

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

15 82

Marion

N,  
AA

MRN.259

**Town/City:** MARION

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 72 Main Street

**Historic Name:** William Handy House

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

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1900

**Source:** 1903 Atlas, building style/form

**Style/Form:** Colonial Revival/ Gambrel

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

One-bay garage with gable roof (poss. pre-1933, Photos 2, 3)

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

New windows (2016)

\*Based on Property Card and/or observation

**Condition:** Good

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

**Acreage:** 0.11 acres

**Setting:** The surrounding area includes mostly 19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century houses sited relatively close to the street and to each other along Main Street, although less densely developed than lower Main Street. The immediate surroundings also include the former Tabor Academy across the street. This house is also sited relatively close to the street on its level parcel. The front yard is enclosed by a wood picket fence, and the front yard is landscaped with lawn and foundation plantings. A gravel driveway leads along the west side of the parcel to a garage behind the house. The property backs up to Briggs Lane.

## 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

72 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA

MRN.259

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 compact 1½-story house is a charming example of the Colonial Revival style. The most prominent feature of the style found here is the side-gable gambrel roof form of the main block, and the off-centered gambrel-roofed wall dormer on the front elevation. The house rests, like most historic houses in Marion Village, on a rough-cut granite foundation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The peak of the front gable is ornamented with wood boards creating a sunburst pattern. This may have been part of the work done in 2016, when the windows were replaced, perhaps inspired by the sunbursts in the gable peaks of the neighboring house at 70 Main Street (MRN.258). The roof is clad in asphalt shingles, and has slightly-projecting box cornices. The ends of the gable-front roof cornice are ornamented with scroll brackets.

The front elevation has an irregular pattern of modern, replacement 6/6 windows set in narrow surrounds with molded lintels. In addition to the gambrel-roofed wall dormer (meaning the front elevation of the dormer is even with the wall below), there is a single shed-roofed dormer. A screen porch with shed roof extends from the east elevation. There are two one-story, gable-roofed ells on the rear elevation (Photo 3). These ells were not shown on the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 4), but they are present on the 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 2). The real ells have unusual high, mortared fieldstone foundations – it is unclear why the foundations are so raised.

## 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.*

The dense development pattern along Main Street, starting in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century with increasing maritime-related prosperity, extended only as far west as Pleasant Street. Although Upper Main Street (as it is locally called), was set out in 1829, residential development was limited to a few houses on large parcels. The building of the Public Library in 1872 and Tabor Academy in 1876 along Spring Street may have inspired increased residential development in the surrounding area. By the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, owners of the larger tracts of land on upper Main Street began to build additional houses on their land and/or sell off portions to others.

The south side of Main Street, across from the former Tabor Academy campus, was a single parcel up to the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1842, Paddock Bates sold that parcel, without buildings, to Nathan Savery.<sup>1</sup> Nathan Savery (1774-1858) was a carpenter. The first house he built was 76 Main Street (MRN.260). It was the first of four that would be built along this parcel. Since Savery was a carpenter, there is a good chance it was built by him. By the 1855 State Census, Savery was living there at the age of 82 with his daughter Patience (1803-1885), her husband Benjamin Chamberlain (1803-1874), a blacksmith, and their three children. That house was inherited by Patience and Benjamin Chamberlain, and they were living in Carver in 1866 when they sold the property to William Handy.<sup>2</sup>

The house at 76 Main Street, still the only one, is shown on the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas with the name “Wm. Handy” (Figure 3). William Handy (1831-1904) was listed as a mariner and sea captain in Census records and, by 1900, was retired. He was living at 76 Main Street with his second wife, Ellen (Downing), whom he married in 1890, and two of their children. Ellen Handy (1853-1902) was 22 years younger than William Handy, and it was her second marriage as well.

<sup>1</sup> Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 206/ Page 217.

<sup>2</sup> PCR, Book 339/ Page 217.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

72 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA

MRN.259

William Handy developed two more houses as rental properties east of his own house – the ca. 1885 70 Main Street (MRN.258) and this house. Both are shown with the Handy name on the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 4). It is unclear when this house was built. It has an Assessor date of 1905, which is incorrect (since it is shown on the 1903 Atlas), but it does have a Colonial Revival style and form that suggests a ca. 1900 construction date. In ca. 1904, Handy built a fourth house, 90 Main Street (MRN.262).

The Handys referred to this parcel as the Middle-House Lot. In 1916, it was conveyed between their children,<sup>3</sup> and then conveyed to Bessie C. and James Nelson.<sup>4</sup> Bessie Clark Blankinship (1879-1946) had married Sweden-born James Nelson in 1900 in Marion. They immediately rented 70 Main Street from the Handys, which they were able to buy 16 years later, along with this house. John (1872-1951) worked as a barber. They had no children, but Bessie's sister, Lucy Blankinship, lived with them for many years. This house was held in Bessie's name and, after her death, her estate sold it out of the family.

It was sold in 1947 to Clarence P. Drolett (1911-1983).<sup>5</sup> According to census records, he worked as an auto mechanic. His wife Dorothy (Dottie) Drolett (1927-2004) provided the Sippican Historical Society with a charming account of her years as a telephone operator. She was an operator from 1945 until the day they "cut over to the dial system" on April 19, 1964. At the end, she was one of 19 operators. This house was sold out of the family after her death.

## 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.

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.

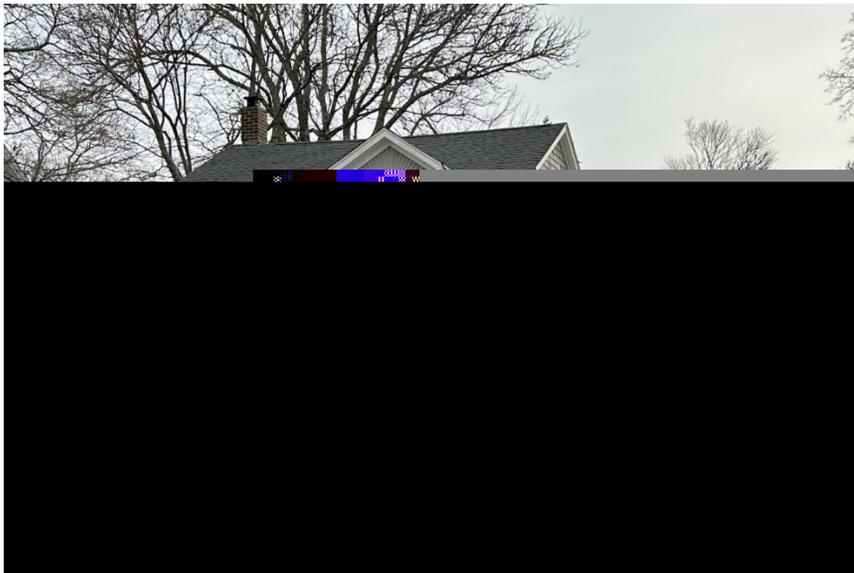


Photo 2. View looking west from Main Street, garage at right.



Photo 3. View of rear elevations and outbuilding, looking east from Briggs Lane, garage at left.

<sup>3</sup> PCRD, Book 1269/ Page 97.

<sup>4</sup> That deed has not been discovered, but the Nelsons also bought 70 Main Street that same year.

<sup>5</sup> PCRD, Book 1949/ Page 73.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MARION

72 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA	MRN.259
-------	---------

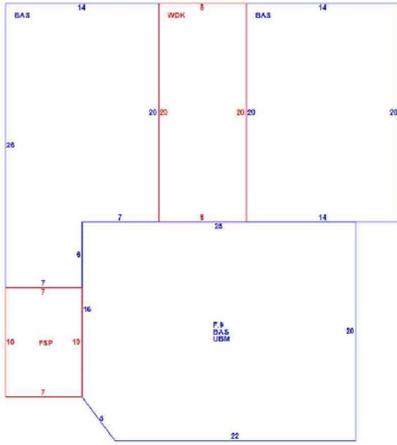


Figure 1. Marion Assessor Sketch (decks, porches in red).

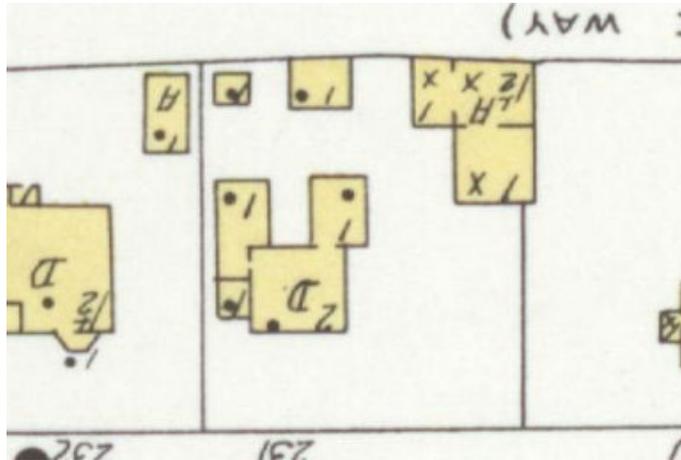


Figure 2. Detail of 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



Figure 3. Detail of 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (arrow added to location of future 72 Main Street).

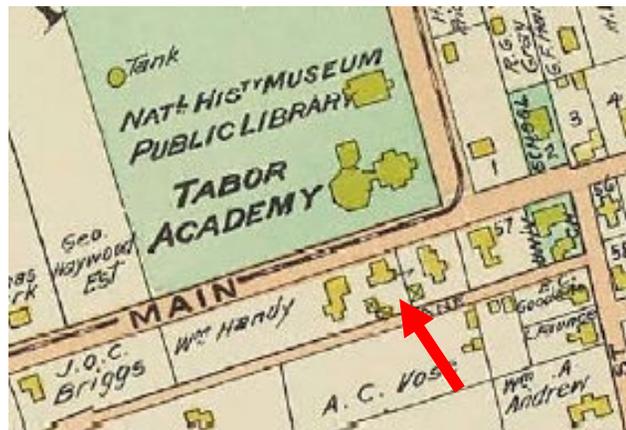


Figure 4. Detail of 1903 Plymouth County Atlas (arrow added to 72 Main Street).

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

72 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AA	MRN.259
-------	---------

## 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).