

The Hidden History of the Lebanon Farmers Market (And the Secret to Keeping Old Brick Beautiful)



If you've ever walked through downtown Lebanon on a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday morning, you know the pull of the Lebanon Farmers Market. The smell of fresh-baked goods, the buzz of conversation, the pride of supporting local vendors, it's one of those places that just FEELS like home!

But here's something most folks don't know: that beautiful brick building you're walking into has been standing strong since **1892**. That's over 130 years of community, commerce, and character packed into 30,000 square feet of historic architecture! And as **painters Lebanon PA** who've worked on countless historic structures across the region, we at J.W.Wolfe Painting have a deep appreciation for what it takes to keep these landmarks looking gorgeous.

So let's dive into the hidden history of this Lebanon treasure, and share the SECRETS to keeping old brick beautiful for another century (or three)!

A Community Hub Since 1892



The Lebanon Farmers Market wasn't always the bustling, renovated space you see today. Back in 1892, this building was THE marketplace for Lebanon County. Think about that for a second, while your great-great-grandparents were shopping for produce and meeting their neighbors, this same brick structure was sheltering them!

The market has always been more than just a place to buy groceries. It's been a gathering spot, a social hub, and a piece of living history. Families have been coming here for GENERATIONS! That continuity is something we treasure in Lebanon, and it's why preserving these historic buildings means so much to our community.

Just recently, in December 2024, the market changed hands for \$1.35 million, and the new owner has committed to preserving its character while breathing new life into underutilized spaces. That's the kind of stewardship these buildings deserve!

The Beauty of 19th-Century Brick Architecture

Now let's talk about what makes this building (and so many of Lebanon's historic structures) absolutely stunning: the **brickwork**.

19th-century brick isn't like what you see on modern construction. These bricks were often hand-made, fired in local kilns, and laid by craftsmen who took SERIOUS pride in their work. The result? A texture, color variation, and durability that modern materials just can't replicate.

The Lebanon Farmers Market building showcases classic Victorian-era brickwork, those deep reds and subtle orange tones that catch the morning light just right. The mortar joints were carefully struck, and the patterns were designed to last. And guess what? They have! Over 130 years later, that brick is still doing its job.

But here's the thing: keeping historic brick beautiful takes knowledge, care, and the right approach. And that's where a lot of property owners get tripped up.

Why Historic Brick Needs Special Attention



Brick might seem indestructible, but old brick is actually quite different from new brick. Here's what makes it special (and a bit more delicate):

The mortar matters MORE than you think. Historic mortar was typically made with lime, which is softer and more breathable than modern Portland cement mortars. This softness is actually a FEATURE, not a bug! It allows moisture to escape through the mortar joints rather than through the brick itself, which prevents the brick from crumbling.

Brick "breathes." Historic buildings weren't constructed with vapor barriers and modern waterproofing. They were designed to let moisture move through the walls naturally. When you seal old brick with the wrong products, you trap moisture inside, and that causes spalling, cracking, and deterioration.

Patina = character. That slight weathering, the moss in shaded corners, the subtle color shifts? That's 130+ years of history! You don't want to blast it away with aggressive cleaning methods.

The Secrets to Keeping Old Brick Beautiful

Alright, here's where we get into the good stuff, the maintenance secrets that keep historic brick looking AMAZING for decades to come!

1. Gentle Cleaning is Key

When it comes to **pressure washing services** for historic brick, you've got to be CAREFUL. High-pressure washing can actually do more harm than good on old brick! Here's our approach:

Low-pressure washing (under 500 PSI) is your friend. We use specialized equipment that provides just enough pressure to remove dirt, biological growth, and grime without damaging the brick surface or eroding the mortar joints.

The right cleaning solutions matter. We don't just blast brick with water and hope for the best! Depending on what we're removing (efflorescence, organic growth, paint, etc.), we use pH-balanced cleaners specifically formulated for historic masonry.

Timing is everything. We clean brick when it's cool and damp, never in direct sunlight or extreme heat. This prevents rapid drying that can cause streaking and damage.



2. Repointing with the Right Materials

If you've got crumbling mortar joints, repointing is essential, but it HAS to be done correctly!

Modern cement-based mortars are STRONGER than historic lime mortars, which sounds great until you realize that means the mortar won't give way under stress. Instead, the brick itself will crack and spall. Not good!

Historic buildings need lime-based mortar that matches the original in strength, color, and texture. This allows the joints to remain the "weak point" in the system (which protects the brick), and it maintains the breathability of the wall.

3. Protective Coatings (When Appropriate)

Now here's where our expertise as a **painting contractor** really comes into play! Not all brick should be coated, but when it IS appropriate, the right products make all the difference.

Breathable masonry sealers can protect brick from water infiltration while still allowing moisture vapor to escape. We use products specifically rated for historic masonry, never standard latex paints or non-breathable sealers!

Limewash and mineral-based paints are traditional finishes that work beautifully on historic brick. These materials bond chemically with the masonry and remain breathable, unlike modern acrylics.

Know when to leave it alone! Sometimes the best thing you can do for historic brick is absolutely nothing. If it's in good condition and not suffering from moisture issues, let that patina shine!

4. Address Water Issues FIRST



Before you clean, seal, or paint ANY historic brick, you've got to address water management!

Check your gutters, downspouts, and grading. Make sure water is being directed AWAY from the foundation. Fix any roof leaks. These simple steps prevent 90% of brick deterioration issues!

How J.W.Wolfe Painting Serves Lebanon's Historic Structures

Listen, we LOVE working on historic buildings! There's something incredibly satisfying about preserving a piece of our community's history, whether it's a church built in the 1800s, a Victorian home on a tree-lined street, or a commercial building downtown.

We've built our reputation as **painters Lebanon PA** trust because we take the time to understand what each building needs. Historic structures aren't one-size-fits-all projects: they require knowledge, patience, and the right techniques!

When you work with J.W.Wolfe Painting, here's what you get:

- ✓ **A+ quality work** (we're talking meticulous attention to detail!)
- ✓ **Projects completed ahead of schedule** (because we respect your time!)
- ✓ **Crews who understand historic preservation principles**
- ✓ **The right equipment and materials for delicate masonry work**
- ✓ **A commitment to building relationships**, not just completing transactions

Whether you need **pressure washing services** for your historic brick home, specialized coatings for a century-old building, or complete exterior restoration, we've got the experience and expertise to do it RIGHT.

Preserving Lebanon's Legacy, One Brick at a Time

The Lebanon Farmers Market is just one example of the incredible historic architecture we're blessed to have in our community. From churches to homes to commercial buildings, these structures tell the story of who we are and where we came from.

And here's the beautiful thing: with proper care and maintenance, these buildings can serve our community for another 130 years! That's the legacy we're helping to preserve every time we carefully clean historic brick, apply the right protective coatings, or restore a weathered facade.

If you've got a historic brick building that needs some TLC: or if you're just curious about the best way to maintain your older home: **let's talk!** We'd love to share our expertise and help you preserve a piece of Lebanon's history.

After all, taking care of our community's landmarks isn't just good business: it's who we ARE. And that means the world to us! 🎨💡