Romance at Old Cantonment Leavenworth

The Marriage of 2d Lt. Philip St. George Cooke in 1830

Hamilton Gardner

Fort Leavenworth . . . a "fort" by courtesy, or rather by order; . . . was in reality but a straggling cantonment, but on an admirable site. The Missouri, in an abrupt bend, rushes with wonderful swiftness against a rock-bound shore; from this the ground rises with a bold sweep to a hundred feet or more, then sloping gently into a shallow vale, it rises equally again, and thus are formed a number of hills, which are to the north connected by a surface but slightly bent, to which the vale insensibly ascends; every line of every surface is curved with symmetry and beauty. On these hill-tops, shaded by forest trees, stands Fort Leavenworth. On the one hand is to be seen the mighty river, winding in the distance through majestic forests and by massive bluffs, stretching away till mellowed to aerial blue; on the other, rolling prairies, dotted with groves, and bounded on the west by a bold grassy ridge; this, inclosing in an elliptical sweep a beautiful amphitheatre, terminates five miles southward in a knob, leaving between it and the river a view of the prairie lost in a dim and vague outline.

Thus young 2d Lt. Philip St. George Cooke 2 records his impressions of Cantonment Leavenworth when he first saw it May 15, 1829. Established only two years previously by Col. Henry Leavenworth, 3 some time still elapsed before it attained the dignity of a fort. Cooke's future military career was destined

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to be cast in major part in service connected with this historic post and at one time he commanded it.

Cooke was born near Leesburg, Va., June 13, 1809, and was appointed a cadet in the United States Military Academy when only 14 years old. After graduation in the class of 1827 he was assigned to the 6th infantry at Jefferson Barracks, Mo. His initial arrival at Leavenworth was as a subaltern with Brev. Maj. Bennet Riley’s Companies A, B, F and H, 6th infantry. The mission of the expedition was to escort the traders’ caravan on its annual trip from Independence, Mo., to Santa Fe, N.M. Departing from Cantonment Leavenworth June 3, the column proceeded as far as the Arkansas river, which was then the international boundary, and awaited the return of the merchants from Santa Fe. There Cooke participated in the first of his many engagements with the Indians. The battalion returned to its home station November 8. Cooke reports that it “took quiet possession of the miserable huts and sheds left by the 3d infantry the preceding May.”

I

Strength of the garrison at Cantonment Leavenworth during the winter of 1829-1830 continued pitifully small. Upon its return from the march along the Santa Fe trail the battalion numbered 12 officers and slightly fewer than 200 enlisted men. Facing the rigors of a winter season in the open prairies, almost completely isolated from civilization, it found questionable comfort and shelter in the existing “miserable huts and sheds.” But such a situation could not be regarded as particularly unusual in the life of the frontier army posts of that period.

Normally it could hardly be expected that a lowly junior lieutenant such as Cooke would figure in the important functions of even so small a station as Leavenworth. Yet the incomplete surviving records of that first winter bring to light some of his official activities.

His first concern had to do with completing the daily “Journal” of the previous summer’s march to the Arkansas and, under Major Riley’s supervision, the final “Report” on it. The major had specifically assigned him to prepare these two documents, even though in normal procedure it would have been the duty of the expedition’s

5. Cooke, Scenes and Adventures, p. 98.
Sketch of Fort Leavenworth in 1838. Courtesy Signal Corps Photo Lab and Librarian, Command and General Staff College, Leavenworth.
adjutant, 2d Lt. James F. Izard, to make the journal entries.  

Riley forwarded the "Report" through channels November 24.

CANTONMENT LEAVENWORTH

Nov. 24th 1829

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose you for the Dept. a Report of my Campaign on the Santa Fe Trace on the Arkansas last summer as also the Journal kept by Lt. Cooke with the several documents connected therewith . . .

I have the honor to be
With Great Respect &
Esteem Your Most. Obt. St.
B RILEY
Major U. S. Army

To.

BRIG GENL LEAVENWORTH

Comg. Right W. W. Dept

One of the critical events during the expedition arose from the conduct of Capt. Joseph Pentland in connection with an attack by the Comanche Indians on the Arkansas river August 11, 1829. 8 After submitting the "Journal" Cooke, in a desire to be absolutely accurate, requested that a change be made in a pertinent entry. Originally he had referred to one of the units engaged as "light Co. B, then under the command of Lt. Dorr."

At this representation of Capt. Pentland I am convinced that this expression may have been the unintended cause of misapprehension. Capt P upon that occasion was off. of the Day; during the time consumed in reaching the body of the guard, his company had left the camp to attack the enemy: nevertheless Capt. P. received instructions which body to command; in time to take charge of his company, I think, before it was engaged; at his command at its head during the whole of the skirmish. . . . 9

On several occasions in his later career Cooke took what appeared to be rather determined action in asserting financial claims against

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6. These two documents have never been published. I have microfilms of both from the National Archives. They are officially entitled: "Journal of the Expedition of a Detachment of Four Companies of the 6th Regiment of Infantry From Jefferson Barracks Mo. to the Crossing of the Arkansas River by the Santa Fe Trace (by Way of Cantonment Leavenworth)," and "Report of Four Companies of the 6th Regiment U. S. Infantry, Which Left Jefferson Barracks, on the 5th of May 1829 Under the Command of Bt. Major Riley, U. S. Army for the Protection of the Trade to Santa Fe." The report bears date of November 22, 1829.

Young, op. cit., asserts, but does not present the proof available in original source records, that Cooke wrote both of these papers. In addition to the documents quoted and cited in this article, internal evidence discloses unmistakably that he was the author. Not only is his hand writing easily identifiable, but his rather unique literary style—evident in embryo even at this early date—place the matter beyond doubt.


8. From the meager surviving evidence it would appear that Captain Pentland was court-martialed for cowardice under enemy fire and dismissed from the service. The War Department records dealing with this affair are not complete and in some places have apparently been deleted. Cooke's concern for technical correctness in the "Journal" becomes clear under these circumstances.

the War Department with respect to matters incidental to his service. The first such instance arose in connection with his work in keeping the "Journal."

CANTONMENT LEAVENWORTH
Feby. 9th 1830

Sir,

In obedience to your orders I kept a journal of the expedition of a Battalion of the 6th Regiment detached from Jefferson Barracks in May last to protect the Santa Fe trade. For this duty it is my object to obtain extra pay. I am aware there is no specific provision for this case; but I was certainly in the performance of extra duty. I have the honor to request you would transmit this application with any remarks that you may make, to the Secretary of War for his decision.

Very respectfully,
Yr. obt. Servt.
P. St. G. Cooke
2d Lt. 6th Regt.10

To,

MAJOR
B. RILEY
Commg.

Major Riley approved Lieutenant Cooke's claim and forwarded it to the Secretary of War.

CANTONMENT LEAVENWORTH
8th Feby. 1830

Sir

I have the honor herewith to enclose you a communication from Lt. Cook of the 6th Regt. Infy. asking for extra pay for keeping and Riting the journal of my Sante Fe Campaign; I have to state that I was ordered by the Comg Genl of Dept to have one Kept and I ordered Lt Cook to perform that Duty which he performed to my satisfaction and I am in hopes to yours; he also performed his Duty in his Company in the same manner as above stated and I hope that you will think as I do that he should have extra pay and will direct it to be [???] to him accordingly. I think it cannot be disputed that it was extra duty. I have the honor to be with great Respect
Your obt. Sert
B RILEY
Capt 6th Regt Maj U. S. Army
Comg.11

To

HONB J. H. EATON
Secretary at War

Surviving records do not disclose whether Cooke ever received the extra compensation he requested.

10. N. A. R. S. W. R. B.
11. Ibid.
From this favorable indorsement on Cooke’s application it is not to be inferred that all remained sweetness and light between the subaltern and his superior. The garrison was so small during that winter, the isolated confinement so narrow, that those concerned would have been less than human if squabbles did not arise, however inconsequential. Only fragmentary data are available as to one such disagreement to which the lieutenant was a party. It appears that on one occasion Cooke dismissed a drill somewhat earlier than his commanding officer approved. Thereupon Major Riley himself continued the drill over an unusually lengthy period. Complaint of this excess reached Headquarters, Western Department, at St. Louis. The accusers are not identified, but they added the further allegation that Riley had acted under the influence of too free indulgence in that potent cup which was all too plentiful on the frontier. Finally the commanding general, Western Department, issued Orders No. 11, March 13, 1830, exonerating Major Riley on the drunkenness charge but reprimanding him for drilling the company too long. Such trifling incidents must surely have broken the monotony of the Cantonment’s winter existence, to say nothing of adding to the supply of that commodity which almost seems to be “general issue” for soldiers—gossip, though usually referred to by other and less respectable names.12

But the picture must not become distorted. Monotony there was—and a degree of pettiness, frustration, bickering and the regimentation inevitable to military routine in a small isolated garrison. To offset these drawbacks were opportunities for professional education—drill, study, the handling of men, a broadening outlook on the developing frontier, an insight into the personalities pushing persistently towards the unknown West, contact with the Indian tribes and, above all, the sense of duty performed. All this had its permanent effect on the young officer, as witness his reminiscences a quarter century later—“the generous, the open-hearted, daring and adventurous—the frank and hospitable far West.”13

II

Lieutenant Cooke attained his 21st birthday June 13, 1830. By all traditional standards, this event, coupled with the spring season, should have caused his “young man’s fancy” to aim at a romantic target. Cantonment Leavenworth seemed to afford little possibility for a successful campaign in that direction. But Cupid

12. Ibid.
possesses an arsenal full of weapons to overcome such handicaps and secure both strategic and tactical victory. In the youthful Virginian’s case it all came about in a manner which many another youngster fresh out of West Point experienced at frontier army posts.

One of the original figures to appear at Leavenworth was Maj. John Dougherty. Early in 1827 he had been appointed an agent in the Indian service. He reported at St. Louis to provide the bond required in his new office. There Colonel Leavenworth suggested that he make his headquarters at the recently located cantonment because of its accessibility to the Indians with whom he must work. Dougherty’s superiors agreed. So he accompanied Companies B, D, E and H of the 3d infantry to the new post, arriving September 25, 1827.¹⁴

Major Dougherty had married Mary Hertzog of Philadelphia, a descendant of John Collins, who had settled in America in 1640.¹⁵ Early in the spring of 1830 Mrs. Dougherty invited her sister, Rachel, for an extended visit with her at the post. Picture the heightened interest, even excitement, especially among bachelor officers, occasioned by the presence of an attractive and eligible young lady, fresh from civilization. Always it had proved so in the army’s far flung chain of early Western posts—Fort Snelling, Fort Crawford, Fort Leavenworth, Fort Gibson. That the gentle, refined Miss Hertzog achieved immediate popularity was but a foregone conclusion. In time, however, her interest centered on the tall, slender lieutenant from Virginia.

In delicate retrospection Cooke paints his courtship:

Blessed with an harmonious and congenial though small society, the days, the months, flew by. Our duties performed, and studious improvement not neglected, the pleasures of female society gave the greater zest to diversions and exercises. Often the whole of us, in a party, would center for miles through prairie and grove, and spend the day on the shady banks of a pretty stream; there, where the world had never made its mark—forgetful of its very existence—we gave our whole hearts to sylvan sports, to feast and merriment, to happiness. A week seldom passed without dancing parties, to which rare beauty and fine music lent their attractions. Sentinels on a distant frontier, ever ready to throw ourselves in the face of savage enemies, though severed from the world with its selfish jarring interests, its contentions and tortuous intrigues, its eternal struggle for dollars, we continued, amid our books and social pleasures, with hunting and the chase, to pass happy years. . . .¹⁶

Far from the possibility of a fashionable church wedding, limited to the small circle of brother officers and their wives, unattended by members of either family except Mrs. Dougherty, the young couple pledged their vows October 28, 1830. It was one of Fort Leavenworth's very earliest military weddings. Almost three weeks later the nearest newspapers reported with regrettable brevity:

**Married**

On Thursday evening, the 28th ultimo, by the Rev. Mr. Edwards, at the residence of Major Dougherty, Cantonment Leavenworth, Lieutenant PHILIP ST. GEORGE COOKE, U. S. A., to Miss RACHEL W[ILT] HERTZOG.17

One could wish for the thoroughness in detail so avidly displayed by the modern newspaper society editor. Were there bridesmaids, a matron of honor, a best man? Did the newly married couple follow army tradition and walk under the crossed sabres of 6th infantry officers? What festivities followed? Even the identity of the Rev. Edwards remains obscure. Certainly he was not an army chaplain, because that corps was not activated until 1837. Very likely he was either a visiting preacher or one of the missionaries who frequently worked with the government's Indian agents.

Unfortunately Lieutenant Cooke did not describe the quarters available for his bride and himself. At best they must have been of the most primitive kind. A visitor in 1833 pictures the buildings on the post:

About a dozen white-washed cottage-looking houses compose the barracks and the abodes of the officers. They were so arranged as to form the three sides of a hollow square; the fourth is open and looks out on a wide prairie.18

The accompanying sketch, dated in 1838, shows only six small buildings which were likely occupied by married officers. In one of these—or perhaps in half of it—Rachel Cooke bravely set up their first abode. What she accomplished as a homemaker tells the story of the cultural contribution of army wives on the early frontier.

As history has chronicled the exciting achievements of their soldier-husbands—fighting Indians, protecting pioneer settlers, laying out roads, building military posts—it has paid but inadequate tribute to the equally brave and far more patient wives. They, too, came from refined homes "back East." They had exchanged the drawing rooms of their parents in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Charleston, and New Orleans for the wilderness. In a rude log hut, rough frame structure or even an adobe house could be found a piece of rare china, some in-

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17. *Missouri Republican*, St. Louis, November 16, 1830.
herited old lace, a daguerreotype, a choice set of silver, a precious gown, a few cherished books. They brought to the frontier the highest traditions of American social culture and kept them alive under the most discouraging environment. When the scales are balanced and a measure of influence of American womanhood in the advance to the West is finally calculated, these army wives will receive the credit and appreciation they so richly deserve.

III

For the next two years—1830 to 1832—the newlyweds stayed at Cantonment Leavenworth. If the lieutenant obtained leave for a honeymoon, such is not of record. Garrison duty was interspersed with few outside contacts, although the first post office had been established May 29, 1829. "But we were not without our visitors from the world," relates Cooke, "who sufficiently refreshed our concepts of its existence and nature." 19 He mentions the Indian agents, the fur trappers and hunters, the bois voyageurs on their way to and from the Rocky Mountains. Officers, newly assigned from the East, were solicited for the latest happenings.

In the "Old Army" Out West it was "standard operating procedure," when the troops took the field on any matter connected with the Indians, for the wives to sit fearfully at the post and hope for the best. But the first separation of the Cookes possessed no such hostile aspect, even though he went into Indian country. He "obtained leave of absence, in order to accompany an officer of the Indian Department on an official visit to the villages of the Otto and Omahaw Indians, and the Old Council Bluff in their vicinity." 20 This was in June, 1831. Cooke does not specifically identify his companion, but it was undoubtedly his brother-in-law, Major Dougherty. The route followed the western bank of the Missouri river as far north as the Platte. 21 This was the first of his many unofficial excursions to the Indian tribes throughout the West. Although he later fought in numerous engagements against them and became known as one of the army's foremost Indian campaigners, he never lost his early admiration for their good qualities or his sympathy with their misfortunes. 22

20. Ibid., p. 95.
22. A considerable portion of Cooke's Scenes and Adventures in the Army is devoted to his observations of the Redskins; see, for example, pp. 119-130, as to his views of the treatment given them by the whites. Some of the Indian country visited by Cooke in 1831 was later the subject of vivid description and illustration by George Catlin in his North American Indians (Edinburgh ed., 1926). Catlin called at Leavenworth in 1833.
Now occurred an incident in Cooke's life at Leavenworth which illustrates the absurd lengths to which the trivial and the inconsequential could become involved in official red tape in the "Old Army." The affair is not lacking in its humorous aspects, but it also forecasts a personal characteristic which appeared several times later. It might well be termed the "Battle of the Mustaches."

Cooke, now 22 years old and only four years out of West Point, decided his personal and professional dignity required that he grow a mustache. The commanding officer, Maj. William Davenport, 6th infantry, who had succeeded Major Riley for a matter of a year, decreed that his officers must forego such hirsute adornment. Cooke felt aggrieved and affronted. Were not his constitutional rights being impaired, his privilege of self-expression? He made an issue of it; the hair on his upper lip must grow and flourish unimpeded by ukase of his superior officer! The very top of the army hierarchy must decide this momentous question! So he wrote a letter to the general-in-chief himself, Maj. Gen. Alexander Macomb.

CANTONMENT LEAVENWORTH
Aug. 5, 1831

Sir,

As the proper protector of the rights of members of the army, I beg leave to address you in a case which, as I conceive, mine have been invaded: and one in which I know no mode of redress more eligible than the one taken. I request your opinion on an order which I have lately received, to cut off a pair of Mustaches; and given by Major W. Davenport the officer here in command.

The order derives the most of whatever importance it may have, from my sense of its oppressiveness.

Without dwelling at all on the opinion that has in all time been received, of the marshal effect of Mustaches, I would beg leave to suggest one or two of my ideas on the subject: and first that the mustaches were an inviolable part of my person: and secondly, that they were not more obnoxious to uniformity than whiskers, which are neither here nor elsewhere regulated by orders; and thirdly as to the particular case I told Major Davenport (what he did not deny) that my lip with the mustaches was not so darkly conspicuous (owing to their size) as are other officer's (mustaches) when freshly shaved. I am not aware that any rule of correspondence denies this direct appeal to your decision on an abstract subject.

A favorable decision in this case, Sir, will be most thankfully received by your Most respectful

and obedient Servant

P. St. G Cooke

2. Lt. 6th Reg. Infy.23
Alas for such students as have indulged in research in the changing vagaries of fashion as it relates to the display of foliage on the male physiognomy, General Macomb's answer, if any, has not been preserved of record.

A sequel, however, did develop. Lieutenant Cooke preferred charges against Major Davenport. Whether the specifications set forth the edict against mustaches is not known. But on December 10, 1831, headquarters, Western Department, at Jefferson Barracks, accorded official recognition to the case. Lieutenant George A. McCall, "A. D. C.—act. ast. Adj Gen" wrote to Cooke to acknowledge receipt of his letter of November 25, inquiring as to the status of the charges, and continued:

. . . I have the honor to inform you, that the charges with the accompanying letter, were, on their receipt at this office, transmitted to Major Genl. Gaines, then on a tour of inspection in the south, from which he is not yet returned—nor have his views upon the subject been communicated to this office.24

Whether the charges ever reached the stage of a military court of inquiry or a court-martial, the records do not disclose.

(Facetiously one may speculate whether Lieutenant Cooke's "hairy declaration of independence" might have set a precedent which "guard house lawyers" in the enlisted ranks later grasped as a measure of desperation. Old timers, especially in the mounted services, will doubtless recall instances of soldiers appearing at inspection without benefit of shaving. When questioned, they glibly affirmed it as their intention to raise a beard. However apparent this deception, the inspecting officer usually took it seriously and forthwith ordered the offending soldier to leave his beard untouched for a considerable period.)

Certainly the significance of this minor incident should not be overemphasized. Probably it could have happened only in a small outlying post where the personnel was thrown entirely too much upon itself. But it exemplified a trait which was to crop out occasionally in Cooke's subsequent career. That was his zealoussness in insisting on his personal and official prerogatives. In this he acted with utmost fearlessness and sometimes he incurred the disfavor of his superiors. Throughout his long army service of almost half a century he remained a forthright individualist. While meticulously loyal and respectful to his commanding officers, he never lost sight of his personal rights. His colleagues of all ranks re-

24. Ibid.
garded him as scrupulously fair and just, even though a strict disciplinarian. He stood up for his command even more than for himself.  

Lieutenant Cooke completed his first stay at Leavenworth in March, 1832, when he volunteered to proceed with two companies of the 6th infantry to join Brev. Brig. Gen. Henry Atkinson’s forces in Illinois during the Black Hawk War. Upon its completion he returned to the post briefly and moved with his wife to Jefferson Barracks. There on September 7, 1832, he took up his new assignment as regimental adjutant of the 6th infantry. This was a signal recognition of his professional competence and merit, especially in view of his youth.

IV

Despite the numerous tours of duty by Cooke and his wife at Fort Leavenworth, it so happened that only one of their four children could claim it as a birthplace.

John Rogers Cooke was born at Jefferson Barracks June 9, 1833, and named after his uncle (a distinguished lawyer of Martinsburg, Va., with whom Philip St. George and his widowed mother, Catherine Esten Cooke, lived for several years before he became a cadet at the military academy in 1823). John Rogers accompanied his father, then captain, 1st dragoons, on the first of two round trips on the Santa Fe trail in 1843. He entered the Lawrence scientific school of Harvard University in September, 1851, and left in 1852 without taking a degree. On June 30, 1855, without the help or even knowledge of his father he obtained a commission in the regular army and was assigned to the 8th infantry in Arizona. He was promoted to first lieutenant on January 28, 1861. Resigning May 30, 1861, he accompanied Maj. James Longstreet to Virginia, where both entered the Confederate service. After the first battle of Bull Run he raised a company of light artillery and early in 1862 he was assigned as major and chief of artillery in the Department of North Carolina. In the following April he became colonel,

25. A typical event of this kind arose at Camp Floyd in Utah territory in the spring of 1858. Brev. Brig. Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston was then department commander. Cooke felt that his 2d dragoons had been imposed upon by excessive details to guard the horsecarts, mules, and cattle of the Utah expedition. When Johnston rebuffed his protest, he did not hesitate to carry the matter directly to the general-in-chief, Brev. Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott. He lost the appeal but won the unquestioned loyalty of his dragoons and the respect of his colleagues.—See Col. Theophilus F. Rodenbaugh, From Everglades to Cahoon With the Second Dragoons (New York, 1875), pp. 529, 530.

26. Harvard University archives.

27. Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, published at the Government Printing Office, "by authority of Congress" (Washington, 1903), v. 1, p. 324.
10th North Carolina infantry. He commanded this regiment in several battles and was promoted to brigadier general for gallantry at Antietam. In the battle of Fredericksburg he was severely wounded while in command of the famous stone wall at the foot of Marye's Heights. Altogether he suffered seven battle wounds. He married Nancy Gordon Patton of Fredericksburg, Va.28 After the war he entered business in Richmond, Va., where his son, Philip St. George Cooke, still resides.

Flora, eldest of the three Cooke daughters, was likewise born at Jefferson Barracks on January 3, 1836. Like her sisters, she spent her childhood and young womanhood at various frontier army posts where her father was stationed. Thus in 1855 she met young Lt. James Ewell Brown Stuart, 1st cavalry, and they were married at Fort Riley November 14. Early in 1861, without hesitation, he resigned his federal commission and returned to his native Virginia. Flora soon followed. Stuart's meteoric rise as a cavalry commander for the Confederacy and his attainment of the rank of major general while still a very young man constitute one of the classic sagas of the War Between the States. Flora visited with her husband occasionally as the Virginia campaigns ebbed and flowed and his fame grew. But when he was wounded at Yellow Tavern and taken to the home of his brother-in-law, Dr. Charles Brewer, in Richmond, she was unable to reach his bedside before he died May 12, 1864. True to his memory, she remained and reared his family among his people in Virginia.

Fort Wayne was a cavalry post established for a few years in the northeastern part of the present state of Oklahoma on the Arkansas border. Captain Cooke served at the station in 1839-1840 with a small garrison of the 1st dragoons. There Maria Pendleton was born February 25, 1840. (Cooke's older brother, John Rogers, had married into the Pendleton family of Virginia.) She married Dr. Charles Brewer of Maryland, who had entered the U. S. army as assistant surgeon on August 29, 1856. Like his brother-in-law, "Jeb" Stuart, he declared for the South and resigned his Union commission May 7, 1861.29 During the latter part of the war he served as surgeon on Gen. Robert E. Lee's staff in Richmond.

The youngest of the Cooke children was Julia Turner, the only

28. I acknowledge my indebtedness for much information concerning the Cooke family to the gracious courtesy of Philip St. George Cooke, Richmond, Va., and his son, Philip St. George Cooke, III, Grand Island, Neb.
one to be born at Fort Leavenworth, March 10, 1842. She became
the wife of Jacob Sharpe of New York November 15, 1864. He
had entered the Civil War as major, 56th New York infantry, in 1861
and the following year became lieutenant colonel, 156th New York
infantry. Colonel Sharpe was brevetted brigadier general of volun-
teers March 13, 1865, for gallantry and meritorious service at the
battle of Winchester, Va. He died April 27, 1892.

These brief sketches disclose the tragic division of allegiance in
the Cooke family during the Civil War. Faced with such a heart-
breaking necessity, Colonel Cooke reached his own decision to
continue service with the Union. He was one of the very few
Virginia-born regular officers who did so, other notable exceptions
being Winfield Scott and George H. Thomas.

V

After 1832 Cooke did not see Fort Leavenworth again for more
than two years. In the meantime he had transferred to the cavalry,
the newly activated arm in which he attained his greatest distinc-
tion. An officer-founder of the 1st dragoons at Jefferson Barracks
in March, 1833 (the oldest permanent cavalry regiment in the
army), he accompanied the fledgling outfit on its first overland
march to Fort Gibson; spent a miserable winter there in tents;
started with Col. Henry Dodge on the costly march to the “Pawnee”
villages in 1834, but soon fell ill in the scourge of sickness which
cost the lives of Brig. Gen. Henry Leavenworth and scores of dra-
goons; and returned with the regiment to Fort Leavenworth in
the fall of 1834. Colonel Dodge resigned from command of the 1st dragoons July 4, 1836, and was succeeded by Col. Stephen Watts
 Kearny. From 1834 to the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846
headquarters of the regiment was maintained at Fort Leavenworth,
but like other units on the frontier, its companies were scattered to
various other posts. Under this practice Cooke’s tenure at Leaven-
worth was interspersed with service at various periods at Fort Gib-
son, Nacogdoches, Tex., Fort Wayne, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., Fort
Crawford, and assignments to recruiting duty.

In the significant contribution of the United States army to the
settlement of the West mounted troops of necessity played the major

30. Ibid., p. 977.
Fort Gibson in 1833-1834,” The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, v. 31 (Spring,
1953), pp. 22-36.
role. And of the entire cavalry the 1st dragoons stood out above all others in this respect.\textsuperscript{33} Equally it may be stated that of all dragoon officers—or of the entire army for that matter—Philip St. George Cooke participated in the greatest number of transcontinental military marches. Nearly all of them were connected with Fort Leavenworth.

Mention has already been made of his trip along the Santa Fe trail in 1829. As a captain in 1843 he made two marches from Fort Leavenworth to the Arkansas with an escort of dragoons to the Santa Fe traders.\textsuperscript{34} During the first expedition he arrested a body of Texans under “Colonel” Snively on the ground that they had unlawfully crossed into United States territory. The actual boundary line had not been definitely fixed on the ground.\textsuperscript{35} Following strong protests from the Republic of Texas, Cooke was completely vindicated by a board of officers sitting at Fort Leavenworth early in 1844. The same year he marched with Maj. Clifton Wharton and five companies of the dragoons on a visit to the Indian tribes along the lower Platte river.\textsuperscript{36} In 1845 Colonel Kearny led six dragoon companies, including Cooke’s, on the most pretentious expedition of the period. From Leavenworth the column moved to the Oregon trail and followed it to the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains. Returning to Fort Laramie, it passed across the present state of Colorado to Bent’s Fort on the Arkansas and returned to its home station on the Santa Fe trail.\textsuperscript{37}

The outbreak of the War with Mexico found Captain Cooke with Company K at Fort Crawford, separated from the headquarters and most units of the 1st dragoons at Fort Leavenworth. Colonel Kearny was designated by President James K. Polk to command

\textsuperscript{33} Some, but by no means all, of the expeditions of the 1st dragoons are discussed in Louis Pater, Marches of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley (published by the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, 1917).

\textsuperscript{34} Cooke’s official “Journal” was published as “A Journal of the Santa Fe Trail . . . 1843,” in The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, v. 12 (June and September, 1925), pp. 72-98, 297-255, annotated by William E. Connelley.

\textsuperscript{35} For one phase of this incident see H. Bailey Carroll, “Steward A. Miller and the Snively Expedition of 1843,” The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Austin, Tex., v. 54 (January, 1951), pp. 261-286.

\textsuperscript{36} Major Wharton’s “Journal of a March of a Detachment of the 1st Dragoons” was published in the Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, v. 16 (1923-1925), pp. 272-305. The trip is also described in the first part of 1st Lt. James H. Carleton’s The Prairie Logbooks, Dragon Campaigns to the Pawnee Villages in 1844, and to the Rocky Mountains in 1845 (Chicago, 1945). Cooke does not mention it in Scenes and Adventures.

\textsuperscript{37} This march has been much publicized. See, e.g., my article, “Captain Philip St. George Cooke and the March of the 1st Dragoons to the Rocky Mountains in 1845,” The Colorado Magazine, Denver, v. 50 (October, 1953), pp. 246-269. Cooke devotes considerable space to it in Scenes and Adventures as does Lieutenant Carleton in the latter part of his Logbooks. From the National Archives I have obtained a microfilm copy of “Journal of an Expedition Performed in the Summer of 1845 by 8 Companies of the 1st Dragoons Under the Command of Colonel S. W. Kearny.” It was written by 1st Lt. Henry S. Turner, adjutant of the expedition. So far as I have been able to ascertain, this “Journal” has never been published.
the Army of the West, with the mission of occupying New Mexico, including Arizona, and Upper California. His force, consisting of the 1st dragoons, less the companies at Fort Gibson, the 1st and 2d regiments, Missouri mounted volunteers, Col. Alexander W. Doniphan and Col. Sterling Price, departed from Fort Leavenworth late in June. The Mormon battalion, Brev. Lt. Col. James Allen, followed about August 13. Colonel Kearny early insisted that Cooke's Company K and Capt. Edwin V. Sumner's Company G, at Fort Atkinson, Council Bluffs, rejoin the regiment. The two companies finally got away from Fort Leavenworth July 6 and by forced marches caught up with the main body near Bent's Fort. Kearny had now been promoted brigadier general and about August 1 he sent Captain Cooke to Santa Fe in advance of the column to confer with the Mexican governor, Manuel Armijo, regarding a truce. The mission proved unsuccessful, so Cooke returned and entered Santa Fe August 18 with Kearny's troops.

When the Army of the West moved out of Santa Fe Cooke started with it, but had gone only a short distance before being sent back to command the Mormon battalion in place of Colonel Allen who had died near Leavenworth. Cooke, now a temporary lieutenant colonel, led the battalion in one of his most notable marches from Santa Fe to San Diego. In California he loyally supported General Kearny in the latter's acrimonious controversy with Lt. Col. John C. Frémont. Leaving Monterey May 31, 1847, he traveled with the general's party, including Frémont under restraint, by way of Fort Hall, the South Pass and the Oregon trail and arrived at Fort Leavenworth August 22.

For the next seven years the fort saw nothing of Cooke. After

38. In a letter dated May 31, 1846, to Brig. Gen. G. M. Brooke, commanding the 3d Military Department, St. Louis, Colonel Kearny stated: "I have now most respectfully to urge . . . to demand . . . that the 2 Cos. of my Regt (Capt. Sumner's and Cooke's) . . . may be ordered by you to repair forthwith to Santa Fe—those Cos are among the very best of my Regt . . . from the Captains down they would consider that injustice was done to them by leaving them unemployed. . . ."—Ms., "Kearny Letter Books," Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.


testifying at the Frémont court-martial (he had been promoted to major, 2d dragoons, February 16, 1847), he served a few months with the occupation forces in Mexico City. From 1845 to 1852 he acted as superintendent of the cavalry recruiting service and commandant of its training depot at Carlisle Barracks. Then followed tours of duty with his new regiment at Fort Mason, Texas, and Fort Union, New Mexico territory. He was advanced to lieutenant colonel, 2d dragoons, July 15, 1853, and shortly assumed actual command, although Brev. Brig. Gen. William S. Harney was carried on paper as colonel for several years. In 1854 he led two successful expeditions in New Mexico against marauding Apaches. He rejoined his regiment at Fort Leavenworth in the fall of that year.

Lieutenant Colonel Cooke and his 2d dragoons arrived at Fort Riley October 16, 1855, and he became post commander. The place had been located in 1852 as Camp Center but was renamed Fort Riley in 1853. Most of Cooke's activities at this time, however, centered around Fort Leavenworth. Thus he commanded the mounted troops under General Harney at the battle of the Blue Water (Ash Fork, Neb.), September 3, 1855. During the troublesome times which beset Kansas territory in that period, when the army had been called in to help preserve the peace, Cooke acted as a field commander. He accomplished his mission with such tact and fairness as to win not only official commendation but general civilian approval.

In the fall of 1857 the 2d dragoons were assigned as a component of the Utah expedition under Col. Albert Sidney Johnston, 2d cavalry. It was the last element in the column to leave Fort Leavenworth, departing September 17 and arriving at Fort Bridger November 19. This was Cooke's last major transcontinental march and undoubtedly the most hazardous and difficult. Due to the lateness of the season and the freezing weather encountered in the high mountain altitude, he lost half of his horses and mules and

43. "It would seem, for sentimental reasons at least, and with our present-day knowledge of events, that it might have been more appropriately named for Colonel Eamullor [Eamullor] who proposed its establishment at this point, or for Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, a dashing cavalryman at heart and one who was intimately associated with the early history of the post..."—Capt. W. F. Pride, The History of Fort Riley (1926), pp. 61-63, 84.
44. Since it has generally been contrary to army tradition to designate installations after living officers, the new fort did not take the name of Colonel Cooke, but of the recently deceased Brev. Maj. Gen. Bennet Riley, Cooke's one-time battalion commander. It still remains ironic that the army's principal cavalry post should honor an infantry officer!
many of his men suffered from frost bite. Only his wide experience and his pre-eminent skill, judgment and courage made the trip possible. His promotion to colonel, 2d dragoons, followed June 14, 1858.

From 1858 to 1860 he visited Italy as a military observer and completed his *Cavalry Tactics*, which was adopted for the service in 1861. In the summer of 1860 he returned to Utah as department commander. When the Civil War broke out he brought the garrison from Fort Crittenden (which he had renamed the former Camp Floyd), east to Fort Leavenworth, arriving in September, 1861.

These successful marches, mostly in and out of Leavenworth, for which he was invariably commended, added greatly to Cooke’s professional stature. From them and his long experience with the Indians, he had attained a place by 1861 as one of the army’s foremost cavalry leaders.

Having received his stars as brigadier general, U. S. army, November 12, 1861, Cooke was placed in charge of a cavalry brigade in the defense of Washington. The next year he became commander of the cavalry division of the Army of the Potomac in the peninsular campaign and participated in many of the battles of that summer. Later he was assigned to court-martial and recruiting duty. At the close of the war he was promoted to Brev. Maj. Gen., U. S. A., “for gallant and meritorious services during the Rebellion.”

In 1866 he was named to command the Department of the Platte with headquarters at Omaha. Possibly he visited Fort Leavenworth at that time, but such has not been established. During this tour he directed the campaign against the Sioux in Wyoming which was marked by the Fetterman massacre. His last duty was as commanding general, Department of the Lakes, at Detroit. He retired there in 1873, following 50 years of continuous and distinguished service since he had entered West Point. His death occurred on March 20, 1895.
