

## The House of the First Settlers

In the colony's early days, a pioneer built his modest dwelling himself. He felled the trees, squared the trunks with an axe or sawed them into boards. He removed the stumps from his plot of land and cleared it. Finally, he assembled his house – one like this, with dovetail corners – and made it weathertight by filling the spaces between the wood with straw, tow or oakum. Then the builder sent for his family and obtained a few animals: a horse, cows and pigs.

This simple type of architecture measures about 20 feet by 20 feet, to make it easier to heat in winter. The cabin usually had just one room, with a large curtain marking off the bedroom, and just one heating source: the *poêle-truie* or pot-bellied stove

François Gaudreau built this house in 1891 and, in 1944, Marcel Thibault restored it to its original style.

In 2014, to protect it from rot and insects, owner Martin Pagé sanded it completely, by hand, and varnished it in accordance with Department of Canadian Heritage guidelines.

Research and writing: Société du Patrimoine SOPABIC, heritage society  
Translation: Anne Johnston



Legend: The side axe, used by pioneers to square the trees they used for the construction of their dwellings. This axe belonged to Joseph Thibault (father of Marcel) and served during the construction of this house.

Source: photo from Colette Légaré



Legend: Dovetail: tenon in the shape of a bird's tail, fitting into a notch of the same shape to create a corner joint.

Source: *photo from Colette Légaré*



Legend: A *poêle-truie*, or pot-bellied stove, which is a small stove made of cast iron in a circular or rectangular shape, with a flat top used for cooking food.

Source: *photo from Colette Légaré*