



Smithville MO Historical Society

Our new website:

www.smithvillehistory.com

Preserving the past for
appreciation in the future.

January 2026

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for a 2026 Membership?**

Renewal form attached

Smithville MO Historical Society
P.O. Box 270, Smithville, MO 64089
Kathleen Bird, Newsletter Editor
Email: smithvillemo1966@gmail.com

Our website:

Check out our YouTube Channel:
<https://youtube.com/@smithvillemohistory>
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250 Patriot Celebration

Patriot ancestors of Smithville residents and society members are featured here to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The Revolution was underway by January 1776, although it would take the Continental Congress another six months to sign the Declaration of Independence. Incidents at Lexington, Concord, and the capture of Fort Ticonderoga from the British had taken place. Over the winter Henry Knox was transporting the fort's cannons to Bunker Hill. George Washington, appointed to lead a Continental Army in July 1775, was recruiting troops.

Captain John Little II (1713-1785)

John Little II was a well-established citizen with a wife and seven children living in Monmouth County, New Jersey Colony in August 1775 when advertisements were posted for an election in each township for local committees to execute the orders of the Continental and Provincial Congress. John and his son-in-law David Knott (ancestor of Dewayne Knott) were selected for the Monmouth committee.

Captain John was a founder and elder/pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Shrewsbury. Members of the Presbyterian and Baptist churches would become the core of the Monmouth Militia. British authorities pointed to the Presbyterians as the cause of the uprising against the Crown, making him the object of British retaliation. He and his family were in constant peril throughout the Revolution. Monmouth County would become the hot bed of a "civil war" between loyalists and those favoring independence, more so than all the rest of all the New Jersey colony combined. After the Continental Army was defeated in New York City in Fall 1776, British and Hessian troops and loyalists ("tories") overran Monmouth County. A son, John III was killed by Hessians in 1777. The same year his son Thomas was captured and held as a prisoner of war on the prison ship *Jersey to be* finally freed in a prisoner exchange in 1781. Another son, Theophilus, was captured in May 1778 and held for three months. Daughter Anne's husband was wounded in battle. His homestead was savaged in April 1779. His livestock, some slaves, and wagons were appropriated by British troops.

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50 Years Ago in Smithville

News in 1976 *Smithville Democrat Herald* in the Clay County Archives. B.J. and Vera Bunch, editors.

Jan. 1, 1976: Blood donations scheduled at Spelman Memorial Hospital; Smithville High School student Rader Miller on the winning team in statewide livestock judging contest.

Jan. 8, 1976: A petition signed by 64 residents was presented at the Zoning Board meeting to oppose re-zoning from residential to commercial in Lakeland Heights (old football field). A letter to the editor signed by “concerned parents” urges more news about Smithville High School sports.

Jan.15, 1976: The re-zoning application for Lakeland Heights has been withdrawn. John Dillingham, President of the Board, Earnest Shepherd Memorial Youth Center reports it reached a new level of service in 1975: 31,386 people days, with capital improvements underway. Plans for development of Smith Fork Park was submitted to the City Council. The cost is \$386,000 with the City contributing \$193,000.

Jan. 22, 1976 The Smithville Dam is now 70% complete, slightly ahead of schedule. Closure of the dam and diversion of water is anticipated in August. Total cost of the project is \$68 million. Congressman Jerry Litton is expected to announce his candidacy for US Senator in Columbia next month. Smithville High School student Julie Littleton has been selected as the General Mills 1975-76 Betty Crocker Family Leader of Tomorrow. She will complete in the state contest.

50 Years Ago – cont’d

Jan. 29, 1976: The sixty piece concert band of the Smithville Junior High School will present their Winter concert. The City is taking a door-to-door population census to address very uneven city wards to establish equal representation. Garnett M. Peters II of Liberty has been elected as President of the Board of Directors of Spelman Hospital. The hospital currently has 128 beds and facilities.

PATRIOT – cont’d

Captain John Little II was 65 years old when he and his son-in-law David Knott fought with Continental troops and local militia in the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse on June 28, 1778. It was a very hot day and humid summer day. Both sides sustained considerable casualties, with most from heat exhaustion rather than combat. The Continental Army is estimated to have inflicted more losses than it received. as This battle was part of General Washington’s campaign to drive the British from Philadelphia back to New York. It was one of the rare occasions when the Continental Army succeeded in possession of a battlefield.

Captain John Little died on February 4, 1785. He and his wife are buried at the Shrewsbury Presbyterian Church cemetery in Monmouth.

Out with the Old and

Spellman Hospital 1938-2025



In with the New

New Construction 2026



