

FOUNDED IN 1767  
**MAIN STREET**  
MIDDLETOWN



THE GAVER HOUSE



THE LESLIE COBLENTZ HOUSE



GRAY HAVEN

## WALKING TOUR EAST MAIN AIRVIEW HISTORIC DISTRICT

In the late 19th century, the town's eastern boundary was today's intersection of Broad and East Main streets. The Coblentz orchard was just inside the limit; just east was the Routzahn farm, and next was the Kefauver property. With the prospect of an electric railroad, or trolley, coming to town, these owners began to subdivide their farms into residential lots.

East of Cone Branch is Airview, the Kefauver family's former land and now on the National Register of Historic Places. It dates from 1896, with the last of the original 12 lots being built on in 1930. This development extends from Coblentz Road eastward for about a half mile.

All three families had financial interests in the trolley and supporting businesses. They pushed for the line to continue into the heart of town instead of terminating farther east at Gray Haven (Airview). To accommodate the track, new houses had wide front setbacks along the north side of East Main Street, which you can see today.



EXPLORE MIDDLETOWN, MD

19 West Main Street

Middletown, MD 21769

301-371-6171 ext. 111

[mainstreetmiddletown.org](http://mainstreetmiddletown.org)



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# AIRVIEW HISTORIC DISTRICT



The trolley line was indeed built through to the heart of Middletown, then north to Myersville, and eventually terminating in Hagerstown, forming the Hagerstown and Frederick Railway. It served the valley until the 1936 rerouting of US 40 from Frederick to Hagerstown. The trolley declined and finally ceased operation in 1947. Its legacy is a string of houses from Broad Street to Gray Haven, a virtual encyclopedia of late-19th and early 20th-century domestic architectural styles.

## EAST MAIN STREET AIRVIEW DISTRICT

In 1896, two farms owned by the Kefauver family were subdivided into 12 lots with 90- to 103-foot setbacks to accommodate the track for a proposed electric railroad, or trolley. The trolley had already progressed from Frederick to Braddock Heights some four miles to the east, and these investors were eager to encourage—and prosper from—its continuation to Middletown.

The families who eventually built homes on these lots read like a Who's Who of Middletown. Many were retired farmers, now investors and officers in Middletown Savings Bank, Valley Savings Bank, and Granger's Insurance Company—all of which stood to profit.

When the trolley finally arrived, the terminus just happened to be in front of developer Lewis Kefauver's newly constructed "Gray Haven," the first rusticated concrete-block house built in Frederick County, c. 1906. Not only did Kefauver live in Gray Haven, but he also ran it as a tourist house, extolling the virtues of the "mountainous air." After the trolley ceased operation in 1947, the tracks were removed and the wide setbacks became generous lawns fronting on Old National Road. Airview was a grand success in terms of the goals imagined by its original developers and investors, and it remains a distinctive architectural asset to Middletown.

George Gaver, retired farmer, was one of the founders and the first president of the Middletown Savings Bank. This Queen Anne style house was constructed from Plan No. 20, George F. Barber and Co.'s Modern Dwellings (1899).

701 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1899)

Charles Biser, retired farmer, was a director of the Valley Savings Bank and the People's Fire Insurance Company of Frederick County. This Colonial Revival house exemplifies several along East Main Street.

703 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1911)

Farmer Oliver Sigler's retirement home is one of two Bungalow style houses in Airview.

705 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1920)

The George Ifert house is a typical three-bay vernacular farmhouse with a central cross gable.

706 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1912 - 1913)

The George Remsburg house is a later, more compact realization of the Colonial Revival style favored in Middletown. Notable are the multi-paned over single-paned sash windows and shingled gables with pent roofs.

707 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1920)

This hipped-roof, four-square house with brick over frame is a good example of a practical and utilitarian carpenter-built house of the early 20th century.

708 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1900)

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## MAIN STREET MIDDLETOWN

Developer Lewis Kefauver's "Gray Haven" served as an elegant tourist house during the era of trolley travel from points east. Built on one of the highest elevations, Gray Haven is one of the largest houses in Middletown. Its cast-concrete rusticated block construction is intended to resemble stone.

709 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1906)

The John Shafer house is one of the first in Airview. Its Colonial Revival style is a striking contrast to the Queen Anne style Gaver house next door. This house set the tone for several contemporaneous houses further west along East Main Street.

710 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1898)

The Leslie Coblentz house represents the swan song of construction in Airview. Only one other was built later, 718 East Main Street in 1930. This gambrel-roofed brick house is a good example of Dutch Colonial Revival.

711 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1921)

Richard Kefauver, Lewis Kefauver's brother, owned the land south of East Main Street when it was developed. His house was built on Airview's Lot No. 1 and can be viewed as a "marriage" of two styles: Queen Anne (seen in the Gaver House) and Colonial Revival (seen in the Shafer house). Look for the elaborate detailing of the cross gables, corner bays, decorative turnings, and scroll-cut verge boards.

712 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1903)

Daniel Kefauver, Richard Kefauver's son, built his house No. 714 (1910) in an entirely new style for Airview: asymmetrical massing, cross-gabbling, and a bay front often found in Queen Anne style construction, but greatly simplified for a more modern look.

This simple Colonial Revival brick house No. 718 (c. 1930) was the last built in Airview before the trolley stopped running.

714 & 718 EAST MAIN STREET

This house was built by another son of Richard Kefauver, Noah, prompting the name "Noah's Ark." There are relatively few Bungalow style houses in town, and only two in Airview. This particular version of Bungalow, with a three-sided, wrap-around porch and hipped roof, is common in Braddock Heights, a former trolley resort just four miles east.

720 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1912)