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# COX CLAN

## NEWSLETTER

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December 2011; Issue No. 41 Founder: Ruth Anna Hicks Editor: Bill Utermohlen, 1916 Windsor Rd, Alexandria VA 22307

### **MURIEL (VANDERWALKER) HELSEL AND PEARL HARBOR** (as told to Bill Utermohlen)

It was fourscore and five years from the Declaration of Independence to Fort Sumter; it was 80 years from Fort Sumter to Pearl Harbor; as it has now been 70 years since Pearl Harbor, this seems a good time to share the story of a Cox family member who was there, Muriel (Vanderwalker) Helsel.<sup>1</sup>

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I was born in 1919 in Bisbee, Arizona. I had two older sisters, one 14 years older and one 2½ years older. My immediately older sister was very ill as a young child, and my mother was very upset and wanted to get out of Arizona and the heat and that's when they decided to move to California. My second birthday was celebrated on the desert, going from Bisbee, Arizona to Los Angeles. We temporarily stayed with an aunt in San Bernardino. But I grew at 3674 Sixth Avenue in Los Angeles till I was married. I was married in 1940, on April 2nd, and my 21st birthday was April 24th.

My husband [Rolland Helsel] was a student at Seattle Pacific College in Seattle, Washington and we met at the Methodist Church where I grew up. He was down visiting. His father had taken a position at USC. He had connections in Seattle and we returned to Seattle immediately after our marriage. He was going to be a history teacher and coach, probably basketball. He and his brother had always refereed the USC practice games.

My husband worked for Captain Anderson, who operated the little boats that went across to Mercer Island. And then they also had friends that had a sightseeing boat that started out at Leshot park in Seattle and went through the locks around to the Seattle harbor. It was very popular in the summertime. And he acted as purser on that through his college days. We went back up there because he had a position and he was not quite finished with his college graduate work. Anyway, we spent the summer there and then returned to Los Angeles where he completed his graduate studies. In the meantime, he asked me if I minded if he joined the Naval Reserve. I did not. As he was finishing his graduate work at USC, he was called to active duty. He asked for a deferment until he graduated. That was granted him.

We went back up to Seattle and the day we arrived, they came out madly saying the government wants you to call immediately. Well, he was called to active duty and told to report to Harvard Business School for indoctrination into the Navy. I went with him. We met his folks in Kansas and transferred all the household things we had taken with us and went on. When we arrived, we did not like any of the apartments. They were very dirty and very expensive, so we decided to see if the school had anything in mind. He was very surprised when he came out and said he had to live at the school. They found me a room at what they called the Harvard Houses. They were boarding houses that the upperclassmen could rent instead of going into dorms and they were vacant for the summer months, so I had a room there. I had temporary jobs with an architect and also with a group called American Defense - Harvard Group, which was trying to get people aware of the problems in Europe at that time. [This was the summer of 1941.]

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<sup>1</sup> Muriel is part of the Sarah Catherine (Cox) Kirby line. For an account of the Kirby family and letters relating to the Vanderwalker family's 1882 migration into Arizona from California, see Appendix E of the Cox Book.

So when he finished the course at Harvard, he was ordered to the U.S.S. Pennsylvania, [a battleship], and we returned to California, found an apartment, and put him aboard the Pennsylvania. And eventually he wound up in Hawaii and he wrote me that he wanted me to come--all the wives were there and I should get over there as soon as I could. We had just bought a new car, so the car and I departed on the 19th of November 1941. I had arrived there -- I don't know how long it took, five or six days -- before Thanksgiving. [Thanksgiving was on November 27]. I discovered, after I sailed, he had been transferred from the Pennsylvania to Ford Island at Pearl Harbor. We found a house to rent in the Waikiki area and got settled in there. It was a two-bedroom place and we had most of our second bedroom with all our gear and unpacked things, found enough just to get ourselves settled in. I got a job with what they called the Pacific Naval Air Base contractor. In those days all repairs or building on government property was done by contractors. They didn't have Seabees, that came along with the war.

At any rate, Saturday night, December 6, we went to the Battle of the Bands, which was at Bloch Arena. A couple of the boys off the Pennsylvania came with us. We tried to get them to stay in the house with us, rather than going back, but they decided they needed to be back for quarters in the morning and it would be too late. [Waikiki is about 10 miles east of Pearl Harbor.] In the meantime, my husband had to be Supply Duty Officer on Sunday and he had to be back aboard Ford Island by 8 o'clock in the morning. We had a neighbor a couple blocks away who was Operations Officer and he was coming off duty. Rather than have his wife take all the kids to come get him, he asked Rolland to pick up his car at home and drive it to Pearl Harbor. So, if I had taken him, I would have been right in the midst of it. [The first wave of Japanese planes hit the airfields on Ford Island at 7:51 a.m. The second wave began attacking the fleet at about 8:30 a.m.]

I was coping with a newness to the island, a change of seasons and the change of hours, and so after Rolland left, I went back to bed and went to sleep. And I could hear all these bombs, but I was used to having that happen around Los Angeles, where I grew up, where they shoot off the guns down there around Long Beach. So, I didn't think anything of it. Anyway, the little house that we had was owned by a couple with a big garage. They lived over the garage and then had these two little houses that they rented out. It was an Army officer we had met and he came to get Rolland and, of course, Rolland was already gone, so he told me to get dressed and he would take me with his wife down to Fort DeRussy, which was right at Honolulu Harbor.

I turned the radio on and they were saying, "Keep off the streets, nobody go on the streets," and I thought, well, I'll have to tell Rolland I can't come, and I got to the phone and I was just about to dial it and I thought, what am I doing, I'm sure he knows what is going on. That was my first reaction, because I was to go out and meet him. There wasn't anything going on and the idea was I would go out and go swimming and have dinner with him later. Well, I had just bought a new pant outfit, which had just come in style, and I went out and the army officer took one look at me and said, "Go find something darker." We went out in the yard and we could see the planes coming over and then peeling off one by one divebombing. And, of course, we could see the fires and smoke, but we didn't know what was going on. The radio said that Pearl Harbor is under attack, but they didn't tell you what had been hit or if anything had been hit at that time



Ford Island and the Naval Air Station during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Battleship row is on the far side of the Island.

I spent the night in a revetment, along with a lot of Army officers and Japanese housekeepers, and the mosquitos. I've never been hurt by a mosquito since. I was so badly bitten I could hardly open my eyes. They let us stand up on the top. They were waiting to take us to Fort Schofield, but they were waiting for us to get gas masks. Well, the Army wife whose husband came and got me and took me down there, we decided we would rather die in our homes, so we left. And as I got back, Rolland was coming home to get clothes, so I knew he was all right. I decided I'd never worry about things again. I had such a headache from being concerned about what was going on and how he was doing. He had been right in the midst of it at Ford Island.

The Pennsylvania was in drydock and was not badly damaged. There were several people on board it that were killed, but no one we knew. The sad part were the ships that were overturned. I worked in a temporary building and the crews off the Oklahoma and the Arizona were trying to get rosters of the people who had survived and, of course, there were so many who were burned in the harbor. We always took our laundry down right to the little boat area where my husband had to take the boat over to Ford Island daily. And I had all my good wedding linens and I'm sure they were used by some of the survivors down there. I was happy to donate them too, but I never got my laundry back.

The heart-rending ones were the ones that had managed to get out of the ship, like the Oklahoma, they had a crew there that were sitting in our offices trying to find out which boys had been found and were all right and where they were. They were invited back aboard another ship at meals and they couldn't stand it, they couldn't stay, they came back right away, they had too many feelings of horror, as they were caught in this area. One of them had tried to pull a boy out. He was too big to get through the porthole. As it overturned, you know, there were portholes that they tried to get out of.

After the attack, the officers were required to be on the station. They got home one night in six or one day in six. Six hours, that was it. So, I was by myself most nights. They kept having these false alarms of Japanese landings on Hawaii and the rumors kept circulating that they had landed. So, I would stay in the kitchen where we had covered the windows for the blackout and then go to the bathroom to get changed into my night clothes and then I'd get into bed. Well, I was by myself and I'd hear these footsteps and they'd go "plop, plop, plop" and it'd all tie together. So, finally I'd get to sleep and then my husband would come home and I'd go out like a light, you know, I was just so glad he was there. And then he woke me, "what is that?" Well, it was quite a few months before we realized they were what they call bufos, they have these big bull forest frogs.

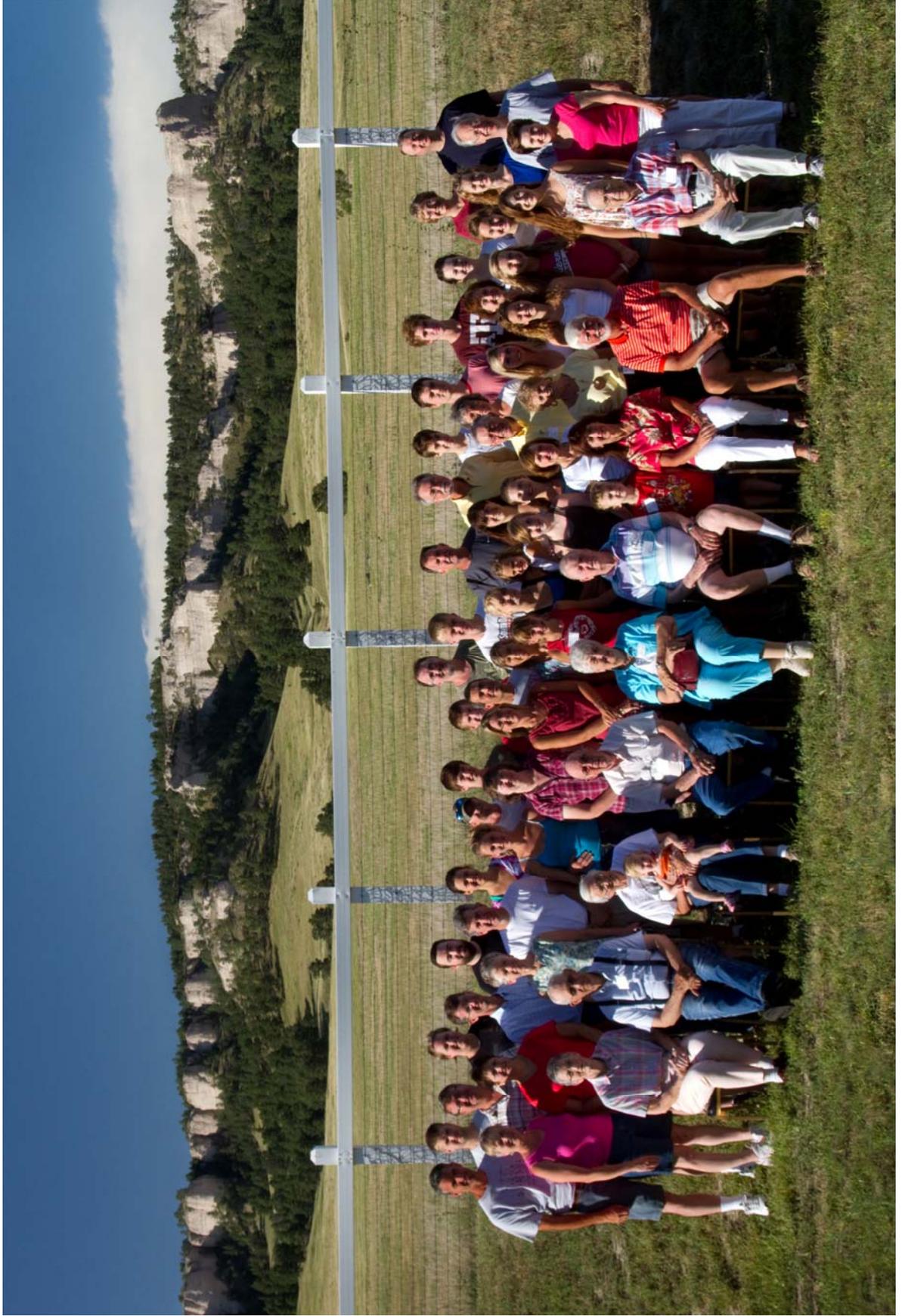
A legal officer we knew had a wife who was a nurse and she had been traumatized by all the boys that she had helped heal and take care of on December 7th. So, I guess it was a couple months afterwards that I went and we gave up our apartment and I lived with her, because she didn't want to be by herself. We had blackouts and curfews until after the Midway Battle (in early June), and then things eased a little bit, although we were never without curfews. I don't think they put that off until almost the end of the war.

I was put into a pool of stenos. Because I had been in Boston that short while, I was sort of used to that Boston accent. And so I kept getting called by this one man, who was so annoyed because the girls couldn't understand what he was dictating. Eventually, he was selected to go with the new admiral that was appointed, Carl Cotter, to set up Pacific Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks. That office handled all the Seabee battalions that were getting organized to work on the different little islands. I would have been shipped home. In fact, they kept telling me I would be on the next ship that went out. The legal officer I mentioned said just declare it your legal domicile and then there won't be a problem. Well, we didn't have children and, at that point, we were not planning for it, so that's what we did and I was able to stay. I eventually wound up as Chief Clerk for this Pacific Division. We discovered later that my husband, along with all the ensigns that were in that Harvard group, were scheduled to go on to Wake and Guam and all of those islands. He, luckily, was kept at Ford. Actually, it ended up as a good place to spend the War after the Midway Battle.

Photos of Muriel and her husband Rolland are at:

[http://www.alplm.org/oral\\_history/veterans\\_remember/world\\_war\\_II/Helsel\\_photos.html](http://www.alplm.org/oral_history/veterans_remember/world_war_II/Helsel_photos.html)

SAM AND ELLEN COX FAMILY REUNION  
FORT ROBINSON, NEBRASKA  
August 4-7, 2011





1. David Welsch
2. Karl Wiese
3. Mike Wiese
4. Jillian Wiese
5. Mark Welsch
6. Jeremy Patterson
7. Sam Welsch
8. Ember Welsch
9. Chelsea Clark
10. Lee Johnson
11. Seth Hicks
12. Sam Hicks
13. Ken Hicks
14. Chase Glazier
15. Doug Hicks
16. Joe Hunt
17. Micah Scott
18. Nate Hunt
19. Noah Scott
20. Briannon Scott
21. Terry Bunke
22. Scott Bunke
23. Deb Welsch
24. Mary Wiese
25. Patty Spitzer
26. Gayle Johnson
27. Karen Karim
28. Monni Karim
29. Sue Wendte
30. Kristen Wendte
31. Ramsey Karim
32. Amelia Hunt
33. Dick Hall
34. Jan Hunt
35. Kim Scott
36. Erinn Scott
37. Kaitlin Scott
38. Bill Utermohlen
39. Tori Glazier
40. Shannon Hicks
41. Lora Hicks
42. Deb Hicks
43. Mary Jane Hall
44. Charlotte McGinn
45. Michaela Bunke
46. Kendra Bunke
47. Mary Utermohlen
48. Alison Utermohlen
49. Louise Welsch
50. Eugene Welsch
51. Lois Walrath
52. Larry Walrath
53. Martha Linstrom
54. Ken Linstrom
55. Jacob Hicks
56. Robin Cox
57. Luke Cox
58. Bob Utermohlen
59. Kylee Johnson

**Scott Andrew McFadden** (Cox Book #690ii, Rachel (Cox Knight family), 46, of Naalehu, HI died June 27, 2006 at Kona Community Hospital. Born May 24, 1960 at Long Beach, Calif., he was a self-employed commercial fisherman. Friends may call at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday at the McFadden residence at 95-1573 Kamaoa Rd., for a memorial service. A scattering of ashes will take place at South Point following the service. The family requests casual attire and welcomes loose flowers.

Mr. McFadden is survived by his wife, Emilen McFadden of Naalehu; mother of his children Charito McFadden of Naalehu; son David (Sarah) McFadden of Naalehu; stepson Michael Paa of Naalehu; daughter Deana McFadden of Naalehu; mother, Joan Lemon of California; brothers, Mark McFadden of Ocean View, Craig McFadden of Ocean View; a niece, nephew and several cousins.

**Karen Johnson** (Cox Book #712, Sandford Cox family), 68, Kenmare, ND, died Saturday, June 05, 2010 in her cousin's home in Minot, ND. Karen Rosalie Cox was born on July 28, 1941, a daughter of Clive W. and Doris (Linstrom) Cox in Coteau, ND. She was raised and educated in Coteau and was in the first graduating class of Bowbells High School. On November 9, 1963, she was united in marriage to Gerald B. Johnson at the First Evangelical United Brethren Church in Minot. To this union a son, Michael was born. They later divorced.



Karen worked for eleven years with the North Dakota Highway Patrol traveling around ND assisting with drivers license testing. Karen then took a job as secretary to the North Dakota Secretary of State in the State Capitol in Bismarck, and then working as executive secretary for Technical Planning Information of Bismarck. She was a member of the Kenmare and Bowbells Methodist Church. Karen enjoyed crocheting and Victorian crafts.

Karen was preceded in death by her parents. Surviving relatives: Son: Michael Johnson, Minot; Siblings: Kathy (Ron) Kuzniar, Denver, CO; Kenny (Debbie) Cox, Niskayuna, NY; two nephews, one niece, special cousin Lloyd Ann (Mace) Caston, Minot and several other cousins also survive.

Funeral Service: Wednesday, June 9, 2010 at 2 pm at the Bowbells Methodist Church, Bowbells, ND. Burial: Bowbells Community Cemetery, Bowbells, ND

**Ann Dirrim** (Cox Book #937 wf, Richard R. Cox family), of Frederick, CO, formerly of Longmont, CO, died Sat. Dec. 11, 2010 at Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center, Lafayette, CO. She was 61. She was born January 9, 1949 in Denver to Foster and Nina (Henry) Sherffius. On December 27, 1975 she married Lysle G. Dirrim.

Ann lived in Brighton, CO for 17 years, moving to Longmont in 1986, then to Montrose in 1994, and finally to Frederick in 2005. A teacher and educator, she taught drama and English at Brighton High School, and later in the Montrose school district and for the Head Start Program. Ann was formerly a member of the Central Presbyterian Church in Longmont.

She was preceded in death by her parents. Ann is survived by her husband, Lysle, four daughters Abby Miller (Joshua), Rebecca Furuta (Dennis), Katherine Dirrim and Theodora Dirrim, and two grandchildren Henry and Midori Furuta, and her favorite Nephew Eoin McPheeters, his wife Valerie and daughter Baylie.

Memorial service will be held 3:00pm Saturday, Dec. 18, 2010 at the Ahlberg Funeral Chapel. Cremation at Ahlberg Funeral Chapel and Crematory. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the OUR Center or a charity of the donor's choice. Visit [www.ahlbergfuneralchapel.com](http://www.ahlbergfuneralchapel.com) to share your condolences.

### **Family Updates**

**Michaela Rose Logsdon**, b. 11 Apr 2011, New Haven, CT, daughter of Michael & Tami Logsdon  
**Graham Carter Hofer**, b. 2 Aug 2011, Shawnee Mission, KS, son of Anne Lacey and Nate Hofer

**Brenna Unity Fraser**, b. 15 Nov 2011, daughter of Tim and Amy Fraser

**Anne Lacey** married **Nate Hofer**, 14 Aug 2009

**Ian Cox** married **Suzanne Melia**, 3 Sep 2011; Ian is a son of John and Lori Cox.

**Doris (McHenry) (Shehorn) Wildermuth**, age 84, of Moline, IL, d. 10 May 2008; wf of Chester Wildermuth

**Donna Janette (McCleney) Cady**, age 66, of Spring Branch, T, d. 12 May 2011; wf of Jeffery Cady

**Elizabeth M. 'Bobbity' (Cox) Clark** (Cox Book #145i, John W. Cox family), 87, Alexis, IL, died at 5:20 a.m. Wednesday, June 15, 2011, at Heartland Health Care Center, Galesburg. She was born Aug. 6, 1923, in Monmouth, the daughter of William A. and Bessie E. (Azdell) Cox. She was reared and educated in Alexis and graduated from Alexis High School in 1942.

Bobbity married William O. Clark in Alexis on July 11, 1946; he survives. She had been employed at Alexis Bank and later in the parts office of Farmall in Rock Island. She enjoyed knitting, needlepoint and painting when her health permitted. She was fond of family heirlooms and antiques. She was a member of Alexis United Presbyterian Church, past president of the Chapter G of P.E.O., a member of the William Dennison Chapter of D.A.R. and Delta Ace Bridge Club for 45 years.

Surviving are her husband, Bill Clark of Alexis, and two cousins, Leonard H. Porter of Winter Haven, Fla., and Ross Porter of Smithport, Pa. She was preceded in death by her parents and one cousin, Howard H. Porter. Graveside services will be 2 p.m. Friday, June 17, in Alexis Cemetery. Memorials may be made to Alexis United Presbyterian Church or the Alexis-North Henderson Ambulance Fund. [Bobbity was the last descendant of Everal S. Cox, son of John W. Cox]

**Doris Edna (Logsdon) Freeman** (Cox Book #344, John W. Cox family) was born October 27, 1919 in Burchard, Pawnee County, NE to James R. and Eliza E. (Cox) Logsdon. Doris was the youngest child in a family of five; one sister and three brothers. Doris attended country schools and graduated in 1938 from the Perkins County High School in Grant, Nebraska.

On February 25, 1940, she was united in marriage to Walter C. Freeman at the Lutheran Parsonage in Grant, Nebraska. Doris was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church in Pekin, Illinois in 1941. Walter and Doris were blessed with three sons, 8 grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren. Doris was a homemaker until they moved to Littleton, Colorado where she helped her husband Walt in their propane business for over 20 years. For over 36 years, she was an active member of Ascension Lutheran Church in Littleton, Colorado where she was active in the Ladies Guild.

Doris moved to Chappell, Nebraska to their home east of Chappell. She kept in membership at Ascension while attending Grace Lutheran Church faithfully in Chappell, Nebraska. She lived a full and active life until her death in Alamogordo, NM on October 26, 2011.



Doris Freeman with Lloyd Logsdon and Cox Book

She was preceded in death by her husband, Walter; sister Zelma Hall; and brothers Robert, Wayne and Cecil Logsdon; and a grandson Todd Freeman. She is survived by her sons and daughter-in-laws, grandchildren; Troy (Trish) Freeman of Aurora, CO, Aaron (Michelle) Freeman of Anchorage, AK, Matthew (Jill) Freeman of Omaha, NE, Christian (Summer) Freeman of Cicero, NY, Briana (John) Kacinski of Englewood, CO, Beth (Rich) Kempel of Englewood, CO, and Kara (Tim) McElheny of High Rolls, NM; along with 6 great grandchildren.

A service to celebrate her life will be held at Ascension Lutheran Church, 1701 W. Caley Ave., Littleton, CO on Thursday, November 3, 2011 at 10:30 AM. Interment, Littleton Cemetery.



Mike & Sherry Fraser 50th Anniversary  
August 2011

August 4, 2011: Suzanne Dawn Melia of Ord, and **Ian James Cox** of Sargent, wish to announce their engagement and upcoming wedding.



Parents of the couple are Tad and Janel Melia of Ord and John and Lori Cox of Sargent. Suzanne was a 2006 graduate of Ord High School. In 2010, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Dentistry. She is employed as a Dental Hygienist at Complete Family Dentistry in Ord. Ian graduated from Sargent High School in 2007. In May of 2011, he received a bachelor's degree in agronomy from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is self-employed with the family farm. The wedding is planned for Sept. 3, 2011, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Ord.



Joseph Franklin Cox & Jane Sutton Cox  
courtesy Becky Stewart

Cox Books are currently available for **\$25** each from Bill Utermohlen, 1916 Windsor Rd, Alexandria, VA 22307 (originally \$60)

The Cox website at <http://members.cox.net/wutermohlen/Cox%20base%20page.htm> is shutting down due to a withdrawal of support by the provider. It will probably move to a new location eventually.