

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

15 -67A

Marion

MRN.AH,
N

MRN.268

Town/City: Marion

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

Address: 108 Main Street

Historic Name: Elijah Braley House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Ca. 1845

Source: Deed and map research

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Elijah Brayley, probable

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Removal of enclosed portico (after 1998)

Replacement windows

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.19

Setting: Diverse residential neighborhood developed in the mid-19th – early 20th centuries. Housing stock represents a range of styles including Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival. Surrounded mostly by moderately-sized, wood-frame, single-family houses on small to medium-sized lots.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION 108 Main 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.

108 Main Street occupies a trapezoidal lot on the south side of Main Street and faces north. The house is positioned near the street on a terraced rise retained by granite blocks. The parcel is maintained chiefly in lawn dotted with small trees and is bordered with tall arbor vitae along the east and west property lines. A gravel driveway enters the property from Briggs Lane at the southern (rear) property line.

This wood-frame dwelling comprises a two-story, front-gabled, three-bay-by-three bay main block with a one-and-one-half story rear (south) wing. Constructed around 1845 in the Greek Revival style, this once high-style house retains many of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a high stone foundation and is clad in painted wood shingles. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. A multi-colored brick eave wall chimney rises from grade at the west elevation of the main block.

The house is trimmed with a boxed cornice, one and two-part frieze boards, and wide corner pilasters. The closed pediment, which is faced with flush wood clapboards, contains a triangular louvered opening at the gable peak. The side hall entry at the westernmost bay contains a glass-and-panel door framed by partial-height sidelights and a transom that have been covered with wood panels; the glazed unit is set within a modern two-part surround. The door fronts a concrete stoop and stair and a concrete walkway leading to Main Street. The enclosed, flat-roofed portico seen on late 20th century photographs of the house has been removed; it was fully glazed above a paneled knee wall and contained elaborate applied and incised Federal-style details (see the photograph that follows).

The windows are single, double-hung, one-over-one replacement sash with flat surrounds that touch the frieze board at the second story. A diamond-shaped window with a molded surround occupies the northernmost bay of the main block on the west elevation. The one-and-one-half-story rear wing is set back from the west elevation of the main block and aligns along its east elevation. It has a one-story, shed-roofed enclosed porch at the west elevation, a shed dormer on the west roof slope, and an enclosed gabled cellar entry at the rear (south) wall.

108 Main Street was built in Greek Revival style. Greek Revival was the predominant style of American architecture from about 1830 to 1850, but the form continued to be used well into the second half of the 19th century. Inspired by the architecture of ancient Greek temples and associated with democratic ideals, it was widely disseminated through the house plan books of Massachusetts architect Asher Benjamin. The identifying Greek Revival features of this house include the front-gabled orientation of the main block, boxed cornice, closed pediment, corner pilasters, and two-part frieze boards. The remaining treatment at the main entry, which may be original, reflects the earlier Federal style (1780-1820) with its obscured partial sidelights and transom.

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.

Marion Village, 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. Main Street runs east to west through Marion Village from Sippican Harbor to Mill Street (Route 6). The western portion of Main Street between Spring Street and Mill Street, along with Park Street to the north and Briggs Lane to the south, comprise the neighborhood know as Upper Main. The 1855 map shows this part of Main Street to be sparsely settled compared to the more densely built eastern end of the street. Later

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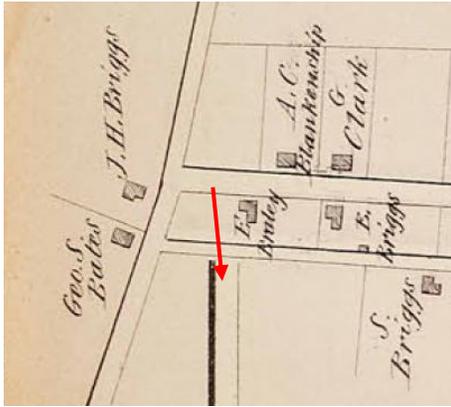
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maps show that most of the resources in this section of Main Street were built in the second half of the 19th century and into the early decades of the 20th century. The first owners of the earlier houses in this area were typically mariners and farmers.



1879 map

This house appears on the 1855, 1879, and 1903 maps with E. Braley shown as owner. It is sited near the corner of Main and Mill Streets at the intersection once known as "Braley's Corner." The first recorded conveyance found for this property recorded the 1858 sale of a parcel of land from Barnabas Holmes to Elijah Braley for \$100. The deed describes the property conveyed as "a certain tract of land on which Braley's house now stands."

Barnabas B. Holmes (1833-1902) was the son of Barnabas Holmes (1798-1855) and Sylvia Delano Clap Holmes (1796-1861) and the great-grandson of Marion salt maker and large land holder, Ebenezer Holmes (1783-1869). The younger Holmes married Sarah A. Ellis in Marion in 1856 and was listed in the 1880 census as schoolteacher. By 1900 Barnabas B. Holmes had moved from Marion to Elizabeth, New Jersey, where he served as a school principal.

The somewhat unusual arrangement between Holmes and Braley whereby Holmes allowed Braley to build a house on his property was also seen directly across the road at 617 Mill Street. Barnabas Holmes's father arranged for George E. Bates to build a house on a small parcel of his land that Bates subsequently purchased in 1853. It can be reasonably presumed that both Braley and Bates paid Holmes rent for the use of the land although the arrangement is not referenced in either of the deeds.

Elijah Braley (1808-1896) was the son of Amos Braley (1768-1816) and Lucy Morton (1768-1852). A carpenter who briefly served as Marion's herring inspector, Elijah was first married in 1831 to Susan Blankinship (1811-1843), daughter of George and Sarah Handy Blankinship. Braley married Sylvia (nee Carswell) Robbins, a widow, in 1845. Census records from 1855 on show Sylvia Braley's daughter from her first marriage, Sylvia Robbins (1828-1914), living with the couple. Sylvia Robbins was married to Isaac Dodge (1828-1901) of Fairhaven.

Based on the apparent age and style of the house, it is probable that it was built by Braley around the time of his marriage to Sylvia Robbins in 1845. After the Civil War the Braleys operated the house as a so-called tramp house. At the time Massachusetts in particular was the destination for itinerant men, many of whom were war veterans, who rode the slow-moving freight trains from town to town. Unlike other states, Massachusetts treated these men relatively well. A tramp could obtain modest meals and lodging for two nights in one of these establishments and the Braleys received a stipend from the town for their services.

Sylvia Robbins Dodge, Braley's stepdaughter, was left the property by her stepfather and in 1909 sold the house and land to Joseph H. Clark and his wife Lizzie, who were active in the real estate development of the Upper Main Street Area and built a number of houses in this part of the town. The property was purchased in 1925 by Isaac Elwood Hiller (1866-1948), who was president of the Hiller Company, a coal and lumber dealer, and owned a Chrysler automobile dealership located at Front and Hiller Streets. Hiller was also active in the cranberry farming business and with his brother Robert, owned more than 75 acres of bogs. According to the 1920 census both Isaac and Robert Hiller lived on Front Street.

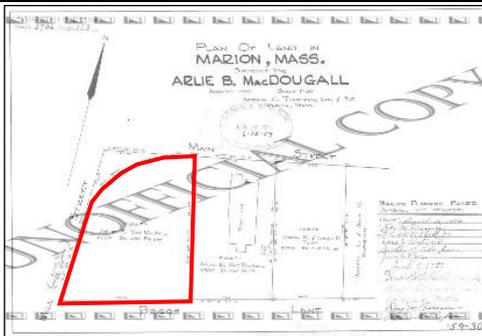
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Hiller sold the property in 1947 to Arlie B. MacDougall. Arlie Belle (nee Bennett) MacDougall (1905-1961) was the daughter of Frederick H. (1875-1965) and Forrestine Warner Bennett and the wife of Roy Silke MacDougall. Her parents owned a house in Marion at 57 Water Street (now razed) where the 1940 census showed her living with her son William F. MacDougall (1934-2016). In 1958 Arlie MacDougall sub-divided the property into two parcels according to the plan at left and conveyed the undeveloped western parcel, outlined in red on the plan, to her son and his wife Susan MacDougall (Plymouth Registry of Deeds. Book 2706/ Page 133); this property became 112 Main Street. After Arlie's death in 1961, the subject house and land at 108 Main Street were inherited by William McDougall. It was purchased by the current owners in 2020.

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds June 12, 1959.

Deed Research

| Date | Book-Page | Grantor | Grantee |
|------------|-----------|--|------------------------------------|
| 10-29-2020 | 53720-289 | Edwin P. & Joan T. Tiffany | Ethan J. Gerber |
| 08-30-1984 | 5768-331 | Helen M. Presnol et al. | Edwin P. & Joan T. Tiffany |
| 02-15-1979 | 4615-403 | Helen M. Presnol | Helen M. Presnol et al. |
| 03-14-1974 | 3972-730 | Benjamin Presnol | Helen M. Presnol |
| 09-27-1968 | 3480-154 | Helen M. Presnol f/n/a Helen M. Oliveira | Benjamin & Helen M. Presnol |
| 06-20-1966 | 3303-192 | Eugene & Helen M. Oliveira | Helen M. Oliveira |
| 12-09-1963 | 3075-199 | William F. MacDougall | Eugene & Helen M. Oliveira |
| Probate | | Estate of Arlie B. MacDougall | William F. MacDougall |
| 06-07-1947 | 1964-113 | Isaac E. Hiller | Arlie B. MacDougall (sub-division) |
| 01-28-1925 | 1478-222 | Amos C. Delano | Isaac E. Hiller |
| 01-17-1925 | 1477-193 | Joseph H. & Lizzie Clark | Amos C. Delano |
| 02-02-1909 | 1014-318 | Sylvia Dodge | Joseph H. Clark |
| | | Elijah Braley | Sylvia Dodge |
| 06-04-1858 | 301-241 | Barnabas & Sarah Holmes | Elijah Braley (Land) |

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
 McMaster, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
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 Rosbe, Judith. *Marion*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.
 Rosbe, Judith. *Marion in the Golden Age*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009.
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 Smith, Pete (ed.). *A Picture Postcard History of Marion, Massachusetts*. New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, 2008.

"When Massachusetts was a paradise for tramps," <https://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/massachusetts-paradise-tramps/>

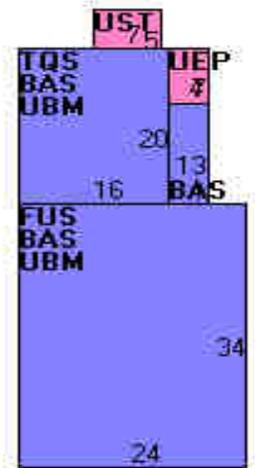
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Assessor's card plan



1972 photograph. Note the enclosed portico, no longer extant.



East and north elevations.

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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 Claire W. Dempsey / edited by Lynn Smiledge

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

This house is recommended as a contributing element in a potential National Register Historic District which would include the Upper Main Street Area. The Upper Main Street Area (MRN.AH,N), a subsection of the larger Wharf Village Area (MRN.N), is a collection of houses constructed in the mid-19th through the early 20th centuries in which simple, small-to-mid-sized dwellings predominate. Along with the other surveyed areas listed below, it is recommended as a contributing element in a potential National Register Historic District for Marion Village. Known variously as Sippican, Wharf Village, and Lower Village, Marion's center is an exceptionally well-preserved harbor village including an important array of public buildings, stores and workplaces, and dwellings dating from the 18th through the 20th century. The village constitutes a small, dense grid along two early and principal streets, Main Street running east-west and Front Street running north-south. Other east-west (Briggs, Cottage, Hiller, and South) and north-south (Spring, Park, Pleasant, School) streets were added as the village grew. The proposed district includes typical public buildings, including churches and schools, as well as a group of exceptional gifts to the town from Elizabeth Taber. The concentration of early dwellings on Main Street is exceptional. Front Street is one of Marion's commercial zones, with shops and other businesses serving the community; some resources from the village's maritime history survive as well, there and on Hiller and off Main. Dwellings here present fine examples of regionally popular forms including Capes, ell houses, end houses, and picturesque cottages, with a handful of later dwellings interspersed. The comparatively small scale of the buildings and lots, as well as the uniform treatment of wood shingles and clapboards, combine to create an extraordinary historic landscape deserving of greater recognition and continued preservation.

The potential district's boundaries are those of the surveyed areas covered during 2020/22, for the 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,N) areas. To these areas should be added the town's public buildings (Town Hall and Library and Natural History Museum (MRN.59 and 60) at 2 and 8 Spring Street as well as their neighbors and might extend further up and down Front Street.

Most of the resources here retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The district would likely meet criteria A and C at the local and possibly at the state level, with areas of significance in architecture, maritime history, and social history.