CARR - 152

WESTMINSTER NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
(Listed on the National Register of Historic Places)

1764

West of U.S. Route 140 on Maryland Routes 97 and 32

Multiple sites

The Westminster Historic District contains 1400 principal structures that show a continuum of residential and commercial architecture from the early vernacular styles through the twentieth century national styles. The basic building form is an early 19th century vernacular farmhouse combining Pennsylvania German and Georgian, or English, elements. Constructed in brick or frame, these buildings have cross-gable roofs, symmetrical arrangement of fenestration and simple detailing. Architectural changes through the nineteenth century are mainly reflected through ornamentation applied to the basic form.

Construction of a distinct commercial district occured during the mid-nineteenth century, especially after the arrival of the Western Maryland Railway in 1862. Businessmen along Main Street erected larger scale, imposing buildings which abandoned references to the house form in favor of national trends. The expansion of Westminster from east to west presents a relatively discernable pattern from which one can read the evolution and development of the town by walking its streets and viewing the structures.

The core of the Westminster Historic District is its Main Street which is in a relatively good state of preservation. While several significant buildings have been lost, the majority of the early buildings still exist and continue in their original use. The residents have a strong and continuing interest in the preservation of Westminster. Restoration and rehabilitation have been underway for several decades. Moreover, the city government has been a leader in the preservation efforts through the completion and publication of an architectural survey and the promotion of rehabilitation projects in both the commercial and residential areas.

FHR-8-300 (11-78)

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United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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date entered

1. Name

historic

and/or common WESTMINSTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

2. Location

street & number West of U.S.Route 140 on Maryland Routes 97 and 32 ___ not for publication

city, town Westminster ___ vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state Maryland code 24 county Carroll code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
X district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	X museum
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	X commercial	X park
___ structure	X both	___ work in progress	X educational	X private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	X entertainment	X religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	X government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	X industrial	X transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Private and Public Owners

street & number

city, town Westminster ___ vicinity of state Maryland 21157

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New County Office Building

street & number 225 Center Street

city, town Westminster state Maryland 21157

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes ___ no

___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Westminster, in the piedmont region of Maryland, is centrally located in Carroll County, at the convergence of major transportation routes connecting to Pennsylvania, Washington, and Baltimore, now U.S. Route 140, and Maryland Routes 97, 32, 31, and 27. Geographically, the area consists of gently rolling hills of fertile soil. Westminster is situated on Parr's Ridge, a north-south oriented ridge that once served as the boundary between Baltimore and Frederick Counties. The district has a dominant linear quality following Main Street, running in a northwest direction and having parallel alleys on both sides. Also parallel to Main Street and to the south of it is Green Street. Arteries perpendicular to Main Street are irregularly spaced along its length, and at the northwest end of the city, there is a fork where Pennsylvania Avenue branches off Main Street to the north. The residential, commercial and industrial district is densely developed, especially in the older, original section on Main Street. The development and growth of Westminster progressed along the Main Street in an east to west movement, a pattern that is relatively discernable in its present townscape. The architecture exhibits a wide variety of vernacular styles ranging from small domestic frame or brick houses at the east and west ends, Victorian commercial structures in the downtown, and scattered twentieth century glass and aluminum facades. However, all of these buildings remain within a four story height, attaining a smooth proportion to a street that is expansive by its length.

The Westminster Historic District contains 1400 principal structures of which one percent are intrusions and ten percent are not now contributing but have the potential through the passage of time or restoration of becoming contributing structures. The remaining 89% are contributing.

Westminster evidences a continum of residential architecture reflecting--with a pronounced time lag--the national changes in "high style" architecture. The basic building form is an early 19th century vernacular farm house combining Pennsylvania and Georgian, or English elements. Constructed in brick or frame these buildings have cross gable roofs, symmetrical arrangement of fenestration, simple detailing. As is to be expected, changes through time are reflected in detailing applied to the basic form. The expansion of Westminster--filling in previously laid out neighborhoods--allowed for these incremental additions so that walking the streets of Westminster one can read the evolution and development of the town.

Construction of a distinct commercial architecture occured only in the mid-19th century. Businessmen along Main Street erected larger scale, imposing buildings which abandoned references to the house form. The commercial buildings demand attention through their height and breadth and the detailing on the facades which follows more closely current national trends: plateglass display windows, Romanesque arches and detailing for upper floors.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The commercial development--unlike the residential--has occurred in the same geographic area so that early commercial buildings have been historically demolished or substantially altered to reflect current needs. The greatest pressure for land use exists in the commercial district: Main Street. The tension and change continues to be evident today--see the sketch map.

The industrial buildings, located along the railroad, are stricly functional and possess no architectural design qualities with the notable exception of the power house on Locust Lane. The existing structures are replacements of earlier shelters on the same site which usually has been occupied by the same firm. Ecclesiastical buildings are uniformly Gothic Revival.

A special feature of Westminster is the frequent occurence of open spaces which relieve the feeling of density. The incremental "Additions" to Westminster accomplished in rectangular plots of land historically left open space in the midst of development. Although not all of the open space is designated for public park use, access is prohibited in none of the areas. Belle Grove Square, the extensive lawn at City Hall, and the municipal park between Willis and Main Streets are notable examples.

The Westminster Historic District is in good condition. The majority of the buildings continue their original use with few exceptions the City has converted an in-town barn into a parking garage adaptable to a covered open space area for activity. The residents have a strong and continuing interest in the preservation of Westminster. Restoration and rehabilitation have been underway for several decades, especially along Main Street. The City of Westminster, most notably, is encouraging rehabilitation in their commercial district and has undertaken large scale rehabilitation projects itself chiefly to address housing needs.

NARRATIVE

Predominantly residential, Main Street contains an indiscriminate mixture of wood, frame and brick houses. Most of these are set immediately on the public sidewalk, and a few have small front yards, although at one time they fronted a tree-lined roadway. Usually the Main Street lots extend to the alley behind the property and often dependencies or sheds exists on this land. Some of the side streets serve as residential appendages to the Main Street.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

Larger lot sizes are associated with the late 19th and early 20th century residential developments exist along Green, Westmoreland and Willis Streets.

The east end of Westminster is the oldest section of the community and has retained much of its early character. A good example of a wood frame house is 226 East Main Street. It is a three bay wide by two bay deep clapboard house on a stone foundation and is two and one-half stories high. There is a full-length rear addition also of clapboard. A single brick chimney rests inside the gable end on the west side. The main facade has the doorway in the east bay of the first floor, accompanied by two single-pane sash windows. The second floor has three 6/6 windows. Immediately above the second floor windows is a dentil cornice, while the rest of the window trim is architraves. The doorway frontispiece displays plain pilaster strips with scroll brackets supporting a flat cornice. The sides of the house are nearly plain clapboard. The west side has a 6/6 window on the second floor towards the front of the house, and the east side has an undersized window in the gable.

Beside 226 East Main Street is a house of the same design but with slightly smaller proportion. This house, 224 East Main Street, is two and one-half stories, three by two bays, and wood frame with clapboards. The brick chimney is in the west gable and the doorway is in the east bay of the main facade. It has a less ornate doorway frontispiece than its neighbor. Alongside 224 East Main Street is 220 East Main Street which has the same doorway frontispiece and same scale but a different plan. 220 East Main Street is five bays wide with a central doorway and two gable end chimneys. In its wood frame and other characteristics, it is similar to 224 East Main Street except that it has a double-tiered porch in the rear.

The wood frame house with a hall and parlor or central hall plan was a popular early style in Westminster and was used throughout the city during the 1800s. Other examples are scattered along the street-scape, e.g., 317 East Main, 311 East Main, and 38-40 Carroll Street. These demonstrate the small intricate scale of the houses, and, in regard to the symmetry of the main facade and other style characteristics shows a continuity with traditional vernacular forms of the mid-Atlantic region.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

A larger domestic home, and one typical of brick craftsmanship found in Westminster, is the Shellman House at 206 East Main Street. Built in 1807, it is a two and one-half story structure in an ell shape. The main facade is five bays, the narrow side is two bays, and the ell side is six bays deep. The main facade has a central doorway, and double hung sash 6/6 windows with gauged brick flat arches and blinds in the other bays of the first and second floors. In the roof are three symmetrically placed gable dormers with 6/6 windows. The floor plan is central hall with an open-well stairway and a parlor to one side. The brick masonry is Flemish bond on an uncoursed fieldstone foundation. The gable ends have inside end brick chimneys at both ends of the main section and in the ell. The ell has a double-tiered porch on its inner side (a frequent feature on mid-Atlantic region homes) which faces a garden area. The trim, both interior and exterior, is influenced by Federal-style woodwork. The entrance frontispiece consists of single columns on either side of the paneled double doors and sidelights supporting a paneled entablature and a flat cornice. The Shellman House is presently a museum for the Carroll County Historical Society.

Also owned by the Carroll County Historical Society is the Kimmey House at 210 East Main Street. Built about a decade after the Shellman House, it was originally a three-bay, three-story house to which a two-bay, two-story addition was later added to the east side. Twentieth century additions were made to the rear and side to accomodate a library and auditorium for the Historical Society. The original structure was built of Flemish bond on the main facade and American common bond elsewhere. A gable end chimney is on the west side and the doorway is to the east indicating the hall and parlor floor plan. The doorway has a triangular pediment frontispiece supported by columns. Of particular notice, in comparison to the Shellman House, are the sash windows of the main facade: square windows of the third floor have brick rounded arches, while the smaller square windows of the third floor have flat brick arches. The eaves contain a wooden box cornice.

Across the street from these two houses and built about the same time is another brick home, the Jacob Sherman House at 211 East Main Street. This house is three bays wide, and two and one-half stories high of white painted brick. The main facade is Flemish bond and elsewhere the brick is laid in American common bond. Built in an ell

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4.

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

shape, the gable end chimney is placed on the west side, and the doorway is in the east bay of the main facade. The 6/6 sash windows have flat brick arch lintels and the cornice has mousetooth brickwork. The comparison of these three houses reveals basic characteristics and differences that are found in other brick structures of Westminster. Some of the other closely related homes are located at 299 East Main, 266 East Main, and 12 Church Street.

228 East Main Street, considered to be the oldest standing domestic structure, serves to show some of the change that has occurred in the east end. This house has had three sections of development. The first section, to the east side, had a three-bay side facade and is built of wide, uneven clapboards covering the logs of a house built circa 1775. (There were several log houses built in Westminster, four known examples which are now clapboard covered are 288 East Main Street, 236 East Main Street, 128 East Main Street, and 65 West Main Street). The brick chimney is in the west side, which is now the center of the building. The main facade has a central doorway and windows with narrow wood sills and trim in the other bays of the west side of the original structure, is Flemish bond brick presently in rough condition. The doorway is in the east bay of the three-bay facade. The two first floor windows have the east bay of the three-bay facade. The two first floor windows have plain block lintels and over the second floor windows is a double jettison of brick rows which rise to the roofline. The third change to the house, occurring in the 20th century, is the addition of a mansard-style roof with dormers and a rear, concrete block of one-bay length. This structure shows some of the prominent, aged construction features found on some of the east end houses, and serves as a model of how, in some instances, these characteristics have been abused.

These buildings indicate several characteristics that dominate the early domestic architecture of Westminster. The settlers brought with them a diverse assortment of backgrounds and architectural ideas--there was even a saltbox house on Main Street (site of 172 East Main Street) that was replaced by a brick house in 1896. However, the basic style derivation is a mid-Atlantic folk style with pervading Pennsylvania German influences[1] and can be classified as follows: brick or wood frame construction; generally two or two and one-half stories; three to five bays wide; gable end chimneys that are usually inside end at the ridge; floor plans that are a variation of the central hall plan;

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

and door and window arrangements that are basically symmetrical. Additions to these early structures are frequently present.

In 1836 Westminster was appointed the seat of government for the newly designated Carroll County. To fulfill their responsibilities the citizens erected a courthouse the following year. Located not far from Main Street on Court Street, the Courthouse donated to the townscape a public buildings designed around the then popular Greek Revival style. Two and one-half stories, seven by two bays, and constructed of Flemish bond brick, the Courthouse's main facade is embellished by a two-story, three-bay wide portico with a double porch and supported by four large plain columns. An interesting feature is the wood, rural interpretation of a volute in the capital of the columns. Additions have been built (symmetrical wings in 1882 which were enlarged by one-half story in 1935) that retain the essential character of the style. Painted white and topped by an octagonal shaped cupola, the Courthouse presents a monumental yet pleasing atmosphere to the rural county seat.

North of the Courthouse is the Carroll County Jail, built in 1837, utilizing an indigenous vernacular form. The Jail is built of green fieldstone masoned in uncoursed bond with strong quoin-like patterns at the corners. Two and one-half stories with a high foundation, its plan is T-shaped. The main section is five by two bays and the wing is four bays deep and three bays wide. The main facade has five 6/6 sash windows at the foundation level, a central doorway and four 6/6 sash windows on the main floor, 6/6 windows in all of the second floor bays, and three symmetrically placed gable dormers with 6/6 windows in the roof. However, in these sets of windows, the size of the window panes used changes from floor to floor. An elevated wooden porch on brick piers with a shed roof exists in the central three bays of the main floor. One gable end has an inside end chimney and the other gable has an exterior chimney that was a later addition to the inside end chimney.

The founding of Carroll County contributed greatly to Westminster's growth. Side streets that had formerly served as alleys were developed for domestic use. These contained single houses intermittently spaced, and some double houses were built The Courthouse Square area became a principal residential section through the late 1800's. Major development also occurred on Green Street, Liberty Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Smaller extensions of home building followed on Bond, John, Carroll and Union Streets.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6.

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The architecture of the mid-1800s did not depart much from the earlier forms, but there is a broadening of style evident in the houses, and the introduction of some new forms. Ell shapes and porches are more frequent and ornament becomes much more important. For example, 13 John Street, built around 1875, continues the pattern begun 50 years earlier at the Jacob Sherman House. The John Street house is, like the Sherman House, ell-shaped, three bays wide, two and one-half stories tall and is laid in Flemish bond on the front and American common bond on the sides and rear. Only a slight elongation of the windows and a general overall increase in mass would enable one to discern the generations' difference between the two. The same is true of 55 Liberty Street (c. 1870), 16 Bond Street (c. 1875) and 36 Liberty Street (c 1875) all of which are heavier in massing and larger in scale than the Shellman House or the Sherman Houses, and all of which depend on porches and bracketed cornices for visual relief. Also, the full third story is more commonly found on houses and businesses, especially on three-bay, brick structures as in 233, 100, 101, and 105 East Main Street; 140 and 152 West Main Street; and 30 and 34 Green Street.

The single pitch roof became popular, as a domestic form as well as for business establishments. 32 Bond Street is a good example of the style. The three bay wide main facade is of stretcher bond with brick, rounded arches over the windows. The doorway is to one side, establishing a hall and parlor floor plan. The most conspicuous element of this form is the upper cornice and trim, which in this example repeats the brackets from the frontispiece and uses applied wood entablatures under the bracket cornice. The chimney is within the wall to the opposite side of the doorway. This style was often employed in rows of buildings. Examples of this are 28-30 West Main Street and three five-bay buildings alongside each other at 58½-60½, 62-64, and 66-68 West Main Street. Double houses of six bays using the single pitch roof are located at 39-41, 43-45, and 47-49 John Street. Also on John Street are two houses that combine the single pitch roof with a mansard-style facade (21 and 23 John Street). 229 East Main Street is an example of the single pitched roof in a wood frame clapboard house.

The Greek and Gothic Revivals in American architecture had a limited but clear influence on the Westminster streetscape. The Gothic Revival in particular and as elsewhere was favored for ecclesiastical architecture. Westminster successfully employs Gothic design as early as the 1840s when Robert Cary Long, Jr., designed the Ascension Episcopal Church (1844) on Court Street.

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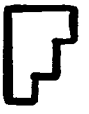
(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The Episcopal complex was later expanded by a Gothic inspired rectory at 35 Court Place (1876) and a small chapel at 30 North Court Street (c. 1870). Both of these later buildings have enjoyed successful adaptations in use: the Rectory row houses law offices and the Chapel is a private residence. The Lutheran and Methodists also made successful forays into Gothicism. Lutherans came to Westminster with the earliest German settlers but they did not build a separate church until 1866 when they located at 25 Carroll Street. That church burned, but the congregation rebuilt a fine Gothic church on the same lot in 1885. This building ranks as one of the eclectic beauties of the city and abounds in decorative brickwork details. The Brethern and United Church of Christ congregations built somewhat more restrained Gothic churches that flank Belle Grove Square on Bond Street.

There is also one house, 156 West Main Street, that appears to be a local interpretation of the Greek Revival style built during the mid-1800s. It is of board and batten construction and has an octagonal cupola. A significant feature in the Westminster streetscape is the mansard roof. Sometimes the mansard roof was added to earlier buildings, as at 295 East Main Street. Houses that were built with mansard or hipped roofs are 133 East Main Street, 100 Liberty Street, 154 Green Street, and 53 Pennsylvania Avenue. Another example is 181 East Main Street where the mansard roof contains extravagant Victorian-style dormers that are curiously juxtaposed with the neon signs and pent roof below.

Another popular style in the mid to late 19th century is the ell-shaped house with the gable end of the ell as part of the main facade. This form usually includes a porch as part of the main facade, and often the gable end contains window variations such as bay windows. The decorative potential inherent in this form is evident. Westminster homes show a variety of craftsmanship in the porch trim and bargeboard ornamentation. 289 East Main Street displays the basic characteristics of the form, with the two story bay windows in the gable end and the porch with a bracket cornice and pendant trim. 46 Liberty Street has an ell-shaped porch which extends around the side opposite the gable ell. This house also has a doorway on the second floor above the main doorway which opens onto the porch roof. 146 West Main Street shows the gable end with a regular two-bay arrangement of windows and a bargeboard pattern which is repeated on the porch cornice. The apotheosis of this form in Westminster is 109 East Main Street where the ell shape is extended to form a floor plan in this shape:  which is appropriately ornamented.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #8.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The trim of these houses often contains a rural flavor, a rural craftsman's interpretation of the current style. Yet it is the diversity of ornamental details that brings to each building its unique character and contributes in an outstanding way to Westminster's identity. The wealth of decorative details is found in both the brickwork and the applied wood ornamentation. In the woodwork the Courthouse volute has already been mentioned, and other areas are the bargeboard and designs of porch trim. Brickwork is evident in the cornices: mousetooth in the Sherman House, Greek crosses at 15 Carroll Street and 259 East Main Street and Latin crosses at 80 West Main Street. 107 Liberty Street uses glazed headers in Flemish bond on the main facade and has a stepped brick cornice. The culmination of Westminster brickwork is 47 East Main Street where the brick facade contains an assortment of patterns.

The esteem of ornament in the Westminster streetscape provided for a smooth evolution to the Victorian period. As in other eras, the prevalent public taste dictated the updating of trim on the older buildings. Many of the early forms and styles were adapted to incorporate Victorian motifs in new buildings. In Westminster, the new features include rounded towers, central high-peaked gables, and broad porches with a new flourish of decoration. Ornamental effects were also attained by innovative uses of shingles on both roofs and walls. 55 Pennsylvania Avenue (c. 1895), 53 Pennsylvania Avenue (c. 1880) and 21 Park Avenue illustrate how eagerly the city's builders adapted these "innovations" to embellish their basic five or three bay ell-shaped houses.

The transformation of architecture in Westminster to a style influenced by the Victorian period is depicted by a comparison on the houses at 97 West Green Street and 179 East Main Street. Prospect Hill, at 97 West Green Street, was built in the 1850s and is two and one-half stories , five by two bays of stretcher bond with a central wing in the rear. The main facade has a central doorway and 6/6 windows with brick, flat arch lintels and gold-painted architraves and blinds in the other bays. Centrally located on this facade is a gable containing a wood quatrefoil window embellished by a surrounding circle of bricks. The eaves have a bracket, dentil and molded cornice. There is an inside end double chimney at each gable end and these facades have two windows spread wide apart on each floor. The distance between these windows and the wide flare of the gables at the ends and in the front give the house a very low profile. This is accentuated by a

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #9.

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

high-roofed porch around three sides of the house and by the central bay on the main facade which is offset by a wider margin of space separating it from the other bays. All of these features combine to give the house a short, squat appearance. Not far from Prospect Hill is 179 East Main Street, a house of similar design. Five bays by two bays and laid in stretcher bond, this house repeats the central gable on the main facade, the sharp contrast of the painted trim to the surface of the house, the 6/6 windows and blinds, and the porch extension. However, this house is three and one-half stories high, in the gable. The slimmer proportion of 197 East Main Street gives an effect of soaring verticality in comparison with Prospect Hill. Minor differences, as in the bracket details of the cornice and window lintels, indicate 197 East Main Street as a later house. This comparison displays the continuation as well as the variations in form and detail as the 19th century progressed.

A Victorian domestic dwelling of note is located at 33 West Main Street. Two and one-half stories and Flemish bond brick on a high foundation, it is L-shaped with an inside end chimney in the west gable. The five-bay main facade had double doors in the central bay on the main floor and on the second floor the central bay has a double sash window with a pattern of small, square, stained glass panes. The east side of the main facade has 6/6 sash windows in both bays on both floors; however, the west side has a three-sided bay window extending for two floors. This bay window is repeated in the second bay of the west gable end of the house. The bay windows have colored glass patterns similar to those in the second floor central bay. The east gable has a central oriel window in the upper one and one-half floors with similar colored glass windows. The one-story porch extends across the house front, the west gable and along part of the ell. It is lavisly ornamented with a pattern of Oriental influence supporting the bannister, broad brackets supporting the lattice, smaller scroll brackets at the molded cornice, and a row of iron motifs along the porch roof. The roof cornice consists of a large wood entablature, with brackets and dentils under the eaves. All of the trim is painted in strong contrast to the painted brick. The eclectic procedure with which the Victorian-style architecture was formulated produced in 33 West Main Street an unbalanced, somewhat bulky, yet lively building.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #10

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The Victorian period also influenced the commercial buildings in the downtown area, such as the Babylon Building and the Wantz Buildings. The Babylon Building uses polychrome bricks (yellow and red) within an imposing form of large arches with inset windows. The Wantz Building is a three-story structure whose facade is divided into the upper two floors showing the original styling of the building. On the second and third floors each section contains a close grouping of windows with white trim and millions of ornamental brackets. The two eastern sections have four windows in each grouping, and the two western sections have three windows. The third floor windows' upper sash have leaded, stained glass windows. Between the second and third floor windows is a frieze of naturalistic motifs in a brick texture. Above the third floor windows are iron plates reading, "WANTZ BUILDINGS." The roofline is curved and tile-covered, with large bulb finials.

Westminster remained a small town through the 19th century and the need for open space was always satisfied by the rural countryside setting. The town plan acknowledged this by not setting aside a "commons" central to the plat. However, the need for common space has grown, especially since the familiar walkway "Gooseberry Lane" was claimed by the Western Maryland Railway Company for its track bed (1862) and the "Old Commons" was given over to the establishment of Western Maryland College (1867). In 1877, Belle Grove Square was donated to the city and is presently being restored by the local Woman's Club. Belle Grove Square and the municipal playground fulfill the open space requirement for the city today.

The culmination of the development along Main Street in Westminster is Western Maryland College. The land once served as the commons for Westminster residents where political rallys, July Fourth, celebrations and other outdoor events took place. During the Civil War Union troops camped on the grounds. This section of Western Maryland College displays the oldest campus buildings, examples of revival architecture commonly popular in the late 19th century (separate National Register nomination). Less expensive residential building took place on the east end of town on the former Fair Grounds. Subdivided and annexed into the city in the late 19th century, "Evenhart's addition," "Fingling's Addition" fleshed out the Westminster street system to the northeast, while "Mitten's Addition" did the same to the southeast. The former additions are bounded by Manchester Road, Colonial Avenue, and East Main Street, are bisected by Webster Street, and are characterized by modest one and one half and two story frame houses.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

These small, gable roofed dwellings are distinctly rural vernacular in style and rely on modest trim and porches for variety. Note for example 39 Webster Street, a pleasant small scaled two story, two bay gable roofed house whose ambitions are reserved for the well carved brackets on the front porch. The continuation of West Green Street from Belle Grove Square to Old New Windsor Road (Doyle Avenue) and for the streets that run parallel (Westmoreland and Chase) and perpendicular (Anchor and Maryland) are also characterized by modest residences that date from the early to mid-20th century. These dwellings are not intrusive; on the contrary they contribute to the continuation of Westminster's vernacular experiments into this century and create in the city a two century long continum of vernacular styles. But the 20th century houses of Westminster are not all modest, vernacular structures. Westminster experienced, albiet in a restrained limited way, several of the more academic nationally popular styles. These "experiments" in domestic design tend to be found in the middle and upper middle class additions to the city to the north (along Willis Street) and west (along Ridge and Doyle Avenues). Note for example the bungalow style at 121 Willis Street and 7 Ridge Avenue, the Georgian Revival at 145 and 174 Willis Street and 7 Doyle Avenue and the shingle style at 131 Willis Street. Nationally popular styles are successfully used in non-residential design as well. The builders of the City Garage at 116-120 East Main Street employed a form of Romanesque Revival, the Maryland National Guard favored the castelated form then gaining favor for armory design for the Westminster Armory on Longwell Avenue (1917), theatre owners employed Art Deco at the Carroll Theater on West Main Street (c.1935) with its yellow and black glazed tiles. Possibly the most advanced structure in the city is the Bauhaus influenced factory at 22 Locust Street (c.1945).

Some of the 20th century building has blended well with Westminster's streetscape. The main intrusions are the aluminum siding facades that were constructed over some of the downtown shops during the 1960s. Another economic group that has built with total disregard for the architectural environment of Westminster is the local banks. However, these structures are scattered along a streetscape with much potential to reflect the social and cultural heritage of the community.

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[1] see Henry Glassie, Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #12.

CARR-152

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

ACREAGE JUSTIFICATION

Several factors contributed to the selection of boundaries of the Westminster National Register Historic District as a result of a two-year, intensive historic sites survey. First, Westminster historically has a conception of self-identity which was defined physically through a series of town plans which date from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century and were filled in and developed by the mid-20th century. The architectural fabric of the town retains its integrity reflecting the evolutionary development. The topography and physical features further support the boundaries. Westminster is located on rolling terrain terminated at its ends by promontories which provide a physical termination of the district as well as panoramic views inward.

A review of the sketch map may raise questions on the choice of boundaries. A building by building analysis of the contribution of individual components to the whole further supports the choice of boundaries. This was not the sole criteria, however. In making decisions on boundaries along major transportation routes where buildings of similar style continue beyond the city limits other considerations (see above) took precedence over stylistic considerations. Secondly the city limits, since the 19th century have arbitrarily delineated the city-county division sometimes cutting through buildings. ~~The idiosyncratic nature of the city limits contributes to the significance of Westminster,~~ the city limits provided a starting point for the historic district boundaries. However, as a practical matter, the National Register district either includes or excludes individual structures.

The boundaries were drawn so as to exclude intrusions and the campus of Western Maryland College which is listed separately on the National Register. The sketch map indicates the location and contribution of the principal structures, not of secondary structures particularly located along alleys.

partial sentence omitted
via telephone conversation
EJG & RLA, 24 July 80

8. Significance

CARR-152

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	X religion	
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science	
___ 1500–1599	X agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture	
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	X education	___ military	X social/ humanitarian	
X 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
X 1800–1899	X commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	X transportation	
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	X politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Westminster Historic District incorporates most of the town of Westminster, a community of about 8500 population in Carroll County on the Piedmont plateau of west central Maryland. As the county seat, Westminster is and has been the political, financial, and commercial center of Carroll County since the county was established in 1837. The district reflects both this role and the evolution and development of the town and contains excellent examples of vernacular and formal residential, commercial and ecclesiastical architecture through the 19th century and into the early 20th century.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

William Winchester laid out Westminster in 1764 and the area, then in Frederick County, continued its growth in a fashion typical of towns in central Maryland. Settlers prior to Winchester were mainly farmers who left the tidewater region of Maryland for the rich land of the Piedmont plateau. The first settler in the immediate Westminster vicinity was Joseph White who established a farm in 1733 on a land patent called "White's Level" granted in 1738. From White, Winchester bought the tract "White's Level" in 1754 and ten years later mapped out the town (Frederick County Land Records liber 472). At that time, Westminster was a nucleated village of a few scattered farms, but it was situated on a road that was to become a major highway in the westward movement of settlers. Winchester's plat provided forty-five lots along this single road with side streets that were alleys.

The degree of later development was influenced by elements characteristic of other slowly burgeoning towns, i.e., water, terrain, economic propensities, and land speculation. In 1764, White purchased "Timber Ridge," the tract on the west boundary of "White's Level" and drew a plat for the development of this land in 1765, naming it "New London" and thus enacting the first addition to Westminster. Winchester added eighty-three lots south of his original plat in 1788, but most of the major development of Westminster came along the main road to the west--"Bedford" in 1812 by John Winters and Logsdon's Tavern Land in 1825 sold in lots at an estate auction. In 1830, these villages were incorporated into one town with a "space between"--"Bond's Meadow" a tract that had been willed by its owner, Ragenia Gradadam, to her Negro slave in 1812.[1]

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #13

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

The earliest buildings were log houses which were expanded or replaced when time and money allowed. The early architecture of the town was a mixture of wood frame and brick houses, all possessing basically similar characteristics--two-and-one-half stories; three to six bays wide, gable end chimneys, floor plans of hall and parlor or central hall arrangement; and symmetrical placement of openings in the facade.

In 1836 the State of Maryland elected to provide a new county for the convenience of the citizens in the extreme regions of Frederick and Baltimore Counties and named it in honor of the recently deceased Charles Carroll. Westminster, being centrally located in this new division, was chosen the county seat. This event generated new activity in the town and an influx of new residents. The history of this period displays the coming together of the common people to unite in the enthusiasm of self-rule, an expression of Jacksonian democracy. The effect was a new vitality to the streetscape, but one which retained the characteristics of a country town influenced by its turnpike location.

The changes in the streetscape were mainly the construction of new and larger domestic houses and several hotels which used the same basic style of design as the houses. The architecture continued the same themes of the earlier building, especially in the symmetrical organization. Changes included the addition of a third story, the central doorway was more commonly found, and in a few instances there is a central chimney. Ornamentation becomes more significant, utilizing a variety of wood and brick patterns. Popular forms included the single pitch roof and the L-shaped house with the gable end facing the street.

The tranquility of Westminster was jolted by the conflict of the War Between the States. Maryland being a border state, the issues were hotly contested and sharply divided the citizenry. Confederate forces entered the town on two instances: the first was a raid by the Fifth Virginia Regiment under Colonel Rosser on September 11, 1862; and on June 29, 1863, J.E.B. Stuart, en route to meet General Robert E. Lee at Gettysburg, was attacked by the 1st Delaware Cavalry on the Main Street of Westminster, delaying Stuart's advance by almost a day. Westminster, because of its train depot and facilities, served as a major supply base for the Union Army.[2]

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #14.

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

The railroad line, an extension of the Western Railway Company, was built by public subscription in 1861 and had the largest effect on the development of Westminster. This represents a prevalent transformation occurring throughout the American countryside, affecting not only the growth and physical terrain, but also the cultural and social mores and the everyday life of the population. The railroad as a force in the community brought together the leading citizens to financially support and operate the venture and the businessmen and farmers whose production would profit by the efficient and quick means of transport. The railroad effectuated an increase in the population by offering rebates to persons who moved and built homes within a short distance of the railway station. It was a dominant factor in the increasing prosperity of the town through the latter part of the 19th century, attracting business establishments to the downtown sector and contributing to the popularity of Westminster as a summer resort.

The Victorian influences on the architecture of the late 19th century coalesced mainly in ornamentation and architectural detail. Vernacular elements were retained with emphasis now placed on asymmetrical facades highlighted by towers, bay windows and large gable dormers. Mansard roofs were added to older buildings and used on new structures. Examples of trim include colored glass windows, lattice and woodturned members on porches, and ornamental uses of shingles. Westminster also has a few examples of the colorful Victorian businesses, especially in the Wantz Buildings and the Babylon Building.

The first complete Rural Free Delivery System in the United States was established in Carroll County by the Post Office Department on December 20, 1899 with Westminster chosen as the central distributing point.[3] An experimental system had been set up in the county in 1896 which proved successful and the "Carroll County Plan" was then instituted in other states. In 1899 a special U.S.Postal Wagon was designed and constructed in Westminster. Known as the "post office on wheels," it went through a several-month experimentation period and then was cancelled by the Post Office Department.

The visual environment of Westminster today provides tremendous resources for its citizens and for the historian. Portions of the sectionalized development of the city are relatively unchanged from an architectural point of view and present a variable feast of ornamention. The long, expansive Main Street contains well-coordinated

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #15.

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

proportions that are enhanced by residential side streets. The profusion of vernacular styles and ornamental details are intricately bound to the social and cultural growth of the agrarian heritage of Westminster.

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[1]Additional data on the founding of Westminster can be found in "The Five Villages That Became A Town," by Dr. Grace L. Tracey, published in Two Hundred Years Ago--Memories of Westminster 1764-1964, Westminster Bicentennial Commission, 1964.

[2]Frederick Shriver Klein has compiled a history describing Carroll County's role in the Civil War, see Just South of Gettysburg edited by Frederick Shriver Klein, The Civil War Centennial Committee of the Historical Society of Carroll County, Maryland, 1963.

[3]The November 1956 issue of the "Bulletin of the Historical Society of Carroll County, Maryland" (Vol. 3, No. 1) is devoted entirely to the history of Rural Free Delivery in Carroll County.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #16

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 235 acres ± Quadrangle scale 1:24000

Quadrangle name New Windsor and Westminster Quads.

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	328380	4383710
B	18	329720	4381160
C	18	329260	4380840
D	18	327590	4381250
E	18	328160	4383720
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

As delineated on the enclosed Photogrammetric map of Carroll County, Westminster area, which is drawn to scale (1":100').

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joseph Getty, Nancy A. Miller, Christopher Weeks

organization Maryland Historical Trust date June 1980

street & number 21 State Circle telephone (301) 269-2438

city or town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

12. 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J. Little 6-23-80

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

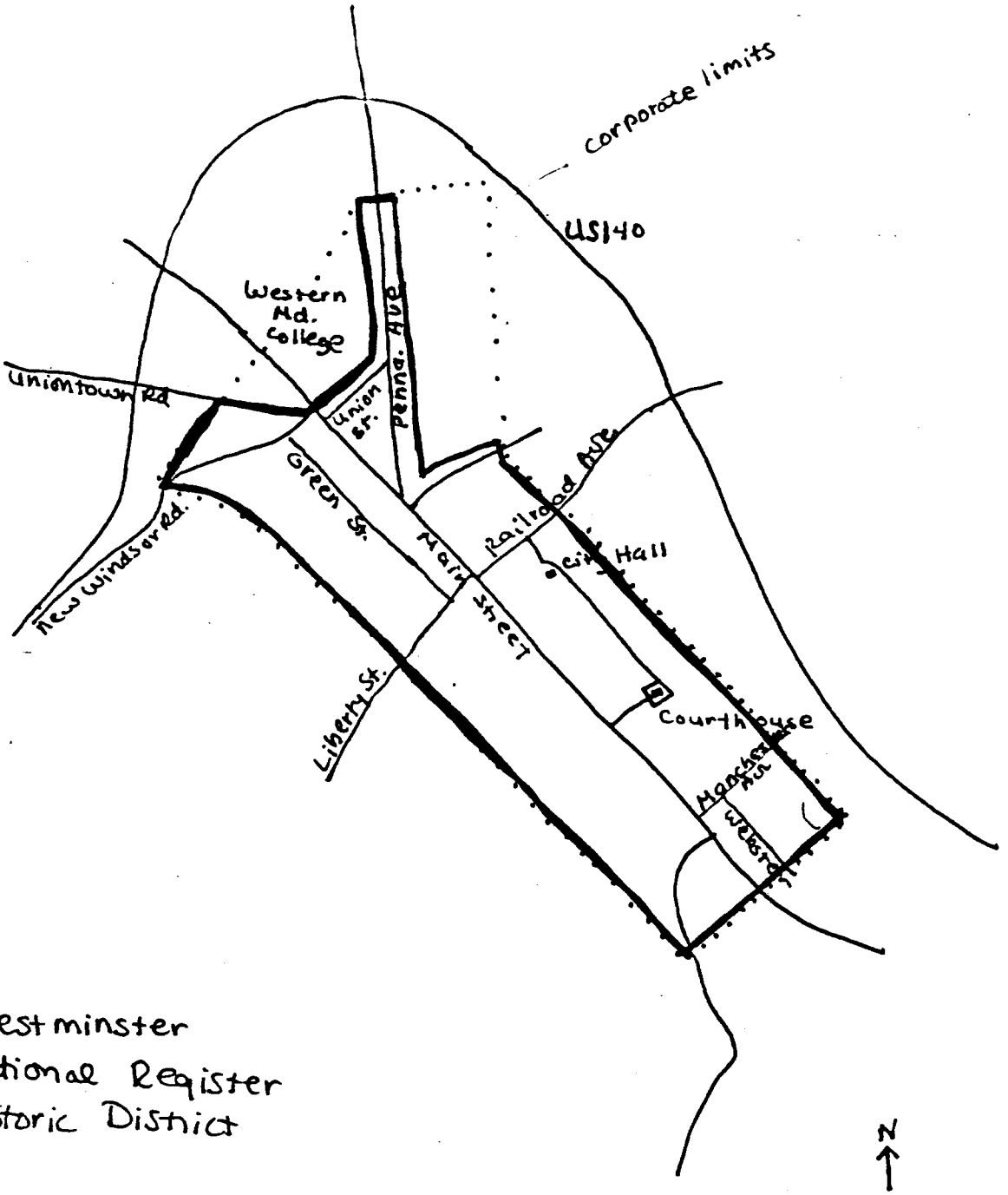
Keeper of the National Register

date

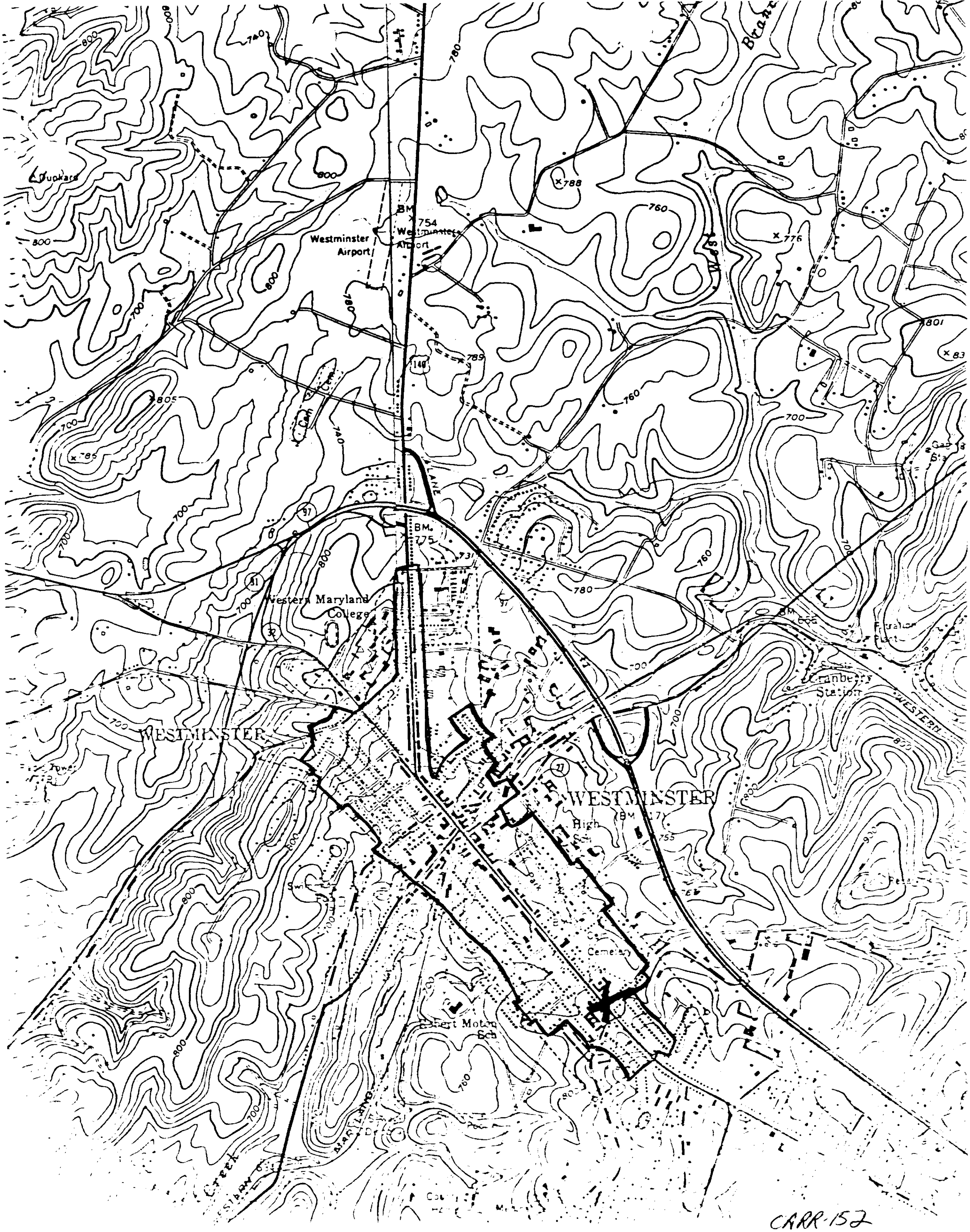
Attest:

Chief of Registration

GPO 938 835



Westminster
National Register
Historic District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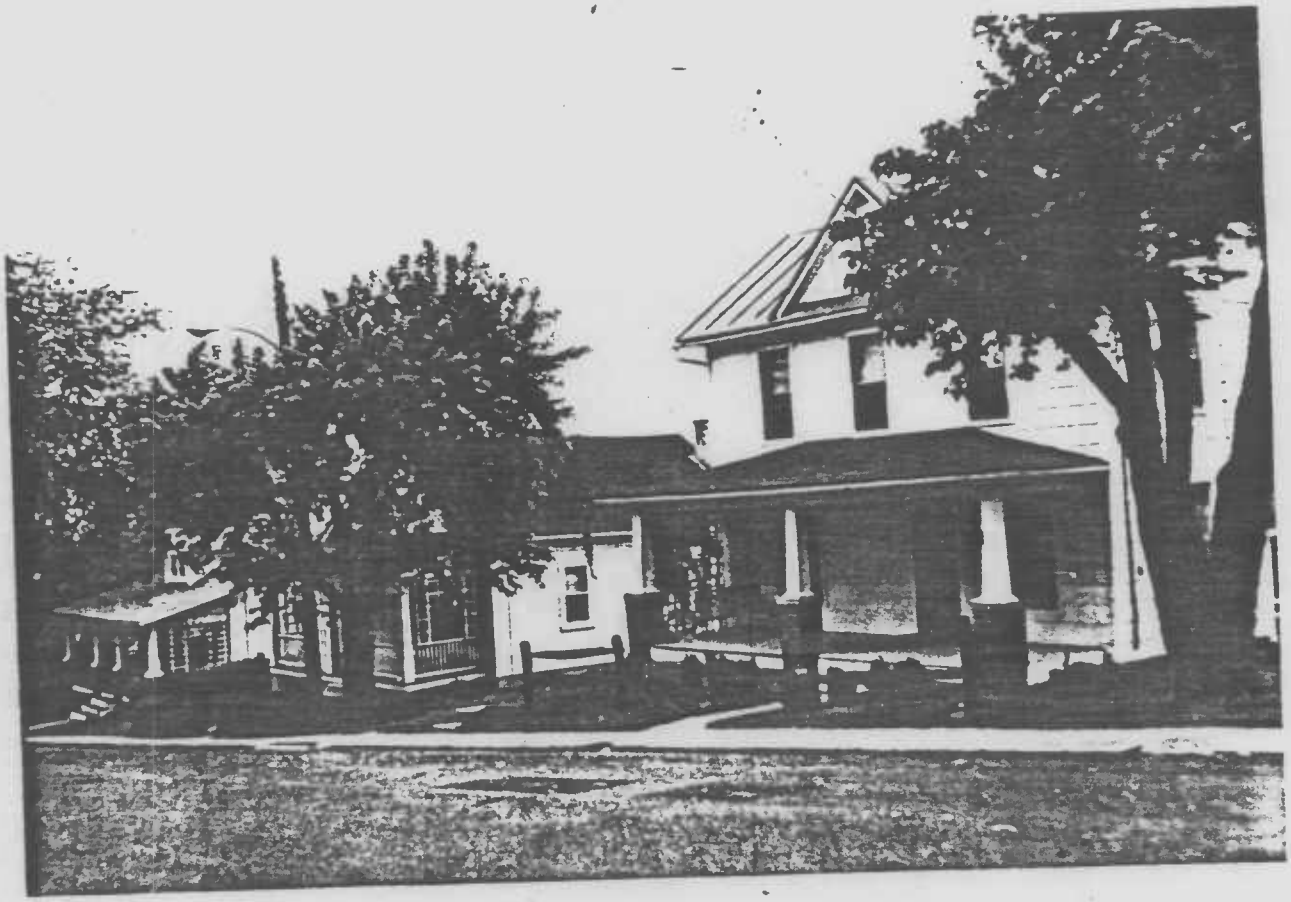

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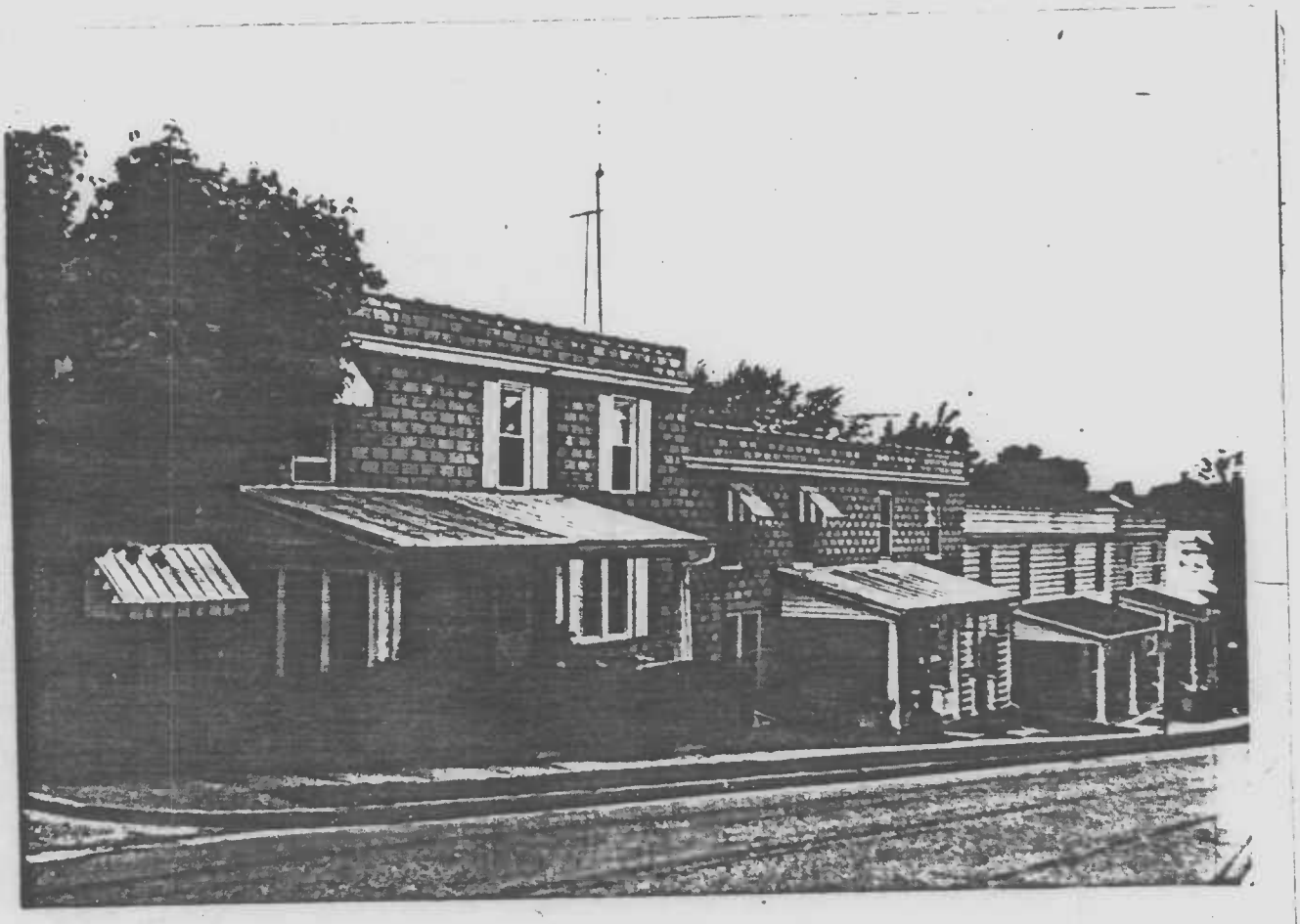

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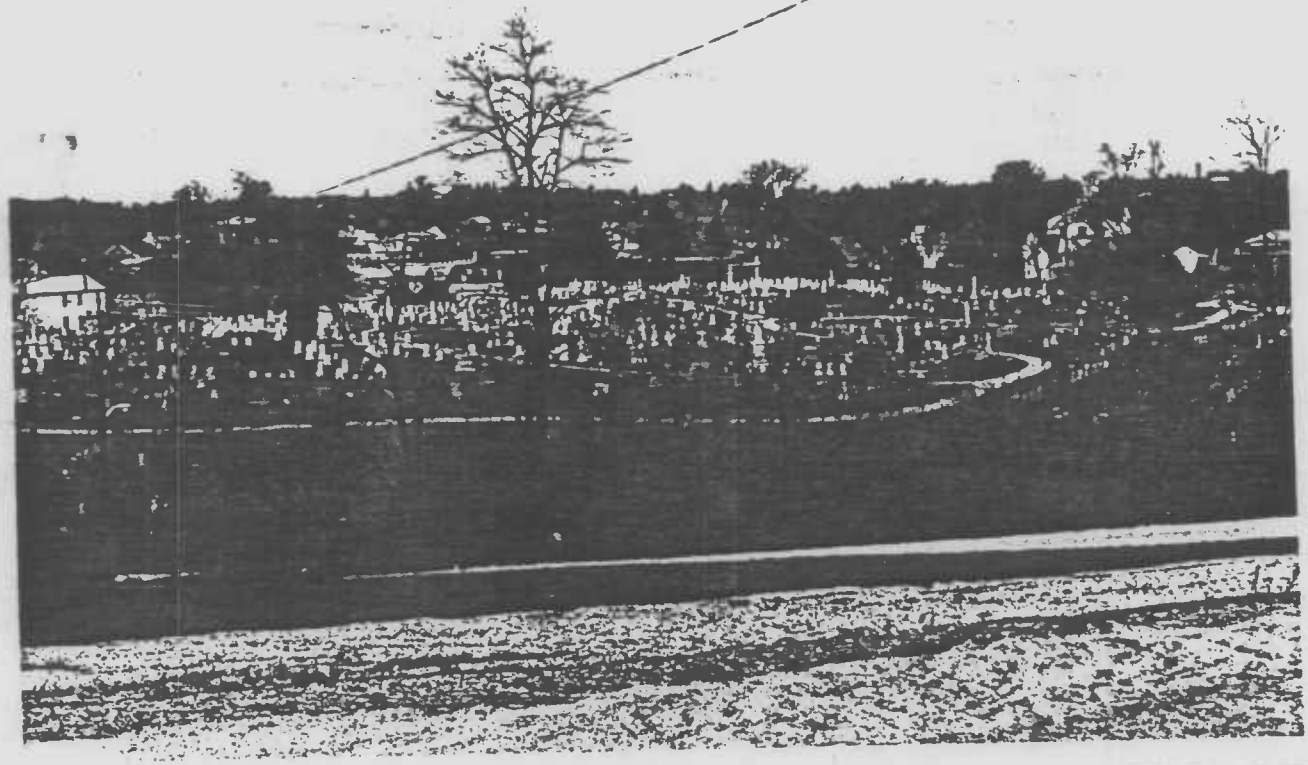

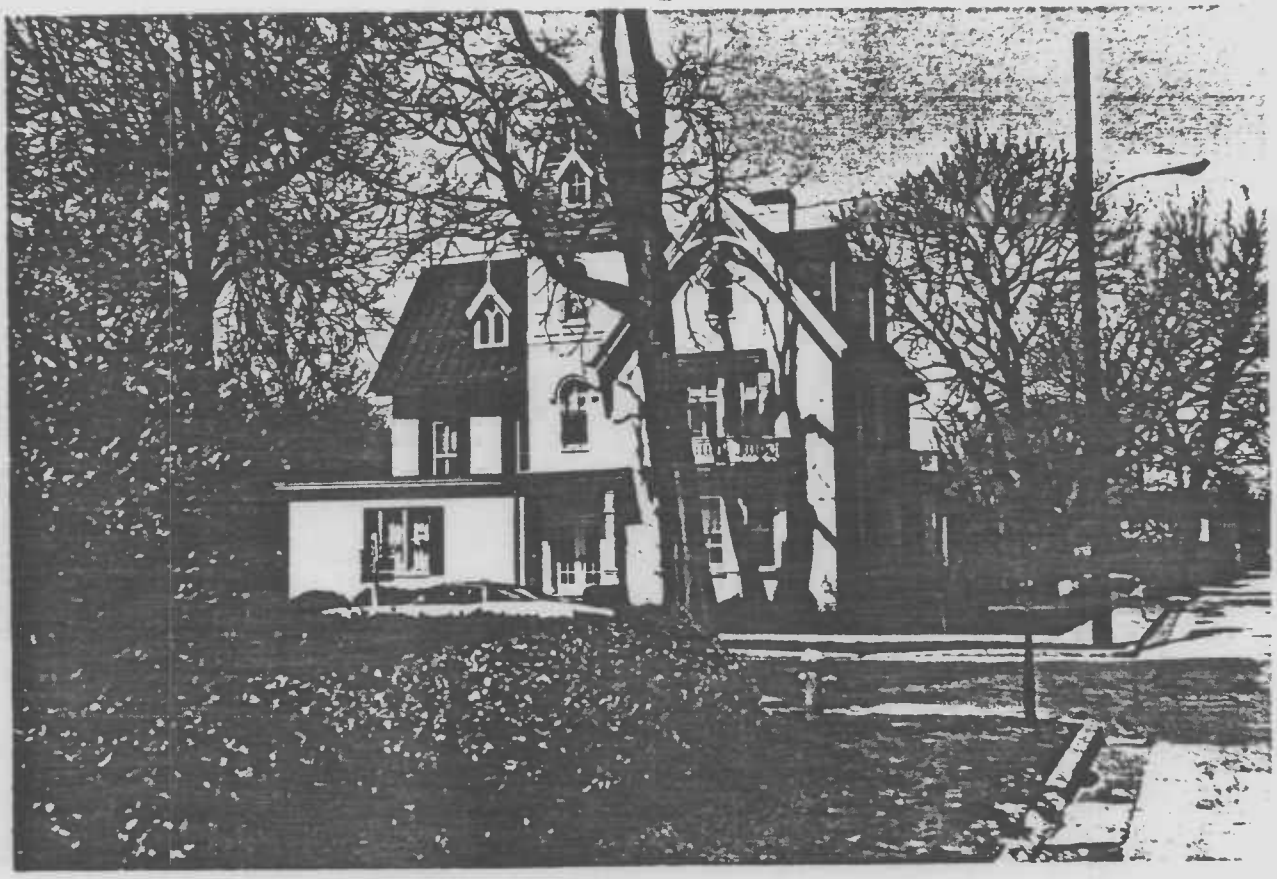

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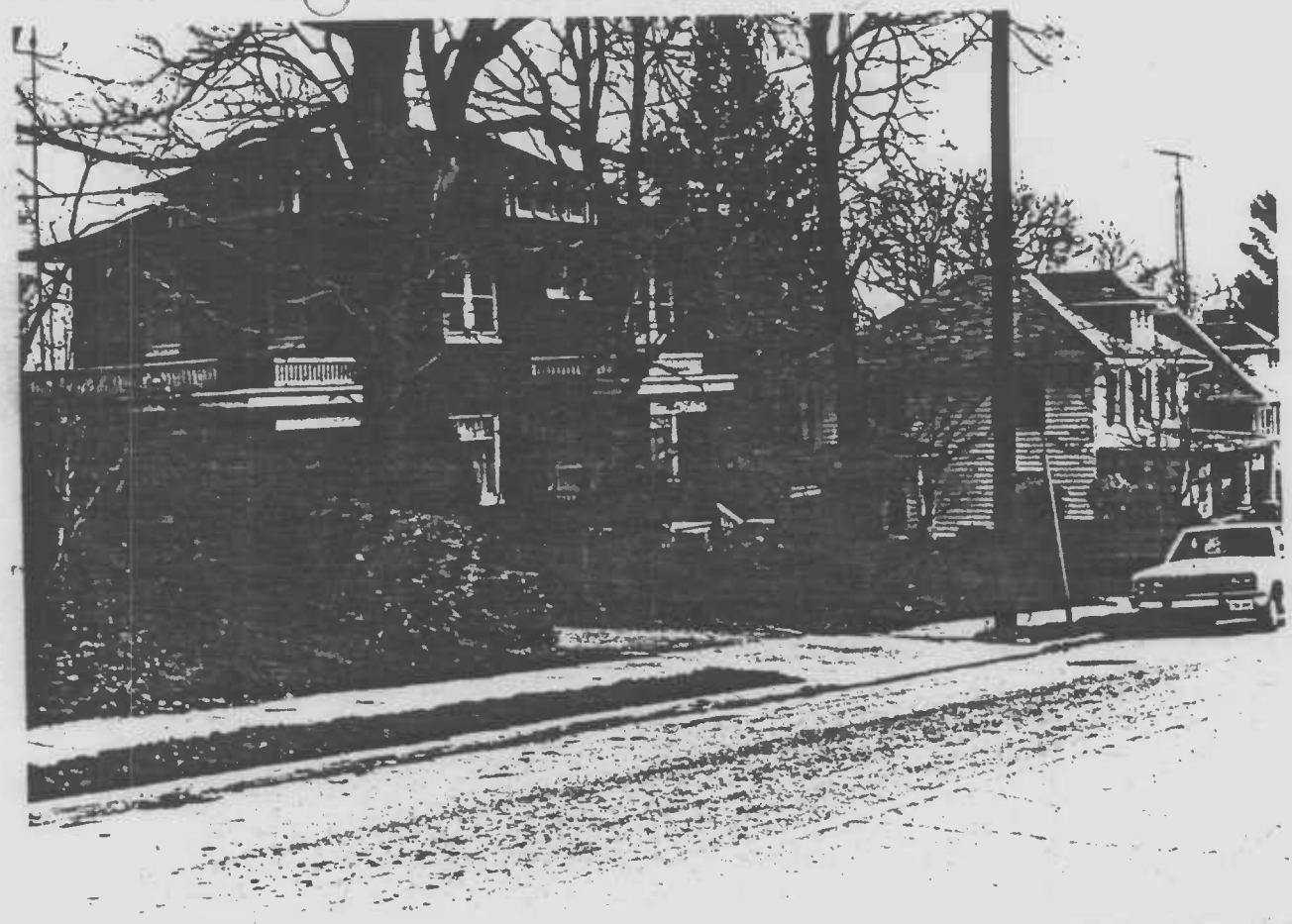

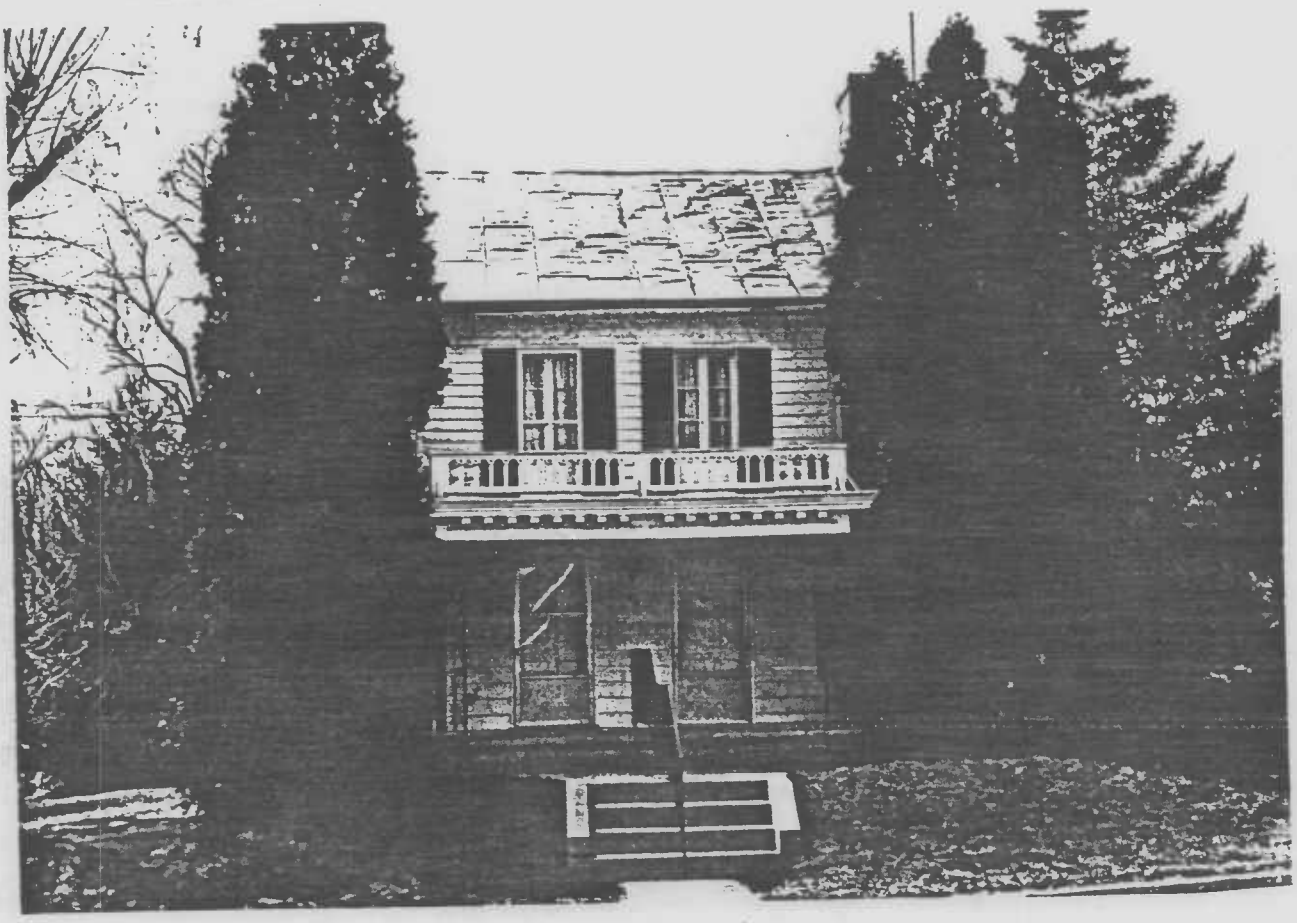

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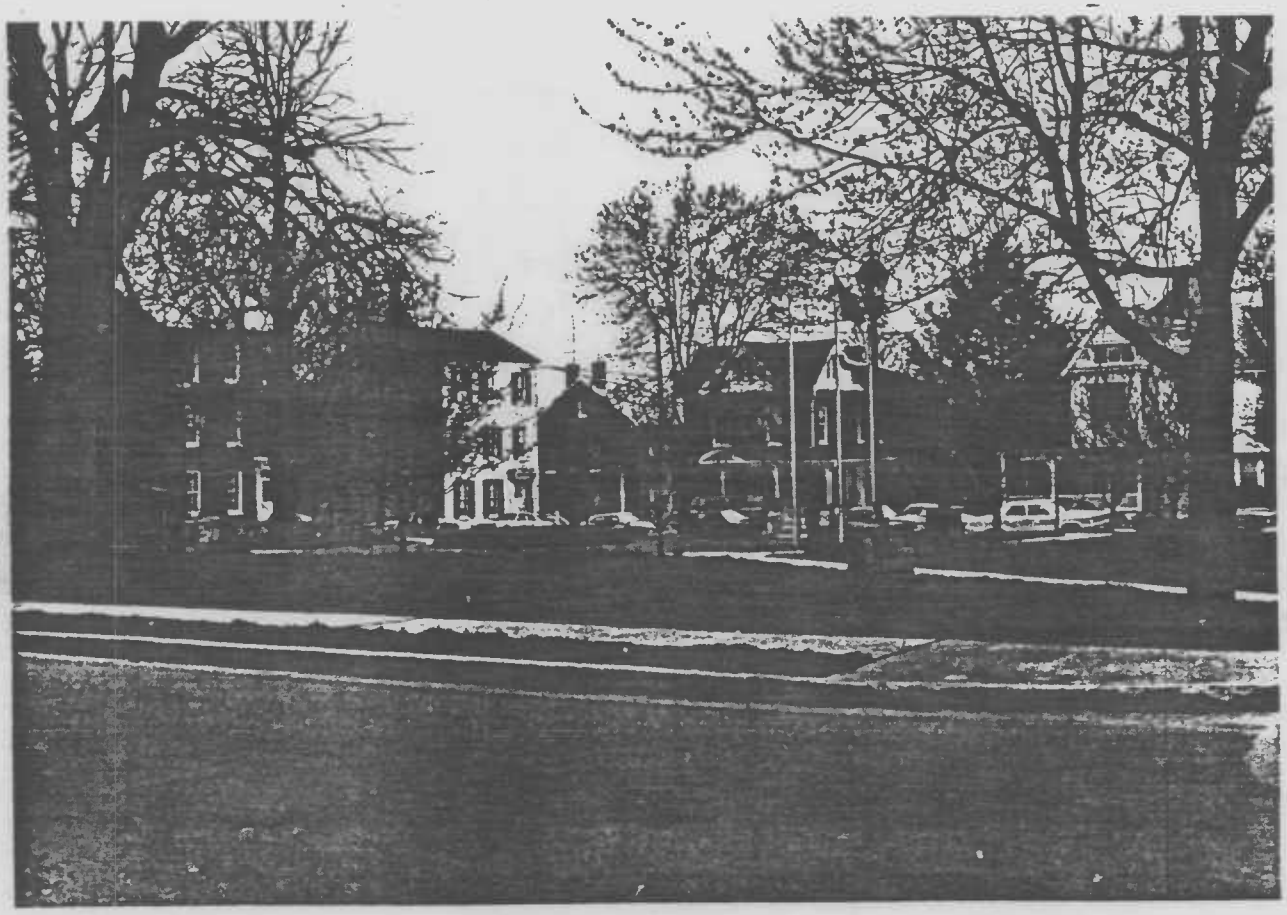

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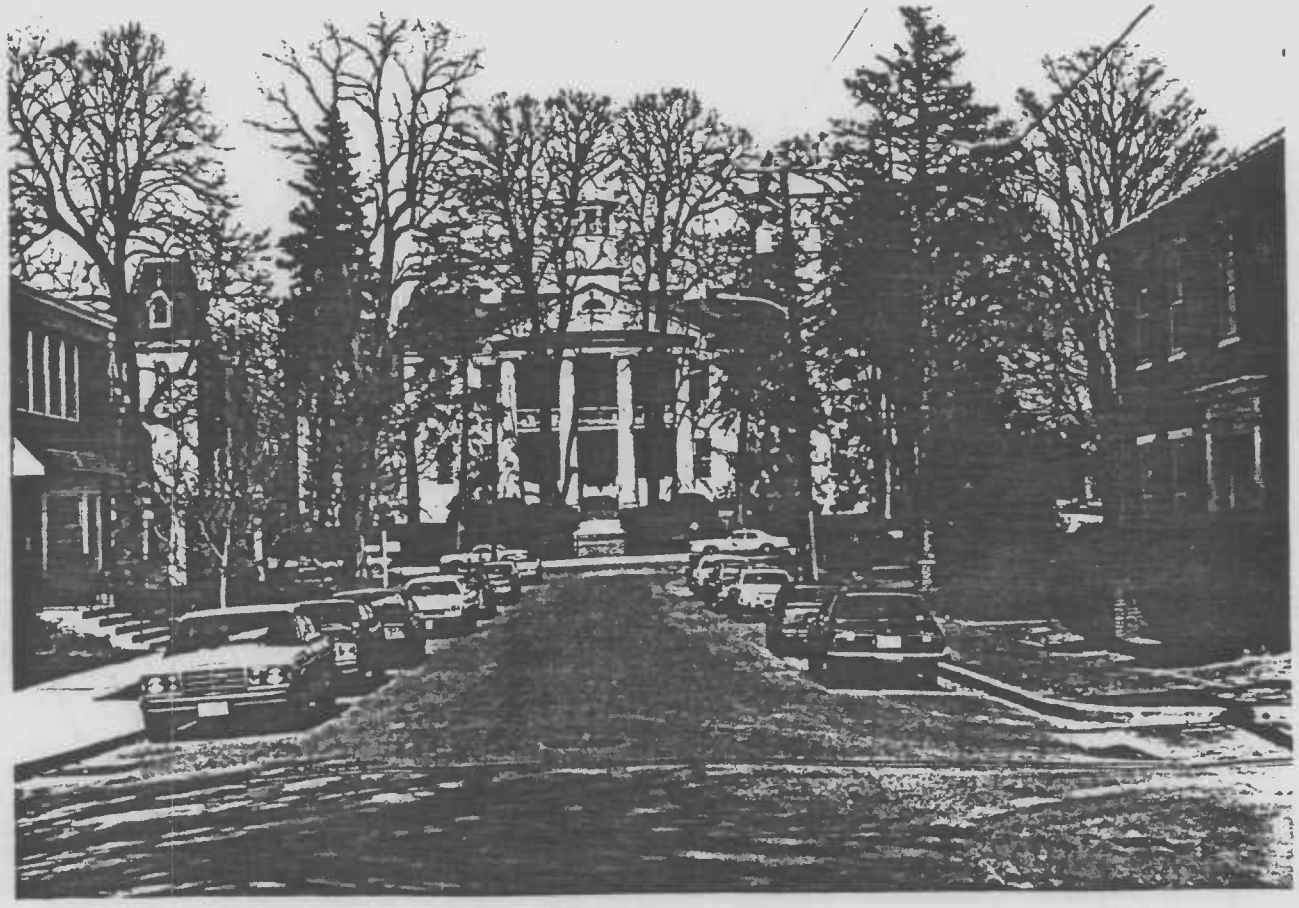

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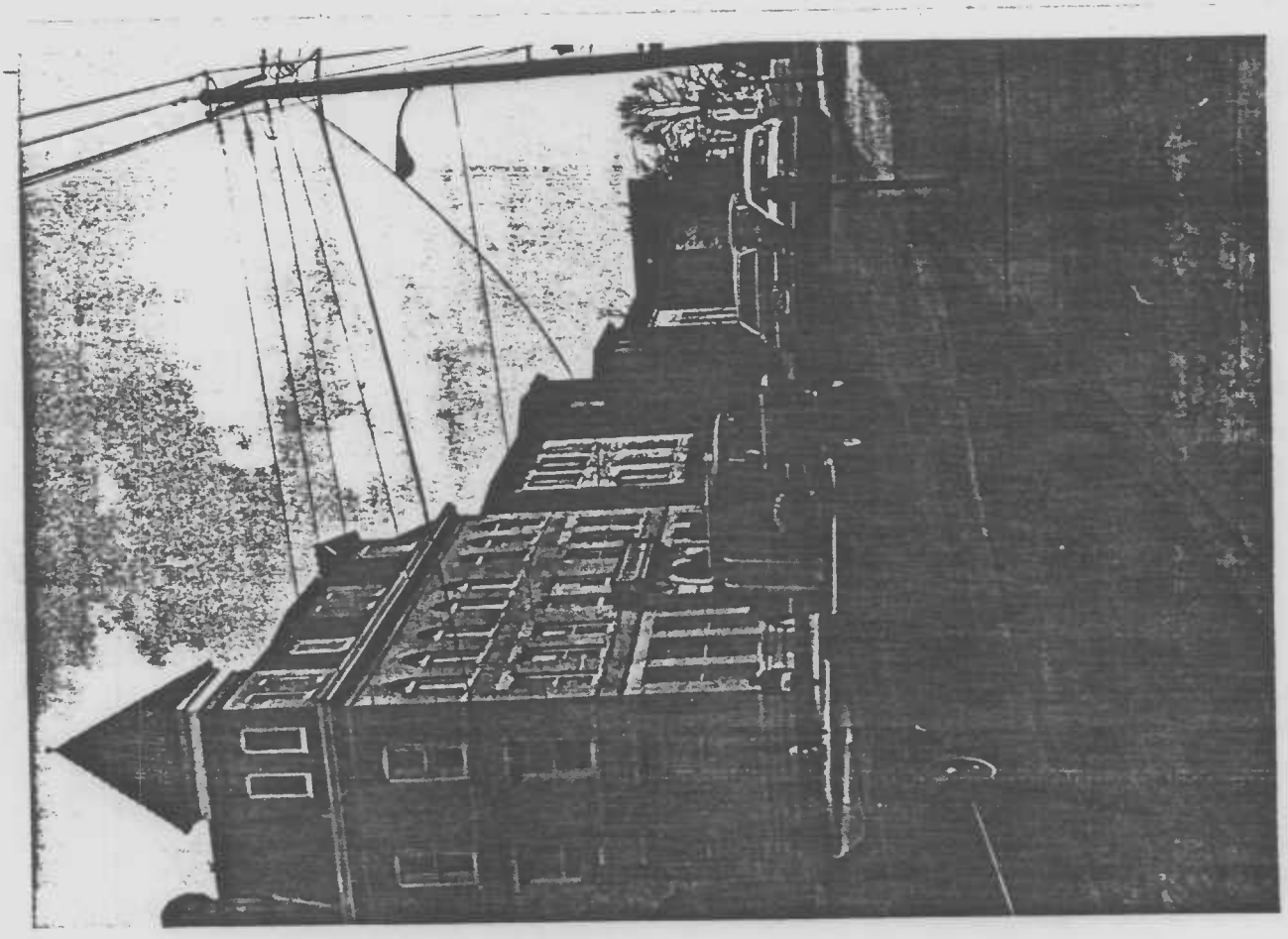

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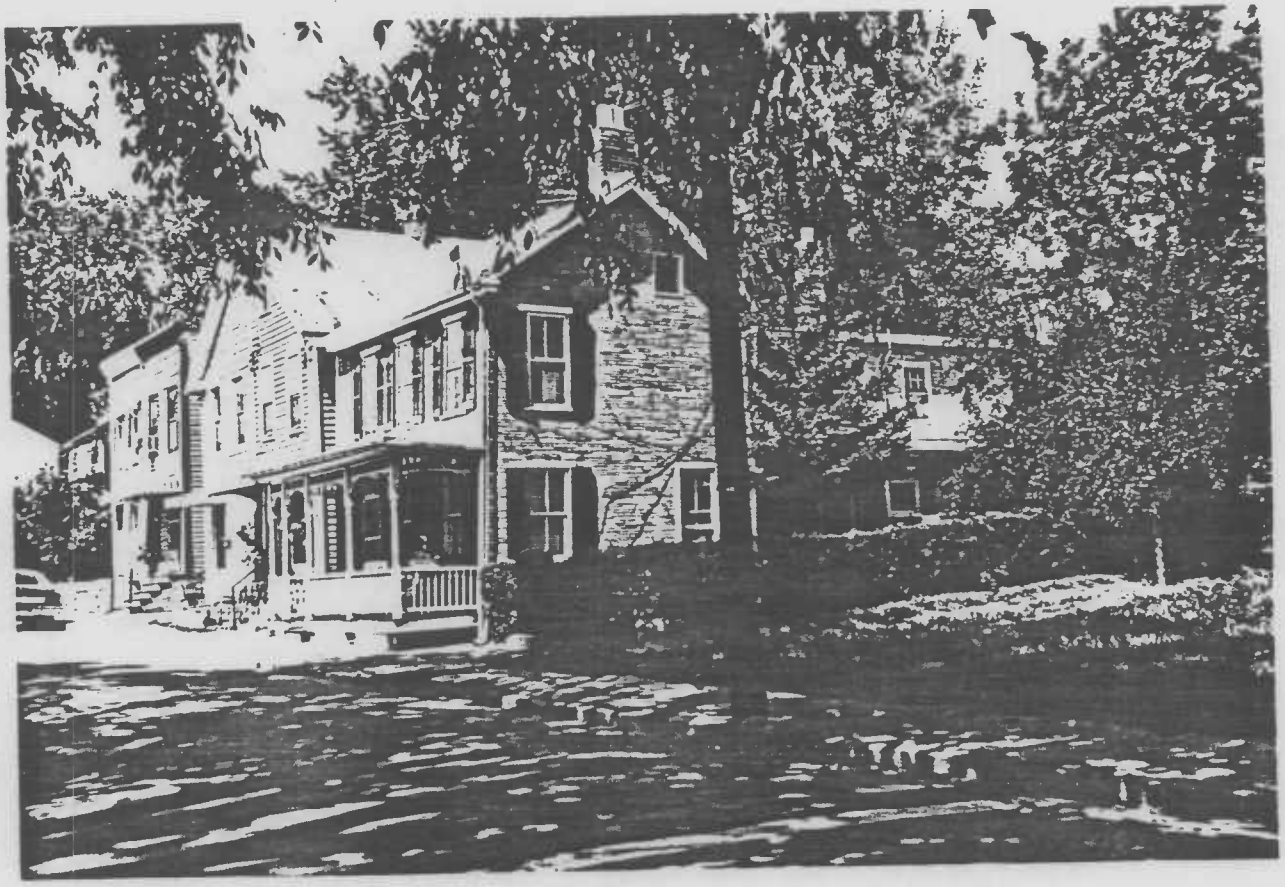

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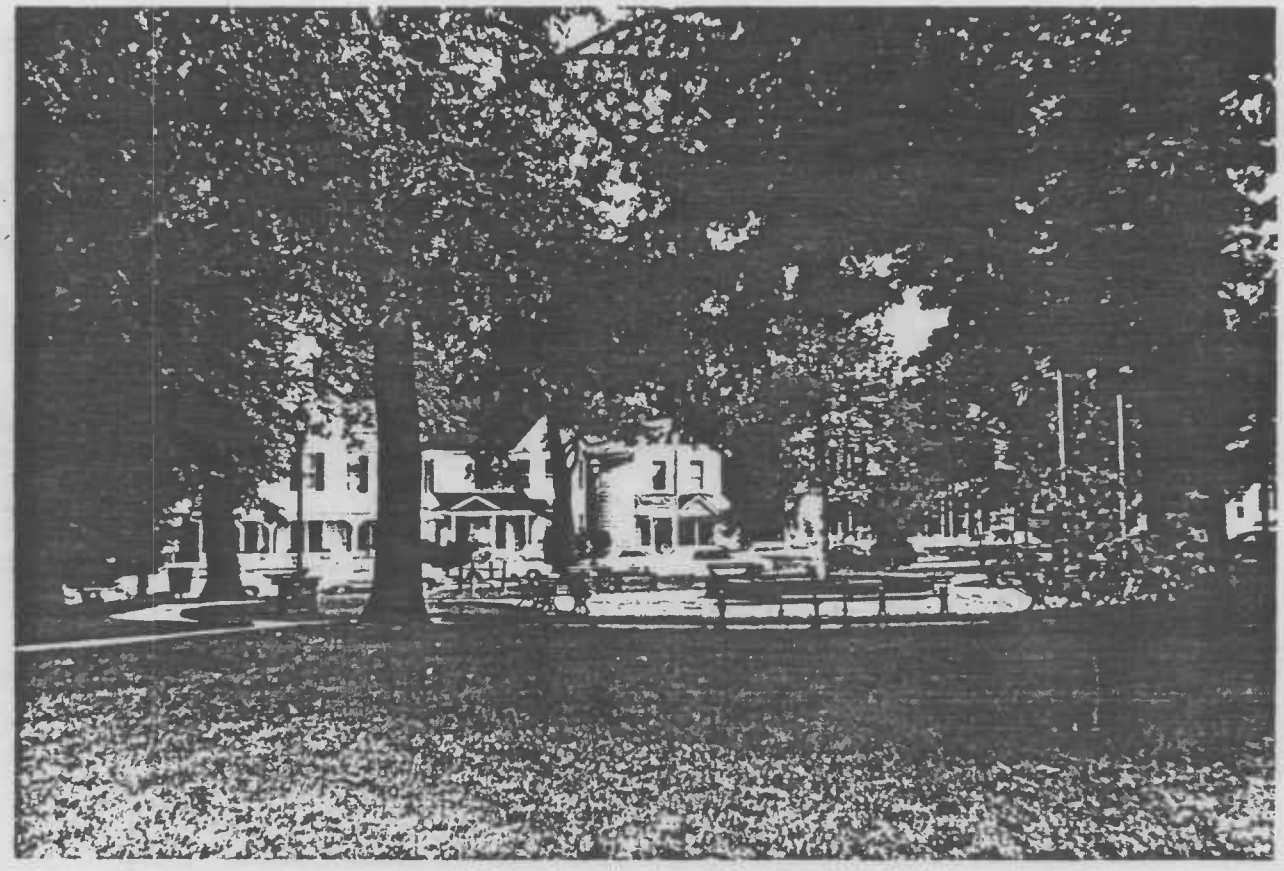

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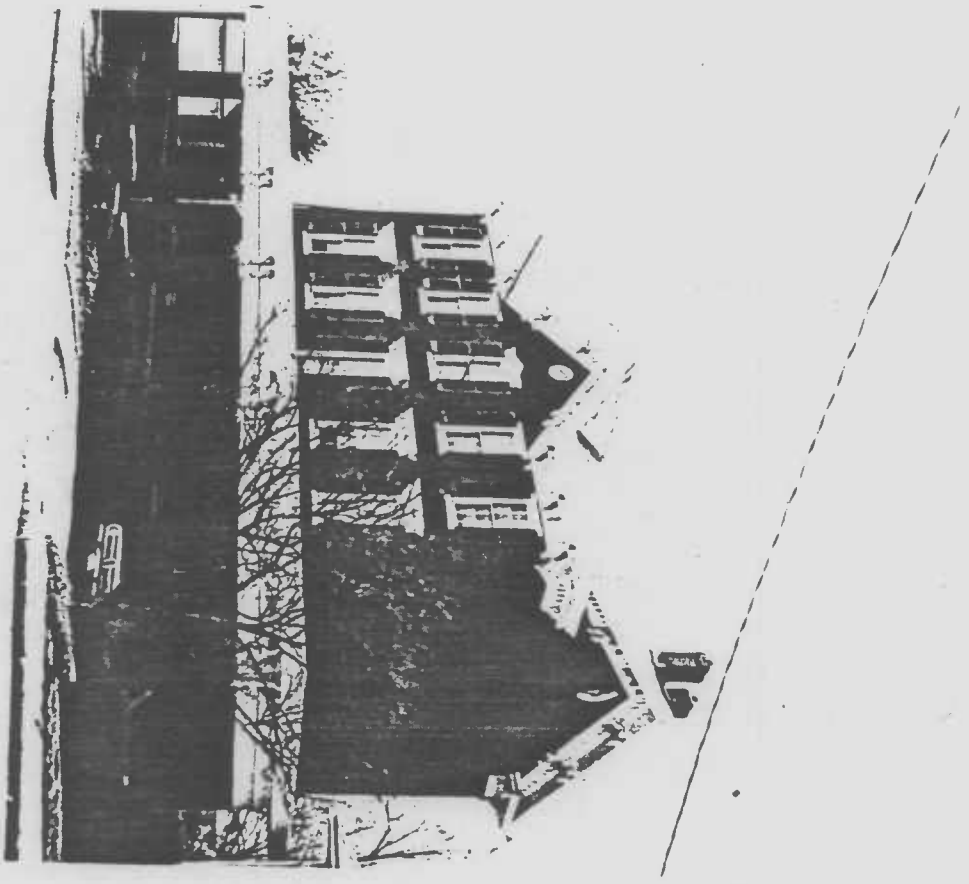

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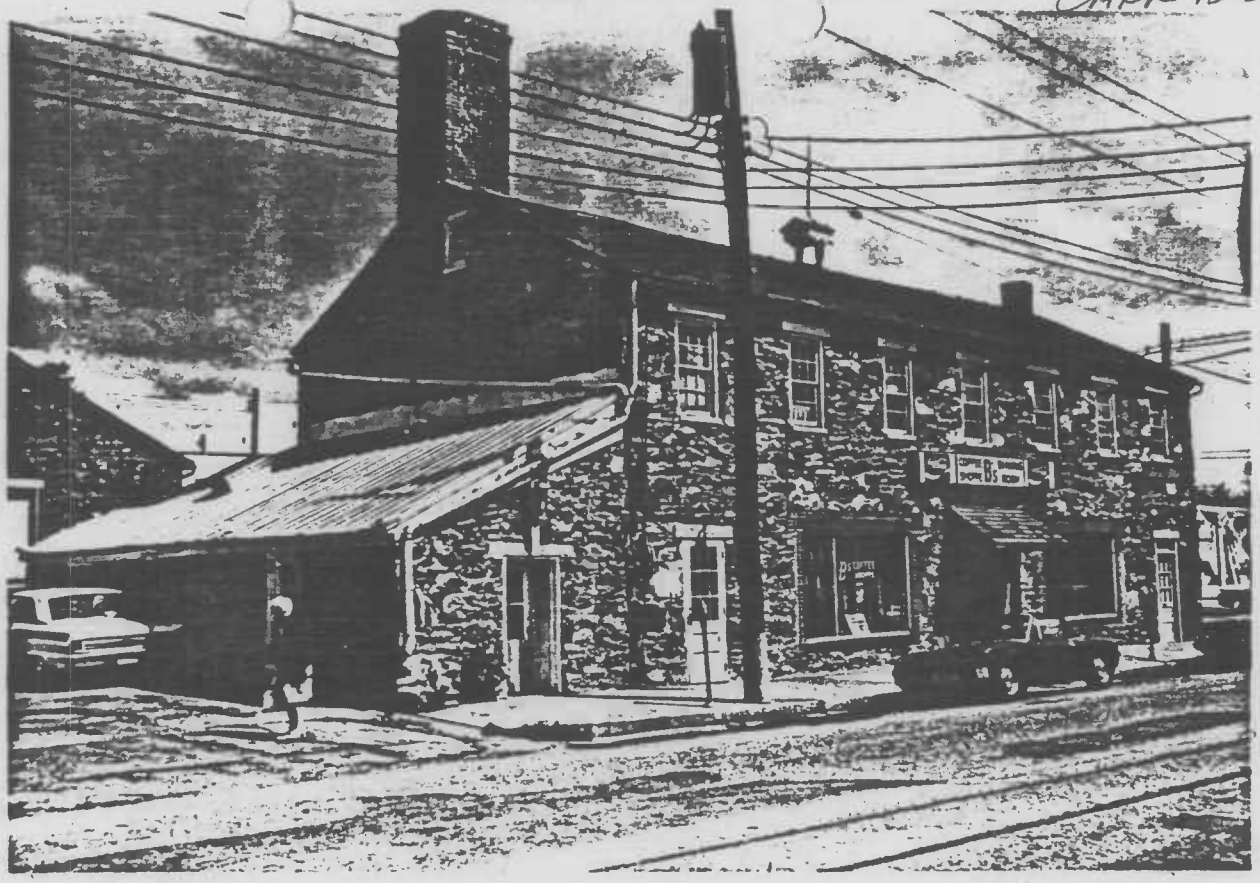

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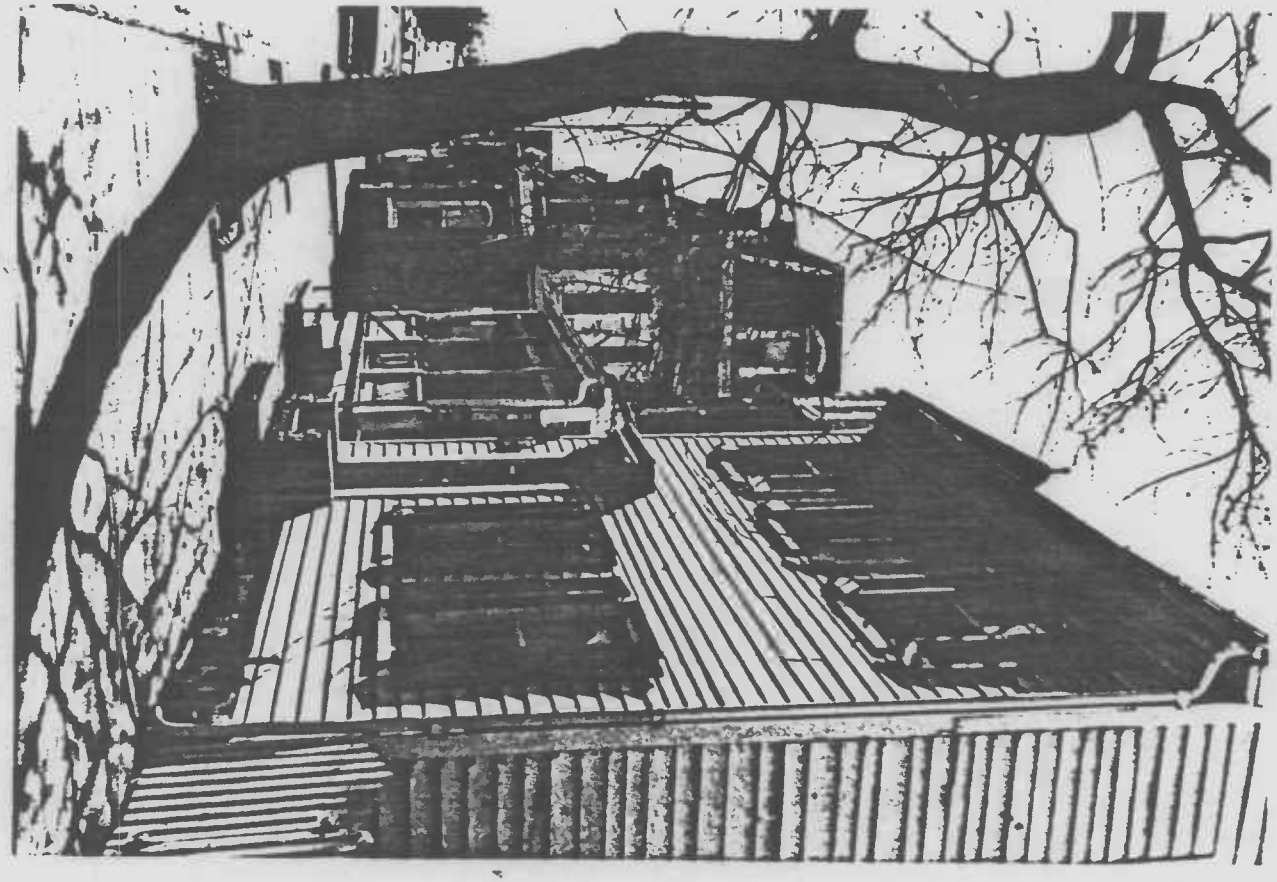
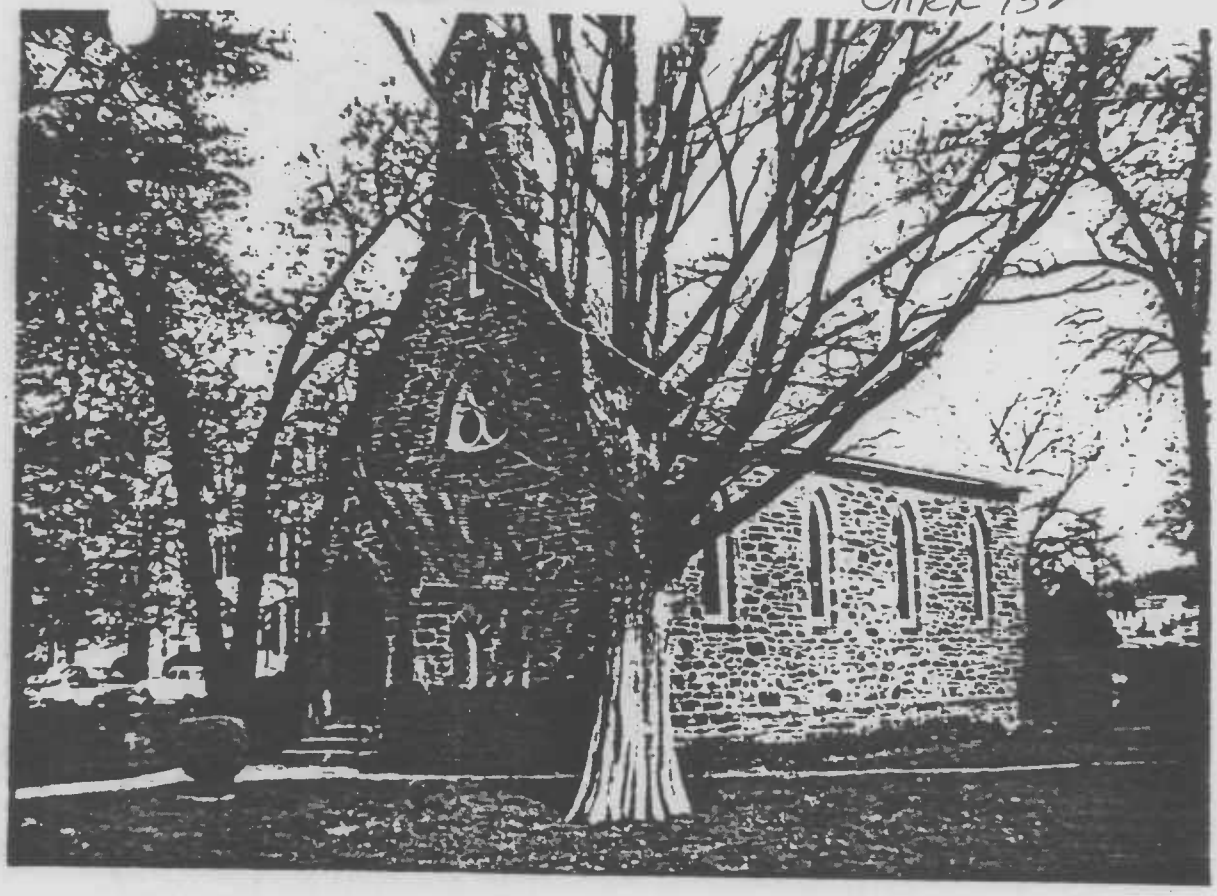
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