

# News From Red Hill

*Red Hill* Patrick Henry  
National Memorial

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## THE SUMMER EVENTS ISSUE: EVERY SUMMER HAS A STORY

2023 brought our busiest event season along with the (mostly) sunny skies and the bright green leaves that provide shade to Red Hill on those warm, lazy days of summer. In this issue, you can read about how we celebrated our Founder's birthday (pg. 2), the return of a staff and community favorite—a Naturalization ceremony—after a three-year COVID hiatus (pg. 11), and revisit our biggest Independence Day ever (pg. 12). Check out the photos and get inspired to plan your next visit.

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## NEW BIOGRAPHY BY JOHN RAGOSTA HITS SHELVES

*For the People, For the Country: Patrick Henry's Final Political Battle*, a new book by historian John Ragosta was released in August, 2023 by The University of Virginia Press. Like all the books mentioned in this newsletter, *For the People, For the Country* is available for purchase in the museum gift shop! A summary of the book and its central concerns, in the author's own words, follows below.

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In 1788, Patrick Henry led the effort to block ratification of the U.S. Constitution. He believed that the new national government would be too large and too distant from the people. When the Constitution was ratified over Henry's objection, he vowed to continue to seek reform "in a constitutional way."

Ten years later, George Washington begged Henry to come out of retirement to defend the Constitution that he had

opposed. The nation that they had helped to create was at risk, Washington warned. Some politicians were openly discussing state secession from the union; civil war threatened. Washington was enraged. The first president had always trusted that what unites Americans is more important than what divides us, but deceitful politicians were inciting the people in a cynical bid for political power without regard for the nation. Washington believed (and hoped) that in this crisis the people would listen to Henry.

Agreeing that disaster loomed, Henry came out of retirement to run for congress again and let it be known that he would speak to his co-citizens at Charlotte Courthouse on March 4, 1799. When he rose to address the people that day, he appeared weak, fragile, bent, grey. But as he went on, Henry's voice rang forth with its (continued on page 4)

# PATRICK HENRY BIRTHDAY BASH: CELEBRATING 287 YEARS

This year Patrick Henry's May 29th birthday coincided with Memorial Day. The Patrick Henry Chapter of Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) held their wreath-laying ceremony to honor his birthday on Sunday afternoon, May 28th.

The day was cloudy with multiple showers, giving us reason once again to be grateful for the completion of the Casey Education Center! We decided to move the event indoors—rainy days at Red Hill are beautiful, but it's nice that now everyone can enjoy the beauty from the other side of a cozy window, even as late as the end of May.

Many Virginia SAR and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) chapters attended and brought wreaths to honor Patrick Henry. For the second year in a row Mark Day, President of the Patrick Henry Chapter of the SAR, presided over the event. Hope Marstin, CEO, welcomed everyone in attendance. Patrick Jolly, Henry's 5th great-grandson, also spoke to the crowd. He shared what a pleasure it was to have his great-grandfather honored, and to be a part of the Patrick Henry Chapter SAR.

Though more than two centuries separate our Patrick from his famous ancestor, he always reminds us here at Red Hill that Patrick Henry's legacy is very much alive

and thriving. (Jolly is pictured pausing for a moment of contemplation in front of the wreath display, lower right). The afternoon concluded with a birthday cake and lemonade.

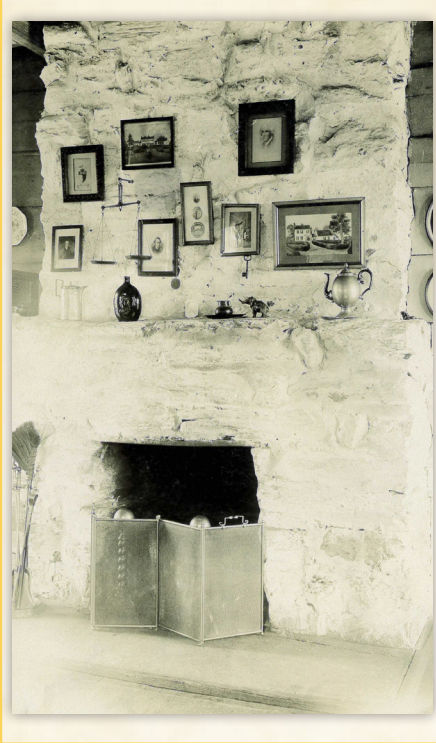
On Monday, May 29th, Henry's actual birthday, the rain disappeared and a wreath full of red, white, and blue flowers was placed on his grave. Just like the day before, admission was complimentary for guests and they, too, were served birthday cake and lemonade. 🐦



# From the Red Hill Collection

## PHOTOGRAPH OF LAW OFFICE INTERIOR

Photographs are one of the best resources we have to chart the 20th-century history of Red Hill. Unlike paintings and drawings, photos illustrate a space exactly as it was without an artist's interpretation.



This photograph, donated to our collection this year, is one of only three known images of the interior of Patrick Henry's law office. Notice the massive stone fireplace, whitewashed and rustic in form, along with a mishmash of decorative pictures and objects. Such details demonstrate the unsophisticated nature of this building.

With its internal structure intact, the law office is considered the only 18th century building to survive at Red Hill. Workers enslaved by Richard Booker constructed the small, two-room building around 1772, using local stone for a large central chimney seen in this image. Booker's overseer lived and worked here, possibly using one room as an office and the other as his quarters.

Patrick Henry purchased Red Hill in 1794 and converted the former overseer's cottage to his own law and plantation office. The second room once again served as a bedroom, but this time it housed some of Henry's children and the occasional guest. In traditional Henry fashion, it is not believed any major alterations were made to the building.

The office stood seemingly just as it was for another 115 years until about 1910. Lucy Gray Henry Harrison, a great-granddaughter to Patrick Henry, took to renovating the entire property—law office included—in her vision. Alterations to the office added a full second story and staircase, expanded the main block westward, and attached an existing building to its eastern side. The original stone chimney, however, remained largely untouched except for its crown which was replaced in brick, a material considered more fashionable than stone.

Following the great fire which destroyed Lucy's home in 1919, the former law office became her permanent residence. It was during this time that this photograph was taken. Lucy's eclectic tastes are exhibited here with a combination of prints, engravings, paintings, and knick-knacks. Incredibly, many of these items have returned to the Red Hill collection.

The large coffeepot, for example, dates to the 19th century and belonged to Lucy's father. Above hangs a watercolor by Lucy's sister Elizabeth depicting the (continued on page 12)

“...the only 18th century building to survive at Red Hill.”



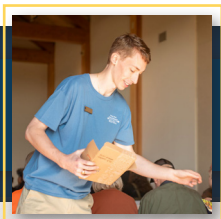
## NEW RAGOSTA BIOGRAPHY (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

former vigor, and the thousands who had come to hear what would undoubtedly be his final political speech were entranced. He reminded the gathered throng that he had opposed the Constitution, but he had lost.

"We the people" adopted the Constitution; while he had led the anti-federalists, he was part of the nation that had ratified. As he told Washington a few years earlier, "I should be unworthy the Character of a Republican

or an honest man if I withheld my best & most zealous Efforts, because I opposed the Constitution in its unaltered Form..." If people were unhappy with the direction of government, they could not simply ignore it



# QUOTES →IN← CONTEXT



BY GUEST AUTHOR KEITH SCHRUM

**"Different men often see the same subject in different lights."**

—Second Virginia Convention,  
March 23, 1775

It was spring 1775. Virginia and her sister colonies were in a strained relationship with Great Britain and matters were getting worse. The Second Virginia Convention was in session to consider the colony's options for dealing with the crisis.

On day four of the gathering, delegates listened to a reading of the prior day's minutes which included a petition from the Assembly of Jamaica to King George III, asking him to intervene to restore good relations between the colonies. Some present believed tensions with Great Britain would ease if the king took action on

the Jamaican petition as well as one submitted by the First Continental Congress in October 1774.

Patrick Henry upset their thinking when he presented a set of resolutions. One was particularly alarming: "Resolved, therefore, That this colony be immediately put into a state of defence, and that be a committee to prepare a plan for embodying, arming, and disciplining such a number of men as may be sufficient for that purpose."

A vigorous debate followed. Conservatives like Robert Carter Nicholas, Benjamin Harrison, Richard Bland and Edmund Pendleton claimed the measure went too far. They wanted more time to wait for England's response to the colonies' latest protest against British action. Thomas Jefferson, Richard Henry Lee and Thomas Nelson stood with Henry. These "radicals" believed the

time for waiting was over and war was coming. George Washington sat in silence, appearing to contemplate his country's fate.

Henry acknowledged the differences of opinions among the delegates, "No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; 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." He went on to deliver his "Liberty or Death" speech.

The resolutions passed by a slim margin, 65 yeas-60 nays, revealing a divided con- (continued on page 9)

*Quotes in Context is a recurring newsletter feature in which we explore the historical, political, and cultural context that helps to inform the meaning and significance of some of Patrick Henry's famous quotes.*

or interfere with federal authority. Under the Constitution, the states had no right to do so. Henry reminded Virginians that change had to be sought “in a constitutional way.” If you disapprove of government policy, he lectured, go to the ballot box! If Americans

decided to ask the states to interfere between the federal government and the people. Jefferson’s draft of the Kentucky Resolutions claimed a state’s right to unilaterally “nullify” a federal law with which it disagreed and thought unconstitutional (a claim that was

seek change “in a constitutional way,” just what he had promised in 1788. Put in other terms: The first rule in a democracy is that the majority rules; the second rule, equally important, is that the minority must accept the first, at least until the next election. That

“

## *His message speaks loudly still.*

”

could not live within the government that they had created, the nation was, indeed, lost. “You can never exchange the present government but for a monarchy.”

Of course, Henry won his election—Henry always won his election—but he died before he could take office. John Randolph of Roanoke who began his political career that March morning in 1799 would later explain that had Henry lived, Thomas Jefferson would not have been elected president.

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What was the threat to the nation that drew Henry and Washington out of retirement?

Why was Henry now defending the Constitution? Does he speak to the nature of a loyal opposition today?

And why has this story not been better remembered?

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After the Constitution was ratified, the new nation struggled to understand the role and power of the president, Congress, and the judiciary. Political battles broke out; partisanship flourished, Federalist v. Democratic-Republican. By 1798, fearing that the United States may be drawn into the raging European wars, the Federalist Congress adopted the Alien & Sedition Acts, effectively making it illegal to criticize the president or Congress.

Thomas Jefferson, leader of the Democratic-Republicans, was horrified. Scores of Democratic-Republican newspaper editors were indicted and jailed. Fair elections seemed impossible if the government could not be criticized; a “reign of witches” threatened, Jefferson warned.

Desperate, and thinking that they had few options, Jefferson and James Madison

renewed in the run-up to the Civil War).

Under such a system, federal law would effectively vary state-by-state, states would oppose other states, individual states might secede from the union; by 1799, newspapers reported that the nation was on the verge of “Civil War!”

This was the crisis that drew Henry and Washington from their retirements.

Henry understood that elections have consequences; the Alien & Sedition Acts were adopted by a Federalist Congress. The critical issue now was not the laws themselves, but how to respond. While Jeffersonians understandably opposed the Alien & Sedition Acts, they had to recognize that the proper role for a loyal opposition was to fight government policy in the courts or at the ballot box. State interference with federal authority, a clear violation of the supremacy clause of the Constitution, was a prescription for disaster; it threatened the nation. While his position on the Alien & Sedition Acts has been challenged by historians (although I think the stronger evidence is that he opposed them), Henry was very clear that in a republic opposition had to be pursued under the law.

His message speaks loudly still. Rather than an extremist encouraging people to revolt against a legitimate government, Henry understood the need to work within the system, to accept the results of an election, and to seek change within the law. In 1775, when he called for “liberty, . . . or death,” Americans had no vote in Parliament; their petitions had been ignored by king and Commons; there was no other choice. Opposition in a republic, a republic that the people had created, was a different matter altogether. A loyal opposition had to

lesson about the fundamental nature of a republic applies today as well.

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A nation on the verge of civil war. George Washington and Patrick Henry emphatically rebuking Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Jefferson’s presidency at risk.

Why is this story not better known?

The short answer is that Thomas Jefferson did everything possible to destroy Henry’s historic memory. For years after Henry’s death in 1799, Jefferson would tell anyone who would listen that Henry was a poor lawyer, unread, a lazy politician, greedy, corrupt. . . . He suggested to Henry’s first biographer that the former governor was a coward, although he had to drop that claim under questioning. While he had to concede that Henry was one of the greatest speakers of all times—“he appeared to me to speak as Homer wrote,” Jefferson admitted—Henry’s great oratorical skill was turned to the tool of a demagogue when Jefferson alleged that he had sought dictatorial powers during the American Revolution.

Of course, Jefferson was deeply disturbed by Henry’s 1799 campaign—political “apostasy” he called it—but that was not what primarily motivated our third president’s animosity. Rather, Jefferson’s burning anger arose during the American Revolution.

In 1781, as the American Revolution seemed at a stalemate elsewhere, Britain decided to invade war-weary Virginia. With very limited authority under the 1776 state constitution and a state that was exhausted from supporting the war elsewhere for six years, Governor Jefferson was unable to prevent the Redcoats from chasing Virginia’s legislature out of Richmond and sacking the city. By June, as (*continued on page 10*)

# “THE MOST TEMPERATE MAN I EVER KNEW”:

## INTRODUCTION

For a man who did not seem to write much down, it is no surprise that sketching a picture of Patrick Henry proves a challenge to historians. Henry's public life – from his time as lawyer, Burgess, governor, and delegate – can fill entire books, but Henry's personal details can merely fill pages.

As no memoir of Henry's exists, it then falls to those who knew the Voice of the Revolution to fill the gaps of his identity. Portraits, after all, can only tell as much as their artists allow; biographies are disconnected from their subject. Using firsthand accounts from those who knew Patrick Henry best, a clearer picture of the man – rather than the lawyer, the Burgess, the governor, the delegate – can then be understood.

Many of the recollections compiled here were recorded after William Wirt published his first biography of Henry in 1817. Family members such as Edward Fontaine (a great-grandson) and Spencer Roane (a son-in-law) hoped to correct the book's errors regarding Henry's character by providing written statements in hopes they would be included. Wirt never incorporated their corrections into later editions, but they have provided succeeding biographers with a fresh look into this “most remarkable man.”<sup>1</sup>

## APPEARANCE AND PHYSIQUE

### *Edward Fontaine<sup>i</sup>*

He was a lithe, active man. Six feet in height weighing about 160 lbs. His hair was dark & curling. His features were classical, more Grecian than Roman, and his countenance commanding, but capable of every variety of expression. The most remarkable feature was his eye – which was deeply set, & well shaded – the color hazel and blue, but bright or dark, benign or piercing at will, & reflecting instantly every emotion of the soul of the speaker.<sup>2</sup>

### *Thomas Jefferson*

Whenever the court were closed for the winter season, he would make up a party of poor hunters of his neighborhood, would go off with them to the piney woods of Fluvanna, and pass weeks in hunting deer, of which he was passionately fond, sleeping under a tent, before a fire, wearing the same shirt the whole time, and covering all the dirt of his dress

with a hunting shirt.<sup>3</sup>

### *Samuel Meredith<sup>ii</sup>*

In his youth he seemed regardless of the appearance of his outside dress, but was unusually attentive in having clean linen and stockings. He was not remarkable for an uncouth or genteel appearance. (Remarks particularly applicable to Mr. Henry's youth).<sup>4</sup>

He was, in his early youth, as in advanced life, plain and easy in his manners, exempt from the bashfulness often so distressing to young persons who have not seen much company.<sup>5</sup>

### *Spencer Roane<sup>iii</sup>*

When he was Governor the second time (and I presume more so the first) he rarely appeared in the streets, and never without a scarlet cloak, black clothes, and a dressed wig, &c.

His dress was plain, as also was his house and furniture, and he was careless about his diet.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Henry was a man of middling stature. He was rather stoop-shouldered (after I knew him), probably the effect of age. He had no superfluous flesh; his features were distinctly marked, and his complexion rather dark. He was somewhat bald, and always wore a wig in public. He was, according to my recollection, very attentive to his teeth, his beard, and his linen. He was not a handsome man, but his countenance was agreeable, and full of intelligence and interest. 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.<sup>7</sup>

### *William Overton Winston<sup>iv</sup>*

He was generally clad in an Ozna[burgh] Shirt Jump. Jacket and Trowsers of Ozna or checks, and very often Barefooted.<sup>8</sup>

## EDUCATION AND INTELLIGENCE

### *Edward Fontaine*

He was never in the walls of any college. He was “forest born,” and reared in what would now be considered in the densely people regions of Europe a wilderness. Yet he received a most excellent education from his uncle the Rev. Patrick Henry after whom he was named. So, far from being illiterate as Mr. Jefferson rep-

resented him to Mr. Wirt, he was not only well-versed in the ancient classics, but in all the proper learning of his profession as a lawyer.<sup>9</sup>

His organs of speech were perfect; and his voice like the tones of a grand and complicated instrument always under the absolute command of a skillful performer.

But he improved all his natural advantages by hard study, & judicious practice. He was certainly born a poet, and made an orator as was Pericles, Demosthenes, or Cicero. No orator or actor ever devoted more preparation to a public display of his powers than he did.

In proof of this I will mention a few facts related to me by my father and three of his daughters. He wrote poetry beautifully, and often composed with much facility little sonnets adopted to old Scotch songs which he admired, for his daughters to sing and play. But after he had been gratified by their performance, he carefully tore up the paper, and destroyed every line he had composed, and they were never able to preserve a single stanza of their father's odes which they told me were gems of poetic beauty. He seemed to fear that such compositions if published would injure his reputation as a Statesman, and lessen his influence with the people of Virginia.

There is an idea generally prevalent that poets are somewhat eccentric, & devoid of common sense. This is sometimes the case. Yet no man can be an orator of the first class without possessing the fire and fancy of a true poet.<sup>10</sup>

### *Samuel Meredith*

With him he acquired a knowledge of the Latin language and a smattering of the Greek. He became well acquainted with the Mathematics, of which he was very fond. At the age of 15 he was well versed in both ancient and modern History.<sup>11</sup>

### *Spencer Roane*

As to Mr. H.'s general education, I do not believe that he had a regular academical one, but I do believe that he had some knowledge of the Latin tongue, and acquaintance with some of the principal branches of Science. These a man of Mr. H.'s genius could not fail to acquire in a considerable degree, if not in the school room, at least at the dinner table of his father, who was a well-educated man. His genius was far-soaring above those of ordinary men as is the first qualified land of Kentucky beyond the sandy barrens of Pea Ridge (a barren ridge in King and Queen).<sup>12</sup>

# RECOLLECTIONS OF PATRICK HENRY'S APPEARANCE, CHARACTER, AND PRACTICES

## RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

### *Edward Fontaine*

He spent one hour every day in his office in private devotion. His hour of prayer was the close of the day including sunset. He usually walked and meditated, when the weather permitted, in his shaded avenue, & then retired into his closet. There he read his Bible, and his prayers were long and fervent; and during that sacred hour none of his family members intruded upon his privacy.<sup>13</sup>

His religion was not a political thing; but a pure & vital principle which animated all his thoughts, words, and actions. When he drew his sword for the right, and he said: "We must fight! I repeat it Sir, We must fight!"<sup>14</sup>

### *Samuel Meredith*

One thing is remarkable in Mr. Henry, and this information comes from his sister, Mrs. Meredith, a very pious woman, that he was never known in his life to utter the name of God except on a necessary or proper occasion. He was through life a warm friend of the Christian religion. He was an Episcopalian, but very friendly to all other sects, particularly the Presbyterian.<sup>15</sup>

### *Spencer Roane*

...for tho' I believe him to have been always a Christian, he was remarkably tolerant to others, and never obtruded that as the subject of conversation.<sup>16</sup>

## CHARACTER

### *Edward Fontaine*

It was his character as a protector of the oppressed, and an invincible champion of Freedom, that made him the most honored and dearly loved man that ever lived.<sup>17</sup>

### *Thomas Jefferson*

I think he was the best humored man in society I almost ever knew, and the greatest orator that ever lived. He had a consummate knowledge of the human heart, which directing the efforts of his eloquence enabled him to attain a degree of popularity with the people at large never perhaps equaled.<sup>18</sup>

His temper was excellent, and he generally observed decorum in debate. On one or two occasions I have seen him angry; his anger was terrible, and those

who had witnessed it were not disposed to provoke it again.<sup>19</sup>

### *Samuel Meredith*

His disposition was very mild, benevolent, and humane. He was quiet and inclined to be thoughtful, but fond of society. From his earliest days he was an attentive observer of everything of consequence that passed before him. Nothing escaped his attention. He interested himself in the happiness of others, particularly of his sisters, of whom he had eight, and whose advocate he always was when any favor or indulgence was to be procured from their mother.<sup>20</sup>

He was uncommonly hospitable; his attentions were not confined to the rich, to the great, or wise, but he was familiar with every man of good character.<sup>21</sup>

### *Spencer Roane*

With respect to the domestic character of Mr. Henry, nothing could be more amiable. In every relation, as a husband, father, master, and neighbor, he was entirely exemplary.

As to the disposition of Mr. Henry, it was the best imaginable. I am positive that I never saw him in a passion, or apparently even out of temper. Circumstances which would have highly irritated other men had no such visible effect on him. He was always calm and collected, and the rude attacks of his adversaries in debate only whetted the poignancy of his satire.<sup>22</sup>

No man ever vaunted less of his achievements than Mr. Henry. I hardly ever heard him speak of those great achievements which form the prominent part of his biography. As for boasting, he was an entire stranger to it; unless it be that in his latter days he seemed proud of the goodness of his lands, and, I believe, wished to be thought wealthy.<sup>23</sup>

As to the character of Mr. Henry: with many sublime virtues, he had no vice that I knew or ever heard of, and scarcely a foible.<sup>24</sup>

## MUSICAL TALENTS

### *Samuel Meredith*

He had a nice ear for music, and when he was about the age of 12, he had his collarbone broken, and during the confinement learned to play very well on the flute. He was also an excellent performer on the violin.<sup>25</sup>

Although an excellent performer on

the violin, he never played but in select companies and for the amusement of his particular friends.<sup>26</sup>

### *Spencer Roane*

I have no doubt, from report, but Mr. H. had been a good performer on the violin, and was in other respects a musical man; but I never heard him play on a violin, or any other instrument, or even sing or hum a tune.<sup>27</sup>

### *William Overton Winston*

He was very active and attentive to his guests and very frequently amused them with his violin on which he performed very well.<sup>28</sup>

## ORATORY

### *Edward Fontaine*

He observed a singular practice for tuning his voice, and strengthening his lungs, different from that of Demosthenes who declaimed aloud while running up hill. His residence overlooked a large field in the bottom of the Staunton River, the most of which could be seen from his yard. He rose early; and in the mornings of the Spring, Summer, and Fall, before sunrise, while the air was cool & calm, reflecting clearly and distinctly the sounds of the lowing herds and singing birds, he stood upon an eminence, and gave orders and directions to his servants at work a half mile distant from him.

During his elocutionary morning exercise his enunciation was clear and distinct enough to be heard over an area which ten thousand people could not have filled: & the tones of his voice were melodious as the notes of an Alpine horn.<sup>29</sup>

He stood erect—his eyes beamed with a light that was almost supernatural, his features glowed with the hue and fire of youth, and his voice rang clear and melodious with the intonations of some grand musical instrument whose notes filled the area, and fell distinctly and delightfully upon the ears of the most distant of the thousands gathered before him.<sup>30</sup>

### *James Iredell*

Gracious God! He is an orator indeed!<sup>31</sup>

### *John Marshall*

[Patrick Henry's "Give me Liberty" speech] was one of the boldest, vehement, and animated pieces of eloquence that had ever been delivered.<sup>32</sup>

# EDITED BY CODY YOUNGBLOOD

## Spencer Roane

As an orator, Mr. Henry demolished Madison with as much ease as Sampson did the cords that bound him before he was shorn; Mr. Lee held a greater competition. There were many other great men in the House, but as orators they cannot be named with Henry or Lee.<sup>33</sup>

He was perfect master of the passions of his auditory, whether in the tragic or the comic line. The tones of his voice, to say nothing of his matter and 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; yet his gesture came powerfully in aid, and if necessary would approach almost to the ridiculous.<sup>34</sup>

## PERSONAL ANECDOTES

### Edward Fontaine

#### Aversion to tobacco smoke:

In his old age the condition of his nervous system made the scent of tobacco pipe very disagreeable to him. The old colored house servants were compelled to hide their pipes, and rid themselves of the scent of tobacco before they ventured to approach him. He detected instantly the fumes of one hid any where in the vicinity of his house.

My father told me he never knew any person whose sense of smelling was so perfect; and he was frequently amused at his grandfather's encounters with the cook & laundress who used patriotically the famous weed which was the staple and resource of wealth of the "Old Dominion." They protested that they had not smoked, or seen a pipe; & he invariably proved the culprits guilty by following the scent, & leading them to their corncob pipes hid in some crack or crannie, which he made them take and throw instantly into the kitchen fire, without reforming their habits, or correcting the evil which is likely to continue as long as tobacco will grow.<sup>35</sup>

#### Diet:

He was very abstemious in his diet, and used no wine or alcoholic stimulants. Distressed and alarmed at the increase of drunkenness after the Revolutionary War, he did everything in his power to arrest the vice. He thought that the introduction of a harmless beverage as a substitute for distilled spirits would be beneficial.<sup>36</sup>

My father thought that he aggravated the disease—intussuseptis—which is ulti-

mately proved fatal, by the use of rhubarb, a dose of which he usually took before delivering a speech for the purpose, as he expressed it, of clearing his head.<sup>37</sup>

#### Last words:

His voice was clear & distinct, & his last words were addressed to his friend Dr. Cabell. He fixed his eyes affectionately upon him and said: "Doctor, I have used many arguments to prove to you the truth of the Christian Religion—I will now give you my last argument by showing you how a Christian can die." In a few moments more, he ceased to breathe, & without giving the signal of a parting pang to the peaceful body, his mighty spirit passed away from earth and time.<sup>38</sup>

### Samuel Meredith

#### Henry's Residences:

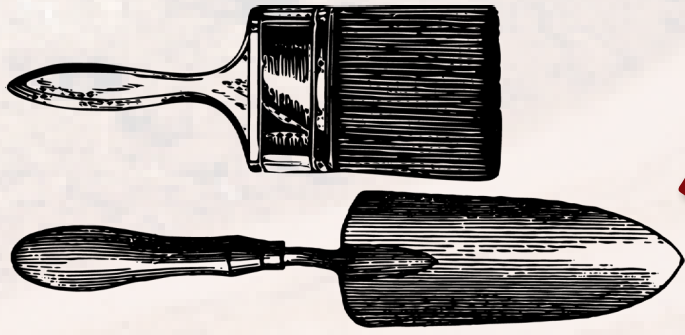
His furniture was all of the plainest sort, consisting of necessities only; nothing for show or ornament. He regarded as nothing the trouble of moving, and would change his dwelling with as little concern as a common man would change a coat of which he was tired.<sup>39</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- i. Rev. Edward Fontaine (1814-1884) was descended through Patrick and Sarah Henry's first child, Martha. As a great-grandson, Fontaine recorded information he heard from older family members and friends over a forty-year period. He compiled his writings into a single manuscript in 1872.
- ii. Col. Samuel Meredith, Jr. (1732-1808) became Patrick Henry's brother-in-law after marrying Henry's sister Jane. In 1775 Meredith became a captain of the 1st Virginia Regiment, but soon resigned his commission in favor of Patrick Henry.
- iii. Judge Spencer Roane (1762-1822) was a distinguished member of Virginia society, serving for six years in the Virginia House of Delegates and as a judge of the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals from 1795 to 1822. Roane married Patrick Henry's daughter Anne in 1787.
- iv. William Overton Winston (1747-1815) was a cousin of Patrick Henry's born in Hanover County. As a young man, he frequented Hanover Tavern and enjoyed the company of the tavernkeeper's son-in-law, Patrick Henry.
- v. Justice James Iredell (1751-1799) served as one of the first justices of the Supreme Court of the U.S. He presided over a case in *Ware v. Hylton*, also known as the British Debt Case, in which Henry made a striking oral argument.

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5. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 432.
6. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 438.
7. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 454.
8. William Overton Winston to William Wirt, 1805, quoted in Robert D. Meade, *Patrick Henry: Patriot in the Making* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1957), 91.
9. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 4.
10. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 7-8.
11. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 431.
12. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 440.
13. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 9.
14. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 13.
15. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 432.
16. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 452.
17. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 13.
18. Gribbel, *Reminiscences*, 3.
19. George Ticknor and Daniel Webster, "Reminiscences of Patrick Henry by Thomas Jefferson in a Conversation with Daniel Webster," 1824, quoted in James Elson, ed., *Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson* (Brookneal: Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, 1997), 61.
20. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 431.
21. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 433.
22. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 436.
23. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 436.
24. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 454.
25. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 431.
26. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 432.
27. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 438.
28. William Overton Winston to William Wirt, 91.
29. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 9-10.
30. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 22.
31. James W. Bouldin, recalling descriptions by John Randolph, n.d., quoted in William Wirt Henry, *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), 475.
32. William Wirt, recalling a note by John Marshall, n.d., quoted in William Wirt, *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry* (Philadelphia: James Webster, 1817), 124.
33. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 443.
34. Roane, "Judge Spencer Roane's Memorandum," 445.
35. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 11-12.
36. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 11.
37. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 11.
38. Couvillon, *Patrick Henry*, 29.
39. Meredith, "Samuel Meredith's Statement," 433.



# Digging

## INTO THE HISTORY

This summer, Lucia Butler, Red Hill's staff archaeologist, and her team of volunteers started out by excavating an area where the 20th century servants' house and an earlier kitchen once stood. The crew encountered almost six feet of disturbed soil in the first unit, indicating that a large, deep feature had been dug there and filled back in. The artifacts recovered from that site mostly included bricks, brick fragments, glass, nails, ceramic, and some Native American lithic artifacts. They did not encounter any building foundations. "We have gone as far as we can in that site," reports Butler, "but still have some questions about what the feature in Unit 1 indicates—we will do some more testing around that area."

Now the team is conducting a shovel test-pit survey across one section of the historic grounds, which involves digging small pits at evenly spaced 25-ft intervals. This will help us understand what the soil and artifacts look like across a broader

swath of the historic grounds, and will help inform future excavations by providing information that will help us decide where to dig next. From this survey, the most common finds have been brick fragments, nails, and glass from, and in most areas there is about 5-7 inches of topsoil to be moved before reaching sterile subsoil. A few pits have gone deeper, with more soil layers, which may indicate an area it would be beneficial to look into with deeper excavation. All the

information about the survey is being recorded on GIS software.

We have volunteer opportunities open to anyone interested in participating in archaeology! Learn more about how you can get involved with our fieldwork on our website: [redhill.org/archaeology](http://redhill.org/archaeology).



## QUOTES IN CONTEXT (CONT.)

(Continued from page 4)

vention. However, it was enough to set things in motion. A committee formed and several of Henry's conservative opponents joined him and his radical colleagues in the arduous effort to prepare Virginia's defense.

Patrick Henry demonstrated that people can take different positions on a matter, and feel passionately about it, but speak and act with respect

toward one another. They found a way to work together.

\*Patrick Henry: *Life, Correspondence, and Speeches* by William Wirt Henry, Vol. I, pp. 261-262.

To learn more about Patrick Henry and the Second Virginia Convention, check out:

• *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence,*

*and Speeches* by William Wirt Henry, 3 Volumes. (Sprinkle Publications, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1993.)

• *Patrick Henry: Champion of Liberty* by Jon Kukla. (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2017.)

• *Patrick Henry: Practical Revolutionary* by Robert Douthat Meade. (J.B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1969.)

## NEW RAGOSTA BIOGRAPHY (CONT.)

(Continued from page 5)

his second term came to an end, Jefferson advised the speaker of the General Assembly that the state needed a governor with military experience and urged that someone else be chosen for the role. Unfortunately, before a new governor could be named, the Redcoats chased the General Assembly out of Charlottesville and west over the mountains to Staunton. Jefferson, whose term had technically expired, escaped instead with his family southwest to his home near Lynchburg, Virginia. When the frightened, weary, and indignant legislature again assembled in Staunton, after electing Thomas Nelson Jr. governor, the assembly launched an investigation of the now-absent Jefferson, effectively accusing the proud man from Charlottesville of incompetence, cowardice, and dishonor. When Cornwallis' British army was captured at Yorktown in October, effectively ending the war, the investigation was dismissed, and the Assembly unanimously voted Jefferson its thanks, but the damage had been done.

While history is not perfectly clear as to who launched the investigation, Jefferson blamed Henry and lamented to James Monroe a year later that even the aborted investigation "inflicted a wound on my spirit which will only be cured by the all-healing grave" – strong words even for Jefferson's sharp pen. The result: For the rest of his long life, Jefferson despised Patrick Henry

and would take almost any opportunity to diminish his memory.

Many Jeffersonians, of course, joined in the effort. In February of 1799, the leading Democratic-Republican newspaper, the Philadelphia Aurora, was praising Henry for a reputation that is "pure...his talents conspicuous." But after hearing of his 1799 campaign, the Aurora editor accused Henry of senility, deriding the former governor as "no longer quick to the apprehension of worldly deceptions."

These attacks continued for years. After the Civil War, unrepentant Confederate Edward Pollard, author of the infamous Lost Cause, honored Jefferson's nullification doctrine from the "resolutions of 1798!" (the Kentucky Resolutions). Responding to Henry's 1799 campaign, Pollard indignantly dismissed the former governor, going so far as to insist, ridiculously, that Henry was not even a very good speaker.

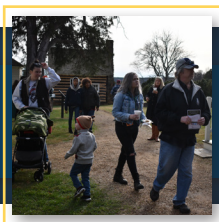
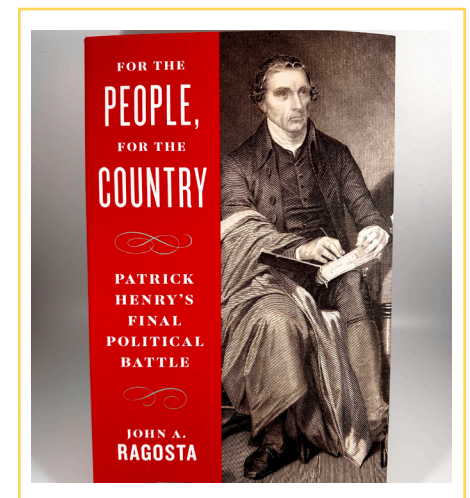
Henry did not help his own historic memory with his opposition to the U.S. Constitution and his refusal to accept national office, although he was offered positions as secretary of state, Supreme Court justice, senator, ambassador to France or Spain. Nonetheless, the attacks on his reputation have had a great effect. It is no coincidence that Henry is the most important of the Founders for whom there is no modern documentary editing project gathering his papers for study by his-

torians. The result is a lacuna in the historic record that is difficult to fill.

\*\*\*\*\*

It says much that in 1799, when George Washington thought the nation on the verge of collapse if not civil war, he turned to Patrick Henry to save the nation. We can still learn much about the proper role of a loyal opposition from his example. Henry speaks eloquently to how Americans need to engage the political process in a time of hyper-partisanship. It is a lesson equally true for our time.

This is the story at the heart of *For the People, For the Country: Patrick Henry's Final Political Battle* (UVA Press, 2023). 



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Ragosta, a historian at the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello, has taught law and history at the University of Virginia, George Washington University, and Hamilton, Oberlin, and Randolph Colleges. Dr. Ragosta is the author of *Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Legacy, America's Creed* (UVA Press, 2013), and *Wellspring of*

*Liberty: How Virginia's Religious Dissenters Helped to Win the American Revolution & Secured Religious Liberty* (Oxford University Press, 2010). He is co-editor of *European Friends of the American Revolution* (UVA, 2023) and *The Founding of Thomas Jefferson's University* (UVA, 2019). His newest book—*For the People, For the Country: Patrick Henry's Final Political*

*Battle*—was released in August of 2023 by the UVA Press.

An award-winning author and frequent commentator, Ragosta holds both a PhD and a JD from the University of Virginia. Before returning to academia, Dr. Ragosta was a partner at Dewey Ballantine LLP. He is also a beekeeper. He can be found at [johnaragosta.com](http://johnaragosta.com)

# NATURALIZATION CEREMONY RETURNS TO RED HILL

After not having a ceremony at Red Hill for the past three years, staff, board, and volunteers were very excited to have this special day—always a favorite for everyone involved—on the calendar of events once again.

On May 12th of this year, 30 citizens from 20 different countries of origin were naturalized at Red Hill. Everyone arrived early to wait their turn to be processed. During this time, their friends and families enjoyed fruit, Danish, and coffee in the Casey Education Center. Then everyone had time to explore the grounds and visit the historic buildings where docents were waiting to share Red Hill's history.

At 11am the ceremony began with children from Brookneal Elementary School singing several patriotic songs to the crowd. CEO Hope Marstin welcomed everyone. Next Patrick Henry Jolly gave a speech on how his 5th great grandfather felt about immigration to America; Henry recognized that people are the strength of a country.

The Honorable Norman K. Moon, Senior United States District Judge for the Western District of Virginia, pre-

sided over the ceremony. The Presentation of Colors was performed by the Patrick Henry Chapter, Virginia Society Sons of the American Revolution. Judge Moon administered the oath to the new citizens and presented each with their certificates. He then made a few remarks welcoming the newest citizens, and invited any of them to speak about what the day meant to them and/or about their journeys. The ceremony was the culmination of each individual's path on their way to naturalization, and the completion of a long dream—for some, a dream that took many years to attain.

Board member Dagen McDowell introduced the keynote speaker: The Honorable Jason Miyares, Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Virginia. AG Miyares is the first Hispanic American to be elected to a statewide office in Virginia, and the first child of an immigrant to be Attorney General. He spoke from the heart, relating his mother's experience to that of the group.

The ceremony concluded with the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

After the *(continued on page 14)*



“...he turned to Patrick Henry to save the nation.”



## LAW OFFICE PHOTO (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 3)*

main house at Red Hill. The brass scale hanging from the chimney belonged to Patrick Henry and validates family tradition which said Henry kept it in his law office. Various prints of Patrick

Henry and Henry artifacts also decorate the chimney.

Visitors to the law office today will see that this piece of Red Hill's architectural history no longer exists. Why? A case of mistaken identity.

In 1954 the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation hired Lynchburg architect Stanhope Johnson to head the restoration of Red Hill back to the 18th century. Johnson's limited experience with historic buildings caused

“

*Why? A case of mistaken identity...*

”

## OUR BIGGEST JULY 4TH CELEBRATION EVER!

July 4, 2023 brought over 2,700 people to Red Hill for our Independence Day celebration, making it the largest crowd we've ever recorded! People came from thirteen different states, 38 different cities from around Virginia, and came full of energy and excitement. Visitors from near and far shared an inspiring spirit of patriotism that permeated the day, with lots of red, white, & blue adorning people, cars, and picnic spots.

The day started hot and muggy and ended the same way, but since it didn't actually amount to any rain or storms we called it a good summer weather day! Many people came early to spend the entire day on the grounds at a leisurely pace, taking advantage of all of the interpretations and living history demonstrations. Crowds were encouraged to move between stations at the blacksmith shop, the archaeology site (where Lucia Butler had multiple found artifacts out for display), and the tobacco and bateaux interpretation, as well as the historic buildings.

Lots of families with children attended, and we had lots of kids enjoying the colonial games on the lawns.

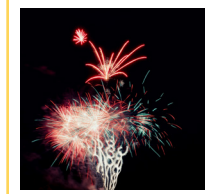
Our volunteer golf cart drivers were kept busy taking folks around the grounds and up to the visitor center and museum.

Andi Bradsher, one of our volunteers and interns, did a terrific job conducting Quarter Place tours for two very full groups of visitors.

On stage, the Brown Brothers were back again to entertain the crowd with a variety of songs. Our food vendors consisted of some local civic

groups and some local food trucks. Folks enjoyed a wide variety of food choices and the ice cream and frozen treats were a very popular way to help beat the heat.

The patio of the Casey Education Center was once again a popular VIP section to have ice cream and cake,



many original features to be removed, significant structures to be demolished, and landscapes erased. The law office is no exception.

Under Johnson's orders, contractors moved the law office near to its

original location after "the removal of the chimney down to the ground line." The chimney, however, would not be rebuilt as it once was. Johnson mistakenly believed "the original mantel was not stone," ordering it be replaced with

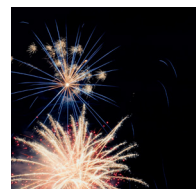
what he believed to be a more accurate finished brick. Parts of the demolished stone mantel were then reused in other building projects around the property. 🐦



and have the best view of the fireworks display. As an added bonus this year, former NASCAR driver Ward Burton was on hand to meet and greet the VIP ticket holders.

Of course, Patrick Henry Jolly is always a crowd favorite, and everyone gathered around him for his

"Liberty or Death" speech, recited in full costume from memory. Then old and young alike lined up to get his picture, autograph, or just to talk to him in person. At last, our fireworks lit up the dark, country sky, a perfectly joyous, fiery conclusion to a great Independence Day. 🐦




## NATURALIZATION (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 11)*

ceremony, most of the citizens came up to meet AG Miyares, Patrick Jolly, and Judge Moon. There were huge smiles all around, little flags flying, and even some very happy tears. Anyone wanting to take a few photos to remember the day had their pick of pretty backdrops on the grounds, which remained open throughout the day for anyone who wanted to continue to wander and learn.

The new citizens, families, friends, and invited guests were treated to lunch in the Casey Education Center after the ceremony.

Alongside the new citizens and their supporters, the 11th grade government class from nearby William Campbell High School was given a tour of Red Hill by Patrick Jolly before the ceremony, and then stayed to watch the proceedings.

In addition to all staff and many volunteers, most of the Board of Directors was also in attendance. 



“friends for a lifetime...champions of Red Hill Forever.”



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VALID THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2023

# FACES OF RED HILL

## IN MEMORIAM: JOYCE McDOWELL & GENE SMITH



Board members are an imperative part of the lifeblood of Red Hill and the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation. In recent years, we lost two such pillars of our community in Gene Smith and Joyce McDowell, whose absence is still felt. We often say that we feel as if our staff and volunteers are a part of our Red Hill family, and when we lose one we feel it as the loss of family too.

After lunch on the day of Naturalization, the current Board went with family and friends of Joyce and Gene out onto the grounds, where a tree was planted in honor of Joyce, and a bench was placed in honor of Gene.

For that reason, we present this memorial edition of "Faces of Red Hill" in honor of Gene and Joyce's many contributions over the years.

friend.

As board members, Joyce and Gene devoted countless hours to shape Red Hill into what we see today. They were here when we dedicated the Nuttle House, when we put the timeline in the Orientation Room, when we reacquired the boys home property, and when we dedicated the Casey Education Center. They were a part of every event held at Red Hill—Naturalization like today, living history with school children, July 4th, Bluegrass Barbecue and Brew Festival, Christmas Open House—I could keep going. And they were not JUST here—they volunteered—arriving early to Naturalization to meet the applicants, working the admission gate on July 4th, working the wine tent and selling raffle tickets throughout the

hesitated to talk to staff, listen, make us laugh, and—always—thank the staff, even bringing us food and treats. Every individual who was here working in any capacity felt appreciated. They loved meeting and interacting with our interns, new employees, and volunteers, making all feel a part of the Red Hill family.

Did either of them ever miss a board meeting? I don't think so. You would have to be in the room to appreciate how they interacted together at a meeting. They always sat next to each other, looked at each other before speaking up, knowing what the other was thinking. And if Gene didn't speak up when Joyce thought



Because they each worked closely with Hope Marstin, Red Hill's CEO, it was she who addressed the group on the day of the dedication. Her thoughts on Joyce and Gene's legacy at Red Hill, in her own words, follows in full below.

\*\*\*\*\*


"This is a special occasion to remember two very special people. All of us here today know how special Joyce and Gene were, to each of us, and to Red Hill.

I want to share a few thoughts from my perspective, as a staff member and

BBB. And even beyond, Gene would pick up anything for staff from Lynchburg and deliver it, he and Dowell put up signs for every event all over the area. Joyce would help us stuff and stamp envelopes for every mailing. I never heard either one of them say no or complain. Even when there was plenty to complain about—July 4th in the downpours of rain, BB&B in the freezing cold—they still stuck with us.

When not at Red Hill, they took every opportunity to share with anyone who would listen. Always ambassadors. When here, they never

he should, she would poke him with her elbow!

Personally, both meant the world to me. I wish everyone could be as lucky as I was to have such tremendous support. Two people who stood by me and believed in my abilities. This never wavered. They were my biggest cheerleaders and my strongest allies. I will treasure their love and carry their support with me always. I miss them very much. But in this spot, I can picture them together, friends for a lifetime, and champions of Red Hill forever." 

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

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

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#### Officers of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation

**Chair:** Dexter Gilliam

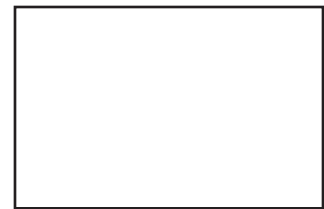
**Vice Chair:** Mike Madden

**Secretary:** Charles "Skip" Fox, IV

**Treasurer:** Elsie Rose

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Sherman LaPrade, Dagen McDowell, Jack Schaffer

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**Return Service Requested**

## RED HILL REDISCOVERED: DIVING DEEPER INTO THE HISTORY

Join us for one of our Red Hill Rediscovered talks: a fun, FREE educational series hosted by Cody Youngblood, our Director of Historic Preservation & Collections!

Upcoming events include: "Patrick Henry and Dying in the 18th Century" on October 28th, 11:00am-12:00pm (also live-streaming for online attendance), and "Lost Buildings of Red Hill Walking Tour" on November 5th, 2:00-3:00pm. Register (for free) at [redhill.org/events](http://redhill.org/events).

## Upcoming Events

**October 13th**

**THE SLAVE DWELLING PROJECT**

Free. Sunset campfire conversation with project Founder Joseph McGill Jr..

**October 14th**

**ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO THE  
QUARTER PLACE COMMUNITY**

Free to the public, 11:00am. Tickets for optional lunch buffet available online.

**November 11th**

**LANTERN TOUR WITH PATRICK  
HENRY JOLLY**

6:00pm-9:00pm. \$10 admission, tickets available at [redhill.org](http://redhill.org)