

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 20 1985  
date entered JUL 18 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Welcek Farmstead

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number LA Hwy 107 N/A not for publication

city, town Kolin N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish Rapides code 079

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. William K. Ortigo

street & number Rt. 4, Box 794

city, town Pineville  vicinity of state LA 71360

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rapides Parish Courthouse

street & number 701 Murray Street P. O. Box 952

city, town Alexandria state LA 71301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

LA title Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1985  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

## 7. Description

|   |                                       |   |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                                      |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent                    | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good              | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair (large barn) | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   |   |

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Welcek Farmstead consists of a farmhouse and four outbuildings, all of which date from circa 1917-circa 1926. All are wood frame and in a fairly plain style. The complex is located amid slightly rolling farm country in the rural community of Kolin. It and the neighboring Libuse were founded in 1913-14 as Czech agricultural colonies. Despite the loss of some of its smaller dependencies and some alterations to the farmhouse, the complex easily retains its Register eligibility as the best preserved Czech farmstead in the area.

#### The Farmhouse:

The farm residence is a frame bungalow with an unusually high gable roof. The plan consists of five rooms without halls. The interiors have been reworked over the years and have a fairly modern appearance. The exterior is characterized by narrow gauge clapboards, plate glass windows, and extended purlins. Distinguishing features include a polygonal bay and a half-timbered treatment in four of the five gables. Presumably the fifth gable was similarly decorated at one time.\* Other exterior changes to the house include the enclosure of a side porch and a rear porch and the addition of a garret window.

\*Old photographs reveal that this half-timbered gable treatment was once found on other houses in Kolin and Libuse. Some of the local Czech descendants believe that this half-timbered look was done to imitate the "native" architecture of old Bohemia. Of course, this interpretation would be very difficult to prove or disprove.

#### The Barns:

Both of the barns represent standard early twentieth century designs of the type associated with the Midwest and dairy farming. Both are two stories high with gambrel roofs and side wings under shed roofs. Both also feature vertical board siding. The westernmost barn (see plan) is larger and has two ventilation cupolas in comparison to the other which has only one. The Welcek barns are unusual because they are built without tie beams and are fitted with glass windows.

Barns of this type are not common in Louisiana. Where they do exist, they generally reflect midwestern immigration into the state. Like most Czech settlers in the Kolin and Libuse colonies, Francis Welcek came to Louisiana from the Midwest. When he came to the Kolin colony, he brought this "midwestern" barn form with him. In this way the Welcek barns represent the Czech presence in Louisiana because their very design is conspicuously imported.

#### The Syrup House:

The syrup house is a small gabled structure with shingled walls on both the exterior and interior. It also has a small monitor-type opening in the roof.

CONTINUED

# 8. Significance

| 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> education                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                          | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                         |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

**Specific dates** c. 1917-c.1926      **Builder/Architect** Builder: Francis J. Welcek

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**      Criterion A

The Welcek Farmstead is locally significant in the area of exploration/settlement because it best represents the agricultural settlement patterns of the Czech colonies of Libuse and Kolin.

Kolin and Libuse were founded in 1913-14 under the auspices of Hospodar (Husbandman), a popular Czech agricultural periodical published in Omaha, Nebraska. Its founder and chief editor, John Rosicky, was one of the most well-known Czechs in the Midwest. Beginning in 1908, Hospodar championed a colonization effort aimed at bringing Czechs scattered throughout America together in specially founded Czech agricultural colonies. The movement was predicated upon two firmly held beliefs. Firstly, Hospodar was convinced, and rightly so, that Czechs in America were being assimilated too rapidly. (One cannot but wonder if this conviction was related to the burgeoning Czech nationalism which culminated in the country's independence in 1918.) Secondly, the periodical's editorials expressed concern over the number of Czechs leaving farms for jobs in cities and issued a call for the establishment of Czech agricultural communities centering on the family. The editors waxed eloquent in extolling the virtues of the country life and the memories it would conjure up of the homeland.

The colonization arm of Hospodar, the Bohemian Colonization Society, was established in October 1908 with Rosicky as president. Advertisements in Hospodar and other sources reveal that there were numerous colonies founded in various parts of the country. The first settlers arrived in Kolin and Libuse in late December 1913 and early January 1914, as recorded in the Alexandria Daily Town Talk. Undoubtedly most of these and later settlers had first heard of Kolin and Libuse from the advertisements carried in Hospodar.

But advertising was not the only role played by the Hospodar in the founding of the colony. E. M. Kroupa, the periodical's editor and Secretary of the Bohemian Colonization Society, journeyed to the Kolin-Libuse area and acted as go-between in arranging land purchases for Czech settlers. In many cases he also drew up the deed transfer papers. In addition, the Hospodar sent agricultural experts to work with the settlers during the early years of the colonies.

As is typical with colonization advertisements, central Louisiana was extolled to the hilt. For example, Bohemian Colonization Society stationery bore the following promise: "Come to KOLIN where Fertile Lands, Splendid Health, Grand Southern Climate, Abundant Rainfall, Pure Water and Good Markets ASSURE SUCCESS." Unfortunately, however, the land purchased for the colonies was pine cutover land. One of the early settlers reminiscing in 1967 about what he and his fellow Czechs found when they arrived referred to the area as a "barren wasteland." "An immense amount of work," he noted, "was required in this harsh land." Nonetheless, Kolin and Libuse prospered. A long-time resident of Kolin estimates that there were about fifty farms in the community during the 1920's, and one assumes a similar number for Libuse. An August 1938 article in the New Orleans Times-Picayune praising the two communities for their "financial solvency" gives an estimate of about one

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 12.34 acres

Quadrangle name Libuse, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

|   |      |              |               |
|---|------|--------------|---------------|
| A | 1 5  | 5 6 15 1 6 0 | 3 4 6 0 4 8 0 |
|   | Zone | Easting      | Northing      |

|   |      |              |               |
|---|------|--------------|---------------|
| B | 1 5  | 5 6 15 3 2 0 | 3 4 6 0 3 8 0 |
|   | Zone | Easting      | Northing      |

|   |     |              |                 |
|---|-----|--------------|-----------------|
| C | 1 5 | 5 6 15 3 2 0 | 3 4 6 0 2 0 0 0 |
|---|-----|--------------|-----------------|

|   |     |              |                 |
|---|-----|--------------|-----------------|
| D | 1 5 | 5 6 15 1 6 0 | 3 4 6 0 2 0 0 0 |
|---|-----|--------------|-----------------|

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| E |  |  |  |
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| H |  |  |  |
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to enclosed property plat map. Boundaries lines follow property lines to include the acreage under single ownership.

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

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| N/A   |      |        |      |

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |

# 11. Form Prepared By

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| name/title | National Register Staff<br>Division of Historic Preservation | SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY, ALSO ASSISTED BY OWNERS. |
|------------|--|--|

|              |                    |      |          |
|--------------|--------------------|------|----------|
| organization | State of Louisiana | date | May 1985 |
|--------------|--------------------|------|----------|

|                 |                 |           |                |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| street & number | P. O. Box 44247 | telephone | (504) 922-0358 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|

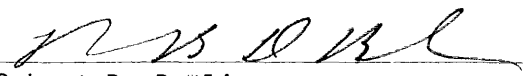
|              |             |       |          |
|--------------|-------------|-------|----------|
| city or town | Baton Rouge | state | LA 70804 |
|--------------|-------------|-------|----------|

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

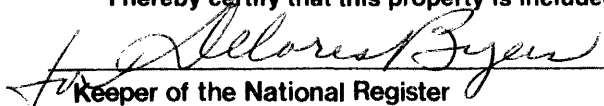
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

|   |  |
|---|--|
| State Historic Preservation Officer signature |  |
|   | Robert B. DeBlieux   |

|       |                                     |      |              |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| title | State Historic Preservation Officer | date | May 22, 1985 |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------|--------------|

### For NPS use only

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

|  |      |         |
|--|------|---------|
|  | date | 7-18-85 |
| Keeper of the National Register  |      |         |

|         |      |
|---------|------|
| Attest: | date |
|---------|------|

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Chief of Registration |  |
|-----------------------|--|

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Continuation sheet Welcek Farmstead

Item number 7

Page 1

7. Description (continued)

The Shed:

The shed is an ordinary frame clapboard building of little architectural note.

Contributing Elements:

All of the buildings in the complex are listed as contributing elements because it is the farmstead as a whole which represents the Czech agricultural heritage of the communities of Kolin and Libuse. Moreover, each building dates from the historic period of the two colonies.

Assessment of Integrity:

The only building which has undergone noteworthy alterations is the farmhouse. But despite the changes, the house is still easily recognizable as a bungalow style structure. Moreover, four out of five of its distinctive gables remain. Hence in our opinion the farmhouse's architectural identity easily survives.

The only other integrity consideration is the loss of a number of small sheds, chicken houses, and other small dependencies over the years. Despite these losses, the Welcek complex is still the best preserved Czech farmstead in the area. In any event, the buildings that remain were the more important ones.

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Continuation sheet Welcek Farmstead Item number 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance (cont'd)

hundred families between the two. This "colony of farmers," the article concludes, "have reaped financial independence from some of the state's most unlikely land and have literally changed the face of the hills on which they live."

One such prosperous farmer was Francis J. Welcek, who like most of his neighbors, came to Louisiana from the Midwest. He made his first land purchase in 1916 with subsequent purchases in 1918 and 1919. In all he held title to 160 acres of land. In addition to planting various crops, he engaged in tung oil and syrup production and had a sawmill on the property. Fortunately his farm complex survives pretty much intact, although there were originally several smaller, less important structures such as chicken houses and tool sheds. More important buildings such as the two barns, his syrup house, and residence survive. There is also a small shed-like building of indeterminate use still remaining. With his sawmill, Welcek cut the beams, planks and shingles to construct these buildings.

By looking at old photographs of Welcek's farm and numerous others, one gets a real sense of the historic landscape of Kolin and Libuse. As might be expected, the barns and other major farm buildings were clearly more important than the dwellings. Unfortunately, this landscape has been appreciably depleted. There are a handful of large barns scattered here and there (one per farm), with some having a few small shed-like buildings nearby. Francis Welcek's is by far the most complete and impressive surviving historic farm complex in the two communities. As such, it best represents the founding and settlement of Libuse and Kolin as agricultural colonies.

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Continuation sheet Welcek Farm Complex

Item number 9

Page 1

9. Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Hospodar. Various issues for 1913 and 1914. In possession of Rose Walker, Czech Heritage Foundation.

Bohemian Colonization Society stationery advertising Kolin. In possession of Rose Walker, Czech Heritage Foundation. Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

Alexandria Daily Town Talk. December 23, 1913 and January 12, 1914. Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

Article on Kolin and Libuse in New Orleans Times-Picayune. August 1938 (specific date unknown). Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

Klamath Falls Evening Herald. September 13, 1911. This article tells of the founding of Klamath County under the auspices of Hospodar and explains the origins of the colonization movement. Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

Plat map of Libuse dated March 20, 1914. In possession of Rose Walker, Czech Heritage Foundation.

Plat map of Kolin dated April 10, 1914. In possession of Rose Walker, Czech Heritage Foundation.

Old photographs of Kolin and Libuse. In possession of Rose Walker, Czech Heritage Foundation.

Secondary Sources:

Bicha, Karel D. The Czechs in Oklahoma. University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.

Capek, Thomas. The Cechs in America. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969. (Reprint of book as originally published in 1920.)

Laska, Vera. The Czechs in America, 1633-1977: A Chronology and Fact Book. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1978.

Svoboda, Joseph G. "Czechs: The Love of Liberty." Broken Hoops and Plains People. Nebraska Curriculum Development Center, 1976.

Historical sketch of Welcek Farm Complex prepared by owners, based on old dated photos, family history, etc. Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

CONTINUED

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date entered

Continuation sheet Welcek Farm Complex

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Bibliography (continued)

Oral History:

Account of founding and early history of Kolin and Libuse written by Emil Tuma, Sr., May 13, 1967, who was at that time 87. Translated by Mary Pospisil Tuma. Copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

Personal communication with Helen Brousek Locker Henderson, who was born in Nebraska in 1916 and moved to the Kolin-Libuse area in 1919. (Her father had gone on ahead of the rest of the family in 1915.)

Miscellaneous:

Windshield survey of Kolin and Libuse by National Register Staff, Division of Historic Preservation, January 1985. Guided by Rose Walker, Czech Heritage Foundation.

Personal communication with Rose Walker, founder and president of the Czech Heritage Foundation. Mrs. Walker has gathered together numerous primary sources on the history of Kolin and Libuse.

NOTE: The National Register staff would like to express its appreciation to Rose Walker for gathering together primary source material on Kolin and Libuse and making it available for this nomination. We are also indebted to her and particularly her mother, Helen Brousek Walker Henderson, for providing translations of Hospodar and other materials. It literally would have been impossible to do this nomination without their assistance.



WELCEK FARM COMPLEX  
KOLIN, RAPIDES PARISH, LA

