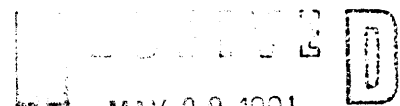


761

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



MAY 09 1991

NATIONAL
REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Sharp, John, House

other name/site number: Cunningham, George, House

2. Location

street & number: 306 College Street

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Stevensville

state: Montana code: MT county: Ravalli code: 081 zip code: 59870

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 2 </u>	_____ building(s)
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u> 2 </u>	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Resources of Stevensville: 1866-1941.

4. 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.

maurice sheep MT SHPO 4-9-91
Signature of certifying official Date

MONTANA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

___ See Continuation Sheet

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register Antiquities Act 6/19/91

___ See Continuation Sheet

___ determined eligible for the National Register _____

___ determined not eligible for the National Register _____

___ See Continuation Sheet

___ removed from the National Register _____

___ See Continuation Sheet

___ other (explain): _____

fr _____
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: Domestic/single dwelling

Current: Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Other: Vernacular/ One-and-one-half-story cottage

Materials: foundation: stone
 walls: wood
 roof: wood shingle

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Built between 1883-1884 by Joseph McLaren, this 1½-story plank-wall house was designed in a simple, vernacular side-gable form with a central brick chimney. The symmetry of the form is emphasized by a central entrance flanked by large double-hung windows on the primary (south) elevation. The vertical plank construction of the exterior walls is an unusual building method that is only rarely found in Montana. While the plank construction remains exposed on part of the rear additions, the front portion of the house was sided with clapboard, likely shortly after the initial construction.

Set back from College Street among mature trees and beautiful old deciduous flowering bushes, the John Sharp house is set perpendicular to the street with the primary elevation facing south. The original board walkway from the entry to the street has been replaced by concrete and the street-side picket fence now divides the yard behind the house. The Virginia creeper vine, which covers the west and south sides of the house, has grown since the Sharp family planted it in 1926, and accents each season with an attractive color change.

The gable roof is covered with wood shingles and has a modest overhang. A modified hip roof supported by simple chamfered posts with decorative braces projects over the full-width porch on the south elevation. The porch has a wooden deck set on stone and concrete piers. Between 1905 and 1906, John Sharp added this porch to the house. A small shed-roofed addition, which was likely built very early during the house's history, projects to the east. This addition is sheathed with vertical board and batten siding.

Windows are wooden, double-hung, 2-over-2 units with very thin dividing sash, with the exception of the one 4-over-4 window remaining in the gable end on the east elevation. The window openings are finished with plain slip sills and simply detailed lintels, which area decorated on the first floor with a spoon carving design. The wooden exterior doors are historic 2-panel units with two or four lights above.

Due to the care and maintenance carried out by past and present owners, the John Sharp house stands in fine condition on what is likely a stone foundation system that may consist only of stone piers at the corners. The house has not been painted in many years, although traces of terra cotta red and dark olive green paint are in evidence on less weathered areas of the exterior.

The original floor plan remains with the exception of two walls and doorways which were added to create a bathroom and kitchen. Surface details and finishes inside and out are

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John Sharp House

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consistent in style and character. New roof shingles, updated plumbing, and a new heating system were recently completed by the current owners.

Outbuilding

The detached, wood frame shed with a low bow roof is located behind the house. The shed is sheathed with horizontal tongue and groove siding and remains in near original condition. The shed contributes to the historic feeling and association of the property. Both the shed and the rear addition to the John Sharp House were in place by the time the 1893 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map was drawn.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: B, C Areas of Significance: Education, Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a Period(s) of Significance: 1883-1926

Significant Person(s): Sharp, John F. Significant Dates: 1883-4, 1905

Cultural Affiliation: n/a Architect/Builder: McLaren, Joseph R.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The John Sharp house is significant in the history of Stevensville as an unusual example of vernacular architecture that utilized plank wall framing and was built during the early years of community settlement. The simple one-and-one-half-story cottage form with very modest classical detailing and symmetrical organization is one of the finest representations of its type in the area due to the retention of a high level of key elements and floor plan. The plank wall framing system, which is characterized by exterior walls composed of rough sawn planks laid in two vertical layers and supported by corner posts, is known to have been used in a number of houses in the Bitterroot Valley during the 1870s and 1880s. However, extant examples are extremely rare.¹

The house also gains historical importance for its association with Professor John F. Sharp, who played a significant role in the development of the Stevensville public school system. Sharp was a teacher and school administrator who purchased the house in 1905 and lived here until 1946. The consistently high national academic standing of students educated within the Stevensville schools during the historic period is thought to be a direct testimony to the success of the quality educational system that was established by John F. Sharp.

John F. Sharp, a Tennessee native, came to Montana and was teaching at the Burnt Fork School east of Stevensville by 1884. He first became a teacher in the Stevensville public school system in 1895. Until 1901, formal education in the Bitterroot Valley was limited to grades 1 - 8 and, in many communities, multi-grade one-room "winter schools" were still conducted by volunteers of varying qualifications well into the 20th century. John Sharp gained a reputation for the promotion of academic excellence while he served as a teacher at the Training School in Stevensville between 1901 and 1907. A private four-year preparatory school located within the city limits, the Training School was the first secondary school in Ravalli County. Following its closure in 1907, School District #2 leased the vacant Training School building and, in 1908, Stevensville opened its first four-year high school. Professor John Sharp was hired as principal. Within one year of its opening date, Professor Sharp is credited with the installation of both a physics department and a library of 125 research books in history, science, and literature. In 1909, when enrollment reached a high of 235 students, a new classroom addition and an additional teacher were required. Sharp reputedly traveled to his native state of Tennessee on his own time and personal funds to hire a qualified teacher to fill the position.

X See Continuation Sheet

¹See Popham Ranch nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (listed 1-13-89). Copy on file at the Montana Historic Preservation Office.

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John Sharp House

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The "apple boom" in the Bitterroot Valley in the 1910s brought many new families to Stevensville and school enrollments soared. A new school building was soon erected to meet the need for expansion. Professor John Sharp's career culminated in his appointment as Superintendent of Schools, a position he held until his retirement in 1926 after 30 years of service. Other accomplishments of John Sharp include the organization of boys' and girls' athletic clubs and literary societies.

During the early years of his career, John Sharp was a figure of some controversy in Stevensville due to his advocacy of a full academic year for public schooling. The transition from a 3-month winter school program to a 9-month program met with considerable resistance from local farming families who felt that much school time was excessive when the children were needed to complete chores. Sharp's philosophy and school program prevailed, and one of the finest educational systems in the state was established under his guidance.

Joseph and Lydia McLaren acquired this property in December of 1883, and built this house the next year. McLaren continued to own the property until 1892 when he sold lots 15 and 16 to J.W. Richman. John F. Sharp purchased the property in 1905.

9. References

Missoula Herald, Special Edition, January 1, 1909.
Missoulian, December 15, 1912; June 12, 1949; August 14, 1949.
Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis (Missoula: Mountain Press, 1971).
Stevensville Republic, December 23, 1903.
Stevensville Register, September 2, 1903; Special Edition, December 23, 1909; March 30, 1911; April 23, 1926.
Western News, December 19, 1911; August 9, 1967.

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 -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	11	723290	5154520

Verbal Boundary Description:

West half of lots 15 and 16 of block 24 of the Original Townsite of Stevensville.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the half-lot upon which the historic buildings are situated.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Lynda Maclay	Date: October 1990
Street & Number: 237 South 2nd West	Telephone: 406/728-7523
City or Town: Missoula State: Montana	Zip: 59801