



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site: 39 Oxford Street
Case: HPC 2016.036
Applicant Name: Kevin Emery
Date of Application: May 31, 2016
Recommendation: Significant
Hearing Date: June 21, 2016

I. Historical Association

Historical Context: The first known owner of 39 Oxford Street is Stephen J. Jackman. He was a veteran of the Civil War having served from August 1864 – January 1865 on the U.S.S. Monadnock, which was an iron-clad monitor ship. Jackman's title was First Class Fireman and Acting Engineer. He is listed as a machinist in the 1869 City Directory and as doing machine engine repair in the 1870 Census and as an engineer in 1880. He was an active member of the Willard C. Kinsley Post 139 G. A. R. Stephen Jackman died in 1900 of pleurisy. The Jackman family owned the house through 1900, when his son Frederick became head of the household. The Grand Army of the Republic veterans' posts were an intrinsic part of city life through 1900. Many prominent citizens who had fought during the Civil War were members.



Residents from 1910-1940 Census were all renters and were only found in the census of that year. While specifics are not known, it is interesting that Catherine Donohue and her brother had four children un-related to them living there as borders in 1910. See table below for a full accounting of residents.

Evolution of Site: Oxford Street has been little changed since 1874. Two or three new houses were added to the wider side yards on the block between School Street and Trull Lane. Street addresses were put into use and changed as the City and Street grew. Driveways and concrete

block garages were primarily added in the 1920s to accommodate the change from street car to individual car ownership. The house itself is relatively unchanged since its construction.

The property at 39 Oxford Street has remained consistent since its construction circa 1869. Maps ranging from the 1874 Hopkins Atlas to the most recent Sanborn map show the building with the same footprint and location. The porch on the rear ell is not indicated until the 1933 Sanborn, thus it was not constructed until sometime between 1925 and 1933. A building permit was found for the alteration of a sleeping porch in September 1924 issued to C. Moody. The remainder of the site stayed open until a garage was constructed by William Chambers in 1976.

Architectural Description: The 2½-story side-hall plan mid-19th century New England vernacular working class house is sited near the southwestern edge of the property. The door has a simple shallow hood. The windows are 6/6 on the sides and 6/1 on the main façade. One window over the front door may have been shortened. There is a large yard with two fully grown American persimmon trees. An asphalt drive separates the house from the adjoining property.

Summary: 39 Oxford Street was owned by Civil War veteran Stephen J. Jackman and family through 1900. The building is typical of working class homes of the era with minimal architectural details and proportions.

Findings on Historical Association

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) **importantly associated with people, events or history** or (b) historically or architecturally significant (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (b) are at the end of the next section.*

(a) In accordance with the historic information obtained from *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, such as *Somerville Past and Present*, Staff find 39 Oxford Street to be importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its method of construction and its association with Civil War Veteran, Stephen Jackman.

II. Historical and Architectural Significance

The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).

The period of significance for 39 Oxford Street begins c. 1869 with the ownership of Stephen Jackman and his family as a working class home on a street of similar buildings.

Integrity

The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

- a. Location: The building has not been moved. It is situated on a residential street parallel to and a short block from Highland Avenue.
- b. Design: The building design is a simple gable end house 3 bays wide by 3 bays deep with a two bay ell on the rear.
- c. Materials: The building is wood frame construction with an asphalt shingle roof.
- d. Alterations: A second story sleeping porch was added to the rear ell. One window on the front façade was shortened and several of the lower sash have been replaced with single pane sash. The house probably had shutters that have long since been removed.

Evaluation of Integrity: The building has not been altered from its original form and style. The neighborhood around it has not changed much since the 1910s or 1920s when two new buildings were added to the block across the street. It retains the ability to convey its history and character as a working class residence of the 3rd quarter of the 19th century.

Does the subject parcel represent a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction?

The house is representative of its time and place. It shares in the rhythm of the street with its gable ends and setback.

Does the subject parcel represent an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or region due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape?

39 Oxford Street by virtue of its age, size, massing, and form; its large side yard and large native persimmon trees are established features of the Oxford Streetscape.

Findings for Historical and Architectural Significance

For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (a) can be found at the end of the previous section.

(b) In accordance with the *Finding on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, which assess the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff find 39 Oxford Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to its period, style, method of building construction and in the context of a group of buildings. The building has not been altered from its original form and style. The house is representative of its time and place. It shares in the rhythm of the street with its gable ends and set back. 39 Oxford Street by virtue of its age, size, massing, and form; its large side yard and large native persimmon trees are established features of the Oxford Streetscape.

The neighborhood around it has not changed much since the 1910s or 1920s when two new buildings were added to the block across the street. The neighborhood retains the ability to convey its history and character as a working class residence of the 3rd quarter of the 19th century.

III. Recommendation

Recommendations are based upon an analysis by Historic Preservation Staff of the permit application and the required findings for the Demolition Review Ordinance, which requires archival and historical research, and an assessment of historical and architectural significance, conducted prior to the public meeting for a Determination of Significance. This report may be revised or updated with a new recommendation and/or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through further research.

For a Determination of Significance, the structure must be either (A) listed on the National Register or (B) at least 50 years old.

- (A) The structure is NOT listed on or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is the structure the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register.

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its method of construction and its association with Civil War Veteran, Stephen Jackman.

OR

- (B) The structure, circa 1869, is at least 50 years old.

AND

For a Determination of Significance under (B), the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant.

- (a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 39 Oxford Street importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.**

OR

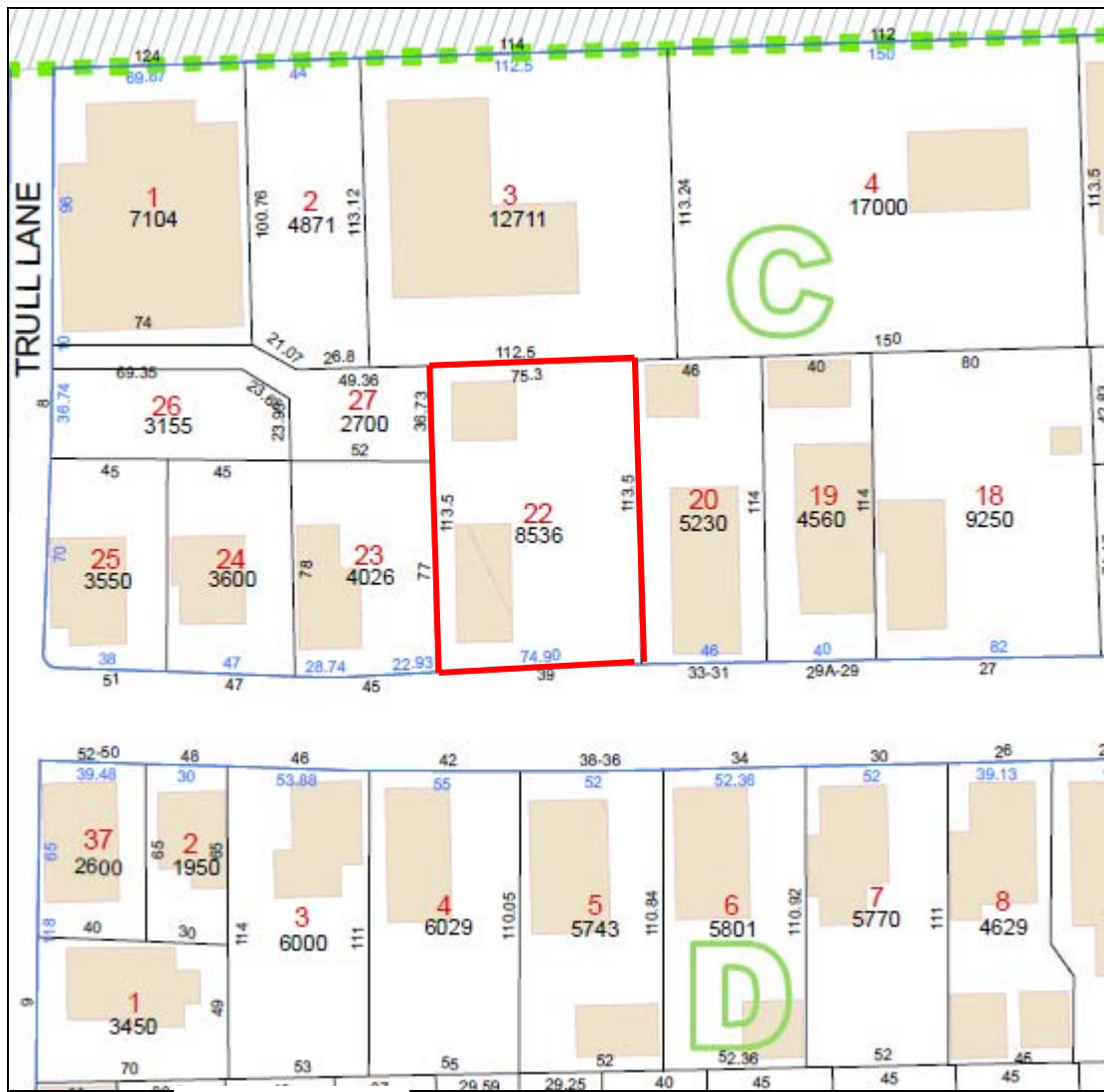
- (b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 39 Oxford Street historically and architecturally significant.**

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to its period, style, method of building construction and in the context of a group of buildings. The building has not been altered from its original form and style. The house is representative of its time and place. It shares in the rhythm of the street with its gable ends and set back. 39 Oxford Street by virtue of its age, size, massing, and form; its large side yard and large native persimmon trees are established features of the Oxford Streetscape.

The neighborhood around it has not changed much since the 1910s or 1920s when two new buildings were added to the block across the street. The neighborhood retains the ability to convey its history and character as a working class residence of the 3rd quarter of the 19th century.

- 2.9 **Demolition** means the act of pulling down, destroying, removing, or razing a building or structure or commencing the work of total or **substantial destruction with the intent of completing the same**. For the purposes of this ordinance, the term “demolition” shall not include routine maintenance, interior renovations, removal or construction of porches, decks, windows or other types of renovations for which Commission approval is generally not required.

It should be noted that while the residence at 39 Oxford Street is a significant building as defined above, the Applicants would like to demolish the rear ell only and rebuild it exactly as it has been according to the plans submitted and approved by the ZBA. The plan had been to rehabilitate the entire structure. However as can be seen in the photos below, the ell is severely structurally compromised. Preservation Staff has conducted a site visit and inspection of the interior to view in person the extent the structure has been compromised. Preservation Staff concurs with the Applicant as to the extent of the damage to the rear ell. There will be no alteration of the building. **Staff recommends that the Commission determine that the demolition and replacement of the rear ell in kind to match the existing would not be considered significant demolition of the house at 39 Oxford Street** since there was no intent to demolish prior to the reassessment of the building’s fabric once the walls had been opened up.

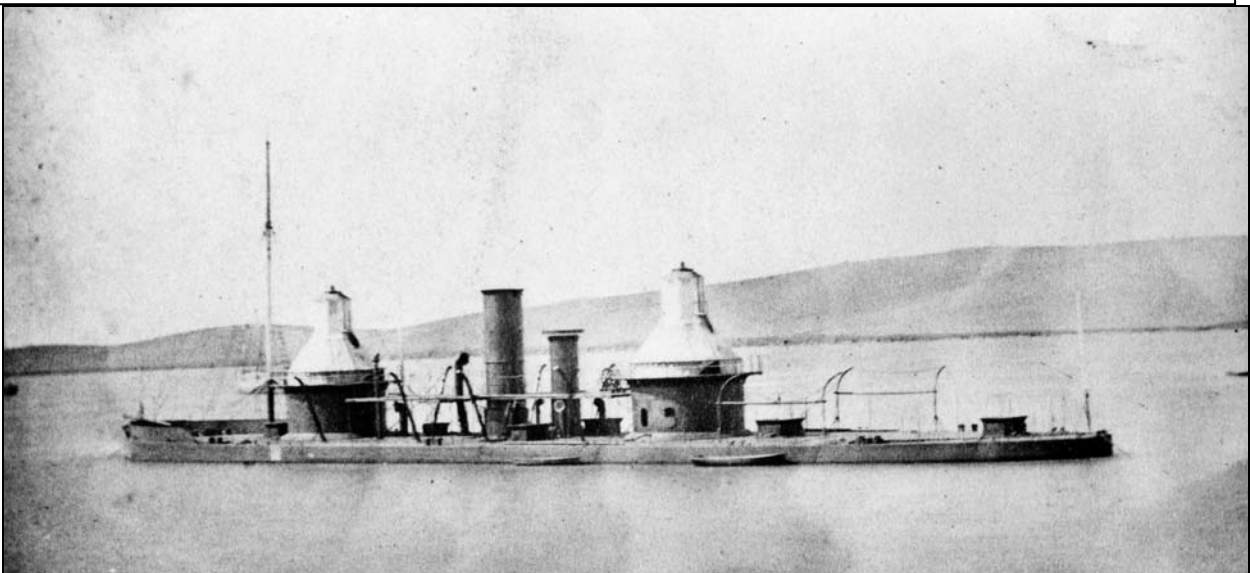


39 Oxford Street



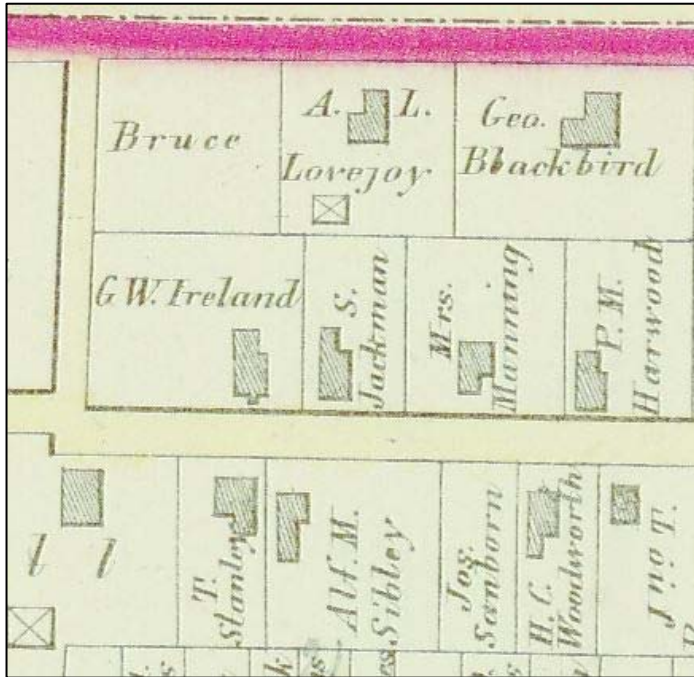
**W. C. Kinsley Post 139
Grand Army of the Republic**

This photo was taken circa 1898, only two of the members shown have been identified, however it is likely that Stephen Jackman appears in this photo.



Monadnock circa 1866 in the Mare Island channel.

USN photo courtesy of Darryl L. Baker. <http://www.navsource.org/archives/01/monadnock1.htm>



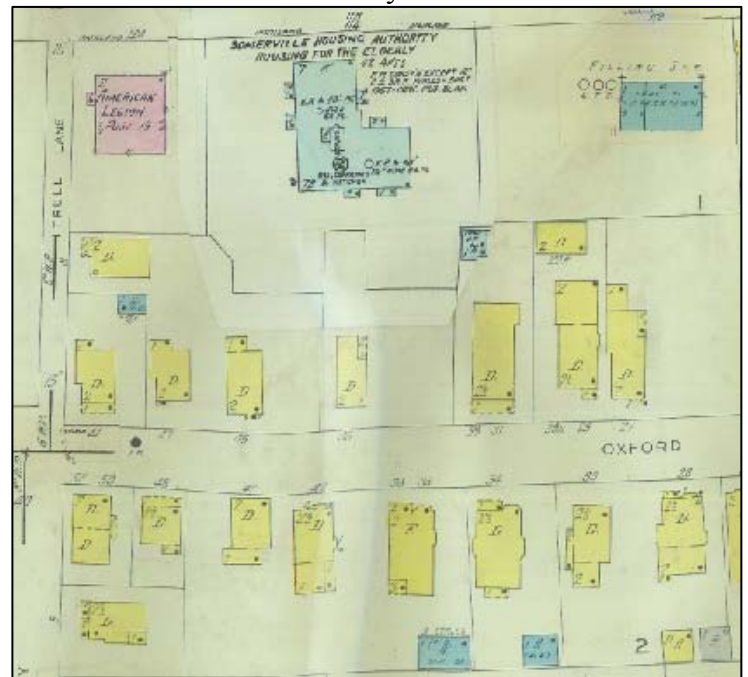
1874 Hopkins



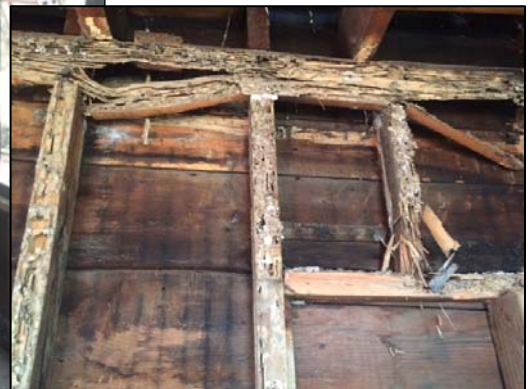
1895 Bromley



1925 Sanborn



1958 Sanborn



LOCATION	O/R	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH	Immigration	SOURCE
<i>h. Oxford Street n Highland</i>		<i>Stephen Jackman</i>		<i>Machinist</i>			<i>1869 Town Directory</i>
<i>Oxford Street</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>Stephen Jackman</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>Machine Engine Repair</i>	<i>New Hampshire</i>		<i>1870 US Census</i>
		<i>Ann</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>Keeps House</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1870 US Census</i>
		<i>May</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>Machine Operator</i>			<i>1870 US Census</i>
		<i>Frederick</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Private Apprentice</i>			<i>1870 US Census</i>
		<i>Carrie</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>At School</i>	<i>Canada</i>		<i>1870 US Census</i>
		<i>Walter</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>At School</i>			<i>1870 US Census</i>
<i>Oxford Street</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>S. Jackman</i>					<i>1874 Hopkins Atlas</i>
<i>h. 11 Oxford Street</i>		<i>Stephen Jackman</i>		<i>Engineer</i>			<i>1876 City Directory</i>
<i>Bds.</i>		<i>Frederick W. Jackman</i>		<i>Printer.</i>			<i>1876 City Directory</i>
<i>Oxford Street</i>		<i>Stephen Jackman</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>Engineer</i>	<i>New Hampshire</i>		<i>1880 US Census</i>
		<i>Ann (wife)</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>Keeping House</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1880 US Census</i>
		<i>Carrie (daughter)</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>At Home</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1880 US Census</i>
		<i>Walter (son)</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Apprentice Machinist</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1880 US Census</i>
<i>39 Oxford Street</i>		<i>Stephen J. Jackman</i>		<i>1st Class Fireman, Acting Engineer, Monitor Monadnock 8/1864-1/1865</i>			<i>1890 Veterans Schedule</i>
<i>39 Oxford Street</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>Frederick Jackman (head)</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>Printer</i>	<i>Ohio</i>		<i>1900 US Census</i>
		<i>Jennifer A. (wife)</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>Telegraph Operator</i>	<i>Canada (Eng)</i>	<i>1873</i>	<i>1900 US Census</i>
		<i>Ann W. (mother)</i>	<i>73</i>		<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1900 US Census</i>
<i>39 Oxford Street</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Catherine Donohue (head)</i>	<i>43</i>		<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1910 US Census</i>
		<i>John T. (brother)</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>Bookbinder in a shop</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1910 US Census</i>
		<i>Felix Slovix (boarder)</i>	<i>3</i>		<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1910 US Census</i>
		<i>Louis Veazeau (boarder)</i>	<i>5</i>		<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1910 US Census</i>
		<i>William Veazeau (boarder)</i>	<i>8</i>		<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1910 US Census</i>
		<i>Edwin Carr (boarder)</i>	<i>11</i>		<i>Massachusetts</i>		<i>1910 US Census</i>

39 Oxford Street	R	Thomas O'Malley (head)	39	Superintendent, Insurance	Ireland	1885	1920 US Census
		Mildred (wife)	33		Maine		1920 US Census
		Helen M. (daughter)	11		Massachusetts		1920 US Census
		M. Evelyn (daughter)	7		Massachusetts		1920 US Census
		Dorothy N. (daughter)	6		Massachusetts		1920 US Census
		Barbara F.	4		Massachusetts		1920 US Census
39 Oxford Street	R	Warren H. Smith (head)	59	Carpenter, Buildings	Canada (Eng)	1876	1930 US Census
		Bertha L (wife)	51		Canada (Eng)	1894	1930 US Census
		Doris G. (daughter)	24	Draper, Dress-making	Massachusetts		1930 US Census
39 Oxford Street	R	George G. Wing (head)	53	Painter	Massachusetts		1940 US Census
		Helen M. (wife)	49		Massachusetts		1940 US Census
		G. Wilber (son)	25	Chauffeur, Trucking firm	Massachusetts		1940 US Census
		Helen M. (daughter)	24	Waitress, Restaurant	Massachusetts		1940 US Census
		Eunice M. (dughter)	11		Massachusetts		1940 US Census
		Raymond F. (son)	1		Massachusetts		1940 US Census