

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

10B 60

Georgetown

GEO.76

Town/City: Georgetown

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Elm Street Area

Photograph



View from W

Locus Map



Address: 18 Chestnut Street

Historic Name: William & Belinda Tileston House

Uses: Present: residence

Original: residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1830

Source: maps

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: Joseph & John Kimball, builders

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl clapboard siding

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Cottage, ca. 1940

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Original entrance removed

Kitchen ell removed

Vinyl siding added; window sash replaced

Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ unknown **Date:**

Acreage: 0.51 acre

Setting: The house on this property is set close to the east side of Chestnut Street with hardwoods and softwoods at the east end of the lot. This section of the district is largely residential.

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

Organization: Georgetown Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): January 2010

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GEORGETOWN

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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 William & Belinda Tileston House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with wood clapboard siding and a hipped roof. It is situated on the north side of a half-acre lot on the east side of Chestnut Street. A small mown yard occupies the south and east sides of the parcel. A one-story wood frame cottage, perhaps earlier a garage or shop, is sited at the end of a short driveway on the north side of the house.

Built ca. 1830, the house plan is one room deep and had two brick chimneys on the rear wall, one each at the backs of rooms flanking a center hall; the southern one is now gone. This was a popular plan for houses in towns along the North Shore of Massachusetts and in Portsmouth, New Hampshire during this period and earlier. It was built by housewrights Joseph and John Kimball for their sister for their sister Belinda Kimball Tileston. The brothers lived in a near-identical houses next door (18 & 20 Elm St.) The five-bay front façade does not contain the unusual projecting center entrance present on other houses associated with the Kimballs, but this may be the result of alteration. The current entrance and porch does not have the have Greek Revival-style trabeated architrave common to other houses of the period. End walls contain single windows on lower and upper stories. Window sash has been replaced, although with units having a historic six-over-six pane pattern. The roofline is ornamented with a plain entablature, but this and other decorative features are obscured by recent vinyl clapboard siding.

The stone foundation of an absent kitchen ell is visible at the rear of the house. It was centered on the rear wall and probably two stories tall based on surviving ells on the Kimballs' other houses. A small enclosed porch is the only attachment to the rear wall. The cottage north of the house is built on a concrete block foundation some time in the last half of the 20th century. It may have originated as a garage and was enlarged to make a dwelling.

The William & Belinda Tileston House is a distinctive example of Federal Period architecture in the town and evinces the single-pile rear chimney plan form characteristic of Essex County and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1830, the house is essentially intact, with the exception of probably entrance alterations and the application of vinyl siding. It was probably built by Joseph and John Kimball who were brothers and neighbors of the residents. It is a key contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

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.

According to Georgetown maps, Chestnut Street was opened from East Main Street to Elm Street between 1830 and 1838. It was probably there by 1835, the year Jeremiah Nelson (1805-42) is said to have introduced "steam as a motive of power" to Georgetown industrial enterprise.¹ The street was probably opened to permit wagons more direct access to the tanneries that were arrayed along this short street from its creation; the land on which Chestnut Street and its buildings stand was earlier the back yards, in effect, of houses on the east side of Elm Street.

By 1800, according to a map showing the town center at that time, various branches of the Nelson family owned large tracts embracing both sides of Elm and Chestnut Street and both sides of Main Street in this section. All of these branches descended from Thomas Nelson (1615-about 1648), who was among the twenty families who had come to the New World in the winter of

¹ Henry M. Nelson, "Town of Georgetown History," in *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*, ed. D. Hamilton Hurd (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1:844, 846.

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1638 with the Puritan cleric Ezekiel Rogers (1590-1666). With Rogers most of these families settled at Rowley, incorporated in 1639.

Five members of the Nelson family—four descended from Thomas Nelson's son Sergeant Thomas Nelson (1638-1712) and the fifth from the immigrant's son Philip (1636-91)—owned the land around Elm Street and the contiguous section of East Main Streets. Three were the sons of Thomas's grandson Solomon Nelson (1703-81) and Mercy Chaplin—Amos (1736-1806), Asa (1739-1815), and Solomon Jr. (1742-1821). Another, Nathaniel Nelson (1767-1853) was the son of Solomon Nelson Jr., and the fifth, Aaron Nelson (1740-1804), was the great-grandson of Philip Nelson. Nathaniel Nelson's parcel extended from the 1767 church along the east side of Elm Street. Local histories state that Nathaniel's father Solomon had built a house for him on this tract just south of the church in 1797.² Indeed, the 1798 Federal Direct Tax schedules for Rowley show that Solomon owned two houses at that time. By 1800 he had given one to Nathaniel and owned another two, one at the southwestern side of the junction of Elm and East Main Streets and the other east of these, now 144 East Main Street, which became the home of Nathaniel's brother Stephen Mighill Nelson (1770-1855). Jeremiah was Stephen M. Nelson's son.

Judging by the position of Pen Brook on early village maps, Chestnut Street was on the tract owned by Nathaniel Nelson, whose longtime home was at 8 Elm Street. The 1830 village map shows the house labeled "N. Nelson," and it is possible that the house was moved here from another location in town: According to local historian Henry Mighill Nelson, Nathaniel Nelson moved buildings, apparently including a house, from another part of town to Chestnut Street to use in his tannery business,³ but he neither dated the move nor specified the Chestnut Street location of the buildings. Thus whether 18 Chestnut was one of these moved buildings is not known.

This house is identified with Nathaniel Nelson on both the 1830 and 1838 maps of Georgetown, but it is possible that he leased it to William Tileston, who may have owned it as early as 1840. Tileston, born in Boston about 1796, was a carpenter, and in 1827 in Georgetown he married Belinda Kimball (1793-1867), the daughter of Samuel and Susannah Kimball of Boxford. Belinda Kimball's brothers, the carpenters Joseph (1798-1881) and John (1800-1889) Kimball lived at 16 and 20 Chestnut Street and had married Nathaniel Nelson's daughters Mary and Sarah (Sally), in 1824 and 1828 respectively, and those family connections suggest that Nelson may have leased and then sold the property to Tileston. Tileston was a carpenter by trade, and it seems likely that he worked with or for the Kimball brothers. Later in the 1800s Belinda Tileston's sisters Susan and Louisa lived next door at 16 Chestnut Street.

The 1830 census shows the Tilestons in Boston, but by 1840 they were in Georgetown and, judging by the order of census taking, were living at 18 Chestnut. The 1856 map shows the house in Tileston's name. His 1850 census included himself and his wife; the shoemaker John Saunders, born in Bradford about 1804, and his wife Sophronia; and Mary Savage and her three-year-old daughter Sarah; Mary Savage was the widow of the carpenter and wheelwright Johnson Savage of Boxford, the Kimballs' native town.

In 1860 William and Belinda Tileston and John and Sophronia Sanders continued to share 18 Chestnut. Neither was affluent: Tileston's estate amounted to \$250, \$100 of that in real property, while Saunders's estate was \$425, \$400 of that in real property. A title search would be needed to determine exactly who actually owned the house. In 1867 Belinda Tileston died in Georgetown, and five years later William Tileston died in Boston.

The 1870 census shows John and Sophronia Saunders sharing the property with Edward and Martha Hall Kimball. Edward was the house carpenter Edwin C. Kimball, the son of John Kimball of 20 Elm Street, who later moved to 12 Elm Street. John Saunders remained at 18 Chestnut probably until his death in 1885. By the time the Georgetown directories began to record street numbers, in 1914, 18 Chestnut is not listed, but by 1925 the house was occupied by shoe worker John J. Malloy, whose father Patrick had come to the United States from Ireland in 1857. The Malloy family moved to North Street by 1930 and leased

² "Map of Centre of Georgetown in 1800," in Sidney Perley, "Centre of Georgetown in the Year 1800," *Essex Antiquarian* 2, 7 (July 1898), 101, based on the manuscript map "Georgetown 1800," 1996.07.01, Georgetown Historical Society. This map shows only a northern section of Elm Street and does not show how far south Nathaniel Nelson's tract extended. On the west side of Elm Street Aaron Nelson's tract abutted Solomon Nelson's on the south, but again the map does not reveal how far it extended southward. Perley, "Centre of Georgetown," 105, asserts the probability that Solomon Nelson Jr. built 8 Elm Street for his son.

³ Henry M. Nelson, "Town of Georgetown History," in *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*, ed. D. Hamilton Hurd (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1:844.

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18 Chestnut. The 1930 census shows the house occupied by Lavinia Wright, a shoe factory stitcher born in New York, and her three children; she was the widow of lumber mill worker Charles J. Wright and had lived in Newburyport in 1920.

The Malloy family owned the 18 Chestnut until 1943, when they sold it to John R. and Marie-Louise J. Boulanger. Born about 1907, Boulanger (shown as Rodolphe J. Boulanger in the 1910 census) was the son of shoemaker Peter P. Boulanger and had grown up next door at 16 Chestnut; his family owned that house until 1963. Marie-Louise Boulanger transferred title to the property to current owners John M. and Diane C. Boulanger in 2001.⁴

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MAPS

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⁴ Patrick J. and Susan E. Molloy to John R. and Marie-Louise J. Belanger, 7 May 1943, SED 3329:157; Marie-Louise J. Belanger to John M. and Diane C. Boulanger, 2 October 2001, SED 17719:607.

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[Delete this page if no Criteria Statement is prepared]

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____Neil Larson and Kathryn Grover____

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The William & Belinda Tileston House is a distinctive example of Federal Period architecture in the town and evinces the single-pile rear chimney plan form characteristic of Essex County and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1830, the house is essentially intact, with the exception of probably entrance alterations and the application of vinyl siding. It was probably built by Joseph and John Kimball who were brothers and neighbors of the residents. It is a key contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

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View from NW

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View from SW



Aerial view from NW