

JOHN T. COX  
New, 1984

Dear Aug -

I enjoyed the day that time you spent with us at the old home place New Orleans. I am glad that I can report Ernest to be from better in health -

Here is the story of my family - wife and children -

Anna Virginia Dendy - Cox was born May 17, 1911 at Fox Hollow, Palo Pinto County, Texas in the Brazos Valley of Texas in the heart of Possum Kingdom from which the Possum Kingdom Lake and Valley were named.

John G. Dendy was born near Houston, Mississippi to James T. and Polly Ben Farmer, Saw mill, Grist mill and Gin operators at Houston and Jardenman Miss. John Dendy came to Mineral Wells Texas in 1788 when he joined his uncle and aunt Mr & Mrs, Austin Rodgers who farmed and ranched near Groford, Texas.

John Dendy, liked horses and soon acquired some 75 brood mares and was soon raising and training young horses as cow ponies, buggy horses and coach teams.

In 1897 John G. Dendy married Nancy O'Neal (Blotie) the daughter of George O'Neal a prominent rancher and horse dealer, whose family was of

The George D. O'Neal family, a well known developer and land man in that area even before the Civil War began.

Virginia (Singer) was the fifth child of John and Blayie Hensel, a talented and beautiful child, was a 1929 graduate of Breckenridge High School, attended John Sartton College and met John J. Cox in 1930. They were married July 30, 1931 at Lometa, Lampasas, Tex. John J. Cox was a teacher who spent each summer traveling the river, lakes and mountains of America with a camera, cones, brushes + paints and of course film, pencils, pens, paper etc. Recording by word or picture history and lore of America.

Virginia, also a nature and history lover, fitted this life like a glove, she had also contracted to teach a school at Lucille, Tex. a lake oil community in the heart of the Brazos River Valley, John T. resigned his job in Mills County and went to Palo Pinto County and talked the school board at Lucille into hiring him the principal there -

It was here, during the head of the depression, when there was no - rough walking, drilling, pumping, nothing but unemployment and hunger in the tub

All Community - only the permanent oil and gas employer and the land owner, had full stomachs and warm homes, but this produced the setting for the creation of the first school that lunch program in America or at least in Texas, Mrs Virginia Roney Cox originated the first answer to "empty tummies in the old school house, The Federal and State Funded Hot Lunch Program in America. In 1942 she also founded or organized what is believed was the first cooperative "Day Care Center" in the country at the lake town of Lockhart in Caldwell County Texas some thirty miles South of Austin, Texas, where she rented a "Board Hotel" and opened it as a home of rented efficiency apartments for wives of service men, preferably with a child under three years of age, and more than 1/2 of age, however there several just babies in arms and in extreme circumstances expectant mothers who had no family members back home who could provide any help or advice through delivery of babies, there were also a few of three year olds, whose mothers wanted to spend a few days before the father shipped overseas. We graduated from Navigation School and were to be shipped on to duty over seas for active duty in further training.

It was here in July of 1942 that Virginia D. Cox converted these rooms to rooms with kitchenettes and small ice boxes and either gas or electric two burner hot plates for the women to use. In case of the Officer Candidates at Norfolk School the Candidates got only Saturday Nights of no sleep and had to report back to base by 3:00 P.M. on Sunday - Not all of the Candidates got off in that case the wife could visit him at base from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm.

On these occasions Virginia used her two full time hired maid to care for the children of those whose husbands were in for the week or who had base privileges with their husbands. If other women were needed Virginia had ladies from the churches in town organized to help, and of course there were many days the mothers could ride the bus to the base for lunches or movie privileges with their husbands.

The Volunteers were required to go to a local doctor and receive a health Certificate so they could provide food or personal attention for the children Mrs. Cox provided these examinations, in many cases the local doctors would provide without charge. In many cases the Base Physicians were augmented by military personnel and Mrs. Cox

provided routine shots and emergency call for the wives and children since it was sometime difficult to get transportation to the base doctor when needed.

The transportation from Lockhart to the base was provided by a very kind and observant man who resided in Lockhart a Mr. Bill Schroeder who provided many services and courtesies to these wives and children, when funds and time were both short, but let it be said for the most part the girls at this organization together with Virginia G. Cox ran a tight ship that provided all needs on most occasions, many of the ~~mother's~~ families or their husbands' parents were from Will Toledo and received extra money from home and shared with the lesser fortunate in case need arose. - There was a Voluntary "Lucky Box" where each of the mothers put in a small letter at the first of the month with Mrs. Cox with one of their own to keep an accounting of its use. Most emergencies were borne by Jack Luck, sometimes the more fortunate mother would pay letter do it for Luck, and pitch in an extra dollar or so - dollars would do a lot more then, than now.

This business operated in Lockhart until the close of the war in 1945-

But this group of "War Mothers" kept in contact throughout the year, to some this war they were family they knew and cling to it and support and after the war Mrs. Cox had so many requests for advice from these war widows of course many were reunited at home with their husbands and relatives but many homes were broken, by death and desertion Mrs. Cox opened several day care centers and several other schools in San Marcos, Texas, some of the <sup>mothers</sup> original children from Lockhart come to San Marcos for advice and assistance.

Mrs. Cox went first in 1942 to the Dept. of Health in Austin to discuss some standards and rules and regulations pursuant to the licensing of the school and day care center.

Mrs. Cox adopted a number of rules and requirements and also published an enrollment blank, medical history, doctors statements she filed these first with the State Dept. of Health although they were not required, yet she wanted to call their attention to nutrition and exercise as well as rest and relaxation required in her program.

In later years the State of Texas did recognize the need for some supervision of the day care and nursery school units being opened every where.

In the late 1940's Mrs. Cox furnished the Welfare Department Copies of all forms she had been using for the past several years and also furnished Copies of her daily menus as well as rest and recreation breaks with juice and Milk supplementation. Many pets and farm animals were kept and used at the unit Vaccination and health records of these were also provided.

A short time after the quarterly visits we made and permits were begun to be issued about 1950-51 as I recall.

It was also about this time that a Voluntary organization was formed among owners over the State and Virginia D. Cox was elected as first president and a Copy of the Regulations and Requirements Recommended by the organization were filed with the State. Mrs. Cox was asked to act as an advisor to the Welfare Department. Mrs. Cox had in her files in 1967 when she closed her business Copies of letters among other a Rockland Times at the Dept of welfare as to her urging closer supervision of the

units especially regarding, Acrobatics  
fire safety, Nutrition and Exercise and  
play equipment to be used in the units.