



Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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Oct 10 * Tickets for Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour!



There is so much that will be going on at the October 10 meeting at our home base, the GHS Museum Complex. It's the annual Barbeque, as well as a birthday celebration of GHS and its members who have reached the young age of 85! You will also have the first exciting view of the recently updated Ignatius Strehle House and the other sites in the museum complex.

It's also the absolute perfect time to purchase tickets for the Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour to be held on Oct. 26, always a sold out show. The tour features seven costumed characters performing at the gravesite of people they are depicting who have helped shape the history of Gretna and the surrounding area. This year there will be a video featuring two sisters, Ruth Ziifle and Myra Ziifle Thalheim.

Persons to be featured in the guided tour will include: "Chief Lovancie Billiot" depicted by Rene Poche; "Jules Delery" by Scott Amacker; "Louis Oscar Fried" by Irvin Schwarz; "Joseph Fist" by Peter DeBroeck; "Gerdie Templet" by Lisa LaFrance; "Audrey Ezzo" by Cheryl

Amacker; and appearing with her "trusty shotgun," Mary Helen Williams as "Emily 'Emma' Kerner Whiteside."

Tours begin at the Red Maple Restaurant where a light buffet is included in the ticket price of \$30. Each group of 25 is accompanied by two guides. Midway the tour, guests are offered complimentary wine.

All proceeds of the tour will go toward Hook & Ladder Cemetery improvements. If you haven't been in the historic old cemetery, you are in for a treat!

Memorial

The November meeting will include a memorial for Harry "Nicky" Danos and Shirley Mahler Kleinpeter, deceased members this past year. If you know of other GHS Members that we lost in 2024, please advise Corresponding Secretary Holly Williams at 504-362-3854.



Ignatious Strehle House Gets Upgraded!

At the October 10 Barbeque at the GHS Museum Complex, the Board will offer members a soft opening of the Ignatius Strehle House, one of the five sites in the complex. The Ignatius House, a circa 1860 Creole cottage, is located in the rear of the complex. It houses historical memorabilia featuring church, school, military, police and mayors of Gretna. Over time it had become tired and boring. The present Board decided to proceed with an update of the complex and started with the least appealing piece of all, the Ignatius House.

The Board wanted this project to be a curated event, so an experienced curator was hired.

Beyond removing everything from the house, all artifacts were preserved to be used again in a more appealing way. The house was caulked, sealed and painted and the design work was well on its way at the time of this writing. We hope you will feel as excited and proud as the GHS Board and Mayor Belinda Constant are about the progress in our little special corner of the world!



**WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS!**

**Ann
Gegenheimer**

**Dwayne
Lassiegné**



CALENDAR

Oct 10 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at GHS Complex Backyard.

**(Annual Barbeque & Birthday at GHS Complex)
(Cemetery Tour Tickets on Sale at this Meeting)**

Oct 26 Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour -
Ticketed Event \$30 per person. Tour & Light Meal at the Red Maple - you pick your tour time.

Nov 14 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St Joseph Gym.

Dec. 12 @ 6 pm Christmas Party at St Joseph Gym.





Times Past —

By Stephanie Dieterich

Heebe's Bakery: Memories of Bread, Floods, Politics

It's hard to believe 50 years have passed since Heebe's Bakery sold its last loaf of "Tasty" bread and closed its doors forever. Locals have wonderful memories and stories related to Heebe's like the smell of baked bread wafting through the air, and stopping by after Sunday Mass for delicious baked treats.

Heebe's Bakery moved to Gretna in the early 1900s, operating at a few locations before settling at the iconic green and black tiled building at 501 Lafayette Street in 1922. Heebe's was running a bakery in Gretna before Gretna even had running water! In the old days, before the bread could be made, water was sourced directly from the Mississippi River. Barrels were filled with water and hauled back to the bakery where it was filtered onsite by running through lime, sand and gravel.

The following article was in the *New Orleans States-Item* on Feb. 3, 1975:

By TOM FRAZER

One of the true "institutions" of Gretna died last year at the age of some 90-odd years, but the memories linger on.

Heebe's Bakery, which actually was born in New Orleans under the original name, Heebe's Union Steam Bakery, moved across the river in the early 1900s and then played hopscotch with various locations, finally coming to rest at Fifth and Lafayette streets in about 1922, according to attorney Bernhardt C. Heebe, grandson of founder George Heebe Sr.

Bernhardt Heebe, who, like his two sisters, was born in the family home at Fourth and Amelia streets, recalls that the bakery and the stable were in the backyard.

Times were different then. Heebe recalls, noting that the bakery ovens were fired with pine logs and water for making bread was obtained from cisterns and the Mississippi River before Gretna provided city water.

Heebe explained that someone would be sent down to the riverbank with a dump wagon and wooden barrels to collect the water that was then run through a homemade filter system of lime, sand and gravel.

Moreover, Heebe recalls, in those days it was the custom for bakeries to provide room and board for their employees.

Deliveries of bread were not always easy, especially in times like the Easter flood of 1927, when, Heebe remembers, water flooded stores on Canal Street in New Orleans and was six or seven feet deep along Napoleon Avenue.

To get bread to Belle Chasse, Heebe said, the bakery loaded up one of its high-wheeled flour wagons with boxes of bread, hitched up the powerful mare, Misery, and the faithful old horse pulled the load through the high waters to a dry point where the bread could be transferred to a waiting truck.

The Heebe bakery also supplied special

"Dutch Round" loaves to the inhabitants of Lafitte and points farther south by boat.

Heebe explained that before there was a road to Lafitte, goods passed back and forth via the Harvey Canal and that a trading center naturally developed at the junction of the canal and the river.

Providing transport, he said, were two sternwheelers, the F and J and the America, which, incidentally, returned to "the city" with loads of shrimp, fish, eggs and vegetables harvested by the fishing folk at Lafitte and beyond.

After Heebe's father passed away on July 8, 1961, the son renamed the business, Heebe Bakery, Inc.

Heebe said that in days gone by, "politics used to be hot and heavy." He noted that after his father installed benches outside the bakery, the spot became a focal point for political discussions and gossip by neighbors and friends who would hold forth until 11 p.m. regularly.

Sunfed GOLDEN CREAM ENRICHED WHITE BREAD



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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To submit articles, call Helen at 504.450.8481

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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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