

Harrison Storefront

This 19th century “double dog trot” style log cabin is a replica of the cabin the David Ruffin Harrison family occupied prior to the construction of the brick Harrison House. The original structure was built in 1858 on the Harrison property and served as a general store and post office. When Julia Harrison Bruce and her husband, Carl, purchased the property in 1975, Carl Bruce and Martin Bruyns built a replica of the cabin with poplar logs on the approximate site of the original structure. Through the generosity of the Harrison/Bruce Foundations, the cabin, along with the Harrison House, has been replicated in the Historical Village on the John A. Logan College campus.



The Harrison Storefront is divided into two pens, one on each side of the concrete-floored breezeway or “dog trot”. Entry into each of the two pens is gained by way of the dog trot through a door in the center of each of the inner walls. In pioneer times, this floor plan provided a way of separating the kitchen, with its eternal fire, from the living quarters during summer months. It also provided for a covered passage between the two pens during inclement weather.

On the right-hand side of the breezeway is a general store, set up to represent the general store owned and operated in the original log cabin by David Ruffin Harrison from 1858 to 1874. He sold everything from medicine to supplies. The names on the medicine bottles have been taken from his store inventory book. Pages from his inventory book are posted on the wall. The rocking chair belonged to Carl Bruce’s family. The horse collars, double-trees, and harness are from Julia Harrison and Carl Bruce’s barn, and the lanterns, lamps and lamp shades are from their house. Many of the items currently on display were purchased at antique shops or auctions. Beginning in 1864, the original general store also served as a post office, with David Ruffin Harrison as the first postmaster – a position he would continue in for twenty-five years. In 1874, D. R. Harrison built a new two-story brick store/post office across the road and south of the log cabin, which he operated until 1899. In 1896, the first private Exchange Bank opened at the store, and eventually became the First National Bank of Herrin in 1898 with D. R. Harrison as president.

On the left side of the breezeway are various donated artifacts including a spinning wheel donated by the Stotlar family, a Springfield rifle, a trunk from Italy, a school desk, a corn sheller, wash tubs, wash board and hand wringer, tools, and a cider-press that came from the Bruce’s home.