

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

14 Moulton Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.239

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

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

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson

Organization: Town of Georgetown Historical Commission

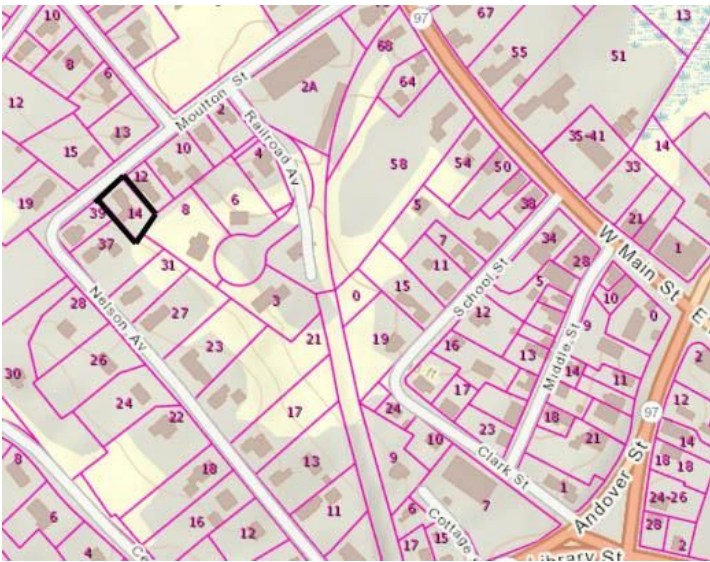
Date: June 2017

Photograph



View from north.

Locus Map (north at top)



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

6C-108

Georgetown

GEO.239

Setting: Residential neighborhood developed in late 19th century adjacent to commercial area of town center.

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 14 Moulton Street

Historic Name: James E. & Armenella Messenger House

Uses: Present: single family residential

Original: single family residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1877

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Italianate

Architect/Builder: Joseph Watson, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: asbestos cement shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Domestic barn (attached)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Siding added, mid 20th cent.

Dormers, oriel added, late 20th cent.

Rear wing altered

Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.17 acre

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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.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The James E. & Amenella Messenger House, built about 1877, is a two-story, wood frame single dwelling with a front gable roof and a side-passage plan. The entrance with a hood mounted on ornate scrolled brackets is positioned off-center at the northeast side of the three-bay street façade. A simple Classical entablature with a tall frieze distinguishes the roof edge with short returns at the base of the gable; wide corner boards frame the facades. There is no window in the gable, although one may have been covered over by the added siding. The front section of the northeast side is blank to correspond with the interior stairs running up that wall. A one-story bay window is positioned at the rear of the wall for the room behind the stairs. An oriel above the bay window and a shed dormer were added at a much later time. The southwest side contains two windows towards the front, one each for the principal rooms on that side; a chimney is aligned with the interior dividing partition where hearths were located. A door and window at the rear correspond to the kitchen occupying the rear space. A one-story wing with a flat roof and a rooftop deck was added to the rear connecting to a small wood-frame domestic barn with a front-gable roof. Its wagon door has been replaced with two vehicle bays with overhead doors, and the mow door converted to a window. The house is centered at the front of lot set back behind a small yard. A driveway enters the southwesterly corner of parcel and runs up to the barn on the side of the house. Larger yards occupy the northeast and southeast (rear) portions of the property.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In 1853, Georgetown shoe manufacturer Daniel E. Moulton bought 16 acre from the estate of late Nathaniel Nelson, who lived at the northwest corner of Andover Street and Nelson Avenue. The tract embraced the area that is now Moulton Street.¹ Between 1873 and 1883 he subdivided the parcel, mostly into lots of 120 by 60 feet, sold three undeveloped lots by 1875, and then had houses built on at least three other lots—at numbers 2 and 10 Moulton Street and 39 Nelson Avenue, at the southeast corner of the intersection of those two streets. Moulton may have been inspired to develop housing for the town's shoe and other workers by the fact that the Nelson heirs had begun to develop the estate's land on both sides of Nelson Avenue as early as 1849.

In January 1873 Moulton sold two 120 ft. x 60 ft. lots to Eliza N. Bodwell of Boxford for \$600. Eliza Edwards Foster had married Henry Newman Bodwell, a carpenter, a year earlier. In March 1878 the Bodwells sold the easterly of the two lots, by then with a house on it, to Eliza's youngest sister Fannie Florence Foster; this house was later numbered 12 Moulton Street.² Though a deed in which the Bodwells transferred title to the other lot has not yet been located, in 1877 James E. Messenger had mortgaged it and its buildings to West Newbury carpenter Joseph Watson, who would have built the house at that time. Watson built other houses on the Moulton tract, including 2 Moulton Street (GEO.236) and probably others for Daniel Moulton. Messenger was living at 14 Moulton Street in 1880 when the census shows him in this neighborhood, and the 1884 map attaches Messenger's name to the property.

Born in Nova Scotia about 1836, James E. Messenger immigrated to Newburyport in 1849 and was living and working as a ship carpenter there by 1855. He and his wife Armenella, also from Nova Scotia, were still in Newburyport in 1870; he was then a wheelwright, and the couple had four children. The 1880 Georgetown census shows Messenger and his 20-year-old son William as house carpenters, and enumerated next to him was another son, Edward Messenger, also a house carpenter living with his wife and two young sons. The 1885 directory shows James Messenger as a carriage manufacturer living on Moulton Street "near Nelson Avenue."

¹ Joseph Kimball and Jer. P. Jones, administrators estate Nathaniel Nelson, to Daniel E. Moulton, 15 September 1853, SECD 487:99.

² Henry N. and Eliza E. Bodwell to Fannie F. Foster, Boxford, 28 March 1878, SECD 994:233. Foster very likely rented the property. Fannie Foster died of consumption only five months later, and her probate records show her sole item of personal property to have been her parlor organ, valued at \$100, while she owned \$2600 in real estate—the house and its quarter-acre lot on Moulton Street valued at \$2000 and pasture and woodland in Boxford.

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James E. Messenger paid off his mortgage to Joseph Watson in 1896, and the 1900 census shows him as a wheelwright living with his wife, his son Ernest, a dry goods store salesman, and a housekeeper.³ The 1905 directory shows him as a carpenter and wheelwright, and the 1912 directory lists him as one of five carpenters and builders living in Georgetown. The 1916 directory is the first to list him on Moulton Street with the house number 14.

James Messenger died in February 1917, and in 1922 the administrator of his estate sold 14 Moulton Street to a Harold M. Messenger, who in turn sold it five months later to Alfred E. Tidd. Born in Monson, Maine, in 1893, Alfred Elmer Tidd was the son of Elmer E. and Hilda Lindgren Tidd; his father was also a house carpenter, and in 1920 Alfred was a shipyard laborer living in his parents' West Street household with his 11 siblings. By 1930 Alfred Tidd and his wife Carrie, who ran a gift shop, were living at 85 Central Street, and they were still there when Alfred registered for the draft in 1942. He thus had acquired 14 Moulton Street for rental income: in 1940 the teacher James H. Boynton, his wife Helen, and their 3-year-old daughter Beverly are shown at this address in the census. Tidd sold the property in 1947 to Arthur E. Outram Jr. of Stoneham, whose family owned it until 1977. The current owner is Moulton Street LLC.⁴

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MAPS

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³ Joseph Watson, West Newbury, to James E. Messenger, 8 June 1896, SECD 1482:323.

⁴ Harold M. Messenger, Brockton MA, to Alfred E. Tidd, 21 February 1923, SECD 2544:106; Alfred E. Tidd to Arthur E. Outram Jr., Stoneham MA, 24 March 1947, SECD 3524:268; Arthur E. Outram Jr. and Mary L. Outram to Glenn A. and Susan L. Clohecy, 19 July 1977, SECD 6372:547; Douglas E. Gisonno and Eileen A. Sharkey-Gisonno, 20 Baldpate Road, to Moulton Street LLC, 14 Moulton, 6 December 2016, SECD 35518:322.

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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from west.