

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

520-01728-013

East
Brookfield

STU.294
STU.295
STU.916

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Podunk

Photograph



Address: 13 Podunk Road

Historic Name: George J. and Delina D. Cloutier House;
Barn; and Edward Nichols Barn Foundation
Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling, Agricultural

Date of Construction: 1912 (barn), ca. 1946 (house)

Source: 1857, 1870, 1898 Maps, 1946 Deed

Style/Form: Colonial Revival (Stylized Ranch)

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete or Stone (not visible)

Wall/Trim: Stone and Wood or Vinyl/Wood

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn (1912)

Earlier Barn Foundation (ca. mid to late 19th century)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Unknown

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.84 acres

Setting: Large, irregularly shaped parcel with residence facing east along Podunk Road, near the intersection of Podunk with Route 49. Barn set back more towards the rear of the parcel.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Shannon Walsh, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2017

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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.

Cloutier House (ca. 1946, STU.289)

The George J. and Delina D. Cloutier House, at 13 Podunk Road, is an interesting example of a mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival (Stylized Ranch), single family dwelling built along a stretch of road which began to see residential and agricultural development around the early to mid-nineteenth century. This one and a half story house is approximately three bays wide by two bays deep with a north to south aligned rectangular plan. It has a concrete or stone foundation, a stone exterior, and wood trim. The cross gable roof is asphalt shingle and has overhanging eaves. An exterior, stone chimney is on the southern side elevation.

The main façade has first story, paired, vertically divided 4/1 windows, beneath an upper story gabled dormer with paired 4/1 windows and siding which is either clapboard or vinyl. There is a recessed, covered entry, and a front gable ell at the northeastern corner. This section has a single window with a vertically divided 4/1 pattern. First story windows have stone sills and flat arch stone lintels. A shed roof ell with a secondary entrance and sidelights is visible off of the southern side elevation.

The southern elevation also has a first story grouping of windows (which appear to be sliders) in the ell, and an upper story 4/1 window set within the gable, matching the windows on the main façade.

The rear, western facing elevation has five windows of varying sizes on the first story, all with stone sills and flat arch stone lintels. The upper story has a shed roof dormer with three windows, each 4/1. An additional, exterior chimney is visible from this perspective, located on the northern side elevation.

Barn (1912, STU.290)

A small, early twentieth century side gable barn sits on a stone and concrete foundation and has a wood, board and batten exterior and wood trim. It is approximately four bays wide by one bay deep with a cross gable ell. (Photos 5-8) The multi-gable roof is asphalt shingle and has overhanging eaves. The defining characteristic of this building is the round dormer and bullseye window, located on the northern main façade, which give the building a Classical Revival (Beaux Arts), or French Eclectic feel.¹ The eastern side elevation has a hayloft door set within the gable. An ell, which is aligned north/south, has a hipped roof and two, large windows, each with 15 divided lights on the eastern facing side. A cast stone heart, formed as part of the concrete floor on the barn interior, says 1912. (Photo 8)

Edmund Nichols, Jr. Barn Foundation (pre 1898, STU.916)

The stone barn foundation, to the west of the main residence and early twentieth century barn, is probably related to the Edmund Nichols, Jr. barn noted on an 1898 map (Photo 9 and Figures 3 and 5). A good amount of the stone remains in situ, as evidence of nineteenth century barn construction, as well as where this barn was historically situated on the property.

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 property appears to have been originally related to Edmund Nichols Jr. (1819-1905), noted as property owner and area farmer by the mid to late nineteenth century.² (Figures 1-3) Edmund married Clarinda Nichols (1820-1910) in 1843, so perhaps that date can narrow down a construction time period for the earlier barn, only evident today by its stone foundation.³ (Photo 9,

¹ Virginia S. McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

² "Nichols, Edmund." *United States Federal Census*, 1870. *Ancestry.com*

³ "Nichols, Edmund." *Ancestry.com*

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Figure 5) At the time that Edmund resided in this area, there were several members of the Nichols family, who had also settled and were operating farms along what was to become Podunk Road. Neighboring family members included Dexter Nichols (1807-1878) and Emeline Nichols (1811-1901), as well as Henry W. Nichols (1836-1898) and Cornelia S. Nichols (born about 1838).⁴

Selectman and realtor Julian C. Gabree (possibly 1885-1956) was documented as a later owner of this property, although the site doesn't seem to be his home address.⁵ By 1946, Florida residents George J. and Delina D. Cloutier, purchased 167 acres from Gabree and it appears as if Podunk Road was altered around this time as well.⁶ (Figure 4) In 1952, George's occupation is listed as a farmer.⁷ The Cloutiers, who have proved elusive to research, owned the property until 1959.⁸ The late twentieth to early twentieth century homeowners noted that George was a stone mason.⁹

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com (see footnotes)

FindaGrave.com

Masslandrecords.com (see footnotes)

McAlester, Virginia S. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

Figure 1: Walling, H.F. *Map of Worcester County*, Boston: Wm. E. Baker, 1857, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3763w.la000320/>, accessed July 2017.

Figure 2: F. W. Beers & Co. *Atlas of Worcester County*, 1870, <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:x059cb92c>, accessed July 2017.

Figure 3: L. J. Richards & Co. "Charlton & Dudley & Southbridge & Sturbridge." Plate 021, *New Topographical Atlas of Worcester County Massachusetts*. (Plate 19) 1898. *Historicmapworks.com* (site). <http://www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/6730/Charlton+++Sturbridge+++Southbridge+++Dudley+Towns/Worcester+County+1898/Massachusetts/>, accessed July 2017.

Figure 4: "Podunk Road." *Worcester County Registry of Deeds*. Book 142, Page 46. (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://www.masslandrecords.com/worcester/>

Figure 5: "13 Podunk Road." *Google.com/maps*, <https://www.google.com/maps/place/13+Podunk+Rd,+Sturbridge,+MA+01566/@42.1389756,-72.0450909,132m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x89e6a6aa2471fe35:0x31e3c5ec01e49468!8m2!3d42.1389584!4d-72.0449186>, accessed July 2017.

⁴ "Nichols" (various family members), *United States Federal Census*, 1870. *Ancestry.com*

⁵ Book 3014, Page 574 (1946); Book 3837, Page 158 (1957), *Masslandrecords.com*, "Gabree, Julian C."

⁶ Book 3014 Page 574 (1946), (granted portion of the land to the Cloutiers), *Masslandrecords.com*; Book 3837, Page 158 (1957), *Masslandrecords.com*

⁷ "Cloutier, George." *Southbridge Directory*, 1952. *Ancestry.com*

⁸ Book 4073 Page 199, (11/2/1959) *Masslandrecords.com*

⁹ Conversation with current homeowners, Barry M. and Christine M. Williams, 2017

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Photo 1: Eastern façade and northern side elevation



Photo 2: Southern side elevation

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Photo 3: Western rear elevation



Photo 4: Barn (1912), northern facing main façade

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Photo 5: Northern façade and western side elevation



Photo 6: Eastern facing side elevation

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Photo 7: Date on barn floor



Photo 8: Earlier barn foundation, to the west of the main residence

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Figure 1: 1857 Worcester County Map showing E. Nichols property

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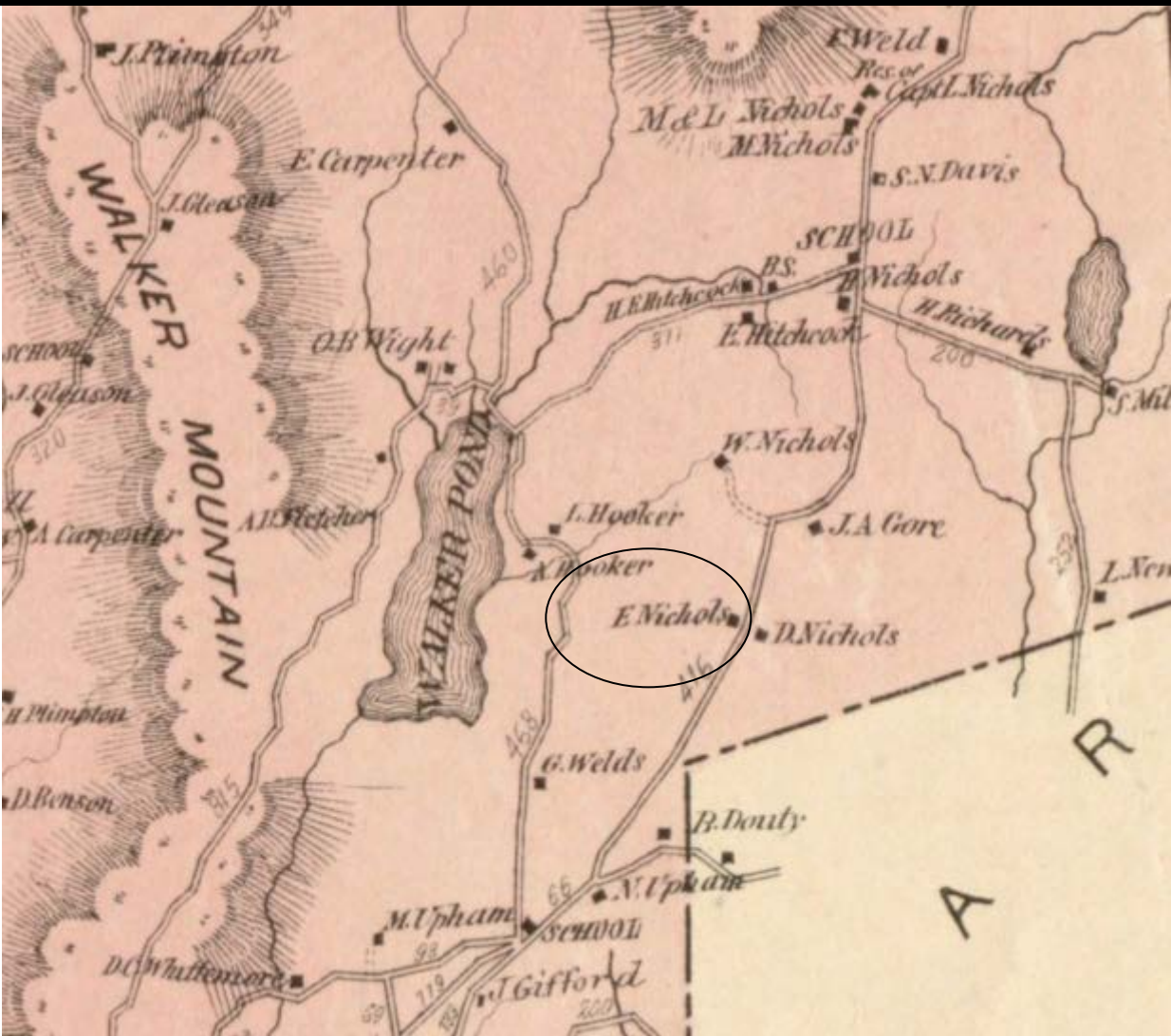


Figure 2: 1870 Worcester County Atlas showing E. Nichols and Dexter Nichols property

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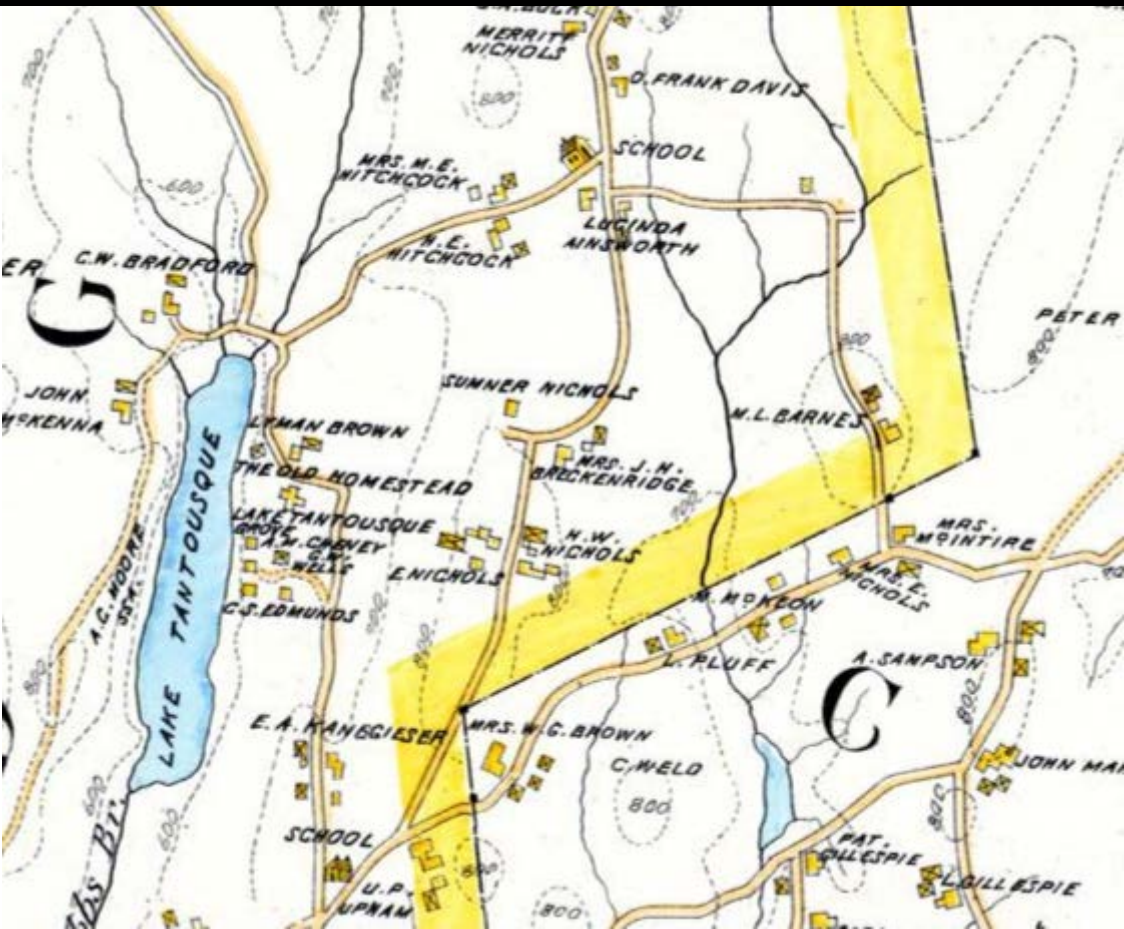


Figure 3: 1898 Worcester County Atlas showing E. Nichols and Henry Nichols properties

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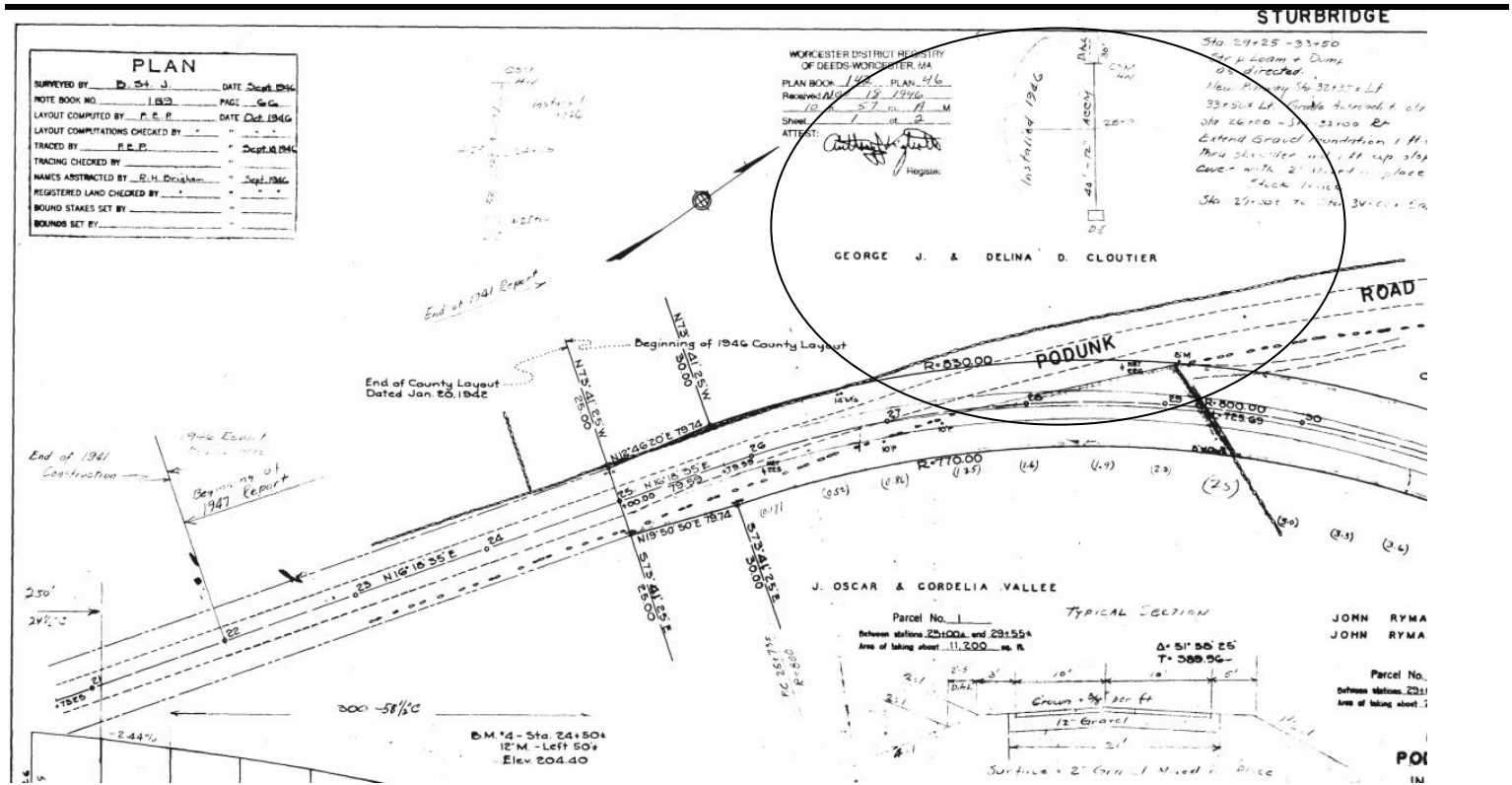


Figure 4: 1946 Land Plan showing the Cloutier Property along Podunk Road.

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Figure 5: Aerial perspective showing property and barn foundation

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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 Shannon Walsh, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Cloutier House (ca. 1946), Barn (1912), and Nichols Barn Foundation (pre-1898), at 13 Podunk Road, are jointly recommended for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places, with significance on a local level, and a period of significance between 1898 (or earlier) and 1967 (arbitrary fifty-year threshold). The main residence, barn outbuilding, and foundation (structure) are each significant under Criteria A for Community Growth and Development and for Criteria C under Architecture. The barn foundation is additionally relevant under Criteria A for Social History related to the Nichols family.

The Nichols Barn Foundation was constructed prior to 1898. Under Criteria A, this structure represents the nineteenth century residential and agricultural growth and development along what would become Podunk Road and, in depth and size, demonstrates the significance of agriculture to the area. It is also significant under Criteria C for what remains of the architecture and construction of this former barn foundation. This structure is further related to Sturbridge Social History and the Nichols family, who had several properties for residential and agricultural use along Podunk Road in the nineteenth century and later.

The smaller, well-maintained Barn on the property was constructed in 1912. This contributing outbuilding helps to further tell the story of this property and the continued twentieth century residential and agricultural growth and development along Podunk Road. It is also significant for architecture, as in spite of its utilitarian use, it has Classical Revival detailing.

The Cloutier House (ca. 1946) represents mid-twentieth century community residential growth and development along Podunk Road. Uniquely designed, in particular due to the stone exterior, this Colonial Revival, Stylized Ranch is also eligible under Criteria C for architecture and is within the fifty year eligibility threshold for age.

In conclusion, the Cloutier House, related Barn, and Nichols Barn Foundation, are eligible for National Register listing under both Criteria A and C, with a local level of significance, related to Community Planning and Development, Social History, and Architecture. Overall, the site retains a good degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.