

## Preface

The Friends of the Bedford Free Public Library have undertaken this project - *The Bedford Sampler: Bicentennial Edition* - as a means of helping our Library, of which we are very proud.

This book has been a cooperative effort involving several hundred people of the town - writers, gourmet cooks, editors, artists, photographers, and last but by no means least - "friends of The Friends," who have volunteered all kinds of helpful advice and suggestions, and who have worked with us.

We have tried to produce a book that will be of interest to various groups: first of all, and especially, to the native Bedford residents, who, we hope, will not find this material too familiar; and then to the more recent Bedford residents, who may come to feel more at home here after having read this background information; and last, to the Bicentennial visitors who, after reading this small volume, may acquire a taste for reading more of the early history of our country.

If we seem at times to be straying too far afield - writing too much of Billerica and Concord - it is necessary to remember that before 1729 there was no Bedford, as such, for Bedford was formed from parts of Billerica and Concord, and our earliest history was their earliest history.

In all instances, we have tried to obtain, as writers, people who are especially knowledgeable in the subject on which they were asked to write, and in the case of the house histories, wherever possible we asked the owners of the houses, who surely know them best, to provide write-ups on them.

In our reference work, we have used the sources that are available, but there are not as many as one would like, and in some cases they do not agree. So, although we have tried to avoid inaccuracies, there will inevitably be some, and there may be a few conflicting statements by different writers who happen to mention the same incident. We hope the reader will bear with us in this.

Some repetition was unavoidable with several writers covering overlapping aspects of our history. As the book is not intended to be read at one sitting, straight through, the repetition should not be a problem.

This is not a continuous story of Bedford from its beginnings to the present. It is simply a collection of episodes from some of its more interesting periods. It is a "sampling" of life in Bedford, past and present, with emphasis on the past.

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