



Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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Looking for Something Different To Do?

By M. Helen Williams

Try searching out an outdoor mural while on a walk, a bike or driving around Old Gretna. See how many you can find. Hint-hint- there are seven!

A mural is a piece of artwork that is painted or applies directly on a wall, ceiling or other permanent surface. There are many different styles and techniques. The best-known is probably fresco, which uses water-soluble paints with a damp lime wash. Murals can take on a special role in a community and can help to transform a neighborhood.

There are lovely, historic indoor murals in Old Gretna as well, but those are for you to find yourself. The outdoor murals are all different and all interesting. They are listed below by year of creation, so choose your route for your convenience.

1. River Boat Mural

Artist: Rodney Lewis Date: 1999
Location: Newton Street, corner of 2nd Street

2. Gretna Green Blacksmith Shop Mural

Artist: Rodney Lewis Date: 1999
Location: Newton Street, corner of 2nd Street

3. Jefferson Memorial Arch with City Hall Mural

Artist: Rodney Lewis Date: 1999
Location: Young-Baham Bldg. - 401 Westbank Exp.,
Amelia St. side

4. Creole cottages - Amelia Streetscape Murals

Artist: Max Bernardi Date: 2006
Location: 524 Amelia Street

5. German Life Mural

Artist: Robert Dafford Date: 2015
Location: 5th Street side of German-
American Cultural Center
519 Huey P. Long Ave.

6. Swamp Mural

Artist: Mel Wilken Date: 2015
Location: Front of Chris Ziifle Home 3rd St.

7. "Love That" Mural

Artist: Keith Eccles Date: 2019
Location: River side of Jefferson Bldg.
(next to 125 Huey P. Long)

The huge mural on the 5th Street wall of the German-American Cultural Center was painted by renowned international muralist Robert Dafford and certainly adds to the charm of Old Gretna.

Very different from Dafford's mural is the work of Gretna artist Keith Eccles located up Huey P. Long Avenue, on the river side of the Jefferson Building next to 125 Huey P. Long Ave. Painted by Gretna artist, Keith Eccles, it's loud and vibrant and fun, just makes you smile. The "Love That" mural has become an iconic image often used for a photo opportunity, where you clearly identify that you are in downtown Gretna. That whole space is coming alive with the greenspace and addition of Downtown 2020 amenities.

All of the murals are on commercial buildings or businesses except the Swamp mural that decorates the home of the late Chris Ziifle. It was painted by local artist, Mel Wilken, and affixed on metal for protection. The murals by Rodney Lewis, the Louisiana artist from the Maurepas area are beautiful depictions of Southern and river scenes. Max Bernardi painted the lovely Creole cottages on Amelia Street. Enjoy your mural tour!





Times Past —

By Stephanie Dieterich

Cash Blast From the Past



Citizens' Bank of Louisiana at New Orleans ten-dollar note (reverse)

The name Dixieland is said to refer to the area south of the Mason Dixon line, or more likely, it's derived from the \$10 note that Citizens Bank of Louisiana printed. Circulating far and wide during the antebellum period, they were known as Dixie notes. Centered on the back of these notes was a large red "Dix," the French word for 10. New Orleans was a French speaking town in those days. As a matter of fact, French was frequently spoken until 1921 when a new Louisiana constitution banned the teaching of French in all public schools and established English as the state's official language.

Confederate dollars called Graybacks were first issued into circulation in April 1861 when the Confederacy was two months old. The Confederate notes were accepted through the South as a medium of exchange with high bargaining power until they weren't. By late 1864 their value had slipped to about three cents on the dollar! Southern fortunes were lost by the end of the war.



Between 1930-1933, during the Great Depression 9,000 banks failed. Depositors' assets of \$7 billion were lost, wiping out lifetime savings. No longer trusting banks, people resorted to burying cash in backyards, in walls or stuffed in hiding places all over. Who knows how much money is still buried?

In the 1940s small grocery or drug stores would run a line of credit to be paid later. Catholic schools would send the tuition envelope home each month for you to return filled with cash. The milk man and paper boy were paid with cash. You could even pay for your funeral with installments of cash! Cash was king!

Checks soon became a popular mode of payment at business establishments. However, checking out was slowed down as you were required to show identification, sometimes even including your Social Security number for approval.

The Diners Club, issued the first multi-business credit card in 1950 with the balance required to be paid in full each month. It was not widely used. In 1958 both "American Express" and Bank of America's "Bank Americard" appeared. "Bank Americard" became "Visa" in 1979 as the first revolving credit card that allowed carrying a balance. Interbank "Master

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Del Hamilton
Julia McGinnis
Tracey M. Reynolds
Mary Graham
Denise Loken

Charge" came about in 1969 and changed to "Mastercard" in 1979. Not to be left out, Sears got into the game in 1985 with their "Discover Card," the first to give you cash back!



Times Past, Continued

Locals probably carried that orange “New Orleans Shoppers” card. It could be used at a number of stores if your application was approved. You chose the stores you wanted to patronize. A letter designating the store was stamped on the card, H for D. H. Holmes, M for Maison Blanche, G for Godchaux’s and so on.

Younger ears will never know that wonderful click-clack sound, heard when the merchant used an imprinter machine, transferring your raised name and card number onto the handwritten, carbon paper, duplicate receipt.

When shopping at Krauss, your payment was sucked through a clear cylinder to an upstairs office where change was made and sent back.

Incidentally, in 1925 Krauss was the first local department store to install air conditioning, and the first to have escalators, called “mechanical stairs” in 1927.

If you happen to have cash on you today, good luck! Many stores don’t have change in the drawer, or the cashier doesn’t know how to count change back. Most self-checkouts only take plastic.

Cash is not king anymore, but maybe things were better when it was!



Krauss Department Store was the first local store to have escalators, called mechanical stairs, in 1927.

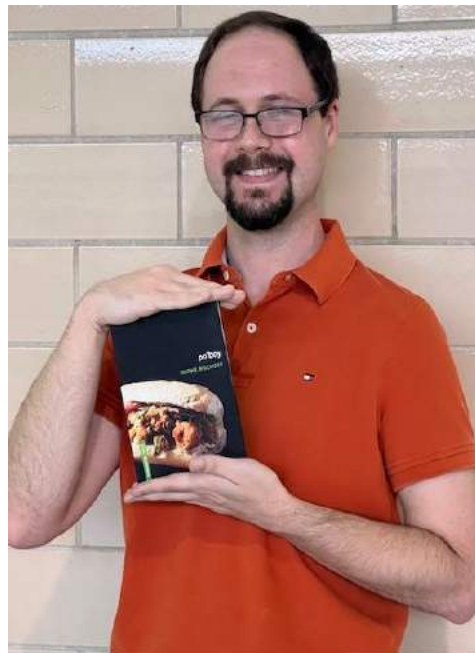
CALENDAR

July 18 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym. (Notice that this meeting is a week later than usual! At the July meeting members must check in at the front door entrance table to get a free “faux ticket” for “Trip to Paris” door prize to be drawn at the August Wine Tasting Event!)

August 8 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym. (Annual Wine Tasting at St Joseph Gym this year!)

September 12 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at GHS Complex Backyard. (Annual Barbeque at GHS Complex)

Po’Boys and Gretna Dairies Highlight June Meeting



Where Y’at Magazine Executive Editor and Contributing Writer Burke Bischoff was guest speaker at the June meeting. He spoke about dairies in Gretna back in the day and his family history in the city. He published the book, *Po’Boy in Gretna* in July of 2023.

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

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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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Gretna Historical Society

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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.

- Lisa LaFrance.....President
- Ray Markase.....Vice President
- Sylvia Schwarz.....Recording Secretary
- Holly Williams.....Corresponding Secretary
- Sarah Daigle.....Treasurer
- Stephanie Dieterich.....Historian and Archivist
- Blaine Daigle.....Sergeant-at-Arms
- Val Coles.....Parliamentarian
- M. Helen Williams.....Board Member/Publicity
- Paul Coles.....Board /Hospitality Director
- Cheryl AmackerBoard Member/Membership
- Monica Naquin.....Board Member at Large
- Judy LeBlanc.....Director of Facilities