

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ludwig and Christina Welk Homestead

other names/site number Lawrence Welk Birthplace; Mike Welk Farm; ND SITS 32 EM 46

2. Location

street & number 2 1/2 miles North, Northwest of Strasburg not for publication

city or town Strasburg vicinity

state North Dakota code ND county Emmons code 029 zip code 58573

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James E. Sperry September 2, 1993
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

James E. Sperry, State Historic Preservation Officer, North Dakota
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Lynne M. Woodard

10/24/93

Well Homestead
Name of Property

Emmons, North Dakota
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
5	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE

Outbuildings

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls Weatherboard

roof Shake

other BRICK chimneys

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE/European (German-Russian)

Period of Significance

1893-1928

Significant Dates

1893

1899

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ludwig and John Welk (builders)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): None

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

State Historical Society of ND

Welk Homestead
Name of Property

Emmons, North Dakota
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.11 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	114	401661410	5111131210
Zone	Easting		Northing
2	114	401681410	5111131210

3	14	401661410	51111910
Zone	Easting		Northing
4	114	401681410	511111610

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gerald A. Klein, Michael M. Miller and Robert A. Mitchell

organization State Historical Society of North Dakota date 11-19-92

street & number 620 E. Boulevard Avenue telephone 701-224-2672

city or town Bismarck state ND zip code 58505

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Site Description:

Located 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles WNW of Strasburg (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles by road) and lying immediately to the south of Baumgartner Lake, the site is open farmland gradually rising toward the southwest. The (leased area) National Register site of 6.11 acres includes the house and outbuildings, protected by shelterbelts of trees immediately to the northwest and southeast. It is surrounded by a 32.5 acre perimeter buffer area dedicated in the lease to agricultural use. The site and buffer are situated in the southcentral portion of the original 160 acre patented Welk homestead which, together with an 80-acre purchase immediately to the north, comprised Ludwig and Christina's maximum holding of 240 acres. The surrounding countryside in general is gently rolling farmland.

The property is jointly owned by Evelyn and Edna (Welk) Schwab and their respective husbands, Lawrence and James Schwab. Evelyn and Edna are daughters of Ludwig and Christina Welk's youngest son, Mike, who operated the farm after Ludwig's retirement. In 1988 the Schwabs leased it for 99 years to Welk Heritage, Inc. (which changed its name in 1991 to Pioneer Heritage, Inc.), a local non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of restoration and operation of the property as a historical site. The site interprets the ethnic heritage of the Germans-from-Russia who emigrated to southcentral North Dakota, and the career of one of their more illustrious countrymen, bandleader Lawrence Welk, who was born and raised there.

Site Features:

General

Site features extant at the onset of restoration included Ludwig and Christina's second house, a summer kitchen, outhouse, granary-garage and foundation remains of a blacksmith shop, and a non-contributing barn. Buildings are generally gable-roofed, oriented on axes not quite parallel to each other but generally lying NW-SE. No longer extant are the first house, the original barn, two windmills, and a smaller outbuilding to the southwest of the existing barn.

House (contributing)

Accurate position and description of the original house, constructed around 1893 and reportedly located in the same general

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portion of the homestead as the second house, have not yet been firmly determined. Family and local tradition describe the first as a "sod" house rather than dried mud brick; however, in local usage, the term "sod" has been and continues to be loosely applied to both types.

The existing house, facing southwest, was constructed in August 1899 (Sherman, 1970), and is the second house on the site. It consists of three rooms in linear arrangement, measuring approximately 29 ft x 38 ft on the exterior. Soon after completion of the house, a gabled, 11 ft. x 11 ft. entrance vestibule or Vorhausl was added at the west end of the southwest (front) wall, facing to the southwest. From the Vorhausl one enters a kitchen 7 ft wide x 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft deep; the central living/dining room is 12 ft. wide x 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft deep, and the SE bedroom is 12 ft. wide x 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. deep. A brick chimney bears on the wall between the kitchen and living/dining room. Round openings 6 inches in diameter in the upper portion of the interior walls promoted air and heat circulation. In the early years the bedroom was divided in half by a partition with a 6 ft. wide draped opening, which was further closed down to a door opening in 1936. In 1941 the kitchen was partitioned off from the doorway to the living/dining room. A trapdoor in the kitchen floor accesses a shallow cellar, which had collapsing dirt walls. The attic is accessed from an open, wood frame exterior stair on the NW end of the house. The eastern portion of the attic is partitioned off as a 12 ft. x 16 ft. sleeping room, heated only by gravity convection through a floor transfer grill from the bedroom below.

The original principal walls are constructed of Batsa - dried mud-and-straw brick, laid in mud mortar, in three wythes to a thickness of about 18 inches. The outer walls of the Vorhausl are a double wythe of mud brick. The brick are laid generally in common or running bond, with header courses at irregular intervals. The mud brick walls are finished on the interior with mud plaster and protected on the exterior with horizontal clapboard siding fastened to wood studs built edgewise into the mud brick walls. The walls were borne on a shallow foundation of stone with mud mortar. Ceiling joists are 2 x 8 spaced randomly from 16 inches to 29 inches o.c., hung on wrought iron hook bolts from a 6 x 8 center beam which projects above the attic floor in the middle of the room. Attic flooring is 1 x 8 shiplap. The gable end walls are framed with rough 2 x 4 studs with shiplap sheathing, and lap siding continues from below. The wood shingled roof is carried on rough sheathing on rough 2 x 4 rafters. The attic floor is planked with dressed shiplap, and the east half is a finished sleeping room

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with a heat transfer grill in the floor, knee walls along the eaves, a gable end window, and is accessed by a door from the west half.

Interior finishes at various times consisted of paint (probably calcimine) and later wallpaper on walls and ceilings, and paint (including hand-graining) and linoleum on the tongue-and-groove wood floors. The kitchen walls received a painted wainscot treatment in the 1920s. In the 1940s, a decorative pair of red and blue stripes was applied at waist height to the section of corner wall between the entrance door and the kitchen.

Window and door openings are generally to southwest/southeast exposures, although the Vorhausl has a northwest window. A kitchen window in the northeast wall is possibly a later addition. Window frames and sash are set to the outer face of the walls, leaving deep window sills and deep splayed jambs to help diffuse the little available light. The house was not electrified until 1950.

The window sills in the house were filled with flowering potted plants. The house had a flower and shrub garden enclosed within a picket fence which ran from the south corner of the Vorhausl toward the summer kitchen, then southeast beyond the end of the house, then northeast and northwest to the east corner of the house. The fence no longer exists.

Summer Kitchen (Contributing)

The Summerkuche or Summer Kitchen, probably built shortly after the second house, faces the front of the house from a distance of about 40 feet. The two were connected by a narrow concrete walkway. A single room measuring about 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft., the walls were light wood framing sided with random width lx sheathing and painted clapboard siding, with lath and plaster interior walls and ceiling painted and papered. At the west end, the brick chimney bears on a wood storage shelf unit.

Outhouse (Contributing)

The only structure without a gabled roof, the outhouse faces northwest toward the yard between the house and summer kitchen. It measures 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. across the front x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. front-to-back and is of ordinary light wood frame construction with a wood shingle shed roof and with screened side vents. It has occupied various locations on the eastern portion of the site.

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Blacksmith Shop (Contributing)

The original blacksmith shop, built in the 1890s, was supplanted by a later building of undetermined use, also no longer extant. The original shop foundations, 14 ft. x 22 ft., were found to the NNE of the house.

Granary / Garage (Contributing)

A granary measuring about 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. x 18 ft., built NNW of the house, received a 10 ft. garage addition on the NW end, and a much later 6 ft. x 6 ft. shed addition on the NE side. All portions were light wood framing with board sheathing and clapboard siding, with wood plank floor and hinged plank doors. The garage was later modified with lift doors.

Windmill (Not extant)

Information regarding the original well is generally lacking, except that research indicates it was inundated by the lake at high water conditions. The windmill was timber-framed. A second well 90 ft deep was drilled in 1928, and appears with a steel-framed windmill in later photos of the site. Neither windmill is extant.

Barn (Non-contributing)

The existing barn was moved onto the site ca. 1950 by the Welks' youngest son, Mike, who took over the operation from Ludwig. Specific location and appearance of Ludwig's original barn have not been confirmed. Oblique aerial photography indicates a former smaller barn-like outbuilding to the southwest of the Mike Welk barn. The original barn was in the approximate location of the Mike Welk barn.

Stabilization/Restoration/Reconstruction Program

Target date of restoration is 1924, the year in which Lawrence Welk left home on his twenty-first birthday to pursue his career as a musician and showman. The design of various reconstruction features was guided by information gathered through local oral history and confirmed by Eva Welk, who was born on the homestead in 1909 and lived there until the 1930s.

Stabilization, restoration and reconstruction of various site features were executed in 1990; interior restorations were completed in 1991. The house and summer kitchen are protected by

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an electronic intrusion and fire detection system connected to the Strasburg police/fire station.

House stabilization and restoration included realignment/stabilization of mud brick walls, using permanently-installed anchored-base wood posts tied through the ceiling with cables/turnbuckles; installation of new concrete block continuous foundation system; installation of new wood shingle roof; replacement of deteriorated wood siding with new wood siding on applied wood furring strips (95% of wood siding was rotted from inside more than 50% of thickness); exterior painting; removal of added wood stud interior partitions; replacement of deteriorated ceilings; refinishing of interior mud plaster walls with lean cement/mud plaster; replacement of deteriorated windows with matching new window sash; refinishing of entrance doors; reconstruction of a former shed addition on the rear (northeast) face. Future work on the house envisions reconstruction of the picket fence flower/shrub garden enclosure.

Summer Kitchen restoration included new concrete continuous foundation, replacement of rotted sill plates and bottoms of studs; replacement of 75% of wood clapboard siding; exterior painting; installation of new wood shingle roof; and replacement of deteriorated wall and ceiling lath and plaster with plastered gypsum wallboard. Future work includes completion of interior surface finishes and furnishings.

Outhouse work included relocation onto a concrete foundation, about ten feet to the south; new wood shingle roof; repair and repainting of door and siding.

Granary-Garage restoration included removal of a small shed addition on the rear; installation of new concrete continuous foundation; replacement of deteriorated wood framing and siding; installation of new wood shingle roof; and reconstruction of doors to original wood plank configuration.

The Blacksmith Shop was reconstructed of wood clapboard siding on light wood framing, erected on the existing original concrete continuous perimeter foundation, and includes door, windows and dirt floor. As in the house shed reconstruction, design was confirmed by oral history. Furnishings and equipment for a complete blacksmith shop of the period are in storage and await full-time site-manning before installation.

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The barn has received no attention except for general interior cleanup. Plans call for minimal stabilization including reroofing, replacement of elements of deteriorated framing and siding, and exterior painting.

Further plans for site development include erection of a windmill near the granary, and installation of a caretaker residence and a visitor center beyond the trees to either side of the complex.

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Statement of Significance

The Ludwig and Christina Welk Homestead merits nomination under two NR criteria:

It is significant under Criterion A as portraying the lifestyle of a particular ethnic people - the Germans-from-Russia. It is representative of the German-Russian settlement patterns in southcentral North Dakota and the northern plains in general.

It is significant under Criterion C as portraying a specific ethnic building type in its forms and use patterns, and in its materials and construction techniques.

Building Tradition - Germans-from-Russia & other Central Europeans

It was common practice, upon taking up a homestead, for the pioneer German-Russian family to build a small "starter" house, which was supplanted by a larger, more permanent dwelling as soon as they were established and could afford it. Finding lumber a scarce and expensive commodity in the Steppe (as later in the U.S. northern plain), they were taught to build a small, crude house, called a Semeljanka, by the Russian and Ukrainian soldiers. Strictly speaking, Semeljanka in Russian and Ukrainian refers to a half-underground dugout structure covered with an earthen, wood or reed roof. The Germans in Russia applied the term more freely to houses either dug-out or above ground, of rammed clay or sun-dried brick, or with clay-covered roofs. German-Russians in the U.S. sometimes use the term Semeljanka even more freely to include houses of cut sod. (Sallet/Sherman: 187)

Many groups constructed their first houses in the U.S. of cut prairie sod, which was stacked for walls and/or laid butted or shingle-fashion for roofs. Unlike Nebraska and Kansas where many such still exist, in North Dakota these were usually soon replaced by more "permanent" types. As with Semeljanka, in current-day usage the Germans-from Russia apply the term "sod house" broadly, to include earthen houses of all kinds whether or not cut sod was used.

The northern plain, as the Steppe, is nearly devoid of trees. German-Russian earthen houses represent an effective utilization of available materials. The thick-walled construction provides

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excellent thermal lag, which protects the inhabitants from the chill of winter winds and from the summer heat as well.

The more permanent housing types of the various ethnic German groups exhibit wall constructions based on several variants of earth construction incorporating a mixture of clay and grass or straw (and sometimes manure). Often referred to as "puddled clay" or "rammed earth," the mixture can be applied in a number of ways. Sherman describes four types of application (Sallet/Sherman: 186) and Koop and Ludwig describe seven (Koop: 3).

The most prevalent earth applications found in North Dakota include Batsa, or mud brick formed in a wooden box mold, sun-dried, and laid up in mud mortar; Fachwerk, which consists of rubble sandstone flats laid up in mud mortar; and rammed earth, in which the mixture is tamped into a "slip-form" which is raised with the wall. Batsa is used in the Welk House and a number of other houses in the area. Fachwerk appears both in southcentral and western North Dakota, and instances of rammed earth are also found there.

Several features of German-Russian building typology are characteristic, although not necessarily exclusive - some being shared with other central European and possibly other ethnic sources. The three-room floor plan of German-Russian houses can be traced back to their ancestral homeland in Alsace. Which others were brought from Germany and which were borrowed from their eastern host countries - Hungary, Russia and the Ukraine, have not been conclusively determined. Discussions of typology in greater detail can be found in various references. (e.g. Sallet: 193 and Koop: 8)

A structural device frequently found in German-Russian houses is the hanging of ceiling joists on wrought iron J bolts from a central axis beam which rises above the attic floor. Attic access is frequently by an exterior stair at the gable end, rather than from an interior space. Both of these features appear in the Welk House.

While "shelf chimneys" appear in many versions among the houses of various ethnic groups, the German ethnic groups - in particular German-Russians and German-Hungarians - share the practice of supporting a brick chimney on a Stellage - wooden storage shelf unit which stands on the floor. At the Welk site

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this feature appears in the Sommerkuche or summer kitchen, but not in the house.

Interior wall treatments vary from wallpaper to patterned oilcloth to painted oilcloth, but in most instances the walls were originally decorated simply by painting on the smoothed mud plaster which was applied to the interior of the earthen or rock wall. The original paint was probably calcimine - a pigmented water-based composition of calcium carbonate or clay mixed with glue. The term for the paint, in local German dialect, is sounded as Kolchemai. Yellow and blue (national colors of the Ukraine) appear frequently, individually or together, as the original paint colors. (Sallet/Sherman: 192)

Emigration of Germans-from-Russia:

In the mid-eighteenth century, Catherine II - a former German princess from the principality of Anhalt-Zerbst, was Empress of Russia. The Seven Years War ended in 1763, leaving entire regions of Germany in devastation and poverty. Having large tracts of virgin land along the lower Volga River, Catherine in 1763 issued a manifesto inviting foreigners to settle in Russia, to develop the agricultural potential of the land and to populate it as a protective barrier against the nomadic Asiatic tribes who inhabited the region. Many Germans emigrated at this time, to other countries as well as to Russia.

From 1764 to 1767, the first German-speaking colonists responding to Catherine's manifesto were directed to lands along the Volga River. As Russia later acquired the Ukrainian lands north of the Black Sea from Turkey, colonists were then invited to settle in those areas. Similarly, forty to fifty years later, colonists settled the Crimean Peninsula and Bessarabia when these areas were also added to the Russian Empire at Turkey's expense. The Black Sea Germans colonized the region around Odessa in response to an invitation issued in 1803 by Alexander I, the grandson of Catherine.

Colonies were generally organized according to religious denomination. Hence, the Kutschurgan District was entirely Catholic. The German colonists, whether Protestant or Catholic, were free to practice their faith, but they were not permitted to convert the native Russian Orthodox population. Consequently the differences of religion, language and culture resulted in very

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little inter-marriage between the ethnic Germans and their new Slavic countrymen.

While most of the German colonists in this part of Russia were expected to plant crops and engage in farming, many of them were not farmers by trade when they emigrated. Armed with only primitive farm implements and horses or oxen, they tamed the virgin steppe only gradually and with backbreaking labor. Those who couldn't or wouldn't make their fields produce were sometimes subjected to public flogging by their own officials. The farms of the German colonists became models of efficiency and productivity in Imperial Russia. In time these farmers were able to acquire or manufacture more durable tools, and the region eventually was transformed into the "breadbasket" of Russia.

Almost three hundred "mother colonies" were founded throughout Russia during the settlement years. As the population grew, more acreage was acquired for the landless. Thus numerous "daughter colonies" were founded, and eventually there were more than three thousand ethnic German settlements in Russia. Schools and churches provided instruction and worship in the native German language, and the colonists were able to maintain the distinctive customs, dress, musical tastes and dialects of their ancestral homelands.

In 1871, Czar Alexander II revoked the preferential rights and privileges given to the colonists by Catherine II and Alexander I. As a result, the colonists were reduced to the status of Russian peasants and subject to the same laws and obligations including, in 1874, military conscription for the first time. The colonists felt that the Russian Crown was guilty of a breach of contract, and many contemplated leaving Russia.

Ludwig Bette, a former colonist, had led a party of eighty-three friends from the Black Sea to the United States in 1849. During the summer of 1872, he decided to visit relatives and friends in the Black Sea colony of Johannestal in Russia. Noting their unrest and dissatisfaction at the recent changes, he extolled the virtues of the United States and urged emigration.

During that year four groups, totalling 175 men, women and children, emigrated and wintered at Sandusky, Ohio before moving on to Yankton, Dakota Territory, where they arrived by special freight train in the spring of 1873 during one of the worst blizzards on record. When the weather cleared, they located

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available land and homesteaded eighteen miles southwest of Yankton at what is now Lesterville, South Dakota.

When Czar Alexander III ascended to the Russian throne in 1881, Russification remained the official policy. School instruction was to be conducted in the Russian language, and all rights of self-government in the German villages were lost. Hesitant to make the long overseas emigration journey, many colonists decided to stay in Russia. In actual numbers, more remained than emigrated to North and South America. But the changing social conditions in Russia, and the extensive promotion in Russia by American railroad agents offering free land under the Homestead Act, were powerful incentives for young families to emigrate. A movement was started which grew and continued unabated until its halt by the outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914.

Settlement of Germans-from-Russia in North America:

A total of 120,000 Germans-from-Russia emigrated to the United States between 1870 and 1920. The initial settlement of the Black Sea Germans in the Dakota territory, in the southeastern area near Yankton, was followed by movement into central Dakota Territory with concentration in what is now southcentral North Dakota, most particularly Emmons, Logan and McIntosh counties.

Significantly large colonies of Catholic Black Sea Germans are found in North Dakota. In 1885, emigres from the colony of Selz, Kherson Province, Russia, moved into the vicinity of present-day Hague, ND, at that time naming the colony Selz. Colonists from Elsass, Kutschurgan District, founded the settlement of Elsass in the following few years. In May, 1889, the village of Tirsbol was settled by colonists from Strassburg, Kutschurgan District. In 1902, when the Milwaukee Road extended its rail line from Eureka, SD to Linton, ND, Strasburg was founded about one and one-half miles south of Tirsbol by four Catholic Black Sea Germans who built a store next to the railroad station. In 1906, the Tirsbol church was moved into Strasburg and the village of Tirsbol was abandoned. In 1930, Strasburg numbered approximately seven hundred inhabitants, of whom 90% were Catholic Black Sea Germans.

The 1900 census listed Germans-from-Russia as the third largest percentage of foreign born in North Dakota, and by 1920 their numbers in North Dakota totaled 70,000. They comprised 95.5% of the population in McIntosh County and 72.9% in Emmons County. The 1965 census lists them as still representing 96.6% in

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McIntosh, 88.5% in Logan and 62.7% in Emmons County. (Sherman, 1983) North Dakota today numbers more than twice as many Germans-from-Russia as any other of the United States.

The U.S. Homestead Act of 1862 required that the new German-Russian settlers live on their individual 160-acre farms, rather than in small villages or colonies as they had in Russia. Although this fact resulted in alterations of their lifestyle and socialization process, their group identity and ethnic traditions have remained strong.

Of those who made the crossing, the Volga Germans tended to settle in cities in the U.S. middle west, while the Black Sea Germans acquired land and homesteaded in Nebraska, Kansas and the Dakotas. Others settled in western Canada by purchase and homesteading. Volga Germans associated with the sugar beet industry in Colorado and western Nebraska, while most Black Sea Germans became wheat growers in the Dakotas and Canada. Some Black Sea Germans later became grape growers in California. Today the descendants of the early Germans-from-Russia are living primarily in California, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Washington, and in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Brief History of the Ludwig and Christina Welk Family

Over the span of less than one hundred years the Welk ancestors inhabited four different countries on two continents. They were participants in a larger migration of German-speaking peoples in search of "Lebensraum", room to live, a place in which to prosper and raise their families in relative freedom.

In the closing days of the eighteenth century, a young German tailor, Moritz Welk, migrated from his home village of Erbach in the region of Ulm, in southern Germany, to the village of Winzenbach in Lower Alsace, France. In 1802 he married a native Winzenbach girl by the name of Magdalena Arth. Their first child, Kasper Welk, was born in Winzenbach in 1804. In 1808 they emigrated to southern Russia. Theirs was one of a hundred German Catholic families who were sent to found the village of Selz in the Kutschurgan District northwest of the seaport of Odessa on the Black Sea.

The family of Moritz and Magdalena Welk continued to grow in Selz. The existing records from a census of Selz taken in 1816 indicate that there were two more sons by that time. However,

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our discussion is concerned with the descendants of the eldest son, Kasper, who grew to maturity in the new colony of Selz. He was married, most probably around the mid-1820s, to Magdalena Gutenberg who, like Kasper, was a native of the ancestral village of Winzenbach, Alsace. In Russia, however, her family had settled in the Kutschurgan village of Strassburg, near Selz. Theirs was probably an arranged marriage, as was the common custom at this time.

The colonist farmers often engaged in other trades as well. Although it is not known how or when, some members of the Welk family became blacksmiths. We do know that this trade was practiced by Johannes Welk, son of the afore-mentioned Kasper. Johannes Welk was born, ca. the 1830s, in Selz and grew up there. He married Marianna Schweitzer who, like his mother, came from the nearby colony of Strassburg. They raised seven children - an average-sized family in that time and place. Of those seven children, one died young, five emigrated to North America, and the oldest, Bernard, stayed in Russia. (Today, some of Bernard's descendants are living in central Soviet Asia where many of the German-Russians were forcibly re-settled in the 1950s following exile to Siberian slave labor camps at the close of World War II). The third child of Johannes and Marianna Welk, Ludwig Welk was born at Selz on August 24, 1864. He grew to manhood in Selz and eventually married Christina Schwahn, who had been born on March 1, 1871, also at nearby Strassburg. As his father before him, Ludwig Welk was a farmer and a blacksmith.

The earlier Kutschurganers settled in eastern South Dakota, and were followed by others who moved on into North Dakota. A group of eleven families in 1889 settled the village of Tirsbol, one and one-half miles to the north of what is now Strasburg, in Emmons County. Ludwig Welk's younger sister, Rosina, and her husband, Michael Klein, had come to Eureka, SD in 1892, and undoubtedly encouraged Ludwig and Christina to come over to the new land. Bringing only a few treasured possessions with them, the Welks arrived in New York in April of 1893. They traveled by rail as far as Eureka, SD and acquired a team of oxen and provisions for the trek to North Dakota. They staked out their homestead three miles west of Tirsbol on a piece of ground which overlooks Baumgartner Lake to the north.

Ludwig and Christina had lost their first child, Anton, before leaving Russia. When they emigrated in 1893, Christina was pregnant with their second child, John, who was born July 3, 1893, not long after their arrival in North Dakota. They had

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much to do in those first few months - building their first home, planting a crop and getting ready for their first winter on the Great Plains.

Ludwig and Christina's first house saw the births of Barbara on February 1, 1895, Anna Mary on November 12, 1896 and Louie on May 24, 1898. Their second house, completed in August, 1899 (Sherman, survey notes) and still standing on the site, was the birthplace of Agatha on May 18, 1900, Lawrence on March 11, 1903, Michael on August 21, 1905 and Eva on December 24, 1909.

Lawrence was raised on the farm, assisting the family in the various chores and labors, meanwhile learning to play the accordion from his father, and attending the local catholic school in which the Sisters conducted classes in the German language. Finding himself not particularly apt nor interested in farming, he left home on his twenty-first birthday, to begin the career in musical entertainment which has brought him international renown.

After Ludwig and Christina Welk retired to Strasburg in 1928, the farm was operated until 1965 by their youngest son, Michael, and his wife, Catherine (Hager) Welk. Their four children were born there, Evelyn in 1929, followed by Edna, Louis and Diane. Today the land is owned and farmed jointly by Michael's daughters Evelyn and Edna and their respective husbands, the brothers Lawrence and James Schwab, who are also descended from Germans-from-Russia.

Pioneer Heritage, Inc., a non-profit organization formed in Strasburg, North Dakota, specifically for the purpose of restoring the Welk homestead, operates the historical site as a resource for educating future visitors about the Germans-from-Russia.

Documentary history of this ethnic group is being preserved through efforts of the Germans-from-Russia Heritage Society, headquartered in Bismarck, ND. Its official records depository is the Institute for Regional Studies at North Dakota State University in Fargo.

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Emmons County, North Dakota

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Sherman, Fr. William C. Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota. Fargo, ND: NDSU Institute for Regional Studies, 1983.

Sherman, Fr. William C. Unpublished notes and survey, 1970.

Torma, Carolyn, and Steven Ruple. Field Guide to Historic Sites in South Dakota. Vermillion, SD: State Historic Preservation Center, 1987.

Welk, Eva. Interview with R.A. Mitchell. Aberdeen, SD. 30 Sept 1988.

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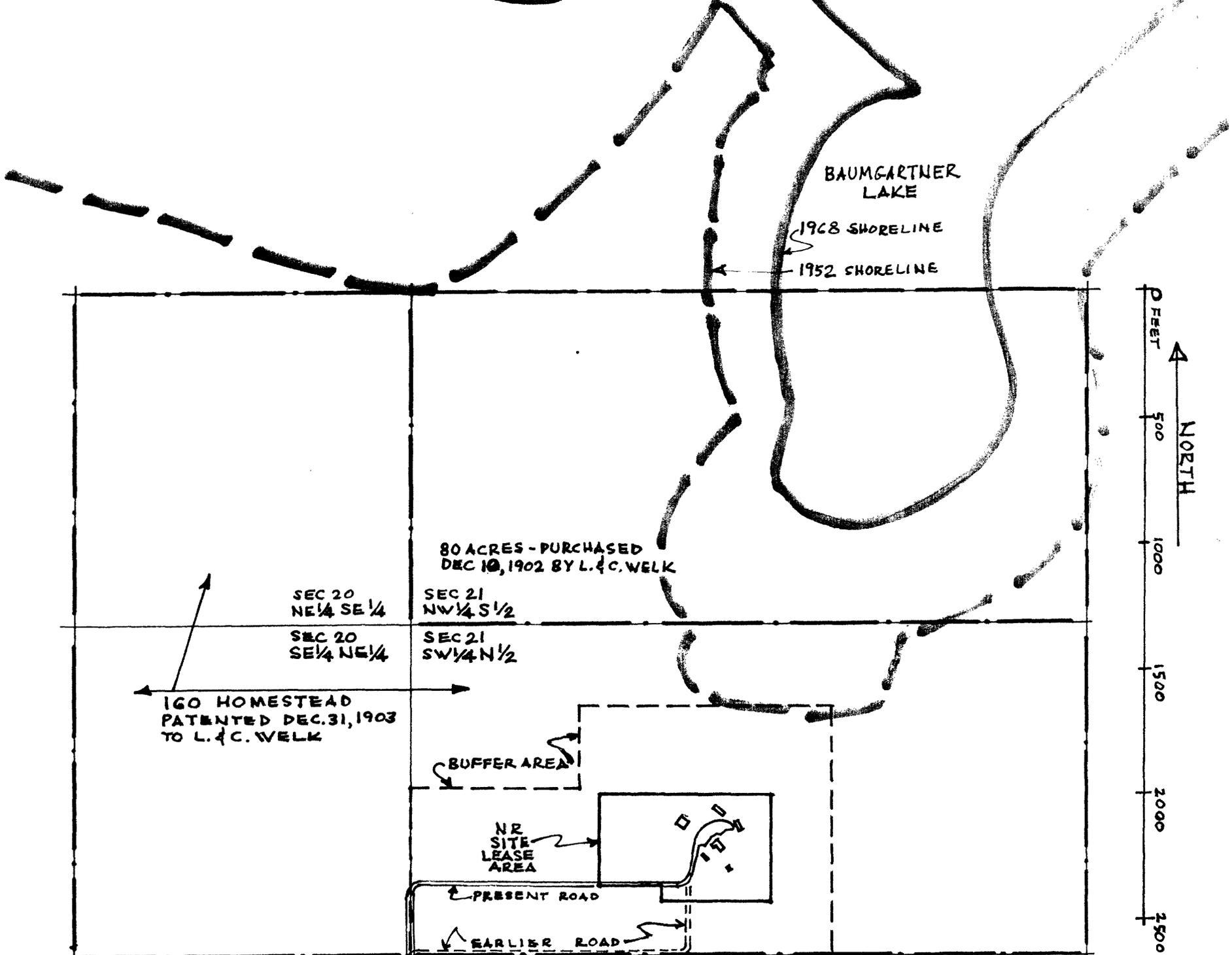
Ludwig & Christina Welk Homestead
Emmons County, North Dakota

Verbal Boundary Description

Emmons County, ND; T 131 N, R 76 W of 5th principal meridian; beginning at a point 1597 feet North and 737 feet East of the Southwest corner of Section 21; thence East 253 feet; thence South 66 feet; thence East 420 feet; thence North 420 feet; thence West 673 feet; thence South 354 feet to the point of beginning (consisting of 6 acres more or less).

Boundary Justification

Ludwig & Christina Welk Homestead per 1903 patent = 80 acres (NE 1/4 SE 1/4 and SE 1/4 NE 1/4) of Section 20 plus 80 acres (SW 1/4 N 1/2) of Section 21 (the latter including the house & outbuildings). Total holdings included another 80 acres (NW 1/4 S 1/2) of Section 21 immediately to the north, purchased in 1902. The Site boundary describes that portion of Section 21, lying within the patented homestead and including the house and outbuildings, which the owners have leased for 99 years to Welk Heritage, Inc., for purposes of stabilization, restoration, reconstruction, preservation and operation as a historical site.



80 ACRES - PURCHASED
DEC 10, 1902 BY L. & C. WELK

SEC 20
NE 1/4 SE 1/4

SEC 21
NW 1/4 S 1/2

SEC 20
SE 1/4 NE 1/4

SEC 21
SW 1/4 N 1/2

160 HOMESTEAD
PATENTED DEC. 31, 1903
TO L. & C. WELK

BUFFER AREA

NR
SITE
LEASE
AREA

PRESENT ROAD

EARLIER ROAD

FOOT
500
1000
1500
2000
2500
NORTH

1320'
20'
29/28

L. & C. WELK HOMESTEAD (32EM346)
T 131 N, R 76 W of 5TH P. MERIDIAN 8/30/90 R.M.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93001102

Date Listed: 10/28/93

Property Name: Welk, Ludwig and Christina, Homestead
County: Emmons State: North Dakota

none
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Rene M. Culland
Signature of the Keeper

October 28, 1993
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5. Classification: The count of resources is hereby amended to four contributing buildings and two noncontributing buildings. The total is likewise amended to four contributing and two noncontributing resources.

Section 7. Description. The blacksmith shop is hereby designated as a noncontributing building because of its recent date as a reconstruction.

Rolene Schlieffman, architectural historian, of the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment on October 28, 1993.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)