

There would have been no central heat so heating devices have been placed in each room such as this parlor stove.

Office

Mr. Babcock's office has 2 secretaries. He owned about 100 acres which he farmed until he moved his family to Lockport where he became a businessman and politician.

The picture to the right of the outside wall secretary is made from human hair.

Upstairs

In the children's room on the west side of the house is a toddler's walker. Notice it's made of wood and not plastic. There is also a wicker potty chair on the far wall.

In the west bedroom is a sleigh bed with a wool coverlet that was made in 1843. It also has a quilt celebrating the sesquicentennial.

The clothes are period clothes. Notice how short and tiny the people must have been to wear these clothes and sleep in the sleigh bed.

The windows are called belly windows. There are two different stories on these windows. One story is that they were called this because children would crawl on the bellies into the window wells, and story two is that the windows come about belly high on an adult.

There are also pot belly stoves in each of the larger upstairs rooms for heat. Wood was carted upstairs and ashes carted down.

East bedroom

In this room is another children's room which was added on when the house was occupied after renovation, to provide for a closet. The blue dress on the wall is a wedding dress. The red dress was worn to Grover Cleveland's inauguration. On the dresser near the door are leather curlers. The leather is wrapped around a wire and twisted around a length of hair to form a curler. There are also several small dishes with a hole in the cover. These are to hold hair from a brush to be used in making human hair art. On the outside wall area there is a baby's bath, a covered thunder mug and an uncovered thunder mug. Thunder mugs are used as toilets during the night time, dumped into the covered pot and then in the morning taken down stairs and dumped, rinsed and replaced in the room.

At the top of the oil lamp on the dresser is the first heated curler. The lamp provides the heat and the curler is reheated after each curl. There were probably several used at one time. There is also a beaded bag which is a coin purse.

Babcock House tour with ~~Priscilla~~ Priscilla

Exterior:

The Babcock House was built around 1848. There is no known documentation with the actual date.

The stones over the doors and windows are called Lintels

The large corner stones are Quoins (coins), and used to keep the walls square.

The Quoins and Lintils would have come from the sand stone quarry. The masonry between the cobblestones is slaked lime. The cobblestones are put in length wise. You are only seeing the end of the stone.

The rows of stones between the Quoins are not equal, meaning there is not the same number of rows between each Quoin. When the stone mason was building the exterior walls, he could only do a couple of rows at a time to allow the mortar to dry, so there would have been several cobblestone houses being built in the same general area. The mason would go from one building to the next while waiting for the mortar to dry. There was another cobblestone house where the power plant is now but it was in disrepair and was demolished.

Inside:

Inside, the back room you can see the original exterior wall. This wall is unusual in that the cobblestones were neatly placed. In most rear facing walls, the cobblestones were just tossed around as the back of the house would not be seen and so the masons were not as fussy there. The cobblestones here are larger on this wall but still uniform.

The house was renovated in 1984 by NYSEG. They spent about \$250,000 to update it. The renovations are period and what the interior could have looked like. They collaborated with the Genesee Country Museum prior to renovations. NYSEG's start up manager lived here for three years and then NYSEG decided they didn't want anyone living in the house and donated, via lease, to the Somerset Historical Society.

Kitchen

In the front window is a board with two holes. This is called a sorter board. It is used to sort the cobblestones into large and small sized. Children were usually given the job to sort the stones using this board.

The fireplace and chandelier are not part of the original house but added during renovation and was located where there was evidence of the original fireplace. Mrs. Babcock or a cook would have cooked over an open fire. There is also a beehive oven next to the fireplace. A fire is started in the box and when it was ready to bake bread the coals were moved to the perimeter and the bread placed in the center of the oven to bake. Since there was no thermometer the general rule of thumb was if you could stick your arm in the oven for only 4-5 seconds, the oven was hot enough to use.

There is a hand pump on the counter. The hand pump pumped water from the cistern that is in the basement. The cistern collected rain water which was used throughout the household. There is also a hand pump outside.

Dining room

The dining room furniture is from around 1865. There is a painting on the wall depicting the Emancipation Proclamation with Abraham Lincoln which was used to determine what type of furniture would have been appropriate for the room.

Over the table is a chandelier that has invisible wiring running down to the lights. The hooks are tubes and the wires run inside the tubes so you can't see the wiring.

In this time period there were no washing machines so knife rests were used to keep the table cloths clean. There were no salt shakers but large master salts and smaller individual salts were used at the table. The master salt was filled with salt and was passed around so each person could fill their own salt vessel with a spoon for their use.

The large globed lamps in the room are called banquet lamps and use kerosene.

Opposite the table is a picture of a quail under curved glass. Curved glass was very unusual at this time.

On the sideboard is a Chocolate Set which consists of a pitcher and cups and saucers. Chocolate was very expensive in the late 1800s, therefore the pitcher and cups were small. One did not get a very big serving. Unlike our cups of cocoa these days.

The wall paper in the dining room and the living room are essentially the same but the living room is fancier with a boarder at the ceiling.

Entry way

Mr. Babcock wanted a wide front door with side lights to brighten the entry. The foyer was angled out and the door way was constructed specifically to support a wide door and the side lights have a deep sill.

Living room

The wide trim around the windows and interior doors is unusual for this time period. The front windows do not have a window sill but the back windows do. This room was probably 2 rooms when originally built.

There were no electronic devices or televisions so the pump organ and melodeon was their entertainment.

Picture over the sofa is a form of flower art made with wire, thread and beads. Look closely and you can see the intricate work done to make the forms look like dried flowers which is called Ganutell work.