



NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION

Society

February 2026 Newsletter

"Our nation is the sum of our stories, and together we forge a common future."

~ Tom Vilsack ~

250 years ago...

In this month, revolutionary sentiment continued to rise among the American colonies, laying the groundwork for the eventual declaration of independence later that year. Discussions and debates intensified across the colonies about breaking away from British rule, and Thomas Paine's influential pamphlet "Common Sense," published in January 1776, continued to circulate and inspire colonists in February. The ideas expressed in "Common Sense" fueled public support for independence and helped unify various colonial factions for the revolutionary cause.

Of note:

- **Military Actions:** Throughout February 1776, General George Washington and the Continental Army intensified preparations for the siege of Boston. Plans for fortifying Dorchester Heights were developed, which would become pivotal in March. Skirmishes and reconnaissance missions continued around the city, keeping pressure on the British garrison. Elsewhere, colonial militias in the southern colonies, especially in North Carolina, mobilized to confront Loyalist uprisings. Plans for the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge were set in motion, leading to a Patriot victory at the end of the month.
- **Political Developments:** The Second Continental Congress continued to debate independence, military strategy, and supplies. In February, they authorized further recruitment and provisioning for the Continental Army and Navy.
- **International Affairs:** The Continental Navy and colonial privateers were active along the American coast, disrupting British supply lines and capturing enemy vessels, especially in the waters off New England and the Carolinas.

250 AMERICA PA

1st
FRIDAY

February Events

February 6th; 7pm-10pm

**Theme: Pirates and Privateers, Buccaneers,
Corsairs, Freebooters, Sea Dogs and Scallywags....**

Shiver me timbers, it's that time again!
Whether ye be a bucko, matey, knave or
scallywag, we'll give quarter to ye at
February's First Friday. But ye best arrive
early to secure your seat as our Pirate Theme
night is always a hit. No hangin the jib allowed
when music by **Forbes Road Frolic** is playing.



And we're kicking it up a notch this year ... Come dressed in your piratey best, if you dare - prizes for best male and female pirate costume and a special award for best beard! Be Creative!!! In addition, this year we will feature a treasure hunt. Get your map with the purchase of a First Friday Tasting Ticket. Or to get an early head start on your treasure hunt; purchase tickets online and pick up your "treasure map":

**Pirates buried treasure, everyone believes
If you follow the clues, TREASURE, you'll surely retrieve
When you purchase your tickets, you'll get a map
If you want to start early, Maple Shade's where it is at!**

This event is exclusive to the 21+ crowd and advanced ticket sales are not available. Simply pay at the door when you arrive - \$10 for members and \$15 for nonmembers. You are welcome to bring your own snacks, dinners, beverages, etc.

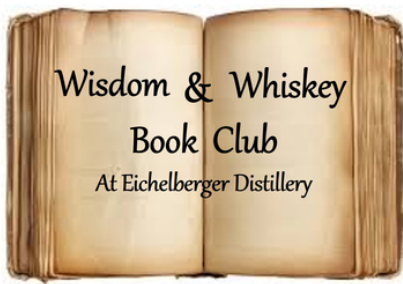


[Reserve a spot here!](#)

This evening's tasting program: Pirate Rum Libations

Tavern Keeper, Captain Murray Small, will tickle your tastebuds in the Eichelberger Distillery. Sign up for this \$10 tasting program on-line or at the door. Featured will be stories, history, and demonstrations related to the pirate's favorite dram: Kill Devil, Demon Water, Nelson's Blood, Rumbullion, Ron, Rhum....RUM!

February Events



Wisdom & Whiskey Book Club

Wednesday, February 11th;

6:30-8 pm at the Eichelberger Distillery

Partipate in a thoughtful discussion of the book [The Pursuit of Liberty: How Hamilton vs. Jefferson Ignited the Lasting Battle Over Power in America](#) by Jeffrey Rosen.

Rosen explores the clashing visions of Hamilton and Jefferson over how to balance liberty and power in a debate that continues to define—and divide—our country today.

Our discussion schedule is as follows:

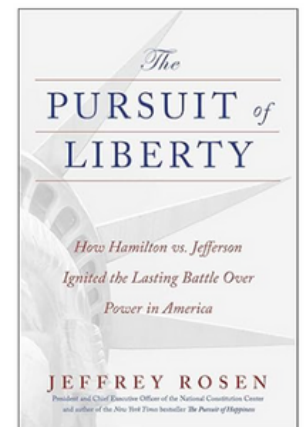
February 11th: Chapters 3 & 4

March 11th: Chapters 5 & 6

April 8th: Chapters 7 & 8

May 13th: Chapters 9 & 10 / Conclusion

This event is free and open to the public. You are welcome to bring a snack to share and we will have beverages.



Speaker Series: Randolph J. Harris

“The Underground Rail Road in York and Lancaster Counties”

Thursday, February 19th; 6:30-8 pm
at Maple Shade Barn



In honor of Black History Month, Mr. Randolph Harris will speak on the Underground Railroad in York and Lancaster counties. He will focus on Route 15 as it was a main thoroughfare for those trying to get north. His presentation will include slides and will last 1.5 hours.

Maple Shade Barn:
35 Greenbrier Lane,
Dillsburg, PA 17019



Upcoming March Events

First Friday at Dills Tavern

March 6th: 7pm-10pm

From the Burren to the Highlands to Appalachia, **Across the Pond** finds the best songs and tunes, then adds their own unique arrangements. If you love Celtic music, (and who doesn't?) you'll want to come early to secure a seat in the ballroom. From slow airs to driving jigs & reels, to lilting slip jigs to soulful love songs and ballads, they will leave you wanting more. In honor of St Patrick's Day, wear something (or everything) green!

Theme: St Patrick's Day!



Women & Whiskey

Thursday; March 25th, 6:00-8 pm
at the Eichelberger Distillery



Ladies, it's time again to gather your girlfriends and spend an evening learning about spirits influenced by women from the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition to sampling a variety of spirits, we will make the spotlight drink together and enjoy some delicious snacks. Reserve your tickets right away as these events sell out quickly! [Tickets may be purchased here!](#)

Speaker Series: Dominish Miller

“A Woman's Daily Life in Colonial America”

Thursday, March 19th; 6:30-8 pm
at Maple Shade Barn



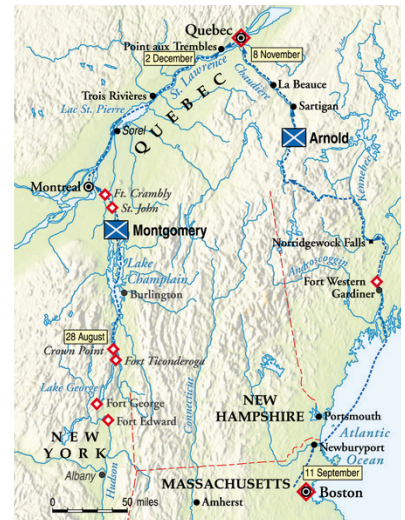
In honor of Women's History Month, Dominish Miller will speak about a woman's daily life in colonial America - their hard work yet with limited legal and political rights. This presentation will last 1.5 hours.

Maple Shade Barn: 35 Greenbrier Lane, Dillsburg, PA 17019

Ed Cavanaugh and the Battle of Quebec

Ed, or Honest Ned as he was often referred to, enlisted in Captain Mathew Smith's command July 1, 1775 in Lancaster, PA for a period of 1 year "if not discharged earlier". He then accompanied his company to Prospect Hill near Boston, Massachusetts. When Washington decided to invade Quebec, he participated in his regiment's movement towards Quebec City under the command of Benedict Arnold. Leaving Cambridge in September of 1775, they did not encounter any enemy troops enroute to Quebec, however the men suffered tremendous difficulties and deprivations. Benedict Arnold had anticipated the march would take 20 days and took supplies for that period of time. Unfortunately, his estimate was based upon a map made for him by a mapmaker who, unknown to him, was a Loyalist who had purposely made errors on the map.

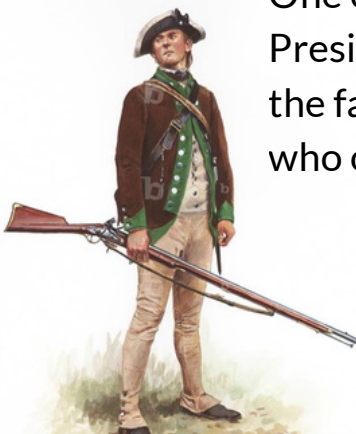
The actual trip took 45 days and the shortage of supplies was made even worse because over half of the supplies were ruined by water leaking into the poor quality boats. Eventually, the men began collapsing from a lack of nourishment and disease and, in an effort to survive, they began to boil the animal hides used to patch the boats for food.



Conditions became so severe that an order was given that if anyone fell they must be left because they had no food to leave them nor the ability to transport the infirm. At one point, in late October, 1775, while they were crossing the "Dead River" two of Honest Ned's fellow soldiers became overcome with exhaustion and were close to drowning. Ed was able to save them.

One of them was John Joseph Henry, who went on to become the President Judge of Lancaster and York courts. The other soldier became the famous General Michael Simpson of Fairview Township, York County who owned the Ferry which Simpson Ferry road is named.

Fortunately, they reached an area that had cattle for the troops. Benedict Arnold paid the farmer for the lost cattle. When they arrived in Quebec, General Montgomery took command of all troops in the area and split his troops into 3 units for an assault on the city. The Battle of Quebec took place on December 31 of 1775.



NYCHAPS Revolutionary War Project

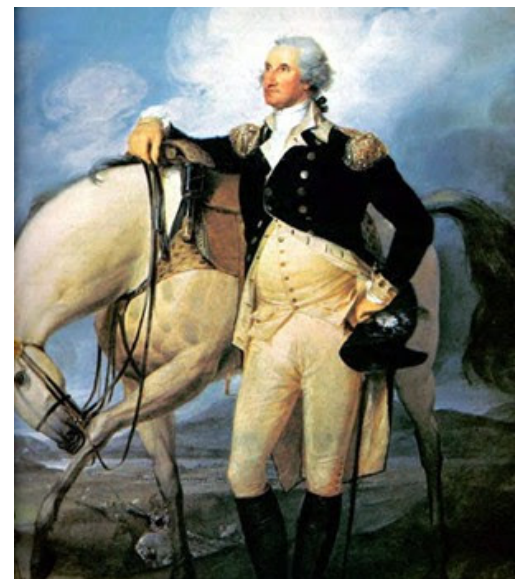
Ed Cavanaugh and the Battle of Quebec cont.

Honest Ned remained in the group assigned to Benedict Arnold. Arnold's troops were to storm Quebec City through the "Palace" Gate. While they were successful in gaining access to the city, Cavanaugh's unit was part of the three companies who were cut off and captured by the British. Because he was a recent immigrant from Ireland, the British offered him two choices. He could be held in tight quarters as a prisoner in a dungeon and be sent to England to be tried for treason when a ship arrived, or he could join the British Army. He elected to join the British Army.

Approximately two months later while he was on guard duty with another British soldier, he acted on a plan he obviously had fostered for quite some time. He had been saving his ration of rum and on this night he shared it with his fellow guard. After his fellow guard became vulnerable, he hit him with the butt of his gun so hard that it stunned him. At this point he leaped from a twenty-five foot wall into a snowbank. Under gunfire, Ned made his escape. When he reached the Patriot line he was interviewed by Benedict Arnold who gave him permission to rejoin his unit in Connecticut. He was discharged sometime around June of 1776 and he went back to his trade as a weaver. In 1810, the then Judge Henry visited Ned and found him in poor health and impoverished. His case was made known to the Colonial government and, as a result of lobbying by the men whom he had saved, he was issued a special pension. .

Following the end of the Revolutionary War, Dillsburg was known to be inclined towards military parades and celebrations. Honest Ned was always recognized for his service. At a semi centennial celebration on July 4, 1826, six prominent men from Dillsburg gave toasts at a gathering near the "Eichelberger" spring. One of these men was Ed/Ned who raised his glass and said:.

"The memory of George Washington and his brothers in arms who assisted the independence this day we celebrate. May it be handed down to the last ages of time."



NYCHAPS Revolutionary War Project

Ed Cavanaugh and the Battle of Quebec cont.

Honest Ned died in 1842 and the obituary below was written in the Carlisle Herald and Expositor on December 28, 1842. From Gibson's, History of York County 1886:

"At Dillstown, on Wednesday the 14th instant, Mr. Edward Cavanaugh, at the advanced age of 96 years. Everybody, almost, has heard tell of "honest Ned Cavanaugh." The deceased was a gallant soldier of the Revolution from its commencement to its close and was one of the daring spirits who accompanied the expedition of Arnold to Quebec, in the winter of 1775, and participated in the attack which cost Gen. Montgomery his life. The late Judge Henry, in his account of that trying campaign, makes honorable mention of the daring feats of his fellow soldier, Cavanaugh, and was the first, we believe, who gave him the title above-mentioned by which he has been so generally known for many years. Old Ned was emphatically an honest man, and as such commanded the respect and esteem of all who knew him. Peace to his ashes."

Edward Cavanaugh is buried in the Dillsburg Cemetery about 12 miles from Carlisle.



The Impractical Distillers: Vol 2.2

Mashing with Mother Nature



The Eichelberger Distillery began producing whiskey in May of 2024. Since then we have mashed nearly 90 times. Mashing is a process where hot water is added to grain to form an oatmeal like soup. The addition of water causes starch molecules in the grains to absorb water and swell. This process is called gelatinization. It also releases enzymes which cut long chains of starches into simple sugars. When the mash has cooled to under 90 degrees, yeast is added to start fermentation. Yeast metabolizes or “eats” simple sugars to produce carbon dioxide and alcohol. The fermentation process takes 3-5 days and produces a finished mash with a final “abv” or alcohol by volume of 5-8%. The next processes are stages of distillation to produce the final spirit. Sounds easy!

The exact amount of corn (14 lbs), rye (28 lbs) and malted grain (8 lbs) are sequentially placed in a wooden barrel and mixed with measured volumes of hot water at specific intervals, then stirred and steeped for about 4 hours. What could go wrong? Actually a lot of things could happen. With 90 mashes completed, there was variability from batch to batch. Some produced only 5% while others reached almost 10%. If a fermentation stalls, no alcohol is produced. A few even fermented violently, overflowing the barrel to form a large puddle on the floor. Typically, a grain cap forms on the top as the CO₂ gases float the grain to the surface. During the 12 hours it takes for the mash to cool from 140 to below 90 degrees, Mother Nature gets her say and can play havoc with our plans.



Bacteria and wild yeast floating around in the air of the distillery can descend into the mash. If wild yeast takes off it can inhibit the yeast we want to cause fermentation. Bacteria can also play a role which can be positive or negative on the final distilled product. Mostly we have been successful, but occasionally Mother Nature scoffs at those who would try to distill 18th century style without the environmental controls of modernity. She challenges us with extremely high temperatures and humidity, changing barometric pressures, and windy, cold conditions.

The Impractical Distillers cont.



Adding further challenges, we “sweeten” or clean the barrels with only boiling water and occasional ashes; no modern chemicals. Even a few bacteria between the staves or crevices of the wood can infect the mash. The Impractical Distillers have stared more than once into a barrel of weird smelling, strange foaming mash wondering what went wrong this time? Was it the moon?

Despite the many challenges of Mother Nature, a long list of possible deterrents and maddening setbacks, the Impractical Distillers are determined to succeed. These same challenges were faced by “practical” Pennsylvania distillers of the 18th and early 19th century. By sticking to the techniques and technology of their time we learn just how much work (and a little luck) it took to produce successful

mashes which led to remarkable spirits. Stop by the Eichelberger distillery to experience mashing, stripping, the finishing run and other aspects of 18th century distilling!

The Impractical Distillers: *Sam and Murray*

The Eichelberger Distillery at Dills Tavern



Saturdays: Open 10am to 4pm. Tours begin on the hour at 12, 1, 2, and 3pm

Sundays: Tours begin on the hour at 1, 2 and 3pm

Mondays: Closed

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: By appointment only. Contact the office at 717-502-1440 or admin@northernnyorkhistorical.org to schedule.

Wednesdays: Open 3pm to 7pm. Drop in and "see what's happening" in the distillery. In a relaxed and casual atmosphere, our Impractical Distillers will be sharing stories of our most recent endeavors - the trials, tribulations and triumphs.

Tours are available to walk-ins as space permits or you may order your dated & timed tour tickets. Cost - \$10.00 by [clicking here](#).

The Garden Shed Vol 1.2

Reflecting, Planning, and Preparing...

by Gary Reneker, Garden Master

From mid-January to late February is usually the gardener's relaxing time for reflection and planning. It's when we remember last year's garden, plan this year's garden, order seeds, and design garden accessories we want to include in our garden this year. If you have an indoor seed starting system, February is also the time to set up your system, sterilize your growing trays and cubes, get your starter soil ready, and start some plants indoors.



Basic Garden Planning: If you are new to gardening, or want to expand an existing garden, you need to determine the best place for your new garden area. To produce well, most garden plants prefer full sun of 6-8 hours of direct sunlight each day. Not dappled or reflected sun, but direct sunlight. Others like partial shade with only 4 to 5 hours of direct sun each day. Shade plants prefer no more than 1 hour of direct sunlight daily. Study your yard to learn where certain types of plants will grow best. Learn how the sunlight moves across your property. What is adding shade to your garden? Evergreens will shade an area all year. Deciduous trees will have leaves in the summer that block the sun from reaching your garden. Of course, buildings and fencing may also shade some areas of your garden. Where are the lines where shade ends and sun begins? What area(s) get full sun, partial sun, etc.? The winter sun is lower in the sky than the summer sun. Except the areas mentioned above that are always shaded, you will gain about an hour of sunlight on your garden than the current winter shade line indicates. Take a little time each day to study your yard so you can better plan your garden. Don't stress out over it, though. Plants are more forgiving than most people are. Even when we make mistakes they often produce for us.

Do a Seed Inventory: What seeds do you have from a previous garden? How old are they? How much of each do you still have? How much of each do you need for this year's planting? Test your old seeds to determine whether or not they are worth planting.

Give Your Old Seeds a Test: This will take a bit of explanation. It looks and sounds complicated, but it's really simple. After you've done it once you'll feel like a veteran. Seeds lose their ability to germinate and produce over time. Even if they germinate they may produce stunted or unproductive plants if they are too old. Most seed packets have a "Packed For" year printed on them. Those seeds are already one year old, because they were grown the year before.

The Garden Shed cont.

For example, "Packed For 2025" means they were grown in 2024. They were one year old in 2025, and will be two years old in 2026. Most herb and flower seeds will be not be fully productive if more than a year old, and vegetable seeds two to three years old. If they are that old it probably won't be worth your time to test them, except to practice this process for the future. Test each variety of seed you have that you think may still have life. The back of most seed packets tells how long it should take that type of seed to germinate. Or go online to www.commonshome.com/how-long-do-seeds-last/. They offer a chart that tells both how long seeds last, as well as the typical germination times for veg seeds. Flower seeds generally take 10 to 20 days to germinate. You may want to copy and print their pages, so you have them on hand for quick reference. Let's go through the process.

- Soak 20 of each of your old seeds for 6-8 hours.
- Strain off water. So you don't lose tiny seeds, strain them through a coffee filter or paper towel inside a strainer.
- Spread a moist (not wet) paper towel over a solid surface like a plastic lid, container, or plate.
- Spread seeds in a single layer over 1/2 the paper towel.
- Fold the other half of the towel over the seeds, and lightly press it down.
- Slide all of it, including the lid or plate, inside a plastic bag. Close it, but do NOT seal it. With a permanent marker write on the bag: (a) The type of seed [i.e., carrot, beet, squash, etc] (b) the date you placed the seeds inside it, and (c) the latest germination date for that type of seed.
- Let sit in a warm location out of sunlight and away from heaters or vents for the time it normally takes that type of seed to germinate.
- Check each day to be sure the paper towel is still damp. Don't let it dry out. If it is getting a little dry, use a spray bottle to spray more water on the paper towel.
- When the longest time has lapsed for that type of seed to germinate, remove the lid/plate and paper towel from bag. Unfold it and count the seeds that developed a starter root. Divide that number by 20 (seeds you started with) to learn the approximate germination rate of those seeds. If less than 40% germinated that seed is probably too old. If you get more than 60% you can try them, but plant a little closer than recommended to account for those that probably won't grow. If you are starting your plants indoors you may want to put 3 seeds 1/2" apart per starter cube. or even 4 if you only get 40% germination. Anything less than that you should buy new seeds, because either they won't produce healthy plants or they won't develop enough fruit to make them worth your time and effort.

The Garden Shed cont.

Visit Seed Companies: Visiting sites of seed producers can provide new ideas of what to plant. They will definitely show you new plant varieties along with the old varieties still available. Grab a drink and snack, turn on your computer, and look at all the "purty pitchers". I have listed some of the better companies I've dealt with. If available I recommend "heirloom" seeds. Then you can save seeds from your own garden rather than buying new seeds every year.

- [Bake Creek Heirloom Seeds](#)
- [Botanical Interests](#)
- [Eden Brothers](#)
- [Johnny Seeds](#)
- [99 Heirlooms](#)
- [Seed Savers Exchange](#)
- [Thresh Seed Company](#)
- [True Leaf Market](#)



Decisions, Decisions: If you already have a garden, think about what did or did not do well last year. This is why it's important to keep a garden record from year to year. Do you want to grow the same plants this year or try something new? Where do you want to plant the old or new varieties this year? If you had an insect or virus problem last year you should not try growing the same type plant in that space again this year. Another important consideration is ground moisture. The scale of moisture runs from Dry - Damp - Moist - Wet - Underwater. If you have a low spot in your garden that holds a lot of moisture don't plant something there that prefers drier soil. For example, lavender and thyme prefer soil that is only Damp. Tomatoes, on the other hand, prefer consistently Moist soil. Most plants we grow prefer the soil around their roots to be in the Damp-to-Moist range.

Order Seeds: Decide what additional seeds you need, and place your order(s). If you wait too long they may run out of their stock of popular exotic and heirloom plants before you order.

Get to Know Your Soil: Typically we do soil tests in our region from late Fall into these winter months. However, this year Momma Nature blessed us with a thick blanket of frozen humidity. If you didn't do a soil test before now you will have to hold off until Momma takes her blanket away. Next month we'll discuss soil testing in more detail, as well things to get ready for your garden. In the mean time, have fun planning, but don't get stressed over it.



Historical Note: The seed saving practices of early American colonists were fundamental to their survival and agricultural independence. Through careful selection, cleaning, drying, storage, and communal exchange, they preserved the genetic heritage of their crops and laid the foundation for future farming traditions in America.

Community Interests

NYCHAPS History Camp Registration

Planning for this year's camp is already in the works and promises to be an exciting one in celebration of America's 250th!

Camp is the week of July 13-17 from 9:00am to noon at Dills Tavern.

Registration will be through the NYCHAPS website under Events and Programs and will first be opened in February to members. In March, registration will be open to the public. Please contact: knellis@northernnyorkhistorical.org if you have any questions.



Clotz's Battalion of the Flying Camp An 18th Century Reenactor Encampment Saturday, February 7th from 10am - 5pm

Come celebrate America's 250th by immersing yourself in Colonial life!

Clotz's Battalion of the Flying Camp, a member of the Brigade of the American Revolution, will be visiting Dills Tavern. Best of all, the public is invited! Clotz's Battalion will spend the day doing multiple demos outside while various tradesmen will give you a glimpse of Colonial life in the rooms of the tavern. There will be cooking and various other activities of everyday life as well as drills that occur periodically.

Current schedule is:

- 10:00 Open to the public
- 11:00 Coffee in Colonial Times
- 12:00 Firing Demo
- 1:00 Cheese making demo
- 3:00 Firing Demo
- 5:00 Closed to the public





Community Interests

Once again...

Cherry Bounce & Chocolate!

A special bottling of Cherry Bounce for Valentines Day will be gift wrapped with hand crafted chocolates curated by our Impractical Distiller, Murray Small. Murray describes these extraordinary chocolates as “one is pretty, one is unique, of course there is classic, and one of mystique”. You will be amazed at the flavors!

This limited supply of Valentines Day Cherry Bounce and chocolate will be available to purchase at the **Eichelberger Distillery** for \$30 at these times:

- Saturdays/Sundays during tour hours from 1:00 - 4:00pm on 1/31, 2/01, 2/07, 2/08, and 2/14
- Wednesdays during evening Distillery hours from 3:00 - 7:00pm on 2/04 and 2/11

February 13th : during 1st Friday from 7:00 - 10:00pm



Lavender Among the Greens 2025 Raffle Quilt Winner

Congratulations to Donna Krayrak, the winner of the 2025 MSB Quilters raffle quilt, Lavender Among the Greens!

This quilt was designed around a foundation of 9 patch quilt blocks and was a favorite with its Spring-like colors. We hope Donna enjoys it's warmth and beauty!



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