

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

Mississippi's Bicentennial
1817—2017

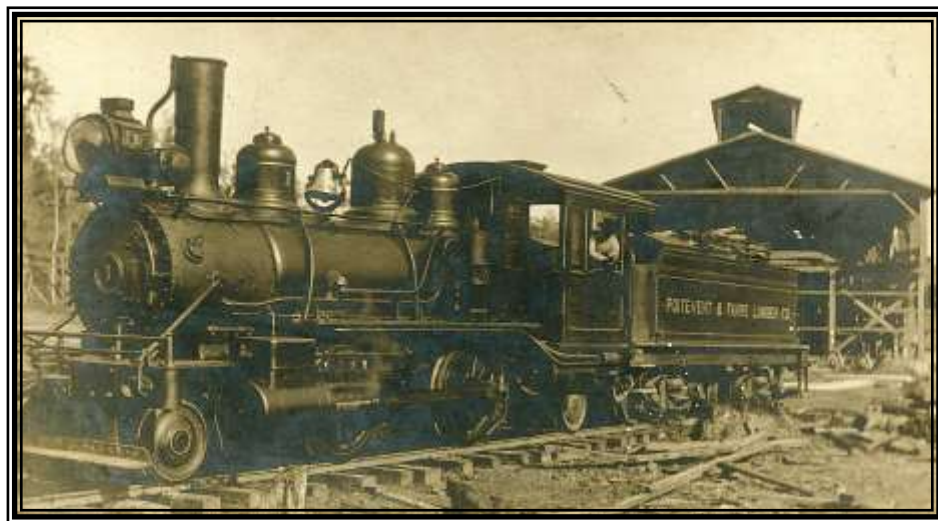
August 2017

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, August 17, 2017, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Andre Arceneaux, whose topic will be the Arceneaux Auto Repair Shop and Service Station. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. **Respectfully we must request that you please call by noon on Wednesday, August 16,** 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. Lunch is \$12.00, payable at the door, and it is catered by Almost Home Catering, Michelle Nichols, chef.

ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR

Even though October is still a few months away, it's not too early to begin thinking about and planning the Cemetery Tour. The 23rd Annual Cemetery Tour will be held on Halloween night, Tuesday, October 31, 2017, at Cedar Rest Cemetery on Second Street in Bay Saint Louis. 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.



This locomotive, owned by the Poitevent and Favre Lumber Company, was probably used on one of the short line railroads in the lumber industry in Hancock County.

Railroad Empire (1870-1900)

By
James Keating, M.D.

The railroad industry in the 1870's in the United States was chaotic because of overbuilding, price wars, and multiple company defaults. The first railroad in Hancock County was built by the New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga Railroad Company for seven million dollars in 1872. However, small railroads were absorbed by large railroads, and in the mid-1870's the large Louisville and Nashville Railroad (L & N) absorbed the smaller New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga line. As a result, rail service was provided for passengers and

freight connecting the Ohio River Valley to the Gulf Coast and New Orleans.

The Mobile to New Orleans route was proposed by the surveyor Lavis Troost. In spite of the hazards of storms and insatiable wood-eating worms, Troost designed a line to run through the Gulf Coast "Watering Holes," or "Six Sisters," of Biloxi, Mississippi City, Pass Christian, Bay St. Louis, and East and West Pascagoula. Chief Engineer Henry Van Vlesk built four iron pivot bridges over the Pascagoula River, Bay of Biloxi, Bay of St. Louis, and the Rigolets Pass. It seems as if his 140 mile construction project literally "walked on water" since about one half of its course traversed water, swamp, or wetlands.

The L & N Railroad was economically strong throughout its lifetime which earned it the nick-

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Eddie Coleman, Editor
James Keating, Publisher

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MAILING ADDRESS:

P. O. Box 3356
Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi 39521

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

108 Cue Street

Telephone [228] 467-4090

Email address:

hancockcountyhis@bellsouth.net

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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.”

name of “Old Reliable.” The company survived under this name for 132 years. A critical factor in its success was its ability to transport agricultural products and manufactured goods from major US cities to the global marketplace through the port of New Orleans. This extended Gulf Coast route provided serious competition to the northeast railroad lines such as Cornelius Vanderbilt’s New York Central railroad that carried freight from Chicago through the Midwest to New York City.

In Bay St. Louis (BSL) six trains a day would stop for coal and water, discharging and picking up passengers and freight. Railroads brought business, culture, religion, and entertainment to Hancock County. Eventually there were stops in Bay St. Louis, two in Waveland (Waveland and Nicholson Avenues), Clermont Harbor, Claiborne, Lakeshore, and Ainsley. The town of Waveland was literally built by the railroad as a resort for New Orleans residents who wanted a summer home or a weekend retreat. The original BSL depot built in 1876 was a handsome two story building that in the early years had

a full-fledged restaurant that accommodated passengers during the twenty minute stop. This depot building burned down in 1928 and was replaced with the current mission style building. As many as fifty horse drawn hacks or cabs would meet each passenger train to transport bags and baggage. People from town would promenade about the depot at night, especially on Sundays, in addition to the travelers coming and going. Captain J. V. Toulme owned and operated the nearby Crescent Hotel which could accommodate one hundred guests. The depot section was the busiest commercial place in town.

A second railroad was constructed in Hancock County during 1881-1885*. [**At this time Pearl County (1872-1878) had been abolished and Pearl River County (1890-present) had not been formed from Hancock County and Marion County.*] The New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad (later known as the Southern Railroad) chose a route that ran southwest to northeast from New Orleans through Slidell, Nicholson, Picayune, Poplarville, and Lumberton which then connected to Meridian, Atlanta, Washington, and New



This is a photo of the original train depot in Bay St. Louis.

York City. This rail line opened up the vast piney forests of Hancock County for exploitation/logging. As a result numerous saw mills sprang up along the tracks, stimulating the naval stores industry in our county. In fact, a small distillery was erected along the rails about every five miles. Migration of capital and labor from Georgia and South Carolina occurred at this time. The labor force arrived with trainloads of highly skilled Negro turpentine workers enticed here by the burgeoning jobs related to the lumber industry. The towns along these two railroad lines continued to grow and prosper as the nineteenth century came to a close (Please see the population chart below.). As a consequence the Pearl River lost its importance as the only highway to the interior. Gainesville began a steady decline in population. Between 1900 and 1908 the Weston Lumber Company ran a short line train from Logtown to Caesar which carried both passengers and freight.

In conclusion, railroads transformed transportation in Hancock County as well as the rest of America in the 19th century. Moreover, railroads were also important in our economic history because they represented the first really big business in the United States and the first modern day corporation. Before the advent of railroads, a



This photo shows the current Bay St. Louis depot.

corporation was a creature of the state chartered to accomplish a specific mission such as building a canal. On the other hand the L & N Railroad, like the New York Central Railroad, became a modern day corporate behemoth. These new corporations could amass capitalization of over ten million dollars which would be equivalent to billions of dollars in today's currency. The L & N was able to coalesce several smaller railroad lines into a vast network that covered the thousands of miles of track from the Ohio River Valley to the port of New Orleans. Even the largest commercial banks or factories in this era rarely boasted of capitalization of over more than

one million dollars. Business enterprises or property transformed from ownership by individual proprietors to an improved or a more modern corporate model owned by many shareholders. In this emerging global marketplace corporations would be king in the new American Railroad Empire.

SOURCE:

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POPULATION OF HANCOCK COUNTY

1820.....	1594	1870.....	4239
1830.....	1962	1880.....	6439
1840.....	3367	1890.....	8313
1850.....	3672	1900.....	11866
1860.....	3134		

Trains, January 1987.

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OTHER DEPOTS IN HANCOCK COUNTY

There were others, but these are just the ones of which the HCHS has photos.



This depot on Nicholson Ave. at Central Ave. in Waveland was built initially for incoming and outgoing freight for the Ulman Mills just a few hundred yards to the north (left) of the tracks. However, it was also used for passenger service as suggested by the two gentlemen in the photo.



The date of the settlement of Ansley is not clearly defined, but it was located ten miles west of Bay St. Louis. It was established as a flag stop on the L & N Railroad and named for a Mr. Ansley who was once roadmaster on the L&N. The station was near a road which led to the Claiborne Plantation on Mulatto Bayou.



The main depot in Waveland was located on St. Joseph St. and Central Ave. Does anyone remember if it sat north or south of the tracks? Please let the Society know.

NEW MEMBERS

Adrienne Nelson Heuer
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Hattiesburg, MS

Brian and Jacki Schneider
Lacombe, LA

Joseph A. Tomasovsky,
Bay St. Louis, MS



Are you looking for a Christmas or a birthday gift? You're in luck. The Hancock County Historical Society will be raffling off a Men's GX Genesis bicycle. The drawing will be held at the Christmas Tea in December. Tickets can be purchased for \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00 at our monthly luncheons or weekdays at the Lobrano House.



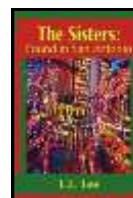
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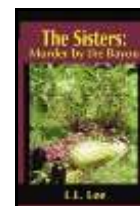
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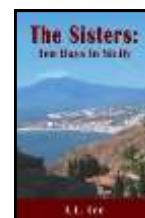
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Found in San Antonio



Murder by the Bayou



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