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BENJAMIN SMITH: REMEMBRANCE AND REHABILITATION

By Alan D. Watson

On a stormy January evening in 1826, Benjamin Smith, former governor of North Carolina (1810-1811), died a lonely and bitter man in eponymous Smithville (present Southport). ¹ Childless and deprived by death in 1821 of Sarah Dry, his wife of forty-four years, Smith was also separated from his surviving siblings and other family relations who lived in his native state, South Carolina. Friends were few. The former governor reportedly was "hated all around." ² A once vast fortune that included Blue Banks, Belvedere, and Orton plantations in Brunswick County, Bald Head Island, tens of thousands of acres of additional land, and fine town homes in Wilmington and Smithville had been lost. Persecuted by creditors and forgotten by those who had benefited from his generosity and hospitality, including the University of North Carolina, Smith had reason to be resentful.

Yet Smith's personality and wealth opened him to criticism. Through the years he appeared to be vain and pompous, bearing an aristocratic mien that alienated lesser men. Flaunting his riches, or so it seemed, the General, as Smith was usually called, together with his South Carolina pedigree invited envy and contempt. Quick-tempered, perhaps sharp-tongued, he made enemies and reportedly engaged in several duels. Increasingly he became antiquated, not only in years but in weltanschauung. The egalitarian, aggressive, commercial, acquisitive America that he had helped to sire by the Revolution had little patience with a domineering, aristocratic country squire overseeing his lordly domain.

Seemingly overlooked or forgotten by most at the time of Smith's death were the governor's contributions to his country and his adopted state. His patriotism was never in doubt, though some may have deemed it self-serving. An abiding interest in martial matters,

perhaps stemming from his supposed Revolutionary service, led to Smith's appointments as brigadier and major general of the militia division in the Cape Fear, and as adjutant general of the state, and to his ongoing efforts to improve the state militia. His support for the University was unwavering, beginning with a handsome bequest of twenty thousand acres of land to the institution in 1789. Moreover, Smith long enjoyed the favor of the electorate in Brunswick County. Multiple times voters sent him to the state legislature where he obviously enjoyed the esteem of his colleagues, given his five consecutive terms as speaker of the senate and his election as governor.

Privately, the governor appeared to live an exemplary life. A fondness for the bottle of which there is only the barest hint may have constituted an exception, but alcoholic drinks were the order of the day, and for all members of a family. From the little information that exists about his personal life, Smith appeared to be a devoted husband and surrogate father. Without children of his own, he cared for a ward throughout her life, adopted two youngsters, and sent others to the University. Grand Master of North Carolina Masons from 1809 through 1811, Smith lived by one of the abiding tenets of Masonry – charity – in both private and public affairs, and seemed to embody fully the tradition of Southern hospitality.

Though Smith may have had few friends at the time of his death, the posthumous rehabilitation of his reputation soon began, largely aided by the sale of the twenty thousand acres of land that he had donated to the University. The proceeds from that gift reminded all anew that Smith was the first and most significant benefactor of the school and, by extension, an advocate of education in general. According to early nineteenth century legislator and

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The *Bulletin* welcomes manuscripts for review. Articles should contain researched primary source material of Lower Cape Fear interest.

Our thanks to all who read and critiqued this piece which aided in the production of this *Bulletin*.

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University graduate Archibald D. Murphey, the former governor was one of a handful of men to whom the University was "principally indebted for its existence and Progress. . . ." ³

Still, many years elapsed between the bequest in 1789 and the realization of the funds by the University. After interminable wrangling with Native Americans, the United States, and Tennessee, the University finally obtained title to its benefaction which lay in Obion County in northwestern Tennessee. Unfortunately, the land was perfectly positioned to be rocked by the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-1812. Measuring 8.0 to 8.1 on the Richter Scale, the quakes were not only the most powerful to strike the contiguous United States in the modern era, but sufficient to occasion for a time a reversal of the flow of the Mississippi River. As a result of "the Shake," as it was termed by the locals, much of Smith's donation was practically "unsalable." Nevertheless, the University trustees finally unloaded the land on a Boston company in the mid-1830s for seventy cents an acre, or \$14,000, a tidy sum for an impecunious institution. ⁴

The University proceeded to honor its first donor a decade and a half later when the trustees named an elegant structure on the campus Smith Hall, which was dedicated in 1851 and has been recognized as one of the most beautiful buildings on the campus. During the Union occupation of Chapel Hill at the end of the Civil War, the Federal cavalry reportedly housed their horses in Smith Hall. Following the war the state Agricultural Experiment Station briefly occupied the basement of Smith Hall. Library facilities looked down from above. Eventually the trustees gave Smith Hall to the Carolina Playmakers for conversion into the Playmakers' Theater, which was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1974 and depicted on a U. S. postal card issued 1993 as part of the University's bicentennial observance. ⁵



Playmaker's Theater Building, courtesy of UNC Chapel Hill.

By the time that Smith Hall had been dedicated, Gov. Smith according to tradition had been relocated to his final resting place, the churchyard of St. Philips in

Brunswick Town. Initially the move entailed the identification of the remains of Smith in the Smithville cemetery, a daunting task. According to tradition, Mary Elizabeth Bensel Stuart came to the rescue. An "independent spirit" who operated an inn on Bay Street in Smithville, Stuart knew the approximate location of Smith's burial site and remembered that Smith carried to his grave a bullet that had never been removed after a duel with Maurice Moore. Thus she proceeded to sift the ashes "With a display of nerve and resolution, which might even test the courage of a man . . .," according to local historian Louis T. Moore. Upon finding a lead projectile, Stuart announced to the satisfaction of all that the remains were indeed those of Smith. ⁶ The date and party responsible for the reinterment are moot, but the transfer probably occurred in 1840 or soon thereafter.



Benjamin Smith's Grave Marker.

At mid-nineteenth century and coinciding with the dedication of Smith Hall at Chapel Hill, Benjamin Smith came to the attention of North Carolina historians. The first was John H. Wheeler, in his Historical Sketches of North Carolina, a title that subsumed data, dramatic personae of the state, county histories, and biographical sketches to 1851. In recognizing leading citizens of Brunswick County, Wheeler offered a lengthy, laudatory encomium to Alfred Moore, father of Maurice the dueler, after which followed cursory mention of Smith, legislator, militia general, and governor. "By nature ardent," and "Sudden and quick in quarrel," Smith's life was "checkered by difficulties" in which he conducted himself "with great firmness and magnanimity," observed Wheeler. His generous gift of twenty thousand acres to the University overshadowed "many greater defects." ⁷

Considerable improvement in the narrative presentation of North Carolina's past flowed from the pen of Wheeler's namesake, John Wheeler Moore, in his History of North Carolina, published in 1880. Lamenting Smith's penury after giving the University

twenty thousand acres of land, Moore characterized the governor as "impulsive and generous," a man "genial and kindly but quick in his resentments," and thus prone to dueling "in which he was both chivalrous and magnanimous." Wheeler and Moore set the stage for a basic remembrance of Smith's character and life: impulsive; magnanimous; genial; benefactor of the University. ⁸

Hard on the heels of Moore's history appeared a sketch of Smith in Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography (1888) that destroyed the factual integrity of the Governor's biography. Smith may have served with Washington at the Battle of Long Island, no doubt was present in Charleston, South Carolina when the British captured the port in 1780, and definitely gave twenty thousand acres of land to the University which named a building for him. Yet, Smith was not born in Brunswick County, or in 1750, was not major-general of the militia from 1794 to 1810, did not raise his own regiment of volunteers when war threatened with France in 1796, was not governor from 1810 to 1812, did not have an island named for him, and did not die in 1829. ⁹

Meanwhile, on the eve of the publication of Appleton's Cyclopaedia major changes were in store for the town named for Benjamin Smith. In an engineering tour de force, after several years of hard labor the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers closed New Inlet in the Cape Fear River above Smithville in order to improve the depth of the river near its mouth. The resulting concentrated flow of water scoured out a basin in Smithville and increased the depth of the Cape Fear from the town to the mouth of the river.

The inhabitants of the quiet little town of Smithville then prepared to take their place among the shipping centers of the world. Since constant dredging was needed to maintain the channel of the river to Wilmington, visionaries felt that Smithville might attract shipping that used Wilmington as well as maritime commerce that sought to avoid the treacherous coast to the north between Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout, those "two cemeteries of the sea." Most particularly, in the era of steam transport, the port might serve as a point of distribution of coal from the interior parts of the United States. ¹⁰

Thus the General Assembly in 1887 reincorporated Smithville as Southport, the anticipated "Port of the South." Disappointment followed. Southport languished. Wilmington remained the maritime shipping center of the state, a position solidified by the establishment of the State Port Terminal facilities after World War II. ¹¹

Local historian W. B. McKoy lamented the renaming of Smithville in a series of articles about Gov. Smith, published in the newspaper Southport Leader in 1896. McCoy, in fact, offered the first full account of the life of Benjamin Smith. It was exquisitely written, romantic,

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filiofietistic, and replete with errors that added to the misconceptions already foisted on the public by Appleton's Cyclopaedia. According to McKoy, Smith was born in North Carolina, accompanied Washington at Long Island, and subsequently engaged in many battles in South Carolina during the Revolution. When the British invaded the Lower Cape Fear, Smith abandoned his home plantation Belvedere which the enemy then used as an important military post. Following the war, the University seemed a hopeless enterprise until Smith donated a tract of land to the institution which he had received "in remuneration for his service in the Continental army of this State. . . ." ¹² With the exception of the questionable Long Island experience, all those statements were false.

Most shocking, but also inaccurate, was the account of Smith's demise. According to local lore, Smith died in a debtor's prison. Moreover, those to whom he owed money decided to take advantage of a common law custom that allowed creditors to retain possession of the body of a deceased debtor until family or friends paid the obligations, in effect ransoming the corpse. In the case of Smith, the sheriff of Brunswick County was informed of the impending demise of the former governor by one or several creditors. At that juncture the story, as later told, diverged slightly. The sheriff and his minions may



Portrait of Benjamin Smith from the Sons of the American Revolution, courtesy of the Carolina Digital Library Archives, UNC Chapel Hill.

have secured the body, after which friends of Smith tricked the officers and stole the corpse, or friends of Smith stealthily and secretly buried the body at midnight before the law could intervene. The latter

version generally prevails. ¹³ Yet no firm evidence exists to corroborate those rather fanciful stories.

Adding to the heightened interest in Smith at the beginning of the twentieth century and the continuing effort to rehabilitate his reputation was the presentation in 1911 of a portrait of the governor by the North Carolina Society of the Sons of the American Revolution to Gov. Claude Kitchen, who accepted the gift on behalf of the state of North Carolina. The public address on the occasion, though delivered by a professor of geology of the University of North Carolina, Collier Cobb, was a tour de force of the virtues of Benjamin Smith and his contributions to the commonwealth of North Carolina. The publication of Cobb's address in the North Carolina Booklet in 1912 followed by seven years the appearance of a brief but flattering biographical essay of Smith by respected state historian Samuel A. Ashe. ¹⁴

Together Ashe and Cobb announced the arrival of Smith as a major player on the historical landscape of North Carolina. Discounting the dissenting voice of University president Kemp P. Battle, who noted that towards the end of his life Smith was "assailed by misfortunes mainly the result of ill temper and recklessness caused by too frequent indulgence in ardent spirits," the General's reputation was on the upswing. Wilmington historian Louis T. Moore led the charge, building on Cobb's panegyric of Smith as a "patriot, legislator, soldier, statesman, and philanthropist; builder of highways and of fortifications, conservationist and drainer of swamps; opener of waterways; believer in education for every child within the State, and the first benefactor of the University; Grand Master of Masons; Governor of North Carolina . . . , and dreamer of dreams. . . ." ¹⁵

For Moore, Smith stamped himself as "a leader possessed of constructive and far-reaching policies for State development and expansion." A "Patriot and builder," the governor "reflected honor and glory" upon North Carolina. Writers of "modern history seemed in thorough agreement that Smith left an impress upon the commonwealth which reflects itself today in our modern and splendid university, and in our common school [system]." ¹⁶ From Moore to the end of the twentieth historians played constantly on the themes of military service – fighting valiantly in the Revolution; legislative accomplishments; and gubernatorial recommendations – industrial development, penitentiary reform, and public education, which were interpreted by some as having been effected even in the early nineteenth century.

Dismissing Battle, local historians found Smith's character unblemished. They agreed with McKoy, who had written, "the same noble spirit which had wrought such wonders for the welfare of the State and for the individual advancement of many of its citizens, remained untainted." A man of deep religious conviction, Smith evidenced a magnanimous

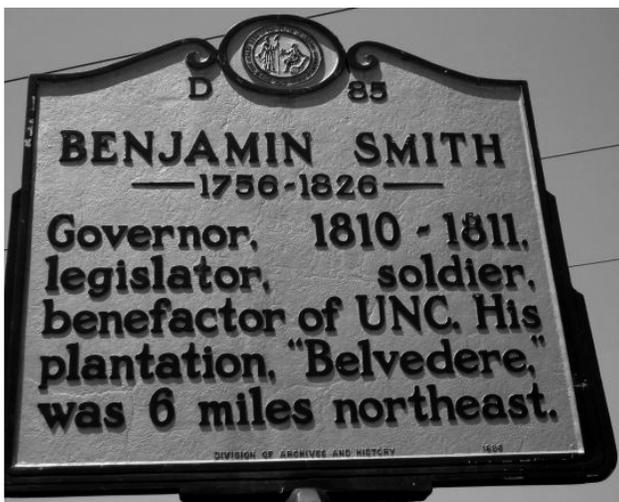
disposition and keen sense of gratitude. He exhibited "rare personal charm," "high character," and "openhearted and openhanded hospitality," and was "always willing to forgive and forget." Toward the end Smith's "generosity and informal business methods got him into financial trouble." The old hero "suffered undeserved buffetings at the hand of an unkind world."¹⁷

In the 1920s Smith benefited not only from the effusive praise of Louis T. Moore but also by an effort of Moore and the New Hanover Historical Commission to advertise and promote the history of Wilmington and vicinity with strategically-placed granite markers. Numbering at least sixteen, the approximately four-hundred pound memorials included a marker on Dock Street between Front and Second Streets to designate the location of Benjamin Smith's fine Wilmington home, and another on or near Eagles Island to denote the construction of the causeway by William Dry, Smith's father-in-law, and Smith. The latter was misplaced during the course of bridge and highway construction, found after several years, and apparently lost again. The marker on Dock Street remains.¹⁸

Moore was also the driving force behind the decision of the Grand Lodge of the North Carolina Freemasons to mark the grave, or supposed grave, of Smith, their past Grand Master, at St. Philips in Brunswick Town. The Grand Lodge passed a resolution and set aside funds for that purpose in 1917, but twelve years elapsed before a stone was laid in a solemn ceremony on July 12, 1929. Past Grand Master Francis D. Winston gave a stirring address for the occasion, relying upon some dubious history to impress more than two hundred people who gathered at St. Philips on a warm afternoon. Taps, both sung and played, closed the exercises.¹⁹

Little more than a decade later World War II brought further if fleeting acclaim to Smith when his name was attached to a Liberty ship, one of the merchant class

Benjamin Smith Historical Marker, courtesy of the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program.



vessels designated EC2-S-C1 by the Maritime Commission, that was destined to help defeat the Axis powers. The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company, located about three miles south of Wilmington on the east bank of the Cape Fear River, laid the hull of No. 25, the SS Benjamin Smith, on September 11, 1942, and launched and delivered the vessel on October 28 and November 11, respectively. The Benjamin Smith enjoyed a brief fling in the war. Off Sassandra, French Ivory Coast (present Cote d'Ivoire), in 1943, three torpedoes from a German submarine abruptly ended her mission.²⁰

Benjamin Smith received his most recent, though much belated, recognition in the form of a North Carolina Highway Historical Marker that was erected in 1987, approximately five miles south of Wilmington on U. S. 17. The state Highway Historical Marker program, initiated in 1935, commemorates individuals, structures, sites, and events of statewide significance in order to preserve and perpetuate the common heritage of North Carolinians. Smith merited a marker because of his gubernatorial service, which is noted in the inscription on the marker, followed by "legislator, soldier, and benefactor of UNC."³⁷ However, at the time of the erection of the marker, Smith was the sole remaining eligible governor of North Carolina to be marked. Even Warren Winslow, acting governor in 1854, had been marked the previous year.²¹

Today, many reminders of Benjamin Smith have been lost. Smith Hall became Playmakers' Theater, the Liberty ship rests on the bottom of the Atlantic, and "Smithville" gave way long ago to the grandiose hopes of "Southport," though a sop to the memory of Gov. Smith remains in the form of a subdivision of Brunswick County – Smithville Township.²² Not only "Smithville" but Smith's fine house in the town that overlooked the bay disappeared,²³ as did his Wilmington residence²⁴ and Belvedere, his home plantation, which apparently morphed into its sister plantation to the south, Belville, that was owned by another governor of North Carolina, Daniel L. Russell (1897-1901).²⁵

Governor Benjamin Smith, if alive today, most certainly would appreciate the remembrances of his person and career. The highway marker neatly encapsulates his career and references his beloved plantation Belvedere. Though Belvedere has been lost, Orton, Smith's last plantation residence, remains. The plantation fortunately found its way into the hands of James Sprunt, wealthy cotton factor, philanthropist, and local historian. His lineal descendants preserved the property and eventually opened the grounds, though not the home, a private dwelling, to a visiting public. And though the name of Southport has been changed, the town still offers the opportunity for a quiet walk along the bay where Smith gazed over placid waters.

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Smith no doubt would be proud of his adopted state. The prestige of the governorship has been greatly elevated, the executives possess more political influence, even to the point of wielding a veto, and the occupants of the office enjoy an impressive residence, all of which governors sorely lacked at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The militia, of which Smith was a leader and self-made expert, has been replaced by the National Guard, a valuable component of the country's military establishment. Most significantly, the University of North Carolina has emerged as one of the outstanding institutions of higher education, public or private, in the United States. If Smith rests at Brunswick Town, on property he once owned and now a North Carolina Historic Site, he reposes with the quiet assurance that he contributed his mite to the development of North Carolina. Gov. Smith, phoenix-like, has risen from the ashes of debt and despair to become a folk hero in the state and the Lower Cape Fear.

NOTES

1. For Smith see Alan D. Watson, "Benjamin Smith: The Early Years of a North Carolina Governor"; "Benjamin Smith: The General and the Governor," *Lower Cape Fear Historical Society Bulletin*, 25 (February, May 1982); *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s. v. "Smith, Benjamin"; Donald R. Lennon, "The Political Views and Public Activities of Benjamin Smith of Brunswick County (1783-1816), M. A. Thesis, East Carolina University, 1961.
2. Eliza Carolina (Burgwin) Clitherall, "Autobiography and Diary of Mrs. Eliza Clitherall," 17 vols., Clitherall Books, 7: 8, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N. C.
3. William Henry Hoyt, ed., *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, 2 vols. (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1914), 1: 288.
4. Jay Feldman, *When the Mississippi River Ran Backwards: Empire, Intrigue, Murder, and the New Madrid Earthquakes* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 135-182; Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, 2 vols. (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1907, 1912), 1: 378-404; http://neic.usgs.gov/neis/eqlists/10maps_usa.html
5. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, 1: 408, 409, 617; Archibald Henderson, *The Campus of the First State University* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 118, 134, 143, 147, 280; William Snider, *Light on the Hill: A History of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 64, 108, 181; William S. Powell, *The First State University: A Pictorial History of the University of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 69; "Building Notes. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill," Compiled Fall of 1984. Updated and Revised, Fall 1993, by Rachael Long (N. p., 1993), 506-510, courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N. C.
6. Brooks Newton Preik, "Kate Stuart: Legendary Lady of the Lower Cape Fear," *Lower Cape Fear Historical Bulletin*, 49 (October 2005): [1]; Louis T. Moore, *Stories Old and New of the Cape Fear Region* (orig. 1956; Wilmington, N. C.: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1999), 117.
7. John Hill Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina; From 1584 to 1851*, 2 vols. in 1. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Gramno and Co., 1851), 2: 49.
8. John W. Moore, *History of North Carolina; From the Earliest Discoveries to the Present Time*, 2 vols. (Raleigh: Alfred Williams & Co., 1880), 1: 458.
9. *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography*, s. v. "Smith, Benjamin."
10. Lawrence Lee, *The History of Brunswick County, North Carolina* (Charlotte, N. C.: Heritage Press, 1980), 189-190.
11. *Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina, 1887*, ch. 76; Lee, *History of Brunswick County, 190-193*; Alan D. Watson, *Wilmington: Port of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 164.
12. *Southport Leader*, March 26, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 1896.
13. *Southport Leader*, April 30, 1896; Kate Stuart to "My Dear Mr. Sprunt," January 1, 1921, Alexander Sprunt & Son, Inc., Papers, Southern Historical Collection; *Morning Star* (Wilmington), November 7, 1926; Moore, *Stories Old and New of the Cape Fear Region*, 113, 115; John D. Bellamy, *Memoirs of an Octogenarian* (Charlotte, N. C.: Observer Printing House, 1942), 3-4; Bill Sharpe, "From Manteo to Murphey," *The State*, 23 (May 19, 1956): 31; Billy Arthur, "The Tragedy of Benjamin Smith," *The State*, 65 (February 1998): 16.
14. Collier Cobb, "Governor Benjamin Smith," *North Carolina Booklet*, 11 (January 1912): 158-168; Samuel A. Ashe, ed., *Biographical History of North Carolina*, 8 vols. (Greensboro, N. C.: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1905-1917), 2: 401-405. The portrait of the regal-looking Governor, which remains with the Office of Archives and History in Raleigh, North Carolina, apparently was painted or copied from a painting by Jacques Busbee, a Raleigh artist more famous for reviving, in conjunction with his wife Juliana, Jugtown Pottery in Moore County, North Carolina.
15. *Rockingham Post-Dispatch* (Wentworth, N. C.), January 23, 1919; Cobb, "Governor Benjamin Smith," 158.

16. Morning Star, November 21, 1926; News & Observer (Raleigh), December 25, 1926; Sunday Star (Wilmington), July 13, 1929.
17. Southport Leader, April 30, 1896; Cobb, "Governor Benjamin Smith," 167; Sharpe, "From Murphey to Manteo," 31.
18. "List of the Granite Memorials Erected by the New Hanover Historical Commissi [on]," n. d.; "Marker Found," n. d., Folder entitled "Historical Markers," Louis T. Moore Collection, New Hanover County Library, Wilmington, N. C.
19. The Orphans Friend and Masonic Journal, (Oxford, N. C.), August 1, 1929, 6-7.
20. Ralph Scott, The Wilmington Shipyard: Welding a Fleet for Victory in World War II (Charleston and London: History Press, 2007), 67-74, 104; John Gorley Bunker, Liberty Ships: The Ugly Ducklings of World War II (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1972), 6-7; Joseph F. Nolen, "The Torpedoing of the SS Benjamin Smith," AMMV, St. Johns River Chapter, Jacksonville, Florida, Newsletter (June 2004), <http://www.armed-guard.com/louv.html> accessed September 22, 2008. The author wishes to thank Sue A. Cody, Randall Library, University of North Carolina Wilmington, for locating the account of the destruction of the Benjamin Smith.
21. Smith had previously received attention in the inscriptions on two markers for Orton Plantation and the marker for St. Philips Church in Brunswick Town. Michael Hill, ed., Guide to North Carolina Highway Historical Markers, 9th ed. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 2001, Introduction, 29, 30, 31, 32; <http://www.ncmarkers.com> The author wishes to thank Michael Hill, Office of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C., for his assistance in obtaining information about the highway marker and for his responses to several inquiries about Benjamin Smith. Individuals may not be marked until a twenty-five year waiting period has elapsed since their deaths. Hill, Guide to North Carolina Highway Historical Markers, 66; <http://www.ncmarkers.com>
22. One of six townships into which Brunswick County is divided, Smithville Township in 2000 accounted for sixteen percent of the county's population. Fittingly perhaps, in recognition of Smith, the incorporated municipalities of Southport and Bald Head Island fall within the township. <http://www.city-data.com/township/Smithville-Brunswick-NC.html>
23. Gov. Edward B. Dudley, North Carolina's first popularly elected chief executive, who lived in Wilmington at the time of his election in 1836, obtained the Smith home in 1838 and used it as a summer retreat for ten years. Subsequently the house served as a hotel, indicative of the size of the dwelling. Thomas D. Meares, who acquired the property in 1859, found the house in such disrepair that he demolished the structure and replaced it with his own elegant home. W. G. Curtis, Reminiscences (Southport, N. C.: Herald Job Office, 1905), 59-60; Wilmington Commercial, January 15, June 15, 1848; Brunswick County, Deed Book S, 125, microfilm, Office of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.
24. The elegant brick domicile on the northwest corner of Dock and Second Streets apparently was in ruins in the 1840s, and had disappeared by the end of the decade. Currently, a fine parking lot graces the location. The author extends his appreciation to Beverly Tetterton, New Hanover County Library, Wilmington, N. C., for providing information about Smith house on the northwest corner of Dock and Second Streets and the subsequent disposition of the property.
25. Southport Leader, April 30, 1896; Wilmington Star, March 19, 1869; Morning Star (Wilmington), September 14, 1879; Jeffrey J. Crow and Robert F. Durden, Maverick Republican in the Old North State: A Political Biography of Daniel L. Russell (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 187.

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Dr. Alan D. Watson is a Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He has written several books including Society in Colonial North Carolina, A History of New Bern and Craven County, and Wilmington: Port of North Carolina. Dr. Watson has served as a member of the Advisory Editorial Committee of the Division of Archives and History, State of North Carolina; the North Carolina Historical Commission; and the North Carolina National Register Advisory Committee. He also served several terms on the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Committee. Dr. Watson is affiliated with numerous historical associations, including the North Carolina Literary Historical Association, Historical Society of North Carolina, Association of Historians in North Carolina, Historical Society of the Lower Cape Fear, Southern Historical Association, and the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

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