

A PROVINCIAL SURGEON AND HIS OBSTETRIC PRACTICE: THOMAS W. JONES OF HENLEY-IN-ARDEN, 1764–1846

by

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Recent research has revealed a small but growing quantity of casebooks and personal papers kept by obscure provincial medical practitioners in the eighteenth century, although the survival rate remains disappointingly low when contrasted with other archive sources for the period. We will never know how many Georgian surgeon-apothecaries in an age of low bureaucracy kept case notes on their patients and we can only guess at the motivation of those who did, although some famous medical teachers of the period certainly encouraged pupils to do so. It seems that the majority of provincial practitioners would know their patients personally and remember their earlier treatments. Written records were obviously of far greater importance as medical partnerships evolved and, by the nineteenth century, when there was more use made of practitioners' services by patients of all social classes, and perhaps practice was more impersonal. The variety of medical conditions, the frequency of treatments, the fees, practice areas, and social status of a practitioner's patients remain aspects of medical history for the eighteenth century about which so little is known when both practitioner and patient were undistinguished, although, of course, certain famous men and eminent sufferers are well documented, both subjectively and objectively. A practitioner's motivation to keep records may have been a desire to communicate his findings to one of the provincial scientific societies that were well established by the later eighteenth century. Even if a society were not named as a medical organization, a glance at its membership reveals a substantial number of practitioners attending meetings. Again, a publication such as the *Philosophical Transactions* frequently carried reports of recent medical discoveries or new theories, sometimes as a series of letters between practitioners, and the writers of case notes may have wished to publish their work in this way.

However, practitioners' casebooks do survive, usually by accident. One country surgeon-apothecary, Thomas Jones, kept such a volume, relating to over four hundred deliveries during the last decade of the eighteenth century, which he entitled 'Women Delivered, Management &c'. In the volume, 6½ inches by 8, rather too large for a pocket-book, he entered on the left-hand page the patient's name, (often in the form 'John Stanley's wife'), her place of residence, date of delivery, and whether the child were male or female. On the opposite page, Jones noted details of the labour, even if

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only “natural” when “nothing remarkable occurred” as well as the fees received; all 422 entries were numbered and in chronological order, written on ninety unnumbered pages. Jones began the casebook on 22 May 1791 and his last entry was on 7 August 1800, but it seems likely that he kept later volumes of notes that have, so far, not been found or have been destroyed (Plate1).¹

In Jones’s own medical education and background may lie the reasons for his considerable interest in recording in detail the parturient women he attended. Baptised on 4 May 1764, Thomas Woen Jones was the son of Jeffrey Jones, a surgeon-apothecary at Henley-in-Arden,² a south Warwickshire market town with a population of some five hundred in the mid-eighteenth century that was to double by 1801.³ Jeffrey Jones had been one of the town’s three surgeon-apothecaries listed in the three *Medical Registers* of 1779–83, when his closest rivals were three men in Alcester and two practitioners in Stratford-upon-Avon, both communities some ten miles away. No physicians practised in this remote, rural corner of south-west Warwickshire, an agricultural area primarily, but with needle-making a local industry straddling the border with Worcestershire. Henley-in-Arden, however, was on a turnpike road from Birmingham to Stratford-upon-Avon, its importance and good communications reflected in the large number of substantial coaching inns situated along the town’s main street. A good road network was always a significant factor in the siting of an eighteenth-century medical practice, enabling patients to reach the surgeon-apothecary, and the practitioner to make domiciliary visits as easily and quickly as possible.

When Thomas Jones was twenty, on 3 February 1785, he was apprenticed to John Jackson, a London surgeon-apothecary, to whom his father paid the substantial premium of £150 for a seven-year term.⁴ Rather old to be an apprentice, presumably Jones had had some years’ instruction and experience with his father. Jackson had attained membership of the Company of Surgeons in 1771; he lived in Knightsbridge until 1799, when he moved to Sloane Street.⁵ While in London, Jones received more specialist instruction than his master could provide, and in November 1790 attended a series of lectures on midwifery and the diseases of children. Fortunately, he kept detailed notes of the lectures and these have survived. On the title-page of his notebook he described the lectures as being by ‘Drs Osborn & Clarke’. The topics covered, all apparently by Clarke, were the complex labour, management of the placenta, management of sore nipples, diseases of women, miliary fever, and the diseases of children. This notebook is obviously one of a series, for the November 1790 entries were “continued from page 359”. He had bought his notebook from the stationers, Flight and Williams in Holborn.⁶

The two men who taught Jones were leading London medical figures in the 1790s; William Osborne, MD, lived at Percy Street, Rathbone Place, and was the physician at

¹ Warwick County Record Office [WCRO], Z383 (sm). Individual references to the entries in the casebook are not given. The WCRO copy is a photostat of the original volume, which is still in private hands; I am grateful for the owner’s permission to use it.

² WCRO, DR 195/4.

³ George Miller, *The parishes of the diocese of Worcester*, London, 1889, vol. 2, p. 159; and *Victoria history of the county of Warwick*, London, 1908, vol. 2, p. 184.

⁴ P. J. Wallis, R. V. Wallis and T. D. Whittet, *Eighteenth century medics*, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985, p. 595.

⁵ Royal College of Surgeons of England Library, examination book, 1785.

⁶ WCRO, Z383 (sm).

the New Lying-in Hospital in Store Street. The author of two textbooks on difficult labours, he was responsible for improving the obstetric forceps, presumably used by Jones; Osborne also claimed to have taught midwifery to over 1200 practitioners. With Dr Thomas Denman, man-midwife at the Middlesex Hospital, Osborne gave lectures in Leicester Street which were listed in the 1783 *Medical Register*. Osborne was also a member of the Company of Surgeons and a committee member of the Society for the Improvement of Medical Knowledge.⁷ John Clarke (1761–1815), originally a surgeon, acquired a midwifery licence in 1787 and an Edinburgh MD before becoming a leading London obstetrician. He taught midwifery at St Bartholomew's Hospital and published two books on pregnancy (1788 and 1793). When he was appointed in 1800 as physician to the London Dispensary, it caused scandal because he was rumoured to be the illegitimate son of an apothecary in Crutched Friars.⁸

By 1791, Jones was back in Warwickshire, for on 10 April 1792 the Overseers of the neighbouring parish of Aston Cantlow paid "Dr Jones his bill for 1791 & 1792", a total sum of £13 13s. 6d.,⁹ and on 22 May 1791 Jones attended the first patient in his obstetric casebook, William Wagstaffe's wife of Henley, whose natural labour produced a daughter and whom he was to deliver again in 1793. These two earliest recorded instances of Jones's medical activities suggest important aspects of his work for the next half-century—contract and fee-based attendance in at least ten local parishes on every kind of pauper patient and a substantial obstetric practice for women of all classes within a five-mile radius of his surgery premises.

As well as his own obstetric case notes, we also fortunately know of Jones's work in the area as a poor law surgeon from parish Overseers' accounts; from them he received annual fees, both irregular and by contract, as well as individual sums for specific cases. His poor law work began on his return from London to Henley, the classic first step on the professional ladder for the unfashionable, struggling new practitioner. In Henley, he may well have taken over the work formerly done by another town practitioner, James Ward, who was known locally as a man-midwife. There is no evidence that Jones's father, Jeffrey, ever provided parish medical attention. Ward had been in practice from at least 1752 and attended six parishes in the locality, four of which Thomas Jones later served, but Ward's name was not included in any of the 1779–83 *Medical Registers*, though he was certainly active in that period.

In 1791, Jones began to be paid regularly (Table 1) as surgeon to Aston Cantlow (Map 1, p. 343), the adjacent parish to Henley-in-Arden, but in erratic sums; in 1795, he received his first contract fee, £6 6s. This rose to £8 8s. in 1798, fell to £7 7s. in 1799 and to £6 6s. by 1800, but by 1803 stabilized at £5 5s. a year, at which it remained until 1819, although this was a period of notable inflation. Jones was also paid extra by Aston Cantlow for midwifery, attending accidents and supplying medicines, which suggests

⁷ Samuel Foart Simmons, *The Medical Register for the year 1783*, London, Joseph Johnson, 1783, pp. 13, 12, 50, 22, 39; *DNB* entry.

⁸ Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (editors), *The diary of Joseph Farington*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1978, vol. 4, p. 1338; *DNB* entry.

⁹ WCRO, DR 259/35.

that his contract, although it has not survived, specifically excluded those medical conditions, as, indeed, the majority of contracts did, unless the practitioner were desperate to secure the work under any conditions. The £5 5s. fee was not termed a “salary” in the accounts of the Overseers of the Poor until 1817.¹⁰

TABLE 1. PARISH POOR LAW PAYMENTS TO THOMAS JONES

Year	£	s	d	Parish	Medical attention etc.	Year	£	s	d	Parish	Medical attention etc.
1792	13	13	6	Aston C.	for 1791 + 1792	1816	5	5	0	Aston C.	salary
1793	4	14	6	Lapworth	bill	1	10	0	Aston C.	2 women delivered	
1794	6	9	0	Aston C.	towards bill	1	9	0	Aston C.	attending/medicines	
1795	8	9	6	Aston C.	bill	7	6	3	Rowington	bill	
	7	17	6	Aston C.	bill		13	0	Rowington	labour	
1796	6	6	0	Aston C.	bill	1	0	0	Langley	labour	
1798	4	14	6	Lapworth	salary	1817	5	5	0	Aston C.	Salary
	5	5	0	Aston C.	bill	4	1	0	Aston C.	4 women delivered	
1799	7	7	0	Aston C.	bill		10	0	Aston C.	bill	
1800	6	6	0	Aston C.	bill	1	1	0	Aston C.	labour	
	1	19	2	Pillerton	bill	1	7	6	Nuthurst	bill	
1802	5	5	0	Aston	year attendance	1818	4	13	2	Rowington	labour & pauper
1803	5	5	0	Aston	salary		10	6	Nuthurst	labour	
		10	6	Morton B.	bill	1819	5	5	0	Aston C.	salary
		10	0	Rowington	smallpox family		15	0	Aston C.	labour	
1804	5	5	0	Aston C.	bill						
	1	1	0	Aston C.	attendance	1821	27	17	6	Aston C.	bill (?for 2 yrs)
1805	5	5	0	Aston C.	bill		16	1	Nuthurst	bill	
	2	12	6	Aston	attendance	1823	2	15	11	Nuthurst	bill
		12	6	Claverdon	woman delivered	1824	2	12	9	Nuthurst	bill
1806	5	5	0	Aston C.	salary		17	6	Beaudesert	vaccinating 5	
	2	2	0	Aston C.	bill	1826	2	10	10	Nuthurst	bill
	3	14	6	Aston C.	paid for Freeman		2	2	0	Beaudesert	fractured leg
1807	2	2	0	Exhall	bill	1827		9	6	Nuthurst	bill
	3	15	0	Beaudesert	bill		1	4	0	Aston C.	labour/medicines
1809	5	5	0	Aston C.	salary	1828	13	2	6	Aston C.	bill
	4	7	0	Aston C.	attending labours		10	14	0	Nuthurst	bill
1811	2	2	0	Ullenhall	inquest	1829	3	18	6	Aston C.	bill for widow
1812	6	14	3	Temple G.	bill, medicines etc		8	2	9	Aston C.	bill
1812-3	3	1	0	Temple G.	bill, medicines etc	1830	2	18	0	Exhall	bill
1813	3	3	0	Aston C.	child burnt						
1814	5	5	0	Aston C.	salary	1833	8	2	0	Aston C.	bill
	3	18	6	Aston C.	5 women delivered		5	5	0	Beaudesert	year's attention
1815	5	5	0	Aston C.	salary		1	11	0	Aston C.	bill
		3	6	Aston C.	woman after labour						
	1	1	0	Lapworth	pauper at the Oak						
	9	14	9	Claverdon	woman gored						
	1	6	0	Exhall	bill						

In the nearby parish of Lapworth, Jones was paid £4 14s. 6d. in two separate years, 1793 and 1798, again indicating a contract. In this particular parish, some four miles distant from Henley, Jones lost the contract work to Dr Kimbell of Knowle, who, though living no closer to Lapworth, was, as a new practitioner, presumably prepared

¹⁰ Ibid., 259/35-39.

to undercut existing rates and be more easily available to parish patients. However, in 1815, Lapworth paid Jones a fee of £1 1s. for “attending and medicines for pauper at the Oak” (the Royal Oak at Lapworth); the case was also attended by another Henley practitioner, Samuel Brown, who had a prosperous private asylum in the town.¹¹ In the hamlet of Nuthurst, with fewer than a hundred population, Jones was parish surgeon for the years 1817–28. During the period, he received annual sums that ranged from 15s. to £10 14s., although between £2 and £3 was most often paid (Table 1). However, in 1827, the parish negotiated a contract rate with William Kimbell for £4 a year, and Jones never worked there again. Nuthurst Overseers always seem to have watched their expenditure very carefully, for in the first year of Jones’s work as parish surgeon there, he gave them a receipt for 4s. 6d. as an “overcharge” on his modest bill of £1 7s. 6d.¹²

Jones’s general parish work, apart from midwifery, included treating smallpox cases and inoculating or vaccinating paupers against the disease. The term inoculation was still used, and perhaps also the technique, as late as 1810 in Langley,¹³ in 1824, the charge for each pauper patient was 3s 6d.¹⁴ He also attended serious accidents to paupers in the locality, and the relatively lengthy entries in the Overseers’ account books to justify such large sums tell us, after nearly two centuries, more about Jones’s activities and the hazards of daily life in rural Warwickshire. Thus in 1813, he was paid £3 3s. by Aston Cantlow as “further allowance for attending a child dreadfully burnt at Newnham ointment &”.¹⁵

Two years later, his bill for £9 14s. 9d. covered “journeys, medicines, cure of lacerated wounds etc in Mary Pardoe when gored with a Cow”. This particular patient had already been treated by the Claverdon contract surgeon, Samuel Brown, for the Overseers noted in their ledger that they had received £2 12s. “overcharged in Mr Browns bill on account of Mary Pardoe”. At that period, Brown was receiving £6 6s. a year as his parish salary, and Jones’s charge was a substantial increase on the poor rate.¹⁶ In another parish, where Jones was himself the contract surgeon, Beaudesert, he was paid £2 2s. extra in 1826 for “reducing & Curing fracture of the Leg S. Daykins Son”, which suggests a tightly negotiated contract in this area of competitive medical practice.¹⁷

An interesting and relatively under-investigated aspect of eighteenth-century provincial medicine is the role of the surgeon-apothecary in post-mortem examinations and at inquests. Although theoretically any qualified man could undertake these tasks, after the mid-eighteenth century it is apparent that, in the provinces, like ophthalmic work, forensic medicine was increasingly performed by a small group of practitioners. In Warwickshire, only a handful of the profession carried out post-mortem dissections and gave evidence at inquests, for which after the 1751 Act (25 Geo. II, c.29) the approved scale of fees applied. Thus in 1808, with a fellow surgeon-apothecary, Thomas Burman of Henley, Jones was paid £2 2s. as a witness at

¹¹ *Ibid.*, DRB 35/Box 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, DRB 24/5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, DR 484/1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, DR 21/8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, DR 259/37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, DR 166/21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, DR 21/8.

an inquest held on the body of John Booth (see Appendix). Booth had been found dead with severe head wounds in a stable at Hall End, an isolated farmhouse some five miles away from Henley, on 19 February 1808. The accused man, William Booth, the deceased man's brother, was acquitted at Warwick Assizes, and the parish incurred an attorney's fee of £30 3s. 4d. as well as medical expenses. Booth later found fame as a coiner and forger at Perry Barr (Staffs) and was hanged in 1812, an event which the hangman bungled at the first attempt, leaving the criminal "stunned and insensible" rather than dead. A perennial problem of medical practice, the tardy settlement of accounts, is well illustrated in Jones's inquest fee, which was not paid until 1811.¹⁸ The suggestion that the busy local surgeon-apothecary as the average expert witness was, at best, ill-prepared and at worst incompetent is less than fair to many eighteenth-century provincial practitioners, as is the suggestion that continental literary sources were beyond their reach.¹⁹ Even in 1779, the *Medical Register* listed sixty-five "foreign books" as contemporary publications (thirty in Latin, twenty-four in French, seven in Italian, and two in German), presumably to draw practitioners' attention to these recent titles. At this period, Warwickshire had a small group of men performing forensic duties, two of whom, William Bindley of Nuneaton and Bradford Wilmer of Coventry, were former Hunter pupils who remained in contact with their teachers in London, writing case notes and articles that indicate a grasp of foreign languages and an awareness of recent medical advances.

As well as his routine medical activities, it is apparent from Jones's obstetric casebook that attending midwifery cases in the area was a major part of his practice, with women patients in twelve parishes, many of which comprised several communities each, as well as scattered, remote farms and cottages. During the nine years and nine months covered by the casebook, Jones attended 422 deliveries, reaching a peak in 1798 with seventy-two labours:

TABLE 2. CASES ATTENDED BY THOMAS JONES FROM 1791 TO 1800

	Year	Cases	Total fees			Not Charged
			£	s	d	
from 22 May	1791	7	1	11	6	4
	1792	10	5	16	0	2
	1793	28	12	12	0	4
	1794	36	19	8	6	3
	1795	46	23	2	0	6
	1796	59	26	10	0	11
	1797	66	37	4	6	5
	1798	72	35	9	0	12
	1799	62	31	18	0	8
to 7 August	1800	36	17	6	6	10

Thus, during his early years in practice, his numbers of midwifery cases grew steadily, and from 1796 onwards, he was delivering at least one baby every five or six

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, CR 2044/6. *Warwick Advertiser*, 16 April 1808.

¹⁹ Thomas R. Forbes, *Surgeons at the Bailey: English forensic medicine to 1878*, New Haven, Conn., and London, Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 3, 33.

days in the year, twice the rate Percival Willughby recorded in Derby in the seventeenth century but similar to William Giffard's in London in the 1720s.²⁰ Of the 422 births, Jones noted difficulties with seventy-eight cases (18.5 per cent), often involving the use of instruments. It seems that Jones attended a distinct social group—the wives of local farmers, the clergy, and master craftsmen—perhaps whether the birth were easy or not, at most deliveries. He also attended women of other classes when his presence was medically necessary, including the occasional tramp and workhouse inhabitant.

The most commonly recorded problem in his casebook was of an abnormal presentation of the foetus. Jones noted five breech presentations, two boys and three girls, one whom was only of “7 Months Gestation but the Child alive”; the baby was baptised on the day of her birth. For all breech presentations Jones charged his usual 10s. 6d. fee, except once, in March 1800, when an incumbent's wife paid £2 2s., nearly the largest sum recorded in the casebook. The only face presentation, entered in October 1794, was subsequently crossed out with no further explanation. Four deliveries, two of each, were arm and hand presentations. Delivering twins in October 1794, Jones noted that it was a “Complex Labor the first Child presented naturally the second the Hand presented, & was brought away with that Presentation with very little difficulty”. Two months later, on Christmas Day, only the boy's baptism was recorded in the parish register. The other hand presentation in 1797 seems to have been without problems; it was the woman's third child Jones had delivered. However, the two arm presentations Jones listed were both disastrous. On 11 June 1791, his second case in the book, he described “a Preternatural Labor, an Arm Presentation. Mr Birch induced to turn. . . I delivered her in 12 Minutes the Child was dead, the Mother done extremly well, though was unable to walk for Seven Months preceding her Labour.” In this case, his fellow practitioner was William Birch (d. 1795) of Henley, a member of an old-established county medical family with another practice in the borough of Warwick. In Jones's other arm presentation, in May 1796, he “delivered with great difficulty on account of the Hand being so exceedingly low down. Mrs Doley had attended—the Child Dead”. Mrs Elizabeth Doley was, in fact, midwife to three parishes near Henley, by whom she was regularly paid for her services during the 1780s and '90s.²¹ In one arm presentation, Jones noted “the Child had been dead at least 24 Hours”, and no fee was entered in his book for attending this case.

Of the preternatural labours he attended, the foot presentation was, with twelve cases, the most commonly recorded (2.8 per cent); Jones added that four of these mothers had “a good time”. Eight of the women who had foot presentations were also delivered by Jones on other occasions. His charges for this work were erratic; he received no fee for three women, one of whom had twins, but two of his patients paid £1 1s. each, both the wives of superior local tradesmen, a victualler and a cabinet maker. One of the mothers “wanting two Months of her time” was described only as “Earthen Ware Wm”, with no place of residence and was presumably an itinerant trader passing through the locality.

²⁰ Adrian Wilson, ‘William Hunter and the varieties of man-midwifery’, in W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter (editors), *William Hunter and the eighteenth-century medical world*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 357.

²¹ WCRO, DR 83/5–6, DR 259/35, HR 61.

The casebook does not indicate directly if Jones were paid by the parish for particular patients, but Overseers' accounts often include special payments to a woman or her family during a pregnancy. Thus, in 1800, when Jones had £6 6s. as his annual poor law salary for Aston Cantlow, on 18 July, he delivered Mrs Duffin (or Dolphin) of Shelfield at no charge. In the same month, the Overseers paid 5s. to "Wm Dolphin, his wife lying down", and other members of the family also received assistance from the parish at this time.²²

Multiple births do not figure prominently in Jones's casebook, with eight sets of twins recorded out of the 422 deliveries (1.9 per cent). He noted them all as complex labours, but received only his standard 10s. 6d. fee, except for two women for whom no charge was entered; three were presentations of the feet and one "of the furnis". Jones commented that one delivery was "remarkably quick good time", another "easily accomp'd", and a third complex with floodings. He attended five of these women at other labours, but none had more than one set of twins, at least under Jones's supervision.

Jones delivered two premature babies, one of six months' and three others of seven months' gestation. One of these, in April 1800, he noted as "Flooding Case to a very alarming degree" but, though a "furnis" presentation, easily delivered. He attended three abortions; for two of these, at sixteen and twenty weeks, he charged his usual 10s. 6d., but the other, in 1794, at twenty-two weeks, was £1 1s., with the comment that "the Patient [had been] labouring under a Violent Hemorrhage for 12 days previous to the Expulsion". Jones later delivered two other babies, in 1798 and 1800, for this woman.

Of Jones's 422 cases, there were twenty-six (6.2 per cent) when he used instruments and when intervention, such as lessening the head, was necessary. He mentioned using the forceps at nineteen deliveries, the crotchet seven times, and the perforator twice; at only two deliveries did he use both the crotchet and the perforator. Instruments were employed in two cases of pelvic arrest, one when the child was dead and one of "small pelvic deformity", as well as in two protracted deliveries of three days and twenty-four hours respectively. Jones "lessened" a baby's head on four occasions. The delivery about which he gave most details, but still charged only 10s. 6d., occurred in October 1797, when an illegitimate child was born to a Bearley women. Jones's comment recorded "Difficult labor having been kept by an Old Woman six days—the last 24 hours two violent floodings coming on. She was easily delivered by the Forceps and done well." Three years later, he delivered another child for the same patient, and then too noted it as "a difficult labour a Compleat Forcep Case yet notwithstanding was obliged to use the Perforator & Extract with the Crotchet which took up at least One hour & half before it could be accomplished, the Woman however done remarkably well". This is the only case in his book for which he recorded that actual time spent on a procedure, although his charge was the usual half-guinea. Jones's lecture notes on obstetric instruments record that their use was taught, with a preference for the forceps over the crotchet, but in his own casebook in six instances he commented that he was "obliged" to use instruments, as if reluctant to do so, a non-interventionist attitude presumably taught by Osborne.

²² Ibid., DR 259/35.

The obstetric emergencies to which Jones was summoned cover only a small range. He delivered three babies that were hydrocephalic, one he noted as “most astonishing”, but added that “the Woman had a good time”. Two other cases involved a retained placenta, and one an excessive lochial discharge, “the greatest quantity. . . I ever knew which of course made her weak”, he added in February 1792 when only recently qualified. One woman’s natural labour was “attended with great Looseness etc”. He had two patients who haemorrhaged severely (one an abortion) and five who suffered flooding. The largest group of emergency cases, however, were eight women who endured a protracted labour of more than twenty-four hours or who experienced particularly strong pains. Jones recorded the length of the labours only if he thought them abnormal; thus there were three of twenty-four to twenty-six hours, one of thirty-six hours, and one of three days. He noted other patients enduring “violent”, “very strong”, and “lingering” pains.

Jones recorded five stillbirths in his casebook, two of which he described in more than usual detail. One natural labour, in August 1793, he attended at Henley for no fee and commented “Natural Labor the Child still Born having a very large Hydrocephalus with scarcely any ossification of the Bones of the Cranium”. Five years later, also in Henley, he delivered a woman for 10s. 6d. at “a Preternatural Labor the Right Leg was turn’d over the Head, with the Furnis hanging down; the P[atien]t was delivered with Forceps, not being able to push the Foot up again—Foetus dead.” The patient had a younger and older child delivered by Jones as uneventful labours. None of the mothers was noted by Jones as dying in childbirth, and their subsequent deaths cannot be ascertained for a statistically significant number in the parish burial registers.

How Jones put into practice the information he had received from Clarke’s lectures is difficult to assess, but Clarke drew on a decade of personal experience and also cited the cases of other elite London accoucheurs in his teaching. Many of the examples Jones gave illustrated the obstetrician’s duty to his patient as much as how to overcome problems in a particularly difficult delivery. Thus, the description of a ruptured uterus attended by William Bromfield ended with Jones’s comment that it was “recited meerly to shew how necessary it is never to make a Prognostic without being virtually certain at the time”. Jones later recorded three similar cases seen by Maxwell Garthshore, John Fordyce, and James Douglas, which were all “attended with success”. Many pages of Jones’s notes referred to management of the placenta, and he mentioned William Hunter’s insistence on leaving matters “intirely to Nature”. He added the tart comment that a nurse’s “officiousness” could “cause some trouble” if she thought all the placenta were not brought away. Smellie’s observations on hour-glass contractions were also recorded.

Clarke’s own precepts in delivering a woman emerge throughout the seventy pages of Jones’s lecture notes; he always waited two hours before removing the placenta “lest Hemorrhage should ensue”. Jones described Clarke’s technique when, having removed his coat, the accoucheur’s hand was to be lubricated with “any Unctious Application & introduced gently”; the details of one delivery Clarke had performed at Islington were added as a further illustration of his method. Clarke obviously impressed certain rules on his students; so that, for example, a night delivery should be

visited the next day, the practitioner should never be “more than 20 hours from the patient without visiting her”, and urine should be drawn off if not passed for twelve or fourteen hours. Jones also noted medicines that Clarke thought could be prescribed after a delivery, and that the woman should be kept in bed for four days after the birth and permitted to walk about the room by the eighth or ninth day.

Clarke’s students were also taught how to manage the nursing mother’s practical problems of sore nipples and breast abscesses. Clarke himself was enthusiastically in favour of breast-feeding but had found “some that could not be persuaded to it by the common way of speaking, have consented through *Fear* in the thoughts of *Cancer &c* by exciting their *Curiosity & attention*”. In Jones’s casebook, he specially recorded those topics taught by Clarke, lochial discharge, placenta retention, and flooding, as well as foetal positions and his own use of instruments. Twice in his notes Jones commented on the potentially difficult relationship of accoucheur and midwife, adding that the rival nurse would “insinuate” her years to the patient, presumably to contrast with the surgeon’s youth. Clarke’s response in this situation was blatant flattery of the nurse in the patient’s hearing. In Warwickshire, Jones later noted only two instances where midwife or village woman had attended a delivery before he was subsequently called (Plate 1, entry number 54). Although Jones had presumably had practical as well as theoretical instruction at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, there is no evidence of his involvement with any provincial hospital such as the Birmingham or Worcester infirmaries, or of sending patients to either.

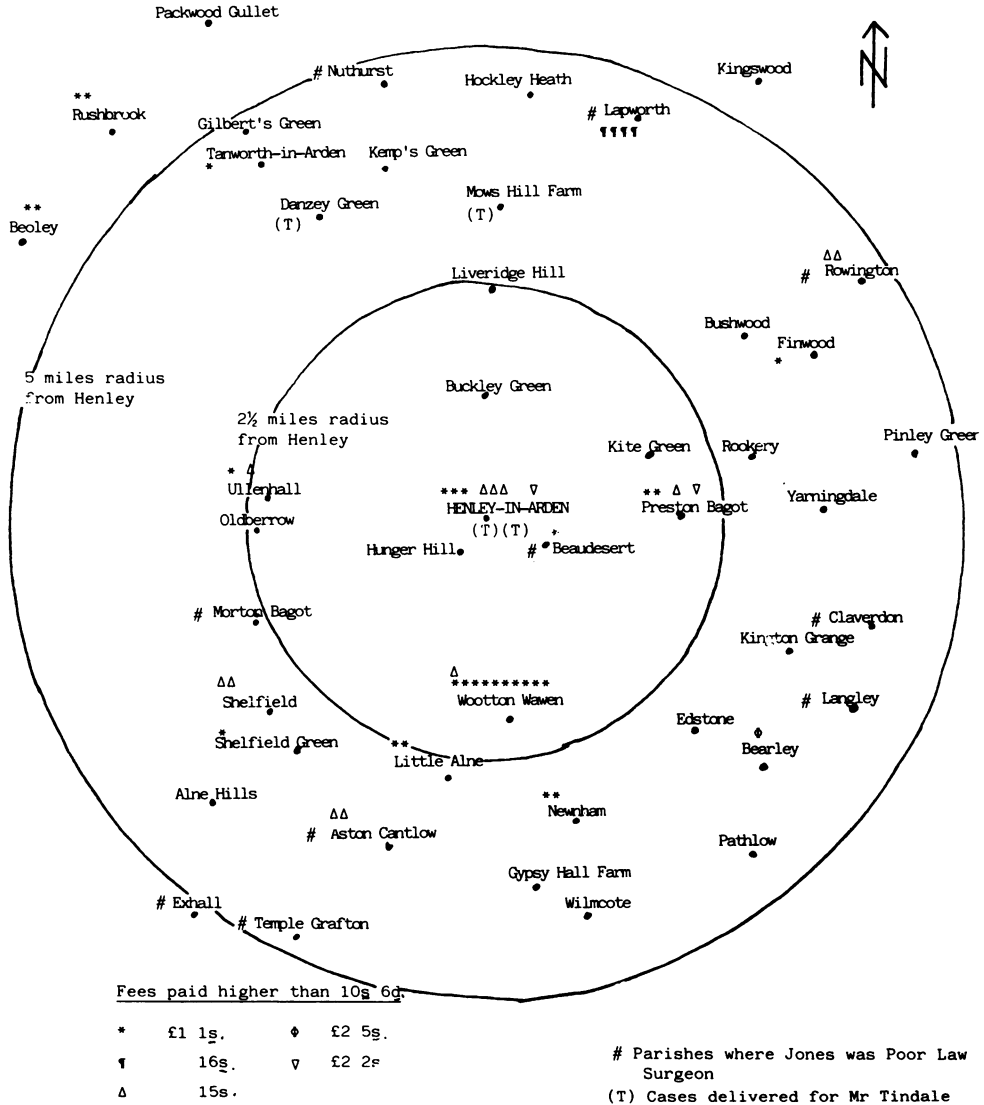
One of the interesting and unexplored areas of medical history for this period is the kind of fees and annual income that a practitioner might expect to earn in his professional career. Some famous practitioners’ fees, of course, are relatively well recorded for the eighteenth century, often by outraged or grateful patients in their letters and diaries, while the great wealth of the metropolitan physician or surgeon was reflected in their houses, marriages, art collections, carriages, and general lifestyle, frequently a topic of fashionable gossip.²³ The provincial surgeon-apothecary, however, is hidden from history in this important aspect of his career, yet it is particularly significant, since profitability and income controlled apprentice premiums, and hence the next generation of practitioners, as well as a man’s standing and esteem in his own community in the monetarist eighteenth century. Medicine could fight for recognition alongside law and other respected professions by being profitable, so the contemporary sources that tell us these important details deserve considerable attention. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of a record such as Jones’s, as it was apparently intended only for his own information, although presumably it aided him in assessing his annual income if he were liable to pay the newly introduced income tax at 6*d.* in the pound after 1796. Jones’s criteria for fees appear to have been those generally applied in eighteenth-century medical practice, as in other businesses, namely, the patient’s ability to pay, linked to his or her social standing. For this, a knowledge of the clientèle and personal judgement was all-important. The distance Jones travelled to visit a case or, except for a couple of

²³ Joan Lane, “‘The Doctor Scolds Me’: the diaries and correspondence of patients in eighteenth-century England” in Roy Porter (editor), *Patients and practitioners*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 205–248.

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patients, the time and trouble expended, appear not to have been significant factors in his scale of fees. For his standard half-guinea fee he attended women who lived within a radius of approximately five miles of Henley-in-Arden (Map 1). He recorded several

MAP 1: THOMAS JONES'S PRACTICE AREA



different fees for patients within one community, so that, for example, at Wootton Wawen he charged 10s. 6d., 15s., and £1 1s., and at Preston Bagot 10s. 6d., £1 1s., and £2 2s. For 16s. he travelled to Lapworth, where he had two patients he delivered twice each, all natural labours. His 15s. fee, however, was for attending twelve deliveries in

seven communities, three in Henley and one in Wootton Wawen. Medical urgency may well have accounted for the guinea fee for five patients; one of these had suffered an abortion at twenty-two weeks, and two were instrument deliveries, for one of whom Jones used “one Blade of the Forceps as a Vectis” [lever]. It seems that each patient had an appropriate fee, no matter how many times Jones attended her, so that one woman for whom he delivered four children was always charged £1 1s., and others’ fees remained the same across a period of years between confinements.

Although it is reasonable to accept that fees depended to a large extent on the patient’s social standing, it is difficult precisely to identify all Jones’s patients from contemporary sources to find the factors that influenced the level of his fees. From various parish sources (Overseers’ accounts, parish registers, apprenticeship material, for example) as well as nineteenth-century trade directories, it is, however, possible to discover the occupations of some of the patients’ husbands as a yardstick to their status and their ability to pay more than the usual 10s. 6d. charge. In all, twenty-eight women (6.6 per cent) paid Jones’s charge of a guinea. At least six women were farmers’ wives, two were married to millers, and one to a victualler. The largest sum Jones charged, £2 5s. in February 1792, early in his career, was for attending a patient named only as “Boneys wife”, rather than the more formal Mrs Boney, suggesting modest status. Hers was one of his most serious cases, a miscarriage “attended with violent & incessant Floodings for many days owing to a portion of the Placenta remaining in the uterus & utterly out of reach. The woman however done well and became hearty”; she subsequently gave birth to twin daughters nearly two years later under Jones’s care. Only two women paid £2 2s., a vicar’s wife, Mrs Hogg of Preston Bagot, with a breech presentation, and Mrs Izod of Henley, whose husband was a glazier and whose delivery was “natural” with no medical explanation for the high charge.

Apart from these patients paying larger fees, a majority of 317 (75.1 per cent) paid 10s. 6d. through the whole decade of the casebook, a fee Jones was still charging occasionally as late as 1818 attending a pauper, but his fees had increased to 12s. 6d. by 1805, and to 15s. in 1816 for poor law deliveries. His annual income, however, cannot be estimated with any degree of certainty. As his casebook shows (Table 2), his obstetric fees in his busiest years, 1797 and 1798, brought him £37 4s. 6d. and £35 9s. respectively. In 1798, he also had £4 14s. 6d. from Lapworth parish as a contract surgeon and £5 5s. from Aston Cantlow, a total of £47 4s. The patients he attended who were not paupers and not parturient women were the source of the rest of his yearly income, and, without Jones’s practice day books or cash ledgers, his earnings cannot be ascertained. The fifty-five deliveries for which he made no charge were presumably paupers or objects of charity, for whom he would not expect to be paid. For two deliveries he noted “rec’d 5s” alongside the cash column suggesting that he accepted reduced or instalment payments if the 10s. 6d. fee were more than patients could feasibly afford. His overall annual income, however, must have been more than adequate, judging by his practice, house, and status within the community for half a century. Although Jones’s book was a chronological record of the cases he attended, it is apparent that he took into consideration the mother’s well-being, if only by a brief note about her post-parturient progress, for those whose labours were abnormally difficult or dangerous. He made such comments for thirteen women, 3.1 per cent of all

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the cases. His most frequent remark was that the patient, after a “difficult”, “complex”, or “preternatural” labour, had done “remarkably” well, suggesting that he expected an unsatisfactory outcome of the delivery. His other notes were of “a good

TABLE 3. PROPORTION OF BAPTISED INFANTS DELIVERED BY THOMAS JONES, 1791–1800

Parish	Aston Cantlow	Bearley	Clav- erdon in-A.	Henley in-A.	Lap- orth	Preston Bagot	Rowing- ton	Tanworth in-Arden	Wootton Wawen #	& Beau- desert	
1791	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	1 8 12.5	— — —	1 10 10	3 34 8.8	1 12 8.3	— 2 —	— 14 —	— 51 —	1 11 9.1	— — —
1792	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	— 23 —	2 3 66.6	1 18 5.5	1 31 3.2	— 14 —	— 10 —	— 22 —	2 47 4.3	— 10 —	— 2 20
1793	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	5 17 29.4	1 3 33.3	2 28 7.1	5 29 17.2	3 15 20	2 9 22.2	4 27 14.8	— 49 —	1 15 6.6	5 5 —
1794	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	9 29 31	6 — —	1 19 5.3	7 22 31.8	2 25* 8	1 2 50	3 25* 12	1 56 1.8	5 19 26.3	— — —
1795	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	5 12 41.6	1 — —	3 21 14.3	12 24 50	3 17 17.6	1 9 11.1	2 28 7.1	1 61* 1.6	12 7 —	2 2 —
1796	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	16 31 51.6	1 — —	3 21 14.3	15 27 55.5	5 12 4.6	1 4 25	— 21 —	— 60 —	13 9 —	3 — —
1797	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	10 20 50	2 4 50	5 22 22.3	12 23 52.2	7 22 31.8	2 6 33.3	4 28 14.3	4 32 12.5	17 14 —	2 — —
1798	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	5 32 15.6	2 8 25	1 28 3.6	26 29 89.6	2 18** 10.5	4 6 66.6	1 26 3.8	1 63 1.6	26 19 —	3 — —
1799	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	9 25 36	— 2 —	5 20 25	18 30 60	5 3 8.3	1 12 9.5	2 21 9.5	7 55 12.7	12 10 —	1 — —
1800	Jones cases total baptisms Jones %	6 17 35.3	2 3 66.6	— 12* —	7 29 24.1	1 4 25	2 11 18.2	— 20 —	3 40 7.5	13 13 —	1 — —
Total		66	17	22	106	29	14	16	19	100	

*represents one set of twins

Wootton Wawen and Beaudesert figures are in the same baptismal register—not always separated.

time” (three women), a “speedy delivery” (one), and a “quick, good time” (one), or that the mother had “done well” (two) or extremely well (one). It is impossible to deduce if his comments on the birth process about strong or lingering pains and violent

floodings are clinical observations rather than sympathy for the patients' suffering, for the women's endurance in some of these cases is incomprehensible to the modern reader.

For three deliveries Jones was joined by other local practitioners, Birch and Burman, both of Henley. In 1792, Birch was able to turn an arm presentation in utero and Jones then delivered a dead foetus. In a similar case months later, Jones was "obliged to lessen the Head and deliver with the Crotchet", adding "Burman attg". In May 1797, at another case, Jones noted "Mr Burman attended, I was sent for on account of the Placenta not coming away—the Uterus having strongly contracted itself upon it. I brought it away however after some difficulty". In all three cases, no fee was entered in the casebook. As well as joint consultations, Jones delivered four women for William Tindale, a local surgeon, son of an excise officer, who had been apprenticed in 1786 for seven years to a Stratford-upon-Avon surgeon, Charles Pestell.²⁴ Tindale's cases, at Mouse Hill, Danzey Green, and Henley (two) in 1796 and 1797 were uncomplicated labours for which Jones did not enter fees.

After he had been in practice for thirteen years, Jones took his first apprentice, Joseph Shilton, for five years and with £100 premium, on 1 March, 1804.²⁵ He later twice advertised locally, in 1813 and 1818, for apprentices, youths who were to be "well educated", treated as one of the family, living in Thomas Jones's home, and from whom an "adequate" premium (presumably at the £100 level) would be expected.²⁶ It is likely that, as he continued to practise long after 1823, when the second of these apprenticeships would have ended, other youths were indentured, for by that date Jones was nearly sixty. However, he continued to practise until he was at least seventy, for in 1834, he was still serving Beaudesert as parish surgeon for £5 5s. year, and wrote to the Overseers of the Poor, stating his terms for midwifery work. His letter was presumably to clarify the situation in the light of the New Poor Law and its implications for the poor rate: "Gentlemen—In respect to the number of Labours likely to take place in Beaudesert I think there will never be more than three, but however let the number be what it may I never will be paid for more than two, and should only one take place, then let that be the one charged, but if anything else arises I leave it entirely to the management of the Gentlemen now assembled."²⁷ His preparedness to quote a figure of this kind must have arisen from his casebook evidence, for during the decade it covered there were nineteen women he delivered from Beaudesert (Table 3).

In his own community of Henley-in-Arden Jones was obliged to take three parish apprentices when his turn came as a rate-payer. Thus he indentured an eleven-year-old boy in 1799 and two nine-year-old girls in 1815 and 1829, who worked as domestic servants in the household.²⁸ He served the town as High Bailiff, and in 1831 acted as Trustee for a Lapworth spinster in connexion with a Stratford-upon-Avon property.²⁹

²⁴ Wallis, *op. cit.*, note 4 above, pp. 867, 1112.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1002.

²⁶ *Warwick Advertiser*, 30 October 1813 and 26 December 1818.

²⁷ WCRO, DR 21/8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, HR 75/Boxes 4 and 5.

²⁹ Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, DR 225/17.

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Interestingly, when the midlands Poor Law Commissioner, C. P. Villiers, reported on the incidence of bastardy and its problems in the area, four witnesses gave their views on the level of parental supervision of children. The witnesses were a savings bank actuary from Bromsgrove (Worcs.), a churchwarden from Stow-on-the-Wold (Glos.), a vicar from Buckland (Devon), and Thomas W. Jones, who said that "it was not unusual for him, as an accoucheur, to deliver girls of 15 of bastard children".³⁰ In Jones's casebook, although there appear to be twenty-one bastard births (4.9 per cent) he noted only one girl who "pretends Age 14 & 6 Months yet had a good Labour and the Child a proper size", while another girl he recorded as sixteen years old.

It is not difficult to appreciate the importance of Jones's casebook, rare though it is and having few volumes with which it may be compared and contrasted. It is of interest as a decade-long obstetric record that suggests a high level of successful deliveries and patient care in a remote area of provincial England by a man in all ways professionally unremarkable. The important fact that his skills and services were available when needed for the labouring poor, as well as for the more affluent, through the parish Overseers, suggests, too, a more optimistic picture of Old Poor Law health provisions than many historians are prepared to concede. Jones's casebook helps to discredit the tenaciously held view that quack and unqualified medical attention was all that the poor might expect. His work as an accoucheur involved him in constant travel on horseback round south-west Warwickshire, so that he must have known the area and inhabitants well in his fifty years of practice there. His book indicates that he attended several women of one family when they lay in. He travelled to most deliveries in the worst months of the year, for he was most active in the months from December to April inclusive, and on twenty-two occasions in the casebook he attended two labours on a single day. He was busiest of all early in 1798, for he delivered eleven women in February, on 3rd, 13th (two), 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 22nd (two), 25th, and 26th, of whom one had a thirty-six-hour-labour and another a hydrocephalic child; however, he was never apparently called to deliver a woman on Christmas Day.

His role with in the small market town of Henley-in-Arden can also be discerned, for he held public office, took parish apprentices, paid local rates and the hair-powder tax in 1797. His death in 1846 at a great age warranted a brief obituary notice in the *Warwick Advertiser*;³¹ he was buried at Henley where his son continued to practise medicine well into the nineteenth century. His surviving papers give all too piecemeal an impression of the provincial surgeon-apothecary, but he emerges in a far better light than such remote country practitioners have often been shown in. This, if for no other reason, warrants our interest in him almost irrespective of his typicality, after nearly two centuries.

³⁰ P. P. 1834, Appendix to the first Report from the Commissioners on the Poor Laws, Appendix (A), p. 9a.

³¹ *Warwick Advertiser*, 10 January 1846.

APPENDIX

EVIDENCE ON THOMAS JONES TO INQUEST ON JAMES BOOTH

(*Warwick Advertiser*, 16 April 1808)

THOMAS OWEN JONES *examined by Mr. DAYRELL.*

The Witness was a surgeon, and lived at Henley; he was sent for to attend the Deceased; he got there about half past four o'clock; Mr. Burman was there before him. Both of them immediately proceeded to examine the body of the Deceased. They cut the hair off his head that they might distinctly see the wounds; then washed the blood away, and had the body turned to examine the back part of the head, they had examined the two sides before. In turning the body a prodigious effusion of blood took place with a small portion of the brain issuing from the nostrils. They then ordered the body to be carried up stairs, and it was; there it remained till the following day; when they examined it minutely. On Saturday, the first wound they remarked was the one of the left side of the head, about five inches long, extending from the front part of the head towards the back part; along the parietal bone, that above the ear, it was straight, without contusion; it had the appearance of an incised wound inflicted by an instrument not having a keen edge. There was another wound above that, smaller, he believed about two inches, or not so much: it was within half an inch of the other, or thereabouts, it was of the same nature as that below; straight and incised:—On the right side of the head there were three wounds, two wounds about four inches in length; those wounds were on the parietal bone also; the third wound was lower, upon the temporal bone: these wounds were rather irregular, partaking both of lacerated and incised wounds. There was one on the hind part of the head about two inches and a half long; there was not any tumefaction round any of the wounds; the integuments adhering firmly to the bones, except where the wounds were inflicted the fracture of the skull was general throughout the right side, it extended along the back part of the head towards the left side; a small portion of the temporal bone came away. These were the appearances, on the dissection of the head. By an incised wound he meant such a one as might be cut without bruising the parts. He thought those wounds could not be inflicted by a horse; they could not. The reason why they could not was, they were all distinct, and the integuments adhering so firmly, it was evident that they must have been made by an instrument. If the wounds had been given by the kick of a horse they would have been in a perpendicular direction instead of a lateral one, if the person lay on the ground at the time the wounds were inflicted. If the Deceased had been standing up, all those wounds could not have been inflicted on the head in the manner the Witness saw them; he must have fell from the first blow. If the horse had kicked the Deceased when he was up and down, they would have been different, he thought; the wounds would have been perpendicular, in some measure, and not all lateral. He was speaking, that if the body had been lying down, he would have received them perpendicularly. He had no appearance at all of being kicked, or any other wounds on any other parts of his body; there was a very slight discoloration on the breast bone that he did not think worth notice. If the horse had kicked him on the chest, it certainly would have had other discoloration and appearance. He examined the mare that was near the body of the Deceased; he examined her hind feet; there was no blood, none in the least; he looked to find if there was any most accurately. There was no shoe on the off foot behind; there was a shoe on the near foot behind, it was particularly smooth. From the state of her feet, when he viewed them, he did not think it possible for the wounds to be inflicted by that mare. He had no doubt upon that subject from his knowledge and experience.

[A lengthy cross-examination followed.]

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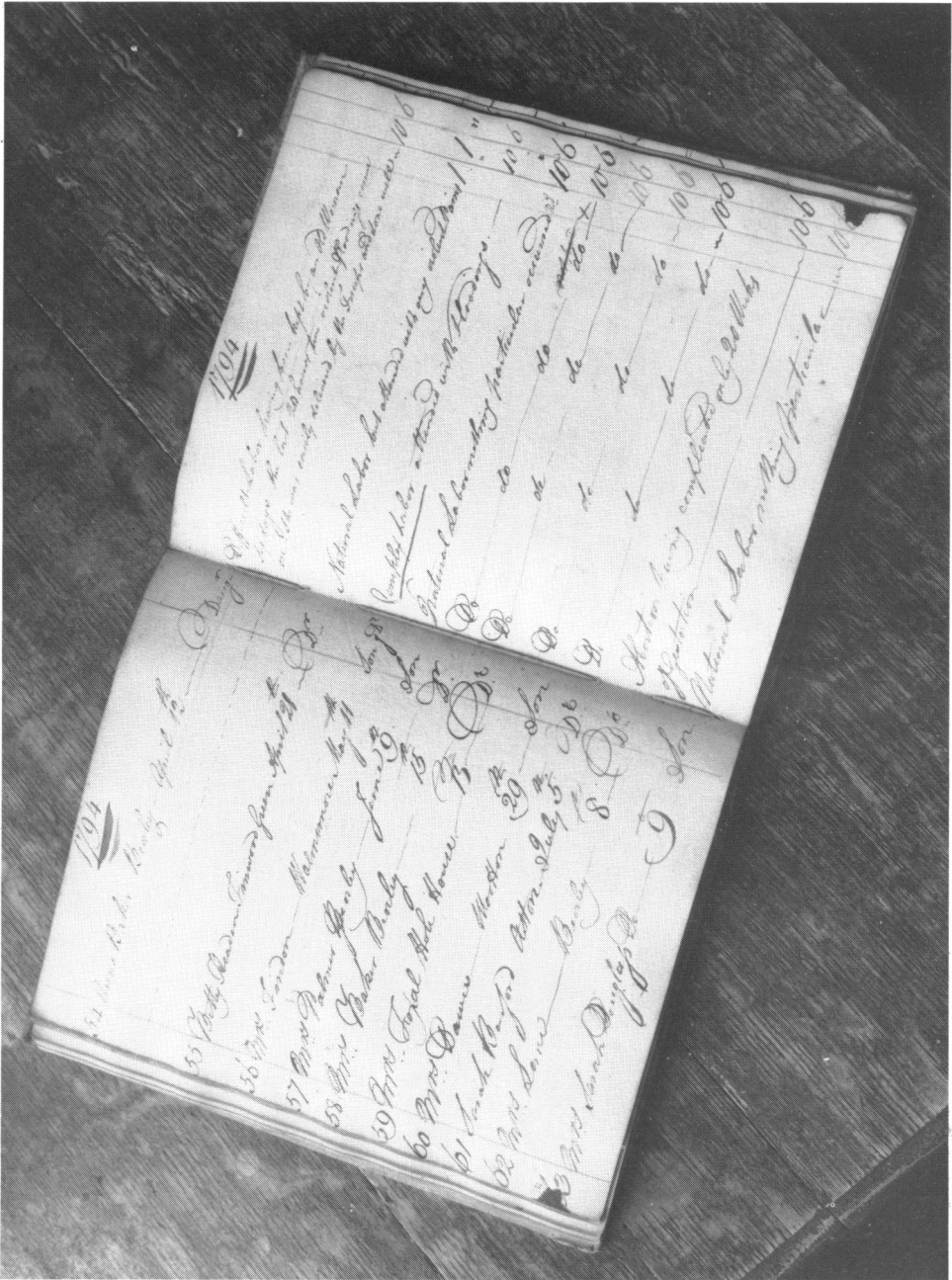


Plate 1 Thomas W. Jones's casebook. (By courtesy of the Warwick County Record Office.)