

THE

# HISTORIAN

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

November 2015

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, November 19, 2015, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speakers for the program will be George Williams, executive director of the Mississippi Pavilion at the 1984 World's Fair, Trish Haas Williams, site director, and Maurey McCurdy. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must insist that you please call by noon on Wednesday, November 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.



Cedar Rest Cemetery  
200 South Second Street  
Bay Saint Louis, MS

It is time to elect board members to serve from January 2016 through December 2017. 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 president, second vice president, publicity chairman, and historian. Thank you to those who served on the board during these past two years.

## The Twenty-second Annual Cemetery Tour Presented by the Hancock County Historical Society

By  
Eddie Coleman

The Twenty-second Annual Cemetery Tour was scheduled to be held from 5:30 until 8:00 P. M. at Cedar Rest Cemetery on South Second Street on October 31, 2015. However, because of inclement weather the program was cancelled. This is only the second

time in the history of the tour that cancellation was necessary because of weather conditions, the first being in October 2005 because of Hurricane Katrina.

The theme of this year's tour was to recognize persons and families buried in Cedar Rest who have streets, avenues, or other roadways in Hancock County named after them. Those families are the Boardmans, the de Montluzins, the Gexes, the Iors, the Ulmans, and the Webbs. In addition to these families, we always honor Katherine Lobrano, for whom the Hancock County Historical Society is named.

THE  
**HISTORIAN**  
 OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
 Ellis Cuevas, Publisher

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 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 Brief History of the  
 Cedar Rest Cemetery**

Cedar Rest Cemetery was built in three stages. There were three separate deeds at three separate times. The northern section was given to the city by Jacques Baptiste Toulme in 1860. The middle section of the cemetery was a swap between St. Luke’s Episcopal and the city of Bay St. Louis in 1888. The south section of the cemetery was given to the city by Joan Newman Seal in 1891.

The plots were given to families in the manner of homesteads—free, but with the responsibility of claiming the plot by physical markings. To this day the City of Bay St. Louis keeps the grass cut, but individual families are responsible for keeping the gravesites in order. The oldest grave is that of E. Meggs, who died in 1815, but the marker is gone. The oldest marked grave is that of Powhattan Robertson, a Native American, who died in 1820.

There are two vaults in the cemetery that are not marked and not used. The one in the north section belongs to the Poullion family. The one in the south section was built for Mrs. Harriet Jordan. At the time of her death, her brother did not know she owned the crypt, and he buried her next to her son in a grave.

**Ioor Street**

Several years ago a woman, who had recently moved to Hancock County from somewhere “way north of I-10,” came to the Historical Society, enthusiastic about being on the Gulf Coast but wanting her street renamed. She mistakenly thought the name of her street was “100-R Street.” In reality the name of the street is I-O-O-R, pronounced “E—oor.”

In fact, there are two roadways in Hancock County with the name Ioor. Both of them were named for John Ioor, one of the developers of the town of Clermont City, known today as Clermont Harbor. Ioor *Street* is located in Bay Saint Louis just off Washington St. on the north side of Highway 90; however, Ioor *Avenue* is located in Clermont Harbor and runs from the beach north toward the railroad.

John B. Ioor was born in Wilkinson County, MS, in 1845. He came to Bay Saint Louis after serving in the Civil War and lived in a house on Hancock Street with his two sisters, Misses Ella and Maria Ioor, and a brother, Harry Ioor.

He was first appointed Justice of the Peace by the governor, and then he was elected to serve a full term in this capacity. In 1888, he was elected to the office of Tax Assessor-Collector and was “a candidate for assessor every two years [thereafter]. He never made a canvass nor solicited a vote, telling friends and the public that if people wanted his service to continue, they were the best judges, and it was left to their consideration to do so.”

As tax-assessor and collector he was particularly painstaking and always successful in the discharge of his duties. No man knew better the location of property, values, etc., than he. He was a strong champion of a full assessment and small tax levy, for, he said, a low assessment cheapened property and the high rate of taxation kept outsiders and investors away—a contention in which he was eminently correct.

One of his large and successful undertakings was the building of a new town, Clermont City, with his associate, F. C. Bordages, Sr., an endeavor which helped build that southern area of the county.

Another noteworthy mem-

ber of the Ioor family was Miss Ella Ioor, who served as postmistress of Bay Saint Louis from August 1885 until May 1894, succeeding Mrs. Annie Avery. She conducted the post office from her two-story residence at the corner of South Beach Blvd. and Bookter Street. One entered from the end of the porch to get to the business window to conduct post office business.

As is often the case, the contributions of more than one family member cause a family to be remembered. Such is the case with the Ioor family who have not one, but two, streets in Hancock County named for them.

### Boardman Avenue

Boardman Avenue off North Beach Blvd. was named for the Boardman family, who came to Hancock County in the mid-1800s, and most settled in the Pearlinton area. Originally from Leominster, Mass., A.P. Boardman was a riverboat captain who moved from Mass. to New Orleans and commanded steamers between New Orleans and Mobile and also between Montgomery and Mobile.

A.P. Boardman's son, William T. Boardman, also became a captain in 1853 at age 19. He began his career in the same area as his father, but later moved westward from Mobile to captain boats on the Red and Mississippi rivers and their tributaries. It was in this area that he built and owned several fine steamers including one named the *Dacotah*. In his later life William Boardman began to settle down with thoughts of marrying and starting a family. He met the lovely Rita Leonhard. Because she was much younger than he, he wrote a letter to her parents asking for their permission to marry. It may sound antiquated now, but he

felt it was the right thing to do, considering the difference in their ages. They married and had three children, two daughters and one son, the latter who, unfortunately, died in infancy.

In addition to A.P. and William T., there were other members of the family who made their livelihoods on steamboats. One was Daniel A. Boardman, Jr. He began his career as a river pilot serving on the steamer *Mitchel*. He was aboard the *Southwestern* when it burned near Colfax, LA, on the Red River. He later owned and piloted the *Bossier*, *Maria Louise*, *Valley Queen*, and *Yazoo Valley*. When he died in 1909, he was one of the most experienced and widely acclaimed pilots of the Red River. His younger brother, Roderick, ran the Pearl River from Logtown to Pearlinton to English Lookout. At different times he had one boat named the *Pelican* and later another one named the *Margaret*. He also delivered mail twice a day on his runs between these river towns.

When city streets were cut and named in the area of North Beach Blvd. near the present-day Bay/Waveland Yacht Club and the recently lost Elmwood Manor, the city fathers sought to honor this prominent Hancock County family by naming a street Boardman Avenue.

### de Montluzin Avenue

The fifth child of his parents, René de Montluzin, Sr., was born in St. James Parish, Louisiana, ten years after they had emigrated from France. His father, Ludovic Adrien de Montluzin, a writer and a chemistry teacher at Jefferson College, wrapped René, his newborn son, in a French flag as a symbolic gesture. His son may have been born in America, he said, but he

must never forget his French ancestry. René never did. He was intensely patriotic toward both countries. When, for example, the news arrived in 1914 that French soldiers, driven in taxicabs to the war front 25 miles away from Paris, had stopped the German advance in its tracks in the First Battle of the Marne, he decorated all the fence posts around his house at 208 North Beach Boulevard with French and American flags.

René grew up in Convent, Louisiana, and his most vivid memory of his early childhood was going one day under the care of a riverboat captain to visit an aunt who lived on a plantation upriver from New Orleans. Only when he was much older did he realize that the kind Mr. Clemens, who put him off at the right landing, was Mark Twain.

After the Civil War ended, René and his family lived for five years in New Orleans and then moved to Bay Saint Louis. When an epidemic of yellow fever in Louisiana spread to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, his mother took her two youngest children—René and his sister Corinne—to France for an extended visit with her family. While they were there, the Statue of Liberty was completed and was on exhibit at the Paris Exposition of 1878, lying on the ground in not-yet-assembled sections. René walked about in its head, but he did not see the statue standing upright until he visited New York at the age of 76 during World War II.

In 1908 he married Venie Lillian Word, and in 1910 their only child, René, Jr., was born. René, Sr., had inherited the beach-front drugstore established in 1878 as an apothecary shop by his father, and he worked there as pharmacist and owner for half a century. The drugstore was the fifth in Mississippi,

and as the years passed, its round, glass-topped showcases, rose marble counter tops, frosted glass partition shielding the prescription area from view, and rows of tall apothecary jars with gold-edged Latin labels made it a mecca for photographers. All the customers enjoyed seeing "Mr. René," who, until shortly before he died, was on hand every day, usually greeting ladies with a pleasant "Bonjour, Madam!" as they entered and an "Au revoir, Madame!" as they left. The drugstore was destroyed in 1969 by Hurricane Camille, a storm with a French name.

De Montluzin Avenue is named for René de Montluzin, Sr.

### Gex Street

Lucien Myrtille Gex and his wife Marie Victoria Demoruelle moved their family to Bay St. Louis from New Orleans around 1885. They were affectionately known by their grandchildren as Pere and Mere Gex. Mr. Gex established the L. M. Gex General Merchandise and Country Produce store on the corner of Sycamore (Good Children) and Hancock Streets. In addition to general merchandise and foodstuffs, the market boasted fine wines and liquors as well as the largest French pastry shop in town.

However, Pere's sons, Walter and Emile, did not follow him into the mercantile business. They became attorneys establishing the law firm of Gex and Gex and beginning the dynasty of family members who made a profession of practicing law.

In addition to practicing law, Walter, Sr., founded the Merchants Bank and Trust Company, owned a sawmill, and amassed large tracts of timberland and mineral rights. He married Amanda von Gohren, daughter of a prominent

Bay Saint Louis doctor.

Walter, Jr., followed his father into the law profession, but he was also president of Gex-Cue Construction, executive vice president of the Merchants Bank and Trust Company, and a state staff member to five governors. He also accumulated 5,500 acres of timberland, most of which later became the City of Diamondhead.

Lucien, another son of Walter, Sr., who was named for his grandfather, and his brother Walter formed the second Gex and Gex law firm. He was city attorney for Bay St. Louis and Waveland as well as a member of the state legislature. He was also president and charter member of Merchants Bank and Trust Co. and attorney for the local Selective Service Board.

Wena, daughter of Walter, Sr., and Amanda von Gohren, married a schoolmate of her brother's—Milton "Hippo" Phillips, who was from Costa Rica. Thus, the Phillips branch of the family began and their son, Walter James Phillips, joined the law firm, now named Gex, Gex, and Phillips. He also served in the state legislature for 16 years. His brother, Milton "Bud" Phillips, was property administrator at Stennis Space Center.

The youngest son of Pere Gex, Emile, Sr., served as county attorney for more than 15 years. His son—Emile, Jr.—worked as an urban and district planner for the city of New Orleans.

Since the late 1800s the descendants of Pere and Mere Gex have lived, worked, and grown up on the coast. Attorneys entrepreneurs, and civic leaders—the Gexes have secured a place in the history of Hancock County and the Gulf Coast. Thus, it is appropriate that four streets in Hancock County bear the name *Gex*, one next to the courthouse in Bay Saint Louis, one in

Waveland off Nicholson Avenue, and two, Gex Drive and Gex Road, in Diamondhead.

### Ulman Avenue

Ulman Avenue is now a quiet Bay St. Louis street, extending from the Presbyterian Church at the beach end, crossing busy Dunbar Avenue, and joining Highway 90 at the other. Until the four-lane concrete bridge across the bay opened several blocks to the north in 1953, however, Ulman Avenue had been for many years a part of the highway itself, the Bay St. Louis section of Highway 90, opening out at its east end onto a wooden bridge that crossed the bay.

The avenue commemorates the Ulman family of Hancock County. James A. Ulman brought his family to Bay St. Louis from Louisiana sometime in the 1850s. He was elected Mayor of Bay St. Louis, and during his administration the State of Mississippi approved the charter and ordinances of the City of Bay St. Louis. James had two sons, Alfred A. (the older) and James B. (the younger) both of whom made contributions to Hancock County.

Alfred A. (A. A.) Ulman bought about 1000 acres of land in Waveland, moved there, and established the Ulman Woolen Mills on Nicholson Ave., just north of the railroad tracks. There was a thriving wool industry in Hancock County at the time, and the mill produced blankets and scarves. Mr. Ulman also established a residential area, known as Ulmanville on Jeff Davis Avenue, for his employees. Ulman also served the City of Waveland as mayor, a position he held at the time of his death in 1893.

James B. (J. B.) Ulman, the younger brother, established a general merchandising store on the

western side of Nicholson Ave., right across the street from the mills. The business was successful even after it was destroyed by fire and then rebuilt. Mr. Ulman served as treasurer of the town of Waveland.

All three of these men helped to develop the Bay-Waveland area, and it is appropriate that two streets named for the family, help keep their name alive: Ulman Avenue in Bay Saint Louis and Ulman Street in Waveland.

### Webb Street

Robert W. Webb is considered one of the most accomplished mayors of Bay Saint Louis, serving almost four consecutive terms before my death.

Although he was a native of Georgia, he had been a resident of Bay St. Louis for 20 years when he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Prior to his death he had been a traveling salesman working for a New Orleans wholesale house with the Mississippi Gulf Coast as his territory. His first venture into politics was serving over 10 years as Alderman of Ward 3. During this time he was instrumental in building a school in Ward 3. For his efforts the school was named for him. The building had two floors with the classrooms upstairs and the cafeteria downstairs. Originally there were two teachers for six grades, but when it closed there were two teachers for four grades. For a short time in the mid-1980s, it served as a meeting place for the Hancock County Historical Society.

While he served as Mayor of Bay St. Louis, he tried in vain to get the board of supervisors to pass

a bond issue to construct a seawall along Beach Boulevard to protect it and adjacent lands from erosion especially by storms. However, the board turned down his request. Not to be outdone, he went to the open market and sold the bonds himself. Because the sale was a success, the seawall was built, and he has since been called the "father of the seawall."

Realizing the fast growth of the city of Bay St. Louis, he visualized the need for a city owned waterworks system rather than a privately owned one. Thus, at his suggestion and with the concurrence of the city aldermen, Bay Saint Louis bought the existing privately owned waterworks from Charles Sanger for \$92,000.

He died May 30, 1925, at age 53 during his fourth term as mayor. A street in Bay Saint Louis has been named in his honor.

### Katherine M. Lobrano

Katherine M. Lobrano, fondly called Kate, was born on January 3, 1871, to Rebecca Jane Douglas, formerly of Charleston, South Carolina, and George W. Maynard, a Confederate War Veteran formerly of St. Louis, Missouri. At the time of her birth, her father was the Town Marshal of Bay St. Louis.

On August 4, 1891, she married Frank J. Lobrano, a direct descendant of Jacinto Lobrano, a captain of Jean Lafitte's famous privateer navy. Her husband was the founder and developer of the process of using empty oyster shells to cultivate oysters domestically in the bay bottom in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana.

After their marriage the newlyweds made Bay St. Louis their home and began their family which produced five children. With the help of her father, Frank purchased the family resi-

dence on the corner of Main and Cue Streets on October 1, 1892. Later that month on October 15, he sold the property in its entirety to Katherine.

Frank maintained his official domicile in Plaquemines Parish in Louisiana and was elected Clerk of Court there. So he and Kate maintained residences here and in Pointe a la Hache, LA. He also served as Justice of the Peace in Plaquemines Parish.

In December 1917, Kate was stricken with skin cancer, and they made a decision to sell the Bay St. Louis property. Instead of selling the entire plot, she decided to sell just the section fronting Main St. and keep the back section with a smaller house on it for her mother. After her death various family members lived in the house, but it was vacant for several years before Kate's grandchildren gave it to the Historical Society to use as its headquarters.

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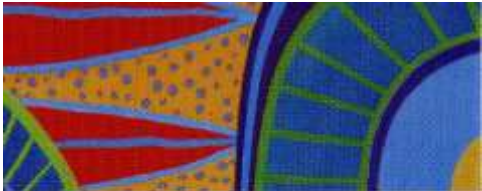
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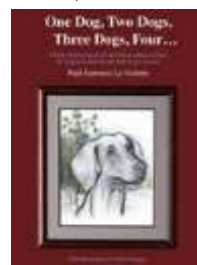
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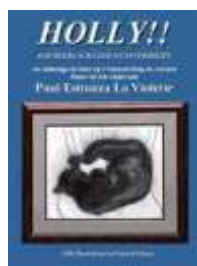
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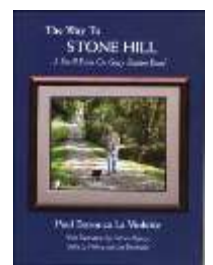
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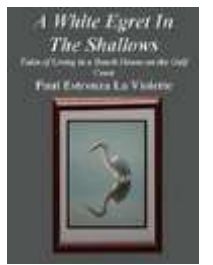
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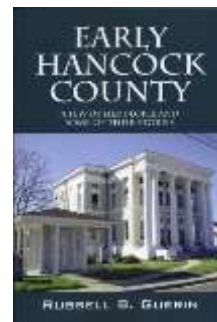


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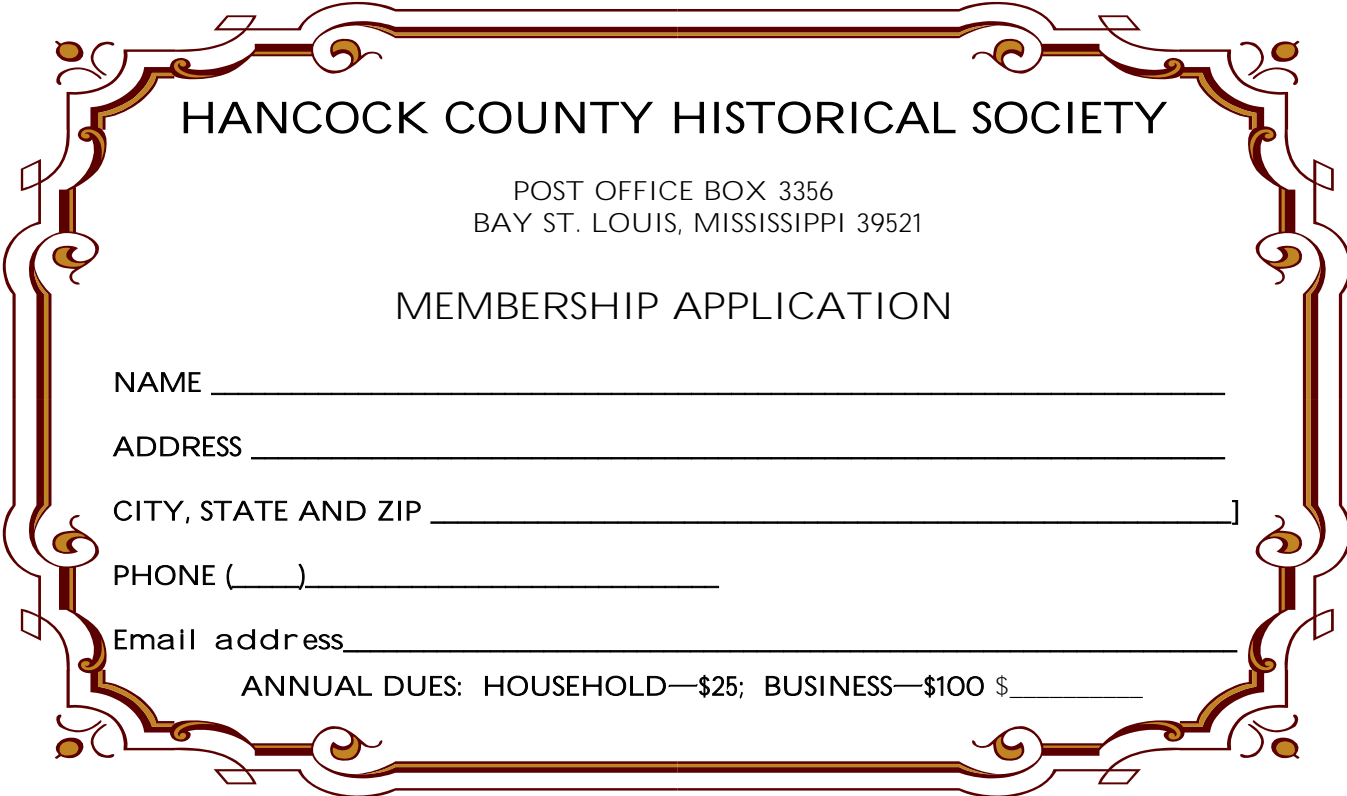
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