

THE JAMES JONES LITERARY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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The James Jones Society newsletter is published quarterly to keep members and interested parties apprised of activities, projects and upcoming events of the Society; to promote public interest and academic research in the works of James Jones; and to celebrate his memory and legacy.

Submissions of essays, features, anecdotes, photographs, etc., that pertain to author James Jones may be sent to the co-editors for publication consideration. Every attempt will be made to return material, if requested upon submission. Material may be edited for length, clarity and accuracy. Send submissions to 2609 N. High Cross Rd., Urbana, IL 61802 or tales@soltec.net .

Writers guidelines available upon request and online.

The James Jones Literary Society

<http://rking.vinu.edu/j.htm>

Online information about the James Jones First Novel Fellowship

<http://wilkes.edu/~english/jones.html>

New Society President Offers Thanks To Volunteers

Serving as your president of the James Jones Literary Society for the coming year gives me the pleasure and privilege to welcome new board members and to recognize the enormous contributions of others who have left office or the board.

Juanita Martin, our first treasurer, and Helen Howe, our first secretary, really authored this Society by brainstorming the first James Jones symposium in 1991. Out of that the James Jones

Literary Society and the James Jones First Novel Fellowship Award were born. Juanita's and Helen's continued energy and ideas fueled subsequent symposia.

Although Helen has left both the office and the board, she continues to be a sounding board for all of us, and we bestow Helen with the title of Honorary Board Member.

Juanita left the office and her job as liaison at Lincoln Trail College difficult to fill but still offers her energy as a board member. Margot Nightingale became the Society's second secretary and gave us wisdom, along with diplomacy and secretarial duties. Margot left the office but, fortunately for us, not the board.

It is virtually impossible to give enough thanks to Ray Elliott and Vanessa Faurie, the editors of our newsletter. They have given us this link to each other for several years. They have asked to be free of this responsibility and give more time to their family and writing and jobs. We do appreciate all the thoughtful hours of editing. And thanks now to our archivist, Tom Wood, for taking on the job as editor after this issue.

It was only because I know I can count on the back-up from our previous hard-working presidents-George Hendrick, Mike Lennon, Judy Everson, Jerry Bayne and Ray Elliott-that I agreed to serve as president for one year. On behalf of the Society and myself, I most wholeheartedly thank them all.

I came to the first symposium reluctantly because of Illinois' November weather and had to be persuaded by Helen Howe's baking a persimmon pudding for me. But immediately I was glad to find myself surrounded by the people who became the James Jones Literary Society. It is the pleasure of visiting with and working with our Society members that keeps me coming back, even in November. Thanks to all of you for making it pleasurable.

Thanks, too, to our new board members. There is Dave Nightingale, who has already worked as if he were a member of the board. And to Barbara Jones who likewise worked as if on high-paying salary, of which there was none. And to new board members and longtime supporters, Cullom Davis and Robert Klaus, and Lincoln Trail College liaison Diane Reed.

I look forward to hearing from members and board members with thoughts and suggestions.

-- Don Sackrider, President, Sackrider519@cs.com

2000 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

Editor's Note: The 1999 Speakers Series with Norman Mailer, William Styron and Peter Matthiessen will continue with the next issue.

Gerald Linderman

Professor Emertius of History, Univ. of Michigan; Author of The World Within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II

Your organization's annual meeting last summer on Long Island - what an occasion, to gather to listen to the friends of James Jones: Betty Comden, Budd Schulberg, William Styron, Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, Peter Matthiessen - an extraordinary roster of speakers. They spoke of James Jones directly, intimately. I cannot do that. I never met him. I have never even studied his books as a body, but glancingly, in the preparation of books and lectures.

I was *surprised* when Carl Becker took the trouble to count references in my last book and then told me that I had cited James Jones more frequently than any other source. Many of you know more than I about James Jones. What I can do is to look at him from a distance, setting his writings against those of many other World War II veterans, charting the congruencies and trying to make sense of the discrepancies.

But first let me raise with you the matter of James Jones' knowledge of combat. In trying to write of war, I ordinarily rely on the narratives of those soldiers in combat longest, those who have passed beyond the initial excitements, beyond what J. Glenn Gray calls, somewhat misleadingly, the enduring appeals of battle.

Here James Jones presents a bit of a mystery: How does he know so much about combat? He was a company runner at Schofield Barracks on the morning that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. On Jan. 1, 1943, he landed on Guadalcanal with F Company, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. For 10 days he prepares lists, helps with reports, runs messages. On the 11th day he moves to the line and on the 12th joins the assault. It begins at 6:30; at 10:30 he is wounded-a mortar fragment to the head.

Ten days later, he returns-to clerking at company headquarters. To be sure, not all during this period remains routine: At one point, he must help to disinter the bodies of American dead; at another, more important, he goes into the jungle to relieve himself and glances up to see a Japanese soldier charging at him, bayonet extended. James Jones must kill him with a knife. Several weeks later, the first sergeant catches sight of Jones' chronically injured ankle and orders him out.

So what do we have? Pearl Harbor and Guadalcanal-less than two days of combat of any intensity. The accomplishment that follows is not exactly that of a Stephen Crane reading yellowed magazines and fueling the imagination that produces *The Red Badge of Courage*, but it is achievement of very high order. How does James Jones expand such limited experience of the line into the perceptions of a veteran combat soldier?

Let me offer an example, that struggle in the jungle with the Japanese soldier. Jones describes it, as you know, in *The Thin Red Line*, with Bead the protagonist: Nowhere is there a grizzlier or grittier passage on close-quarters combat. In the actual event, Jones-utterly spent-searches the dead man's pockets and there finds a photograph of a young woman with a new baby in her arms. He is shocked and sickened and in tears-and he then swears that he will, his words, "never kill anyone ever again."

But in the book, Bead makes no such vow. He is distraught, but he quickly returns to the unit and there its members soon comfort and persuade him that what he has done is both justifiable and inevitable, meriting pride rather than remorse.

I cannot know why at any point James Jones writes as he does, but let me pose the question as if I did. How did James Jones know that his own reaction-an enduring one: he never renounces or forgets his vow-was a rarity? How did he know that rationalization, reassurance and renewed commitment to the unavailability of killing were the common pattern? Does the solution rest in brief but acute observation? Or perhaps in an imagination as powerful, as empathetic, as accurate as Stephen Crane's?

When I first prepared my notes for this talk, I didn't have the glimmer of an answer, but I have been thinking and arguing with my friends in Ann Arbor, and I began to think that three elements were decisive: the turbulence of his childhood, which, however high its costs, does produce in him a finely-attuned emotional acuity; next, his realization in Hawaii that he is meant to be a writer-so that he arrives on Guadalcanal determined to watch and to listen, to absorb as much as possible; and finally, those months in hospitals-on Guadalcanal and on Efate, in New Zealand and in Memphis-listening to the stories of soldiers longer in combat than he, listening and asking questions, weighing and remembering. The confluence of these three factors is the best answer I am able to offer you.

Now, in what ways does James Jones' work reflect and illuminate the ways of most World War II combat soldiers? Let me mention just a few of the many categories in which his portraits are particularly valuable-in showing how quickly combatants abandon notions of cause and effect and invest instead in accident and chance and fate; in showing how soldiers suffer a loss of their efficacy as individuals and feel instead their submergence in numbers; in showing how they seek to numb themselves-here is practically a leitmotiv in *The Thin Red Line* as Jones' soldiers labor to induce a permanent state of numbness; in showing how they quickly surrender the civilian opposition of courage and cowardice as they discover both in themselves and realize that both express themselves in unknowable and uncontrollable fluctuations; and finally but especially, in showing how and why soldiers feel *bitterness*.

And Jones is equally perceptive in his observation of relationships among the enlisted men and between them and their officers. He is without sentiment. Comradeship is of limited utility. In *Whistle*, in rejecting the surgeons' orders and ignoring their threats, Prell tells the doctors, "We don't give a shit, except for each other." But soon he thinks about what he has said and decides, "We probably don't give a shit about each other either." For Jones' soldiers, isolation and *loneliness* are *the* problems, as they were, I believe, for most World War II veteran combat soldiers. Officers in the Old Army are always, Jones tells us, "made SOBs who have you by the nuts," and he sees no change in the wartime army. One of the many surprises in my own work was the intensity of the anger recruits felt towards the officer corps and its exercise of privilege. Here again, James Jones catches that.

Now, where are the disparities between Jones' depictions and those of the body of World War II narratives? What I suggest is that we would not do well to rely on him for soldiers' reactions to women, for soldiers' views of the homefront or for returning soldiers' postwar adjustment.

Women. Is there a sympathetically drawn female character anywhere in the trilogy? Ada Jones was cruel and manipulative, domineering and deceitful. At points, she beat and apparently chained her son and he came to hate his mother. I would guess-and I place it no higher than a guess-that to escape his hurt, his disgust at volcanic family emotion hidden, hypocritically, behind a facade of gentility, he escapes into his voracious reading and his imagination-successfully in all but sex. Understandably, he longed for one who would love him as his mother had not-and his long failure to find that one implicated all women. He described the fundamental relationship between women and men in sexual and monetary terms: women seek to spend as much of men's money as possible without surrendering their bodies; men seek to sleep with women while spending as little as possible. It doesn't help, of course, that most of the women he meets in the Old Army are prostitutes.

Now I do not wish to make too much of this, but its repercussions in his writing are striking. His views regarding women invade his views of combat. Almost alone among WWII writers, he portrays the sexual element as pervasive in warfare-volunteering as a sexual act; sexual arousal when imagining one's own death; even the Midway torpedo-bomber pilots as operating in a sexual ecstasy. And James Jones does not soon resolve the basic problem. Though in 1956 he finds in Gloria Mosolino a woman to love and to love him and in 1957 a marriage that endures until his death, his view of women doesn't much seem to alter.

Here is a passage from *WWII*, published 18 years after his marriage: "Women are the antithesis of war; they are soft, pliable, decent, clean, sensitive, understanding-and great to fuck." Notice how the last phrase sinks in contempt all that goes before it. During the war most soldiers are invested in the Good Woman-Bad Woman division.

As Russell Baker puts it, "It was all right to wallow in lust with bad women, but good women were to be respected and loved purely, the kind of girl you married and remained faithful to all your life-the kind of girl my mother would approve of."

If the mother who is the arbiter of the Good Woman is also the model for the Good Woman, it is understandable that James Jones sees no Good Women. He is angrier at women war workers on the line who, he is sure, daydream of romance and cut grenade fuses too short than he is at leaders who underestimate the need for infantry divisions or artillery shells or who order the unnecessary invasion of Pacific atolls.

The wartime United States. It is not that Jones, with his 3 1/2 years abroad, is away longer than other soldiers but that he leaves earlier, in late '39, with many of the clouds of the Great Depression still overhead. So, in '43, he is shocked at the sweep of change, at what he thinks the public's wartime values-"a new world that seemed to have gone crazy with destruction and a lavish prosperity-and a total breakdown in prewar moral standards. His alienation from the homefront exceeds that of most soldiers who, while themselves increasingly angry at 4-Fs, strikers and profiteers, remain tied to home in ways James Jones does not.

The soldiers' adjustment to civilian life. Jones depicts it as almost impossible, the result, I think, of his Old Army perspective. The Army represents something far different to regulars than to recruits and draftees. The company, Jones tells us in *Whistle*, is the only family they have.

Without it, they belong nowhere. To be cut loose of the Army, then, is to be severed from their lives. Of the four principal characters in *Whistle*, three kill themselves and the last goes mad. But the great majority anchor their lives in their civilian existences-the war is not life but an interruption in their lives-and, though they are by no means relieved of combat distress, their passage from the war is welcome, not feared.

So these are some of the places where one should not assume that James Jones' writings reveal the common pattern. Draftees generally think differently than do Jones' career NCOs about women, about home, about their return to civilian lives.

Just a word about Jones and Vietnam, a brief word because I found there far less than I had hoped and expected. He has visa problems and for help turns to Gen. Frederick Weyand, American commander in Vietnam, but then he allows that connection to set the schedule. He talks and eats with general officers, visits a Montagnard hospital and leper colony, attends a chief priest's funeral, watches a prisoner exchange-signs of a well-guided official visit.

He has opposed the Army's intervention in Vietnam, but he is determined to say nothing critical of soldiers in Vietnam. American combat units had departed. Still, it is strange that he failed to seek out among the support troops remaining in-country those men and company officers who had known combat and from whom he might have learned how that war differed from his, how even more difficult were the conditions of its combat.

His subsequent stop in Hawaii is also one hedged by PR men and general officers; again, he makes no effort to speak with Vietnam veterans there. What happens is not what some charge, that James Jones has grown conservative, a cheerleader forgetful of *From Here To Eternity* and the brutality it portrayed. It is impossible to read *Viet Journal* without feeling the book's heart is not in its Vietnam chapters but in those final pages, in his return to Schofield Barracks. He is already ill. He is but four years from his death. He is not interested in learning about a new type of war. He distances himself. His eyes have turned from both the present and the near past; they look back 30 years.

Let me close, admiringly, with one other way in which James Jones' writing departs from the body of narratives. He may be unique among World War II writers in anticipating the problem of selective memory, the propensity of the soldier to heal his own distress by suppressing his most painful memories. Jones denounces selective memory: "cerebral cheating," he calls it; "recalling terror with affection." He resists its influence in himself: *Whistle*, 1977 is just as remorseless as *The Thin Red Line*, 1962. He fears its influence on veterans; in the final passage of *The Thin Red Line*, he anticipates that a soldier will write a book capturing the experience of his squad exactly as its members had registered it during the fighting, but that later none of them will believe the book because none of them will remember it that way.

Jones' clear eyes may have failed him in Vietnam because focused elsewhere, but they do not desert him in his World War II writings. It seems to me that he would greet today's Steven Spielberg-Tom Hanks-Tom Brokaw Greatest Generation flummery first with embarrassment and then with one of his famous rages. He did not intend to soften what he called battle's "awful

animal indecencies," and he pursued that vision of combat ardently-with steadfastness and with the passionate integrity that characterized his life.

Writing Teacher Wins 2000 James Jones First Novel Fellowship

Steven Phillip Policoff's work-in-progress, "Beautiful Somewhere Else," was selected from among a record 566 entries as the winner of the James Jones First Novel Fellowship for the year 2000. For the first time, the amount of the prize awarded was \$5,000.

Policoff was honored Oct. 28 at the 10th Annual James Jones Literary Society Symposium at the University of Illinois Library in Urbana-Champaign.

"[The award] made me believe in the book," Policoff said to the audience. "There are people who care about writing."

Policoff is a master teacher of writing in the General Studies Program at New York University and lives in Manhattan with his wife and daughter.

His children's book, "Cesar's Amazing Journey," (Viking) was published in 1999. He is also the author of "The Dreamer's Companion" (Chicago Review Press, 1997) and the co-author of "Real Toads in Imaginary Gardens: Suggestions and Starting Points for Young Creative Writers" (Chicago Review Press, 1991). His articles and essays have appeared in Parents, New Age Journal, Ladies' Home Journal and other magazines.

Judges for the 2000 James Jones First Novel Fellowship were J. Michael Lennon, a Jones biographer and vice president for academic affairs at Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; Patricia Heaman, chair of the English Department at Wilkes, which conducts the competition for the Society; writer Kevin Heisler, and Kaylie Jones, author and daughter of James Jones.

Entries for the 2001 James Jones First Novel Fellowship already are being accepted. For rules and guidelines, contact the English Department at Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Pa 18766, or

visit the Web site at <http://wilkes.edu/~english/jones.html>.

The 1999 winner of the James Jones First Novel Fellowship, Louise Wareham, received her award check from Kaylie Jones last fall in New York City. Wareham attended the 2000 symposium in Urbana to be formally recognized for her accomplishment and to read a passage from her first novel, Since You Ask.

Save The Dates For Future Symposia

Symposia dates for the next two years have been set and plans are underway for the programs at Robinson on Nov. 10, 2001, and at the American University of Paris on June 22, 2002.

The return to James Jones' Robinson, Ill., hometown for the symposium at Lincoln Trail College corresponds with his 80th birthday, the 60th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the 50th anniversary of the publication of *From Here To Eternity*.

Dick Grogg of the Southeastern Illinois Heritage Foundation has submitted a proposal to have an Elderhostel program with an expanded James Jones focus also tied into the regular symposium. Elderhostel Area Director Kay Smith visited Robinson in December to learn more about the area and the potential program.

Another feature to this year's symposium that will add to the Jones lore that will be enhanced with the publication of *James Jones and The Handy Writers' Colony* by George Hendrick, Helen Howe and Don Sackrider is a reading or production of *The Last Retreat*, a play based in a writing colony by Jon Shiota, the last member of the Handy Writers' Colony and author of several plays and the novels, *Lucky Come Hawaii* and *Pineapple White*.

In addition to hosting the Paris symposium in 2002 and helping to plan it, the American University in Paris Vice President and Dean Michael Vincent has written that "we are sincerely interested in your proposal and, in the interval since our last communication, we have investigated various resource issues and recruited a host committee of interested faculty who will be invaluable in providing assistance in planning the symposium."

Continuing, Vincent said, "Some complementary activities have been proposed, such as a walking tour of Paris sites frequented by Jones and other American literary expatriates, and a wine and cheese reception at the Abbey Bookshop, where Kaylie Jones has done a reading. Other events are limited only by time and, of course, budget."

The American Council for International Study will be offering air fare, hotel and some ground transportation at group rates for symposium attendees from the Society.

-- Ray Elliott

2000 Symposium Provides Thoughtful Insights

The 10th annual James Jones Literary Society Symposium at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library in Urbana, Ill. last October began with the recognition of two First Novel Fellowship winners.

Kaylie Jones introduced the 1999 First Novel Fellowship Award winner, Louise Wareham of New York City. Although the 1999 symposium was in June 1999 in Long Island, N.Y., the honor was not presented to Wareham until October 1999 when the winner was selected and the request made that she attend the 2000 symposium to be honored publicly and to read from her winning novel, *Since You Ask*.

"(The award) really helped me a lot," Wareham said at the 2000 symposium before reading a brief passage of her work. "(Since I actually got the award in October) I've been able to live with

it for a while. It gave me the push I needed because I was getting a bit exhausted (with the writing). It's also given people a lot of respect for me."

Jones then introduced Stephen Policoff, also of New York, and presented the Society's first \$5,000 award for the James Jones First Novel Fellowship for 2000. Policoff teaches writing at New York University and has a 5-year-old child, who kept walking around their home, saying, "Daddy won a pri-i-ze; Daddy won a pri-i-ze!"

"(The award) made me believe in the book," Policoff said to the audience. "There are people who care about writing."

His novel is titled, *Beautiful Somewhere Else*.

The first panel of the morning was "James Jones and the Illinois Connection," featuring JJLS archivist/historian Tom Wood of the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) and Barbara Jones, rare book and special collections librarian at the U of I in Urbana.

Wood talked about the Handy Writers' Colony papers archived at UIS. He worked for five years on the collection-some "42 linear feet of archives," and the organization of the material was completed in 1989.

"It's remarkable in the depth of the documentation," he said. "You can see the origins of *From Here To Eternity*, including character sketches written on the back of Harry's [Handy] well inspection forms."

Jones oversees one of the top rare book and special collection libraries and has a particular interest in modern American literature.

"When I did the Jones exhibit and worked on the *From Here To Eternity* manuscript, I got goosebumps," she said.

The exhibit was entitled, "Old Soldiers Never Die; They Write War Novels." In addition to photographs, one of the two original manuscripts of *Eternity* (the other is at UIS), the Judy Garland-dedicated copy of *The Pistol*, letters, etc. make up the collection. It focuses on censorship issues, how one conducts research of this type and how scholars do research on James Jones.

The library places great importance on access. "People use the materials; it's not a museum," Jones said.

UI professor emeritus of English and the first president of the Society, George Hendrick, moderated the next session: "The Colony in Marshall, Ill." He also read comments about the Colony and Lowney Handy from longtime Society board member Helen Howe, who was scheduled to appear but unable to attend the symposium.

Howe said of Handy: "She didn't appear to hate, but she did dislike with a vengeance."

Panelist and newly elected JJLS president Don Sackrider met Lowney and James Jones in 1947 after Sackrider's mother insisted he meet Lowney because he wanted to be a writer. The Colony started in 1950, and Sackrider was its second student.

"Jim was finishing *Eternity*, and then interest in the Colony exploded," he said.

Sackrider left the Colony in 1953. "But as you see, we could *never* leave the Colony," he said.

Hendrick, Howe and Sackrider recently co-authored *James Jones and the Handy Writers' Colony*, to be published by Southern Illinois University Press in April.

The other speaker on this panel was author and playwright Jon Shirota of Hacienda Heights, Calif., who was "enthralled and captivated by *From Here To Eternity*." He became the last student at the Colony in 1963. Prior to that, he had corresponded with Lowney, who had sent him some 300 letters.

He described the time when he had completed a manuscript he thought was as good or better than *Eternity*, and Lowney instructed him to throw it away. Shirota just went along and ignored her advice, until she wrote back again that he would never become a writer until he threw that manuscript away, which he finally did.

When she finally invited him to the Colony, he quit a good-paying job to take this chance on himself. At the Colony, he said, "My job was to get up and write for three hours, then mow the lawn (several acres)."

When he published his first book, *Lucky Come Hawaii*, he wanted to dedicate it to Lowney Handy. She said he should dedicate it to his parents. So they determined that a flip of a coin would determine the dedication, and that is how the book got dedicated to Lowney Handy.

"This lady had changed my life," Shirota said, who has never forgotten the influence she had on him and the help she gave him.

He still has a picture of her on his wall today. "She's always looking down at me," he added.

The first session after a lunch break was an overview of Jones' war writings as a prelude to keynote speaker Gerald Linderman. (*See his remarks above.*)

J. Michael Lennon of Wilkes University began this session by explaining the "evolution of a soldier" concept, quoting from *WWII*: "They cannot understand how we can hate war and like it at the same time."

George Hendrick described a Jones letter to his brother, Jeff, about getting injured on Guadalcanal. Hendrick also read a poetic description by Jones about being injured that appears in *To Reach Eternity*.

Hendrick also cited a passage Burroughs Mitchell wrote to Jones on Aug. 1, 1958, about writing *The Thin Red Line*.

UIS English professor Judy Everson said that in light of the fact that WWII has resurfaced recently as a hot topic, Jones gives the statistics of that war individual faces and stories.

"Jones is reviled by some and revered by others," she said.

But his contributions, she added, were numerous:

- He reflected influences of Stephen Crane but with some differences regarding the individual soldier within the group.
- He paid tribute to Thomas Wolfe with disillusioned romanticism.
- Jones' fiction accelerated the trend of war writing. He used language that was the true kind of language heard by such individuals.
- He used a lot of one-syllable, four-letter last names (particularly in *The Thin Red Line*) to imply brief, concussive, interchangeable, repetitive characters.
- And he focused on naturalism-the individual up against forces he doesn't understand and can't control.

Everson then shared a quote from Irwin Shaw about Jones: "He will be the voice of the inarticulate Army."

After Professor Linderman's keynote address focusing on James Jones' work from the perspective of World War II and Vietnam, the afternoon concluded with an educational and entertaining chronology of another art form that was greatly affected by World War II: music.

The Dixieland jazz band, Medicare 7, 8 or 9, is a perennial favorite around the University of Illinois. Retired music professor and World War II veteran Dan Perrino led a discussion about the types of music and songs that were popular during the war years and how they reflected many emotions of the times.

Songs included "I'll Be Seeing You," "The Last Time I Saw Paris," "White Cliffs of Dover," "We'll Meet Again" (a Jones favorite), "Stardust" and "Sentimental Journey."

Some of the musicians told of their musical experiences during the war. Jack May of Arizona was in a German POW camp and recalled how he slowly and painstakingly making a reed for an old clarinet by whittling down a hunk of wood with a bottle cap.

Other musicians of the band included Stan Rahn (clarinet and vocals), John O'Connor (trumpet), Don Heitler (piano), Warren Felts (tuba and string bass), John Bromley (drums) and Dena Vermette (vocalist).

-- Vanessa Faurie

Work Progresses On Jones' Papers At University Of Texas

Editor's Note: New Society board member and University of Illinois Rare Book and Special Collections librarian Barbara Jones reported about her recent visit to the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, which owns a large collection of the papers of James Jones, and includes comments about the response to the recent exhibit in the University of Illinois Rare Book Room of the author's work, papers and photographs on display during the Jones symposium in late October.

The news from Texas is good. Two people from the Manuscripts Department came in specially to see me on Saturday morning. I was taken into the stacks to see the boxes of James Jones materials. They were neatly sitting on shelves in acid-free boxes. The contents were neatly placed in the boxes.

Some of them aren't processed yet, but they are housed correctly. The tax records appear to be in their original boxes, and the librarians told me they weren't as high a priority, which seemed logical to me. They are focusing on the literary manuscripts, photos and correspondence.

(If anyone knows of a scholar who is going to be studying the publishing history of Jones' work any time soon, it might be good to let them know in Texas, so they can focus on the tax records.)

Then they showed me the processing. The cataloger is Bob Taylor, who said we can contact him any time for a progress report. His boss, John Kirkpatrick, was also there. He invited the JJS to meet in Austin, perhaps to celebrate the completion of the processing. But I told him that for the next two years, at least, we are all set. He assured me that the processing would be done much sooner than that!

Taylor's desk was completely filled with Jones papers, newspaper clippings, etc. They had photocopied the newspaper clippings onto acid-free paper, which is good. They showed me the preliminary listing of the materials, which will be downloaded onto their Web site. They said I could have a rough draft, but that if I could wait a few weeks, the finished product would be up on the Web.

I totally approved, from a librarian's point of view, in the methodology they are using for their processing and that they are putting the holdings on a database that will then go up on the Web. This is how we do things at (the University of) Illinois, and it's pretty standard around the world at this point.

Kirkpatrick reiterated that once the processing is done, he would be happy to fly a few of us down there to see the finished product. I think we should take him up on that. He wasn't specific about who it should be, but I would think Kaylie, for sure, and maybe one or two officers of the board.

I was impressed by their commitment, late though it may be. I think we can feel re-assured that the papers are being stored properly, cataloged properly and will be accessible to a larger public in a matter of weeks. I will keep in touch with the folks at the Ransom Center.

Also, I must tell you that we are getting incredibly positive responses on our exhibit. I think we should try to publish a catalog. It will cost a lot, though, but I just wanted to let you know I am thinking along those lines and will try to figure out where to get the money. It could be a catalog not only of the exhibit, but could also contain a checklist of Jones materials in other repositories, thus pulling together, for scholars, one reference book for doing research on James Jones.

-- **Barbara Jones**

Letters To The Society

Marshall Native Remembers Jones, Colony

From Society Archivist Tom Wood: I recently exchanged some e-mails with Lee Butcher, who grew up in Marshall and knew Jones and studied writing with Lowney Handy. He had found information on the Handy Colony Collection at the University of Illinois at Springfield, which includes a "skit" he wrote and some letters he wrote to Lowney.

Included in Butcher's e-mail messages of July 17-18, 2000, was an interesting reminiscence of his association with Jones and Handy, which he consented to share with readers:

"I met Lowney in a roundabout way through Jim Jones. My father was the chief of police