



# Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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March, 2026



Another Huey P. Long Avenue home on the tour.

## Spring Home Tour Set for April 12

**SAVE THE DATE** for the GHS Spring Tour of Homes on April 12, 2026! The Crown Jewel of the tour will be the beautifully completed Huey P. Long Avenue residence of John and Trina Alario. The home was featured on the 2024 Tour of Homes in its “Before” stage. The family is now happily enjoying life on the “Huey!”

Every inch of the 1920 raised bungalow has been carefully restored and now sits amid a stunning landscaped setting. GHS is so appreciative that the Alario’s are opening their home for the tour.

### Spring Tour of Homes

April 12, 2026 1:00 - 5:00 pm

### Couples In Love!

The Blacksmith Shop in the GHS Museum Complex was the setting for the Valentine’s Day Weddings, one of three special events hosted annually by GHS. While Mardi Gras parades rolled in Nola, the day was all about happiness overload at GHS in Gretna!

The 2026 event had Judge Vernon Wilty, the “Marrying Judge” make legal the marriage of nine happy couples. It was a busy day when the Judge, and GHS resourceful volunteers kept everything moving flawlessly. Sylvia Schwarz, longtime event Chairperson, and husband, Irvin, handled the photography for the couples.



Visit lovely historic homes as well as 5 interesting museums within the GHS Museum Complex. Tour the curated renovation of the Ignatius Strehle House.



Tickets are only sold the day of the tour at the White House, 209 Lafayette Street in Gretna. Tickets are \$25 and sold from 1:00 -4:00 pm. For information call 504-362-3854.

# Oh, It's Carnival Time! And GHS Celebrates!

Mardi Gras season is always fun when GHS Royalty are picked by lottery to rule over the evening.

King Maurice "Moe" Brunet and Queen Brenda Fortmayer led a festive Second Line around the gym.

Members played Mardi Gras Trivia and members enjoyed a typical Mardi Gras meal with hot dogs, homemade chili by Judy and king cake!



## CALENDAR

- Mar 12 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym.
- Apr 9 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym.
- Apr 12 Ticketed event. Spring Tour of Homes.
- May 12 Ticketed event. Crawfish Boil @ 6 pm at GHS Complex Backyard.

NOTE: Your \$30 annual "Dues are Due" NOW for Year 2026. Unpaid dues after the March 12 meeting will result in names purged from the roster.



**WELCOME  
NEW  
MEMBERS**

Gary Lehr  
Teri & Warren Hotard  
Lynn Alonzo  
Jane Breaud  
Ken Orgeron  
Roslyn Milligan

Carrie O'Brien  
Rebecca Leger Eymard  
Sean & Adrienne Arrillaga  
**Welcome Back!**  
Dottie Wilcox



## Times Past – Gretna’s Tour of Homes Almost 4 Decades Old

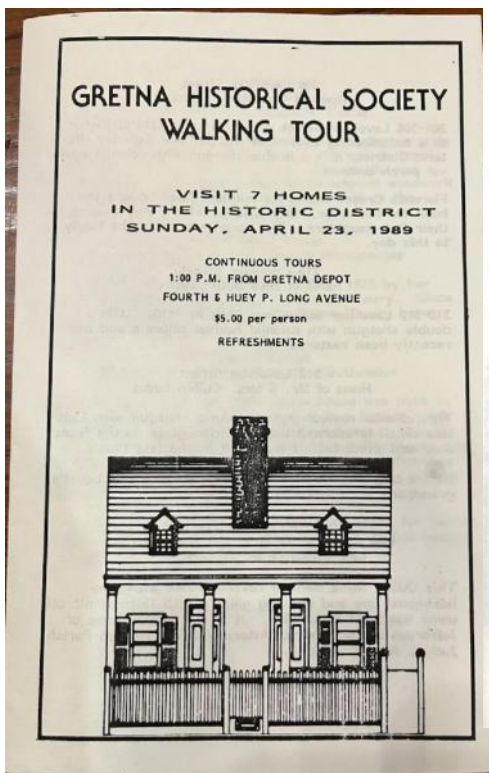
By Stephanie Dieterich

Spring is in the air, and with it comes the annual Gretna Historical Society Spring Tour of Homes, the first held in 1989. Virgie Ott, who later became Gretna’s first ever Tourism Coordinator, was the brainchild of the GHS home tour. She wanted to bring recognition to Gretna’s newly created National Historic District, the largest in Louisiana. At that time, the Historic District was not what it is now. The area was rundown and in a state of decline. A large percentage of the homes were badly maintained and had become low rent eyesores. Investing in the cost of renovations was risky, but a few locals took on the challenge. Gradually, renovated homes popped up, but were few and far between. That was 37 years ago! Good luck finding a rundown home today to restore. Gretna’s Historic District is one of the most coveted locations on the Westbank!

Virgie Ott has been credited with putting Gretna on the map. She founded the tourism office that she ran from 1992 until her 2011 retirement. She started the GHS Spring Tour of Homes, was instrumental in the building of the GHS Blacksmith Shop and starting the Valentine Day Weddings. Virgie was also responsible for acquiring the life size statue of Gretna’s own baseball Hall-of-Famer Mel Ott that is located in Mel Ott Park. The famous ballplayer just so happened to be her husband Ed Ott’s second cousin.

Although Virgie is no longer with us, traditions that she began still are, one of them being the Spring Tour of Homes slated for April 12. We have some beautifully restored and renovated homes in Gretna’s Historic District as well as over in the Old Garden Park neighborhood, Gretna’s first subdivision. Although “OGP” is not a Historic District yet, most of the houses in the neighborhood are over 50 years old, the age requirement for the designation. Hopefully it’s just a matter of time! With the new 5<sup>th</sup> Street improvements bordering “OGP” the neighborhood has shown renewed interest and becoming sought after once more. Don’t wait too long!

Virgie Trosclair Ott



304 Lavoisier Street  
Home of Miss Marian Becker

304-306 Lavoisier Street was built circa 1880's. Listed as a contributing element of the National Register Historic District, it is a double shotgun with colonial revival porch columns.

Florence Cross, one of its builders later bought the home for his bride, Mary Bishop, where they reared their five daughters. The home remains in the family to this day.

310 Lavoisier Street  
Home of Miss Beth Jaycox

310-312 Lavoisier Street was built in 1910. It is a double shotgun with colonial revival columns and has recently been restored.

512 Lavoisier Street  
Home of Mr. & Mrs. Cullen Ledet

This colonial revival style L-shaped shotgun with East-lake detail is adorned with Venetian glass on the front door and windows. It was built in the late 1800's.

Before acquiring it in 1980, it was the home of Ledet's grandparents, Alcee and Eva Ledet.

603 Lafayette Street  
Law Office of John J. Molaison, Jr.  
Law Office of W. J. LeBlanc

This Queen Anne colonial revival house with semi hexagonal bay and curving gallery with fluted ionic columns was built circa 1905. It is the former home of Jefferson Parish District Attorney and Jefferson Parish Judge, John E. Fleury.

610 Sixth Street  
St. Joseph Rectory  
Rev. Francis Carabello, Pastor

This two story mission style house with bungalow style porch was built circa 1921. The porch was enclosed and stucco added at a later date. The inside was recently renovated using much of its original woodwork in innovative ways. St. Joseph Church is on the national register.

602 Newton Street  
Home of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Hourguettes

This bungalow style house was built in 1928 by her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Francis J. Fleury. Since that time five generations of the Fleury family have lived in the home.

517 Newton Street  
Home of Mr. & Mrs. Everette Gauthreaux

This late victorian two story frame house was built in 1905 by J. C. Tillotson who worked in a lumber yard. The house was built with all choice cypress. The Tillotsons lived there with their daughter. The house was a "show house" in its time and many social gatherings were held there. The house was touted as the highest house in Gretna.

The present occupants have been living there for twenty-three years with their two daughters. It has been completely renovated during that time.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED HERE

The brochure for the first GHS Tour of Homes in 1989.

*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  
 P.O. Box 115  
 Gretna, LA 70054-0115



### ***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  
 (or e-mail [mhw500@cox.net](mailto: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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- Val Coles.....President**
- Blaine Daigle.....Vice President**
- Jeannie Radosta.....Recording Secretary**
- Holly Williams.....Corresponding Secretary**
- Sarah Daigle.....Treasurer**
- Stephanie Dieterich and Lisa LaFrance.....Historians/Archivists**
- Sylvia Schwarz .....Parliamentarian**
- Judy LeBlanc.....Sergeant-at-Arms**
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