

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16-144

Marion

N,
AB

MRN.287

Town/City: MARION

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

Photograph



Address: 28 South Street

Historic Name: Marion Congregational Church
Parsonage

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: 1841

Source: Sippican Historical Society

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboards/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Two-car garage w/ hip roof

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

Rear addition (likely late-20th c.)

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.43 acres

Setting: This house fronts on both South and Front Streets. The surrounding area is densely-built with 19th and early-20th century houses, most set fairly close to the street on small parcels, and three churches along Front Street. The house faces South Street and is set very close to both streets. A combination of picket fences and hedges span along the streets. A small, oval gravel driveway leads off Front Street to a detached 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

28 SOUTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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, and its neighbor at 24 South Street (MRN.285), are two of the larger and higher style examples of the Greek Revival style on South Street. 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 form of this house consists of a two-story, gable-front main block, a stepped-down lateral ell on the left (east) side, and a 1½-story rear ell connecting to another two-story gable-roofed addition. A comparison of the current Assessor footprint (Figure 1) with that on the 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 2) shows how the building has evolved since that time. The left (east) side lateral ell appears to have been expanded after 1933, and what may have begun as an open porch on the front of that ell has since been enclosed. Tuscan columns that may have supported the porch roof are still in place (see Photo 2). The porch on the main elevation has since been removed, and the large, rear two-story block was added sometime thereafter (likely late-20th century).

This house, like most 19th century houses in Marion Village, rests on a raised granite foundation. The two-story rear addition rests on a concrete foundation with granite facing, suggesting a more recent construction. The elevations are clad in wood clapboards with broad corner pilasters (flat columns). The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (wood shingles originally). A tall brick chimney rises from the right (west) roof slope of the main block. The roof of the main block, and lateral ell, have projecting, molded box cornices with full returns across the gable front forming a full pediment infilled with flushboard siding, and there are broad, two-part frieze boards along the side elevations (all intended to evoke Greek temple details that inspired the style). A triangular, 4-paned window set in a raised frame is centered within the main pediment. The rear ells have similar roof cornices, as does the two-story rear addition.

Fenestration on the front elevation of the main block appears to be original or early sash, with tall 6/6 triple-hung windows on the first story and 6/6 double-hung on the second story and side elevations. These windows all have wood storms with the same muntin pattern, and are set in frames with low-pitched, triangular lintels with square medallions at the corners. The remaining elevations have modern 6/6 windows set in similar frames. Many windows have wood shutters with modern shutter hardware. The front entrance has a wood door set in a surround with pilasters and a lintel with closed pediment that echoes the roof pediment.

The rear, two-story block is similar in detail, including the window surrounds. In 2001, an Amdega conservatory from Everest was added behind this addition.

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. 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 3).

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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As recounted in the 1998 Marion Village Area Form (MRN.N), this house was built in 1841 as the parsonage for the Congregational Church (28 Main Street, MRN.39). The first pastor to live here was Rev. Leander Cobb (1801-1872). He married twice and had nine children. Leander Cobb assisted his father, Rev. Oliver Cobb, who had been preaching in Marion since the completion in 1799 of the first meeting house, now the Marion General Store (140 Front Street, MRN.22). Following his father's death in 1849, Leander Cobb served as minister until his death in 1872.

In 1873 the church decided to sell this parsonage, via an entity known as the Clapp Fund. It was sold to Leander Cobb's second wife, Selina F. (Bacon) Cobb.² In 1882, she sold it to George L. Luce. Many of the Luces who built or owned houses in the 19th century in Marion can trace their lineage back to Tisbury-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.³ Rowland and Elizabeth Luce and their descendants would go on to have a great impact on the development of the village.

George L. Luce (1825-1893) was one of Rowland and Elizabeth Luce's grandchildren.⁴ He married Sophia Delano (1830-1913) in 1852. Like many in his family, George Luce rose to become a master mariner, and was retired by 1880. George and Sophia Luce also owned the house next store, 24 South Street (MRN.285). Sophia Luce held onto both houses after her husband's death.

She sold this house (for \$3,500) in 1911 to her son and daughter-in-law, William R. and Mary A. Luce.⁵ William Luce (1858-1934) was a real estate agent. This house stayed in the family until Mary Luce's death in 1955. In 1960, her estate sold the house to local historian Olive Hiller Somers (1890-1967).⁶ She was the wife of Rev. Laurence D. Somers (1888-1962) who had been pastor of the Congregational Church, in a way returning this house to its original use. Olive Hiller Somers was the author of the posthumously-published book, *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. In 1967, her estate sold this house to Kenneth A. and Mary C. Dawson of Cambridge.⁷ They summered here until then-widowed Mary Dawson sold it in 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.

² Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 399/ Page 29.

³ PCRD, Book 60/ Page 80.

⁴ Another grandson of Rowland Luce, Samuel W. Luce, Jr. (1807-1885), owned the house across the street, 25 South Street (MRN.286).

⁵ PCRD, Book 1081, Page 174.

⁶ PCRD, Book 2757/ Page 64.

⁷ PCRD, Book 18055/ Page 31.

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Photo 2. View from South Street, looking southwest.



Photo 3. View from Front Street, looking northeast.

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).