

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

24 Summer Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.301

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View from SE.



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

**Setting:** Concentrated neighborhood of single-family homes in town center.

11A-142A

Georgetown

GEO.301

**Town/City:** Georgetown

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

**Address:** 24 Summer Street

**Historic Name:** Thomas & Mary Morse House

**Uses:** Present: single family residential

Original: single family residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1844

**Source:** deeds & visual assessment

**Style/Form:** Federal

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

None

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

Exterior siding, doors & windows replaced, ca. 2005

**Condition:** fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.33 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 Thomas and Mary Morse House is a two-story wood frame single-family dwelling with a gable roof documented to this location in 1850 but appearing to have been built a generation earlier. Its bilaterally symmetrical form and single-pile center-hall plan has a five-bay front façade with a center entrance distinguished by a Classical architrave recently added. The entire exterior envelope of the building appears to have been renovated about 2005 with new siding, doors and windows. The upper story contains only four windows with the center space over the entrance blank. Eaves on all sides are tight to the walls, and one of what likely were two chimneys on the back wall remains. End walls contain two windows on each story; an oriel occupies the lower space on the easterly end. A shed-roof lean-to spans the rear wall with windows on the ends. A rear entrance is contained in an enclosed porch.

The house is situated at the easterly end of the lot near the corner of Summer Street and Juniper Lane where a paved parking area is located. The westerly side of the parcel contains a small yard.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In 1846 and 1848, patent medicine manufacturer Moses Atwood bought almost four acres of land in two tracts in this section of Georgetown, first from Stephen Searle Jr., who lived nearby on the west side of North Street, and then from Nathaniel Nelson.<sup>1</sup> He was the manufacturer of Atwood's Vegetable Physical Jaundice Bitters, a business he began upon his move from New Hampshire to Georgetown in 1840. In October 1850, Moses Atwood sold Thomas Morse a lot of 50 square rods on the north side of Summer Street for \$250. It was a piece of the 3.75 acres Atwood had acquired from Nathaniel Nelson. The lot bordered the Baptist Society's parsonage farm on the north and Atwood's own house lot on the east (28 Summer Street, GEO.303). Morse's deed does not mention a house, but on the same day Nathaniel Nelson deeded any remaining interest he had in the same parcel, which he cited as the land and house where Thomas Morse then lived.<sup>2</sup>

Born in Wiscasset, Maine, in 1811, Thomas Morse was the son of Bradford native Samuel Morse. He was living in Industry, Maine, in 1824, when, according to a record his marriage recorded later, he married Mary B. Nichols of that place. They were certainly married by 1836, when their oldest child Lucy was born. First recorded in Georgetown in 1844, the 1850 census enumerated Morse in this neighborhood with \$550 in real property. He worked as a laborer, and his household included his wife and children Lucy, Colonius, James, and Mary, all born in Maine between 1836 and 1842. Morse is shown as a laborer in every census through 1880, and he served in the 19<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry during the Civil War.

In 1884 Morse and his wife deeded their 1.5-acre homestead on the north side of Summer Street and a half-acre lot on the other side of the street to their son Colonius. Mary Morse died in 1885, and by 1900 Thomas had moved to a grandson's home in Haverhill, where he died in 1902 at the age of 91. As his father had, Colonius Morse served in the 19<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry during the Civil War (though in a different company), and he is shown in the 1900 census as a shoemaker living at 24 Summer Street with his wife Martha R. Downer Morse, a native of West Newbury whom he married in 1859, their son Alva, a shoe factory nailer born in 1883, and Alva's daughter Florence, born in 1896. By 1910 two other grandchildren, Beatrice and Alvania, were living with Colonius and Martha Morse here, as well as 16-year-old Ethel Spaulding. By 1920 Florence as a telephone operator,

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Searle Jr. and Sarah Searle to Moses Atwood, 19 September 1846, SECD 371:265; Nathaniel Nelson to Moses Atwood, 30 May 1848, SECD 398:90; Moses Atwood moved to Iowa in 1855. On his business see Calvin Bandstra, "Moses Atwood: the Man and the Medicine," *New Sharon Area Historical Society* 14, 1 (Spring 2006), online at <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/ATWOOD/2007-03/1173639355>.

<sup>2</sup> Nathaniel Nelson to Moses Atwood, 30 May 1848, SECD 398:90; Nathaniel Nelson to Moses Atwood, 25 October 1850, SECD 436:32. Moses Atwood moved to Iowa in 1855. On his business see Calvin Bandstra, "Moses Atwood: the Man and the Medicine," *New Sharon Area Historical Society* 14, 1 (Spring 2006), online at <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/ATWOOD/2007-03/1173639355>.

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and she and her sister lived at 24 Summer Street with their grandparents while 17-year-old Beatrice, a shoe factory worker, was living with her parents at 28 Summer Street.

Colonius Morse died in December 1926, and in July 1929 his children sold 24 Summer Street to George J. Mary A. Stidstone.<sup>3</sup> Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1862, George Stidstone came to the United States in 1881, and his wife Mary followed in 1888. By 1900 they were living in Chelsea with their three children and Mary Stidstone's brother George. Stidstone worked as a house painter, and the 1930 census shows him at 24 Summer Street with his wife, and the family of Marshall Boutwell, who rented from him. The 1932 directory shows Stidstone as a painter at the State House in Boston, and by 1940 he was 79 years old, retired, and living with his wife Mary at 24 Summer Street.

In August 1940 Stidstone sold 24 Summer Street to Paul W. and Ruth B. James, who owned it until 1977. Current owners Christopher Conway and Debra Berry bought the property in 2005.<sup>4</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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

## DIRECTORIES

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*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 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.

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

<sup>3</sup> James Morse, Colonius Morse, Alvah N. Morse, Emma F. Brocklebank, and Ida L. Spaulding to George J. and Mary A. Stidstone, 5 July 1929, SECD 2813:483.

<sup>4</sup> George J. Stidstone to Paul W. and Ruth B. James, 31 August 1940, SECD 3227:335-36; Ruth B. James to Sean B. McCaughan, 13 July 1977, SECD 6371:552; Frank J. Miani Jr. and Carri L. Miani to Christopher Conway and Debra Berry, 24 Summer St, 29 July 2005, SECD 24644:507. The 24 Summer Street parcel is shown as Parcel A on "Plan of Land in Georgetown, MA as Divided for Ruth James," May 1977, SECD 6371:552.



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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from west.

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

## 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

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

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The Thomas and Mary Morse House, built about 1844, is a representative example of mid nineteenth-century domestic architecture in the town center. Its two-story gable-roof form and single-pile center-hall plan has characteristics in common with other houses from this period in Georgetown. The property meets National Register criteria A and C as a contributing feature in a potential historic district in the town center, the boundaries of which have yet to be determined.