



# Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

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## Cheers for Another Wine Tasting Event!

The *GHS Annual Wine Tasting* held at the Cultural Center for the Arts was a total success!



Joe Miller did a wonderful job of selecting the Italian wines, while Lisa Miller and others served.

### CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE: Next Two Meetings are at the White House !!

**Members, please bring desserts.**

Sept 14 @ 6 pm Annual Barbecue at GHS Complex Backyard!

Oct 12 @ 6 pm Annual GHS Birthday Party at GHS Complex Backyard!

## Wine Tasting, Continued



At left, Sarah Daigle, on the left, did all the buying for charcuterie boxes and shared serving with her daughter, Melissa. At right and below, members helped to prepare the boxes for the event.



### Welcome New Members!

Chris Relle  
Kitty Isemann  
Asward "Zu" Carpenter  
Susan Edmonson  
Gabiella & Jim Hunter





**Times Past —**  
**By Stephanie Dieterich**  
**Old Post Offices!**

There has been a post office in Gretna since Dec. 20, 1869 when John E. Sutton served as the first postmaster. The various locations used for local post offices were rented by the government and not owned.

When Gretna became a city in 1913, Alvin T. Stumpf started a drive to build a better post office for the thriving town. It was only after 22 years that his efforts were rewarded, when, in 1935, Congress passed an appropriation of \$100,000 for a post office building. The dedication of the post office at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Huey P. Long Avenue took place in 1937 while the building was still under construction. In 1964 the building was enlarged.

Many post offices built in the 1930s during President Roosevelt’s New Deal Era were decorated with murals depicting images of America. The New Deal “was a way to help employ artists during the Great Depression.” Stuart R. Purser was the artist who painted Gretna’s mural “Steamboats on the

Mississippi” in 1939. This iconic New Deal mural is now in Gretna’s newer downtown Finance Station Post Office situated in the old Texas Pacific Depot behind City Hall.

The old post office never reopened after Hurricane Katrina and in 2008 the City of Gretna purchased the building. The impressive red brick building underwent a complete restoration and now serves as Gretna’s Cultural Center for the Arts. The artwork that now hangs in the Cultural Center were original to First National Bank.

McDonoghville’s fondly remembered post office originally stood at 525 Weidman Street. The tiny building was built in 1896 when Margaret Berger opened the station. Berger was postmistress until her retirement in 1936 when Lenora Ward took over. Ward was the last employee of the post office until the doors closed on Jan. 31, 1975 upon her retirement. In 1975, Helen Berger, daughter of the longtime postmistress, sold the post office building for \$2,000 which included moving fees. It was moved to lower coast Algiers on Patterson Street. New Orleans zoning deemed it unfit for that location being taller than

the 14’ allowed, so it was moved again. The small Victorian building now stands at the foot of Opelousas Street and the Mississippi River in Old Algiers.



Construction in 1937 of the old post office, now the Cultural Center for the Arts.

On December 31, 1975, the McDonoghville Post Office, Station A, was closed. The tiny structure was built in 1896, when Margaret Berger opened the station. The building



At left is McDonoghville Post Office, Station A, in 1976. Above is Post Mistress Lenora Ward inside Station A, 1975. Photos courtesy of Lenora Ward.



Gretna’s newer downtown post office displays the mural “Steamboats on the Mississippi.”

*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  
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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**

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 \$25 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. 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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- Ray Markase.....Vice President**
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