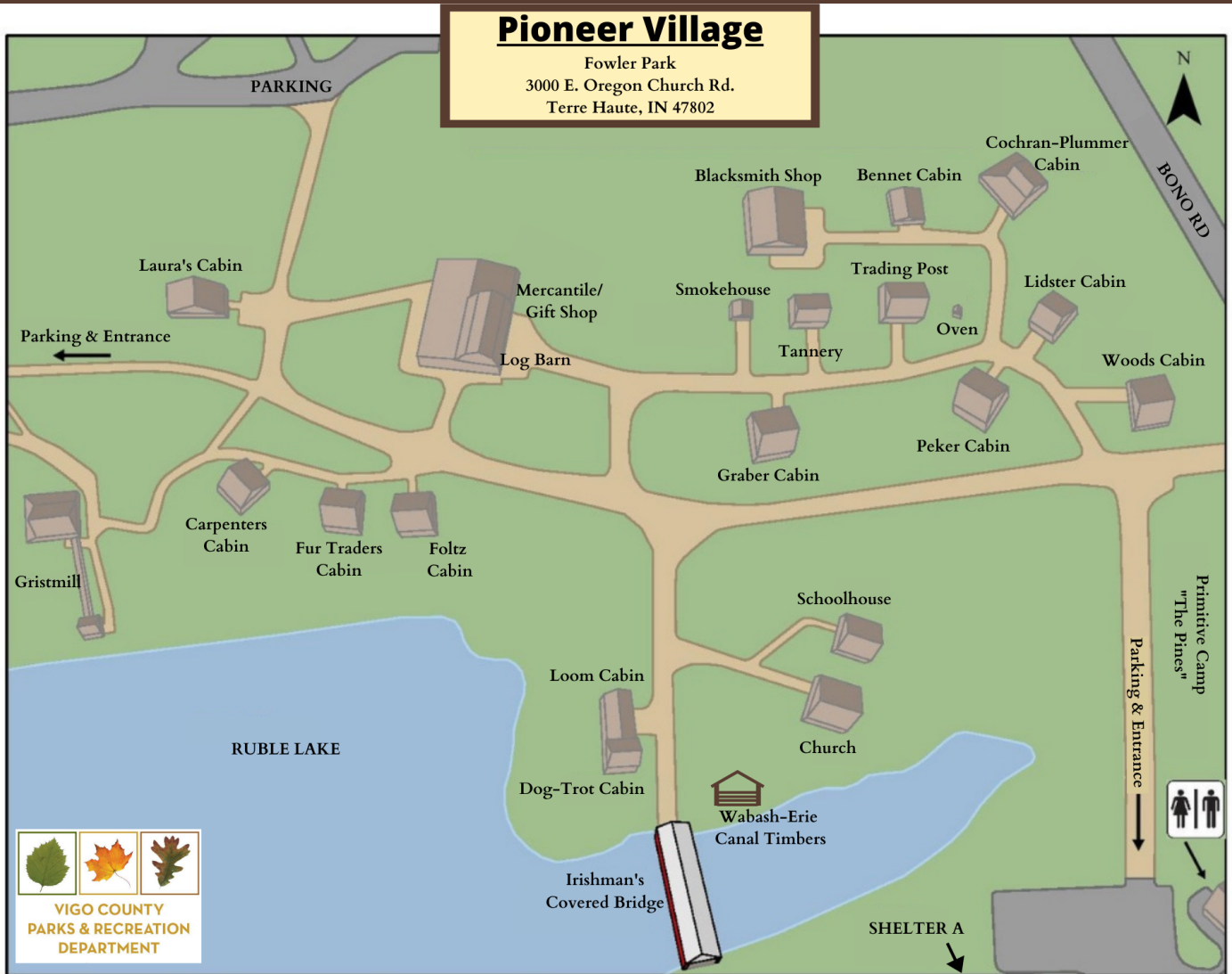




Pioneer Village Fowler Park



Map of Pioneer Village





Woods Cabin

The Woods Cabin was constructed prior to 1830 on land obtained by a grant from the U.S. Government to John Jackson on January 16, 1821. It was located on what became known as the Old Flouring Mill Property in the town of Lockport, now Riley, Indiana. The Wabash Erie Canal, with its Lockport towline, was about three hundred feet east of the cabin.

The cabin was built using white oak logs which were dovetail notched. Originally, the cabin had a fireplace and loft with a stairway. Used as a family home throughout the years, many additions were made by the various families inhabiting the cabin greatly altering its appearance. Such additions included drop cedar siding on the exterior and lath and plaster on the interior, as well room extensions added to the structure. With a cedar siding exterior, the existence of a log cabin was totally hidden. When wrecking the house, the log cabin was found intact.

The cabin was donated to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department in 1969 by the children of Dan and Iva Wood. The cabin had been the home of Dan and Iva for 46 years, who raised four boys and two girls in this home.

The cabin was deconstructed and transported to Fowler Park where it was reconstructed at the park's original entrance by the American Federation of Teachers, Local 734 to be utilized as the park's gatehouse. Upon its completion in 1970, the educational and cultural value of the cabin could not be ignored and instead became the first cabin of what is today's Pioneer Village.



Irishman's Covered Bridge

The Irishman's Bridge was originally located over Honey Creek on Ferree Road northwest of Riley, Vigo County, Indiana. C.W. Bishop built the bridge in approximately 1847. The Irishman's Bridge is a single span modified queenpost truss structure that spans 85 feet and is 14 feet wide and 13 feet high. The bridge was built using heavy oak and poplar with steel reinforcement rods. The original poplar siding of the bridge was replaced with pine.

In its original location, vandalism was causing much damage to the bridge and costing the county to keep it repaired. As it is the last covered bridge left standing in Vigo County, a decision was made to move the bridge to a place where it could be protected. Funds were raised by the Girl Scouts, Vigo County Historical Society, area residents and employees of Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company to move the bridge to Fowler Park in 1971. It was placed in the park where it crosses a section of Ruble Lake so it retains its original purpose of passage over water.

After over thirty years of the bridge standing in its current location, it became apparent the bridge was in need of restoration. In 2019, Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department hired well-known covered bridge engineer, Dan Collom of Square and Level Construction, to repair and restore the bridge. The restoration of the Irishman's Bridge was going to be a significant financial endeavor. On November 19, 2019 the Indiana Covered Bridge Society presented the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department with a \$10,000 donation for the restoration efforts on the bridge. In September 2020, the Irishman's Covered Bridge restoration was complete and reopened for the community to walk across and enjoy for years to come.

Where did the Irishman's Covered Bridge get its name? Well, the story goes that Adolphus Erisman owned the land on the side of the bridge where it originally stood over Honey Creek, and Hoosier dialect being what it is, Erisman soon turned into Irishman.

According to local historians, the Irishman's Covered Bridge is the only covered bridge where a baby was born. Due to ongoing rainy weather the completion of the bridge had been delayed. When workers returned to work on the bridge they found a woman had just given birth to a baby using the covered bridge for protection from the inclement weather. Workmen are said to have postponed the completion of the bridge until the family was able to move on safely.



Lidster Cabin

The Lidster Cabin was originally located in Riley, Indiana near the railroad tracks about a block and a half from the old Wabash Erie Canal. It was built in the early 1800's on land deeded to John Jackson from a U.S. land grant.

The cabin was built using oaks logs with half dovetail notch. It is thought to be the oldest cabin standing in today's Pioneer Village due to the plugged openings found in the east wall of the cabin. These plugged openings were used for proactive purposes either from people or animals. Guns would be laid in the openings and fired as needed. Since relations with Native Americans in this area became peaceful in 1822, it is believed this cabin was built prior to that tie. The port holes and construction style of the cabin indicate the early date. The cabin had a dirt floor and is the only cabin in the village without any windows.

Ben Lidster owned and lived in the cabin since 1935 where, throughout the years, extensions and modernizations to the structure had been added including siding, summer kitchen, storm windows and a small front porch. In August 1973, Lidster donated the cabin to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department. The Terre Haute Jaycees and park staff worked together in dismantling the cabin. During the dismantling process, Charles Hord Ray instructed Park Superintendent Keith Ruble in the proper way to mark corner logs so the cabin could be easily reconstructed as the second cabin to be added to the planned Pioneer Village in Fowler Park. The cabin was relocated to Fowler Park where reconstruction of the cabin was completed in 1974 where the 1820's look was restored.



Pekar Cabin

The Pekar Cabin (pronounced Pee-ker) was originally located on Certain Road in Sugar Creek Township, Vigo County, Indiana. The cabin sat about one mile from the Wabash River and two miles south of West Terre Haute. It sat on a beautiful knoll with a spring below.

This cabin was very crudely built by unskilled hands. It was constructed in about 1834 with tulip poplar logs with a sharp V notch. It had a fireplace for hearth cooking, light and heat. A kitchen and a bedroom were added to the original cabin structure. The Pekar Cabin had been occupied by numerous families over the years including Frank and Bessie Pekar, Nib Cook; Edith Herrington Moss and her children; and the Tatlock family.

The cabin was donated to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department and moved to Fowler Park in 1974 becoming the third cabin added to the growing Pioneer Village. After reconstruction was complete, the Vigo County Historical Society became caretakers of the cabin seeing to its preservation and manning the cabin for special events.



Graber Cabin

The Graber Cabin was built on land in Bogard Township, Daviess County, IN (east of Montgomery). The land was originally purchased from the U.S. government in October 1839, by John Grooms, a resident of Adams County, Ohio. The cabin was probably built in the mid 1800's as a home. Through the years, the land and cabin changed hands several times. Then in 1932, it was purchased by Joel Graber.

The cabin was constructed with red and white oak logs with half dovetail-notch. Originally, the structure was two stories and had no windows. During a remodeling project, Mr. Graber tore away the back portion of his home and discovered the cabin. He called Mr. Apple, the area conservation officer, who then contacted the Vigo County Park Superintendent, Keith Ruble.

In 1975, the cabin had been dismantled and reconstructed in Fowler Park. During its reconstruction, it was realized that some of the cabin's logs were not salvageable, so the height of the cabin was reduced and a sleeping loft and windows were added.

For the first few years in Pioneer Village, it was used as town meeting hall, school and church, but it has now returned it to its original purpose, a home. The interior walls of this cabin have been whitewashed by volunteers. Many settlers tired of the dark whitewashed their cabin walls to make it lighter inside.



Trading Post/ Tavern

The Trading Post cabin was originally located in the area of the Glendale Fish and Wildlife Area in Daviess County, Indiana. Very little is known of the early history of this cabin. Originally, it was used as a home and sat near a creek. It is built of massive tulip poplar logs and has square notch ends. This cabin has a fireplace and a half loft.

It was purchased from Mr. Littell of Washington, Indiana and was added to Pioneer Village in 1975. In the past, this cabin was used as the Village Trading Post. During the early 1800s, people traded or bartered for items they could not provide for themselves. Typical articles available may have been sugar, tea, gunpowder, coffee and clothing materials. On the walls may have hung tools for clearing timber, working the land, and household chores. The Trading Post was also where you would receive your mail, get the area news or just sit a spell and visit. In 1996, the Trading Post was changed to the Eagle and Lion Tavern because the Village Mercantile was opened. The Tavern would also have been a gathering place for the local people.



Tannery

This cabin was originally located in the area of the Glendale Fish and Wildlife Area in Daviess County, Indiana. It is believed to have been built in the early 1800's but an exact date is unknown. The cabin, built of tulip poplar logs with half dovetail notch ends, had previously been used as a barn and was found abandoned from the west end of the Glendale FWA lake. It had a dirt floor.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources gave the cabin to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department through a dismantling agreement. Park staff dismantled the cabin and rebuilt it as the village blacksmith shop in 1975. In 2008, a new blacksmith shop was added to Pioneer Village and the cabin was repurposed as an Animal Barn.

In the summer of 2020, Michael Conley and family became the new caretakers of the cabin and have repurposed the cabin as the new village Tannery. While working on the cabin to transform it into the new Tannery, a stone floor was discovered underneath layers of dirt. A fireplace and new doors will be added to the cabin upon completion within the next year.



Log Barn

The log barn was built in the early 1840's by Billy Fontana. It was originally located just west of the small town St. Bernice in Vermillion County, Indiana. Cecil Shew purchased the barn in 1934 from Logan Jackson. Henry H. Ford of R.R. 4, Rosedale, Indiana had the sheepskin deed.

The barn was constructed with 36 x 28 foot white oak logs. The logs used to construct this barn were also half dovetail notch. Originally, the barn had no chinking to promote airflow as it was believed that air should pass through in order to keep the animals healthy. The top floor is a haymow floor made out of 12' long hand-split white oak boards.

In 1976, Mr. Shew sold the barn to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department for \$850.00. It was dismantled in June 1976 and transported to Fowler Park to be reconstructed on a new foundation in Pioneer Village. At this time, the Parks Department was looking to add an indoor rental facility to its park system. The addition of this log barn made it possible to create such a facility. Combining the best of the old and new, the lower level of the 48' x 48' structure was built as the new meeting room equipped with water, electricity, and indoor plumbing for restroom facilities. The upper level of the barn utilized the original white oak logs and is used for early 1800's pioneer era education.

In 1996, the barn was enlarged, doubling its size on the lower level and adding a gift shop to the upper level. The gift shop was renamed to serve as the Village Mercantile which is the main source of funds raising for the Fowler Village Folk, Inc. In 2001, the log barn was officially renamed the C & M Fox's Barn in honor of Conrad and Marie Fox, two long-time volunteers in Pioneer Village.



Smokehouse

The smokehouse was built from the remains of a log home in Nevins Township, Vigo County, Indiana. It was located east of Fontanet. It is made mostly of beech logs with dovetail notch ends.

It was torn down by the Vigo County Health Department and the remains were donated to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department in 1978. The smokehouse was erected during the annual Pioneer Days weekend in October 1978.

The Smokehouse was used for curing and preserving meat. Butchering was usually done in cold weather so the meat would keep longer. The fresh meat would be soaked in brine then wrapped in burlap and hung to cure. It took about 7 days to cure one inch of meat. If meat was to be used for jerky it would be sliced very thin soaked in a spice solution and smoked. Unfortunately, in the pioneer era, many people had tapeworms from eating meat that was not fully cooked.



Church

This cabin was built in 1848 by John Adam Ell on 80 acres of land east of Staunton, Indiana. John Adam Ell was born in Bavaria, Germany. He was 23 when he married Anne (age 18). They came to America in 1837. The couple first moved to Columbus, Ohio, then to Hamilton, Ohio and then to Staunton, Indiana in 1848 where they built their cabin in the middle of the 80 acres. In this cabin, John and Anne raised eleven children. John later died in 1893 at the age of 79.

The original logs used to build the cabin were white oak with half dovetail notch ends. The cabin was donated to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department by Don Mercer in 1986 in memory of his parents. When the parks department first viewed the cabin in its original location, it was a large white victorian house with long porches on two sides and gingerbread trim. It was two stories and had been modernized with a basement, bathroom, modern kitchen and a wide stairway. It had been covered with weatherboarding on the outside and plastered inside. Logs were visible where the covering was loose, and they were also in full view from the attic.

When dismantled, one-third of the cabin's logs were found to be rotted and needed to be replaced. Logs from a barn located in Sullivan County were donated to the parks department to replace the rotted logs. The cabin was transported and reconstructed by park staff in Pioneer Village and was to be used as the Church/School.

The church bell was added to the structure October 2000. The bell was donated to the village by Butch Harlan. It was the bell from the old Huton School in southwestern Vigo County. The official dedication of the bell took place on Sunday, October 8th during the annual Pioneer Days weekend.

In 2014, a Schoolhouse was added to Pioneer Village and now serves as its sole intended purpose, a church. The Church also serves as a rental facility within the Vigo County Parks system and is often utilized for wedding ceremonies and church group gatherings.



Carpenter Shop

This cabin was originally located about three miles southeast of Brazil, Clay County, Indiana. It is believed to have been built in the early 1800s. The cabin was used as a home and later used as a barn by Carl and Daisy Huggs. It was constructed of poplar and oak logs with half dovetail notch ends.

Daisy visited Fowler Park and enjoyed it so much she wanted this cabin placed here for the enjoyment of current and future generations. In 1980, shortly before her death, Daisy donated the cabin to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to be erected in memory of her and her husband Carl.

Park staff reconstructed the cabin using its original poplar and oak logs with half dovetail notch ends. It has a dirt floor and a small beehive fireplace. Overhead is a loft which could be used for storage. It was brought to Fowler Park and reconstructed in Pioneer Village in 1985 to be used as the Carpenter Shop.

The Carpenter Shop would be where the carpenter worked. He knew the true properties of wood and what was the best wood for each use. He made spoons, butter churns, tools, furniture, drags, cogs and gears. He made from wood anything necessary for the people in the village or on farms. Wood was used from cradle to death.



Fur Trader Cabin

This cabin was originally located in Newberry, Green County, Indiana. It is believed to have been built in the early 1800's and is an example of an original early log structure. The actual date the structure was built is unknown. It has been used as a feed room in a large shed, which protected it from the elements. There are holes bored in the back wall for a frame for making walking canes.

The roof is typical of pioneer construction. Pole rafters and horizontal ties provide support for the shake shingles. Because of the arrangement of the shingles, the roof had holes which permit sunlight and rain in, but also lets the heat out.

Roy Malone from Newbury, Indiana donated the cabin to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department and was torn down by park employees and brought to Fowler Park where it was reassembled in Pioneer Village in 1987. When assembled, a fireplace and loft were added. This cabin first served as the Gunsmith Shop of Pioneer Village but was later repurposed as the Fur Traders Cabin.



Gristmill

This gristmill is not an original pioneer structure but was built as a replica, authentic to the time period of the early 1800's. In January 1989, Keith Ruble, Superintendent of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department, and park staff teamed up with the School of Technology at Indiana State University's Dr. Clois E. Kicklighter to plan out and construct an authentic early proprietor-style 1800's gristmill in Pioneer Village.

Information was obtained from Oliver Evans' historic 1818 book, "The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide," "Old Mill News" periodicals, old archives from milling books and advertisements. In addition, trips were made to existing gristmills in the Midwest such as the mill at Spring Mill State Park to gather photographs and drawings to help guide construction. The mill stones used in the gristmill were purchased from Dewey Sheets, a lifelong miller, who also taught park staff; Keith Ruble, Kenneth Conley and Jim Pierce, the art of sharpening the mill stones.

The gristmill was completed and ground its corn for the first time on October 4, 1991, just in time for the annual Pioneer Days weekend. In 1992, park staff constructed and installed an iron railing which protects and keeps the public safe by restricting access to the grinding equipment of the mill. Fred Hartman constructed the new brass chute for the shroud on the mill stones where the cornmeal exits the stones. The gristmill became a major attraction for Fowler Park and Pioneer Village visitors.

In 2008, the gristmill was severely damaged after flood waters rushed down the chute causing the waterwheel to spin with such velocity it broke and tore apart gears, cogs and teeth that make it possible for the mill to run. The water wheel was also resting on the cabin making it impossible to run in its condition. Park staff began repairs in 2016 in conjunction with a project to repair the dam that was also damaged during the 2008 flood. The slope next to the gristmill was adjusted and the stone wall was raised in height to assist in retaining the earth in the event of another flood. Repairs to the gristmill in this 2016 project included the replacement of wooden teeth, new water boards and metal rings installed to the wheel of the gristmill. Despite the repairs, the gristmill was still not working properly to where it was able to grind corn.

In February 2020, Ron Gillin, a long time village volunteer, dedicated his time and expertise spearheading the restoration of the gristmill along with several volunteers and park staff including Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department Superintendent, Adam Grossman, and Assistant Superintendent, Brian Gilbert. This time around repairs included replacing lower gears underneath the mill that had been damaged in the 2008 flood; the unclogging of a drainage pipe under the mill floor in order to prevent water from building up underneath the cabin of the mill. By May 2020, the gristmill ground its first bag of corn in over a decade.



Bennet Cabin

The Bennet Cabin was built using the logs of two separate cabins originally located near Marshall, Illinois north of Interstate 70 off Highway 1. The cabin was built on land that was part of an 1836 land grant from the U.S. Government to Sexton Mount and wife, Tabitha. When the land was sold to Henry Musgrave in 1858, the cabin was on the property. It can be assumed the cabin was constructed sometime between 1837 and 1858.

The cabin was donated by Harley Bennet in November 1995 to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department. Park staff dismantled the cabins, transporting and then combining the salvageable oak logs to reconstruct the cabin as the village Potter's Shop in July of 1997. In 2004, Doc Lee became the new caretaker of the cabin and repurposed the cabin as the village Veterinarian Clinic. He remained the caretaker of the cabin until 2020, when the Morrissey family took over the cabin as caretakers and repurposed the cabin as a family home where quilting and fabric dying would be demonstrated for visitors during special events.



Dogtrot Cabin

The Dogtrot Cabin was purchased by the Fowler Village Folk from the Peabody Coal Company in February 1996. Originally located south of Dugger, this cabin was standing at Hawthorn Mine built of oak and poplar logs with half dove-tail notch ends. Park staff dismantled the cabin and found many of the cabin logs to be unsalvageable. Logs from other cabins that had been previously donated to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department from Marshall, Illinois; Paxton and Shelburn, Indiana cabin structures that lacked a sufficient number of good logs to be reconstructed in their own form were used to complete the construction.

The Dogtrot Cabin gets its name from the style cabin consisting of a breezeway connecting two log cabins together. The cabin was completed in November 1999 just in time for the annual Christmas Walk. Inside the larger cabin is a large fireplace styled after the early American design with a wood fired oven to the right of the fireplace. The smaller cabin, referred to as the Loom Cabin, is a one-story cabin constructed of poplar logs hand hewn by Keith Ruble, and park staff added a fireplace.



Beehive/ Outdoor Oven

The outdoor oven was built in Pioneer Village by pioneer volunteers and park staff in 2005. Volunteers raised over \$2,600.00 for the cost of materials by selling souvenirs and craft items in the village Mercantile. The inside of the oven dome is a 36- inch diameter floor and the height of the dome is roughly 24 inches.

Cooking in this oven takes much practice to do it correctly; it requires more than just handling the fire. The volunteers need to train for this chore. The wood pile sits at the side and the coals or embers are pushed to the sides or edges of the oven before inserting items to be baked.



Laura's Cabin

The Laura's Cabin was originally located in the Goose Pond area south of Linton, Greene County, Indiana. It dates roughly to around the mid-1800's. Original hand hewn logs are white oak and yellow poplar. The cabin was discovered in 1993 by Larry and Penny Cornelius of Dugger, Indiana and had been found underneath additions made to the original structure which was in a state of near ruin. After purchasing the cabin, the family spent almost two years moving, then restoring it, and turning it into a craft shop on State Road 54, slightly east of Dugger.

In November 2006, Joyce Lakey of Terre Haute, Indiana and her friend Sara McCrocklin of Paris, Illinois noticed that the cabin was for sale and asked Vigo County Park Superintendent, Keith Ruble, to examine it with the possibility of acquisition. The Corneliuses were agreeable because they were assured that it would be given to the Fowler Park Pioneer Village.

Ms. Lakey purchased the cabin in December 2006 and donated it to Fowler Park in memory of her daughter Laura Aileen Shanks (1963-1965), her son William Michael Shanks (1957-2006) and her granddaughter, Laura Marie Shanks (1986-2006). Having two very young deceased Lauras in her family led to the naming of the cabin.

The cabin was transported and reassembled in Pioneer Village in 2008. It is 19 x 19 feet and has a stairway leading to a full upstairs. The handsome stones forming the outside of the fireplace originated in a quarry north of Mansfield, Indiana. The original inside fireplace field stones came from the cabin when it was purchased for Fowler Park in 2006, at which time they formed the outside chimney. The donated mantle is cherry, as are the boards which form the wall above the chimney. It is the only cabin in the village with a front and back porch.



Conley Blacksmith Shop

In 2008, the Conley Blacksmith Shop was added to Pioneer Village. This is the second blacksmith shop to exist in Pioneer Village and houses five forges. The former blacksmith shop, the current Tannery, proved to be too small for adequate ventilation and to house the growing number of volunteers interested in blacksmithing.

In 2001, the Wabash Valley Blacksmithing Association, part of the Indiana Blacksmith Association, began meeting at the blacksmith shop on the second Saturdays of the month. This partnership aided in producing needed items for the village and special events such as hinges and latches, nails, S-hooks, etc.

In 2002, it was decided that more space was needed and the plans to build a bigger blacksmith shop began. The new shop would be situated in back of the present one where there was enough land to build on. In 2003, park staff prepared for construction by clearing trees for the new blacksmith shop.

In February 2003, the logs to be used in the construction of the new blacksmith shop were ready and Keith Ruble invited volunteers to assist in the construction. By November 2004, the blacksmith shop structure had been erected and chinking of the cabin began. Throughout the next few years, the forges were added as was electricity. The idea of offering classes to the public on weekends emerged in 2005.

The Conley Blacksmith Shop was completed in 2008, and it is named in honor of a Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department employee and village volunteer, Kenneth Conley, who passed away. The building is 35 feet long and 30 feet wide and was built with logs donated by J.A. Spears and hand hewn by Keith Ruble.



Foltz Cabin

The Foltz Cabin originally belonged to Paul and Nancy Ike during the mid 1800s. Paul and Nancy had a daughter, Sciota, who married a man named Gideon Luther Foltz. Together, they had a son named Paul Foltz who was born inside this very cabin in 1890. The cabin was used as a farm building on the family farm. Son of Paul Foltz, Donald Foltz (known as Don), moved the cabin during a planned restoration project in 1974 from its original location on Range Line Road to a mile west in Centenary, Vermillion County, Indiana. In its new location, the cabin sat near a pond. Don, his wife Jean, son Time and daughter Julia helped with the restoration of the cabin by repairing the roof, chimney, adding a fireplace and replacing some of the cabin's logs. A covered front porch and an interior second floor were added during the restoration project as well, which was completed in 1976.

The Foltz family donated the cabin to Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to be reassembled in Pioneer Village in memory of Donald Foltz in 2009. Don Foltz served as a state representative from 1955 to 1961, as well as a four-year term in the appointed position of Director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The Foltz Cabin was the 18th cabin to be added to Pioneer Village and a dedication ceremony took place during Pioneer Days weekend in 2010 celebrating the completion of the cabin's reconstruction in the village. When the cabin was rebuilt in the village, the fireplace was rebuilt with rock collected by the Foltz family.



Schoolhouse

Construction on the Pioneer Village Schoolhouse began in 2007 and was completed in 2014. The Educational Heritage Association, an organization created in 2002 to collect and preserve school memorabilia from the past and present of Vigo County Schools, sponsored the building of this cabin with a grant from the Wabash Valley Community Foundation in 2005 and various fundraisers (money was raised to buy the materials necessary to construct a log schoolhouse in Fowler Park).

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department Superintendent, Keith Ruble, agreed to build the log schoolhouse, free of charge in his spare time. Unfortunately, Mr. Ruble's spare time was very limited and it took seven years to complete the building. It was finally finished in 2014, with the help of several other park employees and some inmates from the Federal Prison. The one-room schoolhouse measures 22 feet by 18 feet with a front porch and a fireplace to supply heat in colder months.

The benches were built by the Federal Prison inmates in their woodshop, copying Mr. Rubles' model bench. Small individual slate boards were constructed by Guarantee Roofing, and South Vigo High School woodshop students encased the slates in wooden frames. The roof is made of cedar shingles, which swell up when wet to keep out the rain. The schoolhouse was officially dedicated in October 2015 during the annual Pioneer Days. The schoolhouse continues to be sponsored by the EHA of Vigo County for all Pioneer Village events including Pioneer Days, Mini Pioneer Days, Christmas Walk, Pancake Breakfast, and Summer in the Village.



Cochran Cabin & Cochran-Plummer Cabin

The Cochran Cabin was originally located northeast of Poland in Jackson Township, Owen County. Newly married Campbell Cochran, age 29, and his bride Jane, age 17, arrived in Jackson Township from their native state of North Carolina in 1825. They had walked the distance behind a horse and cart which carried all their possessions. Upon purchasing the land from the U.S. Government, they were recorded as the first white settlers in northern Owen County. They built the cabin on their land in 1825-1826 and continued living there until their deaths in 1888 and 1889. The Cochrans raised seven children. Their youngest son, William, continued to live in the cabin and farm the land until 1915. In the 1920's and 1930's, the cabin was used occasionally for tenant farmers. The cabin and farm remained in the Cochran family until late 1993 when the cabin was donated for the village in Fowler Park by Gordon Spelbring at the request of the Great-granddaughter Beulah Spelbring.

Cochran Cabin was a two room cabin; one room was above the other with a wooden staircase for access. The logs were poplar with V-notched ends. A fireplace downstairs provided heat for both levels and was used for cooking and light. The cabin was never modernized.

Staff dismantled the cabin in 1993 and completed reconstruction in September of 1995. Two poplar upright cabinets from the Preston House were added on each side of the fireplace by the staff.

An unfortunate accident occurred in fall of 2017, causing a fire and a loss of most of the Cochran Cabin. The Department was able to salvage the foundation and chimney from the original structure. In fall of 2017, a donation was made by the Haywood Trust to reclaim a cabin in Plummer Indiana located in Greene County. This cabin was roughly a match for the original structure of the Cochran Cabin and was rebuilt to the same specification as the old Cochran Cabin. During dismantle, it was discovered that a quarter of the logs were unusable. The two base logs were decided to be locust and were donated by the Gillin Family, the current cabin caretakers of the cabin since 2017. Although locust logs last much longer than other logs, they are difficult to find long and straight enough for building a cabin.

The Cochran-Plummer Cabin was a two story cabin built in the early-mid 1880's that had been added onto many times over the years. Dismantle was difficult, but the department was aided by the Greene County Highway Department in removal. Most of the logs were beech and V-notched. The Wabash and Erie Canal passed through the town of Plummer and it is thought that the original parcel owner and many cabin builder was a relative of the namesake for the town. Staff and volunteers completed reconstruction of the Cochran-Plummer cabin at Fowler Park Pioneer Village in winter of 2018. It was recorded as one of the coldest Novembers on record.



**VIGO COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION
DEPARTMENT**