

Smithfield Herald ^[1]

Smithfield Herald

by Wingate Lassiter, 2006

The *Smithfield Herald*, established in 1882 by F. T. Booker, E. G. Smith, and John W. Lassiter (who was not a close relative of the family that later controlled the *Herald* through much of the twentieth century), was the oldest [newspaper](#) ^[2] still operating in [Johnston County](#) ^[3] in the early 2000s. The newspaper was started the same year that Smithfield acquired its first [railroad](#) ^[4], signaling the beginning of commercial growth for the Johnston County seat, which had not advanced beyond courthouse-village status since its incorporation in 1777.

Thomas J. Lassiter Sr., a schoolteacher, became editor of the *Herald* in 1896. His untimely death in 1920 prompted his widow, [Rena Bingham Lassiter](#) ^[5], to follow him as editor. Her son, Thomas J. Lassiter Jr., joined her in 1933, after his graduation from college. His career as editor and publisher extended until 1980, when the Lassiter family sold the *Herald* to the [News and Observer](#) ^[6] Publishing Company of Raleigh. Wingate Lassiter served the *Herald* as a third-generation editor until 1994.

The *Smithfield Herald* received journalistic acclaim throughout the twentieth century. In 1922, under editor Rena Lassiter, it won an award as the best semiweekly or weekly newspaper in the state-the first time the [North Carolina Press Association](#) ^[7] had bestowed such an honor. In 1982 [Thomas J. Lassiter Jr.](#) ^[8] was inducted into the [North Carolina Journalism Hall of Fame](#) ^[9] in recognition of his long career of editorial and community leadership. In 1995 the *Herald* became a property of California-based McClatchy Newspapers when McClatchy purchased the *Raleigh News and Observer* and its subsidiaries.

Additional Resources:

Smithfield Herald official website: <http://www.theherald-nc.com/> ^[10]

"Smithfield Herald Headlines, 1885-2007." Johnston County Heritage Center. http://www.johnstonnc.com/mainpage.cfm?content_id=1681&category_level_id=727 ^[11]

"That Lassiter Family." *The E.S.C. Quarterly* 9. No. 1-2. Winter-Spring 1951. p.19. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/e.s.c.-quarterly-1951-winter-spring-v.9-no.1-2/4239121> ^[12] (accessed September 10, 2012).

"Smithfield - *Herald*." *The E.S.C. Quarterly* 9. No. 1-2. Winter-Spring 1951. p.32. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/e.s.c.-quarterly-1951-winter-spring-v.9-no.1-2/4239121> ^[12] (accessed September 10, 2012).

Interview with Thomas J. Lassiter, Jr. by Natalie Fousekis, December 8, 1994, L-0096, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sohp/id/1438> ^[13]

Etheridge, Bob. "In Memorial of Thomas J. Lassiter." *Congressional Record* 146. Pt. 15. October 6, 2000 to October 12, 2000. Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2005. p. 21820. <http://books.google.com/books?id=nn5a3kEjSBwC&lpg=PA21221&pg=PA21820#v=onepage&q&f=false> ^[14]

Subjects:

[Newspapers and magazines](#) ^[15]

Authors:

[Lassiter, Wingate](#) ^[16]

Origin - location:

[Johnston County](#) ^[17]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[18]

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Links

^[1] <https://ncpedia.org/smithfield-herald> ^[2] <https://ncpedia.org/newspapers> ^[3] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/johnston> ^[4] <https://ncpedia.org/railroads> ^[5] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/lassiter-rena-bingham> ^[6] <https://ncpedia.org/raleigh-news-and-observer> ^[7] <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-press-association> ^[8] <http://jomc.unc.edu/n-c-halls-of-fame/n-c-journalism-hall-of-fame#lassiter> ^[9] <http://jomc.unc.edu/n-c-halls-of-fame/n-c-journalism-hall-of-fame> ^[10] <http://www.theherald-nc.com/> ^[11] http://www.johnstonnc.com/mainpage.cfm?content_id=1681&category_level_id=727 ^[12]

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