

Smoke From The Chimneys

Long Beach Historical Society



Remembering the past to preserve our future

July 2021

President's Message

We have so much in our lives to be thankful for but this pandemic is really trying our patience, isn't it? Seems futile to make a cut and dried plan on what we're going to do when the latest news reports are again revealing facts we didn't want to hear at this point in time. I've gotten my masks out again and plan to be as vigilant as I may possibly be. Also hoping for more vaccinations for those who are able to do so in order to obtain the herd immunity being advocated by the medical community.

In an attempt to lessen your fears about going to a group gathering, let me remind you that there are usually only about twenty to thirty members at our meetings, and some prior guest speakers have told me on occasion that they are impressed with that number and have spoken to much smaller groups. However, it's a very small crowd in comparison to church or other events and we don't have to be in close proximity to each other's faces. I say all of this because I know we're tired of being cooped up in our homes and it's nice to have the enjoyment of seeing friends. We should all consider putting the masks on again.

At the April meeting, our speaker Jenny Levens, Public Affairs Director of the city really brought us up to speed on Greenvale, the Quarles house. The city recently announced they're in contract with Albert & Robinson Architects, PLLC of Hattiesburg for the restoration. It will be hard to wait through the formalities and construction but our city will be a changed place when everything is completed. I'm looking forward to it with great enthusiasm and I know you are also. It will be wonderful for so many people to have easy access to the society at Greenvale's location on what will become North Jeff Davis Avenue. This may be a good time to begin thinking about occasionally being a greeter and guide at Greenvale for those who may enjoy doing so.

Looking forward to seeing you at the meeting on July 19 at 6:00 pm.

Sincerely
Beth Hansen

Upcoming Meeting

SMOKE FROM THE CHIMNEYS LONG BEACH, MS

Beth Hansen: Editor
228-864-6100

Published quarterly by the
Long Beach
Historical Society

Officers

- President – Beth Hansen
- Secretary – Allisa Beck
- Treasurer – Eddie Ware

Board of Directors

- Lucius Marks
- Bernie Parker

Mailing Address:

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

Physical Address

645 Klondyke RD.

Meetings will all be held
on the THIRD Mondays at
Historical Society Building,
645 Klondyke Rd.

2021 Meetings:

- January 18 - Canceled
- April 19 - 6:00 p.m.
- July 19 - 6:00 p.m.
- October 18 - 6:00 p.m.

Email Address:

lbhistoricalsociety@
lbhistoricalsociety.com

Website:

www.lbhistoricalsociety.org
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

Recently with all of the D day talk, Memorial Day, as well as Independence Day, this seems like a good time to talk about our country's Battle Monuments Commission which was organized in 1923. These cemeteries and monuments are exquisitely beautiful and lovingly maintained. They are located in 24 foreign countries. If something is going on at a cemetery here in the United States, you may believe that it is also going on at our American cemeteries around the world where our fallen are memorialized and buried. We will have a Power Point presentation in order to enjoy seeing these locations on the big screen.

Feature Story of the Quarter

Have any of you ever seen the headstone of Fred and Alma Johansen in our cemetery and



wondered just who they may have been?

You'll notice from the picture of the headstone that Frederick Johansen is listed as an M. D. He was a staff member of the United States Public Health Hospital at Carville, LA. for



nearly three decades. For those not aware, this hospital was the only leprosarium in the United States during this point in time. It's historically significant and impressive that our neighbor state was a leader in something so important in the health care field. At this time, we all know what it is like to live under fear of contagious disease which has the capacity to take our lives.

Leprosy, an ancient Biblical disease, would later become known as Hansen's Disease, after Armauer Hansen of Norway discovered the causative agent, Mycobacterium, the first bacterium to become a known cause of human disease. One of the saddest and erroneous thoughts about this disease, which caused lesions and disfigurement, was that it was God's way of passing judgment for morally suspect actions. We now know that Hansen's is a germ disease just as tuberculosis, typhoid fever and pneumonia.

The following paragraphs will provide a glimpse into Dr. Johansen's work place, before and after he arrived in Louisiana.

The humble beginnings of the Louisiana hospital descended through the efforts of several concerned individuals, some compassionate doctors as well as elected officials in the Louisiana legislature. Through their efforts, a shelter was created by Dr. Isadore Dyer of Tulane University Medical School, a skin specialist, who knew of many lepers in the city of New Orleans who had no place to receive care. It would have been beneficial to Dr. Dyer if a location close to the University would've worked out but since no one wanted a hospital of this nature in their back yards, it was hard to obtain any property for this purpose. The doctor wanted to research and try treatments and meds to help these sick members of society.

Finally in 1894, a suitable location was found about an hour by boat from New Orleans and very close to the river. The state of Louisiana was able to rent it on a five-year program with option to buy, which it did, but a fib was told to make it all happen. It was implied that the location was for an ostrich farm.

A sugar plantation had been built on the property in 1859 but by 1894, all buildings were pretty much dilapidated. A row of dingy slave quarters, in rough shape but still standing, would become new homes for the lepers and tiny staff who were transported to this new site under the cover of darkness, on a coal barge being towed by a tug boat. Not a very pretty sight but it was a sign of the

times. However, Dr. Dyer was on board the barge along with several newspaper reporters plus provisions including 80 beds donated to the state by Charity Hospital. After taking up residence at this new site the inhabitants didn't have to hide from society as they'd done in the city, it was still a gloomy existence for the lepers who had nothing to do. There was one resident physician but no iron clad regimen was in place to bolster morale.

Two years later, Dr. Dyer went to Emmittsburg, MD and made a plea to the Mother Superior of the order of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul to send members of its community to Carville, to assume full charge of the patients, including domestic duties of the kitchen, and household along with the nursing duties. This is the same religious order which began staffing St. Thomas School in Long Beach when it opened in 1922.

In 1896 four Daughters of Charity arrived on the dismal scene. One was in her fifties and proficient in hospital administration and the other three were in their thirties.

by the



The group was happily greeted by the disbelieving patients who kept asking if they had really come to stay, live there, and help them. They were near tears which really moved the sisters. Yes, they had really come to stay.... and stay they did for about a hundred years and so changed

the lives of the sufferers, right from the

beginning. Until this time, the patients had been idle so

the sisters created activities to brighten their outlooks, which was a boon to these victims who had been banished from society and forced to live under a mandatory quarantine as they suffered in silence with no hope of a cure in sight for their dreaded affliction.

There was one bright spot about the Carville property, it was a gorgeous home to many large and magnificent, moss-draped live oak trees and resurrection ferns. The grounds were so beautiful that the nuns suggesting gardening and the men found they wanted to grow vegetables while the women found joy in the beauty of flowers. All of this greatly enhanced the looks of the grounds even more and also instilled pride in the residents who seemed to enjoy the work along with the fruits of their labor.

Over the years it was hard to appropriate funds but under the Daughters of Charity, a slow transformation began to take place which turned the old home and run down slave cabins into a full-fledged research hospital.

Many doctors each added their own flavor to the work in progress. In addition to Dr. Dyer, there was Dr. Guy Henry Faget, who revolutionized the treatment of Hansen's with all of his work with sulfone compounds. He was the director at Carville for many years and paved the way for the complete recovery of leprosy.

Dr. Johansen often collaborated with Dr Faget and co-authored a number of papers with him as well as with others also. The doctors were all on the hunt to cure the horrid disease which had broken up families and isolated the sufferers, in order to keep from infecting their own loved ones.

When Dr. Johansen entered the Public Health Health Service, he was sent to Carville in 1924 as the Clinical Director. Conditions had greatly improved by his arrival and he quickly endeared himself to the patients just as the Daughters had with their arrival. Prior to his going to work in LA, the federal government had purchased the property from the state. The doctor would witness many more changes during his thirty years of service. One of them was seeing a new hospital built in 1938. By the end of his tenure, patients were coming to Louisiana from all over the world for treatment!

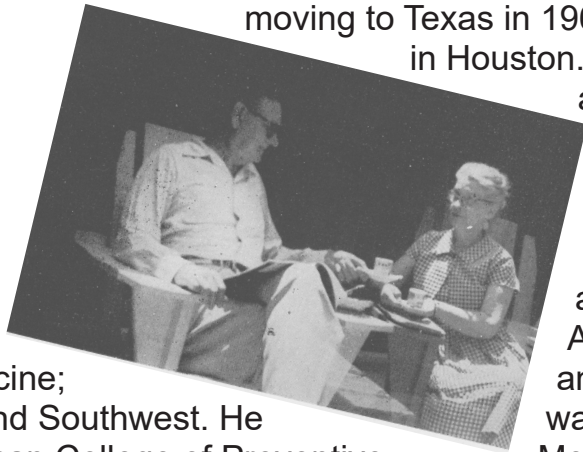
Dr. Johansen spear headed the building of a 20 acre man made lake in 1950 for patients only. The shallow lake was no deeper than 8 feet and was well stocked with fish. The patients soon enjoyed cook outs, fishing rodeos, picnics, boating, all sorts of activities, which of course was great for these patients who were encouraged to stay active in any way possible. The lake was named Johansens Lake in honor of the beloved doctor.

By 1953, when Dr. Jo turned 64 years of age, his retirement from public service became mandatory. At his retirement party, he was lauded as the man who established "a heart-to- heart relationship" with the patients, who staged a giant party in his honor. A bond of mutual understanding and affection existed and in addition to some amazing parting gifts there was a flood of telegrams received from those who could not attend and they were from far off locations, Washington, D. C., and others. Many speakers recalled the warmth

of his friendship and the many benefits of his kindness. A large group of guests came from New Orleans, many from Baton Rouge, several locations in Texas, New York City, and other towns in Louisiana.

It isn't known if their association with the sisters at the hospital had any bearing on the Johansen's choosing to move to Long Beach, Mississippi, but that's exactly what they did. It's very possible that they had been coming to the Coast for years like many Louisiana residents have always done. After being at Carville from 1924 until 1953, Fred and Alma purchased a home on the corner of Magnolia St. and Oak View Avenue and moved to our city after the retirement of Dr. Jo, as he was affectionately referred to at Carville. A certain former stock boy who later became the manager at Skellie's Food Store states that the Johansens did their shopping in the store. He also observed that the good doctor and William Skellie always seemed to enjoy chatting.

The Johansen's were able to enjoy 16 years of retirement here in Long Beach before moving to Texas in 1969 to live with their daughter in Houston. Mrs. Johansen passed away first in November 1973 and Fred passed away 10 months later in September 1974.



Sketches of Dr. Jo in Who's Who in Who's Who in Medicine; Who in the South and Southwest. He was also Fellow of the American College of Preventive Medicine and also Fellow of the American College of Physicians.

are found in America; and Who's was appointed Medicine and

Beth Hansen

Sources: *Genealogybank.com*; *leprosyhistory.org*; *ancestry.com*; *Wikipedia.org*; *hrsa.gov/hansens*; *rlaiche@uno.edu* and *Old Spanish Trail Along the Miss. Gulf Coast* by Lu Hartley Morehead.

The doctors, nurses, and nuns, anyone at Carville are all excellent subjects each worthy of having their own written profile. They were all amazing in their own right. The patients were lucky and surely grateful for having them.



W. J. Quarles House: The oldest house in Long Beach, built in the early 1890's. This is an incredible landmark just by knowing the hurricanes it withstood to be around for us today. We are truly lucky that it will be available for all of Long Beach very soon. If you were ever a student of Carol Paola, you have probably learned everything about this home. She has worked tirelessly to keep this landmark from being torn down. It is already standing stronger than ever before due to restoration funds she helped make possible. Everyone that purchases one of these prints will be helping this landmark stand for many more decades to come because \$15 of every print sold will be reinvested back into this beautiful home. The print is of the W. J. Quarles house transitioning from the current state of the home to the restored state. If you pre-order now, you will receive the low numbered prints. They are 8" x 10" in an 11" x 14" black or white mat for \$35.00. If unable to pick up they can be shipped for an additional cost of \$6.50.

If you are local and want to save the shipping cost you can pick up prints at City Hall, just make a note on the form. You will be notified when the prints are available for pickup.

Only 100 will be produced so get yours while available.

Thank you so much for your support.

Design by Jaimie Bolden of Landmarks Restored.

Mail completed order and check payable to Jaimie Bolden to:
Long Beach Historical Society
P. O. Box 244
Long Beach, MS 39560



Long Beach Historical Society
PO Box 244
Long Beach, MS 39560-0244



Find more at lbhistoricalsociety.org

DUES

Dues are due every January, unless you recently paid or recently joined during the latter part of last year.

Check the address label to see if your membership has lapsed.

- Per Individual \$15.00
- Family \$20.00
- Student \$5.00 (thru 12th grade).

Mail to:

Long Beach Historical Society
PO Box 244

Long Beach, MS 39560

You may also pay online:

www.lbhistoricalsociety.org/members

And, remember, when you reach your 90th birthday, dues become complimentary, which is a small perk of the society.