that, months ago, when the great Chattanooga-Morgan war aroused the echoes of the courts in this city, it was announced that the road would, perhaps, be in practical operation from New Orleans to Mobile on the 4th of July.

Eight Miles Completed in Vicinity of the Pass

Railroad lines are no more built in a single day than Rome; and thus the 4th arrived and the expectations of the inhabitants of our suburban towns were not realized. But if there was not an unbroken line of iron between the two cities, there had, at least, been done work from both ends, and in the centre, which showed that the company has, by no means, been idle.

The Pass section, we understood subsequently, had been built eight miles eastward—that is, from Point

Henderson to the Hammock. To celebrated even this partial success was the object of this celebration, which—as we were notified by a card—was an "informal basket picnic, to be held at Point Henderson."

The card also contained the announcement that Dr. G. N. Smith, Messrs. Elliot Henderson, Geo. Vincent and W. R. Flanders, were on the Committee of Arrangements.

Passengers Carried All Day For the First Time

And so it happened that, from 9 A. M. to a period ranging from between 5 and 6 P. M., the unwonted sound of a shrill whistle was heard resounding through the woods that back the Pass: that the other unwonted sound of the thug, thug, thug of a continually passing train; the wild delight of the "small boys"—for a suburban city has its "small boys," as well as its more pretentious neighbors clothing themselves in brick and mortar—and the sight was now seen for the first time, of a cargo of live passengers, male and female, passing end re-passing on the brand new track.

A gala-day for the Pass; for its young men; its maidens; its sight-seers, not to speak of its spectators and those material personages given unto the rise and fall of stocks.

Invited Guests Arrive

Reaching the ground at 2 P. M. we found a goodly number of invited guests present—guests from near Mississippi City—guests from the Pass—guests from the Bay. The Passites came via the railroad from Market Street. The St. Louisites made the transit by foot to the draw bridge of the new bridge that joins, through its iron fetters, the once divided Shieldsboro' and Henderson Point.

Thence they were transferred by the train to the place of picnic—a capital position, embowered in live-moss-covered and venerable oaks—cooled by perennial breezes—and accounted by us, who have not been wanting in experience at Picnics during the past four years, the very El Dorado of picnic-grounds.

When we reached the ground, the festivity was at its full. interspersed with those whose homes were in the pine woods, stretching toward Bayou Portage, or the spaces beyond the mouth of Wolf River, were some of the prettiest and most graceful of the beauties who now adorn the society of Pass Christian and Bay St. Louis. Prominent among these, we would like to characterize some dozen or more; but the respect which we owe to the gentle sex prevents us from giving the details. It is sufficient to say that the young ladies were beautiful as the Graces; and that their charms had much to do to make the moments, so far as the invited guests were concerned, pass away with no more apparent duration than a summer cloud.

Arrangements Committee

At the Picnic, so far as we could see, Dr. Geo. N. Smith—a gentleman of rare geniality, and by common report a physician of undisputed science and accurate professional knowledge, seemed to be the master of ceremonies. To Dr. Smith we are indebted for many kindnesses apart from his position as chairman of the Railroad Basket Picnic. Pass Christian has no truer or more reputable citizen than he—or one who confers more honor upon it.

With Dr. Smith we had also the pleasure of seeing among the Committee of Arrangement Mr. Elliot

Henderson. Mr. Henderson is a son of Hon. John Henderson so long associated with the legislative councils of the nation [Mississippi U.S. Senator], as well as with the active development of the Pass. Mr. Henderson is a prominent lawyer of the Pass; and is a worthy descendant from his distinguished father....

On the Committee, also, were Mr. Geo. Vincent, one of the most enterprising and thriving merchants of the Pass. No better appointment could have been made.

From Mr. Flanders, who seems to have the progress of the road at his fingers' end, we learn that it is probable that trains will be running between Mobile and Pascagoula by the 1st of October.

By the 1st January, 1871 — perhaps, before —we may hear the steam whistle making a continuous scream from New Orleans to Mobile.

July 4th Orations

But we must return to the Picnic, although only for a moment....

Whether Mr. Wilson Mathews, the eloquent speaker, no longer felt inclined to throw in the peroration so loudly called for, and so anxiously expected, we cannot say. Perhaps the Signal Guns which, from across the Bay, told of a certain loud-voiced celebration of the Fourth, and which, so far as we could hear, were not responded to from the Pass, may have had some little effect; but one thing we can add here, and that is that the opening of that address led the audience to the liveliest expectation of a somewhat better style—shall we say of a Ciceronian of Oratory than one has been accustomed to for years.

Train Ride

Taking our seat in the train—seating ourself by the side of a most pleasant and charming companion, (to whom, in this running manner, we beg to return our acknowledgments for a pleasant quarter of an hour's talk) scarcely noticing in the rapid transit made, (so rapid, indeed, that we are assured by our friend, Dr. Smith, that in the earlier part of the day the train ran the three miles from Market Street to the Point in 3:20 minutes) the points of interest passed.

We found ourself, after traveling seven or more miles, in sight of the Hammock. What the Hammock is, we shall not now describe. But a few months more, and the victorious cars shall send out a whistle that, first heard in the Crescent City, shall, in a couple of hours, make every point and station behind the Bay and the Pass familiar to the traveling public as household words.

We have but one more word to add to this already long account. So far as we could judge, (and we ourself walked the bridge between the Bay and the Pass to the draw-bridge; besides being able to criticize the mechanical building and grading of the road) this word is one of unqualified praise for the strength and durability of the road as laid up to this time. No better can be found in the entire country.