

# News From Red Hill

PUBLISHED BY THE PATRICK HENRY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION — BROOKNEAL, VA



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



## RIBBON CUTTING AND GRAND OPENING

On April 26th, the long-awaited day finally arrived for the grand unveiling of Red Hill's newly completed Eugene B. Casey Education and Events Center. Celebrations began Thursday evening with a VIP preview of the building for members of the Patrick Henry Descendants' Branch and special guests. Friday marked the main event with the official ribbon cutting and a catered party and presentations in *(continued on page 2)*

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## CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MRS. EDITH POINDEXTER

On the morning of March 11, 2019, Edith Cabaniss Poindexter, 91, went to be with her husband Jack Robinson Poindexter.

Edith Poindexter—or Miz P, as she was affectionately known at Red Hill—was honored at a celebration of life ceremony at the Red Hill Scatter Garden on April 26th. Those gathered together were able to share stories and memories of the formidable woman and historian whose work was so vital to Red Hill for many, many years. Special music was performed for the occasion by Lloyd Holt, and remarks were made by Hope Marstin, CEO, and Jack Schaffer, Board Member. Miz P's ashes were scattered by her family

including her son Cole Poindexter, who has inherited her role as Henry Genealogist. Ms. Marstin shared that Miz P, “told me many times she wanted some of her ashes to be scattered at this place so precious to her. She deserves to be here, she has earned the right to be here, and I am so happy she will always be a part of Patrick Henry's Red Hill. Let our hearts find comfort in this and let us hold onto our memories of her as precious gifts.”

Over the years Miz P. worked at Red Hill as Administrative Assistant, Curator and Genealogist, and was an honorary trustee of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation. *(continued on page 11)*



## GRAND OPENING (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

honor of the occasion.

The day was well-attended. Guests included local community leaders from our surrounding region including Campbell, Charlotte, Halifax, and Appomatox Counties, and the Town of Brookneal and City of Lynchburg. Also in attendance were representatives from the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, Virginia Tourism, the Halifax Chamber, the Brookneal Chamber, and the National Park Service. William Cook, President of Jamerson-Lewis Construction Co. who built the Center, and architects Stephen Blashfield and Jaclyn Miller from Glave & Holmes who designed the building were

present, along with construction workers and several sub-contractors, all of whom enjoyed the chance to see their handiwork complete and being enjoyed by the public. Of course, a Red Hill event would not be complete without Red Hill Staff, Board members, volunteers, donors, and descendants there to cheer on the festivities.

While the day began with rain, the skies cleared up just in time for the ribbon cutting. Hope Marstin, CEO, wielded the scissors, surrounded by several Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation Board members. Afterward guests were invited inside to enjoy the beautiful new space, decorated especially



with flower arrangements designed by the Red Hill Garden Club—including one eye-catching floral centerpiece that stood over three feet tall! Catered hors d'oeuvres were enjoyed by everyone.

Ms. Marstin welcomed everybody with some brief remarks recognizing several of the representatives attending and introducing the Board of Directors, after which Board Chair Mark Holman shared a few words. There was also a video presented especially for the occasion by Kevin Ernst of Haven Falls

Production Co., who has produced some of Red Hill's educational film media in the past.

With the Eugene B. Casey Education and Events Center now officially open for use, Red Hill is already enjoying the many opportunities available for programming with the option of such a beautiful, large indoor space. It provided the chance to host the luncheon for new citizens at our annual Naturalization Ceremony here on the grounds on May 29th. During our July 4th Independence Day

Celebrations it will be used for VIP seating during the festivities and for viewing the fireworks. Our newest event, Starry Night Star Gazing will also be held there on July 12th. We look forward to all of the many exciting events that will be possible in the new space in the days and years to come! 🌟




# From the Red Hill Collection



## ELVIRA HENRY'S BOX

Miss Susan Dabney graciously donated this interesting item to the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation in 1947. Unfortunately, not much is known about the piece, which may have belonged to Miss Dabney's great grandmother, Elvira McClelland Henry, the wife of Patrick Henry's youngest son, John.

The wooden box measures just over 10 inches wide and stands 4 ½ inches tall, with a mirror on the inside of the gold adorned, hinged lid. A few small compartments covered in faded purple velvet contain an assortment of small unidentified brass and ivory fittings. Two other compartments hold two small crystal bottles with glass stoppers. The most curious of the objects within this piece is an empty cardboard box with the inscription, "brooch with Patrick Henry's hair".

Do you know anything about the history of this piece, or can you identify any of the small pieces contained within the decorative box? If so, please contact Red Hill. You may be able to help further identify and interpret this heirloom treasure. 



“

*...invited inside to enjoy the beautiful new space...*

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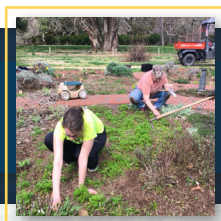


## PHDB REUNION

This spring 27 Patrick Henry descendants from the Patrick Henry Descendants' Branch at Red Hill gathered for their annual family reunion. It was

an eventful time for the descendants to be a part of several meaningful occasions taking place at Red Hill, in addition to their usual adventures in

touring important Henry-related sites in Virginia and getting to connect with one another. The Descendants' Reunion gives members of the PHDB



## Living History at Red Hill

### Colonial Medicine

Colonial Medicine is a subject many teachers ask for as they schedule their annual field trips. The science-based teachings and emphasis on what it was like to be "self-sufficient" draw the students in to a simpler time.

Patrick Henry's wife Dorothea would have the recipes for the medicines and would be the holder of the key to the medicine cabinet. Colonial women would pass down the recipes for medicines they learned from their mothers, to their daughters. African slaves and Native Americans also shared information on medicines which impacted the knowledge base of medicines immensely. The Henry daughters would begin learning about

the medicines and how to make them by age 12. Blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile were the four ailments medicines were used to treat. The use of laxatives and blood-letting was quite common.

In Southside Virginia, where plantations were spread miles apart, there were not many doctors available. Few doctors in the thirteen colonies were formally educated. The only college that offered a doctoral-level medical program was in Philadelphia. The next nearest medical schools were in Scotland and western Europe. Most doctors were actually apprentices to other doctors who themselves had been apprenticed or trained. For Red Hill, the closest doctor would have

been Lynchburg or perhaps Charlotte Court House (roughly a 30 minute drive by car today). Patrick Henry used the doctor based in Lynchburg, Dr. George Cabell, only called upon as a last resort.

There are several different types of medicines our docents show students how to make and tell what they would be used for. The first is water-based teas. Our docents show children lemon balm picked from our own herb garden on the property and how to make tea from it. This tea was used for stomach ailments and would be made just as we would make tea in our own homes today. Colonial women would take cheesecloth to make a bag (continued on page 12)



*In each issue "Living History at Red Hill" will introduce our readers to one of the living history programs that our visitors encounter.*



the chance to gather with their distant cousins and learn about their shared heritage.

This year's excursion took the

group to Point of Honor, the historic home of Patrick Henry's good friend and personal physician Dr. George Cabell. Once a sprawling 737 acre

plantation in Lynchburg, the estate was built by Dr. Cabell and his wife. The name Point of Honor came about thanks to stories at the time that the


## “...medicines they learned from their mothers...”

place was where locals would go to settle arguments through duels. The group also made a stop at Old City Cemetery, which is the oldest municipal cemetery still in use in Virginia and one of the oldest burial grounds in the country.

Back at Red Hill, there was also plenty going on for the cousins to take in. Friday was an especially full day of Living HIstory demonstrations and the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Eugene B. Casey Education & Event Center. The descendants actually got an early sneak peek into the building ahead of the public opening.

Of course, a big part of this year's reunion was giving the descendants a chance to attend the ceremony honoring the passing of Miz P.—Mrs. Edith Poindexter—whose impact on Red Hill and especially on the Descendants' Branch cannot be measured. The descendants attended

her memorial ceremony at which her ashes were scattered in the Scatter Garden at Red Hill. It was Miz P. who many years ago began the effort to create and track the Patrick Henry family genealogy and began to register descendants with Red Hill. Of the group she said, “I am proud of the fact that Red Hill has become a clearing house for Patrick Henry genealogy. The certified descendants have been a joy—they are proud of their heritage

and are so appreciative that we are interested in their lineage. In fact, in 1999 they paid me the high honor of making me a Lifetime Honorary Patrick Henry Descendant.” Many, if not most, of the descendants now active with the branch credit Miz P.'s work for helping them to get connected and learn about their roots. Sharing stories of her together during this reunion was a special time for everyone. 





## PIOUS WIDOW, LOVING MOTHER, SLAVE OWNER, SALT MINE MANAGER, AND PATRICK HENRY'S BELOVED SISTER:

On May 15, 1786, Patrick Henry wrote a letter to his younger sister, Anne (Henry) Christian. He offered his condolences to her, as she had just lost her beloved husband, William. William was also one of Patrick's dearest friends. "I am at loss how to address you my dearest sister," Patrick wrote. "Would to God I could say something to give relief to the dearest of women & sisters." Given Patrick's loving relationship toward his sister, it is surprising that so little is known about Annie, the steadfast and pious woman who became a widow and manager of a salt mine on the same day. Thanks to generous funding from The Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, I had the honor of researching Annie, her time as a widow, and her connection to her brother as the 2017 Red Hill Fellow. I include Annie as a main actor in my dissertation, which analyzes how *feme sole* (single) women managed their slave-manned enterprises in revolutionary and early national Virginia. I show how while Annie abided by the gender, racial, and legal conventions of her time as she managed affairs after her husband's death, she also proved a distinctive woman for her time. Annie learned the financial acumen necessary to run a business, fought off those who sought to undermine her authority, and did everything in her control to promote her and her family's self-interest.<sup>2</sup>

John Henry and Sarah Winston had eleven children, nine of whom survived to adulthood. The eldest child was William (1734-1785), followed by Patrick (1736-1799), then Jane (1737-1819), then Annie (1738-1790), then Sarah (1740-sometime before 1784), then Lucy (1743-1826), then Mary (1744-1766), then Elizabeth (1749-1825), and finally Susanna (1751-1831). Based on the correspondence available between them, Patrick was particularly bonded with Annie. Annie met her future husband, William Christian, through her brother. Colonel Christian was born in Virginia to a well-off Irish family. He had

served in the Seven Years' War before becoming interested in investing in western lands. William also served as a politician, holding a variety of local offices before and during the American Revolutionary War. He studied law under Patrick, befriending him and falling in love with his sister. William and Annie married in 1765, and Annie bore six children: Sarah (Sally), Priscilla (Prissie), Anne, John (Johnnie), Dorothea (Dolly), and Elizabeth (Betsy).<sup>9</sup>

In 1785, the Christian family and the enslaved people they owned moved to what was then the western part of Virginia, called Kentucky County (which would become the state of Kentucky in 1792). William owned a salt mine there called Bullitt's Lick (near present-day Shepherdsville, Kentucky), which Annie reported was putting them "amazingly in debt." The Christians "were in hopes by selling here to get clear of debt." They settled on Beargrass Creek (near present-day Louisville, Kentucky), about twenty miles north of Bullitt's Lick and the town that had grown by it, dubbed "Saltsburgh." Annie felt hesitant about heading out on the dangerous road west, and her brother did not want her to move so far away from him.<sup>13</sup> In a letter to Annie before she moved, he wrote:

*Pray don't go to Kentucky to live. You and I are already too far off, & in case of death no person to trust our children with. This often hangs heavy on my mind. I always hoped that you were not too far to give my Family Help in case of death & you & yr Husband are the only friend in reach.*<sup>2</sup>

Patrick cherished his emotionally close relationship with his sister and her husband, and mourned the distance between them when the Christians still lived in Virginia. So Annie and William's move farther into Kentucky County distressed Patrick. He worried not only about being far away from his sister

and friend, but also about who would help take care of his children in case he or Dorothea died. In a great twist of irony, it turns out that Annie and William should have had this worry—not Patrick.

Annie's entire world changed just a year after moving out west. On April 9, 1786, her beloved husband William died after an Indian attack. William had been partaking in an expedition against native groups north of the Ohio River. His companions reported to her what happened, which she relayed to Patrick: "When the fatal wound was given him he behaved with the greatest fortitude, he never murmured or complained the last, but said, 'My wound is mortal though I hope to get home to my family before I die.'" After riding on horseback towards home for two miles, William had lost too much blood and asked to rest. He told his friend that "he was not at all afraid to meet death & died resigned to the will of God, that it would be very melancholly news for his family to hear." After expiring "without a groan," William's friends brought his "remains home on the very day" he told Annie that he would return.<sup>2, 12</sup>

Patrick wrote to his sister a month after the dramatic and unexpected death of his own close childhood friend. Filled with sorrow, Patrick wrote that his heart "has felt in a manner new and strange to me; insomuch that while I am endeavoring to comfort you, I want to comfort myself." Patrick immediately turned to his Christian faith to bring him relief. He wrote, "I turn my eyes to Heaven where [William] is gone I trust." He admitted that while he and Annie surely could not see the "reasons of these dispensations now," he suggested they should "be assured they are directed by wisdom and Mercy." He felt thankful for "the many precious lessons of piety given us by our honored parents, whose lives were indeed a constant lesson & worthy of Imitation." He opined to his sister that "this is one of the trying scenes,



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF ANNIE HENRY CHRISTIAN

BY: ALEXI GARRETT

in which the Christian is eminently superior to all others & finds a refuge that no misfortunes can take away.”<sup>2</sup>

Annie’s profound grief at the loss of her husband becomes clear in the reply she wrote to her brother. After thanking Patrick for his “kind consolation,” she laments, “the distress & affliction it had pleased the God of Heaven to lay upon me,” especially while living in such a rural part of Virginia. Annie and her children lived in “a place where no human aid or assistance was offered” to them, since they had moved away from any “kind sympathizing friend or relation” who lived back east. It is clear that Annie abided by the patriarchal social conditions of the time, as she writes that the loss of her husband meant her “poor children and me, had no protector” anymore. Like Patrick, Annie had a strong faith in the Christian God. She praised the “Almighty for his great Goodness to me, in supporting me in all the trials his wisdom has seen fit to lay upon me.” She credits the Lord for raising her up and affording her “strength sufficient to bear all.”<sup>2</sup>

Annie’s main concern was the “welfare of [her] dear children,” in case “it should please God to call [her] off” to join William in Heaven. She felt grateful that she and her family still had “a great plenty of every necessary,” since William had “left us all possessed of an ample support.” But she wanted her brother to know her wishes in case the worse happened: if the Christian children lost both of their parents. Annie requested that Patrick and Col. Samuel Meredith Jr. (Patrick’s friend and other brother-in-law) take care of her children back in eastern Virginia. Annie wanted to support her children financially by “leaving all [her] negroes for the support of them,” whom the children could then hire out for additional income. Annie also wanted her land out west “to be sold & the money applied to the education of my children.” To continue their financial wellness, she requested that “the salt works continue to be rented out,” and

her “stocks and furniture immediately sold for ready money” for her children to make the move back east.<sup>8, 9</sup>

Although it may seem morbid to us, Annie’s requests to her brother regarding her hypothetical death were prudent. Premature death was much more common in early America than it is today, and the living more openly preoccupied themselves with making postmortem arrangements. In another letter most likely written that same month, Annie asks her brother to prepare more mourning rings for children, and to announce William’s death in the *Virginia Gazette* newspaper. Patrick replies that he has sent the new rings her way, and that he wears his own mourning ring as his sister “desires of me.”<sup>2, 3</sup>

It is clear in his letters to his sister that Patrick loved Annie dearly, and worried about her wellbeing. In the same reply, he writes that he hopes “soon to have a letter from you.” He continues: “Pray write me as to all your affairs particularly as to yr children & your own state of mind & what prospect you have before you.” After telling Annie that he would “re-sign my office next month” and move to Hanover to “relieve my wife [Dolly] & self being heartily tired of the Bustle we live in here [Richmond],” he continues to ask her to update him about her affairs: “Pray my dearest sister, let me know how I may serve you or them [her children].” He eagerly awaits her replies, writing “Let me know how many letters you have rec. from me, for I have written you 405 this last summer.”<sup>2</sup>

Although 405 letters was probably an exaggeration, his use of hyperbole demonstrates Patrick’s deep concern for his beloved sister. He felt sympathy for Annie: a woman who begrudgingly moved out west into rural territory with her family, enslaved persons, and no friends; whose husband and “ever dear friend” was killed only a year later, leaving her bereaved and reliant upon the Lord for strength in the wilderness; and whom sud-

denly had thrust upon her the great responsibility of managing the salt works operation, which she and her children would have to rely upon to “always be independent” financially.<sup>2</sup>

As a widow, Annie became legally classified as a *feme sole*. Before states individually legislated married women’s property acts starting in the mid-nineteenth century, white women fell under the common law of *feme covert* upon marriage. *Feme covert* or coverture status meant that women relinquished ownership of all personalty (generally, moveable goods) to their husbands. While women retained ownership of any realty (generally, unmovable “goods” such as land) they possessed before marriage, their husbands managed their real estate. But, if a woman like Annie became a widow or remained unmarried, she fell under *feme sole* status. While she lacked the power to vote or serve on a jury, she retained the same property rights as a man: she could own property, sue or be sued in court, and sign contracts. In early America, only when wives turned into widows, or when women remained single, could they exercise the same legal and economic power as married or unmarried men.<sup>10</sup>

William’s will stipulated that Annie should become the manager of Bullitt’s Lick as long as she remained a widow (*feme sole*). Since Annie’s only son John was five-years-old at the time, he could not yet take over the management of his late father’s salt mine. If a son was not yet of-age, then a widow like Annie legally took over the responsibilities of her late husband’s business. Patrick believed that Annie would find this new position burdensome, and in a letter to her thanked “kind Providence” for giving his sister “a good son-in-law so necessary at this time to take charge of [her] affairs.” That Patrick suggests Annie’s son-in-law (Alexander Scott Bullitt, who married Priscilla) is not surprising given the deeply patriarchal society in which early Americans lived. Middling and wealthy men,



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especially, were expected to take over family businesses and manage all accounting work, while their women were expected to raise children and keep house. Patrick assumed that Annie would want help, and that help should come from a close male family member. Since Patrick lived far away in Richmond (finishing up his second term as Virginia's governor), he thought Alexander seemed like the best candidate to assist Annie in her daunting task.<sup>2, 7</sup>

William's will also stipulated that the salt mine was "to be applied to the payment of his debts." So, Annie became responsible for paying off debts that William had incurred while running the business. At first, Annie seems like a typically ill-informed, wealthy wife of this era. She wrote to her mother-in-law that she had been "much perplexed how or in what manner to conduct matters," and felt "Intirely unacquainted with my dear Mr. Christian's affairs." While that may have been true to some extent, Annie certainly sold herself short: there is proof that while William was alive, he trusted Annie to understand at least some parts of the business on her own. In a letter he wrote in 1783, William relayed to his wife the details of business agreements he made while he was away in Richmond. After detailing that he ordered "a Waggoner" to carry a load of things to their home, he gave directions of what to sell and for how much. For example, he warned his wife that a "Buchel of salt...must not be sold under 2 of ready money," since "credit is almost unknown here." He suggested that if she could "purchase Ginzeng for a horse," that she "could let some salt go; but it [was] not worth while to sell salt alone." He then details the variety of prices for ginseng, butter, hemp, and tobacco, implying that Annie knew to not sell short of these items' going price. He asks Annie to pay off a debt for him, writing "Out of the black silk for Bonnets I expect you can pay the Mansfields." William's letter demonstrates that Annie knew the

language of item and prices, and the names and needs of buyers. "Intirely unacquainted," indeed—in the same letter to Elizabeth Christian (in which she claims she is "Ignorant" of her husband's accounts), Annie dedicates the most ink to relaying her detailed plans to pay off the exactly-calculated debts of more than a dozen different people, whom she individually names.<sup>2, 5, 7</sup>

Regardless of Annie's competency with the salt mine accounts at the beginning of her supervision, letters and receipts demonstrate that she grew into a management role over time. Soon after William died, Annie wrote a panic-stricken letter to Anne Fleming (William's sister), in which she worried greatly about two of William's creditors who acted "very pressing" towards her so soon after her late husband's passing. After putting "them off a while," Annie hoped "to raise a great deal of money this winter from Salt" to pay them back. Throughout that summer, Annie wrote dozens of orders to the managers at Bullitt's Lick to pay creditors back—and to pay the workers at the mine—with salt and other dry goods from her late husband's account. Annie wrote terse, short orders at first. For example, she wrote to one manager "Be pleased to let the Waggoners have sixty Bushells ^ of Salt," and a month later to another, "Please to pay Mr. Robt Bailey one Bushell & a Gallon of Salt."<sup>5, 6</sup>

But as she became more comfortable with the accounts and transaction processes of the business, Annie's confidence grew. A year later, she wrote a letter to an unknown correspondent who worked for her at the salt mine. After requesting the correspondent to go after Mr. Pryor for failing to provide her enslaved man Harry with the clothes Mr. Pryor promised he would provide Harry, she includes a P.S. In it, she writes that "Capt. Edwards tells me Mr. R. Donne has sold a large gudgeon at Saltsburg for 7 bushels of Salt. Please to desire Capt. Sturgus to prevent any thing

there being desposd of in future. I wish you to see about the old Kettles what number are there, and mention to him the above circumstance." After a year of practicing her management skills, Annie felt comfortable directing her managers to do as she asked—including warning or punishing disobedient workers—in order to run the mine at a profit. A year after that, in January 1788, Annie wrote to her manager Captain James Asturgus to alert him that two men would soon come down for "two Loads of Salt," or "40 bushels each." She asked that the manager should give the men their loads. Then, she gave James a stern reminder about accountability: "I hope Sir, you are very perticular in keeping an order book—to prevent mistakes." Whether she was reprimanding James for an earlier error, or simply reminding him of his duty to manage the mine well, it is clear: after two years of managing Bullitt's Lick, Annie became not only confident, but shrewd and exacting as she created order at her salt mine.<sup>5, 6</sup>

The best example of Annie fully inhabiting her role as manager comes in the form of a letter she wrote to her son-in-law, Alexander, in April 1788. Annie had taken up Patrick's advice to have Alexander help her with the settling of debts and managing of the mine. In October 1787, for example, Annie wrote to mother-in-law that Alexander had "looked over my dear Husbands acct. book," and "directed me to have Salt sold for Cash at what ever it may bring." But the relationship between the two had soured less than a year later, most likely because Alexander overstepped Annie's bounds. In April 1788, Annie wrote to Alexander that she was "surprized to hear you had leased [the salt works] out for Seven years, a term I cannot agree to, I intend to rent them yearly until the debts are discharged." She subtly reminded Alexander of her legal power over the management of the mine: as little Johnny's mother and legal guardian, her decisions outweighed his as she worked to secure



## BY: ALEXI GARRETT (CONTINUED)

Johnny's rightful inheritance: "Saltsburg is Johnnys whole dependence I wish to carry on the works in a manner most conducive to his interest." She ends her letter implying that she would let Alexander continue helping her, but on her terms and through her chosen conduits: "Mr. Woolfolk will inform you of the Amount of Profits arising from Saltsburg for two years past." Indeed, when Annie wrote to her mother-in-law the year before that she was "determin'd to be frugal as possible & use all my endeavors to get the debts discharged," she meant it. Even if it meant fighting off her son-in-law for complete control of the mine, Annie did whatever it took to secure the continued welfare of her family.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to determine the exact amount of debt Annie had to pay off upon William's death. And given the many records she kept for various creditors and debtors during her time as manager, it is equally difficult to determine if Annie managed to pay off this debt in full. It is clear that upon William's death, the "handsome Fortune" he inherited from his parents passed onto Annie and the children, which left Annie "an Independent Fortune" that she would then pass onto her children after she died. Annie may have added to this fortune through her management of the mine, because Patrick later wrote that her children's fortunes were "ample." Annie worked hard as manager of Bullitt's Lick for four years before she succumbed to an illness that even a medical trip to the Caribbean could not cure. In May 1790, Annie Christian died in Norfolk, Virginia, a day after she returned stateside.<sup>5, 9, 12</sup>

Annie's will demonstrates her continued commitment to her children, even in the afterlife. "To her & her heirs forever," Annie left one enslaved person each to daughters Sally, Betsy, Anne, and Dolly. These enslaved men's names were Jim Lumpkin, Peter, James, and Titus, and Annie's will made them and their children legal property of the daughters.

To her son Johnny, Annie left the "Salt Works at Saltsburgh," as well as "the rest of my estate both real & personal," which included five hundred acres of land, "my Slaves, my Stocks, plate household goods, debts & other effects and estate." Annie's gendered division of property was common for this time in America. Typically, parents would bequeath moveable goods (such as furniture and enslaved people) to daughters, and give land and businesses to sons. They did this because when daughters married, they moved into their new husband's home, bringing along furniture and enslaved people as a type of dowry. When sons married, their new wives moved in with them into the family house located on family land. This division of property made sense in a patriarchal society that valued men over women and marriage over singledom.<sup>6</sup>

Annie trusted Patrick immensely, as she made her brother and two male friends the executors of her will. In a July 1790 letter Patrick wrote to his friend Col. William Fleming (who was the husband of Anne Fleming, William Christian's sister and Annie's close friend), he expressed sadness about the passing of "his ever honored Sister," as well as sorrow anxiety about the emotional and financial wellbeing of her children. For his nieces and nephew, Patrick wished that "they may be like [Annie]," whom he considered "that dearest of women." He felt proud that Annie had left her children "an Example worthy of their Imitation." But Patrick worried that the children were "so remote from me" living far away, that he feared "it will be out of my power to render them the Services I wish."<sup>5</sup>

To correct this issue, he suggested that Johnny be sent to "a public school as soon as age shall render it proper." Public schools existed in urban Virginia, not Kentucky County. (A later letter from Patrick a year later shows that he wished to send Johnny to the College of William & Mary.) Patrick also inquired about

the land that Johnny inherited, so that he could manage it for him before he came of age. He also suggested that the daughters "ought to have the joint assistance of all their Relations," since it was a "Time of life with Sally & Betsey when much depends on their companions & the Discretion of their conduct." Here, Patrick infers that Sally & Betsey were close to marrying age. Patriarchal conventions deemed it necessary for their family to protect the girls' virginity and therefore virtue. To add to the children's financial comfort, Patrick thought "it might be best for the negroes belonging to the Childn to brot in from Kentucky & hired out," and wondered if Kentucky was "not so safe for the Slaves" as compared to farther east.<sup>5</sup>

The reader may be surprised to learn that of all people, Alexander Scott Bullitt offered to take in his wife's siblings. Alexander and Priscilla had started living at the Oxmoor estate (which is still standing today in Louisville, Kentucky). A letter he wrote to Col. Fleming in July 1790 shows a dedicated family man: He felt "unfeignedly sorry for Mrs. Christian's death the loss her children have sustained is almost inexpressible," given "the difficulties of the Wilderness." If he were "certain that they were willing to Come out and Live with their Sister I should not Hesitate A Moment upon the Part I ought to act." A few days after Alexander wrote this letter, a family friend confirmed what we suspected about Alexander (based on Annie's previous interaction with him): Alexander had been a menace of some sort. But by 1790, he had changed for the better, as the friend wrote that "Col. Bullet is greatly reformed, I have now hopes of his being a useful member of Society." Alexander's change was timely. Since he was the executor of William Christian's will, and Annie was no longer alive, he had control of the salt mine until Johnny came of age. While Annie's daughters remained in Kentucky, Johnny lived in Patrick's household until his premature death of tubercu-



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF ANNIE HENRY CHRISTIAN

## BY: ALEXI GARRETT (CONTINUED)

lois in 1800.<sup>5, 9</sup>

As a descendant of the Bullitt family noted, most correspondence between Annie and Patrick was destroyed in a fire in the 1880s. How lucky we are, then, that the Filson Historical Society has housed the few letters between the siblings that still exist. A clearer picture of Annie, Patrick, and their post-revolutionary world can be painted from the letters held in the Bullitt Family Papers' Oxmoor Collection. A brief history of Annie Henry Christian's life shows she was a devoted wife to her husband, a pious woman throughout her whole life, a loving and concerned mother to her six children, a slave owner, and a business owner who grew into her management role. She was also Patrick Henry's beloved sister, and he, her treasured brother. Annie proved a woman both typical and extraordinary of her time: while she was a faithful wife, mother, and Christian, she also grew to become a competent manager of a salt mine after tragedy thrust her into this position. A study of Annie's life should encourage historians to probe further into the history of the Henry families—free and enslaved.<sup>8</sup>

For more secondary source information about Anne Henry Christian, please see:

Honor Sachs, *Home Rule: Households, Manhood, and National Expansion on the Eighteenth-Century Kentucky Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), Chapter 2: "To Live Independent."

Honor Sachs, "Reconstructing a Life: The Archival Challenges of Women's History," *Library Trends* 56 (Winter 2008) 650-666.

Gail S. Terry, "Annie Henry Christian (d. 1790)," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia

(1998– ), published 2006 ([http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Christian\\_Annie\\_Henry](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Christian_Annie_Henry)).

Gail S. Terry, "Family Empires: A Frontier Elite in Virginia and Kentucky, 1740-1815," Ph.D. dissertation (College of William and Mary, 1992).

Fredrika Teute, "Anne Henry Christian, A Frontier Woman," *Virginia Historical Society Occasional Bulletin* 44 (June 1982) 9-12.

### Footnotes

1. Bullitt Family Papers, Oxmoor Collection, Filson Historical Society

2. B937c F133: Henry M. Bullitt Genealogy, including copies of a family history he wrote

3. B937c F393: Anne Henry Christian Personal Correspondence, 1770-1787

4. B937c F396: Anne Henry Christian Business papers-orders, receipts, etc., 1786

5. B937c F394: Anne Henry Christian Personal Correspondence, 1788-1791

6. B937c F400: Anne Henry Christian Legal Papers, 1787-1791

7. B937c F29: William Christian estate (1786-1791)

8. B937c F32: William Christian estate (undated)

9. Edith Poindexter, "Patrick Henry's Siblings," for the *Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation* at Red Hill (2010).

10. Alexi Garrett, "'I have yet much to say about the Negroes': Catharine Flood McCall's Slave Enterprises in Early Republican Virginia," Masters of Arts degree, Corcoran Department of History, University of Virginia, May 2016.

11. Honor Sachs, *Home Rule: Households, Manhood, and National Expansion on*

*the Eighteenth-Century Kentucky Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 46-47.

12. Gail S. Terry, "Annie Henry Christian (d. 1790)," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia (1998– ), published 2006 ([http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Christian\\_Annie\\_Henry](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Christian_Annie_Henry)).

13. Gail S. Terry, "William Christian (ca. 1742–1786)," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia (1998– ), published 2006 ([http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Christian\\_William\\_d\\_1786](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Christian_William_d_1786))  
Col. Samuel Garland Meredith Jr.

14. "Reshaping Virginia [1877 to 1901]," Chronology by Period, *Virginia Memory: Library of Virginia* ([http://www.virginiamemory.com/reading\\_room/chronology\\_by\\_period/13](http://www.virginiamemory.com/reading_room/chronology_by_period/13))

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexi Garrett is a Ph.D. candidate in the Corcoran Department of History at the University of Virginia. Her dissertation, "Single Women and the Business of Slavery in Virginia, 1780-1830," examines how *feme sole* businesswomen managed their slave-manned enterprises in revolutionary and early national Virginia.

Alexi grew up in Iowa City, Iowa and received her B.A. in History, English, and Women's Studies from St. Olaf College. After graduation, Alexi received a Certificate in Publishing from the University of Denver, then dug up a Spanish silver coin at Historic Jamestowne, edited physics textbooks in New York City, and, finally, attended graduate school in Charlottesville. She served as the Patrick Henry Red Hill Fellow in 2017. She hopes to become a professor of early American history.

Please email her with any questions at [asg4c@virginia.edu](mailto:asg4c@virginia.edu).





“

*...so thankful for the life of Miz P.*

”

## MIZ P. CELEBRATION(Cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Thanks to her work the Patrick Henry Descendants' Branch was established. She was considered an authority on Patrick Henry genealogy and was made a life-time honorary member of the Patrick Henry Descendants' Branch by the Descendants. Many descendants were present for the ceremony, and shared their stories of finding out about their Henry family heritage through Miz P's efforts.

Miz P. is survived by two sons, Cole R. Poindexter (Judy) of Altavista, Blake C. Poindexter of Long Island; four grandchildren, Aaron Poindexter (Stacy) of Forest, Rachael Rutledge (Jason) of Evington, Lindsey Jackson (Evan) of Lynchburg, Sara Poindexter of Richmond; six great-grandchildren, Payton Poindexter, Ty Poindexter, Loden Cole Rutledge, Abbigail Poe, Summer Mitchell, Kayley Mitchell; one sister, Jackie Beales of Maryland; one brother Michael Cabaniss of Winchester.

Miz P., for many, was an integral part of the Red Hill experience. She shepherded staff, descendants, and visitors alike toward a deeper knowledge of Patrick Henry. In her own words she shared that for her “the greatest satisfaction is convincing the public of Patrick Henry's importance to our country.” Thanks to her tireless efforts there are scores of people who will not forget him. And we at Red Hill will never forget how blessed we were to have her in our midst as a mentor, cheerleader, researcher, and teacher.

Ms. Marstin expressed it best: “We are so thankful for the life of Miz P. We are thankful for the love she had for Red Hill, for Patrick Henry, and especially for each of us.”





## PRESCHOOL SINGALONG PROGRAM WITH THE CARYS

This year for our Preschool Program we were lucky enough to have beautiful weather to host the event outdoors on the historic grounds. Some 144 local preschoolers, teachers, and parents from four local schools joined us on the lawn, seated on rugs and blankets to enjoy the musical program led by Kim and Jimbo Cary. It was our largest event to date with the musical duo.

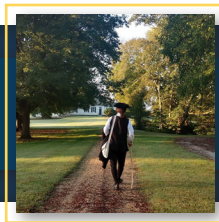
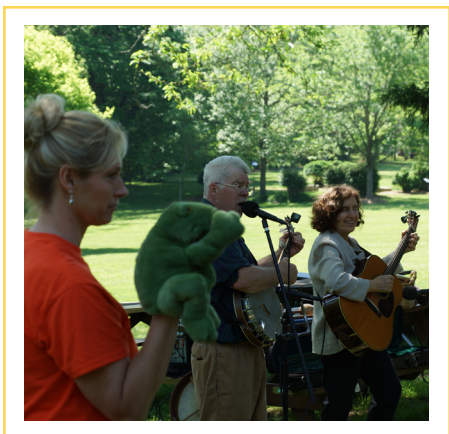
The Carys, who have been performing for over 20 years at sites around the country including the White House, led the group through song. Their musical repertoire spans

several generations of folk music, from colonial-era fiddle tunes to 19th century banjo to songs of the Civil War and the railroad. Their instrument choices are equally diverse, including the mandolin, guitar, whistle, and jaw harp.

Jimbo plays an especially interesting instrument known as a “gourd banjer,” which is a replica of a special kind of banjo dating to the 19th century that was popularly used in the African-American community. Meanwhile, Kim takes over on percussion, playing “the bones,” and usually bringing over 20 sets so that

the children can learn to play them, too, as they sing along with the Carys. Each student was able to play with a musical instrument, many of them fashioned from creative options like chopsticks and gourds.

In addition to the instruments, the Carys also bring several animal puppets with them to help teach the children. The puppets and the songs go together to help instill lessons about the natural world and Virginia’s wildlife. Sing-alongs include “Possum’s Tale is Bare” and “Please Keep Wild Animals Wild.”



## LIVING HISTORY (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 4)*

for the herbs to steep in. They would steep fresh herbs for around five to seven minutes and then drink.

The second type of medicine our docents show students is called infusion. To demonstrate infusion, we use chickweed. Infusions were made using hot water and more plant

material than for tea. It would set for two to four hours depending on how strong of an infusion was needed. A chickweed infusion would be used for skin itches. For example, we ask the student what would happen if you went outside and rolled around in the grass? The itching you would be left

with would be treated with the infusion by pulling out the plant material and rubbing the liquid over the affected area.

Another type of medicine made by the women in the house was cough syrup. In colonial days, cough syrup would be sweetened with honey



After the main performance, Kim ended the day by leading all of the students through the grounds. The children linked hands as they wound their way through Red Hill, singing the songs they had learned together.



The preschool program with the Carys is put on with help from a partial grant through the Virginia Commission for the Arts.



“

*...wound their way through Red Hill, singing...*

”

instead of sugar and would not have the cherry or grape flavoring found in stores today. Sugar was a very expensive commodity because it had to be imported. Plantations often had their own beehives or could find hives in the wild to harvest honey.

Spirit-based medicines were

also made using liquor. Students recognize dandelions, but learn that the plant was much more than a recognizable weed in the yard. Dandelions would be chopped up, roots and all, and put into alcohol for six to eight weeks to work its magic. After that time has passed, the color of the alco-

hol changes from clear to amber. Five to forty drops of this elixir would be put in an herbal tea, depending on the strength needed. This medicine would be used for respiratory problems. This mixture, called a “tincture,” can last up to ten years. Feverfew would also be made into a (continued on page 14)



## LIVING HISTORY (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 13)*


tincture to be used as a painkiller for arthritis, headaches, and migraines.

Olive oil-based medicines were also produced at home. Citronella geranium would sit in oil in a sunny window for six to eight weeks as well. The color changes from clear to amber as it sits in the sun. The oil would absorb into the skin making it last longer than spirit-based medicines. Marigold would be used in olive oil because it has antiseptic properties. Marigold would also be used as an astringent face cleaner.

Essential oils including lavender, spearmint, and peppermint would be made through a distillation process of melting down lard and the herbs grown at home. The oil would then be made into an ointment to treat cuts and burns. Our own docents make these balms to treat their own skin while volunteering.


The last item that our docents

show students is an onion. Onions have antiseptic properties and would be roasted over a fire until it grew soft. The juices would then be squeezed out of it and used to treat ear pain. Garlic could also be used for this and would oftentimes be made into cough syrup. The cure for worms, which was much more prevalent than one might imagine, could be found in onions as well. They would be cubed and soaked overnight in water. That water would then be consumed to kill worms in the body.

For more information on this topic, check out our giftshop or webstore as we have many small books available on Colonial herbs, foodways, and medicine. 



## IN MEMORY OF

Red Hill would like to say goodbye to a faithful admirer of Patrick Henry, Idona Lambert-Thomas. She passed away on August 6, 2018. Her daughter Gail Adams (seen in the photo with her mother and Patrick Henry Jolly) sent us these pictures from a visit to Red Hill. She said her mother loved Patrick Henry, and was thrilled to meet his 5th great grandson, Patrick Henry Jolly. 





# FACES OF RED HILL

15

## MELISSA CARWILE



Melissa Carwile is Red Hill's capable and dedicated Director of Operations. But before she became a valued member of our Red Hill staff, Melissa was introduced to Patrick Henry the way many of our favorite visitors are: as a student on a school field trip. In fact, she first encountered Red Hill thanks to her favorite school teacher—Mrs. Edith Poindexter. At the time, Miz P. was teaching elementary school, and brought Melissa on her first visit to Red Hill. The fondness from that experience stayed with her into adulthood, when she met Hope Marstin and accepted a part-time job helping out with programming. She says that from that point on, “the more I learned, the more I wanted to participate in the Auxiliary,

the visitor experience, and living history. I had a lot to learn about Patrick Henry and Red Hill, but I knew that both ignited a spark in my soul.” Nowadays her favorite spot at Red Hill is behind the Visitor Center looking out over the historic grounds and the view shed. “There is just a wonderful feeling on the grounds.”

Melissa says that even today one of her favorite things about working at Red Hill is watching the students who come through the Living History programs. Thanks to the staff and volunteers who share their passion for Patrick Henry's legacy and for teaching them about colonial life, it's possible to watch children learn for the first time and to share their excite-

ment about their new knowledge.

Another favorite event of Melissa's is the 4th of July Independence Day Celebration. She loves hearing Patrick Henry Jolly deliver his distant grandfather's iconic “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” speech, and says no matter how many times she hears it, his words still bring tears to her eyes. It's an experience she hopes many future visitors will have, and Melissa says that she wishes “all Americans knew how Patrick Henry's important role in the Revolutionary War provided for the liberties and freedoms that we have today.”

*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.*

“...passion for Patrick Henry's legacy...”



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# Red Hill

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[www.RedHill.org](http://www.RedHill.org)

Email: [info@redhill.org](mailto:info@redhill.org)

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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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## SUMMER IS A GREAT TIME TO VISIT RED HILL!

Schedule 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

**September 26-28th**

### LIVING HISTORY DAYS

Join us for our Homeschool Living History or Fall Living History Days! Call for more information or to register at 1-800-514-7463.

**November 2nd**

### BLUEGRASS, BARBECUE, & BREW FESTIVAL

11am to 5pm. Check out the event website at [www.bluegrassbarbecuebrew.com](http://www.bluegrassbarbecuebrew.com) for more information and to purchase tickets!