

# DATA SHEET

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Minnesota
COUNTY: Ramsey
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE APR 23 1975

### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
Gibbs Farm ~~Museum~~ *use this*

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Heman and Jane DeBow Gibbs Farm

### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
2097 Larpentuer Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
St. Paul

STATE:  
Minnesota

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
4th

CODE:  
22

COUNTY:  
Ramsey

CODE:  
123



### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Ramsey County and St. Paul Historical Societies, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Old Federal Courts Building, 75 W. 5th Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
St. Paul

STATE:  
Minnesota

CODE:  
22

### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Ramsey County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
15 West Kellogg Blvd.

CITY OR TOWN:  
St. Paul

STATE:  
Minnesota

CODE:  
22

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic St. Paul Buildings/Statewide Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1964/1974  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
St. Paul Department of Planning / Minnesota Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
421 Wabasha / Building 25 Fort Snelling

CITY OR TOWN:  
St. Paul

STATE:  
Minnesota

CODE:  
22

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Minnesota  
COUNTY: Ramsey  
ENTRY NUMBER: APR 23 1975  
DATE:

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Heman and Jane DeBow Gibbs Farm owned by the Ramsey County and St. Paul Historical Societies is a 1½ acre remnant of a 160-acre farm homesteaded in 1848. It is situated on flat prairie land near the northwest corner of the St. Paul City limits and adjacent to the University of Minnesota's agricultural campus.

The oldest remaining building in the complex is the farmhouse which represents three separate stages of construction starting in 1854. This portion, a 1½ story frame building which replaced an earlier claim shanty, is still incorporated within the front right portion of the house. Its tamarac log ceiling joists are visible within the house. Gibbs enlarged and "modernized" the house in 1867, adding a large parlor and four bedrooms. This gave the front portion of the house its present appearance. The rear wing was added in 1870 to complete it as it appears today. The style although rural Minnesotan vernacular, has Greek Revival overtones with its broadside orientation, symmetrical front facade and stacked fenestration which incidently includes six over six window panes. The exterior is polychromed brown and ivory to give the house a 1870 appearance. The porch was added in the early 1870s.

Three other buildings exist on the site; the large gabled barn built in 1910 which is the only other building surviving from the Gibbs era, a rural schoolhouse built in 1878 and moved to the site in 1966, and a two story carriage barn built in 1959, but styled to fit in sympathetically with the other buildings.

Land adjacent to the farm on the east and north is now leased by the county society from the University for the purpose of making small plots available to individuals, thus providing a more accurate agriculture environment to the farm buildings.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal             | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric            | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic               | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <u>Immigration and Settlement</u>                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation           |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Heman and Jane DeBow Gibbs Farm and the 1½ acres of land on which it stands exists as one of the few remaining farmsteads in the St. Paul/Minneapolis Metropolitan area. Acquired by the Ramsey County and St. Paul Historical Society in 1949, it was opened to the public in 1954 as a farm museum. It is the only interpretive center of its type in the metropolitan area, not only for displaying the rural lifestyle of the mid-1880s but also as representing one of the few remaining truck farms on the fringe of the city. Both aspects are interpreted well at the farm.

Heman and Jane Gibbs homesteaded the original 160-acre site in 1849, emigrating from Galena, Illinois. Mr. Gibbs was one of the many early St. Paul pioneers who had come to Minnesota from the lead fields of Illinois and Wisconsin, and Mrs. Gibbs was no stranger to the territory, having grown up as an adopted child of an Indian missionary family near Fort Snelling. Their original house was a small claim shanty and its cellar depression is still discernable southeast of the present farmhouse. They built the frame house in 1854 which is integrated into the present corner of the farmhouse enlarging the structure in 1867 and 1870 as the family grew and prospered. The homestead evolved into one of many truck farms near the close of the century, servicing the expanding food demands of the rapidly growing St. Paul and Minneapolis communities. Acquired by the County Historical Society, it has been retained as a representative example of an early Twin City farmstead and late 19th century truck farm for the educational advantage of the now surrounding urban community. The house is furnished in the 1860-70 period with many of the original Gibbs furnishings. Farm machinery and pioneer farm tools are displayed in the carriage barn and the restored school is used by the neighboring urban school systems to familiarize their pupils to rural school environment and techniques utilized before the turn-of-the-century. All the interpretive programs along with an elaborate schedule of home craft seminars and exhibitions are coordinated under the auspices of the county society.

The Minnesota Committee for the Preservation of Historic Buildings cited the Gibbs home in 1946 as a "building of exceptional historic and artistic merit;" one of the first three such designations by that committee in the state.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Historic St. Paul Buildings, St. Paul Planning Department, 1964, p. 59.  
Minnesota History, "Three Historic Buildings", Ruth B. Borden, Vol. 27  
 Sept. 1946, pp. 228-232  
 Files of the Ramsey County and St. Paul Historical Societies, Inc.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

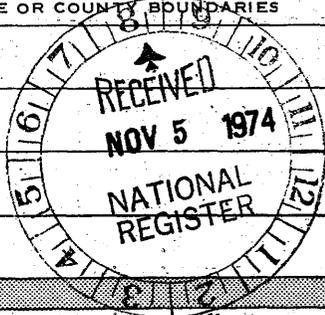
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 . "	0 . "		44° 59' 32"	93° 11' 17"	
NE	0 . "	0 . "				
SE	0 . "	0 . "				
SW	0 . "	0 . "				

15/485160  
 4981900  
 00

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 1/2 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
David W. Nystuen, Director of Field Services/Thomas Lutz, Survey Analyst

ORGANIZATION: Minnesota Historical Society DATE: 10-30-74

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Building 25 Fort Snelling

CITY OR TOWN: St. Paul STATE: Minnesota CODE: 22

**12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Russell W. Fridley  
Russell W. Fridley, Director

Title Minnesota Historical Society

Date 10-30-74

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

[Signature]  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/23/75

ATTEST: [Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date APR 22 1975

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED **APR 08 1975**

DATE ENTERED

**APR 23 1975**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 3 PAGE 1

Classification should be changed from "site" to "building."  
"Site" deleted, "building" added.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Areas of Significance: Add "Architecture."

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Add to Statement of Significance:

The significant buildings are the farmhouse itself, and the white barn, which also is original to the site. While the red barn and the schoolhouse are recent additions, they are functionally related to the overall interpretation of the site and do not detract from the significance of the farm complex.

The farmhouse is significant, architecturally. A rural Minnesota version of Greek Revival, it also represents the special heritage of the St. Paul area, and much of southeastern Minnesota. Gibbs patterned his house after the farmhouses of his native Vermont. He was part of the first wave of immigration into the St. Paul area in the spring of 1849, when Minnesota became a territory, and the great majority of these new first settlers were New England Yankees. They took up land not only in St. Paul and Ramsey County, but also along the Mississippi river and its tributaries which gave access to the farmlands of southeastern Minnesota. This wave of immigration so strongly influenced the cultural heritage of the area that the Yankee imprint still exists today. Gibbs' farmhouse, with its resemblance to its counterparts in New England, is a physical reminder of this heritage, some farmhouses much like it still can be seen in southeastern Minnesota. The Gibbs farmhouse, however, is one of the few early Greek Revival structures which still remain, unaltered, in the St. Paul area.

Mrs. Gibbs' personal history is unique to Minnesota. Known in history as Jane DeBow Stevens Gibbs, she was a child of six when she arrived in Minnesota in 1835 to live in Indian country, west of the Mississippi. At this time there were no other white families in the area, with the exception of those at Fort Snelling, the military post at the junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. She was the foster child of the Rev. Jedediah Stevens, a Presbyterian missionary who had been sent west to join the famous Pond brothers, Samuel and Gideon, who were working with Chief Cloudman's band of Sioux in what is now south Minneapolis. Stevens established the Lake Harriet Mission, close to the Pond brothers' cabin.<sup>1</sup> There Jane DeBow Stevens, "...early became acquainted with the skin lodge or tepee, the sound of the paddle on the lake, the orgies of the feast on the return of the warriors in the spring, the death song, the war whoop and the sight of the painted, half-naked warrior...."

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3 (Cont'd.)

"In the fall, the squaws and children harvested the corn, gathered nuts and rice, made their skin lodges snug for the winter, the men, in the meantime, being absent on the hunt. In the spring, they made a little dark colored maple sugar."<sup>2</sup>.

She learned to speak Sioux and, since Stevens could not master the language, served as interpreter for him during councils with Chief Cloudman and his band.<sup>3</sup>

Jane DeBow Stevens and Heman Gibbs were married in Galena, Illinois, in November, 1848. The following spring they arrived in St. Paul. Gibbs acquired 160 acres of land, of which the present Gibbs Farm Museum is the remnant. The filing, by Gibbs, for his 160 acres, was one of four made in the old Rose Township, now northwestern Ramsey County, in 1849, and one of the first eight in the entire township.<sup>4</sup>

The Gibbs property "was on the trail between Lake Harriet and the other lakes, hunting grounds and marshes of the North, (and) the fort (Fort Snelling) and the Indian agency to the Southeast. Mrs. Gibbs' knowledge of the Sioux language, her old acquaintance of the Indians and the attractions of the (Gibbs') melon patch and turnip fields brought the Indians to the house frequently and in great numbers. She says she often counted as many as a hundred of them on the premises at one time...."<sup>5</sup>.

This, then, was some of Mrs. Gibbs' own early history, which reaches far back into the history of Minnesota itself, as well as that of the St. Paul; Ramsey County area.

SOURCES:

1. Little Bird That Was Caught, a biography of Jane DeBow Stevens Gibbs by her daughter, Lillie Gibbs LeVesconte. St. Paul: The Ramsey County Historical Society, 1968.
2. "A Pioneer Woman, Her Story of the Early Days in Minnesota." Interview with Mrs. Heman Gibbs by Charlotte Whitcomb. Minneapolis Journal, June 26, 1897.
3. "Sod Shanty on the Prairie--Story of a Pioneer Farmer," by William L. Cavert. Spring, 1964, Vol. 1, No. 1, Ramsey County History, semi-annual magazine published by the Ramsey County Historical Society, St. Paul.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

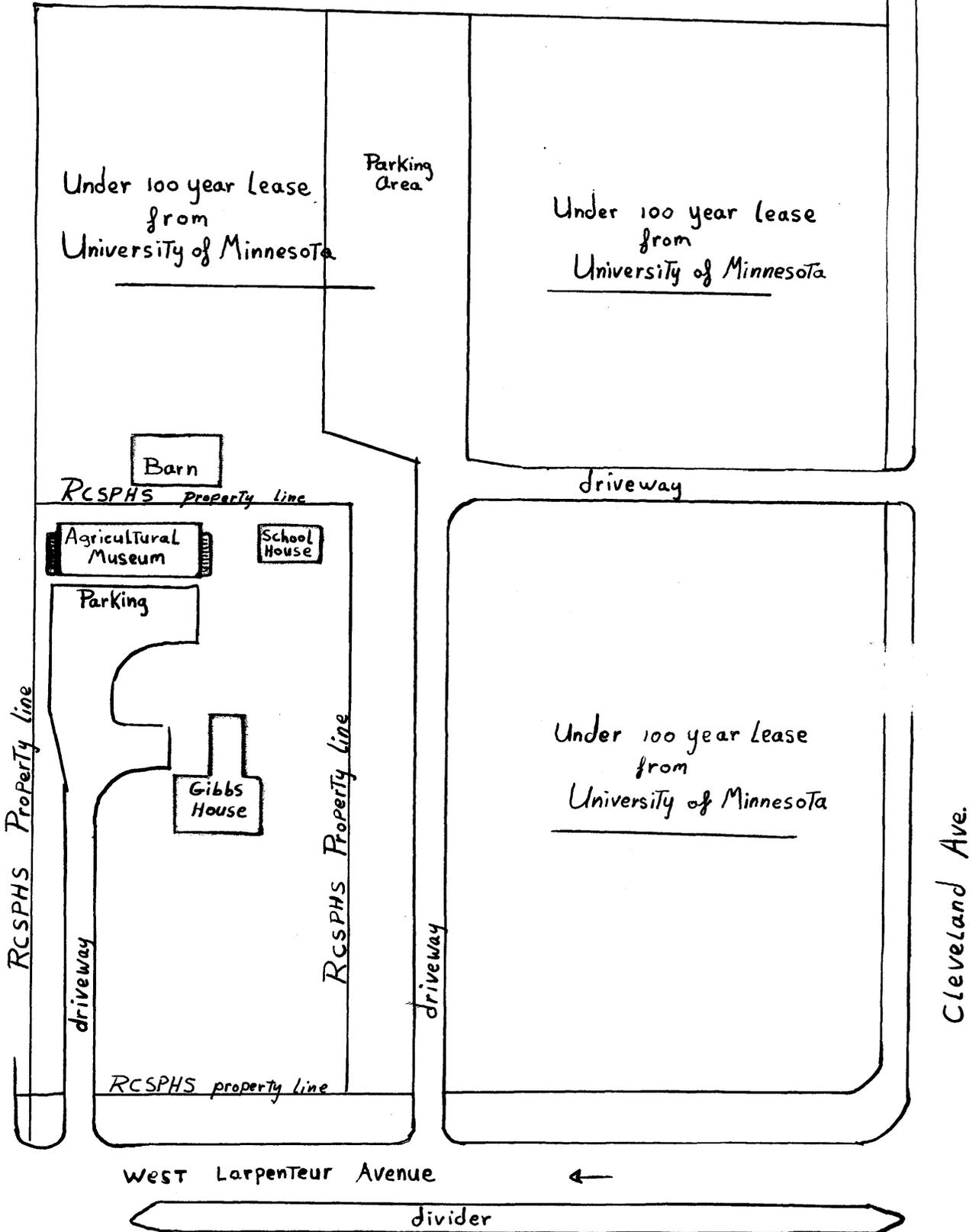
ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3 (Cont'd.)

SOURCES (cont'd.)

4. History of Ramsey County, Minnesota, and the City of St. Paul,  
by the Rev. Edward D. Neill, and Outlines of the History of  
Minnesota, by J. Fletcher Williams, 1881.
5. Interview with Frank Gibbs, son of Heman and Jane Gibbs.  
May 23, 1946. From files of Ramsey County Historical Society.

Buildings to be included as historic sites: —

Scale: 1" = app. 70 feet





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

for Keeper Melvin Lyman  
11/19/89

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Note: These changes apply to  
Gibbs Farm in Ramsey County,  
Minnesota.**

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** 75001009

**STATE:** MINNESOTA

**COUNTY:** Ramsey

**RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):** Gibbs, Heman, Farmstead

**CITY:** Falcon Heights

**VICINITY OF:**

**ADDRESS:**

**CERTIFICATION DATE:**

**REMOVED DATE:**

**COMMENTS:** Property is located in city of Falcon Heights, not  
in St. Paul.

*Nina M. Archabal*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nina M. Archabal  
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date