



The Job Lane House has been a landmark for over three hundred years. Here is its story:

While it appears that Native Americans never settled on this land, in former days they journeyed the trails nearby, and they knew of the iron and Sulphur springs that bubble up into a shallow lake half a mile to the east.

Land ownership began in 1637, when the Massachusetts Great and General Court granted Governor John Winthrop about 1500 acres, from Billerica, in what is now Bedford. Winthrop did not clear any of the land or build upon it. In 1664 the Governor's grandson, having inherited the land, transferred it to house wright Job Lane (c.1620-1697) in exchange for a house that Lane built him in Connecticut.

Lane did improve the land and moved his family here. His oldest grandson, also named Job Lane (1689-1762), inherited 280 acres of the land for a farm. Around the time of his marriage (to Martha) in 1713, he built this small house. It was just the east half of the house we see today: a saltbox consisting of a great hall, kitchen, and storage room downstairs; a bedchamber and garret above; and a high attic under the roof. Job Lane was one of the founders of Bedford and a lieutenant in the militia. He was also a church deacon, and so we know him as Deacon Job Lane.

The house passed through the hands of several of Deacon Job's descendants. The last to own it was his step-great-grandson, Oliver Reed Abbott (1800-1842). Abbott doubled the size of the house and commissioned Rufus Porter to paint the murals on the new parlor's walls. At his death, it was sold out of the family.

Hiram Lee Dutton, of Andover, MA, bought the farm in 1843. It stayed in the Dutton family for another hundred and thirty years. Many Bedford residents remember buying milk and eggs from Hiram's grandson, Warren Dutton, and his wife, Lillian. For many years, Lillian – "the Herb Lady" - ran a highly successful mail order herb business. In her memory, the Bedford Garden Club maintains a period herb garden that includes descendants of some of these same plants.

In 1972, when the House went on the market, Bedford Town Historian Louise K. Brown had the foresight to buy it in hopes that the Town would someday acquire it as a museum. A year later, Bedford bought it from her and charged the Bedford Historic Preservation Commission to oversee it. In 1978, the Friends of the Job Lane House, Inc. were formed to assist in the day-to-day operation of the museum. The Bedford Minuteman Company, the Rotary Club of Bedford, the Bedford Historical Society, the Bedford Women's Community Club, and the Nathaniel Brown family each sponsored the restoration of a room. The museum opened to the public in 1983. Through the efforts of the Friends, a 1720s style timber-frame barn was added in 1993 with an old-fashioned barn raising.