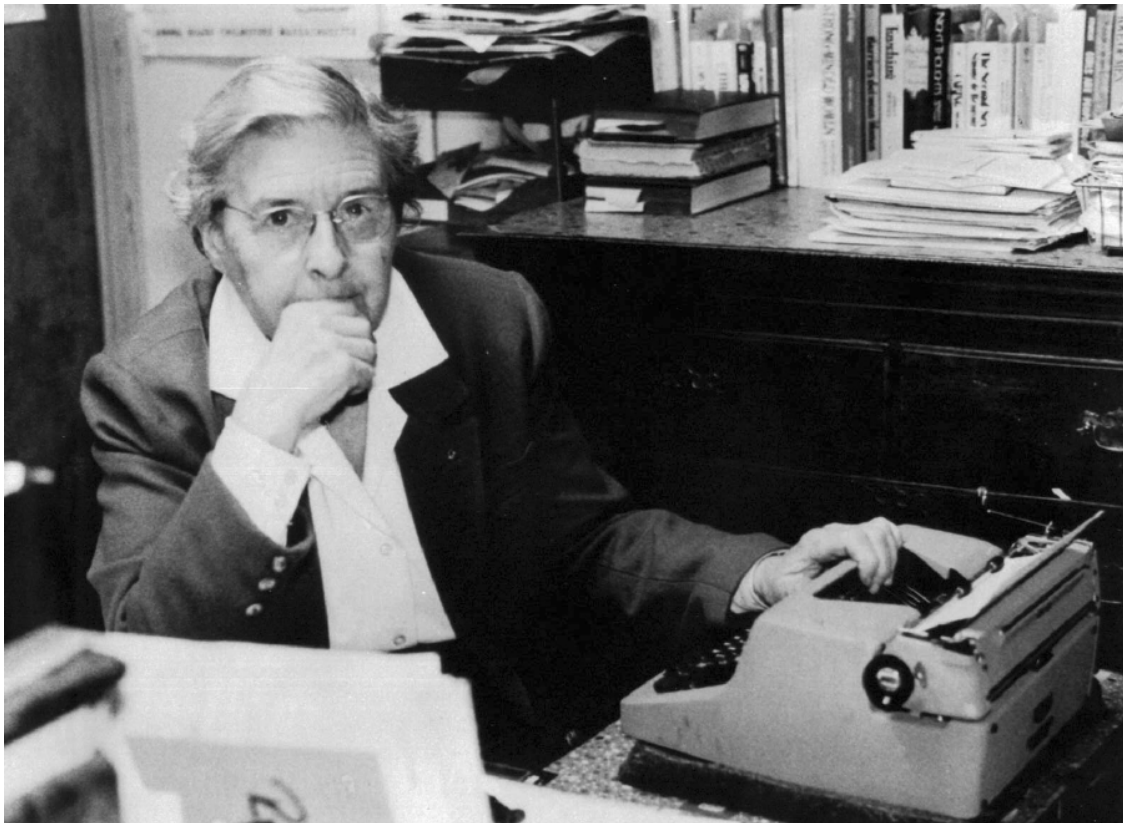


FOREWORD

In 1965, a “Committee to Update the Town History” was appointed by the Chelmsford Board of Selectman to continue the monumental *History of Chelmsford Massachusetts* by Dr. Wilson Waters, published in 1917. This book in turn, was a continuation of *The History of Chelmsford* by Rev. Wilkes Allen, published in 1820. A second printing of *The History of Chelmsford* was organized by the Chelmsford Revolutionary War Bicentennial Celebrations Commission in 1974.

In 1966, Eleanor Parkhurst was selected from a short list of candidates to write the Town history update, with a goal of publishing the book in time for the United States Bicentennial celebration in 1976. Eleanor was a feature writer and history editor for the Chelmsford Newsweekly at the time, and in 1955 had written well-researched historical background articles for the Newsweekly Tercentennial edition.



Eleanor Parkhurst (Newsweekly photo by Micki Hilliard) c.1980

In June 1975 Eleanor informed the Committee that her responsibilities at the Newsweekly would be increasing in July and in November the meeting minutes showed that writing had progressed into the Business and Industry chapter. Article 30 at the 1980 Spring Town Meeting

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“to raise and appropriate the sum of \$18,000 to be expended by the Committee to Update the Town History under the supervision of the Board of Selectmen” was carried unanimously. In spite of this the Business and Industry chapter was never completed and the last chapter on Churches may not have been started. The Committee to Update the Town History was dissolved by 1992, and the manuscript became “lost” until 2008 when it was rediscovered in a file cabinet in the Town Offices belonging to the Chelmsford Historical Commission.

The Business and Industry chapter was finished in this book based on Eleanor’s outline, but bringing Church history up to the twenty first century is left to others. There was so much unfinished business in town during the period 1910 to 1970, it was a surreal pleasure to leap 40 years into the future and say “Here’s how it all turned out!” in the Epilogue 2010 chapter.

Many thanks go to a team of volunteers who contributed to this project:

Sharon Calitri - SC Graphic and Web Design - Book layout design

Dr. Valerie Diggs - Chelmsford High School Library Director - Transcribing

Jill Hayes - Chelmsford Public Library - Transcribing

Mary Howard - Chelmsford High School student - Transcribing

Laura Lee - Chelmsford Historical Commission - Transcribing

Linda Prescott - Chelmsford Historical Commission - Transcribing

Bonnie Rankin - Chelmsford Public Library - Transcribing

Deb Taverna - Old Chelmsford Garrison House Association - Proofreading and Index

Pat Wojtas - Chelmsford Board of Selectmen - Proofreading

Kevin Zimmerman - ChelmsfordMassNews.com - Proofreading and Editorial Advice

The Chelmsford Cultural Council provided a grant in 2010 for the book layout design.

Eleanor’s manuscript was faithfully transcribed with these exceptions:

- Typographical errors in the manuscript were corrected, unless marked as (sic).
- Some sentences were re-structured for readability without content change.
- Occasional paragraphs were relocated to be in chronological sequence.
- References to “now” and “the present” were changed to “in 1970”.
- The Business and Industry chapter after “Early Industry” was greatly expanded.

You will notice that in Chelmsford the British spelling of the word “centre” was used in the context of a location until the mid 1900’s when it became Americanized to “center”.

Photographs were provided courtesy of the Chelmsford Historical Commission, Chelmsford Historical Society, Chelmsford Public Library and several private sources.

Fred Merriam

Project Coordinator, Editor and Epilogue 2010 Author

March, 2011