

Hotel Williams,
Log Building No. 2
Murray Bay (west shore)
Grand Island
Alger County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-258 D

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HOTEL WILLIAMS,
LOG BUILDING No. 2

HABS No. MI-258D

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, being 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 always a one-room nearly square space, with a fireplace centered on one side. Alterations were made at various times: roof, sash and door replaced; fireplace opening reduced; porch, floor covering and exterior clapboarding added. The walls and chimney 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 noticeable deterioration of the exterior, especially the clapboarding.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 17'-0" by 17'-6" interior measurements; one story; facing east.
2. Foundations: Log sill.

3. Walls: Squared logs 1'-0" to 1'-2" in height are laid horizontally, the horizontal joints breaking at the corners. Top plates project several inches into the interior. Later clapboards, now deteriorated, cover the exterior surface. The gable ends, of hewn frame construction, are covered with modern wood shingles.
4. Porch: A small porch centered on the east wall is sheltered by a continuation of the roof. It has a board floor and two plain square columns. It is not original.
5. Chimney: A sandstone chimney is centered on the north wall, projecting on the exterior. On the interior, the fireplace opening has been reduced in size by the addition of some brickwork. The chimney appears to be original.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There is only one door- on the east wall. It is a modern replacement.
 - b. Windows: One west window and two east windows appear to be replacement 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 and composition roll roofing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: This one-story building consists of a single room, nearly square in plan. There is no ceiling, the space being open to the roof. See HABS photocopy, MI-258D-4, for a view of this plan.
2. Flooring: The floor boarding is modern. It is not level.
3. Walls: The structural logs are exposed on the interior and have been whitewashed at various times.
4. Hardware: There is a wrought-iron latch on the door, which is hung on two strap hinges on pintles driven into the casing. There are two stays for a bar. This hardware may possibly be old but is probably a clever modern imitation.

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 and some trees.

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November 29, 1984