

Evan Jones writes, a few months after arriving in the Cherokee Nation.

Cherokee Nation West May 14, 1839

My Dear Brother

Having been, known (thrown), by the location of our detachment, into a very secluded part of the country, I have had but little opportunity of late, to write. And having, till very recently, obtained but little information, on subjects connected with our secular arrangements, sufficiently definite to warrant the formation of a judgment; I had but little to communicate. I have at length, however, acquired so much knowledge of our field of labor, as, I think, will warrant the adoption of at least, provisional plans of operation.

The Conductors, of the several Detachments, being assembled at this time, to wind up the business of the emigration, I shall not, now, be able to enter into particulars.

When I left home, it was my design, and hope, to return in time to remove my family this spring, but the providential hinderances, of the emigration, by the excessive drought on their starting, and of eight detachments, by the ice in Mississippi river; rendered that impracticable. And to bring a large family into this climate, in the midst of summer would be very hazardous. I therefore, concluded to devote some time to visiting our dispersed brethern, and encouraging them to perseverance and faithfulness, in the ways of truth. And I have great satisfaction to say that in this work we have had the most heart cheering encouragement.

The congregations are large and attentive, and a number of instances of hopeful conversions have occurred.

In addition to forty-one: nineteen males and twenty-two females, baptized at Chetata (Chetota) on Sabbath, Sept. 2nd, 1838, and seven: three males and four females at Savannah Branch, just at the time of starting from the Nation East: Bro. Bushyhead baptized three females in the Gascanade, Missouri, on Sabbath, Feb. 3, 1839. And after our arrival, at a very interesting meeting, ten or twelve miles south of Bro. Bushyhead's residence, eleven gave a satisfactory account of a work of grace on their minds, and were baptized on Sabbath April 14th by Bro. Bushyhead: three were males and eight females. On the following Sabbath April 14th, three females were baptized at Batys Prairie, also by Bro. Bushyhead. On Sabbath April 28th at the temporary meeting place twelve miles south of Bro. Bushyhead's, I had the pleasure to baptize ten hopeful converts, one male and nine females. So that in the midst of unfavorable circumstances and many inconveniences we have the pleasing assurance that it is the pleasure of the Lord to prosper his work among this people, giving efficacy to a very imperfect instrumentality for advancing the interests and extending the bounds of his kingdom.

Our brethern are quite active in seizing opportunities to hold meetings in the various encampments and settlements; and very interesting profitable seasons have been enjoyed by them on many occasions. I sincerely hope, if the Lord would spare our lives, we shall yet witness and enjoy much of the gracious effects of the power and grace of our blessed Redeemer.

I have fixed on a place of residence about two miles south of Bro. Bushyhead's which will be at a convenient distance for uniting our efforts in the work which is greatly needed. I have made arrangements to have some temporary cabins prepared, to shelter my family when they arrive.

I hope to start home very shortly, so as to get ready to commence our journey West between the 1st and 15th of September.

Bro. Bushyhead unites in presenting our best respects to Mr. Lincoln D. Bolles and all friends.

We are badly off for Post Offices in this country. You will please to Address to me at Columbus McMinn Co. Tennessee till the latter part of August and after that to Sylvia Post Office, Washington Co., Arkansas.

I am My Dear Brother

Your Very Affectionately,
Evan Jones

Copied from an old letter that Evan Jones wrote to the Baptist Board.

February 21, 1966
A. D. Lester