

Christopher Babbidge House, 46½ Essex Street

Although almost half of this house was cut away & removed, and although its exterior resembles nothing so much as a mid-eighteenth century Georgian mansion house, yet there is a possibility that this is one of Salem's few remaining seventeenth-century houses.

A brief history of the house was written by the historian Sidney Perley, in his History of Salem (vol. II, pps. 309-10), as follows (with my own notes interspersed):

"This lot was probably granted to Christopher Babbidge before 1683, when he owned it, having erected a house, in which he lived. This house was one of the best in the neighborhood, and the staircase is still in use in that section of the house which remains upon the original site." Perley provides an illustration of the newel post & balustrades of the staircase; unfortunately, they are no longer in the house. "Mr Babbidge died about 1711, and his son Christopher succeeded him on the place." Son Christopher was a cordwainer (shoe-maker). "In 1717, the building committee of the East or Second Church met here & considered the plans of its first meeting house, which was built on the opposite side of the street" on the western corner of Essex & Hardy Streets. "Mr Babbidge died in 1755, and the administratrix of his estate conveyed the land and buildings to Richard Derby, the merchant, Nov. 8, 1757" by deed 105:16. Mr Babbidge's daughter Mehitable administered his estate, which was worth about 268 li; his homestead, "House & Barn & about 60 poles of Land", was appraised at 153.6.8 (probate docket #1155).

Richard Derby, one of the great merchants of his day, evidently presented this house to his daughter Mary when she married Capt George Crowninshield about 1764; either Mr Derby or Capt & Mrs Crowninshield completely remodelled the house to its present Georgian appearance. "Mr Derby died in 1783, having devised to his daughter Mary Crowninshield this 'House in which she lately dwelt now occupied by Joseph Moses' " who was a sailmaker. "Mrs Crowninshield conveyed the estate to James Cheever, a merchant, Aug. 24, 1799" by deed 165:180, for \$3500.

"Mr Cheever died Sept 23 1839; and his children conveyed the buildings and land to Phineas R Weston on June 1, 1840" for \$2,075, with a store thereon, by deed 320:14. "In 1859, Mr Weston cut off the eastern end of the house and moved it to Grant Street, where it still stands." Grant Street is now Kosciusko Street, near Derby Wharf; evidently this other half

of the house was demolished within the past ten years. "Mr Weston's family conveyed the remainder of the house and the land to Charles Bowker on July 21, 1885, and Mr Bowker lived there until his decease."

Mr Bowker's heirs conveyed the property for \$7500 to Ezma Abdo of Salem (along with another piece of real estate) on 1 Sept 1914, soon after the Salem fire (2276:322). With hundreds of people homeless in Salem, Mr Abdo moved the old Babbidge house to the back yard, and built the present brick tenement at the street-front. He sold the property 29 Nov 1918 to Nicolai S Jensen of Worcester (2402:174); on 1 May 1922 Mr Jensen sold the premises to Esther Tarlow of Salem (2512:153).

Mrs Tarlow owned the property for 23 years, selling it to Margaret Solovicos of Salem on 19 July 1945 (3417:597); on 28 Oct 1946 she granted it to The Solovicos Trust of Salem (3519:573). The Solovicos family sold it to the Maguires in 1975 (6188:766), and the Messrs Maguire sold it 6 Jan 1976 to the trustees of Hibbard Realty Trust of Marblehead, the present owners (6212:346).

This is just a preliminary history of this property, and draws no definite conclusions about the age of the house. Certainly, the remaining original oak chamfered beams tend to indicate a building date of 1715 or before--and it seems that Christopher Babbidge built a house here by 1664. In a case such as this, where there is very little documentary evidence relating to the house before the 1750s, the construction methods & evidence are crucial to assigning a date to the building. I would suggest calling in an expert on 17th-century construction from the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Robert Booth

- Note: Dr Abbot L Cummings, executive director of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, has inspected this house, and believes that a dating of ca. 1715 is appropriate.

Robert Booth, 13 Aug 1977

CHRISTOPHER BABBIDGE

Christopher Babbidge (1640?-1711?), a tailor, was the son of Roger and Hester Babbidge of Totness, Devonshire, England, where he was apprenticed to George Marks, tailor; about 1660 he married Agnes Triggs of Totness, and in 1661 they came to America in the ship Nathaniel; they settled in Salem that same year, when their first child, Ruth, was born.

Mr Babbidge was listed as one who owned a Salem cottage or dwelling place in or before 1661; the location of this house is not known. On 24 Feb 1662 the town of Salem recorded the sale of house-lots along the northern side of what is now lower Essex Street; one of the purchasers was "Mr Babbidge"-- Christopher Babbidge. On 24 July 1664 Joseph Porter was granted a house-lot "next adjoining Lt George Gardner's spot of land in the common near Xtopher Babbidge his house..." and on the same date it was "voted to Anthony Ashby also a lot of the same quantity with the range (of lots) where Goodman Bavedg (sic) lives, paying for it as others did." From these two items, it is clear that by 1664 Christopher Babbidge was living in a house on the lot he'd been granted in 1662--the same lot that this house stands on today.

By 3 May 1665 Mr Babbidge had been made a freeman, and in the next year he served as a grandjuryman--a position generally held by the town's leading citizens. He would go on to serve in the same capacity in 1670, 1675-6, 1678-9, and 1681-4. he served as a Salem constable in 1673 and many times after, and held many other town offices. By the time of the witch trials, he owned a shop; it was in Mr Babbidge's shop that John Proctor was accused of practicing witchcraft.

Robert Booth
23 Mar 1977

Salem Jan^y 10th 1756

An Inventory of the Estate of M^r Christopher Babbage
Late of Salem Deceased.

- 1 House & Barn & about 60 Acres of Land - - - - - 553. 6. 8
- About 3/4 Acres of Land in Southfield - - - - - 39. 0. 0
- a piece of Land by the Common Containing ^{1/2} 450g Rods - 30. 0. 0
- A pew in the East Meetinghouse - - - - - 8. 53. 4
- 44. of plaster d. s. p. Walnut Table 24. s. D. s. pine D. 1/4 - 3. 17. 4
- 1 Chest of Drawers 4/8. s. Old Chest 1/4. s. Featherbed & Bolsters 2 1/2 - 14. 0
- 1 D. 63. d. s. s. Lute Curtains & Valence 2/8. Large Chest 2/8 - 3. 13. 0
- 1 Great Coat 20/8. s. Strait Bodied Coat 2/4. 2 Small Boxes 1/4 - 2. 15. 1/2
- 6 Leather Chairs 2/8. s. Brass kittle 26. d. s. Brass Cover 2/8 - 2. 00. 0
- 1 Brass Candlestick, s. warming pan 2/8 Brass Skillet 4/8 - 0. 07. 8
- 1 Coarse Crosscut Saw 2/8. 2 Books 5/4. Spitt 2/8 - 0. 15. 4
- Chaise, Chair & Old Hammers with Old Harnis 5. 6. 8
- Saddle & Bridle 2 1/4. 2 Hay forks s. Dung forks 4/8 - 1. 5. 4
- 1 white horse 3/4. s. Bay horse 4. 0. 0. 22 Hand hay - d. s. 7. 4
- 2 Diggs 25 2/3. s. flax Comb 2/8. 3/8. Bushel Corn 11/8. - 1. 18. 2 1/4
- Bell Mettle Morter 6/8. s. Clever 2/8. s. Irons Trammel 4/8. - 0. 12. 8
- 1 Plow 2/8. Old Cart 3/4. s. bettle 1/4 - 1. 18. 0

Summe At M^r Nath^l Osgoods

- 1 Walnut Table s. Framel 4/8. Locking sb. frying pan 1/8 - 2. 5. 0
- 2 Brass kittles 10. d. s. Old Bell Mettle Pot 10/8 - 2. 10. 0
- a Large Sermon Book 1/8 - - - - - 5

268 11 6 1/4

Nath^l Osgoods
Jon^{as} Zenny
Ab^{am} Watson

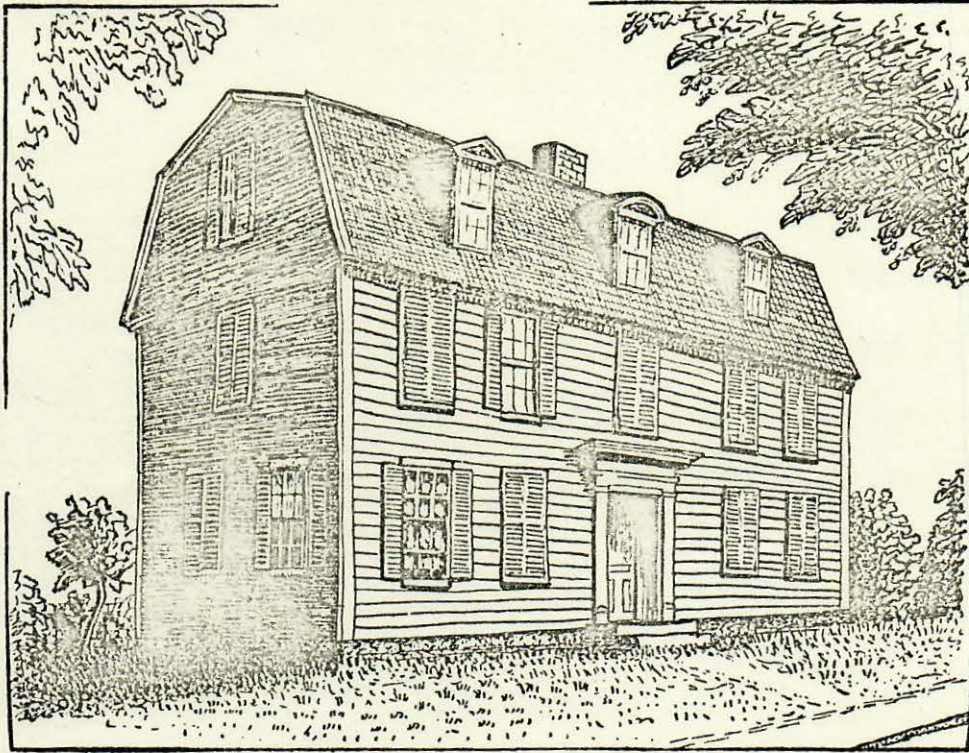
To The Hon^{ble} Thomas Perry Esq^r Judge
of Probates &c. for the County of Essex

appointed & sworn
by Perry 1756

Mehitable Babbage

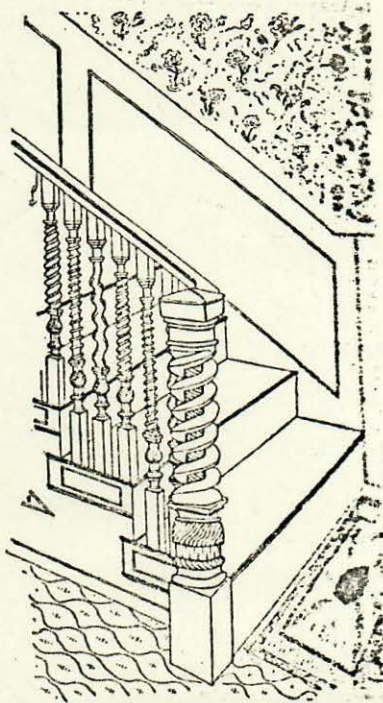
Essex, March 16 1757

Mehitable Babbage made Oath & this
Ind^o & to add what should further appear
before John Choate Ju^{sr} 1756



CHRISTOPHER BABBIDGE HOUSE

As the house appeared before being cut
in half in 1859 (Perley, vol II, p 309)



STAIRCASE IN BABBIDGE HOUSE

From Perley's
History of Salem
vol II, p 310

WE, ROBERT M. MAGUIRE AND GEORGE E. MAGUIRE, as tenants in common, both of Salem, Essex County, Commonwealth of Massachusetts County, Massachusetts,

being ~~xx~~married, for consideration paid, and in full consideration of One Hundred Three Thousand Ten Dollars (\$103,010.00) grants to William M. Rice and Ann M. Rice and Peter W. Rice, Trustees of Hibbard Realty Trust of Marblehead, Essex County, Massachusetts, a Declaration of Trust dated of December 30, 1975, and recorded herewith all of 2 Hibbard ~~with~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ Road, Marblehead, Essex County, Massachusetts with Quitclaim Covenants the land in Salem, with buildings thereon bounded and described as follows:

[Description and encumbrances, if any]

The land with the buildings thereon known as numbers 44, 46, 46 1/2, 48 and 50 Essex Street, in said Salem bounded and described as follows:

- SOUTHEASTERLY: by Essex Street, about ninety-one (91) feet, nine (9) inches;
- NORTHEASTERLY: by land now or formerly of Hayman, about one hundred forty-nine (149) feet;
- NORTHWESTERLY: by land now or formerly of Davis about seventy (70) feet;
- SOUTHWESTERLY: by land now or formerly of the City of Salem, about one hundred forty-seven (147) feet, excepting so much thereof as may have been taken by the City of Salem for the purpose of widening said Essex Street.

For title, see deed of Hames M. Solovicos and Raymond T. White, Trustees under the will of Margaret Solovicos, dated October 14, 1975, and recorded with the Essex South Registry of Deeds, Book 6188, Page 766.

This Parcel is subject to a mortgage held by the George Peabody Co-Operative Bank, in the amount of approximately \$65,000.00, and in a second mortgage held by James M. Solovicos and Raymond T. White, Trustees under the will of Margaret Solovicos, in the amount of \$30,000.00, which the buyers agree to pay.

The documentary stamps necessary are based on the difference between \$103,010.00 and mortgages assumed of \$95,000.00.

Mass. Excise Stamp C 22.80 affixed and cancelled on back of this instrument

Witness our hands and seals this day of January 1976..

ROBERT M. MAGUIRE

GEORGE E. MAGUIRE

[Signature]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Essex ss.

January C 19 76

Then personally appeared the above named ROBERT M. MAGUIRE and GEORGE E. MAGUIRE and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be their free act and deed, before me

Walter A. Costello, Jr. Notary Public

My commission expires June 5, 1981

(*Individual — Joint Tenants — Tenants in Common — Tenants by the Entirety.)

CHAPTER 183 SEC. 6 AS AMENDED BY CHAPTER 497 OF 1969

Every deed presented for record shall contain or have endorsed upon it the full name, residence and post office address of the grantee and a recital of the amount of the full consideration thereof in dollars or the nature of the other consideration therefor, if not delivered for a specific monetary sum. The full consideration shall mean the total price for the conveyance without deduction for any liens or encumbrances assumed by the grantee or remaining thereon. All such endorsements and recitals shall be recorded as part of the deed. Failure to comply with this section shall not affect the validity of any deed. No register of deeds shall accept a deed for recording unless it is in compliance with the requirements of this section.

Christopher Babbidge To Cap^t. Willm. Pickering &c.
Recd on Record August 26th 1717



People... Greeting know ye that Christopher Babbidge of Salem in the County of Essex in his province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England Cordwainer for & in Consideration of y^e Summe of a Thousand poundes to him in hand paid by Captain William Pickering Joseph Andrew Abraham purchase Josiah Williard Mallard, foot and Jacob Manning and others (A Committee elected and appointed by a Considerable Number of y^e Inhabitants of Salem for y^e Erecting and Building of a Meeting house for the publick Worshipp of God towards y^e Tower or Eastern End of y^e Town of Salem aforesaid. And for the procuring and purchasing a suitable piece of Land to plant it on) This Receipt whereof he doth hereby Acknowledge and himself therewith fully satisfied and paid hath Given Granted Bargained Sold Aliened Enfeoffed and Confirmed And by these presents Dote Grant Bargain Sell Alien Enfeoff Convey and Confirm unto y^e aforesaid William Pickering Joseph Andrew Abraham purchase Josiah Williard Mallard, foot and Jacob Manning a Committee as aforesaid for and on behalf of all such as are or hereafter shall be concerned in or with y^e Meeting house A Certain piece or parcel of Upland Situate lying and being in Salem aforesaid in y^e County aforesaid containing Thirteen poles or Rods of Ground Bounded Northwardly with y^e Main street Easterly by a Lane called Grafton lane Southwardly by other land of y^e S^r. Babbages and Westerly by a private way by y^e Widow Downys or howsoever otherwise Butted and Bounded or reputed to be bounded To have & to hold the S^d. piece or partoll of Upland containing 13 Thirteen poles or Rods of Ground Together with all wayes waters easements Rights Liberties Immunities profits priviledges Commodities Hereditaments Inclusions and appurtenances whatsoever therunto belonging or in any wise appertaining unto them y^e S^r. William Pickering Joseph Andrew Abraham purchase Josiah Williard Mallard, foot and Jacob Manning a Committee as aforesaid and their Successors in y^e Trust for y^e Use and behoof of y^e S^d. Committee and all others that shall be