

## German Immigrants' Log Cabin Site

In the 1850s and 1860s, the first house of most immigrant settlers was a one-room log cabin. Logs were stacked one on top of the other until the desired height had been reached. Spaces between the logs were filled with wood, moss, lime, and clay. The roof was made of boards covered with wooden shingles. Most cabins had only one door and one window.

Inside, the earth was covered with coarse planks. The cabin's one room was the family room, dining room, bedroom, kitchen, and guest room. A ladder led up to a small attic space, where the children slept on straw bedding. An outhouse was located a few steps from the cabin. Furnishings were sparse, frequently consisting only of a handmade wood table, a few wood benches, and the trunk that had contained the immigrants' possessions on their journey from Europe. In the cabin, the trunk served as closet, cupboard, and desk. There was no intricate craftsmanship in this log cabin, since it usually functioned as a shelter only until the family had saved enough to build a bigger house.

You can still see pits on this hillside where such a log cabin once stood. It was occupied by an immigrant family from the German state of Mecklenburg who had come to the Town of Middleton in 1867: the farm laborer Joachim (James) Goth (31), his wife Sophia (23), their infant Wilhelm (William), and Joachim's mother Sophie (67). The cabin belonged to the farmer Fritz Elver, who had emigrated from the same region. The little cabin became home to more people, as nine additional children were born into the Goth family.



Joachim (James) Goth and his mother Sophie

Presented by the Town of Middleton

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Illustration by Rob Fulmer