

Claiborne Clippings

October 2009

Claiborne Society

2009 Reunion

Washington, D.C.

Friday June 19, 2009

Mount Vernon and the Capitol

The Claiborne Society had a full and fascinating day on Friday, under the guidance and planning of Society President Will Claiborne. We began with a pleasant ride by motor coach to Mount Vernon, the estate of George Washington just across the Potomac in Virginia. Mount Vernon was extensively and faithfully restored in 1999, due in no small measure to the determination and resources mustered by the Ladies of Mount Vernon. Our guide to the estate was John Marshall, a retired gentleman who was a gracious and knowledgeable host. Inside the Visitor Center he showed us a scale model of the house and described the restoration process.

At the main house, we observed painted walls with sand incorporated in the paint, scored to create a kind of faux brick exterior. Inside, layers of old paint were painstakingly removed to reveal the dining rooms historic, surprisingly intense shade of Verdegris green and landscape murals, depicting George Washington's identity as a farmer. The entrance hall featured yellow pine, stained and grained like mahogany.

Washington welcomed many house guests for weeks at a time, and perhaps for this reason he and Martha had a private staircase between their bedroom down to the study. After glimpsing Washington's bed where he died of "Quinzy's disease" (tonsillitis?), we descended the stairs to the study, where we were surrounded by the Old and New Testaments, many classics, and literature from the Scottish Enlightenment.

John Marshall summed up the genius of George Washington as a leader who recognized that power must not be abused. To that end, he resigned his military commission at Annapolis immediately after the Revolutionary war and was instrumental in establishing a civil government to which the military must always remain subservient. Following the model of the Roman General Cincinnatus, Washington

returned from the presidency to farm his estate.

Following lunch at Mount Vernon, we returned to the District and spent an afternoon inside our nation's Capitol. Congressman John Barrow, Democrat of the 12th District in Georgia (which includes Savannah), supplied two legislative aides from his office, each of whom led half of our group on an informative and fascinating tour of the Capitol. Walking through the recently constructed Visitors' Center, we entered the Rotunda where we observed the rich statuary and murals and were guided through their history.

The highlight of our time in the Capitol was our special admission to the Lindy Claiborne Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room. The uniqueness of this opportunity can hardly be overstated. This room is simply never open to the public and it was only through the graciousness our cousin, Corinne ("Lindy") Claiborne Boggs that we gained admission to this beautiful, historical room. Our hostess was Susan Davis, who referred to herself tongue-in-cheek as the "Clubhouse Director". Ms. Davis was ill with a cold but she came in despite being under the weather to show us this very special place. The Lindy Boggs room was historically the office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. It fell into disuse and had been relegated to a storage facility when Lindy Boggs began her term. The women of the House had no ladies room and no place to rest near the House Chamber, Representative Boggs requested a lounge for female members from then-Speaker Tip O'Neill, and he offered this suite of rooms, telling Rep. Boggs in effect to make what she could of it. The upshot of her efforts is a retreat, beautifully furnished in period late 18th and early 19th century Empire furniture including an authentic chaise and the very sofa where John Quincy Adams died. Adams served in the House following his term as President, he fell ill during a legislative session, and declined to be transported home or to a hospital, declaring he would rather die in the Capitol.

When this lovely suite later was relegated to being a storage room, the sofa found its way to the Supreme Court and a beautiful crystal chandelier to the Indian Treaty Room at the White House. Through the efforts of Congresswoman Boggs, supported by Speaker O'Neill, these historic furnishings were returned to their rightful home. The atmosphere of the Lindy Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room is quiet, lovely, gracious, and filled with history. Our group was indeed fortunate to experience this special room on a private tour. We owe our gratitude to Lindy Boggs and to the room's director, Susan Davis.



We then continued our tour of the Capitol, and sat in the gallery the House Chamber for a few minutes listening to an arcane debate on funding that focused less on the substance of the issues than on procedural rules of the House. Nevertheless, it was a good time to get off our feet and experience the solemn beauty of the House Chamber.

Saturday, June 20, 2009

Our day began with the business meeting – minutes provided below. Following these Ed Ayres presented a talk on Claiborne's and Cliborn's in the Revolution. Since many members had supplied names and information on their ancestor, Ed was able to present much good information on specific ancestor's roles in our founding conflict. Descent charts sent by Sue Forbes on Cliborn's showed ancestors who had served in the Revolution highlighted with asterisks. These charts were made available to members in our hospitality suite during the reunion weekend. Ed covered much of the information available on Claiborne participation in the conflict from various publications including Claiborne/Cliborn Records by Lolita Bissel and the Dorman Book.

After our focus on Mt. Vernon the day before, Ed's talk on the various roles of officers both in the militias and the Continental Army, as well as the suppliers and regular foot soldiers, gave us a comprehensive view of the personnel engaged in the Revolution.

The Saturday Meeting was followed by lunch and sight seeing on our own, or a visit to the Society of the Cincinnati. This Society is the oldest military hereditary society in the United States and in many ways has been a model for other hereditary societies which came after it. It began as the brain child of General Henry Knox and was supported by George Washington who served as the first President General of the Society.

The basis for the creation of the society was to provide a means of ongoing fellowship for the officers of the Continental Army and to develop charitable funds to assist the families of original members. The Society also acted on behalf of the Army's officers in an effort to secure military pensions for surviving Revolutionary War veterans.

Located about a mile from the Hamilton Crowne Plaza where our Reunion was held, the District of Columbia Headquarters of the Society is housed in the Anderson House. This elegant early 20th century home was donated to the society of the Cincinnati by the widow of the diplomat Lars Anderson III in 1937.

The Anderson House is in the heart of DuPont Circle and was built as the winter home of Lars Anderson III and his wife in 1908, so that the rising diplomat could entertain American and foreign dignitaries and the capitol's high society in a grand setting. For 32 years Lars and

Isabel were among the most popular hosts in the capital. During the Washington social season, generally between New Year's Day and Easter, the Andersons hosted diplomatic and inaugural receptions, formal dinners and luncheons, concerts and performances of Isabel's plays. Today, besides providing the venue for the Society of the Cincinnati's Spring and Fall meetings and other social events, it stands as lovely exhibit of art and architecture of the early 20th and earlier centuries.

Following the afternoons event our Claiborne Reunion Banquet provided the grand finale to a weekend of fellowship and presentations of significant historical interest. Members began assembling in the lobby to our banquet hall at 6:00 to visit and relax with a drink or glass of wine prior to dinner. Shortly we were joined by the evening's speaker, Cokie Roberts, and her mother, Lindy Claiborne Boggs. This was a special follow-up to our visit to the Capitol on Friday and the Lindy Boggs Reading Room. We were all impressed with the talk given there by our guide regarding the good things that Representative Lindy Boggs had done, and particularly with the creation of this space as a place where the female members could retreat to rest and conduct special business among themselves.

Cokie gave a most interesting and entertaining talk at the end of the meal highlighting the roles of Claiborne's in the Revolution and Congress, and invited us to consider holding a future reunion in her home town of New Orleans. With that and our board meeting the next morning, the Claiborne Reunion of 2009 was added to a history of celebrating family and history at happy gatherings.

Memorial Stone to Thomas Claiborne and Sarah Fenn

The Claiborne Society is erecting a memorial stone to Thomas Claiborne I (son of the first William Claiborne in Virginia) and his wife Sarah Fenn in the graveyard of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in New Kent County, Virginia. Any contributions to this project would be welcome.

Thomas Claiborne is said to have been slain by Indians in 1683, and was buried on his father's Romancoke plantation. His deteriorating gravestone and remains were moved to the Claiborne family plot in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery in 1926.

Sarah Fenn's gravestone was later found at Brickhouse plantation, New Kent County, where she lived with her second husband. However, the stone had been removed from her burial site and placed in nearby woods where it lies cracked in half but still legible.

It has long been the wish of the Claiborne Society to restore and protect Sarah's stone by removing it to St.

Peter's, Hollywood Cemetery, or some other appropriate site, but the current owner of the property (and his father before him) has made it clear that he will not allow the stone to be relocated off his land which he considers the appropriate place for it. (He says he might consider letting the Claiborne Society clean and repair the stone if returned to his property.)

In light of the property owner's decision, the Claiborne Society voted at its last annual meeting to erect a stone to the couple's memory at St. Peter's, where Sarah (and possibly Thomas) were members.

If anyone would like to help with this project, please send your contribution to our treasurer, Mary Ann Gilman at P.O. Box 5, Port Haywood, VA 23138. When completed, photographs of the memorial stone will be published in the newsletter, and members are encouraged to view it on site. St. Peter's Church, built in the early 1700s with curvilinear parapeting on its gable ends, is worth a visit in itself.

Business Meeting Saturday, June 20, 2009

I. INVOCATION & CALL TO ORDER.

1. ATTENDEES. Those officers in attendance at the Business meeting were: Will Claiborne, President; Clai Bachmann, Reunion 2009 chair; Susan W. H. Rura, Secretary; Mary Ann Gilman, Treasurer; Curly Moore, Archivist; Alex Waldrop, Research; Bill Bissell, Registrar; and Elizabeth Guy Richardson, Sarah Fenn Project.

2. AGENDA. Will Claiborne called the meeting to order and distributed the Agenda. Past president Dr. Tom Sale led the invocation with the prayer used by Rev. Daniel Gregory Claiborne Butts at the 1907 Jamestown Tricentennial.

II. PROGRAM

1. LECTURE. Ed Ayers gave an informative talk on the subject of "CLAIBORNES & CLIBORNS IN THE REVOLUTION". A paraphrase of some of the content follows... There were differences in military service and the historical records available depending upon whether the individual was an Officer, in the Militia, or in regular Army.

2. CLAIBORNES. Generally in the 1700s, Claibornes were not warriors. There were 2 Officers: BULLER and RICHARD. BULLER was in the Second Virginia Regiment, Colonial Line and was at the Battle of Brandywine [Sept. 11, 1777] and at Valley Forge. He eventually became a staff officer, attained the rank of Captain, and was given credit for 8 years service. 5333 acres were given to his heirs.

RICHARD was a 1st Lieutenant in the 1st Artillery, [Col. Charles] Harrison's Brigade, was Deputy Quartermaster General for General Nathaniel Greene, and attained the rank of Captain. He was awarded 3555 acres of land. He joined The Society of the Cincinnati. In 1787, he wrote a

treatise for the Polish people on how to grow tobacco. He was also a private secretary to W.C.C. Claiborne.

HENRY Claiborne was a private in Buller's regiment in Prince George County [Va.]. There were 3 militia officers: AUGUSTINE [Angus] of Windsor Shades, DANDRIDGE, a major, from King William County, and THOMAS of Brunswick County. NATHANIEL and THOMAS were Seamen at Portsmouth-Norfolk.

3. CLIBORNS. There were militia officers who were descendants of John of Dale Parish who submitted claims to the Government. They signed with an "X", which signified a lack of education. They were drafted, moved to Bedford County (near Lynchburg), were in Buford's regiment, marched and marched, driving hogs, and eventually some moved to Tennessee.

In December 1780 Benedict Arnold invaded Virginia, whose forces stood up against the British at Petersburg. LEONARD, the eldest son of Jonas, was at the Battle of Petersburg [April 25, 1781] and fought with Von Steuben. He married Frances Tanner.

WILLIAM [Clibourn] had 4 3-month tours, serving 3 times as a "teenage substitute" for his father [George] and once for neighbor Nicholas Robertson. In his second tour, he was with the Marquis De Lafayette's troops at the Siege of Yorktown [Sept. 29--Oct. 19, 1781].

4. REFERENCE. Sources of information are from: Janice Abercrombie's 3 volume book, VIRGINIA PUBLIC CLAIMS by Hyperion Press; from HISTORICAL REGISTER of VIRGINIANS IN THE REVOLUTION, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, 1775-1783 by John H. Gwathmey; and CLIBORN-CLAIBORNE RECORDS by Lolita Bissell.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

1. TREASURER. Mary Ann Gilman, Treasurer, presented her report, giving # paying dues, # holding life membership, interest generated from 2 CDs, and amount in general fund. Expenses for this reunion, as yet, have not been included, but are coming in as expected. Two other funds are the Bissell Memorial Fund and Nidd Fund. The carryover treasury balance has existed since New Orleans [1999] when entertainment expenses were absorbed by our hostesses [Mrs. Boggs, etc.].

2. RESEARCH REPORT. Dr. Alex Waldrop distributed multi-color charts showing which of the 12, 25, 37, or 67 DNA-marker tests have been done. These were correlated with the pertinent genealogy. As of October 2007, in his last report, there were 38 donors, 33 with 25-markers and 5 with 67-markers.

Pending is extension of #-markers to next level for several ancestral lines. Wishful thought would be: to have 1 more Norfolk group donor [Norfolk haplotype is "very rare"] and a donor from descent line of Thomas, [4th] son of John of Dale Parish. Appreciation was extended to Sue Forbes, Curly Moore, and others who funded the tests.

Queries from the audience included: how the company Family Tree DNA was chosen to conduct our tests ["leader in the field" in 2001 when tests began]; what the error rate for DNA tests is ["very small"]; and whether mixed-heritage tests have been done [one donor of part-African ancestry was a mismatch to the Claiborne markers].

IV. OLD BUSINESS.

1. SARAH FENN TOMBSTONE. The tombstone of Sarah Fenn Claiborne Bray lies on the ground at the edge of a farmer's field and cannot be permanently removed from the site. The owner will allow the stone to move for cleaning and repair, which would cost \$300-\$500. A new tombstone, with pertinent information, could be erected at St. Peter's [her parish church] churchyard, costing between \$2500-\$3000.

Dr. Tom Claiborne made a motion to spend \$1000 to photograph and repair the tombstone. The vote was unanimously positive. To place a new stone at St. Peter's, the vote was 13-4 in favor. Elizabeth Guy Richardson has spearheaded this project.

2. SWEET HALL GRAVEYARD. There has been a "lack of response" from the owners of Sweet Hall who have done a poor job of maintaining the cemetery plot. It seems they are not interested in help from our group. Was the place 'for sale' at one time? Questions remain.

V. NEW BUSINESS.

1. STREETER'S BOOK. At the New England Historic Genealogical Society is a book by Sebastian Streeter giving a biography of William Claiborne. It was written before 1864 and the author may have had access to records that have since been destroyed. There are 2 manuscripts: one giving his full life; the other his life in Maryland.

Alex Waldrop visited the Society, examined, and photographed the book. He took 600 photos, which have been stored on CD. An 1873 journal, the New England Historical and Genealogical REGISTER, vol. 27, has a synopsis of Streeter's work.

This is a project for further scrutiny.

2. EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS. We want to send thank you notes to those who contributed to our enjoyment of Reunion events: to the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union; to Rep. John Barrow; to The Society of the Cincinnati; and to Cokie Roberts. Additionally a thank-you to Ms. Davis in the Lindy Claiborne Boggs room at the Capitol would be appropriate.

It would also be appreciated if photos and greetings could be sent to Jill Price.

3. FIRST REUNION. Greetings were extended to those members who were attending their first Claiborne reunion. This includes: Deborah Lee Sneed Peabody, and husband Alan, from Greenville, South Carolina; Ann Claiborne Case, from Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, and brother Robert Claiborne Case, Jr. from Stayton, Oregon; Corinne R. Middleton & Lennie, from Jefferson, South Carolina; Portia Mitchell Newman from North Carolina and son Michael Sauls.

4. CLAIBORNE JOURNAL. Copies of the Claiborne Journal are available for sale.

5. 2011 REUNION. Sites for our next reunion were considered. Possible locations were: England; Nashville; Tidewater Virginia [Hampton]; New Orleans [last reunion 1999]; Richmond [last reunion 2001]; or even Chicago or St. Louis ["to expand membership"].

An open discussion ensued. Hampton will celebrate its 400th anniversary in 2010 [Tom Sale]. England has Newland Hall in Essex [Alex Waldrop] and Levens Hall with the Claiborne shield [S. Rura/P. Clayborn].

[Newland Hall was the home of Jane Elliott & John Butler, parents of Elizabeth Butler who married William Claiborne.] New Orleans has the Mansion, the Boggs house [Will Claiborne]. Relevant historic topics would be the Battle of New Orleans or the Louisiana Purchase [Alex Waldrop].

Final decision will be made at the Board meeting with the new officers.

VI. CLAIBORNE T. SMITH AWARD. This special award was deemed to go to past president Jane Boylin. Her exceptional skill in organizing and hosting two Claiborne Clan reunions, in Nashville [2005] and Jamestown, Virginia [2007], were worthy of merit. All applauded her achievement.

VII. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS. President Will Claiborne presented the slate of officers for the Claiborne Clan. All have affirmed to stand for election. The candidates are: President, Will Claiborne; Vice President, Patricia Clayborn; Secretary, Susan W.H. Rura; Mary Ann Gilman, Treasurer; Registrar, Bill Bissell; Research, Dr. Alex Waldrop; Archives, Curly [Vera] Moore; and Publications, Ann Claiborne Case.

There were no nominations from the floor. The vote was taken, all saying aye. The officers will serve for the next 2 years, until our next reunion.

VIII. WRAP-UP.

1. TOUR. The afternoon tour of The Society of the Cincinnati will begin at 2 p.m. We will meet at Anderson House, 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., which is near Dupont Circle. We can walk or take taxis.

2. REUNION 2009 PHOTOS. Those taking photos of Reunion 2009 can send them by CD to Bill Bissell.

3. GENEALOGY. Descent charts for John of Dale Parish are available. Alex Waldrop has limited copies.

IX. ADJOURNMENT.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Williams Harrod Rura
Secretary, The Claiborne Clan

Business Meeting Sunday, June 21, 2009

1. ATTENDEES. Those in attendance at the Board meeting were: Will Claiborne, President, [wc]; Patricia Clayborn, Vice-President, [pc]; Susan W. H. Rura, Secretary, [swhr]; Mary Ann Gilman, Treasurer, [mag]; Curly Moore, Archivist, [cm]; Clai Bachmann, Reunion 2009 chair, [cb]; Alex Waldrop, Research, [aw]; Bill Bissell, Registrar, [bb]; Ann Claiborne Case, Publications, [acc]; and Elizabeth Guy Richardson, Sarah Fenn Project, [egr].

2. AGENDA. Will Claiborne, proposed the agenda: Old and New Projects; Recap Reunion; and Next Reunion. Included as topics are: Sarah Fenn, Sweet Hall, Alex W.'s manuscript, sending Claiborne T. Smith award, and Thank

You notes.

II. OLD & NEW PROJECTS.

1. SARAH FENN TOMBSTONE. With an affirmative vote at the Business meeting [June 20, 2009], the Claiborne Society was authorized to undertake the cleaning and restoration of the Fenn tombstone, returning it to its present location on private property. Elizabeth Richardson will act on this and submit the bill cost to the Clan treasurer.

A second proposal was to pursue the details required to replicate the tombstone with its pertinent information, which could be placed in a visible public location. The wording and design were discussed and decisions made.

The coat-of-arms would not be imprinted. "Immigrant", an important word genealogically, would stay. "Moved to" would be changed to "removed to", but better might be "reinterred in" [note from swhr]. Sarah Fenn's second marriage would be stated as "married 2nd to". New Kent would be completed as "New Kent County".

The choices of stone were granite, limestone, and marble. The effect of "weathering" was considered equal for limestone and granite; pricing was about \$2700. Marble was more expensive. No one wanted a granite stone. Pricing for marble would be secured; then a decision would be made.

It would be wise to send pertinent Sarah Fenn Project information to interested members, such as Nellie Richardson.

2. TOMBSTONES AT 'SWEET HALL'. The gravestones continue to deteriorate at the Sweet Hall cemetery. Has the property been for sale? What is the status of ownership of 'Sweet Hall'? It was thought that Jane Boylin was pursuing this. [cm] The best place to consult would be the Virginia Historical Resources organization.

3. STREETER BOOK.

[aw] So far 2 Claiborne Clan members have expressed interest and offered support for the project. It may be that we wish to hire someone to render assistance with this endeavor. [aw] My strategy at present is "do a little and see how it goes".

III. WASHINGTON D.C. REUNION....2009.

1. CRITIQUE. So far, the comments have been favorable. The hotel, its accommodations and location, has been a contributor to everyone's enjoyment. The speakers and organized tours were exceptional.

2. CLAIBORNE T. SMITH AWARD. The considered recipient of this Award was Jane Boylin, who could not attend this reunion. Clai Bachmann will handle the sending of this award to her.

3. HONORARIUMS/MONETARY

CONTRIBUTIONS. [cb] Payment has been made to Ed Ayers, our Revolutionary War speaker. To the Mount Vernon Ladies association, it was suggested we give \$100. All concurred.

4. THANK YOU NOTES. Thank you notes must be written to: the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union; Rep. John Barrow; The Society of the Cincinnati; and Cokie Roberts. Additionally a thank-you to Ms. Davis in the Lindy Claiborne Boggs room at the Capitol would be appropriate.

IV. REUNION 2011.

1. LOCATION. [wc] There are three likely places for our next reunion: England, New Orleans, and Richmond. We should plan a mini-reunion for 2012 to England; we want to keep our connection with the King's Lynn Tour Guides.

Our last New Orleans Reunion was 1999. We need to reconnect with our membership in Mississippi and New Orleans. It is time to revisit. The Reunion 2011 site is New Orleans. Hotel accommodations can be at The Monteleone or Royal Sonesta. The time to visit would be September-November [2011].

Within 90 days, a reunion committee could be formed. These reunion committees are a source of "fellowship, fun, and education".

2. PROGRAM. Is there a Clyborn connection in New Orleans? No. Our historical focus could be: Why did Claibornes/Cliborns leave Virginia and move to other areas of the country? [swhr] Cokie Roberts, in last night's lecture, addressed this subject. If pursuing politics, moving beyond the sphere of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe was a wise political move.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS.

1. NEWSLETTER. Ann Claiborne Case, newly elected editor, will connect with Dan Boylin, previous editor, to augment a smooth transition and handover of tasks. Bill Bissell says he will mail a CD of the Washington Reunion photos in about 30 days, by the end of July 2009. Two thirds [2/3] of the Clan membership have electronic mailing. Mailings for the newsletter should be sent to CASEAC45@aol.com .

2. TREASURER. The treasurer [mag], would like to modify the dues payment year, e.g. "paid for 2007-2008" to "paid for 2008". This would result in simplification of bookkeeping notation. Does this cause a problem with the Bylaws?

Bill Bissell will submit a bill for reimbursement for mailings of the new membership booklet. We all approve of the expenditure as we sit in possession of our new directory.

3. MEMBERSHIP. [wc] To reconnect with our New Orleans membership, it would be easy to send a card to them saying simply 'We're still here!'

4. INTERNET SITE. [wc] Our website is our best tool for advertising activities and connecting with our membership.

VI. ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Williams Harrod Rura
Secretary, The Claiborne Clan

Contributors:

Many thanks go to Curly Moore, Clai Bachman, Ruth Claiborne, Bill Bissell and Dan Boylin for their help and contributions to this newsletter.

Photos are compliments of the Bissell's, the Middleton's, Alex Waldrop and the Peabody's.