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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

OCT 01 1993

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 Chittenden, Giles, Homestead

other names/site number Wright, Smith, Farm; Catamount Family Center

2. Location

street & number Governor Chittenden Road N/A not for publication

city or town Williston N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Chittenden code 007 zip code 05495

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.)

[Signature] 9/30/93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office  
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] 10/29/93  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**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	
5	3	buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
7	3	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

Agriculture/Animal Facility

Agriculture/Agricultural Field

Commercial/Business

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Agriculture/Animal Facility

Agriculture/Agricultural Field

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Colonial Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

weatherboard

roof slate

other wood

concrete

**Narrative Description**

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

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Williston, Chittenden County, VT

On a high plateau in the northeast corner of the town of Williston, Vermont, sits the Giles Chittenden property, now known as the Catamount Family Center, belonging to James M. and Lucille B. McCullough. Approximately two miles northeast of the Williston village center, on Gov. Chittenden Road, the 426 acre property contains five historic buildings, one historic structure, flat pastures, rolling fields, and forested woodlands. In 1796 Vermont Governor Thomas Chittenden built the stately Federal style house for his son Giles, making this the oldest standing house in Williston. A farm of small-diversified agriculture during the early nineteenth century, it later became the home of Smith Wright, an American pioneer in cold storage plants, and the site of his large poultry processing operation. Wright made significant architectural alterations to the Main House around 1910 in the Colonial Revival style. In 1991 the McCullough family adapted the landscape for orienteering, and visitors to the Catamount Family Center can hike, bike and cross-country ski on the varied and numerous historic trails that transverse the property. The property consists of a group of closely related buildings clustered along both sides of Gov. Chittenden Road, not far from the site of Governor Chittenden's home. Centered around the 1796 Main House, the related structures include the c. 1850 Sheep/ Bull Barn, a c. 1885 Office (now a dwelling), a c. 1915 Foreman's House, a c. 1920 Spring House, and a c. 1880 Cistern. Taken together, these buildings illustrate Vermont's historical and architectural heritage from the late 1700s to the 1940s. The house, related structures, and landscape retain their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

**1. Main House, 1796/ c. 1910**Main Block and brick ell

The Main House was built in 1796 as a Federal style, two-story, gable roof, five (front) - by - two (side) bay, brick house consisting of an east facing main block with a contemporaneous, rear brick ell at the northwest corner. Around 1910, the house was renovated both inside and out in the Colonial Revival style. At this time the original east facade central entrance was replaced by a simple set of french doors fronted by a new elaborate, Colonial Revival style, shed roof sun porch. The main entrance was relocated and centered on the north facade, and it was sheltered by a handsome, Colonial Revival style entry porch. A one and one-half story, gable roof, clapboard sided, wood frame ell, offset to the south on

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the gable (west) end of the brick ell appears to be a c. 1860 addition. A one-story, clapboard sided, hip roof ell projecting from the south gable end of the main block appears to be a c. 1910 addition. A one-story enclosed shed roof appendage, which spans the south facade of the brick ell between the main block and the clapboard sided ell, also appears to be a c. 1910 addition.

Twin interior end brick chimneys with corbelled caps are located on the ridge line of the main block. Gray slate roofing shingles cover both main block and ell. The main block and ell are unified by structural brickwork laid in a Dutch Cross pattern, and pedimented gables adorn both ends of the main block and the ell gable end. A distinctive original, enriched full entablature wraps around both main block and ell at the cornice, and is embellished on the east, north and west sides by wooden dentils and a decorative carved frieze. Both main block and contemporaneous ell have a slightly raised and projecting fieldstone foundation, which is topped on the exterior with bricks laid on end and angled toward the house. The foundation is faced with wide lengths of coursed, pecked granite topped with quarter-round sections above the angled bricks. The windows in the original house are six over six sash windows with flat arch brick lintels and wooden sills; most of these windows appear to be replacement c. 1840 sash windows in original openings with a delicate architrave or picture frame surround; several windows dating from c. 1910, have a heavier quarter-round surround, and generally have a narrower brick flat arch painted to look as large as the older lintels. Many windows have louvered shutters, some have old wooden two-light storms, others have new metal combination storm windows.

The current front (north) facade, dating from c. 1910, is created by the adjoining flush wall surface of the main block north gable end and the ell's north eaves-side. The gable end has c. 1840 windows evenly spaced below the pediment on each story. The c. 1910 main entrance and entrance porch are roughly centered on the north facade, a c. 1910 window flanks the porch to the right and three c. 1840 windows are irregularly placed above and right of the porch. The one by one bay, gable roof entrance porch has concrete steps, wide concrete side rails and a concrete deck, which is detailed with broad recessed panels and is level with the top of the house foundation. Triple tuscan columns at the front, and single columns at the rear next to the facade, support the full entablature with denticulated frieze, and the molded cornice and

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gable pediment which is also embellished with dentils. In addition, the porch has a beaded board ceiling, square stick balustrade, and sheet metal roofing. The entrance surround features half-height leaded glass sidelights above molded panels, half height entry pilasters, and a full entablature above with molded denticulated cornice. The Colonial Revival style door has a large beveled glass upper light, bottom panels with bolection molding, and a wooden screen door.

The original front facade, or eastern eaves-side of the main block, has five regularly spaced c. 1840 sash windows on the second floor, and similar first floor windows on each end directly below the end windows above. The large shed roof, two (front) by one (side) bay, Colonial Revival style porch has details exactly like those on the front porch with sheet metal roofing, molded cornice, denticulated full entablature, triple tuscan columns in the front corners, single columns to the rear, concrete deck and steps with concrete closed side rails and recessed panel details. The triangular tympanum below the roof on each side (north and south) is covered with narrow, vertical boards. Large paired twenty-light windows with narrow, molded spandrel panels span each side bay and the right front bay. The left front bay has a central multi-light pass door flanked by narrow square entry columns and narrow ten-light windows with spandrel panels similar to the other multi-light windows on the porch. The porch interior reveals a brick fireplace at the base of the wall chimney, a tile floor, and a wooden ceiling.

The south gable end of the main block has one c. 1840 six over six window on each floor on the left half of the facade. The corresponding window to the right on the second floor was enclosed with bricks when the hip-roof ell was added. A bulkhead through the main block south end foundation wall is located directly under the left side windows. The two (front) by one (side) bay hip-roof ell with slate roofing shingles, clapboard siding, fieldstone and concrete foundation is offset to the right on the south end of the main block; the east wall of the ell and the main block are flush with one another. The ell's south facade has a narrow one over one sash window, right, and a centrally located entrance with a new door and old cornice cap above. The west facade has a centrally placed, original two over two sash window with cornice cap above.

The west eaves-side of the main block has two c. 1840 six over six sash windows widely spaced on the second floor, and a c. 1910 six

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over six sash window just left of what appears to have been a brick infilled former opening on the first floor, far right.

The south facade, second story, of the brick ell has a c. 1840 six over six sash window, left, and a paired c. 1910 window, right. The shed roof projection spanning the length of the brick ell has sheet metal roofing, three c. 1930 paired six-light casement windows, and what appears to be a small stained glass Queen Anne window placed within a larger opening on the far right. A brick chimney is centered on the south roof slope near the eaves.

The west gable end of the brick ell has two second story window openings regularly spaced on the left half of the facade; the openings have been filled in with bricks and are obscured by closed shutters. The former window openings are visible from the interior of the house. The use of a simple wooden lintel rather than a brick flat arch on these windows point to the modest detailing on what was originally the rear of the house. The large window opening below, which appears to date from c. 1910, has a single light replacement glass.

Wood frame ell

This one-story, gable roof ell with fieldstone and concrete foundation may have originally been a barn, or several connected barns moved to this site. According to the owner, the ell is constructed in three parts, with three distinctive types of boards and framing, the central section being the most recent. From the exterior, however, these sections are not noticeable as the trim details and windows are generally consistent throughout and point to a c. 1860 date. The ell's late Greek Revival trim includes a deep raking eaves, medium wide frieze, corner and water table boards, a high kneewall, and narrow drip molding over many windows and doors. An interior brick chimney is located near each end (east and west) of the ridge line.

The front (north) facade appears to have fenestration that is historic, with drip moldings over the doors and windows. A square six light kneewall window is located near each end of the facade. On the first story, doors are directly below the kneewall windows, a four over four sash window is located on the far left and a six over six sash window is just left of center on the facade. A new "Tree Farm" sign flanks the right door on the left, a "Shop" sign is to the right of the door, and a broad set of new board steps leads to this door.

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The west gable end has two six over six sash windows regularly spaced on both stories.

The rear (south) facade has a square, six-light window, right. The first story has a six over six sash window below the kneewall window, an old four-panel door, far right; a new metal door just right of center, and an old, square, two-light outhouse window, left.

Interior of main block and brick ell

Cellar

The fieldstone cellar extends the width and length of the main block, and the southern half of the brick ell. Original hand hewn beams and logs make up the framing members in the cellar. A massive brick and stone chimney base remains for each of the chimneys of the main block. Evidence of the original cellar stairs, now missing, remain in a large open stair well under the main floor front hall stairs. The first floor door frame for the former stairway remains on the west side of the stairwell (visible from the cellar) and is now enclosed by the curved hall wall on the first story. Also visible from the old stairwell is the open, back side of the northeast parlor south wall, which has brick infill or nogging. The area in the cellar under this wall has remains of a former brick wall with an opening on the west end, which would have enclosed the space under the parlor. A root cellar enclosed with machine planed beaded board lumber and a twelve-light window is located in the northwest corner under the main block. The door opening for the bulkhead is located to the right of the south end chimney base. An old gas generator and lines are no longer used but are intact in the cellar, and much of the old knob and tube electrical wiring is still in service.

The portion of the cellar under the ell has a stairway along the north wall, which descends from the kitchen, and a new concrete block replacement wall makes up a large part of the foundation under the south end of the brick ell.

A full fieldstone cellar constructed of smaller stones is located under the south end hip roof ell and is connected by means of an opening to the large cellar located directly left of south end chimney base.

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First story

Around 1910 the interior of the house incurred major renovations in the Colonial Revival style. It appears that during this renovation, the floor plan and large rooms with eleven foot ceiling height remained relatively intact, with the exception of changes to the northwest corner of the main block and brick ell where the kitchen and woodshed/milkroom most likely were located. The changes seem to include the central hall for the new north side main entrance, a new dining room, and a new hall with curved walls connecting the original central hall with the new entrance hall. The kitchen appears to have been moved to the area along the south side of the brick ell and the adjacent south side shed roof extension. Over the years several distinctive gas lighting fixtures have been converted to electricity.

Colonial Revival style trim throughout the house includes softwood window and door surrounds, many with a varnish finish, and hardwood narrow board flooring in most rooms. Most if not all main block doors have a heavy molded surround, and windows have wide splayed reveals. The original central hall has a front stairway with a heavy turned newel post and delicate turned balustrade, a hanging glass lighting fixture is centered in a molded plaster medallion. The front (northeast) parlor is the most elaborately detailed with plaster reeded crown molding at the top of the walls, a curved wall at the southwest corner, and recessed panel reveals at the windows and doors. Fluted classical columns and heavy cornice moldings embellish the wide west wall door opening. Similar classically inspired fluted columns and plaster cast swags and floral motifs adorn the north wall fireplace mantel and the framed mirror above, as well as the wide, glass-enclosed book case along the south wall. The dining room is panelled with oak wainscotting to a height of approximately 5' and a brick fireplace is located on the south wall.

Second Story

A vaulted ballroom with an east-west axis originally spanned the north half of the second floor main block. During the c. 1910 renovation, the space was divided into two bedrooms, but the ceiling was left intact in the northeast corner bedroom. From the upstairs hall an arched doorway leads to the brick ell, originally a single room with high ceiling and plastered, unpainted walls. During the renovation the ceiling in this space was lowered and the room was divided into two rooms, a nursery and maid's room. The maid's room, on the southern half of the ell, has distinctive

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varnished built-in cabinetry.

**Attic**

The main block attic is framed with log rafters, and the brick ell attic space has logs and up-and-down sawn rafters and a ridge pole. A rectangular break in the sheathing around the ridge pole in the west gable end of the brick ell suggests the possible location of a former chimney here. The attic space created between the two ceiling levels in the ell (original and later lower ceiling) was insulated in the 1940s by Jim McCullough's father with a synthetic material called Rock Wool.

Interior of small hipped roof south end ell

The interior of this ell retains original plaster and lath, and beaded board walls and ceiling. Through the south side door, one enters a vestibule with public restroom to the left, and private family rooms on either side (east and west).

Interior of frame ell

The first floor of this ell has a small entrance vestibule at the east end, which serves as a back entrance to the house on the left, and has an entrance on the right to the large, open, customer service area for the Catamount Family Center on the first floor of the frame ell. A now unused, but intact, enclosed interior outhouse is located at the southwest corner of this ell. In the second story, a wall, now removed, formerly ran north-south dividing the space into parts, the west end functioning as a small apartment in the 1920s. The box chimney for the apartment remains, centered on the west gable end wall.

**2. Sheep/Bull Barn, c. 1850**

This long, rectangular, one and one-half story, five (front) by one (side) bay, gable roof eaves-front barn with vertical board siding, sheet metal roofing and a stone foundation is set back on the north side of Governor Chittenden Road just east of the main house. The frame consists of a combination of up and down sawn, post and beam, mortise and tenon construction and later circular sawn lumber. In 1964 the owners put in new floor joists for the second floor.

The front (south facade), according to the owner, was formerly open on the left half of the ground level. Recent infill in this section consists of a new, hinged, vertical board, double door on the left, and a square fixed six-light window inserted within new

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vertical board siding on the right. A hinged hay door is centered above the double door. The right half of the front facade features a new vertical board door, which slides on an exterior track, left, a square window with single-light replacement window, center, and a horizontal opening on the far right with an opaque fiberglass panel insert.

The west gable end has a centrally placed hinged, vertical board hay door on the upper level, and a metal stove pipe projecting from the facade on the far left side.

The rear (north) facade has a hinged double door on the left and two square openings with single light glass inserts regularly spaced on the facade to the right.

The east gable end has a hay door similar to that on the west gable end.

Currently, the enclosed west end is used for storage, three horse stalls are located in the east end, and the hay loft holds more stored items.

**3. Office/ Cottage, c. 1885/ c. 1915**

Just east of the Main House and slightly set back from the south side of Governor Chittenden Road, this small, rectangular, vernacular Colonial Revival style, one-story, three (front) by two (side) bay structure, has a truncated hip roof, gray and pink slate roofing shingles, clapboard siding, and a concrete foundation. Trim details include flat corner and frieze boards, molded cornice boards, and molded cornice caps above the large one-over-one sash windows.

A flat roof, one by one bay entrance vestibule projection is centered on the front (north) facade. A small, vertical, Queen Anne style window centered on each side facade of the entrance projection, features a large center light surrounded by small square lights of stained glass in rose, amber and marbled white/green; each window is protected by a new plexiglass storm window. The front door has a similar Queen Anne style window and three lower panels with bolection molding. Flanking the entrance, on the front facade are paired one-over-one sash windows with new combination storm/screen windows.

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The east side has a paired one-over-one sash window centered on the facade, and a three-light horizontal cellar window within the top of the foundation.

The rear (south) facade features a centrally located brick wall chimney with a corbelled cap, a one-over-one window left of the chimney, and a smaller one-over-one window, right.

The west facade has two one-over-one windows offset to the right and a cellar window similar to that on the east side centered within the top of the foundation.

Originally located in North Williston as the office for the cold storage business of former owner Smith Wright, the building was moved to this location by the Wright family c. 1915, to provide housing for their cook and chauffeur. The house now serves as a dwelling for a member of the McCullough family.

**4. Foreman's House, c. 1915**

This vernacular style, 1 1/2-story, 2 x 2 bay, gambrel roof house has a 1-story, rear, shed roof addition. The house has clapboard siding with corner board trim, new metal roofing and a concrete foundation. The left bay main entrance on the gambrel front has a multi-panel door. The windows are primarily 2/2 double hung sash windows with plain wood surrounds. A brick wall chimney is located on the rear facade and a brick interior chimney is located on the east roof slope. Owned by Mary Hanson, daughter of Julia Wright, the house now is rented as a single family dwelling.

**5. Cistern, c. 1880**

Located out in the field south of the Main House, on a gently sloping rise of land leading up "Goose Hill", this wide, fieldstone lined cistern has a dome-shaped cap with a central raised opening on the top. The cap is constructed of early concrete. An overflow pipe extends from the side of the cistern. According to Jim McCullough, this cistern, through gravity flow, provided water for the Main House and was connected to a water supply that was located back in the woods on the southeast corner of the property. At the water source, a water ram, kept in perpetual motion by flowing water, was set to pump water to the cistern.

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**6. Spring House, c. 1920**

Located within the horse/sheep pasture directly south of the Main House, this somewhat deteriorating Spring House is a small, rectangular, wood frame, one-story, gable roof structure. Constructed with wire nails, the Spring House has sheet metal roofing, clapboard siding (although vertical boards covert the south eaves side), and a stone foundation. Although the Spring House is no longer used, the spring water is good and the McCulloughs have plans to possibly connect this water source to the kitchen in the Main House at a future date.

**7. Outhouse, 1979**

This outhouse is a small, narrow, one-story, shed roof, one (front) by one (side) bay structure with sheet metal roofing, exposed rafter tails, vertical board siding, dimension lumber frame and a concrete block and stone foundation. A hinged vertical board door is located on the front (northeast) facade and a horizontal, sliding, metal, combination glass and screen window is located on the southeast facade. This structure has been designated non-contributing due to recent age.

**8. Outhouse, 1979**

Nearly identical to structure number 7, this outhouse is a small, narrow, one-story, shed roof, one (front) by one (side) bay structure with sheet metal roofing, exposed rafter tails, vertical board siding, dimension lumber frame and a concrete block and stone foundation. A hinged vertical board door is located on the front (northwest) facade and a horizontal, sliding, metal, combination glass and screen window is located on the northeast facade. This structure has been designated non-contributing due to recent age.

**9. House, 1979**

A vernacular style log cabin with a concrete foundation, this single family dwelling was built by the McCullough family for their cross-country ski business. Due to its recent age, the structure has been designated as non-contributing.

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**10. Landscape**

Fields, pastures, woodland, stonewalls, vistas

The land on the Giles Chittenden property is approximately half open fields and pastures, and half closed woodland. The Main House and related structures sit in about the middle of the open lands, and the forests and low vegetation extend to the north and eastern ends of the property.

Much of the land remains in agricultural use. Most of the land in the southern rectangular section, south of the main house is hayed annually or is used for pasture. Additional hayfields and pasture are located in the central western portion of the property and an area north of the parking area is a tree farm.

The wide expanse of open fields to the east of the Main House provide sweeping views in an easterly direction from north to south. On the northeast end of the property an historic vista, known as "Indian Lookout", has panoramic views over the Winooski Valley to the east as far as Camel's Hump and Mount Mansfield, which are considered among the most scenic mountain peaks in central Vermont. "Goose Hill", the rise of land south of the Main House where the old road is still visible, is a picturesque expanse of fields bisected by the old north-south road, which passed just east of the main house.

Many of the historic field patterns are still defined by old stone walls, mature plantings, and historic trails and roads. The original road to the Giles Chittenden homestead, a north-south road passing in front of the east facade, (and original front facade of the house) remains as a gravel road, now mostly dirt and grass, although distinctive old curbing stones parallel the edge of the road in several places. Mature black locust trees, believed by Jim McCullough to have been planted when the house was built, tower over the east side of the house along the old road, and mature maples and stone walls, probably from early in this century, parallel Gov. Chittenden Road along the north, later (c. 1910), main facade of the house. The current, c. 1910 main entrance is fronted by a rather formal circular drive which dates from the early twentieth century and encloses a yard planted with mature barberry and hydrangea bushes. A huge old apple tree and other fruit trees are in back (south) yard of the Main House. A barbed wire fence encloses the pasture to the west and south of the Main House and an old stone wall follows the south boundary of the fenced pasture. Just south of this, another pasture is defined by

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stone walls. North of Gov. Chittenden Road, the several large, historic pastures and fields are bordered by stone walls. The owner claims part of an old stump fence, remnants of which are rare today, remain on the property. Newly planted shrubs, trees and a rock garden front the Cottage and a vegetable garden lies to the east. A new parking area is located across the road and northwest of the Main House.

In the field across the old road, east of the Springhouse, are found ruins of the old Picking House foundation, a former late nineteenth century poultry processing plant. Due to the lack of significant evidence visible in the remains of the old foundation, this ruin has been designated as non-contributing due to lack of integrity.

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
Agriculture

Period of Significance

1796-1943

Significant Dates

1796
c.1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

Chittenden, Giles, Homestead  
Name of Property

Chittenden County, Vermont  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 426

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

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

3 

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

2 

1	8
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6	5	5	7	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	9	2	4	2	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

4 

1	8
---	---

6	5	6	0	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	9	2	3	8	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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 Elizabeth F. Pritchett  
organization Liz Pirtchett Associates date July 1, 1993  
street & number 58 East State Street telephone (802) 229-1035  
city or town Montpelier state VT zip code 05602

**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 Multiple--see continuation sheet  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8

1

Chittenden, Giles, Homestead  
Williston, Chittenden County, VT

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The Giles Chittenden Homestead in Williston, Vermont is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its contribution to the broad patterns of Vermont history. The Main House was built by Thomas Chittenden, one of the original settlers in Williston and the first Governor of Vermont, for his son Giles, a farmer. The property was later owned and farmed by Smith Wright, who established a thriving poultry business in North Williston, and is noteworthy for his innovative cold storage plant built in 1876, among the first of its type in the United States. The Giles Chittenden Homestead also qualifies for statewide significance under National Register Criterion C for being an excellent example of the early Vermont Federal style of architecture embodied by its sophisticated two-story, brick, Main House with high-quality Colonial Revival style modifications displayed in many significant interior features and two elaborate porches. The house and related structures, set in an intact surrounding landscape comprising 426 acres, retain their workmanship, setting, locations, feeling and association. 1796 and c. 1910 are the dates of significance for the property.

The town of Williston, in the center of Chittenden County, is bounded on the north by the Winooski River which separates it from the town of Essex, on the east by Jericho and Richmond, on the south by Hinesburg and St. George, and on the west by the Muddy Brook and Burlington. The town was chartered by Governor Wentworth on June 7, 1763 and it was named in honor of Samuel Willis, one of the original grantees.

As with many Vermont towns, settlement commenced prior to the Revolutionary War, only to be abandoned until after the war when the climate was again safe for settlement to begin anew. Thomas Chittenden and others, mostly from Connecticut and western Massachusetts, were the earliest settlers in Williston, arriving first in 1774, and returning after the war. By 1786 the town was organized.

From its earliest days, much of the land in Williston was considered good farm land with rich loam soil. The town is located in the Winooski Valley which forms a natural corridor between Burlington and Montpelier. Following this corridor, the Winooski Turnpike (Vermont Route 2) built in 1805, became important for east-west trade and towns such as Williston along this road prospered. From a population in 1791 of 471 people, the town grew to 1,246 in 1820, and by 1824 seven school districts had been

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established, with four saw mills, one fulling mill, three stores, four taverns, one tannery and one distillery in operation.

In 1787 Thomas Chittenden came with his family to settle on land overlooking the Winooski River in the northeastern part of town. On his large parcel of land he built a stately brick home where he lived with his wife and ten children. He operated a large farm, and as Governor of Vermont he played a major role in the organization of the State and the administration of its affairs. A distinguished citizen in Vermont, Governor Chittenden was also prominent in local politics until his death in 1797.

Thomas Chittenden built homes for each of his four sons, on land he owned adjacent to his own house. The distinctive Federal style brick house built in 1796 for his son Giles is believed to be the oldest standing house in Williston. Giles, who lived from 1768 - 1819, married Polly Hawley, and with her he had six children. He was a farmer, and not so interested in politics as his father and brothers, although he was a Town Representative to the General Assembly and Colonel of Militia. During his lifetime, Giles became involved with his family's legal entanglements and debts, and eventually sold a large portion of his property including his house to Thomas Chittenden (probably his nephew) of Jericho, Vermont. Giles died insolvent and upon his death, the property was quitclaimed to his son Eli, although his wife Polly was able to keep the house and a small parcel of land as her Widows' Dower.<sup>1</sup>

When Giles Chittenden was farming his land between 1796 and 1819 agriculturalists in Williston were primarily involved in home-use subsistence farming. By the 1820s farmers in Vermont were beginning to expand to more diversified types of farming to include raising sheep, horses and cattle. Some agricultural products such as hay, oats and potatoes were grown for sale. By 1840, Williston farmers produced 19,970 bushels of oats- more than any other town in Chittenden County, and they harvested 42,529 bushels of potatoes and 4,926 tons of hay which were among the highest figures in the county.<sup>2</sup>

Probably not too many years after Giles' death and into the early

<sup>1</sup> "Look around Essex and Williston"

<sup>2</sup> 1840 Census

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1870s, the Homestead was owned by Charles E. Miller. Miller continued to farm the land and according to the U.S. Agricultural Census Records appears to have maintained and later expanded the farm started by Giles Chittenden.

By the 1850s Charles Miller owned one hundred seventy improved acres, twenty unimproved acres and the farm was valued at \$9,000. In 1859, his livestock, valued at \$2,000 included eleven horses, four milch cows, one hundred fifty sheep, and one swine. That year he produced fifty-eight bushels of wheat, one thousand bushels of Indian corn, four bushels of oats, nine hundred pounds of wool, four hundred pounds of Irish potatoes, five hundred pounds of butter, two hundred pounds of cheese, and sixty-five tons of hay. The value of the animals slaughtered was \$100.<sup>3</sup>

The only extant agricultural building on the Chittenden Homestead today is the Bull/ Sheep Barn, which dates from the years Miller owned the farm. The McCulloughs call this structure the Bull Barn, although they don't remember it being used to house bulls. Its form, with a ground level opening and southern exposure, is characteristic of Sheep Barns in Vermont. As noted in the 1859 Census records, Miller owned a large number of sheep with a high wool yield compared to many other farmers in Williston, thus it is very possible that the Bull/Sheep barn was built to house Miller's growing flock during the 1850s. As occurred on other Vermont farms, this barn may have later been used to house other livestock such as bulls, and cows when dairying replaced sheep farming after 1860. Today the structure functions as a horse barn, and for storage of both hay and equipment relating to the Catamount Family Center.

By 1870 Charles Miller owned two hundred improved acres, and twenty-three acres of woodland. The value of the farm had risen to \$11,000. Miller apparently needed additional help with his farm operation as he paid \$800 in wages in 1869, high in comparison to other Williston farms that year. As was the state-wide trend in the 1860s, Miller began to move from sheep farming to dairying, particularly in the manufacturing of cheese and butter. Owning fewer sheep and more cows, Miller in 1869 had only sixty sheep and twenty-seven milch cows, along with six horses, and four swine. The livestock, valued at \$3,000 was high for a Williston farm. Crop

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Agricultural Census for 1860

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production that year was also high at one hundred twenty bushels of spring wheat, six hundred bushels oats, and two hundred pounds of maple sugar. Wool production was down, but butter - at one thousand two hundred pounds, and cheese - at eight thousand one hundred pounds, comprised a substantial portion of the annual farm yield.<sup>4</sup>

In 1873 Smith Wright bought the Chittenden Homestead, a farm which was recorded as "one hundred sixty-six acres of fertile soil which supports thirty cows and other stock in proportion".<sup>5</sup> Smith Wright, believed to be of Scotch descent, was born in 1823, and lived the first half of his life in nearby St. George where he earned a reputation as a hard-working, successful farmer. As a traveling salesman he introduced keg oysters to this part of the nation.<sup>6</sup> In poor health, and considering retirement, Wright moved to Williston in 1865. Failing to slow down, he purchased several farms in Williston which prospered under his management, before he bought the Chittenden Homestead. During the years 1872-84 served as the Williston Postmaster.<sup>7</sup>

Wright continued to expand the farm after Miller, so that by 1879 it had grown to thirty acres of tilled land, two hundred twenty acres of meadows, pasture and orchards, and twenty-five acres of woodland and forest. The farm was valued at \$17,000 that year and he paid hired help fifty-two weeks of the year. With fifty cows he sold or sent thirteen thousand five hundred twenty-three gallons of milk to butter or cheese factories in 1879, and twelve thousand eight hundred eighty-two pounds of butter were made on the farm. He continued to raise sheep, and produced high harvests of barley, corn, oats, Irish potatoes and apples.

Wright ventured into the poultry business, and around 1880 he constructed a large and expensive refrigeration building for meat storage in North Williston, adjacent to the Vermont Central Railroad. The temperature of the plant could be regulated and would

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Agricultural Census for 1870

<sup>5</sup> "Look around Essex and Williston"

<sup>6</sup> Rann, p. 805

<sup>7</sup> Ibid p. 806

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hold over 500 pounds of meat. The success of this cold storage operation gained Wright nation-wide fame and he had customers from New York and Boston for whom he stored goods. In 1883 his sale to one firm, of \$45,000 worth of poultry, was the largest single sale of poultry to date in the nation.

Jim McCullough recalls stories he heard as a child of Wright's turkey/goose drives from Montreal to Williston, during which masses of birds were herded over tar and gravel to coat their feet. Poultry was also transported to Williston by railroad, and stories abound about geese being lead up "Goose Hill" to the farm processing plant for slaughter, the hill "white as snow" with geese.<sup>8</sup> Ruins of the foundation of the poultry processing plant, or "Picking House", are still evident on the Landscape across the old road just east of the Spring House.

In 1880 Williston had a population of 1,342 and 10 school districts. Dairying was the principal agricultural feature and the town was "inhabited by some of the wealthiest and most successful farmers in the state"<sup>9</sup> Wright was among these wealthy farmers. Besides farming and operating the poultry business, between 1881 and 1883 he was a partner in Wright and Harris, a mercantile business dealing in dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes, hardware, drugs and medicines. In 1886 he was elected State Senator.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, when specialty dairy farms such as Wright's manufactured cheese and butter, barns were made larger and additions were often added to earlier structures. Like other successful Vermont farmers, Wright most likely either built new, or expanded older barns for his large farm operation. A photograph in the possession of the McCullough family, dating from the early twentieth century, shows the Wright farm dairy complex with a variety of connected gable roof components, including a ground level stable barn, ice house, and carriage barn topped with ventilating cupolas. Unfortunately, this large barn complex, which paralleled Gov. Chittenden Road opposite the Main House, burned in the 1960s. Dairy farming on the Homestead ceased in 1954, and after the barns burned, they were not

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<sup>8</sup> Interview, J. McCullough

<sup>9</sup> Rann, p. 704

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rebuilt.

Smith Wright had five children with his wife Carrissa Loggins. Twin boys, Clayton John and Clinton Smith, were born in 1864 and in 1897 the farm was conveyed to the twins by their father.<sup>10</sup> Jim McCullough's mother, Julia Wright, is the daughter of Clinton and continues to live in the Main House with her son and his family.

Following Wright family's successes in business and farming, the family apparently acquired the funds and the desire to update the Main House in the then fashionable Colonial Revival style. Moving the entrance to the north side, a substantial, stylistic and handsome sun porch was centered on the former main facade. The main entrance was relocated on the north side of the house, and sheltered with another grand Colonial Revival porch. The interior was redecorated with oak panelled wainscoting in the dining room, and the front parlor was updated with plaster cast classical details which embellished a new fireplace mantel, a large glass enclosed bookcase, and crown molding. Since this c. 1910 renovation, little has been done to alter the distinctive Federal/ Colonial Revival style house.

The farm continued to prosper during the early twentieth century. Clinton and Clayton added another two hundred eighty-seven acres of land to the property, so that by the 1920s the farm's boundaries appeared similar to what they are today.

A significant structure that remains from the years when dairying was probably at its peak on the farm, is the Foreman's House, built around 1915 to provide housing for the farm manager. Typical of the more prosperous Vermont farms at the turn-of-the-century, the farm manager was considered an important part of an agricultural operation and merited his own house for himself and his family. This significant vernacular style house remains intact on the property today and continues to function as a single family dwelling.

At about the same time, the Wright family moved the office for the Poultry business from its original location by the railroad tracks on Chapman Lane in North Williston to its current site on Gov. Chittenden Road across from the Foreman's House. In its new

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<sup>10</sup> McCullough family records.

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location the office was converted to a residence for the nanny/cook and her husband, the chauffeur for the Wright family. This structure continues to serve as a dwelling today and is also intact, with significant Queen Anne features.

The Giles Chittenden Homestead has a significant history that spans the years from 1796 to the 1950s and provides a good example of Vermont's agricultural heritage. From the early years when Giles Chittenden began his diversified farming operation on land given him by his father, Governor Thomas Chittenden, to the years of sheep farming by Charles Miller, and further specialization with butter and cheese production of Smith Wright, the farm reached its peak during the management of the Wright family during the years when Smith Wright operated a highly lucrative poultry processing and meat storage business. The farm continued to prosper as a dairy farm under later generations of the Wright family, even through the depression years, when many farmers went under and lost their livestock and land. When dairying ceased on the Giles Chittenden Homestead in the 1950s, the agricultural land remained intact. These changes represent the broad patterns of agriculture that have contributed to Vermont's history and make the Homestead eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

The Giles Chittenden Homestead qualifies for statewide significance under National Register Criterion C for the distinctive architecture of the Main House which reflects the high-quality Colonial Revival modifications while retaining many of the earlier elegant Federal style features. One of several brick homes built by Governor Chittenden for his sons, the Giles Chittenden Homestead remains with perhaps the best-preserved of the sons' homes and has the most intact surrounding landscape. The Main House is considered the oldest house in Williston and is exceptional in the town and state for its wealth of interior features and rooms which have remained essentially untouched since the early 1900s.

The Homestead is also significant under Criterion C for its group of remaining historic buildings and landscape which form a distinct and distinguishable entity. Today, Julia Wright and her son James and family, are determined to maintain the land and buildings on the Giles Chittenden Homestead, without succumbing to the development pressures that are rapidly changing much of the

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Williston, Chittenden Co., Vermont

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surrounding landscape in Williston and Vermont.

The majority of the land remains in its historic function as agricultural fields used for pasture and hay production. The tree farm operation allows for the adaptation of a portion of the land for new but appropriate agricultural use. The cross country ski business was started in 1979, with a focus on orienteering since 1991. The new use allows the landscape to remain, with no significant alteration to its earlier historic appearance.

The historic landscape retains components of its earlier agricultural heritage and appears much as it had throughout the 19th to mid 20th century. Stone and barbed wire fences separate the pastures and fields from the historic buildings. The individual components that survive form a relatively intact landscape within the existing historic boundaries of the Giles Chittenden Homestead.

It should be noted that the area on the property known as Indian Lookout may likely have prehistoric significance, as may other parts of the property. Indian Lookout has panoramic views of the Green Mountain range. Its name (date of origin unknown but likely suggesting knowledge of a past use) and location indicates cultural importance to Native Americans in the region.

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1961.

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**Interviews:**

Jim McCullough, owner, Williston, VT, April 19 and May 10, 1993.

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- 6) 18/ 656240/ 4922980
- 7) 18/ 655660/ 4923160
- 8) 18/ 655420/ 4922540
- 9) 18/ 654880/ 4922720
- 10) 18/ 655080/ 4923300
- 11) 18/ 654760/ 4923420
- 12) 18/ 655060/ 4924220
- 13) 18/ 655180/ 4924180

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries of the Giles Chittenden Homestead include the north 1/2 of Tax Lot 10-14-25, all of 10-14-30, all of 10-14-31, all of 10-14-35, all of 11-14-20, and all of 11-14-40 recorded in the Town Clerk's Office, Williston, Vermont. A copy of these tax lot maps has been included with the Giles Chittenden Homestead National Register Nomination documentation.

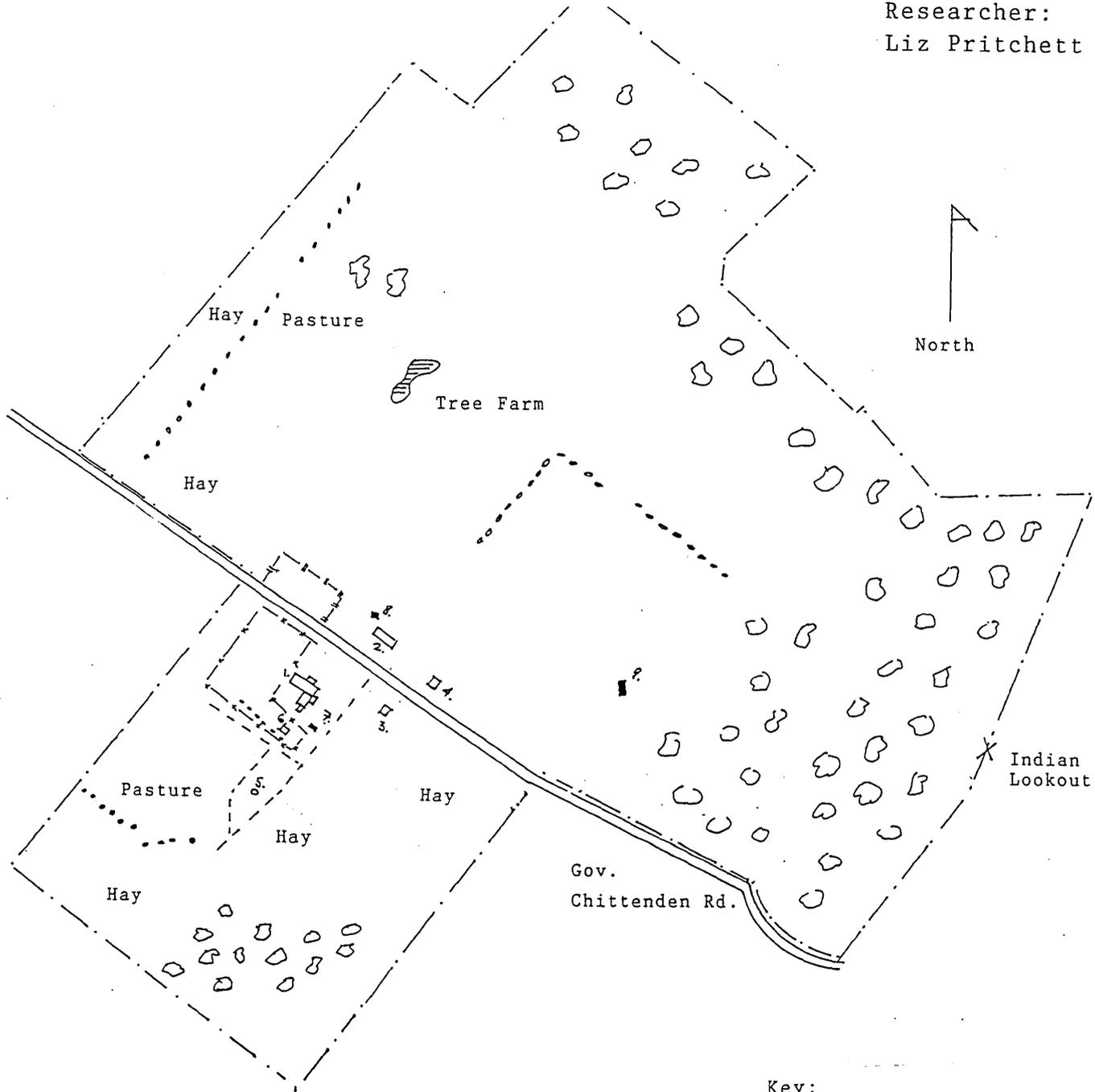
**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of this irregularly shaped parcel of land, includes all buildings and the surrounding open fields and forested woodlands historically associated with the Giles Chittenden and Wright Family Homestead and that maintain historic integrity.

Chittenden, Giles,  
Homestead

Chittenden County  
Williston, VT

Researcher:  
Liz Pritchett



Approximate Scale: 1:5000

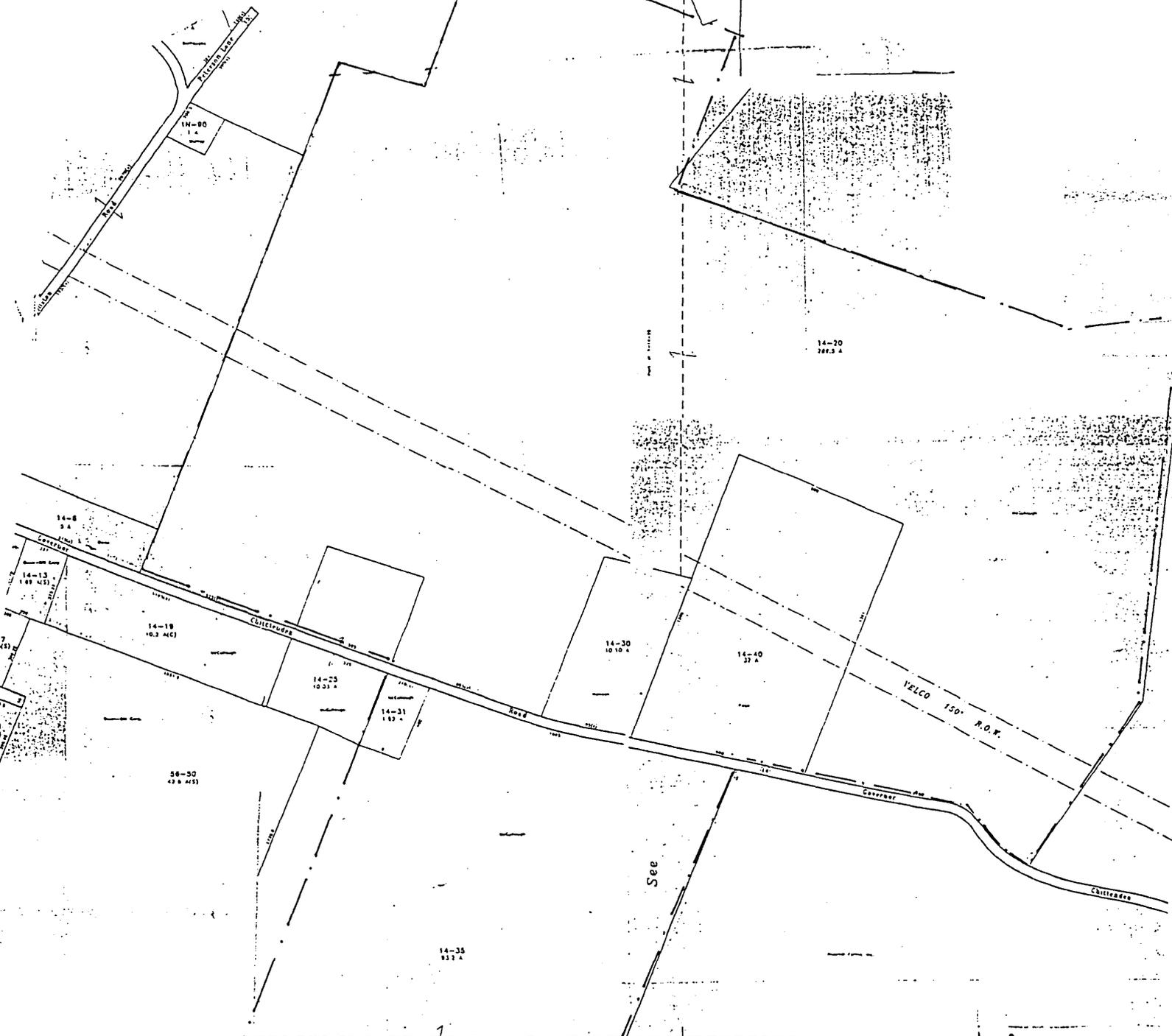
Key:

Boundary Line	— · — · —
Contributing Building	□
Non-Contributing Building	■
Trail	- - - - -
Barbed Wire Fence	- x - x - x -
Stone Wall	- · - · - · -
Wooden Fence	
Wooded Land	○ ○ ○
Pond	▨ ▨ ▨

TOWN OF WILLISTON, VT

TAX MAP

Chittenden, Giles, Homestead  
Williston, Chittenden Co., VT



Map Prepared By <b>BRISTELL GRAPHICS</b> <small>100 S. Pine St., Ferrisburgh, VT 05753</small>	NORTH 	Vermont Map No. 107810 Planned 10/78 1:12500 Scale 17x22.5"	Map Index 	Town of Williston Vermont Map No. <b>10</b>
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Chittenden, Giles, Homestead  
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James M. and Lucille B. McCullough  
Gov. Chittenden Road  
Williston, Vermont 05495

Julia W. McCullough  
Gov. Chittenden Road  
Williston, Vermont 05495

Mary L. Hanson  
247 Poor Farm Road  
Milton, Vermont 05468

Steve and Debbie Page  
372 Gov. Chittenden Road  
Williston, Vermont 05495