

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	MRN.U
<b>Historic Name:</b>	The Kittansett Club 11 Point Rd
<b>City/Town:</b>	Marion
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	East Marion; Sippican Neck;
<b>Local No:</b>	
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	
<b>Use(s):</b>	Other Recreational;
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Maritime History; Military; Recreation;
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials:</b>	
<b>Demolished</b>	No



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

This file was accessed on: Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 2:13 PM

# FORM A - AREA

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

001 001	MARION	MRN.U	MRN.379-381, 930
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## Photograph



**Town/City:** Marion

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

**Name of Area:** The Kittansett Club

**Present Use:** country club, leisure activity

**Construction Dates or Period:** 1922-1926

**Overall Condition:** excellent

**Major Intrusions and Alterations:** restaurant wing addition and the replacement or new construction of several outbuildings

**Acreage:** 186.52 acres

**Recorded by:** John D. Clemson

**Organization:** Sippican Historical Society

**Date** (*month/year*): July 2019

## Locus Map



see continuation sheet

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

THE KITTANSETT CLUB

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.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The 186.52 acre golf course of the Kittansett Club includes five structures scattered across an 18-hole course at the tip of Butler's, aka Ruggles Point, on Sippican Neck across Sippican Harbor from the town center of Marion. The site is centered on the 1925 main club house located at 11 Point Road near the southern tip of the point facing south toward Buzzards Bay. Directly behind and sited perpendicular to the main clubhouse facing west is the Golf House. Just to its north is a utility barn of recent vintage. A barn/ pavilion is sited close to Point Road half way to its intersection with Delano Road. Two other utilitarian buildings of recent vintage are located farther north on the peninsula where Point Road veers due north after swinging sharply to the west toward the coast. In addition to the open golf links the site houses a large asphalt parking lot east of the main clubhouse. The entrance to the club property is demarcated by a rotary at the southern terminus of Point Road and a sign bearing the name of the club.

The main club house of the **Kittansett Club** (photographs 1 and 2), also known as the Winter House, was constructed in 1925. Based upon a comparison of period and current photographs it appears, with the exception of a large dining room/ function hall addition at its east end, to be in an excellent condition of preservation. The clubhouse, with the exception of its large scale, exhibits a strong domestic appearance. Its seven-bay, two-story façade is generally symmetrical with a center entry placed in a partially enclosed entrance porch. The clubhouse's Colonial Revival appearance is enhanced by a shallow garrison overhang, or jetty, between stories. Also, the entry porch's enclosed pediment is supported by paired columns whose gaps are filled with lattice. Although the fenestration pattern in the upper story is an entirely symmetrical seven bays with smaller openings flanking the central three bays, the first story is lit by a variety of openings. On the left side two standard sash arranged in a regular pattern light a front-to-back parlor, while the right is lit by three taller casement windows placed closer together, lighting a dining space. Interior observation determined that a narrow central hall with a straight-run stair on the left leads through the building to a small office space centered on the rear pile. A two-story gambrel wing extends from the left side of the building that terminates in a cross gambrel. This T-shaped wing is placed at a gentle angle rearward from the plane of the main façade, emphasizing its subordinate attitude. The upper story of the wing is lit by gabled dormers arranged in a regular pattern on the lower slopes of its gambrel; three on each side of the parallel section and three on the east-facing side of the cross gambrel. Beyond the wing a large, gabled dining/ function hall with a deep enclosed shed portion was added to the building during recent decades. The hall is well-lit by paired sash arranged in a regular pattern on all sides. The six-over-six light pattern helps harmonize this large structure with the original building. Although the date of this addition could not be ascertained, a general description of the facilities indicates it is known as "Hurricane Hall."<sup>1</sup>

The entire complex is finished in natural shingles stopped by plain corner boards and casings. The façade and some other casings are finished with back-band moldings and the second-story windows have molded hoods. The original section of the building appears to retain six-over-six, four-over-four, eight-over-eight, and eight-light casements. The six-panel front door appears to be original as well. The porch treatment includes simple moldings indicating column capitals and at the rake, and the enclosed pediment is decorated by a scallop shell in carved relief.

According to Bryden and Hood, the **Golf House**, pictured below in figure 7 and photograph 4, was reconstructed and expanded after substantial damage by Hurricane Carol in 1954. The simple gabled building is elaborated by a full-width shed porch and a pair of small gabled dormers counter-sunk into the low-pitched porch roof. The building is finished in a simple manner with weathered shingles and plane corner boards and casings. Sash appears to have been replaced and a pair of standard openings in the right, south-facing elevation have been replaced by a canted oriel lit by a picture

<sup>1</sup> Mary P. Nicholson, compiler, *The Kittansett Club, A Brief History, 1969-1999, Vol. II* (Kittansett Club, 1968) p. 65.

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window. In addition the left wing has been expanded by a two-tier, stepped-down addition that matches the main body in terms of gable and roof pitch. Just north of the Golf House is a recent utility shed (photograph 4), with modern massing and treatments, a low-pitched gable roof, and lacking windows with openings limited to a garage door in the south-facing gable. But its finishes of weathered shingles and plain corner boards match the surrounding earlier buildings.

A cross-gabled **pavilion** (photograph 5), again with low-pitched gables and matching finishes, is located near the north border of the property close to Point Road and appears to date to about 1960. This regularly fenestrated building faces east away from the public way, so its façade and function are not visible or clear, but garage bays and a cargo door in its south-facing elevation, which opens onto a small asphalt parking lot, suggests partial utilitarian use. The domestic appearance on its cross-gable face and north wing suggest other areas house dining or sitting spaces near the half-way point of the course. A set of recent utility sheds or barns is not visible from a public way but assessor's photographs reproduced below in photographs 6 and 7 reveal them to be wood-frame utilitarian buildings and garages finished in a manner which is consistent with the rest of the campus.

The course itself is characterized by an even topography with few undulations in the landscape. Maps and satellite images reveal it to be generally oriented on a north-south axis. A comparison of early 20<sup>th</sup> century and recent aerial and satellite views depict changes in vegetation. Currently the south half of the course is almost entirely open but the north half is heavily wooded between many of the holes.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Kittansett Club, in its present form, was founded by a group of members of the Beverly Yacht Club in 1922. At the time the Beverly Yacht Club and its clubhouse and yachting facilities, which included a pier with floats extending eastward into Buzzards Bay, were located in and near a building (not extant) at the southern tip of Butler's Point, also known as Ruggles' Point, just south of the present site of the Kittansett clubhouse. This location had been the home of the yacht club (established 1872), which owned the land and buildings, since 1913 (see MRN.303 for a complete early history of the yacht club). By 1922 its members had come to feel that the property was underused and that it made sense to expand it into a golf club, which could be used throughout the spring, summer and fall rather than for only several weeks during the summer.

In 1922 a group of yacht club members, including Joseph Lewis Stackpole, Robert G. Stone, Frederick C. Hood, Horatio Nelson Emmons, Edgar C. Rust, Herbert Austin, Roger W. Converse, Donald T. Hood, Edward Hamlin, Donald F. Cutler, J. Philip Hartt, and Galen L. Stone, established a real estate trust known as Butler's Point Associates (BPA) to purchase and develop land on the eponymous promontory. The identities of several of these figures can be outlined through obituaries and other records. J. Lewis Stackpole (1874-1953) was a prominent Harvard educated (1895 and 1898) patent attorney in Boston with the firm of Fish, Richardson and Neave.

He was an enthusiastic yachtsman and in 1907 raced for the Kaiser's Cup in Germany. He was a member of the Eastern and New York clubs and at the time of his death was a member of the Beverly and Mattapoisett Yacht Clubs, both of which he served for many years as commodore. Mr. Stackpole was also an ardent golfer and helped to found the Kittansett Club and was a member of The Country Club and the Somerset Club.<sup>2</sup>

Roger Wolcott Converse (1900-1969), of Brookline and Marion, was a prominent real estate developer and broker in Marion.<sup>3</sup> According to Rosbe, founding member Galen Luther Stone (1862-1926) was a founding partner in the securities firm Hayden, Stone & Co. He maintained the 188 foot power yacht *Arcadia* at Marion (he only used it

<sup>2</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, Aug. 5, 1953, p. 21, obituary.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, Nov. 5, 1969, p. 41, obituary.

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once before his death but the yacht remained in the ownership of his heirs for another decade), and maintained a large cottage in Marion on Great Neck.<sup>4</sup> Frederick Clark Hood (1866-1942) was a founder, with his brother, Arthur N. Hood (1869-1950), of the Hood Rubber Company, a Watertown manufacturer of shoes and automobile tires (see MRN.X, Allen's Point). His son, Donald T. Hood (1893-1970), a stock broker, took over his father's former estate at the end of Allen's Point at 168 Allen's Point Road. The club's initial membership roster in 1924 identifies 76 charter members. An analysis establishes that the predominance of 50% were full-time residents of Boston (31), Brookline (6), Newton (1) or Cambridge (1); second, at 24%, were of New Bedford (18); 4 resided in Worcester; 1 in Whitinsville, 2 resided in the nearby towns of Wareham or Fall River; 4 in Marion; and 6 out of state (New York, Chicago, Connecticut).<sup>5</sup>

During 1922 in a series of complex transactions that included land purchases, conveyances between club member Donald T. Hood and the BPA, and several layers of mortgages, a large parcel totaling over 100 acres was assembled.<sup>6</sup> The club history credits trustee H. Nelson Emmons with working to assemble the property. Emmons was "...a long-time Marion summer resident and real estate man in Marion. Emmons, one of the best racing sailors ever to come into the Bay, had a great love of Marion and was most interested in working with this group [the governing body of the club]. He was given the assignment of buying the various parcels of land as favorably as possible."<sup>7</sup>

Grantors of several of the six parcels included Henry H. Beal and Edward M. Ruggles. The common name for the point during the 19<sup>th</sup> century suggests the largest parcel of 60 acres had been in control of the Ruggles family of Marion and Littleton for some time. Edward Milton Ruggles (1879-1949), a clerk with the Boston and Maine Railroad for most of his active career, lived part time in Littleton and Marion. His father, Nathaniel S. Ruggles (born 1847), was a dentist in Marion and his grandfather, Charles Henry Ruggles (born ca. 1816) was enumerated as a "retired L.B. captain" in 1880 in Marion, although other records identify him as a farmer. Charles Ruggles' father, Micah H., (1791-1857) was agent of the Pocasset Manufacturing Co. of Fall River, a major textile manufacturer. Circumstances suggest the land could have been in the family for more than one generation.

Upon assembling the property, which currently totals 186.52 acres, a substantial portion was leased to the golf club while approximately 16 lots were retained by the BPA for sale to members of the club to help defer the expenses of developing a course (see figures 1 and 2). The Kittansett Club, according to its charter, was established

For the purpose of the following: To provide and maintain proper grounds and facilities for playing the game of golf and such other sports as may be authorized by the board of governors, and to maintain a clubhouse and such other buildings as may be deemed advisable for the accommodation of its members, and to do all acts necessary or appropriate to carry out this object.<sup>8</sup>

The club's name was derived from two "Indian" words, "for it was the red-men who led the Plymouth settlers and their cattle to winter pasturage on the warmer shores of Buzzards Bay:" "Kittan," said to mean "sea," and "Sett," said to be a common "Indian" word-ending for "near" (p. 15).

During the following four years the golf course remained under construction. By 1924 18 holes were open for play. According to the club's published history construction was fraught with delays "...the formerly uncultivated point, with no stone walls, indicated what was later found to be the case: the ground was saturated by large stones and boulders. At the time of purchase the point was well forested with evergreen and deciduous species. The removal of

<sup>4</sup> Judith Westlund Rosbe, *Maritime Marion* (Arcadia, 2002) pp. 107-108.

<sup>5</sup> R.I. Bryden and D.T. Hood, compilers, *The Kittansett Club, A Brief History, 1922-1968, Vol. I* (Kittansett Club, 1968) p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> PCRD certificate of title 10624 (1946); see also: 1382:577-578; 1409:326; 1417:69; 1412:441-442 (1922); 539:337 (1887); 541:454 (1887).

<sup>7</sup> Bryden and Hood, p. 27.

<sup>8</sup>, *Ibid*, charter (forward).

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trees and stones was more challenging than anticipated” (p. 27). Expenses evidently escalated: “wage rates were a fraction of what they are 45 years later, but the number of hours consumed – horse and man – was enormous” (p. 32).

Although according to its history the course has undergone renovations and changes during the nearly 100 years since its construction, its original configuration is described in detail, hole-by-hole (pp. 18-20). Elsewhere this account relates some general comments that characterize the original course:

On the point could be seen the possibilities of a different type of course than most in this country and one that might have some of the character of the famous sea-side courses of Great Britain... It was laid out over wooded and mostly virgin territory through which paths were cut and then gradually widened as the areas for the holes took shape. The ground produced its full share of the stones from which New England walls were built, but the natural sandy soil enriched by decades of pine and deciduous growth provided well-drained and unusually fine fairways and greens... The course was laid out as a series of one-shot holes of lengths from 110 to 235 yards, each different in character and providing varying problems in changing wind and weather... The course starts and finishes at the seaward, and unprotected, end of the Point, and though few holes parallel one another, the outgoing play is generally to the north and the incoming is back to the southerly end of the Point.<sup>9</sup>

Another account of the course further expands on its character:

...it was decided to use [the rocks] for mounds along the sides of the course, around greens and in other desirable locations which would dispose of the rocks and provide a few contours for the relatively flat land... The general theme of the design was to provide a challenge to the good player and give the average player a chance to do his best, but above all to enjoy himself.<sup>10</sup>

The attribution for the course’s design is somewhat confused. Its construction has generally been attributed to the management of member Frederic Clark Hood, an amateur designer. “The design [of the course] was largely created by Mr. Hood from his considerable knowledge of the top American and British golf courses of that day. Kittansett was built to predetermined specifications and undoubtedly was one of the first courses to be constructed on this basis” (p. 16). Elsewhere the account indicates “[s]everal experts were consulted on the design of a golf course. Among them was Donald Ross, a leading golf architect of the time. Mr. Ross came to Marion and advised with the trustees. There was also a Philadelphia design and construction firm, Toomey and Flynn, which produced some of the original plans [Toomey and Flynn never went under contract] so eventually Mr. Hood took the plans which had been procured to that time and developed the design himself. He also took personal charge of construction and undertook the daily direction of foremen, engineers and sub-contractors” (p. 32). Both Donald James Ross (1872-1948) and William Santa Flynn (1890-1944) were accomplished and prolific golf architects credited with a number of prominent and influential courses nationally, including The Country Club, Brookline, Shinnecock, Pinehurst and Cherry Hills, among others. According to a *Golf Digest* article published in 2019 the original blueprints were discovered, confirming an attribution to Flynn.<sup>11</sup>

In 1925 the Kittansett Club undertook the construction of what became known as the “Winter House,” the current clubhouse with the address of 11 Point Road (figure 6). Currently no architect for this distinctive example of country club design has been identified. This allowed the Summer Club House, which was not winterized, to remain in dedicated use by the Beverly Yacht Club (figure 5), and the new clubhouse, which had heat and plumbing, to serve the Kittansett during three seasons of play and social activities. By 1930 the complex included both clubhouses, 10 cottages, two garages, the “Golf House,” two tennis courts, parking, and a barn (figures 1 and 4). The club also constructed the “Kittansett Haven” a small yacht harbor served by a pier with floats (extant but deteriorated and out of use). Fourteen additional lots at the

<sup>9</sup> Bryden and Hood, pp. 15-17.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pp. 31-33.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.golfdigest.com/story/kittansett-club> accessed 7/2/2019.

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east and west sides of the peninsula flanking the golf links were reserved for sale to club members for the construction of seasonal cottages (see figure 3).

During the early 1930s, in the wake of the Crash and Great Depression, the club underwent a series of financial setbacks that culminated in a financial restructuring in 1932. Suffering from diminishing sales of cottage lots and membership, a debt amounting to approximately \$430,000, and threatened with foreclosure by its debtors, the Union Market National Bank of Watertown and the Waltham Trust Co., the BPA refinanced. Although the plan failed and the property was foreclosed, records and accounts indicate that the Kattansett Club remained a tenant at the site for the following decade and a half.

Beginning in the late 1930s the Kittansett Club began to undergo a series of physical disasters. The hurricane of 1938 destroyed the Summer Club House, the home of the Beverly Yacht Club, the Golf House, several cottages, and other infrastructure. At an unspecified date the barn at the 10<sup>th</sup> hole burned but was later rebuilt. At the outbreak of World War II the entire facility was taken over by the U.S. Coastguard Artillery and 100 men were quartered in the Winter Club House. A 1944 hurricane did extensive additional damage to buildings and infrastructure. When the Kittansett Club regained control of the property in 1945 extensive repairs were required. In 1954 Hurricane Carol again caused extensive damage to the club's infrastructure, requiring extensive repairs to the course and buildings.

Beginning in 1946 a number of members undertook institutional and financial steps to reinvigorate the Kittansett Club and other similar social institutions in Marion. That year Donald Angier purchased the BPA's outstanding debt of \$20,000 from the banks and served as the first post-war president of the club. Roger W. Converse took over financial responsibilities for the Golf House, which was rebuilt. Charles J. Winkler, Jr. donated additional funds to regain control of sections of the property, and \$75,000 in new capital was raised by a group of members to rebuild the club's facilities (p. 45). For a brief period of time four of Marion's key social and leisure institutions, including the Kittansett and Beverly clubs, Piney Point Beach Club and Sippican Tennis Club shared membership privileges and dues under a single umbrella organization known as the Sippican Club, but shortly afterward each club began again to adopt its own policies and rules toward these two key aspects of their organizations.<sup>12</sup>

During recent decades the main clubhouse has been expanded with a large dining facility, parking has been expanded, and two outbuildings have been constructed elsewhere among the links. Although the club history does not elucidate the dates of these additions, the dining room is identified as "Hurricane Hall."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bryden and Hood, p. 86.

<sup>13</sup> Nicholson, p. 65.

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381, 930**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Maps and atlases:

1855 H.F. Walling, *Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*1879 Geo H Walker & Co, *Atlas of Plymouth County Massachusetts.*1903 L. J. Richards & Co, *New Topographic Atlas of Surveys of Plymouth County ... Massachusetts*

Ancestry.com: see footnotes.

R.I. Bryden and D.T. Hood, compilers, *The Kittansett Club, A Brief History, 1922-1968, Vol. I and II* (Kittansett Club, 1968).Mary P. Nicholson, compiler, *The Kittansett Club, A Brief History, 1969-1999, Vol. II* (Kittansett Club, 1968).

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds (PCRD) [book:page (date)].

Judith Westlund Rosbe, *Maritime Marion* (Arcadia, 2002).**DATA SHEET**

MHC #	Assessor's #	Street #	Street Name	Historic Name	Form	Style	Const. Date
MRN.379	001 008A	11	Point Road	Kittansett Club	Gable block	Colonial Revival	Ca. 1925
MRN.380	001 008	11	Point Road	Golf House	Gable block	N/A	Ca. 1946
MRN.381	001 001	11	Point Road	pavilion	Cross gable	Colonial Revival	1960
MRN.930	001-001	11	Point Road	Golf course	Designed landscape		Ca. 1925

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Orientation map (Oliver, Mass GIS) showing the configuration of the pavilion (A) and the recent utility sheds (B) at north end of property.

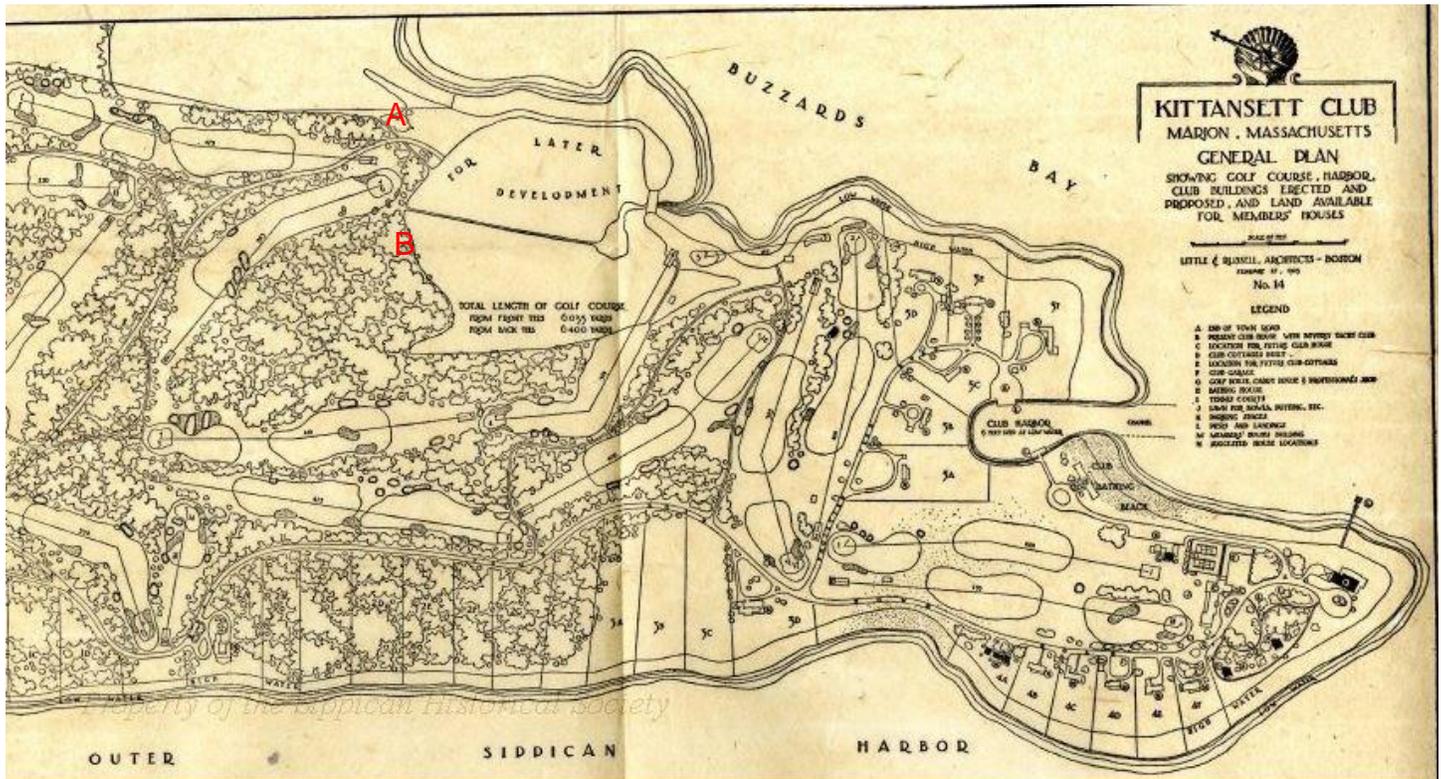


Figure 1. Original early 1920 plan of the point and its facilities (Sippican Historical Society, 2015.006.002). See figure 3 for a legend of club buildings.

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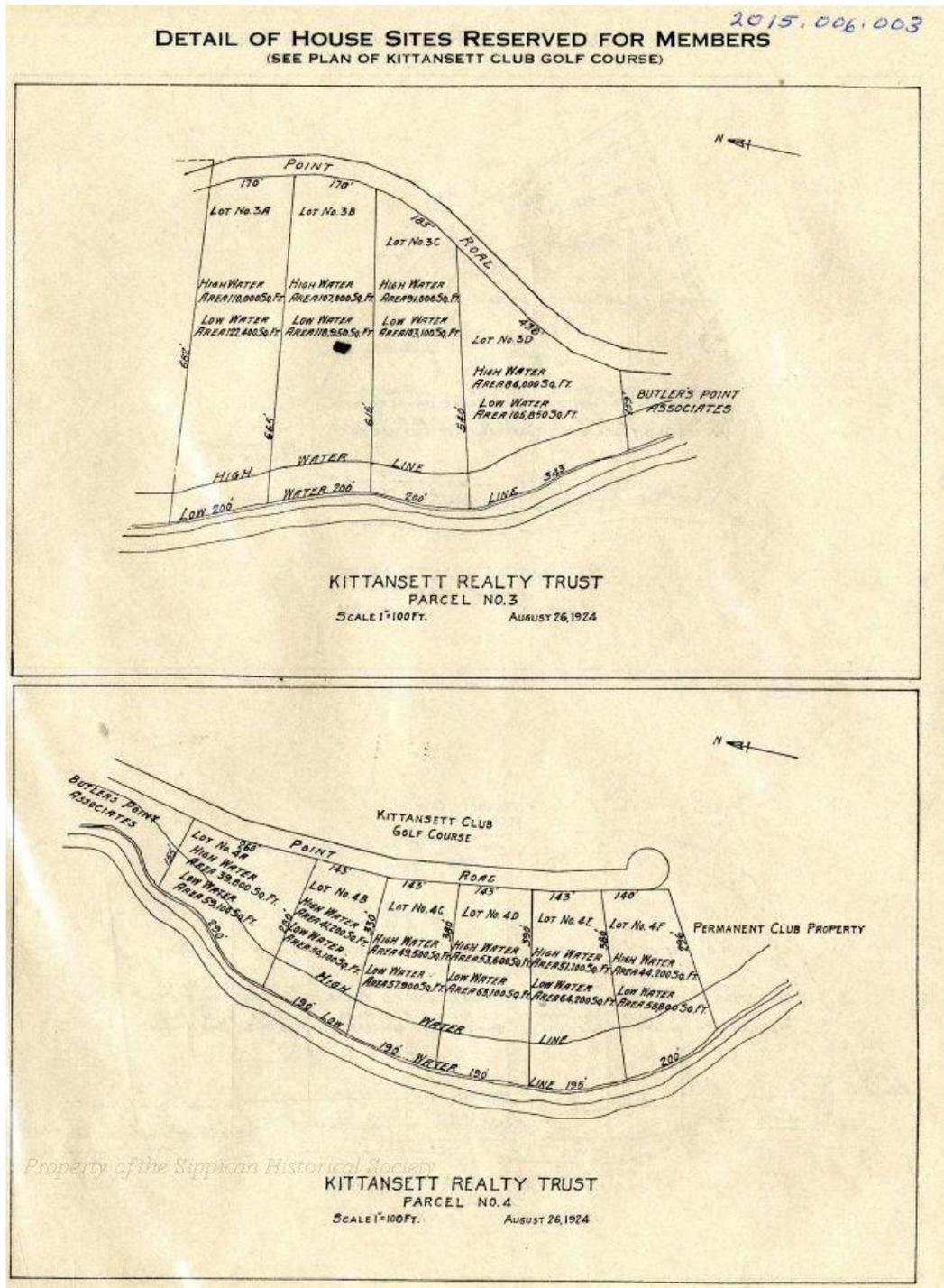


Figure 2. Plan showing house sites on the west side of Point Road (Sippican Historical Society, 2015.006.003)

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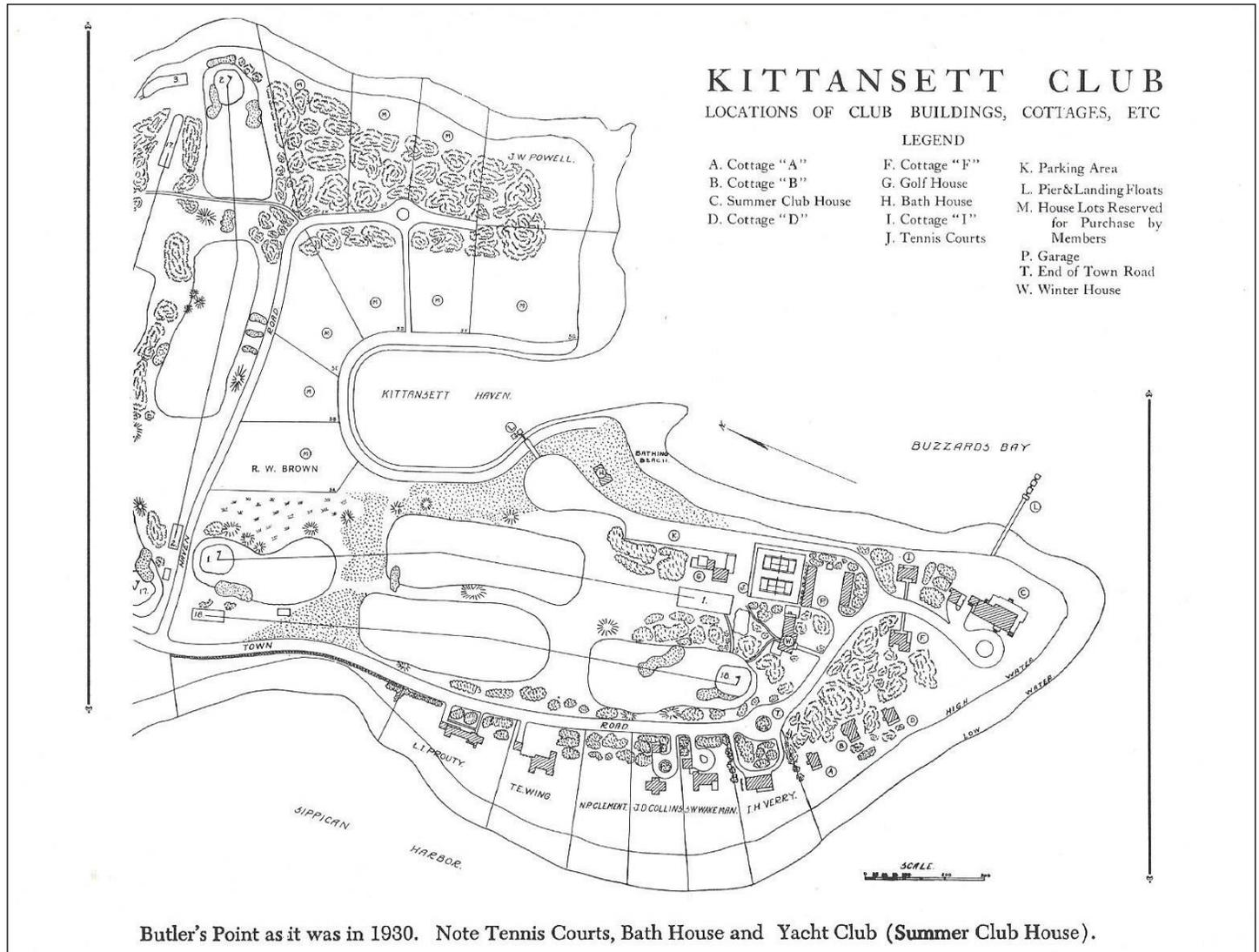


Figure 3. Detail of the tip of the point showing the original layout of the physical plant as built out prior to the 1938 hurricane (Bryden and Hood, p. 44).

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Figure 4. 1930s aerial photo showing the full build-out of facilities. Summer Club House (Beverly Yacht Club) far right; Winter Club House (Kittansett) far left (façade only); various cottages in foreground and center; garages and parking upper left (Sippican Historical Society, 2004.003.086).

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Figure 5. Summer Clubhouse, Beverly Yacht Club (1913-1938). (SHS 2004.008.036).



Figure 6. Winter Clubhouse, current home of the Kittansett Club.

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Photograph 1. Main façade detail.



Photograph 2. Rear elevation showing dining/ function hall wing (left).

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Photograph 4. Golf House, post-1944 reconstruction of the original ca. 1925 building and a barn/ garage of more recent vintage, left.



Photograph 5. Google street view of pavilion/ garage/ other uses located farther north on Point Road.

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Photograph 6. Recent utility shed/garage. Assessor's photograph.



Photograph 7. Recent utility shed/garage. Assessor's photograph.

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MARION

THE KITTANSETT CLUB

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

MRN.U	MRN.379-381, 930
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**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible       Eligible **only** in a historic district  
 Contributing to a potential historic district       Potential historic district

Criteria:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**

Criteria Considerations:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**     **E**     **F**     **G**

Statement of Significance by           Claire W Dempsey            
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Kittansett Club is a well-preserved area associated with Marion's rise in popularity as a summer resort at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Marion was one of many quiescent New England port towns that were transformed after their atmosphere, cool, quiet, and quaint, was discovered by vacationing Americans. Railroads eased the journey and hotels provided lodging, and by the 1870s, outsiders were renting and buying property, often building ample cottages, and planning longer stays. Of particular interest for Marion, prosperous businessmen and their families were joined by literary figures, artists, and actors, and President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland. The largely undeveloped sections of the town on Great Neck became one of the most impressive summer-house neighborhoods, with large Shingle and Classical Revival dwellings at the end of long driveways and overlooking the sea. Also built here were yacht, tennis, and golf clubs and other meeting places for this community, like this one. Most of the resources here retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The district would likely meet criteria A and C at the local level, with areas of significance in architecture, entertainment/recreation, and social history.