



# History of Jonathan Alder: His Captivity and Life with the Indians (Ohio History and Culture Ser)

*Larry Nelson*

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A History of Jonathan Alder: His Captivity and Life with the Indians is one of the most extensive first person accounts to survive from Ohio's pioneer and early settlement eras. Nine year-old Alder was captured and taken to Ohio by Indians in 1782. Adopted by a Mingo warrior and his Shawnee wife, Alder lived as an Indian until 1805. After he left the Indians, Alder became one of the first European settlers to live in central Ohio. Alder composed his memoirs in the 1840s. His account chronicles his life for fifty years, from the time of his capture to 1832. The narrative, therefore, provides a unique perspective on frontier Ohio and its transformation from wilderness to statehood and the continuing evolution in the relationship between Ohio's Indians and whites from the Revolutionary War-era to a time when many of the state's Native peoples had been removed. Alder's recollection provides an exceptional look at early Ohio. His portrait of his captors is revealing, complex, and sympathetic. The latter part of his narrative in which he describes his experiences in central Ohio is an extraordinary rich account of early pioneer life. Further, Alder was fortunate in that he encountered many of the persons and took part in many of the events that have become touchstones in Ohio's pioneer history, including Simon Kenton, Simon Girty, and Col. William Crawford. He participated in the Battles of Fort Recovery and Fallen Timbers, and his recollection of these actions are among the few extant accounts that describe these events from a Native American perspective.

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