FORM B – BUILDING

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

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
21-8	Marion		MRN.XXX

Town/City: Marion

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

Address: 403 County Road

Historic Name: Capt. Ansel S. Gurney House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential / Commercial

Date of Construction: Ca. 1770

Source: Title & map research, visual analysis

Style/Form: Georgian / Federal

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
None

Major Alterations *(with dates):*
West ell (19th century)
Northwest addition (late 20th century)

Condition: Excellent

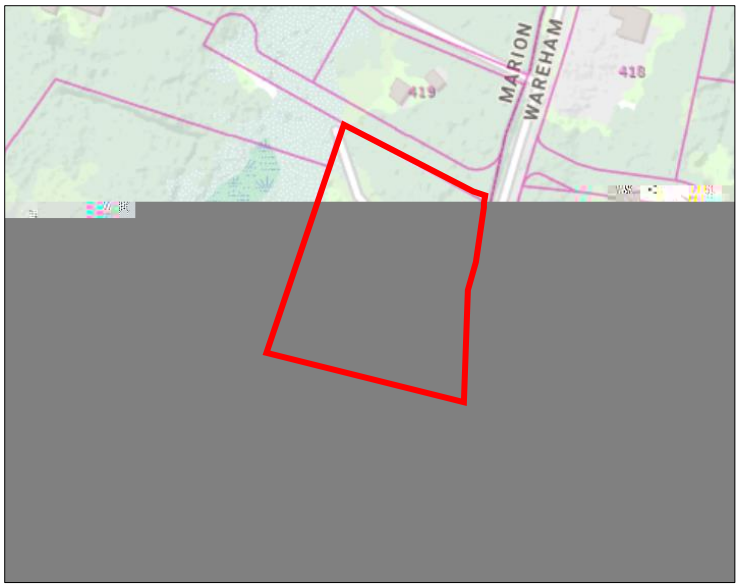
Moved: **no** ☒ **yes** ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 3.3

Setting: Rural residential area of low housing density and moderate to large-sized parcels. Populated with scattered farmsteads in the late 18th and early 19 centuries with later development occurring in the mid-19th through early 20th centuries. House types range from Federal through Queen Anne.

Photograph

Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

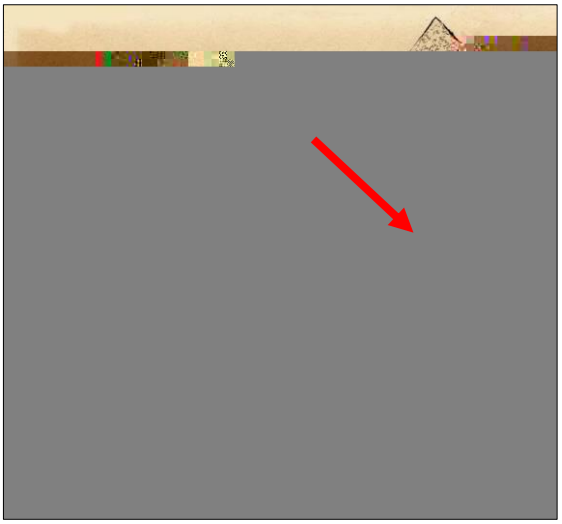
Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year)*: April 2023

ornamentation, and a general sense of lightness and restraint. The form and symmetry of this house are characteristic of both styles. The window placement at the cornice and elegant door surround are Georgian elements. Characteristic Federal-style features include the six-over-six window sash. The channeled corner pilasters were likely a later Greek Revival addition, and the bay window a late 19th century addition.

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.



1855 map.

The Village of Marion, the commercial and residential center of the town, is set on the western shore of Sippican Harbor which leads into Buzzards Bay. This property is located in the northwestern part of the town above the Old Landing section of the Village. County Road branches off Front Street (Rte. 105) south of the Marion-Wareham town line and runs north to cross the Sippican River and enter Wareham. This rural area was largely populated with scattered farmsteads during the 19th century and remains thinly settled.

The subject house is located on the Marion side of the Marion-Wareham town line. This house appears on the 1855 and 1879 maps with Ansel S. Gurney and Capt. A.S. Gurney shown as owner, respectively. On the 1903 map G.M. Delano is cited as the owner. The first recorded conveyance found for the property was its sale by Ruth S.G. Delano and George Mason Delano and Lovicy M. Delano to Fred A. Bassett.

Ansel Stutson Gurney (1822-1904) was born in Rochester, the son of Sullivan B. Gurney (1798-1880) and his wife Louise F. Gurney. The censuses of 1855, 1870, and 1880 report Sullivan Gurney living in Wareham and working as a farmer or carpenter. Ansel Gurney was married in 1850 to Lovicy Bolles Hathaway, the daughter of Rufus F. Hathaway (1805-1875) and Ruth L. Sampson (1809-1897). The honorific of captain on the 1879 map and on his headstone suggests his profession, which is confirmed by the 1860 census which notes his occupation as master mariner. Later censuses report his occupation as merchant. The 1867 Plymouth County Directory lists him as a coal/wood merchant. This house reflects a transition between the late Georgian and early Federal styles, suggesting a late 18th century date of construction. This makes it highly unlikely that the house was built by or for Gurney or for his father. Title research was not able to establish any owner(s) of this house and land prior to Ansel Gurney.

The census of 1900 shows Gurney, a widower, living with his daughter Ruth S. Gurney Delano (1856-1936) and her husband George Mason Delano (1853-1939) and the couple's daughter Lovicy M. Delano (1882-1981). George Delano's occupation was noted to be farmer in that census, but by 1910 he had become the town water commissioner. After graduating from Tabor Academy and Wellesley College, Gurney's granddaughter Lovicy Delano taught German at Passaic High School in Passaic, New Jersey. A 1947 newspaper article describes a European trip she took as a sabbatical in 1947, by which time she and her parents had sold the house and were living on Front Street.[1]

Ruth S.G. Delano, her husband and daughter sold the property in 1926. It was purchased by an interim owner who sold it two years later to Etta Allen. Born in Fall River, Etta T. Hambly (b. 1888) was the daughter of Charles Everett Hambly (1864-1934) and Eugenia Sherman (1867-1936). She married John E. Allen (1873-1946) in Dartmouth in 1908. Census records from 1930 and 1940 show John Allen living in Marion with his wife Etta and the couple's daughter, also named Etta, but at addresses on Point Road and Delano Road. His occupation was reported as gardener/caretaker at a private estate. The Allens may have used the property for rental income during their period of ownership. The house was purchased in 1937 as a summer residence by Olive and Ralph Gunschel of Montclair, New Jersey. It was later converted to a gift shop and cafe which the family operated as the Ansel S. Gurney House for 43 years. The property remains in the Gunschel family and the gift shop/café now operates as Strawberrry Moon: Ansel's Cafe.[2]

---

[1] "Marion Resident Describes Experiences in Visit Abroad," *Standard-Times*, New Bedford, MA, July 26, 1947.

[2] "Historic store to close after 43 years," Uncited reference to newspaper article, Sippican Historical Society.

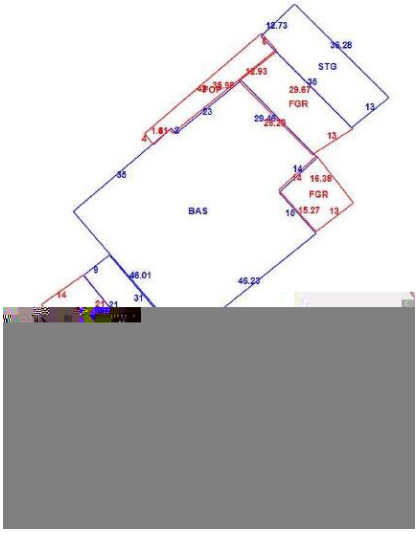
According to local lore, prior to Ansel Gurney's ownership this house was once operated as a tavern.[3,4] Its location on the main road between Marion and Plymouth (MA Route 58), its substantial size, and its apparent age make this suggestion reasonable. However, no documented evidence could be found to support that assertion.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
04-22-2000	18473-26	Ralph Booth Gunschel	Jon & Deborah Gunschel
12-12-1963	3078-346	Olive Vincent & Ralph Gunschel	Ralph Booth & Margaret Gunschel
06-01-1937	1728-359	Etta T. & John Allen	Olive Vincent Gunschel
04-21-1928	1558-37	Fred A. Bassett	Etta T. Allen
07-06-1926	1508-396	Ruth S.G. & George M. Delano & Lovicy M. Delano	Fred A. Bassett

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org: census records, vital records, city directories
Atlas of Plymouth County, Boston, MA: George H. Walker & Co.,1879
Atlas of Plymouth County, Boston, MA: L.J. Richards Co., 1903
Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts 1855 H.F. Walling
McMaster, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
Olive Hill Sommers, *Three Centuries of Marion Houses.* Marion, 1972.
Plymouth County Registry of Deeds
Rosbe, Judith. *Marion*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.
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.



Assessor's card plan

Ansel S. Gurney House, postcard dated 2010. Image courtesy of Sippican Historical Society.

[3] Ibid.
[4] "Ansel Gurney Tavern." Olive Hill Sommers, in *Three Centuries of Marion Houses.* Marion, 1972. p.14.