United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Heller, Michael and Margaret House

other names/site number Heller Homestead

2. Location

street & number 1890-1892 Friedensville Road ☐ not for publication

city or town Lower Saucon Township ☐ vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Northampton code 095 zip code 18055

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide __local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Heller, Michael and Margaret House
Name of Property

Northampton, PA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

	private
x	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3		buildings
		district
	1	site
		structure
		object
3	1	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL REVIVAL

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone
walls: Stone
roof: Slate
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Narrative Description

Heller, Michael and Margaret House
Name of Property

Northampton, PA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

C. Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1751-1935

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Yeager, Stanley

Period of Significance (justification)

Circa 1751-1935. The period of significance begins with the construction of the core (rear section) of the farmhouse and extends to the time of the Colonial Revival style renovations of 1934-1935.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Heller, Michael and Margaret House
Name of Property

Northampton, PA
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Heller, Michael and Margaret House
Name of Property

Northampton, PA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation page.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #HABS PA,48-HELLT,1A
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
__x__Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: **Lower Saucon Township**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 2.2
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	470716	4491814	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet.

Heller, Michael and Margaret House | Northampton, PA
Name of Property | County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert J. Wise Jr., President; Seth Hinshaw, Sr. Planner

organization Wise Preservation Planning LLC date 11/1/2009

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city or town Chester Springs state PA zip code 19425

e-mail bwise@wisepreservation.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Michael & Margaret Heller House

City or Vicinity: Lower Saucon Township, Pa.

County: Northampton **State:** Pennsylvania

Photographer: Wise Preservation Planning LLC

[See continuation sheet]

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Lower Saucon Township

street & number 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike telephone (610) 865-3291

city or town Bethlehem state PA zip code 18015

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

The Michael and Margaret Heller House and its associated buildings comprise a historic cluster of resources located in Lower Saucon Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, 800 feet due west of the Borough of Hellertown. The property, also located two miles south of the City of Bethlehem, is bounded by Friedensville Road to the north and the Saucon Creek to the east. It is owned by Lower Saucon Township and is used as a historic house museum and township park. The property contains three contributing buildings and a barn ruin that is considered a noncontributing site. The key building on the property is the Michael and Margaret Heller House, a two-part building renovated in 1935 to reflect the popular trends of the Colonial Revival movement. Many architectural details installed during the renovation are found in the Curtis Woodwork catalog,[1] the largest supplier of high quality woodwork in the early to mid-20th century. Other resources on the property include the Widow's House (built 1850), a root cellar (mid-19th century), the ruins of a large stone and frame barn (1790 and later, noncontributing). Remnants of the foundation ruins of two small buildings (a wagon shed and wagon house) are located northwest of the barn ruin; due to their minimal size, they are considered minor landscape features and not included in the resource count. The two principal resources are the house and widow's house; they and the root cellar retain a high degree of integrity.

The buildings are located on a lightly wooded, east-facing slope. The grade of the 2.2-acre property falls 30 feet from the west boundary, a plateau where the former farm fields were located, to the east boundary, the banks of the Saucon Creek. The farm lane leads south from Friedensville Road into the center of the property. A level terrace extends north/south on the west side of the drive, elevated approximately 24" higher than the plane of the drive. The three buildings are located on this terrace, along with the ruins of the barn and the wagon shed. The building nearest the road is the Michael and Margaret Heller House, a colonial residence renovated in 1934-1935 in the Colonial Revival style. Fifteen feet south of the farmhouse is a building called the Widow's House, a mid-19th century vernacular residence. These two houses were constructed with their main (east) elevations aligned in the same plane, forming a quite noticeable configuration rarely found in Pennsylvania farms. South of the widow's house is the stone barn ruin, which is aligned with the two houses. West of the two houses and barn are a root cellar and the mostly subterranean ruins of a wagon shed and a wagon house. East of the drive is the concrete floor and foundation wall of a c. 1950 block garage that was removed in 2009. This garage was constructed on top of the foundation of an earlier sawmill.

Farmhouse – Exterior

The farmhouse is located just south of Friedensville Road, on the west side of the drive. The two-part building consists of a two-story, five-bay main block (c. 1820) and a two-story, two-bay core (c.

[1] Curtis Companies catalog, *Architectural Interior and Exterior Woodwork Standardized*, printed 1920. Curtis Woodwork was a subsidiary of the Curtis Companies Inc.

1751) in the rear, which gives the house an overall ell-shape. An enclosed porch occupies the void of the ell. (See the measured diagram of the farmhouse and its sections.) A cement walkway leads east from the main block's entrance and then down a set of stone stairs (built 1935) to the driveway.

The main block (c. 1820) is the dominant section of the farmhouse, and it contains most of the Colonial Revival style features. Features such as the portico, the door detailing, and the windows were replaced in 1935 to reflect the Colonial Revival style. The 2-story, 5-bay Federal style section faces east onto the drive. The 40'x28' rectangular-shaped building has an end-gabled roof clad with slate shingles. A rectangular stone chimney is located at each end of the ridge: the south chimney is larger than the north chimney (an entirely decorative "fake" chimney rather than functional). The fascia board under the molded cornice features a tapered dentil cornice. The walls of the main block are rubble stone, with a slightly more coursed appearance on the main elevation. The main elevation also features ribbon pointing, not found on the other elevations. Fenestration is symmetrical, with double hung sash windows dating to the 1935 renovation: 9x6 on the first floor, 6x6 on the second floor, and two 3-light basement windows. Stone jack arches over the windows date to 1935. The main entrance in the center bay consists of a wide half-oval fanlight over the door with 16 pie-shaped lights and a set of flanking four-pane sidelights. The door's architrave has Federal style panels. A gabled, arcuated portico (added 1935) is supported by fluted Doric columns and aligned with a set of stone stairs leading down to the grade of the drive. The columns support entablatures that support the barrel-vaulted or arcuated portico roof. The end walls of the farmhouse have one 4x4 square attic window and a replacement single-light unit on the attic level, two 6x6 windows on the second floor, and two 9x6 windows on the first floor. The main block has a stone foundation.

The c. 1751 rear section is the core or original part of the house. It is attached to the west façade of the main block at its northwest corner. The north walls of the two sections form a continuous north elevation, facing Friedensville Road. The two-story, two-bay core measures 18'x21'. It has a nearly flat roof (apparently altered in the early 20th century from a steeper gabled roof) and a molded cornice. The rubble stone walls feature square stone jack arches over the windows (dating to 1935). The north elevation has two bays of windows (9x6 on the first floor and 6x6 on the second floor). The west elevation has a paired 4x4 window located off-center to the west. On the south elevation, a single 6x6 window is located on the second floor; the first floor is obscured by an early 20th century porch. This west section is considered the core on the basis of architectural elements as well as historic research. It has the massing of a mid-18th century house and was the location of the only kitchen hearth. The main block has the massing of an early 19th century building, has no walk-in kitchen hearth, and has no fireplace at all on its north wall – all elements pointing to an early 19th century date of construction.

The enclosed porch is located on the south elevation of the core and the west elevation of the main block. The section measures 18'x11'. Its shed roof is clad with asphalt shingles and has a return

cornice on the west elevation. It features a band of 6x1 windows on its south and west elevations, with a door and a 4x1 window abutting the main block. The foundation is stone with ribbon pointing.

Farmhouse – Interior
The interior of the main block includes many period Colonial Revival elements, including the stairway, the French doors, and the arched-headed doorways. These are elements recommended in Colonial Revival pattern books such as the Curtis Woodwork catalog. The interior includes two main floors in the main block and core, with an attic and basement in the main block. Common features of rooms are plastered ceiling and walls, wide plank hardwood flooring, and beaded baseboard molding. The house has a modified center hall plan on both floors, a typical Colonial Revival treatment.

The first floor consists of a modified center hall plan in the main block and one main room in the core. The main entrance, consisting of the six-paneled door with the half-oval fanlight and sidelights, opens into the center hall, which features the formal stairs to the second floor. The stairs include a straight string with a volute around the newel, a typical Colonial Revival style feature. The stairs to the basement, located under the formal stairs, are accessed by a Federal style 6-paneled door with a Colonial Revival style Suffolk latch. Multi-light French doors with glass knobs lead into the rooms to the north and south, and an arched headed passageway leads to the office in the northwest corner and on to the room in the core. The room occupying the south end of the house is currently used as an art gallery. A rustic stone fireplace dating to the 1930s is centered on the south wall. The chimney was built with large stone and has a raised ridge pointing, typical of the Colonial Revival movement. A stone jack arch with keystone is located over the fireplace; the lower portion of the chimney is comprised of semi-coursed stone. The chimney features a mantle-like shelf, above which it tapers down as it rises to the second floor.

Two rooms occupy the north half of the main block's first floor. Another multi-light door leads to the northeast room, now a gift shop. An arched doorway leads from the west end of the center hall to the northwest room, used as an office for the historical society.

The first floor of the core is the house's kitchen. It was renovated in the 1950s by the Nowicki family, and the cabinets and furnishings date to that time. On the east wall is an original door which formerly opened to the exterior. The opening is now used as a closet and retains its architrave with Federal paneling. A closet in the northwest corner appears to have been the original location of the stairs to the second floor; just west of the closet is the former location of the kitchen fireplace. South of the kitchen is an enclosed porch, constructed around a historic stone-lined well. Built-in cabinets and appliances from the 1950s occupy the west and south walls.

The second floor has a more typical center hall plan, with four evenly-spaced bedrooms occupying each corner. The stairs from the first floor rise to a landing with a door leading into the southwest bedroom and a four-light landing window; the stairs continue clockwise to the center hall. The bedrooms on the floor are mainly rectangular, each with closet space partitioned off the two rooms in the west half of the floor. Features of the main block's second floor include six-panel doors dating to the construction of the main block and wide plank hardwood floors.

A narrow hallway partitioned from the northwest bedroom leads through an arched-headed passageway into the core. This space has been partitioned into two main rooms. A bedroom (currently used as a meeting and archive room) is located in the north half with a closet built into the space south of the boxed-in chimney mass. The south half of the core's second floor holds a bathroom and closets.

The attic is a large freespan space located only over the main block. It is accessed by a Federal six-paneled door from the second floor's center hall. The attic framing system is comprised of two 5"x7" principal rafters with offset purlins and oversized diagonal braces supporting the historic rafters (sistered in the 1930s to support the weight of the slate roof). The rafters are attached with the typical "tongue-and-fork" method, without a ridge board. Collar beams connect the principal rafters. The tongue and grooved flooring features butt joints roughly in the location of the walls of the center halls below. The chimney on the south wall is clearly rebuilt, and there is no chimney mass on the north end. On the west wall, the ends of horizontal framing members are visible, extending through the rafter plate; they support the cornice on the exterior. Throughout the attic, L-headed cut nails (common 1800-1830) are used to attach the floorboards.

The basement, which exists only under the main block, has been completely renovated. Summer beams running east / west under the walls of the center hall support nine joists running north / south, with six joists extending from the summer beams to the end walls. A steel I-beam runs laterally through the house under the framing system. As in the attic, the chimney mass on the south wall clearly is of 20th century construction; it is brick with two iron doors to clean out the ashes. A door east of the chimney leads to an exterior bulkhead.

Widow's House (C) – Exterior

The widow's house, built in 1850, is the smaller residence located just 15 feet south of the farmhouse. It was originally constructed as a conservative example of the Greek Revival style, and a photograph dated 1915 shows its original appearance. In the mid-20th century, its appearance was altered when the two historic entrances were sealed and a new entrance was created on the south end. As stated earlier, the east elevations of the two buildings are aligned. The building was known as the Tenant House in the early 20th century and re-named the Widow's House in the 1990s.

The 2-story, 3-bay stone residence currently has a front-end-gabled orientation. The roof of the 26'x23' building is clad with asphalt shingles and features a small brick chimney at each end of the ridge. It has a boxed cornice and simple bargeboard, with nailers on the end walls in the location of the former cornice returns. The building has stone walls with raised ridge pointing. The entrance is located on the south end, under a shed-roofed porch. The elevation has two 4x2 attic windows on the upper floor; its first floor has a replacement 1x1 window west of the four-paneled door. The east elevation has three bays spaced regularly but not strictly symmetrically. Second floor windows are three-light friezeband units, and the first floor windows are 6x6. A single four-light basement window is located in the south bay. The first floor's center window was the original door. The other elevations have two bays. The north end wall has two 4x2 attic windows and a 6x6 window in the west bay on the first floor. The west wall has two three-light friezeband windows on the second floor and two replacement 1x1 windows on the first floor. The building has a stone foundation.

Widow's House – Interior

The widow's house features an irregular floorplan, with an irregular side hall plan on the first floor and two rooms on the second floor. The interior is being carefully restored according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as funds become available; in 2002-2003, the heating system and electricity were upgraded and the plumbing removed.[2] Common features of the rooms include plastered ceiling and walls and wide plank floors. On the first floor, the kitchen occupies the north end of the building. A large hearth is centered on the north wall, with a beehive oven on the east side of the chimney (protruding into the boxed stairs to the basement). A partition wall divides a bedroom in the southwest corner from the parlor in the southeast corner. The latter two rooms have a chair railing and a beaded baseboard molding. The parlor is the only room with an exterior door, though the location of the door was changed from the east wall to the south wall at some time after 1915 (a historic photo of that year shows the original appearance). Throughout the Widow's House, the framing system is held by cut nails with stamped heads (common 1825-1865).

The semi-finished second floor is divided by a frame partition into two rooms. A ceiling is attached to the bottom of the rafters and the collar beams and is lit by three-light hinged friezeband windows on the knee walls and 4x2 windows on the end walls. Like the first floor, it has a plastered ceiling and walls, wide plank floors, and beaded baseboard molding. No restoration work has been completed on the second floor as of 2009.

The basement is a single space. The ceiling is formed by six 10" joists running from wall to wall, supporting the wide plank flooring above. The walls are plaster over stone, and the floor is concrete. A stone arched hearth support is located on the north wall.

[2] Lower Saucon Township signed a covenant in 2002 that it would work with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to ensure that any work done on the historic buildings on the property did not undermine their historic significance.

Root Cellar (C)
The root cellar is located southwest of the farmhouse and northwest of the widow's house. It is a one-story rubble stone building that dates to the mid-19th century and measures 9'x8'. Facing east, it has a simple gabled roof clad with asphalt shingles and featuring exposed rafter tails. A batten door held by long strap hinges opens under a frame attic area on the east elevation. The foundation is stone.

The interior is accessed through the batten door, which is Z-braced on the inside. Concrete steps lead into the hillside and under a stone arch. The interior of the root cellar is a single barrel-vaulted space with plastered stone walls. A low stone shelf lines the perimeter of the room.

Barn Ruins (noncontributing)
The barn ruin is a 64'x32' stone element located south of the widow's house. It consists of a 51'x32' stone core dated by dendrochronology[3] to 1790 with a stone addition on its north end 13 feet wide and subterranean remnants of a frame section on its south end wall (possibly rebuilt in 1890). Little remains of the rubble stone walls of the core. The largest section that does remain is the northeast corner, where a stone arched passageway on the east wall of the addition was retained. The arch was filled with stone, and a "man door" was installed inside the arch; while the date of the changes is not known, the arch had been filled in by the time of the HABS photography in 1941.

The barn complex was professionally documented before it was razed by the Township in 1998. Charles M. Dornbusch AIA photographed the barn complex in 1941 for the Historic American Building Survey (HABS PA-5328). Architect John Heyl AIA later helped Dornbusch complete a manuscript on German barns for the Pennsylvania German Barn project; it was printed in 1956 with the title *Pennsylvania German Barns* and included information on the barn on the Heller Homestead.

Minor Ruins on the Property
Ruins of two small agricultural buildings are located west of the barn ruin; they are considered minor landscape features in this nomination. They were a wagon shed and a wagon house. Scattered portions of the stone foundation walls of these two buildings are visible. The two buildings were likely constructed in the 19th century. They appear on the Sanborn atlas of 1924 and were apparently demolished in the mid-20th century.

[3] A "Tree-ring Dating" Report of the Heller Stone Barn was recently completed by Gregory D. Huber of Past Perspectives and found that the date of construction of the original Heller homestead stone barn is around the year 1790.

Another minor landscape feature is located along the east border of the property. In the 19th century, a railroad spur ran along the west bank of the creek to the limestone quarry of the Thomas Iron Works. Its level railroad grade is intact. A sawmill was located on the west side of the railroad; it had been constructed in the 19th century and was demolished between 1924 and 1944. The Nowicki family constructed a block garage on the site of the sawmill c. 1950 on the site of a former sawmill; a low concrete retaining wall on the west side of the railroad grade may have been part of the foundation of the sawmill. The garage was demolished in 2009, leaving its concrete pad and the nearby concrete retailing wall. They are considered minor landscape features in this nomination and not included in the resource count.

Integrity

The Michael and Margaret Heller House retains a high degree of integrity and continues to convey its appearance after the 1935 Colonial Revival renovations. The assessment of integrity is based upon the seven qualities defined by the National Park Service: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The house easily meets the location quality, as it has not been relocated. The quality of design is mostly intact; the Nowicki family renovated the kitchen and enclosed the rear porch in the 1950s. The setting has been somewhat altered. The former farm fields to the west have been developed; however, the new houses constructed on a higher plateau west of the house are not visible from the grade of the house. The Sanborn atlases show several agricultural outbuildings on the property south and west of the house, most of which have been removed. An herb garden has been created in the location of the pig house, between the Widow's House and the barn ruins. Regarding materials, a limited amount of historic fabric has been replaced in kind during maintenance since the 1935 restoration campaign. The most recent work has been undertaken in consultation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The workmanship of the property has not been altered since the time of the 1935 renovations. Regarding historic feeling and association, the house retains the physical features that convey its historic character.

Statement of Significance

The Heller Homestead in Lower Saucon Township, Northampton County, is locally significant under National Register Criterion C for Architecture. The Period of Significance is c. 1751 to 1935, when the earlier Colonial and Federal style farmhouse was renovated to reflect the popular Colonial Revival style. The architecture of the Heller Homestead demonstrates the distinctive design characteristics of the class of pre-existing farmhouses in the Saucon Valley that were "Colonial Revivalized" in the early 20th century, during a time in which property owners, architects, and builders were influenced by both historic antecedents and the availability of catalog designs and woodwork.

Eighteenth Century to 1827

The property was originally settled in the mid-18th century. It was included in a parcel of 150 acres warranted to Nicholas Walber on 10/1/1737; the warrant states that the property is located "On the Saucon Creek" in what was then Bucks County. The survey, dated 4/6/1738, identifies the location of the property, roughly bisected by the Saucon Creek. Walber also received a warrant for a nearby tract of 100 acres. Within a decade, Walber defaulted on his quit rent and sold the property.

Michael Heller (1724-1803), an important early settler of Northampton County, purchased the rights of Walber on 7/28/1747.[4] Since there were other men of the name Michael Heller living at the same time in the vicinity, each took a nickname. This man was called "Alt Vater Mike," or Mike the Elder. He emigrated with his parents from Germany to Pennsylvania in 1738. Heller obtained a survey order for Walber's 250 acres on July 31, 1751,[5] and a new survey was recorded on the same date. It is assumed that Heller constructed the core of the farmhouse just after purchasing Walber's rights to the property; a brief article about his descendant William Jacob Heller in *The History of Bucks County* states that Heller "built a stone house which is still standing."[6] The 250-acre property was located immediately north of another rectangular tract of 250 acres purchased by Heller's brother Simon Heller in 1746. An important piece of documentary evidence that the rear section was built first is the Federal Direct Tax of 1798, which describes the house as a building measuring 25x18 feet.[7]

Michael Heller (Alt Vater Mike) played a major role in the settlement of the area. Although his father Christopher Heller is usually cited as the founder of Hellertown, historic sources point to Michael Heller as the founder. Christopher Heller lived a mile southwest of Hellertown, while Michael Heller

[4] Pennsylvania Patent Book P-2, page 284.
[5] Pennsylvania Survey Book C, page 313.
[6] William W. Davis, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania* (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1905), pp. 309-311.
[7] Federal Direct Tax of 1798, National Archives Microfilm #372, Reel 12. The dimensions of the rear section today are 21x18 feet. It appears that the assessor estimated the dimensions of the buildings rather than taking a measurement. However, old maps do indicate a frame addition to the south side, which may have been added four or more feet.

owned the western half of the current borough. The manuscript *Heller Family History* by Herman T. Waldner identifies Michael Heller as the founder of Hellertown, as does William W. Davis in an article in the *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, which states of Michael Heller "He became the founder of Hellertown."[8] An undisputed fact is that in 1783 when Michael Heller completed the paperwork applying for a patent for his property, he named the property "Hellerton." Lower Saucon Township tax records indicate that through the course of his ownership, the proportion of cleared land on Heller's property gradually increased from 52 acres in 1765 to 85 acres in 1784.

Michael Heller made many contributions to the Saucon Valley. In 1756, he was one of the first people to join Colonel Anthony Lerch's cavalry that was described as "the first body of armed men to reach the massacre of the Moravians above Lehigh Gap and compelled the Indians to remain above the mountains, thus saving Bethlehem, Nazareth and Easton."[9] Heller constructed a mill on the west side of the Saucon Creek north of his house (not on the property today). He sent the first set of provisions from the Saucon Valley to Valley Forge during Washington's encampment.[10] The mill first appears in the tax records in 1784.[11]

On 12/26/1783, Michael Heller completed the paperwork to obtain the patent for his "certain Tract of Land called Hellerton." Seven years later (1790), Michael Heller and his wife Margaret sold the property to their son Michael. Although Michael Heller's wife is identified in the deed as Margaret, family histories consistently identified her as Magdalena; it is possible that her name had been Anglicized. Their son Michael Heller the Younger (1757-1828) had the nickname of "Creeker Mike," though he was called "Michael Heller the Younger" in the deed. Both the elder and younger Michael Heller served in the cavalry during the Revolution. After the war, Creeker Mike farmed the property and operated the mill. Late in his life, Creeker Mike had financial difficulties; in 1826 he transferred the title to the farm, mill, and 128 acres to assignees who sold them to satisfy his creditors (see chain of title).

19th Century to 20th Century

The property continued in the ownership of miller/farmers throughout the remainder of the 19th century. Francis Hartman purchased the property from Heller's assignees in 1827 and lived there 13 years. In 1840, Baltzer Stever purchased the property from Hartman, and the farm passed down in the Stever family until 1923. In the year 1850, Stever constructed a small residence next to the farmhouse. This house was called the Tenant House throughout most of the 20th century, and was

[8] William W. Davis, op. cit.
[9] W.J. Heller, *Heller Family History* (Easton PA: Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1964), p. 11.
[10] William W. Davis, op. cit.
[11] W.J. Heller, pp. 8-9; Herman T. Waldner, *Heller Family History* (1908), pp. 8-9; Charles M .Sandwick Sr., "Heller Family Ancestry," page 1; miscellaneous papers in the Northampton County Historical Society; Lower Saucon Township tax records.

renamed the Widow's House in the 1990s in honor of Baltzer Stever's sister-in-law Anna Stever, who lived there in the 1850s.[12] In 1890, Baltzer Stever's son Charles purchased the property and owned it from 1890 until 1923. Just one month after the transfer of ownership, a storm moved through the area and destroyed the frame portion of the barn.[13] Charles Stever married a descendant of Michael Heller, who had constructed the original part of the farmhouse. A 1915 photograph on the wall in the farmhouse shows the building and widow's house during the Stever family ownership.

Milling operations continued into the early 20th century. The earlier mill's head race flowed northwest through the current property, and in the 19th century a sawmill was constructed east of the farmhouse. Deeds from 1790 through 1934 include provisions for repairing the mill dam and head race. During Charles Stever's ownership, the sawmill east of the farmhouse appears on a Sanborn Map of 1924 but had been demolished by 1944.

In 1923, John A. Stephens purchased the 102-acre property from Charles and Matilda Stever for $18,000. Stephens owned several other properties in the area, and it is likely that he rented out the farm. Stephens sold the property to Walter and Mildred Geyer in 1934.[14]

Stanley Yeager and the Renovations of 1934-1935

The farmhouse was altered in the then-popular Colonial Revival style in 1935, during the early years of the 1934-1940 ownership of Walter Geyer. A photograph dated 1935 shows the house substantially as it appears today, though it is possible that some elements of the campaign were not finished. The work was completed by local builder Stanley Yeager; Walter Geyer's son Rich clearly recalls watching tradesmen completing project elements for Yeager. It is possible that the farmhouse was in quite poor condition before the work began, since the nature of the changes made it difficult to live in the house during construction.

On the exterior, Yeager's work involved changes to the roof, windows, stonework, entrance, chimneys, and landscaping. He installed a slate roof on the house with snow guards, a feature that was innovative at the time. The windows were replaced, apparently in kind; it appears that metal lintels were installed, with rectangular stone jack arches added over the windows as a decorative flourish. The stone walls were repointed, using the common raised ribbon pointing of the Colonial Revival era. The former entrance, consisting of a six-paneled Federal door with a multi-light transom, was removed, and the doorway widened. The new entrance appears to have been based on the

[12] "Anna Stever gave Widow's House its name," *Heller Homestead News*, Winter 2005, p. 3. In the 20th century, the house became called the Tenant House, and the name Widow's House was taken up again in the 1990s.
[13] "The Great Hellertown Storm," *Heller Homestead News*, Summer 2008, p. 4.
[14] See chain of title for more information.

Curtis Woodwork plate C-101. A new, wider 6-panel door was inserted with four-light sidelights and a 16-pane half-oval fanlight. The architrave was built with Federal style panels. In front of the door, a typical Colonial Revival style portico was constructed; it is remarkably similar to Curtis's Plate C-100. The portico consists of two fluted Doric columns with undersized capitals and bases and two rectangular pilasters. Each column and pilaster supports an entablature, and the two entablatures in turn support the arcuated or barrel-vaulted gable. The former rear entrance leading into the core was converted into a window during the renovation. Last, Yeager rebuilt the chimneys above the roofline. The earlier brick chimneys were removed, and new castellated stone chimneys built at each end of the ridge. The new landscaping included revamping the approach to the house from the property's drive. A former walkway leading around the southeast corner of the house to the Widow's House was removed. The new walk proceeded from the property drive up a new set of stone stairs with two sets of thick stone posts, up along a cement walkway, to the portico. The changes gave the house a more formal appearance and remain in place.

On the interior, Yeager altered the floorplan, installed a new staircase, added arched headed passageways on the two floors, installed new interior French doors, and renovated the attic and basement. The earlier floorplan, likely a center hall Georgian plan, was changed by merging the rooms in the ends. This change produced a modified I-house plan for the first floor. The new staircase Yeager added is nearly identical to Curtis Woodwork Plate C-900, which ends with a volute attached to the newel. The new arched headed passageways led from the center hall on the two floors to the rooms in the core. The French doors with glass knobs were installed in the center hall, first floor, accessing the merged rooms. The French doors were one of Yeager's signature features in his houses. In the attic, Yeager installed a heavy timber framing system consisting of principal rafters with large purlins under the regular rafters. This framing system was necessitated to support the weight of the slate shingles. In the basement, Yeager installed a steel I-beam to support the first floor framing system. He also rebuilt the chimney on the south end wall (as mentioned earlier) with the brick base incorporating two clean-outs.

It is likely that the alterations to the Widow's House took place at the same time. The former entrances on the east and north elevations were converted into windows, and a former window on the south elevation was converted to a door. The earlier Greek Revival style front porch on the east end was removed, and the existing porch on the south elevation was constructed.

Post-Geyer History

The Nowicki family owned the property throughout most of the latter half of the 20th century. Hipolit Nowicki purchased the farm in 1945 and died there in 1952. His widow Helena lived on the property afterwards, and at her death in 1982 her son Zenon Nowicki inherited it. The Nowicki family remodeled the kitchen, installed the powder room on the first floor, and constructed a garage where the sawmill once stood.

Near the end of the 20th century, the Homestead became Township property. In 1988, the farm became the site of a K. Hovnanian subdivision named “Society Hill at Saucon Valley.” As part of the agreement, approximately 14 acres of land along the Saucon Creek and seven acres in Wassergass were dedicated to Lower Saucon Township “for perpetual recreation and open space purposes.” The Saucon Valley Conservancy leases parcel “A” and operates a house museum in the two residences. The parks and recreation board manages parcel “B.” Following storm damage in 1998, the barn was demolished, leaving portions of the stone walls and the stone arch of a wagon passageway on the north end of the barn complex. The property is owned by Lower Saucon Township and leased by the Saucon Valley Conservancy.

The Michael and Margaret Heller House operates as the Michael Heller Homestead. On the first floor, the south room is an art gallery, with a gift shop located in the northeast room; the kitchen furnishings installed by the Nowicki family remain in the c. 1751 section. On the second floor, the northeast bedroom is interpreted as a Victorian living room, the southwest bedroom is interpreted as a late 19th century bedroom, and the southeast bedroom is now interpreted as a parlor. The three rooms are furnished with period furniture. Other rooms on the second floor include an office, an archive room, and a modern bathroom.

Significance

The Michael and Margaret Heller House is significant as a representative example of its particular class of resources – specifically, Colonial and Federal style farmhouses that were modernized during the dominance of the Colonial Revival movement in the early to mid-20th century. The defining features of local examples of the class of resources were identified to help establish the significance, and then the Heller Farmhouse was evaluated for its importance in the class of resources.

Context of Colonial Revival Renovations in the Saucon Valley

The Saucon Valley was settled in the early to mid-18th century by Lutherans and Reformed Germans. The architecture of these German settlers included stone and frame vernacular buildings of one or two-stories in height. In the mid- to late-19th century, the Saucon Valley was generally rural. Railroads were laid through the valley to connect scattered iron works, which fostered the growth of industry. In the 1850s, Bethlehem was incorporated, and the earlier prohibition on selling land in Bethlehem to non-Moravians was lifted. The antecedent to Bethlehem Steel was established in 1857; during the 140-year history of the company, it invented the steel I-beam and became the second largest steel producing business in the nation.

As the Bethlehem steel mills developed in the late 19th century, population growth and wealth spread into the valley. Architecturally, two major events happened in the late 19th century and early 20th century. First, there was a proliferation of new construction in Bethlehem (which annexed a portion of Lower Saucon Township for residential and industrial development) and the outlying suburbs like Hellertown (incorporated as a borough in 1872 and formerly part of Lower Saucon Township). Second, older homes in the valley, like Hellertown and Coopersburg to the south, were rehabilitated. Many of the latter were farmhouses that were constructed in Colonial times or soon after. In the late 19th century, many earlier houses were enlarged and "Victorianized," with decorative elements such as cross-gables and porches with gingerbread constructed. Renovations of historic houses during this time usually involved a radical alteration of the appearance to meet the prevailing architectural currents.

The increased wealth derived from the steel industry continued into the early 20th century, particularly for military purposes. However, the architectural implications of the increased wealth were quite different from the late 19th century. While in earlier years, many historic houses were demolished to make way for a newer house, it became fashionable to live in a house complex that included a historic core. Influenced by the Colonial Revival style, architects and builders in the area were also less inclined to make major alterations to historic houses than they were in the Victorian times. Instead, Colonial Revival-influenced architects and builders generally limited themselves to making changes that were compatible with the original construction.[15] The resulting architecture is a series of older buildings reflecting subtle changes rather than the drastic changes designed by architects of the preceding (Victorian) generation. Reasons for this subtle interpretation of the style are discussed below. Design alternatives to the Colonial Revival in the early 20th century included the Neo-Classical and Tudor.

Two men associated with the Colonial Revival style in the Lehigh / Saucon Valley areas in the first half of the 20th century were John Heyl and Stanley Yeager.

John Heyl

John Heyl, an Allentown-based architect who worked in the Lehigh and Delaware Valleys from 1939 until 1973, completed many important commissions in the area, including Trout Hall, Troesedil House, Lehigh Co. High School, the Cloisters, Landis Valley Museum, the Ehrenhardt House, and Graeme Park. Heyl is currently 102 years old and lives in Booth Bay Harbor, Maine. He was interviewed for this project in the summer of 2008. Heyl graduated from Harvard Architectural School in 1933 and went into private practice in 1939 in Allentown.

[15]Interview with architect John Heyl, a Saucon valley architect, currently retired in Maine.

Regarding the Colonial Revival style, Mr. Heyl explained that he did not consider "Colonial Revival" architecture when working on these historic buildings. His emphasis was on studying the resources and others and then making appropriate changes to reflect the existing architecture, not following any styles per se.

An example of his work is the Ehrenhardt House in Emmaus, Pa. The house was constructed in 1803 near the Moravian community. In the mid-20th century, Heyl renovated the house and "Colonial Revivalized" its appearance. On the exterior, Heyl made two major changes. He completely renovated the entrance, adding a half-circle fanlight over the door and a decorative surround featuring punch and gouge work. Heyl also installed soldiered brick lintels over the first floor windows and splayed soldiered lintels over second floor windows inserted to hide inserted steel lintels. He also installed a slate roof. At some time in the 20th century, the brick chimneys were rebuilt, though it is not clear that this was part of the Heyl renovation project. A painting of the house as it appeared in the mid-19th century hangs on the wall inside and provides a general likeness of the house's earlier appearance. Heyl's changes celebrated the age of the house while giving it a more refined exterior and an interior suited for mid-20th century lifestyles.

Stanley Yeager

Stanley Yeager built well over 100 houses in the Hellertown area, as well as other places such as Fountain Hill in Bethlehem, in the years 1925-1945. He also developed much of his own land in the east part of Hellertown. As such, his buildings changed the face of the borough. Yeager (1897-1953) was a WWI veteran who started building houses soon after his return from war. He eventually assumed the duties of general contractor, allowing his father to pursue his interest of being the master craftsman. Once ideas were approved, plans were drawn up in the drafting office at the nearby Bethlehem Steel Company. Yeager retired from construction in 1945 because of difficulties getting supplies and operated an ice cream store on the main street of Hellertown until his death in 1953.

Most of the houses Yeager constructed are either small Cape Cod type houses or larger, Colonial Revival houses. His daughter, Isabel Bauder, lives in one of the Colonial Revival style houses in Hellertown. She is familiar with many of her father's houses and other buildings (churches, downtown commercial buildings, the large and very prominent American Legion Building), and retains a photo album of some of his projects.

Of the 68 projects in the album, 28 show Colonial Revival influences. Of these, 26 are single family houses. The non-residential Colonial Revival style buildings are a large church addition and Hellertown's American Legion building, a large and prominent building on Main Street that might also be considered Neo-Classical. Most of the houses Yeager built are two-story, end-gabled houses with

slate roofs and brick or weatherboard cladding. Others are 1.5-story houses. Six houses are 2-story, hipped-roof residences with a center dormer and full length porches. Most houses are 3-5 bays wide and symmetrical. Many have popular features of the time, such as those described in Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses:* "including accentuated front door entrances with decorative crowns supported by pilasters or extended forward by slender columns to form entry porch; fanlights or sidelights may be present" (page 320). Most house types Yeager built in Hellertown are featured in the guide's Colonial Revival section (pages 320 – 341).

The Colonial Revival was a major influence in Yeager's designs and construction, or in the desire of his clients. Some houses appear similar to the small catalog type houses available during this time, although Ms. Bauder insists that his buildings were all custom built. Yeager's designs incorporated more elements from design catalogs than Heyl, which gives his construction a more "New England" feel than Heyl's commissions. The sheer number of houses built or developed by Yeager ultimately enabled him to influence the development and the appearance of Hellertown.[16] As such, the Colonial Revival – by way of Stanley Yeager – had an influence on the appearance of Hellertown. Most of Yeager's Colonial Revival commissions were the largest and most prominent houses he built. The open land in which he constructed the houses made them highly visible additions to the growing town.

Regarding the Heller Farmhouse, no records are available for Mr. Yeager's involvement there. Rich Geyer, then resident of the house and son of the owner who hired Yeager, remembers Mr. Yeager and his crew working there (but not the specific nature of the renovations). As a general contractor, there is no doubt Mr. Yeager worked on many houses like the Heller House, but only photographs of buildings he actually built are available. The Heller House was probably regarded as a major commission, in that the house, even then, was one of the more historic houses in the area. Was he hired for his traditional building influences based on the design of his Colonial Revival houses? For the quality of his work? His reputation? His price? These questions will probably never be answered, but there is little doubt as to Mr. Yeager's design knowledge-base and experience, among other things at the time of the renovations.

The alterations to the Heller House that took place in the mid-1930s in the Colonial Revival design tradition were no doubt influenced by Stanley Yeager's ongoing experience with Colonial Revival architecture. It was not, then, an isolated design implementation but one based on a vast amount of knowledge through the experience in working within the local community on dozens of projects over many years. Just as Mr. Yeager changed the look of Hellertown, he changed the Heller House. This change, however, was accomplished in a traditional manner, such that the general historic fabric of the house, and community, was not lost. The Colonial Revival interpretation here, and on his new

[16] Lee Weidner, "Stanley Yeager's vision influenced Hellertown's future," printed in the *Valley Voice* c. 2002.

Colonial Revival houses, was not grandiose; rather Yeager seemed to be influenced by the existing vernacular details and/or the still rural, less stylized architecture found throughout the area.

It appears likely that Yeager was familiar with design books of his day. In particular, the Curtis Woodwork design book *Architectural Interior and Exterior Woodwork Standardized* (referenced earlier) includes plates with several architectural elements Yeager used in his renovations of the Heller Farmhouse. The catalog includes an introductory essay "The Spirit of the Colonial Home" with general information on the "delicate, simple, dignified character" of colonial homes. It describes the importance of painting woodwork white, using small dormers, having symmetrical "divided light" windows, and installing exterior shutters. The most important Colonial Revival exterior feature altered at the Heller Farmhouse was the entrance, and the most important interior feature was the stair system. It is remarkable that the catalog notes these two emphases when considering that the entrance and stair system that Yeager installed during the Heller Farmhouse renovations are shown on plates in the catalog: Plate C-100 shows the arcuated portico; Plate C-101 shows the fanlight, sidelight, and 6-paneled door combination; and Plate C-900 shows the stair system.

Specific Colonial Revival influences / building elements

A survey of dozens of farmhouses in the Saucon Valley that were renovated during the Colonial Revival era found five common exterior features specific to the area. These features, described below, reflect the Colonial Revival movement in general or as specific to the greater Saucon Valley. Not all features, of course, are found on each renovated farmhouse. The Heller Farmhouse happens to contain each of the elements as well as others that are less commonly found in the area.

1. *Slate roof*. In the Colonial and Federal times, the most common roofing material was cedar shakes. As the roofs were gradually replaced, other building materials were sometimes used. During the Victorian era, slate became an acceptable alternate roofing material; it remained popular throughout the Colonial Revival era and particularly in the Lehigh Valley (in which the Saucon Valley is located) where slate is plentiful. In many cases, the rafters had to be strengthened, since the original rafters were not designed to carry the weight of slate shingles. Slate was one of Yeager's favorite building materials, and he installed it on the Heller Farmhouse. Yeager also installed snow guards on the roof – a feature that was new at the time. The snow guards are visible in the photo of 1935.

2. *Oversized chimneys*. The chimney was a decorative (as well as functional) element of many Colonial Revival houses. After the 1830s, smaller flues improved the draft of cook stoves, so older chimneys were reduced in size. By the late 19th century, chimneys were again becoming larger, often with decorative brickwork such as patterned or banded brick. During the Colonial Revival years, the chimneys of many farmhouses were rebuilt, often with oversized chimneys incorporating smaller flues. Larger chimneys were an appropriate application of the Colonial Revival movement, since they pointed to an earlier time when larger flues were needed

although they incorporated small chimney flues to meet the needs of early 20th century mechanical systems. At the Heller Farmhouse, the south chimney was entirely removed and rebuilt larger than required. The new chimney is rustic in appearance, a relatively uncommon Colonial Revival element. The chimney on the north end, which is purely decorative, was also rebuilt.

3. *Emphasis on the entrance*. During Victorian times, the location of the entrance was sometimes minimized through the use of large front porches. This emphasis changed during the Colonial Revival movement, once again reflecting the symmetrical center hall plan within. In some cases, porticoes were constructed onto the front of the houses. These porticoes consisted of arcuated or coved gables supported by heavy columns. Alternately, new door frames with Baroque pediments were installed. Many Colonial Revival renovations included the installation of fanlights or sidelights around the door when these features were not included in the original design. At the Heller Farmhouse, Yeager installed an arcuated portico over the door, a typical portico found on Colonial Revival-renovated farmhouses. In addition, the old door with its transom were removed and replaced with a wider door with a fanlight and sidelights.

4. *Jack arches*. While jack arches were occasionally found on 18th century farmhouses, they were often limited to the more decorative houses. During the Colonial Revival movement, it became fashionable to add jack arches over windows, often to cover new iron or steel lintels installed over the windows. Jack arch treatments included the use of a row of square stones over a window, soldiered brick, or splayed brick. At the Heller Farmhouse, Yeager inserted square jack arches over the windows; the change is evident when comparing historic photographs dated 1917 (showing the earlier stonework) and 1935 (showing the current configuration).

5. *Multi-light windows.* Changes in glass making technology in the 19th century, particularly the introduction of plate glass, fostered the use of larger window panes. By the end of the 19th century, the most common window type was the 2x2 double hung sash window. Older windows, often less air tight, included such combinations as 12x12, 9x6, and 6x6 double hung sash windows. These window combinations were revived during Colonial Revival period, along with the 8x8 window (not common in the 18th century). At the Heller Farmhouse, Yeager replaced the older 6x6 and 9x6 windows in kind.

Some common Colonial Revival elements are not readily apparent in the Saucon Valley. Among those not locally common and also not found on the Heller Farmhouse are thick cornices, paired windows, altered roof systems, and incompatible dormers. Thick cornices, which are very common along Pennsylvania's Main Line, were often designed for interior gutter systems. Paired windows

were quite rare in the 18th century, with only a limited number of examples known. In the late 19th century, paired windows became common after metal lintels began to be used for lintels. They are not commonly used in renovations, possibly because Colonial Revival architects were reticent to change the window shapes. In some cases, the former gabled roof on a building was removed and replaced by a hipped roof. This type of alteration is found in the western Philadelphia suburbs but not in the Saucon Valley. Another alteration commonly found in the western Philadelphia suburbs but not in the Saucon Valley is the addition of oversized dormers. Most Colonial dormers were narrow; changes in technology in the early 20th century made much larger dormers possible, including the monitor dormer. In some cases, Colonial Revival renovations included two dormers that are partially connected or include other Baroque design features that were quite rare in Colonial architecture.

Other common Colonial Revival features that were not commonly found in the Saucon Valley were found in Yeager's renovation work at the Heller Farmhouse. First was the formal approach to the house, already described. For the most part, landscape changes associated with Colonial Revival alterations in the Saucon Valley were limited to stone retaining walls. A second element Yeager added onto the Heller Farmhouse, already noted, was the system of snow guards. Third, the raised ribbon pointing used on the main (east) elevation of the Heller Farmhouse was a typical Colonial Revival pointing treatment, though its use in the Saucon Valley was sporadic.

Yeager made several typical Colonial Revival alterations to the interior of the Heller Farmhouse. The former center hall plan of the main block was altered, resulting in a modified I-house plan (narrow center hall incorporating the stairs, flanked by a room in each end). One of Yeager's common interior features (though not a Colonial Revival feature) was the use of French doors with glass knobs, often paired. These doors were found in the Heller Farmhouse. Another common Colonial Revival design feature was the introduction of arched passageways. Yeager installed two in the Heller Farmhouse – one on each floor leading from the center hall to the core. The stair system that Yeager introduced in the Heller Farmhouse is identical to that found in the Curtis Woodwork catalog discussed earlier. The changes Yeager made to the Heller Farmhouse reflected the prevailing trends in Colonial Revival design, a recognition of the existing architecture, while responding to technological changes (mechanical systems, structural systems, kitchens, etc.) that increased its viability as a livable residence. When combined, the Heller Homestead is a locally representative example of a significant theme of architecture: the Colonial Revival style applied to an existing Federal style house in the Saucon Valley area of Northampton County.

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Interviews by Wise Preservation Planning LLC:

Bauder, Isabel – summer 2008. Daughter of Stanley Yeager.

Geyer,Rich – summer 2008. Son of Walter Geyer who was living in the house at the time of the 1935 renovations.

Heyl, John – summer 2008. Architect in the Lehigh Valley 1939-1973 and contemporary of Stanley Yeager.

Weidner, Lee – summer 2008. Hellertown historian, author, and life member of the Saucon Valley Conservancy, Lower Saucon Township Historical Society, Hellertown Historical Society, and Coopersburg Historical Society.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northeast point of the property, on the southern right-of-way of Friedensville Road, the boundary proceeds along the Saucon Creek South 2 degrees West 22.3 feet to a point; thence South 6 degrees East 308 feet to a point; thence along the southern boundary of the property South 86 degrees West 251 feet; thence North 48 degrees West 70.7 feet to a point; thence North 3 degrees West 298 feet to Friedensville Road; thence along the north boundary of the property North 86 degrees East 106 feet, South 3 degrees East 18 feet, and North 86 degrees East 181.9 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is coterminous with the tax parcel. It includes the Michael and Margaret Heller House, the associated Widow's House, and the other resources documented in this nomination.

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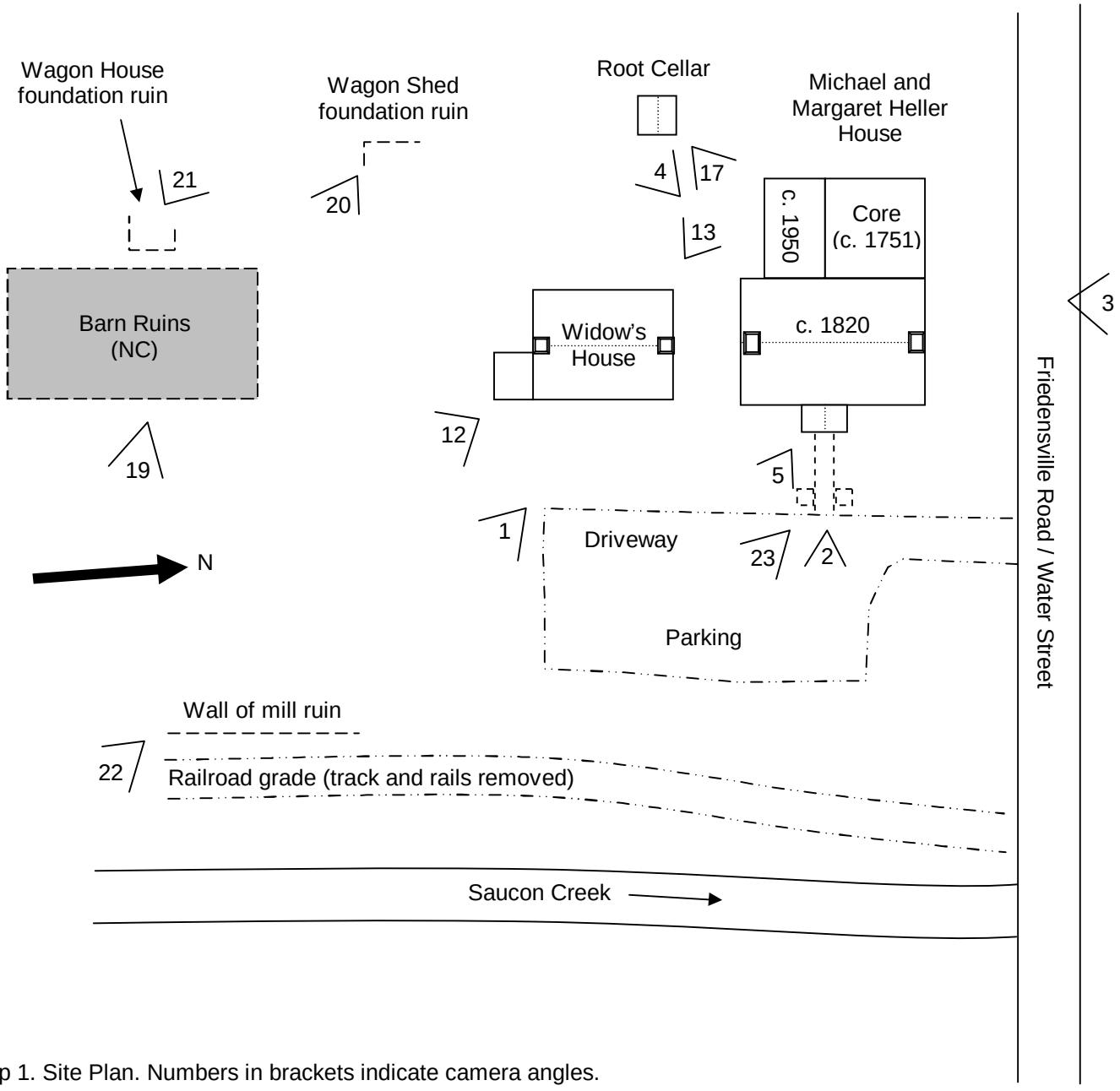

Map 1. Site Plan. Numbers in brackets indicate camera angles.

Map 2. U.S.G.S. Quad Map, Hellertown Quad (1999) [physical Quad map attached]

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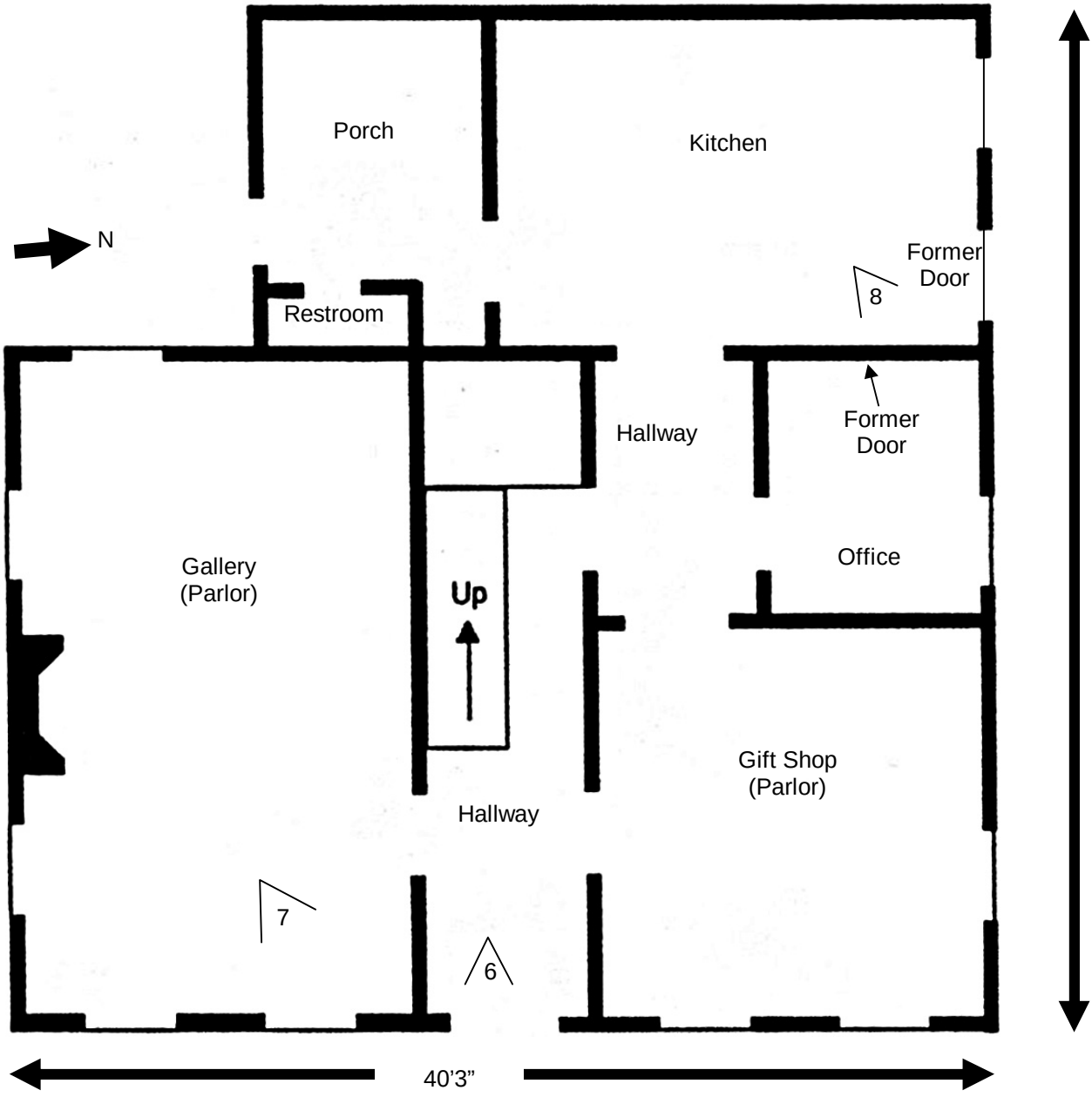
Map 3. Measured Drawing of Michael and Margaret Heller House (supplied by the Saucon Valley Conservancy) – First Floor. Captions indicate the current use of rooms, with the historic uses in parentheses if different from current use.



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Map 4. Measured Drawing of Heller Farmhouse (supplied by the Saucon Valley Conservancy) – Second Floor. Captions indicate the current use of rooms, with the historic uses in parentheses.

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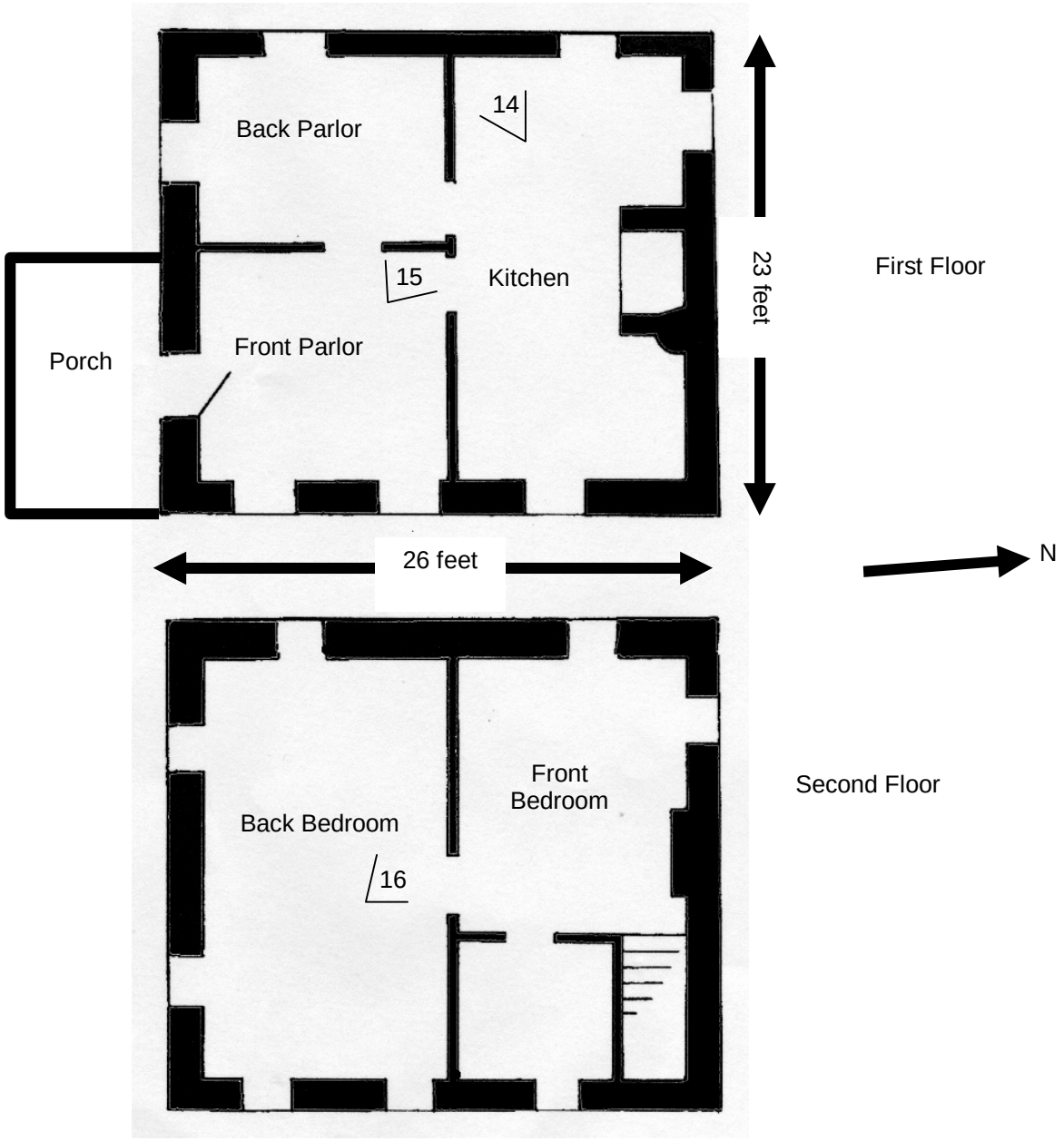
Map 5. Measured Drawing of Widow's House (supplied by the Saucon Valley Conservancy)



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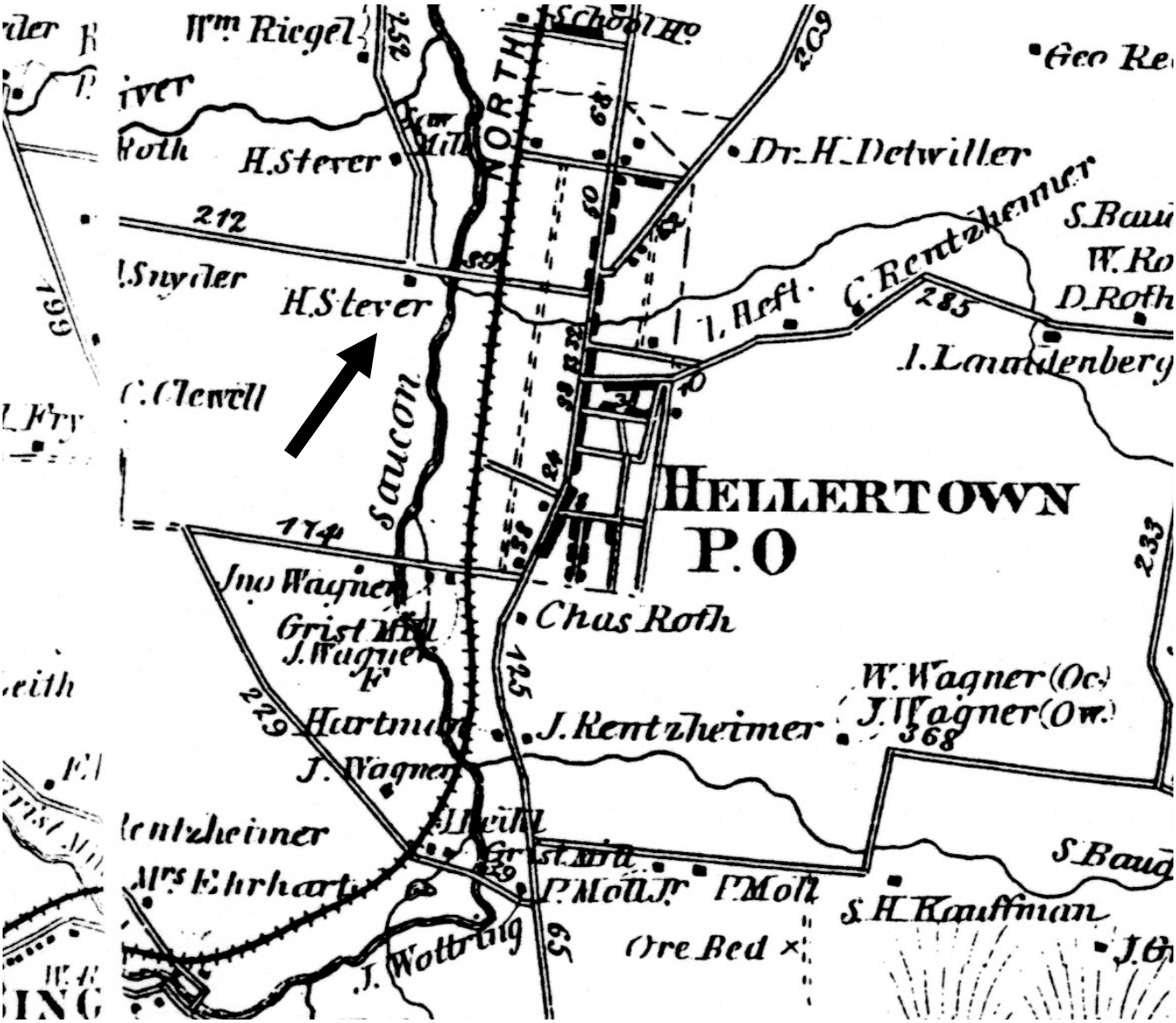

Map 6. Detail of Lower Saucon Township, D. G. Beers, *Atlas of Northampton County, Pennsylvania* (A. Pomeroy & Co., 1874). The owner Henry Stever is shown on the map.

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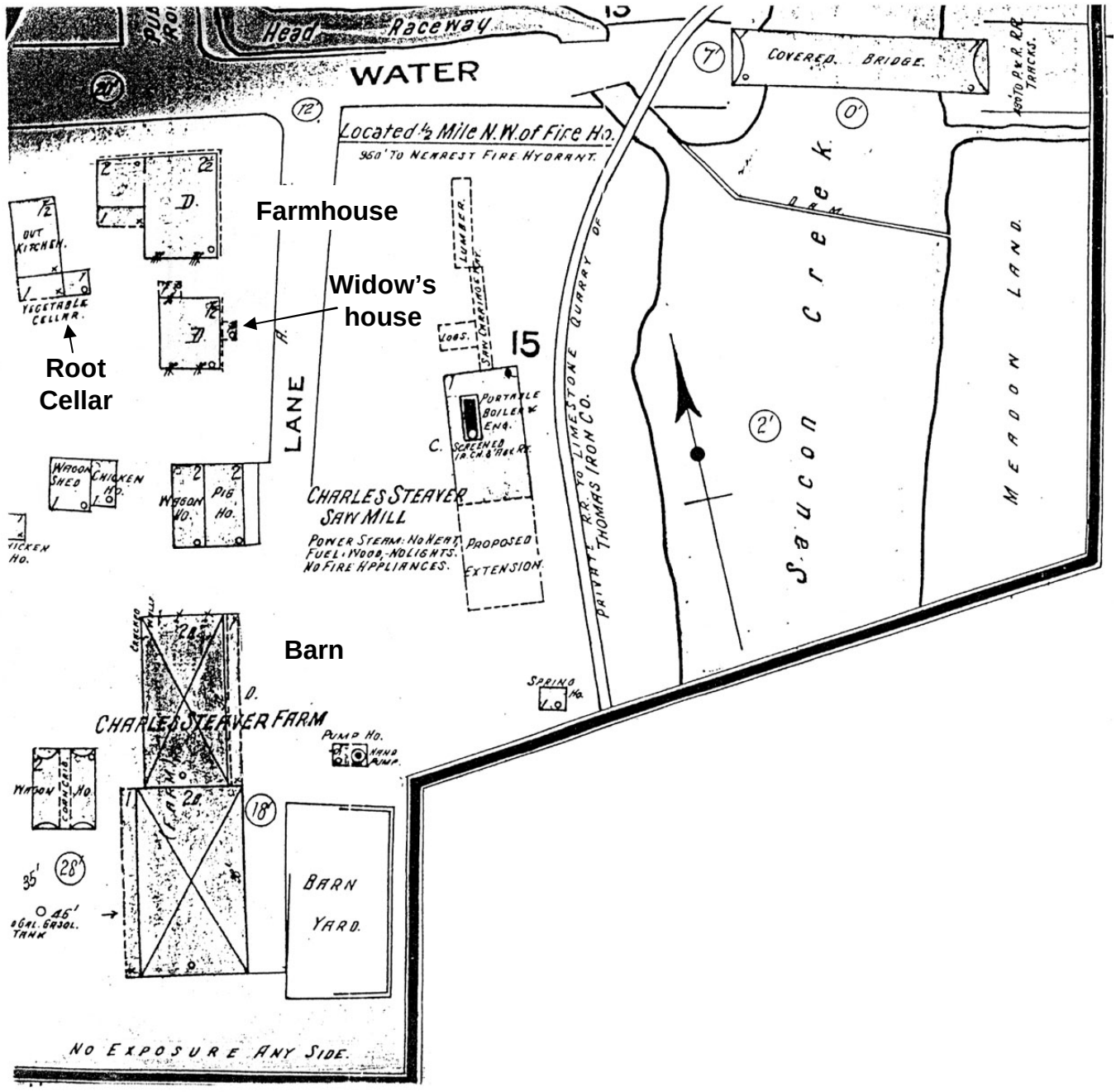

Map 7. Detail of Sanborn Atlas of Hellertown (1933 revision). Note that Charles Stever's name is spelled Charles Steaver.

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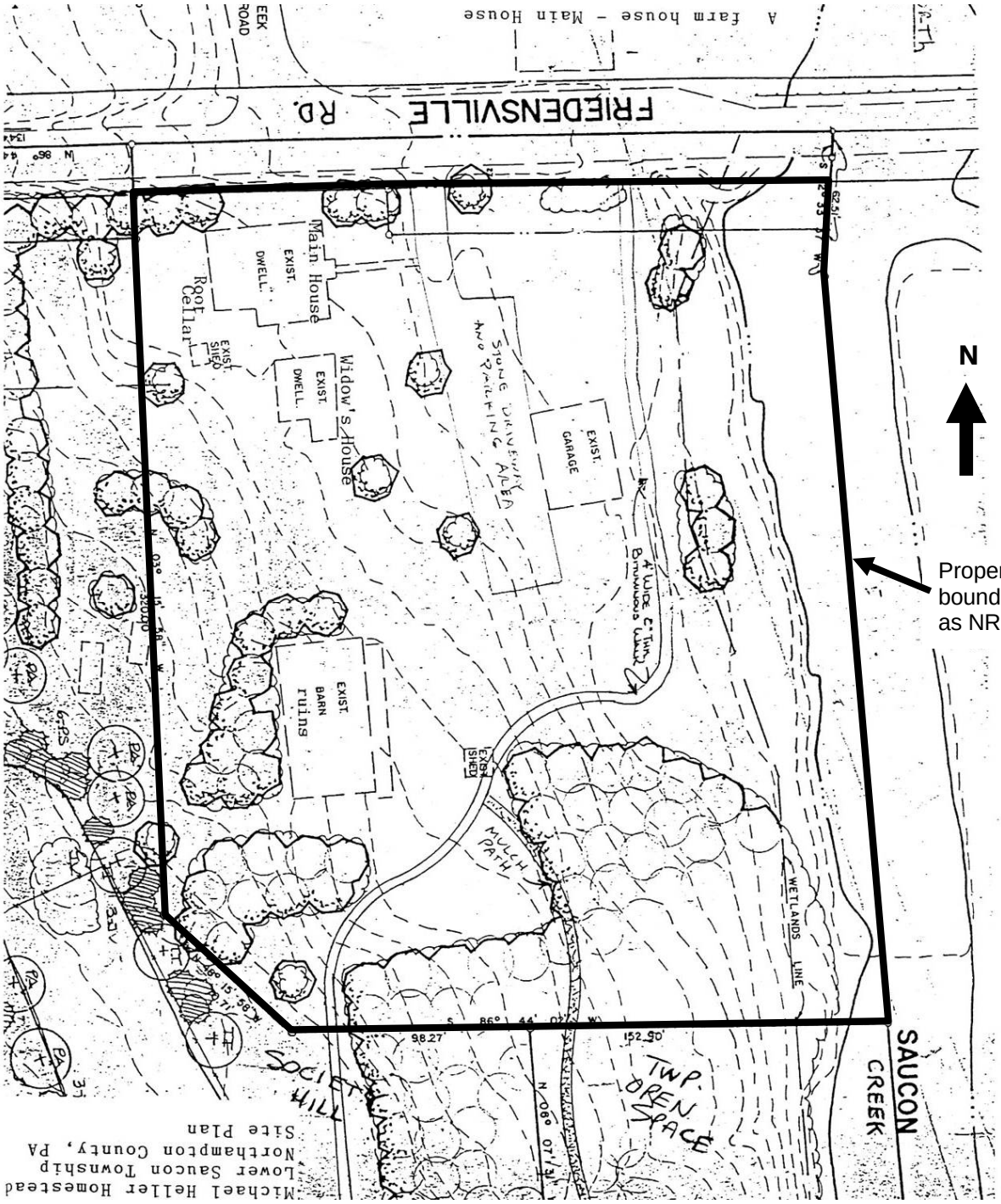

Map 8. Detail of "Site Plan" produced c. 1990 for the K. Hovnanian development of the surrounding property. The map shows the current property boundary. Refer to Map 1 to see all resources on the property.

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Deed Ref. Date	Grantor	Grantee	Price Acreage	Description Excerpts
1993-7-699 8/3/1992	K. Hovnanian at Lower Saucon	Lower Saucon Twp.	$1 2.235 acres	All that certain tract or parcel of land. "This land was acquired for perpetual recreation and open space purposes…" Part of the following property.
768-399 5/9/1989	Dennis E. & Claudia Benner of Lower Saucon Twp.	K. Hovnanian	$1 91.331 acres	All that certain tract or parcel of land. Same as the following deed.
754-273 8/26/1988	Zenon E. & Elizabeth B. Nowicki of Bethlehem	Dennis E. & Claudia Benner of Lower Saucon Twp.	$1 91.331 acres	All that certain tract or parcel of land. Same as the following deed.
652-752 7/19/1983	Helena Nowicki Estate	Zenon E. Nowicki (son and executor)	$1 Acreage not specified	All that certain messuage or tenement and tract of land. Hipolit Nowicki died on 4/21/1952, and his widow Helena died on 1/8/1982. Same as the following property.
A82-339 10/17/1945	John & Clara Spallone of Lower Saucon Twp.	Hipolit & Helena Nowicki of Bethlehem	$1 100 acres	All that certain messuage and tenement and tract of land. The property represents the bulk of the following deed.
F71-310 2/28/1941	Saucon Valley Trust Co.	John Spallone of Plainfield Twp.	$13,500 102 acres, 28 perches	All that certain messuage or tenement and tract of land. Part of the following deed.
D70-689 6/18/1940	Walter K. & Mildred R. Geyer of Hellertown	Saucon Valley Trust Co.	$1 259 acres	All those two certain messuages or tenements and tracts of land. The subject tract is tract #1, with the same size as specified in the deeds of 1934 and 1941. This deed includes the measurements of the buildings. Combination of the following deed (including the subject tract) and a second parcel. This was a sheriff's sale.
C66-97 9/29/1934	John A. & Ella Stephens of Hellertown	Walter K. & Mildred R. Geyer of Hellertown	$1 102 acres, 28 perches	All that certain messuage or tenement and tract of land. Same as the following property.
E51-583 5/4/1923	Charles & Matilda Stever of Lower Saucon Twp.	John A. Stephens of Hellertown	$18,000 102 acres, 28 perches	Tract No. 1, Whereon the buildings are erected. One of three tracts in the following deed.
F21-198 6/10/1890	Jacob & Amanda Wagner of Lower Saucon Twp.	Charles Stever of Lower Saucon Twp.	$15,081.91 113 acres	All of the Three following described Tracts of pieces of Land. Tract No. 1 is the subject tract (102 acres, 28 perches); the other two are a tract of 7 acres, 130 perches and a tract of 3 acres, 77 perches. Same as the following deed.

Deed Ref. Date	Grantor	Grantee	Price Acreage	Description Excerpts
F21-191 6/10/1890	Henry Stever Estate	Jacob Wagner of Lower Saucon Twp.	$15,081.91 113 acres	All of the Three following described Tracts or pieces of Land. Tract No. 1 is the subject tract (102 acres, 28 perches); the other two are a tract of 7 acres, 130 perches and a tract of 3 acres, 77 perches. Combination of several earlier deeds; the subject tract (Tract No. 1) was part of the following deed.
E10-639 N.D. [1862]	Baltzer Stever of Lower Saucon Twp.	Henry Stever (son)	$0 103 acres	Messuage and tract of land. The deed describes Baltzer Stever as the owner but also provides the date of his will as 7/12/1862 and mentions that his wife Maria has a lifetime right to live on the property. Part of the following property.
A10-331 4/11/1840	Francis & Magdalena Hartman of Lower Saucon Twp.	Balzer Stever, Farmer of Lower Saucon Twp.	$9,125 126 acres	All that certain Messuage, Tenement, and two Tracts, pieces, or parcels of Land: one of 108 acres, 3 perches where the house is located, and one of 17 acres, 60 perches. Part of the following deed.
D5-24 4/6/1827	Michael Heller Assignees	Francis Hartman, Farmer of Hellertown	$2,800 128 acres	All that Certain Messuage Tenement and two Tracts of Land: one of 108 acres, 3 roods where the farmhouse is located, and a second parcel of 19 acres, 140 perches. The deed also mentions a 1790 provision for repairing the mill race (this provision continues in deeds into the 20th century). Same as the following deed.
B5-424 4/3/1826	Michael & Salome Heller of Lower Saucon Twp.	Assignees	$1 128 acres	All that certain Messuage or Tenement and Tract of land (same as described in deed of 1827 above). Same as the following property.
G1-356 2/2/1790	Michael Heller the Elder and wife Margaret, both of Lower Saucon Twp.	Michael Heller the Younger (son) of Lower Saucon Twp.	£400 128 acres	One Messuage and two Certain tracts or Pieces of Land. Part of the following.
Patent Book P2-284 12/26/1783	Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	Michael Heller	£79.0.6 149.75 acres	A “certain Tract of Land called Hellerton,” situate on Saucon Creek. The original survey was made for Nicholas Walber, who defaulted on his quit rents and sold his interest in the property to Heller in 1747.

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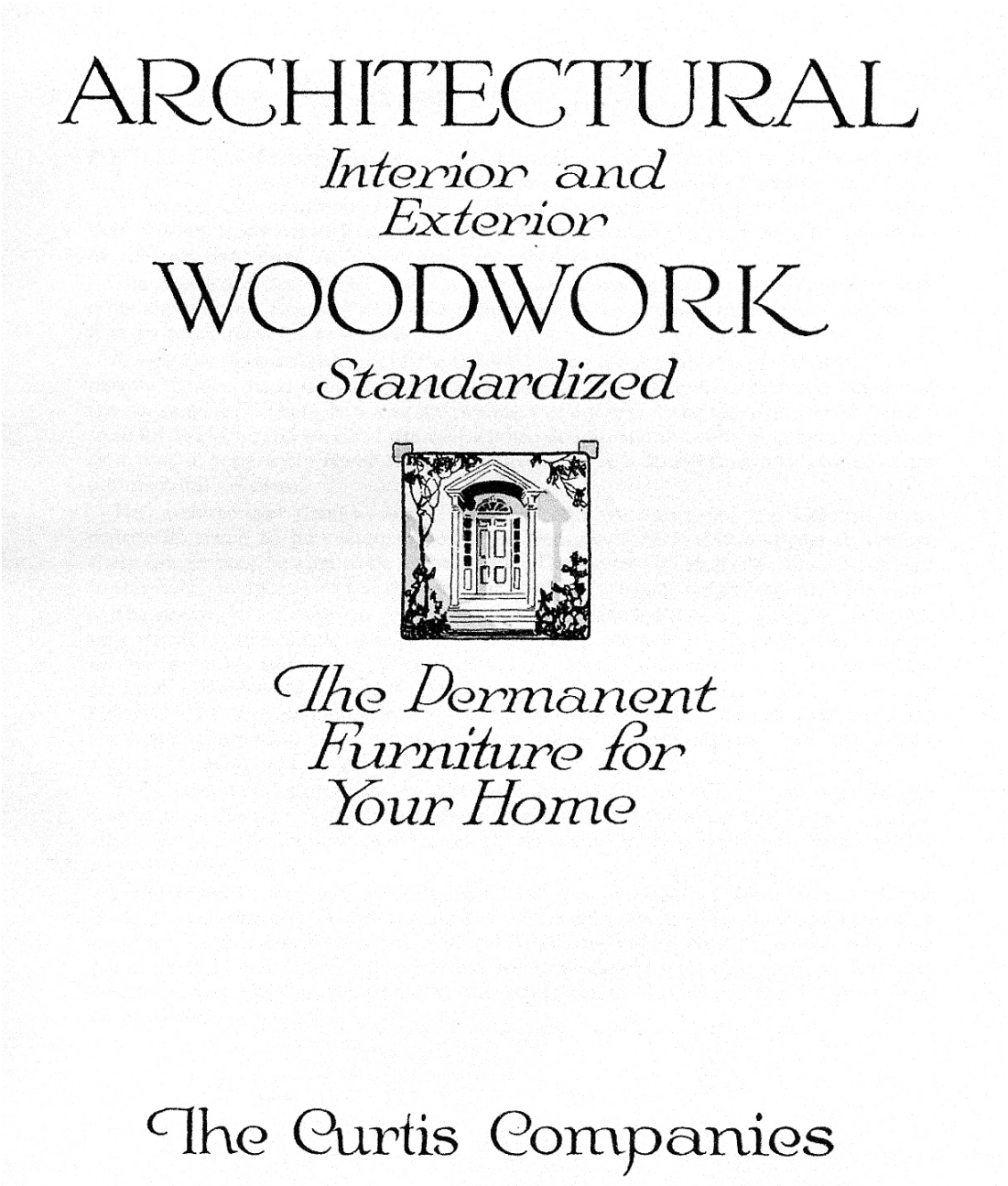
Cover of the Curtis Companies catalog referenced in this nomination.



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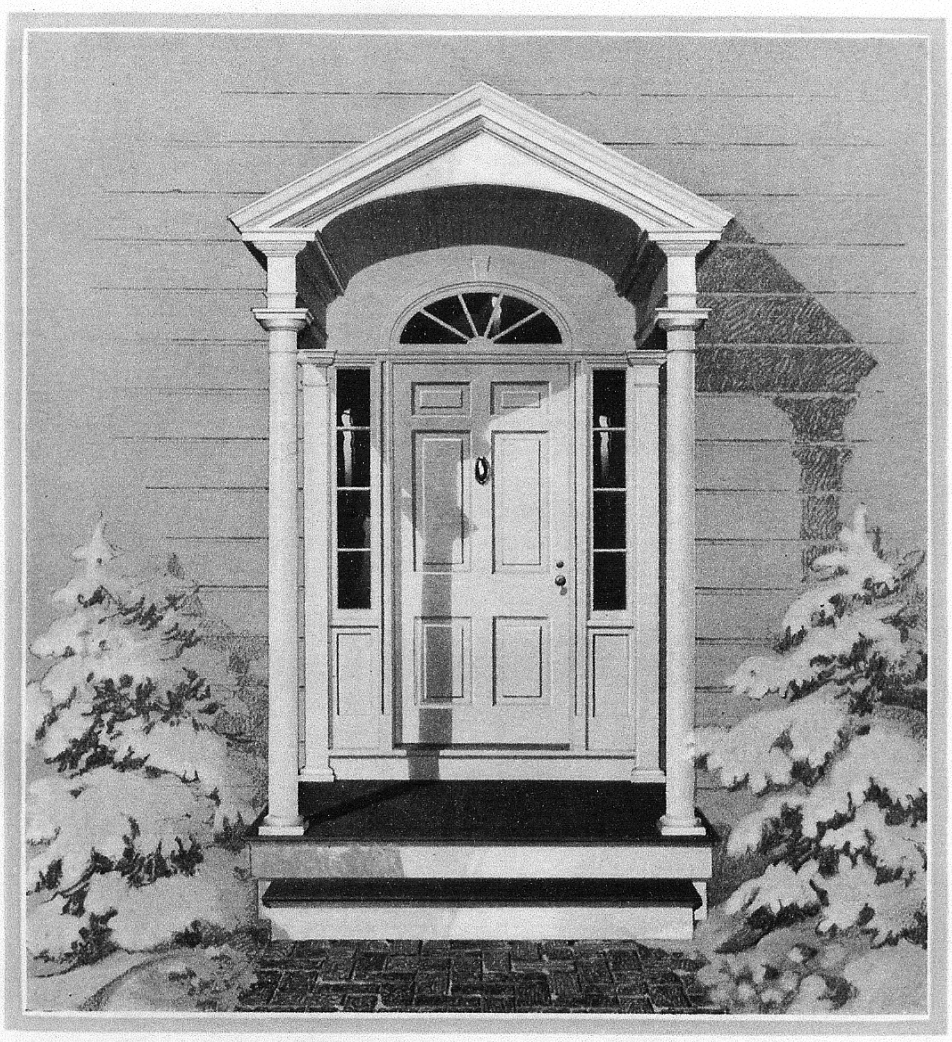
Curtis Companies Plate C-100: the "Colonial" portico. The portico on the Michael and Margaret Heller House is very similar to this portico.



Entrance C-100—Colonial

Complete entrance includes door, frame, sidelight sash, transom, columns, pilasters, all moldings for cornice, plate boxes and hood, half-circle facia and half-circle spandrel. When frame is purchased separately it includes columns, sidelight panels, pilasters, moldings for cornice, plate boxes and hood, half-circle facia, half-circle spandrel and riser beneath sill.

DOOR C-220 SIZES	SIDELIGHT SASH C-1084 SIZES	TRANSOM SASH C-1085 SIZES	COLUMNS C-1426 SIZES	FRAME C-1260 ROUGH OPENING 2 x 4 STUD WALL	FRAME C-1260 SIZE PORCH FLOOR TO TOP OF KEY BLOCK 2 x 4 STUD WALL	FRAME C-1260 ROUGH AND OVERALL SIZE MASONRY WALL
2′ 8″ x 6′ 8″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 5″ 1⅜″ 4 lt.	2′ 8″ x 1′ 2⅛″ 1⅜″ 5 lt.	4½ x 4½ x 7′ 5″	4′ 11″ x 8′ 4″	5′ 6″ x 8′ 11½″	5′ 6″ x 8′ 5½″
3′ 0″ x 6′ 8″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 5″ 1⅜″ 4 lt.	3′ 0″ x 1′ 2⅛″ 1⅜″ 5 lt.	4½ x 4½ x 7′ 5″	5′ 3″ x 8′ 4″	5′ 10″ x 8′ 11½″	5′ 10″ x 8′ 5½″
2′ 8″ x 7′ 0″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 9″ 1⅜″ 4 lt.	2′ 8″ x 1′ 2⅛″ 1⅜″ 5 lt.	4½ x 4½ x 7′ 9″	4′ 11″ x 8′ 8″	5′ 6″ x 9′ 3½″	5′ 6″ x 8′ 9½″
3′ 0″ x 7′ 0″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 9″ 1⅜″ 4 lt.	3′ 0″ x 1′ 2⅛″ 1⅜″ 5 lt.	4½ x 4½ x 7′ 9″	5′ 3″ x 8′ 8″	5′ 10″ x 9′ 3½″	5′ 10″ x 8′ 9½″

Height porch floor to top of pediment 10′ 5¾″. This height should be maintained to preserve correct architectural detail. Distance center to center columns; 2′ 8″ door, 5′ 1½″; for 3′ 0″ door, 5′ 5½″. Porch floor for 2′ 8″ door is 6′ 0½″ x 4′ 7¾″; for 3′ 0″ door, 6′ 4½″ x 4′ 7¾″.

For the kinds of wood, price information, and shipping weight, see Curtis Catalog Supplement

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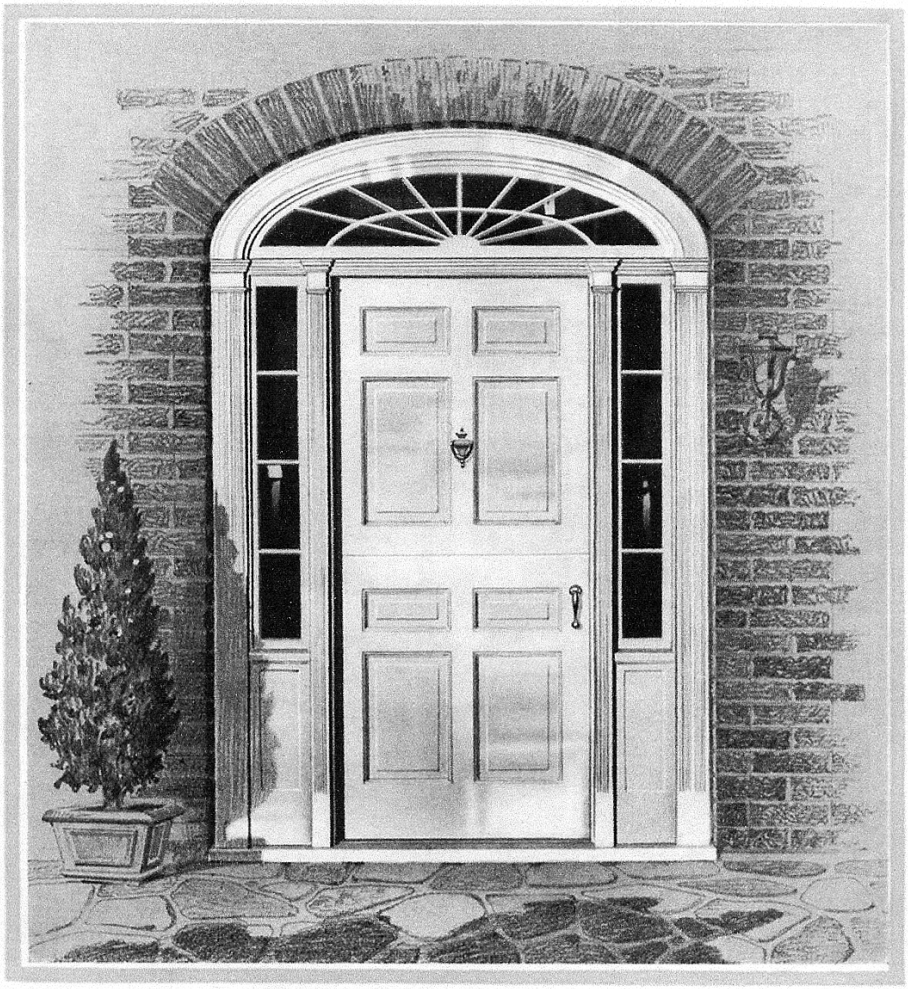
Curtis Companies Plate C-101, showing a “Colonial” entrance very similar to the one Stanley Yeager installed on the Michael and Margaret Heller House.



Entrance C-101—Colonial

NO geometrical figure is more pleasing to the eye than the ellipse. In the transom of this doorway, its beauty is enhanced by the radial lines and the delicately fluted pilasters that support it. The entrance will make a bright vestibule or hall because of the large transom and the long sidelights. The door illustrated is a Dutch design, being cut in half.

Complete entrance includes frame, door, sidelight sash and transom. When frame is purchased separately it includes sidelight panels and trim as illustrated.

DOOR C-221 SIZES	SIDELIGHT SASH C-1084 SIZES	TRANSOM SASH C-1086 SIZES	FRAME C-1261 ROUGH OPENING 2 x 4 STUD WALL	FRAME C-1261 OVERALL SIZE TO TOP OF FRAME 2 x 4 STUD WALL	FRAME C-1261 ROUGH AND OVERALL SIZE MASONRY WALL
2′ 8″ x 6′ 8″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 5″ 1⅜″ 4 lts.	4′ 9″ x 1′ 3″ 1⅜″ 16 lts.	4′ 11″ x 8′ 4⅝″	5′ 5½″ x 8′ 7⅝″	5′ 5½″ x 8′ 7⅝″
3′ 0″ x 6′ 8″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 5″ 1⅜″ 4 lts.	5′ 1″ x 1′ 5½″ 1⅜″ 16 lts.	5′ 3″ x 8′ 7⅛″	5′ 9½″ x 8′ 10⅛″	5′ 9½″ x 8′ 10⅛″
2′ 8″ x 7′ 0″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 9″ 1⅜″ 4 lts.	4′ 9″ x 1′ 3″ 1⅜″ 16 lts.	4′ 11″ x 8′ 8⅝″	5′ 5½″ x 8′ 11⅝″	5′ 5½″ x 8′ 11⅝″
3′ 0″ x 7′ 0″ 1⅜″ and 1¾″	10″ x 4′ 9″ 1⅜″ 4 lts.	5′ 1″ x 1′ 5½″ 1⅜″ 16 lts.	5′ 3″ x 8′ 11⅛″	5′ 9½″ x 9′ 2⅛″	5′ 9½″ x 9′ 2⅛″

Any Colonial door with suitable sidelights can be used in this entrance

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Curtis Companies Plate C-900, showing “Colonial” stairs. The stairs at the Michael and Margaret Heller House are almost identical to this plate.

Stairs C-900 and C-901

C-900 Colonial. (Large illustration.) Material furnished for open string straight run, first to second floor, includes: 15 risers, 14 treads including half-circle starting tread and riser, 1 nosing, 31 balusters C-943, 1 starting newel C-923, 1 landing newel C-933, 1 volute, 14 feet of hand rail C-953, necessary wall and face strings, cove and wedges. Width of stair from face of plaster to center of balusters 3′ 6″. Hand rail 2′ 7″ high from top of tread to top of hand rail on line with face of riser.

C-901 Colonial. (Small illustration.) Material furnished for stairway to run 6 risers to platform and 9 risers boxed from platform to second floor includes: 15 risers, 13 treads, 2 nosings, 1 starting newel C-923, 1 half newel for landing C-933, 1 easing, 1 gooseneck, 9 balusters C-943, 6 feet of hand rail C-953, 10 feet of wall rail, necessary wall and face strings, cove and wedges. Width of stairs from face of plaster to center of balusters 3′ 6″. Hand rail 2′ 6″ high. Width of stairs (boxed run) face to face of plaster 3′ 1″.

Note: No rough horses, baseboard, or second floor material are included.

For the kinds of wood, price information, and shipping weight, see Curtis Catalog Supplement

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Name of Property: Michael & Margaret Heller House

City or Vicinity: Lower Saucon Township, Pa.

County: Northampton **State:** Pennsylvania

Photographer: Wise Preservation Planning LLC

Date Photographed: 11/3/2009

Production: Printed on Epson Premium Photo Paper Glossy with HP Vivera ink

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 23. Widow's House (left) and Michael and Margaret Heller House (right), facing northwest.

2 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, main (east) elevation.

3 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, north elevation. The c. 1820 section is on the left and the c. 1751 core on the right.

4 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, facing northeast. The c. 1751 core and the c. 1950 enclosed porch are on the left and the c. 1820 section is on the right.

5 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, portico on c. 1820 section, facing west.

6 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, first floor, center hall, facing west from the entrance.

7 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, first floor, south room, facing southwest.

8 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, first floor, core, facing southwest.

9 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, second floor, northeast bedroom in c. 1820 section, facing northwest.

10 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, second floor room interpreted as a parlor, facing southeast.

11 of 23. Michael and Margaret Heller House, second floor, bedroom in southwest corner, facing southwest. The cradle in the photo was brought by the Hellers from Germany.

12 of 23. Widow's House, main elevation, facing northwest.

13 of 23. Widow's House, rear elevation, facing southeast.

14 of 23. Widow's House, kitchen, facing northeast.

15 of 23. Widow's House, parlor, facing southwest from the door to the kitchen.

16 of 23. Widow's House, second floor, facing south.

17 of 23. Root Cellar, facing southwest.

18 of 23. Root Cellar, interior, facing west.

19 of 23. Barn ruin, facing west.

20 of 23. Wagon Shed ruins, facing northwest.

21 of 23. Wagon House ruins, facing southeast.

22 of 23. Retaining wall and ruins of c. 1950 garage, facing northwest.

23 of 23. Formal stairs dating to 1935 east of the Michael and Margaret Heller House.