

THE

HISTORIAN

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

Mississippi's Bicentennial
1817—2017

November 2017

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, November 16, 2017, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker will be Steve Treutel, whose topic will be the major hurricanes which have impacted Hancock County. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must request that you please call by noon on Wednesday, November 15**, to make your reservation in order to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people and to apprise us of the number of lunches to order. Lunch is \$12.00, payable at the door, and it is catered by Almost Home Catering, Michelle Nichols, chef.

ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Four new board members will be elected at the November luncheon to serve for two years and one elected to finish the term of Lana Noon as secretary. 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 president, second vice president, publicity chairman, and historian.



This Clyde two-line skidder is a good example of the ones used in Hancock County by the timber industry in the early nineteen hundreds.

The Timber Industry in Hancock County (1930—2017)

By
James Keating M.D.

The loggers of the 19th century harvested all of the large virgin pine trees of Hancock County and left the countryside, called cutover land, barren and desolate. At the time lumbermen did not practice conservation forestry, and the harvested timberland was considered almost worthless. In the early pioneer era of forestry, a fallen tree trunk was transported by an eight wheel wagon pulled by four yoke of oxen. The tree was deposited in an adjacent waterway

such as the Pearl River and floated down to a sawmill. Later in the 19th century, large mill lumbermen constructed short line railroads called tram roads or dummy lines to their timber stands. After 1908 most large operations used steam-driver skidders and mechanical log-loaders as labor-saving devices. The skidder was positioned at the end of the railroad spur where the timber was thick and uncut. Long steel wire cables with lengths up to one thousand feet were uncoiled from large drums in the skidder and attached to the recently-felled trees in the woods. As the revolving drums reeled in the cables, four or five logs were "skidded" to the railroad track at one "pull-in." Unfortunately, the skidder brought complete destruction of

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Eddie Coleman, Editor
James Keating, Publisher

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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.”

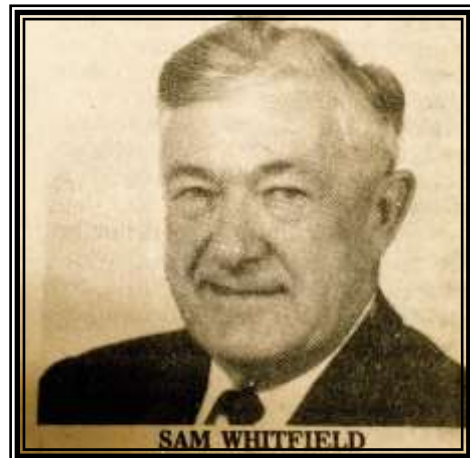
young trees of unmarketable size. In Hancock County all of the virgin timber had been ruthlessly cut and carelessly trampled, leaving the land impoverished. In addition fires had created even more destruction.

Samuel “Sam” Whitfield (1908—1979) was a Logtown native who had worked at the Weston Lumber Company as a bookkeeper. He possessed that entrepreneurial gift to be able to think as others didn’t or in the popular expression “to think outside the box.” He rode around the old cutover timberland of Hancock County with his dear friend Hap Weston and showed him how the regrowth scrub forest was returning naturally with a new generation of young slash pine. These trees were relatively thin compared to the gigantic three hundred year-old virgin pine trees that preceded this new forest. Whitfield envisioned the potential yet to be derived from these regrowth forests. Most of the local timbermen like the Weston family could not see Whitman’s vision, and Hap Weston reputedly sold forty-six thousand acres of timberland to the International Paper Company (IP) for \$600,000. Whitfield was horrified at the sale because he felt the land could generate a decent income over time (twenty-five to fifty

years) by harvesting these relatively young trees as pulpwood for paper products. Accordingly, in 1937 Whitfield with a loan from Walter Gex at Merchant’s Bank started the Sam Whitfield Timber Company and became the first pulpwood dealer in the county. Over time, this business grew and prospered and became one of the largest corporations in Hancock County. It was located in Logtown until 1964.

Sam Whitfield went to St. Stanislaus College. He married Ada Dochterman, who was from Fort Gibson (Vicksburg). They had two sons, William and Robert, who followed their father into the family business. The family lived at #14 Logtown which they rented from Hap Weston. Whitman started his operation with a portable sawmill and four big Kentucky draft horses. He employed two black men as loggers. International Paper Co. (IP) immediately recognized the value of this young entrepreneur and asked him to be their “wood dealer” for all of their land in the county. The key to his success was the availability at that time of unlimited labor in the form of independent contractors who were both black and white. At one time Whitfield had two hundred of these subcontractors cutting pulpwood for the company. The operation grew

Sam Whitfield , owner of the Sam Whitfield Lumber Company and the first pulpwood dealer in the county



steadily and eventually the company had five concentration yards in Logtown, Picayune, Purvis, Lakeside, and Kiln where the pulpwood was loaded on barges or railcars for transport to the papermills. It is estimated that the company moved as much as eight million dollars of timber per year (gross revenue) and at one time had a monthly payroll of \$250,000. Later in life Whitfield became a part owner of the Gulf National Bank. Sam Whitfield died in 1979.

Harvest of timber in pine forests started with simple cross saws. By the 1950's loggers used chain saws. By the 1960's trees were cut with hydraulic shears at the base of the tree. A mobile modern day skidder with huge rubber tires grasped the logs with choker cables and dragged the logs to a knuckle boom loader that lifted the logs and placed them onto a truck. This process made a mess of the forest cut, but by the 1960's reforestation techniques were incorporated into land management. Seedlings were first planted by machine and later by crews of Mexican workers under the supervision of a trained forester. State programs were created by legislatures in Louisiana and Mississippi in the 1980's to compensate landowners for replanting seedlings. During a twenty-five year cycle the wood dealer and his loggers might go through a stand of timber three times to cull and thin the forest as one would tend a home garden. Large trees might be removed or culled and sent to a sawmill for lumber, and a cluster of small trees might be thinned out so only the most promising trees remained and had enough room to grow.

It is of interest to note the economics of timber investment land management. Pulpwood timber is measured in units called cords of wood. A cord stacked on the

ground measures 4 x 4 x 8 feet and weighs approximately 5000 pounds or 2 1/2 tons. A good stand of pine timber might harvest thirty cords of wood per acre. This might generate one thousand to two thousand dollars depending on the price/demand in a particular market. A wood dealer might "merchandise" a timber stand harvesting some trees first for lumber products and later take off the majority of the remaining trees for pulpwood. Other products such as chipping logs, small poles, and piling are used by the paper mills for a variety of manufactured items besides paper such as fiberboard and shingles. An acre of timberland might bring five hundred to one thousand dollars depending on the location. This investment might take twenty-five years to pay off the original cost of the land. This same land can simultaneously generate income by renting to hunters, oil and gas royalties, and wetland bank construction. Timberland can be a prudent long term investment.

The Whitfield family has liquidated its interest in the family business. The Illinois Central Retirement Fund has bought most of the timberland in Hancock County from International Paper, which found that the low land and wet winter climate were not conducive to using heavy modern machinery. In addition the price of wood is currently relatively low. As a result, large institutional landowners can wait for a better market to resume a more active timber harvest.

In conclusion, the timber industry was an important factor in creating the modern economy of Hancock County which over the 20th century had blossomed and diversified. In a forthcoming issue, the Merchant's Bank and the Hancock Bank will be studied. The banking and insurance sector of the economy of Hancock County were



important derivatives of this timber industry composed of businesses like the Sam Whitfield Timber Company.

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ENTRANCE TO THE 23rd ANNUAL CEMETRY TOUR

**Annual Cemetery Tour Present-
ed by the
Hancock County
Historical Society**

By
Eddie Coleman

The Twenty-third Annual Cemetery Tour was held from 5:30 until 8:00 P. M. at Cedar Rest Cemetery on South Second Street on Tuesday, October 31, 2017. Guests were greeted at the front entrance of the cemetery by Historical Society member Faith Gibson. 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 Kate Lobrano,

Annie E. Avery, Gaston G. Gardebled, Dr. Roger de Montluzin, Ginger Burke Paradise, Corine Carco, Richard Boudreaux, and R. R. Perkins.

**KATHERINE M.
LOBRANO
(1871—1921)
(Portrayed by Penny Kelley)**

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 Society to use as its headquarters.

KATE
LOBRANO



ANNIE E. AVERY

**ANNIE AVERY
(1848—1898)**

(Portrayed by Patty Keating)

My father was from North Carolina, and my mother came from Pennsylvania. I was born somewhere in Mississippi, but I'm not sure where. I lived in New Orleans originally, but after my husband passed away, I moved to Bay St. Louis with my two little sisters, Hattie and Blanche. I was a society news correspondent for both the *Times Democrat* and the *Daily Picayune* of New Orleans. When I came to Bay St. Louis, I continued writing, but I also opened a newsstand. I named it Avery's News Depot. I sold books, magazines, and other leading leading periodicals of the day. The newspapers would come in several mornings on the Morning Mail Trains. My shop was located on the corner of Union Street and Front Street, now Beach Boulevard. I believe St. Stanislaus owns the property today.

During this time, Bay St. Louis became the favorite ground for fights (boxers) like Bob Fitzsimmons,

Jimmy Carrol, Jack McAuliffe, and Jack Scully. I wrote about the fights for the newspapers. This was an unusual thing for a woman to do during my time. At first I was reluctant to write about boxers, but later I became quite interested in the subject. In fact one fight I even placed a wager, my whole month's salary. I didn't have the courage to witness the fight in person, but I enjoyed receiving the winnings!

I enjoy running my newsstand, writing articles for the papers, but I also enjoyed visiting my daughter Hattie in Ascension Parish after she married. I would go there often. One time, however, I will never forget, a couple of mischievous boys broke into my shop while I was gone and stole several dollars worth of merchandise. But it doesn't keep me from visiting my daughter or friends in New Orleans. I just installed firmer locks and went about my business.

I was also the postmistress here in town. During the years between 1875 and 1885 the post office was located in my store on Union Street.

Unfortunately I passed away in 1898, but my sister Josie took over my shop, running it successfully for



GASTON G. CARDEBLED

many years.

**GASTON GABRIEL
GARDEBLED
(1871—1913)**

(Portrayed by Robert Delcuze)

I am Gaston Gabriel Gardebled, a native of Bay St. Louis who was born in February 1871. I married Mary E. Huber and we had seven children.

I was a contractor in the city for twenty years. During that time I erected many of the prominent buildings, including the city hall located just down the street from this cemetery. It was completed in 1903. In addition to constructing buildings, I was interested in other civic improvements such as better streets, better public lighting, and upgraded schools.

I was elected Mayor of Bay St. Louis in 1908 and served until 1912.

In addition, I was involved in a couple of civic organizations also—the Masons and the Woodmen of the World. In 1913, I was severely injured in a logging accident and died a few days afterward at the age of forty-two. Because of my membership in the organization, I was honored with a Woodman of the World headstone.

**DR. ROGER
DE MONTLUZIN
(1863—1914)**

(Portrayed by Dr. Jim Keating)

My name is Dr. Roger de Montluzin. I was the fourth child of Adrien de Montluzin and Reine Helluy, and I was born on July 19, 1863, in Convent, Louisiana, about eight years after my family emigrated from France. I graduated from Tulane University's medical school and then went to Paris for further study in surgery. I became a promi-



DR. ROGER DE MONTLUZIN

ment physician and surgeon in Baton Rouge and in New Orleans, performing operations (as was customary then) with my own set of instruments which I carried with me in a red-velvet-lined case designed to hold my scalpels and bone saw. Throughout my home were lavish gifts from grateful patients—gold-headed walking sticks, a crystal humidor for my cigars, silver-mounted hair brushes, and ornate snuff boxes. In New Orleans I was an active member of the Boston Club, the Pickwick Club, and several carnival krewes. I became eminent in my field, publishing articles in American and European medical journals. In Baton Rouge I was appointed Surgeon-General of the state of Louisiana, with the rank of major on the staff of Governor Murphy J. Foster, and had my portrait painted wearing my uniform.

At the age of thirty nine, while practicing in New Orleans, I had a stroke of paralysis, which confined me to a wheelchair. My marriage to Anne Brook of Baton Rouge had ended in divorce, leaving me childless. Thus, I came home to my parents' house in Bay St. Louis and set up an office in the central hall on the second floor. I had a manservant

to assist me, and I managed very well thanks to an outside elevator from my bedroom which allowed me to leave the house at will. I served as president of the Board of Health of Bay St. Louis and was vice president of the Merchants Bank. I was known as a wonderful storyteller, and I enjoyed chatting with passersby as I roamed around the beach front in my wheelchair. Missing my New Orleans friends as much as they missed me, I made a habit of waiting in my wheelchair on Beach Boulevard each day when the New Orleans trains passed to or from the city, waiving to acquaintances and receiving their greetings.

Refusing thus to allow paralysis to curtail the career for which I had so carefully trained, I continued seeing my patients in Bay St. Louis and writing my articles for some years until at last my infirmity overcame me. I died at the age of fifty on January 19, 1914, and was buried with full Masonic rites in the family tomb in Cedar Rest Cemetery.

I take pride in seeing that de Montluzin Avenue has been named in honor of my family.

GINGER BURKE PARADISE

(1924—1967)

(Portrayed by Shawn Prychitko)

I am Ginger Burke Paradise, the Gypsy Queen. I was born on September 27, 1924, in Fort Worth, Texas, and later married Tony Paradise of Rt. 1, Bay St. Louis.

Little is known about my life, but my death is another matter. In 1967 at age forty-three I was hospitalized in the Bay and died three days later. Because I was a gypsy queen, a large, celebratory funeral was held at the site of my burial in Cedar Rest. Unfortunately for people living today but fortunately for me, the actual site of my grave is unknown. Following



GINGER BURKE PARADISE

gypsy custom, the grave has no identifying marks in order for the queen not to be taken from her resting place.

Also following custom, the gypsy king conducted my service, and I was buried in a robe of bright gypsy green with a wax cross in my hand and family jewelry adorning my body. In addition I was buried with a comb, a brush, work clothes (needed on the other side), and other necessities to make the trip across the River Styx.

I was buried in a Wilbert Vault—a vault fit for a queen—of ultra high-strength concrete with a reinforced bronze interior to resist corrosion. Non-gypsies and gypsies alike attended the service, but no pictures were allowed because the gypsies believe that pictures steal one's soul. A big celebration somewhat like a wake was held with many friends enjoying food, drink, and dancing.



CORINE CARCO

(?—1939)

(Portrayed by Ava Sevin)

My name is Ana Carco. This is Robert Carco, my great uncle, and this is Henry Carco, my great, great uncle.

Our name has been spelled many ways: Carquotte, Carquot, Carcot, and lastly Carco.

Robert Anthony Carco was born on February 21, 1889, and baptized at Our Lady of the Gulf on May 5, 1889. His wife was Viola McCarty. They lived in Pass Christian and had two children. In addition they raised a niece. He died on January 6, 1968.

Corine Carco—she’s over there—married Robert’s brother, Joseph. Her parents were Ursin Ladner and Martha Bourgeois. They married on September 17, 1911. She and her husband had several children, but with each child she went berserk and was incapacitated. Finally she was put into a mental institution. One of her children—Maize—was adopted by Robert and his wife.

Henry Carso was born on May 18, 1840, and baptized at Nativ-



ity, B.V.M., Cathedral in Biloxi. His parents were Joseph Carco and Euphenie Buhour d’Angille. He never married. He served in the Civil War in Hancock County Company C, 3rd Mississippi Infantry. He died on February 7, 1911.

RICHARD BOUDREAUX

(1902—1969)

(Portrayed by John Gibson)

Good evening! I am Richard Boudreaux, and I was born on December 21, 1902.

On April 16, 1927, Easter weekend, Miss Geraldine Amos and Mrs. Philomena Gaspard opened the newest movie establishment in Bay St. Louis—the A & G Theater. There had been theaters in the town earlier, but they were open air establishments which sat over the water of the Bay of St. Louis. The A & G was located across the street from these previous theaters on the corner of Front Street (North Beach Blvd.) and State Street.

The A & G was different from these earlier movie houses because it was an enclosed Spanish mission style building. No expense had been spared in its construction. It had lighted marquis, electrical lighting, electric arctic air machines in conduits which made it almost impossible to catch fire, and seated over one thousand patrons.

As a young man in my twenties, I was hired as the operator of the theater. I had full charge of the “operating room,” and my credentials as an electrician made me well versed and competent to operate and maintain the newest projection equipment.

I enjoyed this job for many years and died on June 14, 1936.

R. R. PERKINS

(1869—1916)

(Portrayed by Henry Doussan)

My headstone is the largest one in the cemetery, and it weights 1700 pounds. I had it brought from New Orleans. The train stopped right there on 2nd Street, and it was loaded onto a skid and pulled by eight mules to this location.

I was born in Bernice, SC, in



1869. My family moved to Braxton, GA, and I married Tempie Lott. We moved to Bay St. Louis in 1903 where I established several businesses. Even though my birth name was Rufus Rudolph Perkins, I became known as "R.R.," and my friends kiddingly called me "Rail Road" Perkins because my businesses used so many auxiliary rail lines to the L&N tracks. I owned several businesses in Hancock County and had investments in a few others. I was the President and Manager of Imperial Naval Stores, headquartered in Bay St. Louis with branches in Caesar, Vidalia, Perkins, Sellers, and Fenton. We manufactured turpentine and rosin which we shipped through the ports of New Orleans, Mobile, and Gulfport.

In addition to being involved in these commercial ventures, I was President of Merchants Bank and City Bonds Commissioner.

My wife and I had six children, all buried around me. We lived in a large house at 632 N. Beach Blvd. Being a jovial, optimistic, cheerful person who enjoyed family and friends, our home was the scene of many community activities.

When we moved to Bay St. Louis, I brought my manservant, Will Mc Goon, with me. Not only was he my chauffeur, valet, and butler, but he was also a companion for my children and a handyman for my wife's activities.

My funeral was a big affair, too. It was held at my house which was the custom then, and the whole town and some people from the county as well as people from New Orleans, Gulfport, and Biloxi attended.

THANKS TO ALL OF THE VOLUNTEERS WHO HELPED MAKE THE 2017 CEMETERY TOUR A GREAT SUCCESS.
Jackie Allain, President

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE CEMETERY TOUR



REDEDICATION
 On October 29, 2017, a rededication ceremony was held by the Shieldsboro Rifles Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp 2263 at the Victor Ladner Cemetery in Lakeshore. The area had been heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, and this ceremony was held to rededicate a military headstone for Victor Ladner, Confederate veteran. In addition to the SCV, descendants of Mr. Ladner also attended the ceremony.


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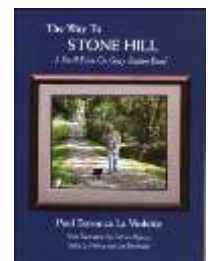
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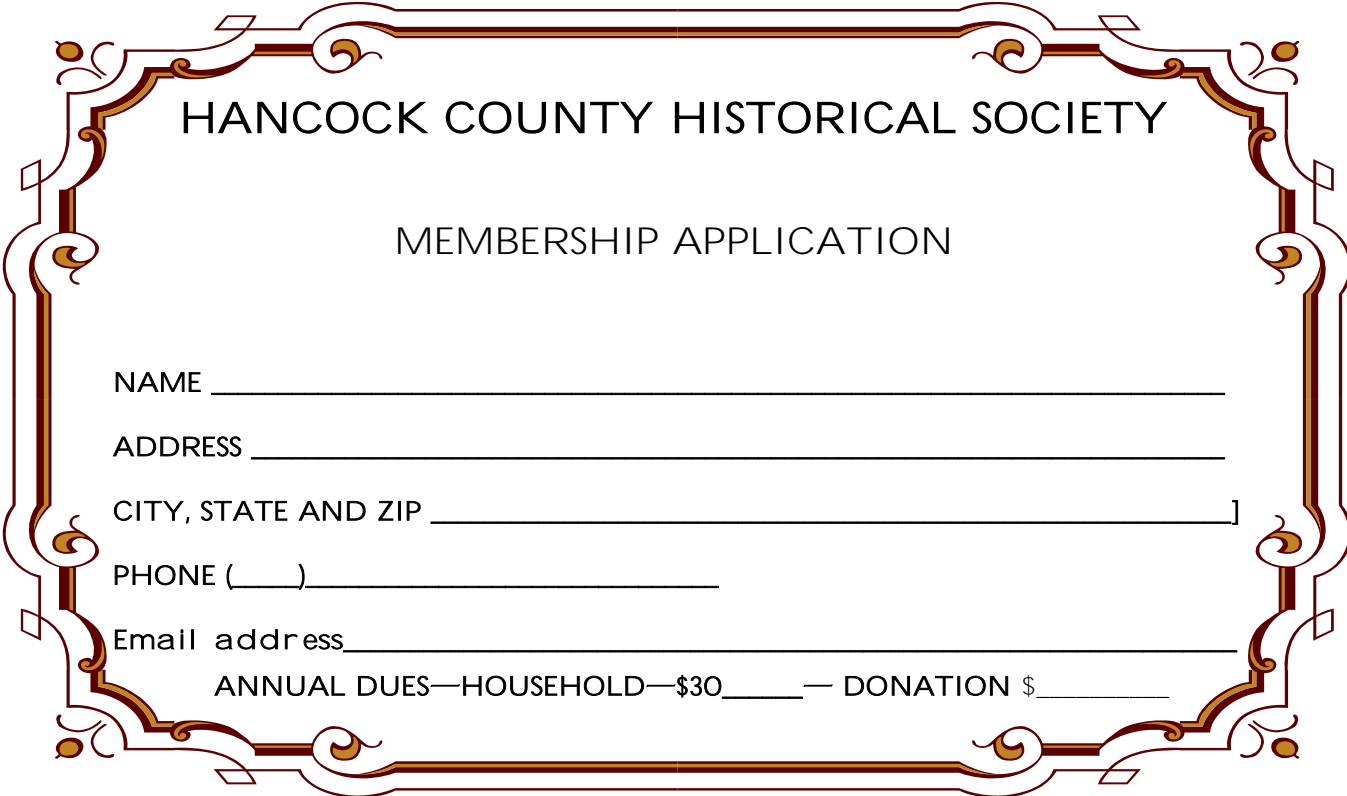
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