

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

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Town/City: Barnstable

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marstons Mills

Photograph



Address: 71 Cotuit Road (Route 149) #A

Historic Name: William Marston House

Uses: Present: dwelling

Original: dwelling

Date of Construction: c. 1780

Source: County Registry; National Historic Register;
Marstons Mills Historical Society Form B

Style/Form: Georgian

Architect/Builder: Benjamin Marston (6)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Cedar Shingle

Roof: Composition Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: barn, two-story guest house, boat house

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1896 Office added to east side, former Post Office of N. Hinckley

1953(?) Office renovated and moved to Northwest side.

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 3.01

Setting: residential village area above Mill Pond

Locus Map



Recorded by: Mike and Deb Bergevine; James Gould

Organization: Marstons Mills Historical Society

Date (*month / year*): August 2019

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TOWN

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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.

The Marston house is a fine example of the Georgian style. It is a 2 ½ story wood frame structure rising two stories to a gable roof with central chimney. The symmetrical five-bay façade is centered around an entry with transom and surrounded with pilasters and entablature. Windows have simple frames and contain 6/6 sash. The house is extended to the rear by a one-story ell. When the building was renovated and restored in the 1960s all possible original material was retained or re-used and replacements were in keeping with the early character of the house.

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 property at 71 Cotuit Road (Route 149) in Marstons Mills is referred to as the William Marston House. It is estimated by the National Register of Historic Homes (MM4) that the house was built circa 1780. However, during the restoration of the house in 1957 workmen found a shingle indicating that the house dates to 1750 – 1760. Priscilla Higgins (who lived in the house from her birth in 1902 until 1954) told members of the Barnstable Historical Commission that a brick in the dining room fireplace was dated 1794. House built by the third Benjamin Marston (5) (1768-1819) and wife Eunice Blish (d. 1836).

Property ownership dates to William's great-grandfather, Benjamin Marston(4). When Benjamin died, his will stated that there was a homestead on the property: "I give and bequeath to my son Benjamin Marston(5) my grist mill standing near my house with the use of the stream in proportion. I give and bequeath to my son Prince Marston(5) my clothiers works with all my goods belonging to Said Works with the use of the stream in proportion." The will also stated that his widow, Lydia (Goodspeed), would continue to reside in the house until her death. [Barnstable Probate Book 13 Page 442, year 1769].

Upon Lydia's death in 1774 a house was inherited by her son Prince Marston(5). An inventory of the property dated March 14, 1797 included the dwelling house, grist mill, shed, barn, 15 homestead acres, and 4 acres of woodland. [Barnstable Probate Book 25 Page 151 and Book 30 Page 135]. Prince died in 1776. The house was then inherited by his son, Benjamin 6), who lived there with his wife, Eunice (Blish) until his death in 1819. In 1836, when Eunice died, the house was inherited by their son, William. [Barnstable Probate, Book 15 Page 246]. William was a clerk at Nathaniel Hinckley's grocery store just east of his home. In 1838, William purchased the store and ran it for 43 years until he sold it to Lewis Hamblin in 1881.

Subsequent transfer of ownership of the property at 71 Cotuit Road was as follows:

- When William died in 1882, with no surviving children, he left the house to his sister, Sarah Phinney of Cotuit. The will, dated January 29, 1880, stated that his sister was to inherit "...all the residence of my property, both real and personal." [Barnstable Probate Book 127 Page 102]. Sarah and family resided elsewhere and rented the house out.
- Sarah Phinney died in 1894, leaving the house to her children Isaac Phinney Jr., Irvin B. Phinney and Sarah Phinney Adams. [Barnstable Probate Book 140 Page 483]. The estate included extensive woodland as well as the house and outbuildings.
- In 1895 the Phinney heirs sold the house to Dr. Henry Babbitt [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 219 Page 237], who gave the house to his daughter, Grace Goodwin Babbitt, as a wedding gift upon her marriage to Dr. James Hayden Higgins [Barnstable County Book of Deeds Book 224 Page 303 Year 1896]. The deed describes the property as "... real estate being the homestead of the late William Marston..." The Higgins added a horse stall, carriage house and windmill to the property.

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- Dr. Higgins (1875-1935) was a popular physician for the area of Cotuit, Osterville, and West Barnstable. He added an office to the front of the house, which was later removed. The house was called "Redwing" because of the red shingles. He often delivered babies, arriving by motorcycle. He bought the first auto on Cape Cod and installed the first flush toilet in 1895. His full biography is in the Marstons Mills Historical Society files.
- In 1911 Dr. Higgins moved the Nathaniel Hinckley Post Office to his property, adding it to the front of the house as a new medical office. Dr. Higgins called the house "Redwing".
- Grace Higgins died on December 5, 1952. She had previously established a will in which she left the property to her husband, with no bequest to her children. She did not update the will after her husband Dr. James Higgins died in 1942. [Barnstable County Probate 33450, Book 254 Page 221]. Her property, surveyed on March 29, 1954, is described as Lot B and recorded with the Barnstable County Registry of Deeds in Plan 118, Page 99.
- After probate the Higgins heirs (daughter Marjorie Bowman, Roger Wolcott Higgins, Katherine H. Ryder, Donald E. Higgins, Priscilla Higgins) subdivided the property. Lot A, consisting of 1.03 acres, was given to Priscilla Higgins. She moved the medical office (formerly the Nathaniel Hinckley Post Office) to Lot A to serve as her residence. Lot B, which included the William Marston house and 3.01 acres, was sold in 1957 to W. Brewster Towne and Eugene Paul Tamburi. [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 976, Page 443].
- In 1963 Eugene P. Tamburi and his wife Catherine purchased W. Brewster Towne's interest in the property [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 1194 Page 208]. They received a permit to operate the property as a country inn, calling it the "Bearded Oyster". It operated as a country inn for 10 years. He owned the popular restaurant, Yankee Pedlar, in Holyoke, MA; he did not live in the house, but he probably had a resident manager.
- In 1986 following the death of her husband, Catherine Tamburi sold the property to Peter Erceg [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 5337 Page 221]. In 1986 and 1987 Mr. Erceg filed for permits to modify the property to again establish a country inn and lodging house, known as the Inn of the Mills from 1986-2000. [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 5365 Page 233 and Book 5889 Page 140]. The permits were granted.
- In November 1992 a Declaration of Trust was filed, establishing the "Inn at the Mills Trust" and naming Peter Erceg and William G. Henry as trustees [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 8291 Page 2 and Book 8291 Page 13]. He was an executive of the Harvard Johnson Group.
- In 2001, following the death of William G. Henry, Peter Erceg sold the property to Kevin A. Galvin, a software developer (1949-2012) and wife Judith A. Galvin. The Galvins filed a Declaration of Homestead [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 13949 Pages 77- 79]. He opened the grounds for Marstons Mills River Day for the Barnstable Land Trust.
- In 2016, Judith A. Galvin, upon the death of her husband Kevin Galvin, sold the property to Bruce E. Mann (b. 1948) and Lauren R. Mann, Trustees of the Lauren R. Mann Revocable Trust of 2002. [Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Book 29871 Pages 78 - 80].

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Barnstable County Registry of Deeds
Barnstable County Probate Records
William Marston House Form B Massachusetts Historical Commission 1983/1985
Barnstable Patriot numerous articles and references
"Historical Sites of the Mills: A Guide", Marston Mills Historical Society
Cape Cod Times 2009/2013
Atlas of Barnstable County 1858 Village of Marstons Mills
Atlas of Barnstable County 1880 Village of Marstons Mills
Town of Barnstable Assessors Map 2019
1888 Town of Barnstable Report pp. 170 – 171
1905 Town of Barnstable Report pg. 30
1911 Town of Barnstable Report
"Marston Genealogy", Nathaniel W. Marston
"Dr. James Higgins", *Barnstable Enterprise*

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ADDITIONAL PHOTOS

