

**LEITH'S NARRATIVE. A SHORT  
BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN LEITH,  
WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF  
HIS LIFE AMONG THE INDIANS**

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Leith's Narrative. A Short Biography of John Leith, with a Brief Account of His Life Among the Indians by John Leith & C. W. Butterfield

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**JOHN LEETH & C. W. BUTTERFIELD**

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LEITH'S NARRATIVE

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A  
SHORT BIOGRAPHY  
OF  
JOHN LEITH

*WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AMONG  
THE INDIANS*

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A REPRINT  
WITH ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES

BY  
C. W. BUTTERFIELD

Author of "Nicolet's Discovery of the Northwest," "Washington-Irvine  
Correspondence," and other works

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CINCINNATI  
ROBERT CLARKE & CO  
1888

## PREFATORY.

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In adding illustrative notes to this reprint, the object has been to make the story more intelligible to the general reader; for, as it stands originally, even the critical student of western history, without considerable thought and study, might fail to realize its importance. The annotations begin with Leith's introduction to savage life, and end with his final return to civilization; beyond this point, the narrative gives a vivid portrayal of hardships and privations such as were incident to the early settlement of the West; but the recital needs little if any elucidation, and none is given.

This narrative, considering the age of the narrator when it was taken from his lips, and the number of years which had elapsed since he bade adieu to Indian haunts, is unusually accurate. What few errors in his statements have been discovered, are pointed out in the foot-notes. The mistake in spelling Leith's name is clearly traceable to his editor, as the same orthography is adopted when the city of Leith, Scotland, is mentioned,—it being given "Leeth." The spelling, punctuation, and capitalization of the original are strictly followed in the reprint; and the original paging is indicated therein by brackets. Adding greatly to the understanding of Leith's relation of events in the wilderness are the depositions given by him immediately after the occurrence of some of them. It is only recently that one of these valuable contemporaneous statements has been brought to light. The republication of what has become so excessively rare as this pamphlet, in a measure rescues from oblivion a valuable contribution to American history, especially to that portion of it relating to the region of the Northwest.

C. W. B.

MADISON, Wis., *January*, 1883.

A  
**SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

OF

**JOHN LEETH,**

GIVING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS TRAVELS AND SUFFER-  
INGS AMONG THE

**Indians for eighteen years,**

TOGETHER WITH

***HIS RELIGIOUS EXERCISES,***

FROM HIS OWN RELATION,

BY EWEL JEFFRIES.

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**LANCASTER, OHIO.**

PRINTED AT THE GAZETTE OFFICE—MAIN ST.

**1831.**

## PREFACE.

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The design of the following work is to show the providence of God, in guiding his creatures through life, although their situation, at times, may be, to all appearance, dismaying, perilous and almost insurmountable.

Mr. LEETH, the subject of the following pages, is now living [1831], and has long been a respectable member of the Methodist Communion. Having been directed, by an unseen hand, through all the vicissitudes of fortune, from the savage haunts of a boundless wilderness, to the peaceful shades of civilized society, with a competency to make his declining years easy and respectable, in the large circle of friends in which he moves, he may truly say, the Christian's life is a life of pleasantness.

THE AUTHOR.





## Biography of John Leeth.

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I was born in Hickory Grove, on the Pedee River, South Carolina, on the 15th day of March, 1755, of respectable parents, though of low circumstances in the world. My father died before I was born; and my mother died when I was about five years of age; after which, I was bound to a Tailor to learn the trade. Shortly after I had entered into my new situation, my master removed to Charleston, S. C. and took me with him. After I had remained in his family about two years, my mind became restless; and I eloped from my master and his service. I made my way for Little York, in Pennsylvania; and when I arrived there, I came to the conclusion that I was not properly able to take care of myself, and bound myself to a farmer for the term of four years; which time I served out with becoming fortitude and agility. When my time of service was out, and I was free from my master, I bent my course to Fort Pitt now Pittsburg;<sup>1</sup> and hired

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<sup>1</sup> A fort—Duquesne—was built at the point in the forks of the Alleghany and Monongahela rivers where they form the Ohio, by

myself to an Indian trader. Our first rout, from the French at the commencement of the old French war, but was burned by them in 1758, immediately before the occupation of the place by the British, under General Forbes. It was a strong fortification of earth and wood stockaded. In December, 1758, the British erected a small stockade, with bastions, within two hundred yards of the ruins of the French post. The next year, however, was commenced a more formidable fortification. It was near the site of Fort Duquesne, and was named Fort Pitt. It remained in possession of a British force until the latter part of the year 1772, when it was abandoned and considerably, though not wholly, destroyed. During the year 1773, a citizen of Pittsburgh—Edward Ward—had possession of what was left. It was, in 1774, reoccupied and somewhat repaired by Captain John Conolly, under orders from Lord Dunmore, as a Virginia post, and its name changed to Fort Dunmore, though the Pennsylvanians still adhered to "Fort Pitt," which name was fully restored when Dunmore became odious to Virginia. It was vacated by Conolly just at the commencement of the Revolution. Its first occupation after that struggle began was by Virginia troops under Captain John Neville, in 1775, who were superceded early in 1777 by others raised in the immediate neighborhood. Following these was a continental garrison, first under Brigadier-General Edward Hand, afterward under Brigadier-General Lachlan McIntosh, whose successor was Colonel Daniel Brodhead, followed by Colonel John Gibson, the latter being succeeded by Brigadier-General William Irvine, who remained in command until October 1, 1783. The post was then put under the charge of Captain Joseph Marbury, who occupied it with a small force for a brief season. His successor was Lieutenant D. Luckett; the latter turned it over to Lieutenant-Colonel Josiah