



Long Beach Historical Society

Remembering and Preserving
the past to empower the future

Meeting April 20 at 6:00 pm

April 2026

From the President...

What a great start to our year! Our Historical Society has grown both in membership and participation. We have an energetic and dedicated board. We have been very encouraged by the participation of some of our younger members and the energy that they bring to our society. All of this combines to make an enjoyable group.

This April 20th is our next meeting. We are very excited that Brehm Bell and Matt Barrett will present their "From Roots to Rockets," an oral history documentary preserving the history of the lost communities of Hancock County. The film is a tribute to the residents of Pearlington, Gainesville, Napoleon, Santa Rosa, Logtown, and Westonia who were relocated in the early 1960s to make way for NASA's main rocket testing facility, known then as the Mississippi Test Facility and now, Stennis Space Center. The government's acquisition of 125,000 acres of land led to the uprooting of these long-established communities, and it was the vision of two local Bay St. Louis residents to capture first-hand accounts of this transitional time. (sourced from BSL Little Theater Facebook group.) We hope as many as possible will join us for this very interesting presentation.

I want to thank both old and new members for their participation in the group throughout the year. Participation is the lifeblood of our historical society to help us celebrate and record the history of Long Beach. I want to give a special thanks Eddie Ware for producing and sending the newsletter, plus so many other things, as well as Lucius Marks, Danny Hansen, Courtney Cuevas, Christina Dahl, and Tina Dahl for their special efforts.

Hope to see everyone on Monday, April 20th, at 6 pm.

Regards,
Billy Skellie

The Fennell Collection

SMOKE FROM THE CHIMNEYS LONG BEACH, MS

Published quarterly by the
Long Beach
Historical Society

Officers

- President - Billy Skellie
- Vice President - Courtney Welch
- Secretary - Allisa Beck
- Treasurer - Eddie Ware

Board of Directors

- Lucius Marks
- Bernie Parker
- Danny Hansen
- Tina Dahl

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.

2026 Meetings:

- **January 19 - 6:00 pm**
- **April 20 - 6:00 pm**
- July 20 - 6:00 pm
- October 19 - 6:00 pm

Email Address:

lbhistoricalsociety@lbhistoricalsociety.com

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

For those of you on Facebook and a member of the "Remember When in Long Beach II," you have been enjoying many photos that are from the William "Bill" Fennell Collection. The Fennell family generously donated this collection to the Long Beach Historical Society, and volunteers are digitizing it. These photos are a collection of decades of Bill Fennell's photography studio, but mainly, his weekly newspaper that operated for approximately 40 years. These photos and the newspapers recorded a huge swath of the history of Long Beach. Many will remember the newspaper. It was a mainstay of our sweet city.

Mr. Fennell operated a photography studio located at different times on Second Street, Jeff Davis, Klondyke, and Railroad roads over the years. Mrs. Dolores Fennell joined her husband in the business while raising six children. The paper, The Gulf Coast Weekly, ran from the 1950s to the 1980s. Every issue was filled with the events and recognitions of our fellow citizens and family members and was eagerly anticipated by its subscribers.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Fennell died in 2000, having given our sweet city wonderful records and memories over the years. Now, their family members are continuing the tradition. There are thousands of photos that have been donated. They are stored at the Long Beach Historical Society. So far, only a small amount has been digitized, but the plan is for all to be made available digitally. If you are comfortable with digitizing photos, please contact us to arrange volunteer times and equipment. Thank you to the Fennell family for generously sharing these memories and knowing how important they are to us all.

1959 High School at Old Pass Rd and Cleveland Ave

The 1926 school on Jeff Davis Avenue, built on property donated by Harper McCaughan, was intended for all 12 grades. By 1950 it had become so crowded that elementary classes were taking place off the main campus in spare rooms provided by local churches. Rent was paid for the use of these additional facilities.

Supt. Appleby was scrambling to comply with Health Department regulations in the lunchroom building, replacing equipment in the science lab and other major improvements.

In March of 1951, Mayor Thompson announced the city was seriously looking into building a new high school with a gym and

also a public health clinic. The plans were big and four different sites were being looked at to fulfill the plans. Supt. McQuiston was ready to collaborate with architects and the Board of Trustees.

By November of that same year, it was reported that if the work could get underway by January 1, of 1952, it could be finished by summer. Plans were made for rewiring the present building, installing new lights as well as other important changes to use the building for the lower grades, but nothing ever materialized from any of those plans.

In August of 1952, the plans took off again beginning with a public discussion of why new facilities were needed. Concerned citizens spoke and input was accepted from everyone present, which included, Oscar P Wren, a member of the school board and father of officer Mike Wren. Also speaking was Clarence Thomas, a local merchant and father of three young children. Sadly, Mr. Thomas, age 59, passed away a few hours after returning home that evening.

Several years would pass before the discussions again became serious but seemed to center around the addition of classrooms only and not a whole new building. However, an in depth 1955 enrollment study revealed a huge jump to 642 students compared to 350 in 1950. Supt. Reeves was then asked to furnish statistical information in regard to expected enrollment in 1960 in order to adequately formulate some long range plans.

This time the talks gained momentum and finally came up for a vote in November of 1957. An ad appeared in the Daily Herald with a long list of progressive minded merchants who endorsed the bond issue. At this time, 151 elementary students were still attending classes off the main campus. They were in various churches and also on the former Van Cloostere property on the beach, then owned by the Future Farmers of America. Yearly maintenance and rent on these locations totaled in excess of \$4,000.00 yearly.

By early March of 1958, the city advertised for school bond bids in the amount of \$350,000.00 and was in the process of securing 20 acres of land on which to build a new high school. Mayor R. L. Reed announced March 25, 1958, as the date when bids submitted by several Mississippi and Louisiana firms were to be opened. The commission accepted the low bid submitted by Scharff and Jones of New Orleans.

Twenty acres of property on the corner of Cleveland Avenue and Old Pass Road was then purchased from Mrs. Ione B Thomas, of the Glad Farm. She and her late husband, Clarence, who died six years earlier, owned 200 acres at the site.

After many, many years, a new school would be forthcoming. Through the years, we students knew that school plans were being bandied about as well as hearing our parents talking about it all the time. Besides street paving, a new school was a hot topic around town, finally coming to fruition.

The building contract was awarded to the Roy Anderson Construction Co. of Gulfport, for the new Junior-Senior high school. Ground was broken on Monday, October 7, 1958. At the long-awaited ceremony were Supt. Thomas L Reeves, School Board President, Tom Wilkerson, Board Secretary

SMOKE FROM THE CHIMNEY'S

Cecil Culpepper, and Mayor Robert L Reed, who turned the first spade of soil. Also present were Roy Anderson, contractor, and the architects, Lloyd Grace and Willis Guild.

Construction began within one week after ground was broken and was completed right on time, in August of 1959, taking only 10 months to complete. The cost was \$384,000.00. An announcement and picture of the school appeared in the Daily Herald on August 19, in preparation for the September 3 opening.

Some of you may have noticed that dates presented here are different from those previously posted. It is not known why pictures of the old high school were labeled with captions denoting the years of its use as being from 1926 until 1956, when in actuality it was used by high school students through May of 1959. This writer has firsthand knowledge, being one of those students, along with many others.

Those of us who began high school on Jeff Davis Avenue in 1956 and completed the first 3 years on that campus were the upperclassmen transferring to the new school on Sept 3, 1959, thus becoming members of the first graduating class of it in May of 1960. In regard to the Historical Society, including me, Beth Bourg Hansen, and my husband Danny, other members of our class were Mike Wren's youngest brother, Chris. In our class also, was member David McDaniel as well as Sally Russ Boulay's brother, Jimmy Russ. The son of the Secretary of the School Board, Cecil Culpepper, was also in our class. The whole group of students from the 12th down to the 8th grade, comprising the classes of '60, '61, '62, '63 and '64 numbered close to 300. In the Junior class was member Christine Thomas Butts, the daughter of the previous owners of the property, along with Mayor Reed's twin daughters, Ida and Carol, and member Gene Watts. Members of the society in the Sophomore class were Bobby Patenotte and Ron and Janice Hare Robertson. Eddie Ware was in the Freshman class, as was Mary Ellen Alexander's nephew, Tom Alexander, along with Buddy Wilkerson, Fran



Wren's brother. Their dad was President of the School Board at that time. Current members of the society in the 8th grade class were former mayor Billy Skellie, Sheila Estes Donald, Linda Leach Sanders, Gary Mander, Jr and Dickie Thomas, also a child of the previous property owners. These folks were all just a small part of a

larger group whose high school years were sort of left in limbo by an unintentional date snafu.

We were all excited about the long anticipated, new school with its modern conveniences. Wow, it even had a gym and Physical Education department. However, it was quite an adjustment moving from the heart of town to a rural setting. Don't laugh, but Jeff Davis Avenue was alive compared to the Glad Farm property in 1959, and we were really sad about leaving our own little hang out, The Busy Bee, across the street from the Jeff Davis Avenue school. There were no public buildings in the new

SMOKE FROM THE CHIMNEY'S

area, nor any paved roads yet. No sales for Cokes, Barqs, hamburgers, chips, etc. would be taking place across the street from this new school, as needed and wonderful as it was.

Long time Board member and webmaster, Eddie Ware, walked to school across the pasture between his house and the fancy new school on most days. He says the grass was tall and the bugs were numerous and hungry!

Four years after the Junior-Senior High School opened, the city built a much needed new stadium, just north of it, in only six months, from March until September. The \$135,000.00 structure was dedicated on Sept 13, 1963 at the season opener when the Bearcats played the Eagles of St. John. Danny Satchfield played quarterback, Richard Daniels and Wayne Smith were halfbacks and Melvin Dubuisson, fullback. Johnny French and Allen Pitts played on defense. Frankie Fillingim played tackle, Jimmy Scully and Jimmy Hillman were ends. A newspaper article in the sports section quoted Coach Magee as saying that Billy Skellie, (future mayor) had been injured and would not be playing that night but Billy recovered and did see some action in the game.

At its opening in 1963, the stadium wasn't named for anyone. However, in 1980, nearly a year after the death of Lance Lumpkin, the decision was made to name it after this popular coach who held the position from 1940 until 1953. It remained so until 2005, when the reunion group of 1960-1965 and beyond, suggested the name of another popular coach, Paul Magee, should be added to it, and thereafter the stadium became known as Lumpkin-Magee Stadium. Paul was the head coach from 1956 until 1963 and again from 1985 until 1987. He was quite thrilled with the change and most of us from the reunion group were at the stadium for the celebration. Sadly, Coach Magee passed away four years later in 2009.

Bringing the school complex to completion was the building of the Junior High School. The low bidder was Frederick T. Hoff Construction of Gulfport in July of 1963, when the building of the stadium was also taking place. The school was built on a ten-acre lot adjacent to the stadium and senior high school and was expected to be ready for occupancy in September 1964. Its existence would be very beneficial to both age groups to be in their own space and would allow the Junior-Senior High School to become the Senior High School. Since that time, the Junior High found its own niche in the world of academia, sports and social groups, thereby creating an easy transition to the high school.

Written by our late President, Beth Hansen in July 2018.

Source: Genealogybank.com for Daily Herald coverage

Extra note about the promotion of the bond issue.

In 1957 the Long Beach PTO had an essay contest,

“Why I would Vote for the School Bond Issue If I Was a Qualified voter”.

A cash prize of \$50.00 went to the winning High School submission and \$25.00 for the winning Jr. High submission. I do not remember who had the winning high school essay, but I, Eddie Ware, won the jr. high entry. To this day I still do not know how I was selected the winner. I have always wondered if I was the only jr high student to submit an enter!!

LOBE Theater


Long Beach
KIP CONDITIGNED — 2855
Open Daily 4 to 12
S. L. and 200

TODAY

BUD ABBOTT and LOU COSTELLO

Hit the Ice

GINNY SIMMS



LONG BEACH SCHOOL OPENED YESTERDAY

Splendid Program Marks Opening Exercises—Attendance Records Are Broken.

Long Beach, Sept. 23.

The Long Beach public schools opened yesterday with the largest attendance in the history of the school. Opening exercises were held in the morning, at which time Gulfport and Long Beach men gave interesting addresses on the general subject of education. The program in full was:

“Onward Christian Soldiers”—Entire School.

Reading—Rev. H. M. Jenkins.

Prayer—Rev. R. M. Witt.

Addresses—The Reverends W. T. Griffin, Witt and Jenkins, Dr. W. A. Dearman and Prof. Girault.

The faculty for the coming year will consist of eight members, and Prof. Girault will act as principle. The faculty roll in full will be as follows: Prof. T. L. Girault, Miss Stelle Goole, Miss Jewel Hannah, Mrs. Hicklin, Miss Genevieve Heenan, Miss Lena Mai Hardy, piano, Miss Elliot, violin, Miss Elaine Griffin, gymnasium.

A 12-Fingered Pickpocket:

When Gerardo Gulliano was arraigned in New York city for stealing a wrist watch he was sent to have his finger prints made. Then it was discovered that he had five perfectly formed fingers on each hand and a thumb. Further investigation showed that he also had six toes on each foot. It is the first time in the police department records that such a case has presented itself.

UTILIZATION OF SOUTHERN LANDS

Head of Development Association Speaks On Subject To Gulfport Business Men.

Clement S. Ucker, manager of the Southern Settlement and Development Association, and Mr. Moore of the Southern Pine Association, spoke to Gulfport business men last night on the need of land development work in the south. The meeting was presided over by H. E. Blakeslee who also made timely remarks.

Mr. Ucker showed what has been done in the Carolinas, Virginia and Georgia by concerted action, and believes that as much can be done in Mississippi. Mississippi, he said, led all the states of the south in tick eradication.

Mr. Ucker made a fine talk, showing plainly that the south cannot hope to enjoy the same prosperity which has come to other sections unless its lands become utilized. That is the keynote of the movement which he heads.

Mr. Moore seconded all that Mr. Ucker said and emphasized the need in this section of the spirit which made California.

Mr. Blakeslee explained the plan of organization and expressed the belief that Mississippi would follow the footsteps of other southern states which have gone in for land development.

Another meeting will be held in Gulfport in two or three weeks. The movement applies specially to south Mississippi but may be extended to take in the whole of the state.

LONG BEACH'S OFFER PRACTICALLY ASSURES GIRLS' COLLEGE FOR COAST

The offer made by the people of Long Beach to subscribe \$25,000 to the girls' college which Col. J. C. Hardy contemplates establishing on the coast, has given definiteness to the proposition. Incidentally it shows that the Mississippi Coast has its eyes open to the main chance and is not passing up anything that would mean so much to its general development as the college proposed by Col. Hardy.

When seen yesterday about the offer of Long Beach, Col. Hardy expressed pardonable gratification. It means, he said, the practical assurance of the school. There are several handsome sites in Long Beach and the people have shown commendable enterprise in seeking to secure the school.

However, Long Beach, it is learned, is not the only contender for the school for Pass Christian has also voiced a willingness to secure it and will doubtless back up its wishes in the premises with a substantial offer. Pass Christian also has a number of suitable sites and would consider itself extremely fortunate in being chosen by Col. Hardy. It is not improbable that sharp rivalry will soon be evident between the towns which would like to be the home of the new school. A school such as that contemplated by Col. Hardy is one which

any community might eagerly reach for.

"Things are shaping up nicely," said the colonel yesterday. "So very nicely in fact," he added, "that I have been making plans for the buildings which, in their entirety, will make a thoroughly modern as well as handsome school plant." The buildings will be of brick and the plan is such that additions can be made from time to time without detracting from the harmony of the whole. The initial plant will cost about \$100,000 and will accommodate 150 girls, but provision will be made to meet an increase of about fifty new girls a year until the annual attendance reaches approximately 500 pupils. The school will be complete to the minutest detail and will not only be a joy to the pupils, but an ornament to the coast and state.

COAST WILL REJOICE

The coast will rejoice to know that Col. Hardy has perfected his plans to that extent where he can speak of his school as almost a certainty. His residence of six years on the coast and his presidency of the Gulf Coast Military Academy have both shown that he is a citizen worth holding on to, and a school man of large ability to whom success is no stranger.

Plant Freak:

Usually the caterpillar eats the plant, but there arrived at London recently a caterpillar which a plant had eaten. It came from New Zealand. The caterpillar, about two and one-half inches in length, burrowing into the ground, took with it on its head the spore of a parasitical fungus. The latter, germinating, rooted in the body of the caterpillar. From the caterpillar's head has grown a fungus plant $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, with a head like a bulrush, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. The caterpillar has become wooden. The vegetable growth fills its skin, which is perfectly preserved. Every segment is plainly marked out and the legs are intact.

DUES ARE DUE

Annual membership dues are in effect from January 1 to December 31. Dues paid in October, November, or December will be applied to the following 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.com/members

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