



FRIENDS OF THE


German-American

American

CULTURAL CENTER
& MUSEUM

We invite you to help celebrate the
German contribution to Louisiana.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



Germans have played a major role in the development of Louisiana ever since they settled the German Coast, or La Cote des Allemands, about 36 miles above New Orleans, in 1721.

They were contracted by John Law to colonize Louisiana after the Duc d'Orleans, Regent of France, granted Law permission to charter the Company of the West. Produce from their family farms fed the emerging city of New Orleans.

The original Germans were absorbed into the French culture and many of their names were changed from Heidel to Haydel, Himmel to Hymel, Zweig to LaBranche, and Zehringer to Zeringue (to name a few). Descendants of the colonists still inhabit St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist parishes.

Throughout the 1800s, New Orleans was a major port of entry for German immigrants, many of whom traveled to Texas or Midwestern states. By 1850, however, there were more Germans than French in New Orleans, including a group of Germans who founded Mechanickham in 1836, the West Bank settlement that became Gretna. They were bakers, blacksmiths, brew masters, carpenters, dairymen, doctors, engineers, farmers, florists, shoemakers, and shopkeepers. Their cultural traditions included love of family and religion. Their strong work ethic helped to shape the destiny of Louisiana.


THE CULTURAL CENTER

The Cultural Center is located at 519 Huey P. Long Avenue in the heart of Gretna's National Register Historic District, which was settled by Germans in the mid-1800s.




The Center interprets the unique German immigrant contribution to Louisiana's history through museum exhibits, lectures, programs, and events. Exhibits in our museum depict the colonial experience, immigration, world of work, culture, and religion. An additional exhibit panel features the "culture in crisis" during the two world wars.

Admission is free to the Center, which is supported and operated through memberships in the *Friends of the German-American Cultural Center* (GACC) and other fundraising activities.

A black and white photograph of a group of people, likely immigrants, standing outdoors. They are dressed in formal attire, including suits and dresses. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

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THE FRIENDS



The Friends of the GACC is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote and support the German-American Cultural Center. Our members volunteer as the center sponsors celebrations with German food and music for Maifest, Oktoberfest, and the Gretna Heritage Festival each fall.

Your contributions, both monetary and in volunteer hours, will help support the preservation of and education about our rich German heritage in Louisiana.

Membership benefits include:

- Monthly membership dinner with guest speakers.
- Regular newsletters and brochures.
- Invitations to lectures and other special events.



In addition, the *Friends of the GACC* will keep you informed of local festivities such as the National German-American Day, Oktoberfest, and other opportunities to explore the German culture. The *Friends of the GACC* also maintains a close relationship with other German-American organizations. Join us as we keep alive German culture and traditions!