

Ichabod Jones

According to the diary of the Rev. John Ballantine, Dec. 20, 1770, 1770, "One Ichabod Jones lodged here – he is said to have a considerable estate but makes no use of it. Rides about the country, lives on the charity of the people, says he is sick but travels in all weathers, in all ways, there is an appearance of religion."

John Lockwood, *Westfield and Its Historic Influences*, 1669-1919... (2 vols.; Springfield, MA, 1922), 1:424, quoting the diary of the Rev. John Ballantine of Westfield.

For additional information about Jones, see Peter Benes, *For a Short Time Only: Itinerants and the Resurgence of Popular Culture in Early America* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 258-59.

1774 January 3 (Monday). At Eve came an old, miserable man *Ichabod Jones*, he says, of Dorchester. He lyes by the Fire. A poor distempered, rheumatic, [Scorbutic?] Object. I keep his Horse also.

1774 January 4 (Tuesday). N.B. At Eve Mr. Beeton and his wife are here to See Mrs. *Kelly*, and they inform that at the Vendue of Miss *Mary Bradish's* House yesterday at Deacon *Woods*, there was one Mr. Jones, who goes about as a Vagrant, Sings, makes Verses and is sometime Crazy -- that this Man is expected to preach tomorrow at Mr. *Beetons* House. But I represented the sin and folly of it, and forbid it.

1774 January 5 (Wednesday). Mr. *Beeton* last Evening acquainted me that Deacon *Wood* warned the meeting at his (*Beetons*) House, for Mr. *Jones* to preach. I Sent for the Deacon, who came, and told me what he had said about this *Jones's* preaching and endeavored to clear himself of any warning of a Meeting, but yet Seemed to Shew a Disposition to go and hear him if he did preach -- nay and asked if I would not go too? I answered with warmth, and Shewed him the utter impropriety of it, and that it would be to his great Dishonor if he Should so Countenance what would be So imprudent, disparaging to the holy Ordinance of Preaching -- that it would be a lifting up the Soul to vanity, etc. -- and I must depend upon his wisdom and steddiess to Conduct suitably in the Affair. But what he will do I know not.... May the Lord grant me wisdom and steddiess at this peculiar Juncture among my Flock and Save them from Evil!

1774 January 6 (Thursday). I hear that Mr. *Jones* aforesaid preached at Mr. *Beetons* last Evening, and that though it was very Stormy, a great many assembled there: that Deacon *Wood* was there, and read the Psalm, that Mr. *Edwards Whipple* sat the Psalm. But I am at my own Business. Mr. *Benjamin Webb* came from Deacon *Woods* hither and acquainted me that Mr. *Jones* was there.

1774 January 8 (Saturday). Hear that Mr. *Jones* preached at Mr. *Tainters* last Evening. One *Duntan* was here at Dinner with us.

1774 January 9 (Sunday). I had prepared to preach on Ps. 92.12 a.m. but thought it would be best to wave that for this time. I repeated with Alterations both a. and p.m. Sermons on Joh.1.12. Mr. Jones at meeting.... After Exercises Mr. Joseph *Harrington* came in here. Said he was going to Mr. *Timothy Warrins* to hear Mr. *Jones*: I let him know that I could not approve of it, Since he was a stranger, had never let me know what he was, had not come to me, and that it was very disorderly for him to thrust himself in thus; and that it was very improper for him who was in covenant with me, to countenance Such irregular proceedings, and which were of Dangerous Tendency, by going to hear him. But he went that way notwithstanding as I understand many more did at Evening though a Cold season.

1774 January 10 (Monday). Am informed that Mr. *Jones* preached at Mr. *Timothy Warrins* last Evening. It is too severe Weather for me to go abroad. No one comes to Speak with me about the preaching stranger.

1774 January 11 (Tuesday). I inclosed them in a Letter to Rev. *Jones* of *Western*, requesting Some Account this Mr. *Isaac Jones*, who preaches to my Neighbours.

1774 January 13 (Thursday). Mr. *Benjamin Webb* came to see me. Tells me that Mr. *Jones* went from Deacon Woods to day, on foot, with his Bundle for Providence.

1774 March 8 (Tuesday). Went to Deacon *Woods*.... Read to him some sentences of a Letter I this Day received from Mr. *Cushing*, concerning the Crazy *Isaac Jones* who preached a while agoe in this Town.

1774 March 25 (Friday). Mr. *Cushing* confirms what he had writ concerning crazy *Jones* the Preacher.