

1787 Seth Babb Homestead



Log Raising Journal

By Daniel Greig Babb

So, I'm now back in Dallas after the Log Raising and wanted to give everyone who wasn't able to be there an overview of how the weekend played out. I arrived in Greeneville, TN late in the afternoon on Thursday November 3rd. As you can imagine, I drove directly to the rebuilding site. I had never gotten to see it in person and was anxious to survey the surroundings.

When I arrived they were setting the stone piers and there was a light rain. An 8x8' hole had been dug and a concrete slab had been poured to support the massive chimney. The slab was about 8" below the ground level so that it would not show once construction was complete. I spoke with the staff for a few minutes and wandered up to the Nathanael Greene Museum to meet the Executive Director, Earl Fletcher. We agreed to a meeting the following day with the Museum, BFA & Civic Leaders. Storms passed through overnight depositing 3/4" of rain and about 4" of water now stood in the hole where the big slab was. We deemed it a Redneck Hot Tub.



On Friday at our meeting we were treated to views of the proposed landscaping and forged an action plan for the next steps in the restoration effort. Our meeting was cut short by the arrival of the first truckload of logs and we all ran out to watch. Walking up I noticed the delivery truck lurching left and right, up and down trying to slide the logs off the back onto the ground. We watched for several minutes

listening to the screech of the logs slowly making their way to the earth. By the time the load was moved, the truck was so mired in the mud that it couldn't move and a Bobcat "Skid Steer" (tractor to the rest of us) was employed to tow the truck back to stable ground. This little tractor that could turned out to be a savior several times throughout the weekend and we welcomed it in as a member of the family.

So excited, I was unable to sleep, I arrived at the worksite Saturday morning at 6:20am, even though no one else would be there until 7:00am. I had already been up since 4:30am and had already been to Tipton's Café which is my favorite Breakfast place in Greeneville. I arrived to find the heavy dewfall had frozen and everything was magically glistening. As the sun rose the Mayor on Greene County,



Alan Broyles was introduced by the Earl Fletcher. In all 36 Babb Family members attended and numerous Greene County locals, most notably Civic Leader Carla Bewley, who has helped steer this project locally for the last 5 years. Without her help we would not have gotten off the ground.



As the sun rose a thick fog emerged reducing visibility. From the Log home you could not see the 3 story Museum which was only a football field's distance away. Still I heard not one complaint. We had a job to do and come hell or high water it was going to get done! I like to think we had a little of both that day.

A temporary new wood floor was laid in place between the massive 24'x12"x12" joists to allow people a place to stand while working. When the exterior is fully in

place, the floor will be removed and replaced with the proper floor. Once this was set, we quickly went to work breaking into four teams. I was on the Front Right corner team, deemed Team Britton. During reconstruction it is important that the logs be placed in exactly the same order and direction that they were



removed from. So at either end of each log a tag had been placed identifying which corner you were working on and the stack order of the log. Thus all of ours bore the label FR (front right). The Bobcat was employed to make sure the logs were on the proper side of the home for stacking and then it was up to us to get them in the right

place. While I'm on the topic for this purposed the chimney (hot tub) side of the building is the front. It is the side that faced the street in its original location. Lynn Babb mentioned to me that the family considered what was labeled the right side to be the front side.





The fog lifted about 11:00am and the jackets started coming off and the pace started to quicken. It was about this time that Ken Little, from the Greeneville Sun newspaper arrived to interview the many family members in attendance before we broke for lunch.

Our bellies now full as our hearts and the sun now as bright as our smiles, we went back to work setting the logs that were over our heads. There is a ancient practice of using leverage to make the work possible. Skid poles were setup, ropes tied and a



using a combination of pushing from below and pulling from above a log quickly comes into place. A man at each side sits on the adjoining wall and turns the log up into place.

By the end of the day we had gotten to the 2nd floor joists in place. This was a natural stopping place as they were replacement joists and needed to be carved to ensure a proper fit. This was dangerous work and made doubly so by the long hours of work and untrained volunteers. So, the decision was made to take a group photo and head back to clean up before dinner.

Dacie Babb had arranged a lovely dining room at Brumley's in the General Morgan Inn. The room was filled with laughter and love as it always the case at BFA gatherings. Our builder, David Howard commented to me that he was struck by the

way that everyone seemed to know each other so well, even though many are very distantly related. I told him that our reunions were largely responsible as we see each other every couple of years, but when we get together it is as if a day hasn't passed.

On Sunday, I had breakfast with David

Howard and then we walked to the homestead to consider next steps for the rebuilding. I then drove back to Knoxville and flew home to Dallas.

I was notified today (Wednesday) that the second floor is now in place at the top capped to help prevent water damage. In the coming weeks a shaker roof will be installed and we will then reassess where we stand financially for the next phases. We hope to weatherproof the home with "Chink" before the winter sets in. Replacement doors have been found, but we are still searching for appropriate windows. We hope to rededicate the homestead along with the accompanying park in June of 2012 at the next Babb Family Reunion. Thanks to you all for making my dream come true!

Dan

