



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 052-5163

1. General Property Information

Property name: Gibson Farm

Property address: 2473 Dr. Thomas Walker Rd

City or Town: Ewing

Zip code: 24248

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Lee County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 36

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The Gibson farmhouse is located 1.64 miles south of the Kentucky state line and 3.2 miles north of the Tennessee state line, on the north side of Dr. Thomas Walker Road (US 58 Bus, about 200 feet from the road) on the eastern outskirts of Ewing, Virginia; roughly 4/5-mile east of the town center and post office. The Gibson-Smith family cemetery is about 100 feet west (and southwest) of the house, its chain-link-fence enclosure measuring 145 feet (roughly north-south) by 40 feet. Three extant outbuildings are located within the backyard, and two deteriorated barns are roughly 230 feet to the east of the house. A small milking house is located about 200 feet due east of the farmhouse, on the west side of the farm road and the north side of Dr. Thomas Walker Rd. A cistern is found in the front yard. A small drainage called Indian Creek is 250 north of the house, midway between the house and four-lane Highway 58, known as both Wilderness Road and Daniel Boone Trail. The c. 1891 Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad bed runs through the property, as close as 210 feet to the north-northwest of the Gibson farmhouse, along the Indian Creek bottomlands.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Federal, Greek Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: unknown

If the builder is known, please list here: unknown

Date of construction (can be approximate): ca 1830 with later additions and improvements

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

Architectural Description

Farmhouse

The Gibson Farmhouse is a south-facing L-plan two-story side-gabled, weatherboarded hewn-log and timber-frame house with a coursed-limestone foundation enclosing a partial basement, and a one-story, two-room frame front ell extending to the south, offset from the southwest corner of the main-block—altogether an unusual configuration. It appears the main block of the house began as a one-story single-pen hewn-log house. By the third quarter of the 19th century it was raised to two stories, and a two-story four-bay braced timber-frame addition was built to the east, more than doubling the size of the house. The log pen is generally not currently exposed, but several logs are partly visible in the second-floor rear wall and corner (see current photos). More logs were revealed when the kitchen was removed from the west end of the house ca. 1991. Photos from the time show larger, smoother, and more neatly hewn logs at the second-story level compared to those of the first story.

The ell has a one-story porch along its east elevation, sheltering an off-center front entrance flanked by a window to each side. The porch roof rafters are notched into a hewn top plate, and is supported by four solid wood posts. The upper portions of the posts are chamfered to an octagonal shape, closely resembling the octagonal corner posts of the house's two-story timber-frame east addition. Under the north end of the porch is a secondary entrance to the house's two-story main block, enclosed by a batten door hung on wrought iron strap hinges. The ell's west elevation also has an off-center doorway and a single window lighting each room, although all are infilled or covered. The ell has weatherboards on three elevations, but flush boards (likely with tongue-and-groove connections) enclose the east side, under the porch.

The timber framing of the lateral two-story east addition, which has a large room on each floor and also includes the house's front entrance and center passage, is highly unusual in that the framing members are chamfered and semi-exposed in the first- and second-floor rooms. The corner posts, which extend two stories, from the sill to the top plate, are chamfered to an octagonal shape (the ell's four porch columns are similarly chamfered). Though wider than the posts, the diagonal down-braces are also chamfered and octagonal. Sawn girts connect the corner posts, and the lower parts of the second-story braces, pegged into the girts, are semi-exposed in the first-floor room. Instead of common studs, the upright members between the corners are semi-exposed, six-inch-wide timbers set at wide intervals. The interior walls are finished with wide, flush-mounted, likely tongue-and-grooved boards. The addition has no basement, but massive hewn joists are seen in the

crawlspace. In the first-floor room the vertically sawn, un-beaded second-floor joists are exposed, as are the tie beams in the second-floor room, all of which measure about 3 x 8 inches thick. The flooring of the addition consists of about 10-inch wide boards with beaded edges.

The house possesses four exterior end chimneys including the now free-standing kitchen chimney. All have stepped shoulders. Of the four, the two on each end of the main block are two stories tall, with bases of dressed limestone blocks up to about six feet, above which are hand-made bricks laid in common bond. The kitchen chimney served only one story and is much wider and slightly deeper than the others, yet is otherwise identically constructed of the same materials as the two-story chimneys. This suggests they were all built around the same time, after the original log structure was raised to two stories and appended with the two-story timber-frame lateral addition to the east (at which time the original chimney was removed). The well-fired bricks have peculiar, unusually deep frogs (indentions in the bottom, see photos) and the masonry bonding courses are at inconsistent intervals ranging from 6-8. All three of these chimneys are in very poor condition, their stacks crumbling from the top. The west chimney will likely soon succumb to vines, but the front ell's one-story chimney, on the south elevation, remains in relatively good condition. The ell chimney is likely newer than the others and lacks a stone base. Although its bricks are hand-made, they are laid with no discernable bond. It has been subjected to poor-quality repair/repointing and the top fitted with two ceramic chimney pots. Oddly, the ell chimney serves one of the largest fireplaces with the oldest mantel in the house—an elaborate Federal-style piece. The fireplace was eventually made smaller to adapt for coal burning, and later still, reduced to a small, round stove-flue exhaust hole.

The timber-frame portion of the house makes up the four easternmost bays, the first and second stories neatly aligned vertically, including the central, principal entrance to the house, which comprises the first-story, fourth bay from the east front corner. The entrance has unusual design features beginning with its folding doors, each with doweled joinery and four raised panels arranged vertically or stacked. The west door has a key lock and white porcelain knob mounted higher than is typical. Spanning the doorway is a four-light transom with vertical muntins. Between the doorway and transom is a coarsely reeded frieze, and surrounding them is wide trim with more-narrow reeding and plain corner blocks. Finally, flanking only the top half of the door and transom assembly are narrow sidelights within architrave-molded frames and covered with fitted louvered shutters, vertically hinged along the outer edges. All of the front windows (and at least one of the two east-side windows) of the house have matching architrave-molded frames and tightly closed shutters. The east elevation second-story does not appear to have had any windows.

Kitchen Wing and Rear Porch

The house is in fair condition, but a kitchen extension on the west end of the house's main block is now gone except for its chimney. The one-story, one-room kitchen wing was demolished circa 1991. It was built partly of frame construction and partly of board construction, all of it externally clad with weatherboards, with a gable roof tucked between two masonry chimneys, both of which still stand, though in deteriorating condition. The kitchen had pole rafters, hewn flat on the upper surfaces, that met at a ridge board, and a square-hewn top plate that projected outward to form shallow eaves. The fairly steep roof pitch allowed for functional space in the loft. The kitchen's frame construction was limited to its west gable end, consisting of a common stud wall finished with regular-sized flush-mounted boards on the inside wall. These boards measured 1-2 inches thick by about eight inches wide. The two front and rear (north and south) walls of the kitchen, however, were built of heavy planks, about three inches thick and a foot or more in width, without the use of studs. These planks were fitted tightly together by means of tongues or grooves along all four edges and fastened by cut nails. The usage of such planks and this type of plank construction have not been documented elsewhere in southwestern Virginia. The planks are seen in 1991 kitchen demolition photos and are included in 2025-2026 photos of the ell's south room, where they are stored.

On the north side of the kitchen is a concrete trough into which water was piped from a spring uphill and across the road to the south. Overflow water from the trough continued by pipe to other locations on the farm. Immediately north of the trough remains is a short flight of wide, stone steps (augmented with concrete) leading down to the backyard.

The main block of the house formerly had a two-story porch across its rear (north) elevation, its second story eventually enclosed with weatherboards and seven windows evenly spaced across it. The porch, built on stacked limestone piers, deteriorated and was taken down, with only pieces left inside the house, and the main-block rear doors and windows, of which there were few, infilled/covered. Family photos show the deconstruction of both the kitchen and the two-story full-width back porch of the house in progress, after it was decided that deterioration had rendered demolition necessary.

House Interior

Within the western (log) portion of the house is a single room on each floor, an enclosed stair in the northwest corner, and modified/infilled fireplaces and replacement mantels on the west wall on each floor. Batten doors are built of hand-planed boards with vernacular wrought-iron hardware, and in some places, cast-iron rim locks and brown mineral doorknobs. Mid-twentieth-century manufactured coverings obscure earlier whitewashed horizontally mounted wall boards and original floorboards. The first-floor ceiling consists of exposed upstairs floor joists and floorboards, all hand-planed, with beaded edges. The second-floor ceiling is finished with narrow slats from a later time period.

The eastern (timber frame) portion of the house includes the house's approximately seven-foot wide center passage (lacking a staircase) on each floor. No framing is exposed within the passage, but the framing is purposely semi-exposed in the corners and along the ceilings of both first- and second-floor large rooms—suggesting that the passage may be an interim space between the log and timber frame parts of the house; however, no further evidence is seen in the attic, where the roof structure appears as only two distinct parts. Nevertheless, the frame portion of the house has its own enclosed corner stair in the northwest corner of the large rooms. It makes sense that a stair would not be within a connecting space. In addition to the highly unusual semi-exposure of the framing, which is complete with diagonal braces and pegged joinery, is the unconventional chamfering of each framing member, or at least the exposed parts of them.

With the two staircases in the house supporting the tradition that the second floor historically had two separate parts with no communication between them, the notion that the house was enlarged to accommodate travelers along the Wilderness Road and/or the L&N Railroad seems more than plausible. Eventually the family made a cut-through between the two parts, possibly during the twentieth century, after the heyday of midwestern migration and railroad passenger service.

The house's fireplaces have been altered, some of them multiple times, to accommodate the use of coal, and later wood- or coal-burning stoves. Two significant mantels remain in the house, one in the first-floor room of the east wing, and one in the south room of the ell. Both mantels have Federal style tripartite designs with center tablets in the frieze, and numerous bed moldings. The east wing mantel has turned colonettes on each side, topped by vasiform motifs, and the ell mantel has fluted pilasters topped by tiny squares with fine diagonal reeding.

In the main block's attic are ample distinctions between the roof structure of the log pen and that of the frame east wing. The log pen has round pole rafters, the pairs lapped and pegged together, and no collar ties preventing them from spreading. Instead, the rafters are birdsmouth-notched and securely fastened into the top plates. A 1991 photo shows layers of shingles still in-place, nailed to narrow roof sheathing boards. Soon after the photo was taken, the shingles were removed and tossed loosely into the attic, where they remain on the

floors of both the log pen and frame wing, and a new sheet-metal roof was installed, leaving the existing roof rafters in place. The frame wing rafters are vertically sawn rather than left round, are nailed to a narrow ridge board rather than pegged together, and are fitted with collar ties, most lapped-and-pegged into the rafters.

Secondary Resources

1) Cemetery

The cemetery dates to the 1860s and contains graves of Gibson family members who resided or were born on the farm, including the original owner, James Johnston Gibson (1810-1874) and his wife Lucy Ann Ball, and 7 of their 10 children. The second youngest son, George Washington Gibson (1848-1930) was the second owner of the farm. He married a cousin, Mary Ruth Gibson, in 1869. According to Find-a-Grave.com, there are 41 grave markers in the cemetery, which is known as the Gibson-Smith Cemetery because of two Smith family-related individuals interred in 2009 and 2023. The oldest grave appears to be that of Pvt. Moses Marshall Gibson (1836-1861) PVT CO E 37 VA INF CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY, who died of Typhoid fever. The cemetery also includes headstones for two unnamed enslaved persons who died in 1862 of Typhoid fever.

2) Meathouse

The unusually large meathouse is located off of the northeastern corner of the house at a distance of about 25 feet. Likely built during the mid-19th century, it is a one-story single-pen v-notched hewn-log building with a rectangular footprint and a cantilevered overhanging roof in the front, which faces west toward the backyard of the house and the granary. The front-gable roof is sheathed with corrugated sheet metal. The building has a collapsed foundation of rounded fieldstones. The only fenestration is a doorway centered below the front gable, with its door hung on wrought-iron strap hinges.

3) Granary

The granary is located directly behind the house at a distance of 10-15 feet. Likely built during the mid-19th century, it is a one-story single-pen half-dovetail-notched hewn-log building with a rectangular footprint and a cantilevered overhanging roof in the front, which faces south toward the house. The front-gable roof is sheathed with corrugated sheet metal. The building has no visible foundation. Its lowest logs appear to be resting on the ground. The only fenestration is a raised, half-height entrance in the front, reached by a ladder fixed to the front exterior wall and enclosed by a small door or shutter.

4) Frame Barn

The ruins of a gable-roofed frame barn clad with wide vertical boards are located about 235 feet east of the farmhouse, on the east side of a two-track farm road that descends to the lower acreage along Indian Creek and the L&N RR bed. The barn appears to have been built around 1920. An extant double-crib log barn was built roughly parallel, less than 20 feet to the south of the frame barn.

5) Double-crib Log Barn

Adjacent, less than 20 feet to the south of the frame barn ruins is a large double-crib log barn in neglected, but fair condition. The logs are left round and are saddle-notched at the corners. Both barns are located about 235 feet east of the farmhouse, on the east side of a two-track farm road that descends to the lower acreage along Indian Creek and the L&N RR bed, and the north side of Dr. Thomas Walker Rd. The round, rather than hewn logs suggest the barn was built during the second half of the 19th century.

6) Corncrib Site

Adjacent, to the west of the double-crib log barn, are four or more massive limestone blocks that served as the piers of a corncrib, no longer extant. The corncrib site is about 230 feet east of the farmhouse, on the east

side of a two-track farm road that descends to the lower acreage along Indian Creek and the L&N RR bed, and the north side of Dr. Thomas Walker Rd.

7) Milking House

Across the two-track farm road from the corncrib site and barns stands a one-story gable-roofed early-20th-century frame milking house clad with vertical boards, in neglected, but fair condition. Inside the building are scales and other milking equipment. The building is located about 200 feet due east of the farmhouse, on the west side of the farm road and the north side of Dr. Thomas Walker Rd.

8) Cistern

Located about four feet off the southeast corner of the house's one-story front ell porch, the approximately four-foot-square top of the cistern is capped and surrounded by a poured concrete structure. A yucca plant and tall grass are growing in it.

9) Domestic Outbuilding

Sited about 65 feet north of the farmhouse's demolished kitchen footprint, the c. 1940 one-story concrete block outbuilding includes two lateral rooms, one a dairy, cooled by piped-in spring water and used for cold storage, and the other a wash house that presumably also used piped-in spring water. The building has two front doors on the south elevation, facing the rear west corner of the house; no front windows, and single small windows on the other elevations. The shed roof is in very poor condition.

10) Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad Bed

The c. 1891 Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad bed runs as close as 210 feet to the north-northwest of the Gibson farmhouse, along the Indian Creek bottomlands. Within the Gibson property the roughly east-west-aligned railbed is wooded, creating a windbreak between wide clearings to the north and south. West of the property line, the railbed runs alongside the creek and is not wooded or obscured, and can be fairly easily discerned in aerial imagery. The railroad alignment is clearly indicated on topographic maps.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The Gibson Farm, with the farmhouse being its primary resource, is strongly recommended eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture/Craftsmanship as a rare surviving early antebellum dwelling with unusual features, located in rural and remote Lee County. The property also has strong potential under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture, because it was the base of a large working farm and still contains agricultural resources that provide good examples of farm building designs and functions from the nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries. The tentative period of significance spans from ca. 1830 (original construction) to ca. 1940 (latest historic resource). The farmhouse and associated buildings ceased to be regularly occupied around 1982.

The Gibson Farm dates to circa 1830 and retains the farmhouse begun about that time and later appended, as well as the Gibson family cemetery located only 100 feet or so from the farmhouse. The original owner was James Johnston Gibson (1810-1874), a merchant and farmer who served a term in the Virginia legislature (1842-1843). He and his wife, Lucy Ann Ball (1813-1891) raised ten children including six sons who reportedly served in the Confederate Army, and three more generations of Gibson residents would follow. The final owner/occupant would be Robert George Gibson, who lived here in the 1990s. The centermost part of the

house, two stories in height and built of logs, is the original structure. The original owners and many descendants are interred in the family cemetery, which is said to contain 41 graves including those of two unnamed enslaved persons.

Immediately to the south of the Gibson farmhouse was the famous Wilderness Road (now Dr. Thomas Walker Road) by which settlers headed to the South and Midwest flowed throughout much of the late 18th and 19th centuries; and a branch of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, completed through the length of Lee County to the City of Norton by 1891, traveled through the Gibson Farm only 80 yards north of the farmhouse. The Gibsons may have constructed one or two of the house's wings to accommodate travelers or boarders, which could explain the segregation of the two lateral wings of the house, with separate stairs and no second-floor internal conduit between them.

The Wilderness Road and Exploration of Present-day Lee County

In 1750, an expedition led by Dr. Thomas Walker, an investor in the Loyal Land Company, set out from Virginia through the Cumberland Gap and into present-day eastern Kentucky with the aim of exploring lands for future settlement. The Loyal Land Company had promoted settlement of lands in southwest Virginia, but not yet in Kentucky. The rough terrain hampered the expedition, but Walker's detailed report proved to be valuable in encouraging and guiding later expeditions, as well as the subsequent founding of the first settlements in Kentucky. Beginning in 1769, Virginia explorer Joseph Martin, for whom the City of Martinsville is named, made several forays into the Lee County area as an agent for Dr. Thomas Walker. Martin's first expedition to Powell's Valley (now Lee County) in early 1769 reportedly earned him a twenty-one thousand-acre grant from Walker and the Loyal Land Company. Martin led the construction of the first frontier fort at present-day Rose Hill, Virginia (a few miles east of the Gibson Farm), which became known as Martin's Station. During the same time period, Owen Station was established at present-day Ewing, and Gibson Station, which still holds its name, was established in close proximity to the future site of the Gibson Farm.

In 1774, a North Carolinian, Richard Henderson, organized a land speculation group called the Transylvania Company with the hope of establishing a colony on the west side of the Appalachian Mountains. They retained the services of experienced explorer Daniel Boone to blaze a trail leading through the Powell Valley and the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. The following year Boone set forth from Fort Chiswell in western Virginia, identifying the optimal route west. The Wilderness Road, as it became known, was difficult traveling, even on foot or horseback. Nevertheless, it would become the principal westerly route used by settlers for more than fifty years. After crossing the Cumberland Gap, the Wilderness Road forked to the south, toward what would become the cities of Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee, and to the north toward northeast Kentucky and the Falls of the Ohio River at Louisville. In 1796, the same year the Sayers House is believed to have been constructed, major improvements to the road were completed, greatly facilitating wagon and carriage travel.

As many as 300,000 settlers traveled along the Wilderness Road between 1775 and 1820. By 1840, use of the Wilderness Road had declined considerably as new, alternative passages to the west were established. During the Civil War, however, the Union and Confederate armies heavily traveled the road through the Cumberland Gap, which changed hands four times throughout the war. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the road provided an important route for timber, farm produce, and other commodities sold in distant eastern markets, as well as for supplies heading west to sustain newer settlements.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

- 1) Bicentennial History of Lee County, Virginia, 1792-1992. Lee County Bicentennial Committee, 1992: 126-127.
- 2) <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/50336/memorial-search?cemeteryName=Gibson+Cemetery&page=1#sr-75652190>
- 3) Pulice, Michael J., *Sayers House, Lee County*, National Register nomination, 2014.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: See attached

organization: _____

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: Va zip code: 24

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Legal Owner's Signature: See attached

Date: _____

• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Mike Pulice, architectural historian

organization: DHR Western Regional Office

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____

e-mail: michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov telephone: 540-387-5443

Date: January 30, 2026

Gibson Farm

Ewing vicinity, Lee County

DHR 052-5163

Indian Creek

Farm Road

Frame Barn

Meathouse

Corn Crib Site

Log Barn

Outbuilding

Milking House

L&N RR bed

Granary

Farmhouse

Cistern

Gibson-Smith
Cemetery

To Ewing

Dr. Thomas Walker
Rd (US 58 Bus)



125 ft

Jan 2026 M. Pulice







SLIP-IN POCKET →

PIONEER PATENT NO. 1,000,000























































































