

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16-170

Marion

MRN.L

MRN.502

**Town/City:** Marion

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

**Address:** 29 Water Street

**Historic Name:** Mary A. Knowlton House

**Uses:** Present: Residential

Original: Residential

**Date of Construction:** Ca. 1915

**Source:** Map & deed research

**Style/Form:** Colonial Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Not visible

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Wood shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

None

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

Garage addition (after 1921)

Northeast corner of porch enclosed (20<sup>th</sup> century)

**Condition:** Excellent

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

**Acreage:** 0.6

**Setting:** Homogeneous residential neighborhood of predominately high-style Shingle Style and Queen Anne houses, principally developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Surrounded mostly by large, wood-frame, single-family houses on generous lots. Borders the shoreline along Sippican Harbor.

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Lynn Smiledge

**Organization:** Marion Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): January 2022

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

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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.*

**29 Water Street** occupies an irregularly-shaped waterfront parcel on the western shore of Sippican Harbor. The house faces west and is positioned in the eastern half of the property. The area around the house and between the house and the harbor is maintained in grass; the balance of the property is thick with mature trees. There are low shrubs and foundation plantings at the facade. A gravel driveway enters the property from Water Street and circles a planting bed at the facade. The beach at the eastern property boundary is retained by a low stone wall.

The building is a two-story, wood-frame house comprising a four-bay-by-three-bay main block and two dependencies, all with gambrel roofs. The dependencies include an angled northwest wing linked to a two-car garage. Constructed ca. 1915 in the Colonial Revival style, it retains the majority of its original character-defining features. A deep, integrated open porch spans the south and east elevations of the main block. The walls are clad in weathered wood shingles finished with narrow, contrasting wood trim. The roof is surfaced with wood shingles. Double-flue brick chimneys rise from the west roof slope of the main block.

The second story overhangs the first story at the side-gabled main block. An extension of the overhang at the northernmost bay at the façade (west elevation) provides a shed roof over the entrance portico. The portico has narrow rectangular posts with integrated carved brackets and shelters a four-panel wood door flanked by full-height sidelights. A continuous shed dormer with four irregularly-placed window openings occupies the lower slope of the gambrel roof. The shed dormer is in turn surmounted by a single, shallow shed dormer. Fenestration at the main block and dependencies consists primarily of single, double-hung, eight-over-two and six-over-two windows with molded surrounds set at the frieze boards.

The hip-roofed porch at the harbor-facing south elevation of the main block has large rectangular posts and a lattice-work skirt. A two-step wood stair meets it from the driveway at the façade. The porch continues along the east elevation, where it is integrated into the lower slope of the gambrel roof. A band of large, single-light fixed sash occupies the open portion of the porch. At the northeast corner of the main block the porch is enclosed by full-height glazing. A hipped dormer centered at the east roof slope is flanked by shed dormers.

The side-gabled northwest wing extends at an angle from the northwest corner of the main block. The second story overhangs the first story, as it does at the main block. The wing has continuous shed dormers at both the front and rear roof slopes. A single shed dormer at the outermost bay at the façade aligns with a deeply recessed entry at first story. The front-gabled garage adjoining the northwest wing has two wood-paneled garage doors and mulled windows at the upper story.

29 Water Street is an example of the asymmetrical subtype of the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival period in America (1880–1955) saw a resurgence of patriotism and a return to the architectural styles of the early years of the republic. Combining the classical architectural elements of the Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival periods, the Colonial Revival style was the most popular style in America for private and public buildings between the World Wars. The characteristic Colonial Revival features of this house include its gambrel roofs and overhangs, continuous shed dormers, multi-light window glazing, and full-height sidelights at the main entry.

## 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

*Continuation sheet 1*

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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-19<sup>th</sup> 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.

This house does not appear on the 1910 map but is shown on the 1921 Sanborn map. The first recorded conveyance for the property registered the sale of a parcel of land from Ebenezer Holmes to Mary A. Knowlton and her daughter Ada C. Knowlton in 1905. Mary A. (nee Frost) Knowlton (1849-1938) was the wife of Daniel Waldo Knowlton (1846-1897). Daniel Knowlton was the scion of a prominent family in Upton, Massachusetts which had founded the Knowlton & Sons Company in 1836, a manufacturer of straw hats and other straw goods. He graduated from Phillips Academy, Andover and only briefly attended Harvard College after being forced to curtail his education because of failing eyesight. Knowlton became a proprietor of the family company and held that position until his death at age 51.

The 1910 map shows a house directly across from this property on the west side of Water Street with Mrs. M.A. Knowlton shown as the owner. It can be reasonably presumed that the subject house was built sometime between 1910 and 1921. Ada Knowlton (1876-1948), the couple's daughter, was married to Philadelphia lawyer Oswald Chew (1876-1948). Their June 1908 wedding "of considerable social importance" was held at Saint Gabriel's chapel in Marion with a number of prominent guests, including Massachusetts acting governor Eben S. Draper and writer Richard Harding Davis and his artist wife Cecil Clark Davis.

After the deaths of Oswald and Ada Chew in 1948, the property passed to Ada's younger brother Daniel Waldo Knowlton (1881-1969). He was a 1903 graduate of Harvard University and served in a field artillery unit during World War I. A lawyer, Knowlton served as chief counsel for the Federal Interstate Commerce Commission. In 1955 the house was conveyed to another Knowlton brother, Philip B. Knowlton of Radnor, Pennsylvania (1893-1984). In 1960 the property was sold to John P. Kendall, the son of Henry Plimpton Kendall (1878-1959), who acquired the house next door at 35 Water Street (ca.1910, Ebenezer Holmes III – Henry P. Kendall House, MRN.307) in 1912. Both houses are still in Kendall family ownership. Henry P. Kendall was the founder and chairman of the board of the Kendall Company, one of the country's largest producers of medical and surgical supplies. His son John P. Kendall served as chairman of the Kendall Company until his retirement.

## Deed Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
05-14-1996	14361-253	John P. Kendall	Water Street Realty Trust
09-17-1960	2803-60	Philip B. Knowlton	John P. Kendall
07-25-1955	2438-161	Daniel W. Knowlton	Philip B. Knowlton
Probate	63618/65659	Ada & Oswald Chew	Daniel W. Knowlton
11-04-1905	933-82	Ebenezer Holmes	Mary A. Knowlton & Ada C. Knowlton

## **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*, H.F. Walling, 1855.

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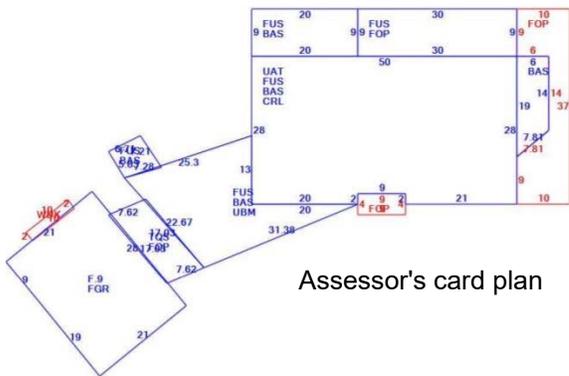
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McMaster, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.  
Olive Hill Sommers, *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. Marion, 1972.  
Plymouth County Registry of Deeds  
Rosbe, Judith. *Marion*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.  
Rosbe, Judith. *Marion in the Golden Age*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009.  
Sippican Historical Society: online database  
Smith, Pete (ed.). *A Picture Postcard History of Marion, Massachusetts*. New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, 2008.

"Knowlton Wedding Announcement," *The Evening Herald*, Fall River, MA, June 4, 1908.  
"Prominent Philadelphia Attorney Dies," *The Sentinel*, Carlisle, PA, December 7, 1949.



South and east elevations.



29 Water Street at right, cropped image from an historic postcard. House identified on the card as the Knowlton House. Date unknown. Postcard image courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.

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 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 for the Water Street Area of Marion Village. The Water Street Area (MRN.L) is recommended as eligible for listing as a National Register District at the local level under Criterion A for Social History and Criterion C for Architecture. The area constitutes a grid along Water Street running north-south between Vine and Lewis Streets and including the eastern portions of the adjoining east-west streets (Allen, Holmes and Lewis), and a short alley (Pie Alley) running north-south between Holmes and Lewis. The potential district's boundaries are those defined in the 1998 survey for the Water Street Area (MRN.L), to which four properties on Water and Lewis Streets have been added.

**Under Criterion A**, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level for its association with the economic revitalization of the town. Marion saw dramatic growth in tourism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century facilitated by the advent of rail service and the rise of new cultural and educational institutions that enriched the community. Affluent urban dwellers from cities like Boston and New York were able to travel in comfort to seaside destinations like Marion, and the town began to attract many notable political, literary, and art world figures who built large summer residences along the Sippican Harbor waterfront. The construction and maintenance of these grand properties sparked demand for a variety of skilled trades and service industries along with the need for housing for this new class of workers and prompted the rapid growth of adjacent neighborhoods to accommodate these workers and their families.

Numbered among the prominent summer residents of the Water Street Area during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Marion was a highly desirable and nationally-known summer destination, were President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland (46 Water Street, MRN.9); the Reverend John Brooks and his brother and frequent visitor, Reverend Phillips Brooks (1 Allen Street, MRN. 304 and 9 Allen Street, MRN. 306); Henry Kendall, founder of the Kendall (medical supply) Company (35 Water Street, MRN.307); James Austin, chief justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court (MRN.171); Amory Houghton, chairman of Corning Glass Works, ambassador to France, and president of the Boy Scouts of America (23 Water Street, MRN.167); and Stanley R. McCormick, son of the inventor and founder of the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company (10 Lewis Street, MRN.491).

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Additionally, the early 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> 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.