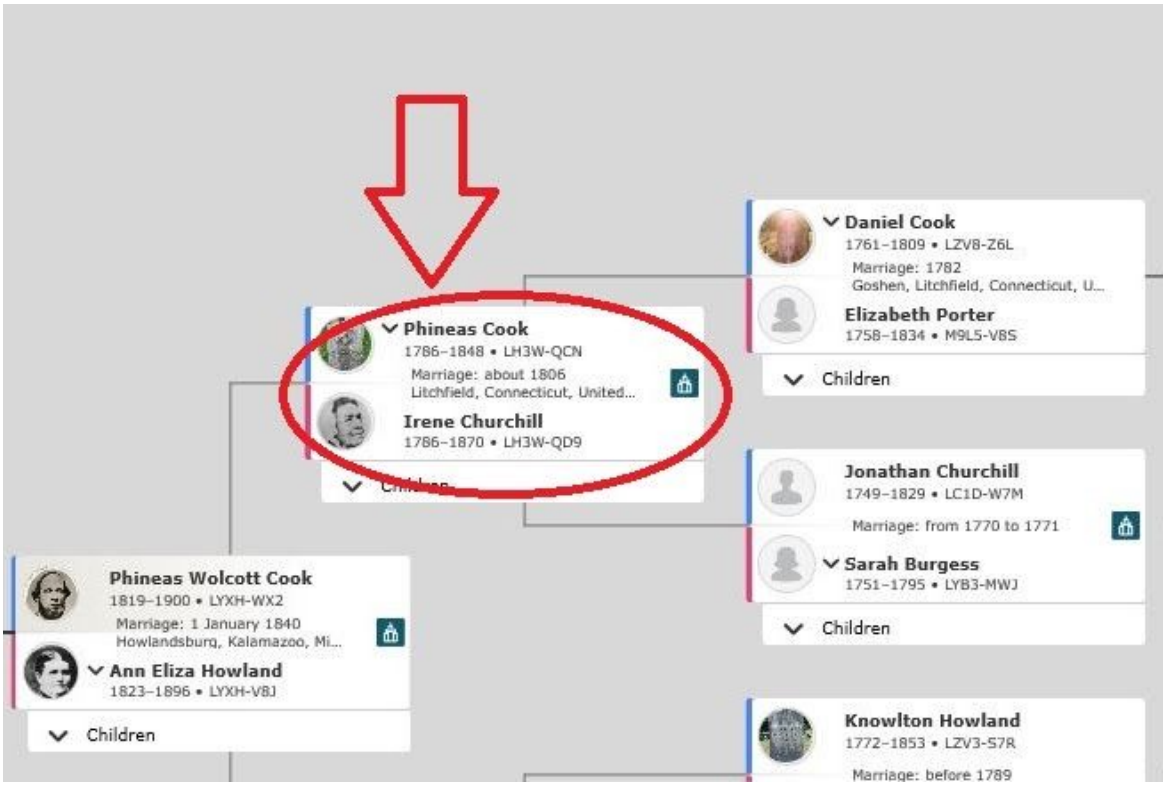
Our Colonial Ancestors:

Phineas Cook (Sr.) (1786 - 1848)

and Irene Churchill Cook

(1786-1870)

Parents of Phineas Wolcott Cook











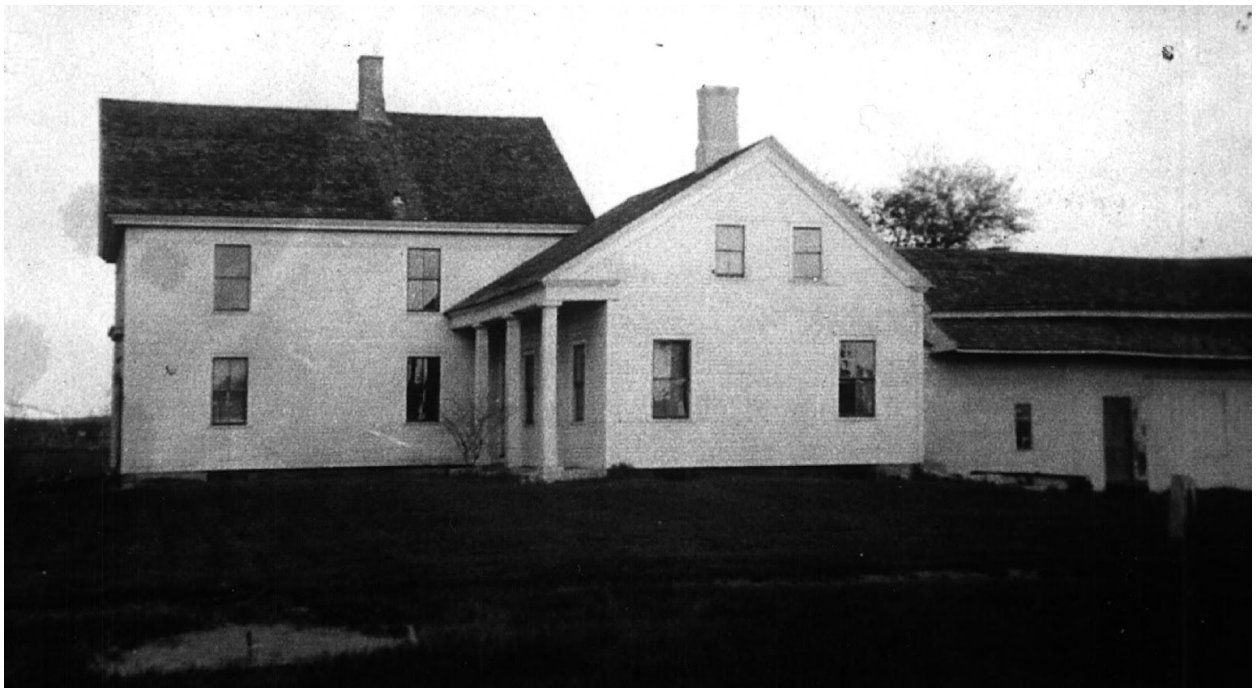
Why was it called “Dog Pond”?

Dog Pond in Goshen, Connecticut. The Cooks lived at the top of Town Hill, on the east side of this pond. Where did it get it’s canine name from??

“Deacon Nathaniel Baldwin, of the north part of the town, lost his dog there by drowning in 1738.”

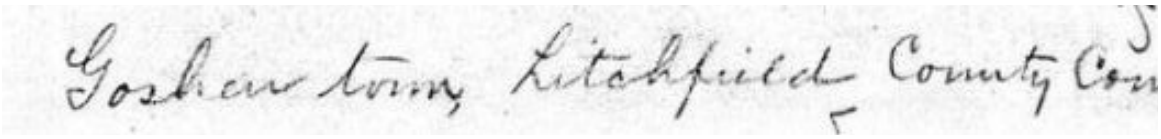
~ The History of Litchfield County, Connecticut, by J.W. Lewis and Co., 1881

There you have it, folks.



Phineas Cook (Sr.) was born at Goshen, Litchfield, Connecticut on 12 November 1786. He was the son of Daniel (Jr.) and Elizabeth (Porter) Cook. Although his great-grandfather Joseph Cook was an original proprietor in Goshen and moved with all but one of his children to Goshen, most of the Cooks had left the area by the time Phineas was a boy. Of all Joseph's children, only Phineas's grandfather Daniel Cook Sr. stayed in Goshen. After the Revolutionary War there were only three Cook brothers in Goshen. Amasa, Daniel Jr. and Moses. Amasa was the oldest and his child eventually left the area. Moses was the youngest and had four children who stayed in Goshen. Daniel Jr. had only two sons, Amasa and Phineas Sr., who inherited his land when he died at age 49.

(Pictured: Cook house on Town Hill near Dog Pond in Goshen, CT as it looked in 1998. We believe Phineas Sr. was born here.)





Phineas (Sr.) and his brother Amasa married sisters: Irene and Polly Churchill. Polly died shortly after her marriage to Amasa. He subsequently remarried to a woman named Sally Rowe and they had a child named Amasa Phillip Cook. Not much is known concerning her other than once Amasa was killed in the farm accident, she remarried to a man named Baldwin and Phineas was appointed guardian of her son.

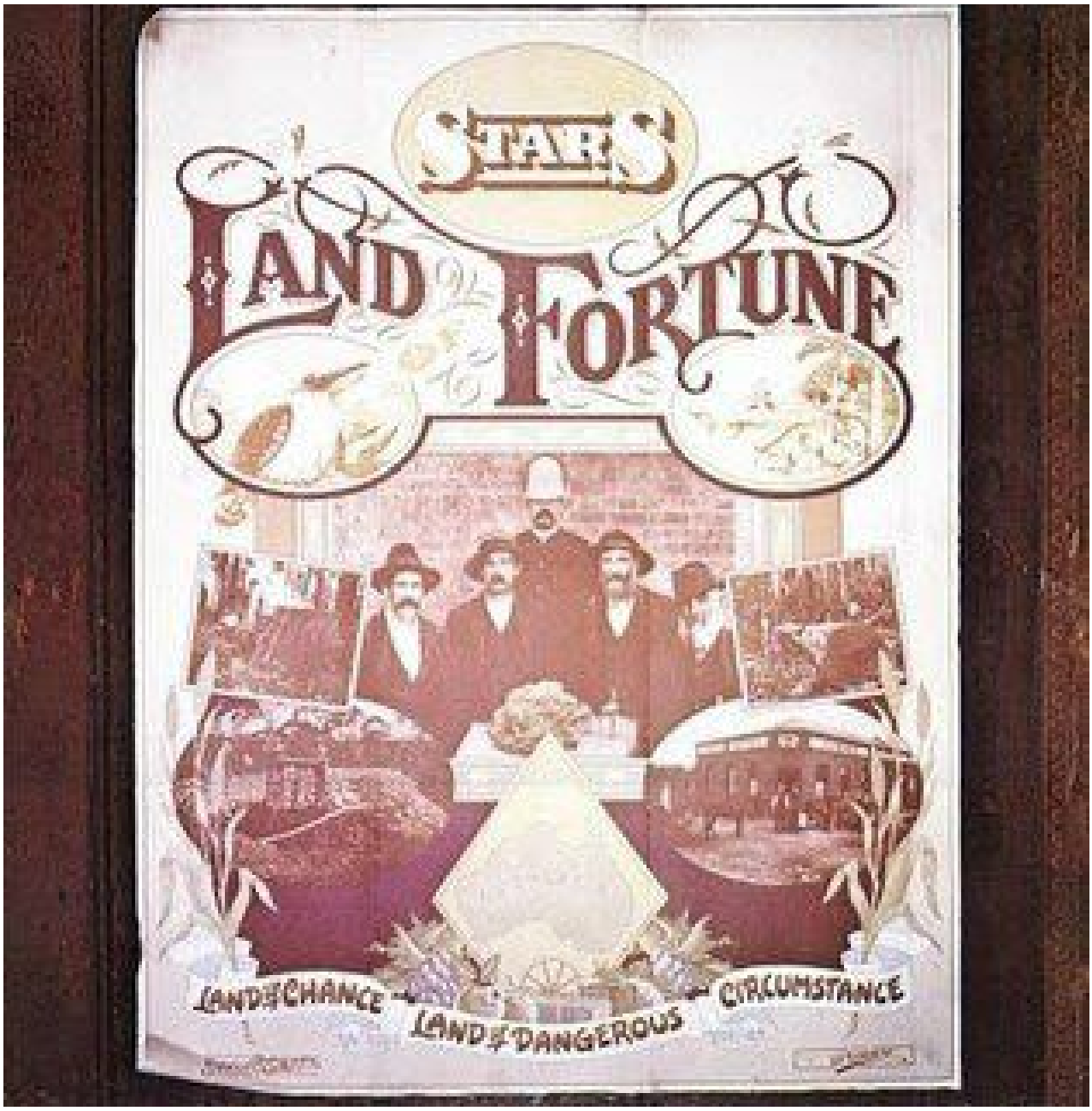
Phinaes' wife, Irene Churchill was born at Litchfield, Litchfield, Connecticut 14 February 1786. She was the daughter of Jonathan and Sarah (Burgess) Churchill.



After the death of their father (Daniel Cook Jr.) in 1809, Phineas (Sr.) and his brother Amasa took over the family farm. Phineas's older brother, Amasa, retained the old mansion while Phineas inherited property in south west Goshen in what was called the Milton Society. This was considered "handsome" property and valued at about $3,000. It was on this property that Phineas and Irene (Churchill) reared their family.

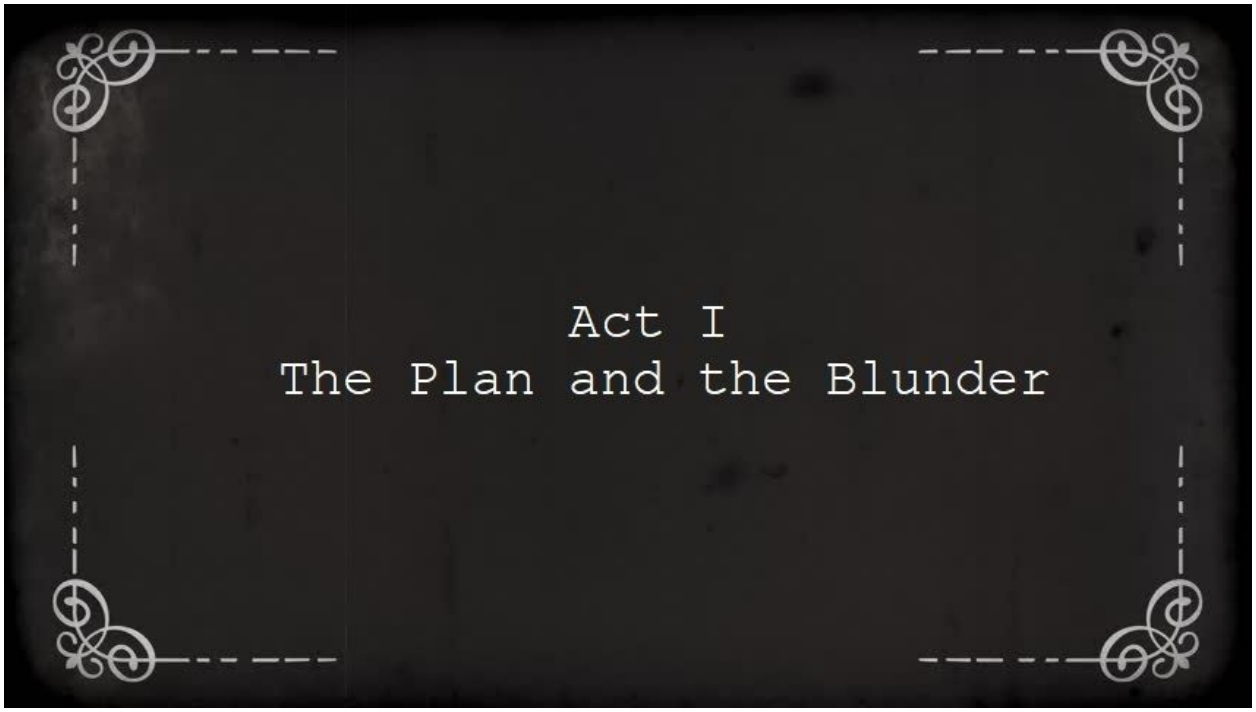
Phineas and Irene's first child Betsey died 26 October 1810 at age 3. The inscription on her tombstone (pictured here) reads:

"Betsey, daughter of Phineas &
Irene Cook, died Oct. 26th, 1810,
aged 3 years and three months.
Sleep on sweet baby,
and take thy rest,
God called thee home,
He thought it best."



LAND AND FORTUNE: A Cook Family Drama

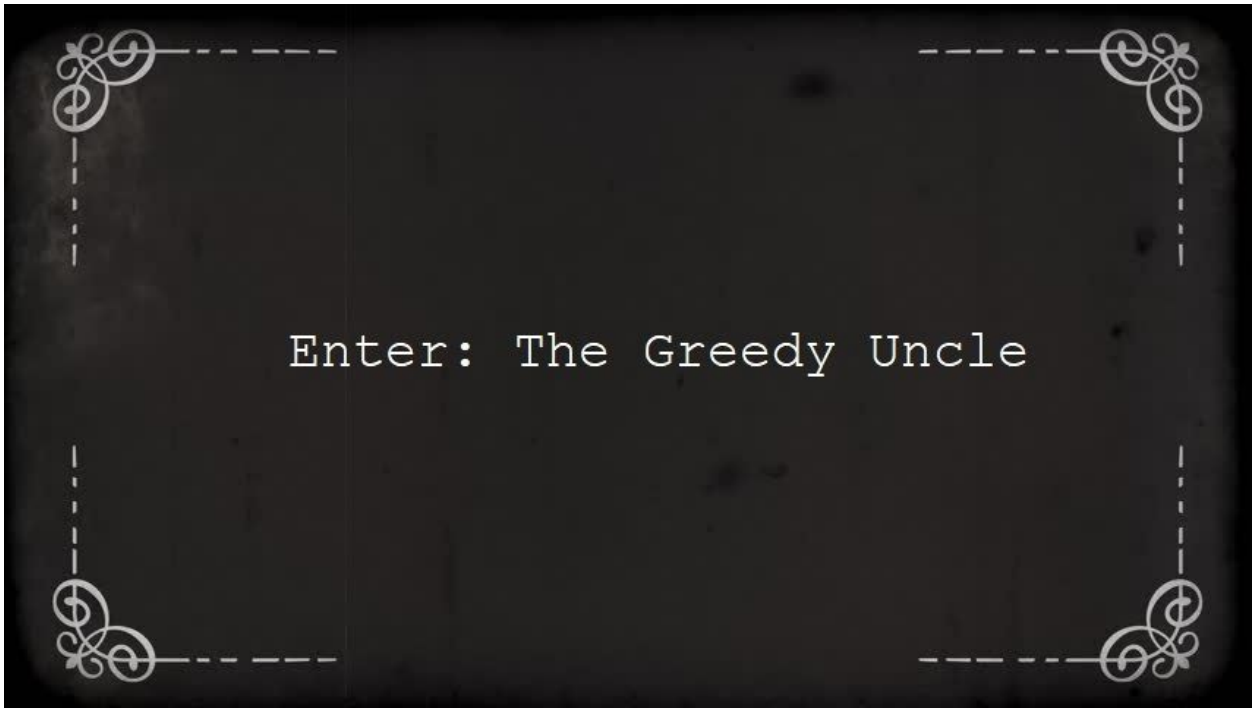
Based on a true story in our family history!



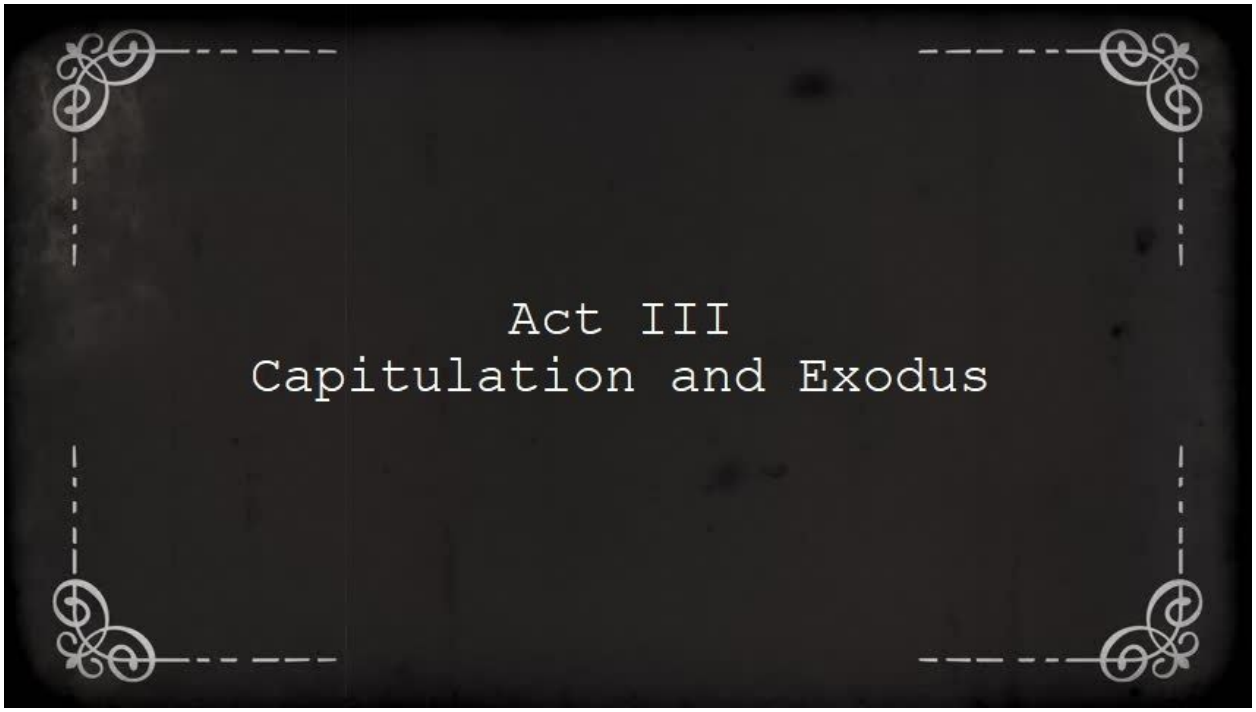
Subsequent to their father's death the brothers, Phineas and Amasa elected to go into business together. Amasa was not possessed of the best business sense and immediately went into debt. Between 1807 and 1811 he bought no less than ten pieces of property, including half an iron forge in Litchfield. His father had been quite prosperous, and he apparently tried to follow the pattern. However, Amasa had to rack up 16 mortgages and various land sales to keep himself from going bankrupt.



Because of their partnership arrangement Phineas was obligated, along with Amasa, to make good on the debts. This proved unfortunate as Amasa was killed unexpectedly in an accident in 1818. Even before the burial took place, Phineas was served writs of attachment at which time the full extent of his indebtedness was revealed. Fortunately, at about this time, Jonathan Churchill, Phineas's father-in-law, wanted to live with the family through his old age. In 1829, in an effort to pay off the mounting debts, Phineas sold the property to his father-in-law Jonathan Churchill, who the same day deeded it back to his daughter, Irene Cook. Since Jonathan died almost immediately and his debts fell due to Phineas, the debt continued to increase; and the land was leased the following year to his son, Daniel Cook. The lease saved the farm from foreclosure but left a $900 mortgage, which wasn't paid until the family decided to uproot and move to Michigan.



This mortgage encumbrance was a great source of irritation to Phineas. His Uncle Moses Cook who was one of the creditors on the estate made an attempt to grab all the family assets including the home place upon Amasa's death. Phineas Wolcott Cook writes in his journal that Moses "would have been glad to get our home and leave us in poverty."



Phineas and his family labored hard to get out of debt. They were unsuccessful and ultimately, being tired of paying debts and the interest on them, they sold the farm to Moses Cook for $2,209 and moved west to Michigan where land was empty and waiting for eastern settlers. The price tag was a long, treacherous journey and years of hard work.

In 1840 Moses Cook was noted in Hibbard's History of Goshen as one of the richest men in town, with a total net worth of $13,000. The passing of the family land into the possession of Moses Cook was noted in The History of Litchfield County, Connecticut where it states that the Cook family property, bought by Daniel Cook, Sr., and passed to his son Daniel Jr. and his grandson Phineas, was sold to Moses Cook of Goshen.

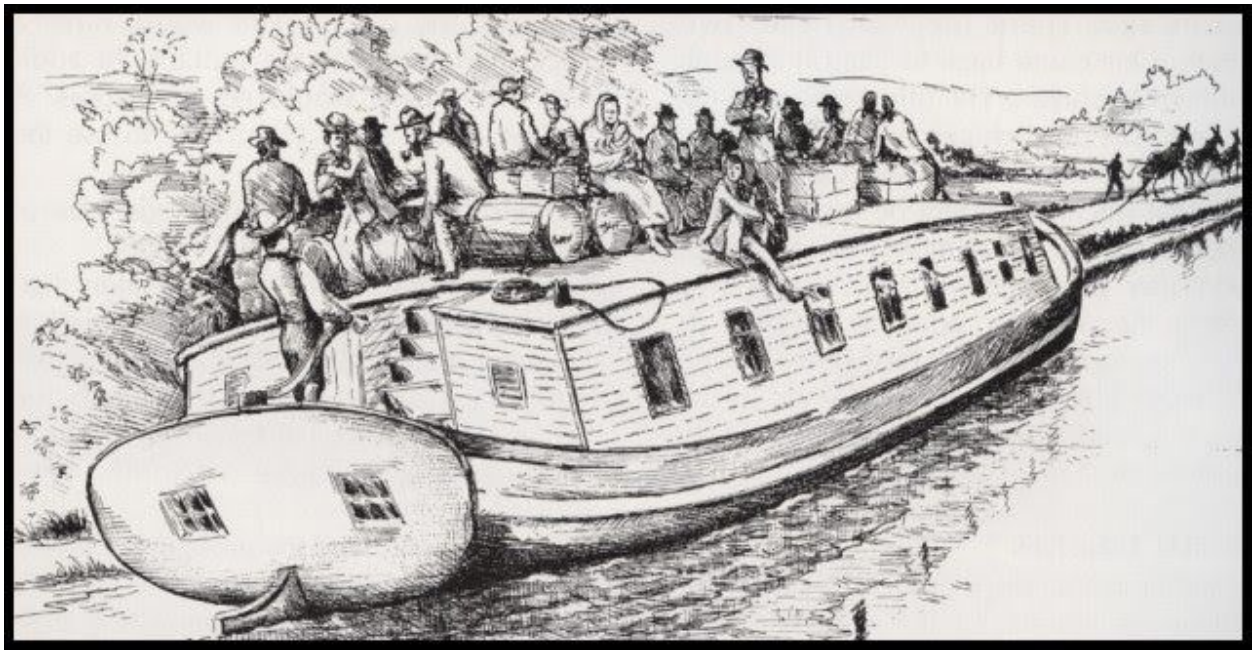


In his will, Moses Cook left the piece of land with the sawmill jointly to his two sons Moses and Frederick..."*situated in the southwest part of Goshen and is bounded west on or near Cornwall line and on lands belonging to Charles Hart and others. Containing about 285 acres. In the said Phineas Cook farm together with the saw mill and water privileges...*" After that the property may have been sold out of the family by Moses' sons. Frederick left no will and Moses Jr.'s son William inherited all his land in 1880 when his father died. However, there were no large pieces of land left by then and no mill or water rights were mentioned.



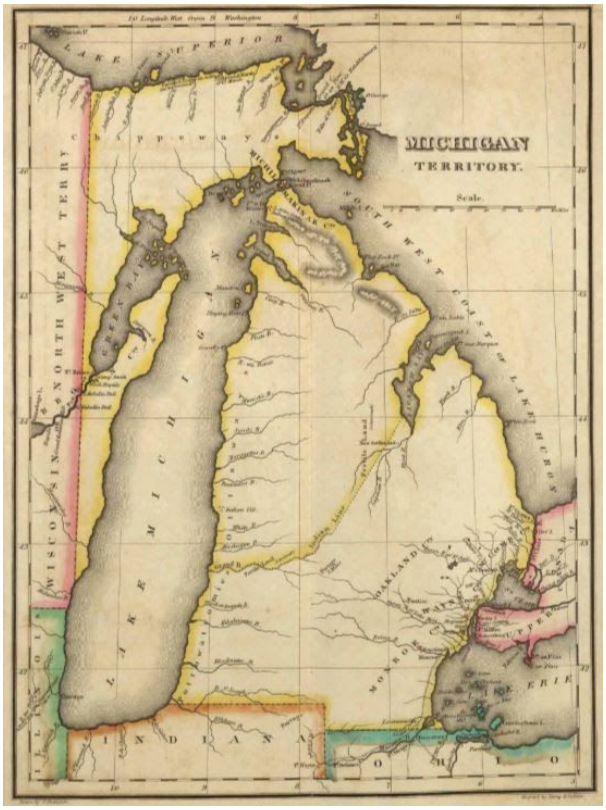
After all the financial woes and drama with Uncle Moses, the Phineas and Irene Cook family was ready to say goodbye to their Connecticut homeland for good.

On October 2, 1836 Phineas sold his farm to his Uncle Moses Cook, and paid all his debts. Taking what little money he had left after dealing with a rush of unjust creditors, Phineas left Goshen with his daughter Eliza, Eliza's husband Solomon C. Hall and their two children and moved to the recently opened territory of Michigan. The rest of the family would follow.



Connecticut to Michigan Territory was a long journey for a man who had lived in the same house for thirty-two years. Phineas' son wrote that before that move, he seldom went to market or away from home on any extended journey. Advertised in eastern papers, new land had been opened for settlers in Michigan and Phineas' destination was Richland, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

They traveled to Albany, crossed New York on the Erie Canal, traveled across Lake Erie from Buffalo to Toledo, Ohio on the Lake Erie steamboat, rode the new strap-line railroad nearly to Adrian, Michigan, and crossed the state to Richland township across what was designated on the map: "Interminable Swamp." It's a small wonder Michigan settlers suffered from debilitating chills and fever -- the ever-present malaria. Phineas W. reported when he arrived a year later, "We found father sick with the Ague and fever and also all the rest. We found them on Gull prairie town of Richland about 10 miles north from Kalamazoo."



Solomon Hall, apparently acting for Phineas, bought land in Richland Township on the western side of Michigan. They built cabins on the land, worked to set up farms, wrote to family members informing them where to come.

Meanwhile, back in Connecticut the rest of the family struggled. Daniel finished his work on the farm and prepared to move west the next year while his younger brothers Darius and Phineas W. worked at several jobs as apprentices. Their mother, Irene did the best she could with the money Phineas had left for her, but when Uncle Moses took possession of the property he evicted her and the children, claiming he would be proud to put her on the street. She and the two youngest girls were invited to use a house belonging to Salmon Hall's father, Daniel in Milton.

In the fall of 1837 the oldest son Daniel moved his family to Michigan, accompanied by the youngest son Phineas W. The next summer Darius, who had already made a trip to Michigan in 1837 to buy land in Barry County, brought his mother and sisters. He returned again in 1841 to marry a Goshen girl, but it isn't likely anyone else in the family ever saw Goshen again.



Phineas was in the Michigan record first as a resident in 1837 living in Richland Township. In The History of Michigan we learn he was appointed a Highway Commissioner in 1841 and was listed as a land owner in Richland in 1844 with acreage in section eleven.

Phineas Cook died on May 20, 1848 and was buried in Richland, Michigan just two years after his son left home to join the Latter-day Saints at Winter Quarters. He couldn't get over the disappointment of having his youngest son, the son he expected to take care of him in his old age, leave him for his religion. It was a difficult time for both of them. Phineas W. had a premonition his father would be dead in two or three years, as he recorded in his journal:

"I was determined to serve my God the rest of my days. My heart was heavy with grief at leaving my father and mother, although they had been somewhat unkind in their treatment to me. I knew that his days were not many on this earth, as I had told Eliza that in two or three years he would be laid low in the grave and it would be a sorrowful time and I did not wish to witness it. He was a good man and was always kind to his family as a general thing…"



Irene didn't remain a widow very long. She remarried a Mr. Gibson almost immediately. Irene was living in Richland after he died when she married Caleb Forbes, also of Richland in 1850. The day after this wedding, she purchased for $1,200 the family farm from her daughter Eliza and son-in-law Solomon Hall. Interestingly, although she and Phineas had lived on the land and had paid taxes on it, they may not have completed payment because after Phineas died the land belonged to Solomon in whose name it had been recorded. Always hard-working and independent, Irene had taken in boarders soon after they moved to Michigan; and, in spite of the fact she apparently had been left with nothing, managed to provide an inheritance for her children, something Phineas hadn't been able to do A strong woman, she buried three husbands and three daughters before her, and died 3 January 1870 in Richland.



Phineas and Irene had interest, not in worldly honors or possessions, but only in their family. They bore seven children, two of whom accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ; and they made sacrifices for the physical and financial welfare of their family. They gave up everything near and comfortable to themselves in Connecticut to provide a place where their whole family could live and thrive in Michigan. Phineas brought with him a reverence for his progenitors which had passed down from his father and grandfather. His son Phineas W. in Utah knew and had a record of those ancestors for six generations. With all he had to leave behind in Connecticut, Phineas made sure the musket belonging to his father Daniel Cook was with him in Michigan, a visible legacy to the patriotism and willingness to sacrifice which had always been a heritage of the Cook family, inherited by every branch of the family wherever they were. This was a family that did its part to build America, and Phineas Cook honored his place in that legacy.

(Pictured: Descendents Marcia Marshall and children at Prairie Home Cemetery in Richland, MI where Phineas and Irene Cook are buried.)