

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Black Farm

other name/site number: Isaac Collins Farm

2. Location

street & number: Rockville-Alton Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Hopkinton

vicinity: N/A

state: RI

county: Washington

code: 009

zip code: 02833

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>4</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Property name

Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Frank R. Williams

29 Sep 1995
Date

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

74

ITEM NUMBER

9

PAGE

27

Hitchcock, Henry - Russell. Rhode Island Architecture. New York: Da Capo Press, 1968.

Huling, Mary Kenyon. Historical Sketch of the Baptist Church in Exeter, Rhode Island (Chestnut Hill). Private printing, 1938.

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

NO STYLE

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation STONE/granite roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD/weatherboard other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: AGRICULTURE

Period(s) of Significance: late 18th to mid-20th century

Significant Dates: N/A _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: not known

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

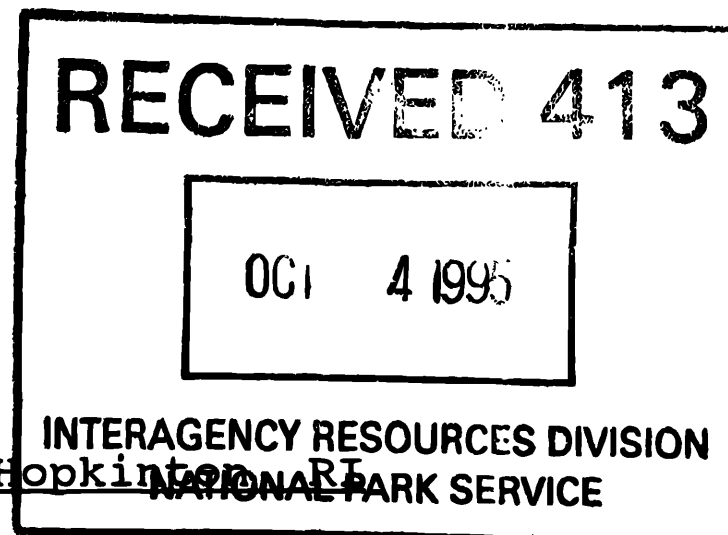
X See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 7



Page 5

Description

The Black Farm is a picturesque, intact complex of farm dwelling, outbuildings, and farm lands. Comprising approximately 264 acres, the farm is located on the east side of Rockville-Alton Road, Route 112, and is bordered on the east by the Wood River. It is situated in a rural, now suburbanizing, section of the Town of Hopkinton. The complex is isolated from the highway and is reached via a 1000-foot, unpaved lane bounded by dry-laid stone walls.

The property includes a one-and-a-half-story wood-frame, center chimney, gambrel roof, late eighteenth-century dwelling with an early to mid-nineteenth century ell. To the north, east and west of the house are ranged a series of outbuildings dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This adjoining farm complex consists of a nineteenth-century corn crib, two nineteenth-century barns, a 1930's guest cottage, a relocated barn, and several small outbuildings. The property also contains the nineteenth-century Collins family cemetery, the nineteenth-century stone foundation of a purported icehouse, and numerous stone walls, which bound former pastures and fields, much of which is now overgrown with brush.

The house is of post and beam construction set upon a mortared stone foundation. The above-grade portion of the foundation consists of a single course of quarried rectangular granite blocks--some of which are over 4 feet in length. The below-grade portion consists of granite fieldstone. The dwelling's exterior is covered by wooden clapboards and shingles: asphalt shingles cover the roof. The original house, which appears to have been built during the later part of the eighteenth century, is five bays wide and two bays deep, with a 3/4 cellar. The exterior of the house is very similar in design and features to the Prudence Crandall house (1778) which formerly stood in the nearby village of Hopkinton City, and the Sleepy Hollow Farm House (c. 1775), on Woodville Road, 1/2 mile southwest of this house. The centrally located front entrance is situated on the south side of the dwelling. In front of this doorway are three steps of cut granite. The bulkhead at the southwest corner of the house provides exterior access to the basement. Subsequent construction modifications include: the addition of an early to mid-nineteenth-century wood-frame, 2 1/2-story ell to the north side of the house, the addition of a twentieth-century wood-frame, 1-story ell to the east side of the earlier ell, the installation of an exterior brick chimney to the west side of the house to service the oil furnace heating system, and the replacement of all sash.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 7

Page 6

Exterior ornamentation of the house is restricted to the cornice molding on the main structure. The front doorway is framed by plain boards flanking a twentieth-century door. Twentieth-century windows in modern framing have replaced the originals on the first floor. On the second floor, the sash have also been replaced, however, the original plain pegged plank framing is intact.

The interior of the house has been somewhat altered through the years, but substantial sections of the original building fabric and plan remain. The house is constructed following the 18th-century, center-chimney, five-room plan. The timber-frame structure is sheathed in butt-ended clapboards on the south side, in wooden shingles on the north, east, and west. Corner posts on the interior are cased. The small, narrow front entry hallway has a double run stairway set in front of the stone chimney. It has an open string course with riser ends decorated with scrolls; newel posts and balusters are straight. The upper balustrade has been temporarily removed. Off the hallway are two large parlors with plastered walls and dropped sheetrock ceilings. Both parlors contain the original raised four-panel doors and door frames. Doors are hung with cast iron butt hinges. The east parlor room doors retain the original bean-shaped wrought iron Suffolk latches; those in the west parlor have been replaced by 19th-century Blake model cast iron latches. The west parlor contains beaded baseboards and wide pine floors whereas the east parlor baseboards are plain and are probably later replacements, and the pine floor has been covered with a later, narrow oak flooring. In the east parlor above a stone hearth, the original 18th-century fireplace mantel is extant and consists of a single raised panel above which is a narrow shelf. Above the shelf is a rectangular piece of plywood that conceals a small built-in cabinet. Bollection molding frames the stone firebox. Adjoining the right side of the mantel is a section of raised panel wainscoting surmounted by a simple chair rail. The firebox contains a wrought iron crane. In the west parlor, the original fireplace mantel has been replaced by simple columns supporting a mantel shelf.

The large rear room is the original kitchen or keeping room. Here the original floor plan has been altered by the removal of the interior wall setting this room off from a smaller northeast corner room, thereby enlarging this room. The kitchen retains the original pine floor boards. Plastered walls are covered by modern vertical wood panelling and the original plastered ceiling has been removed to expose joists and the second story subfloor. In the north wall, a four panelled door provides access to the mid-nineteenth-century ell. Stairways along the west wall lead to the basement and second story. Centrally located in the south wall is the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 7

Page 7

large cooking fireplace composed of cut granite with the wrought iron crane still in place. To the rear right corner of the firebox is a bake oven closed with an iron door. The large wooden fireplace lintel is exposed and no mantel ornamentation (if any existed) is extant. The northwest corner room has been altered into a modern bathroom.

The second floor follows the plan of the first floor with some variation. Access to the large front chamber is through doorways with batten doors in the narrow front hall. There is only one fireplace on the second floor, ceilings are covered by sheetrock; walls are plastered; and encased corner posts are visible. All windows are modern; however, earlier plain narrow plank frames remain. The west front room has later narrow oak flooring; the east front room contains the original wide pine boards. Baseboards in both rooms are plain. The fireplace mantel in the east room appears to be original and is simply detailed with stepped molding framing a flat entablature, above which is a plain mantel shelf. A recently installed plywood partition along the south wall of this room replaces an earlier plaster wall. Here, the floor plan diverges from that on the first (as originally laid out) as the east chamber room encompasses additional area that would have been allotted to an adjoining northeast corner room.

To the rear (north side) are two smaller rooms. A northwest corner room has been converted into a modern bathroom. The adjacent narrow room directly behind the chimney retains plaster walls, but most of the area has been converted to closet space.

Attached to the north side of the house is an early or mid-nineteenth-century two-and-one-half-story ell. The two rooms on the first floor have been modernized into a bathroom and den. The second story contains two bedrooms with narrow floor boards, plaster walls, and a new drywall ceiling. Attached to the east side of this ell is a circa 1950 one-story modern kitchen.

Near the house stand several outbuildings. These include a well-preserved, 19th-century, wood-frame corn crib resting on seven cut granite pillars, a c. 1930 one-story, wood-shingled guest cottage, a c. 1950 chicken coop, a c. 1950 children's playhouse, and three 19th-century barns, one converted into a library, a second used to store farm equipment. The third barn was moved here from an adjoining farm about 1940. The foundation of an outbuilding is located 1200 feet to the north of the house and is said to be the remains of a nineteenth-century ice house. The walls consists of rectangular cut granite blocks 8 feet in height and measuring

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 7

Page 8

10 feet by 8 feet. Local informants state that Plain Pond, located 1000 feet to the northwest, was used as an ice pond.

Several yards to the north of the house is the Collins family cemetery. The cemetery contains about 20 inscribed headstones of slate and granite and is enclosed by a cut granite stone wall measuring 72 feet by 55 feet. Here are buried many of the former owners and occupants of the farm, including, Isaac and Mary Collins, and their children.

Photographs

3. Photographer: Roberta Randall
4. Date: May, 1995
5. Negative: R.I. Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Above information applies to photographs 1-10

6. View: Overview of Black Farm/central complex looking east from driveway.
7. Photo #1 of 11
6. View: Isaac Collins House looking northeast.
7. Photo #2 of 11
6. View: Isaac Collins House looking west.
7. Photo #3 of 11
6. View: Isaac Collins House, main entrance stairway
7. Photo #4 of 11
6. View: Isaac Collins House, east parlor room raised panel mantel and wainscotting.
7. Photo #5 of 11
6. View: Nineteenth-century corncrib looking north.
7. Photo #6 of 11
6. View: Converted nineteenth-century barn looking east.
7. Photo #7 of 11

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 7

Page 9

-
6. View: Converted nineteenth-century barn with recent (1995) dormer addition, looking west.
 7. Photo #8 of 11
 6. View: Nineteenth-century barn looking west.
 7. Photo #9 of 11
 6. View: Nineteenth-century barn looking east.
 7. Photo #10 of 11
 3. Photographer: A. Peter Mair II
 4. Date: August, 1986
 5. Negative: Wilbur Smith and Associates
1 State Street, Prov., RI 02908
 6. View: Collins family cemetery looking northwest along interior of west wall.
 7. Photo #11 of 11.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 8

Page 10

Significance

The Black Farm is significant as a farm complex that exhibits over 200 years of agricultural history. The original dwelling and some of the adjacent outbuildings were constructed in an era when agrarian activities were the mainstay of the economy. By the later part of the century, however, the steady decline in cereal crops due to western competition led to an alternative land use pattern. At the Black Farm this is evident in the large scale lumbering activities that occurred during the last decade of the nineteenth century. By the late 1940s, the Black Farm had entered a third stage, that of a seasonally occupied "gentleman's farm." Thus, the intact complex of dwelling, outbuildings, and enclosed and overgrown fields is an important example of changing land use practices in southwestern Rhode Island.

John Collins (1679-1755) was one of six persons who, in 1710 jointly purchased a 3000 acre tract of undeveloped land in what is now the northeast part of Hopkinton. Collins, a farmer and an elder in the Society of Friends (Quakers) resided in that portion of Westerly that was later set off as Charlestown (in 1738). His share of the purchase, approximately 450 acres bordering the Wood River, near present-day Woodville Village, was divided among his several sons after his death. A grandson, Nathan Collins acquired a 46-acre parcel and probably constructed the modest one-and-a-half-story, center-chimney dwelling in the latter part of the eighteenth century. This structure, with subsequent enlargements, became the Black Farm's house. Nathan Collins, a farmer, and his wife, Tabatha, sold the farm to a cousin, Isaac Collins and his wife, Mary in 1817 for \$450.00.

Isaac Collins (1771-1840), a Quaker, was a prominent physician as well as a farmer. He studied medicine under the tutelage of his brother, Dr. Amos Collins, and after his marriage to a cousin, Mary Collins (1774-1863) in 1792, he began practicing in North Stonington, Connecticut. By 1800, he had moved to the Town of Richmond, Rhode Island, and in 1817, he purchased Nathan Collins's farm. To this property he brought his wife and 13 children. It is probable that the two-story ell was added to the dwelling to accommodate the large family.

Subsequent to the purchase, Collins increased his holdings through the acquisition of several large adjacent parcels. At the time of his death in 1841, the farm had been increased to 197 acres; 182 acres in pasture, cultivation, and orchard, and 15 acres of wood lot. This suggests that Collins's primary source of income was derived from farming, with his medical practice being supplementary. It is during his period of ownership

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 8

Page 11

(1817-1841) that the farm was most intensively worked, and it is probable that the existing corn crib, as well as the one-and-one-half-story barn now serving as a library, were constructed at this time. An indication of some of the agricultural activities on the property is found in Collins's will, written in 1840, which set aside for his wife the privileges of using the milk room and the ashroom as well as ownership of a mare, a cow, heifer, several geese and other fowl, 8 sheep, and a horse and wagon.

The 1840 federal Census records three sons and two daughters living with Collins and his wife. In his will, the sons (Charles, John, and Thomas) inherited the real estate; the two daughters (Bethsheba and Thankful) and his wife Mary, retained occupancy rights. One son, Thomas Jefferson Collins (1815-1896), acquired his brothers' interest in the property in 1849. Thomas, who never married, continued to farm the land for the remainder of his life with assistance from hired hands. According to the 1850 federal census, the farm was occupied by Thomas, his mother, one sister, and a hired hand.

Throughout the 19th century farming continued to be an important occupation in Hopkinton. During the course of the century, however, there was a steady decline in farming activities, as well as in farm size. The Collins's farm mirrored this trend. Although by 1850 Thomas Collins had added three acres to the size of the farm, making it 200 acres, the 1850 census notes that only 125 acres were in pasture or cultivation and a large amount, 75 acres, was unimproved. Farm animals included 2 horses, 4 cows, 2 oxen, 4 heifers, 73 sheep, and 5 swine. The farm had produced during the previous year 120 bushels of corn, 50 bushels of oats, 80 pounds of wool, 50 bushels of potatoes, 5 bushels of buckwheat, 100 pounds of butter, and 10 tons of hay. Of the 209 farms recorded in the town in the 1850 census, the Collins farm was one of the 35 that was 200 acres or more in size. By 1850, as western agriculture supplied greater quantities of inexpensive cereals, beef, and pork to eastern markets, farmers such as Collins, turned to market gardening, the production of dairy products, and the growing sheep for wool to be sold to local textile manufacturers.

Collins, like many farmers in the later part of the 19th century, took on other types of work to augment his income from the farm. The inventory of his estate at his death in 1896 indicates that he had become very actively involved in the lumber trade. There was a large quantity of wood drying in two barns, 32 cords of cut wood in the east lot, 50.5 cords in the west lot, a lumber wagon, bundles of shingles in a shed, 2 million feet of cut pine lumber, and a pile of sawed wood at a nearby sawmill. The inventory also notes that Collins had 5 swine, 4 cows, 3 mares, 2.5 acres

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 8

Page 12

of corn, corn stored in the corn crib, and several pounds of cheese stored in the cheese house. It is evident that by 1896, however, farming at the Collins farm was no longer a primary concern.

On May 7, 1896, Thomas Jefferson Collins died of a neck fracture and pneumonia. He willed his estate to a cousin, James H. Collins ("whom I've raised and provided a home for since his early childhood..."). The following year, James H. Collins sold the property to Peter D. Palmer, a Hopkinton attorney, for \$10.00. It was subsequently acquired by John Foster Collins, a nephew of Thomas Jefferson Collins. John F. Collins (1846-1912) and his wife Mary (1843-1936) probably continued the lumber operation at the farm for a time. After World War II the property was occupied on a seasonal basis, and farming and lumbering activities had most likely ceased. However, the house and outbuildings were maintained and kept in good repair, and a nineteenth-century barn from a neighboring farm was moved onto the property. Also, about this time, a one-story wood-frame guest house was constructed to the north of the main house. In 1956, John Collins' son, Arthur K. Collins of Lake Helen, Florida, sold the property to Joseph and Anna Russo, proprietors of a nearby commercial poultry farm. The property was acquired in 1964 by Mrs. Margaret McCormack Black. The Blacks occupied the premises on a seasonal basis and have modernized the main house by replacing all sash and installing a new oil fired furnace, as well as adding a kitchen to the ell. Other improvements to the property included the conversion of a nearby outbuilding into a library, and the creation of a small pond to the waste of the main house. The Black Farm lands were purchased in 1991 by the State of Rhode Island to be kept as open space. The farm buildings and a lot of land were separated from the open space and sold to a private buyer; a preservation easement protects this property.

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 264 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
A	<u>19</u>	<u>272910</u>	<u>4595080</u>	B	<u>19</u>	<u>273340</u>	<u>4595140</u>
C	<u>19</u>	<u>272810</u>	<u>4593300</u>	D	<u>19</u>	<u>272250</u>	<u>4593400</u>
E	<u>19</u>	<u>271730</u>	<u>4594480</u>	F	<u>19</u>	<u>272740</u>	<u>4594260</u>

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Michael A. Hebert and A. Peter Mair II

Organization: Wilbur Smith and Associates Date: January 29, 1987

Street & Number: 1 State Street Telephone: 401-751-5930

City or Town: Providence State: RI ZIP: 02908

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 9

Page 13

Major Bibliographical References

Collins, Capt George Knapp

1901 Descendants of John Collins of Charlestown, Rhode Island and Susan Daggett, his wife. Baldwinsville, New York, Gazette Print.

Public Archaeology Survey Team

1986 Phase I Archaeological reconnaissance Survey: Rockville-Alton Road Reconstruction Project, Hopkinton, Rhode Island. Department of Transportation, Providence, Rhode Island.

Nebiker, Walter

1976 Preliminary Survey Report, Town of Hopkinton, Rhode Island. Historical Preservation Commission, Providence, Rhode Island.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Black Farm, Washington County, Hopkinton, RI

Section number 10

Page 14

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The Black Farm is bounded by a line shown on sheets 2 and 3 of a boundary survey, dated 1988, labelled Boundary Survey HPK 5247, Drawer 3, Section 1, and located in the Town of Hopkinton Land evidence records.

The boundary encloses land historically associated with Black Farm. The west line is formed by Woodville-Alton Road; the east line is the wood river. The boundary encloses the farm complex of the buildings and the farm woodlands and acreage now owned by the State of Rhode Island.