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# Funds okayed for renovation of Husk House

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SPICE KNOB, Ky. — Felty Husk may have been the first person to grow tired of life in Owensboro and move into the country for peace and seclusion.

Sometime around or prior to 1810, he built a two-story log house of yellow poplar logs near the banks of Pup Creek in this eastern Daviess County community.

The house, now owned by the Pete Shouse family, has been declared the oldest in Daviess County. Thursday U.S. Sen. Wendell Ford of Owensboro announced the approval of an \$8,050 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to restore the old house.

According to Shirley Dexter of the Green River Area Development District, who prepared the grant application, the Junior League of Owensboro will match the grant, making it a \$16,100 project. The house will be moved and reassembled on the Kentucky Wesleyan College campus in Owensboro.

In announcing the grant, Ford said preserving the home of Daviess County's second settler "is an important part of our county's heritage."

Felty Husk has been traced back to at least 1800 in Daviess County. He and William Smeathers, also known as Bill Smothers, were believed to be the only two residents at the time.

Some local historians believe the Husk House to have been built when he first settled in the county. Others think it was a later house.

Joe Ford, director of the Owensboro Area Museum (which applied for the federal grant), thinks Husk may have lived much nearer Smothers at the time and built the log house a few years later.

and Smothers invited him to stay at his house until his own should be finished. Husk was a great Bible reader — having no other book, he had read it repeatedly."

Obviously, if McCreery's version is correct, Husk would not work on his house all day and then hike the 10 miles from Spice Knob to Smother's cabin at the foot of present day St. Elizabeth Street.

In February 1809, a keelboatman named Andrew Norris insulted Molly Smeathers, Bill's sister, at their Yellow Banks cabin and, according to McCreery, she ran to the house of Felty Husk shortly before Smothers stabbed Norris to death.

While pioneer women did many outstanding things, running 10 miles to Spice Knob from Owensboro over an insult may be a little far.

Joe Ford said, "It's a house rather than a cabin with four rooms and two floors, although someone like myself who is 6-foot-1 has trouble straightening up on the second. I think this was probably his second house. Usually the first houses were just one-room cabins."

But, he says, it is possible that Molly Smeathers ran that far. "If she was frightened and there were no other neighbors, she might have."

The museum first applied for a federal grant for the log house last February seeking \$30,000 and planning to put it inside the new museum to be built on the Kentucky Wesleyan College (KWC) campus.

They were told to resubmit the application for less money and Mrs. Dexter and Joe Ford went to Washington in November to work out final details.

Now as soon as possible, Joe Ford said, Bill Jagoe, a member of the museum board of directors who also is a local homebuilder, will begin overseeing disassembling of



**BENEATH THE OLD WEATHERBOARDING** on this house at Spice Knob is the 20 by 40 foot log house built by Felty Husk, Daviess County's second settler, sometime around or prior to 1810. The National Endowment for the Arts has granted the Owensboro Area Museum \$8,050 (to be matched by the Junior League of Owensboro) to move the house to the Kentucky Wesleyan College campus and restore it to original shape. (Staff photo by Bill Welch)

log house may be used for club meetings where people can sit around a roaring fire and sip cider as in the days when Husk lived.

The house is 40 feet by 20 feet made of hand-hewn yellow poplar logs flattened on two sides and chinked with clay from a nearby hill. There are two windows in each of the downstairs rooms which still have panes of the original hand-blown glass, Mrs. Dexter said.

to 1815, she said.

Stan Lemaster and Frances Evered the old house in 1968. They showed the property belonging family by 1812 so Husk appears stay too long.

The Shouse family has owned since 1864 and only moved out in one next door in the 1960s. A true old house has been made with it family, Joe Ford said.

From the web page of JWH at; [[http://members.tripod.com/jwhusk/husk\\_family\\_home\\_page.htm](http://members.tripod.com/jwhusk/husk_family_home_page.htm)]

The caption under the photo reads;

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The article states that, "Felty Husk may have been the first person to grow tired of life in Owensboro and move into the country for peace and seclusion".

The article quotes former U.S. Senator Thomas C. McCreery, (who was a local historian back in the mid 1800's) who wrote, "Husk was a good-looking, sensible man, and Smothers invited him to stay at his house until his own should be finished. Husk was a great Bible reader — having no other book, he read it repeatedly".