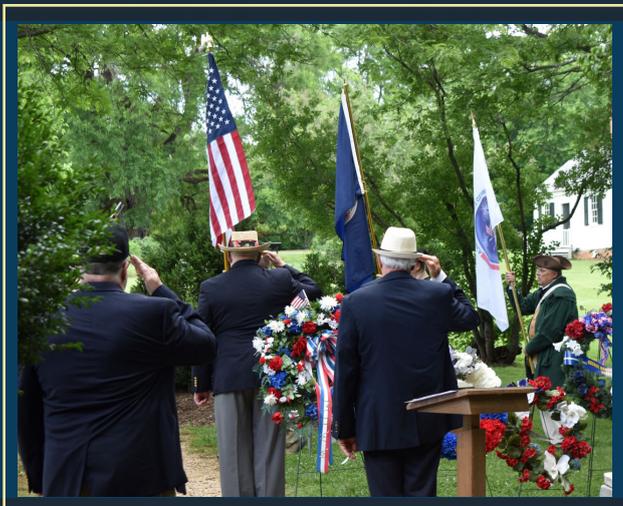


# News From Red Hill

*Red Hill* Patrick Henry  
National Memorial

PUBLISHED BY THE PATRICK HENRY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION — BROOKNEAL, VA



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MR. HENRY!

Sunday, May 29th, 2022, marked the 286th birthday of Patrick Henry (born May 29th, 1736). The event was celebrated at Red Hill with complimentary admission, refreshments including lemonade and a birthday cake, and plenty of pomp and circumstance.

Patrick Henry was honored with wreaths from eleven chapters of the Virginia Sons and Daughters of the *(continued on page 2)*

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## COUNCIL OF VIRGINIA ARCHAEOLOGISTS MEETING

On May 6, Red Hill welcomed some 20 archaeologists from around the state of Virginia for their first in-person meeting in over two years due to Covid. Many more joined the meeting virtually.

The Council of Virginia Archaeologists (CoVA) is the Commonwealth's professional archaeology organization. Founded in 1975, CoVA is dedicated to the preservation and study of Virginia's archaeological resources. What better place for archaeologists to meet than at Patrick Henry's Red Hill with a thousand acres of possible valuable elements of material culture

as yet covered and undiscovered!

Their mission supports the scientific and humanistic study of the human past, the preservation of archaeological sites and collections, and the dissemination of archaeological information for the benefit of the public. CoVA "recognizes that archaeological sites are fragile and non-renewable. We believe that investigations must occur within a research framework under the oversight of professionally trained archaeologists. Current standards will guide recording, sampling, collections management, curation, reporting, exhibiting, *(continued on page 2)*

## BIRTHDAY (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

American Revolution and their representatives.

Each representative also saluted Patrick Henry's grave. There was also a volley of musket fire and presentation of colors by the Virginia Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard.

Fittingly for the day, the SAR Pledge reads: "We Descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution, who, by their sacrifices established the United States of America reaffirm our faith in the principles of liberty and our Constitutional Republic, and solemnly pledge to defend them against every foe."

Red Hill hosted the celebration. The Patrick Henry Chapter of the Virginia Sons of the American Revolution led the ceremony at Patrick Henry's grave. Hope Marstin welcomed those in attendance and descendant Patrick Henry Jolly shared greetings from the Patrick Henry "family". Virginia Sons of the American Revolution current state president gave greetings from the state and Patrick Henry Chapter President Mark R. Day welcomed all attendees. Bagpiper Roy Knighting performed "Amazing Grace".

While many visitors were unaware of the planned events, several made specific plans to attend the birthday celebra-

tion with a total of 150 attendees for the afternoon. The Patrick Henry Chapter and Red Hill plan to make this an annual event. 🐦



## ARCHAEOLOGISTS (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

and interpreting." The organization is dedicated to working with both public and private groups, property owners, and individuals in order to pursue their mission to identify, protect, and interpret archaeological sites, artifacts, and elements of material culture that contribute to our understanding of the pre-history and history of the Common-

wealth at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

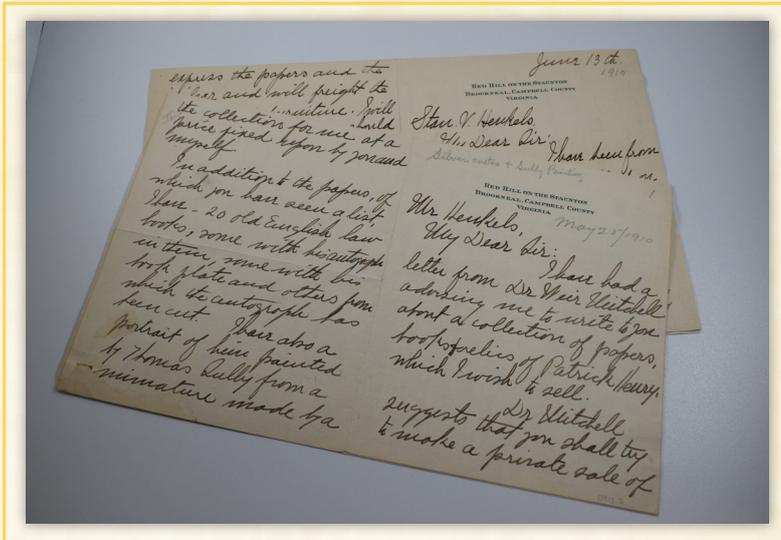
At their Spring meeting at Red Hill, the group enjoyed meeting in person after the long Covid break. Dr. David A. Brown, President, led the meeting, which was a chance for those in attendance to catch up—both with fellow archaeological professionals and with

the updates of what has been happening in the field. News and information was shared about significant projects in the Commonwealth, grant and job opportunities, new and notable research in methodology, and other archaeological activities occurring around the Commonwealth.

Many took advantage of being at Red

# From the Red Hill Collection

## HARRISON-HENKELS LETTERS



In Red Hill's many years as a place of residence, there have been countless letters mailed out by those who lived at the 'garden spot of the world.' We are fortunate to have a few of these papers in our collection. Twenty-seven handwritten letters from 1910 and 1911 provide some insight into their author, Lucy Harrison, and her family heirlooms.

Lucy Gray Henry Harrison (1857-1944) was a great-granddaughter of Patrick Henry, descended through his youngest son, John. In 1886, she married Matthew Bland Harrison and lived in Duluth, Minnesota until Matthew's death six years later. A wealthy widow at the time of her father's death, Lucy was the only one of William Wirt Henry's four children who did not inherit his property at

Red Hill. In 1905, however, she bought her mother's and siblings' shares of the property and began extensive renovations on the Henry house, transforming it into an 18-room mansion more suited to her opulent taste.

At some point in the spring of 1910, Lucy decided to sell some of her possessions that had belonged to her famous great-grandfather. Although she originally intended to bequeath these antiques to the Commonwealth, she wrote that "family misfortunes" had compelled her to raise money instead. On May 25th, she wrote the first of her letters to Stan V. Henkels, a Philadelphia-based antique dealer, describing her "collection of papers, books, & relics of Patrick Henry" and her desire to sell it for at least \$15,000. Subsequent letters from the summer of 1910 indicate that Henkels agreed to arrange a sale and that Lucy shipped him the Henry heirlooms, including some of Patrick Henry's papers, twenty English law books bearing his signature, an original portrait painted by Thomas Sully, and the corner chair that the patriot died in.

*(continued on page 9)*

“...an 18-room mansion more suited to her opulent taste.”

Hill to explore our grounds and historic buildings. We hope we may see some of them back in the future! 

**LEFT:** DR. DAVID BROWN OFFERS A PRESENTATION IN THE EUGENE B. CASEY EDUCATION AND EVENT CENTER  
**RIGHT:** THE NEWLY ELECTED COVA EXECUTIVE TEAM



## THE BUILDINGS

This spring, a grant from the Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust made it possible for us to undertake some much-needed repairs on the historic

Coachman's Cabin. This cabin belonged to Harrison, who was born enslaved and knew Patrick Henry, his son, grandson, and great-grandchildren. He lived to be 102 years old. We

use this cabin to tell Harrison's story as well as educate children on Living History Days. It is imperative that this cabin is maintained for these reasons.

This cabin was originally on the

## KEEPING THE GROUNDS...

### THE TREES

Spanning 1,000 acres of land in the Staunton River Valley, the Red Hill estate is a pristine corner of Virginia, and likely hasn't changed much since Patrick Henry was a resident. Still, while the "untouched" appearance of the grounds is one of the things that enchants those who visit them, they do require (at least) a light touch to keep them in good shape.

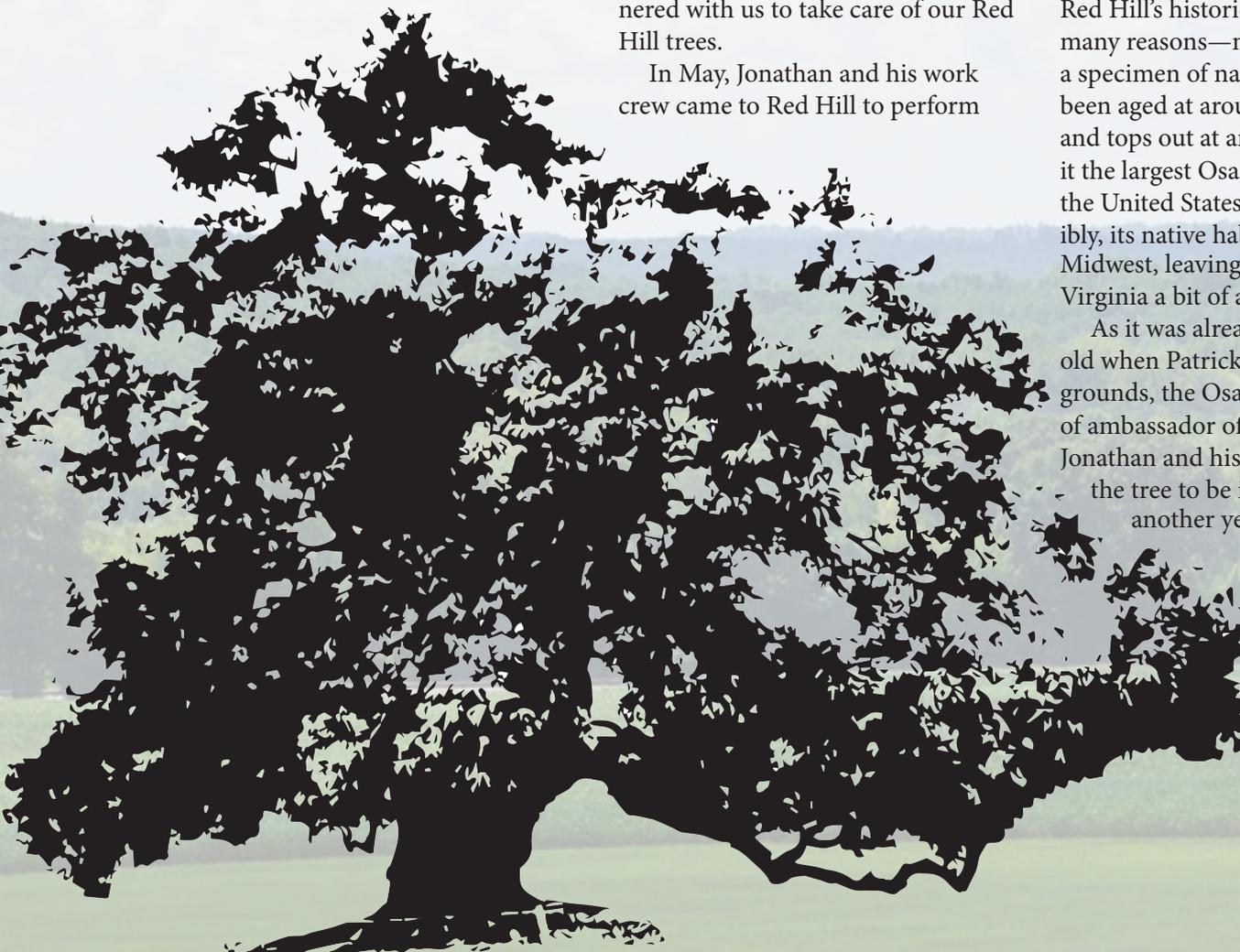
One might easily imagine just how many trees grow at Red Hill, along the forested pathways and stretching away down the valley—more than you could count in an afternoon trip! Now and again, they need a helping hand to make sure the land stays as healthy as possible. For several years, Jonathan Sledge, certified Arborist and owner of Above Ground Tree & Landscape, and his team have partnered with us to take care of our Red Hill trees.

In May, Jonathan and his work crew came to Red Hill to perform

several tree-tasks. First, there were several trees on the edge of the historic area that were dead and needing a professional to take them down. It's always a priority to remove potential hazards from these central areas.

The other purpose of Sledge's visit was to perform a yearly inspection of our National Champion Osage Orange Tree. This tree, which spreads its majestic branches right in the heart of Red Hill's historic area, is special for many reasons—not only to us, but as a specimen of national interest. It has been aged at around 350 years old, and tops out at around 65ft, making it the largest Osage Orange tree in the United States. Even more incredibly, its native habitat is located in the Midwest, leaving its placement here in Virginia a bit of a mystery.

As it was already over 100 years old when Patrick Henry roamed these grounds, the Osage Orange is a kind of ambassador of history. Happily, Jonathan and his crewmate declared the tree to be in good shape for another year! 🌿



Quarter Place trail, which is where the enslaved and later free black population lived. In the 1960s, when Red Hill was being restored and designed as a destination for visitors, this cabin

was moved from its original location to the main grounds where guests could more easily access it. In 1865, Harrison was freed and was given this cabin by William Wirt Henry, Pat-

rick's grandson. Harrison and his wife Milly lived in this cabin. Harrison is likely one of the individuals buried in the Quarter Place Cemetery.

For work *(continued on page 10)*

## ...IN THE "GARDEN SPOT OF THE WORLD"

### THE HONEY BEES

If there is one thing that makes the world go 'round, it's pollinators! We love the sight of a busy honey bee tumbling between the blossoms in our herb garden, doing what they do best to keep our plants happy. But, as anybody who has ever had a colony move in where they weren't wanted knows, they can also become quite a nuisance for the conscientious gardener. Once in a while, Red Hill finds a hive located somewhere that the honeybees sadly are just not welcome!

Right before Independence Day in 2014, we discovered a colony of honey bees in the outside wall of the Patrick Henry house facing the hearth kitchen. In order to remove the hive of bees and the honeycomb, we had to remove boards from the outside of the house. This led to some costly repairs that summer.

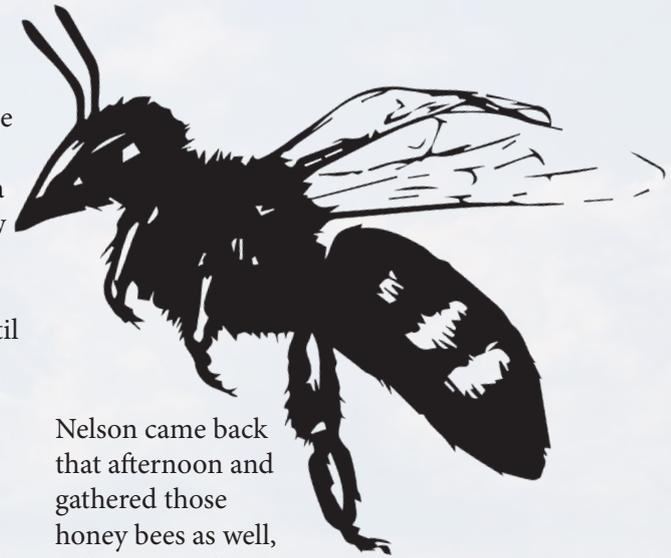
After that, all was quiet in the Patrick Henry house—until this spring. In early May our groundskeeper, Bruce Olsen, noticed a swarm of bees in the tree at the blacksmith shop on the grounds. He decided to search the surrounding historic buildings to see if there were any evidence of honey bees. Sure enough, on the same side of the Henry house was a whirlwind of honey bee activity.

We contacted a local honey bee expert, Thomas Nelson, from Charlotte County. He came within a few days

and used a heat seeking device on the inside wall to find the hive. Luckily (we thought) he was able to cut out a hole on the inside wall and withdraw all of the honey bees and the honeycomb. He said he couldn't be sure if he was able to get the 'queen bee' until he took the hive home to reestablish it there.

Unfortunately, a week or so later, staff noticed honey bees on the outside of the Henry house again going in and out. Again, we contacted Mr. Nelson and he returned. This time the honey bees had established a hive in the floor of the Patrick Henry house against the same wall. For those of you unfamiliar with the layout of the house, there is a cellar door and cellar on that end of the house. Mr. Nelson and his assistant were able to cut out the ceiling of the cellar to reach the bees.

Only two days later there was a swarm of honey bees on the outside wall of the house. We were a little alarmed at becoming so popular, but it turned out these were stragglers from the cellar hive who were trying to get into the wall/floor to reach a hive no longer there. These were the foragers who were 'out' gathering pollen and nectar from flowers while their hive was being removed. Because the space had been sealed, they swarmed together on the outside. Mr.



Nelson came back that afternoon and gathered those honey bees as well, to be returned to their friends.

There has been no sign of any more swarms since then, but we are on the lookout in case of any return. Apparently, our local bees are Patrick Henry fans too! We were happy to be able to save these bees to be relocated to an appropriate hive where they can continue to produce honey and pollinate our plants! 🐝



## PATRICK HENRY, ORATOR, BY JAMES M. ELSON (WRITTEN JANUARY 1992, AS EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PHMF)

Patrick Henry, the acknowledged “Voice of the American Revolution,” was arguably the most influential speaker in American History. “The greatest orator who ever lived, a Shakespeare and a Garrick combined,” proclaimed John Randolph of Roanoke, an admirer of Henry’s politics and a spell-binder himself.

Thomas Jefferson, in his later years neither an admirer of Patrick Henry nor his politics, nevertheless echoed Randolph in describing him as “the greatest orator that ever lived.” Worried about Henry’s possible opposition in a political matter, George Washington wrote to a confidant, “Patrick Henry has only to say ‘let this be law’ and it is law.”

Who was this man whose ability to sway thousands long before the dawn of mass media, prompted Jefferson to describe him as “certainly the man who gave the first impulse to the ball of revolution,” and whose powers of communication could cause The Father of His Country not a little anxiety? Exactly how did he do what he did?

The truth is no one knows for sure. Of all the Founding Fathers, Patrick Henry is the most difficult to pin down. Certainly he left a very sparse paper trail. (Over 500 letters from Patrick Henry’s hand exists today. Over the last decade more have come to light through auction houses and other private sources.) George Washington’s writings fill about forty volumes, Thomas Jefferson’s almost sixty. In comparison those of Patrick Henry scarcely fill one.

But Henry’s most important words were spoken, not written. He lived, of course, before the days of television, motion pictures, or still photography. Even the portraits we possess of Patrick Henry differ so widely as to make us wonder what he really looked like. And, of course, there are no recordings of his voice. As a matter of fact, there exist no accurate transcripts of most of his famous orations. (Patrick Henry’s speeches against the proposed U.S. Constitution, as well as his arguments during the first British Debts case were taken down by a stenographer.

His “I am not a Virginian, but an American!” speech, as well as his last public speech given at Charlotte Court House, were also taken down at the time.) William Wirt, Henry’s first biographer, had to resort to reconstructing them based on the recollections of aging witnesses. It is Wirt’s version of the “Liberty or Death” speech which school children committed to memory in those days now past when memorization was thought to play an import part in training the mind.

Thus a complete knowledge of what Patrick Henry said or how he said it is today beyond anyone’s reach, but it is possible to catch fascinating and tantalizing glimpses of the orator in action. The most obvious approach to understanding how this “Son of Thunder” transfixed his listeners is to go to the reminiscences of those who knew him and heard him speak.

Judge Spencer Roane first encountered Patrick Henry in 1783 and later married one of his daughters. Judge Roane’s memoirs of his father-in-law are, not surprisingly, sympathetic, but nevertheless discerning.

“He was not a handsome man but his countenance was agreeable, and full of intelligence and interest,” recalled the judge. “He had a fine blue eye, and an excellent set of teeth, which, with the aid of a mouth sufficiently wide, enabled him to articulate very distinctly. His voice was strong, harmonious, and clear, and he could modulate it at pleasure.”

Elsewhere Judge Roane states in his memorandum: “It is to be observed that although his language was plain and free from unusual or high-flown words, his ideas were remarkably bold, strong, and striking. By the joint effect of these two faculties, I mean the power of his tone or voice and the grandness of his conceptions, he had a wonderful effect upon the feelings of his audience.”

Judge Roane relates this anecdote: “It is among the first things I can remember, that my father paid the expenses of a Scotch tutor residing in his family, named Bradfute, a man of learning, to go with him to Williamsburg to hear Patrick Hen-

ry speak; and that he laughed at Bradfute, on his return, for having been so much enchanted with his eloquence as to have unconsciously spirited tobacco juice from the gallery on the heads of the members, and to have nearly fallen from the gallery into the House.”

Perhaps the most famous instance of the effect on an individual of Patrick Henry’s speaking is the story of Edward Carrington, who listened to the orator’s 1775 “Liberty or Death” speech while standing outside a window of Richmond’s St. John’s Church. “Let me be buried on this spot!” he vowed, transported by the peroration. Thirty-five years later, in 1810, he was.

“(His voice) was clear, distinct, and capable of that emphasis which I incline to believe constituted one of the greatest charms in Mr. Henry’s manner,” recalled Judge St. George Tucker, who first heard the orator in 1772. Much of Judge Tucker’s testimony correlates with that of Judge Roane: “He was emphatic, without vehemence or declamation: animated but never boisterous; nervous without recourse to intemperate language; and clear, though not always methodical.”

It appears from these contemporary accounts and others that Henry did not overwhelm his audiences with exaggeration or sheer volume of sound. Young Thomas Jefferson, then a student at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, was standing in the back of the chamber when Henry made his historic Stamp Act speech before the Virginia House of Burgesses on May 29, 1765. “Torrents of sublime eloquence” was his later description of Henry’s ultimately successful call for repeal of this taxation without representation. Yet as emotional an experience as it was for the future author of the Declaration of Independence, Henry’s oration had a classical quality about it: “To me it seems he spoke as Homer wrote.”

After Henry’s death, stories of his oratory became increasingly overblown. (For more information on this subject see: *The Demosthenes of His Age*, by Mark Couvillon, written in recent years.) Here is a nineteenth-century, second-hand version

## PATRICK HENRY, ORATOR

of the “Liberty or Death” speech that caricatures contemporary accounts of Henry’s speaking style:

“Henry rose with an unearthly fire burning in his eye. He commenced somewhat calmly, but the smothered excitement began more and more to play upon his features and thrill in the tones of his voice. The tendons of his neck stood out white and rigid like whipchords. His voice rose louder and louder, until the walls of the building, and all within them, seemed to shake and rock in its tremendous vibrations. Finally, his pale face and glaring eye became terrible to look upon. Men leaned forward in their seats, with their heads strained forward, their faces pale, and their eyes glaring like the speaker’s. His last exclamation, ‘Give me liberty, or give me death!’ was like the shout of the leader which turns back the route of battle. The old man from whom this tradition was derived added that, ‘when the orator sat down, he himself felt sick with excitement. Every eye yet gazed on Henry. It seemed as if a word from him would have led to any wild explosion of violence. Men looked beside themselves.’”

The foregoing is an undeniably vivid story, but it is probably safe to say that the effect of Patrick Henry’s oratory was to convince his audiences to follow him no matter what the cost rather than to incite them to violent action. Consider the gentler aspects of his art. As noted, even in the melodramatic description just preceding, his orations often started in a calm, almost diffident manner. William Wirt’s reconstruction of the “Liberty or Death” speech begins like this: “No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as the abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the house. But different men often see the same subject in different light; and therefore I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if entertaining, as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely, and without reserve...”

This technique of beginning a speech in a calm, quiet and nonconfrontational

way, then building to an irresistible but always controlled climax seemed to come naturally to Patrick Henry. “He was extremely kind to young men in debate, and ever ready to compliment even his adversaries where it was merited,” recalled Judge Roane. “I think he was the best humored man in society I almost ever knew,” conceded Thomas Jefferson. For someone who flirted so often with controversy – even danger – Patrick Henry had few personal enemies.

Although Henry was by no means a wild man on the podium, he admittedly did not adhere to the more conservative school of oratory of his day, which was restrained, always decorous, and often filled with learned references to classic texts. Henry’s speeches were more likely to contain quotations from or allusions to the Bible.

Patrick Henry’s father, John, was a member of the establishment Anglican Church. His uncle, for whom he was named, was a member of its clergy. Although throughout his life Henry fought to defend the rights of religious dissenters, he remained an Anglican until he died.

Yet an evangelical influence, which came through Henry’s mother, dominated his speaking. She took young Patrick with her to hear the great George Whitfield preach. (We have since learned Whitfield passed through Hanover once, in 1745. It is unknown if the nine-year-old Patrick heard him preach.) The equally magnetic Rev. Samuel Davies was much in demand for revivals in the Henrys’ native Hanover County. On the way home, Mrs. Henry had the boy repeat, or perhaps re-enact portions of the sermon they had just heard, and one suspects that he did not need much prodding.

“He combined an actor’s flair with a preacher’s fervor, and he spoke politically in the voices of the evangelical revolt,” Henry Mayer, Patrick Henry’s most recent biographer, has written. (This was in 1992. Since then there have been more biographies written on Patrick Henry.) The Liberty or Death speech, Mayer believes is really a sermon in the evangelical style, a

call to make a choice. “This was a political rather than a religious choice, but a clear personal choice none the less.”

Historian Richard Beeman calls Henry’s political style “a blending of some old-fashioned religious moralism with a very new, much more egalitarian and more intimate relationship between the revolutionary orator and his audience...” Beeman believes that this style constituted a change that has reverberated through the centuries from Andrew Jackson to William Jennings Bryan, to Pat Robertson, and perhaps even Jesse Jackson. While this description gives recognition to Henry as the founder of a school of American political speakers, it still fails to explain full the spell he cast over his audiences.

If Patrick Henry’s eloquence could cause Judge Roane’s Mr. Bradfute to almost fall out of his gallery seat and make Edward Carrington vow to be buried “on this spot,” it could also haunt the rational mind of that quintessential American son of the Enlightenment, Thomas Jefferson. “Although it was difficult when Henry had spoken to tell what he had said, yet while speaking it always seems directly to the point,” the Sage of Monticello grudgingly admitted years later. “When he had spoken in opposition to my opinion he had produced a great effect, and I myself had been delighted and moved. I had asked myself when he had ceased, what the devil has he said? And could never answer the enquiry.”

There is very likely more honesty in Jefferson’s confession than malice. Here is Judge Roane again, a friendlier witness, with essentially the same observation: “The tones of his voice, to say nothing of his matter and his gestures, were insinuated into the feelings of his hearers in a manner that baffled all description. It seemed to operate by mere sympathy, and by his tones alone it seemed to me that he could make you cry or laugh at pleasure.” Several years ago this writer interviewed an elderly woman who, while in her youth, had seen the legendary French actress, Sarah Bernhardt, in performance. The year was 1917. Bernhardt, who was

## PATRICK HENRY, ORATOR

in then her sixties, had lost one of her legs and could perform only sitting or lying down.

My respondent recalled with awe the event that had taken place almost 70 years previously: “She was an old, crippled woman and spoke no English. And yet while she was on the stage you could have heard a pin drop – she had so much charisma.”

Charisma – the special, ultimately inexplicable power of an individual to inspire, influence, even hypnotize an audience. It is a quality possessed by the greatest actors, preachers, and secular orators. The present century’s most charismatic political speaker was perhaps Nazi Germany’s Adolph Hitler, who succeeded through his bent talent in driving one of the world’s best-educated and ostensibly civilized nations down the path of self-destruction. Fortunately for the cause of freedom, the Allies’ Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt possessed formidable oratorical gifts as well.

Patrick Henry mesmerized his listeners in the cause of freedom over two hundred years ago. But for us today it is what he said rather than how he said it that makes his words live and assures his place in history:

“If this be treason, make the most of it!” in the 1765 Stamp Act speech to the Virginia House of Burgesses, the first public protest in the thirteen colonies against taxation without representation.

“I am not a Virginian, but an American!” in 1774 to the first Continental Congress at Philadelphia.

“Give me liberty or give me death!” in 1775 to the Virginia Assembly meeting at Richmond to consider the authorization or preparations for war.

“Liberty – the greatest of all earthly blessings – give us that precious jewel and you can take everything else!” in 1788 as Henry argues for a Bill of Rights at the Virginia Convention for the Ratification of the United States Constitution.

“I cannot sleep while Virginia is a rebel to the government of the United States. Let us not split into factions which must destroy that union upon which our ex-

istence hangs,” in 1799, as he reluctantly agreed to come out of retirement to run for the Virginia legislature. He was elected but died before he could take office.

Patrick Henry spent his last decade in private life while his contemporaries served in the new federal government. Although he was offered a number of federal posts, Henry declined them all. He lies buried in the family cemetery at Red Hill, his modest retirement home in Southside Virginia, now the Patrick Henry National Memorial.

Edmund Randolph’s summation of the orator’s genius still rings true today: “For grand impressions in the defense of liberty, the Western world has not yet been able to exhibit a rival.”

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This essay was written by Dr. James Elson, and originally published in January of 1992, while Dr. Elson was serving as Executive Vice-President of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation. We honor Dr. Elson’s memory and work in this issue to commemorate his recent passing on December 8, 2021. He was 89 years old and passed surrounded by family. In his obituary, his family shared about his accomplishments, among which he numbered his years of service at Red Hill, and his scholarship on Patrick Henry:

*Dr. James Elson attended Knoxville public schools and graduated from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. He also earned graduate degrees from the Julliard School of Music and West Virginia University and studied in Germany as a Fulbright Scholar. Over the course of a twenty-one year academic career, Dr. Elson taught at and was an administrator for universities and colleges in Ohio, West Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama, and North Carolina, serving as chairman of the fine arts departments of Huntingdon College (AL) and High Point College (NC). He came to*

*Lynchburg in 1984 as Executive Director of the Academy of Music Theatre. In 1988 he became Executive Vice-President of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation at Red Hill, near Brookneal, and remained in that position until his retirement in 2000. During his career as an academic, Dr. Elson taught vocal music, conducted college, church, and community choral ensembles, and published numerous articles on vocal literature in professional journals. He was the author, annotator, and editor of three books on Patrick Henry; two of these were published by the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation and one by Warwick House Publishers of Lynchburg.*

*Before his retirement, Dr. Elson was a regular contributor to Lynch’s Ferry, a journal of local history. After his retirement, he became the magazine’s editor, serving for six years, from 2000 to 2005. His book, Lynchburg, Virginia: The First Two Hundred Years, 1786-1986 was published in 2004.*

*Dr. Elson was a retired colonel, United States Army, with thirty years active and reserve service. His senior assignments included instructor in the Army’s Command and General Staff College System and Deputy Director, Morale Support, Department of the Army. Upon his retirement from the USAR, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. A life member of the Reserve Officers Association and the College Music Society, he was also a member of Kappa Sigma and Omicron Delta Kappa fraternities, and the Sphex Club of Lynchburg, for which he published a history on the occasion of its centennial in 2010.*

*Dr. Elson’s keen intelligence, booming baritone, showmanship, love of history, and sense of humor endeared him to many. He was a patron of the arts, an advocate of intellectualism, and an unrivaled champion of bad puns. He will be deeply missed by his friends, family, and all who knew him.*

We’re grateful for Dr. Elson’s many contributions to Red Hill and in service of the Patrick Henry legacy.

## COLLECTIONS (CONT.)

(Continued from page 3)

Lucy's correspondence with Stan Henkels did not go smoothly, however. She made multiple requests for an itemized receipt of her valu-

ables of History and Culture (which has another Sully portrait of Henry) have both verified their portraits' provenances.

ables of every piece mentioned in the letters, but perhaps some will be discovered in future years. The corner chair and portrait now reside at



able collection and her letters often repeated questions that the antique dealer neglected to answer. According to Lucy, Henkels initially expressed in writing that he was certain she would get at least \$15,000 for the sale, but drastically lowered his estimate to \$7,000 the next month. After requesting an explanation for the drop in value, Lucy responded, "Had you not written me that you were confident of getting my price I would not have sent it to you. I wish you had been more candid with me from the first and had not mislead [sic] me with unnecessary expense. I do not blame you for the valuation you give to the collection if you are sincere, but I blame you very much for writing me so differently in the beginning. Indeed I do not understand your inconsistencies at all."

Henkels also appears to have questioned the authenticity of the Sully portrait. Lucy fiercely refuted this claim in her letters, citing an excerpt from Volume II of William Wirt Henry's biography of Patrick Henry. She defended her father's integrity in recording the portrait's history and demanded proof of Henkels' claim. Although we do not have Henkels' letters to show us exactly what he said about the portrait, it is obvious today that whatever his doubts were, they were unfounded. Colonial Williamsburg and the Virginia Museum

of History and Culture (which has another Sully portrait of Henry) have both verified their portraits' provenances. Reading these letters from the summer of 1910, it is hard not to feel Lucy's frustration over the handling of the sale. These artifacts were especially important to her, and she was determined that they be valued as meaningful pieces of history. Lucy's persistence, thoroughness, and historical knowledge come through in her writing, giving us a better idea of who she was.

Lucy's next letters detail further arrangements and negotiations with Henkels, right up until the sale in Philadelphia on December 20, 1910. Her collection earned \$8,488.43 in all, a little over half of what she had initially hoped for. While disappointed in the outcome, Lucy thanked Henkels for his interest in the sale. The last letters show Lucy and Henkels settling their accounts in January and February of 1911, with a few more disputes over shipping expenses.

In 1919—nine years after she shipped her antiques to Henkels—Lucy's Red Hill mansion burned down. Although she could not have known it at the time, her decision to sell her family treasures may have saved them from destruction, preserving them and their ability to teach us about Patrick Henry's life. These letters are valuable for the information they give us about the existence and history of several important Henry artifacts.

We do not know the current loca-

tions of every piece mentioned in the letters, but perhaps some will be discovered in future years. The corner chair and portrait now reside at Colonial Williamsburg, and Henry's Stamp Act Resolutions can be found in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, also in Williamsburg. Happily, a few of Lucy's items from the 1910 sale have made their way back to Red Hill; a silver caster set engraved with 'P.H. 1777' and a rough draft letter from Henry to George Washington are now displayed in Red Hill's E. Stuart James Grant Museum. An original land grant to Patrick Henry is in the Red Hill vault. 

### Items that Lucy sent to Henkels:

- *Patrick Henry papers (Including Resolutions Against the Stamp Act, the Receipt for the Gun Powder, a bill for Governor's Palace furniture, letters from Richard Henry Lee, letters from David Ross, and family letters)*
- *20 English law books inscribed by PH*
- *Sully portrait (Colonial Williamsburg)*
- *a set of silver casters (Red Hill)*
- *a silver frame for a platter*
- *a desk*
- *a corner chair (Colonial Williamsburg)*
- *a sword-cane*
- *buckles*
- *a knife*
- *a copy of the Maryland Gazette bearing Washington's signature*

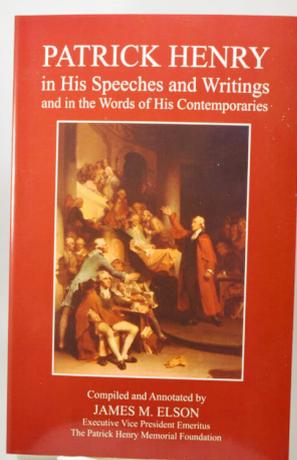
## BUILDINGS (CONT.)

(Continued from page 5)

like this on one of our historic buildings, there are many special considerations in order to preserve their authentic character. For this job we turned to Built-Rite Construction Co., Inc., who brought the benefit of extensive experience in period-specific work. Their commitment to using authentic materials in the repairs even took them up to Pennsylvania to procure the appropriate items! White oak was used for any wooden areas that needed to be replaced. Flex mortar from previous repair efforts was removed throughout the structure and replaced with period-appropriate lime mortar. Finally, all the logs were sealed with a special mixture of boiled linseed oil and mineral spirits to ward off future water damage.

Careful inspection of the entire cabin was conducted to identify all areas of concern—the goal being to make sure the cabin will be sturdy and protected from the elements for

many years to come. To that end, the structure was stabilized with the addition of support beams underneath. Any rot present in the wood throughout was removed and replaced with white oak. Loose siding was replaced with period-specific nails, and the chimney was re-mortared back to the siding up the entire structure. 🍃



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VALID THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

# FACES OF RED HILL

## SHERMAN LAPRADE



Sherman LaPrade (pictured here with his wife, Kim) is a life-long educator, an active and enthusiastic volunteer in our local community, and a wonderful recent addition to the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation Board.

Raised in Nathalie, Virginia, he graduated from Virginia State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Studies Education and a Master's in School Administration and Supervision from Lynchburg College, now University of Lynchburg. Later, he taught in the Amherst County school system for ten years and worked in School Administration in Charlotte County, Danville City, and Halifax County for 26 years. He

Most recently, Sherman returned to Red Hill through his connection to the Brookneal Lions Club, of which he has been a member for over 30 years. "I believe in giving back to my community which I was born and raised in and currently am a member of the Brookneal Lions Club for more than 30 years," he says. Some time back, the Lions elected to host one of their meetings at Red Hill, in the Casey Education Center. During this meeting, the Lions heard about the updates to the Quarter Place Trail, and plans for the upcoming Dedication and Celebration. Sherman responded with immediate interest and support—it wasn't long before we

can American Cemetery Dedication Project and my time as a Board Member of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation; the staff has been most informative and knowledgeable. If there is a question or concern, Hope [Marstin] and her staff do not stop until an answer is found."

Of course, it is no surprise to share that Sherman's favorite memory of Red Hill so far is the Dedication of the Quarter Place Trail and Enslaved African-American cemetery, the 300-person event he worked so hard

*I believe in giving back to my community...*

retired from education after 37 years, and has continued to stay deeply invested in the community.

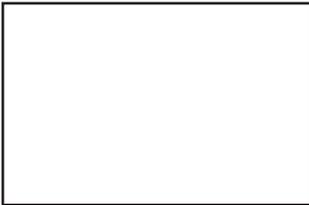
LaPrade's acquaintance with Red Hill goes back a long way—as a local growing up nearby, and former History major in Virginia, he knew Patrick Henry well even before going into education. Then, during the time he spent as a principal in the Charlotte County School System, Red Hill was chosen as a field trip location to incorporate into their curriculum.

asked if he would be willing to volunteer on the Community Engagement Committee to plan the event! And it wasn't long after his admirable efforts on *that* that he was asked to stick with us and join the Board. His energy, zeal, and dedication are invaluable, and we're thrilled to have him on the team.

Asked what he thinks it is that makes Red Hill so special, LaPrade said: "It's the staff, since my time working on the Enslaved and Afri-

to help bring about in June of 2021. If you missed the recap of that event here, or if you would simply like to revisit that moving day, you can find the video, entitled "Precious Memories, How They Linger: Quarter Place Cemetery Dedication & Remembrance Ceremony," on our website at [redhill.org/quarter-place](http://redhill.org/quarter-place). Red Hill will be holding the second annual Tribute to the Quarter Place Community this year on October 15th. Please register at [redhill.org/events](http://redhill.org/events). 

*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.*



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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:** Dexter Gilliam

**Vice Chair:** Mike Madden

**Board:** Ward Burton, Jean Elliott, Charles (Skip) Fox IV, Mark Holman, Sherman LaPrade, Dagen McDowell, Elsie Rose, Jack Schaffer, Gene Smith

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## 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](mailto:info@redhill.org). We look forward to making your learning experience memorable and fun!

## Upcoming Events

**September 3rd**

**STARRY NIGHTS**

7:30-9:00pm, with the Crewe Astronomy club. Email [info@redhill.org](mailto:info@redhill.org) to register.

**October 6th-7th**

**HOME EDUCATORS' LIVING HISTORY DAYS**

9:30am-12:00pm. Visit [redhill.org/events](http://redhill.org/events) to register.

**October 15th**

**ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO THE**

**QUARTER PLACE COMMUNITY**

11:00am-3:00pm. Visit [redhill.org/events](http://redhill.org/events) to register.