

Bluford Cox, early-day outlaw

I recently came across another story about one of the Cox family who used to live on the place owned by my son Hal on County Road 3430.

Pleasant Cox settled on that place in the 1800s. The third child of Pleasant and Martha Cox was a boy named Bluford. Bluford killed his first man before he was 18 years old. That killing was followed by 26 others, so he had 27 notches on his six gun.

Not long after "Blu" killed his first man, he killed another by the name of Doolittle in a Lampasas saloon. In this fight, he lost one of his ears. All this happened during the Higgins-Horrell feud.

Blu took up with the Pink Higgins bunch and experienced a lot of running gun battles on horseback between the two gangs.

Blu was arrested for murdering Thomas Gardner, but Blu claimed he had killed him in self-defense. He reported the killing to his older brother, John Thomas Cox, who was a Texas Ranger.

It seems Blu had his 15-year-old handicapped nephew with him in town that day. This Thomas Gardner had picked on the youngster while they were in a saloon. When Gardner went out of the saloon, Blu followed him and challenged him about the incident and killed him.

In an arraignment on June 19, 1871, Blu was charged with murder, and his bond was set at \$4,000. This bond was posted by Pleasant Cox, John Bybee, D.W. Smart, I.J. Barber, W.R. Blevins and Jasper Owens.

Postponements of the trial were requested, and delaying tactics were set in motion, but when it became

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apparent that Blu was going to trial, his brother James smuggled him out of the area to El Paso hidden under a wagon load of hides.

John Bybee and Harry Clark, brothers-in-law to Blu, appeared in court in May 1873 and reported that Blu had been killed in April of 1873 in Lampasas County in a gun battle with the Horrell gang. Blu's

and coat but not the body is a mystery.

Whether he was killed in Lampasas County by the Horrell gang or whether he lived a full life in El Paso remains unknown.

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father appeared in court with a blood-stained shirt and coat that he testified his son was wearing when he was shot and killed. Pleasant Cox also testified that a search was made for Blu's body, but they were unable to find it and said only the Horrell gang knew where it was. How they were able to have the shirt