

Smoke From The Chimneys



Long Beach Historical Society

Remembering the past to preserve our future

January 2015

President's Message

The New Year brings some exciting changes for your Long Beach Historical Society. For one thing, you are going to get more for your membership dues as we will be meeting six times in 2015. This means more interesting and innovative programs and more opportunities to become personally involved in the activities of your Society.

As this newsletter is being written, the sale of our historical calendar commemorating Hurricane Katrina is going very well. As you know, this is our main fund-raiser. Several hundred were sold before Christmas and we expect sales to continue well into the New Year. Our Finance Chair, Brenda Batey, has done an excellent job in overseeing the production and sales.

If you haven't already done so, please send in your dues this month. We continue to seek new members and to encourage former members to once again activate their membership status. As you read this, please consider inviting someone to join our ranks.

Thanks to those who staffed our booth at Christmas on the Avenue last month. We were looking for new members as usual and also sold some calendars.

Happy New Year, everyone.

Donald Dana, Jr.

Vice President/Program Chairman Message

Hoping the joy of the Christmas season is still in your hearts!

The program in Oct was extremely enjoyable to me and hopefully to all in attendance. Desiring to have some educational type programs on the pioneers of early Long Beach, and using information from old newspaper articles, I wrote a program based on Mary Ellen's mother, May Quarles Watrous. Brenda Batey and Lucy Rishel Levens, a Quarles descendant, accepted my invitation to play the parts which were depicted during different stages in the life of May as she interacted with friends and relatives. Brenda and Lucy were both terrific as they made their acting debuts at the Historical Society House.

Having more knowledge about the beginning of our city and its citizens is a good thing and I hope that we all feel that we "know" May Quarles Watrous, the mother of the society's founder, Mary Ellen Alexander, just a little better.

There's no shortage of other notables who contributed greatly to the beginnings of our city and I look forward to spotlighting them in the future.

This month's meeting will feature Dr Pat Smith, who is retired from the University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Park Campus, where he was Professor of History. Dr Smith, also a popular author, who was educated at Vanderbilt University, has spoken to the society on other occasions and we are happy that he has accepted another invitation, especially during the tenth anniversary year of Hurricane Katrina.

Dr Smith will speak to us about his latest book, Hurricane Katrina: The Mississippi Story and the research that he conducted to write it. In a review, nationally

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SMOKE FROM THE CHIMNEYS LONG BEACH, MS

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**Long Beach
Historical Society**

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645 Klondyke RD

(South side of the central fire station on Klondyke RD)

Meetings will all be held on the THIRD Mondays except the Awards/Soup Luncheon will be held at the Methodist Church. all other at Historical Society Building, 645 Klondyke Rd.

2015 Meetings:

- **January 19, 11:00 AM (Awards/Soup Luncheon at the Methodist Church)**
- March 16
- May 18
- July 20
- September 21
- November 16

Email Address:

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Website: www.lbhistoricalsociety.com

Eddie Ware – Webmaster

Mission Statement

The Society's purpose is "to bring together those people interested in the history of the City of Long Beach and to coordinate their efforts in preserving and recording that history for future generations."

Long Beach Historical Society is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to the:

- Preservation and management of historic and cultural resources of Long Beach
- Provide educational opportunities for both its membership and the public

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renowned historian Douglas Brinkley, acclaimed the work as "a brilliantly researched and exhaustive look at the hammering that the Magnolia State endured in the 2005 hurricane-from-hell." In addition, General Warren Edwards of Homeland Security said that Dr Smith's work is a "much needed and long-untold story of a resilient society,....a compelling narrative of the triumphs of the People of the Mississippi Gulf Coast." Dr Smith will have autographed books available.

Please join us for lunch at the Methodist Church at 11:00 a. m. on Monday, January 19th for this wonderful program and awards luncheon as well as some delicious soups and desserts. The charge for lunch will be \$10.00 this year as this annual event has also become a much needed fund raiser for us. We look forward to using these funds for our future library, the upkeep of our building and for other needs and projects as they arise.

With all of this hurricane talk, and I'm sure there will be more during this 10th Anniversary year of Katrina, I hope the following information that I've gathered about some of the other hurricanes in our area will be interesting to you. These old facts have been presented to us at various times in our local newspaper and of course, in books. If by chance you don't have access to the books, enjoy the info here.

Respectively submitted,

Beth Hansen

A Look at Past Hurricanes on the Mississippi Gulf Coast 1722-1947

Mention has been made in various publications about severe hurricanes here in our area going back to the 1700's. It's interesting to note that two struck a mere few weeks apart in 1722 and the next year there was also another that was very destructive to homes, boats and agriculture. Forests were leveled 30 miles inland in another very destructive hurricane in 1772. There would be even more hurricanes in the 1800's, one that was particularly devastating (with tremendous loss of life in LA) near the end of the century in 1893. Much was written about the damage in Biloxi but the inference was that the whole coast was affected, as it usually is. A full page of coverage in the Daily Herald, in extremely poor condition, reminds us of the beauty of the written word in the days of old as evidenced by the following description:

It was a marvelous sight, a spectacle of thrilling magnificence, to stand on the beach at such a time and watch the angry waves, like a victorious army, sweeping everything before them as they made charge after charge on the works of man. These twin giants, wind and wave, seem to be moved by a common hatred of whatever floats. And on this occasion they had full swing!

It was definitely a killer hurricane with loss of life between Louisiana and Mississippi being in excess of 2,000, destroying canning companies in Biloxi and Bay St

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Louis and pounding all of the towns in between. Part of the Bay St Louis bridge was found on Ship Island and all three coast railroad bridges were destroyed.

In 1901, when the area was struck again, the following appeared in the Daily Herald:

As the bath houses and wharves fell victim to the elements of wind and water, their debris was washed by the impetuous rolling of the waves upon the beach, which was strewn from one end to the other with portions of the wrecks, rendering the beautiful drive wholly impassable to teams, and scarcely so to pedestrians who ventured out, who had to pick their way through lumber and timbers that had been thrown up on the shell road. The sight was a most distressing one, but it was only one of the incidents of the most mementos and terrifying occasion.

At the time of the 1906 hurricane, Charles Johnsson, formerly of Poland, was the lighthouse keeper on Horn Island, living there with his wife Catherine and their 18 year old daughter. Thankfully, four of their other children had already moved.

A tug boat captain tried to persuade the Johnssons to move inland for the storm but Charles said it was his job to keep the light on for the safety of the ships. He conferred with his wife and daughter and they decided to stay with him.

During the night, locals on the mainland noticed that the light was not burning and their worst fears

were realized the next day when no trace of the light house could be found. Two of the Johnsson cows were spotted on higher ground and Charles' body was also found but the bodies of his wife and daughter never were.

Of course, this is just one isolated and extremely sad incident among many more that may be found for each of the hurricanes mentioned here.

It was reported in Sept 1909 that bath houses, pavilions, yacht slips and pleasure resorts that were brilliantly illuminated nightly and the rendezvous for those who sought relaxation and amusement upon the famous Gulf Coast, are washed away and not a timber remains to mark their locations.

Most of the time, Long Beach is not mentioned in the reports which will mention the cities on either side but in 1915, it was stated that the L & N railroad tracks and the tracks of the Mississippi Coast Traction Company and the roadway in front of Long Beach were completely destroyed during that hurricane. Considerable damage was done in Long Beach with a new, large store being blown down and the front of another was blown out by the wind. In one section of town it was reported that it seemed to have been the scene of a cyclone, as there were other small houses blown down, barns, outhouses, fences, trees, etc. and a considerable quantity of cattle killed. Loss of human life was also reported.

Along the coast the hurricane also destroyed the shell road, the trolley line and even an amusement park over on Deer Island that had just been built. Destruction was everywhere.

Hard to believe, but the very next year, and very early in the 1916 hurricane season, July 5, to be exact, another hurricane hit. Many were out in boats, some for pleasure, and some for work. Seventy young students from the Gulf Coast Military Academy were out on two schooners and after the hurricane, panic set in when they were nowhere to be found. A few days later the schooners and students were located in Pensacola where news was abounding that Biloxi and Gulfport had been wiped from the map. There was a lot of sadness and then rejoicing. Sadly though, crew members from several other schooners were never found and news reports continuously told of the great anguish of the families of these men. A father and son were among the group of missing and search parties went far and wide for days without finding any life, just one of the boats in an upside down position.

Boats and barges were piled high out on Ship Island and the bodies of cattle were seen floating about in the Gulf.

Peter Guiffria, who had a very large farm in Long Beach stated that he lost 8000 melons. His Rockford cantaloupe patch that covered several acres was completely ruined, their vines piled up in confusion. He and many other

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farmers lamented the loss of their source of income as they realized that every tomato plant, corn stalk and anything else in season had been whipped to death by the fury of the wind.

The coast experienced a 31 year respite, from 1916 to 1947, with no hurricanes hitting the area. This meant that a whole generation had grown up never experiencing the wrath of vicious weather as had their elders.

The '47, the last nameless hurricane to hit here, was also the first one to hit after the seawall was installed in 1928. Several sections were washed out but the wall did live up to its expectations even though the waves topped it in places wreaking havoc on the south lane of the highway.

The damage was great and not only state dignitaries came but also a personal representative of President Harry Truman, Major General Phillip Fleming, head of the Federal Works Administration, who arrived just behind Governor Wright, Senator Eastland and Representative Colmer. Not long afterwards, mayors from all coast cities came together to plan for a better coast. Within weeks a decision was made to build a beach as well as a better highway.

Sadly, two members of the Boggs family lost their lives due to the 1947 hurricane, Archie, whose parents, the Indians warned not to build so close to the water, and his wife Bessie. She perished in the storm and he, a few weeks later

from sustained injuries. Precious mementos were also lost by all the family members who bravely rebuilt, no doubt praying that another bad storm would not arrive.

The above was taken from genealogybank.com (from the Daily Herald), Rosalie & Radishes by Mary Ellen Alexander, Gulfport, Beginnings & Growth by Henry Black, The Mississippi Gulf Coast by Charles L Sullivan & Murella Hebert Powell, a few assorted websites and me, Beth Hansen.

Refreshments

Thanks so much to Rosemary Gremillion and Mary Levens for the delicious refreshments during the October meeting. The festive Halloween theme included some very colorful cupcakes and many other goodies that were enjoyed by all.

**Condolences**

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to the families and friends of Richard Walter Carman, Don Parks, Nina M Brooks, James Earl Reynolds Sr, Betty Killegrew Matthews, Diane LaFrance Allen, Margaret Reinike, Mark Coots, Jimmy Johnson, Hudson Hamilton, Zachary Whitfield, Ross Lishen, Kimberly Watts, Bobby Tillman, Irene Garriga, James Paul Speigner, Mike O'Rand, Laverne Garriga, Frank Goff, Lois H Reeves, Sheila Diane Walley, Lisa Russell, Juanita Nicey Kranz,

William O Doyle, Wilda P Switzer, Leona Switzer, Ronald Matsuba, Bonnie Burford, Charles Gosselin, Mark Damian Gates, Don Earl Parks, Nina M Brooks, Don Dillistone, and Mary Martha Crawford.

I know so many of the people in this list (and I'm sure that you do also) which includes, classmates, cousins, and friends. So much suffering, sadness and shock. Young Zach Whitfield in an auto accident, Lisa Hover Russell, suffering with cancer so many years and teaching school until the end of her life. Mark Gates, another kind of awful accident, RIP all.

Murrell W Hilton, Sr. was a very special former English teacher and coach at Long Beach High School in the 50's and 60's who influenced many. He will be remembered by his students for his wonderful personality and the fun way that he embraced teaching. A clever teacher, Mr. Hilton always found ways to keep us interested in literature. He never missed a reunion and seemed to love us as much as we loved him. We all wanted to be his "favorite pet" as he used to say. Our thoughts are with his devoted wife, Mrs. Linda Hilton and her children.

Our hearts go out to all of these families.

Mystery question

Which school years were the first in the high school on Pass Rd and Cleveland Ave? Don't look for the answer here. Come to the meeting to find it.

One Hundred Years Ago - 1915

The Harrison County agent said the swine flu in Long Beach that killed 100 hogs is the worst he's seen since taking office. Vaccination and quarantine were required to cure the malady.

Farmers complained that 14th St in Gulfport must be opened up to give a direct route into town. They say that using the beach road takes over 4 miles every day of the year.

Sinking of the first "official" piling ceremony signaling the beginning of work on the Harrison County seawall.



Photo courtesy Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Dixie Press Collection



Photo courtesy Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Dixie Press Collection

Yearly Dues Are Due in January

Since the inception of the society the bylaws have always stated that anyone in arrears on dues for more than 90 days after payment is due shall be dropped from membership. We always want to see your smiling faces at the meetings and also keep Smoke from the Chimneys in your mailboxes so please keep those checks coming in, the society depends on them.

Dues run Jan. 1 - Dec. 31

- **\$15.00 Individual**
- **\$20.00 Family**
- **\$5.00 Student**

Either send in a check to
P. O. Box 244

Membership form on page 7
or pay online at our website:

www.lbhistoricalsociety.org

Payment is through Paypal.
(An account with Paypal is not required to do this).

One of the events of the dedication of the Harrison County Seawall completion

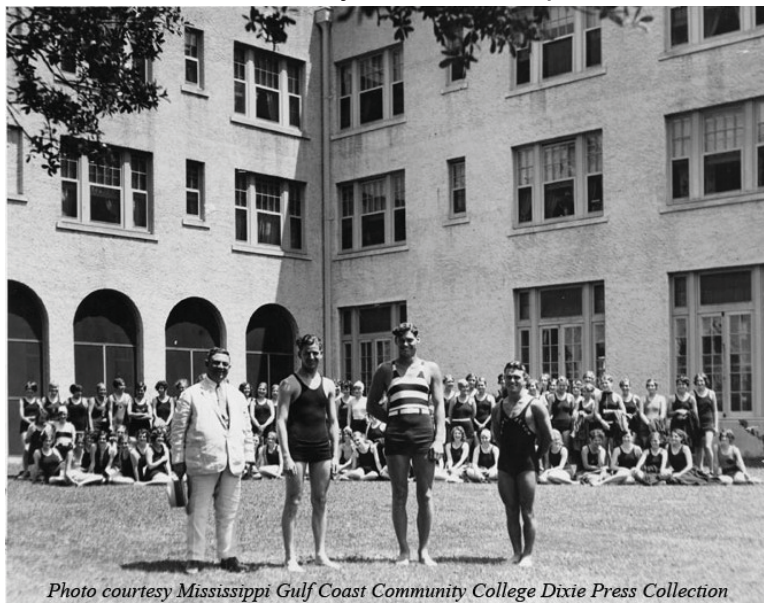


Photo courtesy Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Dixie Press Collection

Come to the meeting to find when and where the above events took place and who the famous people were at this dedication.

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Long Beach Historical Society

**Yearly membership is January 1 – December 31
payable beginning at the January meeting as follows:**

- \$15.00 per individual
- \$20.00 for family
- \$5.00 per student

Those who are unable to attend the January meeting may mail a check too:
Long Beach Historical Society
P. O. Box 244
Long Beach, MS 39560

Name:

Spouse:

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Phone: Home: Cell: Work:

Email:

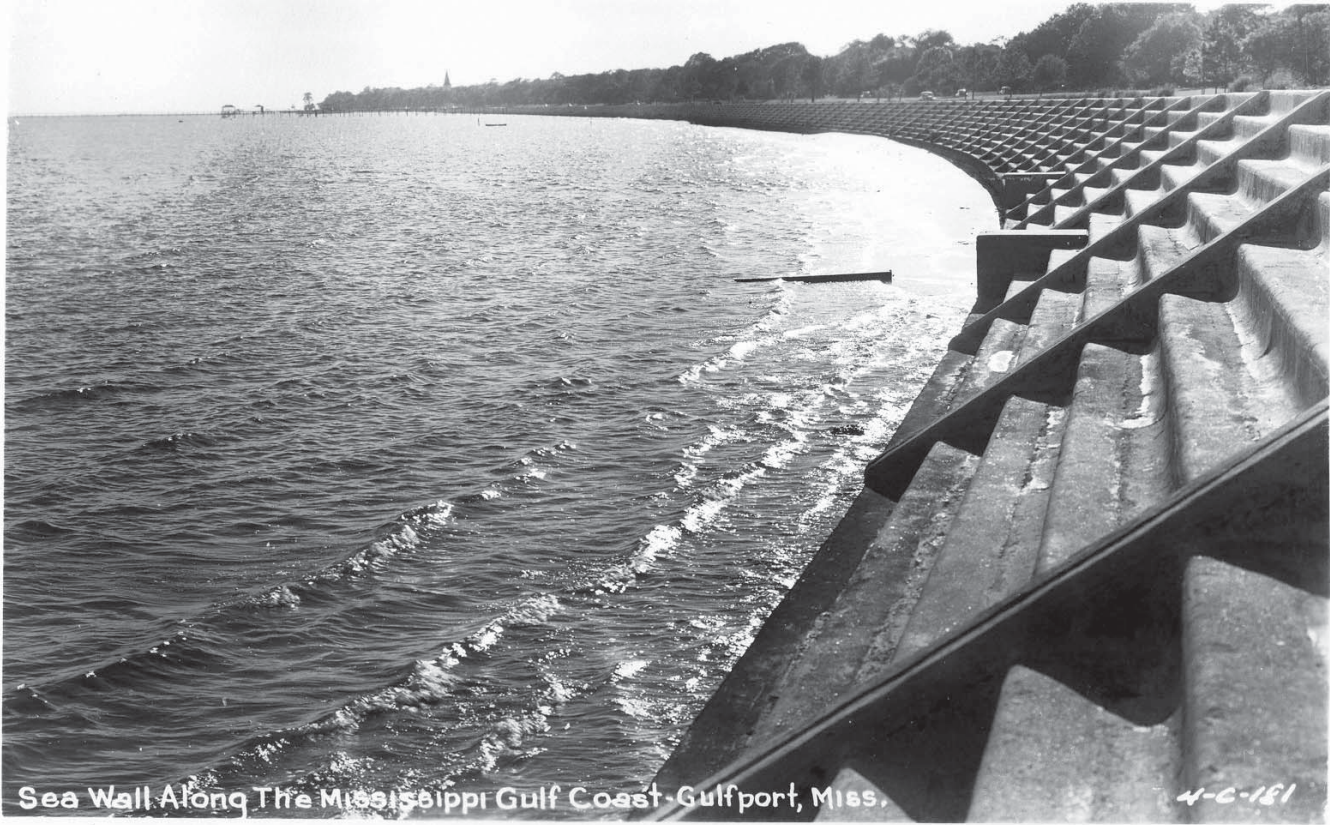
I would like to serve on the Committee to identify historic homes that survived Katrina.

I would like to serve on another Committee.

Comments:

Cut

Long Beach Seawall before the sand beach was pumped in.



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 P. O. Box 244
 Long Beach, MS 39560-0244