

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Gaither House
AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

102 North Anderson Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Morganton

___ VICINITY OF

10th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

37

Burke

023

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

___ DISTRICT

___ PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

___ AGRICULTURE

___ MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ COMMERCIAL

___ PARK

___ STRUCTURE

___ BOTH

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

___ EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ RELIGIOUS

___ OBJECT

___ IN PROCESS

___ YES: RESTRICTED

___ GOVERNMENT

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ BEING CONSIDERED

___ YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ TRANSPORTATION

NO

___ MILITARY

___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. William Vroman

STREET & NUMBER

102 North Anderson Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Morganton

___ VICINITY OF

North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Burke County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

South Green Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Morganton

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gaither House is a one-story, three-bay, hip roofed, Greek Revival frame house distinguished by an impressive Doric porch. The three-bay, pedimented entrance porch has a wide frieze (which carries around the house) and four, large, fluted Doric columns. A simple mock lattice balustrade has replaced the original. A large entrance occupies the center bay. It has wide sidelights and a transom bordered by symmetrically molded architraves with central convex elements. The architraves have corner blocks with simple, deeply incised, convex roundels. The sidelights and transom have large, diamond-shaped lights. Each leaf of the double door has three panels, a long vertical one at the top, a small horizontal one at the middle and a square one at the bottom. The panels are framed by broad, heavy moldings. (This door configuration is reflected in the interior doors also.)

The bays of the three-bay front and two-bay side elevations are divided by heavy fluted pilasters. Each of the outer two bays of the main facade contains a large window with twelve-over-twelve sash and architraves similar to the entrance. The windows have fixed louvered blinds which were once all held in place by curvilinear metal bird-like shutter dogs with star-shaped termini. The roof is pierced by two interior chimneys which reflect the center hall, two room deep plan. The north and south ends have two large windows each with twelve-over-twelve sash. The rear originally may have had fenestration similar to the front, but that has been altered somewhat. In the center bay there is an exterior chimney flanked by windows with small narrow twelve-over-twelve sash. The roundels in these architraves match the interior, and not the exterior, though the architrave appears to match. This may have been the rear door. Flanking this center bay are two small windows whose frames match the original windows; they are of matched size but their height placement is uneven. At the north end is an original, large, twelve-over-twelve sash window. At the south end its counterpart has been removed and replaced with a small door. This bay is covered by a small, hip roof porch. The only pilasters on the rear are found at the corners.

The front entrance opens into a wide, long hall that is divided about one-third of the way back by a wall with a wide doorway now filled with sliding doors. (The doors appear to date from the early twentieth century.) The frame, as throughout the interior, features three vertical strips symmetrically placed. The corner blocks are flush and have roundels similar to the architraves. At the rear of the hall, occupying the space thought to have been the rear door, is an interesting three-part mantel with Greek Revival moldings. The pilasters resemble the exterior architraves and the three unadorned elements of the frieze area are joined by this same molded strip. The shelf is unadorned. This mantel may have been removed from one of the three rooms missing their mantels. The south front room is the most nearly intact of all the rooms. It has a mantel with engaged fluted Doric columns which match those of the front porch. They support a frieze with a long, horizontal panel and unadorned shelf. The south rear room has been divided into two smaller ones; in the southernmost one, there is an original closet fitted in between the interior chimney and exterior wall. This closet has a transom. The interior doors have five panels: two tall vertical ones at the top, one long horizontal one in the center and two square ones at the bottom. There are tall, sparsely trimmed baseboards throughout. The architraves all rest on unadorned blocks that correspond to the corner blocks except that they are plain. There are broad typical Greek Revival moldings used throughout the house.

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/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1840

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gaither House is an impressive and well-preserved Greek Revival house, of imposing character despite its one-story height. It was the home of Burgess S. Gaither, a Whig attorney long prominent in local and state political activities, serving as speaker of the state senate, superintendent of the Charlotte Mint, and as delegate to the state's 1835 constitutional convention and the Confederate States Congresses.

The Gaither House takes its name from Burgess Sidney Gaither (1807-1892), a prominent Whig politician and longtime resident of Morganton. It is uncertain exactly when Gaither acquired the house or whether he was its first owner (nearly all pre-1865 Burke County deeds have been destroyed by fire), but he most likely built it, probably in the late 1830s or 1840s.

Gaither was born March 16, 1807, in Iredell County. His father, also named Burgess Gaither (1757-1819), represented Iredell in the North Carolina House of Commons in 1792-1793 and from 1796-1801. The younger Gaither came to Morganton shortly after his father's death. His older brother Alfred, a prominent Morganton lawyer, sent him to the University of Georgia, where he is said to have been enrolled with Alexander H. Stephens (later a member of Congress from Georgia and vice president of the Confederate States of America) and Robert Toombs (later a United States senator from Georgia and secretary of state of the Confederacy). He later returned to Morganton and studied law under his brother and Judge David F. Caldwell, a longtime member of the General Assembly and later judge of the North Carolina Superior Court. He was admitted to the bar in 1829 at the age of twenty-two.

The following year, he was married to Elizabeth Sharpe Erwin, daughter of Colonel William W. Erwin and a member of one of Morganton's most prominent families. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed clerk of Burke County Superior Court. While holding this office, he was elected as one of Burke County's two delegates to the state's 1835 constitutional convention. He was one of the youngest delegates to that body and its last surviving member.

In 1839, Gaither represented the Morganton congressional district at the Whig party's first annual convention, held at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The following year, he was elected to the North Carolina Senate and to the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina (he remained a University trustee until 1868). In 1841 Gaither was rewarded for his loyalty to the Whig party when President John Tyler appointed him superintendent of the United States Branch Mint at Charlotte; he served in this position for about two years.

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In 1844 he was again elected to the State Senate, where he served as that body's speaker. He was also selected by the General Assembly to be solicitor of the state's seventh judicial circuit, a district which then extended from Burke County westward to the Tennessee line. He resigned his senate seat in January, 1845, and spent a number of years attending to his duties as solicitor and to his private law practice in Morganton.

Gaither again engaged in public service in August, 1861, when he was chosen to represent the Morganton district in the second extra session of the General Assembly. He was then elected to represent his district in the first and second Confederate States Congresses, held at Richmond, Virginia, at various times between February, 1862, and March, 1865.

After the Civil War, Gaither resumed his Morganton law practice, which was said to have been "very large and profitable." He was recognized as the leader of the western North Carolina bar until shortly before his death, when his health failed. He died at his home on February 22, 1892, at the age of eighty-four.

Gaither's will directed that his entire estate be divided between his second wife, Sallie Corpening Gaither, and their son Burgess Sidney Gaither, Jr. Upon Mrs. Gaither's death in 1911, the house passed outright to B. S. Gaither, Jr. The house was apparently moved to its present location sometime between 1933 and 1936. In 1936 Gaither and his wife sold the house to Mrs. Laura Powe Ervin, who in 1950 conveyed to to Mr. and Mrs. Turner M. Thorpe, Jr. The Thorpes in turn sold the house in 1956 to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. William Vroman.

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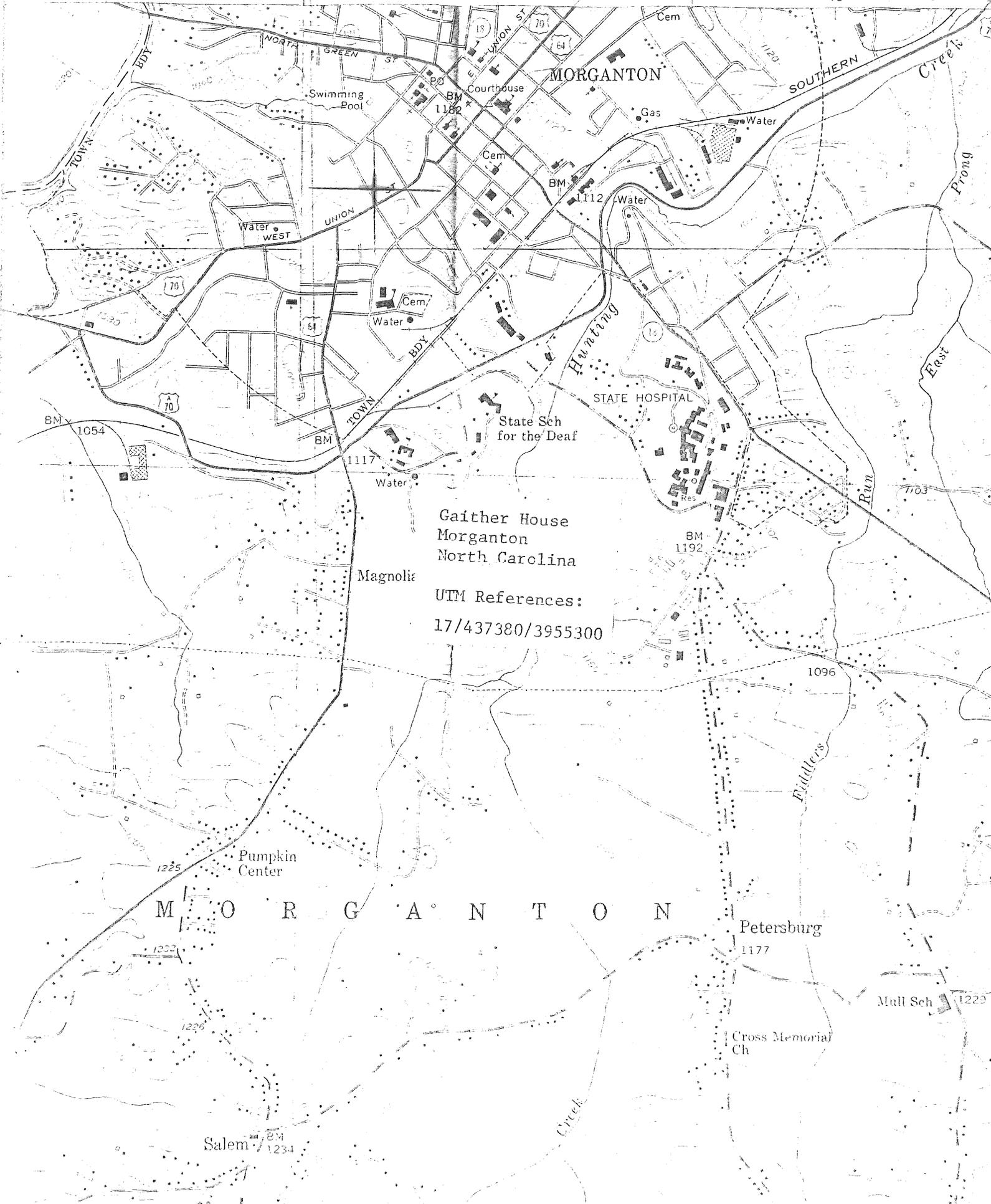
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1200
3657

IGNAS RIDGE 24 MI
GAS HILL 3.5 MI
42'30"

LENCIR 15 MI
GAMEWELL 10 MI
4655 1 SW
(MORGANTON NORTH)

40' 3 MI



Gaither House
Morganton
North Carolina

UTM References:
17/437380/3955300

M O R G A N T O N

Petersburg
1177

Mull Sch 1229

Cross Memorial
Ch

Salem BM
1234