

The Borning Room

Restored by the Bedford Women's Community Club to 1780-1790

We call this small room off the kitchen the Borning Room. How Job and Martha might have used it, we don't know. Similar rooms in other colonial houses were used by a woman lying in after birth – Martha Lane bore eleven children. It might have also been used as an invalid's room – Job referred to his son Benjamin as “disadvantaged” – might he have been disabled and needed a ground floor room? Or it might just have been a storeroom – which in colonial times was called a lumber room. (“Lumber” meaning “stuff,” not “wood.”)

This room once had a steep stair or ladder leading up to the attic. The hole in the ceiling has been plastered over but is still visible in the attic floor. The cutaway in the wall exposes the uneven, hand-split laths that underlie the plaster walls. The plaster itself has animal hair mixed into it. This “horsehair Plaster” was less prone to cracking.

Notice how out-of-square the doorframe is!

Furniture:

- The bed has a straw mattress supported by ropes. Straw stuffed into a heavy ticking is quite comfortable to sleep on. It could have been made warmer and softer with the addition of a featherbed or two.
- The patchwork quilt was made by the Bedford Women's Community Club in the 1980s. It is in the “Queen Charlotte's Crown” pattern. At the time of the American Revolution, patriots wanted nothing to do with the King and Queen, so the pattern was renamed “Indian Meadow.”
- The invalid chair would save someone frail or ill from struggling out to the privy. It might be an older child's job to empty it in the morning.
- The samplers are post-Revolutionary War, and not from the Lane family.
- The South wall has pegs, as it was the only place where they could hang their clothes in this room.

-Sharon McDonald, Curator