

## Purcell Log Cabin

Written by Jeff Poppens  
Tuesday, October 15, 2013

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I have moved. I apologize for the sporadic columns this summer, but I believe I'll get back into the swing of things soon. There is certainly a lot to write about.

First of all, I haven't moved very far, just a few miles downstream. We spent the last year fixing up the old Purcell house on Heady Ridge Road. It has an interesting story.

In 1929 the log cabin that the Purcell family lived in burned down. They were camping out and heard a commotion coming up the driveway. It was a wagon full of doors and windows.

Rufus West had a sawmill across the Long Hungry Creek. He was the wealthiest man around, he ate hog meat everyday. Another team of horses pulled up with a wagon load of neighbors. They said "Where do you want it?"

Unasked, they had come to build this house. As we fixed it up, my carpenter friends kept mumbling "This place was built by farmers." Steve is convinced that one corner fell off the foundation stone, but no one noticed until they'd already hammered it together. The floors and walls have waves and curves adding to the character.

I had no plans. No budget and no timeline. Eventually I decided where the kitchen and bathroom would be. As we stripped out the walls and ceiling, I decided to keep cleaning to get rid of all the old dust. Behind the drywall we found beautiful popular siding, so we sanded it and sanded it.

Plumbing, wiring, doors, windows and the list went on. Then came the trim work. I found a good deal on some basswood and sassafras, and it looks fantastic. A new front porch and back deck went on a few weeks ago, and I started moving my stuff here.

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There is still a lot to do. We'll have to build a root cellar and outdoor shed. Parking is an issue, I may have to sacrifice some flat spot that I'd rather plant in. grown up brush needs cutting, trees and shrubs planted, and berries, herbs and coldframes will have to go in, too.

The chilly mornings remind me to put the stove in and cut some firewood. Once I get a fire warming the house it will really feel like home. It's a beautiful place in a potentially beautiful setting, and I look forward to landscaping the yard.

The old log cabin will house my students, but it is no longer my home. There is a bit of sadness. I love that place and the neighborhood. We'll keep growing chickens and pigs there, and maybe fence it off for cattle.

So come visit me. It's the right hand driveway down the hill from the county landfill on Heady Ridge Road. This is my first column written from here, and I hope to write many more.