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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOHN JUMPER

I saw that great and good man, Dr. DeVotie, of Georgia, take John Jumper, then chief of the Seminoles, by the hand before the Southern Baptist Convention in Jefferson, Texas, in 1874, and heard him say that he was so glad to greet one who fought his father so bravely in the Florida war, now a Christian and a leading Baptist preacher. But Dr. DeVotie was mistaken. John Jumper was too young to do much, if any, fighting in the war of 1835-'42. It was his uncle, the old war chief Jumper, who was one of the leaders, Oceola, Billy Bowlegs and Sam Jones being the others. Oceola (Hus-se Ya-ho-la, Sun-warrior), was taken prisoner under a flag of truce, taken to Charleston, S. C., and imprisoned, where he died of a broken heart. John Jumper emigrated to Indian Territory with the first bands of Seminoles who came west in 1843. He was then about 25 years old. Soon after he was elected Principal Chief of the Seminoles, which position he held

for 25 or 30 years. He is a man of fine sense, impartial judgment, and excellent administrative tact and capacity.

The Seminoles, though the smallest of the five civilized tribes, have maintained a respectable and influential position, chiefly through Jumper's leadership. He has been to Washington City several times in the interests of his people, and always won the respect of the leading public men in that city.

He became a Christian in 1855, if I mistake not, and united with the Presbyterian Church. In 1859 I opened a mission on Little River near where John Jumper lived. One Lord's day I was baptizing some candidates in the Canadian river. Jumper was present. It was the first true baptism he had ever witnessed. The Presbyterians had translated the Gospel of Matthew into the Muskogee language. They did not attempt to translate the word baptize, but tried to Indianize it by writing it ok-pap-ti-sa-tes, which was just as intelligible to a Creek or Seminole as bd-fgh-jkl-mn-pq would have been. But they could not eliminate the Jordan river from the gospel account of Christ's baptism. Jumper had been ok-pap-ti-sa-tesed in a house, and not in, at, with, or by a river. The

baptism he had witnessed was in a river. I had read from an English Testament, and the interpreter had used the word Oe-sum-ka-tes (dipped). He understood that word. It was pure Seminole. He went to his missionary and asked for an explanation. Jumper's keen discernment perceived that the missionary was confused and his explanation weak and unsatisfactory. He continued his investigation. Finally he visited me in my home, and I explained the matter to him and read to him from the Testament. He understood some English, and his interpreter was unbiased. The result was he became a Baptist in 1860, and in 1865 I ordained him to the Gospel ministry.

He has ever since been a tower of strength to our Baptist interests among the Muskogees, Seminoles, and the wild tribes on the western border of this Territory. John Jumper is a deep thinker. I have heard him deliver in his own language sermons that abounded in profound thought, solid truth, delivered in the most tender and pathetic style. He has been led through great afflictions. He had a devoted wife, five boys and two girls, to whom he was ardently attached. One by one he buried four sons just as they reached manhood, from 20 to 22 years of age, then his wife,

and finally his last son, a noble young man, my namesake. They all lie side by side.

Brother Jumper is very old and feeble now and will soon pass away and meet his loved ones in the sweet by-and-by, for they all died in the Christian faith. His last days are being spent in securing a correct translation of the New Testament into his native tongue, the common language of the Muskogee (improperly called Creeks) and the Seminoles.

Will not the American Baptist Publication Society aid this noble Red Man in this worthy work?