

COLONEL DANIEL SMITH

Colonel Daniel Smith, one of the first settlers of Asheville, was born in New Jersey in the year 1762.

Before coming west of the Blue Ridge Mountains to make his home, Colonel Smith with his close friend, Samuel Davidson, hunted frequently in this section, inhabited at that time by the Cherokees. On several occasions they were molested by the unfriendly Red men and for that reason Colonel Smith had, for the remainder of his life, a definite hatred for the Indian people. After the horrible massacre of Samuel Davidson, Colonel Smith was prominent among the men who came across the mountains to avenge the death of Davidson. At the unveiling of the monument at the grave of Samuel Davidson many years later, Colonel Smith's old gun carried by him throughout the greater part of his life and used by him in the attack on the Indians near the mouth of Christian Creek, which followed the murder of Samuel Davidson, was present, having been loaned for the occasion by his grand-daughter, Mrs. Jane C. Spears. It was known as "Long Tom" and many a Cherokee met his death from its fiery discharge. This old gun may still be seen in Asheville.

Daniel Smith was married to Mary Davidson, daughter of Major William Davidson, and to this union was born James M. Smith, the first white child born west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

He served in the North Carolina Militia as Captain during the Revolutionary War in Rowan and Burke Counties, from 1776 to the close of the War. Part of the time he served under Colonel McDowell and General Rutherford. Captain Smith was in the Battle of King's Mountain. He was later elevated to the rank of Colonel.

With William Forster, the second of that name, Daniel Smith made the first permanent settlement in what is now Asheville. On the tract immediately east of the railroad at the first branch above the passenger station was located the home in which he lived with his family. The site of his home being the former location of Fernhurst.

In his later years, Daniel Smith was almost daily seen on the streets of Asheville, mounted on his large white horse.

Colonel Smith died in 1829 and was buried near his home. As he was a militia colonel, he was buried with military honors by the Buncombe militia. In 1875 his body was moved to the Newton Academy Graveyard. Following is the interesting inscription on his tombstone:

"In memory of Col. Daniel Smith who departed this life on the 17th of May, 1829, aged 67. A native of New Jersey, an industrious citizen, an honest man, and a brave soldier. The soil which inurns his ashes is a part of the heritage wrestled by his valor for his children and his country from a ruthless and savage foe."