

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16-89A

Marion

N,  
AA

MRN.242

**Town/City:** MARION

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 40 Main Street

**Historic Name:** Isaac and Clarissa Handy House

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

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1848

**Source:** Deed/mortgage research, vital records

**Style/Form:** Victorian Eclectic

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite, fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboards, wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

### Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

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

Rear additions (dates unknown)

\*Based on Property Card and/or observation

**Condition:** Good

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

**Acreage:** 0.24 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 resources. The front yard of this property is minimally landscaped with foundation plantings, and granite steps to the front entrance. An asphalt driveway leads along the west side of this parcel to an attached rear garage addition.

## 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

40 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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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.*

The house, built in ca. 1848, can be classified as Victorian Eclectic, meaning it was built during the Victorian era but does not have sufficient details to connect it to a specific style. The form of the house consists of a 2½-story, gable-front main block with a series of rear ells/additions currently obscured by mature trees. A comparison between the Assessor sketch (Figure 1) and the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 2) shows there was already a series of rear ells that have since been expanded, including the garage addition.

The house rests, like most 19<sup>th</sup> century houses in Marion Village, on a combination granite/fieldstone foundation. The house is clad in wood clapboards on the front elevation and wood shingles on remaining (visible) elevations, with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (likely wood shingles originally), and has a projecting molded box cornice without the partial returns across the gable-front typical of earlier Greek Revival-style houses. Fenestration includes mostly modern, and a few wood, 2/2 double-hung sash. The 2/2 muntin pattern may have been the original muntin pattern for the house. The front entrance has a deeply-projecting hood supported by heavy curvilinear brackets – a Victorian-era embellishment. The front entrance includes partial sidelights.

## 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 3).

A study map of ownership along Main Street as of 1820, prepared by Olive Hiller Somers, shows that the west side of Main Street in this location, and extending farther to the west, was owned by Rowland Luce. Rowland Luce's own house is shown on that study at 25 Main Street, MRN.235). 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, 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 will be discussed below, this house was likely built by Isaac Handy, but no deeds have been identified wherein he bought this land from Luce or an intermediary. The house has an Assessor date of 1829, but its form and ornamentation suggest a construction date closer to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The house is shown on the 1855 Walling Map with the name "I. Handy" (Figure 4). This refers to Isaac Handy (b. ca. 1800) who married Clarissa Barrows (b. ca. 1805) in Marion in 1828. The US Census started listing

<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.

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

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

40 MAIN STREET

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professions in 1850, by which time they were living here, and he was listed as a ship carpenter. Title research did identify an 1848 mortgage which referenced a dwelling.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that a mortgage would be taken out to help Handy finance the construction, so a ca. 1848 construction date may be correct.

The next owner of this house discovered in title searches was Seth H. Keith of Fairhaven. Seth Keith (1827-1884) married Anna Stackpole (1841-1909) in Fairhaven. It is also unclear how he came to own the house, and they never lived in Marion. He was listed as a depot master in Fairhaven in the 1880 US Census. In 1878, they sold this house to Elmira and Jonathan Ryder of Marion.<sup>4</sup> The Ryders had previously lived in New York City with their three children, and he worked as a shipwright, i.e. ship builder (1860 US Census). Jonathan died in 1875, and this house passed to their three children.

The house is shown on the 1879 and 1903 Plymouth County Atlases with the name "R. S. Ryder" (Figures 5, 6). This refers to Royal S. Ryder (1834-1911), who was the youngest child and only son of Jonathan and Elmira Ryder. He married Priscilla Clifton (1848-1937) in New Bedford in 1867. By the time of the 1880 US Census, they are shown living here with their four children.

In a 1902, Royal Ryder acquired additional land abutting his homestead to the east from George Luce – the deed did not reference a dwelling but did reference a grain elevator.<sup>5</sup> Royal Ryder was listed as a farm laborer in the 1870 US Census, no occupation as of 1880, and by 1900 was a boatman, but was likely also farming. As seen on the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas, there were three outbuildings lined up behind the house – one may be the grain elevator referenced in the 1902 deed (Figure 6).

In 1931, Priscilla Ryder, now a widow, conveyed this house to her two daughters, Alice A. Ryder and Elmira E. Ryder.<sup>6</sup> As of the 1930 US Census, Alice and Elmira, both unmarried, were living with their mother in this house. Alice Ryder (1871-1954) worked as a librarian for the public library. Elmira Ryder (1885-1973) does not appear to have ever worked. By the 1950 US Census, their older brother Clifton, now widowed, had moved in with them. Clifton Ryder (1874-1955) had previously rented a house in Detroit, MI where he worked as a tool maker. In 1959, now alone, Elmira sold this house out of the Ryder family.<sup>7</sup> Elmira E. Ryder had also been left the house at 58 Main Street (MRN.410) by her parents. She sold that house in 1956.

## 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.

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>3</sup> PCRD, Book 227/ Page 231.

<sup>4</sup> PCRD, Book 443/ Page 161.

<sup>5</sup> PCRD, Book 843/ Page 46.

<sup>6</sup> PCRD, Book 1610/ Page 572.

<sup>7</sup> PCRD, Book 2691/ Page 365.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

40 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA MRN.242

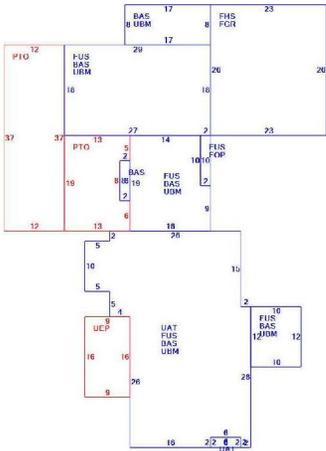


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch (porches, decks in red).

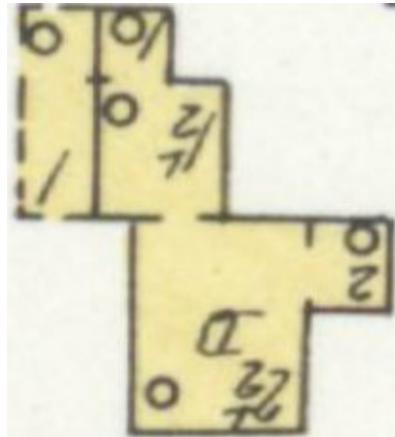


Figure 2. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



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



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

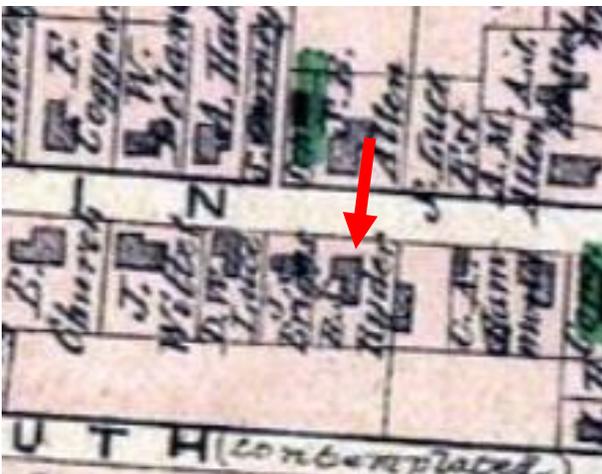


Figure 5. Detail of 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (arrow added).



Figure 6. Detail of 1903 Plymouth County Atlas (arrow added).

**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).