

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04000295

Property Name: Merrill, Moses, Baptist Camp

County: Nance State: Nebraska

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

April 15, 2004
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 6: Function or Use

“DOMESTIC/camp” is hereby added to the list of Historic Functions to more closely reflect the physical aspects and history of the property.

The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

295

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Moses Merrill Baptist Camp
Other names/site number Broken Arrow Wilderness Area and Camp; NeHBS #NC00-002

2. Location

Street & number RR 2, Box 60 Not for publication
City or town Fullerton Vicinity
State Nebraska Code NE County Nance Code 125 Zip code 68638

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.)

Lawrence Sommer Date 3/25/04
Signature of certifying official 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 Beall 4/14/04

[Signature] _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- Building(s)
X District
Site
Structure
Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing and 4 rows: Buildings, Sites, Structures, Objects, 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.)

RELIGION
RECREATION AND CULTURE

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation CONCRETE
Walls WOOD: Weatherboard
Roof ASPHALT
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.
- 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.)

RELIGION

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1942-1954

Significant Dates

1942

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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:

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

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Approximately 99 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	584425	4580265	4.	14	584450	4580055
2.	14	583140	4580115	5.	14	584370	4580155
3.	14	583140	4580055	6.			

[] 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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historian
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office date November 2003
street & number 1500 R Street telephone 402.471.4787
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

Additional Documentation

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.)

Property Owner

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

name/title Doug and Darla Russell
street & number RR 2, Box 60 telephone 308.536.2441
city or town Fullerton state NE zip code 68638

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
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

The Moses Merrill Baptist Camp is located about one-quarter mile northwest of Fullerton in Nance County. Bounded by the Cedar River on the north and rugged bluffs on the south the original campgrounds comprised approximately ninety-two acres. Within the boundary of the site a long ridge of sandy loam cliffs rise as much as three hundred feet above the Cedar River valley. Forested areas comprised primarily of white oak, cottonwood, maple, and dogwood trees characterize the bluffs and the valley below. In addition finger canyons separate hills of native prairie. A cluster of buildings located below the cliffs completes the district.

The entrance to Moses Merrill Baptist Camp (present-day Broken Arrow Wilderness Area and Camp) is located on the east side off Nebraska Highway 14 and marked by a contributing object, the main entrance gate. A noncontributing prefabricated house sits just inside the main gate. The linear entry road turns into a loosely configured figure eight with the two loops running east to west. The northern route of the eastern-most loop runs through prairie grassland lightly interspersed with trees. The southern route of this same loop passes through a more heavily timbered campground. On either side of this figure eight are a number of contributing buildings including eight cabins (c. 1940s), a chapel (1948), a dining hall (1952), a bathhouse (c. 1940), an administration building (1949), and a summer kitchen (c.1940).

The utilitarian cabins are one-story, wood-frame buildings with asphalt shingle roofs and concrete foundations. While all are similar in design there is some variation. The simplest design has a front gable, single front entrance, and single pane windows. A variation of this is a front gable with a two front entrances and double-hung windows. The most elaborate is a cross-gabled cabin with two front entrances and double-hung windows.

The bathhouse and summer kitchen are one-story wood-frame buildings. These utilitarian structures have asphalt shingle roofs and concrete foundations.

The administration building is a one-story, wood-frame building with side gables. The asphalt-shingled roof extends over the primary façade to create an open porch. Two entry doors are located on the main façade. Double-hung windows are featured on all four sides.

The chapel is a large one-story wood-frame building with a steep-pitched asphalt shingled roof. The main entrance is located in the square bell tower that projects from the front façade. The bell tower has a pyramidal roof. Double-hung windows are located on the either side of the bell tower; and on the front and sides of the main body of the chapel. The interior is characterized by exposed wood showing all the support structures.

The dining hall is a one-story rectangular wood-frame building. Large overhanging eaves extend over three sides of the structure. Large serving windows covered with wood shutters are located under these eaves. The convention center, a noncontributing modern metal building, is located north of the road.

The western loop also winds through a forested area. This section of the road is encircled by contributing buildings including: bunkhouses, cabins, two-multi-use buildings, and a bathhouse all constructed in the 1940s. The cabins and bathhouse are constructed in the same style as those previously described. The bunkhouses and multi-use buildings are one-story, wood-frame buildings with asphalt shingle roofs and concrete foundations. They have a side gable with two entrances on the primary façade. Additionally, the windows have wood shutters. A noncontributing modern metal maintenance building is located at the extreme west end.

Starting from the western edge of this main road an unimproved pedestrian path begins. It runs in a west-northwest direction up into the cliffs above the Cedar River. Following a circuitous route the path crosses the varied topography through both natural prairie and heavily wooded areas. At the far western end the path leads to "Lover's Leap" and a breathtaking view of the Cedar River valley. This winding trail eventually ends back in the forested campground area. Many of the roads and trails through this district were constructed prior to the establishment of the Baptist Bible Camp. These roads and trails were maintained and utilized throughout the period of significance and contribute to this nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

As with any natural environment changes are inevitable. However, aside from a slight shift in the course of the Cedar River this site has remained remarkably unchanged. Even the buildings constructed for the camp have made at most a modest impact on the natural setting that still distinguishes this area. By comparing historical accounts with today's view this site is easily recognizable by its large stand of indigenous trees, natural prairie grasses, and steep cliffs.

Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

Moses Merrill Baptist includes twenty-five contributing and three noncontributing resources.

Contributing Buildings:

13 c. 1940s cabins
4 c. 1940s bunkhouses
2 c. 1940s bathhouses
2 c. 1940s multi-use buildings
1948 Chapel
1949 Administration building
1952 Dining hall

Noncontributing Buildings:

2 modern metal buildings
1 prefabricated house

Contributing Objects:

Main Entrance Gate

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

The Moses Merrill Baptist Camp Historic District, located one-quarter mile northwest of Fullerton in Nance County in east central Nebraska, is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the historic contexts Religion, and Entertainment/Recreation. The Nebraska Baptist State Convention, located in Omaha, purchased the site in 1942 and then used it as a summer camp that combined religious instruction with recreation. The period of significance begins in 1942 when the site became a Baptist Camp and ends in 1954, fifty years from this nomination. The nominated district includes twenty-four contributing buildings and one contributing object. The buildings include thirteen c. 1940s cabins, four c. 1940s bunkhouses, two c. 1940s bathhouses, a chapel (1948), an administration building (1949), dining hall (1952), and two c. 1940s multi-use buildings. The contributing object is the main entrance gate.

The Moses Merrill Baptist Camp Historic District (present-day Broken Arrow Wilderness and Camp) comprises an area of approximately ninety-nine acres. Located near the Cedar River the site is noted for its scenic beauty, native vegetation, and rich history. Within the district's boundaries a long ridge of clay cliffs rise as much as three hundred feet above the Cedar River valley. Stretching from the top of the bluffs to the valley below are forested areas comprised primarily of white oak, cottonwood, maple, and dogwood trees. In addition finger canyons separate hills of native prairie. It is within this scenic area that the history behind the Moses Merrill Baptist Camp Historic District is revealed.

History of the Area

The Pawnee, a Native American tribe indigenous to the Central Plains, inhabited present-day Nance County since the 1500s. As a result there are many stories concerning this tribe's activity in the Fullerton area. There is also archeological evidence the Pawnee were in the vicinity of the nominated property by the first quarter of the 1800s.

Euro Americans, primarily missionaries along with a few scattered settlers, first appeared in the area about 1840. Along with their normal religious duties the missionaries apparently participated in a notable event. It is reported that on July 4, 1844 a group of banner-carrying missionaries and some Pawnee students climbed to the top of the bluff (subsequently called "Lover's Leap") overlooking the Cedar River. There the Declaration of Independence was read followed by the singing of "America." Accordingly, this has been labeled as the first official celebration of the Fourth of July in what is now Nebraska.

The term "Lover's Leap" given to a bluff overlooking the Cedar River comes from a story that originated in 1857. According to the legend the Pawnee attacked a small group of immigrants. The group consisted of John Edgington, his wife, and a daughter—Nellie; and two brothers Frank and John Wickland. Frank and Nellie were engaged to be married. The Pawnee captured all five pioneers and indicated they would be killed except for Nellie. Frank Wickland protested and Nellie herself pleaded to die with the others. The Pawnee bargained that if Frank successfully rode a horse down the bluff all the captives would be spared. Frank mounted a horse but the descent down the bluff quickly took a disastrous turn as the horse stumbled and Frank fell to his death. The story concludes with the remaining captives being set free and the place gaining its name as "Lover's Leap."

Following the establishment of Fullerton in 1879, the nominated property again gained notoriety as a gathering place. In 1897, Fullerton's first Chautauqua was held at the site. Chautauqua were designed to entertain guests with lectures, sermons, songs, recreational activities, and other such attractions. Some visitors stayed in tents located on the present-day campground, while many of the events and performances were held at the base of "Lover's Leap." This annual summer attraction was a major regional event that lasted until 1929.

The area was idle for a few years following the end of the Chautauqua era. Activity picked up again in 1936 when the federal government established a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp on the site. The CCC workers lived at the camp for about two years while working in the area. All the buildings they constructed on-site were removed when the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

CCC workers left in 1938. However, the water and sewer system they built and the concrete foundations of the CCC buildings sat on remained in place and formed the basis for construction of the Baptist Bible Camp.

Following the closure of the CCC camp the site lay dormant. However, the Chautauqua Association was actively trying to dispose of the property. A group of private investors who wished to use the land for an amusement park offered \$7,500 for the ninety-nine acres but the Chautauqua Association turned them down. In explaining their refusal to sell, the Association indicated their intentions that "the grounds should be used for something of a religious nature" (Letter Field to Carr, December 12, 1942). Coincidentally, the Baptist Church's Department of Christian Education Iowa-Nebraska, which had already established a camp in Iowa, was looking for a site to for a similar facility in Nebraska.

The Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

In 1942 the Nebraska Baptist State Convention approached the Chautauqua Association about purchasing the campground outside of Fullerton. The Association agreed to sell the ninety-nine acre site to the Baptists for \$4,500 giving the Baptists their first church campground in Nebraska. The excitement and importance of this purchase is echoed in the words of B.G. Field, Area Director of the Department of Christian Education Iowa-Nebraska:

"Let there be rejoicing throughout Nebraska, my fellow Baptists...[t]he announcement of the purchase...known as the Chautauqua Park, marks a new day in our entire denomination life. When I think of the prospects for developing the park as a great campsite, a strange thrill runs up and down my spine. For sheer beauty, there is no more scenic park in the state of Nebraska. There is one valley deep within the bluffs sufficient for camping – and one bluff with considerable tradition known as "lover's leap."

Mr. Field went on to outline the mission of this new camp. He stated it would be the aim of the Department of Christian Education to create a program consistent with finest spirit of Nebraska Baptists. Such a program would stress "Missions, Evangelism, Worship, and the study of the Bible and like interests. Conferences of an informal nature will be encouraged and life situations will be dealt with as they develop." Field concluded by stating on these grounds "I can conceive of no force within our denominational life more potent, more vital to the ongoing program of the churches and the Kingdom interest."

Named after Moses Merrill, who did early missionary work among the Otoe and Pawnee tribes in Nebraska, the Baptists planned to make the site "one of the most complete summer religious camps in the middle west." By the summer of 1943 two buildings were erected and the Baptists opened the camp for their first four events. These events included a boys' camp, girls' camp, a women's house party, and a youth assembly. As the initial registration form stated, "At long last Nebraska Baptists are to meet on their own grounds to begin a new era in assembly and Camp life." During the next few years a number of buildings including cabins, bunkhouses, and bathhouses were constructed. Many of these buildings were constructed on the cement foundations left from the former CCC camp. A chapel was built in 1948, the administration building in 1949, and a new dining hall in 1952. This is the built environment that exists today and reflects the historical importance of the district.

During this period of increased construction the importance of the camp to Nebraska's Baptist churches continued to grow. Following its inaugural year, the Moses Merrill Baptist Camp eventually became home to separate boys' and girls' camps, co-ed camps, and leadership conferences. The result was that by the early 1950s almost every phase of Nebraska's Baptist Church program activity was represented at the Camp.

The area that encompasses this district is rich in history. A Native American presence, pioneer immigration, and a CCC camp all share an historical relationship with this area. Collectively these historical components and events make this area unique. And it is because of its uniqueness the Baptists eventually established a Bible camp in this location. The only visible evidence of these prior

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

occupations are the foundations of the CCC buildings that were later utilized by the founders of the Baptist Bible Camp. The 25 contributing resources of this historic district reflect the built environment of the Baptist Bible Camp and it is through its use as a Bible camp that this property achieved National Register significance. With the exception of the two modern metal buildings and a prefabricated house the extant buildings at the Broken Arrow Wilderness Area and Camp date from the Baptist Camp. Walking among these buildings it is easy to imagine the various church functions and activities that brought a lasting recognition to the area.

For three decades the Moses Merrill Baptist Camp played an important role in the churches' recreational and instructional programs. In later years the facility declined in importance as the Baptist Church found other venues to accomplish their educational and recreational goals. In 1974 the Baptist Church disassociated itself from the property. For the next twenty-five years the area was underutilized and not maintained. In 1999 the property was purchased by a private entity and renamed the Broken Arrow Wilderness Area and Camp. Using the existing buildings, the site now offers lodging, camping, and a wide range of recreational activities.

The Moses Merrill Baptist Camp is eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the significant historic contexts of Religion and Entertainment/Recreation. The camp was an important local addition to the community. The popularity of the camp brought increasing notoriety to Fullerton. The large number of people who participated in the many Baptist camp activities helped ensure a regular, if seasonal, economic boom to the community. There has not been a comprehensive survey of similar camps in Nebraska and it is not possible to evaluate this property in a statewide context. Therefore, this property is nominated at the local level. The district meets the requirements established under criterion consideration A in that it derives its primary importance from its historical significance.

Archeological deposits may be present at the site. However, no archeological investigations have been conducted and the significance of potential archeological deposits have not been evaluated. Therefore, this property is not nominated under Criterion D.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Moses Merrill Baptist Camp

Name of Property

Nance County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 9-10 Page 1

Bibliography

Fullerton's First 100 Years 1879-1979. 1979.

The Nance County Journal, 1943.

Unpublished Papers

Field, B.G. *Department of Christian Education Iowa-Nebraska*.

Historical Sketch of Cap Merrill, March 1956.

Holland, Dorothy. *The Life and Work of Moses Merrill*, March 1950.

Verbal Boundary Description

Pt NE1/4, 16.76A and Pt SE1/4, 55.34 A, Section 10, Township 16 North – Range 6 West; and PT SW1/4, Section 11, Township 16 North – Range 6 West.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the land associated with the Moses Merrill Baptist Camp's historic development.