

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUL 10 1984  
date entered AUG 23 1984

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

## 1. Name

historic Peck-Crim-Chesser-House

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 14 North Walnut Street not for publication

city, town Philippi vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Barbour code 001

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Lucille Crim Chesser-lifetime-Peggy Chesser Hadley & Julia Chesser Martine  
(sisters)

street & number 14 North Walnut Street

city, town Philippi vicinity of state WV

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Barbour County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Philippi state WV

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Peck-Crim-Chesser House, a massive two-story solid brick 19th century residence, occupies two city lots (35-36) at the corner of Walnut and Church Streets (sometimes referred to as "Crim Alley") in Philippi, seat of Barbour County West Virginia. The combined prominent location directly behind historic Barbour County Courthouse and Square, the tall stately maples, dependency and open lawn (enclosed on front and west elevations by a low stone wall of cut limestones blocks set in a castellated pattern) give this bold edifice a commanding presence in the heart of the city. Both inside and outside there is a wealth of fine architectural detail, sawn, turned, open-wood ornament, porches, triple window bays, segmental-headed window openings, louvered window shutters, original pintles, all in an excellent state of preservation. The survival of such detail, the Victorian massing and floor plan cause this house-built in 1884 to be very important to the community. It was designed by its original owner, Cora May Crim (daughter of J.N.B. Crim) Peck. It is the only masonry two and one-half story with full basement of its type ever built in the city and it is one of the two if not the most prominent home in Philippi.

The Peck-Crim-Chesser House is a red brick (also painted barn red) two story house having an irregular plan typical of large brick residences of the late 19th century. It has high pitched multiple gables and decorative high standing brick chimneys with corbeled caps. Although the building is eclectic in architectural style, it has a suggestion of late Gothic design because of the steep gables that are decorated with sawn barge boards. The gabled roofs are covered with green asbestos shingles, earlier corrugated tin, originally slate. The eaves, like the gables, are decorated with wooden barge boards in the same simulated sawtooth pattern. The attic windows are arched with decorative brick hoods featuring key stones and window sash with arches rounded at the top with reeded casing. The first and second story windows are tall, narrow, double-hung in Victorian style and are topped by flat brick arches. The triple bay windows have segmental arches. All windows have stone sills, rusticated with dimpled centers and smooth borders.

The foundation stones extending down to create a full basement are very large, hand-tooled square and rectangular limestone blocks. They also are rusticated. The bricks are layed in seven course common bonding, seven courses in stretchers, the eighth in headers, a very Victorian design.

There are four entrances, two at the front and two at the rear elevation. The oak double entrance doors are reached at the side of the principle porch. They have upper glass panels with beveled borders. The large overhead transom light is beveled and the reveals are oak paneled. The primary porch with its ten, wood, Roman-Tuscan columns extends across the entire front and along one-third of each side elevation. The porch floor and ceiling have narrow tongue and groove boards set in a diagonal and are mirror images of one another. The mid-section of the porch is broken by the parlor bay window with a very large central light set off by upper sash centered with a frosted light bordered by small square lights in the Queen Anne style. The secondary front porch entrance opens into the dining

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room. The secondary porch, at the rear elevation, opens from the kitchen. Its roof extends to join the roof of the two story cellar dependency, which is of identical construction as the residence: foundation, brickwork, gabled pitch, inner walls plaster over lathe. (There is a second dependency, a two story cottage cum garage (former stables). The unusually large dining room is enhanced by a large alcove formed by a multi-sided bay with five double hung windows. An elaborate oak screen defines the alcove entrance transom.

In 1907 the Pecks moved to Richmond, Virginia. Mrs. Peck's brother, Edmund Hall Crim, bought the residence. His wife, Virginia Talbott Crim, whose great grandfather was the first white settler (1782) in the area, designed a handsome living room addition which is incorporated into the side and rear elevations, creating a long corridor leading to a fourth entrance midway in the rear elevation and also creating two additional second story rooms.

A three-run stairway rises in the open well entrance hall and terminates in a spacious hallway which gives access to five large rooms and two baths and a servant's room (also reached by an enclosed stairway from the kitchen). The wainscoating of the primary stairway is made up of oak panels bordered in egg and dart molding. The balusters of the stair railing are turned with a spool design and support a molded rail which terminates in a volute, the newel post, supported by a reeded column with crocketed capital. The stairway forms an L-shaped balcony on the upper hallway. At the bottom landing, a square fluted column supports a fan-shaped screen. In this sixteen-room, virtually unaltered, residence all interior floors and woodwork are oak. All walls are plastered and, are eleven feet six inches high. The hardwood doors, floors, windows, and wainscoating are unaltered, in their original, unpainted finish. The second story woodwork has been painted and the floors refinished. Among the most grand of the wooden finishes are the several decorative open-work screens with turned spindle knobs, the lintel in the dining room entrance, the operative single and double pocket doors into the library and music room, and the wainscoated paneled library book cases with six glass doors. The large music room is notable for its multi-sided bay, containing four floor to ceiling double hung windows with central wall panel, and the ornamental ceiling molding.

The Peck-Crim-Chesser House is a virtually unaltered example of baronial Victorian architecture. It and its site are imposing, speaking eloquently of a bygone age in Barbour County.

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A carriage house dependency, a modest story-and-a-half vertical board and batten structure, stands at northeast corner of the lot upon which the house stands. It is adaptively used as an apartment dwelling.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1884;1907      **Builder Architect** unknown; contributions by Cora Crim Peck and Virginia Talbott Crim

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

The Peck-Crim-Chesser house in Philippi, Barbour County, West Virginia is significant because it is a well-preserved unaltered surviving example of late 19th century Victorian architecture (1884), because it is prominently sited, has been continuously occupied by members of the same family for one hundred years, and because this family has been prominent in the local 18th, 19th and 20th century society of this rural county seat. It is notable that this house was designed by two women: Cora Crim Peck who took great pride in the original plans, developed prior to 1884 (undoubtedly plan books were used), especially in the three-run open well stairway, and Virginia Talbott Crim whose addition in 1907 coordinated in design with the original while roughly doubling the size of the home. The tall gables with their sawn barge boards, the triple bays, the porch of columns, louvred shutters, pintles all intact, double hung windows, locally pressed brick, and limestone hand tooled foundation stones, eleven foot six inch plaster walls, exterior and interior doors with transoms, extensive oak wainscoting, open-work, and flooring testify to the status of the owners and the quality of workmanship of the times.

The citizens of Philippi for whom this house was originally built were Cora May Crim Peck (1859-1948) and Melville Peck, Esquire, natives of Barbour County. Cora Peck was the daughter of J.N.B. Crim, the leading merchant, foremost businessman and financier of the county. Melville Peck (1855-?) was an active member of the firm of Crim and Peck, graduate of West Virginia College, Morgantown, admitted to the Bar 1881, practiced law in Philippi, and with his wife established the Tygarts Valley Star Weekly "to be a leader not a follower of public sentiment." (Cora Peck supervised the office and did the writing.) Peck was Prosecuting Attorney for four years, was twice mayor of Philippi. The Crim-Peck building was erected in 1904. Mr. and Mrs. Peck were prominent citizens in Philippi until they moved to Richmond in 1907.

Edmund Hall Crim (1864-1920) who purchased the home of his sister, Mrs. Peck, was educated at West Virginia College, Morgantown, was President of the First National Bank in Philippi, President of E.H. Crim and Company and successor to his father's business empire until he was robbed and murdered on a business trip to New York City. Continuing to live in the home were his widow and daughter. The widow, Virginia Talbott Crim, was a great great granddaughter of Richard Talbott, first white man to have resided permanently in Barbour County (1782) and great niece of Elam Dowden Talbott (1810-?) a physician and surgeon elected to the Virginia Assembly who was instrumental in getting appropriations to build the covered bridge at Philippi and who played an important role

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Crim-Chesser Family Papers, 14 N. Walnut Street, Philippi, WV

History of Barbour County, Hardesty's West Virginia Counties. Richwood, WV, Jim Comstock, 1973.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Philippi, WV

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 17 583020 413340110  
Zone Easting Northing

B              
Zone Easting Northing

C            

D            

E            

F            

G            

H            

**Verbal boundary description and justification** located in a 75-ft. square bounded to the southwest by N. Walnut St., to the northwest by Church St., to the northeast by a line 75 ft. long and to the southeast by a line 75 ft. long intersecting with N. Walnut St. (City lots 35-36)

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peggy Chesser Hadley

organization N/A date February 15, 1984

street & number 14 N. Walnut Street telephone 304/348-0240

city or town Philippi state West Virginia

## 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 [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date June 29, 1984

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

date 8/23/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

