

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

23-9C	Marion		MRN.32
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Town/City: Marion

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

Address: 586 Front Street

Historic Name: Benjamin Dexter [Sr.] House / Locust Farm

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1770

Source: Title & map research, visual analysis

Style/Form: Georgian Cape

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard & shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Porch at east ell (after 1880)

Garage addition (20th century)

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acres: 0.78

Setting: Residential area in the northernmost portion of Marion extending west along Front Street (Rte. 105) towards the town of Rochester. Neighborhood of low to medium housing density and moderate to large-sized parcels. Cape form and Greek Revival houses predominate in the area, which was originally farmland and developed in the early- to mid-19th century.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

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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.

586 Front Street occupies a trapezoidal lot at the northwest corner of the intersection of Front Street and Briggs Terrace and faces east. The house is sited close to the street on a slight rise at the northeast corner of the parcel. The expansive yard is maintained in grass. A dense cluster of tall shrubs off the south elevation of the house shields the view of the adjacent property on Briggs Terrace. The yard is retained along Front Street at the façade (east elevation) by a low rubble stone wall. Rows of mature locust trees line the property along the eastern and southern lot lines. A gravel driveway enters the parcel off Front Street at the south elevation of the house and ends at the garage addition at its southwest corner. A tall segment of rubble stone wall with concrete coping is sited along the street south of the house and meets the driveway, where it ends in a rustic stone bollard with a stone cap and carved letters spelling "Locust Farm." A second segment of driveway enters the property from Briggs Terrace and runs along the eastern property line at Front Street.

This wood-frame houses comprises a one-and-one-half-story, five-bay-by-two-bay, side-gabled main block with a one-story east ell and a connected garage. The house was constructed ca. 1770 in the full Cape style and retains most of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a fieldstone foundation. The walls are clad in wood clapboards at the façade of the main block and wood shingles at all other elevations. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. A brick chimney rising from just below the roof ridge on the north roof slope is positioned between the second-most westerly bay and the entry. A second brick chimney rises from the south roof slope at the ell. The asymmetrical placement of the chimney and openings at the main block suggest that the house has been altered. It is possible that this dwelling was originally a half (three-bay) Cape that was later expanded. A 1906 photograph of the house (see below) shows a substantial centered wall dormer that is no longer extant.

Trim elements at the main block include narrow corner boards and a frieze board at the facade. The windows are double-hung six-over-six sash with molded architraves that touch the frieze board. Second story openings at the gable ends include paired single and mullied six-over-six sash with flat surrounds. The off-center entry at the façade contains a vertical plank wood door with cast iron strap hinges framed by a flat surround and a five-light transom that touches the cornice. The door fronts a shallow granite step and a stone pathway leading to a three-step concrete stair at the rubble stone retaining wall.

The one-story, three-bay-by-one-bay ell has a shallow gabled roof and a full-width open porch. It is set back one bay from the façade of the main block. Openings include an entry at the westernmost bay that fronts a brick walkway leading to a two-step concrete stair at the retaining wall. The windows are double-hung, six-over-six sash with flat surrounds. The rectangular wooden porch posts are connected by gently arched spandrels. A three-step rubble stone stair at the south end of the porch joins the gravel driveway.

The side-gabled, two-bay-by-two-bay, one-car garage is attached to the ell at its southeast corner. A paneled overhead garage door with a slightly arched surround occupies the east bay and there is a glass-and-panel door at the west bay. The windows are double-hung six-over-six sash with flat surrounds. A freestanding, hip-roofed, one-car, wood-shingled garage is sited midway between the house and the southeast corner of the parcel. It faces east and is accessed from an unpaved spur off the driveway entering from Briggs Terrace.

The Cape Cod house form, a one-story side-gabled house with a central chimney and steeply-pitched roof, emerged in southeastern New England ca. 1700 and saw continued use through the mid-19th century. The full Cape design was one of the later iterations of the house type. Defining characteristics of the Georgian-era Cape form illustrated in this house include the full Cape configuration (five bays with centered entry), side-gabled roof, corner boards, and door surround with a five-light transom. The six-over-six window sash configuration seen in this house is characteristic of the later Federal (1780-1820) and Greek

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Revival (1830-1850) periods, suggesting that the current windows replaced earlier sash with twelve-over-twelve, nine-over-nine, or nine-over-six sash.

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 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 northernmost portion of the Village a short distance from the Rochester town line, an area which runs along Front Street (Rte. 105) north of its intersection with Interstate 195. Throughout the first decades of the 19th century the area was settled largely with scattered subsistence farmsteads owned by seamen. As the importance of coastal shipping diminished with the arrival of the railroad in the mid-century, many of these mariners pursued full time farming and other occupations. The predominant style of the early dwelling houses was the Cape Cod form. As the century progressed farmers sold off parcels of land for the construction of homes for both full time and summer residents. The 20th century saw the subdivision of some of the old farms into small housing developments.

This house appears on the 1855 map with Rufus Dexter shown as owner. Mrs. L Church is noted as owner on the 1879 map and Seth L. Dexter/Locust Dairy Farm on the 1903 map. According to H. Edmund Tripp's history of Marion, *Reflections on a Town*, Benjamin Dexter [Sr.] (1724-1804) purchased the land in 1758 and constructed the house sometime before 1789.¹ The first recorded conveyance found for the property was an 1846 grant from Benjamin Dexter [Jr.] of one-half interest in his homestead and farm to his son Rufus Dexter "in consideration of....his labour for me in my farm since he was twenty-one years old." Benjamin Dexter [Jr.] (1778-1846), the son of Benjamin Dexter [Sr.] and Priscilla Benson (b.1735), was married in 1797 to Ruth Delano Clap (1779-1849). Like his father, Benjamin Dexter [Jr.] had a large family; his 11 children included his son Rufus Dexter (1821-1866).

As noted above, Rufus Dexter was given a 50% share of his father's farm in 1846. In 1850 he purchased his other siblings' interest in the farm, which he operated as noted in the 1850-1865 censuses. Rufus Dexter and his wife Elizabeth N. Lucretia Washburn (1828-1887) had one child who survived to adulthood, Seth L. Dexter (1845-1919). Rufus Dexter died in 1866 at age 45. In 1874 Elizabeth Dexter was remarried to Lemuel Church (1824-1882), who was also a farmer. Mrs. L. Church is noted as the property owner on the 1879 map. The 1900 and 1910 censuses reported her son Seth L. Dexter as operator of the farm, which was called Locust Dairy Farm because of the many locust trees on the property. In 1887 for a \$1.00 consideration Seth and his mother donated the southern portion of the parcel to the Methodist Episcopal Church for their use in constructing a parsonage (574 Front Street, Methodist Episcopal Parsonage, MRN.31). Seth Dexter was married to Elizabeth (Lizzie) Nancy Jenny (1858-1934) with whom he had one son, Robert William Dexter (1886-1949). After the death of his father Robert Dexter and his wife Lena Cheney (1886-1946) lived in the subject house with their three children. The censuses of 1920 and 1940 noted Robert Dexter's occupation as machinist. The property was sold in 1955 after five generations of Dexter family ownership. It was purchased by the current owner in 2016.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
11-18-2016	47773-140	Estate of Odessa C. Farnham	William P. & Dina J. Quinlan
07-23-2006	33076-226	John R. & Odessa C. Farnham	Odessa C. Farnham
05-11-1978	4449-130	Frances L. Fraser f/n/a Frances L. Allen	John R. & Odessa C. Farnham
04-23-1965	3198-198	John H.D. & Barbara K. Lawrence	Frances L. Allen
02-24-1958	2623-206	John A. & Katherine K. Marshall	John H.D. & Barbara K. Lawrence
04-20-1955	2412-82	Ernest W. Briggs	John A. & Katherine K. Marshall
01-28-1955	2399-260	Ellsworth J. Dexter	Ernest W. Briggs
07-02-1951	2155-96	Estate of Ellsworth J. Dexter	Ellsworth J. Dexter
01-13-1951	2136-21	Leonard C. Dexter et al.	Ellsworth J. Dexter
Plymouth	Probate # 27143	Estate of Seth L. Dexter	Ellsworth N. Dexter
07-20-1907	971-544	Children of Ruth and Benjamin Dexter	Rufus Dexter

¹ Tripp, H. Edmund. *Reflections on a Town, a Timeless Photographic and Anecdotal Record of Over Three Centuries of Marion, Massachusetts*. Sippican Historical Society: Marion, MA, 1991.

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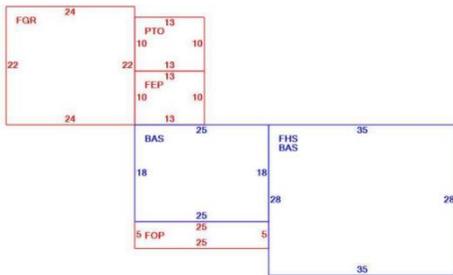
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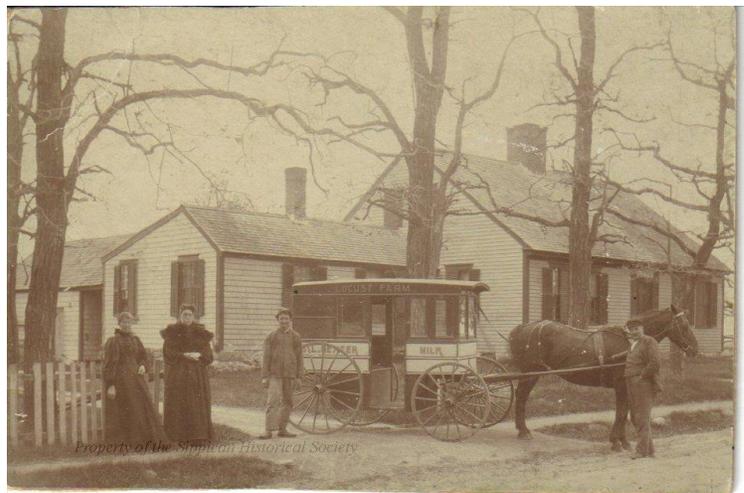
Plymouth	Probate	Estate of Ruth Delano Clapp Dexter	Children of Ruth and Benjamin Dexter
Plymouth	Probate	Estate of Benjamin Dexter	Ruth Delano Clapp Dexter
01-05-1846	220- 208	Benjamin Dexter	Rufus Dexter

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 Plymouth County Registry of Deeds
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Assessor's card plan



Seth Dexter Farm, ca. 1880. Photograph courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.



Seth Dexter Farm, ca. 1906. Note the windmill well pump. Photograph courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.