



HISTORIC SMITHFIELD PLANTATION

PRESERVATION VIRGINIA MONTGOMERY BRANCH



PRESERVATION
VIRGINIA

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For Immediate Release

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Dedication of the Historically Reconstructed Cider House and Cider Press at Historic Smithfield

Blacksburg, Virginia --- The Montgomery Branch of APVA announces the dedication of the Cider House and inaugural demonstration of the Cider Press at Historic Smithfield October 2, 2010 at 10 am. The Cider House is a reconstruction of an historic structure using salvaged vintage materials. Its current purpose is to house the cider press and enhance the interpretation of the orchard and apple production; it may also be used to interpret historic building techniques. The Cider Press is an 1872 patent and was donated to Historic Smithfield by the Blacksburg High School Athletic Boosters and has now been reconditioned for demonstration purposes only.

Smithfield Plantation was an agricultural endeavor and produced flax, hemp, wheat and cattle as well as the sustenance for a family of 12 children, indentured servants and enslaved African Americans. The house was restored in the 1960s and an important goal of Historic Smithfield is a broader agricultural interpretation. An established demonstration garden and heirloom orchard, with varieties documented in Preston papers, is part of the historic interpretation. The establishment of the heirloom orchard was a major step to interpret the growing of apples and the production of cider on the circa 1774 plantation. The next step is the construction of a cider house.

The cider house is a small structure located near the orchard. The cider mill and associated equipment are easily accommodated within. A single door on the side facing the orchard and one or two small windows provide access and light. A gable roof with some loft storage can be used as a place to dry herbs, gourds and other vegetables. Timber-framed construction uses hand-hewn timbers from a pre-Civil War barn, milled oak board siding from the dismantled early 20th century barn. The roof is 9/12 pitch to echo other regional buildings of the period with a recycled standing seam metal roof. The treated 6x6 foundation timbers and 2x6 floor joists are warranted for earth contact for 50 years. The flooring is of tongue and groove AdVantech. The building was assembled on site by Bowers Custom Barns, Inc., which provided a useful interpretive experience for visitors.



The establishment of the heirloom apple orchard, interpretation of growing apples and production of cider at Historic Smithfield has been made possible by support from many organizations. The Garden Club of Virginia funded an overgrown section of land to establish the orchard. The Children of the American Revolution provided a generous grant to establish an orchard which has begun bearing fruit. A cider mill and press were donated to Historic Smithfield. A 12 x 16 foot century old building was donated and dismantled and the rough-cut oak siding and some timbers were made available for the reconstruction.

About Historic Smithfield

“On the eve of the American Revolution, the Virginia backcountry was a place of colliding cultures, clashing ideals, and physical danger. Wolves howled at night, panthers roamed the forest. Europeans and native Shawnee and

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Cherokee vied for the same fertile farmlands, often erupting into murderous violence. It was here, at the eastern continental divide, the literal edge of European/American civilization, that the leader of westward expansion and Revolutionary War patriot William Preston established Smithfield Plantation. In a land of log cabins and physical hardship, Smithfield provided a haven of aristocratic elegance and became the social and political center of the country." More than 225 years later, this house still stands as a cultural center to the surrounding community.

Historic Smithfield is owned by Preservation Virginia (APVA Preservation Virginia), which was founded in 1889 as the first statewide preservation organization in the United States. Since then, the Preservation Virginia has saved and/or restored more than 50 historic properties. Currently Preservation Virginia owns or administers properties that range from historically furnished house museums and civic buildings to cemeteries and gravesites. The local Montgomery Branch of Preservation Virginia manages the daily operations of Historic Smithfield. For more information or to become a member, visit www.smithfieldplantation.org or call 540.231.3947.

Historic Smithfield and the Museum Store are open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays 10 – 5 pm. House tours are \$7 for adults, \$4 for students (12 yrs – college) and \$3 for children 5 – 12 years of age. House tours are given on each open day every half hour until 4 pm. Proceeds from the Museum Store and events are used to support the operational budget and preservation of Historic Smithfield, located adjacent to Virginia Tech's campus off Duck Pond Drive.

For more information, please call 540.231.3947 or visit our website at www.smithfieldplantation.org for more information.