The Spring 2017 issue of the Register contains an article that establishes the parentage of Anthony Sadler of Salisbury, Massachusetts. Anthony had one child, a posthumous son named Abiel, who moved to Gloucester by 1689.\footnote{Randy A. West, “‘The English Origin of Anthony Sadler of Salisbury, Massachusetts,’ Register 171 (2017): 104–108.}

The historian of that town, John J. Babson, claims that Abiel had a child born here [in Gloucester] by Rebekah, his wife, March 13, 1693. She was probably a daughter of Richard Dike; and, after the death of Sadler (Sept. 15, 1697), is supposed to have married Josiah Tainer. Another supposition might identify the child above mentioned, or a previous one, with John Sadler, who, in 1713, married Sarah Scott of Rowley; and in 1720, then living in Rowley, sold a house and land situated in the Second Parish, in the deed of which he calls Josiah Tainer his father-in-law.\footnote{John J. Babson, History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann, Including the History of Rockport (Gloucester, Mass.: Procter Brothers, 1860), 146.}

In a separate treatment of Josiah Tainer, Babson raises his “probable” placement of Josiah’s wife Rebecca as a daughter of Richard Dike to an unqualified factual statement.\footnote{Babson, History of the Town of Gloucester [note 2], 256.}

Genealogists have long treated these claims with caution. Clarence Almon Torrey questioned both Rebecca Sadler’s assignment to the Dike family and her second marriage. Aside from Babson, none of Torrey’s sources places Rebecca in either of the other families.\footnote{Clarence Almon Torrey, New England Marriages Prior to 1700, 3 vols. (Boston: NEHGS, 2011), 2:1318, also database online at AmericanAncestors.org, citing Babson, History of the Town of Gloucester [note 2], 146; James Savage, A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, Showing Three Generations of Those Who Came before May, 1692, on the Basis of Farmer’s Register, 4 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1860–1862), 4:3; Alonzo Lewis and James R. Newhall, History of Lynn, Essex County, Massachusetts: Including Lynnfield, Saugus, Swampscott, and Nahant (Boston: John L. Shorey, 1865), 158; David W. Hoyt, The Old Families of Salisbury and Amesbury, Massachusetts, 3 vols. (Providence, R. I.: Snow & Farnham, Printers, 1897–1916), 1:308, 3:1004. Unnoticed by Torrey, Savage expanded his initial account of the Dike family to show that Rebecca Dike married Josiah Tainer, but not Abiel Sadler (Genealogical Dictionary of New England, 3:616, addition to 2:50 line 7).}

Most recently, Randy A. West cites Babson’s brief sketch of Abiel, but also questions Rebecca’s assignment to the Dike family.\footnote{West, “English Origin of Anthony Sadler” [note 1], Register 171:107.}

Babson’s argument is heavily qualified and not very thoroughly documented. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that it is correct. The rationale for...
this conclusion lies in records that document Josiah Tainer’s connection by marriage with both the Dike family and the Sadler family. These records appear to have been largely overlooked since Babson’s original publication.

Josiah Tainer and the Dike Family

Josiah Tainer, called “Josias” earlier in life, was the son of Thomas and Elizabeth (_____) Tainer of Marblehead. Elizabeth and her children were among the legatees in the will of the widow Ann (_____) Condy, apparently Elizabeth’s sister. Josiah’s birth date is presumed to be 1666 or earlier, because he was appointed administrator of Thomas’s estate, 14 December 1687. Josias Tainor also joined an agreement among the “Children” and heirs of Thomas to settle his debts, dated 21 January 1701/2. By 22 July 1717, when an order relating to Thomas’s estate was issued to Josiah Tainer as administrator, he had moved from Marblehead to Gloucester.

Babson notes accurately that Josiah Tainer and his wife Rebecca are recorded in Gloucester as the parents of three children, of whom the eldest was born in 1707 [1706/7]. Records connecting Josiah to the Dike family date from the same time period. On 30 September 1707, Richard Dike recorded a grant “to his son in Law Josiah taner” of one half of the common right in the house where Josiah was then living. Soon after, Josiah Tainer and James Dike registered their holding of one-half interests in one common right that they had received by deed of gift from Richard Dike, dated 2 October 1708. When James Dike and Josiah “Tanner” sold Lot Number 121 on the cape to Peter Bennet of Gloucester, 23 September 1710, they did so with Richard Dike’s consent, as well as a release of dower by Josiah’s wife Rebecca.

James Dike is directly identified as Richard’s son, not only in this deed but in other deeds from Richard to James. Richard Dike does not appear to have entered another land transaction with Josiah, but the meaning of the September 1707 record is unmistakable. The term “son-in-law” could apply to a stepson, but Richard Dike had no stepchildren, and Josiah Tainer was not born to the same mother as James. The use of this term in the 1707 record could only mean that Josiah Tainer was married to Richard Dike’s daughter.

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7 Essex County Probate, file 27323.
9 Gloucester Town Records, 1850 transcript, 1:309 [FHL 0,876,172].
10 Gloucester Town Records [note 9], 1:287.
12 Essex County Deeds, 38:271; 41:234.
13 Richard Dike’s wife, Rebecca Doliver, had no previous husband, and their marriage ended at her death in 1726 (Vital Records of Gloucester [note 8], 2:179, 182, 3:119, 123).
Josiah Tainer and the Sadler Family

Whether Rebecca Dike had been married before is not obvious from the available records on Josiah, and the records of Abiel Sadler’s estate reveal no direct connection with either Josiah Tainer or Richard Dike.

Abiel certainly had married his wife Rebecca by 27 June 1693, when “Abiel Sadler & his wife” were presented at Salem. Neither her name nor the charge were specified, but “Abiel Sadler & Rebeckah Sadler his now Wife who were p[re]sented the last Salem Court for fornication” appeared at Ipswich on 25 September 1693, and acknowledged the offense. They were ordered to pay a fine of 40 shillings each. Babson does not identify a source for the child reportedly born to them on 13 March 1693, but this information may have arisen from the same proceedings. Rebecca survived Abiel, and was granted letters of administration on his estate on 15 November 1697. Apart from the inventory, dated 6 October 1697, Abiel Sadler’s probate includes no other documents, and no mention is made of any children or remarriage by his widow.

Land records nevertheless suggest that John Sadler belonged to the extended Dike family, in exactly the way Babson proposed. Josiah Tayner sold various pieces of land in Gloucester to John Sadler on 6 July 1717, for £46, with Josiah’s wife Rebeckah releasing dower. This deed makes no reference to any other relationship among the parties. However, on 28 March 1720, John Sadler of Rowley, with the consent of his wife Sarah, made a deed to Timothy Day Jr. of lands in Gloucester, some of which John Sadler had “bought of his father Josiah Tainer.” Sarah was the daughter of Joseph and Anna/Hannah (______) Scott of Rowley, who have no other known connection with the Dike family.

The “father” in this deed is a neat inversion of the “son-in-law” in the 1707 grant. In March 1720, John Sadler was not married to a daughter of Josiah Tainer and would not have identified Josiah as “father” for that reason. The only reason for John’s use of that term is because Josiah Tainer was John Sadler’s stepfather. In turn, this interpretation necessitates the identification of John’s mother as a widow named Rebecca Sadler who was active before 1707.

14 Essex County Court of General Sessions Minutes, 1692–1709, unpaged [FHL 0,877,466]. An abstract of these records omits the 27 June entry and shows the date of the fine as 1 September 1693 (Melinde Lutz Sanborn, comp., Lost Babes: Fornication Abstracts from Court Records, Essex County, Massachusetts, 1692 to 1745 [Derry, N. H.: the compiler, 1992], 1).
15 Babson, History of the Town of Gloucester [note 2], 146. The file papers of the Court of General Sessions are no longer at the Phillips Library of the Peabody-Essex Museum, as reported in Diane Rapaport, New England Court Records: A Research Guide for Genealogists and Historians (Burlington, Mass.: Quill Pen Press, 2006), 181. Instead, they are now held by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives in Boston. However, a recent search of this collection found no file papers related to this case (personal consultation with Elizabeth Bouvier, Head of Archives, 17 April 2019).
17 Essex County Deeds, 35:114–115.
18 Essex County Deeds, 38:73–74.
Only one such woman is known: the widow of Abiel Sadler of Gloucester. If Rebecca (Dike) Tainer is thus identified as Abiel Sadler’s widow, it would follow that Abiel also had married Richard Dike’s daughter.

John Sadler also exchanged property with James Dike. John had removed to Mendon by 8 May 1735, when he quitclaimed to James all the estate that John held in Gloucester “by virtue of one Deed or Instrument of conveyance bearing Date the tenth day of April Anno Domini Seventeen hundred & thirty four from ye s.d James Dyke unto myself.”[20] James Dike in turn sold to John Sadler, by now of Upton, one and a half acres and three rods in Gloucester by a deed of 14 May 1737.[21]

John Sadler died in Upton in 1753, testate, and his will mentions, among others, a son named Abiel.[22] This Abiel was born to John and Sarah (Scott) Sadler in Rowley on 20 December 1720 — nearly nine months after John’s deed to Timothy Day, Jr. (see above).[23] John’s choice of this name for one of his own sons also contributes onomastic evidence in favor of identifying John Sadler as Abiel’s son.

The evidence is less decisive on whether John Sadler was the child whose birth occasioned the fornication proceedings in 1693. John married Sarah Scott on 27 April 1713 in Rowley.[24] If he was born in March 1693, he would have married at age 20 years and 1 month. An older man would have met the conditions for marriage more easily, but as a couple fined for the 1693 birth, Abiel and Rebecca Sadler could not have had an earlier child. At the same time, it is not impossible that their first child died as an infant, and that their surviving son John was born very soon afterward. The timing of John Sadler’s birth remains unresolved.

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20 Essex County Deeds, 97:50.
22 Worcester County Probate, file 51738.
24 Ibid., 1:389.