

1833 March 2 Birth of the dragoons Philip's 6th infantry regiment broke up when Congress created the United States Regiment of Dragoons. The size of the U. S. Regiment of dragoons was fixed at 34 officers and 1,715 men. Henry Dodge was appointed the colonel in command, and one of the noteworthy officers was Philip St. George Cooke. The dragoons were a strange breed of soldier. They were a mounted arm of the army but were neither cavalry nor mounted infantry. Where cavalry trained to fight from the saddle primarily utilizing the saber, and mounted infantry utilized the horse as transportation fighting as infantry on foot, dragoons stressed the ability to fight either in the saddle or on foot. Dexterity, versatility and audacity were the watchwords of the dragoons. Armed with carbine, pistol, and saber, the Dragoons were ideally suited to plains' warfare against the American Indian. The 2nd U.S. Dragoons were some of the best of a hardy lot with a reputation of being rowdy, insubordinate, tough, no-nonsense fighters. (<http://www.civilwarweb.com/articles/05-00/dragon.htm>)

On March 4 Philip was made a senior 1st Lieutenant of the 1st Dragoons, and in celebration of the event he and Rachel (who would have been 6 months pregnant) prepared to take their first vacation after three years of marriage. However his leave was canceled when Philip received orders to go to Tennessee to recruit soldiers to join the newly formed Dragoons. He rode off and had many interesting adventures- including meeting Davy Crockett in Jackson Tennessee - while Rachel was left at home at the fort.

1833 June 9 Birth of John Rogers Cooke at Jefferson Barracks. It was late in the summer when Philip returned and got his first glimpse of his son who was 5 months old at the time. So despite being married to a dashing dragoon in an impressive blue uniform, it is a fair guess that Rachel was beginning to experience what has been described as a life of "glittering misery".

John Rogers Cooke was originally named Peter Hertzog Cooke, but his parents later changed his name. According to my grandmother, Rachel and Philip had a son before this who died. (Malaria, typhus, diphtheria, pneumonia, dysentery and cholera along with inadequate medical care caused many deaths, but the exact cause or date of the first child's death is unknown.) (Q: Was the first-born son also named John Rogers? And was he still alive on June 9 1833 when "Peter" was born? According to Scott Norsworthy, the idea of "replacement children" - that is giving another child the name of a deceased infant - was common in the 19th century so this is a possibility.)

Peter Hertzog, Rachel's younger brother, was born in 1819 when she was 12, and died in 1821 when she was 14. This would have been a traumatic event during this traditionally sensitive developmental stage of her life. It is also interesting to note that "Peter Hertzog" was also used at one time as a pen name for Philip St. George Cooke, perhaps the same Philip St. George Cooke of this paper.

John Rogers Cooke, Philip's older brother was 21 when Philip was born. Philip was 6 when his father Stephen died, and Catherine was 49 with children and a plantation to look after. In 1819 when Philip was 10 he and his mother went to live with John Rogers Cooke and his family. John Rogers was 31 at the time and had participated in the War of 1812 and was a noted jurist. Philip lived with the family until the age of 14 when he went to West Point. So it seems fair to speculate that John Rogers was very important in Philip's life.

1833 - Summer Philip wrote that he was "Seeking to infuse an ardor for service in a new regiment of cavalry". He eventually became known as "The Father of the US Cavalry", and it was the presence of the cavalry that allowed expansion west of the Mississippi to take place.

1833 Nov 20 -1834 A winter march... Soon after returning from his recruitment drive in the South, Philip received orders to march 500 miles with the dragoons to Fort Gibson in Indian Territory - the area that is now known as Oklahoma.

1835 May 31 Philip became a Captain at the age of 26.

1835 July 22 Death of William Burrage Collins aged 34 years.

1835 July 31 Birth of Jacob Sharpe at Red Hook, NY (Future husband of Julia Turner Cooke). Other dates have also been given for his birth. I took this from his signed application form for an "Original Pension of an Invalid" on March 9, 1874, in which he declared himself to be 38 years old. His father was Abram Sharpe and his mother Helen Kip.

1835 Aug 24 Catherine wrote to Michael Baker that "Rachel, I believe, is in Carlisle [Pennsylvania] though I fear that will not be her residence long as Mr. Cooke's station will be Fort Gibson for which I am really sorry should they go there. I never expect to see her again, but so it is and I must give her up." Fort Gibson had a reputation for being an unhealthy place to live. In the article *The Pleasures of Female Society* Kansas History it states that "These moves were not made with the intention that any would be permanent assignments. Rachel often traveled with the children for a season's tour at a post. Rachel was returned safely to Jefferson Barracks the next year, 1836." (She was pregnant again at the time.)

1836 Jan 3 Birth Flora Cooke (Future wife of Jeb Stuart) at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

1838 May 22 The Cookes went to Carlisle Barracks Pennsylvania where, during this year, The School of Cavalry Practice was established.

1838 Summer - An Accident... On August the 14th, at Fort Gibson Oklahoma, an accident occurred when Philip's pistol accidentally discharged and he shot Rachel in the jaw removing half the teeth of her lower jaw. On September 3rd, having run into military red tape, Philip wrote to his brother John Rogers Cooke asking the noted Jurist to write to the War Department on his behalf. On Oct 11, 1838, John Rogers wrote a letter to the War Department stating that he had had a letter from his brother "in which he informs me that he was so unfortunate as to wound his wife very severely on the 14th of August, by the accidental discharge of a pistol in his hand. The ball entered the jaw about an inch and a half and passed out through the under-lip, carrying away one half of her teeth. He is extremely desirous to obtain for her as speedily as possible the professional aid of a surgeon-dentist, in order to mitigate as far as he can this serious misfortune. In order to effect this object he says he has applied to you for leave of absence. But he adds that his commanding officer in backing his petition has suggested that his leave should depend on the arrival at Fort Gibson of two captains and one lieutenant who are out on the recruiting service. Now tho' the captain doubtless feels much flattered at being rated as equal to two other captains and a lieutenant to boot, by his most sapient commander, he has some misgivings that this condition precedent may never be realized and that such a leave will be of no advantage whatever. He therefore earnestly solicits an immediate and unconditional leave: immediate, because unless so obtained it will not avail him... He is much attracted to his wife, and very unhappy at having been the instrument of inflicting on her so much suffering; and, in his feverish anxiety on the subject, has requested me to add any solicitation to his, for an immediate and unconditional leave of absence. Of course I cannot refuse to comply with such a request from a brother, tho' perfectly aware that my application cannot have any effect on your decision, which will of course be founded on the facts you have already before you... I am, dear sir, with great respect, your obt. servt. John R. Cooke, Glengarry, near Winchester. ("The West of Philip St. George Cooke" by Otis Young p.93)

I was really shocked when I discovered that my gr gr grandfather had shot my gr gr grandmother in the jaw. An accident? From a professional and highly trained soldier? My husband and I discussed our theories regarding this event over many cups of coffee at our kitchen table. Most of those theories were eventually discarded. However, in exploring the Cooke's circumstances at the time, this is what I have come up with:

Philip was 29 and Rachel 31 and they had been married for eight years. They had had very little time away from the army and its outposts. Their first planned leave in 1833 had been canceled when Philip had to go on recruiting duty. John Rogers was born while he was away.

He was often away for long periods of time on dangerous missions while Rachel spent her time either on dusty, noisy Army posts with the ever-present fear of disease, natural disasters or Indian attacks, or spent time at her relatives' homes. Boredom, deprivations, loneliness, separation from her relations back east, and not wanting her children brought up in the wilderness could have been other factors. But, because no journal has ever been found, we will never know for sure what her state of mind was at this time.

Rachel was the daughter of a wealthy Philadelphia businessman, and most likely went to "finishing school" either there or in Detroit. Dana H. Prater in *Sabers and Soapsuds: Dragoon Women on the Frontier, 1833-1861*, writes: "Socially, Army wives were generally from upper-middle-class families. Assuming the majority were educated, why then were they almost 'invisible' as a group? One answer may lie in the education itself. They had been educated as gentlewomen in the prevailing school of thought, which began in the early decades of settlement in America. Known as the 'cult of true womanhood', the teaching demanded that a woman be pious, submissive, uncomplaining, supportive, and educated in the genteel and domestic arts. She should not compete with men in any way - as the moral guardian of her home; she should shield the family from the undesirable elements of a materialistic society. In the 1820's and 30's, essays, novels, school texts, sermons, and ladies' periodicals (such as Godey's *Lady's Book*) stressed the importance of a woman's 'sphere' of influence. Although women were considered physically weaker and possibly mentally inferior to men, they were morally superior and thus equal to men within their separate sphere. Women were to remain behind the scenes, with only the results of their work showing, not the process. To use a tired phrase, women were to 'be seen and not heard'."

Of all the children born to her parents, only four girls survived. The sisters, Mary, Elizabeth, Rachel, and Anne, and their widowed mother Catherine, were very close. One of Catherine's ongoing dilemmas was that after her husband's death, she was left without a home of her own.

Mary had married John Dougherty in 1823 and in 1835 they purchased a farm near Liberty Missouri. Mary and their children then spent more time there than they did at Leavenworth. John's service as an Indian agent tapered off, and by 1839 he had resigned and moved to a farm where they lived comfortably and were financially well off. Elizabeth had married William Burrage Collins in 1826 and although she was widowed, her husband having died on the 22 of July 1835 at the age 34, she and children were well established in Collinsville, Illinois. After her husband's death, in a display of independence, she petitioned for and received special state legislation which named her guardian of her children. At times her mother resided with her. From *Pleasures of Female Society at Cantonment Leavenworth* by Daniel D. and Marilyn Irvin Hold, *Kansas History* Vol 8 Spring 1985 Number 1

And probably most significantly, Anne, Rachel's younger sister had married William N. Wickliffe in 1831 who had been commissioned in 1819 and had been on the 1829 Trader Caravan with Philip. By 1837, although he was the commander of Company F, he resigned without further promotion. They also settled in Collinsville where they had a farm and a dry goods store.

Given these circumstances it is reasonable to assume that Rachel, too, yearned for conditions that would be safer, healthier and more comfortable for herself and her young family (John Rogers at this time was five and Flora two). Was she pressuring Philip to leave Army life and settle down? Was she tired of being submissive as she most likely had been taught? Was she threatening to leave him? In the murders of wives by military men in 2002 in the U.S., a consistent factor was that the wives were planning to leave their husbands... and although this wasn't murder, it was close.

Another factor is the reoccurrence that summer of the malaria that had afflicted Philip in 1835. Apparently malaria goes through three stages: the patient is very cold, then very hot, then sweats. If they don't go through the "wet" stage, they die. If they survive the three stages then malaria reoccurs. Recent research confirms clinical reports from 500 BC through the 20th century which noted that patients who survived malaria frequently developed depression, impaired memory loss, personality change and proneness to violence as long-term effects of the disease. (<http://users.mouldier.net.a/users/marshall/medical/malptsd.htm>)

Questions remain.

How could a trained military man make the mistake of having a gun go off so close to a loved one?

Why was the army so slow in responding to Rachel's need for medical care?

What effect if any did this have with Philip's relationship with his son? (I sense a possible distance here even before the Civil War).

Whatever really happened, we may never know. The event still shocks me especially since it was five months later (!!!) on January 25th, 1839 before they were given four months leave so Rachel could receive corrective surgery in the East. The wound was slow to heal.

1839 Catherine Esten Cooke, Philip's mother died in Winchester Virginia, age 74.

1839 May 22 Col Kearny posted Philip to Carlisle Barracks on recruiting duty which Philip described as "as unpleasant a duty as I could have been put on" . In July he was at Camp Washington in Trenton NJ where his malaria took a turn for the worse, and which was "to render it imprudent for him to continue on duty at that training camp" Otis Young The West of Philip St. George Cooke p. 95 . He requested to be put on waiting orders in Philadelphia, where it is possible that they stayed with some of Rachel's relatives.

1839 Nov 6 Philip returned to Fort Gibson, Oklahoma.

1839 - 1845 Philip and his family were in Fort Wayne which was located in Indian territory on the Arkansas border in the northeast part of the present state of Oklahoma where he had obtained a cavalry post.

1840 Feb 25 Birth - Maria Pendleton Cooke (my great grandmother and future wife of Dr. Charles Brewer) at Fort Wayne. She would have been conceived sometime in June, five months after they were given leave to go East, so presumably Rachel was feeling better by that time. In March of that year Philip made a brief recruiting trip to Kentucky, and in late September he went with an expedition with Kearny to Mosquito Creek in the Potawatomie Nation to show some force and pay the tribe their annuities. (Otis Young p. 100)

1842 March 10 Birth - Julia Turner Cooke at Fort Leavenworth Kansas Territory (Future wife of Jacob Sharpe).

When Fort Leavenworth was not fighting the Mexicans, dealing with the Mormons, placating the Indians, and protecting the westward movement of settlers, daily life at the post continued in somewhat dull, routine fashion. During their off-duty time, soldiers pitched horseshoes, played poker, and for a few theatrically inclined souls, participated in the Thespian Society. The highlight of the soldiers' social calendar was the annual Enlisted Man's Ball, complete with supplies and decorations from Weston. This evening of gaiety had one major problem, however, and that was the lack of women to serve as dance partners for the soldiers. Consequently, the troops had no choice except to dance with each other, a situation totally unacceptable to the rugged frontiersmen of the day. Any woman lucky, or unlucky, enough to find her way to Fort Leavenworth was soon besieged by a multitude of suitors. White domestics serving the officers' wives provided the prime source of spouses for the soldiers. To retain their hired help, officers'

wives often selected the ugliest girls available for employment as maids. Even this stratagem did not always work. An officer's wife at Fort Leavenworth during this period wrote of her servant: "The girl was almost a grenadier in looks and manner, and although not absolutely hideous, was so far from pleasing that we were confident of retaining her services.... She had not been at the fort for three days before the man who laid our carpets proposed to her."

<http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/ftlvn/briefhist/briefhist.asp>

1842 April 18 Philip left Fort Leavenworth with Kearny to go to the Cherokee Nation. While he was there a conflict arose between the recently displaced Seminoles and the Cherokees.

1843 May 27 - July 21 The War Department honored the Mexican request (for protection?) and directed Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, commander of Fort Leavenworth, to provide a military force sufficient to patrol the American side of the border. Kearny gave this mission to Captain Philip St. George Cooke, who departed Fort Leavenworth on May 27, 1843, with four companies of U.S. Dragoons to protect the Mexican caravans and to subdue the Texas marauders.

Philip kept the official military journal during this expedition from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe designed to protect the annual caravan of traders from Missouri to the Mexican boundary, and to subdue Texas marauders. Many expeditions started in the springtime as it meant plenty of fodder for the horses. He was ordered to note the military features of the country, its resources, watercourses, general topography, details on the tribes visited including their ability to carry on warlike operations and their dispositions toward the settlers. He took his ten year old son John Rogers along with him and on June 7th recorded that "My little son rode 30 miles today without seeming fatigued". Clearly Philip was proud of his son and had high hopes for him. Other parts of the journal noted that "There are thousands of buffalo peacefully grazing on the great plain" and that buffalo "bulls are quite fat: we think them better than the best beef".

Cooke's detachment caught up with Snively's ruffians on the south bank of the Arkansas River and immediately demanded to know their intentions. After examining Snively's commission, Cooke determined it to be nothing more than a license to steal and ordered... Snively obeyed Cooke's demands by surrendering his weapons and returning peacefully to Texas. This resolute action forestalled a possible war between the United States and Mexico. The Mexican dictator, Santa Anna, called Captain Cooke's action "the first act of good faith ever shown by the United States to Mexico."

<http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/ftlvn/briefhist/briefhist.asp>

1843 Aug 31 Philip arrived at Council Grove in Kansas, and on Sept 2nd marched with the caravan of about 140 wagons. He returned on October 25th "with companies C.F. & K: Not one of their horses have I lost or abandoned." He reported that "Wild Indians - probably Comanches - were occasionally seen on the Arkansas, but they never ventured very near". ... "The companies, and a portion of A. have this year marched with me about 1500 miles in the wilderness: about half of it has been through cold rain storms, and black frosts: sometimes without fuel: not seldom a large river was waded to procure it: exposed to the searching blasts of the tree-less plains - now blackened by fire - now whitened by snow and frosts. I will only say for them that they have done their duty cheerfully and like men." He also made the observation that "With these few wagons of merchandise 68 Americans were reported to me in the summer caravan. Hence they are nearly all adventurers, who live cheaply on buffalo, avoid the restraint of society, and at Santa Fe plunge into the dissipations of probably the most abandoned and dissolute community in North America."

Philip St. George Cooke's 1843 Journal is a fascinating document in its scope and detail, this one has been edited by William E. Connelley and was published in Vol 12 of the Mississippi Valley Historical Review 1925

1844 Sept 23 Birth of Ann "Nannie" Patton in Virginia (Future wife of John Rogers Cooke).

1845 May - August Col. Kearny, who was an army topographical engineer, led an expedition to the Rocky Mountains. Philip went on this expedition with company K and the 1st Dragoons through the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. They covered 2100 miles in 99 days, exploring, surveying, mapping, and reporting on fauna and flora in the frontier West. On June 30th, Philip wrote that "We drank both of the Atlantic and Pacific waters." On July 15th they passed under Long's Peak and caught sight of Pike's Peak. Later on he wrote "We found above Laramie, a woman and two fine children, of eight or ten years, who were perhaps lost, and certainly in a starving condition, having nothing left but the remains of a dog which they had at first packed, and now were eating nearly raw. She was an Arapaho, and, as such, was spared from the massacre by the Sioux.... She was sent to a depot we established near Fort Laramie and afterwards accompanied us south, until we fell in with a part of her nation, to which she returned." [And] "These Indians depend upon the buffalo for food, raiment, and dwellings. In their rapid decay, what is to become of them?" From "Sketches of the Great West" a letter by Capt. Cooke. On his return, Philip St. George Cooke was located at Fort Gibson where he wrote an article on the expedition, which was published on October 6th in The National Union. The editorial introduction to it states: "The following communication will prove very acceptable to all lovers of picturesque landscape, and curious natural history. The scenes, which are described, are singularly striking, and the description itself is expressed with great beauty and force. We would advise our female readers, especially, to peruse it, because they will admire and enjoy it."

1846 John Esten Cooke, Philip's nephew, left school at the age of 16 and studied law with his

father. He was also interested in literature which was to become his first love.

1846 Outbreak of the Mexican War Philip was stationed at Fort Crawford, in Wisconsin Territory when he received orders to go south. He was in command of company K, 1st Dragoons. He left his post and reached St. Louis on June 26th - (It is possible that Rachel and the children were staying with her sister Anne Collins in Collinsville, Illinois at this time) - only to find he had been ordered to join Kearny's expedition to Santa Fe. He left aboard a steamboat on the Missouri River for Fort Leavenworth arriving there three days after Kearny's departure. He and his men marched after Kearny and met up with him on July 31st at Bent's Fort. Together they proceeded to Santa Fe, which they occupied without resistance on August 18th. They started marching towards California, but on Oct 2nd, near La Joya, Kearny learned of the death of Lt. Col. James Allen of the Mormon Battalion, and ordered Philip to return to Santa Fe and assume command of the battalion when it arrived.

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