

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16 158

Marion

N,
AA

MRN.236

Town/City: MARION

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

Photograph



Address: 26 Main Street

Historic Name: Charles O. Luce - Henry and Tamson
Kelley House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1838

Source: Deed research

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

One-story component rebuilt (ca. 1996)

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.10 acres

Setting: The surrounding area includes historic houses sited relatively close to the street and to each other, and three churches along Front Street. This house fronts on and is set close to Main Street, and also close to Front Street. The narrow front yard and Front Street side yard are landscaped with foundation plantings secured by a low brick retaining wall.

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

26 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA

MRN.236

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 a late example of Federal-style architecture that is unique in Marion Village. There are four other Federal-style, 2½-story houses on this block of Main Street, but they are all five bays wide with centered entrance, whereas this house is four bays wide. If you look at the two houses down the street, 22 Main Street (MRN.234) and 25 Main Street (MRN.235), the front elevation of this house is very similar in design, but is simply missing one bay. It is analogous to a five-bay Full Cape vs. a four-bay Three-quarter Cape. This house is unusual in another way. It has, essentially, a square footprint, with broad elevations fronting on both Main and Front Streets, and the roof has a hybrid form – part gable roof and part hip roof. 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.

The house rests, like most 19th century houses in the village, on a raised, rough-cut granite 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. There are two interior and one exterior brick chimneys. The most character-defining feature of the Federal style for this house, in addition to the overall form, is the front entrance with its elegant door surround. The paneled wood door is set in a surround with pilasters (flat columns), a three-light transom, and a broad molded lintel above. Fenestration consists primarily of wood 6/6 double windows set in projecting frames with flared lintels. These lintels abut the roof entablature on the second story. There is also a large, wood multi-paned bay window on the Front Street elevation that was likely a Colonial Revival-inspired addition. That bay window is not shown on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, but was in place on the 1933 Sanborn Map (Figures 2, 3).

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, including this house (Figure 4).

According to the 1998 Area Form for Sippican Village (MRN.N), this house was built in the 1820s for Henry and Tamson Kelley. This is not accurate. For one thing, Henry H. Kelley (1812-1876) did not marry Tamson Luce (1808-1886) until 1836. A diagram of ownership as of 1820 prepared by Olive Hiller Somers shows that land on the south side of Main Street in this location and farther west was owned by Tamson's father, Major Rowland Luce (Figure 6). Indeed, as of 1820, Rowland Luce's own house was across the street, 25 Main Street, MRN.235, where 12 year old Tamsen (Luce) was likely living. For another, this house was more likely built by Charles O. Luce, a grandson of Rowland and Elizabeth Luce.

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, including 5

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.

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

In 1838, Charles O. Luce, Housewright, took out two mortgages on this property, with reference to a dwelling, with other members of the Luce family, possibly to finance the building of the house that year.³ In a strangely worded deed in 1839, Charles Luce sold, seemingly, half of the house to Henry Kelley.⁴ Perhaps it was Charles Luce's intention to build this house for them – Tamson (Luce) Kelley was Charles' aunt.

The house is shown on the 1855 Walling Map with the name "H. H. Kelley" (Figure 5), perhaps an indication that the Kelleys now owned this house outright. Henry was listed as a caulker (i.e. ship caulker) in census records. The house passed to their eldest child, Lucius C. Kelley (1840-1924). His career path was indicative of the changing economy of Marion. He began, like his father, as a ship caulker, but starting in the 1900 and 1910 US Census, he was listed as a day laborer, an indication of how maritime-related work had been greatly reduced. By 1920, he was listed as a laborer for a private estate – indicating how the summer colony had begun employing many local residents. According to the Sippican Village Area Form (MRN.N), Lucius Kelley named the house "Jennie Bell's" after his daughter, presumably referring to Jane Kelley (1864-1946), who had married Charles Bell Blankinship. By 1926, the dwelling was known as Lena Kelley's boarding house. In 1940, the house was sold out of the Kelley family.⁵

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.

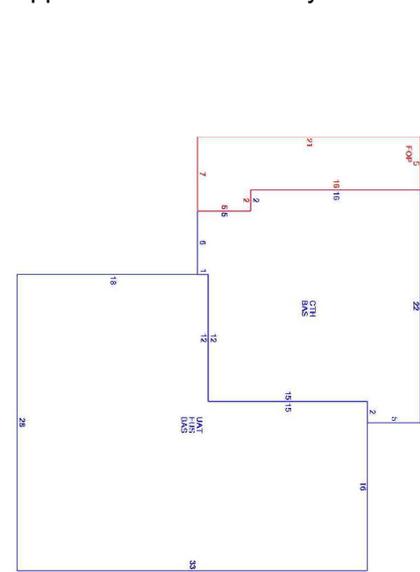


Figure 1. Marion Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View from Front Street, looking northeast.

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

³ PCR, Book 192/ Page 68, Book 196/ Page 108.

⁴ PCR, Book 198/ Page 133.

⁵ PCR, Book 1796/ Page 117.

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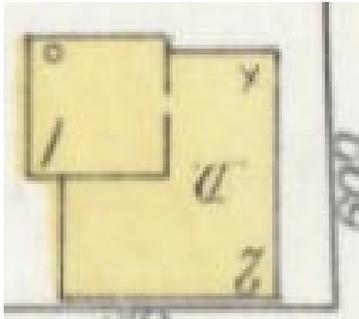


Figure 2. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Map.

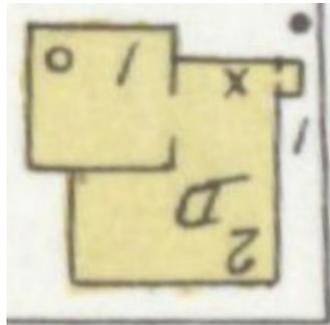


Figure 3. Detail of 1933 Sanborn Map.



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

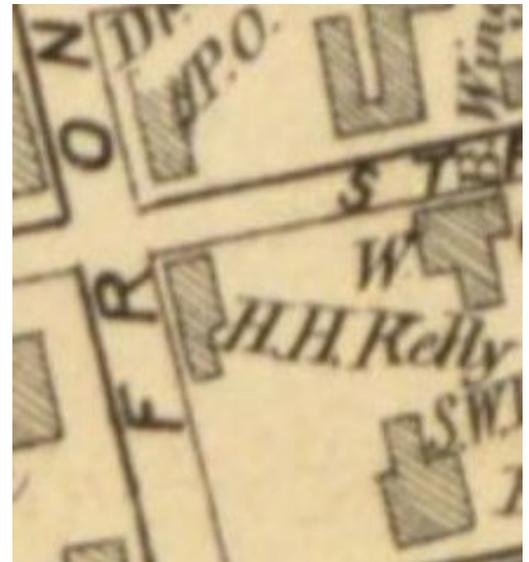


Figure 5. Detail of 1855 Walling Map of Marion (arrow added).

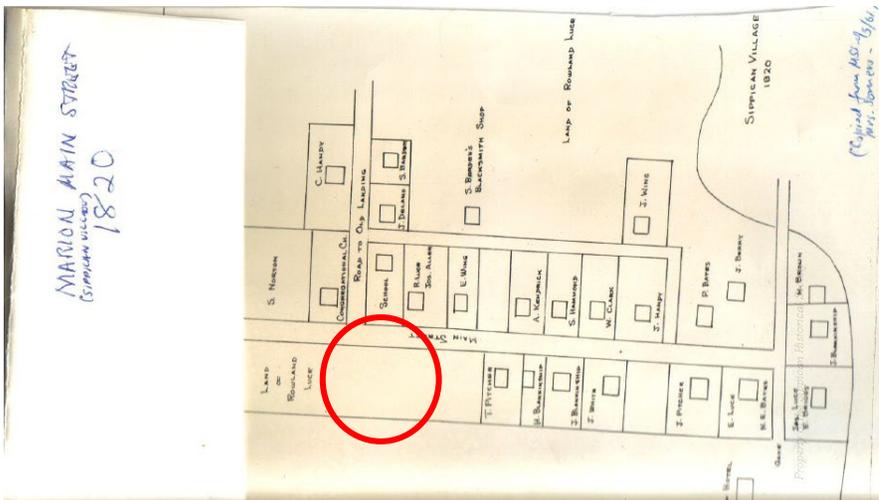


Figure 6. "Marion Main Street (Sippican Village) 1820" diagram, Olive Hiller Somers (circle added) (SHS 2006.010.001).

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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).