

Hotel Williams,  
Log Building No. 1  
Murray Bay (west shore)  
Grand Island  
Alger County  
Michigan

HABS No. MI-258 C

HABS  
MICH  
2-GRAIL,  
1C-

PHOTOCOPIES

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
MICH  
2-GRAIL,  
IC-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HOTEL WILLIAMS,  
LOG BUILDING No. 1

HABS No. MI-258C

Location: Murray Bay (west shore), Grand Island, Alger County, Michigan.

Present Owner: Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company, Ishpeming, Michigan.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: This building is of historical interest as one of a small number of remaining buildings once devoted to the fur trade.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Thought to have been constructed for the American Fur Company in 1837 or before 1840 (William F. Lawler, in Michigan History, 22: 282-283 [Summer, 1938]; The Lure of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, 1955).
2. Original and subsequent owners: Purchased by the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company in 1901. (This information is incomplete).
3. Original plans and construction: Physical evidence indicates that this building was originally a one-room rectangular structure of squared logs. Alterations were made at various times: roof structure, central partition, chimney, clapboards, sash, doors, flooring. The exterior walls are the only remaining original portions.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A small old log building of historical interest, considerably altered.
2. Condition of fabric: The basic structure is sound but several years of neglect have allowed considerable deterioration of the exterior.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 18 ft. by 22 ft., one by two bays; one story; facing east.

2. Foundations: A log sill is supported on several large stones (pier foundation); a skirting of boards (not original) fills in between the sill and the variable ground line (a few inches up to about two feet).
3. Walls: Squared logs 1'-0" to 1'-2" in height are laid horizontally, breaking horizontal joints at the corners. Top plates project several inches on the interior. Later clapboards, now deteriorated, cover most of the exterior surface. The gable ends are covered with wood shingles which appear relatively modern; this portion is of hewn frame construction.
4. Porch: A small porch at the north end of the east wall is sheltered by a roof which continues the pitch of the main roof. It has a board floor and one column remaining. This porch is not original.
5. Chimney: A small modern brick chimney centered on the ridge is supported on the roof framing.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There is only one door- located on the north end of the east elevation.
  - b. Windows: The east and west elevations each have two windows. All are modern replacements or alterations.
7. Roof: The gable roof framing appears quite old but does not seem to be original; it is of hewn timbers. 4" by 4" rafters spaced 2'-8" on centers are butt-jointed to a thin ridgepole. 5" by 6" ties are jointed to wall plates (3-1/2" high, projecting 7-1/4" into the interior) and secured with trenails. Sheathing is of widely-spaced boards, on which are wood shingles covered with roll composition roofing, part of which has come off. Gable ends appear to have been altered. (See also Wall description for gable ends).

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The rectangular plan is divided into two rooms by a modern board partition; probably the space was not divided originally. There is no ceiling, the space being open to the roof; the distance from the floor to bottom of the wall plate is 8'-4". See HABS photocopy, MI-258C-4, for a view of this plan.
2. Flooring: The floor boarding is modern.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: The structural logs are exposed on the interior, and have been covered with whitewash at various times. The log sills project several inches into the room.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The ground slopes gently away from the water of Murray Bay. This building, along with several others, is near the shore line at the bottom of the slope, amid overgrown grass.

Prepared by: Harley J. McKee  
Architect, Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
August 4, 1965

Edited by: Susan McCown  
Historian, Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
November 28, 1984