
Family of James Patton Preston, His Children, and Their Children

Parents: William Preston (1729–1783) m. Susanna Smith (1740–1823) in 1760

James Patton Preston (1774–1843) m. Ann (Nancy) Barraud Taylor (1778–1861) in 1801

Children:

1. Sarah Barraud Preston (1804–1804)
2. **William Ballard Preston** (1805–1862) m. Lucinda (Lucy) Staples Redd (1819–1891) in 1839
 1. Waller Redd Preston (1841–1872) m. Harriett Jane Milling Means (1846–1869) in 1866
 2. Ann Taylor Preston (1843–1868) m. Walter Coles (1839–1892) in 1864
 3. James Patton Preston (1845–1920)
 4. Lucy Redd Preston (1848–1928) m. William Radford Beale (1839–1917) in 1866
 5. Jane Grace Preston (1849–1930) m. Aubin Lee Boulware (1843–1897) in 1878
 6. Keziah Preston (1853–1861)
3. **Robert Taylor Preston** (1809–1880) m. Mary Hart (1810–1881) in 1833
 1. Virginia Ann Emily Preston (1834–1898) m. Robert Stark Means (1833–1874) in 1856
 2. Benjamin Hart Preston (1836–1851)
 3. James Patton Preston (1838–1901)
4. **James Francis Preston** (1813–1862) m. Sarah Ann Caperton (1826–1908) in 1855
 1. Hugh Caperton Preston (1856–1935) m. Caroline [Cary] Marx Baldwin (1858–1935) in 1878
 2. William Ballard Preston (1858–1901) m. Elizabeth Blackford Scott (1864–1920) in 1888
 3. James Francis Preston (1860–1862)
5. Virginia Ann Preston (1816–1833)
6. Susan Edmonia Preston (1818–1823)
7. Catharine Jane Preston (1821–1852) m. George Gilmer (1810–1875) in 1845
 1. James Preston Gilmer (1851–1852)
8. Susan Preston (1824–1835)

A Summary of Nineteenth-Century Smithfield, Part 2: The Early War Years, 1861–1862

Laura Jones Wedin

Introduction

In the mid-eighteenth century, Col. William Preston (1729–1783) established the plantation of Smithfield, which he named in honor of his wife, Susanna Smith (1740–1823). Much has been written of the prominent, wealthy colonel and his wife, but no one written work has summarized his descendants through the death of the last Preston to live on the historic estate. This multi-part article provides a chronology of events; looks at the contributions of the Preston family to Blacksburg, the commonwealth, and the nation; and recounts the lives of the people who carried Smithfield from the new United States through the Civil War and Reconstruction and into the twentieth century.

Part I of the article, published in volume 18 of *The Smithfield Review*,¹ presented an antebellum overview of the properties of Smithfield Plantation, Solitude, and White Thorn, homes belonging to each of the three sons of Virginia Governor James Patton Preston (1774–1843), son of the colonel and his wife. Part II, which follows, examines the Preston family from the early years of the Civil War through the death of William Ballard Preston, a man who played important and historic roles throughout his adult life.

The Sons, Their Families, and Their Plantations

At the outset of the Civil War in the spring of 1861, William Ballard Preston, Robert Taylor Preston, and James Francis Preston operated three plantations west of the town of Blacksburg, Virginia. The three properties had originally been a single plantation, Smithfield, begun by their grandfather, Col. William Preston, and maintained by their father, James Patton Preston. Following their father's death in 1843, Smithfield was divided among his heirs, and his three sons settled on three plantations – Smithfield, Solitude, and White Thorn – adjacent to one another. By 1861, the three plantations were at their pinnacle of success. The land was well suited for cattle grazing and raising corn and wheat. A macadamized road, the Southwest Turnpike, eased travel to and within the area, and construction of the Virginia &

Tennessee Railroad in the early to mid-1850s had linked the area's nearest depot, located near Christiansburg, Virginia, and fewer than ten miles from Blacksburg, to the eastern part of the state. Goods, services, mail, and people could then move easily into and out of the area. The telegraph that soon followed enhanced communication beyond the U.S. mail and letters exchanged with families and friends.²

The governor's eldest son, William Ballard Preston (1805–1862), known as Ballard, lived at the core estate, Smithfield. A well-known lawyer and former U.S. congressman, he briefly served as secretary of the navy under President Zachary Taylor. He and his wife, Lucinda Staples Redd (1819–1891), shared the old Tidewater-style manor house with Ballard's widowed mother, Ann Barraud Taylor Preston (1778–1861). In 1861, their family included sons Waller, age twenty, and James Patton, called Patton or sometimes Pat, age fifteen, and daughters Ann, known as Nannie, eighteen; Lucy, thirteen; and Jane, eleven. Their youngest daughter, Keziah, had died at the age of eight in January of that year.



Smithfield manor house, c. 1900 (from the collection of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Dr. Harvey Black Chapter, Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech)

Over the years, the governor's second son, Robert Taylor Preston (1809–1880), and his wife, Mary Hart (1810–1881), had enlarged and faced an original 1801 log structure at Solitude to give it the look of a gracious plantation home. Their son, James, listed in the 1860 census as a student, lived with them, along with Patrick Bohan, their gardener from Ireland. Their daughter, Virginia (1834–1898), had married Robert Stark Means (1833–1874) of South Carolina in 1856. They were living in Fairfield, South Carolina, near his parents and had given Robert and Mary their first grandchildren, Robert, four; Sallie, fifteen months; and Mary, born in February 1861.³

Two Cousins, One Name

They were first cousins born seven years apart, and both were named James Patton Preston. Historically, they have been confused in academic, military, and death records.

Both were named for their grandfather, Gov. James Patton Preston, who was named for his mother's uncle, James Patton. Neither cousin married, and both served in the same company in the Confederate States Army. Both are buried in unmarked graves in the Preston cemetery near Smithfield.

James Patton Preston (1838–1901) – son of Robert Taylor and Mary Hart Preston. Known as James. Attended University of Virginia. Served in E Company (Montgomery Highlanders), 4th Virginia Infantry April–August 1861. Was to be transferred to 28th Infantry led by his father but went home instead. After two years, re-enlisted as a private on September 1, 1863, in G Company, 14th Virginia Cavalry, along with younger cousin, Patton; present at surrender at Appomattox in April 1865. Lived with parents at Solitude until their deaths in 1880 and 1881. Applied for Home for Disabled Ex-Confederate Soldiers in 1886 but was later dropped. Listed in 1900 census as a boarder with John H. Kipps, hotelkeeper, in Montgomery County. Died in 1901 at age sixty-three.

James Patton Preston (1845–1920) – son of William Ballard and Lucinda Preston. Known as “Pat” or “Patton” and usually signed his name “J. Patton Preston.” Educated at Virginia Military Institute. Initially enlisted as a private in G Company, 14th Virginia Cavalry on September 1, 1863, the unit of his older brother, Waller; recommended for promotion to sergeant in December 1864; present at surrender at Appomattox in April 1865. Living at Smithfield with mother in 1870 and 1880 censuses. Living in Christiansburg in 1900. Moved to Roanoke in May 1908, and applied for Virginia Confederate veteran's pension in July 1909. Received \$36 payment in 1910. Family history has him living in a Blacksburg hotel later in life. Died in 1920 at age seventy-five.

Laura Jones Wedin

James Francis Preston (1813–1862), the youngest of the governor’s sons and the last to be settled, lived with his family at White Thorn, a large brick Italian villa antebellum-style home he had built in 1856–1857. An attorney as well as a farmer, James was forty-two when he married Sarah Ann Caperton (1826–1908), age twenty-nine, in 1855. The bride was the youngest daughter of Hugh Caperton (1781–1847), a slave owner and U.S. congressman from Union, Virginia (later West Virginia), and Jane Erskine (1786–1831). When Sarah was five, her mother died, and she had close relationships with her siblings, especially her older brother, William Gaston Caperton (1815–1852).⁴ Sarah was educated at the Convent of the Visitation, Georgetown, D.C., and at a progressive Christian women’s school, Belmont Academy, at Belmont Plantation in Loudoun County, Virginia.⁵

Her time at the well-appointed Belmont estate may have contributed to her cultivated tastes since White Thorn, her home with James Preston, was beautifully furnished and soon became known for its lovely grounds and garden. By 1861, Sarah and James had three young sons: Hugh, five; William, three; and Jimmie, one. Despite a later-in-life start of home and family, the couple must have felt gratified at establishing a beautiful home.⁶

The Preston brothers’ success was due in large part to the labor of enslaved people—most of them had been inherited from Governor



White Thorn, 1898 (Special Collections, Virginia Tech)

Preston—on their properties. By 1860, Robert had thirty-three slaves at Solitude, and James, twenty-two at White Thorn. With fifty slaves at Smithfield, Ballard was the third largest slave owner in Montgomery County. His largest slave holdings and wealth, however, were largely based at his Horsepasture Plantation in Henry County, Virginia, where he owned more than one hundred sixty African Americans who were under the supervision of three different overseers.⁷

Together, the three Preston homes created their own village of sorts, interlinked by roads and probably sharing resources, with an interconnected network of enslaved families. Some enslaved couples were fortunate to live at the same home. For others, the husband worked at one home and the wife lived and worked at another. Some of the enslaved house servants may have lived in the Preston homes, but those who worked around the homes and in the fields may have been housed in nearby cabins in a slave-quarters community based at each of the brothers' farms.⁸

Owners of a larger number of slaves often depended on overseers to manage their labor force, particularly for agricultural production on the plantation. In the 1860 census, James Petty (Pettit in other sources), age thirty-four, was listed as the overseer of Smithfield and lived near the manor house with his wife and four children. William Linkous, listed as Smithfield's "manager" in the 1850 census, apparently moved later to Henry County to manage Ballard's land and slaves at that location.⁹ Anderson Ledgerwood (1823–1892), overseer for White Thorn, may have lived with his family in a smaller home adjacent to the main house. It appears that Robert Preston may have managed much of his farm operations himself with the help of an enslaved "head man."¹⁰

The Preston brothers were leaders in the community. Understanding that the education of young people in the area was key to growth and prosperity, Ballard had been instrumental in founding the Olin and Preston Institute, a Methodist school for boys in Blacksburg, and was honored with the second part of the institute's name. Ballard and Robert were trustees of the new school, and James joined them on the board in 1854. Ballard likely had served as president of the board in the early years of the school. All three were involved with the contract to construct a three-story building for the school in 1855. This structure would later become the foundation building for the new land-grant school, Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (today's Virginia Tech), which succeeded Preston and Olin Institute (the second name of the Olin and Preston Institute).¹¹

War Begins; Prestons Answer the Call to Duty

Abraham Lincoln was elected president on November 6, 1860, and by the time he took office in early 1861, the unraveling of the United States was already under way as Southern state after state left the Union. With the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the War Between the States began. Ballard Preston, a member of the Virginia Convention, had reluctantly proposed the resolution that separated Virginia from the Union that same month. After hostilities started, Virginia seceded and joined the Confederacy. As local military units were hastily assembled, some from existing militia groups and others formed as new units, many of the able men of Montgomery County volunteered for Confederate service, leaving their wives, families, and communities behind.¹²

The entire spring was an anxious one for the Preston families since the men of Smithfield, Solitude, and White Thorn also answered the call to duty. Ballard, who was experienced in government at both state and federal levels, served with the new Provisional Confederate Congress. James was first assigned to command the 75th Virginia State Militia of Montgomery County and then, as units were organized, was named a colonel and put in command of the 4th Virginia Infantry. Three of the local units or companies—the Guards, the Wise Fencibles (Company G), and the Montgomery Highlanders (Company E)—would come under James Preston’s 4th Virginia Infantry, which would eventually become part of the famed Stonewall Brigade. Gen. Robert E. Lee, named in 1862 to head the Confederate troops, later appointed Robert to the rank of colonel and regimental commander of the 28th Virginia Infantry. It was composed of companies from Botetourt, Craig, Bedford, and Roanoke counties.¹³

The eligible two grandsons of Governor Preston also answered the call. Ballard’s son, Waller (1841–1872), having completed a year at the University of Virginia, was mustered into service on April 25, 1861, as a private in Capt. Robert C. Trigg’s company, the Montgomery Fencibles (later Company G), 4th Virginia Infantry. Ballard’s other son, Pat, born in 1845, was too young to enlist.¹⁴ Robert’s son, James, born in 1838, enlisted on April 18 and became a private in Capt. Charles Ronald’s company, the Montgomery Highlanders, which became Company E, 4th Virginia Infantry.¹⁵

By late April 1861, the Montgomery County companies had arrived at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia (West Virginia in 1863). In May, Virginia authorities stationed troops at Manassas Junction (Tudor Hall Post Office), Virginia, and established a supply depot and place of rendezvous for Confederate troops. General Lee determined that the area of Bull Run Creek, near Manassas Junction, Virginia, was the best place to focus a defensive line.¹⁶

Associated Family and Friends of the Prestons

George Henry Caperton (1823–1895) – youngest brother of Sarah Ann Caperton Preston, physician in Lynchburg area.

Mary Eliza Henderson Caperton (1836–1900) – sister-in-law to Sarah Ann Caperton Preston, married to George Henry Caperton.

Waller Redd Staples (1826–1897) – lawyer (practiced with Ballard Preston); slave owner; first cousin to Ballard Preston’s wife, Lucinda Staples Redd. Elected to First and Second Confederate Congress, later served in C.S.A. House of Representatives until end of the war. Involved with revising Virginia laws during Reconstruction. Served on board of visitors of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (today’s Virginia Tech) in 1886.

John Echols (1823–1896) – brother-in-law of Sarah Ann Caperton Preston. Married to Mary Jane Caperton (1822–1874), sister of Allen T. Caperton. Commanded 27th Virginia, achieving rank of brigadier general.

Allen T. Caperton (1810–1878) – older brother of Sarah Ann Caperton Preston. Married to John Echols’ sister, Harriette (1813–1856). Member of Virginia Secession Convention, senator in Confederate States Congress.

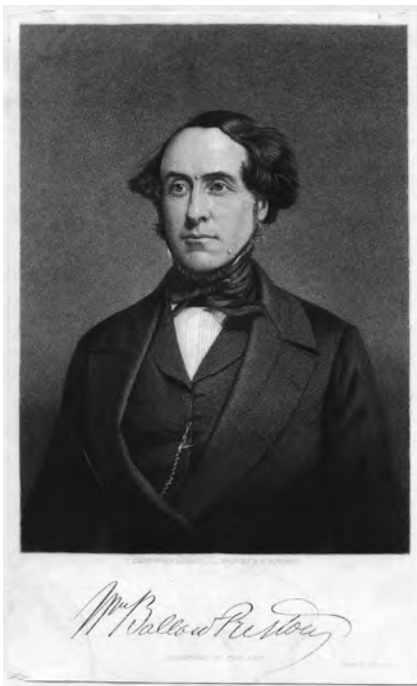
Charles B. Gardner (1813–1875) – friend and business associate of James F. Preston, lived in Christiansburg.

Harvey Black (1827–1888) – Blacksburg physician, grandson of John Black and nephew of William Black, who founded Blacksburg in 1798. Served as surgeon with 4th Virginia until end of war. His son Alex later built the Alexander Black House (now a Blacksburg museum).

Col. James Preston’s 4th Virginia Infantry garrisoned at the Camp Heritage Fairgrounds near Richmond, Virginia. Fifteen years earlier, James had raised a company of grenadiers at his own expense and had served from 1847 to 1848 in Mexico during the Mexican War as captain of the 1st Virginia Volunteers. Thus, he understood more clearly than the newly minted recruits serving under him that the risks of war were becoming more apparent by the day. An attorney, he astutely wrote his will on May 1, 1861, describing himself as “being of sound mind and body, but being aware of the uncertainty of danger of the service I am now in.” He named as executor his good friend, Charles B. Gardner (1813–1875), a businessman who lived in Christiansburg with his wife and six children. James’s concerns were

warranted. On May 8, the Confederacy moved its capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond when Southern leaders thought their capital should be nearer the upper Southern states, where heavy fighting might occur. Consequently, the one hundred miles between Richmond and Washington became the main battle area of the war.¹⁷

On May 2, 1861, Ballard Preston returned to Smithfield after spending much of the spring in Richmond deliberating the future of the commonwealth as a member of the Virginia Convention. In the early 1830s, as a young representative in the Virginia General Assembly and a member of the Whig party, he had championed the idea of the gradual emancipation of slaves. By 1840, however, he had become a slave owner like his father and grandfather before him. Through his marriage to Lucinda, he had inherited the Henry County property and its numerous slaves. Thus, his wealth had become largely dependent on the enslaved laborers who worked his two plantations, probably leading to an alteration of his attitude toward the institution. Though he went to the Virginia Convention as a moderate and conditional Unionist, he finally proposed, on April 16, 1861, the Ordinance of Secession, legislation through which Virginia joined seven other slave-owning states in forming the Confederate States of America. Ballard must have known that Virginia, as a border state, would become a battleground.¹⁸ (More details of this action by Ballard Preston can be found in Part 1 of this article.)



William Ballard Preston, c. 1847
(engraving from original 1849
daguerreotype by Matthew Brady)

In a May 4 letter to his Henry County farm manager, William Linkous, Ballard described the urgency and pressing needs of the crisis and his commitment to what was ahead as he directed Linkous¹⁹ to increase crop production:

The demand for bread stuffs and provisions will be great during this Summer and if the war is carried on during the next year the demand will be very great. I therefore send John over to you to say that I want you at once to put in at all the places increased crops of corn, potatoes, vegetables beans peas & everything that men require for food, and try by all means to have a little to spare for our country and for its defenders. In that way we can give as good help to the war as any other [underlining in original letter].²⁰

On the same day, James wrote to his wife's younger brother, George Henry Caperton (1828–1895), who was a physician in the Lynchburg area, inviting Henry's family to stay with the Prestons at White Thorn, noting that Henry's wife and children "would be a great comfort to Sarah + perhaps not disagreeable to your wife."²¹ Henry may have felt that his family would be safer at the home of his older sister in the southwestern part of the state than at Ivy Ledge, their home near Lynchburg. By May 4, his wife, Mary Eliza Henderson Caperton (1836–1900), had arrived to stay at White Thorn with their three children—Eliza, Allen, and Henry—and remained at least until the summer of 1862, when she returned to Ivy Ledge.²² Even though the children were similar in age to Sarah's boys, Sarah herself was ten years older than her sister-in-law and may have assumed a protective, older sister role.

Mary Eliza's letters to her husband, written not long after her move, candidly reveal an intimate view of activity at the associated properties of Smithfield in the first months of the war and provide a glimpse of the wartime life of those left behind. The letters convey an urgency of activity, anxiety, and purpose. "We are all very well & Sarah Ann & her friends are so kind as they can be," she wrote on May 4, adding, "It is a comfort to [me to] be with her." She also noted that James had written Sarah that he was not well and had "almost suffocated with the heat." In that letter to Sarah, James had reiterated his advice that Henry not volunteer for the military yet and stated his hope that Mary Eliza and the children would continue to stay at White Thorn.²³

In a letter written to Henry on May 6, 1861, Mary Eliza described the confusion regarding the initial aspects of the war. Ballard had visited White Thorn the morning before and had noted his hope that peace would be proclaimed if the Federal army made no attacks on Harper's Ferry within the next week. He said the cavalry would not be called into service; that

only one company in Richmond had been ordered; and that 443 doctors had offered their services as surgeons in the army when only 50 were needed, an indication that the military did not anticipate a drawn-out conflict. Leadership for the Confederate forces was being selected, the letter continued, and

Col. [James] Preston was elected Col. in the army [4th Virginia] without one dissenting [sic] voice. . . . S. A. [Sarah Ann] send[s] her best love and says she is very anxious for you should get an appointment in the army. She seems very ambitious just now and seems gratified at Col P[reston's] promotion. I told her yesterday after Mr. P [Ballard Preston] left that I knew it was not patriotic in me to say so, but that I felt pleased at the idea of the cavetry [sic] not being called into service. She seemed quite shocked and begged [sic] I would not say so before her mother [Ann Preston, James's mother].²⁴

Sarah had chided Mary Eliza for verbalizing unpatriotic thoughts, a good example of the stance of elite Confederate women described in the essay "War Comes Home" by Lisa Tendrich Frank. According to Frank, the women were often "the best recruiting officers" because they refused "to tolerate, or admit to their society any young man who refuses to enlist." A woman derived her status from her husband; that Sarah was "gratified" at her husband's appointment as a colonel could well have reflected the status and respect accorded her as a colonel's wife.²⁵

Ballard had been home barely a week before receiving the call to return to Richmond, a two-day journey by horse/wagon and train. One can image the heavy thoughts weighing on Ballard's mind during his uncomfortable journey, considering his concern for Virginia and for his properties. As an absentee owner, he was especially concerned about his Horsepasture Plantation in Henry County, which grew profitable tobacco crops through the efforts of the slaves there.²⁶

Death Comes to Smithfield

In the early spring of 1861, the health of Ann Preston, often known as Nancy, mother to Ballard, James, and Robert, began to decline. In early May, Ballard had written to a friend, "My old and venerable mother is better today but still in bed."²⁷ On May 26, called to sit with her mother-in-law, Sarah left her sons in the care of Mary Eliza and enslaved caregivers, with the possible exception of one-year-old Jimmie, who most likely went with her.

As the elderly Preston woman's health began failing rapidly and she no longer recognized Sarah Ann, the family realized that she would not be spared many more days. James considered requesting leave to go home, but

Ballard wrote him to say it would all be over before he could get there. On June 8, at the age of eighty-three, Ann Barraud Taylor Preston, widow of Gov. James Patton Preston, died. Mary Eliza described her funeral in a letter dated two days later:

The dear old lady died as she had lived calmly and quietly. . . . She was buried yesterday and I never witnessed such an imposing funeral. It was estimated that between 3 & 400 persons assembled at Smithfield. Mr. [Theodore M.] Carson the Methodist minister preached a short but eloquent sermon in the parlor [or drawing room of Smithfield]. Mr. [Ballard] Preston requested that we all follow the herse [sic] on foot to the grave. . . . After the Episcopal burial service was read and the coffin lowered, the servants assembled around the grave and sang a beautiful hymn²⁸

Ann was interred in the same grave as her husband, a family tradition begun by the governor's mother, Susanna Preston, when she stipulated in her will that she be "buried in grave with the remains of my beloved husband," Col. William Preston. Upon her death in 1823, her wishes were followed.²⁹

Slave Revolts Feared on the Homefront

With the start of the war, many slave owners became concerned about the behavior of their slaves. In Ballard's May 4 letter to William Linkous, he expressed the paternalistic view typical of slave owners:

All over Virginia the Negroes are quiet & much alarmed at the state of things. They are afraid & docile & obedient than ever known and only want to be strictly managed, kept at home, and at work. I am sure proper steps are taken in Henry [County] for patrols [sic] & keep my Negroes at home at all the places both day & night and keep others away.³⁰

However, in a May 9 letter, Mary Eliza described an "uneasiness" about possible unrest among slaves in Montgomery County, noting

that old Uncle Davy who is the husband of one of S. A. [']s women, had made a speech to his brethren in Blacksburg and said "that Lincoln was a second Christ and that all that the white people said about Lincoln was a lie from beginning to end." Mrs. [Mary] Preston told me that she would send for him [Uncle Davy] and ask him if he had made this speech and if so he should never come on her place again although he is the father of their head man, in whom the Gen. [Robert Preston]

has the greatest confidence—however you must not let this make you anxious, for I believe with Mr. Ballard Preston that we are as safe here as we could be any where in the U.S.³¹

When Mary Eliza wrote her husband five days later, concern about the potential for a slave rebellion had heightened, as had the Union sentiment of residents living west of Blacksburg:

He [Dr. Otey] and Gen [Robert] Preston seemed much concerned about the Union feeling in the county. There is a settlement [Prices Fork] about a mile and a half from here composed of poor people who are very rampant just now. The Prices, who live upon Col. [James] Preston's bounty[,] have gone over to the enemy. Dr. Otey says that he has [N]egro evidence that they are inciting the slaves to rebellion [sic].

In the interval between her two letters, Mary Eliza had begun to hear reports of a slave insurrection hatched by Enos Price, a white “stone cutter” living in Prices Fork. Price allegedly met with a slave belonging to Dr. James Otey, also a neighbor of the Prestons, to plan coordinated attacks in which slaves on several of the largest plantations in the area – including those of the Prestons – would “put their masters out of the way.” Saturday, May 18, was the date Price selected for the uprising, but his co-conspirator told Dr. Otey, and two days before the attacks were to begin, Price was arrested and jailed in Christiansburg. Word of his plans quickly appeared in the local newspaper, and with tensions already running high, a spring storm caused even more anxiety at White Thorn.³²

In late May, several days after the Price affair, a severe thunderstorm passed through the area in the middle of the night. According to a May 27 letter written by Mary Eliza, “a severe clap of thunder and a vivid flash of lightning” set fire to a nearby structure, causing her to fear that “the Prices were about to attack us.” It was eventually discovered that the barn was on fire, but the noise of the storm made the family at Smithfield fear that a slave revolt was underway. According to Mary Eliza,

The consternation at Smithfield they say was truly awful. The storm was not so bad there and they did not think of the lightning. The servants gave the alarm and Mr. [Ballard] Preston jumped up, called for his pistol and knife and started off. . . . 4 of the home guard from Blacksburg came riding up with guns, but Mr. Legerwood told them they could put down their horses and guns and come help fight the fire. . . . Mr. Preston said he would send Dr. Otey up to remain during

the night, which he did after the fire was extinguished. Mr. P. returned home to try and keep S. A. quiet until daylight. Before he left he sent her word we were all safe.³³

Adding to the tension that month were concerns about the upcoming referendum in which Virginia voters were to endorse or reject the convention's call for Virginia to secede from the Union. Voting was scheduled for May 23, and in the run-up to the referendum, the Prestons worried that their neighbors in Prices Fork might vote against secession. According to Mary Eliza,

Gen. Preston and Dr. Otey have been trying for some time to get their men [the troublesome residents of Prices Fork] to volunteer [sic], but they will not. . . . [Gen. Preston] says we are in the midst of a revolution and if he is in the county Thursday week and these men dare to oppose the actions of the convention that there will be blood spilled in Montgomery. . . . They will make an effort to have the young men of the settlement drafted.³⁴

Even though no actual military draft existed at the time, Robert Preston, Otey, and other elite leaders of the area planned to force the men to volunteer as if there were.

The Prestons Continue Service to the Confederacy

In May 1861, Robert Taylor Preston was appointed colonel of the 28th Virginia Regiment for duty in Lynchburg. By 1846, some fifteen years earlier, Robert had attained the rank of colonel of the militia. Previous service in the Mexican War had shaped and connected Robert, James, and several men from the Blacksburg area, including Dr. Harvey Black (1827–1888), grandson of John Black and nephew of William Black, who had founded Blacksburg in 1898; John had been among the first town trustees. In 1846, nineteen-year-old Harvey had enlisted in James Preston's 1st Virginia Volunteer Regiment and had served through 1847. He had then attended medical school at the University of Virginia and started a medical practice in Blacksburg in 1852. Since at least 1855, all three Preston brothers had utilized his medical services for their families and enslaved communities. Dr. Black volunteered early and on May 4 was appointed surgeon for James Preston's 4th Virginia.

While Robert was receiving an appointment as a colonel, James was encamped in Richmond with his troops. He had bravely attempted to keep pace with a schedule of four drill exercises and a dress parade each day. But by the time the companies of the 4th Virginia departed on May 10 for duty

at Harper's Ferry, he had become so unwell that he was forced to remain behind in Richmond for most of the month. In his absence, Lt. Col. Lewis T. Moore commanded the 4th.³⁵

Mary Eliza, fearing that a battle was eminent, wrote her husband on May 20 that everyone seemed

to concur that there will be a bloody battle somewhere in Virginia within the next ten days. Col. [James] Preston wrote S. Ann that he hoped to leave Richmond on last Friday—he has been very sick.³⁶

In late May, Robert's 28th Virginia was ordered to proceed to Manassas Junction. The troops boarded trains in Lynchburg and rolled into Manassas Junction the evening of May 28, then marched to Camp Pickens, a few miles from town.³⁷ On that same day, apparently with no appointment forthcoming, Henry Caperton decided to enlist for one year as a private in Company G (Radford's Rangers) in the 30th Virginia Volunteer Mounted Infantry (later to be re-designated as 2nd Virginia Cavalry) at Forest Depot. He was mustered into service at Camp Davis Fairgrounds near Lynchburg.³⁸ By May 29, he had been offered a lieutenantcy, which his wife hoped he would accept: "I think for your children's sake you should be willing to accept a promotion."³⁹

By the end of May, James had recovered from his illness but still was not on active duty. He had written to his wife, according to a letter Mary Eliza wrote to Henry, that Captain Trigg's company (Montgomery Fencibles, which later became Company G, 4th Virginia Infantry, C.S.A.) had been quartered on the Maryland Heights without tents, exposed for fifteen hours to a hard storm. James had also noted, according to Mary Eliza's letter, that Ballard's son, Waller, part of Company G,

had stripped the bark from a large chestnut tree and made himself quite comfortable. The Col. [James] thought it a good idea and I hope you will profit by the information. Col. Preston says Waller takes care of no one and he thinks he has a[s] good a chance for returning home as any one in the crowd.⁴⁰

By the summer of 1861, the Preston men were spread across various regiments that were still struggling to form officially. Robert Preston led the 28th Virginia Infantry, Fifth Brigade, Army of the Potomac, commanded by Brig. Gen. G. T. Beauregard. At the end of June, Robert's son, James, who had begun his service in the 4th Virginia Infantry, had transferred to his father's unit, the 28th Virginia.⁴¹ On June 19, Henry Caperton was appointed

regimental quartermaster sergeant of the Radford Rangers, whom he had joined as a volunteer in May. On July 20, the Radford Rangers were assigned to Col. R. C. W. Radford's Squadron Cavalry, 30th Virginia Cavalry (later 2nd Virginia Cavalry), which, in turn, became part of the First Brigade of the Army of the Potomac, led by Brig. Gen. Milledge L. Bonham.⁴²

In the Army of the Shenandoah, commanded by Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, James was colonel of the 4th Virginia, First Brigade, which was led by Brig. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. Waller was part of Company G of the 4th, although he had been listed as sick since his enlistment in April 1861 in Martinsburg, Virginia (later West Virginia). Sarah Ann's brother-in-law, John Echols, commanded the 27th Virginia, also part of the First Brigade.⁴³

Despite frequent absences due to illness, James Preston apparently had the respect of his men. One of the soldiers of the 4th Virginia Regiment, Ted Barclay, of Company I (Liberty Hall Volunteers), described the regiment's leadership in early July:

We have the best captain [J. J. White] and Co[lonel, James Preston], both are so kind that I do not know which is the kindest, but I suppose the captain. Col. Preston comes to our camp almost daily inquiring about our health, eating, etc.⁴⁴

Prestons Fight in First Manassas (Bull Run)

Jackson's First Brigade held against Union forces on July 21 in the Battle of First Manassas or First Bull Run. A week later, James wrote to Sarah, describing his experience in the battle.

[T]he balls begun [sic] to pass very near us[.] The first shell [shell] that [illegible] . . . in our line burst in the south of Capt. White's (of Lexington) company killing instantly one man and wounding mortally 2 others + one who may recover[.] I was standing so near that the blood was thrown on my pantaloons and [Maj.] Kent's jacket as man + mire spattered. Soon another shell burst in Edmondson[']s company killing and wounding I think 7 officers. . . . But I will not go on with these fearful details + will only say that we lost in killed + wounded 15 or 16 men in this position[.] I consider this the strongest proof of courage that men can give __ to lay [sic] for two hours + be shot at without being able to return the fire or see the enemy__[.] The 4th Regiment did it.⁴⁵

The legendary "rebel yell" was said to have originated when General Jackson continued to press his attacks, telling soldiers of the 4th Virginia Infantry: "Reserve your fire until they come within fifty yards! Then fire

and give them the bayonet! And when you charge, yell like furies!”⁴⁶ With only about twenty soldiers, a fraction of the regiment, and with Col. James Preston at the head, these men led the pursing column.⁴⁷ According to James,

My line became much disordered in crossing the fence + in the thicket + I attempted to form it again but many of the men could not be restrained I however succeeded in getting a portion of them in line_ + joined a part of Col Harper’s [5th Virginia] regiment which was passing at the moment + we together with a party of some Georgia troops [7th Georgia Regiment] formed a line + charged after a battery of guns + took them. . . . I got possion [sic] of a [Y]ankie horse + rode him down to the guns + was the first person at them. I do not claim that I took the Guns but I do that I was first at them + by my order a flag was placed on them. One of my men took the flag of the battery with it. I now have it in my possession. It is called Sherman’s battery + there will be much controversy about it. The flag is marked in embroidery “8 Regt N.Y.S.A” (8th New York Regiment).

The capture of the battery + the charge is in my opinion nothing compared to the two hours they lay upon the ground. I am sure of one thing[,] that the charge made by the 4th Regt[,] the 27th Regt [under Col. Echols,] Col Cummings + Col Allan who moved about the same time + all of Jackson’s brigade determined the fate of the day[;] I may all most [almost] say charged at Johnston’s Division_ of which Jackson’s Brigade was a part did most of the hard fighting⁴⁸

While some modern-day accounts of the 4th’s involvement include references that Col. James Preston “fell wounded,” he himself wrote: “Whilst passing through the cedars a ball passed through the cuff of my right coat sleeve near enough to leave a blue mark on the skin for a time but did not injure me.”⁴⁹

For its perseverance in battle, the First Brigade and its leader earned the name “Stonewall Brigade.” The First Battle of Bull Run was considered an important Confederate victory, strategically as well as emotionally. Three Preston men—James; Robert; and Robert’s son, James—had been involved in the battle, but the elder James most directly so.⁵⁰

The Prestons Face Health and Other Problems

The summer of 1861 brought a number of serious health issues to the Preston family and their households. At White Thorn, a male slave named Ballard, who served in a critical role as a house servant, died.⁵¹ On

August 21, James Francis asked his friend, Charles Gardner, for assistance in replacing the servant, writing:

You doubtless have heard of the death of my servant Ballard. It leaves Mrs. [Sarah] Preston in great want of a house servant + ask the favour of you to inquire + look round for one for her. I want a steady sober man + good servant who know[s] something about gardening if possible + I want a reliable man which can be managed by a lady. If you can hire one of this sort I beg you will do so I will pay any reasonable (+ if he comes fully up to the description any unreasonable) price for him. I [bother?] you with this because it is of absolute necessity to Mrs. Preston + I cannot aid her.⁵²

Apparently, securing another enslaved servant for his wife was crucial for James, even to the point of paying “any unreasonable price.” He clearly felt helpless in trying to assist his wife at home while he was serving in the military. The comment about finding someone who knew something about gardening may indicate that Ballard, the deceased slave, had had some part in the management of the well-known gardens at White Thorn.⁵³

At the beginning of August, Robert’s son, James, was discharged from his father’s Virginia 28th regiment. From service records, it is unclear if he actually served with the 28th. Nor is it known if he had been wounded or sustained trauma or why he had been discharged. Dr. Harvey Black had visited him several times in 1860 and the year before that, so he may have had a chronic illness. With his father commanding a regiment, the decision could have been made that James was needed for farm operations at Solitude.⁵⁴

Similarly, in late August, Waller missed the Company G muster of the 4th Virginia because he was sick enough to be confined in the general hospital. His illness continued through the fall.⁵⁵ His father, Ballard, had written him on November 24, “Your health is the most important thing to be attended to . . . without good health there cannot be a good soldier.” His father, hopeful that his son would receive an officer appointment, also wrote, “[M]ake yourself competent for command and I am sure you will obtain it” and added, “[T]hough you are but a ‘high private’ ‘tis the noblest of all posts and I beg of you to fill it nobly.”⁵⁶

In late summer, word reached Robert and Mary that their six-month-old granddaughter, Mary Hart Means, named for her grandmother, had passed away on August 17, 1861. The child’s mother, Virginia, Robert and Mary’s daughter, still lived in South Carolina with her husband, a physician who was serving as a second lieutenant in the 6th Infantry, Company C, South

Carolina. For Virginia, it must have been even more difficult to lose a child while her husband served in the military and to be so far from her parents.⁵⁷

In September, Henry Caperton contracted a near-fatal case of measles and recovered quite slowly. Mary Eliza, still at White Thorn, wrote to her ailing husband on October 8, sharing war news that she and others in the community had heard. As the impact of war casualties and disease settled in, it became clear that the fighting would continue, and hopes of peace dimmed. Mary Eliza told Henry what many others had begun to understand, “I fear now, that we are in for a long war [underlining in original letter].”⁵⁸

With the approach of fall, anxiety about illness grew. With poor, unsanitary conditions in the soldiers’ encampments, the war had increased the spread of disease. Typhoid fever, measles, and diarrhea plagued Robert’s regiment, and Robert himself became ill.⁵⁹ The illnesses were not limited to military camps. “There is scarlet fever in the neighborhood and we have felt uneasy about it,” Mary Eliza wrote to her spouse.⁶⁰

On November 23, 1861, Samuel McConkey, surgeon of the 28th, supported Robert’s application for a medical leave of absence because of “symptoms for inceptient [sic] Typhoid fever.”⁶¹ Typhoid was a fairly common disease before the application of twentieth-century sanitation techniques. Caused by ingesting food or water contaminated by the feces of a person infected with the *Samonella typhi* bacterium, it was a feverish, month-long attack most people could survive, but for the very young and compromised, it was a common cause of death. The disease flourished in crowded war encampments with inadequate latrine facilities, as well as at homes with “outhouses” and lack of protected water supplies. For everyone, soldiers and civilians alike, the stress of war, contaminated water, bad food, and/or lack of proper food increased the threat.⁶² By mid-December, Robert had been at home for about ten or twelve days on sick leave with typhoid fever although his condition was improving.⁶³ He had requested and been granted an extension of his leave of absence.⁶⁴

The Prestons Add to Their Records of Service

As 1861 drew to a close, Ballard Preston was elected to the First Confederate Congress as a senator. His wife’s cousin, Waller Redd Staples (1826–1897), a friend who had served with him in the Provisional Congress, was elected as a representative to the House of the First Confederate Congress. Ballard’s political commitments did not interfere with his selling needed livestock and horses to the Confederate Army. In September, he sold two brown horses for \$325, followed by two bay mares in early December for \$225.⁶⁵

On the war front, when General Jackson was promoted to major general and given command of the lower valley district, James, as senior regimental colonel, became interim commander of the Stonewall Brigade. However, the combination of cold weather, camp conditions, and a severe attack of rheumatism rendered him unfit for effective command. While in Winchester, he remained as interim commander, at least in name, through the early part of November.⁶⁶ Because James's poor health continued, command of the 4th Virginia finally moved to Col. James Allen of the 2nd Regiment. On December 2, Jackson wrote the adjutant general in Richmond to plead his case for a good brigade commander. On December 5, Brig. Gen. Richard B. Garnett, originally of Essex County, Virginia, received the assignment. When Garnett arrived in Winchester, Colonel Preston accompanied him to New Centreville to greet his troops, lined up in silence to meet their new leader.⁶⁷ Despite his frequent absences due to illness, in the time that he served, James apparently earned the deep respect of other leaders and, in particular, that of his troops.

On December 18, James's wife, Sarah Ann, wrote a letter to her widowed sister-in-law, Harriet Boswell Caperton (1820–1899), that she had not heard from James for a day or two but that he was almost entirely well when he last wrote after having been

confined for some time at Winchester with a severe attack of rheumatism__He could have suffered less perhaps if he had consented to leave the camp sooner__ but he will have a vast amount of pain before he gives up his business of whatever character it may be. I have a hope of seeing him at home about Xmas __ he had not said that he would be at home, but I have "a feeling" that he will!⁶⁸

It is not known if James became healthy enough to return to White Thorn by Christmas day. Sarah also noted in her letter that Ballard had not yet returned home and that his wife and daughter were still considering traveling to Norfolk, apparently a trip that had been planned earlier.

While Waller Preston closed 1861 in poor health, 1862 brought him good health, a transfer, and a promotion. On April 16, he was transferred from the 4th Virginia Infantry to Col. Turner Ashby's command segment in the 7th Virginia Cavalry. Waller became a captain of Company B in the 7th (which later became the 14th Virginia Cavalry), despite the fact that he had served barely a month as a private in Company G of the 4th. Sick, he had been absent from muster for nearly eight months.⁶⁹

A Difficult Year Comes to a Close

The year 1861 ended with the country and Virginia torn apart by war, illness, and death. Although the sentiments of the Prestons themselves had not been divided by the war, their service in the war had physically separated them from each other, and illness and death continued to haunt them. James and Robert Preston and Henry Caperton were ill, and on December 30, Robert lost another granddaughter, Sallie Stark, just shy of her second birthday.⁷⁰

James did eventually return to White Thorn, so all three Preston brothers were at their homes for much of the winter holidays. There was little cheer. Weak from illness at the close of a difficult year of change and hardship, James and Robert—and their brother, Ballard—were perhaps feeling helpless, anxious, and even fearful for themselves; their families; their community; and, ultimately, Virginia. They could not know that the grim year ahead would change Smithfield and the Preston family forever.

In the Shadow of Death: 1862

Illness spread rapidly in the winter of 1861–1862. Ballard was back at Smithfield with a serious infection, described by the *Daily Dispatch* of Richmond as a “dangerous attack of erysipelas.” By then, the newspaper reported, “his condition is generally improved. He is now considered out of danger and in a fair way for a rapid recovery. He will be able to resume his duties in Congress in the course of a few weeks.” Thus, all three brothers and other family members continued to struggle to recover.⁷¹

The next few weeks brought a string of deaths and heartache for the Prestons. Having been ill or in poor health nearly the entire time of his military service, James Preston died at home, at age forty-nine, on January 20, 1862, with his local physician, Dr. David Wade, present.⁷² The county death record lists rheumatism as the cause of death. As noted earlier, some sources claimed that he died as a result of injuries from battle, although James himself wrote otherwise in a letter to his wife. One source suggested that he died of influenza, but Sarah had written in December that he had been suffering from rheumatism. Another source blamed the exposure incidental to his military service for his death. He likely died of the cumulative effect of disease and exposure from deplorable camp conditions or of possible heart disease caused by rheumatic fever, or he may have been weakened by a strep infection similar to the one that had attacked Ballard Preston.⁷³

In a brief letter written the day James died, Mary Eliza informed her husband:

Col Preston left us this morning for the rest that remaineth for the people of God. He died as he lived calmly quietly, trusting in Jesus. Poor S. A. [Sarah Ann] is ill - Dr. Payne who came up last night says she has typhoid fever. She does not shed a tear and says she does not feel. God be with her. . . . All is confusion darling and I cannot say more.⁷⁴

In late January, James was buried in the Preston cemetery located on a knoll southeast of the Smithfield manor house, where his mother had been laid to rest six months earlier. It is not known if Sarah's own illness prevented her from attending his funeral. Following James's death, condolences to Robert Preston from Maj. Joseph F. Kent of Wytheville notified him that Major Kent's present place of encampment had been named Camp Preston "in honor of its late commander."⁷⁵

Not long after James died, the Prestons suffered yet more losses of family members. On February 2, Eliza, the seven-year-old daughter of Mary Eliza and Henry Caperton, died at White Thorn.⁷⁶ The following week—and only two weeks after her husband's death—Sarah's twenty-two-month-old



Gravestone of James Francis Preston in the Preston cemetery (2013 photograph by Laura Jones Wedin)



Memento mori photo of Sarah Caperton Preston with her son, James Francis “Little Jimmie” Preston, who died February 9, 1862 (original photo in family files courtesy of Braxton Gutierrez)

son, James Francis “Little Jimmie,” died of scarlet fever.⁷⁷ After his death, Sarah had a photographed *memento mori* (remember death) portrait made (see above). In widow’s attire, weak from illness and grief, she appears numb and expressionless, holding her seemingly sleeping son on her lap. When Little Jimmie was laid to rest next to the grave of his father,⁷⁸ Sarah plunged into grieving for both her husband and her youngest son.

On February 18, not even a month after his brother and nephew died, Ballard had to return to Richmond to begin his term as a senator for the Confederate Congress, which was meeting in Richmond for the first time since the capital had been moved from Alabama. Robert, meanwhile, because of his brother’s death and perhaps as a result of his own ill health and/or that of others in the household, requested additional leave of absence from the 28th Virginia.⁷⁹

At White Thorn, the Capertons lost yet another child. Their four-year-old son, Allen, died on March 2, leaving just the youngest, Henry (Harry), not yet two, still living. Ballard had not known about Allen’s death when he wrote to Robert on March 4 from Richmond, but he knew that the child

was very sick. Robert apparently had returned to his unit in March since Ballard remarked that “I hear your hut is comfortable + I hope you will not have your quarters ‘beaten up.’” At the time, Ballard was living in a rented house in Richmond; his wife and family would soon join him.⁸⁰ Regarding domestic events back home, Ballard also wrote to Robert,

He [Waller Redd Staples] and I will keep our every [illegible] as to House & plantation affairs. These look most gloo[my?]. I will do the best I can & will go to Sarah’s aid is agreed. I [expect my] wife [in Richmond] this week. Waller has no appointment yet & I am hesitating whether he shall not accept Colo Echols[’s] offer as adjutant instead of any others.

He closed, “I will write often, as you are my only brother now the circle has diminished.”⁸¹

In March, Sarah began to settle the affairs of her dead husband. James had written his will the previous May (1861) and in it had noted:

It is not my wish that any of my slaves should be sold unless it shall be deemed necessary by my executors or by my wife in consequence of unsubsordination [sic] or other bad conduct or unless it should be necessary to make sale of them or some of them to pay my debts & in the later case it is my wish that good homes should be provided for them in Virginia if possible.⁸²

He had been reluctant to break up his enslaved families unless absolutely necessary, but at the same time, he had recognized the possibility of that happening. Like many slave owners, James held a paternalistic attitude toward the enslaved on his plantation.

Preston’s will authorized his friend and executor, Charles Gardner, to sell or convey by proper deeds all or any part of his outlying lands to satisfy any debt as well as make proper deed or deeds to his brothers for the division of their father’s real estate among them. He also left Sarah the option of freeing his manservant, Taylor, or retaining him for her use, trusting Sarah’s “kind of sound discretion in the matter.” It appears that Sarah may have hired out Taylor since he apparently began working for Dr. Harvey Black.⁸³

The appraisal of the White Thorn estate was completed in May 1862, setting the value of the estate at \$30,517.82. The farm’s eighteen slaves provided the largest percentage of James’s property value. The list of household and farming equipment, along with livestock, reveals the fine standard of living their household enjoyed.⁸⁴

In mid-April, Sarah Ann Preston wrote Harriet Caperton, expressing her struggle with delayed grief at the loss of her husband and youngest son:

My sorrow seemed greater now than in the beginning! At first I was without feeling __ but lately I have [begun] to realize my later desolation! Sometimes I think I cannot give him up! Oh Harriet there are not many such husbands as mine! Oh what a loss I have sustained! . . . I have now resumed [sic] my housekeeping, farther than to give some directions about things that must go on; I feel as if I did not care to become engrossed any more in my household concerns[.] I am well[.] perfectly well, but I have no spirit to work __ I used to take great interest in my house and household - but I had since one then to please __ one who always seemed pleased to see me interested __ but he is gone now -- what have I to stimulate now [underlining in original letter]?⁸⁵

Mary Hinnet, a “genteel Irish girl,” moved to White Thorn to keep house for Sarah until her sister and brother-in-law, Mary Jane and John Echols, came to stay. C.S.A. General Echols had become the legal guardian of Sarah’s sons, Hugh and William. He had been severely wounded on March 23 during the Battle of First Kernstown near Winchester, Virginia. Sarah wrote: “I hope it will not be very long before he [John] is able to be moved. How thankful I feel that God spared his life! Poor Mary Jane was spared a heavy blow though she is deeply afflicted.”⁸⁶

Surviving Preston Brothers Address Military Issues

Sarah had noted in a letter that the family was “uneasy now for brother Robert” because he and his unit had gone to Yorktown, where they feared a bloody battle was inevitable. In late April 1862, after months of extended sick leave and little time with his unit, Robert Taylor Preston was not re-elected to his leadership role with the Virginia 28th,⁸⁷ even though he himself was admired. According to the memoirs, *End of an Era*, of John Wise:

At the outbreak of the war, he commanded a regiment in the [First] Manassas campaign; brave as a lion, he was utterly ignorant of military tactics; . . . Colonel Bob was honored, respected, and counted one of the gamest fighters in the army; and nothing but the infirmities of age had reconciled his beloved “28th” to parting with him.⁸⁸

Maj. Robert C. Allen assumed command of the 28th. Robert Preston soon requested that he be allowed to re-join, and testimonies were given to his honorable character as a soldier. By mid-May, he had been authorized

to raise a regiment of militia volunteers from Montgomery, Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig, Monroe, and Giles counties as part of the Virginia State Line military units.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, Ballard was attempting to get a relative restored to a position of military leadership. John Buchanan Floyd (1806–1863) was a first cousin to the Preston brothers and a former governor of Virginia (1849–1852). He was serving as a C.S.A. brigadier general, commanding a brigade of volunteers that was sent to West Virginia. He had been relieved of his command by Confederate President Jefferson Davis on March 11, 1861, on several counts but without a court of inquiry. On May 11, Ballard wrote a letter to President Davis, asking that Floyd be reinstated. His persuasive letter pointed out that the fertile country of southwestern Virginia “furnishes a large part of the supplies and horses of the army” and that it contained “almost the only deposits of salt, lead, and saltpeter relied on for prosecuting the war.” He asked that Davis appreciate the value of the area to the commonwealth and the Confederacy and noted that General Floyd was instrumental in efforts to protect these resources at the Battle of the Cross Lands and defense of the Gauley River. He reiterated that Floyd was a native of the area and that “his fathers have led their fathers to battle in every war from its first white settlement.” Ballard cited the importance of trust that Floyd’s men had for him, that “among those men no one possesses more the popular confidence in his courage and military capacity than General John B. Floyd.” It is interesting that he mentioned he had “separated from General Floyd by a radical difference of political principle” but that “the revolution in which these differences have perished has also consumed any feeling of personal or party animosity.” Ballard asked that Floyd be restored to command and be assigned to local forces and that “such forces be employed in Southwestern Virginia.” His letter to Davis was accompanied by letters of support from B. R. Johnston and Judge Andrew S. Fulton (1800–1884) of Abington. Three others, David McComas, Evermont Ward, and G. D. Camden, concurred with the views and opinion of Fulton.⁹⁰ It appears that Davis was swayed by the plea since Floyd resumed his commission, this time as a major general of the Virginia Militia.⁹¹

Prestons Endure More Bad News, Another Death

September 1862 brought more bad news to Robert’s family. In the battle of South Mountain, Boonsboro, Maryland, on September 14, 1862, Robert and Mary’s son-in-law, Robert Means, was wounded in both legs. Apparently, once his injuries had been stabilized, Robert became part of the invalid corps as a recruiting officer in South Carolina.⁹²

At the end of a difficult autumn and in one—if not the most—significant event for the Preston family, Ballard Preston died at Smithfield on November 16, 1862, two weeks before his fifty-eighth birthday. The cause listed was heart disease. Statements made after his death indicate that he had been in poor health. The statesman, who had provided leadership for his family, his community, the United States, and Virginia in her desperate hour of need, was gone.

Ballard had closed his remarks at the Virginia Secession Convention in March of the preceding year with an appeal for all to stand with the commonwealth and “to vindicate every right that belongs to her.” He noted how his ancestors had fought and died in her defense, adding that should he “fall elsewhere,” he wanted to be returned to the “consecrated earth of my mother Virginia” for burial in his own meadow. Then it could be said, he added, that “[a]fter life’s fitful fever, he sleeps well.” He was, indeed, buried in his own meadow at Smithfield, but it probably is not conjecture that Ballard died a stressed, conflicted man over the issue of slavery and his



Gravestone of William Ballard Preston in the Preston cemetery (2017 photograph by Laura Jones Wedin)

duty to the Commonwealth of Virginia and seeing his beloved mother state torn apart by war.⁹³

[Editor's Note: The author will cover the remaining war years, from the end of 1862 to April 1865, and the effect of Reconstruction on the Prestons in subsequent parts of her article.]

Endnotes

1. Laura Jones Wedin, "A Summary of Nineteenth-Century Smithfield, Part I: The Years before the Civil War," *The Smithfield Review* 18 (2014): 79–95.
2. Charles L. Grant, "An Appalachian Portrait: Black and White in Montgomery County, Virginia, before the Civil War" (master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University [Virginia Tech], Blacksburg, Virginia, 1987), 5; John Frederick Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia: Descendants of John and Elizabeth (Patton) Preston through Five Generations* (Louisville, KY: Filson Club), 1982; Wedin, "A Summary of Nineteenth-Century Smithfield, Part I." Wedin expands on this information in Part I of this article.
3. Gibson Worsham, "Solitude Historic Structure Report" (Christiansburg, VA: G. Worsham), 3; Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield*, 264–265; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "The Population [Slave] Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States: 1860" (National Archives, 1394: 1967, Virginia).
4. Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield*, 266–267; William Alexander Gordon, *The Killing of Adam Caperton by Indians at Estill's Defeat near Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, 22 March 1782; Sketch of the Caperton Family, Will of Hugh Caperton of Elmwood, Genealogy of Hugh Caperton of Elmwood* (London: Forgotten Books, May 11, 2017; first publication, Louisville, KY: John P. Morton and Company, 1915).
5. Margaret Mercer (1791–1846), daughter of a former Maryland governor, purchased the Belmont Plantation, located in Loudoun County, Virginia, in 1836 and established the manor house as a progressive Christian-Episcopalian school for girls. See Caspar Morris, M. D., *Memoir of Miss Margaret Mercer* (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1848); Sarah Ann Caperton to William G. Caperton, June 10, 1842, Caperton Family Papers 1729–1973, Mss 1C1716a, Virginia Historical Society.
6. Cary Baldwin Preston Gary (1883–1960) to Jeannette Heth, June 21, 1947, copy of letter from Heth family private papers; Worsham, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: nomination of Whitethorn, submitted to Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1988, 2.
7. Ninety-one slaves were listed in the property appraisal of James Patton Preston (1774–1843). See Montgomery County Circuit Court Records, Will Book 7, Montgomery County Courthouse, 130. James Kent was the largest slave owner in the county with 123. John Radford was second with 70. See Federal Census of 1860, Slave Schedule, Montgomery County, Virginia. James Kent had more slaves, but Ballard Preston listed more personal property wealth. This was probably due, in part, to his large slave holdings based at his Horsepasture Plantation in Henry County, Virginia. See Federal Census of 1860, Population and Slave Schedule, Henry County. Overall, Montgomery County, located on the edge of mountains that separated the area from nearby counties that became part of West Virginia, had fewer slave owners. For example, the county listed 2,219 slaves in 1860, 21 percent of the county population, which was fewer than the average 38 percent in the eastern part of Virginia but more than nearby outlying areas such as Prices Fork.
8. Federal Census of 1860, slave schedule. Ballard Preston had eight dwellings for his enslaved community; Robert had ten; and James, six. Today, Solitude is the only home of the three that has an extant outbuilding that likely was used as an enslaved dwelling. See Michael J. Pulice,

- “The log outbuilding at Solitude: an architectural and archaeological investigation of Virginia Tech’s second oldest building” (master of architecture thesis, Virginia Tech, 1999). The ruins of an early foundation have been found at Smithfield northeast of the manor home. In the early 1970s, when the Hethwood housing development was implemented, the cabins from the former White Thorn home—now the Heth home—were removed. One was offered for use at Smithfield, and under guidance from Virginia Tech Professor Herman J. Heikkenen, a Boy Scout explorer troop dismantled the cabin and moved it to the previous foundation northeast of the Smithfield manor home. The logs had already been numbered, and dendrochronology studies have dated it to the 1820s. It is possible that the cabin could have been moved from another area near the Smithfield manor house to White Thorn after the latter house was built in the late 1850s, or it could have been part of a “quarter” area housing slaves to work that part of the plantation fields. See Worsham, “Smithfield Historic Structure Report,” 35, 49.
9. Federal Census of 1850, Montgomery County, Virginia; Federal Census of 1860, Henry County, Virginia.
 10. Federal Census of 1860, Population Schedule, Montgomery County.
 11. Clara B. Cox, “Olin and Preston Institute and Preston and Olin Institute: The Early Years of Virginia Polytechnic and State University: Part I,” *The Smithfield Review* 19 (2015)
 12. James I. Robertson Jr., *Civil War! America Becomes One Nation* (New York: Random House, 1996), 170. Details of William Ballard Preston’s involvement in Virginia’s secession can be found in Wedin, “A Summary of Nineteenth Century Smithfield, Part I.”
 13. “The Manassas Campaign, Virginia, July 16–22, 1861,” www.firstbullrun.co.uk/Shenandoah/First%20Brigade/4th-virginia-infantry.html.
 14. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield*, 262–263.
 15. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield*, 266. Confusion surrounding two James Patton Prestons, first cousins born seven years apart and both from Blacksburg, persisted through military, genealogy, and other records.
 16. William C. Davis, *Battle at Bull Run: A History of the First Major Campaign of the Civil War* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977; 2nd ed., 1995), 29; Harry Hanson, *The Civil War: A History* (New York: Signet, 1957).
 17. James F. Preston, 1846–1848, United States Mexican War Index and Service Records, 1846–1848, *FamilySearch*, familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QLXQ-68V, accessed March 13, 2018; Will of James Preston; Federal Census of 1860. Gardner, age forty-six, was a businessman, working as a bank cashier; he lived in Christiansburg with his wife and six children. See Robertson, *Civil War!* 35.
 18. Peter Wallenstein, “William Ballard Preston and the Politics of Slavery, 1832–1862,” *The Smithfield Review* 1 (1997): 63. Lucy’s grandfather, John F. Redd, died in 1850; thus, the inheritance most likely came from him.
 19. Federal Census of 1860, slave schedule, Henry County.
 20. W. Ballard Preston to William Linkous, May 4, 1861, Alice Preston Moore Collection, Preston Family Papers, 1745–1882, Ms 1962-004, Special Collections, Virginia Tech.
 21. James Francis Preston to George Henry Caperton, May 4, 1861, Caperton Family Papers 1729–1973, Mss 1C1716a, Virginia Historical Society.
 22. Mary Eliza Caperton to George Henry Caperton, August 13, 1862, Caperton Papers; Federal Census of 1860, Campbell County, Virginia.
 23. Some sources say her name was Mary Elizabeth, but family records have it as Eliza. See M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, May 4, 1861.
 24. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, May 6, 1861.
 25. Lisa Tendrich Frank, “War Comes Home,” in Wallenstein and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, eds., *Virginia’s Civil War* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2009): 125.
 26. “Railroads of the Confederacy,” www.civilwar.org/education/history/warfare-and-logistics/logistics/railroads.html.

27. W. B. Preston to W. Linkous.
28. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, June 10, 1861; Montgomery County Register of Deaths. No cause was listed. Overseer James Petty (Pettit) was the informant. Although a standard U.S. military marble memorial marker for the governor now stands in the Preston cemetery, the exact location of the grave of the governor remains unknown.
29. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield*, 13.
30. W. B. Preston to W. Linkous.
31. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, May 9, 1861.
32. Daniel B. Thorp, "'Learn your wives and daughters how to use the gun and pistol': The Secession Crisis in Montgomery County, Virginia," *The Smithfield Review* 17 (2013): 75–92.
33. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, May 27, 1861.
34. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, May 14, 1861; Thorp, "The Secession Crisis," 90–91.
35. Robertson, *4th Virginia Infantry* (Virginia Regimental Histories Series), 2nd ed. (Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, 1983), 2.
36. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, May 20, 1861.
37. Frank E. Fields Jr., *28th Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, 1985), 4.
38. Robert J. Driver Jr., *2nd Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, 1995), 203.
39. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, June 4, 1861. Caperton enlisted for one year as a private in Company G, 2nd Virginia Cavalry Regiment (originally the 30th Virginia Mounted Infantry) at Forest Depot, Virginia, on May 28, 1861.
40. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, May 29, 1861.
41. Fields, *28th Virginia Infantry*, 3; Virginia, Civil War Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, 1861–1865, familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:J3HR-PR5, accessed December 5, 2014; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Virginia, database, *Fold3.com*, www.fold3.com, n.d., citing military unit Fourth Infantry, NARA microfilm publication M324 (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1961), roll 410; Virginia Civil War Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:J34G-7R8, accessed December 5, 2014; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, citing military unit Second Cavalry, NARA microfilm publication M324, roll 16.
42. Radford's Squadron Cavalry, www.firs3bullrun.co.uk/Potomac/First%20Brigade/radfords-squadron-cavalry.html.
43. Lowell Reidenbaugh, *27th Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, 1993), 141.
44. Charles Turner, *Ted Barclay, Liberty Hall Volunteers: Letters from the Stonewall Brigade 1861–1864* (Natural Bridge Station, VA: Rockbridge Publishing Company, 1992), 133.
45. James Francis Preston to Sarah Caperton Preston, July 28, 1861, 2, Preston Family Correspondence, 1861, 1872, Ms 2010-070, Special Collections, Virginia Tech.
46. William C. Davis, "First Battle of Manassas," National Park Civil War Series (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1995), 30; "First Battle of Bull Run," en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Battle_of_Bull_Run; Ethan S. Rafuse, *A Single Grand Victory: The First Campaign and Battle of Manassas* (Wilmington, DE: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 315; David J. Eicher, *The Longest Night: A Military History of the Civil War* (New York: 47.
47. J. F. Preston
48. J. F. Preston to S. C. Preston.
49. Robertson, *4th Virginia*, 7; J. F. Preston to S. C. Preston.
50. Robertson, *4th Virginia*, 5.
51. Montgomery County death records of 1861 cite the death of a male slave of James Francis Preston, reported by overseer Anderson Ledgerwood. No name, month, or day is listed. See Montgomery County Register of Death Records 1853–1868. Just the name "Ballard" appears in Dr. Black's account book under "JFP [James Francis Preston]" for medical treatment in 1855 and 1856. See Black account book, Black, Kent, and Apperson Family Papers, Ms 1974-003, Special Collections, Virginia Tech. Ballard, age seventeen, is listed in the 1843 James Patton Preston

- slave inventory as the son of William Mc[Norton]. See personal estate of James P. Preston decs. Nov. 16, 1843, Montgomery County Will Book 7, Montgomery County Courthouse, 130.
52. James F. Preston to Charles [Gardner], August 21, 1861, personal papers collection 41577, Library of Virginia, Richmond.
53. J. F. Preston to Charles [Gardner].
54. Robertson, *4th Virginia Infantry*, 68. From September 3 to October 5, 1859, Dr. Black visited, prescribed medications for, and medicated James Preston nearly every day. He made three visits in 1860. See Black account book, Black, Kent, and Apperson Family Papers.
55. Virginia, Civil War Service Records of Confederate Soldiers; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, citing military unit Fourth Infantry, NARA microfilm publication M324, roll 410.
56. Ballard Preston to my son [Waller] Preston, November 24, 1861, Letters of William Ballard Preston, Ms 62-004, Special Collections, Virginia Tech.
57. Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield*, 265–266.
58. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, October 8, 1861.
59. Fields, *28th Virginia Infantry*, 9.
60. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, October 8, 1861.
61. “Near Centreville. Certificate granting Col. Preston a medical leave of absence. Signed: Saml. A. McConkey,” November 23, 1861, Papers of Robert Taylor Preston, Ms 1992-002 box 1: 7, Special Collections, Virginia Tech.
62. Typhoid Fever, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typhoid_fever.
63. Sarah C. Preston to Harriet Boswell Caperton, December 18, 1861, Caperton Papers.
64. Letter, camp of the 28th Regiment Va. Volunteers, near Centreville, “Col. Preston wished and is recommended an extension of leave for 30 days. Signed: Saml. A. McConkey,” December 19, 1861, Papers of Robert Taylor Preston.
65. Kenneth C. Martis, *The Historical Atlas of the Congresses of the Confederate States of America: 1861–1865* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994); Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, 1861–1865, M346, 2133274; Waller Redd Staples, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waller_Redd_Staples.
66. Robertson, *4th Virginia Infantry*, 8.
67. Sarah C. Preston to Harriet B. Caperton, December 18, 1861; Robertson, *The Stonewall Brigade* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), 54. Rheumatic fever was an infectious disease, causing fever, pain, swelling of the joints, and inflammation of the valves of the heart. See Rheumatic Fever, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rheumatic_fever. Rheumatism is often an archaic term for rheumatic fever. See Rheumatism, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rheumatism.
68. Sarah C. Preston to Harriet B. Caperton.
69. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield*, 262; Richard L. Armstrong, *7th Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, 1992), 210; Robert J. Driver Jr., *14th Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, 1988), 167.
70. Preston/Means marker in the Preston cemetery.
71. *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, Virginia), January 14, 1862; *Richmond Dispatch* (Cowardin & Hammersley), January 14, 1862, microfilm, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Proquest, microfilm reel (35 mm). Erysipelas is an acute infection of the upper dermis and superficial lymphatics, usually caused by the *Streptococcus* bacteria. Patients typically develop symptoms including high fevers, shaking, chills, fatigue, headaches, vomiting, and general illness within forty-eight hours of the initial infection. An erythematous skin lesion enlarges rapidly and appears as a red, swollen, warm, hardened, and painful rash, similar in consistency to an orange peel. More severe infections can result in vesicles, bullae, and petechiae, with possible skin necrosis. Lymph nodes may be swollen, and lymphedema may occur. Occasionally, a red streak extending to the lymph node can be seen. See Erysipelas, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erysipelas.
72. Montgomery County Register of Deaths; M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, January 20, 1862. David Wade, who was James Preston’s physician, was born in 1820 in Christiansburg. In 1860,

he was forty years old and living with his wife and four children. He attended the University of Pennsylvania Medical Department and served with the 27th Battalion Cavalry as a surgeon, then later with the 54th Virginia infantry. He resigned from the military on February 17, 1864, due to health issues. Dr. Wade died in Maryland in 1896. See Federal Census of 1860; www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=80738295; Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Confederate Organizations, documenting the period 1861–1865, compiled 1903–1927, National Archives, www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/resources.

73. Montgomery County Register of Deaths, 8; Robertson, *4th Virginia Infantry*, 7–8; James F. Preston to Sarah C. Preston; James F. Preston to Charles [Gardner]; Turner, *Letters from the Stonewall Brigade*, 50; Carded Records; Phillip Alexander Bruce, *Virginia: Rebirth of the Old Dominion 5* (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1929), 239.
74. M. E. Caperton to G. H. Caperton, January 20, 1862; Federal Census of 1860, Montgomery County. The only Payne found in the 1860 Montgomery County census is listed as a farmer, but it was not uncommon for doctors to be listed as such.
75. Dr. Harvey Black of Blacksburg also served with the 4th Virginia as the surgeon. See J. F. Kent to Robert Taylor Preston, February 5, 1862, Papers of Robert Taylor Preston. The location was known as Camp Preston for some years afterward. Subsequent leaders were often compared unfavorably with the respected Preston, and his death caused confusion as well as sadness. John Herbert Roper, ed., *Repairing the March of Mars: The Civil War Dairies of John Samuel Apperson, Hospital Steward in the Stonewall Brigade, 1861–1865* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001), footnote 94 (“Notes about Preston provided by Glenn McMullen”), 90.
76. Eliza, who was born on May 12, 1855, probably died of scarlet fever or diphtheria. See Caperton Family Bible Record 1791–1929, 20436, Library of Virginia Digital Collection, image.lva.virginia.gov/Bible/20436.pdf Bible Record Image.
77. Montgomery County Register of Deaths, 8.
78. James J. Broomall, “Photography during the Civil War,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Photography_During_the_Civil_War, 2015. Post-mortem or mourning photography, especially of children, was common during the Civil War and the Victorian period that followed. Because of the high childhood and infant mortality rate, this was a significant way to memorialize lost family members. See marker at the Preston cemetery.
79. “From: Mount Joy. Request for continued leave of absence. Signed: Wm. T. Patton,” February 22, 1862, Papers of Robert Taylor Preston.
80. The Montgomery County Register of Deaths of 1862 attributes fifty-four deaths to diphtheria, almost all of them children under the age of ten. However, neither this child nor Eliza is listed in these death records. It is not known where the Caperton children were buried. Given the circumstances, it is possible that they lie in unmarked graves at the Preston cemetery. See Ballard Preston to Robert Preston, March 4, 1862, Papers of Robert Taylor Preston.
81. Ballard Preston to Robert Preston, March 9, 1862, Papers of Robert Taylor Preston.
82. Will of James Francis Preston, Will Book 9, 388, proved March 1862. See Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield*, 266.
83. Will of James Francis Preston. See Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield*, 266. A “Taylor,” age twenty-two, is listed in James Patton Preston’s slave inventory of 1843 in what looks like a family grouping, in which case, his father could have been William Mc[Norton], age forty-two. Taylor served in the Mexican War with James Francis Preston as an enslaved cook for the officer’s mess of Preston’s company, 1st Virginia Volunteers. He applied for a pension in 1887. See United States Mexican War Pension Index, 1887–1926, familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K8H4-QBM, accessed October 3, 2018; personal communication with historian Daniel Thorp. This could also be the Taylor McNorton (or McNaughton) found in the Montgomery County Cohabitation Register of 1866 and the 1867 Freedmen’s census. He and his family are listed as working for Sarah Preston. A “Taylor” was also listed among the slaves of James Francis Preston listed in the account book of Dr. Harvey Black. See Black, Kent, and Apperson Family Papers. A slave

- named Taylor is not found in the list of slaves in the 1862 appraisal of James Francis Preston. It appears that he was working for Dr. Black as a cook. See Thorp, “Soldiers, Servants, and Very Interested Bystanders: Montgomery County’s African American Community during the Civil War,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 126, no. 4: 386–387. Taylor McNorton is found in the 1870 Montgomery County Census. At the time he was age fifty, married to Serena, and working as a coachman. See A list of the personal estate of James P. Preston, deceased November 16, 1843, Montgomery County Will Book 7, Montgomery County Courthouse, 130.
84. Inventory, March 1862, Estate of James F. Preston, Will Book 9, 418–423, January 1863, Montgomery County Court Records.
 85. Sarah C. Preston to Harriet B. Caperton, April 18, 1862, Caperton Papers.
 86. Sarah C. Preston to Harriet B. Caperton, April 18, 1862, Caperton Papers; Montgomery County Court Records. John Echols was Sarah Caperton’s brother-in-law. He was named guardian of the sons of James Preston and Sarah Caperton Preston. See John Echols, *en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Echols*; Inventory, March 1862, Estate of James F. Preston.
 87. Sarah C. Preston to Harriet B. Caperton. Robert Taylor Preston had been considered incompetent in a military role. See Field, *28th Virginia Infantry*, 5.
 88. John S. Wise, *End of an Era*, (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1899), 373–375.
 89. Papers of Robert Taylor Preston. Robert’s unit may have been the 6th Regiment of the Virginia State Line, although it is possible that he never raised a regiment. If he did, the possibility also exists that Col. Winston Fontaine assumed command of the regiment Preston was raising. Since no information has been located about the 6th, the organization could have existed only on paper. If this was the case, it would exemplify another facet of Maj. Gen. John B. Floyd’s numbers game of claiming soldiers recruited by others as his own recruits. See “The Virginia State Line,” *www.americancivilwarforum.com/the-virginia-state-line-1525425.html*.
 90. John Buchanan Floyd was the son of Col. William Preston’s daughter, Letitia Preston (1779–1852), and Dr. John Floyd (1783–1837), who served as the twenty-fifth governor of Virginia (1830–1834). John Buchanan was born in the manor house of Smithfield and was a first cousin to Ballard and his brothers. For Ballard Preston’s letter, see William Ballard Preston to President Jefferson Davis, May 11, 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate Armies, series I, vol. 10 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), 512–515. Judge Fulton was a member of the Whig Party (1847–1849) and a judge of the fifteenth judicial circuit of Virginia (1852–1869). Beverly R. Johnston was a member of the Abingdon bar and later served as commonwealth’s attorney. See Andrew S. Fulton, *Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_S._Fulton*; Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746–1786, Washington County, 1777–1870* (Richmond: J. L. Hill Printing Company, 1903).
 91. Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield*, 289–291.
 92. Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield*, 266; gravestone, Preston cemetery. The Meanses had three more children after the war, but only two sons, Robert Preston Means, b. 1857, and John Hughes Means, b. 1863, lived into adulthood.
 93. Wallenstein, “William Ballard Preston and the Politics of Slavery,” 95.

About the Author: Laura Jones Wedin, who holds a Master of Fine Arts from Virginia Tech, is the associate director of student and young alumni engagement for Tech’s Office of Alumni Relations. She has conducted extensive research on Smithfield, its cemetery, and the Preston family. Part of the archaeology community in the state since 2002, she is a certified archaeological technician with the Commonwealth of Virginia and a member of the Archaeological Society of Virginia and the Council of Virginia Archaeologists.