



# Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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## Ooh La La! A Successful Wine Tasting!

The Wine Tasting was a huge success! French berets could be seen throughout the well-attended crowd, many dressed with a flair of French. Joe Miller did a great job of presenting the wines and the wine pourers were friendly and flawless. Prez Lisa LaFrance donated the suitcases of chocolate, Treasurer Sarah Daigle made the gift basket and also with other Board members arranged for the charcuterie dinners.

The wine gift basket door prize went to lucky Irvin Schwarz! Holly Williams was the winner of the beautiful painting generously donated by local artist Jeanine Falcone.

Thanks to everyone who made the Wine Tasting so special and an extra special thanks to those members who volunteered to stuff charcuterie boxes, some for the second year. What a pleasure for the Board members who do the heavy lifting for the meetings and operations of the museum to share time and tasks with the membership.





## More of the Wine Tasting Pics



**WELCOME  
NEW MEMBERS!**

**Carol Fermin  
Rachael Boudreaux**



In the August Chronicles, we did not have a picture of the Trivia Winners from the July meeting, the Gretnites, but now we do! They are pictured, l. to r., Joe & JoAnn Toomy, Jewel Rousel, and Edna & George Hepting.

## CALENDAR

- Sept 12** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym. (Members are asked to bring desserts)
- Oct 10** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at GHS Complex Backyard. (Annual Barbeque & Birthday at GHS Complex)
- Oct 26** Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour - Ticketed Event \$30 per person. Tour & Dinner at the Red Maple - you pick your tour time. Tickets available at September meeting.
- Nov 14** @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.





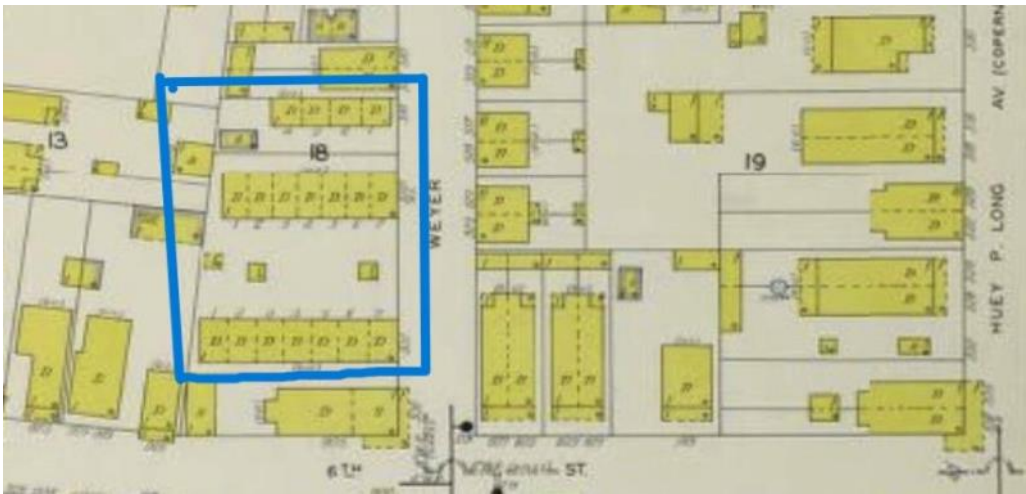
**Times Past —**  
 By Stephanie Dieterich  
**Row Houses**



**A row house on Governor Hall Street in Gretna.**

There appears to be a new craze for “Tiny Houses,” the smaller the better. Residing in one is thought to simplify your life. Of course, first you must divest of almost all of your earthly possessions!

This concept is not new. The little houses of the past were not a desire, but a necessity. The local style of very small dwellings that were once plentiful have almost completely disappeared. Not described or named in any architectural archives, there is very little information recorded or found on these dwellings. Many dated from the late 1800s, and were still plentiful until the 1960s.



**This Sanborn Fire Map from the 1930s shows row houses in Gretna on Weyer Street between 5th and 6th Street.**

Since the architecture was very plain and unadorned they seem to have been left out of our local architectural history. They were most likely the least expensive form of housing. Some were called “row houses,” but if you do a search for row houses, photos of Northern two- and three-story brick buildings pop up. The only similarities are a shared wall between occupants. Local styles were simple one-story wooden structures. Sometimes no larger than a single shotgun

house, multiple residents lived under one roof with only a wall between each family. Row houses were built long and narrow like a shotgun house with entrances on the side. Some were built horizontally and some were vertically on the property.

They averaged anywhere from four, to as many as twelve units under one roof. Some of the inside units had only a front and back door, not a window at all. Some of the nicer ones had a window next to the door. Each unit had one to three rooms, front to back, usually less than 300 square feet.

The units close to railroad tracks may have been called railroad apartments as they were occupied by railroad workers. They were plentiful in neighborhoods close to the river, and have also been called worker housing. Another name used was Red Bean Row as in the book of the same name by local author R. Emmet Kennedy. Some Sanborn Fire Maps list them as “Negro tenements.”

Whatever they were called, they were home to the many who lived and raised their families within. The history of this building style should be preserved and not wiped away. The hundreds, if not thousands who lived within those walls called it home. Good or bad, it’s their history and ours as well!



**At 210-216 Eliza in Algiers, this circa 1860 row house at left is being renovated to the new look at right by Kristin Giesleson Palmer of Bargeboard, LLC. Each of the four units will have 373 square feet.**



*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 \$25 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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