**Four Generations of the Jones Family in Illinois**

Fog hides the lives of members of the Jones family in Illinois but suddenly there will be a small opening for a census report or a death certificate. The fog moves on, and the sun burns through to reveal histories of Crawford County where they lived and even some of the family stories passed down through the generations. The fog moves on, and suddenly there are entries from Ancestry.com and MacShane's biography of James Jones, and the letters of James Jones, the novelist who was a member of the fourth generation. Many of the facts about the family members, especially the quiddities of their personalities, are missing, perhaps forever. Why and when did John George Jones leave Ohio for Illinois? Was his second wife, Mary Ann Haskin Boyd Jones, an Indian (Native American)? Was John Jones a dirt farmer, nothing more, nothing less? What made him die at an early age? What made George Washington Jones leave the farm? What was the source of his ambition? Was Joseph Raymond (Ramon) Jones a poet manqué? What was the source of his alcoholism? What are the sources of James Jones's artistic sensibilities?

As the mists fade away, we find some facts, some rumors, some faint clues, and many mysteries.

**John George Jones**

John George Jones, born February 22, 1824 in Adams, Coshocton, Ohio, died January 10, 1869, in Hardinville, Illinois (also spelled Hardinsville).

- Married (1)—November 5, 1846; Elizabeth Baker 1825-1854
- Children:
  - Mary Jones 1848–1855
  - Martha Jones 1850–1920
- John Jones 1852–?
- Elizabeth Jones 1854–??
- Married (2)—June 21, 1855; Mary Ann Haskin Boyd 1825-1854
Children:
Adaline Jones 1856–??  (Adeline is the spelling on the photograph of five members of the John Jones family)

George Washington Jones 1858–1929
James Allen Jones 1860–1939
Margaret Jones 1863–1882
Arthur Jones 1865–??
Edith Emma Jones 1867–1939  (Emmaline as spelled in the family portrait)¹

It is not known when John Jones came to Illinois. Since his first wife died the same year her last child was born, it is probably safe to speculate that she died in childbirth. What we do know is that in 1851 he began to acquire Land Patents for 160 acres of land in Martin Township, Crawford County, Illinois: 80 acres on January 1, 1851, for two 40 acre plots; 40 more acres on May 1, 1852; and 40 additional acres on April 15, 1853. This farmstead was near the village of Hardinsville, Illinois.² In that area, some of the land was on a prairie and other parts were wooded. He had ambition to own land. Instead of improving his property, selling it, and moving on, he stayed where he was: a pioneer farmer in a rich agricultural area.

Figure 1: Jones family members believed that President Millard Fillmore signed the Land Patent. The Land Patent was issued in Palestine, Illinois, and a clerk there signed Fillmore's name.
The virgin land in this part of Illinois was difficult to plow, and John Jones used the crude plows of the time. The usual crops in Illinois in the 1850s were corn, wheat, flax, and garden vegetables. Early settlers in the county attempted to grow cotton, but the growing season was too short. Getting crops to market was a serious problem until railroads were pushed through. Before that, river shipment was the most common: corn, wheat, salt pork were sent on flat boats to New Orleans. The settlers kept some corn and wheat for planting the next season, some to feed farm animals, and some to be ground in local mills for the making of bread.

In the early period—from the War of 1812 to the 1830s—as settlers were moving in, wolves were a constant problem, preying on livestock and were known to attack humans. One of the most popular ways to kill wolves was the Sunday hunt. Male citizens for miles around would start en a signal and close in on a circle. The wolves would be penned together and shot. Indians (Native Americans) were often slaughtered. By the time John Jones was acquiring land in 1851 the wolves and Indians were gone.

When John Jones took up land in Martin Township, game was diminished, but men still hunted deer, ducks, geese, rabbits, and game birds for family meals. "The first settlers were not all religiously inclined," Henry Perrin writes in his History of Crawford and Clark Counties: "Sunday was their gala day, and was generally spent in hunting, horse racing, or in athletic sports, such as jumping, wrestling, etc." Perrin omitted a major part of these galas: they were fueled by cheap corn whiskey, made locally.

Many of the pioneers wanted to get cheap land and to live free from the usual constraints. Most were peaceful, but others were criminal—thieves and outlaws. In the early days of settlement the wooded area of the county was unsafe, and those passing through needed to be well-armed.

There were murders and crimes of jealousy. Elizabeth Reed lived with her husband in Purgatory Swamp near Palestine. She was a strange woman; some considered her a witch. In 1844 she sweetened his sassafras tea with arsenic, and he was soon dead. She was arrested and found guilty. She rode to the hanging site sitting on her coffin in a cart pulled by oxen. She was singing such songs as "On Greenland’s Icy Mountains" and chanting religious verses. A minister
delivered a ninety minute sermon, and then she was hanged. She was the first and only woman hanged in Illinois.⁴

Justice was often quick, but in crimes of sexual jealousy the murderer was not always convicted. Jack and Thomas Inlow, brothers, were both enamored of May, a widow with an unsavory reputation. She urged the jealous brothers to visit her. Once the two men arrived the same time, quarreled, and Jack shot and killed his brother. Jack was jailed but was cleared of charges on the grounds of self defense. May, who had encouraged both brothers and was responsible for their fight, had no regrets and soon married again—and not to Jack.⁵

Lawlessness in Hardinsville, near the Jones farm, and throughout the county and state, was caused, in part, by the large amounts of corn whiskey at low prices. Small stills and distilleries dotted the landscape. For the years of 1855–1862 the Ruby distillery, two-and-a-half miles east of Hardinsville, produced 100 gallons a day. It closed because it could not pay the revenue demanded by the Union government.⁶

In the early days of Hardinsville, Daniel Miller kept a small grocery and whiskey shop, “known as the resort of all the deperadoes of the county.” The place became such an eyesore that concerned citizens, probably drawn largely from the temperance adherents from religious groups, urged Miller to give up his business and turn to other pursuits. He refused, and his dive became worse. Their patience exhausted, citizens put a keg of powder under the building and set it off when the carousers left for the night. Miller did not resume his grocery. The grocery was gone, but the whiskey not.

A question without an answer in surviving documents: was John Jones, as was common in his society, a heavy drinker, or was he a Methodist temperance man?

His son George was a Methodist and a temperance man. Was George opposed to alcohol because of his father's drinking, or was he following the religious beliefs of a temperance father? George's sons did not follow his injunction against drinking and all four sons were said to be heavy drinkers. George's grandson, James Jones, was a functioning alcoholic.
Churches in the county condemned drinking, and there were churches scattered throughout the townships. The Reverend Jesse York, a Methodist minister, organized a church in 1846 with about a dozen members in the residence of Jacob Garrard. That residence was used until a schoolhouse was built, and then the church services were held there. Another Methodist congregation was established in Hardinsville, with about thirty members, also meeting in a schoolhouse.

Many Baptist congregations were formed, as well as United Brethren and Christian churches, all buffers to the liquor-fed rowdiness of the many ruffians there.

The village of Hardinsville, where John Jones would have done his shopping for farm supplies and household items, was surveyed in 1847. The developer was Daniel Martin, a true believer that his town would grow. He bragged: "Why, by the gods, twenty years from this time will see a second St. Louis right on this spot, or I am no true prophet." He was wrong. At one time Hardinsville had a general store, a blacksmith, doctors; it withered away.

Fog covers most of John Jones's married life. He had a brood of children. Schools in the township were poorly equipped, and the teachers mostly untrained, but he and Mary Ann did send their son George to school, and presumably the other children went, also. When John Jones died in Hardinsville on January 10, 1869, some of his children from his first marriage still needed care at home. How did the family survive? Mary Ann and the older children had to take over the operation of the farm.
Mary Ann Haskin Boyd Jones

Figure 2: In the photograph, George’s brother, mother, and sisters are seen as good country people. The women are inexpensively dressed. James is wearing a cheap suit and is literally exploding out of his jacket. George, though, is a professional man. He could have been a doctor or banker. He walked to his office every day and was trim, unlike his brother. His suit is well-made. He wears his respectability easily.\(^8\)

Photograph courtesy Archives/Special Collections, University of Illinois at Springfield.

Mary Ann Haskin was born January 26 1833, in Crawford County, Illinois. Her father, Robert Haskin, was born near Detroit, Michigan, on August 22, 1793. George Jones, son of Mary Ann, wrote brief history of the Haskin family but was unable to determine what country in Europe the family came from. He did find that the first Haskins in the United States lived near
Rutland, Vermont. Later, several of them moved to Michigan. From 1825 to 1837 two members of the family served in the Michigan legislature.

Robert Haskin at the age of twenty-one came to Illinois, locating near Palestine. There he met Mary Elizabeth White, known as Betsy, born near Lexington, Kentucky on August 2, 1798. When Besty was five, her father Joseph White, whose occupation was flat boating down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, disappeared, never to be heard from again. Was he murdered? Drowned? Alive and with a new family? Betsy's mother moved to Palestine, Crawford County, Illinois, where Betsy and Robert met and were married on June 12, 1817. They had two daughters, Mary Ann and Amanda Haskin Gilbert. Betsy and Robert first lived on a farm near Palestine and then moved to a farm in Honey Creek Township, adjacent to Martin Township, where John Jones lived.

Mary Ann was married in Robinson, Illinois, to Robert Boyd, a laborer, on July 23, 1849. He was born in Kentucky in 1828. Available records do not indicate that Mary Ann and Robert had children. He died in 1854 and was buried in the Haskin Cemetery, Honey Creek Township. Sixteen other Boyds were buried there. Betsy and Robert Haskin must have given the land for the burial ground. A heavy fog covers the marriage of Robert and Mary Ann.

How did Mary Ann meet John Jones? Not known, but John must have been looking for a wife to look after his children. John and Mary Ann were married in 1855. Mary Ann soon had children, and she had a life of never-ending toil: cooking, sewing, caring for children, washing, ironing, taking care of chickens and the garden. Specific details are missing.

A Jones family story about Mary Ann is intriguing: She was a Cherokee girl abandoned to die on the side of the road when the Cherokees were forcibly moved—possibly the Trail of Tears. She was taken in by Robert Haskin and his wife Betsy. Because of discrimination against Indians at that time she was listed as white in official records. If that story is true, the deception continued even after her death. According to “Illinois, Deaths and Stillbirths Index, 1916,” in ancestry.com she is listed as dying in Robinson, Illinois, March 14, 1924, at the age of 91. Her occupation was listed as “House Keeper,” and her race was listed as white.
George Washington Jones

George Jones was born October 28, 1858, on the family farm. He the eldest son in John's second family and would have been needed, even when young, to help tend to the garden and to farm animals, and to do some of the work in getting crops planted, weeded, and harvested. He attended local schools, but for how long is unknown. At the age of twenty he married Euphemia Bales, eighteen. She was the daughter of D. M. Bales, local landowner, elected official, and land speculator.

Born in Monroe County, Indiana, Bales attended local schools which were characterized as “rather poor.” He moved to Martin Township, Crawford County, Illinois, and purchased 160 acres of farmland and 40 acres of wooded land. He built a cabin on his land and was known as a hard worker. He cultivated 60 acres of corn the first year he farmed. He improved his property and in 1864 sold it for $4,000, then a large sum. He bought another farm, improved it, sold it. He purchased a steam sawmill—he probably had not sold his 40 acres of woodland—and began to produce lumber. It is likely that newly-married George Jones worked for Bales. Bales was a Methodist and a Democrat, as was his son-in-law. The two were compatible.

Bales was elected sheriff of Crawford County in 1882, indicating he had a large circle of friends and acquaintances. He appointed George as deputy sheriff, and the Bales family and the Jones family moved to Robinson, the county seat. It appears George Jones was ambitious and ready to leave rural life. At the end of Bales’s four-year term in 1886, Jones ran for sheriff and was elected.

As was the custom, George and his family moved into living quarters in the first floor of the jail. Crawford County, not far removed from the frontier, had its full share of crime—from petty theft, public drunkenness, to murder. George Jones tried to keep the peace, and during his official duties he confiscated many weapons. His grandson James Jones remembered: “My grandfather, who was once as a young man sheriff of the county, had a magnificent collection of two- and four-barrel Derringers, brass knucks, and knives that he picked up here and there.... As a small boy I was allowed to play with them, and I was fascinated by them and the bloody stories behind them.”
By the time George Jones left office in 1890, he and his wife had four sons:

John Paul 1879–1931 (He preferred the spelling Paull.)
Alfred Hanby 1882–1907
Joseph Raymond 1886–1942 He apparently changed the spelling of Raymond to Ramon. Official records use both spellings.
Charles Eugene 1889–1956 Names such as John, George, James, and Mary Ann passed down through the generations of the Jones family

Charles Jones in his Autobiography gives an account of the Jones family life in the jail. A prisoner name "Booze" Boyd persuaded the toddler Charles to give him the large key hanging in the living quarters. With it, "Booze" escaped to the nearest saloon, where the sheriff soon recaptured him. How was the child to be punished? As was the custom, the sheriff provided food from the family kitchen. A maid and cook in the household provided the answer. Charles was to be called “Boozer,” and he was, well into adulthood. George Jones was a teetotaler, but in this instance he showed that he had a sense of humor, and he did not squelch the nickname.

Sheriffs generally served only a few years. George Jones was not going back to the family farm. Ambitious, even before his term of office was over in 1890, he began studying law with a local attorney. He also had other plans. Once he left office he acquired a ten acre farm outside the west city limits of Robinson. Over the years Robinson spread west, and his property became more valuable. He sold acreage on the south side of his land to the Case Pottery Company and the small plots to the workers at Case to built their own homes.

Other lots were sold to employees of businesses in the growing city, especially after oil was discovered in the county in 1906. The sale of land went on over many years. Like his father-in-law, George was a land speculator.

From 1890 to 1892 he continued to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1892. The following year Euphemia died from pneumonia and was buried in the family cemetery in Hardinsville.
Left with four sons, Jones brought in his widowed mother to look after the household and the children. In 1895 he married Christine Kern (1869–1928). Charles Jones would have had few memories of his mother, but in his Autobiography he reports at length the favorable family stories of their stepmother. The older sons, with their stronger memories of their mother, may have resented Christine though there is no direct information on this subject. Charles praises her as a “wise and devoted mother to her step-children.” He writes that she was an accomplished painter in oils a musician, and a seamstress. She created a family atmosphere appealing to Raymond (Ramon) who had poetic ambitions. Charles does not comment on his father's parenting skills, but he does note his “frugality, thrift, and perseverance.”¹⁷ Jones was proud of the family name and wanted his sons to live up to the name to which he had brought local distinction. James Jones was proud of his father and grandfather. They supported him.

George Jones was a wealthy man, and he privately printed The Trials of Christ—Were They Legal? He gave many copies to his friends. As an attorney, he had an interest in Roman law, and he came to the conclusion that the “Romans broke their own laws in submitting Jesus to legal inquiry.”¹⁸ George Jones built his law practice over the years, and from 1904 until 1929, the year of his death, he established a reputation as a criminal lawyer defending those accused of murder. George began this specialty after the Circuit Court Judge appointed him to defend a man charged with murdering a Civil War veteran. The general feeling in the courthouse circles was that the defendant would be hanged or sentenced to life in prison. Instead, in a brilliant defense, Jones obtained a sentence of two years for his client. For the next twenty five years, Charles writes, “he was involved in the defense of every person charged with murder in Crawford County,” with one exception. In that case, Charles was State's Attorney, and it would have been inappropriate for George to participate in the trial.

Defending those charged with murder brought prestige—and notoriety—to George Jones, but those accused of that crime rarely can pay well for the services of an attorney. Before oil as discovered on his property, he had to depend on his general practice for the bulk of his income, and there were many—too many—lawyers in Robinson. When his two older sons were at Northwestern studying dentistry, George was in debt to pay those college expenses. According to Charles's Autobiography, George had acquired the 160 acre family farm from the other heirs. There was talk throughout the county of the possibility of finding oil, and George had received a
good offer to sell the farm. Christine, his wife, advised him to mortgage the farm to pay tuition and living expenses for his sons at college. He did, and an oil company soon leased the mineral rights, paying more than the mortgage.\textsuperscript{19} The oil boom began by 1907, oil was later discovered on the Jones farm, and over the next few years he became a wealthy man.

Figure 3: An oil well in Crawford County.

According to family stories, Jones forced his sons to study to become professional men. Paul, Hanby, and Raymond enrolled in the dental school at Northwestern, and Charles attended the law school at the University of Illinois. In 1907 Hanby, in his final year of study, took his
own life. Was it because he was being pressured by his father? His alcoholism? Family stories reported in MacShane's biography of James Jones were that all four brothers were alcoholics.\textsuperscript{20}

Family stories reported in MacShane’s biography refer to George Jones as “a gloomy and temperamental man” who was “given to fits of violence.” One example is given: he disliked a cake being served to the family and flung it to the ceiling. Soon the icing melted and dropped onto the table. The “children sat in awed silence.”\textsuperscript{21} He may have been a temperamental man, but he does not seem to be the ogre presented by MacShane. He was an ambitious man who wanted his sons to succeed. He may well have pushed them too hard. He was, however, generous to his sons.

Paul, the oldest son, escaped by going to Argentina to practice dentistry. When he left that county, he went to East St. Louis, also a safe distance from his father. In 1908, Raymond, newly qualified in dentistry, was offered a position in Australia but decided against it, no doubt because of his father's opposition. He married that year the beautiful Ada Blessing and established a practice in the village of Flatrock, near Robinson. Oil money was flowing into the George Jones estate, and it is likely that George paid for his son's office equipment. Raymond and his family soon moved to Robinson.\textsuperscript{22}

Raymond and Ada had three children: George William (known as Jeff), James, and Mary Ann. The family lived near the George Jones mansion, bought in 1920, and lived a middle-class life. Raymond (by the time of World War I he used the spelling Ramon) was not an alcoholic in the 1920s. He had a thriving practice.

\textbf{Figure 4: The George Jones Mansion in Robinson.}
In 1908 Charles Jones, who had been captain of the football and baseball teams at Robinson High School, was a law student at the University of Illinois. He spent the summer playing baseball with the St. Louis Bloomer Girls, undoubtedly with his father's permission.

As Barbara Gregorich wrote in *Women at Play*, dozens of women's baseball teams called Bloomer Girls, were formed in the 1890s, and they went on playing well into the next century. The name came from Amelia Bloomer (1818–1894), who was devoted to women's rights and the temperance movement. She adopted a reformed style of dress for women, based on loose-fitting Turkish trousers, which were given her name. Women baseball players adopted bloomers as part of their uniform.

The teams barnstormed across the United States, rarely playing each other, but challenging local men's teams, semi-pros, and minor leaguers. The teams had at least one male, the catcher, but in later years men also played short, third and center field. Charles did not indicate what position he played.

Early on, male players were called “toppers”; the sexual innuendo was probably intended. In some cases, the men wore wigs and were introduced on the field with feminine names. Charles as an adult was a staid Republican and did not mention “toppers” in his *Autobiography*.

Charles had other duties with the team. To call attention to their game, the Bloomer Girls would hold a parade in each town; Charles would move around the parade route sounding the foghorn.23

George Jones may have been a pious man and a Sunday School teacher, but it is likely that he was aware that some of the Bloomer Girl teams were rowdy and given to carousing. He was an indulgent father, and he allowed Charles to have a summer of freedom and fun.

Admitted to the bar in 1912, Charles joined his father in the firm Jones & Jones. Flush with oil funds, George Jones allowed his son to take an extended trip to Buenos Aires to visit his brother Paul, a dentist with a practice for the international set. Many of the young American men there were interested in baseball and formed a team with Charles as a member. The Buenos Aires team planned to travel to Montevideo for a game, but the trip had to be cancelled because
Uruguay had an extradition treaty with the United States. Some of the American team players were fugitives from justice and did not dare to go into Uruguay. George Jones must have commented on this incident. Later, Lowney Handy wrote that Paul had ties to the mob in East St. Louis.

Upon his return to Robinson, Charles worked with his father until 1925; then he departed to practice in Florida, leaving Ramon the only brother under father's influence. Charles did not return to Robinson until 1937, years after the death of George Jones. By that time, Charles's reputation in the family was less than sterling. They believed that he as an attorney had appropriated more of his father's estate than was strictly legal. George had a good reputation as attorney and citizen. His grandson James adored him.

**Paul Jones**

According to the Belleville, Illinois *Daily News Democrat*, March 10, 1931, Dr. Paul Jones killed himself in East St. Louis. He had been to a dinner party at the apartment of Miss Minnie Williams, apparently his girl friend. Dr. Jones had been worried about his worsening financial condition and according to Miss Williams had been threatening suicide. He carried around with him a dagger and several times demonstrated how he would use it.

At the dinner party he seems to have been drinking and was acting strangely. He left Miss Williams and her other guests and went to the home of her brother, Gilbert Williams, where he threatened to kill Miss Williams. Gilbert and a friend ejected Dr. Jones from the house. Paul entered his car. About an hour later, Gilbert and his friend went out to see why the car had not been moved. They found that Paul Jones had stabbed himself in the heart with a seven inch dagger.

Dr. Jones’s financial problems had involved him in controversies with his brothers Ramon and Charles, two of the other heirs to the George Jones estate. He was apparently unable to get more funds from that estate, for the sheriff had just foreclosed on property that Dr. Jones owned in East St. Louis.
Dr. Jones also had marital problems. After Nina Denman, his first wife, died, he married Nelle Farthing, sister of a prominent attorney. After a series of lawsuits, she won a legal separation. He then attempted to get a divorce in Reno, Nevada, but his case was dismissed.

Dr. Jones’s marital difficulties played a part in his death, but more importantly he was a victim of the Great Depression which began in 1929. By 1931, economic conditions were even worse. The George Jones estate was soon to be wiped out.

**Ramon Jones**

![Figure 5: Ramon Jones was captain of the Northwestern football team.](image)

George Jones died in 1929, the year the Great Depression began. For a time, Dr. Jones was not affected; he still had patients and there was family money to draw on. As the Depression deepened, people were unable to afford dental care, and the fortune amassed by George Jones disappeared. He had invested heavily in Insull stock, and in 1932 the Insull Utilities empire collapsed.

Ramon and Ada found it difficult to adjust to the economic hardships of the 1930s. They could not pay their mortgage, and their house was lost. They moved into rental quarters and took in boarders. Dr. Jones, a weak man, began to drink heavily, and his wife turned to religion. Theirs as a family in distress, and James Jones's sympathies were always with his father. Ada Jones was in declining health and died in 1941. In a downward alcoholic spiral, Dr. Jones
committed suicide in 1942. He died in poverty, his $500 insurance policy was divided by his three children. He was buried in an unmarked grave, but a free marker was provided by the United States government because he had served in World War I.²⁵

Figure 6: Record of grave marker for Ramon Jones.

Of the four brothers, only Charles remained, and he was a sanctimonious, distasteful person who would soon cause his nephew James many problems.
James Jones

Figure 7: James Jones in Hawaii, 1940.

The second son of Ramon and Ada Jones, James Ramon Jones, was born in Robinson on November 6, 1921. He was a shy boy, distressed by family problems, not athletic, and a reader at the local Carnegie Library. He also read from his father's poetry collection, but what did Dr. Jones and his son read? Sandburg? Masters? Pound? Eliot? Keats? Tennyson? There are no specific lists. Did James read his father's poetry? Perhaps a better question is: Did Dr. Jones actually write poetry or did he aspire to write poetry? Dr. Jones's interest in poetry did affect his son, perhaps to make him persevere by writing and reading and reading. This subject of influence is hidden in the mists.
In high school James Jones did well in classes that interested him but was lackluster in others. His drinking began when he was a teenager. After he graduated from high school in 1939, he did not have the option of going to college because of his low grades and because there was no family money to pay tuition.

He joined the Army Air Force and was soon shipped to Hawaii. Poor eyesight kept him from being qualified for pilot training, and he transferred to the infantry. During his years in Hawaii he was, as were many of the service people then, a heavy drinker.

He began to write poetry and prose, and a reading of Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*, convinced him he was born to be a writer.

Jones was sent to Guadalcanal, was wounded, and returned to a military hospital near Memphis. After he was granted leaves, he would go into Memphis for sex and for drinking bouts. He also began to go AWOL, at times to have a few days to write. In November 1943 he returned to Robinson. All his family members were gone, except for Uncle Charlie, who now lived with wife Sadie in the family mansion. Jeff was away working for the Red Cross; he was married to Sally Westerman Jones, and they had three children—David, James, and Richard. His sister Mary Ann (1925–1952) lived with Jeff and his family.

James stayed at the mansion, but there were problems from the first. He was in a distressed psychological state, fearful he was going to be sent into battle again, this time in Europe. He wanted to write. He was drunk most of the time, obnoxious. Uncle Charlie had no sympathies for his distraught nephew whose father, he believed, had besmirched the Jones family name by committing suicide. James had hope his uncle would help support him, while he learned to write. Uncle overlooked the education his father had provided him; he thought James should get a job after his army service was over and write in his spare time. The drunken James created several incidents in Robinson, and Uncle Charlie did not intervene to keep James from spending the night in jail. James thought he did so to humiliate him, to make him do what his uncle wanted, not what was right.
James Jones believed that being a Jones meant that they might disagree among themselves, but they would present a united front to the world by sticking together. Later, after Mary Ann’s death, Charles caused more trouble.

Because of the troubled relationships there in the mansion, Aunt Sadie decided to take her nephews to see Lowney Handy, wife of the superintendent of the oil refinery in Robinson. Lowney was a self-appointed social worker, helping pregnant girls, military men in trouble, and teenagers. At the first meeting, Jones read some of poetry, convincing Lowney that he was going to become a major writer.

Lowney began to work to get James out of the Army, and he was honorably discharged on July 6, 1944. Lowney did help him control his drinking, but when he was away from her, he drank heavily.

James and Lowney had almost immediately become lovers, and she used sex to control him, to keep him at his writing. Lowney and her husband took James into their home, built a room for him. Lowney, interested in the craft of writing though she had no formal training, began to read and comment on everything he wrote. He completed a novel called They Shall Inherit the Laughter. Editors thought the novel needed major revisions, but he was unable to do them, and it was abandoned. He began work on From Here to Eternity, which was a success when it appeared in 1951.26

Like his ambitious country boy grandfather George moving from the farm to law enforcement to the successful practice of law, James Jones aimed to be in the company of the best writers. Sending along the section of the bombing of Pearl Harbor in From Here to Eternity to his editor Burroughs Mitchell, he wrote on October 30, 1949: “I personally believe it will stand up with Stendhal's Waterloo or Tolstoy's Austerlitz. This is what I was aiming at, and wanted it to do it, and I think it does it. If you don't think it does, send it back and I'll re-write it. Good isn't enough, not for me, anyway: good is only middling fair. We must remember that people will be reading this book a hundred years after I'm dead....”27
Using Jones's royalty payments, Lowney established a writing colony employing her own unique methods of teaching creative writing—novice writers began by copying on a typewriter stories by authors she admired.28

The relationship between James and Lowney was often stormy, but he stayed with, working on Some Came Running. He was in New York before that novel was published and met Gloria Mosolino. They had a brief romance and were married in 1957. Jones took Gloria back to Illinois, not telling her the truth about his relationship with Lowney. A distraught Lowney attacked Gloria with a knife, according to Jim and Gloria's version. Jones had to admit to his long affair with Lowney, and James and Gloria left Illinois the next day, never to return.29

Gloria provided her husband with a social life he had not had with Lowney, but his drinking was not controlled. She, too, was a heavy drinker. As they moved to Paris and life among writers, there, his drinking increased, but he was a functioning alcoholic; after heavy drinking at night, we would be at his desk early the next day, ready and able to write. The major novel of his Paris years was The Thin Red Line, the second part of his war trilogy.

During their stay in Paris, Jones and Gloria had two children:
Kaylie Ann, August 5, 1960– (the “Ann” is for Mary Ann Haskin)
Jamie Anthony Philippe, October 6, 1960– (adopted)

In 1974, the Jones family returned to the United States. After a year in Florida, they settled in Sagaponack, New York, where he wrote WWII and almost complete the third volume of the trilogy, Whistle. From notes and a tape, Willie Morris completed the last pages of that novel. He died on May 9, 1977.

George Jones had ambition and talent as a defense attorney. His grandson had those same qualities: ambition and talent. His war trilogy will continue to be read, and his novels Some Came Running and Go to the Widow-Maker will likely be re-evaluated.

Too little is known about the Jones family in Illinois. Breaks in the mist reveal tantalizing information, but then the fog moves on, covering much of what we want to know.
George Hendrick

Urbana, Illinois.
Notes

1 “John Jones, 1824–1869,” ancestry.com and “Mary Ann Haskins, 1833–1924,” ancestry.com (The correct spelling is “Haskin.”)


5 Perrin, History of Crawford and Clark Counties, p. 197.

6 Ibid., p. 198.

7 Ibid., pp. 198–199

8 Photograph from Archives/Special Collections, University of Illinois at Springfield. Information about Mary Ann is from “Mary Ann Haskin,” ancestry.com.

9 George W. Jones, “The Crawford County Pioneer, Haskins [sic] Family Among the First,” a paper delivered to the Crawford County Pioneer Association, September 27, 1917. The clipping is undated, and no source is given.


14 James Jones, *They Shall Inherit the Laughter*, unpublished Ms., Archives/Special Collections, University of Illinois at Springfield.


16 Obituary of Mrs. Euphemia E. (Bales) Jones, Robinson *Constitution*, March 1, 1893.

17 Charles E. Jones, *Autobiography*, pages not numbered. See also “Christine F. Kern,” ancestry.com


22 *Ibid*, pp. 7-8. Dr. Jones’s children were George William (known as Jeff), James, and Mary Ann.


26 See MacShane for details about the life of James Jones.


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I am also indebted to Carl Sandburg:

Fog

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over city and harbor
on silent haunches
and then moves on.