



Log Home Life

Promoting The Simple Life

Winter 2025/2026

VIEW FROM THE MILL

By Levi Hochstetler

Here the weather went from being very wet to dry. From struggling to get enough logs in the yard, to being overwhelmed with more logs than what we can handle. In fact, we are hoping for an all-week rain to slow down the flow of logs coming in. Fortunately, as it gets cooler we don't have to be concerned that they will stain on us. Pine, Maple and Poplar will quickly stain in the summer.

Log Cabin Days is behind us with another good turnout. There must be a good many LCD attendees interested in Homesteading as that seems to keep growing. Staff is already meeting to plan on how to make next year's event even better. The tentative date for next year's LCD's is on the second Friday and Saturday in September which makes it the 11th and 12th.

Joseph and Martha, my oldest son and his wife, are finally building their dream log home. Already the foundation is in. It will be constructed with our new hand-hewn 8"x12" log with a 3½" chinking chase and dovetailed corners. It is a custom 2900 square foot design which we want to eventually develop into a standard plan. They hope to have it done in time to be included for next year's LCD home tour.

The new spec/show log home is moving right along. The trim crew is now moving in. Plans are to have a grand opening on November the 28th and 29th; Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving. Hope you can come!

So Long,

– Levi E.H.

Come Visit Us!

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Are All Log Home Packages the Same?

– by Levi Hochstetler

There are numerous log home manufactures throughout the US and none of their packages are exactly the same. This makes it difficult for the buyer to determine and compare the value. Depending on the components included, there can be a vast difference in value.

Primarily there are two variables. First, how much and what all is included and second, the quality of the material.

Taking a look at one example of what all is included; the standard package for the 2007 square foot McKay model, with logs and windows only, has a value of \$63,000 from our company. On the other hand, the more complete package for that same home with the timbered roof system, hardwood flooring, all the way down to finish nails and closet rods has a value of \$224,000. Most advertised packages fall somewhere between these two.

The second variable is the quality of the components in the package itself. Take windows as one example. One package may include a basic Anderson 200 series windows. Another company may include an upgrade to an Anderson 400 series with screens and grilles included. This for the same home will add \$3000 or more value.

Some log home producers like Hochstetler Log Homes who are vertically integrated, the journey of your log home starts in the farmer's wood lot. We buy the standing trees from them, and hire a contractor to cut them. Next, the logs get shipped to our sawmill where they get sawn into boards and cants (square timbers). Unique in that process is, we

continued on page 2



GRAND OPENING! See page 3

Log Home Living Unsurpassed – by Nathan Hochstetler

What makes log homes such a popular choice? Why does their value increase so much in the resale market? Our answers come from the folks that have experienced Hochstetler log home living.

The Warmth and Comfort of a Log Home

When asked what their favorite part of log home living is, Camille Crago replied, “Her 12-year-old granddaughter portrayed it best. It's the way I feel when I'm here”.

Phil DeAngelo says, “that when he turns off the lights at night and walks thru his house he feels so blessed. This home is built with natural material, God made. When you look a picture of a log home, you just want to curl up and wrap a blanket around and you're going to be happy.”

The warmth of the wood just can't be matched. There have been numerous products made to mimic wood but none have brought us the warmth of natural wood.

Energy Efficiency of Log Homes

Scott Lyon says that he has been greatly impressed with the home's heat efficiency. “We have a wood

continued on page 4

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The Clear Fork

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The Clear Fork can be described in one word: majestic! Whether it overlooks a lake or river or expansive valley, this home offers a commanding and unobstructed view. Inside, it features the spacious, open-concept great room with exposed timber ceiling and impressive fireplace; chef-size kitchen with built-in pantry and convenient island; and first-floor walk-through laundry connected to the master walk-in closet. The master suite features a nice size bedroom, master bath with room for a hot tub and shower, a walk-in closet and its own private screen porch. Upstairs, there are two additional bedrooms and a bath, plus an open loft which overlooks the great room and front entry. Your family will love the breathtaking beauty of this home as much as your guests.

Photo and floor plans may differ slightly from actual blueprints.

All our plans can be modified to fit your lifestyle. Call 800-368-1015 to get your new log home started.



© Hochstetler Milling, Ltd., 2025

Are All Log Home Packages the Same?

(continued from page 1)

“kerf” the cants. This is a simple saw cut into the bottom of the logs to help control checks similar to cutting control cuts in concrete. After the logs are sawn we end coat the lumber and put it on stickers, under cover. The cants are air-dried for at least a year and the boards for several months.

Once you place your order for a log home package the cants are put into a dry kiln in order to dry them down even further. Turning up the heat in the kiln to above 140 degrees assures that the logs are sanitized. This kills anything alive such as bugs and larva that may have entered the cant, plus it also helps set the pitch. Finally, they are milled, trimmed and graded into a tongue-and-groove stacking log. From there they are temporarily put in storage until the builder and/or client is ready to take delivery. Generally, we will send one truck load at a time as the builder needs them. This way, the material isn't lying around on the job site where it can get damaged or even wet.

On top of all this, every year we give away 1000's of pine seedlings to farmers and land owners to plant. We try to match planting that many on our own tree-farm as well. This is to assure sustainability and material for future generations to produce quality log homes.

All these invaluable, behind the scenes processing steps, assures quality control, comfort and peace of mind but at the same time adds cost and value to your log home package. Hidden value that most buyers would fail to realize. At least not till many years later when problems start surfacing.

If we chose not to kerf our cants, it by itself would save the consumer \$2500, or more on their package. However, you would experience more checking on the surface. You, as a potential log home owner will have to decide if the extra dollars will justify this quality improvement or not.

Another big cost variation to packages is the quality of the roof system. Some companies will supply conventional rafters with a few decorative timbers and 7/16th OSB sheathing in their packages. Others like ourselves, will supply a post-and-beam structural timber roof system including a continuous blanket of 7-3/8 polystyrene insulation panels with OSB attached. This, for the McKay, amounts to an additional \$17,000 value.

Then it's the type of components. Using the 2007 square foot McKay as an example, the 6" wide logs verses 8" is an additional \$8135 value. Other items with more value include Douglas fir structural timbers versus yellow pine or white pine \$16,500; standing seam metal roof versus shingles \$13,500; and brand name metal such as choosing McELROY METALS versus a local roll former is double the cost. The list could go on and on.

Another point of confusion is the different jargon that company's use that many clients don't understand. #1 dense KD DF timbers; stands for, that the timbers are dense a very strong, slow growing kiln-dried Douglas Fir with a number one and better grade. This is a subject, all by its own, which we will address in a later article.

Sometimes companies advertise a completed turnkey modular log cabin, ready to put on your foundation when all it really is, is a double-wide with log siding and false corners, giving it the log home look.

Do your homework. Compare item for item. Comparing the final turn key build price will tell you more in the end, on the completeness of the package. Far more than what the package costs in itself.

For quality comparison the most effective thing you can do is visit the log home manufacturers production facility. To see their log home models is important but nothing will tell you as much as seeing and observing their facility. If someone claims they air dry their logs for a year they will have a huge air-drying yard full of cants that you will want to see. If they Kiln-Dry their cants you will want to tour the kiln also. This is imperative, as those important steps are impossible without having those capabilities.

Yours to a good experience fulfilling your dream log home,

— Levi E. H. 



GRAND OPENING! NOVEMBER 28 & 29



Welcome to the Grand Opening of the Hochstetler Log Home

The design team took the elements of our most popular designs and blended them together to create this beautiful well laid out home. The wrap-around porches and deck area give you plenty of space for relaxation or to hang out with friends. The expansive glass in the great room brings the outdoors in and plenty of light.

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Log Home Living Unsurpassed *(continued from page 1)*

stove in our living room, and it will heat the entire 2500 sq. ft. house.”

Mike Biskup was surprised at how energy-efficient their new log home is. He had a geothermal system installed, and although their home is twice the size of their previous conventional home, the electrical bills are less!

Log homes have come a long way, from the old days of filling gaps with horse hair, moss and clay, to the modern day, kiln-dried log with tongue-and-groove gasket system. They have become one of the most energy-efficient homes.

My Wife Never Wanted a Log Home

Steve and Adie spent their first night in the log home one year to the day after construction began. “Tears came to my eyes as we sat in the great room and realized my dream had come true,” Steve recounted. “It was better than we ever imagined.” His wife, once less than enthusiastic about the log home lifestyle, quickly fell in love.

Log homes of today are not only for men but women as well. There are 100’s of options you can put in a log home. Don’t like all wood? Add some accents walls with sheetrock, stone or white washed stain. Choose different color stains and lighter stains.

Legacy

Williams’ love of the back-to-nature lifestyle is evident in the decor and furnishings throughout, daily reminders of dear friends and fond memories. Steve was appreciative of the opportunity to build on the family farm and the rich heritage that was part of it. So “coming home” was more than buying a piece of land and building on it. It was keeping family memories and traditions alive.

Leon, and Evelyn, built a log home in Michigan. Today, the family, as well as many friends, enjoy the fruits of their labor. Besides coming together for birthdays and other memory-experiencing events they started a “family tradition” of “gathering at the cabin” during the 4th of July and Labor Day weekend. The

desire is, many years from now, the close-knit family, will continue to enjoy the fruits of their labor and “gather at the cabin.”

Welcomes You Home Every Time

Jane says, “You can feel the love that went into this home and when you get to the top of the hill and see it, you get warm all over, almost heaven.”

“Our log home is so comfortable and inviting. Every time I come in our driveway I have to think, Ok, we’re home, and not on a vacation.” says Deb Coen. “Our thoughts are if we won the lottery would we rebuild or do anything different? No! We love what we have! It’s our own little world.”

Dennis says what he likes most about their home is, “when I come here it’s like all the stress of the day melts away.”

Brings You Closer to Nature

Now our “dream” is finished, we couldn’t be happier. We are surrounded by nature in all its beauty. Pine creek flows through the property and provides a welcome habitat for our neighbors ... deer, mink, turtles, and birds. The rocky outcroppings of sandstone formations, provide a spectacular backdrop to our log home.

Larry Covington has two favorite spots in his log home, the den with a wood burning fireplace, and the covered deck. Above the doorway to the deck is a wooden sign that says “Serenity Hill” and it is here on the deck that the meaning of serenity is profound. On top of the mountains there is no humidity, no mosquitoes, no worry of hurricanes and it’s the best view in the country.

Strength of a Log Home

When asked what the most pleasant surprise was in living in a log home Keith Gaspari replied, “They are rock solid. They’re Tanks.”

*When Hurricane Rita’s winds caused a giant oak tree to crash through the roof of Menlo Klingman and his wife Mickey’s log home. The solid log walls withstood the weight of the toppled tree. “There is no doubt in my mind that the log home saved our lives,” says Mickey.

Log Home Maintenance

John Sloane says, “That some people will try to scare you out of building a log home, but most likely they never lived in one. If you do your research and built it right you realize they are not more maintenance. Log homes have been standing for 100’s of years; they last better than other homes. I own a conventional home as well and I have less maintenance in this log home!”

People said to Keith Burgess, “Oh, you don’t want a log home, there too much maintenance.” But we were not afraid of work. Now I think a log home is actually less work. I never have to paint anything on the inside.

Our Dream Come True, Never Going Back

Since he was 10 years old, Doug Mock dreamt of living in a log home. It wasn’t until years later his longtime dream be-came reality. Doug is still in awe over the transformation. “To go from a 60’s split-level to my dream log home was simply amazing.”

And while the process to get there was a long one, Mike stressed that the outcome made it all worthwhile. “I just want to encourage people who have always wanted to build a log home to never give up on that dream.

And Phil DeAngelo wraps it up with, “If you want to build a log home stick with it. Don’t be taken out by some things people say. Stick to your dreams and make it happen.”

This is not what all log home owners are saying!

Only the owners who have a done right log home. On your maintenance it makes a difference what stain product you’re using, how the home is designed and green versus kiln dried logs. Efficiency of your log home depends on the roof system, is it conventional framed or does it have sip insulation panels. Bat and mice infestation depends if you have solid logs or conventional framed walls with log siding on it. With solid logs there is no cavity for critters. It’s so important to do your homework before signing the dotted line. Ask the question, “is this company going to build me a done-right home, making me able to say what the above log home owners say?”

** Source: From NAHB.org /Why log homes are better than conventional construction.*

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Local Lender Is User-Friendly for Log Home Buyers

A log home dream is just that – a dream – until the time comes to pay for it. Buyers who want to finance a log home project usually apply for a construction loan. One of the lenders that's deeply experienced with serving log home buyers is First Federal Community Bank of Bucyrus. (Janice – we actually cover Ohio and the neighboring states, I'd like to leave it open rather than just listing Ohio)

To help demystify the loan process, the bank's senior loan officer, Tim Adams, explains the basics of construction lending and what he believes makes log homes stand out.

Types of Construction Loans

People who plan to build a new home can choose from single-close or two-time close loans. While it streamlines the process, the single-close (or "construction to permanent") loan can cost a bit more when it comes to locking in a long-term rate for the "permanent" or ongoing portion of the loan, Adams says. With a two-time close, it's possible that interest rates may be lower when the home is completed and ready for the ongoing mortgage.

Construction Loan Details

Construction loans differ from conventional mortgages for already-built houses in several ways. Construction loans require interest-only payments and are written for 12 months. "If more time is needed," Adams says, "we can do an extension of the terms."

A construction loan is not permanent financing: It's a short-term loan that allows for a house to be built. Construction loan interest rates are a little bit higher, Adams says, because they represent a higher risk to the lender. It is possible to obtain a loan that covers both the cost of land and the home construction costs.

If a buyer doesn't have the necessary funds for a down payment, some lenders will offer a bridge loan to finance 100% of land purchase and construction costs. This loan works well for buyers who already own a home that plan to sell when the new home is complete. The proceeds from that sale will go toward paying down the bridge loan balance.

What do you need to qualify for a construction loan?

Qualifying for a construction loan is very similar to qualifying for a conventional mortgage. Adams says his bank looks for established credit, good income, the right debt ratio, suitable down payment funds, good assets, and a favorable loan-to-value ratio for the project.

When it's time to apply for the loan, log home buyers should provide a contract from the log package provider that includes the total cost of materials, a construction cost breakdown from a qualified builder and construction documents like elevations and floor plans. The bank will use this background material to have the project appraised.

Adams notes that these appraisals are based on comparable area sales. Building a log home in an area that has other similar log homes that people have built or purchased can make the appraisal process smoother.

Log Homes vs Tract Homes

Construction loans for tract (or production) homes and more customized homes, like log homes are similar: There's no difference in lending fees or interest rates, and it doesn't take any longer to obtain a log home loan than a loan for a stick-built house. The difference, Adams says, is in the final product, especially with the Hochstetler Log Homes his team has financed over the years. "The quality speaks for itself," he says. "They take deep pride in their work."

Local Lender or Large Institution?

Many log home buyers look to local or smaller banks for their construction loans. One advantage Adams notes is the user-friendliness of a bank like his. "It doesn't get much easier for a customer or a builder to get their job done, reviewed, approved, built, and funded. There are not a lot of phone calls or jumping through hoops," he says. "It's a well-oiled machine when it comes to doing construction loans with The Adams Team at First Federal Community Bank of Bucyrus." You can reach Tim Adams at 614-657-7358 or by email: tadams@ffcb.com NMLS 438939 ORG ID 419803

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Cabin by the Caves



by Janice Brewster Weiser
– Photography by Style Life Photography

Log Homes and Hocking Hills: A Perfect Pairing

More than 4 million people visit Ohio's Hocking Hills area every year, a region where natural beauty and log homes go hand in hand. For people who want to rent a log home, buy a log home or are just cabin-curious, a local property management company and builder, **Cabins by the Caves**, is here to serve.



Valerie Freda, who owns the company with her husband Robert, caters to all kinds of log home lovers. Their property management service started in 2005 when Valerie and Robert built their own two-bedroom log home and began renting it out. Now, after 20 years, their firm offers a portfolio of more than 60 properties.

The benefit for owners who want to rent out their homes? “We take care of the whole process,” Valerie says. “We market, do signage... we have on-call emergency staff and on-call house-keeping. The owners can really be hands off.” Robert, who has a background in engineering, and the couple's log home building crew can help owners by stepping in to make repairs when rental properties need them.

Owners often discover that renting their Hocking Hills area places out to visitors is a good way to offset costs. **Cabins by the Caves** makes it easy to start listing a property by staging the house for photos, creating signage and listing the property on the company's website. “We take care of setting all that up,” Valerie says. “We have a large social media following and we start promoting. We offer VIP invitations to our existing database of guests, too.”

In addition to their own site, **Cabins by the Caves** lists their rentals on both AirBnB and VRBO platforms.

Visitor to Owner

The Fredas know that people who visit the area often consider owning their own log home. Spending time in a rental cabin can be a good way to test the waters, Valerie says. Then, if they make a decision to build, **Cabins by the Caves** and Hochstetler Log Homes can help with custom design and construction. “We have three under construction right now. We can show people lots where they can build spec cabins.”



Choosing the Hocking Hills area makes a lot of sense, Valerie says, because of its central location and appeal to all ages. “And, a log cabin is always going to hold its value. Hocking Hills has always been known for really beautiful log homes.”

If you’d like to build a home that would appeal to vacation renters, Valerie suggests including amenities that are in high demand with visitors: Hot tubs, indoor and outdoor fireplaces, entertainment areas (especially for rainy days), a game room area, and a nicely equipped kitchen. “People like to come in and actually prepare a nice meal,” she says, “and enjoy the fireplaces and being in the woods.”

Just Visiting

If you just want to vacation in Hocking Hills, making your stay the best experience possible is **Cabins by the Caves’** specialty. A look through their rental home listings shows options from two-person cabins to medium size homes to large lodges. Beyond property management, the company offers a range of add-on services like grocery delivery, a traveling chef, spa services, specialty cakes and more.

To make space for parties, the couple worked with Hochstetler to build The Heritage at The Olde Homestead, a timber pavilion that serves as a wedding and event venue. **Cabins by the Caves’** event planner can arrange for gatherings of all types.

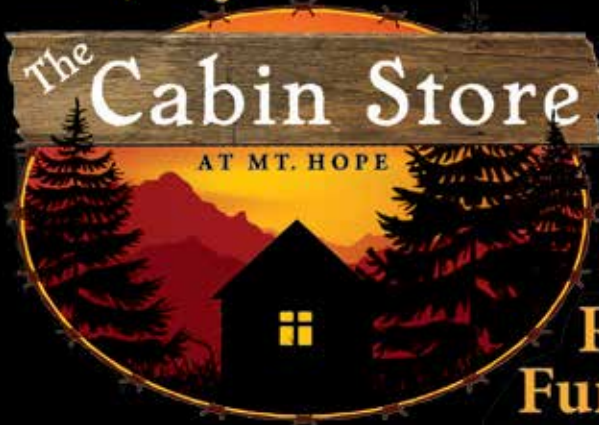
Whether they’re homeowners or just visitors, people spend time in the Hocking Hills area for good reason, Valerie says. “The hiking is number one. It’s very peaceful. We have beautiful parks. It’s quaint with nice restaurants and a hometown feel.”

Because these qualities make Hocking Hills very popular, Valerie recommends making reservations as early as possible, especially for peak times such as Labor Day, Memorial Day, during fall foliage season, and during the winter holidays. 🏠



For additional information about this home, please contact Hochstetler Log Homes at 800-368-1015.

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Holiday

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at Hochstetler Log Homes

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McKay



The Hochstetler Spec



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Open house will be held at the Black Fork Model,
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Black Fork



Open House days are: December 26, 27, 29, 30, & 31.
Closed on December 23, 24, 25, 28 and January 1. We hope to see you!

Log Cabin Days Rekindles the Past!

– by *Bill Dinkins*

Hochstetler celebrated its 14th annual Log Cabin Days, Friday and Saturday, September 12th & 13th. Once again, we were blessed with a beautiful weekend which attracted 4,000-4,500 visitors from all over. The furthest away known visitor came from Iowa.

The 2-day event featured activities for the whole family to enjoy. There were horse-drawn covered wagon rides, a petting zoo, games for the kids, a lumberjack show, lots of booths with log home furniture and related décor, a demonstration with an old steam engine making shingles, plus log peeling and hand-hewing demos. A large tent was set up to demonstrate homesteading skills with vendors sharing gardening tips on raising your own vegetables and herbs. Tables were set up to sell their products. Craftsmen showed 19th century trades like: wool spinning, blacksmithing, wood carving and horse shoeing. A chainsaw carver attracted visitors by deftly carving eagles and bears out of logs, while a lady showed how to make yarn on a spinning wheel. Definitely, an exciting and informative look back in time!

Children enjoyed sifting through a sand box for small treasures, and of course petting the farm animals in the petting “zoo” was exciting as well.

An auction was held on Friday where furniture of all sizes and home furnishings were bid on for very reasonable prices. At 5:00pm, 3 log cabins were auctioned off. These were prebuilt cabins...perfect for the weekend in the woods or a hunting getaway.

Of course, no one went home hungry after sampling the mouthwatering barbecued chicken, burgers, noodles, potato salad, baked beans, and pies in the food tent. Outside, vendors made homemade ice cream, kettle-cooked baked beans, and apple butter. A humongous one-pound hamburger was a real attraction for those daring to try it!

First time guests were surprised at the number of vendors making food and craftsmen plying their various skills. The barbeque chicken, in particular, was a popular treat, along with several varieties of pies and scrumptious sides.

For those contemplating building a log home, the log home tour was a “must see”. On the self-guided tour guests were able to visit up to 8 log homes in the area and talk to the owners. We are happy to announce \$40,000 was donated to the American Cancer Society and Mohican Parochial Schools. A win-win for all!



THE LIFE OF A LOG HOME OWNER

Are you considering building a log home but getting bombarded by family and friends with all the reasons you shouldn't? Listen to folks that experienced log home living!

■ We moved in our log home January of 2024 and have never looked back. It's so peaceful, comfort-able and the architectural aspect of the cabin is just amazing. Everyone that sees it say “it is so cozy and homey.”

– Warren, KS

■ We wanted to work with an honest company that wasn't too big or too small. Big enough to provide many options, opinions, pictures etc. but small enough where our concerns were taken seriously.

– Kofflers, OH

■ Hochstetler was fantastic to work with. Very transparent and they always performed as promised. Very high quality services and materials, delivered on time and on budget. Any changes were handled quickly and efficiently. Overall, a great experience! Highly recommend! From sales to design and product delivery and support all A+.

– Dreilings, CO



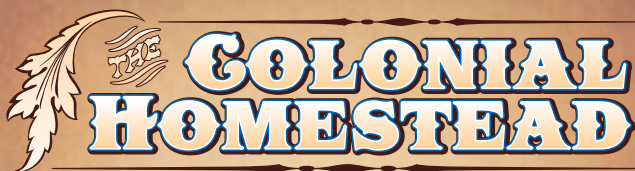
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CABIN FEVER

“The Toe” – by Bill Dinkins

Anyone who has followed the Cleveland Browns over the years is probably familiar with “The Toe.” This nickname was given to Lou Groza, the Brown’s placekicker, for his deadly accuracy in kicking field goals and extra points. He still holds the Browns’ record for most points scored, 1349! Lou had a unique method to help him line up his kicks. He had a 2-yard tape in his helmet, which he stretched out in front of the ball and lined up between the goal posts. It worked so well the NFL outlawed it in 1946! Keep in mind, he kicked with the point of his shoe, not the side, as they do today. He could routinely kick field goals of 50 yards this way!

Lou was born in Martins Ferry, Ohio in January, 1924 and played for the Browns for 21 years until he retired in 1967. He was the smallest of 4 brothers and the son of immigrant parents from Romania. All the boys were good athletes and his brother, Alex, was a member of Kentucky’s two National Championship basketball teams. Lou graduated from Martins Ferry High School in 1942, where he lettered in football, basketball and baseball. He was captain of the Purple Raiders basketball team which won the state championship in 1941.

After graduation, he enrolled at Ohio State on an athletic scholarship and played tackle and placekicker on the freshman team (he learned placekicking from his brother, Frank, by kicking the ball over telephone wires in the street back home). Lou played three games his freshman year and kicked 5 field goals, one from 45 yards! I guess that wasn’t exciting enough for him so he enlisted in the



Army in 1943, as World War II intensified. He served as a surgical technician in the Philippines and tended to severely wounded soldiers, something he never forgot.

While in the Army, he received a package from legendary coach, Paul Brown, which contained a football and a contract worth \$500 a month ‘til the end of the war and a \$7,500 annual salary. And so, “The Toe’s” storied career with the Cleveland Browns began! 🏠

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