Maureen and Will Roberts needed a hand to mill the lumber for the build of their family home. So family friends Nathan and Holly Waterfield came on site with their Peterson WPF.

Using lumber from the Roberts property, Nathan and Will milled a variety of red pine, bass wood, soft maple, black cherry timbers for the house. It was a two year project which began in November 2010.

The Roberts and Waterfield families met at the State University of New York’s (SUNY) Ranger School where Will studied alongside Nathan, Holly, and Maureen’s brother. Will and Nathan also travelled to New Zealand and Australia together to compete in various wood chopping events. More recently, Nathan was also a groomsman at Will and Maureen’s wedding.

Maureen is a case worker for Child Protective Services, and her husband Will has had experience with building houses. Here they share the build of their two-story timber home.

“Friends and family helped us build our house from start to finish. We hired professionals to varnish the floors and walls, and do the foundation but all the building was completed by friends, family and Will.”

“The work Nathan did with the Peterson WPF was amazing and smooth. It saved us time, money and very efficient utilization of the logs. I really liked how effortless it was to run the mill, and how smooth the cutting was. The boards that were milled were exactly what we wanted and came out perfect”; says Maureen.
Within a period of three hours the basement floor walls were complete.
The lumber was then dried and stored away for later use.

Pictured from left; Holly, Nathan, Will’s father Bill, and Will sawing a variety of 1x4 and 1x6 dimensional lumbers for the paneling, floor coverings and ceiling.

These two large 10”x10” Douglas Fir beams were originally part of a Christmas tree farm planted by Will’s great-grandfather. The Roberts and Waterfield families each have lumber from this tree built into their timber homes.

With the foundation walls in place, Will and friends lay down the floor joist for the first floor.
“Another nice straight board.”

Interior walls framed and ready for loft floor joists.

First floor framing.
This is an iron wood tree Maureen and Will discovered on their land. Once cut, the tree was skidded out, peeled, and installed as a main support post in their home.

“Will was walking out in the woods and saw the Iron Wood tree. He loved all the different grooves and knobs that the tree displayed. Once we stripped it and sanded it, it was even more beautiful and we knew that we wanted it as a focal point in our house. We needed a support post, and what better way than using an Iron Wood tree.”
After starting the roof framing, friends take a well-earned break.

Back porch framing.

The final product.
All framing is complete.

Scaffolding needed for working the high spots.

The iron wood tree feature serves as a great focal point for the living room.

The newest addition to the Roberts family; Will with baby Moira inspecting progress.
The guest bedroom in the final stages of construction.

The first-floor kitchen hallway.

Baby Moira’s room complete with finishing touches.

“Our daughter is 20 months old, and was born during the construction. She loves her home. She has so much room to play inside and outside and we know she’s safe in our home.”
Dining room table... “We just need more chairs”; says Maureen.

Bathroom mirror and light fixtures.

Bathroom complete with Maureen’s matching rug and shower curtain.
The stairway landing.

Maple and walnut flooring.

Stairway to the loft.

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The kitchen shell interior ‘before’.

The kitchen: “just need the cupboard doors.”

Base cabinets in place.
Family Perspective
The biggest challenge the Roberts family faced during the build of their family home was the amount of time they were not able to spend together as Will was often away working hard to finish the house.

“Sometimes we thought how much easier it would have been to just pay a contractor to build our home but now we are so happy and glad we took the route we did. If you can survive building a home together and having a baby at the same time, you can survive anything”; says Maureen.
**Costs and Savings**

We saved around $6,000 by using lumber from our land, and the sawmiller’s fee should have been around $8,000 for the 8000bft we milled. We only paid 65c per bft for the drying and planning for the tongue and groove panels. So we probably saved $15,000 just there. We probably saved $100,000 all up, by building our house ourselves, rather than getting a building company to do it.

“Between not having to buy the logs and by using Nathan’s mill we saved at least enough money to purchase the small mill. I would definitely consider that option if I were to build another house the same way we did this one”; says Will.

**Advice to Potential Home- Builders**

“It is a lot of sacrifice but worth it in the end. It is very rewarding to know how much hard work and love was put into building our home by family, friends, and us. We could not have afforded to have a contractor build the same home for us at this stage in our lives. Another thing is to make sure to take the time to plan it out the way you really want it, and make it happen.”

**Final Word**

“We sit on the couch at night and look around our house in awe. We notice something unique about our house almost every day that we never noticed before.

It’s a great feeling to know that we built the house and that all the wood in the home is significant to us and came from our land. We are so thankful for the support of our wonderful family and friends who have helped us along the way.”

Maureen & Will Roberts
Groton, NY USA