On December 29, 1812, Paul Hamilton, the nation’s third Secretary of the Navy, submitted his letter of resignation to President James Madison. Hamilton, a South Carolina planter and politician, possessed no specific experience to qualify him for his cabinet position. His first three years were noticeably uneventful. The Secretary had primarily devoted himself to departmental matters such as “correct habits for the midshipmen,” “economy in naval expenditures,” and “a conscientious attention to duty on the part of the higher naval officers.”

As America’s relations deteriorated with the British, it became obvious that a man more knowledgeable in naval affairs would be required for the position. Cognizant of his own limitations, Hamilton sought the advice of America’s naval captains in the spring of 1812 concerning the strategy which the United States should follow in the event of a war with England. The captains replied almost unanimously that single-ship cruises would be the best way to harass the enemy’s commerce, attack his naval vessels, and protect the United States.

The United States did not have a sizable navy in 1812. President Thomas Jefferson had advocated a defensive military role. Thus, after the successful suppression of the Barbary pirates between 1802 and 1805, he curtailed naval expenses to build a fleet of small boats.

each of which was equipped with a single naval gun in the bow.\textsuperscript{4} In addition to the 177 gunboats eventually built (102 of these were undergoing repairs in 1812), the nation had but eighteen vessels. Three of the latter were over ten years old and were in desperate need of repair. Seven of the remaining fifteen were frigates with a total of 254 guns, originally built under the Washington and Adams administrations. There were also eight brigs carrying 122 guns which had been built or purchased by Jefferson and Madison.\textsuperscript{5} Compared to this small force, the English navy on December 7, 1812, had ninety-seven vessels on the American station of which six were ships of the line and thirty-three were frigates.\textsuperscript{6} In all, England had more than one thousand vessels of war which amounted to "three fighting ships for every American gun."\textsuperscript{7}

The United States had commenced a war with the major sea power in the world. Secretary Hamilton agreed with Charles W. Goldsborough, the chief clerk of the department, that the navy ought to be laid up rather than permitted to fight. The naval captains, however, argued for permission to wage war on the seas, and it was only when the President made clear his agreement with the officers that the possibility of a non-naval war was abandoned.\textsuperscript{8}

America's captains went to sea and won a number of important single-ship actions during the first six months of the war.\textsuperscript{9} Despite the navy's exceptional showing, the cares of office weighed heavily upon Hamilton. During peacetime his ineptness went unnoticed. War, however, brought his shortcomings into the light of public

\textsuperscript{4} For more details on Jefferson's arguments and the design of the gunboats themselves, see Howard I. Chapelle, The History of the American Sailing Navy, the Ships and their Development (New York, 1949), 189-241.
\textsuperscript{5} Paullin, 1318.
\textsuperscript{7} Irving Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, 1812-1836 (Indianapolis, 1961), 39 (Vol. VI of James Madison).
\textsuperscript{8} Brant, 39.
\textsuperscript{9} The naval history of the War of 1812 has been told many times. The best scholarly account is still Theodore Roosevelt, The Naval War of 1812 (New York, 1906). The implications of the war on naval strategy are in Alfred T. Mahan, Sea Power in its Relation to the War of 1812 (London, 1905). A most exciting, well-written account, based on good historical sources, is Cecil S. Forester, The Age of Fighting Sail: The Story of the Naval War of 1812 (Garden City, N. Y., 1956).
knowledge. As the press began to criticize naval policies, Hamilton sought comfort in the bottle. While there were indications that he drank too much before the war, the added burdens of the conflict made the Secretary an alcoholic. "He was publicly intoxicated at the naval ball on the Constellation and again at the Macedonian celebration. . . . For two years Hamilton had been incapable of working in the second half of the day."  

For these obvious reasons, Hamilton's resignation was immediately accepted by Madison. His record clearly shows that the war had been more than the Secretary could bear. As the man chiefly responsible for naval organization, he had done nothing to prepare the nation for war. True, his resources were small, but he had made no attempt to increase them, and what little had been done was mainly due to congressional impetus. Upon leaving office, he asked Madison for a letter stating the President's opinion of him, and the generous chief executive replied, "I cannot satisfy my own feelings, or the tribute due to your patriotic merits and private virtues, without bearing testimony to the fervent zeal, the uniform exertions, and the unimpeachable integrity with which you have discharged that important trust, and without expressing the value I have always placed on that personal intercourse, the pleasure of which I am now to lose."  

President Madison had received the resignation of the Secretary of War, William Eustis, at this same time. Thus he now had to seek two military secretaries in the midst of a war. As Madison looked around for an experienced man—for he had learned a lesson from Paul Hamilton—he settled upon William Jones, a Philadelphia merchant, congressman, sea captain, and loyal Republican. Jones had been offered the Navy Department by Jefferson in 1801 and had refused; now it was up to Madison to persuade him to accept the post. As early as December 28, 1812, Jones received word from Pennsylvania Congressman Jonathan Roberts that he would be offered the position. "The Nation and the Navy," Roberts said, "point to you as the fittest man we have and what is to become of us if the fittest man will not come forward in a moment of public

10 Brant, 125-126.
11 Aurora (Philadelphia), Feb. 17, 1813.
Jones gave Madison's official offer, made on January 3, 1813, several days' thought before he accepted the department "with humility." His acceptance was conditioned by his request to be allowed a few days to settle private affairs before setting out for the seat of government.¹³

Those who knew Jones looked upon his appointment with approbation. Jacob J. Otto, a Philadelphia friend, wrote that, "I have long since thought that you ought to direct the Department, you would occupy, and your country should rejoice that you have accepted the appointment."¹⁴ Naval personnel also applauded. Here at last was a man who understood ships and the men who sailed them. Lieutenant George Reed, on board the frigate United States, exclaimed, "I see by the papers you are to be our secretary and permit me to say it is the best news not only to me but to all my profession, we have heard for some time."¹⁵ The most impressive congratulations came from Jones' old friend Captain William Bainbridge, who forwarded not only his compliments but warned the new Secretary that he would have a difficult time in correcting "the unorganized state of your department."¹⁶

Little is known of the early life of William Jones.¹⁷ He was born in Philadelphia either in 1760 or 1761. As a youth he was an apprentice at a boat yard on the Lehigh River in the Moravian community of Bethlehem, about sixty miles north of Philadelphia.¹⁸ During the American Revolution the lad served in a company of volunteers and fought in the battles of Trenton and Princeton. Tiring of the land war, he went to sea on the privately owned Penn-

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¹² J. Roberts to Jones, Dec. 28, 1812, Uselma Clark Smith Collection of the Papers of William Jones, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Unless otherwise noted, all manuscripts cited are from this collection.

¹³ Jones to Madison, Jan. 14, 1813.

¹⁴ J. Otto to Jones, Jan. 28, 1813.

¹⁵ G. Reed to Jones, Jan. 10, 1813.

¹⁶ W. Bainbridge to Jones, Mar. 1, 1813.


sylvania vessel, *St. James*, captained by Thomas Truxtun. Later, he was wounded and taken prisoner while serving in the Continental Navy, and in 1781 was promoted to first lieutenant for gallantry.  

From 1790 to 1793 Jones resided in the southern port of Charleston, where he was a merchant and active in the city's militia artillery battery. He was elected captain and wrote a manual for artillery drill. On his return to Philadelphia in 1793, he became active in the Republican Party while prospering as a merchant. He was elected to the Seventh Congress (March 4, 1801–March 3, 1803). Shortly after leaving office, Jones wrote to a colleague, John Randolph, of his affection for the nation. “I am sick,” he said, “of city (and I may say Lancaster) Republicanism but I do not despair of the Republic, There is solidarity in it, and the good sense of the real republicans will ultimately prevail.” On January 18, 1805, he was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society and later read many papers before that body, including one on a lead casing for cannon shells. From 1805 to 1807 Jones sailed around the world on his ship, the *Ploughboy*. For a short time he was involved in the Chinese opium trade. After returning home, he was chosen by a Philadelphia town meeting in 1809 to present a letter of support to President Jefferson, assuring the chief executive of backing for the embargo and other restrictive laws.

In 1810 Jones was asked by the Secretary of State, Robert Smith, if he would assume the services of a *chargé d' affaires* to Denmark. He declined due to the press of his private business. After consulting with President Madison, the Secretary of State told Jones that the position “at the Danish Court, does not require you to relinquish your present commercial establishment. The appointment is in substance that of a special Agent, and will necessarily be a temporary one.” No letter remains on Jones' final answer, but all indications seem to be that he never filled the position.

20 A copy of this manual is located with his papers.
22 R. Smith to Jones, Nov. 2, 1810; Jones to R. Smith, Nov. 9, 1810; R. Smith to Jones, Nov. 13, 1810.
However, the Madison administration appeared determined to get Jones into an office of some sort. On March 29, 1812, Richard Rush wrote him “that the President, anxious to avail the country of your services, has it in contemplation to nominate you to the senate as commissary general of purchases. . . . I am informed also to say, it is most anxiously hoped that nothing may oblige you to withhold the benefit of your valuable aid in a line so important.” Jones tentatively accepted the position but asked to see a copy of the new law which established this post. Rush sent another letter to Jones on April 4 with the information that the President had made the nomination and that it had been approved by the Senate. Two days later Jones wrote to the Secretary of War, William Eustis, that he still had not received a copy of the law, but that he would start out for Washington as soon as possible. Before his departure the statute arrived, and Jones did not like what he read. He wrote to Eustis informing him that he would not accept the position and criticizing the law for creating a figurehead post, loaded with responsibility but bereft of power. Unable to locate another first-rate man to take the position, Eustis once again asked Jones on May 3 to accept it. The Secretary confessed that if Jones declined the department would have to “solicit others whose standing and characters are of inferior grade.” When Jones again refused, Richard Rush asked him to name two men who might be interested since, for unnamed political reasons, the administration wanted the job to go to a Philadelphian.23

Jones was aware of the international difficulties of the Madison administration. As a merchant, he had felt the sting of British impressment. While he was in China in 1805, a British man-of-war had boarded the American merchantman New Jersey and removed several sailors. Edward Carrington, the United States Commercial Agent in China, asked Captain Jones what should be done. Jones suggested initial negotiations and consultation, but, recognizing that these means were foredoomed to failure, he urged that, “In the interim it ought to be the unanimous and absolute determination of the American Captains first to resist by firm & cool remonstrance

23 R. Rush to Jones, Mar. 29, Apr. 3, Apr. 4, 1812; Jones to W. Eustis, Apr. 20, 1812; W. Eustis to Jones, May 3, 1812; R. Rush to Jones, June 30, 1812.
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and ultimately to repel by force of Arms, any attempts of the kind in the future. By the summer of 1812, Jones believed that the administration had no choice but to go to war—with England for certain and, perhaps, with France as well. In a letter to Jonathan Roberts, Jones detailed his reasons for urging the immediate beginning of hostilities. Delay, Jones wrote, would only allow the British more time to aid American anglophiles who were hoping to prevent the war. He opposed a combined war against both Britain and France. Such a conflict would prevent the United States from effectively carrying on the war against either nation.

When Jones assumed the secretaryship of the Navy, he had no great expectations and was neither impressed by his office nor by the people he met in Washington. He knew his new position would be a difficult one, and had no doubts as to the demands it would require of him. His official correspondence as Secretary, often composed by clerks from his notes, is usually laconic. His private letters, on the other hand, are quite obtuse and full of intricate similes. These, especially those written to his much-loved wife Eleanor, remain as the best key to the man's personality and mind. They are an interesting commentary on an earlier age. It was to Eleanor that Jones revealed his deepest concern with the burdens of his new office.

Those of my friends whom I have casually met with greet me with pleasure and express great confidence, but commiserate me on the Herculean task I have to encounter.

Be it so, but I am sure it will give you pleasure to learn that though the report of its difficulties increase as I advance my hope and confidence is strengthened and the terrors appear to diminish with the serious contemplation I have given to the subject. Having accepted the trust with reluctance, but with the purest motives and most ardent zeal for the sacred cause of our country why should I despair? My pursuits and studies has been intimately connected with the objects of the department and I have not been an inattentive observer of political causes and effects. The truth is that the difficulties I have to encounter are artificial, but they are not the less difficult on that account. They arise from the corruption of self-interested men who have taken root in the establishment and like the voracious poplar nothing can thrive in their shade. But (as we did in our

25 Jones to J. Roberts, June 10, 1812.
we can cut it down replace the fair pavement, and let in the cheering beams of the sun of truth and honesty. I shall take care however not to cut rashly and indiscriminately. If I cut off the noxious plants, I shall cherish the useful trees.26

Soon after his arrival in Washington, the republican Jones wrote to his wife expressing his disapproval of the society which he had found. He was never at home with or happy in the capital's social life and, in the following letter, he reveals his contempt for the masquerade in which he was forced to participate.

'Ere I go to the drawing room to play the farce of etiquette, let me snatch a moment to commune with the wife of my bosom whose hourly converse has so long been the solace of my leisure hours.

This is Wednesday evening and all the world in Washington assemble weekly to pay their respects at head quarters and I shall return early and go to writing again. As yet I have not been able to return the visits of ceremony . . . and I perceive that my domestic habits have utterly un-fitted me for a courtier for all this gives me pain instead of pleasure. . . .27

Eleanor Jones eventually moved to the capital to be with her husband, but she often returned to Philadelphia for prolonged visits. While she was away in the late summer of 1813, Jones described his bachelor life to her.

My spirits naturally good and disposition cheerful (for Heaven and you well know that had they not my heart must have long since bowed down) has really had but little to preserve their natural tone. In my lodgings I am a hermit & slave. In my office like a public pump kept constantly wagging by any one who thirsts after honors or emoluments which they run off with whilst I am left dry. The little recreation I get is a ride to the navy yard where I mount my old hobby horse and feast my eyes upon the noble ships that are building and their little children the beautiful Barges which I have constructed after my own fancy. These little excursions have in a great degree sustained my spirit and my health which is excellent.28

To make himself more at home, the Secretary asked his wife to bring him a few items from Philadelphia. Among these were "two

26 Jones to E. Jones, Jan. 23, 1813.
27 Jones to E. Jones, Feb. 10, 1813.
28 Jones to E. Jones, Sept. 17, 1813.
barrels of *Snowden & Fishers* pale ale,” a “keg of nice pickled tripe,” “a barrel of nice fat mackrel,” “three or four pots of french mustard,” “a box of currants some soft shelled almonds a jar of olives,” plus some table utensils.29

The summer of 1813 was a particularly busy and trying time for the Secretary of the Navy. Madison was at his home, Montpelier, in Virginia where he was so ill that at times it seemed he would not survive. Secretary of State James Monroe was vacationing in Virginia while the Secretary of War, John Armstrong, was on the northern frontier ineptly conducting the land forces. Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, was in Russia trying to arrange a meeting with the British. Jones was the only person with cabinet rank in the capital. In effect, he was the entire executive arm of the national government.

In Gallatin’s absence, Jones had been formally appointed the acting head of the Treasury Department, a trust he held from May, 1813, to February, 1814.30 The President wanted to keep Gallatin as an adviser and feared that if he removed this wily financier he would never be able to convince him to return to the cabinet. There was also the possibility that the Senate would refuse to confirm the unpopular Gallatin as a peace commissioner. After the Secretary had actually been confirmed as a member of the official United States delegation at Ghent, a successor was named for the Treasury Department and he never returned to the administration.31

When Gallatin left for Europe, he provided Jones with detailed instructions on what he was to do as Acting Secretary of the Treasury. This official memorandum restricted him to procedural matters and severely curtailed any original actions that he might undertake, especially in the remissions cases wherein ship owners asked that vessels be returned to them.32 Typical of these cases was the one

29 Jones to E. Jones, Aug. 22, 1813.
30 Madison’s authorization for this action was a statute of May 8, 1792, which permitted the President to appoint any person to a cabinet office when “death, absence from the seat of government, or sickness” shall prevent the Secretary from performing his duties “until a successor be appointed, or until such absence or inability by sickness shall cease.” *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America* (Washington, 1836), I, 281.
32 Gallatin to Jones, Apr. 20, 1813.
involving the brig *Catherine* trading between St. Bartholomew and Halifax under a neutral Swedish flag. When the vessel was searched on the high seas, an American officer noted that her real destination was New Haven, Connecticut. The *Catherine* was thus plying an illegal trade between the United States and the British West Indies. The owner, James Martin, was an American merchant who claimed that the insertion of New Haven was a mistake by the foreign captain. The acting Secretary was asked to intercede in this case and innumerable similar ones.\(^{33}\)

The most pressing problem which Jones faced as acting Secretary of the Treasury was to find a means of financing the war. The projected revenues would not cover the nation's actual expenditures. In 1813, 1814, and 1815, the administration was forced to seek loans, issue treasury certificates, and raise taxes. The Congress always acceded to these measures just in time to avert a financial disaster. In the summer of 1813 Jones was asked to suggest the best way of raising money. He sent a well-researched answer to Congress which advocated loans backed by an internal tax which would "facilitate the obtaining of the loan," and help to procure it on "favorable terms."\(^ {34}\) Jones estimated that it would take at least four months of hard work to enable the Treasury Department to set up the apparatus for collecting the internal tax that Congress had passed. This measure included a direct tax estimated at three million dollars upon land, dwelling houses, and slaves, plus internal duties on stills, refined sugars, retailers' licenses, bank notes, auction sales, carriages, and an additional levy of twenty cents on each bushel of imported salt. There was, however, more difficulty involved in collecting the unpopular tax than Jones had envisioned. Indeed, of the 190 electoral districts in the nation, there were "74 for which no application or recommendation for Collector" had been received by September 20, 1813. The law was to go into effect on January 1, 1814.\(^ {35}\) Yet the law was operative in time to bring in the needed revenues, and actually raised $3,882,482 the first year and, with increased rates, $6,840,732 in 1815. These methods enabled the gov-

\(^{33}\) J. Martin to Jones, June 22, 1813.
\(^{35}\) Jones to J. Eppes, June 21, 1813; Memo of Jones, Sept. 20, 1813.
ernment to keep a surplus which wavered between two and four million dollars in the treasury at all times during the war.36

Jones rapidly fell behind in his Treasury Department duties. Clerk Edward Jones reminded Secretary Jones "that there are in this office ready for signature, a number of Remission Warrants, which, having been regularly recorded, are now become matters of record and by reason of their date cannot in any event be executed by any person but yourself. It has always been an established rule in this Department never to permit the chain or series of our official transactions to be interrupted . . . and I have with great deference ventured to make this statement with a view of drawing your attention to the subject."37

Jones never really wanted the added burdens of the Treasury Department and only undertook them to help the President. He complained to Eleanor about the increased duties, but because Madison expressed "so much repugnance" at his desire to be relieved of the office, he decided to continue until Gallatin's return. When by December it became obvious that Gallatin would not be returning to the department, Jones informed the President that he could no longer head two departments and asked to be relieved of the treasury post as soon as a successor could be found. But even after the appointment of George W. Campbell as Secretary of the Treasury in February, 1814, the President continued to consult with him on fiscal matters. An example of this was a query by Madison about the financing of the war, to which Jones replied that the nation must rely upon "taxes—a national Bank—loans and Treasury Notes." "The product of the first," he continued, "will be remote—the aid of the second cannot be commanded in time to meet the immediate demands on the Treasury which must therefore be derived from the third and fourth."38

As the Secretary of the Navy, Jones had the power to control a great deal of patronage and he was not afraid to use it. He made

37 E. Jones to Jones, Feb. 3, 1814.
38 Jones to E. Jones, July 14, 1813; Jones to Madison, Dec. 21, 1813; also Jones to Madison, October, 1814, microfilm copy of the James Madison Papers, Library of Congress, hereinafter abbreviated as JMP.
certain that his own friends and relatives were given government business or positions. His brother Lloyd was made captain of the cartel the *Neptune*, which took the American peace commissioners to Europe in 1814. Jones’ wife’s sister married William Strong who died practically impoverished. Jones’ sister-in-law supported her family by operating an apothecary shop in Philadelphia. The Secretary ordered George Harrison, the navy agent at Philadelphia, to buy all the medical supplies for the outfitting of the United States frigate *Guerrière* from Mrs. Strong “because the public will at the same time be as well served, and it will aid the efforts of a respectable and worthy woman to support and educate a large young family.”

Perhaps Jones’ closest friend was William Young, a Philadelphia merchant who was also his financial confidant. Young found himself in tight straits and in need of a job when the war closed international commerce. Jones found a position for him and received Young’s thanks, “the place of Naval Store keeper which in your last letter you said you thought you could get for me would be very acceptable by that help I should be able to pay off my Bank debt which is $2100.”

Jones was the legal guardian of his wife’s nephew, William Strong, Jr., and he attempted to secure a sinecure for him. In a confidential letter to Eleanor, the Secretary wrote about the position he had in mind.

I am laying a plan for William’s future fortune but until I ascertain whether I can bring it to bear you will not suggest it to anyone. I think the President would not refuse any reasonable thing that I should ask. The consulate at Cadiz is one of the best in the gift of the government. It has been hitherto held by an old Spaniard who has done all the business by a vice consul, who with the best opportunities has by imprudent speculation failed and will be removed and I think there is a disposition to appoint a new Consul. This is what I mean to ask and I think I shall succeed. If I do it insures to William a certain and speedy fortune.

Of course, there was no civil service at this time, and it was perfectly right and reasonable for a high administrative official to see that posts were filled with men he could trust.

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39 Jones to G. Harrison, Sept. 30, 1814, United States Department of the Navy, “Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Commandants and Navy Agents, 1808-1865” (microcopy of records in the National Archives, no. 441).
40 W. Young to Jones, Dec. 8, 1813.
41 Jones to E. Jones, Aug. 22, 1813.
Jones himself, however, not only made no fortune from his position, but he fell into bankruptcy because of it. His financial problems began in 1808 when he returned from India, the owner of a ship with an account of $120,000, three-quarters of which was in indigo cloth and meant for European consumption. The embargo kept the material in the United States until June, 1811, when he sent it with an agent to Russia. The agent sold it for an unprofitable amount and the entire deal resulted in a severe loss. Meanwhile, Jones had to sell his ship to gain funds. Because of the unsure state of American commerce, he realized only half of its original cost of $47,000. In an even more poignant letter near the end of his tenure, Jones wrote to Eleanor, “After all I shall return to your arms a beggar with the proceeds of our surplus furniture carriage and horses and a few dollars scraped from the late savings in all perhaps sufficient to support us 12 or 18 months in retired economy. Well never mind it, I shall return with a pure heart and peace of mind as cheerful as a

42 Jones to Madison, Apr. 25, 1814, JMP; Jones to Willing & Francis, Sept. 26, 1813.
43 W. Young to Jones, Jan. 24, Jan. 28, Mar. 1, Mar. 7, June 29, July 21, Sept. 19, Dec. 8, 1813; Jones to E. Jones, Apr. 7, Sept. 30, 1814; Jones to W. Young, July 6, Aug. 17, 1814; Jones to J. Savage, Sept. 26, 1813; T. Darry & J. Roberts to Jones, July 8, 1813.
44 Jones to W. Young, Apr. 11, 1813.
lark and with sufficient common sense to keep out of the snares of public life." By the end of his term Jones' credits amounted to $29,692 and his debts to $47,000.

Within a little more than a year after taking office, Jones had thought seriously of resigning. On April 25, 1814, he told Madison that he wanted to leave the Navy Department for personal reasons, but would remain on until the next session of Congress so Madison would have time to choose a successor. By the late spring, his desire to retire had become public knowledge. As his financial troubles worsened, he wrote to Eleanor, "My unceasing efforts will be to get out of office which will absolutely take place in all this year—I think by the 1st of December." On September 11, 1814, he submitted both an official letter of resignation to the President and a private one which explained why he had to give up his position. In the private letter, Secretary Jones declared that while "Mere abstract poverty is nothing but [being] sensibly alive to those principles of integrity and punctuality which have guided my whole life, the inability to meet my engagements and to avert the inconvenience and possible loss which may accrue to those who are immediately liable for my obligations is painful in the extreme." Jones also told Madison that "I shall never regret [my current financial state] if my services shall have been useful to my country and satisfactory to you—a consummation which with very moderate talents and a heart ill at ease, I can scarcely flatter myself." The end had come, however, and he had no regrets. He had done his duty and was glad to have been a part of the Madison administration. Philosophically he commented to his wife upon the public maliciousness all officials have to face.

Much joy to my successor, whoever he may be. I hope he may acquire honor for himself and fame for his country, but instead of a wreath of laurels he has a much greater chance of acquiring a crown of thorns. The truth is that our Government is so constituted and public sentiments (so called) so capricious and arbitrary that the high public officers are liable to be arraigned and tried & condemned by a species of revolutionary tribunal which though it does not strike off the head stab the more noble and vital part the reputation.

45 Jones to E. Jones, Nov. 6, 1814.
46 Jones to Savage & Dugan, Apr. 13, 1815.
47 Jones to Madison Apr. 25, 1814, JMP; D. Coxe to Jones, May 26, 1814; Jones to E. Jones, Sept. 7, 1814; Jones to Madison, Sept. 11, 1814; Jones to E. Jones, Sept. 20, 1814.
The President responded with regret to Jones' request. "Whatever may happen," Madison wrote, "I cannot let the present occasion pass without expressing the gratification I have experienced in the entire fulfillment of my expectations, large as they were, from your talents and exertions, and from all those personal qualities which harmonize official and sweeten social intercourse." Following his resignation a public dinner was held in Jones' honor in Washington as a testimony of the "high esteem" the citizens of that city had for him. The Baltimore Patriot bemoaned the Secretary's retirement saying that he had "more essentially benefited the department, than any of his predecessors" and that "he embarked in his administrial labors with defined principles of duty, to which he has resolutely adhered, regardless of party clamor or political discontent." Many years after leaving the Presidency, Madison was asked by Henry Lee to comment upon Jones. By this time Jones had been involved in a banking scandal which permanently tarnished his reputation, but the former president unstintingly praised the man.

I must be allowed to express my surprise at the unfavorable view taken of the appointment of Mr. Jones. I do not hesitate to pronounce him the fittest Minister who had ever been charged with the Navy Department. With a strong mind, well stored with the requisite knowledge, he possessed great energy of character and undefatigable application to business. I cannot doubt that the evidence of his real capacity, his appropriate acquirements, and his effective exertions in a most arduous service and the most trying scenes, now to be found on the files of the Department, as well as my own, would reverse the opinion which seems to have been formed of him. Nor in doing him justice ought it to be omitted that he had on his hands the Treasury as well as the Navy Department, and at a time when both called for unusual attention, and that he did not shrink from the former, for which he proved himself qualified, till the double burden became evidently unsupportable.

On leaving the Navy Department, Jones returned to Philadelphia where he was able to recoup the fortune he had lost while Secretary.

48 Madison to Jones, Apr. 24, 1814, JMP.
49 C. Carroll, et al., to Jones, Dec. 10, 1814.
50 Clipping from the Baltimore Patriot, no date, in a letter from R. Spence to W. Jones, November, 1814.
51 Madison to H. Lee, February, 1827, JMP.
Partially due to his friendship with Alexander James Dallas, who became Secretary of the Treasury in October, 1814, and due to his capable handling of the Treasury Department, Jones was elected the first president of the Second Bank of the United States in July, 1816. But in this capacity he was over his head. His knowledge of banking was minimal and the chief reasons for his appointment had been political. He soon became involved in the intra-bank squabbles and was implicated in some shady stock transfers. His degree of involvement was never ascertained and it appeared to be more one of ignorance than of criminal intent. However, in January, 1819, he was forced to resign the presidency of the bank in disgrace. He then joined with Joshua and Samuel Humphreys in a company to build steamships. This endeavor enabled him to recoup his fortune. Later, from 1827 until 1829, he held the sinecure of Collector of Customs for the port of Philadelphia.

In the summer of 1831, Jones left fever-ridden Philadelphia for the cool air of the Pocono mountains. On the way there, he stopped at the pleasant community of Bethlehem where he had served his shipbuilding apprenticeship as a boy. There he was stricken with the fever, which he had carried with him, and he died at the Sun Inn on September 6. In accordance with his special request, the Moravian Church permitted the Episcopalian from Philadelphia to be buried in their beautiful cemetery, “God’s Acre,” where he lies today.

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53 Levering, 653. Some controversy exists on his place of burial. Frederick in the Dictionary of American Biography states that Jones was buried in St. Peter’s churchyard, Philadelphia. I could find no gravestone indicating his body, though his wife and family are buried there; see William W. Bronson, The Inscriptions in St. Peter’s Church Yard, Philadelphia (Camden, N. J., 1879), 90. Bethlehem, on the other hand, does have grave records for William Jones, 1760-1831. It seems inconceivable that the corpse of a man who had died from a contagious fever during an epidemic would be shipped over sixty miles in the summer for burial.