

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

26 – 21

Marion,  
MA

MRN.44

**Town/City:** Marion

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Gifford's Corner

## Photograph



## Locus Map (*North is Up*)



**Address:** 8 Parlowtown Road (formerly 681 Mill St.)

**Historic Name:** Bethuel and Jane Dexter House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1817

**Source:** Visual, title

**Style/Form:** Federal / Cape

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: Fieldstone parged with concrete

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** Garage and other structures only partially visible from the public way

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Addition at west end of house (before 2011); removal of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Queen Anne alterations, gazebo moved (around 2011); chimney removed (after 2011)

**Condition:** Good

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

**Acreage:** 3.75 acres

**Setting:** On Mill Street, a historic route between Sippican Wharf Village and Mattapoisett. Surrounding buildings are a mix of later 19<sup>th</sup> and early/mid-20<sup>th</sup> century single family houses.

**Recorded by:** Jennifer B. Doherty

**Organization:** Marion Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): March, 2021

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

8 PARLOWTOWN ROAD

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Area(s) Form No.

MRN.44

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Bethuel and Jane Dexter House is a ca. 1817 Federal style Cape house that has been altered over the years, including a late 19<sup>th</sup> century picturesque remodeling and a more recent removal of much of that material. Sited on the west side of Mill Street, the Dexter House faces southeast across the street. The main body of the house takes the Cape form – a single story, five bays wide, two piles deep, with a side-gable roof. A one-story, roughly one-room wing projects from the rear pile of the east elevation. A larger addition covers the full depth and height of the west elevation, with the rear of this addition rising to a full two stories.

The main body of the house and the wing to the east sit on granite block foundations, while the addition to the west sits on a poured concrete foundation, indicating it is a later phase of construction. The house is covered in wood shingles, painted on the façade and left to weather on the sides. Asphalt shingles cover the roof. The windows are 6/6 wood sash protected by exterior storm windows. The centered main entry features a simple surround with five square lights above the door.

The house has been heavily altered since it was previously documented in 1998 (see photo, below). At that time, the house retained an elaborate late 19<sup>th</sup> century Queen Anne style porch, along with a circular pavilion at the end of the porch. The porch and a large dormer were removed by 2011, and the gazebo has been separated from the house and moved to the rear since that time. Additionally, the house had a center chimney that has been removed since 2011.

The Dexter House sits on a notably large lot, over three acres, but sits close to Mill Street, rather than set back toward Parlowtown Road. Access to the house is provided by a driveway off of Parlowtown Road, although previously the house was assigned the address of 681 Mill Street. Much of the lot around the house is open, but it is more wooded towards the north and west sides. Aerial images show several additional structures on the lot to the north of the house, although the clearest one visible is a garage or large workshop. This one-and-a-half story gabled structure sits on a poured concrete foundation and is covered in wood shingles.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Mill Street has served as a historic route of travel between Sippican Village and Mattapoisett, and has been shown on maps as early as 1794. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a small neighborhood of farmers had developed south of Mill Street's intersection with Converse and Parlowtown roads; in 1855, three houses stood in the area. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the neighborhood acquired the name Gifford's Corner, named for Edward W. Gifford whose house was located south of Gifford's Corner Road. Around the turn of the century Azorean and Cape Verdean immigrants moved into or built houses in the neighborhood, expanding the residential node. Many of the men worked as laborers, particularly gardeners on Marion's numerous private estates. Today, descendants of these families still live in the area. The area has never had a strong commercial or industrial component, evident in the landscape today, compose mainly of single family dwellings. For additional information on the development of Gifford's Corner, see MRN.XXX.

The Bethuel and Jane Dexter House was likely constructed in about 1817. That year, Bethuel Dexter (1784-1855) purchased two parcels of land on the west side of the road to Mattapoisett (Mill Street) from George B. Nye and Theophilus Pitcher.<sup>1</sup> That same year, Dexter married Jane Blankinship (d. 1854); their marriage may have been Dexter's impetus for purchasing the land and building a house.<sup>2</sup> The couple did not have any children. The 1850 census recorded Dexter as a ship

<sup>1</sup> PCRD 130:214, 1817; PCRD 130:271, 1817

<sup>2</sup> Ancestry.com: Find-A-Grave; US Federal Census of Population for 1850.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MARION

8 PARLOWTOWN ROAD

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MRN.44

carpenter. Little else is known about the Dexters. Bethuel Dexter was marked at the house on the 1855 map of Marion, the same year as his death.

It is unclear what happened to the property in the years immediately after Dexter's death. But by 1866, it was owned by David and Delia A. Lewis. However, it is unclear if they ever lived at the property; they are consistently listed as living in Rochester, even after Marion was split from that town.<sup>3</sup> Lewis was recorded as the operator of the Rochester poor house when the 1850 census was taken; in 1865, he was listed as a farmer. In 1866, Lewis conveyed a 1.75-acre parcel on the west side of the road to Mattapoisett, identified in the deed as the Bethuel Dexter homestead, to Albert W. Taber.<sup>4</sup> However it was Albert W. Taber's parents and siblings who were recorded at the Dexter House in the 1870 census.<sup>5</sup> Bartholomew W. and Fanny Taber were listed with their four sons, one daughter, and son-in-law. While Bartholomew W. Taber worked as a peddler, his sons and son-in-law were all mariners. Bartholomew W. Taber was marked at the house on the 1879 map, but was recorded in Brockton when the 1880 census was taken.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it appears the property transitioned into a summer estate with out-of-town owners, like many other properties in Marion at that time. The Queen Anne style finish was likely added to the property at this time. In 1883, Albert W. Taber conveyed the property, still not quite two acres, to Caroline Mitchell Burnaby of New York.<sup>6</sup> She owned the property briefly before selling it to Ann Maria Grant *Cutter* Tomkins (d. 1930) of Chicago.<sup>7</sup> Tomkins' husband, the Rev. Dr. Floyd W. Tomkins (1850-1932) was the prominent minister of Philadelphia's Protestant Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, serving as the rector of that church for 33 years upon his death. A graduate of Harvard, the General Theological Seminary of New York, the University of Pennsylvania, Temple College, and the University of the South at Sewanee, Dr. Tomkins was ordained in 1875. After the couple married, they served as missionaries in the American West. They had three daughters and one son. Around the time of the Tomkins' purchase of the Dexter House in 1889, Dr. Tomkins was serving at various New England churches in Keene, New York, Hartford, and Providence. During the time of the Tomkins' ownership of the Dexter House, Ann M. G. Tomkins acquired additional parcels around the house to bring the lot to its present size.<sup>8</sup> "F. W. Tompkins [sic]" was marked at the house on the 1903 map.

The Tomkins sold the property in 1915 to Christian Monteiro (1882-1945), a native of Cape Verde who arrived in the United States in 1900.<sup>9</sup> Several other Azorean and Cape Verdean families were already living in the area at the time. Monteiro was recorded on Mill Street in the 1920 census, although by this time his last name was shortened to "Monte," the family name that would continue through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> In 1920, he was living with his wife, Leichandrina *Marshall* Monte (1897-1958), their son Joseph Monte (1916-1996), and their infant daughter Mary D. Monte (1919-1998). The family is consistently listed in census records as Black. Christian Monte worked as a laborer at a private estate and at the Kittansett Club golf course. The family was still together in 1930, but son Joseph Monte had moved out by the time the 1940 census was taken. That year he was recorded in Fairhaven, at the family house of his new wife, Katherine Frances Rasmussen. Mary D. Monte was listed at the house in the 1966 street directory, working as a floor superintendent. After that, it is unclear who, if any, of the Monte family members continued to live in the house, but Joseph and Katherine Monte, and later their sons, Bruce J. Monte and Barry W. Monte, owned the house until 2000.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com: Massachusetts State Census for 1865; US Federal Census of Population for 1850.

<sup>4</sup> PCRD 332:273, 1866

<sup>5</sup> Ancestry.com: Massachusetts, US, Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988; US Federal Census of Population for 1860, 1870, 1880.

<sup>6</sup> PCRD 497:7, 1883

<sup>7</sup> PCRD 574:109, 1888/1889

<sup>8</sup> PCRD 644:244, 1892/1893; PCRD 644:245, 1892/1893; PCRD 647:387, 1893

<sup>9</sup> PCRD 1222:158, 1915

<sup>10</sup> Ancestry.com: Find-A-Grave; US Federal Census of Population for 1920, 1930, 1940.

<sup>11</sup> PCRD 17440:344, 1999; PCRD 18494:3, 2000; PCRD 18494:8, 2000

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

8 PARLOWTOWN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MRN.44

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1903 L. J. Richards & Co, *New Topographic Atlas of Surveys of Plymouth County ... Massachusetts*

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Gordon, Edward W. "MRN.44 – Bethuel Dexter-Bartholomew W. Taber House," Massachusetts Historical Commission Building Inventory Form. For the Sippican Historical Society, March, 1998.

Leonard, Mary Hall. *Mattapoissett and Old Rochester, Massachusetts.* New York, NY: The Grafton Press, 1907.

"Mrs. Floyd W. Tomkins," *The New York Times*, November 4, 1930.

"Mrs. Monte," *The Standard-Times*, November 18, 1958.

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds (PCRD): see footnotes, book:page, date signed/date recorded if notably different, otherwise only date recorded

*Vital Records of Rochester, MA to the end of the year 1849*



The façade and west elevation of the Bethuel and Jane Dexter House. Note the pavilion to the left that has been moved from the front of the house.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MARION

8 PARLOWTOWN ROAD

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Area(s) Form No.

	MRN.44
--	--------



The garage or workshop to the north of the Bethuel and Jane Dexter House.



When the Bethuel and Jane Dexter House was last documented, it had a Queen Anne style porch on the front, and the pavilion was attached to the porch.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MARION

8 PARLOWTOWN ROAD

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Area(s) Form No.

	MRN.44
--	--------



By 2011, the porch had been removed but the pavilion was still on the front of the house. The house also retained a chimney. Taken from Google Streetview.