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FAMILY OF SOLOMON AND NAOMI HUSSEY COX

The early Cox families of Lampasas County trace their ancestry to Solomon and Naomi Hussey Cox, who were early Quaker settlers in the Brandywine Valley of Pennsylvania and Delaware. A relative was Thomas Isaac Cox who served with Francis Marion in the Revolutionary War and who had made horse – hunting trips to the Lampasas area before the Revolution with the cooperation of the Spanish government.

A son of Solomon and Naomi Hussey Cox, a later Thomas Issac, also came to the Lampasas area to hunt wild horses. The permanent link to Lampasas was Pleasant C. Cox, married to Martha Jane Bybee and a son of second Solomon and Elizabeth Johnston/Johnson Cox, who eventually settled in Missouri.

While still living in Indiana, Pleasant Cox made his first trip to the Lucy Creek area at age fourteen in 1834, with his Uncle Ben Cox, who later settled in Bell County, to hunt wild horses. Pleasant returned in 1837 with great uncle Cull “Kiowa” Owens. Later, after traveling the West, Pleasant married and with numerous family members settled in the Springfield, Missouri, area. Pleasant visited the Lampasas area again in 1846.

A number of the extended Cox family decided to move to Central Texas, knowing the area from early horse-hunting trips. In late 1850/early 1851, a sixteen wagon train entered Texas. Included in the wagon train were Pleasant Cox’s family; that of his brother, James Christopher Cox; that of his sister, Amy Cox and Brice Miller Smart; along with the families of Amos Bradley, Phillip Smith, Bill Bybee, and Marlow Hix. There might have been others not yet identified. By 1855, Pleasant’s family settled on Lucy Creek near Rumley, to be joined by James Christopher Cox and family on adjacent property. Later, Elizabeth Johnston Cox, widow of the second Solomon Cox and mother of Pleasant and James Christopher Cox, lived for a time with James Christopher near Lucy Creek.

Many events that happened on Pleasant’s Lucy Creek farm are recorded in Cox family narratives. On July 4, 1858, possibly the first rodeo in Lampasas County was held on this site. Brothers W.F. and J.M. Armstrong were holding a herd of wild cattle nearby to be driven to Green River, Wyoming, when the idea of an Independence Day celebration developed. Local ranchers joined the Armstrong cowboys in roping and riding. Members of both the Higgins and Horrell families, Pleasant’s son John Thomas Cox, and Bill Van Winkle, an early bounty hunter, participated in the rodeo. This was the beginning of a series of celebrations on Pleasant’s property. On the 25th anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1861, a victory celebration was held at the “old Brown house.” Thirty-five people were said to have participated in the festivities. A Quaker service conducted by Pleasant Cox followed the meal. Twenty-five years later, on the 50th anniversary of San Jacinto, another rodeo was held, sponsored by the Lucy Creek Grange. Family records ascribed to Mary Ellen Cox, granddaughter of Pleasant and Martha Jane, describe a Fourth of July celebration in 1893 and mention “the reunion grounds at Long Meadows.”

Another significant occurrence on the Cox farm happened on October 12, 1869, when Thomas Cox, an attorney from Batesville, Arkansas, and brother of Pleasant and James Christopher Cox, came to Lampasas County to organize a Grange. Sixteen men and boys ages 19 –67 founded the Lucy Creek-Lampasas River Grange, with the meeting

place at the “old Brown house” located near the east bank of Lucy Creek. Pleasant Cox was its first master, and James Christopher Cox was one of its first members.

There were occasional unfortunate incidents on Pleasant Cox’s property. One such incident occurred in December 1874. Charley Boyd, who rode with Shanghai Pierce, and Stumpy Watson, who rode for Burk Burnett, “shot it out” and were both nursed by Martha Jane Bybee Cox before dying. They are buried in unmarked graves in Long Meadows Cemetery.

Pleasant’s son Bluford was a source of concern but also the subject of an interesting event, being smuggled out of Lampasas County under a wagon load of Buffalo hides to Arizona Territory by brother Jim after shooting a lawman. No one stopped the wagon loaded with hides going west when normally it would go to Galveston or New Orleans.

Central to the history of this Cox family in Lampasas County is Pleasant Cox’s property on Lucy Creek, now owned by the Harton, Hodges, and Loader families. Family records refer to an old trading post dating to early horse hunting days and attributed to early New Orleans merchant Oliver Pollock; an old Spanish fort known as Terreros Presidio, described in a family record in considerable detail; a Spanish trail known as the Emigrant Trail between New Orleans and Santa Fe, which recent research indicates may have been established by the Spanish and French trader Pedro/Pierre Vial in the late 1700’s; and the Long Meadows/Cox or Terreros Presidio Cemetery, for which an official Texas State Historical Marker was awarded in 2011. Family records state that early horse hunter William Charles Bybee, a relative of Martha Jane Bybee, was the first burial in the cemetery on July 4, 1793, in a grave marked by slashes on a tree and covered by limestone slabs. Joe B. Cox, Sr., born on the property, stated that he had seen the slashes and limestone slabs as a boy and that his father, Francis Marion Cox, son of Pleasant Cox, had told him that they marked Bill Bybee’s grave. Men were buried under five different flags in this cemetery.

Pleasant and Martha Jane Bybee Cox’s immediate family members are listed in Volume 1 of the Lampasas County History. Many descendants and related families remain in the Lampasas area.

Sources are narratives by three grandsons of Pleasant Cox; the “Cox Journal,” last in possession of Mary Ellen Cox Campbell; interviews and family correspondence; and the “Hussey Manuscript,” compiled by Arlee Gowen of Lubbock.

Joe B. Cox, Jr.