

# FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

## STICKY REUNION SITUATION

### NAMING THE REUNION

October 2016

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#### The Situation:

We're planning our first reunion but having trouble identifying an official name. My great-great-grandfather was a Smith. He married twice. His first wife's maiden name was Greene, his second wife was a Jones. He had a total of 14 children—six girls and eight boys. Initially we were going to call the reunion the Smith Family Reunion. Then some family members wanted to make it Smith Greene Jones. Now they want to add the last name of the married children. That would make it Smith Greene Jones and six additional names (as there were six daughters). Since we all have the Smith name in common, wouldn't it be easier and wiser to just leave it at Smith rather than continue to add names? Is there a rule of thumb to follow when selecting a reunion name?

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#### The Fix:



Dr. Ione Vargus

A family reunion name should pay homage and respect to the family elders the reunion is named after and represents. There are many instances where siblings have different last names which would warrant a lengthy reunion moniker. However, your family situation is different. There is a last name, Smith, that links all descendants. Despite that, because Smith is such a common name, you may want to consider using *Smith Greene Jones* to 1-separate yourselves from all the other Smiths in the reunion world, and 2-to link your family together.

There is no set rule of thumb when selecting a family reunion name. Have a meeting to discuss the options. Families have separated because of their dislike of the family reunion name, and that's a shame, so try to avoid this happening to you.

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#### The Fix:



Helen Wilkinson

The official/core reunion name should be Smith. This name is the common thread for all. Visual documents where branches/blocks/listings appear, can include the other name(s) such as SMITH-JONES, SMITH-JONES WILLIAMS. I don't suggest that the name listing go beyond three add on's, that would make it too confusing.

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#### The Fix:



Doug Harris

This Sticky Reunion Situation is really sticky. In my opinion both the Smith and Smith Greene Jones names are acceptable as long as everyone agrees. Calling it the Smith Reunion acknowledges only the male forebearer, almost as if Mr. Smith had 14 children all by himself. I lean toward Smith Greene Jones because it acknowledges all the families that merged to begin this unique family line. Going with six other names becomes cumbersome: hard to put on a letterhead, too long for a Facebook or website name, and difficult to remember without counting out all the names on both hands.

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