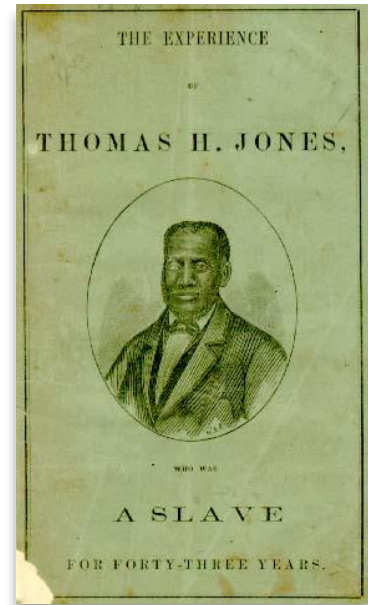


**BACKGROUND:** *Thomas H. Jones was born enslaved in Hanover County, North Carolina. John Hawes enslaved over fifty people on his North Carolina plantation. At the age of nine, in 1815, Hawes sold Jones to a shopkeeper in Wilmington. Here, Jones worked as a house servant and store clerk. He managed to gain a rudimentary education. Eventually, Jones married a woman named Lucilla Smith and they had three children before Smith was taken to Alabama by her enslaver.*

*Several years later, convinced he would never see Lucilla again, he married a woman named Mary R. Moore. They had several children together before Jones purchased her freedom. In 1849, Jones sent his wife and children to a free state. He soon followed, by stowing away on the brig Bell, that was headed to New York.*

*Once in New York, Jones worked as a minister and abolitionist, traveling throughout New England before settling in Salem, Massachusetts. In 1851, on the heels of the Fugitive Slave Law, he left the United States and settled briefly in St. John, Canada, where he continued to work as an abolitionist and became a vocal critic of Black emigration programs.*



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Page 5

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Father and mother tried to make it a happy place for their dear children. They worked late into the night many and many a time to get a little simple furniture for their home and the home of their children; and they spent many hours of willing toil to stop up the chinks between the logs of their poor hut, that they and their children might be protected from the storm and the cold. I can testify, from my own painful experience, to the deep and fond affection which the slave cherishes in his heart for its home and its dear ones. We have no other tie to link us to the human family, but our fervent love for those who are with us and of us in relations of sympathy and devotedness, in wrongs and wretchedness. My dear parents were conscious of the desperate and incurable woe of their position

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Page 6

and destiny; and of the lot of inevitable sufferings in store for their beloved children. They talked about our coming misery, and they lifted up their voices and wept aloud, as they spoke of our being torn from them and sold off to the dreaded slave-trader, perhaps never again to see them or hear from them a word of fond love. I have heard them speak of their willingness to bear their own sorrows without complaint, if only we, their dear children, could be safe from the wretchedness before us. And I remember, and now fully understand, as I did not then, the sad and tearful look they would fix upon us when we were gathered round them and running on with our foolish prattle. I am a father, and I have had the same feelings of unspeakable anguish, as I have looked upon my precious babes and have thought of the ignorance, degradation and woe which they must endure as slaves. The great God, who knoweth all the secrets of the heart, and He only, knows the bitter sorrow I now feel when I think of my four dear children who are slaves, torn from me and consigned to hopeless servitude by the iron hand of ruthless wrong. I love those children with all a father's fondness. God gave them to me; but my brother took them from me, in utter scorn of a

father's earnest pleadings; and I never shall look upon them again, till I meet them and my oppressors at the final gathering. Will not the Great Father and God make them and me reparation in the final award of mercy to the victim, and of Justice to the cruel desolator?

**CHAPTER SECOND.**

I enter now upon a new development of wrongs and woes which I, as a slave, was called to undergo. I must go back some two or three years from the time when my master died, and I was sold to Owen Holmes. The bitterness of persecution which master Jones had kept up against me so long, because I would try to serve the Lord, had passed away. I was permitted to pray and go to our meetings without molestation. My master laid aside his terrible severity towards me. By his treatment to me afterwards, he seemed to feel that he had done wrong in scourging me as he had done, because I could not obey his wicked command, to stop praying, and keep away from the meetings. For, after the time of my joining the Church, he allowed me to go to all the meetings, and granted me many other little favors, which I had never before received from him. About this time I began to feel very lonely. I wanted

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Page 30

a friend to whom I could tell my story of sorrows, of unsatisfied longing, of new and fondly cherished plans. I wanted a companion whom I could love with all my warm affections, who should love me in return with a true and fervent heart, of whom I might think when toiling for a selfish, unfeeling master, who shall dwell fondly on my memory when we were separated during the severe labors of the day, and with whom I might enjoy the blessed happiness of social endearments after the work of each day was over. My heart yearned to have a home, if it was only the wretched home of the unprotected slave, to have a wife to love me and to love. It seems to me that no one can have such fondness of love and such intensity of desire for home and home affections, as the poor slave. Despised and trampled upon by a cruel race of unfeeling men, the bondman must die in the prime of his wretched life, if he finds no refuge in a dear home, where love and sympathy shall meet him from hearts made sacred to him by his own irrepressible affection and tenderness for them. And so I sought to love and win a true heart in return. I did this too, with the full knowledge of the desperate agony that the slave husband and father is exposed to. Had I not seen this in the anguish of my own parents? Yea, I saw it in every public auction, where men and women and children were brought upon the block, examined, and bought. I saw it on such occasions, in the hopeless agony depicted on the countenance of husband and wife there separated to meet no more in this cruel world; and in the screams of wild despair and useless entreaty which the mother, then deprived of her darling child, sent forth. I heard the doom which stares every slave parent in the face each waking and sleeping hour of an unhappy life. And yet I sought to become a husband and a father, because I felt that I could live no longer unloved and unloving. I was married to Lucilla Smith, the slave to Mrs Moore. We called it and we considered it a true marriage, although we knew well that marriage was not permitted to the slaves as a sacred right of the loving heart. Lucilla was seventeen years old

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Page 31

when we were married. I loved her with all my heart, and she gave me a return for my affection with which I was contented. Oh, God of love, thou knowest what happy hours we have passed in each other's society in our poor cabin. When we knelt in prayer, we never forgot to ask God to save us from the misery of cruel separation, while life and love were our portion. Oh, how we have talked of this dreadful fate, and wept in mingling sorrow, as we thought of our desolation, if we should be parted and doomed to live on weary years, away from each other's dear presence. We had three dear little babes. Our fondness for our precious children increased the current feeling of love for each other, which filled our hearts. They were bright,

precious things, those little babes; at least so they seemed to us. Lucilla and I were never tired of planning to improve their condition, as far as might be done for slaves. We prayed with new fervency to our Father in Heaven to protect our precious babes. Lucilla was very proud of me, because I could read and write, and she often spoke of my teaching our dear little ones, and then she would say, with tears, "Who knows, Thomas, but they may yet be free and happy?" Lucilla was a valuable slave to her mistress. She was a seamstress, and very expert at her needle. I had a constant dread that Mrs. Moore, her mistress, would be in want of money, and sell my dear wife. We constantly dreaded a final separation. Our affection for each other was very strong, and this made us always apprehensive of a cruel parting. These fears were well founded, as our sorrowing hearts too soon learned. A few years of very pure and constant happiness for slaves, passed away, and we were parted to meet but once again till we meet in eternity. Mrs. Moore left Wilmington, and moved to Newbern. She carried with her my beloved Lucilla and my three children, Annie, four years old; Lizzie, two and a half years; and our sweet little babe, Charlie. She remained there eighteen months. And oh, how lonely and dreary and desponding were those months of lonely life to my crushed heart! My dear wife and my precious children

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Page 32

were seventy-four miles distant from me, carried away from me in utter scorn of my beseeching words. I was tempted to put an end to my wretched life. I thought of my dear family by day and by night. A deep despair was in my heart, such as no one is called to bear in such cruel, crushing power as the poor slave, severed forever from the objects of his love by the cupidity of his brother. But that dark time of despair passed away, and I saw once more my wife and children. Mrs. Moore left Newbern for Tuscaloosa, Ala., and passing through Wilmington on her journey, she spent one night in her old home. That night I passed with my wife and children. Lucilla had pined away under the agony of our separation, even more than I had done. That night she wept on my bosom, and we mingled bitter tears together. Our dear children were baptized in the tears of agony that were wrung from our breaking hearts. The just God will remember that night in the last award that we and our oppressors are to receive.

The next morning Mrs. Moore embarked on board the packet. I followed my wife and children to the boat, and parted from them without a word of farewell. Our sobs and tears were our only adieu. Our hearts were too full of anguish for any other expression of our hopeless woe. I have never seen that dear family since, or have I heard from them since I parted from them there. God only knows the bitterness of my agony, experienced in the separation of my wife and children from me. The memory of that great woe will find a fresh impression on my heart while that heart shall beat. How will the gifted and the great meet the charge against them at the great day, as the judge shall say to them, in stern displeasure, "I was sick, destitute, imprisoned, helpless, and ye ministered not unto me; for when ye slighted and despised these wretched, pleading slaves, ye did these acts of scorn against me. Depart ye workers of iniquity."

After my purchase by Owen Holmes, I hired my time at \$150 per year, paid monthly. I rented a house

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Page 33

of Dr. E.J. Desert. I worked, loading and unloading vessels that came into Wilmington, and could earn from one dollar to a dollar and a quarter a day. While my wife and family were spared to bless my home by their presence and love, I was comparatively happy. But I found then that the agony of the terrible thought, "I am a slave, my wife is a slave, my precious children are slaves," grew bitter and insupportable, just as the happiness in the society of my beloved home became more distinct and abounding. And this one cup of bitterness was ever at my lips. Hearts of kind sympathy and tender pity, did I not drain that cup of bitter woe to its very dregs, when my family were carried off into returnless exile, and I was left a heart broken,

lonely man! Can you be still inactive while thousands are drinking that potion of despair every year in this land of schools and Bibles? After I parted from my family, I continued to toil on, but not as I had done before. My home was darker than the holds of ships in which I worked. Its light, the bright, joyous light of love and sympathy and mutual endearments, was quenched. Ah me, how dark it left my poor heart. It was colder than the winter wind and frost; the warm sunshine was snatched away and my poor heart froze in its bitter cold. Its gloom was deeper than the prison or cave could make it. Was not there the deserted chairs and beds, once occupied by the objects of a husband's and a father's love? Deserted! How, and Why? The answer, is not the unqualified condemnation of the government and religion of this land? I could not go into my cold, dark, cheerless house; the sight of its deserted room was despair to my soul. So I worked on, taking jobs whenever I could get them, and working often till nearly morning, and never going to my home for rest till I could toil no more. And so I passed four years, and I began to feel that I could not live in utter loneliness any longer.

**REV. THOMAS H. JONES.**  
DEAR MR. GARRISON :  
The Rev. Thomas H. Jones, a fugitive slave, has been laboring in this vicinity a little, of late. You know him, and do not, therefore, require any recommendation. He is soliciting aid for the redemption of his son. An enemy has published a notice in the Worcester *Transcript*, cautioning people not to aid Mr. Jones, and saying that he is the owner of a home, and that his son is free. This is a malicious falsehood. I am intimately acquainted with Mr. Jones, and testify to his integrity, to his need of aid, to his ability as a speaker, and to the fact that his son, for whose redemption he is toiling, is still in bonds, and hopelessly bound, unless anti-slavery friends respond to the appeal of a bereaved and sorrowing father. Will you do him the kindness to insert this correction in your paper? and oblige  
Yours, fraternally,  
DANIEL FOSTER.  
East Princeton, August 8, 1854.

*The Liberator* (Boston, Massachusetts), August 18, 1854.

Thomas H. Jones, the fugitive slave who has addressed our citizens on several occasions during the past eight or ten days, will preach at the Pearl street church to-morrow afternoon, at the usual hour.

*Fall River Daily Evening News* (Fall River, Massachusetts), July 16, 1859.



LETTER FROM REV. THOMAS H. JONES.

CUMMINGTON, Aug. 22, 1853.

DEAR MR. GARRISON :

Well knowing that your heart is ever cheered to learn that the hunted slave finds friends and succor in *any* place and among *any* people, I think it not improper to inform you of my very pleasant and profitable visit to Cummington. Following your kind advice, I reached C. about 8 o'clock Wednesday evening, weary with my long walk, but was much cheered to find Bro. Stockman's church lighted up, and a good audience within, chained to the spot by the resistless eloquence of WENDELL PHILLIPS, who was addressing them. Thank God, the best orator on this continent is the slave's advocate.

When I entered the house, Bro. Stockman came to meet me, and grasped my hand with manifest and earnest joy. Bro. S. is a well-trying and faithful friend of the slave. Bros. May and Foss greeted me with warm friendship ; and, O ! how my poor heart swelled in my bosom to feel myself *a man among men!* The Convention was one of much interest, and I'll agree that it will result in great good.

On the Sabbath following, Bro. Stockman kindly introduced me to his people, and gave me the use of his pulpit. I spoke twice to a very large audience, who listened with great attention to my story of suffering and wrong, and manifested their sincerity by giving me a contribution of \$10.

When I took the platform, I was greeted with prolonged and enthusiastic cheering, which, backed up with the \$10 before mentioned, together with great personal kindness, and scores of invitations to tarry with them as long as I could, will lead you, as it does me, to believe that Bro. S. has not preached the anti-slavery gospel in vain in this place. I must soon bid adieu to Bro. S. and his kind family, under whose roof I have spent many pleasant days as a brother and *equal*, and must hasten back again to British soil for safety.

Though it is hard to turn my back upon my native land, yet my heart is cheered to know, as you also know, that there are many noble-hearted friends of our cause in St. Johns, and in 'all the country round about.' During eighteen months of sojourning among them, I have ever been treated as a *man* and 'brother beloved,' till I went on board the steamer *Eastern City*. Of my cruel treatment on board said steamer, the public are already informed.

I called on my old friend, Bro. D. Foster, who has been to me more than a brother, and found him and his family still the warm friends of the slave.

Yours truly, THOMAS H. JONES.

*The Liberator* (Boston, Massachusetts), September 2, 1853.