This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name  Bichet, Claude, Farmstead

other names/site number  115-0000-00803

### 2. Location

street & number  2959 US Highway 50

city or town  Florence  vicinity

state  Kansas code  KS county  Marion code  115  zip code  66851

### 3-4. Certification

I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

See File

Signature of certifying official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 5. Classification

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<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
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</table>

| | | Noncontributing site |
| | | structure |

| | | object |

| | | Total |
The Claude Francis Bichet farmstead is located in the Cottonwood River valley three miles east of Florence, Kansas, along the south side of U. S. Highway 50, which is paralleled by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line. This property is in the northeast corner of Doyle Township in section 2. A gravel lane to the farmstead is lined with Cottonwood trees planted by the Bichets. The Cottonwood River passes through the property, which today includes 346 acres. There are 40 acres of Walnut and Oak trees and the rest is tillable cropland.¹ The farmstead buildings are collectively situated on roughly three acres and include a residence, a limestone smoke house, a barn, and a milkhouse. The house sits on higher ground and the south side faces the Cottonwood River.

¹ Only the few acres of the farmstead with the house and outbuildings are within the nominated boundary.
Elaboration  *(Provide a detailed description of the building’s exterior, interior, and any associated buildings on the property. Note any historic features, materials, and changes to the building/property.)*

1. **Site (contributing)**

A gravel driveway lined with tall cottonwood trees leads south from the highway to the core of the farmstead where the residence, barn, milkhouse, and smokehouse are located. The surrounding landscape is rather flat and reminiscent of a river valley. To the south of the milkhouse are several trees that line the Cottonwood River. Because of the property’s proximity to the river, it experienced flooding during times of heavy rainfall especially during the most recent major floods of 1951 and 1993. The house, however, was built on ground high enough to avoid flooding during those years.

2. **Residence (1859; 1875; 1951; contributing)**

**Exterior**

The residence was built in phases beginning with the original log-frame building in 1859, a two-story stone addition to the east side of the cabin in 1875, and a one-story addition and garage in 1951. (See Figure 6.)

The one-and-a-half-story, single-pen log house makes up the west portion of the house. The house faces north, is clad with horizontal weatherboard siding, and features a gable-end exterior chimney made of limestone on the west elevation. Photographs of the house from the 1940s shows the log house with an enclosed shed-roof porch on the north elevation and an enclosed hipped-roof porch on the south elevation. (See Figures 3 through 5.) However, the south porch is no longer extant because a garage was built in its place in 1951. Today, a gabled two-car garage extends south off the south elevation of the log house. There are five historic multi-light wood windows in this portion of the house.

A substantial two-story stone addition with a stone foundation was added to the east elevation of the log house in 1875. It is not known who constructed the addition, but the limestone was quarried from the Florence area. It is two stories, has a rectangular footprint, and features a gabled roof. The addition changed the orientation of the house, which now had a front entrance on the east-facing elevation. The addition, particularly on the east elevation, features a considerable amount of masonry craftsmanship. The corners include quoins made of large dressed limestone blocks. The windows on the north, south, and west elevations have raised smooth-cut limestone sills and flush lintels. The pedimented stone lintels adorning the windows on the east elevation are highly decorative. There is a name and date stone within the north-facing gable that reads “A. Bichet 1875.”

There four symmetrically placed windows on the north and south side elevations – two on the first story and two on the second story. There are four symmetrically placed windows on the east elevation – all along the second story. The center two windows have been shortened to accommodate the 1951 gable-roof addition. The first story has been obscured with the 1951 addition. The west side, which is attached to the log house, includes only two second-story windows. The original sashes throughout this stone addition have been replaced. There are two interior brick chimneys situated along the peak of the gable – one at the north end and the other at the south end.

A one-story wood-frame addition with an east-facing gable roof was added onto the east side of the stone house in 1951. It extends across the entire width of the stone house.

**Interior**

Today, the home’s front entrance is through the east entrance of the 1951 addition on the east side of the house. This part of the house serves as a large family room and features mid-century finishes, such as low...

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2 Prior to the construction of the 1951 addition onto the east side of the stone house, there were five windows and a door along the first story.
beamed ceilings and paneled wainscoting. There are two built-in bookcases in the west wall where the original windows of the stone façade were. The opening through the original front door leads one into an updated kitchen along the south portion of the stone section. A small interior door off the kitchen leads to the full-height earthen basement. There is a bathroom and an original bedroom on the north portion of the stone section. A central staircase between the kitchen and bedroom leads to the second floor. On the second floor, there are three bedrooms – one large one on the south and two smaller bedrooms on the north. These have the original walnut floors and the 80-inch-tall windows. Access to the attic is through an opening in the hall, and you can see the roof construction with each wood beam fitting neatly into a carved limestone support.

A small first-floor hallway connects the stone house to the log house, which also can be accessed from the exterior through the north porch and through a door in the garage. The first-floor space in the log house is finished with small stud-wall construction covered with wood paneling. The doors and wood trim around the windows are handmade and quite uneven. A stone fireplace with a simple carved wood mantel (original) adorns the west wall, and in the southwest corner of the room is an enclosed staircase leading to the second-floor loft. The loft is completely open and features a wood floor and lath and plaster walls, some of which has fallen allowing one to see the building’s log framing. The ceiling conforms to the angles of the roof and there is only one small window – a four-paned, fixed wood window tucked beneath the roofline of the west wall.

The house was modernized with indoor plumbing and electricity in the 1940s. An enclosed porch was added on the south side of the log cabin during this same decade, but it was removed with the addition of a two-car garage in 1951. That same year, a large family room was added to the east side of the stone house.

The original front door is preserved inside the house, and is currently displayed on the enclosed front porch. Modern storm windows have been added to the front porch. All original wood window frames from the stone house have been removed from their openings, and are stored in the house. The two brick fireplaces have been covered and heating is done with propane. Carpet covers the original floors.

3. **Smoke House (built 1875, contributing)**

The property once had two limestone outbuildings, but a fallen tree destroyed one. The extant limestone smokehouse was built in 1875, when the stone residence was built. This outbuilding is located northwest of the house and features a gabled roof and a rectangular footprint. Centered in the east elevation is a single wood door with a limestone lintel above. The building is made of irregular sized rough-cut limestone blocks and features quoins at the corners. One of two stone smokehouses built in 1875...one was destroyed by a fallen tree. The building has a metal roof.

4. **Milk House (built c. 1940, contributing)**

The milk house is built into a hillside closer to the river and would flood during periods of heavy rain. Although there may be portions that pre-date the early- to mid-20th century, it has been rebuilt after floods and consists of a stone wall built into the hillside on the north elevation and an open south elevation supported by wood columns. Inside, the building features a concrete floor, wood walls, and an enclosed room to store dairy products.

5. **Barn (built 1947, contributing)**

This barn was built in 1947 and replaced a barn that had built as early as 1875. It features a slight earthen ramp to a central sliding door on west elevation, vertical board-and-batten wood siding, and a metal gabled roof. The interior has wood grain bins on north side, a dirt floor, and original cattle stalls on south side. The upper story is a hay loft.
### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable Criteria
(Mark “x” in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for State Register listing)

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

#### Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply)

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

#### Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Exploration/Settlement
- Architecture

#### Period of Significance
1858 - 1961

#### Significant Dates
1859, 1875, 1947

#### Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

- **N/A**

#### Cultural Affiliation

- **N/A**

#### Architect/Builder

- **Undetermined**

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**Period of Significance (justification)**
The period of significance begins with Claude Francis Bichet settling this land in 1858 and extends to 1961.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

- **N/A**
Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary (Provide a summary paragraph that notes under what criteria the property is nominated.)

The Bichet Farmstead is nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. French immigrant Claude Francis Bichet settled this property in 1858, two years before the Kansas Territorial Legislature established Marion County’s boundaries and seven years before the county government organized. This property is in Doyle Township, where some of Marion County’s earliest residents settled. The township was named after Patrick Doyle, who settled along what is now called Doyle Creek near Florence.

Elaboration (Provide a brief history of the property and justify why this property is locally significant.)

French-speaking immigrants from France, Belgium, and Switzerland began arriving in the Cottonwood River valley in 1857, during Kansas’ territorial period. Their colony was often referred to as the French Colony, and it differed from many other immigrant colonies in Kansas during that period because the immigrants continued to arrive over a period of forty years instead of arriving in one or two mass migrations. By 1885, the colony included over 60 families. They generally remained in Cottonwood Township in Chase County, Grant and Doyle townships and the town of Florence in Marion County.³

In 1857, Lievin Daems, Francis Bernard, Soloman Schultz and nine others located a town of Cottonwood City, in what is now Chase County along the Cottonwood River near the mouth of French Creek. Another Frenchman, Michael Frachet, established a trading post at this place, and by 1859, the town became the terminus of the mail route from Cottonwood Falls and the voting place.⁴

Marion County was organized in July 1865, and county officers were elected in August. An election held the following year on December 29, 1866 determined that Marion would serve as the county seat. At the time of the publication of William Cutler’s History of the State of Kansas in 1883, Marion County boasted three main towns: Peabody, Marion, and Florence.⁵ The Hillsboro area would see an influx of German-speaking immigrants later in that same decade.

The French colony gradually moved west into Marion County, and Belgian and French immigrants settled along the banks of the Cottonwood River and Cedar Creek to the south. At least two residential landmarks were still standing along the Cottonwood River when Alberta Pantle wrote her “History of French-Speaking Settlement” in 1951: the former home of Francis Bernard, two miles east of Cedar Point, which was in ruins, and the former home of Claude Francis Bichet, which was still owned by the Bichet family.⁶ These two men and their families played important roles in the settlement of the area. The Bichets, for instance, were instrumental in establishing a school for area children. A wood-frame school building was erected on Bichet property in the 1870s, but it burned in 1896 when a more substantial stone schoolhouse was built nearby.⁷

Claude Francis Bichet was born in Dijon, France, February 11, 1812. At the age of fourteen, he enlisted in the navy where he learned the trade of a wooden shoemaker. He married Sophia Jacques in 1845, and they left

³ Alberta Pantle, “History of the French-Speaking Settlement in the Cottonwood Valley,” Kansas Historical Quarterly 14 (February 1951): 16. Much of the material on the Bichet family in Pantle’s article was obtained from a sketch written by Fred A. Bichet, a grandson of Claude F. Bichet and father of current owner Fred Bichet.
⁴ Ibid., 17.
⁶ Pantle, 17-18.
⁷ This stone schoolhouse – known as Bichet School, District 34 – was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 28, 2004.
France for the United States in February 1858 with their only son Alphonse (age 12). They traveled with widow Rosalie Dumartinot and her eight-year-old son Joseph. After five weeks of travel, they arrived in New York where a French agent sent them on to St. Louis where they were sent on to St. Joseph, Missouri. It was there they learned about the French settlement in Chase County. 

Claude purchased a wagon and a span of oxen, and they traveled roughly 180 miles eventually reaching their 160-acre claim along the river. According to family recollection, a group of Cheyenne was camped on the land and they helped the Bichets dig a dugout in the riverbank for the winter. The Bichets lived in this dugout until they built the log cabin the following year in 1859. The cabin, which is still a part of the existing house, was covered with walnut siding harvested on the farm.

Alphonse, the only child of Claude and Sophia, worked at French Frank’s trading post along the route of the Santa Fe Trail as a young man. In 1875, he married Mary Stewart from nearby Marion Centre, and they lived in the loft of the log cabin with Claude and Sophia. Shortly thereafter, the two-story stone portion of the house was built. It was attached to the east side of the log cabin. In the early 1870s, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad pushed into Marion County, crossing the Bichet property, and making its way to Florence in May 1871. (See Figure 1)

Alphonse was a farmer, and as early as 1881, was experimenting with a new type of wheat known as Clawson wheat. During the year 1877, Alphonse kept a daily journal, which records daily events, mentions people, crops planted, and includes notes about the weather, his family, and health matters. He retired from farming in 1883 moved his family, which by that time included three children, to nearby Florence. He retained ownership of the farmstead and is noted on the 1885 Atlas of Marion County as the owner of 384.6 acres in the northeast corner of Doyle Township. After his father died in 1886, Alphonse moved back to the farm. He participated in local Republican Party politics and was a candidate for county treasurer in 1887, but was defeated. He would help settle disputes and helped new French families with deeds and land titles. Alphonse and Mary moved to San Diego, California in 1923, where he died January 27, 1929. Mary died July 31, 1940. The Bichet family no longer farmed after Alphonse’s death, but they did lease the land so others could farm. Hazel Haynes, of Wichita, recalls her family living on the farmstead and working the land between 1934 and 1947. It was during this post-war period that the barn was rebuilt to reflect its current appearance.

Alphonse and Mary’s son Frederick purchased his two sisters’ shares of the farm. The farm has remained in the Bichet family since 1858 and is currently owned by Frederick’s son Frederick and his wife Carol.

Architecture
The Bichet House is like other territorial period houses in Kansas, including the William and Jane Shaft House in nearby Chase County, in that it was built in phases using local materials. Often, vernacular houses of that early period were built in stages with the addition of a wing sited perpendicular to an existing gable-front or side-gabled building. Differences in the Bichet house materials clearly reflect a phased construction. The first log section was built in 1859, early the property's development, and as needs changed and the family grew, a substantial addition was placed perpendicularly to the log structure, creating a T-plan. One important difference between the Bichet and Shaft houses is that the orientation of the front elevation of the Bichet House changed from the north elevation to the east elevation when the two-story stone section was built. The orientation of the Shaft House did not change when a stone addition was constructed.

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8 Pantle.
9 The journal is in the possession of the current property owner, a Bichet descendant.
10 Pantle, 18-19. His daughter Laura was born in 1876, Amelia in 1878, and son Frederick in 1880.
11 His body was returned to Florence for burial in September 1929. Florence Bulletin, 19 September 1929.
The Bichet House was built of timber harvested from the adjacent Cottonwood River banks and locally quarried limestone. The hewn log section was covered with wood clapboard siding early in the building’s history, although it is not known exactly when. The stone section features symmetrical fenestration, the stone lintels and sills are tooled, and there are tooled quoins at the building’s corners. Collectively, these features reflect the building’s architectural significance as an early Cottonwood River valley residence that reflects the tastes of the owners and the skills of the builders who used available local materials.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)


*Chase County Historical Sketches, Vol. 1*. Cottonwood Falls, KS: Chase County Historical Society, 1940.


*Chase County (KS) Leader*. 6 June 1858; 15 October 1862.


Bichet, Claude, Farmstead
Name of Property

Marion County, Kansas
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  Three acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
The Bichet Farmstead is located on a 346-acre tract described as follows: The NE/4 & N/2 S/2 & SE/4 NW/4 Less RR Right-of-Way, in Section 02, Township 21, Range 05, located in Marion County, Kansas. Only the three acre-farmstead is within the nominated boundaries.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The nomination boundaries are confined to the homestead site and the concentration of historic farmstead-related buildings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Carol A. Bichet, property owner
organization                                      date  July 2011
street & number  222 Green Street              telephone  620-662-2474
city or town  Hutchinson                       state  KS  zip code 67520
e-mail

Property Owner:
(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name  Carol and Fred Bichet
street & number  222 Green Street              telephone  620-662-2474
city or town  Hutchinson                       state  KS  zip code 67520
**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  
  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Photographs:**

Please check with SHPO staff before completing photographs.

**Name of Property:** Bichet Farmstead  
**City or Vicinity:** Florence vicinity  
**County/State:** Marion County, KS  
**Photographer:** Sarah Martin  
**Date Photographed:** June 7, 2011

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

1 of 13  North (front) and west (side) elevation of 1 1/2 story log-frame house with 2-story stone house attached to east side, facing SE

2 of 13  North elevation of house (1951 addition on left, 1875 stone house in the center, and log-frame house on right), facing S

3 of 13  East and north elevations of 1951 addition and 2-story stone house, facing SW

4 of 13  South elevation of 1951 addition and 2-story stone house, facing NW

5 of 13  Detail of above window on second story of east elevation, facing W

6 of 13  West elevation of 1951 garage and log house, facing E

7 of 13  Detail of date stone on second story of north elevation, facing S

8 of 13  Interior of north porch of log-frame house showing how it connects to stone house, facing E

9 of 13  Interior of log-frame house showing fireplace on west wall, facing W

10 of 13  Interior of 1951 addition showing where it attaches to stone house, facing W

11 of 13  North and west elevations of barn, facing SE

12 of 13  East and north elevations of smokehouse, facing W

13 of 13  Tree-lined gravel driveway, facing N
Figure 3: Bichet House, circa 1940s

Figure 4: Bichet House, circa 1940s
Figure 5: Bichet House, circa 1940s

Figure 6: Bichet House – roof plan