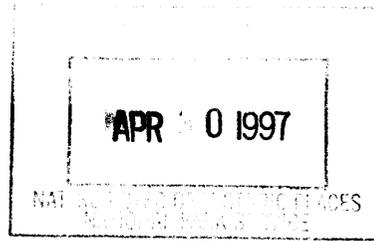


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



504

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Etna School

other name/site number:

## 2. Location

street & number: 2853 Eastside Highway

not for publication: n/a  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

city/town: Stevensville

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

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

(  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

*Edson H. Beall*      5/30/97

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
Category of Property: Building	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  2  </u> building(s)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  2  </u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

<b>Historic Functions:</b>	<b>Current Functions:</b>
Education/School	Domestic: Hotel, Single Dwelling

7. Description

<b>Architectural Classification:</b> Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Prairie	<b>Materials:</b> foundation: concrete walls: brick roof: wood shingle other: n/a
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Narrative Description

The Etna School is a single-story, two-room brick schoolhouse constructed in Prairie Style. The school exhibits a symmetrical, rectangular design, with gently-pitched hip roof capped by a small square tower. Two small brick chimneys project above the roof planes.

On the east, the primary facade is dominated by a large projecting entry porch featuring a single, round arch opening. The opening is framed by engaged pilasters which visually and structurally support the round brick arch. A single wooden door is set in the recess. The porch is capped by a pedimented gable trimmed with scalloped wood shingles. To either side the entry is flanked by the walls of the schoolrooms and the banded fenestration. Windows originally were double-hung, multipane units; the current windows (1993) replicate the originals in their patterning, but are framed with aluminum. On this east elevation, they are placed in groups of three.

On the west elevation, the original design (1918) involved a central rear entrance with a small stoop and short flight of steps. In 1920, this central entry was built out, with an entry hall and a cloakroom to each side, and second pair of double wooden doors added. On the north and south sides, a single window is set into the sides of the entry, while across the classroom wall, they are banded in a continuous grouping of four on either side.

During the past decade a number of sensitive alterations have been made to the building, While maintaining the historic exterior appearance on all but the rear portion of the school, the building was converted to residential space. A rear addition was made by extending the roof to cover a sitting room with banded double hung windows on the west and north. And a rear deck now skirts the rest of the back of the school. It is a wooden deck with brick piers, wooden lattice and a wooden railing.

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On the interior, the school originally was divided by a central hallway into two equal, well-lit classrooms. The cloakrooms projected from the rear as previously described, and single closets for each classroom were tucked under the main entry roof.

During the conversion to a residence, the interior was remodelled. In the south classroom a brick wall and fireplace was erected in 1966 to separate the space into a kitchen and living room, while the closet in the east wall was opened into a study nook, and the southwest mudroom was converted to a laundry room.

The north classroom has been more substantially altered. A wall now bisects the north space, creating two bedrooms on the east and west, along with a bath for each. To the rear, a sitting room was added in 1995 which projects from the building to the west. The former north classroom closet now houses linens, and the northwest mudroom was converted to a bathroom.

From the central hall, an open stair was added in 1982 to access the attic beneath the hipped roof. A second floor was created which contains a living room and two bedrooms.

The Etna School stands along the Eastside Highway south of the small town of Stevensville, on the broad floor of the Bitterroot Valley. The surrounding terrain is cleared and agricultural, although it has evolved toward a mixed agricultural/residential character. The school is highly visible from all directions, and commands a powerful view of the rugged Bitterroot and Sapphire mountain ranges which line the sides of this valley.

Just west of the school was a community cemetery, which at one time held between 83 and 86 graves, many of those were young children who had died in diphtheria and smallpox epidemics. In May of 1886, Josephus Million called a special meeting at the Etna schoolhouse of "all interested parties for the purpose of perfecting arrangements for a new location and the removal thereto of the graveyard". Included in the notice were statements from three physicians certifying that "the graveyard south of Mr. Million's farm, being only four hundred yards from his house, and the water gravitating directly to his house, must cause sickness. This is one of the causes of so much sickness as his family has had for the past two or three years. The graveyard should be speedily removed in order that the health of the neighborhood be improved."<sup>1</sup> Finally, in 1915, many of these graves were dug up and moved to Stevensville cemeteries. In the 1950s the remaining gravestones were gradually removed and the graves were farmed over. There are still graves of at least 28 people in the cemetery site.<sup>2</sup>

The land where the school is sited has been divided since the current owners purchased the property in 1978; it includes a newer horse corral and residential landscaping. The lawns are carefully tended, with flowers, a gazebo, small pond and trees.

## Integrity

The Etna School has by necessity been altered to accommodate its use as a residence after its closing as a school in 1956. However, the changes which made this possible have been highly sensitive to the original design, function and character of the building. Great care was demonstrated in the design of the second floor living area, which was added into the rooflines and by employing skylights and a small gable window, is not detectable from the outside. The sun room and rear deck on the west complement the existing design and brickwork, are appropriately placed at the rear, and are scaled to the building.

From the outside, it sets as it did historically -- apart and in the open, and a visible landmark from most directions in the valley. Although there have been additions to the setting, they are concentrated toward the back of the property, thus the visual appearance of the school and its relationship to the highway and its approaches are preserved. The additions of the horse barn, garage with driveway, and gardened landscape do alter the school's immediate environment which was much more stark in the historic days. However, efforts were made to complement the school building by use of historic brick and similar design elements. And these changes are not to the point of masking the original function, design and historic associations of the building with the surrounding valley community.

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The cemetery which stood formerly to the rear, along with outhouses and fencing are long gone. These changes were completed during the historic period, and simply reflect the evolving history of the school and improvements made for reasons of health and sanitation.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Education, Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1918 - 1946

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1918

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: John Peterson &  
Adam Horning, builders

## Narrative Statement of Significance

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Etna School District #4 was one of the earliest school districts created in the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana. Associated with the emerging agricultural community outlying Stevensville, the Etna School's history reflects patterns of population growth and foundations of education for the children of the community. The district's history spanned more than eight decades, and the Etna School is the third schoolhouse to be built on this site, serving the valley for almost forty years. The school building is a stalwart example of a Prairie style schoolhouse, a style less commonly employed in Montana for school design. Noteworthy for its accomplished design and high quality craftsmanship, the school is also eligible for the National Register for its architectural significance according to Criterion C. For these reasons, the Etna School is deserving of recognition and listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

### Historical Significance

With the Homestead Act of 1862 settlers came to the Bitterroot Valley, and the greater share of the newcomers settled in the Stevensville area. By the late 1860s, about 5 miles south, the community of Etna was forming. Early migrants, from the east, looking for agricultural land were attracted by the flat terrain, rich soil and moderate temperatures, and soon gained an official post office which operated from March 6, 1872 to January 12, 1875.<sup>3</sup> A school district was formed in 1869, just a year later than Stevensville, and it numbered No. 6 in what was then Missoula County.<sup>4</sup> On May 24, 1880, Josephus and Callie Million deeded 2 ½ acres of their property to School District 6. A year after Ravalli County was established, in 1893, its school districts were renumbered and none but Stevensville kept its original designation. Etna became District 4, and served an area of approximately 14 square miles.

The first of three Etna schoolhouses was built in 1871 with logs hauled across the Bitterroot River from the slopes of St. Mary's Peak to a site a half mile south of Bell Crossing. It was a small two-room cabin and stood just west of the present brick schoolhouse. One room was used for the study room and the other for the teacher's supplies. The first teacher was named Mrs. Wadsworth. The children went to school for only three months during the winter because in the other seasons of the year they were needed to work on the farm or ranch. Pupils came by wagon or sleigh, snugly tucked in with straw and buffalo robes, and often wore their heavy buffalo skin coats during class. There was no age limit for students, some were as old as 25. Each provided their own desks, books and slates. When slates were full of writing, they were washed in a pail of water warmed on the heating stove. A pencil was a rare thing.

The log cabin reportedly served as the first Etna School until 1880 when it burned down. The second Etna Schoolhouse, built on the same site as the first, was a larger wooden frame building, measuring approximately 30 by 50 feet. It contained two rooms. The larger classroom was used as a study room furnished with two rows of double desks down each side, with an aisle in the middle. The second, smaller room, was used to keep most of the teacher's equipment, a place to hang her coat, and sometimes when the school could afford it, 10 or 12 new library books. The school term by then ran 6 to 8 months each year, and by 1890, forty pupils attended.

At the turn of the century, an ambitious project was undertaken in the valley, the building of the Bitter Root Valley Irrigation Canal and the planting of orchards, to encourage development of the valley. The canal was to be 24 feet wide and run from Lake Como at the south end of the valley, around the foothills of the east side of the valley for 75 miles to the Eight Mile county east of Florence. This waterway would provide irrigation for the fruit trees to be planted and attract easterners to the valley. In the land boom that followed, thousands of trees were planted, and many investors were brought to the valley.

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The community of Etna thrived with the apple boom and the population of the Etna School remained stable, despite an end to the boom in 1918, when the Big Ditch Company went broke. At the same time, a severe teacher shortage was created by World War I. The state normal school in Dillon held emergency training sessions to certify new teachers, and former teachers were pressed back into service.

Nevertheless, in 1918, Etna school trustees decided to build a more modern and all-around better school. On the 29th day of April, 1918, a motion was made by the school trustees that \$6,000 worth of bonds be sold to any interested party willing to help finance the new school. The bonds would be redeemable in five years and no later than fifteen years, with 6% interest annually. This way the contributors would benefit from the interest and the school would be built and paid off in not more than fifteen years.<sup>5</sup>

To make room for the new building, the existing wooden schoolhouse was sold to an area farmer for \$176.00, moved two miles south toward Corvallis and converted into a home. The new Etna School was built by local craftsmen John Peterson and Adam Horning that summer, and the first session was held that fall.<sup>6</sup> The new double-brick walled school was professionally designed and very well constructed. Two large classrooms were divided by a large hallway running east and west, where eventually the women of the P.T.A. would prepare hot lunches for the children. The school added a second teacher: one for grades 1-4 in the south classroom and one for grades 5-8 in the north classroom. In keeping with recommended principles for school design of the day, large windows lined the walls allowing wonderful lighting during classes. Each classroom had its own ample cloakroom and teacher's closet. Two years later, in September 1920, an addition consisting of two matching rooms on the west of the building was completed furnishing lavatories, running water, and boys and girls bathrooms.<sup>7</sup>

Through the first half of the 20th century, Etna prospered, especially after the railroad moved to the east side of the valley in 1926. Through the 1930s and 1940s, numbers of students in the Etna School generally ranged between 40 and upwards of 50, with a teacher for each of the two classrooms. The schoolhouse also functioned as a community center through these years, and a continuous round of school-centered activities and adult social events substituted for the more sophisticated entertainments available in town. They included traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas programs, Halloween and Valentine parties, the last-day-of-school family picnic, and occasional community dances and basket socials.

In the years following World War II, with better roads and better vehicles, the school population dwindled from a high of 60. Many potential students apparently traveled the extra five miles to attend school in the town of Stevensville. By 1956, just 18 students remained at Etna School. The following year, after the issue passed by a single vote, the Etna school district was consolidated with Stevensville.

A local farmer, Paul Dayton, bought the schoolhouse and acreage on April 16, 1958. It was boarded up and sat unused until 1966 when Charles and Wanda McNees bought it and converted it to a residence filled it with antiques. Two other families have owned the school since then. In the summer of 1978 the Galihier family acquired the school and have been lovingly caring for it. They continue to live in the schoolhouse, while operating it as a bed and breakfast inn. They have landscaped the property and added a barn and garage to the rear.

Etna School  
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana  
County and State

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### 9. Major Bibliographic References

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See continuation sheet.

#### 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:

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: 1.3 acres

UTM References:   Zone       Easting       Northing  
                  11       723250       5146070

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s): SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , of Section 21, T8N, R20W

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#### Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet.

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#### Boundary Justification

These boundaries take in that portion of the historic 14 acre Etna School grounds to adequately encompass the school and the original schoolyard.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title: Karen & Dick Galiher  
organization:                   date: November 1996  
street & number: 2853 Eastside Highway     telephone: (406) 777-3904  
city or town: Stevensville                   state: MT     zip code: 59870

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#### Property Owner

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name/title: (same)  
street & number:     telephone:  
city or town:        state: MT     zip code:

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A tract of land located in a portion of the NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 21, T8N, R20W, PM, Ravalli County, Montana and being more particularly described as follows: Commencing at the southeast corner of the said NE1/4, SE1/4; thence N.15° 08'56"W., a distance of 137.94 feet to a point on the westerly right-of-way of the East Side Highway, said point also being the true point of beginning; thence N. 89°01'58"W., a distance of 375.67 feet; thence N.00°30'03"W., a distance of 132.00 feet; thence S.89°01'58"E., a distance of 372.56 feet to a point on the westerly right-of-way of said Eastside Highway; thence S.01°50'55"E., along the said westerly right-of-way, a distance of 132.12 feet to the true point of beginning, shown as Parcel B, on Certificate of Survey No. 1711. Together with an easement for a drain field over a portion of tract A on certificate of survey No. 1711, records of Ravalli County, MT.

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## ENDNOTES

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*Northwest Tribune* "Historic School Made Modern", 10 September 1920, and 30 June 1893. Stevensville, Montana.

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*Ravalli Republic* 5 April 1966.

Stevensville Historical Society Montana Genesis, Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1971. Pp. 216-218.

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*Weekly Missoulian* 28 December 1884, 18 December 1885, 21 May 1886. Missoula, Montana Territory.

*Western News* 8 September 1938, 12 July 1956, 26 June 1958. Hamilton, Montana.