



Sowams means "Southern Area" and was the home of the Pokanokets (later re-named Wampanoags by colonial rulers). It was their leader, Massasoit {Great Leader} Osamequin who first met the Pilgrims in 1621 and ensured their survival.

A Sowams Heritage Area SITE

Sowams Heritage Area includes Barrington, Bristol, East Providence, Providence, and Warren RI, and Rehoboth, Seekonk and Swansea in Massachusetts. Learn more about Pokanoket landmark sites and history at SowamsHeritageArea.org.



THE AREA OF TODAY'S CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE WAS INHABITED BY THE POKANOKET TRIBE, LATER KNOWN AS THE WAMPANOAG, FOR OVER 10,000 YEARS.

In 1621, the Massasoit Osamequin entered into a mutual protection agreement with the English settlers in Plymouth. While court records show that the original Rehoboth area had been settled by English colonists as early as 1625, the Plymouth Bay Colony gave John Brown and Edward Winslow permission to purchase 64 square miles of land from Osamequin that was given the name "Rehoboth".

Ring of the Green and settlement in the 17th Century



A sketch of how the first meeting house might have looked.

The Newman Church congregation, organized in 1643 by the Reverend Samuel Newman of Weymouth, Mass., moved into the area and built the first meeting house.

COLONIAL BURIAL GROUND

A burial ground was located next to the meeting house, and stones in the cemetery date back to 1658. The oldest one, that of William Carpenter, is simply marked with his initials and the year of his death. A small number of other graves from the 17th century can be found in the cemetery.



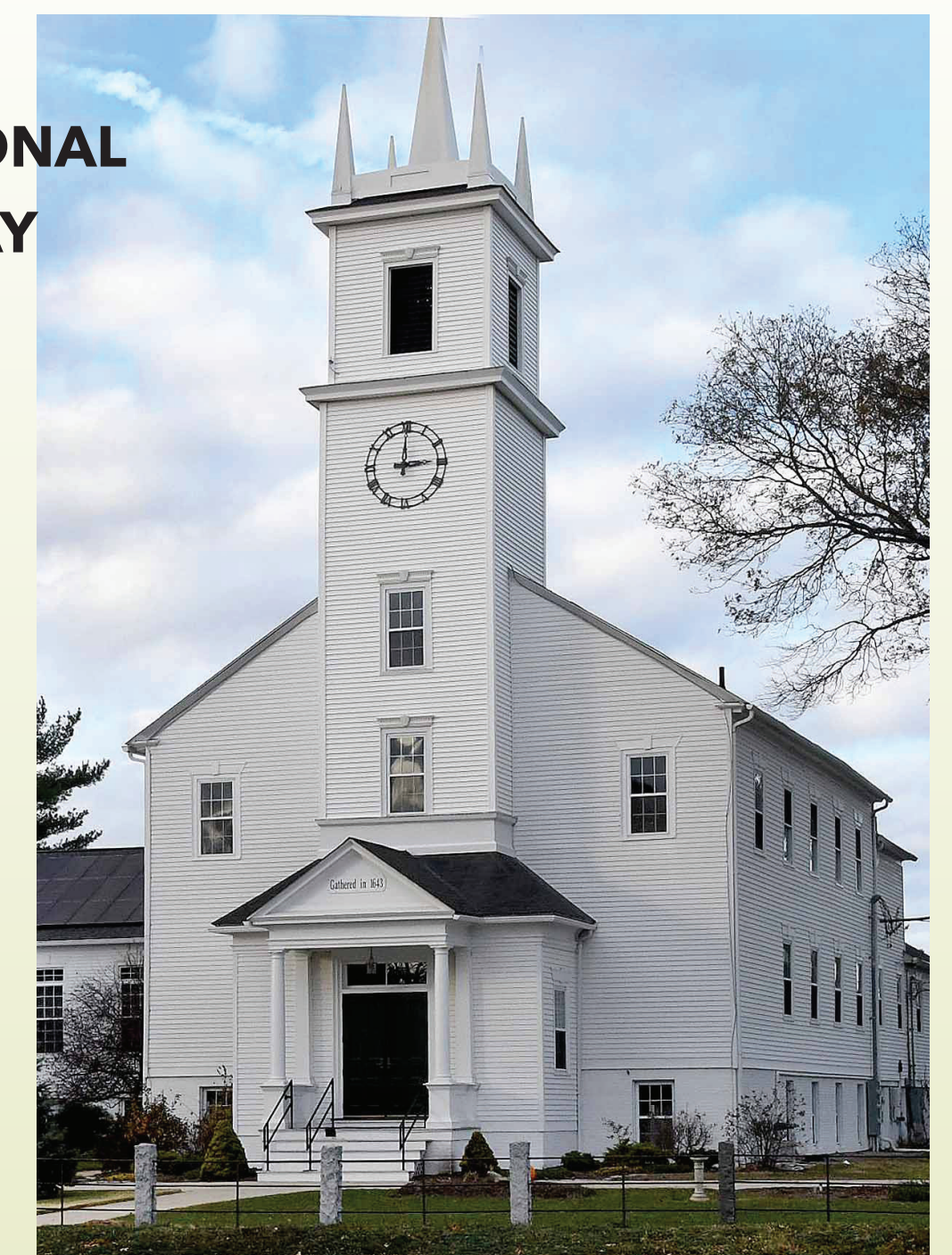
A map showing the original properties that were laid out around the church in 1643 forming what became known as the "Ring of the Green" placed over today's streets.



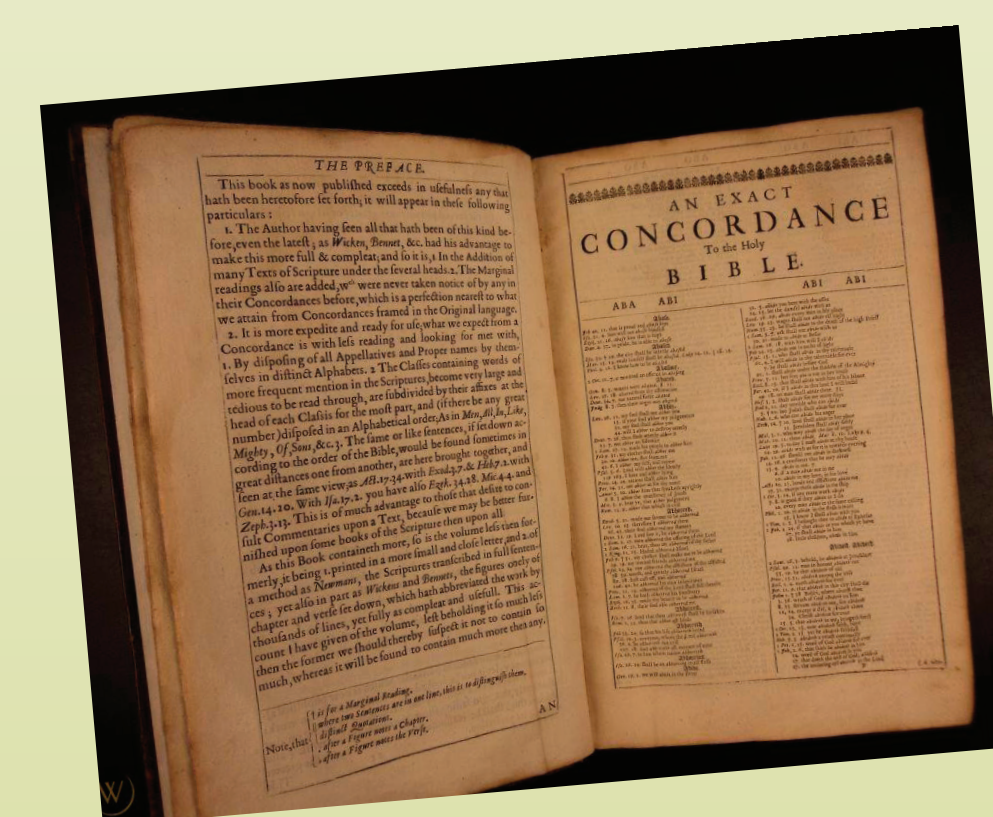
The current Newman Congregational Church is located in the center of the historic "Ring of the Green" on Newman Avenue.

NEWMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH TODAY

After the original meeting house was burned in King Philip's War of 1675-76, two subsequent buildings were constructed. The present building was



built at its current location c.1810 using wood from the previous building and then raised onto

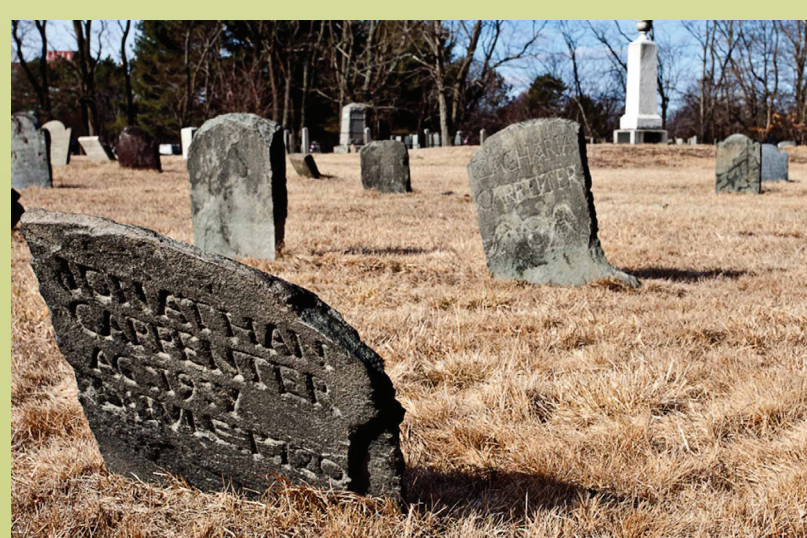


Rev. Newman's widely acclaimed concordance of the Bible, (an alphabetical index of the principal words) was first published in London in 1643.

the current foundation in 1890. When re-designed in 1890, a portico was built over the front door of the church.

clockwise from left: Rev. Newman's grave is marked with an obelisk. The oldest gravestone in the cemetery, that of William Carpenter, is simply marked with his initials and the year of his death. A number of other graves from the 17th century can be found in the cemetery or searched on the Find-A-Grave website.

A TOWN COMMON was located around the meeting hall, with six- eight- and twelve-acre farm lots radiating out so that each could have access to water on either the Ten Mile River or the Seekonk River. Called the "RING OF THE GREEN", the common gave each lot owner access to an area where livestock could be guarded each night. The Ring of the Green of Rehoboth is now the site of the village of Rumford in the city of East Providence.



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