

Edward Smith, Husband of Jane Linville

by Alice Eichholz, PhD, CG® (retired 2022), Minneapolis MN – 21 August 2025

Jane Linville and Edward Smith received a marriage license 10 Mar 1780 in Wilkes County, NC [Wilkes Co Marriage Bonds]. Despite some oral history from a grandson, at age 93, who likely confused his two grandfathers, there is no evidence that Edward Smith was German or from Rhineland [*Jeremiah Smith, Missouri Pioneer: His Kin and Descendants*- by Stiffler]. Nothing about his location or community setting conveys this. No documents, including land, belie German language; his signature is always a mark and no recorder of a document indicated that he had alternate spellings from “Edward Smith” or “Smyth.” Where he comes from remains a mystery. He simply showed up on the Upper Yadkin in his 20s in 1779 when he entered a Wilkes County NC land claim #1327 on 23 Nov 1779 for 100 acres and cabin on Kings Creek just a few months before his marriage to Jane Linville.

One early source seems to suggest he came from Virginia [*Missouri Pioneer Family History*, 1876 “Calloway County,” p.377]. But since he is never located around any other “Smith” families until the 1820s neighbors are eliminated as possible clues as to his origins. A descendant of Isaac’s thought Edward was from Holland [though wife Jane’s maternal line was]. Son Nathan Smith lived until 1883 and lists North Carolina as the birthplace for both his parents, but there is possible misunderstanding as they both did “come from” North Carolina. There is little else to go on except who his bondsmen were for his marriage.* The bondsmen for the marriage [a bond was assurance as to the identity and availability for the groom to marry] were Gholson (Coulson) Stapp and Moses Guest. They both were from Virginia saw Revolutionary War service though neither of their war records suggest any connection to Edward Smith. All

three families owned land in 1780 around Kings Creek on the Upper Yadkin – a small geographic area where the Linvilles, Jane’s family, who were on adjacent Thomas Linville Mill Creek. One document identifies Edward as a “slater,” or one who handles slate or roofs [Wilkes County Court Loose Papers]. This seems possible has his oldest son, Thomas Smith, was a craftsman – a bricklayer [*Jeremiah Smith* ob.cit.].

Edward Smith’s Family in North Carolina

After settling along Kings Creek, the family was enumerated as “Edward Smyth” on the extant listing of the so-called 1787 census for that area of Wilkes County NC. With one poll (male over 21) and 6 females, a number that is clearly written [NCSA – Wilkes County 1787 Tax – G.O. 130- Capt Isbell’s District]. That is a lot of children in seven years if they were all theirs or perhaps some were daughters and others family members in the household helping Jane out. None of his in-laws, the Linvilles, are included in the 1787 “census” likely because they were moving farther west to the Watagua Cove area, not included in this “census.” And, for comparison, the Smiths were totally missed in the 1790 NC census likely because they were then on the move west to Cherokee Creek in in Washington County TN where there are no census records until 1820.

However, with tax and land records their movement can be established. In addition, oldest son, Thomas Smith (bc 1788), who married Margaret Yount, migrated with the Linvilles and Younts to Campbell County TN and Missouri and left more records concerning his origins. Younger sons still in Tennessee figure into the land distribution after Edward’s death. Both Edward’s will (1826) and probate settlement (1829-1832) for Giles County, TN are no longer extant. The court records indicated that a will was entered into probate 20 Nov 1826 [FHL 007642923 -Giles County Court p. 193 view 367] and executors were charged with completing

and settling the estate in three consecutive years 1827, 1828, 1829 [see discussion below]. The estate settlement would have been recorded in the court records sometime between 1829-1833 but those records are missing. It is land transfers that occurred after the time the estate would have been settled that identify some of his Tennessee sons, but apparently none of what seems likely to have been daughters with one exception of probable daughter Elizabeth.

Part of the problem with identifying what was clearly a number of daughters as well as his five known, possibly six, sons are the missing 1790, 1800, 1810 censuses for the family and the prevalence of Smiths in Giles County, TN and environs in the 1820s-1830s. There are several duplicated given names for Smiths in Giles County at the time. A number of researchers of family trees have attached their “Smith” ancestor to this family, with no documentation, simply because they were all in Giles County. However, tracking land acquisitions and sales, the 1836 county tax by district, and the 1830 census help to separate out the Edward Smiths geographically from the others.

Migration in Tennessee

First, let’s track the family’s movement west, upon leaving the land on Kings Creek about 1787-9 Edward sold his land 24 April 1787 [Wilkes County NC Deeds Bk C-1 p.11-12]. The next purchase of land was in what is now Washington County TN on Cherokee Creek. Edward bought 138 ac of land on both sides of the creek from Samuel Goodpasture in February 1791 [Washington County TN Deeds Bk 4 p. 176]. This land was sold in three pieces in 1805/6 [Washington County Deeds Bk 4 p. 259; Bk 8 p. 284 and 341]. The last land sale included an Elizabeth Smith as one of the witnesses, likely one of their unidentified daughters who was counted in 1787. Next, we find Edward 2 Dec 1812 buying land in Franklin County, TN along the Elk River [Franklin County TN Deeds Bk B p. 180]. He may also be the Edward Smith who

was on a road jury for Lincoln County TN in May 1814 [Lincoln Co TN Minutes 1814-1816 p. 39 - Lincoln and Franklin had boundary confusion until 1819] for a road crossing the Elk River from old Salt House on Madison County line [Alabama] towards Huntville [Alabama] and crossing Buchanan plantation [which was on Kellys Creek in 1809 – Lincoln County TN deeds Bk A pp 15-16].

He definitely is the Edward Smith who purchased 255 ½ acres of land in Franklin County TN on Boiling Fork of Waggoners Creek (a family name associated with wife Jane's relatives) of Elk River [Franklin County TN Deeds Bk B p 180]. He witnessed a Cornelius Dollarhide deed in that county 16 Oct 1817 [Franklin County Deeds Bk B p. 420-1] for land on Boiling Creek of Elk River, although he had sold Dollarhide his own 255 ½ acres 16 Nov 1816 for \$1500 [Franklin Co Deeds Bk F-K p.156 – not recorded until 1818]. His final land purchase came for land down Elk River on Kelly's Creek just across the [then] Lincoln County border in Giles County 12 Feb 1819 [the creek is in both counties]. The 134 acres of that deed [Giles County Bk C p.454] are what figure into his estate's distribution.

Isaac Smith, born 10 April 1796 [Isaac Smith Cemetery, Giles Co TN], likely the second son after Thomas, first acquired 56 of father Edward Smith's 134 acres 31 May 1822 [Giles County Deeds Bk E p. 498], with Jacob Smith, probably the next youngest son, as one of the witnesses.

Edward Smith's Death and Estate Distribution

Edward's death occurred before 20 Nov 1826 when witnesses to his will, Abraham and Elizabeth Pa..[??? transcribed variously-possibly Barnes though "Pa" seems obvious] acknowledged the will in Giles County court records [FHL 007642923 -Giles County Court p. 193 view 367]. Solomon Burford, Isaac Smith, and Robert Randolph were accepted as executors.

[Note there are family connections here with at least Solomon Burford and Isaac Smith]. Then, in successive years, the executors were ordered by the court to complete the settlement of the estate [FHL- 007642923 – Giles Court Minutes Feb 1826-Aug 1827: 20 Aug 1827 – view 434, p. 219]; [FHL -007642922 – Giles Court Minutes Nov 1827-May 1829 -- 18 Nov 1828 – view 152, p 310; and 19 May 1829- view 219, p 445]. Unfortunately, the next book of court records for June 1829- Feb 1833 is missing. It should have included the estate settlement including who all the heirs were and what they received. Regardless, certainly the settlement occurred before some of his heirs were able to sell their bequests from the 134 acres in 1832-3 as follows:

20 Feb 1832 – Bk I-J p. 219 [FHL -008264671] – Jacob and Nathan Smith sold 52 acres of the 134 acres on Kellys Creek to Benjamin Smith – signed by both but no witnesses indicated. Recorded 8 Sept 1832. Description of the property is land left by Edward Smith in his will to two sons, Jacob and Nathan. [Both Jacob and Nathan figure into Solomon Burford's estate – see below.]

3 Dec 1832 – Bk I-J p. 340 [FHL -008264671] – an indenture dated 1 Feb 1832 when Isaac Smith sold the 56 acres of the 134 acres on Kellys Creek he had acquired from father Edward in 1822 to Benjamin Smith – bordering by Samuel Lockhart. Witnesses James Higgins and Nathan Smith.

This adds up to 108 acres, leaving 26 acres that MAY be the 25 acres listed for a John Smith who appears in the same 1836 Giles County Tax List District 3 with this group of Smiths, although no deeds seem to exist for his purchase or sale. If there was a son John, there is no other clear information as to which John Smith he was as there were several in the county. He is

definitely not any of the John Smiths who are “claimed” by other Smith researchers as descended from this Edward Smith [the most prominent being one in Alabama whose father was actually a William Smith]. The remaining 26 acres were more likely the dowry rights for widow, Jane who by 1840 was living in youngest son Benjamin’s household. She likely deeded them to him in a private, unrecorded deed because Benjamin Smith then sold all of Edward Smith’s 134 acres to James Higgins on 4 Mar 1839 [Giles County Deeds - Bk 0 p. 10]. The sons in Giles County – Isaac, Jacob, Nathan, and Benjamin – all have a scattering of other court records in Giles County, including road juries and sale of slaves. The most notable was a road jury from Shoemakers Ferry to the county line 19 Feb 1827 [FHL -007642923 – view 137 p. 271] when three of them -- Isaac, Jacob, and Benjamin Smith were named.

Benjamin, Isaac, and Nathan all moved to other land in the county. Only Isaac, Benjamin, and their mother Jane died and were buried in Giles County. Jacob seems likely to have been the one who witnessed Solomon Burford’s [one of Edward’s executors] 1837 sale of his Kellys Creek land in Lincoln County TN [FHL 007902639 Lincoln County TN Deeds Bk I-J 6 Oct 1835 p. 424] and moved to Marshall County MS. Jacob was one of Burford’s heirs along with brother Nathan Smith, who was a known son-in-law who was married to Rebecca Burford. Solomon Burford died with as \$12000 estate and nine slaves 3 Apr 1838 [See Marshall County MS Wills and Marriages 1838-1839; and Lincoln County TN court minutes for suit from representative of widow Elizabeth Burford]. Nathan Smith is apparently the Nathan Smith who eventually moved to and died in Dallas, Texas 20 May 1883 [Dallas TX Probate Packet #1155 view 1994-death date in file differs from gravestone] with heirs – Lucretta Chapman, Walton Z. Smith, Elizabeth J. Hurd, Sarah E. Buchanan, Lydia Stone, Clara Rowe, and Matilda Chapman.

Only Elizabeth, Thomas, Isaac, Jacob, Sally, Nathan, and Benjamin Smith are included in the Linville database [linvillefamily.us] since they can be reasonably documented. Any other claims are going to need some evidence – DNA or otherwise.

*Future researchers should not be misled with a mention in a 1922 Pulaski TN newspaper [*Pulaski Pioneer* 22 Jun 1922, p. 7, c. 6] under the heading “Somewhat Peculiar.” The original story about the Edward Smith mentioned there was actually a man who died in 1820 in Spilby, Lincolnshire, England in March 1820 [*London Moderator and National Advisor* 15 March 1820.]

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