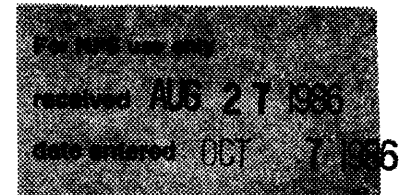


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
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NAME: Gerhardt Octagonal Pig House (Common and Preferred)

LOCATION: Vicinity of Gladstone, North Dakota 38, Stark County 089

CLASSIFICATION: Status Unoccupied; Present Use Agricultural

OWNER OF PROPERTY: Shirley James, Box 251 LaMoure, North Dakota, 58458  
Magdalena Gerhardt, 21 Ninth Avenue West, Dickinson, North Dakota, 58601

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Register of Deeds Office, Stark County Courthouse, Dickinson, North Dakota, 58601

DESCRIPTION: The Gerhardt octagonal pig brooding house sits within a swale near an ephemeral stream which feeds nearby Heart River. The building has a diameter of 24' from wall to opposite wall. Vertical siding is applied over the stud structural system. The roof is composed of eight pie-shaped panels with ridges radiating from the central cupola ventilator outward to join with wall corners below. The roof, initially covered with a rolled asphalt material, exposes the roof lumber where the sheeting has deteriorated. Entry into the building is achieved through a west side door.

The interior of the pig house reveals pie shaped stalls directly below the roof panels of similar shape. Stall partitions connect wall corners to the center area which is open in a small circle. At the rotunda-like center support posts rise to support the roof. Each stall has a window about four feet above the ground and adjacent to the corner. The wall space is open directly below the window to the ground. Each window has an interior straight headed cowl which bevels inward toward the sill. The building has an earth floor and poured concrete foundation.

The building is different from all others on site. It alone has vertical siding, poured concrete foundation, and the unusual shape. It is located closer to the house than any other animal containment area except for the chicken coops.

SIGNIFICANCE: Date: Ca. 1930  
Architect/Builder: Unknown

The Gerhardt pig house is important for illustrating the theme of round barn building. It exemplifies the experimental nature of agriculture in its shape and use, both of which market innovations in the local area.

The use of round barns has been adopted by dairy regions because the form could be tailored most easily to those requirements. In the western portion of North Dakota fewer round barns were ever present because the dominant agricultural products have been wheat and open range ranching during the historical period of round barn construction (1880-1930). Indeed, only three round barns including this one have been identified west of the Missouri River (see Map 1). The Gerhardt barn is the only one standing from among these.

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The rare occurrence of round barns in the west River area symbolizes an equally unusual attempt at hog raising. The west River region of the state, in which Stark County is located, was not as active in pork production from 1900-1925 as was the southeastern portion of the state. Stark county increased its total number of hogs steadily during the period, but raised one-half to less than one-fifth the number found in hog rich counties east of the River in 1925. Willard and Fuller note a general rise in total production throughout the state during the 1920-25 period, and explain it as a response by farmers to the general rise in hog prices. They conclude that the number of hogs raised would decline with prices, and that few farmers had actually made a permanent conversion (p. 241, 243, 261). The construction of a small brooder house, such as appeared on the Gerhardt farm, is consonant with the tentative approach to hog farming. Second, it is a building as modern in its design and specialized function as was the practice of short-term type-of-farming which blossomed during the 1920's.

Architecturally the building is related to others found in the state within the same period and function. In Pembina County, at the state's northeast corner, no less than four hexagonal pig brooders were built during the 1930's. Of those, the Pettis farm's brooder survives today, although in deteriorated and much altered condition. That structure was recorded for this survey. These pig barns attempted to provide individual space for a brooding sow which was small enough to conserve heat during the early spring farrowing season. Informants from the Pembina County area reported the use of a small centrally located heater to abate fluxuating temperatures. The Gerhardt brooder has a space and ventilator which could have been used for that purpose, although no stove is present.

One feature common to the Pembina County brooders is not a characteristic of the Gerhardt's. The Pembina County barns were slightly smaller (16-18 feet between opposite walls) and on skids. This allowed them mobility. Thus, a farmer could inexpensively enter the hog business and abandon it without a significant loss. A mobile building could more easily be sold and moved to another farm which would be initiating pig raising. By contrast the Gerhardt pig barn rests upon a poured concrete foundation and is somewhat larger. It is a building more permanently situated than those common in Pembina County. This suggests a somewhat greater commitment by the Gerhardts to hog raising and it may point to an earlier construction date, when the transience of pork production was not as fully conceived. The barn is an important representative of these trends and changing historic attitudes and practices of farming.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:**

Acreage of nominated property: Less than one acre

Quadrangle name: Bratburg Butte, N. Dak., 1973

UTM References: Zone: 13

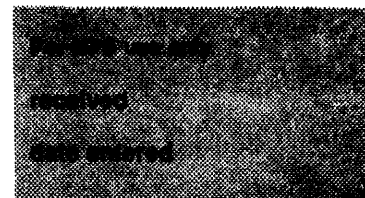
Easting: 690990

Northing: 5194040

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property is located in the West half of the

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Northwest quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 12, Township 139 North, Range 94 West, and includes the octagonal building and a protective area fifteen feet around the perimeter.