

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SEP 15 1989

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

German-Russian Wrought-Iron Cross Sites in Central North Dakota

B. Associated Historic Contexts

German-Russian Ethnic Settlement in Central North Dakota, 1884-1936;
The German-Russian Wrought-Iron Cross Tradition in Central North Dakota,
1884-1936

C. Geographical Data

The geographical area that encompasses known and potential German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites in central North Dakota is an extremely large one (see map on continuation sheet C-1). The eastern boundary is State Highway 1, extending from the North Dakota/South Dakota state line (at a point 6 miles southwest of the town of Ludden, North Dakota), and generally running north along Highway 1 approximately 200 miles to the intersection of Highway 1 and State Highway 17 (4 miles east of the town of Edmore). The western boundary runs along the Missouri River from the North Dakota/South Dakota state border north to the state capitol of Bismarck and then continues north along U.S. Highway 83 to Minot. The southern boundary parallels the North Dakota/South Dakota state border and extends some 115 miles from the Missouri River east to State Highway 1 southwest of the town of Ludden. The northern boundary extends from the city of Minot east along U.S. Highway 2 to the city of Rugby, thence north 11 miles on State Highway 3 to the intersection of State Highways 3 and 17; from this point, the northern boundary extends eastward 53 miles along Highway 17 to State Highway 20, thence 5 miles south to the intersection of State Highways 20 and 17, thence east 24 miles on Highway 17 to the intersection of State Highways 17 and 1.

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

James E. Sperry
Signature of certifying official James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)

August 31, 1989

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

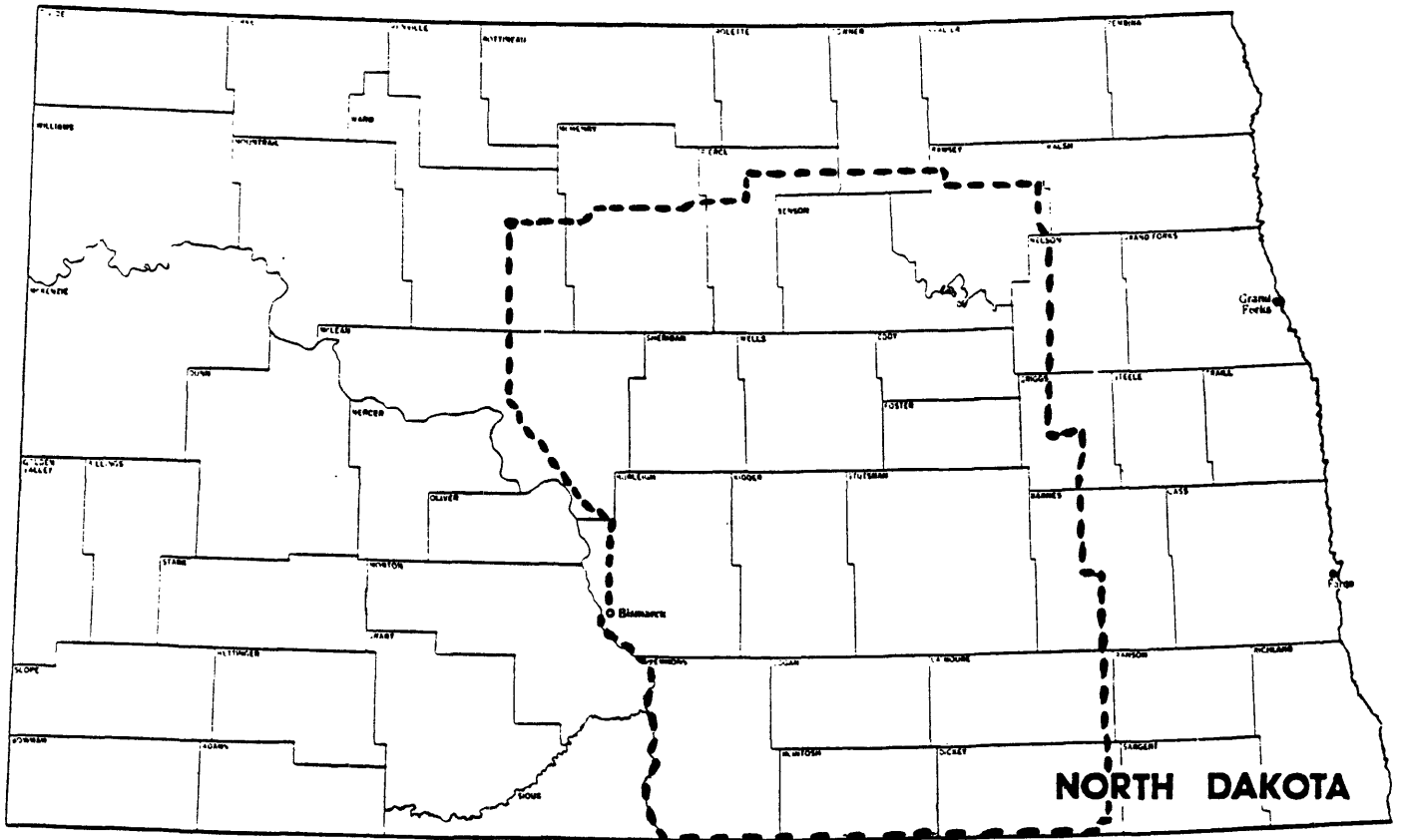
Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

10/23/89
Date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number C Page 1



NOTE: Dotted lines on above map show geographical limits of the large area in central North Dakota--east of the Missouri River--where German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites exist or are likely to exist. The area includes ten entire counties and portions of twelve other counties within the state.

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

INTRODUCTION

The state of North Dakota has a diverse number of prehistoric, historic, architectural, artistic, and other cultural resources. One of the least known and most poorly documented resources, however, is the large number of German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites found throughout the state. Perhaps no other area of the United States includes so many examples of traditional, blacksmith-made iron grave crosses as North Dakota.

Allen I. Olson, former governor of North Dakota, was asked in 1982 to comment on the many wrought-iron crosses that dot the prairies of his state. Reflecting on this unique cultural resource, Governor Olson wrote: "Blacksmithing is an epic occupation, fundamental to the development of our agricultural economy. The religious experience which these crosses symbolize is equally fundamental to our civilization. These two factors combine to form a body of art, a beautiful balance of the sacred and the secular, an achievement worthy of praise. The work that the iron crosses represent and the meaning they hold are an integral part of the foundation upon which North Dakota society is based" (Vrooman and Marvin, 1982: p. vii).

In recent years, the distinctive funerary folk art of the German Russians has become the subject of increasing public awareness and scholarly attention. Nonetheless, the wrought-iron cross sites of the German Russians remain relatively unknown and scantily recorded.

Even many modern-day descendants of the original German-Russian settlers in North Dakota are unaware of the wrought-iron cross tradition and the enigmatic, rural blacksmiths who kept it alive. In January, 1987, Louis Snider--North Dakota's last German-Russian iron cross maker--passed away at the age of 85 (Kloberdanz, 1988: pp. 24-27). Thus, the need for identifying, documenting, and contextualizing North Dakota's wrought-iron cross sites is not merely an important one: it is of utmost urgency.

This contextual discussion focuses on two historic contexts that are interrelated: the ethnic settlement of Germans from Russia in central North Dakota from 1884-1936 and the German-Russian wrought-iron cross tradition that flourished and declined during the same period.

More than a century has passed since the first German Russians took up homesteads in the south-central portion of what is now the state of North Dakota. In all but a few cases, their original earthen homes and simply-constructed pioneer churches are gone. But many of their rural cemeteries and blacksmith-made, wrought-iron crosses endure. The wrought-iron crosses of the Germans from Russia represent much more than a unique type of prairie grave marker or funerary folk art; these hand-crafted crosses represent an important period in this nation's history, when European immigrants settled on the vast American Plains and, in so doing, left an indelible mark on the land.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 1

In this multiple property submission, the German-Russian wrought-iron cross site is identified as an historically-significant and culturally-relevant property type. Twenty-three wrought-iron cross sites (representing fourteen German-Russian ethnic cemeteries) are singled out and included on separate registration forms in this multiple property submission. Altogether, the twenty-three sites contain more than four hundred individual wrought-iron crosses designed and made by early German-Russian blacksmith-artisans.

The wrought-iron cross sites identified and discussed in this multiple property submission, however, do not exhaust the total number of existing sites in central North Dakota. It is hoped other wrought-iron cross sites (in central North Dakota and perhaps elsewhere) will be documented and studied as well. Additional research promises to add not only to our knowledge of this distinctive type of funerary folk art but also to a deeper, richer understanding of the ethnic American experience in the Great Plains region.

GERMAN-RUSSIAN ETHNIC SETTLEMENT IN CENTRAL NORTH DAKOTA, 1884-1936.

To understand the wrought-iron cross tradition of the German Russians that was brought from the steppes of Russia to the prairies of North Dakota, it is vitally important to understand something about the people, their cultural history, and their unique Old World experiences.

The German Russians trace their origin to the first German-speaking settlers who were invited to make their homes in Russia by the ruling tsars. Even during the days of Tsar Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584), ethnic Germans could be found living within the borders of the Russian Empire. In 1763, Tsarina Catherine II ("Catherine the Great"), herself a former German princess, invited potential colonists from her native country to live in Russia as agrarian settlers. Thousands accepted the tsarina's invitation and more than a hundred German settlements were established along the lower Volga river in the 1760s (Koch, 1977; Walters, 1982). Later, Tsar Alexander I (a grandson of Catherine the Great), encouraged German peasants and craftsmen to settle in the newly-acquired lands of the Ukraine north of the Black Sea. This second great migration of German settlers occurred in 1804 and resulted in the eventual establishment of hundreds of German villages in the Black Sea region (Giesinger, 1974; Height 1972, 1975, 1979).

The Germans who settled in the Russian Empire during the reigns of Catherine II and Alexander I were assured numerous "special privileges." These included: free land, exemption from military and civil service, tax-free loans, local self-government, and freedom of religion (Stumpp, 1971). During their long sojourn in the land of the tsars, the German settlers were allowed to maintain their German language, folkways,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 2

and identity as "nemetskie kolonisty" (German colonists). Each German settlement was fairly homogeneous in its regional and religious composition. Thus, Protestant Hessians often established their own villages, as did Alsatian Catholics, Protestant Swabians, Mennonite Prussians, etc. (Height, 1979: pp. 105-119).

For decades, the German colonists in Russia lived in self-contained, largely self-sufficient villages. As was common in their German homeland, the settlers lived in "Doerfer" (agriculturally-based villages). In most cases, a large church stood at the center of their settlement and dominated their lives from birth to death. Following Russian custom, the cemetery was located a short distance from the church and was often located away from the entire village. (This differed greatly from the old German homeland custom of having a "Kirchhof" or churchyard.) Despite their desire to keep themselves "pure German," the colonists incorporated a number of Russian and Ukrainian practices, ranging from cuisine and clothing to architectural designs and Russian swear words (Stumpp, 1978: pp. 294-321).

The biggest challenge that the German colonists in Russia faced was the surrounding physical environment itself. Their original German homeland was a country of green hills and lush valleys. In Russia, however, the colonists were forced to adapt to an entirely different setting. They had to farm and establish villages on the treeless, level steppes of Russia--a country where one could gaze in any direction and behold an unobscured horizon. While the first settlers experienced discomfort and environmental shock, succeeding generations of German Russians grew accustomed to life on the expansive Russian steppes.

In the 1870s, however, a number of factors prompted many Germans living in Russia to contemplate immigration to the New World. In 1871, Tsar Alexander II abrogated many of the special privileges guaranteed the German colonists in earlier manifestoes. Self government at the local village level was curtailed and the long appreciated exemption from Russian military service was revoked. To add to their problems, the Germans in Russia faced a number of economic crises in the 1870s as well. These vexations included: low grain profits, drought conditions, and a shortage of arable land (Giesinger, 1974: pp. 223-234).

By the autumn of 1872, the first Black Sea German colonists had left the Russian Empire intent on settling in "Amerika." Thousands of others soon followed, prompted by worsening land shortages, military conscription, and new Russification policies (Sallet, 1974, pp. 14-15; Rath, 1977: pp. 52-57).

In most cases, the German immigrants from Russia desired to settle in that portion of the New World where there were unsettled, treeless grasslands suitable for grain farming. Coincidentally, the arrival of the Germans from Russia in the United States occurred at about the same time that the Great Plains region was opened for settlement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 3

In the 1870s, the Volga Germans chose to settle in the central plains states of Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado. The Black Sea Germans, however, generally headed north into what was then known as Dakota Territory. Lured by the promise of free homestead land, the Black Sea Germans settled near what is now Yankton, South Dakota in 1873. As land was taken up around Yankton, new immigrants continued to arrive from Russia and they headed north by wagon and oxen to claim homesteads of their own (Sallet, 1974: pp. 22-28).

The vast majority of the Germans from Russia who settled in Dakota Territory were "Schwarzmeerdeutsche" (Black Sea Germans). In many ways, they found the treeless Dakota prairies similar to the steppes of the Ukraine. But they disliked the rocky soil and severe winters that they all too often encountered. Worst of all, the early settlers disliked the isolation of homestead life since immigrant families had to live miles apart from one another on their own claim.

The first German Russians who entered what is now the state of North Dakota were Black Sea German immigrants. These settlers came into the south-central portion of the state in 1884 and took up homesteads near present day Zeeland, North Dakota (located in the southwest corner of McIntosh County). This small group of immigrant homesteaders was the vanguard of a large number of Germans from Russia who would follow. From 1884 until the outbreak of World War I (1914), thousands of Black Sea German immigrants made their homes in North Dakota.

Although German-Russian immigration to the United States ended in 1914, Black Sea Germans within central North Dakota continued to be on the move whenever new economic opportunities or choice farmland became available elsewhere. The usual pattern of German-Russian settlement was for the first immigrant families to seek employment where relatives and friends already had put down roots. In a few years or even months, later arrivals often moved on to other rural areas to acquire farms of their own. The Black Sea Germans of central North Dakota valued stability but they also prided themselves in being "ein Volk auf dem Weg" (a people on the move). Even as late as the 1930s, land-hungry German Russians were establishing new settlement areas in central North Dakota. German-Russian families, for example, settled near Crary (in Ramsey County) during the 1930s and also south of Nortonville in LaMoure County (Sherman, 1983: pp. 88,110).

Because the year 1884 marks the beginning of the German-Russian presence in North Dakota, this date provides a convenient beginning point for discussing the German-Russian ethnic settlement in the central portion of the state. The cut-off date is perhaps more problematic except for the fact that 1936 is remembered by many German Russians in the state as "das grosse Jahr" (the big year). Before this date, German-Russians continued to expand their land holdings and establish new rural settlements in central North Dakota. But 1936 signalled a year of innumerable changes,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 4

enormous hardships, and the end of self-imposed cultural isolation. For the German Russians of central North Dakota, 1936 was undoubtedly the worst year of the Great Depression. According to historian Gordon L. Iseminger, whose research focused on McIntosh County (the oldest and most densely populated German-Russian county in central North Dakota), 1936 was characterized by severe heat, drought, dust storms, and extreme winter cold. To complicate matters, eighty-seven percent of the German-Russian county's 9,000 residents "were receiving [government] relief in the form of direct cash payments, almost always in return for work" (Iseminger, 1984: p. 23). Movement to other areas of North Dakota was seldom attempted, because drought conditions and economic hardships prevailed throughout the Upper Great Plains region. If and when North Dakota's German Russians chose to move on in search of "greener pastures," they invariably headed farther west (i.e., California, Oregon, or Washington). Thus, 1936 can be viewed as an appropriate cut-off date for German-Russian ethnic settlement and expansion in central North Dakota.

Primary areas of German-Russian ethnic settlement in south-central and north-central North Dakota--east of the Missouri River--include the following counties and towns, along with the dates of earliest German-Russian settlement (Sherman and Thorson, 1988: pp. 135-136; Sherman, 1983):

McIntosh County: Zeeland (1884), Ashley (1885), Venturia (1885), Wishek (1885), Lehr (1886)

Emmons County: Hague (1885), "St. Aloysius" (1886), "Tirsbol" (1888), Hazelton (1888), Linton (1889), Strasburg (1889), "Grassna" (1899), Kintyre (1905), "Rosenthal" (1906)

LaMoure County: Kulm (1886), Jud (1889), Edgeley (1890), Alfred (1891), Nortonville (1930s)

Dickey County: Merricourt (1888), Ellendale (1890), Monango (1890), Fullerton (1900s)

Logan County: Fredonia (1890), Gackle (1891), Napoleon (1893)

Burleigh County: Bismarck (1890)

Wells County: Fessenden (1890), Harvey (1892)

Stutsman County: Streeter (1891), Windsor (1896), Kensal (1898), Medina (1898)

Pierce County: Balta (1892), Brazil (1892), Rugby (1892), Selz (1892), Fulda (1899), Orrin (1899), "Old Mt. Carmel" (1900)

Benson County: "Odessa"--Saint Boniface (1895), Esmond (1905)

McLean County: Underwood (1896), Turtle Lake (1900s), Mercer (1904)

Kidder County: Tappen (1898), Pettibone (1899)

Ramsey County: Devils Lake (1898), Crary (1930s)

Sheridan County: Goodrich (1899), McClusky (1899), Denhoff (1900s)

McHenry County: Karlsruhe (1900), Anamoose (1900s), Velva (1900s), "Blumenfeld" (1903), Towner (1905)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 5

As in Russia, the early immigrants tended to settle close to other German Russians of the same religious affiliation and regional background. Thus, Black Sea German Catholics from the Kutschurgan area of Russia grouped themselves together in pioneer communities like Hague, Strasburg, Grassna, Balta, Rugby, Selz, Fulda, and Orrin. Protestant Black Sea Germans from the "Glueckstal" and Bessarabian areas of South Russia congregated in communities like Ashley, Lehr, Gackle, Kulm, Ellendale, Goodrich, and Mercer. These early ethnic communities were German-speaking and thus were served by clergymen familiar with the German language. Social contact with "outsiders" was limited and intermarriage with individuals of a different ethnic background or religious affiliation was frowned upon and discouraged. Perhaps for this reason, many of the early German-Russian settlers brought with them to the prairies of North Dakota the Old World institution of "Kupplerei" (marriage-arrangement). It was the belief of the early settlers that community matchmakers were the best decision-makers in terms of pairing up bridal couples. An old German-Russian proverb reaffirms this belief: "Jedes Kessele hat sein Deckle--Every kettle has its matching lid" (Height, 1975: p. 304).

To accentuate feelings of ethnic solidarity, the German-Russian immigrants relied on the church (whether Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed) to provide a heightened sense of group unity and awareness. The rural immigrant church was particularly important in this respect, especially for isolated German-Russian homesteaders. The rural church was more than merely a clay-brick or simple white frame building on the prairie. It was the focus of the lives of the early immigrant settlers, just as the centrally-located village church had been in the old country (Aberle, 1963: pp. 153-154).

For the German Russians in central North Dakota, the rural church was the weekly place for public worship. But it also provided opportunities for social interaction: casual conversation, exchanges of news and gossip, courtship, barter and trade, and even political discussions. In many cases, the immigrant families would spend the entire Sunday gathered at the site of their rural church. Following the worship service, church members congregated together in small groups and shared the food they had brought. During the winter, these informal gatherings were held inside the church. In warmer months, families enjoyed picnics on the church grounds or sat in the shade of their wagons to eat and converse.

The importance of the rural church for many German Russians was summed up by researcher Phyllis Hertz Feser, who never severed the tie that bound her to her own German-Russian church community in rural North Dakota: ". . . ours is a country church, one of many that dot the North Dakota countryside. Our church is the center of our existence, the thing around which everything else [revolves]. Not that our own families aren't of greater importance than the church, they are, but our church is our first contact with the outside world, our social outlet as well as our guide to live by. During the week

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number E Page 6

our lives revolve around working, playing, and learning, but always with thoughts about God and church" (Vrooman and Marvin, 1982: p. 20).

In addition to weekly religious services, the rural church provided a formal meeting place for the observance of festive and solemn occasions. These events included everything from Easter and Christmas celebrations to baptisms and funerals. Because the rural church of the German Russians was made up of many families who were related by blood or marriage ties, the congregation prided itself in being a "Grossfamilie" (a large, extended family). Thus, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals usually were attended by all of the church members. In countless ways, the rural church of the German Russians in North Dakota took the place of the village in Russia. Its importance cannot be underestimated in any historical assessment of the German-Russians' ethnic experience in central North Dakota.

In some cases, German-Russian homesteaders were able to join churches that had been established in neighboring towns. These small town churches often had the appeal and flavor of rural churches since most of the congregation was comprised of homesteaders and farmers. Many of the towns were located alongside the railroad and usually included a church or two, a livery stable, grain elevators, the ubiquitous tavern, and a blacksmith shop.

The blacksmith, whether working as a full-time craftsman in a small town or as a part-time specialist who also farmed, was an extremely important addition to every pioneer community. Perhaps for this reason, few German-Russian immigrant settlements in central North Dakota were without their own blacksmith. The "Schmied" (blacksmith) played a dominant role during the first decades of settlement, for it was he who designed and fashioned the metal tools that made farming, building, gardening, and transportation (by wagon or sleigh) possible. The German Russians had learned how vital a good blacksmith was during their pioneering sojourn on the steppes of Russia. When they immigrated to the prairies of North Dakota, a blacksmith often accompanied large immigrant groups for the value of his profession was self-evident.

In central North Dakota, the early German-Russian blacksmith spent much of his time sharpening plowshares, making and repairing iron-tooth harrows, shoeing horses, and building or adjusting farm wagons for the hauling of everything from seed grain to manure. Because many German-Russian blacksmiths spent a considerable amount of their time working on farm wagons and buggies, they occasionally functioned as wainwrights and wheelwrights.

Among the German Russians, the profession of blacksmithing was usually one learned and passed on within the family. Certain techniques and tools used by the blacksmiths were shrouded in secrecy. Because of its guarded nature, German-Russian blacksmithing was perceived ambivalently by many of the settlers. This ambivalence no doubt led to a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 7

stereotype among many German-Russians that pictured the blacksmith as a quiet, mysterious, and even fearsome folk specialist. Unlike most German Russians who were farmers, the blacksmith's work was not limited by the changing seasons. The blacksmith was able to work throughout the year, even during the harshest months of the winter.

It was during the long, slow-paced months of winter that many German-Russian blacksmiths turned their attention from repairing wagons and sharpening plowshares to that of highly artistic, decorative iron work. Foremost among the German-Russian blacksmiths of central North Dakota was the art of making "schmiedeeiserne Grabkreuze" (wrought-iron grave crosses).

THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN WROUGHT-IRON CROSS TRADITION IN CENTRAL NORTH DAKOTA, 1884-1936

The German-Russian blacksmiths who made iron grave crosses in central North Dakota practiced a tradition that was well-established in the Old World as early as the sixteenth century. The oldest hand-crafted iron cemetery crosses were made by blacksmiths in the Tyrol and upper Austria. By the eighteenth century, iron crosses also could be found in many parts of central Europe, particularly in the German-speaking areas of Bavaria, Alsace, Baden, Thuringia, and western Bohemia (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 94; Heintschel, 1973: 13-15; Gruenn, 1956: 251-274; Bergmann, 1926). Most of the wrought-iron crosses were made in predominantly Catholic areas and this continued to be the case in both the Old and New Worlds until as late as the 1930s.

The making of hand-crafted iron crosses flourished in Germany during the Renaissance period, when highly decorative ironwork was everywhere in evidence. In the eighteenth century, the rococo style--characterized by its emphasis on curvilinear designs and asymmetrical arrangement--greatly influenced the wrought-iron art of German smiths. During the rococo era, iron grave crosses were particularly popular and were noted for being unusually elaborate (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 94-95).

At the time that the two great German migrations to Russia took place (the 1760s and early 1800s), the wrought-iron cross tradition was a well-established one in the southern portions of Germany from which so many of the would-be colonists originated. A significant number of the Catholic German emigrants who went to Russia traced their roots to the Alsace, Pfalz, and Bavaria--areas where wrought-iron crosses were fairly common. Very little is known about the making of iron crosses by blacksmiths in the German settlement areas of Russia, however, other than the fact that the crosses were an integral feature of German-Russian material folk culture (Keller, 1973: p. 293).

The German Russians who settled on the prairies of central North Dakota initially used simple wooden crosses to identify the final resting places of their dead. In North

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 8

Dakota, German-Russian blacksmiths began making iron crosses in the late nineteenth century, possibly as early as 1884. (An exact date may be impossible to determine, due to the fact that wrought-iron crosses were not always made in the same year that the individuals--whose remains they marked--died. It was common for family members to erect a temporary wooden cross at the time of burial and then replace it with a blacksmith-made one a number of months--or even years--later.) Wrought-iron crosses were most popular in central North Dakota from the late 1880s to about 1925. After 1925, only a few wrought-iron crosses continued to be made and by 1936, most German-Russian blacksmiths had ceased making the crosses. Modern-day German Russians in central North Dakota generally agree that the distinctive wrought-iron crosses simply "went out of style" during the 1930s, a time that coincided with the demise of general blacksmithing in many areas of the Great Plains. Marble or granite tombstones became the preferred type of gravemarker among many German Russians, despite the fact that tombstones cost substantially more than the most elaborate iron cross. For many German Russians, the purchase of commercial tombstones after the First World War meant that they were not only keeping with the norms and expectations of the larger English-speaking American society but also with more modern concerns as well. One elderly German-Russian man in North Dakota explained: "We have a different way in approaching religion [today]. We all have different ways. Now it's marble, marble, marble. You know, monuments The [iron crosses] are a symbol of another age" (Vrooman and Marvin, 1982: p. 34; Kloberdanz, 1986: pp. 96-97).

The wrought-iron cross tradition among the German Russians is not restricted to North Dakota alone. Those German Russians who settled in South Dakota, Kansas, Colorado, Wisconsin, Texas, and other areas of the United States (as well as western Canada) also used iron crosses, but seldom to the extent that their ethnic countrymen in North Dakota did (Kloberdanz, 1986: pp. 101-102; e.g., Sackett, 1976, pp. 82-93). The vast majority of the German-Russian cemeteries that contain blacksmith-made crosses are Roman Catholic ones, although a few of these markers occasionally are found in German-Russian Lutheran graveyards as well.

A number of other German Catholic immigrant groups in the New World used hand-crafted iron grave crosses, including Alsatian-Germans in southern Ontario and Bavarian-Germans in southern Wisconsin and in southern Indiana (e.g., Patterson, 1976: pp. 1-16). Wrought-iron cemetery crosses also are found in a number of non-German but predominantly Catholic places in the United States, such as the Lithuanian sections of Chicago, the Franco-Spanish settlements in southern Louisiana, and Hispanic-American communities in South Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona (Kezys, 1976; Dewhurst and McDowell, 1983: p. 82; Jordan, 1982: pp. 75-88). To date, there has been no comprehensive study of the distribution of wrought-iron grave crosses in either the Old or New World, but the available evidence indicates that this little-researched tradition is clearly more widespread than previously thought (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 102).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 9

In some ways, the wrought-iron crosses of the German Russians in North Dakota are similar to blacksmith-made crosses found elsewhere, sometimes as far away as Indiana or New Mexico. While diffusion or cultural borrowing is a possibility for these resemblances, it is more likely that the basic processes (and structural limitations) of blacksmithing are responsible for physical similarities. In making wrought-iron grave crosses, German-Russian blacksmiths often engaged in a number of traditional metal-working processes. Major blacksmithing techniques included "drawing out" (thinning or stretching the iron), "upsetting" (compressing the iron), and forge or fire welding (joining separate pieces of iron together). In addition, many German-Russian blacksmiths who made iron crosses were familiar with the process of bending (or "rolling") iron in a variety of curvilinear shapes, ranging from simple "C" or "S" shapes to intricate scroll designs (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 105).

German-Russian blacksmiths in central North Dakota used a number of tools to construct the basic form of an iron grave cross. The typical smith preferred the following tools and supplies to complete his job: a forge with a large fire pan in which to heat the iron, along with an attached bellows or blower; a supply of special "blacksmith coal" (a soft variety that has a low sulfur content); "fire tools" (pokers, shovels, rakes); a forged, London-style anvil weighing a hundred pounds or more, mounted on a tree stump or a large block of wood; smithing hammers, including a one and one-half pound hammer; a pair of hand-forged blacksmith tongs, either of the plain or bolt type; a hardy (square-shaped chisel that is inserted in the "hardy hole" of the anvil and used for shearing metal); a holdfast (an anvil tool for securing hot iron); a fuller (a tool for "drawing out" iron); swages, chisels, punches, drills, reamers, and files (Note: illustrations of these basic blacksmithing tools can be found in Bealer, 1969: pp. 47-121).

Depending on the type of iron cross made, certain German-Russian blacksmiths required additional tools and materials. To make simple curvilinear designs, the blacksmith sometimes formed and shaped small pieces of heated iron on the horn of the anvil. The making of scrollwork and other elaborate designs, however, required more specialized tools such as "scroll forks" and "scroll wrenches" (particularly the "Ziehgawel," a fork-shaped iron tool, and the German "Dreh'eise," an angular S-shaped piece that was used to bend heated strips of iron); various sized iron "scroll forms" or templates that were used to gauge the size of different patterns; one to two long-handled pairs of pliers, and an ample supply of wire (for measuring, forming, or temporarily securing desired metal designs). Other tools undoubtedly used by decorative-iron cross makers in central North Dakota included such specialized items as the halfpenny snub end scroll (an anvil tool used for rounding or finishing a piece of iron); the monkey tool (used to square the shoulders of round tenons), and leaf hammers (lightweight "double-faced hammers") (e.g., see Jenkins, 1965: pp. 131-133).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 10

Still another object that was essential to blacksmiths who made decorative iron was the "leg vise" (referred to by some German Russians as a "Flasche'schraubstock") which was secured to a heavy post or old railroad tie. For the blacksmith who often made scrollwork, the leg vise was an ideal tool since he could work all around the vise as he held, hammered, or bent long strips of iron (Kloberdanz, 1986: pp. 107-108).

In making wrought-iron crosses, German-Russian blacksmiths used long iron pieces of buggy or wagon tire. Buggy tire made for lighter crosses that were easier to handle and work with in the shop. Intricately decorated iron crosses often included thirty to fifty separate pieces of iron that had to be individually heated, hammered into the desired shape, and forge welded. As one of the primary techniques of the German-Russian cross maker, forge welding involved not only proper heating but the ability to hammer quickly and effectively. (German-Russian smiths preferred using iron instead of high-carbon steel because iron could be welded relatively easily since it oxidized slower than metal.) In many instances, scrollwork and other decorative features were attached to the main portion of the cross by techniques other than forge welding: riveting, collaring (the bending of small strips of heated iron around cold pieces of metal), as well as the use of nuts and bolts (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 110).

The wrought-iron crosses of the German Russians were made primarily for the purpose of marking and identifying gravesites. In this sense, they were practical objects constructed for a specific purpose. Yet the crosses represented much more than mere grave markers, as evidenced by the fact that few German Russians were satisfied with two simple bars of forge-welded iron to mark the resting places of their loved ones. In most cases, hand-crafted iron crosses were embellished with decorative features, ranging from small heart-shaped pieces of iron to delicately-fashioned metal roses. Sometimes, the adornment was purely decorative (e.g., scrollwork) but in other cases it was charged with cultural meaning and religious symbolism (e.g., tiny metal figures of crowing roosters that represented Resurrection Day and the dawning of a new life) (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 121).

In designing their iron crosses, German-Russian blacksmiths were guided by two forces that had to be counterbalanced: cultural tradition and individual creativity. The smiths were allowed to experiment and deviate from the commonly accepted cross styles but ultimately they had to satisfy the public, for it was customers who bought (or traded for) the wrought-iron crosses. Nonetheless, individual German-Russian blacksmiths in central North Dakota developed their own cross styles and their work was known for miles around them. Important German-Russian cross makers in central North Dakota included Tibertius ("Deport") Schneider of Emmons County, Paul Keller and Michael Schmidt of Hague, Jacob Friedt and Simon Marquardt of Zeeland, Joseph P. Klein and John Krim of Pierce County, Anton Massine of Orrin, and Carl Rennich of Mercer. Each of these men had their own preferred styles and designs and although they rarely

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 11

signed their creations, the crosses they constructed were so distinctive that they still can be identified today by astute observers.

German-Russian cross makers paid particular attention to such aesthetic concerns as balance and symmetry. In almost all cases, hand-crafted iron crosses are symmetrical in appearance. If, as material culture expert Henry Glassie and other scholars argue, symmetry implies "absence of mistake and presence of control," this contention may be of special importance when applied to German-Russian funerary folk art (Glassie, 1972: p. 278). Aside from its aesthetic aspects, symmetry provides a symbolic but comforting sense of order in the face of such disruptive forces as chaos, doubt, grief, and death itself (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 125).

While German-Russian wrought-iron crosses are clearly related to Christian religious beliefs and practices, it is important to remember that the crosses resulted from the experiences, traditions, and skills of the common people. Wrought-iron crosses were made by local blacksmiths and the crosses were purchased by German-Russian customers. The official Catholic and Lutheran churches neither encouraged nor discouraged the making and use of wrought-iron crosses. Indeed, it may be argued that as folk art, the wrought-iron crosses of the German-Russians challenged rather than reinforced religious orthodoxy. During the period when most wrought-iron crosses were made and erected in North Dakota (1884-1936), German-Russian funerals (both Catholic and Lutheran) were solemn, sad affairs highlighted by the singing of highly emotional, dirge-like hymns at the gravesite. The wrought-iron crosses made by German-Russian blacksmiths, however, seemed to counter the disconsolate message of the church's black vestments and songs of final farewell. Classic, symbolic reminders of death and mortality (e.g., skeletons, cross bones, hourglasses, weeping willows) never were incorporated into the German-Russian wrought-iron cross designs of central North Dakota. The blacksmith-made iron crosses--with their unbroken hearts of metal, sunburst designs, endless circles, and exquisitely-formed floral patterns--evoked the exuberant, defiant spirit of their makers. "Perhaps, in a bold effort to transcend the finite, [such] defiance was forged and hammered into iron" (Kloberdanz, 1986: p. 133).

CONCLUSION

The wrought-iron crosses of the German Russians cannot be understood or appreciated without viewing them in their natural setting (i.e., the plains of central North Dakota), in their historic context (i.e., German-Russian ethnic settlement), and in their cultural milieu (German-Russian blacksmithing and folk tradition). The wrought-iron crosses of central North Dakota are symbols of a particular place, a particular historic time period, and a particular people.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F II Page 1 Description of Property Type

Eligible resources of this particular property type include those sites that (1.) contain extant examples of blacksmith-made, wrought-iron grave crosses; (2.) coincide with or are located in the boundaries of cemeteries/graveyards; and (3.) relate to the ethnic settlement of German Russians in North Dakota.

The designation "site" is used to describe physical locations of the wrought-iron grave crosses in accordance with the definitions and examples provided in National Register Bulletin 16: all cemeteries and related funerary localities are to be considered "sites" (p. 41). As used in this multiple property submission, "wrought-iron cross site" can refer to an entire cemetery (depending on the number and distribution of blacksmith-made iron crosses) or to one or more portions of a large cemetery (that contain examples of scattered wrought-iron crosses). Because many German-Russian cemeteries are only a century old or even less, they often include sizeable portions that are filled primarily with modern, commercial grave markers or empty burial plots. Even in certain rural areas of central North Dakota, where German-Russian churches no longer remain open, the old church-affiliated cemeteries may remain active. Indeed, those German Russians who have long since left their rural communities sometimes opt to be buried back in the church cemetery rather than in a newer, urban cemetery close to their own residential area. Thus, German-Russian graveyards often include older portions with wrought-iron crosses and newer portions with more contemporary markers. Sometimes, the markers are mixed, owing to the fact that German-Russian descendants desire to be buried in century-old family burial plots that contain the remains and markers of their immigrant forebears. For these and other reasons, German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites can include entire cemeteries, older portions of still active cemeteries, and even relatively small areas (e.g., four square meters) where a single distinctive wrought-iron cross stands amidst other non-significant gravemarkers.

Despite the range in size and complexity of resources within the boundaries of wrought-iron cross sites, a number of factors contribute to the similarity of these properties. Because the wrought-iron crosses are examples of funerary folk art used to mark the graves of deceased individuals, the sites are invariably found within cemeteries. And because the wrought-iron crosses in central North Dakota were made more than half a century ago, the crosses inevitably are linked to an earlier period of German-Russian settlement and ethnic heritage. The majority of the crosses were made by blacksmiths from the 1880s to about 1925, with only a small number being turned out from 1925-1936. In addition, the German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites in central North Dakota often are to be found on relatively level stretches of prairie, which heightens the visual impact of seeing the crosses against a natural backdrop of waving wheat fields, pasture land, isolated farmsteads, and the Great Plains sky. The primary characteristic that unites all of the wrought-iron cross sites in central North Dakota, of course, is that of the hand-made crosses themselves. Ranging in vertical size from 60 centimeters to 200 centimeters, the taller wrought-iron crosses easily stand out amidst the surrounding wooden crosses, cast-iron crosses, granite markers, and marble

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F II Page 2

tombstones. In many cemeteries, the wrought-iron crosses are occasionally given a fresh coat of bright silver, black, or white paint (sometimes two or more of these colors are combined). Not all wrought-iron crosses include information about the individual whose remains they mark. Especially in the older cemeteries, name plates, dates, and other identifying data are altogether lacking. Church records, cemetery plats, and interviews with local informants sometimes enable the researcher to ascertain the identity of those individuals whose graves are marked by wrought-iron crosses. More often, the wrought-iron crosses bear only silent witness to the immigrant past and the ethnic heritage of the German-Russian people.

The blacksmiths who designed and made the wrought-iron crosses generally recognized three major types of crosses: small ones for children (averaging 60-100 centimeters in height); large "plain" ones for adults (averaging 170-200 centimeters in height); and large "fancy" ones (i.e., with extensive decorative work), also for adults.

While a variety of hand-crafted iron crosses exist in German-Russian cemeteries on the Great Plains and especially in central North Dakota, the many hundreds of wrought-iron crosses can be categorized for purposes of general description, organization, and analysis. In 1986, a study of German-Russian wrought-iron crosses in North Dakota, Kansas, and Saskatchewan resulted in a working typology of ten basic iron cross types (Kloberdanz, 1986: pp. 111-121). Following the fieldwork and background research done in compiling this multiple property submission, the typology has been expanded to include six more wrought-iron cross types (i.e., types K-P). While this typology is not all-inclusive it provides an organizational tool for describing and analyzing data regarding various cross styles, patterns, and basic motifs. The more than four hundred wrought-iron crosses documented in this multiple property submission can be placed in one of the following sixteen categories (following the brief verbal descriptions, a representative illustration of each cross type appears):

A. Single-bar cross, characterized by the use of two single bars of square, round, or flat iron that are forged (sometimes bolted) together to form the classic Latin cross. This cross is usually given at least some decorative feature, however simple.

B. Single-bar and diamond cross features a central diamond design that results from elongated pieces of iron that are affixed to both the vertical and horizontal single-bar portions of the cross at right angles.

C. Single-bar and circle cross is set off by a circle of metal that forms the central portion of the frame or is affixed to the arms and the vertical body of the cross.

D. Single-bar with scrollwork cross is made up of two, intersecting single bars of iron that are embellished with a series of convoluted ornamentations.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F II Page 3

E. Single-bar with canopy cross is distinguished by an iron or metal covering that appears to shelter the upper portion of the cross, thus forming a half-circle.

F. Double-bar cross features double or parallel bars of iron. In most instances, the double bar portions of the cross intersect or appear to be made of one continuous length of metal.

G. Double-bar and diamond cross features a diamond design that is affixed to the double-bar horizontal and upper vertical portions of the cross at right angles.

H. Double-bar and circle cross includes a centralized circle design with horizontal and vertical double-bar extensions.

I. Double-bar with scrollwork cross features parallel bars of iron, highlighted by a series of convoluted ornamentations.

J. Double-bar with sunburst cross has parallel bars of horizontal and vertical iron but is set off by a solid metal center from which a series of iron rods or rays radiate.

K. Double-bar with canopy cross is distinguished by an iron or metal covering that appears to shelter the upper portion of the cross, thus forming a half-circle or upside-down "V." In contrast to Type "E", the body of this cross has double or parallel bars of iron.

L. Double-bar with circle and canopy is set off by a circle of metal that highlights the central portion of the frame and is "sheltered" by a half-circle metal covering.

M. Double-bar with square cross includes a centralized square design with horizontal and vertical double bar extensions.

N. Single-bar with sunburst cross has a solid iron frame that is set off by a small metal center from which a series of iron spikes or "rays" radiate.

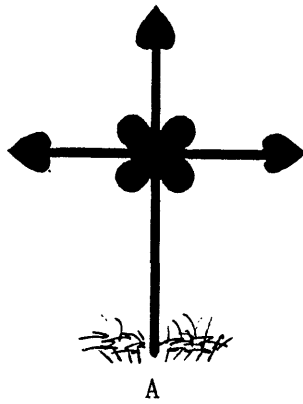
O. Single-bar "twin" cross is actually two single-bar crosses joined together at the base by a long strip of iron. The two crosses are identical in shape and design. (It is quite likely such crosses were used to mark the graves of infant twins).

P. Triple-bar cross with scrollwork features three bars of vertical and horizontal iron, highlighted by a series of convoluted ornamentations.

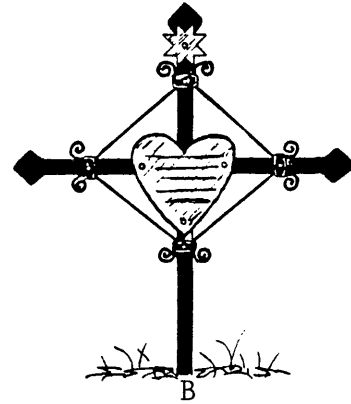
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

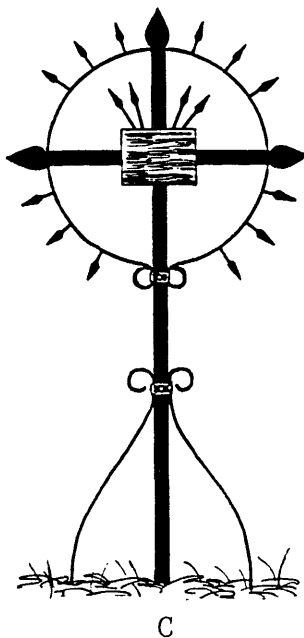
Section number F II Page 4



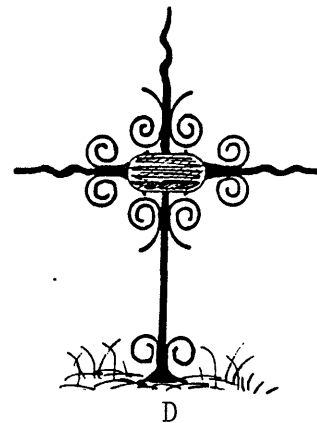
A
single-bar



B
single-bar and diamond



C
single-bar and circle

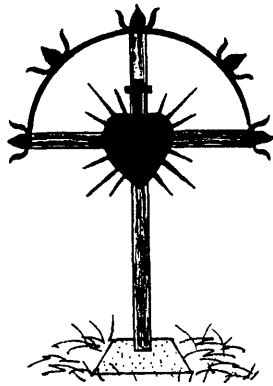


D
single-bar with scrollwork

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

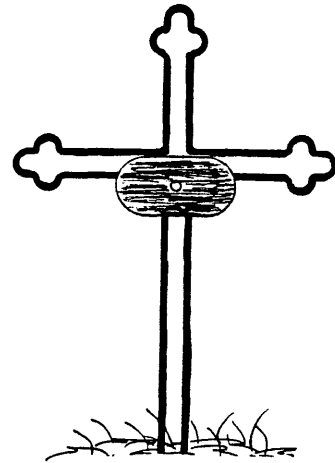
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F II Page 5



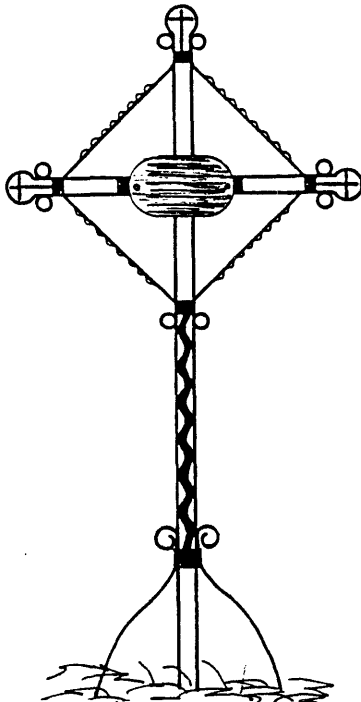
E

single-bar with canopy



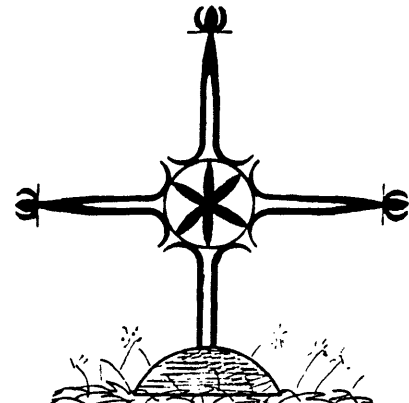
F

double-bar



G

double-bar and diamond



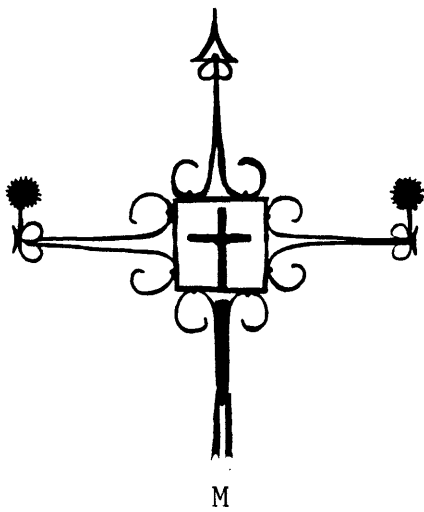
H

double-bar and circle

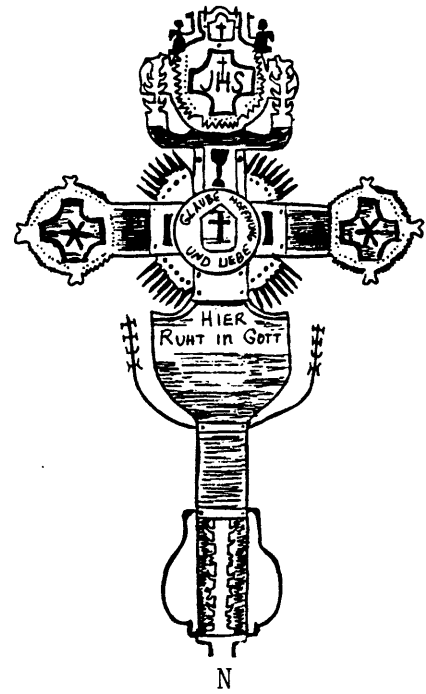
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

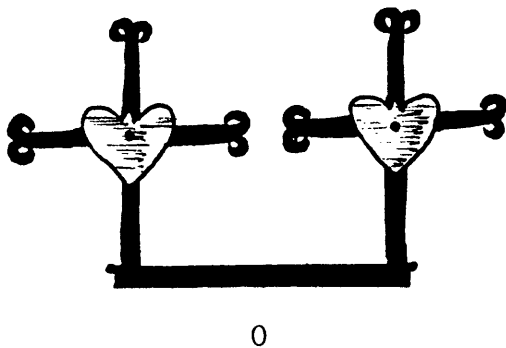
Section number F II Page 7



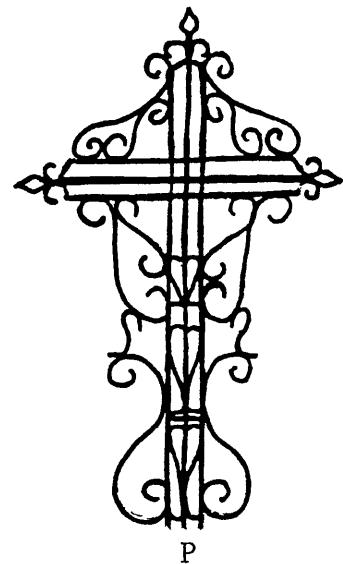
M
double-bar with square



N
single-bar with sunburst



O
single-bar "twin" cross



P
triple-bar with scrollwork

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number F II Page 8

The previous typology, it again should be stressed, is a working one and thus should be viewed as merely a tool to facilitate wrought-iron cross identification and study. The typology is meant to be a guide, not a definitive classification of actual and potential wrought-iron cross types. As other wrought-iron cross sites in North Dakota become known and are subsequently documented, the above typology can be simplified, revised, or expanded.

It is entirely possible that certain wrought-iron cross types no longer exist in central North Dakota due to such factors as vandalism, theft, natural deterioration, and cemetery renovation. According to German-Russian informants, some wrought-iron crosses were removed and replaced with more contemporary looking tombstones. In these cases, the wrought-iron crosses often were buried in the grave itself. Nonetheless, the extant wrought-iron crosses in central North Dakota have withstood a variety of destructive forces. Prairie fires, which were common in the early years of immigrant settlement, often affected rural cemeteries. When this happened, all of the wooden crosses were destroyed. Wrought-iron crosses, however, generally were able to withstand prairie fires as well as the extreme weather conditions of the Upper Great Plains (i.e., freezing temperatures in winter and searing summer heat).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F III Page 1 Significance of Property Type

The wrought-iron cross sites of the German Russians in central North Dakota are significant for two primary reasons: (1.) the sites represent an important phase of American history when Germans from Russia settled on the Great Plains and attempted to transplant familiar Old World traditions to an unfamiliar New World setting; and (2.) the wrought-iron cross sites contain artistic, hand-made objects (i.e., the crosses) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a particular period (1884-1936) and method of traditional construction (decorative blacksmithing). For these reasons, the German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites are significant under National Register criteria "A" and "C".

Specific areas of significance relating to German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites include: art (since the wrought-iron crosses themselves are the products of creativity and the decorative folk arts); exploration/settlement (due to the fact that the wrought-iron cross sites resulted from the establishment of early prairie communities and settlements in central North Dakota); ethnic heritage--European (since all of the wrought-iron cross sites are identified with the history and common heritage of a particular Euro-American ethnic group, the German Russians); and religion (owing to the fact that the wrought-iron sites, the majority of which are to be found in church-affiliated cemeteries, must be viewed in a broad cultural/historical context that includes the importance of religion and spiritual beliefs in the lives of the early German-Russian settlers).

While many wrought-iron cross sites may be considered religious properties, their primary significance nonetheless is derived from the artistic distinction they exhibit, as well as their historical importance (in terms of directly relating to German-Russian ethnic settlement). Cemeteries--and religious properties--usually are considered ineligible for the National Register unless they possess distinctive design features (e.g., hand-crafted wrought-iron cross grave markers) or historical significance (e.g., an association with historic events such as the immigration and settlement of a Euro-American ethnic group).

Principal craftsmen associated with the wrought-iron cross sites in central North Dakota included a number of highly-skilled German-Russian blacksmiths. As previously indicated (in Section E, "Statement of Historic Contexts"), the craftsmen included German-Russian blacksmiths like Tibertius ("Deport") Schneider of Emmons County, Paul Keller and Michael Schmidt of Hague, Jacob Friedt and Simon Marquardt of Zeeland, Joseph P. Klein and John Krim of Pierce County, Anton Massine of Orrin, and Carl Rennich of Mercer. These prairie artisans--as well as a number of other blacksmiths in central North Dakota whose names remain unknown--were key figures in the technical and esthetic development of the wrought-iron cross tradition on the northern Great Plains. Indeed, the wrought-iron crosses of central North Dakota cannot be fully understood or appreciated without recognizing the creative spirit of the individual men who fashioned these distinctive and artistically significant grave markers.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number F III Page 2

The wrought-iron cross sites of the German Russians are significant not only because of their direct relation to a distinctive type of folk art, early settlement history, ethnic heritage, and religion, but also because they provide an important vehicle for a better understanding of the processes of cultural retention, acculturation, and assimilation. The wrought-iron crosses of the German Russians in central North Dakota are not merely a form of Old Country folk art re-created on the American Plains. The wrought-iron crosses reflect the forces of change, adjustment, and adaptation that the German Russians themselves experienced during the early decades of settlement. Recognizing the significance of these wrought-iron cross sites is but an initial step toward understanding the importance of the ethnic presence in the Great American Plains region and the contributions of the German Russians (economic and artistic) to the larger American society and culture.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F IV Page 1 Registration Requirements

Eligible wrought-iron cross sites must possess physical and associative characteristics that link them to German-Russian ethnic settlement and to the distinctive tradition of blacksmith-made, wrought-iron grave crosses. The physical and associative characteristics of these sites were previously described and discussed (in both the Description Section and the Statement of Historic Contexts).

It should be emphasized again, however, that while wrought-iron cross sites occur within the physical context of being both cemeteries and religious properties, the primary significance of the sites is derived from their association to historic events (i.e., ethnic settlement) and their distinctive design features (i.e., hand-crafted wrought-iron crosses).

To aid in evaluating the significance of wrought-iron cross sites, the following components of integrity should be considered:

Location and Setting: Wrought-iron cross sites, due to their location within cemeteries, will comprise whole or partial portions of church or community-affiliated graveyards. In many ways, such locational circumstances may assure greater site integrity due to the conservative attitudes toward cemeteries (i.e., while dwellings and church buildings may be altered as a result of ever-changing needs and modern styles, the older portions of cemeteries often remain relatively unchanged--other than for the re-painting of certain grave markers by family members of cemetery caretakers). In terms of defining the precise location (i.e., boundaries) of a wrought-iron cross site, the following consideration should be kept in mind: wrought-iron cross sites can include an entire cemetery, a portion of a cemetery, or even one wrought-iron cross (along with a small protective area around it)--depending on the surrounding circumstances. If an entire cemetery is comprised of at least 30 percent of wrought-iron crosses, the entire cemetery can be considered a wrought-iron cross site (even if the other 70% of the markers are commercial tombstones, wooden crosses, etc.). This figure seems a reasonable one because the visual impact of the wrought-iron crosses will be evident if about one out of every three gravemarkers is a wrought-iron cross. In cases where a large cemetery has several portions that contain wrought-iron crosses (but the entire cemetery is comprised of far less than 30 percent) each portion of the graveyard may be designated a wrought-iron cross site if the required percentage of wrought-iron crosses is extant. In those instances where isolated wrought-iron crosses are located in a portion of a cemetery, each cross (and a small protective area around it--perhaps only four square meters) may be considered a wrought-iron cross site if the solitary cross is in relatively good condition and exhibits the artistic and associative characteristics of the German-Russian wrought-iron cross tradition previously discussed.

Design, Workmanship, and Materials: Wrought-iron cross sites should contain one or more crosses that were hand-crafted by German-Russian blacksmiths. Such crosses will

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F IV Page 2

exhibit the basic cross shape, a variety of designs and motifs ranging from extremely simple to extremely complex ornamentation and traditional workmanship (i.e., evidence of hammering or forge-welding). While most crosses obviously will be made of wrought-iron, pieces of other metal also may be affixed to the cross (e.g., decorative tin inserts, brass fixtures). So long as the major portion of the cross (at least 75 percent) is comprised of wrought-iron or hand-crafted steel, the integrity of the cross will be maintained. Not included in the wrought-iron cross category are the other kinds of mass-produced, commercial metal crosses so often found in German-Russian cemeteries. These other metal crosses often were made by foundries and thus they lack the important requirements of hand workmanship and traditional German-Russian design elements. Besides these cast-iron or foundry crosses, another type of commercial metal cross is the pre-fabricated metal cross which was machine-cut and assembled by store owners or customers. These pre-fabricated metal crosses also are excluded from consideration here. The problem of physical integrity (or intactness) also should be addressed. Occasionally, wrought-iron crosses are found that are bent or lack a cross bar or have missing pieces of metal ornamentation. Wrought-iron crosses that lack the central vertical bar, the horizontal cross bar, or are 50-75% destroyed can be determined to lack integrity. When found alongside other wrought-iron crosses at a site, such damaged crosses should be noted (especially if what remains of the design features or basic shape appear distinctive) but designated as a non-contributing site component rather than as a contributing resource.

Feeling and Association: While important, these particular aspects of integrity are difficult to address apart from other integral features such as location, setting, design, workmanship, and material. Because of their location in the older portions of German-Russian cemeteries, the wrought-iron crosses convey the feeling of historical association with past people and past events (i.e., the German-Russian settlers, blacksmiths, and the early years of settlement in central North Dakota). In addition, the wrought-iron crosses are visually significant because of their size and distinctive shape, especially when viewed alongside smaller granite tombstones and marble markers. The wrought-iron crosses of the German Russians evoke a feeling of Great Plains "fit," since they appear to be almost natural features of a landscape set off only by windmills, barbed wire fences, and straight prairie roads that stretch on for miles. The wrought-iron crosses do not restrict one's view of the distant horizon; they enhance its openness and accentuate its vastness. Perhaps for this reason, the wrought-iron crosses of North Dakota's German Russians have been called "iron spirits" (Vrooman and Marvin, 1982: p. ix).

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: Division of Archeology & Historic Preservation, State
Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, N. D.

I. Form Prepared By

name/title Timothy J. Kloberdanz/Associate Professor of Anthropology
organization North Dakota State University date 15 August 1988
street & number Sociology-Anthropology Dept., NDSU telephone 701-237-8922
city or town Fargo state North Dakota zip code 58105

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number G Page 1

A study of German-Russian wrought-iron cross sites in central North Dakota was conducted over a period ranging from October 1987-August 1988. Before this time, however, the principal investigator had visited and documented cemeteries containing wrought-iron crosses in a number of areas besides North Dakota: Kansas, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Minnesota, New Mexico, Iowa, Colorado, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. None of these other areas, incidentally, seemed to have so large a number of wrought-iron cross sites as North Dakota. Nonetheless, the opportunity to visit wrought-iron cross sites outside of North Dakota yielded valuable comparative insights and other important information.

Before any fieldwork was done during the October 1987-July 1988 period, the principal investigator decided to focus on the central portion of North Dakota. This area of the state was known to have a number of cemeteries containing wrought-iron crosses. Although the area was a large one, it represented the oldest German-Russian settlements in the state. Also, south-central and north-central North Dakota were settled predominantly by Catholic Black Sea Germans from the Kutschurgan region of South Russia, an area that produced the largest number of immigrant cross makers. For these and other reasons, the central portion of North Dakota seemed ideal for a survey of wrought-iron cross sites.

Archives, historical libraries, German-Russian research centers, genealogical societies, and church groups were among the many sources utilized in identifying potential wrought-iron cross sites. A major problem was the misconception on the part of many people that every cemetery that had metal crosses surely had blacksmith-made, wrought-iron crosses. In many instances, cemeteries turned out to have only cast-iron or pre-fabricated metal crosses and no bonafide wrought-iron crosses at all. Only a few astute scholars and other observers were aware that wrought-iron crosses differed in both appearance and origin from mass-produced, commercial metal crosses.

Fortunately, interest in the wrought-iron cross tradition of the German Russians has grown in the past decade or so, as evidenced by a growing number of publications and contextually helpful studies (Sackett, 1976; Marquardt 1979, 1980; Feser, 1980; Vrooman and Marvin, 1982; Kelly, 1984). In 1982, a preliminary survey of wrought-iron cross cemeteries in North Dakota was conducted by the state's Council on the Arts. This survey resulted in a photographic exhibition and a widely disseminated publication (Vrooman and Marvin, 1982). Such publications helped in the determination of associated historic contexts, particularly since all but one of the above publications dealt with the German-Russian wrought-iron cross tradition in North Dakota. In addition, a doctoral dissertation done by the principal investigator in 1986 on the wrought-iron cross tradition also yielded helpful information and comparative data.

The identification of the "wrought-iron cross site" as a primary property type emerged more out of the requirements set forth by the National Register than by the actual

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number G Page 2

field situation encountered by the investigator. Since all cemeteries listed in the present National Register are to be regarded as "sites" (see National Register Bulletin 16, p. 41), the "wrought-iron cross site" seemed an ideal property type that would fulfill the National Register requirements and yet emphasize the distinctive quality and setting of this particular type of German-Russian funerary folk art. The typology of the sixteen basic German-Russian wrought-iron cross types (presented and discussed in Section F, III) resulted from previous fieldwork and wrought-iron cross documentation done by the principal investigator in North Dakota, Kansas, and Saskatchewan. The typology, however, was revised and expanded following the fieldwork done in preparation for this multiple property submission.

The requirements for integrity (listed in Section F, IV) resulted from knowledge of the condition of existing properties, as opposed to predictions based on the study of historic land use. Nonetheless it is understood and should be emphasized that this multiple property submission represents an attempt to better understand and document wrought-iron cross sites in North Dakota. Future research and additional investigation promises to yield new perspectives and more sophisticated methods to assess the significance of wrought-iron cross sites not only in central North Dakota but hopefully in other areas of the country as well.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- Aberle, George P. From the Steppes to the Prairies. The Bismarck Tribune Company, Bismarck, North Dakota, 1963.
- Bealer, Alex W. The Art of Blacksmithing. Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1969.
- Bergmann, Alois. Die Schmiedkreuze Westboehmens. Egerlandhaus fuer Buch und Kunst, Elbogen, 1926.
- Dewhurst, C. Kurt and Betty Marsha McDowell. Religious Folk Art in America: Reflections of Faith. E. P. Dutton & Company, New York, 1983.
- Feser, Pyllis Hertz. "Gottesacker." Heritage Review 10 (April 1980): 17-20.
- Giesinger, Adam. From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans. Marian Press, Battleford, Saskatchewan 1974.
- Glassie, Henry. "Folk Art," in Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction, edited by Richard M. Dorson. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972.
- Gruenn, Helene. "Oberoesterreichische Grabkreuze in volkskuendlicher Sicht." Jahrbuch des oberoesterreichischer Musealverein 101 (1956): 251-274.
- Height, Joseph S. Memories of the Black Sea Germans. Associated German-Russian Sponsors, Chelsea, Michigan, 1979.
- Height, Joseph S. Homesteaders on the Steppe. North Dakota Historical Society of Germans from Russia, Bismarck, 1975.
- Height, Joseph S. Paradise on the Steppe. North Dakota Historical Society of Germans from Russia, Bismarck, 1972.
- Heintschel, H. Schmiedeeisen. Verlag Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria, 1973.
- Iseminger, Gordon L. "The McIntosh County German-Russians: The First Fifty Years." North Dakota History 51 (Summer 1984): 4-23.
- Jenkins, J. Geraint. Traditional Country Craftsmen. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965.
- Jordan, Terry G. Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1982.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 2

Keller, Rev. P. Conrad. The German Colonies in South Russia, vol. 2. Translated by A. Becker. Mercury Printers, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1973.

Kelly, Thomas E. "German-Russian Graves Marked by Iron Crosses." The American Cemetery (July 1984): 23-26.

Kezys, Algimantas (ed.). A Lithuanian Cemetery: St. Casimir Lithuanian Cemetery in Chicago, Illinois. Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1976.

Kloberdanz, Timothy J. "Mazakaga: The Last Iron Cross Maker." North Dakota Horizons 18 (Summer 1988): 24-27.

Kloberdanz, Timothy J. "Cross Makers: German-Russian Folk Specialists of the Great Plains." Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1986.

Kloberdanz, Timothy J. "Iron Lilies, Eternal Roses: German-Russian Cemetery Folk Art in Perspective." Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia 6 (Fall 1983): 27-34.

Koch, Fred C. The Volga Germans in Russia and the Americas, from 1763 to the Present. The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 1977.

Marquardt, Lewis R. "Eiserne Kreuze of Emmons County: A Forgotten Folk Art." Heritage Review 10 (April 1980): 11-16.

Marquardt, Lewis R. "Metal Grave Markers in German-Russian Cemeteries of Emmons County, North Dakota." Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia 2 (Spring 1979): 18-26.

Marvin, P. A., and N. C. Vrooman. "Iron Spirits: Decorative Crosses on the Northern Plains." The Clarion (Spring/Summer 1983): 24-31.

Patterson, Nancy-Lou. "The Iron Cross and the Tree of Life: German-Alsatian Gravemarkers in Waterloo Region and Bruce County Roman Catholic Cemeteries." Ontario History 68 (1976): 1-16.

Rath, George. The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas. Pine Hill Press, Freeman, South Dakota, 1977.

Sackett, S. J. "Steel Crosses in German Catholic Cemeteries in Ellis, Rush, and Russell Counties." Heritage of Kansas 9 (1976): 82-93.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 3

Sallet, Richard. Russian-German Settlements in the United States. Trans. by LaVern J. Rippley and Armand Bauer. North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo, 1974.

Sherman, W. C., and P. V. Thorson, eds. Plains Folk: North Dakota's Ethnic History. North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo, 1988.

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

Stumpp, Karl. "Fremdes Wortgut in der Umgangssprache der Russlanddeutschen. Jahrbuch fuer ostdeutsche Volkskunde 21 (1978): 294-321.

Stumpp, Karl. The German-Russians: Two Centuries of Pioneering. Atlantic-Forum, Bonn, West Germany, 1971.

Vrooman, N. C., and P. A. Marvin (eds.). Iron Spirits. North Dakota Council on the Arts, Fargo, 1982.

Walters, George J. Wir Wollen Deutsche Bleiben: The Story of the Volga Germans. Halcyon House, Kansas City, Missouri, 1982.

Webber, Ronald. The Village Blacksmith. David and Charles Co., Newton Abbot, 1971.