

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	MRN.902
Historic Name:	Bird Island Light Station
Common Name:	
Address:	Bird Island
City/Town:	Marion
Village/Neighborhood:	
Local No:	4;
Year Constructed:	1819
Use(s):	Lighthouse;
Significance:	Maritime History; Military; Transportation;
Area(s):	MRN.B
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register TRA (09/28/1987); Nat'l Register Individual Property (09/28/1987);
Building Materials:	
Demolished	No



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 2:07 PM

HOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
EMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

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DO NOT REMOVE [B] 902 MRN.902
NETRA/INS 9/28/87 NUMBER 4

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

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USGS on set

PHOTOGRAPH KEY

1. BIRD ISLAND LIGHT

HISTORIC NAME: Bird Island Light Station

TOWN: Marion

LOCATION: An island due south of Butler Pt. o
east entrance to Sippican (Marion)

COUNTY: Plymouth CODE: 023 Harbor

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 10th

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Plymouth County Courthouse

(Book 134, p. 270 (1819))

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Bird Island: the lighthouse is the
only standing structure

LAT./LONG.: LAT 41 40'9"N LONG 70 43'4"W

UTM COORDINATE: 19/357/000/4614/200

USGS QUADRANGLE: Prov. RI., Mass.. Conn.

SCALE: 1:250,000

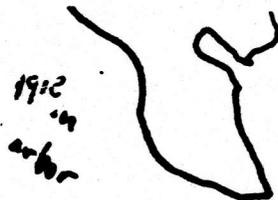
ACREAGE: 3 acres

OWNER(S): Town of Marion
Town Hall
Marion, Massachusetts

(Maintained by the Sippican
Historical Society)

STATUS: Unmanned/Active

SKETCH MAP



Bird Island Lighthouse

Buzzards Bay
21

RECORDED BY: N. L. Salzman

ORGANIZATION: MHC

DATE: July 1981

Bird Island Light, Marion

SITE DESCRIPTION: Bird Island Light, Marion, is located on an island (at high water) on the east side of the mouth of Sippican Harbor, opposite the town of Marion. This island is covered with low scrub and rocks and otherwise serves as a tern nesting ground.

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

MAJOR ELEMENTS DESCRIPTION: The extant element is a privately maintained conical tower (1819). -

TOWER: conical masonry tower painted white; 30' above water; 25' tower.
Originally it was attached to a stone dwelling
Door: modern steel.
Windows: at level 2.
Balcony: projects beyond tower with no coving or brackets beneath. Typical triple railing with vertical grid between posts; knob ornaments at top of post.
Lantern: typical cast iron design with tower portion of iron and incorporating a scuttle door; unusual diagonal astragals between window posts. Surmounted by typical conical roof. Only base to ventilator remains, vent ball and lightning rod gone.

LIGHT CHARACTERISTICS: Fl W 6 sec.
INTERIOR: not accessible

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY:

- 3/5/1819 - George and Betty Blankinship sold land to U.S. Government for \$200.
- 6/19/1819 - Commonwealth of Massachusetts cedes jurisdiction to U.S. Government.
- 1819 - tower constructed; attached to stone dwelling. Although important at the time of its construction, its role gradually diminished because Sippican Harbor was frozen over and therefore during much of the winter, *it was not used*
- 1938 - Hurricane washed away outbuildings.
- 1939 - Sold to town after being declared surplus.
- 7/9/1976 - restored by town and Sippican Historical Society with local contributions (\$13,000). Light restored, automatic beacon installed and tower painted.
- 1981 - Tower was vandalized. Tower again restored by Historical Society (\$1000).

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bird Island Light, Marion, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship as well as associations with the development of aids to navigation in Massachusetts. Constructed in 1817, it is an early masonry tower and although its outbuildings were destroyed in 1938, it remains a locally important navigational landmark in a picturesque position. The light meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the state level. It also meets survey criteria 3a and 4a.

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
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#4



BIRD ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE BUZZARDS BAY MASS.
THE BLACK MARK IS SIXTEEN FEET ABOVE
THE TOWER FOUNDATION AS PER LETTER 2-11-79
FROM DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE LIGHT HOUSE SERVICE