**New York: William Smith**

Much like Henry Dearborn, William Smith had an illustrious and colorful career as a soldier, diplomat, U.S. marshal, and politician that spanned the course of four decades. Smith was born in New York on November 8, 1755. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities with Great Britain, Smith graduated from the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and established a law practice in 1774. When, the American Revolution reach his home state of New York in the summer of 1776, Smith was commissioned a major in the Continental Army and worked as an aide to Major General John Sullivan, one of the heroes from the Battle of Long Island. Throughout the rest of his military career, Smith participated in numerous battles and campaigns, all the while rising through the ranks. By the end of the Revolution, in the fall of 1783, Smith rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and served as an aide to General Washington. That was also the year that he became a founding member of the *Society of the Cincinnati*, to promote and preserve the ideals and fellowship of the officers of the Continental Army.

In the six-year period between the end of the American Revolution and his appointment as the first U.S. marshal of New York, Smith worked as diplomat overseas (1785-1788). During this time, he married Abigail “Nabby” Adams, the oldest daughter of John Adams and sister of John Quincy Adams, on June 12, 1786, and returned to New York City two years later to pursue business and new political opportunities. Because of his personal ties to influential politicians like Washington and Adams, Smith became the first U.S. marshal for New York in the fall of 1789.

As such, Smith was responsible for overseeing the enumeration of New York’s population and overcoming any obstacles that emerged. For example, some New Yorkers were superstitious and associated censuses with tragic events. In the minds of these participants, their fear seemed rational because an epidemic occurred in part of New York during a colonial-era enumeration of the area. Despite struggling to convince people to complete the census, Smith and his eight deputies were able to determine that the state of New York had a total

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68 His sister, Sally, married Charles Adams, younger brother of Smith’s wife Abigail.
population of 340,120 people.\textsuperscript{71}\textsuperscript{72} Furthermore, Smith’s final 1790 census schedule noted New York City was the largest city in America with a population of 33,131 people in 1790-91.\textsuperscript{73} Today, New York City is still the largest city in the United States with a population of 8,398,748 people.\textsuperscript{74} In addition to providing the total population of New York in 1790, Smith and his deputies’ enumerations are unique because they have two extra columns in their returns with information about whether the enumerated area had more males or females in the population. This extra information is significant because Smith, apparently on his own initiative, went beyond the scope of the instructions in the 1790 Census Act.\textsuperscript{75} Regardless of the challenges and time to gather extra information, Smith and his deputies completed the enumeration of New York’s population on July 26, 1791.\textsuperscript{76} Despite his successes, Smith left the U.S. Marshal Service after only a year to accept the more lucrative federal position of New York’s Supervisor of the Revenue.\textsuperscript{77}\textsuperscript{78}
Smith held this position until 1800, when his father-in-law, now President of the United States, appointed him as the surveyor of the Port of New York. Smith was able to leverage these two positions to increase his family’s pre-existing wealth, which proved to be beneficial because the Jefferson Administration removed him from his post shortly after taking office in 1801. In 1806, Smith’s status within American society and wealth were further threatened, when he was arrested and tried for violating the Neutrality Act of 1794 for his role in failed Miranda Expedition of 1806, which attempted to free Venezuela from Spanish control. However, he was acquitted of all charges and eventually elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1813. Ultimately, Smith would serve only one term. After losing his re-election bid, he returned to the town of Lebanon, N.Y., where he died on June 10, 1816.

79 “Spirits, Foreign and Domestic, Communicated to the Congress, November 1, 1791,” American State Papers, NA, Finance 1: 110.

80 Ibid.