

Do you know about...

# HANCOCK COUNTY



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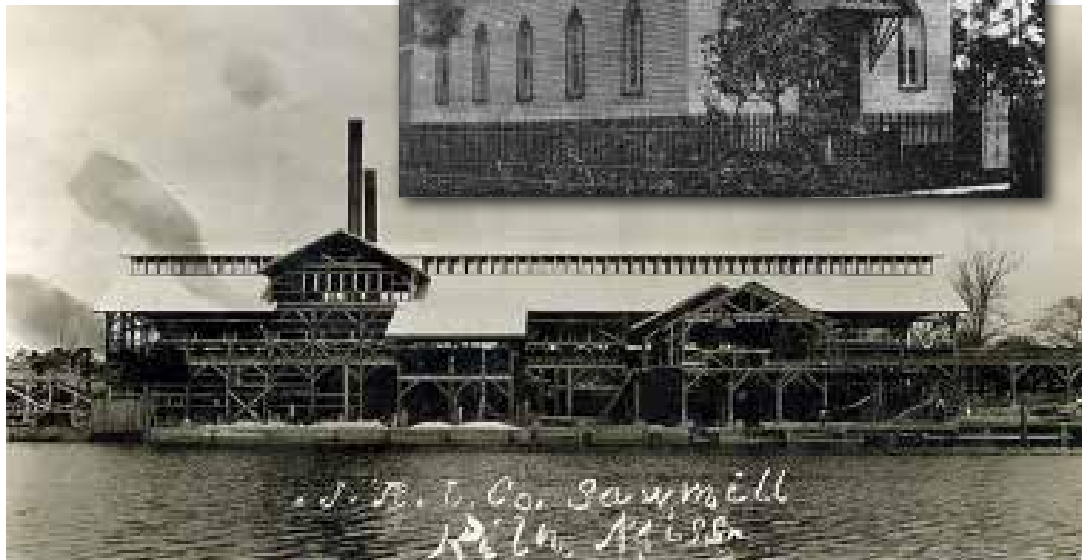


# *Do you know about...* **KILN, MISSISSIPPI**

Kiln is one of the oldest Catholic settlements in southern Mississippi. In the late 1700s, the French settled this area which until then had been inhabited by Choctaw and Muskogean Indians. The town was originally known as the Jourdan River Settlement because of its location next to the Jourdan River. As time went on, a thriving lumber industry was built, and by the 1840s this community was producing charcoal for much of the New Orleans area. Sawmills, two shipyards, a shingle mill, and a turpentine plant were operating by 1860.

In 1880, the name was changed to Kiln since so many kilns in the area produced pine tar. A hospital, restaurant, stores, hotel, movie theatre, high school, and several churches led Kiln in becoming one of the busiest towns between New Orleans and Hattiesburg.

According to local legend, the stock market crash of 1929 created a new enterprise for residents of this wooded hamlet – manufacturing illegal whiskey. This highly alcoholic brew was affectionately known as the Jourdan River Dew, and Kiln thus became known as the “Moonshine Capital of the World.”



**Top:** Annunciation Catholic Church in Kiln

**Center:** Jourdan River Lumber Company Sawmill in Kiln

**Bottom:** Charcoal kiln in Kiln

*Do you know about...*

# THE JOURDAN RIVER



*Fishing on the Jourdan River*

This 18-mile river, fed by artesian springs, winds from a quiet, secluded area north of McLeod Park in Kiln down to the St. Louis Bay. North of the park the river is narrow and creek-like with fairly strong currents. Nearly nine miles of the river's northern course has been designated a Blueway by the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain. This stretch is a favorite for canoers and kayakers. As it journeys south, the Jourdan broadens and becomes a boater's playground. Sandbars and oxbow lakes are some of the river's dominant features, and pelicans, cormorants, and other migratory birds make their homes here.

The Jourdan River was named for Noel Jourdan, one of the river's early settlers. Jourdan served as a delegate in the 1817 Mississippi Constitutional Convention and was Hancock County's first representative in the Mississippi Legislature.

Legend has it that during Prohibition, Al Capone, using a fleet of boats nicknamed "rum runners," smuggled liquor from ships anchored off the U.S. coast into St. Louis Bay and to various points up the river where his cohorts stood ready to transport the contraband to Chicago.



# *Do you know about...* **THE PEARL RIVER**

The Pearl River begins its 400-mile long journey in Neshoba County in east-central Mississippi and flows through the capital of Jackson where the Ross Barnett Dam and Reservoir provide water and recreational opportunities for the surrounding area. Closer to the coast, the river divides into the West Pearl, Middle Pearl, and East Pearl. The lower sections of the Pearl and East Pearl form the boundary between Louisiana and Mississippi. The East Pearl empties into the Mississippi Sound where marshes and oyster reefs thrive.

The Pearl is home to some 110 species of animals. Historical records indicate that the river was named for pearls found in mussels in the river.



*Pearl River backwater (Photo/Charlie Brenner)*



*Floating saloons on the Pearl River in Hancock County, Mississippi*

# *Do you know about...* **THE COCA-COLA MANSION**

The president and CEO of the Hattiesburg Coca-Cola Bottling Company built a sprawling home on the banks of the Jourdan River in Bay St. Louis in the 1980s. Richard "Dick" Spotswood Thomson hired the late, local designer Fred Wagner to build the 17,000 square-foot mansion as his main home. The imposing three-story structure, situated on 150 acres, overlooked the river and marshlands beyond. A guest house and other buildings were also on the property, as were some 100 longhorn cattle and many horses. Thomson kept his six-million-dollar yacht, the Cristina, moored on the river in front of his home. A full-time crew manned the vessel.

Thomson was a graduate of Vanderbilt University, earned the rank of captain in the United States Marine Corps, and was an active member of

Mississippi's Republican Party. His bottling company was at one time the only Coca-Cola plant in Mississippi. While there, he added a food vending company, an ice producing company, built a new plant to house it all, and expanded the business further into south Mississippi and the Bahamas. He received many soft drink industry awards both locally and nationally, served on the boards of several charities, and was involved in banking, real estate, and business development. He sold the business in 1992. He died in his Jourdan River mansion in September 2003. The stately riverfront home was heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina, but vandals and several fires completely destroyed the rest of the home and outbuildings. A brick chimney is all that remains. Thomson is buried in Hattiesburg.



*The Coca-Cola Mansion, photographed before its destruction (Photo/Mark Gilmore)*



*Do you know about...*

# THE OLD BAY ST. LOUIS CITY HALL

The original Bay St. Louis City Hall was built in 1905 on a small tract of land adjacent to the railroad tracks. The 1.6-acre property, located at 300 S. Second St., was purchased from the Sisters of St. Joseph Academy for \$950. Architecturally, the two-story building is of the Classic Revival design. Construction took less than four months to complete. There was a jail on the first floor and a board room and offices on the second. Over the years the jail was removed, walls were changed,

and front stairs were added. The building is also the former home of the public works, utility, and other city departments, the mayor's office, and a couple of restaurants.

The only hanging at the old jailhouse took place in 1928. Silas Richardson, who was jailed for stealing an automobile, shot and killed police officer John V. Damborino and injured Chief Mark Oliver when they entered Richardson's cell to search him. Silas escaped to New Orleans on a freight

car, and after a three-state search, was found 10 days later hiding under his parents' home where he had returned to pick up some clothes. He was found guilty by a Circuit Court jury and sentenced to death by hanging. He was the only person to be hanged there.

Fortunately, most days at the jail were peaceful. The back of the jailhouse, however, stayed unusually busy. At one time, customers could buy white lightning right out the rear window.



*Bay St. Louis City Hall Building, built in 1905*

*Do you know about...*

# ST. AUGUSTINE'S DIVINE WORD CHAPEL

The brick Renaissance Revival structure is part of the former St. Augustine Seminary begun in the 1920s by the Catholic Society of the Divine Word. It is the oldest Roman Catholic seminary in Mississippi for training and preparing black men for the priesthood. At that time it was the only school in the United States where young black Catholics could receive training. There are two shrines on the property at 199 Seminary Dr. in Bay St. Louis.

*First buildings at St. Augustine Seminary, Bay St. Louis  
(Photo/Department of Special Collections and  
University Archives, Marquette University Libraries)*



*St. Augustine Seminary, Bay St. Louis*



*Do you know about...*

# THE PIRATE HOUSE



Jean Lafitte and his band of pirates are believed to have hidden out here while plying coastal waters between Bay St. Louis and New Orleans. A secret tunnel supposedly led from the waterfront to the house and was used to smuggle black slaves from ships to the house where they

awaited transport to New Orleans. The home at 645 N. Beach Blvd. in Bay St. Louis was built in 1802 in the Louisiana Planter style, possibly by a New Orleans businessman with ties to local pirates. It was completely destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969.

*Do you know about...*

# SEA SONG PLANTATION



*Sea Song Plantation or Jackson House, Waveland*

Andrew Jackson, Jr., adopted son of President Andrew Jackson, made his home here before the Civil War. The plantation was named by Jackson's wife, Sarah, after the original home, formerly owned by Asa Russ, burned to the ground in

1858. It was located at what is now Buccaneer State Park in Waveland. Fire destroyed it again in 1935. Jackson also owned the Clifton Plantation on the site of what is now the Port Bienville Industrial Park near Pearlington.



*Do you know about...*

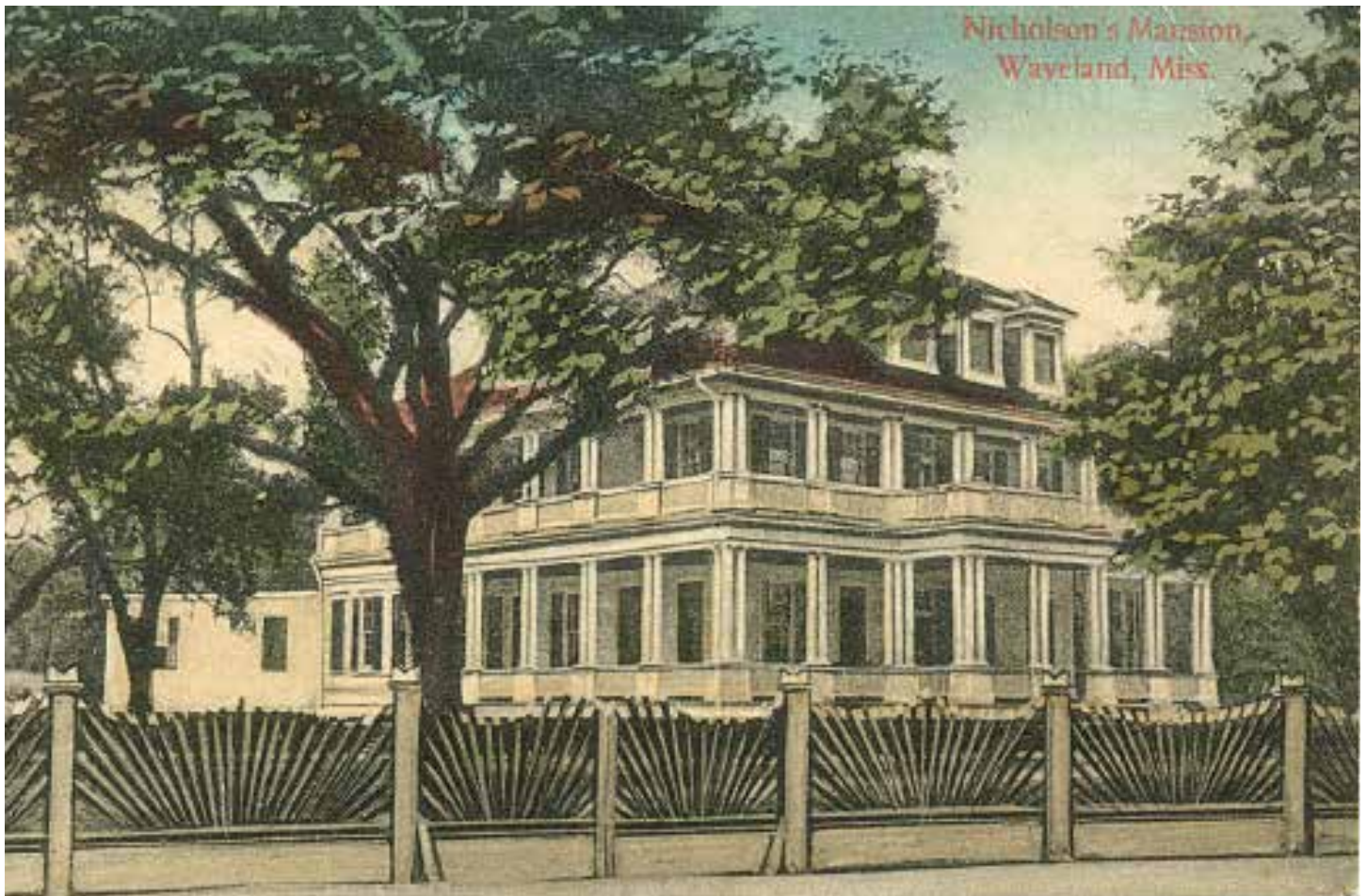
# “PEARL RIVERS”

Just north of the intersection of Beach Boulevard and Nicholson Avenue in Waveland is the former summer home of George and Eliza Jane Poitevant Nicholson. Under the pen name “Pearl Rivers,” Eliza was a poet and writer, and she eventually became the owner and publisher of the New Orleans Times

Picayune newspaper. She was one of the first female publishers in the United States. The picayune, from which the paper got its name, was a Spanish Colonial coin common in the New World. The town of Picayune, located roughly 30 miles northwest of Bay St. Louis, was named in honor of her newspaper.

**Right:** Eliza Jane Poitevant Nicholson

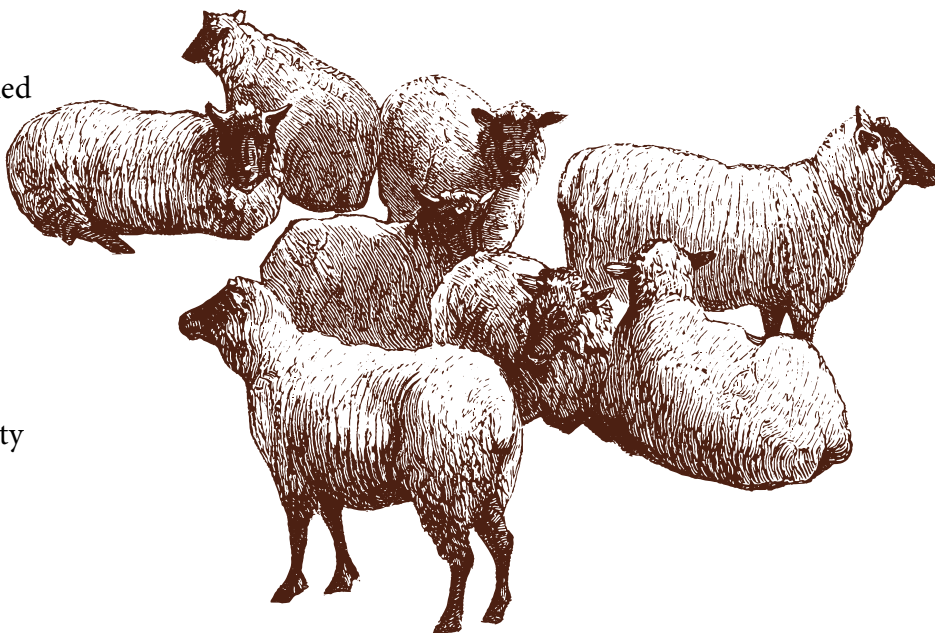
**Below:** Nicholson’s Mansion, Waveland



*Do you know about...*

# SHEEP FARMS

Many sheep farms once dotted the banks of the Jourdan River. Farms varied in size, but the larger ones carried nearly 3,000 head of sheep. On the farms, the animals received minimal care and attention. They were left to freely roam, had little protection from the elements, and were sheared both in and out of season. This produced a highly desirable, premium quality wool considered by both buyers and manufacturers to be of the finest quality in the country and commanding the highest prices at market. Wool and mutton were easily shipped to market via the nearby railroad.



*Do you know about...*

# THE SPANISH CUSTOMS HOUSE

The oldest building in Bay St. Louis was built in 1787 in the Creole architecture style, possibly by the Frenchman Hyacinth Caron. It was located at 708 S. Beach Blvd. in Bay St. Louis and was thought to be the home of the Spanish customs inspector. Hurricane Katrina completely destroyed it in 2005.





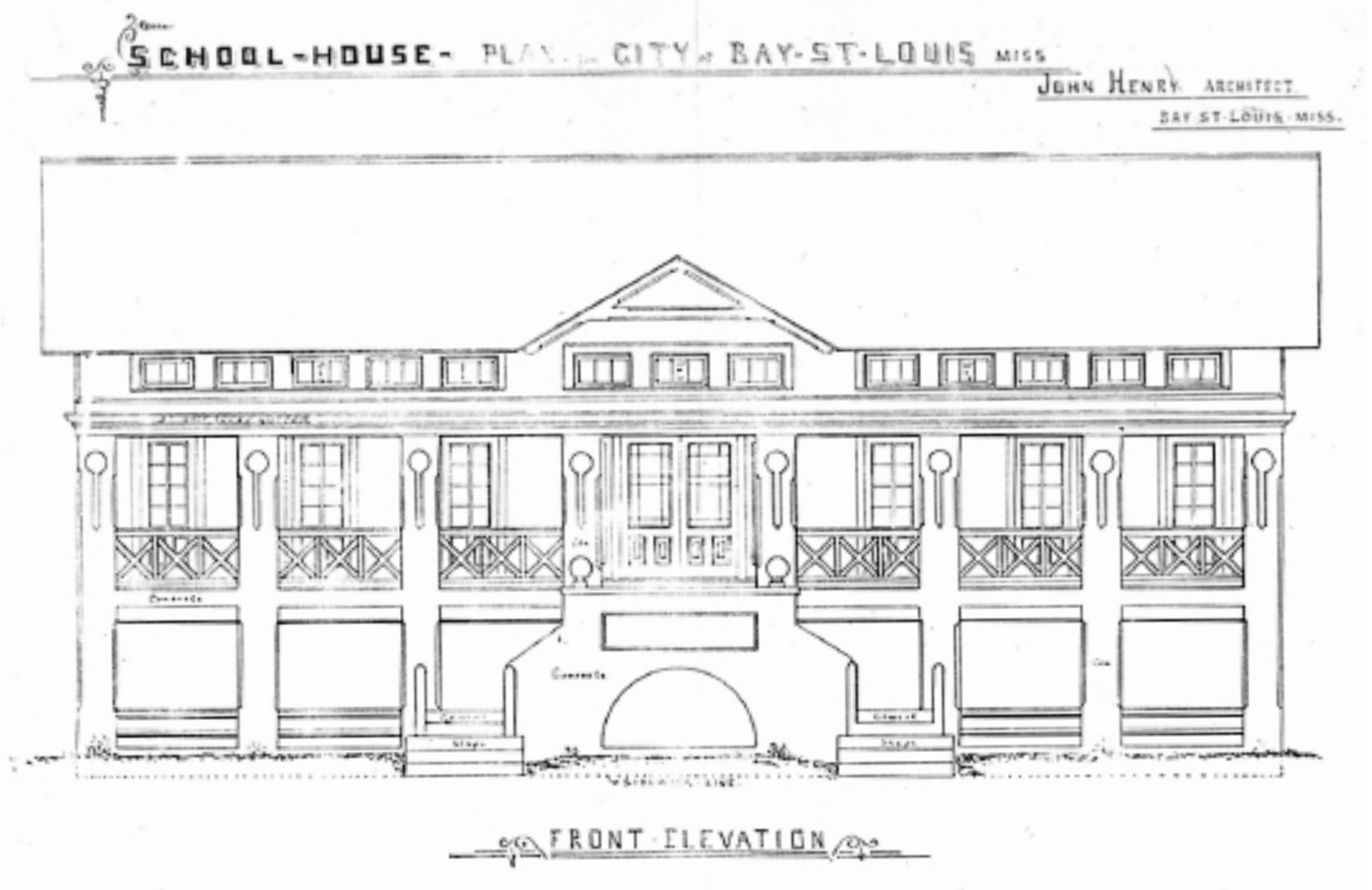
*Do you know about...*

# THE WEBB SCHOOL

This raised Colonial Revival building was constructed in 1913 at 300 Third St. and was Bay St. Louis' first primary school for first through fourth grades. It is the only school building of its kind on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

*Right: Webb School, Bay St. Louis*

*Below: Original Plans for the Webb School*



# *Do you know about...* **BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI**

Bay St. Louis is one of the oldest cities on the Gulf Coast. French explorers Iberville and Bienville discovered the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 1699 when they were sent by King Louis IX to find the Mississippi River. After they established Fort Maurepas in Ocean Springs, Bienville explored Bay St. Louis and named it in honor of the king. At the time, the area was sparsely populated with Choctaw and Muskogean Indians and a few French and Spanish immigrants. The Louisiana Purchase opened up the new territory to settlers in 1803, and when French Catholics and English Protestants began arriving, the Indians retreated into the swamps and woodlands north of the immediate coast.

In 1789, the area along the bay was given to Thomas Shields through a Spanish land grant and from 1802 to 1875 was known as Shieldsboro. The expansion of the railroad ushered in the "resort era" as more and more tourists, wealthy New Orleanians, and Natchez planters came to summer at the beach and enjoy the hotels, scenic drives, and relaxing atmosphere. The county seat was moved from Gainesville to Shieldsboro in 1853, and in 1875 the name was changed to Bay St. Louis.

The city sits at the highest point on the Gulf of Mexico.



*Hancock County Courthouse, built in 1911, Bay St. Louis*



*Bay St. Louis, 1940s*



# *Do you know about...* **THE ST. ROCH MINERAL SPRING**

Crystal clear, natural spring water once flowed through a spring, or “belle fontaine,” at a site near the Sherwood Heights condominiums on Second Street in Bay St. Louis. Early maps and photos indicate a belle fontaine near the bay. Prior to the arrival of the French in the late 1600s, an old Indian midden was located in this area. By the late 1800s, German immigrant Dr. L. H. von Gohren saw Bay St. Louis’ potential as a health resort and seized on a prime business opportunity. He built a large estate near the spring and offered mineral, medicated, and electric baths. With several guest houses on the property, as well as courts for playing tennis and croquet, people with a variety of medical conditions came to the “Villa Quisisana” for a wholly therapeutic experience.

According to old advertisements in the New Orleans Times Picayune, customers could also purchase water bottled “at the spring in Bay St. Louis” for eight cents a gallon.

Von Gohren’s estate was eventually demolished to clear the way for a new highway leading to the Bay St. Louis bridge.



*Dr. Von Gohren's residence*



*An outing at the St. Roch Mineral Spring*



*Do you know about...*

# BROWN'S VINEYARD



*Brown's Vineyard, Bay St. Louis*

The intersection of Highway 90 and Waveland Avenue in Waveland is the site of a 90-acre vineyard and winery once owned and operated by Frederick W. Braun and his wife, Anna, of Germany. Braun (Brown) purchased the land in 1864 under the Homestead Act. His vineyard of muscadine, or scuppernong, grapes produced about 50 barrels of wine annually, and he subsequently built a prosperous local and mail-order business. Vacationers to the Bay enjoyed his winery immensely. A horse-drawn

wagon known as a “tally-ho” transported many guests from local hotels to his vineyard where they were treated to dancing, piano music, and glasses of wine served with homemade bread and butter. Visitors could also peruse his wine cellar or walk the property and pick grapes off the vines. Prohibition ended Braun's business. The contents of his wine cellar were reportedly buried on the property, but revenue agents later found the bottles and broke them.



*Do you know about...*

# THE KILN TURPENTINE FACTORY

The long-leaf pine forests of northern Hancock County, conveniently close to the Jourdan River, brought thriving business opportunities to Kiln in the 1800s and 1900s, turpentine manufacturing in particular. The trees were tapped for their natural gum, and large stills turned the gum into turpentine and resin. One such facility was owned and operated by Albert John McLeod and his wife,

Virginia, and their nephew, Norton Haas. They ran a sawmill, stave mill, planer mill, turpentine plant, and general store, all of which employed nearly 500 people. Their products were shipped down the Jourdan River to New Orleans and Mobile, Ala. McLeod died in 1931, but "Aunt Gin" and Haas continued production until the 1950s. The 328-acre McLeod Park is named after them.



*Albert John and Virginia McLeod*

*Do you know about...*

# THE SUMMER CAMP FOR JEWISH ORPHANS

Children from a Jewish orphanage in New Orleans spent many summers here on the beautiful shores of the Gulf of Mexico. In 1984, the Jewish Federation of New Orleans purchased a home at 984 S. Beach Blvd. in Bay St. Louis where the children could enjoy

a vacation with many outdoor activities. Boys' and girls' groups alternated for two-week periods throughout the summer. Eventually, the number of children at the orphanage declined, so the Federation brought in other groups, and extra cabins were built behind the main house. When the

property was eventually sold, the new owner had a 32-foot section cut out of the center of the main house and moved several hundred feet over, making three houses on the property, 984, 986, and 988 S. Beach Blvd. All were destroyed in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina.

*Do you know about...*

# LOGTOWN

The late 19th and early 20th centuries brought progress and prosperity to the densely forested regions along the banks of the Pearl River in Hancock County. This area south of I-10 was originally known as Cabanage Latanier, or “palmetto camp.” After settlers arrived and began taking advantage of the vast natural resources at their disposal, it was renamed Logtown with the burgeoning timber industry. Nearly a dozen sawmills were operating by the mid-1800s. One of these mills, the H. Weston Lumber Company, opened in 1889 and grew into one of the largest sawmills in the world. Owner Henry Weston employed over 1,200 people at his mill alone. South Mississippi’s timber industry supplied lumber to many foreign countries, including Europe, their largest consumer.

At its heyday in the early 1900s, most of Logtown’s 3,000 residents were employed in the lumber industry. There was a post office, hotel, school, bank, two churches (Methodist and Baptist), an ice factory, and a swimming pool. By 1930 however, the lumber supply was exhausted. Weston had attempted a reforestation



*H. Weston Lumber Company planer mill, 1920s*

project but it couldn’t keep up with demand. The mills closed, and the population in Logtown and other nearby logging communities rapidly declined.

NASA purchased the Logtown property in 1961 as a buffer zone for their rocket engine testing at nearby Stennis Space Center. The Center is named for Senator John C. Stennis, who convinced the remaining 250 residents why they should give up their homes and relocate for the progression of the space program. All that remains of Logtown today is the Logtown Cemetery, with graves dating as far back as the 1850s. NASA



*Logtown Cemetery*

had the area surveyed for old property lines and historic artifacts, and much of their findings and recommendations were incorporated into the NASA Stennis Historic Preservation Plan.



*Do you know about...*

# THE ULMAN WOOLEN MILLS

Waveland's largest industry in the 1800s was the production of woolen blankets, shawls, and other items. The Ulman Woolen Mills were built by Alfred Ulman, who opened Jeff Davis Avenue in Waveland to build homes for the mill workers. This area was formerly known as Ulmanville. Wool production ended here in the mid-1880s.

*Ulman's Factory on Nicholson Avenue at Jeff Davis*



*Do you know about...*

# PEARLINGTON, MISSISSIPPI

With deep water access on the Pearl River, Pearlington was important in the cotton and lumber industries. Cotton was floated down the Pearl from plantations upriver. These jobs were lost when the expansion of the railroad eliminated the need to ship the cotton downriver. This loss was short-lived however. With plenty of timber around, three sawmills were soon up and running, including the Poitevant and Favre Lumber Company, owned and operated by W.J.



*Poitevant and Favre Lumber Company train*

Poitevant and Joseph A. Favre. A shipyard with several steamers and schooners transported the goods to market. Earlier

in its history, after the War of 1812, Pearlington was instrumental in producing bricks used in the construction of Fort

Pike and Fort Macomb in Louisiana. An old Indian path, now known as Hwy. 604, runs through the heart of town.

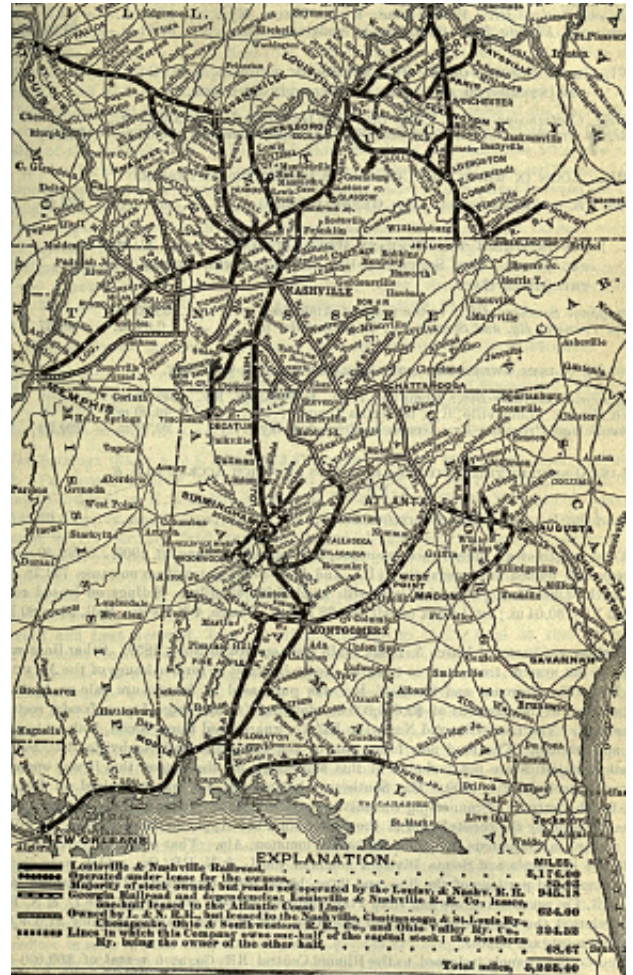
*Do you know about...*

# THE L&N RAILROAD

The Louisville and Nashville Railroad was chartered in 1850 for a route between Louisville, Ken., and Tennessee. By 1855, the first train was up and running. Going 15 mph, it carried 300 people on an eight-mile trip. In 1859, the 187-mile connection between Louisville and Nashville, Tenn., was complete. During the Civil War, the railroad served both the Union and Confederate armies. Despite damage during the war, the railroad recovered quickly and was expanded as shorter railroad systems were acquired. L&N tracks went through St. Louis, Cincinnati, Birmingham, Mobile, Pensacola, New Orleans, and Memphis, and the L&N soon became one of the major railroad systems in the United States. Further expansion extended the L&N's sphere of operations

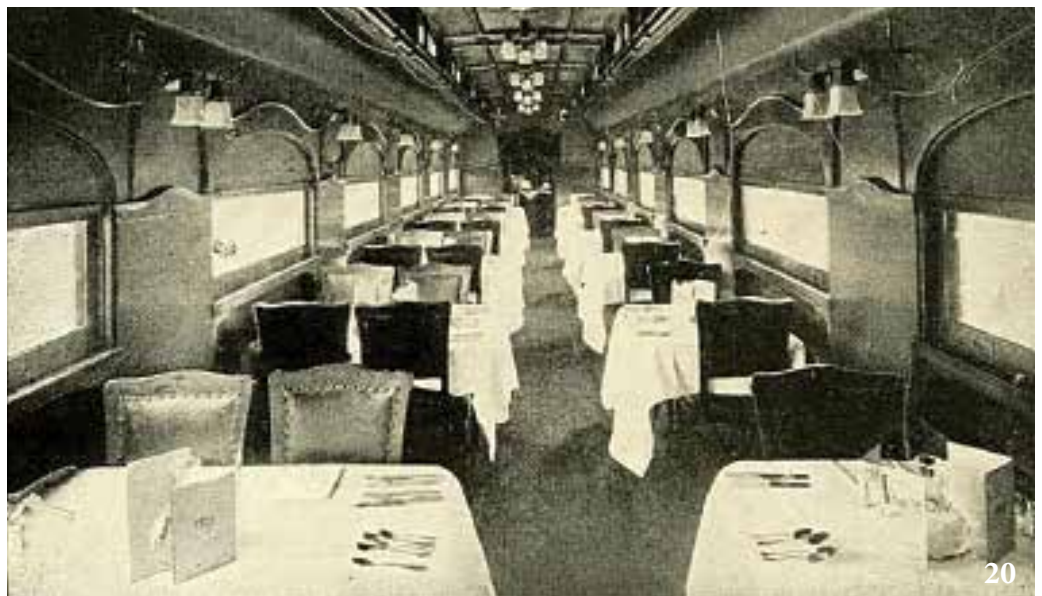
throughout much of the Southeast. The onset of World War II dramatically increased the amount of freight, passenger, and military traffic, but even with thousands of its employees joining the armed forces, the company effectively handled the increased load.

The L&N purchased its first diesel engine in 1939; its last steam locomotive was retired in 1957. Technological changes helped streamline the company, and the railroad continued operating until 1982 when it merged with the Seaboard Coast System, forming the Seaboard System Railroad. In 1986, CSX was formed with the merger of the Seaboard System and the Chessie System.



*Top Right: L&N Railroad lines*

*Right: L&N Railroad dining car*





*Do you know about...*

# THE BAY ST. LOUIS HISTORIC TRAIN DEPOT

One of the hubs of social activity in Bay St. Louis in the late 1800s was the train depot. The large, Queen Anne-style structure was a daily stop on the L&N Railroad line. Residents gathered there early each evening to meet the train and welcome travelers and commuters. Local vendors were always on hand offering sandwiches, pralines, seafood, and pies. The wooden building, constructed in 1876, was completely destroyed by a fire in 1928, but a new, two-story Spanish Revival Mission-style facility opened just over a year later. Even though the growth of the interstate system brought a decline in passenger rail travel, freight traffic was abundant. L&N trains, WWII troop trains, New Orleans commuters, and travelers on Amtrak's Sunset Limited all enjoyed stops at the station. Now the tracks are used exclusively by CSX freight. Bay St. Louis purchased the depot from CSX in 1993. Located at 1928 Depot Way, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is home to the Hancock County Visitor Center and Mardi Gras Museum.



*Original Bay St. Louis train depot*



*Spanish Revival Mission-style Bay St. Louis train depot, built after a fire destroyed the original in 1928*

# *Do you know about...* **UNION STREET, BAY ST. LOUIS**

The town of Bay St. Louis, previously known as Shieldsboro, was nearly decimated during the Civil War. Four wounded Yankee soldiers were being treated by the Sisters of Charity at Our Lady of the Gulf Church when eighty Union soldiers arrived by gunboat with the intent of burning down the

entire town in retaliation for resistance against the Union. Father Henry Le Duc arrived on the scene with a silver crucifix, imploring the soldiers to halt their attack. The soldiers complied, knelt to the cross, and returned to their ship. Shieldsboro was spared, and the street where this took place was named Union Street.

*A Union Street home, built in 1860  
with 1900 alterations*



# *Do you know about...* **PETE FOUNTAIN**

Jazz clarinetist extraordinaire Pete Fountain once owned a home on South Beach Boulevard in Bay St. Louis. Born in 1930 as Pierre Dewey LaFontaine, Fountain began playing the clarinet as a boy when doctors recommended it to improve his lung function. He performed with many jazz bands, joined the Lawrence Welk Show in 1957, and played on TV shows, at U.S. State Dinners, and for a mass in New Orleans with Pope John Paul

II. He also played with Louis Armstrong and Harry Connick, Jr. For years he owned his own jazz club in New Orleans called The French Quarter Inn, and in 2003 he became a frequent performer at Casino Magic/Hollywood Casino in Bay St. Louis until his last show there in 2010. His home was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Political commentators James Carville and Mary Matalin purchased the bayfront property in 2012. Fountain died in 2016 at age 86.

*Pete Fountain in 1962*





# *Do you know about...* **GULFSIDE ASSEMBLY**

For over 100 years this quiet beachfront property in Waveland has served as a beacon of hope and goodwill to thousands of people in need of beneficial change in their lives.

Segregation in the early 1900s denied African Americans access to hotels, churches, restaurants, public facilities, and recreational opportunities. Bishop Robert E. Jones, the first black leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church, decided to find a way to partly solve the problem. He raised \$4,000, bought several hundred acres on the beach in Waveland, and established a Methodist camp where blacks could visit the beach and swim. In 1924 it was the first place of its kind on the entire Gulf Coast.

Descendants of President Andrew Jackson had once owned a large mansion on the property, and this was converted to a meeting facility where black and white Methodists defied segregation laws and continued to meet. As

time went on, pastors, prospective pastors, and various children's groups all took advantage of the camp's amenities, and a year-round school for poor black boys also opened. New buildings and an auditorium were eventually added. By 1960, the Gulfside Assembly was debt-free and held assets worth over \$200,000. Despite ongoing segregation, the assembly continued to host racially integrated events and inner-city youth programs.

A catastrophic Hurricane Camille caused extensive damage to the buildings in 1969,

but they were quickly restored, rebuilt, and used again until their complete destruction by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The facilities were gone but the mission to help others remained. Instead of concrete buildings, temporary shelters were set up to house hundreds of volunteers who came

to assist in cleanup and recovery efforts.

Since that time, the prayer chapel has been rebuilt. It is named in honor of the United Methodist Church's first African American female bishop, the late Leontine Kelly.



*Robert E. Jones Hall at Gulfside Assembly*



*Open Air Chapel at Gulfside Assembly*

*Do you know about...*

# PORT BIENVILLE INDUSTRIAL PARK



*Port Bienville Industrial Park*

An expansive 3,600-acre site between Pearllington and Bay St. Louis is the home of over a dozen manufacturing and industrial corporations. Located on the Pearl River, the companies here are easily connected to intermodal means of transportation via barge, trucking, and rail operations. A shallow-draft barge port has a 100-ton crawler crane providing heavy lift capabilities. An additional 1,000 acres is available, and further expansion is anticipated.

In the early to mid-1800s, this site was the location of the old Clifton Plantation once owned by Judge Lewis Daniells

of South Carolina. He purchased the property in 1826 from the Boisdore family. Daniells owned nearly 900 acres, 700 head of cattle, and 41 slaves, and ran a prosperous farming operation growing sea-island cotton. The cotton was known at market to be of a very fine quality, selling at nearly three times the price of short staple cotton.

After Daniells' death, his heirs in 1856 sold the plantation to Andrew Jackson, Jr., adopted son of President Andrew Jackson. It came to be known as Jackson's Landing, and was the first of two plantation purchases by Jackson in Hancock County.



*Do you know about...*

# NAVY SEAL TRAINING FACILITY

Deep in the woods along the Pearl River, inside the Stennis Space Center's buffer zone, is a live-fire training facility used by hundreds of Navy SEALs from different SEAL teams who come to learn and practice river combat skills. The Naval Special Warfare Group 4's Western Maneuver Area is a training facility only; no SEAL teams are based there. An impressive rescue scene from the 2012 movie *Act of Valor* was filmed on location here.

*Navy SEALs train on the Pearl River.*



*Do you know about...*

# GERMAN U-BOATS IN THE MISSISSIPPI SOUND

During World War II, German U-boats prowled the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi Sound targeting tankers shipping petroleum from ports in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Even though the

Coast Guard patrolled the Gulf from a station on Ship Island, one of Mississippi's offshore barrier islands, the Germans continued their onslaught throughout 1942 and 1943, sinking 56 ships and damaging 14 others.

*Do you know about...*

# CLERMONT HARBOR

Clermont City was established in the late 1890s, but the name was changed when a new harbor was dug. The population gradually increased and local developers envisioned the area as the “Riviera of New Orleans,” especially when the impressive Clermont Harbor Hotel was constructed. However, the vacation destination that was planned never came to fruition. Now this small enclave west of Bay St. Louis is home to residents who savor the tranquil, easy pace of coastal life.

Among the area’s residents was Hugh Turner Carr, who moved to Clermont Harbor from Maryland in 1925 when he was hired to repair the hotel which had been severely damaged by a fierce hurricane in 1915. Despite the heat and swarms of hungry mosquitoes, he decided to stay, build a home, and start the Clermont Harbor Lumber Company and Clermont Manufacturing Company. In 1942, he also built a 40-foot tall lighthouse-like tower next to his home as an observation post to

spot enemy aircraft during World War II. Volunteers staffed the tower and called into the Third Fighter Command to report on any planes flying over. When the war ended, he converted the lighthouse to a workshop where he restored and sold antiques. The tower survived the 1947 hurricane and 1969’s Hurricane Camille, but was lost to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

*Do you know about...*

# CLERMONT HARBOR HOTEL

The Clermont Harbor Hotel has a rather short, sad history. Built in the early 1900s of cypress wood, the hotel overlooked the Mississippi Sound in Waveland and featured 40 rooms and 20 baths. After a hurricane in September 1915 blew a large schooner into the building, it was restored and operated until it was brought to financial ruin by the Great Depression in 1929. For the next 17 years the building sat neglected. When it was finally renovated, it burned to the ground the day after reopening.



*The Clermont Harbor Hotel*



*Do you know about...*

# THE BAY ST. LOUIS ICE, LIGHT & BOTTLING WORKS

Several technological improvements came to Bay St. Louis around 1900. A new facility producing ice, street lighting, and beverage bottling was built at 398 Blaize Ave. Over 100 streetlights were erected around the city, and the new ice plant was capable of producing 25 tons of ice per day. The latest equipment was also brought in for bottling carbonated drinks which were shipped throughout the county and to points beyond via the L&N Railroad.



*Do you know about...*

# GAINESVILLE

A Spanish land grant given to Dr. Ambrose Gaines in early 1810 was the beginning of what would become a thriving lumber and commercial center in south Mississippi. On a high bluff, with deep-water access on the Pearl River, Gainesville was a transportation hub, where goods being shipped up and down the river were unloaded and readied for land transport. Gainesville became the county seat in 1846, and the courthouse was moved there as well. The town grew rapidly, and soon there were hotels, coffee shops, bars, stores, and two newspapers. Chief crops included tobacco, sugar cane, rice, and the much lauded sea-island cotton. Fruit orchards were also in abundance. When the courthouse burned in 1853, a lengthy debate ensued and the county seat was moved to Shieldsboro (Bay St. Louis). This, coupled with the advancement of the railroad and the eventual decline of the local lumber industry, took its toll on this once prosperous



*Unknown home in Gainesville*

community. The few remaining residents were relocated when NASA incorporated the area into the Stennis Space Center.

# *Do you know about...* **NAPOLEON**

How is it that a tiny community along the Pearl River came to be named after an illustrious French emperor?



*Napoleon Bonaparte*

When Napoleon Bonaparte's brother, Jerome, came to America seeking help and funding to free Napoleon from exile on the Mediterranean island of Elba, he and his followers landed somewhere near Waveland and hid in the marshes and swamps along the Pearl River waiting for aides to escort them to New Orleans where they hoped to find people sympathetic to their cause. Jerome named this area in honor of his brother.

The land was first given to John Claudius Favre through a British land grant; he in turn passed it on to his son, Simon Favre, who settled the area in 1798. Families farmed and raised livestock, and by the mid-1800s, many of them worked at the Weston Lumber Company, one of the largest sawmills in the world. A short-lived brick-making industry operated as well. Bricks made here were used in the construction of Fort Pike, a Civil War installation still standing near Slidell, La. In addition, Napoleon was the location of Hancock County's first printing press. The town was absorbed into the Stennis Space Center buffer zone in the 1960s. A small cemetery is all that remains.



*Baptist church in Napoleon*



*Cemetery in Napoleon*

Incidentally, Napoleon engineered his own escape from Elba, was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo, and was permanently exiled to the South Atlantic Ocean island of St. Helena.



# *Do you know about...* **WESTONIA & SANTA ROSA**

Two other early communities supported by the huge H. Weston Lumber Company in the 1800s were Westonia and Santa Rosa, both of which would eventually become a part of the enormous buffer zone surrounding NASA's Stennis Space Center. Westonia was located south of I-10, along Hwy. 607. A tiny cemetery with graves of former Westonia residents lies hidden behind the treeline along this highway. Travelers entering west Mississippi along I-10 can stop at the Westonia Mississippi Welcome Center where they can explore space history at the Infinity Science Center, NASA's official visitor center of the Stennis Space Center. Walking trails, a 3-D theater, indoor exhibits, and guided tours are all part of the experience. Visitors can also get an up close and personal look at an Apollo 13 lunar lander trainer, an Apollo 4 capsule, and a giant Saturn V first stage booster rocket.

Across the Stennis complex from Westonia was Santa Rosa, a tiny community on the northern edge of the Stennis buffer zone, located near the Honey Island Swamp. At one time there were stores, a church, a one-room schoolhouse, a post office, and plenty of venues selling illegal whiskey. Former residents are buried in the Turtleskin Cemetery near Stennis' northern main gate.

The schoolhouse there was the former Aaron Academy, one of the



*Aaron Academy in Santa Rosa*



*Westonia School in 1905, with teacher Esta LaHatte*

oldest schools in northern Hancock County. William Wesley Frierson established the school prior to 1890 and insisted it be named after his father, Aaron Frierson, who was a lifelong staunch supporter of public schools. By 1937, the one-room

structure had become a six-room school with a small auditorium. It was all demolished when NASA took over the property. Thomas Bilbo, a two-time governor of Mississippi and U.S. Senator from Mississippi, once taught here.

*Do you know about...*

# THE VALENA C. JONES MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A small group of African-American women founded the St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church in 1880. When they outgrew their small building on Washington Street, members relocated to a larger place on Sycamore Street. An early 1900s hurricane damaged the building and this, coupled with an ever-growing congregation, led members to construct a new church at its current location, 248 Sycamore St. The Gothic Revival-

style structure was built in 1926, and was named after Valena C. Jones, daughter of one of the founding members. She was born in 1872, grew up with a love for teaching, and began teaching school in rural Mississippi. By 1892, she was the principal of the Bay St. Louis Negro School. She also taught for a short time in New Orleans.

She was married to Bishop Robert E. Jones of New Orleans,

who was the first black bishop elected as General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was the driving force behind the establishment of the Gulfside Methodist Assembly, a beachfront retreat center in Waveland for African-Americans.

Ms. Jones died in 1917. Several public schools are named in her honor, including the Valena C. Jones School on Old Spanish Trail.



*Valena Cecelia McArthur Jones  
(Photo/Louisiana Photograph Collection and  
New Orleans Public Library)*

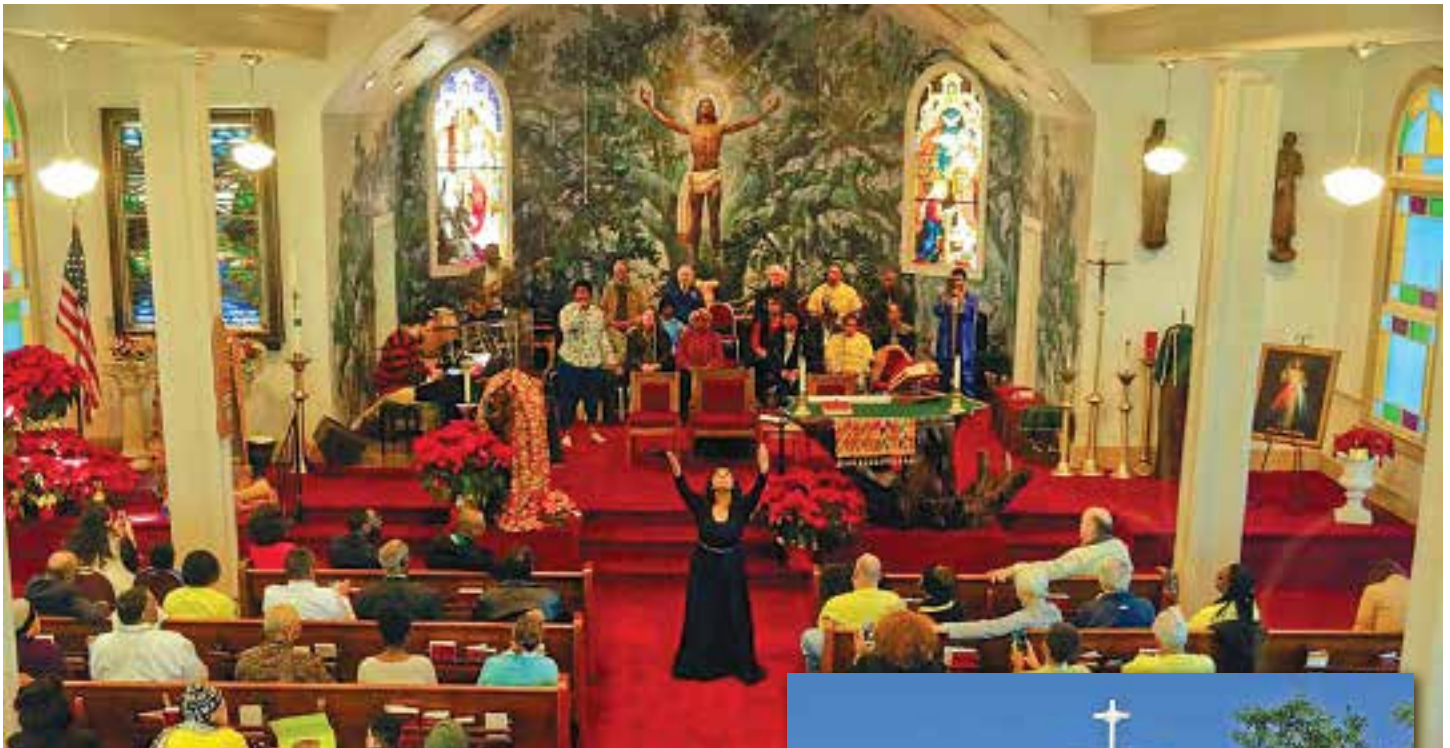


*The Valena C. Jones Memorial United Methodist Church  
(Photos/The Shoofly Magazine)*



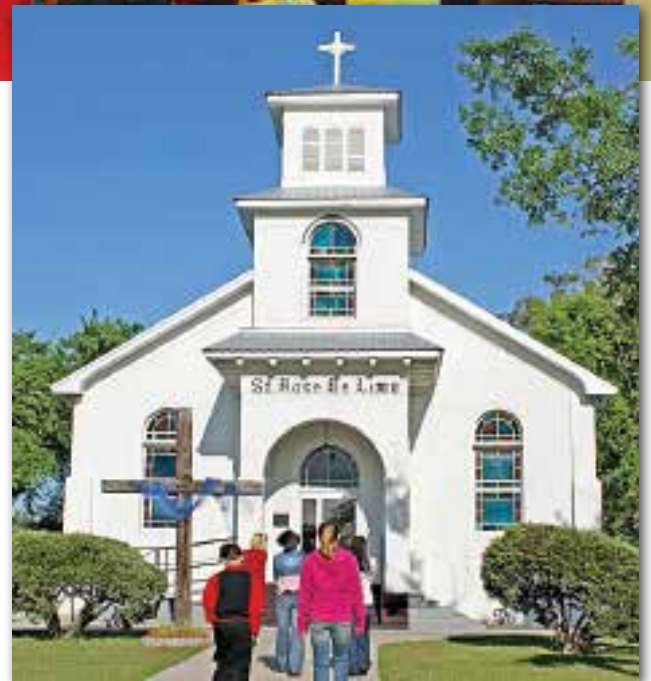
*Do you know about...*

# ST. ROSE DE LIMA CATHOLIC CHURCH



Missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) established a seminary in Bay St. Louis in the 1920s to train young black Catholics for the priesthood. At that time, the Sisters of St. Joseph were operating two schools – St. Joseph Academy and a school for African-American children, both of which were affiliated with Our Lady of the Gulf Parish. Running both schools proved difficult, so the SVDs were put in

charge of the black school. It was soon decided that, to better serve the African-American Catholic community, a separate parish was needed. In 1925, the black school was moved from Second Street to newly purchased property on Nacaise Avenue, and the new parish was named St. Rose de Lima. Construction of the church began immediately thereafter, and the St. Rose de Lima Church, at 301 S. Nacaise Ave., opened in 1926.



*St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church  
(Photos/Ellis Anderson, The Shoofly Magazine)*

# *Do you know about...* **THE BAY ST. LOUIS BRIDGE**



*The Bay St. Louis bridge, rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina*

As more and more people were attracted to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the early 1900s, the need for better roads and travel routes became essential. Ferry service across the St. Louis Bay was slow and dangerous in the city's early years. With a growing population and tourism industry, the increased traffic put a massive strain on ferry transportation.

In 1926, Hancock and Harrison Counties collaborated with the Mississippi Highway Department to begin construction of a new wooden bridge spanning the bay.

Half the cost was split between the two counties, with the other half paid for by the state. The new 1.9-mile long bridge was dedicated in March 1928.

While the bridge did ease traffic problems, the wooden structure needed constant maintenance, often causing long delays and forcing drivers to detour some 27 miles completely around the bay. After damage from a hurricane in 1947, it was obvious a more stable structure was needed.

The new bridge became a reality

in August of 1953. At 55 feet high, it survived for 52 years until Hurricane Katrina wiped it out in 2005. Ironically, ferry service was re-introduced, and the ferry made several trips across the bay daily until the bridge was replaced.

Just 21 months and \$267 million later, the brand new, 85-foot-tall, four-lane span with a pedestrian path was completed. Lights outline the entire gulf side of the bridge, and bronze relief plaques made from salvaged bearing plates from the old bridge retain a bit of bridge history.



# *Do you know about...* **WAVELAND, MISSISSIPPI**

Waveland is the former western end of old Shieldsboro. It was once known as Montgomery Station and had two stops along the L&N railroad line. The first post office was built in 1875. A charter in 1888 established Waveland as a new municipality with a mayor and board of aldermen. Waveland was a haven for people from New Orleans, Natchez, and places farther north who spent weekends and summers at the “Land of the Waves.”

Wealthy New Orleans businessman Peter Hellwege loved the Gulf Coast and made his home in Waveland, choosing to commute daily by train to his cotton and stock brokerage firm at the Cotton Exchange Building on Carondelet Street in New Orleans. He was one of the founders and the first president of Hancock Bank in Bay St. Louis, and was instrumental in promoting Waveland by encouraging friends and associates to buy in the area and improve



*Coleman Avenue, Waveland*

their properties. With the booming economy from the timber, seafood, and tourism industries, he opened a branch of Hancock Bank at Pearlinton, the first branch bank on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Coleman Avenue was the town's main business district. It was destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969, rebuilt, and destroyed again in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina struck. A new City Hall was rebuilt on its former site, and a school built in 1930 is now home to the Waveland Civic



*Waveland Veterans Memorial*

Center and Ground Zero Museum. A memorial at the foot of Coleman Avenue honors America's veterans.

Waveland was incorporated as a city

in 1970, and Buccaneer State Park was dedicated in 1976. Waveland is the only city on the Gulf Coast prohibiting commercial development on the beach.

*Do you know about...*

# DIAMONDHEAD, MISSISSIPPI

Diamondhead began in 1969 as a resort development by the Diamondhead Corporation, which was developing resort properties throughout much of the South. The group purchased a 6,000-acre tract of land next to I-10 that was still under construction at the time. The vision was to build a resort community starting with model homes and condominiums, followed by a country club, marina, small airport, golf course, swimming pools, and community center. Lots began selling in 1970, and by 1974 over 60 homes had been built. A small news circular called the Diamondhead News was created to help keep residents apprised of progress in the neighborhood.

Handily situated close to the interstate, Diamondhead rapidly found favor with retirees, as well as employees of Stennis Space Center and commuters to New Orleans East.



*Golf in Diamondhead*

A Property Owners Association (POA) was formed in 1985, and a Board of Directors elected by the homeowners oversaw management of the golf course and other amenities. As the community grew, so did the cost of property owners' and golf course maintenance fees. Many residents became unhappy with the increasing costs, and talk of incorporating

Diamondhead into a city began in earnest, but to no avail.

Hurricane Katrina changed that. Incorporation efforts were revived after the area saw extensive damage from the massive storm in 2005. After much study and discussion, a petition for incorporation was submitted to the state, and despite a legal challenge by some

residents opposing this move, Diamondhead received its charter as a city in 2012.

Today, over 8,000 residents call Diamondhead home. This sprawling, family-oriented city has retained its resort-like atmosphere and is one of the nicest cities on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



*Do you know about...*

# THE HONEY ISLAND SWAMP

Teeming with life, legend, and lore, the Honey Island Swamp is a great, marshy divide separating southern Louisiana and Mississippi along the Pearl River. Its rich history and mystery are hidden in an expanse nearly 20 miles long and 7 miles wide. Over half of its 70,000 acres is part of the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, gradually turning from swamp marsh at the lower boundary to hardwood bottomland to the north.



*Honey Island Swamp (Photo/Paul Mannix)*

The Honey Island Swamp is fed by the Pearl River and is one of the United States' most pristine and natural river swamps, abounding with migratory birds, alligators, nutria, turtles, black bears, cougars, feral hogs, snakes, raccoons, and cypress trees. It gets its name from the swarms of honeybees that once flourished there.

Although it belongs to Louisiana, the swamp has harbored many an outlaw from Louisiana and Mississippi who have slipped into its dense underbrush in an effort to elude the authorities.

Early Native Americans once made their homes here, and pirates and thieves set up hideouts and skillfully navigated secret watery passageways to rob unsuspecting travelers. One such criminal element in the 1800s was a particularly dangerous gang led by Pierre Rameau, the King of Honey Island.

Rameau was born in Scotland as Kirk McCulloch. Despite being raised in a good family, he decided piracy was a quick way to get rich, and to that end, he and his followers looted, robbed, and viciously murdered

their victims, using the Honey Island Swamp to their advantage. He became quite wealthy, and lived among high society in a fine home in New Orleans under the assumed identity of Col. Phillip Loring, mine owner from Mexico. He stored much of his treasure up the Pearl River in Gainesville. Rameau also served as a spy for the British during the Battle of New Orleans, during which he ultimately died.

The swamp was home to another legendary figure in the 1960s, when claims that a giant ape-

like creature with strange yellow eyes and thin gray hair was inhabiting the area. The Honey Island Swamp Monster has never been caught, but for a time, the legend lived on.

Today the Honey Island Swamp is treasured by naturalists and hunters, as well as guided tour operators who give visitors an up-close look at this incredible and diverse ecosystem. Its beauty is on full display, but its mysteries will remain shrouded, absorbed forever into its swampy sponge.

*Do you know about...*

# THE CRESCENT HOTEL (PICKWICK HOTEL) & HOTEL REED

One of the first and finest hotels in Bay St. Louis in the late 1800s was the Crescent Hotel, owned and operated by Capt. John V. Toulme, a businessman and former Bay St. Louis mayor. Located at the intersection of Beach Boulevard and the railroad tracks, the hotel was the largest of its time, housing up to 100 guests who enjoyed tennis, croquet, swings, walking paths, and fresh water from an artesian well. The hotel was renamed the Pickwick Hotel when ownership transferred to Mr. John Shansy. He in turn sold the property to Horatio Weston, son of Logtown lumber magnate Henry Weston, who renamed it the Hotel Weston. When fire destroyed it in 1923, Weston rebuilt the hotel at the corner of Ulman Avenue and Beach Boulevard. After Weston passed away, Robert Reed purchased the property, renamed it yet again, and operated the Hotel Reed until 1959.

That same year, local physician Dr. Wesley McFarland saw the



*Pickwick Hotel, formerly Crescent Hotel*



*Hotel Reed*

need for an elderly care facility and helped convert the hotel into a nursing home with 16 beds. In 1962, Mr. and Mrs. David Smallwood bought it, changed the name to Gulf View Haven

Nursing Home, and took in nearly 2,000 patients. An extensive remodeling project took place in 1977 and the home was re-opened with 80 beds under the name Hotel Reed Nursing Center. It

closed in 2002, and the building sat deteriorating until a fire of unknown origin gutted it on Christmas Eve in 2011. It was later torn down.