NORTHERN YORK COUNTY
HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION
Society

June / July 2026 Newsletter

"Having weighed the arguments on both sides, I am clearly of opinion that we must (as we value the liberties of America, or even her existence) without a moments delay declare for Independence." ~ Charles Lee, Continental Army officer

250 years ago...

In June and July of 1776, the American colonies took the final steps toward independence from Great Britain.

- **June 7, 1776** – Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced the Lee Resolution in the Second Continental Congress.
- **June 11, 1776** – Congress appointed the Committee of Five to draft a declaration explaining why the colonies wanted independence: Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston. Jefferson wrote most of the draft.
- **July 2, 1776** – The Continental Congress voted to approve independence by adopting the Lee Resolution.
- **July 4, 1776** – Congress adopted the final wording of the Declaration of Independence.
- **July 8, 1776** – The Declaration was publicly read for the first time in Philadelphia, helping spread the news to the public and soldiers. **Public dissemination of the Declaration of Independence occurred through many other channels in addition to public readings:**
- Congressional couriers to state assemblies, committees of safety, and military commanders.
- Newspapers: The first newspaper reprinting appeared on July 6 in Benjamin Towne's Pennsylvania Evening Post.
- Military Proclamations: On July 9, General George Washington had the Declaration read to Continental troops in New York City to motivate them. This reading prompted an angry mob to pull down a statue of King George III later that day.
- Local Proclamations: In other regions, such as Watertown, the document was publicly proclaimed to the town on July 18.

June & July Regular Happenings

Saturdays at Dills Tavern

Distillery Tours Every Saturday
Noon to 3 pm on the hour
$10

Farmers Market
Every Saturday
8:00 am - noon
Vendor List Here

June 20, July 18, August 22, & September 19
Dillsburg Library Storytime
at the Farmers Market
10:00 - 11:00 am
Join Ms. Sue for stories, rhymes, and songs!

1st Saturday of the Month
June: Nick Mich
Nick Mich Music

Sundays at Dills Tavern

Distillery Tours Every Sunday
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
on the hour
$10

Spinning Demonstration
June 14 & July 12
during Tavern tours

Tavern Tours - Every Sunday
2:00 pm & 3:00 pm
$5 adult / $10 immediate family

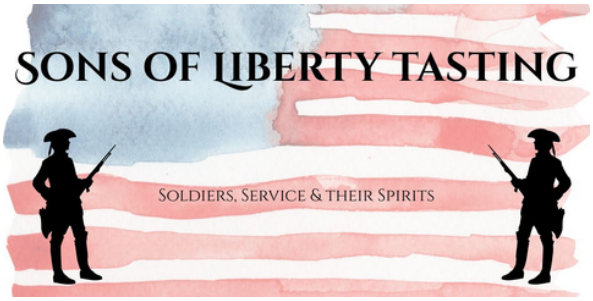
June / July Special Events

Saturdays at Dills Tavern
June 6th - July 4th
8:00am - noon

Life in Colonial America was not easy. Art, as a form of expression, was not something for which settlers had time. However humans have always had a desire to create beauty. So what do you do when you desire beauty but must focus on survival? You let your creativity shine in the ordinary things of life: from fiber arts to blacksmithing, from carpentry to pottery, from masonry to rifle making. Colonial Americans turned their ordinary tasks into unique forms of art. Spend the morning with us as we explore the different ways in which common chores were fashioned into works of art.

The schedule of artisans may be found here!

Eichelberger Distillery at Dills Tavern
Saturday, June 20th
10am - 2pm



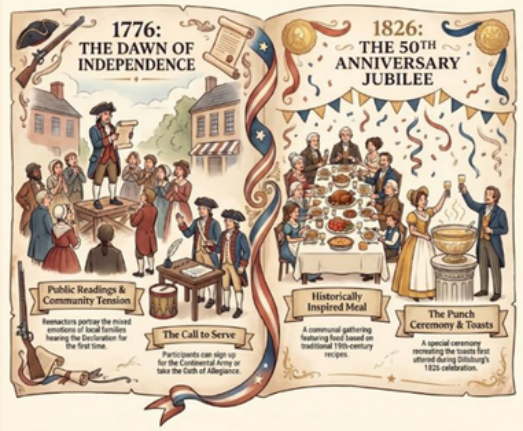
You will be introduced to five Revolutionary War Patriots from northern York county. Four of them actually visited the Dills Tavern. Learn about their lives, their service and the libations they ordered from Dills Tavern - according to our records.

Tastings on the hour from 10am -2pm. **Tickets for June 20th may be purchased at this link.**

July - Celebrating America's 250th

From Oath to Toast

July 3rd; 4:00-8:00pm



Relive the Spirit of Independence by joining us at Dills Tavern for a two-part event that will span 50 years of American history. Pre-registration is required.

Tickets are $50/person. Over 21 only. Dinner will consist of beef stew, homemade bread with pounded cheese spread, grand sallet of beets, historic desserts, and two beverages of choice will be offered (unlimited water) tea, lemonade or shrub , beer, wine, or hard cider. Also included is the punch for the toasts at the end.

Find out more by clicking here!

America 250 National Community Potluck

Sunday, July 5th from 4pm - 8pm

Join us at Dills Tavern as we celebrate with communities around the nation and participate in America's Potluck. The tradition of Sunday dinner invites us to slow down, serve others and connect with one another. Through dialogue and a shared meal, we can promote our common bonds and honor the freedoms we enjoy as Americans.

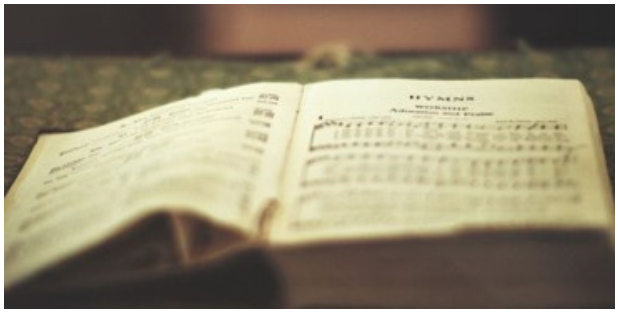
This is a free event and open to the public. NYCHAPS will supply pulled pork, beverages and paper goods. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to share, along with a lawn chair or blanket.

Find out more by clicking here!

July Special Events

Hymn Sing at Historic Monaghan Church

Sunday, July 12th at 2:00 pm

13 East Church St. Dillsburg PA

Join your friends at NYCHAPS for the July Hymn Sing! The program is hosted by the Dillsburg Arts Council and coordinated by the Northern York County Historical and Preservation Society. Clair Zeiders will lead us in music that was current at the founding of our country in 1776.

This is a free event and open to the public with an ice cream social immediately following.

NYCHAPS History Camp
July 13th - 17th

History Camp at Dills Tavern is a one-week experience open to students entering grades 4-6. Students will have the opportunity to participate in hands-on 18th century activities led by our experienced volunteers. Activities will include: games, fiber arts, metal working, wood working, candle making, colonial clothing, food preparation, and more! **Registration ends July 1st.**

Enrollment information and registration here!

Reconstruction of the Blue-Gray Highway

PennDOT has been planning a major transportation improvement project in the Route 15 corridor through Dillsburg for a number of years. The original 2001 proposed rerouting alternatives were modified or dismissed by 2023. Even now as we go to print, three connected projects and detours are impacting traffic in our area, causing massive backups. That's not surprising since the Route 15 Main Corridor carries over 26,000 vehicles per day and the intersection of Route 15 and 74 spikes up to 36,000 per day!

The most recent proposal, the Reconstruction of the Blue-Gray Highway (US-15), is a massive $113 million project to completely rebuild the four-lane US-15 highway from the base up. It will span from Range End Road to the Cumberland County line, with physical construction slated to start in fall 2028.

This proposed project is likely to have a direct impact on the Dills Tavern and Eichelberger Distillery historic site, especially along the western edge of the property bordering Route 15. Recently, we learned that PennDOT and The York Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (YAMPO) are preparing to gather public feedback on the preliminary design concepts and are planning a public meeting in mid-June.

NYCHAPS is very concerned about the impacts of preliminary design on the Dills Tavern and Eichelberger Distillery property and activities. A strong NYCHAPS presence at the upcoming public meeting and following the meeting would increase the likelihood that the Department will make every effort to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the negative impacts on the property and promote positive solutions.

Early in the initiation of the preliminary design, NYCHAPS met with the Route 15 Project Manager and Cultural Resource Specialist and thoroughly described the Dills Tavern and Eichelberger Distillery and supplied a comprehensive package of information about the property. This was to ensure that measures to protect and enhance the property were built into the project design from the onset.

The more people that sign in at the public meeting identifying with NYCHAPS and the Dills Tavern site, and completing the comment forms, the better. It is likely that the meeting will be in a plans display/public information format with one-on-one interaction with PennDOT and consultant employees. So, only a few PennDOT people will hear concerns.

The comment forms will become part of the project administrative record, and the project managers will read every comment after the event and decide how to respond to each comment. Typically, there will be a prescribed time frame after the meeting to submit comments. After the meeting, NYCHAPS will submit a comprehensive comment letter to PennDOT clearly articulating positive comments and negative concerns about the preliminary design. A comprehensive comment letter ensures that NYCHAPS' feedback becomes part of the official public record for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), PennDOT act 120, and the Section 106 (historical site impact) review process.

Also, shortly after the public meeting, NYCHAPS will conduct a member workshop to help those interested in individually submitting substantive and impactful comments and to formulate a NYCHAP’S comment letter. Please 'stay tuned' for more information from NYCHAPS' email, website or facebook sites and be ready to help us do our best to positively influence the project design.

The Impractical Distillers: Vol 2.6

Freedom and Whiskey Gang Thegither

As you enter the tasting room at the Eichelberger Distillery you notice a large plaque. It lists patrons who donated money to help us fund the building, a picture of Frederick Eicheberger and a phrase from a Robert Burns poem:
Freedom and Whiskey gang thegither.
That phrase comes from one of the Scottish bard's poems, *The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer*.

It was written in 1786 as a protest to the Scotch Distillery Act meant to benefit London gin distillers at the expense of Scottish distilleries. Burns had an affinity for whiskey and everyday Scottish life which he crafted into poems extolling the virtues of rural living, Scottish culture and his native land.

It appears as though verses of a virtuous, simple rural life and observations on the human condition were more easily written about than lived. Burns had 12 children with four different women; only one of which was his wife. He was also well acquainted with the national drink of Scotland: Scotch. An additional inconsistency was his profession. Despite crafting verses about tyranny and taxation, his paid position was government " gager". Neither poetry nor farming were lucrative so to feed his family, he toiled as the "damed excise man" he rhymed about! His visits to distilleries were to determine taxes owed to the British government!

But the contradictions of Burns' life do not diminish the indisputable truth of his claim; Freedom and Whiskey go together. The immigrant families that built and managed Dills Tavern created generational wealth, in no small part, because of freedom and whiskey. Matthew Dill was a Scots Irish immigrant who came to America in the 1730's for freedom, land and opportunity not possible in his home country.His entrepreneurial spirit, grit, and leadership ability allowed him to build one of the first taverns in the area.His role as commissioner of roads ensured the tavern was visited by hungry, thirsty, tired travelers. Three generations of his family prospered.

The Impractical Distillers cont.

In 1800, German immigrants also leveraged freedom and whiskey to create economic opportunity. The Eichelberger's kept the tavern and distilled spirits but Leonard's skills as a wagon builder provided a means to get their product to a larger, wealthier market; Baltimore. As their business grew, job opportunities increased for local people. Farmers, laborers, woodcutters, coopers, teamsters, and distillers were needed. The Eichelbergers also transported other small farm distillers spirits on their wagons.

During tours at the Eichelberger Distillery, docents and volunteers highlight the roles freedom and whiskey played in the agricultural heritage of Dillsburg. Make time during this 250 Celebration year to see how whiskey was made and enjoyed in the early days of our country. Burns recognized that whiskey can lift the spirit, warm the heart and bring people together in the celebration of freedom. Follow Rabbie Burns' recommendation: *Tak aff your dram!*

The Impractical Distillers:

Sam and Murray

Tour Information

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@northernyorkhistorical.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.

NYCHAPS Revolutionary War Project

Vol 1.6

Thomas Campbell 1750 - 1815

During the war General Washington was navigating many hurdles. The British were not his only adversary. He often faced a dwindling Army as enlistment periods ended and soldiers did not re-enlist because they were not being paid as promised and were constantly dealing with a lack of supplies. The shortages did not apply just to guns and gun powder. Many were poorly clothed and some were very malnourished. In spite of this, some men were so committed to the cause they reenlisted repeatedly.

Among them was Thomas Campbell who was born near Windsor, Pennsylvania in 1750. He first appeared on the tax list of Monaghan township in 1771. In 1775, he married Isabella Lusk from Cumberland County. After the Battle of Lexington and Concord, he enlisted as a private in a York Rifle Company in April of 1775. The unit left York PA on July 1, 1775 and arrived in the Boston area on July 25, 1775, as described in earlier articles.

Up to this point Thomas Campbell's military experiences are closely aligned with those of Ed Cavanaugh from an earlier article. However, while Ed/Ned went with Benedict Arnold to Quebec, the unit Thomas was in was initially viewed as disruptive. However, by the time the siege of Boston was over the unit was regarded in a much better light. We will never know how Thomas as an individual was perceived. At the onset of the war, many men had only committed for periods of service as short as months and at the most 1 year. Knowing that, Thomas must have reenlisted several times as he continued to serve until the end of the war.

His company participated in major battles throughout the war. It helped cover the retreat of the American forces in the Battle of Long Island in August in 1776. In early 1777, Thomas was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant in the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment of the Continental Army. He went on to fight at the Battle of Brandywine and was at the Battle of Paoli in September 1777. At the battle of Germantown in early October, he was wounded while taking aim at the enemy with a ball passing through his wrist and torso, but he continued to serve and survived Valley Forge in the winter of 1777-1778.

He was at Yorktown, Virginia where British General Cornwallis surrendered in October 1781 and continued to serve through the Carolina Campaign in 1782 and through the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783.

Continue reading here!

From the Garden Shed Vol 1.6

Fungi Aren't Fun Guys

by Gary A. Reneker, Head Gardener

Assuming their gardens have good soil and proper nutrient, the two biggest problems gardeners face are fungi and insects. Fungi are likely to attack first with our current humidity and moderate night temperatures of 55° to 75°, as this creates ideal conditions for fungal spores to germinate and spread. Then we'll take a look at the bad bugs that are coming to visit our gardens.

Fungi Aren't Fun Guys

Fungi thrive on energy absorbed from the plants on which they live. As a fungus grows, the plant withers. Plant fungi can quickly damage and even kill plants. Fungus spores attach to plant leaves having been spread by wind or insects. Other types live in the soil and can enter a plant through the roots or be splashed onto the plant by heavy water flows.

Preventing Fungi

The first preventative measure is proper placement of plants to provide good airflow around each plant.Similarly, occasional pruning heavy foliage from plants provides good airflow within each plant's structure.Thirdly, assure each plant has sufficient sunlight to evaporate excess moisture from the leaves. Finally, use a proper watering method.

The most important step you can take to reduce fungi in your garden is to Stop Overhead Watering.Instead, use a drip irrigation system or a watering wand to deliver water at a slow to moderate flow at ground level. If this isn't possible, water your garden early in the morning when the sun's rays will quickly dry your plants' foliage. Late morning or afternoon overhead watering will likely "cook" your plants from the bright sun and higher temperatures.

A final note on prevention is to never leave infected plant parts in the garden or in your compost, as this will only spread the fungus to other areas of your garden. Before applying any treatment remove infected leaves, or entire stems if many leaves along a stem are infected. Throw them in the trash.

The Main Culprits

The fungi we are mostly confronted with in our gardens are:

1. Black Spot on roses
2. Rust Fungus on conifer trees, shrubs like hollyhock, and some flowers, including Aster, Carnation, Geranium, Iris, Lily, Pansy, Primrose, Snapdragon, Sunflower, Sweet pea, and their related family members.
3. Powdery Mildew on a wide variety of plants.

Continue reading here!

Speaker Series in Review

Thanks again to volunteer, Noel Collanbine, for arranging this series of interesting and informative speakers! These speakers gave generously of their time, often driving more than an hour to provide a program at Maple Shade Barn and staying after to answer questions. We are so fortunate to be a place that respects history and welcomes the sharing of stories and experiences with others.

Thank you everyone!

January: Col. Matthew Todd
"Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan."

March: Dominish Miller
"Women's Lives in Colonial America"

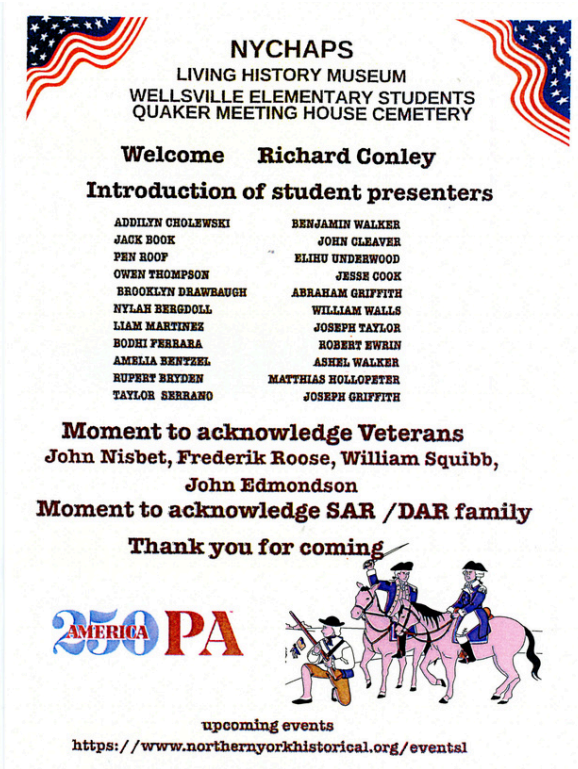
Noel Collanbine

April: Michael Cassidy
"Working Gardens in 19th Century Pennsylvania Dutch Country"

May: Katelyn Reist
"Conestoga Wagons."

Living History at the Quaker Meeting House Cemetery

Students from Wellsville Elemenary 4th grade prepared a living history program honoring patriots buried in the Quaker Meeting House Cemetery. While they intended to speak with visitors at the gravesites, they changed gears to present to a large audience inside the meeting house due to rain. Each student had researched their "person" and gave a 1st person summary of their life. Everyone did an incredible job!


NYCHAPS
LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM
WELLSVILLE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS
QUAKER MEETING HOUSE CEMETERY

Welcome Richard Conley

Introduction of student presenters

ADDILYN CHOLEWSKI	BENJAMIN WALKER
JACK BOOK	JOHN CLEAVER
PEN ROOF	ELIHU UNDERWOOD
OWEN THOMPSON	JESSE COOK
BROOKLYN DRAWBAUGH	ABRAHAM GRIFFITH
NYLAH BERGDOLL	WILLIAM WALLS
LIAM MARTINEZ	JOSEPH TAYLOR
BODHI FERRARA	ROBERT EWRIN
AMELIA BENTZEL	ASHEL WALKER
RUPERT BRYDEN	MATTHIAS HOLLOPETER
TAYLOR SERRANO	JOSEPH GRIFFITH

Moment to acknowledge Veterans
John Nisbet, Frederik Roose, William Squibb, John Edmondson
Moment to acknowledge SAR /DAR family
Thank you for coming

250 AMERICA PA

upcoming events
https://www.northernyorkhistorical.org/events1

John Kelly, representing SAR, with students.

Tombstone Care and Maintenance Workshop

In May, as a 250 Community event, NYCHAPS arranged for Jacob Lemon to provide a workshop on caring for tombstones at the Dillsburg Cemetery. Jacob shared that this work was very meaningful to him and he was happy to provide this service for the community. Jacob explained the materials needed (he brought everything) as well as how to use the items. Along the way, Jacob began work on a broken tombstone and discussed the steps and strategies he would use to restore it.

There were many participants that day including an 11th grade History Class (approximately 20 students) from Cumberland Valley.

Jacob reviewing materials.

Broken tombstone dug out.

Rich Conley sharing information about the Patriots buried here.

Celebrating School Field Trips!

May was an incredibly busy month at Dills Tavern as large groups of 2nd graders came for tours. Each spring, volunteer Viki Wonders, reaches out to schools in the Northern York County District to coordinate field trips. This year we had visits from:

- Dillsburg Elementary
- Wellsville Elementary
- Northern Elementary
- South Mountain Elementary

Our tour content was revised this year to focus on the tools of everyday life in the Tavern household, barn, and wheelwright shop. Through hands on activities, the visiting 2nd graders were able to connect their modern lives to what they were seeing and experiencing; especially the physicality of life in the 18th century. After all, bread just doesn't magically appear! We always welcome having this opportunity to share history and appreciate the District's committment to supporting these trips.

NYCHAPS is also grateful for the amazing group of volunteers that supported this year's field trips and know that these meaningful experiences would not exist without them!

Char Knudsen, Betty Magaro, Robin Conley, Sherry Morgan, Mariann Hunt, Clair Zeiders, Jim McClay, Deb Gilmore, Mindy Bower, Erica Hill, Christine Ecker, Karen Phillippi, Grace Busch, Linda Hagenbach, Viki and Greg Wonders, Carol and Jim Hugar, James and Karen Nellis

Community Interests

Katelyn Reist, our May speaker, shared an upcoming event on her family farm. Here is your chance to see a Conestoga Wagon up close!

Her presentation about Conestoga Wagons is linked here!

Raffle

NYCHAPS Quilt 2026

88" x 100" (Queen)
"Indian Summer"
$2 per ticket OR 3 ticketsfor $5

Raffle tickets for the 2026 Indian Summer Quilt will be on sale during most Farmers Market Saturdays! The winning ticket will be drawn in December during NYCHAPS ChristkindlMarkt (Saturday).

NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION Society

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