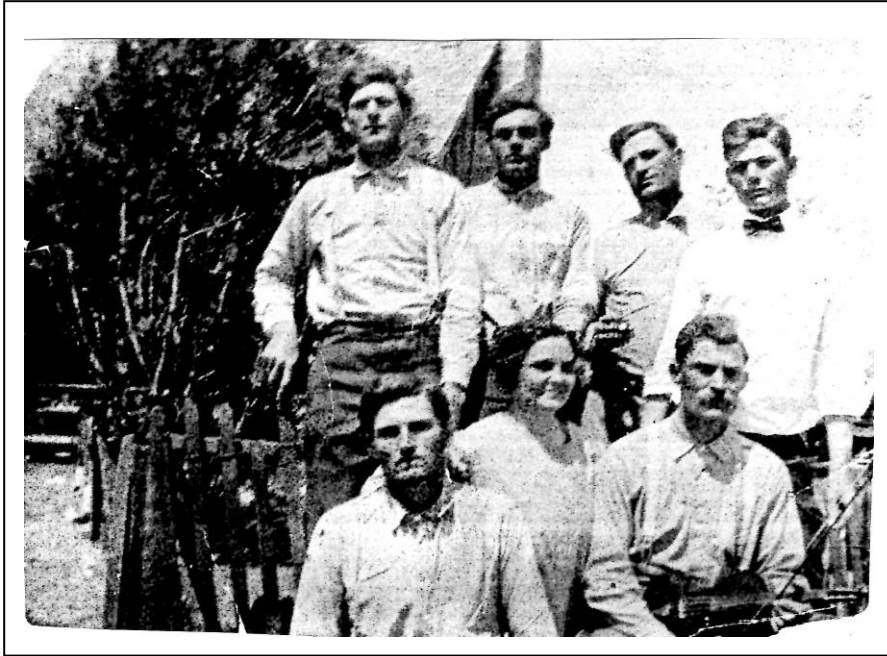


Our Family Loved Music and Singing

By Missy Cox Jones

This is a picture of my Daddy's family. They are in front of the picket fence in front of my grandparent's home place. My grandparents were Cornelius Nicholas "Nick" Cox and Mary Jane "Mollie" Johnson Cox. My parents, Will Cox and Minnie Steward Cox married in 1912.



Pictured on the top row is Hill, Henry, Will (my Daddy), and Jeff, and on the bottom row is Berl, Renier and Robert. This picture was made in the very early 20's. Uncle Joe, another brother, is already living in West Texas, and their sister, Ellen, had passed away in 1906. My daddy's brother, Robert, in the bottom row, right holding his fiddle. And, to this day, his granddaughter has this fiddle and can play it.

Daddy said that he and Uncle Jeff could both play guitars. Uncle Bert could also play, maybe a banjo and guitar and of course, Uncle Robert played his fiddle. Daddy knew lots of old songs, he was born in 1882, and we can imagine all of the family together and having a great time.

So, I was brought up, and no, neither my brother Wilburn, my sister Geneva, my sister Maxine or I ever learned to play any musical instrument. My daddy could also play the organ, my mother could play the organ and piano, but not a one of their children learned anything at all. Strange.

When we lived in West Texas, Daddy and Mama shopped in Big Spring or Midland. They had a Victrola, yes, this was before cd and dvd's, but it played records on a wind-up machine, so they had plenty of music. They would go to Big Spring or to Midland and buy records at a record store. They surely didn't cost very much money, and I still have old records by Jimmie Rodgers and others from that time.

Maxine and I, before the days of radios, played the records lot of times. You would wind up the Victrola, put on a record and it would play beautifully. Several times, we would wind it up too tight, and the spring would break. I guess that Daddy would go to town and buy a new spring, but Maxine and I were smart and figured out that we could use a forefinger to turn the record and it worked just fine. We still have some old records with a worn place on the paper label, where we turned the; record with our finger.

One of our favorite was Jimmie Rodgers: "T for Texas". Another was "Waiting for a Train". We learned all of the words to these songs, and my brother Wilburn and my sister Geneva, several years older than I was, would take their records and visit friends, and they would return the favor. So, everyone learned all of the words to the new songs.

Other songs that I learned from our records: "In the Big Rock Candy Mountains", "The Preacher and the Bear", "The Wreck of the Old Number 9", "Hobo Bill", "Blue Yodel", "Peach Picking time in Georgia", and so many other, too many to list here. Hey, if you were here, I could sing these songs for you today.

We grew up loving to sing. The Bible says "make a joyful noise unto the Lord". We might not be able to sing very well, but we were very loud. My mother was always singing or humming as she worked: "In the Sweet Bye and Bye", "Rock of Ages" and others that we all knew.

My Daddy loved to sing, and he sang songs like: "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers", "After the Ball", "Old Dan Tucker",

*"Old Dan Tucker was a fine old man
He washed his face in the frying pan
He combed his hair with the wagon wheel
And died with the toothache in his heel.
Out of the way. Old Dan Tucker
You're too late to get your supper
Supper's over and dinner's cooking
And old Dan Tucker just stands there looking"*

He also sang: "Red Wing". "The Little Mohee". "All for the love of a girl", and our favorite: "My Mother was a lady"

*Two drummers, there were seated, in a grand hotel one day
While dining, they were chatting, in a jolly sort of way
There came a pretty waitress, to bring a tray of food
They spoke to her familiarly, in a manner rather rude.
At first she did not notice, or make the least reply
But one remark they made to her, brought teardrops to her eye
She turned on her tormenters, her cheeks were blushing red
And, approaching as a picture, this is what she said:
My Mother was a Lady, and yours, you would allow
You may have a sister, who needs protection now
I came to this great city, to find my brother dear
And you wouldn't dare insult me sir, if Brother Jack were here".*

(My Mother wanted her girls to be ladies; I hope we didn't disappoint her.. Missy)

Maxine and I grew up always singing, and one song that we loved to sing was "The Church in the Wildwood": *There's a church in the valley by the wildwood, No lovelier place in the dale*, and the chorus comes in like this

Come to the church in the Wildwood

Oh, come, come, come,

And my sister Maxine couldn't remember how many times to sing: come, come, and we would always have to start over again.

I can just hear my Mother saying, as we were working and singing, "For Goodness sakes, girls, sing a faster song." We worked along to the pace of the song we were singing.