

John Craven Jones

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The year was eighteen-fifty-nine
When Blacks came to these shores
Leaving California
And its discriminatory laws
They came for land and liberty
To build a life that was their own
And with them was a man of books
Named John Craven Jones

Now Jones was fresh from college
With a school teacher's degree
To him an education
Was the key to being free
But the children of the settlement
They had no school at all
So we built a big log cabin
And Jones took up the call

You can build your house of timber
You can build your house of stones
But the best foundation
Is a good education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

He taught three days at Central
Three days at Fernwood too
For years he had no salary
For the teaching that he'd do
There were kids of every colour
Well-fed or skin and bones
All hungry for the knowledge
Of their teacher Mister Jones

You can build your house of timber
You can build your house of stones
But the best foundation
Is a good education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

There's a spirit dwells inside us
There's a light that shines within
No matter what our station
Or the colour of our skin
Sometimes that spirit rises up
To shine for everyone
And the light within John Craven Jones
It shone just like the sun

You can build your house of timber
You can build your house of stones
But the best foundation
Is a good education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

You can travel all around this world
You can spend your life at home
But the best foundation
Is a proper education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

Salt Spring Island's first schoolteacher
John Craven Jones

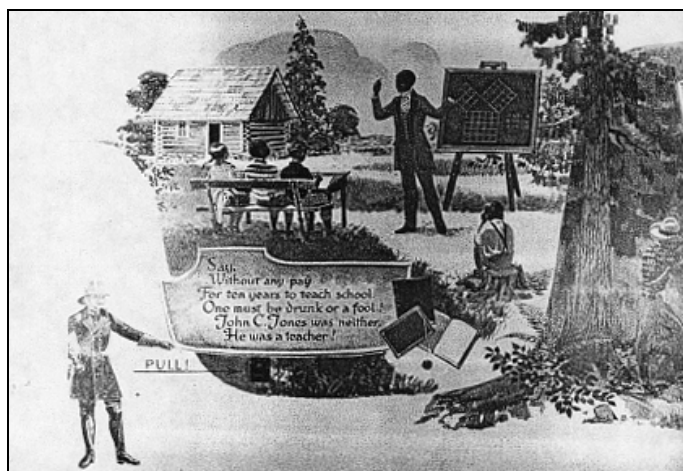


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The words in the mural above read: "Say, Without any pay, For ten years to teach school, One must be drunk or a fool! John C. Jones was neither. He was a teacher!"