

# Barn Tour

*Saucon Valley Conservancy Barn Tour September 12, 2009*



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— conservancy —

Proceeds benefit the  
Heller Barn Preservation Fund

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# 2009 Barn Tour Sponsored by Conectiv Energy

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### Keynote Speakers and Barn Tour Consultants

Professor Robert F. Ensminger  
Gregory D. Huber, Architectural  
Historian

### Barn Descriptions & Glossary of Barn Terms:

Gregory Huber, Past Perspectives

### Map & Homestead Grounds:

Lower Saucon Township

### Barn Owners

Beethoven Waldheim Club  
Chris & Shelagh Cummings  
Casey & Tracey Gatchel  
Joanne & Gerald Holm  
Glenn Kaye  
Lower Saucon Township  
Sherrie & Randy Martin  
Mike & Kim Culver Robertson  
Carmen C. & Diana J. Vallone

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Neighbors Home & Garden Center  
Saucon True Value

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On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude to all who made the 3rd Annual Barn Tour a success. Because of the tremendous support of our sponsors and volunteers, we have started work on the Heller Barn Stabilization project. We extend special thanks to the barn owners who graciously opened their barn doors for you to walk back in time as you learn about the unique architecture which makes these barns worthy of our tour. Sincere appreciation and respect goes out to our renowned speakers who can't say enough about our barns and the importance of preserving these treasures for the future. We gratefully acknowledge all the committee members and volunteers who spent many hours planning this event to raise awareness and funding for the preservation and restoration of the Heller Barn.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Priscilla deLeon, President, Saucon Valley Conservancy

*The 2009 Barn Tour is dedicated to all those who gave their time and talents to preserve your community's precious historic resources*

## Preservation of the Heller Barn

The money raised today will be earmarked for the preservation and restoration of the Michael Heller Barn. Until February of 1998, all four sides of the stone barn complex stood erect. In the aftermath of a severe storm, a portion of the roof collapsed. Deeming it a danger, township officials decided to bring down all but about one-third of the barn. Fortunately, the very unusual stone arch was saved from the demolition and stands proudly amongst the ruins of this large English Lake District barn in Saucon Valley.

The Saucon Valley Conservancy will stabilize & preserve the barn ruins for future reuse and site interpretation purposes. John Milner Associates (JMA), working with Keast & Hood, has developed an Emergency Stabilization Plan. Debris from the collapsed walls has been recently removed to further the emergency stabilization the plan. JMA is currently working on a scope of work as well as masonry stabilization specifications in order to obtain competitive bids for the completion of the work. This project, in part, is funded by a PA state grant sponsored by State Representatives Bob Freeman and Karen Beyer.

With your help, we can preserve a part of the agricultural heritage of the Saucon Valley and restore a former vernacular barn treasure before the ruins are beyond repair, and our local history crumbles away.

The Saucon Valley Conservancy, an all volunteer non-profit organization, encourages historic preservation in our area and teaches people of all ages about our rich heritage. If you cherish history and want to preserve the character of Saucon Valley, please join the Saucon Valley Conservancy.

For a glimpse back in time, please stop by and visit the eighteenth century farmstead, the Michael Heller Homestead, eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, located at 1890–92 Friedensville Road (Water Street) in Lower Saucon Township, Northampton County. Our Heller Homestead Art Gallery and Antiques & Collectibles Gift Shop are open weekends.

Tours of the historic Heller Homestead are available by appointment.

For more information, please call 610-216-0566.



*This is the original early 1940s photo of the Heller homestead barn complex, a circa 1790 English Lake District barn with a stone addition. An unusual front wall stone arch existed at the north end and a large Civil War era frame section was at the south end.*

[www.sauconvalleyconservancy.com](http://www.sauconvalleyconservancy.com)

The mission of the Saucon Valley Conservancy is to preserve the historic and natural environment of the Saucon Valley as an educational and recreational resource for area citizens and visitors. The Conservancy is the major steward of the Michael Heller Homestead and the Saucon Creek corridor.

## Event overview

Enjoy the unique experience of touring inside some of the wonderful old barns along our rural roads in the Saucon Valley area. Each barn is truly one-of-a-kind. The barns dotting our landscape tell a story of life on the farm and a way of life belonging to early settlers. The area, first settled in 1720, was originally known as Saucon Township. It was established as part of Bucks County in 1742. County lines were changed in 1752 and the large township became part of Northampton County. In 1872, the Borough of Hellertown was incorporated. Step back in time with us as we pay tribute to our agricultural past through these magnificent barns. The money raised will be earmarked for the preservation and restoration of the Michael Heller Barn. The third annual barn tour is hosted by the Saucon Valley Conservancy.

The day begins with registration and a book signing at 9:30 am at the Beethoven Waldheim Club, 1984 Waldheim Road in Lower Saucon Township, followed by two lectures at 10:00 am. This is a great opportunity for the public to learn about history and unique barn features from two widely recognized experts on Pennsylvania barns, and tour a selection of historic barns that are an important part of the area's rich agricultural history.

The extensive self-guided and self-paced tour of local barns featuring homesteads spread among the rolling lands of the valley starts at 11:30 am and ends at 4:00 pm. A great diversity of barns will be experienced and will expand upon the excitement that was created in the past two tours that included homestead barns of many types, shapes and sizes.

This year's homestead sites include several nineteenth-century barns plus the Heller barn site with original remnant stone walls. A wonderful diversity of Pennsylvania bank two-level barns will be experienced. All of the barns have their own distinctive construction aspects that follow the typical fore-bay format. This year a few barns are fully of stone construction and have the prominent English based Principal Rafter System which are often seen in the Saucon Valley. All the others are frame buildings and date from the first third of the nineteenth century to near the end of the century. All the barns on this year's tour will long be remembered by attendees.

Professor Robert F. Ensminger will speak about "Standard Barns and their Varieties." The most common Pennsylvania barn type is the standard barn. These dominate in the Saucon Valley area. However, other interesting varieties not found in the Saucon Valley have developed in other locations and will be presented in his program. Bob is well known as the foremost authority on the Pennsylvania Swiss-German forebay barn, examined and studied barns in Pennsylvania along with their origins in Europe, dating back to the seventeenth century. His book first published in 1992 and revised in 2003, *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origins Evolution and Distribution in North America*, is a widely regarded classic. In addition to the book, Ensminger has written several articles on the Pennsylvania barn including the much acclaimed – "A Search for the Origin of the Pennsylvania Barn" that appeared in *Pennsylvania Folk-life – Winter 1980-1981*. Bob has been studying the Pennsylvania barn since the mid 1970s and has examined thousands of barns, not only in his

native state of Pennsylvania, but in more than fifteen other states. Bob is a retired professor from Kutztown University where he taught for more than 15 years. He also taught high school for many years before he taught at the college level.

Gregory D. Huber, a barn historian, will give the second talk on "More Vernacular Barns of the Saucon Valley" and present a slide show of Standard Pennsylvania barns that occupy the hills and flatlands of the valley area. These barns are typical of many areas of southeastern Pennsylvania, and while they are not rare, they deserve recognition. Huber is the owner of Past Perspectives, based in Macungie, Pennsylvania and his special focus is in House Histories of historic homesteads in southeast Pennsylvania and beyond. Huber's organization specializes in Title Searches, Family Histories and Architectural Documentations with dates of construction and creates permanent reports. Nearly 150 House Histories have been created in twenty five counties in five states – Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware and Maryland. A student of early vernacular architecture since 1971, Huber specializes in pre-1830 barn and house architecture of the Holland Dutch and Pennsylvania Swiss-German as well as certain English settled areas of the northeast. He has documented nearly 6,500 vernacular buildings in the east since the mid-1970s, including more than 600 Dutch related barns and more than 2,000 barns in Pennsylvania. Huber also has lectured before many audiences and has led many barn tours in several states in the northeast. He is author of more than one hundred articles on barn and house architecture and is co-author of two books – the second edition of *The New World Dutch Barn* (2001) and *Stone Houses – Traditional Homes of Pennsylvania's Bucks County and Brandywine Valley* (2005).

# Agenda

## Beethoven Waldheim Club Pavilion

September 12, 2009

- 9:30 am ..... Registration & Book Signing
- 10:00 am ..... Welcome & Lectures
- 11:00 am ..... Orientation
- 11:30 am – 4:00 pm ..... Self-guided Barn Tour

Congratulations ... you are attending the third annual barn tour of the Saucon Valley Conservancy. As in last year's tour, there is quite a diversity of barn expressions as well as a number of aspects that in certain respects repeat themselves. It is architectural features that need to be discussed and defined so that the tour attendee may better know certain characteristics that will be

encountered in the barns. These features are listed below in the Glossary of Barn Terms. Note that this is not a complete list of features that the barns possess. Suffice it to say that the terms in the glossary below are in every way a good representation of the over-all appearance or expression in a number of details of the barns that will be seen on the tour.

**Note** – All barns except two are located in Lower Saucon Township and are all Standard types. One of the barns of late vintage appears in Riegelsville, northern Bucks County, and the other is on Creek Road in Bethlehem.

The description of each barn and glossary of barn terms was written by Gregory D. Huber, owner of Past Perspectives, and member of the Saucon Valley Conservancy Advisory Board. A map is provided on page 17 for the self-paced and self-guided tour.

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## 1 - Beethoven Waldheim Barn

Owner: Beethoven Waldheim Club  
1984 Waldheim Road, Lower Saucon Township,  
Northampton County  
Nearest intersection: Flint Hill Road and  
Waldheim Road

The Waldheim structure, as a Standard barn, fulfills all the basic requirements of such a class of barn. But as an extra added spice to the variety of barn structures in the township, the Waldheim barn has one unusual twist in its appearance. Both gable walls to the peaks and rear wall (exclusive of the wagon doors) are all stone, but they have incorporated into the fabric of the masonry walls at pre-determined spots which are called in the parlance – **circular loop-holes**. Its close cousin, vertical ventilator slits or splayed loop-holes, are seen in several other barns in the township. Circular Loop-holes are outlined in brick, about nine or ten in number, and the usual diameter of the opening is about nine inches or so. They are arranged in several rows at each gable wall. Some barns may have up to fifteen to twenty or perhaps more on each gable wall. In the Waldheim barn, loop-holes appear on both the gable walls and the rear wall.



Standard Barn, circa 1840

Loopholes are such a distinctive feature in certain Pennsylvania barns, that the famed painter of early Americana, Eric Sloane, depicted them along with other ventilating openings on an entire page in his classic book published in 1966 – *An Age of Barns*. He says – “Where the loophole came from isn’t really known. Round holes were lined with brick.” Sloane was often transported by romantic imagery and he thus occasionally rendered inaccurate sketches. Such

is very likely the case of a Pennsylvania barn he drew on page 68 that includes all three principal ventilators types – splayed vertical slits, louvered slatted windows and circular loop-holes on the same gable wall. Such a barn has never been encountered by the author. Maybe Sloane simply exercised poetic license. No matter, the loop-holes on the Waldheim barn would have fascinated Mister Sloane.

At the one gable wall are two basement level door openings and if the entries are original to the barn one entry served as a human door or *foodergong* or feeding alley door and the other as a horse entry door. In regard to the interior, much of the structural timbering is obscured as walls and ceiling have been covered. This may be readily understood as the barn now functions as a restaurant. This may lend insight into the fact that

almost any barn in the township can continue its life after the last farmer, whoever that might have been, who filled its mows with crops from surrounding fields and tended to farm animals stabled in its basement.

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## 2 - Michael Heller Homestead

Owner: Lower Saucon Township  
1890–92 Friedensville Road, (Water Street),  
Northampton County  
Nearest Intersection: Friedensville Road  
(Water Street) and Creek Road

Please note that the Michael Heller Homestead is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The original section of the Heller homestead stone barn at the Friedensville Road historic site was a rare local English Lake District type bank barn. One timber ostensibly from the original barn section was dendro-dated in the spring of 2009 and it appears that the barn was quite likely built in the 1790 to 1800 era. This barn is in distinct contrast to the far more common Standard “forebay” bank barn seen in Lower Saucon Township and countless other areas in southeast Pennsylvania and beyond. The Heller barn actually had two sections, an earlier two part stone section at the north end and a much later frame section at the south end of the barn complex.

Until February of 1998, all four sides of the stone barn complex stood erect. In the aftermath of a severe storm,



English Lake District bank barn, Original Stone Barn Section, Dendro-dated to circa 1790

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy, C.F. Martin & Co. and Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc.*

a portion of the roof collapsed. Deeming it a danger, township officials decided to bring down all but about one-third of the barn. Fortunately, what was saved of the barn was the very unusual stone arch of the non-original north end addition.

However English the barn was on its exterior, especially on its fully stone front wall, its original roof structure

## Michael Heller Homestead (continued)

was clearly German in expression – *a liegender Stuhl*. Thankfully, photos of the superb early roof of the Heller barn have survived.

At the south end of the stone barn section was an even larger adjacent frame bank barn section that was photographed in the 1940s and disappeared more than

fifty years ago. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the interior structure of this section.

The Heller barn was included in the classic 1958 book – *Pennsylvania German Barns* – by Charles Dornbusch and John Heyl. Mr. Heyl, a retired area architect, now lives in Maine and is alive and well at 103 years of age.

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### 3 - Wagner Barn

Owner: Casey and Tracey Gatchel  
1896 Skibo Road, Lower Saucon Township,  
Northampton County  
Nearest intersection: Route 412 & Walnut Street  
(Skibo Road)

On the south side of Walnut Street (Skibo Road) in Lower Saucon Township is the dated 1851 Wagner stone to peak Standard barn. It is slated to become a home by the Gatchel family who is the current owner. The barn has exterior dimensions that are medium sized at 37 ½ feet wide by 60 feet long. The front fore-bay wall faces about five degrees south of east and is now covered with metal. The rear wall has unusual old decorative style painting above the main wagon doors that consists of two semi-circles. On each stone end wall, just under the peak, is a not often seen brick lined semi-circle several feet in diameter.

The barn is of three-bay construction. The wagon bay is 15 feet wide and each end bay is close to 21 feet wide. Here again is seen yet another Principal Rafter System with four Principal Rafter trusses. In this example, the Principals are large. In each end bay is a mid-span truss. Each truss originally had a collar beam where only one now remains. Common rafters are milled and have the arrangement – 4-3-5-3-4. In the middle bay, there's a unique triple tiered purlin plate seen in each roof slope. Far more commonly seen are double tier plates as is seen in the end bays in the Wagner barn.

This barn has the very unusual condition where the two inner bents that flank the wagon bay have four main



Stone Standard barn, dated 1851

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy, C.F. Martin & Co. and Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc.*

vertical posts. The two inner posts are very large and create an unusual visual effect. The barn has almost pure oak construction and carpenter marks appear at many timber unions. Inner bents have true upper ties. One of these bents has an unusual built-in ladder that goes straight to the roof peak.

The basement has two summer beams that are evenly centered at the ceiling. Ceiling beams or joists are large sized and are spaced quite one to the next.

The horse stable area in the basement was closer to the street side of the barn while the other end was the cow stable area. In the horse area is a remarkable surviving original staked manger construction unit that runs longitudinally in the barn, set back 13 feet from the rear wall. The area at the rear of the manger is the feeding alley or *foodergang*. At the front of the manger was the horse stable area. The manger that is supported

## Wagner Barn (continued)

by four posts joined to the rear summer beam was originally 27 feet in length, however, a 5 ½ foot length section adjacent to the north end wall was removed for purposes of mobility by the current owner. The manger basically forms a v where the front face consists of dozens of thin wood stakes, nearly three feet long. At the rear face of the manger are two boards joined

side to side that together are 25 inches wide. The farmer entered the end wall and tossed farm produce over the back board where horses drew the produce down and out between the stakes. Such intact staked mangers are quite rare in barns in southeast Pennsylvania east of the Susquehanna River.

## 4 - John Wagner - Holum Homestead

Owner: Joanne & Gerald Holum  
1789 Meadows Road – Lower Saucon Township,  
Northampton County  
Nearest Intersection: Skibo Road (Walnut Street)  
and Meadows Road

The John Wagner barn is very large at about 80 feet in length and it first appeared on the 2007 barn tour. It remains an outstanding example of mid nineteenth century Pennsylvania barn architecture and the craftsmanship is first rate. Few barns anywhere surpass its fine points in construction aspects. Perhaps the barn closest to the Wagner-Holum barn in execution of high level skill of construction details is the dated 1851 Wagner barn. It is possible that both barns might have been constructed by the same builder.

This dated 1849 Stone Standard barn located on Meadows Road, a little west of Saucon Creek, has no rival in sheer size compared to the other barns on the 2009 tour. Standard barns are two level banked barns that have symmetrical roofs, that is, each roof slope per half of the total roof are equal in lengths. In addition, Standard barns have recessed stable walls such that the overhead basement ceiling joists or beams cantilever over and beyond the sill at the top of the stable wall. The vast majority of barns in Northampton County are Standard barns.

Stone appears to the peak at each end wall in the Wagner barn. This is a very well constructed barn. The front or “fore-bay” wall basically faces the southeast quadrant as is the case with the majority of bank barns in southeast Pennsylvania. Much or most of the one



Stone Standard barn dated 1849

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy, C.F. Martin & Co. and Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc.*

threshing floor door retains its originality. Excellent and rare Moravian like wrought metal hinges appear in the human doors that are contained within each main threshing floor door. At the rear end wall (closer to the brick house) are two side by side doors with original overhead door hoods. One was a feed entry door (foodergong) and one was an entry for horses. At the front stone stable wall are seven “double Dutch” doors most of which are original.

The interior of the barn on the second floor afforded tremendous storage capacity. The roof system again is an English based Principal Rafter type. The rafter type is seen in five other barns on the tour. None have more principal rafter trusses – five are seen in this Wagner barn. Very large trees supplied the timbers that formed the principal rafters. This is a very late dated barn for the inclusion of a Principal Rafter system. Most often,

## John Wagner - Holum Homestead

(continued)

this rafter type is seen in barns dating before 1830 or so. There are also double tiered purlin plates in the Wagner barn. The timber frame bents that flank both wagon bays consist of very well formed timbers and reflect a high level of craftsmanship. Mow-stead walls or boarded walls that appear at the lower parts of the bents consist mostly of original boards. These walls contained farm crops in the end bays or mows. Much of the interior surfaces of the stone walls are finished with plaster – a not unusual treatment.

In the basement, the overhead ceiling joists are of good size. Two summer beams appear and both are spliced. Original supporting posts appear below the summers. The basement retains, in general, a good level of originality that includes evidence of an original staked manger and manger trough. Not all barns retain this last feature. There are other interesting elements of construction and fabric to be seen in the barn. The present owner, Gerald Holum, related to the author that the Wagner barn was called by one observer who visited his homestead “the Cadillac of barns.”

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## 5 - Cummings Homestead

Owner: Chris & Shelagh Cummings  
1919 Creek Road, City of Bethlehem,  
Northampton County  
Nearest Intersection: Creek Road and  
Friedensville Road

The Standard Pennsylvania frame bank barn at the Cummings homestead in the City of Bethlehem on Creek Road is perhaps about one-half mile north of the Michael Heller homestead. This barn is a very interesting one and reminds this writer to a certain degree of the Chernasky frame bank barn on Lower Saucon Road that was on the 2008 barn tour. The Cummings barn is quite remarkable in its own right. On the exterior, the barn looks basically like a post 1850 structure. The interior, however, tells a very different story.

The barn is a three-bay structure and at 48 ½ feet by 32 feet in dimension and is small to medium sized. The front fore-bay wall faces due east. No original siding remains on the exterior. A peiler eck appears at each front corner of the barn on the foundation level. Originally, there were five stable wall doors where only three door entries presently survive, as well as a several foot long sliding door that appears on the wall.

The interior displays quite a remarkable framing structure. The roof structure is yet another example of the quite commonly appearing greater Lower Saucon area English

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Frame Standard barn, circa 1825

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy, C.F. Martin & Co. and Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc.*

based early style Principal Rafter System. What is very rare about this barn is that the roof type exists in a frame constructed barn and is only the fourth frame barn that possesses such a roof seen by this writer. All others in several counties are of stone construction. In the Cummings barn, there are four principal trusses and each truss has a good sized collar beam. A single tier of purlin plates appear on each roof slope and the plates are braced. Common Rafters are all milled and the common rafter arrangement is 5 – 4 – 5. Commons are tenoned at their bottom ends to be received in transverse slots in the wall plates. This slotted condition is, in general, a good diagnostic dating tool.

## Cummings Homestead (continued)

The four transverse bents have true upper tie beams. The rear wall plate is spliced and likely the front plate (unseen) is also spliced. The two inner bents have built-in ladders that are uniquely configured. The ladder rungs are only 10 ½ inches long whereas in most other barns, ladder rungs are most often about 18 inches long. Each bay has a quite unusual centered longitudinal overhead beam, about 11 feet above the floor. In the middle bay, this longitudinal beam supports just one full barn width transverse beam

(side wall to side wall). This transverse beam acts in concert with the upper partial tie beams that support the boards above, holding farm crops that reached the peak. The mow-stead wall boards have transitional era nails where the heads assume a v shape.

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## 6 - Reiss – Kaye Homestead

Owner: Glenn Kaye  
2579 Easton Road, Lower Saucon Township,  
Northampton County  
Nearest Intersection: Easton Road and  
Lower Saucon Road

A two-section frame Standard barn with a later rear frame lean-to addition stands on the north side of Easton Road in Lower Saucon Township. The original barn section has two bays and one bay was added at the west end of the barn. The two-bay part was built around the time of the Civil War and the one bay section might have been built in the 1890s since there is a painted date on the front fore-bay wall. The two sections together are 50 ½ feet in length by 30 ½ feet wide. The rear frame addition is 14 ½ feet wide by 30 ½ feet long. The front wall of the two-section barn complex faces thirty degrees west of south. The roof is covered with slate. A *peiler eck* is seen at each front wall corner at the basement level. The *peiler eck* at the southeast corner is wide to accommodate a “closet” area for elements incidental for the use and care of farm horses. The fore-bay wall projects 4 ½ feet beyond the stable wall.

A number of painted barn wall decorations appear, including three barn stars non-centered on the fore-bay wall. On the southeast foundation end wall is a single splayed loophole and such a placement of a loophole



Frame Standard barn - original two-section part, circa 1860 – and one-bay addition – 1890’s

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy, C.F. Martin & Co. and Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc.*

is unique to this writer. A rather distinct regionalism is seen where the ceiling joists join directly to the fore-bay sill since in barns west of the Reiss barn, joists rest on top of the sill. The rear wall vertical siding that is in line with the one-bay addition may be original.

The two-bay section has hewn rafters and all rafters are basically the same size. Vertical queen posts support the purlin plates. In the three bents are dropped upper tie beams. Carpenter marks appear at the timber unions. Most posts and tie beams of the bents are hewn. Both



# 2ND ANNUAL SAUCON VALLEY HISTORY DAY

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2009

### OPEN HOUSE AT THE HELLER HOMESTEAD

#### 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**STEP BACK IN TIME  
WITH THIS LIVING  
HISTORY EVENT!**

**1890-92 FRIEDENSVILLE RD.  
LOWER SAUCON TOWNSHIP  
BETHLEHEM, PA**

**CIVIL WAR LIVING HISTORY DAY** *The Saucon Valley Conservancy will host Historical Impressions of America, one of the most respected living history organizations in the re-enacting community, who will open their camp at the Heller Homestead Park. Public demonstrations including, but not limited to 19th century cooking by the sanitary commission cook, period seamstress, medical and*

*nursing staff, military engineering, and infantry men who will bring the past to life. Inside the Heller House and Widow's House, visitors can experience the past with a "Journey Through Time." The Widow's House, with three rooms to view across a 50 year time span - the 1850s - 1900s, features a beehive oven in the kitchen. The rooms with period furnishings in the Heller House*

*area the 1950s kitchen; the 1930s living room; the 1880s - 1900s bedroom; and an 1880s parlor in memory of Alice Morris.*

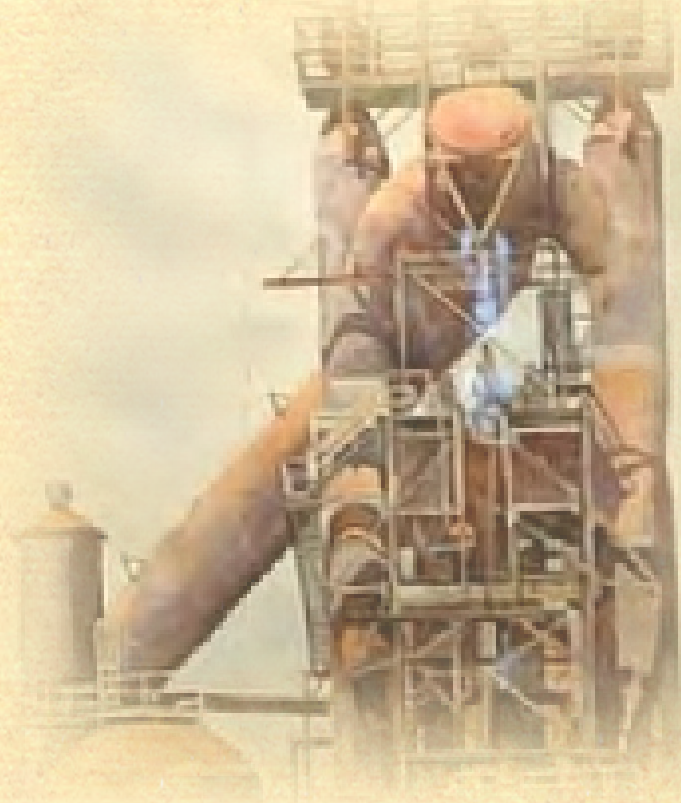
*This event shares Saucon Valley History Day with The Wagner Grist Mill and the Lutz Franklin Schoolhouse in Hellertown.  
For more information visit:  
[www.sauconvalleyconservancy.com](http://www.sauconvalleyconservancy.com)*

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## Reiss – Kaye Homestead (continued)

bents that flank the wagon bay have built-in ladders – the inner one is original and the other that is adjacent to the one-bay section was added when the one bay area was built. Both bays together are about 30 feet in width, thus, this barn section is square in outline.

The one bay section has mortise and tenon joinery and all beams are milled with circular saw marks. In distinct

contrast to conditions seen in the two-bay part, there are milled rafters and canted queen posts. The single bay width is 20 feet.

A single summer beam is seen in both barn sections. The summer in the one bay part is circular mill sawn that indicates its late date of construction.

## 7 - Vallone Barn

Owner: Carmen C. & Diana J. Vallone  
2546 Alpine Drive, Lower Saucon Township,  
Northampton County  
Nearest intersection: Alpine Drive and  
Lower Saucon Road

Another stone Standard barn is seen on Alpine Drive near its intersection with Lower Saucon Road. This is a three-bay construction barn and medium sized. Each side or eave wall measures 45 ¼ feet by 35 ¼ feet at each end wall. The front fore-bay wall faces about thirty degrees south of east. None of the end wall openings typically seen in this area appear – not the vertical splayed loopholes, louvered windows or the circular brick lined loopholes. A regular sized window opening appears just under the roof peak at each end wall that may not be original. A part of the rear stone wall was taken out.

At the end wall closer to Alpine Drive, a single door entry appears that leads into the feed alley adjacent to the horse stable area in the basement. As is almost always seen on Standard barns on their far end walls, no door entrances appear. This is a three-bay constructed barn with a middle wagon bay and two end bays. The middle bay is 14 feet wide and each end bay is a few inches more than 14 feet wide.

Another Principal Rafter system is seen. A Principal Rafter truss is seen in line with each bent that flanks the middle bay so that a total of two trusses appear in the barn. A double tier system of purlin plates are



Stone Standard circa 1840

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy, C.F. Martin & Co. and Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc.*

seen across the full length of the barn. All the common rafters are hewn and their arrangement is – 4 – 4 – 4.

Nine *oberdenn* beams that are longitudinally oriented appear. A few others were removed at one point from the barn. The middle bay has many original threshing floor planks that remain. The basic granary is intact at the front of the barn and its entry door is still seen. The door on the mow-stead wall that leads to the basement is seen very close to the rear wall. The wrought metal hinges should be looked at carefully by tour attendees for their very fine craftsmanship. Each flanking bent has a built-in ladder.

On the stone stable wall, four double Dutch doors are seen and all are original. No *spriggel* bars appear. A *peiler eck* is seen at each front corner of the barn. At the right side corner, a door that leads to a closet for storage of horse related equipment is seen associated with the

## Vallone Barn (continued)

*peiler eck*. Basement ceiling joists at their front ends tenon into the fore-bay front wall sill. These joists are squared off at their exterior ends while in the interior of the barn, the sides are left in the round, a condition that is often seen. A single summer beam supports the second story floor. The summer is spliced with a single scarf joint that is angled or splayed.

The original horse stable area is clearly delineated and is 13 feet by 12 feet 9 inches. A manger trough that is likely not original appears at the rear point of this stable area. The stable wall door located all the way to the right is the horse door. The door all the way to the left and the door to the immediate left of the horse door are cow doors. Between these doors is the human feed door.

## 8 - Windsong Farm – Culver/Robertson Homestead

Owner: Michael & Kim Culver Robertson  
3570 Lower Saucon Road, Lower Saucon Township,  
Northampton County  
Nearest intersection: Wassergass Road and  
Lower Saucon Road

This beautiful picture post card barn located on Lower Saucon Road less than a half mile below the four corners of Wassergass is the smallest barn on the tour at only about 33 feet at the front wall and about 27 feet at each end wall. The barn, however, is in excellent condition and is very well maintained. This barn of three-bay construction likely dates to circa 1830. It is a stone to the peak (originally) Standard bank barn. There are four stable wall door openings. The doors are not original but the door frames are original and may be chestnut. As is typically found, there is a feed alley door entry at the end wall closer to the homestead house. In the great majority of Pennsylvania bank barns the horse stabling area in the basement was closer to the house end. This may have been due to the fact that the farm lane was closer to the house and there was a greater need of accessibility for horses to be stabled toward the house end of the barn. Cows were most often stabled away from the house end. This was very likely the case in the Robertson barn in most of the nineteenth century and likely into the next century.



Standard bank barn, Circa 1830

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy,  
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The Robertson barn is another example of a barn on the tour that has an English Principal Rafter System. In this case there are only two principal rafter trusses due to its diminutive size. The common rafters seen among the principal rafters are hewn. The stone house that is likely of the same general construction date as the barn has a common rafter system. Parts of each bent in the barn that flank the wagon bay were taken out and there is a remnant built-in ladder in at least one of the bents. A single summer beam appears in the basement and is of a single length of timber and it is of good size.

## 9 - Buckwampum Farm – Martin Homestead

Owner: Sherrie & Randy Martin  
6145 Route 412, Springfield Township, Bucks County  
Nearest intersection: Bodder Road and Route 412  
at sharp curve

The only barn outside of Lower Saucon Township that appears on Route 412 in extreme northern Bucks County is cavernous in size to say the least. It is of frame construction and the exterior dimensions are 62 feet on the long side and 37 feet at each end wall. The barn appears to have all its original vertical exterior siding. There are original roof edge over-hangs at all four walls and the Italianate like support braces are original and quite unusual. A three-section cupola is seen centered on the roof ridge. The barn is in excellent condition and is currently used for stabling horses in the basement. At the barn front, a frame addition appears which is open at the bottom and about 40 feet long by 12 feet wide.

The top floor level reveals three-bay construction and its upper reaches appear to nearly touch the heavens. It is a marvel of late nineteenth century construction technology. Same sized milled rafters un-pegged at the top are seen that are supported by barn length purlin plates. A remarkable construction feature appears in each end bay where canted braces stretch from purlins to side wall plates. They are seen two per bay per barn side for a total of eight in the barn. Another very rare feature is a timber seen about seven feet below the roof ridge set longitudinally from end wall to end wall.

This barn has a feature almost never seen in pre Civil War Standard barns – internalized posts that run from the floor all the way to the roof. The barn has yet another very rare feature where the floor boards (or planks) run transversely or front to back in the barn. Almost always, such boards in other barns run longitudinally or side to side.



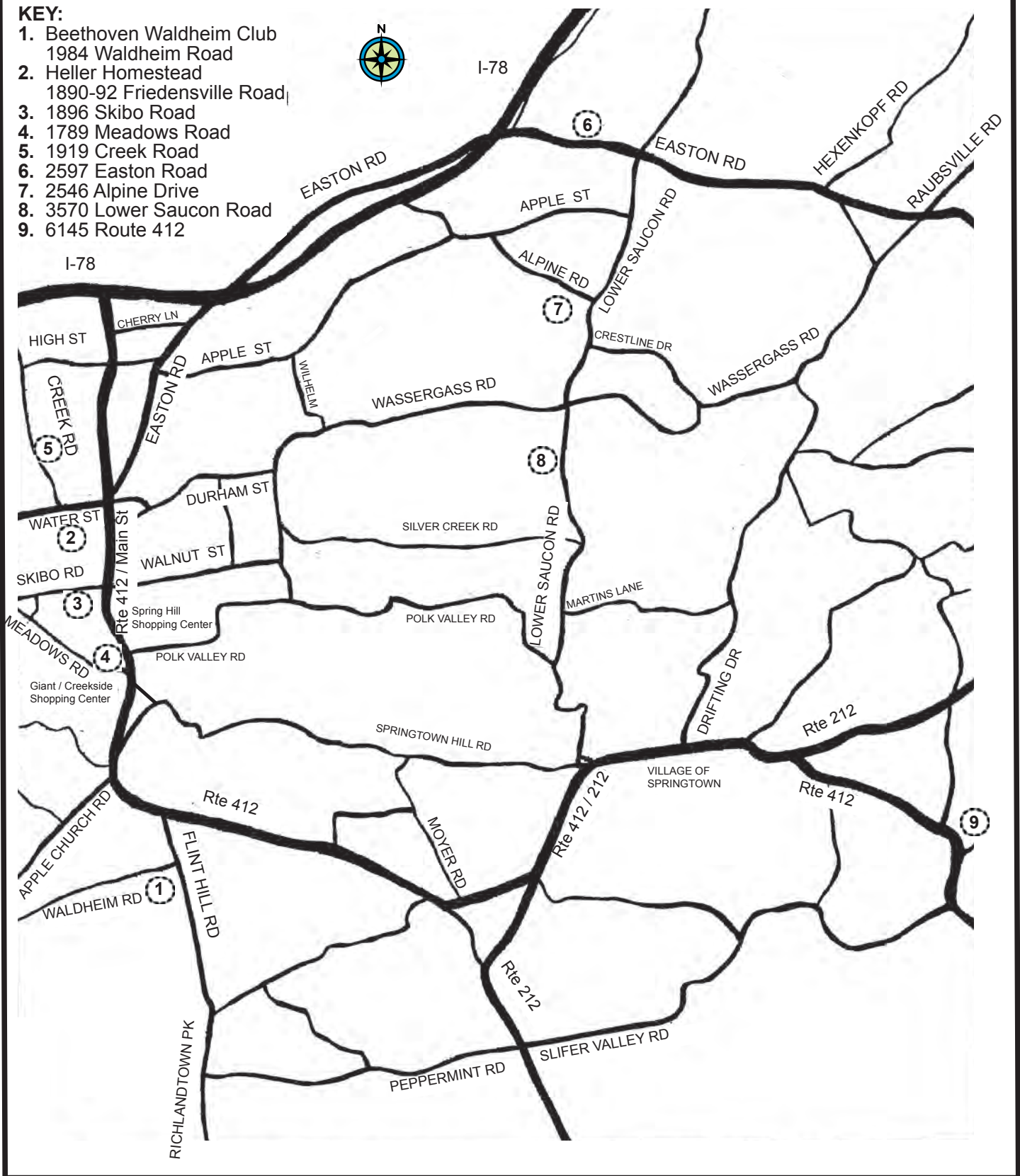
Frame Standard barn built 1898-1900

*This barn sponsored by: A Friend of the Saucon Valley Conservancy,  
C.F. Martin & Co. and Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc.*

Attendant to the above mentioned transverse boards are equally rare longitudinally oriented ceiling joists in the basement. Most often joists stretch transversely or front to back. Since the joists run longitudinally, the summer beams of necessity are set at ninety degrees to the joists where the summers run front to back. In the Martin barn, there are remarkably five summer beams. Only in one other barn are five summers seen and that appears in a barn a number of miles east of State College. Why the builder chose such unusual timber orientations it is not known. Altogether, this barn is an exceptional building replete with very rare features. Its late date of building provides a wonderful contrast with all the other barns on the tour that pre date the Civil War. Three very late nineteenth century photos indicate that the barn was built just before the turn of the century. One photo shows that there was a substantial stone bank barn on the property more than 110 years ago that was torn down.

**KEY:**

- 1. Beethoven Waldheim Club  
1984 Waldheim Road
- 2. Heller Homestead  
1890-92 Friedensville Road
- 3. 1896 Skibo Road
- 4. 1789 Meadows Road
- 5. 1919 Creek Road
- 6. 2597 Easton Road
- 7. 2546 Alpine Drive
- 8. 3570 Lower Saucon Road
- 9. 6145 Route 412



# SAUCON VALLEY CONSERVANCY 2009 BARN TOUR MAP

Prepared with help from:  
Lower Saucon Township Zoning Department



Saucon Valley  
--conservancy--



# Annual Fall Basket Bingo

Featuring Longaberger® Baskets



## Saturday November 7

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Food will be available.



## Glossary of Barn Terms

**BARN TYPES** - Pennsylvania barns come in three categories: Switzer, Standard and Extended. Pennsylvania barns are denoted by their cantilevered fore-bay or projection over the basement level stable wall and are two-level banked structures. Lower Saucon Township fore-bay barns are all Standard barns. There are no known exceptions as of this writing.

**Switzer barns** may have been erected before about 1750 but were commonly built in the 1780 to 1810 era. In certain areas, such as the Mahantango Valley above Harrisburg, Switzers were erected into the 1830's and 1840's. Switzers have asymmetrical roofs where the distinctive appendage-like fore-bay at the barn front creates the roof asymmetry. Four types of barns comprise the Switzer class. No Switzer appears on the 2009 tour.

**Standard barns** that have symmetrical rooflines, of which several are on the tour, were first constructed in the 1790's and were far more commonly erected after about 1820 and then up until the late nineteenth century and somewhat beyond. The width of fore-bays in Standard barns is quite often about 4 feet but can measure up to 6 to 8 feet or even more, depending on the specific barn and barn style. The transverse framing units or bents are contained within the front fore-bay area of the barn. Ten types of barns comprise the full Standard class.

**Extended barns** are those Pennsylvania barns that have been enlarged by amending or extending the barn beyond the basic Switzer and Standard framing limits. Six types of barns comprise the Extended class.

**English Lake District Barns** are a very rare barn type in the greater Lehigh and Saucon Valleys. In the more southern English counties – southern Bucks and Montgomery, Chester and Delaware Counties -- these barns are much more prevalent. These are banked two level structures with a basement and an upper floor or left level without any fore-bay. The upper level can be either stone or frame, which is rather rare. The greatest difference between these barns and Pennsylvania barns is that the front wall in most English type barns are all stone on the front wall level from the ground to the top of the wall. In addition, there is a short roof projection at the top of the stone basement wall at the barn front that is called a pent roof. It extends across nearly the entire full length of the barn. The pent roof protects the stable wall doors. The Heller barn (built 1790 - 1800) was an English Lake District barn.

**BASEMENT** – This is the floor level that occupies the entire area below the second floor. The basement was almost exclusively set aside for stabling animals. The area of the basement that is the horse end of the barn was almost always positioned toward the house side. The other area, most often away from the house side, was for cows. The horse side is adjacent to the gable wall that has either one or two door entries whereas the cow-side gable wall most often has no door entrances. Staked mangers and troughs were a major feature of the basement where feed was placed for the farm stock.

**BAY** – This is the space or area between adjacent framing units or bents. Thus, in a frame barn with four bents, there are three bays. A barn with five bents has four bays, etc. In stone barns, the so-called end bay is the area between the last bent and the adjacent stone gable or end wall. Thus, two end bays appear.

**BENT** – A major transverse framing unit on the second floor level that consists of partial barn width tie beams, vertical side wall posts, mid-point posts, braces of varying lengths and, often, built-in ladders. These bents were assembled on the barn floor or ground and then raised from a horizontal position to a vertical position by the efforts of a number of men using pike poles. At the top of bents, full barn width upper tie beams appear that are not actually parts of the bents since these ties were positioned after the bents were raised. This is referred to as *normal assembly* whereas when upper ties in certain barns were dropped below the level of the posts, the term is called *reversed assembly*.

**BRACE** – These diagonal members are either relatively short or quite long. When they are short, these beams connect partial tie beams to either the wall posts or the centered posts of the bents. They prevent the bents from lateral racking. Braces can also appear in other areas of the barn such as in the plane of the roof where they are known as wind braces. They can also connect purlin plates to queen posts. When they are long, they appear from the floor sill to the partial tie beam. These braces are often considered to be Germanic in nature. In Pennsylvania barns, braces are most often pegged at each end.

**BUILT-IN LADDER** – These ladders are original elements and are most often centered on the bents that are adjacent to the wagon bays. Thus, Pennsylvania barns very often have at least two built-in ladders and three ladders very often appear in four-bay barns. They often have rungs of oak or the ladders can assume other forms such as cut-out areas in horizontal boards that function as rungs. Occasionally, the ladders extend to the roof and quite often, extend to the straining beam when vertical queen posts appear.

**FORE-BAY** – That part of a Pennsylvania barn of the second floor toward the barn front wall that cantilevers over the stable wall of the basement. The fore-bay is also called an overshoot. Recall from above that the Pennsylvania barn is defined as a two-level banked barn with a fore-bay at the front wall. Other barn types, such as one-level ground barns, occasionally have fore-bays. Most barns in Lower Saucon Township are Standard Pennsylvania barns.

**GABLE** – That wall at the end of the barn that includes the triangular section above the eaves level that extends to the roof peak. Gable walls are opposed to side or eave walls. Thus, four sided barns have two gable walls and between them are two side walls.

**GRANARY** – Very often located in the fore-bay side of a Pennsylvania barn and sometimes into the area behind the basic area of the fore-bay. The one side or wall of the granary is continuous with the mow-stead wall that flanks the threshing floor. The front wall of the granary is actually part of the front wall of the fore-bay. The other wall that is opposite the mow-stead wall is the end wall of the barn itself. The back wall of the granary is made of boards. Granaries are broken up into individual grain-bin compartments for storage of grain. Ceilings are about 6½ to 7 feet high. Above the granaries, farm crops were stored.

**JOISTS** – Transverse ceiling timbers in basements that extend from the rear wall over the stable-wall and out to the front fore-bay wall. Most often joists are supported by and are positioned over summer beam(s). Joists are most often of oak and can attain widths of 10 to as much as 18 inches. Joists are often left in the round at their sides and are hewn square at the front of stable walls, apparently for aesthetic reasons. One barn of late vintage on the 2009 tour actually has longitudinal joists which are a very rare feature.

**LONGITUDINAL** – This is an orientation of a barn timber that is parallel to the ridgeline. Full barn length longitudinal timbers are purlin plates, wall plates, summer beams or front fore-bay wall sills. Other longitudinal timbers that do not run the full barn length are girts or horizontal timbers at the front wall in Standard barns. Longitudinal timbers are placed at ninety degrees to placement of transverse timbers.

**MOW-STEAD WALL** – These walls are actually part of the bents that flank wagon bays in barns and often appear 5 to 6 feet and sometimes more above the wagon floor. They consist most often of horizontal boards, typically of pine or of oak in certain pre 1810 or 1820 barns and are secured by wrought, transitional or cut type nails. Such nails can quite often be good general indicators of construction ages of barns. These boards are nailed to partial tie beams and bent posts that are often notched to receive the ends of the boards.

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**PEILER ECK** – The German dialect word for pier corner. These are ell-shaped formations, always of stone, at the front corners of the barn at the basement level and above in all stone barns and were included in the fabric of the barn for extra support of the stone gable walls.

**PRINCIPAL RAFTER SYSTEMS** – Rafter systems in barns that have much larger rafters in line with bents and in end bays than the so-called common rafters that appear between the principal rafters. Most often seen in the southeast counties of Pennsylvania, these large rafters do not normally appear in barns built until about 1790 and are quite rare in barns after about 1830 or 1840 (See Purlin Plate and Rafter). Two barns on the 2009 tour with such rafter systems were built as late as about 1850 – the two Wagner barns.

**PURLIN PLATE** – Barn-length or longitudinal timbers that extend from one gable (end) wall to the opposite gable wall. They most often come in pairs – one per roof slope. Purlin plates support rafters and are quite often spliced or come in two or three sections or lengths. These pieces are joined by refinements called scarf joints. Barns that feature Principal Rafter Systems have purlin plates that are decidedly different than in those seen in barns with Common Rafter Systems. These purlin plates are *sectioned* (and quite often *staggered*) instead of being in one long single piece or spliced timber. That is, they appear in single length sections or timbers between adjacent Principal Rafter Trusses. They are staggered since they attach to the sides of the Principal Rafters at different points along the lengths of these rafters. In addition, barns of large size with Principal Trusses very often have a double level or tiered system of purlin plates ostensibly for greater support.

**QUEEN POST** – A vertical or angled timber (depending on the barn) that extends most often from an upper tie beam of a bent or structural framing unit to the soffit or undersurface of the purlin plate. Thus, the queen post supports the purlin plate. In certain early German barns with particular roofing systems, there are no queen posts. In certain other early German barns, there are queen-like posts. When posts are angled, the term canted is applied. Canted queen posts are often utilized in later barns after about 1840 but can appear before that time.

**RAFTER** – These are the major structural members of the roof, often of oak, that appear just below the outermost roof covering that support the covering. Rafters virtually always come in pairs and in almost all pre-Civil War barns and fairly often in post-Civil War barns, are pegged at the roof peak. Rafters at their bottoms join to the wall plates that sit atop the side walls that are of frame, stone or brick construction. Rafters that are of the same basic size in a given barn are referred to as *Common Rafter Systems*.

Many early era barns, most especially in the Saucon Valley in the 1790 to 1840 time frame, have English-based *Principal Rafter Systems*. Five barns on the 2009 tour have these roof formats. Such barn roofs consist of, depending on the barn, two to five Principal roof trusses where each truss is composed of two large sized and paired rafters. Trusses are either in line with the framing units or bents or they appear about mid-way in end bays in certain barns. They alternate with considerably smaller sized common rafters. More than 140 barns of various ages and types have been identified by the author of this tour guide booklet.

**SIDE WALL** – The side or eave wall is the wall that appears between the gable walls. In the great majority of Pennsylvania barns, the main wagon doors appear on the rear side wall. The front fore-bay wall should be considered a side wall.

**SILL** – This timber is located at the edge of any floor that appears in a fore-bay barn and in other barns. Individual sills acting in concert constitute a sill system. They appear along the edges of threshing bays and wagon bays. They also appear at the bottom of the floor at the front wall of the fore-bay.

**STABLE WALL** – The stable wall or stahlwand at the basement level is often made of stone and sometimes of brick or even wood and is set back from the front edge of the end wall by 4 to as much as 10 or more feet. It contains several animal doors and one or two feed-entry doors. Very often these doors are halved, with a top and bottom.

**STRAINING BEAM OR QUEEN POST TIE BEAM** – These transverse beams stretch from one queen post to the adjacent queen post above the bent with which it is in line. They were often included in barns constructed before about 1860 and less often after that time. In many barns, these ties were removed when metal hay tracks at the roof peak were installed after the Civil War. These tie beams never appear between canted queen posts.

**SUMMER BEAM** – This is the barn-length longitudinal ceiling beam, gable wall to gable wall, in the basement that forms the main support of the second or loft floor above. Actually, joists support the floor above and the summer beam supports the joists that appear above the summer. They are often spliced in one or two spots. Summer beams are often large-sized and very often oak. A fair to good number of barns have two summer beams. Rarely do barns have three summer beams and one very large circa 1840 barn east of State College, remarkably, has five summer beams. Five transverse summers are actually seen in the late nineteenth century Martin barn that appears in this year's tour.

**SPRIGGEL BAR** – A horizontal bar of wood at the horse entry doors on the stable wall. These are set into the wide wooden door jambs about halfway up the door opening and slide freely into a horizontal pocket made of stone or long wood boxes in the surrounding stone wall at the one side. These bars kept the horses contained in the stable areas. *Spriggel* bars are more commonly found in barns built before about 1840 but definite exceptions exist. Rarely are two bars seen per door opening.

**TRANSVERSE** - This is an orientation of a timber positioned in a barn that is perpendicular to the roof ridgeline or side wall to side wall. Full barn width transverse timbers are upper tie beams and basement level ceiling joists. Another type of transverse timber that does not run the full barn width is a partial tie beam that appears in bents a few feet below the upper tie beam.

**UPPER TIE BEAM** – This is the transverse beam at the top of a bent that spans the entire width of the barn and appears at the top of the bent or more rarely seen dropped one to two feet below the tops of the posts. It is either almost always in line with the wall plate or just above the plate. Upper tie beams are usually associated with early English barns in New England and they tie the longitudinal side wall bents together. In Pennsylvania, these beams rest on side wall posts that appear on frame barns and may or may not rest on posts in stone barns. They are placed into position after the bent is raised into its vertical place. This type of beam is found in Pennsylvania fore-bay barns until the Civil War and occasionally beyond.

**UPPER PARTIAL TIE BEAM** – These beams are sometimes called scaffolding beams. They often appear in bents of Pennsylvania fore-bay barns and are seen a few feet below the upper tie and stretch between a side wall post and a centered post.

**WALL POST** – These are major vertical timbers that are part of the front walls in stone Standard barns and on both front, rear and gable walls in frame Standard barns. Posts appear most often in bents at both the front and rear side walls.

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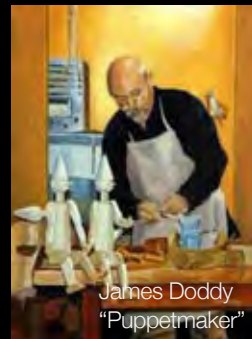
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