

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

October 2019

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE CEMETERY TOUR



Please join us for the 25th Annual Cemetery Tour on Thursday October 31, 2019, at Cedar Rest Cemetery in Bay Saint Louis. The fun begins at 5:00 P.M. and continues until 7:00 P.M. 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. As usual, we will not have a luncheon in October so that we may devote all of our energies to the Cemetery Tour.

It is time to elect board members to serve from January 2020 through December 2021. 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 to 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. Thank you to those who served on the board during these past two years.



The Civil War

By
James Keating MD

The American Civil War was fought both on land and the sea. Volunteers from Hancock County formed two companies of infantry that were the nucleus of the Third Mississippi Regiment of the Confederate Army. Moreover this regiment played an important role in many of the land battles of the war from 1861-1865. Thus their compelling story is the subject of this article. In addition a forthcoming article will address the experience of Hancock County and its citizens who fought in the naval engagements in the Mississippi Sound, Lake Pontchartrain, and the Mississippi River. In particular a naval blockade was the

key ingredient of the Anaconda Strategy of Union General Winfield Scott which crippled the economy of the South. Key players in this drama include young officers and soldiers from prominent families like Saucier, Poitevent, Toulme, Baxter, and Carr and the loyal women who supported this lost cause.

In the summer of 1861, the young men of Hancock County volunteered for the army. Two companies were formed from the county. The first was the "Shieldsboro Rifles," and on June 29, 1861, Mayor Julian Monet swore into service for the State of Mississippi fifty-seven raw recruits. It is of interest that twelve of these lads could not sign their own names to the document. In fact approximately one third of the recruits were below age twenty and another one third were under age twenty five. Accordingly the State

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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.”

of Mississippi provided rifles to the soldiers, but their uniforms were made by their loved ones at home. Many were mariners, fishermen, oystermen, shipbuilders, and ship carpenters representative of the occupations of this little fishing village of Shieldsboro (Bay St. Louis) of approximately one thousand people. Hence this company was mustered into the Confederate Army on October 5, 1861. John V. Toulme was from a much respected old family in Hancock County and was commissioned the rank of first lieutenant of this company —later promoted to captain.

In the town of Gainesville approximately fifty men volunteered for service and the “Gainesville Volunteers” were mustered into state service on July 9, 1861. Specifically these soldiers came from Pearlinton, Logtown, and Gainesville which had an accumulative population of approximately seven hundred people. The company was commanded by Captain John B. Deason (1824-1900) who was a veteran of the Mexican War of 1846. He was an attorney before and after the Civil War and the General Collection Agent of Hancock County. Incidentally

these men in the coastal counties were principally French Catholics. The volunteers met and drilled for several months without pay. In any case the Gainesville Volunteers were mustered into the Confederate Army on October 5, 1861.

Eight companies from the several towns along the coast were formed into the Mississippi Third Regiment of the Confederate Army. Furthermore, Shieldsboro became an armed camp in 1861 with these companies which included the Pass Christian Coast Guards thus forming the nucleus of the regiment. Subsequently on September 15, 1861, the ladies of Shieldsboro treated the soldiers and the neighborhood to a concert and a series of tableaux as a fundraiser to provide winter clothing for the men, collecting \$120.

The Third Regiment spent the first two years of the Civil War guarding the coast or acting as reinforcements performing necessary tasks such as picket duty, reserve, and building fortifications during military engagements in Kentucky, Vicksburg, and Jackson. Hence their significant losses up until 1864 had been mostly the result of sickness or desertion. However, in the



Captain John V. Toulme



Captain John Saucier



Sarah Carr

spring and summer of 1864, the regiment was in the thick of the action in the Atlanta Campaign resisting Union General Sherman's advance. To wit, the Third fought in the battles of New Hope Church, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, Erza Church, and Jonesboro. In fact at Kennesaw Mountain the Third Regiment distinguished itself with a stubborn defense against a Yankee advance which earned the unit official citation on the Confederate Roll of Honor for "gallant and meritorious conduct." Nevertheless, the unit's bloodiest battle was in November 1864 as part of General John Bell's army. At this time they charged the union lines at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, over an open field overtaking the enemy breastworks, but losing fourteen dead, forty wounded, and twenty missing from a residual aggregate of 177. As a consequence General Hood's army suffered seven thousand men killed, wounded, or missing at Franklin with six of his most experienced generals getting killed. Grady Howell noted that "the flower of Hood's army was destroyed." Still, the survivors of the Third continued to fight through the Carolina

Campaign of 1865 as part of the army of General Joseph Johnson. Sadly after the surrender of the Confederate Army only fifty-five men of the original twelve thousand soldiers of the Third Mississippi Regiment were left on the field.

Captain John Saucier (1841-1879) of Shieldsboro was the last commander of the Mississippi Third Regiment. Much of our knowledge of the history of the Civil War was learned from the letters individual soldiers sent back to their families and loved ones which fortunately has been preserved for posterity. As an illustration Captain John Saucier was a prodigious letter writer and sent a treasure trove of love letters to his fiancé, Sarah Carr, from Pass Christian. Indeed John and Sarah were well educated for the times, and he was from the distinguished Saucier family of Hancock County. Incidentally he was a cousin of Captain John V. Toulme, who was also an officer in the regiment who often carried letters to Sarah personally since regular mail delivery during the war was unreliable. Sarah was good friends with Eliza Poitevent (aka Pearl Rivers), who would serve as chaperone and companion for John and Sarah on their outings and picnics before the war. Saucier's letters contained significant detail about camp life, interesting stories about the soldiers, important battle details, and even some of the politics of the time. These letters are a substantial part of the definitive history of the unit, *To Live and Die in Dixie, A History of the Third Mississippi Infantry, CSA* by H. Grady Howell, Jr. John's letters were addressed affectionately to "Cousin Sallie," and during the course of the war, he proposed marriage to Sarah and

received her parents' blessing which was joyfully given.

Captain John Saucier returned home after the war and married Sarah. They had six children. He became an alderman in Bay St. Louis, Sheriff of Hancock County, practiced law, and raised cattle. Sadly, Saucier died prematurely at age thirty-seven in the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878. Local legend says that he was buried somewhere in the county in an unmarked grave which he shared with the local doctor who treated him.

Captain John V. Toulme (1827-1901), cousin of Saucier, also survived the war and returned to Hancock County. Incidentally, he was a hotelier (Crescent Hotel). He was also mayor of Shieldsboro for two terms and was in office during the building of the first public school. In addition Toulme donated land for the cemetery and the Methodist Church.

Marion Francis Baxter (1847-1928) enlisted in a company formed in Handsboro at age thirteen. In fact Baxter served as a courier for the general's staff and had a record for bravery. After the war he worked as a superintendent of the Poitevent and Favre sawmill. Moreover, he served Pearlinton as a justice of the peace. He is buried in the Logtown Cemetery.

The soldiers of Hancock County served in the Third Regi-



ment with distinction. That said, it was a mistake for the South to have seceded from the Union. Nevertheless, the Civil War did settle once and for all the issues of secession and slavery. Consequently the young officers such as Saucier and Toulme that survived the war returned to Hancock County and became political leaders of the community. Eliza Poitevent (1843-1896) would become famous as one of the first female newspaper publishers as owner of *The Times Picayune*. She also received recognition as the poet Pearl Rivers. Her brother, John Poitevent, would achieve fame and glory as captain of a gunboat that resisted the naval blockade, which will be the subject of a forthcoming article.

SOURCES:

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Greenwell, Dale. *The Third Mississippi Regiment C.S.A.* Pascagoula, MS: Lewis Printing Services, 1972.

Howell, Jr., H. Grady. *To Live and Die in Dixie*. Jackson, MS: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 1991.

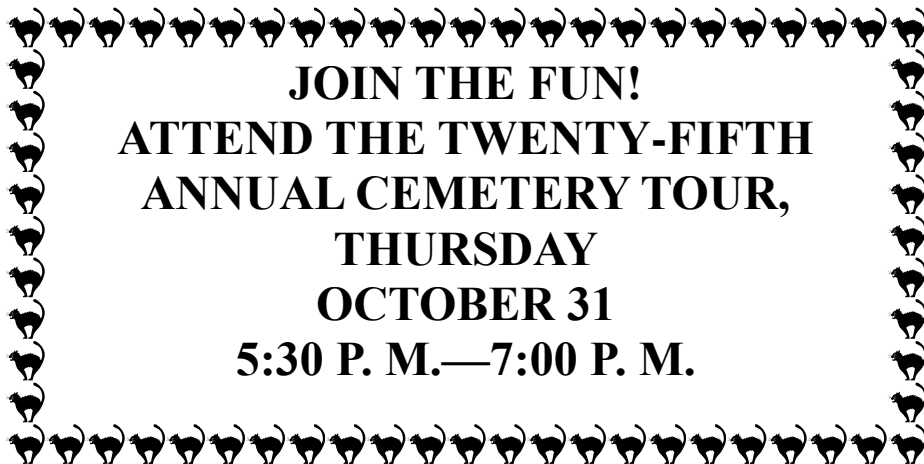
Scharff, Robert G. *Louisiana's Loss, Mississippi's Gain*. Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Publishing Corporation, 1999.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Stuart Simms, a graduate student at the University of Kentucky, is currently looking for people affected by the construction and presence of the John C. Stennis Space Center (SSC) and the surrounding buffer zone to talk about their lives and experiences in pre- and post-SSC Hancock County. If you are interested, please get in touch with Stuart Simms at simms3412@gmail.com or stuart.simms@uky.edu or call (256)777-3248. Any information you can provide will help with his doctoral thesis.

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





JOIN THE FUN!
ATTEND THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR,
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5:30 P. M.—7:00 P. M.

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Cocktails and Canapés

The cocktail party held at the Kate Lobrano House on Friday, September 27, was a successful soiree. The money donated by the attendees gives us a good beginning for the Society's fundraising campaign for the coming years.

Snapshots from
Cocktails and Canapés



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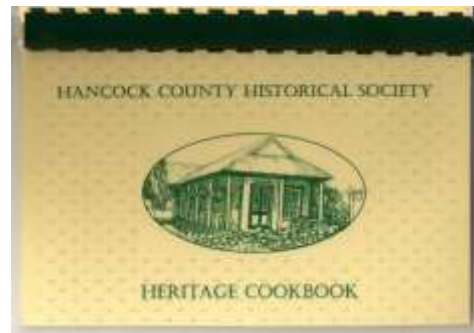
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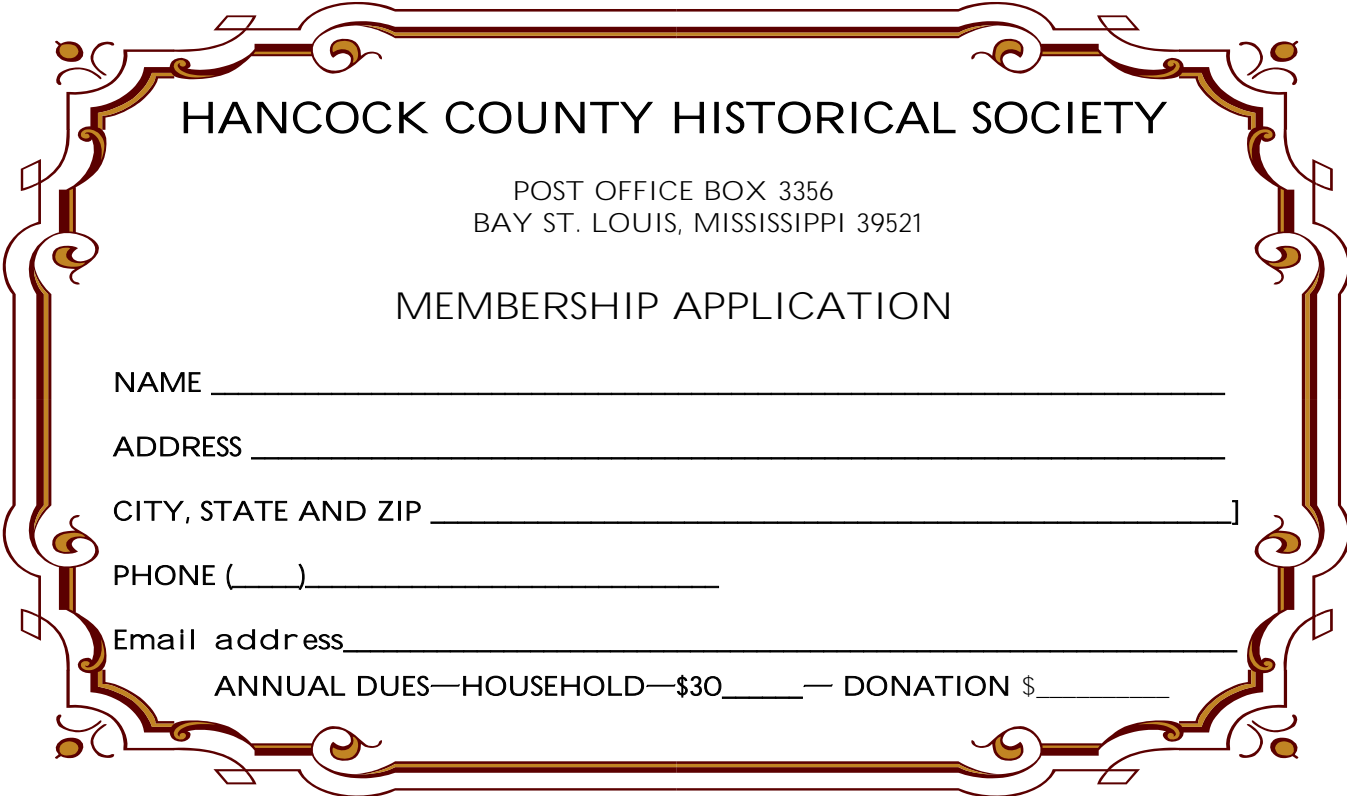
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