

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

14 98

Marion

N,  
AA

MRN.224

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

## Photograph



## Locus Map



Aerial Imagery, 2021

**Recorded by:** Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

**Organization:** Sippican Historical Society

**Date (month / year):** February 2023

**Town/City:** MARION

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village -  
Main Street (MRN.AA)

**Address:** 9 Main Street

**Historic Name:** Rowland and Elizabeth Luce House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1780

**Source:** Deed research, vital records

**Style/Form:** Federal/ Full Cape

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite, fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Small two-story cottage (former shed - now cottage, 1900  
Assessor date, see Photo 5)

**Major Alterations (with dates)\*:**

Additions to right (east) and rear elevations (dates  
unknown)

\*Based on Property Card and/or observation

**Condition:** Good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.12 acres

**Setting:** The surrounding area includes historic houses sited relatively close to the street and to each other along Main Street. Most houses on the north side of Main Street are set closer to the street than those on the south side, including this one. The narrow front yard of this property is landscaped with a wood picket fence and foundation plantings with granite curb stones. This is one of the houses on the north side of Main Street whose parcel backs up to Hiller Street. A high granite wall borders Hiller Street, and a tall board fence obscures the back yard.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

9 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA

MRN.224

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 is an example of a Federal-style Full Cape. The Federal style, popular from ca. 1780-1820, represented the first architecture of the new republic. Like the Colonial-era Georgian style, it used classical forms but in a refined and simplified manner. This is also an example of a Full Cape that has evolved over time, similar to 6 Main Street (MRN.223), 31 Main Street (MRN.238), and 44 Main Street (MRN.246). Typically, the front elevation of a Full Cape is fully symmetrical, with two windows evenly arrayed on either side of a centered door. In this case, however, the two sets of windows are not symmetrical with each other. If you look carefully, you can see that the two windows to the left are farther away from the front door than those on the right. This is often an indication that the house began as a Half Cape (three bays wide) that was later expanded into the Full Cape form (five bays wide).

The second evolution of this building was the addition of the unusual dormer system on both the front and rear elevations (see Photo 5). An undated early view shows the house before the dormers were added (Photo 3). The dormer additions were likely added in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century - a time when homes in the village were expanded and adapted for seasonal use and possible rental potential. The use of paired hexagonal dormer windows with connecting shed dormer is unusual, but was frequently employed in Marion Village. The final evolution of this house is the series of one-story additions extending from the right (east) and rear elevations. These were added sometime after 1933 - the house is shown on the 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map with just small porches on either side of the small side ell (Figure 3).

This house rests, like most early houses in the village, on a combination rough-cut granite/fieldstone foundation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (likely wood shingles originally), and what looks like a rebuilt brick chimney rises slightly off-centered on the main roof ridge. The front entrance has a modest example of a Federal-period surround, with broad frames (not pilasters) and simple transom lights above the door. The door and the windows on the front elevation about the roof cornice, an indication of earlier Capes with lower ceiling heights. Fenestration includes mostly modern, replacement 6/6 windows on the first story, and wood 6/6 and 3/3 windows in the dormers (which may be original). There is also one original or early wood 6/6 window on the left side elevation. The windows on the first story are in projecting frames. These frames may have been an original detail, but these casings appear to be newer, possibly rebuilt when the windows were replaced. Projecting sills are an indication of early plank construction.

The property includes a small, two-story cottage that backs up to Hiller Street (Photo 5). This may have begun as the one-story outbuilding shown on the 1908 Sanborn Insurance Map (Figure 2), that was then shown as a 1½-story outbuilding on the 1933 Sanborn Map (Figure 3). It is unknown when it was expanded/converted into a cottage.

## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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,

<sup>1</sup> 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

9 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA	MRN.224
-------	---------

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 (Figure 4).

This house was built by Maj. Rowland Luce (1756-1835). He married Elizabeth Clark (1762-1833) in Marion in 1778, and they went on to have ten children. In 1779, Elizabeth's mother, Thankful Clark (1734-1812), sold Rowland Luce over 35 acres of land for 2,000 pounds, including 5 acres in Marion Village, likely including this property.<sup>2</sup> Rowland and Elizabeth Luce and their descendants would go on to have a great impact on the development of the village.

Perhaps Rowland Luce built this house shortly after they bought the five acres. The early history of this house is rather dramatic. Rowland was a trader, eventually going into business with his son, Samuel W. Luce (1784-1821), under the name Rowland Luce & Son. They were sued by New York merchant Jonathan Little, and lost the case. Rowland and Samuel Luce were sentenced to the Gaol (jail) in Plymouth until they satisfied the settlement of \$446.89 in damages, and \$27.05 in court costs. In 1811, as part of that settlement, they were forced to sell this house, where (as stated in the deed) Rowland Luce lived, to Jonathan Little. It was valued at \$375 by an appraiser.<sup>3</sup> Rowland Luce appeared to have recovered quickly. By ca. 1815, he had built the imposing two-story, albeit two-family, Federal-style house at 25 Main Street (MRN.235).

This property then changed hands a few times, and in 1817, John Read sold it to Jonathan Handy, Jr.<sup>4</sup> Handy (ca. 1790-1856) married Polly Delano (1798-1864) in 1815, so once again perhaps this modest house was occupied by a couple shortly after their marriage. Jonathan Handy was listed as a carpenter or ship carpenter in Census records. The property is shown with the name "J. Handy" on the 1855 Walling Map of Marion (Figure 5). The property stayed in the extended Handy family until the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. It was first inherited by their daughter Eunice Wing (1816-1878). Upon her death, it passed to her daughter, Mary Bowditch (1836-1902). When she died, it passed to her husband, Benjamin Bowditch (1830-1908).

According to the Sippican Historical Society's Walking Tour of Wharf Village:

Benjamin Bowditch operated a boarding house here during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Bowditch was probably responsible for the dormer additions that would provide more rentable space for his boarders. During the 1890s, famous war correspondent Richard Harding Davis rented two rooms on the west side of the house. ...Davis covered the Boer War in South Africa, as well as early twentieth century hostilities in the Balkans. The author of many short stories and novels, he was a playwright whose successful Broadway plays starred John and Ethel Barrymore, John Drew, Evelyn Nesbitt and Maude Adams; most of these performers followed Davis to Marion.

Bowditch remarried after Mary's death, and when he died, the house passed to his second wife, Ruth (Blankinship). Ruth sold the house in 1912 to Katherine Hamlin of Marion.<sup>5</sup> In 1915, Hamlin sold it to Elizabeth DeKay Richardson of Providence.<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth DeKay (de Kay) married James Richardson of Providence in 1899. The *Boston Globe* ran a florid account of their wedding in its October 27 edition: "Since Miss de Kay is one of the belles of Marion's summer settlement and of a leading New York family, it was a significant occasion to Marion summerites."

Elizabeth Richardson may have purchased this house for guests and/or rentals. She also owned 0 Main Street (MRN.217) until 1920. There are stories that Franklin Delano Roosevelt stayed here or next door at 7 Main Street (since demolished) when being treated by summer resident Dr. William McDonald. McDonald was an expert in polio and had developed treatments that included swimming in Sippican Harbor off his summer house at 0 Main Street (that he had purchased from Elizabeth Richardson). An undated photo in the Sippican Historical Society collection is captioned as follows: "This house was the residence of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Richard Harding and Admiral Byrd" (Photo 4).

This property stayed in the Hamlin family until 1974, when Katharine B. (Hamlin) Whittier of Beverly, sold the house to Michael and Margherita Baldwin, then of NY, NY, now of Marion.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 60/ Page 80.

<sup>3</sup> PCRD, Book 115/ Page 60.

<sup>4</sup> PCRD, Book 130/ Page 211.

<sup>5</sup> PCRD, Book 1116/ Page 492.

<sup>6</sup> PCRD, Book 1129/ Page 470.

<sup>7</sup> PCRD, Book 3963/ Page 329.



**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MARION

9 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA MRN.224



Photo 5. View from Hiller Street, looking WSW, cottage at right.

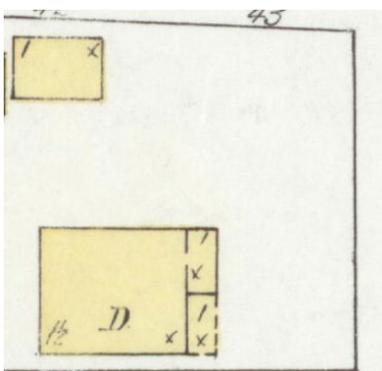


Figure 2. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Map.

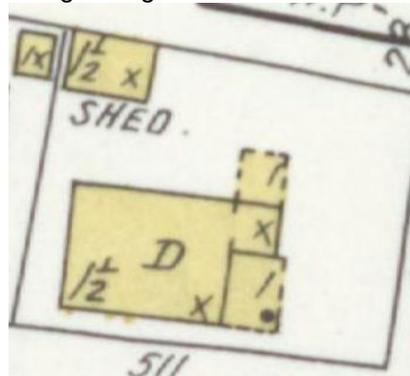


Figure 3. Detail of 1933 Sanborn Map.



Figure 4. 1855 Walling Map of Marion, Sippican Village Inset Map.



Figure 5. Detail of 1855 Walling Map (arrow added).

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

9 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA	MRN.224
-------	---------

## 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-18<sup>th</sup> century. With the rise of saltmaking, shipyards, and whaling, maritime activity increased dramatically into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> 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-19<sup>th</sup> 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).