

EDWARD SMITH BIOGRAPHY

Edward Smith was a native of Ulster County, New York. His wife, Jane Whitaker, was a native of Kingston, Ulster County, New York. Edward and Jane were married in Kingston and four of their children were born there, the others were born in Illinois. One of Smith's daughters, Leah Margaret, married John Breen, a member of the Donner Party.

Smith and his family came overland from Springfield, Illinois to California in 1848, leaving Springfield in April of that year. He kept a diary of the journey beginning in Missouri on April 29, until November 11, when he and his family had arrived in San Francisco. During the journey, Smith was accidentally shot by another member of the wagon train while guarding the camp at night.

In San Francisco, he worked as a merchant until November of 1849, and then moved to live a short time in Santa Cruz. In January 1850, he and his family then moved to San Juan. He practiced law, since he had previously studied English and American law. In July of 1850, with Colonel Allen, he established the San Juan post office, and became the area's first postmaster. He also worked as a land surveyor of Monterey County. The diary notes the surveys taken between March 1851 and September 1853.

Edward Smith died in 1853 probably at the end of September or early October.