

Evant, Texas
July 12th, 1893

Mattie Skinner
Snyder, Texas
Scurry County

My dear Sister,

You would be taxed greatly to have done so many things at the reunion grounds at Long Meadows. There were many persons, and so many names I never heard before. So much fun going on! So many good things to eat and Grandma Martha Jane was such a dear one to visit, but you better watch out if you were not good she would get you. Grandpa Ples was so pious and serious about everything with all of those "thees" and "thous" and quaint sayings of Quaker proverbs and scriptures. I just loved him with his tall black hat and black coat, the uncreased hat, "lest thee brush the grain of the felt", and the high topped black shoes with metal heel and toe plates that sent a signal of his approach long before he appeared in view. And his gentle plea, "my child, drag not thy feet, lest thee wear away thy soles." We would snicker and Grandma would say, "Paw, these kids are all barefoot, caution them instead of the dangers of thorns and splinters."

When Grandpa would pray we all got real quiet and good for then he was very stern and carried a hickory cane. This cane had been carried by our great grandfather, Thomas Isaac Cox, who had been present there at the Indian fight one hundred years ago when Grandma Martha Jane's Uncle Billy (Will) Bybee was killed by an arrow from an Indian bow. It passed completely through the body, piercing the lung and causing death. Our brother Blu read it to us all after supper as we gathered under the giant mulberry tress where great leaves rustled in the gentl breeze and made a dense cool shade all day.

After supper came the hour of meditation and repentance. We would sit while Uncle Jim or our father would recite for hours their experiences as frontiersmen, cowboys, horse wranglers, buffalo hunters and the hardships of the Civil War days, and the terrible treatment during the reconstruction days. Grandma Martha usually sat in silence, just enjoying her family, but when the subject of the reconstruction became the topic, she spoke fully and freely of "Old Abe's war" and as "how Lincoln and his friends panned for years how to create a cheap labor force for the rich industrial people to use and enjoy" as told by her mother-in-law, Elizabeth Johnston Cox, who lived in her home during the Civil War. Elizabeth Johnston

Cox always insisted that she spoke with authority since they had lived as neighbors to the Lincoln family in both Kentucky and Indiana. She also told of her relationship to the first husband of Sara Johnston Lincoln, the step-mother of Abe. Grandmother Lizzie had further told of her son, Thomas Cox, who had read law and worked in the offices of Herndon and Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois.

Thomas Cox, grandfather's youngest brother, was a very able lawyer who lived in Missouri and Arkansas. He kept a journal of his activities which my father had with us. Uncle Tom was very unhappy with the things Abraham Lincoln did at the request of his party members and friends. Thomas Cox quit in disgust and wrote into his journal his bitter feelings in terms so severe that his mother feared for his life should the journal ever fall into the hands of the Union Army, even after the war was over. Uncle Tom also had recorded in his papers many family incidents as far back as their residence in Yorkshire before they followed William Penn to America.

As I sat and listened to my elders talk, I then promised myself that one day I would have the experiences of my ancestors copied and recorded, and if possible, have them published for all to read who cared to. If and when I can do this, I will send them out to California for your family to copy, or have copied for you. I know of your homesickness and feeling of loneliness at being so far away from us at times like this when we can learn so much of what has gone on before our times.

I was so happy to have been able to attend the reunion and who knows who might attend the next centennial.

I will write you and the Knox family as often as I can. Uncle Marion is a young man now and real good looking. I guess he will stay with Grandpa Ples and Grandma Martha Jane.

I will close with great feelings of love and care.

MARY ELLEN COX

Evant, Texas
20th June 1893
Lampasas County

Hon. Pleasant Cox, Esq.
Grundyville Post Office
Lampasas County, Texas

My Dearest Grand Parents,

I take pen in hand and seat myself by the window with the maderia vine arbor, and I will tell both of you how excited we all be about coming down for the Centennial.

It is but two weeks until we will all be down for the fun and good times and visiting with our kin. Father said last night that he hoped the Cornett girls would be there and that Uncle Jim would be back from the Arizona Territory and that he would bring Uncle Blu with him. I know that you long to see Uncle Blu again as we all do.

Father said tell you he would bring the journals and the old spy glasses. He has some new specs and he sees real well now. He will bring the roll of maps and his "divining rod." He wants to look again for the Spanish gold down by the old trading post. Brother Blu has been to the business school. He reads and figures real well. He writes a beautiful hand, does all of the Grange work, and does all of the cotton grading and classing for the buyers.

I hope we have the reunion down at the old Grange Hall. I like to see the people dress up in the Grange uniforms and do their marches. They do not meet at Old Knox anymore except for funerals and weddings. We do not go any more since we came back from Nolan County. We did not get to go to school much out there. Father says I can go this fall to boarding school if the steers gring a good price. I hope that I may have a chance to learn to speak and write so that I may be a good wife and a good neighbor in my community and church.

Father is calling again - it is time to do the evening milking and set the supper.

I hope you have some gourd dippers when we come down. The water is always cooler from a gourd dipper and cedar bucket.

I love you much and think often of you with great affection.

MARY ELLEN COX