

*THE*

# *HISTORIAN*

*OF HANCOCK COUNTY*

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

June 2020

## **NEWS FROM LOBRANO HOUSE**

The Kate Lobrano House has reopened for members and visitors, and the hours remain the same: Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. until noon and 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m., closing from 12:00 –1:00 for lunch.

Monthly luncheons have been postponed until further notice, but we look forward to their return as soon as we feel we can do so without affecting the health of our members.



The Moran cattle farm that was the homestead of Joseph and Anna Moran is located on the picturesque, winding Old Joe Moran Road in the Kiln, Hancock County Mississippi.



## **NEW MEMBERS**

Joseph W. Gex, II  
*Kiln, MS*

Lisette Ecuyer and Janice Guido  
*Bay St. Louis, MS*

Michael Haas  
*Bay St. Louis, MS*

Rick Soldinie  
*Waveland, MS*

John Tindel  
*Bay St. Louis, MS*

## **THE MORAN FAMILY AND THEIR HERITAGE OF CATTLE FARMING**

By  
James Keating, M.D.

Edited by  
Virginia Olander

The European colonization of the Mississippi Gulf Coast witnessed migration of French, Spanish, French-Canadian, and English settlers during the eighteenth century. Some of the first French settlers were attracted to the barrier islands such as Cat Island that proved attractive for sustenance farming and raising livestock such as cattle and swine. The

Moran name (originally Morin) is one of the oldest and historically significant family surnames in Hancock County whose descendants' number in the thousands today.

It is reported that through research and oral tradition, from many centuries back, that the Moran name means "Tall Man," which is evidenced in modern times with most Moran men often being over six feet tall. The English/Irish spelling was MORAN but the original French spelling was MORIN. Whether the Moran's came originally from Ireland or later from France is a mystery, and maybe even a legend, but the most common language spoken in the early settlements of Hancock County was broken Cajun-like French.

THE

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James Keating, Publisher  
Charles Gray, Executive Director

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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.”

In the early parts of the Twentieth Century, and most likely ending in the 1980's, the older generation no longer taught their children French. This was a common practice so they would not be ostracized in American English-speaking society. They would speak French only when they did not want the children and grandchildren to know what they were talking about in important matters or while gossiping. Unfortunately, very few words of French descent are spoken commonly among the locals currently, some which are of religious nature for the endearing terms for godparents (such as parrain or marraine).

The entire clan in Hancock County at the turn of the last century had converted to the MORAN spelling. The Irish priests changed the spelling since they were often the only ones able to read or write during the early years of settlement. This was common among many other last names in the area that lost their original European origination.

The Moran's had a heritage or skill of raising herds of cattle for profit from the beginning of their time here. The following excerpts from their personal histories tell their story of multigenerational, hard-working, capable cattle ranchers and a tradition of livestock husbandry that continues today on the fertile high ground about the Kiln.

The Moran family has lived in Hancock County for over 240 years and has an impressive documented family tree that goes back to 1634 in Normandy, France. The Moran's earliest known member was in Acadia in the early 1600's, but the family had moved to Quebec City by 1696. Many Acadian families expelled from Canada in the 1750's migrated to southwest Louisiana and are called "Cajun" or have Acadian origin. The old family surnames, such as Moran, that settled Hancock County in this colonial period are considered French, French-Canadian, Spanish, or

Greek, but historically not Acadian. Nonetheless, there were probably some inter-marriages with families from nearby Louisiana Cajun communities.

The earliest recorded member of the local Moran clan to migrate from Canada to the Gulf Coast was Joseph Moran I (1739-1805) sometime before 1778. During the 18th century, early settlers were attracted to the barrier islands such as Cat Island because of some perceived safety regarding occasional Indian war parties. The Ladner family had settled on Cat Island by 1745. Nicholas Christian Ladner (1727-1800) married Marianne Paquet (1742-1810) in that year, and they lived on the island until 1788. They are the namesakes for Pass Christian and Pass Marianne. In 1781, Nicholas Christian Ladner registered with the Spanish colonial authorities and was granted ownership of Cat Island. One daughter, Marie Louisa Christian Ladner (1760-1804), married the aforementioned Canadian immigrant, Joseph Moran I, and although they had twelve children, three of their sons had descendants who fostered a giant local Moran family tree now numbering in the thousands and spread over the entire Gulf Coast.

Joseph I and Louisa had three sons: Pierre III (1784-1845), Jean Baptiste (1781-1811), and Joseph II (1781-1843). Joseph II settled on the Back Bay of Biloxi on the old brickyard. Jean Baptiste settled on Cat Island with the Ladner's. Pierre III settled on the Wolfe River (Delisle) in 1796. Jean Baptiste received a land grant that included acreage in modern day Waveland and Diamondhead. In fact, some of this land in the Diamondhead region was sold to John Joseph Jourdan near the Rotten Bayou of the Catahoula River (later renamed the Jourdan River).

A Spanish soldier stationed in Pensacola, Jean "Juan" De Cuevas, Sr., (1762-1849), who would visit Cat Island from time to time,



Rotten Bayou Cemetery

fell in love with a daughter of Christian Ladner, Marie Helene Ladner (1775-1852). The reader can see already how these old families, starting back on Cat Island in the late 18th century, became so intertwined in Hancock County for the next 240 years. These settlers raised beef cattle for profit and sold cows to the butchers of New Orleans, transported by schooner. Indeed, cattle farming has been a profitable enterprise on the Mississippi Gulf Coast from colonial days to the present time.

In the recorded Spanish letters that are preserved, there is mention that Joseph I and Louisa had five cattle stolen by American corsairs (pirates), and Pierre III had thirty-four head taken by corsairs in their gunboats. Jean "Juan" De Cuevas Sr. took over ownership of Cat Island in 1788 and maintained a large herd on the island. The British, in 1814, confiscated many of his cows before the Battle of New Orleans creating the legend of Juan De Cuevas firing the first shots at the British in that engagement. Over the years, the Moran's intermarried with the Ladner, Cuevas, and Necaïse families along with many other popular surnames that are in existence today. Hence, the Moran family eventually became successful cattle farmers.

The *Widow Moran Land Claim* is an interesting story about one of the first Moran inhabitants of Waveland. As mentioned before, Jean Baptiste Moran had a Spanish land grant for acreage in what is

modern day Waveland. His wife, Marie Susanna Lochonne, inherited the land upon Jean Baptiste's death in 1811. They had acquired 640 acres of present day downtown Waveland from Nicholson Ave. to Oak Street. An Act of Congress confirmed her title to this tract of land in 1830. In 1821, she married for the second time to Jean Ramon of New Orleans. After her death in 1837, a lengthy court battle ensued between her second husband, Jean Ramon, and Elihu Carver (1777-1855). Carver was a prolific surveyor of much of early Hancock County. He provided evidence that during the Widow Moran's lifetime she had transferred or assigned one half of this tract of land to him. In spite of that, the Widow Moran's second husband, Jean Ramon, contested that claim, which judgement he lost in the local Chancery Court and again lost in appeal to the MS State Supreme Court in 1856. This interesting bit of early Waveland history about the Widow Moran has been well researched by the historian Russell Guerin.

In the 19th century, the old families in the Kiln buried their loved ones in the Rotten Bayou Cemetery on the high ground of what is now the city of Diamondhead. This land, owned by the Moran family, was donated by Felicite Moran Cuevas in 1893 in her will to the community for public use. This sacred ground of forty acres of Moran land has been used as a burial site for generations. Many of the graves were unmarked at that time. Felicite's husband, Francois Cuevas Sr., was buried there in 1863. He was the son of Juan De Cuevas, Sr., from Cat Island. Felicite Moran was the sister of Victor "Victaw" Moran (1824-1894) who is the ancestor of most modern-day descendants with the Moran last name in Hancock County. Besides John Basile Ladner being buried there with a modern headstone representing a birthdate of 1850, the

earliest known tombstone is that of Felisite's aunt named Adele Ladner (1821-1851).

The Rotten Bayou site was essentially a family cemetery for the Moran, Cuevas, Ladner, Saucier, Dedeaux, Necaïse, Hoda, Koenenn, and Lizana clans. Each plot was fenced in with wood, brick, chain link or wrought-iron palings (fences made from pointed wooden or metal stakes). Using these traditional markers kept out farm animals wandering in open range territory. Early funeral processions before 1920 traveled by boat up Rotten Bayou from modern day Fenton and often on the Jourdan River from the Kiln. An annual meaningful tradition on All Saints Day is a Mass that has been reinstated by Father Sebastian from Annunciation Catholic Church. The Mass is held at the cemetery each year at the grave of Father Dennis which is located on Hoda "Hode" hill on the southeastern part of the Cemetery. During the 20th Century, Annunciation Catholic Church held this mass and it was often attended by as many as one thousand relatives and friends.

Sylvester Moran was born on August 21, 1893, just north of the Orphan Creek bank, about four miles northwest of the Kiln. He wrote in a family history that at a young age his father moved to a farm south of the Gainesville Road presumably in the Lakeshore area. Historically, cattle farmers have raised large herds of cattle in the Ainsley/Lakeshore area. His family owned 150 head of cattle at that time and 160 acres of good timberland. Sylvester reports that in 1898 a snowstorm with a depth of twenty-four inches caused the death of seventy-five cows. Incidentally, the Gainesville Road in 1893 was a wagon trail between Gainesville and Bay St. Louis.

Sylvester Moran also reports that in his era nearly every

cattle farm family around the Kiln, as well as in other sawmill towns, maintained ox teams. A team consisted of three to five pairs of trained ox. Some farmers also had timber wagons that had eight wheels (four in front and four in back) designed to transport heavy tree trunks. Even as late as 1982, a Moran descendant, Tommy Moran, of Lakeshore, Mississippi, found employment and profit raising and training oxen for use in the logging industry. Ox teams can “snake out” the recently felled timber in a dense forest without damage to the rest of the land. The use of ox teams with the skidder preserved the smaller trees that were not ready for harvest. Tommy Moran was the grandson of Vincent Paul Moran who married into the Ladner Family and settled in the Lakeshore area in the early 20th century.

In modern times, other Moran descendants from Victor Moran, farther of Cyrille Moran, father of Oswald Moran Sr., continue the cattle farm traditions in areas along Highway 43, cultivating hundreds of acres. Oswald “Sonny” Moran, Jr., once lived in the area that is now the Buffer Zone along side his brother Pete Moran. Even though the area was abandoned for living purposes, they continue the cattle farming tradition along side their many siblings including Donald and Clyde as well as many descendants and relatives in the area. The tradition carries on in the Buffer Zone and the surrounding areas for this branch of the Moran Family as well.

As a young man, Joseph Peter Moran (1897-1967), son of Cyrille and Victor Moran, worked for the Edward Hines Lumber Company in the Kiln. In 1912, Joe moved up the road north of the town to homestead 160 acres. He built a house and reared seven children. Joe also raised about thirty head of beef cattle and kept ten hogs. In addition, he planted twenty acres of pecan groves as well as a

large vegetable garden, which was typical for every family in that era. Moreover, Joe served on the County Board of Supervisors for twelve years during the Great Depression. One of his accomplishments during years serving the county was creating a road to the Rotten Bayou Cemetery. He believed in higher education and all his children and grandchildren are well educated. This picturesque, winding road to his farm is called the *Old Joe Moran Road* because there was already another road in the region at that time with the name Joe Moran Road. By the way, Joe lived to the age of eighty-eight.

One of Joe’s children, Carl Joseph Moran, Sr., was also a cattle farmer. He married Geneva Hoda. At one time he kept a herd of thirty dairy cattle. In the mid-twentieth century, electricity came to Hancock County that provided farmers with surface coolers and more efficient supply chain management of milk products. By 1945, a Farmers’ Co-Op Creamery with a membership of seventy-nine dairymen was selling milk to the local market. Nevertheless, the industry declined in Hancock County because of government regulation and financial problems of various producers. Today there is little or no dairy farming in the county and the Moran

family raises beef cattle instead.

Carl Moran reared eight children, all of whom acquired higher education. His youngest child, Philip Moran, is our current Mississippi State Senator. Philip graduated from the Mississippi State University, studying business and agriculture. He has a successful Pest Control Business that he started thirty-seven years ago. He also served as the Hancock County Board of Supervisors President from 1996-2000. He has served in the Mississippi State Senate since 2012 and is currently in his third term. Philip maintains the Moran traditions and has the family farm of 220 acres on the Old Joe Moran Road. He keeps fifty head of beef cattle. Senator Moran does much of the farm work himself. He maintains about half of his land in pasture and the other half growing hay, a type of grass that has been mown and dried for use as fodder. He is able to sell some of his harvest to other cattle farmers. In the recent past, Philip created a small, beautiful family cemetery on his family farm where Old Joe Moran and four generations of the Moran family rest in peace under a lovely grove of oak trees next to a large field of cultivated grass.

Philip’s son, Alan Moran, is currently on the City Council of Diamondhead and helps run



This photo shows current beef cattle on the Moran farm.



Mississippi State Senator  
Philip Moran

Philip's Pest Control Company. Alan is a genealogist for the Juan De Cuevas Family Association, which was founded in 2019, to preserve the history and genealogical information of the many inhabitants of the area that are related. Through much time and study, Philip's older brothers kept extensive genealogical records and passed down this information to their nephew, Alan. These records, along with personal interviews allowed this writer to collect valuable history about these families and cattle farming significant to the history of Hancock County.

In conclusion, early settlers who were ancestors of the Ladner, Moran, and Cuevas families settled Cat Island in the eighteenth century. These brave colonists acquired Spanish land grants of the choice timberlands of the southern parts of the county where they settled and practiced cattle farming. Accordingly, over the next 240 years, cattle farming would represent the most consistently profitable sector of the Hancock County agriculture economy. The Rotten Bayou Cemetery was the traditional resting place for the deceased members of the Moran, Cuevas, Ladner, Hoda, Saucier, Dedeaux, Necaise, Depreo, and Lizana families. The timber industry prospered in Hancock County at the turn of the last century and cattle

farms supported the sawmill operations in the forests with trained ox teams and food for the men and animals that worked there. On the Old Joe Moran Road modern day State Senator Philip Moran and his son, Alan, own a successful pest control business and a thriving cattle farm in the old Moran tradition

*Editor's Note: The Juan De Cuevas Family Association is collecting genealogical information pertaining to all families in the area including that of the Moran lineage. All information is welcome even if you are not of Cuevas descent. If you would like to submit your information and receive a family tree with the information collected for personal use or see how you are related to someone, please contact the association via*

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/DescendantsofJuanDeCuevas>

**Website:**

<https://cuevasof-catisland.org>

**Email:**

[descendantsofcatisland@outlook.com](mailto:descendantsofcatisland@outlook.com)

**SOURCES:**

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## HURRICANES OF THE PAST

*(The following excerpt comes from the book Hurricanes of the Mississippi Gulf Coast: Three Centuries of Destruction by Charles Sullivan, Professor Emeritus of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. They are reprinted here with permission of the author.)*

1819

"Freshening winds on the night of July 27, 1819, sent the coastal schooners in Mississippi Found-Lake Borgne scudding for safety. Several of them, including the *Favorite*, sought shelter in the Bay of St. Louis where the *Thomas Shields* lately moored off its owner's namesake village (*Shieldsboro*).

"Mounting swells strained the cables of the 150-ton, 12-gun man-of-war schooner *Firebrand* anchored in deep water between Cat Island and Ship Island. Captain Cunningham had gone by small boat into New Orleans with some of his officers and men, leaving behind Lieutenant Gray who soon ordered the remaining 39 crewmen to batten down for a blow.

"On this same night 150 soldiers were encamped on a small creek branch 40 miles above the head of the Bay of St. Louis. They had departed Shieldsboro to rendez-

vous with a larger contingent building the Andrew Jackson Military Road between New Orleans and Nashville. Captain N. Young and Surgeon A.P. Merrill, alerted by the souging of the pines, warned the men to secure their tents.

“After midnight the east wind reached hurricane force, and near dawn the violence redoubled as the wind shifted to east-southeast. The *Firebrand* parted her cables in the boiling sea and, driven to the northwest, bypassed Cat Island and crashed on Square Handkerchief Reef. Combers tumbled the ship over and over on the reef, splintering the masts, dismounting the guns and crushing the sailors and marines inside with flying equipment. The *Favorite* was beached on Henderson Point, and a number of other schooners sank to the bottom of the swollen Bay of St. Louis including the *Thomas Shields*, which keeled over and went down with five men aboard.

“At the encampment above the Bay, soldiers struggled to free themselves from collapsed tents as giant pines fell among them. Singly and in groups, the men were driven by the winds into a darkness alive with the musketry of cracking branches and the cannonade of booming trees that killed one of them and badly wounded twenty others. At that distance they tasted sea spray in the air and at dawn marveled at the sight of pelicans and all manner of seabirds bouncing off trees and hobbling through the twisted forest.

“Alligators and turtles washed into Mobile along with a large brig that ricocheted off buildings along Dauphin Street. At Biloxi a schooner passed over the village and sailed into Back Bay. It was one of the luckier ones, for the storm swept from the sea every vessel between Pensacola and the mouth of the Mississippi. Many were sunk or beached, and some were driven deep into the pine forests. Few were saved.

“J.C. Monet, a long time

Shieldsboro resident, reported that the eye passed over that village late on the night of July 28, ‘at 11 or 12 o’clock...when it suddenly died away to a perfect calm for about ten minutes, then as suddenly sprang up from the southwest and for about an hour blew twice as hard as it had blown from any other points.’ Dawn revealed severe damage to structures in Shieldsboro not outright destroyed. Only three houses remained standing in Pass Christian. In the wake of the storm, scattered soldiers reassembled at the flattened encampment and prepared for the 40-mile trek back to the cantonment at Shieldsboro. Surgeon Merrill, though badly injured, remained:

*A large portion of the surrounding forest had been prostrated to the ground, and although here and there might be seen a sturdy pine standing, not one had escaped the loss of most of its branches from the vio-*

*lence of the storm....But between this place and the Gulf shore, evidence of stronger and stronger winds were met with every mile. The roads were obstructed by fallen timber...and heavy rains uniting with the waters of the sea, driven by the winds into every branch and bayou and submerging all the low lands, made it necessary occasionally to swim. All the streams leading to the sea were in this way charged with salt water....This storm was probably the most violent and extensive that has been known in this region since its first settlement.*

“From Biloxi to Shieldsboro the shore lay strewn with the carcasses of cattle and raccoons washed from the islands. According to Surgeon Merrill, along that



This map of the St. Louis Bay was made in 1857 when the town was known as Shieldsboro.

Even though it doesn't appear as such the white areas on the left and right sides are all land. Perhaps in 1857 the cartographer was saving ink and money.

This lighter area at the bottom shows Square Handkerchief Reef where the *Firebrand* was destroyed.

same shore:

*Numerous dead bodies of men, women, and children were taken up from the beach and buried by the inhabitants. Many of these were never identified, but in some cases a ring, a bracelet or some natural mark upon the person enabled the charitable rescuers to give assurance to distant friends, of fate of lost kindred.*

“None of the Firebrand’s complement survived, but only a few of the bodies were found washed up on Cat Island and on Bay St. Louis shores. ‘The greater number of her crew,’ wrote Monet, ‘were supposed to have been confined in her hull, as she lay with her bottom upward and for a considerable length of time emitted great stench.’

“While the right-front quadrant of the 1819 hurricane pounded the coastline for 100 miles to the east of Shieldsboro, New Orleans escaped with a few zephyrs that occasioned no damage at all. And, while the exception of twelve or fifteen willows uprooted and a few pirogues filled with water, the city emerged unscathed when capricious nature pulled a virtual repeat of the 1819 storm two years later.”

## 1821

“Gale winds on Saturday morning, September 15, 1821, sent weather-wise schooner captains racing for safe harbor. Several saved themselves when they took refuge in Bayou Portage behind Pass Christian. But the captain of the New Orleans packet *Washington*, loaded with passengers bound for Mobile, elected to anchor near nightfall in front of Pass Christian in Mississippi Sound. At 9 a.m. the

schooner dragged anchor in the face of a fierce east wind and began backing across the Bay of St. Louis. Within a few hours the boat was in peril of going ashore on the west side of the bay until the wind shifted to the northeast and drove her southward to a point opposite the military cantonment below Shieldsboro. There, her anchor held until sometime after nightfall.

“Colonel Zachary Taylor, commander of the cantonment and future U. S. president, could render no aid to the imperiled ship. He and his men, neck-deep in storm surge, were fighting for their lives in the wind-battered barracks.

“Shieldsboro resident J.C. Monet wrote about this storm, too. He reported that near 9 p.m. Sunday the wind ‘fell to a dead calm for about 15 minutes, then suddenly sprang up from southwest blowing very hard for about 30 minutes, and subsided so that by 12 o’clock at night there was no wind from any quarter.’ The next morning, inhabitants found the *Washington* in the tree line 50 yards from the beach, split asunder and lying upside down. All aboard had perished. Searchers found at least twenty bodies, some washed as far as 500 yards into the woods.

“None of the soldiers at Cantonment Bay St. Louis were killed, but scarcely a roof remained in the camp. Four soldiers were reported drowned at surf-pounder Fort Petite Coquille (later Fort Pike) on the Rigolets. Fort St. Philip was inundated, apparently without loss of life.

“At Mobile the water had crested one foot higher than two years prior, and boats lay again in the streets. Six vessels were beached at Pensacola, and one schooner bound for that city went down off Dauphin Island with the loss of fifteen lives.

“Once again as in 1819, coastal shipping was damaged from Pensacola to the mouth of the Mississippi, but the 1821 storm laced

the intensity of the 1819 hurricane. Wind damage on land was much less. Both storms, however, were accounted as remarkable in the amount of beach erosion they inflicted.

“No hurricanes struck the Coast for ten years following 1821. During that decade steamboats chugged past Coast towns for the first time. By 1827 a regular schedule had been effected for freight and passengers on the New Orleans-to-Mobile run. This transportation revolution augured well for the growth of the extant villages and the eventual establishment of new ones.

“To guide the steamboats, the U.S. government installed the first two Mississippi lighthouses in 1831. These stubby towers of white-painted brick were erected to flank the Pass of Christian. One stood on Cat Island, and the other rose opposite it in the village named for the strait.

“Other transport improvements of the era included the dredging of Mobile Bay to allow seagoing ships near the city and the construction of a five-mile-long railroad from downtown New Orleans to the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. New Orleans’ first attempt at rapid transit and Mobile’s harbor improvements cut time and costs for citizens traveling between the two cities, thus inaugurating the tourist industry on the Mississippi Coast.

## SOURCE:

Sullivan, Charles L. *Hurricanes of the Mississippi Gulf Coast: Three Centuries of Destruction*. Perkinson, MS: Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Press, 2011.



## NEWSPAPERS OF THE PAST IN HANCOCK COUNTY

By  
James Keating, MD

The first known newspaper published in Hancock County was the *Gainesville Advocate*. One edition dated June 17, 1845, survives in the vertical files of the Hancock County Historical Society. It was probably not actually printed in Gainesville but nearby, and doubtless it was done by a hand press. Looking back to pioneer days when it took weeks and even months for any type of news to reach the hinterland, local newspapers carried national and international news. In the abovementioned *Advocate* the publisher George O. Field, offers a weekly paper every Thursday evening at a subscription rate of two dollars per annum when paid in advance. The paper reports a rumor from Washington that President James Polk will send John C. Calhoun of South Carolina to England to negotiate a treaty regarding trade and the Oregon Territory.

The *Gainesville Star* started publication after the Civil War in 1866. The only record available to substantiate its existence is the following excerpt: "Ordered that Carlton and Seabrook, proprietors of the *Gainesville Star*, be allowed the sum of \$25.00 for advertising notice of the election of county officers first Monday in October 1866.

A *Bay St. Louis Gazette*, which evolved into the *Sea Coast Republican*, was owned and published by Frank Heiderhoff from 1868—1883. This paper changed hands twice and was purchased in 1887 by A.R. Hart, who changed the name of the newspaper to the *Gulf Coast Progress*, which lasted until 1929. A few other publications were present at the end of the 19th century but short lived with the

names *Bay St. Louis Herald* and the *Sea Coast Gazette*. The *Sea Coast Echo* published its first issue in 1892, but unlike all the others, it is still in business.

The *Pearlington Herald* was published by the *Echo* in 1897 with a circulation of four hundred copies. It was edited by Sam J. Gray. The Poitevent and Favre Lumber Company, which was located in Pearlinton, was running its mill at full capacity at that time, and there was plenty of business. Nevertheless, when the mill closed in 1904, so did this paper.

During the 20th century there were a few papers besides the *Echo*, but their existence was short lived. The *Hancock Eagle* started publishing in 1949 by John Dambrino, a longtime employee of the *Echo*. However, it merged with the *Echo* in 1967. The *Light* was published in the 1940's and 1950's in Bay St. Louis by Mrs. Jeanette Carmichael, who took everyone to task with her blistering editorials. The *Waveland Advocate* was published by the *Echo* briefly from 1959—1961.

There were thousands of small town and community newspapers that came and went in the history of the United States. These newspapers played a vital role in the health and vitality of county economies providing local information and related services. Editorials promoted optimism which maintained morale in times of tragedy and disaster such as depressions, war, and hurricanes.

### SOURCES:

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Michelle Nichols

## 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.*

### Michelle Nichols Almost Home Catering

Michelle Nichols, owner of Almost Home Catering, strongly believes that catering is in her genes. After all, her maternal grandmother was a caterer and her paternal grandmother owned a country grocery store that provided hot meals.

As a former Investment Sales Representative, the stay-at-home mom, like many recovering from the after effects of Hurricane Katrina, found herself in a position where she needed to help supplement her families' income. Michelle al-



ways had a love for cooking, hosting dinners, weddings and parties for friends and family. So the natural progression into a profession that allowed her to do what she loved couldn't be passed up.

The Hancock County Historical Society was her first catering job and this was the beginning of what was to grow and become a successful catering business. While she primarily focused initially on business luncheons, her repertoire has grown to include weddings and special occasions as well. A highlight of her career, she says, was being recognized by her business peers as the 2016 Hancock Chamber Kiln Business of the Year. Michelle believes that a good strategic plan, organization, support from family and friends as well as a strong faith are the perfect ingredients needed to create a successful business.



Georgie Morton

a full bachelor's degree. She received a position as Accountant with the Veterans Administration Headquarters in Washington, D.C. After several years she was promoted to Chief of Accounting with the VA in Los Angeles, CA, Internal Auditor at the VA Hospital in Long Beach, CA, and Cost Accountant at the VA Hospital in Jackson, MS. She retired from VA Jackson with 32 years Government service credit in 2004.

Georgie has been happily married to Gayle Morton for 37 years. They have been members of HCHS since May 2011 and Georgie has been a Board Member since February 2015. They have no children, just two gorgeous Birman cats who they adore.

### Georgie Necaise Morton Treasurer

Georgie, our current Treasurer, was born in May of 1949 at King's Daughters and Sons Hospital in Bay St. Louis, MS. She attended public school from first through twelfth grade, graduating from Bay Senior High School in 1967. After high school she attended Phillips Business College in Gulfport for two years then enlisted in the U.S. Air Force for a four year term. She joined the Air Force to see the world, but soon landed at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, MS, for technical training. It turned out to be the perfect place for a young girl who had never left home or flown in an airplane.


After Technical Training for nine months at Keesler A.F.B., she was reassigned to U.S.A.F. Headquarters, The Pentagon, Arlington, VA, as a Personnel Specialist. She attended night school at Northern Virginia Community College, earning the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in Accounting, acceptable to the U.S. Government, at the time, as

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