

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

April 2021

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.

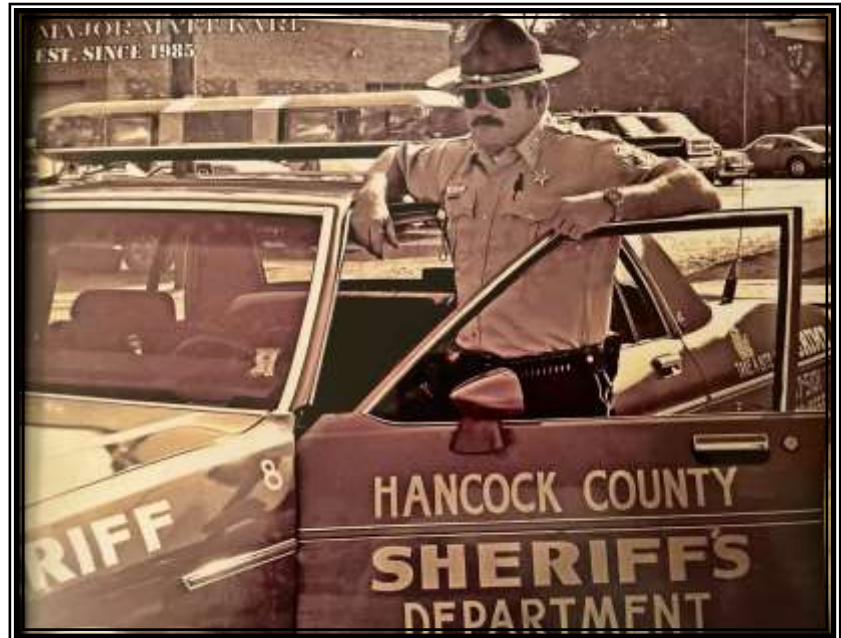
With spring here and summer just around the corner, visitors from around the United States have begun coming to the Gulf Coast, and several have visited the Lobrano House.

President's Corner

Good news on the home front: While a careful eye is being kept on COVID precautions, your Board of Directors has set Thursday, June 17, as the date to resume our much-missed monthly luncheons. Please put this date on your calendar as we look forward to having a full house.

Your board continually looks for cost effective ways to improve our operational effectiveness, and with this in mind we have a new membership, accounting, and data management program, Apios, being installed. Apols is specifically

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Police officer Matt Karl is a direct ninth generation descendent of Jean Baptiste Saucier, an original pioneer settler of the Louisiana Colony. Saucier is a Mississippi First Family.

THE SAUCIER FAMILY

By

James Keating, M. D.

and

Virginia Olander, Ed.

The Sauciers are one of the very old and proud families of French Canadian descent in Hancock County. The original French meaning of Saucier (pronounced so-shay) is sauce-maker or lead chef. It is postulated that the early Sauciers were prominent and respected

merchants of the old city of Orleans, France, in the business of the production and distribution of sauces. During the French colonial period, the name was spelled *Saucie* (without the r). All Sauciers in the United States are descendants of Charles and Charlotte Claret Saucier of Paris. This article traces a single Saucier lineage from the original settler, Jean Baptiste Saucier, to his present day descendant, Matt Karl. In the author's telling of the individual stories of nine generations of this family, the reader will see the history of Hancock County unfold.

The first member of the Saucier family to inhabit the Louisiana Colony was a Canadian

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“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.”

woodsman/soldier, Jean Baptist Saucier (Saucie) (1674-1716), who accompanied Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur, d’Iberville on his voyage in 1699 to establish a settlement on the Gulf Coast. It is important to note that Jean Baptist was not a French Acadian, a group who migrated to the Louisiana Territory many years later during the French and Indian war (1755-1764). Saucier had been in the military service under d’Iberville’s command in the Hudson Bay Expedition to fight the British in 1697. He was educated and was an early pioneer settler of Mobile. He was granted a large tract of land in that location. Unlike most of the other inhabitants of this colony, Jean had some wealth and was a merchant, who also owned a successful plantation using six Indian slaves.

In 1704 the ship *La Pelican* transported a group of unmarried women to be wives of this previously all male community in Mobile. Marie Gabrielle Savarit (Savary) (1684-1735) was one of these girls. She was educated, extremely intelligent, and resourceful. Gabrielle was, therefore, often asked to witness and sign various baptismal and other records of Father La

Vente, the colony Catholic priest. Jean and Gabrielle married soon thereafter in 1704. Their marriage was successful, and they had five children: Anne, Henri, Jean Baptiste, Jacques, and François. Sadly, Jean died at age forty-two.

Gabrielle remarried a soldier attached to the colony, but he died after a short time. Gabrielle married for a third time to another soldier who also died prematurely. Gabrielle gave up marrying local men in the Mobile colony and decided to relocate to New Orleans in 1721. Mobile suffered from poverty, food shortages, inflation, and neglect by France. Gabrielle was a successful merchant and a midwife and was considered an important asset to the French government. Consequently, the Company of the Indies advanced her a large loan to resettle her family and business enterprises in New Orleans. She bought a house in the French Quarter on Royal Street where she had three slaves and three cows. She was a legal purveyor of second hand goods and a registered *marchard* (merchant). In 1784 she acquired a plantation downriver with four additional slaves. Gabrielle passed away in 1735 and is buried under the St. Louis Cathedral at Jackson Square in New Orleans.

The oldest son of Jean and Gabrielle was Henri Saucier (1706-1762) who was born in Mobile and who was only ten years old when his father died. He and his sister and brothers were all tutored by his mother, who was able to give them a good, basic education. Most of the other settlers in the Louisiana colony, whether in Mobile or in New Orleans where his family

(continued from p. 1)

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Remember that if we all recruit one new member, we double our membership.

Best to All,

Chris Roth
 President



Joseph Evariste Saucier,
Post Master of Bay St.
Louis, shows how mail
was struck with a wooden
paddle set with nails after
which it was shaken in a
box of sulphur dust and
presumed free of the yel-
low fever germ.

now lived, could not read or write. Working for the French Company of the Indies, Henri was a merchant/trader and made a living with his younger brothers doing business in the world of commerce or marketplace with the settlements in the Louisiana territory. He traded on the Mississippi River as far north as Illinois. Henri owned and operated boats such as keelboats, barges, and pirogues carrying flour, hides, pork, and lumber from Illinois to New Orleans. His boats carried rice, sugar, tobacco, indigo, cotton, and European fabrics upriver to Illinois in pirogues paddled by five slaves. In 1733 he married Barbe Lacroix (1712-1778) from St. Philip, Illinois. They lived for several years near Fort de Chartres which is located about forty-five miles south of present day St. Louis, Missouri. In 1740 Henri and Barbe moved to New Orleans where he acquired a conces-

sion to herd cows.

It is of interest that Henri's younger brother François Saucier (1712-1757), was sent to rebuild Fort de Chartres in 1751. François was a talented

engineer and a lieutenant in the French Army. The Saucier family had become quite prominent in the French colony by this time. Henri and Barbe had ten children. They both died in New Orleans.

The next member of the third generation of this specific lineage of the Saucier family to be described in this article is Henry Marie Saucier (1734-1810), who was the second child of the aforementioned Henri and Barbe. Henry was born in Fort de Chartres in Illinois. He married Marie François Rouseve (1755-1810), who was from Mobile. They lived in Plaquemines Parish in Louisiana about fifteen miles downriver from New Orleans. This generation of seven Saucier brothers invested heavily in tobacco plantations. In this time frame the colonists in Louisiana could make immense profits selling tobacco to Mexico. The Louisiana colony produced two million pounds of tobacco a



Alcine and Edna Boudreaux Saucier

year in the 1780's. Little else is known about his part of the family except that Henry and his wife had two sons, one of whom was François Julian Saucier. The Catholic church historically kept records of baptisms and marriages, which other than gravestones, may be the only landmarks for genealogists to trace family histories. Both Henry and François died in 1810 in New Orleans, suggesting the possibility of an infectious disease as their simultaneous cause of death.

François Julian Saucier (1775-1823) was the second son of Henry and Marie. François was married briefly to Clara Leonard who died tragically in 1804 after being thrown from a horse. She was pregnant at the time. François then married Melitte Lavergne (1780-1823) from New Orleans, and they had seven children. Five of these children died at a very young age. Two sons survived to adulthood, Evariste and Henry. Several members of this branch of the Saucier family moved to

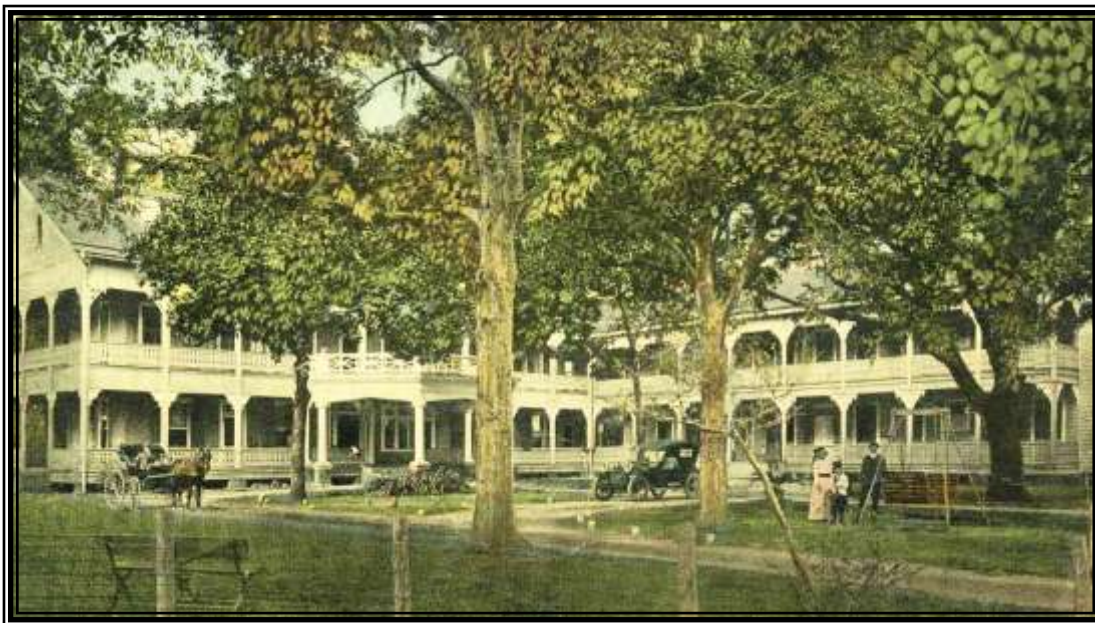
Mississippi in this time frame buying plantations on Bayou La-Croix, Bayou Phillip, and Bayou Mulatto. These Sauciers became wealthy landowners before the Civil War. They owned many slaves and planted sugarcane and Sea Island cotton. Unfortunately, they lost a lot of their wealth as a result of the war.

Evariste Valerian Saucier (1814-1870) was a tragic figure in a family tale of love, betrayal, and scandal with a climax ending in an old fashioned gunfight on the streets of downtown Bay St. Louis. Evariste was born in New Orleans but moved to Shieldsboro (Bay St. Louis). He was postmaster for several years and was well respected. He married into the wealthy Toulme family and co-owned and managed a successful business, the Crescent Hotel. His father-in-law was John B. Toulme, a town leader as mayor, successful merchant, landowner, and entrepreneur. The Crescent Hotel was owned by John V. Toulme (Madeline's brother and son of *John B. Toulme*) and

Evariste.

The female protagonist of this story was Madeline V. Toulme (1833-1905), who also came from a distinguished lineage of Sauciers. In fact, Evariste and Madeline were cousins. At age eighteen, she was young, presumably irresistibly beautiful, and reckless. Yet, at age thirty seven, Evariste fell in love with Madeline in 1851 even though he was twice her age. The marriage produced six children, but by 1868 the magic had left their relationship.

The other man in this fatal triangle was a young Dr. Christopher Post, age twenty-seven. He fell in love with Madeline even though he was also married and eleven years her junior. Nevertheless, Christopher and Madeline had an affair for some time that eventually became the subject of local gossip. The details of the affair spread like wildfire throughout the small town, and at last Evariste did find out the news and decided to confront Dr. Post. The cuckold husband warned the



The Crescent Hotel, later known as the Pickwick, was located on South Beach Boulevard next to the L & N train tracks. When the hotel burned in 1923, Court Street was built to run from South Beach to Second Street.

good doctor that if he did not stop seeing Madelaine and get out of town that he would be dealt with severely...killed in fact.

Dr. Post ignored this warning, and on the evening of April 7, 1870, Evariste confronted Dr. Post on the street in front of his office and engaged him in an old fashioned gunfight. Evariste shot Dr. Post with five bullets from his revolver that killed the man within minutes. Nevertheless, Dr. Post shot Evariste once in the hip which proved fatal five days later, probably from internal bleeding into the pelvis.

Madeline was distraught and so humiliated that she left town escaping to New York City. However, two years later, Madeline recovered and felt comfortable enough to return to Shieldsboro. In fact, she married another Saucier cousin, Judge John Anthony Breath, the year of her return, and they subsequently had two children together. Madeline lived in Shieldsboro the rest of her life, dying in 1905

Joseph Evariste Saucier (1852-1931) was one of the six children of Evariste and Madelaine. Joseph served the public in many different positions. In his early years he was Justice of the Peace for Beat #5. He was known as Judge Saucier and affectionately called "Judge" for the rest of his life by those who knew him. Joseph served as an assistant cashier for both the Hancock Bank and the Merchants Bank in their early years. He attended St. Stanislaus College and was skilled in the profession of bookkeeping and accounting. In addition, Judge Saucier was a noted pianist. He also served the public as post-

master twice, county tax collector and assessor, and sheriff.

In 1904 a local citizen, Sylvester Pierre, murdered John Marshall. As a result of his crime, he was sentenced to death by hanging. A wooden gallows was constructed in front of the courthouse for public viewing. At the time, there had not been a legal hanging in Bay St. Louis in sixty years. However, Sheriff Saucier later decided to hang the murderer personally, privately, and not viewable to the public. The gallows was dismantled, and the lumber was put up for sale. Unfortunately, the local townsfolk considered the wood tainted and haunted by the spirit of Sylvester Pierre. Finally Sheriff Saucier bought the lumber himself and used it to build a shed behind his house on Main Street. He claimed that he never had to lock this structure because no one dared enter the shed since it was deemed haunted. Sheriff Saucier married Adele Ester Nicaise (1860-1926). He started a tradition in this family of service as law enforcement officers that has extended over three generations.

Alcine E. Saucier (1889-1973) followed in his father's footsteps and served Bay St. Louis throughout his life as a policeman. He was actually Chief of Police for thirty-six years. Alcine did not own or need an automobile. With predictable regularity he walked his regular beat everyday down Main Street. Like his father, Joseph, Alcine had bookkeeping skills and prepared tax returns for his neighbors and anyone in town who needed his services. During hard times, he often bartered with farmers for commodities like fruits and vegetables in return for preparing tax returns

or other documents. He had an old Underwood typewriter at his home that was used for these returns. This typewriter is now in the museum of the Hancock County Historical Society on Cue Street. Alcine married Edna Boudreaux (1893-1948). Alcine was an important role model for his grandson who was inspired to follow him in the family tradition and pursue a career in law enforcement. Alcine retired in 1968 at age seventy-nine.

Matthew L. Karl (b. 1948) followed in his grandfather's footsteps serving thirty years in law enforcement. Matt married Kaye Dupuy in 1972.

In conclusion, the noble Saucier family is one of the oldest and well-respected clans in Hancock County. The nine generations described in this article possessed similar qualities that served them well. The Sauciers were well educated for their times and exhibited a serious work ethic. Many served their community as public officials and most possessed notable social skills. Three members of the most recent generations were law enforcement officials. The Gulf Coast has been an attractive place to live and work for three hundred years. Many of the descendants of the Saucier family and other historic families born here have remained here, rather than migrate to other places. Generation after generation of a core of old families have survived and prospered here. Leadership and service to the community have been threads woven into the fabric of our society by their ancestors.

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THANK YOU

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work, time, and donations:

Gary Knoblock, HCHS member, for donating signs to the Society; Jim Codling, HCHS Historian, for his time and upkeep of plants in the yard; Connie Roth, HCHS member, for making soup for the Second Saturday Soup'er Mudfest; Dave Wessinger, HCHS 2nd VP, and Bryan Frater, HCHS Membership and Fund Raising Chairman, for their work in redoing the front bathroom; and Lowe's for donating the flooring for the front bathroom.

Cassette Girls

By
Charles Gray

In 1703, twenty young girls, “reared in Virtue and Piety...” had been approved by Monseigneur Saint-Villier, Bishop of Quebec, as being of high moral character. They were chosen because the lack of that quality in female immigrants had recently created substantial unrest in Martinique and Saint-Domingue.

Most of the girls were between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.

Marie-Catherine Philippe, daughter of Charles Philippe, a prominent resident of Meaux-en-Brie, was sixteen. Marie-Marguerite Dufresne, age fourteen, was the daughter of Charles Dufresne, Sieur Dumotel. Others, like Therese Brochon and Angelique Drouin, were not as well-born, perhaps, but of no less piety. Three of the girls, Jeanne-Louise, Genevieve and Marguerite Burelle, were accompanied by their parents.

The first week of October, the girls and their guardians began their three hundred mile journey by horse-drawn cart from Paris to Rochefort where they learned that their ship was not ready for the voyage. The delays continued until late March 1704 when the first attempt to transport the women to the *Pelican* failed because of rough seas. In fact, it was the nineteenth of April before the *Pelican* weighed anchor and was barely able to outmaneuver an English fleet sent to capture it.

On the ninth of June, the *Pelican* finally made port at Cap-François, but the women were not permitted to go ashore because of the vile reputation of the port. After seven days spent waiting for Governor Auger, the *Pelican* sailed and narrowly escaped being seized by two English warships, but made port at Baracoa on the eastern tip of Cuba.

Violent seas thrashed the ship for several days. However, on the seventh of July, they reached Havana. The girls were allowed to leave their cramped quarters for the first time since departing Rochefort three months earlier and were given



Filles a la Cassette

Young French girls bound for Louisiana with their trousseaux.

guided tours of the many shrines, convents, and gardens in Havana.

The final leg of the voyage began under fair skies on the fourteenth of July, but the high spirits of the passengers quickly deteriorated as some of the soldiers came down with a fever and others began to complain of chills and headaches. The ship put in to shore on the twentieth of July near Pensacola to take on fresh water and then continued directly to Massacre Island, arriving on the twenty-second.

Nearly sixty soldiers and crewmen were already stricken, six of whom died immediately following the landing at Massacre Island. On August 4, the travelers finally reached the settlement at Fort Louis.

“The girls were obviously in a debilitated condition, their

drawn, feverous cheeks barely able to form even the faintest of smiles. Bienville was there to greet them...If Mobile was not what the passengers of the *Pelican* had envisioned, they were surely too tired and sick to care at this point. They had reached their destination....” [ed. note: *Cassette girls were sent twice*

more to the Louisiana colony—to New Biloxi in 1721 and to New Orleans in 1728.]

SOURCE:

Higginbotham, Jay. *Old Mobile: Fort Louis de la Louisiane 1702—1711*. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1977.

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