

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242  
GEO.243

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

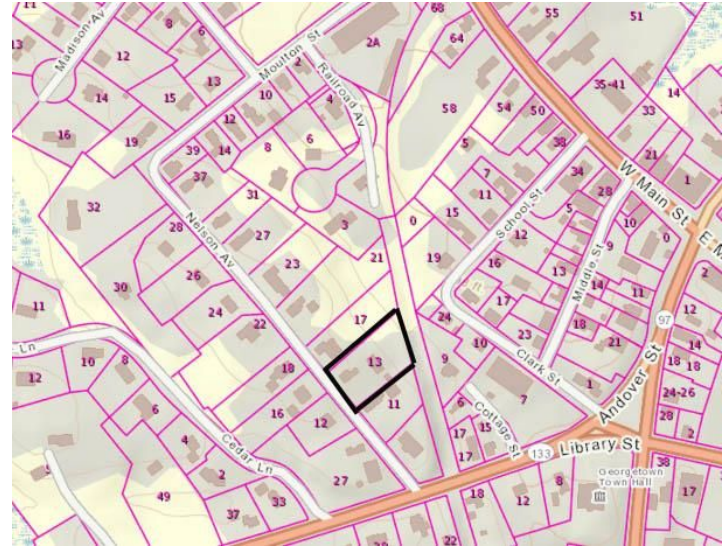
## FORM B – BUILDING

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

### Photograph



View from NW.



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

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

**Organization:** Town of Georgetown Historical Commission

**Date:** June 2017

### Locus Map (north at top)

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242  
GEO.243

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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

6C-100

Georgetown

GEO.242  
GEO.243

**Setting:** Residential neighborhood developed in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century adjacent to commercial area of town center.

**Town/City:** Georgetown

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
Georgetown Center

**Address:** 13 Nelson Avenue

**Historic Name:** William S. & Charlotte Horner House & Barn

**Uses:** Present: single family residential  
Original: single family residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1853

**Source:** deeds & visual assessment

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Joseph Kimball, probable builder

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Domestic barn, ca. 1853

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

Picture windows added front and side, window removed from front, dormers added, rear ell altered, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.56 acre

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242  
GEO.243

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The William S. and Charlotte Horner House, built about 1853, is a two-story, wood frame single dwelling with a front gable roof and a side-passage plan. Designed in the Greek Revival style, the three-bay front facade is distinguished by Classical entablatures along the roof edges to short returns at the base of the gables, wide corner pilasters and an off-center trabeated doorway with a pedimented cornice. Entablatures with tall friezes follow the eaves along the side walls, each with pilasters at the corners. The front section of the northwest side is blank (with the exception of a small second-story window added later) to correspond with the interior stairs running up that wall. Two windows at the rear of the wall illuminate rooms behind the stairs. The southeast side originally contained four windows on both stories, two each for the principal rooms on that side; a picture window has been installed in place of the rear pair on the first story. A chimney is aligned with the interior dividing partition where hearths were located. Two gabled dormers have been added to the roof. A two-part rear ell contains a one-story kitchen/service wing and a two-story back house, perhaps used for shoemaking or perhaps added later.

A telescoping three-stage wood frame outbuilding is sited just east of the house. The largest story-and-a-half section at the northerly end was a barn with its wagon door now replaced with an overhead garage door and its mow door changed into a window. Next is a one-story wing with an overhead garage door and last is a small one-story shop wing with a concrete foundation and no external entrance. The house occupies the northwest corner of the lot with minimal set backs on the front and northwest side. A driveway enters the center of the frontage and runs past the southeast side of the house to the barn. An open lawn occupies the southeast side of the parcel.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The houses on Nelson Avenue were built on land once belonging to Nathaniel Nelson (1767-1853), the son of Solomon Nelson Jr. (1742-1821) and his wife Elizabeth Mighill Nelson (1742-77). He was descended from English immigrant Thomas Nelson, whose sons Philip (1636-91) and Thomas (1638-1712) both have descendants in Georgetown. Philip's son Joseph (1682-1744) was the first of this surname to settle in Georgetown. Nathaniel descended from Philip's brother Thomas. He had two children with Sarah Chaplin, his first wife—Sally (1800-1869), who married housewright John Kimball of Georgetown, and Mary (1803-55), who married John's older brother Joseph Kimball, also a housewright. After Sally Chaplin Nelson's death in 1828 Nathaniel Nelson married Mary A. Spofford of Boxford, and they had one child, Elisabeth Spofford Jones (1830-1902), who in 1851 married New Hampshire native and Georgetown attorney Jeremiah Pingree Jones (1819-92). By then Nathaniel Nelson appears to have moved from Elm Street to the house at 27 Andover Street (GEO.23), built in 1815 at the northwestern corner of what is now Nelson Avenue. The 1850 census enumerated Nelson in this latter neighborhood as a farmer with real estate valued at \$17,140 and a household containing his wife Mary (with \$4000 of real estate), his yet-unmarried daughter Elisabeth, and six boarders, three men of Irish descent and one man of African descent. After Nelson's death the widowed Mary Nelson lived here with her then-married daughter Elisabeth, her son-in-law Jeremiah P. Jones, the Joneses' young daughters Mary and Elisabeth, an Irish-born domestic servant, and two boarders.

In March 1849 Nathaniel Nelson sold a lot of land northeast of his Andover Street home to shoemaker William S. Horner with the proviso that no more than one house be built on the lot and that a house be no less than 12 feet from the front, or west, side of the lot—that is, the east side of Nelson Avenue. It seems likely that housewright Joseph Kimball and his sons, Walter and Charles built the house as they were actively involved in the developing the Nelson Avenue subdivision. A Georgetown native, William Spofford Horner was the son of Andrew Horner and Mary C. Spofford and was born in 1824. He married Charlotte Nichols Saunders Morse in 1853, which likely was the impetus for building the house.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242  
GEO.243

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

The 1856 map mistakenly associates Joseph Kimball with this house rather than the one next door at 11 Nelson Avenue (GEO.240), and William S. Horner was clearly living here in 1855 when the state census lists him in this neighborhood with his wife Charlotte, his mother Mary Horner, and his younger sister Sarah Horner. The 1860 census shows Horner as a boot maker with \$1000 in real property heading a household containing his wife, his sister, by then teaching school, a sixteen-year-old domestic Sarah Baker, boot maker's apprentice Theodore Underwood, and store clerk James B. Wildes. By 1865 Horner had become the master of the Georgetown rail depot, just east of the house, and the 1870 census shows him and his wife alone in the 13 Nelson Avenue household.

In 1880 Horner's Nelson Avenue household included his wife, her brother Edwin, a farm worker, and two other individuals. Horner died in April 1898, and his widow Charlotte remained in the house until her own death in July 1906. Her February 1904 will directed her executor, Israel F. Spofford of Boxford, to assure "that those purchasing the Nelson Avenue Estate, shall be respectable and worthy citizens. If not thought advisable to sell at once, I desire that the property may be rented or leased to the same class of people." Through Georgetown attorney Robert Metcalf, Israel Spofford sold the 13 Nelson Avenue property to his wife Rebecca P. Spofford, and it remained in that family until 1940.<sup>1</sup> The 1910 census enumerated Israel Spofford, a house carpenter, on Nelson Avenue with his wife Rebecca, their three adult daughters Harriet R., Jennie F., and Grace W., and one boarder. Harriet was then a shoe factory stenographer and Jennie was a bookkeeper for a hardware store. The 1918 directory places the Spofford family at 13 Nelson Avenue. Israel Spofford died in May of that year, and the 1920 census shows his widow and daughters Hattie and Grace in the household. Only Rebecca Spofford and daughter Grace, a telephone operator, were in the house in 1930, and in 1939 Rebecca Spofford died at the age of 90. In May 1940 Grace Spofford sold 13 Nelson Avenue to George C. and Dorothy A. Colby, who three years later also acquired 11 Nelson Avenue. The Colbys sold 13 Nelson Avenue in 1947, and the property changed hands three times more before it was acquired in 1991 by Sandra L. Smith (now Martin), the current owner.<sup>2</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

AmericanAncestors.org.

Ancestry.com.

Assessor's Records, Georgetown and Rowley. 1883, 1902, 1920, 1933.

Bureau of the Census. United States Census, 1790-1930.

Lainhart, Ann S. "1855 and 1865 Massachusetts State Censuses for Georgetown." Boston: Ann S. Lainhart, 1987.

Maina, Gloria. "History of Georgetown, Massachusetts." Georgetown: Georgetown Historical Society, 1999.

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.

Southern Essex County Registry of Deeds website, salemdeeds.com.

## DIRECTORIES

*The Essex County Directory. 1866.* Boston: Innes & Niles, 1866.*Essex County History and Directory.* Boston: C. A. & J. F. Wood, 1870.*Resident and Business Directory of Groveland and Georgetown, Mass., for 1885-1886.* Needham, MA: Local Directory Publishing Co., 1885.*Georgetown, Boxford, Byfield, Newbury, and West Newbury, Massachusetts, Directory.* Boston: W. E. Shaw, 1901-2, 1905.

North Essex Directory for Boxford, Georgetown, Merrimac, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury. Salem, MA: Henry M. Meek Publishing Co., 1907, 1909-10, 1912, 1914-15, 1916-17, 1918, 1925.

<sup>1</sup> Israel F. Spofford, executor will Charlotte N. S. Horner, to Robert F. Metcalf, 11 June 1907, SECD 1879:46; Robert F. Metcalf to Rebecca P. Spofford, 11 June 1907, SECD 1879:47.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca P. Spofford to Hattie Rebecca Spofford, 15 May 1915, SECD 2296:585; Hattie R. Abbott fka Hattie Rebecca Spofford to Grace Winifred Spofford, 17 October 1925, SECD 2678:148; Grace Winifred Spofford to George C. and Dorothy A. Colby, 28 May 1940, SECD 3219:365; George C. and Dorothy A. Colby to Clifford A. and Katherine J. Mello, 10 June 1947, SECD 3553:536; Glenn M. and Anna S. Douglas, New Hampshire, to Sandra L. Smith, North Andover MA, 27 September 1991, SECD 10958:372.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242  
GEO.243

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

*Ipswich, Boxford, Byfield, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, Salisbury Beach, Topsfield, West Newbury Directory.* Vol. 1, 1932-'34. Beverly, MA, and Portland, ME: Crowley & Lunt, 1932.

*Haverhill, Mass. Suburban Directory for Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac and West Newbury 1940.* North Hampton, NH: Crosby Publishing Co., 1940.

*Ipswich, Boxford, Georgetown, Middleton, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, Topsfield, West Newbury Directory 1957.* New Haven, CT: Price & Lee Co., 1957.

## MAPS

Map of Georgetown. 1856. In Walling. H. F. *A Topographical Map Essex County Massachusetts.* Boston: Smith and Morley, 1856.

*Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts.* 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

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242 GEO.243
--------------------

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from south.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242  
GEO.243

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



View from NW.

## 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**

*Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.*

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

13 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.242 GEO.243
--------------------

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Statement of Significance by Neil Larson  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The William S. & Charlotte Horner House, built ca. 1853, appears to be eligible for the National Register under criteria A and C as a contributing component of a historic district in Georgetown Center, the boundaries of which are yet to be determined. It is an altered but distinctive example of domestic architecture designed in the Greek Revival style in Georgetown. It is accompanied by domestic outbuildings erected in ca. 1863 that among other functions included a shoe shop. The house and barn probably were built by housewright Joseph Kimball and his son Charles. Built for shoemaker William S. Horner and his bride, the house remained in the family for nearly 100 years. The size and quality of the house indicates the material success and reputable status enjoyed by independent shoemakers ha in Georgetown.