

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16-135B

Marion

MRN.L

MRN.170

Town/City: Marion

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

Address: 62 (formerly 64) Water Street

Historic Name: Frederick Mendell House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: 18th century

Source: Map and deed research

Style/Form: Three-quarter Cape

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete-parged brick

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage
Workshop
Shed

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

West and south additions (early 2000s)

Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:** 1981

Acreage: 1.19

Setting: Homogeneous residential neighborhood of predominately high-style Shingle Style and Queen Anne houses, principally developed in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. Surrounded mostly by large, wood-frame, single-family houses on generous lots. In close proximity to Sippican Harbor.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): January 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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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.

62 Water Street occupies a deep, irregularly-shaped lot on the west side of Water Street. The house is positioned near Water Street in the eastern quarter of the parcel and faces east towards Sippican Harbor. The house is surrounded by grass and sparse, low vegetation. The rear (western) portion of the property is more densely vegetated with tall shrubs and mature trees. The property is bordered along Water Street by a rubble stone wall with granite block capstones.

This early house, which was moved to this location in 1981 (see the historical narrative below), is a three-quarter Cape with an early ell and two later additions. The main block of the building is a one-and-one-half-story, four-bay-by-two-bay, side-gabled, wood-frame house with a three-bay-by-two-bay ell set back from the façade (east elevation) at the north elevation. Although the house was at one time assigned a late-17th century construction date by local historians, its appearance is suggestive of an 18th-century house. The structure has been altered and determination of its exact age would require further physical investigation. The chimney placement and extra width of the southernmost bay at the façade suggests that the house may have originally been a three-bay half Cape that was expanded with an additional bay. The house rests on a concrete-parged brick foundation. The walls are clad in weathered wood shingles and the roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. A tall, corbelled brick chimney rises from just below the roof ridge at the main block in alignment with the entry; a second corbelled brick chimney rises from the west roof slope at the south addition.

Trim elements at the main block and ell are limited to narrow corner boards. The windows at the first story are double-hung, one-over-one sash; the upper sash are smaller than the lower sash, indicating that the original windows had fewer lights on the top sash than the lower sash. The window openings have simple jack-arch lintels and lipped sills and touch the cornice at the façade. The entry at the main block contains a six-panel wood door framed by narrow, fluted pilasters and an entablature with a dentilled cornice. While the door surround appears to be old, it is not original to the house and may have been salvaged. The earlier entry treatment seen on an historic image of the house (see the photograph below) was a shallow, enclosed projecting bay with a deep entablature that extended above the cornice. The door fronts two granite steps and a brick walkway leading towards Water Street, where it is not accommodated by a break in the stone wall.

The three openings at the façade of the ell include a modern door with full-height glazing at the southern-most bay and two windows with flat surrounds equal in size and sash configuration to those at the main block. The door fronts a two-step stair with a wrought iron railing. A one-and-one-half-story, cross-gabled addition along the rear (west) elevation of the main block incorporates the ell. The addition at the south elevation of the main block comprises two telescoping, gable-roofed components rising above a tall concrete foundation clad with painted wood panels at the facade; it is trimmed with corner and frieze boards. The southern-most component, which has a gull wing roof extension at the rear elevation, has a semi-hexagonal bay window at the façade. A wooden deck with a slat work railing and a lattice skirt wraps the southeast corner of the addition.

Three outbuildings described as a garage, workshop and shed near the center of the parcel could not be well visualized. They are accessed by a gravel driveway that enters the property from Water Street along the southern boundary line.

The Cape Cod house form, a one-story side-gabled house with a central chimney and steeply-pitched roof, emerged in southeastern New England ca. 1700 and saw continued use through the mid-19th century. The three-quarter Cape design was one of the earlier iterations of this house type. Defining characteristics of the Cape style illustrated in this house include the three-quarter Cape configuration (four bays with an off-center entry), side-gabled roof, chimney in alignment with the entry, corner boards, and small window openings.

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.

The Village of Marion, 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. This house is located in the southernmost section of Marion Village near the waterfront, which before 1860 was largely uninhabited. Prior to that time Marion, like other coastal towns, was dependent on fishing, coastal shipping and related businesses such as the production of salt from sea water. Salt was a vital commodity for fisheries, and this section of Marion Village was the site of several salt works. Maritime industries were dominant in Marion until the mid-19th century, when the advent of rail service began to facilitate tourism. At the same time, new cultural and educational institutions endowed by the founder of Tabor Academy, Elizabeth P. Taber, dramatically enriched the community.

Affluent urban dwellers from cities like Boston and New York were now able to travel in comfort to seaside destinations like Marion. The town began to attract many notable political, literary, and art world figures seeking a genteel seaside respite. Initially visitors stayed at hotels or rented private houses, but as the end of the century neared and Marion became nationally known as a desirable vacation destination, wealthy individuals began to build their own permanent summer residences. This desirable waterfront area, once home to salt works, became the site of grand summer cottages. These imposing houses include an outstanding collection of Shingle Style residences and fine examples of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles. Several of these residences were designed by prominent American architects including Charles A. Coolidge, James T. Kelley and William Gibbons Preston. Henry Hobson Richardson, the most celebrated American architect of the day, designed the first Shingle Style house in Marion. It was built in 1881 for the Reverend Percy Browne at 192 Front Street (1881, Rev. Percy Browne-Sidney Hosmer House, MRN. 211) just north of this waterfront neighborhood.

In contrast to the late 19th-century houses which predominate on Water Street, this building consists of an 18th century Cape-style house moved to this site in 1981 and expanded by 21st century additions. The house was originally located on a parcel in the northern part of Marion Village (historically known as Old Landing) at the southeast corner of the intersection of Ryder Lane and Mill Road (MA Rte. 6) and abutting the Old Landing Cemetery. The property appears on the 1855 map with F. Mendell shown as owner and on the 1903 map with C.F. Potter as owner. The earliest conveyance found for this property was the 1896 deed registering the sale of one-half interest in the property from Anna Mendell to Clara Mendell.



Clara Gilbert Chloe Fiske Mendell (1869-1930) and her sister Anna B. Mendell (1875-1899) were the daughters of Elbridge G. and Emily M. Mendell of Marion. Elbridge Mendell was the son of Frederick (1806-1885) and Clarissa (1808-1893) Mendell, the owners of the property noted on the 1855 map. Shortly before her death in 1896 from consumption (tuberculosis), Anna Mendell deeded her one-half interest in the homestead to her sister, Clara. That deed states that the property had been inherited by the two sisters from their grandparents. In 1886, Clara had married Charles H. Potter, the son of William H. (1835-1907) and Lydia Ann Haskins Potter (1843-1932). Clara and Charles Potter had three children: Emma O. (1890-1930), Edith O. (1892-1975), and Elmer E. Potter (1896-1957).

An article posted on the Mattapoisett Museum website referenced below describes an incident in 1902 which generated much local excitement and national interest. It involved this house, its owners Clara and Charles Potter, and their boarder James McDonald. For reasons that are unclear the 54-year-old McDonald had left his wife and family in Scituate and come to Marion. A former hotel proprietor, he found work in the village at a local restaurant frequented by the Potters. McDonald took up residence as a boarder with the couple. Soon questions began to be raised in the town about the nature of the relationship between Clara Potter and James McDonald and rumors circulated that they might be illegally selling alcoholic beverages. When town officials hesitated to act on these allegations because of lack of proof, a group of village men organized with the intent to rectify the situation themselves. On the night of August 7, 1902, a mob reported to be 50-men strong pulled McDonald out of the house and proceeded to tar and feather him. He was able to escape, and later charges were brought against seven men that McDonald

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had identified. However, after a well-publicized trial, they were found not guilty by the jury and set free. James McDonald left Marion and perhaps surprisingly, Clara and Charles Potter continued to live together in this house until their deaths.

In 1917 Clara and Charles' son, Elmer Potter, was married in Cambridge to Mary McNally, daughter of Morris and Mary Hanigan McNally. The couple lived in Cambridge and later in Arlington and had two children, Charles B. Potter and Mary C. Potter. In 1936, after the deaths of Clara and Charles Potter, the property was conveyed to their daughter-in-law Mary Potter, who held it until 1947 when it passed to her son Charles B. Potter. It passed out of the Potter family in 1964 when it was sold to Henderson L. and Thelma B. Ladner. Henderson Ladner owned the Marion garage and in 1950 was named chief of the Marion Fire Department. The widowed Thelma Ladner sold the property in 1980 to the Sippican Corporation located on the opposite side of Mill Street (MA Rte. 6), which in turn deeded it to the Town of Marion presumably to allow expansion of the Old Landing Cemetery. The assumption that the house was moved to its current location at this time is confirmed by the Marion assessor's card, which notes that the house was moved in 1981.



The parcel that the house was moved to in 1981 is shown as lot E on the 1957 subdivision plan for Frederica D. Poett, who sold two lots in that year to Hugh O'Neill Hencken. Poett had acquired the land through probate from Cecil Clark Davis (1877-1955), daughter of John Marshall and Mary Louise Clark and former wife of journalist and reporter Richard Harding Davis. Cecil, an accomplished portrait artist, summered in Santa Barbara, California where she met Frederica Diblee Poett. Poett became Cecil's assistant and companion and was bequeathed the large Clark property, which originally included the parcels now occupied by the houses at 62, 72 and 70 Water Street (1900/2006, Clark Carriage House, MRN.503).

1957 Subdivision Plan for Frederica Poett.

Thalassa had acquired the parcels at 62 and 70 Water Street in 1957, owned and occupied the parcel at 72 Water Street (1900, George U. Crocker House, MRN.172) at the corner of Vine and Water Streets. Hencken was a leading American archaeologist who served for 40 years as both the curator of European archaeology and the director of the American School of Prehistoric Research at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. Hencken attended Princeton University and received his doctorate from Cambridge University in England. He led a number of archaeological digs in the British Isles and Europe and was the author of more than a dozen books. Hugh Hencken was a founding member of the Sippican Historical Society and the editor of *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*, in which this house is pictured at its original location at Ryder Lane and Old Mill Road.

Hugh O'Neill Hencken (1902-1981), who with his wife

Hugh Hencken was married to Mary Thalassa Alford Cruso Hencken (1909-1997), also a trained archaeologist, who he had met on one of his many trips to Britain. Born in London, she attended the London School of Economics and was a curator at the London Museum. Using Thalassa Cruso as her professional name, she became well known for her work as a gardening expert and advocate. She appeared from 1966-1969 on the highly successful WGBH-TV series "Making Things Grow," was the author of four books and numerous magazine articles on gardening, and for many years wrote a gardening column for the *Boston Globe*. The house was moved to Water Street in 1981, the year of Hugh Hencken's death. Given the couple's training as archaeologists and their shared interest in history, it is reasonable to assume that it was done in an effort to preserve one of the town's important historic resources.

The property was conveyed by the Hencken real estate trust to John B. and Katherine H. Howard in 1997. It was subsequently purchased by Caleb W. and Kelley S. Hudak, the current owners.

Deed Research: Land

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
11-29-2021	56097-172	John B. & Katherine H. Howard	Caleb W. & Kelley S. Hudak
09-30-1997	15522-212	Hencken Real Estate Trust	John B. & Katherine H. Howard

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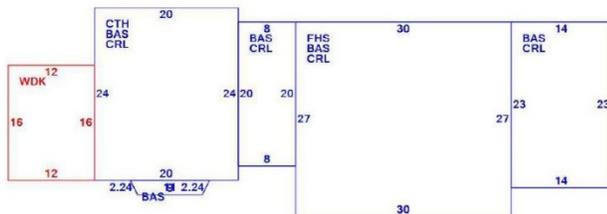
07-16-1984	13033-313	Mary Thalassa Alford Hencken	Hencken Real Estate Trust
05-11-1984	5670-236	Estate of Hugh O'Neill Hencken	Mary Thalassa Alford Hencken
11-2-1973	3945-264	Hugh O'Neil Hencken	Hugh O'Neil & Mary Thalassa Alford Hencken
10-7-1957	2598-33	Frederica D. Poett	Hugh O'Neil Hencken
	Probate	Cecil Clark Davis	Frederica D. Poett

Deed Research: House

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
08-25-1980	4934-95	Sippican Corporation (Lockheed Martin)	Town of Marion
06-25-1980	4843-348	Thelma B. Ladner	Sippican Corporation
07-28-1964	3128-480	Charles B. Potter	Henderson L. & Thelma B. Ladner
05-13-1947	1955-310	Mary Potter	Charles B. Potter
12-29-1936	1718-395	Estate of Clara F. Potter	Mary Potter
10-14-1896	776-395	Anna B. Mendell	Clara F. Mendell Potter
		Estate of Frederick Mendell	Anna B. & Clara F. Mendell

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- "Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 79, Noted Archaeologist and Museum Chief," *The New York Times*, September 4, 1981.
 "Thalassa Cruso, 88, Plant Lover Who Shared Her Passion on TV," *The New York Times*, June 18, 1997.
 Elmer Potter obituary in *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA, June 3, 1956.
 Mattapoisett Museum website at <https://www.mattapoisettmuseum.org/post/the-marion-tar-feather-mob>



Assessor's card plan

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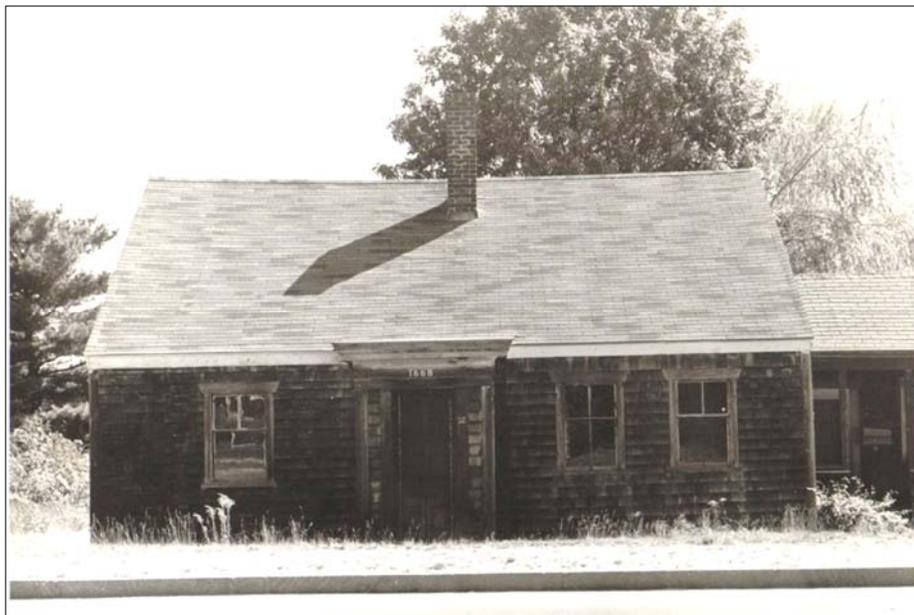
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Façade (east elevation).



House at original Ryder Land location, date unknown. Photograph courtesy of Sippican Historical Society.

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Additionally, the early 19th century residence at 60 Water Street (MRN.169) was originally owned by Captain Henry M. Allen, one of the pioneers of Marion's salt-making industry.

Under Criterion C, the area is recommended as eligible at the local, and possibly the state, level in the area of Architecture for its outstanding and exceptionally well-preserved collection of high-style houses on generous lots which date from the late 19th through the early 20th century. The area includes distinguished examples of the Queen Anne, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival styles, several of which were designed by prominent American architects including Charles A. Coolidge, James T. Kelley and William Gibbons Preston. The only non-residential building in the area is the Craftsman-style, Charles A. Coolidge-designed Sippican Tennis Club at 20 Holmes Street (MRN.157).

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