



# Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

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## Cemetery Tour, Last and Next



Some GHS Cemetery Tour committee members presented proceeds from the 2024 Tour to the City of Gretna for the Hook & Ladder Cemetery.

Strange that as we closed out the books on the 2024 Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour, Paul Coles chairman announced that the Steering Committee for Cemetery Tour 2025 has its first meeting on May 15 for the 2025 event.

Some committee members attended a recent City Council Meeting to present the proceeds from the 2024 event of \$4,000 to the city. Proceeds from the annual Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour are always donated to the City of Gretna for use at the historic cemetery which is now officially owned and operated by the City.

So, the Last Tour is dead and gone and off we go into the nether, namely October 2025!

In order to continue producing successful Cemetery Tours, we must continue to have new, innovative ideas and new people serving on the tour committee.

So, Paul Coles is inviting interested GHS members to volunteer as scriptwriters, actors or groundskeepers. Especially important, we need members to help develop new characters from their ancestors who are buried in Hook & Ladder Cemetery. The committee will, of course, help with the research and development of the story of their relative.

Beginning on Thursday, May 15, cemetery tour meetings are on the third Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the White House. The meetings for the first few months are monthly, but will be held more often as the time of the event gets closer.

If interested, just show up at the committee meeting on May 15 to join the group!



Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour 2024 cast.

## GHS Visits St. Bernard Parish

Plans were made by President Val Coles for a field trip on April 11 to St. Bernard Parish's Los Islenos Museum & Village.

Spanish colonists from the Canary Islands came to Louisiana between 1778 and 1783 to populate Louisiana and halt British colonial expansion west of the Mississippi River. The Canary Islanders called themselves Islenos or Islanders, a tradition that continues to this day. The Isleno contributions to Louisiana are undeniable and can be explored at the Museum & Village, the last vestige of Spanish Colonial Louisiana.

The Museum and Village is managed by Los Islenos Heritage & Cultural Society, made up of descendants of the original settlers. They are preserving and promoting the history, customs, and traditions of the Isleño community. The village consists of nine structures on roughly 22 acres; what a terrific idea for a day trip or stay caw with your friends or family.

Members enjoyed the beautiful Museum complex and the story of how the Los Islenos shaped St. Bernard Parish. Leaving the Museum, the bus trip continued to the popular Rocky and Carlo's for lunch in their private room and a trip to the Chalmette Monument, Battlefield and Chalmette National Cemetery.



Pictured on the right facing the crowd is the Historian of St. Bernard Parish, Bill Hyland, as he told the story of the Los Islenos people to attentive GHS members.



Val Coles & Frank J. Borne Jr.

## Derbigny Street Namesake

Local Historian and Author Frank J. Borne Jr. was guest speaker at the GHS April meeting. He spoke on the legacy of Pierre Derbigny, the only Louisiana governor from Gretna. He also talked of the history of the Jefferson Parish courthouses which are built on land that Derbigny once owned.

Frank Borne has authored numerous non-fiction books and short essays concerning Jefferson Parish history and politics, and served as editor of *The West Bank Beacon*, a good-news community newspaper, for three and a half years. In 2012, he self-published his first novel, *But for the Grace of God*, and in 2013, Astraea Press released his novel *Fame and Misfortune*. Borne serves as Chief Deputy Clerk of Court in Jefferson Parish.

### CALENDAR

**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.

**JULY 10** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.





## Times Past —

By Stephanie Dieterich

### Stolen Land . . . Part 2 Jefferson City

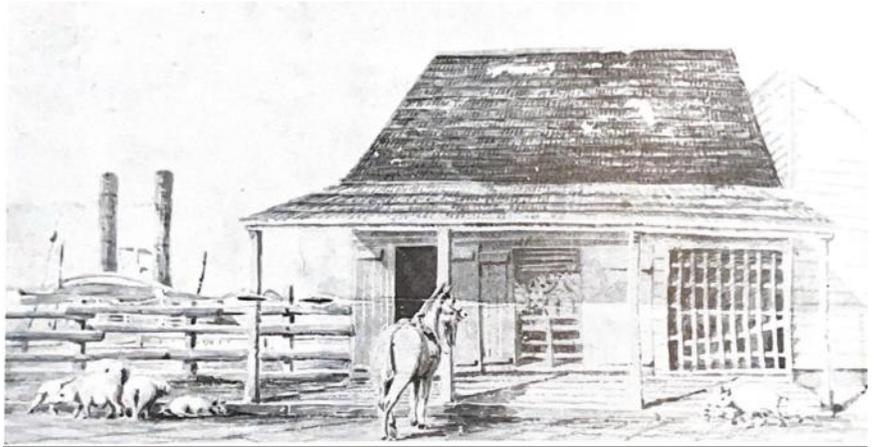


Immediately upriver from the City of Lafayette was the “Borough of Freeport.” Incorporated in 1846, its boundaries were situated between present day State and Webster Streets. The line was extended to Joseph Street in 1847. In 1850 the Borough of Freeport, along with the following faubourgs: Plaisance, Delachaise, St. Joseph, East and West Boulogny were absorbed by the incorporation of the City of Jefferson.

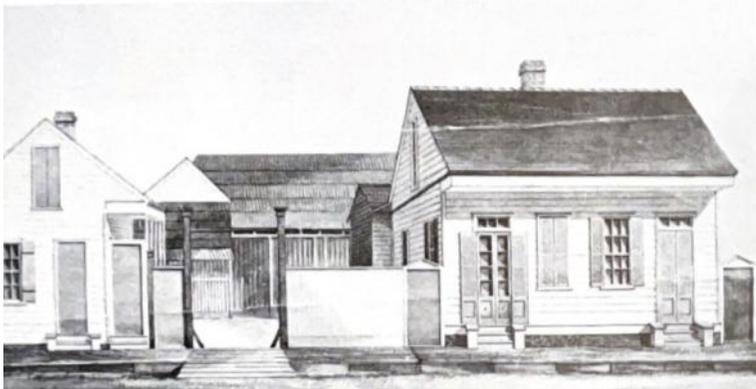
The wealthy people who erected homes in the City of Lafayette’s Garden District in the 1850s objected to the odors of the slaughterhouses and tanneries and the great number of horses and mules running at large in the streets, trampling their rose bushes. The residents of the Garden District were successful in getting the Lafayette City Council to pass measures which led to the removal of the cattle landing where it was relocated to Jefferson City at the foot of Toledano Street.

Jefferson City began to thrive when it inherited Lafayette’s stock yards and related industries. The working class neighborhood’s quiet streets consisted of orange groves and of handsome, and even fine residences, indicating that those who lived there had an appreciation of beauty. Everything had the appearance of comfort and refinement.

It was, however, by the stockyards and slaughterhouses that Jefferson City would mostly be remembered. “The Jefferson City Buzzards,” New Orleans oldest Mardi Gras marching club was established in 1890, named for those birds which circled over the slaughterhouses.



A stable at the Jefferson City stock landing containing cows and outside are a horse and pigs. Smokestacks of a steamboat docked on the river are in the background. Drawing by Charles A. de Armas, 1865.



A street scene in Jefferson City, showing typical working class housing. Formerly on Louisiana Avenue between Annunciation and Laurel, backed by Toledano Street. Drawing by A. Persac, 30 September 1866. (Plan book 41, Folio 20, New Orleans Notarial Archives.)

In 1860 the population of Jefferson City in Jefferson Parish stood at 5,107. In 1870 New Orleans took back Jefferson City and all the territory between it and Carrollton, placing the new boundary line of Jefferson Parish at the lower line of Carrollton, Lowerline Street.

**Statistics of the Cattle Market.**—During the month of August, the following amount of stock has been sold in Jefferson city for the supply of New Orleans—Beeves, 2168; calves, 2540; sheep, 2723; hogs, 1644; cows, 83. The average prices of the different classes of beeves have been as follows: Northern \$39 per head; Texas, \$20; Lake, \$15; Aitakapas, \$16; calves, \$7; sheep, \$2 40; hogs, \$6 35; cows, \$25. The amount of stock now in market is small.

It will be seen that this branch of the trade of the Crescent City, is becoming very important. It must increase with the growth of the city. Jefferson city having secured it within her limits, has in it a source of growing revenue and prosperity. During the same period a commencement has been made of landing horses and mules in Jefferson city. For August we received: Mules, 140; horses, 39.—*Lafayette Republican.*

*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 \$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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- Val Coles.....President**
- Blaine Daigle.....Vice President**
- Sylvia Schwarz.....Recording Secretary**
- Holly Williams.....Corresponding Secretary**
- Sarah Daigle.....Treasurer**
- Stephanie Dieterich.....Historian/Archivist**
- Judy LeBlanc.....Sergeant-at-Arms**
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- M. Helen Williams.....Board Member/Editor & Publicity**
- Paul Coles.....Board Member/Hospitality & Programs**
- Dwight Maness.....Board Member at Large**
- Joe Miller.....Board Member at Large**