The Jones Family

Robert Jones, Sr.

Robert “Bob” Jones Sr. and Beatrice Anderson were married in Alma, NE March 14, 1917 where they farmed northeast of Alma. In 1923 they moved with their three children, Loell, Lyle and Grant to a 1,000-acre ranch in northwest Cheyenne County, Kansas. Five more children were added to the family, Evelyn, Calvin, Raymond, Bob, Jr. and Caryl.

Robert L. Jones purchased the Rosenkrans Ranch in 1937 from the Federal Land Bank through a foreclosure. In March of 1938, the family moved to the Rosenkrans Ranch, 11 miles south of Laird on the Arickaree River. Soon all but four members of the family came down with scarlet fever and the entire family was quarantined for six weeks. They were milking 20 cows so the milk had to be fed to the pigs. A neighbor boy brought groceries for them. Grant, Loell, Raymond and Bea nursed the sick and took care of the chores, so they all survived.

The children were raised during the depression, one World War and two conflicts. Life on the ranch was always busy and, with eight kids, never boring. Bea and Bob never knew how many would come down the stairs for breakfast on a Sunday morning—someone was always bringing home a friend or two. During the busy summer months, there were as many as 20 for breakfast and more at the noon meal. Bea was known for her skillful cooking. She never knew who would be at the table at any meal but no one ever went away hungry.

Bob and Bea were active in the Laird Community Club and the Clough Valley Church until they were physically unable to attend. In the late fifties, Bob was involved in establishing the Farm Bureau in Yuma County and very instrumental in it’s success.

The interest in ranching, created by their father, dominated the careers of the boys. As life long members of the community, Bob and Bea became residents of Cedardale Health Care Center in 1991. Bob passed away in 1992 and Bea in 1995.

“When people my age and a little bit older and a little bit younger die off, there’s nobody around who’ll know the life we lived. There’s no way, I don’t know if we were any better having lived that type of life. We just have knowledge of our own time. That’s all you people would have. You’ll have knowledge of a different time.”
Robert Jones, Jr.

Robert Jones, Jr. or Bob, as he was commonly known, was born April 1, 1934 to Robert Sr. and Beatrice Jones. He was raised on the ranch, and attended the nearby rural school and graduated from Wray High School. In 1955 married Barbara Jane Parker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Parker of Wray. They had two children, Mark and Sherry.

After his father retired and moved to Wray, Bob took over management of the ranch and purchased the home place in 1968. He leased more land and farmed and raised cattle. A skilled farmer and ranch Bob was a steward of the land, believing he should preserve it for further generations, thus being presented with the following awards for his accomplishments:

- 1985—Outstanding Conservationist by the Yuma Co. Soil Conservation District
- 1986—Outstanding Conservationist for the Republican River Waterland
- 1989—He and son Mark received the Wildlife Runner Up Award, presented by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Colorado Wildlife Commission.
- 1990—Yuma Co. Soil Conservation District and Soil Conservation Achievement Award

Bob and Janie lived in the large farm house, which they restored. Paying homage to the history of the house they took the time to restore the cane ceiling in the sod portion of the home and remodeled the original two-story home stuccoing the outside and texturing the inside walls. Glass windows were installed in the open porch upstairs.

In 1972 Bob was leveling a ridge for an irrigation and uncovered some bones, which he knew were not cow bones. Jones stopped clearing the site and called Jack Miller, a former anthropology instructor at Colorado State University. Along with his father, Ruben, and Mike Toft, Miller conducted preliminary excavations that summer. After uncovering hundreds of bison bones and some Hell Gap artifacts, he told Dennis Stanford of the Smithsonian Institution about his find. With funding from the National Geographic Society, Stanford and a Smithsonian crew arrived in June 1973 to undertake a thorough excavation of the site. The excavation lasted three seasons, through the summer of 1975, and uncovered a wealth of evidence to help reconstruct the site’s formation. Bob and Janie were gracious hosts to all of the people involved in the dig and even supplied water and electricity to their campsite.

Bob was a charter member of the Wray Elks Lodge No. 2409 serving three years on the board of trustees. Bob served on the Yuma County Sheriff’s Posse and he was a hunter safety instructor for the Laird Blue Ribbon 4-H Club. Janie was a devoted wife, mother, and friend. She was an excellent cook and baker and enjoyed sharing her “gifts of the kitchen.” She had a wry sense of humor that was always ready and it was hard to “get one over on her.” She was an unassuming woman who took nothing for granted.

Bob Jones lost his life in a tragic farm accident on October 19, 1991 and Janie passed away in March of 2003. Both are buried on the ranch in the family cemetery.
Mark Jones

Ronald Mark Jones was born to parents Robert Bruce “Bob” Jones, Jr and Barbara Jane “Janie” (Parker) Jones on June 27, 1956 in the hospital in St. Francis, Kansas. He lived most of his life on the family ranch. Though starting out his early education in the Laird School, Mark graduated with the Wray High School Class of 1974.

Mark married Susan “Susie” Marshall in May 1978 and became a proud father to Lori, John, and Travis.

Mark Jones took over the ranch following the tragic death of his father. Mark continued to farm and raise cattle and his ranch was known as the Hell Gap Ranch, named after the discovery of multiple Hell Gap arrowhead points carried historical significance to Yuma County.

Mark lived in and cared for the original sod house his grandparents Robert and Beatrice Jones purchased in 1937 and his parents Bob Jones, Jr. and Janie Jones restored. He continued to restore the home. He replaced the roof, remodel kitchen, and refurbished the hardwood floors in “fancy room”. He was proud of ranch heritage and opened it to the public for the Wray Museum’s Holiday Home Tour in 2012 as well as hosted several tours of his ranch for the public.

During his short hospital stay, Mark was eager to watch his Colorado Avalanche win in the Stanley Cup finals game one surrounded by family. In his final days, Mark reminisced with family and friends and never stopped expressing immense love and joy for his children and grandchildren. He passed away on June 16, 2022.

Mark’s children are the 4th generation and continue the legacy of the Jones Ranch. The Jones' men have farmed the same land for 86 years and Mark once commented that their story is still in progress.