NORTHERN YORK COUNTY
HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION
Society

September 2026 Newsletter

"The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dreams shall never die." ~ Edward Kennedy

250 years ago...

September 1776 revealed both both the danger and determination of the American cause.

- **September 9, 1776 -** The Continental Congress officially adopts the term "the United States of America"!
- **September 11, 1776** — Staten Island Peace Conference: Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge met with British Admiral Lord Richard Howe on Staten Island to discuss possible peace. Howe offered a possible pardon and reconciliation if the colonies returned to loyalty under the British Crown, but he did not have authority to recognize American independence. The American delegates insisted that any serious negotiation had to treat the United States as independent or at least acknowledge the reality of the Declaration of Independence. Because neither side would compromise on that central issue, the talks failed.
- **September 15, 1776** — British capture New York City: British forces under General William Howe landed at Kip's Bay on Manhattan and occupied New York City. This was a serious setback. It gave Britain a strong military base and forced Washington's army to retreat, which worried Patriots and made the revolution seem fragile.
- **September 16, 1776** — Battle of Harlem Heights: American forces fought British troops in northern Manhattan. Although relatively small, the battle boosted Continental morale after recent defeats on Long Island and at Kip's Bay.
- **September 20–21, 1776** — Great Fire of New York: A major fire destroyed a large portion of New York City shortly after British occupation. Both sides blamed each other, but the cause remains uncertain.
- **Late September 1776** — Washington's army holds upper Manhattan: After Harlem Heights, George Washington's forces strengthened positions in northern Manhattan while British forces consolidated control over the lower city.

September 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

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

Sundays at Dills Tavern

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

Spinning Demonstration
September 13th
during Tavern tours

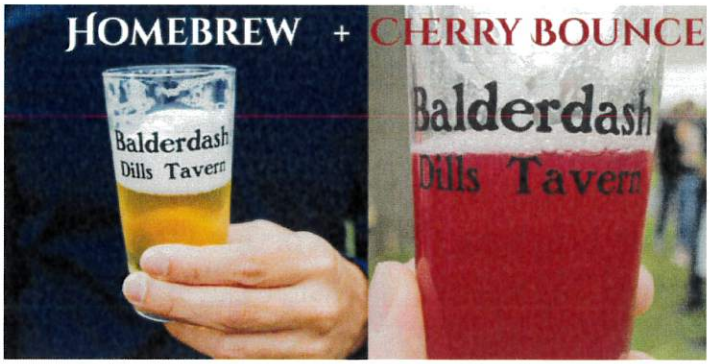
Tavern Tours - Every Sunday
2:00 pm & 3:00 pm
$5 adult / $10 immediate family

September Special Events

Balderdash

September 12th; 1-5pm

Dills Tavern



Balderdash is a combination of our traditional homebrew festival along with our Cherry Bounce festival. This merger, though muddled, provides the visitor with an entertaining opportunity to sample homebrews created by amateur and aspiring brewers and unique variations of historic cherry bounce created by local cherry bounce fans. One single $25 ticket allows guests to sample and vote for Best Homebrew AND Best Cherry Bounce.
Over 21 only. No dogs, please!

~ Cherry Bounce and Homebrew contestants do NOT need to pay to enter ~
Contestants desiring to enter the People's Choice Cherry Bounce competition should contact Karen at knellis@northernyorkhistorical.org. Contestants desiring to enter the Homebrew competition should contact Sam at traditionalbldr@comcast.net.

Contestant rules and tickets for the event may be found here!

Martha Washington's "Excellent Cherry Bounce"

"Extract the juice of 20 pounds well ripend Morrella cherrys.

Add to this 10 quarts of old french brandy and sweeten it with White sugar to your taste.

To 5 gallons of this mixture add one ounce of spice such as cinnamon, cloves and nutmegs of each an Equal quantity slightly bruis'd and a pint and half of cherry kirnels that have been gently broken in a mortar.

After the liquor has fermented let it stand close-stoped for a month or six weeks then bottle it, remembering to put a lump of Loaf Sugar into each bottle."

Martha Washington, Booke of Cookery and Booke of Sweetmeats.
Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania

October Special Events

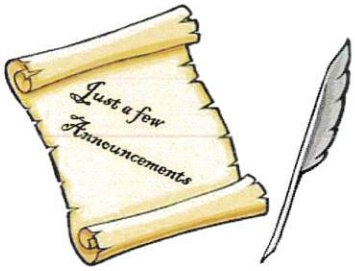
October 2nd

at Dill's Tavern

7-10 pm

Please join us for the start of our 1st Friday season! The evening's musical guests will be **Across the Pond.** This event is exclusive to the 21+ crowd and advanced ticket sales are not available. Simply pay at the door when you arrive. Admission is $10/members and $15 for non-members. You are welcome to BYOB as well as bring your own dinner, snacks, etc.

Tavernkeeper Murray Small will be in the Eichelberger Distillery offering a tasting program for an additional $10. **Reserve your seat at a tasting here!**



As a 1st Friday reminder...

TAVERN KEEPERS RULES OF COURTESY

1. The property is smoke free. Smoke breaks should be taken on the front sidewalk.
2. Clay pipes and Dills cigars may only be lit after 10 pm in the taproom, or in the wheelwright shop.
3. Fires and candles will only be maintained by the tavern keepers.
4. Guests are invited to use all of the rooms in the tavern and wheelwright shop to socialize, however, the tavern keeper has reserved the ballroom for those wishing to listen to the musicians. As a courtesy to our talented performers, please refrain from loud talking in this room.
5. Drink responsibly, or we will confiscate your horse!!
6. Please treat this historic property gently and leave it tidy at evening's end.
7. We hope you enjoy your time with us!

NYCHAPS Revolutionary War Project

Vol 1.8

The Nesbits and Hibernia Plantation

The Nesbit family likely originated in Scotland and served in several military roles while living there. Around 1640, several branches of the family immigrated to Ireland where they served the King of England. In 1754 they came from Ireland to Philadelphia. The group consisted of four brothers and two sisters, three of whom became distinguished in the provincial and revolutionary history of Pennsylvania. From their business connections and the disposition of the eldest brother's estate it is presumed they were of the Donegal branch of the (Conyngham) Nisbet family. They are said to have come from Letterkenny, Donegal, but John Maxwell Nesbit was born in 1728 at Loughbrickland, near Killyeagh in County Down. Upon his arrival in Philadelphia, he entered the mercantile house of Redmond and David Conyngham, which was known in revolutionary times as the firm of Nesbitt and Conyngham, and eventually as the J. M. Nesbitt Company. John Maxwell Nesbitt held many offices of trust and honor in the crucial period of American history. He was treasurer of the Board of War and paymaster of the Navy, a member of the City Troop in 1777 and the Council of Safety for Pennsylvania. He subscribed five thousand pounds to the Bank of Pennsylvania to help supply provisions for the Continental Troops. In 1781 he assisted Robert Morris in founding the Bank of North America, of which he was a director. He was the first president of the Insurance Company of North America. This is the same Robert Morris who went on to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Our local ties to his family start with James Nesbit who first shows in Chester County Pennsylvania in 1707. His son John (who later moved to Warrington Township) was born at Springton Manor Farm in Chester County PA. This structure seems to survive and is currently being used as a wedding venue listed as Springton Manor farm.

Click here to read the rest of the article.

From the Garden Shed Vol 1.8

It's Still Planting Time

by Gary A. Reneker, Head Gardener

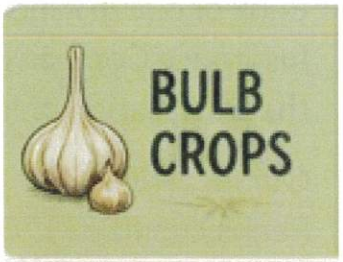
Important Note: The estimated first frost date for our region (7a) in 2026 is October 29th.

You still have time to plant some frost tolerant and cold hardy plants this year. You still must give them time to get established before the temperatures begin to drop. This takes us to planting by mid-September. Using row covers and mini-greenhouses can extend your season by two to four weeks.

These plants fall into four groups; bulb crops, leafy greens, herbs, and cover crops. Some may not develop to full sized, mature plants if not planted until late September. The temperatures will be too cold or the days too short, but they will still be healthy and tasty as "baby" produce.

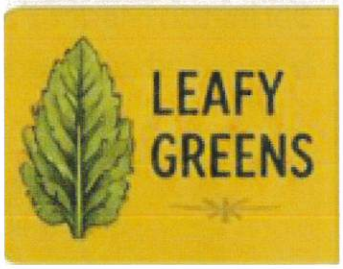
Group 1

This group includes bulb crops, such as radishes, beets bred as "baby" produce, green onions, scallions, short season carrots, and salad turnips. Salad turnips are not the typical storage turnips. These are grown mostly for their tops, but the smallish bulbs can still be eaten, pickled or fermented like the other bulb crops.



Green onions, if planted very early in September, can often mature enough to overwinter without any protection. You can harvest them throughout the winter, or be the first plants you harvest in the spring.

Group 2



Leafy greens include lettuce, spinach, arugula, endive, escarole, collards, chard, kale, corn salad, and clatonia (aka miner's lettuce) make up our second group. Some may not develop into mature plants if planted late in September, but will still be great for baby salad greens. If chard and kale are planted in early September they will generally mature enough to continue producing until late November.

Click here to read the rest of the article.

A Trip to Dills Tavern...

A Visitor's Reflection

by Steve Dills

Some places teach history. Others remind you that you are part of it. For over twenty years, I've had the privilege of helping preserve one of America's oldest taverns in Virginia. I thought I understood what historic taverns meant. Then I walked into Dills Tavern.

What I expected to be a quick visit turned into nearly two unforgettable hours. Every volunteer welcomed us like old friends, eager to share not only the history of the building but the lives of the people who called it home. Their passion was infectious.

As someone researching my own family history, the experience became deeply personal. Standing inside a tavern built and operated by the Dill family... seeing the Dill family Bible... learning about the family's journey from Ireland through Pennsylvania before later generations moved west... I realized I wasn't just learning history anymore. I was walking through a chapter of my own.

What impressed me most, however, wasn't simply the building. It was the people keeping it alive. Our children weren't rushed from exhibit to exhibit. They were invited to ask questions, try period tools, sit around the family table, and experience history rather than simply observe it. That's becoming increasingly rare, and it's exactly what living history should be. As someone who has dedicated much of my own life to preserving another historic tavern, I couldn't help but smile at how familiar it all felt. Different buildings. Different states. Same mission. Keep the stories alive.

To everyone who spent extra time with our family, answered my endless genealogy questions, and even invited me to stop by anytime I happened to be passing through, thank you. This visit has meant more to me than you'll ever know. I arrived hoping to learn about my ancestors. I left feeling like I'd met them. I cannot recommend Dills Tavern highly enough. ~ Steve Dills Facebook Post

Every once in a while, someone shares an experience that reminds us why preserving places like Dills Tavern matters.
History isn't just about dates and artifacts. It's about helping people connect with the stories, families, and communities that came before them.

Maple Shade Quilters present... their America 250 Quilt!

Several times over the past year, these quilters have revealed clues about the pattern used and have shown bits and pieces of their progress along the way. Now it is time for the full story!

As we approached the 250th anniversary of our nation, several events fell into place. One Saturday at Dills Tavern, a fellow NYCHAPS member questioned if we, the Maple Shade Quilters, knew of a quilt pattern called Burgoyne Surrounded. Being an avid quilter and extremely interested in quilt history and education, this comment instigated further research.

Our Tuesday quilting group was just about finished with their current project and were looking to start a new quilt. I had discovered that the Burgoyne Surrounded pattern was a depiction of the English surrounded by the Continental forces in September and October of 1777. These two major battles and other skirmishes were known as the Battle of Saratoga and were widely considered a turning point in the Revolutionary War.

This quilt, Burgoyne Surrounded, is great example of how arts & crafts can tell historical stories while also preserving this art form. The Maple Shade quilters spent more than a year designing, cutting, assembling and hand quilting this fascinating quilt. 30 blocks each containing 97 small pieces, plus sashing, corner blocks, borders, and binding. This totals over 3200 pieces in the making of this quilt.

Mary Voorhees quilting.

Additionally, the time devoted to creating this masterpiece will be in excess of 878 hours by the time it is finished. The Maple Shade quilters are all volunteers supporting the continuation of quilting traditions to highlight how colonial people embellished their lives and homes.

Almost finished! Just needs the binding.

We have just a little bit of work left on the binding of this quilt and then we will be ready to display, prepare for auction, and enter it in the competition for hand quilting at the Farmers Fair!

Winni Flynn, on behalf of Maple Shade Quilters:

Mary Voorhees, Barbara Parisi, Kimberly Tucker, Susan Kuhn, Winni Flynn, Denise Fasnacht, Karen Phillippi, Deidre Woodward, and Karen Nellis

Community Interests

On Saturday, August 29th, Rich Conley, and SAR representatives John Kelly and Dale Leopard presented commemorative plaques to the students from Wellsville Elemenary who had prepared a living history program honoring patriots buried in the Quaker Meeting House Cemetery. Some of the students were even able to find "their person" listed on the Revolutionary War Patriots Display. Group photo by Curt Werner.

NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION Society

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