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Abram English Brown

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Excerpt from History of the Town of Bedford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Year of Our Lord 1891: Embracing an Account of Indian Claims and Troubles; Colonial Grants; Sketches of Its Heroes; Its Part in the Struggle for Independence and the War for Nationality; Its Burial Grounds and Epitaphs; Its Industrial Success, and a Record of Its Whole Progress

This volume is the outcome of a contract with the publishers of the History of Middlesex County to prepare a sketch of Bedford for that work, and of a series of papers read at the request of the citizens in public at different times.

Any seeming disconnection of subjects is due to the fact of the first twenty chapters having been prepared for the above-named work, and printed without regard to issuing a town history.

It is to be regretted that a volume of this character had not been completed at an earlier period and by other and abler hands. Two sons of the town, representatives of a generation earlier, began the work, but died before its completion. Such fragmentary notes of the late John W. Simonds as have been preserved have been at our command, but we have not had access to the more extended manuscripts of the late Josiah A. Stearns.

Various reasons have conspired to lead us to issue this volume. First, the rapidly thinning ranks of those who have stood as oracles, beyond the allotted age of man: since the preparation of this volume began, several aged people, who had treasured up a great store of anecdotes and incidents, have passed away, and with others the ear has grown dull, the eye dim, and the understanding clouded. In the anticipation of these changes we garnered some sheaves from their store-houses, and record them as precious memorials.

Another impelling motive is the imperative demand of the day for each town, however small, to have its annals in printed form, whereby its own people may be benefited, and by exchange of volumes, towns may become familiar with the inner workings of one another. A town may legally appropriate money for gathering and preserving its annals, but we have felt that other pressing demands must put the day far off when this town could reasonably be expected to make an adequate appropriation for a town history; hence we have endeavored to perform this service as best we could, without burdening any one.

We are happy to acknowledge much valuable assistance from many living sons and daughters of the town, without which we could not have done the work. We reluctantly forbear mentioning any, lest we might inadvertently omit some. Those who have at our request prepared special articles are credited with their labor of love in the chapters where their contributions are found.

Through the generous response of families to our invitation, the large collection of illustrations is added to the work, and the volume made doubly attractive and valuable.

Our primary object has been to make the book correct and readable. We have preferred not to weary the reader with our authorities, but have regarded the dates as sufficient guides to state, town and church records, from which we have necessarily gleaned freely.

Finally, this brief volume is submitted, with its many imperfections, to the people of whom it treats, trusting that they will excuse all errors and omissions, and exercise that degree of charity which circumstances demand.

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