



German-American Cultural Center Newsletter

A publication of the Friends of the GACC
519 Huey P. Long Ave., Gretna, LA 70053

September 2020

Back in the Day, Streetcars Connected Gretna and Algiers



In 1929, George Strohmeyer, left, operates the Gretna-Algiers streetcar with Sidney DeBartlo, right. (Donated by Ray Gibson)

See Page 2 for a map of the early streetcar routes between Gretna and Algiers.

Ray Gibson is proud of his Gretna German ancestry. A member of the German-American Cultural Center, he has special memories of his grandfather, George Strohmeyer. George lived on Ocean Avenue, owned a grocery store there and was a motorman for the streetcar that ran from Algiers to Gretna.

The Strohmeyer name is one that older Gretna residents may recall, because members of his family owned three grocery stores and a furniture store on the West Bank.

But it's the photo of Ray's grandfather operating the streetcar that takes us back to a time when that mode of transportation was so important to the West Bank.

The street railway first came to Gretna in 1884, using four small cars pulled by mules. It was operated by Thomas Pickles and William Bogel as the Algiers & Gretna Ry. Company.

When service began to Gouldsboro (McDonoghville) on September 3, 1882, more than 350 people paid the five-cent fare to ride. The *Times Democrat* newspaper noted that the street railway offered "a most cool and delicious ride."

In 1907 the first electric streetcars appeared on West Bank streets. Then in 1912, the New Orleans & Western Ry. Company connected Gretna and Westwego with the electric railway. Late that year, the first crossing of the Harvey Canal by electric streetcar took place. This line continued down Fourth Street to Barataria Boulevard.

By 1928, the number of riders began to fall as automobiles grew more popular. Louisiana Power and Light Company, which had acquired the lines, started using motor coaches (buses). January 22, 1931, was the last day of street railway service on the West Bank.



This photo from the early 1900s shows the streetcar turning in front of the Jefferson Parish Courthouse (now City Hall).

Algiers-Gretna Streetcar Route, Circa 1920

The red line on this map shows the route of the Algiers-Gretna streetcar, from Algiers to Goulsboro, and to the riverfront in Gretna, with a short run down Copernicus (Huey P. Long Avenue.) Later, the line was extended from Gretna across the Harvey Canal, and down Fourth Street to Barataria Boulevard.



LEFT: A vintage ticket for the Algiers-Gretna streetcar. Louisiana Power and Light acquired the line in 1927.

What About Oktoberfest??

The pandemic is still limiting our usual fall events, including Oktoberfest. The famous festival in Munich has been canceled for 2020. The GACC's beer garden celebration on the back parking lot may not take place. But there are still ways to celebrate.

Deutsches Haus has canceled its annual Oktoberfest food and music festival that normally draws thousands of visitors to enjoy everything German. However, the Haus is open with expanded hours on Bayou St. John at 1700 Moss St. During October, the Haus is open Monday through Thursday, 4-9 p.m.; Friday, 4-10 p.m.; Saturday, 1-10 p.m.; and Sunday, 1-6 p.m. There is limited seating indoors but plenty of room outside to enjoy beer, wine and a German menu. Phone: 522-8014.

Middendorf's is offering its Oktoberfest menus from October 7 to November 13, on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the Manchac location (30160 Highway 51, phone 985-386-6666), and Fridays in Slidell (1951 Oak Harbor Blvd., phone 985-771-7777).

Bratz Y'all at 617 Piety Street in New Orleans is a Bywater beer garden with German draft beer, live music outdoors and a tasty German menu. Open Thursday, 1-7 p.m.; Friday, 1-9 p.m.; Saturday, noon-9 p.m. and Sunday, noon-7 p.m. Phone: 301-3222.

Cochon Butcher, 930 Tchoupitoulas, is having month-long Oktoberfest food specials (such as potato pancakes, pork schnitzel, weisswurst and an array of pretzels) and a selection of German beers, wines and cocktails. Open Wednesday through Monday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Phone: 588-7675.

Riccobono's Peppermill, 3524 Severn Ave. in Metairie, also is rolling out its Oktoberfest menu of schnitzels, brats and corned beef and cabbage, as



well as German beers and wines. Open Wednesday through Sunday, 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Phone: 455-2266.

UM DIE ECKE — Around the Corner at the GACC

News Bits from
Carol Schlueter

Welcome, John

We were glad to welcome back GACC member **John Morehiser**, who returned to the center twice in September to continue his genealogy work in our research room. Before the pandemic, John was at the center often to research his family history. It was John who encouraged us to subscribe to the *Find My Past* website, which specializes in genealogy records of British and Irish families. With Irish relatives among his German family history, he thought *Find My Past* would be helpful, so we added it to our genealogy resources.



Irish and German?

Do you have Irish connections in your family lineage? *Find My Past* may hold some keys – come by the GACC to do document your family history. In addition, the GACC offers free access to the international edition of *Ancestry*, as well as *Genealogy Bank*, *Fold3* (historical military records), *Newspapers.com* and *Family Search* (the world's largest family tree and *genealogy* archive developed by the Mormon Church).

Calling the GACC

Eric Hahn called to say hello and that he misses our monthly dinner meetings. We certainly miss hearing his accordion music! If the virus situation continues to improve, perhaps we will hear him play before year end.

Ria Hilkin also called to check in and say that she wants to see all her GACC friends. Both Ria and Eric have been going to Deutsches Haus regularly. The Haus is open and serving delicious meals. Face coverings and other requirements are in force; check out their website for information: <https://deutscheshaus.org/>

In the Meeting Room

The GACC board of directors had an excellent meeting on September 8. It felt especially good to have a group in the meeting room, even if we were spaced six feet apart at the tables! **Ira Hopkins** and I enjoyed seeing President **Barron Burmaster**, **Val Coles**, **Delia Hernandez**, **Chris Ziifle**, **Irvin Schwarz**, **Gisela Galjour**, **Wilma Thompson** and **Robert Kallies**, who is sporting his “COVID beard.”

Gretna Update

It's good to see Gattuso's Restaurant open despite the pandemic issues. The restaurant had donated the delicious meals for our monthly dinner meetings before the virus hit. We encourage everyone to patronize them and other Gretna restaurants who are operating at

below capacity due to the virus. If you aren't going out to eat right now, call in an order and pick it up to show your support.

Memorial Square

Have you taken time to stroll around Memorial Square, between City Hall and the river levee? It's very nice to walk the brick paths and sit on the stone benches. And of course, you can walk up the levee, take a seat and watch the river traffic. Generations of Gretna folks have done the same thing!

Speaking of the Square

Have you noticed that the memorial to World War II soldiers has a new home? It was located in the neutral ground near Huey P. Long and 10th Street, but has been moved to Memorial Square close to City Hall.

Looking for Photos!

Do you have any old photos of Gretna railroads or railroad workers? Or interior or exterior photos of old Gretna family stores? Ira Hopkins is hard at work on an additional exhibit of photographs for our museum display, and it will feature an expanded look at stores run by German and Italian families and others. (Do you remember Trombatore's, Hock's, Fink's, Gegenheimer's,



Trombatore's Grocery on Derbigny Street.

Gassenberger's, Deluca's, Lapeyronnie's?) Let us know if you can share any photos – call Ira at 363-4202. We can scan them and return them to you.

It's a Classic

If you see a red and white '56 Chevy or turquoise vintage Thunderbird cruising around Gretna streets, wave at **Ricky Livingston**. He's a GACC member and dedicated volunteer for our festivals, but he's also a classic car enthusiast. After our dinners or events, you often find Ricky washing dishes in our kitchen ... LOTS of dishes. We appreciate Ricky and all of our volunteers.

Speaking of Dedication ...

You can't find better volunteers than **Pam** and **Kenny Boudreaux**. (Did you know that Pam is a **Hepting**, a member of that large and important Gretna German family?) Among her many talents, Pam is a seamstress and has provided her handmade face coverings to many folks around Gretna. Thank you for all you do for us, Ken and Pam.

'Tag Der Deutschen Einheit' — 30th Anniversary Of 'German Unity Day' on Saturday, October 3

This message is from Emily Haber, German Ambassador to the United States:

"On October 3, 1990, barely one year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, East and West Germany reunited. The trust and friendship of our neighbors and allies, first and foremost the US, helped bring about this unique success story. We will never forget America's support – from the Berlin Airlift, to John F. Kennedy's "*Ich bin ein Berliner*," to Ronald Reagan's "*Tear down this wall*," to the George H.W. Bush administration's trust that made German reunification possible. Thirty years later, we celebrate that historic day and say, "*Danke!*" to the American people."



Around a million people celebrated the regained German unity on the night of October 3, 1990, in Berlin - as here in front of the Reichstag building. On that day, 45 years after the end of World War II, Germans were reunited in a sovereign state.



AT OUR MUSEUM —
A display case in the GACC museum celebrates the historic moment when the Berlin Wall came down. On display are pieces of the wall, photographs, newspaper and magazine articles and other items.



Check Out These Historic Photographs of Algiers

If you enjoy looking at historic photos of the West Bank, take a look at images of Algiers placed on virtual display in honor of the 130th anniversary of the annexation of Algiers by the City of New Orleans.

The online exhibit, titled "Algiers: The Right Bank," was drawn from materials in the City Archives, the Louisiana Photograph Collections and other collections in the Louisiana Division of the



The Market Theater, shown in this 1912 photograph, was located on Teche Street and provided Algerines with silent movies and vaudeville acts.

New Orleans Public Library. A variety of interesting images make up the display. There are photos of railroads and ferries from days gone by; homes and historical documents; and maps and schools. The U.S. Immigration Station at Patterson and Horace Streets is pictured, as well as several photos of Mayor Martin Behrman and his political career.

To take a look at these photos of old Algiers, go to this link:
<http://nutrias.org/~nopl/exhibits/algiers/algtitle.htm>

Meet The Immigrants: *German family histories, part of research by genealogist Pat Smith*

Bernard Dauenhauer
 Born in 1809 in Echenberg,
 Moselle, Lorraine, France
 Died in 1884 in Gretna

Elizabeth Kass
 Born in 1815 in Germany
 Died in 1875 in Gretna

Their children: Marcus, Mary, Michael, Frederick, Elizabeth, Christina, Jacob, Margaret and Celina (Lena)

Notes on this family's history: Bernard was one of nine children born to Auguste Friederich Dauenhauer and Catharine Reisser Dauenhauer. Bernard and his siblings Marx, Michel and Etienne (Stephen) settled in Gretna and New Orleans. The large Dauenhauer family has connections throughout Gretna's history, including names such as Hepting, Traut, Rau, Curry and Gegenheimer.



Elizabeth Kass Dauenhauer is buried in Hook and Ladder Cemetery in Gretna.

GACC Staff:

Carol Schlueter, Director
Ira Hopkins, Cultural Center Assistant

The **GACC Newsletter** is published monthly. Suggestions are welcome; email them to germanamerican@bellsouth.net, or call newsletter editor **Carol Schlueter**, 504-363-4202.

The Board of the Friends of the GACC

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Don't forget to renew your GACC membership!



Membership Form

- Yes, I want to renew my membership.
- Yes, register me as a new member in The Friends of the GACC.
- Yes, I would like to Volunteer .

All Memberships are \$20:

Mail to:
 German-American Cultural Center
 519 Huey P. Long Ave.
 Gretna, LA. 70053

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A Special Exhibit of Historic Photos



Have you seen the GACC exhibit of vintage photos of Gretna? Our museum has reopened, so now is a perfect time for a visit. We will soon be revising the photo exhibit and adding additional prints of old neighborhood stores and railroads in Gretna and McDonoghville. We are giving all visitors FREE copies of our 2020 calendar of historic photos, while the supply lasts. We look forward to seeing you!



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