

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Ohio</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Ashtabula</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Joshua Reed Giddings Law Office**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Joshua Reed Giddings Law Office**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**112 North Chestnut Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Jefferson**

STATE <b>Ohio</b>	CODE	COUNTY: <b>Ashtabula</b>	CODE
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>vacant</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____	

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Ashtabula County Historical Society**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**P. O. Box 193**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Jefferson**

STATE:  
**Ohio**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Ashtabula County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**West Jefferson Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Jefferson**

STATE:  
**Ohio**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1936**     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Division of Prints and Photographs**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Library of Congress (Annex)**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE:  
**District of Columbia**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1823, this one-story frame building served as the law office of Joshua Reed Giddings. The weatherboarded structure of two rooms is 16 feet by 28 feet with a metal standing-seam gable roof with pediment. The cruciform front door is to the right side of the front facade and is set into a doorway with cornice characterized by the great delicacy of the mouldings. One shuttered window with double-hung sash (12/12) is set to the left. The window design with simple cornice is repeated twice on each side. The window and door arrangement is separated at the rear facade.<sup>1</sup>

The building has deteriorated since 1936 when last surveyed.<sup>2</sup> The center partition and sections of the walls have lost much of their plaster and lath. The interior is cluttered and in disrepair. Many furnishings are gone, especially the law books. The building needs considerable attention. Nevertheless, the structure is sound and simple repair and renovation could return it to standard.

The building is privately owned and open to the public by arrangement with the Ashtabula Historical Society.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<sup>1</sup>William A. Bohnard (District Officer, Cleveland) and Carl Waite (photographer), Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS No. 268, "Joshua Giddings Office," Jefferson, Ohio, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., June 29, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                        |                                       |                                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input 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) **c.1838-c.1864**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                         |                                                 |                                               |                                                |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                          |
| <input 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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The small two-room frame office at 112 North Chestnut Street in ~~Lancaster~~, Ohio, was the law office of Joshua Reed Giddings for most of his professional and political life. A radical abolitionist, he remained throughout his life in the minority of the parties with which he was associated--Whig, Free Soil, and Republican--"trying to achieve what Garrison deemed impossible, a fusion of morality and conventional politics for the building of a more humane society."<sup>1</sup>

Returned to Congress for 20 years, his unwavering objective was the elimination of slavery by every conceivable political measure--non-extension of slavery to the territories, abolition of the slave trade, even the use of the war powers of the President, in the event of war, to emancipate the slaves. His most recent biographer says of him, although he was a "political pariah for much of his career, and a maverick for all of it, no Northern political figure did more to channel and move institutions against slavery."<sup>2</sup>

As a moral catalyst in Congress, Giddings became one of the most successful practitioners of radical politics, forging a link between the "root-and-branch" activist and the institutionalized politician.

By attempting to convert the moral imperative of freedom to the political imperative of emancipation, his greatest influence may have been exerted "in the evolution of Lincoln's ideas or at least in the preparation of public opinion for Lincoln's leadership."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>James Brewer Stewart, Joshua R. Giddings and the Tactics of Radical Politics (Cleveland, 1970), p. ix.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. x.

<sup>3</sup>Elbert Jay Benton, "Joshua Reed Giddings," Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. VII, 1943, pp. 260-61.

(Continued)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Benton, Elbert Jay, "Joshua Reed Giddings," Dictionary of American Biography, 1943, Vol. VII, pp. 260-61.

Stewart, James Brewer, Joshua R. Giddings and the Tactics of Radical Politics, Cleveland, Press of Case Western Reserve, 1970.

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 ' "		41° 44 ' 26 "	80° 46 ' 09 "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 1 acre.

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Benjamin Levy, Senior Historian, Historic Sites Survey

ORGANIZATION: Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys, National Park Service DATE: 11/20/73

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1100 L Street NW

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Ohio	
COUNTY	
Ashtabula	
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(Number all entries)

Biography

A prominent abolitionist Congressman, Joshua Reed Giddings was born in 1795 in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, but was taken as an infant to Canandaigua, New York, by his parents who moved again when Joshua was 10 years old to Ashtabula County, Ohio. Young Joshua worked on his father's farm and had little time for school. In the War of 1812 he served against the Indians in northwestern Ohio and until 1819, when he married, divided his time between the farm and some little schooling. After his marriage he began the study of law and was admitted to the bar in 1821. From then until 1838 he engaged in a very successful legal practice and in 1826 was elected to serve one term in the Ohio House of Representatives.

In 1838 Giddings was elected to the Federal House of Representatives as a Whig. He immediately threw himself into the slavery controversy by vigorously defending John Quincy Adams' struggle against the "gag resolutions" passed to prevent open debate on slavery in Congress, a defense regarded as a landmark moment in the development of civil liberties. He opposed the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War as proslavery conspiracies. His intemperate attacks on the coastal slave trade earned him the censure of his colleagues by a vote of 125 to 69. Resigning his seat, he appealed to his constituents who immediately reelected him.

In 1848, with the nomination of Taylor, Giddings broke with the Whigs and joined the Free Soil Party. In 1854, outraged by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he became a Republican and spoke for the radical wing of the new party. He became dedicated to the political achievement of an antislavery program calling for free soil in the territories, opposition to disunion, and the use of the war powers of the President, if war came, to emancipate the slaves. Lincoln was his messmate in Washington and a student of Giddings' speeches. From this it has been postulated that "Giddings' greatest influence ... was exerted in the evolution of Lincoln's ideas or at least in the preparation of public opinion for Lincoln's leadership."<sup>4</sup>

Giddings was active in the Republican convention of 1856, contributing significantly to the party platform. He was active again in this way in 1860, although his radical influence was not felt as keenly as before. Lincoln rewarded him with an appointment as consul-general to Canada, a post at which he served until his death in 1864. In addition to his many speeches and essays, he left two published works: The Exiles of Florida (1858) and The History of the Rebellion (1864).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 261.