



# NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION

*Society*

## December 2025 Newsletter

**“Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on,  
with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.” ~ Hal Borland**

### 250 years ago...

December 1775 was a period of uncertainty and conflict in the American colonies. The military struggle was intensifying, political leaders were organizing for a prolonged war, and ordinary people were coping with the disruptions and dangers of revolution. The outcome of the struggle was far from certain, but the events of December 1775 helped set the stage for the Declaration of Independence the following year.

#### Of note:

- **On December 2<sup>nd</sup>**, the forces of General Richard Montgomery arrive at the gates of Quebec to join those of Colonel Benedict Arnold in advance of an American siege of the city. The Americans hoped to capture the British-occupied city and with it win support for the American cause in Canada. They then attempted a disastrous failed assault on December 31, in which Montgomery was killed and Arnold seriously wounded.
- **On December 5<sup>th</sup>**, Henry Knox's expedition begins, bringing a “Noble Train of Artillery,” featuring nearly 60 tons of vital military equipment on a 300-mile journey from Fort Ticonderoga to George Washington's army outside Boston.
- **December 22<sup>nd</sup>**, Congress named Esek Hopkins commodore of the fledgling American navy of 7 ships. Soon after, Congress authorized privateering, and issued rules for dealing with enemy vessels and plunder.
- **December 23<sup>rd</sup>**, King George III issues a royal proclamation closing the American colonies to all commerce and trade, to take effect in March of 1776. Also in December, Congress is informed that France may offer support in the war against Britain.
- **Ongoing:** Economic Hardships caused by British blockades and the disruption of trade led to shortages of goods and rising prices. Colonists adapted by producing more goods locally and organizing efforts to support the war.

1st  
FRIDAY

# December Events

December 5th; 7pm-10pm

Theme: Celtic Holiday Extravaganza



At First Friday, you can expect loads of fun with live music, snacks, tastings, BYOB (legally procured in PA) , and more! This month, we're excited to have **Seasons**, as our musical guest. While the instrumentation of the band remains centered around the Celtic harp and hammered dulcimer, over the years the band has added violin, mandolin, guitar, bodhran, penny whistle, and piano. They will be featuring music from both their Christmas albums, Eventide Lullabye and Joy on High, as well as some rollicking Irish tunes for a true Celtic Christmas feel. So grab your friends, dress in garb, and prepare for a wonderful evening spent by candlelight at Dills Tavern.

This event is exclusive to the 21+ crowd and advanced ticket sales are not available. Simply pay at the door when you arrive - \$10 for members and \$15 for nonmembers.



## **This evening's tasting program: "Hot Drinks Roasting On An Open Fire."**

Tavern Keeper, Murray Small, will be sharing hot libations in the Eichelberger Distillery for an additional \$10. Sign up for this tasting on-line or at the door.

[Reserve a spot here!](#)

# December Events

## Annual Members Meeting and Potluck

**December 4th - Maple Shade Barn - 6:00pm**



We invite everyone to share in food and fellowship at our annual Membership Potluck. The night's events will provide a brief update on NYCHAPS happenings, followed by a relaxed meal. We ask that all attendees bring a potluck dish to be shared.

**Plates, utensils, and beverages will be provided.  
Hope to see you there!**

Maple Shade Barn: 35 Greenbrier Lane, Dillsburg, PA 17019

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## Christkindlmarkt at Dills Tavern

**December 12th; 4-9 pm**

**December 13th; 9-4 pm**

Christkindlmarkt is a traditional German Christmas Market that takes place in the evening during the Advent season. [Details on our website here!](#)



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## Colonial Candlelight Christmas Service at Monaghan Church Saturday December 20th at 7:00 pm



Have you ever wondered what a church service was like back in colonial times? This service will include music, readings, and candlelight. Following the service, a candlelight procession will lead to Dills Tavern, where light refreshments will be served.

The historic Monaghan Church is located behind the Dillsburg Post Office at 15 E. Church Street, Dillsburg, PA.



# Looking ahead to January

## First Friday

**January 2nd; 7-10 pm  
at Dills Tavern**

This evening will be a **Wassail Celebration** while enjoying the unique acoustic music of earlier days in America and Ireland, as well as original songs, as performed by **Susquehanna Travellers**.

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



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## Pork and Sauerkraut Dinner

**January 10th - Maple Shade Barn - 6:00pm**



Welcome in the New Year with us in the German tradition. Look forward to our locally sourced pork & sauerkraut dinner for good health and good luck. The full menu includes pork & sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, corn, homemade apple sauce, hog maw, bread, jams, and cider fresh pressed from the apples in the Tavern orchard.

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

Maple Shade Barn: 35 Greenbrier Lane, Dillsburg, PA 17019

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## Speaker Series



Maple Shade Barn:  
35 Greenbrier Lane,  
Dillsburg, PA 17019

## Col. Matthew Todd

**“Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan”**

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

Col. Matthew Todd is a volunteer speaker from USAWC and will be sharing a wide variety of experiences from combat to peacekeeping, both on a personal level and as a leader of troops at various echelons.

# NYCHAPS Revolutionary War Project

## Telling the Story of Northern York County

It's December - the holiday season is upon us, and the year is nearing its end. But the 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence is approaching fast. Before we close out the year, it's worth remembering some of what occurred in Pennsylvania before July 4, 1776.

In 1775, the Continental Congress was hard at work in Philadelphia, advancing the cause of independence. While the Battles of Lexington and Concord, of Bunker Hill, and of Quebec, occurred in 1775, many more were yet to come. In preparation, in June of 1775, the Continental Congress created the "Continental Army" out of the troops gathered



around Boston and named George Washington as its commander. The Congress also requested, in a June 14, 1775 resolution, the "raising of six companies of expert rifle men in Pennsylvania" and on June 22, requested 2 more companies – all of which, with those requested from the other colonies, were to join the Continental Army.



Ultimately, nine companies were quickly organized and Colonel Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen from Pennsylvania was created. These men became part of the Pennsylvania Line in the Continental Army. One company was formed from men out of York County and commanded by Captain Michael Doudel, and later by Henry Miller. On July 1, 1775, this Company marched to join Washington at Cambridge. These York riflemen, crossed the Susquehanna, passed through Reading and Bethlehem, and reached New York before any other Pennsylvania company. Continuing to press forward to Boston, they arrived on July 25, having walked roughly 400 miles in 25 days.

The Continental Army was composed of volunteers from the 13 colonies, and it formed the backbone of Washington's Army. Between the summer of 1775 and the end of 1776, Pennsylvania sent additional battalions or regiments of volunteers to join the Continental Army. But that was not the extent of Pennsylvania's support. Even prior to 1775, volunteer military associations, or "Associators," had also been formed as part of the "Military Association," a civilian reserve designed to repel invasion.

# NYCHAPS Revolutionary War Project

## Telling the Story of Northern York County... (cont.)

On June 30, 1775, Pennsylvania's Provincial Assembly gave official recognition to the Associators and established a Committee on Safety which would have authority over Pennsylvania's military forces until the fall of 1777. During the summer campaign of 1776, thousands of Pennsylvania Associators saw active service in New Jersey as part of the Continental's Army's "Flying Camp" which had been established to form a highly mobile independent reserve unit.

However, more was needed, and in March of 1777, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed the Militia Act. Under this Act, all males between the ages of 18 and 33, capable of bearing arms, were obligated to enroll in the militia, attend stipulated exercise days, and, when called, muster for 2 months of active duty, or pay a fine for every neglect of duty. Names were to be obtained from the tax rolls. The implementation in each county was under the direction of a civilian County Lieutenant. By the end of 1777, these County Lieutenants enrolled inhabitants in the militia, and organized them in classes, companies, and battalions. York County was considered a "battalion district;" each battalion was to include 8 companies - ultimately between 440 and 680 men. As a result, soldiers that fought in the Revolution from our area may have served in the Pennsylvania Line of the Continental Army, with a volunteer military Associator, as part of the Flying Camp or in the militia formed after passage of the Militia Act.



The Northern York County Historical and Preservation Society (NYCHAPS) is interested in telling the story of the Revolution from the perspective of Northern York County – the geographic area that currently comprises the Northern School district. To do that, we need your help. We have identified revolutionary war soldiers buried in the northern parts of the County. From that, our volunteer researchers have cross-referenced tax rolls and muster rolls to find out more about our soldiers and are continuing to research various archives and historical society records. As this project evolves, a list of the soldiers so far identified will be posted on the NYCHAPS website. For the long-term residents of the area, you will see many familiar surnames.

But NYCHAPS is hoping for more. We want to know your stories. If you have family histories, letters, journals or other information about those you served in the fight for freedom, we want to hear from you! And we will share what we know and learn over the coming months! Contact us at: [rconley@northernnyorkhistorical.org](mailto:rconley@northernnyorkhistorical.org)



# The Garden Shed: Vol 1

## Progress in the Historic Garden at Dills Tavern

by Gary Reneker, Garden Master



This year I decided to start a Year End Report about Dills Tavern Historic Garden. I also plan to start writing periodic articles about gardening to help other gardeners as well as articles about how early Americans used what came from their gardens.

The indoor seed starter was finished this year, and was used to grow many of the transplants that ended up in our garden. Others were produced in milk jugs using a method called "winter sowing".

Throughout the growing season I was asked by numerous visitors how I used the vegetables grown in our garden. I came to realize that many NYCHAPS members probably don't know either. Nor do many know what actually happens in our garden, except that vegetables and weeds grow alongside each other.

### Produce Donations:

Each year I keep a general log of activities I do in the garden. This year I kept a tally, rounded to the nearest half pound of what / how much was grown and donated to the New Hope Ministries' Food Bank. In addition, and not included in this tally except the pumpkin, there were many vegetables and herbs given on the "spur of the moment" to Tavern volunteers and visitors.

### Upgrades To the Garden:

The area behind the garden's back fence was cleared out for a compost pile and bin area, and a "weed tea" barrel that produced nearly all of the liquid fertilizer I used this year. I borrowed Sam McKinney's truck to pick up a few free pallets from ECI. I need more pallets and will continue to work on these for the walls of two future compost bins.

Produce	Volume (Lbs.)
Cabbage .....	33.0
Carrots .....	14.0 - [Currently left in garden]
Cucumber .....	78.0
Onion .....	9.0
Pepper, Bell .....	17.5
Pumpkin .....	66.0 - [Given to volunteers & visitors]
Squash, Summer ..	63.5
Tomato, Sndwch ..	86.5
	363.5
	- 14.0 - [Carrots left in garden]
	- 66.0 - [Pumpkin to volunteers & visitors]
TOTAL to New Hope	283.5

I'm still trying to recreate the soil from hard packed, York County clay into viable, no-till garden soil without spending a small fortune to remove the clay and replace it with topsoil, peat and compost. It's a long, multi-year process, but a lot cheaper if you have the time, effort and health to do it.

# The Garden Shed... (cont.)



First, there is a lot of hand digging to initially break up the hard pack. Then garden plants and cover crops help to continue breaking up the hard pack. Along with breaking up the clay, cover crops also add nutrients to the soil. Cover crops like Daikon Radish, Crimson Clover, and Buckwheat were not planted this year, but it is my hope they will be in the coming year if funds are available.

This year I hand dug about one-third of the beds. Shredded bond and newspaper were included for their carbon content, and grass clippings from a supportive neighbor were used for the needed nitrogen. Both also provide some micronutrients. Leaves from the property cannot be used, as they are predominantly Walnut. Nothing from a nut tree, especially Walnut, should ever be used in your garden. Even Walnut roots growing under a garden will kill most of the plants.

Chad Goyette donated lumber for the back three garden boxes. Brian Kane helped me rebuild those boxes. The front three boxes were rotted out inside and are drastically in need of replacing. The side bed to the garden's rear has been worked up, and a box to contain the soil was built from lumber we had at the Tavern and some cedar donated by Richard Conley.

The rest of the cedar Richard gave me will be used for new beds just outside the garden's front fence. Those two beds, as well as two beside the kitchen building were planned and approved last year. They have not been started yet because we will need to purchase the soil needed to fill those boxes as the soil in the main garden is far too shallow to take any from there to fill new beds.

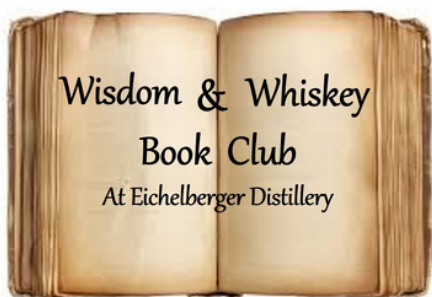
Some final notes. The 2026 garden has been planned and waiting to be planted. The garlic has already been planted for the 2026 garden. All that remains is to calculate how many Spring transplants to start in our seed starter and milk jugs.

That's all for 2025. Here's hoping you all have a wonderful holiday season, and your 2026 gardens feed you well.



# Community Interests

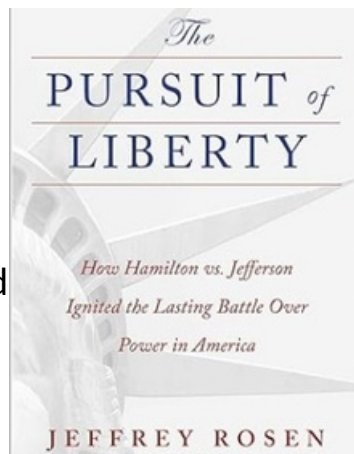
## 2026 Wisdom & Whiskey Book Club



**2nd Wednesday / January through May  
6:30-8 pm at the Eichelberger Distillery**

Our 2026 book discussion will begin with Jeffrey Rosen's, *The Pursuit of Liberty: How Hamilton vs. Jefferson Ignited the Lasting Battle Over Power in America*.

Rosen explores the clashing visions of Jefferson and Hamilton, their shared belief in the American idea, and why it still matters today. The book is available in all formats and may also be checked out from the library. **On January 14th, we will be discussing the Introduction and Chapters 1&2 so have your books ready to read!** This event is free and open to the public. You are welcome to bring a snack to share and we will provide beverages. Contact: [knellis@northernnyorkhistorical.org](mailto:knellis@northernnyorkhistorical.org) for more information.



## Farmers Fair Quilt Award Mix-Up

Last month, it was reported that MSB's 2026 raffle quilt, **Indian Summer**, received a second place award **and** best in show. We have found out since then that the "best in show" ribbon mistakenly ended up on our quilt instead of Sherry Morgan's quilt, which won 1<sup>st</sup> place!

While we are still proud of our second place quilt, we'd like to take the opportunity to congratulate Sherry on her win of 1st place and 'best in show'!



# Community Interests

## Another Farmers Fair Winner!

Chase Koser attended the NYCHAPS History Camp just this past summer. One of his projects was making a tin cookie cutter. When he noticed there was a metalworking category at Farmers Fair, he thought it would be cool to enter his cookie cutter. His project ended up winning 1<sup>st</sup> place in its category! Chase recalled how he made the cookie cutter, "I took 1 straight piece of metal, and then I bent the metal to make the shape of a house, and then a person welded it together." He shared that he hadn't used the cutter yet but plans to try it out making Christmas cookies this year. Congratulations, Chase, and thanks for sharing your story with us!



## Thank you, Dillsburg Lions Club!

We want to give a shout out to the Dillsburg Lions Club. They are donating a live Christmas tree to our Christkindlmarkt at Dills Tavern! So bring your children, your grandchildren, and/or your neighbor's children and help us decorate the tree on December 12th & 13th. We will have a table set up for the kids (and those who are kids at heart) to make pine cone bird feeders to hang on the tree. This fun activity will get you in the Christmas spirit while nourishing our feathered friends. And if you would like to volunteer to help at this table, we will gladly include you in our day. Simply contact: [admin@northernnyorkhistorical.org](mailto:admin@northernnyorkhistorical.org)



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