



NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION

Society

January 2025 Newsletter

The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book,
waiting to be written.” ~ Melody Beattie

Happy New Year

A new year always brings to mind a feeling of anticipation... things to look forward to with plans to explore new opportunities. A great time, in fact, to get to know what NYCHAPS has to offer! First Fridays at Dills Tavern are a sure cure for winter doldrums. There is nothing better than candlelight, music, and bits of history on a cold winter's evening! January is also the launch of our MSB Speaker Series where our presenters will share knowledge of local history along with their personal experiences. If you enjoy “hands-on” activities with great mentors, try on a new hobby: quilting, hearth cooking, or sewing garb.

Another way to learn about NYCHAPS is to volunteer. There are many ways to help out and not all of them require wearing historic garb! You will meet people with shared interests and have fun at the same time.

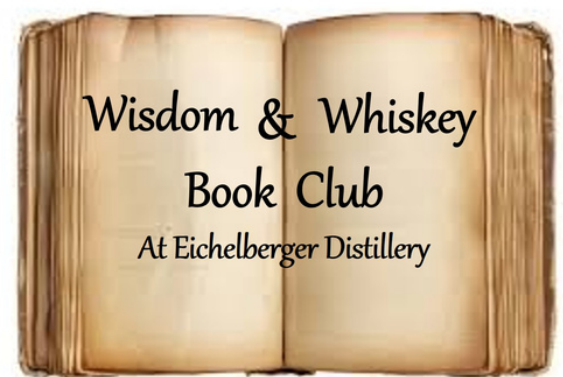
Details about all these opportunities are within this newsletter. We encourage you to take a step forward and become involved with NYCHAPS.



Introducing...

We will be discussing the book, *Ratification; The People Debate the Constitution, 1787- 1788* by Pauline Maier.

This award winning book provides an expansive description of each state's path towards ratifying the proposed constitution. As the book is lengthy, we plan to digest a little at a time. **Our first discussion will cover the Introduction and Prologue of the book.**



See page 4 of this newsletter for more details!

**1st
FRIDAY**

January Events

January 3rd; 7pm-10pm

Theme: A Wassail Celebration

Don't let the cold keep you away from First Friday at Dills Tavern, where you can expect loads of fun with live music, snacks, tastings, and BYOB (legally procured in PA). This month, we're excited to have the **Susquehanna Travellers** performing traditional folk music of the American Civil War, Old Time, Irish and Regency as well as original tunes. The band has been performing throughout the Mid-Atlantic States for more than two decades and has earned a reputation for excellent musicianship and a unique acoustic sound.



January's First Friday will also feature our Wassail Celebration and include the traditional blessing of the orchards on the Dills Tavern site! [Read more about it here.](#)

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.



This evening's tasting program: "A Wassailing We Will Go!"

Tavern Keeper, Murray Small, will be sharing libations in the Eichelberger Distillery for an additional \$10. Sign up for this tasting on-line or at the door.

The tasting includes a complimentary McKenzie glass with the Eichelberger Distillery logo.

[Reserve a spot here!](#)



January Events (cont.)

Pork and Sauerkraut Dinner

January 4th - Maple Shade Barn - 6:00pm



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

Welcome in the New Year with us in the German tradition. Root forward with our locally sourced pork & sauerkraut dinner for good health and good luck. The full menu includes pork & sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, corn, homemade apple sauce, hog maw, bread, jams, and cider fresh pressed from the apples in the Tavern orchard.

[Read more about it on our website by clicking here!](#)

[Advance tickets may be bought here!](#)

Buck Buchanan

“The Helicopter War in Vietnam”

Thursday, January 16th; 6:30-8 pm
at Maple Shade Barn

Buck Buchanan retired from the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as a Brigadier General. Commissioned through the ROTC Program, Buck’s career was mainly Army Aviation as a helicopter pilot with 33 years of service. He served as an assault helicopter pilot in Vietnam with the 1st Air Cavalry Division for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, 2 Bronze Stars, and 16 Air Metals.



The presentation will address the types of helicopters used, what life was like for aircrews, and how helicopters were used to move troops and materials around the battlefield, as well as evacuate the wounded.

[Read more about it on our website by clicking here!](#)

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



Speaker Series

Looking ahead to February

First Friday

February 7th; 7-10 pm
at Dills Tavern

This evening's theme will be Cherry Bounce, Pirates & Patriots - Privateers in the American Revolution. Our musical guests will be Forbes Road Frolic.



[Read more about it on our website by clicking here!](#)

Speaker Series



Andre Weltman

“Charcoal Hearths, Collier Huts & Haul Roads: Traces of the Iron Industry on the Michaux State Forest Landscape.”

**Thursday, February 20th; 6:30-8 pm
at Maple Shade Barn**

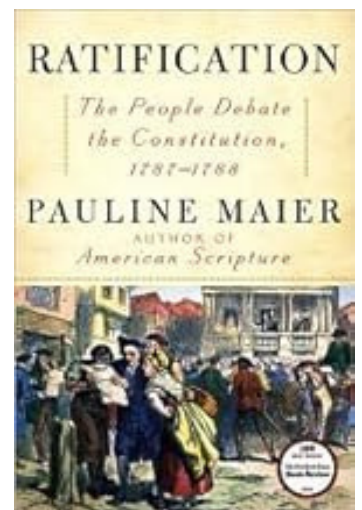
Andre is a historian specializing in the old furnaces around South Mountain and a member of Friends of Pine Grove Furnace. His presentation will explore the history of the local 18th-19th century iron industry, focused on Pine Grove Furnace.

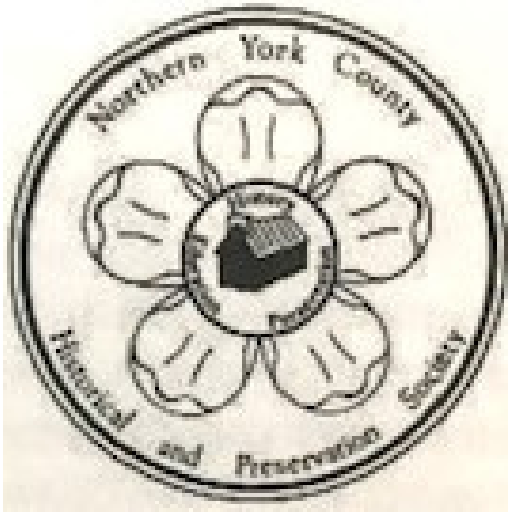
[Read more about it on our website by clicking here!](#)

Wisdom & Whiskey Book Club

Wednesday, February 12th; 6:30-8 pm
at the Eichelberger Distillery

Enjoy a thoughtful discussion of the book, *Ratification; The People Debate the Constitution, 1787 - 1788*. There is no fee to attend but if you would like to, bring a snack to share and we will have beverages for purchase. More details to come!





From the Archives

2024 Acquisitions Summary

2024 was a very fruitful year for the Archives Department of NYCHAPS. We were finally able to get our historic Eichelberger Mourning Embroidery professionally restored. The work spent all summer in Philadelphia getting repaired, cleaned, and reframed. The cost of the restoration was underwritten by an anonymous donor, and we are grateful for the gift. It is housed in the archives but displayed on important occasions in the tavern parlor.

One of the wonderful things about being the archivist is you never know what is going to show up, sometimes unannounced. Such was the surprise when we were contacted by a donor to see if we were interested in the lap desk of U. S. Sen. Matthew S. Quay, who was born in Dillsburg, his father being the pastor of Monaghan Church in the early Nineteenth Century. Needless to say, we were happy to accept this donation.

A few months later we received some truly amazing photographs, views of downtown Dillsburg. They were taken before electricity came to town and probably date from the 1870 era. They may have been last displayed to the public for the Borough Centennial in 1933. (We will be sharing them in upcoming newsletters with then and now photo comparisons).

Toward the end of the year, we received four early deeds/patents for the Strayer farm in western Franklin township. One is dated Dec. 1, 1742, and now has the honor of being the earliest document in our collections. Written on parchment, it pre-dates the formation of York County by seven years.

There were many additional donations throughout the year, too many to describe here; postcards, photos, clothing, military items, artwork, to name a few and we appreciate everything entrusted to us. In addition to managing the collections we get numerous inquiries and questions from researchers, folks looking for historical information on their property, and genealogy requests, so are always looking for individuals interested in helping out, just contact the office.

Lastly, as you contemplate your end of year giving, we are in need of replacing the computer we use for all of our cataloging as it has become out of date and inefficient. Gifts in any amount would be greatly appreciated.

The Impractical Distillers

Who are they?



In 1808 Samuel McHarry of Lancaster, Pennsylvania wrote a distilling manual entitled: *The Practical Distiller: An Introduction to Making Whiskey, Gin, Brandy, Spirits of Better Quality and in Larger Quantities Than Produced by the Present Mode of Distilling*. In the Preface of the book, the author confesses his ignorance of “the dark, mysterious and abstruse science of distilling, a business professed to be perfectly understood

by many, but in fact not sufficiently understood by any”! McHarry was certain “the whole art and mystery could be learned in two or three weeks, or months at the farthest”. After four years of constant attention and experimentation he developed a system. As the “wise Disposer of worlds” allows for exhibition of genius, he shared his knowledge so that “men of capital and science could turn their attention to the production of ardent spirits equal to those anywhere in the world”. His wish was to convey the necessary instruction to those who may honor this work with a perusal, or resort to it for information, and that it be “useful to my countrymen”.

Two hundred years later, two men, **Sam McKinney and Murray Small** found McHarry’s publication not only useful, but fascinating. That fascination led a quest to build a historically accurate distillery, utilizing the technology and techniques of McHarry’s time to educate the public and promote the distilling heritage of Central Pennsylvania through living history.

McHarry faced skepticism. There were “scoffs of pendants, kicks, bites and bruises of critics”. Conversely, he didn’t encounter the substantial government rules, regulations, bureaucracy, codes and red tape of legal distillation in the 21st century. Compounding the challenges, the project is part of the non-profit Northern York County Historical Preservation Society (NYCHAPS). Like McHarry’s path, much of our road to an accurate portrayal of early American distilling was traversed “without a compass, chart, or even star to steer by”. Critics described the project as imprudent, ill-advised and impractical. But we never gave up!

After almost 15 years of tireless effort, energy and entrepreneurial spirit, the small non-profit opened the Eichelberger Distillery at Dills Tavern in May of 2024. Future NYCHAPS’ newsletters will tell this remarkable story in a new column entitled: **The Impractical Distillers!**

by Murray Small



The Impractical Distillers

The Dream Begins...

NYCHAPS hired me to reconstruct the historic Dills Tavern in January of 2005. During the first year, I read the Eichelberger ledgers which consists of detailed business operations conducted at the tavern property from 1800 to 1833. My goal was to understand tavern life in early Dillsburg. 1500 pages of handwritten documents, some quite boring, depicted daily life. Occasionally, there were mentions of broken chairs, broken glasses, and other curious lines but mostly the ledger chronicles local and other regular visitors who came for whiskey, lodging or meals. My initial reading focused on gleaning tavern information. But, during the second reading, a couple of years later, I was shocked to realize I had not noticed there was a huge distillery on the property. There were pages of information on distillers who contracted to make whiskey, sometimes for long periods of time. One page was titled "1811 Distillery Inventory". Other pages told how whiskey was hauled in a "road wagon" or Conestoga wagon to Baltimore. Hundreds of entries documented purchases of grain and paying for labor to harvest grain. My myopic focus had caused me to miss an important facet of the site's history. Fortunately, a light bulb went off in my head flashing, "THERE WAS A HUGE EARLY DISTILLERY ON THE TAVERN PROPERTY".



Sometime in 2010, Murray stopped by Dills Tavern. The log barn, from several miles away, was on site and under reconstruction. Adjustments had to be made to the hand-hewn timbers and some of the ends or "drops" were cut off and piled up. Murray was interested in the ends for sculptures he was building. He was greeted at the gate by George Platts, a blacksmith and docent giving tours of the tavern. "Are you here for the tour," George asked. "No, thanks, what are those timbers behind the barn?" Murray inquired. "It's only 5 bucks." the pushy docent offered. "Well, I'm really here to..." "It's a great tour" the intrepid tour guide, clad in 18th century garb, implored. "OK, OK, here's 5 bucks".

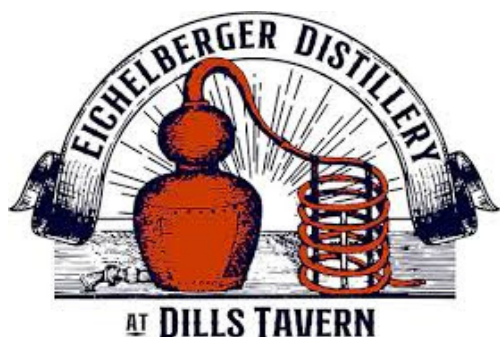
The Impractical Distillers (cont.)

The Dream Begins...

After the tour, docent and tourist walked onto the brick courtyard. George stated, “there was a distillery here on the property at one time. We are going to re-build it someday. The guy who is going to re-build it is back there”. He pointed to me, in the doorway of the Wheelwright Shop.

Already a student of whiskey, Murray hastened his way to the shop and a conversation ensued. From that conversation, a dream was born. With the same naïve inspiration of McHarry’s nascent entry into the arcane art of 18th century distillation, Sam and Murray began the journey to build an 18th century distillery in the 21st century.

by Sam McKinney



Winter Distillery Hours Reminder...

While Tavern Tours and Farmers Market have ended for the winter season, the Eichelberger Distillery at Dills Tavern will continue to operate through the winter months.

Tours will be available:

- Mondays thru Fridays by appointment only. This may be arranged by contacting the office at 717-502-1440.
- Wednesdays: distillery is open 3p to 7p
- Saturdays: tours begin on the hour from noon to 3pm
- Sundays: tours begin on the hour from 1pm to 3pm

Please Note: Sat/Sun tours may arranged on-line and are available to walk-ins only as space permits. Online tickets are available [by clicking here](#) until Fridays at 3pm (a small surcharge is added per ticket)

Cost - \$10.00

Member Spotlight - Jack Winieski



Jack Winieski and his wife, Alberta, of 66 years have always been active members and big fans of NYCHAPS. They were long-time residents of the Dillsburg area and enjoyed many events at the Dills Tavern.

Jack is also one of most renown tree grafters in the US and is an expert in all things "tree" and "nut" with the PA Backyard Fruit Growers and PA Nut Growers! In honor of the late Betty and Bob Gayman, Jack grafted and planted the apple trees in the Dills Tavern orchard.

This involved choosing, planting, and nurturing the original heritage apple trees in the Gayman orchard on the Tavern site, grafting cider apple cultivars into a heritage (1820s) apple small orchard, thanks to the availability of material from the Geneva, NY, Cornell University Repository.

Recently, Jack, at the age of 94, told his life story as part of the PA Conservation Heritage Project highlighting the conservation careers of people making important contributions to the conservation of natural resources in the Commonwealth. Jack is a prominent forest geneticist for the former PA Department of Forest and Waters and PA Department of Environmental Resources, which is now the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.



[Click here to read Jack's Conservation Story!](#)

Volunteer Opportunities



Collections / Archives / Museum

Seeking volunteers who have an interest in any of the following tasks:

- Input of information into our PastPerfect Database (we will train you)
- An interest in working with the collection (caring for objects and/or textiles).
- Help doing research and answering queries.
- Cataloging books in the library.
- Creating displays in the museum.
- Scanning documents.

The hours for these tasks are flexible along with a no pressure atmosphere.

NYCHAPS volunteer, Greg Wonders, coordinates work in this area. He has

indicated that he can be available during some evenings if that works for others.

People have also worked on their own, depending on the job to be done. Greg would like to speak with anyone interested and provide a tour.

Please contact him at gregory.wonders@gmail.com.

Marketing

Seeking volunteers who have experience with professional marketing to assist in:

- serving as an advisor to the NYCHAPS Marketing Committee.
- formulating and activating marketing plans.

The time committment would be 1 hour a week. **NYCHAPS volunteer, Richard Conley chairs this committe and will be interested in talking with you!**

Please contact him at reconley555@gmail.com

Dills Tavern Docents

Seeking volunteers who would like to receive training on becoming a Tavern docent. Winter is a great time to become familiar with the docent handbook. In the Spring, tours for new docents would begin and a shadowing schedule would be developed.

Tours of Dills Tavern regularly occur on Sundays during the Farmers Market season. We also schedule private tours and visits associated with field trips when requested.

NYCHAPS volunteer, Karen Nellis, will work with new volunteers to train as docents. Please contact her at knellis@northernnyorkhistorical.org



Volunteer Opportunities (cont.)



Become part of our team!

Do you love local history or like telling stories? Do you consider sharing a dram or libation in front of the fire in an "18th century" building fun? The Eichelberger Distillery is looking for men and women over 21 to train as Distillery Docents.

As a volunteer, you would be joining an experienced group of Distillery Docents who enthusiastically share the "Whiskey and Freedom Gang Thither" story with visitors.

This evolving role consists of greeting visitors, leading guided tours of the tasting room and distillery, and arranging sampling of colonial libations and spirits made at the distillery.



To broaden your knowledge of 18th century distilling techniques you will have the opportunity to work with distillers as they mash, ferment and distill on period equipment.



It's an exciting time at the distillery. Building an 18th century distillery in the 21st century was no easy task. Running it; no less of a challenge! But, it is fun and you'll be a part of the living history of distilling in the early days of America, Pennsylvania, and Northern York County.



If interested or for more details contact NYCHAPS volunteer, Murray Small by phone 717-880-5063 or murman4fun@aol.com

Community Interests

2024 Quilt Raffle Winner!

NYCHAPS volunteer, Karen Hostetter is the lucky winner of this year's Retrofusion Quilt raffle. Pictured are Maple Shade Barn Quilters, Susan Kuhn and Winni Flynn alongside Karen.



Quilting projects are ongoing with groups meeting at Maple Shade Barn on Tuesdays and Sundays (1-3 pm on each day).

Whether you are an experienced stitcher or novice, you are welcome to join our fun group! Contact Winni Flynn at waflynn@yahoo.com for more information.



Allstate[®]
Foundation

Thank you to an Allstate volunteer for empowering people and our community. Dave Downey gave his time and helped us to receive a \$500 Allstate Foundation Helping Hands Grant. The Allstate Foundation supports the causes that Allstate agency owners, financial specialists and employees care about most by providing Allstate Foundation Helping Hands Grants to nonprofits where they volunteer their time to help communities thrive.

Christkindlmarkt Thank You

Christkindlmarkt at Dills Tavern would not exist without our vendors, volunteers, and visitors. These people show up no matter the weather and lend themselves to spreading the joy of the season. NYCHAPS appreciates everyone's contribution in making this holiday event so special.



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Maple Shade Barn Office 717-502-1440

35 Greenbriar Lane Dillsburg, PA 17019

Office Hours: Tues-Fri 11am - 3pm