

LOST MASSACHUSETTS PRESENTS

# LOST HISTORY OF MECHANIC STREET



# LIBERAL ARTS V. MECHANICAL ARTS

- Classically: rhetoric, grammar, logic, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry and music
- Working with the hands was for lower labor classes
- Medieval astronomy eventually crossed the lines





# ASTRONOMICAL CLOCKS

- Monks built increasingly complex clocks to pinpoint correct prayer times and annual observances
- Importance of tracking solar, lunar and planetary cycles for religious purposes made mechanical construction acceptable
- Monks applied same principles to food production and construction





# MECHANIC MEANING

- From Greek *mekhanikos/mekhane* - inventive, ingenious, artisan, full of resources
- The definition of someone who simply *repairs* devices is more recent

prayer and resort in fulfilling desires or aspirations.

**me-chan-ic** (mē-kan'ik). [L. *mechanica* χανικός, < μηχανή, E. *machine*.] **I.**

**II. n.** One employed in a manual occupation; a handicraftsman; an artisan; esp., a skilled workman; one who uses tools or machines. — **me-chan'i-cal**, *a.* Concerned with manual labor or skill; esp. concerned with the use of tools and the like; of or pertaining to the science and construction of machines or mechanical devices; to do with machinery; also, exhibiting skill in the use of tools and the like, or in the contrivance of mechanical devices (as, a *mechanical* genius); also, belonging to a class (now rare); sometimes, meant or intended to show the nature of a device or contrivance for controlling material forces, or of a mechanism or machine; or operated by means of such a contrivance; produced by such means; performed as if by machinery; without special individuality, etc. (as, a *mechanical* workman); "some tedious and *mechanical* ceremonies": Irving's "Tales of a Traveler," i. 9); also, of or pertaining to the material forces of nature acting on matter, or belonging or pertaining to the subject-matter of mechanics; in accordance with the laws of mechanics;



# EMERGING SKILLED LABOR CLASS

- Renaissance, Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution depend on mechanical development
- Longitude, calculus, etc were not possible without improved mechanical tools
- Mechanical Arts are no longer laborers but new middle class



**Jugs, English, 1795-1800**  
The Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association has owned these jugs for over 200 years. Founded in 1795 as the Boston Mechanic Association, Revere likely used these jugs when he served as their first president 1795-1798. An early meeting of Trustees on April 22, 1795 took place "at the Dwelling house of Paul Revere Esq." Lent by the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association



# NEWTON, MA MECHANIC ST

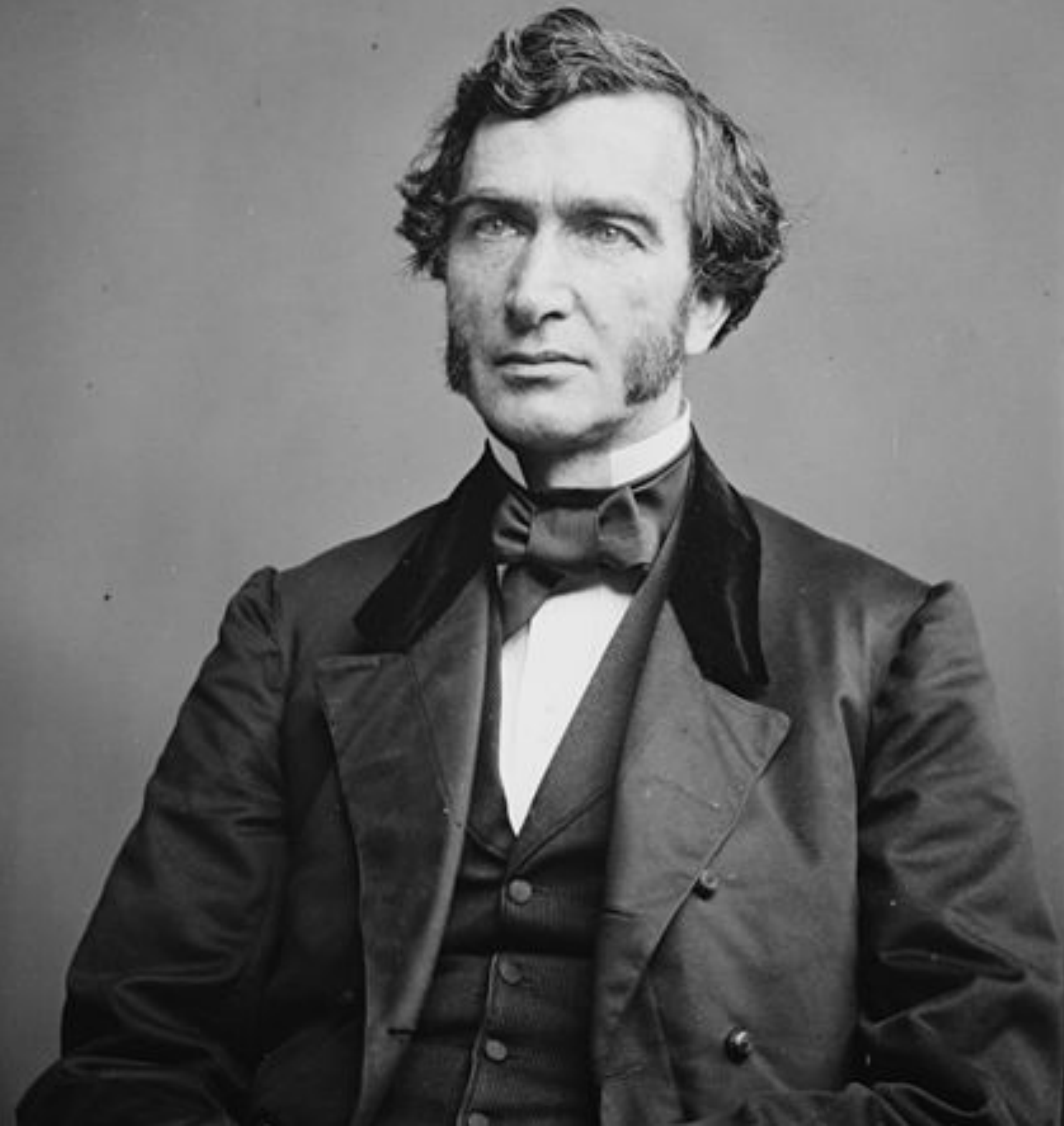
- Large complex of factories
- Product development and improvement were key activities
- Otis Pettee first to use *punch cards* to *program* his machines
- Nerve center of activity with a massive telegraph building and other services





# EMERGENCE OF ACCREDITED TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

- Morrill Land Grants were federally-funded purchases to be used for technical schools around the country
- Boston Technical, founded in 1865, became M.I.T.
- 100+ Universities are Morrill including Cornell, Purdue, Mass, etc.
- Tripled annual US engineering graduates in 50 years





# RELOCATIONS

- Formalization of technical education sent people to new campuses instead of Mechanic Halls
- Dirty, loud, dangerous factories and railroads were moved out of urban centers
- Diesel and electric power replaced steam and water power





# FORGOTTEN SPACES

- Once very busy concentrations of activity at the center of each town
- Now often quiet areas
- Buildings repurposed, factories moved to rural locations, railroads were re-routed





# OTHER STREETS - TYPICAL COMPLEX OF SIX STREETS FOUND IN MOST TOWNS

In addition to Mechanic,  
these are frequently found  
intersecting or nearby:

- Main
- Liberty
- Union
- Elm
- Pearl





# MAIN STREET

- Main has common meaning now of being *central* or *primary*
- Real definition of Main refers to devine power or strength
- Main and mechanic both come from PIE root *magh* meaning “ability” or “force” and also the Sanskrit *mahan* meaning “great”





# ONE LONG MAIN STREET

- Main Street starting in Charlestown continues through New Hampshire on a series of connecting Main Streets
- Route 2 is Main Street and has several Mechanic Streets feeding it





# LIBERTY & UNION

- The “defaced” Taunton flag
- A British Civilian flag with “Liberty & Union” Added
- Subverted the concept that individuals were subjects of the crown
- A free person defined how society should be constructed





# ELM STREET

- Named for the Liberty Tree at the edge of the Common cut down by the British after Bunker Hill
- Towns began planting elm trees, naming Elm Streets as a protest





# PEARL STREET

- Why “Pearl” but no Gold, Ruby, Silver, etc.?
- Pearl Street in Boston starts at location of the Tea Party Ship and leads to the Massacre site, etc.
- Other Pearls branch from Mechanic or lead to a church





# REVELATION 21.21

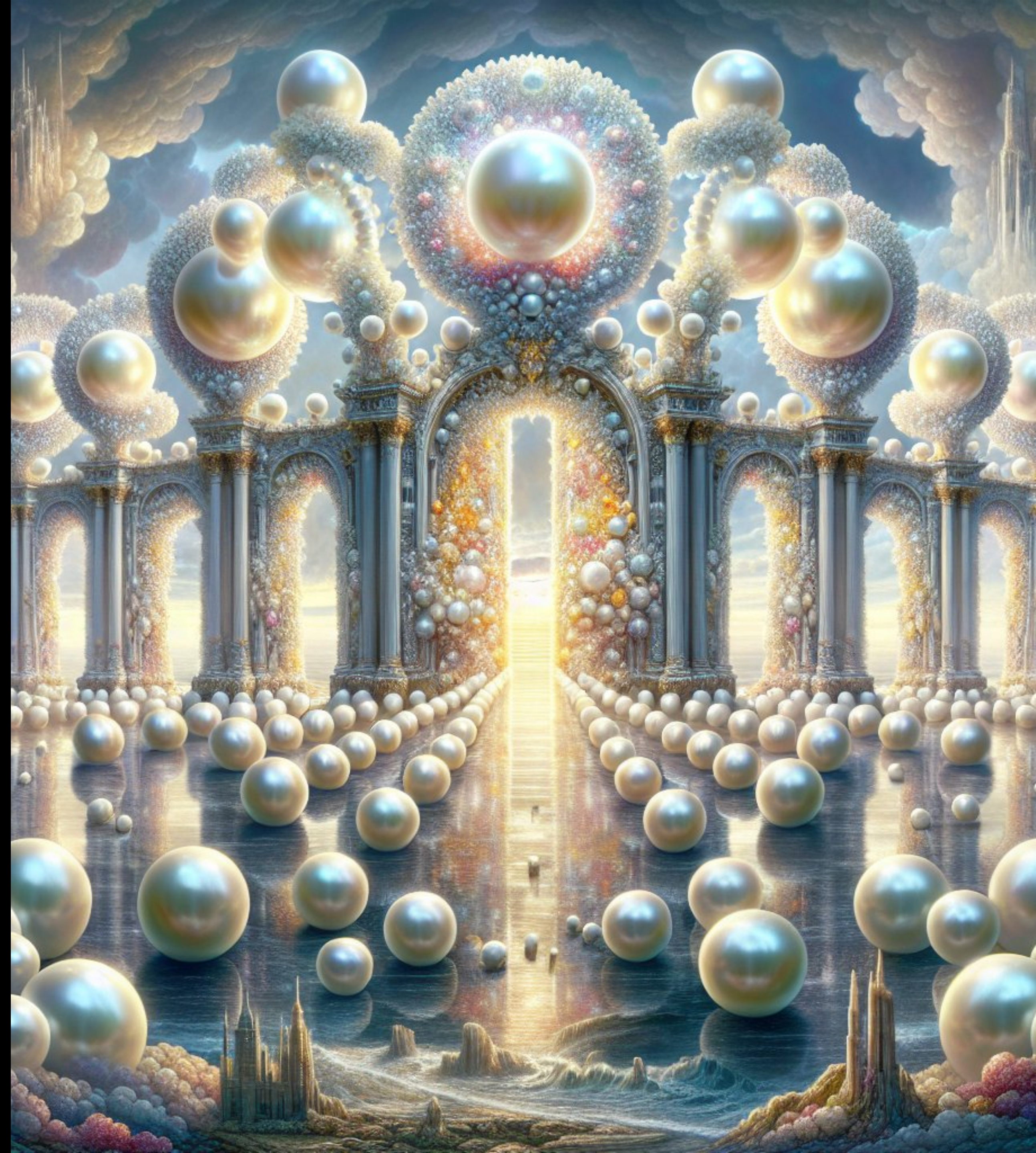
- Misunderstood verse
- *Is a peal, not decorated with pearls*
- "Pearly Gates" not about the afterlife
- Book of Revelation is about creating a new City on Earth ("*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...*")

*"The twelve gates were twelve **pearls**, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass."*



# HOW CAN A PEARL BE A *GATE*?

- *Margarite* is the Latin word for pearl; was a euphemism for the Holy Family in the ancient world
- “Pearls before swine” refers to those who do not accept the gospel; they cannot be forced and need to accept it themselves





# THE HYMN OF THE PEARL

- Apocryphal Acts of Thomas
- Boy sent to retrieve a pearl from a dangerous serpent and fails because he forgets
- His brother reminds him of his mission and succeeds
- Gnostic allegory
- Pearl Street may be intended as an *Anagoge* (spiritual ascension)
- A local pilgrimage path that leads to divinity





# THESIS

- “Mechanic” is a multi-definition word from Revere’s perspective (inventor, spy, patriot, teacher, devine instrument...)
- Mechanic and other streets are public temples to esoteric American principles
- Place of innovation that drove progress and then vanished

