

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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NATIONAL
REGISTERSection number CZ 1-a Page 1 Merkwan House/Barn

Site # CZ 1-a

1. John and Kate (Catherine) Merkwan Rubblestone House/Barn
2. Lincoln Township
Tabor Vicinity
South Dakota Code: 046
- First Congr. District
Bon Homme County Code: 009
3. Building; Privately owned; NA acquisition; Occupied; Restricted access;
Agricultural.
4. Laddie Merkwan
RR. 2, Box 68
Tyndall, SD 57066
5. Register of Deeds
Bon Homme County Courthouse
Tyndall, SD 57066
7. Good; Unaltered; Original site.

Conforming to the Old World linear building form, the John and Kate Merkwan House/Barn is a one-story rectangular rubblestone structure with dimensions of 22 feet by 89 feet. The stone construction material is mortared with a stone, clay, and grass mixture. The lower level floor appears to be of unmortared earth and stone. Entrance is gained via three small doors along the east axial facade. The gable roof is constructed of 44 irregularly-spaced common rafters, rough horizontal boards, and wooden shingles. Two axial dormers allow outside access to the hay loft.

Interior space is divided into two major partitions accommodating a house and barn. The house section comprises a small single bay at the south end of the building and has a ladder-stair leading to the upper level, which is also subdivided to provide a sleeping chamber apart from the hay loft. No evidence of a chimney exists, but this cell's use as a dwelling may have been short-lived, especially since another folk house is located on this farm site (CZ 1-b). The long barn portion is split up into several animal stalls. A bi-level manger runs along the west axial wall providing feeding facilities for both horses and cattle. At the north end of the manger is a ladder leading to the hay loft. Both interior and exterior surfaces show signs of an original whitewash and later white paint. Some evidence of a dark reddish-brown paint is also extant on the interior walls.

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John & Kate Merkwan House-barn

Under the house bay is a small root cellar. Access to this cellar is gained through an outside stairway at the south end of the building. A small leantuhas been added to the north gable end.

8. 1869-1899; Architecture, Exploration/Settlement, Czech Ethnic.

Specific date unknown. John Merkwan Sr., builder.

Significant in architecture, the Merkwan House-Barn is the only known eligible example of Czech House-Barns in the state. Also, its well-preserved interior features, such as the manger and the ladder-stair are indicative of typical Czech barn furnishings. The present owner, a great-grandson of the builder has kept the structure in a good state of repair and still utilizes it in limited ways in the farm operation. It is one of the best surviving Czech barns in the survey area.

The Merkwan House/Barn is also significant in the history of Czech settlement in the state. Born at Chvolsjvce, Bohemia in 1826, John Merkwan Sr. emigrated to Dakota Territory sometime before 1880. He brought his second wife Kate (Catherine) Randel and several of their children to this farm in Bon Homme County. He is responsible for constructing most of the historic buildings on the farmstead. His second son, Thomas, was born at Stryace u Prachadic, Bohemia in 1863 and later became the owner-operator of the farm. Thomas' son Anton was born in 1900 and is the father of the present owner, Laddie Merkwan. The family has long held membership in St. Wenceslaus Catholic Parish in Tabor, SD.

Major biographical source: Dennis L. Povondra, The Plavec and Merkwan Families, (Gregory, SD: Privately Printed, 1973), 4-5, 7-8.

10. Acreage: Less than one acre. Scale: 1:24,000.
Quad: Kloucek Lake. UTM: 14/ 605200/ 4762140.

This site consists of a rectangular masonry barn, a wood frame leantu on the north gable end, and a small masonry cellar entrance on the south gable end. The northern boundary is an imaginary line lying 10 feet from the north wall of the leantu and running parallel to that wall. The eastern and western boundaries are imaginary lines lying 10 feet from the axial walls of the barn and running parallel to those walls. The southern boundary is an imaginary line lying 10 feet from the south wall of the cellar entrance and running parallel to that

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wall. The site is located in the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 33, Township 95 North, Range 58 West, in Bon Homme County.

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SITE PLAN OF FARMSTEAD CONTAINING SITES CZ 1-a & CZ 1-b

ON REVERSE SIDE

SITE PLAN (Complete inventory of all structures, their function, dates & details of construction, and surrounding vegetation) WITH NORTH ARROW

SITE NAME: J. + K. MERKMAN
CZ SURVEY #: 1-a + 1-b

Handwritten signature
SHELTER BELT

HOG HOUSE



POLE CONSTR. MACHINE STORAGE

POLE CONSTR. MACHINE STORAGE

LIVE STOCK CORAL
GATE

(FEED LOT)

SHED ROOF
POLE CONSTR. (BY L. MERKMAN)

OPEN FRONT

STEEL GATE

SILO

SHED ROOF ADD

HOUSE / BARN
1-a
(CONTRIBUTING)

SELF-PLANTED
ELM
TREES

(FEED LOT)

GRAINERY
BUILT BY
PRESENT
OWNER'S
GRAND FATHER
(THOMAS MERKMAN)

WOOD FRAM
BLDG. BY
L. MERKMAN
TO RE-PLA
ORIG. ROC
(RUBBLE
STONE - ?)
MEN. HURS

BARN

STEEL GATE

ENTRY TO
CELLAR

3 mi driveway
(Access to SD Hy 25)

GRAIN STORAGE

SHED ROOF

ARCHED ROOF

ORCHARD

ORCHARD

INTERSECTING
GABLES

HOUSE PRESENTLY
USED BY L. MERKMAN

LOG/STONE
HOUSE
1-b
(CONTRIBUTING)

CEDAR
TREES

SHELTER BELT

OUT BLAG.
COVERED W/ BRICK-
LIKE ASPHALT
SHEETS

OLD CUT HOUSE