

# Tauy Jones And Ottawa University

(From a paper read by Dr. M. L. Ward before the Franklin County Teachers, January 18, 1913 and from an article in the Topeka Capitol, June 11, 1922)

Nearly everyone concerned with Ottawa University is familiar with the story of Tauy Jones and how he persuaded the Baptists of Kansas to found a university at Ottawa. Some of the following article are not quite so facts of his life contained in the well known however.

Tauy Jones, "the noble Indian who came to the prairies of the west," was born in 1800. He was a Chippewa Indian but not full blood. He attended Colgate University for several years and then taught in Kentucky before coming to Kansas. As the missionary, Jotham Meeker, who died in 1855, mentions Mr. and Mrs. Jones in his diary, they probably located on the place later known as the Woodlief farm, in the late 40's or early 50's.

The maiden name of Mrs Jones was Jane Kelly. She was born in Maine and came to Kansas as a mis-



John T. Jones

sionary to the Delaware Indians and was associated with J. G. Pratt, and Miss Elizabeth Morse in mission work near what is now Edwardsville, Kansas. She idealized the Indians and identified herself with the race, and yet she retained her New England ideas of thrift and order. Dr. Ward says that he once heard her state that as a housekeeper, her life had been a long, fierce struggle with dirt.

As their home was on the main road from Fort Scott northward, they often entertained travelers, many of them prominent characters of the time. One guest of honor was none other than President Lincoln, who slept in the east room on the second floor. Horace Greeley was another prominent guest to occupy the same room. John Brown more than once stopped over night with them.

The Jones family was threatened by the pro-slavery element and finally their home was raided one night by bushwhackers. At the first sound of their approach, Mr. Jones rushed from his bed into a cornfield just north of the house, and escaped. The ruffians broke into the house and not finding Mr. Jones, they ransacked and plundered, but offered no personal violence to Mrs. Jones. They dragged their hired man from his bed, slashed his throat and tumbled him over the bank into the shallow water of the creek. This revived him and he survived. Mrs. Jones attempted to save a couple of small bags of coin by throwing a shawl over her shoulders and placing them, one under each arm. Fearing that they might be taken from her, she dropped each one in places at some distance from the house. But she was not successful in her attempt to save the money.

They presented a claim to the government for their house which was burned down by the raiders, and about the same time began the erection of the stone mansion which is still standing. Dr. Ward says that when he first saw it, a peach tree had grown up in the open cellar and fruited, while their claim was pending. The new house was completed in about 1870. The house was built of solid cut stone, which was hauled from Fort Scott by ox teams. All of the stone in the house as well as that in the first university building was cut by the father of Dean Emerson, later county clerk of Franklin county. Dean was a boy at the time and helped his father. He died two or three years ago. One of the ox yokes worn by the oxen while hauling the stone is still in existence. Mr.

H. Woodlief, who bought the Jones farm, gave the yoke to Ottawa University and it is now in the university museum in Taub Jones hall.

Following is a quotation from Dr. Ward's article: "Like many others who have built fine houses, they did not long enjoy living in it. Mr. Jones died in 1872. At the time it seemed premature. He had an attack of the dysentery. He would not consent to have a physician called. He was sick several days before any of his friends in town learned of it. Deacon Holt and I went out there and cared for him the night before he died. He was very weak and wholly indifferent. The exposure of that night's work gave me a case of typhoid fever which brought me very low."

"John Tecumseh Jones was indeed a fine gentleman. He had a kind heart and a generous nature. He was respected and esteemed by his country neighbors. He had a wide vision and large hopes in connection with his race and his country. Both himself and wife planned great things for their people."

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