

Portrait of John Courts Jones, Jr., circa 1816

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This wary young gentleman is John Courts Jones, Jr. (1802-1880) of Clean Drinking Manor, Chevy Chase. In 1815, the 13 year old Jones was sent to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point; he is shown here, in this unsigned portrait, wearing his cadet uniform.

The Jones family, and their home Clean Drinking Manor, have been featured on this blog before, in the person (?) of a large pewter wine measure owned by our boy's father, John Courts Jones, Sr. The house was built around 1750 for Charles Jones, and it stayed in the family until 1910 (the house was torn down shortly thereafter). Because the Manor was one of the oldest homes in the county, and the family both held onto and was proud of its heirlooms, accounts of the house and its contents can be found in several newspaper and magazine articles. In one of these, ambitiously titled "An Ancient Place – One of the Old Manor Homes in This Vicinity – Two Hundred Years in One Family – A Visit to the Venerable Lady of Clean Drinking Manor – Revolutionary Memories Written Exclusively for the *Evening Star*," printed in 1894, the author notes, "One of the most interesting of [the family portraits] represents a handsome boy of fourteen which Mrs. Jones told me was the likeness of her husband, John Coates [sic] Jones taken while a cadet at West Point." The portrait is supposed to have hung in the Manor until 1910 when the last owner, Jones's son Nicholas, died. The Historical Society acquired the painting in 2003 as part of a large auction lot of Jones family artifacts and archives.

I like portraits, and this is one of my favorites from our collections. He has such a hip hairstyle, and looks so very, very young. Unfortunately the artist is unknown; the portrait was probably painted in 1816 (in which year the Secretary of War approved the use of [gray uniforms for USMA cadets](#)), rather than in 1815 when he first went off to school. My first thought was that his expression showed a freshman's dismay, but perhaps instead he was going for a 14 year old's best

approximation of an intimidating stare. Although we know a little about his adult life – including the fact that had nine children with wife Elizabeth Parker Jones, and was a slave owner – to me, JCJ Jr will always be a wary teenager and, in my overly familiar way, he is always Jonesy. (There are a lot of Joneses in the county, and most of them have some variation or another on the same first and middle names – nicknames help me remember which one is which!) (I suspect my personal afterlife will consist of angry Montgomery County residents chiding me for my lack of respect.)