

Original log home destined for Virginia, piece by piece

By Stew Slater
Staff reporter

When the Yoder family — all 16 of them — arrived in Uniondale during a March snowstorm in 1959, the home which was their destination had already been playing its role in other families' lore for approximately 110 years. But in the 47 years until it was sold from the family name in 2006, the home's settler-hewn elm logs also became soaked in Yoder tradition.

So the family agreed to have a Virginia-based descendant — along with his parents, who were married within those walls — meticulously mark the logs for removal, ship them south of the border, and reconstruct the old home in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

March 30 to 31, Raymond Hochstetler of Stuarts Draft, Virginia, was at the "old Yoder place" at R.R. 1 Lakeside, marking the logs. Assisting him were his mother Rachel (Yoder) Hochstetler, who was nine when the family came north from the state of Delaware, and his father Jonas. Raymond himself was born in the St. Marys area; the family ran the sawmill on Cobble Hills Road until relocating to Virginia in 1976, when he was four.

The Hochstetlers now run Appalachian Woods, a company which specializes in reclaiming old barn boards and turning them into stylish flooring.

They've even worked on homes owned by rock stars Bruce Springsteen and Dave Matthews. As a sideline, they also tear down and relocate old log buildings.

"This one is quite different from what we tend to find where we are," Raymond Hochstetler commented, while applying tags to the ends of the logs on the building's northwest exterior corner reading either "NW" (meaning they run along the north wall) or "WN" (for those running along the west wall). He pointed out the builders used dovetailed corner joints on the lower few logs, then switched to squared joints for the rest of the wall. Normally, it's either one way or another all the way up.

Enos Yoder, now a resident of the North Bay area, was a year old when the family became one of the first of a community of Amish to establish itself in what is today northwest Zorra and northeast Thames Centre townships. "When Rosemary and I got married, my parents moved into the smaller apartment off the back and we moved into the main house," he said via telephone. "And we lived there until we moved, so I spent 44 years of my life there."

His research shows the land was purchased from the Crown in 1823, and he estimated the home was built around 1850.

Taking a break from his

work, Raymond Hochstetler moved inside the house and expressed awe at the work done by the people who built the two-story, 20x26-foot structure. This is the first elm cabin he has ever dealt with, he noted, and some of the logs are truly massive. Although the walls are generally about 10 inches thick, some of the logs represent as much as 25 inches of the height of the wall — meaning the trees would have been over three feet in diameter.

"The guys that hewed that log knew when lunchtime came," chuckled Raymond's father.

Jonas also noted the markings on the logs provide clues about when the home was built: saw technology changed through the years, and different types of saws left different marks on the wood.

Until the new owners removed the siding a few weeks ago, neighbours passing by may never have known the original log structure remained intact. Even when the Yoders arrived in 1959, the squared elm was hidden from the outside. But inside, the logs tell tales decades or even centuries old.

The original first-floor ceiling was seven-and-a-half feet high but, at some point, the joists were sawn off at the south wall, dropped just enough to be slipped out of their north-wall notches, then pushed up a couple feet and re-in-



Preparing for the move: Raymond Hochstetler marks the logs on an elm log cabin built in approximately 1850 in what's now Zorra Township. Formerly the home of his grandparents, it will be taken down, moved, and rebuilt in Virginia.

serted into new north and south notches. There was just enough length left in the original joists that they could be re-used in the newly-heightened ceiling.

Different interior wall arrangements were tried, in what eventually became a single, wide-open living room after the arrival

of multiple additions. Evidence of how the rooms were set up can be seen on the ceiling, floor and outer walls, but Rachel Hochstetler's clearest recollection is about how the house looked on the day she was married.

Brother Rufus, who still lives in the area and vis-

ited the day the logs were being marked, looked out the northeast window and pointed to a slight indentation in the bank of the nearby creek — which separates the home from the Amish community's schoolhouse adjacent to Oxford Road 96. He recalled the year his father decided to dig out a basement, and a backhoe was hired to dig a trench towards the lower-lying ground so the wheelbarrows wouldn't have to be pushed too far uphill.

It was heavy work nonetheless — perhaps reminiscent of the even heavier work the original settlers must surely have endured while cutting the logs and constructing the home. And now, more heavy work is in the future for the farm's new owners, who will take down the 157-year-old home piece by piece, and for the Hochstetlers as they meticulously reconstruct it. The plan is to give it a new home on an as-yet-undetermined property in the Shenandoah Valley, as a "weekend place" for use by all the Yoders.

"When we heard that it was going to be taken down, we just decided we had to find a way to keep it," explained Raymond Hochstetler, when asked why he's going to so much trouble. "The opportunity to come up here and save my mom's family home is

"Udder Comfort Sprayable really brings down the swelling, and it's faster and easier to use."

Josef Speck
Moose Creek, Ontario

"Udder Comfort™ Sprayable really brings down the swelling, and it's faster and easier to use than lotion," says Josef Speck who operates Kemmatten Farms with his wife Teresa and son Thomas. The 78-cow dairy is located in Moose Creek, Ontario. "We started using Udder Comfort™ Sprayable when it was first developed about eight months ago. We use it mainly for fresh cows and heifers with more severe edema, and for those with mild edema that is lasting longer than 2-3 days. We have the udders clipped before using it so the udder is clean, and the spray gets right to it. We spray the udder twice a day for the first 3 days, and then just once a day until the edema is gone. How long it takes depends on the cow, but usually within a week, the edema is gone. We'll rub it in, for the first 2 applications. After that, we just spray it on. Udder Comfort™ Sprayable reduces the swelling and leaking from fresh cow edema, and this definitely reduces the risk of mastitis. By getting the edema away as fast as possible, the udder empties better, and we have less somatic cell and mastitis problems. We also use Udder Comfort™ Sprayable for hard quarters and mastitis. In those cases, we start with the lotion for the first 3 to 4 applications and then switch to the spray. Udder Comfort™ Sprayable really works well, and it goes faster, with nothing on your hands. Just go and spray it!"

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