



NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION

Society

May 2025 Newsletter

“Pull up a chair. Take a taste. Come join us. Life is so endlessly delicious.” — Ruth Reichl

Happiness is the start of the Dillsburg Farmers Market season at Dills Tavern! The Market is more than just a place to shop. It is also a place that provides a feeling of community... a place to chat with familiar people and new acquaintances... a place to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea while relaxing on a Saturday morning... a place to introduce others to the wonders of living history at Dills Tavern. For a preview of vendors that will be at the market, [click on this link!](#) They are all local, meaning within 50 miles from Dillsburg.

**The market season runs each Saturday from 8:00am - noon
May 3rd through November 22nd at
Dills Tavern, 227 N. Baltimore St.**



While you are there...

While shopping at the Dillsburg Farmers Market, why not also join Murray Small and his docents for a tour of the Eichelberger Distillery! You will gain an appreciation of the agricultural heritage of South Central Pennsylvania... which includes the making of whiskey in hundreds of small farm distilleries like the one re-created here.



The tour focuses on the entrepreneurial spirit of the Dill and Eichelberger families, the history of distilling, and the distillery itself. Open 10am to 4pm. Tours begin on the hour at 12, 1, 2, and 3pm. \$10 per adult. Expect to show id as proof of age.

May Events



Tavern Tours

Each Sunday

2:00 and 3:00 pm at Dills Tavern



Story Time

Saturday, May 3rd

10 am - 11 pm at Dills Tavern

Join Miss Sue at the market for stories, rhymes, and songs.





Publick Tyme

Saturday, May 10th

8 am - 3 pm at Dills Tavern



Publick Tyme at Dills Tavern takes place in conjunction with the Dillsburg Pickle Fest. Interact with living history reenactors covering Colonial America all the way up to the modern era throughout the property.

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



Spinning Group

Sunday, May 11th

2 - 4 pm at Dills Tavern

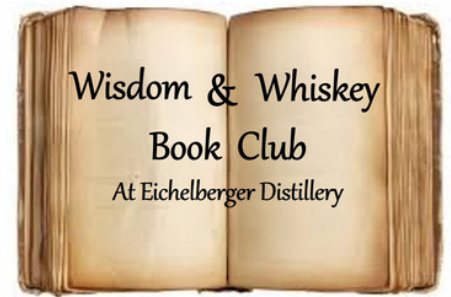
Enjoy a spinning demonstration on the second Sunday of each month!



May Events

Wisdom & Whiskey Book Club

Wednesday, May 14th; 6:30-8 pm
at the Eichelberger Distillery



The fourth session of our book discussion will cover:

Ch 5: "We the People" of Connecticut and Massachusetts

Ch 6: The Massachusetts Ratifying Convention

This event is free and open to the public. You are welcome to bring a snack to share and we will have beverages for purchase: cocktail of the evening and coffee with spirits \$5; coffee, tea, and water \$1.

[More details on our website here!](#)



Sarah Schwarz

"Patriotism and the DAR"

Thursday, May 15th; 6:30-8 pm
at Maple Shade Barn



Sarah has membership with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and Children of the American Revolution. The DAR's mission focuses

on a love of patriotism, education, and historic preservation - all of which are Sarah's passions. They promote educational initiatives and the understanding of American history as they feel a well educated citizen is essential for a strong nation. They also foster the spirit of patriotism through activities like commemorative events and supporting veterans etc.

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



250 years ago...



Key Events in May

In May 1775, several key events unfolded in the lead-up to the American Revolutionary War. The Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, and the capture of Fort Ticonderoga by American forces marked a significant early victory. The Congress began to organize the American forces and also sent the "Olive Branch Petition" to King George III, hoping for a peaceful resolution.

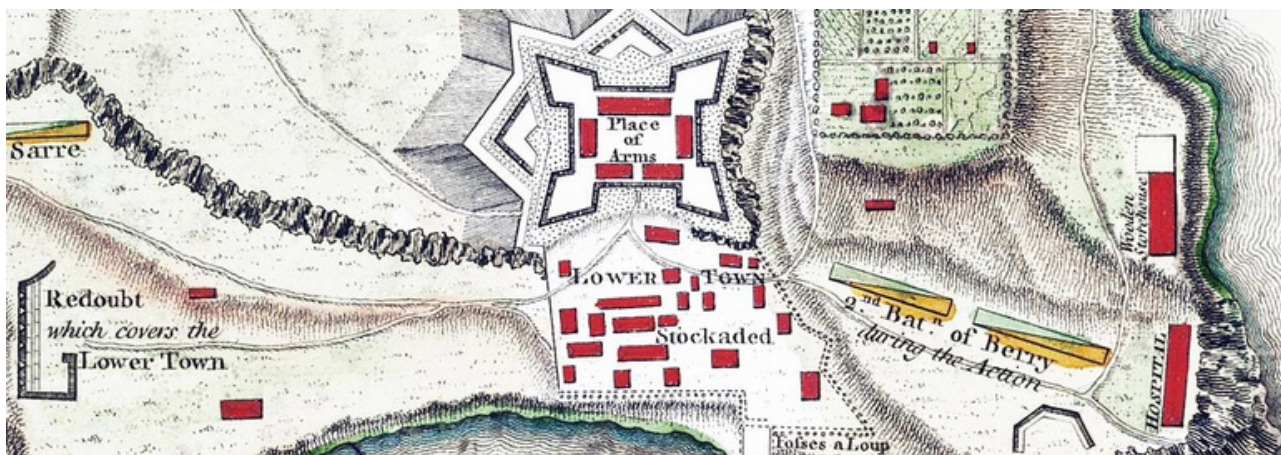


This illustration depicts Ethan Allen and other leaders of the Green Mountain Boys planning a mission. Image Source: [Library of Congress](#).

May 10 - The Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia

May 10 - Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, with the assistance of Benedict Arnold, captured Fort Ticonderoga, securing a strategic passageway and vital artery.

May 18 - The Congress learned of the capture of Fort Ticonderoga and the arrival of British military reinforcements.



Map of Fort Ticonderoga - American Battlefield Trust

May 25 - British Generals Howell, Clinton and Burgoyne arrived in Boston with reinforcements for General Gage.

May 26 - The Congress resolved to prepare for military defense and sent the Olive Branch Petition to King George III. The first draft of the Olive Branch Petition was written by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's draft was thought to be too aggressive. It leaned more towards American independence than peace with England. In response, it was edited by John Dickinson. Dickinson was a leader among a group of Patriots that still wanted peace over war. The letter was a last-ditch effort to keep the peace between Britain and America.



From the Archives

Historic Photograph Donated to NYCHAPS

The last in the series of early photos recently donated to the historical society.

This view was taken looking south from the center of S. Baltimore Street above York St. and depicts the buildings on the east side of the street.

The first property was the Lightner residence later owned by David Sheffer and now the location of the Fire Company. Further up the street is the small shop of Barney Harbold and the Lem Ross home. In the far distance are the cupolas of the school and old St. Paul's Lutheran church both of which burned in the fire of 1913. The road is dirt with cobblestone gutters and brick sidewalks.

Compare the views below for a then and now comparison. Reprints of these historic photos are available in the Dills Tavern Gift Shop.



The Impractical Distillers: Vol 1.5

Thinking: in the Box

Discussions of early American distilling inevitably include a reference to The Practical Distiller. Samuel McHarry from Lancaster, PA authored the book in 1808. This publication became the foundational document in the design and building of the Eichelberger Distillery at Dills Tavern. The volume contains observations, recommendations and receipts for producing ardent spirits pleasing to people from all levels of society.

Granted, some esoteric information is of limited use to modern, high-tech distillers competing for market share and shelf space. “Sweetening hogsheads by burning”, “greasing stills with bacon or tallow”, and “diseases of hogs”, aren’t problems needing solutions for modern distillers. But the “Impractical Distillers” of the Eichelberger Distillery employed this volume of practical recommendations as a compass on the journey to creating a place where 18th century distilling techniques on period equipment is preserved and demonstrated.



One of McHarry’s more unusual but useful suggestions was “The best method of setting Stills”. The writer devotes 2 pages describing how to construct a proper masonry box to house a still. Distilleries generally lack masons experienced in fireplace construction. Not Eichelbergers!

Sam read and re-read the description of how to construct a unit with an arched firebox and flue passageways to distribute heat evenly around the copper still. He finally understood McHarry’s thoughts on this design. It would protect the still and heat evenly to prevent scorching the mash. We built a practice still next to the Wheelwright Shop. It worked... at least for boiling water!

The Impractical Distillers cont.



In the actual distillery, the masonry box was constructed of antique brick and slaked lime mortar. McHarry's book contains no advice on International Building or Fire Codes. Fire brick and building codes didn't exist in 1800 but in 2024 these were non-negotiable. The firebrick used for the arch was a blessing and a possible curse. Fire brick adds years of life to the firebox but does not transfer heat as efficiently as red brick. Therefore, it takes 4 hours for our stripping still, Mary, to get hot.

After reaching 180, the head is placed and luted, lyne arm connected, and condenser water started. In about 8 hours, if the weather is right and the firewood dry, the stripping run is finished.

The masonry unit was completed with a coat of lime plaster. Regrettably, the plaster conceals the exquisite brickwork beneath; however, it accurately reflects the 18th/19th century practice of plastering stone and brickwork.

McHarry witnessed disadvantages in the distilling practices of his peers. When grain in the mash sinks to the bottom, direct fire on the copper can scorch the mash effecting the flavor of the whiskey. Plus scraping scorched mash from a still in 1800 or 2024 – sucks! His “out of the box” analysis led to the concept of setting the still on an arch ” in a box” to direct heat but prevent flames from hitting directly on her bottom. Many of McHarry's other practical suggestions have been incorporated in the distillery.

The Eichelberger Distillery has the only masonry unit in the country built and operating in this historic Pennsylvanian style . Come out and see Mary in her masonry box and the Impractical Distillers and Docents at the Eichelberger Distillery.



The Impractical Distillers: *Sam and Murray*

Volunteer Opportunities



Property/Grounds Maintenance

Seeking volunteers who can assist in any of the following tasks:

- Mowing, weed control, edging
- Simple painting projects
- Spring cleaning tasks
- Garden work

These necessary tasks are very important to ensuring a safe and well cared for environment. As each task is coordinated by a different person, please contact knellis@northernnyorkhistorical.org so she may put you in touch with the appropriate coordinator.

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. Our Spring/Summer tour season is starting and this is a great time for new docents to begin training. 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



Community Interests

NYCHAPS History Camp

July 14th - 18th

Live and play like children of America in the late 18th century! Students will experience a taste of colonial life at Dills Tavern and Plantation with the NYCHAPS' History Camp. This one-week camp is open to students entering grades 4-6. Students will have the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities led by our experienced volunteers. Activities will include: games, fiber arts, metal working, wood working, candle making, colonial clothing, food preparation, and more! [Enrollment information and registration here!](#)



Whole Family Fun on a weeknight!

Thursday, May 8th

Maple Shade Barn: 7p-9p

Admission free and all are welcome!

The Harrisburg Area Homeschoolers Association will be exhibiting the artistic talents of their students at Maple Shade Barn. Students of all grades will be showcasing their artwork. Throughout this past school year, HAHA students have participated in woodworking, leatherworking and quilting classes. But submissions may include photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, nature art, dioramas, and Lego/K'nex creations. You just never know what you will find at a homeschool art show.

But this won't just be a walk-thru event – it will be interactive as the artists will be present and you are welcome to converse with them. There will also be slips of paper available for you to write down your thoughts and encouragement for the artists.



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35 Greenbriar Lane Dillsburg, PA 17019

Office Hours: Tues-Fri 11am - 3pm