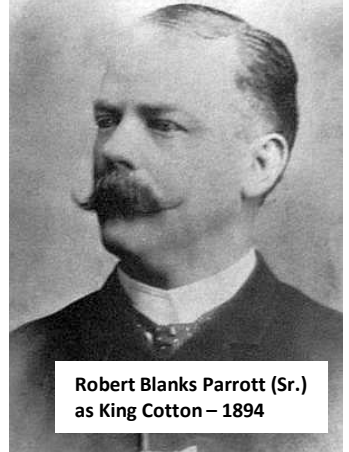


A Parrott King Cotton

By Wayne Parrott (775)

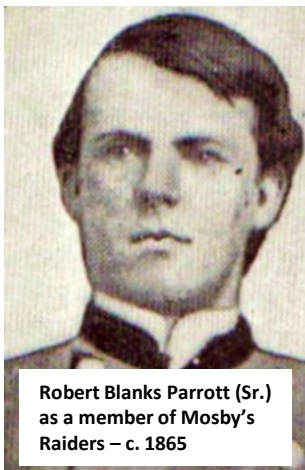
In the American South, cotton reigned supreme among crops, and was the foundation for its economy. Waco, Texas, celebrated cotton's importance with a Cotton Palace, which in 1894 hosted the Texas Cotton Palace Exposition, for which **Robert Blanks Parrott** was a board member. The Exposition lasted a month and was considered to be wildly successful. Among the events that took place, Robert Blanks got crowned the first 'King Cotton' and held the title for 10 years.

Robert Blanks Parrott came of age in the American Civil War in the most memorable of ways.



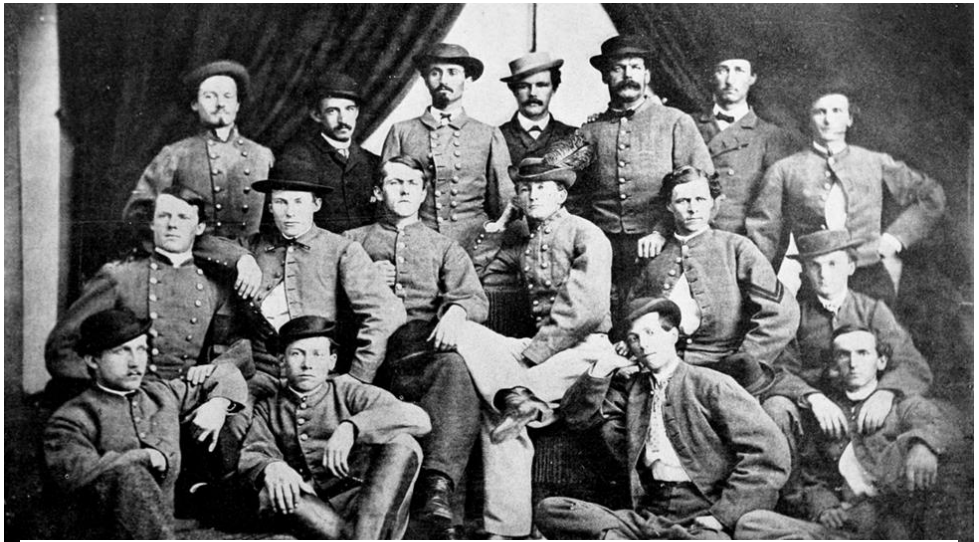
Robert Blanks Parrott (Sr.)
as King Cotton – 1894

The son of a Virginia Merchant and already at least a seventh generation American, Robert entered the University of Virginia at the age of 14, becoming the youngest student ever enrolled there. However, within two years, the Civil War had started, and Robert Blanks dropped out of school to fight in the war. He ended up in the 43rd Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, better known as Mosby's Rangers, or less charitably but more accurately, Mosby's Raiders, for their guerilla tactics that were very effective at disrupting Union lines. Robert Blanks was the 2nd Sergeant for the company.



Robert Blanks Parrott (Sr.)
as a member of Mosby's
Raiders – c. 1865

The unit was commanded by John Singleton Mosby, aka the Gray Ghost of the Confederacy. After the War, he became US consul to Hong Kong. Another member of the unit was first lieutenant Baron Robert von Massow from Prussia, who in 1901 announced he was leaving \$2,000,000 to Mosby, and other brigade members. It is not clear that anyone lived to collect their share – von Massow did not die until 1927. Towards the end of the war, Robert Blanks was captured, and spent the remaining six months of the War in a Union prison. Returning to Virginia, he worked for a commission house for a decade, after which he went through a series of jobs on his way to becoming a business tycoon.



File from *The Photographic History of The Civil War in Ten Volumes: Volume Four, The Cavalry*. The Review of Reviews Co., New York, 1911, p. 171. Robert Blanks, age 16, is on the far left, middle row.

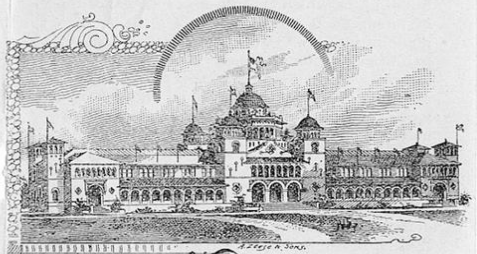
Texas Epitomized.

A miniature representation of the whole State—its natural advantages, its improved opportunities, its present possessions and future possibilities. A magnificent building, exquisitely decorated with the cotton, grains and grasses, the mineral and timber, with Texas products of every kind. There will be also the added charm of excellent music, and many scores of other attractions of various kinds.

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Unique,
Original,
Attractive.



THE Texas Cotton Palace

WACO, TEXAS.

The First Annual Exhibition will Open
November 8 and Close December 6,
1894.

He first went to work for the Nashville Life Insurance Co., then with the Mobile Life Insurance Co., then the Alabama Gold Life Insurance Company, ending as president of the Provident Savings Life Insurance Company. He went on to found the Texas Real Estate Association and became director of the Provident National Bank of Waco. He fought the establishment and managed to introduce reforms in the insurance industry, recognized for the significant savings they provided the state of Texas.

Robert Blanks was a trustee for the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, served on the Waco city council and on the Waco School Committee, and still found time to be a Mason, an Elk, and a Knight of Pythias. He did not obtain his title of Colonel until the late 1870s, when he became an aide to then Texas Governor Richard Hubbard – it was Hubbard who bestowed upon him the honorary title of Colonel.

In 1887, he led the campaign to pass a constitutional amendment that would ban alcohol sales in Texas, but lost to the campaign organized by Judge George W. Clark. Yet, when Judge Clark ran for governor against the incumbent in 1892, he asked Robert Blanks to organize his campaign. Robert went on to chair the Texas World's Columbian Exhibition Committee in 1893, which led to his position on the Texas Cotton Palace Board and election as King Cotton.

Robert had three sons and three daughters: the daughters were **Rosa Scott Parrott** (1876-1878), **Alice Downs Parrott** (1878-1949) married George Thomas Zizinia (1873-1944) and **Lillian Parrott** (1884-1944) who married William Whalen (1896-).

Two of his sons became notable for very different reasons. The third son (**William Downs Parrott**, 1882-1950), sold stocks in Manhattan and never married.

Eldest son **Charles Blanks Parrott** (1874-1906) served in the military during the Spanish-American War and was stationed in the Philippines. Diagnosed with tuberculosis upon his return, he became suicidal and made headline news after he murdered his wife, Mary Lucille Hampton (1880-1906) before turning the gun on himself. The marriage had always been rocky—he was an alcoholic and she was addicted to morphine.

Second son, **Robert Blanks Parrott Jr.** (1880-1962), in contrast, was a paragon of society. He worked on Wall Street from 1901 until the 1929 market crash, at which point he moved to Indianapolis, where he established a group insurance and investment firms. Yet, he never forgot Waco, his home town.



Texas Collection, Baylor University, Texas Cotton Palace 1894 Board of Directors.

GAZETTE WANT ADS BRING BEST RESULTS

San Antonio Gazette

Published Daily, Wednesday, Except on Holy Days.
MILYER BROTHERS, PRINTERS 42
 East Texas St.

VOL. 3, No. 6

8 PAGES

TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 1896.

8 PAGES

PRICE: TWO CENTS

MR. HYDE HAS CLOSE CALLS

Hears People Discuss Method of His Capture and Has Some Fun—That \$25 Is Still Hanging.

Whether it was because the weather was so hot or because he was so tired, Mr. Hyde was feeling the heat in the north end of the city. He had been out for some time and was feeling the heat in the north end of the city. He had been out for some time and was feeling the heat in the north end of the city. He had been out for some time and was feeling the heat in the north end of the city.

KING AND QUEEN ENTER CITY TONIGHT

Ardor Undampened by Rain, Knights Will Escort Rulers in Bright Attire—City Filling with Visitors.

The royal couple will arrive in the city tonight. They will be accompanied by a large number of knights. The city is expected to be filled with visitors to see the king and queen.

PARROTT SLAYS WIFE THEN TAKES OWN LIFE

Shocking Tragedy at 1019-Avenue C Early This Morning—Jealously Leads to Death of Two.

A shocking tragedy occurred early this morning at 1019-Avenue C. A man named Parrott was found dead with his wife. It is believed that the man killed his wife out of jealousy and then took his own life.

WATCH HIM TURN AROUND



Be careful of the man who is turning around. He is a dangerous character and should be watched closely.

SPRINGFIELD, MO., NEGRO KILLED TO SAVE GIRL

White Boy Slashed Back Who Attacked His Sweetheart and Found to Be Raped in Kansas Mo.

A tragedy occurred in Springfield, Missouri, where a young boy was killed to save a girl. The boy was attacked by a white man who was found to have raped the girl.

HERT CONGRESS LYING

Springfield, Mo., April 17.—

The Hertz Congress is a complete lie. It is a fraud and should be exposed to the public.

MASTER BAKERS IN CONVENTION

Large Attendance at the Sixth Annual Gathering, Welcomed in City by Acting Mayor W. L. Schuch.

The sixth annual convention of the master bakers was held in the city. A large number of bakers from various cities attended the convention.

FROST NATIONAL BANK

MAIN PLAZA, CAPITAL & SURPLUS \$500,000

The Frost National Bank is a leading financial institution in the city. It has a capital and surplus of \$500,000.

In 1958, Robert Jr. and his wife, Edith Isabelle Heinze (1887-1974) established the Waco Perpetual Growth Foundation, with the mission to do charitable and philanthropic work in Waco and the surrounding area. Today, the Foundation continues its work and has assets exceeding \$76 million.

Although Robert Blanks Parrott Sr. and his wife, Alice Henrietta Downs had six children, they had but one granddaughter, Frances Zizinia, who died unmarried in 1981.



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Shoots wife and then turns piston upon himself, *San Antonio Daily Light*, Tuesday, 17 April 1906.

Waco Foundation Founder R.B. Parrott,
<http://www.wacofoundation.org/AboutUs/MissionHistory/RBParrott.aspx>

FAMILY NOTES

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