

THE

# HISTORIAN

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

November 2016

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2016, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be former Waveland mayor Tommy Longo who will speak on the administrations of Garfield Ladner and Johnny Longo. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must request that you please call by noon on Wednesday, September 14, 2016**, 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 lunch is \$12.00.

## 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.



Cedar Rest Cemetery  
200 South Second Street  
Bay St. Louis, MS

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

By  
Eddie Coleman

The Twenty-second Annual Cemetery Tour was held from 5:30 until 8:00 P. M. at Cedar Rest Cemetery on South Second Street on October 31, 2016. Guests were greeted at the front entrance of the cemetery by Charles Gray, Executive Director of the Hancock County Historical Society and socie-

ty member, Patty Taylor. Members of the Society acted as guides and led the attendees along the lighted path, stopping at various grave sites as the apparitions of those long gone citizens materialized to relate events of their lives. All of these citizens have, in one way or another, added to the rich fabric of the history of Hancock County, some through commercial ventures, some through local government, and others just by living and rearing families here.

The night's citizens in order of appearance were Katherine Lobrano, the Native American, Lou Meek Osoinach, a Yellow Fever Victim, Justine Necaize Carver, the Phantom Barber, Ella

THE  
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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
Scott Bagley, Publisher

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**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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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.”



Katie Gift as  
Katherine Lobrano

loor, and Captain Ben Lane Posey.

**KATHERINE M.**  
**LOBRANO**

I am Katherine M. Lobrano, fondly called Kate, and I 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 my birth, my father was the Town Marshal of Bay St. Louis.

On August 4, 1891, I married Frank J. Lobrano, a direct descendant of Jacinto Lobrano, a captain of Jean Lafitte’s famous privateer navy. My 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 our marriage Frank and I made Bay St. Louis our home and began our family which produced five children. With the help of my father, Frank purchased our

family residence on the corner of Main and Cue Streets on October 1, 1892. Later that month on October 15, Frank sold the property in its entirety to me.

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

In December 1917, I was stricken with skin cancer, and we made a decision to sell the Bay St. Louis property. Instead of selling the entire plot, I decided to sell just the section fronting Main St. and keep the back section with a smaller house on it for my mother. After my death various family members lived in the house, but it was vacant for several years before my grandchildren gave it to the Historical

**NATIVE AMERICAN**

Cedar Rest cemetery was deeded to the city in three parts. The north section was given by J.B. Toulme, the middle area was a swap between St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and the city, and the south segment was given by Joan Newman Seal. The plots were given to families in the manner of homesteads—free, but with the responsibility of claiming the plot by physical markings.

In the swap between St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and the city, the graveyard received the remains of the old St. Charles Street graveyard, which included Native Americans. Most of them were reburied in the middle section. We have at least two sites of Indian graves here. One contains the remains of an Indian family, and the other contains the remains of Pow-



Jay Kelton as the Native American

hattan Robertson, whose grave, for some reason, is in the south section over there. Her grave is the oldest MARKED grave in the cemetery.

Powhattan Robertson's slab reads "died in Shieldsboro, Oct. 1820 in the bloom of youth." From this description we can surmise that she was a young Indian maiden who could have lived in the Choctaw village of "Chicapoula" [chik a pool ah] which was located where Carroll Ave. is now. *Chicapoula* means "bad grass" and was the Indian name for this area. Because her last name is Robertson, she was probably the child of a European father and Indian mother.

In 1819 a storm and tidal wave swept the village of Chicapoula out of existence and drowned most of the inhabitants. Was Powhattan's death the result of another great storm a year later? Was it the result of yellow fever or of some European disease such as smallpox introduced into the Americas by explorers? Are the deaths of

other Native Americans buried here the result of disaster, disease, or natural causes? We may never know.

### LOU MEEK OSOINACH

I am Lou Meek Osoinach. I was born in 1872 and died in 1951. I was the daughter of Dr. W.H. Meek and Mary E. Williamson. I married John Osoinach on November 27, 1889, and we had three daughters and three sons. John was born in New Orleans, but lived in Bay St. Louis from the age of three.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> into the 20<sup>th</sup> century the woman's place was in the home, so I dutifully reared the children and provided support for John. However, I know that without me, John would never have been the hustling businessman and cultural philanthropist he was.

After first working for August Kellar, John created the Bay Mercantile Co. on South Beach Boulevard at the end of Bookter



Becky Orfila as Lou Meek Osoinach

St., or as it was then known "down in the hollow."

In 1903, he built a larger store in the 200 block of South Beach. It was then he came up with the wonderful idea of providing our townsmen with a real opera house, which we opened on the second floor of our store. It was quite successful for a few years. Many of the fine road shows then touring the country were booked there. One of the most famous actors who played there was Cecil B. DeMille, who went on to become one of the biggest movie moguls in Hollywood history. People nowadays may not have heard of him, but they've certainly heard of his movies such as *The Greatest Show on Earth* and *The Ten Commandments*. When asked years later if he remembered visiting Bay St. Louis, he replied, "I most certainly do! I especially remember playing in that brand new Osoinach Theatre and the appreciative, music-loving Bay St. Louis audience."

Unfortunately, later that same year (1907), the theatre and store burned to the ground. The town also lost the Clifton Hotel, St. Joseph Academy, Our Lady of the Gulf Church, and several commercial buildings on the landside and waterside of South Beach Blvd. It was reported that the fire started in one of the display windows of our store. I guess we'll never know for sure; both John and I were devastated.

John became a city alderman and was one of the organizers of the Bay-Waveland Yacht Club. He also was a Mason, Pythian, and Woodman of the World. He was a wonderful husband who, on his deathbed, took my hand and said, "Lou, I couldn't have done it without you."





Gretchen Thorp as  
the Yellow Fever Victim

## YELLOW FEVER VICTIM OF 1897

I am one of the many yellow fever victims in cemeteries throughout Hancock County. There was a time when there was no known cause of nor cure for this disease, also known as yellow scourge, yellow jack, and some more disgusting names.

During the summer of 1897, the disease spread from New Orleans to Mobile despite the severe quarantine measures which had been imposed. Bay St. Louis established its own strict quarantine system, using at least 120 volunteers to guard entry or any persons from infected localities. Three doctors comprised a local board of health to direct actions—Dr. L.H. von Gohren, owner/director of a local health resort named Villa Quisiana on Front Street; Dr. W.H. Rohmer, the physician of St. Stanislaus College and St. Joseph's Academy, who had

treated yellow fever patients earlier in New Orleans and Mobile; and Dr. R.J. Turner, the highly regarded town doctor and county coroner.

At this time it was not known that yellow fever was spread by mosquitoes, and the most commonly used preventative was household disinfectant. By the third week of September 1897, with residents disinfecting everything in their homes, the local drugstores were suffering a run on disinfectant. Under the quarantine all males leaving town were subjected to fumigation procedures, no visitors were allowed to enter town, all public entertainment was prohibited, all persons were prohibited from going to the depot grounds, and no trains were permitted to stop. In addition the local board of health issued a strict resolution for the fumigation and continuous disinfection of all homes. The *Sea Coast Echo* was even reduced to a single page because the quarantine had caused a shortage of paper.

The accepted method of handling the remains of the victims was to isolate them, drench them with disinfectant, and bury them quickly after hasty funerals. By October all Bay St. Louis physicians were required to report all cases to Dr. Turner daily by 4:00 p.m.; he in turn sent an official daily report to the state board. As the number of victims increased, the state health board issued a new ordinance for Bay St. Louis, to be enforced by Dr. Turner, which declared *The remains of parties dying of yellow fever shall be wrapped in a sheet, with solution of bichloride of mercury...and burned within four hours after death. Rooms in which persons have died of yellow fever shall be fumigated as soon as the remains are removed therefrom. No person from an infected point shall be admitted into the city, except up-*

*on certificate of immunity and disinfection by authorized state authorities, or the marine hospital service....*

The newspaper was filled with reports of new yellow fever cases, accounts of joyous recoveries, and the sad announcements of deaths of the latest victims. The death announcements finally began dwindling by the second week of November. The worst of the terrible ordeal was finally over. The Bay St. Louis public school resumed its regular classes the first week of December. Normalcy returned in stages, and by Christmas, the 1897 terror was becoming a memory.

## JUSTINE NECAISE CARVER

I am Justine Necaise Carver, and my husband was Elihu Carver, Sr. The first Carver to arrive in the New World was Deacon John Carver, who in 1620 sailed on the *Mayflower*. He was the first Governor of the Plymouth Colony and the first to sign the Mayflower Compact.

Since John Carver had no heirs, the name of "Father of the Carvers in America" fell to Robert Carver of Yorkshire, England. Some people say he was a brother of John Carver; others say he was a nephew.

Elihu, buried here, was born in Canterbury, Connecticut, on January 5, 1777. He became an attorney there and then came south to fight in the War of 1812. We met and were married here on July 4, 1813. Our first son was born the next year, and we named him Elihu Carver, Jr., but I called him Leo.

On December 8, 1816, Elihu, Sr., was appointed Assessor and



Ava Sevin as  
Justine Necaïse Carver

Tax Collector for Hancock County. As the official surveyor for this county, he surveyed and platted a good portion of the county during his lifetime. In 1819, he made the first plat for the Town of Pearlington for the Pearlington Company.

In 1825 we bought 490 acres, practically all of the Cedar Point area, for \$367.00 from John Hopkins and John Miller of Jefferson County, MS. In 1872 the U.S. granted my son Homestead Certificate #26 for 79 acres located on Joe’s Bayou, and I think some of our Carver relatives are still living in the area.

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### PHANTOM BARBER

Who am I? I was buried in this grave as William A. Dolan in 1954. My body was found floating in the Mississippi River attached to a creosote piling. I was the man accused in Pascagoula as “The Phantom Barber” for cutting the hair of little girls in the middle of the night, although I was tried for another crime.

I was born in New York City and had a long criminal record. I was arrested in Bay St. Louis on July 9, 1942, at the height of WWII and was tried, convicted, and sent to prison for ten years. After my release I lived in Bay St. Louis for a while and then disappeared. After my body was found in the Mississippi River and identified by family and friends, I was brought to Bay St. Louis for burial. I was waked for three days at home and then buried in this unmarked grave. **BUT** when my fingerprints were checked with the FBI, they proved that I was **NOT** William Dolan.



Ron Thorp as  
the Phantom Barber

Who am I in this grave? No one knows!

### ELLA IOOR

My name is Ella Ioor. Several years ago a woman, who had recently moved to Hancock County, 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 my brother 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





Karen West as  
Ella Ioor

full assessment and small tax levy because he believed 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.

I was another noteworthy member of the Ioor family and served as postmistress of Bay Saint Louis from August 1885 until May 1894, succeeding Mrs. Annie Avery. I conducted the post office from my 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.

## CAPTAIN BEN LANE POSEY

Portrayed by  
John Gibson

My name is Captain Ben Lane Posey, and I am buried here with my family. I was born in South Carolina in 1827. When I was a young man, I ran away from school and signed up with the famous “Carolina Palmetto Regiment” during the Mexican War. I was involved in several battles including the taking of Mexico City. After the war I returned to South Carolina and began a career in journalism which eventually evolved into law. I moved to Alabama and became an attorney, but in 1862 I signed up with the 38<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry: Red Eagle Volunteers. While fighting with this regiment, I was captured at Missionary Ridge in November of 1863, but managed to escape the enemy near Nashville



John Gibson as  
Captain Ben Lane Posey

and return to my command. After the Civil War was over, I traveled around the states and eventually found and settled in Bay St. Louis to practice law. I built a house on the shore which could be reached by a pier. It had two rooms, one for my practice, and one for sleeping.

In 1883 I bought the *Bay St. Louis Republican* newspaper and ran it until I sold it to a fellow attorney and future Senator Eaton Bowers. He was a very good man who eventually married one of my daughters.

I also had the privilege of helping the governor with the infamous Chinese smuggling case when it was discovered that the sloop *Little Deer* was carrying Chinamen from Cat Island to the main shore after they were smuggled in from Mexico. The vessel was anchored in the Bay, and I was put in charge of keeping it secure.

## DEED BOOK C

Deed book C summaries are now available at the Hancock County Historical Society and on the website of Russell Guerin @ [rusguerin.com](http://rusguerin.com). They should be available soon on the HCHS website.



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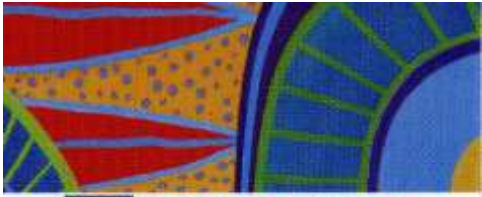
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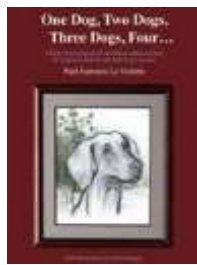
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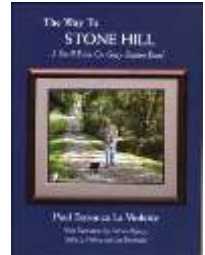
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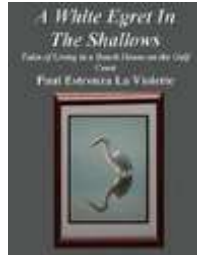
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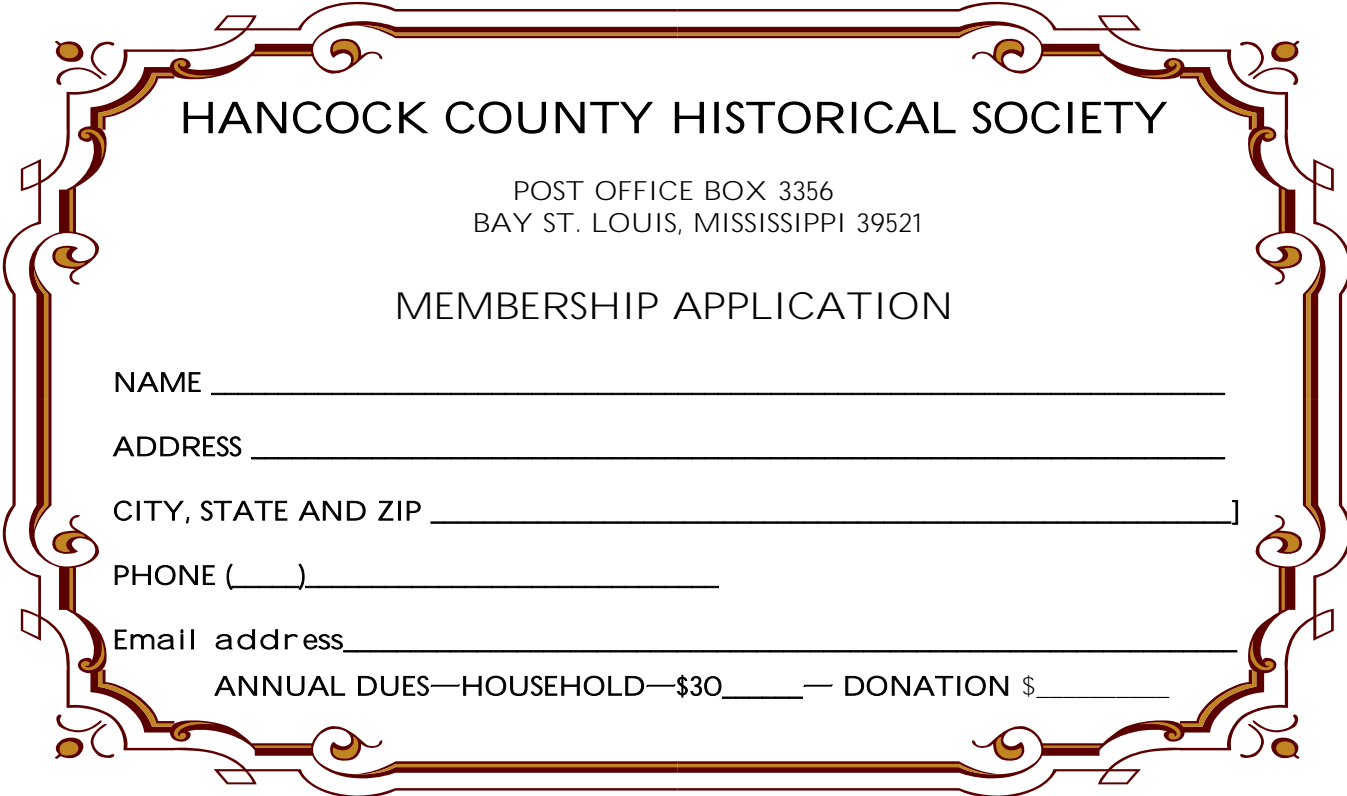
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