

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 -3

Marion

MRN.585

Town/City: Marion

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

Address: 680 Front Street

Historic Name: Hedwig S. Crane House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: 1928

Source: Title & map research

Style/Form: Eclectic

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Rubblestone

Wall/Trim: Rubble stone & wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Garage addition (2005)

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

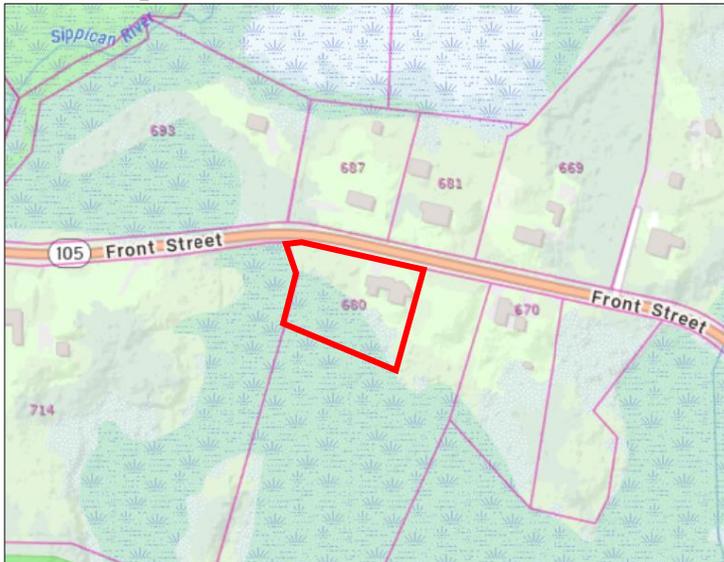
Acreage: 1.04

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*): April 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

680 Front Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.

680 Front Street occupies a polygonal parcel on the south side of Front Street that abuts the Bear Swamp to the southwest. The house is positioned in the northeast corner of the parcel and faces north. The area immediately surrounding the dwelling is maintained in lawn and the balance of the parcel is heavily vegetated. A low wall of random, dressed granite blocks borders the street at the northern property line and breaks for the exit and entrance of a gravel driveway. The driveway curves at the façade (north elevation) and encloses a planting island behind the stone wall. Three tall, conical shrubs serve as foundation plantings at the center block of the structure.

The house comprises a one-and-one-half-story, three-bay-by-three-bay main block with three dependencies. The dependencies include a shed-roofed screened porch at the east elevation, a one-story side-gabled block at the west elevation, and an attached one-and-one-half story front-gabled garage at the west end of the house. This distinctive dwelling was constructed in 1928 in a blend of the Colonial Revival, Shingle, and Craftsman styles and retains all of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a rubble stone foundation and has rubble stone walls. Projections and gable pediments at the main and west blocks, along with the garage, are clad in weathered wood shingles. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. A substantial rubble stone gable-wall chimney rises from grade at the east elevation of the main block.

The main block has a Cape form with a centered, enclosed portico. The pedimented portico is clad with wood shingles and contains a glass-and-panel door with a simple surround and a molded architrave. A small casement window at the east side wall is similarly framed. The entry is flanked by mulled double-hung, six-over-six windows with stone lintels and paneled wood blinds decorated with sawcut crescent moons. The door fronts a shallow stone step and a stone pathway leading to the driveway. There are matching single and paired windows at the side elevations of the main block. Two gently-arched eyebrow dormers occupy the north roof slope and a continuous shed dormer occupies the south roof slope.

The one-story, shed-roofed screened porch at the east elevation of the main block is three-bays-by-three bays and contains continuous screened openings. The low, wood-shingled knee wall under the openings has a gentle outward flare. A screened door is centered at the east wall, where the eave overhang has flat-sawn curved brackets. The one-story, side-gabled west block is set proud of the façade of the main block and contains a small, mulled six-over-six window at the north elevation. Its blinds match those of the openings at the main block.

The front-gabled, two-bay-by-two-bay, two-car garage is set back from the façade of the west block and is connected to it by a narrow hyphen. Several rows of wood shingles flare over the high rubble stone foundation. Shingles also flare over the single window situated at the gable peak. The windows contain double-hung, six-over-six sash with flat surrounds and molded architraves. The overhead garage doors are constructed of vertical planks and contain paired, six-light window openings. They are framed by flat surrounds with molded architraves.

380 Front Street displays an eclectic blend of the Colonial Revival, Shingle Style and Craftsman styles. The Colonial Revival period in America (1880–1955) saw a return to the architectural styles of the early years of the republic and combined classical architectural elements of the Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival periods. The Colonial Revival features of this house include the Cape form and symmetry of the main block, and the six-over-six windows with architraves. The eyebrow windows at the main block and the flared wood shingles at the porch and garage are hallmarks of the earlier Shingle Style (1880-1900). The rubble stone construction is a Craftsman style (1905-1930) feature.

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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 does not appear on any of the historic maps of Marion. The first recorded conveyance found for the property was the sale of a parcel of land in 1925 from George M. Delano to Hedwig S. Crane. No mention of buildings was made in the property description in the deed.

The land on which this house was built was purchased from the owner of the adjacent property to the north, George Mason Delano (1853-1939). He was married to Ruth Stetson Gurney (1856-1936) and the 1900 census reported that George Delano was a farmer living with his father-in-law, Ansel Gurney, at 403 County Road (ca. 1770, Capt. Ansel S. Gurney House, MRN.582). By 1910 George Delano had become the town water commissioner and was living in the house he had inherited from his father on Front Street.

Hedwig ["Hattie"] Schlie Crane (1879-1963) was born in New York City, the daughter of German immigrants. In 1902 she married Jacob [Jay] Warner Crane (1878-1918), a printer and bookkeeper who served as treasurer of the American Colortype Company in New York. He died during the flu epidemic of 1918, several years before his widow purchased the subject property and built this distinctive house. The current owner retains architectural plans for the dwelling, which was designed by an uncited New York architect. George Howard & Sons of Brockton was the general contractor and Bumpus & Reed of Rochester performed the masonry work. The stone was sourced for \$1.25 per ton from a stone wall owned by a Rochester farmer. The Marion section of the 1929 Wareham directory notes Hedwig Crane living on Front Street as a summer resident.

Hedwig and Jacob Crane had two children: Margaret (1907-1997), who was married to Eldredge Milton Hiller (1907-1995), and Wilbur W. Crane (1909-1992). Eldredge Hiller, her son-in-law, was Hedwig Crane's connection to Marion. He was the son of Charles Eldridge Hiller (1875-1953), who at the time Hedwig Crane built this house shared ownership with his siblings of a house nearby at 639 Front Street (ca. 1802, Capt. Stephen Hammond House, MRN.34). The neighboring house at 639 Front Street was also used as a summer residence.

In 1942 Hedwig Crane conveyed the property to her daughter Margaret and son-in-law Eldredge Hiller. Eldredge Hiller had a distinguished career in fund raising and public relations, gaining a national reputation. His obituary states that he retired in 1978 and moved to "the family home in North Marion."¹ After the death of Margaret Hiller in 1997 the house was devised to the couple's four daughters, Frances Healey, Betsey H. Tabraham of Berkeley, California, Margaret Forster of Marathon Shores, Florida, and Helen Hills of Middletown, Rhode Island. In 1998 the property was conveyed to Helen and her husband, Norman Hills. The property has remained in extended Crane family ownership for nearly a century.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
11-19-2012	42466-118	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills, Trustees
07-06-2010	38720-310	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills, Trustees	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills
02-28-2001	19533-201	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills, Trustees
08-17-1998	17331-122	Betsey H. Tabraham & Margaret Forster	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills

¹ Eldridge M. Hiller obituary in *The Sippican Sentinel*, May 5, 1995.

