

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16-148

Marion

N,  
AB

MRN.8

**Town/City:** MARION

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village -  
South Street (MRN.AB)

## Photograph



**Address:** 12 South Street

**Historic Name:** Harvey and Jane Cobb House

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

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

**Date of Construction:** [1855-1860]

**Source:** 1855 Walling Map, 1860 US Census

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Garage/guesthouse (2012)

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

Additions (dates unknown)

Extensive renovation (2001)

\*Based on Property Card and/or observation

**Condition:** Good

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

**Acreeage:** 0.47 acres

**Setting:** This house is located at the eastern end of South Street. The surrounding area is densely-built with 19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century houses, most set fairly close to the street on small parcels, and houses set back on larger parcels along Water Street. The front yard of this house is secured by low granite curbstones, and is landscaped with a low picket fence and foundation plantings. A gravel driveway leads along the west side of the house to a detached two-car garage.

## 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

12 SOUTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AB

MRN.8

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 house, built in ca. 1855-1860, can be characterized as an example of the Greek Revival style, but it has an unusual asymmetrical gable-front form. The left roof slope carries down farther than the right roof slope (more often seen in later Queen Anne-style houses), and much of the right (west) side elevation is given over to a shed-roofed wall dormer. The Greek Revival style, popular from ca. 1825 to 1860, was inspired by then new Greek archeological discoveries, and employed temple forms and details for domestic American architecture.

Like most 19<sup>th</sup> century houses in the village, this house rests on a raised, rough-cut granite foundation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The front elevation is three bays wide, with a side-hall main entrance. This entrance, which appears to be rebuilt, consists of a wood panel door with bulls-eye panes set in a surround with full sidelights, modest lintel above, and a shallow, shingled hood supported by brackets. Fenestration appears to be all modern replacements, and it is possible that the front elevation windows have also been enlarged. They now consist of 12/12 windows on the first story and slightly smaller 12/12 windows on the second story. The side elevations also have 12/12 windows, all the same size.

The original footprint of the house consisted of the main block and an offset rear ell. That footprint was shown on all historic maps from the 1879 Atlas (Figure 4) to the 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 2). Sometime thereafter, the front porch was removed and there have been a series of rear additions that have greatly expanded the size of the house.

## 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).

This house was not present on the 1855 Walling Map, but was built by the time the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas was prepared. That map shows this house with the name "H. Cobb," referring to master mariner Harvey R. Cobb (1819-1861). He had been working as a rope maker in Plymouth when he married Jane Dexter Luce (1819-1888) in 1844 in Plymouth. She was the daughter of Samuel W. and Hannah Luce, and granddaughter of Rowland and Elizabeth Luce. 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.

Harvey and Jane Cobb were living in Plymouth in 1848 when they purchased this land from Silas Allen.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that there is a marker on this house that reads "Russell Grey, Sea Captain, 1845." However, as outlined above, deed research does

<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.

<sup>3</sup> PCR, Book 228/ Page 156.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

12 SOUTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AB

MRN.8

not trace this house back to Russell Gray (or Grey), and the 1848 deed refers to the land to the east as the "house lot of Russell Gray" (i.e. 10 South Street, MRN.7).

As noted above, this house was not shown on the 1855 Walling Map, but in the 1860 US Census, Jane D. Cobb and her son, William Cobb were living in this location, which would mean the house was built sometime between 1855 and 1860. However, Harvey Cobb himself was not listed living here in the 1860 Census - perhaps he was on a long voyage. He died in 1861.

According to a 1999 article in *The Sippican Sentinel*, the large house across the street, 7 South Street (MRN.278), was built by Lemuel Kelley who had had hoped to marry Jane D. Luce, but she had married Harvey Cobb and lived here. Both houses were built in the late-1850s. Perhaps Kelley was hoping to woo Jane Luce away from Harvey Cobb with his imposing house. If so, it did not work, and like Cobb, he died in 1861.

The house is shown on the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas with the name "H. Cobb," still presumably referring to the now deceased captain's given name. The house passed to their son, Capt. William H. Cobb (1865-1922), and his mother. Jane Cobb, continued to live here with him until her death in 1888.

William Cobb married Henrietta Allen (1847-1945) in Marion in 1898. According to the 1998 Wharf Village Area Form MRN.N, William Cobb was the captain of a coastal schooner, and he was active in local affairs, serving in 1919 as a Selectman, Assessor and an Overseer of the Poor. Two years after her husband's death in 1922, Henrietta Cobb sold this house to Adele H. Baxter of Marion, wife of physician Raymond H. Baxter.<sup>4</sup> That same year, Henrietta Cobb purchased a house up the street - 25 South Street (MRN.286).<sup>5</sup> This house remained in the Baxter 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 AB, South Street, 2021.

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

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

Sippican Historical Society Collections.

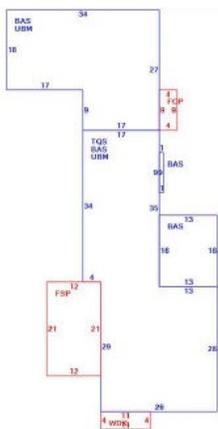


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch (decks, porches in red).

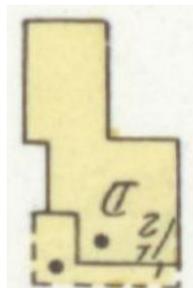


Figure 2. Detail of 1933 Sanborn Map.



Photo 2. View from South Street, looking SW.

<sup>4</sup> PCR, Book 1450/ Page 240.

<sup>5</sup> As an example of the interconnected nature of properties in Marion Village at that time, 25 South Street had been inherited by the parents of Mary (Luce) Cobb who built this house.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

12 SOUTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

N, AB MRN.8

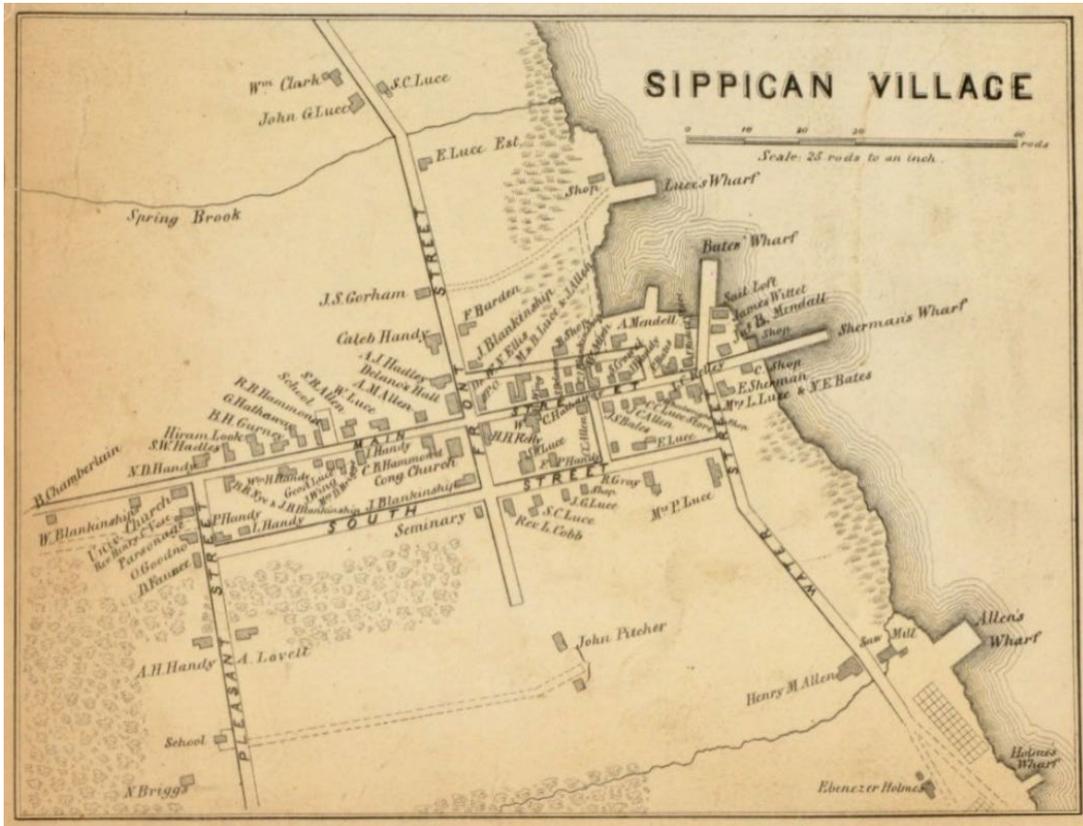


Figure 3. 1855 Walling Map of Marion, Sippican Village Inset Map.



Figure 4. Detail of 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (arrow added).

N, AB	MRN.8
-------	-------

**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).