

# Celebrating log cabins: historians host day-long festival

BY MARGARET THOMPSON  
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When Michigan marked 150 years of statehood back in 1987, historically themed events were held in observance of the sesquicentennial.

Among them was a cele-

bration of the log cabin.

In December of 1986, the Michigan Legislature passed a resolution proclaiming June 27, 1987 as Log Cabin Day. Log cabins throughout the state — some of them owned by historical societies, some of

them privately owned — were open for public viewing.

Log Cabin Day created an up-close opportunity for children and adults to learn the historical significance of Michigan log cabins, past and present. It was so well received that it was eventually declared an annual event.

This year, the Old Mission Historical Society holds its third annual Log Cabin Day with several events, including a tour of the Hessler Log Cabin located in Lighthouse Park at the tip of Old Mission Peninsula.

Built in the 1850s by Joseph and Mary Hessler, the cabin may have been originally located near the shoreline, but moved further inland when a road was built.

Carolyn Lewis, a member of the historical society, said the cabin was scheduled to be leveled by the owners of the Underwood Development in 1992. It was saved when local residents and community clubs took



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**Don Pratt reads a book in the Hessler Log Cabin, which is open on Log Cabin Day, June 27.**

an interest in its fate.

"Many people worked to save the cabin," Lewis said. "They raised over \$10,000 and saved it from destruction."

From May 1 through Oct. 1, the cabin is open for viewing through partitions.

But on June 27, the Hessler log cabin will be open for tours beyond the partitions. Costumed tour guides will be on hand to share their knowledge of the log cabin's history with visitors.

The Hessler Log Cabin was placed on the state register of historic sites by the Michigan Historical Commission in 1999.

To be eligible for that honor, a structure must meet strict guidelines for historical authenticity.

The Old Mission Historical Society has a special committee dedicated to maintaining and preserving the Hessler Log Cabin.

"Repairs are made as needed but we have to be careful not to alter the original work," said Lewis, who is also chair of the Log

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