

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

10B 59	Georgetown		GEO.75
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Town/City: Georgetown

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

Photograph



Address: 16 Chestnut Street

Historic Name: Samuel & Elizabeth Kimball 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: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Windows added to south facade

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.35 acre

Setting: The house on this property is set close to the east side of Chestnut Street with mature hardwoods along the back of the property. This section of the Elm-Chestnut neighborhood is largely residential.

Locus Map



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 Samuel & Elizabeth Kimball House is a two-story wood frame dwelling with a front gable roof and wood clapboard siding. It is located on a third-acre lot on the east side of Chestnut Street. Sited on the north side of the narrow parcel, there is a open, mown area on the south and east sides of the property; a driveway is located on the south side of the house.

The two-story house has a three-bay front façade with an entrance on the left side set within a Federal-style architrave composed of attenuated pilasters and a tall entablature. The attic is enclosed as a pediment with a thin entablature. Long side walls contain multiple window bays. The front portion of north side is blank, coinciding with a staircase within; the wide spacing of windows on the south side indicate where fireplaces and chimneys once existed in front and rear rooms. A secondary entrance is positioned at the rear of the south wall. The plan appears to have been three rooms deep along with a two-story kitchen ell built flush with the north wall of the main house. The house was built with nine-over-six window sash on the first story and smaller six-over-six sash on the upper story and in both levels of the ell; the lower sash have been replaced with two-over-two units. There are two windows with six-over-six sash in the front pediment. Three connected windows have been added to the south façade more recently.

Presumably the house was built by Samuel Kimball's brothers, the housewrights Joseph and John Kimball who lived next door on Elm Street. However, the low-pitched hipped roof, five-bay-wide front facades and single-pile plans with rear wall chimneys of their houses and others associated with them was not repeated here, perhaps because of the narrow dimensions of the lot.

The Samuel & Elizabeth Kimball House is an early and distinctive example of Federal-period domestic architecture in the Elm Street neighborhood. Its direct association with the Kimball brothers builders is noteworthy. Essentially intact to its ca. 1830 construction date, it is an important component of the Elm Street historic district.

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

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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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. Nelson's daughters Sarah (Sally), born in 1800, and Mary, born in 1803, married the brothers John (1800-1889) and Joseph (1798-1881) Kimball, who were carpenters; they no doubt built their respective houses, 20 and 16 Elm Street, on land acquired by or given to them by their father-in-law. Joseph Kimball and Mary Nelson married in 1824; John Kimball and Sally Nelson married four years later.³ Their houses probably date to the time of their marriages. The 16 Chestnut Street house was built by 1830, probably by its longtime owner, the carpenter John Kimball (1800-1889). The property remained in his family until 1917. Kimball was the son of Samuel and Susannah Kimball and was born in Boxford,⁴ the town bordering Georgetown on the southwest; Elm Street was the main route between the two towns. He and his brother, Joseph Kimball (1798-1881) worked in partnership, as local historian Henry Nelson noted in 1888.

Sixteen Chestnut Street appears just east of John Kimball's house on the 1830 Georgetown map and is shown as owned by him. By 1838 the house is labeled "S. Kimball," probably for Samuel Kimball, Jr., John and Joseph's brother. Born in 1802 in Boxford, Samuel Kimball is listed in the 1830 Georgetown (then Rowley) census just before John and Joseph Kimball and immediately after Nathaniel N. Morse of 14 Chestnut Street. The house is still labeled S. Kimball on the 1856 map, though Samuel appears to have returned to Boxford by 1850. The family continued to own 16 Chestnut, but who rented the house in the years between then and 1870 is not clear.

By 1870 Susan and Louisa S. Kimball, sisters of John, Joseph, and Samuel Jr., were living at 16 Chestnut. Neither Susan, born in Boxford in 1796, nor Louisa, born there in 1811, was shown with occupations in that year. Susan Kimball does not appear in any Georgetown or Bradford census before 1870. In 1875 Susan Kimball died at the age of seventy-nine, and her sister remained in the house. Louisa S. Kimball is listed alone in this household in the 1880 census, and the 1885-86 directory shows her as a dressmaker living on Chestnut Street. She died in 1893.

In 1914 the house was occupied by the farmer John Labombard and Albert Willett, who in 1910 lived on Main Street with his wife Barbara and also worked as a farmer. Between 1920 and 1925 the family of the shoemaker Peter F. Boulanger bought 16 Chestnut Street. Born in Quebec in March 1868, Boulanger was living with his wife Herminise and two children in Boxford in the household of his father-in-law Camil DeMers, who emigrated with his wife from Quebec in 1886. Peter and Herminise Boulanger were in the United States by 1899, when their son Theodore was born in Haverhill; by 1902 the family was in Lynn and by 1910 in Georgetown. Boulanger's pattern was typical among shoemakers, who often moved from shoe town to shoe town in search of a better wage.

In 1910 Boulanger was living on Chestnut Street, perhaps at number 8, and worked as a shoe factory heel cutter. The family is shown at 8 Chestnut in the 1920 census and at 16 Chestnut in the 1924 directory. By that time the couple's sons Theodore and Leonard had resettled in Chicago, and their daughter Beatrice had moved to Lynn. In 1930 Peter Boulanger had become a

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 The transfer of title from Joseph S. Kimball's sister Josephine refers to his grandfather's 18 September 1827 purchase from Nelson (SED 244:121); see Josephine K. Smith to Joseph S. Kimball, 10 March 1922, SED 2508:278.

⁴ John Kimball is often shown as John Kimball Jr.; in the manner of the time it might more appropriately have been John Kimball 2d, because he was contemporary with the older Colonel John Kimball of Georgetown.

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morocco finisher in a tannery and his daughter Emily made dresses in a garment shop. Boulanger rented part of the house to the family of Charles Noel of Quebec, worked as a cabinetmaker for a contractor; Noel's wife Sylvia was born in Massachusetts, as were the couple's five children. In 1933 the Boulangers shared the house with Louis Lennon, about whom nothing is yet known.

The Boulanger family owned 16 Chestnut Street until the death of Herminise Boulanger in 1962, when Fairfax Hatch Jr. and his wife Gertrude acquired the property. The Hatches had acquired 14 Chestnut Street in 1944. Current owners Robert C. Hoover and Karin Anderson bought the property in 1999.⁵

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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.
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- "Georgetown, Mass. 1887." Drawn and Published by George E. Norris, Brockton, Massachusetts. Troy, NY: Burleigh Lithographic Establishment, 1887.

⁵ Gregory H. and Charlene E. Smith to Robert C. Hoover and Karin Anderson, 9 April 1999, SED 15595:497.

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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 Samuel & Elizabeth Kimball House is an early and distinctive example of Federal-period domestic architecture in the Elm Street neighborhood. Its direct association with the Kimball brothers builders is noteworthy. Essentially intact to its ca. 1830 construction date, it is an important component of the Elm Street historic district.

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View from NW



View from SW

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View from NE



Aerial view from SW