

~ Reunion 2013 & Fall Recap ~

The 92nd edition of the Clingman-Jones Family Reunion is in the history book, and a fine one it was. There was much visitin', eatin', swimmin' hole fun, explorin', and enjoyin' the Caddo river. The weather returned to normal... just regular Arkansas hot in the daytime and Jones Valley coolin' off when the sun went down. Our ancestors really knew how to pick a location. As a result of the Memorial Day Get-Together and Fixup, Jones Valley looked great, helped by some nice recent rains and Cousin Larry Braswell getting after the mowing and bush-hogging.

Some Highlights

Burn Ban Lifted. With the return of the rains this year, there was no "burn ban" in effect, so the evenings were highlighted by visiting around campfires and, to the delight of the young, and young at heart, fireworks were in full force again. Yes, there were lots of "oohs" and "aahs."

Music and Singing. Both inside and outside, around the campfires. With the evenings being so pleasant, there was no reason to stay indoors, except for the Diffie cabin piano. Family members made their own entertainment playing and singing... most enjoyable and topped off with roasting of marshmallows over the fire and making s'mores (Yum, Yum)!

Meals. Once again, the meals were right on target. Reunion meals, being at the core of our annual tradition, did not disappoint. Hats off to Jeff Cameron for managing the dining hall operation, as well to Karen and Robert Atkinson for hosting Early Arrival Night Burgers and Dogs from the grill. Thanks to Jennifer Jones and Susan Ellis for helping out, it was a smooth operation. Those tasty burgers and dogs got everything off to good start, followed by some great country cooking in the dining hall for the main Reunion meals.

Something New. Somehow when you get the Jonesites together in Jones Valley, something new seems to happen every year and Reunion 2013 was no exception. Several cousins rented a small plane at Mt. Ida International and did a low-level flyover of Jones Valley. Hey, that added some excitement to the swimming hole! What's next? Maybe a hot air balloon invasion or a sky-jump into the swimming hole?

Unexpected Guest. Well, on the final day, Winston arrived to great fanfare, and was an immediate celebrity. I don't know what his people were thinking when they tried to put a harness on him, but Winston had some major objections. All in all, the place wasn't going to the dogs in 2013 – more like going to the piglets!

Reunion 2013 Family Business Meeting Summary. President Spencer Cubage welcomed Family members, especially those attending for the first time or who had not attended in some time. Spencer thanked volunteers for their many contributions, not only at the Reunion, but leading up to it at the Memorial Day Get-Together and Fixup. The following important agenda items were reviewed.

Donations. Spencer announced that the Family had received a bequeathment of \$3,000 from recently passed cousin Mary Hewitt's estate and the Executive Board had decided to use this generous gift as the foundation of a development fund. Attendees were asked to help identify good projects to which the development fund could be applied. Suggestions included upgrading the bathroom/shower facilities and/or dining hall. Gil Jones requested everyone consider doing what Mary did – set aside something for Jones Valley, either be in a will or through a small insurance policy with the Clingman-Jones Family as beneficiary.

By-Laws. Spencer asked Shane Nichols, who has been providing legal counsel to the Board, to outline for the attendees the new by-laws that the Executive Board is considering. Shane explained that the Board had for several years been in the process of adopting a new structure for our Family association based on a State of Arkansas non-profit corporation model. The Board adopted the non-profit corporation structure in 2011. This was because the trust concept of our ancestors had been ruled invalid by the courts. Also, our ancestors had incorporated in 1954 as a non-profit corporation under the Arkansas laws in effect at that time. In conjunction with the incorporation, the Board was reviewing a new set of by-laws consistent with the new non-profit corporation status, and retaining the structure and content of the current by-laws where possible.

There was considerable discussion of the Family entity being a non-profit corporation or a trust. Dawn Anita Plumlee expressed her opinion that a trust was preferable, especially when applied to protecting the Valley. The content of the proposed by-laws that dealt with the issue of protecting the Valley and restricting its sale, was discussed at length.

Shane then reviewed the need for direct line descendants to sign a "quitclaim" to ownership of the Valley. This was needed to have the Family's non-profit corporation own the deed. Shane explained that the deed to Jones Valley was currently not functional because the owners, our ancestors, are deceased. After the meeting, a notary public was available on-site for Family members wishing to sign the quitclaim.

The earnestness of these discussions showed the depth of love and passion Family members have for the preservation of Jones Valley and our ancestors' legacy.

Reunion 2013 Executive Board Meeting Summary. The Executive Board Meeting's major agenda item was the review of the proposed new by-laws for the Family non-profit corporation. This document had been reviewed a month earlier during a Board teleconference meeting which had been called specifically for that task. The results were then further analyzed prior to the Reunion Board Meeting for legal soundness. The Board then reviewed and discussed, in detail every component, making changes, especially to be inclusive to Family members. After comprehensive review and discussion, the Board voted and passed the proposed by-laws unanimously, with each representative signing.

Daniel Highsmith's Highsmith Cabin complaint was not reviewed. The general opinion was that this issue was a matter between Daniel and Larry Braswell. In addition, Daniel did not comply with President Spencer Cubage's repeated requests that he provide an agenda for his addressing the Board and what result he hoped to achieve.