



*Emmanuel Church's First Rector*

## FREDERIC DAN HUNTINGTON 1819-1904

Pastor of South Congregational Church and Society (1842-1855)  
Preacher to the University and Plummer Professor  
of Christian Morals in Harvard College (1855-1860)  
First Rector of Emmanuel Church (1860-1869)  
First Bishop of Central New York (1869-1904)

May 28, 1819 Frederic Dan Huntington born, the eleventh child of Elizabeth Whiting (Betsey) Phelps Huntington (1779-1847) and the Rev'd Dan Huntington (1774-1864), at the family farm, Forty Acres, in Hadley, Massachusetts.

Three generations of Elizabeth's family had lived there since it was built in 1752, the first house constructed outside the stockade which had surrounded Hadley since its 1659 settlement. Her earlier ancestors had been in Hadley since its founding, including her great-great-grandparents who from 1664-1679 had hidden in their basement the English "regicide judges" Edward Whalley and William Goffe, signers of the death warrant of Charles I in 1649.

Elizabeth was well, although informally, educated. She met Dan Huntington in 1799, when he came to tea while guest preacher at Hadley. They were married on January 1, 1800 at Forty Acres, where she spent all but 15 years of her life.

Dan Huntington was a descendant of Simon Huntington (1583-1633), who died of smallpox on board the *Elizabeth Bonaventure* en route to America with his wife Margaret Baret (1595-1661) and their children. Dan's father, William Huntington (1732-1816), had fought in the Revolutionary War. Dan was a 1794 Yale graduate. Although a protégé of Yale's President Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards and a principal architect of the second great religious revival in United States history, the "Second Great Awakening" (1800-1830s), Dan was considered from the time of his ordination as "tinged with liberalism." He became a tutor at Williams College and Yale College, then a Congregational minister first in Litchfield (1798) and then in Middletown, Connecticut (1809). In 1816, his ministerial salary proved inadequate to support his growing family, and he resigned his full-time parochial ministry to farm his wife's ancestral farm, while also serving as principal of Hopkins Academy (1817-20) and the first postmaster of North Hadley, and continuing to preach in local churches by invitation.

Forty Acres is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is described and photographed in a book by Frederic Dan Huntington's grandson, Dr. James Lincoln Huntington, *Forty Acres: The Story of the Bishop Huntington House* (Hastings House 1949). Now called the Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum, it was donated along with its contents by Dr. James Huntington to the Porter-Phelps-Huntington Foundation, Inc. in 1955. It is located on Route 47, two miles north of the intersection of Routes 9 and 47 in the center of Hadley, and is open Saturday-Wednesday 1-4:30 P.M. from May 15 to October 15, and at other times by appointment. (413) 584-4699. ([www.pphmuseum.org](http://www.pphmuseum.org)).

1821  
(aet. 2) The First Church of Christ (Congregational), Hadley (where Frederic Dan Huntington had been baptized), refused the petition of the Rev'd Dan Huntington and his brother-in-law for

communion with the church "as Unitarians." Dan continued to preach to small groups of like-minded liberals.

Elizabeth too was increasingly drawn to Unitarian thinking, and to reject the harsh Calvinism in which she had been raised, as described by her brother:

"I think [our mother] must have viewed the power and sovereignty of GOD as overshadowing all his attributes of Love and Mercy. The earliest idea that I remember to have formed of God in my childhood and Youth, representing him as a being of human form—of large dimensions—sitting on his throne—clothed with terrific power—angry with all his creatures and threatening vengeance and destruction upon the whole guilty and rebellious race of Adam."

MOSES PORTER (CHARLES) PHELPS, quoted in Elizabeth Pendergast Carlisle, *Earthbound and Heavenbent: Elizabeth Porter Phelps and Life at Forty Acres* p. 237 (2004)

August 1828  
(aet. 9)

The First Church of Christ, Hadley, excommunicated Elizabeth by withdrawing its "watch and fellowship" because of her Unitarian views. The family began attending a Unitarian meeting-house in Northampton, across a bridge that her son Frederic later christened "heretics' bridge."

"[Frederick's mother] Elizabeth Huntington at home read [William Ellery] Channing [minister of Boston's Arlington Street Church 1803-1842, and leading Unitarian spokesperson] . . . . On the Puritan Sabbath she took her children to sit with her under the old pulpit from which issued vivid pictures of future retribution. The youngest child, Frederic, never lost the impression of those anathemas. To his wondering mind the streaming tears of the minister were as inexplicable as the threats of impending doom. He used to say in later life that it became fixed in his mind that the preacher's habit of crying visibly and audibly in public, was 'because he was afraid too many people would be saved . . . .'"

ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* p.12 (1906)

"In November, 1821, a committee was appointed to visit each member of the Church in Hadley, to inquire into their views and feelings with regard to religion. One of the committee called on [Elizabeth Huntington], and during that visit wished to know of her if she believed in the doctrine of the Trinity. Learning that she did not, at the close of the visit he observed that it had been customary, on such occasions, to unite in prayer; but as there could be no communion where there was such a difference in opinion, he thought it best to omit it in this case, and accordingly withdrew. The result soon reached the ears of the pastor, from whom she was made by epistle to understand that the committee-man had done his duty, and that the Church could not extend their fellowship to Unitarians. The sister, finding thus, officially, that her presence at the usual place of worship, and especially at the Lord's table, could no longer be desirable, and finding forthwith that the services, when she did attend, became unpleasant, concluded to provide herself with a place of worship elsewhere . . . .

"Years elapsed. Two deacons at length were sent to take the first and second steps in reference to excommunication. Their report was made at a meeting of the Church, August 26th, 1828, and a vote of withdrawal was adopted, to be made public on the following Lord's day, September 7th, 1828. At the close of the minutes, it is added: 'We therefore declare her connection with us, as a sister in the Church, to be at an end; and withdraw from her our watch and fellowship, till such time as she, renouncing her errors, shall return to us by repentance. Attest: JOHN WOODBRIDGE, Pastor' . . . ."

REV. DAN HUNTINGTON, *Memories, Counsels, and Reflections* pp. 65-67 (1857)

"My [grandmother Elizabeth Huntington] was a Calvinist. We had a curious impression of Calvinism and could not make out whether it was really a religion or not, with its references to hell-fire and devils, which we mentally illustrated by association with the Doré pictures. My father [Frederic Dan Huntington] spoke of a far milder interpretation of the Bible by a preacher named Channing, whose books his mother [Elizabeth] read and who

persuaded her to believe no longer in devils or eternal punishment. But the pastor of the village church had told Grandmother she must not believe such a doctrine as Channing's Unitarianism, and that she would be put out of the Calvinist society if she did not give it up. He sent the deacons of the church to ask her questions about it, and they went to Grandmother and spent whole afternoons arguing with her, which made her children frightened and unhappy.

“ . . . They had brought a delegation from the orthodox society to labor with a heretic. The swishing of flies and the fretful pawing of hoofs kept up a steady accompaniment as hours wore away and the orthodox dignitaries prolonged their attempts to dislodge the demons of unbelief from our grandmother's soul. The boy Frederic would hang about, miserably, watching those grim scouts go in by the south door and seat themselves on high-back chairs in the darkness of the 'long room.' Elizabeth would come down the stairs, tall and dignified in her Sunday garb. Through the syringa-bushes which grew against the windows, the child could hear querulous voices of old men and crisp, laconic answers from their victim. The argument lasted long. Toward supper-time the visitors would emerge, blinking at the late sun-rays as they left the darkness of the shaded room behind them, and silently untie their impatient horses, back them round and drive away with vacant, sullen faces and reins lax over the dashboards. Our grandmother, white and manifestly wearied, but with victory after siege apparent in her shining eyes, would watch them climb into the high seats of their chariots, bidding them a grave 'good-afternoon.' Little whirls of dust followed the retreating wheels. Her husband [Dan Huntington], returning from the fields, would take the affair with easy, semi-amused temper of mind, his habitual attitude. He was as firm as she, but confident of her loyalty and poise, proud of the uncompromising front she was able to maintain in the face of antagonism. They came again and again, however, and finally cut both wife and husband off from communion with the Hadley congregation. It was a grief to be denied the sharing of that privilege with neighbors and relatives. Peace and serenity had nevertheless been gained through their change of faith, and they never relinquished it. There is no doubt that to their descendants they have bequeathed a measure of independent conviction and fearlessness of departure from time-honored or accustomed dogmas, as also a revolt against religious persecution which has shown itself more than once in the family history.”

RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS, *Sixty-Odd: A Personal History* pp.9-10 (1936)

“The old Puritan faith had been grand in its unhesitating belief in a Ruler and Lawgiver, with the sense of personality which upheld the conscience in responsibility to its Maker. The later teachings from the lips of New England divines obscured this simple and direct creed by constantly dwelling on human depravity and the doctrines of a theological system which seemed to fetter the will itself. The vileness of the creature was indeed depicted with a view to exalt the majesty and sovereignty of God; the certain damnation of the wicked was a theme intended to enhance the future blessedness of the elect. But there were those whose love for God was best satisfied in performing deeds of mercy and charity towards man, and whose conception of salvation was not that of personal security. To such the terrors of judgment appealed little; trust in Heavenly Love was the mainspring of life. They longed to help the suffering, to break the chains of the slave, to bring peace and order to a distracted world.

“The era of religious enthusiasm in which so many New England churches broke from the bondage of Calvinism was a period of activity in the cause of humanity. Here Elizabeth found her happiness and delight. The anti-slavery movement was to her more than sentiment. As a practical proof of her interest in the African race, she took a little black boy, not only under her care, but into her own sleeping-room.

“She eagerly read and distribute the publications of the Peace Society. The beginning of the temperance agitation engaged her ardent sympathy.

“When the change of view of so conspicuous a member of the Hadley congregation became known, she was subjected to rigid inquiry by the deacons. After many visits and repeated interrogations she was judged guilty of heresy, and her name stricken from the list of church members.

“This exclusion from the table where her father and mother had communed could not fail to be a grief to one of so sensitive and conscientious a disposition. Her husband, as a clergyman, was under no such jurisdiction. Although often occupying pulpits in the neighborhood, where a more liberal creed had been adopted, he at other times accompanied his wife to the place of worship in Northampton which she continued to attend during the remainder of her life.”

ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Under a Colonial Roof-Tree* pp.118-120 (1905)

Seventeen years later, Frederic Huntington commented publicly on the impact that this experience had on him:

“The tears and anxiety we used to see with our child's eyes, after those impudent deacons and sly ambassadors, or their spiritual dictator, had withdrawn from one of those cruel interviews, left an impression that will not lose its horribleness while we remember anything. This was in the heart of our old Massachusetts, in the midst of its hills and valleys and free air, some of the loveliest scenery in the world, indeed, but not beautiful enough to move and soften the gloomy features of that stem, forbidding, unrelenting Calvinism.”

Quoted in ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* p.15 (1906)

He returned to it again in 1886, almost sixty years after the incident:

“Instances of this sort were neither very common nor extremely rare . . . . The defects were not those of unprincipled intolerance or indifference to truth, but of narrowness and disproportion. It is impossible that any denomination built on a dogma or group of dogmas, and not on the fact of the life of God manifest in the person and acts of Christ, should represent Christianity.

“It may revere the son of God in one or more of His offices or characters, but it cannot receive Him as He chose to call Himself, the son of Man. It cannot reunite the life of the human race with God's life. It cannot bear the test of comprehensiveness or Catholicity, or cover the experience of all souls and nations, or satisfy the wants of integral man, in spirit, mind, body. No great Christian cause has lived on a subjective revelation, or a sentiment, or an idea, or the issue of a process of ratiocination. Congregational Orthodoxy believed in Christ, but it was Christ in the past and the future and in Heaven, not where living and tempted men most need Him.”

Quoted in ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* pp.15-16 (1906)

One hundred and forty-eight years later, on June 27, 1968, the Pastor and Board of Deacons of the Hadley United Church formally rescinded Elizabeth's excommunication of 1828.

May 1831  
(aet. 12)

Huntington travelled to Boston with his parents to visit his elder brother John at Harvard, and for his mother to attend peace and abolitionist meetings.

“Social visits were paid . . . to Major Thomas Melvill, in Green Street, who had been a member of the Boston 'Tea Party' and is said to have found some of the tea in his boots afterwards. He has been remembered as the last man in the community to wear smallclothes [knee britches].”

ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* p.17 (1906)

1835  
(aet. 16)

Huntington was admitted to the First Church of Christ, Hadley. That same year his father Dan was censured by the church for his Unitarian views.

1835-1839  
(aet. 16-20)

Huntington attended Amherst College, four miles from his home, where he heard Emerson preach, and his acquaintances included his fellow valedictory speaker Richard Salter Storrs, founder of the Paulist Fathers, and Emily Dickinson. In 1892, six years after her death, he wrote of Emily to her younger sister Lavinia:

“It was long ago that she gave me her confidence & made herself my friend tho' afterwards I scarcely saw her. The image that comes before me when I think of her is hardly more terrestrial than celestial, – a spirit with only as much of the mortal investiture as served to maintain her relations with this present world.”

MILLICENT TODD BINGHAM, *Ancestors' Brocades: The Literary Debut of Emily Dickinson* p.197 (1945)

1839-1842 (aet. 20-23) Huntington attended Harvard Divinity School, where he and his roommate were the only Unitarian students. He did prison work while at seminary, and developed a lifelong interest in the social Gospel. He also had his first experience of liturgical worship when he assisted at King's Chapel, Boston, which was founded in 1686 as the first Anglican church in the United States, and continued to use the Book of Common Prayer (purged of all trinitarian references) after it became America's first Unitarian church in 1786.

Oct. 19, 1842 (aet. 23) Huntington was ordained as pastor of the South Congregational Church and Society (Unitarian) at Washington and Motte Streets in Boston's South End.

Sept. 4, 1843 (aet. 24) Huntington married Hannah Dane Sargent (1822-1910), the great-great-granddaughter of General Benjamin Lincoln, one of George Washington's aides-de-camp. From 1845-1855, they lived on Hawthorn Street in Roxbury. From 1845-58 he was editor-in-chief of the *Monthly Religious Magazine*, for which he wrote articles reflecting his own spiritual struggles.

Eventually Huntington was considered the leading preacher in Boston. True to his belief that Christ should be brought "where living and tempted men most need Him," his published sermons from this period included this denunciation of the 1851 Fugitive Slave Law:

"[T]he system of negro slavery as it exists in the United States . . . [is] the special and overshadowing affront of this nation against the Father of eternal justice, truth, liberty, love . . . the violation, direct or indirect, of each of the commandments, and the denial of the Gospel, the intensest meanness and the foulest filthiness and the most profane impiety, the consummation of crimes, the comprehensive antagonist of the kingdom of Heaven, constituting, in the whole and in each of its parts, 'the abomination of desolation,' 'standing where it ought not.'"

F.D. HUNTINGTON, "National Retribution and the National Sin," *Sermons for the People* pp.428-429 (1856)

One published sermon offers his views on the contemporary treatment of women:

"Some disabilities, however, still accrue to woman, especially in respect to poverty, and just payment for her labor. Tasks that she is fully competent to every way, public opinion and false custom will not let her do, cruelly telling her she shall sooner starve; and for work that she actually does as well and as rapidly as her companion, man, she receives only a quarter of his wages; both of which are wrongs that Christianity rebukes as clearly as it does slavery or defalcation, and wrongs that Christian men must speedily remedy, or else cease to be Christians, and well-nigh cease to be men . . .

"Above all, let not men practise on women the perpetual and shameful falsehood of pretending admiration and practicing contempt. Let them not exhaust their kindness in adorning her person, and ask in return the humiliation of her soul. Let them not assent to her every opinion, as if she were not strong enough to maintain it against opposition; nor yet manufacture opinion for her, and force it on to her lips by dictation. Let them not crucify her emotions, nor ridicule her frailty, nor crush her individuality, nor insult her dependence, nor play off mean jests upon her honor in convivial companies, not bandy unclean doubts of her, as a wretched substitute for wit . . . Let them multiply her social advantages, enhance her dignity, minister to her intelligence, and, by manly gentleness, be the champions of her genius, the friends of her fortunes, and the equals, if they can, of her heart."

F.D. HUNTINGTON, "Woman's Position," *Sermons for the People* pp.160-162 (1856)

He expressed similar views in a review of Margaret Fuller's seminal book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845):

"The pervading sentiment is humane, gentle, sympathetic. Miss Fuller says in one place, 'I wish woman to live, first, for God's sake;' and she seems to be possessed by the reverential, devout feeling indicated by this remark. She casts a deserved contempt on the miserable trifling so often exhibited by men in their conversation and deportment with women, a custom that depreciates and openly insults their character. For our own part, we have often wondered at their patient toleration of the indignity, implied so palpably in this sort of bearing. Mean topics and flippant discourse are perpetually introduced in society for their entertainment, as if they were capable of comprehending nothing else. She urges in respectful terms their rights, both in property, and, as mothers, to their children, suggesting some worthy thoughts for law-makers. She would have woman respectably employed . . . Her notions do not seem ultra nor extravagant. She does not ask that woman may be thrust into man's sphere, but that she may have a right and honorable sphere of her own, whether, as sister, daughter, mother, or 'old maid' . . . She has discussed a delicate topic delicately and fearlessly; without prudish folly, without timidity, as a true woman should . . . What she has said needed to be said, and, if the age has any necessity, needs, we firmly believe, to be repeated, felt and acted upon. The 'nineteenth century' has a mission to woman, as well as she to the nineteenth century."

F. D. HUNTINGTON, "Noble and Stirring Eloquence" in *Christian Examiner* pp. 416-7 (Vol. 38, May 1845)

Sept. 4, 1855 (aet. 36)

Huntington was appointed first Preacher to the University and Plummer Professor of Christian Morals in Harvard College. The position of chaplain was created because the rapid growth of secular areas of study in the curriculum meant that most of Harvard's faculty were no longer clergymen. The appointment of a Unitarian chaplain caused considerable concern in the traditionalist Congregational atmosphere of the Harvard Corporation. Yet in his position Huntington was scrupulously non-sectarian.

"Now it seems unfair to Dr. Huntington for such a church to take the sectarian ground. 'These young men,' he argues, 'are at an age when their minds are developing more rapidly than at any other period of life. My business is not to cramp them to unessential doctrines, only to turn them in the right direction, to give them a strong interest in the all important subject; feeling assured that if this is once effected, creeds will take care of themselves and no one will be very much misled.'"

WILLIAM REED HUNTINGTON, Letter to (his brother) Francis C. Huntington (April 24, 1858)

"Let not the bright beginning slouch into a stupid sequel . . . God never made us, and his institutions never nurtured us, to be sluggish grinders in the mill of repetition, but fellow-wrestlers with the heroes and apostles."

"Life the Test of Learning: A Discourse Before the Graduating Class of Harvard College, delivered June 15, 1856" in *Christian Living and Believing* pp.491-492 (1860)

Over time, his thinking about Unitarian theology, and his own spiritual life, began to change.

"Some Christians never pray to any other than the Father; . . . they surely must be heard and accepted. Still, there comes to many other disciples a time, and not seldom, when their devotional aspirations seek a more direct and personal communion with their Saviour, to whom they owe their everlasting life, their peace and hope and strength. They long to utter the language of this communion, in gratitude and supplication; and theirs, if they do utter it, is the richer worship. It is not so much enjoined as an obligation as it is offered graciously as a privilege. It is not to be forced, nor rejected. The believers who share this veritable and unquestioning fellowship, the fellowship between the suppliant and the Lord . . . —these have the blessing peculiar to those who, in this respect as in others also, keep the Master's own word, and 'honor the Son even as they honor the Father.'"

Note to Sermon XX in *Christian Believing and Living* pp. 527-528 (1860)

Jan. 19, 1860 (aet. 39) He later wrote of the conclusion that his struggles drove him to:

“In the short space of twenty years the Unitarian press and pulpit virtually ceased to make a stand on the foundation which had been known as the Word of God . . . Institutional Christianity began to be regarded more as a superstition than as a safeguard or an obligation. Ordinances were optional. All beliefs were elective. Sacraments were not sacraments, except in figures of speech; they might be serviceable or not . . . There would be from a believing past and from many side sources of God’s gracious help, high-toned families, pure lives, encouraging and enlightening preaching, ardent reformers; but it is difficult to see how practically the upshot could be escaped that everybody is to do, in this world of temptation, error, and folly, which is right in his own eyes . . . He asked himself: Is there anywhere in ecclesiastical annals an instance of so swift a plunge downwards in any association of people bearing the name of Christ, simply losing hold of the central fact of revelation? He could no longer be content with a kind of Christianity destitute of a Christ in whom is all the fullness and power of God . . .”

Quoted in ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* pp.159-162 (1906)

After publishing in December, 1859 a definitive explanation of his new views in the sermon “Life, Salvation and Comfort for Man in the Divine Trinity,” and against the urgings of Harvard’s president, Huntington resigned his position at Harvard, and began attending Christ Church Episcopal in Cambridge.

Feb. 1860 Huntington applied to the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Massachusetts as a candidate for Orders in the Episcopal Church. That same year he wrote about why he had entered the Episcopal Church:

“Judging no man and no system, knowing well, and praying for grace to remember, that to one Master only each must stand or fall, [Huntington] believed that a church to which he could wholeheartedly and gladly yield both allegiance and service must wear upon its outer and inner constitution certain marks of truth. Its creed or symbol of faith must satisfy the requirements of the three agreeing tests—God in Holy Scripture; God in one kingdom, set up as He declared by Jesus Christ; having laws; a covenant, a door of entrance, a history, and a continuous common life; and God in the testimony of His Spirit, in the spirit and mind of man made in His image. Bound by this threefold cord and upheld by this threefold support, a church promised to afford him room, light, safety. Its entire visible economy, in sacraments, orders, and discipline, must be a direct outgrowth of the Word made flesh, or the Incarnation, not a rule imposed, but a divine development. Its worship must be liturgical, the utterance of the brotherhood after Scriptural models; its conditions of communion must be large enough to make admission possible for universal humanity, men of every nationality, temperament and foregoing conditions. It must habitually publish the moral law and illustrate it. It must protect wedlock and the household by religious sanctions and by stringent regulations as respects marriage and divorce . . . Its prescribed offices must be absolutely impartial and uniform as respects all social and class distinctions, from the highest to the lowest. It must treat character as a growth carried forward by a disciplined will, under regenerating and superhuman helps, not as the happy issue of an ecclesiastical charm or as a mere supplement to an emotional ‘experience’ and must therefore make the training of character the prime element in education. In such a church [Huntington] sought out and thinks he found a home.”

Quoted in ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* pp.197-198 (1906)

To a Unitarian colleague who publicly challenged not only his thinking but his good faith, he merely replied:

“My brother! What better thing can we do for one another, in this life of so much darkness and weakness, than

report earnestly to one another what we see or honestly think we see, and tell out any joy we have found? . . . If our joy is unfounded, it will be taken from us soon enough. If it is excessive, there are sorrows enough to weigh it down.”

Letter to the *Christian Register* reproduced in *The New Discussion of the Trinity* p.188 (1860)

To his own father, the Rev. Dan Huntington, whose religious views were liberal but who “knew nothing of bishops, and distrusted with all his might the system which conferred power on them,” he wrote:

“You speak of my ‘not doing anything which cannot be undone.’ Of course the way out of any Church is open, and whenever I wish to do so, I can leave one Fold for another. But for the present I love the Episcopal Church. I honor it more and more; I long to be at work within it; Providence permitting, I shall be a Preacher in it next Fall. I am ashamed to have been so long ignorant of its claims to belief and attachment; its historical foundation; its glorious Saints and Martyrs; its liberty and piety; its generous and comprehensive doctrine of the Communion; its dignified, orderly, and impressive worship; its internal peace and harmony; its love for children and youth. When you consider what I have given up and gone thro’ for the sake of belonging to it, you will not suppose that I can be easily turned aside from the course in which God is leading me. I am sorry it is not the way of my fathers. But I am sure it is the way of my fathers’ fathers, for ages.

“Let us be less anxious to have those we love think just as we do. God’s love is very large. Heaven is open to all that love, believe and obey . . .”

“Wherein we differ let us wait till we reach the world of light.

Your very affectionate son,

FREDERIC.”

Years later, in 1889, in response to an inquirer, he recalled the difficulties of this time:

“In coming to me you come to a brother-soul that has had some experience in the ‘outcast’ business and has tasted of its bitterness, — but for twenty-one years . . . has known such unbroken peace within, in the doctrine and worship of this Church, that the conflicts are well-nigh forgotten . . .”

“In my judgment this Church—which is a School as well as a Home—is the natural place of those who find it not altogether easy to reconcile an intellectual and a spiritual habit.”

Quoted in ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* p.360 (1906)

Mar. 17, 1860 The first formal meeting of the organizers of Emmanuel Church was held at the home of Dr. William R. Lawrence (later Emmanuel’s first Junior Warden) at 98 Beacon Street, Boston.

Apr. 27, 1860 (Easter Monday) Emmanuel Church was formally organized.

Sept. 12, 1860 (aet. 41) Huntington was ordained deacon by Bishop Manton Eastburn.

Sept. 16, 1860 Huntington conducted Emmanuel Church’s first service in temporary quarters in Mechanics’ Hall on Bedford Street. The first sermon was on “The Cross, its three-fold glory, and its blessing.” There were services on Sunday morning and afternoon and on Friday evening, plus a Wednesday afternoon Bible class.

Mar. 22, 1861 Huntington was ordained priest by Bishop Manton Eastburn.

- April 1, 1861     Huntington was elected as first rector of Emmanuel Church, at a yearly salary of \$4,000.
- June 17, 1861     Cornerstone of Emmanuel Church laid. The trowel was held by Huntington's youngest child, James.
- Dec. 15, 1861     First service in Emmanuel Church.
- Apr. 24, 1862     Emmanuel Church consecrated by Bishop Manton Eastburn, after its cost of \$62,000 had been paid off.

At the time of Emmanuel's 75th anniversary, Bishop William Lawrence, the nephew of Emmanuel's first Junior Warden, recalled that its founding coincided with the development of its Back Bay surroundings:

"During the [eighteen-]fifties the business district of Boston had been pushing the homes and residences up Summer, Chauncey, Bedford and other down town streets towards the Common. Tremont Street opposite the Common was already filled with blocks of residences; so were Pemberton Square district and Beacon Hill down to Charles Street. The eyes of the younger couples who were looking for homes were lifted toward the west; then the state and city authorities and the speculators determined that the huge sheet of water extending from what is now the Public Garden out to Roxbury and Longwood must be filled. The dumping of the city's ashes and refuse to make the Back Bay into dry land was too slow to accomplish this.

"I recall sitting at the window of the home of my uncle, William R. Lawrence, one of the founders of Emmanuel, and for many years its treasurer, which was [at number 98] in the last block of Beacon Street, and watching the city tip carts dumping ashes for the making of Arlington Street. Occasionally a dead horse dumped from a cart into the water gave great excitement. In the late fifties the impatient speculators began the hauling of hills from Needham in gravel trains and dumping them into the Back Bay. It was thus that the 'New Land' was created.

"Wooden piles were driven through the 'New Land' and mud into the solid gravel below, and upon them the houses and churches were built . . . Soon houses began to be built and occupied. I recall my mother, who was born and brought up on Beacon Hill, saying that a new bridal couple, who had moved to where Emmanuel Parish House now stands, could not expect to be called on by their friends if they insisted on living so far out of town.

"Trinity Church on Summer Street and St. Paul's Church on Tremont Street had strong and loyal congregations which in their conservative way were following their tradition of worship and preaching . . . The people upon the western slope of Beacon Hill and the 'New Land' felt that they owed it to their families and the coming population to build a church in their neighborhood and not require everyone to walk across the Common down town; for we must remember that people walked in those days, especially on Sundays, for horses and coachmen, it was generally understood, should have their day of rest . . .

"As the church building arose, there was much questioning and discussion as to who should be called as rector, and sharp difference of opinion also, for they were not content with the typical routine man, even if he were a strong preacher. They wanted active leadership in fresh fields of service. To whom should they turn? It so happened that at that time the Plummer Professor of Christian Morals, as well as the preacher of Harvard College, was attracting a public and not altogether enviable attention. He was a Unitarian minister, between thirty-five and forty years of age, who, upon the building of Appleton Chapel in 1858, had introduced certain changes in the form of worship and had also shown himself to be somewhat independent of denominational traditions. He was successful in his work among the students but the faculty was divided on the question of his loyalty and sincerity. One day in 1859, the college community was startled by a letter from him to President Walker resigning his position 'owing to his conversion to the Catholic Theology and the Episcopal Church.' Although urged by the President to remain, he did not feel that he consistently do so and insisted upon his resignation.

"Here was room for division of opinion as to the character and ability of this former Unitarian minister and of his fitness for a rectorship . . . Yet that very experience which might create question created also in some minds a conviction of his independence and force . . . Finally, by a vote of the more adventurous of the

Emmanuel Parish, he was elected the first rector of Emmanuel Church. Time justified his election. He struck a fresh note in the parish life of our church. He was alert to the spiritual and moral conditions of that day. He was an organizer as few ministers were. He gathered the young people in Bible and other classes. He set the laymen to work; started a mission in what was called the Church Street District composed of tenements on a marsh, when he and his people built the Church of the Good Shepherd . . .

"Those first eight years of Emmanuel history under the rectorship of Dr. Huntington created the spirit and tradition which have made Emmanuel Parish an outstanding illustration of the happy and united service of pastor and people."  
 WILLIAM LAWRENCE, "The Founding of Emmanuel Parish, Boston" (1936)

#### The new Rector had only two disappointments about the new church building:

"Dr. Huntington had suggested that provision be made in the hall for those who could not afford to pay regularly for seats. This was the first of the protests, which he never ceased to repeat, against the policy of hired seats in a sanctuary. A courteous reply from Dr. William R. Lawrence, engages that 'provision will be cheerfully made by sittings appropriate to such use, and also by seats hired and not used by those who have united with us. Nearly all have taken more seats than they require for their families' . . . His own vision for Emmanuel had been that of a great People's Church. This plan was not carried into effect, partly because the minds of those controlling the movement for a new parish were not prepared for all that was involved in the abandonment of a system of rented pews, and partly because of the stress of financial uncertainty, accompanying [the Civil War's] civil disturbance, limited the size of the structure.

"A further modification in the plans adopted by the building committee caused Dr. Huntington some disappointment. He greatly deprecated their decision to erect the side and rear walls of brick, with the façade only of stone . . . 'A building with a front of one material for show, and an inferior material for the parts a little less exposed, is an insincere building.' In spite of this appeal, made at some length and with all the arguments at his command, the building committee felt that they had a practical situation to meet."

ARRIA S. HUNTINGTON, *Memoir and Letters of Frederic Dan Huntington* pp.219-220 (1906)

#### The sermon at Emmanuel's consecration was preached by the Rev'd William Muhlenberg.

William Augustus Muhlenberg (1769-1877) had been rector of the Church of the Holy Communion in New York City (1846-1859), one of the first Episcopal "free churches" supported by members' contributions rather than by pew rents. Muhlenberg established a "fresh air" fund to send poor people into the country in the summer, an employment agency to help poor women avoid sweatshops, day schools, and a parish infirmary. He also founded St. Luke's Hospital to serve New York's poor and handicapped. His final project was St. Johnland, a utopian village on Long Island with a school, housing for the poor, and homes for the elderly, for disabled boys, and for orphaned girls. In 1853 he authored the "Muhlenberg Memorial," a petition to the national Episcopal Church's General Convention, calling on the church to broaden itself into an ecumenical Protestantism with a more decisive impact on society, and with "as much freedom in opinion, discipline, and worship, as is compatible with the essential faith and order of the Gospel."

Huntington's whole aspect at Emmanuel Church was that of one who had put off shackles, and was rejoicing in his freedom, according to his first curate, the deacon William Reed Huntington (1860-62). The rector believed "that a church, if it would be a home for souls, must also be a hive of workers," so that every member of the congregation performed some kind of service work in virtue of being a member. Emmanuel sponsored numerous opportunities for service, including visiting the poor, clothing the destitute, and caring for the sick. There was industrial instruction, a ward visitation group, a clothing department, an employing department, and a sewing school for young women. All persons were to be welcomed, and the congregation was "composed of people of a great variety of characteristics, traditions, and religious associations" (Bishop William Lawrence, March 5,

1899 sermon at Emmanuel Church).

The Rector and his family lived at 98 Boylston Street, in a row of brick houses facing the Public Garden. His fourth child, Ruth, remembered how her Sundays were centered on music at Emmanuel:

“On Sundays the great joy of the day was the music in church. It was the busiest day of the week at the rectory, and we ourselves were part of the activity, getting put into our best frocks, and at ten o’clock setting sail in the wake of our mother and sister . . . . The Rector went ahead, of course, his sombre black cape about him, his manuscript enclosed in a purple velvet sermon-case. As the door of Emmanuel Church was opened for our entrance a burst of triumphant organ music poured forth, and we went up the aisle in tune with a brisk march which bore us along ‘on wings of sound.’ The church, finished in dark wood, would look gloomy and severe today, but it was dignified, with Gothic pillars. The clerestory of the chancel, however, was the most churchly feature; the chancel’s ceiling was dark blue studded like the real firmament. The thick carpeting of the aisles deadened all sound of footsteps; so there was nothing to divert the sonorous organ-tones which filled the church.

“When we got into the Rector’s pew, just under the pulpit, we all went down on our knees, and as we were very punctual but not ahead of time, that was usually the exact moment when the processional march wound up and the organ quieted down to slow soft chords, then came to a stop. An instant’s silence followed. Then far off, as if he were up among the stars, Father’s voice rang out declaring, ‘The Lord is in His Holy Temple.’ That turned the place into a Holy of Holies. Afterward all the music seemed worshipful, although it must be conceded that most of the church music of the day was inferior. But we didn’t know that . . . .

“After the uplifting effect of music, one was rather let down by having to sit through the sermon. We felt the eloquence of our father, but we took in little of his discourse.”

RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS, *Sixty Odd: A Personal History* pp.39-40 (1936)

Inferior or not, Emmanuel’s music made a deep impression on Ruth Huntington:

“As a result of Mother’s playing and the choir-inspiration, I longed to make music myself during the week . . . .

“The Rector, writing one noon in his study, was interrupted by the sound of a shrill voice a high key. It was his fourth child singing to the invisible church congregation from the nursery upstairs.

“‘When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness, the sharpness—of Death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heav’n, of Heav’n to all believers.’

“The music dropped from high heaven to wobbly tones below the staff and stopped short. There was a dash of rapid steps along the hall, and down the stairs. In at the door burst a tense little figure. ‘Papa! Papa! What are believers? Can nobody get into the Kingdom of Heaven, only just them? And where is it? Up in the sky? How do we know that they have only believers there?’

“The Rector raised his eyes from a passage that had been hard to express with a pen. He saw the old doorway at Forty Acres, felt a breath of warm air blowing on the face of a worried little boy, squeezed between the syringa bush and the closed green blinds of the Long Room. He was there waiting in case of need to defend his mother, whose unflinching tones, low and distinct, answered the strained interrogations of the believers from the Orthodox Society.

“He bent down and put his arm around me, helping me to climb up over the arm of his chair.

“‘Listen,’ he said. ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is right here, right in this house and on Boylston Street all round us. All children are in it anyway; the Lord Himself said so. It is wherever His friends are. We get into it just by loving Him and doing the things He loves to have done. That’s what friends do, isn’t it? And friends believe in each other. You and I do that, don’t we?’

“The child bent down her head, and looked straight into his eyes. ‘That’s a good idea, papa! I see; don’t you? Friends first, then you believe in the friends. And in the Kingdom of Heaven all the while.’

“I was still for a moment—he told me this long afterward, when he was old and I had forgotten—and then climbed down and ran away. From the stairway echoed: ‘Cherubim and seraphim, cherubim seraphim, cherubim and seraphim, continually do cry.’

“It was the only approach to a theological discussion the Rector ever had with his second daughter.”

RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS, *Sixty-Odd: A Personal History* pp.40-41 (1936)

Huntington had only one relative, a nephew, who fought in the Civil War, but its impact was strong during Emmanuel’s early years:

“But life at ninety-eight Boylston Street had its dark side. Over that warm protected circle lay the shadow of the Civil War . . . . South and North were incomprehensible distinctions, but we grew to realize that there were spaces on the earth, not bounded by gardens and brick where there was cruelty and darkness . . . . We knew, by the time we were four years old, what blue coats and brass buttons stood for. The streets were full of boys in blue, marching over the pavements in squads. We heard that there were other soldiers in gray, and gray was an ominous color; those were the men that had to be ‘all killed up’ . . . . We heard of poor black people in the cotton-fields and men standing over them with whips. We had the kind, rugged face of President Lincoln imprinted on our memories, from pictures and descriptions . . . .

“As I grew older the cannonading on the Common was an almost daily horror, and the military funerals an unbearable experience, long-drawn-out. Some forenoon or afternoon when the Garden was quiet and the hum of traffic monotonous, I would be conscious of a dull, persistent sound like the beating of a heavy pulse, no clang, no reverberation, merely a soft thud, the vibrations making their way through the thick rumble of vehicles and the clap of horses’ hoofs over pavements. It did not seem to grow louder, but it kept up mercilessly, that horrible pulsebeat, and I knew what was coming. Then there would be another sound, even more mournful, the tolling of bells—sometimes one, sometimes many. And to the eye of a tense watcher, there would appear a procession coming up or down Boylston Street, a train of carriages (with some of their curtains down) drawn by horses with plumes and trappings that made their eyes glare out of round holes. Then came biers, sometimes one, sometimes more, on catafalques, with sable hangings and coffins draped in flags . . . .

“Sometimes a horse with an empty saddle was led along behind an officer’s bier; then the old men sitting on the garden benches would cry and wipe their bleary eyes with bandana handkerchiefs. And all the time there was the muffled beating of the drums and the slow, slow clopping of hoofs . . . .

“Then came the band, playing a dirge . . . . I listened with a thumping heart, dreaded it, but I could not get away from it while the carriages and the biers and the soldiers crawled mournfully along Arlington Street, around to Beacon, and finally disappeared along Charles Street on their way to Mount Auburn [cemetery].”

RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS, *Sixty Odd: A Personal History* pp.31-33 (1936)

April 9, 1865  
(Palm Sunday)

General Ulysses S. Grant accepted Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated five days later, on Good Friday.

“But we found the house strangely still when we came down to breakfast. Something had happened—had happened to the world. The faces of our elders were solemn; the family prayers breathed of sorrow. There was talking outdoors under the windows, but it was subdued, intense. Then we were told. President Lincoln, the good, the wise, the fatherly, the savior of the nation, was dead. The triumph of that last fortnight ended in bitter bereavement.”

RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS, *Sixty Odd: A Personal History* p.35 (1936)

April 16, 1865  
(Easter Sunday)

The following Sunday, Huntington conducted the usual festal Easter Communion Service rather than a requiem, but then addressed Emmanuel’s congregation directly from the chancel.

“We have finished a week of which it seems not too much to say, that, in the concurrence of public glory and public crimes, it is without precedent or parallel in the human history of the world. No doubt, as these strangely contrasted events have been announced to us, first filling the land with a joy that could scarcely find moderate

expressions at the sudden prospect of an early, successful and righteous termination to four years of bitter alienation and bloody strife, and then overwhelming it with alarm, affliction, and indignation, equally sudden and even more unspeakable, at that appalling act of infamy that has struck the civil head of the nation from his seat and his life together,—many of us have inquired within ourselves whether there is any one thought, or truth, or doctrine, large enough, powerful enough, and reconciling enough to subdue this awful sense of discord, and to harmonize the terrible contradictions, under one benignant law of love. Is there any solid shelter, any holy pavilion, where we can take refuge, and find those distracting transactions falling into place as parts of one perfect plan of God? . . .

“For there is no possible joy of deliverance, or jubilee of victory, where the feeling of both public and personal sins, and the need of a Redeemer, does not pursue us. Nor is there any secret heaviness, nor any national mourning, where the cross of Christ will not support us, and his resurrection from the dead re-assure us. Here, then, is the reconciliation. Here is the complete and sufficient declaration of our peace. Here is solid rock, be the earth never so unquiet! . . .

“When we lift up our hearty praises and thanksgivings, as we must day by day, that the God of Liberty has struck off the bonds from four millions of enslaved men, and set our whole country free from that wretched wrong, how can we help remembering that it is all the working out, at last, of his infinite mercy by Whom all the families of men are made of one blood, Who shed his own most precious blood in sacrifice for all alike,—the poorest and weakest and darkest as much as any, and whose Christian service, as our daily collect says, is alone ‘perfect freedom’? . . . When we turn our eyes forward to the future, with whatever misgivings or anxieties, who can deny or doubt an instant that all our best and sure hopes rest on the one inestimable and transcendent fact, which we are now commemorating, that the Blessed and Holy and Almighty Lord has so loved us as to give himself for us, the just for the unjust, bringing life and immortality to light? Our only safety from coming evil, as a people, is in *righteousness*; and that not of our own obtaining, but obtained for us by the wonderful grace of an infinite and everlasting Mediator.”

from *Sermons Preached in Boston on the Death of Abraham Lincoln* (1865)

Jan.10, 1869 (aet. 49) After almost eight years as Emmanuel’s rector, Huntington was elected bishop of the newly-created Diocese of Central New York, centered at Syracuse, New York. A year earlier he had declined election as bishop of Maine, but this time he accepted.

March 28, 1869 Huntington resigned as rector of Emmanuel Church.

Apr. 8, 1869 Huntington was consecrated first bishop of Central New York at Emmanuel Church.

In Syracuse, he was widely known for his work for women’s suffrage and the Native Americans in his diocese, and for his opposition to child labor, sweatshops and slums, and to the American acquisition of the Philippines. In 1869, he founded what is today known as the Manlius Pebble Hill School. He also helped to assemble the Episcopal Church’s first official hymnal, published in 1871.

After a nationwide strike for an eight-hour workday ended in tragedy on May 4, 1886 when workers from the McCormick harvester plant fought deadly battles with the police in Chicago’s Haymarket, Bishop Huntington’s younger son, James Otis Sargent Huntington, already a member of the Knights of Labor, responded by founding the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor (CAIL). Bishop Huntington was its president for 18 years, and recruited 47 other bishops as honorary vice presidents. CAIL was the only organization connected with any nineteenth-century church that worked effectively to enhance what labor perceived as its own interests. It supported such direct actions as persuading the Diocese of New York to give church printing jobs only to firms that paid union rates.

1901 In his final formal address to his diocesan convention, Bishop Huntington looked back on his

journey to the Episcopal Church:

“I found in this Church in the United States, in its Book of Common Prayer, its ministrations of the Word, its orderly services, its canon-law, its general uniformity, its spirit, so far as my observation or knowledge extended, very little cause for distress, very much for satisfaction. The two scriptural sacraments seemed to be honored, possibly with a few moderate variations of form but with remarkable agreement and consent as to their solemn reception, their sanctity, the mystical presence of Christ in them, their spiritual significance and power, and their authority. My joy was unspeakable, my gratitude to God was unbounded. I have found a religious home.”

Address (1901)

July 11, 1904 (aet. 85) After almost a 35-year episcopacy, Huntington died at Forty Acres, Hadley, in the same room in which he had been born.

“One of the papers the next morning had for its headline, in great letters, THE BEST-LOVED MAN IN SYRACUSE over a notice of his death. The working-people asked to have a little button made; it was struck off by the thousand, and worn by telegraph boys, factory-hands, salesmen and women, wage-earners all over the city. I have one now, with his face on a black background, and the words, *We mourn Bishop Huntington.*”

RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS, *Sixty-Odd: A Personal History* p.374 (1936)

Nov. 24, 1905 Memorial tablet dedicated in Emmanuel Church.

Huntington’s children Frederic and Hannah Huntington had seven children, of whom five survived to adulthood.

Their eldest daughter, **Arria Sargent Huntington** (1848-1921), became well-known as a social reformer in Syracuse, New York, founding a shelter for homeless women, the Visiting Nurses Association and (with her father) Syracuse Memorial Hospital. She worked for separate quarters for women prisoners, and became a trustee of the Women’s Reformatory. She was also active in child welfare work, was largely responsible for New York State’s first child labor laws, and worked with girls’ clubs and with the developing kindergarten movement. She wrote a number of books and plays. On her death, the *Syracuse Post Standard* wrote, “Her heart was with the poor, the afflicted, the unguided and uninstructed.” (March 25, 1921).

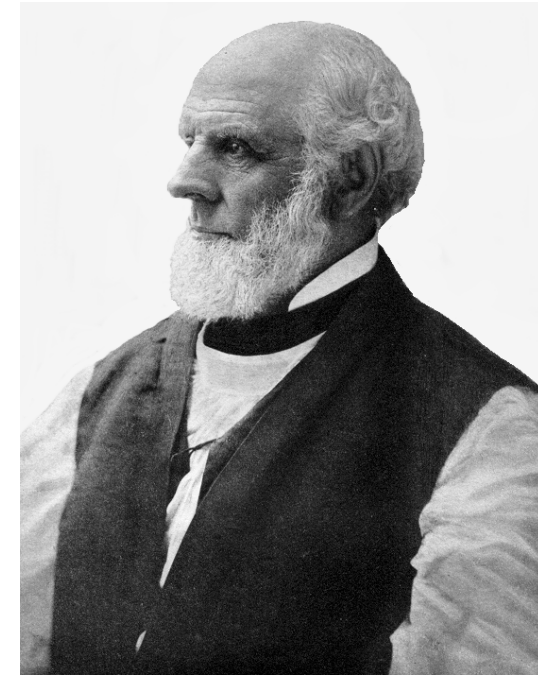
Their second daughter, **Ruth Gregson Huntington Sessions** (1859-1946), was a musician and the mother of composer Roger Sessions. After studying piano with Clara Schumann for three years in Germany, she married Archibald Lowery Sessions and moved to New York, where she helped found the Consumer’s League and worked to reform factory conditions and for the passage of child labor laws. She then managed for twenty years one of the off-campus houses that were the first dormitories at Smith College (and that is now known as Sessions House). She was a campaigner for women’s suffrage and also published a number of poems, short stories and magazine articles. She was one of the first two female members of the Northampton chamber of commerce, representing the Hampshire Bookshop. She retired to a portion of the family farm at Forty Acres.

Their elder son, **George Putnam Huntington** (1844-1904), was an Episcopal priest and rector of St. Paul’s Church, Malden, Massachusetts, St. John’s Church, Ashfield, Massachusetts, and St. Thomas Church, Hanover, New Hampshire. He was also instructor in Hebrew at Dartmouth College. He died, probably of typhoid, on the same day as his father and they were buried in a joint funeral at Forty Acres.

Their younger son, **James Otis Sargent Huntington** (1854-1935), was an Episcopal priest who in 1884 founded, with two friends, the Order of the Holy Cross, the first Episcopal religious order for men in America, which sought to combine a life of active work in church and society with monastic prayer and discipline. From 1881-9, they lived

and worked in the slums of the Lower East Side in New York, trying different forms of social service with poor immigrants. Greatly concerned with labor issues, James Huntington was one of the founders of the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor in 1887, an early member of the Knights of Labor, and a champion for women's rights. The order grew under his leadership as superior, and in 1904 it moved to West Park, N.Y. Today it has five monastic houses and its primary mission is offering guest retreats. Since 1887, the order has welcomed affiliated lay and ordained women and men as Associates of the Holy Cross. In 1984 the order became part of the ecumenical Benedictine monastic tradition. James Huntington is commemorated in the Episcopal Church calendar on November 25, the anniversary of his 1884 monastic vows.

Their youngest daughter, **Mary Lincoln Huntington** (1861-1936), moved with her family to Syracuse when she was eight years old, where she was active in the parish of Calvary Church, Syracuse. She lived with her parents throughout their lives, and then with her sister Ruth at Forty Acres, where she had a small bungalow of her own. During the winter months, she lived with Ruth in Northampton, where she died after a long illness.



*"To be ardent without affectation,  
enthusiastic without inconstancy,  
vigorous without assumption,  
cheerful without irreverence,  
equal to all occasions  
without courting either applause or opposition,  
is the perfect type of piety."*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "J. Huntington". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

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