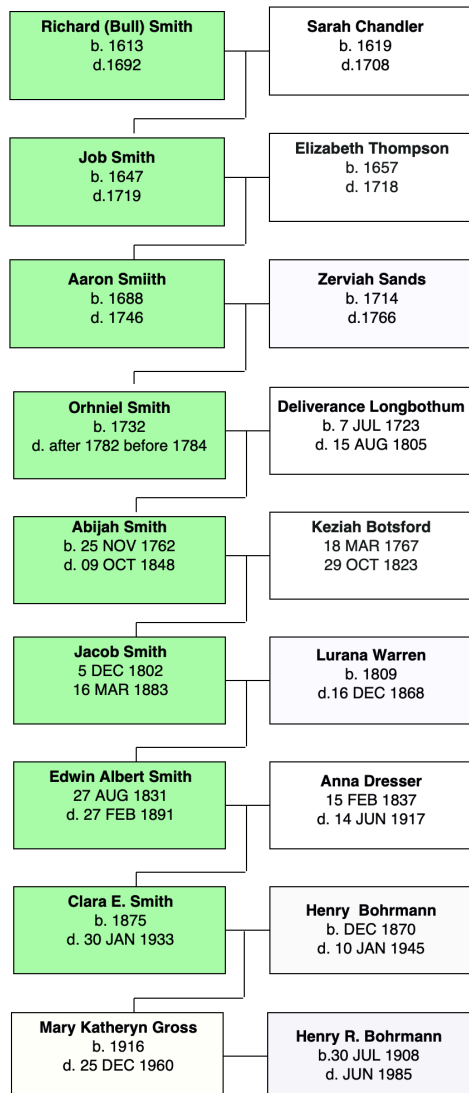


## Smith Family Ancestors of the Bohrmanns of Schroon Lake

Clara E. Smith is the wife of Henry Bohrmann b. DEC 1870. I have been able to trace the Smith family over eight generations, back to Colonial America. One of the difficulties in researching a common family name like Smith is simply the size of the family. My exploration of ancestry family trees began with Clara E. Smith, wife of Henry Bohrmann (b. 1870). Knowing that Clara was from Schroon Lake, I quickly identified her father, grandfather, great grandfather, and 2nd great grandfather (Abijah Smith); they were all residents of Schroon Lake, Essex County,

New York. This greatly simplified the research. Imagine the difficulty of tracing a particular branch of the Smith family as they moved from community to community across the United States.



### Richard (Bull) Smith

I begin this family documentation with Richard (Bull) Smith, the founder of Smithtown, Long Island. Richard Smith is Henry Bohrmann's 6<sup>th</sup> great grandfather. He was baptized 12 OCT 1613 in the Parish of Saint Peter, Leeds, York, England.

Richard Smith was among the earliest settlers of Southampton, Long Island, and later became a patentee of Smithtown, after whom the community is named. At the age of 22 years, Richard left England on 2 OCT 1635. Although the ship was bound for the West Indies, the captain made a stop at Boston in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Although a diversion from his original intent, Richard Smith decided to stay in the North American colonies. He later settled in Southampton, Long Island.

### The legend of Bull Smith<sup>1</sup>

*“Sure, Paul Bunyan was a big guy. And Johnny Appleseed had a green thumb. But they’ve got nothing on Richard (Bull) Smith, the legendary founder of Smithtown.*



*After years of embellishing, Smith’s tale has fermented into the tallest of them all. I think it’s a perfectly wonderful legend. I don’t*

*think there’s another town in the United States that could match it, and we should keep it,’ said Louise Hall, the director of the Smithtown Historical Society. Here’s how the legend shapes up today, more than 300 years later.*

*As the story goes, the Indians made a pact with Smith, an English settler who knew a good real-estate deal when he saw one: He could keep whatever land he circled in a day’s time riding atop his trusty bull named Whisper.*

*A clever man, Smith waited for the longest day of the year, circa 1665, to undertake the trek. He even trotted out one of Whisper’s favorite cows the night before to trace the route. Her fetching scent would surely quicken Whisper’s pace and get Smith to the end of the 55-mile border in time. He would start at the east end of what is now Smithtown, go south to Raconcamuck, now known as Ronkonkoma, then west to Hauppauge and north along what is today Veterans Highway and on to Town Line Road, which marks the town’s western border, and finally north to the edge of Long Island Sound.*

*At noon, he -- and the bull -- rested. Smith munched on bread and cheese in a hollow, inspiring the name Bread and Cheese Hollow Road. Naturally, Smith got ‘round, and Smithtown was his.*

*That’s the legend. Now here’s what historians say really happened. Before Smith ever thought of founding a town in his name, he came to Southampton.”*

The Newsday article continues.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from an article in the Long Island paper [Newsday](#).

*“Actually, Smith first got off the boat, the John of London, from England at the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635. Because land there was already scarce and the Puritans extremely severe, he soon made his way to Long Island.*

*The first mention of Smith, then spelled Smythe, in the Southampton town records was in 1643. Soon after his arrival, Smith befriended Lion Gardiner, the first lord of the manor of Gardiners Island, and quickly rose into the fledgling settlement’s highest social circles.*

*Along the way, Smith must have tweaked a nose or two. In 1656, he was banished from Southampton for insulting the wrong people. The order is reprinted in Noel Gish’s book, “Smithtown, New York: 1660-1929.” It reads:*

*‘It is ordered by the general court that Richard Smythe for his Irreverent carriage towards the magistrates contrary to the order was adjudged to be banished out of the towne and he is to have a weeks liberty to prepare himself to depart, and if at any time he be found after this limited week within the towne or the bounds thereof he shall forfeit twenty shillings.’*

*Smithtown didn’t come into play yet. Smith’s next stop was Setauket, where in 1657 he set up house with his wife, Sarah, and nine children.*

*Other forces were at work. The great Indian sachem Wyandanch gave Lion Gardiner a gift of land for rescuing his daughter, the Heather Flower, from a hostile tribe. Gardiner signed over the land that would become Smithtown to Smith in 1663. Smith either bought it or won it in a card game, depending on who’s telling the story.*

*But the true tale doesn’t end there. It took Smith a dozen more years of court battles to ensure that Smithtown was really his. When the English court didn’t give him what he wanted, he tried the Dutch. And when the Dutch lost New York, he went back to the English. It went on and on. Finally, the last bits of Smithtown were declared his in the Andros Patent of 1677. Sounds like Smith was more of a bull than Whisper was.*

*“If you think about the fact that he got to two colonial governors with his boundary dispute, I think he was a very educated and determined man. He was absolutely determined to secure this land,” said Hall. “I wouldn’t call him pushy, that’s too modern a word.”*

*Though it’s likely Smith’s demeanor may have had something to do with inspiring the “Bull” myth, historians have come up with several theories.*



Statue honoring Richard (Bull) Smith,



*One is that Smith had a pet bull he liked to walk around town. Others point to Smith's coat of arms: A bull rising out of a shield decorated with six fleur-de-lis symbols.*

*Then there's Gish's theory, an interesting take on papal bulls. Apparently, papal bulls, decrees issued to settle matters of church and state, were very popular during the 17th Century. Papal bulls were sometimes used to resolve boundary disputes between dioceses or parishes. Gish argues that Smith could have issued his own "Smith Bull" to solve, once and for all, his boundary disputes with the Dutch, the English and the neighboring town of Huntington.*

*Of course, many people, especially Smithtown residents, dismiss these theories in favor of the fanciful fiction. It may be full of bull, but it's Smithtown's bull."*

### Othniel Smith

Othniel Smith was the great grandson of Richard (Bull) Smith. Othniel was born in Smithtown, Long Island about 1732<sup>2</sup>. Othniel married Deliverance Longbothum of Nissequogue, Long Island. We have a record of the Deliverance marriage to a Samuel Phillips in 1784, so the death date of Othniel of 1782 seems reasonable. Town Records<sup>3</sup> show that Othniel is the son of Aaron Smith and grandson of Job Smith. In the same Smithtown records we read that Othniel Smith was chosen Constable and [tax] Collector in April 1757.

This was a period in American history that lay the foundation of the Revolution. Key dates in the run-up to the Revolution are listed here:

- 1754–1763: French and Indian War. ...
- March 22, 1765: Stamp Act. ...
- June 15–July 2, 1767: Townshend Acts. ...
- March 5, 1770: Boston Massacre. ...
- December 16, 1773: Boston Tea Party. ...
- March–June 1774: Intolerable Acts. ...
- September 5, 1774: First Continental Congress convenes.

In general, the inhabitants of Long Island could be counted as Loyalists to the Crown, but the Stamp Act imposed by Parliament and the Tea Tax that led to the Boston Tea Party began to shift minds. In the following resolution passed in

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<sup>2</sup> Dates of the birth of Othniel Smith vary from 1722 to 1732. I have used the date 1732 which is cited in [North American Family Histories](#) published by the Daughters of the American Revolution

<sup>3</sup> [Records of the Town of Smithtown, Long Island, N.Y.](#)



Jamaica, Queens we see both a wish to remain loyal, yet an expression of outrage at newly imposed taxes<sup>4</sup>.

*“On the passage of the Bill in the English Parliament shutting up the port of Boston on account of throwing of the tea overboard, some persons in Jamaica assembled at the Inn of Increase Carpenter, a mile east of the village, and, after an interchange of opinions requested Othniel Smith, the constable, to warn the freeholders to a meeting at the Court House, for the purpose of considering the state of public affairs.”*

*A number of the inhabitants met on December 6th, 1774, and constituted the local American party. The following resolutions were passed and recorded:*

1. *To maintain the just dependence of the Colonies upon the crown of Great Britain and to render true allegiance to King George the Third.*
2. *That it is our right to be taxed only by our own consent, and the taxes imposed on us by Parliament are an infringement of our rights.*
3. *We glory to have been born subject to the crown and excellent constitution of Great Britain; we are one people with our mother country, and lament the late unhappy disputes.*
4. *We sympathize with our brethren of Boston under their sufferings.*
5. *We approve the measures of the late General Congress of Philadelphia.*
6. *We appoint for our committee of correspondence and observation*

In this meeting, which occurred in Jamaica, Queens, Constable Othniel Smith appears to be an active leader of revolutionary spirit.

*Return of the Jamaica Company.*

[MIL. RES. 37: 138, 140.]

We whose names are hereto Subscribed being part of the Inhabitants of Queens County according to the Resolutions and Recommendations of the Honourable the Continental and Provincial Congress, do associate and form ourselves into a Company of Militia and have chosen Ephraim Baylis to be our Captain, Increase Carpenter to be our first Lieutenant, Abraham Vanarsdall to be our second Lieutenant, Othniel Smith to be our Ensign.

And do Recommend them to the Hon<sup>o</sup> Congress to be by them Commissioned as such persons whom we do choose to serve under, witness our hands March 22, 1776.

Nathaniel Box,	John Amherman,	Jonathan Thurston,
Nehemiah Higby,	Cornelius Lamberson,	Joseph Reed,
William Stine,	Nicholas Lamberson,	John Smith,
Peter Noorstrant,	Bernardus Ryder, Junier,	Plat Smith,
John Lossee,	Bernardus Lamberson,	Othniel Smith,
Isaac Van Ausdell,	Nicholas Lamberson, Jun <sup>r</sup> ,	Amos Denton, Junier,
Peter Fredrick, Junier,	Ephraim Bayley, Esquier,	Daniel Ludlam,
Abram Van Ausdell,	Nehemiah Carpenter,	Increase Carpenter,
Noah Smith, Junier,	Nehemiah Carpenter,	Andrew Oakley,
John Mills, Junier,	Nehemiah Smith,	William Forbes,
Daniel Smith,	Isaac Roads,	Nehemiah Smith,
Albert Hendrickson,	Samuel Messonger,	Abraham Colyer,
Augustine Betts,	Timothy Denton,	Daniel Thuttle,
Hendrick Hendrickson, blacksmith.		

We the subscribers the officers of the Battalion or in the County of Queens & Colony of New York Do hereby Promise and Engage under all the ties of Religion honour and Regard to our Country that we will Respectively duly observe and carry into Execution to the utmost of our power all and Every the orders rules and Recommendations made or to be made by the Continental Congress and the Congress or Convention of this Colony that we will also give in our Respective ranks due obedience to the Regulations by them Established for the forming of the Militia in this Colony as also due obedience to such officers who Either by rank or superiority are placed above us in such order as is directed by the said Continental or provincial Congress.

EPHRAIM BAYLIS,  
INCREASE CARPENTER,  
ABRAM VANARSALLE,  
OTHNIEL SMITH.

We whose names are here unto subscribed Being Freeholders and Inhabitants of Jamaica in Queens County on Long Island in the Province of New York Do Certify to the Honorable the Provincial Congress of the Province of New York that the above named Persons were Elected agreeable to the method Recommend by the Provincial Congress for the Regulating of the Militia of this Province and we do further Certify that the above Persons singe the above Declaration in our Presence.

JOSEPH ROBINSON,  
DANIEL TUTHILL.

[Commissions issued 27 March, 1776.]

*Officers of the Coram Company, Suffolk County.*

[MIL. RES. 27: 43.]

The records of the Daughters of the American Revolution document Othniel’s commission as Ensign in the Jamaica Company in 1776. The clip<sup>5</sup> shown at the left below details the formation of the Jamaica Company—a militia formed in Queens, New York. The term Jamaica Company does not refer to the Caribbean island, but rather to Jamaica, Queens County, New York. This is the militia unit referred to in the citations of the Sons of American Revolution, previously cited.

<sup>4</sup> [History of the Rockaways from the year 1685 to 1917](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Calendar of historical manuscripts, relating to the war of the revolution, in the office of the Secretary of State, Albany, N.Y](#)