

## **Smith, Orren Randolph** <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Smith, Orren Randolph**

by Maury York, 1994

**18 Dec. 1827–3 Mar. 1913**



Photograph of Orren Randolph Smith. Image from the North Carolina Digital Collections.

<sup>[2]</sup>Orren Randolph Smith, soldier, son of Louis Farrar and Olive Huff Sims Smith, was born near Manson in Warren County <sup>[3]</sup> but moved to Louisburg as a teenager. On 1 Oct. 1846 he enlisted as a private in Company H of the First Regiment of Foot Volunteers, commanded by Captain George E. B. Singletary. The unit was called into service against the Mexicans on 19 Jan. 1847 and landed at Port Isabel, Tex., on 28 March.

Discharged on 7 Aug. 1848, Smith studied engineering in New York before moving to Warren, Ohio, to live with his uncle. Residing near Fort Leavenworth, Kans., in 1857, he joined the troops commanded by Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston sent to Utah to suppress the Mormons <sup>[4]</sup>. Afterwards he returned to Louisburg, where he was living at the outbreak of the Civil War <sup>[5]</sup>. On 1 June 1861 he enlisted in Company B of the Second Battalion of North Carolina Troops, commanded by Colonel Wharton Jackson Green <sup>[6]</sup>. After injuring his right arm while on leave, he was appointed quartermaster, with the rank of major, at Marion, S.C., where he remained until the end of the war. Smith then worked as a building contractor and mover, with his business centered in Raleigh <sup>[7]</sup>.

He married Mary Elizabeth G. H. McCampbell on 10 June 1863. They had one daughter, Jessica Randolph. At the time of his death, Smith was living in Henderson. He was buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

Orren Randolph Smith is noted chiefly for claiming to have designed the Stars and Bars <sup>[8]</sup>, the first flag of the Confederate States of America. In his later years he stated that he had created the flag in response to solicitations made in February 1861 by the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States meeting in Montgomery, Ala. Catherine Rebecca Murphy (later Mrs. W. B. Winborne) of Louisburg sewed a flag according to Smith's specifications, and, as Smith related, it was sent to Montgomery on 12 Feb. 1861. However, it is unlikely that Smith's flag was in fact the Stars and Bars, for the Committee on the Flag and Seal rejected all of the "immense" number of designs sent for consideration. Though no definite proof has been discovered, it is more likely that Nicola Marschall <sup>[9]</sup>, an artist on the faculty of Marion Female Seminary in Marion, Ala., submitted the favored design at the request of Alabama Governor Andrew Barry Moore. <sup>[10]</sup>

Smith was honored on numerous occasions. The United Confederate Veterans in 1915 and the North Carolina General Assembly in 1917 <sup>[11]</sup> recognized him as the designer of the first Confederate flag. Such recognition was chiefly the result of a lengthy campaign by Jessica Randolph Smith, who referred to herself as "Dad's Daughter." Several monuments, including one placed in front of the Franklin County Courthouse <sup>[12]</sup> in September 1923 by the North Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, commemorate his efforts. On 3 Aug. 1927 the North Carolina Division of the



**Jessica Randolph Smith, daughter of Orren Randolph Smith, circa 1913. (accessed April 12, 2013).**

<sup>[14]</sup>**References:**

Alabama State Department of Archives and History, *Alabama Legislature Declares Nicola Marschall Designer First Confederate Flag, Stars and Bars* (no date).

*Birmingham News*, 25 Feb. 1935.

David Eggenberger, *Flags of the U.S.A* (1964).

*Fayetteville Observer*, 12 Oct. 1926.

*Franklin Times*, 15 Sept. 1916.

Peleg D. Harrison, *The Stars and Stripes and Other American Flags* (1914).

Johnstone Jones, *Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War With Mexico* (1887).

*Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861–1865* vol. 1 (1904).

*Laws of North Carolina, 1917*, Public Resolution 21.

Mrs. J. Boyd Massenburg Papers and Thomas Merritt Pittman Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

Jessica Randolph Smith Papers (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

*The Stars and Bars: Speech by Major Orren Randolph Smith: Report of "Stars and Bars" Committee, Confederate Southern Memorial Association, Richmond, 1915 . . .* (no date).

United Confederate Veterans, *Report of the Stars and Bars Committee, United Confederate Veterans, Richmond Reunion, June 1 to 3, 1915* (no date).

**Additional Resources:**

North Carolina General Assembly. "Resolution No. 21: Joint Resolution In Regard To The Origin Of The Flag Of The Confederate States Of America." *Public laws and resolutions of the State of North Carolina passed by the General Assembly at its session of 1917*. Raleigh [N.C.]: Edwards and Broughton. 1917. 625-626.  
<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/public-laws-and-resolutions-of-the-state-of-north-carolina-passed-by-the-general-assembly-at-its-session-of-...1917/1956441?item=2134369> <sup>[11]</sup> (accessed April 12, 2013).

"The Designer of the Stars and Bars." *Sky-Land* 1, no.8 (July 1914). 450-454.  
<https://archive.org/stream/skyland1913smit#page/450/mode/2up> <sup>[15]</sup> (accessed April 12, 2013).

Williams, Fannie Ransom. "Why North Carolina claims the designer of the "Stars and Bars," first flag of the confederacy." 1917. <https://archive.org/details/whynorthcarolina00will> <sup>[16]</sup> (accessed April 12, 2013).

**Image Credits:**

"Major Orren Randolph Smith Veteran of Three Wars." Photograph. *Sky-Land* 1, no.8 (July 1914). 453.  
<https://archive.org/stream/skyland1913smit#page/452/mode/2up> <sup>[2]</sup> (accessed April 12, 2013).

"Miss Jessica Randolph Smith "Dad's Daughter" Acting Adjutant for Camp Henderson." *Sky-Land* 1, no.8 (July 1914). 454. <https://archive.org/stream/skyland1913smit#page/454/mode/2up> <sup>[14]</sup> (accessed April 12, 2013).

### Subjects:

[Civil War \(1861-1865\)](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

[Artists](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

[Biographies](#) <sup>[19]</sup>

[Military personnel](#) <sup>[20]</sup>

### Authors:

[York, Maury](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

### Origin - location:

[Louisburg](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

[Henderson](#) <sup>[23]</sup>

[Warren County](#) <sup>[24]</sup>

### From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).<sup>[25]</sup>

1 January 1994 | York, Maury

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/smith-orren-randolph>

### Links

[\[1\] https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/smith-orren-randolph](#) [\[2\] https://archive.org/stream/skyland1913smit#page/452/mode/2up](#) [\[3\] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/warren](#) [\[4\] https://www.ncpedia.org/mormon-church](#) [\[5\] https://www.ncpedia.org/civil-war](#) [\[6\] https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/green-wharton-jackson](#) [\[7\] https://www.ncpedia.org/raleigh](#) [\[8\] https://www.ncpedia.org/stars-and-bars](#) [\[9\] http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1134](#) [\[10\] http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1454](#) [\[11\] https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/public-laws-and-resolutions-of-the-state-of-north-carolina-passed-by-the-general-assembly-at-its-session-of-...1917/1956441?item=2134369](#) [\[12\] https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/22/](#) [\[13\] https://www.ncpedia.org/historical-commission](#) [\[14\] https://archive.org/stream/skyland1913smit#page/454/mode/2up](#) [\[15\] https://archive.org/stream/skyland1913smit#page/450/mode/2up](#) [\[16\] https://archive.org/details/whynorthcarolina00will](#) [\[17\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/civil-war](#) [\[18\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/artist](#) [\[19\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term](#) [\[20\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/soldiers](#) [\[21\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/york-maury](#) [\[22\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-53](#) [\[23\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-32](#) [\[24\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont-2](#) [\[25\] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no](#)