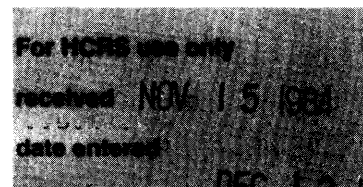


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



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

1. Name

historic GILBERT CLOCK FACTORY

and/or common Gilbert Clock Factory

2. Location

street & number Wallens Street N/A not for publication

city, town Winchester vicinity of Winsted

state Connecticut code 09 county Litchfield code 005

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name William H. Johnson

street & number P.O. Box 5515

city, town Mount Carmel N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Winchester Town Clerk

street & number Town Hall - 338 Main Street

city, town Winsted state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

59 South Prospect Street

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Gilbert Clock Factory in Winsted dates from the period 1871 to 1897 and consists of two four-story brick mill buildings. The complex is sited on a large lot abutting the east side of the swift-flowing Still River, and the foundation of the earliest part, the 1871 case shop, is built right into the stone ledge which forms the river's bank. The mill is a prominent landmark in the area around the intersection of Route 8 and Wallens Road, a residential neighborhood of both modern and late 19th-century houses. The factory has been vacant for several years, and though the factory buildings are mostly sound in structure, wooden elements such as the cornice ornament are in deteriorated condition.

The 1871 shop (Photographs 1 and 2) is 151' x 38' in plan and has a shallow-pitch hip roof. On the west side a three-story brick ell, 27' x 30', is built out over the tailrace, and in the resulting angle is a small square-plan tower accommodating toilets. The larger of two stair towers on the east side has a stylish Mansard roof with decorative brackets, small gabled dormers, and the base to a wooden finial (Photograph 3). Segmental-arched window openings recessed between the walls' brick piers have stone lintels and sills and were formerly fitted with paired double-hung windows. Two transomed entrances to the mill are located side-by-side on the south elevation where the three-story brick ell and main mill meet.

Located a considerable distance to the east is the 1897 finishing shop (Photographs 5 and 6). Of brick-pier construction, it is four stories high with a nearly flat roof, and measures 133' x 60' in plan. It is built on a concrete foundation. There is a large tower near the southwest corner of the mill, two concrete loading docks, and a small one-story addition appended to the tower. Segmental-arched window openings have bluestone sills and formerly had 25-pane swing-out sash under five-pane transoms. The ends of the building have corbelled parapets about 3' high, and there is a firestop wall about halfway along the roof.

The only other buildings in the complex are a small cinderblock shed of recent construction and two small wooden shed-roofed storage buildings, both quite deteriorated.

Little remains of significant interior elements or machinery. Both the case shop and finishing shop have narrow-board wooden floors, painted brick walls, and wooden columns (Photographs 8 and 9). The turbine which provided power for the 1871 case shop is still extant behind the tailrace arch in the stone foundation of the factory's ell (Photographs 4 and 10). Other than the turbine, surviving interior features are limited to an elevator in the Mansard-roofed tower.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Gilbert Clock Factory

Continuation sheet Winsted (Winchester), CT Item number

6

Page

1

Representation in Existing Surveys (continued):

Connecticut: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites.

Historic American Engineering Record

1981 - Federal

Records deposited with Library of Congress
Washington, DC

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received
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Gilbert Clock Factory

Continuation sheet Winsted (Winchester), CT Item number 7 Page 1

Description (continued):

There formerly were several other Gilbert Clock buildings on the south side of Wallens Road, connected to the present buildings by similar elevated walkways (see Sketch Plan). One was a near match to the 1871 building and housed the movement shop, and there also were a storage building and later manufacturing structures. These were destroyed by fire in 1975 and the entire site was leveled and filled. Other than some lengths of retaining walls, there are few discernible remains of the factory buildings which once occupied the site. This parcel on the south side of Wallens Road, now under separate ownership from the surviving Gilbert Clock structures, is not included in the nominated property: the extensive disturbance of the site after the fire has probably destroyed its integrity as an archeological resource. From a 1956 insurance survey of the complex, it appears that lay-out of the waterpower system, including the dam and head-race, had been obliterated well before the fire. Today these elements are not evident from surface inspection.

The present appearance of the clock factory reflects work in progress in which the building is being rehabilitated for residential use. Severely deteriorated wooden sash has been removed and is being replaced with reproduction windows. An irregular-plan two-story brick boiler house (Photograph 7), built in several stages c.1870-1930, was demolished in June 1984, along with a elevated walkway connecting the two mills and boiler house (Photograph 2). The walkway ran at the level of the 1871 mill's third floor and the second floor of the 1897 mill. Of wooden construction, it was covered and enclosed and sided with asbestos shingles. It rested on a combination of metal, masonry and wooden piers. Two short sections of walkway were constructed as Howe trusses, their large wooden diagonal members bound together by iron tie-rods. The boiler house and connecting walkways were found unsafe by local officials, who ordered their removal.

The buildings surrounding the Clock Factory are not directly related to the factory itself. The Gilbert Manufacturing Company did own extensive tracts of land to the south, but these were developed as privately owned house lots in the 19th century. None of the adjacent houses appear to have been built or used as worker houses. A house across Route 8 was used for a short time as the factory's office; the house probably pre-dates the factory (though it has been extensively modernized) and for most of the period was a privately operated store and later a print shop.

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 type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Criteria A, C

Specific dates 1871, 1897 - built **Builder/Architect** Not known

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Gilbert Clock Factory is historically significant as a relatively rare artifact of one of Connecticut's most important 19th-century industries, the production of low-cost clocks, and as an industrial complex which played a large role in the history of the locality (Criterion A). Once a possession only for the rich, clocks in the 19th century became so inexpensive that nearly every family could afford one. Connecticut entrepreneurs developed innovative clock-production techniques which made mass-produced clocks possible, and consequently Connecticut became the center of the clock industry for all of America. Of the many businesses which were started, that of William L. Gilbert became one of the largest and most successful in the country. Dating from 1871, the present factory complex reflects the period when Gilbert's company became a leading clock manufacturer. The factory buildings are also significant because they embody the typical design features of late 19th-century industrial architecture: near-flat roofs, brick-pier walls, long and narrow proportions, and a stylish tower (Criterion C). For almost one hundred years after the start of the present complex, until it closed in 1964, the Gilbert Clock Company was among the largest employers in Winsted, and the company's founder sponsored many philanthropic activities which improved life in the community.

Like so many others, Gilbert had his start in Bristol, the center of Connecticut's clock industry before the Civil War, but in 1840 he moved to Winsted where he took over a small clock factory which had been built about 1825. Here Gilbert began making the brass movements and ornate wooden cases which were the hallmarks of the Connecticut clock. Cost savings through innovations in woodworking machinery and brass stamping technology made these clocks affordable by a large portion of the population. Clockmakers like Gilbert became prosperous by using mass-production techniques to serve a mass market. Gilbert produced a wide variety of wall and shelf clocks, at one point offering 112 different models to choose from. By the 1870s, when the case shop which forms part of the present complex was built, Gilbert was one of the largest Connecticut firms, with a significant share of the national market for low-cost clocks.

The Gilbert Clock Factory represents the Connecticut clock industry at its apogee. Prior to the 1870s most clocks were produced in small wood-frame shops employing fewer than 50 workmen. But in the 1870s certain companies were able to build large brick factories, organize the work using cheaper labor and more efficient production techniques, and expand their workforce to several hundred employees. These companies dominated the market and became successful, while the dozens of smaller Connecticut clockmakers and subcontractors disappeared within a few years. Gilbert Manufacturing Company was one of the successful firms. From only sixty employees in the 1860s, the company grew to about 200 in the period immediately following the 1871 building program, and continued to grow in the decades thereafter.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Pidgeon, Roger. Map of the Borough of Winsted. Philadelphia, 1896.

Bailey, Chris H. Two Hundred Years of American Clocks and Watches. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1975. (continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approx. 3.75 acres

Quadrangle name Winsted

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A

1	8	6	6	1	0	0	0	4	6	4	3	6	5	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 nominated property includes all surviving Gilbert Clock-related buildings and is shown on Winchester Assessor Map 139 as Lot 9, Block 34.

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

state	code	county	N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce Clouette & Matthew Roth, partners, edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Resource Consultants date February 23, 1984

street & number The Colt Armory telephone (203) 547-0268
55 Van Dyke Avenue

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

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.

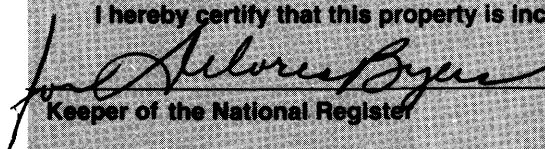
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date 11/2/84

For HCRS use only

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 12-13-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Gilbert Clock Factory

Continuation sheet Winsted (Winchester), CT Item number

For NPS use only	
received	
date entered	DEC 13 1984

8

Page

1

Significance (continued):

Although the 1870s movement shop and other parts of the historic complex have been destroyed, what remains is both physically and functionally significant. In their brick-pier construction, overall proportions, and other architectural features, the remaining buildings are similar to those which have been lost. Moreover, the case shop and finishing shop represent one of the key aspects of the Connecticut clock, the decorative wooden cases encrusted with turnings, jig-sawn motifs, and appliquees and finished with imitation marble, black lacquer and figured-wood exteriors. A variety of richly detailed styles helped sell Gilbert clocks in a period when home furnishings were expected to be highly ornamental.

There are few former clock factories of comparable age and importance still extant in Connecticut. Examples of the earlier small wooden shops, c.1850, form part of the Seth Thomas complex in Thomaston, and there are several c.1890-1900 buildings at the E.N. Welch/Sessions Clock Company site in Forestville (Bristol). Only the movement shop of the Waterbury Clock Company (built in 1860 as a knitting mill) and the New Haven Clock Company complex remain as analagous factories from this period of consolidation in the Connecticut clock industry.

Architectural Significance

The Gilbert Clock case and finishing shops are typical of the industrial architecture of the late 19th-century. Though built more than 25 years apart, both buildings exhibit the brick-pier (sometimes termed "pilaster mill") construction which began to supercede earlier techniques after the Civil War. Unlike earlier masonry mills in which the walls were constructed of a uniform thickness, these mills have thick piers demarcating the bays and corresponding to major floor-support structural elements. As a result, the window areas in between could become curtain walls; the overall window area could be increased, and there was probaby some savings in the total amount of brick needed as well. At the same time, most factories were abandoning the gable roof in favor of low-pitched or flat roofs which had less wasted space, another characteristic of the period evident in both Gilbert buildings.

The form of the mills also reflects the demands of industrial production. Their long, narrow footprint was a consequence both of limited artificial lighting capability and the need to efficiently accomodate the line shafting which transmitted power from the central turbine and steam engine. Clock manufacture involved both highly mechanized and handwork production techniques. Case production required veneer saws, spindle shapers, and other power equipment, as well as varnish and gilt applied by hand. In 1887 the case shop was configured with the saws and other woodworking machines on the first floor, bench work and gilding on the second and third, and varnishing and finishing on the top floor. After the finishing shop was built in 1897, the top floor was used for storage, inspection occupied the third floor, woodworking was moved to the second floor, and a plating room set up on the first.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Gilbert Clock Factory

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Continuation sheet Winsted (Winchester), CT Item number 9 Page 1

Bibliography (continued):

Bailey, O.H. View of Winsted, Conn., 1877. Boston, 1877.

"Illustrated Catalogue, Wm. L. Gilbert Clock Co." Winsted, 1881; reprinted by the American Clock and Watch Museum, Bristol, CT, 1980.

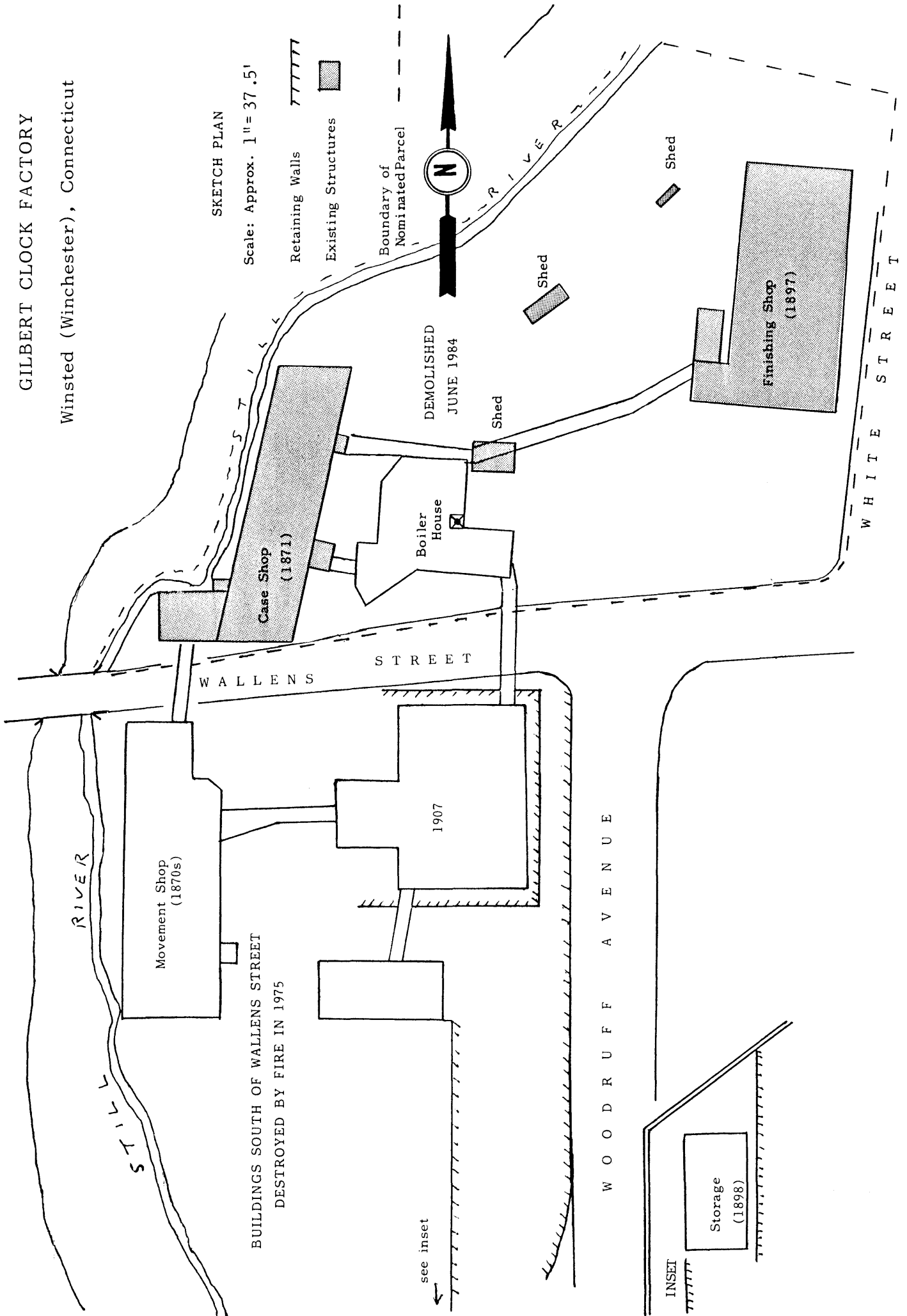
U.S. Census Office. Census of Industry schedules, 1870-1880, manuscript, State Library, Hartford, Connecticut.

"The William L. Gilbert Clock Corp., Winsted, Conn." Hartford: Factory Insurance Association, March 12, 1956. Insurance map.

Winsted Insurance Map. New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., 1887.

GILBERT CLOCK FACTORY

Winsted (Winchester), Connecticut



SKETCH PLAN

Scale: Approx. 1" = 37.5'

Retaining Walls

Existing Structures

Boundary of Nominated Parcel

see inset

Case Shop (1871)

Boiler House

Movement Shop (1870s)

1907

Finishing Shop (1897)

Storage (1898)

INSET

DEMOLISHED JUNE 1984

RIVER

STILLVILLE

WALLENS STREET

WOODRUFF AVENUE

WHITE STREET