

The Bedchamber (Video 5)

This bedchamber (our present day bedroom) gives us a peek into how families lived in the past between the timeframe of approximately the late 1890s to the 1920s.

Take a look at the bed



- This is a fine example of a Jenny Lind or Spool bed. Named after a famous Swedish Opera Singer who came to America in 1850 at the invitation of PT Barnum. She spent 2 years touring the US and promoted many branded products including the spool bed, which was said to be her preferred style of bed.
- The mattresses of Spool beds were typically filled with feathers, straw or corn husks.
- This particular bed frame was found in the attic of a home on West Street that belonged to the family of Katharine Matties.
- On the bed is a handmade quilt from 1912 in a spider web pattern. This pattern was a favorite of quilters in the late 19th and early 20th century. Quilters used scraps of fabric from old clothes to piece together quilts as you can clearly see on this gorgeous heirloom.
- On the quilt stand you'll see a different kind of quilt. This is called a Victorian Crazy Quilt. The Crazy Quilt title refers to a type of patchwork quilt that became popular in the 1800s. The first crazy quilt appeared after the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 which featured a display of Japanese decorative art. The unusual symmetries of Asian art captured the imagination of 19th century women and the crazy quilt was born. The irregular shaped pieces of fabric were made of silk brocade, taffeta and plush velvet. This was

incredibly time consuming to make especially, the embroidery which took the longest time to finish. These elegant quilts were never meant to be used as bed covers but instead used as a parlor throw or decorative displays like the one you see here.

Move to the side of the bed and point to the chamberpot (ask- "Who could guess what this would be used for?")

- Chamber Pots were used before indoor plumbing especially during the night so people would not have to go outside to the outhouse. It was kept under or next to the bed.
 - Morning chores included emptying the pot outside.
 - They can differ in sizes, shapes and materials like pewter, pottery, ceramic, stoneware, gold and silver. This pot is made of royal ironstone china.

Turn to the right to the Rocker Recliner

- This is an Antique Victorian Platform Rocker Recliner circa 1803-1900
 - it's different from others because it moved on a platform which helped it tilt back and form evenly as one rocked. This also prevented it from sliding across the floor, which was a common problem with most

rocking chairs. This particular rocker has a pull out footstool. (if you are comfortable doing so demonstrate)

Move to the Wash Table

- many tasks we reserved for the bathroom were done inside the bedchamber. It was common to have a wash basin and water pitcher in the room to wash up.

Next is the Edison Phonograph from 1903

- This is an example of an early record player invented by Thomas A. Edison in 1878. (Ask- “What do we remember Edison best for?” [electric light bulb])
- The phonograph was developed as a result of Edison’s work on 2 other inventions, the telegraph and the telephone. He was able to create an astounding machine that could record sound and play it back. He eventually built a company that created and sold recordings to play on the phonograph, essentially inventing a record company.
- Music was first recorded on cylinders and later moved to vinyl discs (show records stored in the bottom of the



cabinet) [They Start the Victrola \(music\)](#)
music)

(Scan code with phone for

Look at the vintage clothing

- In the 1800's, the clothing was very fancy and might have been worn to the theater or opera. You can see how it changed through the years.

Look at the oil paintings

- Before we talk about the vintage clothing you see and the items in this room, let’s look at the oil paintings on the wall done by Leda Kleising in 1900.
- This is how these landmarks looked over 100 years ago. Some of them may look familiar to you.
- Can you identify any of them?
 - -The Seymour Public Library -originally located on Broad. It was destroyed in the 1955 floor and was rebuilt on West Street.
 - -Tingue Dam- area where the fish ladder is built now.
 - -Covered Bridge- built across the Naugatuck River by where Stop & Shop is now. The wooden bridge was replaced by a concrete one. Do you know the name of that bridge? It is the General Humphreys Bridge.
 - -Downtown Seymour- with it’s dirt Main Street and railroad station.

Move to the lady's accessories case.

- **Take a hat pin out /ask what it is

- Hat pins were originally designed to fasten a woman's hat to her hair. But to a damsel in distress, a hat pin might just be the deadliest fashion accessory in years.

Point out the antique handkerchief collage.

- A lady NEVER left home without a handkerchief in her handbag . Women also wore a hat, gloves, silk stockings, and high heels just to "go to town."
- This collage was made by Heather Brown, a SHS board member, from her personal collection. Hankies were used for many things like greeting someone, cleaning your hands, face or teeth , wiping your tears or nose, applying perfume or even signaling a gentleman that you would like to meet him or giving him as a token of your affection.
- In the 1940's and 1950's, many handkerchiefs were appliqued, monogrammed, hand tatted, and embroidered. They were made from a variety of cloth from linen to rayon to silk, and later, from cotton. Today, many use paper tissues.

Allow time to look around and ask questions.