

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 23 1987  
date entered AUG - 3 1987

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

1. Name

historic Cramer, Martin, House

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 326 Groff Lane

N/A not for publication

city, town Stevensville

vicinity of

state Montana

code 030

county Ravalli

code 081

3. Classification

Category

district  
 building(s)  
 structure  
 site  
 object

Ownership

public  
 private  
 both

Public Acquisition

in process  
 being considered  
N/A

Status

occupied  
 unoccupied  
 work in progress

Accessible

yes: restricted  
 yes: unrestricted  
 no

Present Use

agriculture  
 commercial  
 educational  
 entertainment  
 government  
 industrial  
 military

museum  
 park  
 private residence  
 religious  
 scientific  
 transportation  
 other:

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ravalli County Courthouse

street & number 105 Bedford

city, town

Hamilton

state

Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

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

The Martin Cramer House is an eclectic, two story, Mansard-roofed residence of frame construction, which combines decorative elements of the Eastlake, Second Empire, and Stick styles. The exterior of this L-shaped house is ornately dressed with corner boards, window panels, and a straight-sided, Mansard roof with an enclosed soffit ornamented with paired scroll brackets, a dentilated cornice beneath the exaggerated roof curb, and gable-roofed dormers that cut into the eave line and are finished with wooden cresting at the ridge line. A large porch spans the length of the ell and features turned support posts with scroll brackets and turned fretwork. The porch balustrade is matched by the balustrade of the porch-roof balcony. The straight-sided, Mansardic porch roof extends to form a roof skirt around the building between the first and second stories that mimics the flare and projection of the primary roof and, with its scalloped shingling and dentilated frieze, and adds textural interest to the sidewalls. The building is sheathed with cedar clap boards and painted white, while decorative elements are highlighted in a cream color.

All windows in the house are one-over-one double hung, wooden sash, with the exception of the large plate glass cottage window of the south (front) facade and small lights of the west (rear) vestibule entry. Two original, two-panel, single-light doors remain in place, the third (north facade) door was replaced in 1983. Aluminum storm windows and doors were added in 1980.

The interior of the Cramer House retains much of its original detailing. The most outstanding feature is the front stairway, which leads from the entrance hall to the upstairs landing, forming a gentle 180-degree curve. The curved hand-carved oak balustrade follows the curve of the wall, which is finished in wainscoting and a decorative, plaster crown molding. A beveled alcove window lights the upper landing. One of the builders of the house, Erick Erickson, was well known for his elaborate, circular staircases. Original door and window, corner block moldings of straight-grained fir, and wainscoting remain in excellent condition. The three upstairs bedrooms, which are set beneath the Mansard roof, feature plastered ceilings with arched alcove windows.

The Cramer House has experienced only minor alterations since its construction in 1895. A 1903 photograph shows that the balustrades of the porch and balcony were added after that date. Although the original historical photograph appears to have been cropped, cutting off most of the eastern half of the front facade, a 90-degree angle to the Mansardic roof skirt at the edge of the image indicates that a square bay window likely existed in place of the present cottage window. Portions of the house were remodeled during the 1920s and 1930s, but the present owners began extensive rehabilitation work in 1980, which involved repair of much of the extant historic fabric. The single piece of original wooden cresting on the gabled dormers that remained in 1980 was used as a pattern to reproduce the missing elements. Recent alterations include the removal of the two original chimneys in 1983, which were replaced with concrete masonry unit stacks, one on the interior and second on the east elevation. The rear porch on the west side was enclosed in 1983 and made into a mud room.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1893-1895

**Builder/Architect** Erick Erickson and John Lagerquist

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

The Martin Cramer House is architecturally significant as a well preserved example of late 19th century residential construction that exhibits design elements of the Second Empire, Eastlake, and Stick styles. Built by local carpenters Erick Erickson and John Lagerquist, the Cramer House exhibits a high level of craftsmanship and material integrity. The eclectic "pattern book" design of the house would have been more commonly chosen for an urban settings during the historic period rather than for a rural farmstead. Martin Cramer located in the Bitterroot Valley in 1890, and was one of the steady trickle of new settlers who migrated to this rich agricultural valley during the last half of the 19th century.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Cramer House stands as a distinctive example of a late 19th Century carpenter-built residence because of the high quality of craftsmanship and materials used in the construction of this "pattern book" design house. The builders of the Cramer House, Erick Erickson and John Lagerquist, built many of the foremost homes in the Bitterroot Valley, often using the published plans and specifications that were widely available during the period. The plans used in the construction of the Martin Cramer House appeared in an 1876 publication entitled "Victorian Home Building," by E.C. Hussey of New York. This specific house design by Hussey also was reprinted in a Seeley Brothers Paint Company catalog of 1886.

Erick Erickson and John Lagerquist owned and operated a lumber mill in Hamilton and very likely produced the materials used in the construction of the Cramer House. These two carpenters built a large number of residences in the Bitterroot Valley, although insufficient historical and architectural survey has been completed in the Valley to know how many of their buildings survive. In the spring of 1895, Erickson and Lagerquist completed a house in Stevensville for a man named Amos Buck that was almost identical in plan and ornamentation to the Cramer House, which was finished a few months later in the fall of that year. Mr. Buck was an early pioneer merchant who assisted in establishing Stevensville as a small trade center during the late 19th Century. Unfortunately, the Buck House was altered extensively in the course of its conversion to an apartment house in 1963, and all significant architectural detailing, except for the interior, curved staircase, has been lost. The most well-known accomplishment of local builders Erickson and Lagerquist was the large, Queen Anne style Marcus Daly House near Hamilton, which was replaced by a new Georgian Revival residence in 1910. Erickson died in 1907 and Mr. Lagerquist in 1948.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 8 acres

Quadrangle name BING

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A	1 1 1	7 2 1 4 3 1 1 0	5 1 1 4 1 5 2 1 6 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Commencing at the corner common to sections 27 and 28, T8N, R20W, thence N.00°50'54"W 1347.02 feet; thence N.89°53'36"E 3057.28 feet to the northerly right-of-way of Groff Lane (the point of beginning); thence 600' due north; 380'west; 600' south; 380' east. SW $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 27 T8N;R20W

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Donna J. Byrne

organization \_\_\_\_\_

date 8/10/86

street & number 326 Groff Lane

telephone (406)777-3060

city or town Stevensville

state Montana

# 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

title

SHPO

date

June 12, 1987

### For NPS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

8/3/87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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**Ownership:**

Robin C. and Jody Hood  
310 Groff Lane  
Stevensville, Montana 59870

G. Tyler Byrne and Donna J. Byrne  
326 Groff Lane  
Stevensville, Montana 59870

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A number of agricultural outbuildings associated with the early use of the property as a ranch and farm headquarters are still in existence, located to the north and west of the house. The original tract of land purchased by Martin Cramer consisted of 350 acres, which has been used over the years for stock grazing, sugar beet production, and most recently planted in wheat.

Within the nominated boundaries of the property stand seven, wood frame outbuildings. Five are considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the Martin Cramer House due to their association with the early agricultural use of the property. Two post-date the historic period, and, thus, are judged to be non-contributing. However, these two more recently constructed, smaller outbuildings are of compatible design and materials and do not detract from the integrity of setting and association.

Granary: ca. 1895, contributing. Measures ca. 20' x 10'; typical "inside-out" stud wall construction; set on concrete foundation; gable roof with cedar shingle covering.

Woodshed: ca. 1895, contributing. Measures ca. 14' x 14'; wood frame; board and batten siding; gable roof with fascia boards; cedar shingle roof covering.

Smoke house: ca. 1895, contributing. Measures ca. 8' x 8'; wood frame; board and batten siding fashioned with vertically placed, 3" thick, rough-cut planks; concrete foundation. The interior of the structure remains blackened from use; a small hole was cut in the gable roof to allow the smoke to escape.

Root cellar: ca. 1895, contributing. Measures ca. 15' x 15'; large, rubblestone root cellar constructed 6' below grade; a two-room storage house was built above. Walls of the storage house measure approximately 2' in width and are of double, frame construction, with the interior cavity filled with sawdust for insulation. Clapboard siding; gable roof with metal covering.

Barn: ca. 1895, contributing. Measures ca. 42' x 26'; wood frame; board and batten siding; three bay with broken angle roof; two-light casement windows; roof recently covered with metal.

Bunkhouse: ca. 1920, non-contributing. Measures ca. 18' x 24'; built to house migrant workers. Wood frame with clapboard siding; gently sloped gable roof with support brackets at the ridge line and eaves; centrally placed door in gable end; one-over-one double hung windows.

Garage: ca. 1950, non-contributing. Measures ca. 15' x 20'; wood frame construction; gable roof covered with shingles.

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The Cramer House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C as a well preserved and distinctive example of a pattern book house design that incorporates decorative elements from three major architectural movements of the late 19th century. The agricultural setting contributes to the significance of the property and helps to evoke an accurate sense of historic time and place. Located on one of the numerous graveled roads that traverse the Bitterroot Valley, the Cramer House stands as part of a discrete farmstead at the edge of expansive tilled fields. Enormous cottonwood trees, planted during the historic period, surround the house and line the main driveway to the barn. The relative architectural refinement and elegance of the house is highlighted by the simple, board and batten treatment of the outbuildings.

The Cramer House is one of a small number of rural residences that was associated with the no-longer-extant community of Etna, which was located four miles west of Victor, six miles south of Stevensville, and eight miles north of Corvallis. Etna was established as a crossroads, agricultural service center during the late 1860s and consisted of a one-room school building, fire hall, Grange Hall, feed store, general mercantile and post office by the 1890s. Its importance as a rural center diminished with improved transportation during the early 20th century when such services could be readily had in the nearby towns of Stevensville or Victor. The Cramer farmstead stands as a reminder of the pattern of dispersed community organization in this agriculturally rich valley.

Martin Cramer, who became an individual of some local historical importance during his later life, achieved significance after his six-year association with the nominated property. Cramer had moved to the Bitterroot Valley in 1890 from the small, agricultural settlement of Bonita near Missoula, Montana. He purchased 350 acres of agricultural land from William Sanders and hired local builders to construct his residence in 1893. The house and the major outbuildings, which reflect the subsistence nature of the farmstead, were completed by 1895. Cramer was a prosperous rancher during his early years in the Bitterroot Valley, but retired early from this rural enterprise when, in 1901, his wife died in childbirth. After selling his farmstead, Cramer moved into Victor and became one of the original members of the Board of Directors of the Farmer's State Bank. Later moving to Stevensville, Cramer established that town's first automobile dealership and was active with the American Crystal Sugar Company in the early 1920s and 1930s.

Cramer sold the nominated property in 1901 to William and Gib Strange, who were large landowners in the Valley and prominent sugar beet growers during the 1920s. Subsequent owners have been Albert Groff, for whom the Groff Lane was named, Glen Kircher, Michael Gaudin, and G. Tyler & Donna J. Byrne, who are the present owners.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Langton, Jeffrey. The Victor Story, Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana, 1985.

Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis: A History of the Stevensville Area of the Bitterroot Valley, Mountain Press Publishing, Missoula, Montana, 1971.

Newspapers:

Ravalli Republic, Hamilton, Montana: July 12, 1948.

Stevensville Register, Stevensville, Montana: September 17, 1902; November 12, 1902; January 27, 1903; February 11, 1903; February 25, 1903; March 11, 1903; April 22, 1903; January 27, 1904; August 3, 1904; November 2, 1904; February 1, 1905.

Western News, Hamilton, Montana: June 16, 1938, July 15, 1948; April 16, 1953.





MARTIN CRAMER HOUSE

(Site Map Not to Scale)

