

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16-146

Marion

N,
AB

MRN.284

Town/City: MARION

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

Photograph



Address: 20 South Street

Historic Name: John G. and Nancy C. Luce House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1849

Source: Deed research, Vital records

Style/Form: Greek Revival (Italianate influence)

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Pool

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

None on record

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.38 acres

Setting: This house is located on the south side of South Street. The surrounding area is densely-built with 19th and early-20th century houses, most set fairly close to the street on small parcels. A wood picket fence runs along the sidewalk. The front yard is landscaped with mature plantings that partially obscure the house. A gravel driveway leads along the east side of the parcel to a parking area.

Locus Map



Aerial Imagery, 2021

Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (*month / year*): February 2023

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MARION

20 SOUTH STREET

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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 house is transitional in style, with elements of both the Greek Revival and later Italianate styles. 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. The Italianate style, popular from ca. 1840-1885, was a reaction against the formalism of earlier styles, and was intended to create a more "picturesque" effect reminiscent of Italian villas and farmhouses.

This house has the gable-front block typical of Greek Revival-style houses, but has some ornamentation that became popular with the Italianate style. The form of the house consists of the 1½-story, gable-front main block, with one-story ells on both sides, and a rear ell – this footprint is shown on the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 3), and is shown more clearly on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 4). The front porch shown on the 1908 map has since been removed, but as seen comparing the 1908 footprint to the current Assessor sketch (Figure 5), the house has otherwise remained unchanged.

Like most 19th century houses in Marion Village, this house rests on a raised, rough-cut granite foundation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with broad plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (wood shingles originally), and has a projecting, molded box cornice with partial returns across the gable ends (intended to evoke the pediment of a Greek temple front). A low brick chimney rises from the front of the main roof ridge. Hip-roofed dormers of the same design are set into the main roof above each side ell.

The feature which hints at the Italianate style is the use of single saw-cut brackets along the frieze boards of the roof entablature (later Italianate houses typically employed paired brackets). This unusual use of single brackets was also employed for the ca. ca. 1855-1861 Kelley House, 7 South Street (MRN.278).

The main entrance is located on the front of the right (west) side ell. The six-panel wood door is set in a surround with unusually broad sidelights. The left side ell has an unusual three-part window system with wood panels below on the front elevation. Remaining fenestration includes modern, replacement 6/6 and 4/4 double-hung sash.

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, maritime-related development accelerated into the early-1800s, as happened in so 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 development was initially concentrated along Main Street, and the harbor became the site for maritime-related utilitarian buildings and wharfs. On an 1830 state road map of Rochester, only Front, Main and Pleasant Streets were in place. Based on deed research, South Street was not laid out until ca. 1836. By the time the 1855 Walling Map was prepared, Main Street from the harbor west to Pleasant Street was the most densely developed street in the village, but there was also substantial residential development along the eastern block of South Street, including this house (Figure 1).

The majority of houses in place along this block of South Street on the 1855 Walling Map are shown with members of the Luce family. Many of the Luces who built or owned houses in the 19th century in Marion Village can trace their lineage back to Tisbury-

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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born Major 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 that likely included this land.² Rowland and Elizabeth Luce and their descendants would go on to have a great impact on the development of the village.

This house is shown on the 1855 Walling Map with the name "J. G. Luce" (Figure 2). This refers to mariner John G. Luce (1809-1888), a grandchild of Rowland and Elizabeth Luce. He married Nancy C. Hammond in 1849. This parcel was sold to him in 1847 by his uncle, Rowland Luce (Jr.).³ Given that sale date and his marriage in 1849, this house was likely built around that time. John Luce was listed as a mariner/sailor/water transportation in census records.

A series of transactions began in 1858, where John and Nancy Luce sold this house to mariner Seth Blankinship (1823-1883).⁴ In 1864, Blankinship sold the house to mariner Frederic(k) Barden (1811-1877).⁵ And in 1870, Barden sold the house to Charity and Samuel W. Waters.⁶ Both Samuel Waters (1831-1912) and Charity (Baldock) (1829-1902) were born in Sussex, England and emigrated in the mid-19th century, presumably after marrying. Samuel Waters was listed as a Medical Peddler in the 1870 Census, and Cancer & Humor Doctor in the 1880 Census. This house is shown with the name "S. W. Waters" on the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 3).

Samuel Waters moved to Lakeville in ca. 1900, possibly after the death of Charity on 1902. Their son, Benjamin E. Waters, was listed living here in the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas, and in 1908, Samuel Waters conveyed the house to son Benjamin.⁷ Benjamin Waters was a prominent local businessman - he was manager of the local telephone company, and was active in local real estate. The house remained in the Waters family until 1963.

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 AB, South Street, 2021.

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

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

Sippican Historical Society Collections.



Photo 2. View from Main Street, looking southeast.

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

³ PCR D, Book 225, Page 267.

⁴ PCR D, Book 290/ Page 68.

⁵ PCR D, Book 327/ Page 65.

⁶ PCR D, Book 374/ Page 40.

⁷ PCR D, Book 1007/ Page 427.

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Figure 1. 1855 Walling Map of Marion, Sippican Village Inset Map.

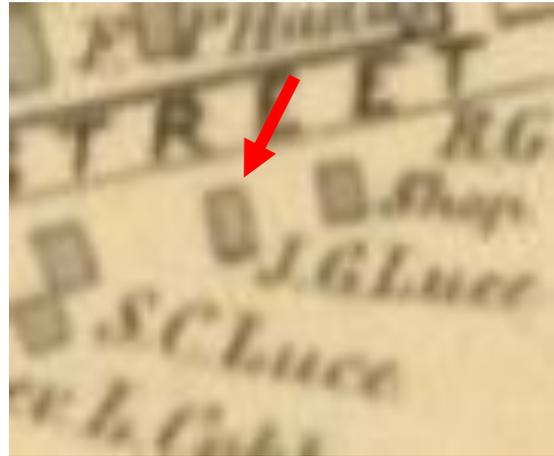


Figure 2. Detail of 1855 Map (arrow added).

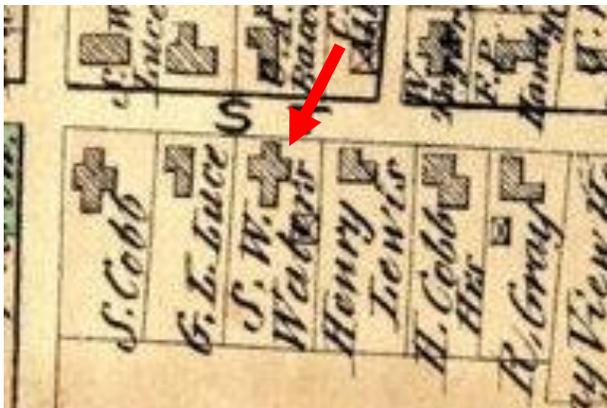


Figure 3. Detail of 1879 Plymouth County

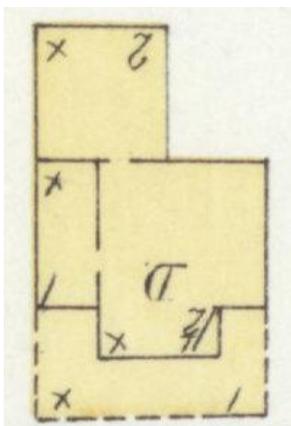


Figure 4. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

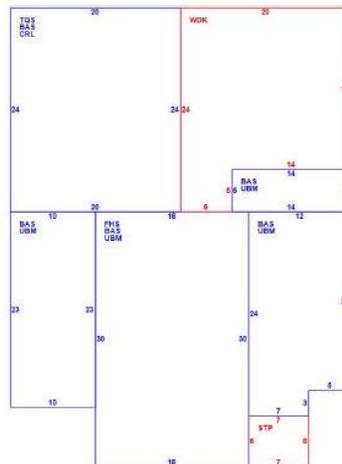


Figure 5. Assessor Sketch (decks, porches in red).

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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).

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