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HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

February 2014

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, February 20, 2014, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Preston J. Mauffray, Attorney at Law. Mr. Mauffray has practiced law in Hancock County for more than ten years and was appointed Waveland Municipal Judge in December 2010 and Hancock County Chancery Court Family Master in July 2013. Mr. Mauffray will give us an historical perspective of some of the more interesting laws formerly and currently on the books. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must insist that you please call by noon on Wednesday, February 19, 2014,** to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of the lunch is \$10.00.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your membership. If your membership is due, your address label will read "Time to renew your membership." Please mail your renewal checks to Hancock County Historical Society, P. O. Box 3356, Bay St. Louis MS 39521, and invite your friends to join as well.



The three buildings shown in the postcard above were rebuilt at St. Stanislaus College after the fire of 1903.

Did You Know This About Hancock County?

By
Scott Bagley

Did you know that about four years prior to the big fire of 1907 that destroyed Hancock County's Our Lady of the Gulf Church and St. Joseph's Academy, there was another disastrous fire that destroyed much of nearby St. Stanislaus? On Sunday, June 21, 1903, at the very end of the school year, shortly after the boarding students had retired for the night, a fire was discovered in the clothes room located just over the dormitory. This room happened to be where the trunks and suitcases had

been packed and stored in anticipation of the next morning's departure for summer vacation.

While an alarm was given allowing all the boys to evacuate safely, the dormitory and the surrounding wooden buildings facing the beach were burned to the ground. Summoning the Bay St. Louis fire department proved rather futile, as the city's fire fighting equipment consisted of a single hand-pump.

St. Stanislaus' Brother Isadore has been credited with saving most of the school's records. Also many of the school's library books were removed without damage. Little else, however, but the school kitchen and dining room remained.

As the students, as well as the Brothers of St. Stanislaus, had no place to sleep for the night, a number

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Marianne Plum, Webmaster**LOBRANO HOUSE
HOURS**MONDAY — FRIDAY
10:00AM — 3:00PM
Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)**MISSION STATEMENT**

“TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION.”

of local hotels provided vacant rooms for this purpose. Those who did not stay in the hotels were offered places in family homes in the area.

On the following morning, the rather stunned and sleepy students gathered on the grounds of St. Stanislaus to bid each other farewell. For the most part, the students had lost all of their belongings but for a few items they had with them when they went to bed. In spite of this, most students vowed to return in the fall even if the classes should be held outside under the trees.

The Brothers of St. Stanislaus immediately set to work, determined to have a building ready for the opening of school in September. A temporary building for classrooms and a dormitory were quickly constructed out of scrap lumber. Incredibly, on October 6, 1903, the school opened with a near capacity enrollment of 178 students. In addition to the temporary dormitory space, the Brothers were able to rent five cottages on the beach, just south of the school. These living quarters were given the names of “Lara’s Villa,” “Nellie’s Villa,” “Avondale,” “Bellevue,” and “Irish Villa.” A certain number of boys were assigned to live in each cottage, along with a Brother.

Even while the above described temporary arrangements were being made and used, plans for rebuilding the school were well under way. Allison Owen, a New Orleans architect, was in charge of drawing up the plans and specifications, working closely with the Brothers. When the bids for the construction were submitted, a low bid of \$52,000 was submitted by Charles Sanger, a local contractor and friend of the school. Ground was broken in late August of 1903 on what was to be three new build-

ings – all facing the water. Furnishings for the new school added another \$25,000 to the cost of replacement. At the end of June 1904, on the very anniversary of the fire, the buildings were finished and ready for occupancy by students and Brothers alike.

A little more than three years later, another major fire was to strike an area within a few hundred yards of St. Stanislaus. Wind and fate would carry that fire in another direction. The Brothers and the students of St. Stanislaus would be only spectators at this fire, their own conflagration being in the past and merely a part of their school’s expanding and textured history.

SOURCE:

Scharff, Robert G. *Louisiana’s Loss, Mississippi’s Gain*. Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Publishing Corp., 1999.

**Bits and Pieces from the
Archives**Compiled and Edited by
Eddie Coleman

There are many bits and pieces of information on people, places, and events in the history of Hancock County found in the archives at the Kate Lobrano House. Although interesting, many of them are too short to be the subjects of articles in themselves in the *Historian*. Not to be outdone, I have decided to make one article, a pot-pourri if you will, of some of this information.

The Bay of St. Louis

Although Louis XIV was on the French throne when Pierre LeMoynes, Sieur d’Iberville and his explorers first sailed along the northern Gulf of Mexico, establish-



Painting of
Louis IX
By
El Greco

ing the first permanent French settlement and naming the areas they visited, it was Louis IX after whom the Bay of St. Louis and later the city of Bay St. Louis were named.

Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville, brother of d'Iberville, and his scouting party landed on the bluff of the bay on August 25, 1699. This date is the Feast of St. Louis, a memorable church day commemorating the death of Louis IX on his second crusade at Tunis, North Africa, in 1270. Bienville officially named the body of water in honor of this King of France, who was beatified by Pope Boniface VIII seven years after his death.

Some Early Settlements and Communities in Hancock County

Some of the early settlements and communities in Hancock County have been written about in earlier *Historians* and will be in future editions. There are others, however, which were much smaller than Gainesville, Logtown, Pearlinton, etc. Some of these smaller ones are included here.

Ansley

The date of the settlement is not clearly defined, but Ansley is located ten miles west of Bay St. Louis and was established as a flag stop on the L & N Railroad. The town was named for a man named *Ansley* who was once road master on the L & N Railroad. This man was possibly the father of M. E. Ansley of Bay St. Louis. A post office was once located here just south of the railroad station on a road which led to the old Claiborne Plantation on Mulatto Bayou.

Catahoula

Catahoula was more of a rural district than a settlement *per se*. It was located on a tributary of the Jordan River in the central part of the county west of Kiln. The place once boasted a grammar school with three teachers.

Claiborne

Located twenty-three miles west of Bay St. Louis, this settlement was first called Grand Plains when settled by John B. Saucier in 1712. About 1870 the name was changed to Claiborne for J. F. H. Claiborne, whose plantation on Mulatto Bayou lay a short distance to the north.

Fenton

Fenton, a ghost sawmill town, was established on a road leading through the Jordan River swamp about four miles east of Kiln on present-day Kiln-Delisle Road. Once river steamers anchored here and unloaded their cargoes into a large warehouse. Bargemen steered their bulky craft down the bayous into the Jordan River while on shore the teamsters hauled logs through the swamp on ox-wagons.

The town's early settlers were largely of French descent, but among the pioneers were some of the Spanish Cuevas family and others as well.

Santa Rosa

Situated in the extreme northwestern part of the Stennis Buffer Zone, Santa Rosa marks the Mississippi part of Honey Island Swamp, a wildlife refuge and for many years the refuge of pirate bands as powerful, if not so notorious, as the Lafittes of Louisiana. The "King of Honey Island Swamp" and of all the outlaws living there was Pierre Rameau.

Sellers

Sellers was the site of a large vocational high school located on the line between Hancock and Harrison Counties. The school was approximately thirty miles from Gulfport, and at one time there were two stores and a few houses. The community had no definite boundaries, but centered around the school district which probably comprised three hundred people.

Westonia

Westonia was a sawmill town, now extinct, and one of the early group of towns comprised of Logtown, Pearlinton, and Gainesville. It was promoted by the H. Weston Lumber Company. The town was located some distance back from the Pearl River, southeast

of Gainesville and Napoleon and northeast of Logtown.

SOURCE:

Brieger, James F., compiler. *Hometown Mississippi*. Privately published, 1980.

Profiles of Hancock County

By
Charles Gray

The Hancock County Historical Society has an on-going program called *Profiles of Hancock County* to create mini biographies of former residents of the county. Each document should be a synopsis of the life of the individual. It should begin with the person's full name, date and place of birth, parents, education, occupation, marriage, photograph (if you have one), and any significant stories of his/her life, ending with the date of death and place of interment. Each will be given one full page: no more, no less. Married couples will be given a page each.

Please attend a meeting at the Lobrano House on Monday, February 24, at 3:00 P. M. to view other profiles. Charles Gray will be present to assist you in gathering information. Your parents and grandparents deserve this remembrance.

LOVE IS IN THE FOREST

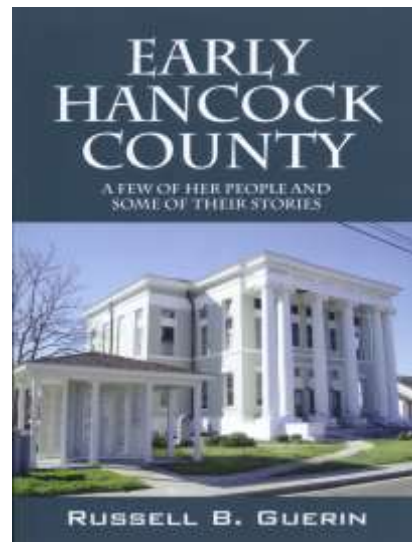
News from the Live Oak Tree Registry

By Shawn Prychitko & Jim Canady

The Live Oak Tree Registry began the year with several great requests to keep us busy registering live oaks. Bay St. Louis City Councilman Bobby Compretta learned about the program when members of the Bay Waveland Garden Club attended a city council meeting January 22, 2014, to make an announcement celebrating its 75th year as a garden club.

Calling all Tree Lovers: help us hug/love and plant more trees on February 14, 2014. It's not only Valentine's Day, but it's also Arbor Day. We are also proud to announce the sponsorship of two old live oaks by the Bay/Waveland Garden Club in the newly created "Edible Forest" in Bay St. Louis on Bookter and St. Francis Streets.

For more information on Arbor Day activities or tree registration, please send an e-mail to treeregistry@gmail.com.



EARLY HANCOCK COUNTY
A Few of Her People and Some of Their Stories
By Russell Guerin

Most of you are familiar with Russell Guerin's articles which appear from time to time in *The Historian of Hancock County*. He has written a new book entitled *Early Hancock County, A Few of Her People and Some of Their Stories*. With over forty chapters and 440 pages, the book presents information about pirates, the Civil War, plantations, and Choctaws and has entries of names like Claiborne, Favre, Ioor, Russ, and more. The book is available at the Historical Society for \$29.95.

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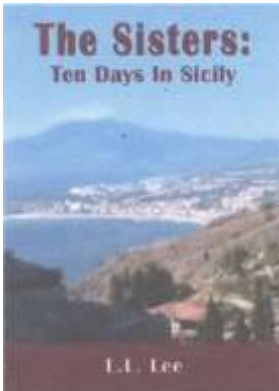


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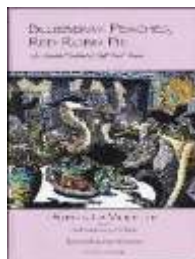
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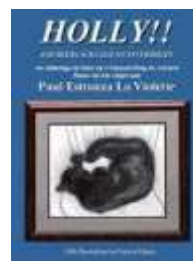
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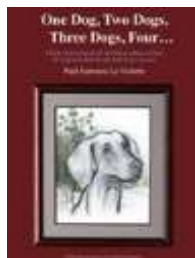
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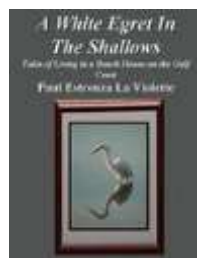
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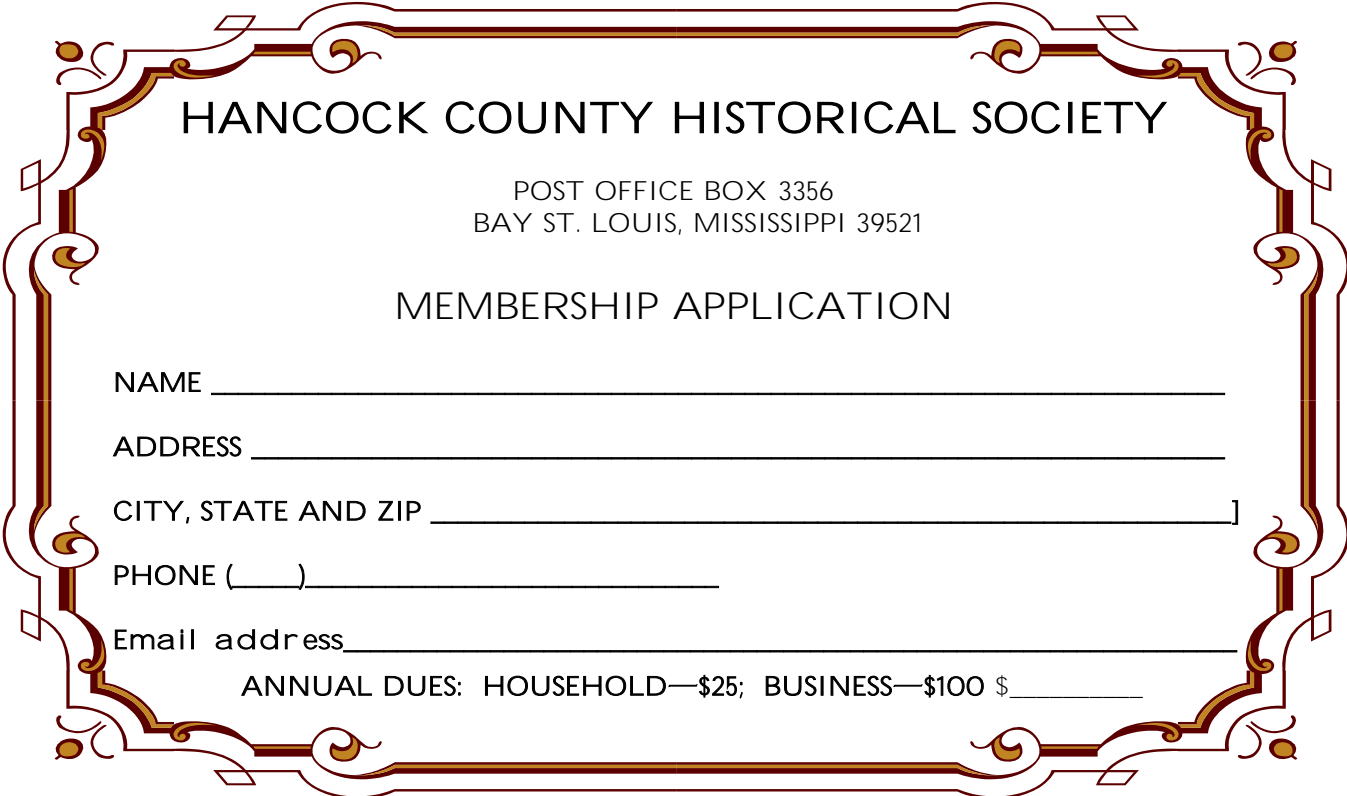
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