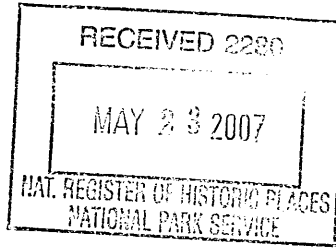


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. 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 any 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 (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House

Other names/site number CU12-011

2. Location

Street & number 451 West Center Avenue

Not for publication

City or town Merna

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Custer

Code 041

Zip code 68856

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Michael J. Smith  
Signature of certifying official

May 17, 2007  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 7-3-07

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House**  
Name of Property

**Custer County, Nebraska**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
3	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete block  
Walls Frame  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Roof Asphalt shingle  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National 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.
X 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.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1906

Significant Dates

1906

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
Previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
Designated a National Historic Landmark
Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location for additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local Government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of property Less than one

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	436211	4592533	3.			
2.				4.			

[ ] See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Jill E. Dolberg and Dee Adams (owner)  
organization Nebraska State Historical Society – NESHPO date March 5, 2007  
street & number 1500 R Street/Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4773  
city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68501-2554

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### 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.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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## Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Dee Adams  
street & number 451 West Center Avenue telephone (308) 643-2455  
city or town Merna state Nebraska zip code 68856

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

This Queen Anne house is generally a rectangular shaped, one and a half story frame structure with an asphalt shingle cross-gabled roof. It has a concrete foundation and clapboard siding. The one story wrap around porch has Tuscan columns and a spindled rail. The north façade contains a dominant gable with a Palladian window and a sunburst pattern in the siding above the windows. The gable also has a delicately carved gingerbread embellishment. The first floor façade features a large fixed picture window with a stained glass transom above, as well as the full-width portion of the wrap around porch. The east elevation is dominated by a large canted two-story bay under a projecting gable, as well as the partial width portion of the wrap around porch.

A full width porch was enclosed during the 1970s to enclose the steps to the basement, but it was done in such a way that the materials are in keeping with the original portion of the house. The enclosed porch has a slightly hipped roof and an added porch. The addition is submissive to the two-story gable it sits beneath. Most of the windows are one over one, double-hung windows that are frequently paired on either side of a larger double-hung window or a picture window. Each of the large picture windows on the first floor has either a stained glass or etched glass transom. The etched glass window depicts a ship at sea, an interesting motif for a land-locked state.

The façade contains a corner entrance into a vestibule entry with two carved oak doors with glass windows and a Victorian screen door. Walking through the second oak door, one enters an entrance hall/sitting room with the canted bay. The house has original oak flooring throughout, and features broad baseboards and door and window frames of amber colored oak. On the main floor, the doors and windows incorporate an egg and dart motif. This room has four doors: one wide pocket door into the two room formal parlor, a five panel door that leads to stairs to the second story, a bi-fold oak door to the original dining room, and a fifteen-light oak and glass door into the kitchen. The formal parlor is divided into two rooms with a columned colonnade of natural oak. This room features the original 1906 wallpaper and borders and the original picture hooks. The dining room has oak woodwork stained in a darker color than any other woodwork in the house. The bi-fold door opens to a wide doorway that permits both the entry hall and dining room to be used for entertaining space.

The kitchen is largely original, with its oak floor and a bead board wainscoting around the circumference of the room beneath a chair rail. The original pantry and small bath were combined into a larger bathroom sometime in the 1970s. The kitchen has an original porcelain farmhouse sink. Three bedrooms are found upstairs, and each features deep closets. The woodwork upstairs is as broad and elaborate as the woodwork on the first floor. Each bedroom has a five panel oak door. The bathroom still contains its original six-foot bathtub.

The property includes a barn/garage, and two smaller sheds, the smaller of which was moved onto the property from a few blocks away. The moved shed does not contribute to this property. All of the outbuildings are frame.

The property exhibits excellent historic integrity, still exhibiting all of the features that one would expect in a Queen Anne house of its age and location. The woodwork is exquisite and the only room reconfiguration was a relatively minor combination of the small pantry and bath on the first floor. The addition is submissive to the scale of the house, and is located on the back.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

The B.W. Kellenbarger House is significant at the local level under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of residential Queen Anne architecture. Although the style was popular from approximately 1880-1910, the time period in which the house was built, only a few examples were built in the community of Merna, Nebraska. The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey includes only eight examples of classic Queen Annes in Custer County. The house, always a single family home, exemplifies typical Queen Anne characteristics such as irregular wall planes achieved by architectural elements like bays, scrollwork, spindles, etched and stained glass windows, and decorative gable insets.

Merna, Nebraska, located in Custer County, is in the central portion of the state. During the 1880s the location of Merna shifted three times. Benjamin William Kellenbarger and his brother Joseph visited Custer County in 1881 to select homestead sites. They returned with their families in covered wagons in 1883 and settled Northwest of Merna where they farmed and endured the hardships of the early days. When the railroad reached Merna in August 1886, the Lincoln Land Company platted the town and sold lots by September of that year. Incorporated as a village in March 1890, with 200 residents, it had two banks, two hotels, three general stores and cafes, three livery stables, a billiard parlor, and a meat market.

Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger gave freely of their time and money toward any worthy civic cause. They helped with the organization of the United Brethren Church and the Merna cemetery. The Merna Opera House was built in 1900, and by 1904 the newspaper boasted that only two sod houses remained in the town proper. In 1906, the Kellenbargers sold their homestead and moved to Merna, where they built this home, in the Third Addition section of town. The property was purchased from the Lincoln Land Company March 17, 1906. An early photo shows the proud couple on the wrap around porch that Fall. The local newspaper, The Merna Postal Card describes in great detail the wedding of Miss Nona Kellenbarger to Jerome Radcliffe at her parents "lovely new home" on December 30th, 1906.

B.W. Kellenbarger was one of the founders of the Farmers Bank of Merna, which opened for business in 1909. He served on its board of managers for thirty-five years. He was appointed Merna Street Commissioner also in 1909. In 1917, Mr. Kellenbarger was among the group of enthusiastic supporters discussing the possibility of a road to be built from Grand Island to Alliance. This group selected the name Potash Highway for the proposed road and Ben Kellenbarger was one of the men who helped mark its location through the Merna area. By 1950, the road was completely oiled across Nebraska and became Highway 2.

Mary Kellenbarger died in 1929, and Benjamin continued to live in the house until his death in 1940. Later that year, the house was deeded to their daughter, Nona Radcliffe. For the next thirty years, Nona's family gathered at the big house for sharing holidays, singing, dancing, picnics and camping in the shady yard. After her death in 1971, the estate sold the property to Erva Adams. In 1993, Harvey Foley and Dee Adams, no relation, purchased the home.

### Architecture

This style was named and popularized by 19<sup>th</sup> century architects from England, led by Richard Norman Shaw. The name is a misnomer, having drawn on influences disparate from the Renaissance architecture that was predominant during Queen Anne's reign.<sup>1</sup> The spindlework and "free classic" variations with Tuscan columns are an American innovation on their original half-timbered and patterned themes.

Queen Anne houses feature steeply pitched roofs of an irregular shape, often with a heavy, front-facing gable. Additional

<sup>1</sup> McAlester, 268.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

**Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House**

Name of Property

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elements may include patterned shingles, bay windows, spindles and other elements that break up the wall plane by giving it an irregular, as opposed to smooth, appearance.<sup>2</sup> This variation was possible through the innovation of light balloon framing; a departure from the heavy timber framing that lent itself best to boxy designs.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the growing industrialization of building materials and relatively inexpensive shipping costs via the prominent national railroad system made the available a vast variety of elaborately designed doors, windows and other elements that added variety to the built environment.

In this case, the planes of the Kellenbarger house are broken up with bands of trim, and a sunburst pattern in the primary gables, executed through the use of milled lumber. The north gable has a half-circle inset sunburst, while the west elevation's gable is completely decorated in millwork arranged in a fan-like pattern. The wall surfaces of the Kellenbarger house are also broken up by the columns and spindles of the wraparound porch and the lacy gingerbread located under the primary gable on the north side. The projecting two-story bay also serves to break up the flat lines of the house.

The Kellenbarger house is a fine example of the Queen Anne style of architecture in Nebraska, and maintains a high level of historic integrity. The setting is intact, with the barn and outbuilding remaining on the property. The building, indeed the site, contains all the elements historically associated with the property. It is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C for its architectural significance.

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<sup>2</sup> McAlester, 263.

<sup>3</sup> McAlester, 239.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House**

Name of Property

**Custer County, Nebraska**

County and State

Section 9,10 Page 1

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**Bibliography**

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

Merna Heritage History Committee. *Merna Heritage Memories*. 1989.

Merna Postal Card, December 1906 and September 1909.

Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office. *Final Report of the Reconnaissance Survey of Custer County, Nebraska*. Mead and Hunt, Incorporated. July, 2006.

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

North Half of Block Four, Third Addition to Merna

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries of the Benjamin and Mary Kellenbarger House include all the land historically associated with the property.