

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 69	Marion	N, AA	MRN.238
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Town/City: MARION

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

Photograph



Address: 31 Main Street

Historic Name: Andrew M. and Cynthia Allen House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House
Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1821

Source: Title records

Style/Form: Federal/ Full Cape

Architect/Builder: Unknown/ Andrew M. Allen

Exterior Material:
Foundation: Granite
Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
One-bay garage (mid-20th c.)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):*
Enclosed porch on left side (post-1933)

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.23 acres

Setting: The surrounding area includes historic houses sited relatively close to the street and to each other along Main Street, along with a few institutional and commercial resources. Most notably, this property abuts the former First Congregational Meeting House to the east. The front yard of this property is minimally landscaped with a picket fence, lawn and foundation plantings. A small asphalt driveway leads to a garage east of the house.

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

31 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

N, AA	MRN.238
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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 is an example of a Full Cape that has evolved over time, similar to 6 Main Street (MRN.223), 9 Main Street (MRN.224), 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).

This house, like most 19th century Marion Village houses, rests on a 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 a brick chimney rises slightly off-centered on the roof ridge in alignment with the front door (another indication that the house began as a Half 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. The elegant front entrance enframingent is one of the features characteristic of the Federal style. Here, the paneled wood door is set in a surround with unusual narrow pilasters (flat columns). Above the door are four transom lights, and the door lintel rises up into the roof entablature, an indication of a low wall plate. Fenestration includes wood 12/12 windows set in projecting frames with splayed lintels (the same design found across the street). Projecting window frames are a sign of early plank construction.

The small, one-story ell on the right side was in place by the time the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas was prepared (Figure 5), and the larger enclosed porch on the left side was likely added in the later-20th century.

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 3).

According to the Sippican Village Area Form (MRN.N), this house was built in 1821 by Andrew M. Allen. A study map of ownership as of 1820 prepared by Olive Hiller Somers shows that this side of Main Street, west of the First Congregational Meeting House (140 Front Street, MRN.22), was land owned by "S. Norton," referring to Shubel (Shubael) Norton (Figure 2). However, this land was originally owned by Tisbury-born 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.² Rowland and Elizabeth Luce and their descendants would go on to have a great impact on the development of the village.

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.

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

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-------	---------

Starting in 1819, there was a rapid series of transactions, involving Shubel Norton, culminating in Rowland Luce's son, Steven Luce, selling "Lots 14 & 15" to Andrew M. Allen in June, 1821.³ The house appears on the 1855 Walling Map of Marion with the name "A. M. Allen" (Figure 4).

Andrew M. Allen (1795-1874) married Cynthia Dexter (1799-1892) in Marion in 1823. They went on to have five daughters. Andrew Allen was described as a Housewright in the 1821 deed, and starting with the 1850 US Census, when they began listing employment, Andrew Allen was listed as a construction carpenter or carpenter. This likely means he had a hand at building this house. Cynthia Allen stayed in this house following her husband's death. As of the 1880 US Census, she was living here with three of her five daughters, along with her daughter Eliza D. Briggs' four children. Eliza's husband, mariner Oliver E. Briggs, had been lost at sea in 1872. The house passed to Eliza, and following her death in 1919, her children sold the house in 1920 to Mary E. Kimball of Boston.⁴

In 1929, Mary Kimball was living in Marion when she sold this house to Charles B. Hathaway and Fred L. Cobb as joint tenants. Both Charles (1880-1962) and Fred (1885-1978) lived elsewhere in Marion with their wives in the 1930 and 1940 Census. They were owners for a time of the Marion General Store at 140 Front Street. Perhaps they bought this property to house employees. They also purchased 32 Main Street (MRN.239) in 1946. They sold both houses in 1948, this one to John G. and Dell G. Carlson of Marion.⁵ By 1955, the Carlsons had moved to Canal Zone in the Republic of Panama when they sold this house to Elizabeth Arnzen of Westport, MA.⁶ The property has changed hands multiple times since then.

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.

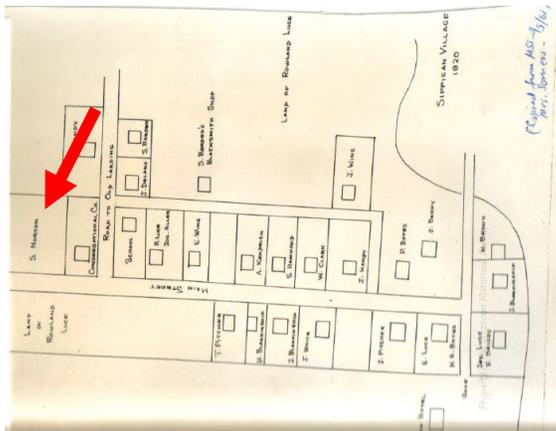


Figure 2. "Marion Main Street (Sippican Village) 1820 diagram, prepared by Olive Hiller Somers (arrow added) (Source: SHS 2006.010.001).

³ PCRD, Book 147/ Page 109. Plan referenced has not been located.

⁴ PCRD, Book 1343/ Page 432.

⁵ PCRD, Cert. of Title 12631.

⁶ PCRD, Cert. of Title 30907.

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Photo 2. View from Main Street, looking northwest.

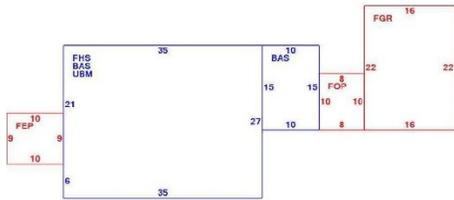


Figure 1. Marion Assessor Sketch.

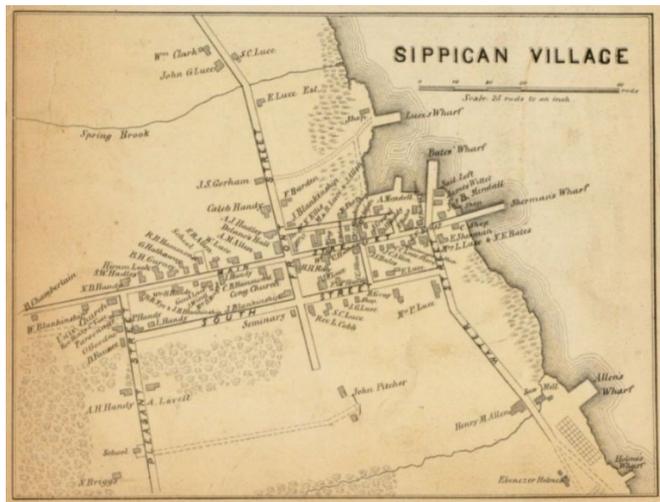


Figure 3. 1855 Walling Map of Marion, Sippican Village Inset Map.

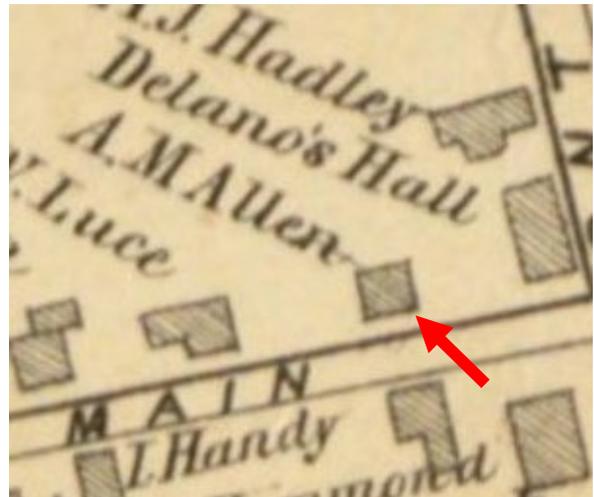


Figure 4. Detail of 1855 Inset Map (arrow added).



Figure 5. Detail of 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (arrow added).

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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).