

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN 185 West Main Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.324

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



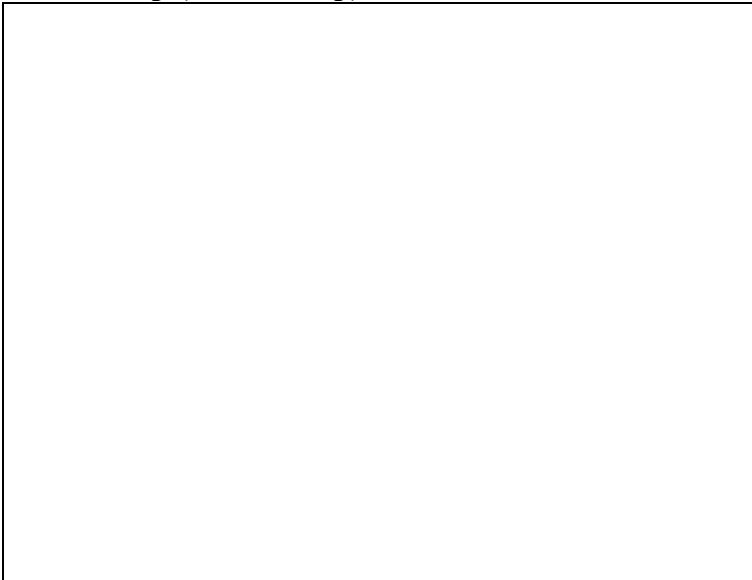
View from SW.



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)



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

6B-66

Georgetown

GEO.324

**Setting:** Densely developed area on historic road leading out of town along spit of land between two major ponds.

**Town/City:** Georgetown

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

**Address:** 185 West Main Street

**Historic Name:** Orin & Lavinia S. Weston House

**Uses:** Present: single family residential

Original: single family residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1829

**Source:** deeds & visual assessment

**Style/Form:** Federal

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

## Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn (attached, added)

## Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Bay window and porch added front façade, late 19<sup>th</sup>c.

Hyphen & barn renovated/added, late 20<sup>th</sup> c.

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 3.00

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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 Orin and Lavinia S. Weston House is a two-story wood frame single-family dwelling with a gable roof built about 1829. Its bilaterally symmetrical form and single-pile center-hall plan has a five-bay front façade with an unembellished center entrance. The center window on the second story is distinguished by sidelights suggesting that there had been a more elaborate surround for the entrance. Two first-floor windows on the west side of the entrance were replaced with a one-story bay window with beveled sides later in the nineteenth century; a porch with turned posts was added over the entrance around the same time. The eave line is defined by a shallow eave with molded cornice; eaves are tight to the end walls. Gable ends contain single windows on each story, including the attic. A story-and-a-half cross-gable wing is attached to the west end of the rear façade. A hipped-roof porch extends from the front corner of the house, across the west and on to the façade of the wing where the kitchen entry is located. A large semicircular window has been added to the upper story of the wing. The porch also connects to a one-story hyphen that contains three doorways and a broad brick chimney. This feature is a recent addition, perhaps an extensive renovation of a pre-existing hyphen linking the house to a barn. The current "barn" contains three garage doors on the front façade surmounted by an arched window in the front gable. If a historic barn is contained in this section, there is nothing to outwardly indicate it. The rear (north) sides of the barn and hyphen have walk-out basements. A deck and small annex have been added in the inside of the L formed by the house and wing.

The house is situated in the center of the street frontage of a large lot extending back to Pentucket Pond. A small yard and privacy fence fronts the house; the area in front of the barn/garage is paved. A large yard is located in the rear of the property.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In 1804 Samuel Weston (1761-1828) acquired seventy acres on the isthmus between Pentucket and Rock Ponds on the west side of Georgetown Center that had been farmed by the Adams and Harriman families in the previous century.<sup>1</sup> The Harrimans' house was part of the purchase (175 W. Main St., GEO.19), and it is likely the house to which Samuel Weston moved his family. Born in Rowley, Samuel Weston was married to Mehitabel Cowdrey (1787-1827) in Rowley and moved to Reading by 1791, when their oldest child, Samuel, was born. Of their next children, Cutler, Fitch, Olive, and Orin were all born in Reading; only son Flint was born in Rowley West Parish, three years after his father bought the farm. After Samuel Weston died, his sons Cutler, Fitch, and Orin continued to work the farm. The 1830 map associates the old Harriman house with the estate of Samuel Weston, evidently occupied by Cutler, and a second dwelling was linked to Orin and Fitch Weston, now at 185 West Main Street.

From the design of the house, and based on the assumption that Samuel Weston lived out his life in the Harriman House, the 185 West Main Street house probably was built about 1829 when Fitch Weston (1797-1844) married Deborah Wood. Orin Weston (1798-1871) apparently had a share in the house, although he did not marry Lavinia Spofford until 1835. After his brother died in 1844, Orin Weston assumed control of the property. The 1850 census enumerated Orin and Lavinia Weston with children George Spofford (1837-1909) and Lucy Richmond (b.1842) and Irish-born farm laborer Bartleby Ferguson. Their real property was valued at \$5330. The agricultural census for the same year shows Orin with 111 improved acres and 12 unimproved acres, while the same schedules for 1860 show him with 50 improved and 50 unimproved acres. The value of his farm in 1860 was set at \$10,000, the highest value of any farm in Georgetown, and he had at that time a horse, four milk cows, another cow, four oxen, and two swine. The farm produced 200 pounds of cheese, 300 pounds of butter, and 40 tons of hay.

In the 1865 state census and the 1870 federal enumeration Orin and Lavinia Weston are shown living alone at 185 West Main Street. Their son George S. had married and moved across the street to the "Foster place" (176 W. Main St., GEO.323), which Orin later willed to his daughter and her husband William Moore Gay. George S. moved into his parents' house, which his father

<sup>1</sup> Enoch Harriman, Rowley MA, to Samuel Weston, Reading MA, 3 December 1804, SECD 174:234.

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conveyed to him with "all the land owned by me on the North side of the highway leading from Georgetown to Haverhill." subject to his widow's rights. In his will, written almost two years earlier, he left his wife the half of the house in which they then lived as well as the right to use the kitchen, storeroom, cellar, shed, barn, and well; she received all the furniture and "household stores" and one-third of all the cash remaining after other legacies were paid. The 1880 census shows George S. Weston and his wife Harriet A. Dow Weston, a native of Atkinson, New Hampshire, in the house with their two adopted children, Charles and Grace, and his widowed mother Lavinia.

Lavinia Weston died in 1894, and Harriet Dow Weston died in 1899. In 1900 George Weston married Mary Louise Searles Ilsley, and he died in April 1909. The next year the administrator of his estate sold 185 West Main Street to C. Jerome Peirce of Salem, who sold it seven months later to Florence E. Johnson.<sup>2</sup> Johnson, born Florence E. Tasker in Haverhill, was the wife of milk dealer Charles E. Johnson, a Georgetown native and the son of Joseph and Mary Morse Johnson; he had grown up in the Moulton Street area. The couple had married in Haverhill in 1899, and the 1920 census locates them in the house with their teenage children Sumner J. and E. Edwina Johnson. By 1930 Edwin was teach pubic school, but by 1940 both children had moved from their parents' home; the census that year show Charles and Florence Johnson in the house by themselves.

In September 1858 the Johnsons sold 185 West Main Street to Georgetown realtor Doris A. Marston, and they moved to Boxford and died within the next few years, Florence in 1960 and Charles in 1962. The property changed hands fairly often afterward. Current owners Dean V. Raspa and Alicia K. Nagle bought 185 West Main Street in 2015.<sup>3</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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## MAPS

"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, 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).

## PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)

<sup>2</sup> Robert F. Metcalf, administrator estate George S. Weston, to C. Jerome Peirce, Salem MA, 26 September 1910, SECD 2039:554; C. Jerome Peirce to Florence E. Johnson, 6 April 1911, SECD 2076:12.

<sup>3</sup> Charles E. and Florence E. Johnson to Doris A. Marston, 20 September 1958, SECD 4511:388; Doris A. Marston to Richard P. and Phyllis M. Eaton, 6 April 1959, SECD 4552:317; Patricia S. Rohner to Dean V. Raspa and Alicia K. Nagle, 185 W Main, 21 April 2015, SECD 34037:312. The property is shown as Parcel 1 on "Plan of a Portion of the Johnson Property, Georgetown, Mass.," October 1958, SECP 4512:1.

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View from south.



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View from SE.

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Aerial view from north. Source: bing.com/maps.