

Subj: Correspondence of John Thomas Cox
Date: 3/26/2000 4:32:17 PM Central Standard Time
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To: tntgal@earthlink.net (Toni King)
CC: pjared7217@aol.com (Peggy Cox Jared), jandhcox@thrifty.net (Joe Burton & Helen Cox), jbsnyc@prodigy.net (Katherine Sullivan), lessutton@aol.com (Les Sutton), nunbug@gte.net (June Fry Smith), mtarry@aol.com (Bill Tarry), hudgo@medt.com (Mary Lou Hudson Goans), b_wallac@swbell.net (Bettye Ruth Cox Wallace)

Mrs. Carol Reardon
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Dear Cousin Carol,

It was a pleasure to receive your letter of March 22 and to know of the deep interest you have in preserving some of the writings of your father, John Thomas Cox. I was not aware that I am the only member of the family who has filed his writings, and I was not aware of just what a treasure trove I had in my correspondence files until I began going through his letters to select some items for you. He was not only a great raconteur, but a fascinating writer as well.

I am particularly pleased to receive your request because it caused me to examine again his letters and to relive our visits and recording sessions. It refreshed my memory of some of the family history that he related to me.

I have given up on the idea of selecting letters from the collection to send to you. Instead I am sending to you the entire file. As you will note, our correspondence begins in February 1960 and continues through December 1987, shortly before his death. I do understand the great desire that you have to obtain some documents in his own handwriting to preserve for his descendants to enjoy.

Consequently, under separate cover, I am forwarding to you the 72 pages that make up his side of our correspondence exchange covering some 27 years. I am withholding a letter that he wrote to my mother on the occasion of her 90th birthday in 1984. She wrote him another letter in 1985 acknowledging his birthday wishes on her 91st birthday. She really loved your father and frequently referred to him as her "favorite cousin." She bragged to her friends that John T. Cox once drove over 100 miles to meet her in Lampasas on one of our motorhome trips.

As you will notice, our correspondence deals mostly with family history. My letters to him frequently requested clarification and documentation on some of the "outlandish" statements he made about our bewildering Cox ancestors. He did his best to clarify things for me. I feel that I really need to keep a copy of his material because cousins today are asking me the same questions that I asked him.

You may keep the originals for your enjoyment and make copies of them for other members of your family. When you make copies, will you please make a set for me and I will use them to replace his originals in the Foundation's files here.

I am sure Peggy, Bitsy and Joe Burton will be interested in having a set of these copies because they deal with some details of our genealogy which are being questioned.

For instance, in John T's first letter, February 15, 1960, you will note that he refers to our grand-father "Thomas Isaac Cox, the lessor" and his namesake "Thomas Isaac Cox, the greater." TIC, "the greater" we concluded was a great uncle to TIC "the lessor."

You will also note in his letters of March 1, 1960 and March 13, 1960 that he mentions that TIC "the greater" "of Pennsylvania" married a girl in South Carolina. He served under Gen. Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox". He also served as a corporal in the defense of Charleston and escaped shortly before its fall in 1780. He and his wife went to Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, "leaving a son and a married daughter" in South Carolina. In Pennsylvania he organized a militia company, but turned over the command when his plan of bringing Texas mustangs for the Colonial army was approved by Gen Lee and Gen. Washington.

Please note that one of his letters details some information from the journal maintained by Thomas Isaac Cox the greater: "On the 96th day, the party broke camp and prepared to return to Pennsylvania with 330 horses and 68 colts." The above statement was written by Texas Ranger John Thomas Cox, uncle of your father. It was he who first transcribed the original Journal and in 1924 dictated it to his daughter, who enlisted the aid of 19-year-old Joe Burton Cox [father of Peggy and Joe Burton Cox, Jr.] who completed the transcription. I interviewed Joe Burton Cox some 60 years afterward and he confirmed that he had a part in the transcription.

You will note that your father writes of using parts of this transcription in 1935 in the book "Brazos West" which he and three classmates at Texas Tech produced for the observation of the Texas Centennial in 1936 under the oversight of several professors at the college.

He makes mention of Dr. J. Lloyd Reed and the military record that he possessed of "Tomas de la Cocques" [Thomas Cox] and his service in the Spanish Army in "Tejas & Coahuila." Dr. Read was a professor at Decatur Baptist College and later at SWTSTC at San Marcos. He studied and travelled Mexico for 40 years. Each summer he took a class of 40 students to the Spanish Archives at Guadalajara.

Notice the mention he makes of the work of J. O. Garrett and Moselle Hillswich of John Tarleton College who read and translated the "old Spanish" records of the Terreros Cousins and their exploits in Texas, particularly at San Saba where Father Terreros was killed by the Lipan Apaches. Bob Weddle, publisher of the "San Saba News" wrote a book about the massacre of the mission.

When I protested that Bob Weddle [my journalism classmate at Texas Tech in 1940] made no mention of Father Terreros in the establishment of Terreros Presidio, site of the Cox family cemetery, in his book, see his lengthy reply written "Easter morn, 1985" quoting Dr. Seth Sheppard McKay of Texas Tech who had evidence of five different accounts of the activities of the Cousins Terreros in planting presidios in Texas.

Note that he quotes George Coon Hester of Texas University at Georgetown [later called Southwestern University when the State of Texas asked Georgetown to give up the title in favor of a new state school to be called the University of Texas] in support of the claim that the Terreros Presidio was wiped out by the Lipan Apaches before San Saba was established.

Note particularly that your father referred to the will of Thomas Isaac Cox which was witnessed by Nate Brown [Cox]. He thought that this will might be deposited in the Allegheny County courthouse about 1810, but that might not have been the place of residence of TIC in his final years. Nate Brown was so closely associated with the Cox family that sometimes he was identified as Nate Cox. Nate Cox spent much time in New Orleans where he was associated with Oliver Pollock, the American millionaire who sacrificed his fortune to supply the American Revolution with arms shipped up the Mississippi River. I recall seeing a document in which a map from the office of Gov. Bernardo Galvez was "being held for Nate Cox." Oliver Pollock visited the Browns and the Coxes at "Long Meadow" on Lucy Creek and it was he who named the meadow, according to your father.

Your father identifies Baptiste Brown as the builder of the Brown House on Long Meadow which was the site of the organization of The Grange in Texas. I regard Baptiste Brown, probably born in New Orleans, as the son of Nate Brown/Cox. You may already know that Capt. Thomas Cox, brother of your Pleasant C[arr?] Cox and my James Christopher Cox, came to Texas from Batesville, Arkansas at the request of Gen. Sterling Price. Price knew that the Federals would not permit the Southerners to organize a militia, even to protect the citizens from the Indians and lawlessness, but he devised a way for an agricultural society to be organized [that did occasionally carry arms and dispense justice] in that difficult period.

You will note that your father enclosed a clipping from the June 15, 1984 issue of the Austin American-Statesman describing work of Friar Diego de Salazar, founder of the remote Mexican village of Lampazos. It was Salazar who influenced the Terreros cousins to the area north of San Antonio and who named it after his village. It was he who directed them to Delucia Creek [now Lucy Creek] and Lampazos [now Lampasas, TX].

It was only in your father's "reconstructed" copy of the "Cox Journals" that we have the birth and death dates of Thomas Isaac Cox:

"Thomas Isaac Cox, according to his journal, was born April 15, 1733 in the Valley of Brandywine Creek in southeast Pennsylvania . . . At the age of 16 Thomas Isaac Cox joined the Army of New Spain . . . in New Orleans. At this time he became Tomas de la Cocques . . . Later he became the proprietor of Long Meadows Trading Post which was established by Oliver Pollock . . . He also was employed by Jose de Escandon, rancher, politician, colonizer and at one time, governor of Spanish Texas . . . Tomas de la Cocques served under Capt. Basterra and Lt. Col. Bernardo Galvez in support of the Terreros expedition to the Lampazos area. . . Friar Diego de Salazar was one of the priests who accompanied Alonzo de Leon on his earlier expedition to the Lampasas area about 1685 . . . Thomas Isaac Cox died in 1811 . . ."

I note your request for tapes of my interviews with your father, "speaking in his own voice." I regret to report that there aren't any. Most of our earlier exchanges were done, nose-to-nose, over a cup of coffee. The correspondence I am sending is "the tip of the iceberg;" the majority of our exchanges were verbal with me scrambling to take notes. I did use a Webster Corporation wire recorder for our earliest interviews. It wasn't very satisfactory; it had only one microphone which we kept it passing back and forth between questions and answers. I only had one spool of wire, and I used it over and over, erasing after transcribing each interview.

You will note in one of your father's letters that he mentions "tapes in San Marcos." Do you suppose they still exist after all this time, and if so, where? I recall one visit that we had at his ranch in Hamilton County; he and I went out to the barn in the rain. We brought back a large trunk which we placed in the middle of the kitchen floor. He brought out stacks of papers and letters and souvenirs. We went through them in a haphazard way, and I was totally frustrated. It seems to me that there were tapes in the trunk. I remember that he fished out a Grange memorial plate which he gave to my mother. It memorialized 100 years of the Grange [and its succeeding organizations]; he was still a state officer in the organization at that time.

I am replying to your letter in E-mail format because I plan to send "carbon copies" of this letter to several cousins who are keenly interested in what your father had to say about the family history. They will be interested in your plan to make copies and disseminate his letters.

I applaud your dedication in preserving your father's writings. I agree that they are important to the family, and I am glad to assist you in this labor of love.

Sincerely, your cousin,

Arlee Gowen