

# Dill's Tavern Chronicle



March 2004

Northern York County Historical and Preservation Society, 35 Greenbrier Lane, Dillsburg, PA 17019 Ph. 717- 502-1440

*Purpose: To promote and encourage the study, collection, and preservation of the historical heritage of the Northern York County area.*

## The Saga of the Tavern Continues

~ Review ~

~ 1784 ~

In our previous publications we learned:

- 1742 – Mathew Dill (1698 – 1750) was granted 199 acres of land. The surrounding area became known as Dill's Gap
- 1750 – Mathew died leaving 190 acres to his son James Dill (1720-1797)
- 1755 – James builds the stone structure that becomes Dill's Tavern.
- 1783 – By this time James increased his holdings to 650 acres and 9 slaves.

### John Dill Acquires the Tavern

John Dill (1763-c – 1840) took possession of 393 acres which contained the Tavern. He may have paid for 190 acres of this acquisition, as there is a notation stating that, "Captain John Dill acquires 190 acre "Plantation" with the tavern for 600 pounds."

He presumably continued to operate the Tavern although his first licensing does not appear until after the Whiskey Rebellion in 1795 and again in 1798.

In the 1798 Federal Direct Tax, John Dill is assessed for 378 acres, including a stone house (25x24), three outbuildings, two log barns and a stable. Another account states, The 1798 "Glass Tax" shows a stone dwelling, stone granary, stone bake house, stone spring house, log barn and log stable.

The property and then the Tavern had been in the Dill family for 58 years. But for whatever reason, in 1800 John sold it out of the Dill family after only 16 years of his ownership.

In 1800, "Dillstown" had six houses and a population of 30 persons. **Leonard Eichelberger**, of Hanover, (recently of Fredrick, MD), bought the Tavern and 393 acre plantation farm for 2950 pounds, 9 shillings, and 1 pence.

He remodeled the tavern doubling it's size and in 1801 began to operate "Eichelberger's Tavern" on the premises.

### Other interesting Information on the Dills:

- 1775 – Lt. John Dill (son of James) is commended for courage and spirit in recruiting volunteers for the Army of the Continental Congress.
- 1775 - Mathew Dill (son of Mathew and brother of James) enters military service with the 5<sup>th</sup>. Battalion of Pennsylvania Militia at Dills Tavern, a recruiting center for the Army of the Continental Congress. He, subsequently, leads the York County Militia and obtains the rank of Lt. Col. seeing active service with the Army of the Revolution in 1776, 1777, & 1781.
- 1780 – Some residents are again driven from their lands by the Indians. Col. Mathew Dill is commissioned to seize personal effects of the Tories.

The Tavern Committee: **Bob Eichelberger ~ Chairman,**  
**Mervin Ice, Larry Klase, Joanne Klase, Connie Trostle, and Greg Wonders**

## The Historical Significance the Tavern held for Commerce, Travel, and the Creation of Dillsburg.

In the last half of the 18<sup>th</sup>. century, the Dill family was active in promoting commerce in Monaghan township, and an important concern was building roads in the area west of the Susquehanna River. In 1747, James and his brothers submitted a petition to lay out a road from Harris' Ferry to William Wierman's mill on Bermudian Creek. In 1765, a road was laid out from Carlisle to a point "where the old road crosses the line between Cumberland and York County towards Dills tavern." A York County map of 1770 (Scull) shows "Dills Road" running from York to Carlisle (the present day Route 74). A 1775 map (Sayer and Bennet) and a map dated 1790, show "Dills Road," and "Dills Gap," where the road crosses Yellow Breeches Creek.

A major development affecting the business of the tavern occurred when Dillstown (Dillsburg) was laid out in 1808, and with the creation of more new roads. In 1810, the road from Harrisburg to Gettysburg was laid out near the tavern. Small and Wagner's map of York County (1821) shows roads passing through "Dillstown" and leading toward Carlisle, Harrisburg, York, Hanover (continuing to Baltimore), and Gettysburg. These major early 19<sup>th</sup>. Century roads exist today as Routes 15, 74, and 194. The location of the tavern near the junction of these roads was significant to its financial stability, since it would have been patronized by the travelers, drovers and haulers that came in increasing numbers down the roads that passed through Dillsburg. The tavern probably also served as a civic center for local residents, where they could receive mail, conduct business, recover lost livestock, purchase refreshments, hear the latest news, attend a meeting or trial, or vote in elections.

When stage coach traffic along the western York County roads developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup>. Century, business declined at many roadside taverns, since travelers could go much farther distances before stopping for the night. Even with this greater activity on the roads, by the time Eichelberger acquired the tavern in 1800, the principal clientele was limited to day trade, with few instances of travelers staying overnight – usually the drovers and haulers that moved goods and livestock through the area. The addition of a distillery, the construction of an assembly room, and the retailing of general merchandise, may have been prompted by the need to maintain income.

### Join a Circle to Preserve Dill's Tavern and Its History

The Northern York County Historical and Preservation Society was gifted the funds to purchase the Dill Tavern on N. Baltimore Street. Now we must raise \$500,000 for the restoration of the property. Your donation is TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

*If/We would like to help by joining the:*

<i>Friends</i>	\$10 - \$ 99 _____	<i>Welty Circle</i>	\$1000 - \$4999 _____
<i>Logan Circle</i>	\$100 - \$ 499 _____	<i>Eichelberger Circle</i>	\$5000 - \$9999 _____
<i>Coover Circle</i>	\$500 - \$999 _____	<i>Dill Circle</i>	\$10,000 - _____

Place this name on the certificate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please print clearly.)

Donor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Make out your check to NYCHAPS, designate, Dill's Tavern Fund, and mail to:  
 The Northern York County Historical and Preservation Society, 35 Greenbrier Lane, Dillsburg, PA 17019

