

## Uncle Curd Cox

N. G. Ozment, in San Antonio Express, July 23, 1916



IN THE FALL of 1855, a Tennessee youth bade his loved ones goodbye and turned his face toward the great Southwest. This youth was Curd Cox, son of Henry and Elizabeth Cox of Knox County, Tennessee. As the young man mounted the wagon and drove away he did not know that there awaited him in the far-away adventures through which not one in a thousand safely pass. Those of a religious turn of mind will with one accord agree that there must have been a special Providence over shadowing the life of this man. Others will say that his was the charmed life—a life that was proof against the vengeful missiles of the red men as well as those of an enemy whom he faced for four years during the Civil War.

After a long and perilous journey, young Cox landed in what is now the lower edge of Llano County, in the Crownover neighborhood. He arrived three days before Christmas, 1855. This was the year before this county was created, and settlements were few and separated by miles of hills and vales. At that time there was a settlement some twenty miles northeast of the Crownover settlement, then known as the Fowler settlement. This neighborhood was in the lower part of Burnet County. It was one of the oldest settlements in this section of the State, as these settlers, Josiah and Levi Fowler and Dr. P. M. Yett, came from Tennessee and settled there in 1846. Six years later Burnet County was created. Shortly after the coming of the above settlers, Wiley Fowler, a cousin of Josiah and Levi, cast his lot with them.

Young Cox's first home in Texas was with "Uncle" George and "Aunt" Cynthia Harden with whom he came to Texas. The boy was soon given his first lessons in roping and rounding up cattle. At this time the woods were full of wild animals. Frequently vast herds of deer were seen, while bear, panther, Mexican lion and other animals were plentiful. Now and then these frontiersmen would go on hunting trips for bear, as the meat of this animal was salted and packed away then as pork is now. On these occasions no one would shoot a deer except to feed the dogs. On one of these hunts for bear Young Cox was left with the horses, being told that he would as likely get a shot from that place as elsewhere.

While standing eagerly waiting and watching for a bear, one of the dogs opened up in a ravine nearby. His youthful eyes swept every nook for the animal the dogs were trailing. As he was peering here and there a dark looking object awkwardly shambled over the rocks and out of the ravine. One—two—three times then again and again the young man's gun belched

forth. At this time there dashed up another hunter who, sharply asked, "What are you shooting at deer for?" "I am not shooting at deer" was the sharp retort of the young man, who also said, "Follow me and I will show you." The young man piloted his friend to a spot not far away where there lay a large black bear with seven bullet holes in it. Not a shot from the young man's gun had missed its mark. Six bear were killed on this trip; these were dressed, loaded in a wagon and carried home.

On another occasion this young man's marksmanship likely saved him from serious trouble. He was out one day hunting and as he walked leisurely along looking here and there for game, he did not know that almost above him on a bluff lay a large panther with eyes fixed on him. He chanced to turn his eyes upward when his eyes met those of the vicious creature. There was a quick movement of the gun to the shoulder, followed by a sharp report. At the crack of the gun, the beast leaped forward and fell in a heap near the young man's feet and lay still in death, for the bullet had plowed its way through its brain.

In July of 1857, Young Cox joined a company of prospectors who were going to the "Twin Mountains," near the foot of the plains in search of gold.

About one week after leaving Llano County, while traveling along the section skirting the headwaters of the north fork of the Concho River, some of the party spied not far away in a ravine, an Indian wigwam. On riding down to it, two pairs of moccasins, bows and arrows, together with some meat broiling on a fire were found. The Indians had evidently just left for more comfortable and healthful quarters.

After days of tiresome riding over rough and burning sandbeds, the prospectors sighted the rugged shoulders of Twin Mountains. Visions of wealth swept through the minds of the adventurers. Not long thereafter, the gold hunters were unloading their tools and preparing to set to work earnestly for the golden treasure which they believed lay under the ground all about them. After two or three days of fruitless toil, the invincible, restless and hungry for further adventure, saddled their horses, mounted and rode away toward the Pecos country, their objective point being the "Horse Head" crossing on the Pecos River.

With a faithful guide and other helps they apprehended no trouble in reaching their destination. No one of that company thought that before reaching their destination they were to pass through almost unbearable hardship and suffering. The