

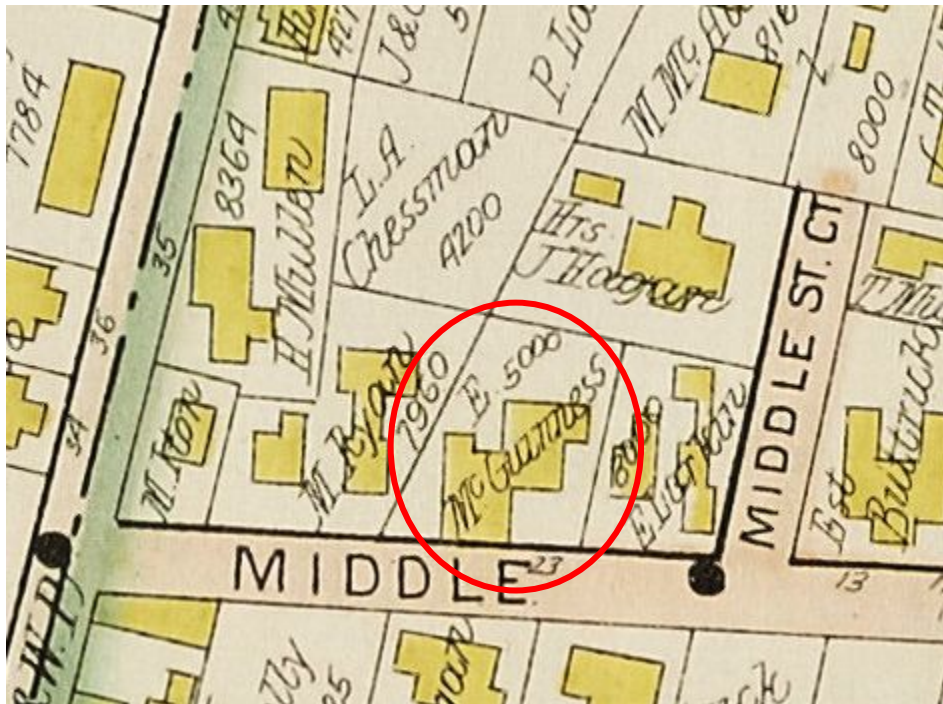
## 23 – 27 Middle Street



Google Satellite

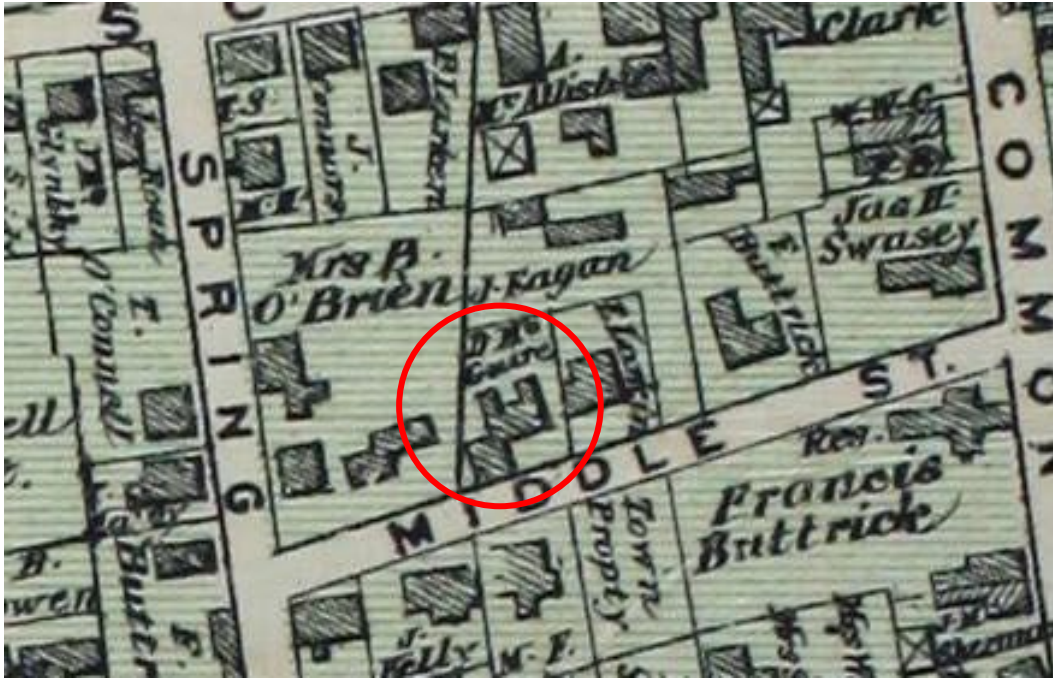


Google Street View

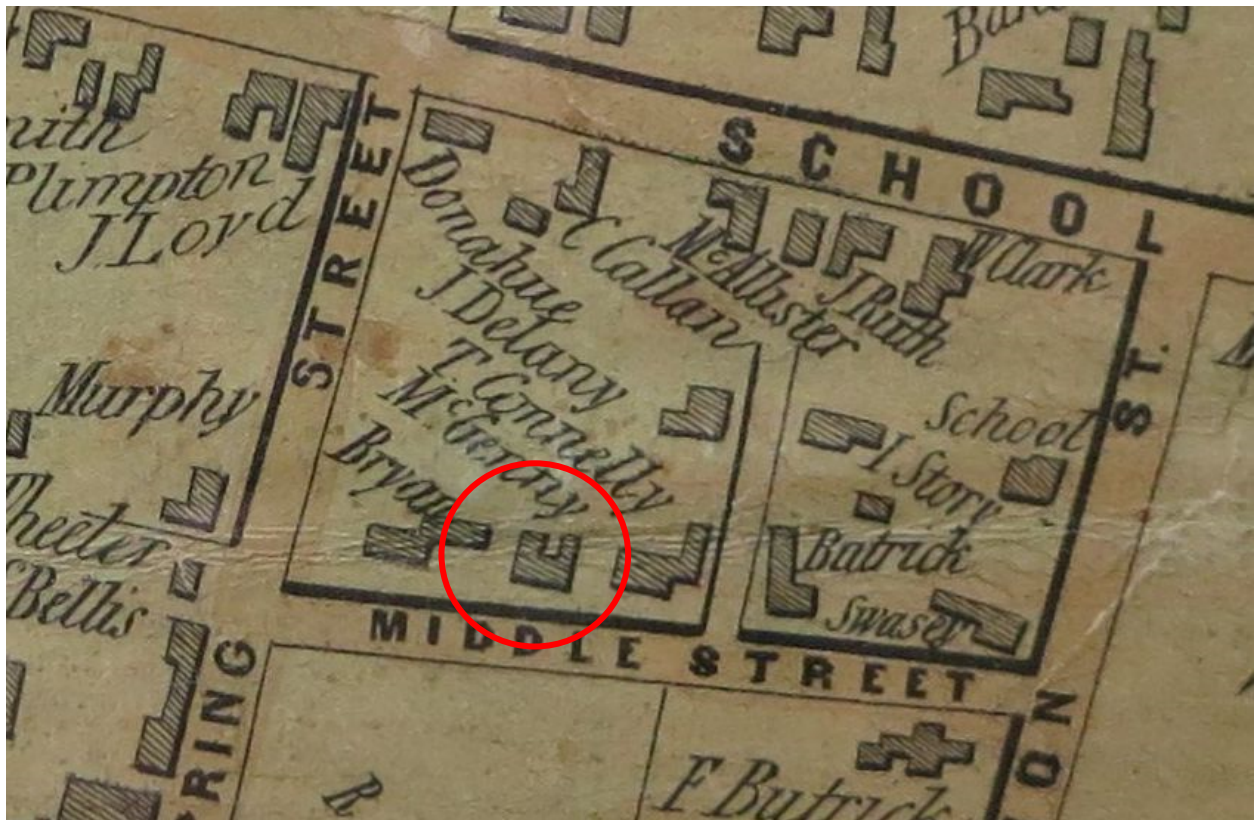


1900 map





1875 map



1854 Woodford map

## Timeline

- 1840 January. Deed, Jacob Farwell to Lewis Bemis [MLR 389/317] tract of land bounded on south by the "contemplated street (called Middle Street)". No mention of buildings.
- 1840 March. Deed, Nathaniel Maynard, Esq. & John Abbott, machinist to Lewis Bemis [MLR 391/159] tract of land bounded on east by Common St., and on south by Middle St. No mention of buildings.
- 1840 March. Deed, Lewis Bemis to Daniel J. Sawyer [MLR 391/160] bounded on east by Common St. and on south by Middle St.
- 1840 Oct. Agreement, between Daniel J. Sawyer, carpenter, and Lewis Bemis [MLR 396/394]. To build a house with two tenements, 36 ft. long by 17 wide with a shed on each 10 ft. long by 14 ft. wide. Stairs to be built straight, run moldings around all the doors and windows, with a division between the tenements from the height of the roof to the bottom of the cellar. Said Sawyer to do all the carpenters work inside and out except the blinds. Providing said Bemis builds two more tenements the same Sawyer to have them to build... being the nearly the same dimensions and finished in the same manner.
- 1841 July. Deed, Daniel J. Sawyer to Lewis Bemis [MLR 404/530] bounded on east by Common St. and on south by Middle St. This may be a correction of an erroneous 1840 deed MLR 391/321.
- 1843 Deed, Adolphus Smith [Deputy Sherriff] to Waltham Bank [MLR 424/526] Suit of Waltham Bank, plaintiff, vs. Lewis Bemis, defendant. The bank seized the real estate of Lewis Bemis, being a tract of land with four dwelling houses and other buildings, bounded on the south by Middle Street.
- 1846 Deed, Waltham Bank to F. S. Carruth [MLR 3491/328]
- 1846 Deed, F. S. Carruth to Edward & Franklin King [MLR 491/329]
- 1847 Deed, Edward & Franklin King of Dorchester to Augustus Townsend of Waltham [MLR 518/373-4]. This lot abutted Middle Street (referred to as the new street) on the north, and stretched from Daniel French & James H. Swasey on the east to John Davis on the west. The lot was about 41,000 sf, with 264 feet of frontage on Middle Street.
- 1848 Deed, Augustus Townsend to Dexter Kingsbury of Roxbury [MLR 528/463]. Deed has 75 feet of frontage on Middle Street, & mentions dwelling house. So Augustus Townsend subdivided the 41,000 sf lot between 1847 & 1848.
- 1852 Deed, Dexter Kingsbury of Needham to Luther Fuller of Auburn [MLR 634/218]
- 1852 Deed, Luther Fuller to Dennis McGuinness [MLR 635/409]
- 1860 Census, Dennis McGuinness, value of real estate=\$2,000
- 1865 Waltham Sentinel newspaper, Augustus Townsend, selectman [3/8/1865]
- 1870 Census, Dennis McGuinness, jobbing laborer. 2 families in the house.
- 1871 Directory, Dennis McGuinness, laborer, 17 Middle St. [Middle Street was renumbered by 1895.]
- 1880 Census, Dennis McGuinness, laborer. 3 families at the address.
- 1882 Directory, Dennis McGuinness, hostler, J & A Munster, 17 Middle
- 1895 Directory, Dennis McGuinness, hostler, 769 Main St, house 23 Middle St.
- 1897 Death, Dennis McGuinness
- 1900 Census, Ellen McGuinness, owns #23 Middle St.  
#25 Middle St., Patrick O'Hare, retired  
#27 Middle St., Hugh Carroll, carpenter (son-in-law of Dennis McGuinness)
- 1907 Death, Ellen McGuinness, widow of Dennis McGuinness, #23 Middle St.
- 1909 Deed, Dennis McGuinness estate to Mary (m.n. McGuinness) Carroll, wife of Hugh Carroll [MLR 3490/257]
- 1910 Census, Hugh Carroll, house carpenter, #23 Middle St., owns
- 1917 Deed, Mary Carroll et al to Giuseppe Alessandro [MLR 4164/121]

1918 WWI Draft Registration, Giuseppe Alessandro, 23 Middle St., Hood Rubber employee  
 1921 Deed, Giuseppina Caivera Alessandro to Antonio Lando [MLR 4417/595]  
 1925 Death, Giuseppe Alessandro  
 1925 Deed, Antonio Lando to Maria Buono [MLR 4896/497]  
 1930 Census, Michael & Maria Buono, 23 Middle St., no occupation  
 1934 Foreclosure on mortgage given by Maria Buono to Watertown Coop. Bank [MLR 5887/279]  
 1939 Deed, Watertown Coop. Bank to Samuel Sottile [MLR 6332/317] Sottile, a baker, lived on Willow St., & therefore rented out the property on Middle Street.  
 1968 Deed, Samuel Sottile to George & Carol Butterworth [MLR 11540/71]  
 1978 Deed, George Butterworth to John Nahigian & Jules Meyer [MLR 13569/594]  
 1978 Deed, John Nahigian & Jules Meyer to Paul Revell Tr. Cross Realty Trust [MLR 13569/595]  
 1986 Deed, Paul & Linda Revell to James G. MacDonald [MLR 17737/561]  
 1993 Foreclosure, to Main St. Building Corp. (mortgage holder) [MLR 24084/524]  
 1994 Deed, Main St. Building Corp. to Skinnybones I [MLR 24971/218]  
 1998 Deed, Skinnybones I to Wayne & Stacie Brasco [MLR 28133/50]  
 2000 Deed, Wayne & Stacie Brasco to Babu & Jolly Punnose [MLR 31682/400]  
 2014 Deed, Babu & Jolly Punnose to Grace Real Estate, LLC [MLR 64748/423]  
 2019 Deed, Grace Real Estate, LLC to 27 Middle Street, LLC [MLR 72117/595]

## Discussion

The house was built in 1840 by a carpenter, Daniel J. Sawyer, for the owner, Lewis Bemis, cordwainer. Lewis Bemis had been born in 1802 in Lincoln, Massachusetts and was the son of Jonas Bemis and Tabitha Gove. He was a cordwainer or shoemaker by trade, and had a substantial shoemaking business in Waltham. In 1828, he purchased from the town of Waltham the property now numbered 380 Lexington Street. He married Hannah Sanderson Livermore in 1830. Lewis Bemis ran a sizeable shoemaking business out of his property on Lexington Street, but he did not hold any municipal offices.

Beginning in January, 1840, Lewis Bemis made a series of land purchases around the Exchange Street, Pond Street, Church Street and Middle Street areas. The first purchase, from Jacob Farwell, identifies Middle Street as a contemplated street. So Middle Street was most likely laid out by Bemis as part of a subdivision plan. He arranged to have a carpenter, Daniel J. Sawyer, build a two-family house, the dimensions of which are similar to the older portion of the current house. His original 1840 deeds show 264 feet of frontage on Middle Street, but by 1848, the property at 23-27 Middle Street had 75 feet of frontage. The original larger parcel was subdivided between 1847 and 1848. The U.S. economy went through one of the longest and deepest recessions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from 1839 through 1843. In 1843, the Waltham Bank foreclosed on Bemis, and the property went through a series of turnovers until 1852.

In 1852, the house was purchased by Dennis McGuinness, an Irish day laborer. The McGuinness family lived in the house from 1852 to 1909, when the house was sold to Dennis McGuinness's daughter and her husband, Mary and Hugh Carroll. The Carrolls sold the house to Giuseppe Alessandro in 1917. So the house was owned by one family for 65 years.

After 1917, the house changed ownership until 1925, when Maria Buono and her husband, Michael purchased the house. But the property went into foreclosure in 1934, and was sold by the bank in 1939. The house was then rental property after 1939.

The Federal style – Greek revival architecture of the original house at # 23 (now 27) Middle Street is consistent with the 1840 date of construction. The house that abuts the property on the east side has

also similar style and dimensions, and may have been one of the four dwelling houses mentioned in the 1843 deed.

### **Conclusion**

The house is one of the original houses built by Daniel J. Sawyer, a carpenter, in 1840 for owner, Lewis Bemis, when Middle Street was first laid out, and is therefore 179 years old. The Middle Street neighborhood was part of an older, working-class area that later grew up in the streets across from Saint Mary's church. The addition on the front of the house was built between 1870 and 1875.