

= Jonathan Alder =

Jonathan Alder ( September 17 , 1773 ? January 30 , 1849 ) was an American pioneer , and the first white settler in Madison County , Ohio . As a young child living in Virginia , Alder was kidnapped by Shawnee Indians , and later adopted by a Mingo chief in the Ohio Country . He lived with the Native Americans for many years before returning to the white community .

Alder settled near present @-@ day Plain City , Ohio , where he became a farmer . He was reunited with his birth family , which moved to Ohio with him , and also had a short career as a military officer during the War of 1812 . A middle school , high school , and school district in Plain City all bear his name .

= = Early life = =

Alder was born September 17 , 1773 , in Gloucester , New Jersey , to Bartholomew Alder and Hannah Worthington . The family moved in 1775 to Wythe County , Virginia , where Alder 's father died about a year later . In May 1782 , Jonathan , at eight years old , was sent out with his brother David to search for a couple horses that ran away . They were attacked by a small group of Shawnee Indians from Ohio . David saw the Indians first and tried to escape , but he was chased down , killed , and later scalped . The Indian group also captured Alder 's neighbor , Mrs. Martin , and her young child .

The group traveled north , passing present @-@ day Chillicothe , Ohio , on the way to a Mingo village on the north side of the Mad River , somewhere near present @-@ day Logan County , Ohio . During the trip the Indians killed and scalped Martin 's child , which they found burdensome . Martin responded by screaming in grief ; when the Indians ' threats to scalp her did not quiet her screams , they whipped her until she was silent . Alder 's life was spared due to his appearance . His captors thought his black hair would allow him to pass as an Indian .

When the group reached the village , Alder learned why his life had been spared . One of the Mingo chiefs , Succohanos , and his wife , Whinecheoh , were an aging couple who had lost their son , and planned to adopt Alder as a replacement . Alder was forced to run the gauntlet , as a rite of passage , and after he exhibited bravery during the trial , he was adopted and cared for by Whinecheoh . The Indian 's other prisoner , Mrs. Martin , had been promised to a man in another village , and was taken away during Alder 's adoption ceremony .

= = Indian life = =

The first few years that Alder lived with the Indians he was very ill , a condition Alder attributed to the Indians ' diet . The other children in the village were friendly towards Alder , and worked together to teach him their language , customs , and traditions . In time , Alder fully adopted the Mingo way of life ; he lived , hunted , and fought as an Indian . When he was old enough he was given an English musket , which he used to hunt mud turtles , wild turkeys , and raccoons . He was praised in the village for his hunting skills . He grew attached to his new life and when , in 1783 , a trader from Kentucky offered to exchange him for a Shawnee prisoner , Alder refused . Alder was living in the Indian village of Mack @-@ a @-@ chack when it was destroyed by Benjamin Logan during his raid into Ohio Country in 1786 , and he accompanied the Indians on raids into Kentucky to steal horses from white settlers .

In 1790 , Whinecheoh died at the age of eighty , and Succohanes died in 1792 at the age of ninety . After their deaths , Alder wandered from village to village , and began courting an Indian woman from Upper Sandusky named Barshaw . In the fall of 1793 , during the peak of the Northwest Indian War , he joined Shawnee chief Blue Jacket to defend against Anthony Wayne 's attacks in the Ohio Country , and also took part in the attack on Fort Recovery on June 30 , 1794 . Alder was asked for advice on the 1795 Treaty of Greenville on land reservations , and urged by the Indians to attend its signing . Alder , not realizing the treaty 's importance , chose not to attend .

= = Life as settler = =

In the summer after the signing of the Treaty of Greenville , which restored peace between Indians and settlers , Alder decided to return to the white community . He married Barshaw , and settled in Pleasant Valley , in the area of Jerome Township , about 5 miles ( 8 km ) north of present @-@ day Plain City , Ohio . He built a cabin , took up the lifestyle of a farmer , and raised hogs , cows and horses . He sold milk and butter he made to the Indians , and pork and horses to the whites . Alder began adopting the white community 's habits , and learned English from the other white settlers . While living in Pleasant Valley , Barshaw struggled to integrate with settler life . She gave birth to two of Alder 's children , but both died in infancy . The couple decided the Great Spirit was opposed to their marriage , and separated . Alder gave Barshaw most of the couple 's property , including the cabin , all of the cows , seven horses , and about \$ 200 in silver . Alder kept only two horses and the hogs .

After some time Alder developed interest in his original family in Virginia . A companion , John Moore , learned that Alder had been taken prisoner near Greenbrier , and traveled to Wythe County to search for Alder 's family . Initial inquiries were unsuccessful , but one of a series of advertisements Moore placed in the district was seen by Alder 's surviving brother Paul . Paul then wrote Jonathan to inform him that the family was still alive .

Alder left for Paul 's house , with Moore , in November 1805 . He and Moore arrived in Virginia the Sunday after New Year , and Alder was reunited with his biological mother and siblings . Alder stayed with his family in Virginia for over a year , and while visiting his family he met and fell in love with Mary Ann Blont , a woman from Virginia . The couple were married on January 6 , 1806 , and in August 1806 , Alder , Blont , and the rest of Alder 's family returned to Pleasant Valley . Alder built another log cabin along the Big Darby Creek in 1806 , and he and Mary had 12 children between 1808 and 1830 .

= = Military career = =

During the War of 1812 , during the summer of 1812 or 1813 , Alder was elected captain of a company of 70 men formed in Plain City . With Frederick Loyd as his lieutenant , Alder 's company was ordered by the Governor to march about twenty miles north and build a blockhouse at Mill Creek , about three miles north of Marysville , Ohio , to protect the Darby settlements . The company built and garrisoned the blockhouse for a few weeks , but when a false alarm was sounded regarding Indians attacking the settlements , the men returned to their homes . This was the only fort ever constructed in Union County , and some of the foundation is still visible today .

After the war ended , Alder returned to the life of a farmer . He continued to visit the other former captives with whom he had become friends . In the fall of 1818 , Alder received a visit from Simon Kenton , to share and compare stories . The two discovered that they had much in common , and had been at many of the same battles , even if they had been on opposite sides . They met several times up until 1828 .

= = Legacy = =

Living out the rest of his days as a farmer , Jonathan Alder died on January 30 , 1849 , in Canaan Township , Madison County , Ohio , at the age of 75 . He had become a well @-@ known figure in the region , and is still remembered today with a school district , high school , and middle school named after him . A historical marker was erected by Ohio in front of Foster Chapel Cemetery at 39 ° 59 ' 42 " @. @ 31 ' N 83 ° 15 ' 48 " @. @ 11 ' W , near West Jefferson , where he is buried . The cabin Alder built in 1806 is now located at the Madison County Historical Society Museum in London .