

## William Jones. (1874-1909)

William Jones was a Fox-Metis, born in Oklahoma on March 28, 1871, the son of Sarah Penny Jones and Henry Jones. His Indian Grandmother was apparently the daughter of a Fox chief. His mother died when William was one year old and his grandmother raised him until she died when he was age nine. He spent three years in a boarding school and then came under the care of his father who was residing in Indian Territory. He then worked three years as a cowboy. In 1889, he was recruited to attend Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institution. This school educated both Blacks and Indians. William was an excellent student and went on to Phillips Andover Academy, Harvard College and then completed his Ph.D. in ethnology at Columbia University, the first Native American to get a doctorate in this discipline. Jones completed research on Algonquin languages in the Midwest and parts of Canada. He is best known for his extensive collection of Nanabushu Tales. The interested reader can find these on the web site for the University of Wisconsin, American Indian Studies Program. He published "Some Principles of Algonquian Word-Formation" in the *American Anthropologist* (Vol. 6: 369-407).

Jones was murdered in the Philippines on March 28, 1909, while on an expedition (1907-1909) for the Field Museum of Chicago. It is a scandal that in spite of his academic credentials and the efforts of his mentor, Dr. Frank Boas, Jones was unable to obtain permanent appointments at Americas leading ethnographic institutions.

### Reference:

Henry Milner Rideout. *William Jones, Indian, Cowboy, American Scholar, and Anthropologist in the fields.*: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell  
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research  
Louis Riel Institute