

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13-7	Marion	MRN.I	MRN.132
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Photograph



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

Address: 317 Front Street
Historic Name: Capt. Peleg Blankinship House

Uses: Present: Residential / Commercial
Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Ca. 1842

Source: Deed and map research

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite and concrete
Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard & shingle / Wood
Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Replacement windows
Southernmost addition (late 20th century)

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.62

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.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

317 Front Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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.

317 Front Street occupies a polygonal lot on the east side of Front Street. The building and land have been incorporated into the large Burr Brothers Boatyard complex on the northwest shore of Sippican Harbor. The structure is set back from the street at the northeast corner of the parcel and fronts a shallow lawn. A gravel driveway runs diagonally across the façade (west elevation) from a large parking area to the south and enters Front Street at a wide concrete apron. A side yard along the north elevation of the main block borders a paved driveway that enters the property from Front Street and serves both 317 Front Street and two large commercial buildings to its rear. The parcel is maintained in lawn dotted with shrubs and mature trees. There are foundation plantings at the façade of the main block and additions. Areas of lawn are bordered by low granite curbing.

This wood-frame former dwelling comprises a one-and-one-half-story, front-gabled, three-bay-by-three bay main block with a full-width porch and two side-gabled, one-story dependencies at the south elevation. Constructed around 1840 in the Greek Revival style, the main block retains the majority of its original character-defining features. The main and center blocks rest on a granite block foundation and the south block has a concrete foundation. The building is clad in wood clapboards at all elevations apart from the south elevation of the south block, which is clad in wood shingles. Tall corbeled brick chimneys rise from the south roof slope at the main block and the roof ridge at the center block. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles.

The main block is trimmed with a box cornice, frieze boards, short eave returns, and narrow molded corner pilasters. The side hall main entry at the northernmost bay contains a six-panel wood door framed by partial-height sidelights and a paneled surround. The door enframement, which comprises corner blocks and a rectangular pediment, resembles those seen in Asher Benjamin's 1830s pattern books. The full-width skirted porch has a shallow hipped roof and a molded entablature supported by Doric columns; the porch was likely added in the late 19th or early 20th century. The door fronts a three-step granite stair and a gravel walkway lined by granite curbing. The windows at the main block are single, double-hung, one-over-one replacement sash with flat surrounds and splayed lintels. Two one-bay gabled wall dormers flank a one-bay gable dormer at the south roof slope.

The early, gabled, one-story ell extending from the southeast corner of the main block appears on the footprint of the house on the 1855 map. One-bay wide, it is trimmed with frieze boards and has a single entry with a simple flat surround and single sidelight. A shallow shed dormer occupies the west roof slope. The mid-20th century southernmost addition is seven-bays-by-two bays with double-hung, six-over-six windows at the west elevation. Openings at the south, wood-shingled elevation are contemporary in design and include an entry with a glazed surround and a full-height three-part window that extends to the eave.

317 Front Street illustrates the Greek Revival style with some earlier Federal-style features. Greek Revival was the predominant style of American architecture from about 1830 to 1850, but the form continued to be used well into the second half of the 19th century. Inspired by the architecture of ancient Greek temples and associated with democratic ideals, it was widely disseminated through the house plan books of Massachusetts architect Asher Benjamin. The identifying Greek Revival features of this house include the front-gabled orientation of the main block, box cornice, frieze boards, corner pilasters, and eave returns. The pedimented, corner-blocked enframement at the main entry is a Greek Revival feature, but the partial-height sidelights and very narrow corner pilasters are more characteristic of the earlier Federal 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 booyard complex on the harbor side of Front Street into which the subject house has been incorporated.

The building appears on the 1855 and 1879 maps with P. Blankinship shown as owner. Mr. & Mrs. A.F. Besse are shown as owners on the 1903 map. The first recorded conveyance found for this property was the sale of "a house lot" in 1842 for \$203 by David Hathaway to Peleg Blankinship.

Born in Freetown, David Hathaway (1788-1861) was the son of Gilbert Hathaway (1745-1829) and Mary Evans (1751-1826). He was married in Rochester in 1811 to Abigail Keen (1787-1878), daughter of John Keen (1744-1812) and Mary Clifton (1746-1822) with whom he had a very large family. Several sources suggest that David Hathaway was a shipbuilder and owner of one of the two wharves at the head of Sippican Harbor. The 1855 map labels the northernmost wharf as Hathaway's Wharf, but the 1850 and 1855 censuses report his occupation as farmer. Hathaway's was listed as merchant in the 1860 census. Regardless of his vocation, he appears to have been quite prosperous. His 1861 will devised his considerable estate, which consisted of a number of properties and businesses, to his wife Abigail and the couple's children. David Hathaway was a large property owner in the area and occupied the house at 304 Front Street (ca. 1846, David Hathaway House, MRN.127).

Capt. Peleg Blankinship (1809-1891) was the son of George B. Blankinship (1791-1834) and Sarah Handy (1787-1825). He was married to Eliza Hadley (1812-1887), the daughter of Captain Joseph Hadley (1789-1821) and Susannah Delano Clapp (1793-1868). Eliza was the sister of Old Landing area homeowners Capt. Joseph Emerson Hadley (1817-1897) and Capt. Stephen Delano Hadley (1814-1892) and Marion store owner and merchant Andrew Johnson Hadley (1820-1897). Peleg Blankinship was also a master mariner, as reported in the 1860 and 1870 censuses. The 1880 census listed his occupation as retired steamboat captain. Peleg and Eliza Blankinship had one daughter, Minnie Mott Blankinship (1855). Her 1875 marriage registration notes that her parents were Gilbert and Mary Mott, so it seems likely that Minnie had been adopted by the Blankinships. Her husband Alvin Francis Besse (b.1846), a sea captain, was the son of David Besse and Salome White of Wareham. By the time of the 1900 census Alvin Besse and his family were living in Weehawken, New Jersey, where Alvin was a police sergeant. Given their New Jersey residence, it is likely that this house became a rental property until it was next sold in 1937. The Besses had two children, Minnie M. Besse (1878-1941) and Hadley Francis Besse (b.1876). Hadley Besse's address in 1917 was the Hudson County, New Jersey Insane Hospital, which may explain why the 1937 conveyance of this property was given on his behalf by a guardian. Minnie Beese was married to Percy Roth of Montclair, New Jersey.

Philadelphia lawyer Oswald Chew (1876-1948) facilitated the sale of this property in 1937 to Osmond and Emily Brown. Chew and his wife Ada owned a waterfront house in Marion at 29 Water Street (ca. 1915, Mary A. Knowlton House, MRN.502) and a rental house at 39 Allen Street (ca. 1910, Oswald Chew Rental House, MRN. 491). Although Chew's primary residence was in suburban Philadelphia and he worked in that city, he was involved in a number of real estate transactions in Marion. The house

