

The Annual Meeting of the Association is scheduled for 3 PM on Sunday, March 18. It will take place in St. John's Episcopal Church in Thibodaux. Every member is welcome. Refreshments will follow. Our directors chosen last year serve two year terms, but we have two new members, Marguerite Erwin of Thibodaux, and M. Lee Shaffer, III, of Schriever, whose elections will be confirmed.

A landscape firm in Thibodaux has offered its services to St. John's Episcopal Church to re-design the Church Yard and entranceway to the Cemetery. After the new Vestry signs an agreement for the donated services, the work shall begin. One of the objectives of the design is to give a much pleasanter pedestrian entrance to the Cemetery on its Jackson Street (south) end, and all vehicular circulation in and out of the Cemetery will be through the Church Street gate. Chad Danos, a native of Larose with a master's of landscape design from the LSU School of Landscape Design, and member of the local firm, will do the work. We look forward to sharing the results with our Association members. Once the design is complete, funding will be needed for its implementation. We hope that we can assist. [Of great help in the landscape work will be the detailed topographic site plan by Leonard Chauvin, Jr., from his survey for St. John's in 2011.] •



Large brick tomb needing re-stucco and joint repair.



Adjoining Tombs, one in need of repair

photos courtesy of Mike Strausser

## ONE OF THE WONDERWOMEN INTERRED IN OUR HISTORIC CEMETERY:

[The essay here continues a series on people whose lives brightened our world and who are buried in our Cemetery.]

### MARY KING FULFORD

My Country calls and I obey,  
And shortly I'll be on my way,  
Removed from home, far in the west,  
Yet you with home and friends are blest.

Kindly remember me,  
(I'll also often think of thee)  
Nor forget the soldier story  
Gone to gain the field of glory.

St. John's Historic Cemetery has been the final resting place for a number of Thibodaux's most interesting citizens, and if the "graves could talk" – what stories would be told. Mary King Fulford has one of the most interesting stories to tell.

Having one's name, especially a woman, associated with Ulysses S. Grant after the Civil War would have raised eyebrows and provided fodder for gossip in the bayou town of Thibodaux. Mary King Fulford became Thibodaux's first postmistress in 1870 when then President Grant appointed her to the position.

Biographers of Grant say that there is some question whether Mary King was his girlfriend or simply a close friend. Grant was noted better for his skills with horses than for his social graces.

Mary and her husband John Fulford migrated south and ended up in Thibodaux in 1847, residing not far up Jackson Street from St. John's Episcopal Church and its cemetery containing burials of the deceased of many faiths. They attended services in the original local Presbyterian Church which faced West Fourth Street at St. Louis Street and which was founded the year the Fulfords arrived. Their seven children, most of whom died early, and her husband John also are buried at St. John's Historic Cemetery.

Beginning his career here as a clerk in the general store/hotel owned by his brother-in-law B. F. Holden, John Fulford prospered before the Civil War, and he and his brother James opened a carriage shop. Because of almost constant Union occupation of and guerrilla warfare in the region around Thibodaux, the town's economy was in shambles, as were the businesses in which Fulford was involved. After a long illness, he died in 1870.

Mary King Fulford was responsible for keeping the weekly Sunday school classes going during the very difficult years following the Civil War and through many years when the church pulpit was empty. To commemorate her sacrifice, Mary's name was carved in stone in 1954 on what was originally known as the Sunday School Building of the current First Presbyterian Church. At her death in 1903 the *Lafourche Comet* lamented her passing, calling her "a lady kind and gentle; of dignified bearing yet humble in manner; a lady devoted to her family, faithful to her friends and true and reverential to her God."

Mary King Fulford's grandchildren also donated a large stained glass window in her honor. It was installed in the First Presbyterian Church which in