

THE LEADER OF THE VOLUNTEER GRAYS

-- The Life of William G. Cooke --

1808 - 1847

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THESIS

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(San Antonio, Texas)

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-- PREFACE --

This narrative purports to be a true chronicle of events that composed a life which left its print stamped indelibly upon the history of the State of Texas, the life of William Gordon Cooke, a citizen of the United States, a citizen of the Republic of Texas, and finally once more a citizen of the United States.

No single life is better illustrative of those enterprising nondescripts who walked boldly forward and took possession of a territory that was far more valuable than any of their fondest dreams. William G. Cooke was one of those people who, when conditions became a bit stuffy in the East, took the popular advice: "Go West, young man."

Col. Cooke's career was short as it was brilliant. Having died at the age of thirty-nine while engaged in the duties of Texas' highest military office, he rested in a lonely and forgotten grave near Seguin, Texas, until sought out and discovered by Mrs. Max Weinert of Seguin in the spring of 1936, when he was reinterred with military honors at Austin along with other Texas soldiers and statesmen.

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## CHAPTER I

### GENEALOGY

North latitude 54 degrees and approximately 20 minutes, West longitude 6 degrees and approximately 50 minutes locates the town of Glaslough, Ireland, where Adam Cooke first knew his wife, Martha Riddell, on October 13 in the year of our Lord 1791.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Family Bible, possession of Robert Cooke, San Antonio, Texas.

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Twenty years earlier, this same Adam Cooke had been born to Jane Oliver, a descendant of the Riddell family of the Scottish nobility, and to her husband, James Cooke, an English textile manufacturer. The possibility is easily seen that the mother of Adam Cooke may have been a blood relative to his wife Martha on account of the name "Riddell" occurring in the history of both; however, the relationship may have been so distant that it was negligible.

For some reason, difficult to determine beyond conjecture, Adam Cooke and his wife and young daughter, Jane Oliver, named for her grandmother, left their home in Ireland and came to America. The young immigrants settled first in Dumfries, Virginia, but later the family, larger

now, moved to Fredricksburg in the same state. But all this family history can be better told by a letter written by Martha Rebecca Cooke, daughter of Adam and Martha, to her nephew, William Navarro Cooke, son of William G. Cooke, the subject of this narrative:

Your grandfather and grandmother Cooke were born in Ireland and therefore are natives of that country by birth, but not by blood, for our father was of English Ancestry and our mother of Scotch descent. They were born in the North of Ireland which was settled by the Scotch. Father was born in the town of Glaslough, and our mother in the town of Monaghan. [Error. She was born in the town of Ballymena in the county of Antrim, approximately 47 miles north and east of Glaslough. See family Bible referred to above.] Both were of Presbyterian parentage, and raised in that faith. Our Mother's name was Martha Riddell. They were both very young when married and came to this country. They settled in Dumfries, Virginia, where an uncle of my father had resided for some years. Their first child, Jane Oliver, named after our grandmother Cooke, was born in Ireland, but died at sea on our mother's voyage to America and was buried in the Atlantic Ocean. They had nine children: Our precious Bro. Dr. James Cooke, who died August 10th 1873 was the second child. He died in Fredricksburg in the 78th year of his age. Eliza, Mrs. Charles P. James, was her 3rd child. She died in Peoria, Illinois, Jan. 8th 1880. Annie, her 4th died in infancy. Another daughter called Jane after the first child died in 1813. Your father, William Gordon Cooke was born Mar. 26th, 1808. Myself, Martha Rebecca, was born Jan. 10th, 1813, and Mary Hamilton was born Jan. 4th 1818. Only three of the family were ever married. Bro. James married Miss Emily Pearson. He had two sons, Robert Riddell who died the 20th of January 1869, and Larkin who died the 17th of October, 1874. Eliza, Mrs. James, had 10 children; her first, Elizabeth, Mrs Chadwick, is a widow with 3 children, lives with her brother Charles in Kansas City, Missouri. William

Cooke James lives in New Orleans. Rebecca also lives with Charles. Annie, Mrs Chanute, lives in New York City. Mary Caroline, a lovely young girl died of consumption in Peoria, Sept. 14th 1874. Virginia, Mrs. Anley, died 1833. John Walter James was killed by Steam Boat explosion at St. Louis in his 16th year. Thomas died in Pittsburg, Pa. And Virginia, Mrs. Moore, was Married on Jan. 13, 1881. I have give you a list of all your nearest relatives. We have 3 third cousins, two of them Presbyterian Ministers one of whom is in Louisville, Kentucky and the other has a church in Maryland. Our mother had a brother in this place who died during the war of 1812. She had another brother, Dr. John Riddell, who was a surgeon in the British Navy, who died in South America. Our Washington City relatives were our first cousins. Rebecca Gordon, our fathers niece She had nine children: Ann, Mrs. Gott, who died a year ago. Louisa, Mrs. Addison, who lives with her son, Dr. Thomas Addison, Rector of Trinity Espiscopal Church, Wash. City. Ellen, Mrs. Hemaker, Mary, Mrs. Niles, and Chas. Gordon, all live in Wash. City. Virginia, Mrs. Ellicott, who lives in Baltimore, William who belonged to the United States army, and Edward who belonged to the same Navy, are both dead and George you have in Texas.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Letter, from Martha R. Cooke to William Navarro Cooke, July 16, 1881.

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Supplementary to this account may be quoted an excerpt from an article written by Harry Warren:

One of the great grandfathers of Jane Oliver (who was the mother of Adam Cooke) was Robert Riddell, a Scottish Earl. He was banished from Scotland, and all his property confiscated, for taking a prominent part in a rebellion in that country. He crossed over and settled in the North of Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Warren, Harry, Col. Wm. G. Cooke, The Quarterly of the Texas Historical Association, Austin, Texas, Pub. by Assoc. Vol. ~~14~~, July, 1905 - April, 1906, pp. 210-219.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE STORMING OF SAN ANTONIO

At the age of twenty-seven young Cooke began to roam. Having left his home in Fredricksburg, Virginia, where he was reared and educated, the adventurous Scotch-English-American decided to begin his career in New Orleans, presumably in the drug business. This presumption is justified by a careful examination of the following excerpt from a letter written two years later:

I have also engaged in my old business (drugs &c) in company with L. H. Bancroft family of Richmond-- Our prospects are very flattering--Sales up to this time average \$40.00 per day and profits not less than 100%. Our credit in New Orleans is very fair and we meet with no difficulty whatever-- ...<sup>4</sup>

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4. Letter, W. G. Cooke to James Cooke, written at Houston, Texas. Now in possession of Raleigh J. Cooke, Grandson of Wm. G. Cooke, 1714 $\frac{1}{2}$  So. St. Mary's St., San Antonio, Texas. Date of letter, Sept. 27, 1837.

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Two things should receive careful attention: the expression "my old business", and the fact that Cooke and Bancroft were able to obtain credit in New Orleans. This latter fact will be all the more striking later on when it is seen that Cooke, like most other Texas men, was continually in straightened circumstances, and could therefore furnish little in the way of collateral to induce credit.

The most logical conclusion is that he was already acquainted with the wholesale druggists in New Orleans in a business way.

In the fall of the same year, 1835, Sam Houston issued a proclamation in New Orleans calling upon Anglo-Americans to aid in the "Texian Revolution". Although the date of October, 1835, is generally accepted as the date of the outbreak of the Texas war for independence, it must be remembered that several members of the Navarro family as well as many others of Spanish origin were exiled from Texas to the United States in 1813 as a result of an attempt to separate Texas from Spain. The designs Aaron Burr had upon this territory are still a matter of conjecture. Philip Nolan had caused some trouble there. Nearly all of this very romantic activity, one must recall, happened within the memory span of William Gordon Cocke, age twenty-seven. Therefore, it is not hard to surmise the charm such prospect of high adventure and personal gain could have for this and other similar young, lusty Americans. But never mind conjecture; read his letter to his older brother James written in 1839:

Houston 7th Aug.<sup>t</sup> 1839

Dear Brother/

By the boat from the Columbia today I had the pleasure to receive yours of the 16 Ulto.-- I know of nothing in this world which can afford

me more real pleasure than a letter from you-- I acknowledge my fault--I have been very neglectful in answering your communication, but I have undertaken a very heavy duty which occupies all my time and which with the aid of providence I am determined to accomplish--I have never given you a history of my campaign in Texas--I will now give you some few outlines and at some future day will give you a full detail--

Early in Oct. 1835 the Texian Revolution commenced, Gen'l Houston's proclamation calling for aid from the citizens of the U. States reached N. Orleans about the 12th--A meeting of those citizens friendly to the cause of Texas was called--Subscriptions to aid the cause were very freely made & Volunteers called on to give in their names--I saw that it was an opportunity for the enterprising to better their fortunes and immediately stepped forward and enrolled my name--Sam<sup>l</sup> Pettus & Nath<sup>l</sup> Brister from Virginia did the same--In four days we had the company completed--We sailed from New Orleans provided with four months provisions by the citizens of New Orleans--on our arrival at the Headquarters of the Army, which had been for some time encamped before the town of San Antonio and the Alamo, I was elected Captain of the Company. We found the Texian Army in a state of insubordination caused by frequent orders from the commanding General to make a night attack on the town which were as often countermanded--On the day of the 3rd of December 1835, orders were issued by Gen. Burleson (then Commanding) for an attack on the town to take place at day-break--Our force was about 700 men, the enemy about 800--Immediate preparations were made, the men were all ready by twelve o'clock--about this time Maj. Morris reported to Gen. Burleson that one of the [sic] centenils had observed a man pass from our camp to the Alamo and after a short conference with a centenil on the walls had gained admittance--On this information Gen. Burleson thought proper to countermand the attack--This created great dissatisfaction among the men, in consequence of which a general parade was ordered and Gen<sup>l</sup> E. after giving Major Morris' statement as his reason for withdrawing the order for attack, formally resigned his command--Nearly all the field officers present did the same--Burleson

then proposed a retreat to Goliad and offered to continue his command until the arrival of the troops at that place--Immediately preparations for the retreat were commenced--The men commenced deserting in squads from ten to twenty--I saw that the citizens of the country had despaired of success and had given up the contest--There were three companies from the U. S.--1st compy from New Orleans commanded by myself consisting of 70 men, 2nd compy from N. O. under Capt. Breese 50 men & 15 men under the command of Capt. Peacock from Miss!--About 4 o'clock I took up the line of march and on arriving opposite the Genls. quarters was informed that a deserter (a Lieut.) from the enemy had come in & was then in conference with Burleson & others--I saw it was a favorable opportunity to prevent the retreat & called on my men to know if they were willing to follow where I would lead--Their answer was unanimous--yes--

Immediately I faced them and marched them up and down the lines calling on the men to fall in & take the town rather than retreat--Breese's & Peacock's Companies immediately joined me & I succeeded in raising 300 men who were willing to undertake the attack--Many voices called on me to take command, but Col. B. R. Milam an old citizen and a brave and good officer being present, I refused and proposed him--he was unanimously received--I fear I am making this too long--I must curtail my account until I can give you a full detail--The attack was made in two divisions--one under Col. Milam and the other under Col. Johnson--We entered the town on the morning of the fifth and fought continuously until the 8th with but little success. On the evening of the 8th I rec'd orders to hold my company in readiness for an attack on the Public Square which was the most strongly fortified position of the enemy--About 11 o'clock P. M. I was ordered to make the attack. My men were reduced by wounds to 37. To this number Capt. Patton's Co. with himself was added--The moon was shining very bright but I led my men on--So soon as we got from under cover of the nearest position to the enemy occupied by our troops, a heavy fire bearing from two directions was opened by the enemy--Our guide led us to a place which we found impregnable. The firing from port holes bearing

directly on us was tremendous--We were completely cut off from retreat & I saw the necessity of getting on the square from some point--I led my men within two feet of a line of port holes (which we avoided in a great measure by stooping) to the Priest's house, which was also strongly barricaded--We climbed up to a place which admitted one man at a time--As we got up we fired our rifles, and succeeded in driving off the men who occupied the house--On gaining admission we rushed on the square and found the two six-pounders planted within fifteen paces of the hole through which we entered--We attempted to spike them, but by this time the square was filled with troops, blowing the charge from twenty different quarters--I immediately called my men under cover & commenced barricading--a very heavy fire was opened on us from artillery & infantry--We found in the Priest's house about twenty women & children. These were placed in the safest part of the house--they with two soldiers which we made prisoners informed us that the enemy had been reinforced about four hours before our attack with 700 men under Col. Urgatache--I thought that our case was hopeless--We were completely cut off from reinforcements, and I determined to sell our lives as dearly as possible--My men were all of the same mind--The firing continued during the whole night without intermission--I had arranged my men, ready in case they should break through our barricades, to at least tell man for man, when just at daybreak their trumpets sounded a parley & we observed a white flag approaching--I jumped over the barricade and received it & then sent it back to the commanding officer.

If I was to continue this account, I would consume half a dozen sheets--I must, therefore, leave it for other opportunities--In relation to the Surveyorship I was almost certain that Philips would get it.--They have been long trying for it--My pay will be due on the first of September. You may then calculate on a remittance--In regard to Politics I have nothing to say. I am attached to the Military and am obliged to obey my rules without murmur--A visit this fall will be impossible--My rules are of such a nature as to prevent it, besides there is a probability of an unfriendly

visit from our Mexican neighbors and I would like to salute my old acquaintances once more-- My health is exceedingly good--I never enjoyed better--I was surprised to hear of Elizabeth's marriage--Request Martha and Mary to write-- Remember me most affectionately to mother and your boys, and believe me to be dear James

Yrs. affectionately

Wm. G. Cooke<sup>5</sup>

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5. Letter, from William G. Cooke to James Cooke, August, 1839.

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There are at least two parts of this unusual letter that should be looked at the second time. The first is in the second paragraph of his letter in which he gives his brother his reason for joining the Texas Revolution. To quote:

I saw it was an opportunity for the enterprising to better their fortunes and immediately stepped forward and enrolled my name--.....

This sentence is given separately because it so simply and honestly explodes our pet story of how the volunteers from the United States went boldly to the aid of persecuted humanity. It removes very quietly but very definitely the halo from the heads of the Anglo-American heroes of the Texas War of Independence.

The second portion of the letter upon which one's attention should be turned is that part which refers to the deserter coming to Burleson's headquarters just when

the Texans were on the verge of retreat. He says:

I saw it was a favorable opportunity to prevent the retreat & called on my men to know if they were willing to follow where I would lead--  
Their answer was unanimous--yes--

Immediately I faced them and marched them up and down the lines calling on the men to fall in and take the town rather than retreat...

Now what becomes of our hero story: "Who'll follow old Ben Milam into Bexar?" Compare this with other accounts, remembering that this is the chronicle of events as rendered by the man who did them--not by an on-looker or some person who heard about it years later.

But probably more significant than anything else is the revelation that the Texas War was abandoned by the Texans, and was revived and carried on and principally officered by citizens of the United States. Which makes us wonder: Was it a war for independence, or a war of conquest? Was the "Old Ben Milam" story invented to cover up the part played by United States Citizens?

Following is a quotation from an article in the San Antonio Express which is offered as corroborative evidence on the one hand, and on the other as a means of locating exactly the scene of conflict. The last paragraph mentions the fact that Cooke captured a small building along side of which was a small canal. This canal is easily recognized as the San Pedro Ditch or Acequia which Frederick Chabot says ran down North Flores Street, thence across

to the plaza in front of the church (San Fernando Cathedral).<sup>6</sup> Thus any one can go down to the corner of Commerce Street and Main Avenue and almost put his finger on the spot.

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6. Chabot, Frederick, San Antonio & Its Beginnings, Artes Graficas Printing Co., San Antonio, Texas, 1936, p. 80.

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Towards dusk the first call was made for volunteers to take a house situated nearer to the center, and from whose palisaded windows incessant firing had come. The first company of Grays under Breese [Cooke, in his letter, claimed to have commanded the first company of Grays, and Breese the second] were determined to make the effort at all hazards and alone, but came too late, for just as we were climbing out of the windows the Mississippians were busily engaged in opening large breaches in the thick adobe walls with crowbars. As soon as the first breach had been opened, a volley of shots was poured into the cavity.

The agonized shrieks of women and children from the interior told us that the house was filled with people who were now loudly appealing for mercy.

Our guns were immediately silenced and part of the wall having caved in, an opening was made large enough for the inmates, men, women, & children, to stagger out. The men turned over their weapons and apparently expected us to make them prisoners. But we were well aware that we did not have any provisions to feed them and they were informed that we were not carrying on a war with citizens of Mexico. We then gave them permission to decamp and they hastily occupied the empty houses lying between our forces and the late camp.

Cooke's Grays had also captured a long building and the next morning took another one on the side of which a small canal was flowing so that from then on we were in close proximity

to water.<sup>7</sup>

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7. Ehrenberg, Herman, (Exact title unknown) Account of seige of San Antonio, San Antonio Express, San Antonio, Texas, July 22, 1923.

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Some idea of Cooke's services and his versatility may be had from an excerpt from James T. De Shields' book titled Tall Men with Long Rifles. He says:

When we went into action on the morning of the 5th each man was supposed to carry two days supply of rations, but by morning of the second day there was not a morsel in my (York's) company, and every man was ravenously hungry--fighting all day and working hard all night gave us a ravenous appetite. But thanks to Quartermaster Wm. G. Cooke, about 9 o'clock that morning and while the air seemed filled with flying missiles, and the smoke from the enemy's guns hung in dense clouds over the old town, he sent forward an abundant supply of nicely barbecued beef. This was issued to the men while they stood or crouched under cover of fences, walls of houses, etc., and was devoured with a relish.

When the Quartermaster found the reserve force--those who refused to go into the assault--had nothing to do but loaf around the camp and watch us do the fighting, he ordered out a detail to bring wood, dig pits, build fires, slaughter beeves and barbecue meat. It was thus during the entire siege, and no man went hungry as long as he was within reach of the Quartermaster. The Captain became a favorite with the men who fought at Bexar, and he later won great distinction in camp and forum. He was a member of the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition. He married a niece of patriot Jose Antonio Navarro--Navarro was a native of Corsicana, and not a Mexican as many suppose. 8

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8. De Shields, James T., Tall Men with Long Rifles, The Naylor Co., San Antonio, Texas, Copyright 1935, pp. 59-60.

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Another direct quotation from the same source places Cooke in conference with the foremost men of the battle:

There have been many accounts written of Col. Milam's death, scarcely any of them agreeing. Being within thirty feet of him when he fell, I believe myself competent to give a correct statement of the facts as I saw them. Milam, Johnson, Cooke, Morris, Karnes, York, and other leaders had assembled at the Verimendi house to formulate the plans for the final assault.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Ibid., p. 64.

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A statement by Capt. Roy F. Hall follows:

Twenty-six Spanish, and ten Mexican governors have ruled the province from these old plazas. Strong, mighty men have made history on them: Stephen F. Austin, James B. Bonham, Gail Borden, James Bowie, Ed Burlison, Mat Caldwell, J. H. Callahan, John Cameron, R. M. Coleman, James Collingsworth, Wm. G. Cooke, David Crockett, General Col. Nicholas Dawson, Elisondo, James W. Fannin, William S. Fisher, John S. Ford, R. A. Gillespie, Tom Green, Bernardo Gutierrez, Jack Hays, John Hemphill, Sam Houston, Andrew Hutchison, P. C. Jacks, F. W. Johnson, Henry Karnes.<sup>10</sup>

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10. Hall, Capt. Roy F., San Antonio Express, San Antonio, Texas, June 3, 1934.

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Thus when all is considered, it is obvious that Wm. G. Cooke was one of the outstanding personalities of the siege and capture of San Antonio de Bexar. Cooke, in his first engagement, served very actively in the capacity of field officer, quartermaster, and staff officer in consultation with the army's highest officials.

### CHAPTER III

#### MAJOR COOKE

After the capture of San Antonio, we are informed by a manuscript by Wm. G. Cooke in 1844, Col. F. W. Johnson left the troops with Col. Grant in charge. In the last days of December, Col. Grant proposed to the troops, principally volunteers from the United States, to go to the Rio Grande and join the Federalists.<sup>11</sup>

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11. Lamar Papers, Vol. IV, Part I, p. 42.

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This was to be for the purpose of forming a union between the Federalist parties of the North Mexican States and Texas. In order to get to the Rio Grande, the leader thought proper to go by way of Goliad. Upon arriving there, an incident occurred that will confuse the student of history who has received the impression that Grant and his followers were fighting for Texas Independence. To quote Cooke's exact words:

We arrived near that place on the 5th and encamped near the old mission. Some difficulty occurred between the commandant of the place (Capt. P. Dimit who had hoisted the flag of independence) and Col. Grant, and we all expected to have a fight with his forces--Dimit refused to furnish us with provisions, of which he had a large store, upon the grounds that we were acting contrary to the wishes of the people of Texas, in uniting

with the Mexicans west of the Rio Grande....  
During the time of the altercation both parties  
were kept in readiness for a fight--

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12. Ibid., p. 42.

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The general tenor of this incident seems to discourage the idea that the men from the United States were fighting for Texas Independence. Of course, the fact that the flag was raised by Dimit proves that there was a faction that believed the people to be in favor of independence.

As soon as this dispute was settled and Sam Houston recognized as the man with authority, Cooke accompanied Col. Grant to Refugio. Col. Grant and Major Morris with seventy-five men went on to San Patricio. Then Col. Fannin arrived with the Georgia Battalion at Refugio. It seems that from then on orders were given by Fannin instead of Grant. Fannin received a letter from Major Morris stating that a force of 1500 Mexicans was within a few hours' march of him. Cooke was sent to reinforce him with the companies of Cooke and Burke--both captains. They made a forced march of forty-eight miles in one day. It turned out to be a false alarm.

The next day Col. Grant, Morris, and F. W. Johnson, who had joined them, left Cooke at San Patricio with the

artillery and set out for the Rio Grande. The same day Cooke received information by way of a Mexican officer that they had joined the Mexican Federals and no longer intended to serve Texas.

Morris' letter stated that he no longer intended to serve the govt. of Texas, that he had received the appointment to the command of a regiment in the Federal service of Mexico.<sup>13</sup>

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13. Ibid., p. 42.

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Upon reporting this to Fannin, Cooke received orders to fall back to Goliad. On the 14th of February Cooke set out from Goliad under orders from Fannin to escort two Mexican prisoners to the seat of government, Washington on the Brazos.

He arrived at Washington on the 15th and on the 16th left in company with Gen. Houston for Gonzales, as Assistant Inspector General. They arrived at Gonzales on the 10th of March to be met with the rumor of the fall of the Alamo. On the 11th Houston and Cooke and whatever other staff officers Houston may have had began forming the troops that had collected at Gonzales into a Regiment.<sup>14</sup>

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14. Ibid., p. 42.

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The route taken by Cooke and Houston from Washington to Gonzales must have been rather round-about for two reasons. First, it took them nearly a month to make the trip, a fact in itself requiring explanation. Second, there exists a receipt from Cooke and Burke to Fannin for wages--dated February 23, 1836.<sup>15</sup>

Recd. Coliad 23rd Feby 1836 from J. W. Fannin  
Jr. Agt. Provl. Govt each of us the sum of  
Ten Dollars--on account of wages &c due us for  
past services

Wm. G. Cooke  
D. N. Burke

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15. Lamar Papers, Vol. V, p. 92.

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Cooke engaged in the duties of the office of Assistant Inspector General of the Army with the rank of Major at San Jacinto. After the battle he was placed in command of the guard of the prisoners. It was in this capacity that Major Cooke saved the life of Santa Anna. His motive, according to his own statement, in saving the Spanish General's life was performance of his duty. But Col. Cooke failed to specify whether it was his military duty or his Masonic duty. It is difficult to think of it as a military duty, because Santa Anna openly stated that his intentions toward the Texan Army was not capture but annihilation. Now it could easily have been a Masonic duty; Santa Anna, it is well known, was a Master Mason; Cooke,

the commander of the guard, was a member of Holland Lodge of Houston, Texas.<sup>16</sup>

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16. See appendix for Masonic papers.

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Sam Houston and other Texas officers were also members of the Order. This, no doubt, accounts for the sparing of his life, but there are still some who wonder what impelled Santa Anna, if his life was not in danger, to grant Texas her independence.<sup>17</sup>

In the secret treaty the same stipulations were reiterated, and in the third article Santa Anna solemnly pledged himself so to prepare matters in the cabinet of Mexico that the mission that would be sent thither by the government of Texas, should be well received, and that by means of negotiations all differences might be settled, and the independence that had been declared by the convention might be acknowledged. The secret treaty containing these pledges was made at the suggestion of Santa Anna .

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17. Bancroft, H. H., North Mexican States and Texas, Vol. 2, p. 270.

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A comparison of the armies still in the field shows it was not military. De Shields' account of the capture of Santa Anna is favorable to the opinion expressed above:

Thus Santa Anna was captured and brought into the Texan Army Camp. As the party approached Genl. Houston's headquarters, which was under a large live oak tree, I hailed Bostick and asked: "Si! Who have you got there?"

"don't know, Creed, but we think he's a big buck." This was only a few paces from the "deadline" where the Mexican prisoners were being guarded. No sooner had Bostick spoken than I saw several of the prisoners salute and heard them say, "Es el Presidente! Es nuestra General!" "It is our president! It is our general!" Hearing this I hastened to headquarters and I saw and heard everything that occurred in that great moment of our country's history.

On reaching headquarters the captive quickly slid down from his horse and was immediately led to Houston. General Almonte was the first man to approach him and at once introduced him to Gen. Houston, who owing to his wound, did not rise to his feet, but did rise to a sitting position and very cordially extended his hand which Santa Anna grasped as if it were that of an old friend. I could not see that Santa Anna was excited, though he appeared quite serious. He bore himself with an air of a fearless--I might say, defiant--man, although at that moment the boys, with fury depicted in their faces, were gathering from every quarter and it was with an effort that the guards held them back...<sup>18</sup>

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18. De Shields, James T., Tall Men with Long Rifles, The Naylor Co., San Antonio, Texas, Copyright 1935, pp. 228-9.

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But a statement from Waddy Thompson leaves no room for conjecture as to how the incident occurred. Thompson states that he obtained his information from Col. Cooke, himself. It will be observed that Col. Cooke seemed to regard this deed of gallantry very lightly, by the fact that he waited about six years to tell it, and then he told it in private conversation. Thompson comments upon the fact of his nonchalance. Following are Thompson's

words:

Col. Wm. G. Cooke, of the Santa Fe Expedition was engaged in the battle of San Jacinto. Two or three days after the battle two Texan boys who were hunting for stray mules and horses, discovered a Mexican in the grass. One of the boys cocked his gun, and was taking aim at the Mexican when the other boy told him not to shoot, as the Mexican was unarmed. They found he was a Mexican but had no idea of the value of their prize. They determined to take him to the Texan Camp, some ten miles distant, and made him mount behind one of them, while the other walked. When they approached the Texan camp the Mexican prisoners exclaimed, "Mira! el Presidente, el General de Santa Anna." This being so immediately after the massacre of the Alamo and Goliad, the first impulse of the Texans was to put Santa Anna to death. Col. Cooke, however, rallied the guard and saved his life.

After his release with all his companions from Perote prison, Col. Cooke stayed a few days at my house and there in answer to my inquiries, narrated these facts to me. I then asked him why he had not communicated this to me before, and stated my belief that Santa Anna, if they had been brought before him, would have liberated him instantly. His reply was: "In saving the life of Santa Anna, I did no more than my duty."<sup>19</sup>

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19. Thompson, Waddy, Recollections of My Experiences in Mexico, 1846.

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We are given a glimpse of Cooke in action at San Jacinto by Charles Merritt Barnes writing for the San Antonio Express:

Led by Gen. Houston, the line advanced at a double quick to the attack, Col. Hockley, with his artillery, keeping pace with it, the brave command dragging the cannon by ropes up to the enemy's position, where it most effectually served them. All of this time our army was under

a continuous and heavy fire from the enemy's musketry and artillery. Dr. Motley, a young man of much promise and surgeon general on Gen. Houston's staff, was shot down by my side and was mortally wounded.

He was borne off the field by Major Wm. G. Cooke, an aid-de-camp, who was also at his side near me...20

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20. Barnes, Charles Merritt, Battle of San Jacinto, Letters from Gen. John Forbes to Col. H. Yoakum, San Antonio Express, San Antonio, Texas. Date, July 4, 1923.

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After the battle of San Jacinto, Major Cooke had the honor of accompanying General Houston to New Orleans to have his (Houston's) wounds treated. He tells about it in the following letter to his father:

Natchitoches, (La) 17th June, 1836

Dear father:

I wrote you hastily from New Orleans, stating my intention of visiting you in a few weeks, but, at the request of Genl. Houston, I am induced to remain with him until he recovers from his wound, which, I hope, will be in the course of a few weeks. I left N. O. in company with the Genl. on the 6th ins. for Nacogdoches (Texas) & arrived at this place last evening. I met Robert McKay, Wm. Dunbar, & Doct. J. Herndon (formerly of Fredg') at Alexandria, a very flourishing town on this river. They are all doing well. R. M. has an apothecary store combined with a book establishment. He states that his business is very good, & I have no doubt he will succeed. The papers have, ere this, given you a full account of our last victory over St. Anna. The last intelligence from Texas states that the enemy have all left the country. I think it will be their last effort to subdue it. I shall continue to write you from Nacogdoches as often as possible & should like very much to hear from you frequently. When you write, address to Major Wm. G. Cooke, Texas Army, Care of Gen. Sam Houston, Nacogdoches. Give my love to all my

relatives & friends & believe me to be truly  
yr. affectionate son  
Wm. G. Cooke 21

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21. Letter, from Wm. G. Cooke to his father, June, 1836.

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It is not hard to see from the tenor of the above letter that to Sam Houston, Wm. G. Cooke was more than just a passing fancy. But unlike so many of the outstanding soldiers of the war, Cooke did not pass immediately into oblivion; his most valuable service was probably during the ten year period that Texas was a Republic.

CHAPTER IV  
SOLDIER OF THE REPUBLIC

Cooke's career during the next ten years was a very colorful one, as will be seen from a short sketch of his life prepared by L. W. Kemp in anticipation of his reinterment at Austin in 1936:

...Later he was made quarter master general and next inspector general of the army. The senate confirmed his appointment to the latter office May 22, 1837. On December 5, 1837, his appointment as Stock Commissioner was confirmed. In August, 1839 he was appointed Commissary of Subsistence by President Lamar, the senate confirming it October 25th. His reappointment to the same office was confirmed by the senate January 10, 1840.

Major Cooke participated in the "Council House Fight" with Indians at San Antonio, March 10, 1840. On August 18, 1840 President Lamar appointed him Colonel of the First Regiment of Infantry...<sup>22</sup>

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22. Kemp, L. W., Life of Wm. G. Cooke, Type-written carbon copy in hands of Raleigh Cooke, Grandson of Wm. G. Cooke, at 1714 $\frac{1}{2}$  S. St. Mary's, San Antonio, Texas. There is a slight error in date of Council House Fight; it should be March 19, 1840. See Memoirs of Mary Maverick.

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It seems probable that Major Cooke stayed in New Orleans for some time after the war. It will be noticed in a letter that follows, dated September 27, 1837, that Cooke says he has just returned from New Orleans. The letter just previous to this writing is dated June, 1836--

more than a year earlier than when he had first arrived in New Orleans. What he did in New Orleans, besides have the yellow fever, is almost a matter of conjecture but for one circumstance: Immediately after his return from New Orleans, he went into the drug business in Houston, Texas, obtaining his supplies from New Orleans and having "very fair credit" in that city. Therefore, he must have done a little promoting while there at least. Following is the letter referred to above:

Houston 27th September 1837

Dr. James/

Ill health has prevented me from writing you for some time, but thank God I am again perfectly restored--Since I last wrote you I have been obliged through sickness to resign my station in the Army--but through the kindness of the President I have an appointment in the civil govt. which pays me two thousand dollars per annum--I have also engaged in my old business (Drugs & c) in company with L. H. Bancroft family of Richmond--Our prospects are very flattering--Sales up to this time average \$40.00 per day and profits not less than 100%--Our credit in N. Orleans is very fair and we meet with no difficulty whatever--I have just returned from N. O. where I had a very severe attack of yellow fever--which has proved beneficial to my general health as it has completely rid me of an attack of scurvy which I contracted in the Army and had it in me at the time I was attacked with the yellow fever--I have just received a letter from Mary dated in July last and regret very much the loss of Spring Hill--I would have sacrificed everything rather than to have parted with it--So soon as I can make my arrangements and have some little comforts about me you can expect me on and I must insist on the removal of our family here--I do not know how you are succeeding in Fredg but if you come here and turn

your attention to the practice of your profession you will certainly do better than you can ever do in Fredg--Give my best love to our parents and all of my relations and friends-- I understand that Eliza and Mrs Gott (Gote?) are with you. Remember me affectionately to them and depend on seeing me so soon as I can make the necessary pecuniary arrangements

Yrs affectionately

Wm. G. Cooke

How are your boys getting on? Tell Larkin that I have given up the trade of killing men. Has Robert grown much and does he retain his beauty as he grows older? Yrs.

W. G. C. 23

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23. Letter, from Wm. G. Cooke to his brother James Cooke, September, 1837.

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The employment with the civil government referred to by Cooke in the letter above was most probably that of signing the President's name to the promissory notes of the Republic of Texas authorized by act of Congress passed on the 9th of June, 1837, and approved by Sam Houston October 23rd of the same year. He held this position for a period of two years and nineteen days when he resigned because his duties as Quarter Master General "occupied all his time". Both the joint resolution conferring these duties upon him and his resignation addressed to "The Hon. J. H. Starr" are reproduced herewith.

Joint Resolution<sup>24</sup>

Authorizing Wm. G. Cooke to sign the name of the president to the promissory notes of the government.

Whereas, in consequence of the recent attack of sickness, and the consequent indisposition of his excellency's right arm from a former wound, aggravated by his present sickness, he is now unable to attend to the laborious duty of signing the promissory notes of the government, authorized by the last session of congress, by an act passed the 9th of June, 1837, which being principally for small sums will amount to some thousands; and whereas, the necessary and pressing wants of the country require that the issue of such notes should immediately commence; therefore,

Sec. I. Resolved by the senate and house of representatives of the Republic of Texas in congress assembled, that Wm. G. Cooke be, and he is hereby authorized and empowered to sign the name of the president to the promissory notes of the government.

Sec. II. Be it further resolved, that Wm. G. Cooke shall be entitled to five dollars per day for the time he is occupied in performing the duties above named, and that he proceed forthwith to sign said notes.

Joseph Rowe  
Speaker of the House of Rep.

S. H. Everitt  
President pro tem of the  
senate

Approved, Oct. 23, 1837

Sam Houston

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24. Gammel, Laws of Texas, Vol. I, p. 1347, (Laws of Republic of Texas, Houston, 1838, p. 5).

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1839 Nov. 11, W. G. Cooke, Austin  
 To J. H. Starr, Austin,  
 Texas  
 (Orig. in Texas Archives, "Comptroller's Letters")  
 (Gammel, H. P. N., Laws of Texas, II, 1347)

To  
 The Hon. J. H. Starr  
 Sec'y of the Treasury  
 Sir,

The honor of signing the President's name to the promissory notes of the Gov't, conferred upon me by Act of Congress Oct. 23, 1837 I hereby most respectfully beg leave to decline, the duties of my office as quarter Master Genl., being sufficient to occupy all my time.

I am

Very Resp. Yr. Obedt. Svt.

Wm. G. Cooke 25  
 (rubric)

(Endorsed)  
 Wm. G. Cooke  
 (rubric)  
 Resignation as signer of  
 Pres. name to promissory  
 notes, Nov. 11, '39.

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25. Lamar Papers, Vol. III, pp. 158-159.

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Apparently Wm. Cooke served as Quartermaster General before the date of his appointment as evidenced by the photostat copy of his commission contained herein; else, it would be difficult to explain the letter below from V. Bennet, to M. B. Lamar, dated December 10, 1838. In this letter it will be noticed that Cooke is referred to as Quartermaster General, and as Mr. Wm. G. Cooke, and as Col. Cooke. (The commission as Colonel of the 1st Regiment

Infantry is dated Aug. 18, 1840.) It will also be remembered that Cooke had not yet resigned from his position as signer of the President's name to the promissory notes of the Republic of Texas, nor did he resign from that position until nearly a year after the date of this letter referring to him as "Quarter Master General". The leaflet of the Centennial Commission gives him credit for holding two other jobs during this period: that of Stock Commissioner and Inspector General of the Army. So, just what Wm. Cooke's exact status and duties were is a bit difficult to establish. But a close examination of the evidence offered herewith proves very conclusively that he did not lack for something to do. Following is the letter in question:

1838 Dec. 10, V. Bennet to M. B. Lamar (Houston)

Pine Point  
Dec. 10, 1838

To

His Excellency  
Mirabeau B. Lamar  
President of the Republic of Texas

Sir, I have received an order from Mr. Wm. G. Cooke, Qr. Master General, to proceed to Bexar with the troops commanded by Col L. Wells, to provide for them, I was not furnished with any money, but ordered to draw on this Dptmt. I find however that people are quite unwilling to part with their provisions unless they get the money in hand. I wish, Sir, if it meet your approbation, you would forward on some money to me for that purpose through the Qr. Master

Gen'l to whom I have written on that subject.

I have the honor to be with  
great respect, Your Obdt. svt.

V. Bennet  
Qr. Master

(Addressed:)

His Excellency  
Mirabeau B. Lamar  
President of the Republic of Texas

(Endorsed):

Burnet -- Act Qr. Master  
Orders of Col. Cooke, Qr. Master &c  
Dec. 10 -- 1838  
Executive Dept. Doct. A. 26  
For the house of Representatives

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26. Lamar Papers, Vol. II, p. 328.

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Some glimpse of the life of Cooke in his capacity of Quarter Master General with the rank of Colonel can be had by an examination of a Court Martial order given by Hugh McLeod, adjutant general of the Army. The names can be corroborated in a degree by a receipt given Lt. Col. Clendenin by R. H. Porter for twelve hundred par dollars or six to one Texas money for forty beeves for the use of a detachment of Infantry. In the receipt, dated Camp Chambers Dec. 3rd, 1840, it will be noticed Clendenin is ranked as a Lieutenant Colonel; in the Court Martial order dated Nov. 14, 1839, Clendenin is ranked as "Captain". In approximately one year Clendenin had advanced from Captain to Lieutenant Colonel. To quote:

Camp Chambers Decr. 3rd 1840  
 Recd. from Lt. A. Clendenin 1st Infty a  
 draft on the Comy Genl of Subc for Twelve Hundred  
 dollars par money or Six Texas dollars for one in  
 full for forty Beeves delivered, weighing Twenty  
 four thousand pounds at five cents pr lb--for the  
 use of a detach. 1st Infty.

R. H. Porter<sup>27</sup>

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27. A. L. S., Possession of Raleigh Cooke, 1714 $\frac{1}{2}$  S.  
 St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, Texas.

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Following is the Court Martial Order:

# 1531<sup>28</sup>

1839 Nov. 14, H. McLeod, Austin (Texas).  
 General Order No. 20.

Adjutant Genl. Office  
 Austin, Nov. 16, 1839

Gen. Order |  
 No. 21 |

Proceeding(s) of) general Court Martial, held  
 at the Head Quarters of the First Regiment of In-  
 fantry, Camp on Wal(nu)t Creek: by virtue of the  
 following order:--

Adjutant Genl's Office  
 Austin, Nov. 14, 1839

Gen. Order |  
 No. 20 |

A general Court Martial to consist of eleven  
 members, a greater number cannot be convened with-  
 out serious injury to the service, will assemble  
 at Head Quarters of the First Regiment of Infantry,  
 on the 14th Inst., or as soon thereafter as possi-  
 ble, for the trial of Corporal Robt Morris, and  
 such other prisoners as may be brought before it.

The Court will be composed as follows:--

Col Edward Burleson, Comdg 1st Reg. Infy Pres't.  
 " Wm. G. Cooke, Qr. Master General  
 " Wm. L. Cazeneau, Commissary General Subsistence  
 Lt. Col. Wm. S. Fisher, 1st Reg. Infy.  
 Maj. P. Caldwell, Quartermaster  
 Capt. A. Clendenin 1st Reg. Infy.  
 Capt. Jno Holliday 1st " "  
 Lt. E. A. Thompson 1st " "  
 Lt. Daniel Lewis 1st " "  
 Lt. C. C. Hornsby 1st " "  
 Lt. A. H. Scott 1st " "  
 Lt. W. D. Houghton, Adjutant 1st Reg. Inf'y, will  
 act as special judge advocate.

By order of the Sec'y  
 of War H. McLeod, Adjutant General T. A.

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28. Lamar Papers, Vol. III, p. 184.

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Morris was sentenced to be shot.

The year 1840 was not a dull one for anyone in Texas. A band of Commanche Indians caused quite a stir down on the plaza in front of San Fernando Cathedral when they ran out of the Council House ahead of Cooke, Caldwell, Sam Maverick and others who were attempting to arrange a settlement of difficulties with them. For a more detailed account than will be possible here see Memoirs of Mary Maverick, a pioneer lady who witnessed part of the battle. The Indians who were captured were held for a while at Camp Cooke, named for William G. Cooke, situated on the head waters of the San Antonio River--(also referred to as on the Medina River). Other Indian trouble may be surmised from the following order:

## Special Order No. 346

Adjutant and Inspector Genls. Office  
 Austin, Nov. 25, 1840  
 Col. Wm. G. Cooke, Comdg. 1st Infantry  
 On the Military Road

Sir: Information having reached the Dept. thru the Tonkeway Indians, and believed by corresponding circumstances, that the hostile Indians are embodied on the upper Brazos, and contemplate a descent upon the settlements, you will take such a portion of your command as you may think necessary and attack their camp, and, if possible, destroy them.

Lieutenant Col. Clendenin is ordered to report to you with the effective force of his detachment & twelve Tonkeway Warriors, who will aid you as spies, and conduct you to the hostile encampment.

By order of  
 The Secty. of War

H. McLeod  
 Adjutant & Inspr. Genl.

P. S. Congress has just refused an appropriation to march Howard's forces from San Antonio to attack the village above. Felix wants to go and do it, but I don't think he can succeed. We have heard horrible accounts from Lt. Ratcliffe of your cannibalism, eating mules, etc, not so much eating a mule but the poverty of the beast.

"Here's a toast to thee, Tom Moore"  
 All well and send love.

Yrs. truly H. Mc.

"And a double health to thee "Col.  
 Coo-k I'm well sure having just returned from La Grange with Todd. He was Acquitted. I send you some late papers.

Your Friend  
 Lockett

We have enough from the States to say that Genl. Harrison has beat little Van B. worse than Old Jackson ever beat anybody. 29

L.

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29. A. L. S., on display in museum of Alamo, San Antonio

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But all of Cooke's business was not as smooth as one might conclude from the financial status of an officer in the United States Army of a corresponding rank. He was paid in money that had an exchange value of six to one when indeed he was paid at all in money. Much of his recompense was in land, then very cheap. The following letter from his friend Francis R. Lubbock will serve to illustrate the financial status of everyone at that time:

Houston March 1, 1840

Dear Colonel

Your esteemed favor came to hand and some time since in accordance with your wishes I have endeavored to find a purchaser for our Land on Greens Bayou but without success, the times are really distressing, money was never so scarce as it is at present. Goods of any kind are selling at the most reduced prices in some cases even less than first cost. As regards my purchasing your interest, it is impossible for me to do so. It requires all the money Scott & myself can command to carry on our operations. We are doing very well much better than we expected the oysters and turtle soup at Deckmans are very fine. I wish you would come and see us and judge of them yourself. the citizens in this neighborhood have turned out enmass to receive the old Genl. they gave him a very fine dinner in this place. he was well received at Galveston had a dinner and ball given him in fact the people in this section go for him almost unanimously and speak of no one else as the next President. I shall be pleased to hear from you whenever you can make it convenient to write and will be pleased if at any time I can do anything for you in this section.

Yours very Resp  
Francis R. Lubbock 30

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30. A. L. S., possession of Raleigh Cooke, 1714 $\frac{1}{2}$  S. St. Mary's, San Antonio, Texas.

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The old general who, according to Francis R. Lubbock, was so warmly received both at Houston and Galveston turns out to be none other than General Mirabeau B. Lamar, and the allusion to him in his letter to Cooke makes it very probable that Cooke had mentioned him in his letter first. There is little doubt that William G. Cooke helped Lamar to get elected as is here evidenced by a letter addressed to Lamar as President of the Republic of Texas and signed by Cooke, Hugh McLeod, and others praising his administration and offering him a public dinner, which he refused.<sup>31</sup>

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31. Lamar Papers, # 1976, Vol. V., pp. 460-461.

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This build up of friendship between Lamar and Wm. G. Cooke culminated in Cooke's ultimate success, if being connected with the government of the Republic of Texas can be called "success". This success led him upon what some regard as a wild goose chase, known as the Santa Fe Expedition. But before that experience took him out of Texas, Cooke served the public good very admirably. All references to him during this period are nothing but pure praise. Following is a letter that one might suspect of referring to the first fumbings at organizing the expedition referred to above. The element that makes it look like business of that character is that it seems the

authority had to come from the President himself. It can be noticed that previous military expeditions of an ordinary or routine nature originated with the Adjutant-General's office. Why should he need authority from Lamar? It is also significant that 250 men (as suggested by McLeod) is more than an ordinary company of soldiers, and that it is approximately the number taken on the Santa Fe Expedition. Thirdly, the exact date of the letter could not be definitely established--it may have been a few months later. However that may be, here is the letter for the reader's own examination:

1841, (April?) H. McLeod to Lamar

The Grove Monday Morn.

Dear Genl.

Cooke has nothing written from you, in the shape of authority to act upon, & feels delicately situated--I dislike very much to press the subject so often upon your attention. But we have no time to lose, and the Sec'y of the Treasury I believe has not laid aside any particular fund upon which to draw--

Will you please address Cooke a letter, authorizing him to organize a force (of 250 men, or whatever number you deem requisite) and draw upon the Treasury thro' the Quarter Master's Dept. for the necessary outfit--? Of course, no more will be spent, and if that amt. is not spent it cannot be started--

I am with high respect  
H. McLeod<sup>32</sup>

His Excy.  
M. B. Lamar

CHAPTER V  
SANTA FE EXPEDITION

Probably the least understood project in all of Texas' history, not understood by even the men who performed it, was the famous Santa Fe Expedition. Some claimed it to be purely mercantile, with soldiers only for the purpose of protection from Indians. Others charged it was equivalent to invasion of Mexico for the purpose of conquest. The Mexican Government was particularly of that opinion. Some facts are known which might tend to substantiate the latter theory. For instance, the original draft of the speech that was to have been delivered to the citizens of New Mexico is in the hands of a grandson of Don Jose' Antonio Navarro, the man who was to have delivered it.<sup>33</sup>

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33. This grandson is Jose' Antonio Navarro III, 602 S. Pinto St., San Antonio, Texas.

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An attempt will not be made here to give a resume' of that speech for fear of leaving a false impression; but suffice it to say, this speech was to welcome the hearers to join the Republic of Texas and release themselves from the oppressive government of Mexico. Nevertheless, the following direct quotations are expressions of the conventional idea

of the purpose and history of the enterprise:

One of the objects and probably the main one of Gen. Lamar's visit to San Antonio was to encourage an enterprise having for its object the sending of an expedition to Santa Fe, now in New Mexico, but then in Mexico. The reason for this expedition was to open up an artery of trade between Lexington, Missouri, & Santa Fe through San Antonio. Gen. Lamar gave the project his sanction and encouragement by furnishing governmental supplies. He also sought the endorsement of it by the Congress of Texas and of the United States. Gen. Lamar appointed Wm. G. Cooke, R. F. Bringham and Don Jose Antonio Navarro as the commissioners representing the Republic of Texas to accompany the Expedition.

After much delay and vexatious happenings the expedition set out on the 20th of June, 1841. The party consisted of 270 men, all of whom were mounted and armed ...<sup>34</sup>

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34. Maverick, Mrs. Mary A., Early Days in San Antonio, Barnes, Charles Merritt, San Antonio Express, later published as Memoirs of Mary Maverick.

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Following is Yoakum's account:

The members of the expedition rendezvoused at an encampment on Brushy Creek, about twenty-five miles from Austin. The Military under command of Brevet Brigadier General Hugh McLeod, consisted of five companies of mounted infantry and one of artillery. Accompanying these went a caravan of merchants, with goods suited to the market, drawn in wagons; also some adventurers, who were neither soldiers nor merchants, but who went along for pleasure; and finally Messrs. Wm. G. Cooke, R. F. Brenham, and J. A. Navarro, the commissioners who were charged by the president with the execution of his instructions.<sup>35</sup>

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35. Yoakum, History of Texas, Vol. II, p. 322.

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It appears from later developments that these instructions from Lamar may have been military, for Cooke was in command of a detachment of soldiers when they surrendered their arms at the behest of one of their own men who, without their knowledge, had turned traitor.

It seems the expedition was poorly managed, guided, and provisioned. Those unfortunate soldiers had no one along who was absolutely sure as to where the Red River was located. No one had any idea of the topography of the ground over which they were to travel. No one knew positively the exact compass position of their destination--Santa Fe. No one had any definite idea as to the best route to follow. Therefore, they proceeded north to a river thought to be the Red River. Then they changed their course to west and a little north, which route led them over the roughest imaginable terrain.

Finally, almost despairing of reaching their destination alive, the party was separated into two detachments, one being sent on to the destination in haste in order that it might send back supplies to the remainder.

General McLeod being encamped more or less permanently with the wagons and most of the expedition, Col. Cooke and his party of ninety-eight men proceeded rapidly and after thirteen days of starvation arrived close to San Miguel and overtook some Mexicans, some

of whom he hired to go back to McLeod and guide him on. The Mexicans informed Cooke's party that they had taken a circuitous route, and that the distance they had covered in thirteen days could be negotiated in four or five. One can well imagine the time lost during the entire journey from lack of a guide who knew the country.

Colonel Cooke, in turn, sent a small squad of fast riders ahead of him. They parted company on the 14th of September, 1841, and never saw one another again until they were in prison in Mexico City.

At the request of Col Cooke and Dr. Erenham, two of the principal merchants, Major Howard, and Mr. Fitzgerald, accompanied Lewis and Van Ness, and as I was in great haste to prosecute my journey through Mexico, I gathered all my effects, packed them in leather panniers made for the purpose, placed them upon my mule, and set off in company. This was on the 14th of September, and when I parted with my friends I certainly did not expect to see them for the first time in the April following, at the City of Mexico and in chains.<sup>36</sup>

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36. Kendall, G. W., Narrative of Santa Fe Expedition, Vol. I, p. 270.

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These five were captured by means of false promises that there was nothing unusual about giving up their arms, but was only an old Spanish Custom. Of course, once their arms were laid down, they were automatically prisoners. They were captured near San Miguel and were immediately

started enroute to Santa Fe to face Armijo.

For the second time in the history of Texas, the role of the Order of Masons can be observed. To be specific, a battle of undeterminable importance would have been fought had it not been for the traitor, William Lewis, giving Cooke his Masonic oath that there was nothing wrong with the proposition that they lay down their arms.

But there was very much wrong with the idea, as they later learned. All were marched as prisoners to the City of Mexico, enduring every known hardship and privation. Once there, they remained in prison only a few months. Their early release was due partly to the efforts of Waddy Thompson, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to Mexico. It is worthy of note that Colonel Cooke refused to use his influence as the man who saved the life of Santa Anna at San Jacinto to save his own life, but was willing to do so to save that of Don José Antonio Navarro.<sup>37</sup>

I asked him if I might inform Santa Anna that he was the officer who had saved his life after the battle of San Jacinto, and that he took a deep interest in Col. Navarro. This Cooke could not resist.

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37. Thompson, Waddy, Recollections of Mexico, 1846.

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There were many men who died on the Expedition by other means than Mexican persecution. The first casualty,

for instance, was at the camp near Austin--a sentinel shot J. C. Snow one night in May, 1841. Following is a complete list compiled from the Texas Archives:<sup>38</sup>

A Reference Sheet Exhibiting the Fatal Casualties Attending  
the Texan Santa Fe Pioneers 1841 & '42

<u>Names</u>	<u>'Nativ- 'ity</u>	<u>'Date of 'Occurrence'</u>	<u>'Casualties and Place</u>
J. C. Snow	'Tenn.	'May, 1841	'Shot by sentinel at night, 'camp near Austin.
A. J. Davis	'Va.	'June, 1841	'Shot by accident on 'Walnut Creek.
David Cockridge	'Tenn.	'June, 1841	'Shot himself purposely 'at Spittle River
Samuel Flint	'N. H.	'July, 1841	'Died on a ranch of 'Tho Bosque
Dr. Brashear	'	'Aug., 1841	'Died at Sulphur Springs 'on Branch Mitchitan
Lieut. R. G. Wall	'Ireland	' " "	'Killed by Cayugas Indians
Robert Dunn	'Ireland	' " "	' " " " "
William Maby	'N. Y.	' " "	' " " " "
Samuel Flenner	'Pa.	' " "	' " " " "
F. D. Woodson	'Ga.	' " "	' " " " "
A. S. Donovan	'Ky.	' " "	'Left camp, never returned.
John Kenann	'Ireland	' " "	' " " " "
--- Klein	'Ger.	' " "	' " " " "
Thomas Glass	'Ky.	'Sept., "	'Killed by Indians at 'Camp Resolution.
--- Mercer	'N. Y.	' " "	'Killed by Indians at 'Camp Resolution.
Raymond - Mexican	'	' " "	'Killed by Indians at 'Camp Resolution.
Maj. B. B. Sturgess	Ga.	' " "	'Died at Camp Resolution.
Robt. C. Todd	'Ky.	' " "	'Left camp, never returned.

<u>Names</u>	<u>Nativ- ity</u>	<u>Date of Occurrence</u>	<u>Casualties and Place</u>
D. H. Bealle	'D. C.	'Sept., 1841	'Left camp, never returned.
W. Wilkins	'Va.	'" "	'Left camp, never returned.
John Spanghlin	'Ireland	'" "	'Died on road in Prairie.
Samuel Howland	'Conn.	'" "	'Killed by Mexicans in San Miguel.
Alexander Baker	'N. C.	'" "	'Killed by Mexicans in San Miguel.
William Rosenberry	'Md.	'" "	'Killed by Mexicans near San Miguel.
William Mitchell	'N. C.	'Oct., 1841	'Died on road in Prairie.
Manuel	'---	'" "	'Killed by Mexicans.
Felix Ernst	'Tenn.	'" "	'Died at Galisteo, New Mexico.
John Mc Alister	'"	'" "	'Killed by Mexicans, Rio Grande.
Amos A. Golpin	'Miss.	'" "	'Killed by Mexicans, Dry Road, Rio Grande.
Edward Griffin	'Md.	'" "	'Killed by Mexicans, Dry Road, Rio Grande.
Gates	'N. G.	'" "	'Died on the Rio Grande.
James B. Sparbee	'---	'" "	'" " " " Concho.
John Walkin	'Pa.	'Feby., 1842	'" at Guanuscero.
Enock Harris	'"	'" "	'" " "
Dougherty	'La.	'July, 1842	'" " "
L. D. F. Shane	'Ala.	'" "	'" " Tula.
Hays Covington	'Ky.	'June, 1842	'" " City of Mexico.
Wm. Johnson	'Pa.	'Apr., 1842	'Died at Pueblo.
I. H. Spooner	'Va.	'June, 1842	'" " Vera Cruz.
David Landers	'O	'" "	'" " D.
Dr. F. A. Whittaker	'Pa.	'Aug., 1842	'" " Puente National.
Capt. T. Levey	'Me.	'" "	'Died at Puente National.

<u>Names</u>	<u>'Nativi-</u> <u>'ty</u>	<u>-Date of</u> <u>'Occurrence</u>	<u>'Casualties and Place</u>
Jacob Hammett under the assumed name of Jacob Lindley	'Ky.	'Aug., 1842	'Died at Vera Cruz.
Hickey	'	' " "	' " " " "
J. Holliday	'Pa.	' " "	' " 3 degrees South 'Galveston.
James Boyd	'Mo.	' " "	'Died at Vera Cruz--Rio Grand 'party.
James Devision	'	' " "	'Died at Vera Cruz--Rio Grand 'party.

Total of our party 46 - 2 of the party from Corpus Christi and Nueces.

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38. Compiled from the Texas Archives.

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William G. Cooke returned to Texas some time in the summer of 1842. The last letter of his while in Mexico was dated July 14.<sup>39</sup>

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39. A. L. S. Possession of Raleigh Cooke.

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CHAPTER VI  
QUARTER MASTER GENERAL

Immediately upon Cooke's return from prison in Mexico as a result of his participation in the Santa Fe Expedition, he was "taken care of" by his fellow Texans and Masonic brothers by being placed in the position of Acting Quarter Master General. It is not to be taken for granted that his position was exactly a bed of roses, as is shown by his correspondence. The job he had was to furnish provisions to an army on an allowance of practically nothing a year. The troops were constantly in a state of insubordination due to slow or complete absence of pay checks. In addition to this, Col. Cooke, for some reason so far hidden, had some sort of misunderstanding with Hugh McLeod. This, however, was taken in hand by the Masonic Order for settlement.<sup>40</sup>

City of Austin Sept 28th 1842

Comp. Wm. G. Cooke  
Companion,

Having heard that some misunderstanding has unfortunately arisen between yourself and Comp. Hugh McLeod I have deemed it my duty to appoint a committee of three of your mutual friends and companions to use their influence for the restoration of harmony.

Forget not I beseech you the nature of your masonic relation. Remember that all of us are mutually bound to aid, protect and assist each other.

That the exertions of your Companions in their endeavors to reconcile you may prove successful and through their means peace may be restored and harmony and brotherly love prevail is the sincere and fervent prayer of

Your friend and Companion  
George K. Teulon  
High Priest pro. tem.  
Lone Star Chapter No. 3.

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40. Archives, Austin, Texas.

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An excellent look-in upon the financial status of the Texas government can be had by an examination of the letter written to Col. Cooke advising him of his appointment as Acting Quarter Master General with authority to appoint inferior officers to assist in the discharge of the duties of the office.<sup>41</sup>

Department of War & Marine  
Washington 25th Oct. 1842

To

Col. Wm. G. Cooke,

Sir: Herewith enclosed you will receive an appointment as Acting Quarter Master General, with authority to appoint such assistance as may be necessary to a prompt and faithful discharge of the same. As few appointments of this character however will be made, as a first consideration for the public interest will allow.

In as much as the duties strictly pertaining to your office will be light, you will assume the charge and direction of the subsistence Department according to the rules and regulations of the service and the destitute condition of the Government renders it almost certain that little else than provisions will be furnished the troops.

In addition to the Regimental Quarter Masters and their assistants, three others have been

appointed --one for Post San Antonio whose name is not yet known to the Department, he having been appointed by Major Hays, Major Bennes for Post Gonzales, and Maj. O. H. Willis who has been ordered to report to the commanding officer at Head Quarters. These officers have received special instructions--the latter directly from the Department and the former through the commanding officers of their respective Regiments to preserve the supplies with the greatest care to exercise rigid economy in the issues of the same and under no circumstances whatever to permit corn to be fed to horses--It will be your duty to issue instructions to all Quarter Masters and commissaries upon this subject, and to see that they are obeyed.

Such appointments as you may make, if any, will be reported to the Department immediately.

I have the honor to be  
Your Obedt. Servt.

M. C. Hamilton  
Actg. Sec of War & Marine

41. Archives, Austin, Texas.

It was a kind fate that guided Cooke's destiny in the fall of 1842. There were two expeditions organized in the latter part of that year, and, as we have already learned, Cooke was excellent expedition material. Brig. Gen. A. Somerville organized the expedition that is known to history as the Mier Expedition, although he did not command it any farther than Laredo. That venture, as we know, was a disaster to the men and advantageous to no one.

But apparently Cooke was saved back for the Snively Expedition--a venture that proved fully as humiliating

to Texas if not as ruinous to the members. The commission amounted almost to highway robbery, but of course Texas can hardly be blamed for any measure she might resort to when one considers her impoverished treasury. The first hint of activity is in a special order from Hamilton to Cooke to report to the Headquarters of the Army on the Southwestern frontier.<sup>42</sup>

Ware replacement  
Oct. 26th 1842

Special Order  
No. 57

Department of War & Marine  
Washington 20th Oct. 1842

Col. Wm. G. Cooke, Acting Quarter Master General will repair forth with to the Head Quarters of the Army on the South Western frontier and report to the commanding officer.

By order of the President  
M. C. Hamilton  
Actg. Sec. War & Marine.

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42. Archives, Austin, Texas.

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It was in the fall of 1842 that news reached Austin that a caravan from Missouri to Santa Fe was to leave in the spring of 1843. With assurances of backing from the citizens of Texas, Colonel Jacob Snively obtained a commission from the government of Texas to take it. His expedition as finally organized consisted of about 180 men.<sup>43</sup>

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43. Bancroft, North Mexican States and Texas, Vol. II, p. 371.

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It did not arrive at the Arkansas until the last of May 1843, but it was arranged in the fall of 1842, as will be seen from the following correspondence between Cooke, Snively, and Hamilton:<sup>44</sup>

Department of War & Marine  
Washington, 7th Nov. 1842

To  
Col Wm G. Cooke  
Actg. Quarter Master General,

Sir: Your communication addressed to Col J. Snively, under date of 31st (31st) ulto, requesting to be furnished with definite instructions relation to supplying Beef for the troops--the forwarding of ammunition &c, has been referred by him to the Department.

With respect to the first, the instructions issued to you on leaving for Head Quarters were deemed sufficient for your guidance, though the precise mode to be adopted in procuring supplies was not pointed out; because it was well understood, generally and of course presumed to be by you--that the Government had not the means to purchase a single ration, nor would contract liabilities with a promise of immediate or ultimate redemption; since she could make none with the remotest hope of a compliance on her part.

It was represented that ample supplies of Beef could be furnished, and would be contributed by the citizens of the country for the contemplated expedition--The duty then, of the Quarter Master General, and those appointed to assist and act under his orders, will simply be to collect, receive and receipt (to such as may wish receipts) for such cattle and other supplies as may be deemed necessary for the campaign; taking a full description of all cattle--mark and brand, with the net weight as near as practicable--but the price made and time of payment, will in all cases be left for the future action of the Govt. Such scattering cattle as may be collected when the owner or owners are not known, will be described particularly--Brand and mark, if any, with the flesh mark and weight, so that they may be hereafter identified.

Issues will be made with the strictest regard to economy, and only to such troops as may have organized and reported to the comm'dg. officer, as heretofore instructed--Great care will be exercised in the preservation of supplies, and at the close of the campaign, full and complete returns made of all matters pertaining to your office--

In relation to the ammunition you require, I have to remark, that there are no means of transportation here or at Houston which the Department can command--Hence, it would be impossible to forward it, were it deemed proper to do so, prior to receiving reports from the commanding officer of the strength of his command,--its organization &c accompanied by his requisition--These are first required; then it will be your special duty to furnish transportation for these as well as articles contributed by citizens--For this purpose officers have been appointed and sent to Head Quarters--There are no officers here, and when supplies are sent by individuals not chargeable with them nor responsible, the consequence is that they are generally left upon the way, squandered or appropriated to individual purposes. An officer should always accompany the teams and receipt for the stores and see that they be delivered in good order, or be accountable for the same--

The Government can, however, supply but little ammunition under any circumstances--Not a single keg of Rifle Powder remains on hand, and the amount of lead in the public store at Galveston, though not correctly ascertained, must be small. The caps you mention are here, but no Lead came with them--I am informed that a small quantity of Powder and Lead was left by some person, at Col Patton's some time since, which had been sent out from the Arsenal at Houston to the army; and also that there is some lead at Mr. Browns in this county--of the latter however I know nothing--This will be mentioned to Mr. Graham--

Let me repeat that a sufficient number of officers have been appointed upon whose activity and energy the army must rely for supplies, and consequently for success in a great degree--

I have the honor to be

Your Obt. servt.

M. C. Hamilton

Actg. sec. War & Marine.

P.S.

Should the expedition fail from any cause, and the troops disband, such public army, ammunition and supplies of Provision &c as you may have collected together, or may find scattered among the troops who have not reported or among the citizens, will be brought in and deposited with some prudent and responsible person on the Colorado, or placed in the care of some officer of the Quarter Masters Department, with instructions to hold the same subject to the orders of the Department.

M. C. H.  
&c &c.

44. Letter, from Hamilton to Cooke, Nov., 1842, Archives, Austin, Texas.

Further discussion of difficulties to be surmounted is brought to the light of day in the following communication from Snively to Cooke:

45

Washington 8th November 1842

Col. Wm G. Cooke  
Actg Qr. M. Genl.

Sir: Your communication of 31st ulto. was received and referred to the Dept. of War.

The Honl. Secretary of War and Marine is not willing that Powder and Lead should be sent to the army until it is organized, and a requisition made by the commanding officer for such ordnance stores as he may require.

I have received no report from the collector at Galveston since early last spring this was the report I alluded to when I last seen you; since that time the Volunteer Army under command of Genl. Davis was supplied out of the stores on hand at Galveston, the presumption is, that but little is on hand at this time.

There two kegs of Powder and a quantity of Lead at Col. Pelli's which left by some person who was on his way to the Army about the time the news reached us that Genl. Well had

retreated.

The percussion caps are here, but no lead came with them. I see no probability of getting the caps to the Army. I will do all that I can to get them under way.

Your Friend

J. Snively

45. Letter, Snively to Cooke, November, 1842, Archives, Austin, Texas.

Col. Snively's signature preceded by "Your Friend" is very eloquent as to the part played by Cooke in obtaining the sanction of the government for the project. It will be remembered that Cooke was a very close friend to Houston ever since December, 1835.

Department of War & Marine  
Washington, 22nd Nov. 1842

To

Col. Wm. G. Cooke  
Actg. Qm. Mr. Genl.

Sir: I am under the necessity of enquiring what arrangements you made for supplies of Powder & Lead--Did you purchase or receive any by contributions while at Houston? or have you any other resource than the Public Stores from which such supplies may be drawn?

I make this enquiry, because you did not make your requisition upon the Department, nor even mentioned the subject--It was therefore taken for granted that you had procured sufficient supplies at Houston and had made provision for its transportation from that place: until your communication to Col. Snively was received; and then it was not known what ammunition was alluded to. Col Snively has taken no steps to forward the articles, none of them having arrived here except the caps, and not

being charged with such duties, as you was aware; and besides having no means of transportation could not have complied with your wishes had he been so disposed.

All arrangements for supplies and for transporting it to the Head Quarters of the Army should have been made by you before leaving, and I was certainly under the impression you had done so.

There is no ammunition here, and so far as I can learn none on the way to the Army; nor will it be possible, if I am correctly informed to raise supplies of Beef, coffee and other articles from this and Montgomery counties and forward it to the Army short of six weeks, if it can be done at all.

It would be well for you to Know exactly what you can supply and when it will be in camp, and a statement of the same laid before the commanding officer for his information; for I am led to believe that you are depending upon uncertainties--

Should the Army be disbanded you will of course see that the ordinances, small arms and such public stores as may be on hand, together with the arms that have been issued to the various parties composing the army, are brought into the settlements on the Guadalupe or farther if practicable, and safely stored--Return of which will be made to the Dept.

I have the honor to be,

Your obdt. Servt.

M. C. Hamilton, Actg. Sec.

War & Marine <sup>46</sup>

46. Letter, from M. C. Hamilton to Wm. G. Cooke, November, 1842, Archives, Austin, Texas.

But being Quarter Master General of the Army did not mean that there was nothing to worry about. There were insubordination, mutiny, and desertion to be dealt with, and he had to fill a man's shoes to do it.

In the various campaigns against the Indians, the

inhabitants of the country whom he was protecting from raids, refused to cooperate in many instances. The army and its animals had to be fed by means of impressment. As is usually the case, the people demanded protection from the Indians but were not willing to pay the price.

Hardest of all, there were times when men had to be impressed for service--at least for cartmen, if not for fighters. Following are three letters that will demonstrate some of the difficulties and also determine some facts and dates relative to the expedition organized by Brigadier General A. Somerville:<sup>47</sup>

San Antonio  
18th Nov. 1842

Col Wm. G. Cooke

Sir

As it is understood that a large portion of Col. Bennetts command are deserting this morning, you are authorized in the event of your being likely to be overpowered by force to desist from taking prisoners or if you have taken them to deliver them up.

I am anxious to avoid bloodshed as from what I can learn of the disposition of the army generally it would not be attended with beneficial results to the cause.

Very Respectfully  
Your Obt. Servt.  
A. Somerville  
Brigadier General  
Commdg.

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47. Letter, from A. Somerville to Wm. G. Cooke, November 18, 1842, Archives of Texas.

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Difficulty of execution of orders in Texas at this period is nowhere better told than by the following communication from V. Bennet to Cooke:<sup>48</sup>

Col. Wm. G. Cook QTM Genl.

Sir I have much Trouble in geting the artillery from this place everything worked against me the inhabitants would render me no assistance at all I am much indebted to Cat. Eastlands Company for their assistance in getting the cannon over the River--I could not get any harness at all I have written to the secretary at War to scend on harness but have had no return--

There has been no arrival of any public property of any kind from the East.

Since Receiving your communication I have written on to the secretary at War earging him to forward everything as fast as posable.

I shall do everything there in my power to facilitate the business I shall furnish the troops as soon as they arrive and push them on as fast as posable

I have the honor to be with  
much respt your/

V. Bennet. Q. M.

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48. Letter, from V. Bennet to Wm. G. Cooke, Texas Archives, Austin, Texas. No date.

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In 1844 Cooke turned from the Army to politics. He ran for and was elected along with D. C. Ogden to the House of Representatives from Bexar County. He sat as representative in the ninth congress of the Republic of Texas as will be demonstrated by an extract from the journal of that congress.

On motion of Mr. Robinson, Messrs. Wm. L. Cazneau, of Travis County, and Wm G. Cooke, of Bexar County, came forward, presented their

credentials, took the oath of office and their seats.<sup>49</sup>

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49. Journal, House of Representatives of 9th Congress of Republic of Texas, Pub. by Authority, Miller & Cushney, Public Printers, 1845, p. 19.

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Following are the certified election returns, signed  
by David Morgan, Chief Justice, Bexar County: <sup>50</sup>

Republic of Texas |  
County of Bexar |

To Hon Anson Jones Secretary of State

The undersigned Chief Justice of the County aforesaid certifies that at an election held in said County on the 2nd day of September A.D. 1844 in accordance with the provisions of existing laws, and in obedience to the proclamation of His Excellency the President bearing date the-day of---A.D. 1844 ordering said election Wm. G. Cooke and D. C. Ogden were elected to the office of Representatives for said County--

The undersigned further certifies that this return was, stated, and mailed within the time required by law. The mail that contained it (as stated by the Mail Carrier) was lost in the Guadalupe river.

In testimony of all of which I have here unto affixed my official Seal. Given under my hand this 10th day of October A D 1844

David Morgan, Chief Justice  
Bexar County

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50. Election Returns, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas. Date, 1844.

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## CHAPTER VII

### ANGELA M.<sup>A</sup> DE JESUS BLASA NAVARRO

One important detail in Cooke's career is, so far, missing; that is when he met a certain dark-eyed Spanish lady with the burdensome name of Angela M.<sup>a</sup> de Jesus Blasa Navarro. Angela was the daughter of Luciano Navarro and niece of José Antonio Navarro.

The closest we can come to a definite date is some time before 1840. The earliest letter between them that has survived is of that year, and in it Cooke apologizes for having asked her parents for her hand in marriage before having obtained her consent. Therefore the presumption is that they had been acquainted for some time.

The couple became engaged some time before the Santa Fe Expedition left Austin in the early summer of 1841, for Thompson speaks of Cooke while a prisoner in Mexico as being engaged to José Antonio Navarro's niece. However, the more significant fact of their marriage is of date of August 16, 1844. The ceremony was performed by a Catholic priest by the name of M. Calvo in the presence of Luciano Navarro, Raphael de la Garza and others.<sup>51</sup>

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51. Marriage License - Wm. G. Cooke and Angela Navarro - County Clerk's office, Bexar County.

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Shortly after the marriage--about a month--Cooke was elected to the Texas Congress (the ninth). Whether there was any connection between the marriage and election is impossible to determine positively; but it will be kept in mind that the Navarro family was a force in Bexar County politics at that time.

But for some reason hard to explain, Cooke resigned as Congressman to accept a post in the executive branch of Government--Secretary of War and Marine. The exact date is a matter of question. L. W. Kemp says:<sup>52</sup>

On March 31, 1845, Col. Cooke was appointed Secretary of War and Marine of the Republic...

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52. Kemp, L. W., William Gordon Cooke, 1936, p. 3.

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But a letter is at hand that seems to place the appointment a little earlier.<sup>53</sup>

Washington 15 March 1845

My dear wife,

I arrived in this town on Sunday last without accident and in excellent health and have entered upon the duties of my office....

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53. A. L. S., Cooke, Wm. G. to his wife, March, 1845.

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Anyway he received the appointment to the office of Secretary of War and Marine which corresponded in a rough

way to the state office he later held--Adjutant General of the State Militia.

But in the meanwhile, José Antonio Navarro effected his escape from prison in Mexico, where he had been ever since the capture of the Santa Fe Expedition. Authorities seem to vary slightly upon the details, however. According to José Antonio Navarro III, grandson of the man in question, he was paroled on December 18, 1844, and effected his escape January 18, 1845.

To be compared with this is a letter from Wm. G. Cooke to his wife dated Washington, 25th of August, 1845, in which he states that Don José Antonio Navarro has at last made his escape from "his severe imprisonment at San Juan de Uloa".<sup>54</sup>

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54. A. L. S., Wm. G. Cooke to his wife, August 25, 1845.

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Cooke continued in his office of Secretary of War and Marine until his appointment to the office of Adjutant General of the State Militia on the 27th day of April, 1846. It is quite interesting to note in one of his letters dated October 9th, 1845, that he says "the United States troops will arrive here today."

The joint resolution of the United States Congress proposing to annex Texas was not signed by Polk until

December 29, 1845.<sup>55</sup> President Jones did not surrender

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55. Bancroft, H. H., North Mexican States and Texas, Vol. II, p. 383.

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his executive authority until February 19, 1846.<sup>56</sup>

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56. Ibid., p. 383.

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It is just a little puzzling to figure out what United States troops were doing in Austin three to five months before annexation.

The austere colonel, William G. Cooke, was not to be left without a son and heir. His letter of June 23, 1846, written from Point Isabel registers his reaction:<sup>57</sup>

It was with the most joyful feelings that I received the intelligence through my friend Addicks, of your safe delivery of a fine boy...

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57. A. L. S., Wm. G. Cooke to Angela Cooke, June 23, 1846.

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The same source gives an intimate touch in the fact that his suggestion of a name for the baby was accepted without the slightest alteration--"William Navarro Cooke".<sup>58</sup>

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58. Billy Cooke--as the son came to be called--lived to the ripe old age of eighty-eight years, participated for years in local West Texas politics, and left a large family of sons and daughters.

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From the latter part of 1846 until well into the year 1847 little communication is at hand. Probably the last letter Colonel Cooke ever wrote to his relatives was penned September 21st, 1847, in Austin. It was written to his brother James and contained quite a bit of enlightening information. His mother had died on the 24th of May in Virginia without ever having seen her son, William Gordon Cooke, since he left home for an adventurous and eventful life a dozen years before. One can well imagine the furious emotions that ran riot in the breast of the Texas Army Colonel upon sober reflection.

December 24, 1847, saw the passing of William G. Cooke at the home of his wife's father, Luciano Navarro at Seguin, Texas. Frank Brown records in his annals of Travis County that he died of consumption.

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59. Brown, Frank, Annals of Travis County and of the City of Austin, from the Earliest Times to the Close of 1875, Chapter 13, p. 15.

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He was buried in a cemetery North of Seguin at Geronimo, and the exact spot was forgotten until discovered by Mrs. Max Wienert of Seguin in 1936. At his head was a small stone bearing the following inscription:

Here Lie The Rem  
ains of Co. W. G. Cooke  
One of the Brav  
Soldiers of Texas  
Who Died on the  
24th of Dec. 1847

Ajacem Agui los  
Restos del Col. W. G  
Cooke uno de los  
Valerosas Soldados  
De Texas quien  
Murio (S) L 24 d (e)  
Diebre d (e) 1847

Cooke's remains were taken up and re-interred at Austin at three o'clock P. M., March 2, 1937, with military honors. No one was aware that he was a Mason.

The most lasting honor done him was the naming of Cooke County in his memory.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Manuscripts

The Cooke papers consist of private letters, official business letters, and official documents that have been handed down through the Cooke family from generation to generation. Cooke's own letters are in excellent penmanship, and are examples of good writing style and correct grammar. They are at the present time the personal property of Raleigh Cooke, grandson of William Gordon Cooke, 1714 $\frac{1}{2}$  South St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, Texas.

The Army Papers of the Texas State Library Archives are a collection of correspondence, muster rolls, official orders, and such other papers as the army might issue, covering the period from 1836 to annexation of Texas.

#### Family Bible

The family Bible was the property of William Gordon Cooke and his wife, Angela. It is now the personal property of Robert Cooke, another grandson of William G. Cooke, and contains the birth, marriage, and death records of the family.

#### Navarro Records

Records of the family of Don Angel Navarro, the

Corsican, is kept by José Antonio Navarro III, grandson of José Antonio Navarro I, who signed the Declaration of Independence. The young José Antonio Navarro was kind enough to furnish a complete record of the family of Cooke's wife, Angela Navarro.

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APPENDIX

Statement

of the 1st Regiment of Infantry since its Organization  
 Janry 1839 as required by a resolution of the Hon<sup>l</sup> Congress  
 adopted 14th Dec 1840 - - - - -

694	Recruited
169	Deserted
11	Apprehended
108	Not Apprehended
48	Honorably Discharged
7	Dishonorably Discharged
24	Died
13	Killed
3	Shot by order of Genl Court Martial
1	Promoted
465	In Service at last return
694	Total numbered recruited and accounted for

H. McLeod  
 Adjutant & Inspr Genl  
 Texas Army

## Copy of Cooke's Marriage License

No. 129.

Republic of Texas |  
County of Bexar |

To any person legally authorized to solemnize the rites of matrimony: Be it known that on the 16 day of August, A. D. 1844, License is granted to any legally authorized person to join in the bonds of matrimony William G. Cooke with Angela Ma de Jesus Blasa Navarro, both parties of the county afore said. In witness whereof I, Thomas H. os. Addicks, Clerk of the county Court in and for said county thereto set my official signature and seal at my office in the city of San Antonio on the above written date.

Thos. H. os. Addicks, Clk.

I, the undersigned Parish Priest of San Antonio de Bexar, have joined in the bonds of Matrimony Col. William G. Cooke and Angela Ma de Jesus Blasa Navarro in the presence of Luciano Navarro, Raphael de la Garza & c.

M. Galvo.

Letter, Cooke to Wife, Angela, 1846

Camp near Point Isabel  
June 23, 1846.

It was with the most joyful feelings that I received the intelligence through my friend Addicks, of your safe delivery of a fine boy-- It has caused me great anxiety on your account and the necessity of my absence from you at so trying a time was truly unfortunate--However the danger is now passed and I am truly grateful to our almighty father that it is so for a boy was what I much desired and Addicks writes me that he is truly a fine one--What shall his name be? & what do you think of William Navarro Cooke--That is my choice but I leave it entirely to you--

We arrived here about two weeks ago, since which I have been to Matamoras, which you have learned before this is occupied by the Americans-- Our army numbers about twelve thousand and more are arriving every day--I think in a very short time we will take up the line of march for Monterrey--My health is exceedingly good and I think will continue so--My every care is for you and if you could be with me I should be truly happy--I will write you by every opportunity but must now bring this to a close as the person who is to take charge of it is about starting--Remember me with love and affection to all the family--Kiss our dear little boy for me and believe me to be truly your affectionate husband.

Wm. G. Cooke

Returns 2nd District  
Western  
29th Congress  
2nd Session  
Dec. 7 - '46 - March 3, 1847  
Election held March 30, 1846

County	'Timothy 'Pilsberry	'Joseph C. 'Megginson	'William 'G. Cooke	'Samuel M. 'Williams	'Thomas J. 'Green	'Lewis
Austin	51	11	5	5		
Bastrop	63	1	5	19	17	1
Bexar	37	5	142	56		2
Brazoria	144	1	10	6	12	1
Colorado	38	6	2	2	20	
Fayette	87		5	6	26	
Fort Bend	52	9	4	40	5	2
Galveston	69	7	8		1	7
Goliad		4	25			1
Gonzales	134	2	57	3		2
Jackson	2		24	22		48
Milam	22	4	12	2		
Montgomery	67	82	13	54	2	
San Patricio	13		60	79		1
Victoria	75	12	6	34	2	
Washington						
Total	854	144	378	328	85	65

Letter, Cooke to Brother James, 1847

Austin 21st Sept. 1847

Dear Brother/

I have just received your letter of 30th Ultimo by which I learn that you did not receive an answer from me to yours announcing the death of our dear mother--I received it about the 20th of June and answered it immediately, but our mail arrangements in the state are so bad that it is a very uncertain matter whether a letter sent by it will reach its destination or not--The P. M. General has treated us with great neglect--Our papers from Washington City are generally about one month on the way--A very important one from the war Department (calling for troops) was recently received, six weeks after it was mailed at Washington.

The health of my wife and little boy is most excellent. They returned home a short time since having spent the summer at her father's farm about 50 miles from here--I was myself afflicted with a very severe and obstinate attack of Diarrhoea which I contracted on the Rio Grande, but have entirely recovered--We have had a remarkably healthy season--

The official report of Scott's Victories near the City of Mexico have just been received here--Though the loss on our side is very considerable it is not so great as I anticipated it would be--I expected that the Mexicans would have made a far more desperate effort to defend their Capitol--Scott, I think, acted unwisely in not following up his victory and not taken possession of the city before agreeing to an armistice--We in Texas have had so much experience of Mexican treachery in regard to their treaties that we do not trust them--They have universally broke them--Letters were received yesterday by the Governor from the officer commanding the Texan troops on our southwestern frontier stating that the Guerrillas were becoming very troublesome & that it was the impression that a general rising of the Mexican Population bordering on the Rio Grande would shortly take place--He applies for large reinforcements--The wild tribes

of indians too are threatening hostilities, so that I anticipate a pretty active time of it this fall & winter--

This section of the country continues to improve very rapidly--large numbers of emigrants are constantly arriving and fine farms are opening every day in our wild lands--The country between this and San Antonio which two years ago no person would venture to travel unless in Company of 8 or 10 & well armed is now settled all the way and two towns containing populations of 500 & 2500 immediately on the main road--Give my most affectionate love to Martha, Mary, Robt. & Larkin--

Most Affectionately  
Yr. bro.  
Wm. G. Cooke

Letter, L. W. Kemp to Mrs. Max Weinert, 1936

Commission of Control  
for Texas Centennial Celebration

214 Westmoreland Ave.  
Houston, Texas  
March 5, 1936

Mrs. Max Weinert  
Seguin, Texas

Dear Mrs. Weinert,

You were no more thrilled in finding the grave of Wm. G. Cooke than I was in receiving your telegram. About four or five years ago I searched all of the cemeteries in and around Seguin for it--including the one you found it in and I had absolutely given up hope.....

L. W. Kemp

Letter, Thurlow B. Weed to Mrs. Max Weinert, 1937

Thurlow B. Weed  
Funeral Home  
Austin, Texas  
Feb. 27, 1937

Mrs. Max Weinert  
Seguin, Texas

Dear Mrs. Weinert,

I presume you have had a letter from Mr. Kemp saying that the reburial service for General William G. Cooke will take place at the state cemetery at 3 P. M. Tuesday, Mar. 2. This will be a full military service, and we hope that you will be able to attend. If we can be of any service to you while you are here, please call on us.

This morning I am in receipt of a letter from Mrs. C. Williamson giving her consent to the removal of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Jones Hardeman to the state cemetery. We will advise you when this is done and when services will be held for them.

Thanking you for your most valuable cooperation in these matters, I am

Yours Sincerely  
Thurlow B. Weed

Letter, Angela Cooke to Mary H. Cooke (no date)

Mi estimada hermana,

Me avergüenzo do no haberle escrito a vd primero que ahora pero la causa para que no lo hiciera es que vd. no entiende el Espanol y yo no puedo escribir en ingles pero al alultimo pense escribirle como quiera que sea pues es una satisfaccion para mi por que cumplo con responder. La que vd. me escrivio un ano pasado pues yo creo que vd. tiene un buen interprete para este tiempo como vd. le dise al Sor. Cooke en una de sus cartas que vd. le escribe que uno de los sobrinos de vd. esta aprendiendo el Espanol.

Yo espero que el hara muchos progresos y entonces tendre cambio para escribir a vd cada correes pero despues de todo mi chiquito William crese tan hermoso como su papa. El Sor. Cooke dise que quando el nino tenga quatro anos lo mandara a Virginia con su tia Mary H. Cooke a la escuela y entonces yo no podre estar sin el chiquito William, deceo ver a vd. y a su Madre muy mucho y demas familia pero creo que no podre ir a verlos por algunas sircustancias. Pero youpienso que el mejor plan sera que vd. benga a bernos. Le ruego que me escuse la letra tan mala pues estoy un poco enferma. No soy mas larga en mi carta por ahora pero hay otra vez sere me hara favor de darle mis cumplimientos a su madre y hermanas de mi parte.

Pues soy su hermana que deceo verla Angela  
N. B. Cooke.

My dear sister

I send some of my hair and some of little William.  
I should like to receive some of yours and believe me your affectionately A. N. B.

Can you read Spanish? W. G. C.

## Letter concerning Government Claims

Austin Novbr. 15th 1848

My dear Sir:

Your favor of the 23rd October, did not reach here until the evening of Sunday last the 12th inst. and then at such a late hour as to preclude an answer by that mail--

Mr. John James was in this place a few days since, but returned to San Antonio before I received your letter--Not knowing whether it would be your wish for me to forward the papers you mention, to him at San Antonio, or whether it was your desire for him to have made some use of them here in the land office, I do not know how to act unless to retain the papers for further instructions from you--as I do not like to trust valuable papers like these to the mail unless ordered so to do. I trust by waiting for further orders from you, will not harm your interests, but will meet with your sanction.--

Under date of October 11th, Mr. Underwood my agent in Washington City, writes me as follows,

"I am afraid we shall not succeed in getting Mrs. Cooke's other claims through--the Secretary of War has decided against it, and all other similar claims. Still when Congress assembles, I will endeavor, through Gen. Rusk, to show that this claim stands on a different footing from those of the Adjutant Generals of the Old States."--

From these remarks of Mr. Underwood you will perceive, that I cannot hold out much encouragement to Mrs. Cooke for the collecting of her remaining claim against the General Government--All that can be done to obtain it, I know Mr. Underwood will do.--

I have paid Mrs. Cookes Taxes for this year, and herewith enclose you the receipts which you will please hand to her.

I learn from Mr. Shaw, that Mr. James informed him, that he had a memorandum of yours to attend to some business here, but that he had lost it.--

You will please present me kindly to your daughters Mrs. Cooke & Miss Cecilia and believe me

Truly Yours  
Jas. H. Raymond

Luciano Navarro Esq.  
Seguin, Guadalupe Co. Texas

## Letter concerning Government Claims

Austin Texas May 25 1848

Mrs. Angela B Cooke

My dear Madam--

I have just received from my agent, Mr. Underwood, in Washington City \$265.00 for the payment of your deceased husband's expenses incurred by him in the spring of 1847 in going to and returning from Point Isabel.--Mr. Underwood writes to me that he expects very soon to get paid the account of \$369.20 for Col. Cooke's services in 1847 in organizing troops, and also that he is quite sanguine in the belief that he will be able to get nearly that amount allowed also for Col. Cooke's services in 1846. This last named account however is not quite as well supported by the necessary proof as the other account for services last year.--

Everything that is in Mr. Underwood's or in my power shall be done to get the payment of every dollar that is so justly due your deceased partner.

Just before Col. Cooke left here for home, I advanced to him out of the Treasury, \$58.83 over and above the amt. of his pay up to the time of his death --which amt. he said was actually necessary for him to enable him to travel home, on account of and for the benefit of his health--and requested me to pay myself the amt. out of his claims which I had sent to Washington for payment.--If it meets.....

Death Notice of William Navarro Cooke

Cooke, William N. (1846 - 1934)

Died Wednesday, April 18, at the home, 231 Buckingham, William N. Cooke, aged 88 years, beloved father of L. W., E. S., Robert J., Raleigh J., and Oscar Cooke, Mrs. K. M. Phillips and Mrs. H. C. Hasley; brother of I. L. Martin. Also survived by 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Funeral services will be held at the Bieve Undertaking Company chapel Thursday afternoon, four o'clock, by Rev. R. G. Van Royer of the Riverside Baptist Church. Interment in Mission Burial Park.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>. San Antonio Light, April 19 or 20, 1934, San Antonio Light Publishing Co., San Antonio, Texas.

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RICHMOND LIGHT INFANTRY BLUES



COMMISSIONED MAY 10th, 1793.

SIR:

We have the honor of informing you, that at a Meeting of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues, held on the 25th day of July 1844, you were unanimously elected an **HONORARY MEMBER** of said Corps.

With sentiments of respect and esteem,

We are your obedient servants,

R. Whiting

Secretary

George W. Munford Captain.

Geo. Tompkins Lieutenant.

To William G. Cooke Esq

Washington February 2<sup>d</sup> AD 1844 425844

Companion

The Most Excellent  
Grand High Priest has been  
pleased to appoint you to the  
Office of Grand Royal Arch  
Captain of the Grand Chapter  
of the Republic of Texas, for  
the ensuing year

Fraternally Yours &c

A. W. Raglin  
Grand Secretary

Companion

William Hooke  
Grand Royal Arch Captain

**We** *Anderson Jones* **Squire, Grand**  
**Master** of Free and Accepted Ancient York MASONS in and for the  
REPUBLIC of TEXAS, and the Masonic jurisdiction thereto belonging.

To the Masonic Fraternity within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge  
of the Republic of Texas,

Greeting:

**Know ye,** That reposing special trust and confidence in the Masonic  
abilities and virtues of our true and worthy BROTHER *William G. Cooke*  
*Senior Warden of Holland Lodge No. 36 at the City*  
*of Houston*

**WE DO HEREBY** nominate and appoint him by virtue of the powers and authorities in us  
vested by the *Next* Section of the *First* Chapter of the CONSTITUTION  
of the GRAND LODGES of the Republic of Texas, our ~~President~~  
~~and~~ *Grand Senior Deacon*

*And we request and exhort the Officers and Members of the* ~~said~~  
*Grand Lodge*

and the Masonic Fraternity in general, under our jurisdiction, to recognize, respect and obey  
him, the said Brother, *William G. Cooke*.

as our ~~President~~ *of said Grand Senior Deacon*

**Given** under our hand and the Seal of our Grand  
Lodge, at the City of Houston, this *Eighteenth*  
day of *April*, Anno Domini, 18*58*,  
Anno Lucis, 58*38*.

Attest,

*Geo. Fisher*

GRAND SECRETARY,

G. L. R. of T.

*Anderson Jones*

GRAND MASTER.

**Wm Samuel Williams Esquire, Grand  
Master** of Free and Accepted Ancient York MASONS in and for the  
REPUBLIC of TEXAS, and the Masonic jurisdiction thereto belonging. —

To the Masonic Fraternity within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge  
of the Republic of Texas, \_\_\_\_\_ Greeting:

**Know ye,** That reposing special trust and confidence in the Masonic  
abilities and virtues of our true and worthy BROTHER *William G. Cooke*  
*a Past Master Mason and a Member of Hol-*  
*land Lodge No. 1. at the City of Houston.* —

**WE DO HEREBY** nominate and appoint him by virtue of the powers and authorities in us  
vested by the *fourth* Section of the *First* Chapter of the CONSTITUTION  
of the GRAND LODGES of the Republic of Texas, our ~~PRESENT~~  
*present* Deputy Grand Master of our  
*No. 1. Grand Lodge of the Republic of*  
*Texas, for A. D. 1840. A. L. 5840.* —

*and to support the same to our Grand Secretary.*

*And we request and exhort the Officers and Members of the said No.*  
*No. Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas*  
and the Masonic Fraternity in general, under our jurisdiction, to recognize, respect and obey  
him, the said Brother,  
*William G. Cooke*

as our ~~PRESENT~~ *Deputy Grand Master.*

**Given** under our hand and the Seal of our Grand  
Lodge, at the City of <sup>Houston</sup> *Houston*, this *Thirtieth*  
day of *January*, Anno Domini, 1840,  
Anno Lucis, 5840. —

Attest,

*Geo. Fisher*

GRAND SECRETARY,

G. L. R. of T.

*Samuel Williams* GRAND MASTER.

# THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS,

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS—GREETING.

Know Ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities of W<sup>m</sup> G. Cooke I have nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, do commission him Colonel of the First Regiment Infantry in the service of the **REPUBLIC OF TEXAS;** to rank as such from the Eighteenth day of August eighteen hundred and Forty. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Colonel by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I do strictly charge, and require all Officers and Soldiers under his command, to be obedient to his orders as Colonel. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future President of the Republic of Texas, or the General, or other superior Officers set over him according to the rules and discipline of War. This Commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the President of the Republic of Texas, for the time being.

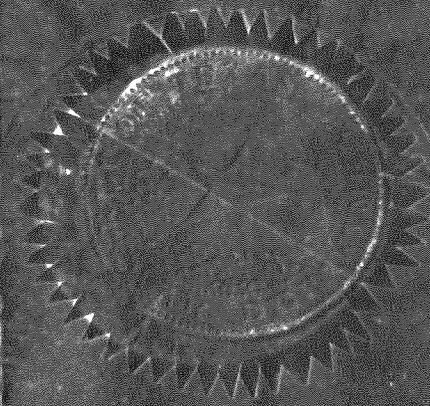
GIVEN under my hand, at the City of Austin this Second day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and Forty-one and in the Fifth year of the Independence of the Republic of Texas.

By the President,

B. J. Archer

SECRETARY OF WAR.

David G. Burnett



# THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS,

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS—GREETING.

Know Ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities of *William Gordon Cooke* I have nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, do commission him *Quarter Master General* in the service of the **REPUBLIC OF TEXAS;** to rank as such from the *Twenty fifth* day of *October* eighteen hundred and *Thirty kind*. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of *Quarter Master General* by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I do strictly charge, and require all Officers and Soldiers under his command, to be obedient to his orders as *Quarter Master General*. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future President of the Republic of Texas, or the General, or other superior Officers set over him according to the rules and discipline of War. This Commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the President of the Republic of Texas, for the time being.



GIVEN under my hand, at the *City of Austin* this *Thirteenth* day of *January* in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and *Thirty* and in the *Fourth* year of the Independence of the Republic of Texas.

By the President,

*Mirabeau B Lamar*

*A. Sidney Johnston*

SECRETARY OF WAR.

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE

# STATE OF TEXAS.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING.

Know Ye, That I, *J. Pinckney Henderson*, Governor of said State, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Navy and the Militia thereof, do, hereby, in conformity to law, and in accordance with appointment duly made, commission *William G. Cooke* Adjutant General of Militia

He is, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duties of Adjutant General by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I strictly charge all under his command, to be obedient to his orders as such.



Given under my Hand, and the Great Seal of the State, at *the City of Austin* this *twenty second* day of *April* in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and *forty six* and in the *twenty first* year of the Independence of the United States of America.

*J. Pinckney Henderson*

BY THE GOVERNOR.

*David S. Burnett*