



**Little Lecture for May is
“The Story of Henderson Hall Plantation”**

***For Immediate Release
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***Contact: Mark Payne, 304-346-8500
payne@wvhumanities.org***

Charleston, WV — Since 2001 the Humanities Council has presented the annual Little Lecture Series at its historic MacFarland-Hubbard House headquarters in Charleston. The 2017 series continues on Sunday, May 21, at 2:00 p.m. with the presentation “The Story of Henderson Hall Plantation” by Randy Modesitt.

The 29-room Henderson Hall mansion, located at Williamstown, sits on a terrace overlooking the Ohio River. The house, completed in 1859 by G. W. Henderson, counts among its many visitors the likes of John James Audubon and Johnny Appleseed. According to the Henderson Hall website, G. W. Henderson’s father Alexander bought 25,000 acres in western Virginia on the advice of his friend George Washington, and sent his three sons to the wilderness that would become the Mid-Ohio Valley. The family has a long and colorful history that includes informing President Thomas Jefferson about what they considered questionable activities of Harmon Blennerhassett and Aaron Burr; serving on the USS *Constitution* during the War of 1812; and participation at the 1861 Wheeling Constitutional Convention.

The house, grounds, and Henderson family cemetery comprise the Henderson Hall Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The last living Henderson heir died in 2007 and bequeathed the property to the Oil and Gas Historical Association to oversee its preservation.

The house contains a wealth of artifacts, antiques, and furnishings from five generations, including handmade linens, books dating to the 1600s, documents signed by Patrick Henry, local ballots from the Lincoln-Douglas presidential election, diaries, and a letter written by Robert E. Lee to Elizabeth

Henderson. Buildings on the estate grounds include what could be the first schoolhouse in Wood County. Last year, the hall completed a \$100,000 restoration project on the three-story mansion.

At the May 21 program, Randy Modesitt will share the story of the Henderson family, the collection of artifacts, transition of the property from family residence to public museum, and plans for the historic property. Modesitt is the director of Henderson Hall Plantation and a graduate of Glenville State College. He was a Wood County educator and coach for 38 years, and following his retirement became involved at Henderson Hall as a volunteer. He has worked as director for the past three years.

Admission to the Humanities Council Little Lecture is \$10 and includes refreshments after the program. Seating is limited and people interested in attending should confirm that seats are available by calling 304-346-8500 no later than noon on Thursday, May 18.

The remaining Little Lecture for 2017 is:

- June 25 *West Virginia Musicians and the Nashville Sound* by Travis Stimeling

All Little Lectures are presented on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. in the MacFarland-Hubbard House, located at 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, East, in Charleston. For more information visit www.wvhumanities.org or contact program officer Mark Payne at 304-346-8500 or payne@wvhumanities.org.
