

**BONUS
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DREAM HOME SHOWCASE

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HONEST ABE LOG HOMES PHOTO BY ROGER WADE

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Gloryland Pioneers

Honest Abe's collaboration with Tennessee couple helped them realize lifelong desire to create a log cabin like Tennessee's early settlers.

Story by Claudia Johnson • Photography by Roger Wade

ABOVE: Honest Abe's Genesis 6" x 12" square log style with a v-groove allows for a 1" interior optional chink line, which combined with the exposed ceiling beams and variegated wide-plank hardwood flooring, creates the historic interior the Claytons imagined. To maintain the ambience of an early Tennessee cabin, the only overhead lighting is from candles. Though just under 800 square feet, the first floor of the cabin feels larger because of the open layout. The Claytons enjoy their wood-burning fireplace, though climate is primarily controlled through a central HVAC system.



RIGHT: The Clayton cabin was custom designed, manufactured and built by Honest Abe Log Homes in a creative collaboration with homeowners Kenneth and Joy Clayton, who conceived of a cabin that captured the simplicity, beauty and spirit of early Tennessee log homes. At around 1,600 square feet, the cabin is perfect for a couple with half a century of marriage behind them and years ahead for welcoming family and friends.

“Lord, build me just a cabin in the corner of gloryland” is a well-known reprise from a country gospel standard recorded by artists from Hank Williams to Charlie Pride. While the lyrics are doubtless metaphorical, Kenneth and Joy Clayton are enjoying their own corner of gloryland in a log home that’s anything but “just” a cabin.

Sure, their cabin is only about 1,600 square feet, with the Claytons residing primarily on the first floor, but the home reflects the inherent transitions of a long marriage, a fulfilling career and a happy family. It represents generosity and collaboration and the meandering paths that dreams take that somehow, sometimes lead to home.

“This was Ken’s dream, but I wouldn’t change making the move to our cabin for the world,” Joy Clayton admitted, explaining that her husband had imagined himself living in the kind of log

cabins he’d seen so often as a boy growing up in East Tennessee.

During their half a century of marriage, Ken, a Baptist minister, and Joy lived in what Joy called “typical suburban houses,” primarily in the Nashville, Tenn., area with a three-year stint in Spain. All the while, Ken continued to sketch his ideas for a cabin like Tennessee’s early pioneers built – square logs, chinked, dovetailed corners, wood-burning fireplace, wide front porch.

Today the Claytons live in that long-imagined cabin on a small piece of Tennessee Cumberland Plateau property gifted them by Dr. and Mrs. Cranston Moses, members of Pine Eden Baptist Church where Ken is now pastor.

In conjunction with the Honest Abe Log Homes sales staff, design department and dry-in construction service, Ken and Joy created and built a cabin near Crossville, Tenn., that merged modern necessities with traditional style.





ABOVE: Among the few personal items the Claytons retained for use in their Honest Abe log cabin was a favorite cherry bedroom suit in the master bedroom. The couple feels their home is perfect for aging in place because their primary living space is all on the first floor.

RIGHT: The Claytons worked with Honest Abe designers to fashion a downstairs master bathroom that would be functional as well as compact.

FAR RIGHT: At the suggestion of a carpenter a planned storage closet was converted into a kids' clubhouse, complete with built-in bunk beds and project tables. Joy Clayton said the sacrifice of storage space pales in comparison to the hours of enjoyment the clubhouse brings the grandchildren.



“They were such wonderful people to work with,” Ken said of Honest Abe’s team. Ken said that he and Joy sought assistance for their cabin project after recognizing the craftsmanship and long-lasting quality of an Honest Abe log home built in 1999 where they were living temporarily upon their move to Crossville.

“The people at Honest Abe let me show them what we wanted and worked with my drawings to design the cabin,” he said. “Once construction began, we were amazed at how quickly Honest Abe’s crew got the structure up. It just all came together.”

Joy said she learned a lesson in



letting go when deciding what possessions to use in decorating the new cabin and what to pass on to her son and daughter.

“We gave most of our furniture to them,” she said without regret. “The china, crystal...numerous things. I read once that you have to mentally tend everything you own. It felt good to let it go, and the children are using these things in their own homes.”

What the Claytons did keep are enough chairs to invite conversation, sufficient bedding to sleep guests and a big table to feed everyone – the things that make their corner of gloryland just a little more glorious.



ABOVE: One of the two upstairs bedrooms is designed as a haven for the Claytons’ six (and one more on the way) grandchildren. They chose light wood flooring, Honest Abe’s naturally finished wood wall covering and pale painted drywall to keep the room bright.



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