

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

October 2014

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE



Yowling, prowling, growling cat
Why do you switch your tail like that?
Why do your eyes flash gold and green?
Could be—must be—Halloween!

Slinky, inky, blinky cat,
Why do you arch your back like that?
What scary creatures have you seen?
Could be—must be—Halloween!

Join us for the 21st Annual Cemetery Tour on Friday, October 31, 2014, at Cedar Rest Cemetery in Bay Saint Louis. The fun begins at 5:30 P.M. and continues until 8:00 P. M. Admission to the tour is free, but donations are graciously accepted.

After the tour everyone is invited to the Lobrano House around the corner from the cemetery at 108 Cue St. for punch, cookies, and other treats.

As usual, we will not have a luncheon in October so that we can devote all of our energies to the Cemetery Tour.



By pumpkins fat and witches lean...
By coal black cats with eyes of green,
By all the magic ever seen...
I wish you luck this HALLOWEEN

A Brief History of Halloween

By
Eddie Coleman

The celebration of Halloween can be traced back two thousand years or earlier to the time of the ancient Celts and Druids of Ireland. What we now term as *Halloween* on October 31 was called Samhain (sah-ween). It was the day between the end of summer signaling the end of the Celtic calendar and the beginning of the winter season on November 1, the be-

ginning of the Celtic New Year. Known by the Ancient Celts as the festival of Samhain, it was the most important Celtic holiday and dealt more with the changing seasons than death or evil. Samhain was also a time of gathering crops and preparing livestock and family for the coming winter.

Since October 31 was “between seasons,” it was considered a magical time of year when all constraints of time and the distinction between the spirit world and the human world were lifted. The usual order of Celtic society became a time of disorder or chaos. Thus, the time from October 31 to November 2 was

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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.”

a time when strange and unusual things could happen as Samhain had both religious and supernatural aspects.

Among the supernatural features were the beliefs that movement between the physical and spiritual worlds could occur without harm and that living persons could make contact with departed souls. Ghosts of the dead could mingle with the living and “souls of those who had died during the year [could travel] into the otherworld.” The Celts did not think of this world of the dead with any sort of fear or apprehension. Rather, they looked to the spirits of their ancestors to give them guidance and inspiration. Yet, it is believed that some Celts thought they had to be on guard to protect their foodstuffs, livestock, and families from the dead. Fires were lit to scare the souls away from the living and show these “ghosts” the way to the underworld.

With the conquest of Ireland and the British Isles by the Romans and the domination of the Catholic Church, the current concept of Halloween began. Christian missionaries entered the area. What these missionaries failed, or refused, to accept or try to understand was the religious practices of the Celts which had lasted for hundreds or even thousands of years. The people had their own priests called Druids, who in addition to being priests were also “poets, scientists and scholars all at once.” These missionaries labeled the religion they didn’t understand as evil and its followers as devil worshippers.

In 601 A.D. Pope Gregory issued an edict to missionaries, instructing them to incorporate traditional practices of the Celtic religion into Christian observances. In other words, he challenged them to

“Christianize” or consecrate such pagan practices and allow them to continue. The edict became standard for all succeeding Catholic missionaries. Therefore, church holy days were set or changed to coincide with non-Christian religious holidays. Thus, Christmas was set as Dec. 25 to coincide with a traditional mid-winter celebration of many pagan peoples. Likewise, All Saints Day was set as Nov. 1 as an immediate follower of Samhain or Halloween on Oct. 31.

Even though these early missionaries accepted such changes in Christian holidays to coincide with pagan celebrations, they nonetheless labeled Druids as evil devil worshippers of gods and spirits of the underworld or the Christian Hell. However, there is no evidence to show the ancient Celts worshipped “anything resembling the Christian Devil and indeed had no concept of it.” Even so, Halloween on All Hallows Eve, the day before the Christian All Saints Day, became associated with witches and all sorts of supernatural creatures, and the Celtic gods morphed into “fairies or leprechauns of more recent traditions.”

When the Irish left the “Green Isle” because of the potato famine in the mid-1800’s and came to America, they brought with them the traditions of Halloween which their forefathers had observed. One of these was the custom of pulling pranks on neighbors during this celebration. Fortunately, the extent of such stunts was confined to overturning outhouses and removing gates from fences.

Another popular Halloween tradition, trick-or-treating, has a cloudy history. It appears to have come from a ninth-century continental European Christian custom rather than from the Celtic Samhain.. Some authorities attribute it

to the idea that spirits lurked about on Halloween, so mortal adults dressed as ghoulishly as possible to ward off the evil spirits. In their frightening garb, they went from house to house seeking treats to prevent their damaging the homeowner's property. Others believe the habit comes from a custom on All Souls' Day in which early Christians went from village to village, seeking soul cakes (small breads) as payment for their praying a deceased soul out of limbo and into heaven, thus giving trick-or-treating a more Christian ancestry.

Many of the modern symbols of Halloween—witches, black cats, goblins, skeletons, vampires, bats, etc.—were not associated with the celebration until medieval times and the later Reformation when a belief in witchcraft became widespread throughout Europe and the American colonies.

In any event, long held customs and traditions of a culture rarely die out completely. Often they just change to accommodate the new. Thus, Samhain, originally a fall festival with innocuous supernatural beliefs, developed into a holiday of witches, ghosts, goblins, etc. This evolution notwithstanding, it is the children who derive the most pleasure from celebrating Halloween nowadays.

SOURCE:

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GHOST OF THE PIRATE HOUSE

Legends of ghosts and hauntings abound in almost every area of the world—some even close to home. One famous Waveland ghost who disappeared after "his" house was demolished by Hurricane Camille was the ghoul who haunted the Pirate House. In a 1986 *Sun Herald* article, Kat Bergeron recorded the following sighting:

"After she had turned off the living room light and started up the staircase, Mrs. James W. Faulkner screamed. Standing at the top of the stairs was a death-like image of a man whose stare was almost hypnotic. When Mrs. Faulkner moved towards him, he vanished into nothingness.

"Blood-stained walls, unexplained moans, screams and ghostly apparitions had long been a part of the Pirate House mystique. The 1930's incident was one of many incidents stretching over more than a century at the large, elegant home on Waveland's beachfront road.

"The large house reportedly was built in 1802 by a New Orleans businessman who moonlighted as a pirate and financial agent of Jean Lafitte and his Baratavia pirates. Some accounts say the house actually belonged to Lafitte. [*Editor's note: We have found no concrete evidence to support this legend.*] A tunnel ran from the water's edge to the house's basement, which some believed doubled as a holding place for 'black ivory,' illegally smuggled slaves."

One of the earliest legends of the site tells of a deep well in the back yard that became the early graves of three men who had been thrown, alive, into its depths. That very afternoon the ghost of one of them who was wearing shirt sleeves returned to walk across the yard—and he has continued to do so.



"The Pirate House" once stood on North Beach Boulevard in Waveland. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in 1969 by Hurricane Camille.

“In the mid-1930’s when the Singreens bought the house, a large photograph was snapped of everyone standing on the front gallery steps. When it was developed, an image of a man in shirt sleeves could be seen at the window of an upstairs room.

“Later owners, Mr. and Mrs. Bjorn Lister, liked to think of the old house as not haunted, just inhabited by ‘visitants.’ Then came murderous Hurricane Camille, a 1969 storm that tore the legendary house apart like match sticks. The Listers collected the thousands of bricks strewn about the area, including the doors and grillwork they could find, and constructed a much smaller cottage 50 feet to the rear of

the original house.

“And were the ghosts blown away too? Officially, yes, but there are rumors....”

CEMETERY TOUR

October is here, so it’s time to finalize plans for the Hancock County Historical Society 21st Annual Cemetery Tour. It will be held on Halloween night Friday, **October 31, 2014**, at Cedar Rest Cemetery on Second Street. We will need volunteers to help prepare the cemetery for the tour (mark the path, etc.), to portray citizens buried there, to act as guides, and to serve at the Lobrano House. We also seek donations of cookies, candy, cupcakes, etc. To volunteer, please call the Society at 467-4090.

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

It is time to elect board members to serve from January 2015 through December 2016. Final selections will be made in elections at the November meeting.

Our nominating committee will submit its recommendations, but we are also asking the general membership for nominations. If you would like to serve or to recommend someone, please call 467-4090 or nominate from the floor at the November meeting. The offices being filled this year are first vice president, secretary, treasurer, and member at large. Thank you to those who served on the board during these past two years.

NEW MEMBERS

Rebecca Gourley
Bay Saint Louis, MS

Mary Labat
Waveland, MS

Tish Williams
Bay Saint Louis, MS



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Bay Saint Louis: Celebrating the First 300 Years
By the HCHS (\$15.00)

A nostalgic keepsake of the city’s history including descriptions and pictures of many of the historic buildings and houses especially those along Beach Boulevard prior to Katrina

*Blueberry Peaches,
Red Robin Pie*

By Stella LaViolette
and Paul Estronza La Violette (\$25.00)
An annotated cookbook of Gulf Coast recipes

*Early Hancock County: A Few of Her People and
Some of Their Stories*
By Russell B. Guerin (\$29.95)

Holly

By Paul La Violette (\$20.00)
An intriguing anthology of tales of a tomcat living in a beach house on the Gulf Coast

*Moonshine Adventures Four: The Lost Moon-
shine City*

By Al Saucier (\$20.00)
Kiln, MS “Moonshine” folklore from the 1910
“Moonshine Capital of the Nation”—fiction based on true life

One Dog, Two Dogs, Three Dogs, Four...

By Paul La Violette (\$20.00)
Twice told tales of several dogs living in a beach house on the Gulf Coast

Scrapbook of Treasured Memories

By Connie Heitzmann and Betty Stechmann (\$20.00)
A book of art, photography, and reminiscence of the Gulf Coast

Sink or Be Sunk

By Paul La Violette (\$30.00)
A recounting of the naval battle in the Mississippi Sound preceding the Battle of New Orleans in 1812

The Way to Stone Hill

By Paul LaViolette (\$20.00)
Stories of relocating after fleeing a vicious storm

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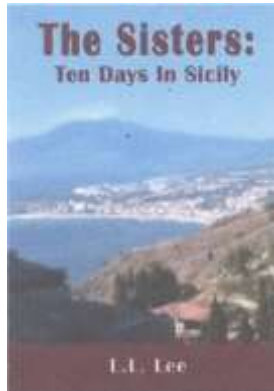
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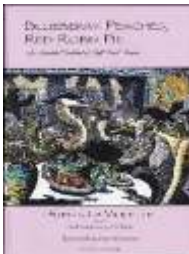
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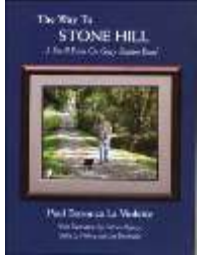
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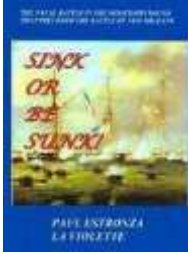
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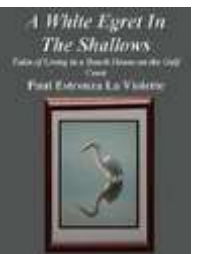
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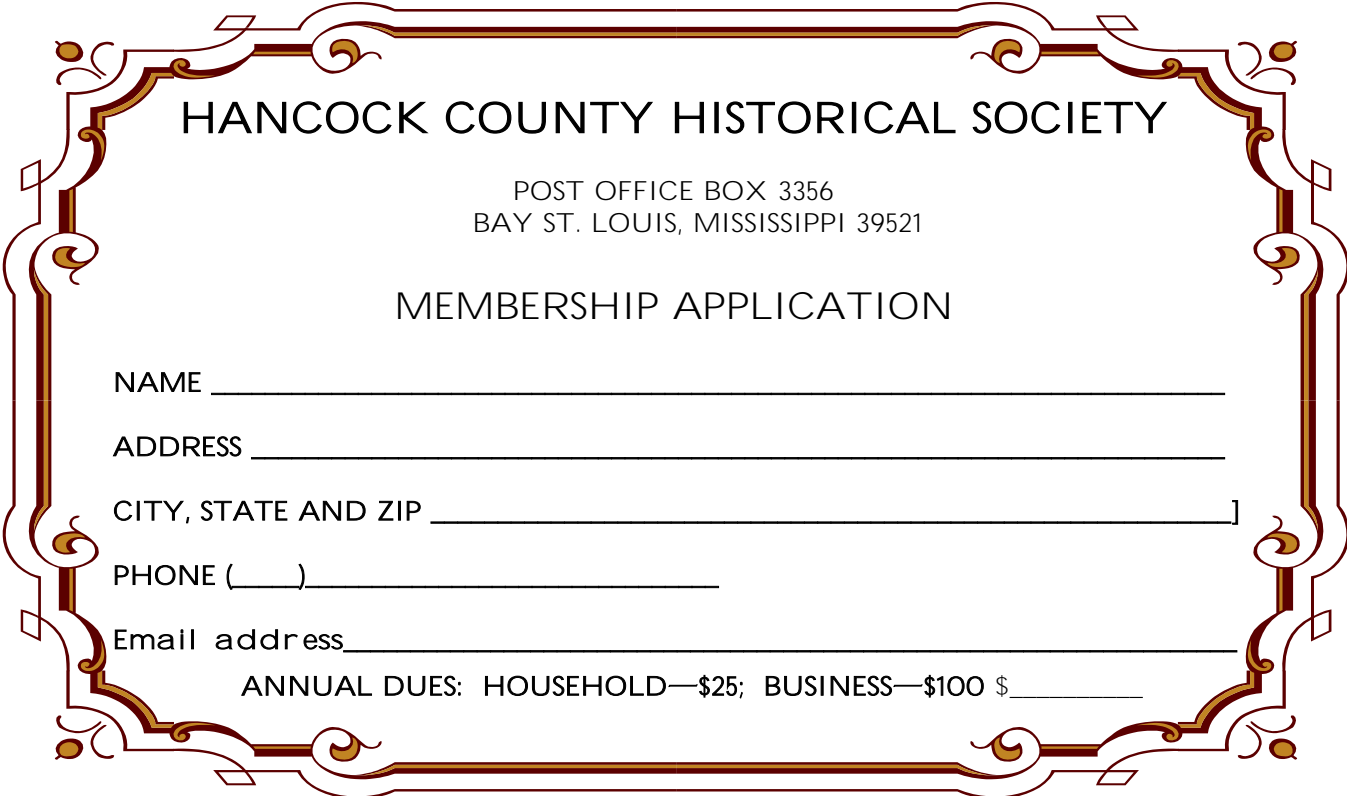
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