

## FORM B – BUILDING

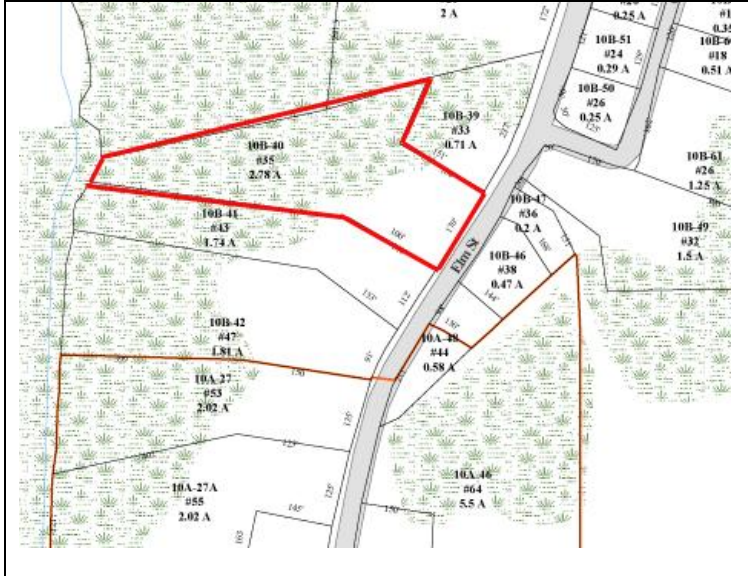
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

## Photograph



View from E

## Locus Map



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

10B 40

Georgetown

GEO.84

**Town/City:** Georgetown

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

**Address:** 35 Elm Street

**Historic Name:** Lewis A. & Apphia Merrill House

**Uses:** Present: residence

Original: residence

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1837

**Source:** historic maps & family history

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Joseph & John Kimball  
probable builders

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
Garage & workshops

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

none

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 2.78 acres

**Setting:** This property is on the west side of Elm Street south of its junction with Chestnut Street and borders a brook on its western bound. Elm Street is primarily residential.

**Recorded by:** Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

**Organization:** Georgetown Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): January 2010

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

## MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.84

☒ 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 Lewis A. & Apphia Merrill House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with wood clapboard siding and a gable roof. It is situated at the east or street side of a 2.78-acre lot on the west side of Elm Street south of where Chestnut Street intersects. It is oriented to Elm Street and flanked by a work yard with outbuildings on the south and a house on a subdivided lot (33 Elm St.) close by on the north; its rear yard extends back a good distance from the street and doglegs into a wooded wetland at the west end of the property.

The form of the house is similar to others on the street that have one-room-deep plans with two brick chimneys on their rear walls, one each at the backs of rooms flanking a center hall. This was a popular plan for houses in towns along the North Shore of Massachusetts and in Portsmouth, New Hampshire during the period Elm Street developed. A map of the area published in 1838 depicts the house, which was but one year after the Merrills were married. Its design and date of construction associates with other of its neighbors that are attributed to local housewrights Joseph and John Kimball, with one notable exception. Unlike the others in this group, the Merrill house does not have a projecting entrance, rather its trabeated architrave with sidelights is flush with the front wall. The house has a long two-story kitchen ell abutting the center of the rear wall; a chimney is located in the center of the ell's ridge line. The enormity of this section suggests that space within was used in the Merrills' shoemaking enterprise.

The five-bay front façade contains a tripartite window above the entrance similar to the Benjamin & Apphia Winter house (17 Elm St.) Windows contain two-over-two sashes that were installed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The rooflines of both the front and rear sections of the house are ornamented with a plain entablature with thin friezes abutting the tops of second-story window heads. A two-story shed-roof addition has been made to the rear of the house on the south side of the ell. A one-story wing was added to the south end of the house, perhaps as a shop or office.

South of the house with its gable end facing the street is a wood frame building that apparently functioned as a shop or store. It appears to have been built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and has wood clapboard siding, and two apertures on the front (east) wall have been framed in and sided over; the south wall also has no openings, while there are three windows on the north side. A brick chimney is located at the rear of the roof. The building abuts the northeast corner of a second one-story wood frame work building, which looks as if it was built first; a vehicle door occupies the portion of wall left exposed on its east gable end. A third one-story section is appended to its rear (west) wall. An in-ground swimming pool is located directly behind the buildings.

The Lewis A. & Apphia Merrill House is a distinctive example of Greek Revival Period architecture in the town and evinces the single-pile rear chimney plan form characteristic of Essex County and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1837, the house is essentially intact and distinguished by original materials and a projecting entrance with Federal-style architrave. It was probably built by housewrights Joseph and John Kimball, who also lived on Elm Street. It is a key contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

### 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 local histories, aside from the road (now Massachusetts Route 133) connecting Georgetown to its parent Rowley to the east and Andover on the west, Elm Street is one of the oldest streets in Georgetown, having been opened to "public travel"

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.84

about 1686.<sup>1</sup> At that time between ten and twenty families lived in what was known as Rowley second (or west) parish or New Rowley. Beginning in the 1650s Rowley proprietors began to make land grants in the town's western reaches; in 1666-67, the town laid out three thousand acres in the area and granted John Spofford the job of penning cattle "the young cattle of the towne" where they had "been herded this last yeare." Pen Brook is named for these pens, which stood west of Elm Street. In 1732 families in the area successfully petitioned to form the Second Church of Rowley (ultimately Georgetown's First Congregational Church) and built a second meetinghouse at the junction of Elm and East Main Streets in 1769. In 1838 the General Court of Massachusetts incorporated Georgetown, which embraced most of the second parish.<sup>2</sup>

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.

In 1800 the land on which 33 Elm Street is sited appears to have belonged to Aaron Nelson (1740-1804) who, unlike most of the other landowning Nelsons in this area, descended from the immigrant Thomas's son Captain Philip Nelson (1636-91). Philip Nelson, Aaron Nelson's great-great grandfather, graduated from Harvard College in 1654 and received a large grant of land in the second parish in the 1660s, Philip's son Joseph Nelson (1682-1744) is believed to have been the first Nelson to have settled in what is now Georgetown. Aaron Nelson's land on the west side of Elm Street was apparently owned by his grandson Charles (1803-74) at the time 33 Elm Street was built, though a large tract on the same side of the street had also passed down to Lieutenant Jonathan Nelson (1772-1852), one of Aaron Nelson's ten children, and then to Jonathan's son Sylvanus Nelson (1803-82). Charles Nelson, a lifelong farmer, apparently lived on Elm Street for at least part of his life, but the location of his house is not yet known.

No house is depicted at the current site of 35 Elm Street on the 1830 map of Georgetown, but it is shown on the 1838 village map marked "L. A. Merrill." Lewis Austin Merrill was among the seventh generation of an ancient Rowley family. Nathaniel Merrill came to Newbury from England in 1635, and this great-grandson Thomas (1702-74) settled in what is now Georgetown about 1743. Thomas Merrill is said to have purchased a saltbox house from Joseph Nelson which stood "about a half mile below the old meetinghouse," built in the early 1730s in the Marlboro district surrounding East Main and Tenney Street, east of the site of the later church at the junction of Elm and East Main Streets. Benjamin Merrill (1780-1853), Lewis's father, was probably born in this house, which survived at least until 1909.<sup>3</sup>

Lewis A. Merrill was born in the Georgetown section of Rowley on 4 July 1815. In 1837 he married Apphia Ann Perley (1818-63), whose first cousin Gilman Perley (1801-86) lived south of the Merrills at what is now 70 Elm Street.<sup>4</sup> The house at 35 Elm was built for the newlyweds, probably by carpenters Joseph & John Kimball, who lived in similar houses on the street at the time. At the time of the birth of their third child, Rose, in 1844, Merrill was a shoemaker. He is listed as such in the 1850 census, but by 1860 he was working as a jeweler, although three of his children and his mother-in-law, Sarah Perley, are listed as working in shoemaking. During the Civil War both Merrill and his son Benjamin Austin Merrill, born in 1842 and also a shoemaker, enlisted together for two tours, probably in the Fiftieth Massachusetts Infantry; Benjamin then enlisted once more, in Company G of the Fifty-ninth Regiment, and served as a surgeon's assistant. He was shot during the battle at Spotsylvania, Virginia, in May 1864 and died in the hospital soon afterward. "Austin, his wife and his wife's mother, and Hannah—all died soon after," a relative later recalled, "and if my memory serves me right it was within a year after Benjamin was shot."<sup>5</sup> In fact, however, they all (except Hannah, probably his sister, whose death record has not been located) predeceased Benjamin—his grandmother Eunice Merrill

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Benjamin F. Arrington, ed., *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922), 146.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1840), 31-32, 320, 324, 326, 329.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Merrill, *A Merrill Memorial: An Account of the Descendants of Nathaniel Merrill, An Early Settler of Newbury, Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA, 1917-28); Henry M. Nelson, "Town of Georgetown History," in D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1: 848. Nelson stated that Thomas Merrill bought "the Joseph Nelson house in Marlboro district, now the Jacob F. Jewett house."

<sup>4</sup> Martin Van Buren Perley, *History and Genealogy of the Perley Family* (Salem: by the author, 1906), 2: 460-61, 468.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Massachusetts in the Army and Navy during the War of 1861-65* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1896), 395; Perley, *Perley Family*, 468.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.84

on 4 Jan 1863, his mother Apphia in August 1863, and his father Lewis two weeks later (both Apphia and Lewis of consumption); his maternal grandmother, Sarah Perley, died in February 1864.

Lewis A. Merrill's daughter Rose Ann, born in 1844, married Samuel H. Wadleigh, a shoe dresser born in Fayette, Maine, in December 1863, and the couple probably took up residence at 35 Elm Street shortly afterward. The 1872 map shows the name "S. Wadleigh" on the house. In 1873 Rose Ann Wadleigh died of consumption. Wadleigh probably remained in the house until he died in 1901. By 1907 Catherine S. Parker of Groveland sold the house and its 2.78-acre lot as part of an eight-acre tract (embracing the house lots from 33 to 47 Elm Street) to Anne Raycroft Pedder of South Braintree.<sup>6</sup> Pedder had come to the United States from her native England with her husband James, a house carpenter, and lived at 33 Elm Street.

It is not yet known who lived in the house between 1901 and 1914, when Charles M. Longley Jr., a bookkeeper in Haverhill, is shown at the address in the town directory. Longley moved by 1916, and who then occupied the house is again unclear until 1930. In that year the shoe factory worker Harold Nelson Poole and his wife and son lived in the house. Poole was the son of William Nelson Poole, who lived slightly south of him at 42 Elm Street; in the 1940s and perhaps earlier his brother Kenneth Leslie Poole lived across the street, next to their father, at 38 Elm. By 1950 Harold P. and Elizabeth Nunan owned and lived at 35 Elm Street, and in 1976 they sold the property of current owner John W. Moultrie.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Catherine S. Parker to Anne Raycroft Pedder, 20 September 1907, SED 1891:189. See also "Plan of Land in Georgetown, Mass. as Surveyed for Harold F. Nunan," 18 September 1976, Southern Essex Registry of Deeds Plan Book 140 plan 31, which shows the preexisting subdivision of this eight-acre tract and Nunan's further subdivision.

<sup>7</sup> Harold F. and Elizabeth L. Nunan to John W. and Lynda W. Moultrie, 29 September 1976, SED 6284:215.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

GEO.84

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Arrington, Benjamin F., ed. *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922.

Assessor's Records. Georgetown Town Hall.

*Biographical Review, Containing Life Sketches of Leading Citizens of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Boston Biographical Review Publishing Co., 1897.

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

Direct Tax List for 1798 for Massachusetts, New England Historical Genealogical Society website, [www.newenglandancestors.org](http://www.newenglandancestors.org).

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

*Georgetown, Boxford, Byfield, Newbury, and West Newbury, Massachusetts, Directory*. Boston: W. E. Shaw, 1901-2, 1905, 1909, 1912, 1914, 1916-17, 1918, 1925.

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.

"Nelson, Carr, and Hussey Families." Stray Cat Genealogy website, [www.trenholm.org](http://www.trenholm.org).

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).

*Resident and Business Directory of Groveland and Georgetown, Mass., for 1885-1886*. Needham, MA: Local Directory Publishing Co., 1885.

**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.

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*. 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."

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.84

*[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 Lewis A. & Apphia Merrill House is a distinctive example of Greek Revival Period architecture in the town and evinces the single-pile rear chimney plan form characteristic of Essex County and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1837, the house is essentially intact and distinguished by original materials and a projecting entrance with Federal-style architrave. It was probably built by housewrights Joseph and John Kimball, who also lived on Elm Street. It is a key contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)    Form No.

	GEO.84
--	--------



View from SE



View from NE



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)    Form No.

	GEO.84
--	--------



View from SE



View from SE



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

35 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)    Form No.

	GEO.84
--	--------



View from S



Aerial view from SE