



Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

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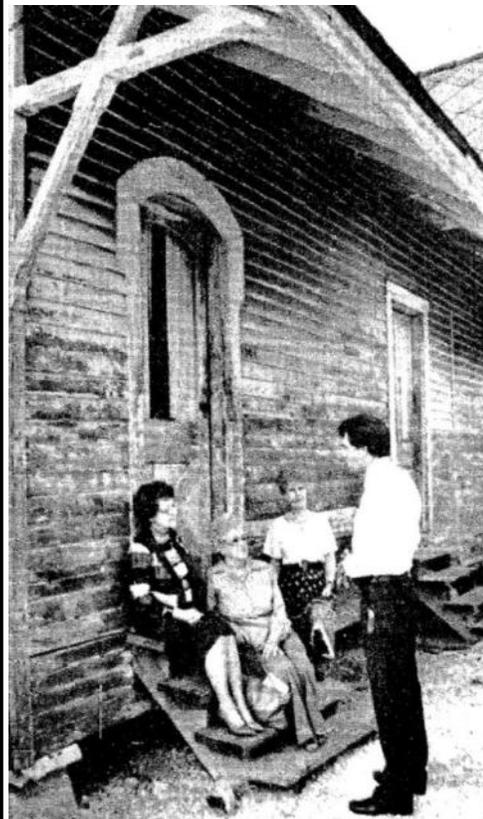
Mayor Harris Coming to Visit

By M. Helen Williams

It is with great excitement that we will have as guest speaker at the June meeting former Gretna Mayor Ronnie C. Harris who was also a former GHS President. Mayor Harris will talk about saving the depot and other efforts made during his tenure.

A tidbit of info -- after attending a cemetery tour in Natchez, Mayor Harris came home with the idea that GHS should produce a cemetery tour. Voila! Our annual Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour was born.

Mayor Harris, the youngest Mayor of Gretna ever, served Gretna from 1985 until his retirement in June of 2013. During his 28 years of service, he was into preservation and remediation of blighted properties. To give you an example, his efforts led to securing funding for remediation of a site in the city of Gretna that was no longer in operation. He involved community organizations, the private sector, local, state and the federal government to marshal the funds necessary to remediate the Malter International property, a former site involved in the production, packaging, and shipping of various household and industrial chemical compounds, including pesticides and cleaning solvents, and to return the industrial site to commercial use. The remediated Malter property was sold to Zatarain-McCormick Company in 2009. It is considered a prime example of tenacity in turning an eyesore into marketable property.



When Ronnie Harris was mayor, he led the restoration of the old train depot. He will discuss the project at the June meeting.

Under his tenure were the building of the 668 seat Riverfront Amphitheater and the creation of the Gretna Marketplace. Economic development and the city's efforts to address blighted properties were to his credit as mayor. I remember him saying that in his early years as mayor, he realized that there was an awful lot he didn't know about his mayoring job and he needed updated ideas. So, his second job was to earn a Master of Business Administration degree from Tulane University.

He was very involved in all the things Gretna Historical Society was doing toward preservation, including getting historical Gretna on the local and National Registers. When I mentioned to Mayor Belinda Constant that Mayor Harris was returning to Gretna to visit with the GHS, she said, "Great. Because of the work that Mayor Harris did, he afforded me an incredible opportunity to follow his pattern of preservation to continue to focus on the historical aspect of Gretna, as well as its economic development. McDonoghville is now on the National Register like historic Gretna. I so regret that I will not be in town for his visit, but hopefully he will come another time soon."

Hopefully, he will do that, again and again so that our GHS members can know so much more about Gretna. Enjoy his visit at the June 12 meeting!



Crawfish Boil a Hot Success

Great job, Blaine Daigle who headed up the Crawfish Boil and all of the members who helped. The pickup and cleanup efforts were very appreciated!

A special Thank You to those members who brought desserts for the event.



CALENDAR

- JUNE 12** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.
 - JULY 10** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.
 - AUG 14** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.
- Ticketed event- Wine Social \$5 per person**
Tickets will be available for sale at the June Meeting!

Planning for Cemetery Tour

First Cemetery Tour planning meeting will be held on Thursday, June 19 at 6:00 p.m. at the Coles House at 516 Lavoisier Street in Gretna. If you would like to be part of the evening or help share your family's story, please join us. Call Paul Coles at 504-450-8232 for more information.

Prayer Dinner June 16

Seats are being reserved at the Gretna Prayer Dinner set for June 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the Mel Ott Center. GHS members and friends are invited to join us, \$20 per person. Call the White House, 504-362-3854 to save your seat.



Times Past —

By Stephanie Dieterich

Stolen Land . . . Part 3 Carrollton



The area we know today as New Orleans' Carrollton neighborhood was acquired in 1781 by Barthelemy McCarthy to become his large sugar plantation. The plantation's boundaries ran 1.15 miles along the riverfront between present day Lowerline Street and Monticello Avenue and back as far as Fig Street.

The land became part of Jefferson Parish in 1825. By 1833 real estate investors had acquired the enormous property and had it subdivided. It was named Carrollton after General William Carroll who camped in the area with his militia during the Battle of New Orleans.

The early development and real estate boom of Carrollton is directly related to its railroads and terminals. In 1836, New Orleans & Carrollton Railroad steam cars traveled continuously from New Orleans to Carrollton every two hours, seven days a week. The Jefferson & Lake Pontchartrain Railway began

in 1851 and ran from Carrollton to Lake Pontchartrain, where steamers from across the lake and Mobile were docked awaiting travelers. The New Orleans & Carrollton Railroad even built a fabulous resort, "Carrollton Gardens" on St. Charles Avenue at Carrollton Avenue that was a favorite weekend getaway for New Orleanians.

The first house in Carrollton was built in 1834; seven years later there were 36 homes. By 1851, the population was recorded at 1,470.

The town of Carrollton was incorporated in 1845 and became the City of Carrollton in 1859. It would serve as the Jefferson Parish seat of government from 1852 until 1874. Architect Henry Howard, who is responsible for Madewood Plantation and the recently burned Nottaway Plantation, in 1855 designed the jail and impressive Greek Revival Courthouse at 719 South Carrollton Ave. A few years ago the courthouse was listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's most endangered list. Thankfully, it has since been beautifully restored and is now The Carrollton, an upscale assisted living facility.

In 1874 Jefferson Parish's "City of Carrollton" became New Orleans' "Carrollton neighborhood" when it was annexed to the City of New Orleans. Carrollton was the last Jefferson Parish land that was grabbed up by New Orleans, but at least this time they kept the name!



An 1830's illustration showing the New Orleans & Carrollton Rail-Road Company's steam locomotive, with the Carrollton Hotel in the background and a family waiting on the platform.



It was built (left) as the Jefferson Parish Courthouse in 1855. Today (right) it is The Carrollton, an assisted living facility.

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

M. Helen Williams, Editor

To submit articles, call Helen at 504.450.8481

(or e-mail mhw500@cox.net)

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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