

## JONES, THOMAS JESSE (1873 - 1950), a Welsh-American who took a special interest in the education of Afro-Americans and the peoples of Africa

**Name:** Thomas Jesse Jones

**Date of birth:** 1873

**Date of death:** 1950

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** a Welsh-American who took a special interest in the education of Afro-Americans and the peoples of Africa

**Area of activity:** Education

**Author:** William Llewelyn Davies

Born 4 August 1873 in Llanfachreth, Anglesey, he emigrated at the age of 11 to the U.S.A. with his widowed mother, a brother, and two sisters, the family settling in Ohio with relatives.

He went to the Universities of Washington and Lee (Virginia) and Columbia (New York), graduating M.A. and Ph.D.; he was also B.D. of the Union Theological Seminary. For seven years he was at the Hampton Institute, Virginia, one of the pioneer colleges for black students and it was there that he began to take the special interest in the education of Afro-Americans and Africans which characterised his life's work. After transferring to the United States Census Bureau he specialised in Negro statistics.

In 1913 he began an investigation for the U.S. Bureau of Education and the Phelps-Stokes Fund; this resulted in two important volumes being published by the Bureau under the title *Negro Education in the United States*. One result of his experience with Y.M.C.A. work for black soldiers during World War I was the leading part he took in the formation of the Commission of Inter-Racial Cooperation after that war. He led two educational commissions to Africa which were undertaken by the Phelps-Stokes Fund at the request of British and American Missionary Societies and with the cooperation of the Colonial Office.

The report on education in West, South and Equatorial Africa, published in 1922, led to the Colonial Office requesting him to make a similar study in East Africa; the report published in 1925 covered Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, the two Rhodesias, and Ethiopia (as they were then known). As a result of these reports the Colonial Education Department was set up. A dinner in honour of Jesse Jones was given by the British Government in 1925 at Lancaster House, London.

Besides his work over 33 years for the Phelps-Stokes Fund, Jones undertook educational inquiries in Liberia (one result of this was the establishment of the Booker Washington Institute at Kakata); he also went to Greece and the Far East on behalf of the Near-East Foundation. In 1932 he was Carnegie Foundation lecturer in the universities of South Africa whilst in 1937 he headed a commission which studied the Navajo Indians in the United States. His educational theories are described by him in two books, *Four Essentials of Education*, 1926, and *Essentials of Civilization*.

He died early in 1950 at his home in New York.

### Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

### Sources

*The Times*, 17 January 1950

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