

***14 Pleasant Street
Salem***

According to available evidence, this house was built in 1844 for John Cook, rope-maker.

On 17 September 1838, John Cook, 50, a Salem rope-maker, for \$300 purchased from the Short heirs a small lot of land on Pleasant Street (ED 350:148). The lot was bounded easterly 3 poles (49.5') on Pleasant Street, southerly 5 poles 6 links on land of John Meguay, westerly on land of Joseph Gardner 3 poles, and northerly 5 poles and 24.5 links on land of Thomas R. Peach. On this land, five years later, John Cook had this house built as a two-family in the fashionable Greek Revival style.

Salem in the 1840s was in transition from its maritime glory days to its future as a manufacturing center. Through the 1820s the town had conducted a large, successful coastal and overseas commerce; but trade fell off sharply in the late 1820s, followed by depression in the opening years of the 1830s. The advent of railroads and canals in the 1830s diverted both capital and trade away from the coast, and Salem's import economy waned as American firms produced goods that once came from overseas. The interior of the country was being opened for settlement, and people went west, including some from Salem. Wharves and warehouses and ships plummeted in value, and the merchants had to shift their investments swiftly into manufacturing and transportation. Some did not, and were ruined; others moved to Boston, the hub of investment in the new economy.

Despite setbacks and uncertainty, Salem chartered itself as a city in 1836. Its City Hall was built 1837-8 and the city seal was adopted with an already-anachronistic Latin motto of "to the farthest port of the rich East"—a far cry from "Go West, young man!" The Panic of 1837, a brief, sharp, nationwide economic depression, caused even more Salem families to head west in search of fortune and a better future. Salem had not prepared for the industrial age, and had few natural advantages. The large-scale factory towns of Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill, had the powerful waters of the Merrimack to drive the machinery of their huge textile factories, but Salem had only the North River, which served mainly to flush the waste from the many tanneries (23 by 1832) that had set up along its banks. Throughout the 1830s, the leaders of Salem scrambled to re-

invent an economy for their fellow citizens, many of whom were mariners without much sea-faring to do. Ingenuity, ambition, and hard work would have to carry the day.

John Cook, for whom this house was built, was a native of Salem, born in July, 1788, the son of Hannah Cook and Thomas Keene. His father, a sailor, came to Salem from Halifax, Nova Scotia, before the Revolution, and married one Hannah Silver (1753-1786), a "natural daughter" of Jonathan Cloutman (per Bentley, in his Parish List of Deaths, 1785-1819, Essex Institute, 1882), with whom he had a son Thomas, born in 1778, who died young, and another, born in 1784, who died on 27 May, 1785, of dropsy of the head, aged 10 months (ibid, p.1). Thomas Keen was a member of the East Church, whose minister, Rev. William Bentley, kept a diary in which Mr. Keen is mentioned repeatedly as asking for prayers and giving thanks for his safe return from voyages (much of the information below is gleaned from Bentley's writings).

Mrs. Hannah Keen died on 18 February, 1786, aged 32, of consumption (ibid, p.2). In that same year, in June, Mr. Keen married, second, Hannah (Cook) Cox-Adams, 36, as her third husband. Hannah Cook (1750-18__), born in 1750, was the last of the seven children of Benjamin Cook, a fisherman and mariner, and his wife Elizabeth Phippen. The Cooks and Phippens were both old Salem families. Hannah, 19, married, in 1769, Edward Cox, by whom she had a son Edward (born 1770), another Cox son, and a daughter Hannah Cox (born c.1771). Mr. Cox died, and Hannah, 30, married, second, in January, 1781, William Adams, by whom she evidently had a son William in 1781. In July, 1787, one of Mrs. Hannah Keen's brothers, mariner John Cook, died, and in November died one of her sisters. By Thomas Keen she had two children: a son born July 5th and baptized at the East Church July 6th, 1788, as John Cook Keen (in honor of her brother), and a daughter, Margaret Keen, born in November, 1791, who died in September, 1792, while Mr. Keen was at sea. By that time, Mrs. Keen's sons Edward Cox and William Adams, had become sailors and were frequently at sea on Salem's far-voyaging merchant vessels. Another Cox son had left town evidently.

The sailor's life was a hazardous one, and Thomas Keen was not more fortunate than most. On a voyage to France, he died of fever at Dunkirk in December, 1794, aged 45 years. He left his wife Hannah with one surviving Keen child: John Cook Keen, then six years old. In 1794 her son Edward Cox married Mary Gayton, and they lived in the East Parish. In November, 1797, her other son, William Adams, 16, went to sea with Capt. John Diman Preston, David

Mansfield, and others, evidently on a fishing trip; and they never returned (ibid, pp. 44-45). In September, 1798, Mrs. Keen's son Edward Cox, 27, died at sea, of fever, off Hispaniola (ibid, p.44). Mrs. Keen's only daughter, Hannah Cox, married James Murray in 1795 and had at least three children. She resided on Curtis Street. After a while her husband James Murray disappeared, and in 1802 two of her children died, leaving only a daughter; and in April, 1802, Mrs. Hannah Cox Murray would die of consumption, age 33 years.

It is understandable if Mrs. Keen, thrice widowed and with three sailor sons, took care to raise her little boy, John, not to follow the sea. John Cook Keen was apprenticed to a ropemaker, and learned that trade. For reasons unknown, he was not keen on his original surname, and used his middle name in its place, and called himself John Cook. Mr. Bentley noted of him (in 1816), "John Cook is a son of H. Keene, but has taken no other name than that of baptism," that is, John Cook rather than John Cook Keen. In another entry, Mr. Bentley notes: "takes the name of John Cooke, but this is indeed his Christian name only" (ibid, p.148).

John Cook grew up in the east parish of Salem, and attended the East Church. Not far from that church, on Union Street, on the fourth of July, 1804, was born a boy who would grow up to eclipse all sons of Salem in the eyes of the world: Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose father, a mariner, would die in 1808 of fever while on a voyage, as had John's own father.

John Cook may have been apprenticed to a Brown or a Vincent, who were prominent rope-makers of old Salem. Times were very good for ropemakers in this first decade of the 1800s, as Salem's merchants sent their ships all over the world and made enormous profits on their voyages. Rigging wore out fast on these vessels, and the rope-makers supplied cordage for old ships and new. In 1808, aged twenty, John Cook (Keen) courted Elizabeth Patfield of Salem, whose mother, Elizabeth, had long been employed as a domestic in the Vincent family, before marrying Thomas Patfield (who had died in 1794). Elizabeth's brother, James Patfield, was employed by Mr. Joseph Vincent as a rope-maker. On 5 January 1809 Elizabeth Patfield married John Cook Keen, whose name was mis-recorded as "John C. King."

Salem's boom had come to an end with crash in January, 1808, when Jefferson and the Congress imposed an embargo on all American shipping in hopes of forestalling war. The Embargo proved futile and nearly ruinous in Salem, whose commerce ceased. As die-hard Jeffersonians, led by the Crowninshield family,

the East Parish seafarers loyally supported the Embargo until it was lifted in spring, 1809. Salem then resumed its seafaring commerce for three years, but still the British preyed on American shipping; and in June, 1812, war was declared against Britain.

Most of the New England towns opposed the war as being potentially ruinous and for the benefit of the western war-hawk states. Not Salem, which went to war eagerly. Forty privateers were immediately fitted out in Salem, manned by Marblehead and Salem crews, who also served on U.S. Navy vessels, including the *Constitution*. In addition, Salem fielded companies of infantry and artillery. Salem and Marblehead privateers were largely successful in making prizes of British supply vessels. While many of the town's men were wounded in engagements, and some were killed, the adventure and possible riches of privateering kept the men, including John Cook, returning to sea as often as possible. The first prizes were captured by a 30-ton converted fishing schooner, the *Fame*, and by a 14-ton luxury yacht fitted with one gun, the *Jefferson*. Of all Salem privateers, the Crowninshields' 350-ton ship *America* was the most successful. She captured 30-plus prizes worth more than \$1,100,000.

Salem erected forts and batteries on its Neck, to discourage the British warships that cruised these waters. In June, 1813, off Marblehead Neck, the British frigate *Shannon* defeated the U.S. Navy frigate *Chesapeake*. Almost a year later, in April, 1814, the people of Salem gathered along the shores of Salem Neck as three sails appeared on the horizon and came sailing on for Salem Bay. These vessels proved to be the mighty *Constitution* in the lead, pursued by the smaller British frigates *Tenedos* and *Endymion*. The breeze was light, and the British vessels gained, but Old Ironsides made it safely into Marblehead Harbor, to the cheers of thousands.

On land, the war went poorly for the United States, as the British captured Washington, DC, and burned the Capitol and the White House. Along the western frontier, U.S. forces were successful against the weak English forces; and, as predicted by many, the western expansionists had their day. At sea, as time wore on, Salem's vessels often were captured, and its men captured or killed. After almost three years, the war was bleeding the town dry, and the menfolk were disappearing. Hundreds of Salem men and boys were imprisoned in British prison-ships and at Dartmoor Prison in England. John Cook and William Brown, captured when the British took their privateer, *Polly*, were imprisoned first at Halifax, N.S. (home town of John's father), and then shipped to prison in England, in October, 1813 (see Bentley). They may have gone to

Dartmoor, and stayed there, in abject conditions, until, at last, in February, 1815, peace was restored. John Cook was wounded in the war, and would later receive a pension (ibid, p.170).

John and Elizabeth Cook had a daughter, Elizabeth, in 1811 or so, and, in 1812, a son, whom they named John, and in 1815 another son, William. They were residing on the northwest side of the Common, near Oliver Street (ibid, p. 148). In February, 1816 (per Bentley), Elizabeth's brother, James Patfield, who was rigging a ship in Boston, fell into the Harbor when the rigging gave way, and drowned. Two others were rescued. James, the former Salem ropemaker, was serving as a U.S. Navy seaman on board the 74-gun frigate *Independence*. This bitter blow was followed, in June, by the death of the Cooks' son John, aged four, of convulsions.

John and Elizabeth Cook had more children, of whom the following are known: John Cook, born about 1817; an infant daughter who died of croup in September, 1819 (they resided on Williams Street at the time); James Patfield Cook, born in 1821, and Hannah Cook, born in 1823. John, James, and Hannah survived to adulthood.

John Cook (1788-1864), born 5 July 1788, son of Thomas Keen & Hannah Cook of Salem, died 4 Jan. 1864, "widower, ropemaker, aged 75 years 6 mos., son of John (sic) Keen & Hannah Adams" (per Salem Vital Records). He m. 5 Jan. 1809 **Elizabeth Patfield** (1789-1849), bp. 15 Feb. 1789, Salem, d/o Thomas & Elizabeth Patfield, died of dysentery 9 Oct. 1849, in her 61st year. He m/2

Elizabeth _____. Known issue:

1. Elizabeth C., c.1811, m. 1834 Thomas Hunt.
2. John, 1812, died 23 June 1816.
3. William, 1815, mariner, went blind 1845.
4. John, c.1817, m. 15 Sept. 1841 Eliza Ann Leighton of Boston.
5. daughter, May, 1819, died of croup 5 Sept. 1819.
6. James P., 12 Nov. 1820, m. 25 Nov. 1841 Mary Parsons; m/2 Abbie Edwards; had son and daughter by Mary, two daughters by Abbie.
7. Hannah, 1823, v. 1855.

As a ropemaker, John Cook was engaged in a business that depended heavily on a healthy maritime economy, since rope was made primarily for rigging ships. The cordage was manufactured in ropewalks, which were very long, low

buildings. The hired men were known as line-spinners or rope-makers, and made the rope by walking along the length of the building, making sure that the strands of hemp were twisted properly. The ropewalks in Salem stood mainly in the area off the Common, especially in swampy land running down to Collins Cove. Some of the ropewalks extended out into the water on piers.

Post-war, the Salem merchants rebuilt their fleets and resumed their worldwide trade, to great effect. A new custom house was erected in 1819, on the site of the Crowninshield mansion, at the head of Derby Wharf. Into the 1820s the foreign trade continued prosperous; and new markets were opened with Madagascar (1821), which supplied tallow, and Zanzibar (1825), whence came ivory, coffee, and gum copal, used to make varnish. Salem's general maritime foreign commerce fell off sharply late in the decade. Imports, which were the return cargoes in Salem ships, were not so much needed now that American goods were being produced in great quantities. The interior of the country was being opened for settlement, and people moved west, including some from Salem. To the north, the falls of the Merrimack River were powering large new textile mills, which created great wealth for their investors; and in general it seemed that the tide of opportunity was ebbing away from Salem by the end of the 1820s.

In 1830 occurred a horrifying crime that brought disgrace to the town. Old Capt. Joseph White, a wealthy merchant, widowed and without children, resided in the house now called the Gardner-Pingree house, on Essex Street. One night, intruders broke into his mansion and stabbed him to death as he slept. All of Salem buzzed with the news of murdering thugs; but the killers, it turned out, were Crowninshields and Knapps, members of Salem's elite class and relatives of the victim. A Crowninshield committed suicide, and two Knapps were hanged. The results of the investigation and trial were very damaging to Salem, and some of the more respectable families quit the town.

The advent of railroads and canals in the 1830s diverted both capital and trade away from the coast. Salem's merchants had to move quickly to take their equity out of wharves and warehouses and ships and put it into manufacturing and transportation. Some did not, and were ruined. Many moved to Boston, the hub of investment in the new economy.

Despite setbacks and uncertainties, Salem was chartered as a city in 1836. City Hall was built 1837-8 and the city seal was adopted with an already-anachronistic Latin motto of "to the farthest port of the rich East"—a far cry from "Go West, young man!" The Panic of 1837, a brief, sharp, nationwide economic depression,

caused even more Salem families to head west in search of fortune and a better future. Salem had not prepared for the industrial age, and had few natural advantages. The large-scale factory towns of Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill, had the powerful Merrimack to drive the machinery of their huge textile factories, but Salem had only the lower part of the North River, which served mainly to flush the waste from the many tanneries (23 by 1832) that had set up along its banks. Throughout the 1830s, the leaders of Salem scrambled to re-invent an economy for their fellow citizens, many of whom were mariners without much sea-faring to do. Ingenuity, ambition, and hard work would have to carry the day.

One inspiration was the Salem Laboratory Company, Salem's first manufacturing enterprise, founded in 1819 to produce chemicals. At the plant in North Salem on the North River, the production of blue vitriol was a specialty; and it proved a very successful business. Salem's whale-fishery, active for many years in the early 1800s, led, in the 1830s, to the manufacturing of high-quality candles at Stage Point, along with machine oils. The candles proved very popular. Lead-manufacturing began in the 1820s, and grew large after 1830, when Wyman's gristmills on the Forest River were retooled for making high-quality white lead and sheet lead (the approach to Marblehead is still called Lead Mills Hill, although the empty mill buildings burned down in 1960s).

These enterprises in the 1830s were a start toward taking Salem in a new direction. In 1838 the Eastern Rail Road began operating between Boston and Salem, which gave the people of Salem and environs a very direct route to the region's largest market. The new railroad tracks ran right over the middle of the Mill Pond; the tunnel under Washington Street was built in 1839; and the line was extended to Newburyport in 1840.

As maritime commerce faded, so did rope-making, and some of the ropewalks were taken down. A notable example was the Haraden brothers' ropewalk, off Brown Street, where John Cook worked, perhaps as a foreman, in 1837 (per Salem Directory, 1837). It was removed in the early 1840s to make way for the residential development of Howard Street (a street full of houses in the Greek Revival style).

Although he used the name John Cook, John C. Keene is the name by which he was listed in 1837 as residing at 24 Pickman Street and working as a ropemaker at 18 Brown Street (see 1837 Salem Directory). Nearby on Pickman Street resided Thomas Hunt, mariner, who had married John & Elizabeth's daughter

Elizabeth in 1834. In 1839 John Cook & family resided at 4 Conant Street (per 1839 City valuation record). In 1840, John Cook and family resided at 12 Andrew Street (see 1840 City valuations, Ward Two); and in 1841 John was there while his son James P. Cook, cabinet-maker, resided at 4 Conant Street (see 1841 Valuation). In 1842 at 4 Conant lived John, ropemaker, and James P., cabinet-maker, who was noted as "lame" (ibid, 1842; also, 1842 Salem Directory). In 1843, John and James resided at 13 Lemon Street (ibid, 1843).

Between 1843 and 1844 John Cook had this house put up on the lot that he had purchased five years before. Some notable events of the time were (1843) the building of a bridge across the North River (at Flint Street) and the visit to Salem of the midget "General," Tom Thumb; and (1844) a riot in North Salem when people thought they would be denied access to Liberty Hill, and a fire that burned down 20 buildings at the foot of Central Street. In 1844 John Cook was credited with "house, 36 Pleasant," valued at \$1000; and he resided there with his son James P. Cook (ibid, 1844). The 1845 Street Book also noted a "new house, \$1000" for John Cook. In 1846 also John Cook and James P. Cook resided at 36 Pleasant, although the 1845 valuation noted that James P. Cook was gone (Salem Directory, 1846; 1845 Salem valuation, ward two). The old numbering of Pleasant Street, increasing as it approached Bridge Street, continued for many years more.

John Cook must have seen that rope-making had a limited future; and he doubtless pondered how to make the transition from rope-making to a more promising branch of manufacturing; however, he was now in his fifties, and he may already have pinned his hopes on his capable sons and son-in-law.

In the 1840s, new companies in new lines of business arose in Salem. The tanning and curing of leather was a very important industry by the mid-1800s. It was conducted on and near Boston Street, along the upper North River. There were 41 tanneries in 1844, and 85 in 1850, employing 550 hands. The leather business would continue to grow in importance throughout the 1800s. The lack of river power was solved by the invention of steam-driven engines, and in 1847 the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company erected at Stage Point the largest factory building in the United States, 60' wide by 400' long. It was an immediate success, and hundreds of people found employment there, many of them living in industrial tenements built nearby. Also in the 1840s, a new method was introduced to make possible high-volume industrial shoe production. In Lynn, the factory system was perfected, and that city became the nation's leading shoe producer; but Salem built shoe factories too, and attracted shoe workers from

outlying towns and country areas. Even the population changed, as hundreds of Irish families, fleeing the Famine, settled in Salem; and the men went to work in the factories and as laborers.

In the face of all this change, some members of Salem's waning merchant class continued to pursue their sea-borne businesses—and therefore to support the remaining rope-makers—but even the conditions of shipping changed, and Salem was left on the ebb tide. In the late 1840s, giant clipper ships replaced the smaller vessels that Salem men had sailed around the world; and the clippers, with their deep drafts and large holds, were usually too large for Salem and its harbor. The town's shipping soon consisted of little more than Zanzibar-trade vessels and visits from Down East coasters with cargoes of fuel wood and building timber. By the end of the decade (just as the California Gold Rush began) Salem was about finished as a working port. An excellent picture of Salem's waterfront, during its period of decline, is given by Hawthorne in his "introductory section" (really a sketch of Salem) to **The Scarlet Letter**, which he began while working in the Custom House and completed at home on nearby Mall Street.

In October, 1849, Elizabeth (Patfield) Cook died at the age of sixty. She left behind her husband John and her children, Mrs. Elizabeth Hunt, William, John, James, and Hannah. Her loss must have been grievous to her family.

In 1850, this house was occupied by two families: in one unit resided John Cook, 62, ropemaker, with son William Cook, 32, a mariner who had been blind since 1845, and daughter Hannah Cook, 23; in the other unit were James Gilbert, 47, mariner, wife Sarah E. (nee Follett), 43, and daughters Ann E., 21, and Sarah F., 18 (per 1850 census). The Gilberts had been residing there since 1847.

In November, 1852, John Cook, Salem rope-maker, for \$2300 sold his Pleasant Street homestead to his son-in-law, Thomas Hunt of Salem (ED 479:214). The Cooks continued to reside here. John Cook married again, to a woman named Elizabeth. His son John Cook (Jr.) and wife Eliza, with their sons John H. and William S., evidently went to China in 1846, in connection with the mercantile business of John Jr.'s brother-in-law, Thomas Hunt; and in 1854 their third child, Thomas H. Cook, was born; but it would seem that John Cook (Jr.) died in China or on his way home, or soon after. In 1855, the house had too many Cooks: in one unit resided John Cook, 67, rope-maker, Elizabeth K., 59, William, 40, a seaman, Hannah, 27, and James, 32, a cabinet-maker; in the other unit lived the family of the late John Cook (Jr.): Eliza A., 32, John H., 13, William, 10, and

Thomas H., 9 months, also Sarah Hart, 50, likely Mrs. Cook's mother (see house 172, ward two, 1855 census).

John Cook Jr. (1819-1854), died in China evidently. He m. 1841 **Eliza Ann Leighton** (1824-1898), born Kittery, Me., 1824, died 20 June 1898. Known issue:

1. John H., 1842
2. William S., 1845, died 1872.
3. Thomas H., 1854

James Patfield Cook (1820-1892) resided here with his father and other family members in 1855. He had already led an adventurous life, and more lay ahead of him. As a young man, he had shipped before the mast on the *Black Eagle*, Capt. Mugford, on a voyage to Australia in the 1830s. Rather than accept the Captain's offer of a position as second mate, he learned the furniture-making business in the cabinet-makers' shop of Kimball & Sargent. He married Mary Parsons in 1841, and they had a son and a daughter before her untimely death. He then became foreman of the repair shops of the Boston & Albany Railroad's South Reading branch; and then he went into the piano business in Boston. His brother-in-law, Thomas Hunt, a merchant and ship chandler, opened a trade with China by 1852, and in that year James became a partner and moved to China. He returned to Salem in 1854, and after 1855 married Miss Abbie Edwards, with whom he would have two daughters.

In April, 1857, Thomas Hunt for \$2500 sold the Pleasant Street homestead to James P. Cook (ED 564:26). In 1859 he returned to China, but the house stayed full of Cooks. In 1860, John Cook, 71, a widower again, resided here with his daughter-in-law, the widow Eliza A. Cook (born in Maine), 36, her sons John H., 18, William S., 15, and Thomas H., 5, and Sarah Hart, 54, born in Maine (see 1860 census, ward two, house 1741).

The Civil War began in April, 1861, and went on for four years, during which hundreds of Salem men served in the army and navy, and many were killed or died of disease or abusive treatment while imprisoned. Hundreds more suffered wounds, or broken health. From this house, William S. Cook, 17, enlisted in October, 1861, and was assigned to Co. F of the 23rd regiment, Mass. Volunteer Infantry. He soon found himself in Maryland, and then North Carolina, where he served in the vicinity of Newbern until October, 1862, when he was discharged

for a disability (MSSMCW 2:748). The people of Salem contributed greatly to efforts to alleviate the suffering of the soldiers, sailors, and their families; and there was great celebration when the war finally ended in the spring of 1865.

In January, 1864, on the 4th, John Cook died in his 76th year, presumably at his home. In the probate of his estate he was termed a mariner, but his death record lists him as a rope-maker. He had managed to preserve about \$2200 of personal property (#36096).

Through the 1860s and 1870s, as Salem continued to pursue a manufacturing course, the house remained the home of Mrs. Eliza A. Cook, widow of John Cook Jr., and her family. The managers and capitalists tended to build their new, grand houses along Lafayette Street (these houses may still be seen, west of Roslyn Street). For the workers, they built more and more tenements near the mills of Stage Point. A second, larger, factory building for the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company would be added in 1860, and a third in 1865; and by 1879 the mills would employ 1200 people and produce annually 14,700,000 yards of cloth. Shoe-manufacturing also continued to expand in the 1870s, with 40 shoe factories employing 600-plus operatives by decade's end. More factories and more people required more space for buildings, more roads, and more storage areas.

In 1865 Mrs. Eliza Cook resided here with her son Thomas H., ten, and her mother, the widow Sarah Hart, 59 (1865 census house 254, ward two). By 1870 the house was occupied by Eliza A. Cook, 46, her son William S. Cook, 25, a clerk in a ship chandlery (probably his uncle Thomas Hunt's), her son Thomas Hunt Cook, 15, her mother Mrs. Hart, 64, and Sarah E. Cook, 21, who may have been a daughter of the owner, James P. Cook (1870 census, house 265, ward two). William S. Cook, the Civil War veteran, would die on 10 Dec. 1872, aged 32 years.

Salem kept building infrastructure, and new businesses, and expansions of established businesses. Retail stores prospered, and machinists, carpenters, millwrights, and other specialists all thrived. In the late 1800s, French-Canadian families began coming to town to work in Salem's mills and factories, and more houses and tenements filled in what had been open areas of the city.

The owner of the house, James P. Cook, continued his remarkable career in Salem. He had made two last trips to China in 1864 and 1868, and had returned in 1869 for good. He turned his attention to railroads and manufacturing, with

good success, and became quite wealthy. In 1870 he was an alderman of the city. He was president of the Worcester, Nashua, and Rochester Railroad, a director of other railroads, president of the Suttons Mills corporation, and partner in a brewery, Jones, Cook & Co. In 1888 he became president of Salem's Merchants' National Bank. By then he had purchased the Washington Square mansion built for U.S. Sen. Nathaniel Silsbee, and there he lived with his family.

In 1880, the Pleasant Street house (#39 at the time) was occupied as a two-family: in one unit lived Mrs. Eliza Cook, 50, and her son Thomas, 26; in the other resided Andrew J. Philbrick, 40, a farrier, his wife Anna S., 36, and their child Mildred, 12 (1880 census, ward two, house 11). Mr. Philbrick carried on a horse-shoeing business at 36 Bridge Street.

On 23 October 1892, James P. Cook, the owner, died at the age of 72. He was survived by his second wife Abbie, and four children, including Mrs. Mary A. Sutton of North Andover and Mrs. Gertrude L. Trumbull of Salem. In January, 1895, the executors of the will of J.P. Cook sold the premises and other Cook real estate to Charles A. Sinclair, of Portsmouth (ED 1437:1). At that time, Mrs. Eliza Cook was diabetic and blind. She had lived here for 38 years; and now she moved to 5 Rust Street in Salem, where she would die on 20 June 1898, in her 75th year. She was survived by a grandson, who worked in Boston City Hall. In her last illness she was patient and resigned; and she left a wide circle of mourners (see obituary, *Salem News*, 21 June 1898).

In May, 1897, Mr. Sinclair sold out to Cora M. Page, the wife of Henry C. Page (1512:549); and in November, 1902, Cora Page sold the same to Alice Wilson, wife of John M. Wilson (ED 1690:175). The Wilsons moved in, and used the house as a two-family. It is likely that the Wilsons remodeled the house: to them we may ascribe the Colonial Revival features (chimney pieces and trim), and the bay windows, side entry porch, and other additions.

In 1909 the house was occupied by John M. Wilson, who ran a bicycle supply store at 22 Central Street, and his family; and by Charles H. McAndrews, a shoemaker, and his family. These two families were still here in 1914.

In the early 20th century large numbers of Polish and Ukrainian families settled primarily in the Derby Street neighborhood, while this neighborhood seems to have remained primarily Yankee in background. By the eve of World War One, Salem was a bustling, polyglot city that had large department stores and factories of every description. Its politics were lively, and its economy was strong.

On June 25, 1914, in the morning, in Blubber Hollow (Boston Street opposite Federal), a fire started in one of Salem's fire-prone wooden tanneries. This fire soon consumed the building and raced out of control, for the west wind was high and the season had been dry. The next building caught fire, and the next, and out of Blubber Hollow the fire roared easterly, a monstrous front of flame and smoke, wiping out the houses of Boston Street, Essex Street, and upper Broad Street, and then sweeping through Hathorne, Winthrop, Endicott, and other residential streets. Men and machines could not stop it: the enormous fire crossed over into South Salem and destroyed the neighborhoods west of Lafayette Street, then devoured the mansions of Lafayette Street itself, and raged onward into the tenement district. Despite the combined efforts of heroic fire crews from many towns and cities, the fire overwhelmed everything in its path: it smashed into the large factory buildings of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company (Congress Street), which exploded in an inferno; and it rolled down Lafayette Street and across the water to Derby Street. There, just beyond Union Street, after a 13-hour rampage, the monster died, having consumed 250 acres, 1600 houses, and 41 factories, and leaving three dead and thousands homeless. Some people had insurance coverage, and some did not; all received much support and generous donations from all over the country and the world. It was one of the greatest urban disasters in the history of the United States, and the people of Salem would take years to recover from it. Eventually, they did, and many of the former houses and businesses were rebuilt; and several urban-renewal projects (including Hawthorne Boulevard) were put into effect.

By the 1920s, Salem was once again a thriving city; and its tercentenary in 1926 was a time of great celebration. The Wilsons remained the owners and occupants here, and made two deeds within the family (in 1922 and 1932, ED 2508:124 and 2909:488). From that time forward, Salem boomed right through to the 1960s, but the arrival of suburban shopping malls and the relocation of manufacturing businesses took their toll, as they have with many other cities. More than most, Salem has navigated its way forward into the present with success, trading on its share of fame arising from the commercialization of the witchcraft delusion, but also from its great history as an unrivalled seaport and as the home of Hawthorne and McIntire. Most of all, it remains a city where the homes of the old-time merchants, mariners, rope-makers, and mill-operatives are all honored as a large part of what makes Salem different from any other place.

--28 July 2001, Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc.

Glossary & Sources

A figure like (ED 123:45) refers to book 123, page 45, Essex South registry of Deeds, Federal Street, Salem.

A figure like (#12345) refers to Essex Probate case 12345, on file at the Essex Probate Court, Federal Street, Salem, or on microfilm at Mass. Archives, Boston, or at the Peabody Essex Museum's Phillips Library, Salem.

MSSRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers & Sailors in the Revolutionary War*, available at the Salem Public Library among other places.

MSSCRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers, Sailors, & Marines in the Civil War*, available at the Salem Public Library among other places.

EIHC refers to the Essex Institute Historical Collections (discontinued), a multi-volume set (first volume published in 1859) of data and articles about Essex County. The indices of the EIHC have been consulted regarding many of the people associated with this house.

The six-volume published Salem Vital records (marriages, births, and deaths through 1849) have been consulted, as have the Salem Directory and later Naumkeag Directory, which have information about residents and their addresses, etc.

Sidney Perley's three-volume *History of Salem, 1626-1716* has been consulted, as has the four-volume *William Bentley's Diary*, J. Duncan Phillips' books, some newspaper obituaries, and other sources.

Salem real estate valuations, and, where applicable, Salem Street Books, have also been consulted, as have genealogies.

There is much more material available about Salem and its history; and the reader is encouraged to make his or her own discoveries.

--Robert Booth

JAMES P. COOK.

Demise of a Well-Known Citizen and Business Man.

James P. Cook died at his home, 94 Bridge street, at 7.30 o'clock yesterday morning, after a lingering illness from Bright's disease. He had been confined to his house for some time.

Deceased was very well known about the city and in Boston, where he conducted business at 147 Congress street.

Mr. Cook was born in Salem Nov. 12, 1820, and when quite young went to Australia in ship Black Warrior, Captain Mugford. He was offered the position of second mate, but instead of remaining a sailor he learned the trade of cabinet maker with Kimball & Sargent, and was afterward in charge of the repair shops of the South Reading branch and of the Boston & Albany railroads. For a while he was in the piano business in Boston, but in 1852 he went to China and became a member of the ship chandlery and mercantile firm of Thos. Hunt & Co.; he returned home in 1854, and went back to China again in 1859, 1864 and in 1868, the last trip to settle up the business of the firm, returning home in 1869 to remain.

Since that time he has been largely interested in railroading and manufacturing. In 1870 he was an alderman of Salem, rendering important service to the city. He was president of the Merchants' National bank (succeeding the late George R. Emmerton in 1888), president of the Worcester, Nashua & Rochester railroad, a director in the Hereford, the Upper Coos, and the Detroit & Eel River railroads, president of the Sutton's Mills corporation, and interested in several other manufacturing concerns, and was a member of the brewery firm of Jones, Cook & Co. He was twice married, first to Miss Parsons, and second to Miss Edwards who survives him; also a daughter and son by his first wife and two daughters by his second.

Funeral services will be held Wednesday at 3 o'clock. The burial will be private.

17 Sept. 1838 Shorts to John Cook, 350:148 (2 pages)

~~Know all men by these presents, that we~~ 148.

Phillip Short, of Lynn, in the County of Essex, Cordwainer, James Philip Short
Short, George Short, Ralph Taylor, John Silva and Nancy Taylor ^{et alii.} to
lor wife to said Ralph Taylor, in her right, in the County of Suffolk, ^{John Cook,}
and State of Massachusetts, in consideration of three
hundred dollars, paid by John Cook, of Salem, in said County
of Essex, Rope-maker, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged,
do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said John
Cook a certain lot of land situate in said Salem, containing about
sixteen and a half poles, be the same more or less, and is bounded
as follows, viz, Easterly on Pleasant Street leading to Bridge Street,
there measuring three poles, Southerly on land of John Hegway
there measuring five poles and six links of chain, Westerly on
land of Joseph Gardner there measuring three poles and Northely
on land of Thomas Hatch there measuring five poles and twenty
four and a half links of chain, with all the privileges and
appurtenances to the same belonging, or in any wise appertain-
ing: SO have and to hold the above granted premises, with
the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to the said John
Cook and to his heirs and assigns to his and their use and behoof
forever. And we the said Phillip, James, George, Ralph, John, and
Nancy for ourselves and our heirs, executors and administrators do
covenant with the said John Cook and with his heirs and assigns
that we lawfully seized in fee of the aforesaid premises, that
they are free from all encumbrances, that we have good right
to sell and convey the same to the said John Cook, as aforesaid,
and that we will and our heirs, executors and administrators
shall warrant and defend the same to the said John Cook and
his heirs and assigns forever, against the lawful claims and de-
mands of all persons: In witness whereof, We the said
Phillip Short, James Short, George Short, Ralph Taylor, John
Silva and Nancy Taylor wife to said Ralph Taylor, with Martina
wife to said Phillip she relinquishing her right of dower for the

Consideration

~~considered before and after the date of the above and 1838~~

this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and thirty eight. - Philip Short. - seal.

Executed and delivered in presence of us. } Ralph Taylor. - seal.

Charles H. Richards. } Nancy ^{his} Taylor _{mark}. - seal.

John G. Davis. } John Silva. - seal.

James Short. - seal.
Gory Short. - seal.
Martha Short. - seal.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Suffolk. ss. Sept. 17. A.D. 1838.

Then personally appeared the above named Philip Short, Ralph Taylor, and John Silva and acknowledged in favor of instrument to be true, correct and true: - before me - W. G. Stearns. - justice of the peace.

Essex. ss. Received January 4. 1845. 10 m. part 11 Ad
received and examined by W. H. French Reg.

Stroeter

Nelson

Mrs. Wm. Q. Jos

Jno. W. h

Mrs. B. Plummer

Jas. T. Goldsmith

Abm. Edward

Wm. H. Plummer

Sam. Honeyca

A. Welch

Heirs of W. B. & F. Johnson

Jos. Foster

G. Barton

Charles Endicott

Geo. D. Phippen

Jos. H. Phippen

S. T.

Samuel Hutchinson

A. Story

Jos. Upton

S. T.

Heirs of Spaulding

J. F. Standard

S. B. Dean

Heirs of Hew

J. W. Boutton

S T R E E T

P L E A S A N T

W I N T E R

O L I V E

P L E A S A N T

