



SMITH MCDOWELL HOUSE

The Smith McDowell House is located on the campus of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, at 283 Victoria Road (formerly the Buncombe Turnpike). It was restored as a heritage center by the Western North Carolina Historical Association.

The house was built in 1840 by James McConnell Smith (1787-1856). The property was one of the land grants opening Western North Carolina for permanent settlement after the Revolutionary War. Smith's parents were among the earliest settlers in this region.

The bricks for the house were produced on the plantation by slaves. Local craftsmen produced the three story house, which was quite elegant for its day. It is believed that Mr. Smith grew to like this style after traveling to Charleston, SC, several times to pick up supplies brought into the Charleston harbor. The Smith McDowell House has several architectural features found in homes in Charleston.

The house was built for James' son, John Patton Smith (1823-1857), who never married. Later it was purchased by James' daughter, Sarah Lucinda Smith (1826-1905) and her husband, William Wallace McDowell (1823-1893). The couple raised nine children and lived in the brick house for twenty-five years.

Economic reversals forced McDowell to sell the house in 1881 to Alexander Garrett. Charles Van Bergen, the next owner, commissioned the famous Olmsted Brothers to landscape the property in 1889.

In 1974, the Western North Carolina Historical Association leased the house and began procuring funds for restoration. Five years and \$316,000 later, the house was opened as a local history museum. Restoration of the Olmsted Brothers landscape plan is currently in progress.

The house is listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

When William Wallace McDowell and Sarah Lucinda Smith McDowell lived in the house, it was a highly productive plantation. About one hundred slaves worked and lived on the farm.

The winter kitchen was located in the basement. The summer kitchen was a separate building behind the main house.

The large farm included what is now St Joseph Hospital, Mission Hospital and the train yard down to the river. It also included what is now Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College and Asheville High School.



JAMES MCCONNELL SMITH

Born 6/14/1787
Married 6/28/1814
Died 1856

Captain Daniel Smith and Mary Davidson were among the earliest settlers in the Asheville area. James McConnell Smith, their son, grew to be one of the most influential men in Asheville. He owned a store, the Buck Hotel, a tanyard, and the first toll bridge over the French Broad River.