

Outside Greeting

This house is one of the oldest in Bedford. It was built over 300 years ago. Deacon Job Lane built it about 1713. He built just the four rooms to the right of the front door, three rooms on the first floor and a bedchamber upstairs, plus an attic. He lived here with his family for the rest of his life. It is in what is called the “saltbox” style, after the shape of the box colonial women used for their salt. The other side of the house was not added until about 1826, by Oliver Abbott, a descendant of Deacon Job’s.

1713 is almost a century after the Pilgrims and Puritans began arriving in America. Unlike them, Deacon Job didn’t emigrate from England, but was born on this farm. It had been in his family since his grandfather, also named Job Lane, acquired it in 1664. Here is some background on the farm:

“For thousands of years, Native Americans had lived beside the Concord River. This road here beside the house had been their path between the village at Musketaquid – that’s now Concord – and Native American villages north of here – that’s now Billerica.”

In 1638, the Massachusetts Great and General Court commandeered the whole area and gave 1500 acres to the Governor of Massachusetts, John Winthrop. His Deputy Governor, Thomas Dudley, also received a large grant. The two came down the river from Concord and stopped at two riverside boulders to view the land and divide it between them. These landmark boulders are still there, and we call them the “Brothers’ Rocks.” Winthrop never lived here, but sold it to his son, who willed it to HIS son, Fitzhugh Winthrop. Fitzhugh didn’t want the land, so he sold it to the Malden carpenter, Job Lane. Job bartered for it by building him a mansion in Connecticut.

When he moved here from Malden, this first Job built his homestead down this road about a mile. (The house is gone now, and the foundations have never been found.) And that’s where his grandson, Deacon Job, was born. In 1713, when Deacon Job was 24, he married the minister’s sister, Martha Ruggles. We think that’s probably when he built this house.

This all happened before Bedford was incorporated as a town. At the time, the Lane farm was located in Billerica. Deacon Job was one of those who lobbied to make a new town out of the southern part of Billerica and the eastern part of Concord. This came about in 1729, and Deacon Job and Martha Lane were among the founders of Bedford. Their descendants lived here for generations.

-Sharon McDonald, Curator