

**NARRATIVES OF CAPTIVITIES.
INCIDENTS ATTENDING THE
CAPTURE, DETENTION, AND
RANSOM OF CHARLES
JOHNSTON OF VIRGINIA**

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Narratives of Captivities. Incidents Attending the Capture, Detention, and Ransom of Charles Johnston of Virginia by Charles Johnston & Edwin Erle Sparks

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CHARLES JOHNSTON & EDWIN ERLE SPARKS

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JOHNSTON'S NARRATIVE



Map Showing Johnston's Route

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NARRATIVES OF CAPTIVITIES
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**INCIDENTS ATTENDING THE CAPTURE,
DETENTION, AND RANSOM OF
CHARLES JOHNSTON
OF VIRGINIA**

*Reprinted from the original, with introduction
and notes by Edwin Erle Sparks*



CLEVELAND
THE BURROWS BROTHERS COMPANY
1905

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INTRODUCTION

CHARLES JOHNSTON, an attorney residing in Botetourt county, in the state of Virginia, upon a journey to the Kentucky country in 1790, was made prisoner by the Indians. Captured on the Ohio River, near the confluence of the Scioto, Johnston was carried north through what is now the state of Ohio, to the Indian village of Upper Sandusky. Here he was ransomed by a Canadian trader and taken to Detroit. Furnished transportation down the lakes by the British authorities at the post of Detroit, Johnston proceeded to New York City, where he was interviewed by President Washington and made a deposition before Secretary Knox upon the condition of affairs in the Northwest. He returned to Virginia after an absence of several months. His Narrative was first published in 1827.

The relation of Johnston does not rank among the foremost of American "Captivities" because he was a prisoner only about five weeks and because the details of his experiences were not committed to paper until thirty-five years after they occurred. This delay no doubt prevented his giving a more detailed account of his captivity and in some particulars may have militated against exact-

ness of description. At the same time, the brevity produces a straightforwardness of narrative and simplicity of style which form a pleasant contrast with the prolixity and verbosity of the average relation of an Indian captivity. Being a man of some education, and conversant with current national affairs, Johnston was able to furnish some inside information concerning the conditions along the northern boundary during that long vexatious period of British occupancy of the American posts.

The original edition of the Narrative was supplemented, according to the custom of the day, by certain "Sketches of Indian Character and Manners with Illustrative Anecdotes." One would expect to find these made up of personal observations of Johnston while in captivity. On the contrary, they are composed of quotations from Charlevoix, Long, Lewis and Clark, Schoolcraft and other writers on the life of the savages in North America. Because they contain almost no original matter, they are omitted from this reprint.

To appreciate the feelings with which a journey to Kentucky was undertaken in those days, one must remember that the settled portions of the United States were confined closely to the Atlantic seaboard. At few points had civilization penetrated the interior more than 150 miles. In certain places, unusual facilities for travel in the shape of waterways