

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

20-11	Marion		MRN.618
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Town/City: Marion
Place: (*neighborhood or village*): The Moorings

Address: 20 Moorings Road

Historic Name: Josephine D. Butler House

Uses: Present: Residential
Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Possibly ca. 1920

Source: Visual analysis, town assessor records

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:
Foundation: Concrete block
Wall/Trim: Fiber cement clapboard & wood shingle / Wood
Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Garage apartment (1930)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
East and west wings (20th c.)
Projections at rear (south) elevation

Condition: Excellent
Moved: no yes **Date:** 1931

Acreage: 4.18

Setting: Sparsely settled area at Converse Point bordered by shoreline. Interior terrain is characterized by woods and marsh land. Populated primarily by large, waterfront seasonal residences built on large parcels in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dwellings display the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge
Organization: Marion Historical Commission
Date (*month/year*): January 2024

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

20 MOORINGS ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.

20 Moorings Road occupies a large polygonal parcel on the west side of Moorings Road that stretches to the waterfront at Aucoot Cove. The house is roughly centered on the parcel and faces north. The wooded property, which drops in grade from north to south, includes an expanse of lawn around the house, stone retaining walls and terraces, and landscaped areas. A planting bed borders the dwelling at the façade (north elevation) and a large flagstone patio overlooks the shoreline at the rear elevation. A gravel driveway off Moorings Road enters the property near the midpoint of the northern property line and curves south to end at a garage apartment sited off the northeast corner of the dwelling.

This large two-story dwelling comprises a five-bay-wide, side-gabled main block flanked by side-gabled wings at the east and west elevations. There are small one-story projections at the south (rear) elevation. Built ca. 1920 in the Colonial Revival style and moved to the site,¹ the house appears to retain all of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a concrete block foundation and is clad in fiber cement clapboards at the façade and wood shingles at all other elevations. Brick chimneys rise from the roof ridge at the gable ends of the main block and from the east wing at its junction with the main block.

The main block is trimmed with narrow corner boards and a molded frieze board. The centered entry contains a nine-panel wood door with a five-light transom flanked by fluted pilasters and surmounted by a molded entablature. The door fronts a shallow flagstone stoop and a flagstone pathway that leads to the driveway. The windows, which align between floors but are not uniformly spaced across the façade, contain double-hung, nine-over-six sash with flat surrounds, prominent architraves, and blinds. The second story windows touch the cornice. There are matching windows at the east and west wings at the façade.

The windows at the north (façade) elevations of the east and west wings have six-over-six sash with surrounds which match those at the main block. The east elevation of the east wing is elaborately fenestrated with three large, mullied, arched openings suggestive of carriage doors. The openings contain paired multi-light sash and have molded keystone surrounds. The center opening functions as a French door and opens to a shallow flagstone terrace. It is surmounted at the second story by a glazed door with sidelights that opens to a railed balcony. The west elevation of the west wing is three bays wide with a centered glass-and-panel door flanked by a six-over-six window and an arched multi-light casement window. The door opens to the flagstone terrace that spans the waterfront rear elevation.

The rear (west) elevation of the house is enlivened with projecting bays and a variety of window types including twelve-over-six, nine-over-six, and six-over-six sash; arched multi-light windows; and fixed multi-light sash and casements. A one-story, shed-roofed projection at the east wing contains a French door and a boxed bay window and is capped with a monitor with continuous three-light panels.

The large garage apartment, which was built in 1930 according to town assessor's records, is a handsome one-and-one-half-story, six-bay-by-three-bay, side-gabled structure with three overhead vehicular openings at the north elevation. It faces west and is clad in cement fiber clapboards at the façade and wood shingles at all other elevations. It is trimmed to match the main house and has four entries at the façade, including two arched, two-leaf, vertical plank doors covered by trellises; an arched multi-light door with sidelights; and a single glass-and-panel door. Two three-bay hipped dormers linked by a shed-roofed dormer occupy the west roof slope and two square cupolas rise from the roof ridge.

¹ It is not known if the east and west wings were moved as part of the original house, or if they were added after the main block was relocated.

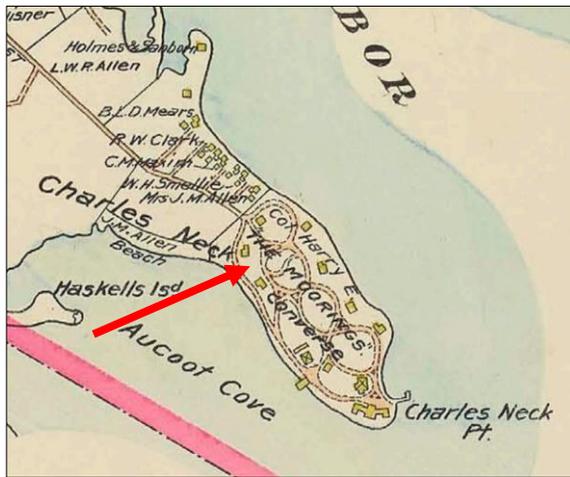
20 Moorings Road exemplifies the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival period in America (1880–1955) saw a resurgence of patriotism and a return to the architectural styles of the early years of the republic. Combining the classical architectural elements of the Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival periods, the Colonial Revival style was the most popular style in America for private and public buildings between the World Wars. The characteristic Colonial Revival features of this house include the symmetrically-arranged fenestration; paired chimneys; main entry door surround; twelve-over-six, nine-over-six, and six-over-six windows; window architraves; and keystone moldings.

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.

This house is located on Moorings Road, an approximately 0.5-mile-long extension of Converse Road [historically called Pleasant Street, Nye Street, or Charles Neck Road] which runs south from Marion Village to Converse Point [historically called Charles Neck Point], the southernmost end of the peninsula on the western shoreline of Sippican Harbor. Moorings Road, which loops back on itself at the tip of Converse Point, takes its name from “The Moorings,” the name given to the Converse estate that occupies the end of the peninsula.

No buildings are seen on Charles Neck on the 1855 and 1879 maps. The 1903 map shows this area occupied by The Moorings estate owned by Harry E. Converse, which included a large main house at the southern tip of the point, about ten smaller dwellings and outbuildings, and a pattern of oval roadways. The earliest recorded conveyance found for the subject property was the purchase of a 120-acre parcel of land from the estate of John B. Blankinship in 1864 by Thomas LeBaron and Nahum Morse. It was ultimately purchased by Harry E. Converse in 1902 and became part of his large estate known as The Moorings.



1903 map. Approximate future location of subject house.

Note: For the history of the estate first owned by Lyman R. Blake in 1878 and later by Harry Converse, see the 2023 MHC Building Form B for [100 Moorings Road](#) (1924, Parker Converse House, MRN.47).

After the death of Harry Converse in 1920, the property was conveyed to three of his children, Margaret Converse Butler (1896-1981), Parker Converse (1897-1965), and Roger Wolcott Converse (1900-1969). In 1922 the siblings drew up a plan subdividing the Moorings estate into 24 building lots. (See the plan below.) In a 1995 recorded interview, H. [Harry] Peter Converse, the son of Parker Converse, described how the property was divided:

“They cut the point in half and Aunt Peggy [Margaret Converse Butler] took everything on the Aucoot Cove side and this is after my grandfather [Harry E. Converse] died leaving the land to his children. Dad [Parker Converse] had the land on the Sippican Harbor side and Uncle Govy [Roger Converse] got a strip across the middle which in my youth was called Govy’s Alley.”²

The subject house is sited on a parcel consisting of parts of lots #11, 12, 13, and 14 on that plan. Consistent with the Peter Converse interview, this property, which was on the Aucoot (west) side of the land, fell to Margaret Butler, the daughter of Harry Converse. Margaret Butler and her husband John Meigs Butler (1892-1953) had a primary residence in Evanston and later Winnetka, Illinois, where John Butler was president of the King Pneumatic Tool Company. The engagement announcement for Margaret Converse in the *Boston Globe* on June 18, 1916 commented that, “[Margaret] is one of the youngest girls to make known her prospective nuptials, for she has not been presented and is still at school.”³ An amateur photographer and Chicago Cubs fan, Margaret C. Butler documented the team in the 1930s.⁴ One of her

² Courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society, transcript of audio tape, object 2005.007.003 (1995).

³ “Table Gossip,” *Boston Globe*, June 18, 1916, pg. 64.

⁴ “Cubs historical sleuthing: 1939,” @<https://www.bleedcubbieblue.com/2021/3/6/22316840/cubs-historical-sleuthing-1939-edition>

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films is in the collection of the Chicago Film Archive.⁵ Margaret and her husband constructed the house at 96 Moorings Road (ca. 1924, Margaret C. Butler House, MRN).

In 1931 Margaret conveyed the property to her sister-in-law, Josephine D. Butler, the wife of her husband's brother Gerald Morton Butler (1886-1946). A note on the assessor's card for the property states that it was built in 1920 and was moved to the site from New Hampshire in 1931. The concrete block foundation under the house lends credence to this suggestion, but additional research would be required to learn more about the provenance of the structure. The house would have been relocated during the ownership of Josephine Butler and her husband. After the death of Gerald Butler in 1946 the property was conveyed to Roger W. Wolcott Converse, Jr. and his wife Evelyn.

Roger W. Converse, Jr. was the son of Roger Wolcott Converse and the grandson of Harry Converse. The senior Roger Converse was a real estate developer in Marion.⁶ Roger Converse, Jr. attended Yale University and served in the Pacific theater in the Marine Corps during World War II. After the war he became a full-time resident of Marion and worked in his father's real estate business. Roger W. Converse, Jr. died suddenly in 1947 at age 27.⁷ His widow Evelyn Chase Converse (Holmes) remarried and sold the property in 1951 to Josephine E. Barkley, who owned the house until 1987.

The property was purchased in 1996 by the current owner Richard L. Morningstar (b.1945), a lawyer and international policy advisor. Morningstar is the former United States Ambassador to Azerbaijan.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee
10-29-1996	14748-54	Rebecca B. Humphrey	Richard L. Morningstar
09-16-1987	8001-223	Josephine E. Griffin (Barkley)	Rebecca B. Humphrey
09-17-1951	2168-231	Evelyn C. (Converse) Holmes	Josephine E. Barkley
10-31-1946	1941-397	Josephine D. Butler	Roger W., Jr. & Evelyn C. Converse
04-30-1931	1613-133	Margaret C. Butler	Josephine D. Butler
07-28-1922	1422-395	Harold S. Davis	Margaret C. Butler, Parker Converse, & Roger Converse
07-28-1922	1422-394	Estate of Harry E. Converse	Harold Davis
11-18-1898	777-57	Estate of Marian Hovey	Harry E. Converse
06-19-1885	526-119	Horace S. Crowell	Marian Hovey
06-19-1885	516-360	Emma R. Blake	Horace S. Crowell
		Estate of Lyman Blake	Emma R. Blake
01-23-1880	459-198	Nelson Sanborn	Lyman R. Blake
01-17-1879	457-285	John W. & Lizzie W.R. Allen	Lyman R. Blake
09-11-1878	442-229	John W. & Lizzie W.R. Allen	Lyman R. Blake
04-26-1875	421-11	Elizabeth & James C. Luce	John M. Allen
10-07-1872	395-202	Thomas M. LeBaron & Nahum F. Morse	Elizabeth Luce
03-19-1864	332-244	Estate of John B. Blankinship	Thomas M. LeBaron & Nahum F. Morse

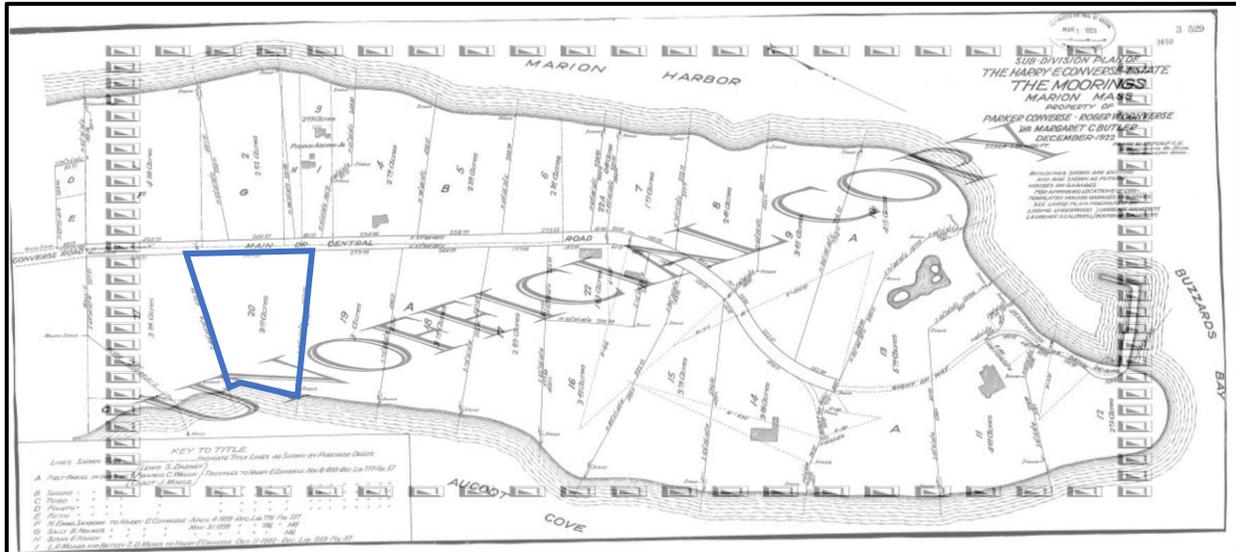
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Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts 1855 H.F. Walling
 McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
 Sommers, Olive Hill. *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. Marion, 1972.
 Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

⁵ Butler Family Collection @ <https://collections.chicagofilmarchives.org/Detail/collections/18>.

⁶ "Roger Converse Dies at 69," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. November 5, 1969.

⁷ "R.W Converse, Jr., Boston realtor and Yachtsman, Aged 27," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. September 24, 1949.



Harry E. Converse Estate Subdivision Plan, 1922. Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 3, Page 529.