**1 NAME**

HISTORIC
Gaither House
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER
102 North Anderson Street
CITY, TOWN
Morganton
STATE
North Carolina

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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<th>STATUS</th>
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**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME
Mr. William Vroman

STREET & NUMBER
102 North Anderson Street
CITY, TOWN
Morganton
STATE
North Carolina

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC
Burke County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
South Green Street
CITY, TOWN
Morganton
STATE
North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
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.
### Specific Dates

**ca. 1840**

**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 P. 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.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Battle, Kemp P. History of the University of North Carolina. Raleigh: By the Author, 2 volumes, 1907, 1912.
Burke County Records, Burke County Courthouse, Morganton, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds and Wills).

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ___ ¼ acre ___

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Research by Robert Topkins, survey specialist; architectural description by Charles Greer

ORGANIZATION Suttlemyre, Jr., survey specialist
Division of Archives and History

DATE 19 January 1976

STREET & NUMBER
109 East Jones Street

TELEPHONE 919/829-7862

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh

STATE North Carolina

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE
date 19 January 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
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 it 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.
Burke County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds and Wills).


United States Works Projects Administration. Pre-1914 Graves Index. Archives, Division of Archives and History.


Gaither House
Morganton
North Carolina

Magnolias

UTM References:
17/437380/3955300

Pumpkin Center

Salem

Petersburg

Morganton

Salem