

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Miss Florence Diner (The Diners of Massachusetts MPS)

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 99 Main Street not for publication

city or town Northampton (Florence) vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Hampshire code 015 zip code 01060

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough  
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

7/29/99  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the  
National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the  
National Register

removed from the  
National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

9/22/99

Miss Florence Diner  
Name of Property

Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	building
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
1	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Twentieth-Century Commercial Architecture:  
The Diners of Massachusetts

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Barrel Roof Diner  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
walls porcelain enamel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof asphalt shingle  
other wood  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Miss Florence Diner

Name of Property

Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

**Period of Significance**

1941-1949

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Worcester Lunch Car Company

Agnoli Sign Company

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Diners of Massachusetts MPS  
Miss Florence Diner  
Northampton (Florence), Hampshire Co.,**

**Section number** 7 **Page** 1  
**MA**

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**7. Description**

Miss Florence Diner (1941, MHC #111), located at 99 Main Street in the Northampton village of Florence, is an excellent illustration of the remodeling of a barrel-roofed diner. Worcester Lunch Car Company manufactured the original diner in 1941, and completed the remodeling in the late 1940s. [Alexander interview]

The Miss Florence is situated on State Route 9 at the center of the historic business district in Florence. Surrounding development is a mix of commercial and residential uses. The diner is placed at the sidewalk and has a paved parking lot to the northeast. The prefabricated diner, as enlarged in the late 1940s, is attached at the rear to the front of a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century dwelling. This two-story dwelling, itself enlarged and remodeled, houses Alexander's Tap Room and Restaurant.

Originally, the barrel-roofed Miss Florence Diner was rectangular in massing, approximately seven bays across at the street (south) elevation and about three bays deep. According to Sanborn fire insurance maps, the diner originally had a one-story wood-frame rear addition and was not attached to the residential building directly behind. Entries likely were located in the short end walls; the wall at the west end of the interior retains a glazed wood door. Expansion in the late 1940s added one bay to the west (left) end of the prefabricated diner, four bays to the east (right) end, and two principal bays to the rear (northeast corner). This remodeling resulted in the present eleven-bay façade, the cross-barrel roof, and the L-shaped configuration of the interior. The barrel-roofed, brick veneer entry vestibule at the front of the diner is a 1950s addition. While a projecting enclosed entry was common to diners constructed in the 1950s, the barrel-roofed treatment of the entry at the remodeled Miss Florence is unusual. The diner was later joined to the residential building directly behind. For the purpose of this nomination, the former residential building, though present during the period of significance for the diner, is a noncontributing building due to modifications made after the period of significance.

The diner has a concrete foundation, asphalt shingles on the barrel roof and entry vestibule, and porcelain enamel panels in yellow and red. Glass block windows at both front corners mark the extension of the facade in the late 1940s. At the western end of the diner is an enclosed entry. The other entry that dates to the remodeling is located in the eighth bay, inside the barrel-roofed projecting vestibule. Both entries contain steel and glass doors. Windows contain single-hung wood sash with orange-colored leaded glass in the transoms.

Another unusual architectural feature of the Miss Florence is the late 1940s rooftop parapet wall over the south (façade) and east elevations. This wall displays moderne-style lettering bearing the name of the diner. Similarly styled lettering executed in neon appears in the large chevron sign (late 1940s) mounted on the roof over the diner's southeast corner. The sign has two faces, fronting the easterly and westerly approaches to the diner from Main Street (Route 9). Other signage for the diner appears on the porcelain enamel wall panels on the façade. At the sidewalk is a neon standing sign (1960s) advertising Alexander's Restaurant behind the diner. Both the rooftop sign and the standing sign were designed and built by George Agnoli of Agnoli Sign Company in Springfield. For the purpose of this nomination, the standing sign, due to its later date of construction, is a noncontributing object.

Inside, the Miss Florence has a barrel ceiling and an L-shaped seating area that connects at the northeast end to restrooms as well as the restaurant tap room behind the diner. Interior finishes are predominantly wood, porcelain enamel, and tile,

**(continued)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Diners of Massachusetts MPS  
Miss Florence Diner  
Northampton (Florence), Hampshire Co.,

Section number 7/8 Page 2/1  
MA

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executed in a color scheme of tan, orange, brown, and black. Seating includes nineteen steel counter stools with red accents, and booths with Formica tables along the south (façade) and east walls. Behind the marble counter, the back bar retains wood cabinetry, a wood-clad hood over the grill and food preparation areas, and porcelain enamel wall panels. Porcelain enamel panels also appear on the walls below the windows, and on the counter apron. Both the counter footrest and the floor are tiled in tan, black, and brown; the original floor has a checkerboard pattern with a border. Interior modifications from the late 1940s are most apparent near the diner's current main entrance. Here, slight changes in the pattern of the floor tiles and the appearance of the counter and counter stools reveal where the counter was extended and the easternmost bays of the current diner were added.

### Archaeological Description

No prehistoric sites are known on the property or in the general area (within one mile). In general, environmental characteristics of the property, especially its location on a level to moderately sloping plain over 1000 feet from wetland resources, are not locationally favorable for most types of prehistoric sites. Given the above information, a low potential exists for the recovery of prehistoric resources on the property. There is also a low potential for the recovery of historic archaeological resources on the Miss Florence Diner property. Archaeological evidence may exist from a wood-frame rear addition, no longer extant, that probably dated to the 1940's. Evidence from that addition would, however, have limited research value. No archaeological resources are known in the area related to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century residence attached to the rear of the diner.

### 8. Statement of Significance

Miss Florence Diner is a fine and comparatively late example of the traditional barrel-roofed diner produced by Worcester Lunch Car Company, the state's premier diner builder and a major force in the design and construction of Massachusetts diners prior to World War II. The Worcester company not only built the original 1941 diner, but executed the remodeling of the Miss Florence in the late 1940s. Consequently, the Miss Florence is significant as a well preserved illustration of the company's remodeling jobs after World War II. Locally, the Miss Florence also is significant for its associations with the Alexander family of Florence, who have owned and operated the diner for more than fifty years. Miss Florence Diner retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Miss Florence Diner meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places at the state and local levels.

Maurice Alexander and his wife, Pauline Florence (Matusiewicz) Alexander, opened the Miss Florence Diner in 1941. Originally, the diner occupied a Worcester lunch car located across Main Street from the current diner. In the same year, the first diner was sold and the business moved into a new Worcester diner at 99 Main Street. The Alexanders resided at the same address, in the house directly behind the diner. Maurice Alexander had Worcester Lunch Car Company remodel the diner in the late 1940s, resulting in the current L-shaped configuration. About 1959, he opened Alexander's Tap Room and Restaurant in the house, which was joined to the back of the Miss Florence Diner. The restaurant operates in the first floor of the former house and there is a banquet hall on the second floor. Maurice Alexander went on

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Diners of Massachusetts MPS  
Miss Florence Diner  
Northampton (Florence), Hampshire Co.,  
MA**

Section number 8 Page 2  
MA

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to own other restaurant enterprises in Northampton, among them Ed's Diner (no longer extant) on Pleasant Street. Today, brothers Tom Alexander and Maurice Alexander, Jr., sons of the original proprietors, operate the Miss Florence Diner and Alexander's Tap Room and Restaurant. [Alexander interview; Northampton directories]

In the 1940s the village of Florence hosted a range of retail and other business uses, among them two markets, meeting halls, a variety store, three banks, a furniture store, a service station, a sporting goods store, and a druggist. At the time the Miss Florence opened, the Northampton directory listed thirty-one restaurants in the city, three of which were located in Florence. Only two restaurants in the city at that time had "diner" in their names: Ed's Diner (no longer extant) on Pleasant Street, and Jim's Diner, 6 Strong Avenue (now Kathy's Diner, ca. 1930, MHC #2063).

The Miss Florence is one of about sixteen diners in Massachusetts built by the Worcester Lunch Car Company in the 1940s, and is particularly notable for its remodeling by the Worcester company later in the same decade. The company was known for its well built, handcrafted diner, and most frequently produced the traditional barrel-roof form with porcelain enamel exterior walls and a wood-trimmed interior. The late 1940s cross-barrel roof, rooftop parapet, and L-shaped seating area distinguish the Florence diner, however, from other barrel-roof Worcesters. After World War II, the barrel-roof diner design could not compete with the stainless steel diners then available from several out-of-state manufacturers. Besides their more modern appearance, the stainless steel diners had an advantage in that they could be manufactured and shipped in sections. Worcester Lunch Car Company sold its last new diner in 1957, and closed in 1961. [Gutman, 161, 243]

Miss Florence Diner is the only diner in Florence and one of four prefabricated diners identified in the city of Northampton. Worcester Lunch Car Company manufactured two of the diners in addition to the Miss Florence. Located in the downtown business district is Kathy's Diner, 6 Strong Avenue (ca. 1930, MHC #2063, formerly Mac's Diner, later Jim's Diner, the Miss Northampton, then the Red Lion Diner). Kathy's Diner, a rail car-inspired diner with a monitor roof, reportedly is the oldest functioning diner in the Connecticut River Valley. Also in the downtown business district is a former diner, considerably altered, at the rear of 11-21 State Street (ca. 1930, MHC #766). On State Routes 5 and 10 north of the downtown area is the Bluebonnet Diner, 324 King Street (1950, Worcester #825, MHC #271), a barrel-roofed diner with modified interior that is attached to a larger restaurant. The Bluebonnet is one of about one-half dozen Worcester diners in the state that were manufactured in the 1950s. [*Diner Finder* and Northampton historic properties inventory]

(end)

Miss Florence Diner  
Name of Property

Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** less than one-half acre

**UTM References** See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 18	691820	4689430	3.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.			4.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
			See continuation sheet		

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen Kelly Broomer, consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July, 1999

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts zip code 02125

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Maurice & Pauline Alexander

street & number 99 Main Street telephone 413-584-3137

city or town Florence state MA zip code 01062

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503. NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Diners of Massachusetts MPS  
Miss Florence Diner  
Northampton (Florence), Hampshire Co.,  
MA

Section number 9/10 Page 1  
MA

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- Interview with Tom Alexander, co-owner, Miss Florence Diner. January 20, 1999.
- Gutman, Richard J. S. *American Diner Then and Now*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993.
- MHC Inventory Forms for Miss Florence Diner (#111), Bluebonnet Diner (#271), former diner at 11-21 State Street (#766), and Miss Northampton/Kathy's Diner (#2063), Northampton (recorded by C. Dubie), May and June 1976.
- Diner Finder Deluxe: Massachusetts*. Watertown, MA: Coffee Cup Publications, 1991.
- Northampton-Easthampton Directory*. Springfield: The Price & Lee Company. 1930, 1935, 1940, 1943, 1947.
- Sanborn fire insurance maps for Northampton: 1902, 1910, 1915, 1930, 1930 corrected to 1947, and 1930 corrected to 1965.
- Burns, Ramona. "The Miss Florence Diner." unpublished manuscript prepared for local history class at Smith College (copy at Forbes Library, Northampton). December 7, 1995.
- Larmon, Marcy. "Miss Flo treats friends on birthday." *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (October 17, 1981), p. 1ff.
- "Cityside: Happy birthday, Miss Flo." *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (October 24, 1981), p.3.

(end)

**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is shown on the accompanying detail of the City of Northampton assessors' map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the entire parcel that has been historically associated with the diner.

(end)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Miss Florence Diner  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Diners of Massachusetts MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Hampshire

DATE RECEIVED: 8/09/99 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/24/99  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/09/99 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/23/99  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 99001123

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 9/22/99 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the  
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



MISS  
FLORENCE  
DINER

Alexander's  
RESTAURANT  
Cocktails

MISS FLORENCE DINER

PARK

BOOTH  
SERVICE

BOOTH  
SERVICE  
MISS

ALEXANDER'S  
RESTAURANT  
ALEXANDER'S

Miss Florence Diner  
99 Main Street, Florence  
Northampton, Hampshire County, Mass.

View NW  
1998

Photo: KK ~~B~~rooker

Neg: MHC

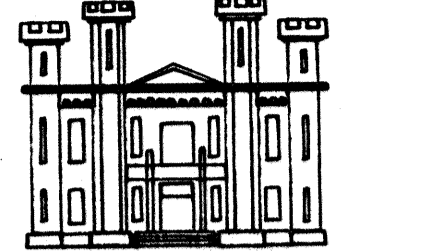


Miss Florence Diner  
99 main Street, Florence  
Northampton, Hampshire County, Mass.

Interior view W  
1998

Photo: KK Broomer

Neg: MHC



NORTHAMPTON G.I.S.  
OFFICE OF  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
ZONING 09/19/96

**DISTRICT TYPE**

- OVERLAYS:
- FFR--FARMS FORESTS & RIVERS
  - PV--PLANNED VILLAGE
  - RI--RURAL INCENTIVE
  - SMALL STREET PARKS
  - WP--WATERSHED PROTECTION
  - WSP--WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION
  - ZONING DISTRICT
- RR--RURAL RESIDENCE
  - SR--SUBURBAN RESIDENCE
  - URA--URBAN RESIDENCE A
  - URB--URBAN RESIDENCE B
  - URC--URBAN RESIDENCE C
  - CB--CENTRAL BUSINESS
  - GB--GENERAL BUSINESS
  - HB--HIGHWAY BUSINESS
  - NB--NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS
  - M--MEDICAL
  - GI--GENERAL INDUSTRY
  - SI--SPECIAL INDUSTRY
  - BP--BUSINESS PARK
  - SC--SPECIAL CONSERVANCY

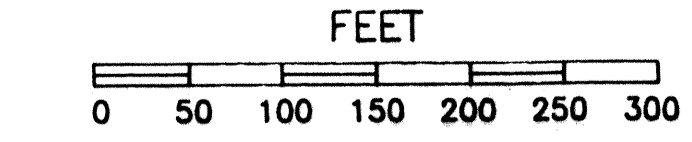


1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44
45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52
53	54	55	56

NOTE: THESE MAPS ARE NOT INTENDED FOR USE IN CONVEYANCING AND THEY CONTAIN ERRORS AND DISCREPANCIES. PROPERTY LINE DIMENSIONS THAT CONTAIN A DECIMAL POINT ARE FROM SURVEYS. OTHERS ARE ESTIMATES FROM DEEDS OR PLANS.

PROJECTION: MASS STATE PLANE 1927 (FT)  
PARCEL BOUNDARIES REVISION: 1-1-96

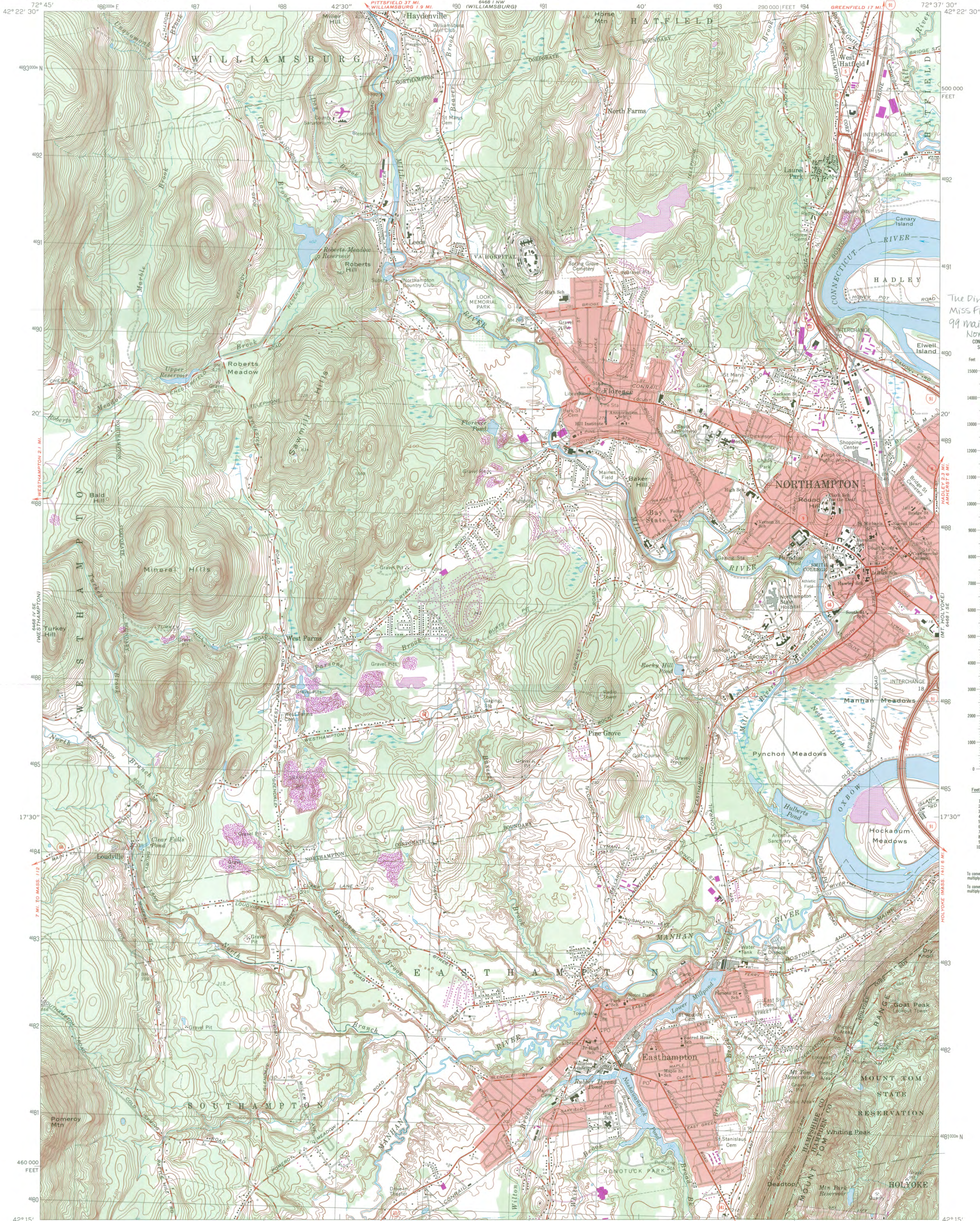
NO BOUNDARY CHANGES 1-1-97



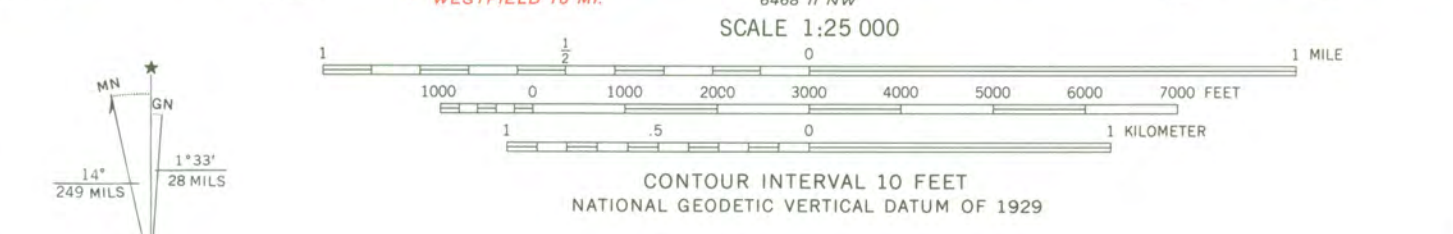
NORTHAMPTON ASSESSORS & ZONING MAP

SHEET NO. 17C

MISS FLORENCE DINER  
99 MAIN STREET, NORTHAMPTON (FLORENCE), MASS.  
THE DINERS OF MASSACHUSETTS MAPS

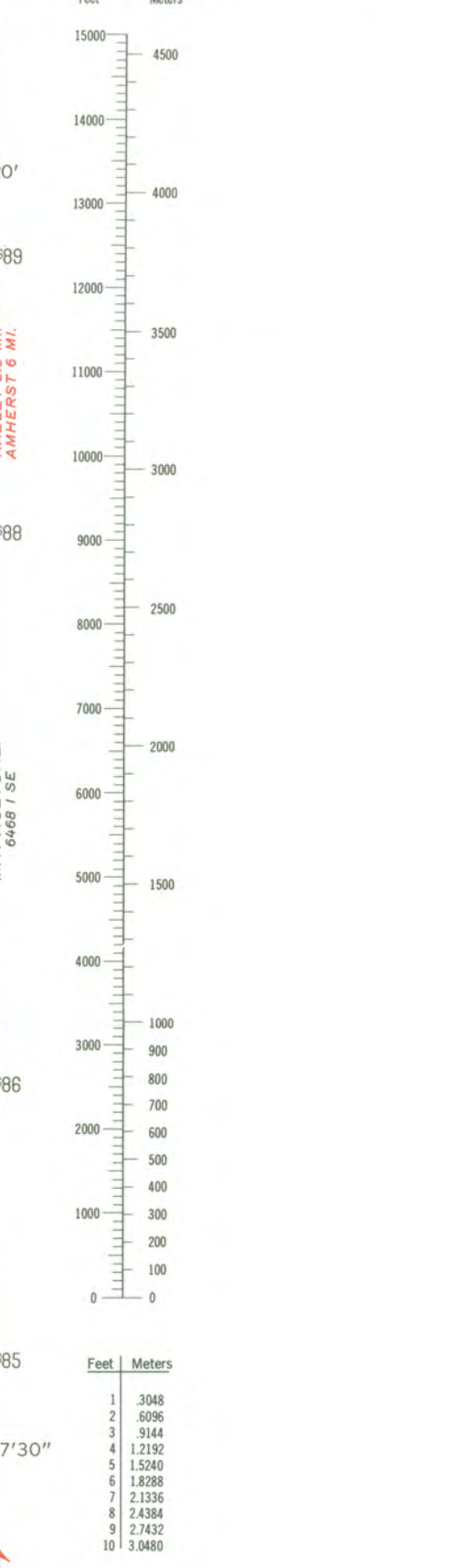


Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS, USCGS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
 Topography by planetable surveys 1935. Revised 1964  
 Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18  
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the  
 National or State reservations shown on this map  
 Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of  
 Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other  
 source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



QUADRANGLE LOCATION  
 EASTHAMPTON, MASS.  
 N4215-W7237.5/7.5  
 1964  
 PHOTOREVISED 1979  
 AMS 6468 I SW-SERIES V814

The Diners of Massachusetts MFPS  
 Miss Florence Diner  
 99 Main Street, (Florence)  
 Northampton  
 CONVERSION  
 SCALES 18 691820 468430



To convert feet to meters  
 multiply by .3048  
 To convert meters to feet  
 multiply by 3.2808