

23 of May til the last of the Cherokees set their faces toward the West, then followed on with them to behold their misery and sorrows on their journey, the knowledge thus gained would be of unspeakable value to place before the public.

Terse reports of Army officers, accounts by accompanying physicians, and occasional letters from the emigrants are available to record some of the early migrations made willingly by "Treaty Cherokee" before 1838, but very little of this relates to the part southern Illinois played in the historic event. The one excellent exception comes from the pen of Daniel S. Butrick, a devout missionary sent to the Cherokee by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, who traveled with the emigrants to their new home in the West.⁴

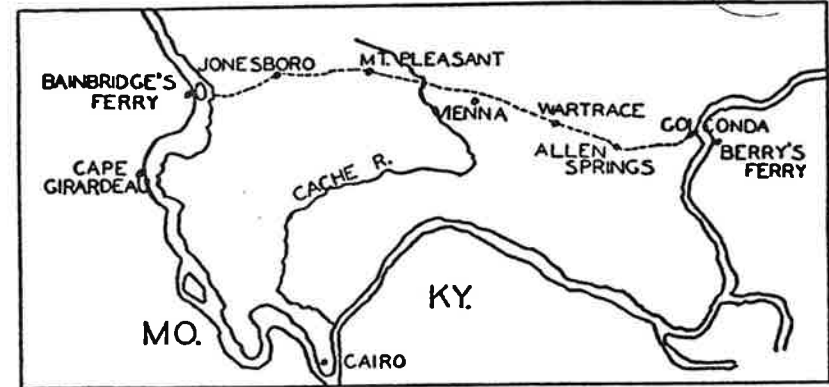
The situation in the lands west of the Mississippi was not unknown to the Cherokee Nation East. A permanent Cherokee settlement had been made in the West as early as 1794, and there had always been much travel between the two sections. At least two thousand "Treaty Cherokee" had emigrated prior to 1838 and many letters had passed back and forth. In the course of this traveling the land route between the East and West nations, which ran from Nashville, Tennessee, to Hopkinsville, Kentucky, Golconda, Illinois, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and then followed the Missouri Ridge Road, became well known and was frequently used.

The route across southern Illinois was blazed first in 1803 by Major James Lusk, who, with his wife Sarah, emigrated from South Carolina and founded the town of Sarahsville, later named Golconda.⁵ The Lusks settled on the Kentucky side of the Ohio in 1796 and were granted a license from that state to operate a ferry in 1797. The next year they moved across the river and became the first settlers in this section of

³ These Indians were emigrating voluntarily in accordance with the New Echota, or Schermerhorn, Treaty of 1835.

⁴ The "Journal of Daniel S. Butrick" is in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. It is unpaginated, so future references to it are given by dates.

⁵ Josephine C. Thompson, "James and Sarah Lusk," *The Egyptian Key*, Vol. II, no. 3 (Carbondale, Ill., June, 1945), 17-21.



WHERE THE CHEROKEE CROSSED EGYPT

From Berry's ferry on the Ohio River to Bainbridge's ferry on the Mississippi was a distance of less than sixty miles. The dotted line is a close approximation of the route of the exiled Indians, although all contingents did not follow exactly the same road. Allen Springs was about a mile southwest of present-day Dixon Springs.

Illinois. To make business for his ferry Lusk blazed the trail west from Golconda to reach the David Green ferry near Cape Girardeau. This road from Lusk's ferry, later to be operated by John Berry, was the shortest and best route across Egypt. Ironically, Major Lusk died just after it was completed. When Illinois was admitted into the Union, and as settlements in the southern part of the state multiplied there were many roads laid out, but most of those leading west followed the general route blazed by Lusk.⁶

In 1838, the road from Golconda veered slightly to the southwest to avoid the hills due west and the cypress swamps farther south. Then it passed through Allen Springs, near the present Dixon Springs, thence through Wartrace to the plateau west of Vienna. From there it went to Mt. Pleasant and Jonesboro where it turned southwest to the Mississippi at Bainbridge's ferry, slightly north of Cape Girardeau.

⁶ An account of early roads in Johnson County may be found in Mrs. P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, Ill., 1925), 42-50.

Source: The Cherokee Cross Egypt
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