

Statement of Significance Prochnau Homestead

20469 HWY 15
NW 20-55-20-W4



Description of the Historic Place

The Prochnau homestead is comprised of three structures, the 1919 residence, the 1915 granary with 1929 flour mill addition, and the 1930 (estimated) summer kitchen. The one and one half storey residence features intersecting gables with an L shape floor plan. The one storey log granary has a medium pitch, side facing gable roof, vertical plank siding and a shed roof addition on one side. The one storey summer kitchen features a small gable end vent door. The historic place is bounded by the footprint of each of the buildings. The homestead is located along the south side of Provincial Highway 15, south of Bruderheim, in Strathcona County.

Heritage Value

The Prochnau homestead is important for its collection of early settlement buildings; the residence, the log granary and flour mill, and summer kitchen. The Prochnau homestead buildings are important symbols of the resilient nature of Alberta's early immigrant pioneers, like Ludwig Prochnau, and their contribution to prairie settlement and agricultural development in Strathcona County.

When Ludwig Prochnau became the owner of the quarter section in 1918 from his father, Samuel Prochnau, the log granary came with the property. The log granary is a hewn log structure and is composed of logs worked flat with a broad axe on the two vertical sides with the upper and lower edges left in the round. Logs were secured using a dovetail corner connection with the spaces between the logs chinked with a mixture of mud, clay, grass and moss. Regular maintenance was required to repair gaps in the chinking. It was not unusual to apply wood plank siding to preserve and protect the logs

as was done with Ludwig's granary to reduce the maintenance. In 1929, Ludwig built an addition to one end of the granary and added a small flour mill to grind grain for his own use. The flour mill is still in working order and remains housed within the granary addition.

Ludwig invested heavily in his farm in the early years, and made shrewd purchases of machinery and equipment. Shortly after buying the property Ludwig purchased a portable sawmill and used it to create the lumber for homestead buildings including the 1919 frame residence, the addition to the granary for the flour mill and the summer kitchen. The summer kitchen, although modified, still reflects its original architectural form. The kitchen was used for summer cooking for the farm and also preparing preserves for the winter food supply. The sawmill was a valuable resource for the community as Ludwig's sawmill was able to supply squared lumber and facilitated the construction of buildings needed for neighbouring farms and homesteads. Not only did Ludwig saw lumber and grind grain for his neighbours, he did custom threshing throughout the area. He would pull his threshing machine from farm to farm to help his neighbours bring in the harvest. Ludwig's many initiatives attest to his resilient nature and pioneering spirit.

Ludwig was only two years old when his father Samuel and mother Caroline, emigrated from Volhynia, Russia. They were one of 14 Moravian farm families who left in search of religious freedom and land they could call their own. Ludwig Prochnau was an important figure in the agricultural community of Strathcona County through his own farming activities and his role as a leader in the community.

The Prochnau homestead has been recognized by the Government of Alberta's Century Farm and Ranch award program and by Strathcona County's Century Families project.

Character Defining Elements

The character defining elements as expressed in the form of the 1919 (estimated) residence, the circa 1915 one storey granary with 1929 flour mill addition, and the 1930 summer kitchen:

The main residence:

- The one and one half storey frame construction
- The L shape Plan
- The medium pitched roof
- The open full length porch with square tapered posts
- The rear porch with hipped roof and square tapered posts.

The granary:

- The one storey granary with floor mill addition
- The hewn squared log construction with dovetail corners
- The stone foundation
- The gable roof with timber braces
- The wood shingles and vertical planks in gable ends
- The plank siding on front façade
- The frame addition with shed roof and concrete foundation
- The vertical plank doors
- The pattern, style and construction of all window and door openings

The summer kitchen:

- The shape and form and the one story low pitched gable roof
- The original door and window openings
- The small vent door in the gable end