



Fort Winnebago Surgeons Quarters

HISTORIC SITE | PORTAGE, WISCONSIN

FWSQ RESTORATIONS by DATE

“Preserving Wisconsin’s Territorial Past for Citizens of Tomorrow”

- 1816-1819** Log house (cabin) build for family by fur trader/portager Francois LeRoi until 1828
- 1828** 124 soldiers arrived commanded by Major David E. Twiggs to build Fort Winnebago. U. S. Army purchased the cabin and used the building as a sutler’s store serving the military
- 1834** The U.S. Army turned the building into the home for the Fort Surgeons. The inside walls were plastered with lime over hand-sawn and hand-tooled lath. Plastering was slowed by lack of access to lime. The Army purchased lime from the Native Americans
- 1845** The U.S. Army disbanded Fort Winnebago and the cabin was occupied by a local physician
- 1853** 4000 acres of Fort Winnebago, including the cabin were sold at auction except the Old Fort Winnebago Cemetery, to J. Martin of Milwaukee.
- 1856** 1/3 of Fort burned, the cabin did not burn.
- 1871** Cabin sold to William H. Wells of Fond du Lac and F. H. Masten of Buffalo. It was used as a home for immigrants who moved to Portage to work on the canal. Four rooms were divided into eight rooms. The fireplaces were removed and the wood floors were covered and siding was installed over the exterior of logs.
- 1938** Wisconsin Society Daughters of the American Revolution purchases the property for \$1,000.00. The cabin was virtually in ruin. WSDAR decided to restore the log house to the way that it was when Fort surgeons occupied the house. WSDAR was able to get the plans from Washington DC Archives.
- 1940** An agreement was made with the Wisconsin State Highway Department to use 5/8 of an acre of FWSQ property on the opposite

side of Highway 33 for a wayside park. If it is no longer used as a wayside, it reverts to FWSQ ownership. The Wisconsin State Highway Department in return graded the property and installed the entrance and circle drive way.

- 1954** FWSQ was opened as a house museum for public tours. WSDAR started the restoration in 1938, which was slowed by WWII, and restoration completed with minimal artifacts.
- 1960** Cabin roof repair work was done
- 1964-1965** “A big job” was completed – Portland cement was put in as ‘chinking’ between the tamarack logs
- 1987** Roof was replaced
- 1994** Foundation repair work was done
- 1998** The interior walls and wood work were painted
- 1999** Roof repair was done
- 2004-2005** Restoration of main support beam in attic with a metal shim replacing rotten wooden shims by Laib Restoration that included flashing around chimney and roof edges
- 2007** A few logs on northwest side of cabin (kitchen wall) were replaced and rechinked with chinking made from sand taken from crawl space. A new door/frame installed on the south side of the building by Laib Restoration
- 2008** Gutters and downspouts were added to cabin; trim and shutters were painted
- 2009** Additional roof repair was done
- 2011** Cabin floor repair completed
- 2014** Cabin interior repainted
- 2014** Entire roof replaced
- 2016** ADT Security System installed in cabin and property
- 2017** Abandoned well filled in for safety
- 2018** Electrical upgrade completed in cabin
- 2018** UV Protective Window Film installed on windows
- 2019** Membership approved Log and Chinking project. Tamarack trees were cut in Northern Wisconsin for 3 year drying

- 2021** **Log and Chinking Project Phase I (back side and side facing school) completed, including the widening of original front door by Laib Restoration with discovery of original door framing**
- 2022** **Log and Chinking Project Phase II (side facing Highway 33) and two sides on front wall) completed.**
- 2023** **Log and Chinking Project Phase III (courtyard) completed including a new original back door (WSDAR front door) and framing**
- 2023** **Re-enforcement of well, new hand rail to kitchen door replaced**

Compiled from many documents, speeches, books, etc. 2021 and updated 2025 by Judy N. Mason