

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE REMARKABLE
OCCURRENCES IN THE LIFE AND
TRAVELS OF COL. JAMES
SMITH: DURING HIS CAPTIVITY WITH THE
INDIANS, IN THE YEARS 1755, '56, '57,
'58, & '59**

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An account of the remarkable occurrences in the life and travels of Col. James Smith: during his captivity with the Indians, in the years 1755, '56, '57, '58, & '59 by James Smith & Wm. M. Darlington

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JAMES SMITH & WM. M. DARLINGTON

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Ohio Valley Historical Series.

NUMBER FIVE.

SMITH'S

Captivity with the Indians.

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WITH

An Appendix of Illustrative Notes.

By Wm. M. DARLINGTON,
OF PITTSBURGH.

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PREFATORY.

WE select this as one of the *reprints* of our OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL SERIES, believing that in it the Indian "Customs, Manners, Traditions, Theological Sentiments, Mode of Warfare, Military Tactics, Discipline, and Encampment, Treatment of Prisoners, etc., are better explained and more minutely related than has been heretofore done," as the author expresses himself in his title page. His vivid pictures of the vagrant, precarious lives of the Indians, little more than a century ago, in the then unbroken wilderness which has given place to the prosperous State of Ohio, written without any pretense to style or learning, bear every impress of truthfulness; and as a faithful record of an eye-witness of their condition, habits, etc., it deserves to be perpetuated. It has been several times reprinted, with more or less accuracy, but all the editions may now be classed among the scarce books.

James Smith was born in 1737, in Franklin county, Pennsyl-

vania, at that time the backwoods frontier, the extreme limit of civilization. As might be expected, he received but a limited education in book-learning, but, as befitted a backwoods boy, he was well versed in wood-craft, active in the hunt, and inured to all the hardships and trials of a frontier life. At the age of eighteen, in 1755, he was taken captive by the Indians, was adopted into one of their families, and accompanied them in all their wanderings, till his escape in 1759. He returned to Conococheague early in 1760, and was received with great joy by his family and friends.

He settled himself at his old home in the ordinary routine of pioneer farming, and in May, 1763, married Miss Anne Wilson, by whom he had seven children—four sons, Jonathan, William, James, and Robert; and three daughters, Jane, Elizabeth, and Rebecca. His subsequent adventures, as a leader of the Black-boys, in 1763 and 1769; his service as a lieutenant in Bouquet's expedition against the Ohio Indians in 1764; his exploring excursion into southern Kentucky in 1766, and his services during the Revolutionary war, in which he earned and received the rank of colonel, are sufficiently detailed in his own narrative.

After the temporary peace made with the Indians in 1778, he removed to Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, and settled on a farm on Jacob's creek. Here his wife died. [Of her we know little, except that she was a good woman, and a devoted wife and mother. In 1785, he spent most of the summer in Kentucky, looking after some land claims; there he married his

second wife, Mrs. Margaret Irvin,* *nee* Rodgers, widow of Mr. Abraham Irvin, a woman of cultivated mind, with whom he lived happily until her decease in 1800. They had no children. She had five by her former marriage.

Of Mr. Smith's affection for his first wife, the following incident bears witness. It was communicated to us by Rev. J. M. Smith, son_of Mr. Smith's youngest son, Robert.

"My father's earliest recollections related to the habits of his father, which he told about as follows: His mother was buried on the farm, on a hill at some distance from the house, where some large oak trees had been left standing to mark and shade the family burying ground. Under the shade of these trees my grandfather had constructed a kind of booth, somewhat after the form of an Indian wigwam, but small in size.

*The following account is given of Mrs. Irvin in the edition of this work, published by Grigg & Elliot, in 1834:

"She was born in the year 1744, in Hanover county, Virginia. She was of a respectable family; her father and the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, of New York, were brothers' children. Her mother was sister to the Rev. James Caldwell, who was killed by the British and totes at Elizabeth Point, New Jersey. Her father removed, when she was a child, to what was then called Lunenburg, now Charlotte county, Virginia. She never went to school but three months, and that at the age of five years. At the expiration of that term the school ceased, and she had no opportunity to attend one afterward. Her mother, however, being an intelligent woman, and an excellent scholar, gave her lessons at home. On the 5th of November, 1764, she was married to Mr. Irvin, a respectable man, though in moderate circumstances. In the year 1777, when every true friend of his country felt it his duty to render some personal service, he and a neighbor, by the name of William Handy, agreed that they would enlist for the term of three years, and each to serve eighteen months; Irvin to serve the first half, and Handy the second. Mr. Irvin entered upon duty, in company with many others from that section of the country. When they had marched to Dumfries, Va., before they joined the main army, they were ordered to halt and inoculate for the small-pox. Irvin neglected to inoculate, under the impression he had had the disease during infancy. The consequence was, he took the small-pox in the natural way, and died, leaving Mrs. Irvin, and five small children, four sons and a daughter.