

Among those who identified themselves with the emigration to California as early as the year 1849 was Mr. WM. B. COOKE, now resident proprietor of the House of WM. B. COOKE & Co. On arriving in San Francisco, Mr. Cooke established a News Depot, and by unceasing energy and strict application to his business, made it not only profitable to himself, but the germ from which eventually sprung into existence their present mammoth establishment.

In the year, 1850, Mr. Cooke associated himself in a partnership capacity with Mr. J. J. LeCount, under the firm name of "Cooke & LeCount," for the ostensible purpose of carrying on a more extensive trade in the Book and Stationery business. The success which followed this union of capital and interest was such as to show that their calculations had not been overestimated. Yet, though commencing under circumstances so flattering, and with prospects so auspicious, their business career was destined to short duration, and at length terminated, through the destructive fires that during the years, 1850 and 1851, destroyed property in San Francisco, amounting in the aggregate to eighteen millions of dollars. Suffering so severely during this unparalleled succession of conflagrations, Messrs. Cooke & LeCount found it impossible to further continue their business relations, and accordingly the firm was soon after dissolved by mutual consent.

Following this, Mr. Cooke began business alone, commencing on a small scale, and gradually extending his facilities as his means multiplied, until the year, 1854, when he formed a copartnership with his father, Mr. Peter Cooke, of New York, under the name and style of "Wm. B. Cooke & Co."

The old adage of "Small beginnings, &c.," was probably never more fully verified than in this instance. From the News Depot, we now find instead thereof a palatial establishment, filled to