

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

17-46C	Marion		MRN.609
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**Town/City:** Marion

**Place:** (neighborhood or village):

**Address:** 129 Converse Road

**Historic Name:** John H. Wisner Cottage

**Uses: Present:** Residential

**Original:** Residential

**Date of Construction:** Possibly ca. 1913

**Source:** Visual analysis

**Style/Form:** No style

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Concrete block  
Wall/Trim: Stucco / Wood & vinyl  
Roof: Asphalt shingle

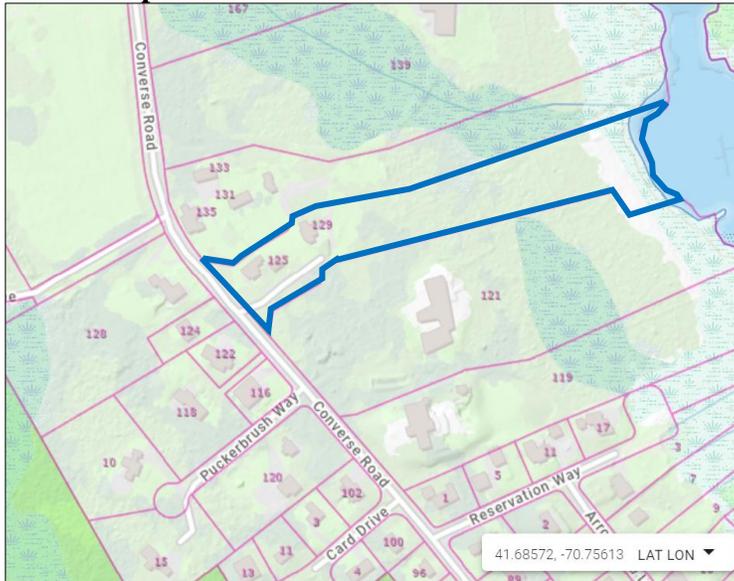
**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

None

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Major Alterations (with dates):**

Replacement windows

**Condition:** Good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 3.97

**Setting:** Diverse residential neighborhood developed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Housing stock represents a range of styles including Cape, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Craftsman and Colonial Revival. Settled mostly with moderately-sized, wood-frame, single-family houses on small- to large-sized lots.

**Recorded by:** Lynn Smiledge

**Organization:** Marion Historical Commission

**Date (month/year):** October 2023

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

129 Converse Road

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

**129 Converse Road** occupies a long, narrow parcel on the east side of Converse Road that stretches to the western shore of Sippican Harbor and transitions to wetlands from west to east. The house is set back from the street near the northern property line in the western half of the parcel behind (east of) the house at 125 Converse Road (ca. 1900, Elizabeth H. Wisner Cottage, MRN.608). Low foundation plantings border the dwelling, which faces west and is surrounded by lawn. A row of shrubs and a segment of drystone wall line the northern property line. A granite wall lined by a row of tall trees borders the western lot line and turns east to partially frame the paved driveway that enters the property from Converse Road near the southwest corner of the parcel. Granite fence posts flank the driveway entrance. The driveway runs east, serving the house at 125 Converse Road and continuing to the subject house, beyond which it transitions to an unpaved driveway bordered by a stone wall. A spur from the driveway leads to the attached garage at the east elevation of the subject house. The dwellings at 125 and 129 Converse Road occupy the same parcel and form a condominium.

The house is a one-and-one-half-story, cross-gabled structure with a symmetrical plan. Bank-built at the east elevation where it is retained by a stone wall, the dwelling contains a grade-level two-car garage. Likely constructed around 1913, the house reflects no particular style but retains some of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a concrete foundation and is clad in stucco. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. A prominent random-ashlar, eave-wall chimney is centered at the west elevation. The tapering chimney is topped by a concrete barrel cap.

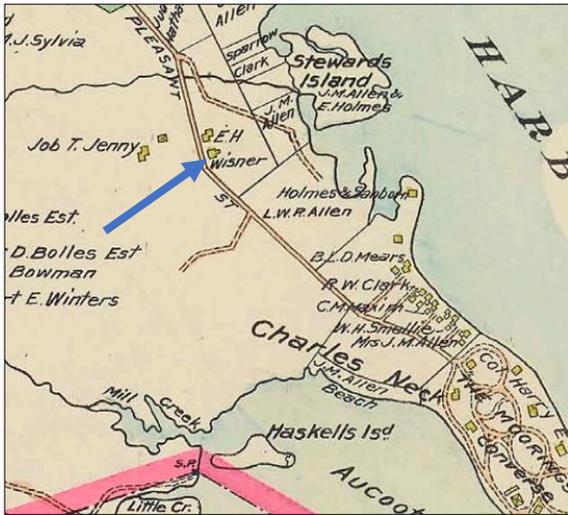
Trim at the house comprises narrow rake boards, short eave returns, and denticulated cornices at the cross-gable junctions. Openings are asymmetrically placed at the primary elevations and include single and mulled double-hung, one-over-one replacement sash of various sizes that are recessed into the stucco cladding. Some of the windows at the first story have blinds. The main entry at the west elevation sits adjacent to the chimney and contains a glass-and-panel door with a flat, narrow surround. It is sheltered by a steeply gabled portico with delicately ornamented wrought iron posts. The door fronts a paved walkway that curves to join the driveway.

A second entry at the south elevation has a metal awning. It fronts a concrete terrace that spans the south cross gable and abuts the paved driveway. The north cross gable and part of the west cross gable are clad with vertical-plank siding. The west elevation, where the two-car garage is located, has symmetrically placed fenestration.

129 Converse Road reflects no particular architectural style but has several distinctive features. These include the stucco cladding and prominent stone chimney, which suggest the Craftsman style, and the denticulation at the cornice, which is a Colonial Revival feature. Both of these styles were popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.



The Village of Marion, the commercial and residential center of the town, is set on the western shore of Sippican Harbor. The town has historically consisted of a northern portion, often referred to as the Old Landing, and a southern portion, known once as Wharf Village but more commonly referred to today as The Village or Marion Village.

This house is located in the southernmost portion of Converse Road which runs from Marion Village southward towards Charles Neck Point, the end of the peninsula which forms the western side of Sippican Harbor. Originally called Nye Street, Converse Road was also inconsistently known as Pleasant Street or Charles Neck Road. When the 1903 map was drawn, this section of Marion was largely open with only a few scattered buildings. Today, the area is settled with late-20<sup>th</sup> and early-21<sup>st</sup> century houses at the midpoint of Charles Neck, and much earlier dwellings on large parcels at the southern part of the Neck as it approaches Charles Neck Point.

This house does not appear on any historic maps of Marion. It is sited in the vicinity of two houses which are seen on 1903 map with E.H. [Elizabeth Horner] Wisner shown as the owner. The northernmost of the two dwellings

1903 map.

is the property at 135 Converse Road (ca.1819, Weston Allen-E.H. Wisner House, MRN.10). The southernmost of the two is the house at 125 Converse Road (ca.1900, Elizabeth H. Wisner House, MRN.608). The subject house is a one and one-half story cottage built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Elizabeth H. Wisner’s nephew, John Horner Wisner.

Elizabeth Horner [var. Hornor] Wisner (1842-1930) was the daughter of William Henry Wisner and Eleanor Bowne Hornor of New York City. In a series of transactions beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Elizabeth Wisner and her sister Josephine Wisner (1848-1914), both unmarried, purchased land on the eastern side of Converse Road including the subject property. In 1913, Elizabeth and Josephine Wisner conveyed all of their real estate holdings to their nephew, John H. Wisner, Jr.



Approximate boundaries of John H. Wisner properties in 1919.

John Hornor Wisner Jr. (1879-1973) was born in Shanghai, China. Wisner was an engineer and a principal at Wesshoeff & Wisner, a highly successful international firm specializing in railroad construction founded by his father, John Horner Wisner, Sr. The senior Wisner built a Colonial Revival country estate in Summit, New Jersey now known as “The Clearing,” the Reeves-Reed Arboretum.<sup>1</sup> John Wisner, Jr. was married to Sybil Holmes Buck (193-2004) in 1930. Summit, New Jersey was the couple’s primary residence for 45 years and the adjacent property at 135 Converse Road in Marion was their summer home. In 1919 Wisner acquired an additional group of properties from George C. Thomas, bringing the total area under his ownership to 45 plus acres (shown at left). The subject property was conveyed to his wife Sybil shortly before his death, and she owned it until it was sold by her estate in 2008. At that point the property included several dwelling houses and outbuildings (see the land plan below). The large property was purchased in 2008 by a development company, Copper Medal LLC, which converted the property to condominiums.

This subject building was purchased by the current owner in 2021.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reeves-reedarboretum.org/discover/history/?The-Reeves-the-Reeds-The-Clearing-3>

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## Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee
01-27-2021	54280-335	Copper Medal, LLC	Mourad Choauch & Alanna Nelson
09-25-2008	36405-338	Estate of Sybil Wisner	Copper Medal, LLC
12-02-1972	3844-293	John H. Wisner, Jr.	John H., Jr. & Sybil H. Wisner
12-30-1919	1359-576	George C. Thomas	John H. Wisner, Jr.
07-11-1913	1162-100	Elizabeth H. Wisner & Josephine Wisner	John H. Wisner, Jr.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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