



Mill • Direct News

Living the Log Home Lifestyle

Spring 2017

VIEW FROM THE MILL

By Levi Hochstetler

This winter has been one of the mildest winters I have ever experienced. These mild winters are starting to work on us skeptics of the so called "Global warming." Apparently, data is coming in to support the claim, though, it's actually only by a small fraction of a degree. Back in the late 70s when we experienced some of the coldest winters in my memory, the cry of the day was, "we are going back to the ice age." Then in the early 80s, we had several mild winters. I remember the question was raised in a news article, "what happened to the ice age?" It was explained by the so called experts that before the ice age, the earth went through a warming as well. It seems we can't win for losing!

While the argument goes back and forth I believe we have a deep responsibility to our future generations to be good stewards of our natural resources. My parents used to say "Waste not, want not." I'm not sure who first wrote that, but I'd like to rephrase it to "let's waste not today, so our children and grandchildren won't be wanting tomorrow." May I ask permission to say, "one of the things that deeply bothers me is the way we live on the high hog, racking up a national debt, that someday our innocent grandchildren being born today will have to repay?"

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23 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Log Homes

- By Levi Hochstetler

This story is the 3rd part of a continuing story.

#12: Aren't log homes prone to insects?

No, not more so than any other home. In fact, cavity-loving insects such as yellow jackets don't nest in a solid log wall. The misconception that log homes are more prone to insects is due to the fact that if you have insect problems you can see it right away whereas with stick homes they can be present for years before the unwary homeowner realizes it. Regardless, what home you own – stick or log – you should hire an exterminator to go over your home at least once a year.

#13: What stain or finish is the best?

Of all the decisions you make in procuring material to build your home this is perhaps one of the most crucial. Depending on the product you choose or what your builder chooses for you, it can easily triple the maintenance on your home. So do your homework!

Several years ago after being constantly bombarded by sales people from various finish manufactures wanting us to promote and sell their products, we finally decided to do our own testing. So we bought 40 different products from 30 different manufactures, all being a similar color. We then took pieces of log siding and coated each one with their recommended procedure. We attached

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Woods to the Mill – Where Quality Starts - *By Bill Dinkins & Levi Hochstetler*

While our operation here at Hochstetler really starts by giving away free white pine seedlings, it is many years later before those trees are large enough to where we can harvest them. That's when the real Hochstetler difference kicks in. You will note that we take it all the way from selecting the trees in the woods, through harvesting, sawing, drying, milling, designing and finally delivery of the package on your home site. Now that's quality control!

When a landowner has trees he thinks are ready to harvest they call Greg, our professional forester, who evaluates their trees and helps them select the trees that should be harvested and those that should be left standing for the future. Recently Greg was able to purchase pine trees over 100' tall. These trees were so large that only four could fit on a semi flatbed. Abe, our sawmill manager said he was able to get (7) 12' saw-logs out of each tree, some measuring 36" across. It wouldn't take many trees of that size to build a log home! After marking the harvestable trees, they are cut and hauled to our saw-mill near Saltillo, a quaint little village about 8 miles southeast of Millersburg, Ohio. The sawmill has been in operation since 1970 and is managed by Abe who has been involved with our mill for over 33 years!

Several years ago, Ervin Raber, the original owner of our sawmill, wanted to retire after cutting pine for us for over 20 years. We had a great relationship

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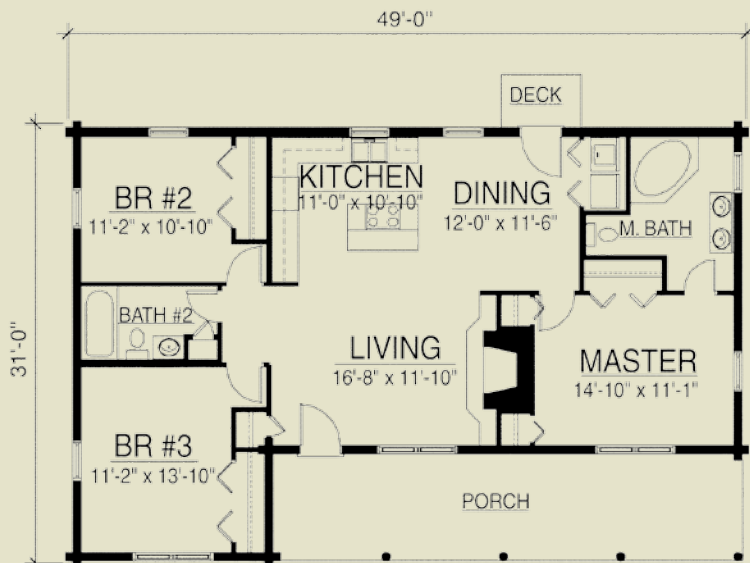


If you're looking for a traditional 3-bedroom ranch that's very affordable, the popular Blue Ridge may be the one for you.

Outside, it features a spacious front porch with attractive hand-peeled railing and double picture windows.

Inside, your guests will be greeted by the open-concept great room with a large stone fireplace and cathedral ceiling with large timbers. The master bedroom has its own master bath with room for a hot tub, while the two other bedrooms share a second bath. The kitchen has its own island while the dining area has a laundry closet and access to the outside deck. No wasted space here!

A beautiful ranch home for those that need 3 bedrooms in a practical, step-saving floor plan.



23 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Log Homes - continued from page 1

the sample pieces of siding into wooden frames and put them in a semi-shaded area matching the environment of a typical log home site. Note that our interest was not to promote any certain product but to try and determine the best option for our clients to use on their home. We left them outside for three years, and then brought them back inside in order to preserve the results for our clients to see for themselves. Two PPG ProLuxe Sikkens products, Log & Siding and Cetol 1 and 2&3 plus were the clear winners. However, buyer beware, not all Sikkens' products performed that well. Sikkens' water-based SRD was a total failure. These lesser quality Sikkens' products are often available in big box stores.

#14: How often do you have to refinish a log home?

With a good high quality finish, expect 3 to 5 years. Some clients have a schedule to do the south & west sides every 3 years and do the other two sides every 6 years. Keep in mind that the darker the finish the longer it lasts.

#15: Are Northern White Cedar logs better than Eastern White Pine?

Let me answer that by addressing the different myths.


N. W. Cedar has more R-value: According to the USDA Handbook, E. W. Pine has about 6% less R-value than N. W. Cedar. If you take thermal mass into consideration the advantage would be even less. It does have about 25% more than Western Red Cedar or Cypress.

N. W. Cedar settles less: Very minimal if green, and no different if properly dried.

N. W. Cedar is more decay resistant: Yes, slightly more than E. W. Pine, but not as much as Western Red Cedar or Cypress.


N. W. Cedar has less maintenance: It takes the same amount of upkeep as the E.W. Pine. In fact, we have found that some exterior finishes don't adhere as well on N.W. Cedar as on E. W. Pine. Instead, consider these three key points when wanting to reduce maintenance on a log home: large overhangs and porches, well dried logs and most importantly, a good quality finish properly applied.

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After logs are shipped in, they are cut-to-length as shown at right

Woods to the Mill – Where Quality Starts - *continued from page 1*

with Ervin through those years, which not only supplied us with high quality pine, but because of their years of experience, were able to provide accurately-cut material as well. Ervin offered the mill to us, and naturally we were interested. In addition to acquiring the equipment, we were excited about adding the experienced sawyers and craftsmen (several worked for Ervin for over 30 years) to our staff. This turned out to be a good fit since Hochstetler is proud to carry on the tradition of their dedication in responsible stewardship, while supplying premium quality rough sawn pine lumber and cants while maintaining a low overhead.



After the raw saw-logs arrive at the log yard they are carefully selected, bucked (a term for cutting to length) and stacked into log piles until needed. Next the bark is removed with a debarker (*shown on left*), a machine that rotates the logs against special blades. This helps to keep our circler-saw sharp longer and the bark-mulch can be used for landscaping. Also, our slap-wood gets chipped into chips which the buyers want bark free.



After the saw-logs are debarked they are put on the log deck which transfers them onto the sawmill carriage itself, which is a newer Frickco sawmill (*shown on left*). Once the log is on the carriage, Atlee, the sawyer, who after 30 years in the business knows the operation like the back of his hand, decides what size boards and cants to cut it into as it travels back and forth past the huge 56" saw blade (*see picture upper right*). The idea is to get the best yield possible from each log and leave nothing go to

waste. The boards and planks are cut from out around the log "side lumber", and then finally the cant comes out of the center for stacking logs or "log home logs." The boards that have wane on the edges, Joe our edger, pules off the line and first runs them through an edger

which cuts them into the max size boards needed. The 1x4, 1x6, 1x8 and 1x12 may end up in interior trim, closet-shelves, board-and-batten siding, or T&G material, and the 2x6, 2x8, 2x10 and 2x12 planks get made into log siding & loft decking. Only one cant for the stacking logs are cut out of each raw log. This is important because most of the sap wood gets removed which in turn gives our clients a better, more decay resistant, heartwood log. The cants are cut into 4x6, 6x6, 6x8, 6x12, 8x8, 8x10 and 8x12 which accommodates most sizes of our T&G log home logs.




The lumber, cants and slap-wood, gets transferred unto a "green chain" which slowly takes them past Marion and Larry who select and stack them into the appropriate bundles. The slap-wood and edgings transfer on to the end and drop into a vibrating conveyer where they finally go into the chipper. The chips mostly get made into compressed pallets. The shavings are used for landscaping mulch, while the sawdust gets used by farmers for animal bedding.



Mulch being loaded into semi trailer

The bundles of lumber and cants then get banded, trimmed and end-coated before they get shipped to our planer mill near Loudonville where they will be put on stickers to be air-dried for about a year before being kiln dried, and then finally milled into T&G log home logs and other log home components.

Years ago before Hochstetler came on the scene, most of Ohio's pine trees ended up in paper. While paper is needed, we at Hochstetler feel it's a far nobler ending for our pine, "a renewable natural resource" in a log home where they will become someone's beautiful shelter, a pleasant and cozy place, where families will love to come home to for many generations to come.

Note: watch for the next newsletter where we will do a story on our log home planer mill. 

Home AT LAST

by Sheree Cole, as told to Bill Dinkins



I grew up in the rolling, scenic Hocking Hills region of southern Ohio, so its not too surprising that area would always hold a special place in my heart. What is surprising though, was the long and sometimes arduous journey to get back there.

While in the military I was deployed in Saudi Arabia during the winter of 2002 - 2003 and found a promising piece of land, close to my childhood home, on a real estate website. I was familiar with that area but wanted my husband, Scott, to scope it out. His opinion was not encouraging. He said, "It backs up to state property, has a creek and flood plane in the middle, PLUS large sandstone boulders where a house could be located." Not to be dissuaded (and forever the optimist), I asked him to check it out again with a friend and perhaps get another perspective. When I returned to Ohio, Scott had purchased this 6.75 acres of "home" land and our wonderful journey began!

For the next six years, we camped on the land, while clearing brush for our home and added massive amounts of rock for the driveway. Meanwhile, my military career took me to Alabama for leadership training and Scott was able to join me. He purchased tools and a work table to teach himself woodworking skills which would prove invaluable later. In fact, one day while driving the Alabama countryside he came upon an old, abandoned farmhouse owned by the Esterling family. He soon arranged a deal with them to trade demolition work for wood in Mrs. Esterling's childhood home, and a lasting friendship ensued. Even today, we stay in touch.

We returned to Ohio in 2005 with a sagging moving van full of reclaimed southern pine, beams, doors ... and cherished memories. Scott's interests expanded as he honed his woodworking skills and began building furniture. He even

took a vocational class in operating heavy equipment, a skill that enabled him to clear our land. But in 2007, I was transferred to Colorado for a 3-year assignment and our plans were put on hold. We stored our wood in my family's garage, along with Scott's grandmother's antique claw-foot tub, and several hundred star bricks from my parent's sidewalk. Prior to our departure, Scott took some home inspector courses, and gained valuable experience by shadowing Colorado inspectors, especially in applying building codes. Once again, the experience helped us in building our dream home.

A year and a half into my assignment, both our mothers became ill and we realized it was time to return home. In the spring of 2009, Scott resumed the building process. The site was cleared, the basement and garage walls were poured, and the first load of hand-hewn, 8"x12' square logs were delivered. We loved the rustic charm of the "Appalachian" style logs with the chinking groove, and Hochstetler's McKay plan was just the right size. (We had another log home company in mind but our general contractor suggested Hochstetler, and after visiting their facilities and model, we agreed).

By September of 2009, I returned to find the dried-in shell of our home. In the seven years since, my "renaissance" man had mastered the skills of a finish carpenter by building furniture, and installing repurposed wood for floors, trim, and accent walls. The claw-foot tub was also refinished and is the focal point of our master bath. Meanwhile, our star bricks are used as a hearth for our wood burner and a porch off the walkout basement.

Now that our "dream" is finished, we couldn't be happier. We are surrounded by nature in all its beauty. Pine creek flows through the property (now named "Narnia") and provides a welcome habitat for our neighbors ... deer, beaver, mink, turtles, and an endless supply of birds. The rocky outcroppings of sandstone formations, from un-glaciated Hocking hills, provide a spectacular backdrop to our home.

So, our epic journey, which began in 2002 and ended in 2016 ... is our home at last. 🏠



For additional information about the home of The Coles, please contact Hochstetler Milling at 800-368-1015.

23 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Log Homes - continued from page 2

#16: Should I consider buying pressure treated logs?

The advantage of pressure treating logs is, that it raises their ability to resist decay and helps to deter insects. However, while this is true, it does bring with it other disadvantages that I feel outweigh the benefits.

The first concern is the chemicals on the inside of the home, where it really serves no purpose, while at the same time you have your family continuously exposed to it, even at night! The second concern is the wetness of the logs, having them forced full of water and chemicals that will cause your wall to excessively settle – possibly even more than a green log. You would have to put them back in a dry kiln for more than a month to take the moisture back out and then it's questionable as how effective the chemicals really are after being exposed to the intense heat of a dry kiln? Thirdly, when your logs are wet from pressure treating, the finish won't adhere as well thus causing more maintenance.

On top of all this people may go with pressure treated logs thinking there is less maintenance. However, just like using certain types of wood it still takes the same amount of staining or refinishing as the untreated.

A proven effective alternative to using pressure treated logs is to spray borates on the outside for decay after the logs are installed, and then for insect control, mix a product like NBS 30 with the exterior finish, whenever you stain the logs. Plus, once a year have an exterminator treat the outside. Using this method you end up with all the chemicals on the outside where needed, but the inside stays chemical free. While most chemicals used for pressure treating have been proclaimed safe for humans – you never know, someday it could be proven otherwise. Even asbestos was thought safe at one time.

#17: Are laminated logs better than the solid real logs?

The presumed advantage is there will be less checking and settling. Which there is. But the question is what does that do for you? Again, its wood and it will take the same amount of staining and recoating as any other wood-sided home. So where is the savings for the extra dollars you spend? One concern I have is will the laminated log overhangs stay together down the road? But then, the hard question is, do I have a real log home with laminated logs?

#18: How much does a log home settle and will I need settling jacks and thru bolts?

With properly kiln-dried logs, very little settling should be experienced. Typically, about 1/2" in an 8' wall. Accordingly, no settling jacks etc. are needed. However, with green or pressure-treated logs, you can expect up to 3 inches. With that much settling, you will need to use adjustable settling jacks, thru bolt systems, slotted window bucks, floating stairs and sliding plumbing pipes to accommodate it.

This article continued in the next issue.

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CABIN FEVER “The Amazing Sheepshead” by Bill Dinkins

Although I'm fairly knowledgeable when it comes to freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing is a whole 'nother world and a recent trip to Biloxi, Mississippi reinforced that. The devastating affects of Hurricane Katrina had left its mark all along the gulf coast, especially to structures along the beach. The once regal President hotel and casino was reduced to a rubble mess after the 2005 storm. In it's place a lake was formed with the remaining marina walls encircling it. My wife and I were staying at the hotel across the street, so it was a convenient place for me to "drop a line."

Locals would park their vehicles (mostly pickups) on the rugged dirt road around the lake, cast out a couple heavy duty rods baited with shrimp, then set back and relax in a folding chair, while enjoying their favorite beverage. Oh, I forgot to mention, most would also tie a stout rope from the pickup's running board to the handle of their rods. You never knew what might attack the other end. One gentleman I talked to said he lost a hundred dollar rod and reel when a large fish, probably a red fish, had dragged his rod out into the lake. I also noticed NO fisherman tied their rope to a small car or minivan. Another fisherman told me he had recently landed a 40 lb. Jack Crevalle, commonly called "Jack," after a half-hour fight in the same spot.

After being sufficiently informed on fishing techniques and bait to use, I purchased a 3-day, non-resident license - optimistic that I could at least catch a few fish for dinner. Well, after three frustrating days and no fish, I decided to re-up with another 3-day license, still not sure there was any piscatorial life in the lake. On the last day, I was chatting away on my cell phone with a buddy of mine when my bobber slowly started sinking. "Gary, I've got a bite," I shouted. I dropped the phone, hurriedly grabbed my rod on the ground and whipped it backwards. Fortunately, he was still on but in no mood to swim toward me. After several sharp lunges I reeled him close to the 4' cement wall I was standing on. The problem was I had no landing net and was using only 10lb. test line. Certainly not the ideal situation for landing a large fish. I tried my best to tire him out, and after a 5-minute fight, carefully lifted him up the wall and over. Dinner was flopping madly on the ground while I returned to my phone and told Gary I had just landed a nice sheepshead.

These are not the same freshwater sheepshead they catch in Lake Erie. In fact, these are good to eat! I did a little research on them and they are truly unique. They live in coastal waters from Cape Cod to Florida and from the Gulf of Mexico to Brazil and favor rock pilings, jetties, reefs and piers. Basically, any place where there are crustaceans. But the most amazing thing about this fish is its teeth. They are squared off, like humans! This enables them to break open shells, like clams and barnacles.

Lastly, not only are these fish formidable fighters, they are succulent table fare when lightly seasoned and fried to a golden brown. 🏠



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