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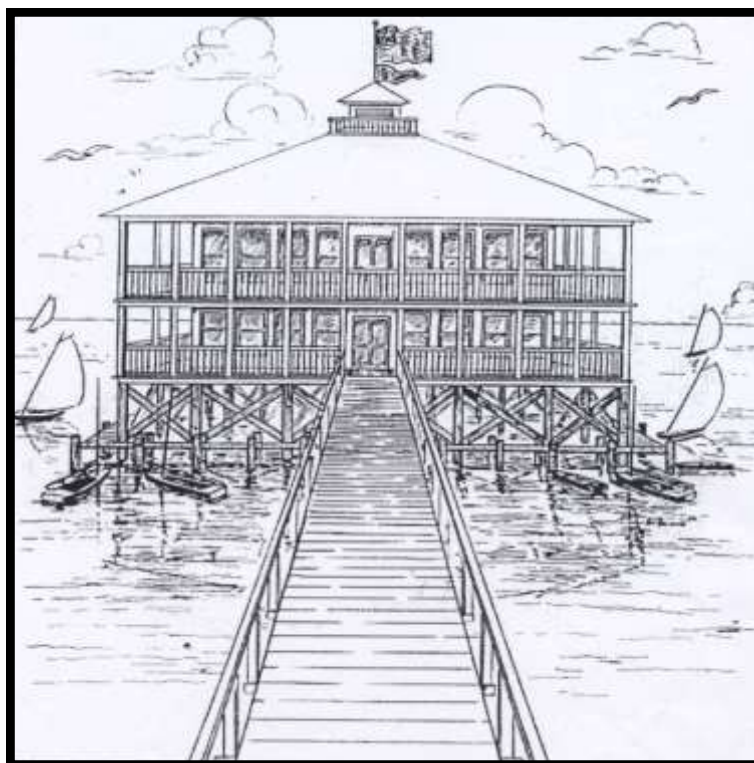
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Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

September 2023

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, September 21, 2023, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The guest speaker will be Janice Guido, who is a Board Member of Partners for Stennis/Michoud. Her talk will include key items discussed at recent Partners Meetings by NASA Stennis itself as well as by speakers at recent Partners Meetings this year to date. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call by noon on Wednesday, September 20**, 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 chicken and sausage gumbo, potato salad, garlic bread, and éclair cake.



Sailors from Waveland and Bay St. Louis organized the Bay Waveland Yacht Club in 1896 and built a magnificent clubhouse at the foot of Washington Street on the waterside considered at that time the finest clubhouse in the south.

## HISTORY OF THE BWYC (1896-1948)

By  
**James Keating M.D. and  
Ginger Worrel Adams**

The Bay Waveland Yacht Club (BWYC) was founded in 1896. A “grandstand,” double story clubhouse was built at the end of a 1,100 foot pier over the waters of the Mississippi Sound at the foot of Washington Avenue.

This location was considered the center of Bay St. Louis at that time. The club construction cost was \$2,500, and the building boasted of “water works and departments for accommodations for ladies as well as gentlemen.” The BWYC club house opened in 1897. According to *The Sea Coast Echo*, “it was said that the club house was the most handsome, well-equipped, and prettiest clubhouse in the South.”

A Fleet Review is a naval tradition whereby a gathering of boats parade before a dignitary such as a monarch. The earliest royal re-



THE  
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Eddie Coleman, Editor  
James Keating, Publisher

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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.”

view took place in England in 1415 in front of King Henry V before his fleet sailed out to fight in the 100 Years War. The first Review of the Fleet at BWYC accompanied the first annual regatta in 1896. According to *The Sea Coast Echo* “residents and businesses alike along Front Street (Beach Blvd.) were asked to illuminate their houses and businesses and decorate elaborately.” There were as many as fifty yachts (sloops) sailing from places as far away as New Orleans and Mobile for the regatta. “Putting on an extravagant show was of the utmost importance.”

The Review of the Fleet in 1896 was led by the flagship *Flor-ence*, a fifty-five foot sloop. A flagship in a fleet of vessels is typically the first, largest, most heavily armored, or best-known. The *Flor-ence* belonged to Lawrence O’Donnell, a respected Federal Judge in New Orleans and previous Commodore of the Southern Yacht Club. He designed the boat and was known as one of the best amateur boat designers in New Orleans. O’Donnell was a regatta judge, a summer resident of Bay St. Louis,

and a member of the BWYC.

The first annual regatta organized by the newly formed BWYC occurred in August 1896 before the new club house was completed. The first Commodore was T.S. Richardson. The first prize was presented to J. Walton Glenny, Captain of the *Tawanta*. The boats that competed in this regatta were *Nyanza*, *Martha S*, *KMA*, *Alice*, *Defiance*, *Jeanne*, *Lady Luckett*, *Lady Gay*, *Lady Florence*, *Black Cloud*, *Trolly*, *Dionysius*, *Daisy*, and *Clemmie C*.

A second annual regatta was organized in July 1897. A five mile triangle was laid off that avoided the shallow water in the Square Hand Kerchief Reefs that extend for miles from Henderson Point. The fleet contained several different classes of boats. A separate race for a distance class of six “half-raters” was set aside for these little fifteen foot sloops. Approximately fifty sailboats competed in these races.

During the “gay nineties” the annual regatta in Bay St. Louis was an event eagerly looked forward to from year to year during

**President’s Corner**

Looking back at the August 30, 1973, *Sea Coast Echo* for Labor Day news, I saw that you could buy a dozen crabs for \$1.50 and Waveland, as it is doing this Labor Day weekend, was having its town fireworks display. Some things change, and some don’t.

To view past *Sea Coast Echo* editions, go to the Hancock County Library website ([hcls.com](http://hcls.com)) under Discover>Sea Coast Echo Archives, and I can assure you that you will enjoy the look back in time.

Remember the next time you have guests visiting, bring them to the Historical Society and let them enjoy learning about the history of our community.

*Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.*

Albert Einstein

Chris Roth  
President



The seaside hamlet of Bay St. Louis has a 175 year tradition of conducting regattas, or races of sailboats, sometimes involving scores of sloops.

which our village was crowded with able and enthusiastic yachtsmen. The Mobile and the celebrated Southern Yacht Club of New Orleans sent entries to the grand event. For a few days before the regatta, ladies of the coast went adorned with the flying colors of their favorite sailor. The day of the race was a gala one in the Bay followed by a grand ball or party at the Yacht Club.

The club flourished after its birth in 1896. The well-attended regattas and grand social events had boosted yachting activities as well as increased the membership. In 1901, BWYC had close to six-hundred members, which was the limit, and dues were six dollars per year. During the early years, a large portion of the membership of the BWYC were also members of the Southern Yacht Club (SYC) because of the large number of New Orleanians who had summer residences in the Bay Waveland area. Many of these men served as commodores, vice-commodores, or committeemen of both yacht clubs.

Around the turn of the Twentieth Century, yachtsmen along the Gulf Coast endeavored to form an organization with the prin-

ciple objective being to fix rules and dates to govern yacht racing. Until this time regattas were scheduled without any notice, which denied some of those who wanted to race ample time to arrange getting a sailboat to an event. It was thought that by having fixed dates and locations for regattas the level of competition and attendance would increase. The Southern Gulf Coast Yachting Association (SGCYA) was formed on April 28, 1901. BWYC was a charter member of the SGCYA which was a precursor of the Gulf Yachting Association (GYA). Other members included Southern, Biloxi, Pass Christian, and Eastern Shore (now Mobile) yacht clubs.

In 1915, a severe hurricane ravaged the Gulf Coast from Pass Christian to Morgan City, Louisiana. It was one of the largest storms reported up to that date to hit Bay St. Louis. There was major destruction on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and the BWYC and the Biloxi Yacht Club were destroyed as well as many other buildings. With no club house and no dues collected, inactivity set in. The organization remained inactive until November 1920. Only a few

active sailors participated in the sport of yacht racing in the Bay.

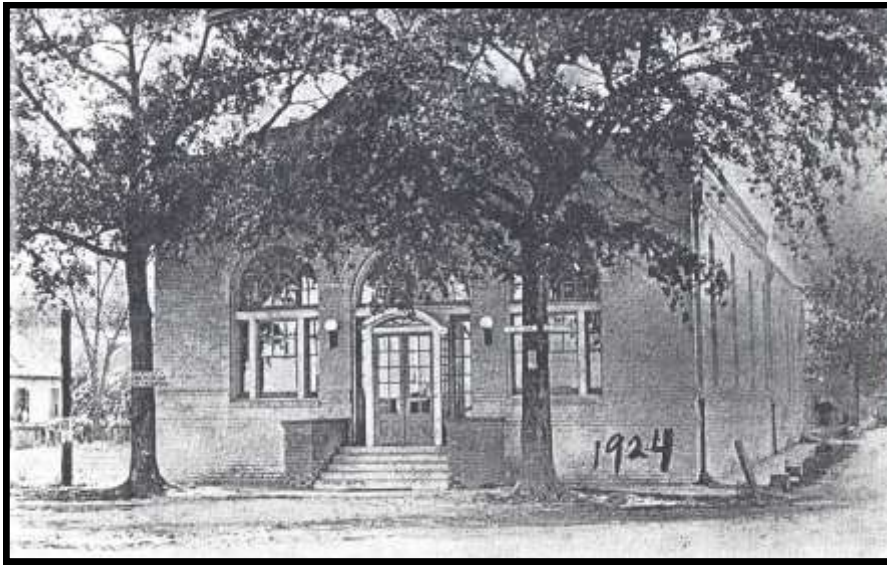
In 1921 a group of men reorganized the club and called it the Bay Waveland Yacht and Athletic Club. The sailors were Ernest J. Leonard, P.V. Lacoste, John Osinac, Charles Breath, and C.R. Rea. The group purchased August Keller's building to be the second clubhouse which was located on the corner of Washington Avenue and Front Street (Beach Blvd.)

On May 21, 1922, the newly reorganized club entertained five hundred guests from Bay St. Louis, Waveland, New Orleans, and other places along the gulf at a reception and dance. That same year BWYC was elected to membership in the Gulf Yachting Association (GYA). The BWYC held its annual membership as a reorganized club on July 15, 1922. The yacht club remained active through the 1920's until the Great Depression.

Charles A. Breath, Sr., was a boatswain who constructed two famous thirty-foot machine sloops in 1923. He named them *Interference* and *Interruption* because they interfered and interrupted work. The sailboats were launched May 21, 1923, and the *Interference* was owned by C. A. Breath, Jr., and the *Interruption* belonged to his brother-in-law, John McDonald. After the two sloops were launched, a trial race was organized over an eight mile triangular course which, to the delight of multiple spectators, was a "nip and tuck" race. Neither boat appeared to have a structural advantage over the other, and this rivalry over the Bay of St. Louis promoted the spirit of sailing in the 1920's.

Inactivity set in during the Depression years, and the club was disbanded. Subsequently, another organization was formed called the Windjammer Club. A windjammer is a sailing ship. The three men who were founders of this organization were Charles A. Breath, Jr., John McDonald, and Hoke Ogden.





This is a photo of the second Bay Waveland Yacht Club which replaced the one destroyed by the 1915 hurricane. It became known as Uncle Charlie's Nite Club.

The best we can deduce from personal recollections from several individuals and newspaper clippings, some of the members were Roger Boh, Joe Olson, Leo Seal, Dave McDonald, C.C. McDonald, and Robert Camors. There was no clubhouse, but the group had meetings, and races were formed solely for the purpose of attracting the annual event of the GYA, which became known as Race Week. The group wanted to attract the fleet of sailboats which encompassed sailors from the entire Gulf Coast for a full week of sailing in several different spots along the coast. The idea was for the sailboats to meet in Biloxi. They were scheduled to spend three days there, sail to Gulfport and spend three days there, sail to Pass Christian to sail for one to two days, and through the efforts of the Windjammer Club, the fleet would stop in Bay St. Louis and sail for one to two days. The group accomplished their goal.

The building that was formally the second BWYC was purchased by Messrs. Lacoste, Glover, and Edwards. Their sons decided to promote a dance during "spring break." The event was a big success and "it was so crowded that you couldn't get near the place."

Consequently, Charles A. Breath, Sr., was inspired to purchase the building from the aforementioned men and establish a venue for dances and get-togethers. It was called "Uncle Charlie's Nite Club." There were many parties and dances held there, and it was considered "the place to be" until WWII or longer.

The Windjammer Yacht Club and Uncle Charlie's Nite Club constituted a transition of the sailing sport and accompanying social life of Bay St. Louis and Waveland through the first half of the Twentieth Century. In 1949 the BWYC reorganized and flourished into one of the most successful yacht clubs on the Gulf Coast which will be the subject of a forthcoming article.

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## THE ORPHAN TRAIN MOVEMENT

by  
Eddie Coleman

Although it was not limited to New York City alone, one of the most gripping social problems of the city after the Civil War was the abandonment of infants and even older children in the streets of the city. By 1869, it was no longer an item of news or even of interest to find an abandoned infant on the doorsteps of the home of a rich family, in the hallway of a tenement, or at the entrance to a convent. It has been estimated that between 150,000 and 200,000 children were sent west until the procedure was abandoned in the early 1930s because of the Depression and the passing of various laws which provided for such children.

In 1853, a young theological student named Charles Lorine Brace was inspired to found the Children's Aid Society because he saw so many homeless and impoverished children roaming the streets of New York. Seeking those who needed help, he and his staff of volunteers visited orphanages, reformatories, and homes of indigent children. Many parents saw this as an opportunity to secure a better life for their children.

Initially Brace tried to help the children by providing more than just the basic necessities of life—food, clothing, shelter. He believed education was necessary as was learning a trade. However, after a year he realized the task was too great. Thus, he followed a plan instituted in Boston in the 1840s, sending children westward by train.

Before children left New York, the Children's Aid Society decided at which towns and cities the train would stop, placed advertisements in local papers, and con-



A Norman Rockwell rendering of  
the Orphan Train

tacted the appropriate local authorities. It was not decided beforehand which children would be placed with which adoptive parents. Rather, the prospective parents met the train at the prearranged place—depot, civic hall, church, etc.—and made their decisions after inspecting the children. The Society wasn't concerned with placing the child with a family of a particular religion; however, it did expect the parents to provide religious instruction.

Concurrently, St. Peter's Convent on Barclay Street was a favorite refuge of distraught mothers, and very often the Sisters on opening their door in the morning would find an infant deposited on the doorstep. In 1869 Sister Mary Irene of St. Peter's Convent took the matter of abandoned children to Mother Mary Jerome, the Superior of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. The Mother Superior presented the matter to Archbishop McCloskey who encouraged the Sisters to provide for the care of abandoned children. As a result, the New York Foundling Hospital, operated by the Sisters of Charity, opened in January 1870.

In 1873 the Sisters of the New York Foundling Hospital joined with the Children's Aid Society in sending many of these orphans westward on orphan trains to be placed with farm and other families in rural America as indentured

servants or as adoptees. The idea was that families would provide the children food, clothing, and a living space in return for their help on the farms. It was hoped that the children would become an integral part of the families. In addition, the Sisters required that the children be placed with Catholic families.

To this end, priests in the cities and towns where the train would stop were notified in advance so that parishioners could make requests, often very specific, for these children. For example, prospective parents might request a child of a specific sex, hair and eye color, and complexion. The hospital made every effort to honor these requests so that the child would "fit in" more readily with the chosen family. Quite often the child wore a number on his clothing corresponding to one held by the adoptive parents. In this way the parents could welcome the child more readily upon his arrival. From all evidence it appears that the children who came to Bay Saint Louis were sent by the Foundling Hospital.

An "indenture" form was used to place the children. It was a legal document that gave the Sisters of the Foundling Hospital legal recourse without going to court in case the child needed to be removed.

Further, the ideal was for the children to become such an inte-

gral part of the families that they would eventually be adopted and become successful members of society, each contributing to the growing nation. Many of them became contributing citizens such as two boys who went on to become governors of South Dakota and Alaska. Unfortunately, not all were law abiding such as the notorious Billy the Kid, also an Orphan Train rider.

At least two of these trains made stops in Bay Saint Louis in 1909 and in 1910, and fortunately the children were of the law-abiding kind and became good citizens of the town and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Among the orphans brought here were Willie J. Adam, Annie Richtner Adam Graham, Margaret Oakley Fayard Cuevas, John Korcinsky Lawrence Damborino, and Thomas Mitchell Luc.

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### THE MERCY TRAIN

Written by Beverly Frater and directed by Jim Codling, the play, *The Mercy Train*, was presented by the Hancock County Historical Society at the Bay St. Louis Little Theater on September 8, 9, and 10. The production deals with the orphan children in New York City who boarded the train to travel west and south to new homes. The play presents those who arrived in Bay St. Louis, MS, in 1909 and 1910 and were adopted by the Adam, Fayard, Damborino, and Luc families



New York Townspeople who wanted something done about the orphan children



The priest and the Sisters of Charity



Orphan children in the streets of New York



Rev. Charles Loring Brace and William H. Wickham, Mayor of New York who set up the orphan train



Husband and wife with one child and another mother with her child for the Sisters of Mercy



New York truant officer with street urchin



An orphan child and his adopted mother





Mrs. Almieda Fayard adoptive mother of Margaret Oakley Fayard Cuevas



Adoptive parents of Tom Adam



Jim Codling (director) and Beverly Frater (author) Portraying adoptive parents



Actors on the left and right portray the couple who adopted John Korcinsky Lawrence Damborino. The gentleman in the middle, Jimmy Quintini, is a descendant of their child from the orphan train.



The actor on the right portrays Mrs. Almieda Fayard. She adopted Margaret Oakley, who arrived on an Orphan Train at the age of eighteen months. Margaret Oakley Fayard married Monroe Cuevas, and they had several children. On the left is Margaret's only daughter, Rose Marie Schaap.



The young man in the middle, Jared Freeman, portrays his ancestor Virgil Pickens, who was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Luc and renamed Thomas Mitchell Luc.



Orphan children in the streets



**CHARLES' STAR**

A STAR representing the years of Charles Gray's service and devotion to the history of Hancock County will be unveiled at the Kate Lobrano House, home of the Hancock County Historical Society, on

Second Saturday  
Oct. 14, 2023 at 3p.m.

**A RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW.**

(Parking is available in the Courthouse parking lot on Court St.)

**NEW MEMBERS**

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*Bay St. Louis, MS*

Mary Matthews  
*Bay St Louis, MS*

Beverly Ogden  
*Baton Rouge, LA*

Cindy Reed  
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Katherine Starr  
*Bay St. Louis, MS*

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October 1-8, 2023



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**ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR**

Even though October is still a month or so away, it's not too early to begin planning the Cemetery Tour. The Tour will be held on Saturday, October 28, 2023. 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. All actors and guides must be members of the Historical Society.



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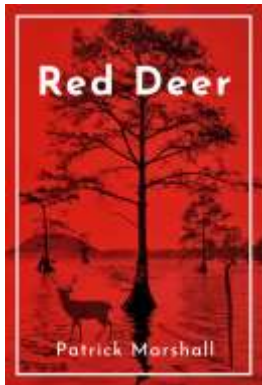
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