

John Cox Family Organization NEWSLETTER

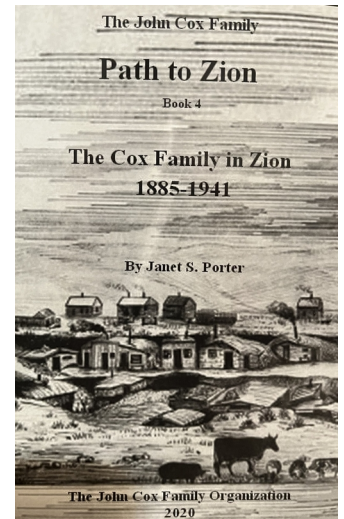
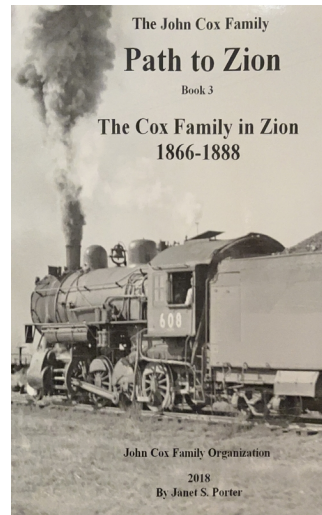
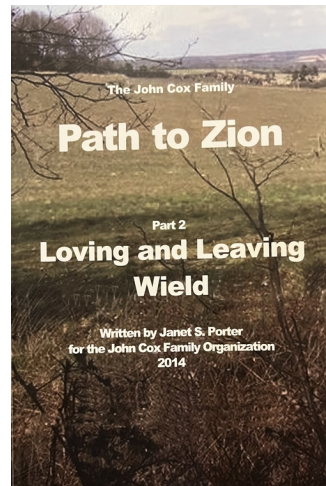
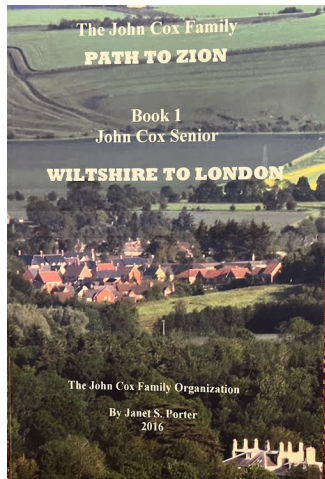
April, 2023

Welcome Back

Dear Cox Family Members,

We have all been through a lot of challenges since we published our last newsletter in 2019. We mourn the family members that have passed to the other side of the veil. We send our love and care to the many of you who have suffered from ill health, economic or other stresses during this time. We have missed getting together and will plan to have a reunion in September of 2024.

Janet Porter has graciously written a new article for this newsletter. When we get together in 2024, she will tell us more about our Cox ancestors and their lives. We are deeply indebted to Janet for the research she has done and for the histories she has written. We also thank our board members: Pat, Janice, Reed, Yvonne, and Roseanne for their dedication to keeping the memories of our ancestors alive for us. Here are the 4 short books Janet has written. You can order them by emailing me at julie_eckman@yahoo.com



The books cost \$7 each, and the shipping is \$3 for each book.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the reunion next year!

With love,

Julie and Wayne Eckman

John Cox: Englishman or American?

Janet Porter

In the middle of the Woodruff winter, a cold February 14, 1873, about the time he moved his family there, John Cox was among the first of the Woodruff people to claim a piece of land at the side of Woodruff Creek.ⁱ Also claiming land that day were John Cox's father-in-law William Stiff, who had come to Woodruff the previous summer, and James and William Jr., sons of William Stiff. Since William Jr. was still in England, it is possible his father claimed the land in his name. As soon as Edwin immigrated, less than a year earlier, John and his brother Edwin Cox had applied for citizenship.ⁱⁱ Clearly these people meant to grow deep roots in America.

Each of them purchased lots in what would become the town of Woodruff, one and one-quarter acres each. John purchased two lots. William Senior purchased 3 lots. James purchased 20 acres. Each man then had enough land to build a house and keep a few animals on the property for the family's immediate needs. There would be space for a well, a garden spot and even an outhouse. The land was so dry there were no trees. Sturdy sagebrush with roots 3-5 feet deep bored deep into the earth. Dry grass held fast where spring rain had watered the roots. There were no roads, no houses, no



After beautiful Hampshire, England, The desert landscape at Woodruff must have been foreboding.
(Courtesy www.fs.fed.us)

churches, no neighbors, no town—nothing but the nearby cattle herds of Texas ranchers who had moved their animals into the area, but who chose to live in better places. To most eyes this was a barren wasteland.

But to these former British citizens it seemed like heaven.



Farmland near Wield, Hampshire, England where John Cox grew up.

Life in England

John Cox had been baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1852 as a teen at the same time as William Stiff's family in the little town of Wield. John and Annie married in 1858 and moved their little family three times before immigrating to America. To his dying day John was a hard-working man, self-sufficient and capable. Yet no matter that he learned carpenter skills and worked for the British Navy, no matter how hard he worked in England, no matter how much energy and drive he possessed, he would never have owned his own piece of land or his own house. In mid-Nineteenth Century England the common citizen was forced to pay rent his entire life and never become the owner of anything but his own shoes.

Relying on someone else to make jobs available and offer affordable rents meant that when hard times came there was nothing to fall back on, no resources to carry a family



The workhouse at St. Marylebone, England, a dreaded destination for families in poverty. (Wikimedia)

through sickness or accidents. It's the reason the Poor House—sometimes called the Workhouse—became a prominent joke in Woodruff. So many of the Woodruff people had experienced England and the threat of being thrown (at times incarcerated) in the Poor House because they couldn't pay their debts, it was indelibly imprinted in their memories. In Woodruff they could laugh about it. In England in the 1840s and 1850s it was no joke.



Southeast England--showing the places where John and Annie Cox and their families lived and worked. (Courtesy Google)

We have no journals from these ancestors. Each major city boasted of a school, but only those who could afford the tuition could go, which meant the poor working man could not educate his children. Fortunately most of our family were able to write their names and taught each other to read at a somewhat elementary level. With such limited skills, it's no wonder they left few journals, wrote no histories, died leaving hardly a trace. It's the reason a school was built in every little town in Utah even before some of the people had homes. Bishop Lee reported to the Salt Lake Herald in January 1872 shortly after moving his family to the Woodruff site that school was being held and there were thirty scholars.ⁱⁱⁱ Usually the building constructed for community use served both as church and school. These British citizens were determined to have some of the benefits of which they had been deprived in the Old Country.

So when John Cox made the move to the barren location they called Twelve Mile Creek in 1873, the first thing he did was find a way to get to the County Land Office in Laketown and sign his name to an application for land of his own. It would never have happened in England.

John Cox came from a family with little hope of security. His father John Cox Sr. and grandmother Mary Cox were both born to unmarried parents and began life a little below the bottom rung of the social ladder. By the time the elder John

Cox was growing up the old agrarian way of life was giving way to a new industrialism which isolated people from the land even more. As economies changed, towns felt pressures unknown in the past, and the common land, once reserved for the cattle of townfolk, was being sold to pay debts. Slowly the common family lost its resources for survival, and many felt pressure to move to the cities where it was rumored there were jobs. The Cox family followed that pattern as they moved from place to place looking for work. The final trauma in their search for security was when John Senior was killed in 1869 by a train while working as telegraph instructor for International Electric Telegraph Company in Teddington, a suburb south of London.

The Neville-Stiff family, ancestors of both John's wives, originated in northeast Hampshire County, in Rotherwick, Sherborne St. John and Basingstoke. They were also hard working people, masons, mechanics and iron workers. The work they did benefitted the economy of the towns, but the profits were divided among very few. The Imperial Gazetteer summarized the affairs in each town in the mid-1800s, and made a statement about Rotherwick, where all but two of William and Rachel Stiff's children were born: "Real property 2,126 Pounds. Population 386. Houses 93. The property is divided among a few. Tylney Hall was the seat of the Tyley family."^{iv}

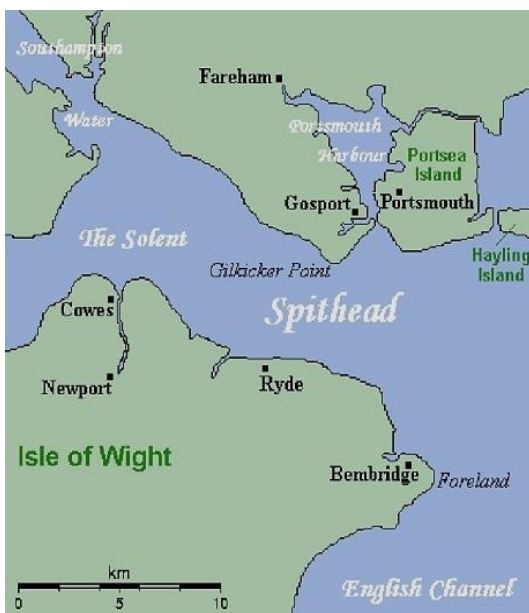
Southampton

In 1858 John Cox and Annie Stiff were married at Southampton, about 15 or 20 miles from their hometown of Wield. John's brother Edwin had moved there and married previously. Building was going on in many places in the city along the river and at the harbor. There was plenty of work, but conditions were difficult at best. The Gazetteer for Southampton makes a strong point that the population of the city "increased six-fold between 1801 and 1861." Tenements were built to adapt to the needs. It goes on to say, "The new



Old tenement at Vyce Lane, St. Michael's Parish-an example of the living at Southampton in the mid-1800s. According to the London Conference records for the LDS Church, the Cox family lived at Northam, the northeast part of the city of Southampton.

town stands compactly with the old; comprises some portions chiefly occupied by the working classes, other portions chiefly or wholly genteel." There was no question about which class John and Annie Cox belonged to. While they were there, in 1859, John Hyrum was born. Edwin's son William Edwin was born there in 1857.



Edwin and John Cox Jr. and their families were in the 1861 Census at Portsea Island, Portsmouth. (Wikimedia)

Portsmouth

After a little over a year, Edwin and John moved their little families, probably on the train which went straight to Portsmouth, where they worked for about two years and where John and Annie's daughter Elizabeth Ann was born. Both families lived on a small island in the bay called Portsea so John and Edwin could be close to their carpentry work. Family tradition is that they worked on ships for the British Navy, but likely did not enlist in the Navy because there is no record for an enlistment.

The 1861 Census listed both families at Portsea Island, but apparently during that time John and Annie decided to go to America. After two years Edwin went back to Southampton where his father was living with his new wife and two children. In time he and his wife Harriet would rescue that family when both parents died. They were on the 1871 Census with Edwin's half-sister Elizabeth Ann in the household. John and Annie left the Portsea Island, again probably rode the train, and went north to Basingstoke before immigrating to America. Annie's family lived in the Basingstoke area and they likely went there for fellowship and to encourage her parents to immigrate as well.

Basingstoke



Basingstoke, 50 miles from London, was a magnet for industry and people looking for work in the mid-1800s (Courtesy freewebs.com)

A center of industry 48 miles southwest of London and 30 miles northeast of Southampton, Basingstoke was very early an industrial town. By 1800 England was experiencing a long economic depression. Since only the very rich could own land, when the population began to grow rapidly, there was not an equitable system of sharing resources. Common land was slowly being sold off. Thus the ordinary family, which could not own land, was deprived of the common land granted for their animals to graze, and in desperation were moving from the countryside into the cities. By 1860 so

many were crowding into Basingstoke, there was resistance from people who had lived there for generations and opposed the building of more houses. Yet the industry, including the notable foundry in Basingstoke, brought considerable business to the area, and people desperate for work were looking for jobs.^{vi}



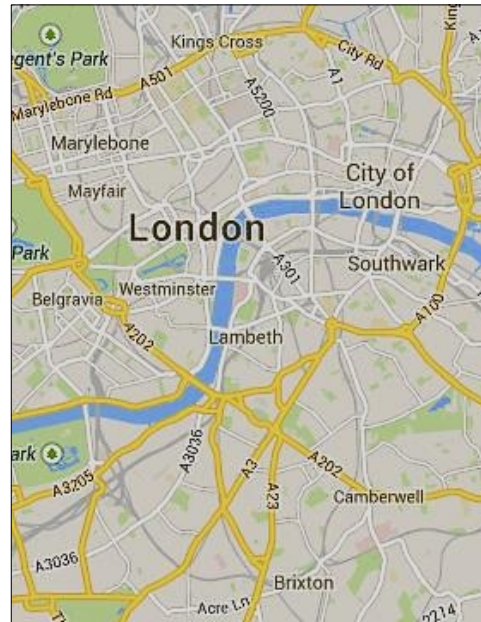
Early Basingstoke (Courtesy ladyjordan wordpress.com)

Far enough from London to maintain its own economy, Basingstoke is close enough to do business. The railroad has connected the two cities since 1839, an early canal ran from Basingstoke to the Thames, and the River Loddon has long been part of the mainstream for the city's industry. Various sub-districts include parishes from Sherborne-St. John and Hartley-Westpall on the north, and as far south as Bradley and Preston Candover. These villages are now close to the city, but remain distinct parishes, and are all places where the family was known to reside at one time. While the area was focused on trade, there was little opportunity for education. There was only one school, which the poor class of people could not afford.^{vii}

London

John and Annie were in Basingstoke about three years. There was plenty of work there, and Annie was only three or four miles from her parents who lived in Rotherwick. William James was born there in 1863. The last part of 1865 they and their three children said their goodbyes and left Basingstoke for London, almost certainly on the train. Annie's sisters Elizabeth Rose and Rachel lived there, and since Annie was

expecting a baby, they probably went to live with one of them. Annie's baby Heber Charles was born in January of 1866, and on May 5 they sailed down the Thames River toward the open sea, bound for America. Hard times lay ahead because they were to lose their son John Hyrum at sea, but they focused on the goal and landed in New York City on June 11, 1866.



Lambeth is just south of the River Thames in London (Courtesy Google)

Heber's birth certificate from St. Catherine's House in London shows he was born in the London borough of Lambeth, in the county of Surrey.^{viii} Lambeth property from earliest times was divided between one nobleman and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and even now much of the freehold land of Lambeth is under Royal ownership as part of the estate of the Duke of Cornwall. So it isn't likely either family owned land there or anywhere else in England.^{ix}

Is there any wonder John Cox and William Stiff were first in line to buy Woodruff land?

True Blue American..



- i Land Certificate: Woodruff City Plot. Rich Co. W. G. No. 7. This is to certify that John Cox is the Lawful Claimant of Lots 5 and 6, Block 10, containing one and one quarter acres each. J.C. Rich. Co. Surveyor, Feb 14, 1873, (Deeds and Mortgages, Rich County Courthouse, Randolph, Utah, Book A, pp. 13-18.) Most of these were Woodruff City Deeds of one and one-fourth acre each. H. C. Putnam, James Neville, Richard Warwick, Elizabeth Sorenson, Charles and Thomas Harrison each claimed one twenty-acre farming plot at the same time. William Henry Lee claimed 32 acres.
- ii Utah State Archives and Records Service, Salt Lake City: Third District Court Declarations of Intention Record Books, 1869-1895, Series: 85111, found on Ancestry.com, John and Edwin Cox, April 9, 1872.
- iii School in Woodruff, Salt Lake Herald, as quoted in Mildred Hatch Thompson, *Rich Memories, some of the happenings in Rich County, Utah from 1863 to 1960*, p. 293.
- iv *Imperial Gazetteer*, Rotherwick, Hampshire, England, p. 724.
- v *Imperial Gazetteer*, Southampton, Hampshire, England, p. 830-831.
- vi Basingstoke History in mid-century England : Anne Hawker, *The Story of Basingstoke*, Local Heritage Books, Newbury, Berkshire, UK, 1984, Family History Library book 942.27B2 H2h, pp. 64-71.
- vii John Burgess, *A History of Hampshire*, Carlisle, 1993, British Family History Library book 942.27 H2bh, pp. 27-28. Also Francis Joseph Baigent, *A History of the Ancient Town and Manor of Basingstoke*, C.J. Jacob, Basingstoke, London-Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1889, pp. 5, 67, 559.
- viii Heber Charles Cox birth : Family records; Birth Certificate for Heber C. Cox (St. Catherine's House, London); copy in possession of Marlene Cox Dimond.
- ix London suburb of Lambeth : "*Royal Southwark and Lambeth*," *Vauxhall History Online Archive*., as found in Wikipedia.