



LOG CABIN OF JOSEPH COX, written by Juanita Cox Firmin about 2002

Much has been written and sketches made of the exterior of the Log Cabin in which the first session of the Livingston County Court was held in 1836. Little, if any, has been written about the interior of the cabin, which was foremost the home of Joseph and Amy Cox and their family. In 1836, they had ten children and only two were married so assume 8 children lived with them in the cabin. The youngest child married after they moved to Texas in 1851.

We lived about a mile southwest of the cabin and visited Sterl and Maud quite often when I was a child. My memories of those visits are very pleasant of both the interior of the home and the lovely people who lived there. My cousin, Ruth Cox Hargrave, was born in this cabin in 1909 and lived there until her marriage. I visited with her on Aug. 9, 2002, and her memory is more like 39 than 93. She is a great granddaughter of Joseph Cox through his son, Isom, and I am a great-great granddaughter through his son, Andrew B. Cox.

The original log cabin was 18x20 feet, all one room with a large fireplace on the East wall, a door on the South and a door on the North. There was a window east of the South door. Ruth's Mother, Maud Knaus told her the fireplace was removed when she was a little girl. She was born in 1877 and the 1878 Abstract shows her father, William Knaus, as owner at that time. Two large east windows replaced the fireplace opening. The floor was originally dirt but at some point prior to Ruth's memory, a wood floor was installed. This room was the kitchen, dining room, living room and parents' bedroom.

A loft covered the entire 18x20 ft main room and was reached by a stairway, I believe, on the north side. At some point the roof was raised. Ruth's father installed windows on the east end and a chimney and stove on the west end. It was divided into three rooms. Ruth had a room and her brother, Manford, had a room. The third room was used for storage. Their older sister, Eugenia Anderson, born 1902, also lived there until she was married.

At some point, two rooms were added on the west of the cabin. Ruth believes this was prior to 1906 when her father purchased it. The door to this was also on the south and opened into a large entry -- so large that her grandmother, Eugenia Knaus, used it for a bedroom after she came to live with them in her declining years. From this entry a door opened to the original cabin on the right and to the new addition on the left -- into the parlor. An additional stairway to the loft was also built into this addition.

There was a living well just east of the cabin with the best tasting water she has yet found but it was very hard and deposited much lime and calcium in the teakettles.

Joseph and Amy Cox sold their holdings in October, 1851 and went to Bell Co., Texas. Their children; Solomon Benj, Mary Cox Lile, Malinda Cox Shriver, Hiram Washington and Nica Jane went with them. A son, Zeamri, is unaccounted for--probably died young. My great grandfather, Andrew, went to Texas but only stayed one year and returned to Livingston Co. Those remaining in this County were John, Isom, Abel and Wm. Hugh. This did not please their father, Joseph Cox, that they would remain in this "old worn-out country".

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To Raze 117-year Old Landmark

Structure Was Site of First Session of Livingston County Court

A bulldozer soon will remove a Livingston County landmark of more than 117 years standing, the old cabin where the first session of the Livingston County Court was held.

Beyond repair, the structure stands on the Manford Cox place, five miles north and west of Chillicothe, and is in sharp contrast to Cox's new home being constructed a few feet east. The Cox family played a close part in the early days of the county and the City of Chillicothe probably was named from their influence.

Cox himself is somewhat reluctant to discuss the old cabin. Numerous sight-seers through the years have arrived unannounced to inspect the structure and often disrupt his family's daily routine.

There has been some speculation here recently of possibly reclaiming of the old building, moving it elsewhere and after rebuilding establish it as a Livingston County museum. However it is in poor condition, and would take considerable funds for restoration, so the project is doubtful.

The first session of the Livingston County Court was held April 6, 1837 after an act of the general assembly on January 6 of that year fixed the boundaries of the county and established the "seat of justice" at the home of Joseph Cox.

Cox, W. Martin and Reuben McCroskie were the first county judges and Thomas R. Bryan, the first county clerk and circuit clerk. W. O. Jennings was the county's first sheriff. The officials as their first act divided the county into townships.

They were named Shoal Creek, Indian Creek, Medicine Creek, and Grand River townships. And all territory north of the county and east of the east fork of the Grand River was named Muddy Creek Township. All territory west of the east fork was named Sugar Creek Township.

Livingston County was named in honor of Edward Livingston, Secretary of State under President Jackson. The county was formed of portions of Carroll and Chariton Counties.

It may have been the influence of Joseph Cox that resulted in Chillicothe being named Chillicothe. Cox's original home was in Chillicothe, Ohio, and he was a member of the first county court. It is believed he proposed the name of this city and his suggestion was approved.