



# Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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## Fun-Filled Fall Festivities

By M. Helen Williams

The Gretna Historical Society was formed in 1969 to preserve and share the history of Gretna. The generation behind us did indeed have a mission back then, which the current Board of Directors and all of our members continue today.

Our Museum Complex that includes five buildings has served us well. Additionally we own the restored Train Depot and Caboose near the Farmers Marketplace on Huey P. Long Avenue.

"Maintaining a complex that is over 150 years old can be quite expensive. For years we have relied on Bingo money for support but that is shrinking consistently. We have decided to implement some traditional fundraising. The first event we are excited about is "Sippin' in Style, 1840's Style" on Friday, October 2 at 7:00 p.m. at the GHS Complex! We hope to make it an annual tradition by jumping 20 years each time we hold it, so next year will be the 1860's Style, etc.," said President Val Coles.

"The party will include Beer, Wine, Bubbly and a Signature Cocktail along with delicious bites. Prepare for a Costume Contest (if you choose to dress-up), a Trivia/Scavenger Hunt within the Complex, Music, Wine pull, 50/50 ... lots of fun to be had. Tickets are \$75 per person and limited to 125," she said.

"Sponsors are very important to the success of the event. We already have our Event Sponsor, which we are proud to announce is "American Safety," but we still have House Sponsorships available for \$500 that includes two (2) entry tickets or you can become a Patron for \$250 that includes one entry ticket. All Sponsors and Patrons will be recognized with appropriate signage.

"In addition to raising much needed funds we are hoping it will also educate folks on what we offer. All proceeds from the Sippin' Event will go to continue the enhancement and maintenance of our museums and grounds," she said.

The second big event is a proven success with sellout crowds since 2013. It is, of course, the Hook and Ladder Cemetery Tour that GHS hosts each fall! Proceeds from the tour on November 14 go for special projects at the historic cemetery.

Tickets are \$30 per person, which includes the food at the Red Maple and the tour. You choose your tour time to attend. Tours run every 15 minutes beginning at 5:00 p.m. After enjoying a light supper from the Red Maple, you will be escorted through the old burial ground with a stop midway through the tour for a complimentary glass of wine.

Our generous Event Sponsor for the Hook and Ladder Cemetery Tour 2026 is an appropriate fit, Mothe Funeral Homes/Westlawn Cemetery. Don't you just love it? We have Site Sponsors available which are \$150 each. Val Coles can be reached at 504-432-7618 for sponsorships for both events.

To get a ticket for the Sippin' with Style Event or the Hook and Ladder Cemetery Tour, go to the White House in the GHS Museum Complex, 209 Lafayette Street in Gretna (504-362-3854) or get one at the upcoming August Membership Meeting.

Gretna Historical Society  
Museum Complex



201-209 Lafayette St. - Gretna

### Sippin' In Style

1840's Themed Cocktail Party with  
Wine, Food & Signature Cocktail

On Oct. 2, 2026 at The White House

Tickets are \$75 Per Person - Open To All

Trivia Contest • Scavenger Hunt • Raffles • Door Prizes

For Details Call 504.362.3854

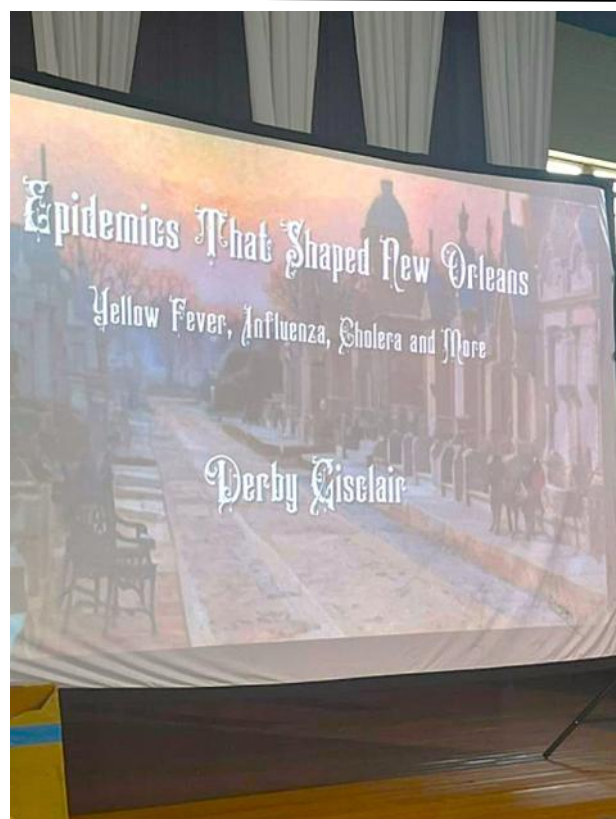
### Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour

Gretna Historical Society  
presents live performances  
depicting ancestors from  
Beyond the Grave! Start  
with refreshments at the Red  
Maple followed by a unique,  
always sell-out tour in the  
historic cemetery.

Nov. 14, 2026



\$30 per person. Must have an advance ticket. Call 504.362.3854



## Author Derby Gisclair Lectures on New Orleans' Epidemic History

Derby Gisclair, guest speaker for the July meeting, presented "Epidemics that shaped New Orleans" to a very interested audience of over 130 members.



Mindy Stern, a travel writer, visited the Museum Complex to enjoy a taste of the lovely GHS Museum Complex.

### Welcome New Members

Evelyn White  
Elaine Leaber  
Gayle Key

Kenny Kempf  
Rhonda Panepinto  
Erica Robertson

### Welcome Back

Dr. Tandra Taylor

Robert Whitehurst

### Cemetery Tour Meeting

The next Cemetery Tour Meeting will be held on Wed., Aug. 12 @ 6 pm at Paul and Val's House. The Cemetery Tour is Saturday, November 14.

Did you sell any Yard Sign Ads @ \$150 per sign!?!

### CALENDAR AND NEWS

**August 13** @ 6 pm Wine Tasting - Ticketed Event \$5 at St. Joseph Gym

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

**October 2** @ 6 pm Sippin' in Style Event – Ticketed Event \$75 at the White House with Limited Tickets Available

**October 8** @ 6 pm Birthday Party Barbecue at White House Backyard



## ***Times Past – GHS Salutes Hero Karl Weyer Jr.***

***By Stephanie Dieterich***

In 1879 Wilhelm Karl Weyer Sr. of Germany joined the German Merchant Marines. He arrived in New Orleans in 1892 and boarded at the Harvey Castle, by then a boarding house used predominately by German and Norwegian sailors. The Harvey Castle had previously housed the Jefferson Parish Courthouse from 1874 to 1884 until the offices were moved to Gretna. It is here where Wilhelm met his future wife, Margaretha Deemer Kaspersen.

Maggie, as she was called, was a recent widow who found employment at the boarding house as a cook.

The couple's first two sons, Wilhelm Karl Jr., 1895-1925, and Ignatius Harry, 1897-1968, both served in the Great War. The next child, George, unfortunately froze to death in his crib as an infant in 1899. Louise Edna, 1900-1975, Ernest Paul, 1902-1974, Lizzie Margaretha, 1904-1906, Herbert John, 1906-1940, and Veronica Carrie Alice, 1909-2002, would complete the family.

The family resided at 900 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on the corner of Couvier Street. In 1914 a midnight fire destroyed the home and the family escaped with only their night clothes.

Unfortunately, although the home was insured for \$1,000, the contents were not. The home was rebuilt, but is no longer there.

GHS purchased a banner for Wilhelm K. Weyer Jr. now on display along Huey P. Long Avenue. Wilhelm K. Weyer Jr.'s 1917-1918 draft card lists him as of medium physical build, tall with light hair and brown eyes. He served in the Great War as Private First Class Company D in the 355<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, service #1609473. Although he was wounded and twice gassed with chlorine, he returned home alive in 1919 on the ship *Leviathan* after occupation duty. In 1925 Wilhelm Jr. died of complications from his badly burned lungs caused during the war. The City of Gretna renamed Couvier Street to Weyer Street in his honor.



**In honor of the World War I service of Army veteran Wilhelm Karl Weyer, the City of Gretna renamed Couvier Street to Weyer Street.**



***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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