

Introduction

As a librarian at the Bedford Free Public Library, it has been part of my job since 1973 to show the Bedford Flag to interested visitors.

"This is the Bedford Flag!" I always say. " It is one of the oldest flags in the United States and is believed to have been present at the Concord Bridge on April 19, 1775. Yet it was already an antique on that day, for it had been carried by previous generations as a flag of a Massachusetts militia troop... "

Through the years, I have become quite fond of that old flag and love to tell its story to anyone who make the pilgrimage to see it. And yet, through years of showing the flag, an enormous urge has grown within me to separate the facts from the myths, and to document them, and my research of the flag's history has grown from a hobby to a passion. What do we really know about the flag?

Where did each story about it come from? What are their original sources? How much can be proven?

I write this book to answer these persistent questions.

Unfortunately, the flag is close with its secrets, and I have been years in research. There is always more to know. This is already the second edition of this book; the first was out of date by the time it was copyrighted and was no longer published. That I have the temerity to publish it now, I owe to my dear friend, local historian Bill Farrington, who asked me, " When are you going to finish your book? I'd be glad to help you, but you'd better hurry up. I am 96 years old, you know!"

And so, I begin.