



DEPARTURE OF INDIAN FRIENDS FOR THE WEST

LOCATION: Beside Steekee Cemetery on Steekee Road (Old Sweetwater Pike), Loudon.

While this home is only 90 years old, it is included in this book because of its earlier historical significance. The land was originally settled by James and Rachel Martin Johnston in 1818, when they built a large log house very near the site of the present home. A smaller home just a hundred yards to the east, the residence of the W. E. Huff family, was built at the time of the original log and was used as the first store and post office in the community. Just across the road stood the log cabin of the Cherokee Indian Chief, Pathkiller, who sold to the early settlers the townsite and area surrounding Loudon. To the east is the old Steekee burying ground, which was the site of the first church. To the southwest in the meadow was the first schoolhouse.

In the corner of the yard beside the road stands a huge oak tree reputed to be over 200 years old. (See tree in foreground.) A sorrowful legend tells the story of this tree and of the mutual love and respect between some of the Indians and white settlers when

the Cherokees were being moved to Oklahoma in 1836, they shook hands with the branches of this tree and wept as they started on their "Trail of Tears." This belies the belief of many today that our early settlers were always at war with the Indians.

This Victorian house was built by Joseph Johnston in 1872. Although this period of architecture is considered stiff and severe, this home has always been noted for its friendliness and hospitality. Much of the beautiful antique furniture is of an early period but seems completely at home, as does the casual visitor.

The present owner is Miss Linna Huff, who occupies the house along with Mrs. Ebb Huff and family.