

Roger Williams University

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Documentation

Isaac Collins House/Farm: National Register of Historic Places Documentation

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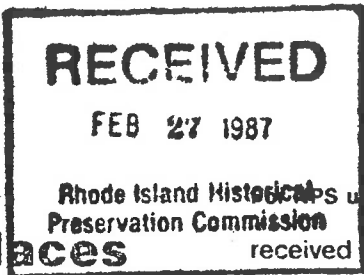


Part of the [Historic Preservation and Conservation Commons](#)

AWB

DRAFT

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)



OMG No 1024-001E
Exp 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Isaac Collins Farm

and or common Plain Pond Farm

2. Location

street & number Rockville-Alton Road

not for publication

city, town Hopkinton

vicinity of

state Rhode Island

code

county Washington

code

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Margaret McCormack Black

street & number

city, town San Francisco

vicinity of

state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hopkinton Town Hall

street & number

city, town Hopkinton

state Rhode Island

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Preliminary Survey Report

Town of Hopkinton, R. I.

has this property been determined eligible?

yes no

date 1976

federal state county local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

city, town Providence

state Rhode Island

ell = ? eo.
 check for fire place - undated + chimney 2nd floor

7. Description

Stairway head room - why that way - way to fire furnace?

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

send me Deed history
 Age of ell - 1817?
 doubt - check

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Description

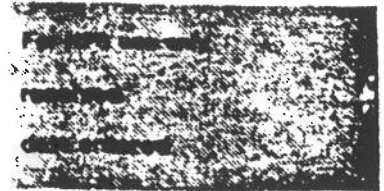
The Isaac Collins or Plain Pond Farm is a picturesque, surprisingly intact complex of dwelling and outbuildings. Comprising approximately 245 acres, the farm is located on the east side of Rockville-Alton Road, Route 112, and is bordered on the east by the Wood River (Figures 1 and 2). It is situated in a rural section of the Town of Hopkinton. The complex is isolated from the highway and is reached via a 1000-foot, unpaved lane bounded by unmortared stone walls.

The property includes a one and half story wood-frame, center chimney, gambrel roof, late eighteenth century dwelling with an early to mid-nineteenth century ell (#1, Figure 3). 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 (#8, Figure 3), two nineteenth century barns (#3 and #4, Figure 3), a 1930's guest cottage (#5, Figure 3), a relocated barn (#2, Figure 3), and several small outbuildings (#9 and #10, Figure 3). The property also contains the nineteenth century era Collins Family Cemetery (#7, Figure 3), the nineteenth century stone foundation of a purported icehouse (#6, Figure 3), and numerous preserved stone walls, which bound former pastures and fields, much of which is now overgrown with brush (Figure 3).

The Isaac Collins house is of post and beam construction set upon a mortared stone foundation. The above-grade portion 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 (Figure 4). 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 (circa 1775), on Woodville Road, 1/2 mile southwest of the Collins 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. A 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 and 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.

The exterior ornamentation is restricted to the cornice molding on the main structure. The exterior front doorway consists of plain planks flanking a twentieth century door. Twentieth century crank out

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 1

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. (1)

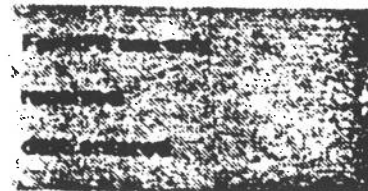
The interior of the house has been somewhat altered through the years, but substantial sections of the original building fabric and plan remain. The house is constructed following the traditional 18th century, centered chimney, five room plan (see floor plans). The timber frame structure is sheathed in buttended clapboards on the south side, in wooden shingles on the north, east, and west. Corner posts in the interior are cased. The small, narrow front entry hallway has a double run stairway set in front of the stone chimney. It is characterized by 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 front rooms or 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 wainscotting 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 a later, early 19th-century one story type consisting of 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 early to mid-nineteenth century ell. Stairways along the west wall lead to the basement and second story. Centrally located in the south wall is the 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 entirely altered into a modern bathroom.

Take

look
mark
type

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

Page 2

The second floor (Figure 5) follows the plan of the first floor (Figure 4) 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 - in the east front room. As on the first floor, ceilings are covered by sheetrock, walls are plastered, and encased corner posts are visible. All windows are of the modern crank out type, 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. Base boards 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 (eave) 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.

①
look
at floor
again
from
inside.

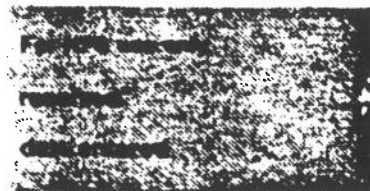
To the rear (north side) are two smaller rooms. A northwest corner room has been converted into a modern bathroom. The adjacent narrow room directly behind the chimney retains plaster walls, but most of the area has been converted to closet space.

Attached to the north side of the house is an early to mid-nineteenth century two and one half story ell. The two rooms on the first floor have been entirely modernized into a bathroom and a 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.

In the immediate vicinity of the Isaac Collins House stands several outbuildings (Figures 3 and 6). These include a well preserved 19th century wood frame corn crib resting on seven cut granite pillars (#8, Figure 3), a circa 1930 one-story wood shingled guest cottage (#5, Figure 3), a circa 1950 chicken coop (#9, Figure 3), a circa 1950 children's playhouse (#10, Figure 3), and three nineteenth century barns - one converted into a library (#3, Figure 3), a second used to store farm equipment (#4, Figure 3), and the third with a garage basement (#2, Figure 3) was moved here from an adjoining farm about 1940. The foundation of a outbuilding (#6, Figure 3;) is located 1200 feet to the north of the house and is purported to be the remains of a nineteenth century ice house according to local informants. The walls consist of rectangular cut granite blocks 8 feet in height and measuring 10 feet by 8 feet (Figure 7). Local informants state that Plain Pond, located 1000 feet to the northwest, was used as an ice pond, and that the foundation is the remains of an ice house where the oxen used to transport the ice, and the ice itself were temporarily kept.

Several hundred yards to the north of the house is the Collins family cemetery (#7, Figure 3). The cemetery contains about 20 inscribed headstones of slate and granite and is enclosed by a cut granite stone

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 3

Item number 7

Page 3

wall measuring 72 feet by 55 feet (Figure 8). Here are buried many of the former owners and occupants of the farm including: Isaac and Mary Collins, and their children.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	X agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social/
X 1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
1800-1899	commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy	theater
1900-	communications	industry	politics/government	transportation
		invention		other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1770's Builder/Architect Nathan Collins

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Significance

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

Westerly land records indicate that John Collins (1679-1755) was one of six persons who, in 1710 jointly purchased a 3,000 acre tract of undeveloped land in what is now the northeast part of Hopkinton. Collins, a prominent 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 3,000 acre 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 Isaac Collins 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' farm. To this property he brought his wife and 13 children - 8 sons and 5 daughters ranging in age from 2 years to 24 years. It is probable that the two story ell was added to the dwelling to accommodate the large family.

Subsequent to the purchase, Collins rapidly 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;

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



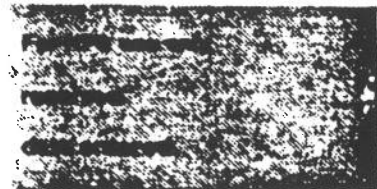
182 acres in pasture, cultivation, and orchard, and 15 acres of wood lot. This suggests that Collins' primary source of income was derived from farming, with his medical practice being supplementary. It is during his period of ownership (1817-1841) that the farm was most intensively worked, and it is 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' will, written in 1840, which set aside for his wife the privileges of using the milk room and the washroom as well as ownership of a mare, a cow, heifer, several geese and dunghill fowl, 8 sheep, and a horse and wagon.

The 1840 Federal Census records three sons and two daughters living with him and his wife. By his will, these sons; Charles, John, and Thomas inherited all 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' farm to some extent 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 records note 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 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, eastern farmers such as Collins, turned to market gardening, the production of dairy products, and the growing of 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, 40.5 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 of corn, corn stored in the corn crib, and several pounds of cheese stored in the cheese house. It is

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet 5

Item number 8

Page 2

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, wholesale poultry farm. The property was acquired in 1964 by Mrs. Margaret McCormack Black (Margaret McCormack Black Foundation), the present owner. 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 east of the main house. Under the present ownership, the Collins house and outbuildings are kept and maintained in good repair.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Cole, J. R.

1889 History of Washington and Kent County. New York
W. W. Preston.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 245 acres

Quadrangle name Carolina

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	9	2	7	2	2	8	0	4	5	9	3	4	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	9	2	7	1	8	5	5	4	5	9	4	4	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	9	2	7	2	2	6	0	4	5	9	4	3	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	9	2	7	2	7	8	2	4	5	9	4	3	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

1	9	2	7	2	9	4	0	4	5	9	4	8	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

1	9	2	7	2	8	9	8	4	5	9	5	4	4	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

1	9	2	7	3	3	1	5	4	5	9	5	4	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

1	9	2	7	2	6	8	0	4	5	9	3	3	5	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Isaac Collins or Plain Pond Farm is a 245 acre complex situated between Rockville-Alton Road to the west and the Wood River to the east. To the north is the Rekowski Property, and the Russo Property lies to the south.

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 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 Rhode Island

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 _____ date _____

For NPS use only

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

date _____

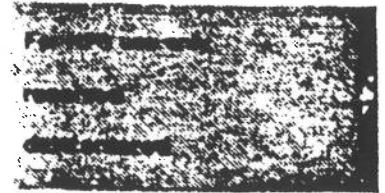
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet 6

Item number 9 & 10

Page 1

- 9) Collins, Capt. George Knapp
1901 Descendents 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.

- 10) I 19 272.499E 4593.375N
J 19 272.420E 4593.450N

Verbal description (con't.)

The complex is located in the Town of Hopkinton, Rhode Island, on Plats 9, 11, and 12, owned by Margaret McCormack Black (see Plat Map, Figure 2). The complex consists of a main house, and a number of outbuildings surrounded by open fields and woodland.