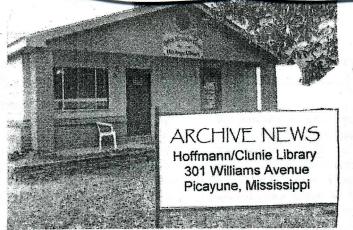
HILDA HOFFMANN

MEMORIAL

ARCHIVE, INC.



CLUNIE/HOFFMANN

HERITAGE

LIBRARY

July-August-September 2014

Telephone: 601-799-5671 - email: hhma1908@att.net

Volume 5 - Page 1

#### FROM IRELAND TO PICAYUNE: The Story of Connections By Mike Fitzwilliam – September 2014

In early 2012, I began writing a history of my family that began in County Wexford, Ireland and ended in New Orleans. This history is heavily documented with references to Irish baptismal records, ships' manifests, newspaper articles, documents, and photographs that date from the early 1800s to present-day. One of the main personages in the history is Thomas Fitzwilliam, my great-great grandfather. Through his eponymous printing and stationery company comes a connection to Picayune for both him and me.

Thomas Fitzwilliam was born near Ballythomas, County Wexford, Ireland on January 1, 1833. He emigrated from Ireland in 1850, landing in Philadelphia in August at the age of 17. To my knowledge, no other family members traveled with him. Family legend has it that he worked at various laborer's jobs, reportedly making about \$25 a month. In 1853, his uncle Thomas Fitzwilliam died of yellow fever at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana. In that same year, young Thomas traveled downriver, apparently picking up his younger brother Denis at Milliken's Bend, and continued on to New Orleans. Their surviving the widespread yellow fever epidemic of that year was a significant achievement for these young men.

The earliest mention of Thomas Fitzwilliam appears in the 1855 Cohen's City Directory for New Orleans (1854 data). Through other sources, I was able to determine that he was working as a bookkeeper for B. M. Norman, a publisher and book seller on Camp Street. In his later years, Thomas recalled that he worked three jobs and his health was affected negatively. He spent a year in San Antonio recuperating, then returned to New Orleans. While working for H. G. Stetson, Thomas borrowed \$4,000 in July, 1860 from another Camp Street bookseller named Thomas O'Donnell to open his own printing and stationery shop: T. Fitzwilliam & Co., 76 Camp Street.

Within two years, Louisiana had seceded from the Union and New Orleans had been captured by the Union navy without firing a shot. It is my contention that this lack of armed struggle permitted Thomas and his business to survive the resulting Union re-unification. With the New Orleans harbor open for business from Union ports, at least some semblance of normal business activity could continue. City directory advertising in 1861 indicated few competitors for Thomas and it is doubtful that many others entered the market before the war's end.

As a result, the business continued throughout the war years and beyond. The business was chiefly involved in the creation of

blank books for accountants and businesses, but also sold stationery, office products, and a variety of printed materials. T. Fitzwilliam and Co. was a consistent advertiser in the *Daily Picayune* newspaper, a publication which for some years was located at 72 Camp St. and later at 66 Camp. Upon the death of its owner, George W. Kendall, in 1867, the *Daily Picayune's* ownership passed to its remaining general partner, Alva M. Holbrook.

It was around this time that Holbrook may have been introduced to the poetry of Pearl Rivers, the pseudonym of Miss Eliza Jane Poitevent, through her grandfather Samuel Russ. She was born in Gainesville, Mississippi in 1843 and, for at least a few years of her youth in the 1850s, was raised by her mother's sister, Jane Russ, and Russ's husband Leonard Kimball in the area of present-day Picayune, Mississippi. As early as 1866, she had been published in both the Gainesville (Mississippi) Star and the New Orleans Times. Between 1868 and 1872, Holbrook hired Eliza Jane to be the Literary Editor for the Daily Picayune, an appointment that would eventually result in their marriage in May, 1872.

The early 1870s were not kind to the fortunes of the Daily Picayune and, in early 1872, Holbrook was forced to sell the paper to a syndicate of New Orleans businessmen. One of those businessmen was Thomas Fitzwilliam. This arrangement proved not only unpopular with readers but a financial disaster for the investors. Holbrook was able to re-purchase the paper in early 1874 for about 1/4 of what he sold it for. Before he could put the paper back on sound footing, he died in January, 1876. Eliza Jane inherited both the newspaper and its debt; with the financial assistance of the paper's business manager, George Nicholson (who bought a 25% interest in it), the debts were eventually paid and the newspaper prospered.

In 1876, Eliza Jane Holbrook and George Nicholson were married, cementing both their personal and professional lives. George Nicholson, based on the inventory of his succession, was quite well-off. As the long-time business manager of the newspaper, he was well-positioned to partner with Eliza Jane in taking the *Daily Picayune* to profitability. In late 1880, George Nicholson bought the property at 62 Camp Street from the estate of Francois Dupuy, a former free man of color who owned a significant number of properties in the French Quarter and the Central Business District in New Orleans.

At the time, the building at 62 Camp St. was occupied by the New Orleans *Democrat* newspaper, a direct competitor for the *Daily Picayune*. In fact, Camp Street was replete with such businesses and was known as "Newspaper Row." In late 1881, the ("Ireland"-cont'd page 2)

#### ("Ireland"- from page 1)

Democrat merged with the New Orleans Times to become the Times-Democrat and vacated the building at 62 Camp. At that moment, the T. Fitzwilliam Co. moved in. Thomas Fitzwilliam and his business became a tenant of George Nicholson.

Not long after this arrangement, T. Fitzwilliam & Co. began publishing full-color lithographs of Mardi Gras parade floats on behalf of the *Daily Picayune*. The lithographer, Daniel Buechner, was an employee of T. Fitzwilliam and gained great fame locally for his art. The lithographs were distributed by the *Daily Picayune* on parade days for ten cents; at the time, there were only four parades in New Orleans - Rex, Comus, Momus, and Proteus. T. Fitzwilliam & Co. at one time or another published these Carnival Editions for each of these Mardi Gras organizations and they were very popular in the city and the region.

The business relationship between Thomas Fitzwilliam and the Nicholsons appears to have been very beneficial to each and lasted beyond the deaths of all the principals. Early in 1896, both George Nicholson and Eliza Jane succumbed to influenza, but the Carnival Editions continued to be published for at least Rex, Comus, and Proteus for a number of years after that. T. Fitzwilliam & Co. also published a *Tourist's Guide to New Orleans* on behalf of the *Picayune*, the first issue being published in 1896.

Since my moving to Picayune in 2002, I discovered another connection quite by "accident." In September, 1914 Thomas Fitzwilliam was working only part-time at his business. His son, Thomas W., had taken over the reins of the business for all intents and purposes. Seven years before, Thomas had been hit in the head by a descending freight elevator inside the building (they were largely unenclosed at the time). As Thomas exited his building to cross Bank's Alley (now named Picayune Place) on his way to the Magazine St. streetcar line, he entered the building across the street, a paper seller.

These freight elevators were nothing more than steel plates the size of a small room, used for lifting paper to the upper floors in wagons and lowering finished printed materials to street level. The operators stood in the middle of the plates and could not see what was below them.

Ironically, their freight elevator and its operator descended on top of Thomas, breaking his ribs and crushing his spine. He was 81 years old at the time but survived three more years. The owner of the paper company was Julius Meyer. Julius Meyer is the great grandfather of Bill Roberts, a Picayune-area resident and member of the Pearl River County Historical Society with me.

When I related the story of the T. Fitzwilliam business being located in the 300 block of Camp St. (the city re-numbered the streets in 1894), Bill approached me to say that it was interesting because his family had a paper company in the 300 block of Magazine St. He said it was the Julius Meyer Paper Co. He was unaware of the story of my great-great grandfather's accident and I have provided him with a copy of the next day's news story about it. He gave me a copy of Julius Meyer's business card. The irony of our both living in or near Picayune and meeting because of these two family histories was not lost on us.

Thomas Fitzwilliam died just short of his 85th birthday

in 1917. The T. Fitzwilliam business survived for another 12 years, merging with the Garcia Stationery Co. in 1929. The combined company failed during the Depression. In the course of my research for this family history, I intended to note the past and present coincidences that brought the Fitzwilliam and Nicholson families together: that the *Picayune* and T. Fitzwilliam were next door to each other between 1881-1919; that now the Fitzwilliams are living near Picayune; and that the event that ties it all together was that Eliza Jane Nicholson named the town of Picayune after the newspaper and the town of Nicholson after her husband, George.

However, I have not found a single credible or contemporaneous source to cite for the naming of the two towns. When the railroad was built through the area, Picayune was not listed as a stop on the original schedule. In August, 1883 the Daily Picayune named 29 stops between Meridian and New Orleans and Picayune was not one of them. East Pearl/Crescent City, which I understand were the names of what is now Nicholson, were named. In January, 1884 the Nicholson depot is named as such in the Daily Picayune; in April, 1884 Picayune appears as a stop. However, there is no citation as to how the towns received their names.

In 1887, the *Daily Picayune* celebrated its being in business for 50 years. It published biographies of all its owners/publishers, including the Nicholsons. Nowhere in those biographies did it mention the naming of Picayune or Nicholson. Ironically, the name of the Chief Engineer for the New Orleans and North Eastern Railroad, the man responsible for its construction through the area to New Orleans, was George B. Nicholson. It seems reasonable, in the absence of any documentation, to speculate that the railroad re-named East Pearl in his favor. However, there is nothing in his obituaries or family lore to indicate that such is the case.

When the Nicholsons died in February, 1896 the Daily Picayune published lengthy life stories of each (Thomas Fitzwilliam was an honorary pall-bearer at George Nicholson's funeral). In neither biography do the authors mention the naming of the two towns. Other published works indicate that Nicholson was named in 1883 but Picayune not until 1891 and then as Pickayune in Post Office documents. By 1918, the Times-Democrat had purchased the Daily Picayune and re-named itself The Times-Picayune, with Leonard Nicholson as its publisher. During the 1940s, Nicholson commissioned a book to be written about the history of the newspaper. Nowhere in that book (Dabney, Thomas Ewing. One Hundred Great Years: The Story of the Times Picayune from its Founding to 1940. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944.) is there mention of the naming of the towns of Picayune or Nicholson. Such a publication would seem the perfect vehicle for describing such a legacy, but it does not. This is the only connection that I have been unable to make.

My intention was to cite a credible source in my family history that states that the towns of Picayune and Nicholson were named by Eliza Jane Nicholson and when, but I have found no such source. Her connection to Picayune is not diminished by the lack of documentation. I am proud to know that my family members were associated with both the Nicholsons and their great newspaper and that we're living in her former home town.



It seems we just sent out the April-May-June newsletter, and here it is September and the July-August-September newsletter is being put together to send out in a week or so.

We are so pleased to see all the response from our asking you to send in the families you are researching and also if you might be interested in having your newsletter emailed to you rather than sending your copy by U.S. Postal Service. We have a few bugs to work out before we can do this, so please bear with us.

If your family has had a reunion, we'd love to hear about it, or if you have any news please let us know.

We want to recognize and send our CONGRATS to Gloria Penton on her fine article on the Home Demonstration Clubs that appeared in our Jan-Feb-Mar "Archive News", it was also again featured in our local newspaper, The Picayune Item, on Wednesday, September 3rd along with her picture.

We do want to remind everyone of our upcoming "YARD SALE" to be held November 1<sup>st</sup>...... We sure could use any donations you might want to drop off(no clothes, please).

Our special thanks again to those of you that send in your donations, they really are appreciated and are such a great help in keeping our "Archive/Library" alive and surviving.

We try to cover a range of topics, and hope you enjoy this issue.

Marilyn Weston and "Archive News" Staff, Gloria Penton, Don Wicks & Helen Hunter Knight......

OLD-RARE ARCHAIC WORD

BAY" (of dog) Means Bark or Howl

# SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup> HHMA HAS SCHEDULED YARD SALE

We plan to have our "Yard Sale" at the same time as Picayune's Fall Street Fair on Sat., Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>...

Being a non-profit organization, we are often scraping by on the few donations and member's dues to meet expenses, so extra ways of meeting this need has to be used.

If you have any items that you would be willing to donate to us, we certainly would very much appreciate the help. Just drop them off at the Archive on Williams Ave., Picayune, Ms., any day of the week Mon. thru Fri. 10:00 am—3:00 pm. Please NO CLOTHING! Thanks to Lillian McCants-Bogalusa, LA for the 2 boxes she dropped off!

#### ABBREVIATED GIVEN NAMES

Abraham - Abra<sup>m</sup> Benjamin - Benj<sup>a</sup> James - Ja<sup>s</sup> Nathaniel - Nath<sup>l</sup> William - Will<sup>m</sup>

#### **COMMON NICKNAMES**

Alexander - Al, Alex, Eleck, Benjamin - Ben, Benjy, Jamie Bertha - Birdie, Bert, Bertie Daniel - Dan, Danny, David - Day, Dave, Davey Deborah - Deb, Debby, Debbie Florence - Flo, Flora, Flossy Frederick - Fred, Freddy, Fritz

## VARIABLE NAME SPELLINGS

MEYER: Mier, Meier, Myer NICHOLS: Nicols, Nickols PAINE: Pain, Payn, Payne PHARES: Pharis, Faris, Farris REED: Read, Reid, Rhead

"A Bookkeeper is a person who feels good when things start looking black again."

#### OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY GO OUT TO JOHN A. McDONALD &

**FAMILY.** We were sad to learn of the death of John's wife, Vivian Ione (Baker) of 36 years who passed away July 9<sup>th</sup>.



Can you believe, "Medicare first went into effect July 1, 1966?
Independence Day or 4<sup>th</sup> of July was celebrated again with parades and shooting fireworks, World War I began July 28, 1914, a long time later July 21, 1930 the Veterans administration was founded.

Many folks take vacations in July and are looking back over their pictures wishing it hadn't ended so soon.

\* \* \* \* \*

"A good traveler in life enjoys the journey, not just the destination."

## JULY "ARCHIVE" VISITORS

We appreciate and thank the 15 local and surrounding county visitors in July, and want to thank Joey & Kathy Howard of Newman, Georgia.... and Judi Holder from Salem, Virginia, coming to check us out.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR WONDERFUL DONATIONS:

Paula Kay Brown - Mary E. Davis Mike & Carol Fitzwilliam - Chas. & Mary Wentworth - Carolyn Williams - Ernestine Thompson & "Mac" McDonald.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

## OLD TIME ILLNESS:

"Catarrhal" – Nose & Throat discharge from cold or allergy \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

### A BIG HELLO & WELCOME TO **NEW AUGUST MEMBERS**

MONROE D. TATE & REBECCA L. TATE WHO JOINED US AUG. 1ST ALSO, CAROLINE J. BONNER FROM HEIDELBERG, MS WHO VISITED ON AUG. 25<sup>TH</sup> & ALSO JOINED. ~;~;~;~;~;~~;~;~;~;~;~;~;~ "Money will buy a fine dog, but love will make it's tail wag."



AUGUST

#### THINKING OF AUGUST THIS YEAR

It certainly was Dog Days with the hot sultry and humid weather we had this month. Speaking of Dogs, do you know "man's, and women's best friend" goes back 8,000 years.

August was named after the first Roman emperior, Augustus.

In August, some interesting things have happened: 1955-Hurricane"Connie" hit the U.S.; No on can forget "Katrina's" devastation Aug. 29, 2005; Chop Suey was invented in NYC 1896: Hawaii became the 50<sup>th</sup> state in 1959; Japan Surrendered in 1945; ....and August is also the month of "Ice Cream Socials"!

While the first American newspaper, "Public Occurences" appeared in Boston in 1690, we can state our HHMA newspaper, the "Archive News" made it's first appearance last year, August 2013!

Most youngsters go back to school the first part of August with most parents not only giving a soft "WHEW" over spending big bucks for books, supplies & uniforms, but then thinking of all the peace and quiet they shout a big......

"HORRAY"......

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

"Just when you think you've graduated from the school of experience - someone thinks up a new course." \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

## **VOLUNTEERS** WEAR MANY HATS!!!!

We are proud to introduce you to

## Volunteer: Mae Foster

Mae Foster and Russell Foster have been married for 37 years and have two sons both living in Pearl River County.

She graduated from San Jose State with a B.S. degree in Business Administration and also completed the Navy Logistics Civilian Intern Program. She retired from the Naval Oceanographic Office shortly after Katrina in 2005.

Mae has been an active volunteer at HHMA since January 2013 and has put in many hours since working on obituaries, putting them in binders, and adding new obits that have been given. Currently she has created a list on the computer of obituaries located in the more than 60 binders for years: 1967 thru 1971 and years 1974 thru 1976. Over 4500 obituaries have been listed with an average of 200 obits for Pearl River County each year.

She is a very active volunteer locally in the Picavune area. She is an officer in the local AARP Chapter, has been a member of the Pearl River County Genealogy Club since 2006. She is active in her church & for 35 yrs., has been pianist/ keyboardist/organist.

She was instrumental in starting an AARP Tax-Aide site at the South Pearl River County Senior Center in 2008 and for past six seasons has been the Site Coordinator and Electronic Return Originator, providing free electronic income tax services for hundreds of taxpayers.

Mae has been a Quilter since 2006. She is Newsletter Editor for Picayune Piecemakers Quilt Guild, who makes baby blankets for the Pearl River Co. Health Deprt. She's an active member of the Jubilee Quilt Guild in Poplarville, the Mississippi Quilt Association, the Gulf States Quilting Association and the American Quilters Society.

### **AUGUST - ARCHIVE VISITORS**

We were delighted to meet and see our 14 August visitors from local & surrounding counties, plus member, Judi Lumpkin Holder from Salem, Virginia, and Caroline Bonner from Heidelberg, MS. who stopped by to visit and research.

"WEB SITES WORTH TRYING" EDITOR'S PICK FOR THE MONTH

I realize most of you don't live in Pearl River County, Mississippi, but many of you have ties here. I think you will find this site really helpful and enjoyable, it has a wealth of information. It is the Pearl River County Genealogy & History Network website.

"PEARL RIVER COUNTY MSGHN" http://pearlriver.msghn.org

On the left hand side under "Pearl River County Data" click on the different headings to find for instance, names of the Cemeteries along with burial listings with tombstone photos, some birth & death dates. Same with Marriage Records, not only both the bride and grooms names, but the date they married. There are some other counties listed also.

#### ARCHAIC OCCUPATION TERM:

"MAGOSTER" - was an Educator "ABECDARIAN" was a Teacher of the Alphabet (Old English-Occupation); Although an education historian called them, "administrative progressives", other names referring to teacher have been: Professor, Educator, Tutor, Schoolmaster and/or Schoolmarm.

"We don't know where we're going until we understand where we've been."

### GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH OUR **BOARD MEMBERS**

## <u> "SEPTEMBER SPOTLIGHT"</u>

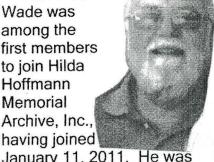


## WADE

#### STEWART

HHMA's New "Acting Chairman"

Wade was among the first members to join Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive, Inc.,



January 11, 2011. He was one of five members who ioined the Board of Directors August 13, 2011, when the existing three member board was increased to seven

members:

He was voted into the office of Vice Chairman on August 23, 2011 and has carried that title until this year. Wade assumed the office of "Acting Chairman" the latter part of May 2014, when Don Wicks resigned as Chairman.

Wade and wife, Terry live in Hattiesburg and belong to the Heritage United Methodist Church there. They have two sons, Wade, Jr. and Patrick, and boast of having 10 grandchildren.

Wade Jr. manages an Office Depot in Marrero, Louisiana. Patrick retired from the Air Force and works for Forrest County.

Wade received a B.S. **Engineering from Louisiana** Tech University; and received his Certificate of **Engineering Management** also from Louisiana Tech University.

He was employed by **Entergy Corporation for 36** years, holding numerous management positions over that time period. He retired in 2003 as Vice-President of Regulatory Affairs/Louisiana.

Wade has been a very active person both in business and belonging to many organizations such as: Linn Wood-Ionic Lodge F&AM, serving as Past Master & served as Secretary or 26 years; The Royal Order of Scotland; and Shriners International.

He is a past member of: Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, St. Bernard Jaycees, St. Bernard Lion's Club and Third District Kiwanis Club.

And, as stated above, he has been and is a Board Member and Officer of the "Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive, Inc." housed in "The Clunie/ Hoffman Heritage Library" on Williams Avenue.

Although he loves to hunt and fish, somehow these seem to get pushed to the "back burner" with all the other happening that occur in his life. We're proud and happy to have him as " Head of our organization." \*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~

There just can't be a "crisis" next week - My schedule is full..... \_\*\_\*\_\*\_\*\_\*\_\*\_\*

Diligence makes all things appear easy.

## <u>~\*~\*~</u>\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~ A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO

Member Ernie Serpas & wife Norma for the <u>draft</u> <u>donation</u> to HHMA each month that arrives rain or shine

~ \* ~ \* ... \* ~ \* SEDTEMBED Labor Day falls on the first Monday

Sept. 1st, the DAR partners with schools & scout troops to offer instruction regarding National Constitution Week from September 17-23, and thanks to Elias Howe for patented of his sewing machine on the 10th in 1846, keeping us ladies from stitching things by hand.

In September, there is no doubt about it, temperatures start to cool slightly after the first of second week. It's only natural that with September, comes the first day of Fall or Autumn, which this year falls on Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

It's said, if you are born this month, you face life squarely, keep both feet on the ground, you are diligent, kind and these qualities lead to worthwhile accomplishments in intellectual pursuits.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Sept 1961 - Wages were \$1.15/hr. Sept 1997 - Wages were \$5.15/hr Sept 2014 - Wages are \$7.25/hr 

## THANK YOU - THANK YOU FOR YOUR \$ DONATIONS IT'S SO APPECIATED

John & Debbie Braswell: John McDonald; and James E. & Mary Wall.