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HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

May 2015

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2015, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Pat Murphy, who will speak on the Depot District, the Washington St. District, the Old Town District, and related old business areas of Bay Saint Louis. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must insist that you please call by noon on Wednesday, May 20, 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.



Baldwin Lodge
on the Pearl River
Hancock County, Mississippi

Albert Baldwin and Baldwin Lodge

By
Russell Guerin and
Eddie Coleman

Most residents of Hancock County know of, or at least have heard of, Baldwin Lodge which stood on the eastern shore of the Pearl River in southwest Hancock County. However, all that remains of the structure are the ruins of the swimming pool, parts of the sidewalk, and the steps of the former house, all of which are inaccessible except

by boat. Bits and pieces of history of this once prominent lodge have surfaced through the years, but a full history hasn't come to light. To weave these fragments into a coherent history of the lodge, one needs knowledge of the man, Albert Baldwin.

Albert Baldwin was born in Watertown, MA, on April 7, 1834. He became a bookkeeper at one of the oldest dry goods stores in Boston. Through hard work and determination, he gained the reputation of being one of the most expert accountants in Boston and one of the best mathematicians in the country.

In October 1855 Baldwin



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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.”

married Rhoda Maria Griffin in Boston. Following his brother in 1858, he moved his family to New Orleans and worked for the largest dry goods business in the city. Unfortunately he lost his wife and infant son to yellow fever in the fall of that same year.

In December 1862 he married Arthèmise Bouigny, a member of one of the most prominent families of New Orleans. Shortly after the Civil War, Baldwin’s brother drowned in Lake Pontchartrain, and Baldwin was asked to replace him at Slocomb and Company. After five years the firm became known as Slocomb, Baldwin & Co. Thus, with his second marriage and his prestigious position with Slocomb, Baldwin began his rise to financial as well as social prominence in New Orleans.

In succeeding years Albert Baldwin became involved in various business ventures. Among them were A. Baldwin and Co. Hardware; New Orleans

National Bank as president; Times-Democrat Publishing Co., as vice-president; and numerous other companies as a member of the board. His social involvement included membership in the Boston Club; membership in the Rex Organization, of which he was a founder and Rex IV; and commodore and founding member of the Southern Yacht Club.

Albert Baldwin’s connection to Hancock County, MS, is due to his building a sports lodge on the east bank of the Pearl River. It’s not known exactly when he purchased the land for his lodge, but a structure of some kind existed in the spring of 1877. Shortly after his retirement from the Presidency of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant visited New Orleans at the beginning of his famous world tour. He left the Presidency on March 4, 1877, so he probably arrived in New Orleans in later March or April of that year because his ship to Europe docked



in Liverpool, England, in May 1877. According to Baldwin's obituary, former-President Grant and Baldwin went to the lodge during this visit, probably sailing from New Orleans to the camp on the Pearl River in Baldwin's yacht, *Semper Idem* [always the same], "one of the most elegantly appointed craft in Southern waters."

A later description of the lodge appears to be of a lavish building, erected in 1892. This one seems to be the one residents of Hancock County remember and the one of which the Historical Society has photographs. A column in the *New Orleans Times Picayune* gives this description:

"Mr. Albert Baldwin was the genial host of a fishing party on Saturday of last week at the handsome clubhouse 'Baldwin,' lately erected on the bank of Pearl River, just where the Louisville and Nashville bridge crosses the stream. The clubhouse is a very pretty and attractive building, with every comfort

and convenience, and shadowed by immense oaks, which add greatly to the picturesque effect of the grayish-green cottage, with its inviting broad galleries. An artificial pond, stocked with fine fish, is one of the many attractions offered the guests. A handsome steam yacht, the *Semper Idem*, is also at the disposal of the members and guests."

Another description refers to the lodge's having four fish ponds, "the best of plumbing, and water supplied by an artesian well." Still another espouses the abundant fishing and hunting in the area.

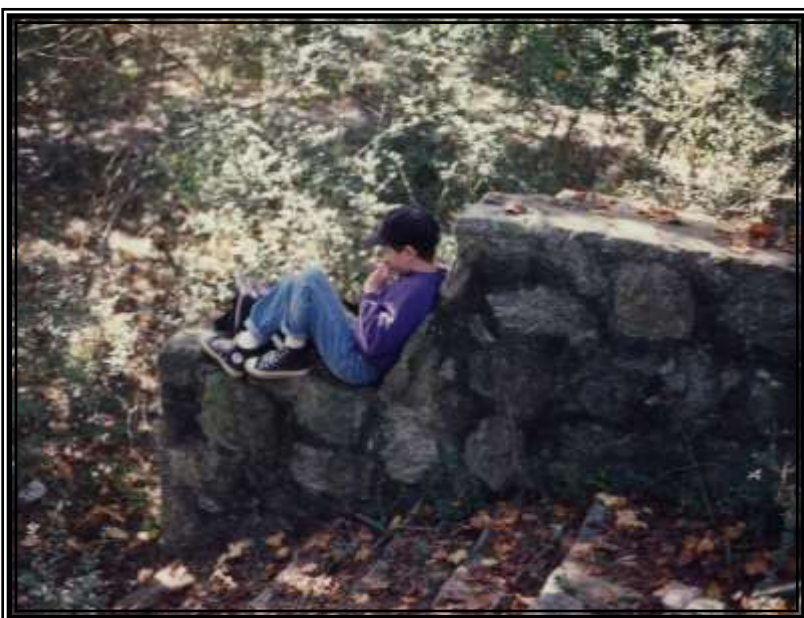
One record the Historical Society has is a memoir of two Baldwin granddaughters. In the transcript, dated April 30, 1983, the granddaughters, Aphro Vairin Morris and Alice Vairin Westfelt, often contradict each other in their memories. Though delightful, their portrayals of their grandparents are somewhat irreverent at times, and the contradictions make one wonder about their accuracy such as one



On of the mosaic walkways at Baldwin Lodge (1993)

granddaughter's recalling that Baldwin had shipped armaments to Central America, yet her sister had no such recall. Moreover, one said that Baldwin had thirteen children; the other, six. The difference seems to have been that there were other children who had died. The dialogue is important, too, in its revelations concerning the relationship of Albert Baldwin to his wife Arthèmise: they lived under the same roof but were essentially estranged.

What these "bits and pieces" of history of the lodge have revealed is that its creator, Albert Baldwin, was a very successful businessman involved in improving the businesses he worked for and in developing new ones to aid not only himself but also his community. In addition, his involvement in social organizations points to his enriching the cultural and recrea-



Child resting on the ruins of the front steps leading into Baldwin Lodge (1993)

tional activities of his community. Furthermore, the once elegant and peaceful Baldwin Lodge on the serene Pearl River offered Baldwin, his friends, and his business associates a place to rest and relax away from the problems of everyday life. Thus, the history of Baldwin Lodge revolves around not only a place but also a man.

SOURCES:

- “Albert Baldwin Dies at Lakeside Lodge.” *The Daily Picayune* 22 April 1912: 1; 9.
 “Baldwin, Albert.” 3 Oct. 2011, 7 May 2015 <findagrave.com>.
 “Baldwin, Albert.” *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, 6 May 2015 <lahistory.org>.
 Dyer, Charles Laerence. *Along the Gulf*. New Orleans: William E. Myers, Pub., 1894.

Did You Know This about Hancock County? Sugar Bowl Teams

By
Scott Bagley

Did you know that St. Stanislaus in Hancock County at one time served as a training locale for some football teams prior to playing in the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans? In 1940 the #5 Boston College Eagles trained at St. Stanislaus stadium for the 1941 Sugar Bowl against the #4 Tennessee Volunteers. It was due to the efforts of Brother Peter of St. Stanislaus that the Boston team chose to visit and train in Hancock County.

The Boston team arrived on December 20, 1940, and stayed at the Reed Hotel during the training period. A pre-game

“victory banquet” was held at the Reed Hotel on December 28. The banquet was appropriate as Boston defeated Tennessee 19 to 13.

Much positive publicity about Bay St. Louis resulted from this visit. Bill Cumming of the *Boston Post* wrote that “one of the highest moments of the entire Sugar Bowl saga was Brother Peter’s omelet....One of the brightest memories of the entire Sugar Bowl was Brother Peter himself. As to the matter of that, I can’t give you Brother Peter, but I can give you his omelet.”

The resulting publicity and further efforts of Brother Peter Brought football teams to Bay St. Louis in other years also. The #6 Fordham Rams arrived at the L&N station on December 23, 1941, for the 1942 Sugar Bowl. Little is known of this visit except that Fordham beat #7 Missouri 2 to 0. More is known of the following year’s visit by the #4 Tulsa Golden Hurricanes for the 1943 Sugar Bowl against the #7 Tennessee Volunteers. An article in the *Chicago Tribune*, on December 20, 1942, reported that...”Tulsa’s unbeaten football team arrived here [New Orleans] in a sunny temper today, at lunch at a famous French restaurant and left town in late afternoon for what Coach Henry Frnka described as steady drills at the Bay St. Louis training camp.... Frnka brought a squad of fifty-five, all necessary tackling and blocking equipment and three hundred gallons of Oklahoma drinking water. [The coach said]....’We aren’t taking any

chances....The breaks of the game are precarious enough without asking for trouble.” The team did in fact have some trouble as Tennessee beat Tulsa 17 to 7.

Brother Peter is indeed a legend at St. Stanislaus and in Hancock County, and certainly his participation in some Sugar Bowl history is an important part of this legend.

SOURCES:

- Chicago Tribune*. 20 Dec. 1941: 5.
 Scharff, Robert G. *Louisiana’s Loss, Mississippi’s Gain*. Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Publishing Corp., 1999.

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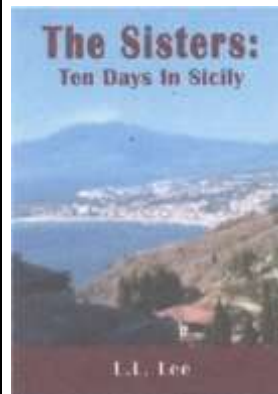
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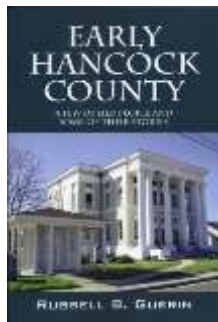
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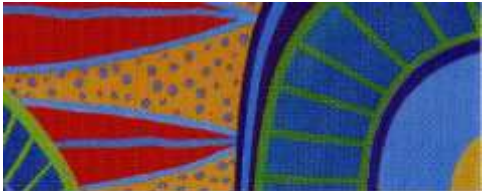
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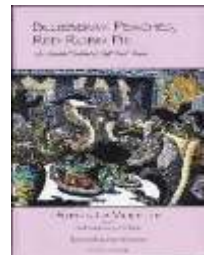
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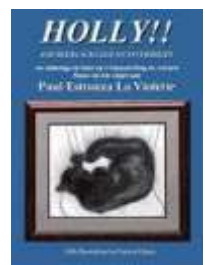
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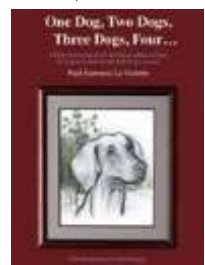
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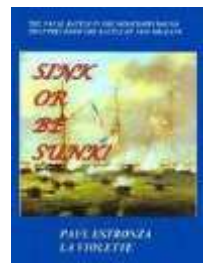
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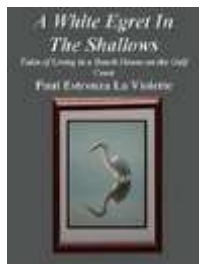
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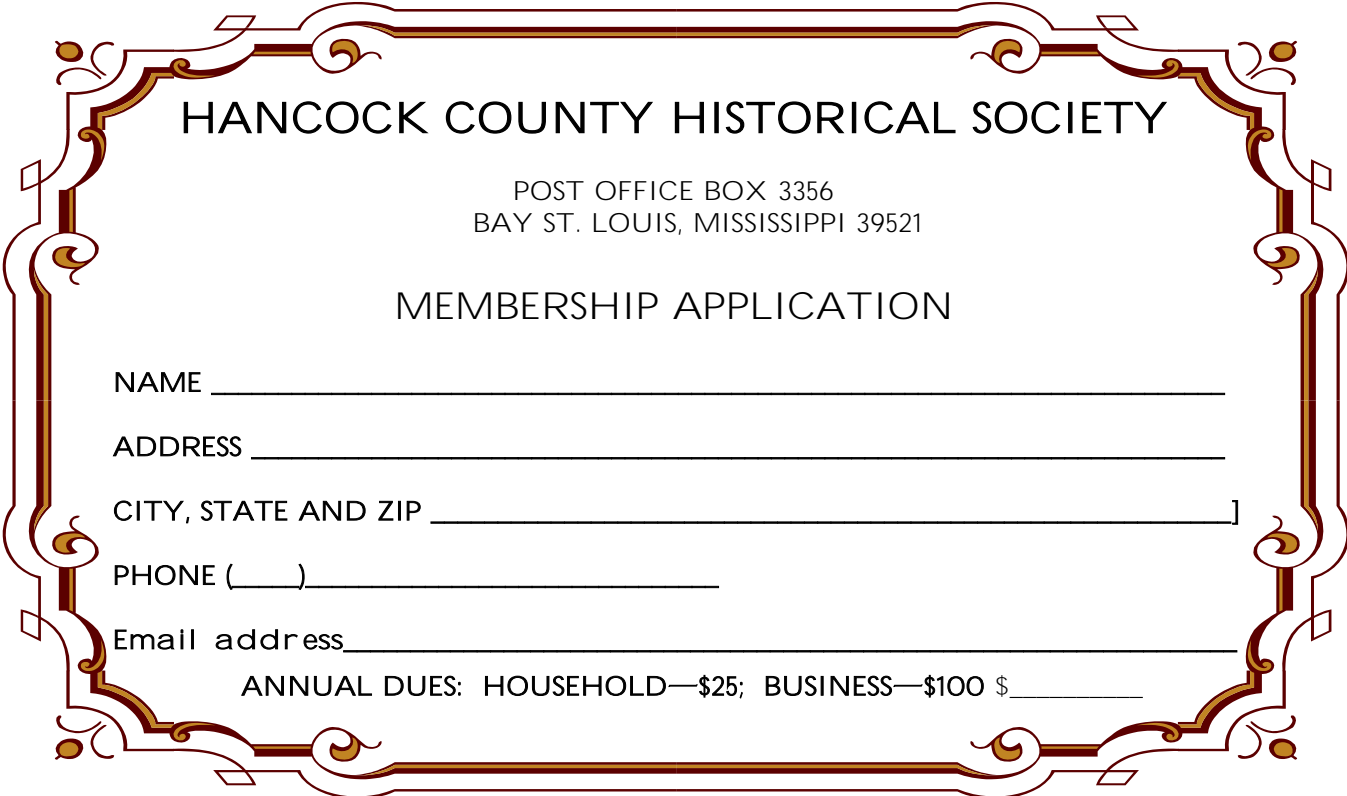
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