

I'm not related to D.W. Smith— why should I look at his records?

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David William Smith was the first Surveyor General for Upper Canada from 1792 to 1804, and before that played administrative roles with the 5th Regiment of Foot. An extensive collection of his papers was acquired by the Toronto Public Library in 1888, and they are now held in the Marilyn and Charles Baillie Special Collections Centre (formerly the Baldwin Room) at the Toronto Reference Library.

While a few series have been microfilmed, and handful of maps has been digitized, the bulk of the material must be consulted in person. The collection is described briefly in the 1954 *Guide to the Manuscript Collection in the Toronto Public Libraries* and in the 1889 McAree article noted at the end of this article—but there is no modern or thorough description. The list of series that follows should provide guidance until a proper description becomes available.

I have written articles about several items in the David William Smith papers to demonstrate the variety and their value for family historians. The articles are available here:

- “A Toronto Farm, 1799-1800”
<http://wherethestorytakesme.ca/a-toronto-farm-1799-1800/>
- “A Tale of Two Isaac Gilberts”
<http://wherethestorytakesme.ca/isaac-gilberts/>
- “Dear Diddles: Eliza Mathews writes to her dear friend Ann Smith”
<http://wherethestorytakesme.ca/dear-diddles/>

Like many officials in Upper Canada, D.W. Smith wore many, many hats within government and the larger community, some of them concurrently. In any of these jobs, Smith could have come into contact with your Upper Canadian ancestor and created a record that mentioned his or her name. Even if the name isn't mentioned, the records still provide context and detail for your ancestral story. Some of the positions held by Smith that are more likely to have generated appropriate records are the following:

- Surveyor General of Upper Canada 1792–1804
- Officer/administrator with 5th Regiment of Foot stationed at Detroit and later Fort Niagara, 1790–1795
- Member of all District Land Boards 1792–1794
- Lieutenant of the County of Lincoln and Colonel of the Lincoln Militia
- Lieutenant of the County of York and Colonel of the York Militia
- Trustee for the Six Nations

The David William Smith papers also include some correspondence of his father John Smith, Commander of the 5th of Foot at Detroit and Niagara, and letters to D.W. Smith's mother. In addition to the letters written and received while in Upper Canada, there is considerable correspondence received by Smith while he was on leave in England, and after 1802 when he returned there for good, eventually working as estate manager for the Duke of Northumberland near Alnwick Castle.

Marilyn and Charles Baillie Special Collections Centre

The Special Collections Centre at the Toronto Reference Library, where the David William Smith papers and other manuscripts are held, is located on the fifth floor. There is no charge to use the collection, but you will need to register as a researcher. You may use a digital camera without flash. No scanners are allowed. For location and hours, consult the Toronto Public Library's website at torontopubliclibrary.ca.

David William Smith papers, S126

Series

- A3** Correspondence to Major John Smith and D.W. Smith from various London agents for the 5th Regiment of Foot, 1780–1803
- A4** Orderly book of John Smith while Commander at Niagara, 1793–1795. Lots of wonderful detail about daily life at the fort, in the form of regimental orders.
- A5** Orderly book of the Percy tenantry volunteer riflemen, Northumberland, England, 1805–1812 (Lt-Col D.W. Smith)
- A6** Approximately 260 letters about specific petitions and other land grant matters from the Clerk of the Executive Council to D.W. Smith in his capacity as Surveyor General, 1793–1799
- A7** Approximately 230 letters about specific petitions and other land grant matters from the Clerk of the Executive Council to D.W. Smith in his capacity as Surveyor General, 1800–1802
- A8** Correspondence (about 260 pieces) about specific petitions and other land grant matters from the Clerk of the Executive Council and directly from members of the Executive Council to D.W. Smith in his capacity as Surveyor General, 1787–1802. This series seems to involve more complicated cases and problems.
- A9** Copies of letters written by D.W. Smith to John Small, and extracts from Eastern, Western, Johnstown and Midland Commissions reports a few years earlier. (about 150 pieces, 1798–1801) Many letters have to do with lots that had been granted in duplicate, or ambiguous or incorrect descriptions
- A10** Collection of about 240 letters, 1764–1805, organized by sender. Of particular interest are letters to D.W. Smith in England from friends in Canada with news from York.
- A11** Collection of about 100 letters, 1772–1805. Many are addressed to Mrs Smith (D.W. Smith's mother). Included are letters from Count Joseph De Puisaye, and several letters about D.W. Smith's career.

- B1** Accounts relating to the 5th Regiment, 1775–1795. Includes notes about expenditures, bill, receipts, etc., letters from regimental agents, and some expenses of recruiting, finding deserters, and discharged men.
- B2** Accounts relating to the 5th Regiment, 1775–1792. This series consists mostly of accounts regarding personnel, including lists of bounty money or subsistence for new recruits with names of recruits, and subsistence of invalids.
- B3** Account books of the 5th Regiment, 1775–1790, debit and credit/contra pages across a spread for various accounts, shows columns for £ and Halifax currency. Also lots of personnel stuff.
- B4** Financial records and correspondence of D.W. Smith, 1798–1804, including his farm at York and election expenses.
- B5** About 140 assorted documents, 1792–1797, from D.W. Smith’s role as Surveyor General, mostly regarding lists of actual settlers in particular areas from correspondence with the Executive Council.
- B6** Correspondence received by Surveyor General’s office, 1800–1802 (about 150 pieces), including investigations of duplicate names, clarification of UE designations, and lists of a few townships with progress of settlement.
- B7** **folder 1** Instructions for deputy surveyors Wm Chewett and Thos Ridout dated 17 July 1799 from Smith before he goes to “Europe”, and additional letter in 1802 before he leaves again.
folder 2 “State of the Surveyor General’s Office, York, Upper Canada, 1 July 1802”, a very detailed inventory of records and supplies.
folder 3 Various letters of recommendation about D.W. Smith
folder 4 Correspondence about Indian lands, 1796–1800. Correspondents are mainly Joseph Brant and Peter Russell.
folder 5 Correspondence about mortgages, etc., on Grand River Indian lands in folder 4
folder 6 Militia Papers, letters to D.W. Smith in his capacity as Lieutenant of Lincoln County and commander of the Lincoln militia, as well as information about the York militia.
folder 7 Documents about a scheme to promote the cultivation of hemp, 1800–1801
- B8** General Correspondence, 1793–1804 (about 80 letters, indexed by sender in the first folder) These are mostly personal letters, some to Smith in England with gossip from Upper Canada. The fonds also includes five powers of attorney that allowed Smith to look after land transactions for Capt Henry Darling, Capt George Hill and wife Isabella, Robert Runchie, and E.B. Littlehales. Additional material in outsize folder: map and list of de Puisaye settlers.
- B9** Letters, reports and other documents relating to the Surveyor General’s Office, 1792–1800, many written by Administrator Peter Russell with opinions and particular instructions about some petitioners. Other letters are written by landowners about additional grants, regulations, and transfers of land. Maps of a salt spring on the Trent River, public buildings in York, Cootes Paradise, and other areas, are in an outsize folder.
- B10** First Heir and Devisee Commission material, 1797–1802

- B11** Copies of Orders in Council, 1793–1797, in numerical order (pages 3–14 are loose and have been removed to an outsized folder)
- B12** Returns of Locations Asked For, 1800–1801 (full of names, an additional 30 pages are in an outsized folder)
- B13** A bound ledger divided into four sections
 Section 1: Abstract of Contingent Disbursements in the Surveyor General’s Department, 1792–1793, refers to items in envelopes
 Section 2: Accounts, 1793–1799, particularly salaries for surveyors and office employees
 Section 3: Accounts 1792–[1799], person on left, contra on right, mostly employees’ out-of-pocket expenses
 Section 4: Monies Received at the Surveyor General’s Office for Surveys, 1798–1799
- B14** A bound ledger divided into three sections
 Section 1: Accounts 1799–1802
 Section 2: Monies rec’d for surveys, 1 July 1799–30 June 1802
 Section 3: Contra account for employees as above, July 1799–1802
- B14** Surveyor General’s accounts for July–Dec, 1804 (an additional folder filed with B9)
- B15** Bound book of D.W. Smith’s “Estates in Canada” contains legal descriptions and maps for each township where he held property, as well as his home in York, Maryville Lodge. The book also contains a Smith family tree.

References

Guide to the Manuscript Collection in the Toronto Public Libraries. Toronto: Toronto Public Libraries, 1954. Available as an e-book at
<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-939810&R=DC-939810>

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http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/smith_david_william_7E.html