

Écoutez



January - June, 2020

Volume LII, No. 1

A PUBLICATION OF THE WEST BATON ROUGE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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"The purpose of the West Baton Rouge Historical Association shall be to foster interest in history, particularly that of West Baton Rouge Parish, and to encourage and pursue research, collection and preservation of materials illustrating past or present activities of the parish."



Officers Named for WBR Historical Association Board

Pictured above from left are officers of the WBR Historical Association Board for 2020: Michelle Owens, Secretary; Mary Bennett, President; and Glen Daigle, Treasurer. Not pictured is Kim Callegan; Vice President. The officers manage the affairs of the 18-member board.

WBR Historical Association Receives \$15,000 Grant

Thanks to a Louisiana Culture Care Fund grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, part-time tour guides at the WBR Museum will receive compensation for paychecks missed due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. The WBR Historical Association received the \$15,000 grant on behalf of the Museum staff. "These part time staff, vital for normal operations, have gone without work for three months," said Executive Director Angelique Bergeron. "We wanted to do something to help them through this difficult time."

The Louisiana Culture Care Fund offers emergency relief grants for 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural organizations in Louisiana with a strong humanities focus that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Awards were designated for operational expenses, including but not limited to staff retention (payroll and benefits), rent, mortgage, and utilities.

In total, the LEH awarded 56 grants totaling \$484,548 across 22 parishes. We thank the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the federal CARES Act for the initial funding for this program, as well as The Helis Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Josef Sternberg Memorial Foundation for their generous support.

For more information about the museum or the historical association, please call the museum at 225-336-2422 extension 200 or visit www.westbatonrougemuseum.org.



Preserving Sweet Memories: 25th Annual SugarFest will be a Virtual Experience

The 25th anniversary of SugarFest, West Baton Rouge Museum's annual sweet celebration of the sugarcane harvest, will be shared online this year. Mark your calendars for a special two day celebration taking place **October 3 and 4, 2020**. Enjoy interviews, performances, and demonstrations with Louisiana folk artists and musicians, recipes for sweet treats, and a look inside the sugar industry all from the comfort of home. There is so much to experience virtually, we couldn't limit it to just one day. A schedule of events including the concert line-up will be posted in the coming weeks.

While we may not be able to gather in person with a few thousand of our closest friends, a quarter of a century marks an excellent time to document our local culture and traditions for generations to come. If there is a silver lining to be found for our silver anniversary, the pandemic does give us reason to pause and archive the things that make SugarFest special, in particular the great works of participating occupational and traditional folk artists who carry on the old fashioned ways of doing things by hand and bands who continue to play musical genres indigenous to Louisiana. Some of these folks don't have apprentices studying under them, and these arts are at risk of fading away. The music is a rich part of that tradition too. So, it will be important for the museum to do their part in preserving this history as well as finding a creative way to stay connected and celebrate with the community.



WBR Historical Association Card Party Cancelled

Due to the ongoing threat from the coronavirus, the West Baton Rouge Historical Association has cancelled its annual **Christmas in July Card Party** scheduled for July 27, 2020. We are looking forward to hosting the Card Party event in February 2021.



Mary Bennett
WBR Historical Association
Board President

FROM OUR PRESIDENT AROUND OUR ASSOCIATION

It's my honor and privilege to serve as your West Baton Rouge Historical Association president for 2020. In spite of the coronavirus pandemic, we are still looking forward to what lies ahead.



For those who don't know me, I'm a life-long resident of Port Allen and have been involved in the local community for many years. I've served on the Historical Association Board for 5 1/2 years and am serving my second 3-year term on the Museum Board. I am actively involved in my church parish, Holy Family Catholic Church, as a Eucharist Minister, member of the Bereavement Committee, and church collection money counter. I'm the mother of 3 grown children and grandmother of 5. It is for our future generation that I want this Historical Association to continue to grow.

My father, Oscar Bennett was very involved with the early stages of the shaping and formation of the West Baton Rouge Historical

Association. He played an integral part in the passage of the first parish millage to fund the West Baton Rouge Museum. It's for that reason that I willingly said "yes" when asked to serve as President.

As we all know we have had to readjust our lives to follow the guidelines of the CDC and the State of Louisiana. The Historical Association has had to do the same. With great sadness, we cancelled our Christmas in July Card Party and the Museum cancelled SugarFest and other local events.

Although the Museum facilities have been closed during this quarantine, many improvements have been made during this time. These enhancements are evidence that we are looking forward to better times and to resuming the functions which are enjoyed by so many.

The West Baton Rouge Historical Association Board will be "putting on their thinking caps" to identify opportunities to raise funds for our organization.

Sincerely,

Mary Bennett



WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

CULTURE CULTIVATED · LA CULTURE CULTIVÉE · LA KILTIR KILTIVÉ



Angelique Bergeron, PhD
West Baton Rouge
Museum Director

From Our Director



Dear Friends,

So much has happened since we were last all together. We have lost friends, family, and our concept of time. 2020 is certainly turning out to be one for the history books. Now, as we are reflecting on those we have lost and missing a way of life that was a bit different, we are so glad to finally be able to open our doors.

This year began with a very successful exhibit, *Artists of West Baton Rouge*. Our community is fortunate to be home to many talented locals who shared their amazing work for this exhibit. The show

opened with an artist meet and greet and music performed by West Baton Rouge musician, Kent Louque. Because of the closure, we have extended this exhibit through July 19th.

Just before the pandemic, we had completed the electrical and lighting upgrade, and interior painting projects in the historic sections of the Museum as well as a new Angela Gregory exhibit installation. With the help of the Gregory Estate and Port Allen native Susan Hymel, we commissioned a bronze cast of the pelican rail mold to complete the display in the foyer. The casting arrived at the end of last year and the new panel was installed in March 2020... a week before we closed. If you have not yet seen the new Dameron and Perkins Galleries, be sure to check them out on your next visit.

In spite of everything, there has been so much progress here at the West Baton Rouge Museum. As soon as our doors closed to the public, we began some capital outlay projects, including replacing and adding new sidewalks, exterior building repairs, exterior painting, new porch lights, landscaping, and a new mounted projection system in the Brick Gallery. I've had a 4-year old "co-worker" for the

past three months, so that was interesting. At least the kid likes to *rodailer* and our beautiful campus was the perfect place to stretch little legs. With all of these major projects, it certainly felt as though we were doing our part to keep the economy afloat!

The downtime also allowed us to think about our mission and how we can continue to have an impact in our new reality. With social distancing in mind, we have reworked programs and tours. Under current guidelines, we are not booking large group tours, but we do welcome family groups. With advance reservations, these visits can be customized with small group experiences such as blacksmithing, woodworking, and spinning and weaving demonstrations. We have brought back outdoors and online programs. On June 14, we hosted the Old Country Jam where musicians gathered on the porch of the Juke Joint and an eager audience sat under the trees enjoying fresh air, entertainment, and friendly faces, all from a distance of course. The 25th annual Blast from the Past summer camp series was held online offering five days of enriching fun to try from home.

Although our scheduled opening was delayed, *Burny Myrick, The Timeless River* is now on view in the Perkins and Brick Galleries. We will host an opening reception on August 30th honoring Gerard and Selma Ruth who have recently donated several items to the WBRHA and Museum collections, including an original Burny Myrick painting. *The Collectable Life of Mignon Faget*, which was scheduled for June, will open August 1st with an opening reception and gallery talk that evening.

We hope to see you soon! Stay safe and stay connected with the West Baton Rouge Museum.

Angélique

Angélique Bergeron





Alice LeBlanc Retires

After 24 years of dedicated service to the West Baton Rouge Historical Association and West Baton Rouge Museum, Alice LeBlanc has decided to retire... well, sort of. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and we closed our doors to the public, Alice thought it best not to return to the museum in the interest of her health and safety. But in keeping with her diligent spirit, she has been training her replacement, Destiny Burnett, remotely. It's in her nature to do things to the best of her ability, even from afar.

Former WBRM Director Caroline Kennedy hired Alice as Clerical Specialist II on April 22, 1996. Job titles changed over the years as she took on additional duties, to Administrative Assistant, and finally Assistant Director of Administration. Alice has been a tremendous asset to the West Baton Rouge Historical Association, the West Baton Rouge Museum, her fellow co-workers, and the community. In her years here, she maintained financial records for both the West Baton Rouge Historical Association and the West Baton Rouge Museum, handled accounts payable, assisted with budget development, managed payroll and benefits, correspondence, and the Historical Association's building rental program. Additionally, Alice helped the WBRHA with fundraisers, meetings, and membership.

Being an active member in various community organizations including her church, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Brusly, the Westside Women's Club, and West Baton Rouge Senior Spirit. Alice was able to network and serve as a great liaison for the museum and the Historical Association in recruiting new volunteers and board members.

Both on and off the clock, she always put in 100% to make sure everything was in order: staff members had what they needed, birthdays and special occasions were remembered with love, heartbreaking losses were consoled, and new friends were welcomed like members of the family. Over the years, we have often affectionately referred to Alice as our museum mom. She has a way of taking care of us even before we know we need it. She's a stickler for detail, and that's so important. Everyone needs a little Alice in their lives. We are truly going to miss her caring spirit!

West Baton Rouge Museum Gets a Facelift

The WBRM took advantage of the recent closure to make significant progress on several projects including sidewalks, windows, painting, and landscaping. Come by and check out the improvements.



Family Fun with the West Baton Rouge Museum

West Baton Rouge Museum is committed to providing safe summer activities during Louisiana's Phase Two operations. From online activities to enjoy from home to tailored tour experiences customized for your small group only, families can find themselves immersed in local culture, history, and tradition.

A visit to www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org will bring viewers to an online version of West Baton Rouge Museum's annual summer history camp program, Blast from the Past under the Do and See/Things to Do tab. Listed here are five days of fun to fill your week with a sense of adventure, creativity, and a love of local history. This year's theme, "Made in Louisiana," explores the tradition of Red Beans and Rice on Monday and how it came to be, Louisiana's connection to the iconic summertime treat, the snowball, the legend of the pirate Jean Laffite and the Loup Garou, Louisiana artists, and a whole lot more. Each day features videos, hands-on activities and a few fun historical facts that tie it all together in a unique way.

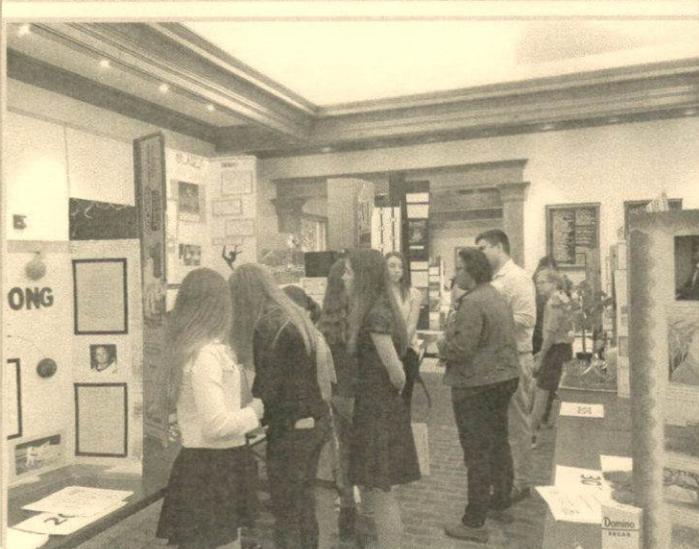
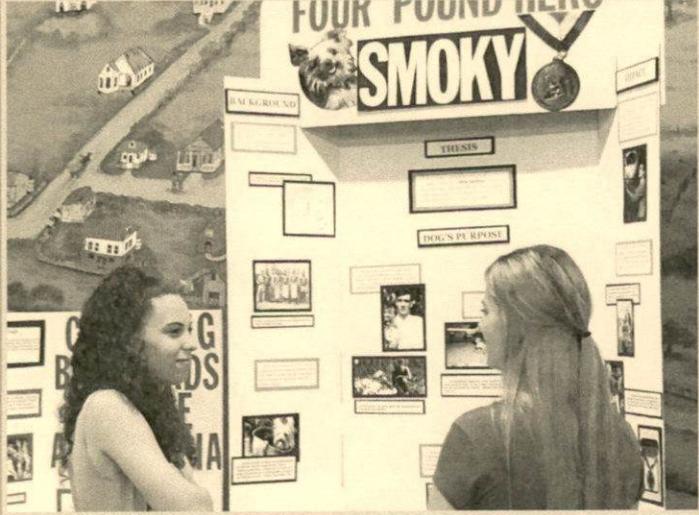
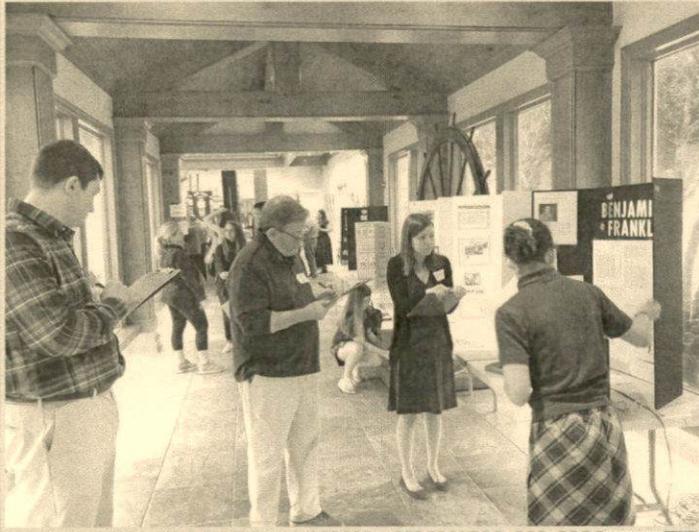
A visit to West Baton Rouge Museum will bring visitors to a six acre campus complete with walkways winding through gardens, historic buildings sharing regional history, gallery spaces filled with art and artifacts, a juke joint jumping with music and memorabilia, and a demonstration barn displaying a vintage tractor, Model A and antique tools used in many trades and handicrafts. Walk-in visitors are welcome six days a week, Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Sundays, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Those who would like to add a little lagniappe experience to their tour can make reservations at least a week in advance to add a little something extra for their family only. Advanced, paid reservations can be made to add one of the following to a weekday tour for an additional fee: Spinning and Weaving Demonstrations, Wash Day Demonstrations, Woodworking and Blacksmithing Demonstrations, or the Early Louisiana Experience showcasing native peoples and early explorers. The cost of admission is \$4 per adult, \$2 per child and senior citizens, and free to residents of West Baton Rouge Parish and members of the West Baton Rouge Historical Association. The cost for the addition of a tailored family tour experience is an extra \$20 per group.

WBR Museum is located at 845 N. Jefferson Avenue in Port Allen, Louisiana. For more information, please call 225-336-2422 Ext. 200.

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

The West Baton Rouge Museum Hosted the Baton Rouge
Regional Contest for National History Day

March 4, 2020



West Baton Rouge Museum's Blues After School Enrichment Program Resumes in the Fall

After a successful first year run, the West Baton Rouge Museum, in partnership with Rockin Mozart Music Academy with support from the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, is excited to continue its *Blues After School* program in the coming school year. Jeannie Lockett, Director of Programs reported that, "Students, instructors, volunteers and museum staff alike who had been meeting since the fall were saddened when the Covid-19 Stay at Home order caused classes to abruptly come to a halt. It did not take long to return smiles to faces and keep the music going once we discovered we could meet via Zoom." Through the use of technology, instructors Mark DuPont and Michael Blount filmed tutorials the kids could use to practice from home. We also continued meeting online with talented Blues musicians including locals, Carter Wilkinson and Kenny Neal and Billy Branch in Chicago. In months prior, students also met other special guests including historian Dr. Ibrehima Seck, visual artists Sharon McConnel-Dickerson, Mary Guarisco, and Kellie Rountree, and musicians Dr. Michael Berthelot, Henry Turner Jr. and Rudolph Richard, III (grandson of Blues great, Rudy Richard.)

Students currently enrolled are planning on returning and we have a few more spaces available for West Baton Rouge middle school students interested in learning music. Participants will meet four times a month after school from September – April for this FREE two hour music program with music educators from Rockin' Mozart Academy, museum staff, and special guests who will share the rich culture and tradition of Blues music that has deep roots in West Baton Rouge Parish. Following in the footsteps of local Blues music legends such as Slim Harpo and the Neal family, students will have the opportunity to learn vocals, percussion, guitar, bass, and harmonica and form an appreciation for Blues music heritage. Students will also have the opportunity to perform at special events.

For more information on *Blues After School*, please email Lockett@wbrmuseum.org or call the museum at (225) 336-2422 Ext. 200 for an application.





COVID ART & ESSAY CONTEST

Now through Labor Day, West Baton Rouge Museum is holding a COVID Art and Essay Contest Series comprised of a research project and a monthly online crowd sourced creative art contest to stay connected to the community during this Coronavirus season.

Middle and high school students are invited to put their research and writing skills to practice for an opportunity to win a cash prize provided by the Frank Carruth III Children's Fund. One student from each level will be selected as the winner based on their 300 word essay.

The theme for the monthly creative art contest is simply: "Show us what you are doing during this time of social distancing." Participation is open to children and adults of all ages. A virtual exhibit will be developed to share participants' artwork, photographs, videos, poems, songs, journal entries, or other creative outlets on the WBR Museum website and social media. One entry per month will be selected to receive a "West Baton Rouge Museum COVID Care Package."

Participation for either contest is FREE. For more information or for an application form, visit WestBatonRougeMuseum.org or call 225-336-2422 Ext. 200. In the meantime, stay in, stay safe, and stay connected with the West Baton Rouge Museum.

2020 Membership Dues Are Now Due

Make check payable to: **WBRHA**

Mail to:

West Baton Rouge Historical Association
845 North Jefferson, Port Allen, LA 70767

See Membership form on Page 8 for dues amount.



Curator's Corner:

Our exhibit calendar fell victim to the stay at home order and we have had to make changes to our exhibits through the end of 2020. Our *Artists of West Baton Rouge* exhibit will get an extended run through July 19th. If you have not already, make plans to check it out! West Baton Rouge is home to many talented artists and the exhibit is filled with original paintings, sculptures, and photographs that are sure to impress and inspire you.



Kathe Hambrick
Exhibits Curator

Burny Myrick, The Timeless River opened with the Museum on June 13th and will run through the end of the year. This exhibit features Myrick's original artwork, on loan from Gerard Ruth, documenting life on the Mississippi River

during the nineteenth century. Burny Myrick attended LSU during the 1930s and studied meteorology for his service in WWII. Myrick's studies are evident in the detailed sky and waterscapes

seen in many of his paintings. Myrick was also the official artist of the 1984 New Orleans World's Fair.

For questions on either of these exhibits or if you have an item that you would like to donate, please contact Elizabeth Brantley at elizabeth@wbrmuseum.org or 225-336-2422 x 206.



Elizabeth Brantley
Curator of Collections

New WBRHA Book Project

A new publication from the West Baton Rouge Historical Association will be available in Fall 2021. *Images of West Baton Rouge* will put the spotlight on our Parish through the photographs found in the West Baton Rouge Historical Association's permanent collection. Published by Arcadia Press, the book will feature familiar faces and landmarks that make our parish special. The book will be for sale in the museum gift shop, local bookstores, and through online booksellers. Stay tuned for more details as work progresses on this exciting project!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 12- 3:00-5:00 pm – Old Time Acoustic Jam - Join us outdoors under the shade of sprawling oak trees for an afternoon of Old Country, Bluegrass and folk music. This open jam welcomes anyone with an acoustic instrument that wants to play along and anyone else who enjoys listening. To ensure the health and safety of all and a contactless experience, **musicians and visitors alike should bring their own lawn chairs, masks, and refreshments.** In the event of inclement weather, this program will be cancelled. FREE

July 19 – *Artists of West Baton Rouge* closes

August 1 – *The Collectable Life of Mignon Faget* opens. In "The Collectible Life of Mignon Faget" collectors respond to the inherent value of Faget's source materials and artistry. More than 200,000 collectors support her 50-year career.

August 1 – 6:00-8:00 pm – The public is invited to attend an opening reception and gallery talk with guest curator Nolde Alexius on *The Collectable Life of Mignon Faget*. FREE

August 7 - 1:00 pm – Le Café Français - Gratuit.

August 9 – 3:00-5:00 pm - Old Time Acoustic Jam - Old Time Acoustic Jam - Join us outdoors under the shade of sprawling oak trees for an afternoon of Old Country, Bluegrass and folk music. This open jam welcomes anyone with an acoustic instrument that wants to play along and anyone else who enjoys listening. To ensure the health and safety of all and a contactless experience, **musicians and visitors alike should bring their own lawn chairs, masks, and refreshments.** In the event of inclement weather, this program will be cancelled. FREE

August 30 – 2:00-4:00 pm – Reception for *Burny Myrick, The Timeless River* - The public is invited to attend a celebration to see drawings and paintings inspired by life along the Mississippi River in honor of Gerard and Selma Ruth. FREE

September 1 – 1:00 pm - Le Café Français - Gratuit.

September 30 – COVID Contest winners announced - Now through Labor Day, WBR Museum is holding a COVID Art and Essay Contest Series comprised of a research project and a monthly online crowd sourced creative art contest to stay connected to the community during this Coronavirus season. For more details, visit www.westbatonrougemuseum.org under the **Do & See** tab.

October 2 – 1:00 pm - Le Café Français - Gratuit.

October 4 – Virtual SugarFest - The 25th anniversary of WBR Museum's annual sweet celebration of the sugarcane harvest will be shared online this year.



Destiny Burnett to replace Alice LeBlanc

Destiny Burnett has been a part-time tour guide at the WBR Museum since June 2019. Over the past year she has taken on numerous duties including: website development and editing, assisting the Curator of Collections and Registrar with describing the backlog of historic artifacts, working with weekend and after-

hours programs, and taking minutes at staff meetings. When Alice LeBlanc retired during the pandemic, Destiny stepped up once again to ensure that the Museum and Historical Association would continue to operate. Destiny holds a B.A. in History from LSU. In her spare time, she enjoys Dr. Pepper and French fries.

CURRENT LIST OF FRIENDS

Carolyn and Wayne Achee
Thomas W. Acosta, Jr.
American Sugar Cane League
Babs Babin and Family
Joyce & Kenneth Barbier
Mary F. Bennett *
Angelique Bergeron
Lorraine & Gordon Bergeron
Riley L. Berthelot, Jr.
Carolyn T. Blanchard
Mike & Pat Blanchard
Sue & Sid Blanchard
Beth & Keith Bonanno
Carroll & Carolyn Bourgeois
Barry & Susan Brewer
Qiana Bynum *
Kim & Kerry Callegan
Kym & Tony Cashiola
Jim & Mary Helen Charleville
Beverly B. Coates
David & Karen Cordell Insurance
David Couvillon *
Cou-Yon's Cajun Bar-B-Q
Russell & Peggy Daigle
Fernin F. Eaton *
Don & Marie Favrot
Ellis Gauthier & Family
Sara & George "Skipper" Grady
Jeff Guidry/Edward Jones
Michelle Guillory *
Lee & Michelle Hart
Holy Family Catholic Church
Hughes Mechanical Contractors
Akitra Johnson & Family
Ken & Cindy Kahao, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. William Kleinpeter
Randall & Judy Kolb *
Stacy & Matthew Krebs
LA Farm Bureau Federation
Lagnippe Dulcimer Society
Carlyn Morales
Andrea & Joey Normand
Dr. Philip G. Padgett
Al & Brenda Parker
Dr. Olivia Pass
Dr. & Mrs. Gordon Pirie
Placid Refinery
Butch & Peggy Plauche
Skip & Laura Rhorer
Edana Robnett
Debra & Ronnie Salvadras
Janet Simoneaux
Bob & Connie Smith
Bobby & Ruth Stanley
Eleanor & Mike Stevens
Clay Stewart/State Farm Insurance
Debra Jones Tarter
Mike & Ellen Tausin
Lorry & Bill Trotter
Al & Cathy Troy
Margot G. Turk
Pam Walsh
West Baton Rouge CVB
West Side Women's Club
Doug & Anna Wilkinson

Welcome New Members:

New Friends Members

Mary F. Bennett
Qiana Bynum
David Couvillon
Fernin F. Eaton
Michelle Guillory
Randall & Judy Kolb

New Members

Caster Brown, Sr.
Alena D. Prejean
Sadie Payne-Woods

New Student Member

Wyatt Dean Simoneaux

2020 Historical Association

Board of Directors

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David Couvillon	Andrea Normand	Mary Bennett
Wilhemenia DeCuir	Ida Pierre	Vice President
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West Baton Rouge Historical Association

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Fax: 225-336-2448

Email: contact_us@wbrmuseum.org

Website: www.westbatonrougemuseum.org

Change Service Requested

Donations were received for the following Memorial Funds:

Acquisitions Memorial Fund

Jane Brou - Angelique Bergeron

Henry E.L. LeBlanc - Pat Alford

Kay Sager - Angelique Bergeron

Evva L. Z. Wilson - Angelique Bergeron

Evva L. Z. Wilson - Lorraine Bergeron

Evva L. Z. Wilson - Sara & Skipper Grady

Evva L. Z. Wilson - Janet Simoneaux

Evva L. Z. Wilson - West Baton Rouge Museum

Ethel Claiborne Dameron Memorial Fund

Jane Brou - Ron & Genie Hendry

Ethel D. Manard - Charles Haywood Dameron

Evva L. Z. Wilson - Andrea Normand

General Memorial Fund

Kay Sager - Andrea Normand

Museum Memorial Fund

Frank Carruth III Children's Fund

WBR HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION MEMORIAL DONATION FORM

Please fill out the form, enclose your donation made payable to the West Baton Rouge Historical Association in an envelope and mail to: West Baton Rouge Historical Association, 845 N. Jefferson Avenue, Port Allen, LA 70767. Only one acknowledgement card will be sent per donation. Thank you.

FROM: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

PLEASE MAIL CARD TO: _____

ADDRESS: _____

NOTE: Place an (X) next to the Memorial Fund to which you wish to send your donation.

ACQUISITIONS FUND _____ ETHEL CLAIBORNE DAMERON FUND _____

GENERAL FUND _____ MUSEUM MEMORIAL FUND _____

FRANK CARRUTH III CHILDREN'S FUND _____ (make checks payable to WBR Museum for this fund)

The WBR Historical Association is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All gifts are tax exempt. Thank you for supporting the WBR Historical Association.

Membership Form - 2020

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Please check the membership category you wish to join.

Student \$10.00 _____ Friends \$100.00 _____
(businesses/individuals)

Member \$20.00 _____ Patrons \$35.00 _____
(individuals) (families/individuals)

Make checks payable to West Baton Rouge Historical Association, and mail to 845 North Jefferson Avenue, Port Allen, LA 70767.