Structural Analysis Reveals “Needed Repairs”

With visible signs of wear and tear, the Lafayette Museum Board knew it was time to take a closer look at the “bones” of this 200+ year old home. With a grant from the Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission (LCVC), the Board was able to contract with Sparks Engineering, Inc. for a structural condition assessment of the main house and the Maison Dimanche. The initial analysis was completed in November, detailing several areas that need to be addressed. The photographs shown here are only some of the concerns that were discovered.

Under the leadership of committee chairman Lennie Sobiesk, the board reviewed bids and recommendations of contractors to perform the repairs. A Capital Campaign is being planned while the costs and urgency of these repairs are considered. It is expected the work will be prioritized and done in stages based on the availability of funds for this critical project. The board is committed to ensure that this beloved home will continue to stand for years to come, bringing history to the forefront of our community and visitors.

It should be noted that even before the structural analysis was done, there were safety concerns about... continued on page 10

Original brick in a deteriorated condition remains under the Sunday House chimney and should be replaced.

Split joist at south end of the house, adjacent to the parlor fireplace.

The west wall of the Sunday House is bulging outward, apparently due to deterioration of the chimney pier and the sill beam. The yellow line is for reference. The arrow points to the approximate location of the deteriorated beam and pier.
Message from the President

Dear Friends of the Museum,

As I reflect upon the past year and the opportunity to serve as President of Lafayette Museum Association, I am overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude and pride. Since joining Les Vingt-Quatre in 2014, I have been continuously impressed by how this amazing group of women work together to keep the Alexandre Mouton House/Lafayette Museum a viable part of our Lafayette Community. There were many great women that I followed as President, but also twenty-three hard working and dedicated women who surround and serve with me as museum board members, giving purpose and meaning to my role as President.

It is humbling to host all of you who enter our museum doors as you show your appreciation in our mission to uphold the vision of the original Les Vingt-Quatre, establishing and preserving a landmark that so truly reflects the culture of our early community. Aside from generously contributing to the museum’s efforts to keep with all the required maintenance, your presence at our museum also shows your commitment to that vision. Accomplishing this vision would not be possible without you.

As its history never changes, the Museum’s needs do. This newsletter will apprise you to all the latest needed improvements which are a continuing work in progress. We ask members value your support. We invite you to continue to visit the museum, attend our events and spread the word of this wonderful historic marker that tells part of the story of the place we call home, Lafayette. I look forward to serving you as Lafayette Museum President in 2019-2020.

Connie Guthrey
President, Lafayette Museum Association

Tours Buses - A Welcome Sight at the Museum!

Chairman of the Tours Committee, Ann Clark, typically organizes board members on the committee to greet large groups. However, on a day-to-day basis, visitors and smaller groups are welcomed with warm smiles and gracious hospitality from the museum Docents, Priscilla DeVille and Jody Smyth. Both Priscilla and Jody are retired school teachers and continue to educate our guests with their knowledge of the museum and the history that surrounds it. They serve as tour guides, handle routine tasks and keep board members apprised of activities. On occasion, Marsha “Sam” Allen pitches in to assist with tours and daily activities.

This past year, the Museum hosted guests from nearly every state in our nation and the following countries: Egypt, Canada, France, Australia, The Netherlands, England, Mexico, Germany, Peru, Russia, South Africa and China with over 1,300 visitors to our museum this past year. Schools and scout groups are welcome, free of charge, but we do ask reservations be made.
Grounds and Gardens

*By Chance* — in speech and writing, the term “by chance” means that something happens accidentally, randomly, unexpectedly or without prior planning and often, but not always, implies luck. When it comes to the yard and garden at the Alexandre Mouton House, “by chance” has a whole new meaning — in particular, Lisa and Thomas Chance. There is nothing accidental about the beauty that surrounds the lovely home, and it takes a tremendous amount of planning. Lisa Chance, co-chairman of the Grounds and Gardens, spends countless hours collaborating with co-chair JoLynn Cole and other committee members and landscape professionals, overseeing projects, and ensuring the yard and flower beds are meticulously maintained. Lisa’s husband, Thomas, has become a regular part of the “yard crew” and volunteers on a regular basis to help with the on-going up-keep. Recently retired, Thomas has found a new passion at the Museum, and by chance, the Alexandre Mouton House is certainly the benefactor.

Thomas noted that when he works in the flower beds, 50% of people approaching by foot inquire about the home with two questions: Was it a museum? Was it open? He noted that drivers would slow to a crawl as they drove by, looking curiously as well. That’s when Thomas decided there needed to be a way to let the passers-by know the answers to those questions! He designed and built the lovely wooden sign using the same font, colors and sculpting as the sign at the front door.

The grounds committee has been keeping an eye on the health of the two registered Live Oak trees that grace the backyard. Preservation efforts began in 2017 when an LCVC grant was received for the handicapped ramp, ground access and garden enhancements. At that time, Bob’s Tree Service installed lightning protection, trimmed brittle limbs and provided soil conditioning of the root zones. Since the extra “TLC” was given, Lisa reports that they are healthy and growing... if only trees could talk!

**The Jean Mouton Oak** — near the new garden path area

- Classified as a *Centenarian*: to be in this class, a Live Oak tree must have a girth over 16 feet and over 100 years old.
- Registered in February 2012, measuring at 4 feet above ground a circumference (girth) of 21 feet 4 inches. Recent measurement on April 28, 2019, circumference of 22 feet 7 inches; Tree has grown 15” in circumference over the past 7 years. The spread of the tree branches is a minimum of 108 feet wide.
- There is an active beehive in the tree located just below the first large branch-off on the south side of the tree. Fun to watch!
- No way to officially date the age of the live tree. An estimate is between 210 to 250+ years old. This is based on the age of the Sunday house (circa 1810), and its placement at this location because of the desire for tree shade.

**The Governor Alexandre Mouton Oak** — near the patio

- Classified as a *Junior League*: to be in this class, a Live Oak tree must have a girth between 8 and 16 feet and deemed worthy by the Live Oak Society.
- Registered in February 2012, measuring at 4 feet above ground a circumference (girth) of 13 feet 10 inches. Recent measurement on April 28, 2019, circumference of 14 feet 6 inches; Tree has grown 8” in circumference over the past 7 years. The spread of the tree branches is a minimum of 98 feet wide.
- No way to officially date the age of this tree. It appears to be a good bit younger than the Jean Mouton Oak.
Lecture Series Continues . . . to Entertain and Educate

In collaboration with the Lafayette Public Library System, the Alexandre Mouton House/Lafayette Museum hosted six speakers in their Lecture Series. Chairman, Ramona Mouton and the Special Events committee wish to thank the Lafayette Public Library System for their continued support that allows these educational and informative presentations to remain free to our community. Special appreciation is also extended to Kathy Mulloy, Programming Librarian at LPLS for her support and participation at the events. Members of the museum board provided tasty refreshments at each of the lectures. The Exhibit and Special Events committee is presently researching and planning another successful lecture series for the coming year.

Maurice Heymann - Business Leader and Quiet Philanthropist

The first of the series kicked off in September with Ms. Jan Swift. Jan hosts and produces Discover Lafayette, a local podcast and television production that focuses on Lafayette’s people and rich culture. The topic of Jan’s museum lecture was about Maurice Heymann (1885-1967) whose vision shaped Lafayette.” Among Mr. Heymann’s many accomplishments was the establishment of a successful discount store and the creation of a second business district in Lafayette – the Heymann Oil Center – which facilitated Lafayette’s rapid growth of the oil industry.

First Cousins: Cajun and Creole Music in South Louisiana

The first lecture in 2019 provided a festive beginning for the new year. In January, filmmakers Drs. Moriah and Elista Istre presented excerpts from their documentary film “First Cousins: Cajun and Creole Music in South Louisiana.” The sisters compared the Cajun and Creole cultures and musical traditions in their discussion. The CDs of the documentary and Dr. Elista Istre’s book Creoles of South Louisiana: Three Centuries Strong were offered for sale following their presentation.

The Mystery of the Shipwreck, El Cazador

The guest speaker in October was Buz Bullock, who is Chief Financial Officer of Doerle Food Service-Syco and a Louisiana Certified Public Accountant. Buz has spent over a decade researching the mystery of the shipwreck, El Cazador. The El Cazador was a Spanish Brig of War that sank in the Gulf of Mexico in 1784. The ship was loaded with newly minted Spanish Silver Reales when it went down.

50 Years of CODOFIL – Looking to the Future

Peggy Feehan, a native French speaker who was born and raised in New Brunswick Canada, has been a resident of Louisiana since 1991. She was recruited as the Executive Director for the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) in January 2018. Peggy’s presentation in March provided insight about the work that CODOFIL does in education, tourism and economic development to embrace and promote the French language and culture in Louisiana.

Queen of Louisiana Seafood

In November, Chef Bonnie Breaux delighted guests with stories from her early culinary experiences at Breaux’s Cajun Catering in Covington, to her current position as Executive Chef at Café Sydnie Mae in her hometown of Breaux Bridge. Bonnie was the 2018 Small Town Chef of the Year and the only female to compete in the 2017 Louisiana Seafood Competition, where she won the title “Queen of Louisiana Seafood.”

Live Oak Trees of Louisiana

The last lecture in the series was in May. An enthusiastic audience was in attendance to hear Dr. Hallie Dozier, Associate Professor in the LSU School of Renewable Resources and an Extension Specialist with the LSU Ag Center. Her passion is for all things trees and the people who grow and steward trees and forests. Dr. Dozier spoke on Louisiana’s live oak trees, especially noting the ancient surviving oaks and presented a slide show as part of her lecture.
To our Donors, Patrons and Friends

Thank You! Merci Beaucoup!

The Lafayette Museum Association wishes to thank the many individuals, corporations and foundations listed below. Without their generous support, our city would not have this beloved house museum and repository for its historic artifacts and documents.

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Patrons Party Rings in the Christmas Season

Each year, the holiday season kicks off with the Christmas Party at the Alexandre Mouton House, and this year was no exception. The home was beautifully adorned, inside and out, by local florists and designers who took special care to use period greenery and decorations fitting to the centuries-old home. Board Members showed off their culinary talents with homemade hors d'oeuvres and sweets, each dish meticulously offset with fresh flowers and fragrant herbs. Adorable tea girls, many of whom are granddaughters or nieces of board members, delighted guests by serving delicacies from silver trays. Several of the husbands of museum board members were recruited to provide wine service, and they performed their tasks graciously! Entertainment abounded with Dave Domingue and his Christmas Carolers who set the mood on the front porch as guests arrived, and The Cypress Lake Trio who kept the party jazzy with their renditions in the back yard. Raffle tickets were sold for a wonderful assortment of prizes and was a great success again this year. Many thanks to Ann Clark, party chairman, to all the board members who worked so hard to make it a success, to the wonderful sponsors and donors who contributed talent, set-up, provisions, and especially to all our Friends who purchased tickets to attend this fabulous evening. The Christmas Party is one of the major fundraisers on which the Alexandre Mouton House relies to remain one of the most cherished landmarks in Lafayette.

The home remained decorated throughout December and was a popular site for Christmas tours and rentals during the season.

Walter Vincent, Penny Langlinais and Connie Landgraves

Thank You!!

The Lafayette Museum Association sincerely thanks the following for their help and support with the Christmas Party.

Sponsors
Lowry’s Printing & Signs
Merrill Lynch
The Clark, Kreamer, Hebert and Cox Group
Party Central
Republic National Distributing Co.
First Baptist Church

Decorations
Champagne’s Floral Department
Brian Crutchfield
Andy Ducharme
Garden Arrangements
Fabians for Flowers
Ted Viator & Associates
Lafayette Museum Association celebrated its 65th Birthday

Members gathered at Café Vermilionville for the Annual Meeting and Luncheon. Hostesses for the occasion were Laura Ann Edwards, President of Les Vingt-Quatre and Connie Guthrey, President of the Lafayette Museum Association. Bouquets of blue hydrangeas in crystal vases graced the dining tables in recognition of the 65th Birthday of LMA. Attendees enjoyed a delightful meal followed by scrumptious Chantilly Cake. Prior to lunch, both Les Vingt-Quatre and the Lafayette Museum Association boards held short business meetings, at which time the officers for 2019-2020 were installed.

Mardi Gras at the Mouton House

Early Spring in Lafayette brings another round of merriment and celebrations, preparing for Mardi Gras, the final holiday of Carnival season. Weeks leading up to Mardi Gras are the selection of royalty, parties, balls and parades. The Alexandre Mouton House Museum joined in the fun and celebration by exhibiting past Royalty costumes of kings and queens for a temporary exhibit during the months of January and February 2019. The Krewes of Bonaparte, Gabriel, Attakapas, Camelot and the Order of the Troubadours shared costumes that were displayed throughout the museum. The museum also houses a permanent Mardi Gras exhibit that can be seen year-round.

Lady Edith Plantagenet of Aquitaine, Selia Abshire, Order of the Troubadours 2018
Downtown Lafayette Unlimited

Maureen Dugas-Foster, Director of Downtown Lafayette Unlimited, recently visited the museum. Maureen is currently making her rounds of the Downtown area to become better acquainted with everyone in the area and help us understand the vision of her organization, which is now 35 years old. She shared the calendar of events that are currently in place for the Downtown area and was very excited about the collaboration of the Downtown businesses and residents. Maureen has a very busy schedule and we were thrilled she took time to visit the Museum and learn a little more, which in turn, as she said, will help her share the hidden treasure of the Museum with the other Downtown people. Maureen is looking forward to future collaborations between her organization and the Museum.

Rent the Museum for Special Events

Our Museum is a beautiful historical landmark, but did you know the Museum is available for private parties? What events are in your future? A wedding under the trees, an engagement party under the stars, bridal shower, anniversary party or even a Mardi Gras gathering. Consider this lovely setting for your next party and treat your guests to something different and new -- well, maybe about 200 years old, but new to them! Call the Museum for details about renting the Alexandre Mouton House.

Lafayette Public Library System

Our public libraries are such an integral part of our lives and communities and serve so many in our area. One of the little known facts of our library is they will allow you to check out free passes to visit museums around Lafayette, including our own Museum. It’s easier than you think. Next time you’re in the library for your next reading adventure, stop by the desk and ask for details on the Museum passes. Many visitors are taking advantage of this popular program to visit the Alexandre Mouton House.

Museum Cookbooks!

Let Us Entertain You! and First - You Make a Roux
cookbooks continue to be a great value and souvenir for visitors and friends. These cookbooks, packed with recipes from board members, are available at the museum for a $5 donation each.

Mission Statement

The Alexandre Mouton House is dedicated to sharing and promoting the history and culture of Lafayette by collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting artifacts relating to the families and times in which they lived in the Alexandre Mouton House and events that contributed to the development of the town and area.