

## Thomas P. Jones

( -11 Mar 1848)

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**Jones.** On Saturday morning last, Dr. Thomas P. Jones of this city, formerly Superintendent of the Patent Office and Editor of the Franklin Journal of Philadelphia, aged 75 years. His funeral will take place from his late residence on F Street. This day at 4 o'clock p.m. The friends of the family are invited to attend.

*The National Intelligencer, April 3, 1848*

### **The Late Dr. Thomas P. Jones**

The decease of this gentleman has been made known through the public prints but no extended notice of his life and labors has yet appeared. We hope to see one from a pen capable of doing him full justice, while, in the meantime, our own shall record some of the principal events in his life. His labors and exertions in various official duties and public trusts, extending through nearly forty years, call for a suitable acknowledgment from his survivors and many friends. He has long ranked high as a man of general science, and the world is indebted to him for two of the best treatises on Chemistry and Mechanical Philosophy which have appeared. At so early period he was appointed Professor of Chemistry and Natural Philosophy in William and Mary College, Virginia, afterwards in the Columbian College, District of Columbia, then of the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia. Here he commenced the publication of the Journal of the Institute, first at his own expense, and through this work, which he continued to edit for twenty-eight years until his death, he was enabled to do much for the advancement of science and the arts in the country. His connection with the United States Patent Office over which he was appointed Superintendent by President John Quincy Adams, brought him at once into acquaintance with the leading mechanics and artisans of the country, and contributed not a little to diffuse a more general and accurate scientific knowledge among them. It also brought into requisition his accurate knowledge of the history and the details of the patented inventions of other countries to which reference would be important before pronouncing upon the novelty and validity of American Inventions. He was so well informed on these subjects that, with his strength of memory, when a supposed improvement was laid before him he could refer to the work and to the very page where the same thing had been described and claimed long before. In this way he could often save the applicants all further trouble and expense. His written specifications of patents, and his monthly commentaries upon those which had been issued, as recorded in the Franklin Journal for many years, are remarkably clear and discriminating, conveying to the reader at once an accurate and comprehensive idea of each particular subject; and while they are eminently simple and practiced, the deductions and applications of theoretical science are frequently brought in to illustrate or enforce his statements. These were far from being always favorable to the inventors. Were they collected together into one volume, covering as they do the whole field of mechanical science, they would form a most valuable work for practical reference to show what had already been done by American inventors.

For the last fifteen years, though again connected with the Patent Office as Examiner of Patents, and afterwards selected as one of the commissioners to investigate into the cause of the explosion of steam boilers, (both Government appointments) his principal employment was that of attorney of procuring patents. In this capacity he renewed his former usefulness and met with abundant success, his knowledge of the patent laws of other countries in which patents were sought through him, as well as of the decisions of our own courts, enabling him, as well as of the decisions of our own courts, enabling him to act with the greatest readiness and certainty. His opinions were often sought in courts of law involving patent claims, and in appeals from the decisions of the office.

In fact, his familiarity with mechanical matters had become such as to place him by common consent the general arbiter of mechanical disputants. His acquaintance with the most distinguished men of science both abroad and at home was extensive, and their high opinion of him is attested by his election as honorary member of various learned institutions with which they were connected.

In 1841 his restoration to the Patent Office was urged by testimonials from all parts of the country, emanating from sources calculated to give them great weight.

Of his private life much could be said. He passed through the world always possessing a happy cheerful disposition, generous, humane, simple and unassuming, unreserved and communicative even when overwhelmed with business, and never uncourteous or impetuous. These are expressions which have not often a true application, but those who knew Dr. Jones will attest to their absolute truth. Of his religious character we could also speak in the highest praise; but on this point any further remarks would be more appropriately reserved for an expressly religious journal. His sickness was short, and unattended by suffering; and during his last few days his mind, as is often the case, was at times clearer than it had been for years, and he said many things which made all around him happy. He was conscious to the last . A.

**Jones, Thomas P.**, of City of Washington (dtd. Feb. 25, 1848, probated March 14, 1848, Will Book 6, O.S. 2824).

To daughter Emily G. Jones, all real estate; all personal estate, subject to payment of debts; desire that estate be converted into money and invested in stock of the U.S. Corporation of Washington or other good, safe and productive stock

Exrs: Emily G Jones, daughter

Wits.: Benjamin K. Morsell; Thomas C. Donn; David A. Hall