



Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

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August, 2021

The President Presiding...

By Sylvia Schwarz, GHS

Once again, it is great to be back to our normal routines but please remain vigilant, so we do not have a repeat of the last 1½ years. That being said:

- Yum! The barbecue was a success. If you didn't attend, you missed delicious hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, coleslaw, corn on the cob and baked beans. Our outstanding barbecue chefs extraordinaire were Garland Gaspard and Blaine Daigle. Sarah Daigle made Paul Daigle's world-famous potato salad, Paul Coles' fabulous baked beans were great and Garland's coleslaw hit the spot. Thanks to our outstanding members who contributed delicious desserts. If anyone went home hungry, shame on you! **THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU** to all who contributed to the success of our event, even if all you did was attend. We could not have done it without you.
- August is our Wine Tasting event at the Gretna Cultural Center. August 12 is the date and 7:00 pm is the time. Joe Miller will be providing the wine and we all know he is the best. Dues must be current to attend, and you can pay your dues that night.
- The Board of Directors has been reviewing our Articles of Incorporation and our By-laws to determine whether changes are necessary. During the review, we determined that there are certain conflicts between those documents that need to be resolved. There are other proposed changes the Board believes should be made as well, at a future date. Please review these changes on the enclosed insert and be prepared to vote on them at the September General Membership Meeting.
- Since everyone enjoyed Ira Hopkins' presentation on Historic Gretna, our September Meeting Speaker will be Ira Hopkins 2.0.
- **REMINDER:** We will be collecting non-perishable food for the Gretna Food Bank. Members who bring 5 or more items to the September meeting will be eligible to win a door prize.
- For our October General Membership Meeting, Gretna Police Chief Arthur Lawson will be our guest speaker on "Growing up in Gretna."
- Rentals of the White House are continuing to grow in number. More and more people are renting our facility. Please continue to remind anyone you know that our facilities are a great venue.
- One of the best kept secrets in New Orleans is the People Program. It is a non-profit membership organization for persons 50 years old and over who are looking for creative ways to spend leisure time. Currently there are almost 500 members enrolled from diverse backgrounds, ranging from ages 50 to 90+. Over 100 varied courses taught by volunteer teachers are offered. Programs also available are exercise, computer, dance, art, needlework, crafts, games, languages, music, and more. For a flat membership fee of \$200, you can take as many classes as you like at either /or both campuses located in Algiers and at the New Orleans lakefront. Registration for fall classes begins on Tuesday, August 9, and classes begin on September 7. *For more information, go to Facebook and search New Orleans People Program or their website.* You will find many GHS members attending and teaching.



If you enjoy our GHS programs and guest speakers at our meetings, tell Ray Markase, "Good job, Ray" the next time you see him.

Barbecue Cookout, GHS Style – A Tasty Success!



**Perfect
for
Special
Events**

With its beautiful renovations, the White House is the perfect choice to be rented for social events such as receptions, repasts, showers and parties.

Amenities include an added patio, updated kitchen and large back yard for socializing. To check on availability and rates, call 504.362.3854.

**WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBERS ...**

Jack & Vita Leftwich
Paul & Joan Pitre
Robin Valle
Wavelen Andras
Tanya Mount

Times Past — By Stephanie Dieterich

Gretna – The St. Mary Connection

During the 19th Century, New Orleans was home to several large food markets which sold produce, fruits, meat, fish and dry goods to residents of the city. One of these markets was located in Faubourg St. Mary, which is currently known as the CBD. The entrance to St. Mary's Park that was once the location of the market, is marked by five large spheres across from the Convention Center.

Over time as the City of New Orleans expanded, much of the population headed upriver to the City of Lafayette which belonged to Jefferson Parish at the time. Situated directly across the river was the recently developed Village of Mechanikham.

The market company also operated a ferry which brought both farmers to the Market to sell their goods, as well as customers from the City of Lafayette and Village of Mechanikham. The ferry route would travel from the Market stopping at Lafayette, then across the river to Mechanikham and then back the same way.

In order to increase ferry passenger and market revenues, the company purchased a large tract of land on the Westbank adjacent to the Village of Mechanikham. Their goals were to develop a new community who would shop at St. Mary's Market across the river and also utilize their transport system.

In 1838 St. Mary's Steam Ferry Company received authorization to develop the Town of Gretna. In order to entice residents to purchase property in Gretna, in 1839 the Company offered free ferry crossings for a year. If you built on your newly purchased lot within the year, another four years of free ferry ridership was given. Advertisements mention the value of the location to

Gretna Garden, opposite Lafayette.
THE Gretna and Lafayette Steam Ferry Boat plies regularly between the above places. Passage FIVE cents.
 The **HOTEL** and **GARDEN** are open, under the management of Mr. K. P. CULLEN.
 The Garden is in fine order, and filled with choice Plants, among which are two "Agave Americanas," or "Century Plants." One is now upwards of 22 feet high, and has from 18 to 22 lateral branches. The other is in an incipient state, and in a few days will force its colossal stem from its confinement. Such a rare phenomenon of two such plants blooming about the same time, and in one garden, is an occurrence without a parallel in the United States, and one that may possibly never occur again.
 The price of Ferringe is reduced on Carriages, Cavaliers, &c. crossing and recrossing the same day. Those wishing to take an airing up or down our charming Coast, will do well to try the experiment. je8

Times-Picayune, June 11, 1841

AUCTION SALES.
 By J. A. Beard and Hewlett & Cenas.
 GRETNA.
A FINAL and extensive sale of Lots and Squares in the flourishing and salubrious village of Gretna, at public auction, will take place on FRIDAY, the 15th inst., at 12 o'clock M., at Banks' Arcade, viz:
 150 valuable building lots, in squares Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18.
 8 batture lots adjoining Mechanic's Village, fronting on the public road and running to the river.
 Also—22 squares fronting on Lafayette Avenue, suitable for market gardens, &c., with a fine growth of valuable timber.
 The avenue through the above squares to be ditched on each side, is now under contract and will soon be completed.
 Gretna is situated on the right bank of the river Mississippi, nearly opposite the upper line of the 2d Municipality, and commands a fine view of the city of New Orleans; and having a steam ferry boat plying between it and the St. Mary's Market, touching at Lafayette both in going and coming, offers to persons wishing delightful country residences, and to be near the centre of business, advantages too obvious to require description. Those persons, therefore, who may wish to purchase lots or squares in the above village, either for residences, market gardens, &c. are particularly requested to visit the property prior to the day of sale.
 Terms—One-fourth payable 1st January, 1841; one-fourth one year from the day of sale; one-fourth two years from do.; and one-fourth three years from do., for notes bearing mortgage, and endorsed to the satisfaction of the vendors—or the first payment may be made in cash, less discount at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum, and individual notes only for the balance, but bearing mortgage as above.
 Acts of sale before J. B. Marks, Esq., notary public, at the expense of the purchasers.
 N. B. The directors of the St. Mary's Market Steam Ferry Co. will also grant to all persons purchasing property at the above sale a free ticket (not transferable) to cross in the ferry boat for one year; and to those who may build a dwelling by the 1st of Jan., 1841, the same will be renewed for four years more.
 may 14 21

Times-Picayune, May 14, 1840

market gardeners, butchers and dairymen who could ferry across the river in 15 minutes to sell their goods at St. Mary's Market.

By 1839 Gretna was quickly establishing itself as a thriving community. The Gretna Hotel and Gardens near the ferry landing was large and had an impressive garden. Newspaper advertisements list horse races, regatta boat races, turkey shooting, as well as dog and bear fights as entertainment and recreational activities. A coffee house was operating and advertising their BBQ. Other advertisements from the time mention home builders, as well as a teaching position for Gretna Academy. By 1845 industry had arrived and Gretna was home to a foundry, steam mill, carriage manufacturer and a brickyard.

Gretna Chronicles succeeds the GHS Newsletter and the Gretna Historical Society Newsletter as the official source of news for the general membership of the Gretna Historical Society.

Gretna Historical Society

201-209 Lafayette Street
 P.O. Box 115
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Gretna Historical Society Museum Complex

1840s Strehle Family Cottage, 1859 David Crockett
 Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 Fire Station (now Louisiana Fire
 Museum), 1840s White Family Cottage

Gretna Chronicles Staff

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ABOUT THE GHS AND HOW TO JOIN

The Gretna Historical Society was founded in Gretna, Louisiana, in 1969, by Lloyd E. Gomez (insurance man, volunteer firefighter, and community activist), who descended from Gretna pioneers, German immigrants Claudius and Catherine Nuss Strehle. The Society's articles of incorporation were drafted by Gretna attorney Everette F. Gauthreaux and signed in his law office on October 26, 1969. Today, the GHS operates the Gretna Historical Society Museum Complex at the corner of Lafayette Street at Second. It consists of three 19th century Creole cottages, a blacksmith shop, and the Louisiana Fire Museum. The GHS also owns and maintains the caboose and train depot on Huey P. Long Avenue at Fourth Street.

There are no requirements for membership in the GHS, other than the timely payment of annual membership dues of \$20 per person. Monthly meetings are held at the St. Joseph's Auditorium at 7th and Newton Streets on the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Guests and prospective members are always welcome to attend the meetings.

The society's newsletter, *Gretna Chronicles*, is published monthly and mailed or emailed to all members.

Gretna Chronicles

is published for the members and friends of the
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