

Welcome! Since this is a history tour, we'll begin in the garden next to the Sippican Historical Society on Main St. (You might also want to check out the SHS's impressive collection of scrimshaw, carved whalebone.) Take a left onto Main St.

1. 21 Main St.

This is the oldest surviving house in Marion. It was built in 1691 for the Ryder family. This is a traditional “cape style” home, one story high with a steeply pitched roof. Be on the look out for other cape-style houses. They are very common.

2. 15 Main St.

This cape-style cottage was built in the early 19th century. (That's the early 1800s.) When the house was modernized, they discovered a brick passageway that may have been part of the Underground Railroad!

It has vernacular style dormers. (A dormer is a window that projects from a sloping roof to allow more headroom in the top story.) The local style dormers are rounded and found in pairs. Can you find any other houses on this street with this vernacular dormer?

3. 3 Main St.

This home was built in 1806. Originally, the east side (right) of the house was a post office and the west (left) a store that outfitted ships. It is shingled like the other cottages but it is built in the Georgian style. Notice the symmetry around the front door: the windows, chimney, dormers, and transom light over the door. Compare this entrance to the Cape-style cottages. Doesn't it seem grander?

4. 2 Main St.

This house was built in 1813 and is nicknamed the “Two Captains House” for its owners, Capt. Elisha E. Luce and Capt. Noble E. Bates. Both of these captains made voyages to southeastern Asia.

Compare the facade (the front) of this home to 3 Main St. In what style is it built? How do you know?

Before you turn right onto Water St., be sure to look to your left down "Sail Loft Alley" along Bates Wharf. There you will see a figurehead from a ship called the Golden Sunset. It was built in England in 1876. You will notice it is on what was once a wharf. All along this shore were wharves where merchant and whaling ships would tie up.

5. Water St.

The Sippican Hotel, the heart of Marion's summer resort industry of the late 19th century, was built at the corner of Water and South Streets. It was a large, four story building with a red roof and big porches with wicker furniture. Across the street was a two-story casino with decks, dancing, tennis, and swimming. It became a Gilded Age destination for city families that often came by train for the entire summer. Their luggage would be carried from the train station at Front St. by horse and carriage. Some families even brought their pianos which were hoisted through the windows with a special lift!

Take a ride down Water St. and notice the large Shingle Style mansions. These “summer cottages” marked the beginning of Marion becoming a summer resort.

6. Moongate

When two Marion residents, June Butler and Parker Converse married, they honeymooned in China. After seeing many moongates abroad, they had one designed for her own gardens in 1921. What makes this gate unique? Can you find the ducks? In Chinese tradition, ducks symbolize wealth and marital bliss.

46 Water St. is where Grover Cleveland stayed during some of his summers in Marion. (He enjoyed his time in Marion so much that he named his first daughter Marion!)

Before Marion became a summer destination, this area was filled with wharves and salt works. In colonial times, the area's main industry was fishing. There was no refrigeration at this time so salt was essential for preserving cod. In the 1700s, colonists were at first dependent on the British for supplying salt. When the British raised taxes and later cut off harbors, Americans needed to produce their own salt. Between the 1790s and 1880s, saltworks lined the shores of the Cape and Islands.

7. Bird Island Lighthouse

When you round the corner of Water St. onto Lewis St., it is possible to see a lighthouse on Bird Island. This light is 25 feet high, 18 feet in diameter at the base, and 10 feet at the lantern. It was built around 1810 and originally had a keeper's dwelling built of stone with two fireplaces, a porch, well, chicken coop, boathouse, belltower, and other small buildings. It was destroyed in the Hurricane of 1938 when waters rose to 16 feet above the base of the tower. If it is a clear day, you can also see Cleveland Ledge, named after President Grover Cleveland, because he liked to fish there.

8. 72 Pleasant St.

This home was built in 1814 and was one of the first one-room schoolhouses in Marion. That means small children sat beside teenagers! School was only held between December and March so the village children could work with their families.

9. Marion Art Center

Now recycled as the Marion Art Center, this was built in 1830 as the First Universalist Church. It is built in the Greek Revival Style with the gable end to the street and rectangular pediment and narrow sidelights at the two matching entrances. Notice the matching double doors, decorative two-tiered tower.

10. Marion Town House

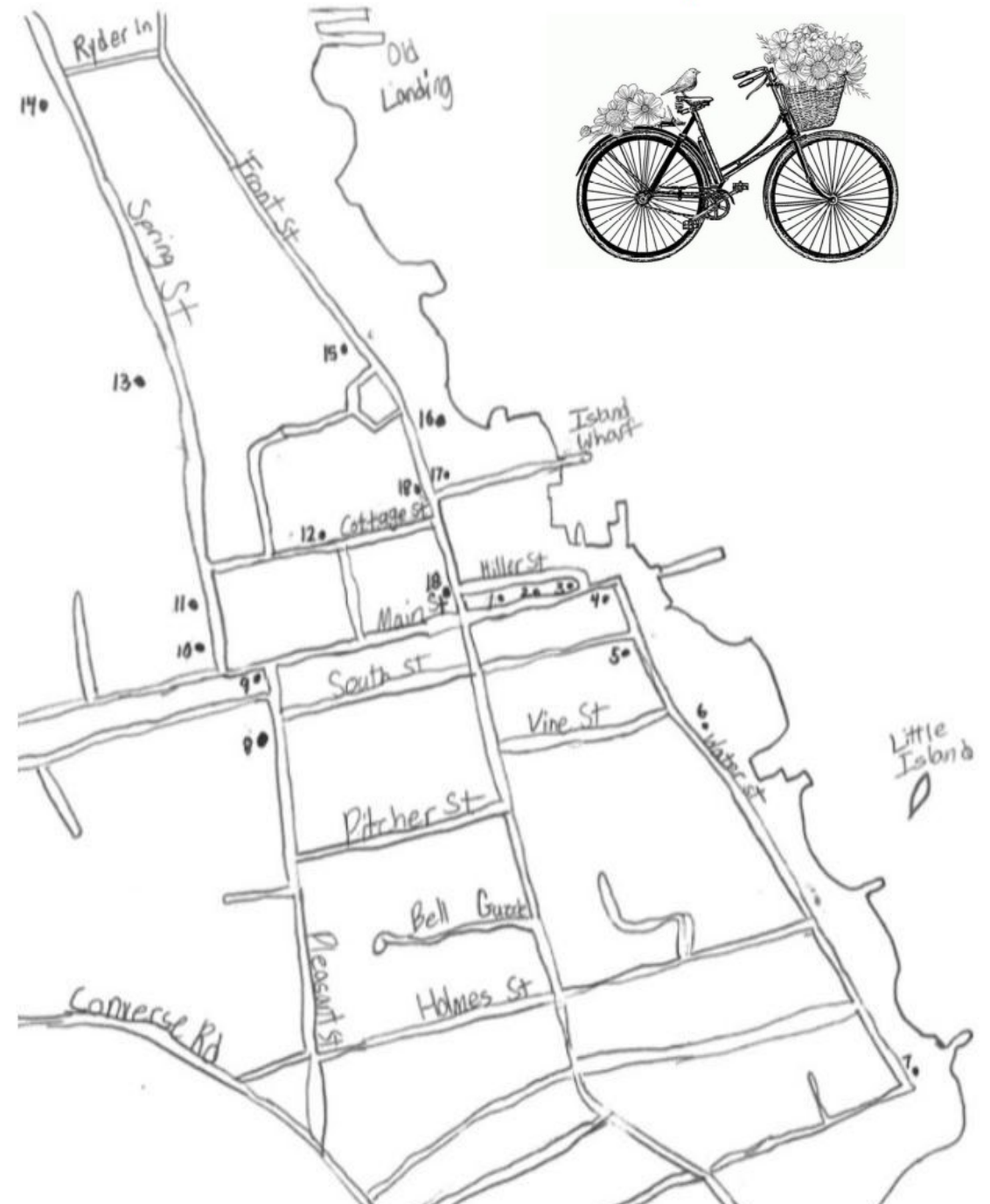
This was built in the Italianate style which means it has features of classic Italian buildings like ornamented, arched or curved windows, low pitched roofs with cupolas or towers, eaves with large brackets.

Across the street is a statue of Elizabeth Taber. She was born Elizabeth Sprague Pitcher was born on August 22, 1791 in a small home on South St. In 1805, at the age of 14, she began teaching grammar school at the “new school” in Marion Village (where the post office is now located). She taught until was 31. In 1824, at age 33, she married Stephen Taber, a clockmaker, and moved to Acushnet and later New Bedford. They had three children but all died young. During their life together, he became quite wealthy as a merchant and trader. After the Civil War, in 1870, at 79 years old, Elizabeth returned to Marion, hoping to improve the town's education and quality of life. She used her fortune to build several buildings that include the town's first library and Natural History Museum in 1872 and Tabor Academy in 1876. In her last years, she sadly became disabled and lost her eyesight. She died in 1888. She is buried in Acushnet with her husband and three children.

11. Elizabeth Taber Library

In what style is the library built? How does it compare to the Town House? You'll notice another Italianate feature, a cupola on the roof. On the second story of the library is the Natural History Museum where you can see natural specimens from around the world. Elizabeth Taber herself donated a glass case of insects and a collection of shells and coral.

A Kid's Historic Bike Tour of Marion, Massachusetts



This home was a stop on the Underground Railroad. The cellar was used to hide run away slaves who were trying to escape to Canada.

17. The Horse Trough

Look for a stone slab at the end of Island Wharf. Elizabeth Taber financed this horse trough so thirsty horses would have a place to drink after long rides into town from the railroad station.

You can take a cruise down Island Wharf for a harbor view but be careful of vehicles!

18. The Music Hall

In her will, Elizabeth Taber left funds for a Music Hall for lectures and concerts. This building was built in 1891 in Romanesque Revival as a public auditorium and meeting space. Be sure to check out the annual library book sale every summer! It's a great place to buy books.

19. General Store

This building was built in 1799 as Marion's first meeting house, the First Congregational Church when Sippican Village was still a part of Rochester. Stop inside for a cold drink or treat!

A portrait of
Elizabeth Taber



by
Greta Agnew

For more info visit:



12. 13 Cottage St. "Tabor Hall"

This home was built in 1880 and originally next to the Library. It was the original school founded by Elizabeth Taber. It served as a dining hall, dormitory and classrooms for the original Tabor Academy. Elizabeth lived on the second story. It was moved to make room for the Sippican School.

13. 46 Spring St. "The Old Stone Studio"

This 1885 buildings was first a storage facility and when purchased by the Gilder family, the editor of Century Magazine later became a salon for artists. Visitors included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Ethel Barrymore, Augustus Saint Gaudens.

14. Windmill

Do you see a tower? This was the base of a windmill that was used to power the fresh water filtration system for the Salt Works.

If you turn down Ryder Ln you'll notice the Tabor Academy playing fields. This is where the Salt Works were located. As you walk down Front St., imagine the harbor that existed here in the early 1700s until the mid 1800s. There where wharves, shipyards, boatbuilders and large ships, many of which were whaling ships. Local whalers hunted sperm and humpback whales in the Atlantic Ocean and beyond and sold their oil.

15. 192 Front St. "Richardson House"

The 1881 Percy Brown house was the first known example of H.H. Richardson's Shingle Style home. Richardson was one of the leading late 19th century architects in America who designed important buildings as Trinity Church in Boston. It was built on a wager that he could build a summer house at minimal cost.

16. 173 Front St.

This Federal-style home c. 1800 is notable for its hipped roof and five-bay center entrance facade.