

**DEACON JOB LANE
OF BEDFORD
1689-1762**

Compiled by
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Job Lane 1689-1762 was a grandson of the original Lane settler in Billerica, Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was named for his grandfather, Job (1620-1697). He inherited part of the (Governor John) Winthrop farm from his grandfather through his father, Major John Lane (1661-1714/5). The first Job had acquired the property, about 1500 acres, in 1664¹, (see Map 1). Job's son inherited half of it, or 750 acres, (see Map 2), with the house which the founder had built about 1665². Now the grandson, Job, had his share of the 750 acres and the house which had been this father's and his grandfather's³.

The founder's son, Major John Lane, and his wife, Susanna (Whipple) had raised six children, three sons and three daughters, in that house on the farm. Neither John nor Susanna left wills so he six heirs divided the estate among themselves under the supervision of Judge Francis Foxcroft, officer of Probate of Wills, Middlesex County, Massachusetts.

The agreement among the heirs took four years because the land was surveyed so that each parcel of the division could be described, (see Map 3). The original acreage had increased during the Major's tenure by about 75 acres. The heirs divided 811 acres among themselves.

By the time of the settlement in 1718, the living arrangements of the heirs affected the distribution of the property⁴. All of the Major's children had married except the youngest, the son James. The three male children were living on land belonging to the farm. Two of the daughters were living on neighboring farms. The third was a resident of Concord. The daughters' husbands shared in the estate even as Major John's sisters' families had shared the property of their father, the original Lane, in 1697.

Job, the oldest son, had been married for a year when the Major died. He received the homestead of 166 acres in the northeast part of the farm. It extended along North Road approximately from the present Beverly Road to Appletree Lane⁵. Its depth carried it eastward to Bedford Springs. Because this was the homestead, by definition it included the house and other farm buildings and a corn mill.

The size and shape of the house and the number of rooms can be deduced from the inventory of its contents taken in 1715 after the Major's death. The house had two stories. It was two rooms long and one deep. Probably there was a central door in the long, south wall and a central chimney. There was storage at the back and on one end. Downstairs there was the hall, as the family room was called, and a parlor. Above were the east and west chambers. There were two lean-tos, one across the back and one on the east end. This house has disappeared, leaving no knowledge of where it stood, when it vanished, or what happened to it. (Ed. Note: Research shows that it was at 130 North Road.)

This is the house which was named a garrison by the town of Billerica in 1675⁶. It may have been here that one of the Major's daughters, Mary Lane, had a startling experience during an Indian alarm. Mary was left at the garrison with one guard while her family was away. She may have been 10 or 12 years old. She was impressed by her father's military career and by the current threat of Indian attack. Being in a garrison with a guard, she took a stance at an upper window as she believed her father would have done. Looking out, she saw a suspicious shadow behind a stump. She called the guard to fire at it. He refused. Mary took up a gun and fired. The shadow became one dead Indian.

This story was passed down in the family to be repeated by a descendant a hundred and fifty years later. It has been included in the written accounts of the times⁷.

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Job inherited not only the land around this old house but also 120 acres on the southwest side of the farm. It was an oblong block of land lying on the west side of Old Causeway Road. It contained a long, thin arm extending to Concord River, resulting in river frontage of about 600 feet. Today most of this acreage is in Great Meadow National Wildlife Refuge. (See Map 3).

The other heirs sharing Major John Lane's estate were Job's two brothers, John and James, and his three sisters' husbands, Nathaniel Page, John Whitmore, and James Minot. Both the Page and Whitmore families were neighbors and they were granted parcels of land. The Minots lived in Concord and were given only cash.

The grandfather had divided the farm into three parts in 1697, remembering his only son, John, and his two grandsons. In 1718 Major John's share was divided into five parts for three sons and two sons-in-law. Divisions of the Winthrop-Lane farm were to continue in succeeding generations until parcels of it belonged to many people. Now it has become classified as conservation land, small farms, and house lots for people who have not been descended from any Lanes.

The sons of Major John Lane, Job, John, and James received a good general education according to the era in which they lived. They were not trained for Harvard College, but each could read, write, and figure. They could follow lectures and sermons and could put words together into literary forms like expositions and letters. Their school days probably were over by the time they were eighteen.

When Job was about ten years old, a cousin named Job Lane came to live in South Billerica. He was a man in his thirties, six years younger than Major John. He was a son of the original Job's brother James⁸, and he came from an area near Freeport, Maine, where James had lived. That location had had real peril from Indian attacks. Probably James had been slain by them. This Job may have been seeking comparative peace near relatives. He bought the farm at 461 North Road, the present estate of Lawrence Kimball. It lay north of the Winthrop farm. He married a local girl, Mary Fassett, and became the father of six children who lived. Among them was his son, Job Lane⁹.

The town clerks immediately had trouble with all the Job Lanes, so they called the new inhabitant Job senior or Mr. Job. His son became Job junior or Job the third.

Somewhat later Mr. Job swapped farms and moved his family to one on Page Road west of Shawshin River¹⁰. His children were not as closely related to Major John's son, Job, as were the children of Job's brothers and sisters. Some of Mr. Job's family remained here for about 50 years.

Major John's sons, under the guidance of their parents and their minister, became devout members of the church. In Billerica and in the Bay Colony generally, the church was congregational. The boys came to believe that daughters of the clergy usually were given more education than many female children. They could read and write, sign legal papers, and teach young people in school. They became familiar with the household routine of family prayers, biblical studies, psalmody, and church attendance. The brothers believed women with this religious background would bring favorable supervision to their own households.

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After his 21st birthday Job was given a seat in Billerica meetinghouse. That same year, 1711/12, he was chosen a tythingman, one who helped maintain peace in any public meeting place. The office served to introduce him as an adult to his towsmen¹¹.

Job, the oldest son, married before his brothers. On December 16, 1713, when he was 24, he took Martha Ruggles, sister of his own minister in Billerica, the Reverend Samuel Ruggles, to be his wife¹².

Job's mother, Susanna (Whipple) had died in August of that year. The young couple may have lived with Job's father in the family home for some time. However, it is possible that the present Job Lane House at 295 North Road had been built for Martha at the time of her marriage. The earliest features of the house are of a style in use between 1710 and 1729. If it had been built for Martha, then Job owned two houses for an unknown length of time after he inherited his father's homestead.

When the present Job-Martha house was new, it was smaller than it is today (see fig 1). Its roof sloped from the ridge pole towards the ground along the north wall, creating a "salt-box". The entrance was at the west end of the south wall and the door opened towards the chimney which was built as part of the wall. To the right of the entrance was the hall or family room. In back of it, the kitchen extended along the north side of the house behind the chimney. The east end of the kitchen, away from the chimney, was partitioned into a small, separate room. Upstairs was an east chamber and an attic stretched under the sloping roof¹³.

During the first 20 years of their life together, Job and Martha had 11 children. Of these, they raised six, three sons and three daughters. Four babies died shortly after birth while one son, Benjamin, lived to be 25. He was disadvantaged, and Job worried about him¹⁴. One of Benjamin's brothers would have been named to look after him, had he outlived his father.

When Job was 28, he was elected constable, tax collector for his part of the town. Later he served on the committee which biannually walked the town's line with Concord, finding the markers and replacing any that were missing¹⁵.

Job's name and activities became well known. In 1724 the acting governor, William Dummer, noticed a vacancy in the organizational chart of the Provincial Troop. He named Job Lane of Billerica a lieutenant to fill that post¹⁶. Perhaps Job never was called to active duty, but his title was not forgotten and today some refer to him as Lieutenant Job Lane.

As soon as he had two children of school age, Job was named a committeeman to find a place for the school to meet part of the year in his quarter of the town¹⁷. When they were not in session in that area, the children gathered in one or another of the quarters, equalizing the distances from all areas which they traveled throughout the year. In the quarters, the school met in a heated room in someone's house, a room loaned to the town without cost for rent or for firewood¹⁸.

Finding a school room in South Billerica led directly to Job's election as a selectman and juryman¹⁹. His concern for fairness among all the townsmen and his judgment were respected.

In 1725 the inhabitants of the southern part of Billerica and the eastern part of Concord, areas which touched each other on a straight line for six miles, began a movement of secession from their towns and incorporation as a new community²⁰. The legal process took four years. In September 1928, Bedford was unified from these parts.

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At its conception Bedford had no officers, no treasury, no minister, no schoolteacher, and an unfinished meetinghouse. From the beginning of the town Job supported it and worked for it. He gave some money to open the treasury and he reckoned with the men who had traveled to the Great and General Court in Boston to establish Bedford. Job made a list of the expenses incurred by the representative and gave it to the newly selected treasurer²¹.

Job was on the committee to search for a minister and was influential in bringing in the Harvard graduate, Nicholas Bowes, who had been teaching in Billerica, a young man trained for both teaching and preaching. Job treated with Bowes about his salary and he helped plan a fast day observance when clergy and deacons from neighboring towns conducted services for guidance in selection a minister. After Bows was elected, Job became a member of the committee to plan the hosts and guest list for the entertainment of out-of-town participants at the ordination²².

As soon as the meetinghouse was completed, Job was assigned the pew in the northwest corner of the first floor beside the ministerial pew. It was an omen because he was to be elected deacon upon the death of one of the two original deacons²³. As deacon, he was caretaker of gifts to the church, its funds, silver, and special contributions. He helped take care of the poor and arrange business meetings of the church. He represented the church at neighboring meetings. Job held this position for 25 years until his death. Because other male children of the Lane family were named Job after the original settler, this man often was called Deacon.

He did not neglect to work for the town while he was deacon. He held many offices, selectman, treasurer, assessor, and moderator. Often, he walked the town's line with Billerica, and he helped complete the lower gallery of the meetinghouse. He oversaw the construction of a town pound for stray animals²⁴.

In 1753 there was a revolt against Mr. Bowes among the congregation. The people wanted a minister whose sermons were theatrical, emotional, full of fire and smelling of brimstone. Bowes resigned before he could be voted out of office. Deacon Job Lane signed the dismissal statement in behalf of the church. As soon as another candidate had been selected, Job treated with him about the terms of his contract, his salary, and his parsonage²⁵.

Job's first-born child, Martha Lane, had a life of sorrow. When she was 20, she married well. Her husband, John Whitmore, was related to the Lanes. His mother was the Deacon's sister, Mary Lane, the Indian fighter. John and Martha were cousins. During their life in Bedford, John and Martha had eight children, all of whom died except one. Three died in 1743 and four in 1750. John himself died in 1748 when he was 37. Martha remarried and moved to Worcester²⁶ leaving the farm where she and John had lived. It reverted to the Lanes.

Probably this was the farm that the deacon gave (or sold) to the second minister, the Reverend Nathaniel Sherman, about 1758. It lay on the north end of Springs Road, now the site of the Veterans' Hospital. The house stood on the west side of the road²⁷ and perhaps was taken down in 1818 when a new one was built opposite it. The second one has been moved southerly along Springs Road and set on a new foundation on the west side of the road. It is now 180 Springs Road and the home of the John Comleys the third²⁸

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Job's neighbors were his relatives. His brother, John, lived on Dudley Road with a wife and seven children. His brother James had built a house near the corner of North and Pine Hill Roads where he lived with a wife and five children. Job's cousin, Jeremiah Fitch, had married Job's niece, Elizabeth Lane. They had seven children and lived on North Road near Billerica town line. Job's sister, Susanna, had married Nathaniel Page for whom Page Road was named. Their house still stands near the tennis-swimming club. They had five children²⁹. (see Map 4)

Hence Job's six children had 30 cousins within walking distance and counting Mr. Job's family. These 36 young people would have gone to school and to church together and perhaps they fished, searched for berries and nuts, and shot crows together.

Deacon Job's daughters' sad life, his own loss of four children, and his disadvantaged son who died in 1754, were crosses the deacon had to bear. His own wife had died in 1740 when she was 49. The deacon remarried so that there was someone to help him administer his home. His second wife was Mary. No record has been found to identify her other than one saying she was a widow who owned property in Lexington³⁰. She and Job made a contract about property before their marriage³¹. She bore Job no children. Four or five of the deacon's children were unmarried and probably were living at home at the time of Mary's marriage.

The sadness in Job's life could not deter his work for the town. He and one other carried on a lawsuit against Concord to determine which town had the responsibility for the care and support of one old, poor man. Where had the indigent one been born? Where had he lived when he had been self-supporting? Which town should spend the people's tax money to care for him now³²?

The townsmen knew that a certain widow in Bedford who needed aid was one of their own. She was to be boarded for a few months with one family and then another, moving three or four times a year until she died. The deacon was named her guardian and he took her into his own home where he and Mary cared for her.³³

The deacon prospered. Annually he shared with his two brothers the income from rental farmland in England, once his grandfather's. Although Job had inherited 286 acres of the Winthrop-Lane farm in Bedford, he sought to increase his holdings as property abutting his own was for sale. He bought the farm at 62 Carlisle Road with its buildings from which the red house recently was taken to Harvard. He acquired other land from the heirs of his uncle, Samuel Fitch³⁴. When his own son, Timothy, married the deacon gave him 46 acres as the beginning of a farm. Most of this land lay in the north part of Job's farm around the present 375 North Road, the late Beulah homestead. The Beulah house is one Timothy may have built about 1750³⁵.

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At some time, Job rebuilt his kitchen. What he did has not been determined, but he had what he called “the old kitchen”. Probably there was an area he called “the new kitchen”³⁶.

As the deacon passed his 70th birthday, he wrote his will. He followed the agreement had made with his wife, Mary, at the time of their marriage. She had brought a dowry to their union. It was her inheritance from her first husband, property in Lexington which gave her an income. Job returned it to her and requested his sons to provide her with a decent suit of mourning clothes. His household goods he scattered among his daughters.

The deacon gave the farm at 62 Carlisle Road to his son, Job, and his own house, the Job Lane museum house at 295 North Road, to his son, John. The third son, Timothy, had his own house at 375 North Road. Job remembered two of his granddaughters, the only children of the tragic Martha, with a gift of money while he provided for its use in case the girls did not live to be adults. He gave his clock to his grandson, John, and he wanted John to have its case also. His land was to be divided among his three sons, piece by piece, while the daughters had a few acres, here and there.

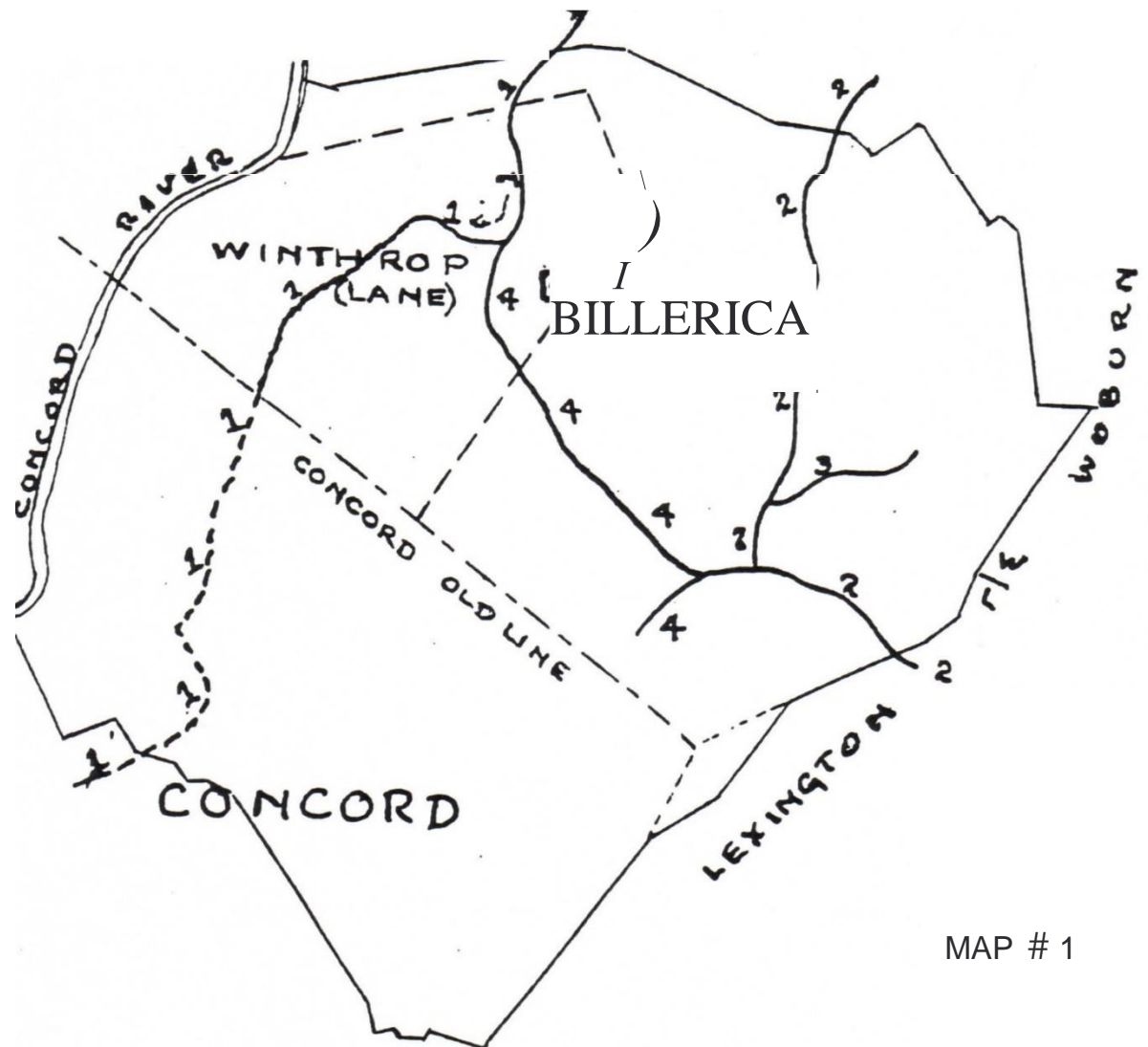
Job always had been concerned about a place for the school to meet in the north quarter of the town. Although he gave his own house to his son, John, he made an exception of “*my old back kitchen which I give unto my neighbors in this quarter of the town for the use of a school house*”. Perhaps he had loaned that room to the town for many years. It was in a good location because years later, when the town built school houses in the quarters, the north school house was erected on the west side of North Road within 600 or 700 feet of the Job Lane House³⁷. The tenant living in the deacon’s house is said to have been the caretaker of the schoolhouse and the children carried drinking water from the well which had been Job’s³⁸.

When the deacon’s farm was divided among his sons in 1762, each received 75 or 80 acres. Job had made certain that each had a house and other farm buildings, improved land, an orchard, pasturage, swamp and woodland. In an agricultural town these were good inheritances. Deacon Job Lane gave them solid foundations. Let them prosper.

At the time of Job’s death there were about 62 heads of families and 440 inhabitants in Bedford. The deacon always had helped sustain the church, the school, the poor, and the town’s business. His energy spent in behalf of his townsmen and heir institutions for 33 years helped the town become a self-reliant, caring community. Job contributed whatever he could according to the demands of the period in which he lived. It is fitting that the Deacon Job Lane’s House is the museum for the Town of Bedford.

Plan of South Billerica and Concord East Part about 1700 showing Winthrop (Lane) Grant and early roads

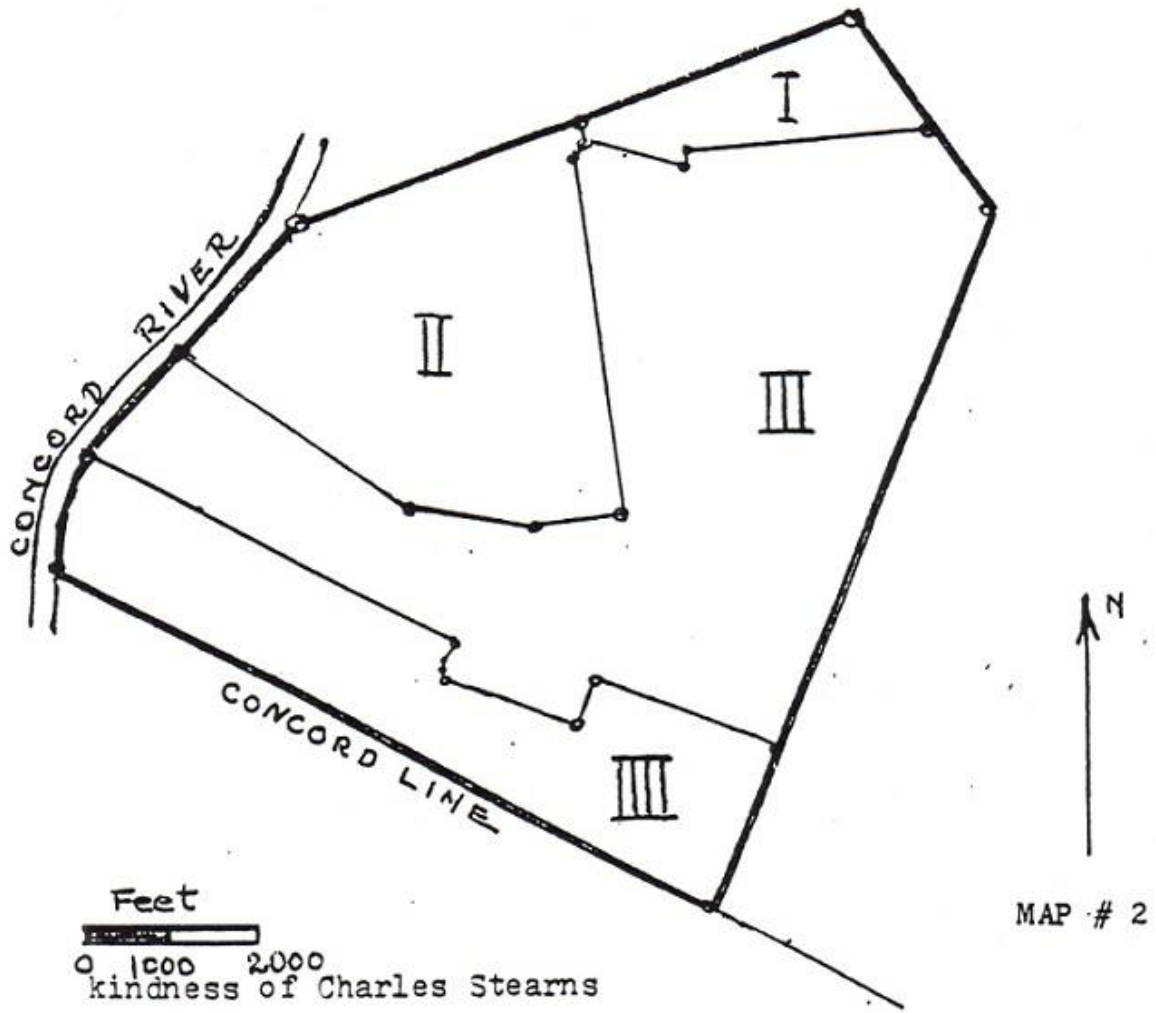
- 1) c1660 Road, Billerica to Concord
The dotted line indicates uncertainty of location through swamp in Concord East Part.
- 2) c1663 Billerica to Lexington, now Old Billerica Road and east end of Page Road
- 3) 1683 to Wilson's mills
- 4) 1694 Pine Hill Road, west end of Page Rad, and Brooksbie Road



MAP # 1

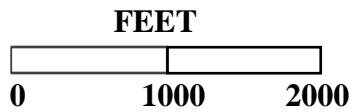
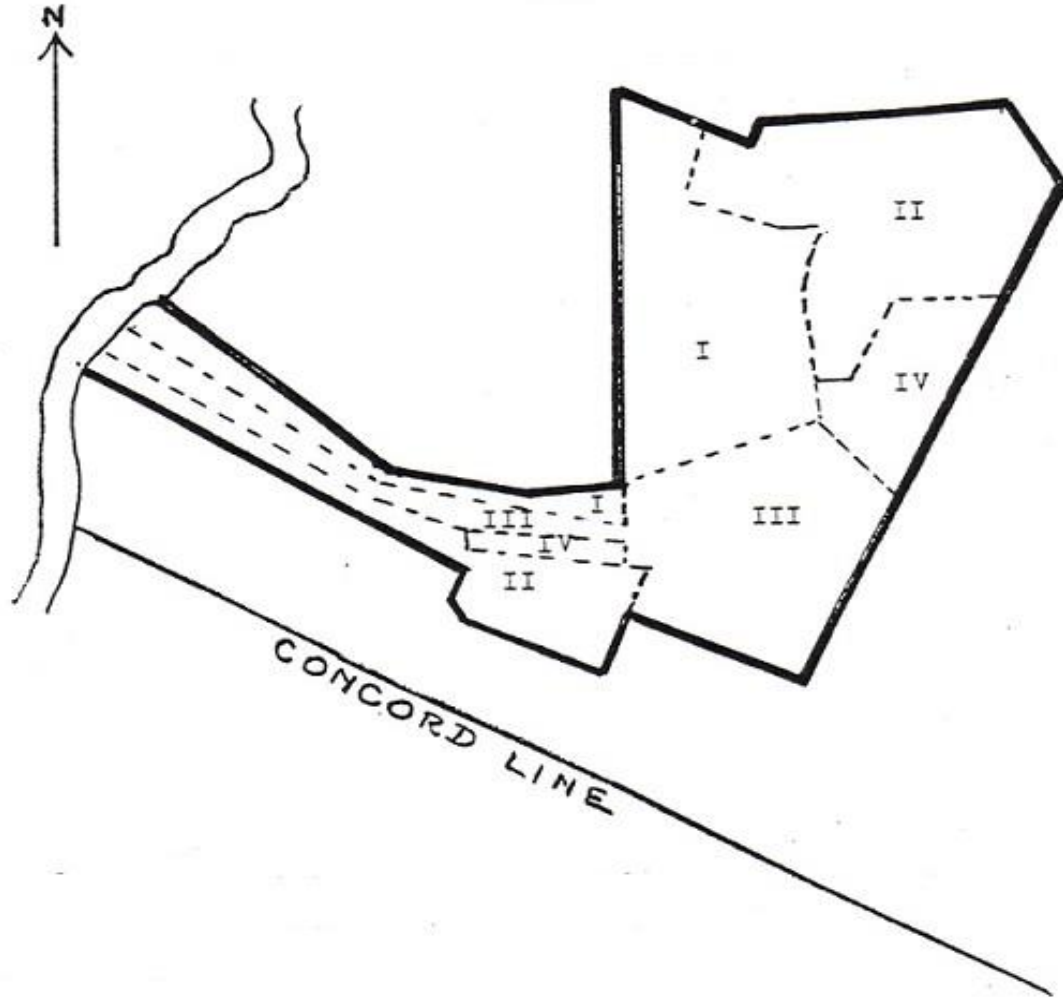
DIVISION OF JOB LANE'S LAND

- From survey by Samuel Danforth in 1706
- I and III 375 acres in all to Samuel Fitch
- II 375 acres to Matthew Whipple
- III 750 acres to Captain John Lane



DIVISION OF MAJOR JOHN LANE'S LANE, 750 acres

- I Two pieces to John Lane
- II Two pieces to Deacon Job Lane
- III One piece to James Lane
- IV Two pieces to John Whitmore



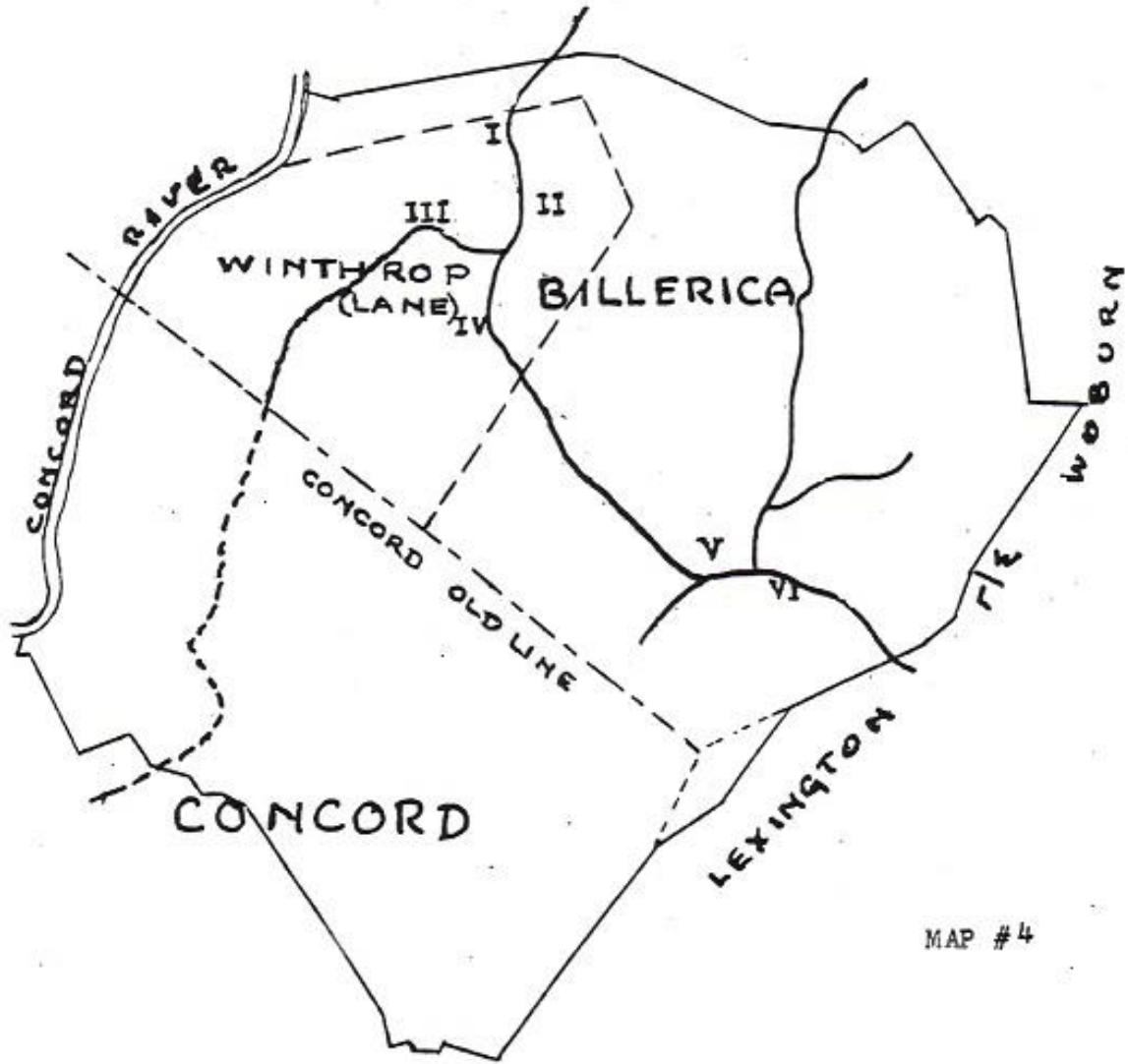
The parcel to Nathaniel Page came out of additional land the Major acquired during his lifetime.

From plan of Samuel Danforth, 1706

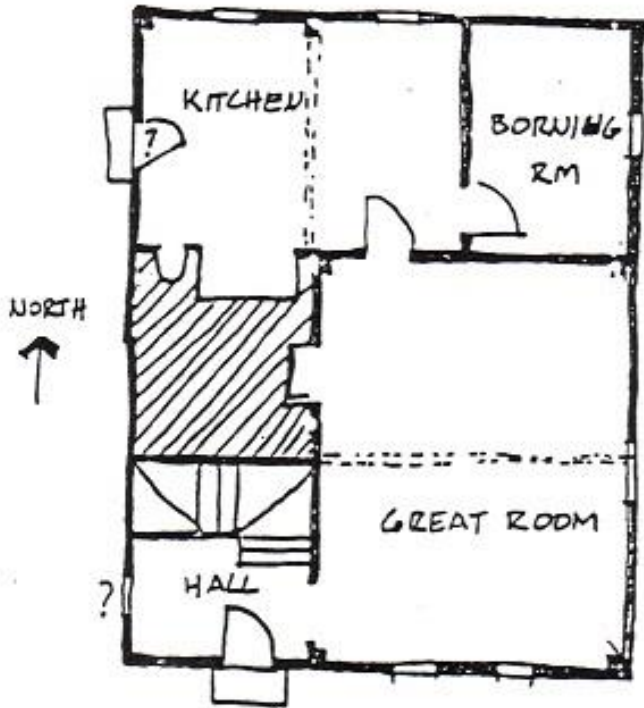
Kindness of Charles Stearns

SITE OF THE LANE FAMILIES

- I Jeremiah Fitch and Elizabeth (Lane)
- II Deacon Job Lane
- III John Lane
- IV James Lane
- V Nathaniel Page and Susanna (Lane)
- VI Mr. Job Lane



The Job Lane House in 1729
(we now believe it was 1713) Ed.
From Preservation Partnership



JOB LANE
First Phase
c. 1729
(or 1713) Ed.

figure I

DEACON JOB LANE

Genealogy

Job born June 22, 1689 to John and Susanne (Whipple) in Billerica

Married first Martha Ruggles of Roxbury Dec. 16 or 17, 1713,

Sister of Rev. Sam'l Ruggles of Billerica: she was Born Feb. 1, 1691/2 to Samuel & Martha (Woodbridge), She died Sept. 14, 1740 at 49 yrs.

Married second Mary. She died Dec. 11, 1783; Died, will dated Sept. 1, 1762 at 73 yrs.

Children:

Martha born June 22. 1716 in Billerica,

Married first John Whitmore Dec. 30, 1736, he was born April 15, 1711 to John & Mary (Lane): he died Oct. 25, 1748.

Married second Nathaniel Adams of Worcester Died?

Job born Sept. 27, 1718 in Billerica

Married first Susanna Fassett Jan. 29, 1746/7; and was born Mar. 29, 1725 to Josiah & Sarah; she died Mar. 24, 1775.

Married second Elizabeth Stickney Jan. 15, 1777; she was born July 23, 1737 to Wm. & Anna (Whiting); she died May 19, 1815 at 79 yrs. Died June 11, 1796 at 79 yrs.

John born Oct. 2, 1720 in Billerica

Married Ruth Bowman Feb. 13, 1745/6; she was born Dec. 23, to John & Mary (Stone); she died Aug. 13, 1759 at 35 yrs.

Married second Widow Sarah (Abbott) Hildreth of Andover May 28, 1761; she married third a Mr. Parker; she died Mar. 5, 1814 at 88 yrs. Died: Dec. 7, 1789.

Timothy born July 10, 1722 in Billerica

Married Lydia Davis Mar. 7, 1750/1; she was born July 25, 1730 to Stephen & Elizabeth F. (Fletcher); she died Aug. 4 or 31, 1801 at 72 yrs. Died Dec. 3, 1793

Mary born Feb. 24, 1724/5 in Billerica

Married Jonathan Hill Jan. 13, 1746/7; he was born Apr. 28, 1718 to Joseph & Susanna (Baldwin); he died Apr. 7, 1796; Died: Oct. 24, 1772 at 47 yrs.

Whipple born Sept. 5, 1726 in Billerica; Died: Oct. 4, 1728.

Benjamin born Aug. 29, 1729 in Billerica

Died Jan. 25, 1754 at 24 in Bedford

Lucy born May 3, 1732 in Bedford.

Married Elijah Stearns Dec. 20, 1759; he was born June 15, 1735 to Isaac & Alice (Wilson); he died Oct. 3, 1801 Died Aug. 4, 1793 at 61 yrs.

Hannah born Sept. 22, 1733 in Bedford, a twin; died Dec. 27, 1733

Sarah born Sept. 22, 1733 in Bedford; a Twin died Oct. 4, 1733

Anna baptized Aug. 31, 1735 in Bedford, Died Sept. 8, 1735.

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Sources and References

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2. Docket number 13571, Registry of Probate, Middlesex County, Cambridge, Mass.
3. Docket Number 13577
4. Brown, gen. sec., p. 20, col. 2
5. Plan of Samuel Danforth, surveyor, 1706, privately owned
6. Henry A. Hudson, History of Billerica, A. Williams & Co., Boston, Mass. 1883, p. 112
7. Brown, p. 21, col. 2
8. Brown, gen. Sc. P. 23, col. 1 and N. E. Historic Register, Vol. 45, pages 142-152
9. Bedford vital records
10. Brown, gen. 103, "Henry Demazes"
11. Billerica town records
12. Hazen, gen. sec. p 89, number 3
13. Report of Preservations Partnership, 1977
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15. Billerica town records
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17. Billerica town records
18. Bedford Minuteman, Feb. 22-May 24, 1979, History of Bedford's Schools (under several headings, (Ina Mansur)
19. Billerica town records
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21. Bedford town records
- 22-25 ibid
26. Bedford Vital records
27. Bedford town records Dec. 10, 1933, and Registry of Deeds, book 68, page 514

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28. Estimate of age by an historical architect and photographs privately owned.
29. Brown, genealogical section
30. Probate docket numbers 13586 and 13572
31. Probate docket number 13572
32. Bedford town records
33. ibid
34. Registry of Deeds, book number 45, pages 442, 708, 710 and book 41, pages 364-5
35. Registry of Deeds, book 64, page 90
36. Probate docket number 13572
37. Bedford Town record and John G. Hales, surveyor, Plan of the Town of Bedford, Middlesex Country, 1830
38. Mrs. Lillian Dutton, Down the Ages with the Old Garrison House, Bedford, Massachusetts, a WPA Grant, c.1930.