

The Beginning

When I told a young friend of mine that I was writing a history of Bedford, Massachusetts, my friend asked, "Will it start before the trees grew?"

That made me think. When did Bedford truly begin?

I could say that Bedford's history began on September 23, 1729 when the Great and General Court voted its charter and the town was founded.

But that's not long enough ago!

Shall I say Bedford's history began half a billion years ago, when this piece of land erupted from volcanoes down near the south pole, and traveled inch by inch atop a continental plate to where it sits now, half a world away?

That's too long ago!

So, I chose a moment long ago—but not too long ago—just at the end of the last Ice Age. The glacier that has buried the land for thousands of years is thawing. Hardy animals and plants—and yes, trees—are making a new start in the chilly landscape. Beside a nameless river, the melting ice has dropped two huge boulders.

That's the ideal time to begin

"Bedford History for Kids"

—*Sharon Lawrence McDonald*