United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

on Form 1 0 2018

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property		
Historic Name: Bohemian Communi	ty Hall	
Other Names/Site Number: Libuse C		II, Libuse Czech Hall
Name of related multiple property lis	ting: N/A	
2. Location		
Street & Number: 94 Industrial Rd		
City or town: Libuse	State: LA_	County: Rapides
Not for Publication:	Vicinity:	
3. State/Federal Agency Certif	fication	
		reservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify
		igibility meets the documentation standards
		ric Places and meets the procedural and
professional requirements set forth i	n 36 CFR Part 60. In	my opinion, the property meets does
not meet the National Register Crite	ria.	
1		- ( ) - ( - ) - ( - ) - ( - ) - ( - ) - ( - )
	onsidered significant	at the following level(s) of significance:
☐ national ☐ state ☐ local		
Applicable National Register Criteria	a: 🛛 A 🔲 B 🗀	C DD
<b>V</b>	in Plander	1//2 12 2
Signature of certifying official/Titl	e: Kristin Sanders, State	Historic Preservation Officer Date
Louisiana Department of Culture,	Recreation, and To	<u>urism</u>
State or Federal agency/bureau or	r Tribal Governmen	t
In my opinion, the property  meet	s C does not meet t	ne National Register criteria
in my opinion, the property in meet	J	To Tradional Trogletor official
Signature of commenting official:		Date
		*
Title:	State or Fed	eral agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Name of Property

Rapides Parish, LA

County and State

#### 4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain.

6-19-2018

# Signature of the Keeper

**Date of Action** 

### 5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

	Private
X	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

# Category of Property (Check only one box.)

X	Building(s)	
	District	
	Site	
	Structure	
	object	

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
4.		Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

#### 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): Social: Meeting Hall

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): Social: Meeting Hall

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## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.): Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements: Craftsman

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete piers

walls: Zinc roof: Metal other:

### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

## **Summary Paragraph**

The Bohemian Community Hall (interchangeably referred to as Libuse Czech Hall in this document) is located in Libuse in Rapides Parish, Louisiana. It is a one story wood frame building with wood and metal siding and is designed in a simplified Craftsman style. Built in 1931 following a 1930 tornado that destroyed the first hall, the building has been continually used as a social hall for the Czech community in the unincorporated community of Libuse. The building's façade has a stylized stepped parapet with central entry and cross hipped roof. It features a large interior space with a few small storage rooms, kitchen, and stage. Very few alterations have been made to the building since it was built and it retains a high degree of integrity. It would be easily recognizable to any of the former residents of Libuse and the surrounding area.

## **Narrative Description**

The Bohemian Community Hall is a single story wood framed building estimated to be approximately 3,000 square feet in area. It was originally constructed in 1931 as a community hall and continues functioning to this day as a community hall for social and cultural gatherings by the public and the decedents of the original Czech colony established in the early 1900's. It is located on a tract of land in the Libuse Community where the Czech colony originally settled. The building is a raised cottage with concrete pedestals supporting heavy timber framing of beams and joist. The original wood strip flooring has been maintained and is exposed throughout the main hall.

Exterior walls are wood framed studs sheathed with solid pine 1 x 6 boards on the interior and exterior of the walls. The height of the exterior walls was constructed to facilitate natural ventilation and extend approximately 10 to 11 feet above the floor. The exterior walls are clad with a unique type of heavy gauge zinc formed lap siding which has an exposed patina finish. Portions of the front siding is painted. New sections of galvanized corrugated building skirting were added for closure between grade and the raised floor.

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Two over two double hung wood windows are located on the exterior of the building. These are single and double units and are trimmed at the window heads and jambs with painted 1 x 6 trim boards. Trim treatment at the window heads is unique with beveled shaped leading edges.

The roof of the Community Hall mainly consists of a cross hipped galvanized corrugated metal roof with exposed rafter tails. The front section of roof is constructed as an enclosed gable end wall with stepped and sloping parapet extending above the roof line. Wood rafters support wood decking with felt underlayment and applied galvanized corrugated metal roof panel screw attached into the wood decking. The overall shape of the building is a square cross.

### Façade (See Photos 1, 2, 7)

The front entrance and door are recessed into the front façade of the building with concrete steps leading to the raised floor. The entrance way is sheathed and finished with bead board vertical siding with a painted finish for the recessed walls and wood and glass entrance door. The door itself has three horizontal wood panels topped by a large piece of glass. A set of double windows flanks each side of the entrance.

#### Southern Elevation (See Photos 2-3)

This elevation has a door and window on the section nearest the façade. A set of double windows flanks a central entry on the central projection of this elevation and features a low sloping wheel chair ramp. A set of smaller double windows is found at the recessed section near the rear elevation.

### Rear (East) Elevation (See Photos 4-5)

There is a single window on the far left side of this elevation and two small 2/2 windows on the rear projection on each side of the stage.

## Northern Elevation (See Photos 6-7)

This elevation features a single window and two sets of double windows on the projecting section of the building and a single window and door on the portion nearest the façade. A small set of stairs accessed this door. The roof over the far left window is a shed roof. The bottom pane of two of the windows is infilled with a piece of plywood and ductwork to provide air conditioning into the interior space.

## Interior (See Photos 9-16)

The inside is all wood, giving it a warm inviting quality. The old potbellied wood stove still stands as it has for years. While no longer used to provide heat, it is very much a part of the hall itself. There is a raised stage area, which still has the "door in the floor", where play prompters would sit (hidden to the audience) to help actors who had forgotten their lines. The original curtain still hangs rolled up tight, not having been used in years. Ceiling fans, air conditioning, and heating have been added in the last 10 years. There are still window air conditioning units that help cool the area. Indoor plumbing has been installed years ago. The original wooden floor may have a few stains, but still is the best dance floor around (so say the locals).

The front entrance way is framed with diagonal walls each with large cased openings. These openings lead into spaces that have been used to serve refreshments. Interior walls have unpainted wood bead board with transparent stained finishes. The original green paint finish was stripped and removed to expose the wood gain of the bead board.

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The interior of the building functions around the large gathering and activity room which provides open space for social and cultural gatherings. A raised stage is located directly opposite the front entrance way. Both the raised stage and front entrance way have semi arched openings which front onto the main room.

The floor is wood with a stained finish. The main activity room is lined with fixed bench seating around the exterior walls. Windows provide natural light into the interior space. Ceiling fans with lamp fixtures provide artificial lighting and ventilation. Package air conditioning and window units are utilized to cool the large room. The ceiling is acoustic tiles (likely over an original bead board ceiling).

#### **Integrity**

The Bohemian Community Hall has not been altered and retains all seven aspects of integrity. Comparing the historic photo (at the end of this nomination) to a current day photo reveals that the main change is how large the trees on the property have grown. It is most definitely recognizable to former residents of the Libuse area and is eligible for listing on the National Register.

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X	Α	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the
		broad patterns of our history.
	В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	С	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

#### Criteria Considerations:

Α	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
В	Removed from its original location
C	A birthplace or grave
D	A cemetery
Е	A reconstructed building, object, or structure
F	A commemorative property
G	Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.): Entertainment/Recreation; Ethnic

Heritage: European

Period of Significance: 1931-1968

Significant Dates: 1931

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

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Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name):** Built by early settlers of Libuse including the Vonasek, Melichar, Prochaska, Pacholik, Cizek, and Voda families.

**Period of Significance (justification)**: The period of significance begins with 1931, the year the building was constructed (following a tornado that year that destroyed the previous Komensky School), through 1968, the 50 year cutoff. The building has continually been used as a social hall through the present day.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Bohemian Community Hall is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and ethnic heritage: European. The hall has been a central gathering place for the Libuse Czech community since it was constructed. It has served as a place for weddings, funerals, dances, plays, and any other social gathering the community had for almost 90 years. Its rarity and cultural importance to the community is unique and significant. The period of significance for the hall is 1931 through 1968, encompassing the year it was built through the 50 year cutoff.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

# Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation and Ethnic Heritage: European

History of Libuse and the Bohemian Community Hall

The following history of Libuse and the hall is taken from a Phase I Cultural Resource survey done in 2016.

Czech immigrants began to seek religious asylum in the British American colonies in the early eighteenth century. Subsequent smaller migrations followed, but more significant waves of migration began in the middle nineteenth century. Many Czech immigrants settled in large urban centers, but others sought agricultural land in the rural Midwest and South. In 1912, the Nebraska-based Bohemian Colonization Club identified a large area of former timber company land available for purchase in Rapides Parish, and began to promote the land as inexpensive and ideal for farming. The Louisiana Investment Securities Company purchased the cutover land at 50 cents an acre, reselling it to the 200-plus subscribers of the Colonization Club for \$15 to \$18 an acre. The quality of the land northeast of the Red River did not offer the agricultural potential promised and would require tremendous efforts by the colonists to produce a living.

The group of more than 200 Bohemian families that immigrated to Rapides represents over half of the total Czech population to immigrate to Louisiana, making Rapides Parish home to a center of Czech heritage, culture, and tradition that remains strong in 2015. Two Czech communities were established in Rapides Parish: Libuse, named for the

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legendary first Queen of the Czechs, and Kolin, named for a city in Bohemia...Libuse and Kolin were formally planned cities with town plats that showed hundreds of lots surrounded by farmland. The reality of the small communities was immediately apparent as the colonists discovered undeveloped land with no civic centers in place. The land on which the communities were established had a high clay and sand content and was highly acidic, and thus was poor land for farming. Despite the promise of lands ready for planting, colonists were forced to clear thousands of pine stumps and roots left by the timber cutover, as well as palmetto and other scrub plants, in order to plant crops.

Despite the hardships and associated out-migration, the Czech communities in Rapides Parish survived. Residents soon established the rural schools of Komensky. Kolin. and Liberty to preserve Czech culture and language among the children of Kolin and Libuse. Although a point of great pride and considered crucial to fostering Czech identity, the schools eventually closed as the inhabitants in the small communities declined. The Czech schools succumbed to the consolidation movement of the 1930s and Czech children thereafter attended parish schools.

Czech identity remains central to the descendants of the immigrant families in the twenty-first century. Czech language was common well after World War II and is still spoken by a few elders, craft traditions like pysanky and needlework remain viable, and food ways are maintained in family homes. Czech heritage is still apparent, with two Czech cemeteries at Libuse and Kolin and historic homes and buildings marking the cultural landscape. The Libuse Community Hall just off of Highway 28 East was built after the first community hall was destroyed by a tornado, ca. 1930. The present hall was constructed in 1931 on the site of the old Komensky School. It is the site of the annual Louisiana Czech Heritage Festival and remains a center for social activities and community events.1

As a culturally important community center, the Bohemian Community Hall held weekly meetings in order to aid each other and facilitate overall progress for the growth of Libuse, which is named from the legendary First Queen of the Czechs. The stage in the building was used for music, dance, and plays. The former backdrop used for plays is still intact and kept rolled up to preserve it. Today, it is used for meetings, private events, community events, and the annual Czech Heritage Festival.

Outside of the community hall, there are a few other standing buildings remaining in Libuse that speak to the Czech cultural heritage and could be listed on the National Register for their significance under ethnic heritage. These include the Pacholik House, the Tuma Store/Post Office, the c. 1928 Tuma Post Office, the Zmek House, and the Tuma House. These resources are all that remain today to tell the story of the settlement and success of Libuse. Along with Kolin, Libuse has added to Louisiana's rich cultural heritage, particularly in the central section of the state. While the population of Libuse has declined, there are still descendants alive today who are keeping the traditions and practices of their families alive. These buildings represent the hard work done by the settlers of Libuse to live off of the subpar land they had been dealt. As stated in the Phase I survey of Libuse, "In some areas, high style architecture is preserved to tell the local history; but the local history of immigrant farming communities takes shape in more modest forms which are still able to contribute significantly to the story of America. Vernacular structures such as this are representative of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Jason L. Parrish, Shawna A. Atkins, Dayna B. Lee, Kelly N. Morgan, Rhonda L. Smith, and Donna K. Stone. "Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Widening of Louisiana Highway 28 (LA 28), Libuse to Holloway, Rapides Parish, Louisiana (H.004825.2). March 2016, pg. 22.

United States Department of the Interior NPS Form 10-900	National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form OMB No. 1024-0018				
Bohemian Community Hall  Name of Property	Rapides Parish, LA County and State				
cultural landscape of rural Louisiana." <sup>2</sup> The study Historic Preservation Review Boards with a quote Hall:	goes on to further quote the Manual for State that perfectly sums up the Bohemian Community				
"Such native resources are increasingly recognized as vital parts of the variety of American culture, especially as they become more scarce. Vernacular resources may convey a sense of historically common, but now rare or nonexistent, lifestyles or design patterns. Frequently the historic patterns and architectural features, associated with vernacular construction reflect a major component of an area's culture."					
The planned ethnic community of Libuse is a vital part of Louisiana's melting pot and the Bohemian Community Hall is a central figure in this community. The activities that have been held at the hall have helped to create a unique sense of place for the Czech community and have helped to define the cultural identity of Libuse. For these reasons, this building is eligible for listing on the National Register.					
Developmental History/Additional historic context information					
See above.					
9. Major Bibliographical Resources					
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)					
Hazmak, Francis. <i>The Story of Libuse and Kolin</i> (Revised), 2012. (The original Pageant material was written by Dr. Rosie Walker.)					
Donna K. Stone. "Phase I Cultural Resour	B. Lee, Kelly N. Morgan, Rhonda L. Smith, and ces Survey for the Proposed Widening of Louisiana Rapides Parish, Louisiana (H.004825.2). March				

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #
Primary location of additional data:
State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Parish et al, pg. 66. <sup>3</sup> Parrish et al, pg. 66.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected reflect the historic boundaries associated with the community hall.

#### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Carolyn D. Tuma (caretaker); Jessica Richardson, National Register Staff

organization: individual

street & number: PO BOX 244

city or town: Libuse state: La zip code: 71348

e-mail: cookiet73@bellsouth.net

telephone: 318-473-2745

date: March 2018

#### **Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Maps: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

#### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For

Name of Property

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simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## **Photo Log**

Name of Property: Bohemian Community Hall

City or Vicinity: Libuse

County: Rapides

State: LA

Name of Photographer: Jessica Richardson

Date of Photographs: July 26, 2017

- 1 of 17: Façade of the hall, camera facing east.
- 2 of 17: View of façade and southern elevation; camera facing northeast.
- 3 of 17: Southern elevation; camera facing north.
- 4 of 17: East (rear) elevation; camera facing west.
- 5 of 17: View of east and northern elevation; camera facing southwest.
- 6 of 17: Northern elevation; camera facing southwest.
- 7 of 17: View of façade and northern elevation; camera facing southeast.
- 8 of 17: View of ticket window by entrance; camera facing north.
- 9 of 17: View of stage and interior of community hall; camera facing southeast.
- 10 of 17: Interior of community hall; camera facing south.
- 11 of 17: Interior of community hall; camera facing north.
- 12 of 17: View of front entrance and refreshment booths; camera facing west.
- 13 of 17: View of space behind stage; camera facing east.
- 14 of 17: View of exterior door in refreshment booth; camera facing south.
- 15 of 17: View of original cooler in refreshment booth; camera facing west.
- 16 of 17: Close view of front door; camera facing west.
- 17 of 17: Historic marker on the hall's property; camera facing north.

Name of Property

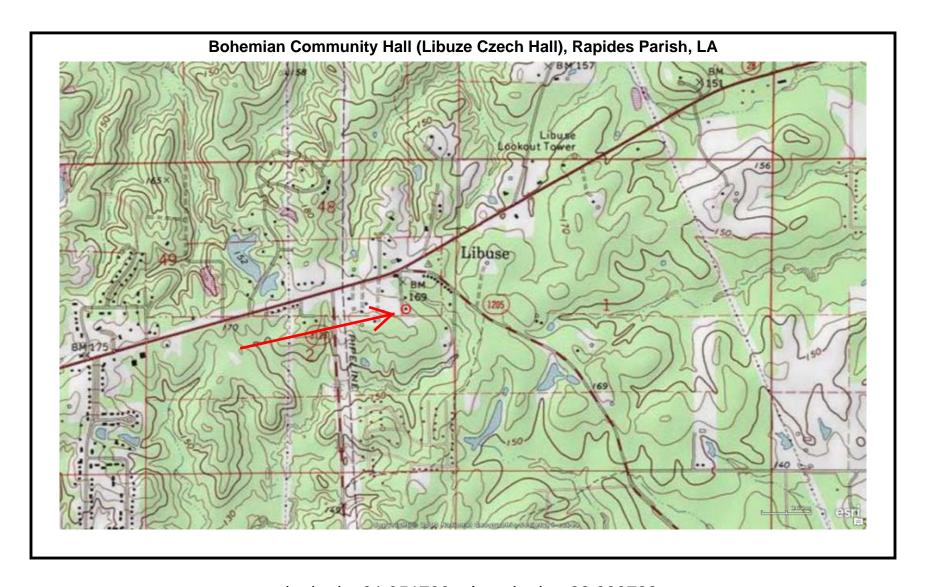
Rapides Parish, LA County and State



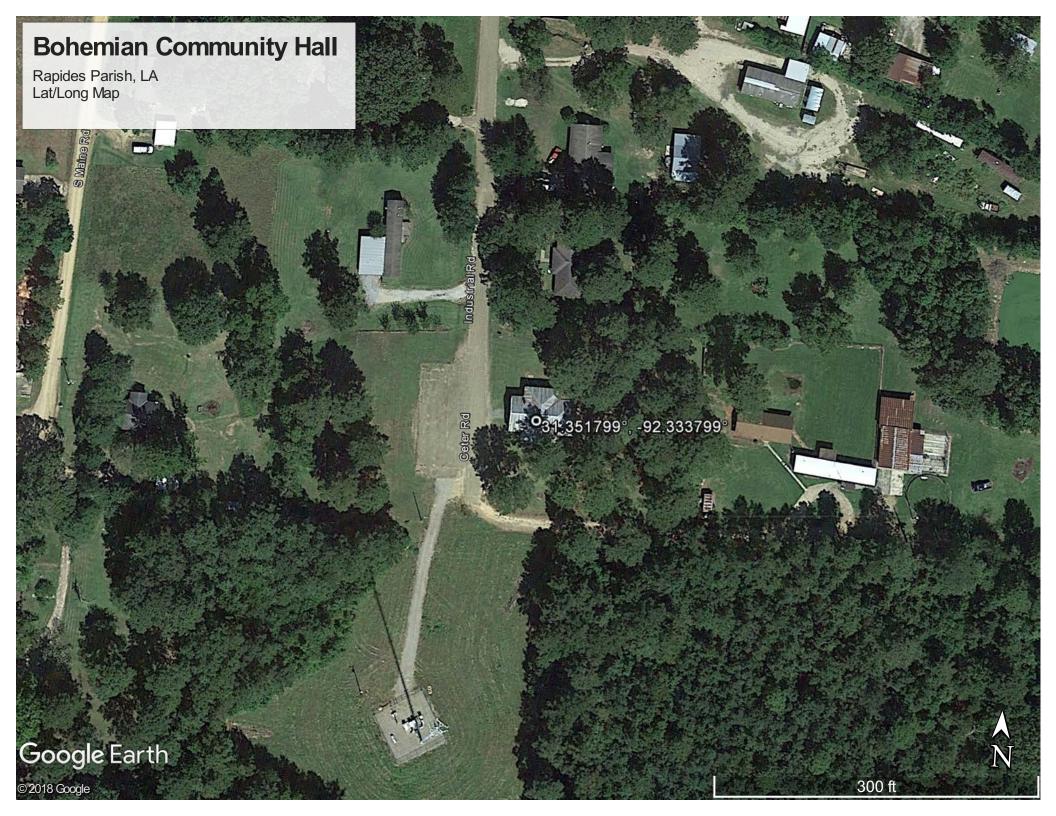
Members of the Libuse community gather around the Bohemian Community Hall in 1940. Image courtesy of Carolyn Tuma.

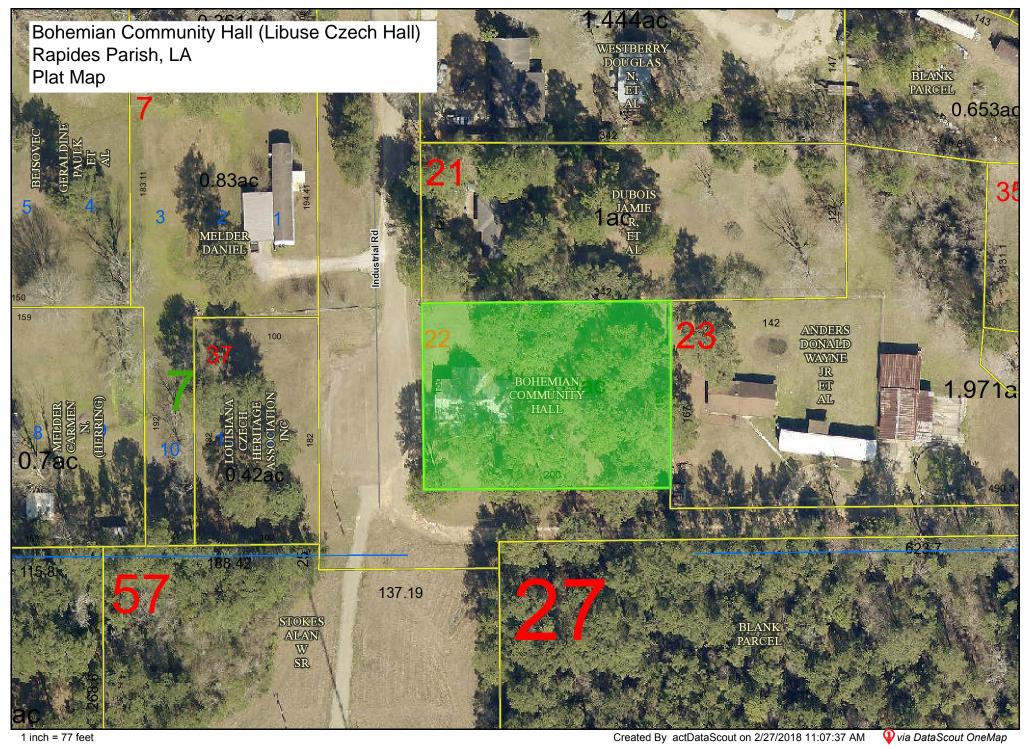
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

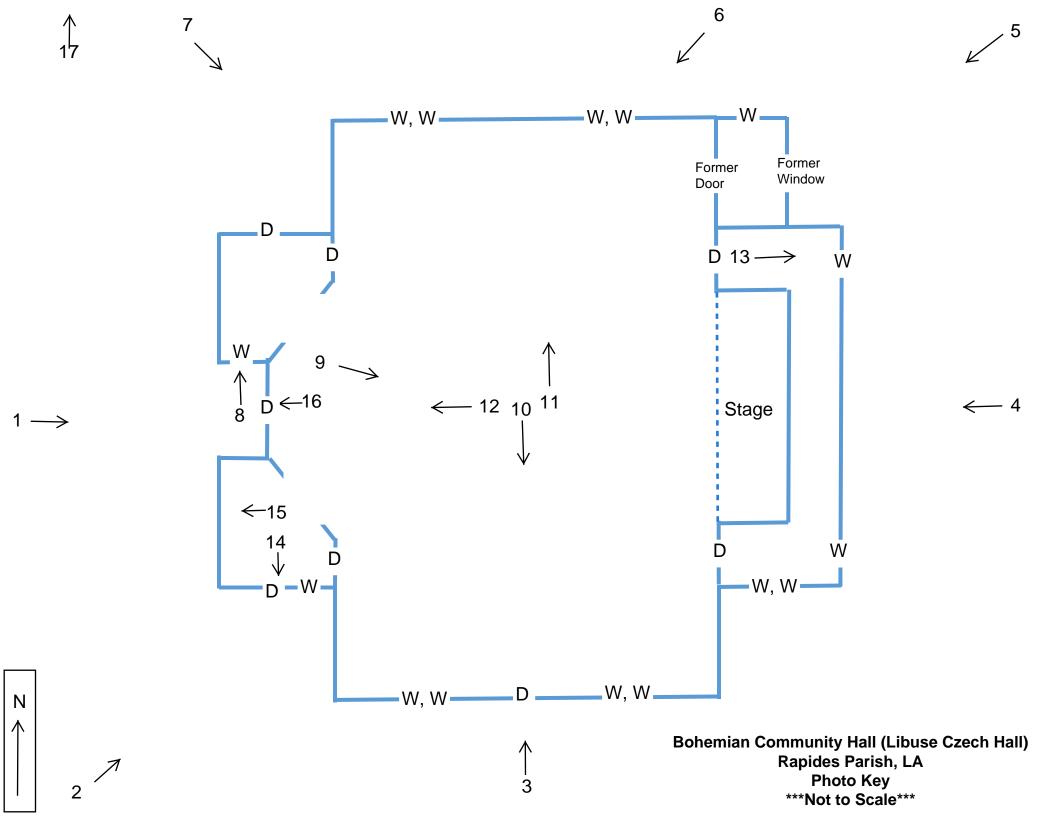
**Estimated Burden Statement**: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Latitude: 31.351799 Longitude: -92.333799









































# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination				
Property Name: Bohemian Community Hall		ity Hall			
Multiple Name:					
State & County:	LOUISIANA, Rapide	98			
Date Rece 5/10/20			of 16th Day: 14/2018	Date of 45th Day: 6/25/2018	Date of Weekly List:
Reference number:	SG100002586				
Nominator:	State				
Reason For Review	r:				
X Accept Abstract/Summary Comments:	A centerpiece in the community identity		ettlement of Lil		touchstone for
Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept / A				
Reviewer Jim Ga	abbert	-	Discipline	Historian	
Telephone (202)3		Date			
DOCUMENTATION	l: see attached co	omments : No se	ee attached Sl	LR : No	
If a nomination is re National Park Servi	turned to the nomina	tion authority, the n	omination is n	o longer under cor	nsideration by the



BILLY NUNGESSER LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

# State of Conisiana

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RICHARD H. HARTLEY DEPUTY SECRETARY

KRISTIN P. SANDERS ASSISTANT SECRETARY



DATE:

May 9, 2018

TO:

Mr. James Gabbert

National Park Service Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20240

FROM:

Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator

Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

RE:

Bohemian Community Hall, Rapides Parish, LA

Jim,

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the National Register Documentation for the Bohemian Community Hall to be placed in the National Register of Historic Places. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 225-219-4595, or <a href="mailto:jrichardson@crt.la.gov">jrichardson@crt.la.gov</a>.

Thanks,

Jessica

Enclosures:

X	_ CD with PDF of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form
X	CD with electronic images (tiff format)
X	Physical Transmission Letter
X	Physical Signature Page, with original signature
	Other:
Comments:	
	Please ensure that this nomination receives substantive review
	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
	The enclosed owner(s) objection(s) do do not
	constitute a majority of property owners. (Publicly owned property)
	Other: