

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

10A 40

Georgetown

GEO.95

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Photograph



View from NW

Locus Map



Address: 94 Elm Street

Historic Name: William B. & Olive Harriman House

Uses: Present: residence

Original: residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1865

Source: historic maps

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Barn (attached)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

none

Condition: poor

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: approx. 0.75 acres

Setting: This property is on a slight rise on the east side of Elm Street on a lot with mature hardwoods and softwoods. Elm Street is primarily residential.

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

Organization: Georgetown Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): January 2010

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.95

☒ 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 B. & Olive Harriman House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with wood clapboard siding and a front gable roof. It is situated on a three-quarter-acre lot and is elevated above the street on a slight promontory. The property is wooded. A long driveway on the north side of the house runs from the street to a barn connected to the rear of the house.

The gabled front façade of the house contains an entrance on the left side embellished with a flat hood supported by scrolled brackets. This feature, as well as the attenuated Classical corner and eave details, is common to late-19th-century domestic architecture in industrial towns in eastern Massachusetts. Six-over-six windows are evenly spaced across the rest of the façade, and there are two windows in the gable end, which is enclosed as a pediment. Long side walls contain multiple window bays. The wide spacing of windows on the south side indicates where fireplaces and chimneys once existed in front and rear rooms. (A door has replaced the rearward one.) Three closely-spaced windows occupy the rear end of the south facade. The plan appears to have been three rooms deep along with a long one-story back ell built flush with the north wall of the house. The back house terminates at a large agricultural barn at the southwest corner of its front-gable façade.

The William B. & Olive Harriman House is a distinctive example of a mid-19th-century village dwelling with a connected barn. The house is essentially intact to its ca. 1865 construction date and is distinguished by original materials. The retention of an attached agricultural barn is an exceptional feature. The property is a contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street. It is currently abandoned and slated for demolition.

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 local histories, aside from the road (now Massachusetts Route 133) connecting Georgetown to its parent Rowley to the east and Andover on the west, Elm Street is one of the oldest streets in Georgetown, having been opened to "public travel" about 1686.¹ At that time between ten and twenty families lived in what was known as Rowley second (or west) parish or New Rowley. Beginning in the 1650s Rowley proprietors began to make land grants in the town's western reaches; in 1666-67, the town laid out three thousand acres in the area and granted John Spofford the job of penning cattle "the young cattle of the towne" where they had "been herded this last yeare." Pen Brook is named for these pens, which stood west 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.²

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 1638 with the Puritan cleric Ezekiel Rogers (1590-166). With Rogers most of these families settled at Rowley, incorporated in 1639.

¹ See, for example, Benjamin F. Arrington, ed., *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922), 146.

² Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1840), 31-32, 320, 324, 326, 329.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.95

The extent to which the Nelson lands reached southward is not clear from the 1800 village map, but by 1836 the tract on which this property is sited belonged to Charles Nelson (1803-74). The first Nelson to own it, as well as acreage on the west side of Elm Street, was Joseph Nelson (1682-1744), who according to local historian Henry Mighill Nelson was the “first of this name to settle in Georgetown.”³ The property passed to Joseph’s son Aaron (1740-1804) and from Aaron to his sons Joseph (1769-1856) and Jonathan (1772-1852) and then to Joseph’s son Charles (1803-74) and Jonathan’s son Sylvanus (1803-82).

Born in Orange, New Hampshire, Charles Nelson was a lifelong farmer and lived for a time at 62 Elm Street. In 1836 he sold the shoe manufacturer William B. Harriman (1801-84) a large tract of “field land” bordered by Elm Street and the land of his uncle Jonathan and cousin Sylvanus Nelson.⁴ Harriman lived in a house on the site of what is now 72 Elm Street and owned at least as far south as the lot on which 94 Elm Street stands. After his marriage Harriman’s son Horace lived in the house he built for his family on 59 Elm Street and later, from 1914 through at least 1933, in the house at 94 Elm Street.

Between its estimated date of construction in 1865 and Harriman’s later occupancy of 94 Elm Street, it is unclear who was occupying the property as it is one of three dwellings associated with the Harrimans in this area. Further deed research will be needed to clarify the matter.

William Brown Harriman was born in Georgetown and in 1838 married Olive Nelson, descended from the immigrant Thomas Nelson’s son Thomas; her father Moses (1773-1863) was the son of Amos Nelson (1736-1806), who in 1800 owned land on the north side of East Main Street near its intersection with Elm that was sandwiched by his father Solomon’s large tracts. In 1850 Moses Nelson is shown as a bootmaker owning four thousand dollars of property, a relatively large sum in Georgetown at the time. By 1870 the value of Harriman’s estate was nearly ten thousand dollars.⁵

Horace E. Harriman, born in Georgetown in 1852, is shown as a seventeen-year-old shoemaker in his father’s household in 1870. Four years later he married Mary Balcom of Salem. It seems likely that the couple lived with his parents until the house at 59 Elm Street was built.

While Elm Street is largely residential today, through the nineteenth century numerous shoemaking shops of varying size also existed along the road; in 1872 five were large enough to be shown on the Georgetown village plate of the county atlas. The 1872 map of Georgetown shows Harriman’s operation as a “Boot & Shoe Manufactory,” the only one on Elm Street so designated (though the map does not show in detail upper Elm Street, where the J. B. Giles factory at the site of 26 Elm Street; Giles’s was probably the only other large-scale shoe operation on the street). The Harriman shop made “men’s high grade heavy boots and shoes,” the footwear for which Georgetown was best known; the shoes were sent for the most part to southern and western markets. As a boot and shoe manufacturing town, Georgetown was far eclipsed by many Essex County towns—chiefly Lynn, the largest producer of footwear in the commonwealth, as well as Haverhill and Marblehead. But an industrial census mandated by the state found that in the year previous Rowley (of which Georgetown was part until 1838) made more boots---32,600 pair---than any other place in the county. The town also made 300,250 pair of shoes, according to this survey, employed 518 men and 192 women, and produced footwear with an estimated value of \$315,360. It is clear that most of this production took place in what soon became Georgetown: according to an 1888 local history, twenty-seven shoe shops operated in Georgetown in the late 1830s and produced boots and shoes worth \$221,900, or roughly 70 percent of the estimated value of footwear in Rowley as a whole. By the 1830s Georgetown was both larger than Rowley and much more focused on industrial development; Rowley remained by and large agricultural.⁶

³ Henry M. Nelson, “Town of Georgetown History,” in D. Hamilton Hurd. *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1: 812.

⁴ Charles Nelson to William B. Harriman, 14 October 1836, SED 295:212.

⁵ See *Biographical Review, Containing Life Sketches of Leading Citizens of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: Boston Biographical Review Publishing Co., 1897), 526-63, for background on William B. and Horace E. Harriman. The sketch states that William Harriman was an “ardent abolitionist.” Jane Field, *A Brief History of Georgetown Massachusetts 1838-1963*, rev. ed. (Georgetown: Georgetown Historical Commission, 1988), 20, notes that in antebellum Georgetown “some of the boys wrapping shoes for Southern consignment folded them in copies of the Liberator, Garrison’s anti-slavery sheet, but had to stop when the recipients in Charleston began to voice their objections to the factory management.”

⁶ See Gage, *History of Rowley*, 402-3; Nelson, “Town of Georgetown History,” 835; and Blanche Evans Hazard, *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 210, which notes that these

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.95

It seems likely that the family's shoe operation began as a "ten-footer" (a shoe shop ranging from ten to fourteen feet square), where shoes were made from start to finish. Beginning about 1820 the "central shop" began to emerge, in which a shop sometimes not run by a shoemaker cut leather into pieces for uppers and put them out to men and women to sew in their homes; these workers then sent the uppers back to the central shop, which then sent them out again with rough soles to be finished in the same fashion. The central shop was responsible for marketing the footwear.⁷ According to industry historian William H. Mulligan Jr., the move from the central shop to the factory system took place incrementally as various shoemaking processes were mechanized, and as late as 1870 this transition was still underway.⁸

By 1880 William B. Harriman had retired, and his son Horace assumed control of the business. At roughly this time, according to Henry Nelson's local history, the Harriman shop was making boots "for Essex County and home trade generally" and was among four Georgetown shoe factories not using mechanical power. But by 1879, according to a biographical sketch, Horace Harriman, who had theretofore been working "in the shoe business, started in as a manufacturer, with a factory located at South Georgetown, where he carries on his business at the present time. He produces heavy work, and sells to the retail trade of New England."⁹

From 1910 to 1913 Horace Harriman partnered with Charles E. Cartwright to make a heel by a process Cartwright had invented. According to local historian Benjamin Arrington, the heel "met with instant success, being ordered in large quantities, but its very success killed the business locally, because great monied interests, seeing huge possibilities in the marketing of the Cartwright process of making heels, placed the same process made heel on the market at a cheaper price." By the late 1910s Horace's sons Fred and William renamed the firm Harriman Brothers and began "manufacturing a popular priced shoe for children."¹⁰

Sometime in the early 1910s Horace Harriman moved from the house at 59 Elm Street to 94 Elm, where he is shown in 1933; assessor's records show that he then owned two houses, a barn, a shop, and twenty fowl. When he died is not yet known. By 1959 the property was owned by William A. Cragg, born in 1912 in Manchester, Massachusetts. Like his father William, born in England about 1885, he worked as a superintendent of a private estate in that town. In 1949 Cragg had acquired 88 Elm Street next door from the Harriman family, and he may have bought 94 Elm at the same time. Cragg lived in Marblehead at least through 1949 and may have rented both properties. In 1959 Cragg sold both properties to Salvatore Pirrotta.¹¹ Born in Italy in 1883, Pirrotta lived in Salem from at least the 1910s to the early 1940s and may also have rented these properties.

statistics were gathered and published by John Warner Barber in *Historical Collections of Every Town in Massachusetts* (Worcester: Dorr, Howland and Co., 1839), 66, 201.

⁷ Hazard, *Boot and Shoe Industry*, 8-9, 42, 44.

⁸ William H. Mulligan Jr., e-mail to Kathryn Grover, 9 December 2009.

⁹ *Biographical Review*, 563.

¹⁰ Arrington, *Municipal History*, 259-62.

¹¹ William A. Cragg to Salvatore Pirrotta et ux, 13 May 1959, SED 18045:579.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.95

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.

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.

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.

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

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.95

[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 B. & Olive Harriman House is a distinctive example of a mid-19th-century village dwelling with a connected barn. The house is essentially intact to its ca. 1865 construction date and is distinguished by original materials. The retention of an attached agricultural barn is an exceptional feature. The property is a contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street. It is currently abandoned and slated for demolition.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.95
--	--------



View from NW



View from W

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.95
--	--------



View from NE



View from S

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.95
--	--------



View from SW



View from S

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.95
--	--------



View from E



View from SE

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

94 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.95
--	--------



Barn interior



Aerial view from W