

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

JONES, Abraham

fl. London 1774; – London 1809

Also Abraham Jones Jacobs. The silhouettist and inventor identified recently as Abraham Jones was presumably a pupil of Pether, from whose address (30 Berwick Street) he sent three heads in black chalk, a flower piece in black lead and three unfinished miniatures to the Free Society in 1774. Graves's inference that the exhibitor was a "crayon painter", while not warranted by the catalogue, seems after all to have been correct. An announcement in the *Bath chronicle*, 13.XI.1777 by "Mr Jones, Artist and Silk-Painter" refuted an allegation published in the *Bath journal* the preceding Monday by one Collins, Lecturer, attributing his absence to a broken leg rather than a flight to avoid prosecution by Mrs Harrington (*q.v.*) who claimed a patent for the miniature profiles or painting on silk in which he specialised. He also now offered profiles in crayons at half-a-guinea each. He could be found at 1 King's-mead-square. He was still in Bath in 1782, appearing in *Manchester* 29.VII.1783. In .IX.1782 "Mr Jones, Artist and Drawing-Master from Bath" advertised "new-invented Optical Instruments, for copying drawing, painting natural flowers, insects, etc." (cited Long 1966 without source). He charged 15s. for likenesses in crayon, gilt frame included. Much the same advertisement, by "Mr Jones...from the Royal Academy, London" appeared in the *Northampton Mercury*, 30.XII.1782 [not 1752]. An advertisement appeared in the *Morning post*, 1.IX.1784 under the heading "Veluti in Speculum. Likenesses of certainty taken with the Royal Patent Instrument." Jones, of 168 Strand, offered in addition to scientific instruments etc.; "Portraits in Oil, or Crayons, from Fifteen Shillings to Five Guineas each, gilt frame included. Specimens may be seen. etc." Later addresses included 56 Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields: according to the *Survey of London*, the occupant in 1788–89 was "Ed. Jones". In the advertisement in *The World*, 5.XII.1788, from 331 Strand, facing Somerset House, Jones claimed His Majest's Special Appointment for his "new invented Optical Instrument for copying drawings, paintings, etc....giving a true likeness, on paper to any size... in one minute, with all their proper colours, either by day or candlelight."

By 31.XII.1790 (*Stamford Mercury*) he was still using this "new-invented reflecting mirror" and again 25.VI.1791 (*Oxford journal*); this is last recorded in the *Derby Mercury* 14.VIII.1794. He also marketed the machine through Henry Brookes's stationery warehouse at the Golden Head, Coventry street.

Jones moved to 4 Wells Street, Marylebone in 1799, and rate books show that he remained there until 1809, and evidence his forename. His full name however appears in his will, made 20.X.1809 and proved 13.XI.1809: "Abraham Jones Jacobs of Wells Street...artist"; he left everything to his wife Rosetta, otherwise unrecorded. Records of the Sun Fire office (London Metropolitan Archives) indicate that "Abraham Jones Jacobs, portrait painter", insured 7 Coventry Street in 1784.

According to the autobiographical note of the engraver and bookseller William Gardiner (1766–1814) (*Biographica hibernica*, II, p. 175)–

Chance led me to connect myself with a Mr Jones in the Strand, who made what he called "reflecting mirrors" and cut profile shades in brass foil, which were denominated "polite remembrances to friends"; my employ was to daub the portraits of any who were fools enough to sit to me. At this employment I got, most justly, neither praise nor profit.

Bibliography

Foskett 1987; Graves 1907; Long 1966, p. 243; McKechnie; profilesofthepast.org.uk, online [consulted 19.III.2016]; Brian Wellings, pr. comm. 23.IX.2023