

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

15-28	Marion	MRN.F	MRN.87
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Town/City: Marion

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

Address: 294 (formerly 290) Converse Road

Historic Name: Charles W. Blankinship House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Ca. 1880

Source: Map and deed research

Style/Form: Queen Anne

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Shed dormer (after 1998)

Replacement windows

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

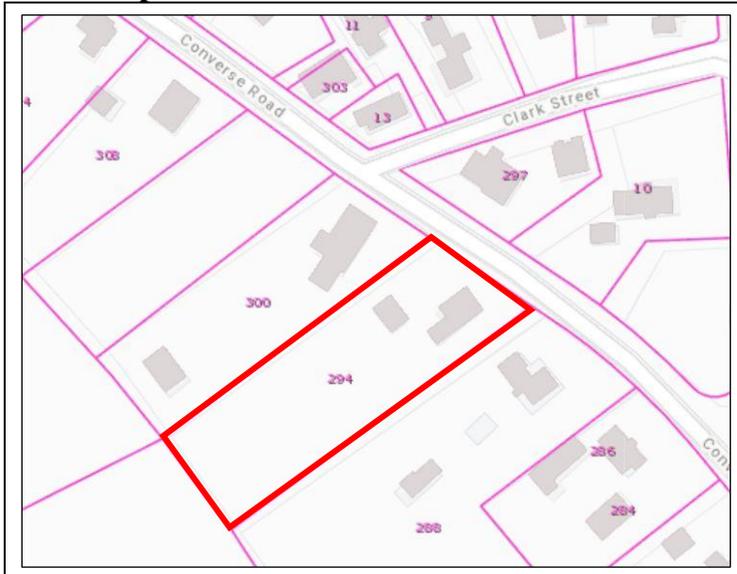
Acreage: 0.96

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

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): February 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

294 Converse Road

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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.

294 Converse Road occupies a long, narrow trapezoidal lot on the west side of Converse Road near its intersection with Clark Street. The house is positioned close to the street in the eastern half of the parcel and faces east. The property surrounding the house is maintained in lawn dotted with shrubs and mature trees. A hedge spans the façade. The western half of the parcel is heavily vegetated. The property is bordered by a drystone wall along its southern boundary. A paved driveway enters the property from Converse Road near the northern property line and terminates at the barn behind the house.

The building comprises a one-and-one-half-story, three-bay-by-three-bay, front-gabled, wood-frame main block with a rectangular plan and an L-shaped rear dependency. The one-and-one-half-story dependency is set off the southwest corner of the main block and is five bays deep at its south elevation, where it wraps the westernmost two bays of the main block. Constructed around 1880 in a transitional blend of the Greek Revival and later styles, the house appears to retain most of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a high granite block foundation and is clad in weathered wood shingles. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles.

The house is trimmed with a boxed cornice, frieze boards, eave returns, and corner boards. Dentils and a row of decorative shingles seen at the gable in the photograph of the property in the 1998 MHC Area Form are no longer extant. A shed dormer with two windows occupies the south roof slope where the extended L-portion of the rear addition ends. Windows at the house have double-hung, one-over-one sash, all with narrow, molded surrounds except for the two windows at the second story at the façade, which have architraves. The entry at the northernmost bay contains a glass-and-panel wood door flanked to the right by a single full-height sidelight. The door is sheltered by a shed-roofed hood supported by open brackets with carved bases. The door fronts a brick step and a brick walkway that curves to join the driveway north of the house.

An early barn (MRN.488) with a gambrel roof is sited off the northwest corner of the house. The side-gabled structure is constructed of weathered vertical boards and has an asphalt shingle roof. The barn contains a two-leaf vertical plank door with strap hinges and several double-hung, six-over-one windows.

294 Converse Road reflects a blend of styles. Simple in design, it has the gable-front, side hall entry form seen in both the Greek Revival and Queen Anne styles. Its box cornice, corner boards, frieze boards, eave returns, and cornice dentils (no longer extant) are characteristic Greek Revival features. The single full-height sidelight at the entry is either a remainder of original paired sidelights, a Greek Revival feature, or a modern detail. The decorative shingle patterns (no longer extant) were commonly seen in Queen Anne-style houses and the shed-roofed hood and open brackets at the entry reflect the Craftsman style. The one-over-one replacement window sash date to the 20th 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 town of Marion was established in 1852 when it broke off from the town of Rochester. 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 southwestern section of Marion Village centered on Converse Road (originally called Nye Street and later known as Pleasant Street or Charles Neck Road) which runs southward toward Charles Neck Point, the southernmost point of the peninsula defining the western side of Sippican Harbor. The area is named for Captain George Bonum Nye (1750-1831), the sea captain who was one of the pioneers in the salt making

Continuation sheet 1

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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industry in Marion and who owned a house and surrounding land at 266 Converse Road (ca.1780, George B. Nye House, MRN.82).

This part of Marion was sparsely settled with a few scattered farms until the mid-19th century, when the advent of regular rail service helped shift the town's economy from traditional maritime businesses to tourism. Wealthy individuals were attracted to Marion and began to build large summer residences along the waterfront. The construction and maintenance of these properties sparked demand for a variety of service industries and trades, particularly carpentry, along with the need for housing for this new class of workers. As landowners in this area saw a new use for their properties and former farms were subdivided into house lots, this part of Marion soon became a densely settled residential quarter. Comparison of the 1879 map with the 1903 map shows how quickly this transition occurred. In a little more than two decades, large tracts of open land had become filled with streets lined with new houses. The majority of residences are relatively modest one-and-one-half to two-story frame houses dating from the early 19th to the early 20th centuries and representing a range of styles including Cape, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Craftsman and Colonial Revival.

This house does not appear on the 1879 map but is shown on the 1903 map with F.C. Blankinship as owner. The first conveyance found for this property was a mortgage from Charles W. and Sarah L. Blankinship (borrowers) to Reuben F. and Bethia M. Hart in 1884 (lenders). The property description in that mortgage included the tract of land and dwelling house. Charles Blankinship (1828-1888) was a seaman according to the 1865 and 1880 censuses and had married Sarah Handy in 1881; she was his second wife. Blankinship died in 1888 and the mortgage was foreclosed. Reuben Hart had died the previous year and the property fell into the hands of his wife Bethia.

Bethia (var. Bethiah) Martin Morse (1838-1940) was born in Tenant Harbor, Maine. She moved with her family to Marblehead and was first married to Gamaliel Morse (var. Morss) who served in the Union Army during the Civil War and was one of the first casualties of the war. She then married Captain Reuben Freedom Hart (1832-1887) who was master of his schooner, the *R.F. Hart*. Captain Reuben and his ship were pressed into wartime service transporting supplies. Bethia Hart reported on the couple's experiences during the Civil War in several local newspaper articles. During the last months of the war, the Harts were stationed at City Point near Washington, D.C., where they had the opportunity to meet President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln would sometimes spend nights on a boat docked at City Point and would chat with the Harts. Reuben and Bethia were also present at Appomattox Court when Robert E. Lee arrived to surrender his army to General Grant. After the war, Bethia accompanied her husband on his sailing ventures and was reputed to have become a skilled sailor herself. Bethia Hart died in 1940 at the age of 101.

In 1888, after the death of her husband, Bethia Hart sold this property to Franklin (Frank) C. Blankinship (1850-1935). Frank Blankinship was a house carpenter and the son of Warren M. Blankinship (1816-1898) and Emily Maria Clark (1816-1853). He was married to Susan S. Landers (1837-1904) and after her death, to Angeline F. Harlow (1869-1957). In 1948, Angeline Harlow Blankinship transferred ownership of the house to her granddaughter, Dorothy D. Dexter Smith (1916-2008). Dorothy Smith was the daughter of Charles William Dexter (1888-1979) and Julia Dunbar Baker (1888-1916). Julia Baker was Angeline Harlow Blankinship's daughter from her first marriage to Chester A. Baker, and therefore ownership of the property remained in the extended Blankinship family.

Dorothy Smith was married to Robert E. Smith (1912-1997) who worked for the water department in Marion. She was the manager of the Sippican School cafeteria for 30 years. In 2001, Dorothy Smith conveyed the property to the couple's three children who sold it to the current owners in 2009.

Deed Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
06-08-2017	48602-0224	Marissa A. Hilton f/n/a Marissa Langley & James F. McDonald	Marissa A. Hilton
05-02-2009	37357-138	Charles R. Smith et al.	Marissa Langley & James F. McDonald
08-03-2001	20375-300	Dorothy D. Smith	Charles R. Smith et al.
04-28-2001	5039-59	Dorothy D. Smith	Robert & Dorothy D. Smith
11-17-1954	2384-288	Angeline F. Blankinship	Dorothy D. Smith
12-22-1948	2036-50	Angeline F. Blankinship	Dorothy D. Smith
		Estate of Frank C. Blankinship	Angeline F. Blankinship

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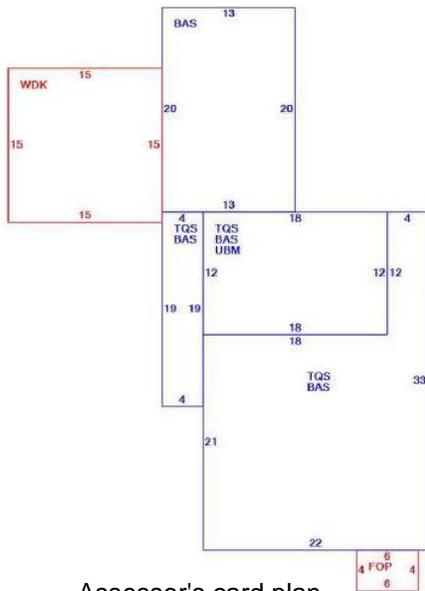
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09-17-1888	560-88	Bethia M. Hart	Frank C. Blankinship
08-14-1888	566-317, foreclosure	Charles W. & Sarah L. Blankinship	Bethia M. Hart
03-13-1884	528-495 Mortgage	Charles W. & Sarah L. Blankinship	Reuben F. & Bethia M. Hart

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Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org: census records, vital records, city directories
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Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts 1855 H.F. Walling
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 Plymouth County Registry of Deeds
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 Rosbe, Judith. *Marion in the Golden Age*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009.
 Sippican Historical Society: online database.
 Smith, Pete. (ed.) *A Picture Postcard History of Marion, Massachusetts*. New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, 2008.
 "Dorothy D. Smith," *Standard-Times*, New Bedford, MA, September 28, 2008.
 "100th Birthday is Observed by Mrs. Bethia Hart, Marion," *Standard-Times*, New Bedford, MA, 1938.



Barn, east elevation. (MRN.488)

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with several high-style examples of these styles, the area also includes a handful of earlier dwellings in the Cape and Federal styles that pre-date the building boom that began in the second half of the 19th century.

The majority 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 social history and architecture.