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LYNDS JONES

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In the diary of Publius Virgilius Jones for the year 1865 under the date of January 5, is this entry: "Baby Boy born 2 A. M." Two days later the entry reads: "Baby cried all night". The first entry may be taken at face value. The second should not be taken too seriously. In the homes of early settlers there was no separate room for a baby and fathers were sometimes disturbed. The expression "cried all night" meant the baby woke up once or twice during the night. Noticing a prominent facial feature on their new born son the parents exclaimed: "He has his grandfather's chin! He shall have his grandfather's name!" The infant was Lynds Jones.

When Lynds Jones was born his parents, Publius Virgilius Jones and Lavinia Burton Jones, were living in the little town of Jefferson, Ashtabula County, Ohio. The territory from the Western Reserve to the Mississippi River was largely settled by people from the New England States and in turn from this territory Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas received settlers. The Civil War was over. Young men wanted to make their own footing, attain personal independence, and be their own masters. They had ideals for their families. Their children should have books, music, college education, and if possible, travel. It was for this hope of opportunity that Publius Jones, a mill wright in the little town of Jefferson, gave up home, friends, comforts, and culture and took his wife and seven small children across the Mississippi to locate on a prairie farm three and one-half miles northeast of Grinnell, Iowa. The mournful howl of the Prairie wolf through the night; the terrifying, blinding blizzard; the raging fury of the prairie fire; these were well known to every pioneer of the middle west.

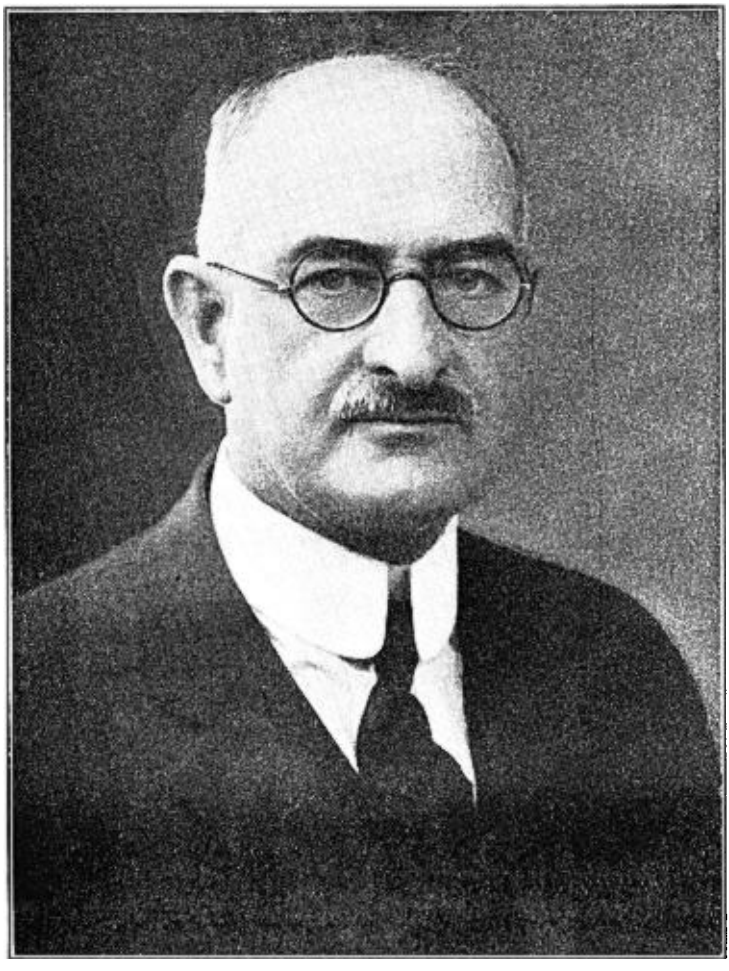
It was a hard year for Lavinia Jones in this new country. In addition to her own family consisting of one daughter and six sons she had under her roof and care three of her brothers. Her babe of only a few months was withering in the sultry, breathless heat of the middle west. Cholera infantum, feared and dreaded by mothers, held

the life of Lynds Jones in the balance for many days. To feed, clothe, and make a home for a family of twelve and tenderly care for a sick infant was indeed a heavy program for Lavinia Jones. How can a woman endure so much? Love and interest give strength and endurance without limit. In the narrow life of the pioneer love and family were lasting interests. A few years of hardship and struggle would bring opportunity to the children and that meant joy to the parents. A forward look can pull a heavy load. Lynds Jones says: "My mother had no artificial charms. She needed none."

Many Iowa settlers were good tree planters and parts of the state had become wooded sections. These were a partial protection against the raging fury of the prairie fire and also against the ruthless fury of the blizzard. After a year on the prairie the Jones family moved to a farm three and one-half miles northwest of Grinnell into a natural grove of oak and hickory trees. What if the cabin was but a single room!—there were trees around it. Near by there were woods—one hundred acres of trees! There was a bubbling spring not far away; and a place to swim; winter would make it into a skating pond. Here was a place that offered free and joyous education to all who had capacity to receive. There were hazel nut bushes gracefully bending their nut-laden branches. Hickory trees with nuts as well as lithe branches for making Indian bows. There were choke cherry trees beautiful with great racemes of white flowers and with oncoming fruit too strongly flavored with tannic acid to be enjoyed—except by small boys. Gooseberries, red raspberries, luscious blackberries, and the sweetest of strawberries were feasts for the children who usually filled up to capacity before they took a supply to the house. The Jones farm was a paradise for children and birds. As soon as it could be done, a five-room story-and-a-half frame building was annexed to the log cabin which henceforth became the kitchen.

Two events of early childhood impressed themselves indelibly on the mind of young Lynds. The first was the total eclipse of the sun on August 7, 1869. The mother had told her children of its coming and they were eagerly awaiting the event. Not knowing the meaning of the sudden darkness roosters crowed vociferously, chickens hastened to their roost, a nearby herd of frightened cattle ran wildly hither and thither. A young herdsman was terrified and almost crazy, while the Jones boys enjoyed the unusual demonstration of the movements of heavenly bodies.

The second, not less memorable event, happened a few weeks later. Lynds was left in charge of his little creeping brother. Sud-



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denly the little fellow, gabbling loudly, was hastening on all fours toward the interesting object he had spied lying under the stove in the log cabin kitchen. Lynds saw the coiled snake as it lay warming itself and flicking its tongue. Snatching the baby he let out such a terrific yell that it brought his mother instantly to the scene. Screaming, she grabbed both children and slammed the kitchen door with great violence. Hearing the commotion, the father hastened to the house. The rattler was gone. His only possible escape was to get under the loose boards of the kitchen floor. He must be found. The father began to mow the weeds patch near the kitchen. Soon the snake with twelve rattles and a button was held aloft on his scythe.

At the age of five and a half years Lynds began his book education in the district school about a mile away. With its program of classes from A B C to Geography, Physiology, and Algebra the district school had a rare and subtle value that was eliminated by the graded system. Younger pupils absorbed much from the recitations of the older ones and had a keen incentive for advancement into the next class. Nor was promotion held up till the close of the term; it was made when the pupil was ready. Lynds Jones was often "ready".

At the age of seven years Lynds, under the direction of a neighbor boy, named Ivan Wheeler who was not only a good collector but also a good taxidermist, began to make a collection of eggs. That the first, a rare collection of singles, was destroyed by mice and the second was accidentally tipped over ruining every egg, was disappointing but not discouraging to Lynds Jones. Mice had to be reckoned with in those days and pioneer homes were pretty well filled with children, leaving little room for boxes of eggs and specimens of birds. Ivan taught Lynds to collect eggs in full sets and to blow them properly through one hole in the side and also to mark them. From Ivan he also obtained his first book, "Samuel's Nests and Eggs of New England Birds". This book is still in the Jones library. Summing up his results Dr. Jones says: "When I left Iowa to go to Oberlin in 1890 my collection numbered approximately 250 species of birds' eggs, most of them collected by myself, some from exchanging duplicates for species which did not nest in Iowa. This collection I have just [1937] donated to Berry College, Georgia." The founder of this college, the accomplished Martha Berry who gave all her years and all her fortune that mountain children might have educational advantages, rejoiced that Berry College received recognition from a northern educator.

At eleven years of age Lynds Jones worked all summer weeding onions for a neighbor at forty cents a day. His earnings bought a suit

1874—Aged 9

1892—Aged 27
A Graduate of Oberlin

1915—Aged 50
A Golf Enthusiast

1923—Aged 58
And Grandchild

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of clothes—with the necessary suspenders thrown in. From that time on he earned all his own clothes by working summers. At the age of seventeen — wages had been raised to seventy-five cents a day — he earned not only enough to buy his clothes but also enough to buy Coues' "Key to North American Birds". This marked the beginning of scientific study for Mr. Jones. Throughout the winter all his spare moments were spent studying the "Key", and how to use it with facility when the spring birds began to arrive. With the "Key" and Samuel's "Nests and Eggs of New England Birds" Lynds Jones had a select library for his work. With the return of the birds the farm work began in earnest. Neither it nor the birds could be neglected. Mornings, from twilight to chore time, were spent in the woods in search of new species; if found he collected a specimen. During the noon hour he identified the specimen and in the evening he wrote up the notes. Now and then a half holiday gave time for trips afield. Even Sunday had its invariable program of church and Sunday school.

When Lynds Jones was about thirteen years old he met "The Pathfinder" and his greed for reading became insatiable. Cooper's Tales, one and all, were devoured and he became Leatherstocking rather than Lynds. With his six-foot gun, made from a pine board, he, with his brothers and the neighbor boys, dramatized the Leatherstocking Tales in the nearby woods. Their war whoops were heard afar. Lynds invariably took the leading part. He didn't act, he was Leatherstocking; imagination had become a reality. He is but one of thousands of boys who are gratefully indebted to Cooper for thrilling adventure in the boundless realm of imagination. In spite of hard work, scarcity of money, and want of comforts, a farm gives children great and rare opportunities of learning what can not be put into books.

Successful farming demands a steady program of work. Publius Virgilius Jones was a hard worker and, in the estimation of his sons, was scarcely second to Samson in strength. He was, however, not a hard task master; ideals for his family were never lost sight of. The Jones farm was successful though it may not have produced its capacity in grain, corn, and hogs. This loss was offset by healthy, happy, mentally alert children who had time for play, for roaming the woods, for knowing birds and trees and flowers. The Jones boys responded to the lure of spring, awaited the return of birds and made whistles when sap was running freely in the willows. They knew the hazy, indescribable atmosphere of Indian summer that meant birds

1926—Aged 61
Still birding

1933—Aged 68
Trimming trees

1936—Aged 71
His 54th Ford car

Date unknown

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were preparing to go to warmer climates, droning bees were saying farewell before going into some hollow tree well stored with delicious honey. Winter with its snow and ice and twenty degrees below zero weather is a glorious challenge to exuberant youth. Nature's school is never closed and grades depend solely on capacity to see, to hear, and to think.

Publius Jones must have had Grinnell, the oldest college in the State of Iowa, in mind when he located a few miles from the town which was then the end of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. Grinnell was a colony town composed from the Eastern States entirely. It had an intellectual atmosphere. Grinnell College merits its reputation for scholarship and thoroughness. It is Congregational but not sectarian. Mr. Jones had three winter terms in the Academy followed by two full years at Grinnell College.

Pioneer families had good food and plenty of it—corn bread was a little too plentiful—but there was scarcely any ready money. A little cash was an absolute necessity when going to college. In western colleges and universities it was customary for young men to board themselves. They walked home Friday nights if it wasn't more than ten or fifteen miles and returned on Monday morning carrying a sack with bread, butter, and vegetables for the ensuing week. Cash for room rent had to be provided somehow. Lynds Jones reduced his cash needs to the minimum. When attending Grinnell College, three and a half miles away, he not only eliminated room rent by walking forth and back, but was also able to assist with the farm work. His daily walk brought him face to face with two board and thirteen wire fences put up to keep the cattle in or out of something. He looked at the fifteen fences. They could not be moved. He accepted the challenge. The board fences he vaulted; two low wire fences he jumped; the remaining eleven barbed wire fences presented a difficult problem. He must crawl under them. The weeds and dirt could be brushed off; to tear his clothes would be a calamity, both financial and otherwise. He removed the barbs from the lower wires, crawled under and went on his way rejoicing. His athletic ability was not lost when he went to Oberlin, where he played tackle and halfback on the Varsity Football Team. He allowed forty-five minutes to walk from the farm to Grinnell and the same to return, but usually he studied his Greek lesson going and his Latin lesson returning and the time was increased somewhat. On reaching home he cultivated corn with his Algebra

fastened to the cultivator. Mr. Jones says: "It was good mental discipline to work out my Algebra lesson that way." When resting the team he stopped at the edge of the woods and checked up on the nesting birds.

Having finished his freshman and sophomore years at Grinnell he went for his junior and senior years to Oberlin College where he graduated in 1892 with the A. B. degree. The college at once gave him the position of Laboratory Assistant. In September, before Oberlin College opened, he married Clara Mabelle Tallman of Grinnell. They went at once to Oberlin and have lived there ever since. Their home has been one of peace and contentment free from all distracting worry, an atmosphere to thrive in and one conducive to fruitful years of which Mr. Jones has had many. In 1895 he received a Master's degree from Oberlin. In 1899 he was promoted to Instructor. In 1905 he was made Associate Professor and in 1922, full Professor. From the University of Chicago, in 1905, he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He was retired in 1930, having served his college continuously for thirty-eight years. He did more than serve his college, for through the lives of many young men and women who went forth from his class room the world has been enriched.

Letters before me are full of gratitude to a teacher who gave lasting values. One of his early students writes: "The course in ornithology with Dr. Jones in the spring of 1897, started a life-long interest which is of the greatest value to me. My father, Professor A. A. Wright of Oberlin College, was for many years head of the Zoology Department and Mr. Jones was his assistant and deeply valued friend and helper. Oberlin was one of the first to include such a course, and Mr. Jones, single handed, certainly made the town and college of Oberlin 'bird conscious'. I recall our sunrise trips. People looked out of their windows and half-opened doors wondering what the queer group was seeing in the tree tops and the sky. Such a group was soon known as Mr. Jones' Ornithological Class. It was a wrench to get up for those early trips but no one who went once would ever miss another. Perhaps the best thing a teacher can do is to arouse the desire to know more and this he certainly did for me and many others."

A student writes thus: "Dr. Jones is a very quiet, modest, retiring, but effective man; a teacher who places the world of nature before you, and with a few guiding remarks expects you to make the discoveries for yourself. When in 1914, for the first time, a major in

ecology at Oberlin was offered I signed up. It was then that I fully realized what an excellent scholar along these lines Dr. Jones was. Today I can say that his teaching has lasting and ever increasing value. It has contributed to the joy of living more than that of any other professor." Another of his students writes: "The name of Lynds Jones brings before me a quiet, dignified student of nature; a strong physique; a rugged character; a rare teacher. This personality I describe by the one word 'homespun'."

In the spring of 1890 half-fare railroad rates enabled Mr. Jones to visit Dr. R. M. Strong at his Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, home. It was a memorable visit. With him he took interesting and helpful trips, especially so was the tramp to the heronry. With Dr. Strong he also went to Pewaukee where he met Captain B. F. Goss, a pioneer ornithologist of Wisconsin. A few weeks later, at the Indianapolis meeting of A. A. A. S. Mr. Jones met Otto Widmann, Amos Butler, Barton W. Evermann and others—men he had known and valued for their writings now became a reality and he a co-worker with them. While in the University of Chicago in 1905 he met Dr. T. C. Stephens and as with Dr. Strong and others there grew a lasting friendship out of the contact. In the summer of 1898, in Washington, D. C., he met Robert Ridgway, T. S. Palmer, and H. C. Oberholser. In New York he met J. A. Allen and Frank M. Chapman. He also met his first Starlings in 1898; a small flock seemed established on one of the little islands in Long Island Sound.

Time evaluates our years. Alert students, enlarged by the inspiration of the class room, express their lives through the avenues opened by a true teacher. Colleges and universities justify their existence in the measure in which they send out men and women able to minister to the needs and welfare of mankind.

Dr. Jones' interests lay preëminently in the field of science. At various times he taught zoology, geology, entomology, dendrology, ornithology, and other allied subjects. He was also curator of the Zoology Museum and in 1922 he became Professor of Animal Ecology. He was at home in all these fields but nearest and dearest to his heart was the field of ornithology. This field he had roamed and enjoyed from earliest childhood. He knew the birds that came and went and those that remained all the year on the Iowa farm. He knew the songs of the birds and the music of the trees. One of his valued friends writes: "Professor Jones has a poetical interest in nature as well as

a scientific view point. He was always painstaking as a field observer with a keen ear and memory for bird songs and notes." One of his students says: "A Conservatory professor told me that Dr. Jones' ear was so perfectly trained that he heard tones which the ordinary human never heard. I also recall Dr. Jones saying that many bird songs were so high that they were not heard by any human ear. To him the sounds of nature were enthralling."

Dr. Jones says: "I organized a class in ornithology in the spring term of 1895. It was the first formal course in that subject ever offered in an American college. The subject has been continuously offered in Oberlin since that time. The first class numbered 27 students, the second 35, and from that on up to a maximum of 137." A former student, now established in natural science work, writes: "Dr. Jones stimulates his students to interest in birds outside of the class room. Several times I went on over night trips with him to Bay Point to observe the warbler migration. Once our combined list of warblers and other birds reached 144 species. The study of bird skins, the use of the balopticon in the class room, and the field trips enabled people to learn the common species. [In 1913] Dr. Jones organized a department of ecology separate from zoology and botany. Only Chicago had preceded him in organizing such a department."

Long before he put it into practice Dr. Jones had the vision for extensive out-of-door study for students. In 1915 the dream became a reality. He took a group of fourteen students in ecology across the country for study in the native haunts of birds. He went by train to Seattle, thence by boat and launch to Neah Bay and Moclips. Of this, the first of thirteen trips across the country with college students, a member of the group says: "I rejoice that I was one of the fourteen students who took the first trip with Dr. Jones to the western coast. He had so often talked of going. With three Indian guides we explored the coast of Washington for 250 miles. We were the first women to visit these little islands. Because they are Bird Reservations we had procured permission from Washington, D. C., to visit them. No other trip that I may ever take will be as marvelous as was this one; it is all so vivid; the delightful incidents would fill a book; the six weeks were all too short.

"This was the first time the college had granted ecology credits for such an outing. I am sure Dr. Jones had no easy task in convincing the college that the study would be worth while and that we weren't

a bunch of jolly girls and boys out for fun. We had to adhere strictly to the rules of the college, such as "No dancing" and "No smoking".

"Again in 1919 I enrolled with a class of twenty for a six weeks' study across the country and on the west coast. This trip was made with five Ford motor cars and one truck. It was before the days of auto camps and we slept under the stars, rain or no rain. In 1920 I again joined the class. These trips gave us something not found in books. We also came to know intimately one of the finest of men as well as a great teacher. Work under Dr. Jones, more than any other professor, gave me that something which has remained an ever present source of joy. These trips were not made without annoyances, but Dr. Jones rarely made the slightest reference to any unpleasant incident."

In the thirteen trips across the country with students Dr. Jones made it a point to visit national parks and other places of interest en route. Twice he took his party to National, Iowa, to see the interesting work done by Miss Althea R. Sherman. Of especial interest was the tower she had built for the Chimney Swifts that were roosting and nesting in it. On several trips he visited the interesting laboratory at Lake Okoboji, Iowa. Those who were able to avail themselves of these out-of-door studies attest to their value. The idea of Nature Schools is deeply rooted and is steadily on the increase.

For his personal study of bird life Dr. Jones took a trip to the west coast in 1900. He was accompanied by one of his students, W. L. Dawson. A Summer Reconnaissance in the West (WILSON BULLETIN, 1900, XII, No. 4) is the account of this trip. Also for his own study he made two trips to Alaska and the Yukon, and one to Porto Rico. Exclusive of the birds he listed in Porto Rico Dr. Jones has a Life List of 672 birds. His interest in the subject of birds is boundless. He realizes the study should reach beyond the scientific; it should be popularized to call people to lake and wood, marsh and meadow, to train eyes and ears and to this end he gave much time and effort.

In Fall River, Massachusetts, December, 1888, the Wilson Ornithological Club was founded. Its object was the study of birds in their haunts and habits. Of the twelve founders but three are living, Franklin Lorenzo Burns, Reuben Myron Strong, and Lynds Jones. All three have played a large part in the nurture and welfare of this organization. They have been constant and vital factors through many trying and seemingly hopeless years. Much tenacity of purpose is re-

quired to produce the growth of an idea. In this respect the founders of W. O. C. were not wanting. Unto tenacity they added perseverance and faith. The history of the Wilson Ornithological Club is one of years of struggle crowned with success.

Every office, except that of Vice President—for which I am sure he could qualify—has been held by Lynds Jones. The presidency he held eleven years, from 1890-1893 and from 1902-1908, and again from 1927-1929. He was secretary from 1888-1889, and treasurer from 1894-1901. He was editor from 1888-1924. For thirty-nine years he held office. Any one with such a record must have been satisfactory to all political parties. For thirty-six years Lynds Jones was editor of this would-be club. The signs of life were often dim but nurture never ceased. The editor's job was not all absorbing which was of no great moment as editors draw no pay. They draw the printer's bill which, large or small, some one must pay. On such occasions the editor seized the opportunity of taking the lonely bill out of his pocket and giving it to the printer. Dr. Strong says: "The first number of the Wilson Quarterly was published in 1892 and was edited by Lynds Jones with myself as publisher. It had 40 pages. This was the first number edited by him. It appears as Volume 4, No. 1, but it was the first issue under this name. It was preceded by other publications issued as the organ of the club but different in name and form."

We are grateful to the founders but we are not sorry for them. Life must reach beyond the task by which it earns a living. It must feel the pulse throb of humanity and respond to its needs and interests. The vision of the founders was not in vain, the aim of the organization "to study birds in their haunts and habits" has been fulfilled. From its original membership of twelve the Wilson Ornithological Club now has 838 members and money enough to pay the printer.

Oberlin, in 1930, placed the name of Dr. Lynds Jones on the retired list but Lynds Jones has not retired. His interest in nesting activities of birds and their migration is as keen as ever. In 1937 he taught in Berry College, Georgia. He continues to take field trips. His interests increase with the years. He takes no small part in the civic and educational affairs of Oberlin. He plays golf and tennis if the day is long enough. His garden, out of which he digs weeds and health, is one of choice and beautiful flowers. And Lynds Jones is a welcome guest in the homes of all who know him.

The years of his life have been useful and fruitful. He has the love and high regard of unnumbered students; he is rich in life-long

friendships; this club honors and values him for his constant and unlimited service. Lynds Jones became a Life Member of this club. The Wilson Ornithological Club made Professor Jones an Honorary Member. The years have made Dr. Jones a Beloved Member.

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