



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Walnut Groves Farm (Name Change and Boundary Increase)
other names/site number Originally listed as Merrifield, Samuel B., House; NE-64

2. Location

street & number 801 Taylorsville Road not for publication NA
city or town Bloomfield vicinity X
state Kentucky code KY county Nelson code 179 zip code 40008

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.

David L. Morgan 3-9-99
Signature of certifying official Date

David L. Morgan, State Historic Preservation Officer
Kentucky Heritage Council, the State Historic Preservation Office
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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register Patrick Andrews 5/14/99
 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): Expands a previously-listed property

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	objects
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

- AGRICULTURE/storage
- AGRICULTURE/agricultural field
- TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions:

not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Greek Revival

Materials: foundation Brick
roof Tin
walls Brick
other

Narrative Description starts on continuation sheet **page 7-1.**

Walnut Groves Farm (Name Change and Boundary Increase)
Nelson County, KY

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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

- 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.

Areas of Significance : Agriculture

Period of Significance 1820-1881

Significant Dates: 1820

Significant Person: NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Batchelder & Allen

Narrative Statement of Significance begins on continuation sheet **p. 8-1.**

9. Major Bibliographical References: **See p. 9-1**

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 of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data:

Acreage of Property 259 Acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	646720	4200200
2	16	647190	4200140
3	16	647600	4198920
4	16	648020	4198880
5	16	648010	4198320
6	16	647140	4198300
7	16	647005	4199220
8	16	646640	4199420
9	16	646490	4199760

Verbal Boundary Description and Boundary Justification: See p. 10-1

11. Form Prepared By:

name/title Karen E. Hudson
organization KEH Preservation Services date Dec. 1, 1998
street & number 876 Lynn Drive telephone 606-278-3919
city or town Lexington state KY zip code 40504

Property Owner:

name Linda Bruckhiemer
street & number 12822 Highwood Street telephone 606-885-1307
city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90048

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Walnut Groves Farm
Nelson County, Kentucky

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Walnut Groves Farm (NE-64) is located in Nelson County, Kentucky. It was established in about 1820 by Dr. Samuel B. Merrifield. Merrifield's home, smokehouse, and a small amount of land surrounding the home (approximately 2.5 acres) were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 12, 1979. The area proposed for boundary expansion includes 260 acres surrounding the home. The acreage was associated with the Merrifield home during the period of significance and consists of 7 additional contributing resources and 9 non-contributing resources.

Walnut Groves Farm is located at the Northern limits of Bloomfield on the Western side of Kentucky Highway 55 (Taylorsville Road) and the North side of Simpson Creek Pike and Turkey Run. The Southern boundary of the property consists of a 19th century dry laid rock fence (contributing) which courses along Turkey Run.

The imposing, two-story, five-bay, Greek Revival home (listed 1979) is approached by a 1/4 mile driveway (contributing) off Taylorsville Road. At one time the drive was lined with large walnut trees, thus the farm's historic name "Walnut Groves." While most of the trees have expired, the current owner is attempting to reintroduce the trees along the drive. The processional nature of the drive is enhanced by a pond, fed by the waters of Turkey Run, which is located just north of the drive. The banks of the pond were lined with cut stone by the current owner.

The brick, pyramidal roof smokehouse (listed 1979) is located approximately 50 feet north of the home. A 19th century dry laid rock fence (contributing), located behind the smokehouse, delineates the domestic complex. The fence runs approximately 75 feet behind the home, turns to continue south, and joins the rock fence delineating Turkey Run. The remains of a slave quarters, including the base of two stone-chimneys, is located behind the

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home and within the rock fence delineating the domestic complex. At this time, the archaeological site is considered non-contributing since integrity has not been determined. In the future, however, further investigation may determine that this is a contributing resources.

Located just behind the archaeological site but outside the rock fence is a c.1820 stone spring house (contributing) and a small pond. A non-historic log guest house and a single-pen log home (non-contributing), moved from its original site, are located nearby. An additional rock fence is located behind this cluster of resources (contributing). Two barns are located north of the home. One, a late 19th century transverse crib frame barn is a contributing resource. The other is a non-historic, frame and metal structure.

The rock fence coursing along the banks of Turkey Run extends the entire length of the property's Southern boundary and turns North where it exists intermittently along the Western boundary. The abandoned railroad bed of the 1874 Cumberland and Ohio Railroad (contributing) cuts across the back of the farm and in several cases forms its western boundary. The entire boundary of the property is marked by established tree lines.

As in the period of significance, most of the property consists of fields and pastures. One cluster of non-contributing resources--two, one-story frame homes, two barns, and a single-pen log home (moved from its original site)--are located approximately a ½ mile north of the domestic complex.

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Nelson County, Kentucky

The Samuel B. Merrifield home (NE-64), smokehouse, and a small amount of land surrounding the home (approximately 2.5 acres) were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 12, 1979. The home was listed under Criterion C. The home was recognized as an "exceptional Greek Revival structure" and one of the "most impressive homes in the area." The survey which led to the 1979 nomination concentrated on the home and its immediate surroundings. A new and broader survey of the Merrifield farm, known historically as Walnut Groves, determined that the farm is also eligible under Criterion A, and is significant within the historic context "Nelson County Agriculture, 1820-1881." This historic context builds upon the overview presented in *The Bluegrass Cultural Landscape Study*, part of the Kentucky State Plan for Historic Preservation. In addition to the home and smokehouse, the new survey revealed other historic resources which contribute to the ability of Walnut Groves to convey important trends in Nelson County's agricultural history. It is proposed, therefore, that the boundary be expanded to include these resources and that the name be changed, from the Samuel B. Merrifield House to Walnut Groves Farm, in order to reflect these changes.

Born in 1788, Merrifield studied medicine under Dr. John Bemiss, the founder of the town of Bloomfield. He married Bemiss' daughter, Fanny, in 1814. Bemiss surveyed and platted Bloomfield in 1818. According to local legend, he named the town after his wife whose maiden name was Bloom, and his Merrifield son-in-law (Thomas).

Soon after Merrifield and Fanny married, Bemiss loaned Merrifield \$50 cash to pay Richard McKay for work on his house and in 1817 he loaned him money to purchase three out lots in the town of Bloomfield (Dr. John Bemiss estate settlements). The out lots appear to be the property that eventually became Walnut Groves and the home that McKay was building for Merrifield in 1815 appears to be the extant one-story, brick ell, which became the kitchen when the two-story Greek Revival structure was completed.

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The siting of the home, not at the road, but at an abundantly-flowing spring, is a significant feature of Walnut Groves. In the *Bluegrass Cultural Landscape Study*, an element of the Kentucky State Plan for Historic Preservation, Amos noted that during the settlement period, the period when Merrifield established Walnut Groves, one of the most important features for siting a farmstead was the proximity of an abundantly-flowing spring. During the settlement period, a locally-based economy required infrequent trips to market and therefore, road proximity did not significantly affect farm siting (26). As a result, many farmsteads established during the settlement period, like Walnut Groves, are located at the end of long drives which lead from a road to the area of a spring. During later periods, when farmers began to participate in a regional and national economy, and transportation became more important, homes were constructed closer to roads. Its location at the end of an extended drive and near an abundantly-flowing spring, reflect the settlement period establishment of Walnut Groves and the fact that Merrifield had the means to obtain such a suitable site. The extended drive was not included in the original National Register Boundary.

By 1820 Samuel Merrifield owned 340 acres of land on Simpson Creek. Only 88 of the 16,273 individuals living in Nelson County in 1820 reported owning more land than Merrifield. Merrifield's land was valued at \$15 an acre in 1820. Compared to other Nelson County land owners, the \$15 rate was very high, suggesting that he had already made improvements, such as a home and rock fences (Nelson County 1820 Tax Assessment).

The series of early 19th century rock fences at Walnut Groves contribute to our understanding of how Merrifield used architecture to materially express his social and economic standing. In their study of rock fences, Murray-Wooley and Raitz found that dry laid rock fences could take years to build, thus requiring a substantial investment of money and management time. They suggest that since well-built fences required skilled masons they represented a kind

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of conspicuous consumption of labor, and the public came to associate them with wealth, desired social status, and the region's landed plantation families (Murray-Wooley 1992: 82). Most of the rock fences at Walnut Groves were not included in the original National Register boundary.

There were 13,637 individuals living in Nelson County in 1840. Merrifield, however, was one of only 78 individuals who listed their occupation as "professional" in the 1840 census return. He retired from active medical practice in 1850 and devoted his attention to agriculture. In both 1850 and 1860 he listed his occupation as "farmer". It appears that he was just as successful at farming as he had been at medicine. By 1860 his land holdings had increased to 465 acres and the value of his farm was estimated to be \$30,000. Of the 873 farms in Nelson County in 1860, only 11 were valued higher than Walnut Groves (1860 Agricultural Census).

Merrifield died in 1869 and left Walnut Groves to his son, Samuel B. Merrifield. The younger Merrifield appears to have successfully continued to operate the farm and maintain his family's social standing. In 1874, for example, when the Cumberland and Ohio Railroad arrived in Bloomfield, he had enough influence to arrange to have the railroad pass through Walnut Groves. The Merrifield family retained ownership of the farm until 1881 when it was sold to John D. Motch.

This new and broader survey of the Merrifield farm, known historically as Walnut Groves, revealed historic resources which were not included in the original nomination--rock fences, springhouse, railroad bed, and setting (driveway, fields, pastures) which contribute to the ability of Walnut Groves to convey its significance. As a result, it is proposed that the boundary be expanded to include these resources and that the name be changed, from the Samuel B. Merrifield House to Walnut Groves Farm, in order to reflect this fuller understanding of the property.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NPS Form 10-900-a
1024-0018
(8-86)

OMB No.

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Walnut Groves Farm
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Nelson County Property Valuation Map 73, Parcel 5 and Map 72, Parcel 15.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The area proposed for listing in the National Register includes the resources that have historically been part of Walnut Groves and that maintain historic integrity. The boundary utilizes current legal boundaries and visual barriers that mark a change in the historic character of the area due to new construction.

Walnut Groves
Nelson County
Kentucky
Site Plan
(not to scale)

Grocery
Spring



KNR Boundary

Tree Line

16

KY 553

Turkey Run

POTTER

