

**Tyrone Plantation
Alexandria, LA**



HISTORY

(Obtained from the Tyrone Plantation website: www.tyroneplantation.com)

Tyrone was built in 1843 by George Mason Graham, a Virginian who came to Louisiana and fell in love with the new state. Graham was raised in Virginia at Gunston Hall Plantation; his father was Secretary of War under two presidents and his family members were friends and neighbors to the first five presidents of the United States - Presidents Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe. Graham was familiar with plantation life and built a three storied house, a granary, a brick kiln, a saw mill, a cotton gin and a wharf for barge traffic on the bayou. Graham wrote an autobiography and left much correspondence that is in federal, state and university archives. Graham also built what is probably the only underground tomb on a plantation and buried there a wife and a son that has given rise to the story of the "soldier ghost."

Prominent on both a state and local level, Graham was named in 1856 as Vice Chairman, with the Governor of the state as acting chairman, of the Board of Trustees entrusted with the establishment of a state university. As it so happened both Graham and the Governor at the time,

Gov. Wells were from Rapides, and so, not surprisingly, the school was established in Rapides and was named the Pineville Seminary of Learning. Graham was responsible for everything, from hiring Feret, who later designed the Old State Capital to look very much like the school, as the architect, to writing the charter to hiring the faculty and it was all done in Graham's study at Tyrone. Graham hired William Tecumseh Sherman as the first superintendent of the school and he was a regular guest at Tyrone. When the school building in Pineville burned in 1869, Graham's friendship with Sherman was instrumental in obtaining federal property, the arsenal now known as the Pentagon Barracks, in Baton Rouge for a new location for the school. Graham served on the Board for 30 years and is known as the "father of LSU."

The ownership of Tyrone passed in 1915 to Mr. Charles Edward Robinson, the owner of a lumber mill in Boyce. Robinson made extensive repairs and alterations to Tyrone and modernized the upper two floors, discontinuing use of the brick first floor as the main living area. Mr. Arthur Robinson and his wife Amy, a granddaughter of George Mason Graham, were the second generation of Robinsons to live at Tyrone, but they moved into Alexandria upon the death of their only child, whose laughter continues to be heard at Tyrone today. Tyrone was sadly neglected until it became a home again, this time to Col. Rae and Marion Donaldson. Their daughter, retired Judge Rae Swent is the present owner. The Donaldson family has operated Tyrone as a bed and breakfast for the last 20 years and family weddings have given way to those of friends and neighbors and, now, to many happy brides from all over Cenla.

REPORTED ACTIVITY

Sounds of children running and laughing on porch area, an apparition of a confederate soldier walking thru the downstairs area, footsteps heard on the stairwell.

INVESTIGATION

The investigation was attended by 7 investigators; Jennifer, Elissa, Lori, Charles, Brian, Steve and Brandon. We were also accompanied by two reporters from the LSU Legacy Magazine as well as a student working on her Senior class project. We set up two DVR systems to cover two floors of the house and used emf meters and voice recorders. After the set up we split in to two groups and moved to different sections of the house. Steve, Elissa, Lori, Brian and the two reporters were in the downstairs area using a ghost box and got the name Luke repeated several times. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the ghost box we do not believe it is as always credible evidence and take it as more of a personal experience. With that being said, on another occasion the other group was downstairs using the ghost box when one of them asked if this is where they had died and the ghost box stopped on the Radio Maria station as it was saying the Rosary. Again, it's not credible evidence, but no doubt freaky. We were able to get a few emf spikes while investigating the downstairs bedroom.

SUMMARY

Unfortunately, we were not able to get any other physical evidence for our night. We did have a great time at a beautiful home and we were able to hang out with some really nice people. We would like to thank Judge Rae Swent for allowing us in to her home and look forward to making a return trip sometime in the future.