

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

HABS No. MN-146-G

HABS
MINN
31-GRAP.V,
36-

PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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, PLAYHOUSE (Library)

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of Erection** Ca. 1927.
2. **Original and Subsequent Owners** In 1916, David Gage Joyce secured the site of the Playhouse and nearby buildings through the services of Simeon D. Patrick, who purchased the land 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.¹
3. **Builders, Contractors, Suppliers** Unknown.
4. **Alterations and Additions** The interior shelves were probably added when the building was converted from a playhouse into a library at some point after 1938. A toilet room in the northwest corner appears to be a later addition.

B. Historical Context:

According to former Joyce Estate caretaker Joseph Waleski, Jr., the Playhouse was constructed about 1927 for Beatrice Clotilde ("B.C") Joyce, the only child of the estate's founder, David Gage Joyce. David Gage's probate inventory, dated 1938, itemizes "Playhouse" among the estate's improvements. At some time later, the building was converted into a library.² For further information, see the historical overview of the Joyce Estate in HABS No. MN-146.

¹ 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.

² "In the Matter of the Estate of David Gage Joyce, Final Decree of Distribution," 30 June 1938, Book of Deeds 144, 401-406; author's interview with Joseph Waleski, Jr., Grand Rapids, MN, 22 January 1987.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural Character** Unlike the first buildings on the estate, which were fashioned from peeled logs, the Playhouse and some other later structures are of wood-frame construction sheathed with split-log siding. The single-story, front-gable playhouse features a simple, symmetrical design.
2. **Condition of Fabric** Fair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall Dimensions** Approximately 10'4" x 12'4".
2. **Foundations** Concrete pier foundations.
3. **Walls** Split-log siding, painted brown.
4. **Structural System, Framing** Wood-frame construction.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads** Single concrete step by front (east) door, with cobblestone and concrete riser.
6. **Chimneys** None.
7. **Openings**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors** A five-panel wood door, painted green, is centered beneath the front (east) gable. The doorway is edged with plain board trim, painted green, with fillet molding over the lintel.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters** Nine-pane casement windows are on each side of the front (east) door. Large window openings on the north and south sides, now empty, probably each held a pair of casement windows. Frames for screens were held in place by butterfly nuts; the frames and screens are no longer in place. Windows are trimmed with plain boards, painted green, with fillet molding over the lintels.

8. Roof

- a. **Shape, Covering** Front gable with composition shingles and sheet-metal ridge roll.
- b. **Cornice, Eaves** Rafter tails and purlin ends are exposed beneath the eaves.
- c. **Dormers, Cupolas, Towers** None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans

- a. **Describe Floors** The interior of this small building is essentially a single room. Studs covered with particle board partitioned off a toilet in the northeastern corner of the room, but the particle board has mostly been removed.

2. Stairways None.

3. Flooring Wide pine boards.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes Exposed wall and roof framing.

5. Openings

- a. **Doorways and Doors** Plain board trim.
- b. **Windows** Plain board trim.

6. Decorative Features and Trim Simple plank shelving covers the entire rear (west) wall. It also extends below the window level on other walls.

7. Hardware None.

8. Mechanical Equipment

- a. **Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation** None.

- b. **Lighting** Electric service is no longer provided to the building; no light fixtures remain.
- c. **Plumbing** A porcelain toilet sits in the northeastern corner; it is no longer functional.

D. Site:

- 1. **General Setting and Orientation** Facing east, the Playhouse is located about 45 feet southwest of the Main Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-A). For further information, see HABS No. MN-146.
- 2. **Historic Landscape Design** The Playhouse occupies level ground, originally maintained as a lawn, but now overgrown. A wooded hill rises immediately to the rear (west) of the building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

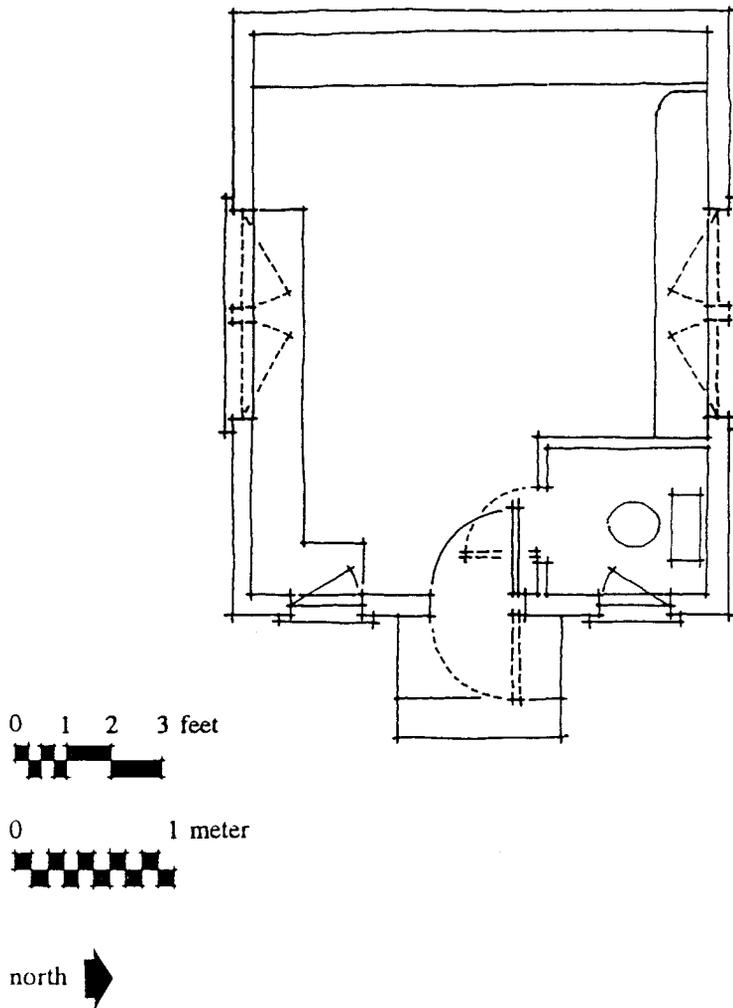
A. Interviews: See HABS No. MN-146.

B. Bibliography:

- 1. **Primary and Unpublished Sources** See HABS No. MN-146.
- 2. **Secondary and Published Sources** See HABS No. MN-146.

C. Likely Sources not yet Investigated: See HABS No. MN-146.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION See HABS No. MN-146.



SKETCH PLAN: PLAYHOUSE