

ROSS, ELIZABETH.

THE JONES HOUSE.

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Elizabeth Ross,
Investigator,
January 3, 1938.

Narrative by Elizabeth Ross,
On the Jones House.

One of the oldest residences in Tahlequah has long been known as the Jones house, having been built and occupied by the Reverend John B. Jones and family, who came to Tahlequah in 1867.

In 1866 the American Baptist Home Mission Society was given authority by the Cherokee National Council to remove the Mission Station to Tahlequah. At that time the mission was situated at a place where it came to be called "Baptist", in the Goingsnake district, a short distance from the boundary line between the Cherokee Nation and the State of Arkansas.

The Reverend John B. Jones for a number of years engaged in preaching and teaching among the Cherokees. He considered Tahlequah as a more suitable location for the headquarters of the Baptist Mission and consequently removal was sought and made.

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After spending several years at Tahlequah, the Reverend John B. Jones died in Colorado in 1876, where he had gone in hope of renewing his health, and the brick house was occupied by others.

Among the number who lived in the Jones house in years past was Professor Almon C. Bacone, who established the Cherokee Baptist Academy at the beginning of the early eighties of the last century. Sometime later Professor Bacone established the present Bacone College, in what was then the Creek Nation.

The Baptist Academy continued in operation for a number of years after Professor Bacone moved to the vicinity of Muskogee. Reverend Walter P. King, Walter J. Pack, and others, men and women, were connected at intervals with the Academy, and lived in the brick house.

When the Jones house was built seventy years ago, its location was somewhat isolated. The town of Tahlequah was rather small and the majority of the houses were near the center of the town. Others were sparsely scattered about the townsite, and there were many trees. But with the

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passing of the years, the scene is now greatly changed and numerous residences are in the near vicinity of the old brick house. Few of the old trees remain, many were taken away to make space for buildings, while others died from the ravages of time.

Until recent years all the bricks used in Tahlequah buildings were made, usually, at a place two miles south of Tahlequah, where water, and clay of superior quality exist in abundance. It is very probable that the bricks used in the Jones house were molded and kiln-burned near the "Chapel Spring".

The Jones house is now occupied by W. B. Wyley, the present postmaster of Tahlequah.

Few of the older houses remain in Tahlequah. New owners have replaced them with more modern and convenient buildings. But occasionally a house of historic interest is spared. Quite probably, the brick house once occupied the Reverend John B. Jones and family is the oldest of its kind at Tahlequah.