



Welcome to Saxonville,
a traditional mill village within the town of Framingham, with a wide variety of historic, cultural, and recreational attractions.

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, native Americans of the Nipmuc tribe lived in a village in Saxonville centered around the waterfall on the Sudbury River, which surrounds the area on three sides. Framingham's first settler, John Stone, built his home here in 1647, and for the next two hundred years the area was known as Stone's Neck. With the industrial revolution of the mid-nineteenth century, the force of the waterfall, previously used to run a grist mill, was harnessed to power a large textile mill. One of the early companies was named the Saxon Factory Company, and the village was renamed Saxonville.

Today's Saxonville is a thriving residential, commercial, and artistic community. On the National Historic Register, with many surviving examples of nineteenth century architectural styles, this unique corner of Framingham combines our historic past with modern-day amenities.

Architecture & History

Most of Saxonville's Second Empire and Victorian period architecture is within a short distance of McGrath Square, at the intersection of Concord and Central Streets. This makes it an ideal area for a walking tour.

Arts & Culture

Saxonville is home to an active community of visual artists, and several public galleries and performance spaces.

Recreation

With its location on the Sudbury River, a nationally-recognized wild and scenic river, nearby Lake Cochituate, and walking trails through its woodlands, Saxonville offers outdoor enthusiasts four seasons of beauty and tranquility.

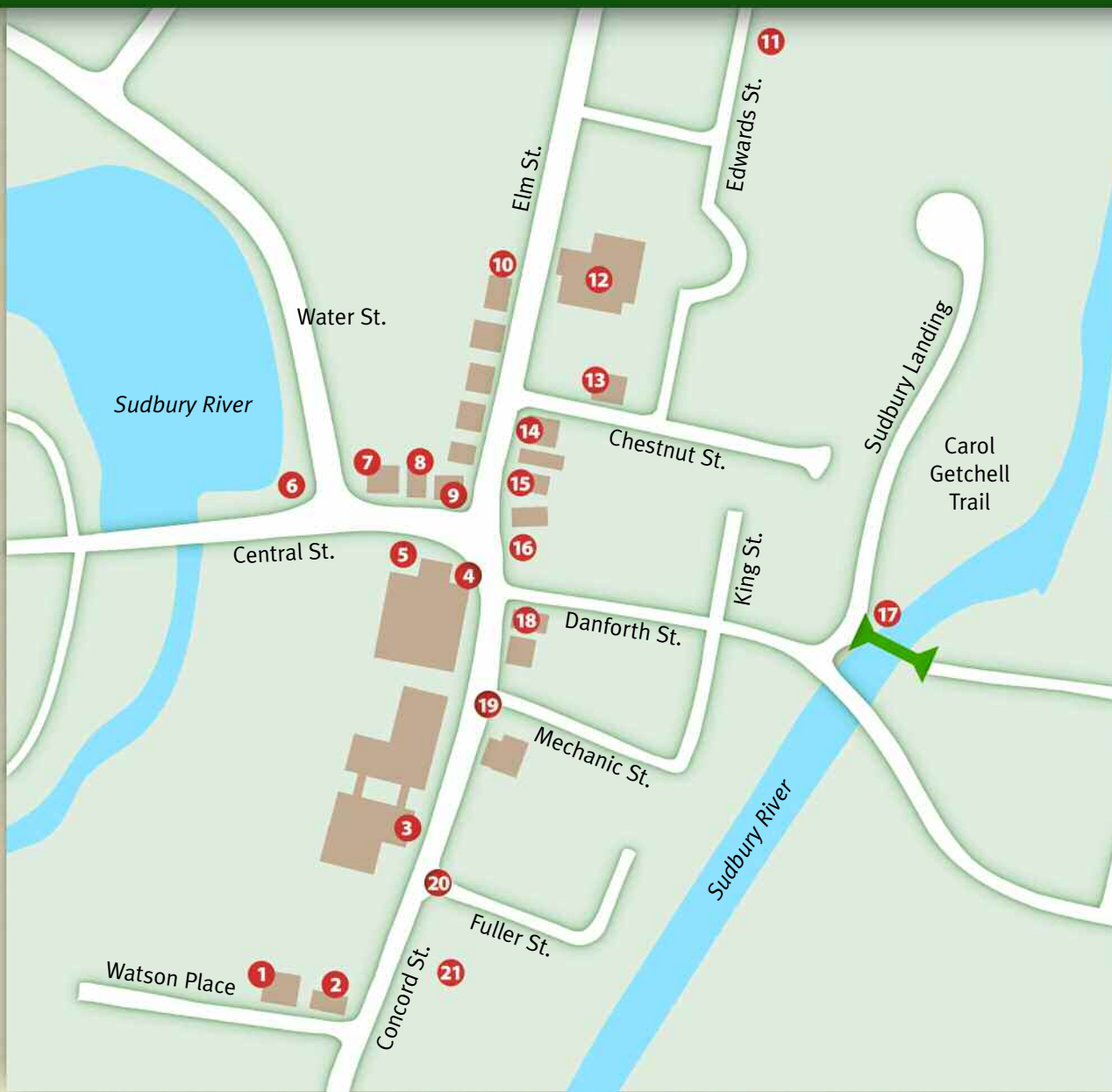
SAXONVILLE

A Traditional New England Mill Village



This brochure was produced by the Friends of Saxonville, Inc., by means of a Tourism Grant from the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. The Friends of Saxonville is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate the public about the special identity of Saxonville, a historic neighborhood of Framingham, Massachusetts, and to preserve, enhance, and protect its cultural, environmental, and historical qualities. Learn more about Saxonville and our organization by visiting our web site at www.saxonville.org.

Saxonville Historic Walking Tour



LEGEND

- 1 Saxonville Fire Station (1902)
- 2 Athenaeum Hall (1847)
- 3 Saxonville Mills Building #7 (1850)
- 4 McGrath Square
- 5 Saxonville Mills Main Tower (1884)
- 6 Saxonville Falls and Dam (1865)
- 7 Liberty Apartments (1823)
- 8 7-9 Central Street (c. 1880)
- 9 Mill Store Block (c. 1830)
- 10 Site of Michael Simpson's "Cottage"
- 11 Edwards Church and Cemetery (1838)
- 12 Stapleton School (1922)
- 13 Old Methodist Church (1880)
- 14 Old Edwards Chapel (1871)
- 15 Turnpike Rug (c. 1877)
- 16 Site of Fuller's Store
- 17 Old Danforth Street Bridge (c. 1890)
- 18 Site of the Simpson Block
- 19 Mechanic Street
- 20 Fuller Street
- 21 Site of Railyards (1846)

DATA SOURCES: Roads and Buildings from Boston Edison at 1:5,000. Hydrography from MassGIS at 1:25,000



Saxonville Fire Station (1902)
"High Victorian Eclectic" design currently housing Engine 2 of the Framingham Fire Department. It was built when canvas hoses had to be hung in a drying tower after each fire. The only other such tower in Framingham is at the old Hollis Street Fire Station, which is now a community arts center.



Athenaeum Hall (1847)
First called the Saxonville Town Hall, this building has served as a school, meeting hall, jail, veterans post and hospital over the years. Recent renovations by the Friends of Saxonville will preserve the building for future generations.



Saxonville Mills Building #7 (1850)
This is the oldest building in the complex, and the only mill building to survive the great fire of 1883. A railroad spur used to go right inside this building.



McGrath Square
Named for James J. McGrath, a Saxonville lad killed in World War I while trying to save the lives of his fellow soldiers. The square was once the site of the town pump, the only water source for the entire neighborhood before indoor plumbing.



Saxonville Mills Main Tower (1884)
The towers reflect the "Second Empire" or French Mansard design that was the fashion at the time. The bell inside set the routine for village life in Saxonville for many years. The bell used in the original mill complex was cast by the Paul Revere foundry, but melted in the great fire. Framingham Historical Society and Museum has a piece of the original bell on display.



Saxonville Falls and Dam (1865)
The water power at these falls has been used to drive mill wheels since 1659 when John Stone built a grist mill here. The transition to steam power began in the late 19th century.



Liberty Apartments, 11-13 Central St. (1823)
Typical multi-dwelling housing for mill workers. Dates back to the earliest textile mills of the 1820s. Before its name was changed to McGrath Square, this area was called Liberty Square.



7-9 Central Street (c. 1880)
Once of the many commercial and private Saxonville buildings either built or remodeled in the Second Empire style. This building was moved in the 1980s to center it between its neighbors. The old Saxonville fire station was once located to its left. The fire station being directly across the street from the mill when it burned down in 1883 did not seem to help.



Mill Store Block, 1-5 Central St. (c. 1830)
Significantly remodeled in the Second Empire style in about 1880.



Site of Michael Simpson's 'Cottage,' 50 Elm Street
Simpson took over the Saxonville Mills in 1859. He lived in a mansion on this site that he called his 'cottage.' From this hill he could survey hundreds of acres that he owned. Prior to this, the area was the site of a Native American village. Simpson died in 1884 and the mansion lasted until the 1930s.



Edwards Church (1827) and Cemetery (1838)
Framingham's second oldest church was built just one year after the First Baptist Church at Framingham Center. First built as the Saxonville Meeting House for use by various denominations, it was soon taken over by the Congregationalists. The cemetery is owned and managed by the town. Conrad Homan, Civil War Medal of Honor hero, is buried here.



Stapleton School (1922)
This elementary school replaced a wooden school that was on this site since the 1850s. The older building served as the Saxonville High School until the 1890s. It is now named after Mary Stapleton, long-time Framingham teacher, principal and School Committee member.



Old Methodist Church (1880)
The Methodist Church in Framingham goes back to the 1790s. This church once had a tall steeple, but it was lost during a hurricane in 1938. Since the Methodists built their modern church on Water Street, this church has been used by Baptists, and is now a Taiwanese church.



Old Edwards Chapel (1871)
Built by the Edwards Church as a social hall, it was converted to commercial use in 1961.



Turnpike Rug (c. 1877)
Another Second Empire commercial building. Turnpike Rug was so named because the business was originally located on the Worcester Turnpike.



Site of Fuller's Store
Luther Fuller was the Saxonville Postmaster and served as Framingham's State Representative for many years. His general store and post office no longer stand, but his name is remembered in Fuller Street, just down the road.



Old Danforth Street Bridge (c. 1890)
Danforth Street is still lined with worker housing from the 1870s and leads to an iron bridge and Danforth Park. The old bridge is a rare example of a Pratt Pony Truss structure. Beyond this, on top of the hill at Danforth Park, was once located a Native American fort. The street and the park were named for Samuel Danforth, a 19th century builder, not Thomas Danforth, originally Framingham's largest land owner.



Parking lot at Danforth and Concord Street - Site of the Simpson Block
A wooden, three story commercial building on this corner housed Saxonville's first library, called the Simpson Reading Room. In the 1920s it was the scene of a small riot by striking textile workers.



Mechanic Street
Named long before auto mechanics, this street housed carriage makers and other craftsmen.



Fuller Street
Named to honor Luther Fuller this street was originally named Church Street because the Methodist Church was located at the end. The name had to be changed when Saxonville was incorporated into Framingham, because there was already a Church Street in Framingham.

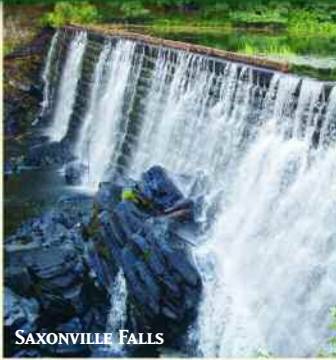


Saxonville Village Apartments - Saxonville Train Station
It would not be surprising if these apartments are also sitting on the place where John Stone, Saxonville's first European resident, originally brought his family when he built at Otter Neck. In 1846 it became the site of the rail yards and station of the Saxonville Branch Railroad, which went to Natick Center. When these apartments were built, the excavation was interrupted by the discovery of the old locomotive turntable. If you continue further down Concord Street, past the Patrick McDonald House, to the bridge over the Sudbury River, you can see the old railroad bridge abutment to the right.

SAXONVILLE — A Traditional New England Mill Village

Saxonville Falls

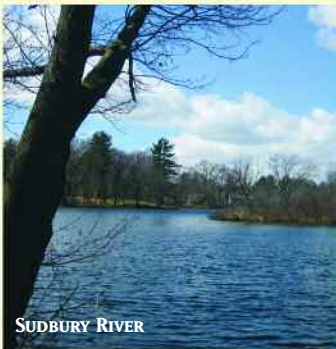
Originally a native American fishing spot, this natural waterfall on the Sudbury River was dammed and used to power colonial grist mills, and then power the mill turbines during the nineteenth century. Located on Central Street at the intersection of Water Street, across from the mill complex.



SAXONVILLE FALLS

Sudbury River

Part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the Sudbury River in Saxonville is a popular destination for canoers and kayakers. From the bridge at Wickford Street you can head up river towards Framingham Center, or down river to the mill pond at the waterfall. There is also a launching area at the end of Little Farms Road, off Elm Street, where the Carol J. Getchell Nature Trail ends. This is an ideal starting point for paddling up river into the village area, or down river into Wayland and Sudbury.



SUDBURY RIVER

Saxonville Mills

The sprawling mill complex was once the principal employer within Saxonville, and manufactured blankets, carpets, and other textile products. Today home to numerous small businesses, it runs along Concord Street and turns left onto Central Street by the Saxonville Dam on the Sudbury River. Most of the current buildings date to 1884, when the mill complex was rebuilt following the great fire of 1883. A talented group of local visual artists works from studios within the historic mill complex, at 1602-B Concord Street. Saxonville Studios hosts an annual open studios event in the spring, and at other select times during the year. Individual artists may be available by appointment. Learn more at www.saxonvillestudios.com.



SAXONVILLE MILLS



SAXONVILLE FIRE STATION



CAROL J. GETCHELL TRAIL



ATHENAEUM

Athenaeum

Located just before the mill complex on Concord Street at Watson Place. Built in 1847, Athenaeum Hall was once Saxonville's town hall. The building has also served as a school, a jail, a hospital, a polling place, a Veterans of Foreign Wars post, and a newspaper pressroom.



OLD DANFORTH STREET BRIDGE

Cochituate Rail Trail

A work in progress, this multi-use trail uses the four-mile long rail bed of the former Saxonville Branch railroad and will eventually run from School Street in Saxonville to Natick Center. Check trail signage or www.crtrail.org to determine what sections are open for public use at the time of your visit.



COCHITUATE RAIL TRAIL

Saxonville Beach

An oak tree-shaded beach on the upper end of Lake Cochituate, a former reservoir for the city of Boston. On Lake Road, off Old Connecticut Path. Staffed with lifeguards from mid-June until late August. Canoes and kayaks can be rented seasonally at Charles River Canoe and Kayak, at the middle part of the lake at Cochituate State Park on Route 30.



SAXONVILLE BEACH

Saxonville Fire Station

Located on Watson Place off Concord Street, next to the Athenaeum Hall. The fire station was built in 1902 and is the oldest active fire station in Framingham. The distinctive Victorian tower that crowns the station was originally used for drying canvas hoses after a fire.

Old Danforth Street Bridge

A unique iron Pony Truss style bridge, constructed around 1890 to span the Sudbury River. The bridge was refurbished and reopened as a pedestrian bridge for the twenty-first century. Located on Danforth Street off Concord Street.

Carol J. Getchell Trail

A one-mile walking trail that follows the gentle contours of the Sudbury River, at times using boardwalks and footbridges, through serene soft and hardwood forest and marshland. It begins at the intersection of Sudbury Landing and Danforth Street, off Concord Street, and ends at Little Farms Road, off Elm Street. Named for the late principal of Saxonville's Stapleton School, and one of the founders of the Friends of Saxonville.