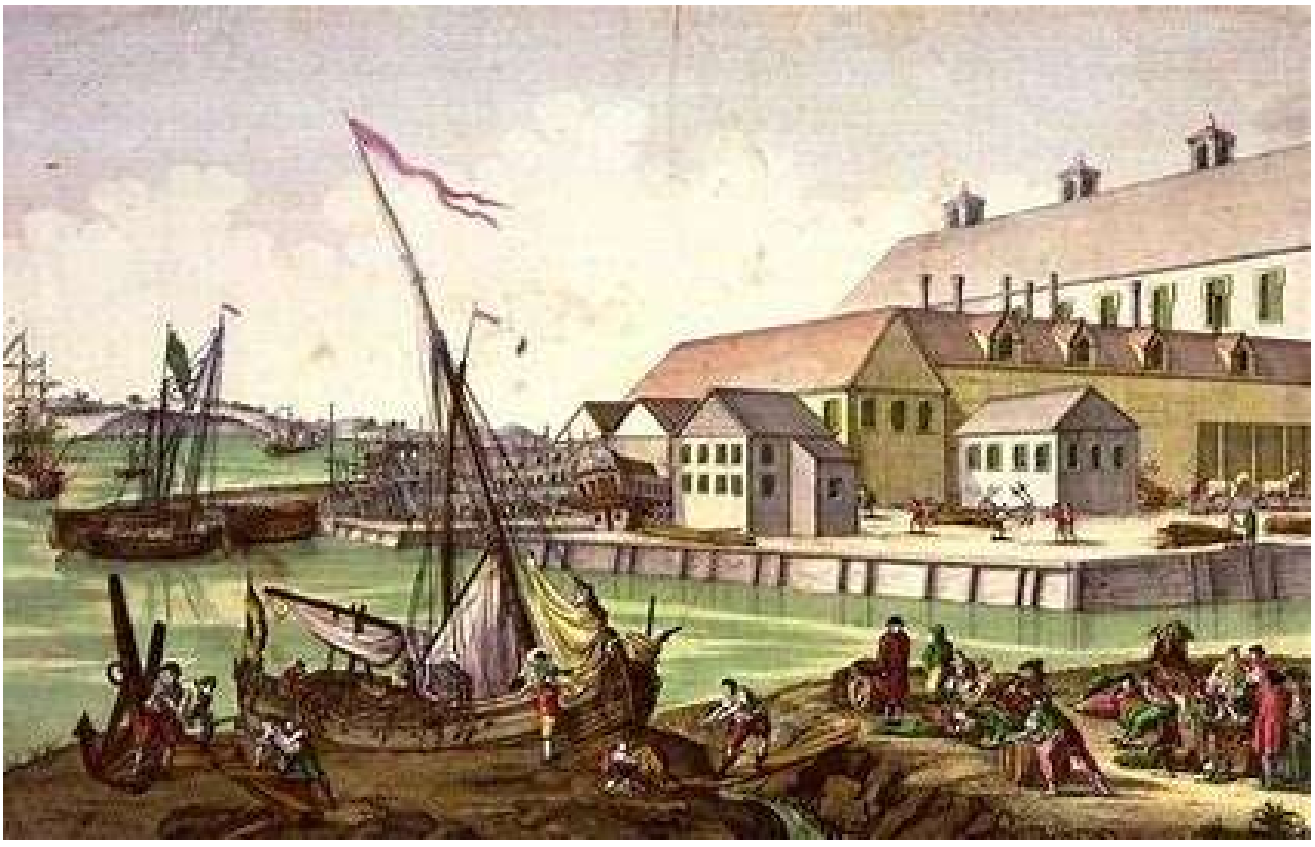
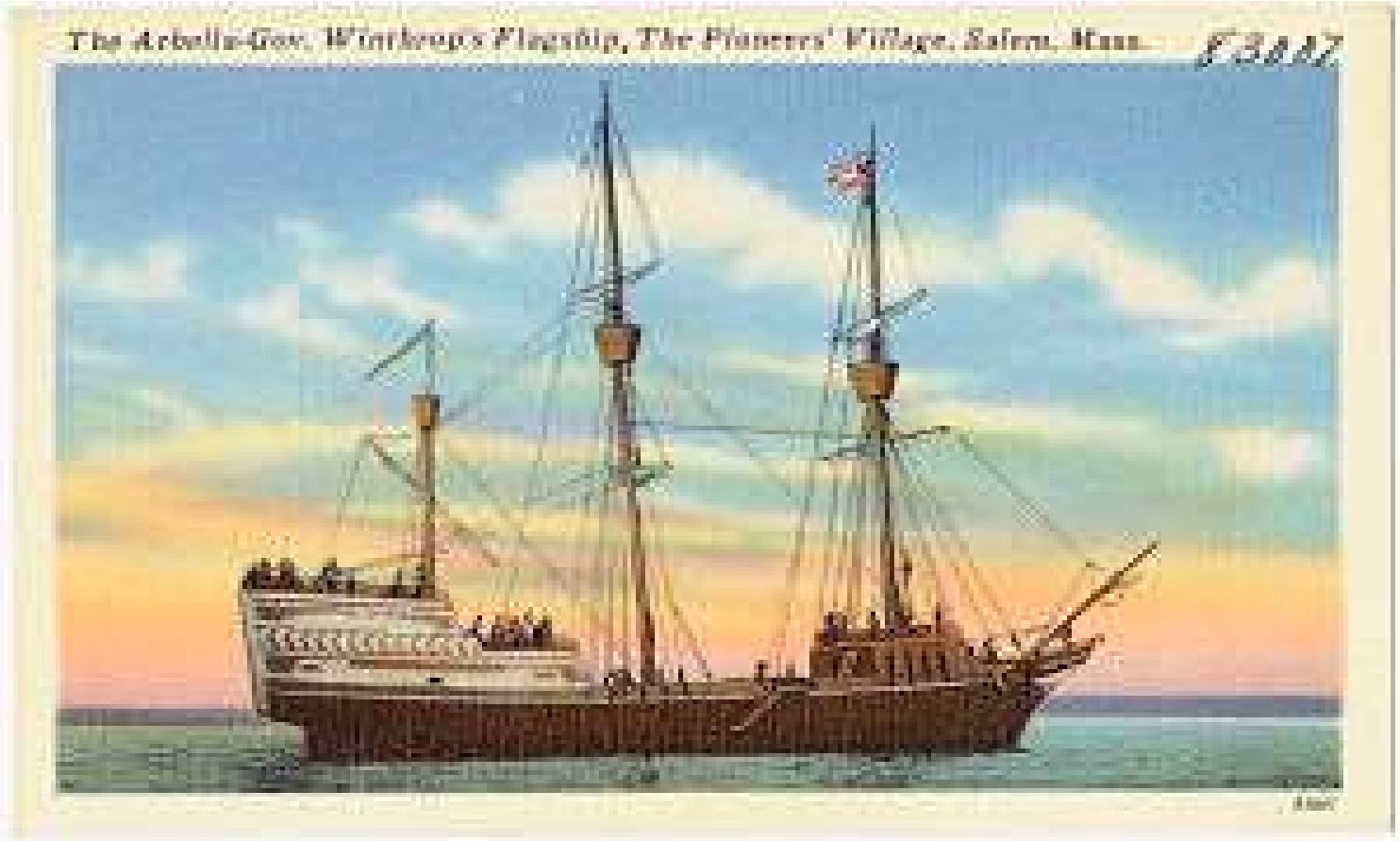
Our Original Colonial Ancestors:

Henry Cooke





Our ancestor, Henry Cooke crossed the Atlantic to settle in Salem, Mass sometime around 1635. He joined more than 20,000 Separatists who left England between 1629 and 1640 to settle in the New World. The Arabella (pictured here) was one of the first ships to transport immigrants to the New World.



The town of Salem (*pictured today, above*) where our original Cooke ancestor settled, was established in 1626 by a group of settlers who moved a few miles south from Cape Ann. Two years later, more colonists came from the Massachusetts Bay Colony to Salem, which was about 15 miles north and west from that early settlement. They lived in a fort built a mile from the coast. All the families in the community lived inside the fort.



Henry Cooke was sexton for the Congregational church in Salem, Massachusetts. He rang bells for funerals and swept the church. The local Congregational Church, First Church of Salem was founded in Salem in 1629 *(though this building dates from 1836).*



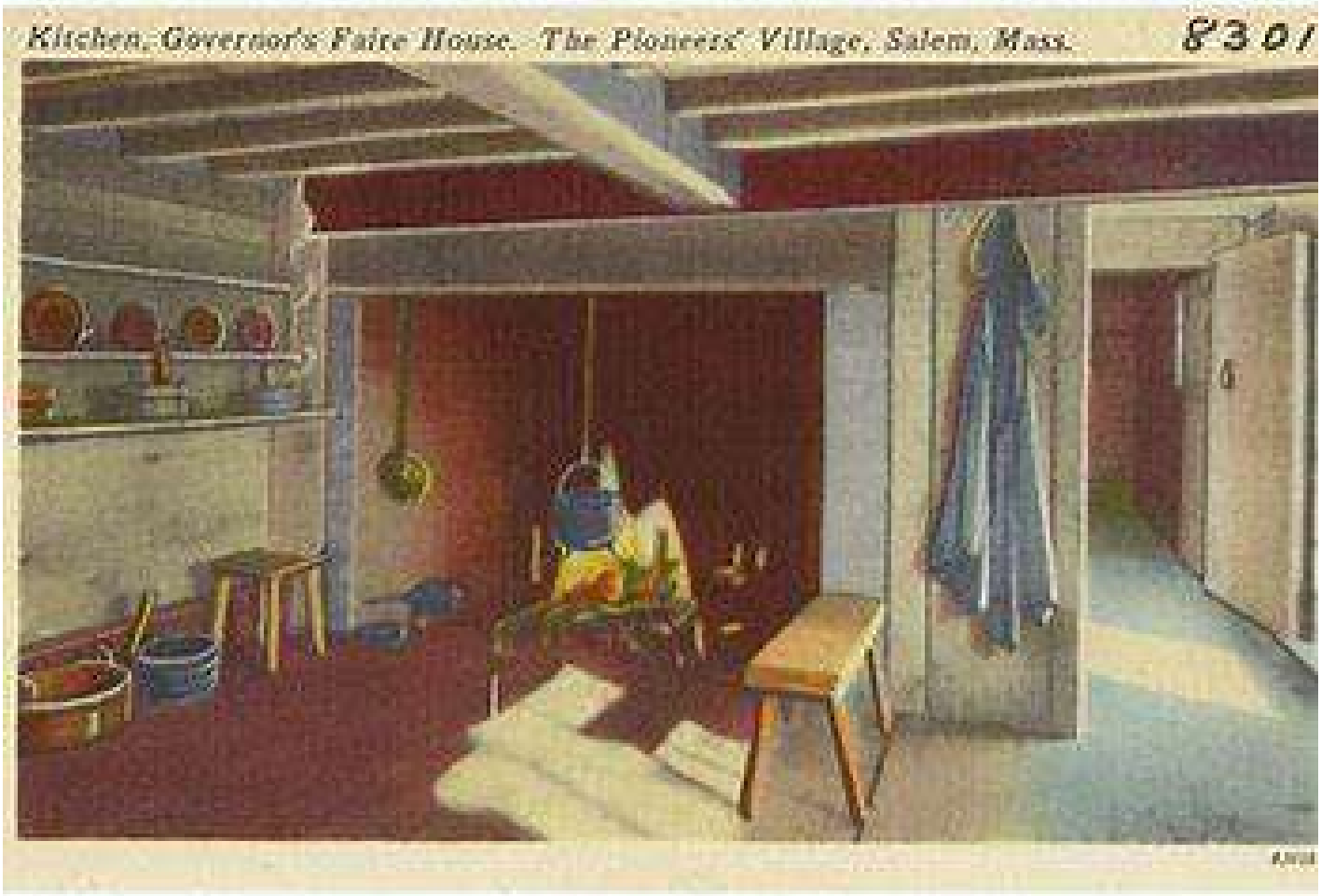
On Christmas Day in 1637 the minister at the Congregational Church in Salem, Mass wrote down the name of Henry Birdsall (Henry Cooke's future father-in-law) as the newest member. Then he was given enough land to raise his crops and pigs and make a living for his family.



Henry Cooke wanted to be admitted into a town in Massachusetts so he could have some of the free land given to the first settlers. Though it is no longer standing, we know exactly where Henry Cooke's house stood. It was at the site of an old fort. His street is now known as Washington Street and where his house once stood there is now this Masonic Temple.



When Henry Cooke came to Salem, it was a quiet little village beside the sea. The houses were all made of logs and most had high pointed roofs.They resembled the thatched roof houses in England.



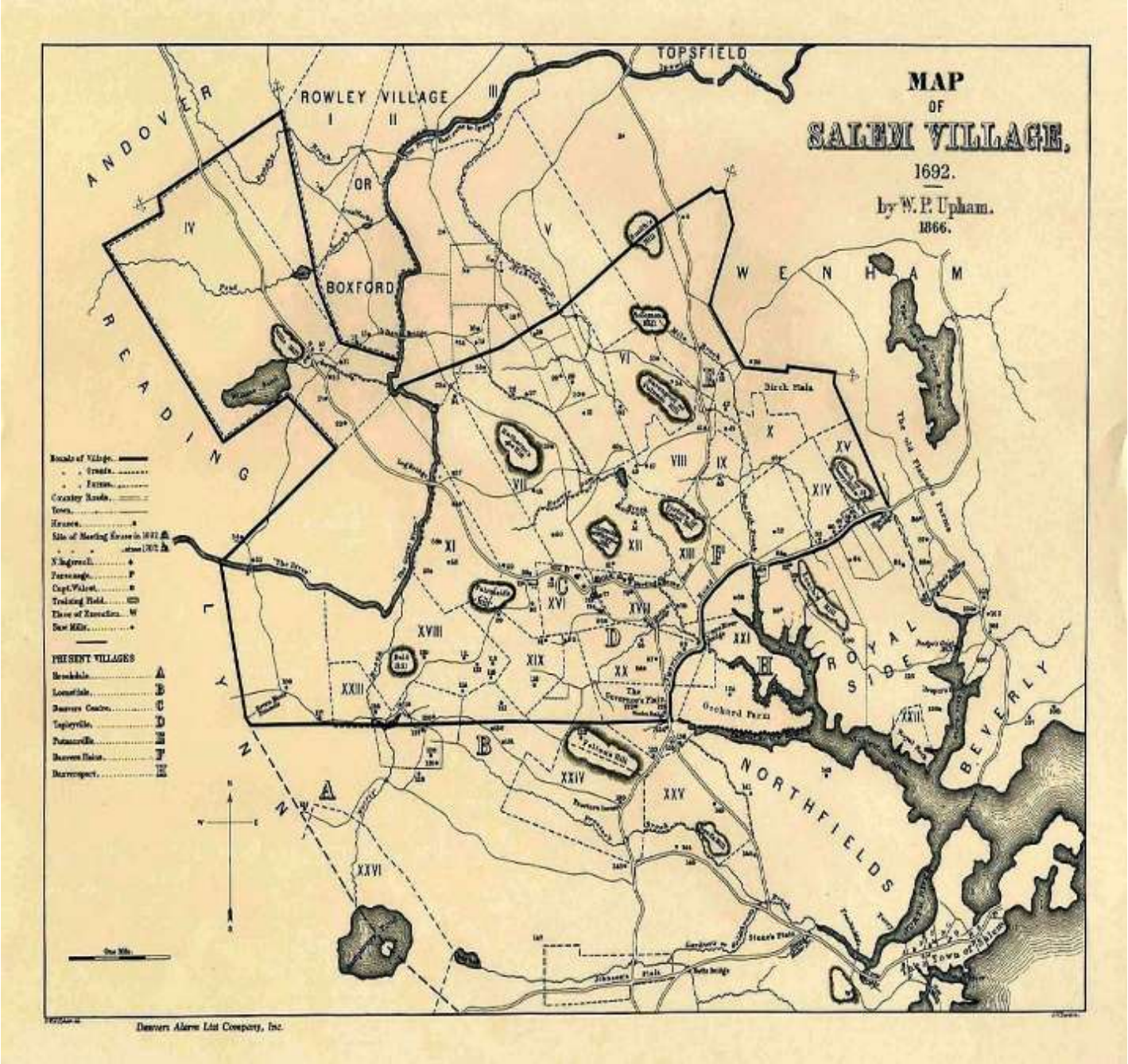
Each house had a big fireplace with small ovens along the sides to cook their food. A tall chimney reached from the fireplace to the top of the pointed roof. There were only a few rooms in the house to the fireplace could keep everyone warm.



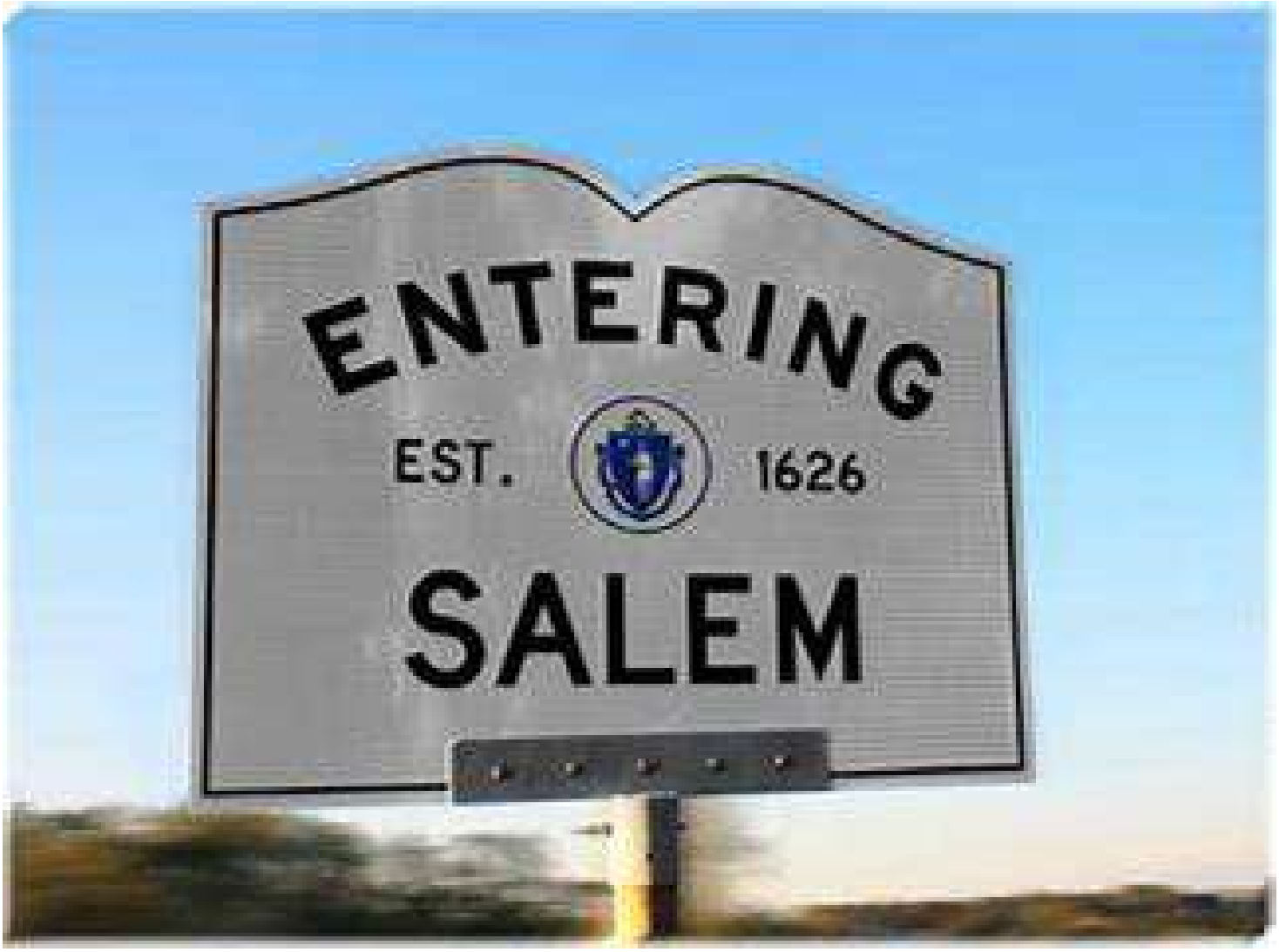
One Dec 26, 1638, Two months after he had been accepted into Salem, Henry was given 6 acres to plant.



Two months later, Henry received 5 more acres, and the following February he was given 25 acres at Jeffrey's Creek. Eventually he also had 40 acres "beyond the river."



In June of 1639, after securing 36 acres of land, Henry Cooke married Judith Birdsall, also of Salem.



Henry and Judith had 10 children from 1640 to 1658. Two little girls died when they were young. The rest of the children grew up and married in Salem too. Henry was known as a "proprietor" so we know he was a free man from the beginning and was a man of substance.



In 1640 Henry Cooke was appointed with another man to keep the town swine, earning six shillings for each animal. Since there was no patience for pig pens in town, the two men walked through the town on their way to the pasture in the morning, herding pigs as they walked. At the gates they blew their horns and the owners brought their pigs out to the drove. Then the swine were returned at sunset in the same manner.



There were rules for the swine keeper job: The keepers were responsible for any swine that were lost, but for those which were killed by wild beasts they were excused if they brought home a part of the flesh as evidence.



Later, when he owned property in town, Henry was known as a butcher or “slaughterer.” The rules for occupations were strict in England. To be a butcher one would have to serve as an apprentice for several years. The rules in America were much the same as in England, so he must have learned the trade in England.



(Pictured: Not his grave! But someone else's in Salem, MA)

On Dec 1661 at age about 50, Henry Cooke died and was buried on Christmas Day. His estate reads like that of a prosperous colonist. It included several houses, farms and plots of land, cattle, horses, a cart, a sled, household goods, books and clothing.



Henry’s grave was probably wood, as most were those days, and decayed long ago. We don't know exactly where he was buried. He left no record of his roots in England, but his descendants in America 13 generations later number into the thousands. Research is ongoing to find where in England Henry came from.



About the same time Henry Cooke died, the Indian chief Wampanoag also died. His son Metacom became chief at age 23. Settlers called him King Philip. Metacom wanted to reclaim the land from the settlers.



In 1675 a full war broke out, called now King Philip's War. Three of Henry Cooke's sons -- John, Isaac and Henry Jr. -- fought in the war. (Our ancestor, Samuel had already moved to New Haven, Connecticut.) The war lasted several years and 10% of the settlers were killed. They signed a treaty with the natives in 1678.



After Henry died, his wife, Judith lived another 28 years with her son Isaac. She owned a silk hood, and in those days, the law prohibited a woman from wearing a silk hood unless her husband's estate was valued at 200 pounds or more. Therefore, we know Henry and Judith were well off. Here, the woman's white hood is the silk hood.





Henry Cooke's wife, Judith Birdsall was born in June 2, 1611 in Norfolk, England. She was christened at St. Stephens, (*the church pictured here).* Henry and Judith were also married at St. Stephens.