

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

23-40

Marion

MRN.J

MRN.148

Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Rev. Oliver Cobb

Address: 448 (formerly 446) Front Street

Historic Name: Oliver C. Cobb [Jr.] House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: 1850 – 1860

Source: Deed and map research

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Oliver C. Cobb [Jr.], likely

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard & shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Rear addition (20th century)

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 1.0

Setting: Dense linear development of residences developed in the late 18th – late 19th centuries. Housing stock includes mid-sized wood-frame, single-family houses in the Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles on small to medium-sized lots.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): August 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

448 Front Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s)

Form No.

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MRN.J

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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.

448 Front Street occupies a long rectangular lot on the west side of Front Street and faces east. The house is positioned close to the street at the eastern end of the parcel and fronts a shallow front lawn dotted with shrubs. A cleared area with a perimeter of dense vegetation occupies the western half of the property. A drystone wall capped with granite blocks spans the eastern property line at the sidewalk and continues north, extending across the adjacent property at 454 Front Street. Foundation plantings are minimal. A crushed shell driveway enters the property from Front Street at the southwest corner of the property and ends in a circular drive behind the house.

This wood-frame dwelling comprises a one-and-one-half-story, front-gabled, three-bay-by-four bay main block with a single rear dependency. Constructed between 1850 and 1860 in the Greek Revival style, the house retains the majority of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a high brick foundation, exposing a finished basement level at the side elevations. It is likely that the original foundation was granite that was replaced with brick when the basement level was renovated. The house is clad in wood clapboards at the east (façade) and north elevations and weathered wood shingles at all other elevations. A brick chimney rises from the north slope of the roof, which is surfaced with asphalt shingles; a small brick chimney is centered on the roof ridge of the rear addition.

The main block is trimmed with a box cornice, two-part frieze boards, eave returns, and channeled corner pilasters. The side hall main entry at the northernmost bay contains a six-panel wood door framed by full-height sidelights, channeled pilasters, and an entablature. The door fronts a small porch with a slat work railing and a three-step wooden stair that ends at the front lawn. The windows at the first story at the façade are early, single, double-hung, one-over-one sash with molded surrounds, architraves, and paired scroll cornice brackets; those at the upper level have narrow flat surrounds. The windows at the other elevations are double-hung, six-over-six sash with narrow flat surrounds and decorative beaded heads. The basement windows are replacement sash with six-over-six false muntins.

The side-gabled, one-story, three-bay-by-two-bay rear addition is set back from the south elevation of the main block and aligns along the north elevation. It has a saltbox roof which overhangs an open porch spanning the south elevation. There are single entries at the south and west walls.

344 Front Street exemplifies the Greek Revival style. 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, two-part frieze boards, corner pilasters, eave returns, main entry surround with full-height sidelights and an entablature, and six-over-six window sash. The scroll brackets at the window hoods at the façade are characteristic of the later, Italianate style.

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.

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 northernmost portion of what has been known as Marion's Upper Village runs along Front Street from the intersection of Front and Spring Streets to Interstate 195. Less than a mile from the Rochester town line, the Rev. Oliver Cobb Area, where this building is located, is centered along Front Street immediately north of the Old Depot area, the former site

Continuation sheet 1

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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of the rail station. It is so named because the late 18th-century home of Oliver Cobb, the first minister of Marion's First Congregational Church, was located here at 460 Front Street (1799, Rev. Oliver Cobb House, MRN.149). Initially Oliver Cobb served both the church at Rochester and the one at Marion, and this house, his parsonage, was situated at a convenient mid-point between the two churches. A sparsely settled agricultural area during the 18th and early 19th centuries, its rapid residential development began in the mid-1800s. There are two late 18th century buildings in this small area, including the Cobb house and the Hammatt House at 429 Front Street (late 18th c., MRN.144). The mostly modest residences in this area were built throughout the 19th and into the early 20th centuries.

This house is first seen on the 1879 map with R. H. Dorr identified as the owner. On the 1903 map the Dorr Estate is shown as the owner. The first recorded conveyance found for this property, which included land and a house, was its sale by Oliver C. Cobb to Richard H. Dorr in 1862.

Oliver C. Cobb (1828-1918) was the son of Oliver Cobb (1770-1849), the son of Seth Cobb (1740-1821) and Margaret Cooke (1741-1810). He was from Kingston and was married there in 1795 to Sarah Everson. Cobb was a graduate of Brown University and was later awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the same school. He was called to be the minister of the First Church (Congregational) in Rochester in 1798. The original settlement town of Rochester and its church separated into several political entities, including Marion, in the early 19th century. Reverend Cobb became the minister to the church at Sippican where he served until his death in 1849. Reverend Cobb lived next door to the subject property at 460 Front Street.

Oliver C. Cobb [Jr.] was married to Lucy Crocker Ellis (1830-1921), the daughter of Reuben Lawrence Ellis (1801-1887) and Hepsibah [sic] R. Bacon of Barnstable. He was a carpenter, making it likely that he built the subject house himself sometime between 1850 and 1860 based on its appearance. He later served in the Civil War.

Richard H. Dorr (1811-1887) was born in Maine, one of the 14 children of Nathaniel Dorr (1781-1862) and his two wives, Mary Dolly Smith (b.1788) and Mary Goodwin. Richard Dorr was married to Sarah Gould (1816-1885). Richard Dorr appeared to have two vocational callings. The 1865 and 1880 censuses reported his occupation as dentist; the 1870 census noted his occupation as clergyman. The 1867 Plymouth County Directory listed his occupations as clergyman, dentist. His 1887 death certificate indicated his occupation as minister and his name on the family headstone at the North Marion cemetery has the honorific Reverend. No record of where he might have served as a clergyman was found. After his death the property made its way to his son George W. Dorr (1844-1911).

The property was purchased from Dorr's estate in 1913 by Benjamin Franklin Benson (1865-1953). Benson was the son of Rufus Benson (1835-1925) and Ruth Briggs Hathaway (1841-1894) and was married to Caroline Williams Staples (1862-1930). Census reports showed his occupation variously as farmer, day laborer, and teamster. The property was devised through probate to Leila Bliss (Little) Sherman of Marion (1899-1981). It is unclear what her connection might have been to Benson. A registered nurse, she was married to Erland Joseph Sherman, Sr.(1894-1955). Leila Sherman owned the property until 1974. It was purchased by its current owner in 2021.

Deed Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
08-24-2021	54878-323	Jonathan S. & Teri L. Richards	Laurie R. Herbert
0809-2012	41775-307	Jean M. & Robert Buckley	Jonathan S. & Teri L. Richards
11-15-1974	4035-555	Leila B. Sherman	Jean M. Buckley
Probate	71139	Estate of Benjamin F. Benson	Leila B. Sherman
03-08-1913	1146-180	Desire M. Winters	Benjamin F. Benson
01-22-1913	1138-357	Estate of George W. Dorr	Desire M. Winters
07-25-1862	320-67	Oliver Cobb	Richard H. Dorr

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org: census records, vital records, city directories
Atlas of Plymouth County, Boston, MA: George H. Walker & Co., 1879
Atlas of Plymouth County, Boston, MA: L.J. Richards Co., 1903

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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448 Front Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

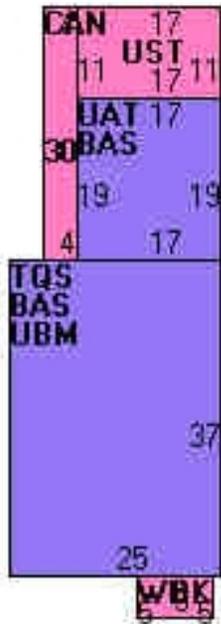
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Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts 1855 H.F. Walling
 McMaster, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
 Olive Hill Sommers, *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. Marion, 1972.
 Plymouth 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.
 Sippican Historical Society: online database
 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 Rev. Oliver Cobb Area of Marion. The Rev. Oliver Cobb Area (MRN.J) 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. Less than a mile south of the Rochester town line, the Rev. Oliver Cobb Area is a linear development along Front Street immediately north of the Old Depot area, the former site of the rail station. A sparsely settled agricultural area during the 18th and early 19th centuries, its rapid residential development began in the mid-1800s. The area is so named because the late 18th-century home of Oliver Cobb, the first minister of Marion's First Congregational Church, was located here at 460 Front Street (ca.1799, Rev. Oliver Cobb House, MRN.149). The potential district's boundaries are those defined in the 1998 MHC survey for the Rev. Oliver Cobb Area (MRN.J).

Under Criterion A, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level for its association with Rev. Oliver Cobb, who simultaneously served both the Congregational church at Rochester and the one at Marion in the early 19th century. His house, the late 18th century parsonage at 460 Front Street, was situated at a convenient mid-point between the two churches.

Under Criterion C, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level in the area of Architecture for its collection of architecturally significant houses dating from the late 18th to the late 19th centuries. These include two distinguished Federal style properties, the Rev. Oliver Cobb House and the Hammatt House at 429 Front Street (late 18th c., MRN.144), along with houses in the Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles.

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.