



Smithfield is an important historic property adjacent to and surrounded by the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. The manor house, constructed around 1774 on the Virginia 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 Col. William Preston, who immigrated to the Virginia Colony from Ireland in 1739. Preston was a noted surveyor and developer of western lands who served as an important colonial and Revolutionary War leader. He named the 1,860-acre plantation Smithfield in honor of his wife, Susanna Smith.

The Prestons' commitment to education as well as Preston farmlands were both critical factors in the creation of Preston and Olin Institute and its subsequent conversion into Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) in 1872. VAMC has now evolved into a world-class, land-grant university—Virginia Tech.

The manor house and outbuildings are now a museum, interpreted and administered by a large group of volunteers. Historic Smithfield[©] is owned and operated by the Smithfield-Preston Foundation, Inc. The primary goal of the foundation is education about the Preston legacy and life in the region during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This goal is realized using both historic and contemporary venues for programming, educational activities, meetings, arts presentations, music, and commemorations.

Under the auspices of the foundation, *The Smithfield Review* was founded in 1997 with the purpose of helping to preserve often-neglected history of the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and adjacent states. Articles accepted for publication in the journal have focused—and continue to principally focus—on important people and events; archaeological

discoveries; and analyses of the social, political, economic, and architectural history of the region. Whenever possible and appropriate, these articles have incorporated letters, diaries, business papers and reports, speeches, and other primary documents that convey a direct sense of the past to the reader.

Beginning this year, the Smithfield-Preston Foundation and the Department of History at Virginia Tech have joined together to co-publish *The Smithfield Review* in cooperation with University Libraries at Virginia Tech. The library began putting the journal online in 2017 with volume 21, which can be accessed at scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/smithfieldreview/.

Additional information about Historic Smithfield© and its programs can be found at its new website, historicsmithfield.org. Inquiries about *The Smithfield Review* should be directed to Editor Clara B. Cox at history@vt.edu.

William G. Foster
Chairman of the Board
Smithfield-Preston Foundation

A Message from the Editor

Announcements

A number of changes relating to *The Smithfield Review* (*TSR*) were announced last year, and that trend continues with volume 22. *TSR* is pleased to announce that the Virginia Tech Department of History, under Chair Mark Barrow, has joined the Smithfield-Preston Foundation as co-publisher of the journal, beginning with this issue. The department has supported *The Smithfield Review* for more than two decades through funding from the Frank L. Curtis Fund and has provided the journal with a history advisor throughout the years.

The foundation and the history department are publishing *TSR* in cooperation with Virginia Tech's University Libraries, whose employees have begun putting the journal online at scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/smithfieldreview/. Volume 21 was the first to go global via cyberspace, and work is under way to add previous volumes, with the exception of work by those authors who do not want their articles included. This online presence continues with volume 22 and those that follow.

Changes have also come to the *TSR* Editorial Board. An exceptional historical researcher, Aaron D. Purcell, director of Special Collections in Tech's University Libraries, has joined the group, effective with volume 23, while David McKissack departs the board with publication of this volume. Additionally, Sharon Watkins has returned to the board after serving one year as co-editor during *TSR*'s major transition period.

Contents of Volume 22

For the first time and beginning with this issue of *TSR*, articles include brief biographical notes about each author. Other changes are under consideration for later volumes.

The content of the four major articles in volume 22 centers upon two overriding themes: World War I and the achievements of father and son Harvey and Alexander Black.

This year is the one-hundredth anniversary of the end of World War I. To mark this milestone, two authors look at different aspects of that war and the effects it generated. In the first article, "Southwest Virginians and the 'War to End Wars,'" author David McKissack commemorates the experiences of Southwest Virginians in the conflict, reports on views of the "Great War" held by regional citizens, and examines how military service affected Southwest Virginians. He also provides a list of Southwest Virginia soldiers who died in the conflict.

The second article, "'Living in a New World': World War One and the Decline of Military Tradition at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1916–1923" by Daniel C.

Newcomb, relates how the U.S. Army’s use of the Blacksburg college undermined the school’s military tradition, which had dated to the school’s beginning as a land-grant institution in 1872. Newcomb looks at the establishment of a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) unit and the Students Army Training Corps (SATC) on campus and how they affected VPI. The article explores the conflicts between military and academic education and training and between military leaders and college administrators.

Next is “Sketch of the Life of Dr. Harvey Black,” written in longhand by John S. Apperson and transcribed by Clara B. Cox. It begins the focus on the Black family and their achievements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dr. Apperson, who married Harvey Black’s daughter, worked with Dr. Black during the Civil War and on founding the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum. The biography is a tribute to the Blacksburg physician and his accomplishments in education, medicine, and even politics.

The final article, “Alexander Black and His World, 1857–1935, Part II: Alexander Black and the Bank of Blacksburg, 1877–1935,” completes the examination of Alex Black’s life by author Sharon B. Watkins. In this treatise, she focuses primarily on how Black founded the Bank of Blacksburg, his leadership as president of the bank, and its operations and advancements during its years under Black’s guidance. She also covers the second part of Black’s life, including an overview of his early business ventures, which included a general store, and his marriage and family life.

For the Brief Notes and Documents section, which follows the fourth article, “A Letter from Janie Preston Boulware Lamb” provides information on Lamb’s ideas for Smithfield and touches on some of her relatives.

The editor thanks these authors and extends appreciation to Barbara Corbett, graphic designer; the anonymous reviewers who provided feedback on the articles; Laura Wedin, a *TSR* author, for behind-the-scenes assistance and information; Sharon Watkins, board member, for editorial assistance; and Dan Thorp, board member and history advisor, for influencing authors to submit articles, both for this volume and the next.

Editor: Clara B. Cox (*history@vt.edu*)

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