

Deb,

I think that may be Meady Cox in dwelling 256 in White River Township, AR in 1850. Look at how he makes his other “a”s. I do not have anything on a Meady Cox either.

Now look at household’s 248 and 249 on the previous page, John and Thomas Riggs. By this time, Benjamin, Elizabeth and his remaining children had left for Texas. (They married off three of the girls at ages 13, 15, & 15.)

Now go back to the 1840 census and you will see that Thomas Riggs is living on the farm next to Benjamin Cox. I assume that is your John Crouch six lines up.

John Riggs obviously moved to Bell County Texas sometime in the early 1850’s My Anderson Sutton moved from this area sometime between 1851 and 1853. The following story is excerpted from George W Tyler’s “History of Bell County” published in 1936*

.....A little later on the same morning, ignorant of the murder of Pierce and of the presence of Indians in the country, Mr. John Riggs and young David Elms (a lad of about fourteen years old, in the employ of Mr. Riggs) started to the cedar brake with two wagons for rails, Elms being in front. Before they were out of sight of the house, the Indians came upon Elms and began whipping him with ropes and quirts. He pulled off his shirt and gave it to them. They then came to Riggs and began to whip him. Thomas Riggs (a brother, who had just arrived at John Riggs' home), seeing the Indians whipping John, ran toward him, whereupon the Indians desisted and left him. Thomas Riggs immediately put out to the neighbors to give the alarm of Indians and to obtain help, particularly of Mr. Ambrose Lee, a fearless old frontiersman and a good marksman with a trusty rifle, who lived a mile away. David Elms had meantime escaped. John Riggs, wounded in the hand with an arrow, started back toward his house. His wife and children, having witnessed the whole occurrence and feeling that, unarmed as they were, their house was too open for protection against an attack, became greatly alarmed and had started away, either for Young Pierce's house or for Mr. Mack Whitehead's (a brother-in-law about a mile away west toward Sugar Loaf Mountain); and when John Riggs saw them fleeing he cut across the prairie and joined them about 200 yards from the house. The Indians, seeing that all the family had left the house, charged upon them in the open with an unearthly yell, surrounded them and began shooting Mr. Riggs with arrows, which he pulled out and threw back at them, at the same time throwing rocks with all his might but without avail. They shot him eleven times and he fell lifeless to the ground. Then they attempted to capture Mrs. Riggs, doubtless to lead her away into captivity, but she fought them so

desperately, with rocks and anything that came to hand, that they speared her under the left arm, and she died trying to defend herself and her helpless children. Two Indians grabbed the two little girls and held them up behind them on their horses. Going to the Riggs home they plundered it of everything they could carry away on their horses, emptied the feather beds in theyard and wrapping the bedticking around their bodies, danced in merry mockery. They burned all the plunder left and tried to burn the house, but the timber was too green to burn. Mr. Ambrose Lee came soon afterward and found the two little boys, whom the Indians had somehow, in their hurry, overlooked in the high grass. The infant boy was trying to nurse at the bloody breast of his dead mother, and the dead father lay but a few steps away, mangled with many mortal wounds. It was a sight to make a brave man sick and faint. He took the boys to their aunt, Mrs. Mack Whitehead. The neighborhood was aroused; the families gathered together at "Fort Scoggin" (so-called), the home of Mr. Jesse Scoggin, which afforded the best protection in the neighborhood. Immediately the news was heralded to the surrounding country and posses for pursuit of the Indians were formed in this and neighboring settlements and at Belton.

The Indians, departing from the Riggs home, went south, crossed the Nolan about one or two miles below where Killeen now stands, and came to Little Nolan Creek, where they secured some of Charlie Cruger's horses by rounding them up under some trees and roping or "snaring" them. Mr. Cruger, returning home from Salado, rode up within 300 yards of them before discovering that they were Indians, turned to run, and was pursued by some of the Indians, but fortunately he was riding a fleet horse and outran them. He sped away for Belton, with a Paul Revere warning as he passed each house, halloaing "Indians," but not stopping to explain.

The Indians, having gathered up quite a herd of horses, moved south to the Douglas Mountain, on the divide between Nolan and the Lampasas, and there stopped to eat their dinner, stolen from the Riggs home, but they didn't offer a bite to the little Riggs girls. Here they spied a Mr. Peevy riding on horseback some distance away. Mounting their horses, they at once rushed upon and killed him, and, while holding a war dance around his dead body, they discovered, in the distance, several men riding in scattered formation, whom they took to be cow hunters but were in fact members of one of the posses started in response to Cruger's alarm who had scattered out in order to find the trail of the Indians. The latter became suddenly frightened, remounted, and fled westward in great haste. The two little Riggs girls had been carried with them all the while and when the Indians began their flight, after killing Peevy, the one who was carrying the younger girl,

Margaret, in trying to hand her over to another Indian (both mounted and running at full speed) accidentally dropped her and they did not stop to pick her up. Her older sister, Rhoda, riding behind another Indian, saw this and jumped down from

the horse she was on, but was held in a dangling position till she managed to grasp a bush, or something, and wrenched herself loose and she fell, stunned, to the ground. Recovering soon, she hastened back to her little sister and found her, badly bruised and crippled from her fall. The Indians were gone and were seen no more.

The little girls, barefooted, their clothes nearly stripped from them, sore and crippled from rough handling, grassburrs torturing their little unshod feet, made out to follow back the way they had come and finally found a dim trail which led them several miles to an unoccupied house, the chimney of which they had seen in the distance when first freed from the Indians. Reaching it about dark they spent the night there. The weather being cool, Rhoda took what remained of her own dress, wrapped it around her little sister and nursed her all night. Next morning they followed a road around the mountain to Bates Renick's house, which was abandoned on account of the Indian excitement. Here they went inside the yard and stood awhile, when Mr. John B. Slack, an old Texas veteran, came along, having started out to see what he could learn about the Indians. He found the little Riggs girls there, took them on his horse to the home of Captain Milton W.

Damron on the Lampasas, near Comanche Gap, where they were taken care of. The good women of the neighborhood made clothes for them, and they were soon returned to their aunt, Mrs. Whitehead, at Sugar Loaf. When found they had eaten nothing since their last breakfast at their home and were nearly starved.

Posses were made up in several neighborhoods to pursue these Indians. Major John Henry Brown, Capt. M. W. Damron, Ben Cox, James R. Sutton, Ambrose Lee, Charles P. Cruger, John Carmack, John Allcorn, Joseph Murrell, Isaac Shriver, J. J. Meek, C. B. Roberts. Sr, X. B. Saunders, J. Swan Bigham, Wm. B. Blair, Joel Blair, Thomas Trimmier, John B. Slack, Jesse Sutton, old man Harrell and his son, and Bates Renick were members of the posses. The names of the others—there were a number of others—are not available. They pursued the Indians as far as the Santa Anna Mountain and then went to Camp Colorado where they learned that ranger Captains John Williams and McMillan, of that post, were already out on the trail of the Indians. Their horses exhausted, the Bell County posse, after a brief rest, returned to their homes. The rangers recovered Judge Ferryman's horse and some others which had been abandoned by the Indians on the Jim Ned Creek, but the Indians were not overtaken.

There seems to have been a strange sequel to this raid. "While the four Riggs children and other families were at "Fort Scoggins" "a certain white man," says Mr. Wm. C. Riggs, "paid visits to that place and one day asked Rhoda (Riggs) if one of the Indians hadn't a very large nose. She replied, 'Yes,' wondering why he should ask such a question. He told Rhoda that he was acquainted with the Indians and that they were Comanches and came from the Reservation. She was afraid of him and thought she knew his features and reported what was said to her. He was immediately caught, confessed to being one of that cut-throat mob, gave the names

of two other whites, who also took part in the murdering of our parents. This villain, whose name was Page, was hung by the people. The others were also executed, but their names were never known to us.

Endnotes: Jas. T. DeShields, in Wilbarger's Indian Depredations in Texas, 593. The above narration is based upon the statements of Captain M. W. Damron in Belton Journal, March 11, 1886; Wm. C. Riggs, son of John and Jane Riggs in Belton Daily News; Margaret Benton, daughter of John and Jane Riggs in Belton daily News, March 2, 1887; Statement of James R. Sutton and other traditional sources. Wm. C. Riggs' statement published in Belton Daily News, March 18, 1886. He was a son of John and Jane Riggs and was one of the little boys whom the Indians "overlooked in the high grass." In mature manhood he returned to Bell County and while many of the participants in and contemporaries of this tragedy were still living interviewed them personally, examined the ground on which the same occurred and from these sources composed the published statement mentioned above.

My great Aunt Zephia Sutton, daughter of Anderson Sutton stated that the posse stayed overnight their house when returning the girls. The children were later returned to their relatives in Arkansas.

* There is another interesting footnote to this story. When my parents moved to Concho County from Bell County in 1935, my sister Barbara, now deceased said that Daddy had arranged for a Mr. Tyler, "the man who wrote the book about Bell County," to stay with Grandpa Frank Sutton, who was 75 at the time, but "It did not work out" so Aunt Hester and Uncle Oscar moved in with him. It could not have been this George W Tyler since he died in 1927, but the book was not published until 1936, so it must have been a son. I will see what my sister Nell remembers about him.

Les