

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

6-34A

Marion

MRN.C

MRN.603

Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 160 Allen's Point Road

Historic Name: Charles S. Norris Stable

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Stable

Date of Construction: Possibly ca. 1904

Source: Visual analysis

Style/Form: Shingle Style

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Rubblestone & concrete block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (month/year): November 2023

Major Alterations (with dates):

New openings and replacement windows

Condition: Fair - Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 2.37

Setting: Sparsely settled neighborhood on Allen's Point, a small, wooded peninsula between Sippican Harbor to the west and Blankenship Cove to the east. The majority of properties are imposing seasonal dwellings on large waterfront lots and have boat docks. The area was substantially developed from the 1890s through the 1920s.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

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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.

160 Allen's Point Road occupies a large, polygonal parcel that stretches between Allen's Point Road and Blankenship Cove. The dwelling is set back from the road in the western half of the property and faces west. The parcel drops in grade from west to east and the house is bank-built. The terrain transitions to marshland as it approaches the cove, where a boat dock reaches into the water near the northeast corner of the parcel. The property is maintained primarily in lawn dotted with shrubs and clusters of mature trees. Heavier vegetation is massed at the northwest and southwest corners of the parcel. A paved driveway enters the property from Allen's Point Road near the midpoint of the western property line and ends along the north elevation of the house.

The dwelling comprises a one-and-one-half-story, three-bay-by-three-bay, front-gabled main block with a gable-on-hip roof; a one-story, cross-gabled north wing; and a small gabled addition at the rear (east) elevation of the main block. The structure was built ca. 1904 as a stable and converted to a residence around 1953. It exhibits the Shingle Style and although significantly altered, appears to retain many of its original character-defining features, including a dove coat at the gable peak at the façade. The main block has a concrete block foundation, and the north wing rises from a rubblestone foundation. The rubblestone wall extends east and west from the north elevation of the house to function as a tall retaining wall which borders the driveway. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles and the walls are clad in wood shingles. A brick chimney rises from just below the ridge of the north roof slope of the main block.

Trim is limited to a molded cornice. The window and door openings are small relative to the wall surface area and are asymmetrically placed. Most of the windows are single or mullied, double-hung, six-over-six sash with flat surrounds. Openings at the first story at the façade (west elevation) at the main block include a six-panel door fronting a small wooden stoop and three-step stair. The stair meets a paved walkway leading north to the driveway via stone steps in the rubblestone wall. Openings at the second story at the façade comprise three closely set six-over-six windows and a glass-and-panel door with a fire balcony at the northernmost bay. The door is surmounted by a hay hook, suggesting that the opening was originally a hay door. A dove coat occupies the gable peak. The south roof slope at the main block carries a shed dormer.

The north wing incorporates a one-car garage at its north elevation. The rubblestone retaining wall encloses a terrace that spans the rear elevation of the house. A wooden stairway descends to grade from the east wall of the terrace.

160 Allen's Point Road was built in the Shingle Style, a uniquely American form which was introduced in the northeastern United States in the last quarter of the 19th century and reached its zenith of expression in New England seaside resorts and country estates. It was a high-fashion style favored by architects and was primarily employed from 1880 to 1900. The focus of the style was on complex shapes and forms encased within a surface of continuous, naturally weathered shingles on the roof and walls which created patterns of light and shadow. The features that characterize the Shingle Style in the subject house include the expansive use of wood shingles and the gable-on-hip roof.

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.

This house is located on Allen's Point, a spur of land on the eastern shore of Sippican Harbor almost directly across the harbor from Marion Village, the commercial and residential center of the town. Maritime industries drove Marion's economy until the mid-19th century, when the advent of rail service helped to shift the town's economic base to tourism. Affluent urban dwellers from cities like Boston and New York were now able to travel in comfort to seaside destinations like Marion and the town began to attract many notable political, literary, and art world figures. Initially visitors stayed at hotels or rented private houses, but as

Continuation sheet 1

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the end of the century neared and Marion became nationally known as a desirable vacation destination, wealthy individuals began to build their own permanent summer residences. Set on the harbor, Allen's Point was one of the areas which saw this development. With its convenient access to Buzzard's Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, it was especially attractive to those interested in recreational boating.



1879 map.

1903 map.

The 1879 map at left shows Allen's Point (blue arrow) as largely undeveloped farm land. However, by the turn of the 20th century the area had been subdivided and settled with a number of large summer residences as seen on the 1903 map. These imposing houses include an outstanding collection of Shingle Style, Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival residences. Several of these summer homes were designed by prominent American architect J. Randolph Coolidge.

George Delano (1821-1890) is shown as the owner of the roughly 70-acre tract of undeveloped farm land known as Allen's Point on the 1879 map. In 1902 Delano's two surviving sons, Stephen Clark Luce Delano and Charles Henry Leonard Delano, conveyed their interest in the property to Elizabeth (Lizzie) Reed Delano, the widow of their late brother James Delano. Lizzie Delano engaged John M. Allen, a local architect and real estate developer, to subdivide the property and in 1903 he drew up a land plan dividing the tract into eight parcels of between eight and ten acres. These parcels were quickly settled with summer residences and over time the parcels would be further subdivided. For details of the land transactions and subdivision of Allen's Point, please see the narrative description on the 2023 updated data sheet for Area Form MRN.C.

This building stands on Lot #2 which was purchased from Lizzie Delano in 1903 by Charles S. Norris of Brookline [note: the name was incorrectly recorded as Charles S. Morris in the 1903 deed]. Charles S. Norris, the son of David Holden Norris and Ruth Blake Norris, was born in 1856 in Watertown. He was the founder of the Charles S. Norris Piano Company located on Tremont Street in Boston. One of the establishing members of All Saints Church in Brookline, he served there as organist and choirmaster without pay for 31 years.¹ At the time of the land purchase the property spanned the peninsula and included the portion west of Allen's Point Road, where Norris built a dwelling at what is now identified as 163 Allen's Point Road (ca. 1904, Charles S. Norris House, MRN.73). He owned the property for a little more than three years before selling it to George G. Thomas in 1907. The deed noted "the buildings thereon" in the property description, so it can be reasonably assumed that Norris constructed both the main dwelling and the subject building, which was originally a stable, at about the same time.

George C. Thomas (1839-1909), a Philadelphia banker and stockbroker, and his wife Ada Elizabeth Moorehead (1843-1924) owned the property for only three years before his death. He had also purchased 125 Allen's Point Road (ca. 1903, Shepard-Clark House/Fair Oaks, MRN. 67) in 1908, which his estate sold in 1911. His estate sold the subject property to Almira Pitman of Brookline in 1912.

Almira Hollander Pitman (1854-1939) was born in Boston and in 1875 married Benjamin Franklin Pitman (1852-1918), the son of Benjamin Pitman and Liliha Kino 'olē Ho'olūlu of the Hawaiian Islands. Benjamin Pitman was born on Hilo in the Hawaiian Islands and was a direct descendant of the Hawaiian monarchy, which included his mother, Princess Kenoli. He was a prominent Boston merchant who worked as junior partner at the women's clothier L.P. Hollander & Co.² Almira Pitman was a suffragist and women's rights activist who served in various suffrage organizations and was a frequent speaker on behalf of the

¹ "Charles S. Norris of Brookline Dead," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA June 4, 1909.

² "Benjamin F. Pitman, Long a Boston Merchant, Dead," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. July 1, 1918.

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movement. Also an actress and director, she was very active in the Boston theater scene during the first decades of the 20th century and directed numerous performances for the benefit of various charitable organizations. She and her husband had two sons, Benjamin Pitman and Theodore Baldwin Pitman (1892-1956), who inherited the property in 1939. Theodore was a noted painter, illustrator and sculptor. The property was subdivided by Mary Pitman in 1953 and the portion east of Allen's Point Road containing the stable (the subject property) was purchased by Constance Bennett, who with her husband Fred H. Bennett converted the stable to a residence. The portion west of the road containing the main house was purchased in 1956 by Margery J. Clark and is now identified as 163 Allen's Point Road.³

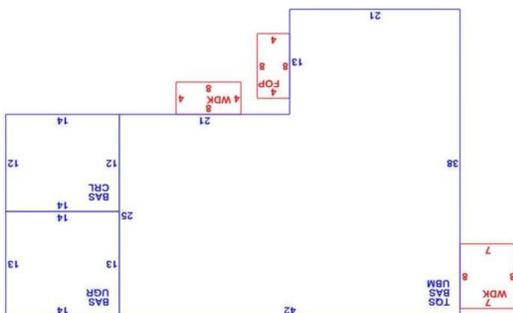
In 1957 the house was purchased by William Henry Howell and his wife Jane Braitmayer (1915-1993) of Poughkeepsie, New York. Henry Howell died in 1961 and Jane Howell was remarried to John A. Smithers, who died in 1989. Jane Smithers retained ownership of the house as a summer residence until her death. An active alumna of Vassar College, she was a leader in local healthcare services in her home in Red Hook, New York. A sailor, she was a member of the Beverly Yacht Club.⁴ The property remains in Howell family ownership.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee	Plan Book-Page
09-24-1998	16630-193	William David Howell	Marian B Howell	
05-26-1996	16226-72	Estate of Jane B. Smithers	William David Howell et al.	
07-30-1957	2584-437	Contance M. Bennett	William H. Howell	
03-31-1953	2264-387	Theodore B. Pitman	Constance Bennett (Fred H. Bennett)	9-343
11-01-1912	1144-93	Estate of George C. Thomas	Almira Pitman	1-944
01-09-1907	989-118	Charles S. Norris	George C. Thomas	
10-04-1903	879-173	Elizabeth R. Delano	Charles S. Norris	

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
- Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts* 1855 H.F. Walling
- McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
- 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
- Sommers, Olive Hill. *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. Marion, 1972.
- Smith, Pete. (ed.) *A Picture Postcard History of Marion, Massachusetts*. New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, 2008.



Assessor's card plan

³ Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Book 2520, Page 433.

⁴ "Jane Braitmayer Smithers," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, Poughkeepsie, NY. April 4, 1993.

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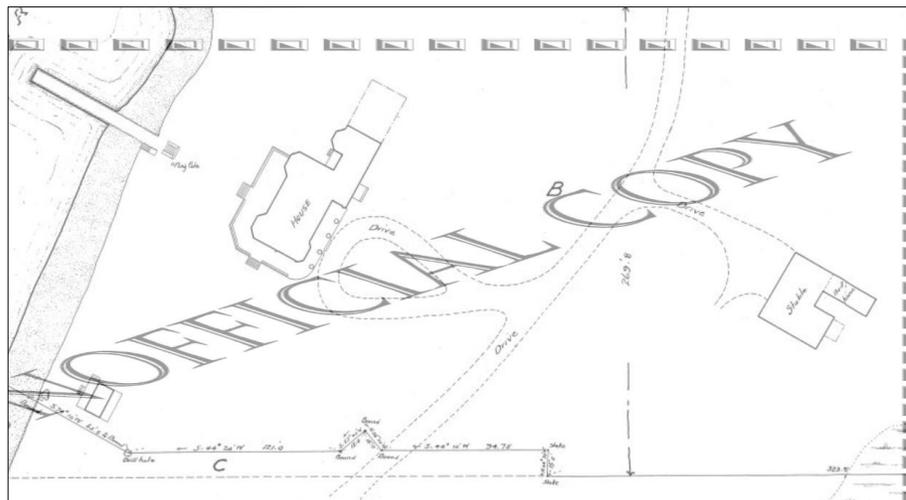
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East and north elevations.



1910 land plan showing the former stable (subject house) at right and 163 Allen's Point Road at left.

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 Edward Gordon (1998) / Lynn Smiledge (2023)

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

This house is recommended as a contributing element to a potential National Register Historic District which would include properties on Allen's Point, a small area situated on a peninsula between Blankenship's Cove on the east and Sippican Harbor on the west. This area is home to a collection of high-style seasonal residences in the Shingle Style, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival styles constructed in the early 20th century. The area includes the Coolidge & Carlson- designed 125 Allen's Point Road (ca.1903, MRN.67) with a garden designed by noted landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff, and its ancillary buildings now at 123 Allen's Point Road (ca.1902, MRN.68) and 131 Allen's Point Road (ca.1904, MRN.71). The house at 151 Allen's Point Road (ca.1903, MRN.72) has also been attributed to Coolidge & Carlson.

The Allen's Point Area is recommended as eligible for listing as a National Register District at the local, and possibly the state, level under Criterion C for Architecture for its nearly intact collection of distinctive dwellings. The majority of the resources here retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association.