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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries---complete applicable sections

Name 1.

William Gorton/Farm historic

Bond Farm and/or common

_ -4

state Connecticut

2. Loc	ation		
street & numb	er 14 West Lane		\mathbb{N}/\mathbb{A} not for publication
city, town	East Lyme	\mathbb{N}/A vicinity of	

09

code

Classification 3.

Category district _X building(s) structure	Ownership public _X private both	Status _X_ occupied unoccupied work in progress	Present Use agriculture commercial educational	museum park _X private residence
site object	Public Acquisition in process being considered N/A	Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	<pre> entertainment government industrial military</pre>	<pre> religious scientific transportation other:</pre>

county New London

Owner of Property 4.

name Estate of William G. and May Mills Bond, c/o Attorney Foster K. Sistare

302 Captain's Walk street & number

city, town New L	ondon	N/A vicinity of	state C	onnecticut
5. Locati	ion of Legal	Description		`
courthouse, registry	of deeds, etc. Office	of the Town Cle	rk, East Lyme	
street & number	108 Pennsylva	nia Avenue	<u>_</u>	
city, town	Niantic		state (Connecticut
6. Repre	sentation in	Existing Su	rveys	
State Regis title	ster of Historic		v been determined elig	ible? yes _X_ no
date 1983			federal state	county local
depository for survey	y recordsConnecticut	: Historical Comm	mission, 59 Sou	th Prospect Street
Hartfo	rd		atata Co	nnecticut

city, town Hartiord

state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition	deteriorated	Check one unaltered	Check one	site
good fair	ruins unexposed	<u>X</u> altered	moved	date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance The William Gorton Farm is a complex consisting of a farmhouse and associated outbuildings and other remains located on Black Point in East Lyme, Connecticut. The farmhouse faces southwards towards the end of Black Point on a gentle slope. Associated with it are two barns, a blacksmith shop, the stone foundation of an icehouse, and the remains of a dock on the eastern side of Black Point. All structures are frame and range in date from the 18th century to the late 19th century. The farmhouse, of late 18th-century date, is $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories in height with a two-story ell which may be of somewhat earlier date. Gable roofs and a large center chimney distinguish this building. The barns are two stories in height with gable roofs. The blacksmith shop is a small onestory building with shed-like additions on either end. All buildings are to the rear and northeast of the main house. To the east of the house is West Lane, from which a driveway passes between the icehouse foundation and the nearest barn. An earlier driveway can still be discerned by a break in the fence on West Lane and stone gateposts near the blacksmith shop. To the east of the farmhouse, across West Lane, are the remains of a dock built in 1858 (Plan 1).

The facade of the farmhouse, which faces south, is five bays in width. All windows have 6-over-6 double-hung sash. Wooden shingles, of late 19th- or early 20th-century date, cover the original clapboards (Photograph 1). The front door, placed slightly off center in the facade, has four panels. Above this is a five-light transom. The door surround is of Georgian design with narrow pilasters supporting an entablature (Photograph 2). The pitch of the roof is low, with a large central chimney.

The side elevations, both east and west, are two bays in width with two 6over-6 double-hung sash on each floor. An attic window in each gable end also has 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The rear of the house has an ell at a right angle to the main house (Photograph 3). A sun porch was added to the west side of the ell in the early 1950s. The west wall and roof of the ell is preserved within the porch. To the rear of the ell, a one-story milkshed was added by 1886, probably in the 1870s or early 1880s. A brick chimney a modern furnace unit rises from the milkshed at the gable end of the ell. In the peak of the gable, there is a window containing 6-over-6 double-hung sash. Below this is a window with 3-over-3 sash. Another probably existed where the chimney is now. The east side of the ell had a doorway located near its center, which was converted to a window in the 1950s remodelling (Photograph 4). To the right of this is a 9-over-6 window. At the end nearest the main house are paired 6-over-9 windows. A smaller 6-over-6 window is towards the rear of the house. Two 3-over-3 windows are located on the second floor. Placement of the windows is irregular.

The house plan is organized about the central chimney (Plan 2). The front door leads to an entry hall with a stairway to the second floor. To the left side is the sitting room, to the right, the parlor. Both are plastered, with molded chair rails. The fireplaces have mantelpieces of Georgian design (Photograph 5). Ceilings also appear to be plastered, although modern fiberboard has been placed over the original surfaces. No summer beams are present. Doors in the front of the house have four panels each. Late 19th-century porcelain doorknobs are used. A large kitchen in the rear of this section is dominated

1

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

William Gorton Farm Continuation sheet East Lyme, CT

Item number

4

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Page

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Owner of Property (continued)

Emily P. Gilbert 310 Walnut Street Englewood, New Jersey

The Old Black Point Association P.O. Box 260 Niantic, Connecticut

Louis H. & Gladys J. Bond Beckwith Road Oakdale, Connecticut

NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82)			OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84
United States Department of the Inte National Park Service	rior		For NPS use only
National Register of Hist	oric Places	;	received
Inventory-Nomination F	orm		date entered
William Gorton Farm			
Continuation sheet East Lyme, CT	Item number	7	Page ¹

by the kitchen fireplace with its associated built-in ovens (Photograph 6). On the east side of this room, a modern bathroom has been installed in an earlier room. To the west, a staircase leading to the second floor was removed in the early 1950s to increase the available space. The wall dividing the kitchen from the ell has also been removed and a new partition placed further inside the ell, to provide increased space. On either side of this partition, wide, beaded sheathing has been reinstalled. A batten door leads to the modern kitchen of the ell. Beyond this is the milkroom with its furnace. A "dutch" door of unknown date, with a built-in four-light window, leads to the sun porch from the ell. Next to this is a narrow staircase leading to the second floor of the ell. As the exposed beam reveals mortise holes, it is evident that the stairs were installed after the construction of the ell. The second floor of the ell contains a modern bathroom and bedroom. The house has three bedrooms on the second floor with a smaller room of undetermined function. Batten doors leading to the attic and ell have H-L hinges and wrought-iron latches. Walls and ceiling are plastered. Corner posts, girts and plates are cased. No summer beams are present. The attic contains a brick structure with a wooden door, which is attached to the chimney and is said to have contained racks for smoking meat. The rafters are common rafters, joined with a mortise-and-tenon joint at the peak, and fastened with treenails.

The blacksmith shop, of mid 19th-century date, was converted in the 1920s to a summer cottage with the addition of two 10' by 12' wings (Photograph 7). The central portion, however, retains the original bellows in situ (Photograph 8). The horse barn nearby has accomodations for horses on the first floor, with hay storage on the second floor (Photograph 9). Across the driveway from this barn are the foundations of an icehouse. Further to the north, at the end of a cleared field, stands a red two-story barn built in 1869 for commercial purposes (Photograph 10). The gable roof features a cupola. A one-story addition to the north side of the barn is not visible from the remainder of the farmstead. The interior, despite conversion to a community center, displays many original features, including built-in ladders and sheaves.

Across West Lane, on the east side of Black Point, is the remnant of the dock built in 1858. This was a wooden pier with an extension at a right angle on the end. It is clearly visible in aerial photographs of the area. Some pilings and underwater remains exist. Nearby, in the late 19th or early 20th century, was a windmill, probably intended to pump water for domestic use. Because of the clear interrelationship between the sites, it is felt necessary to define the boundaries of the National Register site to include all relevant outbuildings and other physical remains.

8. Significance

1400-1499 archeology-historic conservation law 1500-1599 X agriculture economics literal 1600-1699 X architecture education milita X 1700-1799 art engineering music X 1800-1899 X commerce exploration/settlement philos	rature sculpture itary social/ sic humanitarian
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Specific dates late 18th century Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) (Criterion A)

The site of the William Gorton Farm was in continuous use for agricultural purposes from the late 17th century to the early 20th century. In the mid 19th century, while owned by William Gorton, farm products were exploited for trade with the West Indies. The facilities required for this operation are still extant and illustrate and important link between agriculture and commerce. Evidence suggests that earlier owners of the property also engaged in the West Indian trade, utilizing agricultural products such as livestock. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Bond family created a fashionable summer resort, known as Old Black Point, from the farm. Improved transportation facilities along the coast made the project feasible. Wealthy New Yorkers formed the bulk of this summer colony. Farm products supplied the summer residents with dairy goods. This shift in land use reflects a continuing trend in the State of Connecticut. (Criterion C) The farmhouse, dating from the late 18th century, preserves many distinctive elements of the period. The main house is a relatively intact example of the Georgian style of architecture. Outbuildings are representative of 19th-century rural architecture.

In the colonial period, the West Indies trade played a vital role in the regional economy of New England. Products of farm and fishery were exhanged in the West Indies for sugar and its derivatives, molasses and rum. These, in turn, provided the capital necessary to purchase European manufactured goods. An adjunct of the West Indies trade was trade in slaves, also obtained in the West Indies, although some direct importation from Africa did take place. Merchants from the New London area specialized in the trade of livestock for West Indian products, employing small vessels such as sloops. Horses were the most common type of livestock transported, earning the sobriquet "horse jockeys" for New London and Norwich in the 19th century. Horses, cattle, mules, and other produce comprised the cargoes.² While the relative importance of this trade had declined, it still proved attractive to several area merchants, including J.M.Huntington & Co., of Norwich, who maintained a wharf and warehouse in New London.⁹

Black Point, now in the town of East Lyme, was coveted by early settlers for its meadows of salt and sweet hay, necessary for livestock, whether intended for shipment or domestic use. In the mid-17th century, Black Point was the focal point of a boundary dispute between the towns of Lyme and New London. The controversy culminated in 1672, when rival mowing parties from the two towns engaged in a pitched battle.⁴ In 1686, Christopher Christophers purchased a large tract of land on Black point from the Indian Tatto-bitton.⁵ Christophers was a successful New London merchant active in the lucrative trade with the West Indian island of Barbados, from whence he is believed to have emigrated in 1665.⁶ Between 1666 and 1672, three vessels were built for Christophers in New London.⁷ In addition to his holdings at Black Point, he

9. Major Bibliographical References

Burr, Jean Chandler. Lyme Records 1667-1730. Stonington, CT: The Pequot Press, 1968.

Caulkins, Frances Manwaring. <u>History of New London</u>, New London: Published by the author, 1852.

10. Geographical Data

Nionti	erty <u>19.2 acres</u>			1. 0/ 000
Quadrangle name Nianti UTM References			Quadrang	ie scale <u>1: 24,000</u>
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A 1 8 7 3 4 3 4 0 Zone Easting	44 5 7 4 5 50 Northing	B 18 Zone	73 4 03 5 Easting	4 16 7 4 5 4 0 Northing
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Map 2, lots 22,	otion and justification lary description m 24, 24A, and 25 j enue, Niantic, CT.	n the East	ned by refe Lyme Assess	rence to Map Book or's Office, 108
List all states and count	ties for properties overla	pping state or co	ounty boundaries	N/A
state	code	county		code
state	code	county		code
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NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82)			OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84
United States Department of the Inter National Park Service	ior		For NPS use only
National Register of Histo	oric Places		received
Inventory-Nomination Fo			date entered
William Gorton Farm			
Continuation sheet East Lyme, CT	Item number	8	Page 1

NPS Form 10.000.a

acquired by purchase the Pine Neck Farm and the Willey Farm, both on the Niantic River. ^{O.} Other land was granted to Christophers by the town of Lyme in 1686, with the provision that he build a warehouse and supply the town with salt and Barbados goods at reasonable prices. " At Christopher's death in 1687, his son John inherited the lands purchased by his father. John Christophers was also active in the West Indies trade, dying in Barbados in 1703. ¹⁰ His son John inherited all property west of Jordan Brook in what is now Waterford, which included both the land at Black Neck and the Pine Neck and Willey farms. The inventory of the estate lists 170 acres of upland and 18 acres of meadow at Black Point, valued at \pm 150.¹¹ · From the relatively low value of the land compared to the two farms, it is apparent that no dwelling was present at this time. It is probable that the land was used to provide hay and pasturage for livestock.

At the time of his father's death, John Christophers, grandson of Christopher Christophers, was two years of age. In 1723, John Christophers was drowned off Long Island while returning from a voyage to the Island of Martinique. His will left all lands in the town of Lyme, which included both the Black Point property and the Willey farm to his sister Esther, wife of Thomas Manwaring. B. Manwaring also had close ties with the West Indies. His brother, Peter, drowned with John Christopher in the shipwreck off Long Island. 4. In 1725, Hempstead reports that Thomas Manwaring was "Cast away on the South side of Montauket," but that all men and horses had been saved.¹⁵ Although no definate documentation has been found by this writer that the hayfields and pasture at Black Point were connected with the West Indies trade, it is likely given the close association of the owners with that trade. The only clear reference in Hempstead's Diary to the Black Point property of Thamas Manwaring is in an entry on February 25, 1757:

I went to black point the Lower End of it to get some Cattle kept & agreed with Capt Tho^s Manwaring to keep 6. ¹⁶.

Evidently, Manwaring did keep cattle on his Black Point land. His other activities must remain problematical, although his residence there is indicated by the fact that Hempstead spoke with Manwaring there. It is also possible that the rear ell may be earlier than the main house and associated with Manwaring. The staircase in the ell, which is similar to that of the main part of the house, was added later, as evidenced by the fact that the exposed beam reveals mortise holes. The main part of the house was probably built during the last quarter of the 18th century, perhaps even somewhat later, as evidenced by the absence of summer beams and interior details such as mantelpieces.

In the division of property following the death of Esther Manwaring in 1782, Adam Manwaring received his share of the "home farm" with house and buildings. From the position of the property described, this probably refers to the present farmhouse. In 1817, Robert Gorton of Fisher's Island purchased the land from the Manwaring family for \$5,500. Improvements undertaken by the Gortons included the planting of windbreaks and the excavation in 1835 of two wells. The first major change was the construction of a dock on the eastern

NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82)			OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84
United States Department of the Inter National Park Service	ior		For NPS use only
National Register of Histo	oric Place	es	received
Inventory-Nomination Fo			date entered
William Gorton Farm			
Continuation sheetEast Lyme, CT	Item number	8	Page ²

side of Black Point by William G. Gorton in 1858. This was intended for the transfer of hay to vessels bound for the West Indies. A wagon capable of hauling a five-ton load of hay was also acquired. The agents responsible for the West Indies trade were J. Monroe Huntington and Theodore Raymond of Norwich, operating as J.M. Huntington & co. By 1869, the construction of a large red barn on the property was felt justified.¹⁰ The two other surviving outbuild-ings, the horse barn and the blacksmith shop, are also 19th century in date, and may well be indirectly related to this commercial venture.

The firm of J.M. Huntington & Co. was closely associated with the export of the products of the Gorton farm. After establishing a shipyard in Norwich in 1855, the partners Huntington and Raymond decided to revive Norwich's trade with the West Indies. Their first vessel returned to Norwich from Puerto Rico on April 3, 1859. The decision to construct the dock on the east side of Black Point in 1858 must have been occasioned by this project. In 1866, Caulkins observed:

This trade has since been pursued by the company with spirit and success. The exports consist of lumber, assorted articles and some live-stock. The returns are chiefly sugar and molasses. The high price of these articles has made the business very profitable. The schooner Telegraph, Martin L. Rogers captain, was first employed in this trade in 1859, sailing May 9th of that year, and was kept afterwards constantly upon the line. On the 13th of June, 1864, she arrived from her twenty-fourth voyage, having averaged nearly five voyages per year, and us ally bringing from 200 to 220 hhds. per voyage. This is a great advance over the old rate of navigation,when two, or at most, three West India voyages consumed the whole year,- and illustrates in a vivid manner the progress of skill, science and tact in this department of business.

The Gorton farm also raised Red Devon cattle and horses. These may also have been shipped aboard J.M.Huntington & Co. vessels. It is also possible that the icehouse, of which only the very deep foundation remains, was constructed to hold ice for export. It should be noted that ice was a major from New England ports to warmer climes in the late 19th century.

In 1874, Colonel Norman J. Bond purchased the farm from William G. Gorton. Shortly afterwards, advertisements for Black Point Cottages, Colonel Norman J. Bond, proprietor, began to appear.²¹ By the 1880s and 1890s, a colony comprised primarily of wealthy New York residents had been established on the southern tip of Black Point. Shingle style houses were built, many of which were accompanied by windmills to supply water, giving rise to the epithet "Dutch City" for the area. In 1931, the residents organized the Old Black Point Association, which met in the Red Barn of 1869, later purchasing and renovating the building for a community center. Although West Indian commerce had been abandoned, dairving continued on the remaining portion of the farm until the 1920s or 1930s.² The addition of wooden shingles to the farmhouse probably occured in the 1880s or 1890s to conform with new cottages then being erected. A windmill was also present between the dock and farmhouse in the early 20th century, although it is no longer extant.²³.

(3-82)			Exp. 10-31-84
United States Department of the Int National Park Service	erior		For NPS use only
National Register of His Inventory—Nomination I			received date entered
William Gorton Farm Continuation sheet East Lyme, CT	Item number	8	- Page ³

OMB No 1024-0018

The shift in land use from agricultural to residential was a result of improved transportation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Railroads and steamboats made the Southeastern Connecticut area easily accessible from New York. By 1905, trolley service between East Lyme and New London was available. Conversion of farmland to developed residential use is a continuing process on the Connecticut shoreline, accelerated today by the interstate highway system. In the case of the William Gorton farm, a large proportion of the farm and related structures have survived to reveal earlier patterns of land use and exploitation, while coexisting with the new pattern which has supplanted it. In many similar developments, earlier buildings have been cleared to permit maximimum utilization of the available land.

The farmhouse itself is a good example of late Georgian architecture retaining much of the original interior. Features include plaster walls and ceilings, chair rails in the sitting room and in the parlor, and mantelpieces. The mantelpiece illustrated in Photograph 5 is probably of the second decade of the 19th century and may reflect alterations after the house was purchased by the Gorton family in 1817. Panelled doors and front stairs with balusters and handrails, are original. An unusual feature is the presence of a brick chamber in the attic said to be for smoking meat. The rear ell has wide panelling forming a dado along one wall. The "dutch door," which is of batten construction, and incorporates a four light window, is unusual, and may be of 18th-century date.

The outbuildings, constructed for specialized purposes, have architectural value in illustrating non-residential 19th-century building techniques. The blacksmith shop retains the wood and leather bellows in the original position, mounted overhead. Although the forge itself has disappeared, the bellows itself is a valuable document of an older technology. The red barn of 1869 is massive in construction and includes a cupola which not only provided ventilation, but is an attractive stylistic feature. Despite conversion to a community center, the original construction is evident, including the use of ladders built into the supporting posts within. The proximity and interrelationship of the buildings to one another enhances their value.

Endnotes.

NPS Form 10-900-a

- 1. Decker, Robert Owen. The Whaling City. Chester, CT: The Pequot Press, 1976, pages 24-27 for's summary of the West Indies trade.
- 2. <u>Ibid</u>, pages 177-178.
- 3. The <u>New London City Directory for 1865-1866</u>, page 62, lists J.M. Huntington & Co., importers of West India goods at Water Street, foot of John Street.
- 4. Caulkings, Frances Manwaring. <u>History of New London</u>. New London, Published by the author, 1852, pages 167-169, for an account of the incident.
- 5. <u>Ibid</u>, page 170.
- 6. Totten, John R. <u>Christophers Genealogy</u>. New York Genea logical and Biographical Society, no imprint (1921?).
- 7. Decker, op.cit., page 335.
- 8. Caulkins, op.cit., pages 117, 310.
- 9. Burr, Jean Chandler. Lyme Records 1667-1730. Stonington: The Pequot Press, 1968, pages 18, 66.

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received

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form

William Gorton Farm Continuation sheet East Lyme, CT Item number 8 Page 4

10. Totten, op.cit., page 46.

- 11. Inventory, Estate of John Christophers. Mss. copy. August 18, 1703. Book A, page 277. On file at New London Probate Court.
- Hempstead, Joshua. <u>Diary</u>. New London: New London County Historical Society, 1901, pages 133, 135.
 Will of John Christophers. Mss. copy. Book B, page 495, N.L.Probate Court.
- 14. Hempstead, <u>op.cit</u>. page 135. 15. <u>Ibid</u>, page 157.
- 16. <u>Ibid</u>, page 681.
- 17. Distribution of Eatate of Esther Manwaring. Mss. Copu. March 11, 1783. Book R1, page 55, New London Probate Court.
- 18. Cooper, Louise Field. A Short History of the Successive Invasions of Black Point (no imprint), pages 14-16.
- 19. Caulkins, Frances Manwaring. History of Norwich. Hartford: Case, Lockwood, & Co., 1866, pages 652-653.
- 20. <u>Ibid</u>, pages 653-654.

21. Walker, Charles H. The Greening of Old Black Point, graphed copy dated December 1, 1974, pages 3, 8. 1874-1974. Mimeo-

- 22. Lyman, Dwight C. Some Thoughts on the History of Niantic. November 6, 1957. Mimeographed copy of speech to Lion's Club, pages 15-16.
- 23. Daboll & Crandall, Surveyors. <u>Plan of Property at Black Point, Bond Farm</u>. April, 1913. In Map Book 1, Map No. 3 in the Office of the Town Clerk, East Lyme, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form

William Gorton Farm Continuation sheet East Lyme, Ct Item number

FO	NPS u	se only	
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Page 1

9

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Caulkins, Frances Manwaring. History of Norwich, Connecticut. Hartford: Case, Lockwood, & Co., 1866. Christophers, John. Inventory of Estate. August 18, 1703. Manuscript copy in Book A, pages 276-277, in New London Probate Court Records, Municipal Building, New London, Ct. Christophers, John. Will. Manuscript copy in Book B, pages 494-497, in New London Probate Court Records. Cooper, Louise Field. A Short History of the Successive Invasions of Black Point. (no imprint). Daboll & Crandall, Surveyors. <u>Plan of Property at Black Point</u>, <u>Bond Farm</u>, April, 1913. In Map Book 1, Map No. 3 in the Office of the Town Clerk, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, Ct. Decker, Robert Owen. The Whaling City: A History of New London. Chester, Ct.: The Pequot Press, 1976. Hempstead, Joshua. The Diary of Joshua Hempstead. Collections of the New London County Historical Society, Volume 1. New London: New London County Historical Society, 1901. Lyman, Dwight C. Some Thoughts on the History of Niantic. November 6, 1957. Mimeographed copy of speech to Lion's Club. Manwaring, Esther. Distribution of Estate. Manuscript copy in Volume Rl, pages 54-57, New London Probate Court Records. The New London City Directory for 1865-1866. New London: Christopher Prince. 1865. Totten, John R. Christophers Genealogy. New York Genealogical and Bio raphical Society, (no imprint), 1921? Walker, Charles H. The Greening of Old Black Point, 1874-1974. Mimeographed copy dated December 1, 1974.



