

FORM B – BUILDING

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

14-61 Marion N, Y MRN.205

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: 160 Front Street

Historic Name: Russell Gray House/
Rosamond Inn

Uses: Present: Commercial- Retail

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1857

Source: Deed research

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles, tongue-in-groove/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

Commercial alterations and additions (dates unknown).

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.15 acres

Setting: This small parcel borders on Front and Cottage Streets. The former house faces Front Street, with a long rear ell and store additions set close to Cottage Street. A gravel parking area is located south of the house off Front Street. The surrounding area includes a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional resources.

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

160 FRONT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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 is mid-19th century, gable-front house was altered and expanded in the 20th century as its use evolved into an inn and then commercial space. The house can be characterized as a late, transitional example of the Greek Revival style. The Greek Revival style, popular from ca. 1825 to 1860, was inspired by then new Greek archeological discoveries, and employed temple forms and details for domestic American architecture.

The gable-front house form is fairly common in Marion Village for 19th century houses. As shown on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 5) and an early-20th century postcard view (Figure 7), this house began as a 1½-story, gable-front main block with a one-story rear ell. The front elevation was three bays wide with a side-hall entry. That front elevation configuration has since been altered by the replacement of the first story windows with a large store window. The change of use is first shown on the 1933 Sanborn map, where the building use is labelled "S" (store) (Figure 6). It also appears from that map that the one-story rear ell had been expanded to 1½-stories. A 1½-story, gable-roofed addition was later built onto the rear of the first ell (date unknown). The two-window, gable-roofed wall dormer on the north side of the main block is also a later addition.

The original building rests, like most 19th century Marion Village houses, on a rough-cut granite foundation. The front elevation of the original block is clad in wood clapboards, and the side elevations, unusually, are clad in broad tongue-in-groove boards. The additions, including the dormers, are clad in wood shingles. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (likely wood shingles originally), and the roof has a projecting molded box cornice which terminates in a straight edge, i.e. there are no partial returns across the gable ends typically found on Greek Revival-style houses – an example of style transitioning.

The front entrance appears to retain its original design with a wood panel door flanked by full sidelights, pilasters (flat columns) with recessed panels, and a broad lintel with dentil (teeth-like) molding. The original window openings have elaborate surrounds with projecting molded lintels supported by brackets. Fenestration includes wood 6/6 windows. In addition to the large storefront window on the front elevation, a large commercial addition spans the right (north) elevation along Cottage Street. This addition was built sometime after 1933. It has a corner entrance and banks wood, multi-paned, fixed sash commercial windows.

According to Edmund Tripp's 1991 *Reflections on a Town*, this house was built with timbers of a salt works that was destroyed in an 1815 hurricane.

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.

While there had been some economic activity and residential development in Sippican Village prior to the Revolution, residential development accelerated in the early-1800s, as happened in many coastal Massachusetts towns, with boat building, whaling, coastal schooner trade, and the salt industry driving the economy. The construction of the First Congregational Meeting House in 1799, now Marion General Store ([140 Front Street](#), MRN.22), also helped make Sippican Village the center for spiritual and civic life.¹ Residential (and limited commercial) development was initially concentrated along the Front Street/Main Street axis, and the harbor became the site for maritime-related utilitarian buildings and wharfs. By the time the 1855 Walling Map was prepared, additional streets had been laid out, but Main Street from the harbor west to Pleasant Street was the most densely developed street in the village. There was also some development along Front Street, including this house (Figure 2).

¹ Marion was first settled in 1679 as Sippican, a district of Rochester, and was not incorporated as a separate town until 1852. The name Sippican Village continues to be used interchangeably with Marion Village.

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Located just north of the primary village intersection at the corner of Front and Main Streets, this area was first developed with a handful of dwellings along Front Street, and increased in density and functional complexity over time. Behind the dwellings to the east, land was developed largely for industrial and maritime-industrial uses. The commercial zone on Front expanded with the construction of purpose-built stores and the conversion of residences after the turn of the 20th century.

There is a house in this general location on the 1855 Walling Map of Marion with the name "J. S. Gorham" (Figure 2). This refers to John S. Gorham (b. 1835), who was listed as a painter in the 1855 State Census. However, there are no deeds around this time under the name Gorham connected to this property, and that house appears to be slightly north of this building's location. Perhaps that was a different house that was later moved or demolished.

Title research suggests that this was not the Gorham house shown on the 1885 map. In 1856, Joseph W. Hunnewell of Boston sold land that included this parcel, and what is now 6 Cottage Street (MRN.180) and 8 Cottage Street, to Russell Gray of Marion.² That deed referenced land only. Two years later, Russell Gray sold it to his considerably younger brother, Rufus Gray, with reference to a dwelling.³ The house is shown with the name "R. Gray" on the 1879 Plymouth Atlas (Figure 3). Capt. Russell Gray (1812-1889) was born in Rochester (Marion), and Rufus Gray (1831-1872), born in Yarmouth, was listed as a mariner in census records.

Despite this house still being shown with his name on the 1879 Atlas map, Rufus Gray had died in 1872. His wife Abby (Mendell) died in 1884, and in 1886, Rufus Gray's heirs sold this property to Charles H. Damon in two deeds for a total of \$720.⁴ Those deeds described the parcel as bordered on the east by "the road leading from the upper to the lower village" (i.e. Front Street), and bordered on the north by a "lane leading from [Front Street] to the house of Jabez. H. Wing" (what became Cottage Street). The parcel was described as 1/3 acre, which equals the acreage of 160 Front Street along with 6 and 8 Cottage Street.

Charles H. Damon (1826-1889) worked as a painter, and he was living in Rochester with his wife, Phebe, and one son when they bought this property in Marion. By the time the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas was prepared, this 1/3 acre parcel showed the main house on Front Street and a smaller house with a square footprint behind the main house (Figure 4). The parcel was listed with the name "C.H. Damon Estate" – referring to Charles H. Damon.

In 1903, Charles Damon's estate sold this property to Louzon and Harriet Damon of New Bedford.⁵ The nature of their kinship is unknown, but the sale price was \$1,220. Perhaps the 50% appreciation in value of the property was due in part to the construction of the second smaller house. In 1921, Harriet Damon was living in Danvers when she sold this property, still the full 1/3 acre, to Benjamin E. Waters of Marion.⁶

Two years later, the property was sold to Alice Ryder and Clara Lewis.⁷ They owned the property until 1946. It was they who first introduced a commercial use. As recounted in the 1998 Area Form for Marion Village (MRN.N), by the early-1930s the house was operating as "a typical New England home open to tourists." A *Wareham Courier* article dated July 17, 1931 explains that "the Rosamond Inn at Cottage and Front streets Marion has thrown open its doors to tourist travel and those who have read of New England hospitality, the homey features of the abode and the traditions handed down from the early settlers, will enjoy this hostelry's outstanding features such as delicious meals and large, comfortable and unusually pleasant rooms."

Alice Ryder (1871-1954) and Clara Lewis (1870-1963) were both single women who lived with their parents and/or siblings. Alice was listed as a public librarian in census records, and Clara was never listed with an occupation. Neither were listed as living on Front or Cottage Streets during the time they owned this property. It was subsequent owners, Herbert and Prudence Jenkins, who recorded a plan in 1972 creating the two additional parcels on Cottage Street. Herbert L Jenkins had a toy shop here and expanded it with a lunch counter. The property continues to have commercial uses.

² Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 275/ Page 19.

³ PCRD, Book 289/ Page 108.

⁴ PCRD, Book 538/ Page 306, Book 536/ Page 23.

⁵ PCRD, Book 879/ Page 57, Book 876/ Page 179.

⁶ PCRD, Book 1405/ Page 586

⁷ PCRD, Book 1423/ Page 946, Book 1435/ Page 327.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and Atlases:

- 1855, Walling, H. F. *Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*, 1855.
- 1879, *Atlas of Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Geo. H Walker & Co, 1879.
- 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.

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

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

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Tripp, H. Edmund. *Relections on a Town*. New Bedford: Reynolds DeWalt Printing, Inc., 1991.

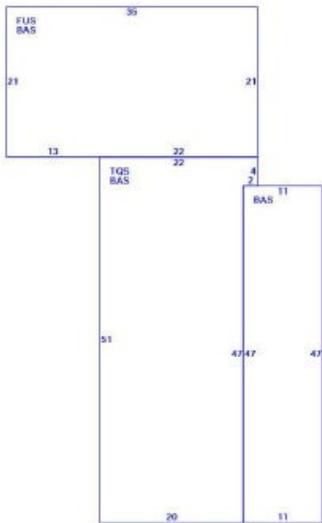


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View from Front Street, looking west.

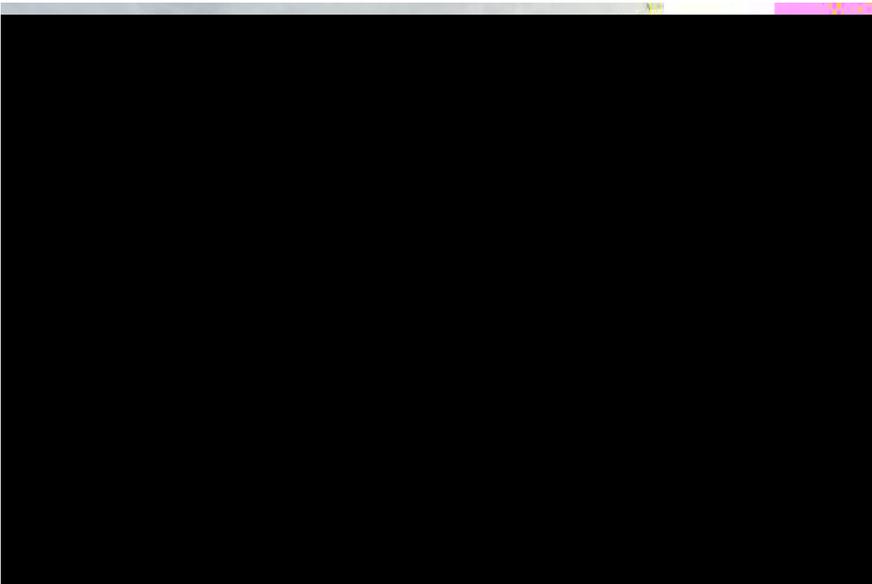


Photo 3. View from Cottage Street, looking southeast.

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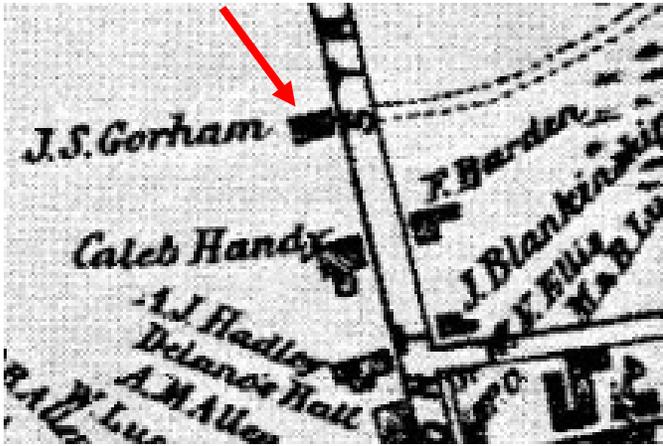


Figure 2. Detail of 1855 Walling Map (arrow added).

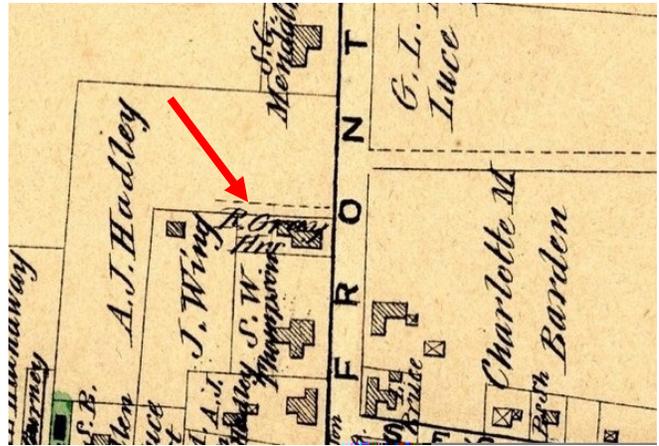


Figure 3. Detail of 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (arrow added).



Figure 4. Detail of 1903 Plymouth County Atlas (circle added).

Figure 5. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

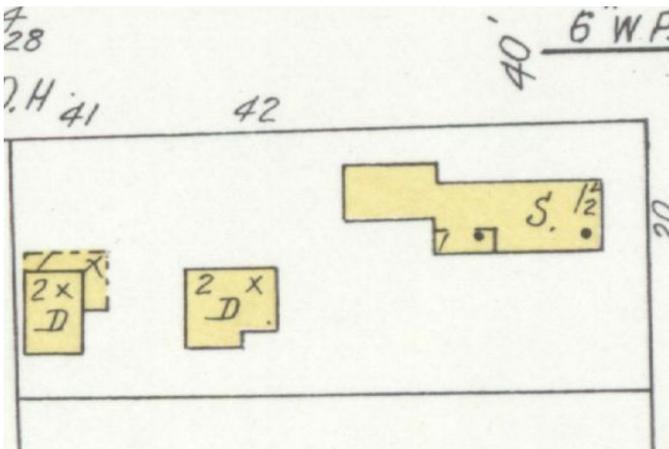


Figure 6. Detail of 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



Figure 7. Early-20th c. view of 160 Front Street when serving as the Rosamond Inn (SHS 2008.001.140).

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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).