

Geneva Cox, Remembers
Her First Christmas Tree At The Age of Four Years,

"I, Geneva Cox Mercer, age 82, would like to talk about the Christmas times in my life. When I was a little girl about four years old we lived near Pettit The first Christmas program that I remember was at Pettit school. They had a big cedar tree that had little candles on it. I thought that was the most beautiful thing. Naturally, we didn't have much light in the building, so that showed up real pretty.

They had taken cotton and pulled pieces of cotton and thrown it over the tree to try to make it look like snow. And they had popcorn, I think, strung and it seems like some red crepe paper fixed around on it. But I thought that was just great.

Some of the women had taken their children's Christmas presents over there before the night of the program and put them under the tree. So, when we went in there was all of this stuff. I thought that was really great. So, after awhile, Santa Claus showed up for the main program. He was handing out things and the cotton and everything got on fire and they were beating out things. Some of the little doll dresses got on fire and it was really exciting there for awhile. But I remembered it mighty well, anyway.

So, either the next day, or the next, Daddy went down the creek, we lived right on the creek by Pettit. He went down with his axe and came back with a little cedar tree. He trimmed it up and got him a bucket and put sand in it and got the tree fixed in it Mother put a sheet over a square table, she put it up by the window, set this little tree up there. She started decorating it And, Oh, I just stood and watched. I can almost see her. She would pull that cotton off and drop it around like snow. And she had some red crepe paper, I don't know how come her to have that, we didn't buy much of anything like that, but she cut that in strips and decorated a little with that I looked at that thing, I guess, until it began to fall apart, dry up and they had to take it out."

As I said, we have Geneva talking all of this on cassette tapes. And, when she is talking about our Mother decorating the little tree, and she said "I can almost see her", her voice is breaking, she is almost in tears at this point on the tape, and let me tell you, I am almost in tears as I am typing this. To picture our Mother and Daddy working to get this little tree set up for my brother Wilburn and my sister Geneva to enjoy. And they did the same kind of things for Maxine and I to enjoy.

NOTE: Our parents were William Cornelius Cox and Minnie Steward Cox. "Will" was the son of Cornelius Nicholas "Nick" Cox and Mary Jane "Molly" Johnson Cox. Nick was the son of Andrew J. Cox and Arenna Ratliff Cox. Nick had a brother named William Marion Cox, and two sisters, Catherine Cox and Amanda Cox. Arenna Ratliff Cox died in 1855, when the families were en route to Comanche County. Andrew J. Cox was left with 4 small children to raise, and in the early 1860's, Jesse J. Johnson and his wife, Adeline Ratliff Johnson, the uncle and aunt of the Cox children, brought them on the Comanche County, Texas and they grew to adult with them.

Petit is a community just southwest of Gustine, which is about 13 miles west of Comanche. At first, it was a thriving community named Fleming, which at one time had businesses, a school, a doctor and a post office. Later, John P. Pettit, later husband of Catherine Cox, donated land for a school and the name of the community was changed to Pettit.