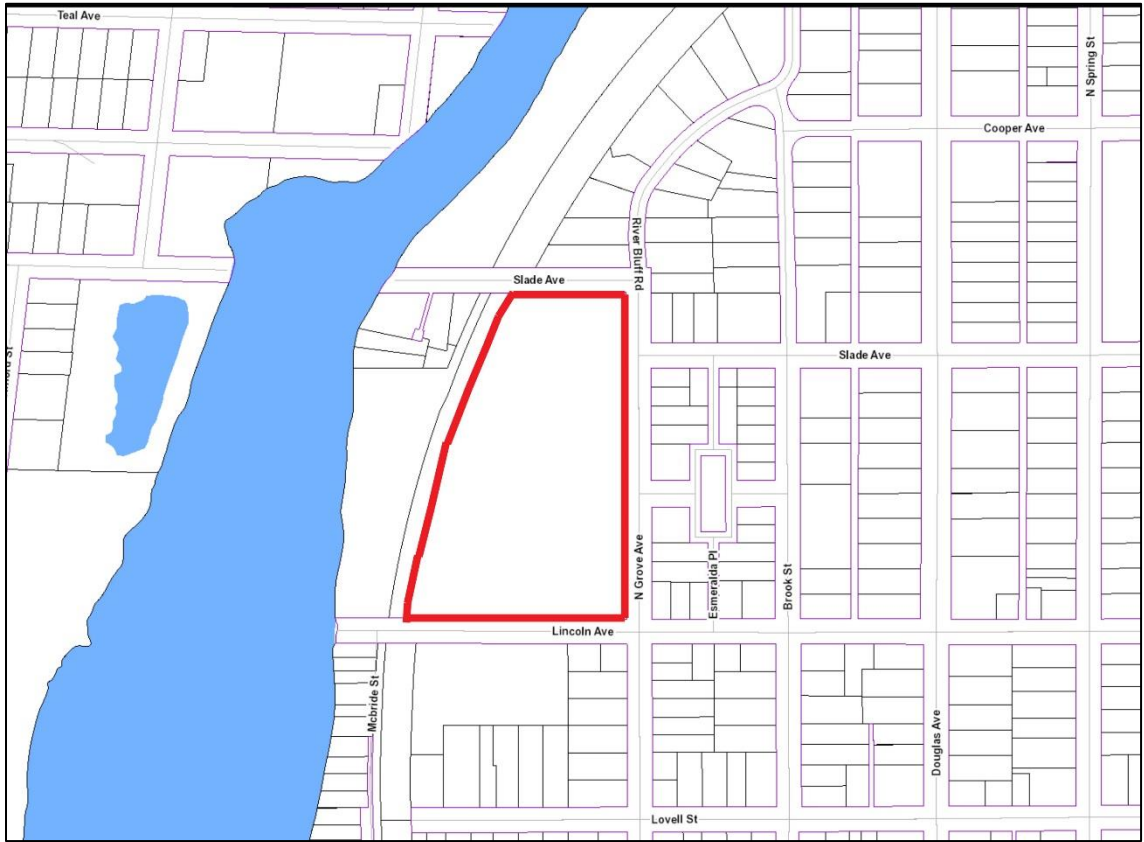


1. Common Street Address

850 N. Grove Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60120

Current Use: Industrial

2. Map – Location of property



3. PHOTOGRAPHS – PRINCIPAL AND SECONDARY STRUCTURES



Figure 1: Front Elevation - N. Grove Avenue

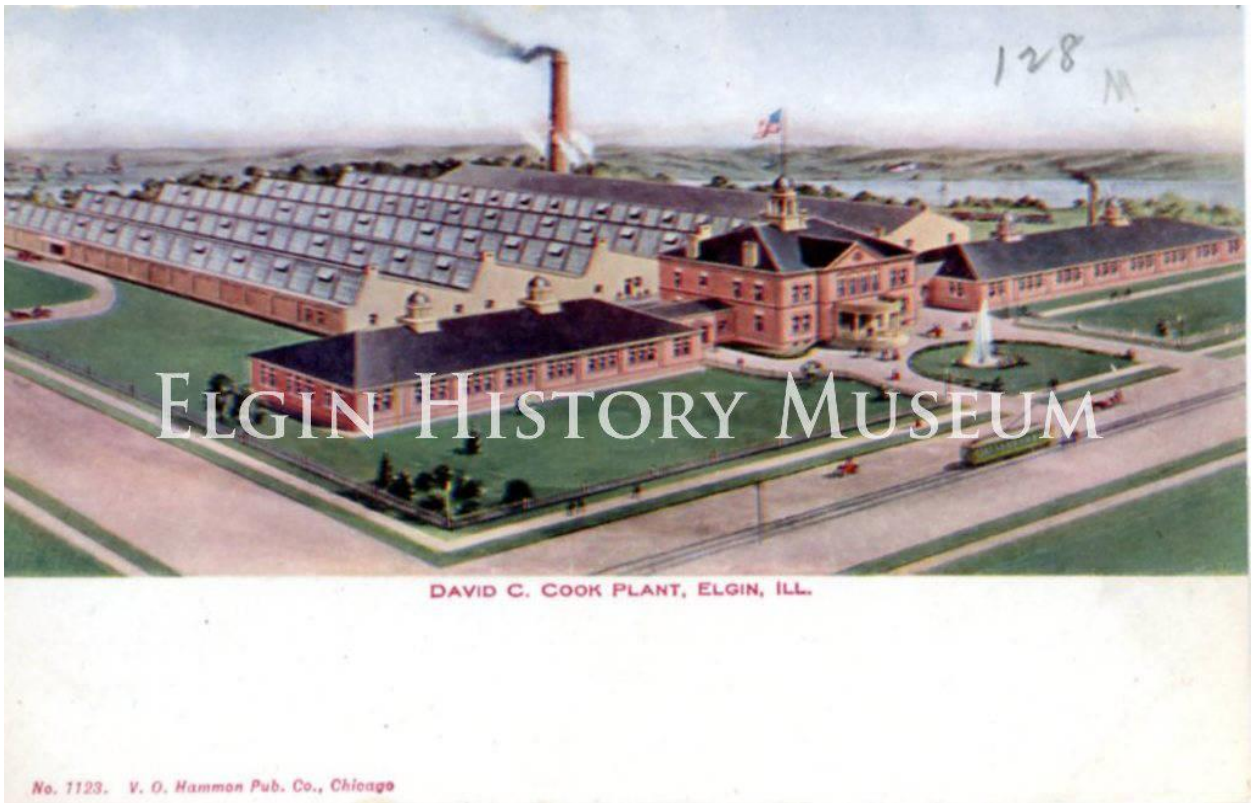


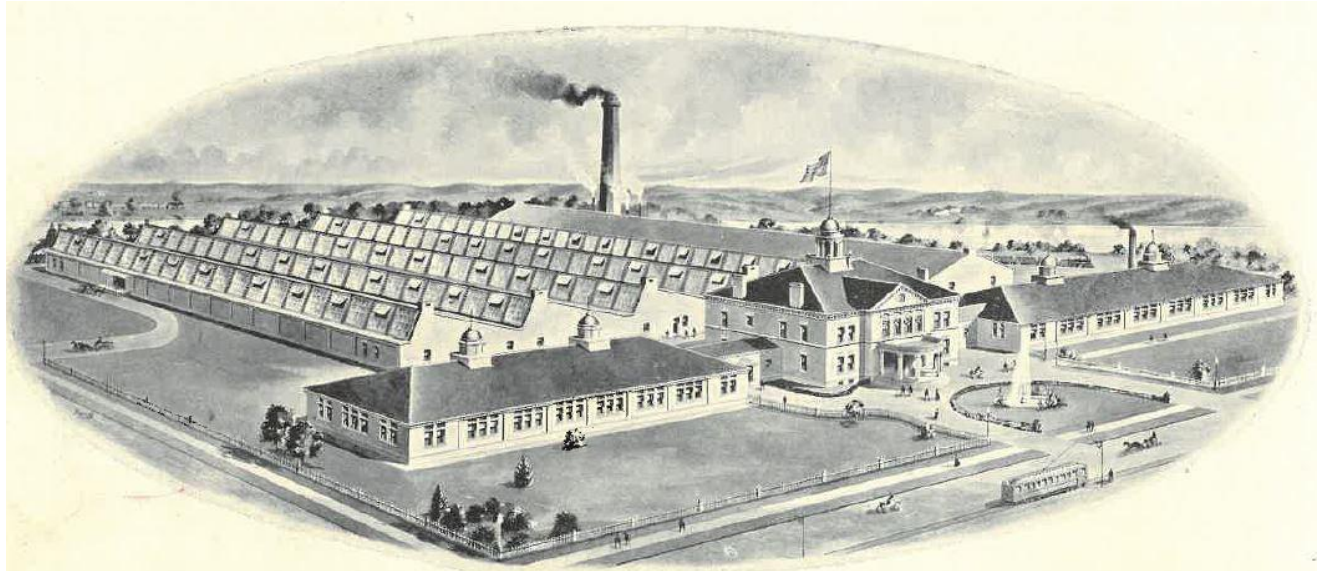
Figure 2: Historic Postcard



Figure 4: Original location of D. C. Cook Publishing House, Elgin, IL



Figure 3: 1901 - Front Elevation taken from Esmeralda Place



D. C. Cook Publishing House

Figure 5: Sketch of D. C. Cook Publishing House, Elgin Today -1904



Figure 6: Aerial View of D. C. Cook Publishing House



*Figure 7: David C. Cook Photograph, Elgin Today - 1904*



DAVID C. COOK  
1850 - 1927  
To Whose Memory This Room Is  
Affectionately Dedicated  
Founder and First Superin-  
tendent of the Sunday School  
A Generous Benefactor of the  
Church.



*Figure 8: D. E. Postle, Architect, Elgin Today - 1904*





#### 4. Statement of Significance

The David C. Cook Publishing House, located at 850 N. Grove Avenue, is considered a locally, and nationally significant property and of exceptional importance. It is worthy of rehabilitation, restoration and preservation due to its historic and architectural significance to the city of Elgin.

The D. C. Cook Publishing House, erected in 1901, stands east of the Fox River in a primarily residential area in the Northeast Neighborhood in Elgin, IL. The publishing house, named after its proprietor, David Caleb Cook (**Figure 7**), was one of the leading industries in Elgin, relocating to this area in May of 1882 from Chicago.

The company was founded in 1875 in Chicago and focused on non-denominational Sunday School literature. David was the son of a Methodist Minister and quickly became interested in the Sunday School movement, attending as many as three classes a Sunday. He found that lessons for the teachers were non-existent and begun his endeavor in writing and printing lessons and pamphlets that were engaging, easy to teach as well as informative.

The business quickly outgrew its Chicago location and with the help of Kane County's wealthiest man and former Mayor, William Grote, the David C. Cook Publishing Company relocated to Elgin. The business was located in an old woolen mill within the central business district on the east side of the Fox River near the Chicago Street Bridge (**Figure 4**). By the end of the company's first year in Elgin, it became the city's second-largest industrial employer, second to the Elgin National Watch Company with a work force of 350 employees.<sup>1</sup> By 1884, upon the completion of the new post office which was located on the northeast corner of DuPage Avenue and South Grove Street, the post office was quickly ranked as the third busiest in the state by weight of handled mail due to the publishing house's output in packages. Amazingly, approximately 68,400 second-class packages weighing twenty-one and a half tons were sent through this post office in one four-day period that year of solely Cook literature.<sup>2</sup> By 1950, it was the world's largest publisher of Sunday school literature and church supplies.

In 1901, the publishing company, once again, outgrew its facilities and purchased land one mile north of the city center which came to be known as the David C. Cook's Addition to Elgin (**Figure 9**). In this subdivision, the company built a central building with a north and south wing and rear factory building measuring 167 feet deep and 252 feet wide composed of six fire-proof compartments on eight acres.<sup>3</sup>

Opposite the factory and grounds a plot of five acres was platted with a boulevard (Esmeralda Place) through the center, and forty buildings lots were laid out. Here a number of handsome cottages were erected by David C. Cook for the use of his factory workers. The homes in this

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<sup>1</sup> E. C. Alft, "Elgin: An American History 1835-1985," *Crossroads Communications*, October 1984.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "Elgin Today, 1904," *Lowrie & Black Publishers*, 1903.

area now make up a large portion of the D. C. Cook – Lovell Area Historic District and are considered contributing buildings to the historic significance of the district.<sup>4</sup>

The main building and sprawling wings were designed by notable Elgin architect, David E. Postle (**Figure 8**), in the Classical Revival style. This structure is the only example of a Classical Revival style industrial building in Elgin from the turn-of-the-century and is considered an excellent example with high integrity. The building is symmetrical in design and consists of many elements that are distinctive to its style including its hipped roof with pedimented front gable, large overhanging eaves, a large freizeboard accented with dentils, and one of its most notable features is its large, rounded portico accented with Ionic columns directly at the center of the main building. The building consists of masonry construction with elaborate limestone window and door surrounds.

The central building is two stories in height and dominates the site with one-story wings found at its north and south. Cupolas and elaborate chimneys can be found throughout the one-story wings placed on a shallow hipped roof. In addition, grouped windows placed in 12 bays separated by engaged brick columns on a rusticated limestone foundation can be found throughout the one-story wings.

The factory building with its eight compartments express a utilitarian design that was efficient and allowed for the maximized use of space but are tucked behind the more elaborate main building. The historic saw-tooth roof is a construction type that isn't unique to Elgin but it is one that is still in excellent condition and worthy of preservation.

David Postle resided in a residence he designed at 54-56 N. Liberty Street. He quickly became one of Elgin's busiest architects designing a vast variety of types of architecture including homes, multi-family units, schools, commercial buildings, governmental buildings, churches and factories. One of Postle's most notable designs was the Lords Park Pavilion built in 1898. He resided in Elgin until the early 1920s before moving to Los Angeles with his family.

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**That it has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state or country and retains the integrity to be highly representative of the relevant area's social and cultural history.**

Due to the increase in business, David C. Cook bought thirteen acres in what is now known as the David C. Cook's Addition to Elgin. Here, he constructed his factory and headquarters as well as platted 40 lots and commissioned the construction of many of the homes for his workers. This was still a time where workers needed to be near their place of work and so building these homes across the publishing company's factory was another amenity and luxury that David Cook provided to his employees.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The homes that were built across from the factory are considered contributing buildings to the historic significance of the D. C. Cook – Lovell Area Historic District, designated a local historic district in 2007, due to their association with the company and for their architectural value.

In addition, according to E.C. Alft, “The D.C. Cook Publishing House was one of the few to maintain production stability” during the Panic of 1893 where many other industries, including the Elgin National Watch Company, had to lay off employees.<sup>5</sup> Alft also notes that, “in 1900, the Cook Publishing Company became the first major local employer to cut the daily hours of work to nine, and the watch factory followed the next year. Cook also led in adopting the eight-hour day in 1911,” which did not become the general practice of many other employers in Elgin.<sup>6</sup>

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**That it is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state or country.**

The D.C. Cook Publishing Company site identifies with David C. Cook, significant to the City of Elgin’s development in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century as the second largest employer and now the longest continual company in Elgin’s history.

An excerpt from *Elgin Today, 1904*:

*David C. Cook, Editor-in-Chief and President of the David C. Cook Publishing Company, was born in East Worcester, New York in 1850. His father was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As a boy, Mr. Cook was greatly interested in the Sunday school, attending not only that of his own church, but usually one and sometimes two other schools each Sunday.*

*Since boyhood he has been an aggressive and a successful aid to the Sunday school, church and temperance cause. At the age of 17 years he was appointed teacher of his first Sunday school class, in Ward’s Rolling Mills Sunday School in Chicago. Soon afterwards he offered his services as teacher in Milwaukee Avenue Mission and Wicker Park Sunday schools, and for four years following was most of the time teaching in two or three schools each Sabbath, while his evenings were mostly given up to visiting members of his classes. The unusual success which Mr. Cook has attained as a publisher of Sunday school literature is undoubtedly due in some measure to the fact that his whole life has been devoted to that work.*

*After the great Chicago fire he began to develop the Sunday school field on the north side. Witnessing the distress of those about him he threw himself heartily into relief and mission work in one of the poorest sections of the burned district.*

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<sup>5</sup> E. C. Alft, “Elgin: An American History 1835-1985,” *Crossroads Communications*, October 1984.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

*During the fall of 1871 he left his home, and with three other young men whom he had persuaded to co-operate with him, rented rooms in this field and gave all his spare time, including evenings and more or less weekdays and Sundays, to relief and mission work, conducting neighborhood prayer meetings, providing for sick and distressed and otherwise helping where help was needed.*

*During the winter following he organized and superintended his first Sunday school, "Everybody's Mission." This school was opened in a German theater and beer hall, on North Avenue, in what was then one of the roughest neighborhoods in the city. Afterwards, a lot was leased and a building erected for the school on an adjacent street. With an attendance of 350 to 450, and without aid from any church or society, he maintained this school for a period of five years and until nearby churches were able to occupy the field.*

*Besides "Everybody's Mission" he started and superintended the North Avenue Mission, Lake View Mission and Lake View Union Sunday school in Chicago and Grace Sunday school in Elgin, besides several smaller schools. Much of the time for ten years he superintended two schools, and some of the time three schools, each Sabbath.*

*His first publications were prepared for use in his own Sunday schools, but as other schools showed a desire for the same helps much of his time was soon given up to providing for what proved to be a general demand. Keeping constantly in touch with practical Sunday school work Mr. Cook has been able to so far anticipate the needs and possibilities that his lesson helps and supplies have served as an impetus to other publishers and as an inspiration to the Sunday school world in general. As a publisher he has relied entirely upon the merits of his publications to secure a market; unlike most other publishers in this line, who work under the auspices of some church or society and depend on this constituency to maintain patronage.*

*The larger part of the profits of the business has been continually employed for the improvement of the publications and the lessening of their cost to Sunday schools. When Mr. Cook first entered seriously and vigorously into the business of publishing Sunday school literature, his establishment was in Chicago. As the business increased there was a demand for space that could not be satisfied without removing to a new location. Accordingly in 1882, the entire business, excepting the Chicago salesroom, was removed to Elgin.*

*As an employer Mr. Cook has always been accorded the sympathetic loyalty of his employees, many of whom have grown up and grown old with the business.*

*Since coming to Elgin he has shown himself a public spirited citizen, and although prevented by stress of business from taking any active part in city affairs, he has contributed generously to numerous charities and enterprises.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> "Elgin Today, 1904," Lowrie & Black Publishers, 1903.

David married Miss Marguerite Murat on July 7, 1853 in Chicago, Illinois and had two children, George Evans Cook born in 1875 and David Caleb Cook, the Second in 1881. By 1885, the Cook Mansion was finally built located at 105 N. Gifford Street at a cost of \$10,000. The home is considered a significant structure to the Elgin Historic District, which was designated a local historic district in 1981. David passed away in his home on July 31, 1927 at 78 years old. Marguerite followed him in death 14 years later in 1941.

David C. Cook was not only well known in Elgin but he was also an internationally known publisher for his six weekly and twenty quarterly publications were circulated to church societies and Sunday schools across the world. He also had branches of the company located in Chicago (36 Washington Street), New York City (146 Fifth Avenue) and Boston (101 Tremont Street).

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**That it embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials**

The D.C. Cook Publishing Company main building and wings is a locally, exceptional example of a Colonial Revival style and the last remaining turn-of-the-century industrial architecture of this style in Elgin.

The D. C. Cook Publishing Company's Main Building was designed by Elgin architect, David E. Postle in the Colonial-Georgian Revival style and constructed in 1901. The building is set back from the street providing an expansive front lawn with a crescent shaped sidewalk, a historic design feature of the site. The two-story brick building faces east and has a rectangular footprint, a symmetrical facade, and a hipped roof with a pedimented front gable. A round portico contains six fluted columns with Ionic capitals and placed centrally on the primary (east) façade with the pediment being held up with five fluted, Ionic columns at the second floor directly above the portico. Two one-story wings flank the central, two-story structure with rectangular footprints spanning almost across the entire site. The wings contain a hipped roof and built in the same red-orange brick with simplified details.

The central, two-story building's (east) primary façade features symmetrically arranged fenestration and a limestone beltcourse between the first story and the second story that continues on all elevations. A wood dentiled cornice with large eaves ornaments the primary and secondary elevations. Many of the windows on the primary façade feature limestone sills and flat arch lintels with limestone voussoirs and a keystone with the exception of the four windows beneath the pedimented gable which contain a flat arch with decorative brick work laid above the lintel. The central building also is flanked by a two-story linked passageway that is pushed back from the main façade that connects to the adjacent, one-story wings. Historically, the links were one-story in height but were enlarged and heightened in 1914 as the company expanded. The existing linked passageways carry the same elaborate details found on the primary central building with the inclusion of a highly decorative, limestone door surround design flanked with Ionic stone pilasters, and decorative lintel topped with an elaborately carved half circle stone pediment. Remnants of the original one-story link are still visible including the

door surround and two flanking windows.

A historic one-story portico with a flat roof is placed on a raised landing that aligns with the foundation height approximately 40 inches above grade. The porch is that of a half circle and features six classical, fluted columns with Ionic capitals that are even spaced around the landing. The wood, Ionic columns support a wood entablature and ornamented with dentils. Centrally located within this portico is the historic double-leaf wood entrance doors with decorative glass panels set within a flat arch historic stone door surround and topped with a transom with true divided lites. Flanking the entryway are one double-hung wood windows with flat arch lintels with limestone voussoirs and keystone as seen in many of the windows on the primary and secondary elevations of the central building. Above the portico, placed on top of the limestone beltcourse at the second floor are three Ionic columns with two Ionic pilasters that are evenly spaced holding up the dentiled entablature to the pedimented roof. Directly behind the second floor columns are four double-hung wood windows with a patterned pane in the upper sash and single pane below. The windows are topped with a flat arch lintel with decorative brick work. Within the pedimented front gable is the David C. Cook seal made of stone and placed prominently at the gable's center.

Flanking the central two-story building is a north and south wing, are almost identical in design. The south wing contains 12 bays whereas the north wing contains 14 bays. Both wings display a pattern of brick pilasters separating each bay with grouped or paired windows. Simplistic one-over-one double-hung windows are found at each bay and are placed beneath a limestone lintel and a fixed transom and are separated with brick muntins providing visual contrast to each bay. Historically, the both wings contained only eight bays and are delineated with the use of paired windows that provided an end feature to the wings. When the company needed to expand the building in 1907, an additional four bays were added to mimic the original design. Three cupolas are also found at the low sloped hipped roofs and are evenly spaced.

The design features found at the primary (east) elevation are simplified at the rear (west) elevation. A small, hipped dormer is found at the central building's roof that aligns with the pedimented gable and a limestone beltcourse is still present delineating the first floor from the second. A bay window protrudes outward at the rear likely to allow for additional light into the space beyond. The windows are simplified at this elevation and consist of one-over-one double-hungs with minimalistic lintels. The bays and window fenestration found at the wings, however, appear to mimic those at the front (east) elevation with the exception of utilitarian loading docks and brick additions that once provided access to the rear of the site and the factory buildings beyond.

Due to the topography of the site, the rear factory buildings are not visible from Grove Avenue. The historic saw-tooth roof building is still present (six compartments) built of light colored brick, six over six double-hung windows and single door entries. The additional south two compartments were built in 1911 and lastly, in 1914 in the same design as the original six compartments. The factory building is not connected to the main building except through a

covered passageway. Although several later non-historic additions have been constructed after the 1950s, the overall utilitarian design of the historic factory is still present.

As stated in *Elgin Today – 1904*:

*The buildings, which are believed to have no superior in this country for convenience, adaptability and comfort, are of one-story construction, with the exception of the center building in front, which has the editorial offices on the second floor. The front buildings are entirely separate from those in the rear, and are connected by a covered passageway. The buildings in the rear are absolutely fire-proof being built of brick, with roofs of corrugated iron and glass supported on steel girders. All the floors are of hardwood, laid on solid beds of gravel. This arrangement affords a perfect foundation for pressed and other heavy machinery.*

*The central building and south wing are devoted entirely to office purposes. In the north wing are the composing room and electrotype foundry. The rear or main factory buildings, are 167 feet deep by 252 feet wide, and afford room for the power plant, stock room, press room, bindery, mail room, merchandise and shipping rooms. These buildings are divided into six fire-proof compartments, protected by brick walls and iron doors.*

*The power plant consists of a battery of four 80-horse power boilers, three of which furnish sufficient steam for power purposes and for heating in the coldest weather, thus leaving one boiler in reserve at all times.*

*There are two high-speed, 100-horse-power engines, each belted to a 60 kilowatt, 250-volt dynamo, either of which is capable of furnishing light and power for the entire plant. Forty-seven motors, with an aggregate capacity of 118 ½ horse-power, are distributed about the plant, divided among the various departments as follows: Pressroom, 49 horse-power; bindery, 12 horse-power; foundry, 17 horse-power; photo-engraving, 9 horse-power; conveyors, blowers and other miscellaneous apparatus, 31 ½ horse-power. The buildings are lighted by six hundred incandescent and twenty-eight arc lamps.*

*One great advantage of the establishment is that everything is on one floor, and the paper received in the stock room passes immediately to the next room adjoining, where the presses are located. In this are to be found seven rotary presses built especially for the company, printing in from one to four colors on both sides of the sheet, and delivering sheets at a speed of six thousand per hour.*

*All the different mechanical departments are supplied with finest and most modern machinery, and every process necessary for the complete manufacture of books and publications is carried on.*

*Mr. David C. Cook, the head of the establishment, is a kind-hearted employer, and commands the esteem and respect of his large force of operatives. The establishment is a*

*monument to hits untiring energy and enterprise, and is a pride not alone to its proprietors, but to the citizens of Elgin.*<sup>8</sup>

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**That it is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state or country**

The D.C. Cook Company Building is a locally exceptional example of the work of master architect, David Elmer Postle, known across the country for his architectural designs.

Born in Columbus, Ohio in 1863, Postle grew up on a farm and later went to school for teaching. After two years of teaching he moved to Chicago in 1884 finding work at an architectural firm. There he began to learn the trade and by 1892, opened his own office and became quite successful in Chicago and the Chicagoland area. In 1893, he married Miss Georgia N. Richardson and settled in Elgin.<sup>9</sup>

Around that time, Postle partnered with Gilbert M. Turnbull and William C. Jones in the 1890s. Their local designs included many of the workers flats found in the Elgin Historic District, which filled the need for rental housing during Elgin's 19th century industry boom. They soon became Elgin's busiest architects designing a vast variety of types of architecture including homes, multi-family units, schools, commercial buildings, government buildings, churches and factories. One of Postle's most notable designs was the Lords Park Pavilion located in Lords Park built in 1898. In 1901, Postle designed the David C. Cook publishing house in the Classical Revival style. The building contains a large portico with two sprawling wings that housed over 300 employees. At the peak of his career in Elgin, he designed a home for himself in the Prairie Style located at 54-56 N. Liberty Street in 1903.<sup>10</sup>

Around that time, he partnered with his brother, Oliver H. in Chicago. Their offices were located in the Marquette Building located on Dearborn Street in Chicago. While in Chicago, Postle designed the Pattington Apartments in 1902-3, which were considered the first luxury apartment complex on the north side of the city. In the early 1920s, Postle moved to Los Angeles with his family and began an architectural firm with his son, David E. Postle, Jr.

David E. Postle, Sr. had a long, successful career and is noted as an innovative architect at the turn of the century. Postle, Sr. passed away in 1939 at the age of 76. His sons, David E. Postle, Jr. and George R. Postle continued to lead the firm into the 1940s.

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<sup>8</sup> "Elgin Today, 1904," *Lowrie & Black* Publishers, 1903.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> "Elgin Heritage Plaque Application," City of Elgin, 1990.



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**That it embodies elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant.**

The details found on this building are indicative of the Colonial-Georgian Revival style. Its masonry construction; highly decorative window, roof and entry treatments; heavy, Ionic columns and portico; its far-reaching north and south wings with detailed cupolas and vast bays with pilasters and its ornate pedimented roof and entablature display a type of craftsmanship that cannot be easily replicated. The building is an elite example of a time of true building expertise found at the turn-of-the-century.

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**That it has a unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature.**

The David C. Cook Publishing House was strategically placed directly north of the city center with access not only to the Fox River but to the Chicago & Northwestern Railway and most importantly, to an expanding residential area that would be used for the company's workers providing a walkable commute.

As a part of the David C. Cook's Addition to Elgin, approximately 40 lots were platted on five acres with a boulevard through the center (Esmeralda Place). Including a green space for the residents and workers of the company was an added benefit that was rare to include at this time where property values were high and housing was booming.

The building and factory quickly became a landmark to the area not only for the workers but for other residents and higher class citizens who were moving into this area and has since been a significant landmark within the Northeast Neighborhood for over 115 years.

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**That it is a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to farmhouses, gas stations or other commercial structures, with a high level of integrity or architectural significance.**

The David C. Cook Publishing Company's main building and wings are considered the only Colonial-Georgian Revival style industrial buildings to remain in Elgin. Built in 1901, the building and factory were deemed as innovative structures that allowed for efficiency as well as beauty. The use of the Colonial Revival style gave a sense of permanence to an area of the city that still being established.

The factory building with its eight compartments express a utilitarian design that was efficient and allowed for the maximized use of space. The buildings are tucked behind the more elaborate main building. The historic saw-tooth roof is a construction type that isn't unique to Elgin but it is one that is still in excellent condition and worthy of preservation.

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**That it is suitable for preservation or restoration.**

The David C. Cook Publishing House has impeccable integrity as it meets all seven aspects and qualities including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

**Location:** The historic buildings that are a part of the Cook Publishing Company has remained in its original location since its construction in 1901.

**Design:** In addition, the design and its composition of elements including form, plan, space, structure and style of the building has been retained and although the construction of non-historic buildings built after the 1950s are on the site, it does not constitute a loss of integrity of the design due to the additions location (at the rear, minimally visible from Grove Avenue and not obstructing the main building and wings). The main building and wings, built in the Classical Revival style, alludes to a sense of permanence and establishment within the neighborhood, a quality that was beneficial for a new site for the young Elgin company.

**Setting:** The setting around the D. C. Cook Publishing Company buildings remains the same since its construction with the building still surrounded by residential buildings that were built within the period of significance (1901-1968) of the Cook site.

**Materials:** The buildings still retain their original materials including its red-orange brick, and limestone masonry, its wood portico features, windows and cupolas.

**Workmanship:** The construction and attention to detail is found throughout the buildings and reflects turn-of-the-century craftsmanship that cannot easily or affordably be recreated today.

**Feeling:** For over 115 years, this building has been a landmark to not only the Northeast neighborhood but for residents throughout Elgin. It is the longest continual company in Elgin where many recall working or remember family members and friends who were employed by the Cook Publishing Company family. In addition, many Elgin residents remember Cook's Whistle that could be heard for miles to indicate the start of the day, lunch time and closing. The bell tolled for 55 years until being silenced in 1956 but during that time, it gave the neighborhood a sense of assurance that their Elgin business was thriving.

**Association:** The buildings' association with the David C. Cook Publishing Company allowed Elgin to become one of the leading cities in industry in the area. The building, with its association with internationally known businessman and owner, David C. Cook, allowed Elgin to be kept in the spotlight decades after the closing of the Elgin National Watch Factory.

With this, the D. C. Cook Publishing Company buildings retain a high level of integrity, and are considered significant to not only Elgin's heritage but as well as across the country its association with David C. Cook, and its impeccable Colonial Revival style architecture that is rare to see in industrial architecture in Elgin.

5. **Attachments**

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1903, 1913 and 1950

Chicago Tribune Articles

“Near the Mountain Top, Chicago Progressiveness, 1891”

“Odd Way to Save Souls, 1897”

“To Open Religious Camp, 1900”

“David C Cook of Elgin Buys Real Estate in E. Washington Street, 1901”

“In Real Estate Circles, Developments Regarding Cook Property, 1901”

“Says He is Taxed Twice, 1901”

“Big Blocks on Cook Lots, 1902”

“Work on Cook Building, 1903”

“David C Cook Publisher Dies at Elgin Home, 1927”

“700,000 Willed to Widow by David C Cook, 1932”

“David C Cook III, Elgin Heir is Hurt in Crash, 1934”

“They Love that Elgin Whistle, 1947”

“George E Cook Services to be Held Tomorrow, 1950”

“Publishing Firm Assets Go Over to Foundation, 1953”