

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received MAY 27 1987

date entered JUL 6 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Czech Folk Architecture of Southeastern South Dakota

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number Multiple, See individual site continuation sheets. not for publication

city, town vicinity of

state code county code

3. Classification See individual site continuation sheets.

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple, see individual site continuation sheets

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multiple, see individual site continuation sheets

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Czech Folk Architecture of Southeast—has this property been determined eligible? yes ☒ no

ern South Dakota

date Summer, 1985 federal ☒ state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Preservation Center

city, town Vermillion state South Dakota

7. Description

See individual site continuation sheets

Condition

☒ excellent
☒ good
☒ fair

☒ deteriorated
____ ruins
____ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
____ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

See continuation sheets

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Czech Folk Architecture of Southeastern South Dakota is a thematic nomination recording examples of known extant vernacular buildings constructed by early Bohemian settlers in the state. The nomination includes 22 contributing buildings located at 15 sites in Bon Homme and Yankton counties. Constructed between ca. 1870 and ca. 1920, these buildings employ forms, materials, and special features that occur in patterns to create a Czech vernacular landscape. Nominated properties include houses and barns built of log or stone construction.

One of the many groups of eager pioneers who migrated to South Dakota in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century were the Czechs of central Europe. They began entering the Dakotas in 1869 and continued to emigrate in significant numbers until about 1914. Compared to some other ethnic minorities in the state, people of Czech descent make up a relatively small group comprising about 1.5% of the total population in 1930. Nevertheless, they had a distinct impact on the landscape as well as the social development of the rural centers, in and around which they made their homes. Their unique culture is expressed in many ways including folk buildings they constructed on the Dakota prairie.

Like many European immigrant groups who settled throughout the American West, these newcomers tended to concentrate in particular communities or colonies. The earliest arrivals settled in the southeastern corner just west of the territorial capital city of Yankton. The community grew to include most of western Yankton County and eastern Bon Homme County. In 1910, 60% of the South Dakotans of Czech descent lived in these two political subdivisions. Today the region is still greatly affected by the early presence of Bohemian settlers.

Starting in 1879, however, many of these families as well as new arrivals from the old country migrated northward and westward along the Missouri River into Brule County and western Charles Mix County. In the late 1890's, after Sioux Indian lands were opened for White settlement, numerous Czechs homesteaded on the former Yankton Sioux Reservation in eastern Charles Mix County. Around 1904, this movement continued west of the Missouri into Gregory and Tripp counties. They also moved even further west establishing themselves in Jackson, Jones, Lyman, and Mellette counties. By, 1920, every county in the state had at least a few Bohemian residents.

From May to August of 1985, the Department of History at the

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University of South Dakota conducted a thematic survey of Czech folk buildings in southeastern South Dakota. Specifically, the study concentrated in the area of the first Czech-Dakota settlements in Yankton and Bon Homme counties. Although total farmsteads were recorded with site plans and photographs, the descriptive work centered on folk buildings. Since previous knowledge of Czech building traditions in the state was slim at best, it was decided to concentrate the survey on that aspect of their settlement. Consequently, this nomination reflects that emphasis. But for one exceptional farmstead (CZ 25, see continuation sheets), only specific folk buildings are recorded and nominated in this document. Site plans displaying all structures composing a farm are included on continuation sheets.

The survey team consisted of John Rau, a recent graduate of the University of South Dakota with a Master of Arts degree in history, and Rolene Schliesman, a junior photography Bachelor of Fine Art major at the University of South Dakota. Thirty-nine structures at twenty-five separate sites were measured, photographed and analyzed according to standards established by the State Historical Preservation Center. When criteria for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places were applied to the survey properties, twenty-two of them were found to be eligible for listing. These buildings represent Czech settlement history in the state and therefore relate to a broad pattern of historical development (Criteria A). They also bear evidence of the use of special materials and traditional folk technologies; thus, they relate to significant architectural qualities (Criteria C).

Several sites were preselected for survey after careful review of previous geographical survey materials as well as field notes taken by Carolyn Torma, survey coordinator at the State Historical Preservation Center. In addition, a few local residents responded to publicity announcements in area newspapers and made their properties available to the project team. Also, Laddie E. Kostel, president of the Czech Heritage Preservation Society, of Tabor, SD, offered suggestions and encouraged the work throughout the survey period. General reconnaissance of the region revealed many of the surveyed properties. Site selection was based on a building's integrity, condition, and relationship to thematic patterns. All structures were constructed by hand with indigenous materials by Czech pioneers or their descendents.

There are several sites pertaining to Czech settlement in South Dakota that are already listed on the National Register. In the city of Tabor, the St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church and Parish House stand at the north end of the main commercial street. Sited in a park on the

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same street is the Tabor Log Schoolhouse. About eight miles to the west in the city of Tyndall is the massive, wood frame, now unoccupied Z.C.B.J. Hall. Also, in Bon Homme County, near its northern boundary is the Cihack Farmstead, which was listed as a part of the German-Russian Folk Architecture Thematic Resources nomination of 1984. Another listing, Brule County's Holy Trinity Church at Kimball was originally sited to the south at Bendon and is the only survivor of that early Czech Catholic community.

Five other Czech properties have been entered on the National Register as part of the 1977 nomination entitled Historic Resources of the Northern and Central Townships of Yankton County. The sites are: Mathias Lasek House; Walloch Farmstead, both in Lesterville vicinity; Machacek Homestead, Utica vicinity; Stribal Homestead and Farmstead, Tabor vicinity; and the Old Catholic Church, east of Tabor near the abandoned Lakeport community. The Machacek house was included in the 1983 German-Russian thematic survey. The Walloch site contains several buildings displaying second and third generation use of rubble masonry technology and was included in the 1985 survey.

The majority of the buildings surveyed were constructed of either rubble fieldstone or dressed chalkrock. The latter material is a soft sandstone substance found along the bluffs of the Missouri River and at several prairie outcroppings throughout the state. It is easily cut into blocks and mortared with clay or cement. An exterior veneer can also be made from melted chalkrock mixed with water.

On rare occasions, South Dakota's Czechs built their houses and outbuildings using puddled clay or unfired clay bricks. Even some chalkrock houses were found to have a layer or two of clay bricks under the wall plate. However, very few buildings employed unfired clay as the sole load-bearing material. One structure, the Sedlacek House (CZ 24, see continuation sheets), combined chalkrock and a later addition of pressed, fired bricks. Another structure, an abandoned frame house in Tabor, displayed brick and clay nogging. This technique has been discovered in some of the houses built by Czechs in Nebraska.

Although trees were scarce on the prairie plains, log structures were still present on the early Dakota landscape. Like their neighbors, Czechs, too, constructed a number of their buildings using hand-hewn logs, when they settled close enough to tree-lined streams such as the Missouri River. Most often, Bohemian builders used two-sided planking and full-dovetail corner notches on their log structures. Also in keeping with their masonry background, they usually filled the

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interstices with a mud-straw mixture.

The survey identified a number of specific construction forms that seem to constitute early Czech building patterns. The simplest form is a single-pen structure. Dimensions of the measured properties vary slightly from 12 feet by 16 feet to 20 feet by 16 feet. Some examples were used as stables and have no chimneys, while others utilize single gable-end chimneys.

A second form is a coaxial configuration of two or three bays with a central chimney, usually set above or adjacent to the left partition wall. Many three-bay examples are extensions of original two-bay structures. Entry is generally gained through the smaller central bay. Gable widths range from 15 to 18 feet, while axial lengths vary from 30 to 43 feet.

The most interesting house form is a three-bay, L-shape structure. Of the examples surveyed, orientation, dimensions, and floor plans are very similar. Most of these houses are sited in nearly identical manners, with perpendicular gables facing south and east. Stairways in most of the houses appear between the northwest and the northeast bays. A few examples have stairways placed between the two western bays. Although entrances to these structures are irregular, doors are generally located facing east or south. Some have a single entry door, while others have two or three doors. Remarkably, dimensions of these buildings differ very little, averaging 18 feet by 35 feet by 18 feet by 35 feet. Some of these structures started as one-or-two-bay dwellings and were later extended with the perpendicular ell; however, most of them were constructed as original L-shaped houses.

Another example, the Walker/Vellik House (CZ 3, see continuation sheets) is a derivative of the above pattern. It has long been owned and occupied by Czechs, but may have been originally constructed by Anglo pioneers who were influenced by their Czech neighbors. Although a two-bay structure, it is built on the basic L-shape form of the other three-bay houses. But, it is oriented with gables facing south and west. Also, it has two entry doors on the south and one on the north. The dimensions are 19 feet by 28 feet by 17 feet by 37 feet. The two bays may very well have been constructed at different times.

Besides house forms, several sites contain unique masonry barns, which incorporate Czech building traditions. The most common folk barn in the survey area is a medium-size rectangular rubblestone or chalkrock structure with a gable roof. Typical of barns on the

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American agricultural landscape, these buildings include at least one large gable-end door, a feature not usually found in European settings. Yet, construction technologies, materials, and interior features are evidence of old world folk traditions. Dimensions vary considerably, depending upon the needs of the individual farm. These measurements range from 27 feet by 48 feet to 30 feet by 80 feet. The recorded heights of the barns at their peaks range from 17 feet to 26 feet. The height of masonry walls range from 8.5 feet to 10 feet. This latter figure may represent the maximum height obtainable using this Czech masonry technique. If a taller peak and therefore more loft area were desired, a wood frame wall was placed atop the masonry wall.

Several of the barns included ventilation ports in the axial walls, but occurrence and placement of these ports is not uniform. Many of them also included one or more axial dormers for outside access to the loft. Interior decoration is never more than a simple plaster veneer and whitewash or white paint. Other features are hand-made ladders, mangers, or tack hangers as well as large exposed joists. Windows are usually placed quite high on the wall, and the sills are tapered to allow more light to enter the barn. Jack arches usually cap each window or door opening. Door and window frames are frequently hand-made.

A second type of barn found among the early Czech farms in South Dakota is a long, rectangular form generally with entrances along only the axial walls. Some of these structures appear to be house/barns; however, their use as dwellings has long been abandoned. These barns utilize the same materials, techniques, and features discussed above, but their overall form is different. The long dimensions and seemingly linear design resemble in part old world barns. Axial facades vary in length from 44 feet to an extreme of 160 feet. The latter structure, the Frydrych Barn (CZ 25, see continuation sheets), is a wood frame and rubblestone bank barn with several axial openings including a second-story drive-in door for loading hay. But, it also incorporates a gable-end entrance on the first story. Aside from the masonry barns, a log house/barn has been recorded; nevertheless, due to relocation and alteration it is not eligible for the Register.

In addition to their common forms and construction methods, the buildings displayed a variety of other special features. With few exceptions, front facades of the houses and barns are oriented to the east or south. Masonry buildings utilize angled window openings to allow maximum solar lighting and frequently included wooden window sills the full depth of the outside walls. These same buildings almost

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invariably include carefully-crafted brick, stone, or chalkrock jack arches above the windows and doors. Although rare, pediment-shaped hand cut wooden lintels were found on examples of both log and earthen structures.

Frequently, the builders employed iron straps or rods extending from the middle of axial walls to the plate in an effort to anchor the roof to the rest of the structure. This element is also found on both log and earthen examples, but its use is not universal nor uniform.

Roof systems were almost always common rafters built of store-bought pre-cut materials. Many times, collars or other transverse braces were used to stabilize roof peaks. Occasionally, lateral windbraces were included. Although rafter spacing varied considerably among survey buildings, most were placed between eighteen inches and thirty inches apart. The most common placement was twenty-four inches apart. Often the inside ledge along the wall plate between each rafter was packed with a mud and straw mixture or with plaster.

A distinctive element is a one to one-and-a-half foot high stone or log "knee wall" that is a vertical extension of the exterior walls above the ceiling joists. This device allows a taller roof line and greater interior space, since the rafters are set atop of this wall above the floor of the loft. This treatment may also provide better insulation for the upper sleeping chamber. Knee walls are not universally found on Czech-built structures in this state, though they are quite common. Also noteworthy is that none of the Bohemian buildings found in Nebraska have exhibited this feature.

Chimneys in recorded buildings do not appear to have particularly Czech features and in no way resemble massive clay chimney/oven combinations found in Old World Czech homes. This is somewhat surprising, since the Czech's German-Russian neighbors who settled in Hutchinson County to the north of Tabor retained such a tradition. These immigrants often included clay-brick chimneys, bake ovens, or black kitchens in their Dakota Dwellings. In contrast the Czechs constructed simple square and rectangular chimneys of red fired bricks or of concrete tiles. Typical dimensions range from fourteen-inches by fourteen-inches to twenty-inches by twenty-inches. Many of the Czech houses had built-in cupboards installed below the chimney on the main floor. Some of these cabinets had a door, while others were left open in the front.

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The interior colors that represent a historic or early period of decoration are light blue, medium blue, medium green, dark green, and white. For more specific color designations, paint samples from a few selected sites were compared with chips in the Munsell Book of Color. Greens that matched samples included 10 GY 8/4, 7.5 GY 5/2, 2.5 G 5/4, and 7.5 G 5/4. Blues that matched samples included 10 BG 8/4, 2.5 PB 7/2, and 10 B 8/4. This simple comparison of paint chips did not account for fading and other distortions. The earliest houses usually had a layer of whitewash beneath the first layer of paint. For trim, gray, brown, or red were used frequently. Some houses that were occupied quite recently display brighter hues including shades of yellow, light green, and pink, as well as flower-patterned wallpaper.

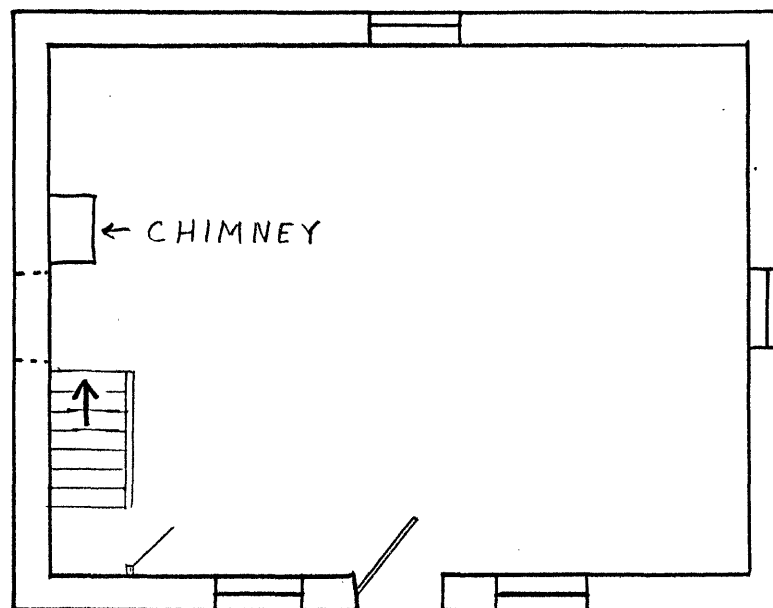
All of these materials, forms, and special features combine to make up an interesting group of folk buildings. They represent a way of construction that is no longer practiced and is in danger of extinction. These examples deserve to be recorded for posterity.

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SKETCH OF SINGLE PEN CZECH HOUSE



□ = 1 ft.

J. HRUŠKA
LOG HOUSE

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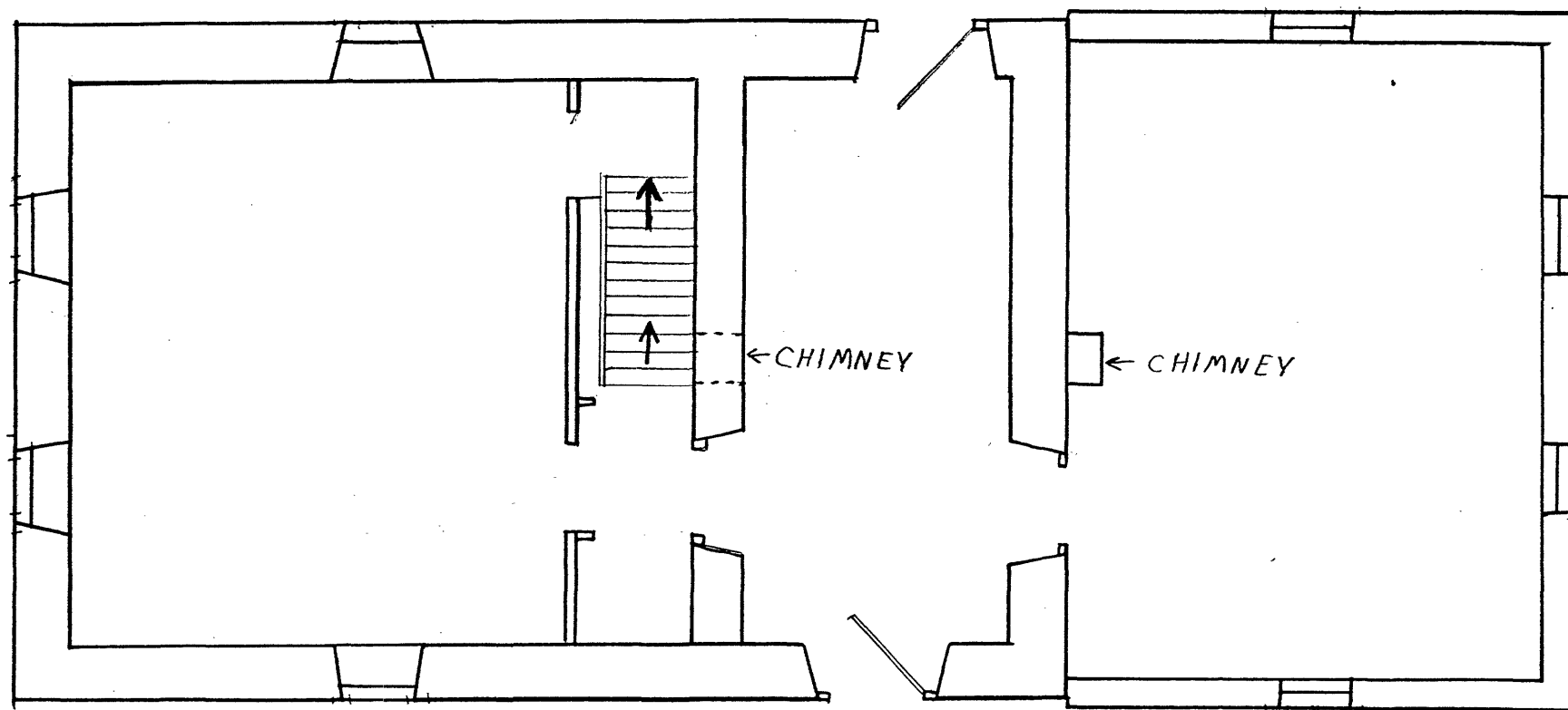
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SKETCH OF LINEAR TWO AND THREE BAY CZECH HOUSE
ON REVERSE SIDE

□ = 1 ft.

JACOB SEDLACEK CHALKROCK & PRESSED BRICK H'SE



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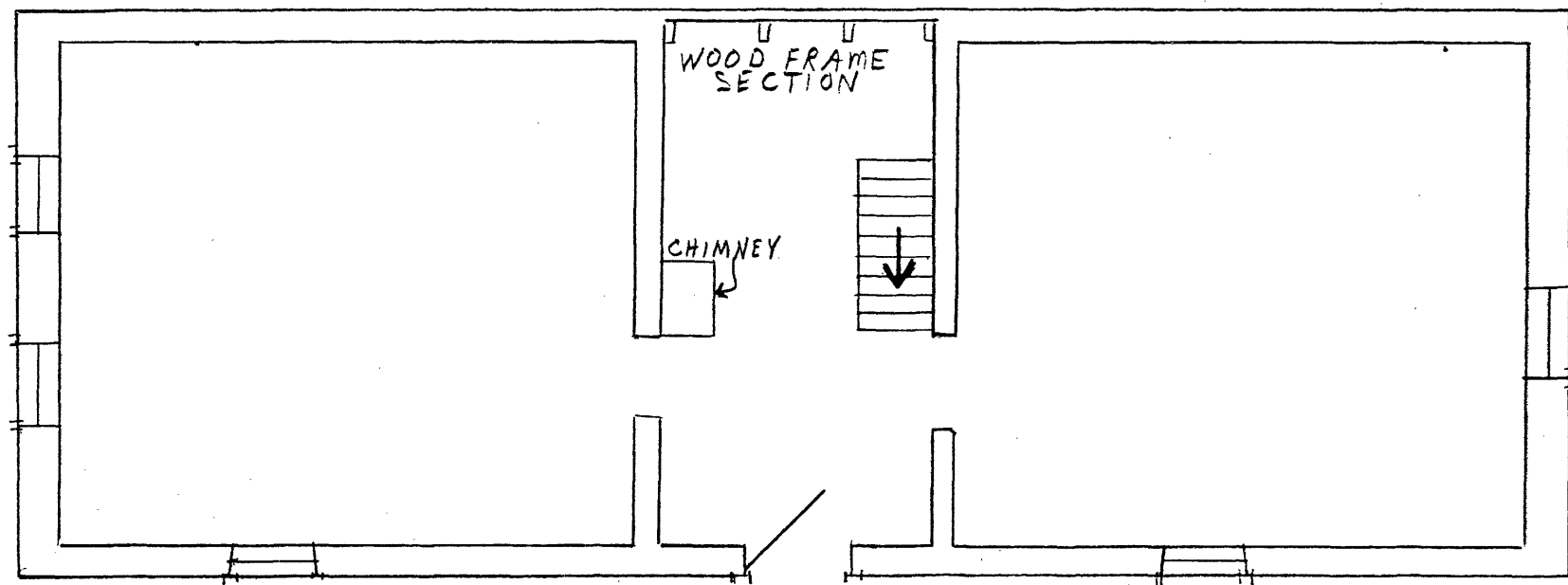
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SKETCH OF THREE BAY CZECH HOUSE ON REVERSE SIDE

JOS. PECHAN LOG HOUSE



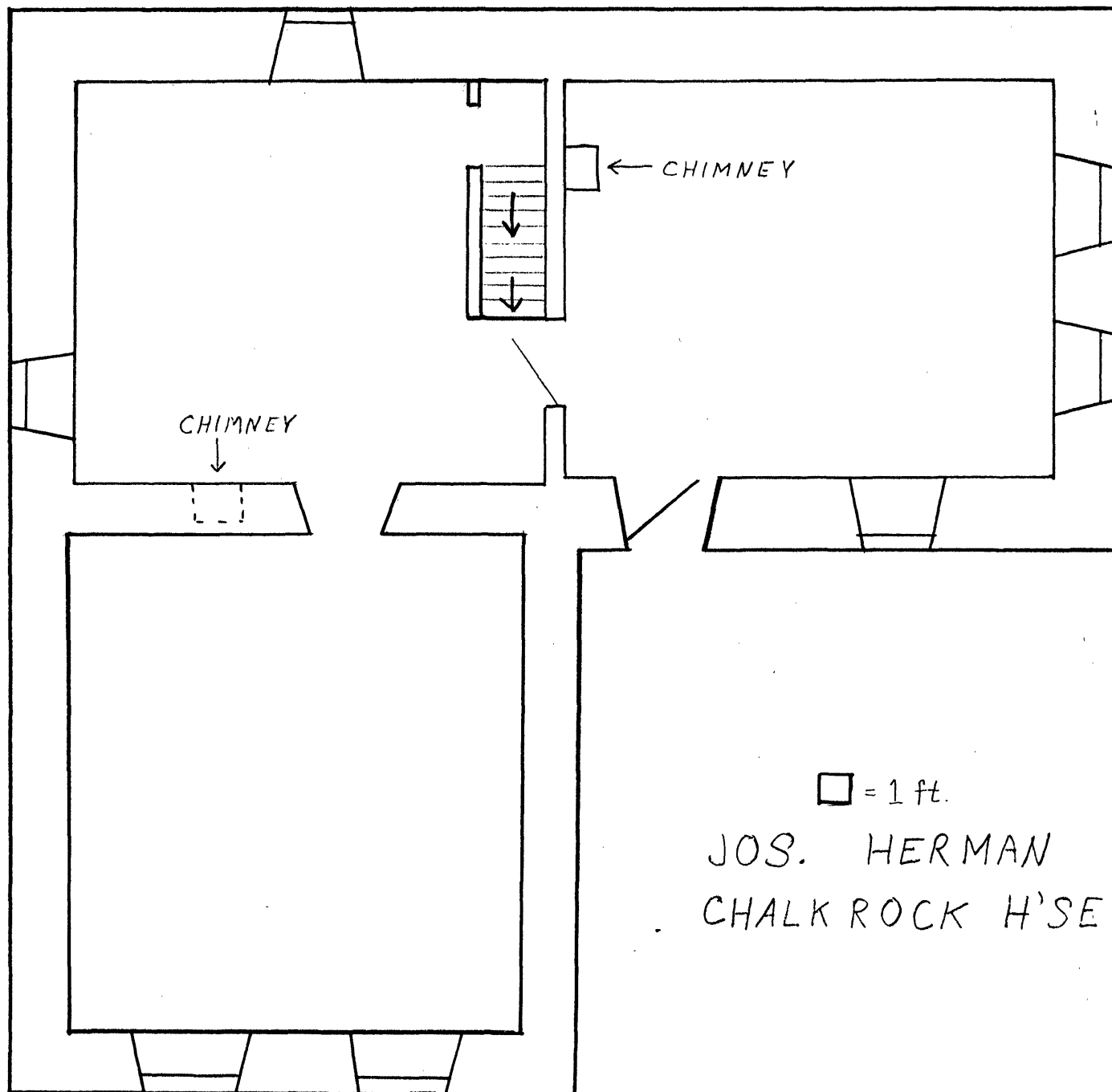
□ = 1 ft.

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SKETCH OF THREE BAY, L-SHAPED CZECH HOUSE

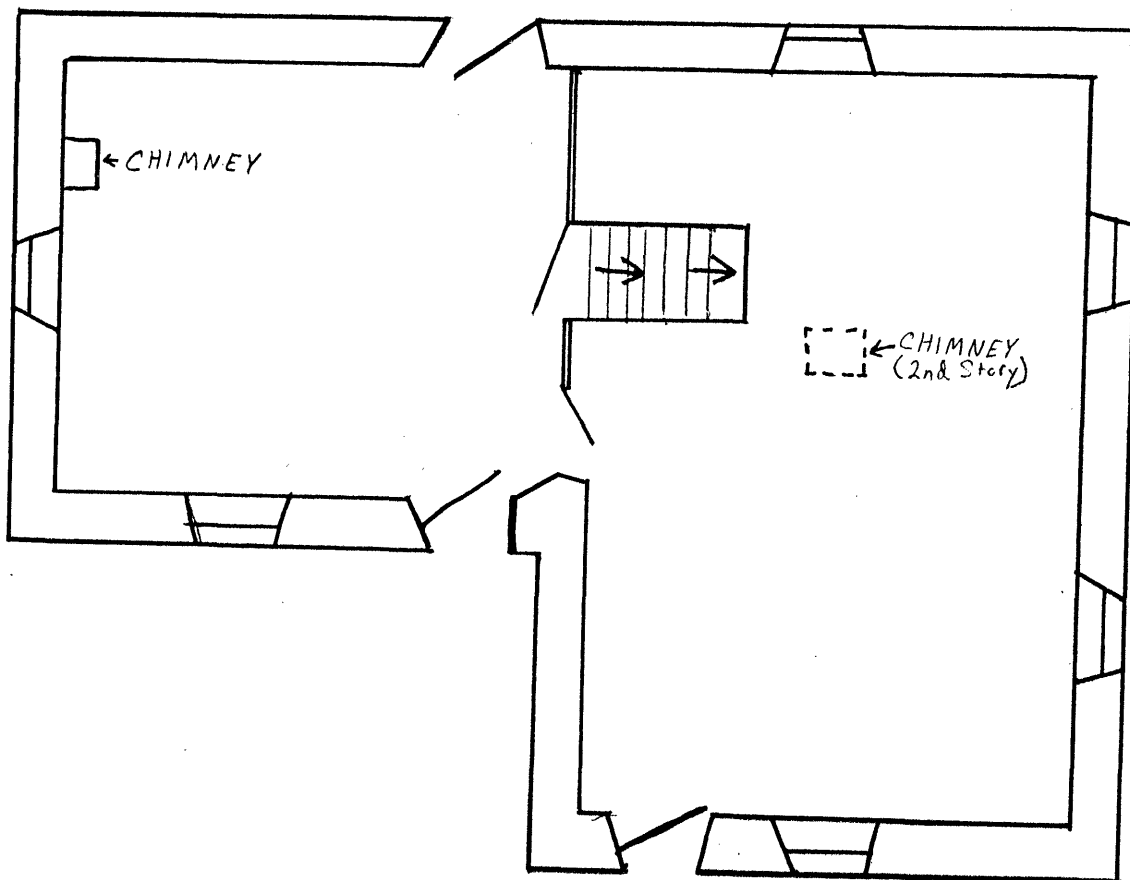


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SKETCH OF ANGLO DERIVATION OF THREE BAY, L-SHAPED CZECH HOUSE



□ = 1 ft. WALKER/VELLIK CHALK ROCK H'SE

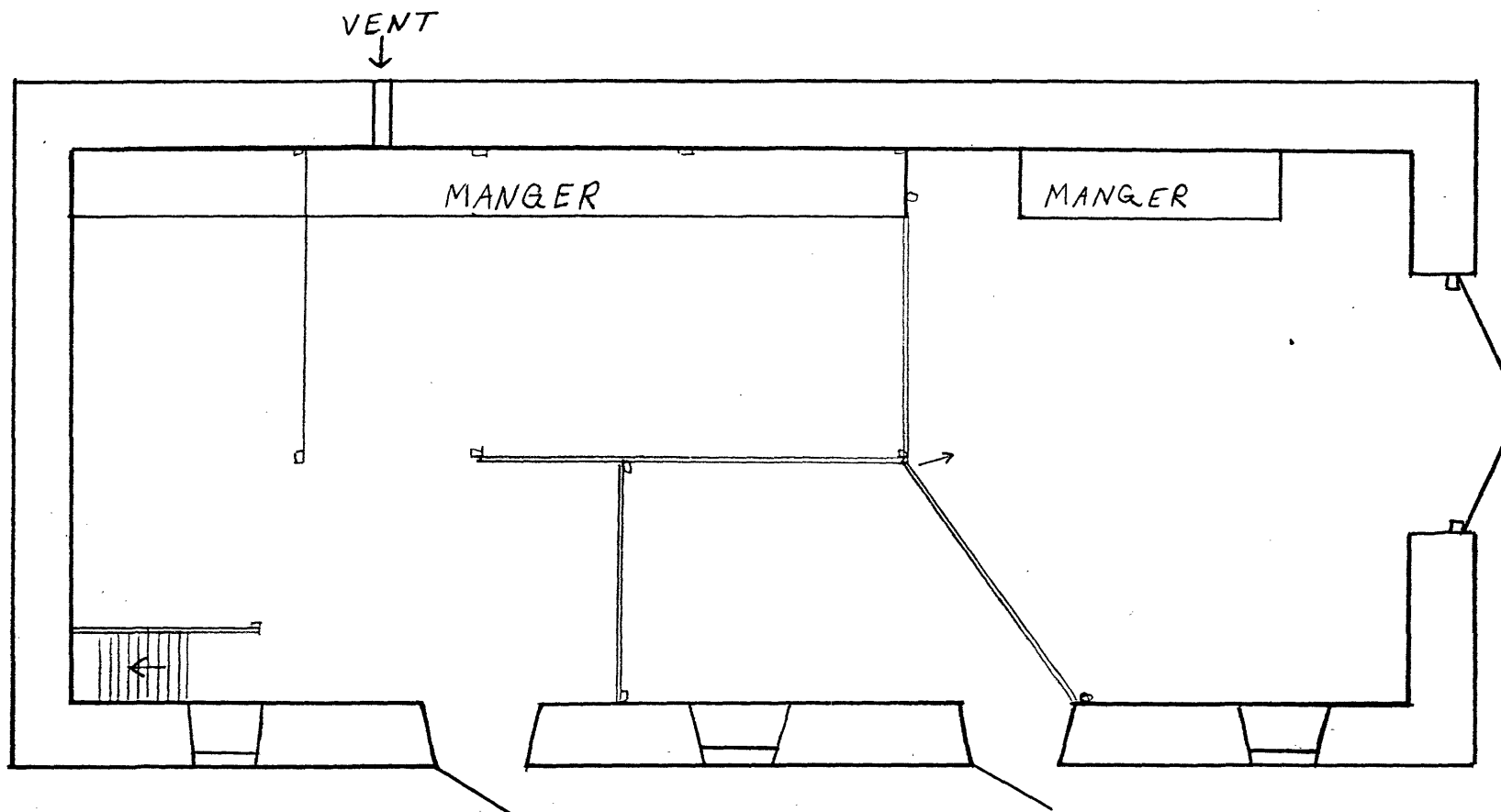
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SKETCH OF RECTANGULAR CZECH BARN ON REVERSE SIDE



□ = 1 ft. MATHIAS MERKWAN RUBBLE STONE BARN

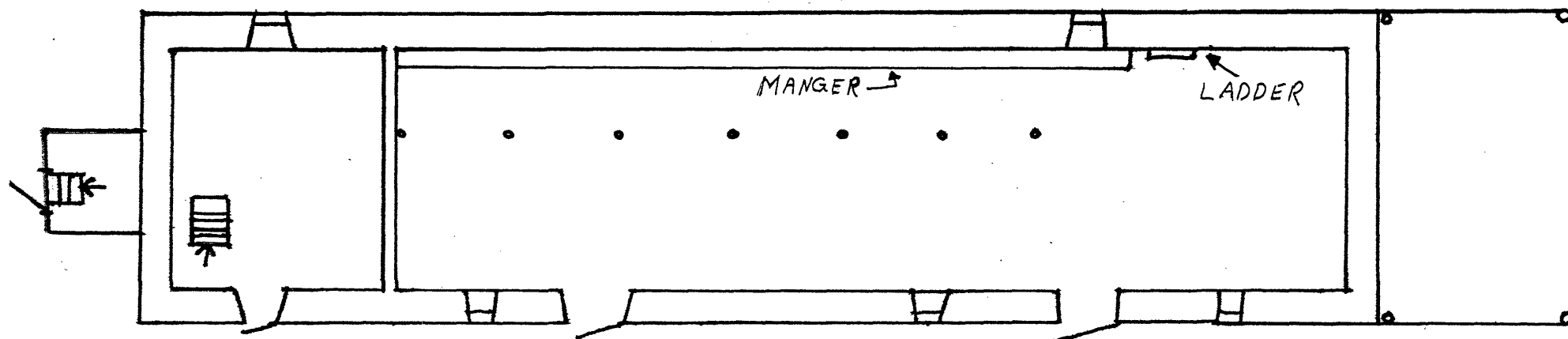
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SKETCH OF CZECH HOUSE BARN ON REVERSE SIDE



□=1 ft.

JOHN AND KATE MERKWAN RUBBLESTONE HOUSE/BARN

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SOUTH DAKOTA T. R. NOMINATION

YANKTON COUNTY

	SITE NAME & LOCATION	LEGAL DESCR.	OWNER & ADDRESS
Site # CZ 5	Joseph Pechan Log House Tabor Vicinity	NE-SE-35-94N-57W	Alfred Nedved RR 1, Box 116 Yankton, SD 57078
Site # CZ 13	Mathias Merkwan Barn Tabor Vicinity	NW-NW-19-94N-57W	Helen Hale RR 1, Box 283 Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 16	Frank Svatos Barn Tabor Vicinity	NE-NW-30-94N-57W	Jerry Herman RR 1 Tabor, SD 57063

BON HOMME COUNTY

	SITE NAME & LOCATION	LEGAL DESCR.	OWNER & ADDRESS
Site # CZ 1 a & b	John & Kate Merkwan House-Barn and House Tabor Vicinity	SW-NW-33-95N-58W	Laddie Merkwan RR 2, Box 68 Tyndall, SD 57066
Site # CZ 3	Albion Walker House Tabor Vicinity	SW-NE-2-93N-58W	Ray J. Vellek RR Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 6	John Merkwan Jr. House Tabor Vicinity	SE-NE-32-95N-58W	Louis & Stella Merkwan RR 2, Box 66 Tyndall, SD 57066

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BON HOMME COUNTY CONTINUED

	SITE NAME & LOCATION	LEGAL DESCR.	OWNER & ADDRESS
Site # CZ 9	John Travnicek House Tabor Vicinity	NE-NE-17-94N-58W	Donald Zimmerman RR 1, Box 226 Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 10 a, b, & c	Joseph Herman House, Barn, & Stable Tabor Vicinity	SW-SE-8-94N-58W	Monte & Ruth Smith RR 1, Box 243 Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 18	Teibel-Sykora Barn Tabor Vicinity	NW-NE-29-95N-58W	Roger Sykora RR 2, Box 71 Tyndall, SD 57066
Site # CZ 20	Martin Honner House Tabor Vicinity	SE-SE-15-94N-58W	Roman Honner P. O. Box 98 Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 21 a & b	John Hruska House & Barn Tabor Vicinity	SE-SE-22-94N-58W	Edward W. Kronaizl RR 1, Box 10 Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 22	Joseph Noll Barn Tabor Vicinity	NW-NE-26-94N-58W	Thomas Noll RR Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 23	John Hakl House Tabor Vicinity	SW-SW-22-94N-58W	Dan Hakl RR 1, Box 203 Tabor, SD 57063
Site # CZ 24	Jacob Sedlacek House Tabor Vicinity	NW-NW-27-94N-58W	Ronald Kreber 921 Coastview Drive Laguna Beach, CA 92651.
Site # CZ 25	John Frydrych Farmstead Tyndall Vicinity	NE-NE-11-94N-59W	John Fredrich P. O. Box 352 Wagner, SD 57380

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The following owner objected to his property being listed on the National Register. We are therefore asking for a determination of eligibility for the nominated buildings under his ownership.

OWNER	SITE #	PROPERTY NAME/LOCATION
Edward Kronaizl RR 1, Box 13 Tabor, SD 57063	Site # CZ 21-a	John Hruska Rubblestone Barn Tabor Vicinity Bon Homme County
Same	Site # CZ 21-b	John Hruska Log House Tabor Vicinity Bon Homme County

8. Significance

See individual site continuation sheets

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Czech Ethnic
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1869–1920 **Builder/Architect** See individual site continuation sheets

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

See continuation sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets

10. Geographical Data

See individual site continuation sheets

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John E. Rau, Staff Surveyor

organization State Historical Preservation Center

date 12-30-1986

street & number 3 E. Main, P. O. Box 417

telephone (605)-677-5314

city or town Vermillion

state South Dakota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ☒ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director Office of History date 5/20/87

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Czech Folk Architecture of Southeastern South Dakota is significant because it is an element of the surviving material culture unique to a small, but vital, rural ethnic group. As one of South Dakota's first concentrated European immigrant groups, the Czechs have had a lasting impact on the development of the state and individual communities, in which they settled. They brought many traditions with them to the new country, including several folk building forms that are represented by the 22 contributing buildings recorded in this nomination.

All sites contained here relate to the settlement history of Czechs in the state and to their construction of folk buildings. Under the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Plan, these properties fit the historic context labeled IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement B. Ethnic Enclaves 1. Czechs. The nominated buildings represent the ethnicity of the Czech immigrants, their settlement in the state, and the unique architecture they brought with them.

Oral traditions propose that as early as 451, a Slavic tribe led by a chief named Cech invaded and conquered the land of the Boli. Since that time these people have been known as Czechs after their ancient leader or as Bohemians, the name derived from the land. ¹ They reached their height in social, cultural, and economic greatness in the 14th Century when the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV chose the Czech city Prague for his residence. In the early 15th Century, a religious reformation movement erupted creating intense civil tension. Despite the execution of its leader, John Huss, this crusade lasted into the next century. Then, in 1526, to prevent the Turkish invasion, the Czechs elected a Catholic Hapsburg to rule their state, thus securing the protection of the Austrian Empire. Under this reign, there were great pressures to revert to Catholicism, which culminated in open warfare--

1. Actually, the people that occupied both Bohemia and Moravia spoke the Czech language and should be considered "Czechs," despite the popular tendency to label all Czech-speaking people as "Bohemians." Slovaks and Czechs were one people until 896, when the Mongol Magyars conquered the Slovaks but failed to overcome the Czechs. This separation lasted until 1918, when the Republic of Czechoslovakia was created in response to long-standing arguments for such a unified state.

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the Thirty Years War. Finally, in 1620 the rebel Czechs were defeated by the Austrians at the Battle of White Mountain. ²

Czech culture from that time on survived only among the peasants until the "romantics" of the 19th Century revived national spirit throughout Europe, reawakening the ancient desires for Czech independence. But, long-reigning monarchs were not disposed to such losses of power, and tensions increased. After the failures of the so-called revolutions of 1848, oppressed lower-class people all over the continent began to emigrate to the United States; those of the Czech provinces were no exception. Besides having a desire to escape the explosive problems of Europe, these immigrants were enticed by promises of land and economic opportunity. ³

Once in America, 45-percent of all Czechs settled in the urban centers of New York City, Cleveland, and Chicago. The balance settled on the plains and engaged in farming. States favored by the greatest share of rural Czechs were Nebraska, Wisconsin, Texas, Iowa, and Minnesota. Significant numbers also came to the Dakotas, Michigan, Missouri, and Kansas. Most of these people were of the peasant class in the old country, which meant little more than that they were farmers. Although they lacked political freedom and social rank, they were usually landowners or skilled artisans in the old country. They brought their talents and limited financial means to both

2. Stephen Thernstrum, et. al., eds., HARVARD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN ETHNIC GROUPS, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1980), 261; Paul P. Vondracek, "History of the Early Czech Settlements in South Dakota," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1963), 1-3.

3. HARVARD ENCYCLOPEDIA, 262. A handful of Czechs migrated to Pennsylvania and North Carolina in the mid-17th Century, but the greater share of Czech immigrants came to America after 1848.

4. HARVARD ENCYCLOPEDIA, 263; Frederick C. Luebke, "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains," WESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, 8 (1977): 418; Karel D. Bicha, "The Czechs in Wisconsin," WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY, 53 (1970): 194-203; Francis E. Clark, OLD HOMES OF NEW AMERICANS: THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEW WORLD, (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1913), 52-3.

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urban and rural New World settings. ⁴

Owing to their history, Czechs of both urban and rural settlements were divided on the issue of religion. A majority remained loyal to the Roman Catholic faith, but there was also a significant agnostic movement among these immigrants. "Freethinkers," as many called themselves, remembered the oppression under Austrian Catholics and refused to identify with any particular Christian denomination. Still others proclaimed a Protestant faith, including Presbyterianism and the Unity Moravian Brethren sect begun by John Huss. ⁵

These immigrants adapted quickly to their new environment. However, they did not take well to assimilation, because as former Austrian subjects, they were accustomed to ethnic survival in a large state. One of the strongest factors in their fight to retain tradition and identity was their use of fraternal societies. These organizations ranged from benevolent and religious societies to athletic clubs called "Sokols". Community-wide involvement in such organizations assured stability in Czech settlements and retention of the language and culture. ⁶

Permanent Czech settlement in the area now called South Dakota began in 1869. In that year, a group of Czechs from Chicago moved to a parcel of land along the Niobrara River in Nebraska. But, the stark appearance of sandhill country greatly discouraged them, and they were soon persuaded by Yankton

5. HARVARD ENCYCLOPEDIA, 265-6; John P. Johansen, IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENTS AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA, (Brookings, SD: South Dakota State College, 1937), 26.

6. HARVARD ENCYCLOPEDIA, 266; Russel W. Lynch, CZECH FARMERS IN OKLAHOMA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF A CZECH FARM GROUP IN LINCOLN COUNTY, OKLAHOMA AND FACTORS RELATING TO ITS STABILITY, (Stillwater: Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanic College, 1942), 94-8; Robert I. Kutack, THE STORY OF A BOHEMIAN-AMERICAN VILLAGE: A STUDY OF SOCIAL PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE, (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1970), 15; Robert L. Skrabanek, "Forms of Cooperation and Mutual Aid in a Czech-American Rural Community," SOUTHWESTERN SOCIAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY, 30 (1949): 183-7; Vondracek, "Early Czech Settlements in South Dakota," 43-6, 67.

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engineer Charles Meyer to seek land in southeastern Dakota Territory. Settling in an area just west of the territorial capital city of Yankton, they found rich soil and relatively flat terrain. News of this bountiful real estate spread to other North American Czech enclaves as well as to the old country. In a few years, more Czechs were joining their brothers to share in the benefits as well as heartaches of this raw frontier. ⁷

At about this same time, another group of Czechs from Chicago chose to settle in Knox County, Nebraska establishing the Bohemian community of Pischelville. This settlement was populated entirely of Freethinkers. In contrast, the Bohemians that moved north to Dakota Territory tended to be Catholics or Presbyterians. ⁸

In 1872, several Dakota immigrants decided to found a new town to serve as a nucleus for Czech settlers entering the area. They named the town Tabor, after the community in Bohemia that was at the heart of the seventeenth-century freedom movement. Located in Bon Homme County near its eastern boundary with Yankton County, Tabor remains the major Czech settlement in South Dakota. Traditions flourished around this community and are continued today by an active heritage preservation society, which sponsors annual group trips to the old country, Czech language courses, a memorial park, and an annual ethnic heritage festival. ⁹

Several distinct later phases of Czech migration occurred. In 1879, several Bohemians settled in Brule County and western Charles Mix County. After the Yankton Indian Reservation was opened to White settlement in 1895,

7. Johansen, IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENTS, 23; Joseph A. Dvorak, comp., MEMORIAL BOOK: HISTORY OF THE CZECHS IN THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA, Laddie E. Kostel, trans., (Tabor, SD: Czech Heritage Preservation Society, Inc., 1980), 21-4.

8. David Murphy, "Bohemian-American Log Technology in Northeastern Nebraska," (Unpublished Paper, Vernacular Architecture Forum, Madison, Wisconsin, May 6, 1983), 3-4; Dvorak, HISTORY OF CZECHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA, 120-67; Vondracek, "Early Czech Settlements in South Dakota," 35-6.

9. Dvorak, HISTORY OF CZECHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA, 39-47; Vondracek, "Early Czech Settlements in South Dakota," 12-4, 54-5.

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a number of Czech families took homesteads in eastern Charles Mix County. Czechs moved west of the Missouri River when the Rosebud Reservation was opened. They began homesteading in Gregory County in 1904 and in Tripp County in 1909. Several Czech enclaves are found
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even further west in the state.

By 1930, people of Czech descent made up only 1.5 % of the population of South Dakota. Yet, because of their concentration in a specific region, they had a profound affect on the state's history. In 1910, 90 % of South Dakota's Czechs lived in the five southeastern counties of Yankton, Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Gregory, and Brule. Sixty percent resided in the first two counties alone. After the beginning of World War I, very few Bohemians or Moravians entered the state, and its number of foriegn-born Czechs declined rapidly. Nevertheless, most of the settlements they established between the 1869 and 1920, continue to
11

prosper.

10. Dvorak, HISTORY OF CZECHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA, 20.

11. Johansen, IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENTS, 25; Bruce M. Garver, "Czech-American Freethinkers on the Great Plains," in Frederick C. Luebke, ed., ETHNICITY ON THE GREAT PLAINS, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 152. Garver contends that the number of Freethinkers just about equaled that of Catholics in Southeastern South Dakota, but he does not provide precise documentation for his claim.

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OLD WORLD FOLK BUILDINGS

The survey of Czech folk structures in South Dakota revealed many unique construction traits; however, it may be useful to briefly examine the characteristics of Czech folk buildings in the old country. Professor William Tishler, a scholar of Czech architecture in Wisconsin, has traveled extensively in Czechoslovakia researching archival collections and examining building types first hand. He states that Czechs, like some other European groups, often built their homes in a linear, central chimney form, adding a room to either end when necessary. The most common such form is a three-bay plan with the main entrance in the center bay. A 1925 Czech author likewise described the typical farm dwelling as a two or three bay linear structure of either wood or clay construction. A modification of this plan is a L-shaped 3-bay structure. Sometimes, a barn was attached to the gable end of the house. Roofs generally were covered with thatch and included a clipped gable, or jerkin head, configuration. ¹

Perhaps the most prevalent feature of Czech folk buildings is the use of earth and stone. In a 1913 work intended to introduce the Slavic immigrants to the people of America, Francis Clark portrayed the Czech peasant home as a "small but comfortable adobe house." That author stated that some of the better homes were built of brick or stone and had tiled roofs, rather than more traditional thatched roofs. ²

Due to sparsity of land in Europe, the ground plans of farms tended to be small, closed, subsistence-oriented units. Animal sheds, the granary, the house, and the fields were all in close proximity to each other. Many of the buildings were connected. The total farm plan often formed a narrow strip that bordered that of neighbors, ultimately creating a community of cottage

1. Telephone interview with William H. Tishler by the author, October 25, 1984; Bohumil Vavrousek, DEDINA: 516 FOTOGRAFU LIDOVYCH STAVEB V REPUBLICE CESKOLOVENSKE, (Prague: Vesmiru, 1925), 3.

2. Clark (1913), 53; see also Vavrousek (1925), 3.

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farms.³ Since land was plentiful in America, the farmyards became spread out and, buildings were less likely to be connected to each other. Yet, house-barn combinations are on rare occasions found in plains states, including South Dakota. The ground plans of these New World farms conform to American patterns and seldom resemble the old cottage farm.

Sites surveyed in South Dakota display combinations, derivations, and simplifications of many of these building features and forms. Although Czech immigrants readily adopted many contemporary American methods, especially roof systems, they continued to construct houses and barns in forms that closely resemble the medieval designs of their old homeland. This building tradition flourished about the Tabor, SD, community for several decades, until third generations began operating the farms. Yet, enough extant Czech vernacular structures survive near the original settlement to provide scholars with an image of the former ethnic folk tradition as it was brought to the New World. The present condition of these structures and their patterns of special features and forms are described in detail in the Item 7 (description) general essay. Buildings selected for nomination represent the best quality and variety of those recorded during the survey.

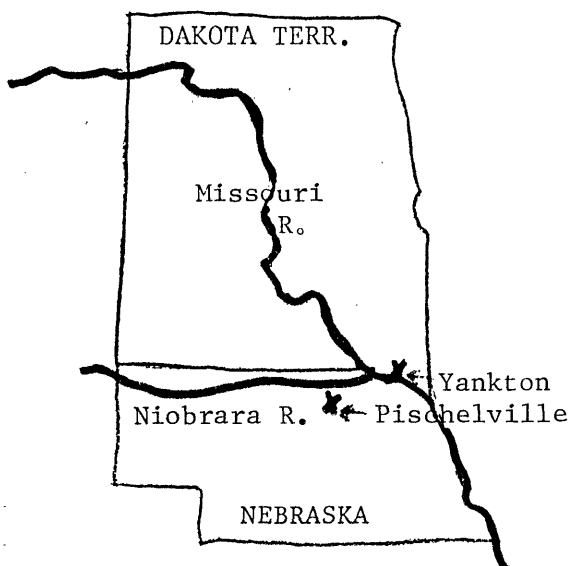
3. Zdenek Salzmann and Vladimir Scheufler, KOMAROV: A CZECH FARMING VILLAGE, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), 26-35.

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Early Czechs in Dakota Territory settled near Yankton in 1869. A similar group established the community of Pischelville near the Niobrara River in Nebraska during the same year.



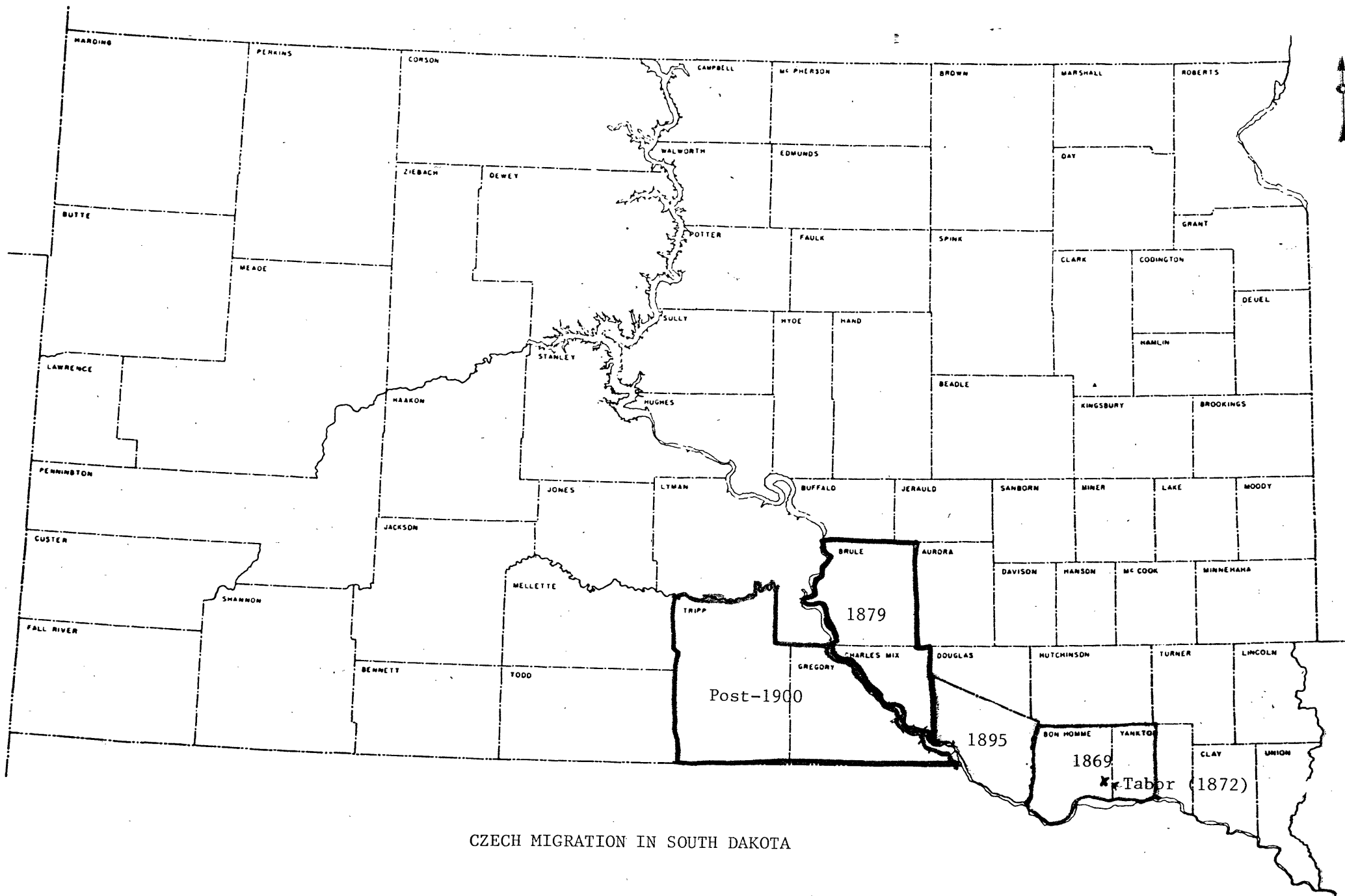
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MAP OF CZECH MIGRATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA ON REVERSE SIDE



CZECH MIGRATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Czech Folk Architecture of Southeastern South Dakota MRA
State SOUTH DAKOTA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

Cover Substantive Review

1. Frydrych, John, Farmstead

for Keeper

William B. Bushong 7/6/87

for Keeper

William B. Bushong 7/6/87

Attest _____

2. Hakl, John, Chalkrock House

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

3. Herman, Joseph, Log Stable

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

4. Herman, Joseph, Rubblestone Barn

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

5. Herman, Joseph, Chalkrock House

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

6. Honner, Martin, Chalkrock House

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

7. Merkwan, John Jr., Rubblestone House

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

8. Merkwan, John and Kate, Rubblestone
House-Barn

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

9. Merkwan, John and Kate, Log and Rubble-
stone House

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

10. Merkwan, Mathias, Rubblestone Barn

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

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Name Czech Folk Architecture of Southeastern South Dakota MRA
State SOUTH DAKOTA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Noll, Joseph, Chalkrock Barn

~~Entered in the
National Register~~for Keeper Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

12. Pechan, Frantisek, Log House

~~Entered in the
National Register~~for Keeper Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

13. Sedlacek, Jacob, Chalkrock House

~~Entered in the
National Register~~for Keeper Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

14. Svatos, Frank, Rubblestone Barn

~~Entered in the
National Register~~for Keeper Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

15. Teibel-Sykora Rubblestone Barn

~~Entered in the
National Register~~for Keeper Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

16. Travnicek, John, Chalkrock House

~~Entered in the
National Register~~for Keeper Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

17. Walker, Albion, Chalkrock House

~~Entered in the
National Register~~for Keeper Melrose Byers 7/6/87

Attest _____

18. Hruska, John, Log House ~~Substantive review~~

Determined Eligible

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

for Keeper William B. Bushy 7/6/87

Attest _____

19. Hruska, John, Rubblestone
Barn

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Determined Eligible

for Keeper William B. Bushy 7/6/87

Attest _____

20.

Keeper _____

Attest _____