United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: _James McCrossin Cabin_____
Other names/site number: Foss Ranch Log Cabin_____
Name of related multiple property listing**:**
__N/A_____
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: _1237 Highway 93 S._____
City or town: _Hamilton_____ State: _MT_____ County: _Ravalli_____
Not For Publication: [ ] Vicinity: [x]

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national **___statewide** **_X__local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_A **___B** **_X_C** **___D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [X]

Public – Local [ ]

Public – State [ ]

Public – Federal [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) [X]

District [ ]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
_OTHER: vernacular rustic log

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: _Wood: Log, Shingle___

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph
The log cabin built by James P. McCrossin in 1908 is located in the NESWSE of Section 23, T5N R21W, approximately 200 feet west of U.S. Highway 93, and six miles south of Hamilton, Montana. The cabin sits on an undeveloped 239-acre parcel of land that had been part of the later 1800-acre Foss Ranch, established in the mid-1930s and early 1940s. Though residential subdivisions have begun to creep into the area from the north, west and east, the cabin's surroundings retain their rural character with native grass meadows to the south, hills and mountains to the west, and the Bitterroot River less than a mile to the east. The Bitterroot Mountains provide a dramatic backdrop to the west, while the Sapphire Range stand to the east. Gold Creek flows west to east, passing about 150 feet west of the cabin. The cabin initially served as a residence to James P. McCrossin and his family, and later as a residence for newlyweds, a temporary home for families in search of a better life, and as a bunkhouse for transient hired ranch hands. The extremely stout hand-hewn cabin has survived over 60 years of human occupancy, followed by years of use as a storage shed, unintended cattle shelter, and now a restored cabin for occasional occupancy by the current owner's family and guests.

Building Description

Exterior

The James McCrossin Cabin is a one-story, two-room log building that displays a rectangular footprint oriented in a general north-south direction. The cabin measures 26 feet long, north-south, and 20 feet wide, east-west. The cabin is topped by a gable roof exhibiting eight-foot gable extensions, courtesy of two additional rafters on each end, over the north and south elevations. A rehabilitation of the cabin beginning in 1999 resulted in re-shingling the roof with cedar shingles and stabilizing the natural stone, interior, east slope chimney projecting from the roof.

The cabin is made of hand-hewn, peeled, western larch logs of various diameters, though generally all less than 1-foot. The logs are assembled using saddle-notching, occasionally referred to as Swedish notch.[1] Like many cabins, the logs display large gaps between them; these are filled with split hand-cut poles overlain with chinking.

Originally the cabin sat directly on the ground and no crawl space was necessary since the cabin lacked indoor plumbing or sub-floor utilities of any kind. Unfortunately, direct contact with the ground resulted in some of the lower course of logs rotting and requiring replacement during restoration that began in 1999. At that time, the cabin was temporarily moved from its original location while a stem-wall concrete foundation, partially faced with stone from the surrounding area, was built where the cabin had sat. The cabin was then returned to its original site and placed upon its new foundation.

Fenestration includes a four-light/two-panel wood door and a two-over-two double hung window in the north and south elevations, two two-over-two double-hung units in the east elevation, and a single two-over two double-hung unit in the west wall. Replacement windows were constructed locally in the original style.

Interior

The interior of the cabin features 2” x 8” fir tongue-and-groove flooring obtained from a grain elevator in Great Falls; although not original, the material closely replicates the original flooring. The walls, shiplap 1” x 8” fir boards, show signs of their historic use in the cabin including previous paint and wallpaper, holes from bullets, and darts that missed their target. One of the “pioneer improvements” still visible involved use of tin and tobacco can lids to cover knot holes in the wall boards to keep drafts to a minimum. Interior touches not commonly seen in log cabins includes window and door trim more associated with higher-end residential properties in town. The ceiling boards damaged from years of a leaking roof have been replaced with tongue-and-groove blue pine.

The cabin lacked indoor plumbing and electricity when built. Though electricity to power two ceiling lights, one in each room, was introduced in the 1930s, no electrical outlets were installed in the cabin until 2006.

[1] An article entitled “Notching” in “Montana The Magazine of Western History”, Winter 2013, provides a short, illustrated description of the various notch types used in log structure construction; George M. White, *Living in Montana* (no publisher, 1982), 76.

In the process of the 1999-2005 restoration, a small bathroom was constructed of the 1" x 8" fir tongue-and-groove boards salvaged from the deteriorated original ceiling.

The original wood used for the interior of the cabin likely came from the Anaconda Mining Company's "Big Mill", located at the end of Main Street in Hamilton. The Big Mill, one of the crown jewel enterprises of the Anaconda Mining Company from the 1890s-1910s, was an essential provider of lumber needed for operation of the Marcus Daly-owned copper mines in Butte, Montana.[2] Some of the milled pieces of the cabin, like the window and door trim, match similar pieces used in construction of Victorian-style houses built in the emerging town of Hamilton at that time.

Although two outhouses and a chicken coop now sit on the premises and serve as storage sheds, none are original to the site and lie outside the National Register boundary. Original outbuildings, which would have included an outhouse, no longer survive and an original water well site has yet to be located. Because of the close proximity of the cabin to Gold Creek, it is likely that most, if not all, of the domestic water was obtained directly from the Creek.

Integrity

The McCrossin Cabin retains a high degree of integrity. Integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association remain strong. Integrity of location is excellent; although the cabin was temporarily moved to construct a foundation for it, the foundation was built in exactly the same spot the cabin originally sat, with the result that when the cabin was placed on the new foundation, it was returned to its exact original location. Though the country setting has been slightly compromised by increasing encroachment from rural development and increasing traffic on U.S. Highway 93, the setting still easily evokes the historic feeling and association of the period of construction. Gently restored over 12 years ago, the cabin's original design, workmanship, and materials, including the exterior dimensions and basic floorplan, remain as apparent now as the day it was built. Cedar shingles cover the roof and are in keeping with the original roof material. The original windows had been damaged beyond repair during decades of neglect, but replacement windows emulate the originals in design, glazing pattern and pin locking mechanisms.

[2] Ada Powell, *The Dalys of the Bitter Root* (no publisher, 1989), 116. (See Chapter 8 for information on how the Big Mill influenced the development of Hamilton, Montana.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1908-1912

Significant Dates
1908

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
James P. McCrossin

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The James McCrossin Cabin is eligible for listing in the National Register, at a local level of significance, under Criterion A and Criterion C. The McCrossin Cabin, constructed in 1908 by James P. McCrossin, a Canadian-born immigrant of Swedish descent, is eligible under Criterion A for its associative and representative value as an example of the modest living accommodations often erected in the intermountain valleys of western Montana. The cabin provides a glimpse into the spare living experience of many rural families trying to make a living around the turn of the twentieth century. The cabin represents a cost-efficient solution, using locally available materials, for the short-term housing of a new family. Evidence suggests that the cabin wasn't associated with farming immediately around the building, but instead it served as the haven for James to return to his young family after a long day of work.

Under Criterion C, this rustic hand-built cabin stands as an excellent example of the type of cabin constructed in the area by homesteader's using locally available materials. The sturdy and well-constructed cabin, hand crafted from local materials and displaying saddle notching, stands as a testament to the quality craftsmanship that has allowed it to survive years of occupation along with years of abandonment. The cabin is also noteworthy for its extended gable roof, present not just off one gable, but both, a feature considered quite unusual and not commonly seen.

Attrition has resulted in this once-common type of building becoming an increasingly rare and precious resource. The diligence of James McCrossin when constructing his cabin speaks loudly to the workmanship and materials used in that construction. In addition, the moldings and trim provided, and continue to provide the cabin a sense of finishing and elaboration commonly associated with houses and residences in more metropolitan areas. The moldings and trim afford an otherwise functionally-designed building a touch of class generally lacking in such a rural cabin.

The period of significance, 1908-1912, identified for this property covers the initial construction by James McCrossin through the period during which James and his family used the building as their home.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Ravalli County History

Ravalli County human history, like most human histories in all parts of North America, began with the occupation of the land by Native Americans.[3] Likely the first native people would have arrived in Western Montana about 14,000 years ago and were certainly traversing the

[3] Ravalli County was created by the Montana Legislature on March 3, 1893, from part of the larger Missoula County.

countryside by 9,000 B.C., shortly after the last emptying of glacial Lake Missoula.[4] Eventually, tribal identities became more defined and by the time of Lewis and Clark's arrival in 1805, the Bitterroot Salish people, now one of the three Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, called the Bitterroot Valley their home. Precontact Salish consumed bitter root as part of their diet, naming the valley *spet-lum*, "place of the bitter root." The plant's importance was recognized as its bloom serves as Montana's state flower.[5]

In September of 1805, the Lewis and Clark Expedition arrived in the Bitterroot Valley. Greeted in Ross's Hole in the Sula Basin at the south end of the Valley by the Salish, the Corps of Discovery was welcomed and assisted in their journey through the Valley and onward to a trail over the Bitterroot Range of the Rocky Mountains.[6] Their return trip in 1806 met with similar hospitality.

Later outside incursions by non-Salish groups, however, began the slow and painful process of the eventual removal of the Salish from the valley. In 1840, the Salish agreed to meet with visiting priests, the first being Father Pierre-Jean De Smet.[7] And thus began the onward march of "Western Civilization" resulting in the establishment of the Saint Mary's Mission in Stevensville in 1841 and Fort Owen.[8] Although not overwhelmed with the natural prospects for agriculture in the Valley, the potential of irrigation bolstered the priest's enthusiasm, "Irrigation, either by natural or artificial means is absolutely necessary to the cultivation of the soil… This difficulty, however, if the country should ever be thickly settled, can be easily obviated, as the whole region is well supplied with numerous streams and rivulets."[9]

By 1850, constant immigration to the area, the increasing presence of the Blackfeet, and growing resentment of the Salish convinced the Jesuits to leave the area, selling the mission to John Owen, an Indian trader, who established a trading post.[10] Between the establishment of the mission and the later trading post, white settlement dramatically increased in the area.[11]

Fur trappers and traders came in ever increasing numbers to profit from the bounty of this newly discovered land.[12] In the mid-1860's the gold rush had begun and miners flocked to what is now

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[4] Russ Lawrence, *Montana's Bitterroot Valley*, (Stevensville: Stoneydale Press, 1999), 59.

[5] Samuel Lloyd Cappious, "A History of the Bitter Root Valley to 1914," M.A. Thesis (University of Washington, 1939), 1-5; Montana State Historic Preservation Office Staff, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Stevensville, Stevensville, Montana* Multiple Property Documentation Form (documentation accepted May 1991, NR #64500346) E-1; Dorothy J. Zeisler, "The History of Irrigation and the Orchard Industry in the Bitter Root Valley," M.A. Thesis (University of Montana, 1982), 8.

[6] Discovery Writers, *We Called This Creek Traveller's Rest*, (Stevensville: Stoneydale Press, 2003), 17 and 32.

[7] Mary Greenfield, *National Register Nomination for the University Heights Historic District* (listed August 14, 2012, NR #12000501), on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena.

[8] Discovery Writers, *supra* note 6, at 66.

[9] Pierre-Jean De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, S.I.,* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1905), 571.

[10] Ellen Baumler, National Register Nomination for the St. Mary's Mission Historic District Boundary Increase (listed August 16, 2010, NR #10000552), on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena.

[11] Mary Greenfield, *supra* note 7.

[12] Lawrence, *supra* note 4, at 123.

western Montana from all directions. Some of those miners came to the Bitterroot Valley and staked claims and sought their fortunes. For the most part, mining fortunes were few and far between, but the land did offer other types of riches to be had from agriculture, logging, lumber mills, hunting and fishing. Towns sprang up, the railroad came, and trails became roads.

The increased presence of Euro-Americans boded ill for the Salish in the Valley. In 1871, Ulysses S. Grant issued a Presidential Order to remove the Indians. However, because the government had failed to meet their obligations from prior agreements, the tribes refused, especially the Bitter Root Salish under Chief Charlo. As Charlo never signed the Hellgate treaty, he hence felt little compunction to follow the dictates outlined in it with the result that while two branches of the tribe relocated to the Jocko Reservation, Chief Charlo and his group remained.[13] However, by the end of 1891, under mounting pressure, the Salish people, under the guidance of Chief Charlo with an army escort, moved to the Flathead (Jocko) Reservation leaving their Valley behind, thus making way for further white settlement by those taking advantage of the Homestead Act.[14]

Making a Living in Ravalli County: The Establishment of Hamilton and Marcus Daly

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the emergence of the Bitterroot Valley as an economic driver in the region was the result of often unrestrained ambition. This ambition sprang from Marcus Daly, the well-known Anaconda Copper Mining (ACM) mining magnate who required massive amounts of lumber to serve primarily as support timbers for his mines in Butte, and as fuel for his Anaconda Smelter.[15] Daly realized the untapped potential growing in the forests in the Bitterroot Valley. The arrival of the Missoula & Bitterroot Valley Railroad at Grantsdale in 1887, that connected to the Northern Pacific at Missoula, allowed for an economical method to ship lumber. The arrival of the railroad was quickly followed by the establishment of the Daly-owned Bitter Root Development Company (BRD), in 1889. This was followed by the damming of the Bitterroot River and construction of a new lumber mill, known at the time as "the Big Mill."[16]

With such business enterprises underway, it was only a matter of time before the establishment of a town occurred to act as a support-community to the mill. The following year, in 1890, the original townsite of Hamilton, 49 blocks set up in a 7 x 7 block grid parallel to the railroad track, was platted by James Hamilton, an agent of Daly.[17] In addition to the Big Mill, a few of Daly's ventures in town also included the Ravalli Hotel, and the Valley Mercantile.[18] Much of the

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[13] Samuel Lloyd Cappious, *supra* note 5, at 28-31.

[14] Robert Bigart, ed. *Life and Death at St. Mary's Mission* (Pablo, MT: Salish Koontenai College Press, 2005), 9; Jeffrey H. Langton, *The Victor Story: History of a Bitter Root Valley Town*, (Missoula: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1985), 54. See also Bitter Root Valley Historical Society and Victor Heritage Museum, *Bitter Root Trails IV*, 2007, for family histories of settlers in the Victor area.

[15] Kirk Michels, *Historic Resources of Hamilton, Montana Multiple Resource Area*, (documentation accepted September 1, 1988, NR #64000430), on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT., 8-1.

[16] Ibid, 7-1, 8-1.

[17] Ibid, 7-0.

[18] Powell, *supra* note 2, at 123.

economy and local employment in Hamilton was directly related to Daly's operations including the timber harvesting, mill, and Daly's nearby mansion and associated holdings. Hamilton, less than six miles north of the McCrossin Cabin, continued to prosper under the investment of Daly developing into a permanent town. Both well-to-do citizens and those of more modest means called Hamilton home, adventurers looking for a place to live out the American dream. Fancy Victorian houses were built for and by prominent citizens and more humble quarters were built for and by those at the other end of the economic spectrum.[19] Daly's political influence eventually resulted in Hamilton garnering the permanent seat of Ravalli County in 1898.[20]

Prosperity occurred not only in the nascent town of Hamilton, but also outside the town as Daly bought and purchased a ranch in the area a few years earlier in 1886, less than seven miles north of the McCrossin Cabin. With the means to accommodate his desires to live on a grand scale, Daly built a mansion with over 50 rooms. His excess wasn't limited to his home as his love for horses also knew no bounds, nor limits, in terms of spending; three race tracks, the stabling of over 50 thoroughbreds, and one of the leading horse stables in the country constituted his passion. The year 1897 witnessed "Scottish Chieftain", Daly's Hamilton-bred thoroughbred, winning the Belmont Stakes, the only Montana horse to achieve the feat. Daly's holdings eventually grew to encompass over 20,000 acres.[21]

By 1894, the US Government became involved in Daly's handling of the surrounding forests. The Government Land Office (GLO) accused Daly's BRD of cutting public timber illegally. Undaunted, Daly assumed all interests in the BRD, which then were transferred to the Anaconda Copper Mining Company for the protection offered by the company. By 1896, the workforce at the Hamilton mill was almost doubled to 300 as the demand for mining timbers and lumber continued to accelerate. To meet the demand, the ACM pushed to acquire timber stands, opened its own lumber camps, assumed control of the Big Blackfoot Milling Company, and established a new mill at St. Regis, 85 miles to the northwest.[22]

However, the act of unrestrained timber harvesting with little planning to the future, along with scrutiny by the GLO, eventually resulted in the collapse of the timber activity in the Bitterroot Valley area. By 1898, the Bitterroot National Forest, under the direction of Gifford Pinchot, was established. Daly died soon after, in 1900. After the cessation of unregulated timber cutting and Daly's passing, Hamilton's population dropped by almost a third.[23]

Ravalli County Agriculture

Although timber served as a primary driver of the economy early in Hamilton's and the Bitterroot Valley's history, agriculture also made strides. By 1893, the Hamilton mill yielded

[19] Jiusto, Chere, *Montana Mainstreets Volume 4: A Guide to Historic Hamilton*, (Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press, 2000), 37-38. See also Ada Powell and Carolyn Jones, "Hello Hamilton: Walking and Driving Tours", Prospector Printing & Graphics, 1988.

[20] Kirk Michels, *supra* note 15, at 8-3.

[21] Mary Greenfield, *supra* note 7, at 14.

[22] Kirk Michels, *supra* note 15, at 8-2.

[23] "Death of Marcus Daly: Montana Millionaire Expires at the Hotel Netherland," *New York Times* 13 November 1900; Cappious, *supra* note 5, at 76; Kirk Michels, *supra* note 15, at 8-3; Mary Greenfield, *supra* note 7, at 15.

150,000 apple boxes and 52,000 berry crates for that year, and by 1908, the Bitterroot Valley alone required 150,000 fruit boxes.[24] These numbers reflect not only the prolific increase in fruit tree planting and production, but also the early attempts in the Bitterroot Valley to bolster agricultural production via irrigation, which included the Independent Ditch in 1872, and the Supply Ditch in 1885.

Though much of Daly's legacy can be viewed through the prism of unrestrained capitalism and entrepreneurship, Daly also undoubtedly contributed to the future of irrigation in the Bitterroot Valley. While his financing of water-related projects was limited to his own holdings, he was a vocal advocate for larger projects beyond his property.[25] The arrival of the railroad provided an extra boost of enthusiasm for agricultural possibilities—if the land could be made more productive through irrigation, the financial possibilities could be endless. In 1894, discussions arose between developers and businessmen about building a canal between Three Mile Creek and Willow Creek to irrigate wheat, and possibly fruit. Conversive in the ways of money, and with some experience with irrigation, Daly broached the idea of funding projects through private-entity issued bonds, with the possibility that Federal funding might also be available.[26]

After Daly's death, in 1900, construction of the 43-mile long Daly Ditch occurred, under the supervision of F.A. Jones and H.S. Lord. The largest ditch-effort in the state at the time, the ditch took water from the Bitterroot River above the town of Grantsdale, near the James McCrossin Cabin, for its 43-mile long journey.[27]

Other irrigation projects soon ensued. The construction of the Big Ditch from 1905-1917 resulted in the settlement of thousands of new residents in the Valley. The project was the brainchild of Samuel Dinsmore of the Dinsmore Irrigation and Development Corporation. The ditch, beginning at Lake Como and ending at Stevensville, was capitalized at $1,500,000. Reorganization occurred in 1906 with a recapitalization rising to $3,000,000, and by 1907, the newly renamed Bitterroot District Irrigation Company purchased and subdivided large tracts of the Valley for agricultural development. Belief was high in the agricultural potential of the Bitterroot Valley.[28] This belief included plans for two new communities, one north and one south of Hamilton. The optimism also spread to Hamilton where new construction accelerated. Initially, faith in the success of agriculture seemed well grounded as the orchards in the Valley flourished from 1908 to 1916, marked by an increase of 450,000 apple trees in 1908 to a zenith of over 1,000,000 in 1920. Unfortunately, the good times wouldn't continue. An early harbinger was the complete shutdown of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company mill from 1911-1915; a short two-year run ensued, however, complete closure occurred in 1917. Agriculture couldn't avoid the downturn either as a depletion in soil nutrients, lack of water, insects, disease, and weather began to take a toll. Combined with a $2,000,000 loan foreclosure to the Bitterroot

[24] Kirk Michels, *supra* note 15, at 8-2.

[25] Mary Greenfield, *supra* note 7, at 15.

[26] Dorothy J. Zeisler, *supra* note 5, at 25-31; Mary Greenfield, *supra* note 7, at 15; Kirk Michels, *supra* note 15, at 8-3.

[27] Kirk Michels, *supra* note 15, at 8-4.

[28] Ibid, 8-4.

Irrigation Company by a Chicago bank, 1916 marked an interruption in the prosperous agricultural times in the Valley.[29]

The James McCrossin Cabin

The James McCrossin Cabin was built in the midst of the land rush going on in the Bitterroot Valley from the mid-1880's to the 1920's.[30] A man of limited means, James McCrossin couldn't resist the lure of the Bitterroot Valley and the boom times then in progress gave him hope for a more bountiful future.

The son of John Robert McCrossin and Ann Jane (Annie) McCrossin (née Walsh), James Patrick McCrossin, of Swedish decent, was born on April 20, 1876 in Kings County, New Brunswick, Canada.[31] James spent the early part of his life in Canada, with at least some time in Fredrickton (sic), New Brunswick, immigrating to the United States as a grown man with his parents and siblings in 1898.[32] James was the eldest of 11 children, though at the time of the 1900 census, only eight survived. Being the oldest, James worked as a farm laborer in Fort Fairfield, Aroostook, Maine in 1900, not the first time James declared an association with the agricultural field.[33]

James arrived in Ravalli County via the Northern Pacific Railroad.[34] While he may have been in the Bitterroot Valley by 1902, he undoubtedly was in the area by at least 1905, as his name appears in the Western News for a $7.00 claim he filed against the county for road work.[35]

March 20, 1907, witnessed the union of James to Ethel Likins of Lawrence County, Missouri.[36] Ethel, the second daughter of George and Mary Likens, moved with the family sometime

[29] Ibid, 8-5.

[30] Buddy Smith, "Sharing a Common History, Bitterroot Families Share Memories of a Cabin on the Banks of Gold Creek," *Ravalli Republic*, 2 December 1999.

[31] The family name appears as "McCrossier" on the 1900 United States census, the first census after the family's immigration to the United States. It is unknown if the family changed their name or if the spelling on the census was inaccurate; "Jim McCrossin Is Taken By Death: Last Rites Were Held Monday," *The Western News* (Hamilton), 16 April 1959.

[32] Some disparity as to the exact year James immigrated to the United States exists. The 1900 Federal census provides a date of 1898, the 1930 census displays a date of 1885, and petition for naturalization indicates a date of January 28, 1902. "Petition for Naturalization," for James McCrossin, Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, District Court of Ravalli County.

[33] 1900 United States Federal Census.

[34] "Petition for Naturalization," *supra* note 31; McCrossin Ancestor Chart, derived from information stored in Ethel McCrossin's bible and provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Hamilton, Montana.

[35] "Jim McCrossin Is Taken By Death: Last Rites Were Held Monday," *supra* note 30; "Commissioners' Proceedings," *The Western News,* 4 January 1905.

[36] State of Montana, County of Ravalli, Marriage License of James McCrossin to Ethel Likins, certificate number 1009.

between 1900 and 1908, possibly 1904, to Ravalli County where she met James.[37] James at the time was 30 years of age while Ethel was 17. Soon after their marriage, James, Ethel, and their infant son, Virgil, moved into the cabin James built near Grantsdale, just north of what is now Gold Creek Loop Road, six miles south of Hamilton, Montana. James either squatted or had permission of the land owner to build his cabin where it stands, as the location of the cabin, in the SE1/4 of Section 23 in T5N R21W was owned by Hans and Lena Rosette of Portland, Oregon, at the time.[38] How, and under what circumstances, he obtained permission to build on the property has been lost to history. All that is known is that this rustic, two-room cabin with no electricity and no indoor plumbing, would be their home for the next four years, during which time, a son George, the second of their six children, was born.

The James McCrossin Cabin stood, and stands, in dramatic contrast from the elegant Victorian homes built about the same time in nearby Hamilton. Even greater disparity is seen when compared to the opulent Daly Mansion, only seven miles to the north. That all these coeval resources remain within a short distance of each other illustrates the different economic worlds of the Ravalli County population at the time—log cabins, wood frame residences, and mansions all constructed around the same time within a very short distance of one another. The cabin represents the simple modest existence of an aspiring young family. In contrast to the more substantial and eye-catching historic structures of the middle and upper classes, the cabin illustrates the story of those of more modest means whose lives might otherwise be overlooked or forgotten.

In January 1909, while still living in the cabin, James petitioned the United States through the District Court of Ravalli County, to become a United States citizen.[39] Prior to his application, he declared his intention of changing citizenship in September 1905. At the time of the petition, James listed his occupation as a farmer.

By 1910, James and Ethel had two boys, Virgil and George. James was still involved with agriculture at that time, though his documented occupation shifted slightly to working as a teamster in the farm industry.[40] Although several occupations and trades have been applied to James throughout his lifetime, he undoubtedly held significant experience in the farm industry. His obituary states the family operated, or had farms, in several different areas of the Bitterroot Valley including the Sleeping Child area, southeast of the McCrossin Cabin, the Charlo Heights area, about three miles to the south of the cabin, and ". . . the Dutch Hill farm . . .operated

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[37] "Ethel Nancy Likins," found at https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/23555245/person/1409359637/facts?_phsrc=EAF215&_phstart=successSource, accessed 4/25/209; "Jim McCrossin Is Taken By Death: Last Rites Were Held Monday," *supra* note 30.

[38] According to Abstract of Title No. 14645, Ravalli County Abstract Co., Thomas Ritenour filed a patent on the SE1/4 of Section 23, Township 5N, Range 21W on March 30, 1888. Hans and Lena Rosette of Portland, Oregon, later acquired the land and on August 30, 1906, executed a right-of-way deed to George W. Ward for an irrigation ditch. Hans and Lena Rosette mortgaged the land on February 23, 1909, and sold the land to Eftland and Scoby of Portland, Oregon on March 15, 1915. It therefore appears that Hans and Lena Rosette owned the land upon which the McCrossin cabin was built. There is no record of lease or permission to construct on the property. The original General Land Office survey of T5N R21W that dates to 1872 shows no buildings or structures in Section 23.

[39] "Petition for Naturalization," *supra* note 31.

[40] 1910 United States Federal Census.

farming land for the Bitter Root Stock Farm for several years . . ."[41] Based on James' obituary, his farming experience went well-beyond that of causal farmer: "He proved over the course of years to be an expert in producing crops and livestock."[42]

While it remains unknown if James and his family actually farmed the land around the McCrossin Cabin, it is highly likely they at least had a subsistence farm or garden to supplement any necessities purchased by the family. His noted experience in farming would indicate whatever crops he may have raised would prove successful. Crops commonly grown in the area at the time included beets, potatoes, and small grains. With James employed in the farm industry around the time he and his family lived in the cabin, it is also possible he was able to bring produce home from where he worked in the valley for his family.

The 1910 census for Edwards Township in Ravalli County indicates Ethel's father, mother, and brother lived with the McCrossins at that time, likely a tight fit for that number of people in the small two room cabin just east of Gold Creek.[43] The same year, James filed a $2.00 claim against the county, to what purpose remains unknown.[44] Other happenings involving the McCrossins occurred in November of the same year, when Ethel was drawn into a murder trial against a Walter White, where she provided corroborative evidence.[45] The McCrossins apparently didn't linger through the colder months of the year, or at least the winter of 1910, in Ravalli County as the same issue of the paper that discussed Ethel's involvement with the murder trial also announced that the McCrossins planned to leave Ravalli County shortly for Ash Grove, Missouri, where they planned to spend the winter.[46]

James and Ethel's growing family appears to have moved out of the cabin by no later than 1912 as evidenced by the occupancy of the building by Dolph and Gertrude Cooper.[47] Within eight years of leaving the cabin, by 1920, two more children entered the McCrossin family; while born in Arkansas, Annie and James, along with the rest of the McCrossin family were back in Montana living again in the Grantsdale Precinct area.[48] The three older kids all attended school by 1920 and James moved on from farm work to employment with the railroad.[49] Ten years later, James returned to the kind of work he knew well as the 1930 census found James working in agriculture, as did both his and Ethel's older sons.[50] During this period, the family, which now included an additional three sons, were back in the country and living on a farm, along with Ethel's brother. By 1940, the family grew a bit smaller as several of the children moved out. While the family contracted in size, it appears that James fortunes increased as the 1940 census

[41] "Jim McCrossin Is Taken By Death: Last Rites Were Held Monday," *supra* note 30.

[42] "Jim McCrossin Is Taken By Death: Last Rites Were Held Monday," *supra* note 30.

[43] 1910 United States Federal Census.

[44] "Commissioners' Proceedings," *The Western News,* 15 June 1910.

[45] "White Asked To Have His Own Child Destroyed," *The Western News,* 29 November 1910.

[46] "The City In Brief," *The Western News,* 29 November 1910.

[47] Chronology of James McCrossin Cabin Occupancy, in possession of Dan Rothlisberger.

[48] 1920 United States Federal Census.

[49] 1920 United States Federal Census.

[50] 1930 United States Federal Census.

indicates he moved from the "employed" ranks to that of "employer" who lived on farm and owned his own house (since 1935).[51] James passed away on April 10, 1959 from arteriosclerotic cardio-vascular disease.[52] He is buried at Riverview Cemetery in Hamilton. Ethel passed away six years later, on October 3, 1965 from the same malady; she is buried next to James.[53] Several descendants of the family still reside in the Bitterroot Valley.

The James McCrossin Cabin After 1912

Several different families are known to have lived in the James McCrossin Cabin after the McCrossins left. While most occupied the building for only a short period of time, the cabin served them well, providing each different group with a roof over their heads and protection from the elements. The following information was provided to the current owners of the James McCrossin Cabin by people who lived in the cabin or by their relatives.

Soon after the McCrossins left in 1912, Dolph and Gertrude Cooper occupied the cabin shortly after their marriage. It was their first home as a married couple, though the length of their stay in the cabin is unknown. Their daughter, Emma Lee (Cooper) Nicholson, now deceased, remembered and cherished her parent's memories of their "honeymoon cottage" and visited the cabin with her granddaughter, Stacey Sue (Olson) Brickley, on November 1, 2012.

In 1915, the Shook family was reported to have occupied the cabin for an unknown period of time; little information is known regarding the Shooks.

Ten years later, in 1925, Art and Ann Hendrickson reportedly occupied the cabin for an unknown amount of time. Art worked at a local lumber mill.

In 1930, Tim and Ann McCart lived in the cabin with their son William (Bill). Bill walked and attended the first grade at the Como Community School located about two miles south of the cabin. Bill, a WWII veteran, said his grandfather built the McCart Lookout on the Bitterroot National Forest south of Hamilton, Montana. Bill so wanted to preserve his memories of the cabin that he commissioned an artist to paint a picture of it.

Five years later, in1935, Sid and Virginia (White) Wilkerson moved into the log cabin following their marriage on May 18. Virginia, now deceased, cherished her memories of the log cabin and either painted a picture of the cabin (or a picture was painted for her and Sid by Astrid Sipma) as a reminder of that experience. The original of that painting is now in possession of her daughter Gwendolyn.

Four years later, in 1939, Richard and Clara Miller moved into the cabin with their five children; they lived in the cabin in both 1939 and 1940. Their daughter, Vera (Miller) DeTienne, remembers the children sleeping sideways in one of the beds so all could fit. Richard, who was in-between jobs at the time, went on to drive bus for the Hamilton School District in later years.

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[51] 1940 United States Federal Census. Later in his life, James found employment at the Rocky Mountain Laboratory in Hamilton until an infection brought his employment there to an end, "Jim McCrossin Is Taken By Death: Last Rites Were Held Monday," *supra* note 30.

[52] Montana State Board of Health Certificate of Death for James P. McCrossin.

[53] Montana State Board of Health Certificate of Death for Ethel Nancy McCrossin; "Jim McCrossin Is Taken By Death: Last Rites Were Held Monday," *supra* note 30; Ethel McCrossin obituary, *The Western News* (Hamilton), 6 October, 1965.

The 1940s witnessed Elton Ginn, his wife and sons Jesse and James living in the cabin. Reports suggest the two boys may be responsible for some of the bullet holes in the walls on the inside of the cabin.

The Foss Ranch

The great depression of the 1930's took its toll on continuity of land ownership in the Bitterroot Valley and across the Nation. Where one owner failed and lost, another stepped forward to take a chance on a better outcome. With that positive outlook, Sam T. Foss and his wife Alice acquired land, piece by piece, in an area historically referred to as Camas Prairie, named for the Camas plant that grew abundantly in the meadows between what the locals refer to as Charlos Heights (named for Chief Charlo of the Salish Tribe) to the south, and Hayes's Hill (named for George Hayes, an early settler) to the north.[54]

Sam T. Foss, who was born March 8, 1910 (also noted as March 10), to William and Mabel, was no stranger to Ravalli County as he lived and attended school during his early years around Lone Rock, within the county boundary.[55] His wife, Alice, was born to Hattie and William Duncan on June 17, 1912 in Nashua, Montana.

By 1920, the William Duncan Family had moved to Hamilton where they lived briefly with their eldest daughter and family on South Third Street before moving to their new home on South Eight Street in Hamilton.[56] The year 1930 found Alice and family still living on South Eighth with her parents, sister, two brothers, sister-in-law, and two nephews.[57] Four years later, Alice married Sam, on November 4, 1934.[58]

Seizing opportunities in quest of building a ranch that would support themselves and their five children, born between 1936-1947, Sam and Alice borrowed, worked, and then borrowed and worked some more to purchase parcels of land for taxes at foreclosure sales and through other events during the mid-1930's and early 1940's. Their persistence eventually paid off with the ownership of over 1800 acres of prime agricultural property. On this land they grew grain, raised cattle, horses and other farm animals, hired farm hands down on their luck, built fences, barns, and corrals. In short, they operated a productive ranch, preserving the essence of the land and its historic use in the Bitterroot Valley.

The McCrossin Cabin is located on a tract of land purchased by Sam and Alice Foss on September 17, 1945. Cheryl (Foss) Rothlisberger recalls visiting the cabin several times in the

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[54] Lena Bell, Henry Grant, and Phyllis Twogood, *Bitter Root Trails Vols. I and II*, (Hamilton, MT: Bitter Root Valley Historical Society, 1982). See also George Hayes, *The Bitterrooter*, (Hamilton, MT: Bitter Root Valley Historical Society, 1999), for an account of what life was like living in the area of Hayes's Hill.

[55] 1920 United States Federal census; Selective Service Registration card for Samuel Trownson [sic] Foss, found online at https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=2238&h=114909530&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=EAF245&_phstart=successSource, accessed April 26, 2019. Sam middle name was actually Trounson, not Trownson, as appears on the Selective Service Registration card.

[56] 1920 United States Federal census.

[57] 1930 United States Federal census.

[58] State of Washington Marriage Certificate for Sam T. Foss and Alice I. Duncan.

1950s during her childhood when she accompanied her father, Sam T. Foss. At that time, the cabin was used as a bunkhouse for a hired ranch hand. Her recollections were of a dirty, smelly, dimly-lit, somewhat scary place with pelts handing on the walls. During the decade, at least three different hired ranch hands occupied the cabin for different amounts of time. Two of the three include Paul Gapin who occupied the cabin in the early 1950s, and Scott Croxton who lived in it in the mid-1950s, the last hired hand to do so.[59] In the mid-1960s to 1970s, the cabin devolved into a storage shed and cattle shelter.[60]

Restoration of the cabin began in 1999 by current owners Dan and Cheryl (Foss) Rothlisberger and was completed in 2006. The cabin now sits as it always has in its rural setting with the Bitterroot Mountains as a scenic backdrop.

Architectural Significance

The McCrossin Cabin gains additional significance under Criterion C. The cabin stands as an excellent example of early 20th century rural vernacular rustic log architecture in the Bitterroot Valley, a once common building type. The cabin embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. The single story two-room cabin features hand-hewn, peeled logs of western larch, gable extensions, with a high interior rubblestone chimney. The cabin is also noteworthy for its extended gable roof, present not just off one gable, but both. The cabin displays saddle notching with the gaps between logs filled with small split hand cut poles. The cabin sits on a recently-constructed concrete foundation partially faced with native stone.

Finished in 1908, the simply-constructed and charming cabin easily conveys the care and workmanship of James McCrossin. All materials used to build the cabin were obtained locally including the logs for the walls and roof, and the stone for the chimney and recently constructed foundation. While selection of readily available materials was no doubt due to expedience and convenience, the use of such materials allows the cabin to continue to complement its rural setting. Though simple in general presentation, James added several interior details not commonly found on such a utilitarian type of building to make the cabin more inviting and comfortable, such as window and door trim similar to that found in more upscale houses in nearby Hamilton.

In her 1984 *Log Cabin Studies*, Mary Wilson discussed the log cabin morphology often found in the western United States, contrasted with its eastern counterparts. She narrowed her focus to a type of cabin she termed the Rocky Mountain Cabin. Her sample generally consisted of examples found in Idaho; however, much of the information is relevant to the larger Rocky Mountain region.[61]

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[59] Personal communication, Dan Rothlisberger, May 14, 2019.

[60] Locals still recall driving by the cabin, seeing cows with their heads poking out the window watching the traffic go by. Unfortunately, the cows were not house-broken and thus left a bit of a mess behind. Through the years, the McCrossin Cabin was thought by some Valley residents to have been a schoolhouse or a way station for the stagecoach that went from Hamilton to Darby. The origin of those beliefs is unknown, but, as a teamster, James McCrossin may have driven the stagecoach on the Hamilton/Darby route and may have parked the stagecoach at the cabin at one time or another. There is no historical evidence to show that the cabin was ever used as a schoolhouse or way station.

[61] Mary Wilson, *Log Cabin Studies*, USDA Forest Service, Cultural Resource Report No. 9, Ogden, Utah.

Wilson noted that by the later stages of the nineteenth century, a uniquely different western cabin type evolved, while still sharing several features with what Wilson termed earlier "Anglo-Western" cabins; these earlier shared features included a front facing gable, a single off-center gable entry, roof slopes generally less than 45 degrees, and the use of iron stoves instead of fireplaces. The retention of these attributes as cabin construction moved west demonstrates their acknowledged benefits regardless of location.[62]

Gable entries proved important for a number of reasons. They allowed easier access during periods of heavy snow; doors set under eaves were susceptible to snow load slide-off. Gable entries also resulted in the use of fewer logs in construction as an eave entry required taller walls. Also, a lower sloped roof resulted in less snow slide, allowing the snow that stayed on the roof to serve as insulation.

In addition to the above characteristics found in many log cabins in both the eastern and western United States, Wilson discussed one feature particular to a smaller subset of log cabins found in the Rocky Mountain area, a gable roof extension that extends significantly beyond the end of the gable, often supported by vertical posts. Wilson noted this distinctive characteristic in the region is a "frontward extension of the gabled roof, 25 to 100 percent of the length of the cabin, which forms a covered porch or work area." While the extended gable roof is the primary attribute distinguishing what Wilson dubbed the Rocky Mountain Cabin, many also displayed full wood floors below the gable extension. Wilson suggested these extended gable roofs served as additional living space with uses that included storage and exterior sleeping, often for children.[63]

The extended gable roof cabin style appears not to be specific to a singular occupation or subsistence method as examples of the style are associated with miners, homesteaders, loggers, ranchers, and the Forest Service, confirming that a well-constructed sturdy building never goes out of style.[64] Wilson indicated the earliest examples displaying Rocky Mountain Cabin attributes date from the 1880s, though the dominant construction period of the style occurred from 1900 to 1930.[65]

James McCrossin obviously patterned his cabin after the Rocky Mountain style, incorporating stylistic and functional cues, of which he would have been familiar from his travels and life in Montana. While the gable extensions on James' cabin don't display the length found on some cabins, they easily fall within the range proffered by Wilson of 25 to 100 percent of the length of the cabin. One very interesting modification James incorporated into the construction of his cabin is the inclusion of an extension off of both gables—a feature considered quite unusual and not commonly seen.[66] Wilson knew of only two such examples in her study of cabins in Idaho. While James' cabin lacks vertical posts that support the overhangs, it does display large diameter log rafters at the ends, which serve the same purpose—supporting the extended gable roof.

Many cabins identified by Wilson as examples of the Rocky Mountain Cabin style feature full exterior floors below the gable extension. Presently, the cabin sports a wood deck off the south

[62] Ibid, 33.
[63] Ibid, 1, 34, 36, 37.
[64] Ibid, 51.
[65] Ibid, 52.
[66] Ibid, 43.

end and a small stoop on the north end; however, a 1920s photograph that shows Racheal Likins (Ethel's sister) at the cabin suggests there may have originally been a floor on the south end.[67] Additionally, a painting by Norma Squires, granddaughter of Annie McCrossin, also shows what looks like a floor and with a roof support at the south end. If the south end of the cabin originally had a floor below the gable, it is possible the north end did too.

The James McCrossin Cabin also sports a two-pen layout showing James' vision, anticipating the future need for more space. With thoughts of a growing family, he needed something large enough and stout enough to provide shelter for a number of people. Despite the inherent sturdiness of log cabins, most when constructed, weren't intended as the final end-all location for a person or family to live. In many cases, they preceded the construction of a more permanent occupation, and were viewed as temporary. This appears to be the exact case for James and his growing family who occupied the cabin for only around four years. However, little did James know that the stout cabin he built to shelter his new wife and infant son would host successive families and individuals who also stayed for short periods, whether in anticipation of moving to another residence, or as temporary shelter by local workers.

The James McCrossin Cabin actually predates by several years the later log construction often identified with Forest Service buildings and other buildings constructed around that time that typically claim the vernacular rustic architectural style mantra and that display extended gable roofs—however, the James McCrossin Cabin truly represents a building displaying vernacular rustic architecture, not a later stylized manifestation exhibiting those same attributes. Although beautiful, its original construction occurred for practical reasons, providing shelter to James and his family.

In 1999, Ravalli Republic newspaper reporter Buddy Smith commented on the initial restoration efforts of Dan and Cheryl Rothlisberger on the James McCrossin Cabin.[68] In his article titled, "Memories Live in the Chinking Between the Logs of this Cabin," Smith wrote: "So, as relieved, as every single long-time resident was that the cabin was getting a new lease on life, I was too. If I wore a hat, it'd come off to people like Virginia attorney Dan Rothlisberger, who's new dream it is to preserve the historic building." "My hat would come off to others who care enough to preserve - with wood, nails or shared memories - a little bit of Bitterroot past."[69]

Additional Information

The James McCrossin Cabin is located within a mile of both the westbound Lewis and Clark Trail of 1805 and the eastbound William Clark trail of 1806.[70] It is also within a mile of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail most notably travelled by Chief Joseph and his band of Nez Perce in 1877.[71] The cabin also sits along the Glacial Trail created when the glaciers

[67] Photograph in the procession of Dan and Cheryl Rothlisberger.

[68] Buddy Smith, "Memories Live in the Chinking Between the Logs of this Cabin," *Ravalli Republic*, 21 December 1999; Smith also wrote another article on the cabin's history entitled "Restoring History, Former Charlos Heights Schoolhouse will have a New Life as a Law Office," *Ravalli Republic*, 26 November 1999.

[69] Dan Rothlisberger was a Montana lawyer working with the Department of the Army in Alexandria Virginia at that time.

[70] Discovery Writers, *supra* note 6, at 32.

[71] "The Flight of the Nez Perce Through the Bitter Root Valley in 1877", by the U.S. Forest Service, R1-95-79.

carved their way down the Bitterroot Mountains and through the Bitterroot Valley.[72] Land nearby bares evidence of volcanic activity and the presence of Glacial Lake Missoula, which disappeared thousands of years ago.[73]

As importantly, the cabin sits in the heart of tribal lands occupied for many centuries by the Salish tribe prior to white settlement in the latter part of the 19th Century.[74] Still visible on the adjoining acreage is evidence of logging and early agricultural activities that took place from 1880 on. An old county road abandoned in 1934 hugs the hillside 100 yards west of the cabin and an old railroad spur and log pond are just ¼ mile west. The narrow width of the old county road suggests its use by horses, wagons and the novel "horseless carriages".

Still evident are irrigation ditches dug in 1883 and part of what was to be the George Washington Ward Irrigation Canal intended to provide water from neighboring mountain streams and the Bitterroot River to support agricultural use of adjoining lands. Though man-made irrigation has changed the character of vegetation in irrigated areas, the land in its natural semi-arid state still produces native plants such as camas, lupine, yarrow and bitter roots as documented by Lewis and Clark over 200 years ago.[75]

Evidence of the apple boom of the 1910-1924 era is nearby with several Macintosh apple trees still surviving.[76] Despite encroaching development, wildlife to include whitetail deer, elk, coyotes, moose, marmots, hawks, owls, and eagles still call the property around the cabin their home.

The James McCrossin Cabin has caught the eye of local and visiting photographers and artists alike. Locally, restoration of the cabin prompted newspaper articles and innumerable comments on the significance of the cabin to the history of the Bitterroot Valley. Looking south from the cabin is an agrarian scene often photographed and painted showing the Como Peaks of the Bitterroot Mountain Range on the western horizon. This iconic scene was captured by renowned local photographer Ernst Peterson whose photographs were used for postcards in the 1950's and 1960's to convey the image of Montana both nationally and internationally.[77] The scene remains much the same now as it was when the cabin was built.

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[72] Eliot John Allen, Marjorie Burns, and Scott Burns, *Cataclysms on the Columbia: The Great Missoula Floods*, (Portland: Ooligan Press, revised 2nd Edition, 2009), 89.

[73] Ibid, 104.

[74] Russ Lawrence, *supra* note 4, at 59.

[75] Sharon Anelia Ritter, *Lewis and Clark's Mountain Wilds: A Site Guide to the Plants and Animals They Encountered in the Bitterroots*, (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 2002), 29, 79, 215.

[76] Wm. W. Whitefield, "Bitter Root Valley Apple Boom, A Brief History" (visitors pamphlet), Ravalli County Museum and Historical Society.

[77] The Ravalli County Museum and Historical Society hosts an annual Ernst Peterson Photograph Montana Contest and Exhibit in memory of Ernst Peterson, a native son, whose photographs of the Bitterroot Valley and Western Montana were marketed as postcards and circulated all around the United States and abroad in the 1950's and 1960's. By 1953, the editors of magazines like National Geographic, Colliers, Field & Stream, and The Saturday Evening Post featured his photographs in their publications. See also Ravalli Republic, January 20, 2013.

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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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:
__x_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ____less than 1 acre_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 46.17145 Longitude: -114.18144

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The boundary includes the land and cabin within a rail fence that immediately surrounds the property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The cabin and associated yard are conscribed by a split rail fence, setting the property off from the surrounding acreage.

---

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: __Dan and Cheryl Rothlisberger_____
organization: _____
street & number: _P.O. Box 2135_____
city or town:____Hamilton____ state: __MT_____ zip code:__59840___
e-mail___ drothlisberger@q.com_____
telephone:_____
date:___June 2019_____

and

name/title: ___John Boughton_____
organization: ___Montana State Historic Preservation Office_____
street & number: __1301 E. Lockey___
city or town:____Helena_____ state: ___MT____ zip code:_59620____
e-mail___jboughton@mt.gov_____
telephone:___(406) 444-3647_____
date:____June 2019_____

Owner

name/title: __Dan and Cheryl Rothlisberger_____
organization: _____
street & number: _P.O. Box 2135_____
city or town:____Hamilton____ state: __MT_____ zip code:__59840___
e-mail___ drothlisberger@q.com_____

Additional Documentation

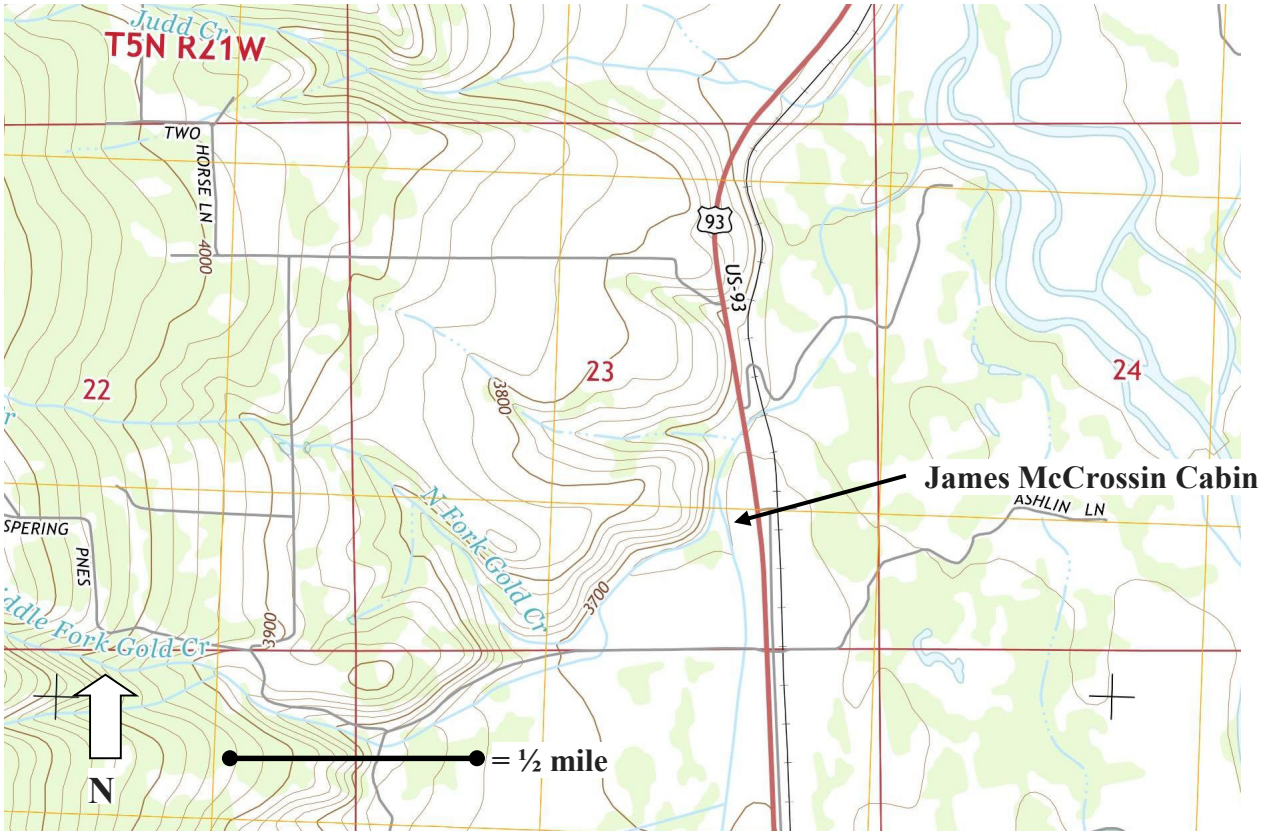
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Maps:



Location of the McCrossin Cabin. Found on the Hamilton South 7.5' topographic map.

Photographs
Photo Log

Name of Property: James McCrossin Cabin
City or Vicinity: Hamilton
County: Ravalli State: Montana
Photographer: Cheryl (Foss) Rothlisberger
Date Photographed: October 12, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 6

MT_RavalliCounty_JamesMcCrossinCabin_Photo 0001. North (northeast) elevation, looking west. Como Peaks in the distance.

MT_RavalliCounty_JamesMcCrossinCabin_Photo 0002. East and north elevations. Looking west. Ward Mountain in background.

MT_RavalliCounty_JamesMcCrossinCabin_Photo 0003. North elevation. View to the south. Close-up of front door. Como Peaks barely visible in background.

MT_RavalliCounty_JamesMcCrossinCabin_Photo 0004. West elevation. View to the east towards U.S. Highway 93 and the Sapphire Mountains.

MT_RavalliCounty_JamesMcCrossinCabin_Photo 0005. South elevation. View to the north.

MT_RavalliCounty_JamesMcCrossinCabin_Photo 0006. East elevation. View to west. Ward Mountain in the background.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.