

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13-5	Marion	MRN.I	MRN.135
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Town/City: Marion

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

Address: 325 Front Street

Historic Name: Thomas M. Bassett, Sr. House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: 1780 –1800

Source: Deed & map research, visual analysis

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard & shingle / Wood & synthetic

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Replacement windows (1994)

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.65

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

325 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.

325 Front Street occupies a large trapezoidal parcel on the east side of Front Street and backs up to the Burr Brothers Boatyard and Sippican Harbor. The house is set very close to the street behind a strip of lawn and faces west. The eastern portion of the parcel behind the house is maintained in lawn with a perimeter of heavy vegetation. A U-shaped driveway of crushed shells with concrete aprons enters and exits the property from Front Street in the southwest corner of the parcel; it encloses a stand of mature trees. A short paved driveway enters the property along the northern property line and ends at a small garage off the north elevation of the house.

This wood-frame building comprises a two-story, three-bay-by-two-bay, saltbox-form main block with an open porch spanning the west (façade) and north elevations and a rear addition. This Federal style house, which was probably constructed in the last decades of the 18th century, retains many of its original character-defining features despite the significant alterations to the fenestration at the facade. The house is clad in weathered wood shingles at all elevations apart from the area enclosed by the porch at the façade and north elevation. The house is trimmed with wide corner boards and has a frieze board at the façade. It rises from a high granite block foundation and has an asphalt shingle roof. Short but substantial brick chimneys rise from the roof ridge near the south gable end and from the west roof slope near the north gable end.

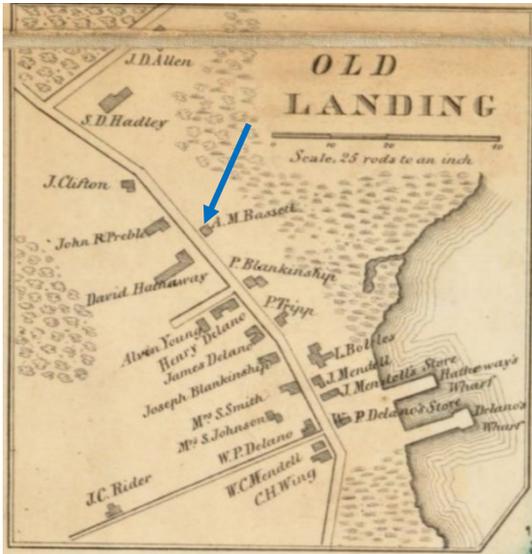
The single window openings at the facade were replaced in the late 20th century with paired and triple, mulled, double-hung, four-over-four sash. The windows are paired at the second story and have flat surrounds and capped lintels that touch the frieze board. The openings at the first story comprise a centered entry with a double window to its right and a triple window to its left. The single windows at the side elevations of the main block are double-hung, six-over-six sash with either flat or molded surrounds and capped lintels. The main entry contains a glass-and-panel wood door flanked by full-height sidelight openings containing louvered panels. The hip-roofed porch has square channeled posts, a slat work railing, and a vertical slat skirt; the porch trim is fabricated of PVC. The main entry fronts a two-step stair; a second access to the porch is provided by a graded brick and concrete walkway that enters at the southeast corner of the porch.

A portion of the one-story rear addition first appeared on the 1903 map. This early portion is a side-gabled block, three bays in length, that aligns along the south elevation of the main block. A second gabled block and a flat-roofed block were later added to comprise the current full-width configuration. Openings at the addition are contemporary and include an entry flanked by casement windows at the south elevation. A railed wooden deck wraps the southeast corner of the addition. A small, gabled one-car garage is sited off the north elevation of the main block; it is sided with clapboards and has an asphalt shingle roof.

325 Front Street was built in the Federal style (1780 –1820), the predominant architectural style in the United States during the early decades of the new republic. Like the preceding Georgian style, it was based on simple, rectangular building forms with strictly symmetrical openings. It offered a refinement of the earlier style, however, a general sense of lightness and restraint. 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. The most striking Federal-style feature seen in this house is its side-gabled saltbox form. Other characteristics include the symmetrical fenestration, entry surround with sidelights, and six-over-six window sash at the side elevations.

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 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 map with the owner identified as A.M. Bassett. Mary Ann Penniman is shown as owner on the 1879 map, and W.R. Gifford on the 1903 map. The earliest conveyance found for the property was its sale in 1864 by Eunice Bassett to Mary Ann Penniman. Title and biographical research

and the apparent age of this Federal style house suggest indicate that it was likely first owned by Thomas M. Bassett, Sr. (1759-1833). Throughout its somewhat complicated ownership history the house remained in the extended Bassett family until 1935.

Thomas M. Bassett, Sr. (1759-1833) was married in 1781 to Lydia Mendall (1760-1833). The couple's son, Thomas Bassett, Jr. (1790-1832), married Abigail M. Tripp (1792-1863) in 1807. Census records did not reveal occupations for the two Bassetts, but given the community's maritime-based economy at the time and the proximity of the property to Sippican Harbor, it was likely that one or both of them were seamen.

Among the children of Thomas and Abigail Bassett who lived to adulthood was a son, Peleg T. Bassett (1815-1859). Peleg was married in 1837 to Susan Augusta Bray (1811-1855) and the couple had a daughter, Eunice (1841-1896). Eunice's mother Susan Bassett died in 1855 and according to a 1859 newspaper article, her father Peleg Bassett was shot and killed in Denver, Colorado after engaging in an argument.¹ The 1860 census reported Eunice living with her widowed grandmother, Abigail M. Bassett, who was likely the A.M. Bassett shown on the 1855 map. Abigail's occupation was given as common (public) schoolteacher. Also living in the house was her aunt, Peleg Bassett's sister Susan (var. Susannah) S. Bassett Ellis (1824-1887), and her 10-year-old daughter. Susan's occupation was listed as dressmaker. She was the wife of William Ellis (1819-1916) and the couple had two daughters, Susan (1850-1877) and Sarah (1847-1898).

Abigail Bassett died in 1863 and presumably left the property to her granddaughter, Eunice. In 1864 Eunice Bassett sold the house for \$400 to her widowed aunt, Mary Ann Carlton (Bassett) Penniman (1822-1886). Mary Ann Penniman's will of 1886 left the house and its goods to her sister, Susan S. (Bassett) Ellis. Via probate the property was ultimately devised to Mary Ann Penniman's niece, Sarah Ellis Hammond (1847-1898). Sarah and her husband George Hammond owned the property until it was purchased in 1892 by Sarah's brother-in-law, William R. Gifford, who had been married to Sarah's sister Susan S. Ellis until her death in 1877. In 1884 Gifford married Adele D. Ray of Freetown. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Gifford operated a livery stable and passenger transfer service between the Marion depot and lodgings in Marion Village. His wife Adele continued to own the house until 1937. The latest recorded sale of the property took place in 2020.

¹ *The Rocky Mountain News*, Denver, CO, April 23, 1859.

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Deed Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
05-04-2020	52756-292	Roger E. Race et al.	Marion Dental Properties, LLC
08-17-2017	48929-24	Kara J. Race	Roger E. Race et al.
07-28-1978	4503-359	Roger E. Race et al.	Kara J. Race
05-25-1971	3701-197	Edmund H. Race	Roger E. Race et al.
08-06-1963	3040-160	Gerard F. & Jacqueline A. Cusick	Edmund H. Race
09-27-1958	2661-225	Frances L. Arne	Gerard F. & Jacqueline Cusick
09-13-1950	2116-327	Richard S., Jr. & Alice F. Hunt	James A. & Frances L. Arne
09-06-1945	1888-556	George H. & Eudora E. Winters	Richard S., Jr. & Alice F. Hunt
11-05-1937	1737-178	Fairhaven Institution for Savings	George H. & Eudora E. Winters
10-19-1937	1738-94	Fairhaven Institution for Savings (Foreclosure)	Fairhaven Institution for Savings
07-16-1935	1692-426	Thelma A. Coleman & Adele D. Gifford (Mortgage)	Fairhaven Institution for Savings
03-28-1934	1656-418	Adele D. Gifford	Thelma A. Coleman
Probate		William R. Gifford	Adele D. Gifford
10-06-1892	644-166	Charles F. & Katherine B. Chambelayne	William R. Gifford
02-8-1889	572-524	Sarah M. & George W. Hammond	Charles F. Chambelayne
Probate		Susan S. Ellis	Sarah M. Hammond
Probate		Mary Ann Penniman	Susan S. Ellis
10-07-1864	326-121	Eunice Bassett	Mary Ann Penniman

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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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.