

Daniel Webster Birthplace

History of the House

The house, associated with Daniel Webster's childhood, provides an intimate snapshot of frontier life during the country's earliest years.

The hearth was obviously the center of the home, with the smell of freshly baked bread drifting from the oven while a stew bubbled in an iron pot or a haunch of venison roasted slowly on a spit. It is here where the family would have gathered to talk, work and eat. By the flickering light of hand-dipped candles they would also have read from the family Bible, which was kept in the cupboard above the mantle. The stairs in the corner of the main room lead to a loft, where the many Webster children slept on cornhusk mattresses. Abigail and Ebenezer slept in the house's second room, with baby Daniel in a wooden cradle similar to the one now on display.

Much of the house is believed to be original despite its several moves. The fireplace was rebuilt using the original handmade bricks and hearthstone. The attached woodshed and well surround are reconstructions. Furnishings such as the flax spinning wheel and kitchen utensils are typical of a rustic farm of the period. Other items on display belonged to Daniel Webster later in his life. (Continued on next Page)



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History of the House (continued)

When the Webster family left their small home they moved to Elms Farm, where Ebenezer ran a mill and also built and operated a tavern. The foundations of Ebenezer Webster's mill can be found among the trees behind the house near Punch Brook. The original mill was for sawing wood, but Ebenezer also added a grist and cider mill. There are still some apple trees near the house. The property was later sold to finance Daniel and his brother at Dartmouth. The family moved to a smaller house nearby. This new home eventually passed to Daniel, who owned it until his death. It is now owned by the Sisters of the Holy Cross and can be viewed from the outside.

The old Salisbury cemetery is on the same road as the Webster house. Ebenezer and Abigail are buried there along with many other Websters. Daniel is buried in Marshfield, Massachusetts. The Webster Birthplace and Elms Farm were in the town of Salisbury, which was incorporated as a part of Franklin in 1828.

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