

The Harrison-Bruce Historical Village

The Harrison-Bruce Historical Village celebrates one of John A. Logan College's most unique endeavors. The Village was dedicated April 3, 2012 with critical acclaim from local historians, tourism officials and community leaders.

The Village began when Purdy School, a one-room school built in 1860 in southern Perry County moved to the John A. Logan College campus in 1983. Decades passed, but campus visionaries hoped that the Purdy School would be the beginning of a commemorative and vital historical place for the entire region.

In 2007 the Hunter Cabin, a log cabin built in 1818 was reconstructed on the JALC campus near the Purdy School.

The newest addition includes a replica of the historical Harrison House built in Herrin in 1868 by David Ruffin and a replica of a 19th century dog trot-style cabin.

Volunteer Docents serve as guides for groups or persons seeking a tour of the Historical Village. Individuals may take their own walking tours at designated public tour hours, as well as special events throughout the year.

Major funding for the historical village was furnished by the Julia Harrison Bruce Foundation and the Fred G. Harrison Foundation. Retired JALC President Robert Mees is the namesake for the Village centerpiece - The Robert L. Mees Village Centre. Through his enthusiastic support and ability to work with the village building donors and foundations, dreams for the Village were realized.

Brief Timeline for The Harrison-Bruce Historical Village

1967 – John A. Logan College is created by public mandate under the authority of the Illinois Community College Act of 1965.

1968 – The College opened its doors to its charter class in the fall of 1968 in storefronts and churches in Herrin, IL

1969 – The College acquires its permanent grounds in Carterville, IL

1972 – The College is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The College now offers a wide variety of programs including foundation courses for bachelor's degrees, technical and vocational curricula, adult education classes and public service activities.

1983 – Purdy School - a one room school building is moved to the College campus September 16, 1983 through the generosity of the Julia Harrison Bruce Foundation

1989 – Williamson County celebrated its Sesquicentennial and "A Salute to 150 Years of Education" was held at Purdy School on the College campus with tours, exhibits, demonstrates and activities related to one-room schools.

1993 – Purdy School Foundation begins planning and implementation of ongoing activities including annual fall and spring one-day sessions for students from throughout Southern Illinois.

2007 – The Hunter Log Cabin, built in 1818, is rebuilt after a period of reconstruction on the campus beginning in 2006 and completed in 2007 for visitors. The Jacob Hunter Trust donated the cabin to the College.

2010 – By Fall 2010 the Purdy School Foundation celebrated over 8,000 students from all over the region, who had experienced a day at Purdy School on the John A. Logan College campus.

2012 – The Village Centre is named for retiring JALC President Robert L. Mees who worked tirelessly for decades to invigorate and create The Historical Village.

2012 – Completion of the replica of the historical Harrison House built in 1868 by David Ruffin Harrison and the Harrison Storefront. The Harrison-Bruce Village is dedicated April 3, 2012.



HARRISON HOUSE

Harrison House was built by David Ruffin Harrison in 1868 in northwest Herrin (then known as Herrin's Prairie). The family lived in a log cabin at the rear of the house while their new home was being built.

D. R. Harrison lived in the Harrison House with his first wife Julia A. Walker Harrison (1836-1874) and their children. His second wife was Elizabeth "Libby" Fellows Backus Harrison. D. R. Harrison served as Herrin Prairie's first postmaster, established the first bank, helped organize the Baptist Church and the Masonic Lodge in Herrin. He auctioned the Harrison House in 1900 and moved into town.

The House and farm lands were purchased by the Chicago & Carterville Coal Company. In 1936 the house came back to the Harrison family as the home of D. R. Harrison' great nephew Leonard Pope until 1946 when he sold the house to Sam and Ruby Talley.

Harrison's granddaughter, Julia Harrison Bruce, purchased the house from the Talley's in 1975. After restorations and new construction of the log cabin in back, a grand reopening of the house was held July 16, 1977. Advisors of the Fred G. Harrison Foundation and the Julia Harrison Bruce Foundation collaborated

with JALC to preserve the heritage of the historic home by building a replica and using many parts of the original home on the College campus. The house was completed in 2012.



HARRISON DOUBLE DOG TROT CABIN

The 19th Century "double dog trot" style log cabin is a replica of the cabin that George Henry Harrison built for his wife, Delilah. The cabin, built in the early 1830's in what was then Herrin's Prairie, was family home occupied until the construction of the brick home in 1868 by David Ruffin Harrison.

When Julia Harrison Bruce and her husband Carl purchased the property in 1975, Carl and Martin Bruyns built the replica cabin with poplar logs on the approximate sight of the original structure.

The cabin is divided into two pens, one on each side of the concrete-floored breezeway or dog trot. In pioneer times the floor plan provided a way of separating the kitchen with its eternal fire from the living quarters. The breezeway provided relief from the heat of summer and a covered space for animals during the winter. The pen on the right is now set up to display what might have been found in the Harrison General Store that was also on the original property. Many of the items were purchased at antique shops or auctions and from other pioneer families including the Stotlar family.



HUNTER LOG CABIN

Emmanuel Hunter built the Hunter Log Cabin in 1818, the year Illinois became a state. Upon acquiring statehood, Illinois offered free land to veterans of the war of 1812. Hunter was leading wagon trains from middle Tennessee to southern Illinois. Lured by the promise of free land, he moved his wife, Judith Lee Hunter and their six children to the southern Illinois

prairie, near what is now Whiteash, located northeast of Marion.

The log house was deeded with 40 acres in 1886 to Elijah Lodge Grant. He and his descendants preserved the building for the next 120 years.

In February, 2005 Richard H. Hunter purchased the cabin from Wendell E. Grant. Richard donated the cabin to the Jacob Hunter Trust, named for the Revolutionary War soldier Jacob Hunter, who was Emmanuel Hunter's father. In July, 2005, the Jacob Hunter Trust donated the cabin to John A. Logan College.

Approximately 80 per cent of the logs are original. The cabin served as a residence until 1899 when it was converted into a storage building.



PURDY SCHOOL

Purdy School served as a one-room school in southern Perry County, Illinois from around 1860 until 1951. Classes ended in the 1950's at Purdy School due to decreasing population and county consolidation of schools.

The building continued to be used as a polling place and community center until 1981 when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Rice. The Rice's made the school a gift to the John A. Logan College Foundation for its use as a museum that represents early public education in southern Illinois.

Edwin Burbank, the great grandfather of Mrs. Harold Rice, donated the land on which the school house was originally built to the county and four generations of Mrs. Rice's family attended there. The school was named for Mr. E. P. Purdy who helped initiate Sunday schools in the rear of the school and taught music and Sunday school classes.

The school building was moved to the campus September 16, 1983 through the generosity of the Julia Harrison Bruce Foundation. The school was dedicated November 6, 1983. The building has been repaired and volunteers have collected artifacts to recreate the one-room school.

The one-room school atmosphere has been restored with vintage textbooks, slates and chalk, a recitation bench, potbellied stove and recess games that reflect an earlier time. The school is used seasonally each year for day long sessions for area students to experience school as it was in rural America. Classes are led by volunteer retired teachers.



ROBERT L. MEES VILLAGE CENTRE

The Robert L. Mees Centre serves as the hub of the Harrison-Bruce Historical Village by providing a venue for college, community and private events.

The Centre can host 104-155 persons in the 1860 square foot common room, depending on seating arrangements.

The all-inclusive rental fee of \$300 for the Mees Village Centre includes, setup, clean up and audio-visual needs. Food service may be arranged through one of several John A. Logan authorized caterers.



HERITAGE GARDENS

The newest addition to the Historical Village are the lovely heritage gardens, established and maintained by volunteer master gardeners and naturalists. Each area is carefully cultivated to replicate period appropriate gardening.

The Hunter Cabin features a settlers planting of heirloom varieties, representing an 1818 subsistence garden. The native wildflower garden hosts traveling and local pollinators and is registered as an official Monarch Watch Waystation.

Near Purdy School, there is a Memorial Garden. Memorial Day is directly linked to General John A. Logan. The garden features heirloom annuals, as well as rosemary "for remembrance."

The Harrison House gardens feature beautiful heirloom and native varieties, as well as a formal herb garden. In the herb garden, you will find both medicinal and culinary herbs.

Restoration of a natural one acre prairie immediately behind the Harrison Storefront is ongoing.

HARRISON-BRUCE HISTORICAL VILLAGE

Located on the Campus of
John A. Logan College
Carterville, Illinois



For information on scheduling events and tours,
or to volunteer at the Village,
please contact the Facility Scheduling Office
at 618- 985-2828, ext. 8209.

Visit us on the web:
[www.jalc.edu/facilities/
the-harrison-bruce-historical-village](http://www.jalc.edu/facilities/the-harrison-bruce-historical-village)

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