

1. Bill and I are part of the Northville River Restoration Task Force and the subgroup "History Team," which is dealing with the research, preservation, and relocation of the Down's Log Cabin.
2. Our History Team has been working on a historic walking trail through the proposed River Park and identifying adjacent historic sites, along with creating an interactive map as part of the project. The work on the historic points of the Riverwalk include the Down's Cabin on River Street.
3. In the early 1930's, legend surrounds this dwelling as the Northville/Wayne County Fair Honeymoon Cabin, accommodating the lucky couple on their wedding night after winning an all-expense-paid contest to be married at the fair that day. While a great story, our investigation found it differing to the legend, with the dates of the wedding and the existence of the cabin not quite lining up.
4. What we did discover of the only log cabin in downtown Northville, was that in the middle of the Great Depression, a recently retired, 65 year old, single, kindergarten school teacher from Howell, Michigan, Miss Mary Gilbert, boldly bought an acre of land on the Rouge River in downtown Northville, and built a state-of-the-art log home in 1936.
5. Built with Air-lock logs, patented in Grayling, MI, that very same year, consisting of hollowed-out logs that were pre-seasoned, shrunk with no cracking, cut evenly and to length, that provided a consistent building log that fit together, requiring none of the traditional log cabin chinking. These new logs provided a finished look both inside and out, air insulation, as well as providing conduits for the installation of plumbing and wiring. Mary Gilbert was a member of the Northville Women's National Farm and Garden Association, also formed in 1936, still existing today as the Northville Garden Club. Sadly, she passed away four short years after building her home.
6. Moving into the present and the change coming to the Down's property -- preservation, repurposing, and restoration of the cabin has become a focal point for the History Team. Hunter Pasteur has worked up a detailed conceptual budget for preserving this piece of Northville history, and has graciously promised up to \$125,000 for half of the proposed budget. I believe this has already been presented to Planning at a past meeting.
7. The History Team and Northville River Restoration Task force have gone an extra step -- and have found and been in contact with a seasoned, log cabin restoration expert, ready to examine and give a true estimate of the work that needs to be done on this 86 year-old gem, including providing a schedule and costs of on-going maintenance into the future. Unfortunately, the Cabin today is private property, with tenants that wish not to be disturbed at this time, leaving our expert unable to visit the property and give us a full, accurate estimate and assessment.
8. In our conversations with cabin expert Grizzly Bob and providing of pictures, he did let us know this cabin has great value, he's familiar and has worked with air-lock logs before, and is ready to move on this project when the time comes -- from estimates to contracting to hands-on experience in all phases of restoration, including moving and stonework. Again, we need to keep in mind that Northville is spoiled with its numerous unique and historic buildings -- this log cabin would be highly valued in any of our neighboring communities if they were so fortunate to have it.
9. From this picture, you can see the original cabin that will be moved and restored, while the breezeway addition and garage will be removed. Again, everything is currently on-hold until we can gain access to the property and interior of the cabin, along with the next phase of repurposing and

relocation, with a number of different suggestions along the future Riverwalk. Potential uses if it can be kept on site or nearby still in River Park is as an amenity center/museum for Northville Downs/County Fair related history. If not, then as recreation department approved restroom facilities in Ford Field West or East, which the City has already committed for the need at that location.

Down's Cabin

318 River Street, Northville, MI

318 RIVER ST NORTHVILLE, MI 48167 (Property Address)

Parcel Number: 48 004 01 0187 000

Map It  | Print 



Item 1 of 2

[1 Image / 1 Sketch](#)

Property Owner: NORTHVILLE DOWNS ASSN

Summary Information

> Residential Building Summary

- Year Built: 1900
- Full Baths: 1
- Sq. Feet: 696
- Bedrooms: 0
- Half Baths: 0
- Acres: 1.640

> Assessed Value: \$416,300 | Taxable Value: \$244,657

> Property Tax information found

> 1 Building Department records found

Property Information

Tax Information

Building Department

Jump To: [Owner and Taxpayer Information](#) | [General Information for Tax Year 2022](#) | [Land Information](#) | [Legal Description](#) | [Land Division Act Information](#) | [Sale History](#)
| [Building Information - 0 sq ft Apartment \(Commercial\)](#) | [Building Information - 696 sq ft RANCH \(Residential\)](#)

★ Click here to add this parcel to your favorite records for easy access on your next visit...



☐ **Owner and Taxpayer Information**

[Back To Top](#)

Owner

NORTHVILLE DOWNS ASSN
301 S CENTER
NORTHVILLE, MI 48167

Taxpayer

SEE OWNER INFORMATION

318 River St. on 1.63 Acres (Includes 13,072 sq. ft. barn built 1968)



Northville Wayne County Fair

August 28, 1931

The Northville Record

Northville, Michigan, Friday, August 28, 1931



Big Public Wedding at Northville Wayne County Fair Wed. Night Aug. 26

Impressive! — Beautiful!

A Prominent
NORTHVILLE COUPLE

To Be Married

by a

Local Clergyman

SEE IT AT THE FAIR

August 25th to 29th

2,500 ATTEND WEDDING AT LOCAL FAIR

Miss Gertrude B. Parmenter
and Donald E. Starr
are Participants

Before a crowd estimated at 2,500, Donald E. Starr and Gertrude B. Parmenter, prominent Northville couple, were married at the Northville Wayne County Fair grounds, Wednesday evening, August 26.

The Rev. H. G. Whitfield officiated, using the ring ceremony.

The public wedding ceremony, following the Blue Heaven Revue, attracted a large crowd of people as the event had been extensively advertised, who were curious to learn the identity of the happy couple and to view the impressive service.

To the strains of Lohengrin's "Wedding March," the bride and groom walked onto the platform followed by the maid of honor, Miss Ellen La Clear, of Pontiac, and the best man, Walter Gries, also of Pontiac. Seven members of the revue, beautifully gowned, were bridesmaids.

The bride was attired in a white silk faille gown and she carried a wedding bouquet of white Killarney roses. Miss La Clear was beautiful in a shell pink satin gown and carried a bouquet of rose colored, Dane Ethel Helen roses.

The flower-girl was Mary Elsie Babbitt, dressed in a peach colored crepe, and she carried a basket of Johanna Hill roses and Delphinium.

Immediately following the strains of "O Promise Me," sung by a member of the revue, the service was

Immediately following the strains of "O Promise Me," sung by a member of the revue, the service was begun and every word was carried clearly and distinctly to the audience by means of amplifiers.

The ceremony carried many of those present back to the day of their own wedding ceremony and they sat quietly enjoying the solemnity of the occasion. At the conclusion of the wedding the happy couple was given a hearty cheer and the best wishes of the grandstand full of spectators was easily ascertainable.

At the reception, held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Babbitt on Rogers street, immediately following the ceremony, about 75 guests congratulated the bride and groom.

Felicitations were extended to the bride's father, Clarence Parmenter, and to Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Starr, the groom's parents. A luncheon was served and everyone partook of the beautiful 3-tier wedding cake.

Mrs. Starr was formerly in the employ of Mr. and Mrs. Babbitt and has lived at their home for several years. Mr. Starr is associated with the Thompson Aeronautical company of Detroit.

(Continued on last page)

2,500 ATTEND WEDDING AT FAIR

(Continued from page 1)

The couple left for their new home in the Chelsea apartments on Chelsea avenue in Detroit.

Out of town guests at the reception were Mr. and Mrs. Farrell, Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Arthur, Miss Helen Arthur, W. E. McCarthy, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Woodman, all of Detroit, Mrs. Ida Putman Williamson, Mrs. Grace Stanke, Rochester, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Arndt, Wayne, Carlton Starr of Ypsilanti, the groom's brother, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. D. Parmenter, the bride's aunt and uncle, Mrs. A. T. Holcomb, of Novi, besides a host of friends and relatives from Northville and surrounding communities.

Northville merchants announced in advance of the occasion that they would donate gifts to the couple, N. C. Schrader leading the way with a grand prize consisting of a three-piece overstuffed furniture suite.

Northville Record - October 16, 1936

FOUR ROOM COTTAGE IS BUILT HERE FOR MISS MARY GILBERT

The first cottage built of air-locked logs to be constructed in the village has just been completed at 318 River street by P. L. Mott, Detroit contractor.

Completing a four-room lodge to meet the specifications set forth by the owner, Miss Mary Gilbert, the contractor unlocked the door Wednesday morning for a final inspection before Miss Gilbert takes up a permanent residence there.

A feature of the new house is a large stone fireplace which occupies practically an entire end of the living room. Light fixtures are of wrought iron in rustic style to fit in appropriately with the natural charm of the "backwoodsman" type of architecture.



U.S. Patent May 12, 1936 CAN Patent January 5, 1937

May 12, 1936.

C. TAHVONEN ET AL
BUILDING AND LOG CONSTRUCTION
Filed Sept. 15, 1933

2,040,110

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

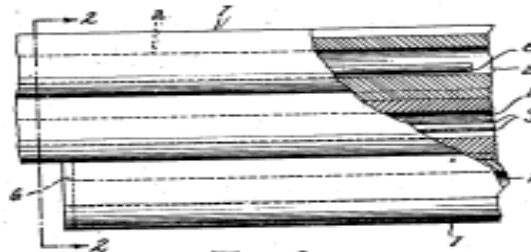


Fig. 3.

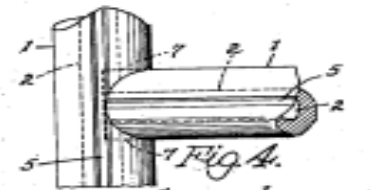


Fig. 4.

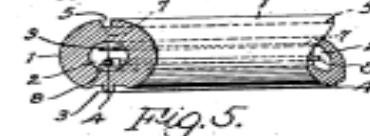


Fig. 5.

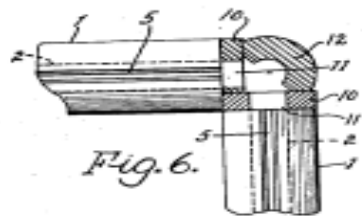


Fig. 6.

INVENTORS
ROYALE A. WRIGHT
CARL TAHVONEN

BY *Robert T. Bailey*
ATTORNEY

Downs Cabin Conceptual Budget \$250k

0	A	B	E		F
1	Project	Northville Downs Log Cabin			
2	Scope of Work	Conceptual Improvement Budget			
3	Location	318 River St. Northville, MI 48167			
4	Date	11/15/2021			
5		700 SF			
6					
7	Scope of Work	Responsibility	Projected Costs	Costs per SF	Notes
8					
9	Architectural	TBD	\$12,000	\$17	
10	Site Engineer	Seiber Keast	\$4,000	\$8	
11	Water & Sewer Tap	City of Northville	\$16,000	\$23	
12	Building Permit	City of Northville	\$3,500	\$5	
13	Erosion	GC	\$1,000	\$1	
14	Gas Service	Consumers Energy	\$5,000	\$7	
15	Utilitie Connections	DTE	\$4,000	\$8	
16	Selective Interior Demo	GC	\$3,000	\$4	assuming no asbestos
17	Final Cleaning	GC	\$500	\$1	
18	New Foundation	GC	\$10,500	\$15	
19	House Moving	GC	\$25,000	\$38	Dismantle and reassemble
20	Steel	GC	\$3,500	\$5	
22	Finish Carpentry	GC	\$7,000	\$10	
23	Insulation	GC	\$2,000	\$3	
24	Gyp Board & Framing	GC	\$7,000	\$10	
26	Bathroom Buildout	GC	\$17,500	\$25	
27	Flooring	GC	\$3,500	\$5	
28	New Windows	GC	\$8,000	\$11	
29	Front Door	GC	\$2,500	\$4	
30	Gutters	GC	\$2,000	\$3	
31	Roofing	GC	\$7,500	\$11	
32	Ext. Paint	GC	\$4,000	\$8	repaint post reconstruction
33	Interior Paint	GC	\$4,000	\$8	
34	Garage Doors	GC	\$1,500	\$2	
35	Electrical	GC	\$8,500	\$12	
36	HVAC	GC	\$9,100	\$13	
37	Plumbing	GC	\$8,400	\$12	
38	Sidewalk or Stoop	GC	\$1,500	\$2	
40	Earthwork	GC	\$7,500	\$11	
41	Landscaping	GC	\$5,000	\$7	
42	Punch List	GC	\$2,000	\$3	
43	Contingency	GC	\$50,000	\$71	
44	Total		\$246,500	\$352	

Grizzly Bob Kenel - Log Cabin Expert

With a special focus on historic log home restoration



With a special focus on historic log home restoration. Check out these photos of the recent restoration of King House in Good Hart, Michigan. For more info go to their [association link](#)

Preserving American History

The log cabin is a uniquely American building type. It was first used for simple protection from the elements during years of Westward expansion. As the nation expanded the style grew into multi-room homes, eventually incorporating indoor plumbing and even electric lighting. The major benefit of the log home was that the natural wood resource was plentiful. It was also usually available from the the surrounding area of construction. Many of these homes still exist and many of those are noted as historic structures by the Secretary of the Interior.

Grizzly Bob has developed a special focus on restoring these uniquely American homes. Whatever their size or age would love to take a look at your restoration project!

Within that we offer...

- Expert restoration consulting and building services.
- Historic preservation specialists, as designated by the Secretary of Interior Standards for historic projects.
- Quality professional management and construction.

Log Home Restoration

Whether your log home is in need of new chinking or caulking, log replacement, or a whole structural re-build Grizzly Bob is your log home restoration specialist. Foundation rebuilding is also part of what we do. Although we're home based in Michigan we can probably assist you in your log home or log cabin restoration needs, wherever you are in the continental U.S. Just call I us and provide us the details of YOUR project and we can determine if you could benefit from the Grizzly Bob touch! Email Bob at grizzly1bob@gmail.com.

Because of the advanced age of many historic log structures preservation begins at ground level as exemplified by the rot and deterioration noted in these photos of a recent project.

12.8.21 Pictures



Mary Gilbert Log Home

