



Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

Volume 36, Issue 7

An Official Publication of the Gretna Historical Society

July, 2026

Patriotic Parade & Party

Jefferson Parish celebrated America's 250th Birthday with a parade and party on the Bestbank on what felt like the hottest day ever! Mayor Belinda Constant rode a horse in the direct sun and Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng walked in the parade, wearing patriotic colors, stopping to give out goodies to those along the route.

The parade passed in front of Gretna's oldest buildings like City Hall, Gretna Primary, home of the German-American Cultural Center, St. Joseph Church and the GHS Museum Complex where blacksmith, Doug Hebert demonstrated in the Gretna Green Blacksmith Shop.

A few weeks ago, the old pumper was meticulously rolled out of the 1859 Louisiana State Fire Museum by firemen from David Crockett Steam Fire Company and put on a trailer to transport it to the new fire station. With tender loving care, the firemen polished up the 1876 Gould hand-drawn steam engine. This beautifully intact, fifth-class copper, brass, and steel engine is the only one still remaining in the United States out of just 73 ever built. The old pumper is the crown jewel of the Louisiana State Fire Museum and the pride and joy of Gretna residents. Folks applauded as the old pumper rode past, a highlight of the parade!

The long day that had much to offer beyond the parade with races and old cars, awesome singers, including our own Nola Arcement, ended with a drones display! Happy Birthday, America!



Helen Williams and Lisa LaFrance.

Wine Tasting!

Instead of a regular meeting on August 13, there will be the Wine Tasting, an annual ticketed event for only \$5 to attend, which helps to pay for the special wines that are offered.

"California Dreamin' featuring California wines is what we will be doing at the Wine Tasting as we celebrate the USA's 250th anniversary!" Chairperson Sarah Daigle said. "Dress like you would in sunny California and we'll have a cool photo op so you can take some great pics! We will have lovely baskets ready to be raffled off and enjoy charcuterie boxes for dinner!"



Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant rides in the parade.





Riding the pumper are Chief Mike Labruzzo, left, and his grandson, Jake. →



Helen Williams and Linda LaBorde.



Blacksmith Doug Hebert.



Mr. Bingle Came Alive!

Gerilynn Faulstich, guest speaker at last month's meeting, gave an interesting talk about "Mr. Bingle," a beloved local Christmas mascot depicted as a snowman with an ice-cream cone hat and holly-leaf wings that is kept alive today by department store Dillard's. She offered interesting details about the little character and had interesting artifacts on display.

Welcome New Members

Sandy Sallettes
Sandy Marlborough

Welcome Back

Lloyd & Bonnie Andrus
Brad & Shannon
Gegenheimer

CALENDAR

July 9

July 16

August 13

September 10

@6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym.

@6 pm Cemetery Tour Cast Meeting, Coles house.

@6 pm Wine Tasting — Ticketed Event, at St. Joseph Gym.

@6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym.



Times Past – GHS Salutes Hero Louis Oscar Fried

By Stephanie Dieterich



Louis Oscar Fried, son of Matthew Fried and Mary Meisner was the first casualty during the 1914 American intervention in Mexico. The 19-year-old seaman aboard the U.S. battleship *Arkansas* was killed by a Mexican sniper's bullet during the U.S. occupation of Veracruz.

Before his return to Gretna, Fried and 16 other Navy and Marine servicemen were honored in a public ceremony at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Their bodies were then escorted by train to their respective hometowns.

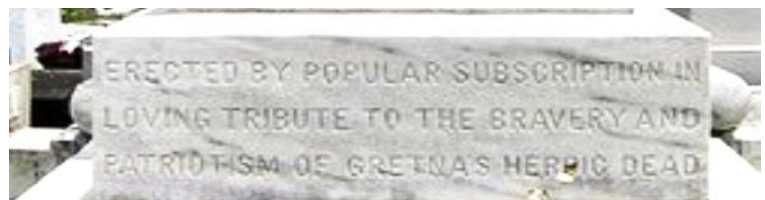
Fried's body arrived in Gretna on May 15 at 7:30 p.m. and was immediately taken to the undertaker. He was transferred from a plain oak coffin into a handsome purple plush casket and brought to the family home on Copernicus Street before being brought across the street to the Courthouse.

Prior to the funeral, the casket lay in state for five hours in the corridor of the Gretna Courthouse, where hundreds came to pay their respects. Among the many floral arrangements surrounding the casket was a simple wreath of palms and green leaves sent by President Woodrow Wilson.



Following the viewing, a funeral procession departed the courthouse. A caisson drawn by four large white horses, heavily draped in mourning, led eleven carriages carrying family members to Salem Lutheran Church for funeral services before continuing to the cemetery. Almost every citizen of Gretna, members of the Military, Louisiana State Officials and members of every civic organization followed the line of procession to the cemetery.

The city declared a half day holiday. Thousands crossed the river from throughout the city and surrounding areas to attend. Church bells and fire alarms tolled throughout the day, while flags across Gretna were flown at half-staff. One year later, citizens raised enough funds to erect a monument over Fried's gravesite. In 1922, the city renamed Madison Street to Fried Street in his honor.



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)

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/>

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

Phone: 504.362.3854

Email: directoroffacilities@gretnahistoricalsociety.org

Facebook: @GHSGretnaLA

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 SchwarzParliamentarian

Judy LeBlanc.....Sergeant-at-Arms

M. Helen Williams.....Board Member-Publicity

Paul Coles.....Board Member-Program Director

Dwight Maness.....Board Member

Rene Poche.....Board Member