SAMUEL COOK (1641-1702) ae. 61
HOPE PARKER (1650—before 1690)

From the story of Samuel's parents, Henry and Judith (Birdsall) Cook (4-5), we find that Samuel, and probably his brother, Henry, left Salem, Mass., to settle in New Haven, Conn., about 1663. Samuel would be 22 years of age and Henry, just older, was evidently about 24. How we would love to have the details of such an undertaking. They left Salem after the death of their father, leaving their widowed mother, not knowing if they might ever see her again. Traveling the distance from Salem to New Haven was of much greater consequence then, than now.

Since New Haven is a port on the Connecticut shore of Long Island Sound (map #5), they no doubt traveled the distance by boat from the Massachusetts Bay around Cape Cod and into the Sound to their destination.

We get a brief review of Samuel's life and activities in Connecticut in an account written by William Richard Cutter:

"Samuel Cook, son of Henry Cook, appeared in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1663, and, in April 1670, removed to Wallingford with the first planters. He was a tanner and shoemaker, the first of that trade in the settlement. He held important offices in town and church, and died in March, 1702. It is apparent that he was an industrious and useful citizen, and achieved worldly success, as his estate inventoried at three hundred and forty pounds, a large sum for that place and time. He married first, May 2, 1667, at New Haven, Hope Parker, daughter of Edward and Elizabeth Parker (4-9), born April 26, 1650; died before 1690. He married second, July 14, 1690, Mary______, who died after having two children. He married third, about 1695, Mary (Mallory) Roberts, widow of Eli Roberts. Samuel and Mary Roberts had three children, bringing the number of Samuel's children to 15. Mary survived Samuel and married, Jeremiai Howe, Sr., April 9, 1705. . . ."1

Not all of the section of land bordering the Sound at New Haven was suitable for settlement and crowding conditions invited a migration to lands further north in the valleys of the Quinnipiac River.

In 1667, the General Court at Hartford granted the "towne of New Haven libertie to make a village on ye East River provided they settle a village there within fower years from May next." Shortly after this "libertie" had been granted, thirty-nine persons, among whom was our Samuel Cook, Nathaniel Merriman (4-13), and John Ives (4-11), entered into a "covenant" which provided that "we doe engage personally to settle upon ye place...come twelve months, if God's Providence inevitably hinder not." 2

It required courage to open a country in the interior. Deer, bear, moose, and wolves roamed the thick forests between New Haven and the settlement later named Wallingford. Nights were made hideous with the howling of wolves who killed cattle and sheep left without constant guard. Indians often broke loose at unexpected times and in unprepared places. It was a practice of our forefathers in New England to group themselves, when migrations were made into new areas, and to settle new villages with groups of
families for mutual protection. Plans for colonization were matters that required organization and discipline. Traveling any distance required armed guards and means of conveyance for needed provisions, as well as necessary equipment for the building of homes.

The new village must be laid out around a "common", planting fields surveyed, burying ground and a meeting house lot allotted, and building of homes must proceed without delay. A train band must be on hand immediately whose members, all able-bodied men of the town, must be ready at all times to take turns at guard duty to signal any alarm of surprise Indian attacks and to be prepared to take military action.

The five acre lot allotted to Samuel and Hope within the village of Wallingford is shown on a 1670 map of Wallingford (map # 9), being the second lot east of Long Highway and north of the first laid out cross highway. It is not known whether they resided on this lot, but he did build a home on their farmland. They were given 500 acres to the west of the village, part of which extended into what became known as the parish of Cheshire, (maps #8, 12) but was early considered a part of Wallingford. He built his home on what came to be known as 'Cook Hill'.

"His home was situated one-half mile off the six rod road or 'King's Highway', and was built on one of the highest elevations in the immediate area. It stood about 400 feet above sea level, overlooking the beautiful valley of Mill River with West Rock and the Waterbury Mountain in the distance. To the north was the Hanging Hills that later gave rise to the town of Meriden. To the south, the Sleeping Giant, a mountain sentinel, just across the border of Wallingford; the head bearing south, 18 degrees west, which, could its eastern slope be moved, would allow a view of the more settled area of New Haven." 3

The road that leads to the home spot was surveyed and built in 1702, the year that Samuel died, but during his occupancy, the only road was whatever seemed most traversable, through the fields to the town. Among the many virtues of Samuel and Hope's land was the presence of a lovely spring where Samuel could build the vats essential to the curing of hides for leather.

"He (Samuel) was by trade a shoemaker and tanner of hides, and traces of his old tannery may still be seen on the farm now owned by one of his descendants. There is a boiling spring, near which are mounds of earth arranged in a manner so as to form various sized vats to accommodate the different sized hides which he tanned. These mounds and vats were made on a slight grade so that the water from the spring could be turned from one vat to another. This spring is still known as 'Tan Vat Spring'." 4

Charles H. S. Davis, in his "History of Wallingford", speaks of Col. Thaddeus Cook, a grandson of Samuel, the settler, in these terms:

"Col. Thaddeus Cook... was born in that part of the town now embraced in the township of Cheshire. (His mansion is still standing and is located across the road from the old Cook place) On the breaking out of the war of the Revolution, he entered into the service of his country; was made Colonel of his regiment, and was under the command of Gen. Gates during the memorable battle at Saratoga in 1777, and greatly distinguished himself as a brave and skilful officer. He died in Wallingford, Feb. 28, 1800, ae. 72 years." 5

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COLONEL THADDEUS COOK PLACE

This fine old mansion was built in 1738. Hand wrought nails were used throughout. The old chimney measures 11 feet at its base. Nearly all the original glass in the 22 windows is intact. A portion of the building on the east was removed to the town of Wallingford in 1810. It was originally occupied by slaves who were willed their freedom in due time.

"The approach to this old landmark is glorious. For a distance of several hundred feet, leading to the house, is an avenue of maple trees, thirty-eight in number, set out on each side of the highway which forms the boundary line between Wallingford and Cheshire. But the hand of time is fast working havoc on these trees, which were set out in 1805 by Squire Samuel Cook, son of Col. Thaddeus. These trees have furnished much of the sweets for the early settlers of Cook Hill. Those were happy days for the children over 100 years ago, when the warm spring days started the sap flowing. Many of the little sugar cakes were heartily relished by the Grand and Great Grand-children of Col. Thaddeus Cook. Two large elms across the road from the house were also planted by Squire Samuel before the War of 1812. Two rows of box wood lead from the front and side doors to a white picket fence..."

"The house contains 11 spacious rooms and all of the rooms have large corner posts and beautiful wainscoting...The electric light has replaced the golden glow of the old fashioned candle, and steam heat has replaced the fireplace and Franklin Stove, and a modern electric pump has released the old oaken bucket from further service..."

"Across the road from the house was a large barn, and we read in Thaddeus' Will that his livestock consisted of seven horses, eight cows, including the cow with the crumpled horn, eight heifers, and five pair of oxen.

"It is known that Col. Thaddeus was a lover of good horses. To the north of his mansion house is a large field where he pastured his horses, and it is said that the horse he rode during the last days of the war would, upon being liberated, trot to the farthest corner of the field and remain there waiting the approach of other cavalry horses to be stationed in formation."
The aforementioned author, Charles Davis, speaks of Thaddeus' grandfather, Samuel, in these words:

"Samuel, the first of the Cook settlers in Wallingford, was regarded as a very good man by his friends and neighbors, and was frequently called to fill offices of responsibility and trust in the village and in the church of which he was a member..." 7

Mrs. Mary (Cook) Leonard, a direct descendant of Samuel, was head of the Welfare Department of Wallingford for many years. She graciously offered the following information for an article printed in the 'Wallingford Post' newspaper dated Thursday, March 29, 1951. From this article we read:

"Her folks, she said, (referring to the Cooks) were not just early settlers of Wallingford—they were the original settlers. Six of the names on the marker at the Congregational Church were her ancestors.

"It seems that when the Cook family left New Haven for the back country on the Quinnipiac River they had in their saddlebags a land grant for 500 acres on what is now Cook Hill and five acres on what is now Center Street." 8
Mrs. Leonard has since passed away, but seven acres of the original 500 acres is still owned by her son, Dr. Harmon Leonard, of Wallingford, Conn., and her daughter, Adella Olean (Leonard) Buswell, of Glastonbury, Conn., both of whom the writer and her husband were privileged to meet. Many pleasurable hours were spent with the Buswells looking over the area of the original Cook property of 500 acres where both Adella and her brother, Harmon had lived, romped and played as they were growing to maturity. We tramped through the fields and found the old 'Tan Vat Spring', where our common ancestors, Samuel and Hope, had settled, and where the hides were tanned for shoes and marketing. Some of the vats still remain and the Spring holds water within its framed wooden walls. Had it not been for Adella, we may never have found the precious spot.

Charles and Elaine at Cook Tanning Vat
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The isolation of the once active tannery, hidden within prolific underbrush, insures its forgetting by the public in general. It seemed we were traversing hallowed ground and that those of the past were close by to give sanction to our love for them and an appreciation for our interest in their names and personal data. Such experiences as this brings the past close to the present and a personal acquaintance is developed that approaches realism.

Across the road from the Thaddeus Cook Mansion is the area where Samuel and Hope made their farm house. The old rock fence that enclosed the house was 'tumbled down', but still very much in evidence. There was no mistaking that here was where they had lived, though no log house remained. It was here that Samuel had built the home for his bride of three years. They had moved from New Haven to Cook Hill in 1670 with two children. The oldest, Samuel Cook, our progenitor, was but two years of age and another, John Cook, was but a tiny baby. We must look back into the past more than 300 years to
see Samuel, a young man of 29, and his dutiful young wife of 20, making plans for a new home where they must subdue the rawness of a wilderness and eek out a subsistence in a very primitive way.

The usual way of traveling the trails between New Haven and Wallingford before roads were built, was by horse or ox-drawn cart, or on horseback, trailing livestock as they went. According to Mrs. Leonard's report, Samuel and Hope, with their two babies, may have traveled on horseback. The mention of saddlebags leaves this impression. The trails were frequented by Indians and other dangers would be met as streams were crossed and underbrush cleared. In spite of the difficulties, there were rewards in the natural beauties by the way. The countryside around Wallingford is impressive with its rolling hills that seem placed to make way for many small streams.

Samuel and his wife, Hope Parker, had a daughter born to them the following year in 1671, and as time went, at each two year interval, their family saw an increase to ten children.

Hope did not live to see all her children reach maturity. Some time before 1690, she died. Samuel married Mary____, but death was soon to take away a second mother and wife. Mary had two children whom she left when the youngest was only two months old. Samuel, no doubt, had his hands full of responsibility, but he soon married Mary (Mallory) Roberts, widow of Eli Roberts. Samuel and this Mary had three, which brought the number of Cook progeny to fifteen.

Children of first marriage:

1. Samuel Cook, b. Mar. 3, 1668 in New Haven; md. Hannah Ives, dau. of John and Hannah (Merriman) Ives (4-7)
2. John Cook, b. Dec. 3, 1669, in New Haven
3. Hannah Cook, b. Mar. 3, 1671, in Wallingford
4. Isaac Cook, b. Mar. 10, 1673; died April 7, 1673, ae. less than a month.
5. Mary Cook, b. Apr. 23, 1675; md. Nathaniel Ives, Apr. 5, 1699

Children of second marriage:

11. Israel Cook, b. May 8, 1692
12. Mabel Cook, b. June 30, 1694

Children of third marriage:

13. Benjamin Cook, b. Apr. 3, 1697; died, 1717, unmarried; was a
14. Ephraim Cook, b. Apr. 19, 1699
15. Elizabeth Cook, b. Sept. 10, 1701; md. Adam Mott, Aug. 28, 1717."

"It seems in those days there were Indians hereabouts, so the Cooks signed an agreement with the town that they would not work their farms on the hill until one hour after sunrise, and would quit work one hour before sunset. This, explained Mrs. Leonard, was a manner of protection for all concerned." 10

Indian attacks occurred most often in the semi-darkness of early morning or later evening of the day.

With all the hardships that may have been suffered, with all the privations endured, as were common to the early settler, with all the labor that had to be undergone, these people had the great good fortune to live in the golden age of this country. The golden age is always in the past. It is the 'good old times'. It was a time of almost total self-reliance. Their wants were limited by their means to gratify them, and they managed to live an independent life, untaxed of all save labor. They built their own houses and barns. They raised their own wool and flax. They spun and wove them, and there is no doubt felt just as proud in the garments they made as we do in our 'store clothes'. They tanned their own leather and made their own boots and shoes. They made their own hominy and ground their corn. They threshed their own grain and then ground it with a horse mill and felt proud and content, and thought they were 'living high' if they could have a wheaten flour biscuit for Sunday morning, or when a visitor called to see them. They fattened their hogs in the woods, and when they killed them, they dug a hole in the ground, filled it with water and heated it up with hot rocks to give the porker a good scald. They killed deer and venison and cured the hams; they fished in the streams, picked wild fruit and nuts, and lived on the fat of the land as far as game was concerned.

The colonial days were a time of good fellowship, when the latch strings of their cabin doors hung generously on the outside. It was a time when men, for self-protection, rallied together and stood shoulder to shoulder. There were town meetings, legislatures and elections, with voting privileges usually confined to men with property and membership in a church. Self-government was encouraged, although the colonists had no voice in the British Parliament and the leading Colonial officials were British. Like the settlement of Wallingford, all other colonies were initiating local laws and establishing order in their particular communities. They were learning self rule.

Samuel was an active participant in all such affairs, as well as attending to the wants and needs of his large family. He died in March of 1702, age 61, leaving his widow, Mary, and nine of his fifteen children still unmarried. The youngest of these nine was a baby of six or seven months. Mary became the wife of Jeremiah Howe in 1705, and lived for forty seven more years after Samuel's death. She died, 17 September, 1752, at age 96.
1. #21, Vol. 1, p. 533
2. #33 Chapt. iv, p. 29, 30
3. #12 p. 1
4. ibid
5. #7 p. 522
6. #12 pp. 2, 3
7. #7 p. 672
8. #12(b) (news clipping)
9. #7 p. 672-3
10. #12(b) (news clipping)