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## January Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): Final Update from Village Restorations, Inc., and an Interview with Pam Roub

January 2024

*Tony Indovina, SHHS Board Member and FONLH President*

### Mission Statement for the Friends of the Neill Log House (FONLH Inc.)

*Adopted February 2022*



Friends of  
NEILL LOG HOUSE

***"We secure funds to restore and maintain the Neill Log House, foster knowledge of its historic significance, and work with interested parties to ensure the continued educational use of the structure and its site for future generations."***

Individual support for the FONLH restoration effort will always be needed. To make online donations by credit card or PayPal, go to the SHUC website, [shuc.org](http://shuc.org), and click on the "Projects" link in the black menu bar at the top of the page. A pull-down menu will appear. Select "Friends of the Neill Log House." Alternatively, checks can be sent to SHUC (put FONLH in the memo line) at the following address: SHUC, 5604 Solway Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15217.



The photos on this page, accompanying this final update from our primary contractor, Village Restorations, Inc. from Hollidaysburg, PA, represent a holiday present to all our hardworking board members and generous funders. The picture on the left above shows the Neill Log House in its precarious position in 2020 before the restoration project began. The other photos above and to the right show the house as work progressed on it.



The photos below, taken in December 2023, show all four sides of the completed house. What a great accomplishment for the dedicated people who saw the project through to completion!

After stockpiling materials and logs on site in September and actively beginning work that month, Village Restorations formally concluded all work to restore the Neill Log House to historic standards by mid-December. Though a little later than they had anticipated because of a delay





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in receiving roofing shakes from their suppliers, they were well within the schedule originally agreed to.

Here is the first very brief report we received of their final work:

- Add and cinch the rosehead nails in the door (remove the screws that were used when building it)
- Add the replacement hand-forged thumb-latch
- Replace the pine shutter in the front with a new oak shutter and add the stops on the window
- Install the shelf above the fireplace and the peg boards on the wall
- Do a final cleanup to the site, including stockpiling old logs, timbers replaced, and other miscellaneous material inside the fence

All work completed was reflected in Village Restorations' final invoice to FONLH and reported to the City for its final inspection, which is briefly summarized below. All of this was done after earlier work, including shoring up and re-chinking the log house, was completed and previously paid for.

- Clearing foundation stone to cabin grade and repointing all exposed stone, replacing missing stones; holes in chimney filled and repointed inside and outside.
- Carpentry work, including replacing and hanging new oak front door and shutter, and repairing and stabilizing other shutters and windows. Other carpentry repairs outside and inside included work to gables, replacing sills and inside ceiling repairs (floor repairs had been done earlier).
- Shingles were completely replaced with one-inch cedar shakes after all rafters were inspected and repaired.
- Both fireplaces, cooking and heating, were "parged" to historical standards and appearance (*right*).

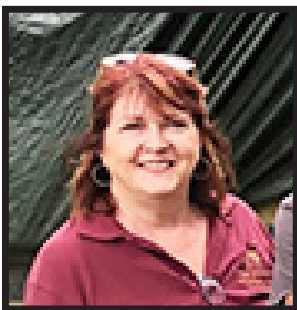


Most of the above work was done under the original contract, with a minimal amount of change orders. Additional work that was done, at no expense, included installing a shelving board above the fireplace, providing and hanging peg boards where they would have been, and installing a period panel near the fireplace to reflect the wall that would have run along the back of the main room.

The new year promises many exciting site enhancements to compliment the beautiful work we were fortunate to have received from our friends and partners from Village Restorations. Stay tuned for further updates in our newsletters about site enhancements and educational programming in the future.

## **An Interview with Pam Roub, President and Owner of Village Restorations, Inc.**

*Tony Indovina, SHHS Board Member and FONLH President*



The November SHHS Newsletter featured an interview with Roland Cadle, site foreman and vice-president of Village Restorations, Inc. (VRC). I now present an interview with Roland's partner, Pam Roub, president and owner of VRC. Both interviews tell a wonderful story of these hard-working and dedicated individuals who applied their different talents to make this recent restoration of the Neill Log House a success, and of how two individuals with diverse backgrounds came together in friendship and a shared passion for historic restoration.

I first asked Pam about her early life, and what experiences brought her to her present role as owner and president of VRC. She related that she was the oldest of four in a family that was not wealthy. Pam said her mother passed away in her teens and her father worked all the time. She also reveals growing up as a consummate tomboy, building tree houses and dams in local creeks, all perhaps in preparation for building and restoring, and being her own "boss." Her early jobs included a series of "unintentional" experiences, all focused on business, sales and marketing. After seasonal work with Sears, where she met her husband, Pam was invited by the cousin of the owner of Blue & White Bus Lines, Altoona, to be interviewed and was first hired as a reservationist for the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans, for which she ran a hundred motor coaches a month. Pam describes the "crazy" responsibilities she later took on while under the wing of the owner's cousin, and moved up the ladder with this company to become the sales and marketing director, supervising all staff and planning all tours from Altoona to Arizona and Florida. As Pam describes everything back then, "when you're in