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# COX CLAN



## NEWSLETTER

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October 2001 Editor Mrs. Ruth Anna Hicks, 6703 Holdrege St Lincoln, Ne

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### COX GENEALOGY A TALE OF THREE FAMILIES

#### Story No. 2 VIRGINIA TERRITORY

Gabriel, Isaac, and Friend Cox located along the Potomac River and were noted for participation in public affairs, eagerness to defend their communities against Indian attack, and their industry, by which they become large land holders. History describes their activities and migrations, and details six forts they built stretching from the South Branch of the Potomac River to Cox's Fort in Kentucky, near Bardstown. All of these Forts were built in territory claimed by the colony of Virginia.

The Coxes apparently moved to Frederick County, Virginia, around 1750, when this territory was organized into Hampshire County (now West Virginia). Following their route westward into Kentucky provides insight into the attitudes, activities, and circumstances of this Cox Clan.

#### SIX COX FORTS

The Cox Fort at the mouth of the Little Cacapon is mentioned on 7 May 1755, in a diary of General Braddock's forces, as the first stop on a detachment's northward march from Henry Enoch's Fort or twelve miles from the Forks of Cape Capon.<sup>6</sup> George Washington referred to the Cox Fort, in his diary, when traveling through the area, surveying land for Henry Enoch at the Forks of Cacapon on 23 Apr 1750. He also surveyed one tract each for Friend Cox and Nicholas Friend along the South Branch of the Potomac two days later.

The first Cox Fort was abandoned. Washington's diary records the following: "On October 12 he proceeded about seven miles from Romney toward Patterson Creek (Headsville) over a hilly road to a place where Cox's Fort formerly stood."<sup>7</sup>

An exodus of Coxes from Hampshire County, Virginia, occurred in two phases. In 1771, Friend with son Jonathan and Gabriel's son Israel claimed land along the Ohio River at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, now in the West Virginia panhandle. The next year Isaac's son George joined them and they built the first cabin on the site of Wellsburg.

They built the third Fort south of Buffalo Creek on Gabriel's land in Ohio County. This Fort became an important defense of the new settlements during Dunmore's War in which, in 1774, Dunmore defeated the Sawnee and claimed what had been Indian hunting grounds in Kentucky.

Ohio County was the site of the fourth Cox Fort, this being built in 1776 north of Wellsburg in Cox's Bottom on Friend Cox's land. The sale of a tract of land of 277 acres was made to Van Swearingen by Friend's son John, "including the part called Cox's Fort."<sup>8</sup>

The Cox Fort in Yohogania County, Virginia, the fifth Fort, stood on the original site of Augusta Town, now the location of Washington, Pennsylvania.

...Augusta Town was commonly referred to as Cox's Fort, and it was here that the land commission convened in 1779 and 1780 to issue certificates. Gabriel's certificate for his settlement in 1769 bears the legend, "given under our hand at Coxes Fort, the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1780."<sup>9</sup>

There was another Cox Fort not counted in the original six Forts. This one is mentioned frequently in Crumrine's *History of Washington County*, and was on Gabriel's land located near the Monongahela River, adjacent to Peter's Creek. Colonel Isaac Cox and John Canon attended to organizing the men for expeditions from Cox's Fort.<sup>10</sup> The location has a roadside Pennsylvania Historical Marker which states:

Fort Cox or Coxes Station

Built by Gabriel Cox about 700 yards SE of this site. Gabriel Cox came to this area in 1770 and took out a grant of 400 acres. The Virginia Certificate was dated 1780 under the Title of "Coxburg." He also received another tract of 262 acres called "Coxes Addition." Here he built his log cabin near a spring of water on the present Waldo Brown farm. He also built a fort or blockhouse, for protection from the Indians, near the Brown and Denniston line fence, which later became a militia post. Gabriel Cox was a major under the authority of Virginia from 1776 to 1781. He also was a participant in various expeditions that went out from this area, against the Indians in 1778 to 1782. This was a stockade fort of considerable importance and was garrisoned with troops. It was used as headquarters for the land commissioners granting Virginia Land Certificates until sometime in 1780. This is shown by old Certificates on record in the Recorder's office, dated at Fort Cox.

Peter Creek Historical Society, Inc.

We find another reference to the Peter's Creek development, which states that one of two Peters Township Captains, Gabriel Cox, attended a military conference at Catfish Camp in January (1777), and, further, that:

In 1777, Peters Township's defense received a substantial boost. The township's first, and only, fort was constructed on Peters Creek (now in Union Township, near Gastonville). Gabriel Cox built and supervised the fortification which was modestly called Fort Cox. In accord with his new station, he became Major Cox. Unlike most Washington County forts which were merely places of refuge during Indian attacks, Fort Cox boasted an actual garrison of soldiers.

The proximity of this stronghold had very important consequences for Peters Township. In the ensuing years of Indian attacks, no Peters Township residents were killed.<sup>11</sup>

The last of the six Forts was built in Kentucky, about 30 miles south of Louisville and the falls of the Ohio River.

The site of Cox's station would be currently placed about five miles northeast of Bardstown...thirteen miles from the mouth of Cox's Creek, five miles west of Polk's Station on Simpson's Run, and thirty-two miles from Harrodsburg—is mentioned by Colonel William Fleming in the diary of his journey through Jefferson County in 1783....he paid Colonel Cox a shilling per meal and three pence per bushel of corn during the two-day stay. Cox's Station was connected with Harrodsburg by Middle Trace or Powell's Trace, which was well traveled in 1781.<sup>12</sup>

## PIONEERS OF WESTERN TERRITORIES

Our primary genealogical interest is in Isaac Cox. With his pioneer brothers and their children, they all played significant roles in the settlement and development of the newly opened territory west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The Coxes began their migration to Ohio County in 1769. They acquired extensive land holdings in the "West Virginia" panhandle where the third and fourth Forts were erected. Coincident with the opening of the land office in 1769, Isaac's son, Gabriel, claimed land along the Monongahela. In 1771, Friend with his son Jonathan and Gabriel's son Israel claimed land along the Ohio River at the mouth of Buffalo Creek.

In recognition of settlement and holding onto the early claims, grants were issued to Friend, Gabriel's sons Peter and Israel, and Isaac's sons Gabriel and George.

Only Isaac's children went to Kentucky, about 1779, where his estate was settled in 1800. He had married Susannah Tomlinson and they had twelve children: James, John, Isaac, David, Gabriel, George, Nancy, Ann, Polly, Joseph, Jonathan, and Benjamin. Members of these families were active in governmental affairs:

...Off and on, John, David, Gabriel, George, and Benjamin appraised estates, collected taxes, laid out roads, and served on juries.<sup>13</sup>

Many served in the county militia in defense of these remote settlements. In the Ohio County militia, George Cox was an ensign, Polly Cox's husband John Lemon was a captain, and Ann Cox's husband William McMahan was a lieutenant; in the Yohogania County militia, Isaac was a captain in 1776, a lieutenant colonel in 1777, and a colonel in 1778; David was a lieutenant in 1778; and Gabriel was a captain in 1777, a major in 1778, and a lieutenant colonel in 1779.

Their land holdings in a two county area were estimated at ten thousand acres. Grants exceeded three thousand acres and purchases exceeded two thousand acres. A single sale by Isaac in 1779 brought sixteen hundred pounds, and one by Gabriel in 1782 brought one thousand pounds.

Colonel Isaac was preparing to leave for Kentucky, and the Yohogania court ordered, October 25, 1779 in response to his passport application:

...the said Isaac Cox have leave to remove himself and attendance aforesaid, he Departing himself as a good Citizen and in Amenity with the United States, having been long a Magistrate and Demeaned himself well. It is expected that all good Offices be done him by the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth.<sup>14</sup>

Colonel Isaac and his wife Mary, David and his wife Margaret, and about six of their children, with brothers Joseph and Benjamin set out for Kentucky in March of 1780. Their cargo included essential household goods and supplies, livestock, farming

implements, and seeds for planting to make more habitable the rolling bluegrass meadows of Kentucky.

Flatboats were lashed together to withstand the dangers of the swollen Ohio River. These had six foot high protective sides, thick enough to withstand bullets, as protection from Indians. A partial roof over the stern provided residence quarters.

On April 26, 1780, Colonel Isaac, David, Benjamin, and Joseph Cox were named in certificates issued by the Virginia Land Commission at St. Asaph (Standford). Each certificate referred to pre-emption of one thousand acres lying along Cox's Creek that were marked and improved by Isaac Cox.

Peace was shattered the closing year of the Revolutionary War. Indians again attacked the outer fringes of the settlements upon urging by the British. The Cox cabins were rebuilt around Colonel Isaac's cabin, and a palisade placed between them. Cox's Station, or Fort, as it became known, was a measure of security for the surrounding area.

Colonel Isaac was elected the first representative from Jefferson County to the Virginia Legislature in 1781. In 1783, he was appointed one of the trustees of the town of Louisville, and in 1784, he and David served as justices of the Jefferson County Court.

Upon organizing Nelson County, at Baird's Town in 1785, Isaac and David were appointed the first justices of the new court.

... There are nearly 200 entries in the deed books of Nelson County alone... A conservative estimate of the Cox land holdings in Kentucky would be about 75,000 acres.

Colonel Isaac, the wealthiest member of the family, was one of the largest individual land speculators in Kentucky. His sale on October 25, 1785, of 12,150 acres to James Nourse... for 2,333 pounds is somewhat typical of the scale of his transactions....<sup>15</sup>

Is there a genealogical connection between this Cox Clan and our John Cox ancestors? The primary candidate for such a relationship appears to be through Isaac's son John.

Isaac and Susannah Cox

James	b. Abt 1740	m.
John	b. Abt 1742	m1 Mary _____
		m2 Martha Rich
Isaac	b.	m. Mary Enoch
David	b. Abt 1746	m. Margaret Bruce
Gabriel	b. Abt 1747	m. Sarah Enoch
George	b. Oct 1748	m. Susannah Decker
Ann	b.	m. William McMahan
Nancy	b. Abt 1750	m. Nathan Chalfont
Polly	b. Abt 1753	m. John Lemon

RICHARD RUE COX line, from a letter by Merrily Newton Tunnicliff (Mrs. Joseph Robert)

Lauren Joy Tunnicliff, born 9 May 2001 in Clarinda, Iowa to Joseph Newton and Joy Caldwell (Nesser) Tunnicliff. Grandparents: Bruce and Sally (Caldwell) Nesser of Deerfield, IL and J.R. (Bob) and Merrily (Newton) Tunnicliff, Clarinda, Iowa

Hallie Tunnicliff Johnson born 19 July 2001 in Dickinson, North Dakota to Bonnie Elizabeth (Tunnicliff) and Christopher Lee Johnson. Grandparents, Roger and Thelma (Attleson) Johnson of New Hampton, Iowa and J.R. (Bob) and Merrily (Newton) Tunnicliff, Clarinda, Iowa. Hallie is named for Hallie (Thomas) Shum of Clarinda, her great-great-grandmother and a Cox descendant.

Rebecca Jean Tunnicliff married Richard Keith Finch on 15 September 2001, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Clarinda, Iowa. Parents are Jim and Gail (Sanborn) Finch of Chelsea, Michigan and J.R. (Bob) and Merrily (Newto) Tunnicliff Clarinda, Iowa.

Thanks Merrily for sending this information on your family.

This is a belated notice of the death of William B. Appleby, of the Sarah Catherine Cox Kirby line. He was born 21 October 1910 in Mesa, Arizona and died 28 August 1997 in Phoenix, Arizona. Buried in the Greenwood Memory Lawn Phoenix, Arizona.

I am running out of material to put in this newsletter, after 10 years. So I would appreciate any family news. Also if you have stories on some of the earlier ancestors I would love to have that information.

These drawings were made by Bud Thomas



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
ORGANIZED IN 1815.  
FRANKFORT, KY.



BIBB BURNLEY HOUSE.  
PRIOR HOUSE BUILT IN 1786.  
JOHN BIBB, LT. WAR 1812.  
KY. HOUSE/SENATE 1827-34.  
FRANKFORT, KY,



WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

I found these pictures in my files,  
unlabeled, but they were taken in  
Rock Island and Moline, IL.

They have to be Cox relations. Can  
you help identify them.

