

THE

# HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

March 2015

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2015, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Jimmie Hoda, who will speak on the rise and fall of the Kiln and the timber industry in that area. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must insist that you please call by noon on Wednesday, March 18, 2015,** 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

The 2015 Membership Drive is on! It's time for current members to renew their memberships in the Historical Society and to encourage family and friends to join us too. The price of membership is twenty-five (\$25) per year. 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.



Old Clermont Harbor School  
built c. 1911  
Clermont Harbor, MS

## The Ringing of School Bells (Part II)

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

*(This article is a continuation of the reminiscences of Jeanne Doby Williams, a teacher in Hancock County from 1912-1958. Part I was published in the February 2015 edition of The Historian of Hancock County.)*

After the graduation of the Kiln High School Class of 1919, which consisted of only four members, "many graduation classes of larger numbers followed. Kiln

Consolidated School grew like magic. When the Edward Hines Lumber Company opened a large mill in the community, people began moving into the town. Some built their own homes; many rented houses the Hines Company built. The school added more teachers and built an annex to ease the congestion. Primary grades and other work occupied the new building. At this time Kiln had two doctors, a well-staffed hospital, a moving picture show, and even a railroad. The railroad was mostly used to get timber for the mill. Things went fine for several years; then timber grew scarce. Like all sawmill towns Kiln commenced to go down; people moved away in search of work.

"When my husband lost his

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 OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
 Ellis Cuevas, Publisher

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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.”

job as lumber checker, he was offered the same work in Weston’s Lumber Mill in Logtown. He accepted, and we boarded in Pearlington. I was principal again in Pearlington Public School. But [I taught only] one session. Logtown mill was feeling the timber shortage, and my husband decided to work at Crosby Lumber Company in Picayune, Mississippi. My next teaching position was Gainesville Public School. We were two teachers. I was principal. I missed the large, spacious Kiln School. But I enjoyed my years at Gainesville. Many school patrons had been friends of mine when Pearlington had been a booming mill town. The beautiful oaks and sparkling Pearl River brought memories of my girlhood days when Pearlington was my home. The high school students from Gainesville rode back and forth on a school bus and attended Bay High School. I taught and lived six years in Gainesville.

“Then [I] accepted a position as principal of Clermont Harbor Public School as living in Clermont Harbor would be a shorter distance for my son to ride back and forth to Bay High as he was to enter high school that session. I had an assistant teacher. We had good blackboards, heaters, sanitary drinking fountains, and quite a bit of outdoor play equipment. The school had a large number of boys and girls who were active in 4-H Club. We also took part in the carnival celebration at Bay High. Our school entered a float and marched with Bay High pupils in the street parade. I taught four years at Clermont Harbor, and when my son finished high school, I [moved to Bay St. Louis].

“By then, Lakeshore had built a large modern school. I accepted the position I was offered. [I] taught third and fourth grades;

fifth and sixth; sixth and seventh; then seventh and eighth, the session I was principal. The school was modern, our heaters were gas heaters, and we had electricity and lunchroom, free to those who could not pay. Before the lunchroom started, the schools of Hancock County were getting free textbooks. At Lakeshore we had a maintenance man and janitors. We had a large number of 4-H boys and girls. Many were winners in various contests, not only in athletics, but in sewing and crafts. Our 4-H group from Lakeshore and Clermont Harbor also entered contests in Harrison County, Picayune, Hattiesburg, and Jackson. I was 4-H leader for our school and went with the group; the county let us use the school bus.

“By the close of the school session, Clermont Harbor had built a pretty, well-equipped new school. As it was nearer my house, I returned as principal of Clermont Harbor Public School. I taught eighth grade and also worked with the 4-H group.

“In the 1957-58 session, I taught fifth grade at Bay High School... At the close of 1958 session, I retired.

“When the 1958-59 session arrived, I taught seventh and eighth grades at St. Joseph’s Academy in Bay St. Louis.

“After retiring, I substituted in the Bay/Waveland City Schools [and] also at Lakeshore and Clermont Harbor for a number of years. I also did tutoring at my home. [Later I worked] some with the R.S.V.P. program, helping children who [were] a little slow in some school subjects.

“On my long journey through Hancock County Schools, I have seen a remarkable growth: consolidation, larger buildings, better classroom equipment, better prepared teachers, less teacher load,

better salaries, sanitary drinking fountains, indoor restrooms, proper lighting, modern heating systems, air conditioning, libraries, science laboratories, music and art classes, language instructors, guidance teachers, projectors and screens, T.V., radio, trained athletic coaches, free textbooks, lunchrooms, desegregation, modern buses, trained bus drivers, maintenance men, and janitors.”

### Reader's Corner

*This month the newsletter begins a new section wherein we offer reviews of books that provide history or information on topics of local interest. We hope this will become a fairly regular part of a newsletter that strives to provide both informative and entertaining pieces about the richly textured area many of us are lucky enough to call home. We hope you enjoy this new addition and would welcome any comments or suggestions you may have or any reviews you may wish to submit.*

#### ***Cat Island: The History of a Mississippi Gulf Coast Barrier Island***

By John Cuevas

Reviewed by  
James Keating, MD

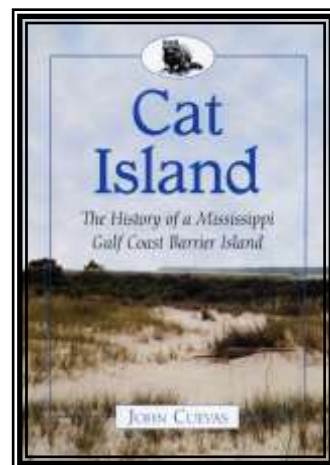
*Cat Island: The History of A Mississippi Gulf Coast Barrier Island* (2011) by John Cuevas provides an interesting, immensely readable account of the history, legends, and folklore of Cat Island, a T-shaped barrier island seven miles off the Mississippi Gulf Coast near Bay St. Louis. The Cuevas family owned it and resided there as permanent residents for three generations. Most of the history is about

the author's great-great-great grandfather, Juan de Cuevas. Juan was a soldier from Spain who fell in love and married the beautiful daughter of the first couple who lived on the island. Her name was Helene Ladner. Her father, Nicholas Christian Ladner, first owned the island, having acquired a land grant from Spain in 1781. The island passed down to Helene and Juan, and Juan sold it in 1837 for \$15,000, a fortune at that time.

The strategic location of Cat Island just off the coast put Juan and his family in the middle of several important historical events or developments that became the subject of legend or oral tradition in this “neck of the woods.” The chapter entitled “The Hero of Cat Island” relates a great story about Juan and the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812. In this tale, Juan is captured by the British navy on Cat Island and forced to pilot its lead warship to the mouth of the Mississippi River. In this mostly fictional account, Jean misleads the flagship up the Pearl River instead of the Mississippi River on a very foggy night passage. The warship's running aground on a sandbar causes the vessel to lurch and then tilt, wreaking havoc on the crew. Juan escapes during the pandemonium and travels to New Orleans to warn General Andrew Jackson that the British are coming.

Interesting subjects include an early mutiny on American soil; Jean Lafitte, the Pirate, and buried treasure; a Seminole Indian encampment during the journey along the Trail of Tears; Al Capone and the rumrunners; and a canine training facility for World II war dogs.

This 191 page paperback book contains photos, illustrations, graphs, and maps. It is sometimes difficult for the reader to distinguish fact from fiction in this account.



Nonetheless and to his credit, the author attempts to resolve this problem in a helpful chapter entitled “How the Truth Became a Legend.” Cuevas explains that a legend describes a specific event in a moment of time which always contains a kernel of truth. The chapter about pirates describes real maritime mischief of that era, but speculation about buried treasure on the island sounds like myth and wishful thinking without the ring of truth.

I heartily recommend this book for all readers interested in the history, folklore, and legends of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The work represents careful research with depth and breadth of detail in a richly illustrated account of Cat Island and the Cuevas family. (*Copies are available at Bay Books in Bay Saint Louis.*)

### History Week in Biloxi

By  
Eddie Coleman

The Mississippi Coast Historical and Genealogical Society and the City of Biloxi hosted the 25th Annual Mississippi Coast History Week February 12-14 at the Biloxi Visitors Center, located at 1050 Beach Blvd. across from the

Biloxi Lighthouse. For the past several years the Hancock County Historical Society has participated in the event.

Organizations which presented exhibits during the week were the Biloxi Fire Museum, the Local History and Genealogy Department of the Biloxi Library, the Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum, Beauvoir, the Biloxi Schools, and the Department of Marine Resources. Historical societies participating were the Hancock County Historical Society, the Ocean Springs Genealogical Society, and the Historical Society of Gulfport. Additionally, the following ethnic groups participated: the Fleur de Lis Ladies Auxiliary, the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church (Greek and Russian), the Jewish Community, and the Slavonian Ladies Auxiliary.

The Hancock exhibit included an exhibit from and information on the Monte Walden Collection of Native American Artifacts, an 1857 map of the Bay of Saint Louis and Shieldsboro Harbor, a child's chair made by Prudent Mallard, noted New Orleans furniture maker, and the preserved *Book of Marks and Brands* for Hancock County. The items which drew the most attention in the exhibit were this *Book of Marks and Brands* and the Native American artifacts. In addition to the entries in the book, visitors were most intrigued by the handwriting and made many remarks bemoaning the loss of good penmanship nowadays.

History Week is held each February at the Biloxi Visitors Center around February 13, the date d'Iberville and Bienville set foot on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 1699.



Hancock County Historical Society display at History Week 2015

### NEW ACQUISITIONS

Executive Director Charles Gray has been on the prowl again! He has recently purchased for and donated more antiques to the Lobrano House. Among them are a secretary, which sits just inside the front door and holds our bottle collection and the visitor guest book, two dining tables with Queen Anne chairs for the research room, and additional Queen Anne chairs for the smaller research tables.



### NEW MEMBERS

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*Bay Saint Louis, MS*

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*Bay Saint Louis, MS*

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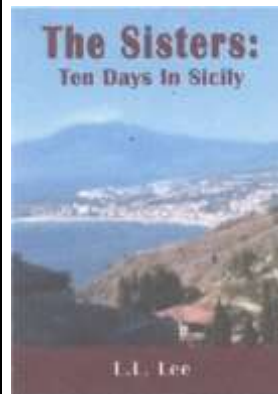
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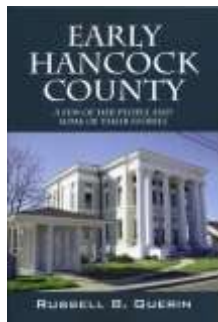
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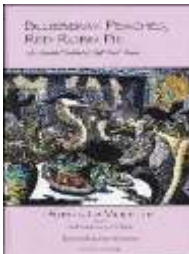
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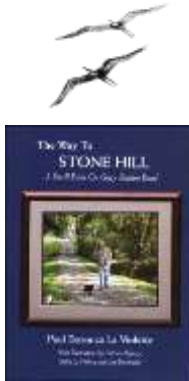
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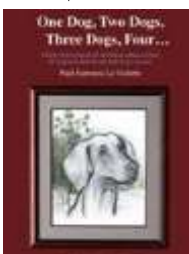
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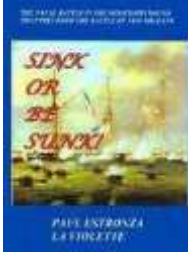
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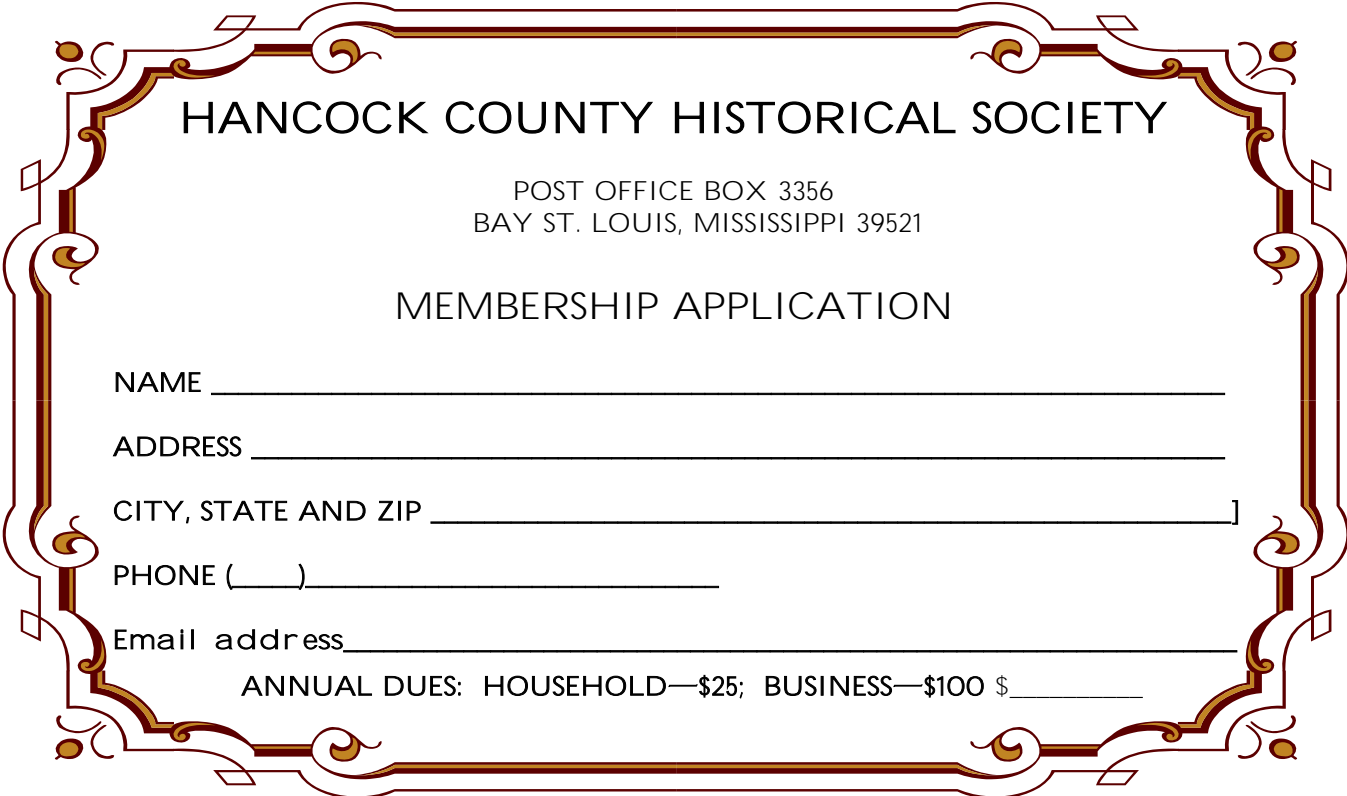
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