

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

Mississippi's Bicentennial
1817—2017

January 2017

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, January 19, 2017, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Charles Gray, Executive Director, Hancock County Historical Society. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must request that you please call by noon on Wednesday, January 18**, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of lunch is \$12.00.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

It's time for current members to renew their memberships in the Historical Society and to encourage family and friends to join us, too. The price of membership is **\$30.00** per year. If your membership is due, your address label will read "Time to renew your membership." Please mail your renewal checks to Hancock County Historical Society, P. O. Box 3356, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521.



The Landing of d'Iberville on the Mississippi Gulf Coast
1699

European Coloniza- tion of the Mississippi Gulf Coast during the Eighteenth Century

By
James Keating, M.D.

During the 18th century European nations established colonies and/or settlements on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Known as the French, English, and Spanish periods of Mississippi history, the story of these times recounts the rule of several different colonial govern-

ments each under its appropriate national flag. Transfer of land ownership was determined by European wars and the resultant treaties signed by France, England, and Spain. As a result the political map of the region changed dramatically during the 1700s. With the added influence of the Native American culture this rich chronicle of Mississippi unfolded in the southern piney forests and barrier islands of the Gulf of Mexico.

The French period of this history extended from 1699 to 1763. René-Robert Cavelier de LaSalle explored the Mississippi

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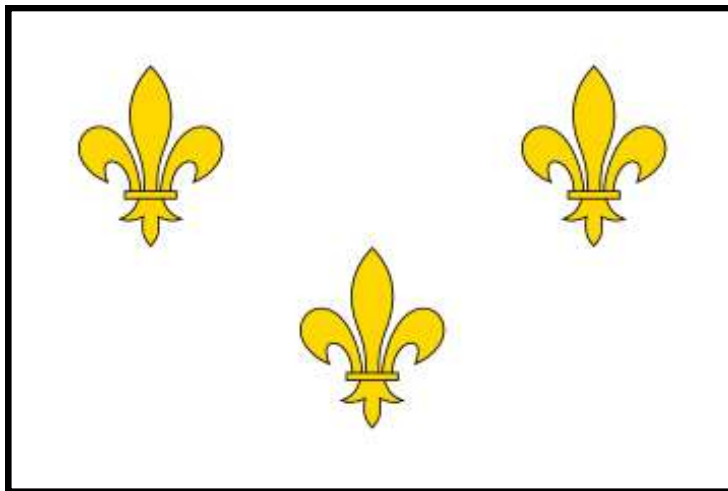
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**LOBRANO HOUSE
 HOURS**

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.”



The French Fleur de Lis
 1699—1763

River and claimed the region in the name of France which flew the Fleur de Lis flag. After the Treaty of Ryswich in 1697, Louis XIV directed his minister of finance, Louis Phélypeaux, Comte de Pontchartrain, to commission Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur d’Iberville to locate the mouth of the Mississippi River and establish a colony to secure French claim to this land called Louisiana. A garrison was built in the Biloxi region (1699)

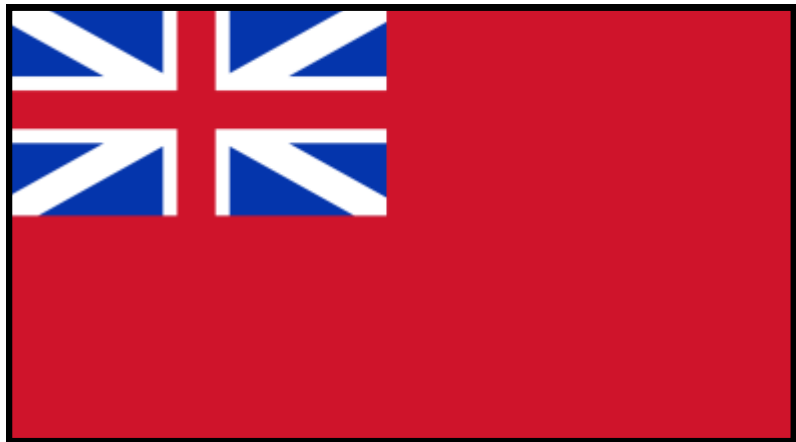
which served as the first capital, later moved to Mobile (1702), returned to Biloxi (1719) and then moved to New Orleans (1722) by Iberville’s brother, Jean-Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville.

The first small settlements survived and prospered. The early, exclusively male, settlers in the countryside were principally hunters and trappers, and there was little commercial activity except in hides and pelts



Map 1

which were transported by boat to New Orleans for shipping. French Canadian immigrants followed the very first colonists, and they often took the comely Choctaw women as concubines and the young girls of the Natchez and Chickasaw tribes as slaves to do the cooking and housecleaning. These men hunted and fished for food, dressed and groomed themselves in the fashion of Indians, and built homes of thatch and mud. Early French inhabitants of this region had names such as Nicaise (Necaise), Dedeaux, Moran (Morin), Saucier, Ladner, Favre, and La Fontaine. Along the Mississippi River, plantations were worked by Negro slaves and raised rice, tobacco, and indigo. Further, there was trade upriver with communities around the forts in the French Illinois region for their flour, pork, and beef. By 1722 there were approximately five thousand people (including two thousand Negro slaves) in these French settlements in the Mississippi River Valley (Louisiana). By 1744 there were sixty-two hundred colonists (including twenty-two hundred Negro slaves). (See map #1.) Moreover, Florida and New Spain—later Texas—were Spanish Colonies, and during this period the French were frequently at war with the Natchez, Choctaw, and Chickasaw Indian tribes. For this reason barrier islands such as Cat Island were attractive to early settlers because of the diminished risk of attack by Indian war parties.



The British Red Ensign
1763—1780

The English Period under the British Red Ensign flag started in 1763 and extended to 1783. With the defeat of France in the Seven Years War (French and Indian War), all of Louisiana east of the Mississippi River except the Ile d’Orleans was awarded to England in the Treaty of Paris, including the Mississippi Gulf Coast (See Map#2.) Spain took over the rest of Louisiana from France. The Mississippi Gulf Coast was

called the British Colony of West Florida, and East Florida was a separate colony. Pensacola was made the seat of provincial military government with another garrison manned in Mobile. England now had fifteen colonies in North America which included the peninsula and panhandle of Florida. The map of that English Period demonstrates the division of the 15th colony into the Natchez District and the Mobile and Pensacola Divisions.



Map 2 (Note that the boundary line of British West Florida extends to 32 degrees 28 minutes N.)

The first English governor was naval Captain George Johnstone. To encourage more settlement, large tracts of land of five thousand to ten thousand acres were offered to soldiers and officers of the French and Indian War as compensation for back pay. Vast stretches of land were sold to settlers who would promise to develop the land. Large numbers of Protestant immigrants came from the original increasingly rebellious thirteen English colonies. Considered “Tories” back home, these immigrants were good farmers, and they settled mostly in the Natchez district. Tobacco and cotton were cultivated, and the Natchez district became a more prosperous farming region. There were only about twelve hundred Europeans in the West Florida district in this period, not including New Orleans. During this time there were approximately twenty families on the east bank of the Pearl River in the area which later included the towns of Pearlington, Logtown, and Gainesville. Further east

there were about ten families on the Bay of St. Louis. In the Mobile division the inhabitants were mostly fishermen and hunters who were French-speaking and direct descendants of the original settlers. The barren, pine covered, sandy soil of the Gulf Coast was not so attractive to farmers or plantation owners. In 1764 Christian Ladner registered his claim to Cat Island. Any travel along the coast was done by ship/boat since there were no roads or highways inland.

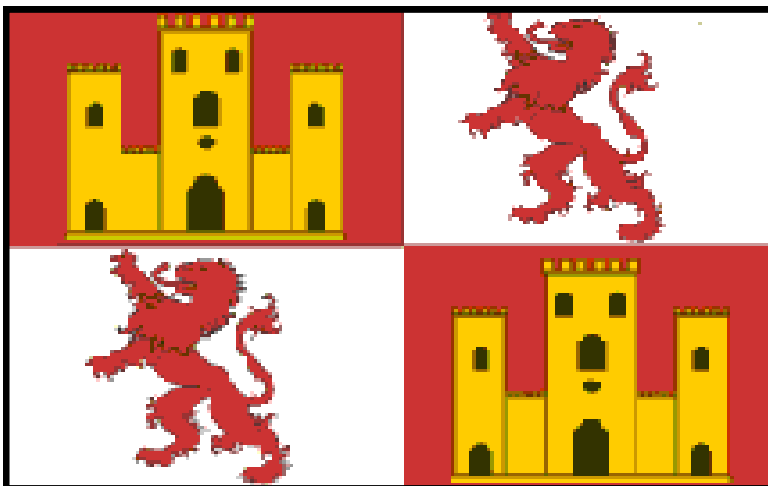
The Spanish Period of this history under the Lions and Castles Flag of Spain extended from 1780 to 1810. The American Revolutionary War ended with the Second Treaty of Paris of 1783 which recognized the independence of the original thirteen English colonies which became the United States. The fourteenth and fifteenth English colonies (East and West Florida) were given to Spain as well as the Feliciana parish in Louisiana. Spain moved quickly to recognize the property rights of those who would swear allegiance to

the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church. Juan Cuevas, the son-in-law of Christian Ladner, acquired a confirmation of the family land grant for Cat Island from this Spanish government at this time. New grants were issued freely. A report in 1804 noted about forty-eight families “eking out an existence” on the Gulf Coast.

In 1800 Spain returned its Louisiana Colony to France with the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso. In 1803 Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States. However, between 1805 and 1810 both the United States and Spain claimed the Gulf Coast lands known previously as West Florida.

Such a territorial dispute led American settlers in the Baton Rouge area to hold a convention on September 23, 1810, and draw up a Declaration of Independence for a free and independent Republic of West Florida. Nonetheless, most of the settlers on the western side of West Florida supported the Spanish government. Still, this “country” existed for seventy-four days with its own original lone star flag, called the “Bonnie Blue Flag.”

Then, President James Madison issued a proclamation annexing the region west of the Perdido River, flowing between Mobile and Pensacola. To follow up, Governor W.C.C. Claiborne of Louisiana sent Dr. William Flood in a gunboat on January 11, 1811, to Simon Favre’s farm on the east bank of the Pearl River. An American flag was raised, and Favre was ap-



The Spanish Lions and Castles
1780—1810



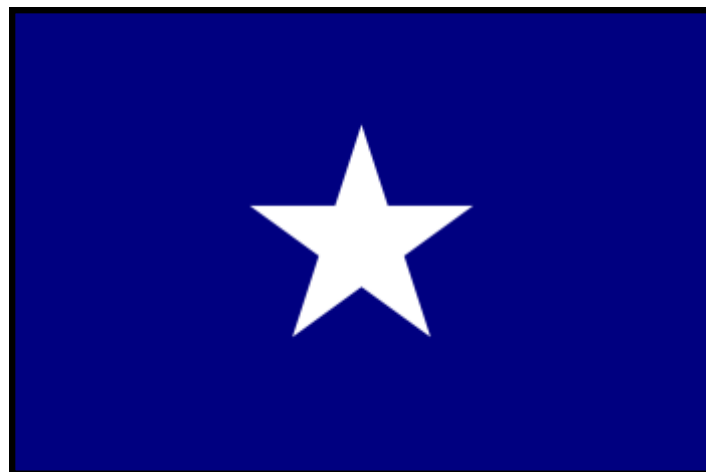
Map 3

pointed justice of the peace. That same day Flood raised the Star Spangled Banner at Shieldsboro (Bay St. Louis) and Pass Christian. Flood estimated the number of inhabitants so affected on the Gulf Coast to be 750 people. The coastal region was then known as the county of Mobile in the Mississippi Territory (See Map #4.) Spain ceded

Florida to the United States in 1819. Ultimately, the original Hancock County was subdivided into present day Hancock, Harri-

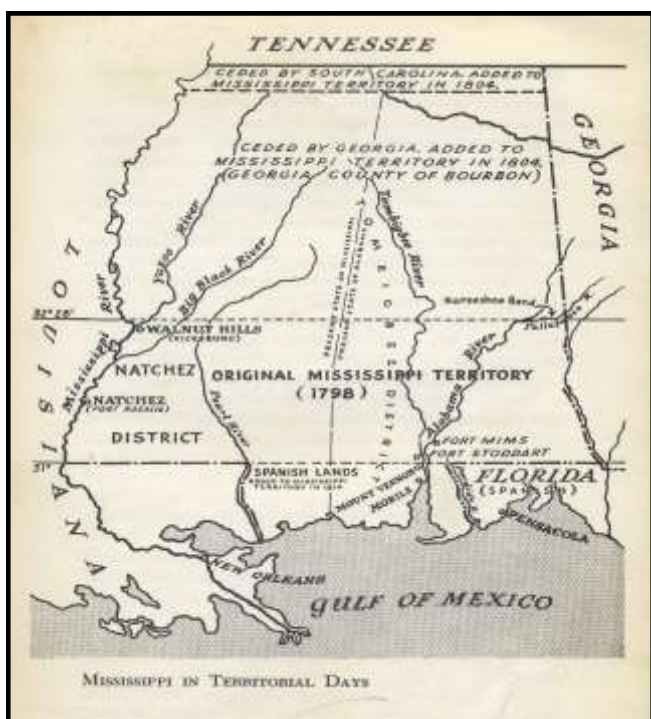
son, Stone, and part of Pearl River counties.

In conclusion, the eighteenth century witnessed three distinct periods during the European colonization of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. After the transfer of ownership from



The Bonnie Blue Flag of the Republic of West Florida
Sept. 23-Dec. 7, 1810

(Although it was more closely associated with the War Between the States, the Bonnie Blue flag first appeared as the flag of the Republic of West Florida.)



Map 4



STAR SPANGLED BANNER 1811,
the only US flag to have 15 stripes

France to England and then to Spain, the Gulf Coast was finally annexed as part of the Mississippi Territory by the young United States. Small settlements survived and prospered over the eighteenth century, but the population along the Gulf Coast was still sparse. The lifestyle of these early settlers was terribly hard, and their farms were subsistence at best. Yet, the seeds of future economic and political success had been planted. We are indeed indebted to our European, Native American, and Afro-American ancestors for their contributions to this important transformative period of our local history.

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**The Annual Christmas Tea
and Installation of
2017 Board of Directors**

The annual Christmas Tea with the installation of the 2017 Board of Directors was held on Thursday afternoon, December 8, from 3:00—5:00 P. M. at the Kate Lobrano House, the home of the Hancock County Historical Society at 108 Cue Street, Bay Saint Louis.

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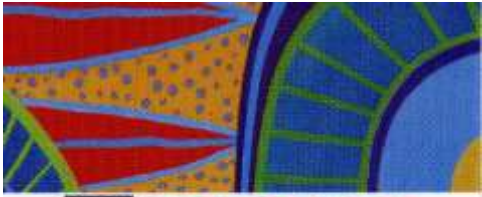
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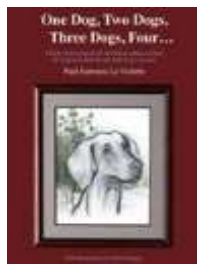
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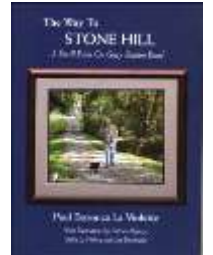
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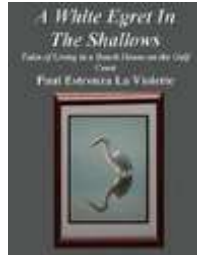
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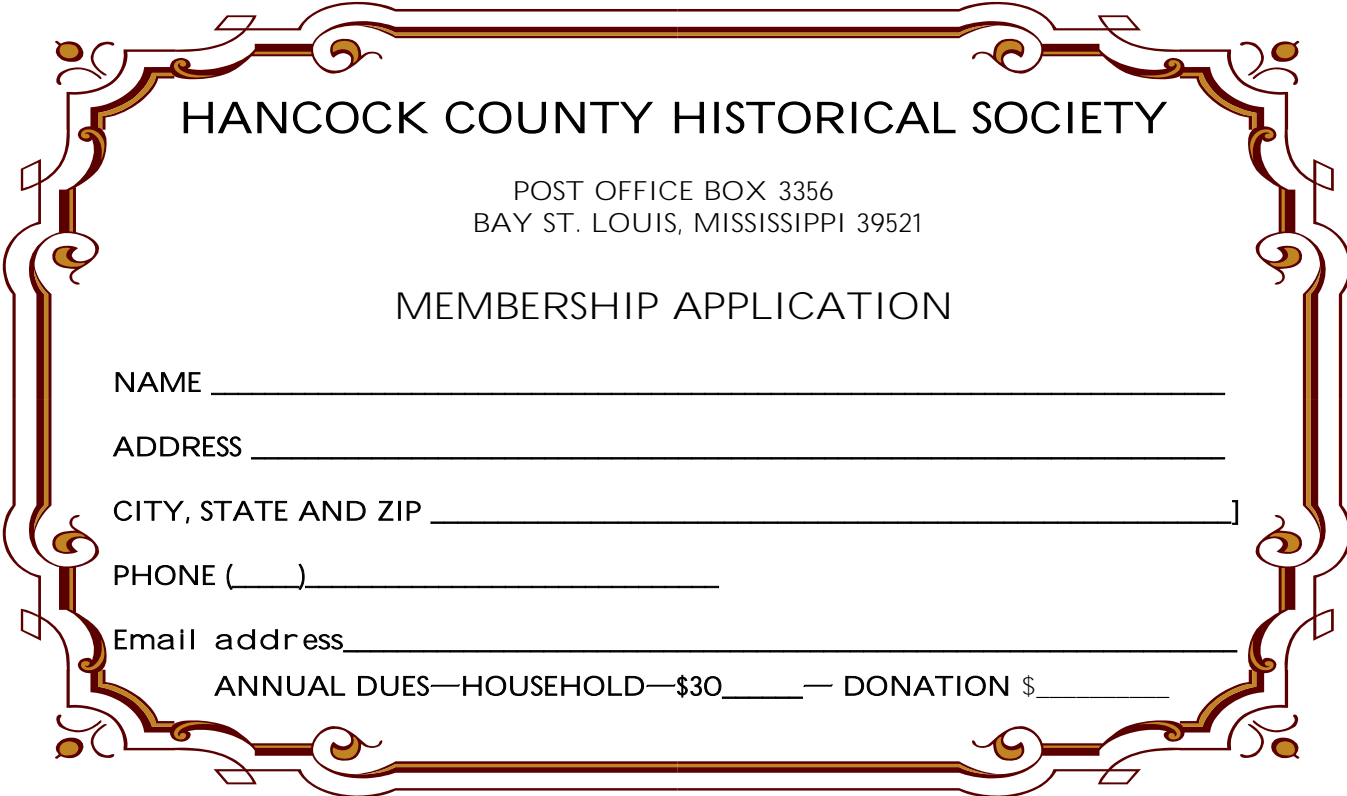
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