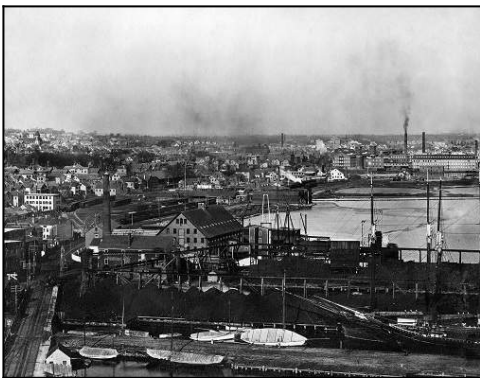


Book Review: A Picture History of New Bedford Volume 1

Road workers take a break to pose at 830 Purchase Street

I would like to pre-empt this review with a confession and a disclaimer. I was immensely enthusiastic about the release of this book for the months leading up to it. Scratch that. Ecstatic, would be more accurate. For anyone who enjoys local history, this is a big deal. We've been living off of Ricketson and Pease for decades. We're starved.

I have to admit to being a bit biased and perhaps this will skew my review in a more positive light. However, anyone who has come across anything by [Spinner Publications](#) or had any interaction with the staff, knows the professional, world-class organization for what it truly is. It's my honest opinion, that Spinner is incapable of an inferior product. Simply not possible. It comes down to a matter of degree of excellence. A review of this book – or any product from Spinner Publications – is not whether it is good or bad, but where it sits between good and great.

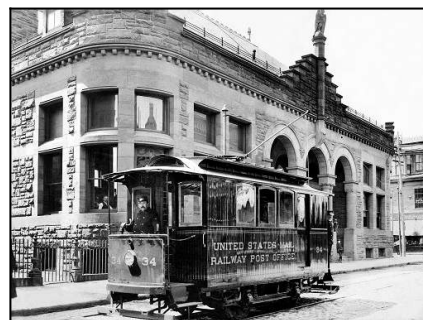


*Overview looking
Northwest*

Before the book release, I wondered about the format. The rhythm and flow of the content. Would the book be coffee table sized? How about the paper quality, especially those pages that will contain those vintage images we have all grown to love? Would it be on par with the iconic historic publications that preceded it?

I was relieved when I held the book and saw it for the first time. The book is big, but not unwieldy. It is a perfectly sized coffee table book, which allows you to take them time to explore some of the finer details in the photographs. The durable, vivid, high quality front cover was the appropriately chosen, iconic William Allen Wall (1801-1885) "Old Four Corners" oil painting. The image wraps around to the rear, taking up half of that cover. Oh, this was starting out good.

Now, this next part is for those of us book lovers, who perhaps suffer from a bit of OCD. When I get a new book, I turn one page at a time and read every nook and cranny. I must absorb it all, and not miss a single thing. There is no skipping over the forward and hastily rushing to page 1. Oh, no. I'll even admit that I take a whiff. Hey, try that with a Kindle. A book is an experience, not just a read. We dinosaurs like to whiff.



Man in trolley

The book has a minimal amount of introductory pages. After a page thanking sponsor Bristol County Savings Bank for their gift making the book possible, there is a page with the author

and editor credits, the Content page, a short forward, and a Contributors page. That's it folks. Straight to the goods.

The book is divided into five chapters, starting of course, with Gosnold in 1602 and ending with "Immigrant City" which highlights the many ethnic groups that comprised the city through the years up to 1925. These chapters make up 294 pages of content. Though the Index, Selected Bibliography and Art Credits comprise an additional 9 pages.

The layout is genius. While chronological, it is organized by topic in "blocks." Each topic is generally 1-2 pages, accompanied by vintage photos, and succinct. For example, in Chapter Three (1815-1860) The Golden Age of Whaling, page 79 has a column dedicated to harpoon innovator Lewis Temple and another on darting gun inventor Ebenezer Pierce. Three images accompany this page, one of the sculpture of Temple at City Hall, a 19th century display of harpoon iron and darts, and a schematic of Pierce's bomb lance.



*Parker Auto Sales
1913 – Labor Day
Motorcycle Ride –
Market Street*

The text is not forced, or placed in a cold, encyclopedic "just the facts" manner. It is concise, and succinct, and infused with personality. You get all the pertinent and interesting facts about each topic, and not thirty boring details that most couldn't care less about. You get the idea

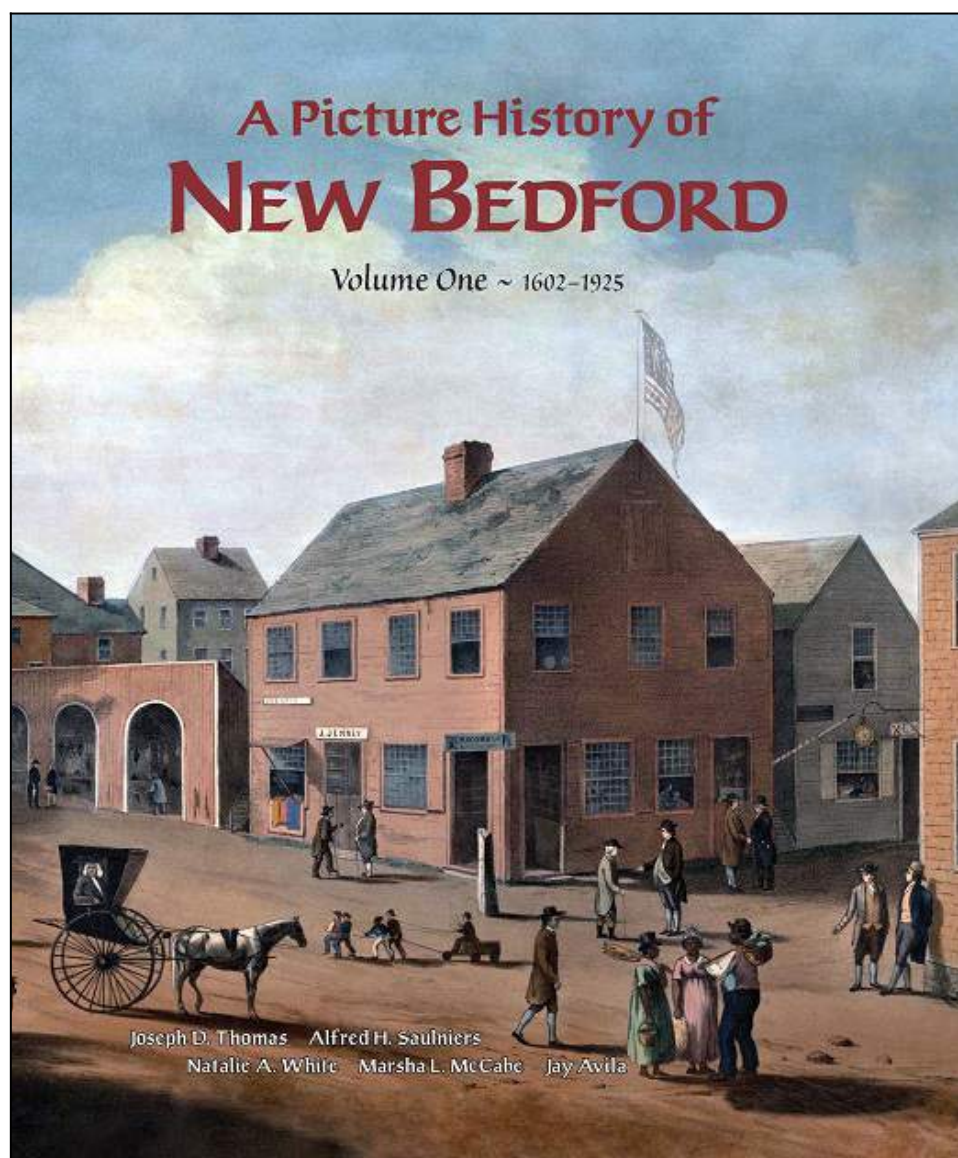
that the gang at Spinner made the “story” their primary objective. People like stories and want to be entertained, not clubbed over the head with endless dates of mundane details. This makes the book incredibly easy to read. It has a “pick up and start anywhere” feel to it. You’re given a choice to start from the beginning or to meander around. You aren’t bullied into starting on page one. That’s a subtle design characteristic, that was well thought out, hence one of the reasons I say the layout is genius.

Another reason, is that the images draw you in. Every page has at least one image and many have more than that. These images are immensely popular. Snapshots of the “bridge” in different stages, seeing the streets we drive down daily filled with horse drawn carriages and derby topped men, and cows grazing on hay where now sits a bank. When you look at these images, it piques your curiosity. You want to know more. Naturally, you will read the text. This is the way a history book should be designed. The “traditional” manner is to make you read a dozen pages and then you be rewarded with a sole photograph. Everyone from a child to the serious historian will enjoy this stellar read.

The crew at Spinner Publications has outdone themselves with a flagship product. They have raised the bar for all future releases. Not just from their company, but anyone who wishes to take a foray into the genre. Anyone who would make an attempt to try this, would – to use a colloquialism, perhaps vulgar, but accurate - “be screwed.”

That means all eyes are on Spinner Pub. for Volume 2. The pressure is on and knowing what we all know about Spinner, they will do the only thing they know how to do: outdo themselves in a world class way and produce a superlative product. I eagerly and enthusiastically await Volume 2.

For a glimpse at more images and info on the book, head to Spinner's Facebook [Page](#) that they built specifically for the book. For more info on Spinner Publications, you can check out their [Facebook](#), [website](#) or [Flickr](#) account.



*A Picture History of New Bedford Volume 1 1602
– 1925*