

TID BITS

- ◆ When it was time for the annual event of replacing the chink of a log cabin neighbors would gather at one home and completed the job together. The day was made into a social event that was repeated at each home until all the area cabins had new chink.
- ◆ Log cabins are a symbol of humble origins and have come to represent hard work and patriotism in America. Seven US presidents were either born in or have lived in a log cabin including Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, James Buchanan and Adlai Stevenson.
- ◆ It is thought that the first log cabins were built over 5000 years ago during the Bronze Age in Northern Europe. It is thought that log cabins were first brought to America in the 1630's by the Scandinavians, to an area which later became known as Delaware. Others believe that the Mennonites brought them to the Pennsylvanian area in the early 18th century.
- ◆ The classic children's construction toy Lincoln Logs was developed in 1916 by John Lloyd Wright, son of Frank Lloyd Wright, a famous American architect and who has won many prestigious awards.
- ◆ The doors to log cabins were usually built facing the south. This allowed the sun to shine into the cabin during the day.
- ◆ Log walls help to keep the temperature steady inside, being warm in the winter and cooler in the summer.

Cedar County Historical Society Museum and Prairie Village

1094 Hwy 38, Tipton, Iowa
(Just North of Tipton)

PO Box 254, Tipton, Iowa, 52772

Museum Hours:

Tuesday 10 AM—4 PM
Thursday 10 AM—4 PM
Saturday 10 AM—2 PM
By Appointment, please call in
advance: 563.886.2899

Cedar County Historical Society

TO COLLECT, PRESERVE, AND SHARE
CEDAR COUNTY HISTORY

FRASEUR CABIN



TOURS OF THE PRAIRIE VILLAGE ARE
AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT.

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563.886.2899

FRASEUR CABIN

The Fraseur Cabin was built west of Tipton in 1842 by Benjamin Fraseur, one of Cedar County's earliest settlers'. This served as his primary residence for some time. In 1975 it was moved to Massillon Park in northern Cedar County and restored for the National bicentennial celebrations the following year. After 30 years in Massillon Park, it was became too much to care for in addition some vandalism had occurred. For these reasons, it was donated to the Cedar County Historical Society. It was moved to its current location, which at the time had been recently acquired by the society. The cabin was the first building in our Prairie Village. As part of the move the cabin was placed on a short limestone foundation. This feature was not original to the cabin as it sat directly on the ground initially. However, it was determined that the limestone fell in line with available materials of 1842, would help preserve the cabin by keeping it away from the moisture associated with sitting on the ground in the changing Iowa climate.

In 2012 new restoration efforts began with a thorough inspection of what needed to be done. It was determined the roof would need to be replaced, a new log to replace a dry rotted one, a new floor, and chinking

would be necessary. In 2013 the shake roof was replaced with the new roof estimated to last at least 25 years. At the same time the wood floor was replaced as well. In 2016 we replaced a couple of logs, as a second one was showing signs of dry rot as well, and the chink was completely



replaced in side and out. We did use a modern composite material that can expand and contract with Iowa weather conditions as the original chink material, some combination of clay mud and horse hair, needed to be replaced annually. The modern material was applied in the traditional manner which was likely used when the cabin was built. The modern material will protect the logs and interior better. After the chink was in and dried the cabin then received two coats inside and out of a moisturizing spray mixed by the craftsmen we hired. This was done to help moisturize the old wood and help prevent

further dry rot or insect infestation.

As you approach the cabin one of the interesting characteristics about it, is the ability to see the marks in the logs where Benjamin Fraseur used a hatchet or axe to trim down the logs into the square shape that they are. These same markings can also be seen on the inside walls and beams for the ceiling. The interior is decorated with an antique rope bed complete with feather ticks and handmade quilts. A small cabinet is mounted on the wall behind the small table and benches that would tightly seat 4 adults. We also have a stove, kitchen items, rocking chair, baby cradle, and a couple of hand-woven rag rugs to add some charm. The cabin is equipped with an attic or small loft that would have been where the children slept probably on palettes of straw and quilts. Outside the cabin we have established a small plot of native grasses and flowers that the settlers would have seen upon their arrival to the area.