

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13 -32

Marion

MRN.I

MRN.126

Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village/Old Landing

Address: 300 (formerly 302) Front Street

Historic Name: John Bassett House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Ca. 1830

Source: Deed and map research

Style/Form: Federal, altered

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Field stone & concrete block

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard & shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Replacement windows

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.22

Setting: Linear development of residences and a boatyard primarily developed in the late 18th–mid 19th centuries. Mid- to large-size wood-frame, single-family houses in the Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles predominate. Neighborhood borders the northwestern shore of Sippican Harbor.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

300 Front 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.

300 Front Street occupies a deep, narrow, rectangular parcel on the west side of Front Street. The house is set back from the street and faces east towards the Burr Brothers Boatyard and Sippican Harbor. The property is maintained primarily in lawn and is dotted with a handful of mature trees. Sparse foundation plantings span the facade. A gravel driveway enters the property from Front Street at the northwest corner of the property and terminates in a parking area behind (east of) the house.

This wood-frame building comprises a two-and-one-half-story, five-bay-by-three-bay, side-gabled main block with an early one-story rear addition. Constructed ca. 1830 in a simple iteration of the Federal style, it also displays some late-19th century features including a full-width front porch, double-leaf entry, and decorative shingling. The house is clad in wood clapboards at the façade and wood shingles at all other elevations. It is trimmed with narrow corner and frieze boards, a box cornice and eave returns. The house rests on a field stone foundation except at the front porch, where the foundation is concrete block. It has an asphalt shingle roof and a tall concrete-block gable chimney at the addition. Paired chimneys are seen in the photograph of the house in the 1998 MHC Area Form for Old Landing (MRN.I) at the north and south ends of the main roof; these are no longer extant.

The window openings at the facade comprise double-hung, one-over-one replacement windows with flat surrounds that touch the frieze board at the second story. The windows and door are asymmetrically placed and appear to have been shifted. The one-over-one windows at the side elevations have flat surrounds and molded lintels. The windows replaced two-over-two sash seen in the photograph of the building on the 1998 MHC Area Form for Old Landing. The full-width shed-roofed porch has narrow rectangular posts, a slat work railing, and a lattice skirt. The double-leaf wooden doors at the centered entry contain arched glass insets. The entry fronts a porch landing and wooden three-step stair. Rows of fish scale shingles embellish the side elevations at the midpoint and gable peak.

The square, gabled, one-story rear addition, which is seen on the 1855 map, aligns along the north elevation of the house. A second-story open porch supported by rectangular posts occupies the rear (west) elevation of the house at the southwestern corner.

300 Front Street, although altered, is a modest example of the Federal style. The Federal style (1780 –1820) was the predominant architectural style in the United States during the early decades of the new republic and persisted in rural areas until the mid-19th century. Like the preceding Georgian style, it was based on simple, rectangular building forms with strictly symmetrical openings. Charles Bulfinch (1763-1844), considered America's first professional architect, is credited with introducing the style to the United States, where it was broadly disseminated through the pattern books of Asher Benjamin. Characteristic Federal-style features typically include side-gabled roofs, symmetrically-placed openings, paired chimneys, and six-over-six window sash. Features likely added to the subject house in the late 19th century include the front porch, two-leaf main entry, and decorative wood shingling characteristic of the Queen Anne style.

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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.



R.E. Walling 1855 map of Marion.

The town of Marion was established in 1852 when it broke off from the town of Rochester. The Village of Marion, the commercial and residential center of the town, is set on the western shore of Sippican Harbor which leads into Buzzards Bay. The northern portion of the Village running along Front Street, where this house is located, has been referred to historically as Old Landing. While there are several late 18th century buildings in the area, most of the houses along this northern section of Front Street were built in the first half of the 19th century. With a very few exceptions, the first owners of the houses were seamen. Maritime industries were dominant in Marion until the mid-19th century, when the advent of rail service began to facilitate tourism. At the same time, new cultural and educational institutions endowed by the founder of the nearby Tabor Academy, Elizabeth P. Taber, dramatically enriched the town. With this economic shift, some of the properties on Front Street became summer residences for city dwellers. Others were acquired by Tabor Academy for use as dormitories and several became commercial properties, including the boatyard complex on the harbor side of Front Street.

This house appears on the 1855 and 1879 maps with Susan Smith shown as owner. On the 1903 map the owner is shown as the estate of N. Hathaway. The first recorded conveyance found for this property, which included both land and

buildings, was in 1838 from John and Laura Bassett to Isaac Smith. John Bassett (1793-1848) was the son of Thomas M. Bassett (1759-1833) and Lydia Mendall (1760-1833) of Rochester. He was married in 1816 to Laura Wing (b.1796), daughter of Butler Wing and Thankful Ellis of Rochester. The house was purchased in 1838 by Rochester shoemaker Isaac Smith (1801-1849), the son of Lydia Mendall Bassett and her second husband Joseph Bates Smith (1759-1833). Isaac Smith was first married to Azubah Wing (b.1804), and after her death to Susan B. Turner. Smith died in 1849 at the age of 47. It can be assumed that Susan Smith continued to live in this house until it was sold by her and her son Augustus H. Smith in 1890.

The next owner of the property was Judah Hathaway, Jr. (1832-1914), the son of Judah Hathaway, Sr. (1797-1834) and Bethiah Crapo (1800-1882). Judah was married to Hannah Ellis Lewis and lived in Rochester, where he was a seaman who progressed to master mariner as reported in the censuses of 1865 through 1880. By 1900 Judah Hathaway was a widower and operating a sawmill in Rochester, where he lived with two of his daughters and two servants. He owned the subject property for just four years before conveying it to his daughter, Ellen Adelia (b. 1872) who was married to Isaac Elwood Hiller (1870-1946) of Mattapoisett. Isaac was the son of farmer Isaac Hiller, Jr. (1825-1914) and Wealthy Ann Bennett (1828-1906). The younger Isaac Hiller became the president of the Hellier Company, suppliers of coal and wood, and a Chrysler automobile dealership located at Front and Hiller Streets. Hiller was also in the cranberry business with his brother Robert, with whom he farmed more than 75 acres of bogs.

In 1905 Ellen Hiller sold the property to Abram B. Gibbs, the son of Alvin Francis Gibbs (1837-1883) and Nancy M. Savery (1842-1892) of Wareham. He was married in Marion in 1892 to Mabel Clifton (1873-1938), daughter of Joseph W. Briggs (1837-1912) and Cynthia Dexter Delano (1840-1919). According to the 1900 census Gibbs was a hostler (a horse or mule caretaker); the 1910 census reported him as a coachman for a private family. Abram Gibbs took out a mortgage on the property in 1915 which was foreclosed by the Wareham Savings Bank the following year. Abram's daughter, Helen Maria Gibbs Cornwell (1895-1974), and her husband Carl Clement Cornwell purchased the mortgage back from the bank in 1917. The property remained in the Gibbs family until 1972 when it was sold to the current owner.

Deed Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
05-03-1978	4807-219	Joanne B. & Alan G. Inman	Joanne B. Inman

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MARION

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

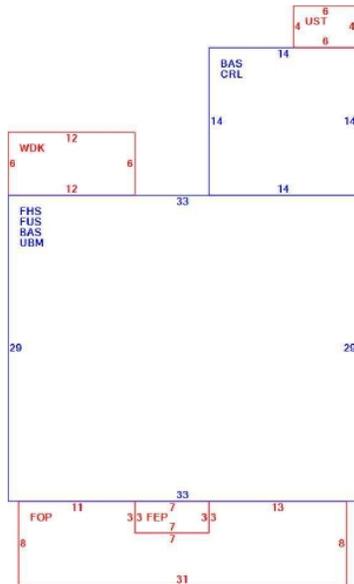
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11-10-1973	3950-492	Carl S. Gibbs & Dorothy G. Buckman	Joanne B. & Alan G. Inman
09-21-1972	3827-549	Carl S. & Barbara A. Gibbs	Carl S. Gibbs & Dorothy G. Buckman
09-30-1965	3242-304	Dorothy G. Buckman f/k/a Dorothy Gibbs	Carl S. & Barbara A. Gibbs
06-30-1953	1741-250	Helen M. & Carl C. Cornwell	Warren B. & Dorothy Gibbs
05-17-1917	1283-39	Wareham Savings Bank	Helen M. Cornwell
06-24-1916	1249-544	Abram B. Gibbs (Foreclosure)	Wareham Savings Bank
09-03-1915	1229-487	Abram B. Gibbs (Mortgage)	Wareham Savings Bank
10-13-1905	920-251	Ellen A. Hiller	Abram B. Gibbs
10-18-1894	685-188	Judah Hathaway	Ellen A. Hiller
06-16-1890	596-118	Augustus H. & Susan B. Smith	Judah Hathaway
11-21-1838	195-276	John & Laura Bassett	Isaac Smith

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- Atlas of Plymouth County*, Boston, MA: George H. Walker & Co., 1879
- Atlas of Plymouth County*, Boston, MA: L.J. Richards Co., 1903
- Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts 1855* H.F. Walling
- McMaster, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
- Sommers, Olive Hill. *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. Marion, 1972.
- Plymouth County Registry of Deeds
- Rosbe, Judith. *Marion*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.
- Rosbe, Judith. *Marion in the Golden Age*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009.
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- Smith, Pete (ed.). *A Picture Postcard History of Marion, Massachusetts*. New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, 2008.



Assessor's card plan

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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 Lynn Smiledge

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

This house is recommended as a contributing element in a potential National Register Historic District for the Old Landing Area of Marion Village. The Old Landing Area (MRN.I) is recommended as eligible for listing as a National Register District at the local level under Criterion A for Social History and Criterion C for Architecture. Old Landing is among the oldest neighborhoods in Marion, with development dating to the 18th century. Historically a maritime community with two wharves and a boat yard near the head of Sippican Harbor, the Old Landing area is a linear development of residences extending from Tabor Academy's campus on the south to Wareham Road (Rte. 6) on the north. The potential district's boundaries are those defined in the 1998 MHC survey for the Old Landing Area (MRN.I).

Under Criterion A, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level for its association with Marion's the maritime industry, upon which the economy of Marion depended from the 18th century to the mid-19th century. Home to two wharves and many mariners in the 19th century, the area today maintains its connection to the sea with the active operation of Burr Brothers Boatyard located on Sippican Harbor along the eastern boundary of the area.

Under Criterion C, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level in the area of Architecture for its nearly intact collection of houses that provides a sense of the progression of architectural styles from the late 18th through the early 20th centuries. The Old Landing Area contains mostly moderate- to large-scaled, one-and-one half to two-story wood-frame dwellings on generous lots in the Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, and Queen Anne styles. Along with several high-style examples of these styles, the area also includes several earlier dwellings that pre-date the building boom that began in the second half of the 19th century.

The majority of the resources here retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The district would likely meet criteria A and C at the local level, with areas of significance in social history and architecture.