

"I have been restoring regional historic brick and stone buildings for the past 27 years and remember visiting the Heller Barn when it was still standing. A light in me goes out when I see the demise of our limited historic resources since it is my opinion that these structures have a large role in defining this region. The Heller complex, as an example, gives the sense of permanence and the depth that the local culture has which I have come to know and love. Therefore, I am grateful to the Saucon Valley Conservancy for guarding the ruin and developing a master plan for its conservation with the hopeful possibility to re-establish the barn in its entirety one day. My part in this effort was to act as a material supplier for the pure Natural Hydraulic Lime, (NHL), which is being used as the binder for the "in-kind" repair mortar formula developed by conservators at John Milner Associates. I have been importing the NHL from France for the past 10 years and I warehouse it in Allentown, PA. In these last 10 years I have had the privilege to effect the quality of the built environment, defined by historic masonry buildings, for many communities across the United States because of my specialty supply company called LimeWorks.us.

Sending lime to protect an adobe building in New Mexico or create a special Brownstone repair material for a Library in Connecticut or to supply the National Park Service with lime binder to rebuild ca1600 Conch shell concrete (called Tabby) in St. Augustine, Florida does not fulfill me in the same way as it does when this cobbler sees our local historic footprint shod in the same high quality conservation work we engage in everywhere else every other day of the week. Thanks for letting me play in the mud!"

Andy deGruchy,
of LimeWorks.us



The photo above shows the stone arch and doorway before the stabilization and repointing work was done. Many of the stone were very loose.



HELLER BARN RUINS PRESERVATION PROJECT



Above: The doorway in the arch was quite rickety at the start.



Ron Rickert (right) and his brother, Mike Rickert proudly show their work. The stone archway now looks spectacular with its new pointing work using Natural Hydraulic Lime.



Above: The frame was sinking into the ground.

Below: It has now been stabilized by replacing the wooden frame and adding a new stone threshold.

"I would like to say that it is a pleasure and a privilege to work on such a project, because this type of work is "far & few between". When we get to lay stone like was done 200+ years ago, it's not really "work", it truly is a fun activity, and to see the finished results as it comes along, still amazes me to what we can do to make a project look totally original. It is also a pleasure to work with all involved, as everyone is as excited as we are about this project. The area of the barn ruins will be spectacular, once work can continue to restore the rest of the stonework."

Ron Rickert, of R S Rickert Masonry

"JMA (John Milner Associates, Inc.) has been involved with planning for the stabilization of the Heller Barn ruins for over three years. We have worked with the Saucon Valley Conservancy to develop a phased approach to save the standing masonry walls. The first phase is to save the character-defining archway and its adjacent walls using traditional masonry materials and methods. The second phase will be to stabilize the north and south walls. Later phases will address the retaining or banked west wall. Ultimately, JMA hopes to help the Conservancy implement a complete plan for reusing the barn ruins as both a heritage and community space."

Lori Aument, LEED-AP
of John Milner Associates



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