History of Our Church
“Teaser Exposition”

Edwards Church, Saxonville, Mass.
All Saints Day 1 November 2026

https://www.edwardschurch.org/edwards-grace-200-digital-project/

What is the “digital remit”? - 1

This research started with a goal – to create a **Wikipedia entry for Edwards Church – Grace Church by October 2027**.



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First Baptist Church (Framingham, Massachusetts)

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 42°18′1.12″N 71°26′19.9″W

The **First Baptist Church** is an historic Baptist church on 1013 Worcester Road (Massachusetts Route 9) in Framingham, Massachusetts.

First Baptist Church
U.S. National Register of Historic Places

History [edit]

The cornerstone of the First Baptist Church was laid in 1826.[2] The first services were held on January 1, 1827 by the Rev. Charles Train. Originally an "open" basement for the horses to stay dry during worship services, the Sanctuary floor was raised around 1881 and the basement closed in. Around 1888 a 4-room addition was added on the west side (rear) of building along with a baptismal on the altar stage. With the exception of some major renovations around 1998 to make the building handicap accessible, the building remains much as it was the day it was built. The original box pews were replaced by curved padded pews in the late 1800s, however the original box pews still exist in the balcony. Also still intact, however sealed in from the Main Sanctuary, are the original Negro galleries which were closed off around 1849

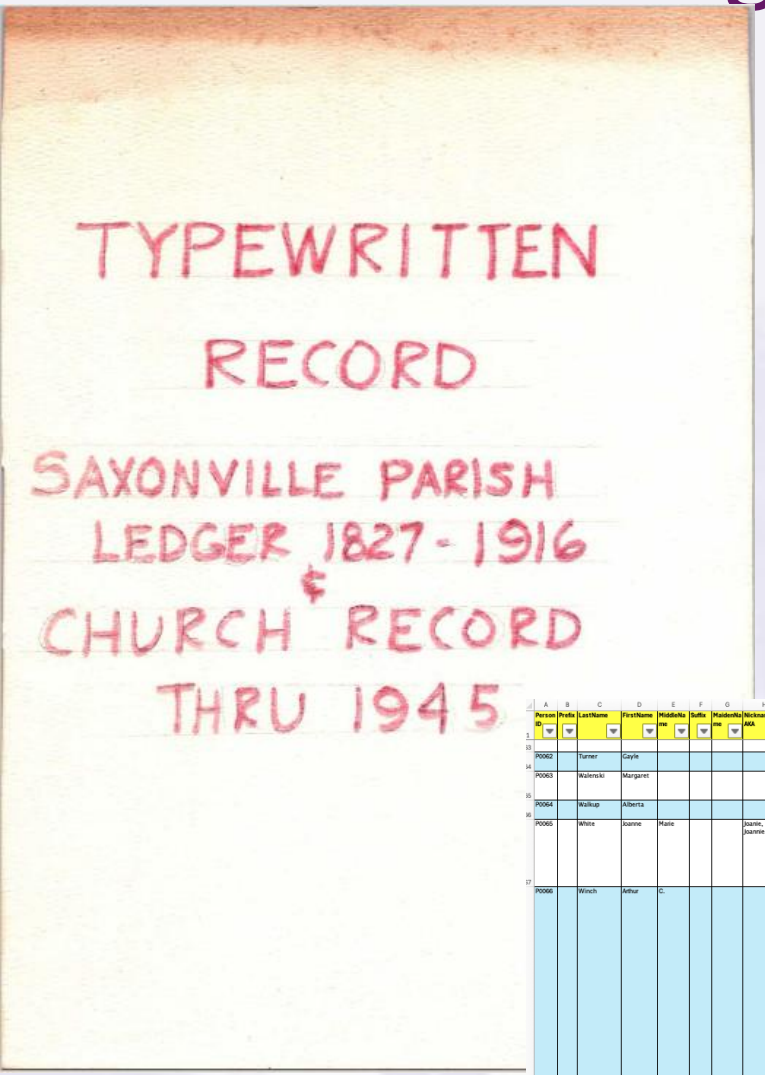
In 1854 several members left with a "mothers blessing" to create the South Framingham Baptist Church in South Framingham. The name was changed to Park Street Baptist Church shortly thereafter. Major renovations were completed on the church in 1881. In 1998 due to dwindling membership in both congregations, the members of First Baptist Church and Park Street Baptist Church began worshipping together. In 2002 The members of Park Street Baptist Church officially rejoined First Baptist Church as one congregation now known as the First Baptist Church in Framingham.

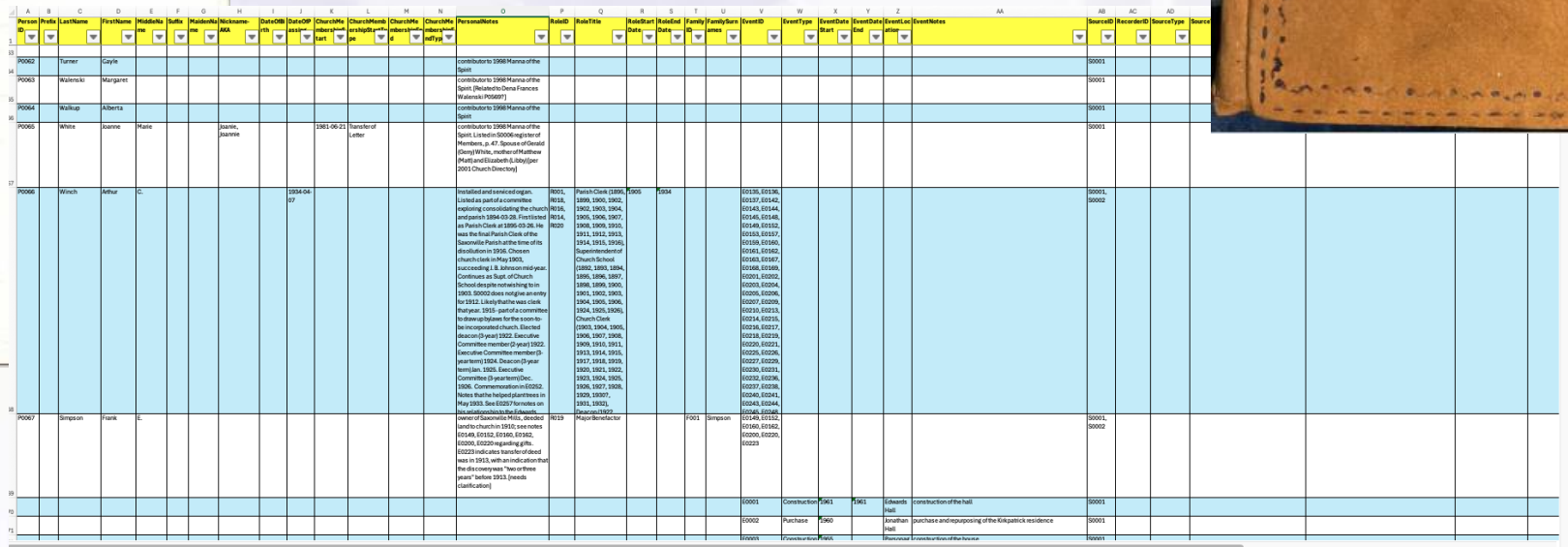
The church building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.[1]

What is the “digital remit”? - 2

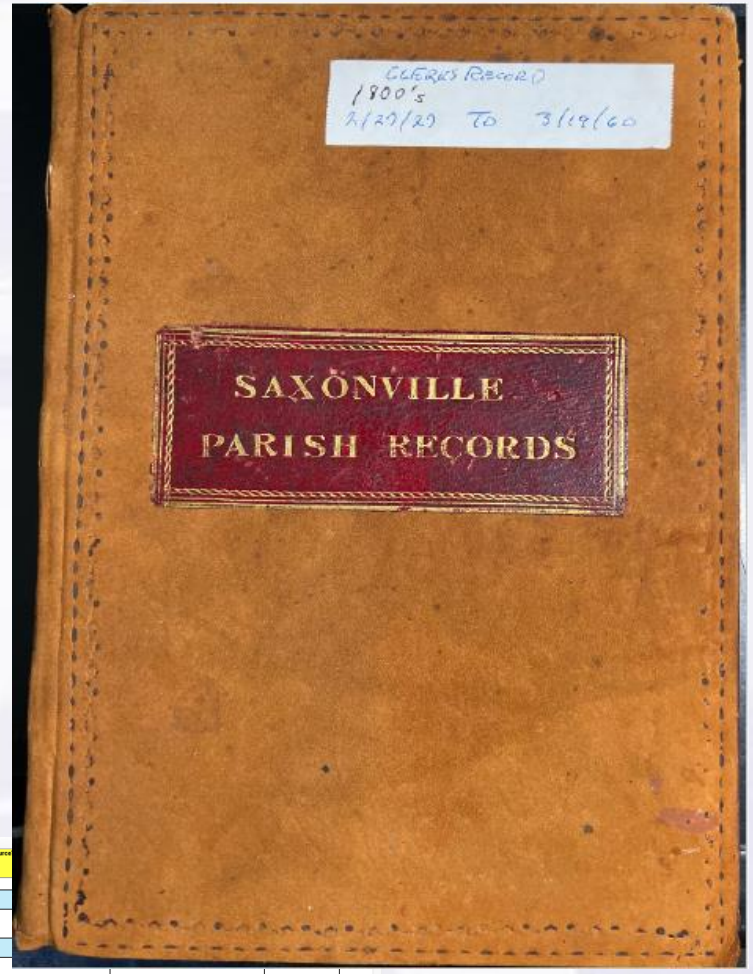
- Seems simple, no? But Debbie had all this material in the church office…
- So we started looking at our inhouse primary sources.
  - Unlike Plymouth and Grace (which have material at the CAL in Boston), what survives of Edwards’ early records has been kept on site: oldest – 1827, newest – on various computers. We have a far amount of Grace material from the mid-1900s on.
  - We have short histories of Edwards that were prepared in 1977 and 2007.
- Focus currently is on the earliest material (about 1827 to 1862): transcription, analysis, context research. This already has revealed complexity that makes the earlier Edwards histories and, especially, outside histories incomplete or misleading. So, there is a lot of basic resource work to do.

What is the “digital remit”? - 3





PersonID	Prefix	LastName	FirstName	MiddleName	Suffix	MaidenName	Nickname-AKA	DateOfBirth	DateOfPassage	ChurchMembershipStart	ChurchMembershipType	ChurchMembershipEnd	ChurchMembershipEndType	PersonalNotes	RoleID	RoleTitle	RoleStartDate	RoleEndDate	FamilyID	FamilySurname	EventID	EventType	EventDateStart	EventDateEnd	EventLocation	EventNotes	SourceID	RecorderID	SourceType	Source
P0062		Turner	Gayle											contibutorto 1998 Manna of the Spirit													S0001			
P0063		Walenski	Margaret											contibutorto 1998 Manna of the Spirit. [Related to Dena Frances Walenski P0569?]													S0001			
P0064		Walkup	Alberta											contibutorto 1998 Manna of the Spirit													S0001			
P0065		White	Joanne	Marie			Joanie, Joannie		1981-06-21	Transfer of Letter				contibutorto 1998 Manna of the Spirit. Listed in S0006 register of Members, p. 47. Spouse of Gerald (Gerry) White, mother of Matthew (Matt) and Elizabeth (Libby) (per 2001 Church Directory)													S0001			
P0066		Winch	Arthur	C.					1934-04-07					Installed and serviced organ. Listed as part of a committee exploring consolidating the church and parish 1894-03-28. First listed as Parish Clerk at 1895-03-26. He was the final Parish Clerk of the Saxonville Parish at the time of its dissolution in 1916. Chosen church clerk in May 1903, succeeding J. B. Johnson mid-year. Continues as Supt. of Church School despite not wishing to in 1903. S0002 does not give an entry for 1912. Likely that he was clerk that year. 1915- part of a committee to draw up bylaws for the soon-to-be incorporated church. Elected deacon (3-year) 1922. Executive Committee member (2-year) 1922. Executive Committee member (3-year term) 1924. Deacon (3-year term) Jan. 1925. Executive Committee (3-year term) Dec. 1926. Commemoration in E0252. Notes that he helped plant trees in May 1933. See E0257 for notes on his relationship to the Edwards...	R001, R018, R016, R014, R020	Parish Clerk (1895, 1899, 1900, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916), Superintendent of Church School (1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1924, 1925, 1926), Church Clerk (1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930?, 1931, 1932), Deacon (1922	1905	1934			E0135, E0136, E0137, E0142, E0143, E0144, E0145, E0148, E0149, E0152, E0153, E0157, E0159, E0160, E0161, E0162, E0163, E0167, E0168, E0169, E0201, E0202, E0203, E0204, E0205, E0206, E0207, E0209, E0210, E0213, E0214, E0215, E0216, E0217, E0218, E0219, E0220, E0221, E0225, E0226, E0227, E0229, E0230, E0231, E0232, E0236, E0237, E0238, E0240, E0241, E0243, E0244, E0245, E0248							S0001, S0002			
P0067		Simpson	Frank	E.										owner of Saxonville Mills, deeded land to church in 1910; see notes E0149, E0152, E0160, E0162, E0200, E0220 regarding gifts. E0223 indicates transfer of deed was in 1913, with an indication that the discovery was "two or three years" before 1913. [needs clarification]	R019	Major/Benefactor			F001	Simpson	E0149, E0152, E0160, E0162, E0200, E0220, E0223							S0001, S0002			
																					E0001	Construction	1961	1961	Edwards Hall	construction of the hall	S0001			
																					E0002	Purchase	1960		Jonathan Hall	purchase and repurposing of the Kirkpatrick residence	S0001			
																					E0003	Construction	1965			Personal construction of the house	S0001			



What categories seem to make sense at this stage of research? *(not exhaustive!)*

- The land & the buildings
- Religion and religious trends
- Local political and institution building
- Place within the community
- Legal developments
- Institutional organization (Parish, Society, Church)
- Religious practice & polity
  - Organizations (internal, external)
  - Spiritual life
  - Creeds
  - Missions & committees
- Music (hymnody, singing, instrumental, the organ, the choirs)
- Gender (sociology & politics)
- Economics (internal, local, national)
  - Socio-economics
- Membership
  - Individual stories
  - Families, groups, demographics
- Clergy
- Diaconate and lay leadership
- External political and social trends and events
- Struggle and Renewal
  - Financial, Membership
- ONA

But, of course, as a people of faith, we look at all of this to help understand the essential arc:

What is the spiritual journey of this place?

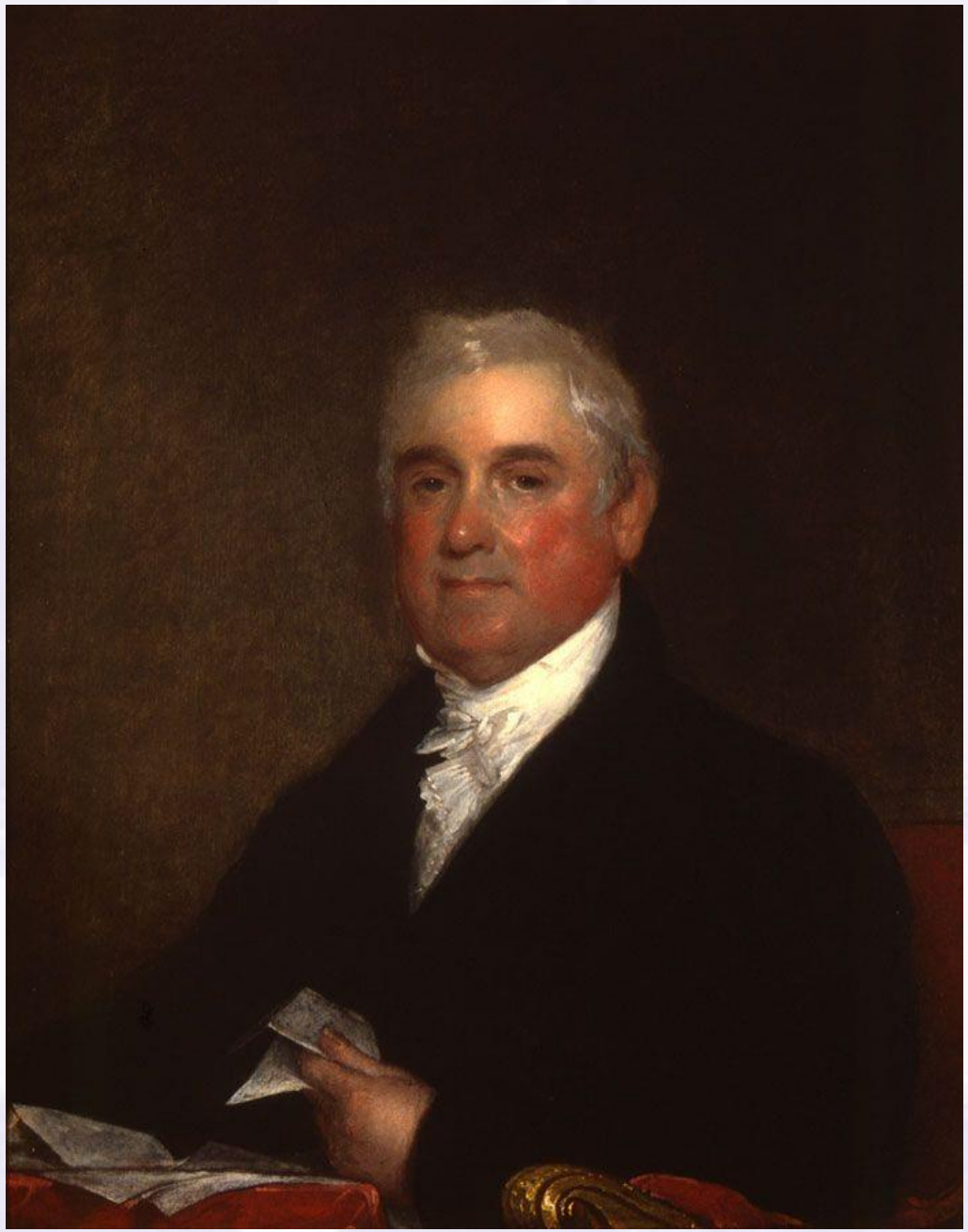
And

How does that affect my own spiritual journey?

Categories that make sense at present: the Land - 1

- **Nipmuc**: fishing village with weirs on the river.
- **Colonial period:** John Stone (1645–47 into the area). Stones remained in the area into the late 1800s. Many were part of this Church.
- **Early republic:** at some point Charles Fiske, a tanner acquires the land and in 1826 he sells it to Joseph Head for $1.00, conditioned on Head building a meeting house within three years. Head completes the task in 1827.
- **Ante-bellum:** Head dies in 1836. In 1843 his sons sell the land (and meeting house) to New England Worsted Co. and Michael Simpson.

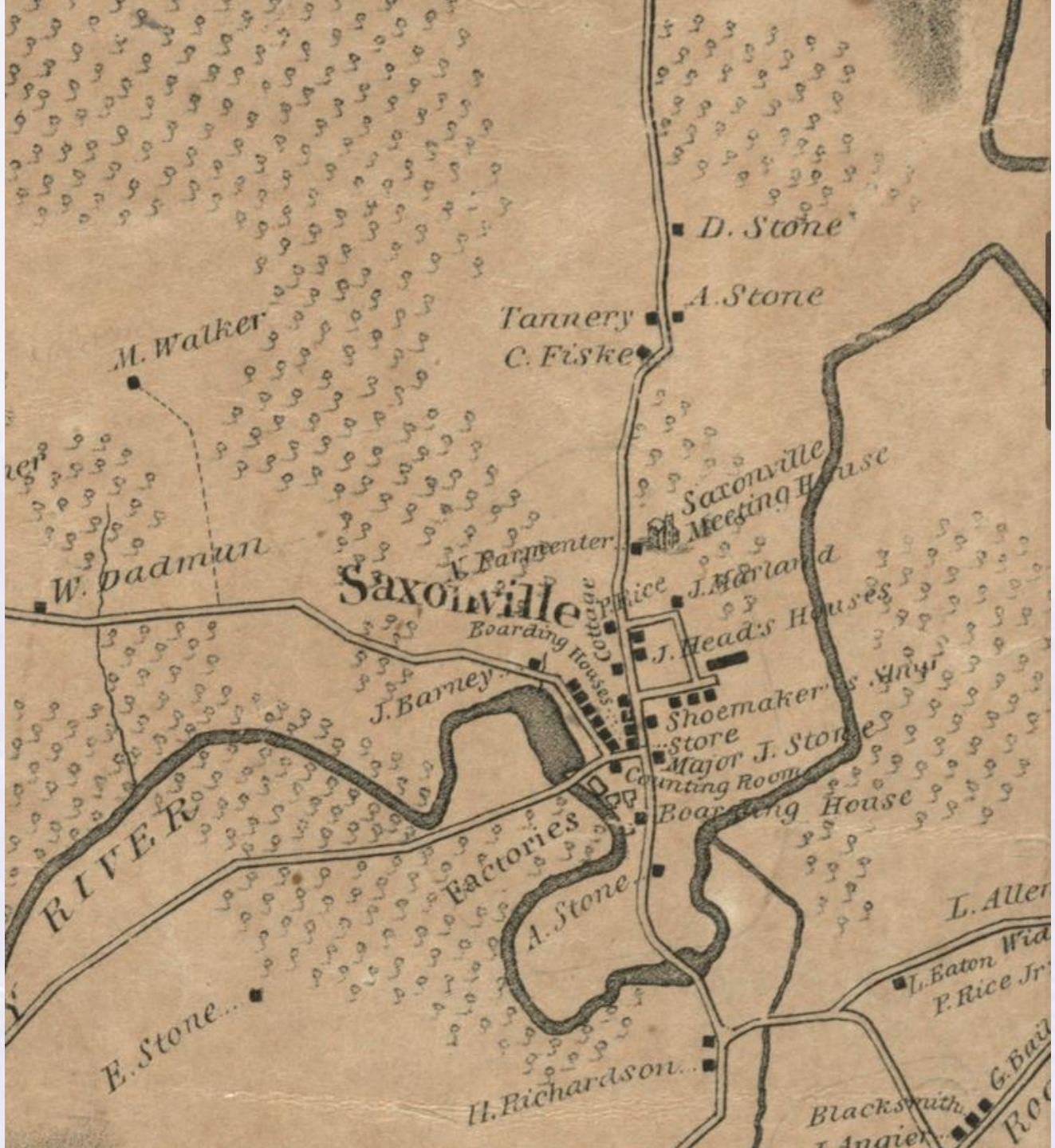
The guy who built our church was painted by the same guy who painted George Washington…



Categories that make sense at present: the Land - 2

- **Ante-bellum**: In the mid-1850s the Parish starts to explore buying the land and building, but nothing comes of it.
- **Pre-WWI**: Frank Simpson (Michael Simpson's son) decides to donate the land and building to the Parish in 1912. The Parish dissolves in 1916, giving the Church (Edwards Church, Inc.) all its holdings, including the deed for the land and the building. Everything isn't fully resolved until 1932.
- *NEEDS RESEARCH: The Parish/Church used factory space a lot. We had a chapel down the hill, too.*

Categories that make sense at present: the Land & Buildings - 1832



Categories that make sense at present: the Land & Buildings - 1882



Categories that make sense at present: the People - 1

- **Eli to Ellie, Clark to Clark, Amherst to Amherst**
- **Gender plays a role in which people are listed – the Saxonville Parish is a male institution (1827)**

1. **F. A. Bertody**, chosen Treasurer (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)
2. **Ephraim Brigham**, chosen Moderator
3. **Burleigh Bullard** (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)
4. **Henry Dalliba** (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)
5. **J Dench**
6. **Charles Fiske**
7. **Amos Johnson, Jr.**
8. **Lyman Morse** (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)
9. **Daniel Rea**
10. **James Stimpson** (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)
11. **Josiah Stone** (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)
12. **Eliphalet Wheeler**, chosen clerk (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)
13. **John Whitney** (also founding member of Saxonville Religious Society)

Categories that make sense at present: the People - 2

Saxonville Religious Society also seems to be a male institution

1. **Francis A. Bertody** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
2. **Burleigh Bullard** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
3. **Henry Dalliba** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
4. **Dexter Fairbanks**
5. **Lyman Morse** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
6. **William Phillips**
7. **John Rice**
8. **James Stimpson** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
9. **Josiah Stone** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
10. **Edward Warner**
11. **Eliphalet Wheeler** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
12. **John Whitney** (also member of the Saxonville Parish)
13. **Isaiah Wild**

Categories that make sense at present: the People - 3

But, Edwards Church initially (and probably always) has more women than men (this is the 1833 list of members):

Lambert Allen
Hannah Allen
Franklin Abels
Esther Abels
Mary Bailey
Clarissa E. Bailey
James Darling
Alice Darling
Ira Draper
Eunice Draper
Eben Eaton
Sally E. Eaton
Samuel W. Eaton
Anna B Fisk
Sally Hemenway
Mary Fairbanks
James Jackson
Sally Rice
Fanny Rutter
Maria A. Richardson
Abner Stone
Persis Stone
Ebenezer Stone
Jane Stone
Mary G. Soden
Mary A. Soden
Eliza Soden
Harriet Soden

(18 of 28 – ~65%)

PersonID
Prefix
LastName
FirstName
MiddleName
Suffix
MaidenName
Nickname-AKA
DateOfBirth
DateOfPassing
ChurchMembershipStart
ChurchMembershipStartType
ChurchMembershipEnd
ChurchMembershipEndType
PersonalNotes
RoleID
RoleTitle
RoleStartDate
RoleEndDate
FamilyID
FamilySurnames
EventID
EventType
EventDateStart
EventDateEnd
EventLocation
EventNotes
SourceID
RecorderID
SourceType
SourceTitle
SourceDetails
SourceDocumentPath
Source Transcription

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All these categories… say “Saturday workshop next Spring or Summer”

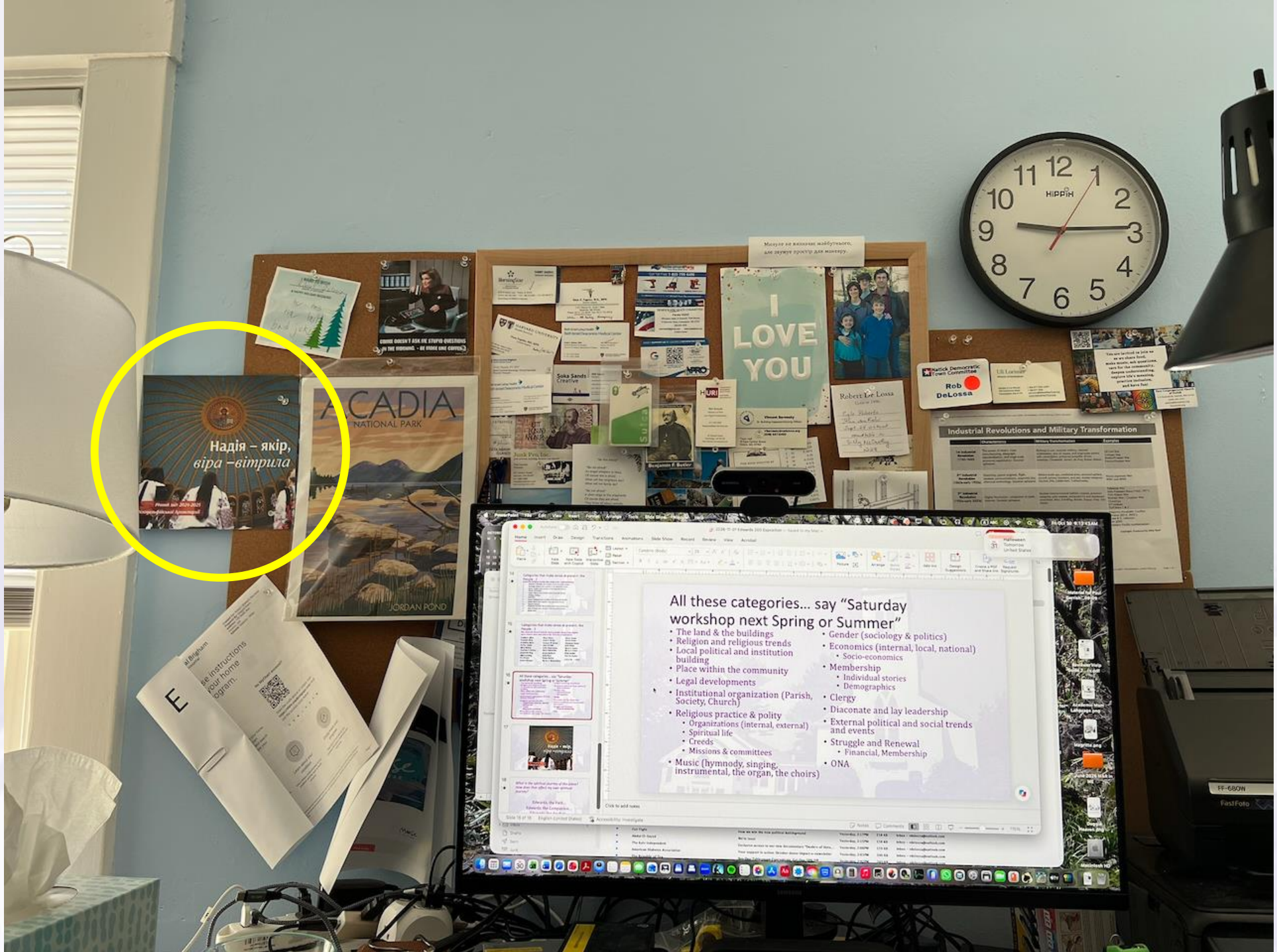
- The land & the buildings
  - The mystery of ”the chapel”
- Religion and religious trends
  - The Trinitarian v. Unitarian split; we were once called “Orthodox”
- Local political and institution building
  - A parish was needed to establish a place legally
  - Mills built churches, they were envisioned as having moral obligations to workers
- Place within the community
  - At one point Parish notices were posted at the Post Office
- Legal developments
  - Ability to create your own religion tax-receiving religious society in early 1820s; disestablishment in 1833

All these categories… say “Saturday workshop next Spring or Summer”

- Institutional organization (Parish, Society, Church)
  - We’re still working on how these all fit together after 1833…
- Religious practice & polity
  - Organizations (internal, external) – Ladies’ Society, Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor
  - Spiritual life – individual and the church; this will be the hardest to recover
  - Creeds
  - Missions & committees – it was always important
- Music (hymnody, singing, instrumental, the organ, the choirs)
  - There was a gift of hymn books at the beginning; treasurer reports the purchase of “viol strings” in an early report, so we know there was instrumental music…
- Gender (sociology & politics)
  - Legal position of women early on; Arthur Titcomb’s letter to the Parish in 1899
- Economics (internal, local, national)
  - Pew rents!!
  - Socio-economics – what was that like for our members?
- Membership
  - Individual stories – the Brown sisters! A. C. Winch! Ellie Kell!
  - Families, groups, demographics – Families are huge from the beginning; how do demographics shift over time (and how do they reflect Framingham?)

All these categories… say “Saturday workshop next Spring or Summer”

- Clergy
  - When was this a “pastoral church”? When was it a “family church”?
- Diaconate and lay leadership
  - This needs extensive mapping
- External political and social trends and events
  - Abolition…
- Struggle and Renewal
  - Financial, Membership
- ONA
  - Grace the pioneer; Edwards’ path forward


Надія – якір,
віра –вітрила
ACADIA
NATIONAL PARK
JORDAN POND
I LOVE YOU
Industrial Revolutions and Military Transformation
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ONA



Надія – якір, *віра –вітрила*

Річний звіт 2024-2025
Філадельфійської Архиєпархії

What is the spiritual journey of this place? How does that affect my own spiritual journey?

Edwards, the Path…

Edwards, the Companion…

Edwards, the Anchor…

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