

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

Vol XXI

3-2-99  
C.W. Lattin County Historian

No.9

## SEELEY A. COOK 1851-1912

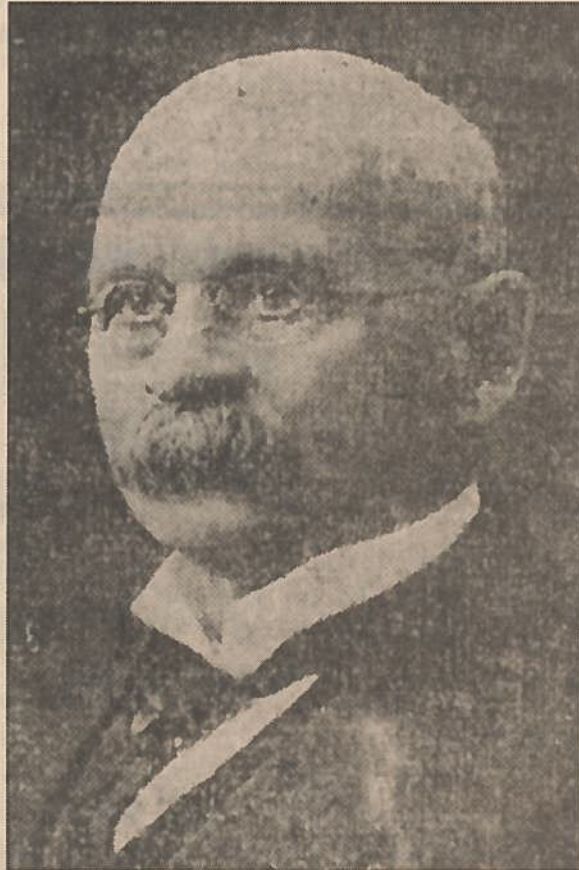
Although S. A. Cook died in 1912 his named has resounded beyond the grave for generations since. Mr. Cook was born in the Town of Yates July 12, 1851 the son of George and Olive Comstock Cook. He received his education in the common schools of his native town and was married in 1876 to Adelaide Thorp, of Knowlesville. Their children were: Mrs. Milford W. Childs and Mrs. Mortimer Nagel.

In 1873 Seeley A. Cook embarked in the manufactured tobacco business. He made his own rounds traveling a radius of fifty miles with a team and wagon, peddling cigars, tobacco and confectionery.

In 1876 he became associated in business with the Tinkham Brothers forming a partnership known as S.A. Cook and Tinkham Brothers. It was at this time that Mr. Cook, on a small scale, started to make furniture to be given as premiums for retail customers. Within a few years Tinkham Brothers withdrew from the firm and it became known as S.A. Cook & Co. By now, his main line of work was in the manufacture of furniture but he continued in the tobacco business as well. By the turn of the century they were producing about 1200 Morris Chairs on a weekly basis. At the time of his death Mr. Cook headed a firm that employed around 500 men from Medina. In 1911, just a year prior to his death, he had built a large business block on the west side of Main Street in Medina which still bears his name.

S.A. Cook was a figurehead in his community, giving freely of his time and ability for the advancement of Medina. He was elected mayor of Medina on two separate occasions and served his office with distinction. In politics he was a Democrat.

Mr. Cook was very prominent in many social and fraternal affairs. He was a member of the Alert Club and of the Chamber of Commerce and Business Men's Association. He was involved in the Methodist Church of Medina and active in the Masonic Lodge. He was a member of the Alpha-Omega Council No. 71 and Genesee Commandery No. 10 of Lockport.



Following his death the S. A. Cook Co. continued to grow, catering to a mass commercial market supplying furniture to Montgomery Ward, Spiegel and Sears & Roebuck. However, the great depression had its effect. Employment dropped in the 1960's to thirty or forty. Outside interests eventually became involved but by 1985 production ceased, bringing an end to an era of large scale furniture manufacturing in Medina

"Man's life is laid in the loom of time  
to a pattern he does not see'  
While the weavers work and shuttles fly  
Til the dawn of eternity."