HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

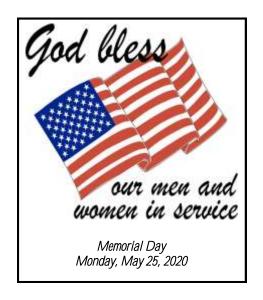
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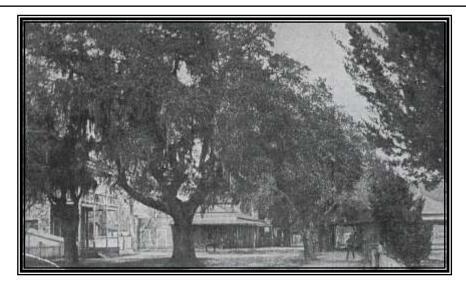
Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

May 2020

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FOR LOBRANO HOUSE

The Board of Directors for the Hancock County Historical Society has decided to cancel our monthly luncheon meetings and close the Lobrano House to visitors until further notice. Should you have any questions or have an immediate need to access information from the Society, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone (228-467-4090) and leave a message if no one answers. Or you may get in touch with us by email at hancountyhis@bellsouth.net. In either case, someone will get back to you as soon as possible. The newsletter will be published as usual.





This 1903 photo taken at the corner of Main Street and Front Street depicts the charm and beauty of this corner, a grove of stately old southern live oaks, Levy's dry goods store, and Taconi's Tavern.

PORTRAIT OF HANCOCK COUNTY 100 YEARS AGO 1918—1920

By James Keating MD

OVERVIEW

In the second decade of the twentieth century, Hancock County and the rest of the world witnessed transformative change described at the time as the end of the old order or culture and the beginning of a "new era." Young men from the county such as Henry Tudury would enlist to fight in World War I (WWI) called at the time the Great War. The "Spanish Flu" would kill fifty million

people the world over, more than the 17 million killed during WWI. The women of the United States, who comprised half of the country's population, would finally get the vote and be able to participate in our republic. The daily existence or culture in the small towns of Hancock County in that period was quite different than today. It represented a simpler lifestyle, often without modern conveniences that we take for granted today such as electricity, automobiles, computers, and television. This portrait will bring the reader back in time one hundred years.

PART 1 HANCOCK COUNTY

In 1918, Hancock County (population 11,000) had a mostly

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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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."

agrarian, poor economy and was relatively isolated from the rest of the Gulf Coast. There were approximately 200 farms in the northern part of the county that used the small, historic, beautiful riverside ports of Kiln, Gainesville, Logtown, and Pearlington to trade crops for supplies. The streets of these picturesque towns were shaded by groves of stately, Southern live oak trees. Each town had a sawmill that employed most of the townspeople and represented the key source of employment and prosperity. Bay St. Louis was a small fishing village and resort with approximately 3000 residents. Half of its citizens acquired their livelihood, either directly or indirectly, from the seafood industry or fishing. The Peerless Oyster Company operated a large cannery located at the present site of the Bay-Waveland Yacht Club. A cannery of this size required a fleet of fifty sloops and schooners to harvest shrimp during the summer and oysters during the fall, winter, and spring.

By the turn of the 20th century, there was enough business in the county to justify creation of two local banks. The Hancock Bank, formed in 1899. boasted \$1M in assets and competed with the Merchants Bank. The railroads were built around 1875 and transformed the economy and lifestyle of everyone. Travel to New Orleans to shop or visit was a pleasant ride of only one hour. A few items of interest to the reader will be noted in this portrait of days gone by:

> * While walking in any of these small, charming villages, it was not unusual to see an errant cow poking her head

- into a neighbor's vegetable garden.
- * Most families owned a cow, some chickens, and maintained a sizable vegetable garden.
- * Horse and buggies were commonplace in town and after 1915 you might see an occasional automobile.
- * Roads were still made of dirt, gravel, or shells.
- * There was no ferry across the Bay.
- * A ferry did cross the Pearl River from Gainesville to a landing that would allow one to travel along a road to Slidell.

The arrival of automobiles stimulated the construction of better roads, ferries, and bridges in the 1920's. Claude Monte was a successful blacksmith in Bay St. Louis that had recently converted his shop from wheelwright and horseshoe repair to fixing gas engines and autos. Prohibition of alcoholic beverages generated a booming business in the Kiln distilling whiskey. Foreign imported liquor was smuggled up the Jourdan River. Dr. A.P. Smith operated a small clinic/hospital on Main Street in the Bay.

The many wooden, historic cottages with picket fences usually had a stable/barn, a spring well, outhouse, and a chicken coop. There were only a few sidewalks in town. The Bay Ice, Light, and Bottling Works served Bay St. Louis, Waveland, and Clermont Harbor with electricity and streetlights, but only had 450 customers. Candles and

kerosene lanterns supplied light for most. Wood was the source of heat for cooking and the fireplace. A family used a mule or horse for work or to haul a wagon, but walking was the most common means of transportation.

PART 2 SUFFERING AND SUFFERAGE

During WWI, in the late spring of 1918, an influenza epidemic broke out in Europe among British, German, and French soldiers. It was ignored in the United States until August of 1918 when soldiers returned from the war in Europe and infected other servicemen in the Boston area. The disease spread across America so quickly that by the fall of 1918 the "Spanish Flu" (as it was erroneously referred to), reached every urban and rural community nationwide. In Hancock County, St. Stanislaus College reported 200 cases of infection. The Mississippi Department of Health shut down the public schools. "Church services were cancelled, and public meetings and gatherings were



During the 1918 Influenza Epidemic people wore masks on the street as well as in their offices.

postponed" for six weeks into November 1918. The movie houses were closed.

Dr. C.L. Horton in Bay St. Louis reported that hundreds of patients were stricken and conditions were worse than he had ever encountered in his experience as a physician. Dr. Adrian Heva treated patients in Waveland. The Ladies Aid Organization and volunteer citizens helped care for the innumerable patients when the epidemic was at its height. The local health care facilities were overwhelmed. According to a Sea Coast Echo at the time, "...everyday they were hauling caskets from Bay St. Louis to the Kiln. You'd see them [sic] trucks coming there with caskets." Dr. Horton succumbed to the infection and had to suspend his practice until he recovered. As a result, the mayor of the Bay, R.W. Webb, recruited a New Orleans physician, Dr. A.F.Rodes, to come rescue the community.

In Mississippi an estimated 6,219 patients died in 1918 and 3,013 in 1919. Hundreds died in the coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson. The pandemic continued off and on in the United States until 1920. The rural communities fared better than the more densely populated towns or cities.

The Women's Suffrage Movement started in 1848 championed by Susan B. Anthony at the Seneca Falls Convention in upstate New York. The movement did not gain immediate traction in the South because of a regional, cultural pride of "Southern ladies" in their perceived roles or identity that pre-



Nellie Somerville

cluded getting involved in men's business or politics. Yet, by the 1890's, forward thinking activist women leaders began to see the potential value for women to acquire voting privileges that would improve their legal, educational, and employment opportunities as well as promote reforms of society.

Nellie Nugent Somerville (1863-1952) of Greenville, MS, was president of the



Belle Kearney

Mississippi Woman's Suffrage Association in that time frame. She and her fellow suffragists worked hard speaking, writing, and distributing literature in Mississippi for several years but were quite discouraged and pessimistic by the early 1890's. In 1906, a national professional speaker, Belle Kearney (1863-1939) of Madison County, focused her attention on Mississippi to bring back to life the woman's suffrage association. But it was not until 1917 that the other woman activists such as the MS Federation of Woman's Clubs that promoted such causes as temperance supported woman's suffrage. The one serious state political campaign in 1914 that generated a suffrage resolution failed in the MS State House of Representatives with a vote of 42 for and 80 against. Mississippi suffragists decided in 1915 that it would take a US Constitutional Amendment to get the vote.

The Nineteenth Amendment was finally added to the Constitution on August 20, 1920. The Mississippi Legislature had previously rejected that amendment. In addition, Mississippi was only one of two states that did not allow women to vote in the 1920 Presidential Election. Mississippi did finally ratify the 19th Amendment on March 22, 1984. Nevertheless, Somerville and Kearney were elected in 1922 into the Mississippi Legislature.

PART 3 THE WORLD STAGE

World War I (WWI) started in June, 1914 when a Serbian nationalist assassinated

Archduke Franz Ferdinand. After three years of war, the Western Front had degenerated to a series of 2,000 miles of trench lines in northern France and Belgium. This war of attrition witnessed multiple massed infantry advances against strong, impregnable defensive positions. This resulted in casualties from machine gun, artillery, and rifle fire sometimes numbering 500,000 to 1M soldiers. By 1917, battles such as Verdun, Sommes, and Ypres had depleted and exhausted both sides of the conflict, but accomplished no major exchanges of territory. The United States entered the war in April of 1917.

In June of 1917, Hancock County formed its first Mississippi Infantry Company B which consisted of 144 men recruited from the Gulf Coast to serve in WWI. Many men and women from here served in this country and overseas. A Selective Service Act (or draft) brought in 3M men from the United States and another 2M volunteered during this war. Enlisted soldiers in Hancock County were honored by the townspeople of Bay St. Louis. The night before they departed for Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, MS, a dance and reception was held at Woodsman Hall. Two such occasions occurred on July 7 and August 8, 1917. These soldiers came from old families with surnames such as Bourgeois, Tudury, Moran, Smith, Arnold, Frierson, Holden, Dawrey, Casanova, and Bontemps.

Henry Jetton Tudury (1885—1952) was a distinguished hero of the war from Hancock County. It was fortunate for posterity that he kept a diary during his service in

France. This is a revealing account of his experiences that chronicle the successful offensives of the US army called the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). The story of Private Tudury is the story of the American army, because he seemed to end up in the thick of the action in the most important key battles of that theater in 1918.

The commander of the AEF was General John Joseph "Black Jack" Pershing (1860— 1948). He refused to embed his divisions into the armies of Britain or France, and instead occupied a position on the battle line just east of Paris. It took a year to build up his forces to 1M men. However, in July of 1918, there were some troops stationed fifty miles east of Paris in the town of Chateau-Thierry to aid the French. Private Henry Tudury was here in a newly formed 12 Machine Gun Battalion. From July 15 to August 6, 1918 the German Army staged its last massive thrust or offensive called the Second Battle of the Marne. Tudury was "gassed two or three times, but stuck to his post." After being hit by a shell he was taken to Base Hospital 41. The Germans were stopped by the French 50 miles from Paris at the Marne River.

Private Tudury recovered quickly and was back with his company in two weeks. In September of 1918, General Pershing conducted his first major and distinctly American offensive operation to reduce the salient of Saint-Mihiel. With seven divisions (500,000 soldiers) the bulge or previously impregnable German line was reduced. Private Tudury's company was located in the line near Verdun during this engagement. While



General John J. Pershing awarding Private Henry J. Tudury the Distinguished Service Cross on March 18, 1919.

sleeping in a French dugout there, a high explosive shell blew him out of his bunk. "Although his comrades thought him lost, Tudury was unharmed by the blast."

A more decisive thrust by General Pershing followed from September 26 to November 11, 1918 which was called the Meuse-Argonne offensive. It broke the German line again, and Pershing with an army of 1M American and French soldiers and Private Tudury pierced the most redoubtable section of the Hindenburg Line. Pershing advanced forty miles and captured both banks of the Meuse River which could have been a possible defensive shield for the Germans. More importantly, Pershing captured the vital railroad junction at Sedan, a four track railway that carried 250 German trains a day, conveying most of the German army's men, material, and supplies. The German army was now trapped in France and Belgium with its railroad

lifeline severed. Private Tudury was wounded in this conflict in the Argonne Forest when a shell hit his helmet but did not explode.

The Germans agreed to an Armistice on November 11, 1918. Private Henry Tudury received in recognition of his service to his country a Purple Heart Medal and numerous battle bars. General Pershing pinned the Distinguished Service Cross on his uniform on March 18, 1919. On July 18, 1919, he received the Croix de Guerre from Marshal Petain of the French Military Forces. Tudury was the most decorated Mississippi soldier of the Great War.

If Private Tudury and the US Army had not gone to France in 1917, Germany would have won WWI. The Americans saved France and Britain from certain defeat at Chateau-Thierry in the spring and summer of 1918. The AEF destroyed the Germans in the fall of that year. Superior American tactics which

mandated relentless mobility of combined arms including artillery, armor (tanks), infantry and air support. This activity resulted in a breech that denied the enemy any opportunity to regroup and build a defensive line (trenches). This powerful lesson in tactics learned from Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman made an indelible impression on the young officers in WWI. General George Patton would later employ the same style of fighting in WWII.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In geopolitical terms, the only winner of WWI was the United States of America. America would become the dominant superpower, the dollar world's reserve currency, and Wall Street the financial center of the global marketplace. In four years, the USA evolved from being a debtor nation owing \$3B to a creditor nation owed by its allies \$12.6B. Private Henry Tudury and his cohorts from Hancock County and the rest of the American army saved Britain and France from certain defeat in 1918 in this war. In this time frame, a new era began and an old order ended, economically and culturally. Electricity and the automobile would transform the landscape of Hancock County and the rest of the world. The Nineteenth Amendment was more than symbolic of a cultural revolution for women in our society. The Spanish Flu killed more patients than were lost on both sides in the Great War. Looking back 100 vears, a portrait of Hancock County reveals that 1918—1920 was perhaps the best of times, and yet, in some ways, the worst of times.

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MIGRATION OF THOSE WHO SETTLED HANCOCK COUNTY

By Marco Giardino and Russell Guerin

Edited by Eddie Coleman

Much can be learned from the study of early census information. Although the earliest settlers—the French and Spanish—arrived by water, others arrived overland from the eastern seaboard after the Louisi-

ana Purchase. In an analysis of what is now Hancock County, it should be considered that until 1840 Hancock included present-day Harrison and Stone Counties and until 1880 parts of Pearl River County. Even though it is not always apparent where any particular family lived, there are sufficient patterns to shed light on the area.

A study of the 1850 census of Hancock County reveals some interesting statistics. was the first census to record each individual's place of birth by state, territory, or country. Apparently the population was comprised of a very diverse group, representing fifteen countries—among them the British Isles, Russia, Greece, Denmark, Holland—and eighteen including Vermont, states— New York, New Jersey, Maine, Delaware, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Because each child's place of birth is listed, one can almost follow the trek from distant places to Hancock County, sometimes a journey of a year or more. Particularly interesting is the number born originally in the Carolinas. South Carolina natives number fifty-one, and North Carolina has a count of twenty-six. While the numbers themselves may not appear large, there are two reasons why they stand out. First, it must be considered that there are only thirty-one other places of birth listed and that many of these settlers were in fact native to Mississippi. The second reason for taking notice of the Carolinians is that they do seem to comprise an inordinate percentage of the more prominent citizens. This is reflective of those who owned larger amounts of real estate and the higher number

of slaves.

The question arises as to whether the migration was a movement to somewhere or away form some place. Was the reason for the move cheap land, regardless of the mosquitoes and the supposed "fevers" of the southern swamps and marshlands? Although all records of land sales were lost in the 1853 fire which destroyed the courthouse at Gainesville, there is evidence from the U.S. land office at Natchez that land in the area was sold in the 1830's for \$1.25 per acre with a minimum purchase of eighty acres required.

Or were there other reasons for migration?

De Bow's Review, written by James D. B. De Bow, offers some answers. In the 1840's there was a "severe and long drought" in South Carolina and Georgia which heavily affected the cotton crop. Comparison of these crops of North Carolina and New Orleans from

De Bow's Review

James D. B. De Bow began this magazine in New Orleans in 1846 as the *Commercial Review of the South and West*. He moved it to Washington, D. C., between 1853 and 1857 (during his tenure as Head of the U. S. Census). By the start of the Civil War it was the most widely circulated southern periodical.

De Bow wrote much of each issue himself. Born in Charleston, S. C., he was an ardent champion of slavery; his review even published an article in the 1850's that urged the South to resume the African slave trade.

www.iath.virginia.edu/utc./ proslav/debowshp.html



Later named *Elmwood*, the manor house of the Cowand Plantation stood at 900 North Beach Blvd. in Bay St. Louis. When it was built in 1803, it stood on forest land fronting the western edge of the Bay of St. Louis, many years later enveloped by the City of Bay St. Louis. It was completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

1840—1849 shows North Carolina with an average of ten thousand pounds to that of about one million pounds in New Orleans. De Bow further shows that the "natural increase" of slaves in North Carolina diminished sharply from 1810 to 1840 because "their owners [took them] to a soil producing 1800 pounds [of cotton] instead of 1200 pounds."

It may be assumed that the Carolinians brought with them something besides money and slaves: they probably also introduced Sea Island cotton into the area. This was long staple cotton of strong fibers, highly prized in the marketplace. Considering that cotton growing was not one of the major industries in coastal Mississippi, it may be surprising to learn that there were several Sea Island cotton plantations in Hancock County during the 19th century. Among them were the Cowand, Clifton, and Claiborne Plantations.

Cowand Plantation was located on the Bay of St. Louis and comprised 550 acres. Elmwood, the manor house standing until Hurricane Katrina, is believed to have been built in the early nineteenth century, perhaps as early as 1803.

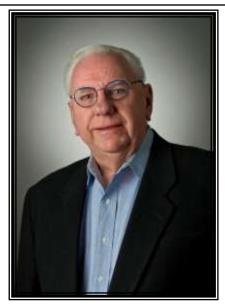
Another was Clifton Plantation on Mulatto Bayou, operated by Judge Lewis Daniells after he arrived from North Carolina. It seems to have been a going operation in 1852 when Benjamin Wailes, the state geologist, visited the area and described in detail the ginning operation of the plantation. He also mentioned that Daniells had sold his cotton for fifty cents per pound and that "it brings upon an average of three times as much as the short staple cotton." Earlier, the *Gainesville Advocate* 19, 1846) reported, "Hancock claims the finest specimen of sea island cotton exhibited in the Liverpool [England] market last year. It was grown on the plantation of Judge Daniells."

Adjacent to the Clifton land was Laurel Wood, the highly successful plantation of J. F. H. Claiborne. Sea Island cotton was also the major crop of the Claiborne operation.

Whether from the sea or over land, immigrants into Hancock County came for a variety of reasons to this rich Gulf Coast area. They traveled from Europe and other continents or from the thirteen original states. Regardless of their reasons for coming and regardless of their points of origin, they brought with them commercial, agricultural, and cultural designs, concepts, and outlooks which have blended to make present-day Hancock County such a diverse society.



Known as Laurel Wood, the manor house of the Claiborne plantation was built c. 1800 on Mulatto Bayou on the western side of Hancock County. It and the Cowand manor house were built in the French Colonial style.



George Saucier

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

We have prepared a series of articles about our Board of Directors and Staff. We hope you enjoy their interesting recollections of how they got here.

George Saucier President

George is currently semiretired after thirty-five years of healthcare financial and administrative management experience. The first half of that was spent in financial management of hospitals and medical office buildings. This also included a tour of duty as Director of Domestic and International Acquisitions and Development for a major investor owned hospital company. While in that position, George worked on acquisition projects in Great Britain, Switzerland, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Hong Kong. The second half of his career was spent as CEO of hospitals, all with condo office buildings.

Major projects while in

this position included construction project planning and management for hospitals and office buildings. George was responsible for hospital operating budgets in excess of \$60 million annually and a workforce of over eight hundred employees. Other special projects included implementation of a corporate compliance program in specific facilities, acquisition of domestic and international hospitals, and operations liaison to legal department during federal investigations.

Since moving to Bay St. Louis, George decided to move his experience in commercial property development into the residential real estate market. He is currently a licensed Realtor in the state of Mississippi specializing in second homes, investment properties and property management. Additionally, he also works with his wife, JoAnn, in her retail shop in Bay St. Louis.

He and JoAnn have been married for fifty-one years, have two sons, and five grandchildren. They are both animal lovers and work with several rescue agencies to find forever homes for rescued pets.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

We have prepared a series of articles about our Board of Directors and Staff. We hope you enjoy their interesting recollections of how they got here.

James William Keating, Jr., MD, FACR Publicity Chairman

James (Jim) Keating is a retired radiologist who was born



James Keating

in New Orleans, LA, on July 20, 1944, where he has lived most of his life. He graduated from Isidore Newman School, Dartmouth College, and Tulane University Medical School. During the Vietnam War Dr. Keating served as a flight surgeon/captain in the United States Air Force. He completed a radiology residency at the University of Vermont Medical School and a Neuroradiology Fellowship at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA.

Dr. Keating started his career in academic medicine at Dartmouth Medical School and then at Tulane Medical School, achieving the rank of associate professor. Later, he practiced hospital radiology for 32 years at numerous hospitals in the country. He was honored to have been awarded the degree of Fellow of the American College of Radiology (ACR), one of the highest honors the ACR can bestow on a member.

Dr. Keating was elected President of the New Orleans Radiology Society, the Louisiana Radiology Society, and the Dartmouth Club. Dr. Keating was a pioneer in the diagnostic evaluation of degenerative disc disease of the spine. After retirement Dr. Keating published numerous articles on the subject of the economic history of Hancock County.

He was the son of James William Keating, Sr., from Nunda, New York, and Bernice Marion Ross from New Orleans. He had two brothers who are deceased, John Charles Keating and Robert Edwin Keating. He married Margaret Lyle Smith, who was his genuinely dear friend throughout his life. They bore a son, James William Keating III, who gave Dr. Keating immeasurable pleasure being his dad. He also married Patricia Turner, who is his constant and devoted companion throughout their 25 years of marriage. Dr. Keating has two step-children with whom he enjoys a deeply affectionate relationship they were 7 and 4 years old: Adam Jeffrey Wroblewski (Bridgit) and Kiley Jane Wroblewski Mokate (Travis). Dr. Keating has four grandchildren: John (Jack) Gilbert Keating, Margaret (Meg) Miller Keating, Madisan Anne Wroblewski, and Turner James Mokate.





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