



General Benjamin Smith: A Biography of the North Carolina Governor

Alan D. Watson

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This biography is about one of North Carolina's early governors, an advocate for public education in the post-Colonial period. Benjamin Smith (1757-1826) came from a distinguished South Carolina family and acquired enormous wealth in the Cape Fear region as a member of the planter class. Like his elite white peers, Smith was active in public life, in county government and as a legislator in state politics. He promoted public schools, the University of North Carolina, domestic manufacturing, banking, penal reform, and internal improvements. Earning the nickname "General" because of his militia activities, he rose to governorship but ended up dying in poverty.

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