



# Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

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July, 2021

## Hosanna Fellowship Church Thanks GHS

By M. Helen Williams

A lovely “Reception of Thanksgiving” was held recently at Hosanna Fellowship Church for GHS officers and board members to show gratitude for a restoration grant awarded to the church at 400 Weidman Street in Gretna.

A primary purpose of GHS is the restoration and preservation of buildings and structures within Gretna that have historic value so that they are maintained for posterity. As part of that effort, GHS considers providing supplemental grants to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations to aid in the restoration and preservation of historic structures.

“The Church had received recognition from the State of Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation that the church building is a contributing element to the City of Gretna Cultural District,” GHS Financial Director Mal McCletchie said.



At a “Reception of Thanksgiving,” Hosanna Fellowship thanked GHS leaders for a grant to renovate the church.

“A year ago, Hosanna Fellowship Church applied to GHS for such a supplemental grant to assist in extensive repairs to their sanctuary and other areas of the church structure. After review to ensure that their application met the GHS requirements, a grant was authorized. The church’s fundraising efforts to accomplish the significant renovations included donations from their parishioners, a Louisiana State tax credit for rehabilitation of a historic property, as well as the GHS grant,” he said.

Hosanna Fellowship International Ministries was born on Nov. 15, 2002, when a group of 12 gathered to fulfill the vision of a young pastor, Alex Julian Bellow.

His vision was to found a community-oriented church that would be involved in the civic affairs of the community and more. He envisioned a church that would help meet more than just the spiritual needs of the people, but also support their day-to-day needs. He wanted a church that could help with ordinary things like school supplies or use of a computer if needed or simply food when hungry. Hosanna Fellowship officially began to worship bi-weekly at temporary locations, lastly at 2131 Huey P. Long Ave. in Gretna.

“God began to breathe upon Hosanna. Many souls were added to the Kingdom as we operated under a unique anointing,” Pastor Bellow said.

“The devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina forced many church members to relocate. A ‘gathering of the sheep’ became necessary after the wake of the storm. It was one year later that our ministry solidified itself as a pillar within the Gretna community at the Huey P. Long address,” he said. “Hosanna forged a lasting partnership with World Vision. This was the first of many Community Outreach efforts that continue today, both locally, nationally and internationally,” he said.

At last, on Sept.13, 2006, it was surely the Promised Land when 400 Weidman St. in Gretna became the permanent home of Hosanna Fellowship Church!

“A decade passed and we grew. Then, in September of 2016 we were shocked to discover that one of our trusted church administrators had been engaging for a long time in fraudulent activity with the church coffers and ended up taking her own life. We were devastated. Mortgage payments had been neglected and six months later, the bank initiated foreclosure proceedings. Full payment in 30 days was required of just under \$190,000. We did it! With the help of God, we raised the money. We rallied and God gave us the grace to do it!

“In 2020, I became concerned about large cracks I noticed in the ceiling of the Sanctuary, worried about the safety factor. We had never done any major repairs since we bought the building. Contractors said the original construction beams weren’t spaced properly and a restoration was necessary. Thanks to the generosity of Gretna Historical, we were able to complete the ceiling restoration inside, as well as do needed outside repairs,” Pastor Bellow said.

## The President Presiding...

By Sylvia Schwarz, GHS President



AIN'T IT GRAND! It feels so good to be back to normal. We can get out, see our friends and family, go to church, do whatever. WOW!

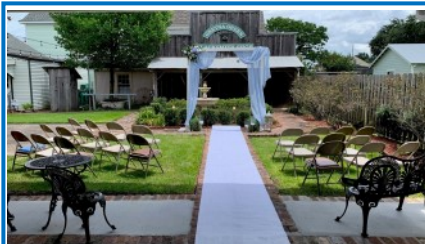
- **DO DUES, 'CAUSE DUES ARE DUE.** If you plan to attend the annual July Barbeque, your dues must be up to date. If you paid your 2020 dues, they are good until the end of 2021. Some members, however, have not paid their 2020 dues. If you forgot, please send them in ASAP. You can also pay at the barbecue. So, let's get it done!



- The GHS Barbecue will be held on **Thursday, July 8, at 6:00 p.m.** in the back yard of the Complex. Our chief chef, Garland Gaspard, is back. He and Blaine Daigle do a fabulous job at the BBQ. Paul Daigle's tasty potato salad will be on the menu. Please donate yummy desserts needed for the event.
- There will be a Cemetery Tour Steering Committee meeting for all interested in serving on the committee on **July 21 at 6:00 p.m.** at the White House. The Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour will be held on **Saturday, Nov. 6.**
- We will host our traditional Wine Tasting on **Thursday, Aug. 12, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Gretna Cultural Center for the Arts. Mal and Sue McLetchie have selected some outstanding wines for us to enjoy.
- Repairs to the Fire House roof have been done and the windows that were damaged have been repaired and painted. Our Facilities Director, Judy LeBlanc, has kept an eye on all the work being done. Good job, Judy.
- Our member, Tommy Naquin, is in the process of redoing the Railroad Museum located in the Caboose. I will bet you didn't know we even had a railroad museum, but we do. He will be sprucing up the exhibits and adding items to them. It is going to be a long slow process but, in the end, it will be something of which we can be proud. Thanks Tommy!



It always amazes me the wealth of talent we have in our Society -- talents they are willing to share. We are truly blessed.



### Perfect for Special Events

*The White House is the perfect choice to be rented for social events. Call 504.362.3854 to check on availability and rates.*

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS ...

Frank Maness III  
Maria Guillot

### AND WELCOME BACK ...

Frank and Josephine Macera

## Times Past — By Stephanie Dieterich

### The Gretna Bridge That Never Was....

While in the pilothouse of the *Gouldsboro*, a railroad transfer ferry that crossed the Mississippi River from the Gouldsboro area of McDonoghville, railroad magnate Jay Gould asked “why cannot this river be bridged?”

The first bridge crossing the Mississippi River below the Missouri River was the Eads Bridge, completed in 1874 at St. Louis. This multi-tiered bridge allows trains to cross on the lower deck while other traffic crosses on the upper deck. The oldest bridge on the river, still in

use today, is a National Historic

Landmark as well as being listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The first proposals for a New Orleans bridge were in the 1820s, but the size and power of the river here delayed serious initiatives. In 1869, *The Daily Picayune* proclaimed “time is not too distant for a double track bridge for trains and ordinary vehicles,” ordinary vehicles being the horse-drawn variety. It would be another 66 years for anything similar to come to fruition.

In the meantime, many bridge ideas were considered including tunnels, draw bridges, tubular floating cylinders suspended 50 feet below the surface, as well as gondolas. The gondola idea actually became a short-lived reality during the 1984 World’s Fair in New Orleans.

Most ideas were quickly scuttled, but a privately financed vehicular Hero-Hacket Toll Bridge won support from the Jefferson Parish Police Jury in 1925. Involved in the project was George A. Hero, a local entrepreneur known as the “Drainage King,” who organized the drainage of vast tracts of swampland on the West Bank of the Mississippi River at New Orleans. A permit was issued in 1929 after President Hoover signed a bill for the bridge to be built.

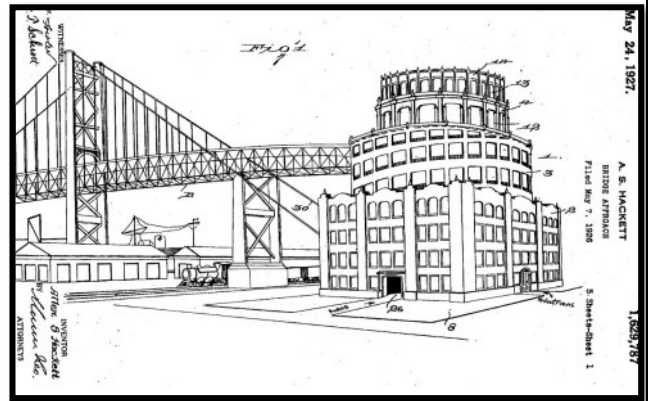
The Hero-Hacket Bridge would have had a circular approach tower on Perry Street in Gretna and another on Race Street in New Orleans. These towers would have allowed motorists to make three and a half loops, 3/4 of a mile inside the towers ascending to the bridge

summit. The circular towers were expected to save money by not having to purchase land for traditional bridge approaches.

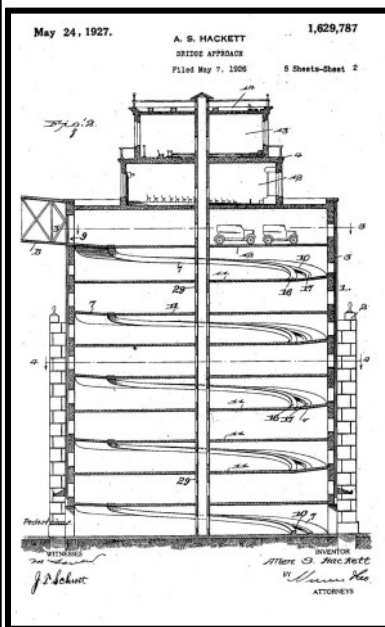
Unfortunately the stock market crashed shortly after the permit was issued, and George Hero died in 1932. Then, plans to build a railroad bridge upriver picked up steam, and the Hero-Hacket Bridge was abandoned.

The first bridge crossing the Mississippi River in Louisiana, the Huey P. Long Bridge was completed in 1935 and opened to great fanfare. Although it was good for the railroads, making train ferries obsolete, the location proved inconvenient for New Orleans and Westbank locals who continued to use passenger ferries.

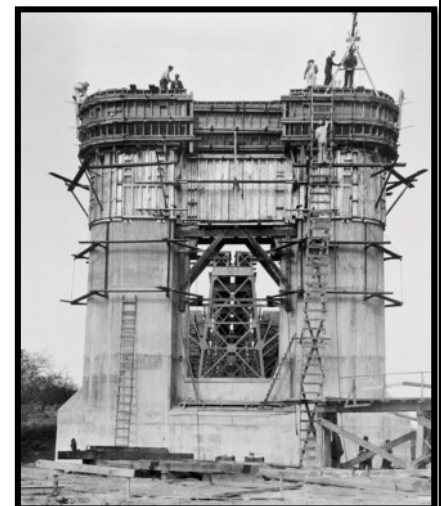
The City of New Orleans would not have its own bridge until the GNO opened in 1958. The first car in line on opening day belonged to Richard “Dick” White, a Gretna Banker and member of the Mississippi River Bridge Authority. When the horn sounded, White manned Toll Station No. 1 and collected the first 35 cents toll from his wife, Helen, before she drove the car across the bridge.



The Hero-Hackett bridge was approved in 1925 but never built across the Mississippi River. The circular bridge approach was to be in McDonoghville.



The circular approach tower was planned for Perry Street in Gretna.



Work on a Huey P. Long Bridge pier in 1933.

*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***

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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

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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  
**Gretna Historical Society**  
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