

Joyce Estate
Chippewa National Forest Road 2144,
3 miles north of County Road 335
Grand Rapids vicinity
Itasca County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-146

HABS
MINN
31-GRAP.V,
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOYCE ESTATE

HABS
MINN
31-GRAP.V
3-
HABS No. MN-146

Location: Chippewa National Forest Road 2144, 3 miles north of County Road 335
Grand Rapids Vicinity
Itasca County, Minnesota

Quad: Wabana Lake, Minnesota, 7.5 Minute Series, 1970.

UTM: 15.457990.5256840
15:458230.5256600
15:458340.5256640
15:453290.5257030

Present Owner: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: During the first three decades of the twentieth century, northern Minnesota's scenic woodland-and-lake region developed a national reputation as a vacation area. As part of this general tourist boom, wealthy Chicagoan David Gage Joyce in 1915 carved out a large forested tract around Trout Lake in Itasca County for his personal use as a summer retreat. As the heir to a vast lumber fortune, Joyce had the financial resources to plan his resort on a grand scale. His models were the opulent "Great Camps" of the Adirondacks region of New York State.

Although the utilitarian log architecture of the Joyce Estate was no match for the Swiss Chalet fantasies of the Great Camps, Joyce managed to capture the essence of the Eastern prototypes -- their ability to create a sense of wonder. Joyce accomplished this feat by equipping his retreat with numerous unexpected amenities, combining rustic pleasures with civilized comforts. His private telephone cable, electric lighting, hot-water system, greenhouse, landscaped grounds, and golf course were all splendidly improbable in a region just emerging from its homestead era.

Joyce commenced work on his estate in the spring of 1917 and most facilities were in place by the mid-1920s. After Joyce's death in 1937, the estate remained in his immediate family's possession until the death of his only child in 1972. Two years later, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service purchased the property for the Chippewa National Forest.

Historians: Jeffrey A. Hess and Charlene K. Roise

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of Erection** The first buildings went up at the Joyce Estate in the summer of 1917, providing sleeping quarters for family members, guests, and staff. During the next summer, construction focused on utilities and storage structures in order to supply the estate with electricity, hot water, and ice. By the mid-1920s, most of the estate's buildings, recreational facilities, and landscaping were in place.¹
2. **Original and Subsequent Owners** Although the Joyce Estate eventually included about 4,500 acres, almost all of the buildings stood on an 80-acre parcel on the west side of Trout Lake. In 1916, David Gage Joyce secured this parcel through the services of Simeon D. Patrick, who purchased it as an intermediary. In 1917, Joyce acquired title in his own name. After Joyce's death in 1937, the property passed to his wife Beatrice Rudolph and daughter Beatrice Clotilde. In 1946, two years before her death, Beatrice Rudolph conveyed full title to Beatrice Clotilde, who retained ownership until her own death in 1972. In 1973, the Nature Conservancy purchased the property and resold it at cost the following year to the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service for incorporation into the Chippewa National Forest.²
3. **Builders, Contractors, Suppliers** According to former Joyce Estate caretaker Joseph Waleski, Jr., the estate's initial buildings were constructed of native pine logs by local carpenters. F.L. Norman served as construction foreman, overseeing "Pete Richland, along with Mr. Rupert and Mr. Holm." Overall project supervision was the responsibility of Simeon D. Patrick, a Grand Rapids resident who had formerly worked as a timber cruiser for the Joyce Family's Itasca Lumber Company.³ Those who participated in later construction activities have not been identified.

¹ "Will Build Home on 'Big Trout,'" Grand Rapids Herald Review, 14 March 1917; Grand Rapids Herald Review, 7 August 1918; author's interview with Joseph Waleski, Jr., Grand Rapids, MN, 21 January 1987.

² S.D. Patrick, Deed to David G. Joyce, 9 May 1917, Deed Book 35, 103; "In the Matter of the Estate of David Gage Joyce, Final Decree of Distribution," 30 June 1938, Book of Deeds 144, 401-406; Beatrice Rudolph Joyce, Deed to Beatrice Clotilde Joyce, 3 July 1946, Deed Book 167, 249 (all the foregoing in the Itasca County Recorder's Office, Itasca County Courthouse, Grand Rapids, MN); "Former Joyce Estate Is Dedicated to Public," Grand Rapids Herald Review, 14 October 1974.

³ Author's interview with Waleski; "Will Build Home on 'Big Trout.'"

- B. Historical Context:** Embracing about 4,500 acres and 12 lakes in Itasca County in north-central Minnesota, the Joyce Estate is located about 20 miles north of the City of Grand Rapids in the Chippewa National Forest. The estate contains an uninhabited complex of approximately 35 structures extending along the northwest shore of Trout Lake.⁴ These buildings form three general clusters: a "Caretaker's Compound" to the north; a "Main Cabin Compound" embracing a small peninsula to the south; and a "Recreation Area," formerly containing a tennis court and small golf course, to the west. Although the buildings now are deteriorating and the grounds overgrown, the Joyce Estate once was heralded as "one of the most soul inspiring recreation camps to be found between the two oceans."⁵

The public first learned of the Joyce Estate in March 1917, when a Grand Rapids newspaper announced that "David G. Joyce of Chicago . . . [is] making arrangements for the construction of a new summer home . . . on Big Trout Lake that will be the most extensive improvement of this character in Itasca county."⁶ Joyce had the financial resources to plan on a truly grand scale. Born in Clinton, Iowa in 1885, he was heir to a vast lumber fortune, largely accumulated by his grandfather for whom he was named.

The elder David Joyce had launched the family fortune in the 1860s, with a single sawmill in Clinton. By the time of his death in 1894, he had diversified into banking, machinery manufacturing, and street railways. But his initial success was in lumbering, and he achieved it by vertically integrating his business. To supply his sawmill with raw materials, he purchased pine lands in northern Wisconsin, and then to assure a profitable outlet for his finished product, he established retail lumberyards throughout Iowa. The enterprise depended on a steady stream of logs. When the Wisconsin pineries began showing signs of depletion in the mid-1880s, Grandfather Joyce shifted his attention to the virgin timber blanketing the Mississippi headwaters region of northern Minnesota. This phase of the business was supervised by his only son William T., who helped organize the Itasca Lumber Company in 1887.⁷

⁴ This historical context draws heavily, without further citation, from an earlier narrative written by project historian Jeffrey A. Hess for the following study: MacDonald and Mack Partnership and Jeffrey A. Hess, "Cultural Resource Overview, Joyce Estate," prepared for Chippewa National Forest, 1987, in Chippewa National Forest Headquarters Building, Cass Lake, MN.

⁵ A Zone of Plenty, Itasca County, Minnesota (Grand Rapids, MN: Grand Rapids Herald-Review, 1922), 17.

⁶ "Will Build Home on 'Big Trout,'" Grand Rapids Herald Review, 14 March 1917.

⁷ On the business career of David Joyce the elder, see Agnes M. Larson, History of the White Pine Industry in Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1949), 127, 224; George W. Hotchkiss, History of the Lumber and Forest Industry of the Northwest (Chicago: George W. Hotchkiss and Co., 1898), 594-596; History of Clinton Iowa (Clinton, IA: Clinton County Historical Society, 1976), 98.

As its name suggests, the new company centered its operations in Itasca County, which also supported a number of other major lumbering concerns. After logging the general vicinity of Grand Rapids in the late 1880s, the Itasca Lumber Company gained access to more remote timber by building a logging railroad northward from Deer River, located about 15 miles northwest of Grand Rapids. Constructed during the 1890s, this line later reorganized as a general carrier under the name of the Minneapolis and Rainy River Railroad. The railroad delivered logs to the region's extensive network of interlocking waterways, where they were driven into the Mississippi River to float downstream, initially to the Joyce Family mill in Clinton, and later to the Itasca Company Mill in Minneapolis. In 1904, William T. Joyce side-stepped the long costly river drive by joining forces with the Pillsbury Family of Minneapolis to build a large sawmill near Deer River. Although lumbering in Itasca County peaked about 1910, the Deer River mill remained in operation until 1921.⁸

When William T. Joyce died in 1909, his twenty-three-year-old son David Gage inherited \$30 million and a position as head of field operations for the Itasca Lumber Company. According to an early biography, Joyce was educated "in public and private schools," probably in Clinton and Chicago, where his family maintained two of their three major residences, the third being in Miami. In 1905, he "began in the lumber business," although the nature of his activities are unrecorded. Stories concerning him at this period reveal a young man with extravagant tastes: "He reportedly showed up at the Florida estate for a two-week stay in need of money, so he wrote his father in Chicago When his father sent \$12,000, David Gage wrote back: 'What the hell do you expect me to do, stay in bed for two weeks?'" His new position with the Itasca Lumber Company apparently did not instill a stronger work ethic: "The first action he took after his father's death was to fire the 'bouncer' who had been hired in a vain effort to curtail his drinking." It was only a short time before David Gage agreed to turn his business responsibilities over to paid professionals. Thereafter, he devoted himself to his own pleasure, adopting a seasonal routine that took him to the Minnesota north woods in the summer, his Illinois hunting lodge in the fall, his Miami estate in the winter, and his Chicago mansion in the spring.⁹

⁸ For information on William T. Joyce and Itasca County lumbering, see John W. Leonard, ed., Book of Chicagoans (Chicago: A.N. Marquis and Company, 1905), 320; Larson, 127, 224; James E. Rottsoak, Pines, Mines and Lakes: The Story of Itasca County, Minnesota (Grand Rapids, MN: Itasca County Historical Society, 1960), 20-30; Lydia Zetterstrom, "The Itasca Lumber Company and Minneapolis and Rainy River Railway," ca. 1958, in Minnesota Historical Society; Stanley Johnson, Transcription of Interview with Joseph Waleski, Jr., 15 July 1975, in Chippewa National Forest Headquarters Building, Cass Lake, MN.

⁹ The source of both anecdotes about Joyce is Joseph Waleski, Jr., who inherited his father's position as caretaker of the Joyce Estate. Between them, the Waleskis' employment with the Joyces spanned four decades. The first story appeared in Duluth News-Tribune, 3 June 1979; the second in Joseph Waleski, Jr. and Don L. Boese, "The Joyce Estate," Grand Rapids Companion, ed. Donald L. Boese (Grand Rapids, MN: Grand Rapids

Although the family lumber business introduced Joyce to northern Minnesota, the date of his first visit to Itasca County is unknown. According to the Grand Rapids Herald Review of 14 March 1917, Joyce by that date already was a "frequent visitor to Grand Rapids." The newspaper went on to mention that Joyce had spent the previous summer vacationing on a lake in neighboring Cass County, but "the superior advantages of Itasca County turned his decision in favor of [building a summer home in] this section." Whatever the actual inducements, Joyce apparently had planned on building a summer retreat in Itasca County at least as early as 1915, when he used the Itasca Lumber Company to consolidate approximately 2,600 acres of secluded woodland encircling most of Trout Lake.¹⁰

Joyce also purchased in his own name one parcel of about 80 acres on the west side of Trout Lake. This tract included a wooded peninsula known as "Larson's Point," in honor of Anna and Frank Larson who had acquired the land in 1895. Joyce seems to have delayed his building plans until he could gain control of this particularly scenic piece of shoreline. Although the Larsons had moved off the point about 1900, they retained ownership of the land until 1916, when they lost it in a mortgage foreclosure. Undoubtedly by prior arrangement with Joyce, a former timber cruiser for the Itasca Lumber Company named Simeon D. Patrick purchased this property when it came up for sale and resold it at cost to Joyce in the spring of 1917. With Patrick supervising the work crews, the first buildings of the Joyce Estate immediately went up on Larson's Point.¹¹

Centennial Committee and others, 1991), 94-195. For additional information on Joyce's early life, see Albert Nelson Marquis, Book of Chicagoans (Chicago: A.N. Marquis and Company, 1911), 373. The Boese and Waleski collaboration also is the source for Joyce's activities with the Itasca Lumber Company after his father's death. Since all Joyce Family business records apparently have been destroyed, it is impossible to examine this aspect of David Joyce's life more closely; see L. K. Verhoek, Program Associate, Joyce Foundation, to Mark E. Haidet, Research Historian, Minnesota Historical Society, 5 January 1981, in Joyce Estate File, State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society. None of Joyce's obituaries, however, credits him with significant business achievements; see Chicago Tribune, 29 August 1937; Grand Rapids Herald Review, 1 September 1937; Clinton Herald, 28 August 1937.

¹⁰ The Itasca Lumber's Company's acquisition of the Trout Lake tract, and its transfer to Joyce in December 1917, is recorded in Torrens File 964, Itasca County Recorder's Office, Itasca County Courthouse, Grand Rapids.

¹¹ On the Larsons, see Keith W. Matson, "A Sample Survey for the Cultural Resources on the Trout Lake Tract, Marcell Ranger District, Chippewa National Forest," 1974, 4-6. The relevant land transactions are recorded in the following documents in the Itasca County Recorder's Office: Hank Gale, Deed to Anna Larson, 11 December 1895, Deed Book N, 191; C.H. Marr, Mortgage to Anna and Frank Larson, 9 December 1911, Mortgage Book U, 602; C.H. Marr, Notice of Mortgage Foreclosure Sale, 4 January 1916, Deed Book 69, 487; C. H. Marr, Deed to Simeon D. Patrick, 23 August 1916, Deed Book 77, 425; Anna Larson and Frank Larson, Deed to Simeon D. Patrick, 23 August 1916, Deed Book 62, 482; S.D. Patrick, Deed to David G. Joyce, 9 May 1917, Deed Book 35, 103. Patrick was identified as a former Itasca Lumber Company employee by Joseph

Even if Joyce had not been associated with the Itasca Lumber Company, his decision to build a summer home on Trout Lake would have been accepted without much surprise. During the period 1910-1920, northern Minnesota developed a national reputation as a summer resort area, as its picturesque lakes and superb fishing annually attracted tens of thousands of vacationers by the end of the decade.¹² In Itasca County, the tourist industry had begun in earnest in the early 1900s, stimulated by excellent rail connections with Chicago and other Midwestern cities. In 1904, one of the county's first successful resorts was established by Irv Martin at the north end of Trout Lake. In 1907, C.V. Smith erected a large hunting lodge on Balsam Lake, about 10 miles northeast of Martin's Resort, and in 1911, Walter Stickler constructed Idlewild Resort on North Star Lake, about 10 miles to the northwest. By 1920, the Grand Rapids area boasted at least 15 major resorts, with many more scattered throughout the county. In addition to these commercial ventures, the region also contained numerous private summer homes, such as the "Arrow Point Cottages" built by a wealthy Indiana family on Lake Wabana.¹³

The establishment of the tourist industry in Itasca County occurred simultaneously with the settlement of the region, and both activities utilized essentially the same type of log cabin construction. For the most part, resort buildings and farmhouses alike were gable-roofed structures with round, peeled, saddle-notched logs enclosing an open interior plan. This similarity resulted from three basic factors. First, logs were cheap and plentiful in Itasca County. Second, log buildings appealed to the circumstances of both types of builders. For homesteaders, who rarely had excess cash, they were virtually an economic necessity. For summer home owners, they were an aesthetic preference, sanctioned by such influential magazines as The Craftsman, which assured its readers that "log houses . . . harmonize with the most primitive surroundings." Third, most of the early resorts in Itasca County were, in fact, constructed by local settlers, who were in

Waleski, Jr in an interview with the author at the Joyce Estate on 29 July 1993. Patrick's involvement in the construction project is noted in "Will Build Home on 'Big Trout,'" Grand Rapids Herald Review, 14 March 1917.

¹² For a brief historical overview of the northern Minnesota tourist industry, see Historic Context Outlines: The Post-Contact Period Contexts. Minnesota History in Sites and Structures (St. Paul: State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, 1985), 19-21.

¹³ On the development of Itasca County tourism, with references to Martin, Smith, and Stickler, see Rottsolk, 56, 82-86; Carole Russell, ed., In Our Back Yard (Bemidji: North Central Minnesota Historical Center, 1979), 98-99; Zone of Plenty, 16-18; "Western Itasca County -- Its Early History of Resorts and Tourists," ca. 1958, in Minnesota Historical Society. For detailed information on Martin's Resort, see Nadine Martin, "My Trout Lake," n.d., in Itasca County Historical Society, Grand Rapids. An historical assessment of the Arrowhead Point Cottages on Wabana Lake is provided by Mark Haidet, Minnesota Historic Properties Inventory Form, 1981, in State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society. Haidet observes: "During the [twentieth] century's initial three decades, many prominent business executives residing outside Minnesota were attracted to the state's northern wilderness for recreational reasons. In Itasca County they were primarily attracted to the scenic central lakes region"

the tourist business themselves, or who hired out as carpenters to build the summer places of wealthy visitors.¹⁴

In building his own summer estate, Joyce also relied on the skills of area residents. For his construction foreman, he hired F.L. Norman, who had earlier worked on the C.V. Lodge, a three-story log cabin that was famous throughout the region. Work began in the spring of 1917. At this stage, the estate was divided into two sections: a Main Cabin Compound compactly sited on Larson's Point, and a Caretaker's Compound that stretched along the shore to the north. At the northern end of the Caretaker's Compound was a small farmstead of one-story, log-frame buildings, including a Farmhouse (HABS No. MN-146-EE), barn, shed, and privy. During the first season, construction in the Caretaker's Compound also commenced on a wood-frame Winter Boathouse (HABS No. MN-146-AA), and an earth-sheltered, concrete Powerhouse (HABS No. MN-146-Z), both located on the lakeshore to the south of the farmstead. The Powerhouse contained a battery-operated "Delco" system to provide the estate with electric lighting, as well as a telephone system, connected to Grand Rapids by a private cable. In addition, the estate's initial buildings included a garage, probably in the Caretaker's Compound, although its exact location is unknown. The garage was necessary because Joyce intended to drive his automobile up from Chicago, reaching the estate by means of an unpaved logging road that bordered the west side of Trout Lake and connected with a public highway near Martin's Resort at the north end of the lake.¹⁵

At the Main Cabin Compound, all of the major buildings erected during the first season faced the tip of Larson's Point to the east, providing a scenic view of Trout Lake. The

¹⁴ In his discussion of homesteading in Itasca County, Rottsoik (42-44) notes the chronological overlap with the development of the region's tourist industry; he also provides several historical photographs of typical log cabin farmsteads. The quotation on the scenic qualities of log cabins originally appeared in "A Log House That Will Serve Either as a Summer Camp or a Country Home," The Craftsman (March 1907); this article, with the original architectural illustrations, is reprinted in Gustav Stickley, Craftsman Homes (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1978), 74-75. Early twentieth-century builders could choose from many published log cabin designs; see, for example, William S. Wicks, Log Cabins and Cottages, How to Build and Furnish Them (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1910).

¹⁵ This description of initial buildings at the Joyce Estate relies heavily on information provided by Joseph Waleski, Jr. during an interview with the author, conducted at Waleski's home in Grand Rapids on 21 January 1987. Also valuable are brief articles outlining Joyce's construction plans and activities in "Will Build Home on 'Big Trout,'" Grand Rapids Herald Review, 14 March 1917; Grand Rapids Herald Review, 8 August 1918. The log-frame farmstead buildings at the Caretaker's Compound are shown in an early, but undated photograph, in Joseph Waleski, Photograph Album, in Chippewa National Forest Headquarters Building, Cass Lake, MN. For a brief description of the electric power and phone system, see Zone of Plenty, 17. The local press paid a good deal of attention to Joyce's automobile, noting, for example, that: "Mr. and Mrs. Dave Joyce arrived last Sunday from Chicago in a Crane-Simplex car. The trip from Chicago by the longest way round was accomplished by Mr. Joyce in 16 hours"; Itasca County Independent, 21 July 1917.

largest structure was a one-story, log-frame, gable-roofed Main Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-A), similar in design and construction to the main lodge at Martin's Resort. The building was constructed with a wrap-around, screened-in front porch, that served as a communal dining area for Joyce Family members and guests; a large, open "living room" area; and a shed-roofed kitchen facility at the rear. As part of the original plan, the compound also included two, log-frame, gable-roofed sleeping cabins directly north of the Main Cabin. The cottage closer to the Main Cabin was used by Joyce as his personal quarters, and therefore came to be known as the "Joyce Cabin" (HABS No. MN-146-B). The other cottage was built as a Guest Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-C).

In early June 1917, Joyce arrived in Grand Rapids with his wife Beatrice Rudolph, whom he had married some time after 1910. According to the local press, the couple checked into the Hotel Pokegama while "their new summer home" was in "the course of completion." By the middle of August, construction was far enough advanced to permit the Joyces "to spend a few days" at Trout Lake before returning to Chicago. In September, Mrs. Joyce once again visited the estate, taking a train up from Chicago with a woman friend. After a short stay, the two women departed for the season, relinquishing the estate to the year-round caretaker who resided in the Farmhouse (HABS No. MN-146-EE) in the Caretaker's Compound.¹⁶

The Joyces did not return to Trout Lake until July 1918, when the local press noted that "some building is in progress at this place during the present summer though not as much as in 1917." The season's activities included the completion of the Powerhouse (HABS No. MN-146-Z), the erection of a concrete Ice House (HABS No. MN-146-L) near the Powerhouse, and the construction of a row of four cottages, perched on a small hill overlooking the Main Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-A) and Joyce Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-B). Two of these cottages were intended as guest cabins (HABS Nos. MN-146-P, MN-146-Q), while the other two functioned as servants' quarters, known as the Maid's Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-M) and the Butler's Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-O). For the most part, these cottages were similar in design to the log-frame sleeping cabins erected the previous year. The principal exception was the Butler's Cabin, which had a wood frame, although it was in all other respects identical to the adjacent, log-frame Maid's Cabin. All the cabins in the Main Cabin Compound had running water, supplied by underground pipes connected to a Water Tank (HABS No. MN-146-T) standing on high ground to the northwest. With the expansion of their guest and staff facilities, the Joyces in 1918 played host to several friends, including the well known race-car driver Barney

¹⁶ The Joyces' activities are chronicled in Itasca County Independent, 9 June 1917; Grand Rapids Herald Review, 1, 15 August; 1 September 1917. Joyce's biographical sketch in Book of Chicagoans, 1911 does not mention a wife, and the date of his marriage is unknown. Nor is there much information available on Beatrice Rudolph. Her obituary merely states that "Mrs. Joyce was born March 7, 1889, in Philadelphia, Pa., the daughter of William E. and Sarah Rudolph"; Clinton Herald, 11 February 1948.

Oldfield, also a frequent visitor in later years.¹⁷

By about 1920, the first phase of construction at the Joyce Estate had been pretty much completed. At the Main Cabin Compound, additional facilities included three small, log-frame structures: an octagonal-plan gazebo called the "Observatory" (HABS No. MN-146-S); a Gun Room (HABS No. MN-146-J) to store hunting and fishing equipment; and a Bathhouse (HABS No. MN-146-D) overlooking a small beach at the tip of Larson's Point. At the Caretaker's Compound, the only major new facility was a wood-frame sleeping cottage used by handymen and called the "Men's Cabin" (HABS No. MN-146-Y). By this time, Joyce and his wife had settled into a routine. Arriving at Trout Lake in early June, they would remain until early September, with an occasional intervening trip to Chicago.¹⁸

As one visitor observed in 1922, most of the Joyce Estate's initial buildings were constructed "of peeled, sand papered and shellac[k]ed logs."¹⁹ During the mid-1920s, however, Joyce abandoned saddle-notched, round-log construction for simpler wood-frame structures with various types of siding. Drop siding, for example, was favored for several new wood-frame buildings in the farmstead area of the Caretaker's Compound, including a Barn (HABS No. MN-146-FF), a Three-Car Garage (HABS No. MN-146-DD), and two storage sheds (HABS Nos. MN-146-JJ, MN-146-KK). Wood-frame construction with drop siding also characterized a cabin constructed on a small island in Moore Lake, which was separated from the southwest corner of Trout Lake by a thin isthmus. One of several acquisitions that eventually enlarged the Joyce Estate from its original 2,600 acres to approximately 4,500 acres, the Moore Lake parcel became Joyce's property in 1925, and he built the cabin shortly thereafter.²⁰

In addition to expanding the estate's boundaries, Joyce during 1920s also added two important facilities: a small Greenhouse (HABS No. MN-146-W), which supplied the grounds with flowering plants and ornamental shrubbery; and a nine-hole, pitch-and-putt

¹⁷ This discussion of construction activities during 1918 relies on author's interview with Waleski, 21 January 1987; Grand Rapids Herald Review, 7 August 1918. For brief notices of the Joyces' guests, see Grand Rapids Herald Review, 17 July 1918; Itasca County Independent, 3 August 1918.

¹⁸ The description of the Joyce Estate in the early 1920s is based on author's interview with Waleski, 21 January 1987. The essential details are corroborated by Zone of Plenty, 17. Waleski was unfamiliar with this source at the time of the interview.

¹⁹ Zone of Plenty, 17.

²⁰ Joyce's purchase of the Moore Lake tract is recorded in Thomas H. Simmons and Luella Y. Simmons, Deed to David G. Joyce, 9 October 1925, Deed Book 104, 418, in Itasca County Recorder's Office, Itasca County Courthouse.

Golf Course (HABS No. MN-146-OO), located in a newly developed Recreation Area northwest of the Main Cabin Compound. For the convenience of players, the Golf Course was provided with a wood-frame Golf Clubhouse (HABS No. MN-146-NN), clad in half-round log siding. Similar sheathing was used at the Main Cabin Compound for a new guest cottage known as the New Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-R) and for a small Playhouse (HABS No. MN-146-G), constructed for Joyce's daughter "B.C." (Beatrice Clotilde), born in 1923. Except for a few storage sheds and utility structures, these were the last buildings erected at the estate during Joyce's lifetime.²¹

By the 1930s, the Grand Rapids newspapers no longer chronicled the Joyces' various comings and goings, but the family and their estate continued to hold a powerful fascination for the local citizenry. Even the Martin Family, who were the Joyces' neighbors for four decades, were unable to travel across Trout Lake without "a hasty glance at the buildings about [Larson's] point" and "a curious wondering of what the rich people were doing."²² Although the estate's allure partly derived from a certain mystique that inevitably surrounds the immensely rich, it also reflected the fact that the complex of buildings on Larson's Point was unique for the region. Individually, the estate's log-frame and wood-frame buildings were similar to resort structures throughout northern Minnesota. But taken as an assemblage, they were unparalleled.²³

Joyce seems to have modeled his estate after the lake-side summer retreats built by wealthy Eastern families in the Adirondacks region of New York during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Joyce's lifetime, these "Great Camps," as they are sometimes called, were as well known among the nation's wealthy families as the fabulous mansions of Newport. According to historian Harvey H. Kaiser, the Great Camps generally enclosed thousands of acres of prime hunting and fishing territory reserved for the exclusive use of the owners and their guests. Buildings usually were

²¹ The analysis of construction activities during the 1920s and 1930s relies heavily on author's interview with Waleski, 21 January 1987. Most of Waleski's comments about the names and uses of specific buildings are substantiated by a detailed probate inventory of the Joyce Estate, compiled in 1938; see "In the Matter of the Estate of David Gage Joyce, Final Decree of Distribution," Book of Deeds 144, 401-403, Itasca County Recorder's Office. Waleski was unfamiliar with this document at the time of the interview. B.C. spent her first summer at the estate in 1924 ("Mr. and Mrs. David Joyce and daughter, Beatrice, left Wednesday afternoon for Chicago, after having spent the past two months at the Joyce summer home on Big Trout Lake," Itasca County Independent, 30 August 1924).

²² Martin, "My Trout Lake," 4.

²³ Systematic architectural field surveys of northern Minnesota, conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society, have not identified other summer resorts resembling the Joyce Estate; see Historic Site Inventory files for Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Hubbard, and Itasca Counties, State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society. Estate

sited on a scenic lake with well defined areas for guest accommodations, service buildings, and recreational activities. Virtually every Great Camp contained a "Main Lodge," surrounded by "smaller single-purpose structures."²⁴ The overall effect was that of a small self-contained village:

In addition to residential quarters, the typical Great Camp was supported by outbuildings designed for the maintenance of the complex and for insulation from the essentially hostile locale and climate. The concept of self-sufficiency incorporated working farms, greenhouses, icehouses, and occasionally even a chapel. Superficially stripped to essentials, the Great Camps were sustained by a complex network of underground water supply, waste collection systems, and eventually electric powerlines.²⁵

In its elaborate site plan and extensive service facilities, the Joyce Estate closely resembled the Great Camps of the Adirondacks. The rustic nature of the estate's buildings also were in the tradition of the Great Camps, which used "logs as a basic building material."²⁶ As these exclusive New York resorts proliferated during the late nineteenth century, their architecture became increasingly sophisticated, evolving into a Swiss Chalet style with intricate, rustic stickwork. In this respect, the Joyce Estate clearly was on the "low end" of the spectrum. Joyce's buildings were little more than utilitarian cabins. Although the Observatory (HABS No. MN-146-S) and Bathhouse (HABS No. MN-146-D) originally contained characteristic examples of gnarled, Adirondacks-style stickwork, these were virtually the estate's only architectural flourishes.

Perhaps the greatest correspondence between the Joyce Estate and the Great Camps of the Adirondacks lay in the similarity of their basic intention. As Kaiser has pointed out, the Great Camps were not designed merely for relaxation and recreation. Even more importantly, they were built to convey a sense of wonder -- a "sense of the improbable if not the impossible."²⁷ Testifying to the great wealth of their owners, the Great Camps sought to overwhelm their guests with marvelous contradictions: log cabins and luxuriously landscaped lawns; pristine moon-lit lakes and electrically lighted boathouses; backwoods fishing expeditions and butlers. In keeping with this tradition, Joyce, too, attempted to create a secluded woodland Xanadu that combined rustic pleasures with

²⁴ Harvey H. Kaiser, Great Camps of the Adirondacks (Boston: David R. Godine, 1986), 2-14, 13.

²⁵ Kaiser, 3.

²⁶ Kaiser, 3.

²⁷ Kaiser, 174.

refined civilized comforts. The estate's private telephone cable, powerhouse, greenhouse, bathhouse, landscaped grounds, hot-water system, and golf course were all splendidly and expensively improbable in a region just emerging from its homesteading era.

The summer of 1936 was Joyce's last season in Itasca County. By the following year, he had separated from his wife, who did make the annual pilgrimage to Trout Lake. Joyce, however, remained in Chicago, suffering from a variety of ailments exacerbated by advanced alcoholism. He died before the end of the summer. Upon Joyce's demise, the woodland estate became the joint property of his wife, Beatrice, and daughter, B.C. In 1946, two years before her own death, Mrs. Joyce gave B.C. full legal title to the property. B.C. continued to use the estate as a summer retreat for the next quarter of a century without significantly altering its appearance. Her major contribution was the construction of a wood-frame Seaplane Hangar (HABS No. MN-146-BB) on the shore of Trout Lake at the south end of the Caretaker's Compound. In this structure, B.C. housed the aircraft that shuttled her between Chicago and Itasca County.²⁸

Married and divorced twice, B.C. died without children in 1972. Although the U.S. Forest Service, on several occasions, had studied the possibility of incorporating the 4,500-acre Joyce Estate into the region's Chippewa National Forest, there were no federal funds available at the time of B.C.'s death to satisfy the \$2 million asking price. The Forest Service therefore appealed to the Nature Conservancy, a national non-profit conservation organization, to act as its intermediary in acquiring the Joyce Estate for the public good. In 1973, the Nature Conservancy completed the purchase, using \$500,000 of its own funds, supplemented by a \$1.5 million loan from the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company of Minneapolis. A year later, the Forest Service reimbursed the Nature Conservancy, and the Joyce Estate became part of the Chippewa National Forest.²⁹

Under Forest Service management, the Joyce Estate was opened to a variety of non-motorized recreational activities, including hiking, camping, canoeing, and cross-country skiing. Little effort was made to preserve the estate's architectural resources, especially after a resident caretaker's position was discontinued in 1986. The Forest Service demolished some buildings as a matter of public safety. These included the Greenhouse

²⁸ Author's interview with Waleski, 21 January 1987; David Gage Joyce, "Last Will and Testament," 23 June 1923, in Torrens File No. 2994, Itasca County Recorder's Office; Beatrice Rudolph Joyce, Deed to Beatrice Clotilde Joyce, 3 July 1946, Deed Book 167, 249.

²⁹ Waleski and Boese, 201; "Former Joyce Estate Is Dedicated to Public," Grand Rapids Herald Review, 14 October 1974; "More Wilderness for Public Thanks to Nature Conservancy," Minneapolis Tribune, 17 November 1974.

(HABS No. MN-146-W), Winter Boathouse (HABS No. MN-146-AA), and Seaplane Hangar (HABS No. MN-146-BB). Other buildings suffered from vandalism, especially the Bathhouse (HABS No. MN-146-D), which was stripped of its Adirondacks-style stickwork. Still another structure, the Observatory (HABS No. MN-146-S), blew down in a storm. In 1992, the Forest Service prepared management recommendations for the Joyce Estate that attempted to reconcile its status as a "semiprimitive" recreation area with concerns for the preservation of its architecture, which had been declared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. With some modification, these recommendations served as the basis of a "Memorandum of Agreement" signed in 1992-1993 by the Forest Service, the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The MOA called for the rehabilitation and preservation of four log buildings and the retention of several masonry structures. All other architectural elements were to be removed, with the understanding that, prior to demolition, they would be documented according to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey. This present study is intended to fulfill that obligation.³⁰

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Site:

1. **General Setting and Orientation** Embracing about 4,500 acres and 12 lakes, the Joyce Estate is located about 20 miles north of the City of Grand Rapids in Itasca County. The estate's residential development, confined to about 80 acres on the west side of Trout Lake, consists of three major parts: the Main Cabin Compound to the south, the Caretaker's Compound to the north, and the Recreation Area to the west.

The Main Cabin Compound includes seven sleeping cabins and the Main Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-A), which housed the central dining and socializing spaces for Joyce Family members and guests. Claiming a choice location near the tip of Larson's Point, the Main Cabin commands a panoramic view of Trout Lake to the south, east, and north. Ancillary structures, such as a Root Cellar (HABS No. MN-146-H) and Main Pump House (HABS No. MN-146-I), are located immediately to the rear (west). Behind (west of) these structures is a small wooded hill that contains another cluster of sleeping cabins for guests and staff.

³⁰ William J. Yourd, "Joyce Estate Disposition Project: A Preservation Perspective," 1992, "Memorandum of Agreement among the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the USDA Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest," R903-MOU-2360-92-006, 1992-1993; both documents in Chippewa National Forest Headquarters Building, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

The Caretaker's Compound stretches along the shoreline a short distance north of the Main Cabin Compound. This area holds staff residences, garages, workshops, storage facilities, and the Powerhouse (HABS No. MN-146-Z) for the entire estate. Some structures, such as a Winter Boathouse (HABS No. MN-146-AA), Seaplane Hangar (HABS No. MN-146-BB), Oil House (HABS No. MN-146-CC), and Greenhouse (HABS No. MN-146-W) have been demolished. The locations of these buildings are marked by foundation ruins. Most landscape features are completely overgrown, such as the Garden (HABS MN-146-V), which occupied a site immediately northwest of the Greenhouse, inland from the lake.

About one-quarter mile west of the Caretaker's Compound, beyond a small White Spruce Plantation (HABS No. MN-146-U), is the Recreation Area. It contains a severely deteriorating Tennis Court (HABS No. MN-146-LL), an overgrown, nine-hole, pitch-and-putt Golf Course (HABS No. MN-146-OO), and a Golf Clubhouse (HABS No. MN-146-NN) overlooking Trout Lake to the southeast. A solitary sleeping cabin (HABS No. MN-146-MM) nestles in the woods north of the Tennis Court. A Golf Course Pump House (HABS No. MN-146-PP) and Golf Course Tool Shed (HABS No. MN-146-QQ) are southwest of the Golf Course. Almost a mile further to the southwest, beyond a small trout stream, is the Trap House (HABS No. MN-146-RR), which was used for target shooting.

A cabin (HABS No. MN-146-SS) on an island in nearby Moore Lake, is the only building on the estate located away from Trout Lake. Moore Lake borders a small isthmus of land at the southwest end of Trout Lake.

2. **Historic Landscape Design** According to former Joyce Estate caretaker Joseph Waleski, Jr., the estate's founder David Gage Joyce had professional assistance in laying out the grounds of the Main Cabin Compound on Larson's Point, but the name of the professional and the nature of his services are unknown. Although the grounds have not been maintained since the property passed from Joyce Family ownership in 1972, surviving features and historic photographs make it possible to reconstruct parts of the landscaping plan for the front (east) grounds of the Main Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-A) area.³¹

The Main Cabin's front grounds occupy a small peninsula, measuring approximately 250 feet in length (east-west). At the Main Cabin, the peninsular is approximately 145 feet wide (north-south), and it tapers gradually to a point, so that half way to the tip, it is about half as wide. Approximately 100 feet in

³¹ Author's interview with Waleski, 1987. The historic photographs are found in Waleski, Photograph Album, in Chippewa National Forest Headquarters Building, Cass Lake, MN.

front of (east of) the Main Cabin, the land abruptly slopes to the east about four feet. The two levels are connected at roughly the north-south mid-point, by seven stone steps, four-feet wide. Formerly, there also was a gravel path that ran to the south of the stone steps, linking the Main Cabin with the point.

The upper level forms the immediate front yard for the Main Cabin and the neighboring Joyce Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-B) and Guest Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-C). This area was maintained as an open lawn, with a perimeter of conifer trees and shrubs along the east end. At the bottom of the stone steps, the lower level dips into a bowl-shaped depression, approximately 45 feet in diameter. Originally, this area may have been excavated for a pond, for an early photograph shows it half full of water. Later photographs, however, indicate that it was planted in grass and extensively landscaped with irregularly shaped beds of flowers and ornamental plantings, banked with gravel and rocks. From the center of the depression rose a birdhouse on a tall metal pole. Although the birdhouse has been removed, a short section of pole still remains. At the east end of the depression, approximately 200 feet from the Main Cabin, stands the Bathhouse (HABS No. MN-146-D). Although the vicinity of the Bathhouse is now overgrown with shrubs, it was once maintained as an open area for the use of swimmers.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views:

Photographs of Main Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-A), Joyce Cabin (Habs No. MN-146-B), Guest Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-C), Observatory (HABS No. MN-146-S), Winter Boathouse (HABS No. MN-146-AA), and Farmhouse (HABS No. MN-146-EE), dating from ca. 1920-1935, in Joseph Waleski, Jr., Photograph Album, in Chippewa National Forest Headquarters Building, Cass Lake, MN.

Photograph of interior, living-room area of Main Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-A), captioned "the Main Lodge of the Joyce Estate in 1945," in Joseph Waleski, Jr. and Donald L. Boese, "The Joyce Estate," Grand Rapids Companion, ed. Donald L. Boese (Grand Rapids, MN: Grand Rapids Centennial Committee and others, 1991), 201.

Aerial photograph, looking east, of Golf Course (HABS No. MN-146-OO), undated, in Rolf T. Anderson, The Joyce Estate: A Reuse Study (St. Paul: State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society and U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, 1989), 26.

B. Interviews:

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was part of a program initiated through a Memorandum of Agreement among the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, the Minnesota State Historic Preservation, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. William J. Yourd, Forest Archaeologist, Chippewa National Forest, served as program manager. The HABS recordation was completed under a contract between the USDA Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest and Hess, Roise and Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Jeffrey A. Hess served as the contractor's principal investigator and project historian, while Charlene K. Roise served as project architectural historian. Large-format photographs, sketch plans of individual buildings, and a measured site plan of the estate were prepared on a sub-contract basis. Clayton Fraser of Fraserdesign, Denver, Colorado, was responsible for the photographs; Stuart M. MacDonald of MacDonald and Mack Architects, Ltd, Minneapolis, for the drawings.