

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

16-157

Marion

N

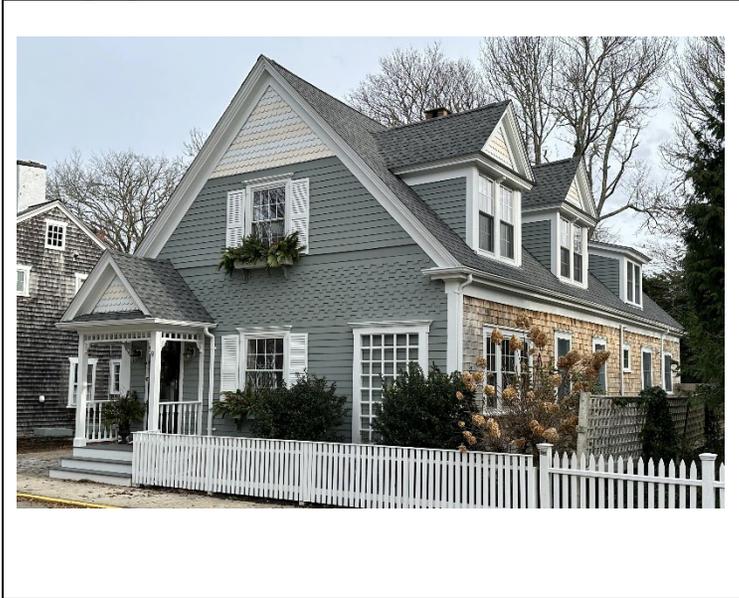
MRN.198

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

**Town/City:** MARION

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 137 Front Street

**Historic Name:** Lucius C. Kelley House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1892

**Source:** Deed research, vital records

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown/Charles Blankinship (poss.)

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles, wood clapboard

Roof: Asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Garden shed

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*)\*:

2006 – addition (kitchen, bath)

\*Based on Property Card and/or observation

**Condition:** Good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.09 acres

**Setting:** This small level parcel is located on the east side of Front Street between Main and South Streets. The surrounding area includes a mix of historic residential, commercial and institutional resources in the heart of Marion Village. The house is set close to the street. A gravel driveway extends along the north side of the house. Landscaping in front of the house includes a wood board fence and foundation plantings.

## Locus Map



Aerial Imagery, 2021

**Recorded by:** Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

**Organization:** Sippican Historical Society

**Date** (*month / year*): February 2023

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

137 FRONT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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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.*

This house is a charming example of the Queen Anne style. The Queen Anne style, popular from ca. 1880-1910, employed different roof shapes and surface materials to enliven a building's elevations and create a more "picturesque" effect than earlier more formal styles. The form of this house consists of a 1½-story, gable-front block, with a prominent cross-gable on the north side, and gable dormers on the south roof slope. The house is clad in a combination of wood clapboards, and wood shingles. The wood shingles on the front elevation, including the gable field of the entrance porch, and the gable field of the south dormers, are patterned - including a variation of sawtooth and fish scale patterns. The variety of roof shapes, and the use of patterned wood shingles are characteristics of the Queen Anne style. It should be noted that it is unknown if these patterned shingles, or some variation of them, are original to the house.

The house rests, like most 19<sup>th</sup> century houses in the village, on a rough-cut granite and fieldstone foundation. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (likely wood shingles originally). The roof has a projecting, molded box cornice with partial returns across the gable ends. The cornices of the gable dormers have full returns, creating full pediments. The off-centered front entrance is shielded by a gabled entry porch. This porch is ornamented with a partial spindle screen. Fenestration includes modern, replacement 8/8 double-hung windows set in surrounds with molded lintels, and 6/6 windows on the side elevations.

A comparison of the Marion Assessor sketch (Figure 2) with the building footprint on the 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 3) shows that the footprint has remained largely unchanged.

## 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.*

While there had been some economic activity and residential development in Sippican Village prior to the Revolution, maritime-related development accelerated into the early-1800s, as happened in many coastal Massachusetts towns, with boat building, whaling, coastal schooner trade, and the salt industry driving the economy. The construction of the First Congregational Meeting House in 1799 (now Marion General Store, 140 Front Street, MRN.22), also helped make Sippican Village the center for spiritual and civic life.<sup>1</sup> Residential development was initially concentrated along Main Street, and the harbor became the site for maritime-related utilitarian buildings and wharfs. By the time the 1855 Walling Map was prepared, Main Street from the harbor west to Pleasant Street was the most densely developed street in the village, and Front Street stopped after South Street (Figure 1).

This house was built in ca. 1892 on the back of the lot of the ca. 1820 Kelley House at 26 Main Street (MRN.236). This house is not shown on the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 4), but is shown on the next available map, the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 5). The owner of the parcel at that time with the two houses was listed as "L. C. Kelley." This refers to Lucius C. Kelley (1840-1924). The transition in Marion Village from a maritime industrial to seasonal economy is evidenced by Census records of Kelley's career: he was listed as (ship) caulker (1880 Census), day laborer (1900 Census), laborer odd jobs (1910 Census) and then a laborer for a private estate (1920 Census).

Lucius Kelley built this house for his one child, daughter Jane F. Kelley (1864-1946). She had married Charles B. Blankinship in New Bedford in 1886. Charles Blankinship (1864-1938) was listed as a carpenter in Census records, so perhaps he was involved

<sup>1</sup> Marion was first settled in 1679 as Sippican, a district of Rochester, and was not incorporated as a separate town until 1852. The name Sippican Village continues to be used interchangeably with Marion Village.

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in building the house. Lucius Kelley sold the house for a nominal sum to Blankinship in 1892.<sup>2</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the house was sold to Blankinship shortly after it was built, which would mean a ca. 1892 construction date.

The house remained in the family until 1914, when Blankinship sold it to Annie C. Cobb of Marion.<sup>3</sup> By that time, Annie (Wallen) Cobb (1864-1944) was a widow; her husband, blacksmith Charles C. Cobb, had died in 1894. The house passed to their son, Fred L. Cobb (1885-1978). He was listed as a grocery store manager (1920, 1930 US Census), and then grocery store owner (1940 US Census). This refers to the former First Congregational Meeting House built in 1799, which had been converted into what is now the Marion General Store in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (140 Front Street, MRN.22). Fred Cobb and Charles Hathaway had purchased it from Andrew Hadley. Cobb sold the house out of the family in 1949.<sup>4</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and atlases:

1879, *Atlas of Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Geo. H Walker & Co, 1879.

1903, *Atlas of Surveys of Plymouth County*. Springfield, MA: L. J. Richards Co., 1903.

1933, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1933.

Ancestry.com – Vital records.

Gordon, Edward. MHC Area Form N, Wharf Village, 1998.

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

Sippican Historical Society Collections.



Photo 2. View from Front Street, looking southeast.

<sup>2</sup> Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 645/ Page 171.

<sup>3</sup> PCR, Book 1182/ Page 387.

<sup>4</sup> PCR, Book 2059/ Page 311.

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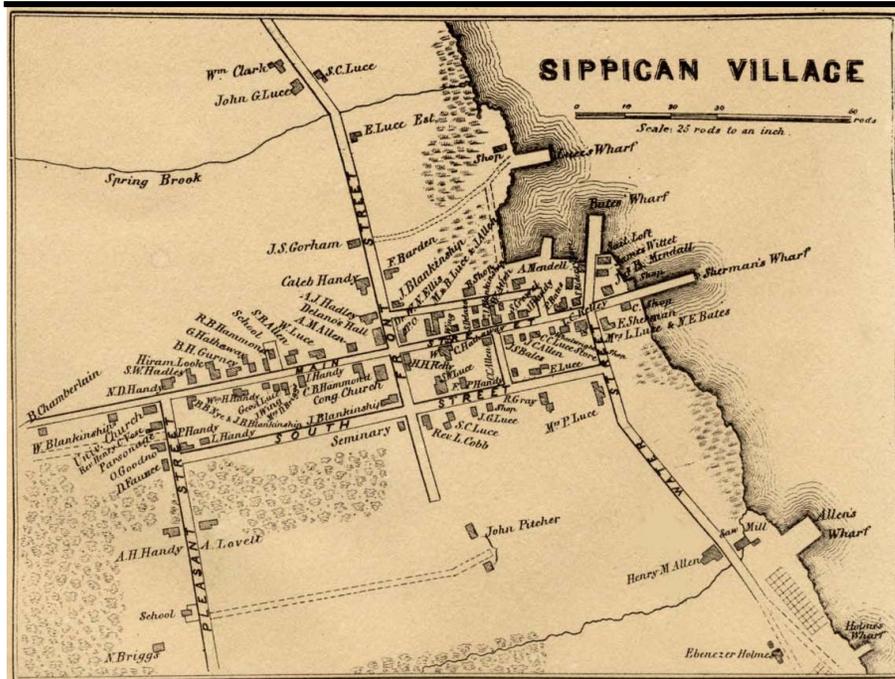


Figure 1. 1855 Walling Map of Marion, Sippican Village Inset Map.

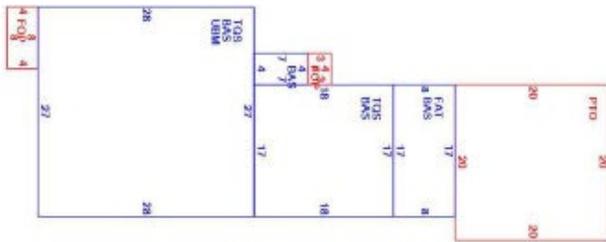


Figure 2. Marion Assessor Sketch (decks, porches in red).



Figure 3. Detail from 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Plate 2 (arrow added).



Figure 4. Detail of 1879 County Atlas (arrow added).



Figure 5. Detail of 1903 County Atlas (arrow added).

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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 Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant for Sippican Historical Society  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

This property is a contributing resource in the combined Areas of Wharf Village-Sippican Village (MRN.N) and Water Street (MRN.L), hereinafter referred to as Marion Village.\*

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History. Marion Village contains the great majority of buildings connected to Marion's historical maritime development beginning in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century. With the rise of saltmaking, shipyards, and whaling, maritime activity increased dramatically into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as did residential development in Marion Village. In addition to the houses built by those in the maritime industry, Marion Village contains numerous buildings and structures associated with maritime industrial activity, including a chandlery, sail loft, cooperage, and wharves. As Marion Village's prosperity became linked to Sippican Harbor, Marion Village also became the commercial, political and institutional center of the town.

Marion Village is also recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation. Starting in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, maritime activity declined significantly. The decline in maritime activity was eventually replaced by the rise in the 1870s of a summer colony as Marion Village emerged as an elite summer resort. This was facilitated by the arrival of train service in the 1854. Summer visitors, including artists and writers, were drawn Sippican Harbor's beauty and tranquility. A large hotel, the Sippican Hotel, was located at the corner of South and Water Streets, and a few houses were converted to inns. While the hotel was town down in 1929, a large livery complex built by the Hiller Brothers at 147 Front Street (MRN.216) is extant. They provided horse-drawn vehicles to summer visitors registered at the Sippican Hotel, and ferried guests back and forth between the hotel and the train depot. In Marion Village, ownership (or occupancy through rental) of many houses began to shift from local maritime families to seasonal residents, including nationally-noteworthy politicians, businessmen, artists and writers. During this period, Marion Village also saw the addition of high style, architect-designed summer cottages and recreation resources.

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Marion Village is a remarkably intact historic town center, including a compact collection of historic dwellings, along with a few churches, schools, commercial buildings and recreation buildings. Marion Village contains a great concentration of Federal and Greek Revival houses; and examples of later Victorian-era styles, including high-style examples of summer house architecture along Sippican Harbor and large institutional buildings not found elsewhere in Marion.

The great majority of resources in Marion Village retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association.

\*The potential Marion Village district boundaries include surveyed areas within the boundary of MRN.N completed in 2020-2022 for Barden-Hiller (MRN.Y), Cottage Street (MRN.Z), Main Street (MRN.AA), South Street (MRN.AB), Upper Pleasant Street (MRN.AC), and Upper Main Street (MRN.AH).