

## JONES, Sir THOMAS ARTEMUS (1871 - 1943), journalist, judge and historian

**Name:** Thomas Artemus Jones

**Date of birth:** 1871

**Date of death:** 1943

**Spouse:** Mildred Mary Jones (née David)

**Parent:** Thomas Jones

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** journalist, judge and historian

**Area of activity:** History and Culture; Law; Literature and Writing; Printing and Publishing

**Author:** Frank Price Jones

Born 18 February 1871 at 22, Lôn Abram, Denbigh, the sixth son of Thomas Jones, stonemason. At 11 years of age, he left the National School to work at the station bookstall, and while there, he taught himself shorthand. In 1886 he was appointed junior reporter on the *Denbighshire Free Press*, for which he reported the Tithes War. He left Denbigh in 1889 to work on newspapers in Herefordshire, East Anglia and Manchester. In 1896 he joined the Parliamentary staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, later transferring to the *Daily News*.

He studied Law in his spare time, and in 1898 became a student of the Middle Temple: he was called to the bar there in 1901, and the following year he joined the Welsh Circuit. He took part in the libel action *Lord Penrhyn v W. J. Parry* (1903) and the trial of Sir Roger Casement for treason in 1916. In 1909 he himself brought a libel action against Messrs E. Hulton & Co. for using his name in a defamatory manner in the *Sunday Chronicle* (12 July 1908): the defendants carried the case to the House of Lords, but were unsuccessful, and the note normally inserted in novels to the effect that all characters in them are fictitious is the result of this action.

In 1919 he became a King's Counsel and in 1928 he was appointed to represent Britain on the Claims Commission set up as a result of disturbances in Mexico. He was knighted for his service in 1931. In 1930 he was appointed Judge of County Courts in north Wales, an appointment he held until October 1942. In 1938 he was elected chairman of the Caernarfonshire Quarter Sessions and in the same year he was awarded the degree of LL.D. honoris causa by the University of Wales. From 1939 until July 1941 he was Chairman of the North Wales Conscientious Objectors' Tribunal. He was a Parliamentary candidate (Liberal) in Macclesfield (1922), Swansea East (1923) and Keighley (1924).

In 1927 he married Mildred Mary, (eldest daughter of T.W. David, Ely Rise, Llandaff), who edited a volume of his articles published posthumously in 1944, under the title *Without my Wig*.

He contributed many articles to periodicals other than the newspapers by which he was employed, and they all reflect the experience of his humble beginnings and the deep impression which the radical-nationalist revival of the Cymru Fydd movement had upon him, as do also his pronouncements from the Bench. Some of these are listed below: in *Wales*, 1 (1894) he contributed two short stories which illustrate his childhood. In *Young Wales* (1902), 38, 210 and 265 he describes some of the Welsh M.P.s and the struggle against the Education Bill of 1902 in Wales: the principles which underlie those articles were seen again forty years later in his (English) Open Letter to Winston Churchill, published anonymously in *Y Cymro* 26 June 1943, calling for a Secretary of State for Wales. From the Bench, he announced that he would not imprison debtors who were unable to pay their debts, and he was a fierce opponent of the sharp, though legal, practices of some firms which operated hire-purchase agreements. But his chief work for Wales was his sustained effort to secure the right to use the Welsh language in the Courts. He heard cases in Welsh despite the prohibition against it in 27 Hen VIII 8 c. 26, and he did much in pronouncements from the Bench, and in articles and lectures, to support the Welsh Language Petition which secured the Welsh Courts Act of 1942.

He also argued in favour of restoring to Wales a National Judicature, and he discussed this matter in an article in *Welsh Outlook* January and February 1932. The same magazine, in April and August 1932, contained articles by him under the *nom-de-plume* 'Demos' criticising the lay magistracy. Under the title 'Gwaliophobia' and with the pen-name 'Rhydwen Aled', he counter-attacked writers in the English press who decried Wales (*Welsh Outlook*, October and November 1932). The volume *Without My Wig* contains a number of his articles on legal matters and the fruits of his researches in Welsh history.

Among the posts which he held were the Readership of the Middle Temple and the Vice-Presidency of the University College of North Wales, Bangor. He died 15 October 1943 and was buried in Bangor Public Cemetery.

### Author

**Frank Price Jones**, (1920 - 1975)

### Sources

Information from Lady Artemus-Jones

and personal knowledge

## Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Thomas Artemus Jones](#)

## Additional Links

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