

THE

HISTORIAN



OF HANCOCK COUNTY

www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

October 2023

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The guest speaker will be Jim Schott. Retired, Mr. Schott has become interested in St. Augustine and the Society of the Divine Word. **Reservations are requested** and may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call by noon on Wednesday, October 18**, 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 spaghetti and meatballs, green beans, salad, rolls, and triple chocolate brownies.

It is time to elect board members to serve from January 2024 through December 2025

The nominating committee has selected Chris Roth for President, Georgie Morton for Secretary and Ron Thorp for Chairman of the House Committee. If you would like to nominate someone, please call 228-467-4090 or nominate from the floor at the November meeting. Voting will take place at that meeting.



In 1896 Father R. J. Sorin from the De Lisle Church established a mission in Vidalia-Dedeaux. The Dedeaux family donated land for a church. The mission grew and a new, beautiful church became the Sacred Heart Catholic Church dedicated in 1926.

DEDEAUX—FENTON

By

James Keating, MD

The community of Dedeaux is located in the northeast region of Hancock County on the boundary line between Hancock and Harrison counties. This neighborhood has an interesting history that goes back to 1798 when Don José Vidal (1765-1823) from Natchez petitioned the Spanish governor for a grant of land. Spain owned the Louisiana Colony at this time and Vidal wished to move to the territory that is present-day Hancock County, which was also a Spanish colony called West Florida. This land grant, therefore, acquired the name Vidalia.

Across the Mississippi River from Natchez is the community of Vidalia, also named for Don José Vidal, who arrived in the Natchez area in 1789 as a Spanish official. Spain controlled the Natchez District from 1779 to 1798. Vidal was considered one of Spain's ablest officials during that period. Vidal remained in Louisiana after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and became an American citizen. Nonetheless, Vidal never lived in Hancock County.

There is another town in Georgia named Vidalia. It is the sweet onion capital of the world. Vidalia onions are grown there. The Vidalia Onion Museum is located in that town, which is also named after the aforementioned Spanish aristocrat, Don José Vidal.

Long after the United States took possession of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, in 1880 the US Govern-

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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.”

ment granted Cheri Dedeaux 161 acres of land in this same neighborhood. As a result, there is a place called Dedeaux in Hancock County, and three miles away in Harrison County, there is a place called Vidalia.

In 1896, Father R. J. Sorin became pastor of the De Lisle Catholic Church. He established a mission in Vidalia. In 1898, Cheri and his wife, Celestine Dedeaux, deeded some of their land to be used as a church. In 1907 Father Sorin had the small St. Lucy Chapel, originally built for Cuevas (Pineville), moved to Vidalia. In 1926 the present church was dedicated by Bishop Gerow and named the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. This church was damaged by Hurricane Camille in 1969 and repaired and renovated in 1986.

Dedeaux-Vidalia was originally settled by French and Spanish Catholic families such as Ladner, Dedeaux, Necaize, Cuevas, Garriga, and Deschamp. These settlers emigrated from France and Spain and originally landed in New Orleans and Mobile. This pattern of settlement differs from pioneer farmers in the more northern communities of Necaize Crossing, Sellers, Crane Creek, and Steep Hollow that were Protestants who traveled overland

on the Old Federal Road from Virginia and the Carolinas.

The Dedeaux Consolidated School opened in 1912 with one hundred and sixty students. It was located two miles north of Vidalia and that site has henceforth been known as Dedeaux. The school was vacated when The Kiln Consolidated School was established in 1935. In 1970 the vacant school property was ceded to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church and was used as a retreat thereafter.

The Dedeaux-Vidalia community public sector consists of the Dedeaux Community Grocery Store, the old abandoned public school and cafeteria (now the Dedeaux Cursillo Center), and the Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Rectory.

Gary Garriga (pronounced Gar'-a-ga) was born in 1954 at the Hotel Dieu Hospital in New Orleans. His father, Laverne Garriga (1929-2014), attended the Dedeaux School. Later, Laverne enlisted in the US Air Force and the Air National Guard. He was the Chief Master Sergeant at Keesler AFB and chose to live in Gulfport. Gary's mother, Josie Bennet (1934-2007), came from The Kiln.

Gary lived in Gulfport as a child and attended Gulfport High

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For our member's viewing pleasure, we recently installed our new 75"—need I say, "big screen"—TV. Picture clarity and sound are spectacular. Bert Young, board member and AV specialist, has been recording our meetings and other events and putting them on You Tube. For example, today we viewed the 2023 What Floats Your Cardboard Boat race and Jim Keating's recent presentation at the Pearlington Library.

On October 14, after the dedication of Charles Gray's Star at 3:00 p.m., we will show *Connections Matter: An Oral History of the People and Places of Hancock County, Mississippi, narrated by Charles*.

For the Centennial Celebration of Saint Augustine Seminary on the weekend of October 28-29, the Historical Society will be showing a film at the Seminary on its history and that of the Society of the Divine Word. Please join us as we preserve history and actively participate in historic events.

Chris Roth
President



Gary and Sonia Garriga were married in 2008.

School. Then he attended Mississippi Gulf Coast Junior College in Perkinston studying business. His trade has been carpentry, and he found employment doing full time maintenance for the Hancock Whitney Bank. He has retired but does part time work today and cuts timber on his property.

Gary's wife is Sonia Guyton (b. 1956). Her father was Merle Guyton, and her mother is Roma McDougald (b. 1936). Sonia's family is originally from North Carolina, but she is a native of Wiggins, MS where she attended Stone County High School graduating in 1978. She then went to Mississippi Gulf Coast Junior College and studied business. She presently works as an accountant for a law firm in Biloxi.

Gary and Sonia inherited thirty-one acres from Gary's grandparents in Dedeaux. Gary runs a small herd of Black Angus cows (Aberdeen Angus). They maintain a large garden and pasture. Sonia cans various food stuffs, and they maintain their pecan trees. They attend the Annunciation Catholic Church in Kiln, not the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in town. The Fenton Dedeaux Road was paved in the 1960's, and RD 310 that they live on was paved around 2000.

Gary's grandfather was Sidney "Poppy" Garriga (1901-1986) who was a carpenter and operated a dairy farm. He lived in Fenton. Sidney married Eula Mae Moran (1907-1978) from Catahoula. They had a grove of pecan trees and the income from the pecans paid their taxes each year.

Gary's great grandfather was Ursin Garriga (1865-1921) who died from a ruptured appendix. Although he was rushed to the hospital in Gulfport, the vehicle employed was a horse and buggy in 1921, and he died in transit, arriving at the emergency room DOA.

Gary's great-great grandfather Ramon Garriga (1830-1895) was an emigrant from Barcelona, Spain. Ramon married Georginia Ladner (1836-1904). Ramon went to seminary in Spain for eight years to become a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. After his graduation he went home to visit his family, but had a terrible altercation with his sister and lost his temper. He repented his behavior, but considered himself unworthy to be a priest. Subsequently, he boarded a ship to America. He immigrated to Mississippi. He met Georgiana Ladner, they married in 1854, and they bought a farm in Fenton, Mississippi. They reared seven children.

Fenton was a historic ghost sawmill town located on the Kiln Delisle Road four miles east of the Kiln. Fenton was located in the Jourdan River swamp. In the past, Jourdan River steamers unloaded cargo there into a large warehouse. In 1912, R.R. Perkins was president of the Imperial Naval Stores Operation that had its headquarters in Fenton, which was considered an interesting place to see. Naval stores such as resin were placed in barrels and hauled in wagons drawn by teams of oxen. The product was taken to Gulfport and loaded onto ships and barges for shipment throughout the world. The Perkins Company Store was a

long building with a narrow front porch. The store served as a gathering place in the early Twentieth Century

Today, the neighborhood of Fenton is considered all the land in the voting precinct of Fenton that extends a few miles north of Firetower Road. The land north of the voting precinct of Fenton is the voting precinct of Dedeaux. The neighborhood of Fenton has grown in the last twenty years because of the influx of "city folks." There are hundreds of small modern houses on small lots on Firetower Road, where there had been only seven before Hurricane Katrina. After these people saw how beautiful the countryside is in Fenton, they decided to stay and make it their new home. Most of the "old-timers" in Fenton and Dedeaux know one another. They love their farms and are reluctant to sell their land to developers.

Curtis Joseph Deschamp (b. 1947) was born in the King's Daughter and Sons Hospital in Bay St. Louis. His parents lived in Fenton and Dedeaux. The Deschamp Family has been in Hancock County for six generations, their ancestors are buried in Fenton, and their hearts remain here. Curtis attended The Kiln and Hancock High schools and graduated in 1967. A jack of all trades, he did construction work in Long Beach. In 1968 he met Sarah Ladner from "Bonne du Terre" which is a neighborhood in Dedeaux. He built his home in 1972 which lasted twenty-two years. They reared four children, and Curtis divorced Sarah in 1993.

In 1994 Curtis married Rebecca E. Prentice (b.1950) who was from Carrollton, Georgia. They met through a mutual friend. Rebecca had two boys from a previous marriage, ages eighteen and fourteen. Curtis and Rebecca bought thirty-two acres in Dedeaux in 1996. They moved and spent several years restoring a



Curtis Deschamp and Rebecca Prentice married in 1994.

one hundred year old house on the property. Rebecca was employed by the NASA Stennis Space Center as a Technical Data Architect until her retirement in 2018.

Curtis' father was Purvis Paul Deschamp (1901-1967). He is buried in the Sandhill Cemetery (aka Alphonse G. Malley Cemetery) in Fenton. He was a dairy farmer from Necaise Crossing. Curtis' mother was Verina Mary Moran (1904-1997). She was a farmer's wife and is also buried in the Sandhill Cemetery.

The old families in Dedeaux -Fenton are described as "tribal" and enjoy seeing one another at church and other key local events. Every year the Sacred Heart Church has an Annual Bazaar, and there is a well-attended soft ball tournament at the playing field every year.

The Vidalia Road is a historic byway between Delisle and Dedeaux-Vidalia. The neighborhood along the Vidalia Road is the location of Neco's Family Market, Love's Pharmacy and Gifts, a Dollar General, the Front Porch Café, and the Zimmerman's Family Dentistry Clinic.

In conclusion, the three communities named Vidalia in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Georgia are named after a renowned Spanish Colonial aristocrat, Don José de Vidal. The delicious sweet onion you buy in the grocery also bears

his name because it was first grown in Vidalia Georgia. The early settlers of these communities were mostly French and Spanish Catholics. Some of these families boast of five or six generations of ancestors because the lovely countryside here was and is an attractive place for farmers to raise cattle and grow crops

SOURCES:

- Deschamp, Curtis Joseph. Personal Interview, August 26, 2023.
- Garriga, Gary. Personal Interview, September 11, 2023.
- "History of Dedeaux." *Vertical Files*. Hancock County Historical Society, Bay St. Louis, MS.
- Scharff, Robert. *Louisiana's Loss, Mississippi's Gain*. Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Pub. Corp., 1999.



ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR

The Cemetery Tour will be held on Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm. Needed are volunteers to prepare the cemetery for the tour, to portray citizens buried in Bay St. Louis, and to act as guides. To volunteer, please call 228-467-4090. All actors and guides must be members of the Historical Society. In case of inclement weather, the tour will be held at the Lobrano House, 108 Cue Street. Bay St. Louis.

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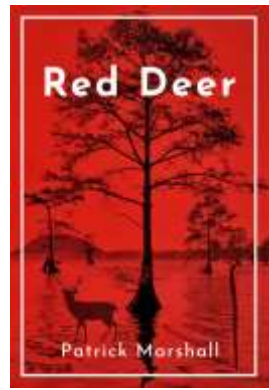
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