



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 small, fragile settlements along the east coast of North America in the early 1600s initiated what some have called “The Great Migration” — the historic ever-westward march of humanity that eventually populated what became the United States. In the mid 1700s the frontier of this migration reached the Eastern Continental Divide at the southern end of the Allegheny Mountains, a difficult barrier to cross. Four of the five articles in this issue address specific segments of this mass movement and the complex context within which the movement occurred.

The first article tells the story of one of the very first families to settle on the west side of the Allegheny Ridge. “Adam Harman, German Pioneer on the New River” was written by Zola Troutman Noble, currently an associate professor of English at Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana. The frontier settlement of Draper’s Meadows (now Blacksburg) was on one of the earliest and best routes over the Allegheny ridge. One segment of this early route extended westward from the Fincastle region along the Catawba valley, then over the ridge through Draper’s Meadows to Adam Harman’s house on the New River.

In 1773 William Preston selected Draper’s Meadows as the site of his new home — Smithfield, just within the eastern boundary of the great Mississippi River basin. From Smithfield he launched massive real-estate ventures to the west. Our second article, “The Central Role of William Preston and Other Smithfield Region Leaders in the Opening up of Kentucky” is authored by Meredith Mason Brown, a descendant of William Preston. Brown is the author of *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America* (LSU Press, 2008). During his work on that book, Brown came to realize the importance of the Smithfield region leaders in the opening of western Virginia, including what is now Kentucky; portions of this article are based on his book. Brown, a lawyer and historian, is a graduate of Harvard College, where he majored in American history, and of Harvard Law

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School. After a career in New York City with an international law firm, he now lives in Stonington, Connecticut.

In the midst of the aforementioned westward migration, the Revolutionary War began, adding to the complexity of affairs in the entire Appalachian region. The third article, which conveys part of this complexity, is a continuation of Richard Osborn's article that began in the previous issue of *The Smithfield Review*. It covers the crucial, final year of the Revolution, a year in which the tides of war changed and the English were finally defeated at Yorktown. Preston's role in that conflict is the subject of "William Preston, Revolutionary, 1781" by Richard Osborn, currently the president of Pacific Union College in Angwin, California.

The article "The Diaries of Rosanna Croy Dawson" provides a brief departure from the great migration theme of the other articles. The diaries provide some insight into the nature of life in Blacksburg at the end of the nineteenth century, slightly more than a century after the events in the other articles of this issue. We find names of persons and places that formed the fabric of a small but growing town interwoven with an emerging land-grant college called Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College. With the benefit of hindsight, we can now recognize that within about one hundred years, the Draper's Meadows/Blacksburg community evolved from a frontier town in the geographical sense to a town on the frontier of higher education. The diaries are transcribed by Joann (Pack) Sutphin, a lifelong resident of Blacksburg and the great-great granddaughter of the author of the diaries. Joann is currently a co-director of Historic Smithfield Plantation (a branch of APVA Preservation Virginia).

Near Seven Mile Ford, Virginia, a few miles west of Marion, Virginia, on the main route to Tennessee and Kentucky, lies the historic Aspenvale Cemetery, a Registered National Historical Site and a Virginia Historic Landmark. It is the final resting place of an unusual number of people who were important in our nation's early history, including General William Campbell, the hero of the pivotal Battle of King's Mountain. The article provides a brief study of the events of that era, followed by an in-depth study of the cemetery, including brief biographies of the people buried there. "Aspenvale Cemetery and Its Place in the History of Southwest Virginia" was written by Jim Glanville, a retired chemistry professor at Virginia Tech, and John

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Preston, a retired city and university planner of Knoxville, Tennessee John Preston and his two brothers currently own the cemetery.

“A Brief Note” by Jim Glanville provides an update to an earlier article (volume 8) about an early Spanish intrusion into Southwest Virginia. The article was based on recent archaeological and archival research and has initiated an expanded understanding of southwestern Virginia history.

Again, we are indebted to Mary Holliman of Pocahontas Press, Peter Wallenstein of the Virginia Tech history department, our Smithfield Review Management Committee, our donors, and our many anonymous reviewers and copy editors. It is indeed a team effort for which we are grateful.

Hugh G. Campbell, Editor

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