

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0677612

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 20 1979
DATE ENTERED MAY 21 1979

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC *Historic*
Enfield Shakers National Register District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *Parts of Shaker Road, Taylor Road,
and Cybulski Roads,*

CITY, TOWN

Enfield

___ VICINITY OF

6th - Toby Moffett

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Connecticut

CODE
09

COUNTY

Hartford

CODE
003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple Ownership

Correctional Institution

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. *Enfield Town Clerk*

STREET & NUMBER

820 Enfield Street

CITY, TOWN

Enfield

STATE

CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources

DATE

1975

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE c. 1920
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		#8

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Enfield Shakers district comprises all the remaining buildings built by the members of the Shaker community at Enfield, Connecticut. Although the district's 15 structures represent only about a sixth of the buildings standing when the Shakers left Enfield in 1917, they are nevertheless representative of many facets of Shaker life, and include the meetinghouse, one large brick dwelling, a large laundry building, five barns, four small workshops, a saw mill, an icehouse, and a slaughterhouse. As when the Shakers occupied the site, the buildings are grouped into three clusters spaced about a half mile apart: these are the remnants of the North, Church and South Family settlements, each of which was a self-contained village. Today, only the South Family buildings, a tight group of shops, dwelling house and barn, retains the historical appearance of a Shaker village, but the Church and North Family buildings nearby nevertheless have fairly well-preserved exteriors and add to the range of Shaker architecture in the district. About a mile northeast of the main concentration of buildings is the North Family's sawmill, a discontinuous lot also included in the district. Historically, this mill was always isolated from the main settlement, although for a while a few Shakers lived at the mill site.

The boundaries for the major part of the district were chosen so as to include the groups of Shaker buildings and the open farmland between them, at the same time excluding non-Shaker structures, with the result that there is only one major non-contributing building, a two-story brick home at the corner of Shaker and Taylor Roads. To the southeast of the district, an industrial area has been recently developed and may expand into the open land between Shaker Road and the South Family buildings, compromising the visual continuity of the district. To the northeast, the land formerly occupied by the extensive Church Family settlement is now the farm of the Connecticut Correctional Institution, Enfield, a collection of modern barns and other farm buildings. Taylor Road forms a distinct eastern boundary, as it did during the Shakers' tenure.

Not included in the district is the canal from Crescent Lake to Freshwater Brook, part of an elaborate scheme devised by the Shakers to provide power and drinking water and built with the help of Irish hired men in the 1850's. Because the canal's bridges are modern, the machine shop and sawmill which once stood near the canal are no longer extant, and the many prison farm structures intervene between the canal and the remaining Shaker buildings, it was decided that the canal and associated lake did not contribute sufficiently to a coherent district. There are no remains visible of two short-lived families, the East and West, nor of the Shaker railroad depot.

More Detailed Descriptions

In the north part of the district are four large barns arranged in a square, the North Family's ox, grain and colt barns and a large cart shed (#1-4). These are all post-and-beam framed, gable-roofed barns with vertical board siding, and were built in the years 1855-1856. The cart shed is the largest, with shed-roofed lean-tos on its east and west sides; like the other barns, it is built into a hillside giving access to more than one level. The roof rests on a series of queen-post trusses to which iron rods are attached, suspending the first floor ceiling and creating a clear, unobstructed space. Another interesting constructional technique is the saw-toothed mortise, visible in the ox barn, by which diagonals and uprights were joined: the ends of the braces were cut with a saw-toothed pattern which fit

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Enfield Shakers National Register District
Enfield, CT

List of owners and inventory of structures; names and addresses from Enfield Assessor's files, May, 1978:

Lot Number, Location & Owner

Inventory of Structures

Map 80 Lot 197
Cottage Road
Shaker Pines Lake Assoc. Inc.
23 Cottage Road
Enfield, CT ✓

Critical: Saw mill (#15), c. 1875, 2-story frame gable-roofed structure, part shingled, part vertical boards, lean-to, modern porch and interior.

Map 98 Lot 1 (part), Map 99
Lot 8 (part)
Shaker Road and Taylor Road
State of Connecticut
Connecticut Correctional
Institution, Enfield
Box G, Hazardville Station
Enfield, CT 06082 ✓

Critical: North Family barns (#1-4), 1855-56, four large frame gable-roofed barns.
Slaughterhouse (#5) small brick structure.
Dairy (#6), small 2-story frame building, modern interior, chimney.
Meetinghouse (#7), 1827, large 2½ story, gable-roofed frame building, 7 bays wide, 2 entrances with simple porticos.
Elder George's Shop (#8), small 2-story frame gable-roofed building, moved across street c. 1920, remodeled first-story facade, interior.

Noncritical: Modern 2-story brick house, corner of Shaker and Taylor Roads.

Map 99 Lot 11 (part)
Taylor Road
Lego Building Corporation
555 Taylor Road
Enfield, CT 06082 ✓

No structures, land only.

Map 99 Lot 10
Cybulski Road
Zigmund Cybulski et al.
Cybulski Road
Somers, CT 06071 ✓

Critical: South Family Dairy (#12), 1849, small 2-story brick building, modern interior.

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Enfield, CT

Lot Number, Location & Owner

Inventory of Structures

Map 99 Lot 6
Moody Road
Zigmund Cybulski et al.
So. Shaker Road
Somers, CT 06071

Critical: Half of South Family Dwelling (#9), 3½ story large brick dwelling with louvered belfry, slate-shingled gable roof, intact interior of upper floors, built 1852.
Ice House (#14) small frame gable-roofed structure, board-and-batten siding, 1863.
Grain Barn (#13), Shaker origin disputed; small frame barn, slate roof, possibly 1821.
Noncritical: Modern 3-stall frame shed or garage.

Map 99 Lot 7
Taylor Road
Zigmund Cybulski (estate)
So. Shaker Road
Somers, CT 06071

Critical: Half of brick dwelling (above).
Wash House (#11), 1858, long 2½ story frame structure, slate gable roof, board-and-batten siding, brick floor first story, interior upper floors largely intact.
Shop (#10), small 2-story concrete and rubble structure, brick floor on first story, possibly machine shop, 1855.

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into corresponding shallow cut-outs in the sides of the posts. Formerly attached by a long shed to the colt barn is the slaughterhouse (#5), a small brick building with a modern steel ventilator on its gable roof. The barns are still used for agricultural purposes. Since the North Family only had six barns, these four represent a significant concentration of Shaker barns.

A short distance to the south is the North Family Dairy, #6, a small two-story clapboarded structure resting on a brick foundation. The ridgeline of the gable roof parallels the road, and there is a distinct overhang at the eaves and at the gable end, where there is a partial return of the simple cornice. The main facade is irregular, with an off-centered doorway and three windows on the first story and three evenly spaced windows on the second. A simple veranda with railing runs across the width of the house. The original wood-shingled roof has been replaced with asphalt, an exterior end chimney substitutes for a small central stack, the original small-paned sash has been removed, and the interior has been completely renovated as a residence. Despite these changes, the building retains its basic form and is a typical small workshop, where in 1860 the North Family produced 2000 pounds of butter and 2700 pounds of cheese.

There are only two buildings left from the Center or Church family, one on either side of Shaker Road. Elder George's Shop, #8, is similar to the North Family Dairy and is a two-story clapboarded workshop with a one-story wing to the east. It was moved from its original site just across the road around 1920. It has the typical single-molding cornice and overhanging gable roof, from which formerly emerged two small chimneys, one of which has been replaced by an end chimney. It has a veranda across the front, but this may not be the original one. The main or north facade has two windows on the upper story and a central entrance with four windows on the first. This is a complete reworking of the lower facade as left by the Shakers, who themselves had changed the arrangement of windows and doors at least once. The date of the workshop is uncertain, probably after 1840, and it was last used as a library, laboratory and informal museum by Elder George Wilcox.

The other Church family building is the 1827 Meetinghouse, the successor to two smaller meetinghouses. This large 2½ story frame structure rests on a brown-stone foundation with the ridgeline of its asphalt-shingled gable roof perpendicular to the road: its main or west facade formerly faced a courtyard formed by the other Church Family buildings, now demolished. The main facade is seven bays wide with two identical entrances near the ends. These have simple peaked-roof shelters supported on plain braces, and the north entrance has its original wrought-iron railing. The exterior of this clapboarded building is fairly well-preserved, with its simple molded cornice and old 12/12 and 12/8 sash in place. A side entrance has been boxed in, a low wing has been added to the rear, and an exterior chimney on the north side has replaced the two small chimneys which originally were placed near the ends of the ridge. The interior, which served as an open meeting hall for the entire Shaker community, with living quarters for the ministers, has been completely modified for use as a prison shop. Nearby is the Shaker

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cemetery, with a large central monument supposedly made up from the individual headstones.

The centerpiece of the South Family buildings, a half-mile to the south, is the large 3½ story brick dwelling (#9) built in 1852. The building faces west on Cybulski Road, once the central lane of the settlement, and rests on a brownstone foundation. The sidelighted entrance is in the center of the nine-bay main facade and is partly obscured by a wood storm shelter. The windows have old 6/6 sash and plain limestone lintels and sills. The brick is laid in common bond but with no visible header course. The cornice is very similar to those previously described but the molding is larger in scale. The gable roof is covered with original rectangular slates and is surmounted by a cubical louvered wooden belfry, containing a bronze bell cast in West Troy, NY, in 1862. There are four small brick chimneys and on the rear slope, four rectangular skylights. Across the rear there is a veranda and another small porch on the south side. There are wrought-iron hand rails in place at the north and west entrances.

The first floor of the dwelling has been modified for use as a private residence, but the upper floors are virtually unaltered. At each end of the building, stark stairways with plainly turned balusters and curved rails lead to the retiring rooms on the second floor, each of which has the typical pegboards set into the plaster and a complete set of cupboards and drawers built into the wall. In some rooms, the pegboard and the panelled door have been decorated with restrained graining. The retiring rooms are arranged on either side of a large central room the width of the building which was probably used for family meetings and weekday religious services. The third floor contains additional retiring rooms but is mostly devoted to storage space. There are two large rooms with banks of long drawers on one side and cupboards on the other. There are also closets with pegboard not only along the walls but suspended from the ceilings; one of these has iron clothes hooks instead. Two of the interior partitions have large unglazed windows to admit light into the interior closets. In addition to the more than a dozen retiring rooms, the building probably included a communal kitchen and dining area on the first floor. Originally fitted with stoves, the dwelling was later heated by coal furnaces still in the basement. The brick-floored cellar was also used for food storage, and several large oak racks are still in place.

Behind the main dwelling is the Wash House, #1. Built in 1858, it is a long, 2½ story board-and-batten, slate-roofed building. There are two entrances on the 12-bay west or main facade: one nearly in the center, with sidelights and transom, and one near the south end. The windows have old sash and have wide frames with a slight suggestion of a peaked cap. The gable roof has the usual overhang but no molded cornice: instead, the rafter ends are simply boxed in with plain board fascia and soffit. There are two chimneys evenly spaced along the ridge. The first floor of the interior has a brick floor and has been partly converted for

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horse stalls. This is where the large laundry vats with powered dashers were located. The stairway to the second floor is somewhat deteriorated but is similar to those in the main dwelling. On the second floor are several rooms with pegboards and built-ins, perhaps additional retiring rooms. The attic is entirely open and must have been used for drying laundry on lines, as there are rows of small knobs fitted into all the crossbeams between purlin-posts.

To the north of the Wash House is a small two-story shop (#10) which may be the 1855 South Family Machine Shop: a 19th-century photo shows a large smokestack to the north of this building, perhaps for a steam engine. The shop's ridgeline is at right angles to the Wash House, to which it was formerly attached by a low shed. The walls of the shop are of small stones and bricks set into cement, with a finish coat of cement over the masonry. The modern-shingled roof has the same cornice treatment as its neighbor. There is a large set of doors on the west end and a door to the second level on the south side. The foundation and window trim are of brownstone, and the first level floor is brick.

Across the street from the dwelling is the South Family Dairy, #12, a small two-story building, now a residence. It is built of brick with limestone trim. There are two small chimneys near the ends of the slate-shingled gable roof. The five-bay main or east facade has a central transomed doorway; a veranda extends partway across the front. The interior is reported to be greatly modified.

Other South Family buildings include the 1863 board-and-batten icehouse (#14), a small one-story building; a small outhouse; a 3-stall modern frame garage not Shaker; and a small clapboarded barn south of the dwelling, a building (#13) of disputed Shaker construction. It has a small modern attached shed on the north side and a pured concrete floor, but it is of pegged post-and-beam construction and has slate shingles on its gable roof. On both the east and west sides there are wide doors. It is on the site of and has the same general form as one of the South Family grain barns, the earliest of which was built in 1821.

At the southern end of Shaker Pond, about a mile northeast of the main settlement, is the North Family Sawmill, #15. Although the present building is believed to date from about 1875, there was at least one earlier sawmill on the site. Both the mill building and its setting have been greatly altered, but the structure retains its distinctly utilitarian ambience and contributes to the district. The mill is two stories tall, about 40' long, with its gable end facing north toward the pond. Along the length of the building on the west side is a lean-to, and a smaller shed-roof addition, one-story high, is appended to the south end, where there is a door on the second story. At either end of the lean-to there are small exterior chimneys of uncertain age. The principal entrances to the building are on the long east side, across which is a modern porch supported on steel posts. Irregularly spaced window openings contain modern sash and are mostly boarded up. The exterior of this post-and-beam frames building is partly covered with vertical board siding and partly with wood shingles. The interior is completely modernized and is used as a social club. A road has been put through

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across the dam site just north of the building, the headrace has been filled in and can barely be discerned, and a new channel for the pond's outlet has been cut to the east, so that only a swampy meadow behind the mill recalls the use of waterpower. According to the 1880 Census, the mill produced 200,000 board-feet of lumber, using 30 horsepower developed with a 22' head.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

Criteria A,C

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

These fifteen buildings have historical significance because of their association with the Shakers and architectural significance because they reflect the social values and communal lifestyle of their builders. As one of the most extensive and long-lived Utopian experiments in the United States, with 20 communities in New England, New York, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky and perhaps 6000 members at their peak, the Shakers are an important part of American social history. Intellectually, the Shakers were dissenters from the dominant values of American society and were associated with many of the reform movements of the 19th century, such as feminism, pacifism and abolitionism: an Enfield Shaker's diary, for example, records the visits of fugitive slaves, including Sojourner Truth. Although somewhat eclipsed by larger villages in nearby New York and Massachusetts, the Enfield settlement, the only Shaker community in Connecticut, was notable for its garden-seed industry and its statewide promotion of agricultural progress. And although their doctrines called for a minimum of contact with outsiders, the Shakers had a large impact on the surrounding town.

The Shakers were part of a general movement to restore enthusiasm and inspiration to an overly formalized Protestantism. Not surprisingly, many Enfield Shakers came from Baptist backgrounds, among them Joseph Meacham, a former Baptist preacher who became the most influential 18th-century Shaker leader. Each wave of religious revival brought new seekers to the Shakers, who being celibate, could rely only on converts for growth. Besides the Baptists, the Shakers had contacts with other religious groups such as the Millerites and certain Spiritualists. Moreover, their religious tenets led to their involvement with reform movements not specifically spiritual which, in addition to those mentioned above, included lesser-known ties to the Fruitland Transcendentalists, the S.P.C.A., the Oneida community, Henry George's Single-Taxers, and other Utopian Socialists. The Shakers typify the great religious fervor, humanitarian reform and social experimentation of the 19th century.

The Shakers are also important because of the widespread interest they generated among their contemporaries. In part a curiosity about their celibacy, odd religious services and plain dress, the attention given them was also due to the relative success of their movement, especially when compared with other Utopian schemes. Their success derived partly from the religious commitment of their members, but other factors were the material wealth made possible by cooperative ownership, the organization of each village into smaller "families" which encouraged consensus, and the Shaker theology of "Gifts," which balanced individual achievement against group identity. Their form of leadership was fairly authoritarian, with elders and eldresses having nearly unlimited power over the spiritual and material lives of other members, but there was little personalistic leadership, since there were always a number of ministers, elders and trustees at the top, and rotation among these positions was frequent. Although the Shakers

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Barber, John W. Connecticut Historical Collections. New Haven, 1838. Engravings.
- Brainard, Jesse Miriam. "Mother Ann's Children in Connecticut," Connecticut Quarterly, October-December 1897, 460-474.
- "Enfield Shakers." Broadside, Enfield Historical Society, 1971. Map and photos.
- "Enfield. Some First Things." Thompsonville Press, January 7, 1881, p. 2.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 110

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	70,5	7,2,0	4,6	5,5	0,9,0	B	1,8	70,5	9,7,0	4,6	5,3	5,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,8	70,5	9,2,0	4,6	5,3	2,2,0	D	1,8	70,5	6,8,0	4,6	5,3	1,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The major part of the district is bounded as follows: beginning at a point on Taylor Road opposite the northern driveway to the former North Family barns, the boundary runs westerly (counterclockwise) in a line perpendicular to Taylor Road for 500', then runs southerly parallelling the road at a distance of 500' until it reaches a point opposite the southern entrance of the driveway to the barns. It runs easterly 200' in a line perpendicular to Taylor Road, then southerly parallelling the road at a distance of 300'. Upon encountering Shaker Road, it turns westerly

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Bruce Clouette, Consultant

ORGANIZATION Connecticut Historical Commission DATE June 21, 1978

STREET & NUMBER 58 South Prospect Street TELEPHONE (203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN Hartford STATE CT

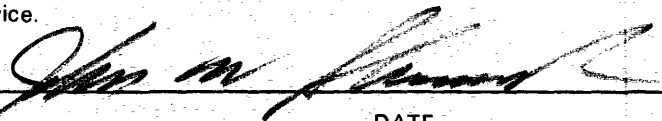
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE March 14, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAELOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST Thomas M. Davis
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 5-21-79

DATE 5/21/78

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had serious disagreements over spiritualism, vegetarianism, and participation in secular reform movements, there was always enough consensus to avoid schism. The Shakers thus avoided both the instability of democratic utopias and the eccentricities of those dominated by a single personality. For modern-day historians of communal movements, as well as for the 19th-century observers, the Shakers are a rich source for speculation and research.

The religious beliefs of the Shakers were fundamental to their everyday life. As followers of the English visionary Ann Lee, the Shakers believed in celibacy, confession of sin, equality of the sexes, lay ministers, and the communal ownership of earthly goods. Their worship was a mixture of individual visions and ecstasy and group formation marching and singing. Their idea of salvation varied from an emphasis on individual regeneration to the creation of a new world order, but in either case, the Shaker way of life was seen as both the model for and the agent of change. Careful workmanship, cleanliness, simplicity, indifference to individual worldly concerns, the substitution of spiritual brothers and sisters for blood relations and total nonviolence were promoted as essential parts of the quest for spiritual perfection, as was the attempt to make the Shaker village a self-contained economic unit. Marriage, slavery, and industrial society were seen as bondage and therefore as signs of sinfulness incompatible with the higher life of the spirit. On the other hand, innovation, social progress, and the material wealth of the group were viewed as the natural products of human reason conducive to perfection.

The architecture of the buildings in the district illustrate the ideals of the Shakers and the needs of communal living. Even the size of the buildings is significant: in 1860 there were 146 Shakers with 31 in the South Family, and the Meetinghouse, Dwelling and laundry had to be large to accomodate such numbers. Simplicity is everywhere apparent, with repetitious facades, rectilinear forms, plain cornices, austere stairways, stark rooms, and the overall lack of ornamentation. Although some departure is evident in the grained woodwork found in some rooms or the Wash House's window frames, the simplicity of even these elements is outstanding when compared to the Romantic and picturesque fashions of the mid-19th century. Equality yet separation of the sexes is reflected in the two identical doors to the Meetinghouse and in the bilateral symmetry of the Dwelling's floor plan. The omnipresent pegboard and built-ins, perhaps the most characteristic Shaker interior features, are architectural expressions of their extraordinary concern for tidiness. Less well-known but also typical are the cupola, skylights and interior windows, all attempts to insure plenty of light and ventilation in their large buildings.

In form and style, Shaker architecture is derived from plain country building, and in some cases, such as the North Family barns or the small shops, they closely resemble the world's buildings. Yet the district contains a few examples of the Shaker willingness to innovate or adapt new techniques to their needs, among which are the suspended floor in the cart shed, the concrete construction of the shop near the South Family dwelling, and the saw-toothed

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joinery in the ox barn. Although not as impressive as the round barn at Hancock, Massachusetts, or the octagon barn which once stood at Enfield, these details are suggestive of the same efforts to save labor and speed production while retaining quality.

The first Shaker buildings at Enfield were put up in the 1780's, but most of those which remain now are from the period 1830-1860 when the community (and the entire movement) were at its peak. Although the Enfield Shakers made and sold a wide variety of products, including brooms, tubs, pails, oval boxes, baskets and macrame mats, their economic livelihood was dependent upon agriculture. They relied on their farms and gardens more than any other Shaker community. In addition to growing their food, the group cultivated acres of gardens for their packaged seed industry. They sold butter, cheese, canned corn and applesauce to the world. They raised fruit trees for sale and bred livestock, especially horses. Several elders and eldersses were knowledgeable in scientific agriculture and were early participants in such groups as the Connecticut Dairymen's Association and the Connecticut Pomological Society. One of these was Elder George Wilcox (1820-1910) who had a notable collection of agricultural periodicals and early farm machinery. His shop, as well as the several barns and dairies, reflects the agricultural base of the settlement.

The Shakers made their presence felt among their neighbors in Enfield. Until they relinquished the franchise around 1850, they were active in local politics, holding office and voting at town meetings, mostly on issues having to do with town schools and school taxes. The Shakers hired people from the town, particularly at harvest time, and themselves did machine shop work for outsiders. Various errands kept them in contact with the townspeople, especially in the nearby Hazardville section. Even when their numbers were thinning, the Shakers were famous for their acts of charity toward their neighbors, of which the most important was their taking in orphaned children. Today, besides a few place names, the Shaker presence in Enfield is preserved only in these fifteen buildings.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA 10

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| E: 18/705670/4653250 | F: 18/705620/4653240 |
| G: 18/705440/4654180 | H: 18/705500/4654180 |
| I: 18/705500/4654100 | J: 18/705740/4654140 |
| K: 18/705670/4654640 | L: 18/705620/4654630 |
| M: 18/705560/4655070 | |

Saw Mill (Discontiguous point) : 18/703780/4654820

for 735'. It turns northerly and runs in a line perpendicular to Shaker Road for 250', then westerly parallelling the road for 225'. From there it runs southerly in a straight line to the northwest corner of Lot 10, as shown on Enfield Assessor's Map 99. It follows the property line of Lot 10 southerly and then easterly to Cybulski Road. It runs southerly along Cybulski Road, then easterly along the southern boundary of Lot 6, Map 99, to Taylor Road. It follows Taylor Road northerly to the first point.

Noncontiguous but also included is Lot 197, Map 80, a 1½ acre lot containing the Saw Mill, about 1.1 miles northwest of the major part of the district outlined above.

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Source: "Enfield Shakers"
1971 Broadside,
Enfield Historical Society

North Family

- 1 Ox Barn
- 2 Grain Barn
- 3 Colt Barn
- 4 Cart Shed
- 5 Slaughterhouse
- 6 Dairy



Church Family

- 7 Meeting House
- 8 Elder George's Shop

(NOT SHOWN:)

- 15 Saw Mill

South Family

- 9 Brick Dwelling
- 10 Shop
- 11 Wash House
- 12 Dairy
- 13 Grain Barn (?)
- 14 Ice House

ENFIELD SHAKERS

ENFIELD, CT

- 4 Shaker Buildings
- Other Buildings
- ④ Photo Positions
- - - District Boundary

