

SMITH, JOHN (1811-1895), sheep breeder, was born on 25 May 1811 at Trelanvean, St Keverne, Cornwall, England, son of John Smith, farmer, and his wife, Elizabeth, née Cock. He reached Sydney in the Abel Gower on 22 April 1836, became station superintendent for John Maxwell at Narroogal in the Wellington District and in 1839 for John Betts, based on the Molong run. Concurrently he acquired sheep and runs.

On 12 September 1843 he took up part of the Molong run with some pure-bred descendants of Rev. S Marsden's [q.v.] merinos, the nucleus of his famous Gamboola stud; by 1847 he had built a substantial brick house there. In 1845 he bought 3989 contiguous acres; he acquired more runs, including Gunningbland, Dovedale Park and Boree Cabonne, and by 1855 was running 35,428 sheep and had developed his stud.

His tenacity and knowledge of the land laws contributed to many arguments with the authorities. In 1847 he was arrested for allegedly stealing an iron pot; he was acquitted but failed in two actions against R.J. Barton who had signed the warrant. He was appointed a magistrate in 1850.

Smith evolved a large-framed, plain-bodied sheep with medium to strong wool. He adhered to Marsden's method of breeding (Bakewell's) and the Gamboola sheep became noted for their wool, constitution and carcase.

In 1860 he imported from T.S. Sturgeon and Sons, Essex, six Negretti rams certified to be directly descended from the flock of George III. He acquired numerous stations on the watersheds of the Lachlan and Macquarie rivers and settled his sons on Toogong, Boree Cabonne, Boree Nyrang, Narroogal, Nandilyan and Gamboola stations. In 1872 his second son, Lance, took his portion of the Gamboola stud sheep to Boree Cabonne. These sheep became the Boree Cabonne Merino Stud, carried on by John's great-grandson, Lance Mac. Smith. In 1879 the Kater [q.v.] brothers of Mumblebone bought sheep from Smith and continued to do so for many years, building up the Mumblebone stud and later the Egelabra stud with the Camboola blood.

Smith was one of the first to fence in the Molong district and to use wire in the western districts. Active in the town, he helped to establish a church and a school and in 1864 was president of the first show; a free trader, he was narrowly defeated in 1880 by Dr Andrew Ross (q.v.) for the local seat in the Legislative Assembly. That year he was appointed to the Legislative Council, where his knowledge of financial and pastoral matters, combined with his sound common sense and integrity, contributed to his success.

In 1857 he was a foundation member of the Union Club. About 1865 he purchased another family home, Llanarth, at Bathurst.

Smith died on 1 January 1895 at Ashfield of broncho-pneumonia and was buried in the Anglican section of the Bathurst cemetery. He was survived by his wife Mary, daughter of William Tom [q.v.], whom he had married on 12 September 1842, four sons and six daughters. His eldest son, Fergus Jago Smith, represented West Macquarie in the Legislative Assembly in 1887-89 and sat in the Legislative Council in 1895-1924; his eldest daughter, Emily, married Sir J.G. Long Innes [q.v.]. His estate was valued for probate at £142,600.

Bertha Mac. Smith (ed), *Quench not the spirit* (Melb, 1972) V&P (LA NSW) 1861, 1, 966, 976, 1880-81, 1, 163, 2, 353, 1883, 144; SMH, 8 Aug 1848; Bathurst Times, 2 Jan, 25 Mar 1895; National Advocate 3, 4 Jan, 25 Mar 1895; Parkes letters (ML); MS cat under Hon, John Smith (ML).