

## About this book

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### Ina Mansur, Town Historian

What happens when a woman with a degree in English, excellent research skills, and an intense, longtime interest in local history moves to an old New England town? This book provides part of the answer.

Ina Mansur, Bedford's official Town Historian from 1975 until her death in 1988, was born Ina Babb in Peru, Maine, in 1910. She studied English at Boston University, graduating in 1930, and in that same year she married physicist Lawrence Mansur.

They lived for a time in New Mexico, where he worked for rocket pioneer Robert Goddard. During World War II, Ina and Lawrence were both employed by M.I.T., where she worked on microwave components, and he worked on radar systems. After the war they did similar work for the Air Force.

In 1974 Ina retired, and in 1951 she and Lawrence moved to Bedford. She then had the leisure time to indulge her interest in local history and was living in a locality that she found intriguing. She began to research and write about Bedford's history. In 1967 she published *The story of the First Parish in Bedford Unitarian Universalist. Compiled for the 150th anniversary of the second meetinghouse, 1817-1967*. This was followed in 1974 by a full-length book, *A New England Church, 1730-1834*. She had clearly become such an expert on Bedford's history that she was soon appointed its Town Historian. In 1975 she began writing "Bedford Profiles," a series of more than 100 newspaper articles published by the *Bedford Minute-Man*. (This book, *The Ina Mansur Reader*, is a compendium of these "Bedford Profiles," published for the first time in their entirety.)

Not content with meeting a demanding schedule for the *MinuteMan*, Mrs. Mansur also produced a wide array of books, pamphlets, and monographs, along with giving public talks. She scoured the town for historical information, tracked down and interviewed its old-timers, visited and photographed its old houses, and trekked many times to the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds to seek out the town's oldest land records. In her role as Town Historian, she responded to many research inquiries with carefully investigated, written reports.

Her best-known publications include the following:

*The Deacon Job Lane House of Bedford, Massachusetts*, published by Friends of the Job Lane House, Inc., 1984 *Bedford Center in the 1800s* by Ina and Lawrence Mansur, 1985 *The growth of Bedford Center*, 1979 *A Pictorial History of Bedford, Massachusetts : 1729 to modern times* by Ina and Lawrence Mansur; edited by Virginia Wharton, 1992 Mrs. Mansur is long gone, but her published materials and her collected papers (now preserved in the Bedford Free Public Library) remain to inform and entertain the people of her adopted hometown, Bedford. We are grateful for her devotion.