

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View from east.



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

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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

9A-10

Georgetown

GEO.227

**Setting:** Major route into town center with concentration of historic and non-historic residential buildings.

**Town/City:** Georgetown

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

**Address:** 247 Central Street

**Historic Name:** Abraham & Charles H. Adams Double House & Barn

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

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1832

**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, possibly 19<sup>th</sup> century

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

Additions on rear, late 20<sup>th</sup> century

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 2.17 acres

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227

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 Adams Double House is a two-story wood frame multiple dwelling with a gable roof built about 1825. Its symmetrical form, fenestration, and plan are characteristic of the type, although locating the entrances on opposing ends rather than on the street façade is unusual in a rural setting. Built for two brothers who operated a store on an adjoining parcel, the scale and pretension of the house indicates that it was a residence for persons of higher status, reflecting the position of the Adams family in South Georgetown. The street (east) façade contains two pairs of windows widely separated in the center where the dividing partition between the dwelling units is located. Large brick chimneys are positioned on the roof ridge in the center of the units between two principal rooms in each story. Entrances are centered in the three-bay gable ends, both contained within porches since enclosed. It's likely that there are vestibules inside the doorways and stairs rising up within the chimney space. A story-and-a-half kitchen ell with a cross gable roof is centered on the rear façade. Like the main part of the house, it could be divided down the center for separate kitchen units or, as in other cases, a single space shared by both occupants. Entrances would have been located on the side walls with the recessed area back from main house filled with porches. These porches have been replaced with shed-roof sunrooms that extend past the rear corners of the house. It appears that the rear end of the ell has been preserved with its central chimney flanked by single windows. Reflective of the Federal Period, the house has shallow overhangs along the front and back walls, with the roof edge flush with the gable end walls. Windows have board surrounds with molded edge trim. Other decorative elements concentrated on the entrances and porches have been concealed or obliterated by later alterations.

A small two-story barn is located north of the house and may retain a 19<sup>th</sup>-century frame; its gable end contains wagon and mow doors. Its scale and form are consistent with small domestic barns of the period; however, enveloped by more recent wood board-and-batten, the historic integrity of the structure is impossible to determine. Once part of a small farm, the house retains a setting amid small meadows and pastures stretching from the street west to the railroad right-of-way and beyond. A lawn surrounds the house, and a tall privacy fence has been erected along the street and the southern boundaries. Horse fences run along the other sides. A driveway enters a break in the fence north of the house and leads to a parking area in front of the barn.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Brothers Abraham and Charles H. Adams owned separate halves of a double house on Central Street in South Georgetown by the 1830s. Prior to that decade, the deed history of property is confounded. It is documented that Abraham purchased six acres of land with buildings thereon from Joseph P. Low in 1832.<sup>1</sup> In April 1826, in a deed cited in other deeds but not itself recorded, Amos J. Tenney of Georgetown sold to Joseph P. Low a lot on the west side of Central Street south of Nelson Avenue that had probably been part of the holdings of Eliphalet Chaplin (1777-1825). Amos J. Tenney was the administrator of Chaplin's estate, and at a 27 April 1826 auction Joseph P. Low bought part of an acre of land with half a house and three-quarters of a barn for \$123. Low, born in Dunbarton, New Hampshire, in 1800, was the eldest child of Joseph Low, a native of Essex, Massachusetts, and his wife Apphia Perley, of Boxford. He was a cooper, and by 1824 he was living in Georgetown when he married Eliza Dole, the daughter of Silas and Rebecca Balch Dole of the Georgetown part of Rowley. In 1827 and 1828, Jonathan Chaplin and Wingate Ilsley deeded their shared interests in the property to Low, described then as including half of the land and buildings

<sup>1</sup> Joseph P. Low, Rowley, to Abraham Adams, 17 March 1832, SECD 265:212. Joseph P. Low had been deeded the property by his brother Benjamin on the same day. Benjamin Low to Joseph P. Low, 16 March 1832, SECD 264:166; See also M. V. B. Perley, comp., *History and Genealogy of the Perley Family* (Salem, MA: by the compiler, 1906), 140-41, 278.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

described in the Tenney deed.<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Chaplin was a descendant of Eliphalet, and Ilsley had bought 27 acres of land at the 1826 Chaplin auction. Precisely how Joseph P. Low ended up with six acres of land is not known.

The 247 Central Street house is not depicted on the 1830 map of Georgetown, which suggests that the Adams brothers built it in 1832 at the earliest. And while a deed of the transaction has yet to be located, they divided the house and the lot down the middle with Abraham owning the north half and Charles owning the south. This division is represented in deeds by which their father, Benjamin Adams, whose house and tannery were located on Nelson Street (#23), placed liens on halves of the house for loans to each son in 1845 and 1846.<sup>3</sup> Abraham Adams (1800-1849) and his younger brother Charles Henry Adams (1809-1880) also were in business together in a store at 239 Central Street. In September 1849, however, Abraham drowned himself, and the subsequent account of his estate showed him to be at least \$2300 in debt.<sup>4</sup> At the time of his death Abraham owned half of the double house, one other "small house," a shop, and a shed and outbuilding on 4.5 acres, all valued at \$1960; he also owned a one-eighth share in a tan yard and buildings, no doubt the tannery founded by his father in 1780 and the first tannery in what became Georgetown. A committee appointed by the probate court assigned to his widow Ruth Loftly Adams the house in which she then lived, half of a "hog house," and half of a shed on the property as well as another lot further south.

The 1850 census enumerated the widow Ruth Loftly Adams, 36 years of age, in a household with her infant daughter Lizzie Frances and five boarding male shoemakers. She is listed immediately after her father-in-law Benjamin Adams's entry on the list. Also in her dwelling was the household of shoe manufacturer Luther D. Perley with his wife Almira and infant daughter Lucy. Charles H. Adams was listed as a shoemaker two entries away with his wife Eliza and their four children—Ellen E., 15; Charles H., 13; John K., 4; and Sarah L., 1. Thirteen-year-old Abby Ross in this household was likely a domestic. In between Ruth and Charles in the schedule was shoemaker Charles H. Johnson, a tenant, with a household that included his wife Eliza A. Hardy, two young children, and a teenage boarder, also a shoemaker. Betsy Johnson, probably Charles's mother, and fifteen-year old Louise F. Johnson maintained a separate household in the residence. The Johnsons may have been renting the "small house" mentioned in Abraham Adams's probate inventory.

Charles H. Adams moved to Danvers in 1852 and sold his southern half of the house and land to Moses W. Follansbee, a shoecutter, in the same year.<sup>5</sup> The 1855 state census has him 25 years of age and head of a household of his wife Martha, infant daughter Alice, and 22-year-old Ellen Wayland listed just before Ruth A. Adams, her daughter and three boarders. Follansbee sold his part of the property to George A Kimball, who conveyed it to Irish-immigrant laborer Thomas Shehan for \$600 in 1859.<sup>6</sup> In the meantime, Ruth A. Adams bought an adjoining parcel to the south from Charles H. Johnson for \$90 in 1850, which he had acquired at the auction of the estate of Abraham Adams, Ruth's deceased husband.<sup>7</sup> She had built the house at 253 Central Street by the time the 1856 Essex County map was published; she sold her northern half of the subject house and the one in which she lived (#253) in 1863 to George Washington Adams (1815/16-97), the younger brother of her late husband, and moved elsewhere in the town.<sup>8</sup> The 1872 map attaches his name to #253 and Thomas Shehan to the subject house. It is not clear who occupied the north side of the house in 1870, but in 1880 it's likely that G.W. Adams was renting the northern half of the house to farm laborer Lowell G. Wilson and his large family.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Chaplin to Joseph P. Low, 14 February 1828, SECD 249:247, and Wingate Ilsley to Joseph P. Low, 22 December 1827, SECD 249:247, both describe this 1826 Tenney deed.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Adams to Charles H. Adams, \$450, 2 July 1845, SECD 357:105 and Benjamin Adams to Abraham Adams, \$460, SECD 366:285, 16 April 1846. Both deeds have boundaries running down the center of the house.

<sup>4</sup> His death is cited in *Salem Gazette*, 5 October 1849, but the cause is not cited there; it does appear in Georgetown vital records. His probate records variously show the debt as \$2369 and \$2669.

<sup>5</sup> Charles H. and Eliza A. Adams to Moses W. Follansbee, 21 May 1852m SECD 461:247.

<sup>6</sup> Moses W. Follansbee to George A. Kimball, SECD 614:284; Kimball to Thomas Shehan, 5 November 1859, 597:19.

<sup>7</sup> Charles H. Johnson to Ruth A. Adams, 16 November 1850, 438:249 and Ruth A. Adams, adminx to Charles H. Johnson, 16 November 1850, 438:248.

<sup>8</sup> Ruth A. Adams to George W. Adams, 28 December 1863, SECD 660:284. In 1853, a year after the death of Benjamin Adams Jr., his sons Benjamin and Samuel sold their father's "mansion house" and nine acres to George W. Adams, who also owned the family's ancestral estate called Highfields in the Newbury section of Byfield Parish. See Andrew N. Adams, *A Genealogical History of Robert Adams, of Newbury, Mass., and His Descendants, 1635-1900* (Rutland, VT: by the author, 1900), 7.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

George Washington Adams died in 1896, and his widow, Sarah Perley Adams, died in 1909. The following year both houses were sold to harness maker Jacob Jewett Hardy, with Charles P. Adams relocating to 253 Central Street where he died in 1930 at the age of seventy.<sup>9</sup> Born in 1862 in Groveland, Jacob J. Hardy was living in Georgetown by 1880, when he was apprenticeship with harness maker Thomas F. Hill and living with his family and two other boarding harness makers. In 1887 he married Topsfield native Lucy H. Lake, and in 1900 the couple lived in Topsfield with their daughters Marjorie, born in 1888, and Helen L., born in 1897. The Hardys returned to Georgetown by 1905, when the directory shows him as a box factory worker living on Prospect Street. By 1910 the family was living at 253 Central Street. Thomas Shehan's half had been conveyed to antiques dealer Edward J. Boyle, whose household contained wife Martha, an artist, daughter Laura and Evan R. Day, a ward.

Jacob Hardy died in 1918 and in 1920 his widow Lucy deeded the northern half of the property to her children Helen and Frederick. The other half was owned and occupied by Edward and Ellen (Ella) Noonan. Charles P. Adams, who was the tenant in the Hardy's portion died there in 1930. By 1934 the Hardys had returned to Groveland and sold their Georgetown property to Jenny M. Purchase of Lynn, who appears never to have occupied it, renting the dwelling to others. Ella Noonan sold the southern part to Purchase in 1935.<sup>10</sup>

Ten years later Purchase sold the entire house to Kenneth W. and Marion T. Nunan. The deed states that "said premises were formerly two separate parcels of land and the Northerly part formerly occupied by Abraham Adams and later owned by Helen L. Hardy, and the Southerly part formerly owned by Thomas Sheehan and later by Ella A. Noonan."<sup>11</sup> Born in 1915 in Saugus, Kenneth W. Nunan was a carpenter at the time of his marriage to Marion T. Bailey of Georgetown, in 1941, but by 1943 he was working as a "control operator" at the Boston radio station WEEI. In 1960 the Nunans sold the property, and it changed hands often after that point. Current owner Patricia Claydon-Gleason bought 247 Central Street in 2000.<sup>12</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Adams, Andrew N. *A Genealogical History of Robert Adams, of Newbury, Mass., and His Descendants, 1635-1900*. Rutland, VT: by the author, 1900.

AmericanAncestors.org.

Ancestry.com.

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

Chute, Wm. E. *A Genealogy and History of the Chute Family in America*. N.p. 1894.

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

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. HAVE ON CD

Perley, M. V. B., comp., *History and Genealogy of the Perley Family*. Salem, MA: by the compiler, 1906.

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

## 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.

<sup>9</sup> Harry O. and Gertrude E. Adams, Georgetown; Amos W. and Fannie W. Bennett, Ossipee NH; and John W. and Mabel Harvey, Danvers MA, to Jacob J. Hardy, 28 August 1906, SECD 1839:91. It is unclear how the property came to belong to these multiple grantors.

<sup>10</sup> Ella A. Noonan to Jenny M. Purchase, Swampscott MA, 9 November 1935, SECD 3065:295.

<sup>11</sup> Lucy H. Hardy to Helen L. Hardy and Frederick O. Hardy, 30 December 1920, SECD 2473:383; Helen L. Hardy to Jenny M. Purchase, Lynn, 8 November 1934, SECD 3015:576; Ella A. Noonan to Jenny M. Purchase, Swampscott MA, 9 November 1935, SECD 3065:295; Jenny M. Purchase to Kenneth W. Nunan Sr. and Marion T. Nunan, 11 July 1944, SECD 3376:439.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth W. Nunan Sr. and Marion T. Nunan, New Rochelle NY, to Cornelius D. and Elizabeth H. Shea, Andover MA, 6 July 1960, SECD 4683:482; Derek J. and Julia B. Wheeler to Patricia Gleason-Claydon, trustee Claydon Realty Trust, 9 September 2000, SECD 16563:386.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227
---------

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Map of Georgetown in 1810 and 1840. In Gage, Thomas. *The History of Rowley, Anciently Including Bradford, Boxford, and Georgetown, from the Year 1639 to the Present Time*. Boston: F. Andrews, 1840. 320.

"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).

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

*Insurance Maps of Haverhill Including Bradford, Groveland & Georgetown, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1893; Sanborn Map Co., 1906, 1949.



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227
---------

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from NE.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227
---------

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



View from SE.



View from east.



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

247 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.227
---------

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Aerial view from west. Source: [bing.com/maps](https://www.bing.com/maps).