

Dec. 30, 1838

My Dear Honored Brother,

✓ We have been on our road to Arkansas seventy-five days, and have traveled five hundred & twenty nine miles. We are nearly three hundred miles short of our destination.

✓ We have been greatly favored by the kind providence of our heavenly Father. We have met with no serious accidents and have been detained only two days by bad weather. It has, however, been exceedingly cold for some time past, which renders the condition of those who are but thinly clad, very uncomfortable. In order, however, to counteract the effects of the severity of the weather in some degree, we have, since the cold set in so severely, sent on a company every morning to make fires along the road at short intervals. This, we have found a great alleviation to the suffering of the people.

At the Mississippi river, we were stopped from crossing by the ice running so that boats could not pass for several days. Here Bro. Bushyhead's detachment came up with us and we had the pleasure of having our tents in the same encampment, and before our detachment (were) got all over, Stephen Foreman's detachment came up and encamped along side of us. I am sorry to say, however, that both their detachments have not yet been able to cross. I apprehend very serious suffering to them from traveling this dreary road, in the depth of winter.

The members of the church, generally, maintain consistency of conduct, and many of them are very useful. Our native preachers are assiduous in their labor, seizing all favorable opportunities to cherish a devotional spirit among the brethren. Their influence is very salutatory.

I am afraid that, with all the care that can be exercised with the various detachments, there will be an immense amount of suffering and loss of life attending the removal. Great numbers of the old, the young, and the infirm will inevitably be sacrificed. And the fact that the removal is effected by coercion, makes it the more galling to the feeling of the survivors.

Having an opportunity to send this to a Post Office, I close with respectful regards to Wm. Lincoln, Dr. Bolles and all friends. I remain in haste.

My Dear Brother

Yours in the bounds of the Gospel

Evan Jones

P.S. I will write again in a few days. Please to write to me at Kedran (Keobian) P. O. Cherokee Nation Arkansas and a duplicate to Columbus Tennessee, lest it should not arrive before I return.

Copies from a letter, written by Evan Jones to the Baptist Board while he was the conductor of one of the Cherokee detachments over the Trail of Tears, in 1838. I have a photo-copy of this letter in my files, which was sent to me from, American Baptist Foreign Mission Societies
Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 19481

A. D. Lester
Westville, Oklahoma

Feb. 22, 1966