



**GEN. SAM SMITH**  
"The greatest Baltimorean"

## Famous names o Baltimore

# Sam Smith: 'Savior of city'

*This year Baltimore is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its founding as a town. Each Thursday, The Evening Sun is publishing a series of short biographical sketches of people connected with the history of the city or people who in some manner have contributed to its enrichment.*

A statue and Sam Smith Park in the Inner Harbor honor Maj. Gen. Sam Smith, merchant, military leader, politician and, some believe, "the greatest Baltimorean of all time."

His successful defense of Baltimore in 1814 not only saved the city but turned the tide of the war. He spent 40 successive years in Congress—16 in the House and 24 in the Senate. When he was 83, he was elected mayor of Balti-

more.

Sam Smith (1752-1839), hero of both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, was born in Carlisle, Pa. and came to Baltimore with his family when he was 7 or 8. His father, John Smith, was a prosperous merchant and Sam was sent to the best schools.

At 15 he sat on a high stool in his father's counting house. At 18 he was supercargo and owner's agent aboard one of his father's Europe-bound ships. He took a four-year grand tour of Europe and came home, in 1774, a full partner in his father's business.

At 23 he organized volunteers to fight in the Revolutionary War. His active service included Long Island, Brooklyn Heights, Harlem Plains, White Plains,

Brandywine, Monmouth and a winter at Valley Forge. In command of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware, he delayed the passing of Howe's fleet for 40 days, thus contributing toward Burgoyne's surrender which marked the turning point of the war.

After the Revolutionary War, he was commissioned a brigadier general of State militia. In 1814, he held the rank of major general of militia, having been asked to take chief command of the military and naval forces defending Baltimore. He was then 62.

Pledging his private fortune to the effort, he urged on the preparation of the defense both on land and at Fort McHenry, organized and directed the inadequate and poorly equipped forces,

put every able-bodied person to work and successfully defended the city against the British. The Battle at Baltimore was the last fight before the Declaration of Peace.

In 1835, as commander of the State militia, Sam Smith was called upon to quell the riots in Baltimore resulting from the failure of the Bank of Maryland. The mayor had resigned; houses were burning; Sam Smith, at 83, was sworn in as mayor and hailed (for the second time) as the "Saviour of the City."

With order restored, he ran the city government for three years, until 1838. He died the next year and was buried in Westminster Presbyterian cemetery.

—Josephine Novak