W.O. JONES: FROM WELSH FARMBOY TO INDUSTRALIST

W.O. Jones immigrated to America sometime between 1856 and 1859, and became a citizen in 1860. He married Ruth Jones (her birth name) in 1866, in Ohio. She was also from Wales and was first married to John Stark, a miner in July 1860; they were living in Salisbury, Ohio. Salisbury is about 100 miles east of Cincinnati.

W.O & Ruth lived in Cincinnati till 1869, then at Ironton, Ohio through 1877. At that time Ironton was a major industrial center in America and the largest producer of iron in the world. In the 1870 census, W.O. is listed as a “boiler maker”, boilers were used to power everything in the factories in Ironton. By September 1878, and the birth of their last child, William Owen Jones, Jr., they were living on High Street in Louisville.

**The move to Louisville in 1878 must have had to do with work.**

The name of the Louisville boiler works that W.O. came to be associated with is, **C.J.Walton & Sons** Boiler Works, it was founded in 1836 by Joseph Mitchell, as **the Joseph Mitchell Boiler Yard**.

In 1863, Charles James Walton married Louisa Mitchell, the daughter of Joseph Mitchell. It was in that year that C.J.Walton began working at the boiler works. In **1878** when Joseph Mitchell retired, C.J.Walton took over as President of the company, it was now called, the Joseph **Mitchell Boiler Yard, C.J. Walton Proprietor**. It was at this time that C.J. brought in W.O. Jones to replace him as Superintendent of the boiler works.

In 1888, Druid (David) Walton, C.J.Walton's son, began working at the Boiler Company. He had graduated a year earlier from the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey with an M.E. degree. Now (in 1888), W.O.Jones is listed in a Directory as the "**Superintendent - The Joseph Mitchell Boiler Yard**".

Twelve years later, in 1900, C.J.Walton retires and Druid Walton, his son, becomes President of **C.J. Walton & Sons**. In the 1900 census, W.O.’s son, Evan Owen Jones is 30 years old, married, and listed as **the Superintendent** of the Boiler Yard. He had most likely started working there when he was 17 or 18, in 1888. He had become Superintendent there, in 1897. Also in the 1900 census, two of his brothers-in-law's sons are also found working at the boiler yard, as are other relatives.

Probably by 1909 W.O. Jones is retired, his employment is listed as none, in the 1910 census. The next year 1911, finds **Evan Jones, Druid Walton and someone named J.E. Coleman** forming a partnership or company with a $50,000 investment, which is called C.J.Walton & Son, “for the manufacture and sales of metal boilers”. Either they have acquired all the stock in the company or they have put additional money into it. In February, 1922, W.O. Jones dies. At the end of that October, Druid Walton commits suicide in his office. Evan Owen Jones retired in 1927, and died in July of 1932.

I do not know what became of the boiler works, but I would assume that its assets were sold to a competitor.