

Charles Normand – Mettie Beatrice Thomas

(Dec 20, 1872 - Apr 9 1944) (Jul 31 1872 - Mar 6 1954)

This account compiled by Hal Corbin Normand in 1984 from diary entries of both his mother, Mettie Thomas Normand and his sister, Emma B. Normand. (*Les' note: Emma was one of Ettie Cox Sutton's closest friends and major contributor to the book, Joseph Cox, Ancestors and Descendants.*)

With the addition of a fourth child and the natural increase in Charley's little herd of sheep, the children and livestock were beginning to outgrow the carrying capacity of the little farm. Charley and Mettie went "land hunting" and eventually found about two hundred acres of field and pasture land on Post Oak Branch about three miles northwest of Nolanville on the road connecting Belton and Killeen. This place belonged to "Uncle Brinkley" Roberts, a widower who lived on the place with a house full of grown boys and girls. The place was for sale with possessions after crops were gathered. A contract to buy was signed, earnest money up and the Berea place put on the market.

Sooner than expected a buyer was found. He insisted on possession before time for crops to be gathered but allowed the crop to be reserved and harvested when ready. Rather than miss the sale, the deal was closed and the Normands packed and moved in October 1904,

The bare essentials were moved into a little two room shack across the road from the Roberts place belonging to "Granny" Pettit for 2 months. Everything that was non-essential was stored at the Normand home place about 4 miles across Nolan Creek. Corn and grain from Berea was stored in the Roberts barns when there was room or hauled on to the Normand home place. Charley's youngest brother, James, helped him with hauling. Charley bought a second team of mules. Did and Babe, so two wagons per trip could be hauled, or four mules to pull in bad weather.

Emma and Ernest were enrolled in school at "Hay Branch." and after school and on weekends, they helped the Roberts children pick cotton to hurry their departure. On such a Saturday a stranger came through the field and Ernest addressed him as "Mr. Cox." The stranger replied, "Young man, you have me at a disadvantage. You seem to know me but I don't believe I know your name. Ernest introduced himself and went on to say, "You see, they told me that if I met a stranger to say, 'Howdy Mr. Cox' and I couldn't go wrong." "Well young man, you hit the nail on the head this time," Mr. (Columbus Alonzo) Lon Cox was their nearest neighbor, across the road.

Indeed the Normands soon learned that there were very few people living in the neighborhood who were not Coxes or relations. To mention a few, there were Uncle Sam(uel Hampton) and Aunt (Nica) Jane who cared for their invalid son Trigg and three of his children, Hiram, Milly and Katy. In addition there was Aunt Martha who lived alone in a little shack up in Granny's Hollow.(She had been a widow since Solomon Benjamin Cox died in 1892) It was rumored that she had "powers" and could conjure off warts!

Other Cox members were Aunt Martha's son Andy Porter, his wife (Sarah Jane) and 5 children, Sammy, Willie, who was crippled and had deformed hands, Fleming, Delia, and Vernon. Further up the branch lived Mr. Tom (Thomas Jefferson) Cox, his wife Ollie and their sons Lee and Jack. This family furnished music from the organ and fiddle frequently.

Other Cox families were Uncle George and his wife Sarah and two sons, Thomas, and the one noted as "Little George". Jack (Andrew Jackson), and his wife Joe Cox, was the barber in Nolanville. His two sons, Frank and Hiram ran the ice cream parlor in Nolanville and bought cream from the Normands for their sales. Mr. William Cox lived across the creek at Will's Crossing south of the cemetery. He had one son Horace, and a house full of (8) daughters. A brother to Jack was Ike Cox, married to Mary Elizabeth Wilheit, who lived up on Hay Branch.

Of special concern to the Normands. was Hiram Cox son of Trigg and grandson of Uncle Sam. Sam and Hiram had a personality conflict and on one occasion, the grandfather ordered Hiram to pack and get out. Indeed he packed and got over to the Normands, where he remained for ten years as a member of the family. He has continually been considered one of the Normand boys, and was joint heir in Charley and Mattie's estates