## HISTORIAN

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

### OF HANCOCK COUNTY

### Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

#### November 2018

#### COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, November 15, 2018, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The guest speaker will be Dr. Sandra Reed, Superintendent of the Waveland School District. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 467-4090. Respectfully we must request that you please call by noon on Wednesday, November 14, 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.

#### **BOARD ELECTIONS**

It is time to elect board members to serve from January 2019 through December 2020. 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 historian.



This grove of tung nut trees is quite similar to the ones which grew in north Hancock County as well as in other South Mississippi counties at one time.

—from an old postcard

# Farming in the 20th Century in Hancock County

By James Keating MD

The 20th century witnessed more innovation and progress in farming than had occurred in the previous one thousand years. A statistical analysis of census date of the last two centuries reveals the numerical parameters of the agricultural sector in Hancock County. The number of individual farms never exceeded

240 or 50000 acres under cultivation and pasture. Orchards of tung nut trees became a major crop in Hancock County and Pearl River County during the 20th century while cotton, corn, and sweet potatoes diminished to a negligible amount of annual harvest. Dairy farming flourished after the advent of electricity and refrigeration in mid-century but later declined. Only beef cattle breeding has persisted as as a successful investment for farmers over two centuries with herds totaling as much as 7,848 head in 1959. The experience of farmers in the 20th century is a story of invention and adaption to change THE

## **HISTORIAN**

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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."

which demonstrated the hard working character of a class of citizens in Hancock County who prefer to work out-of-doors growing crops and raising livestock in the heartland.

The railroads transformed transportation of passengers and freight in Hancock County as well as the rest of America in the 19th century. A second railroad was constructed in Hancock County during the period of 1881-1885. This Southern Railroad chose a route that went through the towns of Picayune and Poplaville. This railroad stimulated the logging and naval stores/chemical industries in the adjacent countryside. As a result Pearl River County was formed out of northern Hancock County in 1890. Afterward the supply chain management of farmers in the remaining central and northern parts of Hancock County shifted in the 20th century to Picavune and the Kiln from the previous commercial centers of Gainesville and Logtown, which subsequently disappeared.

A very important industry in Hancock County after the closing of the lumber mills in the 1930s was raising tung nut trees. Tung oil was produced/pressed from seeds acquired from the nut of the tung tree, which was indigenous to China. The rise and fall of the tung oil industry in Hancock and Pearl River Counties was an important chapter in the history of farming on the Gulf Coast in the 20th century. This vegetable oil was a quick drying agent much like linseed oil used to provide a hard finish on furniture. For a few decades tung oil was a very profitable cash crop for farmers. It was employed as an ingredient in paints and varnish, linoleum and oilcloth, printing inks, and a supplement to gasoline. The tung tree grew as tall as forty feet with beautiful small white flowers. Each nut contains three to seven large white seeds. An acre of tung trees could harvest two tons of nuts a year which could generate one hundred gallons of raw tung oil.

Tung trees were brought to America from China in 1905 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture



This is a mid 20th century farmer with his modern tractor somewhere in Hancock County.

—from the Scafidi collection

because the Gulf Coast needed a good cash crop to plant in the vast cutover land left by the timber industry. In 1912 the U.S. Bureau of Plant Industry provided one year old trees free to farmers in Hancock and Pearl River Counties to plant orchards. By the 1930's Mississippi had become the largest producing state of tung oil in the U.S. In 1939 Congress appropriated \$140,000 to the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Bureau of Chemistry to conduct more research into tung oil. The main lab of this research was established in Bogalusa, LA. The partnership between farmers and the federal government was important in promoting this cash crop.

Lamont Rowlands (1877-1953), Lucius O. Crosby (1897-1973), and Miles Goodvear were lumber barons who formed the Goodyear Yellow Pine Company in 1917 that established a large sawmill in Picayune, MS. Lamont Rowlands introduced the concept of planting tung nut trees in the cutover land where the Goodyear Company had harvested pine trees. Cattle were introduced on the same land to eat the grass that grew in between the tung trees. 100,000 acres of land in the region were planted.

Lucius Crosby was determined that Picayune was not going to become a ghost town after the lumber industry left the area. He and Rolands built a chemical plant in Picayune in 1937 to manufacture resins, chemical, and tung oil. This became a Crosby family enterprise that in 1946 incorporated the name of Crosby Chemical, Inc., with an attached Pearl River Valley Railroad. The tung nuts from Hancock and Pearl River Counties were processed in Picayune which was called the "Tung Oil Capital of the World" during this time.

During World War II the tung oil industry flourished. China traditionally supplied the United States with four-fifths of its domestic consumption of the product. After Japan invaded China during the war, this foreign supply ceased to exist. Tung oil was used to coat artillery shells, consequently in 1942 the Department of the Army requisitioned the entire domestic production of tung oil.

Tung oil production was significant in the Gulf South from 1930-1972. Unfortunately, tung trees are vulnerable to frost. During the 1950's freezes destroyed many tung tree orchards in Mississippi. Hurricane Betsy (1965) and Hurricane Camille (1969) struck a death blow to the local industry. After 1970 Argentina captured most of the market because their farmers could produce the tung oil much cheaper than American farmers. Rising labor costs, excess supply in government reserves, reduced product demand, and diminished profit/income ended American tung oil production.

Both turpentine and tung oil were significant agricultural products produced by loggers and farmers in Hancock County in the 20th century that came and went with time and changes in the marketplace such as the use of these chemicals/oils. There are still occasional tung trees scattered in the local piney forests of Hancock County that remind us of a crop that our farmers grew for profit many years ago.

Another profitable industry in Hancock County was the dairy industry, which evolved over the 20th century from four dairy farms during the Depression to 177 at the peak of the industry around 1950. These dairy farms were located in the northern and central parts of the county. Farmers Henry Hariel, Plumber Shaw, Harrison Hariel,

Joseph Shaw, Sr., and their related families were notable. Before refrigeration was invented, the fresh milk at ninety-four degrees was cooled with spring or well water to prevent spoiling. The closest milk plant was the Crosby Creamery in neighboring Pica-Electricity came to the farmland in this era and provided surface coolers and a more efficient supply chain management of milk products. Thereafter raw milk production in Hancock County increased significantly. By 1945 a Farmers Co-Op Creamery with a membership of seventy-nine dairymen was selling pasteurized milk in Bay St. Louis and the Seabee Base in Gulfport. In 1944 raw milk production in the county reached a record of 2,860,000 pounds. Nevertheless, the industry declined because of government regulation and financial problems of various producers, and by 1977 there were only fourteen dairies in Hancock County. Today there are none.

Farmers have been raising cattle for beef for two hundred years in Hancock County. By the mid 20th century substantial herds began to develop. James L. Crump and E. M. Brignac were two beef farmers during the 1950's raising Herford, Braham, and Aberdeen Angus herds. A cow requires two acres of pasture of rye grass for nourishment. At this time the tractor replaced the ox, mule, and horse to plow and do heavy labor on the farm. Across the nation the large population of mules and horses so intrinsic to a farm were sold and slaughtered for dog food. Since half of a farmer's acreage was required in the past to feed these work animals, this pasture could now be devoted solely to beef and

dairy cattle for profit. Furthermore, a single farmer with a tractor could efficiently enlarge his acreage for cultivation/pasture from fifty acres to 150 acres. In 1958 cattle breeding and the dairy industry were the second and third largest sector of the economy of Hancock County. Timber was the largest. The climate in the South, abundant grass/pasture, and adequate rainfall were the ingredients of a dream cattle kingdom.

In conclusion, farmers were important pioneer settlers of the countryside after the Choctaw Indians were forced to migrate to Oklahoma. The early society with its economy in Hancock County was always two fold: farmers in the northern part and mariners/fishermen along coast. Different products or industries such as timber, turpentine, cotton, dairy farmers, sweet potatoes, or tung oil flourished and later declined because of changes in the marketplace such as oversupply or decreased demand, diminished profit, rising labor costs, or changing technology. Agriculture is decreasing in relative proportion of the county gross regional product to other sectors such as government, health care, polymer chemicals, and gaming. Nevertheless, farmers producing the food we consume will always play an essential role in every society.

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## The 24th Annual Cedar Rest Cemetery Tour

By John Gibson and Eddie Coleman

The 24th Annual Cedar Rest Cemetery Tour was held on Friday, October 26, 2018, from 5:00 until 7:30 P.M. Because this year is the one hundredth anniversary of the end of World War One, all of the characters presented this year were soldiers in that war or someone on the "home front" who contributed to its success in some way.

#### Frank J. Lobrano

Husband of Katherine C.
"Kate" Lobrano,
Cemetery Host

Good evening, my friends! Welcome to Cedar Rest Cemetery. I am happy you've decided to visit us. Like many of you, my wife Kate was born here in Bay St. Louis. Her father was a Confederate war veteran and the town marshal. Kate and I married in 1891. I am a descendant of one of Jean Lafitte's pirate captains. I am from Plaquemines Parish,



Frank J. Lobrano
Portrayed by HCHS
Executive Director
Charles Gray

Louisiana, and was famous for developing the process of cultivating oysters in the back bays by seeding or planting beds with empty oyster shells. If you enjoy oysters, you can thank me!

After Kate and I married, we settled here and reared our family. We bought a house at the corner of Main St. next to the courthouse (Cue Street was not built until a few years after the current courthouse was in 1911.). Because I maintained an official residence in Plaquemines Parish, I was elected Clerk of Court, so we spent time at both places. In December, 1917, Kate was diagnosed with skin cancer. The decision was made to sell our home. There were many offers to sell all of the property, but we sold only the house and kept the rest. The cook house was renovated as a home for Kate's mother. Rebecca Maynard. Now it is home of the Hancock County Historical Society, the organization presenting As their special this tour. host, allow me to introduce you to tonight's tour. The year Kate was diagnosed with skin cancer. America entered the Great War in Europe, what you know as the First World War. Tonight you will meet a few of my neighbors. all of whom were involved in the War to End All Wars. You will meet soldiers who fought for their country (and our freedom). You will meet a mother whose son was a decorated veteran. will meet one of the founding members of the Hancock County Red Cross and a dedicated volunteer nurse, who helped treat wounded veterans and comfort the families of men who never came home.

After the tour, I hope you will visit my home on Cue Street and enjoy some refreshments. Please consider joining the society, too. Welcome again to Cedar Rest. I hope you enjoy your visit.

#### Miss Louise Crawford

Founding member, Bay St. Louis Red Cross

Hello! My name is Miss Louise Crawford. I was born in Mount Vernon, Indiana, in 1880 and moved here in 1912. worked for the L&N Railroad along with my brother Owen. When the country joined the war in Europe in 1917, I became one of the founding members of the Bay St. Louis Red Cross. I was elected as the first secretary for the organization. We had 177 members at first, but just a year later, we had over 1500 including most of the school children! We had our headquarters in the courthouse.



Miss Louise Crawford Portrayed by HCHS Secretary Bev Frater

We quickly organized committees to sew pajamas, robes, and gowns for sick and wounded soldiers. We also made a variety of surgical dressings and bandages and knitted socks, sweaters, and caps for our boys "over there." Everyone was involved: the men took knitting classes at the courthouse and even had a knitting tournament with prizes for the best knitted items. I served as Charman of Supplies to help organize and ship needed goods overseas. There were dances and various shows to raise money; people donated fabric, yarn, rubber, even fruit pits and nut shells to protect our boys from poison gas. We needed lots of hands for so much work, but right in the middle of all that activity, we had a flu epidemic. It was sometimes called Spanish Flu because only Spain reported their epidemic (They didn't fight in the

war). So the Red Cross formed Home Health classes to teach local women how to care for the victims.

I served as a nurses' aide and helped the Home Services and Civilian Relief Committee. We took care of the sick and also provided comfort and sympathy to the families whose sons had been captured, wounded, sickened, or killed in the war. Even after the war, we had a lot to do, caring for the sick and wounded boys who came home.

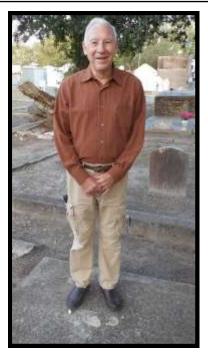
The Red Cross was needed then, and I hear it's still needed all over the world. I am proud to have had a part in bringing it here to our home town. Thank you for coming to see me this evening.

## Second Lt. Henry Chapman

Pilot and trainer of World War I and World War II Pursuit Pilots

Good evening! I am 2nd Lt. Henry Buckley Chapman, and I was born in New Orleans in 1893. Shortly after that, my family and I moved here to Bay St. Louis to 620 N. Beach Blvd. near the bridge. I was a spirited child. I once rigged a sail to a baby carriage and sailed up and down Beach Blvd., but scared the horses so I had to stop. Then, armed with a peashooter, I climbed out on an oak tree limb that reached across Beach Blvd. and shot a horse in the rump. The horse was pulling a surrey at the time and panicked, ran wild, and wrecked the carriage! That was the end of that!

In 1911 I worked in a hardware store, and then in 1914 I



Second Lt. Henry Chapman Portrayed HCHS member Robert Delcuze

worked as a traveling salesman. When America entered World War I, I joined the U. S. Army in Texas. I wanted to fly, so I was sent to March Field, California, qualified solo after four hours of training, got promoted to 2nd lieutenant, became a flight instructor, and trained pursuit pilots for duty in France. I did this until 1919.

After the army, I kept flying and helped map the first air mail rout in California: San Diego to Sacramento to San Francisco. Later, I took the position of manager of Biloxi Hardware, investing my life savings—\$5000. A year later, the company went broke, the store closed, and my money went with it. I had been in the Merchant Marine, so I went to work for Lykes Bros. Steamship in New Orleans. I rose from third mate to captain of ocean going ships and served until 1926.

In 1932 I was back flying air service in Guatemala, Spanish

Honduras, and Nicaragua. Often I had to pack everything I owned in the plane when I left the country I was in because revolutions were common in those days. In 1934 I started my own company, Chapman Air Service, at Shushan Airport in New Orleans (now known as Lakefront Airport), taught students, flew mail and passengers, and did air circuses. In 1939 I set a new long-distance world record for light seaplanes, flying nonstop from Bennet Field in New York to Lakefront in New Orleans. I had fuel to reach Houston, but the weather was bad, and I had set the record anyway.

From 1942 until the end of World War II, I trained U. S. Navy pursuit pilots. According to air museum curators in Alabama, Louisiana, and California, I was the only instructor known to have trained pilots in both World Wars. In 1947 I married Juanita Gelpi Chapman, widow of my brother Alfred—no one had to change names! I worked as a land survevor in Hancock County and retired from that in 1964. 1968, while on a motor trip to Canada, I had a heart attack and died. And here I rest.

#### Robert Dedeaux

Master Sergeant and Baker, World War I

Good evening! My name is Roger Dedeaux. I was born in Fenton, here in Hancock County, in 1892. I had two brothers and four sisters (Two of them were twins!). We lived on Austin Lane in Cedar Point and attended St. Joseph's Chapel. When America entered the Great War in 1917, I joined the army. The army trained me as a baker and sent me to France. I rose to the rank of



Roger Dedeaux Portrayed by his grandson Rock Murphy

Master Sergeant before I returned home. I wanted to use the skill I'd learned in the army, but I needed some transportation. So, I bought a horse. But whenever I got on the horse to go somewhere, the horse started to dance! This puzzled me and made it hard to get around town. What I didn't know at the time was that I had bought a circus horse!

Shortly after that I married Miss Amelia Cower. We had three children: Clois Roger, Roy Joseph, and Helen Murphy. My professional baking career led my family and me to live in various places. We moved to Louisiana at first, then to Hattiesburg, and finally we settled in Gulfport. I became co-owner of a bakery there. I made regular bread deliveries to the nuns in Gulfport. During my career, I developed a special recipe for French bread and sold it to a larger baking company.

On New Year's Day in 1934, I told my wife I was having chest pains. She went to the drug store to get something for what we both believed was indigestion. While I waited, I decided to lie down across the bed. When my wife returned home, she found me dead. I was only forty-two years old.

### Oswald Planchard Gilbert

Buffalo Soldier in World War I

Hello! I am the grand daughter of Oswald Gilbert. He was born here in Bay St. Louis in December 1897. His parents were Walter and Georgiana Gil-When the U. S. entered bert. World War I, he, along with others here, signed up to fight. He entered the army in April 1917. There were some people who tried to create conflict between whites and blacks then, but most of the black people were loval Americans and supported the government's action. He passed his physical at Jackson and enlisted at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans. From there he went to Camp Stotsenburg in the Philippines. That's right, the war was in France, but he went to the Pacific. The Woodrow Wilson administration refused to send blacks to Europe; instead, blacks guarded the Mexican border or went to the Philippines.

My grandfather was a Private First Class in Troop I, 9th Cavalry—a Buffalo Soldier. Black soldiers got that name when they served in the western U. S. after the Civil War. Indians gave them that name, perhaps because the soldiers' hair reminded them of buffalo hair or because



Oswald Planchard Gilbert Presented by his distant cousin Mary Labat

the soldiers fought fiercely and bravely like buffalo or maybe for the buffalo skin coats the soldiers wore in the winter. In any case, while he was in the Philippines (at Fort William McKinley), he went on day and night patrols to prevent attacks from local insurgent bands. Remember that the U. S. won possession of the islands after the Spanish-American War in 1898, and small groups of local fighters began attacking American troops. The Buffalo Soldiers adapted well to the climate in Southeast Asia, and they already had a strong reputation as tenacious fighters. While overseas, my grandfather served in both Buffalo Soldier companies and participated in a department athletic meet.

After the war, Oswald returned to Bay St. Louis and married Geraldine Whysant in 1923. They had five children:

two boys and three girls. He worked as a security guard (a federal census listed him as a "watchman"). He passed away in 1957, and here he rests.

## Seymour E. Carrio

World War I soldier, died in France

Hello! My name is Seymour Carrio. I was born in Waveland in 1898. My parents were Seymour and Margaret Kilbride Carrio. When our country declared war on Germany in 1917, I registered to serve. I was found fit for duty and entered the U.S. Army. Like other "Sammies," American soldiers fighting for Uncle <u>Sam</u>, I went to a camp for basic training. We got up early for exercise, ate breakfast, learned to march and use a rifle, trained some more after lunch, and studied after supper before lights out.



Seymour E. Carrio Portrayed by HCHS member Henry Doussan

Eventually, I made my way to New York to board a troop ship. Our ship was crowded with men, weapons, and supplies. The bunks were cramped and stacked five or six high with only about two feel of space between them. We only got up on deck a couple of times a day, usually for exercise or life boat drills. The ships had to sail a zigzag pattern to avoid German submarines. Along with the rolling and pitching of the ships, this pattern caused nearly all the men to become sea sick.

When we finally arrived in France, there was more training, learning to use artillery guns, learning to adapt to trench warfare, and learning how to use gas masks. You see, we had to be ready for gas that burned the eyes and lungs. When we finished training, we marched with all our equipment to a "quiet" part of the front lines to get used to the war. How do you get used to countryside so torn by artillerv shells and explosions? Chlorine and mustard gas attacks had poisoned the fields and killed all the trees

We lived in trenches that filled with water during heavy rains. Food was cold, and often we went days without eating. Men became sick from the mud and constantly wet clothing; wounded men often drowned in the mud. Probably because the trenches were so crowded. I contracted meningitis—a disease that attacks the brain and spinal cord. I was taken to an army hospital, where I died on January 26, 1918. I was exactly one month shy of my twenty-first birthday. I was the first fatality of a Hancock County serviceman in France. My body was eventually sent from France to New York and finally here to Cedar Rest Cemetery, where I spend by eternal rest.

#### **Ida Saucier Tudury**

Mother of Henry Jetton Tudury, Mississippi's most decorated soldier of World War I

Good evening. I am Ida Saucier Tudury. My mother was Victoire Toulme Saucier, so I am related to just about everyone in Hancock County. I want to tell you about my son, Henry Jetton Tudury. Henry was the oldest of my eight children, born in 1885. When the U. S. declared war on Germany in April 1917, Henry was among the first men to join up. He enlisted just eighteen days after war was declared. He was made a mess sergeant in the 59th Infantry, and then he transferred to the 12th Machine Gun Division. He took "French leave" (he went without permission) and came home to spend Christmas and marry Zelda Bermond. He was



Ida Saucier Tudury Portrayed by HCHS member Ava Sevin

demoted to corporal when he returned.

In July 1918, Henry and his unit were at the Second Battle of the Marne, supporting French troops when he was hit with poison gas weapons two or three times. He was so weak that he couldn't stand, but two weeks later Henry was back with his unit.

The war ended, but Henry didn't come home until August 1919. But he returned as the most decorated Mississippian: a Purple Heart, the Distinguished Service Cross, and the Croix de Guerre from France. He was given a well-deserved hero's welcome, but Henry loved being back with his family most of all.

He graduated from Delcado Institute in New Orleans and was declared "rehabilitated," but Henry wasn't rehabilitated. His lungs were burned by the mustard gas, and he had nervous attacks and jitters, which he fought with alcohol and cigarettes. His children were forbidden from shooting firecrackers or making any loud noises, but when he was drunk, he would fire his .45 caliber pistol into the air.

Henry Tudury died of cancer in May 1952 and was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery here in Bay St Louis. As it says in the novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Henry was one of those men who escaped the shells, but was destroyed by the war.



Poster from WORLD WAR I

#### **New Members**

Joby Bass *Bay St. Louis, MS* 

Leo F. DiBenedetto Bay St. Louis, MS

Pete Frank Staunton, VA

Bridget Garcia
Bay St. Louis, MS

Kaye Karl *Bay St. Louis, MS* 

Audie Rock Murphy Bay St. Louis, MS

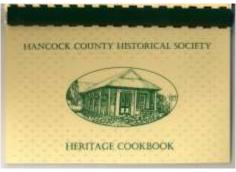
Martin Wato *Denton, TX* 

Ms. Gerry Whitney *Bay St. Louis, MS* 



Stop by the Historical Society to buy one of the Kate Lobrano House Plaques. \$25.00





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, Bay St. Louis, MS, 39521.



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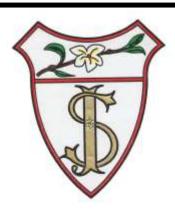
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