

## Samuel Nichols Smallwood

(5 Sep 1772 – 29 Sep 1824)

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A native of Charles County, Maryland and for 30 years a citizen of Washington D.C. A signer of the articles establishing the Congressional Cemetery. Fifth mayor of Washington (1819-1822 and 1824).

*The National Intelligencer, September 30, 1824*

**Died,** Yesterday morning, between 3 and 4 o'clock, in the 54th year of his age, Samuel N. Smallwood, Esq. Mayor of the City of Washington. He had been indisposed for several weeks, but his disorder did not assume a threatening aspect until a few days before it terminated his useful life. The deceased was universally esteemed as a private citizen, and justly respected as a public one; the best proofs of which were his repeatedly receiving from the hands of his fellow citizens the highest honor and most important trust within their gift. This city in his death, loses the services of a most efficient chief magistrate -- to his family the loss is irreparable.

The friends and acquaintances of the family are requested to attend his funeral from his late residence this afternoon at 3 o'clock.

At the opening of the session of the two Boards of the City Council, yesterday afternoon, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Whereas the lamented death of our worthy and respected fellow citizen, Samuel N. Smallwood, Mayor of this City, is an event of deep interest and regret, as well to the Corporate Authorities of the City, as to the people at large: And whereas the Boards of Aldermen and Common Council of the City of Washington feel desirous of evincing the estimation in which he was held by them: Therefore,

Resolved unanimously, That we consider the death of Samuel N. Smallwood, Esq. Mayor of this City as a public loss of no ordinary character, and that we sympathize with his family and friends, and our fellow-citizens generally, in the lamented event.

Resolved, unanimously, That, as a mark of respect for the memory of the deceased, the Members of the two Boards will wear crape on the left arm for the space of thirty days, and that the like testimony of respect be recommended to the officers of the Corporation generally.

Resolved, unanimously, That the Members of the two Boards, with their Secretaries, will attend the funeral of the deceased; and that a committee to consist of two Members from each Board, be appointed to co-operate with his friends in making the necessary arrangements.

Resolved, unanimously, That the Register of the City and all other officers of this Corporation, be requested and are hereby invited to join the two Boards in attending the funeral.

Resolved, unanimously, As a further mark of respect for the memory of the deceased, That the two Boards do now adjourn, and that they stand adjourned until Monday the 4th of next month.

Resolved unanimously, That the Presidents of the two Boards be requested to transmit to the widow of the deceased a copy of the foregoing resolutions.

*The National Intelligencer, Saturday, October 2, 1824*

The funeral of our late Mayor S.H. Smallwood, Esq. took place yesterday afternoon and was not respectably and numerously attended. As a mark of respect to the merits of this citizen, the shops on the Avenue were closed at 3 o'clock yesterday for the remainder of the day.

## **The Navy Yard Section During the Life of the Rev. William Ryland**

Columbia Historical Society, Volume 4

Mr. Smallwood was one of the first of the city's merchants, being mostly engaged in the lumber business. He owned one of the wharves on the Anacostia River near the foot of Fourth Street, and was actively engaged in many other things. He was a director in one of the banks; was an incorporator of the Washington City Canal, which was expected by its projectors to be a mine of wealth to the stockholders and a source of great benefit to the city; was one of the incorporators of the Navy Yard Bridge Company, which built the first bridge over the Anacostia after the two bridges across that stream were destroyed during the invasion of the city by the British in 1814; was one of the managers of the public lottery authorized by the city government for raising funds for the building of public school houses and of the city hall; and was mayor of Washington from 1819 to 1822, and again from June to September, 1824. He died in 1824. His daughter married Jonathan Prout son of William Prout, owner of what was known as Prout's Farm, out of which was formed much of the city in the Navy Yard section.

The residence of Mr. Smallwood is still standing, being what is now known as 324 Virginia Avenue southeast.

Abstract From: Allen C. Clark, *"Samuel Nicholls Smallwood, Merchant and Mayor,"* Vol. 28, Columbia Historical Society, 1923.

Colonel Samuel N. Smallwood was a leading dealer in lumber and building supplies. He lived at the corner of 2nd & N St., S.E. (now part of a public housing project just southeast of the Waterside Mall), in the neighborhood of Smallwood's Wharf located at the foot of 2nd St., S.E. on the "Eastern Branch" (the Anacostia). At the time it was one of the main wharves of the City.

In 1820 the City had a population of 13,474, of whom 3,636 were black (1/2 slaves and 1/2 free). There were 2,141 buildings in Washington including a Masonic Hall and eleven churches. Alexandria and Georgetown were significant ports at the time having 9,844 and 7,519 inhabitants respectively.

Smallwood first entered public life in 1804 when he was elected to the 3rd Council as Alderman (serving with Rapine). He was reelected in 1806 and 1809-1811. Smallwood was elected Mayor by the City Councils in 1819. In 1820 Congress amended the city charter to provide that the Mayor be elected by popular vote to a term of 2 years. Smallwood was the first to be so elected. He lost the election of 1822 to Thomas Carberry, but was reelected Mayor in 1824. His term was cut short when he died Sept. 30, 1824 at the age of 52.

His last act (signed Aug. 24, 1824) created the committee to make arrangements to receive and entertain General Lafayette. Members of the committee included Maj. Genl. Brown, Commodore Tingey [R57/1], Daniel Carroll, Richard Bland Lee [R28/24], and George Watterston [Hamilton & Watterston family vault].

During Smallwood's term plans were adopted for a City Hall as designed by George Hadfield [R30/33], and the site on Judiciary Square was selected. He also authorized an Act to pay Francis Scott Key \$60 for services as the City Counsel and Attorney.

Smallwood was one of the founders of the Congressional Cemetery. Mr. Crew's History of Washington (p. ???) shows Smallwood as one of the signers of the article incorporating the cemetery on April 4, 1807. Smallwood was a vestryman of Christ Church and his name appears as a member of the Board of Trustees absent at a meeting in 1812 but present at meetings from 1816 to 1824.

From 1823 to 1824 Smallwood served, together with Commodore Tingey, on a committee to acquire funds from Congress to build a brick wall to enclose the cemetery. Their efforts resulted in an appropriation of \$2,000 and the first brick wall was erected in 1824.

Smallwood, his wife, and several children who died in infancy are buried in the family plot. The children who survived to adulthood are buried as far afield as St. Anthony, Minnesota where his son served as a minister.