



# NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION

*Society*

## May 2026 Newsletter

**“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it.” ~ Thomas Paine**

### 250 years ago...

May 1776 was the point in time that independence shifted from a radical idea to an organized political goal, with both Congress and individual colonies actively preparing to create a new nation.

- **May 15, 1776:** The Second Continental Congress adopted a major resolution urging the colonies to establish new governments independent of British authority. This effectively told colonies to abandon loyalty to the Crown. Virginia led the charge but by the end of 1776, six additional states had also written constitutions (New Jersey, North Carolina, Maryland, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware).
- **Military preparations,** including fortifying New York, demonstrated the colonies' readiness to actively resist British advances. Colonial forces worked to strengthen defenses along the Hudson River, anticipating a major British attack from the sea. Meanwhile, the British Navy, one of the world's most powerful at the time, began assembling fleets off the American coast, aiming to blockade ports and disrupt supply lines.
- **Skirmishes:** Patriot and Loyalist militias were still engaging in clashes, especially in the Carolinas and Georgia. On the western frontier of New York and Pennsylvania, there were small-scale raids and skirmishes involving settlers, Loyalists, and Native American groups allied with the British.

**250 AMERICA PA**

# May Events



## Dillsburg Farmers Market returns to Dills Tavern!

**Saturdays: 8:00 - noon**

**May 2nd - November 21st**

Looking forward to fresh local produce, baked goods, and meats? Then you will want to experience this season of the Dillsburg Farmer's Market at Dills Tavern!



## Publick Tyme

**May 9th 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!](#)**

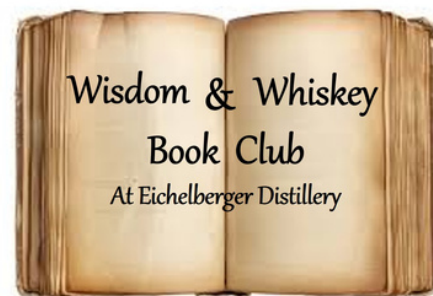


## Wisdom & Whiskey Book Club

**Wednesday, May 13th; 6:30-8 pm  
at the Eichelberger Distillery**

The **final session** of this season's book discussion on Jeffrey Rosen's, **The Pursuit of Liberty** will cover:  
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.





# May Events cont.

**Katelyn Reist**

**"The Conestoga Wagon"**

**Thursday, May 21st; 6:30-8 pm**

**at Maple Shade Barn**

Our Speaker Series concludes on May 21st with Katelyn Reist. Conestoga wagons have played a significant role in shaping our nation. Unlike some misnomers, the wagons were not used to haul people, but were used to transport freight.

During the presentation, Katelyn will talk about the history of the Conestoga wagon, the roads they traveled, the Conestoga wagon design, and accessories associated with the wagon.

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



## **Tombstone Preservation**

### **Workshop**

**Saturday, May 23rd from**

**9am - 12pm**

**at Dillsburg Cemetary**

**[Details may be found here!](#)**

Mr Jacob Lemon will demonstrate the process of preserving headstones and then allow us limited time to get some practical experience. We will spend the morning observing the repairing of 2 broken tombstones and the cleaning of 3 others – including Thomas & Archibald Campbell. All of these tombstones mark Revolutionary War Soldiers who are laid to rest in the Dillsburg Cemetery. **This program is free to the public and everyone is welcome!**

# May Events cont.

## Living History within the Community

Please consider supporting our community's elementary students as they perform living histories at the following locations in honor of America 250.

5/23/26 Living History at the Quaker Meeting House 10am-12pm: 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from Wellsville Elementary.

5/31/26 Living History at the Old Monaghan Church 2pm-4pm: 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from Dillsburg Elementary.

5/31/26 Living History at the Dillsburg Cemetery 2pm-4pm: An area homeschooler will provide interpretation of Dillsburg's own Revolutionary War patriot, Thomas Campbell.



**Saturdays**  
**May 9<sup>th</sup> - July 4<sup>th</sup>**

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 next nine weeks 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!**



Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization and we are grateful for each one of you! For without you, we would not be able to offer the many events and opportunities that we do. We are in the beginning stages of planning a volunteer appreciation event and would like your input. This event would not be open to the public but would be for our volunteers who give so much of their time and talents to support NYCHAPS' mission. To help us best serve you, please fill out this **Volunteer Survey**.





# There's Whiskey in the Wagons cont.

Gauging required the use of an early style hydrometer like a Dicas or Sikes (pictured). Whiskey at 100 proof brought 23 cents a gallon. Under 100 proof resulted in a lower amount paid. A dollar was added to the purchase price to cover the cost of the wooden barrel used to hold the whiskey.

One item missing from the receipts is taxes. A whiskey tax was imposed in 1791. That led to the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794. The tax was discontinued during the Jefferson administration and not re-instated until the Civil War.

Eichelberger wagons delivered local whiskey to the busy port of Baltimore which previously had been a market too distant for small farm distillers to reach. Return trips brought back mercantile goods and commodities including oysters! The financial network of local distillers and whiskey merchants in Baltimore is a fine example of the early agricultural entrepreneurship of the Northern York County region.



You can see the early American whiskey making process and taste “wagon-aged” whiskey at the Eichelberger Distillery during a tour or special event..

## The Impractical Distillers: *Sam and Murray*



**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@northernryorkhistorical.org](mailto:admin@northernryorkhistorical.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 Battles of Brandywine and Germantown**

As early as 1776, France was secretly supporting the colonies in the war with Britain. Many believe that their support of the colonies was much more about aiding any foe of their long term enemy. Nevertheless, they were secretly providing support. Fearing that France might soon enter the war, and combined with the fact that Britain's economy was still suffering from the debt accumulated in the French and Indian War, many members of the British parliament felt that the rebellion in the colonies must be brought to an end



British General William Howe

quickly. As a result, General William Howe developed a plan to capture the capital of the colonies, Philadelphia, falsely believing this would motivate the colonies to agree to terms of surrender.

To facilitate the capture of Philadelphia, General Howe sailed his army south from New York to the opening of the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia and then sailed North to land at present day Elkton, Maryland on August 25, 1777. Washington was aware of this maneuver and could have taken advantage of the vulnerability during unloading, however Washington chose to position his forces along the Brandywine Creek at Chadd's Ford in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, which he incorrectly believed was the only viable place for the British army to cross Brandywine Creek on their way to Philadelphia.

Unfortunately for the colonial troops, General Howe was made aware of another ford north of Washington's position. Howe split his army and marched some of his troops east as a diversion and then crossed the main portion of his troops at the ford which was unknown to Washington. Howe then marched his troops south and was able to attack the flank of Washington's line. This maneuver by the British allowed them to claim victory at the Battle of Brandywine which occurred on September 11, 1777. However, the morale of the colonial troops remained high because they had fought well and were able to retain their structure in retreat. The troops attributed the defeat to the better knowledge of the topography by the British - most likely a result of aid by Loyalists in the area.

**[Find out more by clicking here!](#)**

# The Garden Shed Vol 1.5

## We All Need Companions

by Gary A. Reneker, Head Gardener

Shortly after the Medieval times (476-1486 AD) agrarians became more scientific in farming practices. They began noticing that certain plants were more or less productive when grown near other specific plants. Many beliefs about planting companions have since been passed down through the generations; some more mythological while others have been proven true.

In the New World companion planting was an accepted practice by many farmers and gardeners. The early forms of companion planting were primarily root depth and aerial companionships.

In the early-1800's a few American and European agricultural colleges began studying what was

happening in the sub-soil, rather than focusing only on the plants, birthing a new school of study called of study called Soil Science. They learned how the soil's living creatures - bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes and worms - changed the soil's structure and how they benefited the growth and productivity of plants.

By the mid-1800's many other ag schools added Soil Science as a curriculum choice. In addition to the lifeforms in the soil, they learned about the nutrients needed by plants. Those needed in abundance were defined as Macro-nutrients. Those still critical, but not used in large amounts were called Micro-nutrients. Others still vital, but used only in tiny amounts, were termed Trace minerals.

In the early 1900's a new science called Allelopathology (al-lel'-o-path-ah'-lo-gee) was developed. Just like animals, plants take in food and discharge the residue of their digestive process. Some of what they discharge can be helpful or harmful to neighboring plants. This knowledge opened a new avenue of companion planting.



Companion planting has become a significant concern of serious gardeners and many farmers. Today there are three schools of thought about it, and all should be considered when designing your garden.

**[Continue reading the article by clicking here!](#)**

# Celtic Festival Appreciation

## To our incredible NYCHAPS Volunteers!



On behalf of the entire society, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to every one of you (all 60 plus!) who dedicated your time and energy to make the 2026 Dills Celtic Festival a resounding success. This event is a celebration of the Scots-Irish heritage that is so deeply rooted in the history of Northern York County, and it simply would not be possible without your tireless efforts. The atmosphere at the festival was truly magical this year, and that was thanks to your hard work behind the scenes. We want to specifically recognize the diverse roles you filled to keep the festival running smoothly:

**Guest Experience:** Our gate and support teams were the first friendly faces many visitors saw. Your help with ticket sales, wristbands, and providing directions ensured a welcoming start for every family that joined us. A shout out to our gift shop volunteers, as well!

**Operations & Grounds:** A huge thank you to the crews who handled the less glamorous but vital tasks, including pre-festival setup, the back gate crew, "trash support" to keep the historic grounds pristine, and restocking facilities throughout the weekend. (A special thanks to Scout Troop 38!)

**Hospitality & Service:** From those of you who stood at the kitchen window serving up portions of traditional corned beef and cabbage and Irish stew, to the teams managing the beer wagon and distillery, you helped keep our guests fed and happy.

**Artisan Demonstrations:** The festival is even more special thanks to our NYCHAPS artisans, who brought history to life through fiber arts, woodworking, coopering, and blacksmithing.

**Event Assistance:** From assisting our musicians, to helping our artisan vendors settle in, your logistical support allowed the "craic" to flow uninterrupted.

**Staff Support:** A sincere thank you to the amazing team at NYCHAPS! They did an incredible job managing the pre-festival rush—juggling everything from social media posts and ticket sales to phone calls, emails, and finances. We couldn't have navigated the chaos without their hard work!

Your dedication does more than just run a weekend festival; it directly supports the NYCHAPS mission to preserve our local history and fund educational programs like the upcoming History Camp. Whether you worked a single three-hour shift or were with us from setup to takedown, your contribution was the heart of this event.

We are honored to have such a passionate group of volunteers! Thank you for your hard work, your smiles, and your commitment to our community. Sláinte!

**Dills Celtic Fest Committee:** Del Cunningham, Doug Riley, Dan Diviney, Mike Gaffney, Jason Metzger, and Evan Maclay.

# Looking Ahead...

## Celebrating America's 250<sup>th</sup>

### From Oath to Toast

July 3<sup>rd</sup>; 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 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!](#)



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