

THE

HISTORIAN

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

October 2018

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

You are invited to attend the 24th Annual Cemetery Tour at Cedar Rest Cemetery, 200 South Second Street, Bay Saint Louis. Presented by the Hancock County Historical Society, the tour will be held on **Friday, October 26, 2018 from 5:00 pm until 7:30 pm.** The first tour begins at 5:00 with tours beginning every 10 minutes. Come visit the historic Cedar Rest Cemetery and enjoy a 45 minute tour. Hear eight of the “ethereal residents” talk about Hancock County’s experiences during the First World War. Come meet “doughboys,” sailors, a Buffalo Soldier, volunteer nurses, and more! This fun and informative program will entertain all ages. 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 hot dogs, punch, cookies, and other treats.



Mules were the heavy work animals in addition to oxen in the settlement of the United States during the early years. Not only were mules used to work on such things as the Erie Canal and pull wagons westward, but they were also very important in plowing the fields and pulling loads of logs from the forests of Hancock County to the Pearl River.

Farming in the 19th Century in Hancock County

By
James Keating, M.D.

The first permanent European settlers in Hancock County in the 19th century claimed lands along the Pearl and Jourdan Rivers. The communities of Gainesville, Pearlington, Logtown, and the Kiln evolved as small centers of

commerce that revolved around localized industry such as saw mills, boat yards, and naval stores. Even with the growth of these towns, farmers continued to play a vital role in the economy of early Hancock County. The lifestyle of these farm families was quite different from those of today, thus making it interesting to historians.

Small scale yeoman farmers/herders were scattered in the back country neighboring these towns, many living in dog trot dwellings. These primitive hous-



THE
HISTORIAN
 OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor
 James Keating, Publisher

Published monthly by the
**HANCOCK COUNTY
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charles Gray, Executive Director
 John Gibson, President
 Jim Thriffiley, First Vice President
 Bryan Frater, Second Vice President
 Georgie Morton, Treasurer
 Beverly Frater, Secretary
 James Keating, Publicity
 Jerry Zimmerman, Historian
 Ames Kergosien, Member at Large

MAILING ADDRESS:

P. O. Box 3356
 Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi 39521

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

108 Cue Street

Telephone [228] 467-4090

Email address:
hancockcountyhis@bellsouth.net

Website:
www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com
 Marianne Pluim, Webmaster

**LOBRANO HOUSE
 HOURS**

MONDAY — FRIDAY
 10:00AM — 3:00PM
 Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)

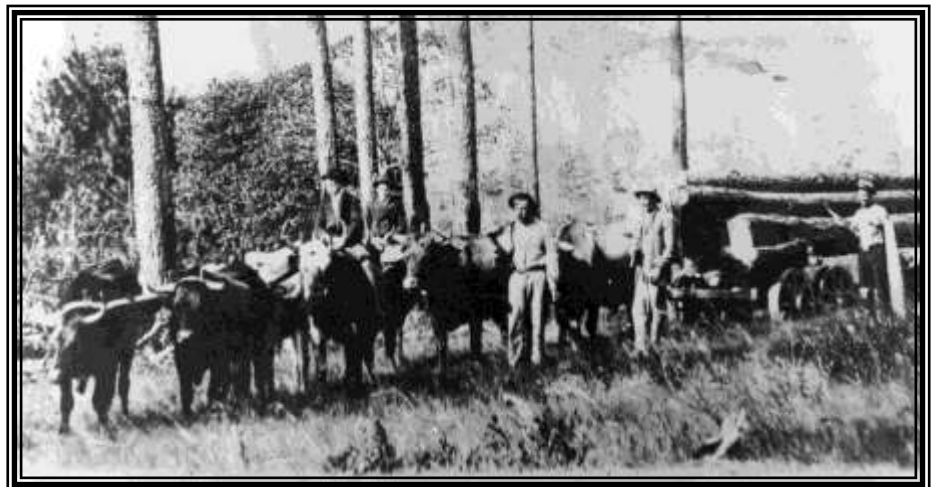
MISSION STATEMENT

“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.”

es usually contained two log rooms with a central passage between them, sharing a common roof. Considered subsistence farmers, these early settlers depended on game and natural resources to support themselves. They were also stock raisers and herders whose animals roamed the adjacent forest feeding on the food of forest trees (mast) or wild sweet grass. Although a few of these early settlers were wealthy, well-refined plantation owner/planters, a substantial poor yeoman class of farmers constituted the bulk of early farmers. In addition slaves made up one third of the population of the county before the Civil War with plantations having large numbers of these workers. Unlike the plantation owners who usually grew only one main crop, these small farmers practiced a “safety-first” principle of seeking a relative self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and held back from an all out com-

mitment to only one staple crop production.

The principle crops of these early yeoman farmers were corn, sweet potatoes, and cotton in the first half of the nineteenth century. Neighbor helped neighbor at critical times such as planting and harvest seasons. They kept careful accounting of loaned labor so that repayment in kind was easily provided especially with hard tasks such as logging, clearing forests, or quick reaping and threshing of crops. Some of these farmers may have owned a very small number of slaves, but they typically worked alongside them and hired hands in the fields. A typical farmer may have needed half of his acreage for pasture or for crops to feed his animals. A fifty acre farm might feed two horses, a mule, a small number of cows and hogs, the farmer’s family, and perhaps a slave. Any surplus crop could be sold, possibly bringing in \$50 profit for the year after expenses. The



A team of oxen was often used to transport logs as well as do heavy labor on farms in early Hancock County.



This flock of sheep in central Mississippi is similar to the ones grown in Hancock County.

land originally owned by the Indians could be purchased by farmers from the U.S. government in a program promoted by President Andrew Jackson in the 1830's in eighty acre parcels for \$1.25 per acre.

It was typical for these early farmers to keep a milk cow, a few laying hens, and a very large vegetable garden. Bee hives (called bee gums) provided honey which was an important food on a farm. One or two hogs were raised and fed refuse from the family table. Abundant orchards of fruit trees allowed people to grow, harvest, and process most foodstuffs themselves. Beans, peas, and pecans were shelled out and "put away" for the winter. As a result very little food was sold in country stores.

Sweet potatoes were harvested in the fall and banked by the farmers. Thus the sweet potatoes could be kept fresh until spring. A farmer might then load up a wagon pulled by a yoke of oxen and take a big load to Gainesville or Logtown to

sell. The corn harvest was stored in a crib. The long stalks of sugar cane were ground at the mill on the farm to remove the juice. This juice was cooked, and the molasses produced was stored in barrels or jugs.

Hogs ate mast grass in the woods. However, for several weeks before butchering, the swine was fed corn to make the meat taste better and fatten the hogs. Cows and hogs were usually butchered at the first cold

spell of the winter and the meat processed by drying and smoking it in the smokehouse, which most farms had, for the winter.

In this era, sheep and cattle were owned by many farmers. The two main money crops besides cotton were wool and cattle, which were sold to merchants in Gainesville and the Kiln. There was an insatiable appetite for these products in New Orleans and Mobile. The animals or crops were shipped by schooners to the busy wharves of these seaports. This was the character of the early supply chain management that exported over the next 175 years.

Every farm had a wagon, which was used to haul everything the farm needed as well as the family. Oxen were the first animals used to pull the wagons. The wagons were quite sturdy and could carry five thousand pounds of cargo. Yet, it might require three



This dog trot house is quite similar to the ones built by early settlers in Hancock County. One which older residents may remember was the Koch house in the Logtown area before additions were added and before it was moved because it was in the buffer zone of the Stennis Space Center.

yokes of oxen to carry a crop or heavy load to Gainesville over a dirt road or trail. In time farmers could afford horses for transportation and mules for tasks requiring power such as plowing. Wagons and accompanying supplies such as harnesses accounted for much volume of business or country store merchants.

A few plantations existed in Hancock County in the mid-nineteenth century which produced Sea Island cotton as a staple crop. The Cowan-Field plantation in Cedar Point introduced this type of hearty plant which was an immediate economic success, and it spread to other areas of the country. Other planters such as Claiborne, Carroll, Jourdan, Daniells, and Saucier were established on the Mulatto Bayou of the Pearl River, the lower Catahoula stream, and Bayou Phillips and La Croix. On the one hand, the Sea Island cotton grown here was a very high grade comparable to Egyptian cotton; on the other hand the plantation owners found the cost to produce it too expensive, and around 1850 a significant number of them moved their cotton operation to the Mississippi Delta. When they left, the planters took their slaves with them and the population of the county diminished from 3,672 in 1850 to 3,134 in 1860. Nevertheless, cotton continued to be grown and sold in the county even during and after the Civil War. Simon Favre's "The Gin" on the Pearl River north of Pearlington continued to prosper. His gin processed cotton from local farmers as well as those who sent it by

flatboat downstream along the Pearl. His company also shipped agricultural produce and animals to New Orleans to be sent to other ports in the region.

Governor Claiborne recognized early in the 19th century that Hancock County was particularly suited for raising sheep and encouraged farmers to raise them. The piney forest offered a countless variety of shrubs for grazing. The land provided food all winter with its wild grasses, reeds, and rushes. Unlike the shepherds in the North, our farmers could graze one thousand head of sheep without owning a foot of land or paying any property taxes. The animals were self supporting ranging during the entire year, receiving no feed from the farmers, and needing no shelter or protection during the winter. The natural increase of the flock was about twenty-five percent annually. Wool and hides from the sheep were sold each year to vendors in Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Waveland, and Woolmarket. Waveland's biggest industry in the 1880's was the Ulman Woolen Mill built by Alfred A. Ulman. Sheep raising flourished in Hancock County during most of the 19th century, but began to decline by 1900.

Farmers soon prospered in this era enough to buy horses and mules to provide transportation, originally accomplished by oxen. A good horse and/or mule became indispensable for the farm. Every village had at least one blacksmith. Transportation was done by cart, buggy, wagon, or foot. A blacksmith built wagon wheels, buggy wheels, and other

wagon parts as well as coffins. He also built and repaired plows and shod horses and mules. While a horse was useful for many jobs around the farm, a mule did most of the power work such as plowing as well as grinding the sugar cane at the mill. In fact in every community there was at least one man who raised and trained horses and mules.

The timber industry was a great boon for the farmers. Farms popped up all around sites of timber harvest in the forest. All the early logging and farming was done with oxen. Farmers all over the county raised oxen and trained them in teams to sell to the loggers. They got anywhere from \$200 to \$400 for a well trained team of four yoke of oxen, which was several times what they could get for the animals if sold for beef. Many farmers in Hancock County made good money raising and training ox teams. Later loggers used mules as well. A mule camp and an ox camp were necessary next to an active logging site in the forest. The loggers also needed feed for their animals and food for their many workers as well.

How Is a Mule Different?

A mule is the sterile offspring of a female horse and a male donkey. Mules are faster than oxen and stronger than horses. Their legs and hooves are sturdy, and mules tend not to flounder or go lame on rocky ground or from hard use. A mule will last thirty years compared to twenty for a horse.

The nineteenth century was a mule's world. Farmers and mules in the United States played a substantial role in conquering the wilderness and doing the hard power work of farming and logging. Needing only half as much food as a horse, a mule was also particularly useful in the South because it was resistant to heat, flies, and disease. In the North thousands of mules pulled freight and passengers along the barge canals between cities. A mule could tow a barge for fifteen miles a day.

Farm families did not go to town very often to shop. They grew most, if not all, of their food and needed a store just for basic necessities such as flour, salt, coffee, tobacco, shoes, and gun powder. Often a store "carried" farmer's charge accounts like a bank and give him ample time to pay for his supplies. Merchants often accepted cattle or crops to pay for items. Without any banks in the county, the early farm economy depended very much on simple barter, which with accurate record keeping worked rather well.

In conclusion, farming in Hancock County during the 19th century was accomplished much as it had been done throughout the world for the previous one thousand years. The primitive pioneer society and agriculture was part of the foundation of a more modern economy of the 20th century. Railroads, motorized vehicles, electricity, refrigeration, and other modern inventions substantially transformed and improved the lifestyle and prosperity of the farmers in Hancock County,

which will be the subject of a forthcoming article.

SOURCES:

Bagley, Scott. "Did You Know This About Hancock County?" Cotton, *The Historian of Hancock County*. Hancock County Historical Society, Bay St. Louis, MS, Sept. 2018.

Coleman, Eddie. "Raising Sheep in Hancock County," *The Historian of Hancock County*. Hancock County Historical Society, Bay St. Louis, MS, April 2012.

Harris, J. "Portrait of a Small Slaveholder: The Journal of Benton," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No.1, Spring 1990.

Thigpen, S. G. *A Boy in Rural Mississippi and other Stories*. Kingsport Press, Kingsport, TN, 1966.

Thigpen, S. G. *Next Door to Heaven*. Kingsport Press, Kingsport, TN, 1965.

Thigpen, S. G. *Pearl River: Highway to Glory Land*. Kingsport Press, Kingsport, TN, 1965.

United States Department of Agriculture. *Census of Agriculture Historical Archive*, <http://dsda.mannib.cornell.edu/usda/as/census/mages/> 1960.

NEW MEMBERS

Vicki Arnold
Bay St. Louis, MS

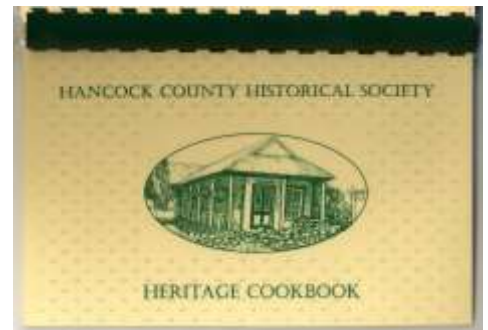
Janice & Cliff Darby
Bay St. Louis, MS

Donald King
Bay St. Louis, MS

Bob Livingston
Alexandra, VA

John & Carol Mahoney
Bay St. Louis, MS

Ms. Gerry Whitney
Bay St. Louis, MS



A revised edition of the original 2000 Hancock County Historical Society Cookbook will be available July 1 at a cost of \$20. You may pick up a copy at the Lobrano House. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please send a check for \$27.00 per copy (\$20 + \$7 for mailing for each copy) to HCHS, P. O. Box 3356,



**VOLUNTEERS
ARE NEEDED
FOR THE
CEMETERY
TOUR.
CALL THE LOBRANO
HOUSE AT
228-467-4090**

Michelle Nichols Presents

Almost Home

www.dinnemthings.com

Catering

228-332-2334



Steve B. Treutel
Vice President
Senior Financial Advisor

Mississippi Gulf Coast
 (228) 385-6307

Merrill Lynch Wealth Management makes available products and services offered by Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith incorporated, a registered broker-dealer and member SIPC, and other subsidiaries of Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved.
 AD-06-12-0048 ARSOT2V1-10-11 Code 453007PM-0612

The Sisters Series
 By L.L. Lee



Taxing Tallula
Found in San Antonio
Murder by the Bayou
Ten Days in Sicily

Available at Bay Books, Amazon.com, Kindle.
 Lee3731@bellsouth.net
 Amazon.com/author/lllee




Dan Bader
228.466.5165
Interiors / Exteriors

528 State Street
 Bay St. Louis MS 39520

PAINTING & PRESSURE CLEANING

FORD REALTY
 (601) 798-6202 800-354-FORD(3673)

Residential, Timberland, Ranches, Commercial



MARTHA FORD, Broker, GRI SFR
 MARTYFORD@BELLSOUTH.NET
 CELL: 601-590-2988

1004 Memorial Blvd
 P.O. Box 418
 Picayune, MS 39468
 Fax 601-799-0202

Est. 1949

www.fordrity.com

JOHN "CORKY" HADDEN
 Financial Advisor

RAYMOND JAMES®

T 228.466.9888 843 Highway 90
 F 228.466.9978 Bay Saint Louis, MS 39520
 corky.hadden@raymondjames.com
 www.RaymondJames.com

Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC.

BSL

"A Place Apart"

Robert and Samantha Mc Raney
 and Family



Donuts • Pastries • Breakfast • King Cakes

228-466-5037 308 HWY 90
 Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Susanne (Sue) Ashman ABR, CRS, GRI, SRS Broker

Office: (228) 467-5454
 Cell: (228) 216-7864
 Fax: (228) 466-4561
 Email: sueashman@aol.com
 www.Ashman-Mollere.com

Serving the MS Gulf Coast since 1928



418 Highway 90
 Waveland MS
 39576



Historic Bay St. Louis Ms.
 Vacation Rental

305 Main

www.vrbo.com (ID #313124 & 400259)

228-466-4793

HUBBARD'S WAVELAND
 HARDWARE

" IF YOU DONT THINK WE HAVE IT, ASK US!!"

DAVID & RICHARD HUBBARD

615 NICHOLSON AVE
 WAVELAND, MS 39576

PHONE: (228)467-4494 FAX: (228)467-7632



In deepest appreciation
 from the 1967 graduating
 class of
 Saint Joseph's Academy
 to the
 Hancock County
 Historical Society
 for its continuing work
 in preserving the history
 of Hancock County.

Bay St Louis:
 412 Hwy 90
 228-466-4498

Biloxi:
 2505 Pass Rd
 228-385-1177

Diamondhead:
 5400 Indian Hill
 228-467-2272



SOUTHGROUP
 INSURANCE SERVICES
 GULF COAST

- We offer Personal, Business, Life and Health Insurance
- We help our clients save money and get more value.
- We are Trusted Choice and have been awarded the Best Practices Designation.

For more information, please visit our website:

www.southgroupgulfcoast.com
 central fax: 888-415-8922



Kristen E. Thwait, CRP
 President
 SouthGroup Insurance
 -Gulf Coast

Relentless about
 caring for the coast.

Ochsner Medical Center - Hancock is right here in your neighborhood. We have same-day and next-day primary and specialty care appointments, starting as early as 7am.

We are accepting new patients at our 7 locations in Bay St. Louis and Diamondhead!

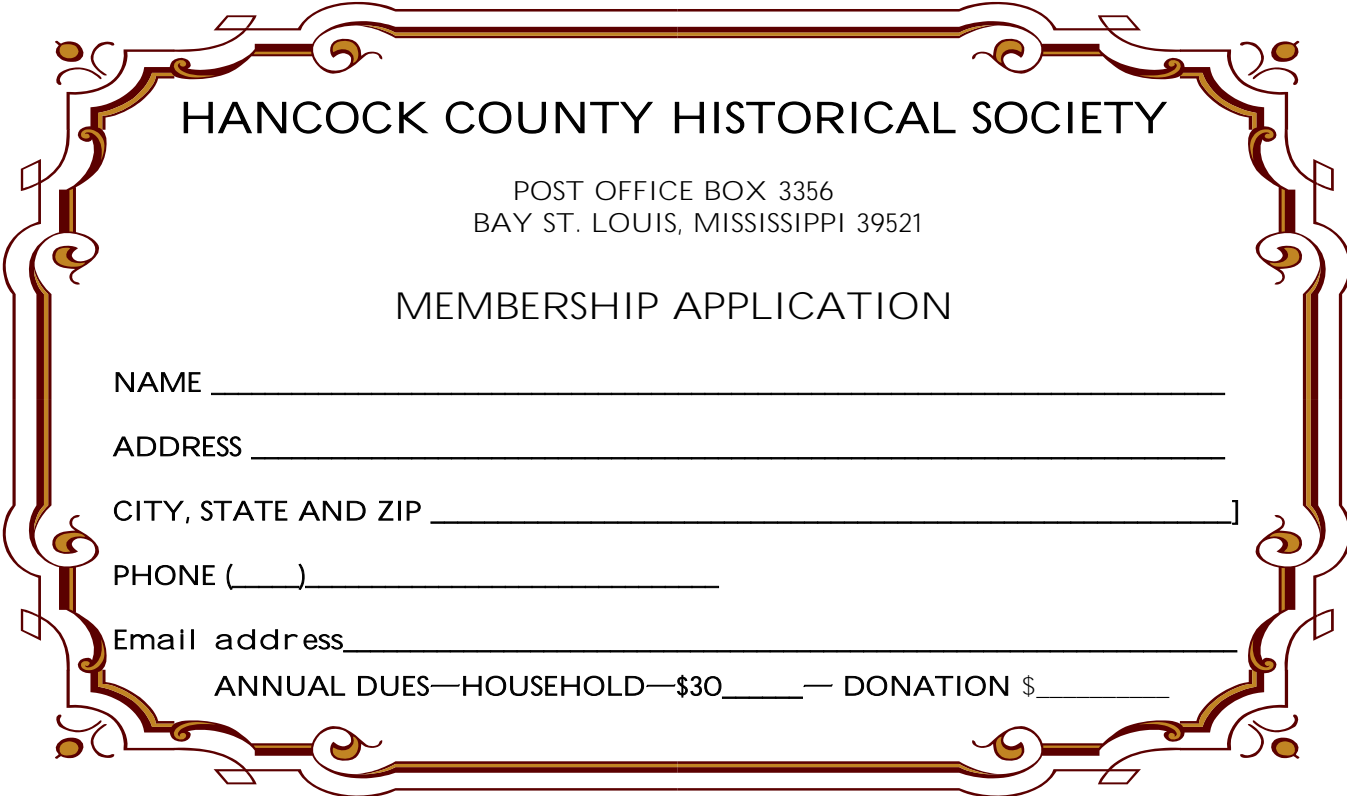
To schedule an appointment, call 228.220.3969 or visit ochsner.org/appointment.



HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 3356
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS 39521

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION

U. S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 87
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS



HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

POST OFFICE BOX 3356
BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI 39521

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE AND ZIP _____]

PHONE (____) _____

Email address _____

ANNUAL DUES—HOUSEHOLD—\$30____— DONATION \$ _____