

# 'Westford Recollections'— first town history done in 100 years

By GORDON SEAVEY

WESTFORD — One hundred years ago, a substantial group of citizens formed an organization known as the Westford Town History Association. As its name implies, it was to publish a history of the community, something that had never been done before.

Now, a century later, a new history is being produced. Written by June W. Kennedy, it will fill the gap the past century has overlooked.

Back on March 15, 1879, the association was charged with publishing a history of the community, something that would mirror the authentic life of the town from Colonial, Revolutionary and Civil War days. And it was also to include the civic, educational and religious activities of the same period.

On April 4, 1879, Rev. Edwin R. Hodgman, retired minister of the Union Congregational Church, was asked to take on the arduous task of collecting great quantities of data and writing this first history. The town was to put up the first cost of \$200 and the association members the other \$200.

MRS. KENNEDY'S 1979 venture is a private one. Already, word-of-mouth information has lined up orders for more than 150 copies and the edition will be limited to 1,000.

Hodgman took four years to complete his research and writing. The result was a carefully compiled history, including much statistical data, covering the period from 1659 to 1883. The

volume, which was reprinted for the Bicentennial, is invaluable to historians but rather tedious reading.

A CENTURY LATER, in time for the 250th anniversary observance of the founding of Westford, another history is soon to be released. In comparison, this new history will neither look like nor contain voluminous quotations from records lying in the dust.

Mrs. Kennedy's history will contain nearly 200 choice photographs, some new, some old. A selected bibliography, maps and geographical data add to its value.

Consciously, the author has highlighted the unique quality of each of the separate villages, and grouped them together, to make the oneness of Westford.

It's like a journey down Westford roads into villages and areas of today and yesterday. Voices from the people add a personal touch, making the book warm, lively and authentic — and nicely reminiscent.

The author of this new history has been a Westford resident for 21 years. She grew up in Lexington, where she says "historic pride becomes ingrained in the soul at an early age."

Her interest in Westford history started in 1965, when, as a member of the Westford Historical Society, she volunteered to present a slide-talk program on the district schools of the town.

Nothing came pre-packaged, she found out. She had to seek out aged schoolmarms, students, tales and photos until all the pieces fitted together.