

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

10A 27

Georgetown

GEO.88

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

**Town/City:** Georgetown

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

## Photograph



View from E

**Address:** 53 Elm Street

**Historic Name:** Joshua & Charity How House

**Uses:** Present: residence

Original: residence

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1830

**Source:** historic maps

**Style/Form:** Federal

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

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
None

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

none

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒    yes ☐    **Date:**

**Acreage:** 2.02 acres

**Setting:** The house sits on a rise on the west side of Elm Street and is bordered by a low stone wall on the north and east sides. The tract borders a brook on its western bound. Elm Street is primarily residential.

## Locus Map



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

**Organization:** Georgetown Historical Commission

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

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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 Joshua & Charity How House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with wood clapboard siding and a hipped roof. It is situated at the east or street side of a 2.02-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 small yard with no outbuildings; its rear yard extends back a short distance from the house and doglegs into a wooded wetland at the west end of the property.

The form of the house diverges somewhat from other houses of the period on the street that have one-room-deep plans with chimneys on their rear walls. This house has chimneys on wide ends that contain two window bays and likely have an second room at the rear of the plan. A map of the area published in 1830 depicts the house and associates it with Peabody Dole, the likely original owner. Its design and date of construction associates with other of its neighbors that are attributed to local housewrights Joseph and John Kimball. With the others, the How house shares the distinctive feature of a projecting entrance with a trabeated architrave and sidelights. A two-story kitchen ell abuts the rear wall and aligned with the south side of the main section of the house. It contains a door and two windows on the south side. A second two-story ell was later added to the north side of the rear wall, which extends a few feet past the north wall of the main section; the exposed part of the east wall of this addition contains an entrance. The latter ell may have functioned in Hows' shoemaking enterprise.

Windows on the five-bay front façade and two-bay end walls contain nine-over-six sash on the first story and six-over-six sash on the second story, similar to Joseph and Mary Kimball's house at 16 Elm Street (assuming that the replacement sash in the Kimball house accurately replicates the original pane pattern). The rooflines of both the front and side facades are ornamented with a plain entablature with thin friezes abutting the tops of second-story window heads and a projecting cornice.

The Joshua & Charity How House is a distinctive example of Federal Period domestic architecture in the town and is a notable variation on the theme of single-pile house forms in Georgetown and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1830, the house is essentially intact and distinguished by original materials and a projecting entrance with Federal-style architrave. It may have been 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" 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 year." 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

<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.

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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.

The land on which the house at 53 Elm Street is cited probably belonged to Aaron Nelson (1740-1804) in 1800 but may earlier have belonged to Moses Dole (ca. 1714-1772), who owned more than one hundred acres in this area and lived on Baldpate Hill, west of Elm Street; his great grandson, Luke Lincoln Dole, lived at 43 Elm Street.<sup>3</sup> Luke's son Peabody, born in 1807, is identified with the house on the 1830 map of the town, when his other son and namesake was recorded as the owner of his house. The brothers and their sister Sally were born in New Boston, New Hampshire, where Peabody probably returned before 1838 when Joshua How was indicated as the owner on the town map.

Joshua How (1805-1903) was born in Ipswich and married Charity Bailey (1807-76), daughter of Pierce and Salome Bailey of Ipswich, in 1826 in Rowley. By 1850 How was a shoemaker with an estate valued at \$1710. At that time the family of another shoemaker, James H. Rider, boarded with the Hows and a second household, that of tanner and currier Joshua M. Wagg, were recorded as living in the house. Rider and Wagg likely worked in How's shop, which the 1856 and 1872 maps shows just south of the house. The shop remained on the property until at least 1902 and may have been the "shed" listed on the property by the town assessor in 1933.

While Elm Street is largely residential today, through the nineteenth century shoemaking shops of varying size also existed along the road. According to Benjamin Arrington's 1922 history of Georgetown, about 1830 "there was scarcely a farmhouse (or any other house) but that had in its back-yard a 12x12 foot shoe-shop. It was in these small shops that the countrywide known Georgetown boots and shoes were made until recent years, when they were manufactured in factories."<sup>4</sup>

The Georgetown boot and brogan were coarse, heavy shoes, the brogan reaching to the ankle, and they were the product for which the town was best known. As a boot and shoe manufacturing town, Georgetown was far eclipsed by many Essex County towns—chiefly Lynn, the largest producer of footwear in the commonwealth, as well as Haverhill and Marblehead. But an industrial census mandated by the state found that in the year previous Rowley (of which Georgetown was part until 1838) made more boots---32,600 pair---than any other place in the county. The town also made 300,250 pair of shoes, according to this survey, employed 518 men and 192 women, and produced footwear with an estimated value of \$315,360. It is clear that most of this production took place in what soon became Georgetown: according to an 1888 local history, twenty-seven shoe shops operated in Georgetown at the time and produced boots and shoes worth \$221,900, or roughly 70 percent of the estimated value of footwear in Rowley as a whole. By the 1830s Georgetown was both larger than Rowley and much more focused on industrial development; Rowley remained by and large agricultural.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the value of How's estate, at least through 1870, was in his real property and not in his personal estate, which never exceeded five hundred dollars in value through this time. Local histories do not mention How among the prominent boot and shoe makers of Georgetown, and thus it seems likely that his shop was a so-called "ten footer," a building ranging from ten to fourteen feet square where as many as eight shoemakers (including journeymen and apprentices) made a shoe from start to finish. At some point How might have moved to a putting-out system and have operated as a "central shop," which cut leather for shoe uppers, sent the pieces out to men and women working in their homes to sew, made a rough sole, put out the uppers and lower for home assembly, and then gathered and marketed the finished product. The central shop began to emerge in the

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

<sup>3</sup> This biographical information appears in an anonymous, undated manuscript on Cuffee Dole, once enslaved by Moses Dole, on the Parker River Association website, [http://www.bussevison.info/parker\\_river/Cuffee%20Dole2.doc.pdf](http://www.bussevison.info/parker_river/Cuffee%20Dole2.doc.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Arrington, *Municipal History*, 254.

<sup>5</sup> See Gage, *History of Rowley*, 402-3; Nelson, "Town of Georgetown History," 835; and Blanche Evans Hazard, *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 210, which notes that these statistics were gathered and published by John Warner Barber in *Historical Collections of Every Town in Massachusetts* (Worcester: Dorr, Howland and Co., 1839), 66, 201.

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1820s, but the transition was neither rapid nor universal. The move from the central shop to the factory system also took place incrementally as various shoemaking processes were mechanized, and, according to industry historian William H. Mulligan Jr., as late as the 1870s the industry was still “in the midst of transition” from shop to factory.<sup>6</sup> The 1872 map shows both shoe shops and shoe “manufactories” on Elm Street.

In 1860 Joshua How’s household included his wife Charity and two children. Benjamin S. How, age twenty-three, was a shoemaker, while his wife Elmira was a shoe binder; Joshua How’s fifteen-year-old daughter Harriet was also a shoe binder. It seems likely that they all worked in or for How’s shop. By 1870 Benjamin had moved from his parents’ home, but Harriet remained there, and the federal census of that year shows her as working in a shoe factory, likely not her father’s shop. He was then sixty-four years old.

Charity How died in 1876, and her husband lived at 53 Elm until he died in 1903. By 1880 the family straddled the transition to the factory. Joshua How continued to be identified as a boot and shoe maker through the 1880 census, but his son Benjamin, either living in the household or close by, was a finisher in a shoe factory, and Benjamin’s wife sewed the uppers of ladies’ shoes by machine. The 1900 census lists Joshua, his daughter Harriet, his son Benjamin, and a boarder in the house, none of them with occupations.

By 1901 the How family shared 53 Elm Street with the farmer and day laborer Forrest E. Bailey. Whether he was somehow related to Joshua How’s wife Charity Bailey has not yet been determined. In 1910 three of Bailey’s five adult children, all still in the household, worked in the shoe industry. His daughter Fannie was a stitcher, his son Henry a sole cutter, and his daughter Lizzie a clerk in a shoe factory office. Bailey’s eldest son William Edgar Bailey was a farmer and lived in the household as well with his wife and two young children. In 1914 Fannie was working at F. W. Baker Shoe Company, created when Baker (the son of Cornelius Baker of 150 Elm Street) partnered with Cass and Daley of Salem and then moved to Georgetown; it set up shop in the former H. Prescott Chaplin shoe factory on Central Street.<sup>7</sup>

By 1925 Forrest Bailey moved to East Main Street and his son William, then employed as a teamster, lived at 53 Elm. He remained there through at last 1942, and by 1964 William’s son Bainbridge E. Bailey, born in 1923, owned the property. In 1984 Bainbridge Bailey and his wife Patricia registered a plan that showed a larger parcel of more than four acres which he had earlier divided in half, reserving for his family the northern part. The southern section at that time included an “old brick foundation,” probably that of the onetime shoe shop.

Bainbridge Bailey died in Haverhill in 2002, and the next year his widow sold the property to Timothy D. Howard, who in turn sold it in 2004 to John W. Butler. Butler sold 53 Elm Street to its current owners, Abraham G. and Elizabeth de Veer, in 2008.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> William H. Mulligan Jr., e-mail to Kathryn Grover, 9 December 2009.

<sup>7</sup> The Baker factory operated in Georgetown until 1945. See Massachusetts Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey Town Report for Georgetown, 1985, MHC website, <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/MHC/mhcpdf/townreports/Essex/geo.pdf>. See also Arrington, Municipal History, 260, which states that Baker created the company in 1918 and “installed a full line of modern machinery” at the Central Street plant, though it seems unlikely that in 1914 Fannie Bailey would have traveled to Salem to work in shoes.

<sup>8</sup> Bainbridge Bailey to Patricia Bailey, 20 March 1964, SED 5156:705; Patricia Bailey to Timothy D. Howard, 3 November 2003, SED 22062:107; Howard to John W. Butler, 2 July 2004, SED 23088:543; Butler to Abraham G. and Elizabeth de Veer, 9 June 2008, SED 27836:504.

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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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*[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 Joshua & Charity How House is a distinctive example of Federal Period domestic architecture in the town and is a notable variation on the theme of single-pile house forms in Georgetown and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1830, the house is essentially intact and distinguished by original materials and a projecting entrance with Federal-style architrave. It may have been 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.

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View from NE



Front entry from E

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View from SE



Aerial view from E