

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received APR 7 1988

date entered MAY 20 1988

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wood, Walter B. House

and/or common Crow House

2. Location

street & number 814 12th Street N/A not for publication

city, town Modesto N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county Stanislaus code 099

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Harry D. Crow

street & number 814 12th Street

city, town Modesto N/A vicinity of state California 95354

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Recorder of Stanislaus County

street & number 801 11th Street

city, town Modesto state California 95354

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Modesto Historic Building Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date May, 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Office of Historic Preservation

city, town Sacramento state California

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Walter B. Wood House is a two-story wood frame residence of Italianate/Queen Anne design on 12th Street in the heart of Modesto's business section. With the exception of an added three-story hexagonal corner bay and a wrap-around veranda, the house retains its basic architectural integrity and is one of the city's few remaining examples of Victorian architecture.

An 1880 lithograph and an 1885 photograph show the house as it was originally constructed in 1877 without the corner bay and with only a small porch directly over the front entrance. The original porch was supported by slender round posts and curved brackets. A pierced railing with turned posts and finials at the front corners enclosed the flat porch roof. The steps leading up to the porch were flanked by matching pierced railings and turned posts with round finials. Originally, a picket fence surrounded the property, and a windmill and a small barn occupied the northeast corner of the lot. A single-story wood frame garage now stands in this spot, but it is not a contributing structure. The three-story corner bay and full veranda were added sometime between 1885 and 1895. The garage was built c. 1925.

Although these alterations changed the original appearance of the house, they do not detract visually from its overall architectural character.

The Wood House is constructed in an essentially rectangular plan with the short side facing the street. It rests on a brick foundation and is capped by a side-facing gable roof with intersecting front and rear gables. The roof material is composition shingle. A simple boxed cornice encloses the eaves, and those at the gabled ends have returns. There are two interior brick chimneys; the larger of the two located near the center of the house has a corbeled cap. Shiplap siding sheaths the structure.

The front (west) facade features a slanted bay at both the first and second-story levels and a three-story hexagonal bay at the southwest corner of the house. Each bay side contains a tall one-over-one double-hung sash window set in a segmental arched opening and capped by a projecting molded lintel. Slender colonettes frame each of the individual bay windows. The third story of the corner bay creates a turret which is crowned by a flared tent roof of scalloped wood shingles and an ornate wrought iron weathervane. Carved brackets with pendants support the roof at the intersection of each bay side. The main entrance to the house is located between the two bays, near the center of the west facade, and consists of a pair of doors with rectangular glass panes above elaborately carved lower panels. A stained glass transom extends over the entire doorway. Above the entrance, at the second-story level, is a one-over-one double-hung window with an arched top and projecting lintel. A single-story veranda extends across the front and wraps around the south side of the house. The shed roof of the veranda is supported by abbreviated classic columns resting on a low shiplap covered wall which encloses the porch. Wide wood steps flanked by plain open railings lead to the porch and front entry. Decorative treatment includes molded end boards at the front corners of the building and recessed rectangular wood panels beneath the first-story windows.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1877–1903 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)**

The Wood House is significant at the local level based on its historical associations with early Modesto as well as the fact that it is one of the rare examples of Victorian architecture still in existence in the city. It is one of only six structures built before 1900 represented in the Historic Building Survey of Modesto. The building, although modified and given a Queen Anne configuration, maintains an Italianate character in the manner of its decoration, even in the corner tower. It is thus a good representative of this style, and a rare one as well. The home's first owner, Walter B. Wood, was a leading early Modesto businessman who made substantial contributions to the development of several local commercial enterprises.

The Wood House is important architecturally as a good local example of Italianate/Queen Anne residential styling and is one of a very few formal Victorians remaining in the entire city. In form, the Wood House is recognizable for its Queen Anne influence; however, in most details, the house is a good representative of the Italianate style, as the later additions to the house were carried out in keeping with the earlier period. Such exterior elements as the projecting slanted bays with their tall windows set in segmental arched openings and framed by slender colonettes, as well as the many original interior features including the unique fireplace, plaster ceiling medallions, and elaborate newel post and bannister, contribute to the building's architectural integrity.

The son of Elkanah and Abigail Wood, Walter B. Wood was born in Allegheny County, New York on December 13, 1832. A year later, the Wood family moved to a farm in Hillsdale County, Michigan. When Walter was 17 years of age, he left home to attend Michigan Central College where he paid his way by teaching for four years. Subsequently, he taught at an advanced school. However, after only four months, the discovery of gold prompted him to book passage on the California bound steamer, "George Law". After a 25-day journey, Wood arrived in San Francisco on June 10, 1857.

Wood then went to Merced County and farmed there until November of 1867 when he moved to Stanislaus County. He continued to farm successfully for six more years, producing 10,000 to 18,000 bushels of grain annually. He then leased his farm, which consisted of more than 1,000 acres, and opened the first hardware store in the new town of Modesto (founded in 1870). In addition, Wood built a large grain warehouse and a flour mill with a capacity of 80 barrels per day.

In 1877, Wood purchased land on 12th Street and began construction of his new home. When completed, it was considered one of the most handsome residences in Modesto. At approximately this same time, Wood became one of early Modesto's most prominent merchants and influential citizens. In 1878, he and several other community leaders

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Branch, L. C. History of Stanislaus County, California, San Francisco, California Elliott and Moore, 1889.
2. Tinkham, George H. History of Stanislaus County, California With Biographical Sketches, Los Angeles, California: Historic Record Company, 1926

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Riverbank

Quadrangle scale 1 to 24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	0	6	7	6	8	6	0	4	1	6	7	6	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

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D 

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E 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Lots 21, 22, and 23 in Block 94 of City of Modesto according to the Official Maps thereof, filed in the Office of the County Recorder of Stanislaus County on December 21, 1941 in Book 15 of Maps. APN:1052406  
Justification: This is all that remains of the historic property.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Melgard, Historic Preservation Chair

organization Stanislaus County Historic Society date February, 1987

street & number 1003 Wellesley Way telephone (209) 523-6784

city or town Modesto state California 95350

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Kathryn Swaiter*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/31/88

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Patricia Andrews*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/20/88

Attest:  
Chief of Registration

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

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Near the front of the north facade is a simple one-over-one double-hung window on the first story. Immediately beyond, centered on the north wall of the house, is a one-story slanted bay with a one-over-one double-hung window set in an arched opening on each of its three sides. Slender colonettes separate the bay windows, and there is a recessed panel below each window. To the rear of the bay are three symmetrically placed two-over-two double-hung windows at each story level and a narrow single-story level and a narrow single-story screened porch containing a side entrance to the house.

At the northeast corner of the house, three wood steps lead to a small stoop off the screened porch. To the left is a plain two-over-two double-hung sash window on the first story east facade and two identical windows on the second-story level.

Resource count: 1 contributing building  
1 non-contributing building

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founded the Modesto Bank, one of the young city's first two banks. Wood was also instrumental in organizing the Grange Company and served on the board of directors of both institutions. Wood attended the state's Constitutional Convention of June 1878 as one of the three delegates from Stanislaus County. Until his death in 1903, Wood was recognized as one of Modesto's leading citizens, active in banking and commercial circles.

After Wood's death, his widow, Martha, continued to live at the 12th Street home until 1933, when it was deeded to the Woods' daughter, Ella Hancock.

Harry and Jewell Crow acquired the property on January 2, 1946. Harry Crow, who still resides in the house at the present time, is a member of an important Stanislaus County pioneer family. His father, Henry G. Crow, was a prominent Modesto businessman who owned the Hotel Modesto from 1914 until it burned down in 1944. Henry G. Crow was also influential in establishing the Modesto Irrigation District, a project which made water available for irrigation and transformed the great San Joaquin Valley from a dry wheat farming region to the lush agricultural area it is today.