

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



82

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

1. Name

historic CRAIL RANCH BUILDINGS

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Meadow Village ___ not for publication

city, town Gallatin Gateway vic.
Big Sky ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Montana code 030 county Gallatin code 033

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Big Sky of Montana, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 1

city, town Big Sky, ___ vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Gallatin County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Bozeman state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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 date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Crail Ranch is a one and a half story log home located alongside the West Fork of the Gallatin River. It was carefully constructed on a site that would take full advantage of the breathtaking views in all four directions - south toward the Madison Range; west toward Lone Peak; north to the Spanish Peaks and east into the Gallatin Canyon. It is a rectangular building, 38' x 17'. The house is constructed of logs, hand hewn to a flat surface and joined with dove-tail notches and mortar chinking. The home is divided in the center by a stairway which is located below a shed dormer on the second level. The 12 step stairway is decorated with a hand hewn sapling railing. The stairway separates the living area and the kitchen which are the 2 rooms that comprise the lower level. The interior of the living room is finished with knotty pine wall-board which was added in later years to the original structure. The kitchen has also been finished off with wallboard and wall paper. The ceiling of the first floor is supported by exposed hand hewn 8" log joists that are 16" on center. The ceiling is built of rough sawn 1 x 6 decking. The upper level consists of 2 bedrooms which are also divided by the stairway. These rooms have also been finished off with wallboard which could easily be removed to expose the original log interior. There are 2 concrete chimneys in the house, one on the west end and the other on the east side of the house. The flooring throughout is of 1 x 6 pine boards. The Crail Ranch has a straight gable frame roof. The original wood shingles remain on the north side of the roof, however, asphalt shingles have replaced the original on the south side. A concrete stoop is set before the front entrance in which is inscribed the brand of the Ranch. The stoop is covered with a shed roof porch.

Certain additions have been made to the Crail Ranch to modernize it, but nothing that could not be removed to return it to its original state. Most noticeable is the 10' x 17' lean to room which houses the modern plumbing for the house. It is connected to the north side of the house and is of frame construction with asphalt shingle siding and a tin roof.

The ranch home is immediately surrounded by an old buck n' rail log fence. Also on the property is an older log cabin of a smaller size 12' x 16'. This cabin has served many purposes at the ranch as well as housing the Crail Family while they built the larger home. It is of round log construction with V notching and mortar chinking. The roof is the most unique part of this cabin. Supported by log gables and purlins, it is constructed of 3 layers of rough sawn lumber laid in alternating directions. The top layer is of board and batt construction to provide for efficient drainage. The interior of the one room cabin is paneled with peeled log slabs. The flooring is of 1 x 4 decking. The cabin is adorned with a hand made door made of 3 layers of rough sawn wood laid in alternate directions and is connected to the frame with strap hinges.

The Crail home is still in sound condition and habitable, although there is currently no power to it nor is the plumbing hooked up to the existing well. It was last lived in the summer of 1979 by employees of Big Sky and they found it to be a very warm house and solidly constructed. The building is presently vacant, pending the owner's decision as to the future use of the house. The Crail Ranch is situated in the center of the Meadow Village at Big Sky where it was the only homestead in this area since it was built in ca. 1905 until the Big Sky development began in 1970. It was the center of a 960 acre ranch that comprised most of the meadow area. It is the only building older than 10 years of age that lies within the modern resort development of Big Sky.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" 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 ca. 1905

Builder/Architect

Augustus Frank Crail

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Crail home was built ca. 1905 by Augustus Frank Crail and his family as a living and working center for their 960 acre ranch. It took many years of work to complete the house which is constructed of hand hewn logs and rough sawn lumber cut at the family sawmill which was, at one time, a significant part of the ranch facilities. The house itself and the nearby cabin are the only remaining structures which testify to the existence of the original ranch whose lands have been developed in the last 10 years into a resort community by Big Sky of Montana, Inc.

Frank Crail purchased the homestead rights to this property in 1902 from 3 men named Frazier, Insbrite, and Sprague, who were the first homesteaders of this range country. The house and accompanying cabins, barns and sawmill, built by the Crails, were the first and only structures in the meadow valley for over 50 years. Frank and his wife Sally had 3 children, Eugene, Emmett and Lillian, who all contributed to the ranch operation. Eugene was the woodworker of the family and operated the sawmill that they built at the ranch to mill logs and lumber for their own use and for market. Eugene was a noted cabinetmaker and as a hobby made fine musical instruments such as violins and also had a passion for whittling. Emmett took over the stock operations of the ranch from his father after Frank passed away in 1924. He ran a successful working ranch until 1950 when he sold the property to Jack Hume. Hume and his wife Elaine made the existing alterations to the original log house by adding interior wallboard, modern plumbing and bringing in electricity.

The Crails were one of the few families in the Gallatin Canyon that were successful with their ranching business and were not forced to resort to dude ranching to support their working ranch. It was a sheep ranch from 1915 until 1934 when their success in this endeavor allowed them to switch over to cattle ranching. At this time they closed down their sawmill to concentrate on raising cattle and hay. The Crail is of extreme significance as a reminder to the residents of the Gallatin Canyon of the agricultural economy and lifestyle that originally brought homesteaders to this area. Because land along the Gallatin has been developed for recreational use, the original working ranches can no longer afford to function as such. Almost all the ranches of the area have been sold to land developers or have been converted to dude ranches. The Crail Ranch stands alone at Big Sky, amongst clusters of modern condominiums, as a very obvious reminder of our history.

As well as being culturally important, the Crail Ranch is of great architectural significance. Probably, most physically impressive, are the hand hewn logs which were used to construct the house. Each log has been hand chiseled with an axe to flatten the sides of the logs. The very obvious markings on the logs add a distinctive quality to the surface texture of the building. The logs are joined at the corners by the dove-tail notching technique and then chinked with mortar. The handcrafted detail gives character to the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gallatin County Tribune, Special Edition, Tuesday, February 17, 1970.
High Country News, September 17, 1980.
Interview with Mrs. Dorothy Vick, August, 1980.
Interview with Mr. Jack Hume, September, 1980.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Spanish Peaks

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UMT References

A

1	2	4	7	4	9	1	0	5	0	1	2	6	2	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

A portion of Tract 8 of the Big Sky Meadow Village Subdivision. Southern boundary is the bank of the West Fork River; northern boundary is right-of-way of the Meadow Village access road.

SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 36; T6S, R3E

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paula Halverson

organization

date

street & number P.O. Box 304

telephone (406) 993-4722

city or town Big Sky

state Montana 59716

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marcella Sheffy

title

Deputy SHPO

date

12-15-80

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page

SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

house and its sturdiness speaks for the time and care that went into construction.

The small one room cabin which accompanies the larger home was also crafted by the Crail family. Evidently, this cabin was built first and lived in while the larger house was being constructed. This cabin is also unique architecturally, due mostly to the roof design. The outer surface of the roof is laid in a board and batt fashion to provide adequate drainage and is constructed over 3 layers of 1 x 10 rough sawn boards with layers laid in alternating directions.

The cabins display methods of log cabin construction which are rarely used today. The original structures were built of materials either hand hewn or rough sawn, cut and milled on their own land with power produced from a homemade water wheel. Seldom does any home exhibit such qualities of handcrafted techniques as well as being the product of a joint family effort.

The Crail Ranch stands as a credit to the Crail family, one of the original homesteading families of the Gallatin Canyon; as a reminder of the past, and no longer existing, agricultural economy and lifestyle of the area; and as an architectural example of the handcrafted buildings which typified the Montana homestead at the turn of the century most of which no longer exist.