United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received JUN 29 1984
date entered AUG 13 1984

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

1. Name

TR

historic   German-Russian Folk Architecture in South Dakota

and/or common   Same

2. Location

17 + 7 DoE

street & number   Multiple (see continuation sheets)   (X) not for publication

city, town   ___ vicinity of   congressional district

state   S D   code   county   code

3. Classification   See Continuation Sheets

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name   Multiple (see continuation sheets)

street & number

city, town   ___ vicinity of   state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.   Multiple (see continuation sheets)

street & number

city, town   state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title   German-Russian Folk Architecture
         Intensive Survey   has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes _X_ no

date Summer 1982-Winter 1984   ___ federal _X_ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records   Historical Preservation Center   216 East Clark

city, town   Vermillion   state   South Dakota

7. Description

See Continuation Sheets

Condition

___ excellent   ___ deteriorated

___ good   ___ ruins

___ fair   ___ unexposed

Check one

___ unaltered

___ altered

Check one

___ original site

___ moved   date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The German-Russian folk architecture of South Dakota is a unique group of structures built by German-Russian immigrants between 1873 and 1914. The German-Russians settled in four areas of the state: the southeast in Hutchinson, northern Bon Homme and Yankton, western Turner and eastern Douglas Counties; the north central in McPherson, Campbell, Edmunds, and Walworth Counties; northwest in Corson and Dewey Counties and southwest in Tripp and Gregory Counties. These areas are characterized by relatively flat, treeless terrain with an occasional shelterbelt, riverbed or windbreak of trees. Approximately 100 structures were discovered through historic research. Field work located just over 100 structures in various states of preservation and of these 47 were intensively surveyed with measured drawings, photographs, site plans, detailed notes and historic research. The 24 sites nominated here represent the most complete and best preserved examples. In addition, sites were selected as examples of specific building techniques or because they possessed characteristic details of German-Russian folk building.

Through the Department of History, University of South Dakota, Michael Koop and Stephen Ludwig, graduate students of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin, conducted an intensive survey of 20 sites in southeastern South Dakota in the summer of 1982. In the fall of that year, additional field work was conducted in north central South Dakota by Koop and Carolyn Torma, Historical Survey Coordinator with the Historical Preservation Center. A third survy was conducted by Koop and Torma in the fall of 1983 in the north central counties as well as Douglas and Gregory Counties. These structures were selected based on data recorded during geographic surveys, historic research and through extensive contact with local German-Russian historic societies and local residents. Sites surveyed were selected on the following criteria: overall condition of the building, degree of alteration to the structure and significance of relevant historical information. As field work progressed additional criteria was employed. Sites were selected as good examples of a type of construction method or selected as an example of a particular floor plan or because they possessed important features such as furnace/bake ovens, batsa chimneys or elaborate interior decoration.

The German-Russians employed their traditional architecture for a number of buildings including houses, barns, agricultural outbuildings and even churches. Residences are the most numerous survivors and were studied the most intensely. Where sites contain remnants of other German-Russian structures, these have been included in the nomination. All German-Russian folk structures employ a unique form of construction called puddled clay. This clay can be used as a load-bearing material, a mortar or as a finishing plaster. In addition, some very late examples of dwellings use traditional forms, but employ common American stud frame construction.

While the form of German-Russian outbuildings is quite simple, such as vaulted root cellars and rectangular, gable-roofed barns, the form of the dwellings is more complex. The house form is a rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed building constructed of puddled clay, rammed earth, brick or stone masonry, batsa brick, frame and batsa brick, or frame. One story in height, the dwellings have a loft under the gable. A heating unit comprised of several distinct features is located in the center of the house so that the chimney rises through the center of the roof. The houses have distinctive plans of two, three or four bay divisions, which create a long, rather narrow rectangular structure. On the interior the bays may be divided with lateral partition or non-load bearing walls creating a

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house with as many as six rooms. Some houses are attached to barns which are built along
the lateral axis. Other interesting features include a covered exterior vestible called
a vorhäusl. The main door and most windows are found along the front facade. The door
is most often located toward, but seldom directly in, the center of the wall. Window
openings vary from two to six. The gable-end facades in southern South Dakota, where bake
ovens are more prevalent, have two ground floor windows. In other areas, a single, cen-
tral window may light the side. In the loft one or two windows pierce the gable-end wall.
On the rear facade openings are less numerous as this wall most often faces north or west
and into the strong prairie wind.

Many other interesting details distinquish these houses. Houses with clay walls have a
stabilizing plate buried in the clay at the top of the wall which helps to keep the heavy
wall from spreading outward under its own weight. Traditional decoration is painted on
the white-washed plaster walls, including striped wainscots, door and window surrounds,
and freizes at cornice and baseboard lines. Bright colors, predominantly bright turquoise
blue with combinations of mustard or ochre yellow, brick red, dark pine green, rose, sage,
olive green and earth brown are found on walls, ceilings, door and window trim. The
immense heating unit called a Russian oven is found in many forms. The most complete
version includes a furnace, bake oven, walk-in kitchen, and batsa brick chimney. Ladder
stairs, which exhibit fine workmanship, are found on the interior, most often in the
kitchen, and on the exterior in the barn or gable-end wall. Rain guards at the top of the
gable-end wall beneath the gable itself, shelter the earth walls. Roofs are constructed
of commercially purchased lumber and built in a common rafter method. Occasionally ridge
poles and wind bracing were recorded. The foundations of the dwellings are often flush
with the ground. Where visible, they are undressed stone bonded together with puddled
clay or concrete mortar. Cellars can be found beneath the house in some sites. These
small rooms are built directly beneath the kitchen or adjacent to the house on the ex-
terior. Valuted root cellars were also recorded, most are built apart from the house.
Many other details are described in the site descriptions.

The outbuildings are generally distinguished by their less elaborate construction tech-
niques. Rubble masonry construction is extremely common. Most outbuildings are so badly
deteriorated that additional information about roofing systems and other details are
obscured. However, where wood is employed, sawed lumber, stud framing and common rafter
roofs were recorded. In some cases where the barns are attached to houses, there is
little to distinquish the barn from other American barns, although the house was clearly
German-Russian. Puddled clay was recorded as an insulating material in many outbuildings
such as root cellars. Brick, concrete and stone are also employed in the vaulted roofs
of these structures.

German-Russian architecture forms a distinctive group based on its form, construction
techniques and individual features.

8. Significance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

German-Russian folk architecture in South Dakota is significant in the areas of vernacular architecture, settlement, and the history of the German-Russian people. These buildings represent a unique form of material culture and along with the Czech architecture are the most complete and rich body of folk architecture in the state.

The term "German-Russian" refers to the people who migrated to Russia after 1763 at the invitation of Catherine the Great and her successors. Emigrating from the German provinces Of Baden-Wurtemburg, the Netherlands, France, Poland, Switzerland, Austria and Rumania, these people formed a distinct cultural group in Russia, which upon their migration to America became known as the German-Russians. Certainly, the dominant culture was Germany and the common language was German. The migration to Russia occurred in waves between 1763 and the mid 19th century. The colonists settled in their own street villages along the Volga River, in south Russia near the Black Sea and on the steppes of the Ukraine. The majority of the settlers were devotely religious and belonged to the Mennonite, Hutterite, Lutheran, Reform, Evangelical and Catholic denominations.

Despite becoming Russian citizens the Germans remained culturally distinct from their native neighbors. The separation was emphasized both geographically through settlement in their own villages and culturally through the retention of the German language. They did accept, however, Ukrainian and eastern European folk building practices. Both the materials and forms were absorbed and taken with them on their move to the New World.

By 1871 many of the privileges granted to the German-Russians had been withdrawn and so these people looked to the Americas as a new place to settle. Seeking large tracts of undeveloped land, they moved to the Great Plains of the United States and Canada and the plains of Argentina. In America they settled in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South and North Dakota and Minnesota.

Arriving in 1873 they passed through the territorial capitol of Yankton and first settled in the community they named Odessa, which was located southeast of the present day town of Scotland in Bon Homme County. The initial wave of settlers took up land in western Turner, Hutchinson, northern Yankton and Bon Homme and eastern Douglas Counties. These settlers were primarily Hutterite, Mennonite, Lutheran and Reform protestants. A later wave of settlement occured in McPherson, Campbell, Edmunds and Walworth County and brought Evangelical, Lutheran, Catholic, Congregational and Seventh Day Adventist settlers. This second settlement, which came after 1880 was encouraged by the railroad which had laid track into the area in 1887. The third migration took second generation and late arrivals across the Missouri River into Corson, Dewey, Tripp and Gregory Counties. The migration was over by 1910.

These pioneers once again settled in distinct communities, which helped the German-Russians maintain their isolation and independence. However, only the Hutterites settled in

9. Major Bibliographical References

Harpers Weekly "A Bit of Europe in America," July 11, 1896, pp. 689-690.
Jennewein, J. Leonard and Jane Boorman, eds. Dakota Panorama, Dakota Territory Centennial
   Commission, Pine Hill Press, Freeman, South Dakota, 1961.
Johansen, John B. "Immigrant Settlements and Social Organizations in South Dakota," Bulletin #31
   Dept. of Rural Sociology, Agricultural Experiment Station, Brookings, South Dakota, 1937.

10. Geographical Data   See Continuation Sheets for each site

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____   Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]   B [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]
  Zone Easting   Northing   Zone Easting   Northing

C [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]   D [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]

E [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]   F [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]

G [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]   H [| |] [| | | | | |] [| | | | | |]

Verbal boundary description and justification

   See continuation sheets

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   Michael Koop & Carolyn Torma

organization   Historical Preservation Center   date   3-13-84

street & number   216 E. Clark   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   _X_ 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title   Director, Office of Cultural Preservation   date   06/20/84

GPO 938 835

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closed colonies, and so the other groups proved more vulnerable to assimilation after a time. Folk architecture was not the only cultural trait exhibited by the newcomers. However, it was highly visible and so succombed to assimilation. At first, this happened slowly and only parts of the architectural tradition changed, such as the roof structure. But by the First World War when intense anti-immigrant and German sentiment swept the land, these structures and many other ethnic features were abandoned.

Evidence remains today of this unique architecture and a few dwellings are still occupied; many more could be restored for use. Perhaps one reason for the presence of these fascinating structures is that they were so well suited to the Great Plains environment where other types of building materials were so scarce and costly. Indeed, it may be their environmental qualities which help to preserve them for future use.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

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Southeastern South Dakota, Vermillion: Historical Preservation Center, 1984.

Butler, J.D. "The Mennonite Stove," Mennonite Life, vol. 4, no. 4
(October 1949), 29-30.

Goertz, Reuben, "German-Russian Houses: Here and There, Now and Then,"
Clues, (1976), 31-50.

Pfeiffer, John E., "The German-Russians and Their Immigration to South Dakota,
Selected Papers of the First Nine Dakota History Conferences, 1969-1977,
ed. Herbert W. Blakely (Madison: Dakota State College, 1981), 200-210.

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Multiple Resource Area   dnr-11
Thematic Group

Name ___ German-Russian Folk Architecture Thematic Resources ___
State ___ South Dakota ___

Nomination/Type of Review   Date/Signature

1. Beck, George, House   Substantive Review   Keeper _____

    DOE/OWNER OBJECTION   Attest _____

2. Bieber, Johann, House   Substantive Review   Keeper _____

    DOE/OWNER OBJECTION   Attest _____
                              Determined Eligible
3. Miller, Phillip, Summer Kitchen   Keeper _Beth Grosvenr_ 8/13/84

    DOE/OWNER OBJECTION   Attest _____
                              Determined Eligible
4. Rempfer, Johann C., House   Substantive Review   Keeper _Beth Grosvenr_ 8/13/84

    DOE/OWNER OBJECTION   Attest _____
                              Determined Eligible
5. Vetter, John, Barn   Substantive Review   Keeper _Linda McClelland_ 11/28/84

    DOE/OWNER OBJECTION   Attest _____
                              Determined Eligible
6. Waldner-Tschetter House   Substantive Review   Keeper _Beth Grosvenr_ 8/13/84

    DOE/OWNER OBJECTION   Attest _____
                              Determined Eligible
7. Weinzirl, Michael, House   Substantive Review   Keeper _Linda McClelland_ 11/28/84

    DOE/OWNER OBJECTION   Attest _____

8. Cihak Farmstead   Entered in the   Keeper _Helen Byrne_ 11/28/84
                              National Register
                                                  Attest _____

9. Deckert, Ludwig, House   Entered in the   /Keeper _Helen Byrne_ 8/13/84
                              National Register
                                                  Attest _____

10. Eisenbeis, John, House   Entered in the   /Keeper _Helen Byrne_ 8/13/84
                              National Register
                                                  Attest _____

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name ___ German-Russian Folk Architecture Thematic Resources ___

State ___ South Dakota ___

Nomination/Type of Review   Date/Signature

11. Grosz, Martin and Wilhelmina,   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 8-13-84
    House-Barn
                                           Attest   _____

12. Hofer, Enoch, House-Barn   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 11/28/84

                                           Attest   _____

13. Hofer, Michael, House   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 8/13/84

                                           Attest   _____

14. Holzworth-Lang House   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 11/28/84

                                           Attest   _____

15. Moser, Wilhelm, House-   Entered in the   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 11/28/84
    Barn   National Register
                                           Attest   _____

16. Ochszner, Jacob Sr., House   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 8-13-84
                             Entered in the
                             National Register   Attest   _____

17. Schatz, Jacob, House   Entered in the   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 8-13-84
                             National Register
                                           Attest   _____

18. Stern, Gottlieb, House   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 11/28/84

                                           Attest   _____

19. Strouckel, John, House   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 11/28/84

                                           Attest   _____

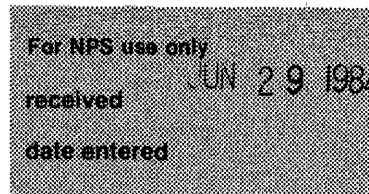20. Vetter, George, House   Keeper   _Helen Byen_ 8-13-84

                                           Attest   _____

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name   German-Russian Folk Architecture Thematic Resources

State   South Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
21. Weins, Jacob, House-Barn	Entered in the National Register	Keeper *Helona Byers* 8-13-84
		Attest
22. Wittmayer, Peter, House-Barn	Entered in the National Register	Keeper *Helona Byers* 8-13-84
		Attest
23. Wollman, Joseph, House	Entered in the National Register	Keeper *Helona Byers* 11/28/84
		Attest
24. Ziegler, Wilhelm, House-Barn	Entered in the National Register	Keeper *Helona Byers* 8-13-84
		Attest
25.		Keeper
		Attest
26.		Keeper
		Attest
27.		Keeper
		Attest
28.		Keeper
		Attest
29.		Keeper
		Attest
30.		Keeper
		Attest