PITTSBURGH'S WILDERNESS HOMES: BY J. M. MILLER

HUNDREDS of primitive log cabins still stand among the stately modern residences, steel-ribbed skyscrapers and belching chimneys of Pittsburgh and the adjacent districts—a vivid contrast between the architecture of two centuries. As the Pittsburgh business man sits comfortably in a towering marble-finished office building and figures profits on steel rails and armor plate, he may glance through the window, if he is so inclined, and see the decaying log walls of the cabin in which his grandfather, perhaps, sheltered his family and himself from the rigors of a frontier winter and the savage Indian warriors of the wilderness. Now instead of a wilderness of trees he will see a wilderness of business houses and mills with their slender smokestacks rivaling in height the trees which they have displaced. The financial risks and difficulties encountered by the business man in the skyscraper and the social and domestic troubles of his wife in her modern home are familiar to many who have forgotten how comparatively recent are the dangers and hardships endured by the hardy pioneer. A study of the primitive cabins built in the wilderness a century ago and standing now in a modern city, reveals not only amazing changes in local architecture but the difference as well between the business and home life of the first settlers and their descendants of today.

The homes which sheltered the adventurous frontiersman and his family are of three types. The temporary shelter of round logs, hastily erected immediately following the settler's arrival, was the first and crudest home. Next came the substantial, carefully built fortress cabin of selected logs hewn square, his permanent homestead. A few of the wealthier settlers and landowners lived in houses of stone or brick, the latter having been brought from

FORSYTHE CABIN IN THE HEART OF PITTSBURGH'S MOST EXCLUSIVE RESIDENCE DISTRICT. THIS OLD HOME IS STILL OCCUPIED BY MISS MARGARET FORSYTHE, A WEALTHY PHILANTHROPIST. THE 40-FOOT LOT ON WHICH THE CABIN STANDS IS WORTH $100,000.

EARLY PITTSBURGH HOMESTEAD NOW STANDING IN SCHENLEY PARK, KEPT IN REPAIR ON ACCOUNT OF ITS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS.
Pittsburgh's Wilderness Homes

England as ship's ballast and carried from the coast, a distance of 1,000 miles, on the backs of packhorses.

One of the very few of these brick houses which still stands, was erected in 1764 by Colonel Henry Boquet as a residence and part of the flanking defenses of Fort Pitt. It is now on Liberty avenue in the downtown district of Pittsburgh. The walls are pierced with two tiers of loopholes, but it was never attacked and bears no bullet marks. Fort Pitt, with which it was connected by an underground passage, and Fort Duquesne, an earlier French stronghold in the same location, had been erected at great cost to guard the Forks of the Ohio. No battle, however, was ever waged about either fortification. The garrisons always got hastily outside the walls upon the approach of a hostile army—either to fight or to run away. The real stories of early adventure belong to log houses at a distance from the "old block house" as it is now called. Very old stone houses are rarer even than those of brick, but there is one still standing on the bank of Chartiers Creek west of Pittsburgh. It affords a comfortable home for a family of Italians.

The pioneers' first cabin was built of small round logs about 12 feet long, notched at the ends and laid one above the other until the walls were five or six feet high. A roof of bark or split clapboards was added, and the interstices between the logs filled with wet clay. The cooking was done outside during the first summer. In the fall the construction of a crude fire-place and chimney completed the first architectural venture of the settler. This first home was erected usually in two or three days, and was often occupied for less than a year.

Just west of Pittsburgh in the Middle Run Valley one of these very early homes of round logs remains. It is a double cabin built by twin brothers, John and James Williams, 125 years ago. Together they constructed the building and one family occupied each end. The structure is now dismantled. The chinking has crumbled from the walls, the windows are gone, one door only remains and scarcely half the heavy locust clapboards are left clinging to the white oak rafters. The two brothers who built the cabin lived in it for only a few years, then left the community. Following them other settlers occupied it for short periods, but during the last 50 years it has been tenantless. A few miles farther up the valley there stands another cabin of the same type. It has been kept in repair and is used at present for a stable.

However, nearly all the temporary homes of small, round logs have fallen into decay and disappeared. In most cases, the stone houses of the wealthier class have been torn down and the stones used for the foundations of new buildings. It is the substantial structure of squared logs, straight-grained and sound, built by the settler of average means for a permanent home that remains today in Pittsburgh. The logs in the walls of these homesteads have withstood the storms of more than a
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This frontier home was restored by Gustavus Swenson, a Swedish laborer, as a home for Freda, his sick wife.

century, and escaped as well the greed of later builders. The home planned by the home-builder himself and erected with his own hands for his family and himself has outlasted almost invariably even the more costly residences of the period.

Some of these old cabins are occupied even yet as homes with but little change either inside or out. The log walls of many have been covered with modern weatherboarding and plaster while others are dismantled and deserted. In one of the unaltered cabins there lives a wealthy philanthropist while another shelters a Swedish laborer and his family. Several of the old homesteads have been converted into playhouses for children. Two of them have been acquired by the city and are kept in repair on account of their historical associations. In some of the old cabins ghosts are believed to walk nightly. Many bear the marks of Indian bullets. One is scarred by leaden missiles fired at a United States revenue collector from guns in the hands of "moonshine" whisky distillers, as he was running away with the daughter of one of their number.

No architect planned these early Pittsburgh homes. Even the most substantial of the permanent cabins were built by the hardy and resourceful pioneers, in most cases, with no other tool than the ax. If the settler was careless in the selection of materials and the erection of a temporary shelter he made up for it by the painstaking planning and construction of his permanent home. First the straightest, soundest white oak trees were felled and

ehewn square. Next a foundation of flat stones was built on which four sills were laid. To form the floor, squared logs were fitted close together in notches cut in the sills. Then round after round of straight, sound logs were built one above the other until the walls were sufficiently high to suit the settler—or rather his wife. The ridgepole of chestnut was next set in place, followed by white oak rafters and chestnut clapboards. Sometimes a layer of clay and flat stones was placed between the logs. Other builders dressed the logs so true and cut the end notches so deep that no chinking was necessary. The second floor was reached by a steep, crooked stairway.

The door was of oak and very heavy, as constant danger of attack by Indians compelled the settler to build for defense as well as for comfort. In nearly every cabin the original windows were really loopholes less than a foot high and about two feet long. These openings were enlarged in later years when danger of Indian attack was over, but a few of the old style loop-

CABIN SHOWING LOophOLE WINDOW AND CHIMNEy BUILT INSIDE THE WALLS. IT WAS BUILT IN 1765 AND IS NOW USED AS A REST HOUSE FOR GOLF PLAYERS.
hole windows remain as in a cabin near Indian spring in Schenley Park.

This house was built in 1765 by Robert Neal, who lived in it with his wife Elizabeth until 1787 when he sold it to John Reed, a packhorse driver, for 360 pounds sterling, making a profit of 203 pounds on the property. After being transferred many times it came into the possession of the city and was restored to its original appearance except the roof and gables, which are modern. It is now used in the summer as a rest house for golf players on the city links, in the center of which it stands. The fireplace is built inside this cabin with the top of the chimney protruding through the roof. Many chimneys, however, were constructed outside the cabin walls with only the front of the fireplace facing inside. Usually the log walls of the cabin have outlasted the fireplace and chimney built of flat field stones and clay, which have been reduced to a moldering heap of ruins by rain and alternate freezing and thawing.

The great fireplace with its deep, wide chimney, often in the summer appearing obstructively large in proportion to the size of the cabin, became in winter the center of domestic life in the early homestead. In the living room, lighted by the ruddy glow of the smoldering fire, the frontier girl, mayhap, entertained her swain by baking apples and roasting chestnuts in the hot coals, while the elder members of the family dozed in the shadows and the children romped on the floor.

On the west side of Schenley Park there is also a cabin which the city owns and has made habitable. It was built by Ambrose Newton, in 1761. Newton was promoted from artillerist at Fort Pitt to conductor of the king's stores. Following this improvement in fortune he built the cabin in which he lived for many years. Later it was occupied by a family of slaves, then for a long time was tenantless. During the fall and winter the two cabins in Schenley Park are in great demand for "pioneer parties" by young men and women, many of whom belong to the most exclusive society of the city. At these old style gatherings apples are baked on the hearth, and chestnuts and corn roasted in the embers much the same as was done 150 years ago. The cabins may be used for this purpose without charge but a permit must be secured from the park authorities.

In the heart of the east end of Pittsburgh where scores of millionaires have erected costly homes, there is a quaint three-roomed log cabin occupied by Miss Margaret Forsythe, a wealthy philanthropist interested in many charities. The cabin stands on a lot 40 by 100 feet, valued at $100,000. On all sides are costly apartment houses and stately residences of the most modern type. Almost every lot for 20 squares in each direction is occupied by a modern building.

Miss Forsythe's log home was built by William Forsythe, her great-grandfather. It was erected in the little village of Wilkinsburg outside of what is now the city of Pittsburgh, and two miles from the present location of the house. About 25 years ago Miss Forsythe became tired of living in the quiet village although she was greatly attached to the old cabin. For several months she hesitated between erecting a new and modern house on ground she owned in Pittsburgh, and remaining in the old cabin. She cared little for the luxury of the modern residence, although her wealth would have enabled her to live in as fine a home as there was in Pittsburgh. She longed, however, for the life and bustle of the city streets and disliked the comparative solitude of the village.

Finally she solved the problem by having her quaint old home transported to a fine location in the heart of the city. Even the tiny kitchen built of boards against the side of the house was moved. The stone flagging in the old yard was laid in front of the house in its new location. The same rustic trellis was built over the front entrance, and the same vines which had covered it in Wilkinsburg were dug up and replanted in the new location. The log walls are whitewashed inside and rag carpets cover the floors. The furniture has been in use by the Forsythe family during the last three generations. A few quaint pictures adorn the walls.

There is a picturesque cabin in Joncaire Street, a residential section of the city and scarcely two squares from the imposing Carnegie Library and Music Hall, constructed of granite and marble only a few years ago at a cost of $2,000,000. The cabin, which was built by Alphonse Joncaire, a French farmer, about the middle of the eighteenth century, is in striking contrast to the architectural triumph erected through the generosity of the millionaire.
steel manufacturer. The old French cabin with its dingy rooms and porch, unusually wide for a frontier home, is now used as a playhouse by the boys and girls of the neighborhood when inclement weather drives them from the street.

Following the flight of the French from Fort Duquesne upon the approach of the English under General Forbes in 1758, this cabin was occupied by an English family. Later a German, who kept a shop near Fort Pitt, made it his home, and after him came an Italian laborer. Next a family of negroes occupied it, but they were alien to the neighborhood and only remained a few weeks. For the last five years it has been given over to the children.

Close to the Allegheny river and scarcely a mile from the Pittsburgh city line still stand the walls of a cabin in which a dance of long ago was prevented from being turned into a tragedy by good fortune and the resourcefulness of the frontier merry-makers. Settlers for miles around were attending the dance. While the fun was at its height boys who had gone outside suspected for some reason that Indians were in the vicinity, and quietly informed the men. A surprise was planned for the redskins. The merry-makers were warned that an Indian attack was expected but cautioned to keep up the dance and to show no signs of alarm. The doors, already closed on account of the cold, were barred and

A very old stone house now occupied by Italians.

the dancers safeguarded from bullets by arranging the furniture about the loophole windows in such a manner, however, as not to alarm the savages by shutting off the light which was streaming out. Guns were in readiness for at that time a settler never ventured from home without his rifle. When the savages attacked the cabin, instead of surprising the settlers, they were

John Garland's wife and family were carried from this cabin by Indians over a century ago. On the same night the McCallister cabin across the Monongahela was also attacked.
themselves surprised by the sudden darkening of the windows, and a well-aimed volley of bullets which caused them to fall back in disorder. None of the settlers were injured and the attack was not renewed.

Pioneers in the Pittsburgh district, however, were not always so fortunate. On opposite sides of the Monongahela river and scarcely a mile apart there stand two cabins which were surprised by Indians over a century ago. These old homes even today are within sight of each other notwithstanding the smoke and ore dust from steel mills which now surround them. It was during the winter and Peter McCallister and John Garland, heads of the respective families, were away on a trapping expedition. Savages broke into both cabins at almost the same time and carried away the women and children. The Indians refrained from burning either home, for fear, it is believed, of alarming those living in the other in case the attacks did not occur at exactly the same time. The trappers did not recover their families until five years later. McCallister's cabin was never occupied again, but Garland's was used as a residence until 25 years ago when it was converted into a stable. The base of the old chimney may still be seen protruding through the log wall on the northside of the building.

In the Thorn Creek Valley and not far from a haunted cabin, there stands a substantial home of huge white oak logs hewn so true that they fit closely together with only the thinnest layer of clay between. The old home has been repaired with a roof of modern sheet iron, and the chimney, originally built of small field stones, has been restored to its original height with a top of bricks. And now almost any pleasant evening a person wandering up the valley may see near the cabin, a light complexioned man taller than the average and very muscular. By his side will be a blond, blue-eyed woman, who smiles happily as she glances from her husband to the comfortable little home and the stable nearby from which, perhaps, you can hear the mooing of a cow or the satisfied grunt of a fat pig. If the visitor approaches and asks the man who he is the reply comes promptly:


Further questioning brings out the fact that Gus Smith's baptismal name is Gustavus Swenson. He was born in the mountains of Sweden 35 years ago, and has worked in Pittsburgh on the railroads and in the mills for the last 10 years. Several years ago Freda, the wife, became ill and the doctor told Gus that she would die unless she returned to the fresh air and outdoor life of her native Swedish village. The man was in despair. His scanty earnings were not sufficient to send the woman to Sweden and support her there. Besides she was not willing to leave him.

"If I bane called to die, Gus," she said, "I bane going to stay by you to th' las'. I won't go back to Sweden widout you."

For days and weeks the big husband worried while the wife became weaker. There was apparently no way of preventing her death. As the Swede was resting at noon on a high bank near the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie railroad on which he was employed as a section hand, he noticed in the haze far up the valley, a tenantless, dilapidated, old house. Suddenly his face brightened, and all afternoon as he worked there was a smile on it.

When the day's work was done he walked up the valley and examined the old house. The solid oak walls pleased him. It would not be hard to put on a new roof. He knew of a scrap heap where he could get sheet iron cheap. The chimney could be mended with broken bricks, for that very day the gang with which he worked had torn out a brick wall along the railroad and replaced it with cement. The foreman would let him have the bricks for nothing.

A few days later Gus drove a bargain which sadly depleted his little hoard of savings, but he got in exchange a neatly folded document which showed that he was owner of the dilapidated cabin and an acre of ground surrounding it. Most of the repairs were made by Swenson himself during the evenings. After the building had been made habitable the scanty furniture was moved from the southside tenement, while Freda visited a neighbor across the hall. Finally one bright, warm day nearly a year ago the Swedish wife was conveyed to the new-old home, which had been built by an English emigrant 150 years before. Freda said little but her cheeks flushed with pleasure. Soon her interest in life
revived, and in a few days she was able to walk about the house and even to venture out into the sunshine. Now she is well and strong and very happy.

Scarcely 100 feet from the western boundary line of Pittsburgh and in the aristocratic residence suburb of Crafton is one of the few wilderness cabins where the chimney and fireplace are in better repair than the cabin itself. Not a stone has been displaced from the chimney although near the top a few straggling vines are growing in the clay between the stones. The roof of the cabin, however, has fallen in and the walls are broken and dilapidated. It has been tenantless for half a century. The chimney is built entirely outside the cabin with only the front of the fireplace facing inside.

It was in this log home that Lawrence Wilson, a youthful United States revenue collector, courted pretty Sally Hall, over a century ago. Wilson was directed by the Federal authorities to collect evidence against "moonshine whiskey" distillers. It was only a few months before the outbreak of the whiskey insurrection in western Pennsylvania and many farmers derived a large part of their income from corn whiskey made in small stills on their farms and sold in Pittsburgh. The placing of a tax on each still by Congress was bitterly resented by the farmers, and two tax-collectors already had been treated to a coat of tar and feathers and a third had been beaten severely. Wilson, however, was young and adventurous so he collected evidence against the still owners while roaming about in the guise of a hunter during the day, but in the evenings he courted Sally Hall before the great open fireplace in her father's cabin in Chartiers Valley, and finally won her love.

Late one evening while riding to Pittsburgh, he was set upon by a gang of masked men. Going quickly through his pockets they took possession of a roll of papers which not only included letters and his commission but a list of farmers who were running illicit stills. Wilson then was bound securely to a tree. Naturally the young officer was alarmed for he knew only too well that he had fallen into the hands of the "Whisky Boys," an organization as desperate and lawless as the Klu Klux Klan, which terrorized the South following the Civil War. If they would tar and feather officers who had come openly to collect the whiskey tax, undoubtedly they would devise a worse penalty for a man whom they believed to be both officer and spy. Moreover, Wilson suspected that the leader of the masked gang was James Stewart, a farmer rival for Miss Sally's hand. It developed later that Sally's father was also with the gang.

However, while his captors were withdrawn slightly to examine the papers and to discuss his fate, the ropes binding the officer to the tree suddenly loosened and a soft voice from behind whispered, "Follow me." Slipping quietly around the tree and darting into the dense underbrush, Wilson perceived that his liberator was Sally. His horse as well as the horses of the "Whisky Boys" were tied to trees in plain sight of the men, so the fugitives started to the farmhouse where they expected to find another horse, the young officer running along with his hand on Sally's stirrup. Just as they reached the cabin, the masked men rode into view, and a volley of bullets rattled against the log walls only an instant before the girl and the officer dodged behind the chimney. Wilson held the pursuers at bay with his rifle while the girl saddled horses in the stable. In a few moments they were able to dash through the forest and escape; finally reaching Philadelphia, where they were married.

Sally's parents also soon left the neighborhood never to return. Though a "Whisky Boy" himself, the father thought more of his daughter than of his still and could never forgive his neighbors for firing at the fugitives after learning that Sally was one of them. Little indeed remains now to recall this story of the adventurous past except the chimney and walls of the cabin which still bear marks of the bullets fired at the frontier girl and her lover.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER PLANTING IS OFTEN UNDERESTIMATED. YOU PLANT FOR THE FUTURE. THE CHOICE AND PLANTING OF A TREE IS AN INDEX OF CHARACTER AND IS AS TRULY INDIVIDUALISTIC AS THE BUILDING OF A HOUSE. THE MARCH "CRAFTSMAN," OUR GARDEN NUMBER, WILL BE FOUND A MOST VALUABLE HELP IN EFFECTIVE PLANTING.