

FORM B – BUILDING

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

14-83

Marion

N, Y

MRN.199

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

Town/City: MARION

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village -
Barden-Hiller (MRN.Y)

Photograph



Address: 145 Main Street

Historic Name: John and Polly Blankinship House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1820

Source: Oliver Hiller Somers

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite, concrete

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

None on record.

*Based on Property Card and observation.

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.15 acres

Setting: This small level parcel is located on the northeast corner of Front and Hiller Streets. The surrounding area includes a mix of historic residential, commercial, industrial and institutional resources in the heart of Marion Village. The house is set close to both streets. Landscaping in front of the house includes a low picket fence and foundation plantings. The rear (east) side of the property is given over to a large gravel parking area accessed from Hiller Street.

Locus Map



Aerial Imagery, 2021

Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (*month / year*): February 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

145 FRONT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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.

This house, built in ca. 1820, is an example of the Federal style, popular from ca. 1780-1820. This style represented the first architecture of the new republic. Like the Colonial-era Georgian style, the Federal style used classical forms but in a refined and simplified manner. The form of this house consists of a two-story, side-gable main block that is three bays wide, with a two-story rear ell. The form of the main block is sometimes referred to as a Half House – a truncated version of the two-story, five-bay Federal house form (see e.g. [25 Main Street](#) (MRN.235)). Another way to think of this form is a two-story version of a Half Cape vs. of Full Cape. The main block rests, like most 19th century houses in Marion Village, on a rough-cut granite foundation, and the rear ell rests on a concrete foundation – suggesting that the rear ell may have been altered or rebuilt. The 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows a two-story rear ell with the same offset siting as the current ell (Figures 1, 2). That map also shows the two-story rectangular bay on the right (south) side elevation. That bay is decorated with molded panels between the first and second story.

The elevations are clad in wood shingles and trimmed with corner pilasters (flat columns) that have fluted capitals. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (likely wood shingles originally), and has a projecting box cornice with dentil (teeth-like) molding across the top of the frieze boards. A large, brick chimney rises centered from the main roof ridge.

The off-centered front entrance has what appears to be a replacement door and replacement sidelights set in a surround with broad pilasters. If the larger opening is original, then there might have been sidelights originally. An open porch with turned posts spans part of the front elevation and all of the north elevation of the main block. This porch is also shown on the 1921 Sanborn map. Fenestration includes wood, 6/1 double-hung sash. The first-story windows are set in frames with molded lintels, and the second story windows on the front elevation about the frieze boards of the roof cornice. The original muntin pattern would more likely have been 6/6.

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.

While there had been some economic activity and residential development in Sippican Village prior to the Revolution, residential development accelerated in the early-1800s, as happened in many coastal Massachusetts towns, with boat building, whaling, coastal schooner trade, and the salt industry driving the economy. The construction of the First Congregational Meeting House in 1799, now Marion General Store ([140 Front Street](#), MRN.22), also helped make Sippican Village the center for spiritual and civic life.¹ Residential (and limited commercial) development was initially concentrated along the Front Street/Main Street axis, and the harbor became the site for maritime-related utilitarian buildings and wharfs. By the time the 1855 Walling Map was prepared, additional streets had been laid out, but Main Street from the harbor west to Pleasant Street was the most densely developed street in the village. Front Street at that time stopped after South Street (Figure 3).

The house has an Assessor date of 1825, but it may be slightly older. It is shown on a diagram prepared by Olive Hiller Somers called “Marion Main Street (Sippican Village) 1820,” and this house is shown with the name “J. Delano” (Figure 5). Unfortunately, there were multiple Delanos around that time in Marion with a “J” given name, so tracing title research back has not yet born fruit.

¹ Marion was first settled in 1679 as Sippican, a district of Rochester, and was not incorporated as a separate town until 1852. The name Sippican Village continues to be used interchangeably with Marion Village.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

145 FRONT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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The 1855 Walling Map of Marion shows the house with the name "J. Blankinship" (Figure 4). This likely refers to mariner John Blankinship (b. ca. 1785-1854). He had married Polly Handy in 1808. No records have been identified wherein Blankinship purchased or inherited this property. This house passed to their son, Jarvis Blankinship (b. 1813). He married Celia A. Sherman (1819-1876) in 1843 in Marion.² They had one son who died young. Jarvis Blankinship was a mariner who was lost at sea in 1864. Following Celia Sherman's death, her sister, Lucy Sherman Bruce, had a life interest in the house. In 1901 and 1906, Celia's heirs sold the house to brothers Robert and Isaac Hiller.³

According to MRN.Y, Robert B. (1863-1937) and Isaac E. (1866-1948) Hiller were born in Mattapoisett and had established their livery, lumber, coal, and later automobile business next door (147 Front Street, MRN.394). They also became involved in cranberry farming, holding 75 to 100 acres of bog in the town, and operated a dairy and later beef cattle farm in Rochester. This property remained in the Hiller family until 1985.⁴

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and atlases:

1855, Walling, H. F. *Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*, 1855.

1879, *Atlas of Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Geo. H Walker & Co, 1879.

1903, *Atlas of Surveys of Plymouth County*. Springfield, MA: L. J. Richards Co., 1903.

1921, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1921.

Ancestry.com – Vital records.

Dempsey and Clemson, MHC Area Form Y, Barden-Hiller, 2021.

Gordon, Edward. MHC Area Form N, Wharf Village, 1998.

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

Sippican Historical Society Collections.



Photo 2. View from Front Street, looking southeast.

² It is possible that the "J. Blankinship" on the 1855 map refers to Jarvis, not his father John.

³ PCRD, Book 817/ Page 473, Book 946/ Page 85.

⁴ PCRD, Book 5967/ Page 152.

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__Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant for Sippican Historical Society
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

This property is a contributing resource in the combined Areas of Wharf Village-Sippican Village (MRN.N) and Water Street (MRN.L), hereinafter referred to as Marion Village.*

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History. Marion Village contains the great majority of buildings connected to Marion’s historical maritime development beginning in the late-18th century. With the rise of saltmaking, shipyards, and whaling, maritime activity increased dramatically into the mid-19th century, as did residential development in Marion Village. In addition to the houses built by those in the maritime industry, Marion Village contains numerous buildings and structures associated with maritime industrial activity, including a chandlery, sail loft, cooperage, and wharves. As Marion Village’s prosperity became linked to Sippican Harbor, Marion Village also became the commercial, political and institutional center of the town.

Marion Village is also recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation. Starting in the mid-19th century, maritime activity declined significantly. The decline in maritime activity was eventually replaced by the rise in the 1870s of a summer colony as Marion Village emerged as an elite summer resort. This was facilitated by the arrival of train service in the 1854. Summer visitors, including artists and writers, were drawn Sippican Harbor’s beauty and tranquility. A large hotel, the Sippican Hotel, was located at the corner of South and Water Streets, and a few houses were converted to inns. While the hotel was town down in 1929, a large livery complex built by the Hiller Brothers at 147 Front Street (MRN.216) is extant. They provided horse-drawn vehicles to summer visitors registered at the Sippican Hotel, and ferried guests back and forth between the hotel and the train depot. In Marion Village, ownership (or occupancy through rental) of many houses began to shift from local maritime families to seasonal residents, including nationally-noteworthy politicians, businessmen, artists and writers. During this period, Marion Village also saw the addition of high style, architect-designed summer cottages and recreation resources.

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Marion Village is a remarkably intact historic town center, including a compact collection of historic dwellings, along with a few churches, schools, commercial buildings and recreation buildings. Marion Village contains a great concentration of Federal and Greek Revival houses; and examples of later Victorian-era styles, including high-style examples of summer house architecture along Sippican Harbor and large institutional buildings not found elsewhere in Marion.

The great majority of resources in Marion Village retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association.

*The potential Marion Village district boundaries include surveyed areas within the boundary of MRN.N completed in 2020-2022 for Barden-Hiller (MRN.Y), Cottage Street (MRN.Z), Main Street (MRN.AA), South Street (MRN.AB), Upper Pleasant Street (MRN.AC), and Upper Main Street (MRN.AH).