

THE

HISTORIAN



OF HANCOCK COUNTY

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

May 2023

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The guest speaker will be Brian Altobello who is the author of *Whiskey, Women, and War: How the Great War Shaped Jim Crow New Orleans*. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call by noon on Wednesday, May 17**, to make your reservation. Seating is limited to forty-eight (48) people, and we need to order the correct number of lunches. **Served at noon, lunch is \$15.00 for members and \$17.00 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 noon on Wednesday 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 seared pork chops, grits casserole, strawberry salad, yeast rolls, and mixed berry cobbler.



This image was taken beside the home of Du-bois Ladner in Steep Hollow. The remains of an old children's wooden ladder and tree house is noted on the left side of the trail. A steep hollow or slope on the right of this cove descends to a flowing spring below.

STEEP HOLLOW

By

James Keating M.D.

The word *hollow* (pronounced hol-er) is a noun often encountered in Southern Appalachian English which means a small, sheltered cove on a narrow creek valley. The neighborhood of Steep Hollow shares a cultural heritage with Crane Creek, Sellers, and Necaise Crossing, although it is located just over the county line on Hwy 53 in the southern part of Pearl River County. Originally Hancock County extended on the north to the 31st parallel and east

to the Pascagoula River.

The Steep Hollow neighborhood was settled in the mid-Nineteenth Century by the Saucier, Smith, Hariel, and Ladner (Ladnier) families. These pioneer farmers intermarried with the inhabitants of Crane Creek, Sellers, and Necaise Crossing and shared a common ancestral bond. Most everyone in this region knew one another and often attended church together. Families intermarried and many people referred to their elders or neighbors as "Uncle" or "Aunt."

Steep Hollow enjoys a picturesque, rolling hills landscape suitable for small subsistence farming and raising cattle. In this region, the early settlers did not cluster in tight villages but spread out and cultivated



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**LOBRANO HOUSE
HOURS**

MONDAY — FRIDAY
10:00AM — 3:00PM
WEDNESDAY—10:00AM—
5:00PM
SATURDAY—1:00PM—3:00PM

CLOSED 12—1 (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.”

small tracts of fairly level acreage surrounded by long leaf piney forest within a network of waterways that drained into the Crane Creek tributary of the Wolf River.

Dubois Ladner was born in Poplarville in 1949. He attended Savannah School through the seventh grade and graduated from Poplarville High School in 1967. In 1968 Dubois entered the US Army and served in Vietnam from 1969-1970. Dubois repaired Chinook helicopters and was sent on supply, evacuation, and combat missions in his helicopters. After his tour of duty in Vietnam, he was stationed in Fort Rucker, Alabama. Later, Dubois went to Mechanics School and learned how to be a welder. Subsequently, he found good employment at the Stennis Space Center working for the Cuevas Machine Company. Dubois is active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars club in Lakeshore. Incidentally, Steep Hollow boasts of sixty-one veteran patriots who have served their country in uniform during the last one hundred years in the several wars in which the USA has been involved.

Dubois’ wife, Patricia Dobbs Ladner, was born in 1953 and came from the Dobbs Family. Her family moved from New Orleans to Hancock County in 1961. Patricia met Dubois at a Henley Restaurant. They married in 1972, and they have a daughter, Chastity, and a son, Stormy. In 1975 they built a house in Steep Hollow adjacent to the farm land of the rest of the Ladner family.

Dubois plays the drums with a popular local country music band, *Country Gentlemen*. The band plays at various venues in Hancock County such as Veterans of Foreign Wars clubs, Knights of Columbus parties, and other various benefits.

Dubois’ father was Hubert Ladner (1920-2002) who attended Seller’s School and found employment as a dental assistant, a sheet metal smith, and a farmer. The family houses are on the Hubert Ladner Road. Hubert married Gladys Wilkerson (1926-2014) from Yazoo County, Mississippi, who was also a welder in the Army and later an administrator. Both

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Your society is on a roll with enhancements to our facilities and equipment. Your board approved a contract for a much-needed new metal roof for the Kate Lobrano House and a new color copier. How do you like the color?

On Friday and Saturday, May 5 and 6, the Gulf Coast Historical and Cultural Exposition celebrated the history and culture of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Representing the Hancock County will be Beverly Frater, Bryan Frater, Jim Keating, and Eddie Coleman. We should have lots of photos in the June issue of the *Historian*.

May 20th is the 3rd annual “What Floats Your Cardboard Boat” race, starting at 9:00. In September our local and talented thespians will be acting in a play at the Little Theater about the historical orphan trains, an entertaining and informative production. Also, in September we will be celebrating the installation of Charles’s “star” in the sidewalk in front of the Kate Lobrano House. On November 11 the Society will be part of the NASA/Stennis “Space Day in the Bay” which will feature interactive exhibits.

Call now to reserve your seat at our monthly luncheon on May 18th and remember to encourage your friends and neighbors to become members of the Society.

Chris Roth
President



Dubois and Patricia Dobbs Ladner were married in 1972. Patricia came from New Orleans, and her family moved to Hancock County when she was in the third grade. She worked for the Pearl River County Nursing Home. Dubois and Patricia have two children.

Hubert and Gladys served their country in World War II. Dubois' paternal grandparents were Willard Stephen Ladner (1890-1966) and Ellen Ladner Ladner (1890-1970). The ancestors of this branch of the Ladner Family are buried in the Juniper Grove Cemetery. There is a Juniper Baptist Church and a Steep Hollow Baptist Church in Steep Hollow.

From the 1920s through the 1930s, a railroad boom town called Barth emerged right next to Steep Hollow. The Hines Lumber Company built a Southern Mississippi Railroad that connected two big sawmills in The Kiln and Lumberton. The Barth timber camp became an important railroad equipment depot after most of the virgin pine timber in Hancock County was cut down. Barth was now in a central location for the remaining virgin forest in northern Hancock, Harrison, Stone, and Pearl River counties. The town of Barth was incorporated in 1917. By the end of 1920, the Hines Company had moved over 150 families into worker shacks and the town had more people than any other place in Pearl River County including Poplarville

or Picayune. The Hines Lumber Company also had a passenger train that ran from The Kiln to Lumberton that consisted of three passenger trains and a caboose.

In Barth there were cafes, hotels, general stores, hardware stores, clothing stores, and one silent movie theater. In this era few citizens in the adjacent communities of Steep Hollow owned cars, and this railroad was the best means of transportation. Steep Hollow residents took advantage of the Barth markets. This north/south railroad connected at Lumberton from which the Southern Railroad extended north to Hattiesburg and south to New Orleans. Sadly, Hines moved his timber business to Burns, Oregon, in 1929. Everyone in Barth lost their jobs by the end of 1929. Barth became a ghost town in three months. Today, there is no evidence of this town as you drive down the Old Barth Road.

Several generations of this branch of the Ladner family have farmed along the Hubert Ladner Road. Steep Hollow is not an incorporated town, but it is a neighborhood with a shared identity and

an affectionate sense of place. There's a popular *Big Mama's Restaurant* on Hwy 53 in the center of Steep Hollow. Also noted is a Volunteer Fire Department, an active Masonic Lodge, a slaughterhouse, a men's rehab in the old church, and an automobile detail shop. Over the years six different general stores have come and gone.

The boundaries of Steep Hollow neighborhood are north to McNeill McHenery Road, east to Connie Hariel Road, west to Bouie Road, and south to the line between Hancock County and Pearl River County.

In conclusion, the residents of Steep Hollow cherish their special identity and history. Dubois and Patricia Ladner live on land which has been home of this branch of the Ladner Family for 120 plus years. They live in a cove much like the cove nearby which was the Saucier homestead. The Saucier family gave the colorful name "Steep Hollow" which was adapted and embraced by all their ancestors in the Nineteenth Century and is loved by the living Ladners of today. A railroad boom town called Barth next to Steep Hollow has come and gone. Today, Steep Hollow is witnessing an influx of migrants or "city folks" from urban communities such as New Orleans who buy land and build summer or retirement houses.

SOURCES

- Harriel, Lester. "Barth Community Once Boomed. *Poplarville Democrat*. Vertical Files. Hancock County Historical Society, Bay St. Louis, MS.
- Ladner, Dubois. Personal Interview, August 12, 2022.
- Ladner, Hubert. *Ride This Train: People of the Piney Woods*. Bloomington, IN: Books Library Publishing Co., 2003.



The soldiers in this photo were part of the US Army 11th Aviation Battalion. The twelve men were stationed at Phu Loi, Vietnam, in 1970 at a Chinook helicopter air base near the Cambodian border. The men were positioned in front of a wall of sandbags protecting a shell bunker. Half of the soldiers in this picture were killed in combat. Du-bois Ladner is the person standing third from the reader's left.



DID YOU KNOW??

Hancock County Historical Society now has a You Tube channel! Videos of monthly luncheon presentations and other videos of interest are available to view free of charge. To access a video:

Go to You Tube. com.

Search Hancock County Historical Society.

Scroll down until you see the Lobrano House.

Click on the Lobrano House icon, and the available videos will be displayed.

(Hint: Be sure to bookmark our channel for easier access in the future.)

There is no need to subscribe. However if you do, you will be notified when new videos are posted.

Many thanks to Bert Young, our Audio/Visual tech, for adding this wonderful feature to our already extensive collection of information available to the public on the internet.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

BERT YOUNG Audiovisual Tech Hancock County Historical Society

Bert Young is a retired lawyer who practiced juvenile law in Birmingham, Alabama, through mid-2017. In December of 2018, he and his wife of forty-six years—Leigh Ann— moved to Bay St. Louis to help care for his parents.

Bert grew up in New Orleans and has visited Bay St. Louis since his grandmother and step-grandfather purchased their retirement home in the Bay in 1958. The Youngs were introduced to the Hancock County Historical Society by former Executive Director Charles Gray, who was a nearby neighbor.

Bert and Leigh Ann have three adult children and three granddaughters. The Youngs are members of Christ Episcopal Church in Bay St. Louis where he handles service video streaming.

During the past fifty-two

years, Bert has worked in media. He began working in radio as a college student at Auburn University, and from there, he worked as a reporter for the Opelika-Auburn News before attending law school at the University of Alabama.

During his student years, he also helped build two different video production studios in Louisiana.

Currently, Bert serves on the Hancock County Historical Society Board of Directors as our Audiovisual Technical director.





GARDENIA TEA ROOM

BY ALMOST HOME



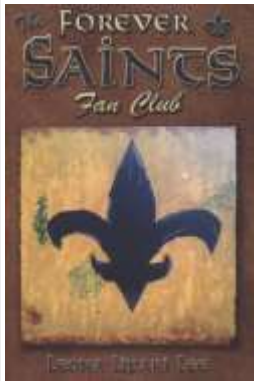
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All Proceeds Support the Mardi Gras Museum

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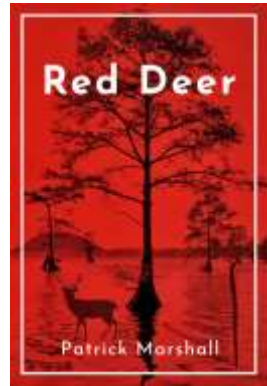
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