

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

14 92 1-4

Marion

N,  
AA

MRN.235

**Town/City:** MARION

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 25 Main Street

**Historic Name:** Rowland Luce (and possibly) Joseph  
Allen House

**Uses:** Present: Multi-unit Dwelling

Original: Two-family Dwelling House

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1815

**Source:** Deed research

**Style/Form:** Federal

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite, fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Garden sheds

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

Rear and side additions (2004, possibly)

\*Based on Property Card and/or observation

**Condition:** Good

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

**Acreage:** 1.0 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 front yard of this property is landscaped with lawn and foundation plantings. This is one of the houses on the north side of Main Street that backs up to Hiller Street. The rear of this parcel along Hiller Street is largely obscured by mature plantings.

## 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

25 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA

MRN.235

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 one of four examples on this block of Main Street of a Federal-style, 2½-story, side-gable house with a symmetrical five-bay front elevation. 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. As shown on the 1855 Walling Map of Marion (Figure 3) and the 1933 Sanborn Insurance Map (Figure 4), this house by 1855 had a complicated series of rear ells that remained in place into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It appears that these rear ells have since been replaced or expanded since that time.

The house rests, like most 19<sup>th</sup> century houses in the village, on a rough-cut granite and fieldstone foundation (but the west side ell rests on a concrete foundation). The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (wood shingles originally), and has a molded box cornice. This house, unlike the other three examples on Main Street, is "double-pile" meaning it was built with mirror image interiors, and was owned and lived in by two families for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most evident exterior feature which shows this are the two evenly arrayed chimneys.

The front entrance may be a later replacement. It consists of a surround with full sidelights, paneled pilasters (flat columns), and a denticulated lintel with paired brackets. Fenestration consists primarily of modern replacement 8/8 windows (which would not have been the original muntin pattern, more likely 6/6 or smaller). The window surrounds on the second story overlay the roof cornice frieze boards.

## 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, 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 2).

This house has an Assessor date of 1815, but according to the 1998 Area form for Sippican Village (MRN.N), this house was built in ca. 1800 for Major Rowland Luce. The Assessor date may be more accurate, and the house may have been built by Luce and Joseph Allen as a two-family house. Rowland Luce had built the modest Cape at 9 Main Street (MRN.224) in ca. 1779. He was forced to sell that house in 1811 to settle a legal dispute, and the deed for that sale stated that Rowland Luce lived there. If the ca. 1815 date is accurate, Luce was able to bounce back fairly quickly from his legal setback. What is known for sure, based on a study map prepared by Olive Hiller Somers, is that this house was in place by 1820.

Tisbury-born Maj. Rowland Luce (1756-1835) 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,

<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.

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25 MAIN STREET

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including 5 acres in Marion Village.<sup>2</sup> Rowland and Elizabeth Luce and their descendants would go on to have a great impact on the development of the village.

As shown on a the aforementioned study map prepared by Olive Hiller Somers to identify ownership along Main Street as of 1820, "R. Luce" and "Jos. Allen" are shown as owning this house jointly, and Rowland Luce owned extensive amounts of land in the area (Figure 1). The pattern of the house being owned by two families continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The 1855 Walling Map of Marion shows this house with the names "M. & B. Luce & J. Allen" (Figure 3). One half of the house was occupied by children of Rowland and Elizabeth Luce – Mary Luce, who never married, lived here until her death in 1886. That half of the house remained in the Luce family until 1905, when Anne E. Luce of Marion sold it to brothers Robert and Isaac Hiller.<sup>3</sup>

The other name shown on the 1855 map, "J. Allen," refers to Capt. Joseph Allen (1781-1860).<sup>4</sup> The deed wherein he bought his share of the property has not been identified. In 1877, his heirs sold his share to John A. Kelley of Marion.<sup>5</sup> Kelley was living in Brooklyn, NY in 1884, when he sold his half of the house to William W. Handy of Marion.<sup>6</sup>

In 1915, Handy's heirs sold their half to brothers Robert and Isaac Hiller, thereby uniting the Hillers' interests in this property.<sup>7</sup> Robert B. (1863-1937) and Isaac E. (1866-1948) Hiller were born in Mattapoisett and established their livery, lumber, and coal business nearby (see 147 Front Street, MRN.394). As stated in MRN.Y, among the Hiller brothers many ventures, they provided horse drawn vehicles to summer visitors registered at the Sippican Hotel, and ferried the guests back and forth between the hotel and the depot. The Hillers were also dealers in coal, wood, lumber, nails and paints. Their business was continued by several generations of the family, shifting their transportation services from horses to automobiles and operating a Chrysler-Plymouth dealership for several decades.

This property became a rental property that was later known as Hiller Apartments. The property remained in the Hiller family until 1999.

## 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.

1908, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1908.

1933, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1933.

Ancestry.com – Vital records.

Dempsey, Claire. MHC Area Form AA, Main Street, 2021.

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

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

Sippican Historical Society Collections.

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

<sup>3</sup> PCRD, Book 910/ Page 413.

<sup>4</sup> The 1998 Area Form, MRN.N, described Allen as an architect – which does not appear to be accurate.

<sup>5</sup> PCRD, Book 433/ Page 191.

<sup>6</sup> PCRD, Book 515/ Page 168.

<sup>7</sup> PCRD, Book 1215/ Page 553 (this is a 1915 deed recorded to correct a 1900 deed).



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Photo 3. View from Hiller Street, looking southeast.



Figure 2. 1855 Walling Map of Marion, Sippican Village Inset Map.



Figure 3. Detail of 1855 Walling Map.

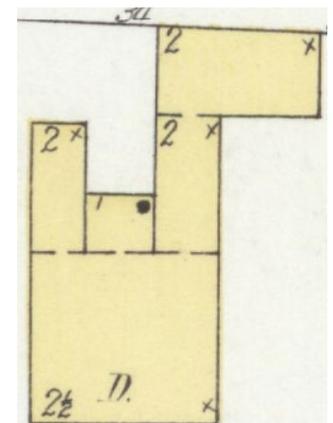


Figure 4. Detail of 1933 Sanborn Map.

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).