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JONES, EVAN AND JOHN B.

#7143

227

August 12, 1937.

Citizenship - Evan and John B. Jones
By Elizabeth Ross, Interviewer.

Two notable ministers and missionaries of the Baptist denomination among the Cherokees were Evan Jones and his son, John Birchard Jones. The former, a native of Brocknockshire, Wales, came to the United States as a young man. He was first connected with the established church in his native land, later with the Methodists, but finally joined the Baptists and became their first missionary to the Cherokees east of the Mississippi river. The original mission station was established at a place called Valley Town in the present state of North Carolina. Selection of the site was made about 1820, and the station was in existence until the disruption of the old Cherokee Nation during the mid-thirties of the last century, as a consequence of the efforts made to induce the Cherokees to remove to the west. During these years the Reverend Evan Jones was identified with the Valley Town mission. His son, John Birchard Jones, as born at the mission in 1824, is ~~to~~ faithful days ~~were~~ set upon the Indian college. His education was completed at the University of Rochester, New York, some years after the removal to ~~Indian~~ territory. Upon the arrival of the Cherokees in their new country in 1839, the Baptist missionaries resumed their

-2-

labors, and after 1855, in which year he completed his education, John Birchard Jones returned to the Cherokee nation in Indian territory, and the greater portion of his after lifetime was spent among the Cherokees. As the Civil war approached, the United States agent for the Cherokees caused the expulsion of the Rev. rends Evan and John Birchard Jones from the Cherokee Nation, charged with inculcating abolitionism among the Indians. The aged Evan Jones remained outside the Indian country, but the Rev. rend John Birchard Jones returned in 1862 and became chaplain of the Third Union Indian regiment. A few months after the close of the war, on the 26th day of October, 1865, the national council in session at Tahlequah, passed an act which granted citizenship to the Rev. rends Evan and John Birchard Jones and their families to reside in the Cherokee nation as citizens. This act was soon followed by another, which restored to all the rights of Cherokee citizenship. The resolution in act are as follows:

"Resolution and an act granting citizenship to Evan Jones and son, J. B. Jones, and their families.

"Resolved by the National Council; That our sincere thanks are hereb tendered the Baptist Missionary

-3-

Society of Boston. It is more than forty years since the missionaries of that society came into the Cherokee Nation. When the Cherokees were poor and covered with darkness, light with regard to the other world was brought to us by Evan Jones, and at a later date by his son, John Birchard Jones. And we do bear witness that they have done their work well, and that they have striven to discharge the duties incumbent upon them in, in doing good to the people and performing faithfully their duties to God. And we do bear witness that their work was highly prosperous up to the time when they were driven out of our country by the United States agent in 1831. And now, after the close of the war, we are informed that the Missionary Society has determined to resume their work in the Cherokee Nation. For this determination we heartily return them our thanks; and we hereby declare that it is our desire that they will more strongly than ever push forward their work of enlightening our land. And we do further declare that we hold in high esteem Evan Jones and his son, J. B. Jones; now, therefore, Be it enacted by the National Council, that Evan Jones and his son, J. B. Jones, be and they are hereby admitted to citizenship in this Nation, together with their families, and all the rights allowed to white men under the constitution are hereby granted to them. Our object

-4-

in so doing is that our people may be ~~instructed~~ by them in good morals and general intelligence?"

The resolution and act, dated at Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation, November 7, 1865, bears the signatures of Smith Christie, president of the national committee, (senate); and of ... D. Reese, clerk of the committee. As acting principal chief, Lewis Downing, the assistant principal chief, signed the measure.

The Reverend John Birchard Jones was highly proficient in his knowledge and use of the Cherokee language and addressed the fullblood Indians in their own tongue.

He was appointed United States Agent to the Cherokees by President U. S. Grant, serving for several years.

The Reverend Evan Jones died in 1874 and is buried in the Tahlequah cemetery. The death of the Reverend John Birchard Jones occurred in 1876, in Colorado, whether he had gone for the benefit of his health. He is said to have been buried at Vinita, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory.

Authorities: History of Baptist missions among the Cherokees; Acts of the Cherokee National Council; Personal knowledge of various Cherokee citizens.