

THE

# HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

October 2016

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

Hamlet to Ghost:

...[But] tell/ Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,/ Have burst their cerements; why the sepulcher/ Wherein we saw thee quietly inured,/ Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws/ To cast thee up again. What may this mean/ That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,/ Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,/ Making night hideous, and we fools of nature/ So horridly to shake our disposition/ With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?—*Hamlet*, Act I, scene 4.

Perhaps, we can find answers to these questions and others on the Halloween Tour. Please join us for the 22nd Annual Cemetery Tour on Monday, October 31, 2016, at Cedar Rest Cemetery in Bay Saint Louis. The fun begins at 5:30 P.M. and continues until 8:00 P. M. Admission 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 may devote all of our energies to the Cemetery Tour.



This is the Hancock County Courthouse as it looked with the original dome, lost in Hurricane Camille in 1969.

## “ONCE UPON A MID-NIGHT DREARY...”

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

The words of horror master Edgar Allan Poe ring throughout the halls of schools the world over. Often Americans denigrate the actual artistry and mastery of this native-born genius because they think of him only as a writer of “scary stories” and “eerie poems.” True, he *did* write these, but upon closer inspection one can see that his tales and poems of horror and terror transcend the macabre and enter the realm of introspection and reflection. Where did Poe get his material? Was it just from his imaginative

mind? Or was it from “ghost stories” he had heard during his short life? One wonders. The Mississippi Coast has a bountiful share of ghost stories; some have been told for many generations. Perhaps a modern-day Poe could make use of some of the following tales.

## A GHOST IN THE COURTHOUSE?

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

Is there really a ghost in the Hancock County Courthouse? Some people say yes; some dismiss it as urban legend. Two things are certain, however: the passing of time has not stopped the mysterious sight-



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**PHYSICAL ADDRESS:**

108 Cue Street

Telephone/Fax [228] 467-4090

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“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.”

ings and the ghost has reportedly been seen as recently as a few months ago (previous to August 2009).

On a cold December evening in 1987, dispatcher Lillian Roberts was working her normal night shift at the sheriff’s department. About 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. she stepped outside on a short break. Looking up at a window in the courthouse, Roberts was stunned at what she saw. Standing in the window appeared to be the silhouette of a young woman dressed in a flowing dress.

Some former county workers say they are afraid to go in the courthouse alone.

“I don’t go in that God darn building alone,” longtime county attorney Gerald Gex said. “I can’t prove it, but I have had some experiences at the courthouse. One night I was in the board room, and I heard what I thought was a noise outside. It sounded like someone humming. I went outside and

looked towards the stairs, and I saw something.”

What Gex said he saw was a woman in a long-flowing dress. He said he then went up the stairs and all of the lights were off. He then realized he was alone in the building.

“I got the heck out of there,” he said.

The strange events at the courthouse were frequent and included books dropping, doors closing, and strange noises, but nothing threatening, Gex said. He said he gave the ghost a name, “Mrs. Carol.” “If there is a ghost, she is friendly,” Gex said.

Hancock County Narcotics Chief Matt Karl [2009] said he remembers stories his grandfather—former Police Chief Alceen [sic] Saucier—told him about the last woman hanged at the courthouse.

Karl said that in the old days, hangings were conducted outside the courthouse on gallows. According to him this particular woman was hanged, but did not die;



The Bourgeois House stood at 734 South Beach Boulevard, Waveland ,prior to its being destroyed by Hurricane Camille August 17, 1969.

therefore, she was let go because the sentence was only to hang her.

Is this woman Mrs. Carol? We may never know, but as the supernatural sightings continue to occur, the legend will continue to grow.

**SOURCE:**

Bremer, Dwayne. "Courthouse Memories" *The Sea Coast Echo*, August 8, 2009, pp. 13-14.

### A WAVELAND GHOST

One story which may interest a modern teller of tales concerns a Waveland family who can attest to hearing their house's ghost and actually to having caught him in a photograph. The ghost of Leon Bourgeois and his sister-guardian Angeline were captured on film the day after Hurricane Camille in 1969. The home had been demolished except for the front steps.

The Bourgeois family had built the house in the 19th Century, and the last of that family to occupy it were the invalid Leon and his caretaker, Angeline. It had changed hands several times until the family of Carlos J. Lozano, Jr., bought it in 1958. Mr. Lozano's wife, Lois, said that she occasionally caught a glimpse of Leon, a shadowy figure on the stairs, or heard something like the dragging of feet in carpet slippers in the hall.

The day after Camille when Lozano hired a photographer to record the damage to the house on South Beach in Waveland, the developed photo showed Leon and Angeline sitting behind the steps.

"Before Camille, I saw him and heard him all the time," Mrs. Lozano said. "But after the storm, we never saw him again. Some ghost experts say that after the house was destroyed, he no longer had anything to haunt."



The Pirate House  
Destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969,  
it stood at 649 North Beach Boulevard in Waveland.

### GHOST OF THE PIRATE HOUSE

Another famous Waveland ghost who disappeared after "his" house was demolished by 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. 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.

"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....”

**SOURCE:**

Bergeron, Kat. *The Sun Herald*, 1989.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF CEDAR REST CEMETERY

By  
Eddie Coleman

Bounded by Second, Easterbrook, and Toulme Streets, Cedar Rest Cemetery became the property of the City of Bay St. Louis in three separate deeds at different times.

The chain of ownership of the land begins with the United States and from there passes to Elihu Carver, Millette Lassassieur, Peter Surrogate, Madam Charlo, and John B. Lardasse. These people held most of the land on which the city of Bay St. Louis presently sits. From there Madam Charlo deeded a parcel of her land, which the cemetery now covers, to Euphrone Necaïse, John B. Necaïse, Zeni Necaïse, and Celeste LaFontaine. From there this parcel went to Publius Rutilius Rufus Pray, from him to J. B. Toulme, John Martin, and John Magilly and then in a partition by Judge J. W. Winningham (Probate Court) to J. B. Toulme.

The northern section was one of six plots given to the city by Jacques Baptiste (J. B.) Toulme. In 1860 he also deeded a section south of the original cemetery to St. Luke's Episcopal Church. J. B. Toulme II and his only son, John

Victor (J. V.) were mayors of the city. J. V. Toulme, his three wives and some of his children are buried in Cedar Rest. According to the *Sea Coast Gazette*, a local newspaper in 1880, J. B. I and his wife are buried in a crypt with a spire, facing west across from the bathtub. In reality the bathtub was a watering trough for horses when Bay St. Louis was a horse and wagon town. Originally it sat in front of the first courthouse in Bay St. Louis.

The middle section of Cedar Rest was a swap between St. Luke's Episcopal Church and the city in 1888. (The deed was recorded on September 13, 1895.) The church gave up the “Old Burying Ground” property at the corner of Beach Blvd. and St. Charles St. for this center section. The bodies in this cemetery were disinterred and moved to Cedar Rest. Some of them were Indians, and for this reason Cedar Rest is on the list of historical graveyards of the United States.

The south section of the cemetery was given to the city by Joan Newman Seal on November 20, 1891. Also at the south end sits McDonald's warehouse on a site she deeded to the Baptist Church.

The oldest grave in the cemetery is that of E. Meggs, who died on May 15, 1815. However, the marker is gone. The oldest **marked** grave is that of a Native American, Powhattan Robertson, who died as a young woman on October 1, 1820.

The plots in the cemetery were given to families in the manner of homesteads: free, but with the responsibility of “claiming” the plot by physical markings. Although the city of Bay St. Louis has assumed the responsibility of keeping the grass cut, etc., the individual families are responsible for keeping the gravesites in order.

In 1993 the Hancock County Historical Society began a tradition that is the highlight of Halloween celebrations in Bay Saint Louis, in Hancock County, and along the Mississippi Gulf Coast—the Annual Cemetery Tour.

Originated to discourage vandalism of the cemetery by mischievous ghosts and goblins, the event has other objectives—to preserve and teach the history of the area and to serve as the October function of the society. The cemetery tour has been presented each year since 1993 except in 2005 because of Hurricane Katrina and in 2015 because of severe thunderstorms.

**SOURCE:**

Hilliker, Meg. Letter to Mayor Victor Frankiewicz, City of Bay St. Louis, August 7, 1985. Cedar Rest Cemetery file

### BOARD ELECTIONS

It is time to elect board members to serve from January 2017 through December 2018. 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 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**

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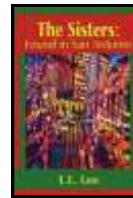
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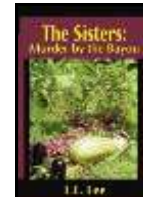
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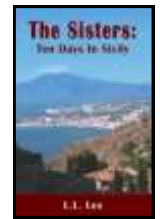
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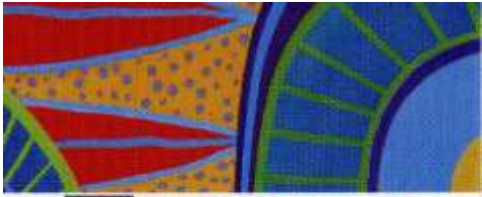
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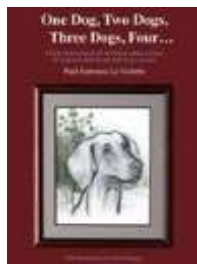
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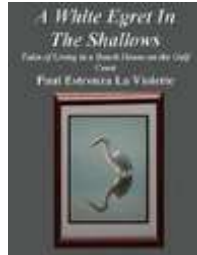
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