



# KINFOLKS

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY, INC.

ISSN 0742-7654

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3 - Society News                              | 20 - Chart - W. B. Williamson                 |
| 4 - January Program - Show & Tell             | 21 - Swamp Ferries                            |
| 4 - November Program - Lost Lake Charles      | 27 - 1904 Lowry Wedding                       |
| 10 - Have You Researched NARA?                | 29 - Laban Thomas Owned Gunshop               |
| 11 - Queries                                  | 32 - <i>The Daily American</i> (29 July 1897) |
| 12 - American Legion W. B. Williamson Post #1 | 35 - Index                                    |
| 36 - 2018 Officers & Patron Members           |   |

Volume 42 No. 1 - March 2018



**SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY** organized in 1973 to gather, process and preserve genealogical material, is a non-profit educational organization. Its objectives are to promote interest in genealogy, to encourage and assist its members in genealogical research, and to conduct such subsidiary projects as shall contribute to that end. SWLGS was incorporated in 1991. The Society does not maintain an office. Telephone numbers listed in *Kinfolks* are private numbers. All work is done by volunteers.

**MEMBERSHIP** per calendar year is \$12 - individual, \$17 - families (husband and wife), and \$22 - patron (individuals or husband and wife, provides additional financial support). Membership begins in January each year and includes an annual subscription to *Kinfolks*. Members joining after January will receive quarterlies for the current year. Correspondence and dues should be sent to SWLGS, P. O. Box 5652, Lake Charles, LA 70606-5652.

SWLGS holds its regular meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of January, March, May, September and November at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Meeting Room of the Southwest Louisiana Genealogical & Historical Library, 411 Pujo St., Lake Charles, LA. Programs include a variety of topics to instruct and interest genealogists.

**KINFOLKS** is published quarterly. Issues should be received by end of March, May, September and November. Notify the SWLGS of a change of address as soon as possible to assure delivery. Queries are free to members, \$2 for non-members. Each issue has a surname index. Single issues are \$4.00. Back issues are available from 1977. *Kinfolks* is indexed in the Periodical Source Index (PERSI), Fort Wayne, IN.

**EDITORIAL POLICY** - We encourage and welcome contributions for inclusion in *Kinfolks*, especially unpublished material pertaining to Southwest Louisiana. However, we will accept genealogical material referring to other areas. We strive to publish only reliable genealogical information, but neither the SWLGS nor the editors assume responsibility for accuracy of fact or opinion expressed by contributors. Articles are written by the editor unless otherwise specified. We reserve the right to edit and/or reject material not suitable for publication. Articles and queries will be included as space permits. Please send contributions to SWLGS, P. O. Box 5652, Lake Charles, LA 70606-5652. Permission is granted to republish information from *Kinfolks*, provided the SWLGS and the author or compiler (if identified) is given due credit.

**SOCIETY ITEMS FOR SALE** - *Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. III (1991) \$25.00 ppd; Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. IV (1994) \$25.00 ppd; Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. V (1997) \$25.00 ppd; Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. VI (2000) \$22.00 ppd; Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. VII (2003) \$20.00 ppd; and Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. VIII (2009) \$20.00 ppd. Kinfolks - Subject Index II - Vol. 19 (1995) through Vol. 22 (1998) \$5.00 ppd; Subject Index IV - Vol. 27 (2003) through Vol. 31 (2007) \$5.00 ppd. Order from SWLGS, P. O. Box 5652, Lake Charles, LA 70606-5652.*

**IMPORTANT!!! PLEASE ADVISE US OF A CHANGE OF ADDRESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** *Kinfolks* is mailed in bulk in March, May, September and November. The post office will not forward your copy if you have moved and charges 75 cents for an address correction. Re-mailing *Kinfolks* cost the price of a second copy, plus \$2.00. Therefore, it is necessary that you advise us of a change of address as soon as possible to help save unnecessary expenses.

**COPYRIGHT 2018: Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society, Lake Charles, LA**

**SOCIETY NEWS**  
**SWLGS Web Site - <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~laslgs>**  
**Mark Your Calendar for Meetings -**  
**2018 - Jan. 20, March 17, May 19, Sept. 15, Nov. 17**

**MARCH MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society will be held on Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Meeting Room.

“First Lady – Bess Truman” will be presented by Mrs. EILEEN HACKER.

Canned goods and monetary contributions will be given to Abraham’s Tent.

**MAY MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society will be held on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Meeting Room.

Program will be “Colonial Life” presented by LEE ROBINSON of Jennings, La.

Canned goods and monetary contributions will be given to Abraham’s Tent.

\*\*\*\*\*

**NEW MEMBERS**

1641. ROBERTA PINCH, 19407 Rostrom Rd., Welsh, LA 70591

Membership to Date: 145

\*\*\*\*\*

**CORRECTION: *KINFOLKS*, Vol. 41 #4, p. 135, should be *RUPERT CISCO*.**

**Capt. DANIEL GOOS.** A statue of the early Lake Charles settler was unveiled in the Goos Plaza at Memorial Point in Lake Charles. It is adjacent to the 9/11 memorial on the southwest corner of the Lakefront Promenade. The statue was done by JANIE STINE LaCROIX. The plaza was designed by architect EVERETT SCHRAM.

\*\*\*\*\*

<p><b>IN MEMORIAM</b></p> <p><b>MARY MOUTON POLLET</b></p> <p><b>1929 - 2018</b></p>
--

## JANUARY PROGRAM

The January program is always our "Show & Tell" program presented by members of the Society.

### ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Submitted by DOROTHY AKINS, Member #1451

This book *Alice in Wonderland* was given to me by a friend who moved from his house at 727 Moss Street (formerly Common Street) to Kansas. He said the book was in his old house when he moved in. The house had belonged to ALICE KURTZ ARGUELLO.

Inside the book is an inscription by A. P. PUJO. It is dated April 11, 1938, and says "From one friend to another to Miss ALICE W. KURTZ." ALICE was Mr. PUJO's personal secretary for 20 years.

\*\*\*\*\*

Louisiana's anti-lottery campaign of 1888 gave ARSENE PUJO, a distinguished early Lake Charles attorney, his first taste of the political arena which ultimately led to the United States Congress. He was immediately put on the Committee on Banking and on Commerce. There he was famed for his leadership in the 1912 "money trust" investigation conducted by a subcommittee of the United States House of Representatives Committee on banking and on currency. He served in the House from March 3, 1903, to March 2, 1913.

Mr. PUJO was born in 1861 in Rose Bluff, just west of the Calcasieu River, near Bayou d'Inde where his family had settled in about 1848. ARSENE's father, PAUL PUJO, and PAUL's brother AMEDEE reportedly owned the first schooner to ply the waters of the Calcasieu for trade purposes. PAUL PUJO also opened a mercantile business (reportedly the first store in Lake Charles on Pujo Street) which was named for him). ARSENE PUJO received his education in the public and private schools of Lake Charles. He studied law in the office of Judge GABRIEL A. FOURNET and upon his admission to the bar in 1886 became Judge FOURNET's law partner. At the time of his death in 1939, he was senior partner of the firm, Pujo, Hardin, and Porter. He is buried in Orange Grove Cemetery.

\*\*\*\*\*

### BOLT

Submitted by JIM GILL, Member #728

Some years ago in the back of an old antique shop I found a bolt like fastener that seemed to be very old. Not finding out exactly what it was made for, I brought it to Show and Tell. After much discussion we learned it was used to attach blades to farm implements or plows.

\*\*\*\*\*

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM

The November program was "Lost Lake Charles" presented by ADLEY CORMIER. The following is an excerpt from the book *Lost Lake Charles*, published in July 2017 by Arcadia Publishing of Charleston, South Carolina. The book tells of the fascinating hidden history of



Lake Charles, a history lost to fire, storms, flood, disasters and "progress." Mr. CORMIER presented a portion of the book and the images at the November meeting. All rights are reserved by the Author.

## **THE ISHAK**

The earliest inhabitants of what was to become Lake Charles were roaming bands of Ishak Indians. Much of what we know about the Ishak came from what appears to be now-biased accounts from other native-American tribes at the time. The neighboring tribes, the Chitimacha and the Natchez, warned the first French and Spanish settlers that the local tribes were cannibalistic and renegade. Even the name by which the native inhabitants are perhaps better known, Attakapas, is actually the Chitimacha tribal word for "man-eater" and not an Ishak word at all. As the European explorers first encountered the Chitimacha (with their advanced culture), those same explorers adopted and used the Chitimacha term for the neighboring native peoples, and, to some extent, adopted the derisive attitude about their nature and character. The Ishak were essentially handicapped by bad press from even before contact with the white man.

The range of the Sunrise Ishak covered most of southwest Louisiana. One of the earliest French garrisons in Louisiana, Poste des Attakapas (now St. Martinville) marked the eastern edge of their traditional range. The Sunrise people were part of the greater Ishak people that had two components: The Sunrise-people east of the Sabine River and the Sunset-people west of the Sabine. While linguistically connected to the western and southern plains Indians, and possibly even the Aztecs, the Ishak were remote from their larger tribal cousins, and lived at the very frontier edge between the roaming plains tribes and the more village-oriented Native Americans of central and eastern Louisiana.

As a nomadic tribe driven by needs to hunt and gather seasonal foodstuffs, the Ishak did not leave large tangible villages or much in the way of solid artifacts. In fact, the relatively low numbers of Ishak were focused mostly on self-preservation as small family and clan-related tribal groups. While fierce fighters and agile hunters, the Ishak were never very numerous. Many succumbed to European-introduced disease and to near-constant skirmishes with the Chitimacha on the east and the Caddo and Natchez tribes on the north. Post contact intermarriage with settlers also diluted the culture rapidly.

Today, there are a few descendants of the Ishak people in Southwest Louisiana who are attempting to regain a tribal identity. Much of the challenge in establishing identity is that there are few physical remains or artifacts to attest to this near-lost culture. Rare items such as pottery, tools or arrowheads (made with traded-for chert or flint from northern and western sources) are in private and a few public collections. Many items are not particularly well-documented. No villages or archeological settlements remain. Occasionally, archeologists find shell and artifact middens - essentially waste dumps - that marked the location of seasonally reused settlement sites.

So middens were harvested for the construction of shell roads in the 1920s and 1930s. A massive, alligator-shaped midden was photographed somewhere in Big Lake very early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with nothing remaining of that unique feature. According to some traditions, two of

the ancient trails of the Ishak, one that connected the Sunrise people to their cousins in east Texas and the other which connected them to the trading Natchez and Caddo tribes to the north eventually became the routings for the Old Spanish Trail to Texas and the Old Opelousas Road respectively.

There was a strong oral tradition for ancestor Ishaks, a cultural tradition which continues to characterize current tribal practice. Perhaps the best evidence of the oral tradition and of the ancient Ishak language is the word "Calcasieu" itself which is the English transliteration of the Ishak word meaning "crying eagle." Crying Eagle was (and is) the honorific for the paramount chief of the Ishak tribe and this word was used by early Europeans to identify the river and the area. The Calcasieu River and Calcasieu Parish are two of the relatively few geographic entities in Louisiana with native-American names and perhaps the only ones named for an actually native-American person.

## **THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH MEET THE AMERICAN**

Like most of Louisiana, Lake Charles was first viewed from the water. Early European explorers and settlers used the network of river and coastal waters to access and explore North America and first area explorers skirted the coast and portaged over prairie to get to Southwest Louisiana. Much of Louisiana history focuses on the heroic expeditions of LaSalle and others to claim the entire Mississippi valley and to explore and settle the central core of the continent.

However the southwest corner of the state was not directly connected by water to the rest of Louisiana. For most of French Colonial and Spanish Colonial Louisiana history, Lake Charles was literally off the radar, viewed as a less than strategic part of the French settlement plan.

The French plan focused on water-connected "Postes" like those in Natchitoches, Rapides (Alexandria), Opelousas, and Attakapas, and on trading the continent's riches through New Orleans to the mother country. Even when the French lost the core of the continent in the 1760s, the new Spanish authorities also viewed southwestern Louisiana in pretty much the same light: it was remote, hard to get to, under-populated and could wait for development.

The American Revolution changed everything. The United States became a new player in the game for domination of the continent, and besides, our revolution ignited a continental change by helping to encourage revolution in Europe as well. After the downfall of the French monarchy, Napoleon regained the central core of the continent back from the Spanish – from Louisiana west of the Mississippi River – plus strategic New Orleans.

While less than a century old, the city of New Orleans was the prize of North American post-colonial strategy. It controlled access to the world for the goods of the entire center of the continent including those of the newly-won and settled American Territory west of the Appalachians. Nearly as soon as Napoleon regained the Louisiana Territory, he offered it whole to the young American nation, a delegation from which had been in negotiations for access to the City of New Orleans only. The Louisiana Purchase instantly doubled the size of the United States, and it secured the valuable Mississippi Valley, making modern America possible.



However, there was a problem. Napoleon, while generous with his offer of sale, was not particularly clear on some of the details. Specifically, the boundaries on the west were contestable if not actually in conflict with the geographic realities. The purchase included all the land drained by the Mississippi River to the west, a geographic definition based on the essential realities of drainage patterns. In the northern parts of the purchase (inhabited only by native Americans), Lewis and Clark were soon to establish the plumbing limitations of the Purchase, but south of the Red River – which clearly connected to the Mississippi – the lines and the intent of the sale were murky in territories that had been only lightly inhabited by Creole colonists for three generations.

Much of Southwest Louisiana was simply not part of the Louisiana Purchase. Plumbing-wise or otherwise, the land was clearly drained by streams that did not connect to the Mississippi. And while waiting for the diplomats to draw the western boundary of America's new purchase, the commandants of the responsible federal and Spanish garrisons closest to the area in question made a simple gentleman's agreement about the disputed territory at their doorsteps.

In a practical sense, they agreed to leave the land alone and unclaimed. They agreed to not send in militia, customs officers, or regulators of any sort. Any inhabitants there would be unprotected, ungoverned, and untaxed. The commanding officer at the American fort in Natchitoches, Louisiana, and his counterpart in Nacogdoches, then capital of Spanish Texas, crafted the first "no man's land" or as it is sometimes called, "the neutral strip." They agree to not recognize the other's claim, at least for the time being, until the diplomats drew their final lines, or until perhaps national objectives were clarified and re-focused.

At first, even deciding where the line for No Man's Land itself would be drawn posed a bit of a problem. Some Americans believed that the Purchase included all the land to the Rio Grande, a concept totally unacceptable to the sizable Spanish settlements in central and eastern Texas. The Spanish countered that the Tejas province reached to the Bayou Teche area, a mere 70 miles west of New Orleans.

In the end, practical matters set the boundaries of the new no-man's land: the lands of settlers who regularly traded and moved goods to New Orleans were considered as part of the Purchase on the east, and the land of those who traded and moved goods to San Antonio or Veracruz on the west were not. In between these two populations was No-Man's Land – an irregular wedge from the Gulf northward to where Sabine Parish is located today. On a modern map, the western boundary would be between the Sabine and Neches rivers, and the eastern line somewhere east of the Calcasieu and definitely west of the Mermentau and the Red rivers. Sparsely populated and with no real strategic value, No Man's Land, the neutral strip, was of little immediate value.

This wedge of No-Man's Land was the status quo for nearly thirty years. During that time, Spain lost its Mexican colony, and the province of Texas began to agitate against Mexican rule. The strip served as sanctuary for a variety of settlers. Small number of "Texians," disenchanted Anglo settlers in the Spanish-ruled province made their way eastward across the Sabine, and a few French-speaking Acadians drifted westward from the Teche valley. The United States would fight the War of 1812, and the famous Battle of New Orleans would make a hero of Andrew Jackson. Some of those who defended New Orleans made their way westward as well

after the war. JEAN LAFITTE, the other hero of the battle, would visit and trade with the few scattered settlers in the Lake Charles area, and once his days in New Orleans were over, he would eventually have to establish a second sanctuary by building an entirely new base at Galveston Bay, a site physically closer to Southwest Louisiana.

While the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819 set new boundaries and redrew maps specifically, the era of No Man's Land would be ended only when the United States physically installed a military presence in this once-disputed territory. That military presence, a very modest, but significant "Cantonment Atkinson" was opened on the eastern shore of Lake Charles and with that enterprise, the era of No Man's Land was over - at least for governing purposes. The United States had staked its flag on No Man's Land. However, socially and economically, the area would take longer to be fully assimilated into the still young nation and newly created State of Louisiana.

The establishing of that simple fort consolidated the western boundary of the state and that of the United States. It marked the beginning of American control of the very southwest corner of the Louisiana Purchase, and secured the international frontier with Mexico and, later, with the young Republic of Texas.

A marker stone on the shoreline of Lake Charles was installed by Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution. The marker tells the thumbnail story of Cantonment Atkinson and the end of No-Man's Land. The Cantonment itself was decommissioned in a few years, and the site was later sold to THOMAS BILBO and his wife ANN LAWRENCE BILBO who set up their farm and mill on its grounds, actually living in the old barracks building for a time. The family made improvements on the property and eventually included a cemetery for family burials. Today, nothing remains of the barracks, the farm or the mill properties. But the ancient Bilbo Cemetery and the granite marker stone are still on the lakeside of the intersection of Interstate 10 and Lakeshore Drive, one of the gateway entrances to downtown Lake Charles. These mark the first real American claims to this corner of Louisiana.

## **CRAFTING A CITY**

Starting in the mid-1830s, the Bilbo farm along with neighboring pioneer JACOB RYAN's lakefront properties were subdivided into streets and development lots. The little community was commonly known as just "the Lake" or sometimes as "Charley's Lake," or "Charles Town" after CHARLES SALLIER who had been the earliest European settler in the general area.

JACOB RYAN is credited with being the "father of Lake Charles," but his extensive land patents ranged on both sides of the Calcasieu River. In addition he was a force in shaping the entire early parish. He was a bit of a renaissance man, he operated a farm, a large cattle ranch, and a forge, did surveying, served on various public committees, managed retail and wholesale businesses, was elected to several offices, and also helped to bring in new settlers for this bit of civilization in Southwest Louisiana.

Family lore says so driven was the man's phenomenal energy, that when he personally surveyed the land to stake out the streets of the little community-to-be on his old farm, he did not notice



that his surveyor's chain had caught in the root of a hackberry tree and thus shortened, kinked the layout for streets in downtown Lake Charles. To this day there is a marked skew in the street grid orientation with streets north of Division Street running perfectly north-south and east-west, and those streets south of Division running slightly northwest to southeast. Interestingly, Division Street marked the boundary between the Bilbo farm on the north and the Ryan properties on the south, so there may be some truth to this city myth.

But the primary activity of JACOB RYAN, the enterprising "father of the city," was the cutting and processing of lumber. Lumber was the primary building material of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was a valuable resource. The waterways of Southwest Louisiana were edged with millions of board feet of virgin cypress and the spectacular Calcasieu longleaf pine. While most of the lands to the east and south were prairie and marsh land just north and east of Lake Charles held sizable reserves of the valuable trees, 200 and 300 year old specimens that provided long, straight and sturdy lumber, useful for building a city, and also useful for trade. RYAN and most other early pioneers cut and shaped lumber, notching straight timbers for log cabins, and crudely sawing boards in a whip-saw pit. Shingles were made by hand with a draw knife. Branches were used as firewood, no part was wasted. While most of the production was used to build their own homes, barns, and commercial buildings, there was enough produced to use the surplus as a modest cash crop, shipped via river schooner to outside markets.

In the late 1840s and for another decade and half, Germans and Frisian Islanders migrated to Lake Charles expressly for the developing lumber industry at which they excelled, and they are credited with instituting a booming shipbuilding industry. Locally recruited by Captain DANIEL GOOS, the enterprising immigrants were part of the national influx of northern Europeans immigrating to the new United States, primarily to the Midwest but also to points in the south and west like Lake Charles. The original settlement of the Germans in Lake Charles are marked by German street names that formed Goosport, the original German settlement on the upper Calcasieu River. Names like Fitzenrieter, Prater, Goos, Moeling, and others outlined the once independent community now entirely located within the city limits.

At first, lumber production was inefficient with only man-powered pit saws and hand tools to shape timber. The introduction of steam powered mills in the 1850s increased productivity and profits, and also increased the number of operating sawmills. The best example of the enterprise of early lumber pioneers is that of Captain GOOS himself who relocated a working sawmill from Mississippi. His three-newly installed steam-powered upright sash saws were able to cut 11,000 board feet daily, an unheard of spike in productivity. Soon, his son-in-law GEORGE LOCKE operated his own new steam sawmill on Prien Lake. Together they shipped out 4,000,000 board feet of cypress lumber to Galveston for sale their first year of operation together.

In addition, the GOOS family also produced lumber for use by their shipyards which crafted custom sailing schooners for the gulf trade. And by 1857, the shipyard was able to launch a 100-foot steamboat, modestly named the *Dan*. The *Dan* was expressly designed to tow, when needed, the four principal lumber-carrying trading schooners that had been built and were being operated by the GOOS enterprises: the *Lehman*, the *Lake Charles*, the *Emma Thornton*, and the *Winnebago*. The *Dan* would push or tow the vessels through and over the shallows of the lower Calcasieu River into the gulf where they would capture the winds to Galveston and to other

**AMERICAN LEGION, W. B. WILLIAMSON, POST #1**  
Submitted by SANDRA FISHER TAVENEY, Member No. 334

Ground work for the organization of an American Legion post in Lake Charles, Louisiana, was laid early in 1919 when many of the servicemen from this area were still in uniform waiting discharge from active service. Veterans in all branches of service had discussed the possibility of forming some type of organization ever since the guns had fallen silent from World War I, on November 11, 1918.

As the men returned to the Lake Charles area, various individuals sought to encourage the formation of a local group to continue the comradeship developed during the great war. By May, 1919, more than 50 returned veterans had answered a call to register at the City Hall so that an organization of World War I veterans could be formed locally.

On May 20, 1919, the veterans gathered for a meeting at the City Hall to discuss formation of a permanent organization led by Col. BRET EDDY, who was visiting as speaker at the gathering. Many national organizations of war veterans were being formed across the nation at that time and the local group voted not to affiliate with any of the groups until an investigation could be made.

A three-man committee was composed of Capt. JOHN MARTIN, DAVID R. ROSENTHAL and Dr. J. G. MARTIN. Just 12 days before the Lake Charles group met, 1,108 delegates from every state in the nation gathered in St. Louis, Missouri, to hold the first American caucus of an organization born on March 15-17 in Paris, France.

Some 500 men representing various branches of the service had gathered in Paris to form an organization that would continue in peace the comradeship that war had thrown them into, and to continue to peace the sense of service and dedication to America that in war required them to offer their lives for their country.

Among those attending the St. Louis meeting which selected the name American Legion was JAMES O. DOLBY of Lake Charles. The St. Louis caucus was threatened by division, but strong hands prevailed and a non-partisan organization was molded. By early November, 1919, the American Legion boasted of 684,000 paid up member and state organizations were growing rapidly.

The Lake Charles veterans continued to meet without joining any of the national organizations. By 1920, most of the men called to service had returned home and the growing strength of the American Legion was evident. In the summer of 1920, a group dedicated to the cause espoused by the American Legion was taking shape in the Lake Charles area and on September 22, 1920, the local post was chartered.

All veterans who joined the local post within 90 days of its organization were charter members, but 15 men are remembered as the ones who signed the original application to the national organization. They are JAMES O. DOLBY, THOMAS F. PORTER, BRET W. EDDY, RANDALL A. GORMLY, LESLIE E. DAMON, DAVID R. ROSENTHAL, EDDIE KING, R.



that his surveyor's chain had caught in the root of a hackberry tree and thus shortened, kinked the layout for streets in downtown Lake Charles. To this day there is a marked skew in the street grid orientation with streets north of Division Street running perfectly north-south and east-west, and those streets south of Division running slightly northwest to southeast. Interestingly, Division Street marked the boundary between the Bilbo farm on the north and the Ryan properties on the south, so there may be some truth to this city myth.

But the primary activity of JACOB RYAN, the enterprising "father of the city," was the cutting and processing of lumber. Lumber was the primary building material of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was a valuable resource. The waterways of Southwest Louisiana were edged with millions of board feet of virgin cypress and the spectacular Calcasieu longleaf pine. While most of the lands to the east and south were prairie and marsh land just north and east of Lake Charles held sizable reserves of the valuable trees, 200 and 300 year old specimens that provided long, straight and sturdy lumber, useful for building a city, and also useful for trade. RYAN and most other early pioneers cut and shaped lumber, notching straight timbers for log cabins, and crudely sawing boards in a whip-saw pit. Shingles were made by hand with a draw knife. Branches were used as firewood, no part was wasted. While most of the production was used to build their own homes, barns, and commercial buildings, there was enough produced to use the surplus as a modest cash crop, shipped via river schooner to outside markets.

In the late 1840s and for another decade and half, Germans and Frisian Islanders migrated to Lake Charles expressly for the developing lumber industry at which they excelled, and they are credited with instituting a booming shipbuilding industry. Locally recruited by Captain DANIEL GOOS, the enterprising immigrants were part of the national influx of northern Europeans immigrating to the new United States, primarily to the Midwest but also to points in the south and west like Lake Charles. The original settlement of the Germans in Lake Charles are marked by German street names that formed Goosport, the original German settlement on the upper Calcasieu River. Names like Fitzenrieter, Prater, Goos, Moeling, and others outlined the once independent community now entirely located within the city limits.

At first, lumber production was inefficient with only man-powered pit saws and hand tools to shape timber. The introduction of steam powered mills in the 1850s increased productivity and profits, and also increased the number of operating sawmills. The best example of the enterprise of early lumber pioneers is that of Captain GOOS himself who relocated a working sawmill from Mississippi. His three-newly installed steam-powered upright sash saws were able to cut 11,000 board feet daily, an unheard of spike in productivity. Soon, his son-in-law GEORGE LOCKE operated his own new steam sawmill on Prien Lake. Together they shipped out 4,000,000 board feet of cypress lumber to Galveston for sale their first year of operation together.

In addition, the GOOS family also produced lumber for use by their shipyards which crafted custom sailing schooners for the gulf trade. And by 1857, the shipyard was able to launch a 100-foot steamboat, modestly named the *Dan*. The *Dan* was expressly designed to tow, when needed, the four principal lumber-carrying trading schooners that had been built and were being operated by the GOOS enterprises: the *Lehman*, the *Lake Charles*, the *Emma Thornton*, and the *Winnebago*. The *Dan* would push or tow the vessels through and over the shallows of the lower Calcasieu River into the gulf where they would capture the winds to Galveston and to other

ports. This lumber trading connection with Galveston continued for another sixty years and after the devastating 1900 storm which leveled most of that coastal metropolis, many structures there were rebuilt using Calcasieu pine and cypress.

Hundreds of thousands of individual trees were branded, felled, limbed and dragged to the water to float to the mills lining the shore from Goosport to Prien Lake for almost four decades. Early report of pre-Civil war lumbering in Lake Charles record that visitors were able "to walk to West Lake" by stepping gingerly from one floating log to the next, so thickly covered was the lake that served as a holding pond for logs.

These early shipyards and sawmills along the river and lakefront are now entirely gone, their waterfront locations literally erased by ever newer sawmills, and later, by continually improving railroad facilities, dredging, and flood control projects. Because of a relative scarcity of high, buildable land close to the river, there was a continuous competition to build bigger and better, erasing the old but essentially staying put on the same land.

JACOB RYAN's modest original sawmill - like all of the original pre-Civil War sawmills, GOOS, LOCKE, BILBO and the few others - is long gone, now replaced by a string of commercial and trade buildings. The current Chase Bank Building at Broad and Lakeshore in downtown Lake Charles marks the approximate site of that very first RYAN enterprise that set the city wheels in motion. The placid but now largely empty shores of the Calcasieu River north and east of the Salt Water Barrier mark the site of the once bustling and now long-erased GOOS enterprises.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **HAVE YOU RESEARCHED AT NARA? NOT SURE WHAT NARA IS, OR WHAT THEY HAVE?**

**"©2017 Reprinted with permission of GENA PHILIBERT-ORTEGA,  
and Moorhead Magazine, Ltd." *Your Genealogy Today*, November/December 2017**

NARA is the acronym for the National Archives and Records Administration. The National Archives' website 'About' page states: "The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation's record keeper. For all documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States Federal Government, only 1%-3% are so important for legal or historical reasons that they are kept by us forever." An archive is different than a library in that it has materials that are "firsthand facts, data, and evidence from letters, reports, notes, memos, photographs...". [www.archives.gov/about/info/whats-an-archives.html](http://www.archives.gov/about/info/whats-an-archives.html). These are materials made at the time of an event, by people involved in the event.

What does this mean for the genealogical researcher? The National Archives houses records pertaining to our ancestor's military service, immigration and naturalization, various Native American records, federal land, census records and more.

While the National Archives is located in Washington, DC, they do have branch offices throughout the country. However, not every state has a National Archives office. These offices hold records that pertain to the local and surrounding areas. For example, California has two National Archives offices. The National Archives at Riverside, [www.archives.gov/riverside](http://www.archives.gov/riverside), holds records for southern California, Arizona, and Clark County, Nevada. The National Archives at San Francisco, [www.archives.gov/san-francisco](http://www.archives.gov/san-francisco), holds records for central and Northern California, Nevada (except Clark County), Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Marshall, Caroline, Northern Mariana Islands). To find the National Archives location that holds records for the state or area you are researching, see their 'Visit Us' web page, [www.archives.gov/locations](http://www.archives.gov/locations).

Before any visit to the National Archives office, make sure to email and ask about the records you are interested in. You will need to contact the office prior to your visit so the records can be pulled and an archivist can be available to assist you. Also, if you have never researched at NARA before, you will need to fill out a form to be issued a researcher identification card. You may also be asked to watch a short film to better understand the records and how to handle them. You can learn more about your first research trip from their webpage, 'Plan Your Research Trip' at [www.archives.gov/research/start/plan-visit-0](http://www.archives.gov/research/start/plan-visit-0).

In some cases, the records you need may be available by ordering online or through a partner website that has digitized NARA records like Fold3, Ancestry.com, or FamilySearch. Make sure to consult the websites first. Fold3 has many different military records previously only available through NARA. Browse the collection at [www.fold3.com/browse](http://www.fold3.com/browse). Some of the service records include Civil War Service Records for both the Union and Confederacy.

You can learn more about the records available from NARA, including military service and pension records by consulting the Research our Records section of the website, [www.archives.gov/research](http://www.archives.gov/research). A specific page for genealogists can be found at [www.archives.gov/research/genealogy](http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy). This webpage has informative articles on starting your genealogy, researching military records, online tools and more. It's a must-have resource for researchers.

\*\*\*\*\*

## QUERY

### ALEXANDER, MURCHASON, OLSON, ELLENDER

Old maps of Calcasieu Parish. More info. re: the Great Fire (Maps of Fire area). We lost all of our genealogy in the 9/16/16 flood. Need info on CARRIE ALEXANDER, JOHN WILLIAM ALEXANDER, DUNCAN MURCHASON (MURCHENSON). My grandfather ELLENDER worked on the trolleys and had a cab. Also WILLIE and BUSTER OLSON, NEPOLIAN ELLENDER.

PAUL ELLENDER, 14653 Stoneberg Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70816

**AMERICAN LEGION, W. B. WILLIAMSON, POST #1**  
Submitted by SANDRA FISHER TAVENEY, Member No. 334

Ground work for the organization of an American Legion post in Lake Charles, Louisiana, was laid early in 1919 when many of the servicemen from this area were still in uniform waiting discharge from active service. Veterans in all branches of service had discussed the possibility of forming some type of organization ever since the guns had fallen silent from World War I, on November 11, 1918.

As the men returned to the Lake Charles area, various individuals sought to encourage the formation of a local group to continue the comradeship developed during the great war. By May, 1919, more than 50 returned veterans had answered a call to register at the City Hall so that an organization of World War I veterans could be formed locally.

On May 20, 1919, the veterans gathered for a meeting at the City Hall to discuss formation of a permanent organization led by Col. BRET EDDY, who was visiting as speaker at the gathering. Many national organizations of war veterans were being formed across the nation at that time and the local group voted not to affiliate with any of the groups until an investigation could be made.

A three-man committee was composed of Capt. JOHN MARTIN, DAVID R. ROSENTHAL and Dr. J. G. MARTIN. Just 12 days before the Lake Charles group met, 1,108 delegates from every state in the nation gathered in St. Louis, Missouri, to hold the first American caucus of an organization born on March 15-17 in Paris, France.

Some 500 men representing various branches of the service had gathered in Paris to form an organization that would continue in peace the comradeship that war had thrown them into, and to continue to peace the sense of service and dedication to America that in war required them to offer their lives for their country.

Among those attending the St. Louis meeting which selected the name American Legion was JAMES O. DOLBY of Lake Charles. The St. Louis caucus was threatened by division, but strong hands prevailed and a non-partisan organization was molded. By early November, 1919, the American Legion boasted of 684,000 paid up member and state organizations were growing rapidly.

The Lake Charles veterans continued to meet without joining any of the national organizations. By 1920, most of the men called to service had returned home and the growing strength of the American Legion was evident. In the summer of 1920, a group dedicated to the cause espoused by the American Legion was taking shape in the Lake Charles area and on September 22, 1920, the local post was chartered.

All veterans who joined the local post within 90 days of its organization were charter members, but 15 men are remembered as the ones who signed the original application to the national organization. They are JAMES O. DOLBY, THOMAS F. PORTER, BRET W. EDDY, RANDALL A. GORMLY, LESLIE E. DAMON, DAVID R. ROSENTHAL, EDDIE KING, R.



K. LAKE, M. J. DUGAN, GORDON T. LAKE, ERNEST S. CLEMENTS, JAMES L. McCABE, ELMER PERRY, REMI BORDELON and A. C. "Burt" ANDERSON.

Two of the post's past commanders who have headed the state organization and were elected sate commanders are SAM H. JONES and MURPHY MOSS.

Several cities and towns in Louisiana wanted the honor of bearing the title of Post No. 1 and a flip of the coin between Lake Charles and Alexandria, according to early members, decided the issue for Lake Charles. The local organization decided to name the post in honor of Major WILLIAM BURKE WILLIAMSON, a prominent Lake Charles attorney, who died in Tours, France, in January 1919, while serving on the Judge Advocate General's staff.

WILLIAM BURKE WILLIAMSON was born on August 21, 1878, in Stonewall, Desoto Parish, Louisiana, and died on January 18, 1919, in Tours, France. He was the son of T. J. WILLIAMSON (1857-1886) and his wife, EVA BURKE (1858-1920). W. B. as he was known throughout his life, married HAZEL PARR ALLIS, daughter of SEBASTIAN ALBERT ALLIS (1855-1905) and SUSAN SEDDEN (1861-1901) before 1906. His succession was opened in the Fourteenth Judicial District Court, Calcasieu Parish on May 29, 1919 #2666, leaving his estate to his wife and three children; WILLIAM BURKE, Jr., ROSALIE and JACK ALLIS WILLIAMSON.

From the *Lake Charles Weekly American Press*, January 24, 1919, the following two articles were written concerning the death of Major WILLIAMSON.

#### **MAJOR WILLIAMSON DIES IN FRANCE**

News Received in Cablegram Today Shock to Whole Community

News was received by Mrs. W. B. WILLIAMSON Monday of the death of her husband, Major W. B. WILLIAMSON, which occurred Sunday night at Tours, France.

Hon. A. P. PUJO received a message yesterday from Washington, stating that Major WILLIAMSON was dangerously ill, and immediately afterwards he sent a telegram of inquiry to Washington. About 1:20 Monday afternoon a cablegram came (to) Mrs. WILLIAMSON, in Mr. PUJO's care, and this message contained the sad tidings of his death.

At the entry of this country into the world war, Major WILLIAMSON at once tendered his services to his government and was assigned to the first officers' training school at Camp Pike. His health being none too robust, he was compelled to return home after a few weeks on account of physical inability. He continued his efforts to serve in some manner, and on Dec. 12, 1917, was commissioned a major in the judge advocate's department, and was assigned to duty in the 39<sup>th</sup> division at Camp Beauregard. He left this camp on Aug. 12, 1918, and sailed from Hoboken on Aug. 18<sup>th</sup> on the *George Washington*. When he reached France he was stationed at St. Florient-sur-Cher and made personal adjutant of the depot division. The 39th afterwards broken up and made into a replacement division.

From St. Florient-sur-Cher, Major WILLIAMSON went to St. Aignan and was acting judge advocate there, having about 60,000 men in the camp. It was here that Mr. LISKOW last saw him only a few weeks ago.

Major WILLIAMSON came to Lake Charles in 1910 from Leesville and was representative in the general assembly from Vernon parish at the time. He became associated in law practice with Attorney LEON SUGAR and later joined PUJO & MOSS under the firm name of PUJO, MOSS & WILLIAMSON. After Mr. MOSS retired, the firm became PUJO & WILLIAMSON.

Major WILLIAMSON was well known in political circles throughout the state and was very prominent in legislative affairs at the capital during his term as representative.

His military career covered a long term in years and at the time of his removal here he was captain of the Leesville company of the Louisiana National Guard.

After coming to Lake Charles Major WILLIAMSON was a conspicuous figure in everyday life. He was a man in whom the community set great hopes and who was justly popular among a large circle of friends. Socially he had hosts of friends, and in his profession he had the respect and esteem of all.

Major WILLIAMSON was a Shriner, a member of the Elks and of the Lake Charles Rotary club. His associates in these organizations have lost a true friend, and the community has lost one of its most estimable and valuable citizens.

#### **DEATH OCCURRED JAN. 18**

#### **TRIBUTE TO LAKE CHARLES' DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN, MAJ. WILLIAMSON**

By special courier from the Great Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces, Chaumont, France. The *American Press* is in receipt of the following account of the death and funeral services of Major W. B. WILLIAMSON. Official confirmation of Major WILLIAMSON's death occurs in today's casualty list.

On Monday afternoon, January 20, one of the most beautifully impressive military funerals ever held in the old city of Tours, France, and one of poignantly sad interest to the people of Lake Charles, was that of Major W. B. WILLIAMSON, of this city. At 3 o'clock in the presence of the entire staff of the judge advocate general's department of the headquarters at Tours, of which he was a member, the simple military service was held in the headquarters chapel by the post chaplain. During the services and as the bier draped in the flag in whose service he had paid the supreme sacrifice and covered with beautiful floral tributes, was placed upon the military camion, the band of the 11<sup>th</sup> regiment of marines played with touching tenderness "Rock of Ages" and "Abide With Me." The guard of honor, consisting of a company of the 11<sup>th</sup> marines, rendered the military courtesy as the camion passed. The cortege then formed, band, guard of honor, chaplain, catafalque and attendants, and proceeded through the city, accompanied by the solemnly beautiful strains of the funeral march. Along the route all traffic stopped, while the courtesy was rendered by all Americans and the French paused with

reverently bared heads in silent tribute to a hero of a foreign land. Crossing the Loire river, the procession wound up the hill of St. Symphorian, and there in the little American cemetery on its topmost point, overlooking the most picturesque (sic) of the valley of France, in the shadows of evening the closing services were held. The guard of honor again rendered the military courtesy and the salute of three volleys was fired. The band softly played "Nearer My God to Thee." This was followed by a prayer, the Masonic tribute and the sounding of the sweetly sad notes of "Taps" by the regimental bugler. It was indeed a fitting and a touching tribute to the passing of one of Louisiana's noblest heroes, in whom Lake Charles loses one of her most prominent and popular citizens, and the legal profession of the state one of its strongest members.

Louisiana friends and former military associates who were enabled to attend the services were Major LOUIS F. GUERRE, 156<sup>th</sup> Infantry of Bogalusa; Capt. EMMETT IRWIN, 156<sup>th</sup> Infantry, of Clinton; Capt. J. FAIR HARDIN, 156<sup>th</sup> Infantry of Leesville and Lieut. RAYMOND WILLIAMS, air service of Leesville.

Major WILLIAMSON entered the service on December 12, 1917, being commissioned in the judge advocate's general department. He was stationed at Camp Beauregard, as assistant judge advocate of the 39<sup>th</sup> division, and sailed with his division overseas in August of the last year. After the final dissolution of that division in November he served as judge advocate of the first depot division, and had been ordered to duty at headquarters at Tours only a short time before his fatal illness. He was ill only a very few days in the hospital at Tours, being seriously taken with pneumonia in both lungs, and died quite suddenly early Saturday morning, January 18<sup>th</sup>.

Three years later, on January 23, 1922, according to the *Lake Charles Weekly American Press*, Major WILLIAMSON's body was removed from its burial place in France and interred in Graceland Cemetery on Broad Street, Lake Charles, Louisiana.

### **MAJOR WILLIAMSON'S BODY WILL BE LAID AT REST HERE TODAY**

Legion Post Escort Met it at Train Last Night

Funeral Services at Methodist Church

Comrades Will Furnish Active Pall Bearers and Firing Squad of Sixteen

The remains of Major W. B. WILLIAMSON arrived in Lake Charles Sunday evening from New York. An escort from the American Legion Post here met the train and took charge. Hosts of friends of the WILLIAMSON family were there, including representatives from the Masonic Lodges in Lake Charles.

The remains were taken to the GILL and TROTTI parlors and from there to the WILLIAMSON home on Broad Street.

The entire funeral arrangements are in the hands of the W. B. Williamson Post of the American Legion, and services will be held from the Broad Street Methodist church at 3:00 p.m. today. Rev. W. W. HOLMES will deliver the funeral address.

The active pall bearers are: BRETT EDDY, JAMES O. DOLBY, D. W. EDDY, H. DREW GORHAM, JOHN H. MARTIN, F. H. GOUAUX and Judge T. F. PORTER, Jr. A funeral escort will consist of the American Legion Post, and firing squads from Company "K", interment in Graceland cemetery.

W. B. Williamson Post, maintained a guard of honor at the WILLIAMSON home throughout Sunday night and today. The pall bearers will accompany the body from the home to the church where the entire membership of the Post will assemble.

The body of CECIL ELDERMAN did not arrive with that of Major WILLIAMSON.

From the time the local post was organized, it joined in all national programs of the American Legion and became an important part of the everyday activities of the community. The American Legion has recognized that education is the cornerstone of the nation, and has supported this endeavor on both a local and national basis. The W. B. Williamson Post has maintained a scholarship at McNeese University for many years and often contributes to the university's loan fund by spending memorials in honor of deceased members.

Emphasis has been placed on developing character and scholarship among high school students by the American Legion, and in recognition of the qualities, the post has annually made presentation of medals and certificates to outstanding students in local and area schools. To promote a deeper knowledge and understanding of the constitution, the W. B. Williamson Post has participated in the national organization's annual high school oratorical contests.

The local post and its auxiliary have dedicated themselves to the task of indoctrination of the youth of our area with a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of our government and its operation by annually sponsoring Parish Government Day at the local schools.

The W. B. Williamson Post was one of the first in the state to join in the promotion of the American Legion baseball program. Many former members of the local American Legion Nine went on to professional baseball, and one ALVIN DARK was manager of the Cleveland Indians of the American League. Many other community services are sponsored by the local post.

In 1950, the W. B. Williamson Post became one of the most envied in the state when MATILDA GRAY donated the land and building for a post home in honor of her brother, HENRY GRAY, who had served with American Expeditionary Forces in France during World War I. Miss GRAY noted an urgent need for increasing the facilities to accommodate the growing membership and made further donations to the home for its improvement. Miss GRAY established a 100 year lease to the Legion, keeping the name of the Post as W. B. WILLIAMSON, but the name of the building to be the HENRY GRAY building. Today, the post home made possible by Miss GRAY is recognized as one of the finest American Legion homes in the nation. The post is located at 1530 9<sup>th</sup> Street in a lovely area of old homes in Lake Charles. The building is quite beautiful inside and out, with approximately 7,000 square feet and built with brick and large white pillars in the front entrance. The floors are marble imported from Italy and in the large meeting room are steel chairs with green leather-like seats still in excellent condition from the 1950s. A beautiful day room is lined with imported paneling from



the Philippines, as well as cane back chairs from the '50s still in use in the Auxiliary Meeting Room. Miss GRAY spared no expense on furnishing the building with items that have lasted many years.

The original membership of Post #1 was over 2,500 and has dwindled down to maybe 500 in 2015, with about 75 member in its auxiliary and 100 in the Sons of the American Legion. The Post encourages the Coast Guard and all veterans of active duty to use its facilities. The Vietnam Veterans and the Marine Corps hold meetings in the building. The Legion holds a pot luck supper every Friday night with a card game afterwards and bingo 3 days a week. Legion dues and bingo supplement the program implemented by the Post.

There are several interesting and unusual memorabilia on the walls of the interior, which include a 6 x 8 foot Japanese Flag which flew over a slave labor factory in Mukden, Manchuria, and was brought to the United State by JESSE KNOWLES, a POW from 1942 – 1945 and Senator of Louisiana. The flag is also unique in that it is covered with names of survivors of the Bataan Death March and labor camps during WWII. After April of 1942, U. S. surrender of the Bataan Peninsula on the main Philippine island of Luzon to the Japanese during WWII, the approximately 75,000 Filipino and American troops on Bataan were forced to make an arduous 65 mile march to prison camps. The marchers made the trek in intense heat and were subjected to harsh treatment by the Japanese guards. Thousands perished in what became known as the Bataan Death March.

There is also a 6 x 8 foot Nazi flag which flew over Hitler's parade grounds in Nuremburg, Germany, and was shot down on March 23, 1945, by U. S. soldiers, brought to America and placed on the wall of the Post. A uniform donated by the family of Sgt. S. A. WULFF from WWII and a Korean War uniform from JAMES JANICE is also on display.

The American Legion has established a Veterans Court with the local District Attorney's Office, City and State Judges which provides counseling to veterans of non-violent offences for drug, alcohol and mental issue, such as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). They have a wide variety of pamphlets and other information available on insurance and prescription plans, life insurance and scholarships available through the American Legion in the entrance hall.

Membership eligibility to the American Legion is for all veterans of the following:

World War I, April 6, 1917 - November 11, 1918  
World War II, December 7, 1941 - December 31, 1946  
Korean War, June 25, 1950 - January 31, 1955  
Vietnam War, February 28, 1961 - May 7, 1975  
Lebanon & Grenada, August 24, 1982 - July 31, 1984  
Persian Gulf War, August 2, 1990 - to cessation of hostilities as determined by the United States Government.

Current officers for June to June 2016-2017 at the American Legion W. B. Williamson  
Post #1 are:

RICHARD MORGAN - Commander  
JAMES JACKSON - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander  
MARIALIASA EDWARDS - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander  
ROY SANDERS - 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander  
JAMES NELSON - Adjutant  
LEROY CARPENTER - Sargent at Arms  
HARLAN GUILLORY and LEE THORNTON - Color Bearers  
ROY SANDERS - Chaplin

Replacing officers for the June - June 2016-2017 are:

RICHARD MORGAN - Commander  
ROY SANDERS - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander  
MARK GUILLORY - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander  
JAMES JACKSON - 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice commander  
ROY SANDERS - Adjutant  
STEVE ROTHERMEL - Sargent at Arms  
WESLEY KRATZER and LEE THORNTON - Color Bearers  
ROGER PETE - Chaplin

---

Sources:

*Lake Charles Weekly American Press*: January 24, 1919, page 3, Roll 070.

January 23, 1922, p. 1, Roll #85.

Interview with Col. JAMES JACKSON, 1s Vice Commander and DONNA JOHNSON,  
Post secretary

Ancestry.com

Louisiana Wills and Probate Records, 1756-1984

Find A Grave - Orange Grove Cemetery, Lake Charles, La.

Stonewall Cemetery, Stonewall, Desoto, La.

1870-1940 Census Records for Calcasieu Parish and Desoto Parish, La.

Dodd, Jordan R., *Early American Marriages: Alabama, 1800-1920*

\*\*\*\*\*

**PAST POST COMMANDERS:**

BRETT W. EDDY 1919-1921, 1925-1926

ALLEN R. LISKOW 1921-1922

TERRELL WOOSLEY 1921

Dr. J. G. MARTIN 1922-1923

J. R. L. KILGORE 1923-1924

Dr. D. C. ILES 1924-1925

FELIX W. STONE 1925-1926

F. E. FARR 1926-1927

JAMES A. PARTRIDGE 1927-1928

A. C. WEDEMEYER 1928-1929

W. E. RICHARD 1929-1930

JOHN W. FLANDERS 1930-1931

VANCE PLAUCHE 1931-1932

TORBERT SLACK 1932-1933

GEORGE L. KAY 1933-1934

JOHN R. McCANN 1934-1935

T. L. HERLONG 1935-1936

JOHN J. DOYLE 1936-1937

FRED W. SCHROEDER 1937-1938  
 R. A. MARINER 1938-1939  
 JAMES O. DOLBY 1939-1940  
 G. W. FORD 1940-1941  
 J. A. McLEOD 1941-1942  
 C. A. RICHARDSON 1942-1943  
 C. W. GABBERT 1943-1944  
 W. B. NASH 1944-1945  
 E. D. PARISH 1945-1946  
 E. N. VAN DIEZER 1946-1947  
 JOE J. TRITICO 1947-1948  
 CLARENCE L. SHADDOCK 1948-1949  
 EDWARD L. SHAHEEN 1949-1950  
 JAMES A. LEITHEAD 1950-1951  
 JAMES FRED PATIN 1951-1952  
 WILLIMAN G. McCLANAHAN 1952-1953  
 CURTIS D. FONTENOT 1953-1954  
 MURPHY MOSS 1954-1955  
 ROY S. BROWN 1955-1956  
 FRED C. MARTIN 1956-1957  
 FRANK T. SALTER 1957-1958  
 EDWARD M. NICHOLS 1958-1959  
 W. H. ARMSTRONG 1959-1960  
 GAYLORD H. COX 1960-1961  
 RICHARD R. GOFORTH 1961-1962  
 J. E. PIERROTTE 1962-1963  
 JACK C. WATSON 1963-1964  
 KENNETH L. STRAUSS 1964-1965  
 A. S. DEWEY 1965-1966  
 ALBERT HEBERT 1966-1967  
 J. J. DESHOTEL 1967-1968  
 J. F. WILLIAMS, Jr. 1968-1969  
 CURTIS ARMENTOR 1969-1970  
 LEE FIGUERON 1970-1971  
 L. J. HINES 1971-1972  
 ROBERT METREGEON 1972-1973  
 ANDREW L. DeCOOK 1973-1974  
 WILLIAM CALGREEN 1974-1975  
 R. GENE EDWARDS 1975-1976  
 WALTER HAAG 1976-1977  
 V. J. DUPRE 1977-1978  
 MAURICE WILKINSON 1978-1979  
 JACK MECHE 1979-1980  
 JAMES DRURY 1980-1981  
 JOE LaFLEUR 1981-1982  
 CHARLES WALLER 1982-1983

EMERY FRUGE 1983-1985  
 JAMES H. BENOIT 1985-1988  
 RAY LaFLEUR 1988-1990  
 ROBERT L. SPENCER 1990-1992  
 WILLIAM H. "Bill" BAKER, Jr. 1992-1993  
 A. C. "Woodie" WOODLE 1993-1994  
 PAUL K. TATUM 1994-1996  
 PAUL TOERNER 1996-2000  
 CARROL J. FRUGE 2000-2002  
 JOE D. HILL 2002-2004  
 RUFUS NELANDS 2004-2005  
 RONNIE W. ODOM 2005-2006  
 TRUMAN STACY 2007-2008 (3 months)  
 STEPHEN R. ROTHERMEL 2007-2008  
 (9 months)  
 ALBERT DUPLANTIS 2008-2009  
 JIM JACKSON 2011-2012  
 JACK YOUNG 2012-2013  
 RONNIE ODOM 2013-2014  
 STEVE ROTHERMEL 2014-2015  
 RICHARD MORGAN 2015-Present

(Continued next issue)

# Ancestor Chart

Name of Compiler TAVENEY, Sandra  
 Address 1026 Lakelyn Dr.  
 City, State LAKE Charles, LA 70605  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

b. Date of Birth  
 p.b. Place of Birth  
 m. Date of Marriage  
 d. Date of Death  
 p.d. Place of Death

## 4 WILLIAMSON, William Jacob

(Father of No. 2)

b. 1820 - 1823  
 p.b. North Carolina  
 m. 21 Apr. 1842  
 d. — 1899  
 p.d. Caddo Par., La.

## 2 WILLIAMSON, Thomas J.

(Father of No. 1)

b. — 1857  
 p.b. Louisiana  
 m. 22 Dec. 1875 - La.  
 d. 12 Aug. 1886  
 p.d. Caddo Par., La.

## 5 RAY, Eliza Love

(Mother of No. 2)

b. 22 May 1822  
 p.b. Alabama  
 d. 3 Sep. 1889  
 p.d. Keithville, La.

## 1 WILLIAMSON, William Burke

b. 21 Aug. 1878  
 p.b. Stonewall, Caddo, La.  
 m.  
 d. 17 Jan. 1918  
 p.d. Tours, France

## 6 BURKE, William R.

(Father of No. 3)

b. — 1810  
 p.b. South Carolina  
 m. 23 Jan. 1839 - Al.  
 d. Before 1880 census  
 p.d. Alabama

## 3 BURKE, Eva

(Mother of No. 1)

b. — 1858  
 p.b. Louisiana  
 d. 4 Oct. 1931  
 p.d. Riverside, Ca.

## 7 KIRVEN, Sarah Margaret

(Mother of No. 3)

b. 18 Feb. 1818  
 p.b. North Carolina  
 d.  
 p.d.

## ALLIS, Hazel Parr

(Spouse of No. 1)

b. 17 Sep. 1886 d. 10 Oct. 1968  
 p.b. Blue Springs, Mo. p.d. Lake Charles, La.

8

b.  
 p.b.  
 m.  
 d.  
 p.d.

(Father of No. 4)

9

b.  
 p.b.  
 d.  
 p.d.

(Mother of No. 4)

10

b.  
 p.b.  
 m.  
 d.  
 p.d.

(Father of No. 5)

11

b.  
 p.b.  
 d.  
 p.d.

(Mother of No. 5)

12

b.  
 p.b.  
 m.  
 d.  
 p.d.

(Father of No. 6)

13

b.  
 p.b.  
 d.  
 p.d.

(Mother of No. 6)

14

## KIRVEN, William

(Father of No. 7)

b. 11 Sep. 1777  
 p.b. Big Laurel, N. C.  
 m. 10 Oct. 1804 - S. C.  
 d. 26 July 1845  
 p.d. Dallas, Al.

15

## EVANS, Martha James

(Mother of No. 7)

b. 15 Oct. 1785  
 p.b. Darlington, S. C.  
 d. 22 Sep. 1861  
 p.d. Marengo, Al.

16

b.  
 m.  
 d.

17

b.  
 d.

18

b.  
 m.  
 d.

19

b.  
 d.

20

b.  
 m.  
 d.

21

b.  
 d.

22

b.  
 m.  
 d.

23

b.  
 d.

24

b.  
 m.  
 d.

25

b.  
 d.

26

b.  
 m.  
 d.

27

b.  
 d.

28

## KIRVEN, Thomas

b. — 1735

m.  
 d.

29

## CADE, Elizabeth

b. — 1735  
 d. — 1795

30

## EVANS, Enoch

b. — 1760 - S.C.  
 m. 20 Feb. 1784  
 d. 6 Nov. 1794 - S.C.  
 p.d. KOLB, Ann James

31

b. — 1760 - S.C.  
 d. Unknown



**SWAMP FERRIES**  
**Pleasure Cruises, Stag Parties and Fiddle Serenades**  
**Before Bridges and Cars, Ferries Were a Highly Valued Form of Transportation**  
**in the Lake Area**

**By BRAD GOINS**  
*LAGNIAPPE, December 3, 2015*

No historical situation better demonstrates the importance of documentation than that of ferries in the Lake Area.

It's all but certain that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were already several ferries operating in the areas that would eventually be called Lake Charles and Westlake. Proving all that with historical documents is a different matter.

As with many undocumented situations, the origins of the local ferry are shrouded in mystery, myth and fancy. In 1971, the *Leesville Leader* published a story asserting that it had once been rumored that a Burr Ferry carried passengers across the Sabine River into Texas in 1805. The story went that this ferry was named after the historical figure AARON BURR, who was said to have crossed into Texas shortly before he was tried for treason in 1807.

What is far more likely is what is well documented: in 1827, a Dr. TIMOTHY BURR operated a Burr Ferry. BURR kept his slaves on the Louisiana side of the Sabine River; his fields were located on the Texas side. BURR might have run a ferry primarily to move his labor back and forth across the river.

Burr Ferry came to an end exactly one century after its first appearance in recorded history in 1827. It ended as almost all ferries did – because someone built a bridge.

In 1892, census reports show Burr Ferry with a population of 55. When the Leesville paper wrote about it in 1971, that population figure was about the same. Forty years after the end of the ferry, all Burr Ferry had worth noting was three grocery stores, a catfish restaurant and some Civil War ruins.

While the probably mythical stories about AARON BURR are intriguing, what's important about the Burr Ferry story is that it documents that a ferry was running in the Lake Area in 1827.

**THE RIO HONDO CLAIM**

Common sense leads us to think that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, this area was already a center of commerce because of the number of people who wanted to move goods from the Gulf of Mexico to the inland and vice versa.

A 1965 *American Press* story on the ferries of Westlake provides a more specific version of just what sort of commerce took place on the area waterways. According to this historical analysis, immediately after the Revolutionary War, there was a large influx of settlers seeking land along

the Calcasieu River (which was called the Rio Hondo River at the time). Because of this immigration, the writer said, any area within 60 miles of Westlake became “the logical trading site for many pioneers settling in the Rio Hondo claim.”

Be that as it may, we have no evidence that the settlers of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century were careful record keepers. Up until the 1880s, documentation about what must have been a widespread ferry business around Lake Charles is scant.

In 1841, some forgotten historian recorded that the Donahue Ferry, which was also called “Spikes River,” served Calcasieu Parish. Another ferry may have operated at the time five miles north of Lake Charles at a spot near a town called Marion, which was later called Old Town.

A Niblett’s Bluff Ferry may have carted goods and people across the Sabine. The west fork of the Calcasieu River was long-ago home to such ferries as the Swearington, Lyles and Babin. And the Joe Moss Ferry probably transported those who wished to cross the Bayou D’Inde.

Other ferries said to have operated in Lake Charles included the Georgia, the Romeo and the Pharr. And such little-known places as Bayou Guy, Burnett Bay, Hecker, Nevils Bluff and Phillips Bluff were likely home to ferries in long-forgotten years.

As tantalizing as these fragments of ferry history may be, it’s most sensible to conclude, as a *Weekly American Press* writer did in 1935, that there is no record of the earliest ferry that operated in the area.

### BEFORE HAZEL

In the years leading up to Lake Charles’ first thoroughly documented ferry – the *Hazel* – much was happening in water transportation.

The Hartmann’s Ferry, which traveled to a town near present-day Westlake called Bagdad, would eventually be replaced by *The Hazel*. Although Bagdad has long since disappeared, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was home to the thriving enterprises of Grout’s Shingle Mill and Smart’s Lumber Co.

At the same time, the steamboat *Evangeline* carried passengers from Lake Charles to Westlake. It too would be forced out of business by the popular *Hazel*.

Other boats would become more obscure than *Evangeline*. In 1881, the *Echo* reported that the “steam ferry boat” *Nettie* had just received a new coat of paint, and as a result, was “looking as neat and prim as a new calico dress.” *Nettie* was another vessel that plied the Lake Charles to Bagdad trade.

The first powered ferry in the Westlake and Lake Charles area may have been the *Ramos*, which employed a tugboat powered by steam.

## THE HAZEL

The 1880s and 1890s saw a sea change in the documenting of Westlake and Lake Charles history. As the area underwent its first population surge, leaders in several fields became active in giving the cities formal organizations and documenting the new arrangements.

In 1898, ALLEN J. PERKINS saw to it that the city of Westlake was formally established on a 160-acre tract. PERKINS was the right man for the job. An undated map of the period shows that almost the entire southern peninsula of Westlake was owned by PERKINS & MILLER Lumber Co. (Across the way was an enormous parcel of land owned by "Estate of C. BARBE.") The map indicated that the population of the area was 10,000, and that it produced 250,000 wooden shingles and 2,500 barrels of rice each day.

Also undated is an old historical photograph showing a large crowd of men and women in Victorian dress clustered around the area where Pujo Street once ended at the shore of Lake Charles. A sign that reads FERRY LANDING is clearly visible.

What was dated was a postcard mailed in 1911 that showed a second sign right next to the one for the ferry; this sign read "STEAMER *BOREALIS REX*: GULF AND WAY LANDINGS." The correspondent wrote on the postcard that he was working for LOCKE-MOORE Lumber Co. in Westlake, which, he said, was one of 11 lumber mills in the area – mills that included saw mills, planing mills and shingle mills.

A map dated 1898 shows the end of Pujo Street extended by a long planked wharf at which ferries docked. The wharf included a walkway for the general public and an oyster and fish house. An Elks Lodge Hall stood at the entrance of the wharf. Across the street from the Elks was the City Market – the most popular Lake Charles gathering spot of the day. The Pujo Street wharf was a thriving enterprise.

The star player at the once-busy wharf was the ferry called *Hazel*. Curiously enough, *Hazel* made her debut in an atmosphere of fear.

A *Lake Charles Echo* report of 1880 indicated that the public at large believed at first that the *Hazel* would never make it across the Calcasieu River. It was felt that the ferry's owner, Cpt. ADOLPH W. WEHRT, and the main contractor who built it, O. A. HARMONSON, had an inadequate knowledge of boat structure, and that as a result, the ferry had been "built by guess."

The phenomenal success of the *Hazel* would prove these rumors to be about as accurate as most rumors. Perhaps at first, *Hazel* awed the public because it was the largest form of water transportation yet seen on Lake Charles. Contractor HARMONSON took two bottoms, which were then "bridged together" to make a platform large enough for 100 passengers. The ferry boat could move these passengers across Lake Charles in 15 minutes.

Another popular contemporary of *Hazel* was the Perkins Ferry. It's not clear just when it began; there are some indications that it was operating as early as the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At any rate, we are certain the ferry was acquired by L. M. DEES in the 1890s. (REESE PERKINS had established the venture.)

The Perkins Ferry was, reported the *Weekly American Press*, a “flat-bottomed boat” that was moved by the simple operation of pulling ropes by hand. Each pull of the rope jerked the ferry forward a few feet. If passengers were in a hurry, they grabbed the rope and pulled along. Ropes were simply tied around the trunks of trees on each side of the river.

In its early days, Perkins Ferry charged 10 cents for each worker who rode it. There were charges of 25 cents for each buggy and 50 cents for each wagon. Once the government of Calcasieu Parish took over the operation of ferries, there was no charge for anything.

The construction of bridges made *Hazel* obsolete in 1916. She would go on to serve as a ferry in Baton Rouge until she retired for good in 1934.

### THE WEST FORK

Documentation about the old West Fork Ferry is detailed, perhaps simply because it operated for so long. Its last day of service was in July, 1968, when the West Fork Indian Bayou Bridge was opened.

The ferry, which *The Westlaker* reported had “for so many years [been] the only means of crossing the river at West Fork,” carried passengers from Westlake to Moss Bluff.

The ferry was still being written about in 1997, when the *American Press*’ ALLEN SEAL wrote a detailed history of the craft. SEAL related that in the days of the Great Depression, those who wanted to cross the Calcasieu River simply pulled up to the ferry operator’s shed and honked. Pedestrians were given a rowboat and allowed to make their own way to the opposite shore.

It had taken time to build the West Fork Ferry and its business. At first, development was hindered because the area was inaccessible and what roads came near it were undeveloped.

In its early days, the design of the ferry was remarkably simple. The primary safety feature was a long, heavy “safety chain” that stretched across both ends of the ferry. Some Westlake residents were afraid to be the first to drive onto the ferry because they’d heard the story about the car that had been driven right through the safety chain, with the result that the whole family inside the car had drowned. Whether there was any truth to this story or it was sheer urban myth I don’t know.

The West Fork Ferry lasted long enough to go through the full evolution of ferries. It started as a craft moved by two workers who used a “pull handle” that was attached to two ropes. The ferry was supposed to be able to carry four cars, but the parish engineer of the time, RODNEY VINCENT, recommended that it carry only two. He also suggested that drivers opt for the Perkins Ferry, which he described as “modern and motorized.”



The West Fork Ferry was eventually equipped with a four-cylinder Ford engine. In the 1950s, the ferry progressed to two six-cylinder engines and the ropes were replaced by 3/4-inch steel cables.

The documentation of the West Fork Ferry gives us some of the most charming instances of ferry lore. When the four-cylinder engine created an imbalance on the ferry, the owners compensated by putting a large box on the ferry and filling it with dirt. Workers used the dirt to grow greens, onions, radishes and other vegetables. Riders referred to the spot as "the Garden."

Also of interest was the curiosity of the Westlake people about what the large craft would do when it was struck by the Great Flood of 1953. Those who stuck around to view the effects of the flood waters may or may not have been surprised to see the West Fork ferry boat floating serenely in the spot where it had been securely tied to the tops of cypress trees.

The ferry would witness the evolution of Westlake traffic. There was a time when Westlake drivers waiting up to an hour before six cars came to the ferry. But by 1968, the growing "industrial complexes" of Westlake had created so much traffic that they had rendered the ferry obsolete.

## CHALLENGES OF FERRIES

Even in the early days, running a ferry was more than a matter of merely pulling a rope. Ferrymen were obliged to be acutely aware of water levels and to adjust ramps and cables in response to them. The changing of cables at the end of one trip and beginning of another was a difficult operation.

As ferries in the Calcasieu Parish area gradually moved from private to government control, they began to create challenges for government. In a 1956 article ("The Vanishing Ferry") the *American Press* reported that the maintenance and operation of area ferries accounted for the single biggest expense to local government - \$60,000 a year.

At the same time, parish government paid for the Perkins and Indian Bayou ferries, the Dunne Ferry (on the west fork of the Calcasieu River), the Anthony Ferry (on the Houston River), the Gum Cove Ferry (on the Intracoastal Canal), as well as ferries at Gibbstown, Black Bayou and Creole. The ferries ran 24 hours a day.

The *Press* quoted assistant parish engineer ARTHUR DARNSTEAD as saying that the ferries were his "biggest headache." One of his big challenges was making sure the ferries met safety regulations. He told the *Press* that shortly before his interview, he'd worked six straight hours to fix a "bull wheel" on the Indian Bayou Ferry. He said that when he was finished, his clothing was so dirty he had to throw them away.

Slow moving as they were, in the 1950s, ferries were central to the area's Civil Defense effort. All evacuation plans took into account the schedules and capacities of ferries, which were considered viable forms of evacuation.

## WHY FERRIES MATTER

In 1935, E. D. STAGG wrote for the *Weekly American Press*, "the present bridge across Calcasieu River at Lake Charles is much more efficient than the old ferries ... but it certainly isn't nearly as much fun."

What was so fun about them? STAGG probably idealized the issue a good bit when he wrote, "one can imagine now the romance of travelling down a moon-lit river dancing to the strains of a fiddle and accordion."

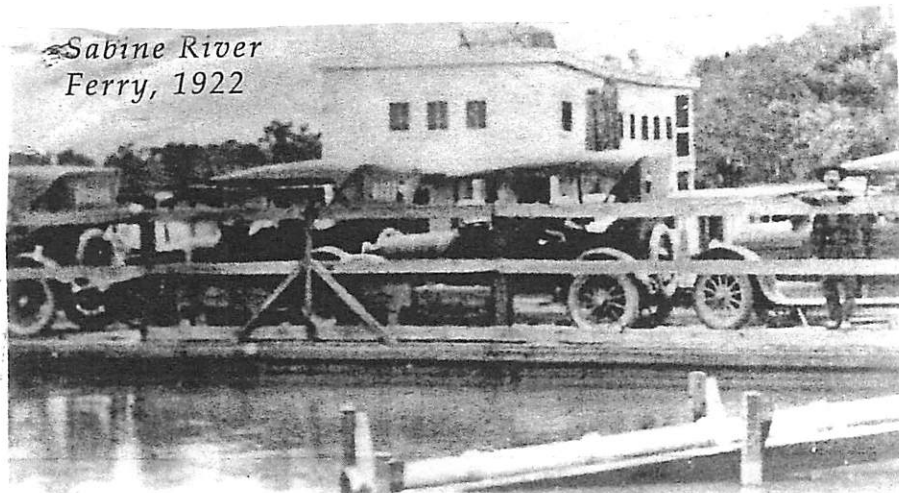
We know that in their day, ferries did what cruise ships did – they carried large crowds to the events they found enjoyable. Certainly there were plenty of business reasons to take the ferry to Bagdad back in the day. But we're told that, at one time, Bagdad was considered an ideal location for picnics. That fact no doubt accounted for many fond memories of ferry rides.

We also know that many valued the *Hazel* as a craft that took them to the diversions they found most satisfying. The ferry was often chartered (at a high rate) to take a group for night ride to Prien Lake or Big Lake. It was sometimes rented by groups of men for "stag parties," which appear to have been largely fishing parties.

Sadly, the lore of local ferries largely preceded the orderly documentation of local history. At any rate, ferries vanished quickly as large bridges and widespread car ownership fundamentally altered the nature of travel across bodies of water.

In the same story in which E. D. STAGG praised the "fun" of ferries, he noted that the majestic old riverboat *Rex* no longer carried passengers. It had been tied to the wharf at Pujo Street, which had once been the most popular local gathering place in Lake Charles. Said STAGG, the old *Rex* was becoming "rather dilapidated." But he remembered a time when it had carried local pleasure seekers all the way to the Gulf of Mexico.

\*\*\*\*\*



## 1904 LOWRY WEDDING

Submitted by TERRY and KATHLEEN DUPUY, Members No. 1542/1543

The reception for the wedding of LOUISE BROUSSARD and DUPRE HEBERT took place at the old NAPOLEON BROUSSARD home. NAPOLEON's wife was ASPASIE HEBERT, daughter of ALEXANDER HEBERT, original owner and builder of the "Green House". NAPOLEON BROUSSARD's house was located on the west bank of the Mermentau River, bordering the Green House on the south side. It was gone before 1950. The Green House, circa 1837, is still standing and is on the National Historic Registry. The area was called Hebert's Bluff (now Lowry) located right below Lake Arthur on the Mermentau River.

The wedding account was copied by PHYLLIS AGAN DUPUY, wife of CHARLTON FRANCIS DUPUY, great grandson of NAPOLEON BROUSSARD and great, great grandson of ALEXANDRE HEBERT.

(Perhaps of interest during the Centennial Year, the following is a copy of a newspaper account of the wedding February 9, 1904, of LOUISE BROUSSARD, aunt of C. F. DUPUY of Welsh, to DUPRE HEBERT, cattleman and employee of the late A. R. McBURNEY of Welsh.)

### HEBERT - BROUSSARD

The marriage of Miss LOUISE BROUSSARD and Mr. DUPRE HEBERT, which was celebrated on Tuesday the ninth instant, was an event of more than passing interest to all of the older residents of both Calcasieu and Cameron parishes, on account of the prominence of both contracting parties. Miss LOUISE BROUSSARD is the daughter of Mr. SIGISMOND DUPLEX BROUSSARD and Mrs. ELODIE LANDRY BROUSSARD, and is a granddaughter of Mr. NAPOLEON BROUSSARD who was among the earliest settlers to take up land in Cameron parish. The HEBERTs have long been residents of the Lacasine District. Mr. EUGENE HEBERT, father of the groom, is a large landed proprietor and rice planter. Mr. HEBERT's mother, now deceased, was a member of the HOLLAND family, and a sister to Mr. JOHN HOLLAND of Hayes. To give the genealogy of these two people would be to write the history of Southern Louisiana. A notable feature was the superb weather conditions that prevailed. A more beautiful day it would be difficult to conceive. The guests began to arrive at the BROUSSARD residence shortly after eight o'clock in the morning, coming from all directions and by almost every conceivable mode of conveyance, some in carriages, some in heavy team wagons, others in buggies, and whole troops of young men on horseback, while the people from the Lake and River towns arrived by boats; noticeable among which was the launch, *Hobson*, bringing Captain ALBERT LAURENTS and party from Laurents.

Ceremonies began at high noon when a wedding breakfast was served under the live oaks upon a high bluff close to the river's edge. The guests were seated at one long table presided over by the bride and groom elect, and made a picture the "tout ensemble" of which, it would require the pen of an artist to describe.

The table was prettily decorated and laden with viands of every description, and the service of a character common only to true Creole hospitality.

It was a novel feature to several guests from the north to participate in an open air festival in the early days of February. And well may they have been impressed, for with the blue sky above, and the stately green live oaks festooned with Spanish moss, and the carpet of green grass underfoot, it seemed to vivify Longfellows' descriptions of the "Eden of Louisiana," which he has termed, "The land of perpetual summer." At three o'clock the bridal party repaired to carriages and drove to the house of Mr. A. G. MURRAY, across the parish line where the marriage ceremony was performed by Judge SAMUEL BLACKFORD of Calcasieu Parish.

Upon alighting, the party was formed, and proceeded to the MURRAY residence which had been very beautifully decorated for the occasion with evergreens; side aisles being formed of festoons of vines through which the bride and groom walked while the wedding march was played by Miss OLGA MURRAY. The bride and groom were preceded by Miss DOROTHY ACKERMAN and Mr. FELIX BROUSSARD, brother to the bride, acting as bridesmaid and best man respectively, who separated at the end of the aisle and formed a group, with the bride and groom in the center standing under a floral bell. In addition to the regular legal form of service, Judge BLACKFORD made a short but very eloquent address to the celebrants. This was followed by the rendering of some charming vocal music by the Misses ALPHA and OLGA MURRAY and a short standing reception.

Upon the conclusion of the ceremonies the party returned to the BROUSSARD residence where another reception was held and a supper served upon the lawn, which continued until the shades of night attracted the revelers into the dancing room, which was radiant and beautiful with illumination and music, and the light of another day appeared upon the scene before the last of the happy guests departed for their homes. The bride, who is a charming brunette, ever appeared lovelier than on this joyous occasion, gowned in a beautiful bridal robe of white Swiss mull and entirely tucked and trimmed with lace. From a coronet of orange blossoms the long filmy veil fell in graceful folds to the train of the gown. The bridesmaid, being in mourning, was attired in a pure white gown made exactly like the bride's, and without ornamentation of any kind. As the wedding occurred early in the day, the groom and best man appeared in conventional street costume.

Among the guests present were, Mrs. TELESPHORE LANDRY of Lake Arthur, Grandmother of the bride, Mr. and Mrs. SIGISMOND DUPLEX BROUSSARD, parents of the bride, Miss ESPASIE BROUSSARD, the bride's only sister, Messrs. ARTHUR, FELIX, RHULE, NAPOLEON, LANDRY, WILLIE and SIDNEY BROUSSARD, the bride's brothers, Mr. EUGENA HEBERT, Mrs. OTTO WEBB and Miss HEBERT, father and sisters of the groom, Mr. and Mrs. FILBERT GIBBS of Lake Arthur, Mr. and Mrs. VINCENT HOLLAND of Lacasine, Mr. and Mrs. I. R. MOUTON and children, ALVIN, AGNES and LUETTA, of Lake Arthur, Messrs. ALVIN, DUFFY and MURPHY HOLLAND of Lacasine, Mr. ALBERT GIBBS of Lacasine, Mr. ALBERT LAURENTS, Mrs. FELIX LAURENTS and Mrs. CORRINE REVILLON of Laurents, Mrs. ARTHUR BROUSSARD, her daughter, Miss ELLA BROUSSARD and grand-daughter Miss BENOIT of Lacasine, Miss ATTA STAFFORD, Miss QUINN, Mrs. A. G. MURRAY and daughters Misses ALPHA and OLGA, Mr. and Mrs. BUCHANAN and children, BLAIR and MURRY, Mrs. BEARD, Miss MOSSIE LOWRY, Mr. and Mrs. JEROME BURAS, and children PETER, ANNIE and LUCY, Mr. and Mrs. ANTOINE BENOIT and son AVIE, Major and Mrs. HOWARD ACKERMAN, Miss

DOROTHY ACKERMAN, Mr. ARTHUR POPE ACKERMAN, Miss GERTRUDE WRIGHT, Mr. AURELIAN GAIDRY and daughters ETA and AURELIE, FELIX HEBERT, OZINE DEROUEN, ALEXANDRE DEROUEN, CHARLIE and HENRY POMEROY, E. L. and THOMAS WRIGHT, JOHN DAVIS, BRYANT and DeWIT MURRAY, FENIOUS McCAN, BENNETTE FATHERREE and WINFIELD SHARP, Messrs. ARTHUR HOLL, WILLIE MARTIN.

\*\*\*\*\*

**LABAN THOMAS OWNED GUN SHOP**  
Submitted by EVELYN LeBLEU, Member No. 1551

LABAN GILBERT THOMAS was born in Tennessee, October 26, 1816, but migrated to Morgan County, Ala., where he met and married RACHEL MAPLES on December 2, 1837. RACHEL was the daughter of JOHN MAPLES and ELIZABETH SHARP MAPLES whose family has been documented as far back as the late 1600s.

So far, there is no documented proof of LABAN's parentage but it is strongly believed that he descended from EZEKIEL THOMAS. Much research has been done by LABAN's descendants and descendants of other THOMAS families and evidence points in the direction of having been descended from EZEKIEL THOMAS of Itawamba County.

Although LABAN bought land in Morgan County, Ala., after his marriage to RACHEL MAPLES, he moved his wife and two young children to Itawamba County, Miss., in 1841. He had been buying up land in Itawamba County (now Lee County) since 1839. Deed records show that much of the town of Guntown was built on the land which he had been buying. According to deed records, LABAN bought a strip of land one mile wide and two miles in length in which the M & O Railroad was later constructed.

In the meantime, LABAN had established a general merchandise store and a gun shop in this area. Since the M & O Railroad came almost through the center of the strip of land bought by LABAN, there were business sites to be had which LABAN lost no time in selling. In this area the thriving little town of Guntown was to be situated. LABAN also owned a plantation and a few slaves; this was located to the northwest of the business community.

What caused LABAN THOMAS to migrate to Itawamba County after he had established himself on the quarter section of land he had bought, established a home and had two children born to him and RACHEL? Perhaps he had relatives in Itawamba County. Tax records of Itawamba in 1836 show a J. W. THOMAS paying taxes there. The tax records also show taxes being paid there by J. W. THOMAS and Brothers. This indicates partner ship in an endeavor of some kind.

The 1840 census records of Itawamba County list an EZEKIEL THOMAS between the ages of 60 and 70, a JAMES THOMAS between 50 and 60, a J. W. THOMAS between 40 and 50, an E. G. THOMAS between 20 and 30 and a W. C. THOMAS between the ages of 20 and 30. It appears that either some or all of these THOMASES might have constituted "J. W. THOMAS

and Brothers" of the tax record. In all likelihood, that was the strong pull which influenced LABAN to move to Mississippi: relatives!

At the time LABAN G. THOMAS moved to Itawamba County, no name had been given the community which was to grow up and become a thriving little town called Guntown. It was not until the 1850s when the M & O Railroad came into being that this business community began to grow.

Deed records show that by this time, LABAN THOMAS had sold most of the business sites along the railroad but there are no records found so far that give the community a name at that time. It was not until after the nearby community of Campbelltown moved its two stores, a cotton gin and its post office into this new business location, about 1858, that this section was referred to in various records as Guntown.

Although its name is attributed to an Indian princess, RHODA GUNN, it is very unlikely that this legend is true. Had Guntown been named in honor of RHODA GUNN it would have either been called RHODA or Gunn Town instead of Guntown. The Mr. GUNN from which the name was supposed to derive was an admitted Tory who drifted into the area, took up with the Indians, and married a squaw among them. This was supposed to have been the ancestor of RHODA GUNN.

After checking with the United States board of geographical origins of names, it was stated by them that the origin of the name of Guntown has not been determined by them. It has always been a family legend that Guntown got its name from LABAN THOMAS' Gun shop, the only shop in the area where guns were made and sold.

An obituary appearing in the *Temple Daily Telegram*, a Temple, Texas newspaper, states that Mrs. H. J. INGRAM (SARAH M. A. THOMAS) who had died, was a native of Guntown, Miss., a town named for her father's gunshop. This article appeared in that publication in 1937 at the time of Mrs. INGRAM's death. To the descendants of LABAN G. THOMAS, the above statements are proof enough of where Guntown got its name.

The children of RACHEL and LABAN G. THOMAS: JOHN L. (born in Morgan County, Ala., 1838); NANCY ELIZABETH ANN (born in 1840 in Morgan County, Ala., married JOHN C. MATTHEWS in Itawamba County); JAMES F. (born in 1842 in Itawamba, died in childhood); WILLIAM E. (born in 1843 in Itawamba); BENJAMIN K. (born in 1844 in Itawamba); EMARILLA JANE (born in 1846 in Itawamba, married THOMAS J. McLAUGHLIN in Texas); RACHEL FRANCES (born in 1847 in Itawamba, married first, LAFLETTE HOOPER in Texas and second, GEORGE W. JOHNSON); SARAH MATILDA ANGELINA (born in 1850 in Itawamba, married HARRIS J. INGRAM in Texas); LABAN HENRY (born in 1853 in Itawamba, married ELIZABETH DeBORD in Texas); JAMES BURTON (born in 1857 in Itawamba, married NEBRASKA ANN NEAL in Texas); and MARTHA CUSTUS TALITHA (born in 1860 in Itawamba married F. H. UNDERWOOD in Texas).

JAMES F. THOMAS died in early childhood in Itawamba County. WILLIAM E. was wounded in the Second Battle of Manassas (Bull Run) on August 30, 1862. He was not taken to a hospital



until September 7 and died on September 30, 1862 at the age of 19 years. His war record shows that he fought in the First Battle of Manassas, July 21, 1861, the Battle of Seven Pines (also called Fair Oaks) May 30, 1862: the Battle of Gaines Farm (also known as Chickahominy) June 27, 1862; and Malvern Hill, August 28-30, 1862.

The eldest child of the THOMASES, JOHN L. was given a medical discharge from service after participating in the first Battle of Manassas due to chronic dysentery. He was separated from service at Camp Fisher, Va., on December 17, 1861, but did not reach home before his death.

All the rest of the THOMAS children moved to Texas with their parents where they lived lengthy lives. NANCY ELIZABETH ANN married JOHN C. MATTHEWS in Itawamba County. They had a small son, JOHN L., when they moved to Texas with the rest of the LABAN THOMAS family.

LABAN served in the Civil War with the Fourth Regiment Minute Men, Colonel BRUMELY; Company E, Captain E. L. HAWKINS. When LABAN left home for war, with his two eldest sons already in service, he delegated the eldest daughter, NANCY, to take charge at home in Guntown and take care of her mother and the younger children. NANCY had been away teaching school but this became unimportant in the face of her being needed at home.

There is a family story that NANCY shot a "Yankee" when he tried to steal the last milk cow which was sorely needed to supply milk for the family in later years, NANCY neither confirmed nor did she deny this story but if one had come to know NANCY, affectionately referred to by many of her pupils as "Miss Nan," one could easily believe the story.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **GENEALOGYMAGAZINE.COM LAUNCHES A YOUTUBE SERIES OFFERING ADVISE AND TIPS FOR THE FAMILY HISTORIAN**

GenealogyMagazine is the name of a new YouTube series offering advise and tips for the family historian. Hosted by James Pylant, an award-winning true-crime writer, authorized celebrity biographer, and professional genealogist, each five-minute episode offers tips and "how-to" examples for genealogical research.

The first episode, "County Courthouse Research," is now at YouTube:  
<https://tinurl.com/countycourthouse>

Upcoming episodes include "Family Bible Records," "Diaries and Journals," "Longevity Lies," "Misidentified Family Pictures," "Handwriting Analysis."

Source: Jefferson Genealogical Society Newsletter, Vol. XXXII, Issue 4 – November 2017

\*\*\*\*\*

**GENEALOGY ... IS NOT A HOBBY, IT'S AN OBSESSION!**

**THE DAILY AMERICAN (29 JULY 1897)**

Information Gathered by MICK HENDRIX, Member No. 1296

**LITTLE LOCALS. Items Briefly Mentioned for the benefit of Our Readers.**

Mr. PUJO is having some more improvements made on his beautiful home on Bilbo street.

WM. ROBINSON has contracted with the K. C. P. & G. to furnish the shells and sand for the new bridge foundations.

GARDETT EGGLESTON is helping to repair the telegraph lines on the Watkins road today, which were blown down by the recent wind.

F. M. JOHNSON, of DAVIS' mill, is in town today with a load of peaches. He says that cotton and corn look well but a good shower of rain is needed.

A force of men are at work cleaning and deepening the ditch in front of Mrs. OPPENHEIMER's store, on Railroad avenue.

The waiting rooms and ticket office of the S. P. depot are being made more cheerful looking by the application of a coat of paint.

A cow belonging to JACOB RYAN broke her right hind leg yesterday afternoon while going to the lake for water. She caught her foot between two logs, breaking the leg just below the knee.

The show windows of many of the stores on Ryan street are decorated with posters which put together in such a way as to spell company G. They announce the entertainment to be given to the military boys at the Lake house tomorrow night.

**PUNGENT PERSONAL PICK-UPS. Pleasantly Put by Reporters While Pre-ambulating the Streets.**

Mrs. C. HORTMAN went to Cameron, Texas, this morning.

CLAUDE MAYO is transacting some business in Welsh today.

Mrs. THOS. G. KLEINPETER has been quite sick for several days with rheumatism.

Miss M. A. JENKINS went to New Orleans this morning to remain some time.

Mrs. THOMAS SAUNDERS leaves for her home in Lakeland, Florida, this evening.

T. A. ARCENAUX, who has been visiting in the city, went to Beaumont this morning.

Dr. COLLINS, Jr. went to Oberlin this morning to transact business for a few days.

Mr. DAVIS, sheriff of Vernon parish, was transacting business in the city yesterday.

Mrs. B. H. HARMON and son, DAN, left for Rayne this morning, where they will visit friends.

Mrs. C. HARVESON and children, who have been visiting W. F. HARVESON and family, returned to their home in Houston this morning.

Miss FLOSSEY WASEY returned from Sour Lake, Tex., this morning, where she has been visiting for some time.

Dr. HOWE left last night for Marion, Iowa, where he was summoned on account of the death of his brother, Mr. JOHN HOWE, who spent some three months here last winter.

Mr. HENRY JOHNSON, the cattle king and heavyweight rice planter of Coupique, is in the city today, shaking hands with old friends. He says the shower Tuesday was copious at Vincent Settlement, but failed to reach his place.

**LOCAL MATTERS. Gathered Here and There by Reporters for Perusal of Our Readers.**

**THE DAILY AMERICAN (29 JULY 1897)**

Information Gathered by MICK HENDRIX, Member No. 1296

**LITTLE LOCALS. Items Briefly Mentioned for the benefit of Our Readers.**

Mr. PUJO is having some more improvements made on his beautiful home on Bilbo street.

WM. ROBINSON has contracted with the K. C. P. & G. to furnish the shells and sand for the new bridge foundations.

GARDETT EGGLESTON is helping to repair the telegraph lines on the Watkins road today, which were blown down by the recent wind.

F. M. JOHNSON, of DAVIS' mill, is in town today with a load of peaches. He says that cotton and corn look well but a good shower of rain is needed.

A force of men are at work cleaning and deepening the ditch in front of Mrs. OPPENHEIMER's store, on Railroad avenue.

The waiting rooms and ticket office of the S. P. depot are being made more cheerful looking by the application of a coat of paint.

A cow belonging to JACOB RYAN broke her right hind leg yesterday afternoon while going to the lake for water. She caught her foot between two logs, breaking the leg just below the knee.

The show windows of many of the stores on Ryan street are decorated with posters which put together in such a way as to spell company G. They announce the entertainment to be given to the military boys at the Lake house tomorrow night.

**PUNGENT PERSONAL PICK-UPS. Pleasantly Put by Reporters While Pre-ambulating the Streets.**

Mrs. C. HORTMAN went to Cameron, Texas, this morning.

CLAUDE MAYO is transacting some business in Welsh today.

Mrs. THOS. G. KLEINPETER has been quite sick for several days with rheumatism.

Miss M. A. JENKINS went to New Orleans this morning to remain some time.

Mrs. THOMAS SAUNDERS leaves for her home in Lakeland, Florida, this evening.

T. A. ARCENAU, who has been visiting in the city, went to Beaumont this morning.

Dr. COLLINS, Jr. went to Oberlin this morning to transact business for a few days.

Mr. DAVIS, sheriff of Vernon parish, was transacting business in the city yesterday.

Mrs. B. H. HARMON and son, DAN, left for Rayne this morning, where they will visit friends.

Mrs. C. HARVESON and children, who have been visiting W. F. HARVESON and family, returned to their home in Houston this morning.

Miss FLOSSEY WASEY returned from Sour Lake, Tex., this morning, where she has been visiting for some time.

Dr. HOWE left last night for Marion, Iowa, where he was summoned on account of the death of his brother, Mr. JOHN HOWE, who spent some three months here last winter.

Mr. HENRY JOHNSON, the cattle king and heavyweight rice planter of Coupique, is in the city today, shaking hands with old friends. He says the shower Tuesday was copious at Vincent Settlement, but failed to reach his place.

**LOCAL MATTERS. Gathered Here and There by Reporters for Perusal of Our Readers.**

Manhchunk, Penn.; and J. G. HAUPT, of Lake Charles. The election of officers will probably not be held until about a month before the time for school to begin.

**MAYOR AND ALDERMAN. Mayor CROWLEY and Alderman LYONS Have Hot Words this Morning.**

After the mayor's court adjourned this morning Mayor CROWLEY and Councilman LYONS had a misunderstanding that might have resulted seriously had not friends intervened. It seems that Mayor CROWLEY took offense at an open letter which appeared in a local newspaper yesterday and which he considered cast a reflection upon him and of which Councilman LYONS was the author. The letter in question was in regard to some people being fined while others were not. Mayor CROWLEY told Mr. LYONS that he should have spoken to him about the matter before writing the letter and given him a chance to explain those cases in which it seemed that persons were not fined.

Hot words followed and some strong, though not profane, language was used on both sides. The affair was not on the point of terminating in a fight when the police officers and friends present intervened. After reaching the foot of the stairs the trouble began again and was only stopped by Officer JEFF LYONS taking Councilman LYONS off.

The affair is deplorable in that there is no doubt that it was all the result of a misunderstanding.

Mayor CROWLEY may be relied upon to give a full and satisfactory explanation of those cases to which Mr. LYONS referred, as he always dispenses justice without fear or favor; while undoubtedly Mr. LYONS, who always has the best interest of the city at heart, was perfectly right in the way in which he understood the matter.

**MAYOR'S COURT. The Sinners who stood Before the bar of Justice This Morning.**

The eclipse of the sun didn't affect the mayor's court this morning, although its effect was felt shortly after. It is still doing a rushing business at the same old stand, that is, the court is.

A Mr. MURPHY, for contempt of court, was sentenced to four hours in the calaboose. Following were the cases disposed of this morning:

W. GRAHAM, for being drunk and using bad language, was fined \$2.50 or five days work on the streets.

TONY ABRAHAM, for using bad language, was fined \$2.50 or five days work on the streets.

SAID MESSOR, for using bad language, was fined \$1.50 or three days work on the streets.

LILY MOSS, colored, for fighting, was dismissed, no case being made against her.

**JOURNALIST AND ORATOR.** Forty-three road workers will give a picnic at Little Indian bayou at an early date and have invited Captain RICHARD HARRISON to address them on that occasion on the subject of Good Roads. There is no doubt that the hustling newspaper man will uphold the honor of his profession on that occasion, treat them to logic, wit and eloquence, and do his full share towards disposing of the choice viands which will be set out for that purpose.

**MY FAVORITE THINGS IN LIFE DON'T COST ANY MONEY. IT'S REALLY CLEAR THAT THE MOST PRECIOUS RESOUCUE WE ALL HAVE IS TIME.** S. Jobs

**SURNAME INDEX (A Surname may appear more than once on a page.)**

Abraham 34	Epping 33	Jones 13	Nelson 18	Tatum 19
Ackerman 28,29	Evans 20		Nichols 19	Taveney 12,20
Agan 27		Kay 18		Taylor 33
Akins 4	Farr 18	Keeny 33	Odom 19	Thomas 29-31
Alexander 11	Fatherree 29	Kilgore 18	Olson 11	Thornton 18
Allis 13,20	Faucett 33	King 12	Oppenheimer 32	Toerner 19
Anderson 13	Figueron 19	Kirven 20		Tritico 19
Arcenaux 32	Fisher 12	Kleinpeter 32	Parish 19	Trotti 15
Arguello 4	Flanders 18	Knowles 17	Park 13,20	
Armentor 19	Fontenot 19	Kolb 20	Partridge 18	Underwood 30
Armstrong 19	Ford 19	Kratzer 18	Patin 19	
	Fournet 4	Kurtz 4	Peery 33	Van Diezer 19
Baker 19	Fruge 19		Perkins 23,24	Vincent 24
Barbe 23		LaCroix 4	Perry 13	
Beard 28	Gabbert 19	LaFleur 19	Pete 18	Waller 19
Benoit 19,28	Gaidry 29	Lafitte 8	Pierrotte 19	Wasey 32
Bilbo 8,10	Gibbs 28	Lake 13	Pinch 3	Watson 19,33
Blackford 28	Gill 4,15,33	Landis 33	Plauche 18	Webb 28
Bordelon 13	Goforth 19	Landry 27,28	Poe 33	Wedemeyer 18
Broussard 27,28	Goins 21	Laurents 27,28	Pollet 3	Wehrt 23
Brown 19	Goodman 33	Lawrence 8	Pomeroy 29	Wilkinson 19
Brumely 31	Goos 4,9,10	LeBleu 29	Porter 12,16	Williams 15,19
Buchanan 28	Gorham 16	Leithead 19	Powell 33	Williamson 12-16,20
Buras 28	Gormly 12	Liskow 14,18	Pujo 4,13,14,	Woodle 19
Burke 20	Gouaux 16	Locke 9,10,23	32	Woosley 18
Burr 21	Graham 34	Lowry 27,28		Wright 29
	Gray 16,17	Lyons 34	Quinn 28	Wulff 17
Cade 20	Guerre 15			
Calgreen 19	Guillory 18	McBurney 27	Ray 20	Young 19
Carpenter 18	Gunn 30	McCabe 13	Revillon 28	
Cisco 3		McCan 29	Richard 18	
Clements 13	Haag 19	McCann 18	Richardson 19	
Collins 32	Hacker 3	McClanhan 19	Robinson 3,32	
Cormier 4,5	Hamand 33	McLaughlin 30	Rosenthal 12	
Cox 19	Hardin 15	McLeod 19	Rothermel 18,19	
Crowley 34	Harmon 32	McNeese 33	Ryan 8-10,32	
	Harmonson 23			
Damon 12	Harrison 34	Maples 29	Sallier 8	
Dark 16	Harveson 32	Mariner 19	Salter 19	
Darnstead 25	Haupt 34	Martin 12,16,	Sanders 18	
Davis 32	Hawkins 31	18,19,29	Saunders 32	
DeBord 30	Hebert 19,27,28	Matthews 30,31	Schram 4	
DeCook 19	Herlong 18	Mayo 32	Schroeder 19	
Dees 24	Hill 19	Meche 19	Seal 24	
Derouen 29	Hines 19	Messor 34	Sedden 13	
Deshotel 19	Holl 29	Metregeon 19	Shaddock 19	
Dewey 19	Holland 27,28	Miller 23	Shaffer 33	
Dolby 12,16,19	Holmes 15	Moore 23	Shaheen 19	
Doyle 18	Hooper 30	Morgan 18,19	Sharp 29	
Drury 19	Hortman 32	Moss 13,14,	Simmons 33	
Dugan 13	Howe 32	19,34	Slack 18	
Duplantis 19		Mouton 3,28	Spencer 19	
Dupre 19	Iles 18	Murchason 11	Stacy 19	
Dupuy 27	Ingram 30	Murchenson 11	Stafford 28	
	Irwin 15	Murphy 34	Stagg 26	
Eddy 12,16,18		Murray 28,29	Stine 4	
Edwards 18,19	Jackson 18,19		Stone 18	
Eggleston 32	Janice 17	Nash 19	Strauss 19	
Elderman 16	Jenkins 32	Neal 30	Sugar 14	
Ellender 11	Johnson 30,32	Nelands 19		



SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. BOX 5652  
LAKE CHARLES LA 70606-5652

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LAKE CHARLES, LA  
PERMIT NO. 263

-----  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

American Canadian Gen Society NH  
P.O. Box 6478  
Manchester, NH. 03108-6478

**MS**

**2018 OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT – Thelma LaBove (337/433-3409)  
VICE-PRESIDENT – Linda Gill  
TREASURER – Diane Oliver (337/263-5499)

RECORDING SECRETARY – Evelyn LeBleu  
CORR. SECRETARY – Dorothy Akins

**KINFOLKS – Vol. 42 No. 1 - p. 36**

EDITOR – Pat Huffaker (337/477-3087)  
TYPIST – Pat Huffaker  
CIRCULATION – Pat Huffaker <phuffaker@bellsouth.net>

PROOF READING – Wilmer & Phoebe Guillory,  
Dot Akins, Reva Chesson & Pat Huffaker

**2018 PATRON MEMBERS**

Mrs. Margaret Bass  
Mrs. Norma Blake  
Mr. Don Blanton  
Jerrine Boone  
Mr. Paul Cochet  
Mrs. Candace W. Cooper  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Creech  
Mrs. Behrend Drost  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Dupuy  
Miss Jo Anne Durand  
Mr. & Mrs. Hershel Frazier  
Mr. Gedge Gayle  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Gill

Miss Betty Jean Henry  
Tracy Hagar  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Howard  
Mr. & Mrs. R.E. Huffaker  
Mr. Paul Kratzer  
Mr. & Mrs. Don Ladner  
Evelyn LeBleu  
Mr. Robert LeJeune  
Pamela McKinney  
Marian Miller  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Moore.  
Mr. Keith Nabours  
Mr. Michael Nunez

Mrs. Roberta Pinch  
Peggy Reyes  
Mr. Billy Rosteet  
Mr. Daniel Rosteet  
Mr. Donald Rosteet  
Mr. Frederick Rosteet  
Mr. Jeff Rosteet  
Mr. Robert Rosteet  
Mr. Sidney Rosteet  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Roy  
Mrs. Susan Simmons  
Mr. Aaron Tassin  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Taveney  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald White





# KINFOLKS

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY, INC.

ISSN 0742-7654

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 39 - Society News                          | 57 - Glimpses of Arts & Entertainment         |
| 40 - SW LA Genealogical/Historical Library | 64 - Swamp Angels of Cameron Parish, La.      |
| 40 - March Program - Martha D. Washington  | 69 - Queries                                  |
| 46 - Pins, Staples and Paper Clips         | 70 - <i>The Daily American</i> (31 July 1897) |
| 49 - American Legion Post #1 - continued   | 71 - Index                                    |
| 72 - 2018 Officers & Patron Members        |   |

Volume 42 No. 2 - May 2018



**SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY** organized in 1973 to gather, process and preserve genealogical material, is a non-profit educational organization. Its objectives are to promote interest in genealogy, to encourage and assist its members in genealogical research, and to conduct such subsidiary projects as shall contribute to that end. SWLGS was incorporated in 1991. The Society does not maintain an office. Telephone numbers listed in *Kinfolks* are private numbers. All work is done by volunteers.

**MEMBERSHIP** per calendar year is \$12 - individual, \$17 - families (husband and wife), and \$22 - patron (individuals or husband and wife, provides additional financial support). Membership begins in January each year and includes an annual subscription to *Kinfolks*. Members joining after January will receive quarterlies for the current year. Correspondence and dues should be sent to SWLGS, P. O. Box 5652, Lake Charles, LA 70606-5652.

SWLGS holds its regular meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of January, March, May, September and November at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Meeting Room of the Southwest Louisiana Genealogical & Historical Library, 411 Pujo St., Lake Charles, LA. Programs include a variety of topics to instruct and interest genealogists.

**KINFOLKS** is published quarterly. Issues should be received by end of March, May, September and November. Notify the SWLGS of a change of address as soon as possible to assure delivery. Queries are free to members, \$2 for non-members. Each issue has a surname index. Single issues are \$4.00. Back issues are available from 1977. *Kinfolks* is indexed in the Periodical Source Index (PERSI), Fort Wayne, IN.

**EDITORIAL POLICY** - We encourage and welcome contributions for inclusion in *Kinfolks*, especially unpublished material pertaining to Southwest Louisiana. However, we will accept genealogical material referring to other areas. We strive to publish only reliable genealogical information, but neither the SWLGS nor the editors assume responsibility for accuracy of fact or opinion expressed by contributors. Articles are written by the editor unless otherwise specified. We reserve the right to edit and/or reject material not suitable for publication. Articles and queries will be included as space permits. Please send contributions to SWLGS, P. O. Box 5652, Lake Charles, LA 70606-5652. Permission is granted to republish information from *Kinfolks*, provided the SWLGS and the author or compiler (if identified) is given due credit.

**SOCIETY ITEMS FOR SALE** - *Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. III (1991)* \$25.00 ppd; *Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. IV (1994)* \$25.00 ppd; *Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. V (1997)* \$25.00 ppd; *Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. VI (2000)* \$22.00 ppd; *Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. VII (2003)* \$20.00 ppd; and *Ancestor Charts & Tables, Vol. VIII (2009)* \$20.00 ppd. *Kinfolks - Subject Index II - Vol. 19 (1995) through Vol. 22 (1998)* \$5.00 ppd; *Subject Index IV - Vol. 27 (2003) through Vol. 31 (2007)* \$5.00 ppd. Order from SWLGS, P. O. Box 5652, Lake Charles, LA 70606-5652.

**IMPORTANT!!! PLEASE ADVISE US OF A CHANGE OF ADDRESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** *Kinfolks* is mailed in bulk in March, May, September and November. The post office will not forward your copy if you have moved and charges 75 cents for an address correction. Re-mailing *Kinfolks* cost the price of a second copy, plus \$2.00. Therefore, it is necessary that you advise us of a change of address as soon as possible to help save unnecessary expenses.

**COPYRIGHT 2018: Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society, Lake Charles, LA**

**SOCIETY NEWS**  
**SWLGS Web Site - <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~laslgs>**  
**Mark Your Calendar for Meetings -**  
**2018 - Jan. 20, March 17, May 19, Sept. 15, Nov. 17**

**MAY MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society will be held on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Meeting Room.

Program will be "Colonial Life" presented by LEE ROBINSON of Jennings, La. He will dress in character and talk about life in the early American colonies. Mr. ROBINSON was born and raised in Jefferson Davis Parish where his ancestors had migrated in 1887 from Kansas and Nebraska. He is a retired Jefferson Davis Parish law enforcement officer. During his 20 years of service he was a DARE officer for 8 years and gave presentations in schools. When teachers learned that he had an interest in and knowledge of history they requested that he present programs to the students about Louisiana history, American history, the Constitution and Lewis and Clark's journey. He has also given presentations to various other groups.

Canned goods and monetary contributions will be given to Abraham's Tent.

**SEPTEMBER MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society will be held on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Meeting Room.

Program will be "Save Your Photos" presented by RENEE GRANTHAM.

Canned goods and monetary contributions will be given to Abraham's Tent.

\*\*\*\*\*

[www.linkpendium](http://www.linkpendium.com) – [www.linkpendium.com/La-genealogy](http://www.linkpendium.com/La-genealogy)

Linkpendium is a 10,000,000 resource directory to everything on the Web about families worldwide and genealogically-relevant information about U. S. states and counties. It covers both free and subscription sites, with a strong emphasis on free resources provided by libraries, other government agencies, genealogical and historical societies, and individuals.

Family Discoverer search engine at the top of the page covers 2,804,000 of pages they index. There are also city or county or family surname navigation tools; locality directory, and a surname directory.

\*\*\*\*\*

**IN MEMORIAM**

**PATTY JEAN McFATTER SINGLETARY**  
**1937 - 2018**

**SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL LIBRARY**  
**411 Pujo Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601**

**2018 Beginning Genealogy Workshops**

**Part I – Thursday, June 21<sup>st</sup> - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

**Introduction to Genealogy and the Genealogy Library**

**How to get started and how to use the Library resources/equipment,  
books, microfilm and computers.**

**Part II – Thursday, July 19<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

**Organizing and Preserving Records**

**Organization and Preservation of records.**

**Part III – Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

**Electronic Resources**

**Demonstration of the electronic resources available at the Library  
and at home for Calcasieu Parish residents.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**MARCH PROGRAM**

The March program was “First Lady – MARTHA DANDRIDGE WASHINGTON” presented by Mrs. EILEEN HACKER.

MARTHA DANDRIDGE was of English ancestry. Her family had been in the New World a long time. The Rev. ROWLAND JONES, her great grandfather, was pastor of Bruton Parish about 1633 for fourteen years.

She was the first born, June 2, 1731, to JOHN and FRANCES DANDRIDGE on the family’s plantation near Williamsburg called Chestnut Grove. At that time, perhaps one of the most noteworthy situations is that both mother and child survived. If mother and child survived that milestone, there was a host of other dire circumstances to cause death. (Fevers, spoiled food, colics, worms, malaria, yellow fever, smallpox, tuberculosis)

In our minds eye, we see a Virginia Plantation as something like Tara, Carters, or Shirley Mansion. The plantations of colonial Virginia were much more modest. They were practical, working abodes that served the families for that time in history. The DANDRIDGEs were well off, not as wealthy as the Fairfaxes, or the Custises. Chestnut Grove had six rooms. Unless the planter was very wealthy the home would not have elegant furnishings, silver, paintings or porcelains. Needs of the family would be met. There would be beds, tables, chairs, cooking utensils, very simple toys and a few books for the children’s school.

There was always a room for guests. They were expected, and they came. The visit would maybe be an overnight, a few days or maybe a week. The female guests would be in one bedroom. The male guests in another room. The parents of the home had a bedroom. The female children had a room and the boys had a room.

Kitchens were a distance from the main house – a precaution against fire. Other buildings would include a poultry yard, smokehouse, tobacco drying house, a wash house, a still room for making beer and cordials, a pigpen, a barn or stable for horses and cows, school house, springhouse, privy, an orchard, an herb garden, and perhaps a spinning house.

Would you like, just for fun, to go back in time for maybe a few minutes to Tidewater Virginia in July to experience the sounds and the odors along with MARTHA, her three brothers, and four sisters and all of the plantation children?

MARTHA grew up as a child of privilege. Her education was that of most girls of her class in Colonial Virginia. Girls married young and were expected to be schooled in running the domestic side of plantation life. She would be responsible for the domestic welfare of the entire family including servants, the health and feeding, clothing, religious education, and would be responsible for the smooth running of all the special houses of the plantation such as smokehouse, spinning, etc.

Although her education did not include classic training, she was literate, intelligent, she read and understood business documents and of course she could write, but found it a terrible chore. She was happiest entertaining guests, and running her enormous households.

When MARTHA was eighteen she was married to DANIEL PARKE CUSTIS. He was twenty years older than MARTHA, he was handsome, wealthy and he adored MARTHA. They lived on the Custis Plantation where MARTHA presided over the household and DANIEL managed the 17,000 acre estate. They had several hundred slaves.

Four children were born. Two died in infancy. JACKY and daughter PATSY survived. More sorrow came to MARTHA in 1757 when DANIEL died after a brief illness. He was 46. It was a sad time for MARTHA. Within a three year period, she had lost her father, two children, and her husband. She was a widow at 26, alone with two children to raise. Her husband had not left a will, so by Virginia law she was probably the wealthiest land owner in the entire state, and the guardian of her children. She was responsible for several hundred slaves, the management of far flung acreage, paying the bills, overseeing the overseers, correspondence with British agents, money to be collected, planning next year's crops, and had become seriously ill after DANIEL's death.

She did have several people on whom she could rely for advice, but in those times, perhaps another husband to help was what she needed. In those days before modern medicine, people died early in life. There were usually children involved and the remaining spouse needed help. Families came forth to help, and society rather expected the spouse to marry again quickly.

There are different stories about how MARTHA and GEORGE really met. One of her grandsons many years later wrote a hearts and flowers romantic piece about how they got together suggesting that it was a love at first sight affair. More serious and probably more credible journalists report that they met at the home of the Chamberlaynes, mutual friends. MARTHA and her two children were visiting. GEORGE was ill with respiratory problems, fever, dysentery, and general malaise after being on the frontier for a long time fighting the Indians and



the French. He was frustrated because he had been passed over as a commander in favor of a British officer sent out from England who really didn't understand the frontier situation. He was completely exhausted and seriously felt that he was about to die of his infirmities. He was considering resigning his commission. At dinner he ate little, was very quiet, he had a gaunt look, and MARTHA felt that he needed someone to look after him.

Visiting in the Chamberlayne's home, and talking with MARTHA by a cozy fireside he found her to be frank, unintellectual, not flirtatious, friendly, and she let him know that she too, was weary, and frustrated with so many problems with her life. Maybe there could have been some match making. He rode away with an invitation to visit the White House at a later time.

WASHINGTON's doctor gave him reassurance that he would be all right, and that he did not have tuberculosis as LAWRENCE, his older brother, had died of. He had thought about the rather pretty, kind, and helpful widow who was also wealthy while he was in Williamsburg. MARTHA had made inquiries about the tall, quiet soldier whom she had talked with at the Chamberlaynes. He was highly regarded by all to whom she talked and she looked forward to his visit.

It was a highly successful time. Maybe the stars, and the sign of the moon were all in order. MARTHA's children adored him from the first moment and he liked them. As MARTHA took him around the plantation, he appeared to have exactly the correct blend of courtesy and authority required with her people. Back in the parlor, baby PATSY presented him with a somewhat worse for wear bouquet. To accept, he got down on his knees, and told her that she would break lots of hearts in the future.

As he arose, his eyes met MARTHA's and it was that magical moment. MARTHA had found someone whom she could trust with her children, and to help take care of her estates. She was in love, and from that day forward, she continuously had GEORGE's interest uppermost except for her children who always came first. There was that proverbial 'fly in the ointment' however. For many years, GEORGE had been in love with the beautiful, fascinating, witty, and rich SALLY FAIRFAX. However, she was the wife of another man. Even more disconcerting, that man, LORD FAIRFAX, was one of GEORGE's best friends.

In a soul searching moment, WASHINGTON toted up the differences of the two women and MARTHA always came out ahead of SALLY. He was glad that there was really nothing similar about their attributes, and he could sit across the table from MARTHA without comparing. MARTHA was small, totally giving, friendly, she was a good listener, and maybe the fact that she was very wealthy could have entered the brain wave. Anyway, he asked her to marry him. They were married on Twelfth Night Jan. 6, 1756, at MARTHA's White House home on the Pamunkey River.

As the couple stood before the Reverend DAVID MOSSOM both elegantly dressed in clothes for the occasion ordered from England, amid a large gathering of MARTHA's neighbors and friends and relatives of them both. There were a variety of issues for them both. There was MARTHA's dead husband, GEORGE's hopeless love for his friend's wife, two rich and very



spoiled children, GEORGE's debts, and his mother was a problem. He loved to hunt and he and MARTHA were both overly fond of beautiful and expensive clothes.

GEORGE wore a blue suit with a white satin waistcoat. He had gold buckles on his knee breeches and shoes. He wore gloves. MARTHA wore a costume of gold damask trimmed with lace over a petticoat of fine white fabric decorated with silver threads. She wore purple satin high-heeled slippers with silver threads and pearl jewelry. The ceremony was at 10:00 a.m. with dinner at three.

GEORGE hastened the remodeling of Mt. Vernon for his bride. He wound up his duty with the army; he registered for a seat in the House of Burgesses. Mt. Vernon was finally livable, and he was elected. Life settled down to the routine of plantation owners. The WASHINGTONs entertained, they planted their crops, and they loved their lives. Life was pleasant, but the affairs of the state, and the family seldom allow such comfort for a long period. The mother country's demands, and the insistence of freedom for Americans combined to create distrust, turmoil, disobedience, rioting, rebellious thoughts and actions, and finally the Revolution which freed those people whom we call our founding fathers to form, a fledgling nation – our country.

MARTHA's corner of Eden was in a terrible turmoil. Her beautiful daughter, PATSY, had died of epilepsy. JACKY, her son, was married. GEORGE was raising and training troops at his own expense. He had also been asked to train volunteer troops for other areas. There was the Boston Tea Party. British troops were occupying parts of Boston. MARTHA could not believe what she was hearing, as there were many meetings at Mt. Vernon between GEORGE's trips to Philadelphia to attend meetings. She couldn't believe that the colonists would really take up arms against the King. Governor DUNMORE had seized the powder from the town magazine in Williamsburg which the people thought belonged to them, and he had dissolved the House of Burgesses. There was an ill and murderous wind blowing and swirling around her that threatened to destroy her way of life. The Colonists were not altogether in their thinking. At that time only about a third of the people were avidly hoping for freedom from England. A third were loyal to the King, and the other third of the people didn't really care.

The letter, which MARTHA dreaded, came from GEORGE telling her that the army to fight for their freedom had been put under his command.

There was some alarm that Governor DUNMORE may try to take MARTHA as a prisoner, and probably destroy Mt. Vernon. Not many felt an eminent threat, but care was taken. WASHINGTON's papers and the family's treasures were packed in trunks just in case. She was with the CUSTISEs in November for a visit when a rider reached her that GEORGE wanted her to come to Cambridge to be with him. She was ecstatic and immediately made preparations for leaving. Never in her life had she been north of Alexandria. She wrote out lists of things that had to be done and to be packed, and everyone on the plantation was put to work getting her trip in readiness. GEORGE sent word that he would get all of the arrangements made as soon as he got the word that she would join him. Hams were packed for the headquarters for Christmas. Bacon, nuts, dried fruit, small Christmas gifts, knitting needles, --- the lists were endless.

The trip would require about three weeks --- without breakdowns, serious illness, fatigue. NELLY and JACK went with her. JACK wearing the Custis green and white livery as was his body servant. MARTHA's maid SALLY was along with the black coachman in the Washington white and scarlet livery. As the chariot with its four white horses plus an extra horse got under way, MARTHA and her entourage were met at every turn with greetings and hospitality. Officers met her at the Lower Ferry in Philadelphia and escorted her into the city. She was impressed for GEORGE and for herself because of the honor, which they gave to His Excellency. It didn't ever occur to MARTHA that the courtesy, good will, cheers, ringing bells were for her as well as for her husband because she left her comfortable home in Virginia to be in a cold New England winter and share the hardships. Not many wives had joined their husbands, but some had and MARTHA set to work having knitting sessions and repairing uniforms for the soldiers and making bandages for the hospital.

Christmas Day was special. The men soon learned what a difference the General's wife made in the camp. All of the wives put on their best clothes and got out the bit of jewelry they had brought with them. Food from Mt. Vernon was served and there was enough wine for all of the toasts.

The church had been abandoned, but for New Years MARTHA had it cleaned and the men observed a church service. MARTHA and GEORGE observed their seventeenth wedding anniversary. The British were coming by sea. GEORGE sent her back to Philadelphia. Most of the wives went home at this point, but with Governor DUNMORE rampaging in Virginia, she wouldn't be safe. If the British in New York should capture her, she would be a great prize for Great Britain. So, she went back to Philadelphia with her faithful SALLY in the somewhat worn chariot pulled by the same white horses.

In Philadelphia, President HANCOCK relayed messages to her about the war. It was all bad. She couldn't help GEORGE, and suddenly she felt that she must go back to Mt. Vernon where she could help the plantation manager with some of the problems. Perhaps many of us have a mind's eye feeling of MARTHA, in a little white cap sitting around sipping and chatting with friends. She was personally a great inspiration to all involved in the Revolution. Her money outfitted ships and armed them, she provided great quantities of food and clothing for the effort. Some sources say that a large number of soldiers would have deserted had it not been for MARTHA. She was a rock. Congress gave her an escort as far as Baltimore. Friends met her with an escort the rest of the way. JACKY accompanied her to Mt. Vernon. Working very hard helped her as she worried about GEORGE and the war. The situation was very bad. The army was reeling. She had nightmares. If GEORGE were captured, would he be taken to England, tried for treason, and sent to the Tower. Would she be allowed to go with him!

A letter from GEORGE telling of his victorious crossing of the Delaware as well as other victories changed the atmosphere completely. MARTHA prepared to join GEORGE again. In March, she started with JACKY CUSTIS accompanying her. Guards and escorts provided her protection and company all of the way. She had been away from GEORGE for ten months. She was in Valley Forge now. The good food she had brought from Mt. Vernon was most appreciated, too.

The winter was cruel, but somehow it was endured. MARTHA was going home, but was delayed because the British held Philadelphia and GEORGE didn't think it safe for her to travel. She finally started to Mt. Vernon in June. The trip was long, tiresome, and dangerous, but she knew how much it meant to GEORGE for her to be with him. She brought a semblance of his beloved Mt. Vernon which he hadn't seen for such a long time, and she gave hope to the beleaguered troops as a breath of home. She also brought much needed food and bandages for the wounded. Who really served, we need to think.

The war dragged on. Finally, after help from the French and CORNWALLIS' surrender which we all know about, the war was over. After the final surrender ceremonies in New York, the parties and thank you from a grateful Assembly in Philadelphia, GEORGE and MARTHA were going home, and they both intended that nothing could pry them away.

However, the states were wrangling, they couldn't come to an agreement about anything and all of the bitter winters and sacrifices were about to be sacrificed because of the ill will and lack of compromise, and direction. Ultimately GEORGE was persuaded to be president - just for awhile - until he could forge a workable congress. GEORGE didn't want to do this. MARTHA was in tears. How could their country demand more of GEORGE! Of course through her tears MARTHA knew he would go, and he knew he couldn't say "no." So, she watched him ride away again, and even as she dried her tears, she prepared to go to New York.

Her entourage included fourteen white servants, a coachman, two footmen, a porter, a houseman all dressed in the splendid scarlet and white Washington livery with cocked hat, and white gloves, and polished shoes. In addition there was a cook, two kitchen maids, two housemaids, two washers, the steward, a French valet skilled in hairdressing. The chariot was pulled by four white horses.

What role would MARTHA play in this great and extraordinary experiment in representative government. She only knew that she wanted to be with GEORGE and to help him. From the first, GEORGE was determined that MARTHA would have a role. He met her in his presidential barge when she came to New York from Mt. Vernon, which set the tone. She was greeted by hundreds of people shouting "Long live Lady Washington." What to call the elected leader and his lady was a matter of much discussion, for the time the crowd preferred "Lady Washington." She must have been a bit startled to be greeted by a 13-gun salute. It would have been more, but that was all the black powder that the greeters had.

She hoped after 4 years they could go home to their beloved Mt. Vernon, it was not to be. Finally after eight years, the end appeared in sight. Many roles of the president's wife had been established. MARTHA had assumed the role of hostess for the country. She had entertained the great and near great from over the world to great success. She made her place as the First Lady in a very gracious, unassuming, competent manner. Had she been more outspoken, and had she taken part in any of the debates swirling around her, she might have set a different tone for the wives who followed. She put her personal touch on the job, and was most happy to go home and hope to have a few peaceful years with GEORGE. There were many 'good-byes' balls, teas, and parties until they were at last on their way to their beloved Mt. Vernon.

Unfortunately they didn't have much time together after GEORGE's long service to his country. GEORGE did set up a very successful distillery in 1797. He made 11,000 gallons of whiskey in 1798 and sold the whiskey for \$7,500. MARTHA had shared her husband with the demands of service to the country all but seven years of their forty years of marriage, and those years were her happiest. Her entire world had revolved around GEORGE. She loved him. About two years after they were home, he took a cold and didn't recover. When the doctors told her that he was dead, she didn't weep, but she said very quietly, "All is over now, I've no more trials to pass through." There were no regrets. She was ready to join GEORGE.

MARTHA did not hide herself from her many well wishers. She took part in the lives of her relatives and kept busy, but when GEORGE died, she closed the bedroom door and never went into the room again. Instead she slept in a small room on the floor above where their bedroom had been. After about two years, she was spending more time in bed and didn't wish to leave her garret room. She had one more thing to do: She must burn the few letters from GEORGE, which she had kept for special reasons. One day, when everyone was gone from the house, she burned the letters. Only two were left when she heard someone come into the outer hall. She quickly put the two in a drawer in a table. She never left her room again. She became feverish and a bit unclear. She did remember the letters, but her niece would find them and she knew she would never make them public. On May 22, 1802, she died and is buried beside GEORGE at Mt. Vernon. Severe fever was the diagnosis for her death. She was 79.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **PINS, STAPLES, AND PAPER CLIPS**

**© 2017 Reprinted with permission of DAVID A. NORRIS, and Moorhead Magazine, Ltd.”  
*Your Genealogy Today*, July/August 2017**

**David A. Norris looks at the ties that bind our family documents together.**

Keeping papers in some kind of order was as important for our ancestors as it is today. A collection of family papers might well show quite a range of paper fastening techniques from ordinary straight pins to the modern stapler.

For centuries, sets of paper sheets were pierced with a straight pin to keep them together. While ordinary sewing pins worked well, there was also special “T-pins” made for that purpose. Long before correction fluid or post-it notes were invented, pins attached notes or newly edited sections to their proper place in manuscripts. Nineteenth century lost and found ads sometimes mention that lost bundles of papers or currency had been pinned together.

Among famous authors who kept manuscript revisions in order by using pins was Jane Austen. In 2011, the Bodleian Library of Oxford University obtained an original manuscript of *The Watsons*, an unfinished Austen novel. Among the pages were numerous pins, some holding pages together and some affixing rewritten sections over replaced text. Austen's pins were compared with the library's archive of “dated and datable pins.” At the Bodleian, pins and clips are removed from manuscripts, and sorted into a reference collection. With pins dating back as far as 1617, the collection can offer clues to the dates of creation or re-ordering of manuscript pages.

In old papers, the presence of “extra” holes in a sheet might indicate that it was once pinned to another page. In some 19<sup>th</sup> century court cases, testimony partly depended on matching up and counting holes in papers. Close examination could prove that the pinned pages of a will or other document had been tampered with, and that sheets had been removed or added.

Pins remained in use long after staplers and paper clips were widespread. In 1943, the Associated Press reported that the British Army in India faced a shortage of pins. The army’s solution? They found that thorns from India’s babul trees worked just as well as steel pins to keep papers together.

With pins being used where we might now employ staples, paper clips, and clear tape, stacks of papers could contain lots of pointed traps to spear unwary fingers. Other (and safer) simple ways of attaching sheets of paper included folding page corners over, sewing pages together, or using a little bit of glue.

Various home recipes for making “mouth glue” or “Indian glue” recommended melting glue in boiling water, and adding some sugar. Simmered until thick, the mixture was poured out to cool and then cut up into small bars or cakes. One could dampen the cakes and rub them onto paper sheets to stick them together or mend small rips.

The stapler, often called a “stapling machine” or a “paper fastener,” was common by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Early staplers were complicated mechanisms. It took several separate steps for users to line up a fresh staple, punch it through the papers, bend back the prongs, and reload a fresh staple. By the late 1890s, there were automatic models that required only a single punch.

Another type of gadget pierced little tabs in the paper and folded them together, so the user never had to buy staples. Other devices punched holes and inserted a sort of grommet to hold the paper together.

Paper clips were known in the mid-1800s, but no one knows for sure who invented the first one. The “Gem” paper clip, made of metal wire that was bent, curved, and shaped to resemble a contemporary paper clip, was advertised in the 1890s. No one obtained a patent for the classically simple innovation and it’s not even known if it was an American or European invention. The U. S. firm of Cushman & Dennison received a trademark for them in 1904, and stated that such paper clips were “Used since March 1, 1892.”

Other early paper clips and clamps came in a variety of shapes and patterns. If you have any family papers held together by odd-looking old paper clips, you can compare them with an online selection, courtesy of the Early Office Museum website. Their paper clips section can be viewed at [www.earlyofficemuseum.com/paper\\_clips.htm](http://www.earlyofficemuseum.com/paper_clips.htm)

At least twice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the press reported worries about shortages of paper clips. A few months after the US entered World War II, the War Production Board announced a cut of 40% in steel destined for paper clips, thumb tacks, clamps, staples, and related office materials. Another paper clip shortage was predicted in 1974, because steel manufacturers were cutting back on inexpensive metal wire in order to make more profitable products.

Two or three centuries ago, the word “tape” meant a thin strip or ribbon of cloth. Often used to decorate clothing, cloth tape also held papers together. One way was cutting two slits or holes in the sides of documents, looping a length of ribbon through the holes, and tying a knot. Bundles of paper were also wrapped with cloth tape. By the early 1700s in Great Britain, legal and official papers usually came wrapped in red ribbons. So well-known was this practice that the term “red tapeism,” later shortened to “red tape,” was coined to describe time-wasting legal or bureaucratic regulation.

Our modern “adhesive tape” appeared by the late 1800s, coming into use for purposes ranging from bandaging cuts to wrapping electrical wire. People also found “sticky tape” was good for holding documents together, and repairing torn folds in paper items such as bank notes and sheet music.

In 1930, Richard Drew invented a transparent, self-adhesive cellophane tape, known as Scotch Brand Cellulose Tape for the 3M Company. Drew’s transparent tape has remained a necessity in homes, classrooms, and offices.

Paper fasteners can create a lot of problems with historic materials. Staples, clips, tape, or rubber bands should be used only on copies, not original documents. This prevents damage to fragile or brittle old paper, and protects them from creases, punctures, or rust stains.

Ordinary adhesive tape has chemicals that migrate into the paper, causing discoloration or stains. The adhesive in the tape can dry up over time and slip off the pages, leaving only the damage.

To keep old documents collated, place sets in archival cardstock folders or boxes. It’s best to store documents unfolded and flat.

If old fasteners are removed, the task must be done carefully to prevent damage to fragile paper. Often, it’s better to leave pins, paper clips, and staples in place if they are not causing harm. It’s a good idea to remove rubber bands; they can become brittle and even “melt” and stick to pages. Pressure from heavy spring clips can damage papers. Documents fastened by such methods as glue or wax seals should be left alone.

The US National Archives has a page with information on how to handle old “Fastened Documents” at [www.archives.gov/preservation/holdings-maintenance/fastened-docs.html](http://www.archives.gov/preservation/holdings-maintenance/fastened-docs.html).

Certainly, if a pin or paper clip has done no significant damage in the past century or two, it can be left alone. Amid some old family papers, I found a copy of my grandparents’ 1949 income tax form. Someone had slipped a pin through the upper left corner of the sheets to hold them together. The pin is still in place where my grandfather or grandmother left it; it seemed a shame to move the pin after so many years.

\*\*\*\*\*

**How can the increase in the price of cemetery lots be blamed on the rising cost of living?**



**AMERICAN LEGION, W. B. WILLIAMSON POST #1**  
Submitted by SANDRA FISHER TAVENEY, Member No. 334

Continued from Vol. 42 No. 1

**NAME CONTROVERSY**  
By SANDRA FISHER TAVENEY

In 1920 the Lake Charles American Legion William Burke Williamson Post #1 was named in honor of the local attorney and hero of World War I. W. B. WILLIAMSON, was a noted and well liked individual who took great pride in assisting his state and his country. He was well known in political circles throughout the state and was very prominent in legislative affairs, serving a term as a representative of Louisiana. The name of the post stood in good standing for 30 years.

In 1950, MATILDA GEDDINGS GRAY, heiress, philanthropist, daughter of MARY KIRKMAN and JOHN GEDDINGS GRAY, decided to benevolently donate land and build a new home for the Legion, to be located at 1530 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Lake Charles, Louisiana. There would be two stipulations, one the land would be held under a 100 year lease and the building would be named for her deceased brother, HENRY GRAY. So the name of the Post would remain as the W. B. Williamson Post, but the building would carry the name and be known as the HENRY GRAY Building. Members of the Legion must have voted to accept these stipulations and the building proceeded. And a beautiful building it is. Marble imported from Italy graces the floor of the 7,000 square foot building; paneling from the Philippines lines the walls in several rooms, sturdy well-made chairs of steel and cane are still in use 65 years later and brick covers the outside walls. Miss GRAY spared no expense in memorializing her brother through the show place of the building in his name.

The building was built and the dedication took place in October of 1950, but all was not as acceptable as would be thought. Several members and others of Lake Charles took exception to the possible "renaming" of the Post. One in particular was Mrs. W. B. WILLIAMSON herself who wrote the following letter to the Members of the American Legion W. B. Williamson Post #1 that same month. Although she makes no precise accusations, her reference and meanings are clear.

Lake Charles, LA  
October, 1950

To the Members of the American Legion  
W. B. Williamson Post #1  
Lake Charles, LA

Dear Sirs

Letters of condolences are, at best, difficult to write. This one is going to be very difficult, and I am sure that what I say here will be no consolation to you men for the loss you have so recently sustained - a loss that, judging from the telephone calls I have received, has shocked the good people of the town.

These people believe implicitly in your courage to defend your country, but they grieve - as I do - over the loss of courage to demand the just and fitting recognition of the dead, and the right to pay honor where honor is due. This is a loss you will feel deeply in the years to come, and for which you have my heartfelt sympathy.

In your recent dedication ceremonies, your failure to mention the man your earlier comrades chose to honor by giving his name to the first American Legion Post to be organized in Lake Charles, was - to say the least - astounding. I could attribute it only to hurried planning of the program and the thought that thirty years back often seem like ancient history to the youth of today.

Later, when I learned the facts, I was even more astounded, that - even with the large membership of the Legion - there were not enough of you to speak out courageously with authoritative indignation, and demand that this defect in the program be corrected. You paid a high price when you failed to do that, and lost a measure of esteem in the eyes of your friends.

Many of you younger men holding office in the Legion today, did not know W. B. WILLIAMSON, and it seems fitting here to sketch briefly the highlights in his career - that you may know at least some of the things for which he stood, and some of the characteristics that endeared him to the towns people, and the men who served under him for many years when he was a captain in the National Guard, and a Major in the Judge Advocate General's Department after we entered the first World War.

W. B. WILLIAMSON was born on a farm in Stonewall, La., in 1878. He studied law in the office of Mr. CHARLES ELAM in Mansfield, and when he was admitted to the bar, he went to Leesville to practice in the year of 1902.

It was here that he became interested in the National Guard, and acquired the title of "Cap", a name by which he was affectionately called even after his rank was upped a grade. It was also while he was in Leesville that he was elected to the state legislature, a position to which his younger son, JACK WILLIAMSON, was also elected some twenty-five years later.

He moved to Lake Charles in 1910 and was a member of the law firm of Pujo and Williamson. In 1912 he was elected a member of the Constitutional Convention - a convention which it was decided, later, not to hold.

When World War I came, he was the father of three children, but he volunteered in 1917 and was sent to officers training camp at Fort Logan H. Root. Because of an infection, which he contracted from vaccination and which almost cost him the loss of his arm, he was dismissed for disability and sent home.

A few months later he volunteered again - this time as Judge Advocate, and was attached to the Headquarters Dept. of the 39<sup>th</sup> Division. He trained at Camp Beauregard for eight months before being sent to France where he died in 1919, having been retained there, after the close of the war, to settle claims.

Writing home after the Armistice was signed he said: "God knows there is nothing I should like better than to return home at once, but I understand that, in addition to the settling of these claims, my name is being considered for a place at the Peace Conference, and if that is true, and I should be elected, I would feel it an honor that I could not turn down, and I think our children might like to know that their father had served in this capacity."

He had passed away by the time the letter reached me. I learned later that, at the time of his death, he had already been approved by three members of the board that made the selections.

Before closing I want to recount just one incident that happened at Camp Beauregard during the time he was stationed there. This incident which is typical of dozens of others in which he figured all during his service both here and abroad, will perhaps explain the 150 letters of condolence I received after news of his death was announced by the War Department.

Many of these letters were from people I had never known, but who had been associated with him either here or in France. Some were from the parents of boys he had befriended, and many were from the members of the old Company K in Leesville.

The incident to which I refer occurred on a cold rainy day at Beauregard, and the circumstances are substantially as recorded here.

An eighteen-year old soldier had been put in the guard house, because - after getting a pass - he was fifteen minutes late in returning to camp. The guard house consisted of a small tent a short way down the hill from headquarters, and was surrounded by a high fence of poultry wire. The young boy was the only prisoner in the compound, and being bored, began to kid the guard who was walking back and forth in front of the gate, with military precision, gun over his shoulder, in the pouring rain.

At certain intervals, he walked the whole length of the yard.

The prisoner, with a grin on his face, bet he could slip out of the guard house without being seen. The guard told him, out of the corner of his mouth - in passing - that he'd like to see him try it. The prisoner said, "Want to bet a dollar?" and the guard agreed.

The prisoner went back into the tent, and waited until the guard's position was such that he could not see a certain place in the back fence because of the tent, the prisoner darted over to the wire and pulled it up from the ground. As the guard turned the prisoner hid behind the tent, then darted back again when the time was right and pulled a little harder. After three such efforts he succeeded in making an opening large enough to crawl under, and once he was outside, he hid behind a tree to see what would happen when the guard learned of his escape.

A soldier from the mess hall arrived about this time with supper for the prisoner, and when he found the tent empty, the alarm was sounded, "Prisoner escaped!"

The prisoner then stepped out from behind the tree and laughingly demanded that the guard pay up. The two of them dodged in and out among the nearby trees for a minute or so with

the guard trying to lay hands on the prisoner, who then ran back into the guard house and ate his supper.

Officers at headquarters watched the little act. Some of them smiled. Some of them frowned. Some of them were graduates of West Point.

The next Major WILLIAMSON heard of the incident was when he learned that the boy had been court-martialed and sentenced to TWENTY YEARS at Leavenworth! He was to be shipped out immediately.

Tearing through red tape as if it had been cobwebs, Major WILLIAMSON succeeded in getting a new trial for the boy with himself appointed to defend him. At the end of this second trial the previous sentence was set aside and the boy given three months in the guard house. He was out in time to join his unit when it was sent overseas.

Perhaps you men who are old enough to be fathers of eighteen-year-old boys, full of vigor and still thoughtless in many ways, can appreciate the feeling of this boy's parents when they learned about the man who had interceded in their son's behalf. That man has dozens of such acts of human kindness to his credit. He is the man for whom you named your post.

He is the man you could so fittingly have honored at the dedication of your new home, without detracting one iota from the honor accorded the man in whose memory the home is named, and without lessening in any way the credit due his relatives who gave it to you.

W. B. WILLIAMSON's sons are both lawyers practicing in the same firm in Chicago. When the Second World War came, they both volunteered and served for four years with the armed forces. His daughter, ROSALIE ECHOLS, lives in Lake Charles.

During his life time, he and HENRY GRAY were the best of friends. They would both have taken great pride in the magnificent quarters which should be - to the Legion - a source of joy and comfort, now, and in the years to come.

But I am wondering if it isn't going to take a bit of doing - to reap the fullest measure of satisfaction from the luscious surroundings - for which you have paid so high a price.

<Signed> Sincerely Yours,

Mrs. W. B. WILLIAMSON

Mrs. WILLIAMSON was born HAZEL PARR ALLIS on September 17, 1886, in Blue Springs, Missouri to parents, SEBASTIAN ALLIS (1855-1905) and SUSAN SEDDEN (1861-1901). She and her husband had three (3) children: ROSALIE, WILLIAM BURKE, Jr. and JACK ALLIS WILLIAMSON. The family remained in Lake Charles after the death in 1919 of Mr. WILLIAMSON.

ROSALIE WILLIAMSON was born on December 25, 1907, and died May 30, 1973, she married an ECHOLS and was the Manager at the Arthur Murray School of Dance for a number of years.

WILLIAM BURKE WILLIAMSON, Jr. was born March 30, 1906, in Louisiana and died February 20, 1987, in Boca Raton, Florida, at the age of 80 years. His partial obituary is noted on Find a Grave Memorial #82323424.

“BURKE WILLIAMSON, 80, a Chicago Attorney for more than 50 years until his retirement in 1983, died Friday in Boca Raton, Florida. Mr. WILLIAMSON was a member of the law firm of ADAMS & WILLIAMSON in Chicago. He was also formerly the president of the board of trustees of the Hull House Association. He was elected to that office in 1957. Mr. WILLIAMSON served in the army during World War II and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He formerly resided in Chicago and Lake Forest and moved to Asheville, N.C. after his retirement. He is survived by his wife ELISE CLOW WILLIAMSON; two daughters, ELEANOR HAMELL FISCHER and ROSALIE; two grandchildren; and a brother, JACK. A memorial service is being arranged.”

WILLIAM BURKE WILLIAMSON and his wife, ELISE HAMIL CLOW WILLIAMSON are buried in Graceland Cemetery, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. His wife “PEGGY” HAMIL CLOW WILLIAMSON was born September 28, 1916, in Evanston, Cook County, Illinois, and died February 24, 2008, in Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina. She was the daughter of KENT SARVER CLOW and his first wife, ELEANOR CORWITH HAMELL CLOW. Her obituary states that she is survived by one daughter, ELEANOR FISCHER; two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

JACK ALLIS WILLIAMSON was also born in Louisiana on April 5, 1910, and died on August 23, 1994, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. He was also a practicing attorney in Illinois at his death. Unfortunately, nothing further is known about his life.

Mrs. HAZEL WILLIAMSON continued to reside in Lake Charles until her death in 1968. She is buried with her husband and daughter, ROSALIE WILLIAMSON ECHOLS, in Orange Grove Cemetery.

#### **Widow of Legion Post's namesake dies**

Funeral services for Mrs. W. B. WILLIAMSON, 82, widow of WILLIAM BURKE WILLIAMSON for whom the W. B. Williamson Post of the American Legion in Lake Charles is named, will be at 10 a.m. Saturday in the south chapel of Hixson Funeral Home.

The Rev. LUTHER BOOTH, pastor of First United Methodist Church, will officiate. Burial will be in Graceland Cemetery.

Mrs. WILLIAMSON of 1314 Reid St. died at 6:45 p.m. Thursday after an extended illness.

She was a native of Blue Springs, Mo. Her husband had died in 1919 in Tours, France.

Survivors are one daughter, Mrs. ROSALIE WILLIAMSON ECHOLS of Lake Charles; two sons, W. BURKE and JACK ALLIS WILLIAMSON, both of Chicago, Ill.; three grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

### **DEATH TAKES HENRY GRAY IN ORLEANS**

Prominent Lake Charles Man Dead After Prolonged Illness.

HENRY GRAY died October 18, 1933, in New Orleans, after a prolonged illness. He was survived by his sister and one brother, W. K. GRAY, both of Lake Charles. The following is his obituary in the *Lake Charles American Press* on October 18, 1933.

HENRY GRAY, prominent ranchman and philanthropist of Lake Charles, died this afternoon at Touro Infirmary in New Orleans, a message received here late this afternoon stated.

Mr. GRAY had been a patient at the infirmary since October 2. He had been in ill health for more than a year. He was about 50 years of age.

Mr. GRAY is survived by one sister, Miss MATILDA GRAY and one brother, W. K. GRAY, both of Lake Charles.

Mr. GRAY was a member of one of the oldest and most prominent families of the state. His father was JOHN GEDDINGS GRAY, one of the pioneer citizens of Calcasieu and one of its early builders.

The GRAY ranch, south of Vinton and near the Ged oil field is one of the largest in the state and has been managed by HENRY GRAY since his father's death.

Mr. GRAY was the largest cattle owner in Southwest Louisiana, was one of the largest landowners, and was extensively interested in oil activities.

### **AIDED CHARITIES**

Mr. GRAY was a philanthropist interested in many causes, though his charities were conducted quietly and modestly in his efforts to avoid publicity. Many boys and girls have found it possible to continue their education because of his financial assistance.

He was always ready to give aid to all local needs. Only last fall when the Civilian Relief treasury was nearly empty, with many dependent families to be cared for during the winter. Mr. GRAY sponsored a two-day rodeo, using cattle from his ranch, for the benefit of the organization, with the result that many who were dependent on the Civilian Relief were able to have food for the cold months.

The funeral arrangements had not been completed late today.



**WORLD FIGURE**  
**MISS GRAY RITES THURSDAY**

Episcopal funeral service will be at 4 p.m. Thursday in the Hammer Funeral Home Chapel for MATILDA GEDDINGS GRAY, 82 year-old philanthropist who died Tuesday morning at her home, 2417 Shell Beach Drive.

The Rev. RICHARD COOK, pastor of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd will officiate. Burial will be in Graceland Cemetery.

Miss GRAY inherited a large estate left by her father, oilman JOHN GEDDINGS GRAY.

She was internationally known and has been honored by three countries. England awarded her the Honorary Order of the British Empire; France the Legion of Honor; Guatemala the Order of the Quetzal.

The MATILDA GEDDINGS GRAY Foundation with headquarters in New Orleans was established Nov. 14, 1969. The main purpose of the foundation is to establish innovative educational programs by utilizing Miss GRAY's assets and thereby enriching the educational opportunities of the people of Louisiana.

Representatives of the foundation recently proposed that McNeese State University be the educational institution to permanently exhibit a multi-million dollar jewel collection which contains a large portion of the Royal Jewels of the Imperial Romanov family of pre-Soviet Russia.

This is one of the most noteworthy assets of the foundation.

McNeese was also asked to permanently house foundation art works and take the lead in the development and establishment of the educational programs and to utilize the various facilities that the foundation may wish to make available to the institution and people of Louisiana.

In Lake Charles, Miss GRAY donated the land, buildings and furnishings for two American Legion homes. These were W. B. Williamson Post #1 and Post #555. She gave the land for a school in Vinton, where she grew up, and land and financial support for the John Geddings Gray School in Lake Charles.

Other favorite philanthropies included land and financial support for archeology expeditions for Tulane University and textile exhibit for Tulane; donated rice crops to France and England after World War II; historical library in Guatemala City.

Also a hospital in Antigua; restoration of Santa Anna Catholic Church in Guatemala and buildings to Jefferson Military Academy.

She was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary; Daughters of the American Revolution; Orleans Club in New Orleans; Le Petit Salon and Phi Mu Sorority.

She was a fellow of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City and on the board of Boedelin Library.

Miss GRAY restored the famous Gauche Home on Esplanade Avenue in New Orleans; the Evergreen Plantation on the Mississippi River in St. John Parish and a coffee Finca in Antigua.

She retained her permanent home in Lake Charles, residing part-time in New Orleans, Antigua, New York and France.

The 13<sup>th</sup> annual Louisiana Dairy Festival was dedicated to Miss GRAY in 1961.

At one time Miss GRAY had a home in Paris and a chateau in the French countryside. She donated the chateau as a recreation home for American soldiers in World War II and the chateau later became a hospital.

She was the daughter of JOHN GEDDINGS GRAY and MARY KIRKMAN GRAY. Four brothers predeceased her, WILLIAM K. HENRY, JOHN Jr. and ROBERT GRAY.

Survivors are her niece, Mrs. MATILDA GRAY STREAM; Mrs. STREAM's husband, HAROLD H. STREAM, II; great-nephews, HAROLD H. STREAM, III and WILLIAM GRAY STREAM, and sister-in-law, Mrs. OPAL HUGHES GRAY.

Pallbearers will be Dr. JOE BARHAM, Dr. GORDON HOLCOMBE, EDWARD CARMOUCHE, EDDIE SHAHEEN, JOHN CARE HENDERSON, HENRY A. REID, Jr.; BILL McCLANAHAN and HAROLD H. STREAM, II.

Honorary pallbearers will be PETE HENDERSON, HAROLD H. STREAM, III, JOHN JACKSON, Sr., ALBERT LIEUTAUD, BOB CORDER, Dr. ALTON OSCHNER, LASTIE PAUL VINCENT, JIMMY BOYER, GRAY STREAM and SAM HOUSTON JONES.

---

Sources:

Succession of William Burke Williamson, May 29, 1919, 14<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Lake Charles, Louisiana, #2666

Find A Grave, data base on-line for: Major W. B. Williamson, Memorial # 140360951  
Hazel Allis Williamson, Memorial # 64833523; Rosalie Williamson Echols, Memorial # 64833523; W. B. Williamson, Jr., Memorial # 52323424; Elsie Clow Williamson, Memorial # 82323305; Jack A. Williamson, Memorial # 97949490

W. B Williamson Obituary, *Lake Charles Weekly American Press*, January 24, 1919, page 6, Roll 070 and January 23, 1922

Matilda Gray Obituary, June 9, 1971, *Lake Charles American Press*, Page 1, Roll 625

Henry Gray Obituary, October 18, 1933, page 1, Roll # 186.

## GLIMPSES OF ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT IN EARLY LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

Submitted by DOT AKINS, Member No. 1451

### References:

*History of Lake Charles* by Stewart Alfred Ferguson

*Leaves from the Diary of Louise* compiled by George Ann Benoit

*The History of the Theatre in Lake Charles, Louisiana, from 1920 to 1950* by Patsy Heidt

History of Lake Charles from Wikipedia

Lake Charles, Louisiana, and other Web pages

Archives of *American Press*

People in the city of Lake Charles have enjoyed the arts and other forms of entertainment from its earliest days. One of the first references was a comment by STEWART ALFRED FERGUSON in his *History of Lake Charles* wrote that as early as 1824, clipper-schooners anchored in the lake and entertained settlers on board. GEORGE ANN BENOIT reported in *Leaves from the Diary of Louise* that on July 20, 1869, a ball was held on board the schooner *Adeline*.

Various churches presented private theatricals and public concerts. On January 20, 1876, the social season was opened in Goosport at the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School. In 1878 the first public concert was held at the Methodist Episcopal Church and was advertised as a concert and jug breaking entertainment. The Church of the Good Shepherd gave an interesting concert and tableaux in June 1886. The leading figures in it were Miss MINNIE KNAPP, Miss EVALINA PUJO, Miss MARIA GOOS, Miss LOTTIE MAYO, Mr. and Mrs. W. L. HUTCHINS, JOS. ECKART, and H. J. ORTMEYER. The Presbyterians gave an entertainment in September 1890. Messrs. KINNEY, LITTLE, KNAPP and WILLIAMS formed a quartette. Master ERNEST TAYLOR gave a cornet solo; Miss TILLIE BREUCHER sang; Miss FRAZER and Mr. KNAPP gave a mandolin and guitar duet; Misses KNAPP and BRADLEY sang a duet; MATTIE SUMMERS and Miss DELLA NEAL gave recitations.

In these years, there were various community events and celebrations. In the *Leaves from the Diary of Louise* are the following notations:

"May 9, 1872 - Last Saturday we had more fun! There was a fish fry in the neighborhood of the L. C. DEES home with boats sailing on the river and the lake as the principal diversion. MARIE, MAX, MICHAEL and I had a lovely sail all around the lake. Captain REYNOLDS gave an excursion, too, on his boat. That night we all went to the soiree at Haskell Hall and we danced till the wee morning hours. - May party

"June 6, 1874 - Everybody is talking about the Fourth of July picnic. It will be held near DEE's mill and there are going to be boat races and everything.

"March 28, 1878 - We had a wonderful Mardi Gras celebration this year. All ferries and public conveyances were instructed to convey his Majesty's subjects at half rates by order of Rex. The procession, in which none but maskers were allowed, formed at MEYER's hall. First came the chief marshal and his aides, mounted, then the queen and ladies of the royal household in a palace car, with a mounted escort. Next came the king of the carnival, the prince and the royal heir apparent in a chariot with mounted maskers riding at the side, then the king's

musicians in carriages and then the other maskers in carriages. It was a beautiful sight, so everybody who saw it said. I didn't really see much, being one of the maskers. There were two big masquerade balls at night.

According to PATSY HEIDT in her book *The History of the Theatre in Lake Charles, Louisiana* the theatrical history of Lake Charles goes back to 1878, when an amateur group met to produce plays in an attic. During the 1880s, road companies played FRICKE's Opera House. Later the name was changed to WILLIAMS' Opera House, and finally to the Lake Charles Opera House.

The old FRICKE Opera House, the first of its kind in Lake Charles, was quite the place for all types of entertainment. In this opera house, located in the 700 block of Ryan Street, there were 1200 folding opera chairs, ample scenery, and a piano. WILLIAM C. FRICKE was the Proprietor and Manager.

During the early 1880s, after FRICKE moved away, the WILLIAMS Opera House, located in the 900 block of Ryan Street, opened. Dances, theatrical, and local affairs took place there. The array of stars that appeared in the old WILLIAMS Opera House was staggering. Such names as JAMES O'NEILL, father of the playwright EUGENE, and a matinee idol of his day, was one of the many. Madame MOJESKA, the great Polish actress of the day, played in MacBeth, and JOSEPH JEFFERSON thrilled audiences with his Rip Van Winkle. The BARRYMOREs and the DREWs all came to Lake Charles. The men of the town always greeted LILLIAN RUSSELL when she arrived. The opera house became dilapidated, was condemned as unsafe, and closed in the early 1900s.

In March 1881, the Magnolia Dramatic Club was organized. THAD MAYO was president; J. A. KINDER, vice president; A. M. MAYO, secretary; THOS. R. REYNOLDS, stage manager; PAUL SULLIVAN, assistant stage manager; Dr. J. C. MUNDAY, treasurer; P. M. MURRAY, janitor. The club embraced considerable dramatic talent and gave some fine entertainment.

J. L. WHITE announced in 1910 that he had acquired a lease from the late MATHILDE MILLER for the purpose of erecting a new theater to be called the Arcade in the 800 block of Ryan Street. On opening night, September 26, 1910, though work had been rushed so that the theater would be ready to open on schedule, only three of the eight boxes were completed and much of the carpet was not down. Notwithstanding, on this opening night amid great excitement SIDNEY DREW appeared in the comedy "Billy." Next day the *Lake Charles American Press* carried these headlines: "Opening of the New Arcade was Brilliant Social Event" and went on to say "the pretty women in evening and dressy gowns made the scene quite festive, giving a decided metropolitan air to the event."

From 1959 to 1965 the Arcade Theatre was just for live performances. It was a major stop on the theatrical circuit. The BARRYMORE family of actors, SOUSA the march king, HOUDINI the magician, bandleader PAUL WHITEMAN and IRA GERSHWIN appeared on its stage. Motion pictures were played at the Arcade when it was not otherwise used for stage shows.

By 1965 the building was in such disrepair that it had to be closed down. The Arcade Theatre was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. In 1985 the theater was in the process of being restored by the Calcasieu Preservation Society when a fire broke out and destroyed the building.

Of considerable importance to the theatrical life of Lake Charles was the beginning of amateur theatrical productions by the adult members of the community. On January 13, 1922, a group met at El Casa, a combination tearoom and women's clubhouse, to organize a "Little Theatre Guild." Mrs. JOHN HENNING was the first president, Mrs. O. T. WHITE was secretary and treasurer. Mr. R. CISCO was chairman of the casting committee, assisted by Miss ROSA HART and Mr. SAM QUILTY. Mrs. M. K. BULLOCK was chairman of the study committee with Mrs. WILLIAMSON and Miss MARION NORTH. Mrs. WHITE was the librarian.

The initial meeting for the organization of the Lake Charles Little Theatre was held December 8, 1926, at the home of Mrs. T. A. DEES. Officers elected were ROSA HART, president; Mrs. DEES, vice-president; and Mrs. PAUL BARBE, secretary. Committees appointed were: the play reading committee, Mrs. E. N. BULLOCK, chairman; the ways and means committee, Mrs. T. F. PORTER, chairman; the casting committee, SAM QUILTY, R. F. CISCO, and Miss AZENA THOMSON; the costume committee, Mrs. HOMER C. ABBIE, chairman; and the publicity committee, Miss GEORGIA WILLIAMS and PHIL REILLY.

On February 23, 1927, announcement was made in the *American Press* of the initial production of the Little Theatre to be held February 24 in the Parish House of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd. Three one-act plays were to be presented; "Overtones," a psychological character study; "Moonshine," also a psychological study, and "Suppressed Desires," a comedy. Another kind of membership available was announced, the junior membership, for the young people of the community.

The Lake Charles Little Theatre productions were held in the Masonic Temple beginning from 1936 to 1938. In 1938 LCLT found its own home - The Wells Fargo stable on Bilbo Street. It was called the "Stable Playhouse." In 1858 the theater burst into flames and was rendered useless. The Arcade on Ryan Street became the next home for the LCLT. Oct. 20, 1966, the theater was moved into a discarded chapel at Chennault Air Base as LCLT's Memorial Theatre Center. Fire struck again in 1975. Since 1976 the LCLT is in The New Stable Playhouse in the 800 block of Enterprise Blvd. which had been the U.S. Postal Service vehicle maintenance building.

Artists Civic Theatre and Studio began performances in 1967 at the Arcade Theatre under the direction of MARK PETTAWAY. ACTS, a civic, non-profit organization with an open membership policy, started as a facility for adult, teen and children's theater. In December 1973, the group moved to their new ACTS theater complex on the corner of Bilbo and Church Streets. The building was converted from an empty warehouse to a 350-seat theater. The seating was theater-type seats placed on elevated ramps encompassing four sides of the round stage area. In 1983, ACTS Theater moved into its current home at 1 Reid Street, formerly the location of the Dixie Theatre.

Movie entertainment was popular in Lake Charles from the 1920s until the present day. The first all movie theater was the Paramount. The Paramount Theatre was open as early in 1924 in the 800 block of Ryan Street. Seating was listed at 600. It was initially operated by Saenger Amusements, and later by Southern Amusements. It was one of the most elegant movie theaters in its day in Lake Charles. There were plush lobbies upstairs and down, real leather and velour seats, and ushers and usherettes. The Paramount provided quality movie entertainment for almost 60 years. The theatre was closed by the mid to late 1970s and has since been demolished.

There were many other movie theaters in Lake Charles. Following is some information about these theaters:

The Palace Theatre, located at 405 Enterprise Boulevard was open as early as 1930. Seating was listed at 550. This was a Negro theater that was operated by Dixie Amusements. The theater closed in the late 1950s. It has since been demolished.

The Ritz Theatre was located at 603 Ryan Street. It was open as early as 1935. Seating was listed at 700 and was operated by Southern Amusements. The theater closed in the early 1950s.

The Dixie Theatre was open in 1940. The small theater seated 350. It was operated by Southern Amusements and was listed as a Negro Theatre. It was located at the corner of S. Railroad Avenue and Reid Street. The theater was destroyed by fire in 1947, but was rebuilt and provided seats for both white and Negro. The Dixie Theatre has closed but the building still exists and is the current home of ACTS, (Artists Civic Theatre and Studio).

The Delta Theatre was the first independently owned, neighborhood theatre. Mr. and Mrs. W. L. PATERNOSTRO owned the movie house. Opening in 1941, it was located at 2215 South Street (now Ryan Street) and had 610 seats and air conditioning.

Next to the Delta Theatre was the Victory Theatre opened by Southern Amusements near the same time.

The Rex was a theater that opened in 1947 to serve residents of the north Goosport area. It was located at 2012 Moeling street. B. CLYDE STEPHENS was the owner and operator of this 325-seat theater. Upstairs was a balcony for Negro patrons.

Mr. and Mrs. W. L. PATERNOSTRO's new Lyric Theatre at 22 Broad Street was opened in 1949. Constructed at a cost of more than \$350,000, the new theater was termed one of the most modern and original in design throughout southwest Louisiana. Named the Lyric, the new theater's design follows the name's theme throughout its decoration. An immense replica of a lyre tops the huge neon sign in front of the structure, and musical notes light up all around the marquee and signs. The same motif was carried out on the theater interior where lyre-like lighting fixtures cast an indirect light over the pastel-colored walls, aisles and lobby. Completely fire proof, even to the heavy Victorian curtains which set off the stage and screen. The building



was air conditioned and has special acoustical arrangements which reduce noises and increase the audibility of shows being presented. The theater had 1500 seats.

The Pitt Theatre also opened in 1949. Located on Kirby Street near Hodges, the theatre was built by the T. A. PITTMAN Theatre Company of New Orleans. The building's stadium ramp type auditorium, designed to provide unhampered vision of the screen by patrons, had a seating capacity of 1900. The screen was 20 feet wide and back of it were the high fidelity speakers of the R.C.A. photo phone sound system. The Pitt closed during the 1990s. The old single screen movie house could no longer compete with the multiscreen Charles Cinema located on Sale Street. The building was demolished in 2004.

In the 1950s drive-in theaters were popular. Lake Charles had two of these theatres. One was the Round-Up Drive-In on East Broad St. (once the old Sam's Club building, now the Calcasieu Parish School Board Office off I-210). It was unique because of the huge neon sign that covered the whole back of the screen. It faced the street, and it consisted of a cowboy on a horse swinging a rope at a calf.

The New Moon Drive-in on 5100 Gerstner Memorial Boulevard (now the New Moon Golf driving range) probably lasted the longest, even though it burned at one point. Open Air Theatres Inc. opened the New Moon Twin Drive-In in 1954. In addition to the 1000 car capacity, there was an indoor auditorium located in the center of the site, which had 400 seats and was air conditioned and centrally heated. The building also contained a large concession facility and the projection booth. There was also an outside patio with 150 seats. The screens were named East Tower and West Tower, and were in a Streamline Moderne style, with a moon & clouds on the rear of the screens. To complement the facilities available, there was a large playground with motorized and standard rides.

In an article in the *American Press*, ANN Q. SMYTHE wrote, "Music is recognized as a human necessity rather than a luxury or matter of mere entertainment. The article was entitled "Community Concert Group Brings Good Music Here." The aim of the Lake Charles Community Concert, organized in 1932, was to make available to the people fine music, presented by professional artists. Some of the programs included Mantovani and his orchestra, the Robert Joffrey Ballet Company, LaBoheme Opera presented by the Boston Opera Company, Singer Lily Pons, Pianist Van Cliburn, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the Boston Pops Orchestra. The Community Concert continued until the late 1980s.

Prior to 1932, Lake Charles had musical events to entertain the citizens. As early as 1879 WILLIAM MEYER, W L. HUTCHINS, ADOLPH MEYER, LOUIS O. AUCOIN, AUGUST SECKENDORF, JAMES A. LYONS, BRYANT HUTCHINS, H. WAITT, FRANCIS CHAVANNE, and PETER PROTHERSON organized a band. In 1882 Professor F. HORTIG organized a string band.

A significant contribution to the cultural history of Lake Charles was made on November 11, 1958, when seventy musicians took their places on stage at McNeese State College for the premiere performance of what is today the Lake Charles Symphony Orchestra. The Junior Welfare League played a major role in the unfolding events leading to this momentous occasion.

There had always been an interest in music in southwest Louisiana, and before the League's involvement, there were successful efforts with orchestras, including the Kushner Orchestra and the Livingston Orchestra. According to the late Dr. FRANCIS BULBER, it was as early as 1938 that an organization called the Lake Charles Civic Symphony came into being. The orchestra performed for five seasons on into World War II, but was forced to suspend its concerts after the war.

In the fall of 1954, The Junior Welfare League undertook the responsibility of rebuilding the orchestra. In August of that same year, a non-profit corporation was formed with Dr. MAURICE KUSHNER as Chairman of the Board. WARREN SIGNOR was named Conductor. The first performance of the newly reorganized Lake Charles Civic Symphony was held on November 11, 1958, with pianist GEORGE SANDER as soloist.

During the Symphony's 60-year history, the conductor's baton has been held by six distinguished men: B. WARREN SIGNOR, Dr. GEORGE RUFFIN MARSHALL, DON WILDER, JAMES MacINNES, and WILLIAM KUSHNER, who held the position for more than thirty years. The current conductor is BOHUSLAV RATTAY.

The Symphony performs in the Rosa Hart Theatre of the Lake Charles Civic Center, which seats 2,000 people.

Of equal importance with the organization of the Civic Symphony was the organization of the Messiah chorus in 1940. This group was organized to present a major portion of Handel's immortal work each year during the Christmas season. Their first concert was December 15, 1940. Dr. FRANCIS BULBER, Dean of the Fine Arts Department at McNeese Junior College was the conductor. The Messiah Chorus sang with the Houston Symphony in 1942.

J. M. CLEVELAND and J. C. LeBLEU opened the first dancing school in 1877. They taught all the fashionable dances of the day, waltzes, polkas, mazurkas, schottisches, Spanish dances, cotillions, quadrilles, and others. They also gave lessons on the guitar and banjo.

Ballet was first introduced in 1947, when MARINA SVETNOVA [Svetlova], prima ballerina for the Metropolitan Opera, appeared. This group achieved unusual success, and was followed by MIA SLAVENSKA in 1948. The program, entitled "The Slavenska Ballet Variante" included selections from Coppélia, the Nutcracker Suite ballet, Concerto Romantique by Liszt, and a group of American folk dances called "Settlers' Sunday."

In 1963 the Lake Charles Ballet Society for Ballet Joyeaux was formed. It was dedicated to contributing to the educational and cultural life of the community and to provide desirable performing opportunities for the serious dance student. In December of 1963 it presented a local production of Tchaikovsky's fairy-tale ballet, "the Nutcracker" in the Arcade Theater. IDA WINTER CLARKE founded the Lake Charles Ballet Society and served as artistic director until her death in 1987.

The Lake Charles Civic Ballet was chartered in 1968. Mrs. JOHN A. GOUX headed the board of directors during the 1968-69 seasons and Mrs. W. L. PERKINS of Maplewood served

as secretary-treasurer. LADY LEAH LAFARGUE HATHAWAY was the artistic director. The group has put on a variety of performances, including "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Sleeping Beauty," "Cinderella," "Petruchka" and "Scheherazade." The LCCB often collaborates with the Lake Charles Symphony to provide music for its productions.

In 1938 the Lake Charles Art club was organized at the home of Mrs. MARY LOU STOCKWELL. It was a merging of members of an old art club and the Lake Charles Art Colony. These artists decided that their interest would be served best by bringing them all into one active group.

The club was inactive for several years and was reorganized in 1948. The president was Mrs. R. L. STOWE. The purposes of the club were to promote interest in art and handcrafts, to give opportunity to interested people to work together for inspiration, and to introduce new forms of creative art. The club endeavored to encourage any latent talent in any member or prospective member.

Art Associates of Lake Charles was formed in 1957. The purpose of the organization was to encourage education, appreciation and participation in all forms of artistic expression. The first president was Mrs. CHARLES SNEAD.

Within a few short months, the Art Associates presented the organization's first formal exhibit at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Hall. The exhibition showcased a collection of French paintings from Houston. Some 150 formal exhibits followed through the years drawn from the Smithsonian, Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Federation of Art, and other institutions as well as works from private collections. In addition to the first formal exhibits, AALC introduced other "firsts" in Lake Charles: house tours, Christmas-Around-the-World exhibit. In addition, over fifty organized art trips sponsored by the Art Associates took participants throughout the U. S. and Europe.

The Imperial Calcasieu Museum was founded in 1963 and has been serving the five-parish area of Calcasieu, Cameron, Beauregard, Allen, and Jeff Davis in Southwest Louisiana for 53 years. Their mission is to exhibit and support the visual arts, maintain a strong arts education program by offering educational opportunities, and to preserve the unique cultural and history of the region. The museum houses a permanent collection consisting of artifacts and memorabilia depicting life in the old Imperial Calcasieu region from the Native Americans to the present. There are numerous items of special interest including: period furniture, photographs chronicling the Great Fire of 1910 and other sentinel events in the history of the region. The Museum also boasts a permanent art collection including works of John James Audubon, Boyd Cruise, Angel Gregory and Lynda Benglis.

The Children's Museum promotes the Arts and Humanities in Southwest Louisiana. From its inception in 1988, the museum has consistently provided interpretive exhibits that encompass music, visual and performing arts, folk life, storytelling, and art education.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.**

**THE SWAMP ANGELS – CAMERON PARISH, LA**  
**IN WWII, a Hundred Area Volunteers Banded Together to Keep Nazis Off The**  
**Southwest Louisiana Coast**  
By BRAD GOINS  
*LAGNIAPPE*, January 2016

In 1944, *Collier Magazine* called them “the most unusual military outfit to serve in the war.”

They were the Swamp Angels of Grand Chenier, La. - a group of 100 men who patrolled the beaches of Southwest Louisiana during World War II.

What makes them so “unusual” is that they drew the attention of the then-popular national magazine *Collier*? Well, they had never been through boot camp. They’d never lived in barracks. They’d had no formal training in anti-submarine attack techniques or even the most basic combat attack maneuvers.

Almost all of them were members of a group little-known to *Collier* readers – the Cajuns. Many of them spoke only French.

None of them had been drafted. They were an all-volunteer force.

They relied not on modern military technology, but on the old bayou and Cajun techniques of using horses, dogs and pirogues for maneuvering the waterways of the swamp lands. They may have seemed unusual indeed to big city writers and editors who had no idea what a “pirogue” was.

The unorthodox quasi-military group began to come together in 1942, when German Uboats in the Gulf of Mexico were endangering ships there. Residents on the Louisiana coast were, quite naturally, deeply concerned about German infiltration or sabotage on the Louisiana coast.

When the VIIC - the “work-horse” of Uboats - glided into the Gulf of Mexico, it brought with it 18 torpedoes and 26 mines. And the threat was even greater than that, as Uboats tended to travel in groups, which were known as “Wolfpacks.”

In spite of the fearsome reputation of these crafts, they did have some limitations.

Because their battery power was limited, Uboats tended to move on the surface of the water under the power of diesel fuel. Thus, they were not usually silent.

Also, in the early years of the war, Uboat crews could do little more with their weaponry than launch it or drop it. It was only in the last years of the war that technological innovation enabled Uboat operators to become extremely accurate in the aiming of their weapons.

Still, it’s hard to exaggerate the public’s fear of the havoc the Uboat could wreak on maritime commerce. British war leader WINSTON CHURCHILL was once quoted as saying that the Uboat was the “only thing” in World War II that “frightened” him.

### THE THREAT IN THE GULF

In his history of the U.S. Coast Guard station at Biloxi, Air Force Lt. Col. TED ALLAN MORRIS, Ret., tells the story of the German threat:

“Throughout 1942, German submarines were having a field day along the U.S. east coast, sinking many ships. They also moved into the Gulf of Mexico, concentrating on the shipping ports of Tampa, Mobile, the Mississippi Delta, Port Arthur and Houston.

“They scored heavily against ships steaming independently, since initially there were no efforts to form convoys or to give merchant ships the protection of warships in American waters.

“In addition, there were very few aircraft equipped to hunt and sink submarines, and effective tactics still had to be devised. In those early days, tactics were often, for both warships and aircraft, ‘If you see an enemy submarine, try to sink it somehow.’

“The Germans were winning, and shipping had to have more aerial coverage. While developing the convoy system, along with more effective anti-submarine tactics, everyone made do with what they had at hand.

“In December, 1941, the Coast Guard began anti-submarine patrols from Biloxi ... None [of its airplanes] were designed to be equipped with armament or depth bombs ... Several jury-rigged systems were utilized until more sophisticated systems were developed and installed. The aiming of depth charges relied on the same seaman’s eye used to drop message blocks to the shrimping fleet.”

### THE COAST GUARD TAKES ON THE NAZIS

As 1942 wore on, the damage in the Gulf of Mexico became severe. In mid-May of 1942, Uboats sank the S.S. *David McKelvey* and the S.S. *William C. McTarnahan* in a location 50 miles south of the Mississippi Delta. The boats were sunk within 72 hours of each other.

Shortly thereafter, the freighter S.S. *Heredia* was sunk south of Atchafalaya Bay.

In July, the S.S. *Robert E. Lee* was hit 200 miles south of Biloxi. Fortunately, the boat did not sink.

In a three-hour operation, the Coast Guard flew 300 survivors, all of whom were coated in the oil that floated around the stricken boat, to hospitals in New Orleans,

It seemed that it was only a matter of time until the Coast Guard encountered a Uboat in the Gulf. When it happened, it happened in those waters south of the Mississippi Delta that the Germans seemed to love so much.

Pilot H. WHITE was flying a Grumman J4F-1, which carried a single depth charge of 325 pounds (and no other device for attacking a boat or submarine). There was no sighting mechanism for the depth charge. The pilot had to drop it simply according to sight.

When WHITE sighted the Uboat in the Gulf waters, it made a sudden and sharp dive to avoid attack. WHITE chose to approach aggressively at a very low altitude.

In spite of the Uboat's vigorous attempt at evasion, WHITE made a solid hit on the tail of the craft. Although debris floated to the surface, the hit was not verified until the war was over.

For his work, WHITE received the Distinguished Flying Cross. He likewise had the distinction of being the only Coast Guard pilot to sink a German submarine during World War II. And he did it all with nothing but eye-sight.

### **'WIN' HAWKINS; DUCK HUNTER AND WOULD-BE PLAYER**

Meanwhile, a leading citizen of Lafayette had been working concertedly to keep the chaos and danger of the Uboat attacks off the coasts of Southwest Louisiana.

WILLIAM WINFORD 'WIN' HAWKINS, a retired Lafayette oil man and a diehard Louisiana duck hunter, was working in New Orleans with the U.S. Coast Guard during the time the Uboat scare spread through coastal Louisiana.

HAWKINS seems to have gone into the war with a significant influence on the U.S. military. In her blog on Cajun culture ("On The Bayou ..."), "MizMa" says that at the beginning of the war period, she attended a wedding party in Abbeville at the same time that HAWKINS was entertaining members of the "military brass." MizMa says that at the time, HAWKINS was a friend of Gen. DWIGHT EISENHOWER, who would go on to become the head of Allied forces in the European Theater in World War II. (It's worth noting that some victims of Uboat attacks had been hospitalized in Abbeville - a circumstance that was highly publicized in the *Houma Press*.)

When HAWKINS offered the U.S. Coast Guard in New Orleans the use of his hunting camp in Grand Chenier in Cameron Parish as a base of operations, he got a cold reception at first.

HAWKINS may have been moved to make the unusual offer when he'd heard reports of a Coast Guard discovery of mysterious footprints on a remote Vermillion Parish coast. The Coast Guard had speculated the prints may have been made by Uboat crew members trying to find fresh water. The incident is described in the book *The Cajuns: Americanization of a People* by SHANE K. BERNARD.

Could the Coast Guard have known more than it was letting on? After all, could a set of footprints really be so menacing?

At any rate, it was a report delivered at a meeting of customs and Coast Guard officials conducted at the time that spurred the U.S. Coast Guard to take the extraordinary measures WIN HAWKINS proposed to protect the Louisiana coast.

One official in attendance at the meeting said he had picked up two hitchhikers on Highway 90 who spoke little English but were fluent in German. He said they told him a story of being



delivered to SW LA by a convoluted scheme involving Spanish and Cuban boats and a lot of swimming in bayous.

When the two men were asked how many were in their group, they answered 26. The 26 German-speaking men, who one assumes must have been saboteurs, were all grouped together in the Big Bayou Constance area. If their claims of having swum a great deal in treacherous coastal waters was true, they may have been tired and disoriented - and hence willing to accept a ride from a potentially hostile American. They said they walked in pairs and hid in ditches along the highway when they weren't walking.

It's said that this incident unnerved the Coast Guard and immediately sparked an interest in HAWKINS' offer. In fact, so enthusiastic was the Coast Guard that it commissioned HAWKINS and put him in a Coast Guard uniform immediately.

HAWKINS was told to put together a team in his Grand Chenier hunting camp. Anything he needed, the Coast Guard would gladly provide. Members of HAWKINS' group would have the job patrolling the coasts of Southwest Louisiana.

#### **COME ONE, COME ALL**

Most men in and around Grand Chenier volunteered for the patrol duty. There was no age cut-off. One Swamp Angel was aged 65.

Men patrolled on horseback or on foot; some brought dogs along. Inductees preferred their own horses to those offered by the U.S. military, as they felt the military horses would not be able to adjust to the bayou mosquitoes.

Many of the volunteers spoke only French.

Age wasn't a barrier; neither was any sort of physical limitation. Those who'd been classified as 4F by the U.S. Armed Forces were welcome to serve.

There was only one requirement: that the inductees know the terrain. They had to know the layout and workings of the bayous and cheniers. As we'll soon see, many of the rescue operations they wound up undertaking were necessary because of the dangerous terrain of the area.

The patrols were walking the beaches of Cameron Parish within 48 hours of HAWKINS' commission.

"MizMa" says the Swamp Angels worked 12-hour shifts and received \$21 a month in pay. Those who patrolled on horseback swapped out every eight hours. During their off hours, they sometimes engaged in horse races.

HAWKINS built three 50-feet-high towers that were used for observation of the beach.

Eventually, lookout stations were built at Johnson Bayou, Cameron, Creole, Big Bayou Constance, Rollover Bayou, Mulberry and Chenier au Tigre. Each had a radio and a look-out tower. Wives of recruits cooked meals at some stations.

The group's reach spread as far east as Southwest Pass in Vermillion Parish. In sum, the Swamp Angels' membership may have totaled about a hundred.

### **NAZIS, NO; RESCUES, YES**

"We never saw any trace of a submarine," said former Swamp Angel ANTHONY "TOONIE" SEGURA when he was interviewed in 2001 by the *Houma Courier*. SEGURA was 80 at the time.

What the shore patrollers did manage to do was rescue Army-Airmen who crashed in flights from the Army-Air Force base in Lake Charles.

In one episode, one man (and possibly two) died in an off-shore crash; others were very seriously injured by burns, and by saw grass and mosquitoes they encountered when they found their way inland and became lost in the bayou. They were in desperate states when the Swamp Angels located them and brought them to medical care centers.

SEGURA said the Swamp Angels were told by the military to stay away from one crash scene - perhaps because experimental equipment was involved. When the experimental craft being used by the military to navigate the bayou failed, the Swamp Angels were then invited back, and wound up rescuing both the victims and their would-be rescuers.

The Swamp Angels were the only U.S. military unit in World War II whose members were recruited, served and were discharged at the site of their homes. Because of their quasi-official statuses, the group was called various names at various times - the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Beach Patrol and Cajun Coast Guard.

It's said the name "Swamp Angels" was concocted by the airmen who'd been saved by the group. By the end of World War II, the Swamp Angels had saved a total of 35 Army-Airmen on the coasts of Southwest Louisiana.

### **AFTER THE WAR**

After the war HAWKINS remained more interested than ever in hunting ducks in the Grand Chenier area. As he expanded his camp into a lodge, he employed members of his former beach patrol group as the guides.

Friends who were pleased with the lodge lobbied HAWKINS to form a hunting club; he complied, and the Oak Grove Club was formed.

It was completely destroyed by Hurricane Audrey in 1957. HAWKINS responded by building an even bigger club.

It did not survive Hurricane Rita in 2005. Some members claim the destruction was so severe that only a few shotgun shells and dishes were found on the site.

This time, it was necessary to rebuild on a new 10-acre tract in Little Chenier. When construction was completed in 2007, the Oak Gove Hunting Lodge stood 3½ feet above the high watermarks of Hurricane Rita.

Former members of the Swamp Angels may no longer grace the rooms and grounds of the Oak Grove Hunting Lodge. After all, if the records are correct, the youngest of the Swamp Angels would be 91 if he were still alive today.

But who knows? Even at this late date, secret stories of the almost unknown World War II conflict of the Gulf of Mexico and the Louisiana coast may still be passed around in front of the fireplace late at night.

\*\*\*\*\*

[*Kinfolks* editor note: Articles about the Swamp Angels can be found in *Kinfolks Vol.23 No. 2*, page 68 (1999) and Volume 26 No. 1, p. 34 (2002)]

\*\*\*\*\*

## QUERIES

### SANDERS/SAUNDERS, ZEIGLER, COWARD, CAGLE, POOL

I read the obit of ELIZABETH SANDERS ZEIGLER in the *Kinfolks* issue of December 2017. She was the daughter of WILLIAM McKINLEY SANDERS. I descend from the SANDERS/SAUNDERS in Calcasieu Parish or Beauregard Parish. Mr. WILLIAM McKINLEY SANDERS is in my DNA tree. I would like info from this family and I will share all of my family documentation. I descend from WILLIAM SANDERS, husband of SALLY ANN or "CELIAN" COWARD. WILLIAM was born in 1829 in Louisiana and died 1864 probably in the Civil War. CELIAN was born ca 1831 in St. Landry (Calcasieu) Parish, La. Died after Sep. 1862 in Calcasieu (Allen) Parish, La. Imperial Calcasieu was divided into other parishes in 1913. They disappeared after the 1870 census. I am descended from their son CARROLL MURDOCK SANDERS h/o JUDITH ALICE CAGLE. WILLIAM's father was JOHN SAUNDERS born 1790 probably in Wilkinson Co., Ms. Died after 1850. He was married to MARY POOL 7 Mar. 1825 in Wilkinson Co., Ms.

JUNE R. POOLE, 6495 Wilder Dr., Beaumont, Tx. 77706-4205, <clydeandjune@att.net>

### NUGENT, LEE

1) Would like any information pertaining to JACQUES (JAMES) NUGENT, possibly born either 1811 or 1815, Rapides Parish, moved to Imperial Calcasieu Parish by 1850.

2) Any information pertaining to the LEE family, WILLIAM & FRANCOISE of Ky. In either St. Landry or Vermillion Parish by 1819.

GLORIA MOREAU, 10239 September Dr., Cincinnati, OH. 45251, [moregenealogy@gmail.com](mailto:moregenealogy@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

LA Free Genealogy is a site that provides links. <http://LAAHGP.genealogyvillage.com>  
Jefferson Gen. Society Newsletter, Feb. 2017, Vol. 32 #1

**THE DAILY AMERICAN (31 JULY 1897)**

Information Gathered by MICK HENDRIX, Member No. 1296

**LITTLE LOCALS. Items Briefly Mentioned for the benefit of Our Readers.**

Mrs. P. J. CONNOLLY and children spent yesterday in the country with Mr. SNIDER's family.

Mrs. L. C. KNAPP is having her well deepened today.

**PUNGENT PERSONAL PICK-UPS. Pleasantly Put by Reporters While Pre-ambulating the Streets.**

Mrs. J. W. WEBSTER and family leave today for Fort Worth, Texas, where they will make their future home.

Misses LIZZIE CHAISON sister of, and ANNA BALDWIN cousin of Mr. CHARLES CHAISON, charming young ladies from Beaumont and Greenville, Texas are visiting him.

Mrs. CHARLEY LOREE and her son and Mrs. HORACE EDDY and son DAVID, returned from an extended trip to Lake Arthur yesterday.

The families of Messrs. JULIUS FRANK and SOL BLOCH leave for Big Lake.

Mrs. H. A. REID left for New Orleans this morning for a few days.

Miss HATTIE KINDER returned from Big Lake yesterday.

**LOCAL MATTERS. Gathered Here and There by Reporters for Perusal of Our Readers.**

**DIED.** GEORGE JACKSON died at Forest Hill, yesterday morning at 4:30 o'clock.

**BORN.** To Mr. and Mrs. JAMES CLOONEY on Monday, the 26<sup>th</sup> inst., a fine eight-pound girl. Mother and babe are doing well.

**DANCE AT GOOSPORT.** The young people of Goosport, spent last evening very pleasantly at the home of WM. SWEENEY. Dancing was the chief amusement and not until two o'clock did it cease.

**POPULAR FIRMS MOVING.** THOMPSONS Bros. are moving into their new shop on Railroad avenue today. They will carry a line of bicycle supplies and a complete line of jewelry.

**KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS HALL.** The rooms over FRANK's furniture store are being fitted up for the Knight of Pythias ball. When completed it will be one of the best lodge rooms in the city.

**CUPID'S WORK.** Following are those who have abandoned single blessedness since the last publication of the marriage licenses to this paper: ARTHUR M. MOORE and MISS KATIE PARHER; JOHN K. SYLE and Miss DRUSILLA REEVES.

**A NICE PRESENT.** Hon. R. F. BROUSSARD congressman from this district has made Attorneys CLINE & CLINE a handsome present in the shape of the Blue Book in two volumes. It is a very handsome set containing a list of the officers and employees in the civil, military and naval services together with a list of the vessels belonging to the U. S. The boys feel very proud of these books and highly appreciate Mr. BROUSSARD's gift.

**COTTAGE ON BIG LAKE.** Mr. JO C. ELSTNER and Rev. C. W. LYMAN have bought lumber with which to erect a rough cottage or camp in which to live while rustivating on Big Lake. Every day adds to the popularity of Big Lake as a pleasure resort and no doubt many others will soon follow the example of Messrs ELSTNER and LYMAN by erecting little cottages on the banks of the beautiful lake.

# SURNAME INDEX (A Surname may appear more than once on a page.)

Abbie 59	Hacker 40	Perkins 62
Akins 57	Hamell 53	Pettaway 59
Allis 52	Hamil 53	Pittman 61
Aucoin 61	Hancock 44	Pool 69
	Hart 59	Poole 69
Baldwin 70	Hathaway 63	Porter 59
Barbe 59	Hawkins 66-68	Protherson 61
Barham 56	Heidt 58	Pujo 57
Benoit 57	Henderson 56	
Bernard 66	Hendrix 70	Quilty 59
Bloch 70	Henning 59	
Booth 53	Holcombe 56	Rattay 62
Boyer 56	Hortig 61	Reeves 70
Bradley 57	Hughes 56	Reid 56,70
Breucher 57	Hutchins 57,61	Reilly 59
Broussard 70		Reynolds 57,58
Bulber 62	Jackson 56,70	Robinson 39
Bullock 59	Jones 40,56	
		Sander 62
Cagle 69	Kinder 58,70	Sanders 69
Carmouche 56	Kinney 57	Saunders 69
Chaison 70	Kirkman 49,56	Seckendorf 61
Chavanne 61	Knapp 57,70	Sedden 52
Cisco 59	Kushner 62	Segura 68
Clarke 62		Shaheen 56
Cleveland 62	LaFargue 63	Signor 62
Cline 70	LeBleu 62	Singletary 39
Clooney 70	Lee 69	Smythe 61
Clow 53	Little 57	Snead 63
Connolly 70	Lieutaud 56	Snider 70
Cook 55	Loree 70	Stephens 60
Corder 56	Lyman 70	Stockwell 63
Coward 69	Lyons 61	Stowe 63
Custis 41,43,44		Stream 56
	MacInnes 62	Sullivan 58
Dandridge 40	McClanahan 56	Summers 57
Dees 57,59	McFatter 39	Sweeney 70
Drew 58		Syle 70
Dunmore 43	Marshall 62	
	Mayo 57,58	Taveney 49
Echols 52-54	Meyer 57,61	Taylor 57
Eckart 57	Miller 58	Thompkins 70
Eddy 70	Moore 70	Thomson 59
Elam 50	Moreau 69	
Elstner 70	Morris 65	Vincent 56
	Mossom 42	
Fairfax 42	Munday 58	Waitt 61
Ferguson 57	Murray 58	Washington 40,42,43
Fischer 53		Webster 70
Fisher 49	Neal 57	White 58,59,65,66
Frank 70	Norris 46	Wilder 62
Frazer 57	North 59	Williams 57-59
Fricke 58	Nugent 69	Williamson 49,50,52-54,59
Geddings 49	O'Neill 58	Zeigler 69
Goins 64	Ortmeyer 57	
Goos 57	Oschner 56	
Goux 62		
Grantham 39	Parher 70	
Gray 49,52,54-56	Paternstro 60	



SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. BOX 5652  
LAKE CHARLES LA 70606-5652

-----  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LAKE CHARLES, LA  
PERMIT NO. 263

American Canadian Gen Society NH  
P.O. Box 6478  
Manchester, NH. 03108-6478

MS

#### 2018 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT – Thelma LaBove (337/433-3409)  
VICE-PRESIDENT – Linda Gill  
TREASURER – Diann Oliver (337/263-5499)

RECORDING SECRETARY – Evelyn LeBleu  
CORR. SECRETARY – Dorothy Akins

#### KINFOLKS – Vol. 42 No. 2 - p. 72

EDITOR – Pat Huffaker (337/477-3087)  
TYPIST – Pat Huffaker  
CIRCULATION – Pat Huffaker <phuffaker@bellsouth.net>

PROOF READING – Wilmer & Phoebe Guillory,  
Dot Akins, Reva Chesson & Pat Huffaker

#### 2018 PATRON MEMBERS

Mrs. Margaret Bass  
Mrs. Norma Blake  
Mr. Don Blanton  
Jerrine Boone  
Mr. Michael Burnett  
Mr. Paul Cochet  
Mrs. Candace W. Cooper  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Creech  
Mrs. Behrend Drost  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Dupuy  
Miss Jo Anne Durand  
Mr. & Mrs. Hershel Frazier  
Mr. Gedge Gayle  
Mr. & Mrs. Clave E. Gill  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Gill

Miss Betty Jean Henry  
Tracy Hagar  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Howard  
Mr. & Mrs. R.E. Huffaker  
Brenda Kelley  
Mr. Paul Kratzer  
Mr. & Mrs. Don Ladner  
Evelyn LeBleu  
Mr. Robert LeJeune  
Pamela McKinney  
Marian Miller  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Moore.  
Mr. Keith Nabours  
Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Noack  
Mr. Michael Nunez

Mr. Vance Perkins  
Mrs. Roberta Pinch  
Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Quick  
Peggy Reyes  
Mr. Billy Rosteet  
Mr. Daniel Rosteet  
Mr. Donald Rosteet  
Mr. Frederick Rosteet  
Mr. Jeff Rosteet  
Mr. Robert Rosteet  
Mr. Sidney Rosteet  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Roy  
Mrs. Susan Simmons  
Lana Sullivan  
Mr. Aaron Tassin  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Taveney  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald White