



Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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Old Depot Repurposed! — By M. Helen Williams

GHS Members may not be aware that the Southern Pacific Freight Depot, located on 4th Street at Huey P. Long Avenue, is owned by the Gretna Historical Society. It sits on City of Gretna-owned land and served as the Gretna Visitor Center for decades.

A Ribbon Cutting was held recently to celebrate the occupancy of the building as the Gretna Farmers' Market Office. City of Gretna officials and guests gathered for the ceremony outside and celebrated the lovely new base for the Saturday market with a toast of the bubbly inside! Built in 1906, the freight depot was constructed at its present site, but had been physically relocated to 4th Street near the mid-century built Jefferson Parish Courthouse. Former Mayor Ronnie Harris arranged to move the old depot back to its original location in the early 1980s upon threat of it being torn down.

Behind the freight depot, one can't miss the little red Caboose that is also owned by GHS. Built in 1951 by the Illinois Central Railroad Company, its service to the railroad company is unknown. By the 1980s, the caboose was privately owned and being used as a Terrytown restaurant called "The Brothers Three."

GHS heard that the restaurant was closing and set a goal to get the red caboose to the historic district, thinking it would be a perfect complement to the old freight depot that had already been relocated back to 4th Street.

GHS could not manage the expense nor logistics of moving the caboose, but Mayor Harris and the late Mary Grace Curry, society president, received support from then Louisiana State Rep. Joe Toomy, who had contacts.

In 1986, B & G Crane Service moved the caboose at no cost and the utility company lifted power lines along the route to get the caboose to downtown Gretna, creating a new Gretna landmark.

Arrangements are being made to reopen the caboose that houses railroad memorabilia for public tours in the future.



The President Presiding... By Sylvia Schwarz, GHS President



It will be hard to top our February Meeting/Mardi Gras Party. Ray Markase's trivia contest was head scratching and hilarious. GHS wishes to congratulate the 2022 Royal Couple, His Royal Highness, King Paul Montagnet and Her Royal Highness, Queen Peggy Pellegrin. They royally led a joyous second-line parade. Long may they reign, at least until 2023!

- Our March meeting theme will celebrate St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's Day. We encourage everyone to wear either Irish or Italian colored outfits. In this way we can determine if we have more Irish or Italians present. Guest speaker will be Mayor Belinda Constant. Chef Garland will prepare dinner for us. Yum!
- We really need help setting up and serving for our meetings. The Board Members have had that responsibility, but they need additional assistance. If you can help, please call Judy at 504.362.3854.
- Our Valentine's Day Weddings were very successful. We had 12 weddings and 2 vow renewals, married by Judge Vernon Wilty III, escorted by bagpiper John Rode, with vows sealed by blacksmith Tom Verret. One couple was celebrating their 53rd anniversary.
- Check out our website www.gretnahistoricalsociety.org to read our newsletters and catch up on current events. Visit our Facebook page @GHSGretnaLA. Please Share our GHS FB posts to your FB friends.



Welcome to Our New Members

Edra LaForte
Barry Daigle
Tere Femia
Herman and June Carbo
Peggy and Ken Pellegrin
Larry and Marci Plaisance

And to Rejoining Members

Marsha M. Martin and Tom Verret

Times Past — By Stephanie Dieterich

Moving Around Town



Older generations are often accused of not being “green” enough and contributing to the decline of our planet.

Our ancestors saved and reused what they had and they typically didn’t have much. There were no disposable paper towels or diapers. Milk, soft drinks and beer came in glass bottles, the bottles returned and reused. Water came from the faucet and not in throwaway bottles. Such was the case with houses. They weren’t torn down when their location was needed for another use, but simply moved elsewhere.

Gretna High School opened in 1926 on 10th Street at the foot of Copernicus (now Huey P. Long Avenue). The school grounds were bound by Newton, Weyer and 11th Streets. Tragically, in 1975, the beautiful school burned down and Huey P. Long Avenue was cut through to the Expressway. The property is now Heritage Square. Gretna’s Welcome Center, Heritage House sits approximately where the school cafeteria was located. It was originally the home of John Linden at 111 Lavoisier St. The 1840s Center Hall was moved instead of demolished to make room for the Riverview Condos.

After the 1884 New Orleans World’s Fair, many of the buildings were sold and relocated. The Bakers Pavilion designed by Thomas Sully was barged to Port Allen. It became the main building of the Poplar Grove Sugar Plantation and is still standing. Gretna can boast about having a piece of that World Fair history in the quaint little tin roof house that now sits at 630 Newton St. It has an unusual pagoda style roofline and was barged across the Mississippi to Gretna.

When First National Bank needed more parking, the Ivcevich home that sat in the 200 block of Newton Street was relocated to 935 Newton St. The house was cut in half and moved in two sections. School teacher Edith Cross lived at the new location for many years. Unfortunately with the exception of the William Tell Hall, all the other buildings were torn down for the parking lot.

The double at 733 6th St. once faced Huey P. Long, but was turned and pushed back on the lot for Trupiano Grocery to be built, which later became LeGrand’s Florist.

The Clayton Hotard home at 929 Lafayette St. was moved to 605 Romain Street to make way for a convenience store. It sits on a much smaller lot, lower to the ground and without its grand steps and large wraparound porch. Although not as impressive as it once was, it was saved! It also has the reputation as being the first home in Gretna with colored (green) bathroom fixtures!

When the Expressway was being built, many houses standing in the way were relocated like the Ziifle family home that was moved to 1119 Newton St.

In McDonoghville, the Coludovich home at 418 Weidman St. once stood at 937 Jefferson St. as the Kass home. It was one of many homes moved for the railroad.

Houses often were put together by adjoining two homes into one. A Cottage might connect to a shotgun. Sometimes buildings were moved back on lots and new facades were built. With a keen eye you might be able to spot the connected homes. The rooflines sometimes give them away. Opening up the walls of a circa 1930 or -40s house often reveals 1800s reused bargeboard or lumber.

Yes, our ancestors used and reused many things — tin foil, bacon grease and even houses!



The Ziifle home was moved completely furnished with the China and glasses still in the cabinets.

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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is published for the members and friends of GHS

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

Gretna Historical Society

<https://www.gretnahistoricalsociety.org/>

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