THOUGH the Reverend William Smith, D.D., is known to students of Pennsylvania history as the first Provost of the College of Philadelphia, later the University of Pennsylvania, and as the leading pulpit orator of Philadelphia during the years preceding and following the Revolution, little has been written concerning his activities as a land investor. While it may seem unimportant to bring to light this purely commercial phase of a man's life which was more idealistically devoted to politics, education, and the church, yet the spirit in which this business seems to have been undertaken and prosecuted lends to it both dignity and significance.

The date is August 18, 1757. One might perhaps have noted that at the market square of busy, tidy Philadelphia, lands were to be sold by the sheriff—lands forfeited for taxes. The list had been posted for days with due notice of the sales, according to practice, and now those interested crowded about together with the idly curious. Among the interested bidders one might have seen a tall young man who waited intently until a certain parcel of land was cried. He joined the bidders, topping the offered price each time the bid went round. Finally, there was silence,

\footnote{See Pennsylvania History, II (October, 1935), 225-238, for "Provost Smith and the Quest for Funds," by the same writer.}
his voice the last. By one pound he had exceeded the bid of seventy, and had shown his determination to carry the price beyond the range of any other bidder. Only he knew how nearly that bid may have approached his own limit, but the coveted land was his. The lengthy descriptive deed was duly signed and witnessed, setting forth that the sheriff of Philadelphia county had sold for debt a plantation belonging to George Palmer, for £71—5—0 paid by William Smith of Philadelphia, gentleman, the highest bidder. The tract lay in the Northern Liberties of the city of Philadelphia, “beginning at a corner stone on the bank of the river Schuylkill, thence by lands of Rudeman Robeson and Marcus Garrett—thence by land of George Palmer—thence by land of Stephen Paschall and William Palmer—back to the place of beginning,” containing, exclusive of the Wissahickon Road which passed through the tract, seven acres and nineteen perches.²

A residence of three years had made Smith well acquainted with Philadelphia and its surroundings. The city clung to the banks of the great Delaware, but inland lay the valley of the Schuylkill, where the river hurried in rapids over its stony bed, where shad and herring abounded, and where steeply sloping banks were the wooded refuge of small game. Here the city seemed far away; yet it was within easy driving distance were the roads always passable. Where several roads converged on the river a rude ferry carried the traveler across the river to continue his journey on a highway leading westward.

Here was a scene to appeal indeed to the imagination and tastes of the young Scottish “gentleman.” Here was perhaps the best that America had to offer—the unspoiled beauty of nature within reach of the culture of civilization. Here was inspiration for poet and teacher, rest and delight for a wanderer far from home, who may well have seen in these hills and valleys with their rushing river a magnified and intensified version of his native countryside. Here, comprised in seven greatly desired acres, was a bit of America all his own!

To better round off the boundaries of his tract, Dr. Smith bought the following October a quarter acre of land for £2 from William Palmer. But whatever may have been his design for

²Philadelphia, H 15:206. This and similar following references give the index number of the deeds as recorded in the courthouses of the counties concerned.
improving his property, it was laid aside during the next two years while all his attention centered on political controversy and his journey to England for redress from the Crown. On his return, however, he arranged with George and William Palmer for a more convenient location for the small roadway leading into the Wissahickon Road. Then in 1761 came the deal which showed his intention of making his original seven acres the nucleus of further investments, for on April 27 he purchased from Rudeman Robeson a tract of twenty-six acres between the Wissahickon and Germantown roads “beginning at the ferry commonly called the Falls Ferry.” The price was £200. In this year also he began investing on the west side of the river, along the Falls Ferry road, acquiring in all ninety-four acres for £590.

During more than ten years the records of the Philadelphia Court House are blank, but by 1773 the Provost had built and had already begun to occupy the house at the Falls of Schuylkill which was then his country residence and which in later life became his permanent home. The building still stands, placed high on the top of a knoll and commanding an impressive view of the valley both north and south. In spite of the absence of deeds, it is apparent that during these ten years he must have acquired more acreage on the west bank of the river, for on December 6, 1773 he sold to John Penn a tract of 141 acres for £1410.

In 1774 he became proprietor of the ferry at the foot of his hill to the Falls Tavern across the river; for John Nicholson transferred to him the rights to a ferry, including a landing, and the privilege of storing goods. That the ferry brought good returns we can gather from a deed of 1801, which while disposing of the land of the Falls Tavern tract, retained the right of “ferrying and of ferriage across the said river and all boats, utensils and implements belonging to the said ferry.” This deed also reserved his right in the shad and herring fishery under lease to Godfrey Schranck.

There are records in 1776 and 1779 which show an investment in lands in Lower Merion township amounting to 250 acres, but

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3 Philadelphia, I 4:360.
5 Philadelphia, I 2:494.
7 Philadelphia, E F 8:1.
8 Philadelphia, I 17:64, 204.
Dr. Smith's interest in lands near Philadelphia seems to have centered principally about his home. He had the satisfaction of seeing his investments constantly increasing in value, as is shown in the case of a fifty-acre tract on the west side of the river which, purchased in 1774 for £500 and presented in 1790 to his son Charles, was sold by the latter in 1794 for $5,000.

All these investments which greatly increased in value, together with his artistically laid out private estate, gave him a place among Philadelphia's people of wealth. But while the ownership of surrounding lands would naturally enhance his enjoyment and interest in his home, his truly important investments did not lie here. It is perhaps significant that within view of his home site, the ferry crossed to a road which passed his own lands on its way to the West. Even while that home was still a dream of the future, his thoughts followed that road far, far to the west, where another vision was taken shape—a dream for the adventurer, the enthusiast, to be realized in the acquisition of western lands.

Western lands! words of power to make men rich or poor. Western lands! words of conviction to symbolize a prosperous province. Western lands! words of hope on which to build a greater America. Western lands! words of magic in whose rites strange incantations were spoken, such as Conecocheague, Juniata, Chilisquaque, Kittanning, Allegheny, Warrior Ridge, Tuscarora, Chinglaclamouche. Western lands! words of import to all—investors, patriots, pioneers, poets. No words were more significant nor more frequently spoken by all the people of Philadelphia and by their stranger guests, impatient to be off on their adventures; nor could a man of Smith's temperament remain heedless of their call.

Many events had directed his attention to the West. The frontier had been his special concern during the political disturbances of the French and Indian war; the same region had been his particular care in the attempt to bring learning and religion to its people; his friendship with Richard Peters, Secretary of the Proprietary Land Office, and with others who were heavy investors in the West, had made him familiar with the process of land speculation; and perhaps more than all, those challenging hills themselves, with the riches of forest, land, and stream which they enfolded may have called to his heart as well
as to his mind—called with their power, their majesty, their lonely awesomeness, challenging his courage, his faith, his vision. Some of those hills he would make his own.

The principal road at this period through Pennsylvania to the land west of the Allegheny Mountains crossed the Susquehanna at Harris' Ferry, kept to the south of the Kittatinny Mountains through Carlisle and Shippensburg, where it divided, a southern route passing Fort Loudoun and there turning north to Fort Lyttleton, while a more direct route crossed the Kittatinny and Tuscarora ranges and joined the longer route before reaching Fort Lyttleton. From here the road, or rather the well-defined trail, led one due west over Sideling Hill and Ray's Hill across the Ray's Town Branch of the Juniata to Tussey's in the Allequippa Gap. Ray's Town lay beyond, and following the stream almost to its source, the trail crossed the Allegheny Ridge and continued somewhat northwesterly to the site of Fort Duquesne, now named Fort Pitt. The present Route 30 is the modern version of this old trail.

Up the great Susquehanna were other trails leading to the West; the nearest and most practicable was via the Juniata which by the middle of the century had been well mapped, with its creeks and tributaries named. Fort Granville on the north bank near Kishicoquillis Creek and Fort Shirley on the Aughwick were the outposts; beyond lay Indian country. After passing the mouth of the southern or Raystown Branch referred to previously, an Indian village called Standing Stone was reached, where a creek bearing the same name entered from the north. This part of the river was called the Frank's Town Branch of the Juniata from an Indian village above the Canoe Place which marked the head of navigation. From Standing Stone and Canoe Place the great Indian trails led west and north, and to the south between the great ridges. This part of the country was well described by traders. Some settlers had entered the Juniata Valley before the opening of hostilities in 1754, but during the war their stockades were abandoned and they themselves were either massacred or driven from their holdings.

The terrors of war had been but a check to the settling of the West, and no sooner were the French definitely excluded than the movement to regain the old holdings and to establish new ones
began. The attention of Smith had been turned to the Juniata Valley, perhaps through the knowledge of that section given by George Croghan who already held tracts of land there. Smith's first ventures were the acquisition of three warrants for lands at different points on the Juniata, all dated December 14, 1762; the one for 300 acres on the south side of the Frankstown Branch opposite Standing Stone Creek;9 another for 200 acres on the south side "a little lower than Harts Logg";10 and the third for 300 acres on the north side of the river at Water Street.11 This latter name was given to the short stretch of river that cut through so narrow a defile that any one following the trail along its bank had literally to take to the water. These three warrants are the earliest which the records show, and are the nucleus of a considerable investment. So much interest centers in the history of the town of Huntington which was to develop under Smith's management that this early investment in the surrounding section is not generally mentioned.

At this time, that is, December of 1762, Smith was actually in England collecting funds for the College of Philadelphia and his interest in western lands was but one of his projects interrupted by that voyage. But he had left his incomplete deals under the care of Richard Peters, who of all men was best qualified to handle them successfully. On meeting with Thomas Penn in England there had evidently been some talk concerning his plans in the West which met with approval from the chief Proprietor. On April 5, 1762 Smith wrote to Peters:

Mr. Penn tells me that he has ordered warrants to issue long ago, so that I need not doubt but you have secured my land for me, as surveyed. I had set my mind upon it and I trust I shall not be disappointed. As it was your original motion, so I shall ever think myself wholly obliged to you for it.12

Again in September he writes, hoping that Peters is prosecuting his interest and urging him to let nothing interfere with its success. The assurance came to Smith in a letter from Peters of

9 Carlisle, B 1:14.
10 Carlisle, B 1:15.
11 Carlisle, B 1:15.
12 Smith Papers (Brinton Collection) II, 83.
January 15, 1763, confirming the transactions which the records show were completed in December:

I have got conveyances executed by the persons whose names were made use of to you for the lands surveyed by Colonel Armstrong and I have paid the Colonel and the Proprietaries the five pounds per hundred which is all that is necessary at present.¹³

These three tracts are insignificant in themselves compared with his later holdings, yet they possess the glamor of the initial attempt, the first venture in a great undertaking.

It is quite impossible to gauge the amount of money involved in land investment from court house records, since as a rule only a nominal sum of five shillings is mentioned in the deed. Procedure at the Land Office demanded that the person desiring land lay claim to a certain specified tract, to which he could show some right of occupancy. These tracts were usually referred to as tomahawk claims, but if they did not conflict with claims already on file at the Office their possessor was given a right to survey or option. This meant that some person had actually visited the location and presupposed some knowledge of the land on the part of the petitioner. The survey was at the expense of the purchaser, and when paid for and confirmed by the Land Office the warrant was issued. Thus many warrants were taken out by agents living near the lands who later turned the warrants over to the actual purchaser, having held them “in trust”; or the agent used the purchaser’s name in the original warrant. The option usually covered a right to 200 or 300 acres, but often when the survey came to be made there was not nearly that much acreage available. Thus it might be far more desirable to buy up a warrant for a tract that had been surveyed and entered at the Land Office even though the price might be more, especially if certain definite locations were desired.

Immediately upon his return from England, Smith showed his determined interest in western investment. For on April 12, 1765 there was conveyed to him a warrant for 250 acres on Dunning’s Creek, eleven miles from Bedford.¹⁴ The valleys about

¹³Ibid., II, 113. The reader will note that apparently certain parties were paid to permit their names to be used in the business.
¹⁴Carlisle, B 1:19.
Bedford were to rival the Huntingdon section in interest, and while at first glance they seem quite unrelated, the two districts were at the time rather closely linked. The approach to Bedford from the east was of course by the old road, but from there an Indian trail turned northward, called Trader’s Road, which led to Frank’s Town on the Juniata, where, crossing the river, it followed the north bank beyond Canoe Place to Robinson’s Run, crossed to the south bank and met the river again at the ford at Standing Stone. From there the natural method of return was by canoe down the river. But if the entire circuit were to be made on horseback, a trail led to Fort Shirley, then east and south over and through the intervening ridges to Logan’s at the head of Shareman’s Valley, where continuing through Croghan’s Gap the old road was reached at Carlisle. It must have been a difficult ride from Fort Shirley to Logan’s, as no modern road attempts a direct cut across the hills; nevertheless, some twenty-five miles of extra hard going could be accepted in such an itinerary.

These roads and trails, and many more that branched from them, were to be explored and traveled in years to come by the hearty and impressive clergyman from Philadelphia on his stout horse, as he inspected new sites and acquainted himself with changing conditions in his other holdings. Perhaps much of his success as a land investor was due to his first-hand knowledge; for not many years passed after his first purchase before he saw for himself the acres that were his, and noted other sections that offered best for the future.

The records for 1765 show an acquisition of 2,050 acres, mostly in the Huntingdon district, with a beginning on Dunning’s Creek near Bedford. The only record in which a price is mentioned is in the conveying of 315 acres above Standing Stone but on the south bank of the Juniata lying on both sides of Trader’s Run. This Smith bought for £75, the seller having paid £50 for it in 1763. The year 1766 shows the highest acreage recorded for some years to come, with an acquisition of 3,100 acres, all in the Huntingdon district except for 500 acres near Bedford. The prices are stated in this year’s deeds, and show an investment of £630, with an average of five acres per pound, except in the case of 800 acres including the 500 at Bedford which cost £100. A

15 Carlisle, B 1:20.
relatively high price was paid for a tract of 400 acres bought from George Croghan, lying on the north side of the Juniata at Standing Stone, the site of the future town of Huntingdon. This tract was bought for £300.16

From this time on there are records which show that some lands were acquired nearly every year until 1795. Of course it must be remembered that these court house records do not give a completely accurate accounting, since some transactions were not recorded, though this may apply more particularly to sales than to acquisitions. Smith himself was rather meticulous about his business affairs, and we may safely credit him with having nearly all deeds entered at the court house involved, while from his will and statements in other deeds we can gather that his bookkeeping was accurate. In 1769 appear the first records of land bought in Northumberland17 and Northampton counties.18 and also at Turkey Foot,19 as the district about the forks of the Yohiogeny was called.

Most of these old conveyances follow the same pattern of legal wording, but occasionally one departs from the common and reveals a bit of personal history. The following seems worth quoting:

I do hereby declare that before Braddock's defeat I had built two good log houses and lived at a place called the Turkey Foot or Three Forks of Yohiogeny and that I had cleared considerably and had several acres of Indian corn in the ground at Braddock's Defeat when I was driven away from the said piece and that I have and do hereby convey my right of improvement at the said Turkey Foot to Rev'd William Smith for a satisfactory consideration received this 3 April 1769.

John Owens.

George Croghan attests the handwriting of Owens, calling him an Indian trader.20

While the Proclamation of 1763 limited the advance of settlements to the eastern side of the Allegheny watershed, there is one
instance of land being bought by Smith beyond the mountain barrier. The limitation was far from popular and was constantly being evaded, but so long as England could not afford to police properly the great area beyond the mountains her only method for preventing trouble with the Indians was to keep out the whites. The general expectation was that each year the ban might be lifted, yet England continued to delay, pleading her quite genuine lack of funds. American expansionists called it mistaken economy and certainly a part of the opposition to England which brought on the Revolutionary War can be laid to the dissatisfaction of those who felt themselves disbarred from profitable pioneering, or the disillusionment of those who actually suffered great losses in speculations west of the mountains. Among these was George Croghan, whose faith in the expansionist power of England led him to financial disaster. As for Dr. Smith, there is no record of any further purchase by him west of the Allegheny range until 1781.

In Northumberland county his lands lay to the north and west of Fort Augusta, now Sunbury, on Buffalo, Chillisquaque and Big Fishing Creeks, and along the south bank of the west branch of the Susquehanna opposite Long Beach. No records appear of any larger single acquisitions than of 300 acres, and the total acreage is about 2,500. In 1791 and 1793 two tracts were sold, each for an average of a pound an acre; the rest were given by Smith at various times to his children.

The earlier deals in Northampton county refer to lands in Lower Smithfield township and along Dingman’s Creek, but some time before 1783 a considerable acreage was bought father to the north in the present Wayne county. This was a partnership venture and was never properly surveyed and divided during Smith’s lifetime. He gave 2,000 acres of this tract to his children, and his

21 Bedford, A:413.

22 The acquisitions, according to records at Sunbury, were made between 1769 and 1775. The dispersment began in 1783 and by 1793 the entire acreage in this district had been disposed of.

23 This deed has not yet been located.

24 On May 15, 1783 Dr. Smith gave to his daughter Williamina, among other lands, “1,000 acres in the county of Tryon and State of New York on the north east Branch of Susquehanna, near a place called Owegy, being an undivided part of about 10,000 acres of land belonging to the said William and Rebecca Smith and conveyed to them as a yet undivided part of about thirty thousand acres of land granted by patent to Daniel Coxe, William Coxe and others.” Huntingdon, L:299.
executors sold his share of the remainder in 1813 to the widow of Robert Strettel Jones of Philadelphia, a former business partner, but neither the acreage nor the price is mentioned in the record.25

Another set of ventures in the northern part of the state is revealed in a release filed at the Land Office at Harrisburg, wherein about 3,000 acres were returned by Smith to the Commonwealth. These lands all lay within the “Seventeen Townships of Luzerne County”—the disputed Connecticut claim. The confusion existing between claimants in this section who held title from Connecticut and those who held title from Pennsylvania, was to be settled according to an act of Legislature of April 4, 1799, by which all warrants taken out during the years when the area was under dispute were to be released to the state. Proper compensation was to be given according to a scale of prices ranging from five dollars for land of greatest value to twenty-five cents an acre for the poorest quality. When all the surveys were in and claims adjusted the vacant lands were to be offered at public auction, to be bought again at a price no less than the compensation rate.26

Since the release to the Commonwealth is dated November 26, 1800, so near the close of his life, it is hardly probable that Smith ever cared to reinvest in this district.

It cannot be known whether he ever visited these scattered tracts in Northampton, Northumberland and Luzerne counties. They were perhaps taken up from maps, or on report of friends, as ventures in districts which promised well. But in the Bedford and Huntingdon districts there are many traces of his presence. It was he who built the first inn on the site of the present Bedford House. It may have been his regard for the Lady Juliana Penn which caused her name to be given to one of the principal streets of Bedford town. In the county records the name of the Reverend William Smith, D.D., appears so often that not many present-day owners in tracing their titles can escape it. His holdings about Bedford mounted steadily from 1765 to 1778, so that by that year he owned 7,000 acres. In 1778 a rather notable purchase of about 3,500 acres was made from George Croghan, who in this instance fared quite well, receiving twenty-five shillings an acre for all

25 Easton, A 4:177.
26 Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801, XVI, (Harrisburg 1911), 245.
surveyed land. The records at Bedford show no further purchases until 1784, when 300 acres were taken up, and 1787 when a considerable amount of land sold for taxes was bought up by Smith. In June of that year he acquired 712 acres for £9—6—10, and in August 4, 477 acres for £308—19—7. This was only a preliminary to the great purchase which caused his name to supercede the well-known one of Croghan. In fulfillment of a contract between Smith and Croghan dated November 5, 1778, in 1788 Smith received from the executors of the Croghan estate a full title to 27,300 acres for the sum of £100. With the purchase in 1791 of a 300-acre tract bought up for taxes costing £9—1—0, his acquisitions in this district ended.

Though his holdings in the Huntingdon district never equalled those of the Bedford region they acquired a greater significance since here Dr. Smith became the proprietor of a town. After purchasing in fourteen separate warrants the relatively large amount of 3,100 acres in 1766, he contented himself with a gradual accumulation through the years which brought his holdings by 1794 to about 7,000 acres. These lands lay mostly along the waters of Crooked or Vinyard Creek, along the Aughwick, and at various points along the north bank of the Juniata from Water Street to some five miles below what is now the town of Huntingdon.

Just how the idea of laying out a town in this almost uninhabited region originated we do not know, but there seems to have been a definite purpose back of the acquisition of the 400-acre tract from George Croghan on March 25, 1766. For the next year Dr. Smith had a survey made on this tract laying out a town into streets and lots. The site was naturally favorable for a center of population, and here, as in many other instances, the Indians had already used the location for one of their ancient villages. The ford across the Juniata had determined the junction of trails at this point, and as the ground on the north bank of the river rose gradually, then steeply, to a moderate hill, the valley was somewhat

27 Bedford, B:442.
28 Bedford, C: 307.
29 Bedford C: 455.
30 Bedford C:455.
31 Carlisle, B, 1:13; and Bedford, A:206.
32 Historic Huntingdon, 1767-1909, p. 146.
protected from the winds, while the creek to the east gave a measure of defense from enemies on that side. Here, at the juncture of creek and river, the Indians had set up a pillar of carved stone as a memento of some tribal victory, giving the name of Standing Stone to their village and to the creek. When the white settlers arrived the original stone had been overthrown and lost, but a smaller stone still marked the site and maintained the name and tradition, though the village itself had disappeared.

Here then, paralleling the rather straight stretch of river extending from the creek to the ford, the main streets of a town were laid out, with transverse streets running from the river to the base of the hill, whose steeper slopes were reserved for a cemetery. Lots were offered upon the basis of a ground rent of one Spanish milled piece of eight per year payable on the first Monday in September, and with the provision that the tenant build on the lot a substantial house not less than eighteen by twenty feet in size having a stone chimney. These requirements are specified in every deed granting a lot. The oldest title yet found is dated September 7, 1768, for lot No. 12, conveying the lot on the above terms to Samuel Anderson.

There is little to prove the rapid growth of the town, indeed the evidence is all to the contrary. There was as yet no need for community life. The early settlers had previously lived on their own holdings scattered along the creeks and bottom lands, each in economic self-sufficiency. Though the population of the district increased after the French and Indian war, when Smith became interested, the whole region suffered a serious setback at the outbreak of the Revolution, for the Indians remained loyal to the British, and by massacre and burning forced an almost complete evacuation of the district. The years of terror ended in 1781 when there was a return of settlers, and at this time the life of the town can really be said to begin.

These first difficult years of pioneering can best be pictured in the words of some of those who lived through them. In 1845 printed questionnaires were sent to persons of standing in what had been the frontier section, asking that old persons might record their recollections of earlier times. Some of these were printed. Mrs. Hannah Spencer, at that time eighty-six years of age, related the following:
Recollect no ancient houses now standing. Huntingdon had three or four cabin houses, when I first saw it, and was then called Standing Stone.

When I first removed to the country it was a wilderness of woods, mountains, hills and valleys, with here and there a small cabin house, and small patch cleared.

Deer was the most numerous of wild animals, until hard winter of 1784, after which they were not so numerous. That about 1774, Dr. William Smith preached one Sabbath at Standing Stone, and published notice that he would baptize the children that might then be presented to receive that ordinance; to the surprise of all, about eighty children were baptized in one day. And she thinks he was the first clergyman of any denomination that administered baptism in the county unless it might be Catholic.

The settlers lived poor, principally on corn bread, hominy and venison; mills were scarce and were small, round-log, one-story buildings; salt was very scarce and dear, and had to be carried on horses, from Hagerstown, Carlisle, etc.

The men in their accounts add another most important item to the list of local products. Mr. Joseph Adams, who collected these statements, began his own account of the history of the county thus:

If any custom has been established among us by long usage and general practise, it is the deadly practise of drinking whiskey, which prevailed among our whole community, among judges of the court, members of the bar, ministers of the gospel, physicians and patients, farmers and mechanics, servants and laborers. It was used when we were born, when we were buried; when we rose in the morning, when we went to bed at night; before dinner and after dinner; when we were hungry and when we were full; when we were sick and when we were well; when we were cold and when we were hot. It was the universal panacea. Some of our citizens can remember and count fifty and sixty persons who killed themselves by its use within their recollection, in their own neighborhood.

34 Ibid., I, 409.
This rather severe indictment is borne out by the statement of Michael Maguire, who in his recollections states:

Athletic exercises were common and much practised by hardy and robust settlers, such as throwing sholden stone, pitching the rail, flinging the maul, hopping, jumping, dancing, wrestling, and fighting with the fists, and the stoutest man was the cleverest fellow and gave law to the rest of the community. Drinking whiskey was very general amongst all our people, and carousing days and nights in succession. . . . Rev. Dr. Smith came to this county occasionally to preach, and survey lands; his brother Thomas was then a young man, and was reputed a good surveyor; he subsequently became a lawyer and was afterwards appointed Judge of the Court.\(^{35}\)

Many of the recollections of those early settlers located in William Smith's town deal with Indian massacres and are alike pathetic and gruesome, but the story of an escape might be considered, since it evokes so clear a picture and raises such a debatable point of ethics:

In Morrison's cove, they attacked a miller in his mill, named Neave, a Dunkard; the miller slipped out through the cog pit, being pursued by an Indian; they shot at each other; both missed; Neave ran, and after running some distance, Neave stopped, commenced loading his gun; Neave raised his gun to shoot, but the Indian commenced jumping from side to side; Neave found that he could not get a sight sufficiently certain; but after trying it a second time, he killed the Indian. For this defensive act, his Dunkard friends turned him out of meeting, and never owned him a church member.\(^{36}\)

But with the vanishing of Indians along with wolves and bears, leaving only copperheads and rattlesnakes to vex them, the settlers began a more orderly and fruitful existence. Flour mills and saw mills were built, and the town of Huntingdon proved the wisdom of its site by the gradual development along its rectangular blocks of a trading and cultural center. In 1786, when the district was made into a county, this town was given the distinction of becom-

\(^{35}\) Ibid., I, 415.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., I, 414.
ing the county seat, and its population was augmented by members of the legal fraternity. To meet the requirements of its new dignity, Dr. Smith deeded to the town the land for a court house and jail.

At just what time the popular name of Standing Stone gave way to Huntingdon cannot be ascertained, probably the numerous arrivals after the Revolutionary disturbance called the place by its official name. The tourist of the present day nearing the city reads on the blue and gold sign that this is Huntingdon, and that the name was given to the town by the Reverend William Smith, its founder, in honor of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who had generously contributed to his collection of funds for the College of Philadelphia. Though highly interesting, this statement is purely fanciful, for a most diligent search of the list of contributors cannot show any mention of the Countess, of whose gift, had it been a generous one, Smith would certainly have made adequate mention. It is far more plausible to suppose the name, if given by Smith to the town, was in appreciation of his friend Thomas Barton, the loyal frontier missionary who had been stationed in the township of Huntingdon in York county at the outbreak of the French and Indian war. The two men remained fast friends, and were associated as partners in land purchases in Cumberland county. However, a bit of romance by the wayside does no harm; certainly it is preferable to the laconic statement that greets one's entry to another place in Pennsylvania: "Oxford, named for a town in England."

The growth of Huntingdon in population and in the value of its real estate can be traced by the recorded deeds at the court house there. While Bedford remained the county seat the records are too scanty to give any just appraisal of what was happening in the town; but after 1786 a clearer picture emerges. That year was a record one for the taking up of lots, sixty-five being granted then, and thirty-four in 1787. In all, the fifteen years between 1786 and 1801 show that Dr. Smith granted 177 lots. After 1786, in addition to the yearly payment of the Spanish milled dollar, a down payment of 7/6 was required for each lot. In later years a down payment of as much as $40, $24, or even £40 is mentioned, though in most cases the price is still 7/6 or $1. Lots sometimes changed owners soon after they were granted,
and the prices paid reveal the current values. Lot. No. 118 sold for £9 in 1793; lot No. 181 for £7—10 in 1794; lot No. 15 for £130 in 1794; lot No. 195 for £75 in 1796; and lot No. 76 for £220 in 1797. That the character of the buildings was changing is shown by the presence of two bricklayers, George Martin and James Fulton, who both took lots in 1796. By 1800 an additional improvement was begun in the village of Smithfield, on the south bank of the river, at the fording place.

Nothing is more characteristic of the tenacity of purpose shown by the earlier settlers than their insistence on maintaining through years of isolation and neglect their peculiar church preferences. As the town established itself definitely as a center of population, each of these religious groups strove to supply itself with a church building, and the worshippers gathered there from a radius of twenty miles. That Dr. Smith regarded their endeavors sympathetically is shown by his generosity in granting the land for their church buildings. The year 1794 should be regarded by the church people of present-day Huntingdon as a year worthy of commemoration, for on August 1 of that year he granted to the Rt. Rev. John Carrol, Bishop of Baltimore, land in Huntingdon for a Roman Catholic church and burying ground; on November 14 he deeded a plot of ground to the trustees of each of the following churches: Presbyterian, German Calvinist, German Lutheran, and Protestant Episcopal; and that education might progress equally with religion, he gave to the town a two-acre plot for a public grammar and free school.

But there was more than a proprietor's interest in his relationship to the town. His second son, Thomas Duncan Smith, after having been graduated from college, had studied medicine, and when equipped for practice settled in Huntingdon. His presence there was most helpful to his father's interests and he soon became active in public affairs, so that when Huntingdon became the county seat he was appointed a justice of the peace. As a physician and magistrate he began a career of great usefulness, but lived only long enough to forecast the promise of his career. Suffering a severe fever, he died July 9, 1789, at the age of twenty-nine. The name of Huntingdon thus took on in his father's mind an added significance, as the resting place of his well-loved son, whose death was the first great sorrow of his later life. Several
years having passed, his son Richard, younger than his brother by nine years, came to Huntingdon after having been admitted to the bar in Philadelphia in 1792. He combined his law practice with a comprehensive study of real estate and became the guardian of the family interests in that district.

The last visit of Dr. Smith to Huntingdon, of which we know, occurred in May of 1798. It may well have been that on completing the many details of business that had been reserved for his coming, he turned his face toward the hill behind his town and climbing the short ascent, took his way to that single grave set apart among the trees. To recall that earlier grief was but to evoke the clearer poignancy of succeeding sorrows wherein the companionship of an admired daughter and of a beloved wife had given place to unappeasable loneliness. In distant graves they lay, but united so long as an affectionate remembrance glowed within his heart. Nor were their lives cut off or ended when he, too, would join them; for they, and he, by their lives, had become an indissoluble part of that human tide of life which alone gives significance and worth to the soil wherein they finally came to rest—continuance was in the very air. There were the steadfast hills. Far on the horizon to the west of Huntingdon the distant ranges carried the majestic line of their summits in unbroken grandeur. Before it, tumbled mounds showed one behind the other, their slopes hinting of the curving valleys between. To the east the river lost itself in a deep defile, but his thoughts could flow on with it, on through the hills to the distant sea. Those hills had no concealments for him. To him they were as guide posts defining the trails that wound among them, trails he had so often joyously followed, when—leaving behind him the cares of his diversified activities—he had become something of a happy adventurer, who might on occasion assume the guise of a clergyman. Those trails had led to scenes of utter isolation when first he followed them; while now, he could behold a town which boasted a weekly mail, a printing press, and an embryo news sheet. In that advance he had played a part. Rough and crude it might all be, yet continuance was there, and hope, and abundant life for a nation spreading ever westward.

The earliest proof of the presence of Richard Smith in Huntingdon is the record of his purchase of Lot No. 174 on Dec. 17, 1793.
To the holdings of William Smith already listed must be added a considerable acreage in the Clearfield district northwest of Huntingdon. He was also a part holder, as has been mentioned, in the large Coxe tract lying in New York state, in what was then the county of Tryon, granted by Sir William Johnson. In all, a conservative estimate of his holdings as revealed by recorded deeds would place the acreage at slightly less than 70,000.

To acquire, hold, and administer such an estate over a period of forty years, leaving it at the end of that time an asset to his heirs and beneficiaries, was indeed a notable achievement. He was favored, of course, by the consistent advance in values through the latter half of the eighteenth century. For though there were occasional setbacks as the result of Indian troubles, these were not of long duration. They psychological effect was perhaps to enhance values, since the lands from which the whites were temporarily driven took on to them an added value in their determination to hold them and colonize them at any cost. He was favored also by his policy of acquiring selected lands which, though their initial cost was greater, brought surer and swifter returns in the form of rent than could be obtained from large blocks of cheaper but less desirable acreage. There are records of sales of 200 or 300 acre tracts, but these are seldom, and always for a good price. It is evident that at no time did the cost of carrying this increasing investment become too great for his returns; rather that the returns were consistently reinvested to increase the capital holdings. He was also fortunate in the assistance of his brother Thomas, whose talents in the selection of lands equalled his own.

He contented himself with the extent of his holdings on reaching the age of sixty-five. After 1793 there are no more records of purchases. Long before that time he had begun his policy of distributing to his children a considerable share in his widely scattered estate. The first occasion for doing so was the marriage of his daughter Williamina. On May 15, 1783, "for and in natural love and affection which we have and bear for our dearly beloved daughter Williamina Elizabeth Smith" she was given eight acres at Falls of Schuylkill, 2,750 acres in the Bedford district, 300

38 The three recorded deeds at Clearfield courthouse refer to the disposal of 3,558 acres by the executors of the estate of Dr. Smith.
near Huntingdon, and 1,000 each in Northumberland and Northampton counties and in Tryon county, New York.9

When his son Charles was admitted to the bar and moved to Sunbury in 1786, his father gave him a tract of land on Middle Creek and another in Allen township and Cumberland county. In 1790, having settled in Lancaster where he was soon to wed the daughter of Judge Yeates, he was given additional holdings amounting to about 3,000 acres and also two lots in Huntingdon. His share was increased in 1802 by an additional 2,400 acres.

On the marriage of his daughter Rebecca to Samuel Blodget in 1792, she was given an estate of nearly 6,000 acres, lying in the Bedford, Northampton, Northumberland and Huntingdon districts, with four lots in the town itself.40 Later, in 1802, when hard times had overtaken her husband through his over-confident speculations in the newly developed capitol city of Washington, a trust was created for her children consisting of nearly 2,000 acres of carefully selected lands in the Bedford and Huntingdon districts.41

In the case of his son Richard, who settled at Huntingdon, there is no record of any one considerable gift, but from 1790 to 1802 he was given holdings, all in the Huntingdon section, which amounted to over 4,000 acres, together with five lots in the town. However, the income from some of these tracts was to be reserved to the donor during his life-time. The records of grants to his oldest son, William Moore Smith, are but few, consisting of two tracts in the Bedford district given him in 1792, and a lot in Huntingdon in 1801. The house at the Falls of Schuykill passed through his hands into the keeping of his immediate descendants. There are records also which show that during the life-time of Thomas Duncan Smith lands were given him.

Thus was carried out the deliberate life-purpose of Dr. Smith, clearly stated in his will of July 14, 1802, where, disposing of his real estate, he affirmed:

Respecting which, having always considered it to be the duty of a parent, after a good and virtuous education of his children, according to his station in life, as far as

9 Huntingdon, L :299.
40 Huntingdon, B :425.
41 Bedford, H :279.
his abilities and a due measure of prudence will allow; and having upon those principles given or conveyed to my children respectively, with an equal and impartial hand, a considerable part of my property, as they came of age (or as their settlement and advancement in life seemed to require), and having confirmed the same by separate deeds or grants to each of them, with such limitations and reversions etc. respecting some parts of my estate as I thought proper, this my last will and testament needs therefore only to regard my residuary estate as it may be at the time of my death.42

These words were written in the house at the Falls of Schuylkill on the acres that embraced his initial purchase forty-five years before. From this spot how often had he set out accompanied by a few congenial friends on his excursions to the West! How familiar had grown the roadside that linked his western holdings with the East! Familiar through the happenings that had enlivened those journeys—events dangerous, ludicrous, admirable, pathetic or joyous. How real by 1802 were the tenants of those western lands; those humble partners in the extension of his estate, whose sorrows and hardships he comprehended, whose greatness and worth he understood! Together they had enlarged the bounds of civilization; together they had established values in a wilderness; as their circumstances had improved, so had his children’s heritage likewise increased. Together they had served their generation, while from their dreams they had wrought reality.