



Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

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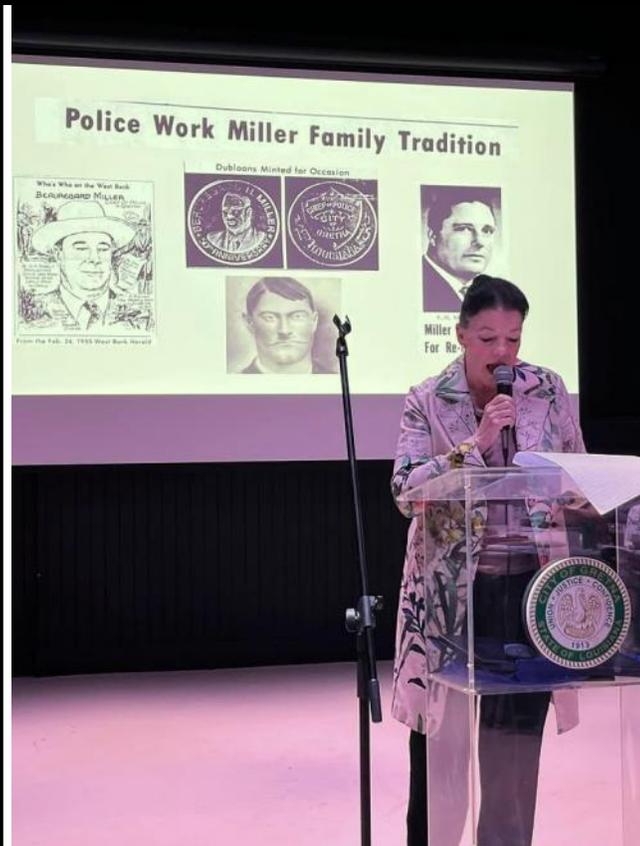
April, 2025

Miller Family Tradition

GHS was honored to have Liz Miller, daughter and granddaughter of the longtime police dynasty as guest speaker at the March meeting. A local historian, she gave a colorful presentation that was both enlightening and entertaining. Police Chief Arthur Lawson and newly elected Chief Brett Lawson attended to enjoy Liz Miller’s family story.

It started with B. G. Miller, born in 1861 in McDonoghville, who became Chief of the Jefferson Parish Police Force under the powerful Sheriff Louis Marrero. B. G. was a lawman in 1898, during a lawless and turbulent era.

Next came Beauregard H. Miller Sr., “Burry,” who 100 years ago in 1925 became Gretna’s Marshall. He was a one man police force, operating from his residence since there was no police station. By 1975 when Burry was celebrating his golden anniversary, he had “cleaned up” Gretna and turned his one-man operation into a department with 34 full time policemen, a detective bureau, K-9 corps and 10 squad cars.



Burry had a shadow, his son B. H. Jr. who was born in 1927 and from an early age was exposed to “all things law enforcement and political.” He served in the Navy in WWII. In 1958 B. H. was elected to the newly formed Jefferson Parish Council for District 1.

In 1979 when Burry Miller died after serving 54 years as Gretna Police Chief, B. H. resigned his council seat to become the interim police chief. During his 26 year tenure as Police Chief, the evolution of Gretna Police Department continued.

The inception of a training academy became integral to the department, ensuring the standards are upheld by each and every Gretna Police Officer.

Beauregard H. “Burry” Miller, Sr. City of Gretna Chief of Police, 1925-1979 (death)



Valentine Wedding Bliss!



The 2025 Blacksmith Shop Valentine Weddings went off without a hitch on a beautiful sunny day for sweethearts. Judge Vernon Wilty married 20 couples, including vow renewals for three. Thanks to all volunteers who make this annual event so special. Thanks to Amore Bakery & Cafe and Bae's Bakery for the special treats for the couples.

One happily married twosome and Gretna favorites who renewed vows were Councilman-at-large Wayne and Nancy Rau. Their marriage journey began in 1982 when they were civilly wed by Marrying Judge Leycester Trauth. On December 23, 1983 they were wed in a Catholic ceremony officiated by Rev. Msgr. Gerard Poche at St. Anthony Church. After 43 years of wedded bliss, the Rau's chose to celebrate a vow renewal by longtime friend, today's Marrying Judge, Vernon Wilty.

Judge Wilty attended the March meeting and presented a very generous donation to GHS President Val Coles, his fees from the weddings as he does every year. Thank you, Judge Wilty for the donation and allowing us to host this wonderful, special event each year.



CALENDAR

- APR 10** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.
- APR 11** @ 7:30 am Field Trip to St. Bernard Los Islenos Museum & Chalmette Monument, Battlefield & Cemetery. (Ticketed Event—\$45 — Includes Lunch at Rocky & Carlos)
- MAY 8** @ 6 pm Annual Crawfish Boil at GHS Complex Backyard. (Ticketed Event—\$20 (4# crawfish, corn, potatoes, sausage) (Note: We ask members to please bring desserts to the crawfish boil)
- JUNE 12** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.

Wecome New Members

Ann Maness Johnson
Steven Raymond Leaber
Glen Boudreaux



Times Past —
 By Stephanie Dieterich
Stolen Land . . . Part 1



Louisiana is the only state in the U.S. that uses the term “Parish” instead of county for local government divisions. Louisiana was originally organized into counties. Orleans was the first “county” created after the Louisiana Purchase. Its boundaries comprised all of Louisiana lying on both sides of the Mississippi River from its mouth to the St. Charles line. Orleans County included the present parishes of Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard and Plaquemines. In 1807 the Orleans Territorial Legislature changed the name to Parish, drawing on the historical use of the term in the Catholic Church. It is at this time that Plaquemines and St. Bernard were carved from New Orleans.

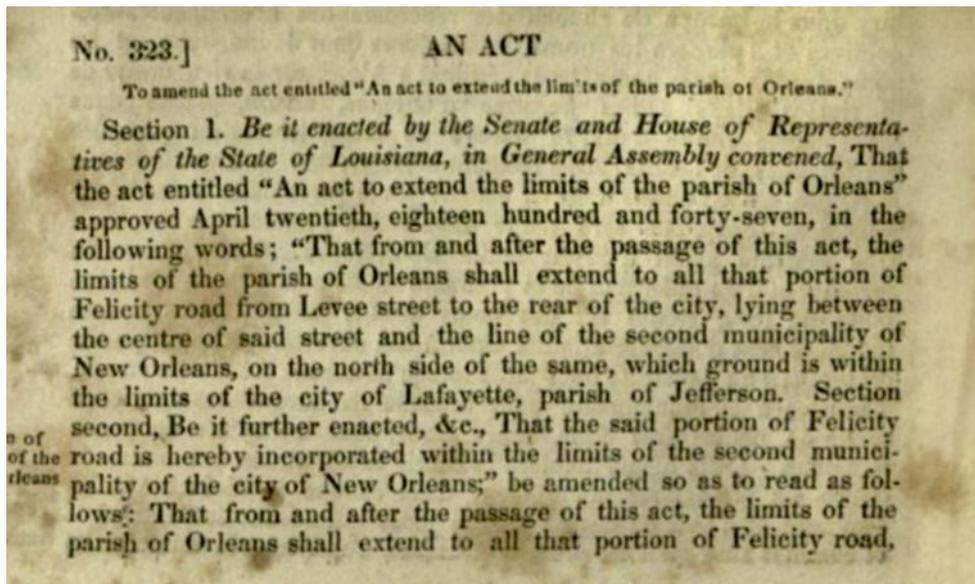


The City of Lafayette in 1842. Notice across the river the beginning of the Village of Gretna.

In 1825 Governor Henry S. Johnson signed legislation creating Jefferson Parish from land split from Orleans. Originally the name was to be Tchoupitoulas, but instead it was named after our third U.S. President. The boundaries would be from present day Felicite Street in New Orleans to the St. Charles Parish line. At this time most of Jefferson Parish’s population lived on the East bank. Except for McDonoghville, Jefferson Parish’s

Westbank plantations had not yet been divided into parcels. The City of Lafayette, incorporated in 1833, would become Jefferson Parish’s first city, where it served as the Parish seat until New Orleans snatched it back in 1852.

In the 1850 census, the City of Lafayette had a population of 14,190. German and Irish settlers were the majority including 13% Colored residents. The areas within the City of Lafayette would become known as the Irish Channel and the Garden District.



In 1850, New Orleans takes the City of Lafayette from Jefferson Parish.

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

Gretna Chronicles

is published for the members and friends of GHS

M. Helen Williams, Editor

To submit articles, call Helen at 504.450.8481
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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 \$30 per person. Monthly meetings are held at the St. Joseph Complex Gym at 7th and Newton Streets on the second Thursday of every month at 6:00 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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