

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

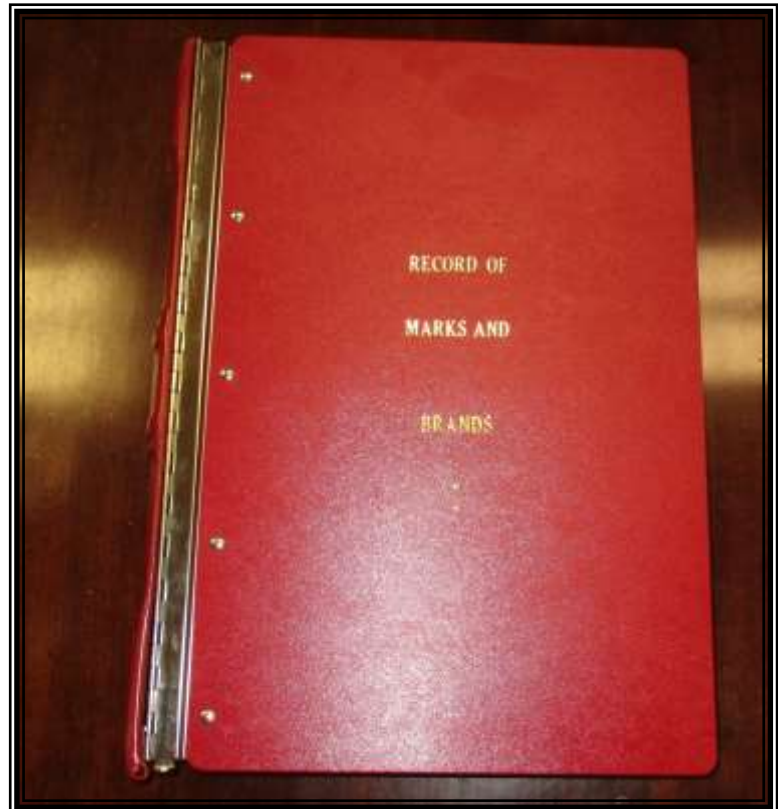
www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

August 2021

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, August 19, 2021, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The speaker will be Hancock Chancery Clerk, Tim Kellar who will speak on livestock marks and brands. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Please call by noon on Wednesday August 18**, to make your reservation in order to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people and to apprise us of the number of lunches to order. **Served at noon, lunch is \$14.00 for members and \$15.00 for nonmembers**, payable at the door. The catering order is submitted on Wednesday at noon prior to the luncheon on Thursday. If you need to cancel your reservation, please call by 2 p.m. on Tuesday prior to the luncheon if at all possible so that the society does not incur unnecessary expenses. It is catered by Almost Home Catering, Michelle Nichols, chef. The lunch menu is hamburger patty in red gravy, roasted garlic mashed potatoes, roasted Brussel sprouts with bacon, dinner rolls, sticky toffee date cake.



This is one of the two restored volumes of *A Record of Marks and Brands* for Hancock County Mississippi.

Livestock Marks and Brands

By
Eddie Coleman

Livestock marks and brands have been used since ancient times to determine the ownership of a stockman's animals. The reason they were necessary long ago is that large, communal grazing lands were often used by several farmers in a community. Since then evidence has been found that the ancient Chinese used branding to identify their cat-

tle long before the time of Confucius. Egyptologists have found tomb paintings depicting the branding of oxen by the early pharaohs. In addition, proof has been uncovered that herdsmen of the Bible—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others—used brands to identify their stock and that even Greeks and Romans used brands for slave identification.

Some of the earliest herdsmen branded the entire side of an animal, giving its lineage, ownership history, etc. In more recent times, the brands became smaller and were limited to certain areas on the body of the animal—left or right side, foreleg, hindquarter, and so forth. In



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Eddie Coleman, Editor
 James Keating, Publisher
 Charles Gray, Executive Director

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 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.”

addition to or even instead of the hot branding iron so familiar in movies and TV westerns, ear markings were also used. These markings were cuts made into the animal's ears, either left or right or both. Though branding could be used on all livestock—cattle, sheep, hogs, horses—ear markings were not usually used on horses.

Branding and marking were used all over the world in some form, but it was the Spanish who made the practices prevalent in the United States. With its exploration of the New World, Spain brought the custom to the Americas. The practice spread from Mexico northward into what later became the southwestern United States with the Spanish *vaqueros*, or cowboys, and branding specifically became the familiar procedure seen in movie westerns.

Because the purpose of the brand was to establish legitimate ownership of the livestock and because such a large number of brands were invented, recorded, and used, a method of registering them was developed. Initially, they were registered in the county where the stockman lived. Later, it became necessary to register the brands in a

wider area so territorial legislatures required them to be registered with territorial livestock boards and ultimately with state governments when these territories became states.

Although branding is the most recognizable form of livestock identification to most people, ear marking seems to have been more prevalent in east Texas and the Southeastern U.S. In fact, as with branding, this practice dates to the Spanish exploration of Florida and the Southeastern U.S. especially along the Gulf Coast. Even though the brand was the legal identification of the animal, the ear mark was also used because it could be seen more readily.

Because the brand or mark was, and still is, considered personal property, each one could be sold or traded, but more often than not, it was passed down from parent to child. In earlier times a son was usually the child to whom the brand was passed. However, it was quite possible for a daughter to inherit the brand or mark and take it into marriage with her. In this event, the brand remained the property of the wife unless she went to the county courthouse and passed it on to her husband.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

July was indeed a month to celebrate. In addition to Independence Day, your Society had a very successful inaugural Cardboard Boat Race and received a significant grant award from the Humanities Council. In addition the Society was selected by the *Sea Coast Echo* as the repository for bound editions dating from the 1890's. Information concerning the availability of these newspapers will be forthcoming in future newsletters. Presently, you may check the microfilm at the Hancock County Library.

“History is a symphony of echoes heard and unheard. It is a poem with events as verses.” *Journalist Charles Angoff*

Chris Roth
 President

Thus, a genealogical lineage could or can be determined by knowing who possessed or still possesses the brand or mark.

The marks and brands have been most helpful in areas with open ranges to help stockmen determine animal ownership. At one time, Mississippi had no stock law, and in many areas of the state, livestock was allowed to roam freely through the countryside. They foraged for themselves during most of the year, saving the farmer the cost of feeding the animal. Consequently, such a practice produced very lean animals. However, if a farmer wished to kill a young hog or beef for the family, he would round up the animal, place him in a pen, and feed him corn or other fodder for a few months to fatten him up before the slaughter.

Initially marks and brands in Mississippi were registered in each county. A *Record of Marks and Brands* book, much like the *Record of Mar-*



CATTLE BRANDS

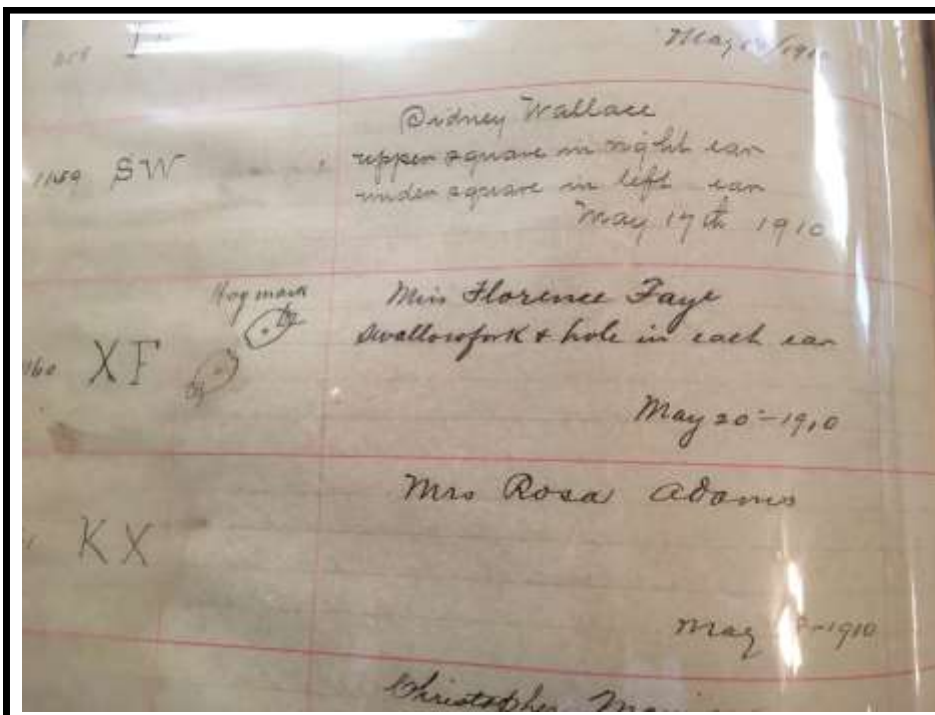
The two brands at the left belong to Executive Director Charles Gray. The one on the right was donated by a resident of Hancock County.

riages book, was kept at each county courthouse, giving the name of the owner, a drawing of the brand, a description of the ear mark, and the date of registration. Some farmers used only a single brand; others, only a

single earmark; still others, a brand and an ear mark; and some, multiple brands and/or marks, each with an entry in the book.

With the passage of a Mississippi stock law in the mid-1960's, the practice of allowing livestock to roam freely was outlawed, and farmers had to keep their stock within penned or fenced areas. In addition, the need for so many brands and marks was lessened, and the registration of such marks and brands was done through the state rather than at the local level. Currently, it is the Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau which registers all livestock brands in the state.

Sadly many of these books have been lost in Mississippi counties because some people do not see a need for such records any longer. Hancock County, on the other hand, is quite fortunate that it has a Chancery Clerk who



From the HANCOCK COUNTY BOOK OF MARKS AND BRANDS

Several things were written in the Record of Marks and Brands. The first thing written at the extreme left is the persons registration number (1159). Next to that is a rendering of the brand (SW). The third information given is the name of the person who owns the brand or mark. (Mr. Wallace was person 1159 to register a mark or brand in Hancock County.) If the person had a mark as well as a brand, a drawing of the mark was given next. (The drawing of Mr. Wallace's mark has been lost probably through time or water damage from a hurricane.) If the person had a mark, it was written below his name. Finally the date the brand/mark was/were given is written. You'll notice that Miss Florence Faye had a mark and a brand and that Mrs. Rosa Adams had only a brand.

Mark Terminology

Crop
Overslope
Sawset
Splice
Split
Staplefork
Swallowfork
Underbit
Undersquare
Uppersquare

Each of the terms at the left refers to one of many different cuts made into an animal's ear (s). These cuts could be made in either ear or both. When recorded in the book, the mark might be written to read "swallowfork, sawset, split, and two underbits."



Notice the mark on each ear of the hog.

does see a need and also sees a purpose, historical and genealogical, to preserve this record. Although the original books were damaged in Hurricane Katrina, they have been restored through the efforts of county officials and for a time may be viewed at the Hancock County Historical Society.

SOURCES:

"Cattle Theft Investigation in Madison and Yazoo Counties Leads to Arrests." *Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce*. 08 Nov. 2013. 12 Dec. 2013. <www.mdac.state.ms.us>.

"History of Branding." *Agricultural History Project*. 2013. 11 Dec. 2013. <www.aghistoryproject.org>

Thomas, Heather Smith. "Stamp Them." *Western Cowman*. July-August 2011. 11 Dec. 2013. <www.westerncowman.com>.

as along the Gulf of Mexico. Spanish settlers added to this rich heritage from Florida through south Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. The descendants of the livestock they brought to the Americas are still found in parts of these Gulf Coast regions. Among these are the Pineywoods cattle, Florida Cracker cows, Texas Longhorns, and other species which have developed through inbreeding with the Spanish cattle. These are called criollo cattle because they are of European origin but were born in the New World.

The one breed most important to Hancock County, others along the coast, and its sister counties which were formed from the original Hancock County is

the Pineywoods cattle. Although of Spanish origin, these cattle were able to adapt to the heat of the Gulf Coast and resist its parasites and diseases and become productive on marginal forage found here. In essence the Pineywoods breed of cattle was shaped by the agriculture and environmental conditions of the Gulf Coast.

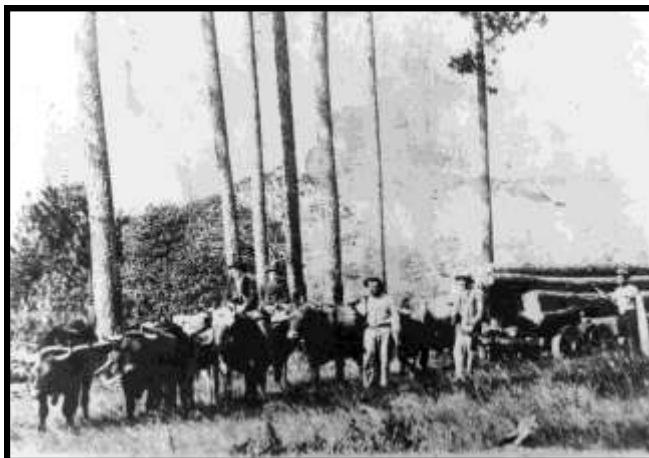
These Pineywoods cattle also played an important part in the logging industry. Many of the oxen used to transport logs from the forests to the mills and dummy lines came from these animals. In the late 1800's and early 1900's the improved English and other European cattle became more tolerant of the Southeastern United States. For this reason the

PINEYWOODS CATTLE

By

Eddie Coleman

Spain had a great and lasting influence on the land are-



Oxen were important in the timber industry in Hancock County. This group is taking logs of virgin pine to the mill.



This Pineywoods cow is from the Conway line, one of the families who helped preserve the breed and keep it from extinction.

Pineywoods cattle began to be replaced. These improved cattle were also crossbred with the Pineywoods cows producing calves which retained the survival skills of the cow and the production skills of the bull. However, this crossbreeding almost eliminated the purebred Pineywoods stock and ended the breed.

However because of the ingenuity of a few families—Holt in Georgia, Barnes in Alabama, and Conway, Bayliss, and Carter in Mississippi—the breed was not lost. Their process caused these pure herds to become more isolated so that each one became a unique self-isolated strain, and they preserved the important genetic elements of the breed.

The long and interesting history of the Carter strain began with the story of Print Carter. As a sixteen year old in the 1860's, he swam across the Pearl River with a herd of red cows and began raising cattle. With only one outside animal to enter the herd, a bull in 1895, the herd thrives today.

Adapting to harsh conditions such as the heat in the Southern United States, Pineywoods cattle are small and rug-

ged. The size of the cattle does vary depending on the area of the Southern United States in which they are grown. In fact it might even vary within a state depending on whether it's grown in the northern or southern section of that state. Regardless, these Pineywoods cattle do have certain common characteristics derived from their Spanish ancestors such as an angular appearance and horns which may be long and twisted or short and crumpled. The weight for cows may vary from 600-800 pounds and for bulls may vary from 800-1200 pounds. There is even a very small number known as "Guinea" or dwarf cows. The colors of the breed are varied. They may be red, yellow, brown, black, and/or white or any combination or variation of these. This coloring is a legacy of the breed. Some of the original families have their own preference to color.

In the past several years, the number of registered Pineywoods animals as breeding stock has increased although it is little known outside the Southeast. These American breeds have important qualities, such as fertility and longevity, which are lacking in other heat tolerant cat-

tle commonly used. The Pineywoods, with almost five hundred years of adaptation to the American Southeast, has history on its side as well.

SOURCES:

Pitts, Justin B. *An Overview and History of Pineywoods Cattle*: Pittsboro, NC: American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, 2010.

INTERESTING THINGS

By

Eddie Coleman

Often in doing research for articles and through just plain reading, people pick up a sliver of something new which one has never heard of or probably even thought of before. In researching the Pineywoods cattle, I came across some things I would like to share.

"In 1521, Spanish conquistador Juan Ponce de León made landing on the southwest coast of La Florida with two colonizing ships. On board were 200 men, 50 horses, and other livestock including 7 head of Andalusian cattle. These were the first cattle to set hoof on North American soil in what we now call the United States. Shortly after landing, the colonists were attacked by Calusa warriors defending their land. Ponce de León was struck by an arrow dipped in the poisonous sap of the Everglade's manchineel tree. It would be his final voyage. His ships retreated to Cuba where he soon died of the wound. The first cattle however, remained strong, and thrived in this New World."

I wonder if these Anda-

lusian cattle were the ancestors of the Pineywoods freed. Hmmm....

“It is thought that the Spanish brought fewer than 300 cattle to the New World during their colonization period. From this small founding population four groups developed: Criollo (Mexico/Central America), California, Texas Longhorns, and the Southeastern Pineywoods and Cracker. The California strain eventually became extinct due to breeding problems and over-consumption during the Gold Rush. Everyone is familiar with the Texas Longhorns, the rangy animal of the Chisolm

Trail and other cowboy history. And finally the Florida Cracker/Pineywoods strain in the Southeast.

One other thing that I thought was interesting is that not only did the colonists raise the Pineywoods cattle but Native Americans did too, members of the five civilized tribes. Not only did these Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Choctaw, and Chickasaw people raise herds, but they were large herds.

SOURCE:

The Pineywoods Cattle Registration and Breeders Association. 2021<www.pcrba.org>Aug.4, 2021

CARDBOARD BOAT RACE

Sponsored by the Hancock County Historical Society, the first annual Cardboard Boat Race was held on Saturday, July 10, 2021. Awards were presented for the winners of both the single and group races.

Committee:
L to R:
Todd Edwards, Ann Edwards, Basil Kennedy, Chris Roth, and Beau Gex



The race is on!!



Most Dramatic Sinking

Jake Whitney



Jaden Talbot

Brady McCaw

Group Winner



Adam Cain

Single Winner



Three Amigos

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Brody and Ann Saxon
Baton Rouge, LA

Gabriela Shinskie
Bay St. Louis, MS

Mike Hanson
Bruce Cabell
Al Copeland

Most Original Boat

The photos of the Cardboard Boat race were taken by Gregg Martel of the Shoofly Magazine and Lori Massey of the Historical Society.

ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR

Even though October is still a few months away, it's not too early to begin thinking about and planning for the Cemetery Tour. Because Halloween falls on Sunday this year, the 26th Annual Cemetery Tour will be held on Saturday, October 30, 2021. Needed are volunteers to prepare the cemetery for the tour, to portray citizens buried there, and to act as guides. To volunteer, please call 228-467-4090.

SCHOOL IS BACK IN SESSION!

Unless covid has changed the beginning of school in your area, children have returned to the classrooms. Please pay close attention when you drive near schools, and please follow the speed limits.

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