

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



*Into the Bluegrass
An Evening with Mel Hankla*

*With Liberty & Justice For All!
A Countdown to USA 250! Speaker Series*

SHELBY COUNTY, KY - Mel Hankla is many things – a noted collector, researcher, lecturer, historical actor/educator, writer of Kentucky's heritage, and a builder of the traditional Kentucky Longrifle. As the owner and CEO of American Historic Services, LLC he is a broker of fine Americana, buying and selling 18th and 19th century Kentucky rifles, powder horns and frontier art and arms for over 25 years. Internationally known for authentication and appraisal, Hankla will bring his expertise to Shelbyville on **July 15th** for *Into the Bluegrass*, a FREE program presented by the **Shelby County Historical Society** about the history surrounding the Kentucky Longrifle. This program will take place at **6 pm** at the Carnegie Library Center, located at 731 College St. in Shelbyville, in collaboration with the Shelby County Public Library.

Hankla grew up in the small town of Jamestown, Kentucky on the banks of Lake Cumberland. He attended Western Kentucky University earning Bachelor of Science Degrees in Agriculture, and Wildlife Management and Ecology, and a Master of Science Degree in Administration. In 2010 he completed an Educational Doctorate (Ed.D.) in Education Administration through the WKU and University of Louisville Cooperative Doctoral Program.

He has been an active member of the Kentucky Rifle Association since 1990, is past president and co-founder of the Contemporary Longrifle Association, and editor-in-chief of American Tradition Magazine. In 1984 Hankla was awarded a National Endowment of the Arts Folk Art Apprenticeship grant to study with legendary riflemith Hershel House. For 23 years, he portrayed frontiersman Simon Kenton and General George Rogers Clark as Chautauqua characters for the Kentucky Humanities Council. In 2012 he was cast for the leading role in the PBS documentary, *An Audacious American*, the story of Kentucky abolitionist Cassius Marcellus Clay.

Hankla has served on the Museum Board of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR) and currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) and the Governing Board of the Kentucky Historical Society. He is a proud member of the Kentucky Material Culture Collectors and the prestigious American Society of Arms Collectors. In addition, he is the author of "Into The Bluegrass - Art and Artistry of Kentucky's Historic Icons." The book has been awarded the Kentucky History Award by the Kentucky Historical Society, the Clay Lancaster Heritage Education Award by the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation, and the KSDAR Spirit of Kentucky Historic Preservation Award by the Kentucky Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

There will be one more program in the ***With Liberty and Justice For All!*** series on **August 19th** - ***Pulling up Roots: Moving to the Kentucky Frontier in the Midst of War***, featuring Nancy O'Malley, author and archeologist responsible for surveying and unearthing artifacts from the original Painted Stone Station site in Shelby County, KY. All programs are open to the public and free of charge. The SAR (Sons of the American Revolution, Gov. Isaac Shelby Chapter), DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution, Isaac Shelby Chapter), Painted Stone Settlers, Inc., and Shelby County Public Library are partnering with the **Shelby County Historical Society** to present this program.

Be sure to check out **Revolutionary Minutes** airing on the Shelby County Historical Society's YouTube channel and Facebook group page. These are the most fun and informative 60 + seconds of history you'll ever witness! Learn about the struggles our Patriot ancestors and Founding Fathers faced to create the United States of America.

The Shelby County Historical Society is a 501©3 organization whose mission is to *preserve and promote the knowledge and appreciation of Shelby County and Kentucky history*. To become a member or for more information, contact the Shelby County Historical Society at (502) 513-5555, www.shelbykyhistory.org, or email director@shelbykyhistory.org.



Countdown to USA 250!

Celebrating 250 years of American History

July 4, 1776 - July 4, 2026

Logo created by Shelby County student Esther Van Zee

