

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 28 1992

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Clerc-Carson House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 121 North Street  not for publication

city or town Ripley  vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Jackson code 035 zip code 25271

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William C. Lancer 9/23/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

**Entered in the  
National Register**

Date of Action

Michael Byers 10/29/92

Clerc-Carson House  
Name of Property

Jackson, WV  
County and State

**5. Classification**

85 432

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	N/A	buildings
N/A	N/A	sites
N/A	N/A	structures
N/A	N/A	objects
3	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Italianate

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick, Wood

roof Slate, Asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

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The Clerc-Carson House is located on the south side of North Street at the point where it intersects with Seventh Street. This corner lot is located in one of the older residential sections of downtown Ripley.

The house is set back from the street near the center of its lot with a row of trees and a metal wire fence between it and North Street. The lot slopes gently to the west from the bank on its east, or upper side, which runs along Seventh Street. Located on this side of the lot is one of the two contributing outbuildings that are associated with the house; it is known as the "sample room."

The Clerc-Carson House (c. 1880) is a two-story, asymmetrical, Italianate, brick house with a "T" shaped plan. The exterior of the house is painted brick with a wooden bay window at ground level on the first floor of the front elevation. Other wood features include the side and back porches, and a small board and batten addition on the eastern side of the house by the side porch. The back porch runs along the base and the top of the "T." The front of the house is three bays long and one wide, while the top of the "T" is five bays long and one wide.

The features of the building that give it its Italianate character are the low hipped roof with wide eaves that are typical of this style. It also has eaves brackets and cornice denils. The windows are another key style element that this house has. The windows are tall, narrow rectangles that are 1/1 double hung and have the characteristic arches above them. These arches are brick segmented arches with stone impost and keystones to highlight the arch. The windows also have stone sills under them. Exceptions to this can be found on the kitchen section of the house, the enclosed part of the back porch, and the second floor bathroom, which has the only square window on the house. The frames for the majority of the windows are curved at the top, repeating the curve of the arch. Another interesting detail is the centering of the keystones between the paired brackets. The bay window repeats the eave and cornice decorations found on the house's eaves and cornice. The front door has rectangular side and transom lights that are sometimes used in this style.

The house has other interesting features on its exterior that are not necessarily style defining but do give the house character. One such feature is the original shutters which are in working order. Another such feature is the already mentioned board and batten addition (c. 1924) that was built to house an indoor toilet. A third feature

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in this category is the recessed kitchen section, which is a plainer portion of the house and is almost hidden from the main road by a recess. The three chimneys fit into this group as well. The two chimneys on the main part of the house are corbelled at their tops, and the one on the kitchen is a plain square chimney.

The house has three porches that provide it with some of its character. The front porch (c. 1924) is one story in height with a roof that is partially supported by two square brick columns. The balustrade across the front of the porch runs between the columns. The balustrade has a square brick pedestal with concrete cornice in the center with wood rails and balusters on either side. There is a small balustrade on the west end of the porch composed of just the rail and balusters. Hidden by shrubbery on the front and side of its base are four recessed panels with the bricks angled and their headers facing out at an angle. The panels on the front are two rectangles, while the two side panels are square. The porch on the eastern side of the kitchen is a simple wooden structure with its floor just up off the ground and its roof supported by posts. The back porch has been partially enclosed to create three rooms on the first floor. These rooms are the powder room, laundry room (both of these date from the 1950's), and an office, which dates from the 1970's. There is a green lattice work skirting on the supports that raises the enclosed porch up to be level with the first floor. The enclosed portion runs across the back of the "T's" base, while the open portion runs across the top of the "T," giving it an ell shape. The open portion is supported on a cement foundation.

The house's interior floor plan consists of 14 rooms, with 8 on the first floor and 6 on the second floor. This count includes the foyer and the second floor hall, but not the closets.

The floor plan of the first floor begins with the foyer, which is a spacious, high-ceilinged room, as are all the main rooms on this floor. The door to the library is on the west side of the hall. On the eastern side of the hall are the formal living room and the dining room, in order from front to back. There is one door between the two rooms in their adjoining wall. This has 15 glass panels and is not an original door. Both rooms have one closet each, also located in the adjoining wall. The living room and the library are the only two rooms on this floor with fireplaces. The bay window is part of the living room. Returning to the dining room, the door in its southern wall leads to the kitchen. The kitchen was remodeled in the 1970's and has doors leading

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to the basement, a pantry, the back stairs to the servants' room, and doors to the porches. These last two doors have transom lights. Back to the foyer, there is one door in its southern wall that provides access to the powder room and through it to the remaining rooms of the enclosed porch. In the foyer there is the main stairs to the second floor.

At the top of the spiral staircase is the second floor hall. On the west side of the hall is the door to one of the three main bedrooms on this floor. This bedroom contains one closet and a fireplace. Directly across the hall is the second bedroom, which has one closet and a fireplace. In the hall leading to the third bedroom and the bathroom is a small linen closet. The bathroom was added in the 1950's and shares a wall with the third bedroom. This bedroom was remodeled to provide more cupboard and closet space. This room also has a door leading to the servants' room, now just a bedroom. The servants' room has a narrow winder stair leading to the kitchen.

The interior of the house retains much of its original fabric. This includes the doors (except where noted elsewhere in this section), woodwork (base boards, the surrounds for the doors and windows, mantel pieces, and wainscoting in the kitchen), and decorative plaster work. The spiral staircase in the foyer is another original piece of woodwork that enhances the architectural integrity of the house. The walnut and white pine stairs were imported from Baltimore. The rail of the stairs is supported by thin, elegant balusters and terminates in a newel post at the foot of the stairs. On the outer stringer there is a decorative molding in a scroll design that adds to the elegance of the stairs.

There are four gas fireplaces in the house; each has a wooden mantel piece. The two mantels on the first floor are particularly noteworthy. The fireplace mantel in the library is the most elaborately carved one in the house. This mantel piece has one column carved on each side of the firebox and topped with ionic capitals. Above each column is a single acanthus leaf. On the mantel piece just above the firebox is a scroll design done in relief. On the overmantel there are two pilasters with one on each side of the mirror, and above these is one acanthus leaf on each side. Above the mirror in the center of the overmantel there is a small bric-a-brac shelf. The other outstanding feature on this fireplace is the use of green glazed tiles on the hearth and around the outside of the firebox. The tiles around the firebox consist of a band of dark green tiles, one tile in width, to outline the top and sides of the firebox, with light

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green tiles used for the rest of the firebox. The hearth uses the same green tiles, but the dark green tiles are laid in a diamond pattern. The living room mantel piece is made of pine and white ash. The principal decorative features of this mantel piece are the two brackets on either side of the firebox. The remaining two fireplaces are located on the second floor in the bedrooms located above the library and formal living room. These mantel pieces are simple wood mantels with mantel shelves.

The ornamental plaster work mentioned earlier in this section is located on the first floor in the library, living room, and dining room. There are plaster ceiling modillions in each of these rooms. In the library, living room, and dining room there are plaster cornice line moldings, and each room has a different design. The design in the molding in the library uses cranes in its motif. A wreath pattern is used for the motif of the living room molding. The dining room molding has a scroll design.

In the upstairs hallway hangs a pink opalescent light fixture. This fixture is an original light fixture from the gaslight era of the house. This fixture was wired for electricity when the rest of the house was first wired. The fixture is probably Wheeling glass.

The property has two outbuildings in its grounds that have been historically associated with the house. The first of these structures is called the "sample room," which is located on the eastern edge of the property along Seventh Street. This structure is a one-story shed-like building with masonry piers for its foundation. Its roof is covered with asphalt shingles. It has undergone some recent changes to its exterior, which include aluminum siding, new wooden stairs to the back door, and two sliding glass windows on the rear elevation. It is associated with A. M. Carson, who used the place to review samples of goods for possible sale in his mercantile store. These samples were brought by traveling salesmen. The second structure is also of shed design and is attached to the kitchen section by a small breezeway. It is a simple, one-story frame structure with a square chimney and masonry piers for the foundation. There are two kinds of wood siding on this shed. The first kind covers a little over three-quarters of the exterior and is a wide weatherboard. The second kind covers the remaining portion of the front and is a narrow weatherboard siding. On the western side of the shed there is one 2/2 double-hung window. The shed has two doors in the front elevation and a closet that was once used for storing smoked meats. One of its early functions was to house a washroom.

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Other interesting features on the grounds of the house include part of the original stone sidewalk, which runs from the front walk around to the eastern side of the house. Its continuous path is interrupted by a wood walkway with stairs. The sidewalk then continues its path around the house and across the rear. There is the cap for the filled-in stone-lined well by the kitchen on the east side of the house and a cistern under the partially enclosed back porch.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

C. 1880

**Significant Dates**

C. 1880

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

The personal collection of Dorothy Staats Kerns



Clerc-Carson House  
Name of Property

Jackson, WV  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	4 3 8	4 8 0	4 2 9 7	7 8 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing	
2					

3					
	Zone	Easting		Northing	
4					

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Swift Landon

organization N/A date August 3, 1992

street & number 1404 Virginia Street East, Apt. D telephone (304) 344-9658

city or town Charleston state WV zip code 25301

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Kerns

street & number 121 North Street telephone (304) 372-6100

city or town Ripley state WV zip code 25271

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Clerc-Carson House is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a locally significant example of Italianate architecture under criterion "C." This house is the only example of a brick Italianate house in this North Street neighborhood.

The house was built around 1880 by F. Léon Clerc, a French-Swiss immigrant, who moved to Jackson County, West Virginia, in the 1870's and eventually settled in the town of Ripley. His moving to West Virginia from New York was probably due to the land that he inherited from his first wife, Amelia Rosset. Sometime after his arrival in Jackson County he became a partner in a real estate firm with Colonel John H. Riley. It was Riley who later sold Léon the land on which he was to build his home. During this period he married his second wife, Mary E. Smith. They had two children and only their daughter, Adele, would reach adulthood, while their son, Lonnie, died in infancy. On February 27, 1880, the Clerc's purchased the lot on which their home still stands. Léon and his partner, according to a 1906 newspaper article, were responsible for the construction of the Clerc-Riley Road and the first brick commercial building in the downtown. This same article attributes the second brick residence in Ripley to Clerc. Léon lived in this house until his death on February 6, 1886.

The house remained in the possession of his widow until 1890 when she sold it to H. E. Pfof. Mr. Pfof sold the property two years later to T. E. Graham. Graham sold the property in 1898 to A. M. (Arthur Melanethon) Carson and his wife, Cordelia (Cora).

The Carsons and their two children, Waid and Bessie, moved to Ripley in 1889 from Racine, Ohio. Arthur was able to purchase an interest in J. M. Hensley Company, a mercantile store in Ripley. This marked the beginning of his long and successful career in the mercantile store business. In 1919, he retired from the business, leaving his son-in-law and second partner, C. C. Staats, in charge of the A. M. Carson Store Company. A. M. died in 1925, leaving the house to his wife. The house passed from Cora to their two children and eventually to Bessie's son, Dr. Enoch Dwight Staats. In 1979, Dr. Staats's daughter, Dorothy, and her husband, Dennis Kerns, inherited the house and are its current owners/occupants.

The house is a fine example of a two-story brick Italianate house. The features

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of the building making it a classic example of its style are the characteristic wide eaves, the low hipped roof, and the use of brackets (in this case paired brackets) under the eaves. The windows have the characteristic arches over them (except for those in the kitchen section, enclosed porch, and the second story bathroom). In the case of the Clerc-Carson House, these arches are segmented arches with stone keystones and imposts to highlight the arches. These windows also have stone sills. Again, the exception to this is the windows on the kitchen section and enclosed porch. The keystones for the second story windows are centered between the paired brackets, except for the kitchen section, enclosed porch, and second floor bathroom window. The top of the window frames repeat the curve of the segmented arch. The windows are for the most part 1/1 double-hung wooden framed windows in the characteristic tall and narrow rectangular shape. The second floor bathroom has the only square window in the house. There is a wooden bay window at ground level on the first floor which uses the same bracket pattern as the second story windows. All the windows have retained their original wooden shutters, which are still in operating condition. The exceptions to this are the second story bathroom window and the enclosed porch, which have no shutters.

Other interesting features on the house's exterior are the two corbelled chimneys on the house and the one square chimney on the kitchen section. There is the color patterned slate on the roof, which adds to the character of the house and to the integrity of its fabric.

The interior of the house also retains much of the original fabric, which includes the doors (except for the door between the formal living room and the dining room), base boards, door and window surrounds, mantel pieces, and the main staircase. For a more detailed description of the last two items, see Section 7.

While this 112-year-old house retains much of its integrity and fabric, it has not been frozen in time. In 1924, there was the addition of a small room to the kitchen section's eastern porch for an indoor toilet. In the 1950's, Dr. Staats made many changes to the house, which included the enclosure of part of the back porch. This created two new rooms on the first floor. These rooms are the powder room and the laundry room. In the 1970's, an office space was added to the enclosed porch. The brick front porch is another change made to the exterior.

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The changes to the interior include the second story bathroom, closet and cupboards added to the bedroom above the dining room, and the remodeled kitchen. The floor of the foyer was recently covered with tile. These changes reflect the changing needs and tastes of the property owners, but they do not adversely affect the overall integrity of the house.

The grounds of the property retain two outbuildings that are associated with the house and serve to connect it to its past. There is the "sample room" on the eastern edge of the property, which has undergone some minor changes to its exterior. These changes include two windows on its rear elevation and aluminum siding. The other building is the tool and wash shed at the southeast corner of the kitchen. Near the east side porch there is the capped well for the house, which has been filled in. A large portion of the original stone sidewalk runs from the front walk around the eastern side of the house and across part of the rear. Its path is interrupted by the wood walkway and stairs between the house and shed. These all contribute to the sense of place and history of the house and its land.

In summary, the Clerc-Carson house, due to its being a fine example of Italianate architecture and its integrity, qualifies the house for inclusion on the National Register under criterion "C."

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Bibliography

"A. M. Carson Succumbs, a Prominent and Well Known Business Man Dies in Hospital at Pittsburgh." *The Mountaineer* (January 9, 1925). (Newspaper clipping from property owners' collection.)

"Carson Rites Held Sunday." *Jackson Herald* (May 21, 1941). (Newspaper clipping from property owners' collection.)

Jackson County. Ripley, West Virginia. *Deed Book*. 23.

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Jackson County Historical Society. *History and Folklore of Ripley, West Virginia*. Ripley, West Virginia: Jackson County Historical Society, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Jackson County, West Virginia: Past and Present, 1990*. Waynesville, NC: Don Mills, Inc., 1990.

Letter from A. M. Carson to Waid Carson, March 30, 1898. (Ms. in owners' collection.)

P., C. H. "F. Léon Clerc: Twenty-three years Deceased, Short Sketch by Contributing Countryman and Fast Friend." *Jackson Herald*. (February 1909). (Newspaper clipping in property owners' collection.)

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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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## Verbal Boundary Description

Tax Assessor's Map 13, Plot 90. Ripley Corporation, Jackson County, West Virginia.

## Boundary Justification

This plot of land has been historically associated with the house since its construction.

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CLERC-CARSON HOUSE  
121 North Street  
Ripley, Jackson County, West Virginia 25271

Photograph #1, Photographer-Dorothy Staats Kerns, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-D. Kerns, P.O. Box 9, Ripley, W.V. 25271. Photograph is of the front (North) side of the Clerc-Carson House.

Photograph #2, Photographer-Unknown, Date of photograph-1904 or 1905, Negative location-DSK, Photograph is of the front (North) side of the Clerc- Carson House. The photograph shows the original porch, fence, and wood gingerbread. Left to right-Cornelius C. (Neil) Staats, Waid Edwin Carson, M.D., Mrs. Cordelia Susannah Carson, Arthur M. Carson, and Mrs. Elizabeth (Bessie) Carson Staats.

Photograph #3, Photographer-DSK, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of the North-East corner of the Clerc-Carson House showing the East side of the house.

Photograph #4, Photographer-DSK, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of the back (South) enclosed porch, and the West back porch.

Photograph #5, Photographer-DSK, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-DSK, Photograph is of the walnut and ash mantle in the parlor (living room).

Photograph #6, Photographer-DSK, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of the curved stairway which is made of walnut and white pine. The stairway was brought from Baltimore, MD. It is located in the foyer.

Photograph #7, Photographer-DSK, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of the mantle in the library. It is made of oak.

Photograph #8, Photographer-DSK, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of the East side of the Sample Building.

Photograph #9, Photographer-DSK, Date of photograph-7/28/92, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of the West side of the Sample Building.

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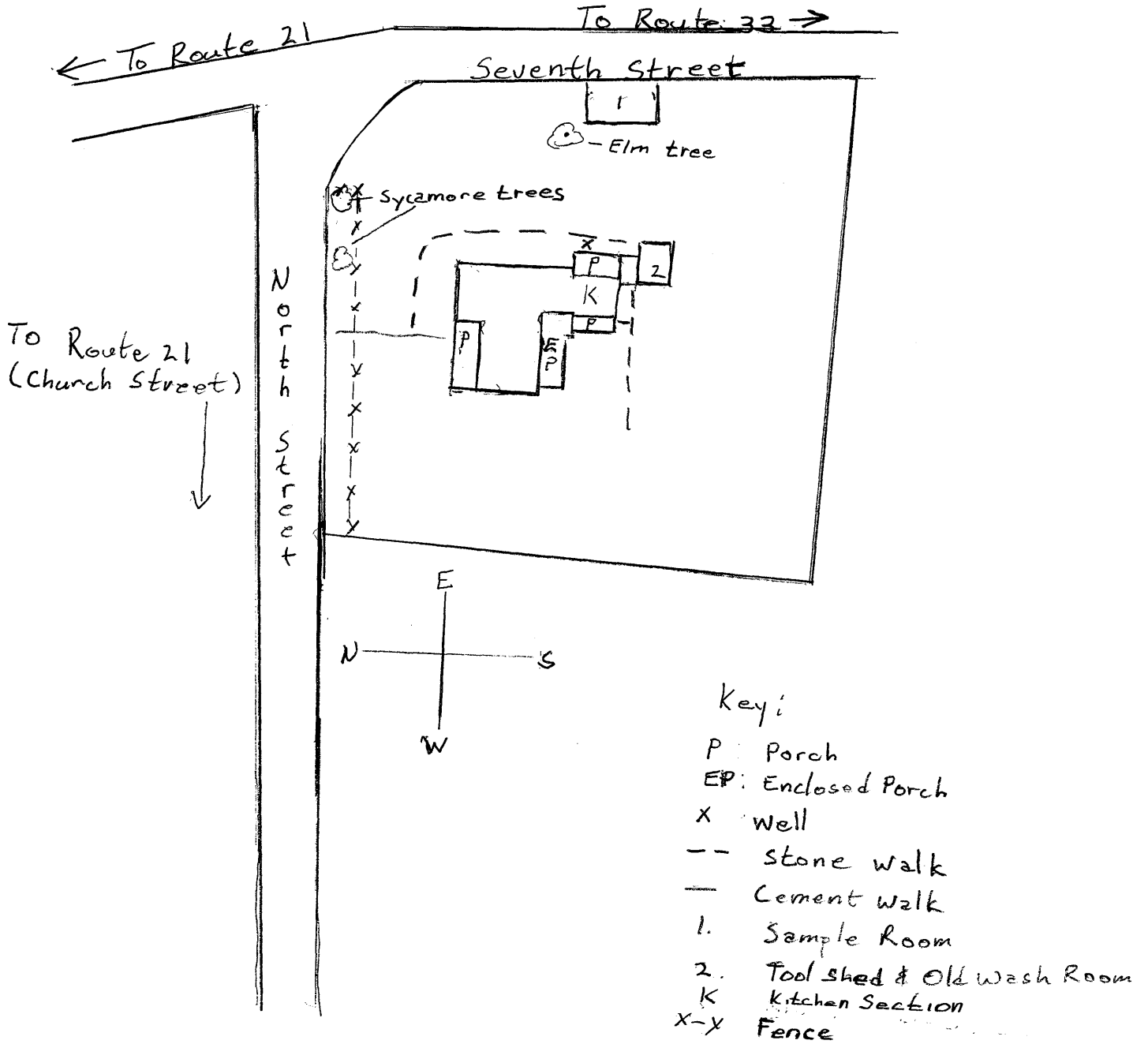
CLERC-CARSON HOUSE Photographs  
(Continued)

Photograph #10, Photographer-Unknown, Date of photograph-Unknown, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of Arthur M. Carson and his grandson, Wallace Waid Staats. Arthur M. Carson was the owner of the Clerc-Carson House from 1898 until his death in 1925. He was a prominent merchant in Ripley, W.V. in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Photograph #11, Photographer-Unknown, Date of photograph-Unknown, Negative location-DSK. Photograph is of Cordelia Sussanah (Cora) Carson, wife of Arthur M. Carson, and owner of the Clerc-Carson House from 1898 until her death in 1941.



Clerc - Carson House  
 121 North Street  
 Ripley, WV  
 Jackson County



Map Not to scale