

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

HABS No. MN-146-S

HABS
MINN
31-GDRAP.V,
35-

PHOTOGRAPH
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,
OBSERVATORY (Gazebo)

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35-
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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of Erection** Ca. 1920
2. **Original and Subsequent Owners** In 1916, David Gage Joyce secured the site of the Observatory and nearby facilities 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** After 1989, the Observatory blew down in a storm. The site is marked by the structure's wood foundations.

B. Historical Context: According to former Joyce Estate caretaker Joseph Waleski, Jr., the Observatory -- the Joyce Family's name for their rustic, log-framed gazebo -- was built "in the early 1920s." A description of the Joyce Estate, published in 1922, noted that the grounds included an "observatory, having an elevation of 100 feet, overlooking the lake."² A survey of the Joyce Estate, conducted in 1986, described the Observatory as follows:

"One story, approximately 7'0' floor to ceiling. Octagonal plan, approximately 4'6" along each side and 10'4" across the flats. Unpeeled 'rustic' log construction. Log posts support 2x4 framed polygonal roof with radiating

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 Author's interview with Joseph Waleski, Jr., Grand Rapids, MN, 27 January 1987; A Zone of Plenty (Grand Rapids, MN: Grand Rapids Herald Review, 1922), 17.

half-log tails at eaves, green composition shingles, and wood flagpole. Half-log, patterned flat ceiling. Chinoiserie log rails and eave lattice. Tongue-and-groove flooring and timber sleepers (reused) on log blocking on grade. Half-log skirting below floor."³

Shortly after a reuse study of the Joyce Estate was completed in 1989, the Observatory blew down in a storm.⁴ Its site is marked by the structure's octagonal-plan, log-sill foundation, which retains half-log skirting, half-log floor joists, and portions of tongue-and-groove flooring. For further information about the Joyce Estate, see HABS No. MN-146-A: Joyce Estate, Main Cabin, Part I.B.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural Character** The Observatory is a ruin consisting of an octagonal-plan, log-sill foundation.

B. Site:

1. **General Setting and Orientation** Located about 50 feet south of Peterson Cabin (HABS No. MN-146-R) in the Main Cabin Compound, the Observatory overlooked Trout Lake to the south from the crest of a wooded hill. This site apparently was selected for the gazebo because of its scenic qualities. For further information, see HABS No. MN-146.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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

B. Bibliography:

³ Stuart MacDonald and Jeffrey A. Hess, HABS/HAER Inventory Card for Observatory," in MacDonald and Mack and Jeffrey A. Hess, "Cultural Resource Overview, Joyce Estate," prepared for Chippewa National Forest, 1987, in Chippewa National Forest Headquarters Building, Cass Lake, MN.

⁴ The study contains a photograph of the Observatory; see 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).

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.