

Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3), son of Pleasant C. Cox (C4/2.2) and Martha Jane Bybee Cox (B4/1.1), was born in Missouri July 10, 1850. He appeared in the 1860 census of his father's household as a 10-year-old. Descendants of James Christopher Cox (C4/2.4) recalled that Bluford Cox (C3/2.3) did not get along with his uncle and once poisoned his hunting dogs. It was reported that Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) was enrolled in the University of Texas at Georgetown, Texas, but was expelled for bringing his pistol on the campus. The school was the result of the consolidation of three academies in the area. The College of Rutersville established in Bell County May 1, 1841 was the earliest of the three. In 1875 at the request of the State of Texas the university officials ceded the name to the state for the creation of a new University of Texas at Austin and renamed the school Southwestern College. Later the name was changed to Southwestern University.

Once Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) killed a man named Doolittle in a pistol fight in Lampasas, but not before the victim had shot his ear off. In 1873 he killed Thomas Gardner in a gunfight and was arraigned for murder. John Thomas Cox (C2/12.3) relates that Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) challenged Gardner after Gardner had abused his handicapped nephew, Willie Bybee, in an Adamsville saloon. Willie Bybee, son of William Bybee, had a hand eaten off by a hog when he was a baby. His parents had taken him with them when they went to work in their field and placed his crib in the shade of a tree. Before they left to begin their work they placed a cookie in the hand of the baby. A wandering sow was attracted to the cookie in the baby's hand which was extended through the side of the crib and ate the hand off in getting the cookie.

Hearing the baby's screams the parents ran to the crib, but were too late to save the hand. They applied a tourniquet and save the baby's life. On his fifteenth birthday Willie Bybee had put on his new hat, chaps and gun and gone to the Adamsville saloon to celebrate his manhood. Thomas Gardner made fun of the young man and teased him to tears. Hearing of the abuse Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) followed Gardner and overtook him before he reached his home. In quickness and accuracy with a pistol Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) had no rival, and Gardner lay dying with the first shot.

Bluford S. Cox went to report the matter to his brother John Thomas Cox, a Texas Ranger, who convinced him to turn himself in. In jail he learned that he would be tried for murder in Williamson County District Court and that his plea of self-defense would be disallowed. With the help of family members he posted bond, but shortly afterwards disappeared having been smuggled out of the country to El Paso, Texas in a wagon under a load of buffalo hides by his brother James W. Cox (C3/2.2). The Williamson County District Judge declared the bond forfeited and issued the following judgement:

"The State of Texas

To the Sheriff of Lampasas County, Greeting:
Whereas on the 15th day of July, 1873 before the Hon. District Court there in session within and for the county of Williamson and State of Texas at the courthouse in the town of Georgetown the following judgement ni si was entered to wit:

The State of Texas, No. 658 } And now on this

15th day of July A.D. 1873 this;

vs.) cause being regularly reached

on the Docket and William Bybee and Bluford Cox } called for trial, came the State of Texas by her District Attorney and the Defendant Bluford Cox comes not, but wholly makes default and it appearing to the court that said defendant had on the 19th day of June A.D. 1871 made and executed bond for his personal appearance to answer in this behalf and stand trial upon a charge of the murder of one Thomas Gardner in the penal sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) with John Bybee, D. W. Smart, I. J. Barber, W. R. Blevins, W. J. Owens and Pleasant Cox as sureties thereon, which said bond is on file with the papers of this cause and is here shown to the court and said defendant being distinctly called at the courthouse door came not but wholly makes default and said sureties John Bybee, D. W. Smart, I. J. Barber, W. R. Blevins, W. J. Owens and Pleasant Cox, each being distinctly called at the courthouse door, and required to bring into court the body of their said principal Bluford S. Cox as they were bound to do, and they failing so to do within a reasonable time thereafter, on motion of the District Attorney for forfeiture of said appearance Bond it is considered, ordered and adjudged by the court that said Bond be and is hereby forfeited, and that the State of Texas do have and recover of and from the said Defendant Bluford S. Cox and his sureties John Bybee, D. W. Smart, I. J. Barber, W. R. Blevins, W. J. Owens and Pleasant Cox the said sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) named in said Bond together with all costs of this proceeding, and that this Judgement ni si be made final at the next term of this court unless good cause be shown why the same should be set aside. It is further ordered that a cine facias issue to said above named sureties requiring them to appear at the next term of this court and show cause if any they have why this Judgement shall not be made final.

Now therefore in the name and by the authority of the State of Texas, These presents are to command you that you summon Pleasant Cox if to be found in your county to be and appear at and before the next term of the District Court to be begun and held within and for the County of Williamson and State of Texas at the Courthouse thereof in the town of Georgetown on Monday the 3rd day of November A.D. 1873 then and there to answer in this behalf and show cause if any he has why said Judgement ni si shall not be made final. Herein fail not but execute and due return make of this writ as the law directs.

Witness W. T. Dalrymple, Clerk of the District

Court of Williamson County. Given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in the town of Georgetown this 4th day of September A.D. 1873.

W. T. Dalrymple, Clerk, D.C.

W.C.

by D. G. Smith, Deputy."

The bondsmen came into court in November 1873 and testified that Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) had been killed April 25, 1873 by Ben Harrell et al. His father produced a bullet-riddled, blood-stained coat and shirt and testified that it was the clothing worn by his son that day. Harry Clark (C3/1.1), brother-in-law to Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3), testified that he was riding with him when they were ambushed by the Harrell gang. Harry Clark (C3/1.1) claimed that as he was fleeing for his life he saw Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) shot from his saddle. John Bybee testified that they had made a diligent, but unsuccessful search for the body of Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) and implied that the Harrell gang had disposed of it.

The court was not convinced and prepared sequestration papers against the bondsmen, but did relent to the defense attorney's insistence that the Harrell gang be called to testify. The judge prepared interrogatories to be sent to Thomas L. Harrell, Martin E. "Mart" Harrell (E4/1.1), Merit Harrell, William Bowen and Rufus Overstreet.

The deposition of Thomas L. Harrell revealed: "I have known Bluford Cox for 12 years and knew him to be a son of Pleasant Cox. I saw him last between April 1 and April 10, 1873 in Coryell County. I first met Harry Clark in Lampasas County June 15, 1873. Ben Harrell was in Coleman County on April 25, 1873 on the road between Coleman and Lampasas with Thomas L. Harrell, William Bowen, and Merit Harrell. I know Ben Harrell and William Bowen did not kill Bluford Cox. I was with them in Coleman County on the 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th and was with William Bowen throughout the month of April."

The court accepted the depositions and bonafide evidence and proceeded to sequester property from the bondsmen. In the November term judgement was rendered against Doctor William Smart, husband of Mary Ann Bybee Smart deceased, and 200 acres of his land on Berry's Creek was taken in an allowance of \$2,000. Joining in the deed by the children of Doctor William Smart: Brice Miller Smart, Robert Sneed and Isabella Smart Sneed, Houston Smart and Braxton Smallwood, surviving husband of Elizabeth Smart Smallwood.

Bluford Cox (C3/2.3) grew up with the Pink Higgins gang and joined their extermination campaign against the Harrell gang. William Ernest Cox (C2/12.1) wrote in 1960:

"He did pretty well as a practicing exterminator. He killed 25 men during his stay in the Lampasas area. He killed his 26th man, a U.S. marshal, after he moved to Indian Territory in search of a healthier climate. Reportedly the marshal had followed him to Lexington, Indian Territory to bring him back to stand trial for a recent killing. The marshal made a fatal mistake when he attempted to talk Gentle Bluford into returning with persuasive logic rather than more insistent methods."

Bluford came out into his front yard to meet the marshal with a warm, friendly welcome and listened very courteously to what the marshal had to say. At the end of the visit Bluford requested time to talk the matter over with his wife. He had become a squawman since coming to Indian Territory, marrying a Miss Traylor. Since the discussion would require some time Bluford requested the marshal to come back later for his answer.

The marshal consented and returned to town believing that he had convinced Bluford to do the right thing. Meanwhile, back at he ranch, Bluford oiled up his pistol, and when the marshal returned later in the day, Bluford shot him in the head through a chink in the wall without even inviting him in."

Mary Alnora "Nora" Cox Drennan (C2/10.4) wrote that Bluford Cox (C3/2.3) left his wife in Oklahoma and made his way back to Lampasas County taking refuge in the home of his brother James W. Cox (C3/2.2)

James W. Cox (C3/2.2) smuggled his brother out of Texas in a wagonload of hides and they hid out in New Mexico and Arizona. Bluford Cox (C3/2.3) spent some time in Tombstone, Arizona, and in Nevada.

Once when he appeared in Hylton, Nevada a town which was being promoted by John Dowell Hylton (H4/1.1), reported to be a cousin of Pleasant C. Cox (C4/2.2), from the Lampasas area. [He was same man who promoted Hylton, Texas in Nolan County where James Madison Cox (C3/4.10) operated a butchershop.] Hylton recognized Bluford Cox (C3/2.3) by the missing ear, and notified the authorities, but the fast-gun escaped and continued west. The last communication the family received from him was an unsigned postcard which read "I'm in Walla Walla."

A half-breed son of Bluford S. Cox (C3/2.3) stated that his father had also lived in Utah and Colorado, according to John Thomas Cox (C2/12.3), a nephew.

John Thomas Cox (C2/12.3) wrote in 1960 "In 1946 while I was working at Ft. Lewis, Washington I visited the Washington State Penal Institution located in Walla Walla. I had a hunch that the records there might reveal something of Uncle Blue. I did not get to return to determine the results of the search that I had started." [A search of the archives of Washington State Department of Corrections was made in 1985 showed no record of the fugitive ever being imprisoned in the Walla Walla penitentiary. A family report claims that at one time he was a cattle inspector in Idaho and Montana. He did not appear in the index to the 1880 census of Idaho.]

When Bluford S. Cox, his nephew, was indicted for murder in Lampasas County in 1873 Doctor William Smart was one of his bondsmen. After Cox was smuggled out of the country under a wagonload of hides the \$4,000 bond was called for a forfeit by the court in its November 1874 term. Doctor William Smart appealed to the court for a reduction in the bond, and it was lowered to \$2,000. On October 18, 1875 he deeded 200 acres of land, "part of the James Ovid Headright," to Williamson County in settlement, according to Williamson County Deed Book 16, page 557. Children of Doctor William Smart and Mary Ann Bybee Smart were required to sign the deed because of the death of their mother. Signing were "Brice M. Smart, Isabella Smart Sneed and Robert Sneed, Braxton Smallwood, surviving husband of Elizabeth Smallwood and Houston Smart."