

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **AUG 31 1987**

date entered **OCT - 1 1987**

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

1. Name

historic Free Library and Reading Room; Williamstown Memorial Library

and/or common Monroe Township Historical Society Museum

2. Location

street & number 405 South Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Monroe Township _____ vicinity of

state New Jersey code 034 county Gloucester code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	XX museum
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> other:
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	

4. Owner of Property

name Township of Monroe

street & number Main and Hall Streets

city, town Williamstown _____ vicinity of state New Jersey 08094

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Gloucester County Courthouse

street & number Delaware Avenue

city, town Woodbury _____ state New Jersey 08096

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

"Survey of Cultural Resources of the Historic Era in the Watersheds of the Great Egg
title Harbor and Tuckahoe Rivers" has this property been determined eligible? yes no

by R. Alan Mounier

date 1982 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Office of New Jersey Heritage, CN-404

city, town Trenton _____ state New Jersey 08625

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION

The Monroe Historical Society (Free Library) is situated on the southwest corner of the intersection of Main and Library Streets in the center of Williamstown. An 1876 map (Evans & Stewart) shows that this area was the core of the town, with residences, churches, schools, and a variety of shops extending out from and adjacent to the Williamstown Glass Manufacturing Company located just south and west of the Free Library property. When the building was erected there in 1878, it was within the 6-acre Williamstown Glass complex itself. Structures such as warehouses, packing houses, furnaces, engines and machine shops would have been just to the south of the Reading Room.

The Reading Room was set apart from the factory buildings and glass-making equipment by its location on the furthest northwest corner of the complex. On a 1885 insurance map, the entire complex, including the library, was surrounded by a lath fence, and the library was entered from inside the factory complex on the south end. Today the library is entered from the street on the north end of the building. A (1974) painting of the building "as it appeared in 1878" depicts it with a bracketed cornice but without the shutters on the windows as it has today. In the painting, the building is located in a pastoral setting, surrounded by trees and a horse and buggy poised in front of the main entrance.

An 1894 map shows a single chimney that rose from the gable center of the library. If it was in fact there, today there is no evidence of a chimney in that location. On the south side of the building, however, is a nonfunctioning brick chimney and a more recent brick chimney on the west (rear) side of the building.

In the 1890s and after the turn of the century, the glassworks operations that surrounded the library building were expanding and adding new equipment, which indirectly affected the library itself. For example, by 1905, a railroad spur cut just to the south of the library and a small store had been erected adjacent to the library.

During its heyday, the glass factory land around the library formed a U-shape. A new street--Chester Street--now bisects it. Along this street there are still a few structures that relate to the glass factory era. These are turn-of-the-century two-story buildings which appear to be former warehouses for the glass factory. Today they are part of a lumber yard which occupies the site. There are several other structures in the lumber yard that are more recent but are similar in scale, placement and material to the others.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1878 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Free Reading Room and Library is being nominated under Criteria A and C. The structure is located on the property that was a part of the Williamstown Glassworks into the twentieth century. The Williamstown Glassworks was the most important industry in the area and was largely responsible for the development of the community. The town essentially sprung up for the factory, as it rapidly became a company town. Residents still say that they usually did not need to travel far to acquire goods or services. Located in the center of town, the library offered a cultural amenity through literature and education for those who had the time and ability to use it.

The Free Reading Room and Library was built in 1878 on property owned by the Thomas Bodine and Company Glass Manufactory, a glass-works company originally established on the 6-acre tract in Williamstown in 1835, under the name of "Free Will Glass Manufactory". By 1840 the glassworks was destroyed by fire. In 1841 Joel Bodine formed a company with two other individuals, a partnership that lasted for only two years. In 1843, Mr. Bodine was sole proprietor of the business, and the glassworks company stayed in the Bodine family until 1866, when Walter R. Thomas joined with John F. Bodine to create the Williamstown Glass Manufacturing Company. In 1882 Samuel Garwood became partner in the company.

On February 8, 1878, a group of Monroe Township's residents met to discuss the establishment of a library. Committees were formed to solicit annual subscriptions, and to set up construction and maintenance plans for the library. Thomas and Bodine offered the use of the property under a ten-year lease for the price of \$1.00. The subscription committee acquired members, funds, and some donated labor and materials, and construction was completed that same year for the sum of \$766.11. By the end of the first year of operation, thousands of visitors had passed through the doors of the Free Reading Room.

In addition to memberships, the library held lectures and entertainment events to raise funds. Funding, however, would be scarce then and for years to come. There is a gap but it appears that the building at least remained open during that time and was still owned by the glassworks company. But then for about a decade, from 1889-1903, the library's debt problems forced it to close

9. Major Bibliographical References

"A History of Monroe Township 1859-1976". Esther M. Davis, Compiler, 1976. Published by Monroe Township Historical Society, Williamstown, New Jersey.

Interview with Mrs. Ruth White, Williamstown, New Jersey, December 1986.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Williamstown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	5	0	0	7	4	0	4	3	9	2	2	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property nominated is a rectangular lot 24" by 50" bounded on the northeast by Main Street and the northwest by Library Street. (Block 11601, Lot 3)

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lauren C. Archibald

organization MAAR, Associates, Inc.

date December 30, 1986

street & number #6 Library Plaza, P.O. Box 676

telephone 368-5777

city or town Newark

state Delaware

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 National Park Service.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Sharon R. Senne

title Assistant Commissioner for Natural Resources

date 8/13/87

For NPS use only

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

entered in the
National Register

date 10-1-87

John A. ...
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Free Library & Reading Room,
Monroe Township, Gloucester
County, NJ

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The company store, a focal building during the glass factory era, still stands fronting Main Street, half a block south of the library. The second story has been removed. The nineteenth century Bodine house is at the corner of Virginia and Main Streets, now used as apartments. Streets immediately surrounding the library comprise a moderately paced mixed, commercial, residential area. Pocketed throughout these streets, especially on Library and Blue Bell Streets and Chestnut Street, late nineteenth century worker's houses still survive. Across from the library is a classically inspired Victorian structure that once served as a social center or recreation hall for the glass workers, now the Atlantic Dress Manufacturing Company.

The library is a one story frame rectangular building 3 bays long with a 3-bay facade. It has a gabled roof, now covered with rubberoid shingles over the original wooden shakes. The boxed cornice with returns frames the main facade, and is accentuated with repeating wood brackets with small pendils. Although the building has only one true story, it stands as high as the other 2-story structures along the block. The foundation/(basement) is above ground level which adds to the building's height. Foundation material is red sandstone (known locally as Jersey Brownstone) covered with stucco; the exterior framing is sheathed with clapboard painted dark yellow. The foundation and the trim around door and window frames have been painted in a rose brown.

The main door has two leaves with two molded panels on each side, topped with a heavy wood lintel. The semi-elliptical two-pane transom light matches the curve of windows throughout the building. Centered over the door in the gable end is a small, rounded-arch window with four panes. The door is flanked by two double hung sash windows. These two windows, like the others, are very long, with four over four lights. The windows are evenly spaced and centered vertically. Those on the sides have paneled shutters.

The rear door has been sealed and the steps which apparently once led up to it have been removed. A twentieth century chimney was added that rises from the southern end of the structure. Inside, above the sealed door, are the two wooden signs that were once used on the building, lettered "Williamstown Memorial Library and Reading Room since 1878". A small trap door in the ceiling provides access to the attic. Within the sealed door is the foyer, which has been fitted

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with a small, modern bathroom in the southwest corner. Through the foyer is an open entry way framed with a molded wood surround.

Plastered ceilings are uniformly high throughout the building. This is accentuated in the main room by a decorative molded plaster lighting fixture, patterned with a series of concentric rings of varying thicknesses--some 15 in all--up to the center in a fleur-de-lis motif, which drops down to accommodate a lampchain.

Extending from the level of the window sills is a molded wood chair rail running the entire length of the main room and foyer, with tongue-in-groove wainscotting. Windows have wide molded wood jambs and sills, painted a rose brown color. Floor boards are relatively narrow random width and are original to the building.

The library shelters a museum and offices for the Monroe Township Historical Society. The foyer area is used for storage, as a small work space, and antique clothing display area. The main, larger room contains an array of furniture, antique clothing, artifacts, and documents pertaining to the area's local history. Only the reception desk, just inside the main door, is original to the library building.

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for extended periods on two occasions. When the building reopened in 1903, their lease had expired, but the Board drew up an agreement mandating that the building be used only as a library and reading room. A similar agreement was again drawn up in 1922, when the property was sold to the Lumber and Trust Company.

In 1916, repairs were made on the library building and the board was re-organized. The library was able to expand its collections through the New Jersey State Library System. From 1928-1946 the library apparently suffered severe financial problems until it was taken over in 1946 by the Williamstown Memorial Library, formed in honor of the township's soldiers. The structure was chosen since it was "located on the highest point" in Southern New Jersey and had historic value to the local residents, especially those who had supported the building throughout its difficult years. The building was refurbished but was apparently not substantially altered.

As a glass company town, Williamstown is a rare survivor in Gloucester County. The library is a good example of the glass factory era, and is certainly the only one of its type in the area. Another previously identical building, the former post office, is still standing a few blocks north on Main Street, but is so dramatically altered that it is unrecognizable. A modern lumber yard complex, which contains original glass factory structures, is situated half a block south of the library. The Hall Street School, a late eighteenth century frame structure, was a factory-related building that is also standing, two blocks northeast of the library. Along with these few other extant structures, the Free Library is a remaining element of factory life in Williamstown.

The Free Library and Reading Room made a significant contribution to Williamstown, its residents, and the employees of the nineteenth century glass factory. The library was built in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, during the town's and the glasswork's height of prosperity. The library was a much-needed institution in the community, and was a place for relaxation, research, and education. For almost a century, the structure has functioned solely as a Library/Reading Room.

Since 1878, the Reading Room and Library has been located on the Williamstown Glassworks factory site. Still in the same location, the library

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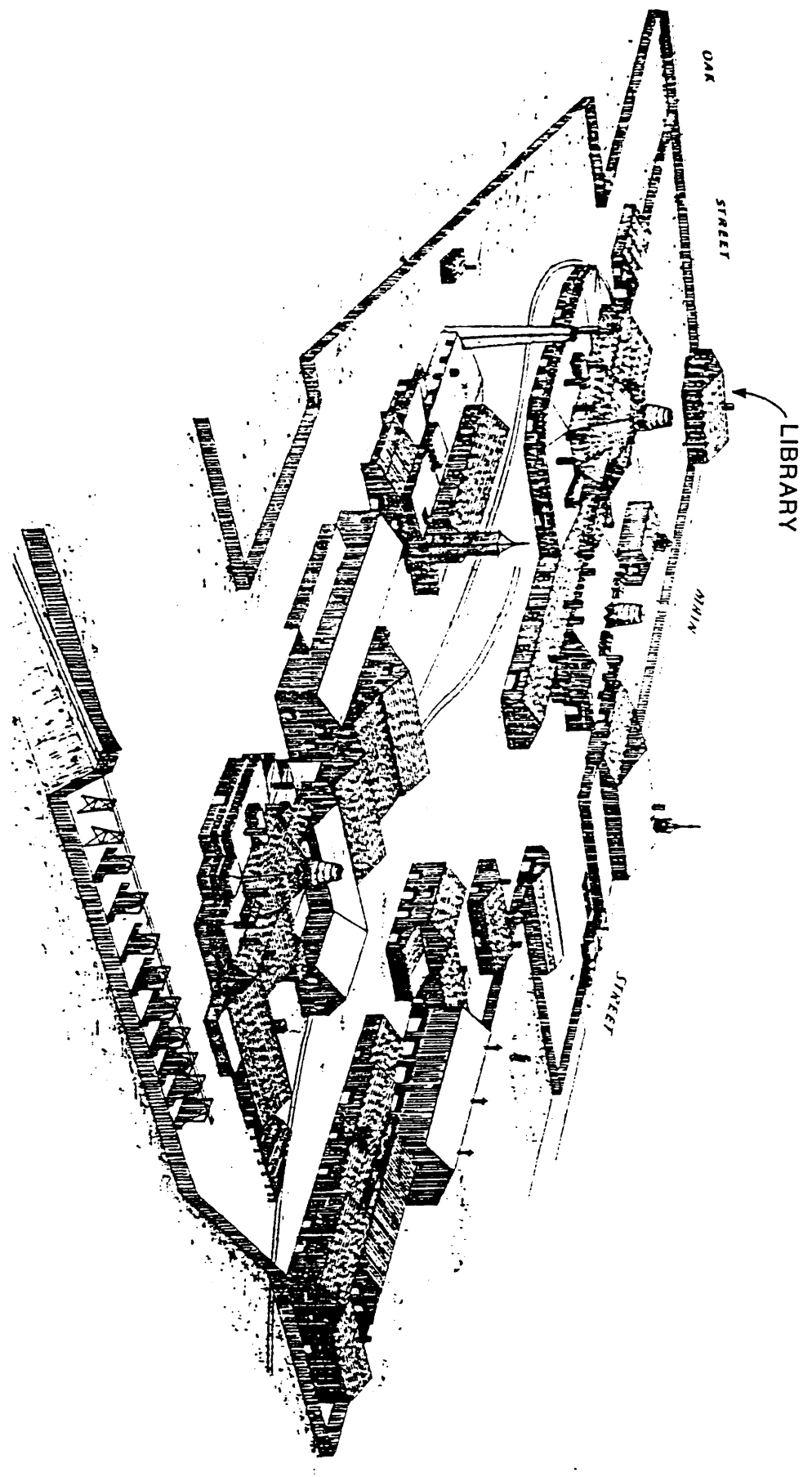
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now houses a museum and the Monroe Township Historical Society offices, but is actually owned by the Township of Monroe, which acquired the building for \$1.00 in 1971 from the Williamstown Memorial Library. Although the library was not built by the glassworks company, historical accounts suggest that it was used by the glass works and other townspeople as well. When it first opened, it featured evening hours only; later experiments with morning and daytime hours proved unsuccessful. Nevertheless, some 7,000 readers passed through its door the first year.

Architecturally, the building remains essentially unchanged in form and style since its construction in 1878. It embodies Victorian Classical styling in a vernacular form. Its current use as a museum is sympathetic with its former use as a library. Throughout its existence, the building has retained its elegant symmetry and finish, both inside and out.

It was only through the perseverance and efforts of the local residents that the library has survived into the twentieth century. Operated almost solely by volunteers and donations, the survival of the library building is the result of a dedicated citizenry.

Free Library & Reading Room
Monroe Township
Gloucester County, NJ



WILLIAMSTOWN GLASS WORKS

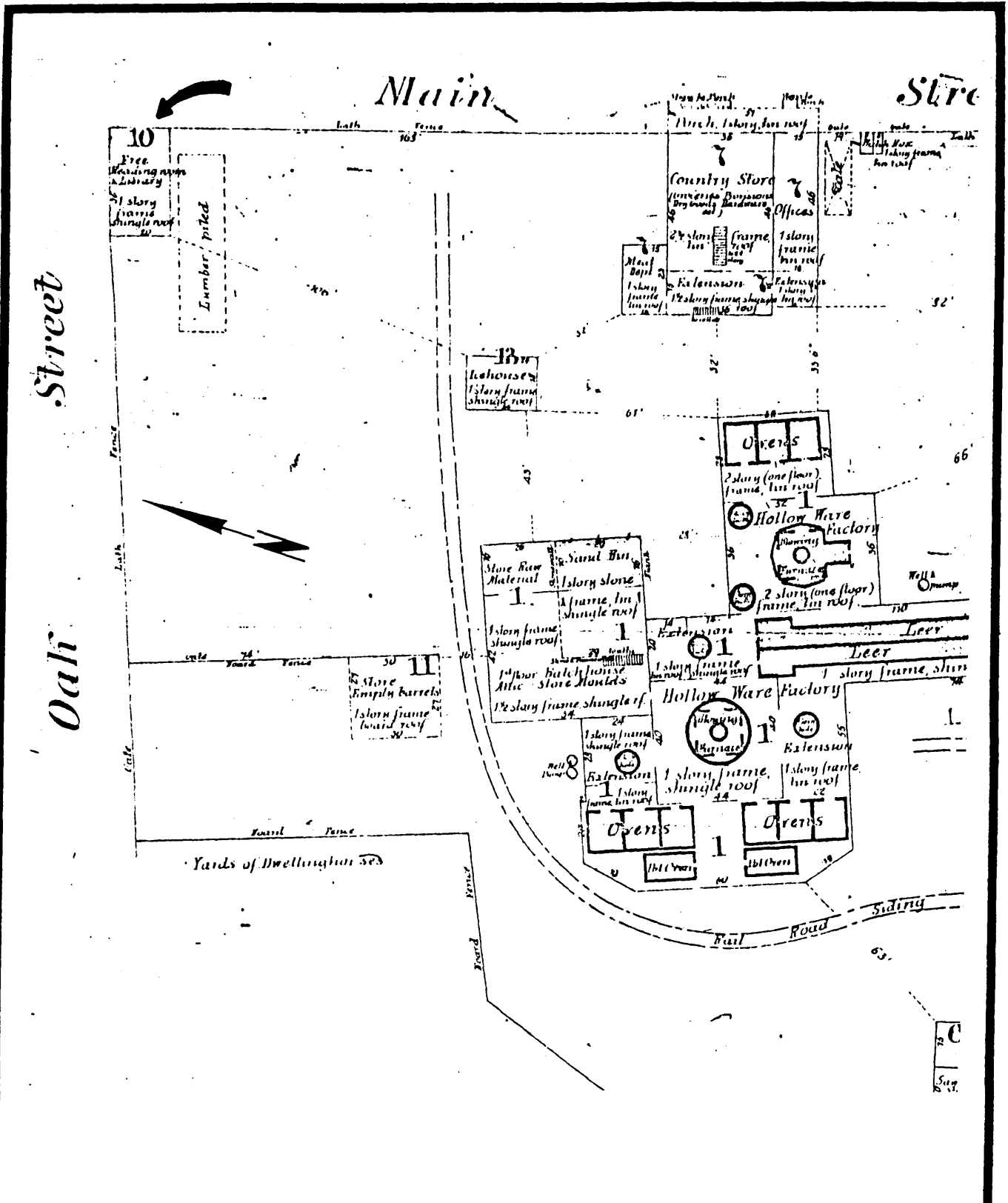
NO SCALE

LEGEND

PERSPECTIVE DRAWING OF GLASS
WORKS, 1885

SCALE

SOURCE: E. HEXAMER, WILLIAMSTOWN GLASS WORKS 1885



SOURCE: E. HEXAMER, WILLIAMSTOWN GLASS WORKS, 1885



FEET

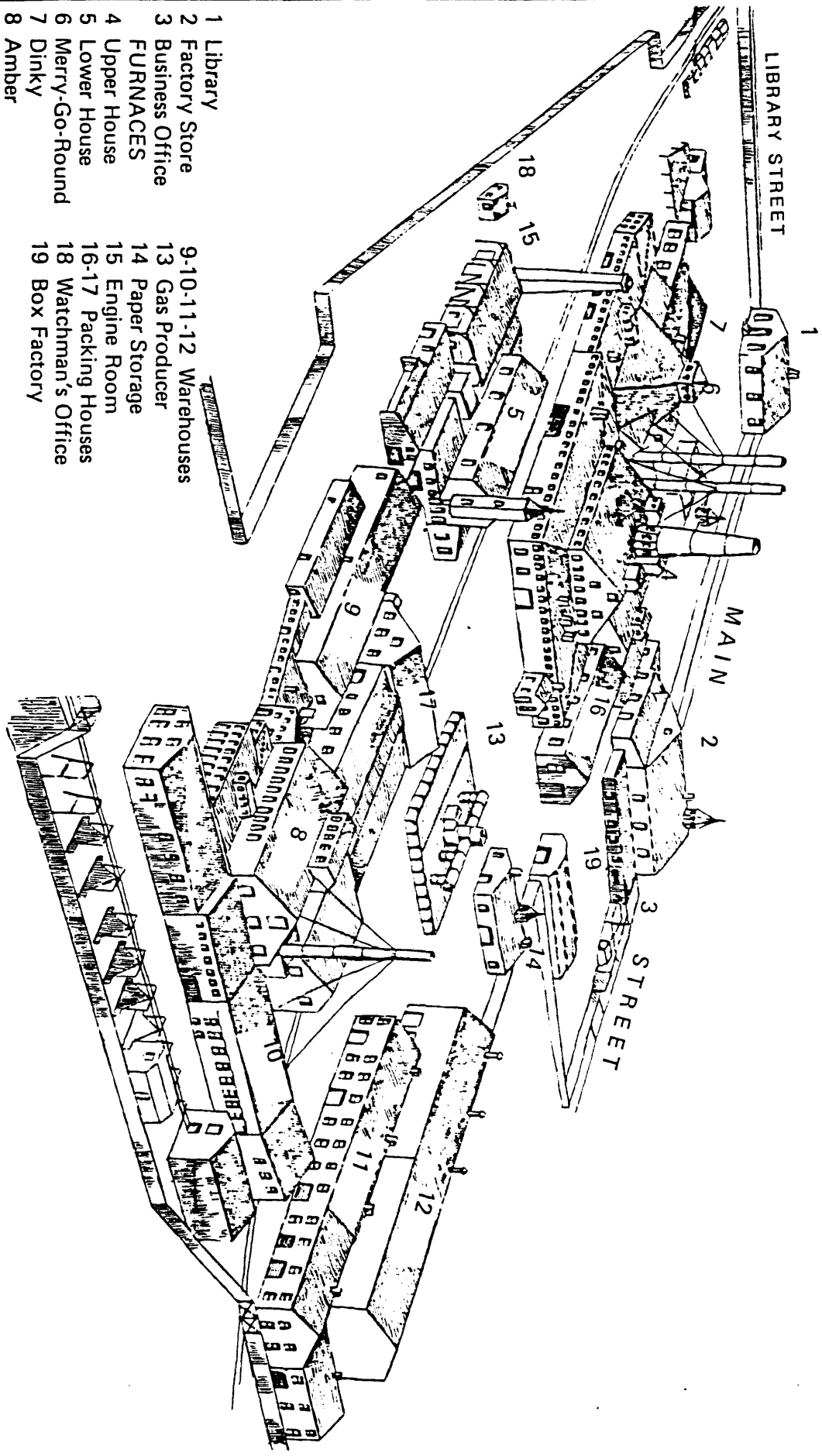
SCALE

WILLIAMSTOWN

1885 HEXAMER MAP

Free Library & Reading Room
 Monroe Township
 Gloucester County, NJ

Free Library & Reading Room
 Monroe Township
 Gloucester County, NJ



- 1 Library
- 2 Factory Store
- 3 Business Office
- FURNACES
- 4 Upper House
- 5 Lower House
- 6 Merry-Go-Round
- 7 Dinky
- 8 Amber
- 9-10-11-12 Warehouses
- 13 Gas Producer
- 14 Paper Storage
- 15 Engine Room
- 16-17 Packing Houses
- 18 Watchman's Office
- 19 Box Factory

WILLIAMSTOWN GLASS WORKS

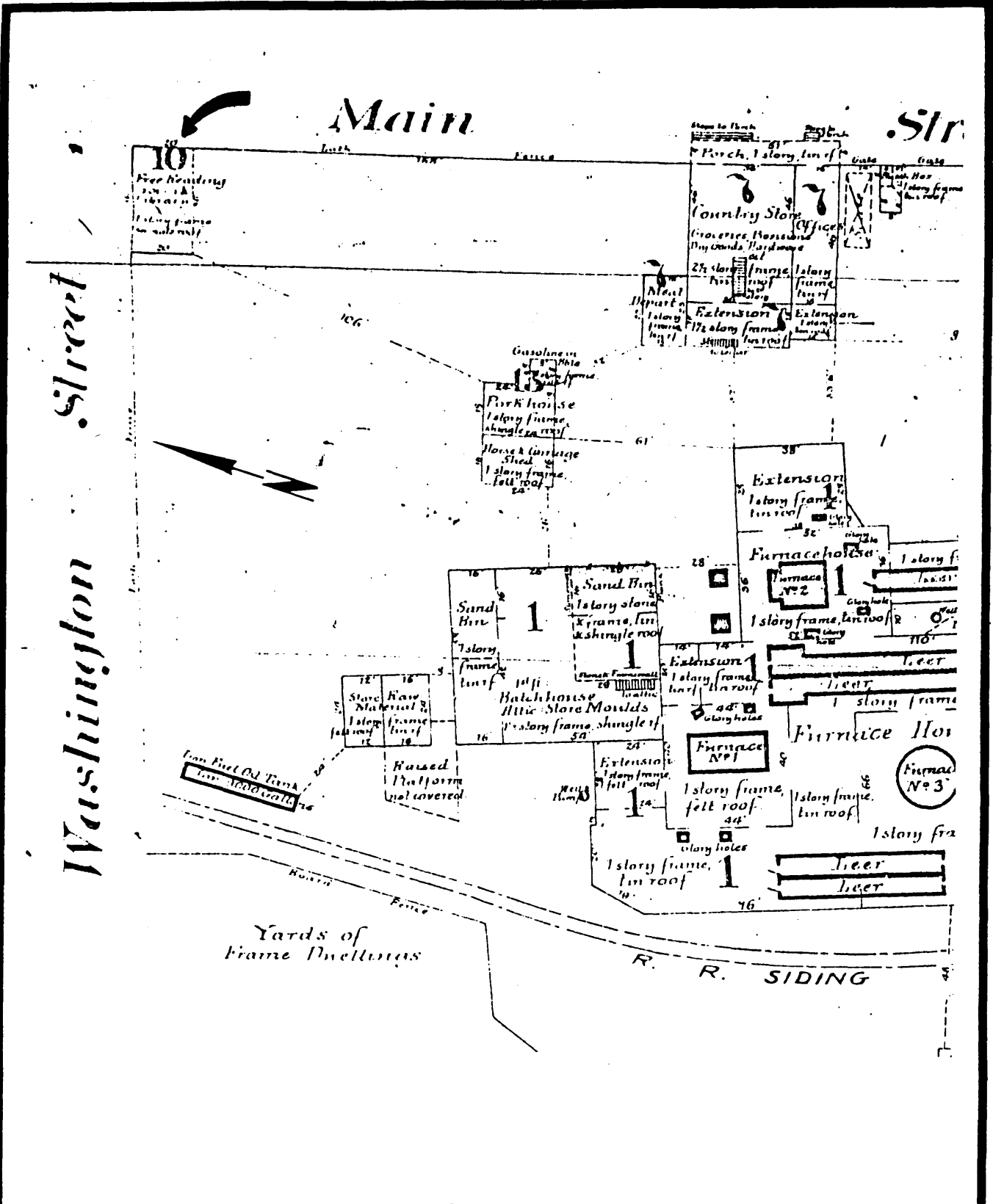
LEGEND

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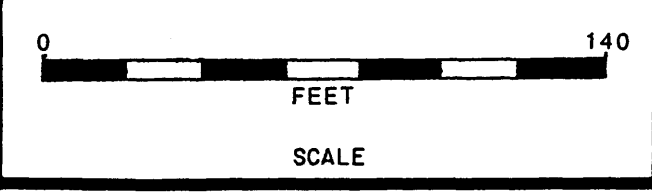
SCALE

PERSPECTIVE DRAWING OF GLASS WORKS, 1894

SOURCE: E. HEXAMER & SON, 1894 LABELS FROM DAVIS, 1976



SOURCE: E. HEXAMER & SON, WILLIAMSTOWN GLASS WORKS, 1894

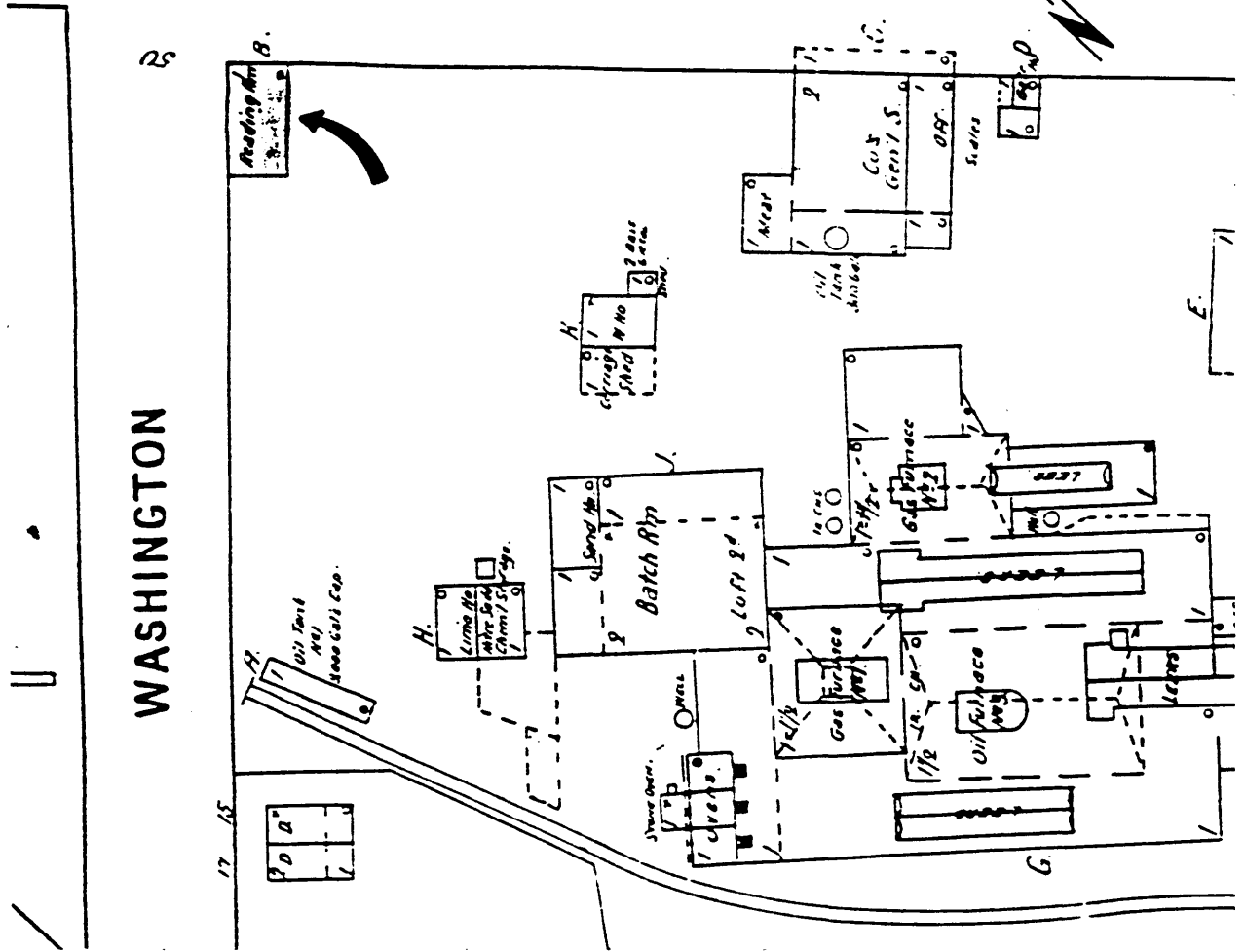


WILLIAMSTOWN

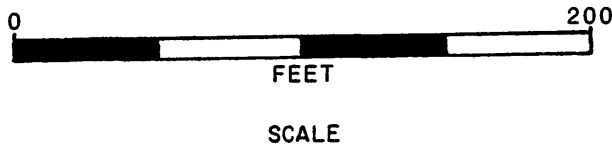
1894 HEXAMER MAP

Free Library & Reading Room
 Monroe Township
 Gloucester County, NJ

AUG. 1895
WILLIAMSTOWN
 N.J.



SOURCE: SANBORN MAP CO., WILLIAMSTOWN, 1895



WILLIAMSTOWN

1895 SANBORN MAP

Free Library & Reading Room
 Monroe Township
 Gloucester County, NJ

