

VIEW FROM THE MILL

By Levi Hochstetler

Here in Ohio we have experienced one of the worst snow storms in recent history (or most delightful, depending on your perspective, usually defined by the color of hair left on your head). Locally we got 10" to 12", but in other areas they got even more. Luckily, we were all at home Sunday morning when it started. Here it started around 11:00 P.M. on Saturday night and continued steadily on until around 9:30 P.M. on Sunday night.

Several men are preparing the log display for the Columbus Log Home Show. Nathan designed a log home display booth with logs and timber which is more in line to what most manufacturers used to do 20-30 years ago. The industry has gone the way of pop-up picture displays as real wood display takes a lot more effort to set up. Nathan thinks most log home people still like to touch and feel things.

For years, the Mose Yoder family and Ray Miller operated a high-production-grade sawmill next door to our planer mill. Recently, we had been looking for property in order to consolidate the timber sawmill and the pine sawmill closer to us here. Apparently, they found out of our intent and offered for sale their mill with the real estate to us. Because it was such a good fit, we decided to take them up on their offer. So now we are in the process of shutting down the other two mills and modifying the new mill in order to eventually saw everything next door.

So Long,

– Levi E.H.

Are Log Homes Expensive?

– by Levi Hochstetler

We get the question a lot: "Are log homes more expensive than conventional stick homes?"

Like I have often said, if you compared it to building a simple squarish home consisting of four solid log walls versus four stud walls with OSB sub siding, house wrap, vinyl siding, insulation, drywall, and with flat ceiling trusses on both, the price would be nearly a wash.

However, most log home enthusiasts want a well-designed home with high-quality components. This would include cathedral ceilings, fireplaces, timber roof and loft systems, real hardwood floors, actual wood paneling trim and interior doors, high-end front doors, nice chandeliers, and custom cabinets, etc. Suddenly, you have a home that will cost twice of what a basic house would. All of these added expensive niceties are expected in a Hochstetler log home. Whereas in a conventional stick home, several of these items may be added, such as a nice front door, but probably not all of them. Now instead of log homes starting at \$200 per square foot, like many stick homes do, they start at \$275.

And on top of that, some conventional stick homes are built cheaply by design. Economy grade lumber, cheap drywall, low-end vinyl siding, fake wood MDF trim and cabinets, hardwood look-a-like vinyl plank LVP floors — the list goes on and on. Poor quality this and base price that.

For years, builders have been economizing the American dream. We have been brainwashed into the idea that these

continued on page 2



Hochstetler Celebrates 40 Years – by Nathan Hochstetler

2026 will mark an important milestone in the history of Hochstetler Milling - their 40th Anniversary! The blueprint to the company's steady growth has been its determination to stick to its mission statement to provide the highest quality materials for a fair and honest price.

Levi Hochstetler, the founder, as an Amish youth, attended school only through the 8th grade before embarking in his career in the building trades. Most of us would view this lack of an advanced education as a disadvantage. However, Levi insists it was actually an advantage since it gave him a "jump start" on his career getting hands-on experience at an early age. "I always have been an avid reader though, reading any self-help books and magazines that I could get my hands on. This ranged from, the encyclopedia to the IRS 1040 instruction booklet, filling in the gaps of my 8th grade education."

In the fall of '86 his parents sold him a 2-acre field off the farm "to be paid later" to set up the planer mill. At the time it was planted in corn. So, the first order of business was to make a small clearing in the corn field for an 8'x20' concrete slab. This was to set the planer on. Thus, Hochstetler Milling was literally, "off

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Are Log Homes Expensive?

(continued from page 1)

cheap homes are the standard when, in fact, they should be considered standard. We have begun to think that a 100-year-old home is an old home, when it should be considered a newer home. There is no reason that homes couldn't be built with the intent of them lasting 500 years. That is what our standard should be. If we look at it from that angle then log homes are on par with other "should be" standard custom homes. In other words, it's not that log homes are expensive, but that stick homes are cheap.

If you upgraded a conventional stick-built home to match a log home's structural integrity, energy-efficiency, and air quality — not to mention warmth and inherent beauty — you would find the stick-built home would match the log home in price!

Then too, you might ask yourself — Do we want housing, or a lifestyle with a purpose? Take transportation as an example. You can drive (not us Amish) a basic car such as a Chevy Malibu or opt for a Lincoln Navigator SUV. The SUV not only provides style but also provides safety, capacity, durability, longevity and, if ever sold, will maintain greater resale value as well.

The bottom line is, too much emphasis has been in getting us Americans into the American dream, as any dream, instead of into a quality, healthy home. With that said, "Yes, log homes are cost effective when you compare them 'apples to apples' to a good quality, custom stick-home!" 🏠



Interior of Komm Heim plan (shown on left)



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Hochstetler Celebrates 40 Years *(continued from page 1)*

the ground.”

Everything was set up direct motor drive with belts and pulleys. True to Amish tradition, no electricity was used. The planer itself was an older 4-sided Timber Sizer weighing about 9 tons. It was able to smooth-plane all four sides in one pass, with a capacity to mill 15”x30” timber.

At first, two people rolled and tugged heavy cants onto the feed rolls and pushed them into the planer. Each evening the old planer was “put to bed” with heavy tarps covering it since there was no building to house it. After the first year, a small roof was added so employees would not have to mess with the tarps.

After several years they were able to move up to a 32’x96’ open-faced shed over the planer operation. As all businesses do, they had their share of setbacks. Soon after the shed was built, they lost the roof to a wind storm. Another time Levi’s dad, giving him a fatherly hand, fell off a truck and broke both legs. Even grandpa, a successful business man, remarked what most others sensed but didn’t verbalize, “He will never make it.” Despite these and other setbacks, with faith, outstanding customer service, excellent product and the ever present blessings from above, Hochstetler prevailed.

1997 marked an important milestone, for that was the year the entire operation was moved from a cornfield in Nunda, Ohio to McKay, going from an open faced shed and small wing of 3450 sq. ft. to an insulated facility of over 13,000 sq. ft. A small log cabin was also built at the time which served as the sales office.

By the year 2000 they were bursting at the seams and doing over 80 log homes per year not counting the many timber and wood components for other homes as well. In order to serve the customers satisfactorily, they more than doubled the shop. This enabled them to house the planer in the front half of the building while creating much-needed warehouse space in the back. All log packages would be wrapped, stored under roof and ready for delivery when customers had their foundations ready. Also at that time the old planer was replaced with,

a state-of-the-art Yates American, the Cadillac of the industry. No planer mill can achieve the accurateness and fine-milled log finish as the Yates American

Steady growth continued through the next couple years, where by 2003 over 150 log homes left the mill. But one piece was still missing - a model customers could visit and see first-hand the quality workmanship that goes into the homes. In 2003, ground was broken for the McKay model. Although the McKay was the ideal family-size home, there was also a need for a smaller, vacation-type model, so the Black Fork was built in 2007.

New state of the art dry kilns were added in 2012 for better control on the wood drying process. In 2018 with the surge of customers wanting a one stop shop for their log home a new warehouse was built for windows, doors and conventional lumber storage.

In 2020 an addition was added to the Black Fork and the sales and design team moved out of the McKay model. This brought the production office and sales all under one roof.

The first spec home was built in 2022 called the Teton and in 2025 the Hochstetler which is currently available to tour. Call 800-368-1015 to setup a time to tour.

Recently a grade sawmill next door was offered for sale. Currently they are working on consolidating two other sawmills all into one location for better efficiencies. A second sawmill is being setup to have the capabilities to cut over 40’ Oak beams.

Today, ten of Levi’s sons, one son in-law, and one daughter work in the business, with six being partners. As always, challenges will come our way but with the family being involved, the willing hands of the employee’s, and the blessing from above we should be able to continue. 🏠

See photos on next page →

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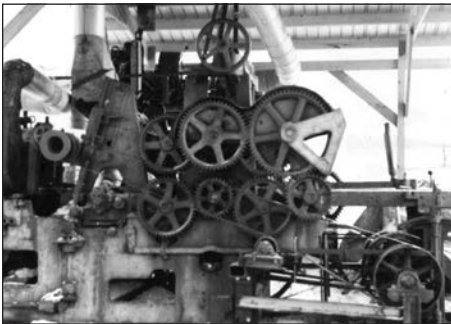
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Follow the Hochstetler Journey of 40 years.



1987 first shop and original planer



1987-1994 Timberframe Office



1989-1997 32x96 Open Face Planer Shop



1994 Ground Breaking for new location in small town of McKay



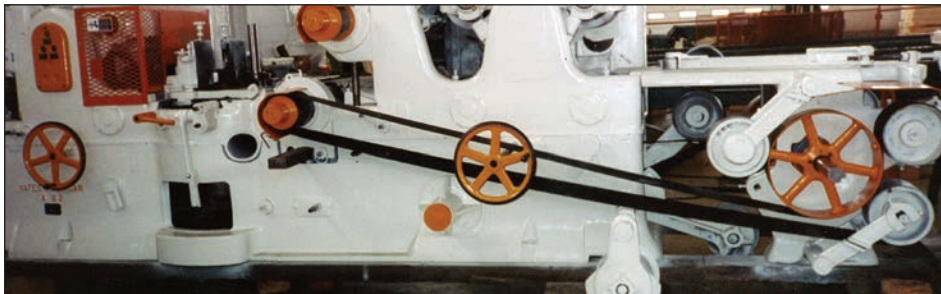
1997 Moved to current location new 13000 sq. ft. shop



1997 New Log Cabin Office



2000 New Warehouse Addition



2000 Rebuilt Yates American Planer ready for 26 years of accurate milling.



2004 New McKay Model



2004 Purchased Dry Kilns from neighbor Lewis Hostetler



2007 New Black Fork Model



2008 Loading a Log Home to ship to Ukraine



2009 First Log Cabin Days



2012 New SII Dry Kilns



2016 New Racking for Lumber Storage



2018 Warehouse for Conventional Lumber



2022 Teton Spec Home



2025 Hochstetler Spec Home



2025 Sawmill

Tranquility Pines



by Nathan Hochstetler

– Photography by Style Life Photography

Step out and listen to the wind whispering through the towering pine trees. Everything is so peaceful! It's easy to imagine being miles away from civilization. This is the setting the newest Hochstetler spec home is in — a place where log homes are just a natural fit. No wonder the team at Hochstetler became excited when this 5 acre property became available close by that had an area cleared for a home.

Owen at Woodland Rose Log Homes was hired to be the General Contractor and to manage the complete build. With the previous build we were our own General Contractor and decided this time around we will have Owen do what he is good at — being a GC and we stay in the office and take care of our clients that want to build their own peaceful place. Ground breaking began on April 1st and 9 months later the final decorations were put in place, just in time for a Thanksgiving open house.

When we build spec homes a lot of thought goes into the design. These are homes that we design to be practical for our customers. A home to fall in love with. The design team took a few of our most popular home plans and combined them into what we call the “Hochstetler”. You will see elements of our McKay, Wilson and Black Fork in this home and ideas from other homes as well. The result is stunning!

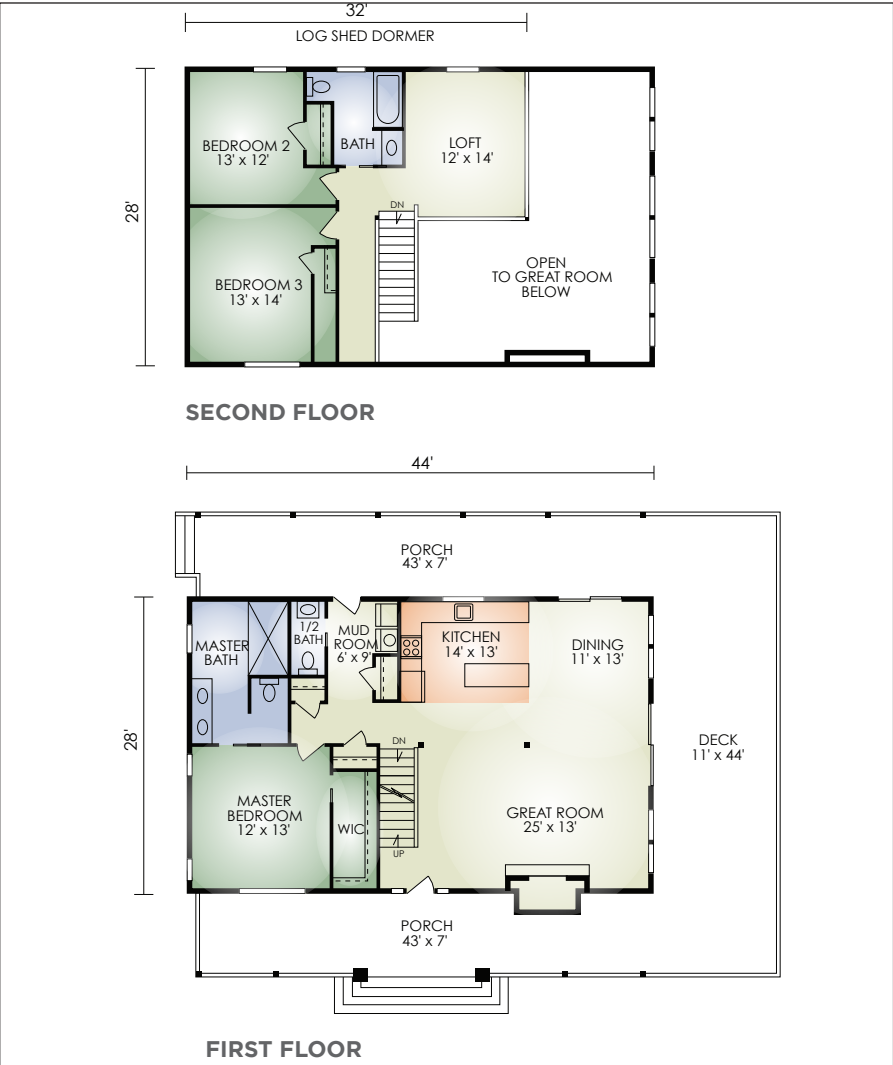
On the outside, there are lots of covered porch areas to enjoy that cup of coffee. An oversized deck and patio designed for late night s'more roasting and swapping tales.

Moving to the inside, you are welcomed by the extra-large wood burning fireplace and the expansive glass in the gable, bringing the outdoors in. The custom kitchen has a well thought out layout, and is the perfect size for cooking those holiday dinners. The Master suite is on the main floor, with two additional bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs. Downstairs, there is a spacious area finished out for indoor fun.

The Cabin Store in Mt Hope, Ohio, along with Jara at JT Interiors, did a phenomenal job with the decorations and furnishings. It has the cozy and relaxing feel that we all yearn for in our homes.

This home will be available for a tour until we sell it. So if you would like a tour, make arrangements with us soon by calling 800-368-1015. 🏠





*To tour this home contact
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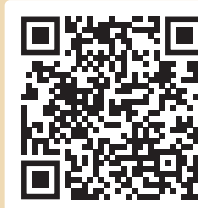
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Featured Advertiser: Miller's Rustic Furniture

— Janice Brewster Weiser

Furnishing a Dream

Joe Miller and his wife Miriam own Miller's Rustic Furniture in Millersburg, Ohio. Together they work with customers looking to outfit their homes with furniture that brims with character. "Log furniture definitely brings warmth," Joe says. "It just fits in very nicely with a log home or timber frame home."

Pieces to Match Every Home

Wood furniture takes on a variety of styles at Miller's Rustic Furniture. For those who prefer a rustic organic look, the red cedar, hickory and Aspen collections feature log elements and some pieces that have skip-peeled or intact bark. Slab dining and side tables highlight oversized wood cuts and peeled tree stumps for bases.

The hand-hewn and reclaimed collections have clean lines and play up the grain and character of the wood itself, especially the wood that the company salvages from former tobacco barns in Kentucky and Tennessee. "There's nothing like it," Joe says. "No new wood matches up with barnwood. It has tons of character. Some of it has old nail holes. It's just very unique."

The wood furnishings Miller's sells are primarily made in-house in their seven-person woodshop or at other local craftsman's shops. The wide range includes beds, bunk beds, dressers, night tables, dining room tables and chairs, living room chairs and sofas, home office furniture, pie safes, benches, and much more.

Much of the collection can be viewed and ordered via the website to be shipped anywhere -- from Ohio to the surrounding states of West Virginia and Pennsylvania to across the country. Orders are taken by phone or email instead of through an online shopping cart.

A Unique Experience

Still, in times when many purchases are made via a screen, seeing the Miller's Rustic Furniture showroom in person is an experience. Themed room settings feature matching bed linens, lamps, artwork and decorative accessories. Antiques in the mix add to the homey feel. Sprinkled throughout the showroom are countless stuffed and mounted animals like elk, cougar and bears from Joe's hunting trips.

Joe and Miriam say visitors love the smell of wood in the store and are excited to see a wide variety of handcrafted wood bedroom and dining room furniture on display to choose from.

To fully round out the lines of furniture, the store also provides upholstered pieces like recliners through two suppliers: Best HF and Best Crafted Furniture.

Made to Order

While the showroom offers a wide range of locally made furnishings available to purchase and take home the same day, Miller's also welcomes custom orders for furnishings, kitchen cabinetry or bathroom vanities.

When designing cabinetry, "we usually sit down with the homeowner and their measurements," Joe says. "Or we can do it by email." They have provided cabinets for both new builds, including Hochstetler log homes, and some remodeling projects. The lead time for kitchen cabinets runs about 16 to 18 weeks. Custom furniture has a shorter lead time; usually eight to 12 weeks.

Furnishing Generations

For 15 years, Joe and Miriam have loved providing furnishings and helping customers outfit their dream homes. "I love the retail part, meeting customers," Joe says. "We have a lot of customers who have come in ever since we started up." Now those customers' grown children are buying furniture. "We have a lot of friends who started out as customers."

If you plan to shop in person, the store at 6101 County Road 68 in Millersburg, Ohio, is open Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. You can also visit their website at MillersRusticFurniture.com.



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Tech Section

Educational and Interesting Facts.

Question: What is the oldest known log structure?

Answer: The oldest known log structure was built in 1287 AD. It is called the Haus Bethlehem located in Schwyz, Switzerland.

– Steve Lykins, Log Home Engineer and Design

Question: What is the maintenance on a log home?

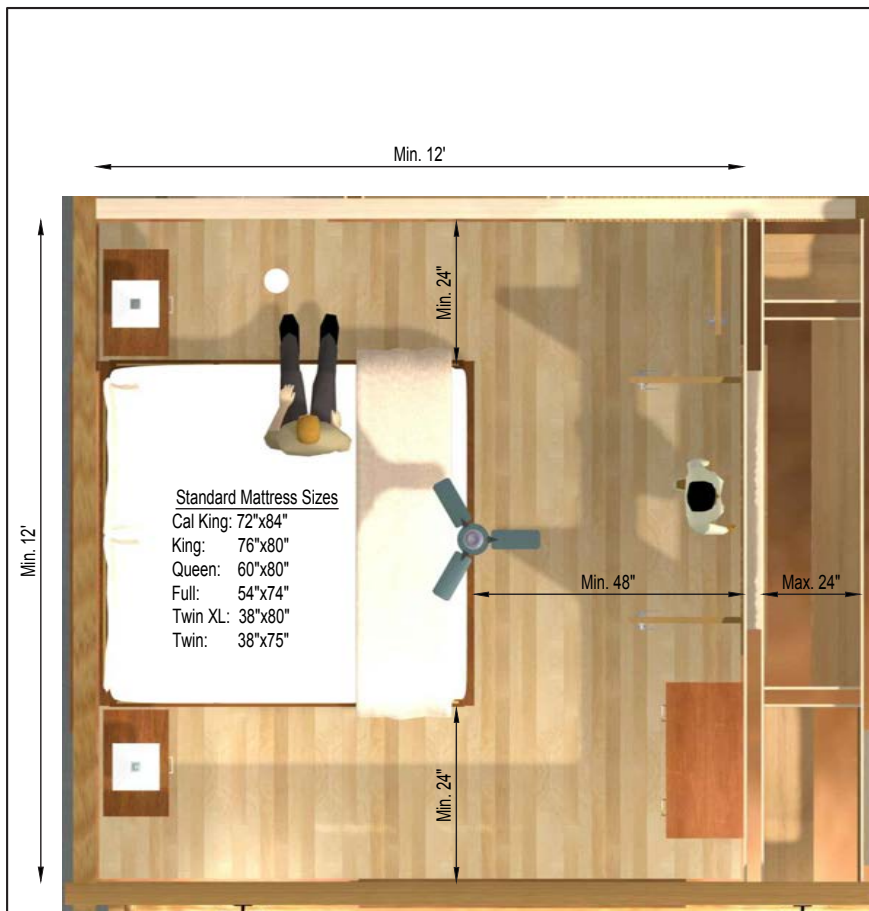
Most log home owners want mostly wood rather than drywall on the inside walls which, like wood furniture, has virtually no maintenance. No drywall to paint!

Generally, on the outside you will want to stain every 4-7 years. Under porches you might go even longer. We suggest you wash the home once per year to remove dirt and pollen which can break down the finish.

The key is to plan the maintenance to avoid surprises. The most convenient way to take care of your home is to enroll in an annual maintenance plan with a staining company, generally about \$150 per month.

– Levi Hochstetler, Proprietor of Hochstetler Log Homes

Bedrooms

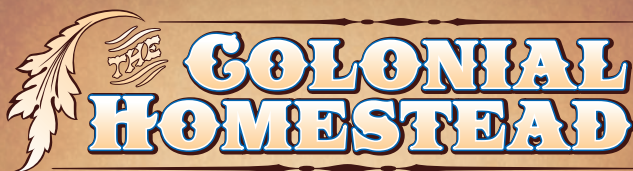


- Minimum Size: 9'x11' or 10'x10' to accommodate a twin or full size bed.
- Primary Bedrooms (shown) are generally 12'x12' or larger to accommodate a queen or king size bed.
- Provide at least 24" walkway between bed and wall or between bed and other furniture pieces.
- Provide at least 48" in front of closets for dressing space.
- Reach-in closets should be no more than 24" deep.
- Walk-in Closets should be at least 5'x5' for shelves on two perpendicular walls.
- For closets with vaulted ceilings, consider capping it off at 8' or 9' high with a plant ledge to avoid unusable, hard-to-clean spaces.
- Do not place windows where they might be obscured by the headboard of the bed. Consider short windows above the headboard height.
- Arrange the furniture so that the bed is presented foot first as you enter the bedroom doorway.
- Avoid arrangements where the bed is in a corner butting against two adjacent walls, except for bunk beds.

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CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

■ It was our dream to have a log home built for our retirement home. We also wanted to live in the mountains somewhere. After we secured land in Mountain City, TN, we contacted builders that were recommended in the area. We did visit another log home company, but something just didn't feel right. The contractor/builder had not worked with this particular company and he then recommended Hochstetler Log Homes. He thought them reputable and of great quality. Once we visited Hochstetler Log Homes in Ohio, we just knew they were the one for us! It has been a great experience!
– Georges, TN

■ It has been a pleasurable experience working with the Hochstetler family. Joseph is an exceptional example of an employee of a faith-based family business. He answered every question and helped in every way possible enabling us to purchase and build our dream home. All material deliveries were easy and on time. The quality of the materials is exceptional. The supplied plans and building manual are accurate and detailed. Every member of the team/family is personable and helpful. Customer service is excellent! The calls are answered or returned every time without fail!
– Zullo, ME

■ Hochstetler Log Homes was a great company to work with, on the way to making our dream come true. I had my own custom design which I had been working on for 10 years. I was impressed with HLH's ability to work through all of my design elements, letting me know what needed changed as well as what would work well when porting my design to final plans. From there, moving forward with the build was seamless. I would recommend HLH to anyone new to the log cabin game. – Kopec, OH

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CABIN FEVER

Buzzard Day is a special day in Hinckley, Ohio, for it marks the return of turkey buzzards to this small northeastern Ohio city. Since 1957, the city has celebrated the return of this majestic bird with a festival. Referred to as “Nature’s garbage disposal,” the buzzard is a vital part of our ecosystem and has been a key factor in keeping our roads cleaner by eating roadkills (technically, they are turkey vultures, not buzzards, since buzzards eat only live animals, while vultures feast on carrion). Vultures are not particularly selective either. Dead — even rotten — opossums, raccoons, deer, foxes, coyotes and other roadkills — are a culinary delight for this amazing bird. And, the succulent skunk may be at the top of its list! The head, being featherless, enables the bird to reach most places, while staying relatively clean. But, no need to worry with the diet...the strong stomach acids dissolve everything, including bones, in their wake.

This year, the festival will be held Sunday, March 15. The Hinckley Chamber of Commerce and residents organized the

event in 1957 when Walter Nawalaniec, a Cleveland Metroparks patrolman, noticed the buzzards would always return to this area the same day, each year. Why, you ask? In 1818, Judge Samuel Hinckley, the landowner, proclaimed a great hunt to take place in Hinckley Hills. Participating hunters, many of whom were veterans of the American revolution and the War of 1812, conducted the massive hunt to rid the abundance of wild animals there, including large predators like bear and wolves. The thousands of dead animals were left behind and soon attracted vultures, which returned to the area each year on their migratory route. Around 1818, townships adjoining Hinckley included settlers who started clearing the scenic land for agriculture.

The annual Buzzard Day event now attracts thousands of people and includes a scrumptious sausage and pancake breakfast, a craft fair, and numerous exhibitors. And, the bonus is your opportunity to see the vultures! 🏠



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