

# News From Red Hill

PUBLISHED BY THE PATRICK HENRY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION — BROOKNEAL, VA



*P. Henry*  
**RED HILL**  
PATRICK HENRY  
NATIONAL MEMORIAL



## LARGEST CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE YET ENDED 2017

Red Hill greeted the holiday season at the end of 2017 with our best-attended Christmas Open House yet. 300 guests flooded the Red Hill grounds on a beautiful, sunny Sunday in December to see the house and Visitor Center decked out in festive, 18th century holiday decorations. The Christmas Open House is always a special time of year, as the buildings, adorned with holly, fruit, boxwood, and candles, *(continued on page 13)*

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## PATRICK HENRY LETTERS ACQUIRED FOR COLLECTION

The Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation has recently acquired two interesting and heretofore unpublished letters written by Patrick Henry.

The first letter, which is in good condition and still bears traces of the sealing wax used by Henry, was purchased through an auction house from a private collection in Arlington, Virginia. The letter is addressed to Robert Carter Nicholas, who was a burgess, lawyer, and Treasurer for the colony of Virginia. A conservative patriot, Nicholas and Henry rarely saw eye to eye on political matters. He had op-

posed Henry's Stamp Act Resolutions, as well as his resolution to raise independent militia companies during the 2nd Va. Convention. Nicholas was also the only man in the 5th Virginia Convention not to vote for Independence. Nevertheless, he was a firm defender of colonial rights. It was Nicholas who introduced the resolution before the House of Burgesses calling for a day of "fasting, humiliation, and prayer" to coincide with the closing of the port of Boston.

In 1771, Robert C. Nicholas turned over his law practice to Patrick Henry, due

## HENRY LETTER ACQUISITION (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

to his demanding duties as Treasurer. In the late 1770's Mr. Nicholas purchased the Henry family home, "Mount Brilliant," located in upper Hanover County, from Patrick Henry's widowed mother and named it "The Retreat." He is believed to be buried in the graveyard at Mount Brilliant, near the resting spot of John Henry.

This letter, which was written by Patrick Henry sometime prior to his becoming a lawyer in the General Court in Williamsburg in 1769, is a rare find as only a few letters written by Henry prior to 1770 have survived. The "Mr. Hoops" mentioned in the letter below is possibly David Hoops, who married John Syme Jr.'s daughter, Mildred.

"Sir,

*As I am just setting out to Goochland Court, I've time only to acknowledge the receipt of your favor with the money a receipt for which I send. Hurry will not permit me to count it, though doubt not its right. I shall take the first opportunity to settle with Mr. Hoops, & with my best*

*compliments to your Lady and family.*

*I am with much respect*

*Sir, your most obedient servant,*

*P. Henry"*

(on back of letter)

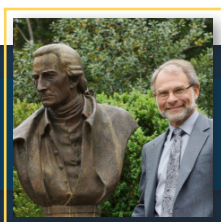
*"Ro. C. Nicholas, Esqr.*

*Pat. Henry brought Receipt for L 213.3.4 on Acct. of my land in Hanover. This is the balance I was to pay Mr. Hoops."*

The second Patrick Henry letter, which was also purchased from a private collector through an auction house, was written in Charlotte County on Dec. 13, 1792. At the bottom of the two-page letter is the patriot's signature: "P. Henry." Patrick Henry never wrote out his first name on any of his letters. On occasion he would add "Jr." to distinguish himself from his uncle, the Rev. Patrick Henry. The letter was written with iron gall ink, which over time has degraded from black to a brownish color. (See full text to the right.) At first glance, it appears that Patrick Henry wrote this letter at Red Hill, in "Charlotte." However, in December of 1792, Henry had just purchased


"Long Island" in Campbell County. Why he was in Charlotte County is unknown, but, it likely had to do with his law practice.

The first page of the letter deals primarily with John Syme's attempt to sue Philip Aylett over flour which he had sold to Philip's father, William Aylett, while the latter was serving as Commissary for Virginia during the Revolution. This inconvenience to Henry's son-in-law and daughter, Elizabeth, added to the already strained relation between Henry and his step-brother, which began years earlier when Syme failed to credit Henry for wheat he had sold him. By 1795, tensions had increased to the point that the two were no longer associating with one another. On the second page, Patrick Henry is seen trying to get his friend and land venture partner, General Joseph Martin, the position of U.S. Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Southwest Territory. During the Revolution, Martin had been appointed by Governor Henry to serve as agent for Indian Affairs for Virginia. His ability to



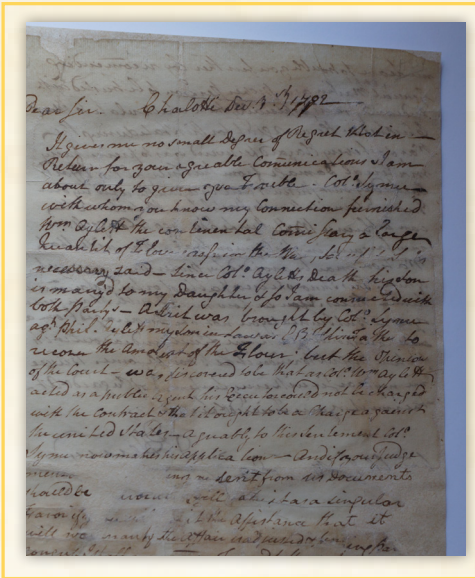
deal firmly, yet fairly with the Indians helped keep the Overhill Cherokees from waging war against the western settlers during the latter part of the Revolution. Martin's perceived bias towards the Indians, along with the verbal attacks he made towards the leaders of the State of Franklin carved from North Carolina, made him a number of powerful enemies. Despite Henry's help, Martin was passed over for the congressional position which

he had asked Henry to procure for him the previous year. Patrick Henry and Martin were neighbors while the former lived at "Leatherwood" in Henry County. Martinsville, the Henry county seat, was named in honor of Gen. Joseph Martin. The recipient of this letter is unknown. However, Henry had written a number of letters regarding Gen. Martin to Richard Henry Lee and William Grayson, U.S. Senators

from Virginia, regarding his possible appointment as Superintendent of Indian Affairs. It is likely this letter was addressed to one of them. Both of these letters will make happy additions to the Patrick Henry Digital library, which is an ongoing project to collect, digitalize, and share correspondences written to and by Patrick Henry in order for the public and scholars to gain further insight into the man and his times. 



# From the Red Hill Collection



## SECOND OF TWO RECENTLY ACQUIRED HENRY LETTERS

"Charlotte Dec. 13, 1792

Dear Sir,

It gives me no small degree of regret that in return for your agreeable communications I am about only to give you trouble. Col. Syme with whom you know my connection furnished Wm. Aylett the Continental Commissary a large quantity of flour \_\_\_\_\_ the war, \_\_\_\_\_ necessary said since Col. Aylett's death his son is marry'd to my daughter and so I am connected with both parties- A Writ was brought by Col. Syme against Philip Aylett, my son in law, \_\_\_\_\_ to recover the amount of the flour, but the opinion of the court was discovered to be that as Col. Wm. Aylett acted as a public agent his executor could not be charged with the contract and that it ought to be a charge against the United States- agreeably to this sentiment Col. Syme now makes his application and if you judge \_\_\_\_\_ sent from \_\_\_\_\_ documents should be

\_\_\_\_\_ as a singular favor if you would \_\_\_\_\_ the assistance that it will \_\_\_\_\_ the affair \_\_\_\_\_ congress I shall \_\_\_\_\_ be highly gratified because thereby future contentions will be avoided.

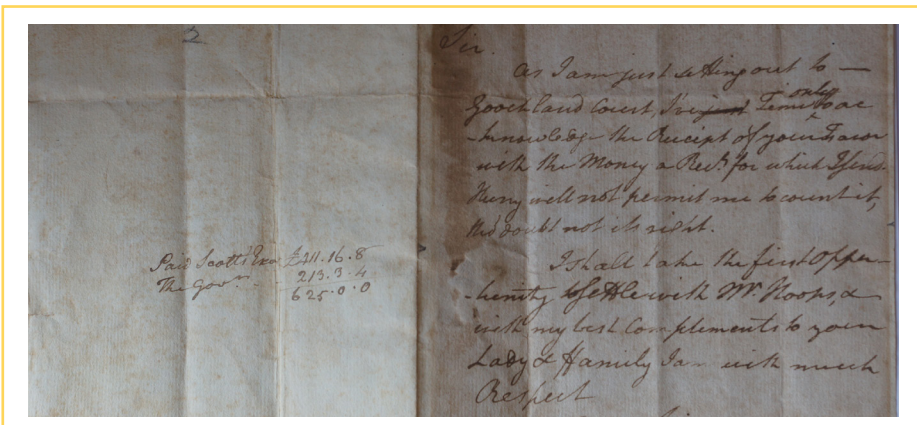
Give me leave to trouble you further by recommending General Joseph Martin as a proper person to be trusted with Indian affairs, especially those which relate to the Cherokees. He was agent for this state during the war, and at every hazard persevered so as to prevent any material damage from that Tribe, altho' efforts backed by cart presents were incessantly used by our enemys to incite them to hostilities. He tells me he can influence Watt their leader to go to Congress and is very sanguine in his opinion that a war with that Nation may be avoided by proper management of them. This, I know he is capable of or I would not recommend him. Thus, you see how much trouble I have given you, But I entreat you not to be discouraged from a correspondence with me and will endeavor in the future progress to render it less bothersome. Believe me my dear with every sentiment of regard and attachment your friend and servant

P. Henry"

“

...I must trust in your goodness and candor...

”



## BUILDING UPDATE: FOUNDATIONS LAID

Progress is humming along on the building of the new Eugene B. Casey Education & Events Center here at Red Hill (the groundbreaking

for which we announced in the last edition of this newsletter).

Moving into the new year, construction crews have been steadily

at work laying the foundations (pictures to the right).

If you'd like to keep abreast of future progress and updates, or see



## What Would Henry Say?

about the American Dream?

*by Mark Couvillon*



The “American Dream” was first coined by historian James Truslow Adams in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*. Adams defines the American Dream as “a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” regardless of social class or circumstances of birth. The roots of the American Dream can be traced all the way back to the first colonists to settle the New World. The Puritans who fled religious persecution in Europe became self-made

successes throughout New England largely on the strength of the spiritual beliefs that it was preordained. Their religion taught them that prosperity on earth would eventually lead to spiritual peace and eternal life. The adventurers at Jamestown, starting with John Smith, also realized that opportunity was here for anyone who dared seize it. It was this lure of the American Dream that motivated Patrick Henry’s father to leave Scotland for Virginia in his early twenties; just as it had his paternal great-grandfather who arrived in the 1660’s from

England in search of a better way of life.

Among the Founding Fathers of Virginia, few fit the example of achieving the American Dream better than Patrick Henry. Through hard work, political courage, natural talent, and a bit of good timing, this son of an immigrant went from being a failed shop keeper and struggling farmer to the first governor of the Commonwealth and one of the largest landowners in Virginia. Unlike his father, Patrick was also able to clear himself of debt and provide real

*(continued on page 12)*

*“What Would Henry Say?” will present how Patrick Henry actually addressed a question of his day, so that the reader can consider how Henry’s principles might inform today’s debates.*



more photos and videos of the work, follow us on facebook, where we'll be posting about the ongoing work toward our new, beautiful building!



*The roots of the American Dream...*

## SEVENTH ANNUAL BB&B SUCCESS

The seventh annual Bluegrass, Barbecue, & Brew Festival rolled around this past fall on a cool, misty Saturday. Luckily, the festival provided plenty of opportunities to warm up and get the blood flowing—from dancing to tastings to tours of the historic buildings. The 1,100 guests in attendance were all able to enjoy a variety of activities with family and friends throughout a fun day set against a beautiful backdrop of the misty Staunton River Valley.

This year's Festival featured a series of new organizational procedures, designed after last year's event had finally outgrown some of the original arrangements (an excellent challenge to have). The reworked entrance gate check-in was busy all day, but ran smoothly to get all of our guests inside for the fun stuff as quickly as possible. Along with a few "behind the scenes" improvements, this year's BB&B also saw the debut of a new logo and t-shirts, as well

as the addition of an excellent emcee to help introduce the bands and keep the festivities flowing. The three bands also got to shake it up, rotating to perform two sets each. Toes were tapping to the bluegrass offerings of Nothin' Fancy, The Church Sisters, and Breaking Grass. For those who wanted to do more than toe-tap, a small wooden dance floor was added to the stage, ready for all the (continued on page 14)







## RED HILL 2017







## YEAR IN PHOTOS





# Thank You

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*The Foundation also gratefully  
acknowledges the many gifts of  
money, time, and enthusiasm  
from members of the Auxiliary  
and the Descendants Branch.*

## WWHS (CONT.)

(Continued from page 4)

or personal property to his numerous offspring, thus fulfilling another aspect of the American Dream: being better off financially than one's parents.

The accessibility of land played a large role in achieving the American Dream. So did the right to life, liberty, and property, which, as the French philosopher, Montesquieu, stated, made British citizens "the freest people in the the world." Parliament's attack on these basic British rights—starting with the Proclamation line in 1763 (which threatened westward expansion), followed by the passage of the Stamp Act two years later, was looked upon by Patrick Henry as a threat to the American Dream.

Upon declaring independence from Great Britain, the Foundings Fathers made sure that their new government was set up to protect the American Dream. This was done by insuring that each individual had the opportunity to pursue their own idea of happiness, which is seen in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold

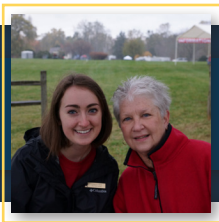
these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Though these basic concepts were not extended to slaves, it would eventually lead to their emancipation a century later.

After the war, Patrick Henry encouraged emigration as a speedy means of seeing Virginia grow and prosper, as well as to provide an asylum for the oppressed and distressed. "Encourage the husbandmen, the mechanics, the merchants of the old world, to come and settle in this land of promise," declared Henry to his fellow legislators. "They are already standing on tiptoe upon their native shores, and looking to your coasts with a wistful and longing eye—they see here a land blessed with natural and political advantages which are not equaled by those of any other country on earth—a land on which Providence hath emptied her horn of abundance... They see something more attractive than all this- they see

a land in which liberty hath taken up her abode...let but this, our Celestial goddess, Liberty, stretch forth her fair hand toward the people of the old world-tell them to come, and bid them welcome."


Patrick Henry saw the American Dream threatened once more with the proposed U.S. Constitution in 1787, as he believed it did not properly secure the basic rights of the individual, or of the States. He warned the delegates of the Virginia Ratifying Convention that "you are not to inquire how your trade may be increased, nor how you are to become a great and powerful people, but how your liberties can be secured." For, as Henry believed, if liberty is secured, it would provide people the opportunity to prosper and the country to flourish, thus continuing the American Dream.

Patrick Henry embodied the quintessential definition of the American Dream by living a life that focused on self-reliance and hard work. He once told a young man who was about to try his fortune in the



world to "Be of good courage, and remember the best men always make themselves." When Henry heard that one of his sons was intending to court the daughter of an affluent gentleman, he declared that he'd "rather see him independent by his own industry than ever so rich by the favor of any person he might marry." To Patrick Henry, the American Dream was not just based on the acquisition of wealth, but contentment: "Go to the poor

man," he asked the members of the Virginia Ratifying Convention: "ask him what he does. He will inform you that he enjoys the fruits of his labor, under his own fig tree, with his wife and children around him, in peace and security." This biblical reference to the vine and fig tree that Patrick Henry evoked—that is, the idea to be left alone to develop and nurture one's family and estate—was a dream that drove many of the first immigrants

to the New World, and continues to do so to this day. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in *Democracy of America* (1835), "The American Dream is the charm of anticipated success." 



# CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE (CONT.)

*(continued from cover)*

create a cozy and merry setting for the guests. The decorations, which are made almost entirely from materials found on the grounds in the tradition of the colonial time period, were created especially by the Red Hill Garden Club.

As beautiful as the setting is, the event is a feast for all the other senses as well! This year, a string trio provided music on the lawn for guests as they strolled from building to building. A delicious and hearty stew was served by the Charlotte County Lions Club to anyone who wanted a bowl, while the hearth kitchen was kept busy and bustling by Auxiliary members serving hot cider and cookies. Visitors were also invited to take a piece of the experience home with them in the form of a clove orange—a traditional 18th century craft that combines the yummy scents of citrus and clove and can perfume a whole room throughout the holidays.

The lovely 55-degree-day also meant that there was plenty of fun to be had out-of-doors. While Living History demonstrations went on in each of the historic buildings, our wonderful docents also took to the lawns to tell kids and adults alike about daily pursuits like spinning, and to teach those who had extra energy to spare how to play the tradition-

al lawn game of Patrick Henry's day using a hoop and stick.

As always, the Patrick Henry Auxiliary held their yearly fundraiser selling handmade boxwood kissing balls and wreaths. These pieces are a popular item every year, made from Red Hill boxwood so that folks can take home a piece of the 18th century Christmas cheer for their own homes. (For those gardeners among us: did you know that you can often purchase propagated cuttings of our very own Red Hill boxwood and Osage Orange tree through our gift shop? They are available seasonally as the Red Hill Garden Club is able to produce them, so feel free to ask us about them next time you're here!)

Join us for next year's Christmas Open House, we'll see you on the first Sunday in December!



“

*...a feast for all the other senses as well.*

”





## BBB (CONT.)

(Continued from page 5)

two-stepping, whirling, and twirling our more rhythmic attendees had to show off.

The seventh BB&B also marked the largest group yet of vendors—of both crafts and food—that the event has seen. There was something to please every palette, and to complement every beverage offering presented by our slate of craft breweries for those who purchased a tasting ticket. Artisan and craft vendors gave everyone a chance to start their holiday shopping with a number of unique and beautiful items for sale.

Aside from the Bluegrass, the Barbecue, and the Brew of it all, there were a myriad of other fun activities taking place across the grounds for visitors to peruse. Our docents offered tours of the buildings throughout the day and guests were able to explore the Visitor Center at their leisure. Author Jenny Cote was there doing signings of her newly released book *The Voice, The Revolution, & The Key*, which tells the story of Patrick Henry's most famous speech through the frame of her exciting series *The*

*Epic Order of the Seven*, and brings the historic events of the Revolution alive for kids.

This year's BB&B was attended by folks from at least 72 cities and towns across Virginia as well as visitors from 5 other states. Not a local? Start planning a visit for the Eighth Annual BB&B on November 3rd, 2018 and help us make the map of attendees for this year even more diverse! This event is a great excuse to make the trip you've been thinking about happen! 🖋️





# FACES OF RED HILL

GENE SMITH



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For this edition of “Faces of Red Hill” we interviewed Vice Chair of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation Gene Smith, who recently marked his ten year anniversary serving on the Board. Gene, who has been a tireless supporter of the Foundation’s mission, shared that his relationship with Red Hill actually started long before he joined the Board. In fact, his first visit to Patrick Henry’s home was as a seven-year-old boy, brought for a visit by his father. Also, he says, he is happy to have found other connections to the history of the place, saying “I am very proud of the fact that the minister at my church, Hat Creek Presbyterian, preached Patrick Henry’s funeral and that my four times great-grandfather,

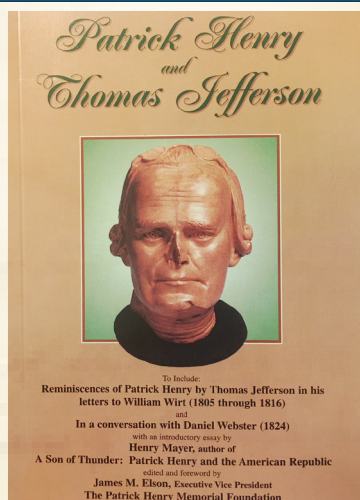
Major John Irvin of Hat Creek, served under Henry in the Virginia militia.”

Much has changed on the grounds since his visit as a boy, as preservation efforts have helped to restore and rebuild many of the structures that had been altered over the years, bringing them back to what they would have looked like in Henry’s day. But for the most part, the things that Gene loves best about the place are the ones that haven’t changed during those intervening years between his first childhood visit and his work for the Foundation now. His favorite places on the grounds are Patrick Henry’s grave and his law office, both original to the land from those final days of Henry’s life.

Asked what he thinks makes Red Hill so special, Gene says that “we have such a gem right here in southern Virginia---the last home and burial place of such an important founding father, Patrick Henry.” And he likes that “we are not huge like the homes of some other founders, but that is what makes us special--no glitz and glamour; just like it was when Henry chose to live here in the ‘garden spot of the world.’” There is a timeless quality in the things that make Red Hill remarkable—they are the things that made Henry himself fall in love with it, and it’s what keeps visitors coming back time and again. If you haven’t yet discovered the magic—what are you waiting for? 🖋️

*In an effort to recognize the people whose devotion and passion keep the site running, the Newsletter features a “Faces of Red Hill” series that introduces readers to the individuals who help Red Hill to thrive.*

“...what are you waiting for?”



## 25% OFF Patrick Henry & Thomas Jefferson

*By Henry Mayer, author of Son of Thunder  
Edited by Dr. James Elson, retired PHMF Director*

Valid in person or by phone order. To receive this discount by phone, please ask for Melissa or Bonnie. Not valid for website purchases.

VALID THROUGH APRIL 30, 2018

# Red Hill

## the Patrick Henry National Memorial

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*The Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation is a non-profit corporation devoted to education and preservation. The Foundation will promote through education and research programs the life, character, times, philosophy and contributions to posterity of Patrick Henry. As part of that mission, the Foundation is charged with maintaining and interpreting Red Hill, Patrick Henry's last home and burial place, as an historic site. A copy of the Foundation's most recent financial statement is available from the State Division of Consumer Affairs, Box 1163, Richmond, Virginia 23206.*

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### Officers of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation

Chair: Mark Holman

Vice Chair: Gene Smith

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## START PLANNING YOUR 2018 TRIP TO RED HILL!

Start 2018 off right by scheduling a group tour or living history experience for your class, club, or other organization! You can plan a special visit for your group by getting in contact with us any time by phone at 1-800-514-7463 or by email at [info@redhill.org](mailto:info@redhill.org).

## Upcoming Events

**May 29th**

**PATRICK HENRY'S BIRTHDAY**

**May 29th**

**13TH ANNUAL  
NATURALIZATION CEREMONY**

Witness the final step in the process of becoming a naturalized U.S. Citizen, and welcome the new citizens as they celebrate their new status in the country, all on Patrick Henry's 282nd birthday.