

Jones, John Tecumseh (Tauy)

Mr. John Tecumseh (Tauy) Jones was born in 1800 in Canada, the son of an Englishman and Chippewa woman. He was educated in a Baptist mission in Michigan and completed his studies at Madison University, New Jersey. He came to Kansas in 1838 and was an interpreter for the Pottawatomie Indians and became one of their leaders. The Indians herded cattle on the prairie in return for annual stipends from the government.

In 1839, an Indian tribe known as the "Ottawa Indians" was transferred to the area around Ottawa. With this tribe was sent a man by the name of Jotham Meeker, a missionary sent by the Baptist Mission Board. He brought the first printing press into Kansas. Rev. Meeker was determined to bring education and Christianity to these Indians. Soon a young man by the name of Tauy Jones joined Rev. Meeker.

In 1840, Mr. Jones married Rachel Littleman, a Stockbridge Indian, who died in 1844. In 1845, he married Jane Kelly, a New England missionary, who survived him and lived in Ottawa in later years.

In 1848, Mr. Jones took over the trading post and store which a Mr. Roby had established five years before northeast of Ottawa (southwest of LeLoup) on what was later named Tauy Creek. He built a large two story frame and log house and opened a hotel which became the principal stopping place between Ft. Leavenworth and Ft. Scott. Mr. Jones was a friend of John Brown from Osawatomie and sympathetic to and often assisted the Free Staters. In the middle of the night in 1856, Missouri border ruffians burned down his house and store and Jones escaped to the woods and his wife was spared. He built another house and it too was burned. Ten years later the U.S. Government appropriated \$6700 to Mr. Jones to compensate for his loss.

In 1862, Mr. Jones hired Damon Higbie, a carpenter who lived near LeLoup, to build his third house which is still standing. His money-making ability was shown by the fact that this two and a half story, 14-room stone house cost between twenty and thirty thousand dollars to build. It was undoubtedly the most beautiful house in eastern Kansas at that time. The house was built in a "T" shape and faced west. The thick walls are made of cut and faced sandstone brought by ox team from quarries in Ft. Scott. Constructed with wooden pegs and square nails, the woodwork is of walnut and two of the four fireplaces are of Indian marble. On the east side of the roof was a lift-out section which served as a lookout station as slaves were hidden in the basement and then taken through a tunnel from the basement to the creek. It is also said that at one time the doorknobs of the house were of sterling silver. It has been told that Abe Lincoln once slept in the upper room while traveling through on a speaking tour.



The third Tauy Jones house as seen in 1975.

In 1860, while representing the Ottawa Indians, Mr. Jones suggested that a white and Indian school be established in Ottawa which led to the founding of Ottawa University. He was active in educational work until his death in 1873 and was buried in the Indian Cemetery northeast of Ottawa. On his gravesite still can be read his name with the inscription, "The founder of Ottawa University," date of birth and death.