

News From Red Hill

Red Hill Patrick Henry
National Memorial

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PRECIOUS MEMORIES— HOW THEY LINGER

June 5th, 2021 ushered in a new era at Red Hill—one in which the descendants of those who lived and worked at Red Hill, both enslaved and free, were brought into the fold of the larger Red Hill story. Nearly 275 people from across the country attended the event dedicating and consecrating the Quarter Place African American and Enslaved Cemetery. This ceremony was only the first of what

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STUDENTS RETURN TO RED HILL FOR LIVING HISTORY

As Red Hill began moving toward a “new normal” following many months of necessary social distancing, one of the events everyone was most looking forward to was the day when we would be able to welcome student groups onto the grounds once more for our Living History Days. In summer 2021, we were at last able to do just that! The Volunteer Auxiliary hosted six YMCA Summer Camp student groups throughout the summer, guiding over 150 students through the hands-on experience of what life was like in early America.

Most of the students who took part in these camps had never been to Red Hill before, and most

had also not yet studied Patrick Henry in their classes—so the experience was all new territory for our volunteers to tread with them! Thanks to our volunteers, the students were able to partake in a variety of our Living History stations, including Flax to Fiber, Colonial Games, Blacksmithing, Pottery, Tobacco & Batteaux (which you can read more about on page 4), as well as guided tours of the grounds, museum, and orientation room.

Back at the outbreak of COVID-19, our staff and volunteers worked hard to pivot our educational materials and capacity to provide virtual ways *(continued on page 2)*

INDEPENDENCE DAY FESTIVITIES

Over 1,500 people took over the Red Hill grounds on Saturday, July 3rd for our Independence Day Celebration this year. Many were first-time visitors, though, as ever, there were plenty of faithful Red Hill guests, too, who were thrilled to be back after a year of hiatus for the event.

The enthusiasm of the crowd was palpable, and it seemed that even Mother Nature was in a good mood for the celebration, providing a day of clear sunshine and low humidity without even a hint of rain—the perfect kind of day for a picnic on the lawn. Or, for our VIP special ticket holders, a comfy seat on the patio of the Casey Education and Events Center. And picnic we did! Our food vendors included Clark Brothers Kettle Corn and Cotton Candy, Bistro Brothers BBQ, and the Charlotte County Lions Club. Almost all sold out of every morsel of food they brought for their happy customers. Additionally, guests who purchased the VIP ticket enjoyed ice cream, cake, and lemonade as well as reserved seating from which to enjoy the music and fireworks.

Throughout the day, live bluegrass music was provided by Blanks and Wright from the bandstand. Tony Wright, who makes up half of the musical duo, is a local

who grew up right here in the Brookneal area and remains a big fan of Patrick Henry.

Patrick Henry Jolly, a direct descendant of Patrick Henry as his 5th great-grandson, was a crowd favorite. His performance of Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech from memory is one of the unique attractions of celebrating Independence Day at Red Hill. He delivered it with the signature passion that still fires up our visitors today and gives them a little glimpse into the oratory gifts that earned Henry the nickname "Voice of the Revolution." Jolly also read the Declaration of Independence
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STUDENTS RETURN (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

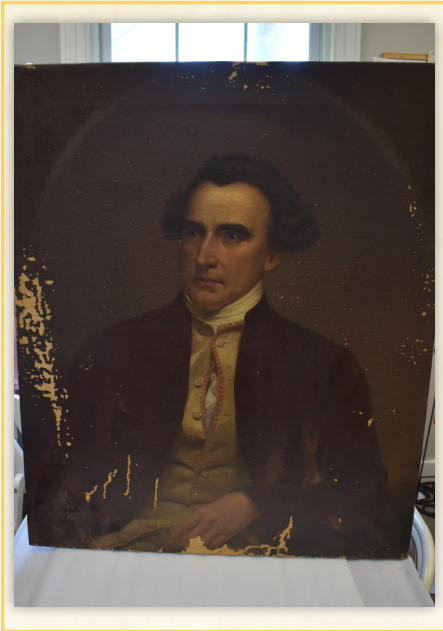
to continue to engage students. Through those efforts we were able to develop new ways to connect with classrooms and students who were unable to visit in person. It was rewarding working to innovate and create materials to keep students learning about the history of the nation in such unusual circumstances! But bringing students back to the grounds, and getting to watch

them touch and see and do new things that help them understand life in early America is undeniably something that we've all been looking forward to!

For many of our staff and volunteers, working with the student groups on these hands-on activities is a highlight of working at Red Hill, and the students' irresistible excitement and enthusiasm has

certainly been missed in the time since they were last able to visit us for Living History Days. The YMCA Summer Camp students had a wonderful time here—but our staff and volunteers enjoyed it just as much, thrilled to be teaching again surrounded by the tangible beauty and timelessness of Red Hill! 

From the Red Hill Collection



JUNIUS BRUTUS STEARNS PORTRAIT

In February 2021, the staff were made aware of an auction in Los Angeles, California that included an exceedingly rare find: a portrait of Patrick Henry. Junius Brutus Stearns (1810-1885), a well-respected American artist, painted this rendition of Patrick Henry sometime between 1835-1880. As the auction began, the estimate for the portrait was surpassed almost instantaneously. Clearly, the Edith Poindexter Collections Fund resources would be insufficient to purchase this portrait. Fortunately, Toby Winston, a descendant of Patrick Henry, saw the importance of this object and generously offered to help ensure this portrait would hang in the museum at Red Hill.

Upon arrival, Sasha Erpenbach and Cody Youngblood unpacked the portrait, using their training as museum professionals to employ best practices. It became obvious the deteriorating painting would need immediate conservation. The original paint flaked off around the edges, and a large section of Patrick Henry's folded hands were already missing.

Mark Wittl, a conservator based in Roanoke, Virginia agreed to complete the conservation work on the portrait. He began by documenting the condition of the front and back before cleaning the portrait. After removing the stretcher bars, Wittl placed a new canvas behind the current one, and placed it into a vacuum press. This successfully re-adhered the flaking paint to the new canvas, thus stabilizing the portrait to prevent more paint loss. He then began to fill in missing parts of the work as preparation to rebuild the paint layer. Varnishing and framing the painting completed the work.

The cost of proper conservation is not inexpensive. Yet again, generous donors stepped up and pledged to pay for this work. Lowell & Judith Kreeger, of Ohio, have assisted with other Henry artifact conservation in the past, and were kind enough to take this on as well. The staff received the completed portrait at the end of August, and it now hangs in the E. Stuart James Grant Museum Room, serving as a testament to how important donors are to the collections at Red Hill. 🖋️

“

...the tangible beauty and timelessness of Red Hill!

”



JUNE 5TH (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

will in future become an annual event as we continue to expand our knowledge and understanding of everyone who was and is part of the full tapestry that makes

up Red Hill's history.

The event began with a processional led by the Kuumba Dance Ensemble, a dance company whose mission is to preserve and share the art form of

Western African Drum and Dance in the Lynchburg area. Traditional spirituals, hymns, drumbeats, and African dances were performed as the group walked toward the cemetery down the Quarter



Living History

at Red Hill

Tobacco & Batteaux



With the reopening of Red Hill for student groups and Living History Days this summer, the Auxiliary has added a new station to its repertoire. Tobacco and Batteaux (French plural for boats) covers the history of both the crop and the primary method of its transportation in colonial Virginia.

Bruce Cumbie, a retired educator, headed up the development of this station by constructing a 1/12th scale batteau with hogshead barrels to show students how Virginia's "green gold" cash crop was moved from field to market. The station is introduced

with a presentation sharing a brief history of tobacco production in Virginia, starting with John Rolfe. Rolfe (who may otherwise best be known for his connection with Pocahontas) was responsible for improving tobacco cultivation as an export crop for the Virginia colony all the way back in 1612, when he introduced a milder variety from Trinidad. Its sweeter flavor than the native tobacco from Virginia made it much more readily marketable to English settlers, as well as to the profitable European market. After sharing a bit of the history, Cumbie shows the students

what actual tobacco seeds look like. Tobacco produces one of the smallest seeds used in commercial farms still today. There are nearly 330,000 seeds per ounce!

In Patrick Henry's day, enslaved fieldworkers produced roughly 20,000 pounds of tobacco annually on around 40 acres of land. This accrued nearly 150 pounds sterling—enough to build a two-story home in the 1790s. It is likely that for this volume of tobacco, Patrick sent three batteaux to market filled with hogshead barrels, which are likened to shipping containers today. One of these boats

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

Place Trail. Reverend Dr. Ceasor Johnson, of Spring Hill Baptist Church in Brookneal, shared words of hope which emphasized the importance of memory. “We’re here to say that they were here,” he

said of those buried in the cemetery, “they contributed, and they left a legacy of love.”

Johnson’s words were followed by a reading of 40 names. These names were those that had been identified as

the individuals interred in the cemetery through extensive research by Sasha Erpenbach and Peighton Young. The reading was a solemn and emotional moment for those present to reflect on the

(Continued below)

“...a solemn and emotional moment for those present...”

(Continued from above)

significance of the occasion.

After the ceremony, all visitors enjoyed a lunch on the main grounds, along with the opportunity to mingle together and share their family’s stories. The afternoon concluded with poetry readings by Dr. Muriel Mickles, Interim President of Danville Community College, an interpretive presentation by Gloria Robinson Simon, a history of Red Hill by Ramona Battle, and a closing performance of drumming and dancing by the Kuumba Dance Ensemble.

To be able to bring Henry Descendants together with descendants of Red Hill’s enslaved population, along with staff, volunteers, board members, and community members made for a very memorable day. To learn more about the Quarter Place project and what this event represents in the larger efforts going forward at Red Hill, you can visit www.redhill.org/quarter-place.



18TH CENTURY PHYSICK AND THE MERCURY CURE FOR PATRICK HENRY

Patrick Henry was the quintessential Virginia patriot. His passionate oratory was the spark that lit the fire of revolution when America sought to elevate her status from a loose assemblage of subordinate colonies under British King George III to a liberated and united confederation of independent states. Patrick Henry's passion and vigor as a founding statesman was notable, but it began to wane in 1797 due to ill health.¹ A steady, two-year decline occurred until his life's end at age 63. On June 6, 1799, at the guarded advice of his personal physician Dr. George Cabell, he ingested the contents of an iron vial containing about one tablespoon of liquid mercury. This raises several questions. What was the supposed benefit of such a medicine? Could it cause harm? Was Dr. George Cabell a "quack" or was he trained to understand what he was doing?² Why would Patrick Henry knowingly swallow a potentially lethal dose of medicine?

The practice of the art of medicine in the 1700s was called "Physick" or "Physic." It was a discipline ruled more by philosophical principles than science. In the fifth century BCE, Greek physician Hippocrates Asclepiades gave organization to the healing arts and his postulates became the most widely held explanation of the cause of illness for hundreds of years. He hypothesized that an imbalance of one of the Four Humors (blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm) was the origin of illness; this theory was advanced to refute belief in evil spirits.³ "Humorism or Humoralism" theory predominated until the "Age of Enlightenment" in the mid-1700s when scientific experimentation began to refute it. It is known that Dr. George

Cabell subscribed to the tenets of humoral medicine as did most physicians of his day, therefore this is how he might think about a patient with an infection: infections manifest with a rapid pulse, nausea, vomiting, fever, and flushed skin leading to the presumption that the cause is a disorder of the blood humor. The treatment prescribed would be bloodletting to rid the body of the "bad" blood. Over-treating can have disastrous results as it did with America's first president, George Washington. The majority of Physick treatments relied on the elimination of "bad" humors prompting the doctors to use purging, blistering, poultices, cathartics, and induced vomiting for their therapies.

Physick was unencumbered by controlled experiments or regulatory governance and anyone wishing to engage in the art of healing could do so. Competing theories about how the human body could be cured of an illness were regularly advanced and defended passionately. Since only wealthy medical students could afford to go to Europe to train in a more enlightened practice of medicine, American medicine and the knowledge of those who were skillful in it lagged behind the Europeans. That began to change in 1765 when the first medical school in America was founded by Benjamin Franklin at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Before then, human dissection had not been a part of the apprentice method of medical training and the inner workings of the body were a mystery; cause and cure were discernible only from the external signs that could be observed or produced (e.g., excitability, flushing, pallor, stupor, fever, rapid pulse, etc.).

Dr. George Cabell (1776-1823) of Lynchburg was among the

first of Virginia's physicians to earn an official medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1790. Equipped with the best education and skills of his day, he was considered by the public to be an excellent surgeon and apothecary (one who dispensed medicines) and from this, one may conclude he was a superior medical person. Patrick Henry chose Cabell for his personal physician because he was the best in Virginia. Through the doctor-patient relationship, he and Henry became close friends. Though separated by a hard day's ride of some 30-40 miles, they visited together often to discuss political, economic, social, scientific, and spiritual issues. Patrick's son Alexander Spotswood Henry would later marry George's daughter Paulina Cabell. These men were family and there can be no doubt that the medical treatment of Patrick Henry was rendered carefully with respect and affection.

Lacking the decision-making tools of x-rays and CT scans used today, Mr. Henry's exact diagnosis is conjecture based on his history and the physical examination of Dr. Cabell. Henry's final illness began in early April and lingered for two months until his death on June 6, 1799. Mr. Henry summoned his doctor, explained his symptoms, and this led to a diagnosis of "the gravel" or kidney stones.⁴ Kidney stone symptoms might include colicky abdominal pain spreading into the groin area, back pain, blood in the urine, nausea, vomiting, signs of abdominal swelling and infection. While painful, they were usually not fatal. These symptoms are also common to other diseases such as cancer of the bladder and bowel.

According to the principles of 18th century medicine, the "regi-

BY CHARLES E. DRISCOLL, M.D., FAAFP

men" (first stage of a planned therapy) should begin with a proper diet, an appropriate physical activity such as riding on horseback, and the direct use of medicines adapted to treat the external symptoms of the disease.⁵ Medications might include extract of dandelion, opium, and decoctions of carrion flower, goldenrod, or snow-berry. Symptoms were intermittent yet gradually worsening in severity so as to appear severe by the first of June. Dr. Cabell's diagnosis was "intussusception of the intestine" (one part of the bowel sliding into another blocking any passage of food or fluid). Intussusception is most common in children three years of age and under, but it is rare in adults. This makes Cabell's primary diagnosis unlikely. When it does occur in adults it is usually secondary and results from another condition such as a malignant tumor, polyp or an abscess of the bowel wall. Obviously, a surgical procedure is required to correct these problems, but surgery was not a consideration for diagnosis or treatment due to a lack of anesthesia and aseptic surgical practices.

Since no post-mortem exam was done on Mr. Henry, one cannot arrive at a definitive conclusion as to the exact cause of his terminal illness, but it is possible to choose a more probable cause. Considering the insidious onset of ill health, perhaps over the last two years of his life, his condition appears to have culminated in an acutely fatal illness at the age of 63. Intestinal malignancy resulting in complete obstruction or peritonitis from a ruptured bowel appear more likely. The apothecary medications were palliative at best; an agonizing death awaited the fiery statesman. Heroic measures were considered as a "last ditch" effort. Dr. Cabell realized

full well that he had no reliable cures left in his armamentarium. Together he and his patient discussed the need to relieve the obstruction of the bowel and Patrick Henry, being a spiritual, Christian man, knew his fate was in the hands of his God. Not only did he know he was about to die, but he had full realization that no matter what was tried, success was unlikely.

Dr. Cabell proposed using inorganic liquid mercury which was 20 percent heavier than lead and he likely had the impression it might wiggle its way through the intestines and push the bowels back into place. Dr. Cabell recognized the signs of peritonitis and inflammation were already present (causing paralysis of the smooth muscle of the bowel), yet he appeared to be hoping for a mechanical advantage to unblock the obstruction. He advised that the dose required to deliver the desired effect would probably be fatal if it were absorbed before the blockage opened up. Rapid death occurs from absorbing inorganic mercury into the blood stream causing disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) with a congealing of the blood in all the small blood vessels causing kidney death, cerebral stroke, lung irritation, nerve damage, and vomiting. Cabell, who at that time was something of an agnostic, was influenced by the piety of his patient; he went outside to render a tearful prayer for God's help with this intervention.

These are the final moments of Patrick Henry's life as observed and recorded by his family:

"I suppose, doctor, this is your last resort," Henry said as he accepted the vial of mercury.

"I am sorry to say, governor, that it is," Dr. Cabell replied. "Acute

inflammation of the intestines has already taken place; and unless it is removed mortification will ensue, if it has not already commenced, which I fear."

"What will be the effect of this medicine?" Henry asked.

"It will give you immediate relief, or . . ." Cabell was unable to finish his sentence.

"You mean," Henry said, "that it will give relief or will prove fatal immediately?"

"You can only live a very short time without it," Cabell explained, "and it may possibly relieve you."

"Excuse me, doctor, for a few minutes," Henry replied, drawing his silk cap down over his eyes. Holding the vial of mercury in his hand, Henry prayed briefly for his family, his country, and himself. He swallowed the medicine and spoke quietly for a while with his family and physician. Finally he breathed "very softly for some moments" and died.⁶

Epilogue

Patrick Henry's life ebbed away, but not his legacy. He shall always be revered as one of the finest of America's statesmen and lawyers. He mastered the power of eloquent speech and had a vast knowledge of Virginia and international law. He served in the Virginia House of Burgesses, as a delegate from Virginia to the Continental Congress, as a patriot soldier in the War for Independence, and as the first and sixth Governor of Virginia. Though most of his speeches were not transcribed, they were so memorable that many were published in paraphrased form by his admirers. As a lawyer, he succeeded in most of the cases he tried and served as an example to the legal profession until his retirement from public

18TH CENTURY PHYSICK AND THE MERCURY CURE FOR PATRICK HENRY (CONT'D)

service in 1794. Though urged to run for President of the United States in 1796, Henry was aware of his declining health and probably worried about the impact the death of a sitting President would have on that office; he refused and continued his life as a gentleman farmer.

Dr. George Cabell was born November 1, 1766 and survived his famous patient by 24 years. Dr. Cabell's skill in surgery was renown and his patients had great confidence in him. Perhaps in some measure a result of his experience in treating Patrick Henry, Cabell worked to reform the doctors of his day in their over-zealous use of calomel (mercury) and jalap (combined with calomel to produce a powerful purgative). Dr. Cabell advocated reducing the conventional large doses of mercury and offering ice, cooling drinks and an alteration in diet instead to reduce inflammatory symptoms. The reputation of Cabell became so great he found himself in the difficult position of being regarded with such admiration that his patients expected miracle cures, even escape from death.⁷ In 1806 he began a ten-year project of constructing one of the finest Virginia mansion homes (Point of Honor). As a gentleman farmer, he raised tobacco on a large plantation that neighbored Mr. Thomas Jefferson of Poplar Forest, his sometimes business partner. Dr. Cabell was said to be more favorably disposed to the Christian religion in his maturing years. He died as a result of a fall from his horse on December 27, 1823. 🐾

CITATIONS

1. WILLIAM WIRT, *SKETCHES OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF PATRICK HENRY* (PHILADELPHIA: JAMES WEBSTER, 1817).
2. A GENERAL TERM OF THE 1700'S REFERRING TO ALL MEDICAL PERSONS, WITH OR WITHOUT FORMAL SCHOOLING
3. VISIT WWW.FUTURELEARN.COM/INFO/COURSES/ROYAL-FOOD/0/STEPS/17055 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE FOUR HUMORS THEORY.
4. JON KUKLA, *PATRICK HENRY: CHAMPION OF LIBERTY* (NEW YORK: SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2017), 1.
5. SHARON COTNER, KRIS DIPPRE, ROBIN KIPPS, SUSAN PRYOR, EDS., *PHYSICK: THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF MEDICINE IN WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA, 1740-1775* (WILLIAMSBURG, VA: THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION, 2003), 24.
6. KUKLA, *CHAMPION OF LIBERTY*, 1.
7. MARGARET COUCH CABELL, *SKETCHES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF LYNCHBURG* (RICHMOND, VA: C.H. WYNNE, 1858), 208.



Elemental Mercury, the only metallic element that is liquid at room temperatures, commonly known as "quicksilver"



Dr. Driscoll stands beside Patrick Henry Jolly on the set of our orientation video, in costume as Dr. Cabell and Patrick Henry.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Charles Driscoll is a retired Lynchburg physician and educator. He is a graduate of the University of Iowa College of Medicine and has a particular interest in the history of American medicine. Dr. Driscoll is the author of two books about Civil War medicine. He is also a charter member of the Patrick Henry Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

For those who have visited Red Hill and viewed our orientation video, you may recognize Dr. Driscoll's face. In fact, he portrays Dr. Cabell, the subject of this article (pictured above)!

MUSIC AT RED HILL BY MARK COUVILLON

Walking the peaceful and quiet grounds of Red Hill today, it is easy to forget that it was once a thriving and active plantation. During Patrick Henry's time, the air was filled with the clanking of the blacksmith's hammer, the mooing of cows, the clucking of chickens, and the chopping of axes on wood. Also absent today is the sound of music and singing that once filled the air at Red Hill.

Patrick Henry's grandson, William Wirt Henry, wrote that upon his grandfather's retirement at Red Hill "his love of music seems to have revived, and he is described as fond of entertaining himself and his family with his violin and flute and often improvising the music."¹ According to another grandson, Patrick Henry Fontaine (who lived most of his first twenty-five years of life in the presence of his famous grandfather), the old orator "often composed with much facility little sonnets adopted to old Scotch songs which he admired, for his daughters to sing and play."² One song played at Red Hill came from the pen of Patrick Henry's 14 year old daughter, Martha Catharina, which survives in the Library of Virginia:

"Free Mason's Song"

*Behold my Dear Bretheren in the Lodge we
have met
And in proper Order together doth set
Our secrets to none but ourselves are
known
Our actions to none but Freemasons are
shown
And lets join my Brother Masons for I love
to raise the song
All virtues of life to a Mason belong*

*Let Brotherly love be amongst us revived
Let's stand by our laws that are wisely*

*contrived
And then the whole glorious Creation shall
see
That none are friends so loving as we*

Old Scotch tunes that were popular during Henry's time included, "Allen Water," "Will you go to Flanders," "Lady Charlotte Murray Reel," "Bonnie Annie," "Highland Lady," and "Farewell to Whiskey." Another tune frequently heard throughout homes and taverns in the eighteenth century was "Over the Hills and Faraway" from the Beggar's Opera, which was first performed in Virginia in 1750. Two main sources of music in colonial Virginia came from traditional songs that had been passed down orally from generation to generation, and printed broadside ballads. Some tunes that would have been familiar to Patrick Henry and his family, which are still familiar today, include: "Three Blind Mice," "Pop Goes the Weasel," "The Bear Went over the Mountain," "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and "Yankee Doodle."

Elizabeth Lyons, the great-granddaughter of Patrick Henry, told biographer, George Morgan, upon his visit to Red Hill in the early 1900s, that: "Towards the close of the day, in summer-time, he [Patrick Henry] took the breeze on the lawn. Around him played his children, to whom he was greatly attached, and whom he treated as companion and friends. He was very fond of music, and often-times the sweet notes of his flute or violin, echoing on the evening air, broke the stillness of the valley."³ This romantic twentieth-century picture of Patrick Henry in his retirement years is supported by Gov. Henry Tazewell, who visited "The Voice of the Revolution" at his home in Prince Edward

County, where he found "him in the shade of an Oak playing the fiddle for the amusement of a group of girls and boys."⁴ Patrick Henry's cousin, George Dabney, also recalled that Henry's "visitors have not unfrequently caught his children dancing around him with obstreperous mirth to the tune of his violin."⁵

Music could also be heard coming from Patrick and Dorothea's modest home on the Sabbath. According to early nineteenth century historian, Henry Howe, Patrick Henry "read Sherlock's Sermons every Sunday evening to his family, after which they all joined in sacred music, while he accompanied them on his violin."⁶ Some of the religious music sung at Red Hill likely came from Isaac Watt's Hymns and Spiritual Songs, which Henry owned. Among the songs found in Watt's 1707 book are: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Come ye that love the Lord," and his most famous hymn, "Joy to the World."

The violin (also referred to as a fiddle) was the most commonly played instrument in Virginia. Some were made in the colony, but most were imported from England: Cremona and Steiner's violins being the most commonly sold by Williamsburg merchants. Accounts of Patrick Henry's fiddle playing go back to his early twenties. His cousin, William O. Winston, mentioned how Patrick "frequently amused the guests at his father-in-law's tavern with his violin on which he performed very well." His friend and brother-in-law, Samuel Meredith, stated that Patrick "was an excellent performer on the violin," and Thomas Jefferson recalled, upon his first meeting with Henry at a Christmas party in 1759, that his "passion was fiddling, dancing and pleasantries."⁷ A persistent legend con-

MUSIC AT RED HILL

tends that Jefferson and Henry used to play duets together on the violin. Though possible, there is no contemporary evidence to support this claim.⁸

The violin was not the only instrument played at Red Hill. Listed on the 1799 estate inventory is a fortepiano. Valued at £45, it was one of the most expensive items owned by Patrick Henry. Invented in the early 1700s by Italian instrument maker, Bartolomeo Cristofori, the first known fortepiano in Virginia was purchased by Robert Carter in 1770. A year later, Lord Dunmore arrived in Williamsburg with a fortepiano, which he placed in the Governor's Palace, along with the three organs and harpsichord he owned. Unlike the harpsichord, which plucked the strings like a harp, the fortepiano struck the strings with padded hammers. The sound volume could also be varied on the fortepiano. The maker and date of the Henrys' fortepiano is unknown, but by the 1790s most fortepianos had a range of five or six octaves.

On display at Red Hill is a German (transverse) flute, which reportedly belonged to Patrick Henry. Next to the violin, the flute was the most common instrument played by males in colonial Virginia. The flute appears to have been the first instrument Patrick learned to play. According to Samuel Meredith, "when he [Henry] was about the age of 12, he had his collar bone broken, and during the confinement learned to play very well on the flute."⁹ Also on display at Red Hill is an English guitar that was owned by Patrick Henry's wife, Dorothea Dandridge. Unlike the modern 6-string guitar, the English guitar was a 12-string version of a Renaissance cittern with a flat back and

a tear-drop shape, tuned to an open C chord. Along with the guitar, evidence suggests that Dorothea was also able to play keyboard instruments. Two months after Patrick Henry married Dorothea, the 41-year-old governor purchased a harpsichord for the Governor's Palace.¹⁰ Due to the fact that Henry did not think it appropriate to throw lavish balls or parties during war-time, the purchase of the harpsichord was likely a gift for his new bride.

Being able to play a musical instrument was considered part of a proper upbringing for both males and females. It not only provided self-discipline, but also entertainment for family and guests, as well as for personal enjoyment. It is known that Patrick Henry's daughters played on musical instruments, however, according to Spencer Roane, who married Henry's daughter, Anne, "these seemed not much to engage their father's attention."¹¹

In the eighteenth century, there were certain instruments that were considered "un-ladylike" to play. Musical instruments that distorted a person's facial features, like a flute or horn, or caused rapid or unflattering arm movements, such as the fiddle and drum, were reserved for men. As a result, colonial women were restricted by social norms to the harpsichord, English guitar, fortepiano, and by the late eighteenth century, the harp.

Patrick Henry is said to have come from a long line of musicians. On his maternal lineage, Edward Fontaine writes: "The Winstons of Virginia are the descendants of Welsh ancestors who were so distinguished for their poetical and musical talents among the bards of their chivalrous and romantic land that Sir Walter Scot has named the noble minstrel

in "Rokeby" Edmund Winston. This family has produced many sons and daughters highly gifted as... musicians."¹² There is no evidence that Patrick was formally trained in music. It appears that he was self-taught, just as he had been in the law. Samuel Meredith stated that Henry had "a nice ear for music," and he was described by Spencer Roane as being "a musical man." Along with the violin and flute, contemporary accounts state that Henry also "performed very well" upon the harpsichord, piano, and even the lute.¹³

Patrick Henry's musical talents likely aided him as an orator. Baroque musicians and theorists saw many parallels between the Greek and Roman art of rhetoric and music. According to ancient writers, such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, oratory employed rhetorical means to control and direct the emotions of their audiences and so persuade and move them. As such, musicians have often been described in early writing as 'harmonic orators.' Rene Descartes mentions how music, like rhetoric, arouses the passions in the listener just by sound alone. That is why oratory has often been described as 'a piece of music.' German composer, Johann Quantz, wrote in 1752: "Musical execution may be compared with the delivery of an orator. The orator and the musician have, at bottom, the same aim in regard to both the preparation and the final execution of their productions, namely to make themselves masters of the hearts of their listeners, to arouse or still their passions, and to transport them now to this sentiment, now to that. Thus, it is advantageous to both, if each has some knowledge of the duties of the other."¹⁴ Patrick Henry's contemporaries often described his eloquence


BY MARK COUVILLON

with musical references. After hearing the “Demosthenes of Virginia” speak in Congress, Silas Deane wrote to his wife, “In a letter to you I can give you no idea of the music in his voice.”¹⁵ Judge Spencer Roane told Patrick Henry’s first biographer, William Wirt, that his father-in-law “had a perfect command of a strong and musical voice, which he raised and lowered at pleasure, and modulated so as to fall in with any given chord of the human heart.”¹⁶ P. H. Fontaine declared that “the tones of his [Henry’s] voice were melodious as the notes of an alpine horn.”¹⁷

Music continued to fill the air at Red Hill during the nineteenth century. Patrick Henry’s youngest son, John (who inherited the family seat), played the violin, like his father. An inventory taken at Red Hill upon John Henry’s death in 1868 lists a piano (which was possibly the same one owned by his parents), a piano stool, and a guitar. John’s family was said to have been “very musical,” and in the evenings they would gather together in the parlor at Red Hill for musical entertainment. John Henry’s daughter, Emma Cabell (1838-1874) was an accomplished, formally trained pianist, and his daughter, Elvira (1829-1874), was known to have played the harp. Patrick Henry’s granddaughter, Maria Rosalie, who was born at Red Hill in 1818, also played the guitar.¹⁸ She was painted holding her guitar in 1837 by the famous artist, George Cook. Unlike her grandmother’s English guitar, Rosalie holds the more modern 6- string guitar, which first appeared around 1820.

Besides the music played by the Henrys at Red Hill, there was also music and singing that would have been heard coming from the fields, as well as the living quarters

of their enslaved workers. Through music, African Americans kept alive hope, resisted bondage, and eased the burdens of labor. Musical instruments like drums, gourd rattles, and banjars (the precursor of the banjo) could be made from items found around the plantation. The first European instrument played by blacks was the fiddle. Enslaved fiddlers often provided music at dances and parties for their white masters. Juba, a style of music that involves clapping, snapping, stomping, and making complex rhythms with one’s own body as a percussion instrument, would also have been heard coming from the Quarter Place at Red Hill after the work day was over and on Sundays.

Throughout the year, music can still be heard at Red Hill. Patrick Jolly, the 5th great-grandson of Patrick Henry, frequently performs on his violin to appreciative visitors; and each fall, the Bluegrass, Barbecue, and Brew Festival takes place on the grounds of Red Hill, which connects music, food, and beer with history; and in December, during Red Hill’s Open House, costumed interpreters can be found singing eighteenth and nineteenth century Christmas carols. 

CITATIONS

1. WILLIAM WIRT HENRY, *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondences and Speeches* (CHARLES SCRIBNER’S SONS, 1891), I: 518.
2. MARK COUVILLON, ED., *Edward Fontaine Manuscript* (PATRICK HENRY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, 2011), 7.
3. GEORGE MORGAN, *The True Patrick Henry* (J.B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY, 1907), 405.
4. MARK COUVILLON, *The Demosthenes of His Age: Accounts of Patrick Henry’s Oratory by His*

Contemporaries (THE PATRICK HENRY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, 2013), 112.

5. HENRY, *Henry*, 2: 518.

6. HENRY HOWE, *Historical Collections of Virginia* (CHARLESTON: 1845), 221.

7. ROBERT MEADE, *Patrick Henry: Patriot in the Making* (J.B. LIPPINCOTT, 1957), 91; MORGAN, *The True Patrick Henry*, 432; JEFFERSON TO WIRT, AUGUST 5, 1805, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

8. THE EARLIEST KNOWN WRITTEN ACCOUNT OF THE STORY COMES FROM THOMAS WATSON’S, *The Life and Time of Thomas Jefferson* (NEW YORK: 1903).

9. SAMUEL MEREDITH’S STATEMENT FOUND IN MORGAN’S, *The True Patrick Henry*, 431.

10. JOHN GREENHOW STORE ACCOUNTS, DECEMBER, 1777, CWF ROCKEFELLER LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.

11. JUDGE SPENCER ROANE’S ACCOUNT FOUND IN MORGAN’S, *The True Patrick Henry*, 438.

12. COUVILLON, *Fontaine Manuscript*, 2.

13. NATHANIEL POPE TO WILLIAM WIRT, SEPTEMBER 12, 1805, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

14. JOHANN QUANTZ, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiera zu spielen* (BERLIN: 1752).

15. SILAS DEANE PAPERS, 1789, 2: 181, CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

16. MORGAN, *The True Patrick Henry*, 447.

17. COUVILLON, *Fontaine Manuscript*, 10.

18. INFORMATION ON JOHN HENRY AND HIS FAMILY’S MUSICAL TALENTS FOUND IN JOHN HENRY FILE, RED HILL.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Couvillon is an historian, author, and former trustee of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation. His books on Patrick Henry include *Patrick Henry’s Virginia* and *The Demosthenes of His Age*, both of which are available for purchase in the Red Hill Museum Shop.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WITH THE VIRGINIA SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Though Patrick Henry's birth date is May 29th (he was born in 1736, making this year the 285th anniversary of his birth), we celebrated a day early this year, holding the party on May 28th so that our friends in the Virginia Sons of the American Revolution (VASSAR) could join in the festivities and honoring Patrick Henry's life and legacy with us.

The day began with a parade of colors and a salute by the VASSAR Color Guard. The VASSAR brought approximately 30 historical replica flags from the American Revolution to place on display lining the lawn leading to the front of Patrick Henry's house. Some of the flags they brought included: the Bennington flag, the Continental Navy Jack, the Pennsylvania Navy Jack, the Taunton flag, the Green Mountain Boys flag, the Sons of Liberty flag, the Pine Tree flag, and the Bunker Hill flag—just to name a few!

There were numerous representatives from VASSAR chapters across Virginia in attendance, and

each representative brought a wreath to lay on Henry's grave. One by one, each representative stood before Henry's grave and paid their respects with a salute or bow. It was a particularly moving portion of the day. Afterward, several state officers, including VASSAR President Jeff Thomas, gave remarks. The program was rounded out with a bang by the firing of rifles and of a small replica cannon on the grounds.

Once the official ceremony was over, everyone present enjoyed birthday cake and lemonade, as well

as the beauty of the Red Hill grounds on a clear May day. Visitors to Red Hill throughout the rest of the afternoon were also invited to enjoy the refreshments—a happy surprise for anyone who didn't realize that they had planned their visit for an auspicious day! 🍃



INDEPENDENCE DAY (CONT.)

(Continued from page 2)

in honor of the anniversary at hand. After his recitations, many visitors lined up to talk, take photos, and get autographs with him. You can watch a video of Patrick Jolly's electrifying performance on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/patrickhenrysredhill. Just click on the tab marked "videos"!

Though we were fortunate not to require their services this year, we were

thankful to have both the Brookneal Fire Department and the Charlotte County Rescue on site in case of any emergencies.

While this is a favorite annual event, with many elements that our visitors look forward to experiencing year after year, we also were happy to bring several new pieces to our guests for 2021. New interpretive signage located at all of the historic buildings, gravesite, and along the Quarter Place Trail made it easier for guests to guide themselves through the grounds. For those who wanted a guided experience, there was a new tour of the Quarter Place Trail and Cemetery added to the schedule of events for the day in addition to the docents providing interpretation in all of the historic

buildings, Henry's gravesite, the orientation room, and the museum. Our wonderful Auxiliary volunteers were also there giving Living HIstory demonstrations throughout the day, including stations for blacksmithing, spinning and weaving, flax to linen, and tobacco and batteaux. On the sprawling lawn, we provided a selection of colonial-era games, including wooden hoops and lawn bowling.

It was a beautiful day to be back for a favorite event for both our guests and the staff and volunteers who worked on it, after missing the chance to gather in 2020. We're looking forward to next year! Check out this and other upcoming events on our website to plan your next visit. 🦋



“

the program was rounded out with a bang...

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TOBACCO & BATTEAUX (CONT.)

(Continued from page 4)

would return to Red Hill, bringing back goods necessary for the plantation, while the other two would have been dismantled and the lumber sold. These batteaux would travel along the Staunton River, which Red Hill overlooks. It is emphasized to students that rivers were just as important to colonial farmers as interstate highways are for moving goods today.

For students to picture the size of what an acre of tobacco would have been, Bruce teaches students how to measure what a rough acre would be using their walking pace. He brings in the mathematics Standards of Learning for this as well. Students learn that an acre was originally how much one person could plow with draft animals in one day. This measures 43,560 square feet, or just a bit smaller than the size of a football field. He teaches students that their stride is the distance of each step they take. So, by measuring their strides,

they can determine how much distance is covered by walking naturally. Bruce calls this a "feet-on activity," as opposed to a hands-on activity, making it perfect for our students in this COVID-19 world!

Understanding the history of tobacco and its importance to Virginia's growth is a key point in the Virginia Studies Standards of Learning for 4th grade, but it has been common to find many teachers and parents say that they worked in tobacco growing up. For them, this station is a time to remember their upbringing in rural Virginia. It recalls fond memories of hard work and family ties, making the connection between the distant days of Patrick Henry and the everyday lives of our students feel that much closer to one another. Red Hill is excited to now be able to offer this new, salient station. 🐾



NEW EXHIBIT "DINING WITH THE HENRYS"

New to Red Hill as of Summer 2021 is a special exhibit in the Patrick Henry House entitled *Dining with the Henrys*. This exhibit was installed by our student curator, Cody Youngblood. It features over 75 artifacts from Red Hill's collection, all telling the story of five generations of the Henry family's table and the edible history of Red Hill.

Artifacts of particular interest in the new display include a 35-piece china set once belonging to Flora

MacDonald, a Scottish woman who helped Charles Edward Stuart evade capture after his failed attempt for the British Crown in 1746. MacDonald later sold her china to the Davis family, who are related to the Henrys by marriage and thus brought the set into connection with the Red Hill Estate.

In addition to the dishes and settings that would have been used to serve meals for the Henry family itself, the exhibit is also intended to

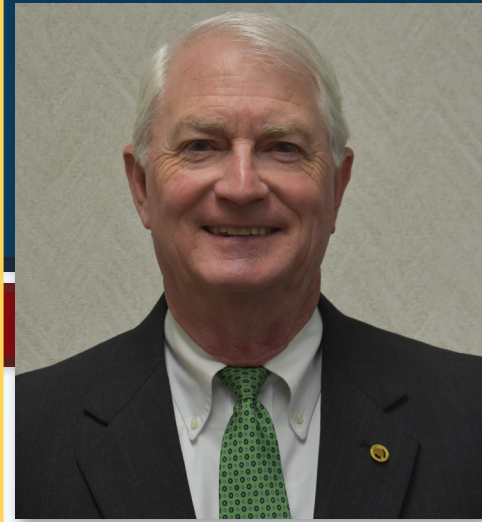
incorporate and highlight the narratives of the individuals who labored to produce the meals served at Red Hill. An interpretive sign in the new exhibit explains the significance of these items to the entire household, reading "The people and histories connected to food and its preparation make these objects irreplaceable."

We hope you'll stop by and visit *Dining with the Henrys*, as well as the rest of our museum and exhibits, soon! 🐾

FACES OF RED HILL

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DEXTER GILLIAM




Before he ever thought of becoming the Chair of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation Board, Red Hill was already a part of Dexter Gilliam's family story. Growing up in Halifax County, Red Hill was a favorite nearby spot to visit throughout his childhood. Later on, as a parent himself, the annual Independence Day celebration took on a special personal significance as well. His son's birthday is July 4th, so taking a family picnic on the grounds and enjoying the fireworks became a yearly tradition to celebrate.

When Gilliam accepted the position of President and CEO of The Bank of Charlotte County, he wanted

to take the "community" part of community banking seriously by becoming involved with local goings on. It seemed only natural to him then to get involved with Red Hill, taking on a formal capacity with the Board after many years of counting it among his favorite spots in Virginia.

Gilliam says that "the undisturbed surroundings allow one to get a true feel of what life on one of our Founding Father's plantations would have been like." And he is particularly proud to be a part of "the incredible work being done today to expand the story of the life of the enslaved at

Red Hill," which he believes makes Red Hill even more special as one of the foremost destinations of early American history doing this kind of research in our country.

It is certainly an exciting time at Red Hill for new research and the expansion of our mission to educate about Patrick Henry's life, legacy, and beliefs, and with Gilliam spearheading these efforts as Board Chair we are looking forward to even more exciting growth and discovery to come! 

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.

“...fond memories of hard work and family ties...”



20% OFF BB&B TICKETS

Save 20% off tickets to this year's Bluegrass, Barbecue, & Brew Festival when you purchase in advance with this exclusive newsletter offer!

*Visit www.redhill.org/events to pre-purchase your tickets and learn more about the BB&B (one of our favorite annual events here at Red Hill). Use the code **bbbnews2021** at checkout to receive 20% off!*

VALID THROUGH NOVEMBER 3, 2021



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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.

Officers of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation

Chair: Dexter Gilliam

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Return Service Requested

LIVING HISTORY IS BACK AT 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. We look forward to making your learning experience memorable and fun!

Upcoming Events

November 6th

**BLUEGRASS, BARBECUE, &
BREW FESTIVAL**

Join us for the 10th Annual BB&B Festival 11am to 5pm. Check out www.bluegrassbarbecuebrew.com for more information and to purchase tickets!

December 5th

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

2pm to 4pm enjoy complimentary admission, hot mulled cider, Brunswick stew, and cookies, courtesy of the Charlotte Lions Club in celebration of the holiday season.