

News From Red Hill

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P. Henry
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THE E. STUART JAMES GRANT MUSEUM GETS AN UPGRADE

The E. Stuart James Grant Museum in the Visitor Center looks a bit different after some recent changes to artifacts and displays. Back in December, Caitlin Curtis, Sasha Erpenbach, and Bruce and Jarret Olsen changed the fabric backing of display cases, moved artifacts from storage and put them on display, and moved pieces of furniture throughout the museum. *(continued on page 2)*

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REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF COVID AT RED HILL

2020 certainly can't be said to have gone the way anyone expected back in January of last year, but at Red Hill we've been doing everything we can to turn lemons into lemonade! The biggest obstacle of course over the past year has been the difficulty inviting visitors onto the Red Hill grounds in a way that kept everyone safe and healthy. But having a lower daily visitor count also offered the staff opportunities to make improvements and changes that they wouldn't have in a normal flow of visitor traffic, many of which we can't wait to show off as soon as everyone is back and events are able to get underway again! Throughout 2020 we worked to

ensure that visitors still had access to learning about Patrick Henry, even though they could not see us in-person. Of course, one of the saddest things for us was having to cancel our school field trips, which are always a highlight of the year. Instead, for the schoolchildren we worked to develop Patrick Henry Activity Books, which were distributed to local schools that could not bring their students for Living History field trips. In all, 1,500 were passed out in school lunches that were picked up by families. The staff has also developed virtual tours of the site for both classrooms and Life Care Communities. In all, the staff facilitated 13 virtual tours of Red Hill with *(continued on page 13)*

MUSEUM UPGRADE (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

This whole process took several days, and the museum looks quite a bit different now!


In order that moving the artifacts would go smoothly, a plan was laid for where certain artifacts would go and one case was opened at a time. The green fabric that covered the back of the display cases was replaced with an off-white linen fabric, which makes the artifacts ‘pop’ in the cases.

As part of our ongoing project to expand the interpretation of the role enslaved people played at Red Hill, we have displayed several artifacts they would have used here. A bread bowl and rolling pin are now displayed in the museum, as both of these artifacts were a part of daily life at Red Hill. The rolling pin was actually made by an enslaved person on Edward Winston Henry’s portion of the Red Hill property. As we continue to expand our understanding of what slavery was like at Red Hill, we hope to be able to continue to display artifacts used by the enslaved population. Our current research can be read about on page 5 “Quarter Place” and is ongoing as we try to connect docu-

ments and artifacts from the Quarter Place section of Red Hill to the names of specific enslaved people who lived and worked at Red Hill over the years. As we do so, our goal is to share more of the stories of people whose lives were so integral to the history of Red Hill.

Portraits of Dorothea Henry, Patrick’s daughter, and Elvira Henry, John Henry’s wife, hang on opposing walls when you first enter the museum. In addition to the new presence of the Henry women in the museum, a charcoal etching of Patrick Henry drawn by descendant Marie Henry Young now adorns the wall of the museum.

One big change is the addition of John Henry’s violin encased on the floor of the museum. Recently restored by John Montgomery, who has 40 years experience as a violin maker and restorer, this violin sits prominently at the entrance of the museum. This violin was originally thought to have been Patrick’s and was on loan to the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation from 1964 until its purchase in 1998. Based on research conducted

by John Montgomery (which you can read more about on the next page), it was determined that the violin actually dated to John Henry, who was musical just like this father. The body of the violin is German in origin but has undergone several repairs. Hugh Gresham, a stringed instrument repairer, added the neck and scroll of the violin in the 1920s. The treatment used by John Montgomery on the violin is reminiscent of a technique used on colonial-period furniture and interiors to emulate the more expensive kinds of wood that were used in Europe. This technique involved applying a thick coating that could later be removed using a tool to reproduce the natural figure that is seen in fine European maple. We can’t wait for you to come and visit to see the changes to the museum and John Henry’s violin on display! 

PICTURED BELOW: THE ROLLING PIN, ARTIFACTS ON THE NEW WHITE LINEN BACKING, AND ELVIRA HENRY’S PORTRAIT

“...these artifacts were a part of daily life at Red Hill.”



From the Red Hill Collection

AN UPDATE ON A CLASSIC COLLECTION ITEM: THE HENRY VIOLIN

Any of you who have been to Red Hill have most certainly been in our museum and seen the many artifacts of Patrick Henry and other family members. One such object, a violin (or as Henry called it, a fiddle) used to be mounted in a case on the wall along with a flute and English guitar. It's a fond and familiar item in our collection—about which we have learned some new information.

After John Henry's death, a man named Joshua Hazelwood purchased the violin from John Henry's estate. It was handed down through the family until given on loan to the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation in the 1980's. In the 1990's, the family offered to sell the violin to our foundation, and it was purchased. At the time of the loan, we were given a signed statement from the family saying their great-grandfather bought it on representation of it being one of Patrick Henry's violins.

maker, and he wanted John to recommend any repair work that should be done to the instrument.

We did not get the news we wanted. Unfortunately, this violin could not be Patrick Henry's. John Montgomery dated it from the 1800's. But! It is not all bad news. We firmly believe that this violin was Patrick's youngest son, John's. This is based on John Montgomery's examination and our research of John Henry's life. We know John Henry played the fiddle like his father; his family was very musical and gathered in the parlor in the evenings for musical entertainment. John lived his entire life at Red Hill and the violin was purchased from his estate here.

The board and staff have decided this is an opportunity—to share the truth as we learn it, good or bad—an opportunity to continue learning about Patrick, his family, and life at Red Hill, and an opportunity to admit



for the instrument. John Montgomery repaired the violin and furnished us with an in-depth report of his findings and the work he did, complete with pictures.

Before this happened, the violin never left its display case. With the new interpretation Mr. Montgomery recommends the violin be played



During our Christmas Open House of 2019, a gentleman who happened to be a 4th generation violin expert visited Red Hill and was very interested in the violin. After several discussions, he recommended John Montgomery, who has worked as a violin maker and restorer for 40 years, should take a look at it. The gentleman wanted John to examine our violin for several reasons – he wanted his expertise in dating the violin and the

we are not perfect in interpreting history. The act of teaching is inevitably also an act of continual learning, and we're glad to have learned much more information about the history of this violin than we knew before, which we can now share more accurately with visitors to our museum collection!

The gentleman who led us on this path, suspecting these results, offered to pay for all of the repair work and to fund a new display case

several times a year, which is a whole new opportunity! And the same gentlemen, who wishes to remain anonymous, has discussed funding some musical programming or even recordings of the violin being played. Anyone interested? We know we are!

WEBSITE UPDATES

To continue to fulfill our mission in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Red Hill has set about to update redhill.org, with an eye to making all of our resources easier

to navigate than ever for all of our would-be visitors and students who are currently working and learning from home. The new website provides easy-to-access online resources for all

ages, including a better organizational structure for information on Patrick Henry, Red Hill, the enslaved population, primary sources, and student activities. New lesson plans for

“...to bring Red Hill to students who can't come to us...”

Living History at Red Hill social distance edition!

While we're really looking forward to welcoming students back to Red Hill in-person as soon as it's safe to do so, we haven't let social distancing keep us from helping students learn all about Patrick Henry and colonial life at Red Hill! Though visiting in-person is impossible at the moment due to Covid-19 restrictions, students can still take a *virtual* trip to “The Voice of the American Revolution’s” final home and burial place without ever leaving the classroom. Our Zoom lecture tours are by appointment, and include a 15-minute pre-tour video about the life and history of Patrick Henry, a 360 degree tour of the reconstructed Henry home, Colonial Kitchen, Law Office, Quarter Place Cabin, and family gravesite, finishing up with a Question & Answer session for the kids to ask more about what

they've seen! These 30 minute tours are hosted by Red Hill's Director of Education and staff members, and are designed to align with Virginia curriculum standards for teaching history.

A further educational resource that we've developed to bring Red Hill to students who can't come to us is “Liberty Trunks.” These suitcases are filled with curated books about Patrick Henry and colonial life, colonial games and activities, lesson plans, activities, primary source documents, and much more. The purpose of these trunks is to provide educators with Standards of Learning-aligned (SOL) activities that they can incorporate into their curriculum to assist in adjusting their lessons based on COVID-19. Teachers will receive these trunks for up to a month so that they can use the materials provided inside. The trunks will then be returned to Red Hill where they will be quarantined and sanitized so that

another teacher can use the trunk for their lessons. Many teachers have a set curriculum that they adhere to, so the purpose of these trunks is to help augment their lesson planning, allowing them to use the content they think will work best in their classroom!

In 2019, Governor Northam established the Virginia Commission on African American History Education in the Commonwealth. This group recommended extensive technical edits to the existing Virginia SOL to better teach students about African American history and diverse perspectives. The Liberty Trunks will include curated books, activities, and lesson plans to help teachers engage students in these new SOL changes that were presented in fall 2020.

If you're a teacher, have a student in grade school, or just know a teacher, send them over to redhill.org/for-teachers/ to see if these resources and more might be tools they can use in their classrooms!



teachers and homeschool families are added often, as well as sources for researchers to browse through. To highlight our ongoing Quarter

Place Project, the new website offers a variety of ways for people to see our progress through blog posts and the Quarter Place page itself. The online

gift shop has also been upgraded to help visitors find exactly what they are looking for with ease. Check out the changes at www.redhill.org! 



THE QUARTER PLACE

The summer of 2020 brought with it the beginning of a large research project here at Red Hill. The Quarter Place at Red Hill is the portion of the property where the enslaved population lived during Patrick Henry and later John Henry's time here, and two interns spent their summer researching it. James Stanton Camp from Hampden-Sydney College and Sasha Erpenbach, a recent graduate from the University of Mary Washington, began research that will serve as the foundation for a multiyear project that we are embarking on as an organization to expand our knowledge of the life of enslaved people at Red Hill. Throughout James Stanton Camp's time at Red Hill, he worked on compiling research surrounding the culture of slavery in this region of Virginia and here at Red Hill. This research was compiled using existing sources that we have at Red Hill but also required Camp to travel to Hampden-Sydney College to look through their collection of sources. The research was compiled into a report titled "A Report on the History and Culture of Enslaved African Americans within Southside Virginia and Specifically Within Red Hill Plantation." As we continue to work on our interpretation of slavery at Red Hill, this report will be very

important to our understanding of its role here.

While James Stanton Camp was conducting research for the report, Sasha Erpenbach spent time researching the African American Cemetery that sits at the bottom of the .5 mile Quarter Place Trail. Based on an archaeological study done by Longwood University's Institute of Archaeology in spring 2020, 147 graves were identified in the cemetery, and almost all of the graves have a headstone and footstone to mark their location. Erpenbach spent a large portion of the summer tracing the genealogy of Matilda Pannell, who has the only named headstone in the cemetery. Matilda Pannell was born in 1860, and her name appears on a list of individuals that were owned by John Henry until 1865 with the end of the Civil War. It was her wish

to be buried with her ancestors and this wish of hers came true when she was laid to rest in 1923 at the Quarter Place African American Cemetery here at Red Hill. Matilda Pannell's headstone is one of the large reasons that this cemetery was not forgotten, and it is through her name that we will be able to find out more information about the cemetery and slavery at Red Hill. In addition to Matilda Pannell, 39 more individuals have been identified out of the 147 graves at the cemetery. Death certificates and inventories were used to do this and in the coming months we will continue doing this work to connect names to the cemetery. Sasha has continued her research from the summer into the fall and will be working at Red Hill until she begins graduate school this fall.

(continued on page 14)



GRAVESTONES FROM THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CEMETERY



RED HILL 2020





YEAR IN PHOTOS



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

COVID AT RED HILL (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

plans for even more in 2021.

Since visitation was down dramatically, we wanted a way to make each one feel even more special. We asked visitors to fill out surveys to get their suggestions and opinions. This was also a way to obtain their contact information so they would receive our newsletters, e-newsletters, and mailings. We ensured every visitor left with a postcard, brochure, and newsletter. After their visit, we sent visitors a postcard thanking them for their visit and inviting them to return and bring friends and family and to share the experience they had with family and friends. In the time of social distancing, feeling connected through other ways is more important than ever, and our staff has put in a lot of work to maintain that sense of connection after people leave our doors. Now this is something we plan to keep doing even when visitation returns to normal. We pride ourselves on giving every visitor the very best experience.


As part of this same expanded outreach effort, we beefed up our social media content and “got

personal” by introducing the Red Hill staff to the public. Our social media presence grew during this time which expanded our opportunities to reach our followers. We also hired an up-and-coming drone photographer who came to Red Hill to video and get aerial photos for us. He created a fly-over-and-through video and that video has now been seen almost 12,000 times on his site! This video allowed us to connect to more people and entice people to learn more about Patrick Henry and Red Hill. Check out our updated website at redhill.org, or look for us on facebook at [facebook.com/patrickhenrysredhill](https://www.facebook.com/patrickhenrysredhill).

Lower daily visitation allowed the staff to complete much needed upgrades to the museum and some research projects on the grounds without disturbing tours, which you can read about in this edition of the newsletter as well. Today the museum feels modern and refreshed and ready for guests, and includes some brand new research into the lives of the enslaved people who lived at Red Hill.

Red Hill didn't remain entirely deserted during the year, though!

We were able to invite people to come and walk the grounds and enjoy being outside, giving folks a space where they felt safe to get some fresh air in those scary months when going out of your house safely was not always easy to do. We were even able to add the Gene Dixon Trail for visitors during this time, providing a new walking trail. We also hosted blood drives to respond to the blood shortage that occurred in the wake of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. And we brought in a local coffee truck vendor who was going to different locations showing Drive-In movies, and put on a movie night for families to be safely in their cars while still having a fun time out!

After a year of tidying, improving, and innovating, we absolutely can't wait to see our visitors back on the grounds again, and to get back to the big events that we love so much! But we're happy to say that 2020 wasn't time wasted for the Red Hill Staff, and we have so much to share when everyone returns! 


“...a year of tidying, improving, and innovating...”

ARE YOU A SON OR DAUGHTER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION?

If so, the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution are always seeking new members who fit the qualifications for membership. Some of the potential kinds of Revolutionary War Veteran ancestors that qualify someone to join the SAR or DAR include: Continental Army or Navy, State Militia or Navy, Signers of the Declara-

tion of Independence, Members of the Continental Congress, civilians who provided supplies to the American Revolutionary cause, politicians who supported the Patriots, and soldiers or sailors from allied nations who fought in support of American Independence!

If you think your family history fits any of these categories, the SAR


or DAR would love to hear from you. The Virginia SAR will be holding its semi-annual meeting this year at Red Hill on September 10th, which would make for a wonderful chance to re-activate a Patrick Henry Chapter. Contact Kevin Jennings by phone at (255) 558-5843 or email at jhc8413014@aol.com for more information! 

QUARTER PLACE (CONT.)

(Continued from page 5)

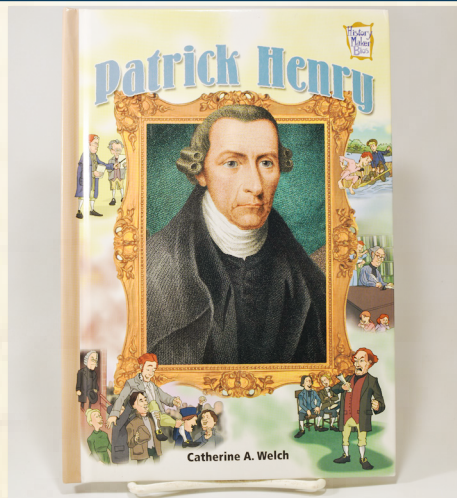
Peighton Young, a first-year Ph.D. student at William and Mary, has been researching family units of the enslaved population in addition to other research to create more context regarding slavery. Young has been able to identify where several individuals went after 1865 and has contributed research to find descendants. Some of the sources Young consulted for this research include census records, a list of the enslaved that were here in 1865 that is located at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and several local courthouses and repositories. This information is vital to finding descendants and opens up the possibility of oral history interviews as future avenues of research. In addition to this, it also provides specific names and stories that are a part of the enslaved people's experience here at Red Hill. Peighton Young's research, as well as the research that was done by James Stanton Camp and

Sasha Erpenbach, is very beneficial to our efforts to interpret the Quarter Place and present this information to visitors that come to Red Hill.

Additionally, we have formed a Research Advisory Council and a Community Engagement Committee to assist staff in our efforts to interpret the Quarter Place and present this information to visitors who come to Red Hill. 



LEFT: THE QUARTER PLACE CABIN, TOP RIGHT: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN PROGRESS ON THE TRAIL, BOTTOM RIGHT: MATILDA PANNELL'S MARKED HEADSTONE



20% OFF

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Use coupon code: REDHILLNEWS when you check out on redhill.org/giftshop!

VALID THROUGH DEC 31, 2021

FACES OF RED HILL

15

SASHA ERPENBACH




Sasha first got connected with Red Hill when she attended the Small Museum Association Conference in February 2020. After learning about the Quarter Place Project internship Red Hill was offering, she decided to apply! She spent last summer researching the enslaved African American Cemetery at the end of the Quarter Place Trail, and tracing the family of Matilda Pannell. Sasha says that she knew from her first chance encounter with Red Hill staff at the conference that Red Hill was a special place, and she says with confidence that it's our staff that makes it so!

Although her work during her internship was largely outdoors on her own solo projects, Sasha says one of the things that really struck

her was the way that the Red Hill staff pulled together during the Covid-19 pandemic to overcome all the challenges it has brought. Things are different than anyone could have predicted, but Sasha says the Red Hill staff met everything head on and has really made a success of the circumstances in bringing resources to the public beyond the boundaries of Red Hill's estate.

Still, we're glad Sasha was able to get her hands dirty right here on the Red Hill grounds in pursuit of her research, and so is she. "I have never been to another historic home on a piece of land as expansive and picturesque as Red Hill," Sasha says. Of course, the enslaved African American Cemetery on the Quarter Place

Trail is close to her heart as it's the site that brought her to Red Hill. "When I am at the cemetery, I experience a deep connection to its history and the people who once called it home. I just know that there is so much more that we could uncover about the 147 people buried there and their lives at Red Hill." Her work has helped us make relevant updates to our museum, as well as additions to the information about enslaved life on our website.

We're looking forward to sharing the fruits of Sasha's research with our visitors, and so glad to have welcomed her into the Red Hill fold this past year! 

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.


“...there is so much more that we could uncover...”

IN MEMORIAM: TOM WARD

Red Hill is sorry to announce the passing of our colleague and friend, Thomas Ward, who was a faithful member of the Board for the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation from 1992-2017. During his tenure, Tom held several key offices, including Secretary, Vice President, and President from 2004-2009. As President, he oversaw the completion of the Red Hill Renewal Project, which brought to a conclusion a multi-year, multi-million-dollar

transformation of Red Hill.

Addressing his fellow Board members at an event in recent years, Tom said of their duty, “we are trustees not only of a foundation, its financial resources, and Red Hill, but in many ways also stewards of a legacy left to us by a man who counted himself not only a patriot, but a defender of the weak...”

Tom passed away in September 2020 in Chapel Hill, NC, and will be missed. 





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www.RedHill.org

Email: info@redhill.org

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

Vice Chair: Jean Elliott

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Return Service Requested

SCHEDULE A PRIVATE VIRTUAL TOUR !

Enjoy a private, 30-minute "tour" of the historic grounds including Henry's reconstructed home, Colonial kitchen, cabin, original Law Office, and family gravesite from the comfort of your classroom or conference room! For more information or to schedule a virtual tour for your students, please see the Virtual Tours Flyer at redhill.org or email caitlin@redhill.org.

Upcoming Events

May 1st STARRY NIGHT

Join us for a night of stargazing! Free admission, please email caitlin@redhill.org to register. 8:00-9:30pm.

**May 28th
PATRICK HENRY'S BIRTHDAY**
Come help us celebrate Henry's 285th birthday with a wreath laying ceremony and complimentary birthday cake!

**June 5th
QUARTER PLACE CEMETERY
DEDICATION**
Remembrance Ceremony to be held at 11:00am.