

FORM B – BUILDING

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

14-82B

Marion

N, Y

MRN.215

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

Town/City: MARION

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village -
Barden-Hiller (MRN.Y)

Photograph



Address: 17 Hiller Street

Historic Name: Robert B. and Edith Hiller House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1889-1903]

Source: Title research, 1903 Plymouth County Atlas

Style/Form: Victorian Eclectic

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite, fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard, wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Rear addition (date unknown)

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

None on record.

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.10 acres

Setting: This small parcel is located on the north side of Hiller Street. This parcel backs up to Barden's Boat Yard (MRN.O) and the Hiller Brothers complex (147 Front Street, MRN.394). The property slopes down to the north, and is landscaped with lawn and foundation plantings. There is a concrete parking area west of the house.

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

17 HILLER STREET

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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 small house can be characterized as Victorian Eclectic – meaning it was built during the Victorian era but does not display sufficient form or ornamental details to connect it to a specific style. This 1½-story house is four bays wide, has a side-gable form, and a prominent, off-centered cross-gable on the front elevation. The house rests, like most 19th century houses in the village, on a combination rough-cut granite and fieldstone foundation. The front elevation is clad in wood clapboards with plain cornerboards, and remaining elevations are clad in wood shingles. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (likely wood shingles originally), and has a projecting molded box cornice.

Fenestration consists primarily of wood, double-hung 6/6 sash set in surrounds with molded lintels. The front entrance has a paneled wood door with two lites, set in a broad, flat surround surmounted by a hood supported by Victorian-era decorative brackets. The building appears to have been expanded during the 20th century by a two-story rear addition.

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.

Hiller Street retains the largest concentration of special use structures in Marion Village, including late-19th century utilitarian buildings providing a glimpse of an early working waterfront area.¹ The street was an unnamed way on the 1855 Walling Map of Marion; was labeled "Second Street" on the 1879 Plymouth County Map; and referred to as Back Street in deeds of the late-19th century. By ca. 1900, it had been renamed Hiller Street, after the industrious family that owned most of the residences and utilitarian structures on the north side of the street.

This house is shown on the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas with the name "R. B. Hiller" (Figure 2). This refers to Robert Bennett Hiller. The house is located immediately adjacent to the large Hiller Brothers Coal Lumber and Livery complex at 147 Front Street, (MRN.394). Brothers Robert B. and Isaac E. Hiller acquired land in this area in six deeds between 1889 and 1915 from families including the Bardens and the Luces, and also from their father, Isaac Hiller. According to Judith Rosbe's *Images of America, Marion*, this house was built in 1880 for Robert B. Hiller. However, given that there are no deeds going back that far connected to Robert B. Hiller, and given that he would have been 17 in 1880, that date may not be accurate.

Robert B. (1863-1937) and Isaac E. (1866-1948) Hiller were born in Mattapoisett and established their livery, lumber, and coal business in this area after these purchases. As stated in MRN.Y, "the surviving buildings on the interior of this area are associated with their business that would be continued by several generations of the family, shifting their transportation services from horses to automobiles and operating a Chrysler-Plymouth dealership for several decades."

Robert Hiller married Edith Bryant Howard (1870-1965) in Fairhaven in 1890. He entered the lumber business with his brother Isaac E. Hiller. As stated in MRN.Y, Robert Hiller traveled a great deal as a horse trader and was well known because of that activity. Among the Hiller brothers many ventures, they provided horse drawn vehicles to summer visitors registered at the Sippican House Hotel, and ferried guests back and forth between the hotel and the depot. According to a 1903-04 advertisement, the Hiller Brothers operated a "boarding and sale stables with barges to all trains." They were "agents" for Hatch and Company Express and "promptly attended to teaming and jobbers." The Hillers were also dealers in coal, wood, lumber, nails and paints. By 1916, the Hillers' livery stable had been converted into a garage, but they also continued their coal and lumber operations. In addition,

¹ See MRN.N for broader discussion of Barden-Hiller Area.

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starting in the late-1890s, the Hiller brothers developed cranberry bogs in Marion. They were cited in Robert Hiller's obituary (*Wareham Courier* 12/3/1937) as "pioneers in the cranberry industry here."

Given that the Hiller brothers began acquiring land in this area in 1889, and the house is shown on the 1903 County Atlas, the house was likely built sometime during that period. This building is again shown, now within the bounds of the Hiller Brothers complex, on the 1908 and 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, labeled as a dwelling (Figures 3, 4).

This house remains in the Hiller family.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and Atlases:

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

1908, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1908.

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

Ancestry.com – Vital records.

Dempsey and Clemson. MHC Area Form Y, Barden-Hiller, 2021.

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

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

Rosbe, Judith Westlund. *Images of America, Marion*. Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, SC, 2000.

Sippican Historical Society Collections.

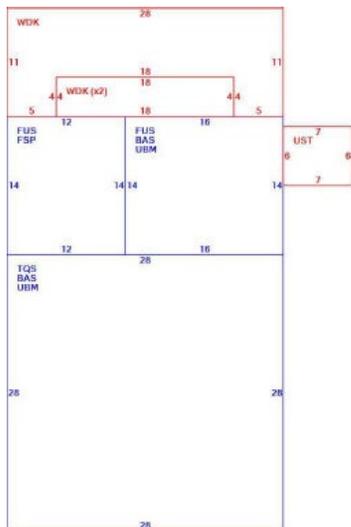


Figure 1. Marion Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View from Hiller Street, looking northwest.

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Figure 2. Detail of 1903 Plymouth County Map (arrow added).

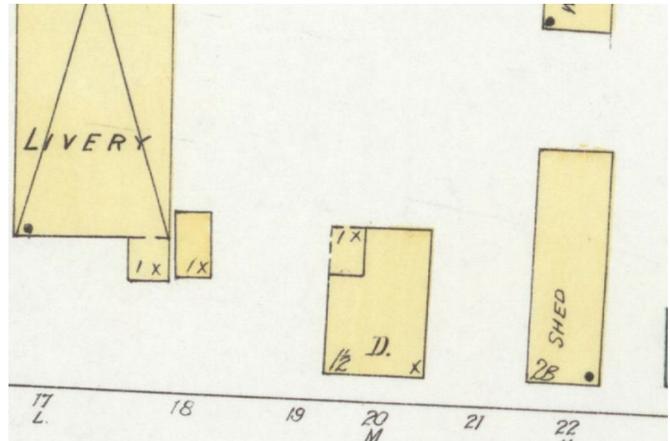


Figure 3. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



Figure 4. Detail of 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

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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-18th century. With the rise of saltmaking, shipyards, and whaling, maritime activity increased dramatically into the mid-19th 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-19th 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).