



*Leavens/Hitchon House, near Bloomfield: highly refined log construction.*

HA-31

### *Leavens/Hitchon House* c.1845

Lot 17 Concession 2 North-West of West Lake,  
Hallowell Township

The County's most skilfully executed log house, at least of those which are known to be log, is the Leavens/Hitchon House off Highway 62 above Bloomfield. This is log construction at its most sophisticated with timbers of even width, finely hewn to a smoothly textured surface. Each is precisely dovetailed to ensure structural rigidity and that joints were self-draining.

Despite its admirable sophistication, the logs were never meant to be on view. Proof of this lies in the treatment of the trim, particularly the window frames, which project slightly to line up evenly with a layer of clapboard sheathing. Everyone was to assume that

this was a frame house, and until the clapboards were removed recently, everyone did.

Unlike the temporary shanties of the pioneers, this house was built to last, and was adorned with all the latest architectural finery. The cornice is heavy, hinting at the Greek Revival, and the doorcase, now obscured by a sunporch, is lighted with a transom and side-lights finished in the 'chinoiserie' pattern. The latter dates the house to the 1840s.

David Leavens, the builder, had accumulated all of Lot 17 by 1828. The land had been previously owned, and perhaps occupied by his father, Benjamin Leavens, a pioneer Quaker. Why the younger Leavens chose log construction is not known, and the location of the house, several hundred yards from the road, also defies explanation. In a passage, which also conveys the intrinsic charm of all log buildings, *Pioneer Life on the Bay of Quinte* describes the Leavens farm:

"The old homestead, built of cedar logs, although greatly benefited by many times repairs, still stands, like some old jewel in a new setting."