

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

## Photograph



View from SE

## Locus Map



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

10-9

Georgetown

GEO.107

**Town/City:** Georgetown

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): East Main Street Area District

**Address:** 188 East Main Street

**Historic Name:** John T. and Hannah M. Hills House & Barn

**Uses:** Present: residence

Original: residence

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1850 – ca. 1885

**Source:** historic maps, censuses

**Style/Form:** Italianate

**Architect/Builder:** unknown; alterations probably by John T. Mills

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

### Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn connected

Site of ca. 1830 schoolhouse

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

Renovation ca. 1885

Shed dormer added, west side

Barn renovated, ca. 1930

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 1.62 acres

**Setting:** The house on this property is set on a slight rise on the northeast side of East Main Street on a lot with mature hardwoods and softwoods and shrubbery. This section of East Main Street is largely residential.

**Recorded by:** Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

**Organization:** Georgetown Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): January 2010

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

GEORGETOWN

188 East Main Street

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.107

☒ 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.*

John T. and Hannah M. Hills House & Barn is a one-story wood frame single dwelling with wood clapboard siding and a front gable roof. It includes connected ells and barn in the rear. The 1.62-acre property is located on the north side of East Main Street with the front of the house close to the road; the front half of the lot is maintained as mown lawn with ornamental plantings; the rear of the lot is forested. The site of a school house, which predates the house, is depicted on historic maps up to 1884 occupies the southeast corner of the property.

While a house is documented on the property as early as 1856, the style of the existing exterior features date to ca. 1885, indicating that a substantial renovation was undertaken, probably after John T. Hill entered the house building trade. The gabled front façade is framed by corner pilasters and a full pediment that were part of the original design of the house. The entablatures are decorated with pairs of scroll-sawn brackets that were added in the later period, as were the entrance porch with a decorative brace and window architraves with corner blocks. The large cross-gable wall dormer on the east side was added as part of the renovation, and window trim on the side walls were updated as those on the front; the large shed dormer is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century addition.

A long one-story kitchen ell extends back from the rear of the house, at least part of it original to the house. It has been expanded by an enclosed porch on the east side and a larger addition on the west side. It terminates at a cross bay on the east side of the ell, which appears it was added ca. 1885, perhaps as a wagon house. John T. Hills farmed the property, and portions of the existing barn at the northern end of the connected complex may have been constructed in his lifetime. However, this part of the building appears to have been renovated by subsequent owners in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

John T. and Hannah M. Hills House & Barn is a distinctive example of a small house with connected outbuildings, which would have been common features on the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Georgetown landscape. Hills's involvement in the local building trade in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is reflected in the house's unusually elaborate ornamentation. The site of an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century schoolhouse is also contained on the property.

## 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.*

East Main Street, now Massachusetts Route 133, is the earliest road in Georgetown and connects it to its parent Rowley to the east and Andover on the west. Beginning in the 1650s Rowley proprietors began to make land grants in the town's western reaches, the area that came to be known as Rowley second (or west) parish or New Rowley and ultimately Georgetown. In 1666-67, the town laid out three thousand acres in the area and granted John Spofford the job of penning "the young cattle of the towne" where they had "been herded this last year." Pen Brook is named for these pens, which stood east of Elm Street. In 1732 families in the area successfully petitioned to form the Second Church of Rowley (ultimately Georgetown's First Congregational Church) and built a second meetinghouse at the junction of Elm and East Main Streets in 1769. In 1838 the General Court of Massachusetts incorporated Georgetown, which embraced most of the second parish.<sup>1</sup>

By 1800 the site of 188 East Main Street was part of a larger tract owned by Job Brocklebank (1755-1824), part of the fourth generation of descendants of the immigrant Samuel Brocklebank (1628-76), who came with his widowed mother Jane (1605-68) and brother John among the twenty families who had come to the New World in the winter of 1638 with the Puritan cleric Ezekiel

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1840), 31-32, 320, 324, 326, 329.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

GEORGETOWN

188 East Main Street

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.107

Rogers (1590-1660) and settled with Rogers at Rowley. In 1660 Brocklebank was granted land in the Rowley west parish and built his first home at what is now 108 East Main Street in 1670. Job Brocklebank married his cousin Mercy Brocklebank (1768-1821) in 1788; his father David (1724-56) and her father John (1738-1819) were brothers.<sup>2</sup>

Of village maps, the 1830 map is the first to show this section of East Main Street. No house is shown on the site but the land in this general area is marked "D. Brocklebank" for David Brockelbank (1789-1859), one of Job Brocklebank's children. By 1856 the home of shoemaker John Thurlow Hills (sometimes Hill) is depicted at what was later this address. Born in Georgetown in 1826, Hills was the son of Charles and Mehitable Chase Hills and in 1845 married Hannah Matilda Brocklebank (1828-1905), a daughter of David Brockelbank and granddaughter of Job Brocklebank. Hills was a shoe cutter at the time of his marriage, and in 1850 he was shown as a farmer. His household then included his wife, two children, and his brothers Benjamin and Luther. Their mother Mehitable died in Georgetown in 1838 and their father Charles in 1844 of consumption; their brother Joseph died some six weeks later of the same disease.

By 1860 John T. Hills was again working as a shoemaker, and his wife Hannah was also working in the industry as a shoe binder. He served ten months during the Civil War in the Seventeenth Massachusetts Infantry (his brother Luther enlisted at the same time but served only three months). The 1870 census shows Hills as a brick mason (and in later censuses as a stone mason) owning \$1200 in real property; his daughter Hannah was then working in a shoe factory.

John and Luther Hills shared the same fate. In 1892 Luther committed suicide by ingesting Paris green, a highly toxic compound that was used in pigments and was a poison for insects and animals not infrequently used in suicides. Seven years later John T. Hills hanged himself. Hills's widow Hannah probably remained in the house but died in Hampton, New Hampshire, in 1905. The couple's son Charles, born in 1859, ran a tobacco store, confectionary, and pool hall at the turn of the century, but what became of him is not known.

Who owned and occupied the house between about 1905 and 1925 is not yet known. In the latter year the brothers David Frank and Barney Abraham Camenker lived at 188 East Main and ran Cambro Poultry Yard at that address. They were Russian Jewish immigrants, David (born May 1887) having come to the United States between 1900 and 1904 and Barney (born July 1892) in 1907. In 1910 David was working as a shoe cutter in Lynn, and by 1917 he and Barney ran Camenker Brothers, a poultry business in Lawrence. The brothers were living on North Street in Georgetown with David Camenker's daughter Leah, born in Lynn in 1909, in 1920, and were at 126 East Main Street by 1925.

By the Second World War David Camenker was working in Derry, New Hampshire, and Barney Camenker remained at 188 East Main. He owned the property until 1975, when he sold it to current owners William J. and Helen A. Curran.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Brocklebank Genealogy," *The Essex Antiquarian* 12, 2 (April 1908): 54-57.

<sup>3</sup> Barney A. Camenker to William J. and Helen A. Curran, 9 September 1975, SED 6179:61. "Plan of Land in Georgetown, Mass., as Subdivided for Barney A. Camenker," 21 June 1965 shows the 188 East Main "homestead lot" of 1.62 acres and a larger, surrounding parcel "to be conveyed to the First Baptist Church." Southern Essex County Register Plan Year 1965, plans 337 and 338.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

GEORGETOWN

188 East Main Street

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.107

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

- Arrington, Benjamin F., ed. *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922.
- Assessor's Records. Georgetown Town Hall.
- Biographical Review, Containing Life Sketches of Leading Citizens of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Boston Biographical Review Publishing Co., 1897.
- Brigham, Willard Irving Tyler. *The Tyler Genealogy: The Descendants of Job Tyler of Andover, Massachusetts, 1619-1700*. Plainfield, NJ: Cornelius B. Tyler, and Tylerville, CT: Rollin U. Tyler, 1907 and 1912.
- Bureau of the Census. United States Census, 1790-1930.
- Direct Tax List for 1798 for Massachusetts, New England Historical Genealogical Society website, [www.newenglandancestors.org](http://www.newenglandancestors.org).
- Field, Jane. *A Brief History of Georgetown Massachusetts 1838-1963*. Rev. ed. Georgetown: Georgetown Historical Commission, 1988.
- Gage, Thomas. *The History of Rowley, Anciently Including Bradford, Boxford, and Georgetown, from the Year 1639 to the Present Time*. Boston: F. Andrews, 1840.
- Georgetown, Boxford, Byfield, Newbury, and West Newbury, Massachusetts, Directory*. Boston: W. E. Shaw, 1901-2, 1905, 1909, 1912, 1914, 1916-17, 1918, 1925.
- Nelson, Henry M. "Town of Georgetown History." In Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888.
- "Nelson, Carr, and Hussey Families." Stray Cat Genealogy website, [www.trenholm.org](http://www.trenholm.org).
- Perley, Sidney H. "Centre of Georgetown in the Year 1800." *The Essex Antiquarian: A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Biography, Genealogy, History, and Antiquities of Essex County, Massachusetts* 2, 7 (July 1898).
- Resident and Business Directory of Groveland and Georgetown, Mass., for 1885-1886*. Needham, MA: Local Directory Publishing Co., 1885.

**MAPS**

- "Map of the Centre of Georgetown in 1800." In Perley, Sidney H., "Centre of Georgetown in the Year 1800." *The Essex Antiquarian: A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Biography, Genealogy, History, and Antiquities of Essex County, Massachusetts* 2, 7 (July 1898): 201.
- Map of Georgetown in 1810 and 1840. In Gage, Thomas. *The History of Rowley, Anciently Including Bradford, Boxford, and Georgetown, from the Year 1639 to the Present Time*. Boston: F. Andrews, 1840. 320.
- "Map of New Rowley Surveyed and Drawn by Philander Anderson 1830." Georgetown Historical Society.
- Map of Georgetown. 1856. In Walling, H. F. *A Topographical Map Essex County Massachusetts*. Boston: Smith and Morley, 1856.
- Atlas of Essex County*. Philadelphia: D. G. Beers and Co., 1872). Plates 59 and 61.
- "Town of Georgetown Mass." and "Village of Georgetown Mass." In *Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: George H. Walker, 1884).
- "Georgetown, Mass. 1887." Drawn and Published by George E. Norris, Brockton, Massachusetts. Troy, NY: Burleigh Lithographic Establishment, 1887.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

GEORGETOWN

188 East Main Street

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.107

*[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.*

John T. and Hannah M. Hills House & Barn is a distinctive example of a small house with connected outbuildings, which would have been common features on the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Georgetown landscape. Hills's involvement in the local building trade in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is reflected in the house's unusually elaborate ornamentation. The site of an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century schoolhouse is also contained on the property.



	GEO.107
--	---------



View from SW



Aerial view from SE



	GEO.107
--	---------



View from SW



View from S