

THE

# HISTORIAN

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

Mississippi's Bicentennial  
1817—2017

May 2017

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2017, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be John Baxter who will speak on Logtown. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must request that you please call by noon on Wednesday, May 17,** 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, catering by Almost Home Catering, Michelle Nichols, chef.



Benjamin L. C.  
Wailes

(August, 1797—  
November 16,  
1862)

Buried in Wailes  
Cemetery in  
Adams County,  
MS



**Memorial Day**

**Monday, May 29, 2016**

## The Journal of Benjamin L. C. Wailes (Part 2)

Edited by  
Eddie Coleman

*(Editor's note: I have transcribed the passages from the journal in first person to convey the voice of Mr. Wailes.)*

Thursday 17 August 1852.  
Judge Daniels settled at Clifton,

his present residence, on a Spanish grant to Boisdoré in 1824, when it was a forest. It is the last high land within the extreme SW corner of Hancock County, in sight of the mouth of Pearl River and of passing boats in the Rigolets and Lake Borgne, distant about 2 1/2 miles (all between being open salt marsh). His plowing operations are confined to the culture of Sea Island cotton of which he makes about 70 bales (which he sold at 30 cents per pound). It brings upon an average about three times as much as the

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# HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
James Keating, 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.”

short staple cotton. His ginning apparatus consists of a large wheel of the usual size without coggs [*sic*] but carrying a chain in the manner of [a] band, which turns a drum (or cylinder) placed horizontally [*sic*] about ten feet long and five in diameter. Parrallel [*sic*] with this cylinder and at about the same elevation is a stand (or bench) on which is [*sic*] arranged five small roller-gins, a pair of rollers to each not exceeding an inch in diameter (rather less) and not more than 7 inches long. A small band of cord is attached to each roller and two to each gin, passing over the cylinder which gives motion to the rollers.

Two hands are required to each gin (generally children), one to feed with seed cotton & the other to receive and draw out the fibre [*sic*] on the opposite side. When the machinery is perfect and in good order, each gin (or pair of rollers) may be said to average *about 75 pounds of Clean Cotton* per day. But this is by no means uniform, as in humid, damp, or rainy weather the process is much slower and more difficult, [and] the cotton ginned is inferior (the seed being often crushed).. In very dry, warm, clear weather the process is more satisfactory, the Cotton [being] drier, & perhaps nearly a hundred pounds could be turned out (a lie of the overseer)....

I visited the gin again, accompanied by Judge Daniels and learned the following additional particulars: a child or small negro will answer to take out the line (or fibre) as it passes through the cylinders, but it requires an efficient hand to feed the seed cotton & to regulate the action of the mill & [to] prevent the seed from being crushed & drawn between the cylinders. In which case the rollers become charred, & danger of fire from friction ensues, to prevent

which a bucket of water is always at hand on the stand with the gins. It is also necessary to replace the rollers upon an average two or three times a day, as they wear away so rapidly as to impair their proper action. On this account a turning lathe is required, and a hand is constantly employed in turning new ones, and the worker sometimes cannot keep pace with the demand. There are also six or eight friction rollers (or tighteners) for the Chain, which wear away rapidly & have to be renewed. The Cotton requires to be thoroughly dried, and [it] is very carefully moted by hand both before and after ginning; so that, with the ginners, turners, drivers, &c., at least thirteen hands is [*sic*] employed. [*Moting was the process of removing trash from cotton by hand. The term mote usually referred to a seed crushed in ginning*].

The packing is done in round bags suspended through a round hole in an upper floor by means of a stout hoop stitched to the mouth of a bag. The bags are steeped in water for one night and partially dried. A negro fellow gets into the bag with an iron crow bar & treads and packs in the Cotton. The bags average about 350 pounds. [*Sea Island cotton was almost never pressed into bales because cotton prepared in that manner brought a price little higher than common upland cotton.*]

The gins are placed on the bench (or stand) in such a manner as to be moved [?] from the cylinder in order to keep the bands (or cords) tight, as they are constantly stretching.... [*This gin was a variation of the Longstreet roller gin.*]

*Wednesday 18 August 1852.* Judge Daniel presented me with some relicks [*sic*] of the Aborigines and of the Ancient French inhabitants (found on his plantation

in and about the mounds): parts of a gun barrel, a French-made hoe (cut out of an oak tree in which it was embedded, about twenty years since), an antique bayonet, a leaden pipe fashioned like a small tomahawk [*sic*], &c....

Upon due reflection & examination I incline to the opinion that all the mounds, including those of shell, are artificial works of the aboriginies [*sic*]. The wall (or parapet) & the fosse (or ditch) I should unhesitatingly assign to a more civilized race, & [would] believe it to be the work of Europeans but for the magnitude of the two live oaks & the Magnolia growing on the embankment. It is possible that they may not be more than [word omitted] years old, which would not carry them back beyond the period that the first French emigrants abandoned the establishment at Baluxi [*sic*]. But the concentric rings (or annuals) of similar trees would assign [to] them an age of at least double of that period. The French Colonists doubtless took possession & occupied the position, & the Cooper Coins were probably buried then to commemorate the discovery & taking possession of the Country (as they seem to have been coined for that purpose, in accordance with the known practice of the discoverers of the period), & no situation could be more suitable for the purpose than the mound in question.

With many obligations to Judge Daniels for his attention and hospitality, I parted with him in the morning and travelled fourteen miles through a level, dreary waste of pine forest (with only two or three widely separated huts & swarming with musquitoes [*sic*] & very destitute of water) to Mr. Peter Iloor's who was kind enough to ride with me on a by-road to Mr. Asa Russ' on the Lake Shore [*Lake*

*Borgne*]. I found Mr. Russ at home, & he conducted me over the marshland he is reclaiming. He commenced this year & has a crop of rice, sweet potatoes, corn & ockra [*sic*] growing on it. The potatoes and ockra [*sic*] are very promising. The rice is indifferent and the corn worthless....

In the afternoon travelled along the sands of the shore of Lake Borgne & through pine & live oak groves extending to the water's edge, the level of the pine flat being about ten feet above high tide...and having the pine, magnolia grandiflora and the palmetto [*sic*], on the very verge of the Lake.

The buildings of Shieldsborough extend for six or seven miles continuously & with but few intervals along the Shore of the Lake & [the] Bay of St. Louis. [*At this time the land of the City of Waveland was a part of Bay St. Louis {Shieldsborough}.*] I met Mr. Monet [*Judge Julius C. Monet*] in the streets, & was directed by him to Carr's hotel as the only one in the place provided with stables (which I found consists of a very small, open & ruinous shed, & a great scarcity of provender)....

*Thursday 19 August 1852*.... There is a good Academy here of the protestants. The only Church is a new brick building of the Catholics, of [a] mongrel, frenchified, gothic style. The center of the building running up two stories & the sides only one, which gives it a heavy, factory-like appearance. The Jesuits [*In 1852, it would have been the Christian Brothers rather than the Jesuits.*] have also a school

*Friday 20 August 1852.* [I] took a rough sketch of part of Hancock County from the map of Mr. Monet and took a ride along the town, [but] found no one who could give [any] aid or infor-

mation. There being no land route to Pass Christian without making a wide circuit around the Bay of St. Louis (over a very bad road through dreary pine woods) requiring two days travel, [I] crossed my carriage & horses over in the afternoon on the mail boat, *Oregon*, and landed at dusk at Pass Christian. Could not get my carriage off the wharf till near 11 o'clock. Put up at the Mansion house (miserable fare & accommodation)....

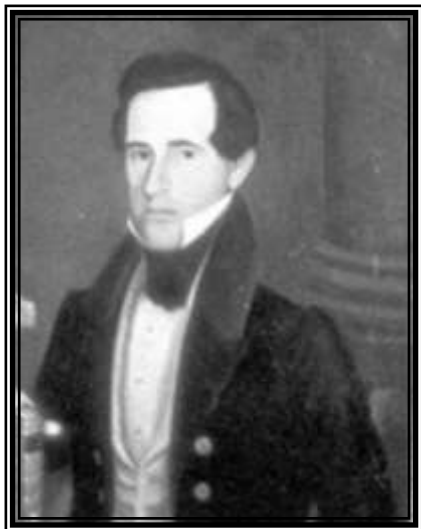
After crossing the Bay of St. Louis, Mr. Wailes leaves Hancock County and enters Harrison County, by this time having been carved from the original Hancock County.

### Mississippi Married Women's Property Act of 1839

By  
Eddie Coleman

So very often the State of Mississippi seems to lag behind other states and countries in its rights for citizens of the state. However, such was not the case in the early 1830's. It was Mississippi that led the way for American women to obtain equal property rights long before their sisters in neighboring states and in Great Britain obtained them. Following the *Fisher v. Allen* lawsuit in Mississippi, Michigan, Maine, Texas, and New York also passed laws recognizing that married women could hold property in their own right and not be required to pass it along to their husbands upon marriage.

The *Fisher v. Allen* court case resulted from a Chickasaw woman named Elizabeth Love, who married James Allen in the late 1790's. Miss Love took many slaves who had been given to her by



Alexander G. McNutt  
the Mississippi governor who signed  
the Married Women's Property Act  
in February 1839

her parents into the marriage with her. In native Chickasaw society a woman could own property separate from her husband including anything she owned prior to marriage or anything she acquired on her own during marriage. In 1831, Allen was sued by his attorney, John Fisher, for two hundred dollars for lack of payment for services rendered. Fisher requested payment from all of Allen's assets, including the property owned by his wife. The Allens countered that as a Chickasaw Mrs. Allen's property prior to her marriage was hers alone, not jointly with her husband and, therefore, could not be a part of Mr. Fisher's request.

Unfortunately for women, at this time the United States and the young state of Mississippi followed English common law under which a woman, together with children and the mentally unsound, was a legally incompetent person. Fortunately, Fisher argued that because his wife was Chickasaw the common law was invalid because it had been accepted in the US after their marriage and that Mississippi law

came into being after 1817, the year of Mississippi statehood.

Ultimately the case worked its way to the Mississippi Supreme Court in which William L. Sharkey and Cotesworth P. Smith were the two justices who ruled in favor of the Allens and set up the ability for women in Mississippi to hold property in their own right, thus enabling the Mississippi Legislature to pass the Married Women's Property Act of 1839.

**SOURCES:**

Howe, LeAnne. "Betsy Love and the Mississippi Married Women's Property Act of 1839." *Mississippi History Now* Online publication of the Mississippi Historical Society <mdah.ms.gov>.

Moncrief, Sandra. "The Mississippi Married Women's Property Act of 1839." *Vignettes Hancock County Historical Society website* <hancockcountyhistoricalso-ciety.com>.

**CITIES, TOWNS, AND COMMUNITIES OF HANCOCK COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI**

**INCORPORATED CITIES/TOWNS**

(Year of incorporation in parentheses)

- Bay Saint Louis (1818)
- Diamondhead (2012)
- Gainesville (1846)
- Pearlington (1822)
- Waveland (1888)

**UNINFORPORATED TOWNS/COMMUNITIES**

- Ansley
- Bayside Park
- Center/Caesar
- Claiborne
- Clermont Harbor
- Cane Creek
- Fenton
- Flat Top
- Kiln
- Lakeshore
- Logtown
- Napoleon
- Necaise
- Santa Rosa
- Sellers
- Silver Creek
- Standard
- Westonia

Some of these towns and communities still exist, and some do not. Gainesville, Logtown, Napoleon, Santa Rosa, and Westonia are part of the Stennis Space Center complex or its buffer zone.

**Old Pearlington**

Russell Guerin has recently added an article on Old Pearlington to his website. Check it out at [russguerin.com](http://russguerin.com).

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<i>Eyes of an Eagle</i> \$50.00	<i>A Mississippi First Family</i> \$14.00	<i>West Side Stories</i> \$28.00

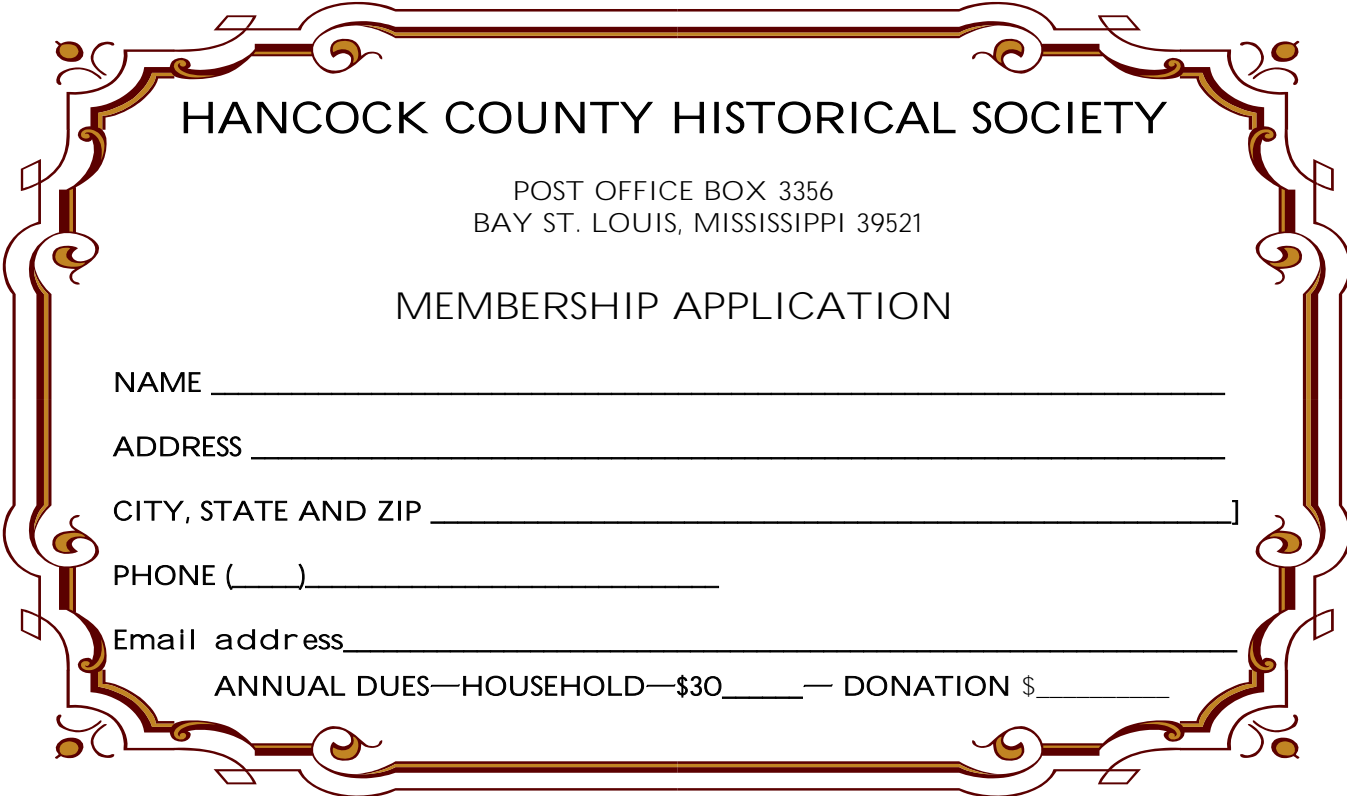
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