

THE

# HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

April 2014

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2014, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Mayor Les Fillingame of Bay St. Louis, who will discuss the harbor and other plans for the future of the city. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must insist that you please call by noon on Wednesday, April 16, 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.

A generous donation has been made to the Hancock County Historical Society by the estate of Meg Hilliker. Meg served the Society as treasurer on the Board of Directors and as a devoted volunteer for many years.



Logtown School, c. 1890

## LOGTOWN A Shadow in a Memory

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

*(Information in the following article comes from two earlier essays, one by Charles Gray and the other by Mildred Otis Fountain.)*

Every spring the Pearl River rises within its banks along the many bayous and tributaries as the waters of the spring rains make their way to the Gulf of Mexico. It wasn't very long ago that this now deserted landscape was alive with activity. The silent remainders of the people who lived here can be

found among the wildflowers and brambles. Beneath a large oak tree still stands a set of steps now leading nowhere, but once gracing the entrance to a home filled with the warmth and love of a strong pioneer family.

Many families through several generations have called Logtown home. Among them were Chalon, Carré, Weston, Baxter, Otis, Goddard, Koch, Lott, Seal, Fountain, Bailey, Tinkelpa, and Nelson. Only a few shadows remain where once stood the drug store, the hotel, the ice factory, the post office, the school house, the sawmill, the brick commissary, the silent movie house, and other buildings that were the center of this once-thriving town.

There was an earlier settle-

THE  
**HISTORIAN**  
 OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
 Ellis Cuevas, Publisher

Published monthly by the  
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**HOURS**

MONDAY — FRIDAY  
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**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.”

ment here, and indeed there are remnants of it too. The Logtown shell mound of the Choctaw Indians still contains pottery treasurers left by the proud people who lived here for hundreds of years before Europeans came to the region.

Early explorers passed through, followed by settlers. One such pioneer, Joseph Chalon, had a twelve hundred acre French land grant in 1788 called *Cabanage Latanier*, more familiarly remembered as Palmetto Plantation. With the advent of timber harvesting, the area became more and more popular for the landing of logs— hence the name “Logtown.” It was just one of many towns that grew up along the Pearl River because of the timber industry plus other settlements on the Jourdan River and on the bayous in other areas of Hancock County.

The first Logtown sawmill of record was a small one erected by slave labor in 1845. A larger mill was soon built by E. G. Goddard of Saginaw, Michigan. Mr. Goddard and co-owner, a Mr. Judd, helped in developing the town by building houses for the company officials, a boarding house, and a store. This mill operated until c. 1893.

Additional information obtained from the 1850 census states that Judge D. R. Wingate owned a sawmill in Logtown when Henry Weston came south from Skowhegan, Maine, for his health. For a while Weston worked at the W. J. Poitevent Mill in Gainesville; however in 1848, he was hired to operate the Wingate mill in Logtown, thus beginning his career climb from wage hand to multi-millionaire industrialist. In 1856, Weston, W. W. Carré, and Henry Carré bought the mill from Judge Wingate. In addition Weston also bought the Wingate home. Still, in 1878 he dissolved the partnership

with the Carrés, and later he bought out their interest, becoming sole owner. Under his direction, the Weston Lumber Company grew into one of the largest industries in Hancock County and Mississippi.

Horatio S. Weston, son of Henry Weston, was instrumental in making the H. Weston Lumber Company the first in Mississippi to begin the practice of reforestation. The company participated in organized forestry work and forest fire prevention. In fact, the younger Weston was largely responsible for the laws passed by the 1927-28 legislature whereby a State Forestry Commission and the State Forestry Service were set up on a practical operating basis.

It is interesting to note that the Weston Lumber Company had its own electric plant and ice factory that provided services to the town. The company commissary had grocery, hardware, and drug departments. Moreover it carried ready-to-wear clothes for women, men, and children, it had a millinery department, and it had a display section for coffins. While this section might seem gruesome to people today, it served quite a useful purpose. It was a convenience for families of the deceased, and it prevented the delay caused by shipping caskets from New Orleans.

With the growth of the lumber companies and the influx of settlers to the area, businesses and services to support the population were necessary. The first church in Logtown was built about 1875 by the H. Weston Lumber Company on land donated to the Methodist Church by Henry Carré. The church was originally named Cooper’s Chapel in honor of the Reverend Inman W. Cooper, its first minister, who was brought to Logtown by Weston to assist in organizing a Methodist Church. Later a Baptist Church was built with the



help of Mr. Toulme Holliman and Mr. John Nelson, both skilled carpenters and longtime residents of the town.

Further, during the years that Logtown existed, it boasted a school, a branch of the Hancock Bank, a post office, some physicians, a few pharmacists, and several grocery stores in addition to the aforementioned movie house, hotel, and boarding house. After the clos-

ing of the Weston Mill in 1928, the Sam Whitfield Corporation began its pulpwood operation during the height of the Great Depression in the middle of the 1930s. This industry remained open until 1964.

Even after the decline of the lumber business and their struggles through the Depression, families remained in Logtown. The general prosperity of the 1950s reached even to the secluded town so picturesquely nestled by the river

that had nurtured it in its heyday. However, this prosperity was short lived. In 1962, the news reached the residents that Logtown would be included in the "buffer zone" of the soon-to-be built Mississippi Test Facility, built by NASA and later renamed the Stennis Space Center. For this reason the town along with Napoleon and Gainesville would need to be evacuated and their residents relocated.

Leaving Logtown was very difficult for families who had lived in their lovely old homes for four and five generations. All of them treasured the peace and tranquility, the association of close friends, and the rich heritage that they found in this small town. Although the land remains, Logtown exists today only in the memories of those who once lived there.

#### SOURCES:

- Fountain, Mildred Otis. "Logtown." *The Sea Coast Echo*, 28 June 1992: D1+.
- Gray, Charles H. *Logtown Revisited*. Bay St. Louis, MS: Hancock County Historical Society.

### THE LOGTOWN OF S. G. THIGPEN

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

*(The following information comes from two books by S. G. Thigpen with very little editing on my part.)*

from *Next Door to Heaven*, p. 5

Logtown, when I first went there, was at its zenith. I first went to Logtown in 1918 as an employee



of Crosby & Rowlands to exchange deeds whereby Crosby and Rowlands deeded land and timber they owned near Weston's [Weston Lumber Company] operation for land and timber Weston owned near their operation. Two big sawmills employing many hundreds of men were in operation at Logtown back then. There was a railroad from Logtown to Ansley on the L & N and one from Logtown to Picayune. Many carloads of lumber were shipped daily from Logtown back then and big cargoes were carried out on barges pulled by tugs to be loaded on ocean going steamers anchored in the deep waters of the gulf.

The two company stores at Logtown and Westonia carried tremendous stocks of merchandise. These stores were much larger than any in Picayune at that time. There were dozens of nice homes in Logtown then. The streets and homes were well kept and attractive. Logtown was for many years a town of two to three thousand people.

.....

from *Pearl River: Highway to Glory Land*, 81-83

Where Logtown stood was for hundreds of years an Indian village on Pearl River. The first whites to come to the little Indian community were French trappers and traders....

Logtown was the home of a considerable Indian population long after all the Indians were gone from Pearlinton and Gainesville. As logging and sawmilling became more important, white people began to move into the little Indian village set among the pine and live oaks just back from the river. As the whites gradually moved in, the Indians just as gradually moved out, some of them going across the river into Honey Island, but most of them

moving over next to Devil Swamp, a few miles northeast of Logtown.

The Indians left many signs of their long time residence in old Logtown. There were arrow heads, pottery, and other articles used by Indians buried in a number of mounds in the area.

For many years, citizens of Logtown used to make trips on Sundays and holidays to the nearby Indian village along the edges of Devil Swamp. The ways and customs of the whites did not appeal to the Indians. They lived their own lives according to their own customs in the old time houses of the Indians in their own villages. They swapped their baskets of various designs and the hides they had cured in white men's trading places for the few things they wanted from such places. They grew small plots of food stuffs in season, but mostly they got their food from hunting and fishing....

Old timers tell us that Indians sold baskets in Logtown,

Gainesville, and Pearlinton. When I was a boy living out on a farm, Indians would pass our home several times a year selling baskets they had woven. These baskets came in many sizes as much as two feet in diameter and about twenty-four inches high. They made one basket for carrying loads on a person's back. It was about thirty to thirty-six inches long with one side flat to fit comfortably on a back. My Mother [sic] used to look forward to their coming and always bought several of the baskets. They sold these baskets at low prices; they were vari-colored and very durable....

#### SOURCES:

Thigpen, S. G. *Next Door to Heaven*. Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1965.

Thigpen, S. G. *Pearl River: Highway to Glory Land*. Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1965.



Retiring the flag at the Logtown Post Office, 9/30/1963

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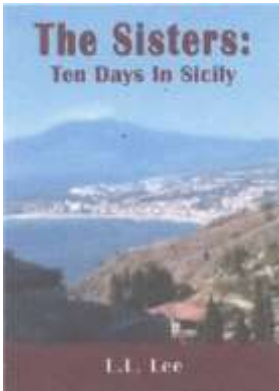


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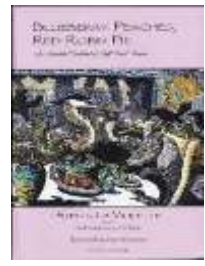
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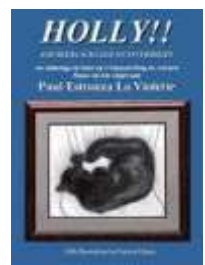
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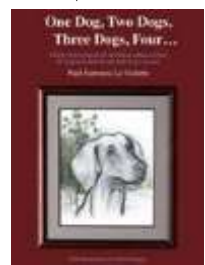
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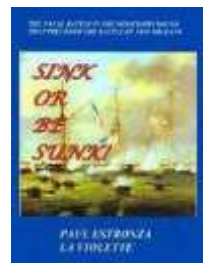
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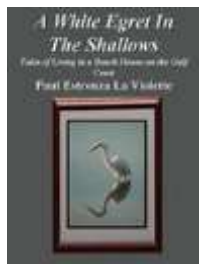
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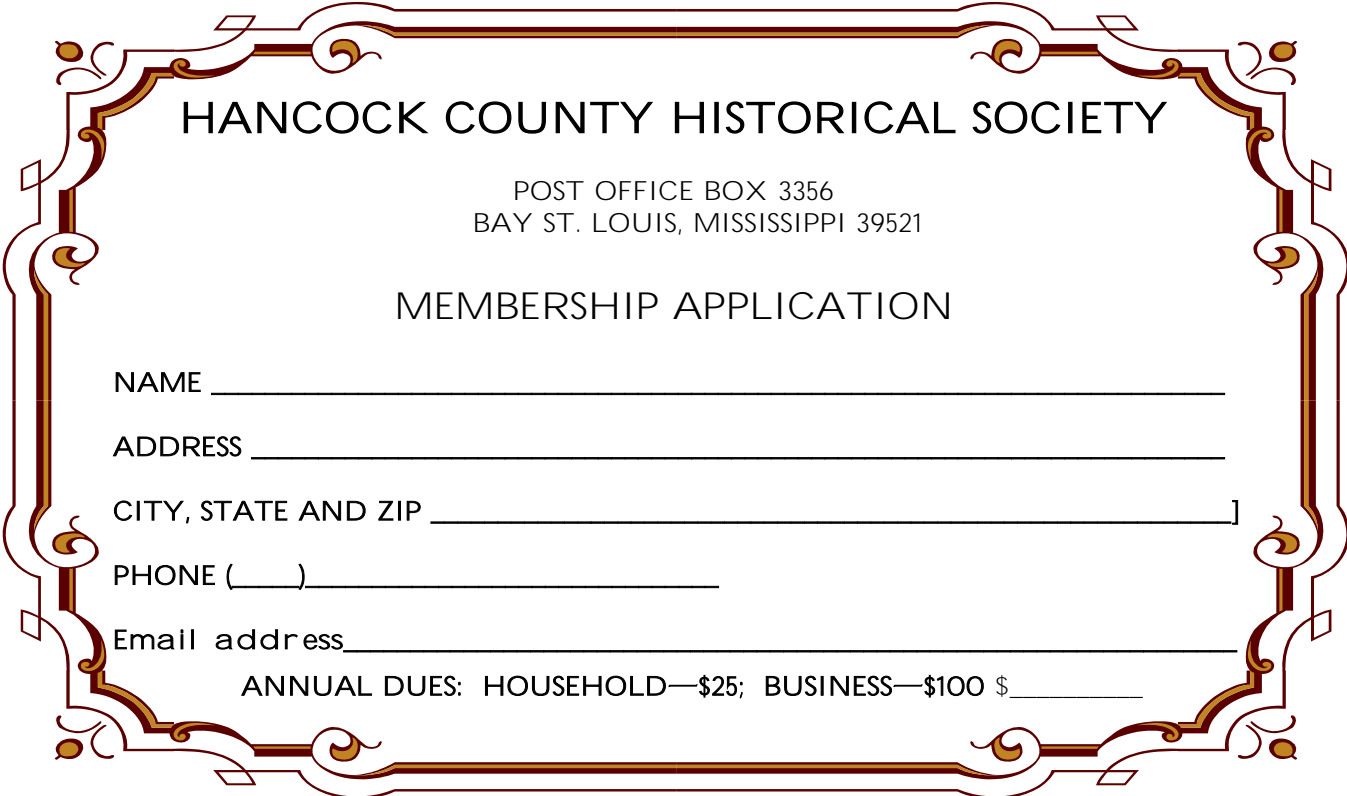
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