

CARR-1325

## Gamber Survey District, (Pleasantville, Mechanicsville)

### **Architectural Survey File**

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site ([mht.maryland.gov](http://mht.maryland.gov)) for details about how to make an appointment.

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***Last Updated: 04-16-2004***

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Gamber Survey District Survey Number: CARR-1325

Project: MD 32 at MD 91, Gamber, Carroll County Agency: FHWA

Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Eligibility not recommended

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

Based on information prepared by SHA, Gamber, a small, linear, rural village located southeast of Westminster in Carroll County, Maryland, does not meet the National Register criteria for listing. The village developed from the mid 19th century through the early 20th century as a postal and commercial center for the surrounding agricultural area. It had several stores, a blacksmith shop, fraternal lodge, school and a number of houses. The district has seen additional development and alterations throughout the later part of the 20th century. The District as a whole and many of the individual buildings, although historic, do not retain adequate integrity of historic character for listing in the National Register. Most of the houses have been altered with replacement windows or siding and none of the buildings in the village appear to warrant individual listing.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Project files

Prepared by: Rita Suffness

Elizabeth Hannold Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services March 3, 1993 Date

NR program concurrence:  yes  no  not applicable

[Signature] Reviewer, NR program 3-4-93 Date

DT

Survey No. CARR-1325

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)  
 Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)  
 Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)  
 Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.  
 Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.  
 Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.  
 Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.  
 Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.  
 Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900  
 Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600  
 Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750  
 Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815  
 Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870  
 Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930  
 Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present  
 Unknown Period (  prehistoric  historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- Subsistence  
 Settlement  
 Political  
 Demographic  
 Religion  
 Technology  
 Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- Agriculture  
 Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning  
 Economic (Commercial and Industrial)  
 Government/Law  
 Military  
 Religion  
 Social/Educational/Cultural  
 Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: District

Historic Environment: Rural Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Commercial, Dwellings, Social

Known Design Source: NA

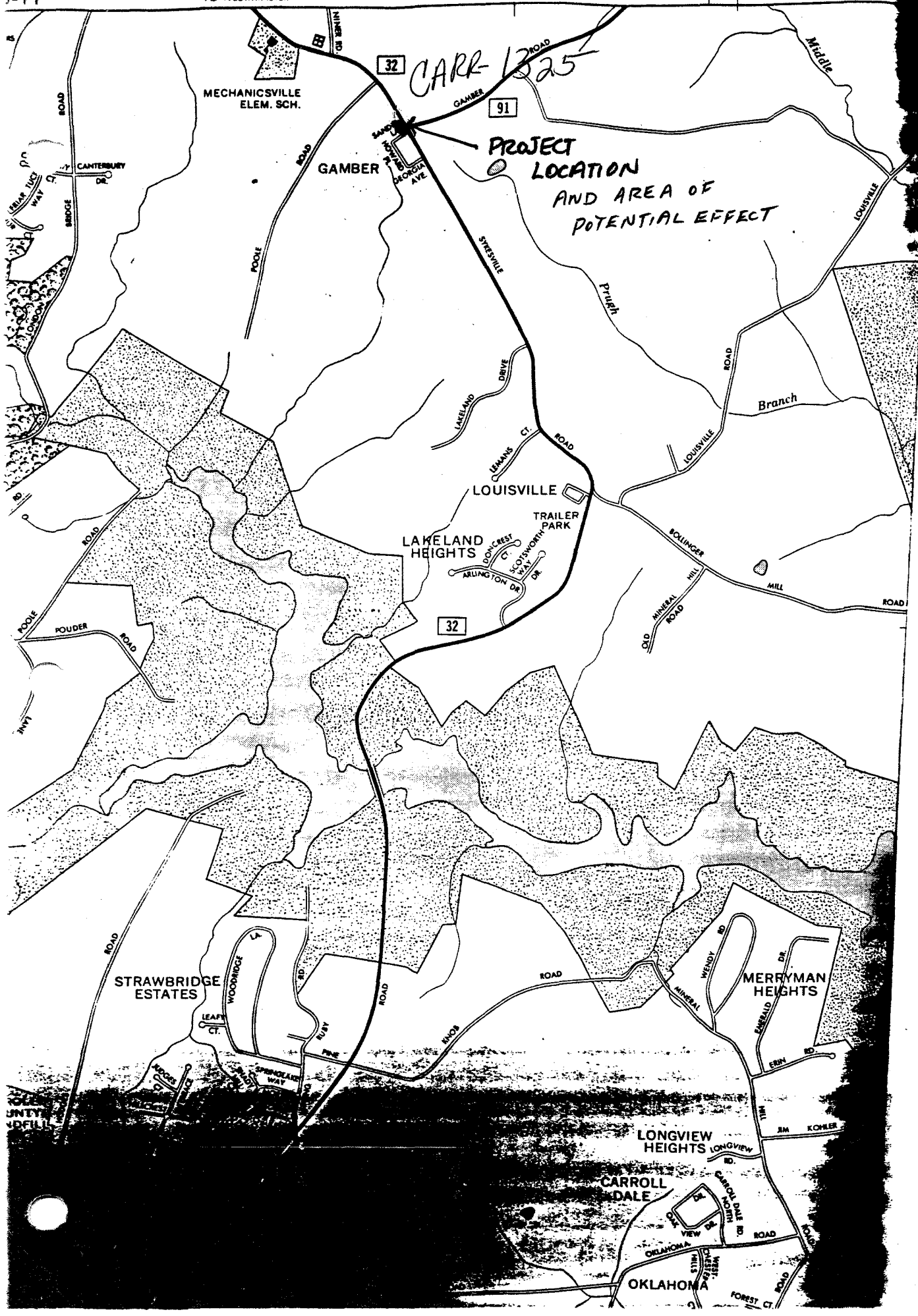


Figure 1

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. CARR-1325  
Magi No.  
DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Pleasantville, Mechanicsville

and/or common Gamber ~~Historic~~ <sup>Survey</sup> District

**2. Location**

street & number MD 32 at MD 91  not for publication

city, town Westminster  vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Carroll

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name various

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. liber

street & number folio

city, town state

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. CARR-1325

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Gamber is a very small, rural village located southeast of Westminster in Carroll County, Maryland. It is primarily composed of 28 dwellings arranged in a linear fashion on either side of MD 32 (Sykesville Road) between MD 91 and south of Niner Road. Over one-third of the buildings are modern intrusions, such as High's Convenience Store (A in photos 1 and 2), Wantz Construction Company, with its equipment storage sheds and office (B), Discover Carpet Store (C) and concrete block building (D in Photo 2), some recently constructed residences (sites 5, 7, 9, 11, 21, 22, 23, 24), some of which are highly intrusive (see Photographs 13, 15, 17, 19, 35, 36, 37, 38).

In 1862, the village, with only five dwellings, which were concentrated in the southern part of the area defined as the historic district near MD 91, was called Pleasantville. By 1877, having been re-named Mechanicsville, it was composed of 10 dwellings, one store and one blacksmith shop. Another store, in an area of outside of the bounds of the historic district, was replaced by the Westminster Bank. The first store, plus buildings at the southern end of the historic district formerly utilized for the Lodge Hall of the Junior Order of the United American Mechanics, and the Gamber House, were torn down to make way for the High's Store, the Carpet Store, plus Sandra Lane and the concrete block building and storage tanks.

The village did not span all of the area between MD 91 and Niner Road until the early twentieth century.

By the 1910's a store now known as the Gamber General Store (photographs 21-24, 51-53), currently owned by the Timchulas, was opened in what had been the residence of Nicholas Benson by Messrs. Henry Shipley and Banner.

The only other non-residential historic building in the village is the Gamber School (photographs 31-33) built around the turn of the century, as closely as can be determined. It was converted to an apartment house in the 1950's with the addition of a large shed dormer along the front and a sizeable addition to the rear.

## 7. Description, Cont'd.

The older dwellings are mostly simple, frame two-story buildings with little detail or embellishment, with most of them having been constructed in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. They are all located along MD 32 and conform to a standard set-back from the edge of the road, although newer structures (see photos 13, 15, 17, 19, 35-38) interrupt the rhythm in the traditional spacing of the structures and constitute visually jarring intrusions.

Although more concentrated and sheltered in the center, the district is quite open at the two ends where the newer buildings are concentrated. The concentration of the Westminster Bank, Wantz Construction, High's Store and the Carpet Store at one end constitutes a sharp demarcation of the district at MD 91, as does the Mechanicsville School, Fire Department and new dwellings at the northern end at Niner Road.

The boundary, as shown on the attached map, includes the structures on the west side of MD 32 from the Bitzel Residence on the north end of town (3860 Sykesville Road) to the Applewaite Residence (3940 Sykesville Road). An auxiliary resource separated from the district by Highs Convenience, Carpet Store, Sandra Lane and the concrete block building, is the Horace Shipley House (Wantz Construction). On the east side the district extends from south of Niner Road (D.M. Hill residence at 3887 Sykesville Road) to the Gamber Store at 3947 Sykesville Road.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. CARR-1325

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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or	
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

*Survey*  
 The Gamber ~~Historic~~ District is a small, linear rural village located in central Carroll County about six miles from Westminster. Known as Pleasantville in 1862, with fewer than a half dozen structures, and renamed Mechanicsville in 1877 when it had roughly doubled in size, it acquired its current name when the postal authorities became aware that there was another town of that name in southern Maryland. As the townspeople procrastinated about possible new names, the United States government quietly dubbed it Gamber after its postmaster.

It was characterized by Thomas Scharf in History of Western Maryland, 1882, as the "home of an industrious people", to which, evidently, he attached little importance, as only one other village in Carroll County which is listed has less said about it.

With intrusions not only at the intersection of MD 32 and MD 91 and along the length of the District, but also at the intersection of MD 32 and Poole Road, the district lacks a strong sense of cohesion or focus. This lack of integrity is exacerbated by the alterations seen in a number of the more prominent or visually commanding buildings, such as the Gamber School (Christiana Apartments), the Gamber Store, which was converted from a residence and has had additions to the front and rear, plus the Horace Shipley House (Wantz Construction). Incidentally, Horace Shipley is not related to any of the owners of the Gamber store.

## 8. Significance, Cont'd.

Historical Background

The history of Carroll County is divided into two periods: the initial settlement and development of the area before its establishment as a county from 1730 to 1837, and the period after 1837 when the manufacturing component of the County's base and the nature of the agricultural pursuits became defined. The basic settlement pattern was established in the earlier period as settlers entered the area over four major routes: from the south branch of the Patapsco; from the north (Union Bridge area); from the east along the Connewago Road; and, lastly, from the west and the Monocacy Valley. Early farmers specialized in tobacco cultivation. Industry was located in the areas around Union Mills, Detour and Taneytown, with 18th century communities concentrated in the northern part of what become Carroll County.

The establishment of the small village which came to be called Gamber occurred after the separation of Carroll County from neighboring counties in 1837. The settlement patterns started in the earlier period were more firmly entrenched in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The county transportation system was greatly expanded with the increase in roads plus the building of several railroad lines. Gamber was never on a railroad line, although it was located on a road midway between Birdwell and Louisburg, and southeast of Westminster. No foundaries, mills or other well established, Carroll County industries are known to have been located in Gamber.







CARR-1325

Panorama of area of  
Potential EFFECT  
(west side of MD 32)

L-R = Wantz Construction  
(2 or B) Discover Carpets  
(D), concrete block  
bldg. (D) High's Store  
(A) and Applewhite  
Residence (#1).

CARR-1325

NOV 1992

NOV 1992



CARR-1325

Project area- vic. of proposed  
passing lane. West side of MD32  
Sound end of Gamber H.D. looking  
N.E. toward concrete bldg.

(D), Discover Carpets (c) and  
Highs (A).



CARR-1325



NOV 1992



CARR-1325

view through Gamber Survey  
District looking north



CARR-1325

Wantz Construction

Horace Shipley House

NW Elevation

with company bldg. in rear.



CARR-1325

Applewaite Residence

East or principle facade

also shown in photo 20

NOV 1992

NOV 1992



CARR-1325

wants Construction  
Horace Shipley House

4004 MD 32

NW corner



CARR-1325

Northern edge of impact area  
west side of MD 32

Applewaite Residence (site 1)

also shown in photo 20



CARR-1325

view through Gamber Survey  
District looking south



CARR-1325

wantz Construction  
(site 2 or B)

Horace Shipley House

4004 MD32

SW Corner



CARR-1325

Bitzel Residence (site 3)  
3860 MD 32 (west side)

DEC 1992

DEC 1992



CARR. 1325

Wantz Construction  
Horace Shipley House  
East- Principle facade

*Kodak*  
MAY 1992

*Kodak*  
MAY 1992



CARR- 1225

Joseph Howard House (site 4)  
3872 MD 32 (west side)

DEC 1992

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Non-contributing (Site 5)  
3880 MD 32 (west side)



CARR-1325

Site 6

3886 MD 32 (west side)

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Non-Contributing (site 7)

3899 MD 32 (west side)

DEC 1992

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Benjamin Schaeffer Residence  
(Site 8)

3906 MD32 (west side)



CARR-1325

Non-contributing (site 9)  
MD 32 at Poole Road



CARR-1325

Irene Johnson Residence  
(Site 10)

3924 M032 (west side)



CARR-1325

Non-contributing  
(Site 11)

3943

MD32

(west side)

Kodakux  
Processing Service

DEC 1992

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Minera Ritter House  
(Site 12)

3938 MD32<sup>N</sup> (west side)

DEC 1992

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Applewhite Residence (site 1)  
3940 MD32 (west side)  
also shown in photos 5 and 6.



CARR-1325

Gamber Store (Shiopley and  
Bonner) (Site 13)

3947 MD 32 (east side)

SE elevation



CARE-1325

Gamber Store  
South Corner



N





CARR-1325

Gamber Store  
West (Principal<sup>a</sup>) facade

Kodak  
Processing Service  
MAY 1992

N

Kodak  
Processing Service  
MAY 1992



C. Aker - 1325

Gamber Store  
NW corner

Kodaklux  
Processing Service

DEC 1992

Kodaklux  
Processing Service

DEC 1992

N



CARR-1325

Parish House (Site 14)  
3943 MD 32 (east side)

Kodak  
Producing Excellence  
DEC 1992

Kodak  
Producing Excellence  
DEC 1992



CARR-1325

L.A.J. Lamotte House (Site 15)

3941 MD32 (east side)

DEC 1997

DEC 1997



CARR-1325

Strickland Residence  
(Site 16)

39.39 MD 32 (east side)

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Harmon Residence - (site 17)

3935 MD32 (east side)

DEC 1 1992

DEC 1 1992



CARR-1325

Frame House (Site 18)  
(east side)

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Wagner Residence (Site 19)

3933 MD 32 (east side)



CARR-1325

Gamber School (site 20)

Now Christiana Apartments

3834 N MD32 (~~east~~ side)

South corner



CARR-1325

Gamber School /  
3824 MD32 (east side)  
west (principal~~er~~) facade



CARR-1325

Gamber School

3824 MD 32 (east side)

NW corner



CARR-1325

Non-contributing (site 21)  
3915 MD 32 (east side)

DEC 1992

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Luther Brothers Property  
(site 22)

3899 MO32 (east side)

Kodakux  
Processing Services

DEC 1992



CARR-1325

Non-contributing (site 24)

Luther Brothers Property

3899 MD 32 (east side)



CARR-1325

Non-contributing (site 24)

3897 MD 32



CARR-1325

Bungalow (Site 25)

3893 MD 32 (east side)



CARR-1325

D.M. Hill (Site 26)

3887 MD32 (east side)

CARR-1325



Wantz Construction Co.  
Looking South

CARR-1325



Wantz Construction Co.  
looking east toward rear  
of Shipley House

CARK-1325



Wantz Construction Office/  
Storage Bldg. and truck  
yard

CARR-1325



House behind Shipley House on  
Sandra Lane.  
(Westminster House in Housing  
Dev.)

CARR-1325



Shipley House  
Dining Room

CARR-1325



Shipley House  
Living Room

CAROL-1325



Shipley House - east entrance  
facade - looking SW toward.  
Vinyl clad columns/stone faced  
concrete block plinth.

CARR-1325



Shipley House east entrance  
facade tri-partite window.

CARR-1325



Concrete block bldg.  
and storage trailers

CARR-1325



Concrete block bldg.  
SE corner

CARR-1325



Gamber Store  
SE corner

CARR-1325



Gamber Store  
SE corner - detail

CARR-1325



Gamber Store Carryout  
Addition to east end  
of store.

CARR-1325



Applewaite Residence  
South elevation

CARR-1325



Applewaite Residence  
with High's Parking Lot  
in foreground

CAKR-1325



Rock filled area in parking lot  
of Highs Store adjacent  
to Applewaite Residence