



Two Cabins at 825 Lee Ave., Louisville, Colorado (Also referred to as 801 & 809 Lee)

Legal Description of Parcel from Boulder County Assessor: OUTLOTS 1 & 2 S & W BLK 2
LOUISVILLE EAST & ABANDONED RAILWAY RIGHT OF WAY LYING WEST OF OUTLOT 1 & OUTLOT
2 8-1S-69 REC 805500-01 11/17/86 3 IMPS ID 71870 COMB HERE PER OWNER 1983

Specifically, the two cabins in question were constructed on Outlot 2. According to the Boulder County Assessor website, the entire parcel currently contains six structures. The two freestanding cabins, to be referred to as Cabin #1 and Cabin #2, are the subjects of this report and are pictured here in a 2016 photo:



These two cabins were surveyed in 2000 under the addresses of 801 Lee Ave. and 809 Lee Ave. Those Architectural Inventory Forms are incorporated by reference into this report.

Year of Construction: circa 1935-1940

Summary: Emmitt and Laura Trott built these very small cabins and they were rented out, with other cabins on the property, starting during the Depression years of the 1930s. The cabins are in their original locations in the Miners Field neighborhood.

Louisville's mining history extends to the culture that grew around the mining economy. People didn't have much, lived in small structures in tight-knit neighborhoods, often rented rather than owned, and made do (and were inventive with) with the resources available to them. This was already the case in Louisville, but it was particularly true during the Depression years when the cabins were built. To many, these two cabins represent a counterpoint to a later time when residents are fortunate to be enjoying a more comfortable lifestyle.

In 2016, the Louisville Historical Museum included images of these two cabins in both public presentations that were given on "Tiny Houses With a History" about the prevalence and history of small houses in Louisville. According to the 2000 Architectural Survey Forms, Cabin #1 (to the south) is 198 square feet and Cabin #2 (to the north) is 216 square feet.

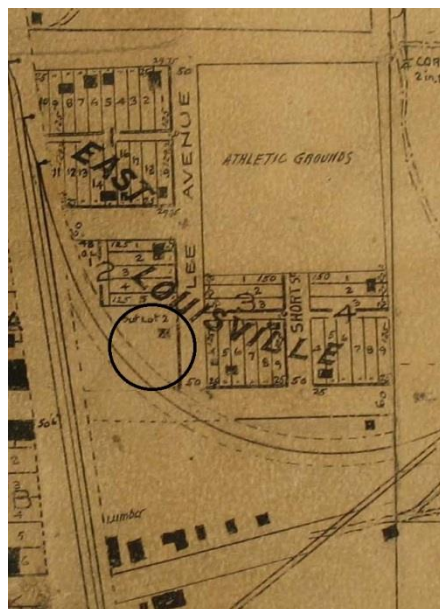
Development of East Louisville Addition

The history of the East Louisville Addition originated with Charles C. Welch, a prominent businessman and figure in Colorado history who started the first coal mine in Louisville and was the primary person behind the establishment of Louisville as a town. His wife, R. Jeannette Welch, transferred the land to brothers William J. Lee and George A. Lee, who platted the area in 1906, thereby creating the East Louisville Addition. The subdivision is located on the opposite side of the railroad tracks from the commercial core of Old Town Louisville and most of the rest of the town.

Houses in the East Louisville neighborhood are characterized by their close proximity to Miners Field, a historic ball field dating back to the late 1800s, and to their close proximity to the railroad. Not only is the main railroad line nearby, but a railroad spur cut through from northwest to southeast. The cabins at 825 Lee are close to Miners Field and were notably close to the railroad spur, which is now gone, and to Miners Field, located just northeast of the cabins. This neighborhood historically had a high number of immigrant residents.

Earliest Ownership of Lots, to 1930s

In 1908, after having platted East Louisville in 1906, the Lee brothers sold Outlots 1 and 2 (on which the cabins were later constructed) to August Seeger. Property records indicate that August and Mina Seeger sold the lots to William Jopling in around the same year. William Jopling had been born in England in 1849 and he passed away by 1918. There is no evidence that he ever lived in a structure on the lots; the 1910 census records show that he was living in Old Town Louisville on the west side of the railroad tracks, not the east side where these lots are located. However, the 1909 Drumm's Wall Map of Louisville does show a structure existing on Outlot 2, seen here. Nothing else is known about that building. The area in which the cabins are located is circled.



In 1918, Jopling's estate sold the lots to Tony D'Orio. He had been born in Italy in about 1878 and was a longtime shoemaker in Louisville. As with Jopling, there is not any evidence that he lived in a structure on the lots. Records show that he lived with his family on Grant Ave. during the time of his ownership of the lots.

Trott Construction and Ownership of Cabins, 1936-1946; Dates of Construction

Boulder County Recorder property records indicate that Laura Trott purchased these lots in 1936, based on the recording of the deed of trust (mortgage) on the property that year. The actual warranty deed was not recorded until 1940. The Trotts are believed to have been the owners who were responsible for the construction of the cabins. They built four cabins on the lots, all facing Lee Ave. Cabins 3 and 4 were later attached to one another to become one building. There were also additional buildings adding up to several rentals. According to the 2000 Architectural Inventory Forms for Cabin #1 and Cabin #2, they were both constructed on Outlot 2.

Laura Hendricks Trott (1898-1986) was born in Oklahoma. Her husband, Benjamin "Emmit" Trott (1894-1972) was born in Arkansas. They married in Arkansas in 1914 and had several children. At the time of the 1930 census, they were living in Six Mile, Franklin County, Illinois, which was a coal mining community from which others also came to Louisville. The Trott family arrived in Louisville by 1933 and Emmit Trott opened a junk business on the north side of Pine just east of the railroad tracks. Their property on Pine included the Ernest Grill Lumber building, which they later relocated, and the house that is now 1105 Pine. The 1940 federal census listed him as being the proprietor of a junk business. He is also remembered as having had a hauling business. They purchased this separate parcel on Pine by a deed that was recorded in 1945 and are believed to have also owned other property in East Louisville.

The 1948 Boulder County Assessor cards for these structures do not give a date of construction. The Boulder County Assessor website appears to give 1935 as the date of construction. Boulder County has sometimes been found to be in error with respect to the dates of construction of Louisville's historic buildings, so other evidence is looked to. In this case, the Boulder County property records indicate that the Trotts, who are believed to have constructed the cabins, purchased them in 1936 (the year in which the deed of trust on the property was recorded, though the warranty deed was not recorded until 1940). According to Louisville resident Jean Morgan, a grandson of Laura and Emmit Trott was born in one of the cabins in 1939. Last, the 2000 Architectural Inventory Forms state that the two cabins were constructed in "ca. 1940." Based on these pieces of evidence, the construction date is estimated to be "circa 1935-1940."

The following excerpt of an aerial view from the Carnegie Library for Local History shows the cabins and the area around them in the early 1940s. The Trott business and home can be seen to the south of the cabins (on the north side of Pine). The area in which the cabins are located is circled.



History of Cabins and Ancillary Buildings in Louisville

These cabins relate to an aspect of Louisville history from its earlier years, particularly the mining years. Although people in the Louisville community were overall similarly situated in terms of class, many residents could not afford to purchase houses or wanted the convenience of rentals. Also, according to many current Louisville residents, for a long time there were more people interested in purchasing houses than there were houses to purchase. As a result, many people in Louisville rented or lived in temporary housing. Census records show that it was common for a family to rent a house, and that it was also very common for people to live in the outbuildings of relatives or to rent outbuildings. If a single miner or a few single miners lived in such a building, it is still in Louisville typically referred to as a "batch" or "bach" (short for bachelor).

Likewise, if one owned an extra outbuilding, cabin, or cottage, one could gain extra income by renting it out. A coal stove and chimney could be installed relatively easily, and the outhouse would typically be shared.

The fact that the local mines closed in the summers also contributed to the prevalence of outbuildings. Many of Louisville's historic homes may have been very small, but one could easily add additional outbuildings to a property, particularly in the summertime when many miners worked to improve their houses and yards.

Although the rental market was very active, there were not records kept of rentals. Most of the available information comes from census records, which noted for the census years from 1900-1940 whether the head of a household owned or rented; Louisville directories that show extra people or even an extra family residing at a particular address; information that has been collected over the years from Louisville families; and historic photos and property records documenting the presence of small cabins.

Many of Louisville's cabins and outbuildings are gone, but some historic houses in Louisville still have outbuildings that were once rented out to single people, couples, or families. One example is 1024 Grant, which is one of the twelve structures in Louisville that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When it was selected for the Register in 1986, one of the considerations in its favor was that it still had associated outbuildings. One of these outbuildings was a cottage that was rented out.

In another example, the small building behind the Mossoni House at 836 Main St. (now the location of Bittersweet) was rented out to families such as Boyd and Callie Forbis and their children, who lived there at the time of the 1930 census. The structure is now part of Por Wine House.

When Emmitt and Laura Trott purchased Outlots 1 and 2 in the mid 1930s, it was likely with the intention that they could build cabins there and bring in rental income. The presence of the cabins were likely a draw for Marjorie Downer when she decided to buy the property in 1947, as she could benefit from the rental income and be able to keep an eye on the cabins from her own home on the property.

In 1946, Laura Trott sold the property with the cabins to Glen and Lois Walters. In around 1947, the Trotts moved to Lafayette and had a secondhand/antique business there at a store (moved from its Pine St. location in Louisville) called Trott's Trading Post. Also in 1947, Glen and Lois Walters sold the property with the cabins to Mayfair Development Co.

Downer Ownership, 1947-1994

In 1947, Marjorie Downer purchased a parcel of land from Mayfair Development Co. In about 1949, she built a house on the property in which she lived. She was able to oversee her rental cabins from her house on Lee Ave.

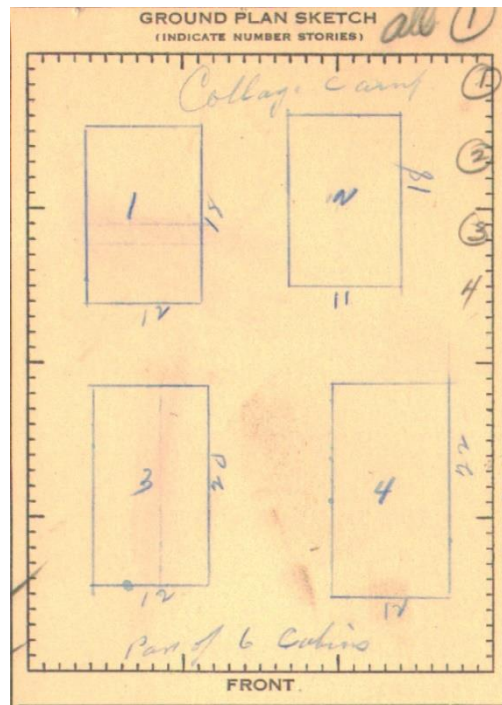
Marjorie Downer (1898-1985) was born in a sod house in Nebraska. Her family moved to Colorado by 1910. Previous places in Colorado where she lived were: Englewood in 1910, Bailey in 1920 (teacher at a country school), Denver in 1930 (working in printing office), and Wray in 1940 (no occupation given, but living with her mother, brother, and other relatives). It is believed that her primary occupation was that of a schoolteacher. No records were found that would indicate that she ever married.

The following images are from the 1948 Boulder County Assessor cards that were completed for all of the buildings at 825 Lee. These are believed to be the images of Cabin #1 and Cabin #2, though they were not specifically identified on the cards.



The following image of the ground layouts from the 1948 County Assessor cards appear to be for all four cabins facing Lee Ave. The diagram is labelled "Cottage Camp." The cabin labelled as #1 has 216 square feet and the cabin labelled as #2 has 198 square feet, which is the reverse of what was stated in the 2000 Architectural Inventory Forms for the two cabins. However, it is

not known whether or not the Assessor intended to go in order from south to north. The Assessor card indicates that the other two cabins have 240 and 264 square feet.



The following 1962 aerial photo of the Miners Field neighborhood shows a circled area where the Trott/Downer community of cabins was located. This view is looking east.



Neighborhood resident Jean Morgan has interviewed several former cabin residents, and others who remembered the cabins, and typed her notes. She noted that the cabins each consist of two rooms, with the kitchen/living space in front and the bedroom in back. They did not have insulation, but the people she interviewed remembered the cabins having had cold running water. A shared toilet was in a long, angled building behind the cabins (now gone). The siding is original. A particularly unique feature of the cabins is that the fence posts by the

cabins, still there, were made out of casings from cardox shells from the coal mines. (Cardox shells using compressed air were used to break up the coal as an alternative to using explosives.)

It is believed that single miners, couples, and families all rented the cabins at different times over the years. Unfortunately, directories from the time period of the cabin rentals typically did not identify precise addresses for residents living in this neighborhood. The 1940 census listed some households in East Louisville in which the people were renters, but there is not a way to determine exactly who lived in what building.

There may have been as many as eight small structures that Marjorie Downer owned and rented out on the property, creating a small community in a neighborhood already known for having been tight-knit. The 1949 Louisville director listed the “Louisville Cabins” as an entity with Marjorie Downer as the manager, and as noted above, the 1948 Assessor cards called it a “cottage camp.” Though some outbuildings that were used for rentals still exist, these Lee Ave. cabins appear to be unique in that there were several of them rented out to different people over many years, and they are virtually unchanged today. It is believed that there is nothing similar to them elsewhere in Louisville.

At an unknown date, the cabins became vacant. Downer passed away in 1985. In 1986, her property passed to her brother, Lowell Downer, who died in 1993. In 1993, it passed to John Downer as Trustee for the Lowell Downer Living Trust. John Downer is believed to be the nephew of Marjorie Downer and Lowell Downer. In 1994, John Downer sold the property with the cabins to Michael McAlpine.

Later Ownership

In 1997, Michael McAlpine transferred ownership of the parcel with the cabins to Sidecon LP.

In 2009, Sidecon transferred ownership to 825 Lee LLC, which is the current owner of record.

2000 Architectural Survey Forms

The Architectural Survey Forms for 801 Lee and 809 Lee, which are references to the two freestanding cabins with the current address of 825 Lee, give extensive descriptions and statements of significance for both cabins. The reports state, “These two cabins have had no additions, and no notable alterations, subsequent to their original construction.” The 2000 reports are incorporated by reference into this report. (It should be noted that although the 2000 reports referred to Mrs. Marjorie Downer, she did not have a married name and is believed to have not married.)

The preceding research is based on a review of relevant and available online County property records, census records, oral history interviews, Louisville directories, and Louisville Historical Museum maps, files, and obituary records.