

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Wiederkehr Wine Cellar

AND/OR COMMON

Wiederkehr Wein Keller Restaurant

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

St. Mary's Mountain

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Altus

VICINITY OF

Third

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Arkansas

05

Franklin

047

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

X COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

X YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Hernan J. B. Wiederkehr

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, Box 9

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Altus

VICINITY OF

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Franklin County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Altus

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original wine cellar for the Wiederkehr vineyards was dug about 1880 by John Wiederkehr. The cellar lies beneath the Wiederkehr cabin, a one-and-one-half storey log house which was also built about 1880. Just before the turn of the century the original cellar was enlarged by the addition of a wing to the south.

Measuring approximately twenty feet by thirty feet, the original cellar had walls of native stone resting on the hard-packed dirt floor. Heavy posts necessary to support the floor above bisected the rectangular room. In the southwest corner a small recessed area was used for storage of special wines.

The c. 1900 addition gave the cellar an ell-shape floor plan. Like the original section, the west wing was lined with native stone bonded with mortar. The two-room cellar had a single entry in the staircase along the north wall of the original room.

In the mid-1960's the Wiederkehr wine cellar was restored to house the Wiederkehr Wein Keller Restaurant. The hard-packed dirt floors were covered with cast stone, and a second outside entry was cut into the north elevation. The exposed-beam ceiling in the original cellar was refinished and the ceiling in the west wing was plastered. Deteriorated support posts were replaced with logs taken from the cabin above.

Except for the addition of wooden tables and chairs, many of which are made of old wine casks used by the Wiederkehr's, the cellar looks much the same now as when John Wiederkehr began storing his wine there in the late nineteenth century. The cellar remains in excellent condition, a tribute to the skill of its builder, John Wiederkehr.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1700-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
X 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Wiederkehr

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Winemaking is one of the oldest commercial arts to be developed by man. In North America, the process of fermenting grapes into wine began during the sixteenth century when French Huguenots in Florida made wine from wild grapes. This ancient art was first widely practiced in Arkansas during the late nineteenth century when new settlers emigrated from Western Europe to the northern hill section of the state. One of the earliest Arkansas winemakers was John Wiederkehr, who originated Wiederkehr wines.

Many young European families in the late nineteenth century were drawn to the United States through the advertisements of American railroad companies. These ads in European newspapers, magazines and printed leaflets offered free or inexpensive homesteads to families who would settle along newly laid railroad tracks. One such advertisement was placed by the Iron Mountain Railroad, which sought more settlers for a German-Swiss colony near Altus, Arkansas. In 1880 John and Catherine Wiederkehr responded to this advertisement. They emigrated from their native Canton Argau, Switzerland, and in December, 1880, arrived in north Arkansas.

On their arrival in Altus the Wiederkehr's stayed with the local priest, Father Ziswyler, until their log house could be built. The original one-and-one-half storey cabin consisted of a single large room with a loft above. Beneath his home John Wiederkehr dug a deep cellar and lined it with bonded stone. Heavy wooden posts helped support the cabin floor. The single cellar entry led from outside the north elevation of the cabin. The Wiederkehr cabin and cellar were completed within two months of the Wiederkehr's arrival in Altus, and were typical of the modest homes and cellars built in the area at that time.

In Switzerland John Wiederkehr had been a shoemaker, and he continued his trade in Arkansas. But, though he made shoes and repaired harnesses and leather goods for a cash income, his main interest was in farming. Among other crops planted on the forty-acre Wiederkehr farm were grapes to be used for jellies and juices. Extra grapes were turned into wine to be stored in the Wiederkehr cellar.

Originally, the wine produced by John Wiederkehr was used only by the family; however, within a decade of his arrival in north Arkansas, Wiederkehr had begun to sell his homemade wine. Using Delaware and Cynthiana grapes, Wiederkehr produced quality wines whose market value soon enabled him to turn

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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his full attention to grape-growing and winemaking. For the next thirty years the Wiederkehr's made a living from the wines they produced at their Ozark vineyards.

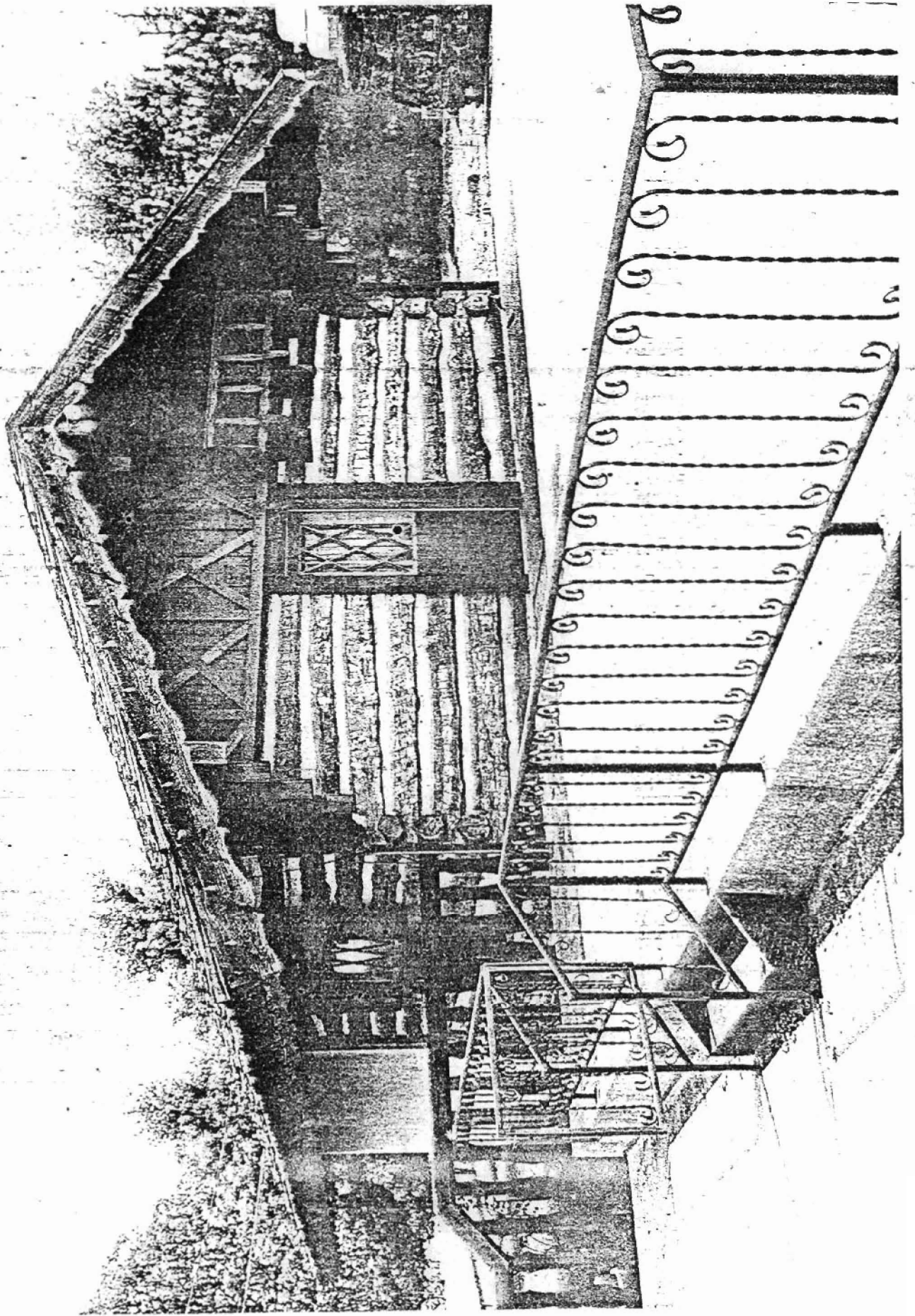
In 1919 Prohibition ended commercial production of Wiederkehr wines, but small quantities were still produced for private and sacramental use. After John Wiederkehr's death, the farm and vineyards were operated by his son, Herman J. B. Wiederkehr. With the repeal of Prohibition, grapes from the Wiederkehr vineyards were once again used for the commercial production of wine. The 1500 gallon storage capacity in 1934 had grown to about two million gallons in 1975.

As the production of Wiederkehr wines increased, so did the need for storage space. About 1900 the original cellar was more than doubled with the addition of a wing on the west elevation. The enlarged cellar provided adequate storage space until mid-century when modern structures came into use.

In 1966 the original Wiederkehr cabin was restored and remodeled for use as a gift shop. The cellars beneath were also restored and used to house a small restaurant specializing in Swiss cuisine. The cellars were furnished with rustic tables and chairs, many of which were made from old wooden wine casks which were once used to store wine in the cellar.

For almost a century the Wiederkehr vineyards and wine cellars have been operated as a family business, with John's grandson, Alcuin Wiederkehr, now in charge. This Swiss immigrant family is representative of the many European families who moved to Arkansas in colonies in the nineteenth century. With other German-Swiss families who settled in the area, the Wiederkehers helped make Altus one of the leading grape-growing and winemaking areas in the southwestern United States.

Symbolic of John Wiederkehr's contributions to Arkansas' winemaking industry, the Wiederkehr Wine Cellar is one of the most important historic sites related to winemaking in Arkansas. This historic cellar, still used as a part of the family business, is typical of home cellars constructed for storing wine in late nineteenth century Arkansas, but it is one of few such cellars remaining in existence.



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Adams, Leon D. The Wines of America. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1973.
 Wiederkehr, Alcuin. Interview at Wiederkehr Winery, September 17, 1975.
 Wiederkehr, Herman J. B. "The Swiss Make Franklin a County of Plenty." Ozarks Mountaineer, December, 1956.
 Works Progress Administration. Arkansas Wine Manufacturers' Permits, 1938. Archives, Arkansas History Commission.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 5	4 3 1 9 1 0	3 9 2 3 9 8 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dianna Kirk, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

12-9-75

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

TELEPHONE

(501) 371-1639

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Gene Richardson

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

12-9-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM



"THE OLD STATE HOUSE" 300 WEST MARKHAM LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201
TELEPHONE - 501 371-1639

OCT 30 1975

PROPERTY OWNER'S APPROVAL

I, Herman J.B. Wiederkehr, am the legal
owner of the original Wiederkehr Weinkeller and log cabin built in 1880
located at Rt. 1, Box 9, Altus, AR 72821.

I hereby acknowledge that I have been fully informed and understand the significance of having the aforementioned property placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

I hereby approve the inclusion of the aforementioned property on the National Register of Historic Places.

Herman J.B. Wiederkehr
Owner

Date

10-8-75