West Baton Rouge Museum Socially Distanced SugarFest

Come have a sweet ole time at the West Baton Rouge Museum’s SugarFest on Sunday, October 3, 2021 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This annual sweet celebration of the sugar cane harvest has been growing strong since 1995. This event will be held in person this year, and all events will be held outdoors in an effort to be socially distanced and safe as possible. There will be hand-sanitizing stations, and we ask that all visitors and participants wear masks.

SugarFest provides visitors of all ages with a free opportunity to learn about local culture, music and history with a variety of folk art and occupational craft demonstrations, a peek inside museum exhibits and historic buildings, cane cutting and grinding demonstrations, cane syrup boiling, and live music. Genres featured include Blues, Dixieland Jazz, Folk, Cajun, Zydeco, and Bluegrass. Some of the demonstrations include blacksmithing, wood working with antique hand tools, spinning and weaving, and much more. There will be old-fashioned pastimes for children to enjoy and a Café Français tent where only French is spoken and lively games of Bouché will be played. Food and drink will be available for purchase, and artists will be selling their wares. Of course, there will be lots of sugary treats, fresh chewing cane samples, and for those age 21 and over, a rum tasting and discussion on how this spirit is made from Louisiana’s sweetest cash crop.

SugarFest is FREE and open to the public. Hope to see you there, SUGAR!

SUGARFEST CHICKEN DINNER AND SWEETS BOOTH

The West Baton Rouge Historical Association will have traditional chicken dinners available for pickup and purchase at SugarFest on Sunday, October 3rd, from 11:00 AM-4:00 PM, or while supplies last. Tickets are $9.00, and meals include ½ smoked chicken, rice dressing, beans, and a dinner roll. IF YOU PURCHASED TICKETS AHEAD OF SUGARFEST, PLEASE PICK YOUR DINNER UP BY 1:30 PM. Any dinners not picked up before 1:30 PM will be resold to festival goers.

To complete your meal, please be sure to check out the West Baton Rouge Historical Association’s Sweets Booth. Sweets have been donated from local businesses and community members alike, and are available for purchase.

If you would like to donate to the sweets booth, we would be happy to have you! Please email Amanda Moak at amanda@wbrmuseum.org, or call (225) 336-2422 x203, and we will get you connected with the right people.

HERE’S A SWEET PROPOSAL TO WIN A SWEET PRIZE!

Help West Baton Rouge Museum celebrate 26 Sweet Years of SugarFest by donating home-made sugary treats to the West Baton Rouge Historical Association’s Sweets Booth in return for a chance to win a very special prize! Simply fill out an entry form, available at the Museum or online at www.westbatonrougemuseum.org, and drop off your goodies at the Sweets Booth between 10 & 10:30 a.m. with a completed form attached. Make your best recipe in any of these sugar-filled categories – cookies, cakes, candies, or pies.
FROM OUR PRESIDENT
AROUND OUR ASSOCIATION

Well, at the time of my Summer Ecoutez letter, we just thought things were slowly beginning to return to a pre-pandemic normal. Unfortunately, Louisiana once again led the nation (and not in a good way) with the Delta-variant Covid surge. Please get vaccinated & stay safe!

On July 26, after a Covid-pause in 2020, we hosted 96 participants for our “Christmas in July Card Party” at the WBR Community Center in Port Allen. Once the final expense bills are paid, it appears we will clear over $3,000.00 for this event. Special thanks to Mary Bennett, Alice LeBlanc, Andrea Normand, the Museum staff and all WBRHA volunteers who worked so hard to prepare for and put on this fun activity!

SugarFest returns on Sunday, October 3 - as outlined in greater detail below. Our traditional Chicken Dinner fundraiser, as well as the always-popular Sweets Booth, and so many other SugarFest outdoor activities are returning. Unfortunately, there will be no Sweets Contest or Cake Walk, and all music and craft activities will be conducted outside. The Museum is requesting that everyone – guests and participants/vendors – wear masks, even outdoors, and maintain social distancing. For our WBRHA members/volunteers, this is an "all hands on deck" event. We hope everyone will consider volunteering in whatever way you can!

Our Ethel Claiborne Cameron lecture will be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, November 14. Dr. Elisa Istré, who has previously served as museum director at the Historic Dyess Colony: Boyhood Home of Johnny Cash in Dyess, Arkansas, will present this year’s lecture: “Ring of Fire, Circle of Love: The Women in Johnny Cash’s Life.” This promises to be a most interesting event which will serve as a perfect complement to the museum’s exhibit: 1968: “A Folsom Redemption” which opens on November 13. Please make plans to attend!

As mentioned previously, we eagerly anticipate the late fall publication of Images of West Baton Rouge by Arcadia Publishing - part of their Images of America series. Plan to purchase copies of this fine book as Christmas presents for family & friends!

Our Holiday Open House returns on Sunday, December 5. We hope and pray that the Delta-surge Covid restrictions will allow some of these activities to take place indoors.

Next year, we will once again be called upon to spearhead the tax election campaign to successfully renew our Museum millage. The 2022 election date will be scheduled by the WBR Parish Council later this year.

Sincerely,

Tom Acosta

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WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM
CULTURE CULTIVATED • LA CULTURE CULTIVÉE • LA KILTIR KILTIVÊ

FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As these unprecedented times persist, the West Baton Rouge Museum continues to roll forward with exhibits and programs with health and safety modifications in place. We are fortunate to have a lovely six-acre campus where we have successfully been holding socially distant exhibit openings and outside programming such as our monthly Blues After School, now in its third year, started back in September with a full house. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the students and community support from Rockin’ Mozart Music Academy, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, and special guests such as artists, historians, and musicians, this program continues to be a success. At SugarFest, while on stage for his performance, Bluesman Kenny Neal will be gifting the 2020-2021 students their very own guitars. He surprised everyone during class with that announcement last spring, and with shipping delays during the pandemic, these generous gifts just arrived. The kids will be singing the Blues with big smiles on their faces!

The West Baton Rouge Museum is pleased to welcome back Port Allen Cultural District, Kellie Routen this fall for a six-week workshop on Pouring Acrylic painting. We also offer on-demand workshops for individuals and small groups including blacksmithing, woodworking, and spinning and weaving. Visit our website for more information.

To be on the safe side, we have decided to postpone some things this fall due to rising COVID numbers, such as the Johnny Cash Bus trip we had planned. Instead, we hope promote this enrichment opportunity during the run of the 1968: A Folsom Redemption exhibit and travel in the spring if conditions allow.

Follow us on social media for updated program information.

See you soon at the museum!

Angélique Bergeron, Ph.D.

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Angélique Bergeron, Executive Director

Country and Cajun Jams and Historical Happy Hours. We are looking forward this fall to our annual SugarFest (Oct 3), a Merry Not Scary – Still Socially Distant Halloween (Oct 22), and our Holiday Open House (Dec 5).

We are excited about our fall slate of exhibits: Music Behind the Gates, which explores the freedom incarcerated men and women find in music, is set to coincide with the nationally travelling exhibit 1968. A Folsom Redemption, a collection of photographs and memories of two eyewitnesses to Johnny Cash's concerts at Folsom Prison. In the Perkins “Sugar” Gallery Places People Remember is a nostalgic collection of works by Louisiana artist, Stan Routh, and down the hall, visitors will see Dog Breeds and Louisiana Birds, beautiful watercolor paintings by Katherine Klimitas. If you have not had a chance to check out the Evangeline: Evolution of an Icon exhibit be sure to stop in at SugarFest to see an international display of art that depicts Longfellow’s beloved character. Evangeline closes October 31.
Ethel Claiborne Dameron Lecture Series

The West Baton Rouge Historical Association is pleased to host its annual Ethel Claiborne Dameron Lecture Series on Sunday, November 14 at 2pm. This year’s event will feature guest speaker, Dr. Elista Istre on “Ring of Fire, Circle of Love: The Women in Johnny Cash’s Life.” This talk takes place on opening weekend for the West Baton Rouge Museum’s fall exhibition, 1968: A Folsom Redemption, a traveling exhibit from Exhibits USA featuring a collection of photographs and memories of two journalists lucky enough to be among a handful of eyewitnesses to the historic Johnny Cash concerts at Folsom Prison. The presentation will be followed by a reception and live music from the era performed by participants of the museum’s monthly Old Time Country Music Jam.

While working on a project to restore and transform Cash’s childhood hometown of Dyess, Arkansas into an international heritage site and tourism destination, Dr. Istre had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing several of Cash’s childhood friends, his high school sweetheart, his only surviving sister, and all but one of his daughters. Piecing together bits of Cash’s life story through the voices of the women who knew him best provides an intriguing tale of one of America’s most revered cultural icons. As this presentation will explain, although the famous song “Ring of Fire” may have characterized his public career, the women in Cash’s private life enveloped him with a circle of love.

Dr. Elista Istre, historian, is the founder and director of Belle Heritage, LLC. She earned her PhD in Heritage Studies at Arkansas State University. While pursuing her PhD in Heritage Studies, Istre worked as a Graduate Assistant to help develop and establish Historic Dyess Colony: Boyhood Home of Johnny Cash in Dyess, Arkansas. She later served as the museum’s director. Dr. Istre’s intimate knowledge of Cash’s formative years, her close relationship with Cash’s relatives and childhood friends, as well as her deep connections with the current residents of Dyess equipped her to serve as an advisor on a variety of projects including the P. Allen Smith program on PBS that featured Johnny Cash and his upbringing in Dyess, Arkansas, the nationally-televised live concert The Johnny Cash Music Festival: 2011, and the documentary film Joanne Cash, I Do Believe.

This year’s Ethel Claiborne Dameron Lecture Series will be held at the West Baton Rouge Museum. This free and open to the public event is offered annually in memory of West Baton Rouge Historical Association and West Baton Rouge Museum founder, Ethel Claiborne Dameron.

Curators’ Corner Fall 2021

October, November, and December at the museum will surely give you the chills. Cozy up with bird feathers and furry animal watercolor paintings. Then, set your sights on the photographs from the famous Johnny Cash concert at Folsom Prison in 1968. You’ll also learn why Lead Belly isn’t the only talent from Angola. Finish your trip off with some local talent, art by Katherine Klimitas and Stan Routh.

1968: A Folsom Redemption will display thirty-one photos featuring Johnny Cash a wide range of intimate photos with friends and family to a backstage meeting with country music legend Merle Haggard with the Man in Black. This exhibition highlights Cash’s golden era from the January 1968 Folsom prison album recording to a March 1, 1969 concert in Anaheim, California when he was getting ready to launch his network television show. 1968: A Folsom Redemption is organized by ExhibitsUSA, a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance. This exhibit will open on November 13th and run through January 9th, 2022.

Music Behind the Gates explores the life of prison inmates and their escape through music. Bands, iconic songs, and touching stories are all birthed from this infamous prison and other prisons across the state. In collaboration with the Angola Museum and the research of Dr. Marianne Fisher-Glorando of Dr. Benjamin J. Harbert, Associate Professor of Music at Georgetown University, Music Behind the Gates provides an intimate look at prison pastime and reform. This exhibit will run through December.

Louisiana Birds provides an intimate look at the beautiful array of birds that reside in and pass through our state. It will also highlight her paintings of different dog breeds. New Orleans based artist and author Katherine Klimitas is known for her watercolors of animals and insects writes of this series, “With studies of pelicans, egrets, herons, and a few in between, I hope each painting in the collection captures the same elegance and grace that I see when I look at these magnificent creatures.” This exhibit will run through December.

Places People Remember: Selected Drawings by Stan Routh began on Saturday, September 11th in the Perkins Gallery of the Museum. The exhibit features watercolors and drawings of architectural landmarks and historical structures in towns throughout Louisiana. Local artist and architect Stan Routh is known for his loose and artful drawings and watercolors of places for which people feel a bit of nostalgia. This exhibit will run through December.
WBRHA and WBRM Receive Over $40,000 in Grants

The West Baton Rouge Museum and West Baton Rouge Historical Association have been busy writing grants and their efforts have paid off!

To date, over $40,000 in grant funds have been secured in the first half of the year. These funds help support staffing, infrastructure, programming, and community projects.

This summer, the WBRHA received $20,000 from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities Culture CARES Fund to support the museum and staff during the pandemic. Funding for Louisiana Culture Care Fund grants has been administered by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) and provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative. CARES Act funds from these governmental agencies were granted with the intention of aiding cultural, arts, and humanities institutions and staff impacted by the pandemic.

The State of Louisiana Department of Culture Recreation and Tourism granted the West Baton Rouge Museum $3,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) CARES Act. Funds received through these agencies were used to assist furloughed staff members and to help with staff retention.

The WBRM received $10,000 from Union Pacific Foundation for lighting and signage on the museum's campus. The new sign has been designed and should be installed this fall.

The WBRM received another $7,000 grant from the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area to support the 2021 SugarFest as the event honors local musicians and tradition bearers from around the Atchafalaya Basin.

Working with community members, the WBRM also received a $2,000 grant from the State of Louisiana's Division of Historic Preservation Office for the research to nominate the Stone Square Masonic Lodge #8 to the National Register for Historic Places.

An additional $800,000 has been applied for and notification of the status of these applications will be received later this fall and next spring.

Our staff and volunteers have demonstrated tenacity in the midst of a pandemic. Their hard work is always appreciated though especially so in these unprecedented times.

A Look Back at 2021 Blast from the Past Summer History Camp "A Tale of Acadie"

Campers ages 6 to 12 passed a good time with a Cajun celebration at West Baton Rouge Museum’s annual Blast from the Past Summer History Camp. This year’s theme, “A Tale of Acadie” was in keeping with the museum’s summer exhibit, Evangeline: Evolution of an Icon.

Museum staff, visiting artists, and other special guests led participants through time by celebrating Louisiana’s Acadian customs, traditions, food ways, music and works of art. Through a series of fun and creative hands on activities including games, crafts, old fashioned chores, and storytelling, campers gained a greater appreciation for local culture and its Canadian beginnings.

A few of this year’s fun favorites included sitting around a camp fire with a storyteller dressed as a young Acadian girl, learning how to build a boat, plow and plant a garden, make a roux and play Bourré, mixing mud and moss to make bousillage, sewing vests and garde soleil (sunbonnets), with Programs Department’s Linda Collins, making Courir de Mardi Gras costumes, and chasing the chicken (AKA Museum Educator, André St. Romain!)

Blast from the Past summer history camp has been in existence since June of 1995. The museum is proud to now be serving second generation campers by immersing them in local culture and history with a fun twist. Blast from the Past is supported in part by the Frank Carruth Children’s Fund. To inquire about how to sponsor a child to attend next year, please contact Director of Programs, Jeannie Luckett at Luckett@wbrmuseum.org or call (225) 336-2422 Ext. 205.

Teachers Institute 2021
Evangeline: Engine for Student Engagement & Social Change

West Baton Rouge Museum in partnership with West Baton Rouge Historical Association and West Baton Rouge Parish Schools hosted its annual Teachers Institute program on July 12 and 13, 2021. This year’s theme was designed to coincide with the museum’s summer exhibit, Evangeline: Evolution of an Icon. Participating teachers from three parishes examined Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s iconic character through the art and paraphernalia produced since her inception in this professional development series.

Museum Educator, André St. Romain along with other museum staff and special guest presenters led activities that engaged teachers in activities showing how the Evangeline exhibit, Longfellow’s poem, and poetry in general, could be used as engines for student engagement and social change. Guest presenters included former Louisiana Poet Laureate, Darrell Bourque, artist Melissa Bonin, author, Erica Ramsey-Bowen, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge’s Lea Reese Russell, and West Baton Rouge Parish Schools’ Dr. Tammy Seneca.

West Baton Rouge Historical Association presented each teacher with a stipend for their participation. Teachers Institute has been offered by West Baton Rouge Museum since 2007 and was the inspiration of former Museum Director, Dr. Julie Rose.
Fall Calendar

Exhibits

• Evangeline: Evolution of an Icon (through Oct 31)
• Music Behind the Gates (through December)
• Louisiana Birds and Dog Breeds by Katherine Kilmitas (through December)
• Places People Remember by Stan Routh (through December)
• 1968: A Folsom Redemption (November 13 through January 12)

Scheduled Events

October 3, 11AM – 4 PM ~ SugarFest Come have a sweet ole time at this annual sweet celebration of the sugar cane harvest that has been growing strong since 1995. This event will be held in person this year, and all events will be held outdoors in an effort to be socially distanced and safe as possible. There will be hand-sanitizing stations, and we ask that all visitors and participants wear masks. Free.

October 10, 3 – 5 PM ~ Old Time Jam a monthly open jam welcoming any musician with an acoustic instrument to join in to play tunes including but not limited to Old Country, Bluegrass, Cajun and folk music. The public is invited to sit in to enjoy music on a Sunday afternoon. Free.

October 15, 6 – 8 PM ~ Historical Happy Hour featuring Smokehouse Porter, Miss Mamie and the Gutbucket Blues Band. Also known as the King and Queen of Gutbucket Blues, Smokehouse and Miss Mamie were influenced by musicians along the Mississippi River and both have an unmatched stage presence. Come see for yourself and witness Smokehouse’s signature smoky voice and Miss Mamie’s warm tones that will certainly bring the blues to life and hold their audience captive. Free.

October 15, 6 – 8 PM ~ Cajun Jam a monthly open jam hosted by the WBRM and the Cajun French Music Association. This Jam will be lead by special guest Chad Huval of the group Beausoleil. Gratuit.

October 18, 25, November 1, 8, 15, 22 Mondays 10 – 11:30 AM Poured Acrylic Workshop Sign up for a six week series exploring an exciting way of creating art with abstract artist and instructor, Kellie Rountree at a Poured Acrylic Painting Workshop for adults at the West Baton Rouge Museum. Limited space is available. Advanced paid registration of $75, which covers supplies, is required.

October 20, Noon ~ Luncheon Lecture and Book Signing featuring author, Yvonne Krumins and illustrator, Katherine Kilmitas of the book, Breed All About Us. This publication is a remarkable collection of watercolor paintings that offers an amusing description of 64 breeds of dogs. Free.

October 22, 6:30 – 9 PM ~ Merry not Scary: Still Socially Distant-Halloween - Get ready for tricks, treats, and a whole lot of fun! From 8:30-7:30 trick-or-treaters can enjoy a fortune teller, crafts, activities and more across our six-acre campus. Come in your favorite Halloween costume to participate in the fun and get your picture taken- all before the grand finale! Starting at 7:30, we will be showing a family friendly Halloween movie on the lawn. Free.

November 3, Noon ~ Luncheon Lecture featuring Louisiana architect and artist, Stan Routh who is known for his drawings of historical landmarks, original paintings, sketches, and watercolors of cities and towns throughout Louisiana and surrounding states. Spend the lunch hour with this artist to learn about his process and his inspiration for creating visual recordings of the things we all remember such as country stores, churches, old homes, mills, bridges, barns, and other architectural structures. Free.

November 5, 1PM ~ Le Café Français. Gratuit.

November 12, 6 – 8 PM - Instead of our regular Historical Happy Hour this month, join us for Unchained Voices, a special musical performance accompanying the exhibit, Music Behind the Gates featuring Consuela Gaines. Free.

November 13 – January 12, Exhibition ~ 1968: A Folsom Redemption The exhibition highlights Cash’s golden era from the January 1968 Folsom Prison album recording to a March 1, 1969, concert in Anaheim, Calif., when he was getting ready to launch his network television show. “1968: A Folsom Redemption” is organized by ExhibitsUSA, a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance.

November 14, 2 PM ~ ECD Lecture “Ring of Fire, Circle of Love: The Women in Johnny Cash’s Life” with Dr. Elista Istru. Johnny Cash was a rebel, and the public loved him for it. He performed in prisons and sang violent lyrics throughout his career such as “I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die,” “I’m gonna break my rusty cage and run,” and “If I hadn’t shot poor Delia, I’d have had her for my wife.” He kicked out Grand Ole Opry stage lights, set fire to a national park, and trashed hotel rooms. Yet, the women who knew him best claim “that wasn’t Johnny.” On stage, he was “Johnny Cash.” Off-stage, he was simply “J.R.,” “John,” or “Daddy.” Far from his public image as “America’s favorite bad boy,” Cash’s most intimate relationships reveal the kind, sensitive, and even vulnerable side of a man who loved deeply and generously, despite his flaws. And at 3 PM Old Time Jam. Free.

November 21, 3 PM ~ Cajun Jam featuring Wallace Trahan. Gratuit.

December 3, 1 PM ~ Le Café Français. Gratuit.

December 5, 2 - 5 PM ~ Holiday Open House. Enjoy an afternoon at the museum featuring holiday music, warm cider and gingerbread, craft making, a visit from Papa Noel, and everyone’s favorite campus wide game, “Find the Elves!” Free.

December 7, Noon ~ Lunchtime Panel Discussion. “Follow Me Down: A Postscript” Dr. Benjamin Harbert, Associate Professor of Music, Georgetown University, and panellists will talk about music from both men’s and women’s prisons in Louisiana drawing upon his film “Follow Me Down,” which documents music in three Louisiana’s prisons and more recent research from his forthcoming book about the history of music in Angola. This presentation will include pictures and music of the old days at Angola and stories from both the researcher and those who sang and played music “Behind the Gates.” Free.

December 12, 3 PM ~ Old Time Jam. Free.
Friends List as of September 2021

Carolyn & Wayne Achee
Tom & Mary Acosta
Karla Argrave
Babs Babin & Family
Joyce M. Barbier
Beaulieu Plantation, Inc
Angélique Bergeron & Family
Gordon & Lorraine Bergeron
Riley L. Berthelot, Jr.
Mike & Pat Blanchard
Sid & Sue Blanchard
Beth & Keith Bonanno
Barry & Susan Brewer
Business First Bank
Kim & Kerry Callegan
Tony & Kym Cashiola
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Beverly B. Coates
Cordell Insurance
David Couvillon
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Aundrea Flynn & Family
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Bob & Connie Smith
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Clay Stewart
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Bill & Lorry Trotter
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Upper Delta Soil & Water Conservation
West Baton Rouge CVB
West Baton Rouge Garden & Civic Club
Westside Women's Club
Wendy Wilcombe

New Members of Friends
Patty Lyles & Family

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Ida Pierre
Janet Simoneaux
Ruth Stanley
Lorry Trotter

Sunday, December 5
2:00 - 4:00 pm
West Baton Rouge Museum
Arts & crafts • Gingerbread • papa noel
Hot cider • Elf scavenger hunt
Holiday musical performances
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 _____

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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 – 2021

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________

Email 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.