



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.

A Note from the Editors

The book review on page 77 presents a superb illustration of the importance of local and regional history in the study of broader historical concepts. The book's author, Professor Edward Ayers of the University of Virginia, uses Franklin County in Pennsylvania and Augusta County in Virginia to examine, among other things, the evolution of political thought from 1859 to 1863. In this issue of *The Smithfield Review*, we, too, use local history to gain a better appreciation for state and national currents in which the local events were embedded. The first article reveals a previously unpublished letter by an eyewitness to the surrender at the pivotal Battle of King's Mountain in the Revolutionary War. The letter provides additional evidence in a two-century-old controversy about the role of Colonel William Campbell, which was outlined in Volume 7. Next, we present a critical review of written material concerning one episode in the life of the flamboyant John Floyd, the father and grandfather of two Virginia governors. Floyd became entangled in some international intrigue. In several earlier volumes we have provided, through old letters and diaries, a sense of the social issues that affected soldiers and their families during the Civil War. Historian James I. Robertson Jr. adds to our collection by annotating a letter from a reluctant soldier from Montgomery County. The fourth article provides a description of interesting research that resulted from our earlier article on Saltville, Virginia. Our final presentation illustrates some statewide and national religious trends through an examination of the racial split within the Methodist Church of Blacksburg.

"An Unexpected Enemy and the Turn of the Tide: Andrew Creswell's King's Mountain Letter" includes a brief history of the battle and surrounding controversy. Very little is known about Andrew Creswell, but his letter is important because it is a first-hand account of the events of that historic day. One of the authors, Jim Glanville, a retired chemistry professor from Virginia Tech, was able to persuade the owner, Hubert Gilliam of Kingsport, Tennessee, that the letter's

importance required its publication. Quotes from Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Lord Cornwallis provide the reader with an indication of the historical importance of the battle.

“The Phoenix Caper - A Frontiersman goes to Sea” analyzes several accounts of John Floyd’s foreign exploits. Floyd, who was introduced to our readers in Volumes 1 and 2, spent most of his short life on the Virginia and Kentucky frontier, but this one deviation has been the subject of widely divergent accounts. Author Wirt H. Wills, a retired Virginia Tech faculty member and active volunteer at Smithfield, attempts to distinguish historical fact from embellishments and other assorted distortions. The foreign trail leads Floyd from captivity on the high seas to England as a prisoner, followed by an escape to France.

“Montgomery County in August 1862: A Showalter Observation” reveals the attitude of one man with respect to being drafted as a soldier in the Civil War. Details about the lives of his family and friends also are expressed. The language and content provide insight into life in rural Western Virginia during the second year of the Civil War. The letter and annotations were furnished by James I. Robertson Jr., Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at Virginia Tech.

In “The Blade from Glade,” Jim Glanville describes his investigation into the origin of an artifact found near Saltville, Virginia. The artifact was brought to the author by a resident of the area who hoped that it would provide evidence of a visit to the area by 16th century Spanish conquistadors. The outcome demonstrates that research often leads to unexpected results.

“Growth and Independence of Methodist Congregations in Blacksburg, Virginia” describes the birth of Methodism in Blacksburg and then follows the rapid changes during and soon after the Civil War. Particular attention is given to the birth of the African-American St. Paul Methodist Church. The analysis is embedded in the broader context of the events of the day as they played out on state and national scenes. Chris Donald, the author and a native of Blacksburg, is currently a student at Duke University Divinity School.

This issue of *The Smithfield Review* culminates a decade of publishing essays and old documents of local and regional historical interest. We mark the occasion with a comprehensive index for the first ten volumes. We think it is also appropriate to acknowledge those who have contributed so much to the success of this ten-year venture. Generous financial assistance and encouragement have come from the persons and institutions listed on the preceding pages of this issue. Many anonymous reviewers and proofreaders have devoted hours to the preparation of each article. Peter Wallenstein and James I. Robertson Jr. of the Virginia Tech History Department have furnished manuscripts and wise counsel on many occasions. Mary Holliman and the staff of Pocahontas Press have published each issue in a competent and efficient manner. Terry Nicholson and several volunteers from Smithfield have provided miscellaneous assistance that is absolutely essential in a venture of this scope. Last of all, our authors, who are the “life-blood” of the endeavor, have given much time, talent, and energy to bring you, the reader, a direct sense of the past. For all of these contributions we are deeply appreciative.

In closing, we pay tribute to one of our editors, Charles E. Modlin, who died on the first day of 2006. One of his last activities was to assist in the preparation of this volume. Charlie, a retired English professor at Virginia Tech, was one of the four persons who, twelve years ago, established this journal of local and regional history. We shall miss his friendship and wise counsel.

Hugh G. Campbell, Editor
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