

# Germantown Colony gaining national attention.

JUNE 12, 2013 LYNN DORSEY



Minden and Webster Parish are gaining national attention as Germantown Colony Museum is highlighted as a historic site on the National Geographic Maps website.

**Webster Parish is gaining national attention as the Germantown Colony Museum is highlighted as a historic site on a newly launched National Geographic Maps website.** As of June, the Colony is nationally recognized by the National Geographic Society and can be seen on their new “geotourism” website: go to [www.usgulfcoaststatesgeotourism.com](http://www.usgulfcoaststatesgeotourism.com) and look under historical sites. Geotourism is tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place, including its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its inhabitants. Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne said "the partnership with National Geographic is an opportunity to showcase to the world the unique places and experiences offered in the Gulf Coast states." The Webster Parish Convention and Visitors' Bureau had to submit the Germantown Colony Museum in advance for approval to get included. This is an incredible opportunity for Webster Parish to get national exposure.

The Germantown Colony Museum is the “historical gem” of Webster Parish and is destined to be the top tourist attraction in our parish. After much anticipation, construction of a new visitor center at the Germantown Colony Museum began on Monday, June 3. KAN Construction of Bossier City will complete the construction at a bid of \$424,000. Although the museum will be closed for construction for 180 days, when construction is completed, the visitor center will house more than 2,000 square feet including a “climate-controlled” designated exhibit gallery to display historical artifacts, a reception area, a gift shop, and handicapped-accessible public restrooms.

The Germantown Colony Museum is one of three sites founded by the Utopian Movement or Harmonist Society in the early 19th century. Established in 1835, the colony operated on a communal basis for 37 years, finally dispersing in 1871. **The Colony was placed on the official list of the Nation’s Cultural Resources Worthy of Preservation by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in 1979.** It is also the most recent addition to the Louisiana Department of State Museums and a major asset to the recently developed “**Heroes and Heritage Trail**” throughout the state of Louisiana.

Recent national marketing research on tourism attractions, details the significance of the “experience” offered to the traveler. Static museums and art galleries are now considered stagnant and the research recommends adding “interactive” exhibits to capture the visitor’s interest and encourage return visits. The Colony offers the visitor the opportunity to step back in time and experience how these German settlers lived in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Visit [www.usgulfcoaststatesgeotourism.com](http://www.usgulfcoaststatesgeotourism.com) to see the Germantown Colony Museum on the National Geographic “geotourism” website. Be sure to look under “historic sites”. Keep up with other happening at the Germantown Colony Museum now on Facebook @ Friends of the Germantown Colony Museum.

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