

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or 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 listed in 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 William Gibbons Stable and Farm

other names/site number Brook Valley Farm

2. Location

street & number Loantaka Way

not for publication

city or town Chatham Township

vicinity

state New Jersey

code NJ

county Morris

code 27

zip code 07935

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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 of certifying official/Title

Date

John S. Watson, Jr. Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
State or 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 this 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 of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Ball 3/30/05

**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	
7	0	buildings
		1 (farm road) sites
		structures
		objects
8	0	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)

Agriculture – animal facility

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture – animal facility

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Fieldstone

walls Brick (on main barn); clapboard

roof Asphalt Shingle

other

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**Narrative Description**

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

**William Gibbons Stable & Farm**

Name of Property

**Morris County, NJ**

County and State

**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.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Agriculture
- Entertainment/Recreation
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

Circa 1836 - 1934

**Significant Dates**

1836, 1911

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

George Walker Jenkins (1847-1922)

William Gibbons (1794-1852)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

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

**Primary location of additional data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**William Gibbons Stable & Farm**

Name of Property

**Morris County, NJ**

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of property 122.5 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	546595	4511440	3	18	546895	4510470
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	546605	4510912	4	18	547301	4510175

 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 Janet W. Fosterorganization Acroterion, LLC date August 31, 2004 (rev.)street & number 27 Maple Avenue telephone 973 822 0441city or town Madison state NJ zip code 07940**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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mrs. Helen Mead Plattstreet & number P.O. Box 1 telephone 973 377 8872city or town Madison state NJ zip code 07940

**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.

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

Section number 7 Page 1

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William Gibbons (1794-1852), a wealthy landowner and businessman from Georgia, built a summer residence in the Greek Revival style in Madison, New Jersey in 1833-36. Now known as Mead Hall, it is the centerpiece of Drew University. Gibbons was instrumental in developing the popular early 19th century spa and resort of Schooley's Mountain, farther west in Washington Township, Morris County. Both of these sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Yet a third site in New Jersey is also closely associated with Gibbons, and with his great recreational passion, horse racing. The barn associated with his summer residence lies some two miles directly south of Mead Hall, in Chatham Township.

The William Gibbons barn is unique in Morris County for its brick construction and may be the county's earliest surviving building constructed specifically for horse stabling. After the Gibbons family ownership, the barn became part of more modest farming pursuits, but it was preserved. Now surrounded by later outbuildings and a tenant farmers house, the William Gibbons barn is still the centerpiece of a 122-acre farm, which is again focused on raising horses.

The Gibbons Stable is a rectangular plan building, approximately 100 x 40 feet in dimension, and standing two-and-a-half stories tall. It was built shortly after completion of his summer home, and is thus dated to circa 1836. The north-west elevation, facing Loantaka Way, (photo 2) has an arched opening for paired wagon doors, opening into a full- height space which extends through the barn to exit through identical doors on the south-east-facing, barnyard side (photo 1).

Windows on the north side and in the second level hay loft are covered with parallel wooden bars or louvers. On the south side first floor are arched, multi-paned windows which admit light into the stalls and work areas of the stable. The windows are regularly spaced on the north elevation, marking five bays. Windows are wooden, with traditional pinned frame construction, and they retain a considerable amount of original glass.

Three hipped-roofed cupolas with louvered sides cap the building; the center one marked by a modern weather vane. Ventilating cupolas would have been a necessity for such a large hay storage area from the time of its original construction; the existing cupolas are new construction (ca. 1970s) using traditional materials and design. The gable roof is now covered with asphalt shingles (photo 4). Close inspection of historic photos indicates that until at least the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the roof was wooden shingles (photo 22).

The barn was built on a fieldstone foundation, which is exposed to view on the northwest corner, closest to the stream. A silo stood beside the west gable end of the barn from about 1915 to 1940,

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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when the farm was used for dairying. The silo has been removed, but the stone and terra-cotta tile base for it is visible.

The bricks in the barn are orange-red in color, apparently hand-made, and likely come from the Lum Brick Yard in Chatham, New Jersey, which supplied the brick for the Gibbons mansion.<sup>1</sup> The brick is laid carefully, and with a strong design sense, using voids between bricks to create diamond-pattern vents along the cornice line of long elevations, and decorative vents in large diamond patterns on the gable ends (photo 3). The brick is reinforced at the attic level with S-shaped tie rods. The walls are in excellent condition, and little repointing has been required over the years.

The interior is bisected by the great drive-through bay entered by double doors front and back (photo 5). The exterior brick walls are visible on the interior of this space as are the wooden timbers forming the truss assembly for the barn roof. Interior partitions are wooden.

Inside the stable is a small board-and-batten-paneled storage room. The larger tack room adjacent is also similarly paneled (photo 7). These rooms are on the first floor to the northeast of the tall drive-through bay. The paneling is original to the rooms, and reflects the high quality of the original construction, and the deep pockets of the original owner. To the southwest of this bay on the first floor are thirteen horse stalls, each approximately 11x12 feet, arranged along each side of a wide aisle running the length of the barn. The floor is now concrete, an alteration made in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The wooden stalls are as originally built, lined with flushboard sheathing to a height of five feet, and then supporting slender iron bars above, which extend to the ceiling (photo 6). Each stall is entered by a crossbuck door on heavy wrought iron strap hinges.

The second floor is still actively used for hay storage. Narrow ladders rise to the hayloft from each side of the drive-through bay. Wide wooden plank floors and exposed rafters present an appearance little changed from Gibbons' day.

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<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, John T., *University in the Forest: The Story of Drew University*. Afton Publishing Company, 1990, page 47.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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The Carriage Barn is a rectangular two-story frame structure, built perpendicular to the main barn on the south side (photo 8, 10). It was constructed in two distinct phases. The original portion stands to the north, closer to the main stable. The carriage barn was moved west from its original location circa 1915-1940 to get it away from the flooding of the Loantaka Brook, and set on a poured concrete foundation. It is shown in its original location in the 1910 Mueller map; it is shown in its present location in family photos from the 1940s.<sup>2</sup> It was built on a rectangular plan barn with centered paired doors on the west-facing side and small, high windows flanking the doors. The gable roof is capped by a centered cupola, with hipped roof and louvers similar to those on the main stable. The heavy timber frame is now sided with wooden clapboard; the building's foundation is fieldstone. Used as a general purpose barn in the 19th century, it had animal pens on the ground floor and hay lofts on the second floor, portions of which survive at both levels. Interior narrow-width wainscoting and a concrete floor were added later, when the building was moved. It now is used for storage.

To the south side of the original frame barn is an addition (photos 9, 15), made when the building was moved. It matches the original heavy timber frame building in size and height, although the addition is made from sawn, dimensional lumber and put together with nails. The gable roof of the addition extends the line of the original roof. The expanded building is punctuated with cupolas on top, matching those on the brick stable building. The addition is as large as the original building, extending the roofline and second floor hayloft over a recessed first floor equipment storage area with open wagon bays facing west, which are fenced closed from the barnyard. Storage of vehicles, including old carriages for use with the horses, has given the building its present name. The floor is poured concrete on a concrete slab foundation. There is no precise family history of the date of this addition, although it must have post-dated the moving of the older portion of the structure to this site.

Appended to the far south of this building is a one-story hip-roofed frame shed building, (photo 9) probably dating from the same ca. 1915-1940 period when the farm was in use and many minor changes were made to accommodate active farming needs. The construction is balloon frame and with nailed ridgepole. This shed has an open vehicle bay facing west, used for tractor storage.

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<sup>2</sup> See photos 21 & 22, appended to this nomination. Owned by the Platt family, undated, but recalled to be from the 1940s.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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The Tenant House (photo 16, 17) may originally date from the 1830s and the period of construction of the stables, but the house was damaged by fire in the early 1930s and extensively rebuilt at that time. It is a modern dimensional lumber, platform frame structure on a fieldstone foundation. The massing is of a center-entry, three-bay "I" house, one room deep. The gable roof features a heavy molded eave and gable end return and a single brick end chimney. A single-story lean-to extends to the rear, housing the old kitchen. A hipped-roof porch extends across the center entry and one half of the house's façade (photo 18). The house is presently clad with narrow clapboard siding, and has 6/6 sash windows flanked by shutters.

Inside, the first floor is arranged on a two-room plan without center hall. The staircase has the heavy square-section balusters and newel post characteristic of vernacular work of the 1920's and '30s. Wooden mantles survive in the main first floor room and in an upstairs room; both are simple arrangements of simple wide, applied pilasters supporting a plinth and plain mantle shelf (photo 20). Plank doors and simple 19<sup>th</sup> century hardware remains on the second floor of the house (photo 21). The house now serves as a veterinary office.

The Milk House, (photo 11, left) a square-shaped frame building on a high concrete foundation with hipped roof, stands in front of the barns along the driveway. This structure kept milk cool before shipment. In the 1920s the farm was operating as a dairy farm, and the structure has every appearance of having been constructed during this time. The building has clapboard siding and an asphalt roof. Large windows have been added to the structure since its construction, and it now is connected to the Caretaker's House and serves as part of this structure. An added metal chimney is part of its ca. 1970 renovations as a caretaker's residence.

The adjacent Caretaker's House (photo 11, right and photo 12, rear view) is a low, one-story frame shed-like building, also dating from the 1920s. It has a front-facing low-pitch gable roof with asphalt shingles. It has clapboard siding. It seems to have been constructed in the 1920s for storage purposes, and was converted to a modest residence in the 1970s when it was joined to the Milk House. Windows, doors and interior finishes are all from the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Garage is made of brick identical to the barn, which suggests that some walls of this much-modified structure originally were constructed in the 1830s. Presently, it is a one-story building set on a stone foundation, and capped with a low hipped roof, covered in asphalt singles. The brick portion of the building is approximately 20 x 25 feet. The north elevation is gone; replaced by a three-bay wood frame construction that opens the side of the building completely to the roof eave and allows the building to be used as a garage.



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William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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An Ice House (photo 12, right) with attached utility sheds stands between the garage and the caretaker's house. This story-and-a-half frame building has a high door in the gable end facing the driveway, facilitating loading and unloading from a wagon or truck, but the proximity of this gable end to the rear of the brick garage would make for very tight maneuvering. The gable-roofed structure has a louvered monitor on top for ventilation. The siding is wooden clapboard. There are no windows or openings in the walls. Attached to the rear of the building is a one-story shed with separate entrance on the west side. The Ice House appears to date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the early maps of the property show a pond near the farm on the Loantaka Brook where ice may have been cut.

The buildings cluster near Loantaka Way; the rest of the farm extends to the east toward Green Village Road. The land is low and relatively flat, making for good pasture land. A strip of land adjacent to the Loantaka Brook was given by the owners of the property to the Morris County Park Commission in 1980 for part of the Loantaka Park and trail system. The land beside the Gibbons stable contains a paved path, and is used for walking, biking, and jogging, while a parallel unpaved bridle path allows riding (photo 14).

The 1866 hand-drawn map of the property along the brook specifically notes the presence of a "large stable", some 800 feet downstream (more or less south) of the existing brick stable building. This was probably built by Gibbons' son-in-law, who inherited the property from him. This barn is no longer extant. Its site is within the boundaries of the nominated property. A farm road leading to the site of this stable is still visible, following the course of the brook along the property (photo 13). The farm road appears on the USGS maps as a land feature, although it is not paved and has never been a public right of way.

Local oral tradition claims that a track for exercising horses was located behind the barnyard. It is logical that a track would have been nearby, but the field bears no above-ground traces of the track today, and an inspection of aerial photos of the site does not reveal an obvious location. Gibbons had another track, where spectators could watch races located on another tract of land east of this farm. This is obliterated by mid-20<sup>th</sup> century residential development, so the track site on this farm may have valuable and unique archaeological interest.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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Part of the Gibbons family summer estate, the William Gibbons Stable and Farm is a rare vestige of New Jersey's early 19th century horse racing tradition, and a well-preserved farmscape in an increasingly suburbanized landscape. When the Gibbons family summered in New Jersey in the 1830s and 40's, their property encompassed over 1000 acres in Chatham Township (which then included today's Madison Borough, Harding, and Passaic Townships). Architecturally an outstanding example of a rare brick barn in New Jersey, it was specifically constructed for racehorses, and became one of the most famous stables of the 1840s. The stable was home to Fashion, one of the most famous American racehorses of the 1840s and '50s.

The Gibbons stable is the most significant structure in the complex, but other surrounding buildings contribute to the farm's setting, and elucidate the later history of the property. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the farm became the property of George Walker Jenkins, husband of philanthropist Helen Hartley, and a prominent local businessman with an interest in preserving the rural landscape around Morristown. As the property remains in the hands of his direct descendants, and his own residence in Morristown was demolished in 1935, "Brook Valley Farm" as he named it, is the property most closely associated with him. Thus, the William Gibbons Stable and Farm is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B and C.

### William Gibbons and the Creation of the Farm

The stable was built for William Gibbons (1794-1852), who added considerably to his father Thomas' significant fortune with shrewd management of a steamship company that ran primarily between Elizabeth, New Jersey, and Georgia. William Gibbons joined his father in business in 1815, acting as the New Jersey agent for their Georgia-based family. When his father Thomas died in 1826, William was the sole heir to a fortune considered one of the largest in America at that time. The Gibbons family had thousands of acres of plantation land in South Carolina and Georgia, and hundreds of slaves to work it. William Gibbons also inherited the profitable steamship company, and real estate holdings in Savannah, New York, Elizabeth, and western New Jersey.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Who Was Who in America – Historical Volume 1607-1896*, Revised edition, A.N. Marquis Co., Chicago, Illinois, 1967, p. 272.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
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In 1829, noting a decline in the productivity of Georgia's cotton and rice plantations, he sold the steamship business, and turned his time to gentlemanly pursuits, namely house building and horse racing. William continued to manage the family's South Carolina plantations from afar, and is said to have become interested in horse breeding in order to supplement the income of the flagging plantations. Starting with a stable of five or six horses in 1829, Gibbons sought to buy or breed his way to racing prominence.

William Gibbons married Abigail Louise Taintor in October 1826, six months after his father's death. The couple lived in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and summered at Schooley's Mountain, a rustic resort known for its waters and their restorative powers. Legend has it that in the summer of 1832, on the way to Schooley's Mountain, Mrs. Gibbons passed through the village of Madison, and just west of it saw a beautiful wooded site where she wanted to build a home.

The result was "The Mansion in The Forest", an imposing Greek Revival style brick house which faced the old turnpike (today's Route 124) which was the main road from Elizabeth to Sussex County, through Madison, Morristown, Mendham, and on to Schooley's Mountain, outside of Hackettstown. The vast property that Gibbons assembled as a setting for "The Forest" was put together from many sources, and contained over 1,000 acres assembled through 63 separate deed transactions beginning in 1831. His estate was described in 1840 as containing four parts, based upon the largest farms he purchased in 1832-1836. The mansion was located in a tract described as "The Forest"; south of that was the Derthick farm; and southwest of the mansion tract was the Carter Farm.

### The Carter Farm and the 18<sup>th</sup> century history of the property

Benjamin Carter was one of the first settlers in the area in 1740 and owned much of the land that today makes up the town of Madison, extending north and east to the Loantaka Brook. His son Luke was instrumental in founding the Presbyterian Church in Madison in 1749. Both father and son served in local militias, supporting the cause of American Independence. Luke's brother Barnabas Carter had a home and a farm of some 200 acres along the Loantaka Brook, and permitted soldiers to stay there during the encampment of some of the Continental army in and around Morristown in the winter of 1776-77. Following their successes at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, American troops moved north to the hills overlooking occupied New York.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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Local pastor and historian Rev. Tuttle, writing in the 1850s, was the first to identify the lowlands around the Loantaka Brook as a Revolutionary War campsite, although he places the center of the encampment on farms to the north of this property, near Kitchell Road. He relied on the memory and oral traditions of several old members of the community, and the evidence of pots and other artifacts unearthed in farmer's fields in the area.<sup>2</sup>

The 18th century Barnabas Carter farm included all of the modern boundaries for the William Gibbons farm; Carter's farm also included the south side of Loantaka Brook which has been subdivided off from the historic farm in the 20th century. The farm remained in the Carter family until the 1830s, when William Gibbons purchased the property along the Loantaka Brook. There, beside the brook on relatively flat land some two miles southwest of his house, he had a large brick stable constructed. The construction of the stable is thought to have occurred shortly after the house; the house is dated 1834-36, so the stable is considered to date to "circa 1836". It was standing by 1837 when its most famous resident, the horse Fashion, was foaled there.

The fourth tract of Gibbons' estate, the Sandy Hill Farm, lay to the east of the Carter farm, and was somewhat separated from it. It was on Sandy Hill Farm that Gibbons had a race track created, where his horses could "show their stuff" and compete with other horses from New Jersey and New York. The 19th century aspect of the Sandy Hill property is now entirely obliterated by mid-20th century residential development and a private golf course on the land.

### William Gibbons and "The Queen of the Turf"

Horse-racing has been popular in New Jersey for over 300 years, and residents kept horses for racing even in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Races run in New York attracted New Jersey horses and spectators; the first verifiable race run in the state was the "Middletown Cup" in Monmouth County in 1699.<sup>3</sup>

The state was one of the first in the United States to foster the breeding of blooded stock. Among the blue-blooded stock of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the Morven Stud, owned by the Stockton

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<sup>2</sup> William Tuttle, *Bottle Hill and Madison*, privately printed, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Cole and Ronald Weyer, *The Thoroughbred Horse of New Jersey*, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, N.J., 1959, p. 3-4.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
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family of Princeton. Robert Stockton imported an English horse, Trustee, to New Jersey in 1835, and it was this horse that sired Gibbons' famous racer, Fashion.<sup>4</sup>

Fashion was foaled at the William Gibbons stable in 1837 by a dam named Bonnets O' Blue. The filly Fashion remained at the Gibbons stable until she turned three, when she was sent to Colt's Neck to be trained. Throughout her nine-season racing career, Fashion defeated the fastest challengers of the time, and outran the otherwise invincible horse "Boston" in a match race at the Union Course on Long Island in front of a record crowd of 70,000 people. She was undefeated on the New Jersey-New York racing circuit in 1842, 1843, and 1844. There are disputed accounts of how many races Fashion ran and won through her long career, but she certainly won the majority.

Races in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were for speed and endurance, and the standard race was a four-mile course. Fashion was noted for her stamina, and as a rare female to best male horses. In May, 1845, Fashion narrowly lost a four-mile race to the thoroughbred Peytona from Alabama. This involved a record purse of \$20,000 in a race run on Long Island billed as "The Grand Match". However, a rematch a few weeks later in Camden saw Fashion take the race, exerting such speed that Peytona was completely overextended, and never again completed a race.<sup>5</sup>

Gibbons called her his "queen" and expended money on her in a royal manner. She enjoyed a pampered life in her home stable and at Colt's Neck, where one month's training and board cost Gibbons \$600. In return, her winnings came to over \$41,000 over her racing career. Fashion continued racing until she was 11 years old, when she retired to breed back at her home stable in Chatham Township. She had seven live foals, three of whom were good performers, but they could not equal their mother. Her line died out, and today there are no descendants of Fashion, "The Queen of the Turf". Fashion died in 1860, and was buried near Glencoe, Long Island.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Nelson Dunstan, *The Thoroughbred in New Jersey, His Days and Deeds*, Garden State Racing Association, Camden, New Jersey, 1944, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> John Cunningham, "Queen of the Turf", *New Jersey History*, Spring-Summer 1978, p. 43-48.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Ross, "Fashion", *Thoroughbred Heritage*, Web site [www.tbheritage.com](http://www.tbheritage.com).

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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### The Farm and the Second Generation

William and Abigail Gibbons had four children: Sarah (1829-1909); William Heyward (1831-1887); Caroline Gilmore (1833-1857); and Isabel (1835-1875). They all grew up at the Greek Revival mansion at "The Forest". Isabel married Frank Lathrop, a neighbor, in 1855. She moved to a Romantic Revival style house, "The Willows" (no longer extant), just down the road from her childhood home, "The Forest". Sarah married Ward McAllister of New York, the arbiter of society and creator of "The Four Hundred", *the* social set of late-19th century New York.<sup>7</sup> Caroline never married and died young.

William Gibbons died in 1852, and his four-part estate was divided between his four children, according to his will. Sarah, already married and living in New York, was willed the Delthick Farm and 16 acres of meadow in Green Village. The farm was run by local laborers, and produced feed for the horses on the neighboring property. Isabel Gibbons Lathrop inherited the Sandy Hill farm with the race track on it, and the Schooley's Mountain property. Caroline was willed property in Morristown<sup>8</sup> and the Carter Farm, including "the farm house and brick barn".

William Gibbons' only son, William Heyward Gibbons, inherited the mansion at Madison, along with a family mansion in Savannah, and other property in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He apparently had either no interest or no aptitude for his father's equestrian pastimes, for he was instructed in the will to sell all the horses.<sup>9</sup> His sister Isabel purchased many of them and kept them at the Sandy Hill farm. With his unmarried sister Caroline living at "The Mansion", young William Gibbons left for Georgia in 1852. In those ante-bellum years, he was romanced by the southern cause, and gave generously to it. When his sister Caroline died in 1857, he and his brother-in-law, Frank Lathrop were named as executors. William Heyward Gibbons immediately sold his share of his sister's Morris County property to Isabel and Frank Lathrop. He returned south with

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<sup>7</sup> "Mrs. Ward McAllister", Obituary, *The New York Times*, October 14, 1909, page 9.

<sup>8</sup> In 1842, William Gibbons led a group of investors in building The New Jersey Hotel on the Green in Morristown. The brick and brownstone building in Greek Revival style was the most elegant hotel in Morris County. Unfortunately it burned down in 1845, and it was uninsured. The loss was absorbed more easily by the wealthy Mr. Gibbons than the town of Morristown, for the hole in the ground on the corner in the center of town remained an eyesore for nearly 20 years.

<sup>9</sup> William Gibbons will, copy in Drew University archives.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

Section number 8 Page 6

fresh cash, which he generously gave to politicians and statesmen supporting states rights and the rebel cause.

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A map from the Civil War era, done in 1866, shows the Gibbons-Lathrop property near Loantaka Brook, and indicates the location of the brick building under the label "barn". A farmhouse stood adjacent to this "barn", on the site of the present tenant house. Farther downstream is another barn identified as "F. Lathrop's lower large stable".<sup>10</sup> This strongly suggests that it was built under Frank Lathrop's ownership and was not part of the Gibbons-era construction. Its designation as a stable, while the old brick building by the road was now labeled simply "barn", suggests use for horses rather than general farm use. However, an entry from Frank Lathrop's personal ledger in 1860 indicates that the old Carter farm was rented to and operated by non-family members. The agricultural census for that year indicates no great horse farms in Chatham Township; presumably the farm was now a more humble, and less-specialized operation, with perhaps stable accommodation for the working horses needed to run a family farm.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, in Georgia, William Heyward Gibbons enlisted with the Confederate Army. As the war progressed, his slaves left, his farms were abandoned, and eventually, his land was confiscated by the Union Army. Financially ruined and allied with the losing side, William Heyward sought a pardon from President Andrew Johnson, and petitioned for the return of his Georgia property. Through family status and connections, both were granted. William Heyward returned north in 1866, bought back the Carter farm from his sister Isabel, and resided there until his death in 1887.

William Heyward Gibbons never married; at his death he willed his property to his sister Isabel's sons, William Gibbons Lathrop and Francis Lathrop. The will was contested by his other sister, Sarah McAllister. At issue was not only the Chatham Township property, but rice plantations in Georgia, real estate in New York, and land in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The court case was heard in December 1887 before Special Master in Chancery Court, a young attorney named George W. Jenkins.<sup>12</sup>

Jenkins decided in favor of the original will, and the Lathrops, William and Francis, held onto the property until 1907. Though they themselves did not farm, they had tenants who worked the

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<sup>10</sup> Hughes, Thomas, *Map and Profile of Part of Loantica Brook*, 1866.

<sup>11</sup> United States Census of Agriculture for 1860, Morris County, New Jersey.

<sup>12</sup> "Gibbons Estate Before Court", *The Madison Eagle*, December 30, 1887, p. 3.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

Section number 8 Page 7

property, even as it came to be known as the Lathrop Stock Farm. The legendary horses of the past were forgotten; the colonial farmer/patriot was no longer honored by name. A Morristown

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lawyer and State Senator, Charles Rathbun, acquired the property in 1908, still renting it out to tenant farmers, until in 1911, he sold it to George W. Jenkins.

### George W. Jenkins and Brook Valley Farm

George Walker Jenkins (1847-1922) was the son of a Welsh mining engineer, who emigrated to Boonton, Morris County in 1832 to work in the iron forges and furnaces in the area. George Jenkins, Senior became the Superintendent of the New Jersey Iron Company's blast furnaces in Boonton in 1848, and he served during the "golden years" of industrial prosperity in the mining areas of Morris County. He was active in Republican politics and held many local offices. His son and namesake grew up in a household of expanding opportunities and connections, and he made the most of them.

George W. Jenkins went to Yale, where he studied law. He was admitted to the bar in 1873, and began to work in New York for several firms where he came to specialize in corporate finance. With his father's local connections in politics as a springboard, young George successfully ran for a seat in the New Jersey assembly, and served there through the 1890s. He became a Special Master in Chancery Court and served in Morris County courts for years. In the course of a Chancery Court case in 1887, he heard about the Gibbons stable property in Chatham Township. That, and his activity in state and local politics, through which he undoubtedly knew Charles Rathburn, seems to have led him inevitably to purchase the property.

In addition to his work in the law, Jenkins served on the Boards of several companies, including the Bridgeport Gun Implements Company, the Remington Arms Company, M. Hartley Company, Union Metallic Cartridge Company, and the Washington Trust Company. A photograph of him, (undated although apparently of a man in his thirties or early forties), is from an illustration of company officers of the American Deposit and Loan Company, where he served as President.

His social life built upon a network of business and political associations, and the Morristown newspaper includes an account of Jenkins' trip grouse hunting with Andrew Carnegie in 1890,



**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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and attending parties along Millionaire's Row in Morristown.<sup>13</sup> A very eligible bachelor, George finally married in 1892 at age 45, to Helen Hartley of New York. Helen Hartley (1860-1934) was

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<sup>13</sup> "Social notes", *Jerseyman*, Morristown, New Jersey, August 1, 1890, p. 3 and January 23, 1891, p. 3.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

Section number 8 Page 9

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the daughter of Marcellus Hartley, founder of the Union Metallic Cartridge Company, which later merged with the Remington Arms Company. The couple lived in Morristown, and built a Colonial-Revival style mansion there in 1893-94.

Mrs. Jenkins had the far larger fortune of the two, and she worked throughout her life to contribute it to civic and philanthropic activities. She donated considerable sums to Columbia University, to hospitals, and to camps and settlement houses helping children, and she not only sent her money but gave of her time to the beneficiary organizations. On the other hand, George Jenkins was ready to settle down after marriage and lead a quiet life of a businessman and country gentleman.

He joined with his wife's nephew Marcellus Hartley Dodge in purchasing land outside Morristown as much to keep it from development as anything else.<sup>14</sup> While some of Morris County's turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century millionaires assembled personal estates of hundreds of acres with the intent of developing private pleasure-grounds, the Dodge-Jenkins holdings retained their old farms and tenant houses and barns. The idea of preserving the landscape and buildings of a rural community came to reality by 1928 with Mr. Dodge leading the formation of the New Vernon Land Company. Members of the company purchased land and placed restrictive covenants on it, with the express intent of conserving the landscape.<sup>15</sup> George Jenkins had already died by the time the New Vernon Land Company was established, but he was certainly sympathetic to its intent, and had been a leader through his actions in acquiring land and preserving buildings.

With the acquisition of the Lathrop Stock Farm in 1911, George Jenkins set about making repairs and alterations to operate a dairy farm there. Dairying had become a popular farming specialty in

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<sup>14</sup> "Vital Problem in Morristown: Absorption of Farm Territory into Great Estates", *Newark Evening News*, March 20, 1912. Quoted in: Cavanaugh, *In Lights and Shadows*, Morristown and Morris Township Public Library, 1986, pages 210-211.

<sup>15</sup> The National Register nomination for the Silver Lake Historic District in Harding Township, Morris County, New Jersey has a great deal of information about the New Vernon Land Company and its conservation efforts. It was an innovative approach to preserving rural landscape while keeping land in private ownership, and it proved effective in guiding development for half a century in the parts of Morris County where it was applied in the 1920s. Silver Lake Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

Section number 8 Page 10

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Morris County at the end of the 19th century, and was to remain so through the early 1940s. The farm was named "Brook Valley Farm", following the fashion of the estate-owners in the area to name properties rather than identify them by address.

The old brick barn was put to use for a dairy barn with the addition of a silo off the south gable end of the building (only the foundation remains), and the insertion of a "sanitary" concrete floor throughout. A milk house was added to the property, and an old brick outbuilding modified to a garage. Lathrop's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century barn was moved from the streamside location to the barnyard, and expanded. But essentially, the cluster of farm buildings remained similar to those which had been there a century before.

Tenant farmers were entrusted with the day-to-day operations, but Jenkins was an active participant, and visited the farm often. The tenant house was completely rebuilt, maintaining a traditional, vernacular form but updating systems from plumbing to heating after a fire burned the old house in 1934. The rebuilding of the tenant house was the last major alteration to the standing fabric of the farm; after that time the farm began a period of declining intensity of use.

After George Jenkins' death in 1922, and the 1934 death of his wife, their daughter, Grace Hartley Mead, and her children were willed the farm. They lived in Morristown, and the children recall visiting it often to collect garden produce, to play, and to ride a horse kept there. After World War II, it was re-converted from a working dairy farm back to a horse farm, and re-named Swing Tree Farm. The tenant house became the veterinary offices of Dr. Adrian Platt, and locally the barn is now known as "Platt's barn" or "the brick barn". Land on the west side of the Loantaka Brook was subdivided off from the farm, but east of the brook the boundaries of the farm remain the same as they were when Gibbons acquired the land from the Carter family. The farm remains today in the hands of George and Helen Jenkins' grand-daughter, Helen Mead Platt.

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

Section number 10 Page 1

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**UTMs Con't**

Zone 18

5- E 547311

N 4510769

6- E 547006

N 4511511

**Boundary Description and Justification:**

The nominated property is the entirety of Block 144, Lot 19 in Chatham Township, Moms County, New Jersey. The north side of the property fronts on Loantaka Way. The eastern edge of the property is bounded for much of its length by the Texas Eastern gas pipeline, which maintains a 50' right-of-way for its underground natural gas lines. The western edge of the property is bounded by the Loantaka Brook and its streamside land, which is now part of the Moms County Park Commission's Loantaka Brook Reservation. The property totals 122.5 acres, containing all the buildings described in this nomination, the site of the mid-19th century Lathrop stable, and the site of any horse training track which may have been on the property during the Gibbons ownership.

The historic farmstead buildings and the associated 122 acre landscape of streamside pasture lands and woodland have been together as a single parcel since the Gibbons family assembled the property in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

### Photographs

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Photographs were taken in 1998 and 1999 by Janet W. Foster, of Acroterion, LLC.

1. Gibbons Stable, looking northwest from Loantaka Brook.
2. Gibbons Stable, looking south from Loantaka Way.
3. Gibbons Stable, west gable end.
4. Gibbons Stable, south elevation and west gable end.
5. Interior of Gibbons Stable, view of doors on south elevation and hayloft.
6. Interior of stable: horse stalls.
7. Interior of Tack Room
8. View of farm, looking east from Loantaka Brook.
9. Jenkins-era expanded carriage barn and carriage shed; 19<sup>th</sup> c. barn incorporated into left side of building.
10. Gibbons stable in center, rear of carriage barn on left, caretaker's house on right.
11. View of accessory buildings from front, looking south. Left to right: ice house, caretaker's house, milk house.
12. View north to rear of accessory buildings.
13. View south from stable down old farm road.
14. View west from stable; Loantaka Brook in foreground.
15. View southeast from stable second floor, barnyard and barn.
16. Tenant house to left, stable to right.
17. Tenant house, rear elevation.
18. Tenant house, façade.
19. Interior tenant house, staircase in first floor.
20. Interior tenant house, typical mantel, first floor west gable end.
21. Historic view of the farm, looking north along old farm road. Undated; from Jenkins era, ca. 1920s, according to family members.
22. Historic view of the farm, looking east from opposite side of Loantaka Brook. Undated; photo taken before 1949, when carriage barn was remodeled.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

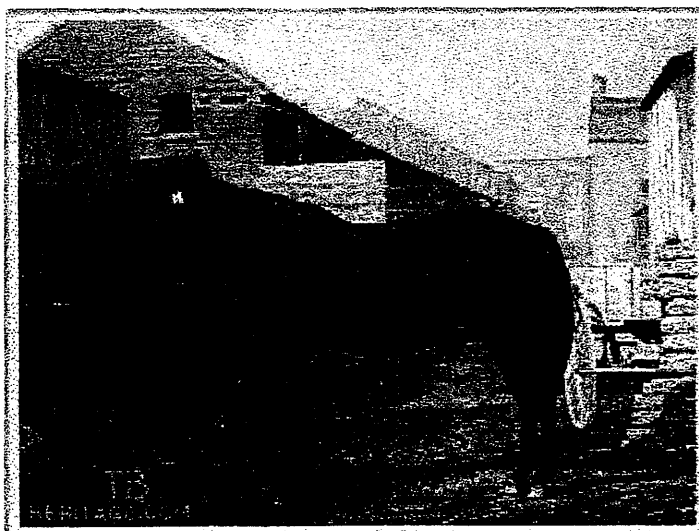
William Gibbons Stable and Farm  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

### Illustrations

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### Fashion

The great horse "Fashion", foaled at William Gibbons' stable in Chatham Township, New Jersey, was one of the best-known race horses of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. She was recorded in several drawings and engravings. She is shown here in an engraving which appears in the book *The Horses of America* by Frank Forester. This image is taken from the internet site, Thoroughbred Heritage, at [tbheritage.com](http://tbheritage.com).



Other known images of this famous horse include:

Artist unknown – "Fashion, the Property of William Gibbons, New Jersey, Foaled 26 April 1837, drawn from Nature, Printed by B. Jones Newman, New York, Published by B. Sintzenich, Morristown, New Jersey." Owned by a private collector, Madison, New Jersey.

Artist unknown - "Fashion", an engraving owned by Mr. William Bassett, Liberty Hill Road, Camden, South Carolina.

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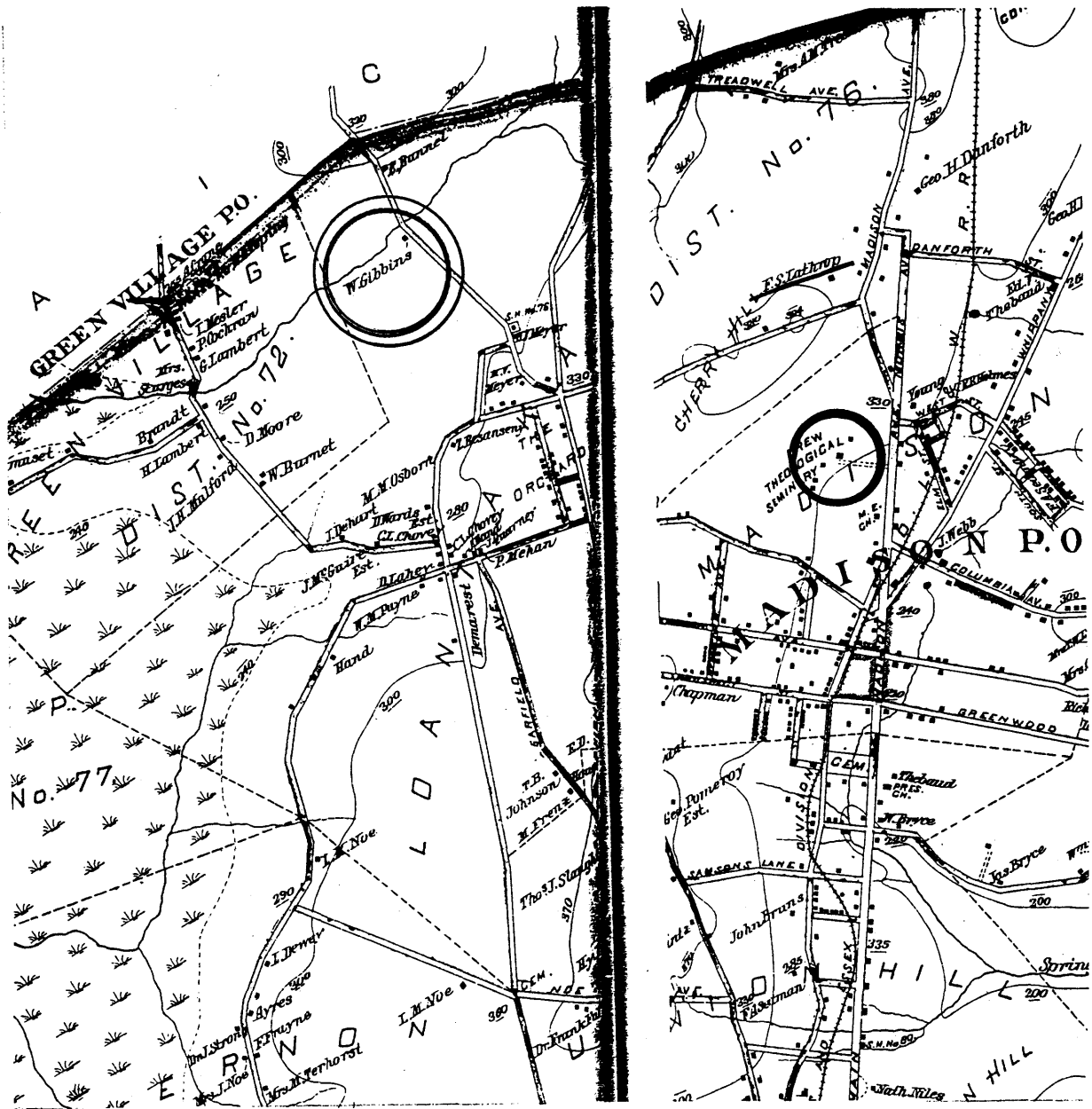
**Illustrations of the two most prominent owners of the Gibbons Stable.**



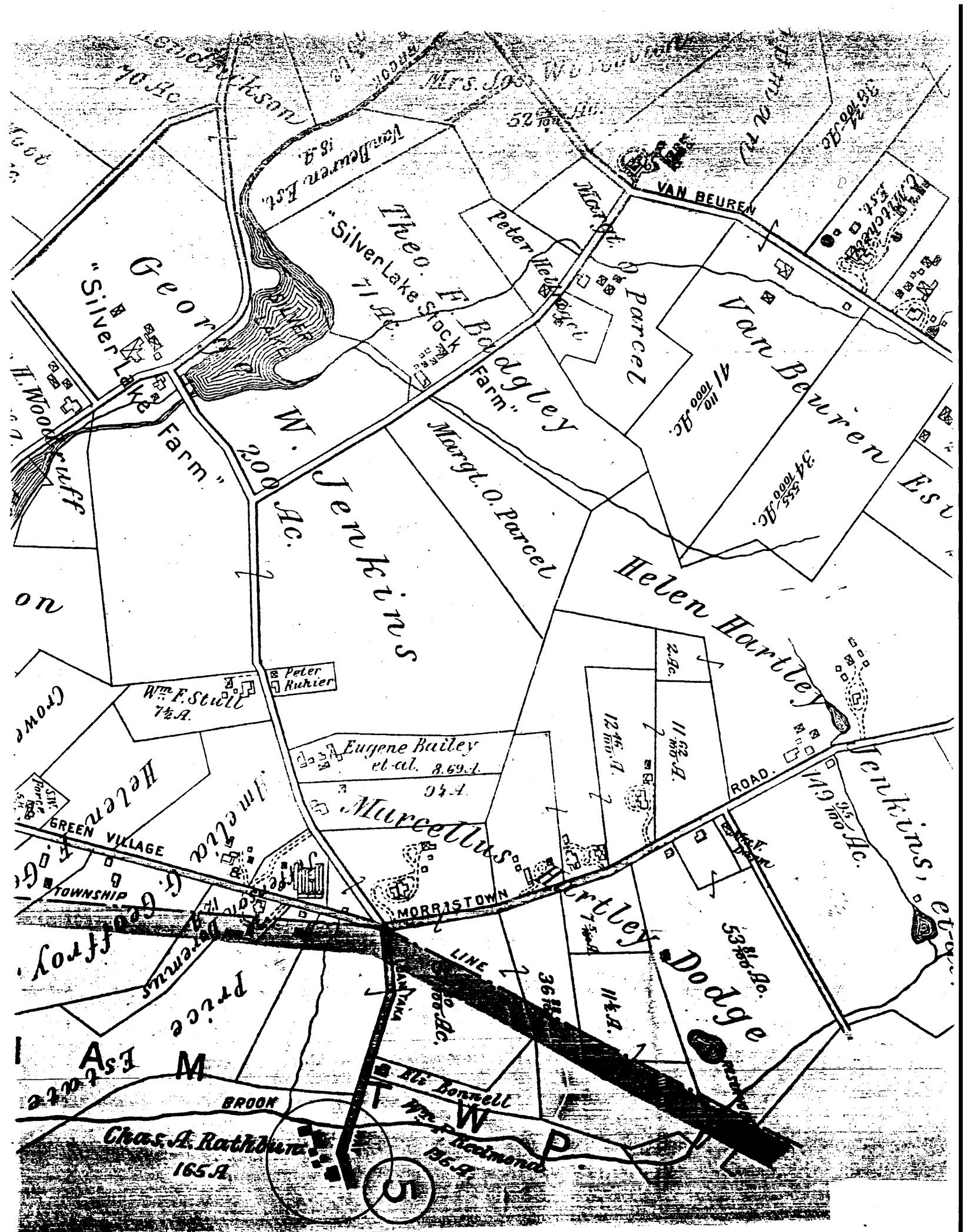
**William Gibbons (1794-1852)**  
Reproduced from *University in the Forest*, p. 44.
















**George Walker Jenkins (1847-1922)**  
From the Curtiss Collection, Morristown and Morris Township Public Library



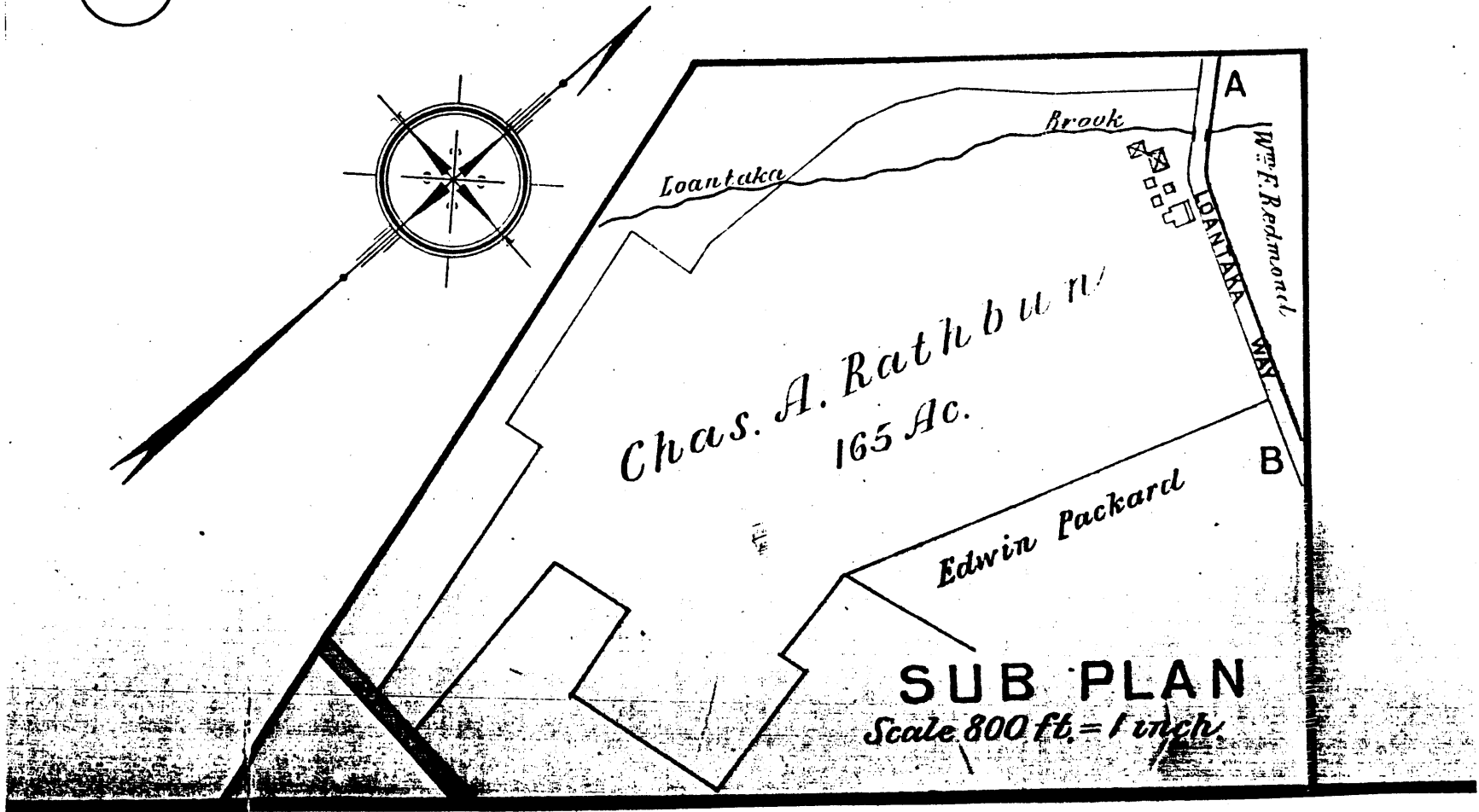
Portion of the Robinson's *Atlas of Morris County*, 1887, with the Gibbons stable property circled twice. The single circle surrounds the former Gibbons Mansion, which became the Drew University in 1867. William Heywood Gibbons lived at the stable farm, although within a year of this map's appearance, the property would be passed by will to his nephews, the Lathrops, whose family home stands north of the Gibbons mansion, the name Lathrop underlined.



**EXPLANATION**

-  STONE BUILDING
-  BRICK "
-  HALF FRAME "
-  FRAME "
-  STABLE OR BARN
-  GREEN HOUSE
-  STEAM RAILROAD
-  ELECTRIC "
-  WATER PIPE
-  SEWER
-  IMPROVED ROAD
-  FIRE HYDRANT
-  5 ADJOINING PLATE

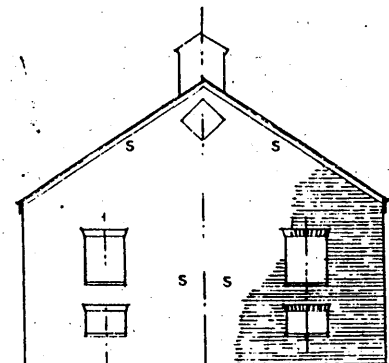
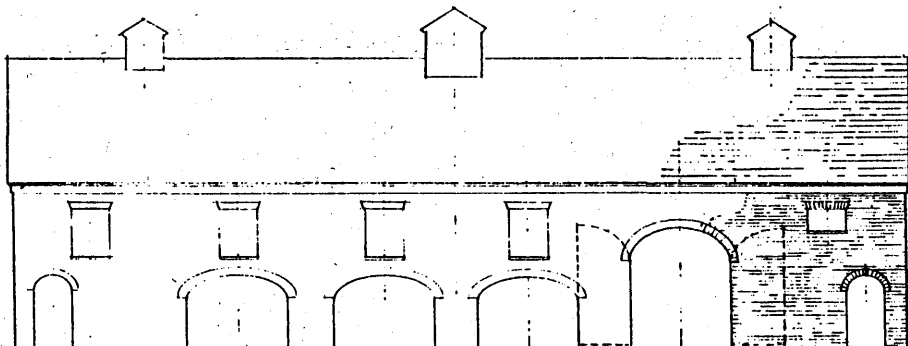
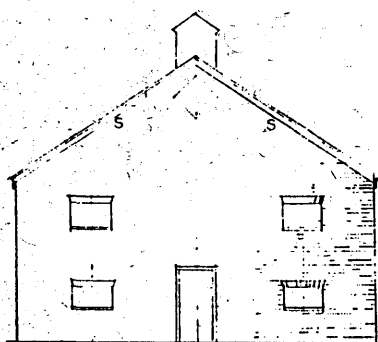
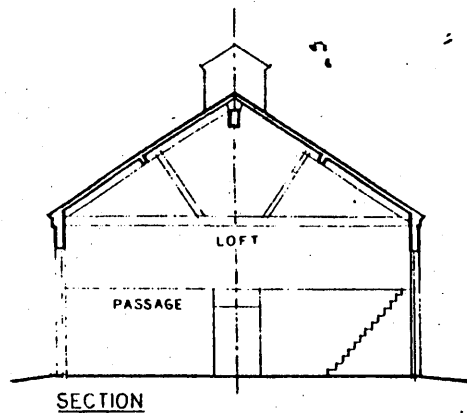
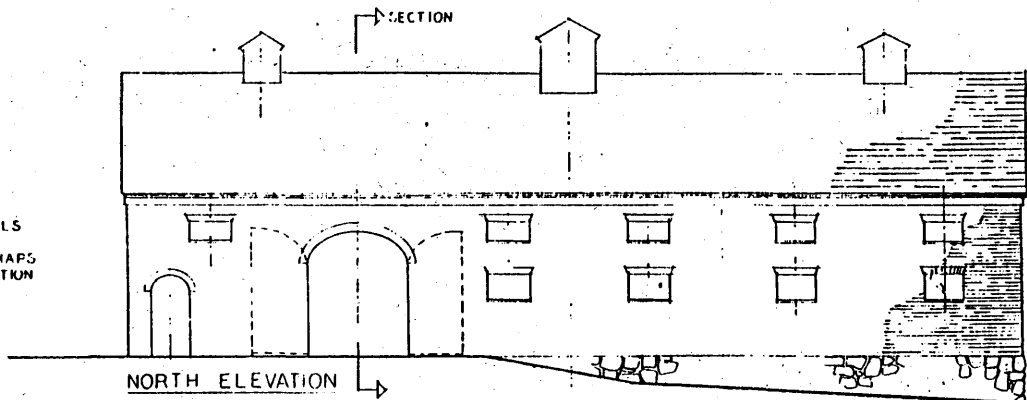
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Detail map from Mueller's Atlas of Morris County, 1910, showing the Gibbons Stable property. It was owned by Charles Rathburn from 1908-1911.

NOTES -

SEE PHOTOGRAPHS  
FOR BUILDING DETAILS  
SEE ACCOMPANYING MAPS  
FOR PROPERTY LOCATION

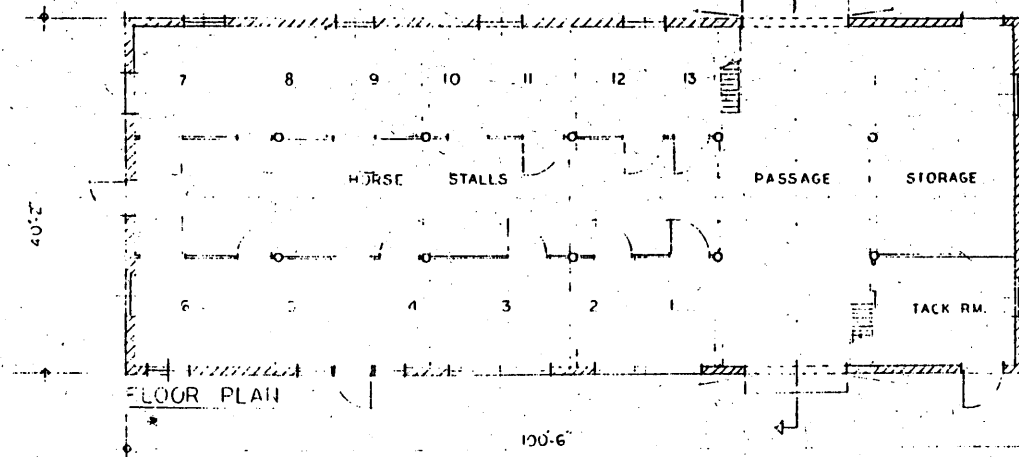


WEST ELEVATION

SOUTH ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



FLOOR PLAN

100'-6"

**THE WM. GIBBONS  
RACE HORSE  
STABLES**

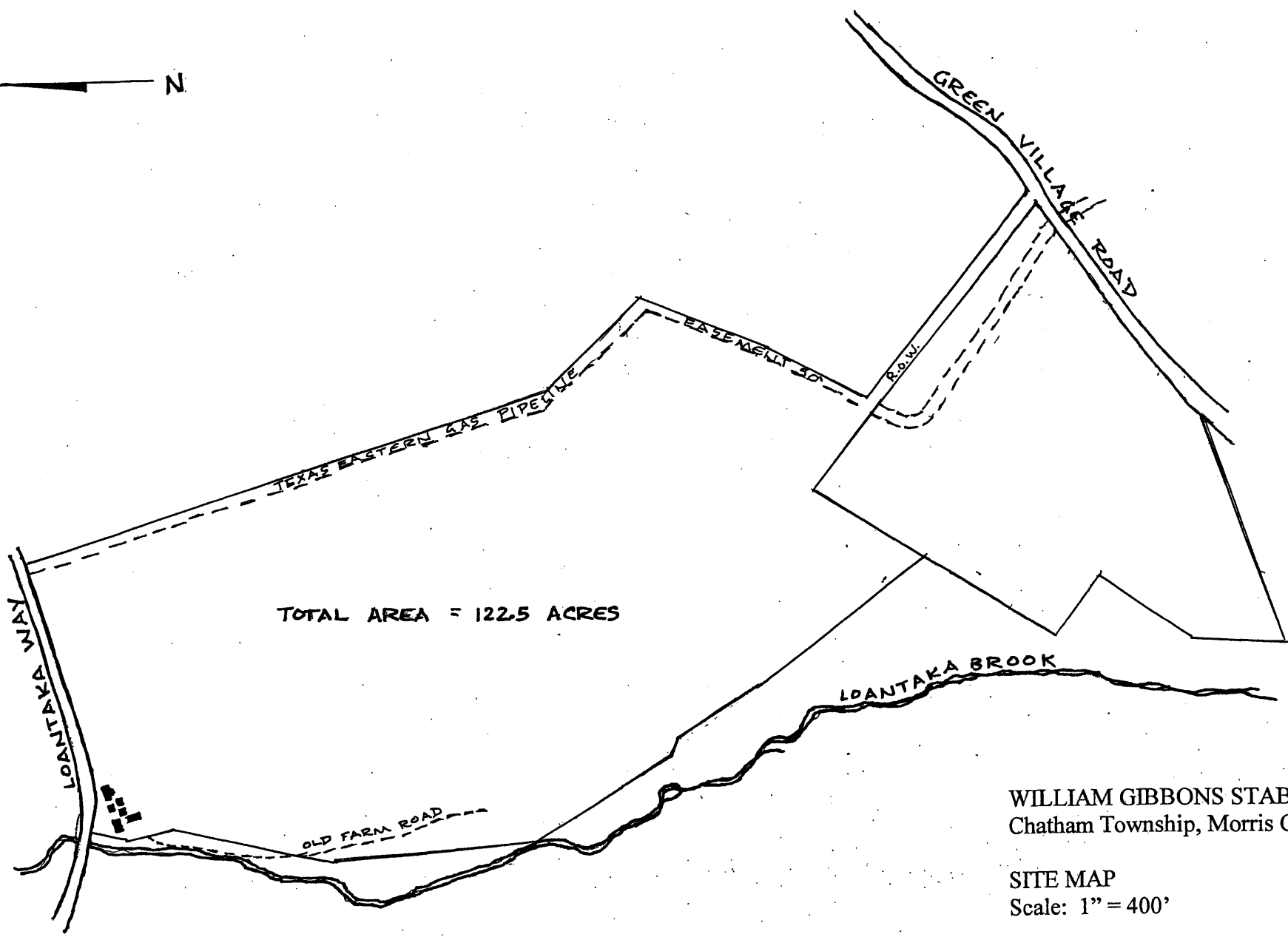
**circa 1838**

**LOANTAKA WAY  
CHATHAM TWP.**

A PROJECT OF  
THE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF  
CHATHAM TOWNSHIP  
NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 1978





TOTAL AREA = 122.5 ACRES

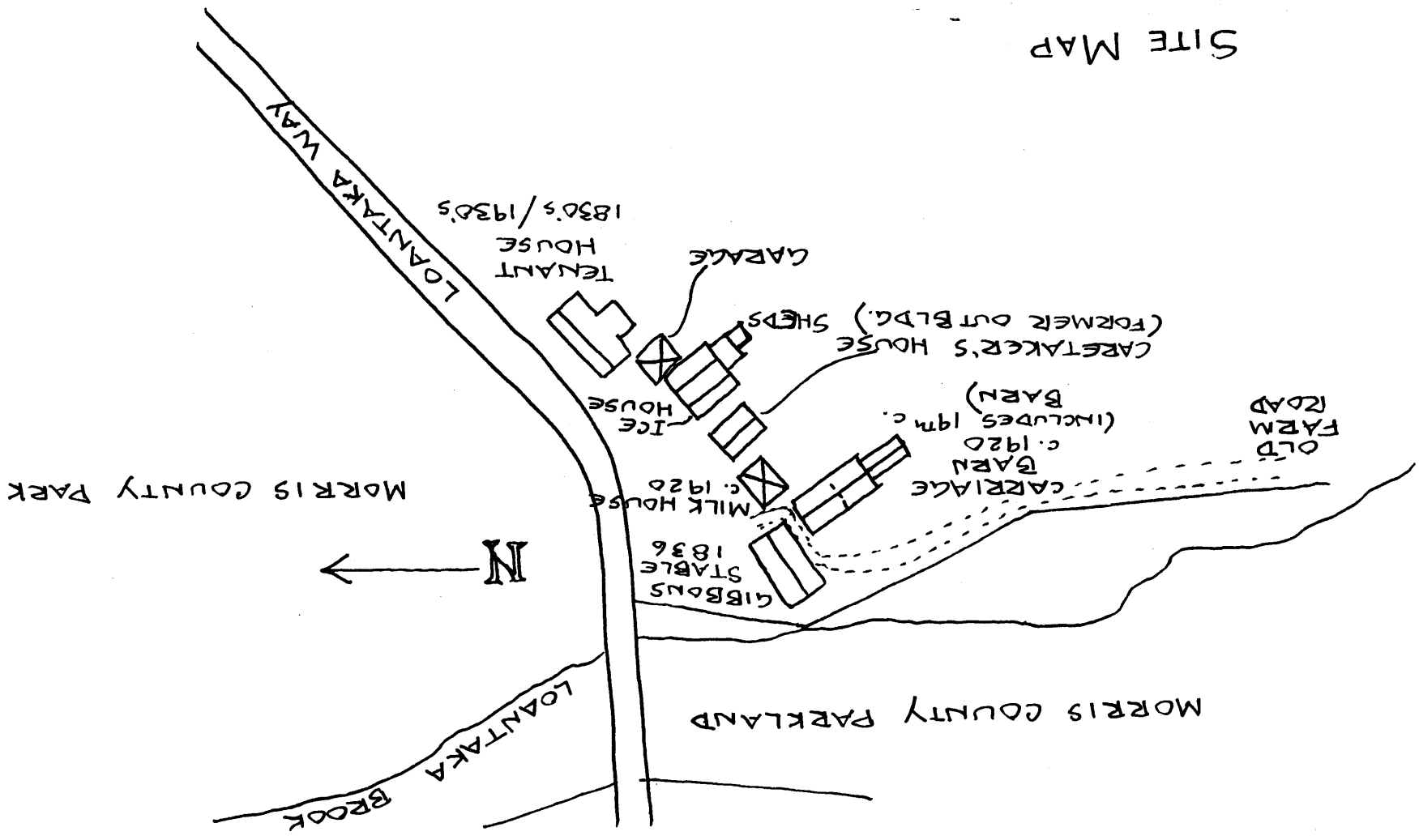
WILLIAM GIBBONS STABLE AND FARM  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

SITE MAP  
Scale: 1" = 400'

From tax maps of Chatham Township, NJ,  
showing Block 144, lot 19

# SITE MAP

~ NOT TO SCALE ~



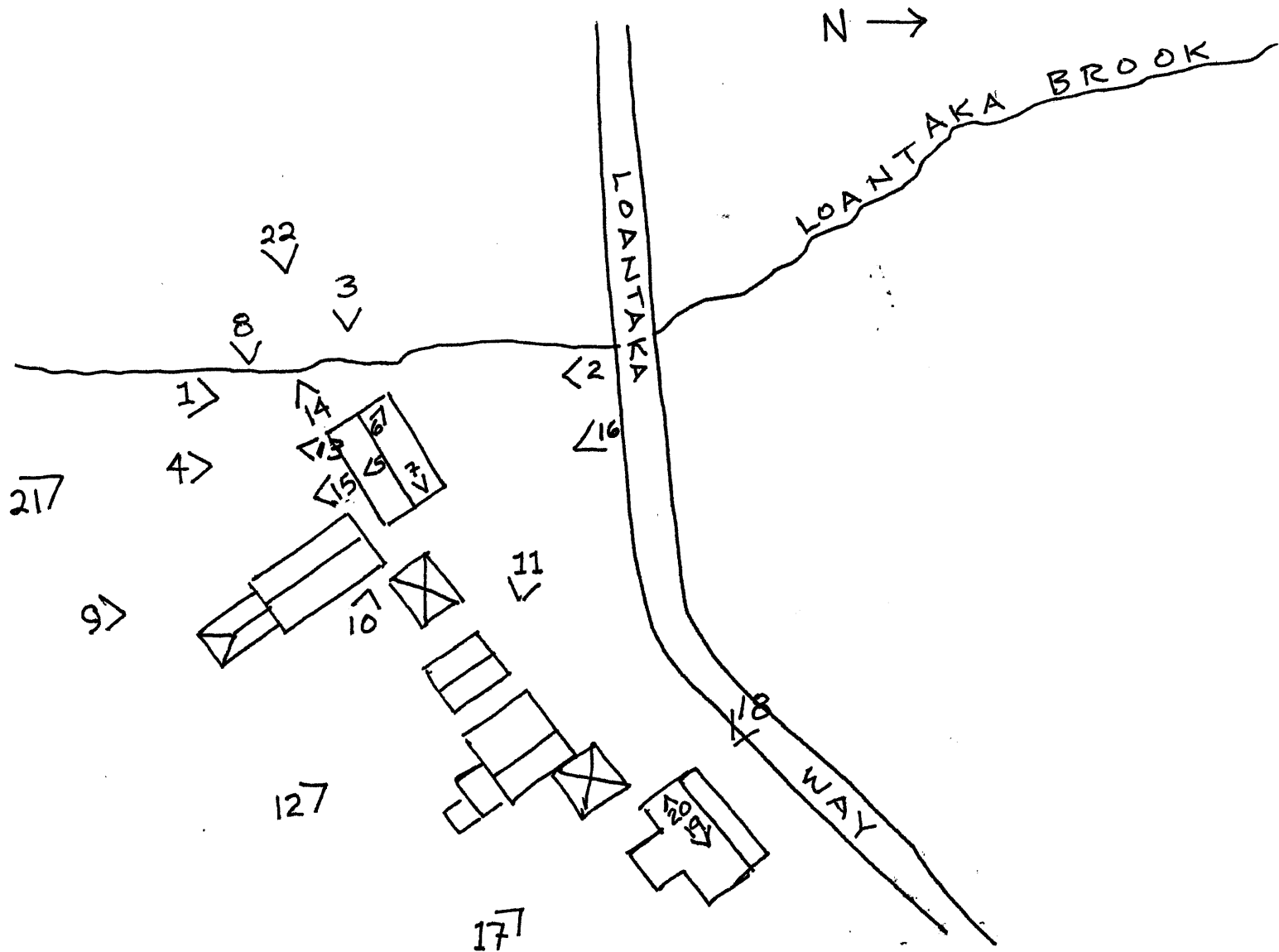
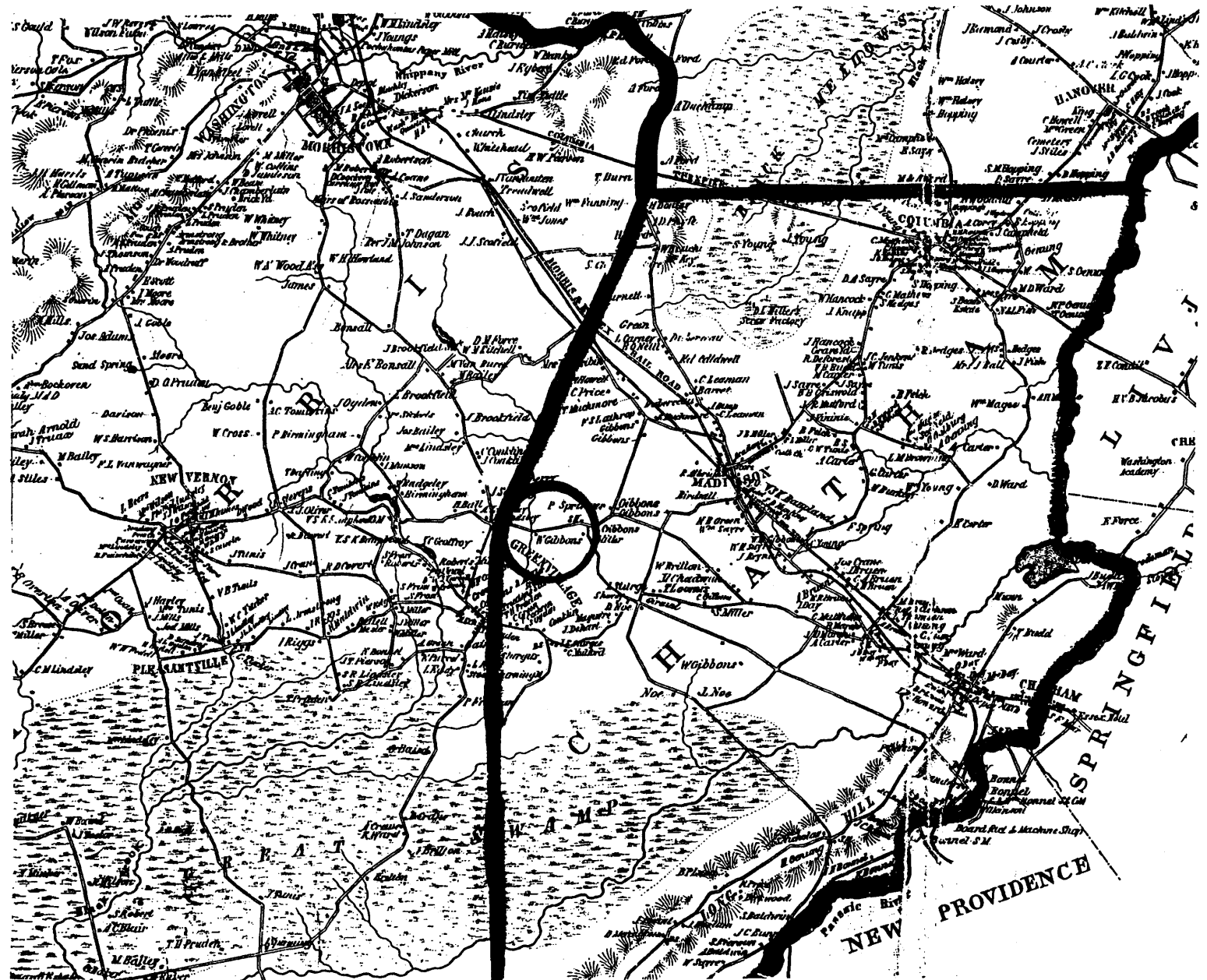
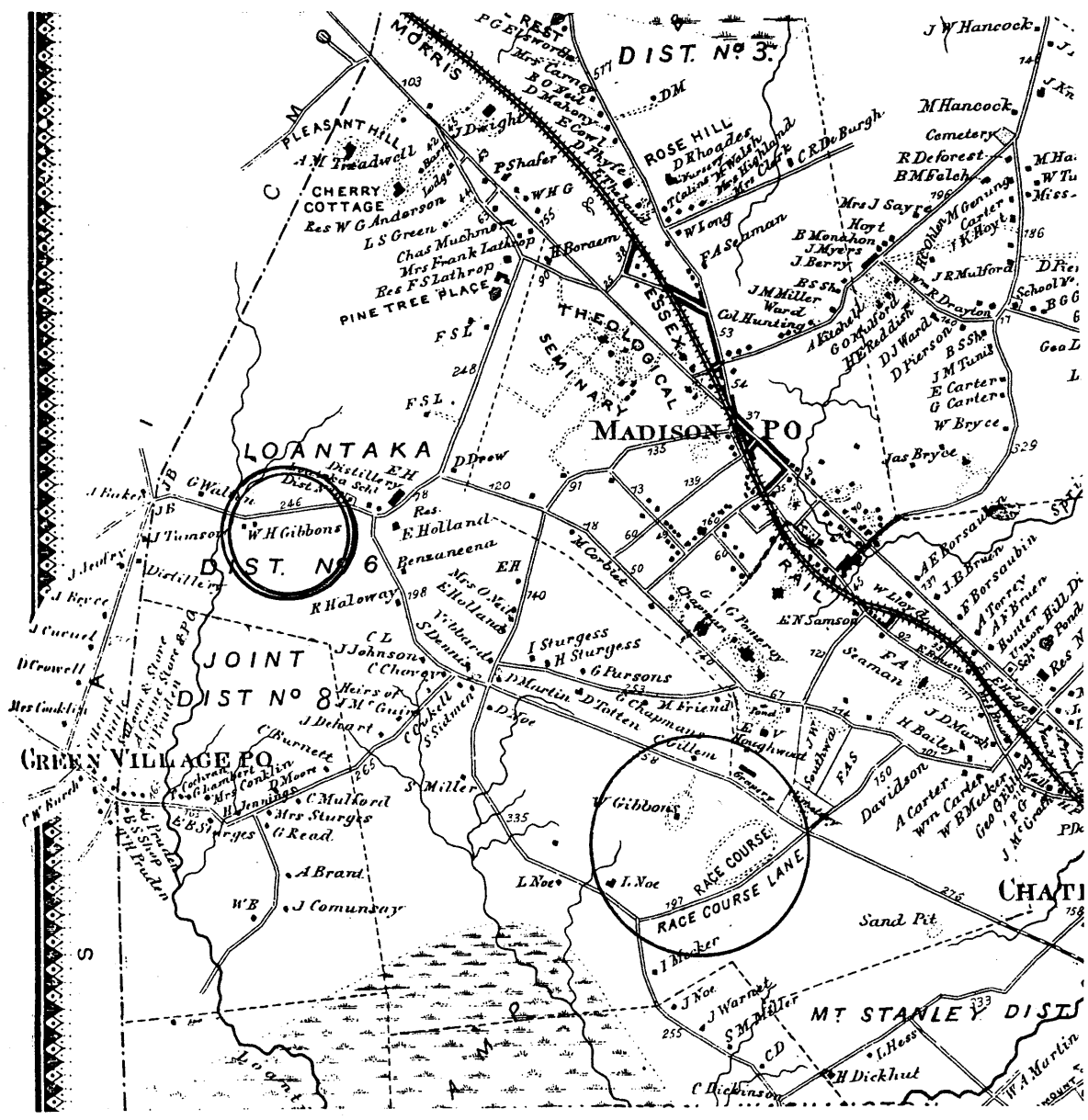


PHOTO LOCATIONS  
 WILLIAM GIBBONS STABLE + FARM  
 CHATHAM TOWNSHIP, MORRIS COUNTY, N.J.



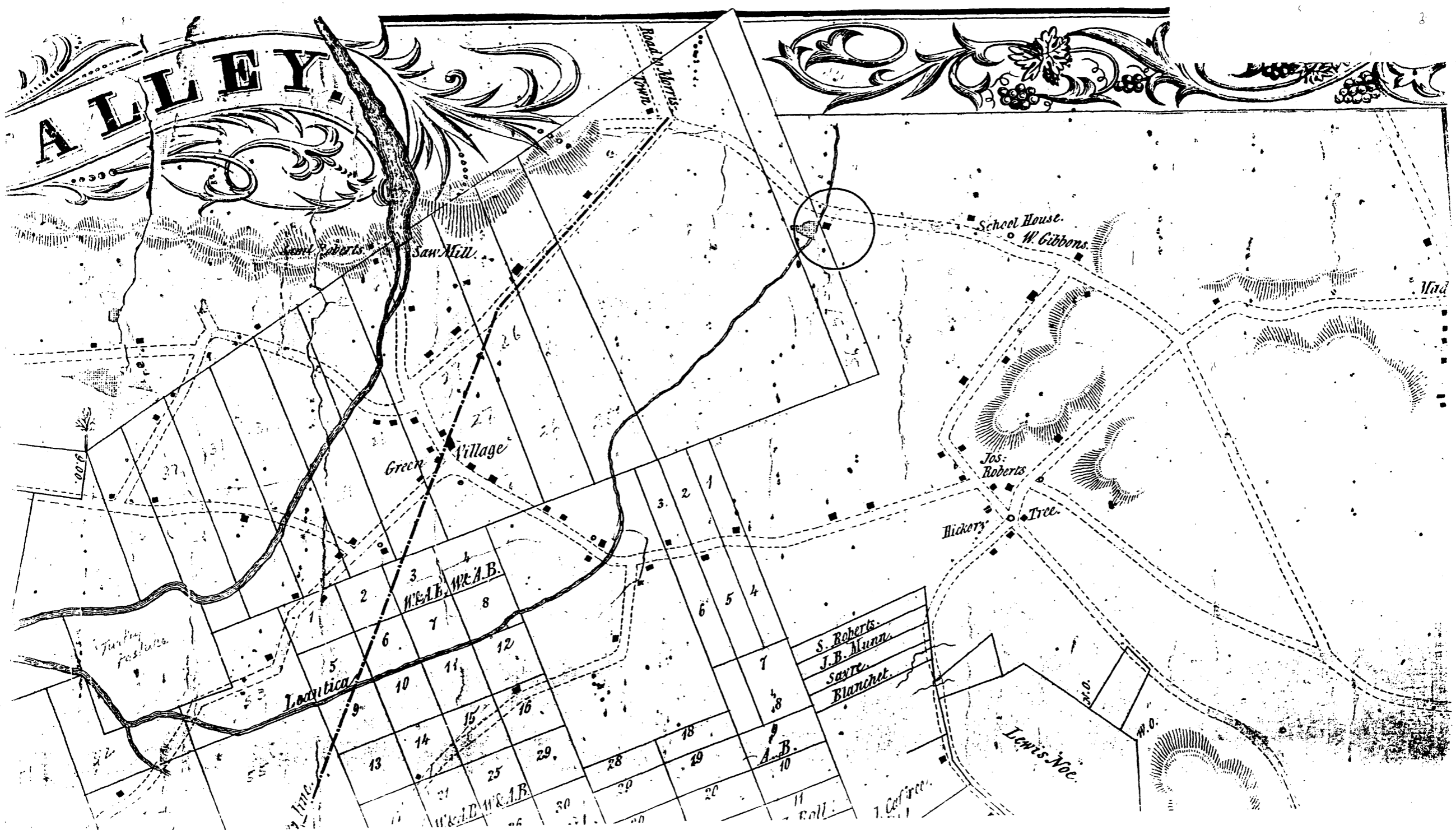


Portion of the Shields Map of Morris County, 1853, with the Gibbons stable property circled. Nearby are several other properties owned by the Gibbons family at this time. This map was made within a year of William Gibbons' death, apparently before the estate was divided up between his four children.



Portion of the Beers' *Atlas of Morris County*, 1868, with the Gibbons stable property circled twice. The single circle surrounds the former Gibbons Race Course on Race Course Lane, now known as Noe Avenue. The race course and the Gibbons House near it are gone.

# ALLEY.



San Roberts  
San Mill

Road to Morris  
Town

School House  
W. Gibbons

Green Village

Jas. Roberts

Hickory

Tree

Laoptica

W & A. B.

S. Roberts  
J. B. Munz  
Sayre  
Blanchet.

Lewis Noe

1. Pine

W & A. B.  
W & A. B.

A. B.

1. Fall

1. Coffee

# MAP and PROFILE of Part of LOANTIC.

Horizontal Scale 200 feet to an inch

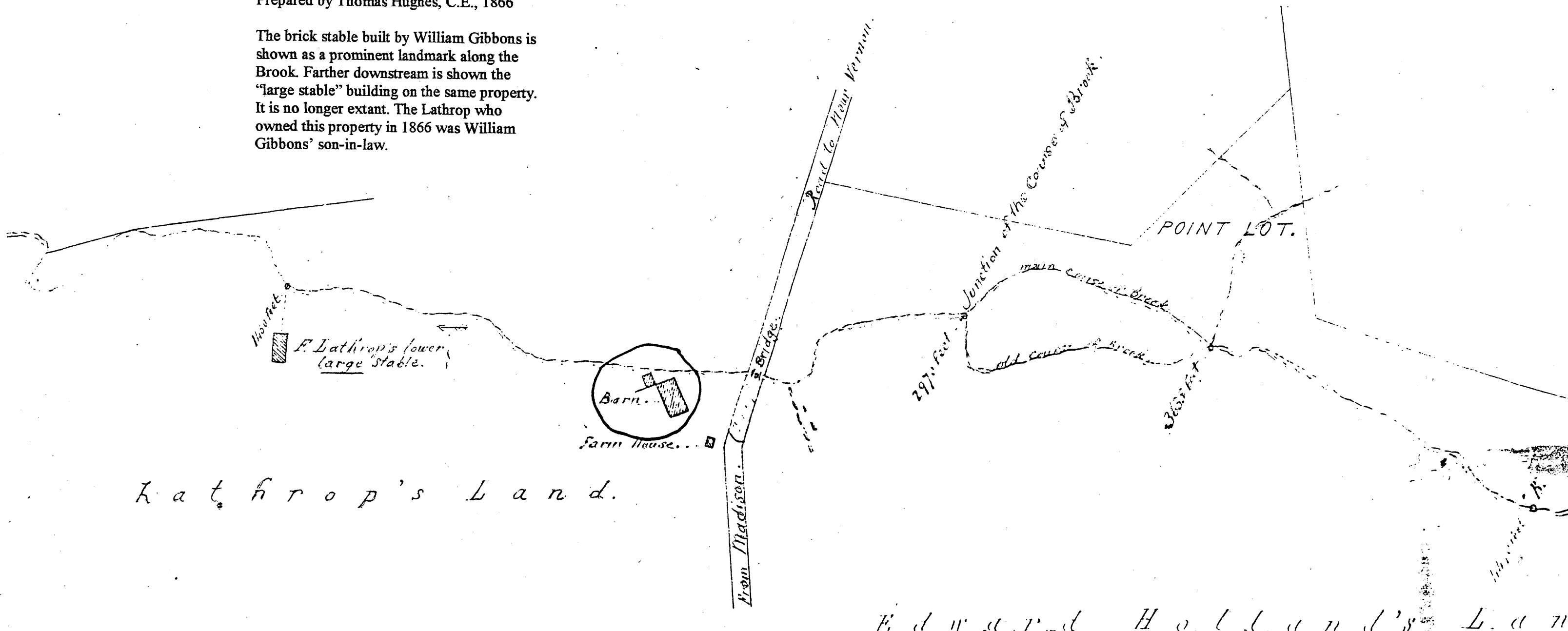
Vertical " 10 " " " "

April 1866.

Thos. Hughes C.E.

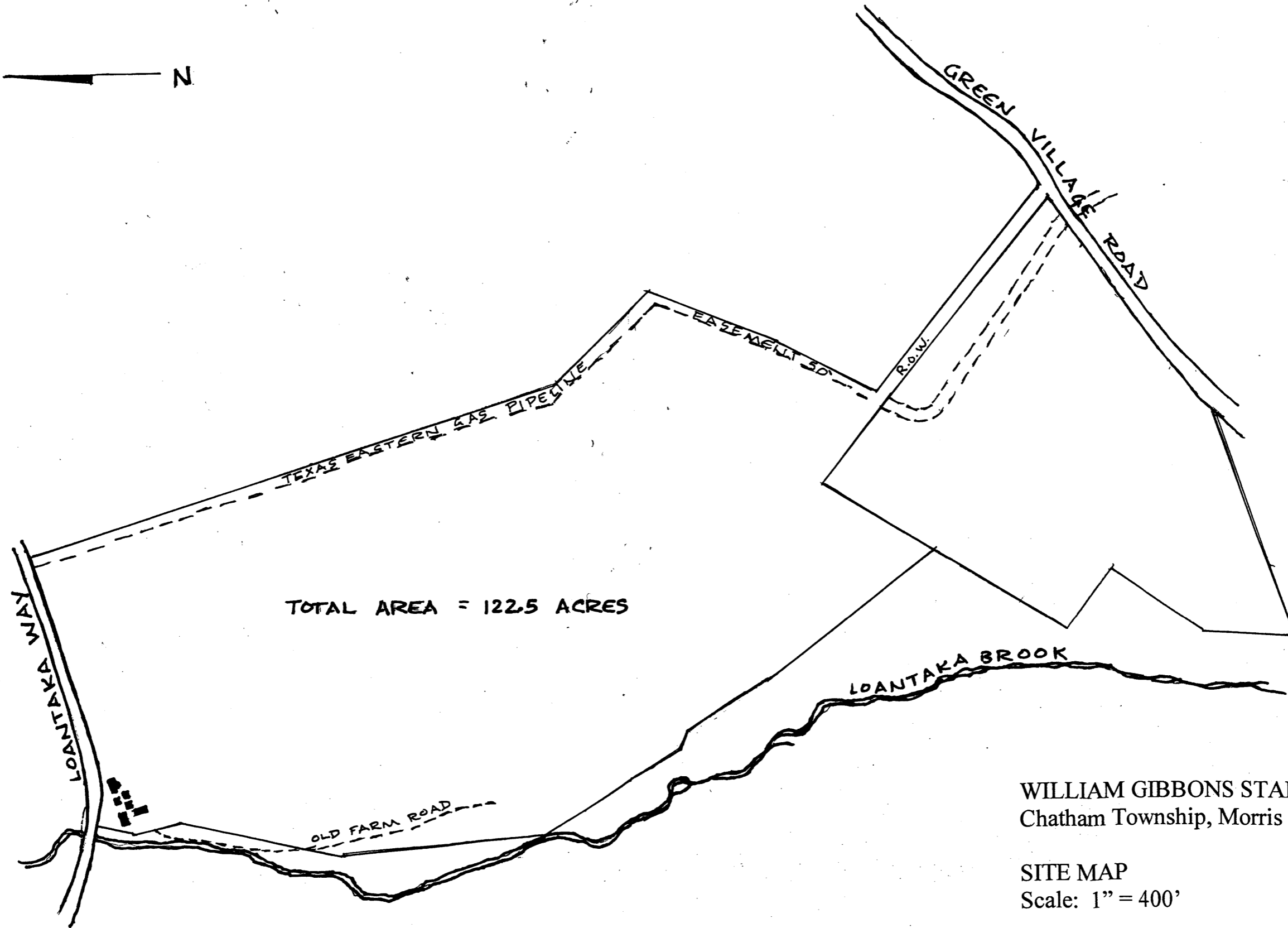
Map and Profile of Part of Loantica Brook  
Prepared by Thomas Hughes, C.E., 1866

The brick stable built by William Gibbons is shown as a prominent landmark along the Brook. Farther downstream is shown the "large stable" building on the same property. It is no longer extant. The Lathrop who owned this property in 1866 was William Gibbons' son-in-law.



Lathrop's Land.

Edward Holland's Land.



TOTAL AREA = 122.5 ACRES

WILLIAM GIBBONS STABLE AND FARM  
Chatham Township, Morris County, N.J.

SITE MAP  
Scale: 1" = 400'

From tax maps of Chatham Township, NJ,  
showing Block 144, lot 19