

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet Joseph Baker House Item number MD 85 Page 1

SITE MD 85

NAME Joseph Baker House

LOCATION MC Road 19-A, 4 miles northeast of Hereford, Belle Fourche-Cheyenne Valleys Unorganized Territory, Meade County (093), South Dakota (046)

OWNER Ray Baker
Star Route Box 13
New Underwood, South Dakota 57761

CLASSIFICATION Building, private, NA acquisition, unoccupied, restricted access, vacant

DESCRIPTION Good, unaltered, original site

The Joseph Baker House faces south on the north side of Meade County Road 19-A, about four miles northeast of Hereford on the open prairie. The sod house was built by the owner's father, Joseph Baker, in March 1907 of sod blocks cut from the grassy fields surrounding the house. One of the few surviving sod houses in South Dakota, it is presently unoccupied and used for storage.

With a construction date of 1907, the one-and-one-half-story Baker House, fits well within the recorded date range of 1900 to 1917 of this style of cube house in South Dakota. The house has a moderately pitched pyramidal roof covered with wood shingles with gable dormers in the north and south sides. The attenuated two-over-two, double-hung windows found in the ground floor and dormers, and the door with its slender top arched wooden panels are detail features found in Second Empire vernacular revival style buildings in South Dakota.

On the ground floor the front, south elevation has one door and window, as does the west elevation. The north elevation has one window in the ground floor with one dormer window in the center of that side of the roof opposite that in the south side. The east elevation has two windows. The exterior walls on the south, east and half of the north side of the structure are covered with very course cast concrete panels.

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The one-and-one-half-story cube house has a spacious ground floor with thick interior walls which have been plastered over and painted various pastel colors. The interior of the house is two bays in length and double pile in width. A corridor off the north end of the kitchen was partitioned off to create a pantry; the stairs to the loft are located in this room. The large red brick chimney located in the center of the loft provided minimal heat for the large open room. The loft is lighted by the two dormer windows in the roof.

The entry to the three quarter cellar is gained through an exterior entrance on the west side of the house. The cellar has a dirt floor and was used for storage.

SIGNIFICANCE 1900-present, vernacular architecture, settlement

DATE: 1907

BUILDER: Joseph Baker

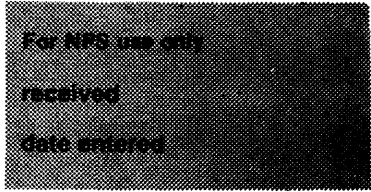
The Joseph Baker House is significant because it is the only surviving early twentieth century homestead period sod house in the survey area. Particularly noteworthy for the Second Empire vernacular revival details, stylistically the house closely resembles the McCaslin House photographed by Solomon D. Butcher in 1887 while he was documenting turn-of-the-century homesteads in Nebraska.

At the present time there are only two surviving soddies included in the National Register of Historic Places in South Dakota. They are, the Prairie Homestead in Interior and the Anna Carr Homestead in Bison.

Although sod houses were one of the most common buildings found on the Great Plains during the homestead era as evidenced by the writings of Dick and others, very few survived through the years due to the delicate nature of their construction. Therefore sod is perhaps presently, the rarest form of building material encountered in the state.

In addition, according to Ray Baker, the present owner and son of the builder, the site has achieved a certain level of prominence as a historic site as people come from neighboring states to see it. Although the house is unoccupied, it is in good condition and retains its architectural integrity as it has never been altered.

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QUADRANGLE NAME Hereford NE, South Dakota UTM REFERENCE *14167122014918760*

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000 ACREAGE Less than one

PHOTO REFERENCE NUMBER

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site is located within a contemporary ranch setting. The boundaries of the site are a set of imaginary lines which lie ten feet from the walls of the structure. The site is located in the SE quarter of the SE quarter of Section 12, Township 5 north, Range 10 east in Meade County.

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