

Jenifer Lime Kiln



This northern-most kiln in the group is a continuous burn, vertical shaft kiln once owned by Thomas Risteau Jenifer. This 1883 kiln measures 14 feet square for its full 25 foot height. Its walls are at least 4 feet thick surrounding the circular center stack. The arched “poke holes” on either side were used to monitor the burning of the Cockeysville Marble and, when the time was right, to stoke or push the mass of marble and ash down to the cooling chamber below.

Notice the size of the stack top opening. This measures approximately 4 feet in diameter compared to the adjoining Risteau Kiln opening which measures 13 feet in diameter. This comparison begins to show the difference in technology of the intermittent burn Risteau Kiln, initially developed in the Middle Ages, and that of the Jenifer Kiln, which became popular in the United States around the 1850s. The Jenifer Kiln was capable of producing up to 6000 bushels of quicklime per year.



Atop the Jenifer Kiln stood a 10 foot to 15 foot high chimney which aided in creating an up-draft for hot air baking of the marble and in carrying away the smoke and toxic fumes from the lime making process. When the kiln was no longer in use, the chimney was collapsed into the kiln stack to prevent possible injury to people and prize dairy cows.

During 2015 stabilization work, some of these chimney bricks were recovered. Several of the bricks are stamped with the name of the manufacturer, such as Baltimore Brick Co., Savage Brick, and Union Brick Co.



Visible from here is the timber bracing system that shows large timbers held tightly against the stonework by the original iron tie-rods. These timbers and ties braced the kiln walls against the outward pressure of the hot gasses and expanding stones. Also visible on the ground below the kiln is the original stone patio in front of the kiln



cooling vault. This patio most likely protected the ground in front of the kiln from damage by wagon wheels and allowed continued use of the area even in bad weather.