

The Death of Mary Jane Johnson Cox

By Missy Cox Jones

My grandparents were Cornelius Nicholas "Nick" Cox and Mary Jane "Mollie" Johnson Cox. Her parents were Robert Whatley Johnson and Sarah Whitaker Johnson. Robert was the first born son of Peter Cartwright Johnson and Matilda Whatley Johnson. Peter Cartwright Johnson was killed and scalped by Indians on December 31, 1857 between Iredell and Meridian, Texas. Nick and Mollie were married April 19, 1875 in Comanche County, Texas. Mollie died January 14, 1921 at their home place between Comanche and Gustine, Texas.

My mother talked a lot about Grandma Cox (Mollie). She had a cancer on the top of her head. Mama said that Grandpa Cox sold a lot of horses and borrowed money on other livestock and raised the money for her to go Indianapolis, Indiana to a cancer hospital. Aunt Renier, the last surviving daughter in the family went with her on the train. We have a letter that Aunt Renier wrote home to my daddy and mother on hospital stationery. The heading on the letter is: "*Indianapolis Cancer Hospital, Drs. Root and McNeill, Indianapolis, Indiana.*" They stayed there for three or four months. There wasn't much that they could do for her, but the family did everything they knew of to help her. She lived for several more months. Mama talked about helping take care of her, changing her bed and changing her dressings. All of the family was with her when she died. My sister Geneva told about remembering our Mother trying to get her to go to sleep on a pallet, and she was a little girl, and she could see the lamp light shining under the door where Grandma Cox was in bed.

She died in 1921, and my brother Wilburn Cox told me that he remembered when she died. He would have been about six years old. He said that a horse drawn hearse came out to the homeplace from Comanche to carry her body to Union Cemetery, several miles to be buried. He said that he remembered very well how the hearse looked. He said it was black, and the sides were open, and it had black fringe hanging down from the top of the hearse.

He said all of the family followed behind in buggies or wagons to the cemetery. The cemetery is several miles east of the home place. At that time, where Highway 36 is now, was the Cotton Belt Railroad. He said they crossed across the railroad and proceeded on a mile or two to the cemetery.

My mother said all of the family loved her very much and everyone did everything they could to save her.