

# The Dill's Tavern Chronicle

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www.dillstavern.org

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.

## Fabulous 'Reproduction Rug' from the Loom of Donna Bert



The found remnant



Close-up of the new weave

### A Chronicle of a Venetian Carpet from the Pen of Donna Bert

A scrap of antique striped carpeting was found during the early stages of restoration at the Tavern. The dirty, moth-eaten textile was crumpled in the walk-in fireplace of the 1819 kitchen. Upon closer study and analysis, it was determined to be an early example of a style of rug called "Venetian Carpeting".

Venetian Carpeting was found most frequently in use between 1750 and 1860. Very early examples were imported from England, but subsequently constructed of handspun materials produced locally and taken to a professional weaver to complete the weaving of the yardage. The Tavern carpeting is an example of the latter.

The Tavern Venetian Carpeting would have been woven on a large heavy wooden framed loom, often referred to as a barn loom. The warp threads on Venetian Carpeting - those running the long length of the fabric - are of spun wool and dyed in a wide range of intense colors. The weft thread carried from side to side on the weaver's shuttle, is a handspun linen or tow thread in early examples. These are the same materials found in the Tavern example. The width of the carpet was limited by the width of the loom and by the reach of the weaver when throwing the shuttle across the weaving. The original tavern sample is 37" wide.

The structure of the weave is called "warp-faced structure". The threads in a warp-face carpet are set very close together. The Tavern reproduction carpeting has a set of 24 threads per inch. Because the warp threads are so close together, when the weaver sends the shuttle carrying the weft threads across the loom, these weft threads do not show. The vibrant warp threads are the only ones visible in the weave.

These colorful, durable striped carpets were a luxury found in the homes of the "well-to-do" of that time, rather than in the homes of struggling settlers. Long lengths of Venetian Carpeting were sometimes sewn together in panels, creating wall-to-wall carpeting as opposed to long runner rugs.

Although Venetian Carpeting was a durable floor covering, textiles deteriorate much faster than other types of antiques. Therefore this fascinating sample is a rare and precious piece of tangible history. We are fortunate to be able to include it in the collection of the Northern York County Historical and Preservation Society. *Donna Bert*

*The Tavern Committee highly commends Donna for seeing to the acquisition and dying of the weaving materials along with her own contribution of time and talent which was considerable in the weaving process. This textile is a huge contribution to the interpretation of the Tavern! See it in color on our Web-Site.*

## The Dill Tavern Buildings Pre-1800

One of the most difficult things to understand about the Dills Tavern property, is when, where, and why, different buildings were erected and then removed. We don't know where the first Dills Tavern (circa 1750) was located. We think it was very close to the present tavern. A 1793 map seems to show the tavern building across the street. 18<sup>th</sup> Century maps are notoriously inaccurate, however, especially when it comes to house placement.

The first document we have that lists the buildings on the Dill Tavern property, is the 1798 Glass Tax. The tax mentions these structures:

|              |       |       |              |
|--------------|-------|-------|--------------|
| House        | 25x24 | stone | 2 story      |
| Granary      | 24x13 | stone |              |
| Bake House   | 20x11 | stone |              |
| Spring House | 12x10 | stone |              |
| Barn         | 80x30 | log   | shingle roof |

The house (25x24) is the present 1794 tavern. The rest of the buildings are gone. We have a photograph that probably shows the 12x10 stone spring house. This photo shows a spring house out in the middle of the south yard. The (80x30) log barn may be part of the barn shown in the 1870 era picture of the tavern. The Eichelberger ledgers tell of a fire to a barn in 1811. The ledger seems to say that the barn was extensively damaged, but the building was rebuilt. The new sections were timber frame instead of log. They also changed the roof from shingle to a thatched roof.

If the present tavern was built in 1794, and the Glass Tax was done in 1798, did the Dills build all the support buildings in four years? That's a lot of construction. Or were some of the buildings there before the 1794 tavern, and were being used by the 1750 tavern? These are the kinds of questions we find ourselves asking and we have no answers at this time. We will discuss other buildings found in later documents in following Chronicles. Watch for them.

## Public Tyme once again at Dill's ~ Saturday, May 9, 2009 FREE TO THE PUBLIC ~ 9am to 4pm

During the Winter Months:



A cartography, Engineering and Surveying School of Instruction was held one weekend in January. Members came from Ohio and States up and down the East Coast to learn and practice Colonial engineering skills.

←Tools of the Trade

A workshop on Digging Fortifications was also held →



The Tavern Committee:

Bob Eichelberger-Chairman, Mervin Ice, Larry Klase, Joanne Klase, Connie Trostle, and Greg Wonders

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