

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

14-12

Marion

MRN.62

Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village

Address: 46 Spring Street

Historic Name: Old Stone Studio / Richard Watson
Gilder Studio

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Industrial

Date of Construction: Ca. 1860

Source: Alice Austin Ryder, title research

Style/Form: No style

Architect/Builder: Unknown / Stanford White (1883
chimney mantel piece)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Rubble stone

Wall/Trim: Rubble stone / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Residence (1983)

Garage/apartment (1992)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

None apparent

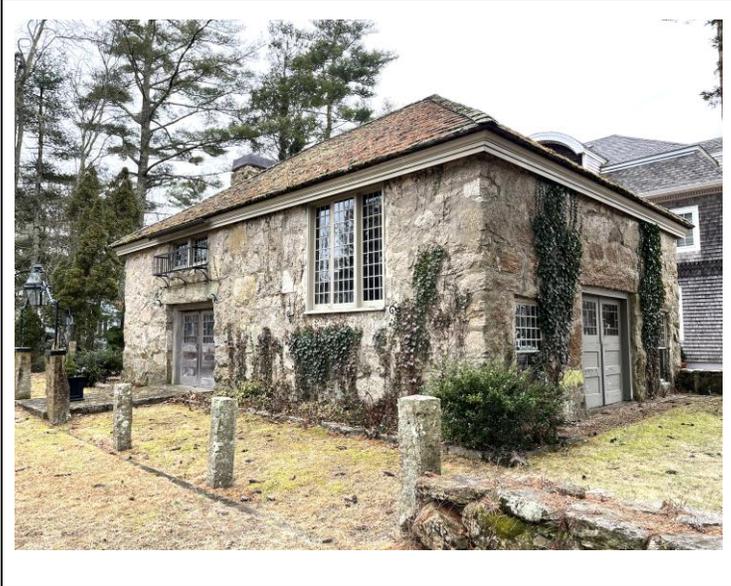
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.75

Setting: Moderately settled neighborhood including residential, institutional, and municipal buildings. Developed in the mid-19th – early 20th centuries with housing stock representing a range of styles including Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival. Moderately-sized, single-family houses on small to medium-sized lots predominate.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*): June 2024

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

46 Spring Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MRN.62

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.

46 Spring Street (The Old Stone Studio) occupies a trapezoidal parcel on the west side of Spring Street and faces east. The adjacent building to the north is the Marion Fire Department Headquarters and south of the property is the Sippican School campus. The building is set near the street at the approximate north-south midpoint of the eastern lot line. The property is maintained in lawn with a cluster of tall pines located off the northeast corner of the Studio and heavy vegetation bordering the western and southern lot lines. A low drystone wall that encloses the property is broken at the façade, which is spanned by a row of heavy granite fence posts. The fence posts are not seen in early images of the building and may have been installed in the late 20th century. A stockade fence lines the western half of the northern property line, which abuts the adjacent fire station. A wide gravel driveway enters the property from Spring Street near the northeast corner of the parcel and ends at a north-facing, three-car garage/apartment located behind the Stone Studio and the main house. The two-and-one-half-story main house, which was built in the 1980s, is set close to the rear elevation of the Studio and was until recently connected to it via a gabled hyphen.

Built of rubble stone around 1860 and originally used for industrial purposes, the Studio retains a high degree of historic architectural integrity. It is a one-room, one-story, two-bay-by-three-bay, side-gabled structure with a shallow hip roof. The building rests on a stone foundation and has a wood shingled roof. A massive rubble stone chimney rises from near the eave of the south roof slope.

Trim is limited to a deep molded cornice. The openings at the façade include an off-center two-leaf entry in the Queen Anne style containing glass-and-panel doors with square multi-light insets. The door has a simple molded surround and carries a heavy granite lintel described on the 1998 Building Form B for the property as a "ton-and-one-half boulder." The entry fronts a shallow stone terrace flanked at the east end by square granite posts carrying a wrought iron archway with a lantern.¹ The entry is surmounted by mullied, 20-light fixed sash set at the cornice. A decorative, wrought-iron pseudo-balcony at the window incorporates "S-S" in the railing design; a slender lance capped by fleurs-de-lis at the ends is suspended from the base of the balcony. These wrought-iron ornamental elements, which were added in the 1930s, lend a Medieval sensibility to the building.

The three openings piercing the north wall of the Studio include double-hung, 20-over-two-light sash flanking a double door that matches the one at the façade minus the heavy lintel. The south elevation contains two doors, both with heavy granite lintels. The rear (west) wall of the Studio has two mullied, 20-light sash set at the cornice and a 20-over-two window at ground level. A single entry with a heavy granite lintel centered on the wall is framed by a ghost image of the one-story gabled structure that connected the Studio with the main house. A patio set in herringbone brick spans the area between the two buildings.

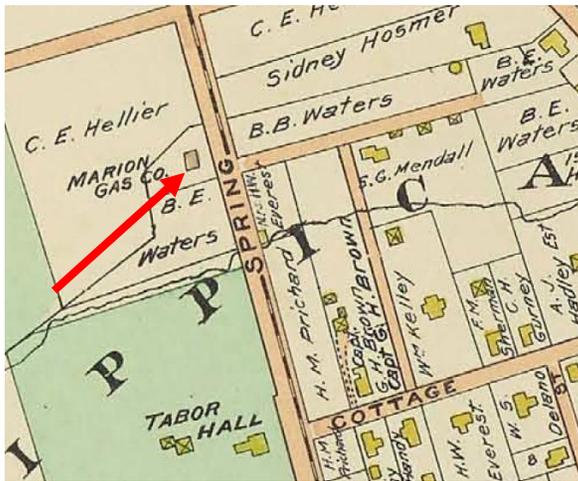
Over the period between 1983 and 1992 a two-and-one-half-story house and a one-and-one-half-story garage/apartment were constructed behind the Studio. Both structures reflect the 20th century Mansard style and feature exaggerated barrel dormers. They are clad in wood shingles and have Colonial Revival trim at the window and door openings. A swimming pool located between the buildings is enclosed by a fence.

¹ Photographs of the Studio show that the wrought iron archway was added between 1972 and 1998.

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. The town has historically consisted of a northern portion, often referred to as the Old Landing, and a southern portion, known once as Wharf Village but more commonly referred to today as The Village or Marion Village. This house is located in the southernmost section of Marion Village, which before 1860 was largely uninhabited. Prior to that time Marion, like other coastal towns, had an economy dependent on salt works, fishing, coastal shipping, and related businesses. 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 Tabor Academy, Elizabeth P. Taber, dramatically enriched the community. Affluent urban dwellers from cities like Boston and New York were now able to travel in comfort to seaside destinations like Marion. The town began to attract many notable political, literary, and art world figures seeking a gentile seaside respite.



1903 map.

This building is located on Spring Street in the northern part of Marion Village. Edward Gordon, author of the 1998 MHC Building Form B for the property, reports that Spring Street began as a dirt path which led from Main Street to the subject building, which was originally part of the salt works operated by Henry Allen.² The building does not appear on the 1855 map and its location is outside the scope of the 1879 map. The building is labeled Marion Gas Co. on the 1903 map. The earliest conveyance found for this property in a clear chain of ownership was the 1855 sale by Barnabas Holmes to Henry Allen of an approximately six and one-half acre parcel of land “known as the “bight lot” for \$667. “Bight” means a long, gradual bend or recess in the shoreline that forms a large, open bay.

Capt, Henry Manly Allen (1802-1887) was the son of Captain Joseph and Rhoda Allen. As his honorific suggests, Henry Allen began his career as a sea captain. He shifted his focus, however, to the salt-making business, and along with George Bonum Nye and Ebenezer Holmes, was a leader in this important business in Marion Village in the middle decades of the 19th century. Allen appears to have been quite prosperous and owned a grand Federal-style home at 60 Water Street (MRN.169).

According to local historians, the subject building was built ca.1820 as part of the Sippican Salt Works. Quoting from the 1998 MHC Building Form B for the property, “This enterprise extended from Cottage Street to the Upper Landing, encompassing most of Tabor Academy’s harbor-side campus.....According to local lore, the Old Stone Studio was originally a place for the conversion of sea water into salt. Usually, this conversion process requires square wooden vats linked to the sea via a system of windmill-powered pumps and pipes. It is more likely that this building was used as a salt storage facility.”³ However, anything but wood frame construction in Marion prior to the 20th century was very rare, and its stone construction suggests a purpose for the building other than simply storing salt. It is more likely that the structure was built at a later date and used as a manufacturing facility for petroleum products as described below.

Henry Allen moved from open-air salt making to oil production in the mid-19th century. The subject building was used to process petroleum — likely into kerosene which had supplanted whale oil as a fuel for home and street lamps. Referring to Elizabeth Taber, the founder of Tabor Academy in Marion, historian Alice Austin Ryder records that she “bought a great tract of land on a lane that led from Main St. up through “Bight,” the Sunday School picnic grounds, and where Capt. Henry Allen had his stone oil factory.”⁴ Stone oil was a synonym for petroleum. Ryder notes that the land Taber purchased was for the new library which she gave to the town in 1872. Ryder further notes, “Captain Henry Alen had built the stone building about 1860 for a petroleum oil

² Gordon, Edward, “The Old Stone Studio,” MHC Building Form MRN.62 (Jan. 1998)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Alice Austin Ryder, *Lands of Sippican, On Buzzards Bay*. New Bedford, MA: Reynolds Printing, 1934, p.264.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

46 Spring Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MRN.62
--	--------

refining plant, probably the first in this section. Mrs. [Elizabeth] Taber had bought a great tract of Allen's land for the [Tabor] Academy, and now the pines where the Sunday School picnics had been held, and the "oil factory" passed to the Gilders."⁵

In 1880 Henry Allen sold the property to the New Bedford Institution for Savings, which sold it the following year to the Rev. Percy Browne of Boston. Percy Browne (1838-1901) was born in Ireland and emigrated with his mother to the United States after the death of his father. Percy was educated at Kenyon Preparatory School and Kenyon College, where he was a classmate and friend of John Cotton Brooks, the youngest brother of the Reverend and later Bishop Philips Brooks. Browne developed a close friendship with Philips Brooks, whose 1877 Trinity Church in Boston had been designed by architect Henry Hobson Richardson.⁶ Through Brooks, Browne also established a relationship with Richardson. Browne's former classmate, the Rev. John Cotton Brooks, was a summer resident of Marion and probably introduced Browne to the charms of the town. In 1881 Richardson designed a house for Browne at 192 Front Street (MRN.211), only a short distance east of the subject property.⁷ In 1886, Brown sold a parcel of land containing the subject building to Richard Watson Gilder and his wife Sarah Helena de Kay Gilder.

Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909), a summer resident of Marion during the late 19th century, was a poet and editor of the *Century Magazine*. Born in Bordentown, New Jersey, Gilder was the son of the Rev. William Henry Gilder. He served in the Union Army during the Civil War and worked as a reporter for the *Newark Advertiser* before joining Scribner's publishing company. The magazine began its existence as *Scribner's Monthly* but was renamed *The Century Magazine* when Gilder became its editor, a position he would hold until his death. Published in New York, the highly regarded magazine combined literature, history, and current events with high quality illustrations. Works by authors including William Dean Howells, Henry James, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman appeared in its pages. A social activist, Gilder was deeply committed to improving the living conditions of new immigrants to New York and the sometimes-desperate conditions of tenement housing.⁸ He was remembered by Theodore Roosevelt after his death as "a man of letters... who worked in a practical fashion for the betterment of social and economic conditions, and took keen and effective interest in our public life. No worthier American citizen has lived during our time."⁹

Gilder was married in 1874 to Helena de Kay (1846-1916), the daughter of Commodore George Coleman De Kay. Helena Gilder was a painter and sculptor and was a founder of the Art Students League and the Society of American Artists. Despite its lack of a roof, she was attracted to this building because of its rustic simplicity and charm and saw it as a studio, and according to Gordon, hired local contractors to cut new windows in the north and street elevations. The design of the immense fireplace mantel piece, which dominates the Studio's interior space and bears the date "1883," is attributed to Stanford White of the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White. Pete Smith, author of *A Picture Postcard History of Marion*, notes that White designed the nine-foot fireplace to resemble a billowing sail and that it was built by Capt. "Tip Ryder," who often provided fishing trips for Gilder and friends. He was assisted by "Old Man" Vale, a Marion stone mason.^{10,11}

The Gilders lived nearby,¹² and used the stone building as a studio, performance venue, and gathering place for many of the literary and artistic notables of Marion's summer residents. Gordon asserts that "the Gilderswere the catalysts for the creation of a glittering summer colony in Marion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While the more conservative captains of industry, bankers, lawyers, doctors, etc. tended to summer in rambling houses out on Marion's points, Wharf Village attracted the more bohemianset. It [the Old Stone Studio] symbolized the sea change that occurred in Marion around the turn of the century. The Gildersreshaped the quiet village into a gay, more natural, more hopeful, brighter place."¹³

⁵ Ibid. p. 291

⁶ Wright, Mark, "H.H. Richardson's House for Revered Browne, Rediscovered," *J. Soc. of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 68 No. 1 (2009) p. 75.

⁷ Ibid. p.76.

⁸ Mathews, Brander, "Richard Watson Gilder," *The North American Review*, Vol. 191 No. 650 (1910) pp. 29-49.

⁹ "Roosevelt Praises Gilder," *The New York Times*, New York, NY, May 3, 1910.

¹⁰ Edward Gordon, "The Old Stone Studio," MHC Building Form MRN.62 (Jan. 1998).

¹¹ Pete Smith, (ed.) *A Picture Postcard History of Marion, Massachusetts*.

¹² E.H. Tripp suggests that they lived in a Cape form house at 182 Front Street (MRN.209).

¹³ Edward Gordon, "The Old Stone Studio."

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

46 Spring Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MRN.62

Among the numerous celebrities who attended salons held in the building by the Gilders in the 1880s and 1890s were President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland; author Henry James; writer and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson; actors John and Ethel Barrymore and Evelyn Nesbitt; sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens; illustrator Charles Dana Gibson; naturalist Louis Agassiz; Arctic explorer General Adolphus Greeley; and architect Stanford White.¹⁴

In 1901, the Gilders sold the property to Emma J. Waters (1864-1950), the wife of Benjamin Waters. Benjamin E. Waters (1863-1962) had begun his long and successful career in 1878 at age 15 in the nascent telephone business by joining the Southern Massachusetts Telephone Company. By 1900 the census listed him living in Marion and employed as the superintendent of the company. Waters was also involved in the early establishment of other utilities in the area and served as president of the local gas company and as manager of the Marion Electric Light company. He was elected as a town selectman in 1940 and was active in the real estate market, developing properties for use as summer rentals. Waters repurposed the building as a facility for the Marion Gas Company and it was used in the production of so-called manufactured, or carbide, gas. Before piped-in natural gas became available, manufactured gas was produced locally and used for residential and street lighting. A ca.1900 photograph of the building in the collection of the Sippican Historical Society shows a windmill beside the Stone Studio, then being used as a gas works. The subject building was shown on the 1921 Sanborn map labeled "Electrical Supplies Store."

Beginning in 1933, Edith Waters Hudson, the daughter of Emma and Benjamin Waters, operated a coffee shop in the building (see image below). Smith notes that in addition to landscaping she added the wrought iron "balcony" and window grilles. The café remained in business until the 1960s. The property was owned by the Waters family until 1970, when it was purchased by Virginia Roy. Roy used the building as an antique shop in the early 1980s.¹⁵

Town assessor records note that the abutting house on the property was constructed in 1992. The property was purchased by the current owners in 2009.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee
01-16-2009	36695-345	Christopher J. & Franca L. Kuppig	Christopher J. & Franca L. Kuppig
12-27-1997	15769-160	Mark L. & Eileen E. Epstein	Christopher J. & Franca L. Kuppig
04-28-1988	8417-62	Glenn & Celine G. Lukowicz	Mark L. & Eileen E. Epstein
03-24-1983	5318-38	Virginia A. Roy	Glenn & Celine G. Lukowicz
07-17-1970	3605-622	Elizabeth K. Waters & Edith W. Hudson	Virginia A. Roy
07-01-1970	3602-580	Everett T. Waters	Elizabeth K. Waters & Edith W. Hudson
Probate	65431	Estate of Emma J. Waters	Elizabeth K. Waters, Edith W. Hudson, & Everett T. Waters
Probate	85933	Estate of Benajmin E. Waters	Emma J. Waters
08-05-1901	855-72	Sarah Helena deKay Gilder & Richard Watson Gilder	Emma J. Waters and Benajmin E. Waters
08-03-1886	534-418	Percy Browne	Sarah Helena de Kay Gilder & Richard Watson Gilder
11-02-1881	474-192	New Bedford Institution for Savings	Percy Browne
01-15-1880	459-177	Henry M. Allen	New Bedford Institution for Savings
10-07-1855	273-29	Barnabas Holmes	Henry M. Allen

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

¹⁴ Edward Gordon, "The Old Stone Studio."

¹⁵ Michael DeCicco, "Old Stone Studio a Sturdy Landmark," GBN Magazine, July 2-15, 1982.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

46 Spring Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MRN.62
--	--------

Atlas of Plymouth County, Boston, MA: L.J. Richards Co., 1903
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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.
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Rider, Alice Austin. *Lands of Sippican on Buzzards Bay*, Reynolds Printing, New Bedford, MA (1934)
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Somers, Olive Hill. *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. Marion, 1972.
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Wright, Mark, "H.H. Richardson's House for Revered Browne, Rediscovered," *J. of the Soc. of Architectural Historians*, (2009) 68-1: p. 74-99



East elevation.



North and west elevations.



Main house, east and north elevations.



Studio ca.1885. Image courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

46 Spring Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MRN.62
--	--------



Chimney and fireplace. Image courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.



Studio ca. 1930s when it was a coffee shop. Postcard image courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.



Studio, mid-20th century. Postcard image courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

46 Spring Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MRN.62
--	--------

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 / Lynn Smiledge

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

The Old Stone Studio / Richard Watson Gilder Studio (ca.1860, MRN.62) is recommended as eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A for Arts and Literature and Criterion C for Architecture. Erected ca. 1860 as a utilitarian structure whose original purpose was the refining of petroleum, the Old Stone Studio is one of only two buildings in Marion constructed entirely of stone. During the late 19th century this one-room building became nationally known as the literary and artistic salon of poet and *Century Magazine* editor Richard Watson Gilder.

Under Criterion A, the building is recommended as eligible at the local level in the area of Arts and Literature for its association with Richard Watson Gilder and the scores of Gilded Age luminaries who visited his salon. These celebrated leaders in the arts included author Henry James; writer and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson; actors John and Ethel Barrymore and Evelyn Nesbitt; sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens; illustrator Charles Dana Gibson; naturalist Louis Agassiz; Artic explorer General Adolphus Greeley; and architect Stanford White. President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland were also frequent visitors.

Under Criterion C, the building is recommended as eligible at the local level in the area of Architecture as a distinctive and well-preserved mid-19th century industrial building. One of only two stone buildings in Marion, it features a massive fireplace mantel piece designed by Stanford White of the renowned architecture firm McKim, Mead & White.

The Old Stone Studio retains substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. It would likely meet Criterion A at the local level and Criterion C at the local level with areas of significance in Arts and Literature and Architecture.