

Joseph Landry Foundation
Meeting of the Board of Directors
4-11-12

President, Ed Whitson called to order the meeting of the Board of Directors at the Donaldsonville Public Library. He started the meeting with a prayer saying that the group which began four years ago had worked, planned and cleaned the tomb in reverence of the Joseph Landry family, part of the original Cajuns who settled in Louisiana. Although members have been separated by time and distance, he prayed for a miracle as we resumed the effort started.

In attendance were Marjorie Landry LeBlanc, Priscilla Whitson DiLorenzo, Claire Dolese Safford, Jim Safford, Jr. Margaret Safford Canella, Ed Whitson and Ted Whitson. Also in attendance were Mary Ellen Stinski and Susan Judice. Current officers are: Ed Whitson (President), Walter Landry (Vice President), Claire Safford (Chief Executive Officer) and Margaret Canella (Secretary Treasurer).

Ed began the meeting stating that the tomb was 160 years old and had two major problems:

1. Vegetation – primarily Virginia Creeper
2. Money

The group originally began thinking that we could get state and federal grants, but nothing came of that.

A lot of work has been done to clean up the tomb. Dan Safford invited LSU's agriculture department to come and analyze. It has been sprayed with five different applications of herbicide and it has not been effective. The continuing goal is to establish a trust fund. Dues could possibly be used to maintain the tomb. The vine grows 25 feet under the earth. Treatment may need to be done in fall when plants are sucking nutrients from the earth. Arrangements need to be made to pay someone to maintain the tomb.

Ed Whitson announced that he and Claire Safford were resigning – age has taken its toll. A Sargent at arms is needed to maintain order.

Attorney Michael Landry, has written the Landry History. Bob Judice had gotten the tomb put on the National Register. Ed Whitson had photos and historical articles laid out in the meeting room for all to view.

Nominated and voted in as new officers were Mary Ellen Stinski (President) Susan Judice (Vice President of New Members and Margaret Canella stayed on as Secretary Treasurer.

Ed Whitson gave Marjorie LeBlanc credit for starting the group when she suggested they have a family reunion to honor T.S. Landry, affectionately known as Gramps. He is buried in the graveyard also in the Theriot-Landry Tomb. Gatherings occurred in December 1979, then at the Lemans Center Gym in 1981 with 300 people present, again in 2007 in St. Martinville with 90 people present. Gramps Landry (Theodore Seghers Landry) came from the house at the foot of

the Sunshine Bridge, known as Lafitte's Landing. It eventually served as John Folse's first restaurant before burning to the ground.

Last September Ed was prepared to get an estimate for the restoration of the tomb. In six months time the vines had completely encircled the tomb again. He was devastated.

Priscilla DiLorenzo has spoken to a Mausoleum expert who cautioned her about using local people to clean up the tomb and using bleach which would further deteriorate the tomb. Mary Ellen Stinski, who is from Iowa, has been coming every two years. She contacted the University of Pennsylvania who referred her to the Chicora Foundation. In May 2009, Michael Trinkley of North Carolina came and did an evaluation and made recommendations for preservation, not restoration. He recommended two specific chemicals for the vines that would not damage the Tomb – Tordon and Garlan. Bob Judice researched the tomb and found that the stone mason for the tomb was from St. Genevieve, Missouri. It was originally thought to be made of French stone, but now it is thought that it may be native stone. Six months ago, Susan Judice contacted the Save our Cemeteries group out of New Orleans who came to look at the tomb. Susan Judice spoke about the Landry Association. Several members are interested in turning over their files to our group. It is no longer active and was never formalized as a foundation.

Margaret Canella gave the Treasurer's Report.. The only monies spent have been to formalize the Foundation and regular annual fees to the Secretary of State. It was agreed that the Foundation offer to compensate Dan Safford for herbicide expenses.

Last year Mary Ellen Stinski called a meeting of interested Landry heirs. Twenty one attended. Mary Ellen made a motion to have a web site for the group. Her son does that for a living and could do it for us at no charge. Priscilla Whitson said that she could maintain it, once created. There is a website called Landry Stuff. It was suggested that once our site is up and running, a link could be placed on the Landry Stuff site. The group discussed consolidation of the three organizations, inviting them by letter to join with a letter of explanation, noting that contributions would be tax deductible. The motion passed. Dues were discussed and it was moved and approved that we have dues of \$15 per year due by the first of August, raising it \$5.00 at a later date, not to exceed \$25. Payments should be made to the Joseph Landry Foundation. It was also agreed that we would give a regular accounting of how the money was spent.

The meeting ended with Ed Whitson thanking Mary Ellen Stinski for coming to the rescue and agreeing to serve as President – she was indeed our miracle of new blood. He stated that both she and Susan Judice were a welcome addition to group. Susan and Mary thanked and congratulated Ed for a job well done.

After the meeting adjourned, members were invited to tour the graveyard to look at the tombs.

Margaret S. Canella
Secretary-Treasurer

Note: Dan Safford was contacted and declined reimbursement.