Smithfield is an important historic property adjacent to the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. The manor house, constructed around 1774 on the frontier, is a premier example of early American architecture and is one of few such regional structures of that period to survive. It was the last home of Colonel William Preston, a noted surveyor and developer of western lands, who served as an important colonial and Revolutionary War leader. Preston named the 2,000-acre plantation “Smithfield” in honor of his wife, Susanna Smith. Today, the manor house is a museum that is interpreted and administered by a local group of volunteers.

In 1997 The Smithfield Review was founded with the purpose of helping to preserve the often neglected history of the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and adjacent states. We seek articles about important personages and events, reports of archaeological discoveries, and analyses of the social, political, and architectural history of the region. Whenever possible and appropriate, the articles will incorporate letters, speeches, and other primary documents that convey to the reader a direct sense of the past.
Smithfield circa 1900.

Robert H. Lamb, a descendant of Colonel William Preston, recently provided this photograph, with these comments:

"I am enclosing … a picture of 'Smithfield' copied from the original, which hangs in my Uncle Aubin Boulware Lamb's cottage in Richmond, Virginia. On the back of the frame for the picture was written, in my Grandmother's handwriting, a notation that it was a picture of 'Smithfield' taken about 1900, showing also the law office of the Honorable William Ballard Preston. My Uncle remembers peering in the door of the law office as a child; he said the stairs were on the left side once you entered."
A Note from the Editors

An interesting facet of United States history is the relationship between the transportation systems of a given era and the concurrent migration patterns of a wide variety of ethnic cultures. Immigrants from all over the world entered the country for many reasons, but once they arrived, they often migrated to their eventual destinations along waterways, then roads, and later railroads. In this issue we examine four distinct experiences that enable us to appreciate more fully how we grew from many roots, and traveled over vastly different routes, to reach our present state. The issue begins with the story of a German soldier who was recruited in 1776 by a German prince to help the British king put down a rebellion within his thirteen American colonies. Unusual circumstances eventually led the young soldier to become a colonist himself. The long journey of Henry Linkous is followed by a discussion of the forced migration of thousands of slaves from the eastern coast, through mountain passes, into the Mississippi River Basin. Our third presentation is an unusual and an insightful view of Appalachian folk history from an accomplished artist, and the last essay tells the story of two competing, post-Civil War railroads and the resulting birth of the city of Roanoke.

After a sequence of unusual events, and extraordinary journeys, the German soldier, Henrich Linckorst, eventually became one of the earliest citizens of Blacksburg, Virginia. Henry Linkous, as he was later known, was likely a beneficiary of one of Thomas Jefferson's attempts to entice captured German soldiers to settle in Virginia. The article was written by Clovis E. Linkous, a retired General Electric engineer and a descendant of Henry.

Phillip Troutman, who recently received his doctorate in history from the University of Virginia, presents a vivid picture of the transportation of human cargo along the "Great Valley" road of Southwest Virginia. At first, the slaves were transported by the families who owned them as those families moved ever westward. Later, as the slave trade
grew, the traders began moving large numbers of slaves westward to accommodate the demand for labor as the large Mississippi River Basin plantations prospered. The author presents relatively scarce first- and second-hand accounts of these melancholy journeys.

“Malissia of Tom’s Creek and Brush Mountain,” by artist Joni Pienkowski, is a fascinating piece of oral history sensitively told through a sequence of paintings and quotes. Two persons from vastly different backgrounds developed a friendship that grew in unpredictable ways. From this friendship emerged a unique picture of a way of life unknown to many in today’s world.

The last essay of this issue, entitled “Triumph and Tragedy,” presents the story of the competition of two companies to build railroads in the Shenandoah Valley immediately after the Civil War. This essay is adapted by John R. Hildebrand from his recent book, *Iron Horses in the Valley, the Valley and Shenandoah Valley Railroads, 1866–1882*. The outcome of the corporate combat was disappointing failure for one company and extraordinary success for the other one. The reader will learn how the struggle between these two companies was instrumental in the creation of southwestern Virginia’s largest city — Roanoke.

Two book reviews are included in this issue. Wirt Wills reviews *Surveyors and Statesmen, Land Measuring in Colonial Virginia* by Sarah Hughes, and Michael Puglisi reviews *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, edited by Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra.

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Hugh G. Campbell, Editor

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