

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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

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Continuation sheet Henry Buskala Ranch Item number Site #55 Page 1

Site #55

1. Henry Buskala Ranch
2. FDR 206
Dumont Vicinity
South Dakota 046 Lawrence County 081
3. buildings; private; NA acquisition; occupied; restricted access; agriculture and private residence
4. Melvin and Carl Anderson
RR 1
Spearfish, South Dakota 57783
5. Register of Deeds
Lawrence County Courthouse
Deadwood, South Dakota
7. good; unaltered (or very, very slightly altered); original site

The Henry Buskala Ranch is sited in the ravine formed by Buskala Creek. The majority of the ranch buildings are located on the northwest hillside and are grouped by function into five units. Of the fourteen structures, two are built of frame and twelve are constructed of log. These log structures reveal eight distinct methods of construction and many different finishing details. They represent an extraordinary collection of Finnish folk architecture in South Dakota.

Dominating the site on the crest of the hill is the two-and-one-half-story log house (contributing). Resting on unmortared fieldstone foundation, the house is built at ground level on the north side and has a full story basement on the south. The exposed basement wall reveals a three-bay configuration with a large, garage-type door on the west and a smaller door and square window to the east. The house measures 31'3" by 30'4" in plan and a full 32' in height from the bottom of the basement to the peak of the gable.

On the interior the house is divided into five rooms on both the first and second floors although the plan design of each is different. The entrance door opens into the kitchen. To the rear of the kitchen is a small pantry and a bath, in which contains a handbuilt stair to the second floor. Along the front is a second room which serves as a parlor and bedroom. To the rear of this is another larger bedroom. The upper story, which is unheated has a hall which runs the length from one gable-end wall to the other. The exterior stair opens onto the hall on the north side. Three bedrooms are located along the front and two along the rear. The pull-down ladder stair to the loft is located in the southwest room. The loft has no floor and appears not to have been used. Dividing the first floor and the loft into two units is a log wall which runs to the roof. However, this wall which is perpendicular to the ridgeline, does not appear on the second floor.

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A porch covers the first floor of the front facade. This facade is divided into three bays with the door on the south and two windows to the north. The screened porch extends slightly beyond the end of the north wall and has a door opening to the back of this extension. The south facade on the first floor has two windows; the kitchen window has been recently replaced with a smaller, two-window unit. All other main windows are 2/2, double-hung sash. The second floor has one central window, while the attic/loft contains a small vent-like window. On the opposite, gable-end, wall, one window on the first floor lights the rear bedroom; on the second floor there is an external stair to the second floor, which has a single door opening; the third or loft story has another window/vent. The rear facade has an irregular two-bay window fenestration. A separate ladder is propped against this side, which is used to gain access to the roof in case of fire. This external fire ladder is common in Finland where the majority of buildings are built of wood.

The exterior stair on the side facade is a characteristic of this house type, which Matti Kaups identifies as the two-story type. This form came from Sweden into western Finland and was most often built in America as a second home. Indeed, the Buskala house was the second built by Henry Buskala in c. 1910.

To the rear of the house are a series of outbuildings which complete the houseyard. First is the old sauna, which was converted to a garage (contributing). Built of square, hewn logs, which are fitted flush, the building has overlapping, double vertical notching. A small, low building, the old sauna measures 11'10" by 18'8" in plan and 9'5" in height at the gable. The log sills rest directly on the ground. A large opening was cut on the end.

Adjacent to the old sauna is the frame outhouse. Built with a shed roof and vertical plank boards, the building rest directly on the ground and is no longer in use. (contributing)

Just slightly to the north of the old sauna is the chicken coop (contributing), composed of one log pen and one frame pen. The frame unit which has three windows on the south, axial wall, has a door in the east, gable-end wall. The log unit has a window on the south axial facade and a door on the rear, gable-end wall. Loose rock forms the foundation of the coop which measures 34'4" by 13'8" in plan and 8'9" in height at the gable.

A collapsed, rock-lined root cellar completes the domestic yard (contributing).

To the west is a fenced animal yard. Two large structures are built along the north edge of the yard. The first is a stable, which was probably used as a calf barn as well (contributing). Measuring 22'3" by 30'2", the building is 38' 6" in height. Constructed of square-hewn, flush-fitting logs, the stable has full dovetail notching. Loose stone is wedged beneath the sill logs at several places, but primarily the building rests on the ground. A narrow, double-door entrance on the south, gable-end wall is flanked by single, hand-made, square windows on either side. This door leads into the lower floor which contains stables for the animals along three sides and a large open space in the middle. The rear of the building is built close to the excavated section of the hill. Logs resting on support piers provide a ramp from the hillside into the upper story. The upper floor is entered through a large door and was used to store animal feed. Along the west, axial wall on the animal floor are two, low, unglazed openings.

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The other building in the animal yard is the large hay and cow barn (contributing). In contrast to the stable, the logs on this building were left rounded and spaces appear between the logs in the second story. This allowed air to circulate and dry the hay. The corners are notched with a crude, double-vertical notch. Similar to all the buildings on the site, the log walls extend into the gable. Also similar to the stable and granary, the hay barn is built into, but does not touch, the hill. Logs form a bridge into the second-story hay loft. The bottom floor which was used for animals, has two small doors on the front, gable-end wall, while the second story is accessible only through the doorway facing the hill. Both the stable and the hay barn are built into an embankment which is excavated and lined with stone. The stone-lined wall is approximately one to two feet from the buildings. The hay and cow barn measures 41'6" by 40'5" in plan and 24'5" in height at the gable. In plan the barn is divided into two sections on the first floor. Stables line the partition wall on the west and the exterior wall on the east. In the front corners are hay bins where hay was thrown down from the loft.

Across the creek, in the low pasture, and isolated from the other buildings, most likely for fire safety, is the newer sauna. This complex structure (contributing) is built of log and was originally a smoke or savusauna. Evidence of its early use survives in the smoke vent, which is a box built into the ceiling over the bathing benches and which has a sliding panel used to regulate the draft. The original kiuas (stove) is gone and presently only a brick pad and back wall stand where the kiuas should be. The bathing room has three benches along the rear, gable-end wall; the change room has benches along all four walls. In the change room are the hand-carved wooden slats of a water bucket made by Henry Buskala. The bucket has a traditional Finnish design with a carved handle.

The overall building measures 16'6" in height, and 18' by 12' in plan. The entrance door is in the center of the east, gable-end wall. One window on each axial wall lights the change and bathing rooms. An interesting feature of the sauna is the log partition which forms the upper section of the wall between the interior rooms. The logs, which begin at the height of 5'11" extend through the axial wall. Loose rocks are wedged beneath the sill logs and from a foundation under the front wall. The structure has a double roof. The lower, ceiling, is made of small logs which are wedged, perpendicular to the ridge line, and between the plate, purlin and ridge pole. The upper roof is frame covered with wood shingle. This roof also has a log ridge pole, but no purlins. This small loft or airspace is vented by an opening in the rear, gable-end wall.

A fourth division of the plan of the ranch is an outer yard which contains four structures. This fenced area is on the top slope of the hill and extends into the pine woods. Located to the northwest of the house is the log blacksmith shop (contributing). The shop had lost its roof, but the walls remain sturdy and the interior is littered with tools and collapsed work benches. The walls are built of square-hewn logs fitted with a full dovetail notch. While the front wall notches are neatly done, the rear notches are crudely finished. Ridge pole and purlins once supported the roof. The log sills rest directly on the ground, and a small door in the gable-end gave access to the shop. Additional light and air came from an east window and west vent. The shop measures 18'6" by 14'6" in plan and 10'2" in height at the gable.

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Further up the hillside is a frame loafing shed (contributing), which may have been built more recently. The gable-end walls of vertical plank and a portion of the roof remain, while presently the majority of the superstructure is exposed.

Two log hay bins (contributing) are located in the pine wood. These structures are built of unhewn log and lie to the west of the loafing shed. They are fitted with a saddle notch and measure 20'4" by 12'3" in plan and 6' in height. Large spaces between the logs allow the air to circulate.

The final structure in this area is the granary (contributing). This structure is built similar to the stable and hay-cow barn and the rear is fitted into the excavation in the hillside. This excavated area is lined with rock. The upper story of the granary is accessible to machinery, which allowed the easy dumping of grain into the bins. The lower story is accessible through a narrow door on the front, gable-end facade. Covered with with an odd, low-pitched, gambrel roof, the granary has purlins, ridge pole and full dovetail notching. A window in the south, axial wall lights the first floor. The plan of the grain floor is two large bins covering three quarters of the interior space. A shoot separates the two bins. An additional two small bins flank the entrance area. The log walls have a square-hewn shape and are flush fitting. Loose stone is packed beneath several areas of the log sill. The granary measures 23'6" by 22'2" in plan and 16'6" in height.

Located approximately three-quarters of a mile from the house is the field hay barn (contributing). The location of the building is traditional as Finnish farms in Finland and some areas of the United States, have a clustered central farmyard and distant field barns for hay storage. This barn appears to be the only Finnish element in the ranch site plan.

The structure measures 24'2" by 30'10" in plan and 16'6" in height at the gable. The logs are unhewn and have wide interstices. A rough, double-vertical notch joins the corners and two sets of purlins and a ridge pole support the frame roof. The log sills rest directly on the ground. An interesting feature of the interior is the floor cover, which is made of cut sapplings. These are simply laid directly on the earth floor and each new layer is laid on top of the old and perpendicular to it. The openings on the gable-end facades are in the center of the wall and are simple, square openings 2'5" from the ground. Fitted into a groove cut along the side frame are wooden slat boards which are slid into place to form a covering for the openings.

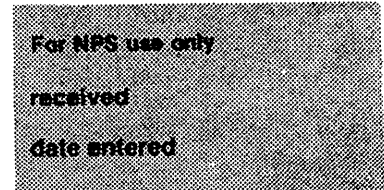
8. 1900-; architecture (folk) and Finnish settlement

c. 1900, c.1910- builder: Henry Buskala and sons

The Henry Buskala Ranch is significant as an extremely large, varied and well-preserved example of rural, Finnish folk architecture. It is the most complete and complex folk architecture site associated with the Finns in South Dakota. The ranch also reveals the history of the Finns who left the mining industry and settled in rural Lawrence County in order to ranch.

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Henry Buskala was a native of Raaha, Oulu Province, Finland. Upon coming to the United States in 1890, Henry changed his name from Ypparila to Buskala. He was married in Finland to Anna Piiola who was also a native of Raaha. Coming to the copper mining area of northern Michigan on his own, Henry sent for his family after several years work. They moved a few years later to Lead, South Dakota where Henry worked in the mining industry. In 1901 the family had saved enough money to purchase this ranch in the Finnish settlement area of Dumont. In c. 1910, Henry began the second and more permanent phase of building on the ranch when he erected this immense house, which is the only example of Finnish domestic folk architecture in South Dakota.

Many Finnish pioneers had to supplement their agricultural income. Henry worked cutting timber and for a time, had a shoe store in Lead. Extremely clever as a woodworker, Henry made tools, buckets and other items for practical use.

In 1918 the family moved to Florida, but returned again in 1923. Anna Buskala died in 1937; Henry died near Portland, Oregon in 1943. Both were members of the Apostolic Lutheran Church. His children continued to live on the ranch until a few years ago.

Henry Buskala carried with him from Finland a rich knowledge of log building practices, which he exhibited with exhuberant skill. According to the family biography, the present buildings were a second phase of building, but all display a uniform skill and even the personal quirks of the builder. For example, many of the buildings which have very finely finished front facades, have more carelessly completed rear walls as evidenced in the notching. The ranch is a rare example of the variety and skill employed in Nordic or Scandinavian-Finnish log building practices.

10. acreage: 10 acres scale: 1:24 000
quad: Nahant Quad

UTMS A 13/595470/4895470 D 13/595470/4895340
 B 13/595790/4895480
 C 13/595800/4895340

Verbal Boundary Description:

The site is bounded by four intersecting lines which form a rectangle. These lines are parallel to the section lines (as indicated on the USGS Quad map). The north boundary line lies 550 meters south of the east-west section line on the north, while the south boundary lies 140 meters to south of the north boundary and is parallel to it. The east boundary lies 520 meters to the west of the north-south section line which is located to the east of the site. The west boundary lies 320 meters to the west of the east boundary and is parellel to it.

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