



Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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May, 2026

GHS Museum Complex Hosted Tours for Tour Directors!

The 7th Annual Bus Fam Field trip to Jefferson Parish Westbank attractions by the Mid South Women in Tourism (MSWIT) was a huge success! GHS Board and volunteers had the Complex fresh and shiny! Mayor Belinda Constant “addressed the tourism group with a warm welcome and showed her passion for Gretna.”

The guests were very complimentary and impressed with the five buildings in our Museum Complex. We especially appreciate Charlene Hale, JCVB Director of Partnerships and Travel Media, for including us in this impressive tour opportunity.



The 'Kittie House' Got a Facelift!

The 1840s Strehle Family Cottage, aka the Kittie Strehle House got a facelift and, she is a beauty!

Thanks to President Val Coles and Board Member Holly Williams who took on most of the challenge of the upgrade. Chandel Hancock, who curated the Ignatius Strehle House last year offered advice and ideas. Archivist Stephanie Dieterich, Celeste Apostalo, Lisa LaFrance, Dwight Maness, Paul Coles, Jeannie Radosta and Barbara Gaspard listened to the call of the president and showed up to scrub and work.

True, the lovely Creole cottage was badly in need of a thorough deep cleaning, but with a little re-staging, better curtains and a few small repairs from Garland Gaspard, our handyman and cook, the difference is phenomenal! Signage of the many items displayed in the cottage are still to be added to allow for self-guided tours in the future. The Kittie House will be open the night of the Crawfish Boil and all members should take a walk through history while in the GHS backyard! There is a delightful audio you will enjoy of Angelina Gunn, the six year old granddaughter of Val and Paul Coles as she receives a piano lesson in the parlor seemingly by Kittie Strehle.



The Kitchen in the Kittie Strehle House. Notice the wood stove and imagine cooking on it!



The lovely piano in the living room, a reminder of when Kittie Strehle taught piano to children in Gretna.

Crawfish Boil Instead of Regular Meeting

The GHS Annual Crawfish Boil will be held on Wednesday, May 13 @ 6:00 pm at the GHS Complex backyard. This is a \$20 each, ticketed event where admission is from presold tickets only. You CANNOT purchase a ticket that night at the door. Purchase a ticket from the Complex office open from Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. The DEADLINE to purchase tickets is May 9 @ 3:00 pm so don't wait!



Notice that the Crawfish Boil is on a Wednesday instead of a Thursday, our usual meeting day. It has to do with the garbage collection time at the Complex.

Also, it is the tradition for our members to generously donate their favorite dessert to the Crawfish Boil. Thanks.

CALENDAR

- May 13** Ticketed event. Crawfish Boil @ 6 pm at GHS Complex Backyard. Tickets \$20 – Presold Only! Deadline May 9 @3:00 pm. Members always bring desserts for this event.
- June 11** @6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym.
- July 9** @6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym.

Welcome New Members

Kathleen Gloeckner
Jeannette E. Cantin

Welcome Back!

Lisa Clapp



Times Past – More Bang for Your Buck!

By Stephanie Dieterich

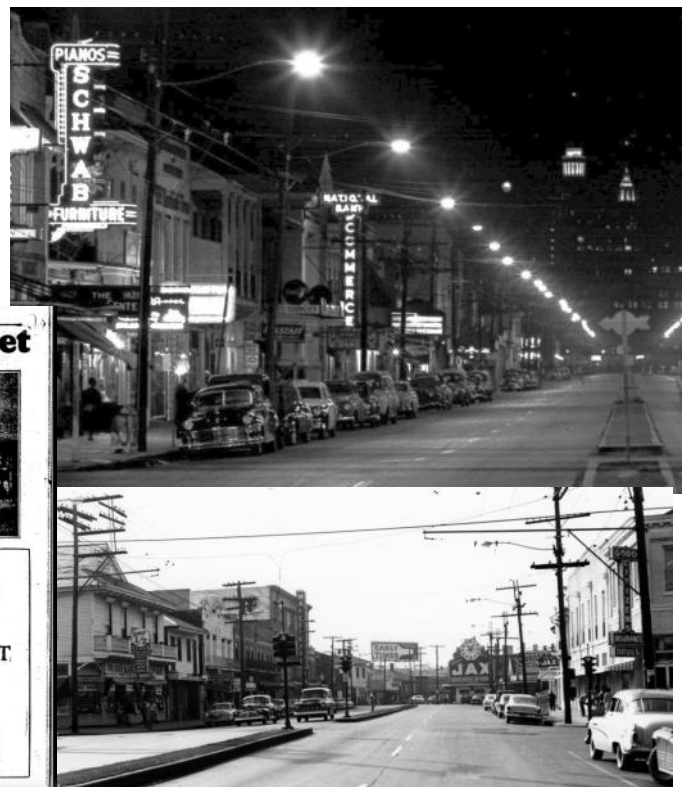
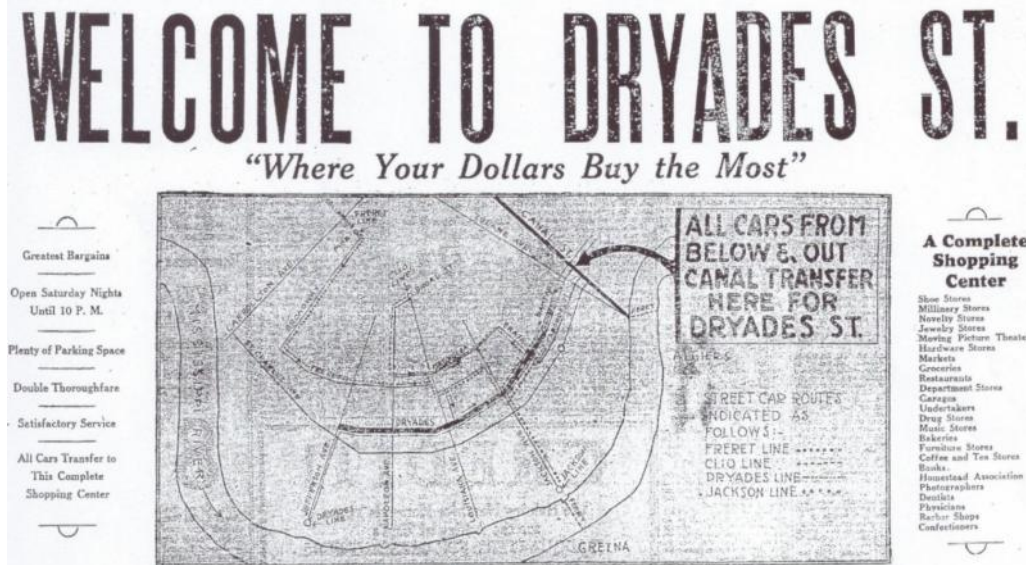
Everyone loves a bargain, and the popularity of stores like Marshall's and T.J. Maxx is testament to that. After all, who doesn't enjoy finding a great deal? Before modern shopping centers appeared in residential neighborhoods, shopping was an event. People dressed in their Sunday best and headed downtown to Canal Street. But even then, savvy shoppers knew where to stretch their dollars, Dryades Street, sometimes called Little Canal Street offered better value. With lower rents than Canal Street, merchants could pass those savings on to their customers.

Dryades Street has deep roots. Originally laid out in 1809, it grew rapidly after the city opened the Dryades Market in 1849. Churches, banks, schools, and shops soon followed, and by 1860 the area had become one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Dryades Street reflected a diverse community of Irish, German, Jewish and Italian merchants, African American professionals, insurance companies, dairies like Browns Dairy and German bakeries like Leidenheimer Baking Company. By 1925 more than 200 businesses and three bank branches lined the street, supported by five streetcar lines. It had become the second largest shopping district in the city after Canal Street.

The district reached its peak in the 1940s and 1950s, serving as a thriving commercial hub and a favored destination for Black shoppers. Civil rights leader Oretha Castle Haley helped lead a 1960 boycott against stores that refused to hire Black employees as sales clerks or cashiers. Integration soon followed and Dryades Street rapidly declined.

A portion of the street has been renamed Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard and efforts have been made to revitalize the once thriving street. Two of the larger stores, Kaufman's Department Store is now home to Ashe Cultural Arts, and Handelman's, Kaufman's largest competitor, has been turned into condos.



Just Completed—The New Dryades Market



PLUMBING AND PLUMBING FIXTURES

In the New and Beautiful

DRYADES MARKET

EMILE M. BABST CO.

1050 CAMP ST.

Raymond 334

The Dryades Street Market has just been completed and will soon be open, ready to serve the public in one of America's most beautiful, modern and sanitary market buildings. The plans and specifications were prepared by Sam Stone, Jr., prominent local architect. The Reitzman Construction Company, with offices in the Maritime Building, were the construction manager.

The firms represented on this page furnished most of the materials and equipment for this beautiful structure.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS

For

**FEIBLEMAN'S
BASEMENT STORE**

*Furnished the Asphalt Floor Enamel
for the handsome floors of the*
NEW DRYADES MARKET

See our famous SEROCO paints for every purpose on sale exclusively in New Orleans in Feldman's Basement Store . . . The very finest paints that money can buy . . . at much less than the cost of inferior grades. Investigate our painting contract department.

FEIBLEMAN'S

Affiliated With Sears, Roebuck & Co.

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

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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