

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

85 Spofford Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.298

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

## FORM B – BUILDING

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

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

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

**Organization:** Town of Georgetown Historical Commission

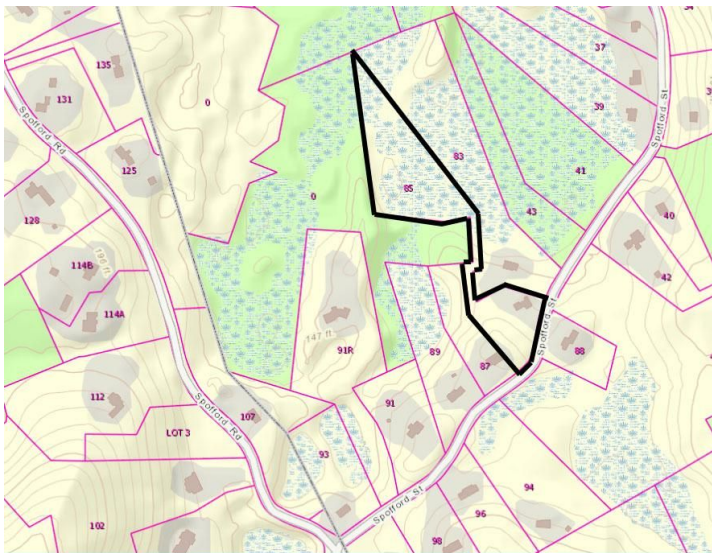
**Date:** June 2017

### Photograph



View from south.

### Locus Map (north at top)



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

1-15

Georgetown

GEO.298

**Setting:** Rural road with historic farmhouses and in-fill residential development.

**Town/City:** Georgetown

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
Baldpate Hill

**Address:** 85 Spofford Street

**Historic Name:** Abel & Eleanor Spofford House

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

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1765

**Source:** deeds & visual assessment

**Style/Form:** Colonial

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

## Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage (attached)

Outbuildings added early 21<sup>st</sup> century

## Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Wing & shed dormer added on rear, mid-20<sup>th</sup> cent.

Windows altered east side, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

Garage added, late 20<sup>th</sup> century

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 4.2 acres

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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 Abel and Mary Spofford House is a two-story wood frame single-family dwelling with a gable roof built about 1765. Its form and side-passage center-chimney plan associate it with eighteenth-century domestic design and construction methods. It has a three-bay front facade with an off-center entrance and a wide space between it and pairs of windows corresponding with the interior chimney space. Exterior siding does not appear to be original, and the trabeated architrave framing the entrance, window trim including cornices on first-story windows have been added in twentieth-century restoration projects. Six-over-six wood window sash are also recent replacements. Eave lines have also been altered, particularly on the ends where they would have originally been flush with the walls. There were two widely separated windows on the first and second stories of the end walls and single attic windows centered in the gables. Those at the rear of the northeasterly gable end were replaced with triple window units, and the rear first-floor window on the southwesterly end is now covered by the breezeway addition where it has been made into a doorway. A small, story-and-a-half cross-gable wing has been added to the northeasterly end of the rear wall aligned with that end of the house. The house roof has been raised for a shed dormer. The one-story breezeway contains a second entrance and provides a link to a one-story two-car garage with a gable roof. Outbuildings west of the house have been recently erected.

The house occupies the northeast corner of a highly irregular lot with a yard space in which the house is situated fronting on the street and an unimproved, wooded section in wetlands to the west linked by a narrow connector. A driveway enters the property south of the house and runs up to the garage wing before heading towards the outbuildings west of the house.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In 1765, Abel Spafford (1718-85) of Rowley recorded four deeds in which he had received land since 1740—unstated acreage from his father Jonathan Spafford (1684-1772) in 1740, a half-acre from his cousin Daniel Spafford (1721-1803) in 1754, and two totaling 6.75 acres from William Searle and Edmund Dole in 1761 and 1765. Family sources state that Abel Spofford built the house numbered 85 Spofford Street “westerly of Baldpate Hill” in 1765 on one of these parcels, which might have been contiguous.<sup>1</sup>

Born in Newbury, Abel Spofford was the son of Jonathan and Jemima Freethe Spofford and was sometimes referred to as Lieutenant Abel Spofford. His great-grandfather John Spofford (1612-78) came to Massachusetts in 1634 and to Spofford Hill, south of Baldpate Hill, in 1669; in 1676 his farm was assigned to his sons. The 85 Spofford Street house passed from Abel and his wife Eleanor Poor Spofford to son Moses Spofford (1748-1830), who married Hannah Kimball and ultimately lived at 176 West Main Street, and then to Moses’s son Abel (1780-1868). This latter Abel married Mary Merrill of Rowley in 1809, and he is shown among many other Spoffords in this part of Rowley West Parish in the 1830 census and the 1840 Georgetown census. In 1850 he is shown with \$105 in real property in a household with his wife Mary, and they remained together at 85 Spofford Street until they died, both in 1868. In 1865 the farmer George A. Kimball, his wife Anna, and their 3-year-old daughter Hattie lived in the house with the couple.

In November 1869, the executor of Abel Spofford’s will sold 85 Spofford Street, “meaning hereby to convey the homestead that was owned by said Abel Spofford,” to George W. Boynton for \$610. Boynton, a constable and deputy sheriff, had married Abby N. Stocker of Georgetown in 1844, and he is shown in the 1870 census with his wife and an Irish immigrant domestic servant.

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Spofford, *A Family Record of the Descendants of John Spofford* (Haverhill, NH: E. G. Frothingham, 1869), 25, 35-36, 63, 65, 97; Jonathan Spafford, Rowley, to Abel Spafford, Rowley, 1 October 1740, SECD 117:186; Daniel Spafford, Rowley, to Abel Spafford, Rowley, 20 March 1754, SECD 117:188; William Searle, Rowley, to Abel Spafford, Rowley, 9 February 1761, SECD 117:190; Edmund Dole to Abel Spafford, 29 October 1765, SECD 117:191.

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He died in 1877, and in the same year his widow sold the property to Elizabeth A. Perley, whose family owned it for the next three decades.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Averill Perley was from Andover, the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Averill, and she was the wife of brick mason and farmer William Putnam Perley. The 1880 census shows the couple alone in the household. By 1900 William P. Perley had died, and Elizabeth A. Perley lived at 85 Spofford Street with boarding farm laborer Frank Whitney, born in Buxton, Maine, in 1843. Perley died in 1909, and in the same year her heirs sold the house, its outbuildings, and 6 acres to Whitney.<sup>3</sup> He is shown on Spofford Street in the 1910 census with his son Fred, a 35-year-old unmarried farm worker also born in Maine. In 1912 Frank Whitney died, and in 1915 the administrator of his estate sold 85 Spofford Street to Lena Whittlesey Adams, who owned it until 1945.<sup>4</sup>

Born in Sherburne, Vermont, in 1875, Lena Whittlesey was teaching oratory and dancing in Salem in 1906 when she married George L. Adams, a native of Somerville who also taught dancing there. By 1910 the couple was boarding in Lynn, and by 1920 they were living in Boston, where he is shown as a newspaper manager and she as a newspaper editor. They had a daughter, Phyllis, born about 1914, a foster daughter, and two lodgers. George L. Adams had died by 1932, when the directory shows Lena Adams on Spofford Street, but she had moved to Boxford by 1940. She sold 85 Spofford Street to Edna H. Ayer, Elaine G. Ayer, and Laura E. Ayer, all of West Boxford, who owned it among themselves until 1997. Current owners William and Susan J. Andreas have owned 85 Spofford Street since 2007.<sup>5</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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## DIRECTORIES

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North Essex Directory for Boxford, Georgetown, Merrimac, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury. Salem, MA: Henry M. Meek Publishing Co., 1907, 1909-10, 1912, 1914-15, 1916-17, 1918, 1925.

*Ipswich, Boxford, Byfield, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, Salisbury Beach, Topsfield, West Newbury Directory*. Vol. 1, 1932-'34. Beverly, MA, and Portland, ME: Crowley & Lunt, 1932.*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.

<sup>2</sup> Luther P. Palmer, executor will Abel Spofford, to George W. Boynton, 16 November 1869, SECD 786:56; Abby N. Boynton to Elizabeth A. Perley, 2 November 1877, SECD 989:149.

<sup>3</sup> George L. Averill, Andover MA, and Mary L. Paul and Florence L. Averill, North Andover MA, to Frank R. Whitney, 1 May 1909, SECD 1961:343.

<sup>4</sup> Roy H. Urquhart, administrator estate Frank R. Whitney, to Lena Whittlesey Adams, 11 January 1915, SECD 2284:438.

<sup>5</sup> Lena Whittlesey Adams to Edna H. Ayer, Elaine G. Ayer, and Laura E. Ayer, all West Boxford MA, 27 July 1945, SECD 3419:92; Elaine G. Abronowicz (fka Elaine G. Ayer) to Timothy D. Howard, Georgetown, and John M. Travers, West Newbury MA, 3 December 1997, SECD 14466:454; Elaine G. Abronowicz to Timothy D. Howard, Georgetown, and John M. Travers, West Newbury MA, 3 December 1997, SECD 14466:454; Susan J. Andreas to William and Susan J. Andreas, trustees 85 Spofford Realty Trust, 8 July 2011, SECD 30515:338. The 85 Spofford Street property is Lot 1 on "Plan of Land in Georgetown, Massachusetts, Property of John M. Travers and Timothy D. Howard," 13 February 1998, SECD 325:51.

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MAPS

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.

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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from south

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View from east.



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



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## 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.*

The Abel and Eleanor Spofford House, built about 1765, is a distinctive surviving example of mid eighteenth-century house with a side-passage center-chimney plan. Although extensively restored at various times in the twentieth century, the two-story wood frame single dwelling retains its characteristic form and plan while exterior materials have been replaced. Yet it retains sufficient integrity of design, location, feeling, and association to convey its significance in the early history of the town.

Born in Newbury, Abel Spofford was the son of Jonathan and Jemima Freethe Spofford and was sometimes referred to as Lieutenant Abel Spofford. His great-grandfather John Spofford (1612-78), came to Massachusetts in 1634 and to Spofford Hill, south of Baldpate Hill, in 1669; in 1676 his farm was assigned to his sons. The 85 Spofford Street house passed from Abel and his wife Eleanor Poor Spofford to son Moses Spofford (1748-1830), and then to Moses's son Abel (1780-1868). This latter Abel married Mary Merrill of Rowley in 1809, and he is shown among many other Spoffords in this part of Rowley West Parish in the 1830 census and 1840 Georgetown census. They remained together at 85 Spofford Street until they died, both in 1868. After a century with the Spofford family, the house was sold out of the family.

In 1915 the old house was sold to Lena Whittlesey Adams and entered a period of antiquarian interest. Born in Sherburne, Vermont, in 1875, Lena Whittlesey was teaching oratory and dancing in Salem in 1906 when she married George L. Adams, a native of Somerville who also taught dancing there. By 1920 they were living in Boston, where he was employed as a newspaper manager and she as a newspaper editor. Lena Adams sold the house in 1940.

The property appears to meet National Register criteria A and C as a significant surviving 18<sup>th</sup>-century house associated with important people and events in the history of Georgetown.

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