

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

January 2022

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2022, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The speakers will be HCHS President Chris Roth who will discuss the growth and accomplishments of the Society this past year and to present plans for 2022. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call by noon on Wednesday, January 19,** 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 morning 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 barbeque chicken breast, baked macaroni, coleslaw, garlic bread, and éclair cake.

CEMETERY TOUR THANK YOU!

Thank you to Jim and Candee Canady for beautifying the horse trough at Cedar Rest Cemetery.



The Vaughn house in Pearlinton was a vintage Creole Cottage. The building in this photo shows the renovations made by the Viguere family. The original Creole cottage is to the reader's right and there is an addition to the left made by the Viguere family.

ANATOMY OF A CREOLE COTTAGE

By
James Keating, MD

Edited by
Virginia Olander

Hancock County is proud of its general and architectural history. In the mid-nineteenth century the port of Pearlinton evolved as an im-

portant commercial center supporting shipyards, brickyards, a cotton gin, taverns, kilns, and six small sawmills. Skilled black craftsmen such as Usan Vaughn worked in the shipyards and sawmills and built houses with classic styles such as Creole Cottage, Shotgun, French Colonial, and Greek Revival. Several old houses built by Vaughn survived into the twentieth century. One such Creole Cottage, built around 1859, was studied by an architecture student, Kathleen White. Her findings offer invaluable insight

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

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MONDAY — FRIDAY
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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.”

to understanding the anatomy of a Creole cottage and the genius and carpentry skills of its builder and first occupant, Usan Vaughn.

Colonial French architecture on the Gulf Coast was influenced by the innovations learned from the earlier experience of builders in the hot and humid weather conditions in the West Indies. Frenchmen built small cottages that were raised and steep-roofed with heavy timber frames using locally available native materials for bricks, mortar, nails, shingles, and plaster. The Creole cottages were the most common houses in New Orleans from 1790 to 1850. In that era, there was a lot of com-

merce between the small commercial port of Pearlinton, Mississippi, on the Pearl River and New Orleans.

Etienne William Maxson (1864-1957) lived in Pearlinton and was called “Uncle Bud” by his family. He had a house on the corner of White Road and Hancock Street. In 1930 Maxson wrote *The Progress of the Races* which was reprinted in 1950. His niece, Gail Fusco, in her heartwarming memoir, *Mama Nettie’s Time To Love*, reported “This book is rich in the history of Pearlinton and the old neighboring towns along the Pearl River. It also covered the skill and ingenuity of African American people after the aboli-

President’s Corner

As the years seem to go by at an accelerated pace, we have certainly had a busy and productive year at the Society. Please join us at our January luncheon meeting to hear about what we have accomplished and what plans are afoot for 2022.

We recently added three new talented and accomplished individuals to our board. Please join me in welcoming Michelle Breisacher, Ron Thorp and Lea Young. I also want to thank Kaye Karl for her many contributions during her term on the board.

A very special thanks to the Silver Slipper Casino and Hotel for their very generous support and contribution to the success of the Charles Gray Premier. Also, we want to thank Lowes for their generous donation of six ceiling lights.

I also want to thank Eddie Coleman, our board of directors, and our many volunteers who have worked so hard to make 2021 a banner year for the Society. As president of the Society, I am grateful to have the opportunity to work with so many talented and committed people.

In closing, I hope you and your families had a very Merry Christmas, and I send best wishes to all of you for a wonderful New Year.

In the words of Charles Dickens’ Tiny Tim, “God Bless Us, Every One.”

Chris Roth
President



CARRY-LOG



CARRY-LOG IN USE

tion of slavery and the great contribution they made to the area.”

Maxson wrote about a skilled black carpenter, Usan Vaughn, who became famous because he invented a two wheeled cart called a “carry-log” or “caralog.” Even though this “carry-log, or its variations, had been created by others, Vaughn’s improvements enabled timber men to haul large logs by oxen out of the forest or marshes to the riverbank to better advantage. The logs then floated down to the mouth of a river to a sawmill. Although Usan was a slave owned by Nezan Favre, he secured a patent for the improved cart, and they sold these carts to all the “timber-getters” in the region for \$100 a pair.

Vaughn was encouraged

by Favre to build and sell the carts. The traditional custom at the time was that the slave owner received twenty percent of the profit. Consequently, Vaughn accumulated some wealth and was able to purchase the freedom of his wife, Anna. Her husband acquired his freedom in 1863 when the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

It is presumed that this very skilled master carpenter, who had previously worked on the dry dock and sawmill in Pearlinton, went into business building houses after the Civil War. One such Creole cottage he built on Gin Road is called the Vaughn House because it was the home of Usan and Anna. She died in 1869 and was

buried in a site on the other side of Gin Road where their house was located. Usan was recorded in the 1880 census, but his exact date of death and his burial site are unknown. The Vaughn House has changed ownership several times since the nineteenth century. In 1958, it was bought by Shaun and Yvonne Viguere. Their daughter, Kathleen White, wrote a master’s thesis about this house because it is a classic example of a vintage Creole cottage. Her paper was submitted to the Tulane School of Architecture in 2005, and it has been a valuable source of information for this article.

This classic Creole cottage was raised on brick piers about three feet above the ground. In 1972, the old Vaughn House was moved closer to the Pearl River, a distance of about three hundred yards. Because this new site had low elevation, the original house was placed on new, not original, piers eight feet above the ground to prevent flooding from the Pearl River. The original bricks used for the new foundation came from the Pearlinton brickyard, and the mortar was made from river lime, sand, and water.

The wood foundation of this cottage was composed of thick horizontal beams, called sills, of locally forested heart pine probably measuring as much as fifty feet in length. A skilled carpenter like Usan Vaughn could fashion notched corner joints. An array of boards called joists supported the wooden floor of the first story of this building.

The heart pine floor of the Vaughn House had “tongue in groove” interconnections of the boards. Vertical thick corner



The renovated Vaughn house, seen from this angle, demonstrates the classic features of a Creole cottage. The house is raised on piers, has a tall, steep roof, and a cut-away gallery in front. The front of the cottage was rotated to face the Pearl River instead of the Gin Road, when moved in 1972.

posts of the rooms and smaller vertical 2" x 4" pieces, called studs, frame the walls of the first story to the nine foot ceiling. The studs might be secured to the foundation of sills by a whittled end of a stud called a tongue that would fit into a hole or notch in the base beam. This articulation is called a "mortise and tenon" joint and requires skilled carpentry to fashion it. The roof of the Vaughn House was supported by a framework of wooden trusses and rafters.

Cypress shingles produced in Pearlinton were attached to the roof. Cypress was the preferred wood for shingles because it was less flammable than other types of wood. Nevertheless, there were many fires of roofs that originated from the chimneys embedded in a house. The original Vaughn House had two chimneys.

The Creole cottage had a steep-pitched gable roof, and the ridge was parallel to the sidewalk or Gin Road. The first floor had four rooms and a center hallway. An "undercut" front

gallery could be employed as an "outdoor living space offering multiple functions such as a living room, reception area, offices, and a bedroom in the summer." The outer walls were covered with clapboard. The attic was not used as living space.

Kathleen White was able to confirm the approximate date of the construction of the original Creole cottage. Her vast

knowledge of historic preservation and her careful inspection of the house in 2004 was professional and convincing. Analysis of various clues included evaluation of the nails used in the construction. These long 3" square head nails with a square shaft found in the Vaughn House also had vertical imperfections which were not manufactured until after the Industrial Revolution between 1820-1900. The character of some marks on the wood boards indicate they were from a sawmill with a steam engine-driven circular saw. This indicates the house had to have been built after 1825 in Hancock County. Glass windows were hand-blown with imperfections of bubbles and slight swirls typical in Hancock County until 1875. The original windows in the living room, master bedroom, and bath were six-paned, double-hung windows that operated with a pulley window mechanism consistent with a mid-nineteenth century house. A final clue was the date 1859, carved on the back of a cypress



This house is an example of a classic Creole Cottage which looks much like the original Vaughn house built in 1859.

fireplace mantle.

In conclusion, the history of Pearlinton and its architecture treasures are of interest to the Hancock County Historical Society, reflecting its mission of researching, preserving, and interpreting our cultural heritage. This history of architecture, history, tradition, values, and a shared bond, passed down from one generation to another over two hundred years, represents our unique identity. The Vaughn House was a vintage Creole cottage built by a constructive genius master carpenter, Usan Vaughn. Local historic preservation commissions and well-educated architects such as Kathleen White protect historic districts of old towns such as Bay St. Louis and Pearlinton, making them a place apart, uniquely, old-fashioned Americana villages.

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Private Donald Joseph Monti

PRIVATE DONALD J. MONTI (1923-1944)

By
Jacqueline Schorr

Born in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, on November 5, 1923, Private Donald Joseph Monti made the ultimate sacrifice by giving his life for his country during World War II. He was the first born son of Pedro Francis and Leonie Aline Blaise Monti.

Donald was reared in "The Bay" along with his siblings, Joy and Pedro, during the Great Depression. While attending classes at St. Stanislaus High School, Donald worked on campus to help his parents make his tuition. He also made the football team his senior year. Donald took to war with him his short life experiences such as working at home with his family, tending cows on his uncle's farm, and battling on the football field. He loved music and dancing, and he often sang his favorite song, "On the Sunny Side of

the Street." In addition, he liked to draw with his pen and pencil set when he found the time.

Donald enlisted into the US Army's 13th Infantry Regiment, 8th Infantry Division. His unit, A Company, was inserted into the line of battle on the Western European Front in Normandy, France, on July 4, 1944. Company A experienced fierce hedgerow fighting with an entranced German enemy right from the very start. This successful Allied offensive advanced to Rennes, France, over the next few weeks, but at a cost of many casualties. Sadly, Donald was killed on August 28, 1944. He died bravely fighting to preserve the freedom we all hold dear. For his great sacrifice, Donald Joseph Monti was awarded the Purple Heart Medal, and he will always be remembered because of how he lived and died.

Source:

Sidaway, Lynn. *The Forgotten Cemetery*. Coppell, TX: Lynne Sidaway, 2020.

Editors note: Donald Joseph Monti is buried in The Brittany American Cemetery in Saint-James, Normandy,



France. Lynn Sidaway has spent the last several years researching each of the gravesites, photographing each one, and contacting the relatives of these brave soldiers to learn more about each one's short life and to give them information about each one's final resting place. Her dedicated work created the book *The Forgotten Cemetery*, a copy of which one may view at the Historical Society.

WILLIAM FAULKNER IN WAVELAND

By
Eddie Coleman

People from throughout the world know of William Faulkner, the writer and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949, and they know of the man from Oxford, Mississippi and his writings about the Mississippi Delta. However, we tend to forget this genius was just an ordinary man who wrote of deer hunts and bear hunts in the forests of northern Mississippi. He was able to see the genius in "just plain folks," and this ability led him to present the characters he did in his many novels and short stories.

Although we tend to think of Faulkner as the native of Mississippi, which he was, he also spent time in the French Quarter of New Orleans in the 1920's as did many American writers, particularly Southerner writers. While F. Scot Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and their wives as well as other members of the *Lost Generation* expatriated themselves to Paris, some American writers went to New Orleans whose French Quarter gave them the feel of Paris.

Faulkner spent the first

half of 1925 in New Orleans, and during that summer he rented a house on the corner of Beach Boulevard and Market Street in Waveland. Ducre Bourgeois and his cousin Edward Bourgeois met Faulkner one night as they passed his house on their way to the beach to go floundering. As people do, the young men stopped and began talking to the visitor. At this time Faulkner was not a famous or even known author. He was just a visitor renting a house on the beach for a couple of months, and the young men just wanted to be neighborly.

Faulkner told them that he had left New Orleans and the French Quarter to get away from the alcohol. Being friendly they told the visitor that they knew where they could find some white lightning, not an uncommon thing in the county or elsewhere at that time. The Bourgeois brought him a half gallon the next night, and they all drank until it was time for the cousins to go crabbing.

As Ducre told the *Sea Coast Echo* writer in later years, "Faulkner was a fine looking man in his late 20's, but he was a peculiar fellow." Faulkner went floundering with the cousins a time or two, but he thought floundering was "too much work and too much walking."

During the following summer days, the young cousins could always tell when Faulkner was writing and that he wanted to be left alone and not be disturbed. As Ducre told the *Echo* writer, "You could always tell when he was writing because of the mess; the entire porch would be covered with paper and books." Faulkner didn't want people to know what he was writing about so that when



William Faulkner

the cousins stopped by to visit, he covered everything he was writing or working on with blank sheets of paper.

The cousins discovered that Faulkner never drank or hardly ate when he was involved in writing. What they learned is, that like most writers, Faulkner



This photo shows Pirate's Alley, located between the Cabildo and St. Louis Cathedral in the French Quarter, where Faulkner lived his short time in New Orleans. The building was bought by an attorney in 1990 and now houses Faulkner House Books.

wanted to devote his time, energy, and efforts on his craft, focusing on what he had to say and how he wished to say it.

Ducre even said that Faulkner wrote an entire book in three days. In addition he was aware of only one book that Faulkner based in Bay St. Louis. That one dealt with three young African American boys who left Bay St. Louis on a trip to Memphis. Could it be *The Reivers*?

It appears that Faulkner stayed pretty much to himself except for the Bourgeois cousins. They didn't know of any girlfriends around or of any visitors except for themselves.

Apparently Faulkner stayed on the beach for a few

months that summer of 1925, and then he just left. Bourgeoises didn't know where he went or ever saw him again. But, later they heard that Faulkner returned to Ole Miss.

Although the house that Faulkner lived in was demolished in the 1947 hurricane, the house that replaced it on the property was called Faulkner Heights.

Bourgeois and his wife Mazie lived on Market Street, just across the street from where Faulkner lived and wrote until their deaths. According to cemetery records Ducre died on November 9, 1988, and Mazie died on April 17, 1991.

SOURCE:

Earley, James et.al. *Adventures in American Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968.

Heathcock, Brenda. "Waveland Man Recalls Time Spent with William Faulkner in Hancock," *Sea Coast Echo* (Bay St. Louis, MS), 10 October 1985.

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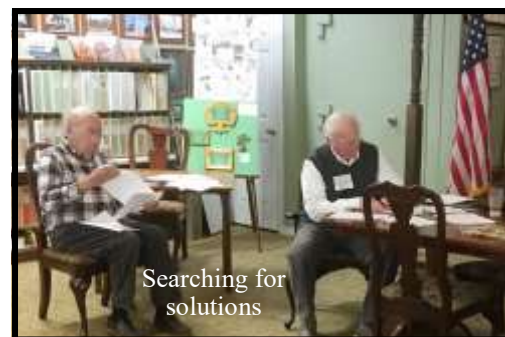
"William Faulkner." Wikipedia.com. 10 December 2021.

(Editor's note: If any of the children or grandchildren of Ducre or Edward Bourgeois remember either gentleman talking about their meeting with Faulkner, please get in touch with the Historical Society and share this additional information.)

BUSY AT WORK FOR THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



2022 Hancock County Board of Directors
 Front row, L to R: Virginia Olander, Michelle Breisacher, Georgie Morton, Beverly Frater, and Chris Roth;
 Second row, L to R: Bryan Frater, Ron Thorp, Lea Young, and Jim Codling
 Not present, Jim Keating



Searching for solutions



Thinking about and discussing solutions



HANCOCK COUNTY LIBRARY CHRISTMAS TREES

By
Beverly Frater

The Hancock County Library System was unable to hold its Annual Christmas Gala in 2020. Fortunately, to everyone’s delight, the annual event returned in 2021. In addition to having the Christmas tree displays at just the main branch in Bay St. Louis, trees were displayed at all branches: East Hancock, Kiln, Pearlinton, Waveland, and Bay St. Louis. Winners were selected from each branch, and an over all winner and an Online People’s Choice Winner were also selected.

The Hancock County Historical Society would like to thank everyone who worked on the tree it displayed at the Bay St. Louis Library: Kathryn MacDowell, Margaret Sarrat, Georgie Morton, Cynde Maurigi, and Beverly Frater. The Hancock County Historical Society won Third Place!



At left:
The tree displayed by the Historical Society, 3rd place at the Bay St. Louis Library

At right:
All of the winners at the various branches of the Hancock County Library System



HCS 2021 Tree Gala Winners

- Winner Over All - Paper Moon (Bay Library)
- Online People's Choice Winner - TIPS (Pearlinton Library)
- Bay Library Judges Pick - Unabridged Architecture
- Bay Library 1st - HCS Reference Dept
- Bay Library 2nd - Paper Moon
- Bay Library 3rd - Hancock County Historical Society
- East Hancock Library Judges Pick - Crafty Chicks
- East Hancock Library 1st - East Hancock Library Staff
- East Hancock Library 2nd - Cafe Brewet
- East Hancock Library 3rd - Aloha Wine & Spirits
- Kiln Library Judges Pick - 2nd Friday Book Club
- Kiln Library 1st - 2nd Friday book club
- Kiln Library 2nd - Coastal Hardware
- Kiln Library 3rd - Rhythm & Grace Dance Studio
- Pearlinton Library Judges Pick - Virginia Amacher
- Pearlinton Library 1st - Pearlinton Impact Association
- Pearlinton Library 2nd - Teps Lake CH Pennods Sensible
- Pearlinton Library 3rd - Greater P.L. Zion Church
- Waveland Library Judges Pick - Ashman-Mellere Realty
- Waveland Library 1st - All American Volunteer
- Waveland Library 2nd - Ashman Mellere Realty
- Waveland Library 3rd - Waveland Elementary

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The following books by Paul La Violette are available online at www.annabellebooks.com:

Holly, The Wedding Guest, Sink or Be Sunk, A White Egret in the Shallows.

Copies of *One Dog, Two Dogs...*, *A White Egret in the Shallows*, and *The Way to Stone Hill* are available at the Hancock County Historical Society for \$20 each..

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