



TOWN AND CITY
MONOGRAPHS

*Division of
Research*

334 BOYLSTON STREET BOSTON

Monograph

#68

TOWN OF BEDFORD

Prepared-1954

INDEX OF MONOGRAPH

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. 1. City or Town
 - 2. County
 - 3. Location
 - 4. Population 1950
 - 5. Land Area
 - 6. Density
 - 7. Climate
 - 8. Elevation
 - 9. Topo. Characteristics
 - 10. U.S.G.S Topo Plates
 - 11. Aerial Survey Photo. Nos.
- B. 1. Date Established
 - 2. Date Incorporated
- C. 1. Type of Government
 - 2. Special Districts

II. POPULATION

- A. 1. General Description
- B. 1. Number of People
 - 2. Age Composition
 - 3. Nativity
 - 4. Education
 - 5. Occupation
 - 6. Politics
 - 7. Income

III. HOUSING

- A. 1. General Information
- B. 1. Type of Structure
 - 2. New Construction
 - 3. Age
 - 4. Density
 - 5. Condition
 - 6. Value
- C. 1. Rent Control
 - 2. Monthly Rents

IV. ECONOMIC BASE

- A. Historic Trends
- B. Present Economy

V. EMPLOYMENT and PAYROLLS

- A. All Industries
- B. Manufacturing

VI. MUNICIPAL FINANCE

- A. 1. General Statement
- 2. Extent of Services
- 3. Comparative
- 4. Tax Rates
- 5. Tax Levy
- 6. Assessed Valuation
- 7. Debt

VII. PUBLIC EDUCATION

- A. 1. Enrollment
- 2. Number of Teachers
- 3. Pupil-Teacher Ratio
- 4. Expenditure Per Pupil
- 5. Teachers' Salaries

VIII. TRANSPORTATION

- A. General Statement
- B. Rail
- C. Highway
- D. Other

IX. PLANNING

- A. Planning
- B. Zoning
- C. Subdivision Control

X. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. General Description

XI. UTILITIES

- A. Electric Service
- B. Gas Service
- C. Water Service

I GENERAL INFORMATION

- A 1. Town: Bedford
2. County: Middlesex
3. Location: Northeastern Massachusetts, bordered on the north by Billerica, on the east by Burlington and Lexington, on the south by Lincoln and on the west by Concord and Carlisle. It is 15 miles from Boston, 12 miles from Lowell, and 216 miles from New York City.
4. Population, 1950: 5,234
5. Land Area: 13.73 square miles
6. Density, 1950: 381 persons per square mile
7. Climate:
(Lexington) Mean temperature in January: 31.8°F.
Mean temperature in July: 70.4°F.
Mean annual precipitation: 52.84 inches
8. Elevation at
Town Hall: 135 feet above mean sea level
9. Topographical
Characteristics: The topography is fairly level except in the eastern section. Elevations vary from about 150 feet to almost 300 feet. Soils are mostly wet with large areas of moist soil of good texture in the north central and rough soils in the east with some swamp in the northwest.
10. U.S.G.S. Topographic
Plates: Billerica, Concord, Lexington, Wilmington
11. Aerial Survey
Photos: DPQ - 6K - 34 DPQ - 11K - 61
35* 62*
36 63
37* (*asterisk indicates those photos needed
38 for complete physical coverage. All
76 numbers are needed for stereoscopic
77* coverage.)
78
79*
- B 1. Established as
a town: September 23, 1729
- C 1. Type of Govt: Town Meeting
2. Special Districts: 5th Massachusetts Congressional District
7th Middlesex District for State Senator
19th Middlesex District for State Representative
6th Councillor District
- Boston Metropolitan Area

II POPULATION - U.S. CENSUS, 1950

A-1 Because of the rapid changes in Bedford since 1950, the Census of Population provides only a clue to present population characteristics. Indicative of this growth is the fact that in 1950 there were 808 dwelling units enumerated in the Census while in the years 1950 to 1953, a total of 882 new dwelling units were constructed. Bedford is also the site of a federal hospital with 1,900 patients on the date of the last census. Changes in Bedford probably have maintained the heavy concentration of persons in the lower age groups, raised the level of education and income, and caused an even greater concentration of persons in the professional, technical and kindred occupations. The 1952 birth rate in Bedford was 20.8, while the death rate was 5.2. The birth rate is understated to the extent that the institutional population was used in calculating it.

B-1 NUMBER OF PEOPLE

Year	Number	Ratio to 1930	
		Bedford	Boston Met. Area
1910	1,231	47.3%	73.7%
1920	1,362	52.3	86.1
1930	2,603	100.0	100.0
1940	3,807	146.3	101.7
1945	4,170	160.2	106.4
1950	5,234	201.1	110.7

B-2 AGE COMPOSITION

Age	Number	Percent of total	
		Bedford	Boston Met. Area
Under 5	372	7.1%	9.4%
5 - 13	404	7.7	12.6
14 - 19	304	5.8	7.9
14 & over	4,458	85.2	78.0
21 & over	4,074	77.8	68.6
65 & over	325	6.2	9.7

B-3 NATIVITY

	Number	Percent of total		Of the 610 foreign-born persons in Bedford, 28.4% were Canadian-not-French, 13.6% Italian, 10.3% Irish, 7.5% Canadian-French, and 6.9% were of English-Welsh origin.
		Bedford	Boston Met. A.	
Native-born White	4,569	87.3%	81.5%	
Foreign-born White	610	11.7	16.2	
Negro	48	.9	2.1	
Other	7	.1	.2	

B-5 OCCUPATION

Of the 4,458 persons 14 yrs. old and over in Bedford, 1,313, or 29.5% were in the civilian labor force. Of these, 69.5% were male and 30.5% were female. 2.5% were unemployed, as compared to the 5.7% for Boston Met. Area and the 5.8% for the State.

B-4 EDUCATION (Persons 25 years old and over)

	Percent of total	
	Bedford	Boston Met. Area
Median No. of School yrs. completed	11.4	11.9
Completing less than 5 grades	9.9%	7.0%
Completing high school or more	44.9%	49.0%

Group	No.	Bedford	Boston Met. A.
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B-6 POLITICS*

Actual Voters 1952 Pres. Elec.	1,825
Voted Republican 1952 " "	75.2%
Voted Democratic 1952 " "	24.7%

Prof. Tech. & Kindred	271	21.2%	12.1%
Mgrs. Off., & Prop.	134	10.5	9.8
Clerical, etc.	154	12.0	17.9
Sales	74	5.8	8.7
Craftsmen, Foremen, etc.	204	15.9	14.9
Operatives	140	10.9	19.4
Pvt. Hshld. workers	19	1.5	1.9
Service wkrs.	192	15.0	9.4
Laborers	85	6.7	5.0
Not Reported	7	.5	.9

B-7 INCOMES OF FAMILIES & UNRELATED INDIVID.

	Bedford	Boston Met. Area
Income under \$1,500	35.7%	23.7%
From \$1,500 - 2,999	25.5	25.3
From 3,000 - 4,499	20.0	26.0
\$4,500 and over	18.8	25.0
Median Income	\$2,388	\$3,042

*Secretary of the Commonwealth

III HOUSING - U.S. CENSUS, 1950

A-1 Of a total of 808 dwelling units in Bedford, 794 were occupied and 8 or 1.0% were vacant and available for occupancy. Of the occupied units, 73.2% were owner-occupied and 26.8% were tenant-occupied. In the Boston Met. Area 44.6% were owner-occupied and 55.4% were rented. 1.0% of the total dwelling units in the Boston Metropolitan Area were vacant and available for occupancy. The average estimated cost per unit of housing units built in Bedford during 1953 was \$7,673, compared to \$8,592 per unit for all units reported in the State.

B-1 TYPE OF STRUCTURE

B-2 NEW DWELLINGS*

	Number	Percent of total		Year	No. of Units
		Bedford	Boston Met. Area		
1 Unit Detached	611	75.6%	33.0%	1946	7
1 Unit Attached	--	--	1.1	1947	19
1&2 Units Semi-detached	39	4.8	2.8	1948	28
2 Unit Structures	100	12.4	23.0	1949	59
3&4 Unit Structures	41	5.1	23.0	1950	104
5 or more Unit Structures	17	2.1	17.1	1951	82
				1952	291
				1953	505

B-3 AGE

B-4 PERSONS PER UNIT

Year Built	Units	Percent	Persons	Percent in	
				Units Bedford	Boston Met.
1940-1950	185	24.3%	1 person	48	6.1% 8.7%
1930-1939	140	18.4	2 persons	201	25.3 25.2
1920-1929	85	11.2	3 persons	163	20.5 23.0
1919 or earlier	350	46.1	4 persons	166	20.9 19.9
			5&6 persons	171	21.5 17.8
			7 persons or more	45	5.7 5.4
			Median persons per unit	3.4	3.1

B-5 CONDITION

Percent of
Bedford Boston Met. Area

Units having no private bath, no running water or dilapidated	10.0%	10.4%
Units having central heating	95.1	82.3
Units having mechanical refrig.	95.0	88.2

B-6 VALUE OF ONE-DWELLING-UNIT STRUCTURES

C-1 Bedford has not accepted Chapter 434, Acts of 1953 providing for rent control.

	Number	Percent of	
		Bedford	Boston Met. A.
Less than \$3,000	9	2.1%	1.6%
\$3,000-\$3,999	5	1.2	1.8
4,000- 4,999	5	1.2	2.6
5,000- 7,499	57	13.4	15.3
7,500- 9,999	98	23.0	22.4
10,000-14,999	172	40.5	34.1
15,000 & over	79	18.6	22.2
Median Value		\$11,069	\$10,878

C-2 MONTHLY RENTS - TEN. OCC. UNITS

	Percent of	
	Bedford	Boston Met. A.
Under \$20	3.0%	7.9%
\$20 to \$39	40.9	49.7
\$40 to \$59	35.4	29.5
\$60 & over	20.7	12.9
Median Rent	\$42.13	\$36.53

*From building permits issued.

IV ECONOMIC BASE

A. HISTORIC TRENDS

Bedford became a town on September 23, 1729 as a result of an act passed by the state legislature, but the first reference to a permanent settlement mentions the Shawshire House in 1637. This building was a trading post. Michael Brown built a grist mill on the Shawshire River which was burned by the Indians in King Philip's War. A saw mill was later built by Herbert Clark on this site. In the year 1873, ground was broken and the construction of the railroad was begun. The road was opened for travel in 1874. In 1805, a shop for making children's shoes by hand was established; but the advent of shoe machinery led to its closing. About 1812, a mineral paint (yellow ochre) was made from natural material found here. Band boxes were made around 1820 to 1830. Brick-making was another industry here, and in 1840 a paper mill was built. Despite the coming of the railroad, manufacturing died out and the town reverted to agricultural pursuits, particularly the growing of small fruits and vegetables, and dairying.

B. PRESENT ECONOMY

B 1. General

Present employment in Bedford is concentrated in manufacturing and in federal hospital and Air Force facilities. From a residential town with a commuting population, Bedford has become a center of employment providing jobs for many persons with homes in other communities. There are still some commuters here and also a limited amount of agriculture is carried on.

2. Manufacturing and Service

The hospital has been located here since 1928, but the Air Force installation at Hanscom Field was first established in the early forties and has reached its greatest period of expansion during recent years. Since 1951, a total of \$27,000,000 has been spent by the Government in its Air Force facilities and \$3,600,000 on additions are planned for the current fiscal year. Total employment on the Air Base is estimated at about 2,500 persons. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Raytheon Manufacturing Company both maintain facilities on the base. The hospital, a 2,000-bed mental institution, is operated by the Veterans' Administration and has just over 1,000 paid employees, and an annual payroll of about \$3,850,000. The town itself employs just over 50 persons. The employees of governmental units do not appear in the Division of Employment Security figures quoted in Section V. Other significant manufacturing employment consists of a textile mill products firm and a small chemical manufacturing organization.

Bedford

V. EMPLOYMENT AND PAYROLLS as reported to the DIVISION OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

A. ALL INDUSTRY

<u>Industry</u>	<u>No. of Firms</u>	<u>1951 Annual Payroll</u>	<u>Nov.1951 Employees</u>	<u>Distribution by Employees</u>
1. Agriculture & Mining	---	---	---	---
2. Construction	10	\$ 80,000	28	10.5%
3. Manufacturing	3	65,000	19	7.1
4. Trans., Comm., & Utilities	6	211,000	73	27.4
5. Wholesale & Retail Trade	25	302,000	128	47.9
6. Finance, Ins., & Real Estate	---	---	---	---
7. Service Ind.	6	34,000	16	6.0
8. Unclassified	---	---	---	---

VI MUNICIPAL FINANCE

A-1 Bedford's rapid growth has brought many new problems in the provision of municipal services. The town has taken these problems in stride. School facilities have been expanded and a new jr.-sr. high school is planned for next year, sewerage is being provided, and new fire equipment purchased. Other services such as health and nursing service and recreation service are good for a town of this size. The town receives federal aid for children whose parents are employed by the Federal Government and will probably also receive aid for school construction from both the federal and state governments. Per capita figures here are misleading since they are based on 1950 Census of Population figures to conform with our listings for other towns - present population is estimated to be 6,592 (12/31/53). There are other distortions because of the institutional population. In general, growth in assessed valuations have absorbed most of the impact of demands for new services and the town is in good financial condition. The future depends to a good degree on continued federal expenditures, but despite this the town is a desirable residential area close enough to Boston to insure a demand for all existing housing.

A-2 The tax rate given below is the complete cost of municipal services per \$1,000 of assessed valuations. There is no additional county or school district levy.

A-3 For the 51 towns in Massachusetts with populations of from 5,000 to 10,000, per capita assessed valuation in 1953 was \$1,540 and per capita tax levy was \$79.05. Per capita debt as of December 31, 1953 for this group of towns was \$99.65, of which \$85.56 was general purpose and \$14.09 was public service debt.

A-4 TAX RATE

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1954	\$52.00
1953	45.00
1952	52.00

A-5 TAX LEVY

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per Capita</u>
1954	\$510,508	\$97.54
1953	325,792	62.25
1952	256,084	48.93

A-6 ASSESSED VALUATION

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per Capita</u>
1954	\$9,770,500	\$1,867
1953	7,195,600	1,375
1952	4,912,210	939

A-7 DEBT, 1/1/54

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per Capita</u>
General Purpose (net)	\$495,000	\$94.57
Public Service (net)	<u>35,000</u>	<u>6.69</u>
Net Total	\$530,000	\$101.26

VII PUBLIC EDUCATION

	<u>Bedford</u>	<u>State</u>
A-1 Pupil Enrollment	525	667,153
A-2 Number of Teachers	21	24,852
A-3 Pupil-Teacher Ratio	25.0	26.8
A-4 Expenditures per pupil in net average membership	\$216.40	\$239.07
A-5 Teachers' Salaries(min.-max.)	\$2,700-\$4,200	\$2,300-\$5,950

VIII TRANSPORTATION

A. GENERAL

Bedford is well located for transportation services. Its proximity to Cambridge and Boston makes available all transportation facilities of these regional centers, including the port facilities of Boston. Existing highways facilitate access to all parts of Massachusetts and New England.

B. RAIL

Bedford is served by the Lexington Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad Company with three trains to and from Boston five days a week. Bedford is 14.8 rail miles from Boston. The average commuting time to and from Boston is about 45 minutes.

C. HIGHWAY

Bedford is served mainly by three state highways. Route #25, running from northwest to southeast, is the principal highway into Boston and crosses Route #128, the circumferential highway, in Lexington. Route #4 runs north and south from Chelmsford and intersects Route #25 at Bedford, and Route #62 runs east from Concord through Bedford and intersects U.S. Route #3 at Pinehurst and Route #2 and #2A in Concord.

BUS The Town of Bedford is served by the Middlesex and Boston Street Railway Company and the Boston and Maine Transportation Company.

D. OTHER

The Town is within easy trucking distance of the Logan International Airport and the dock facilities of the Port of Boston Authority. The Bedford Airport provides two runways of 5,000 and 5,550 feet in length, both paved with both beacon and runway lights. The airport is a joint civil-military operation, base operators are East Coast Aviations and Frank E. Nagle.

IX PLANNING

A. PLANNING

Bedford has a Planning Board which is organized under the improved method of municipal planning. The board is of high quality and has been very active. Recent actions have included a revision of the sub-division control regulations and of zoning ordinance. The zoning was revised to exclude two-family dwellings and to raise lot sizes in B and C districts.

B. ZONING

The town is zoned into five types of districts. Residential Zone A requires each lot to be at least 40,000 square feet and also requires a minimum frontage of 150 feet; Residential Zone B requires a 30,000-square foot minimum lot size and a 125-foot frontage; and Residential Zone C requires 15,000 square feet with a 100-foot frontage. The business zone extends for the most part along Great Road, while the major industrial area consists of a 200-foot strip along each side of the Boston and Albany tracks from the Lexington line inland.

C. SUB-DIVISION CONTROL

To protect the public health and to insure adequate facilities in sub-divisions without excessive cost to the town, the Planning Board has set up regulations providing for minimum service provisions in developments. Among other things, sub-division regulations here require the planting of trees in open areas. Regulations of this type will help to maintain property values and perpetuate the attractiveness of Bedford.

X INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. In industry, as well as population, Bedford has been growing at a very rapid pace. The town has felt no need for organized activity in the field of industrial development.

XI UTILITIES

A. ELECTRIC SERVICE

Electric power is supplied by the Boston Edison Company. Details on rates and capacities may be obtained from the firm at 39 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts; or from the Research Division, Massachusetts Department of Commerce.

B. GAS SERVICE

The Boston Consolidated Gas Company provides gas service in the Town of Bedford. Information on rates and capacities may be obtained from the firm at 100 Arlington Street, Boston, Massachusetts; or from the Research Division, Massachusetts Department of Commerce.

C. WATER SERVICE

Water for Bedford is supplied by the town water department from ground water sources. The following is an average of a chemical analysis of samples taken from the sources in 1952 by the Division of Sanitary Engineering, Massachusetts Department of Public Health:

	Parts per Million
	<u>Gravel-Packed and Driven Wells and Old Dug Well</u>
Color	6
Ammonia	
Free	.040
Total Albuminoid	.044
Nitrates	.60
Chlorides	7.5
Hardness	32
Alkalinity	15
Fe	.04
pH.	6.1