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HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

July 2022

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, July 21, 2022, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. “Laissez les bons temps roulers” is a phrase with which we are all familiar, and it gives us a love of life, family, and friends for which we can thank the Acadians. Speaking at our July 21 luncheon will be Warren Perrin from Lafayette, LA, who has spent much of his adult life preserving and promoting the Acadian culture and language. Warren is the author of nine books including *Acadian Then and Now* that will be the topic of his presentation. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call by noon on Wednesday, July 20**, 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 \$15.00 for members and \$17.00 for non-members**, 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 jambalaya, green salad, green beans, bread pudding, and rolls.

PRICE OF LUNCH INCREASE
MEMBERS: \$15
NON MEMBERS : \$17



The Bordages Brothers' marina (1926-2019) has been an important landmark on Bayou Caddy for recreational fishermen and their families.

LAKESHORE

By

James Keating M.D.
and
Virginia Olander, Editor

The wetlands and bayous of the coast of Hancock County were an irresistible magnet for early French and American settlers in the nineteenth century. The Bordages was one such French family. They have operated a popular marina for recreational fishing on Bayou Caddy for almost one hundred years. The mouth of Bayou Caddy is an attractive safe harbor for commercial fisherman.

The harbor is an important port for our local robust seafood industry which contains numerous commercial oyster luggers and shrimp trawlers. In the present-day neighborhood of Lakeshore, Vietnamese Americans own and operate a fleet of shrimp boats that ply the waters of Lake Borgne and the Mississippi Sound. The Kent and Sue's Quick Stop on Lower Bay Road has been an important and popular establishment for decades.

Historically, the name *Lakeshore* refers to the northern shoreline of Lake Borgne in Hancock County. In the past, the term applied to the region from Bayou Caddy east to present day Bay St. Louis. Today, the name Lakeshore refers to the neighborhood containing the mouth

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James Keating, Publisher

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MAILING ADDRESS:

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108 Cue Street
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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.”

and harbor of Bayou Caddy between Ansley and Clermont Harbor.

The Bordages (Bourdages) Family of Hancock County can trace its ancestry to Aulon, Haute-Garonne, France. One early pioneer, Jean François “John” Bourdages (1825-1878), was born in France in Aulon but emigrated to Hancock County in 1846. In 1848 he married Marie Anne Saucier (1817-1909) from Mississippi, and they reared four children. They owned a grocery store and a bar on Beach Blvd. in Bay St. Louis where the Merchants Bank once stood.

Joseph J. Bordage (1850-1923) and Mary Hau (1853-1888) represented the second generation of this direct line of Bordages in Hancock County. Joseph was Hancock County Treasurer in 1873 and 1877. Joseph and Mary reared two children.

John Joseph Bertrand Bordages (1875-1947) represents a third generation of the Bordages Family in Hancock County. He married Mary Yarborough (1859-1946). John was a fisherman by trade. He stayed in his camp on Bayou Caddy during the Hurricane of 1947. Sadly, he died by drowning that day. His son Wilfred, tied himself to a large oak tree trunk next to the camp with rope and sur-

vived. John and Mary had twelve children.

Lionel “Sam” Thomas Bordages (1921-1976) represents one of the fourth generation of the local Bordages Family. He married Grace Ann Ladner (1923-2001). Her father, Garfield Ladner (1923-2001), was the Mayor of Waveland.

The Bordages Brothers’ Marina was an important landmark on Bayou Caddy over the last one hundred years. The business started in 1926. Three brothers of the fourth generation—Sam, Ray, and Wilfred—developed an important “destination marina” for recreation fishermen and their families. They sold bait, gas, ice, snacks, and tackle. The business rebuilt the marina after Hurricane Camille in 1969, investing \$90,000 in the project. At one time there were fifty storage sheds over water for rent in a day when fishing was very popular as a family sporting pastime.

Lionel Thomas “Tommy” Bordages, Jr., was born in 1952 at the King’s Daughters and Sons Hospital on Carroll Ave. in Bay St. Louis. He represents the fifth generation of this family and has owned and operated the marina over a lifetime on Bayou Caddy. Tommy attended St. Stanislaus College and Pearl River Junior College. He built a blue boat in 1983 to

President’s Corner

The inception of the Old Spanish Trail was a boost to tourism on the MS Coast and Bay-Waveland especially. Save the date, SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2022 for a celebration of the Old Spanish Trail at the Kate Lobrano House with details to follow.

Battle of Saint Louis Bay: The General Society of the War of 1812 will be replacing and rededicating the historical marker at the foot of Ulman and North Beach Blvd. later this summer with an appropriate celebration. Stay tuned.

It was wonderful to see the turnout for Charles Gray’s Celebration of Life. He is missed and will be long remembered.

Chris Roth
President



Tommy Bordages in 2022 is standing on his live bait Blue Boat

shrimp for live bait which he named *SamBoAnde* after his first three children: Samantha (Sam), Lionel Thomas, Jr. (Bo), and Ande. Tommy has a fourth child named Chloe.

In 1975, Tommy was introduced to a Japanese American tourist who was visiting the marina named Dianna Williams (b. 1956). It was love at first sight, and they were married two months later. They are still happily married after forty-seven years and live in Waveland.

Tommy had a live bait license that allowed him to catch shrimp in the Lake Borgne waters year-round. However, there is a limit to the amount of catch, and the live shrimp must be sold at the marina to his sportsmen fishermen customers only. Three years ago, Tommy acquired a nick or minor abrasion on his hand which he considered at the time insignificant. He was handling the shrimp, wet with salt sea water, and tragically was infected with the dreaded bacteria, *vibrio vulnificus*. His right upper extremity became red and swollen over the next twenty-four hours indicating cellulitis and tissue necrosis. Treatment was intravenous antibiotics and surgery saved Tommy's life and amputation of his hand/forearm was not deemed necessary. After a grateful recovery, Tommy retired from the live bait business and closed the marina.

Another important business

in Lakeshore is the Cure Family business, the Bayou Caddy Fisheries, Inc. The Cure family came to Hancock County in 1959 and have built a prosperous enterprise in the oyster sector of the seafood industry. The Ladner family had a business in the harbor for many years and sold their shrimp at their seafood market in the depot section of old town Bay St. Louis. If you are looking for live crabs, Pincher's Seafood is located next to the docks offering wholesale and retail fresh seafood. This market has been in operation about ten years. The Silver Slipper Casino was built in 2007, and that enterprise now dominates the waterfront. A St.



Tommy and Dianna Williams Bordages on their wedding day in 1975.

Joseph Shrimp and Oyster Factory located next to the Bordages Marina property came and went during the twentieth century.

Lakeshore is the place of business of around twenty Vietnamese families whose ancestors emigrated to New Orleans after the fall of Saigon during the Vietnam War in 1975. Those refugees were attracted to the commercial fishing industry in Mississippi and Louisiana because they were experienced shrimpers and fluency in English was not required to gain employment. The Vietnamese in Hancock County worked hard, long hours, saved their money, practiced strict frugality, and in time, bought their own shrimp boats. Presently, there are approximately forty shrimp trawlers in the Bayou Caddy municipal harbor, mostly owned and operated by Vietnamese Americans.

The usual shrimp boat in Hancock County is a double rig skimmer that has two outrigger booms on each side of the vessel that tow the nets, called trawls. Hence the name *shrimp trawler* which is a different rig from the ten oyster luggers that Cure family maintains in the Bayou Caddy harbor nearby. These Vietnamese are commercial shrimpers who trawl during the season from May to December. These skimmers usually go out for one to two days in the relatively shallow waters of the Mississippi Sound or Lake Borgne. Some Vietnamese have invested in much larger SLAB or "reefer" (refrigerator) shrimp trawlers that are docked in the Pass Christian Commercial Harbor which have large freezer tanks that can hold as much as 45,000 pounds of shrimp. These large boats may shrimp offshore for several weeks before returning to harbor to sell their catch of frozen shrimp.

The small boat shrimper will peddle his catch at the docks,

local marketplaces, or even transport the shrimp to buyers as far north as Hattiesburg or even Jackson to get the best price. These Vietnamese shrimpers have suffered financial setbacks as has the entire seafood industry on the Gulf Coast because of Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill. The younger generation of Vietnamese families are often choosing to go to college and not follow their ancestors into the seafood industry. The Vietnamese in Hancock County have been close to their fellow countrymen in East New Orleans and Harrison County.

In Waveland, the Ly Le Vietnamese family owns and operates the Loc Le Seafood Market on Highway 90. Ly Le is a young Vietnamese entrepreneur who sold her seafood out of a trailer parked in an empty lot after Katrina for several years. As her business prospered, she moved into her present location. She and her husband, Loc Le, own a 65-foot shrimper vessel that harbors in the Pass Christian marina. Shrimp boats of this size are too big for Bayou Caddy.

No history of Lakeshore would be complete without mention of Kent and Sue's Quick Stop on Lower Bay Road. The business has a gas station, convenience store, diner/delicatessen, and seafood market. It is the best place in Lakeshore to get breakfast at 3:00 a.m. The workman in the seafood industry, recreational fisherman, and early bird truckers enjoy delicious food all day, but especially for breakfast. The diner is the favorite place for the locals to visit. In May of each year, a visitor to the diner will overhear such conversation among the local citizens such as the unattractive small size of the shrimp caught the day before, the preference of brown verses white shrimp, or the flooding of the market with foreign "THI" (Thailand) shrimp. The business was started by the Mitchell Family about 1950, but then it was little more than a gas station.

In 1974, Robert Kent Sellier



The Bordages brothers L--R:
Lambert, John, Ray, Wilbert
Below: Sam

(1935-1998) and Sue Kathryn Klein Sellier (1938-2010) bought the business from the Mitchell's and enlarged the undertaking. This business has been family owned for forty-eight years and is presently owned and operated by their children, Bruce and Keith Sellier. The Sellier family can trace their ancestry to France. Their paternal grandparents are Elder and Elzie Token Sellier.

In conclusion, the shrimp and oyster industry in Hancock County is embedded in the neighborhood of Lakeshore at the mouth of Bayou Caddy. Recreational fishermen have also been attracted to Bayou Caddy at popular marinas such as the Bordages Brothers' Marina. Tommy Bordages has owned and operated this marina for decades, but recently retired and closed the business. The Vietnamese-American families that have migrated to Lakeshore since 1975 operate a fleet of shrimp boats in the municipal harbor of Bayou Caddy. When going to Kent and Sue's Quick Stop in Lakeshore, one cannot fail to notice the diversity of the many local customers partaking of the various products for sale such as delicatessen food, snacks, or seafood.

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A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO CHARLES GRAY

By
James Keating, MD

On Saturday, June 4, 2022, a celebration of life was held for Charles Gray (1934-2022) at the Kate Lobrano House by the Hancock County Historical Society. Several members of the Society in attendance

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shared anecdotes about this beloved historian/story teller. Mark Isaacs remembers Charles for “his legendary sayings, pearls of wisdom distilled with care like fine brandy or cognac.” One such pearl was “History is lies agreed to, often written by the victors.” Charles was witty, charming, and legendary for his ability, as one friend put it, to “spin a yarn.”

Before Charles moved to Bay St. Louis in 1984, he and his life partner, Jimmy Plauche, owned and operated the iconic Corinne Dunbar’s Restaurant on St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans for twenty-two years. Eating there was like being invited to an elegant old Southern home. Dining a la creole in Victorian elegance at Dunbar’s offered their guests a glimpse of the gracious living of the Creole aristocrats of 170 years ago. Charles brought to Hancock County that “glimpse of gracious living” in his Historical Society luncheons and

his personal high teas.

Charles Gray was a gentleman of the old school, a “natural aristocrat.” Not surprisingly, he grew up in the American South in a society that has historically stressed a culture of courtesy, consideration, etiquette and conservative attire. Charles Gray, age 88, passed away on April 27, 2022.



Woodie Nero plays the bagpipes to honor Charles and the home he owned in Scotland.

BSL

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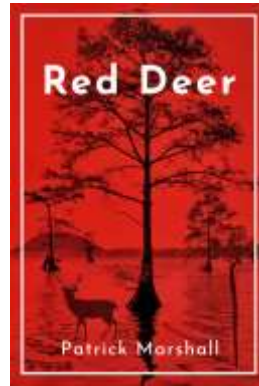
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