
A Message from the Editor

Announcements

Unlike the previous two years, when several major changes were made in *The Smithfield Review*—most importantly, adding a co-publisher and putting the journal online—volume 23 includes only one significant change. In an effort to broaden our readers’ knowledge of the history of the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and surrounding states, the *TSR* Editorial Board has decided to feature a regional historical site and/or museum in each volume. This new content appears—and will continue to appear—on the inside back cover.

Less significant, but certainly more graphically appealing, the online version of *TSR*, beginning with the 2018 volume, includes several color photographs. That practice will continue whenever color images are available. For now, however, printed copies will appear in black and white.

TSR is also happy to report that another member has been added to the editorial board: Sherry Joines Wyatt, curator of the Montgomery Museum of Art and History in Christiansburg, Virginia. Wyatt is a past contributor to *The Smithfield Review*, having co-authored an article on early roads in Montgomery County for volume 21 (2017).

Contents of Volume 23

The articles that follow cover a wide range of topics, from the Prestons of Smithfield to western Virginia Civil War newspapers and from the Botetourt County (Virginia) Resolutions of the Revolutionary era to the Montgomery County (Virginia) poorhouse in pre-Civil War times. The information uncovered by the authors of these articles expands the body of knowledge in each of these areas.

The first article, “‘The original purchase was blood, and mine shall seal the surrender’: The Importance of Place in Botetourt County’s Resolutions, 1775,” relates the experiences of Botetourt County settlers as they moved into and settled the frontier region. Author/historian Sarah E. McCartney points out how those experiences affected the way these pioneers crafted the county’s resolutions that supported and instructed their delegates to the Second Virginia Convention. McCartney also follows clues uncovered in her research to identify at least some of the heretofore anonymous writers of the resolutions.

In the next article, “The War in Words: Union and Confederate Civil War Military Camp Newspapers in Western Virginia,” author Stewart Plein describes two Civil War newspapers—one produced by Rebels, the other by Yankees—from the size to the contents of each newspaper. She relates information these “rarely examined” soldier-produced publications add to knowledge of the 1862 Battle

of Charleston, Virginia (West Virginia the following year) and emphasizes that these publications are part of the documentary evidence of the struggle of western Virginia counties to create the new state of West Virginia.

Few people probably know that some of the poor amongst the nineteenth-century population of Montgomery County, Virginia, were aided by placing them in a poorhouse, much less that the county had such a facility. In the third article, “Life on Poorhouse Knob: Poor-relief in Montgomery County, Virginia, 1830–1860,” author Jennifer A. Gallagher describes the types of poor-relief provided by the county before the Civil War and how the poor were treated and viewed. She also compares local poor-aid and treatment of the poor with that in other parts of the country, notably the rural South and urban North.

The fourth article is the anxiously awaited continuation of Laura Jones Wedin’s work on the historically prominent Preston family: “A Summary of Nineteenth-Century Smithfield, Part 2: The Early War Years, 1861–1862.” In it, Wedin provides new insights into the lives of the three sons of Gov. James Patton Preston: William Ballard, Robert Taylor, and James Francis Preston, who inherited the adjoining Smithfield, Solitude, and White Thorn properties, respectively, upon their father’s death. Additionally and, perhaps, most importantly, she reports new findings she uncovered about the brothers’ enslaved communities and the efforts of Ballard Preston to get a relative reinstated to a position of military leadership.

A University of Virginia Press review/synopsis of Daniel B. Thorp’s book, *Facing Freedom*, follows the last article. In his book, Thorp, who is the history advisor for *The Smithfield Review* and a member of its editorial board, relates the experiences of African Americans in Montgomery County from the Civil War to the early twentieth century.

The editor extends appreciation to these authors and particularly thanks Barbara Corbett, graphic designer; the anonymous reviewers who provided feedback on articles; Sharon B. Watkins of the editorial board for editorial assistance; Daniel B. Thorp of the editorial board for influencing prospective authors to submit manuscripts; Mark Barrow, chair of the Department of History, Virginia Tech, for promoting *TSR* among the department’s faculty and students; and the three publishers for making *TSR* possible in both printed and electronic formats.

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See volumes 21 and 22 of *The Smithfield Review* online at [//scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/smithfieldreview/](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/smithfieldreview/).