

weather was extremely hot—so hot that smoke-like waves of heat arose from the burning sand beds ahead of them. As they rode out into this desert main all vegetable life seemed perished from the face of the earth; not a shrub was to be seen anywhere. No animals except the antelope were seen out there at that time. On these the travelers subsisted. Soon the canteens were emptied, after which the suffering became increasingly great. Stretches of barren territory yet lay before them. The suffering of both man and beast became almost unbearable—so intense was the pain from thirst that some of the men found their tongues so swollen that it was almost impossible to speak. At last the Pecos, thrown like a blue ribbon across the gray of the plain, was seen. Ere long the travelers and their horses, weary and worn, drew up beside the waters of this stream. Both man and beast were frantic with thirst. The horses were given only a small quantity of water at a time, else they would have killed themselves.

After a short sojourn in the Pecos country the party started on the return trip to the Llano country. They took a route that led them south of the territory traversed on the outgoing trip. This route carried them toward the Concho and San Saba Rivers. While crossing the dreaded dry section they found an excellent spring of water, belted with a thriving pecan grove.

One night the party camped on a small stream between the Concho and San Saba. Before retiring, the campers were disturbed by the horses dashing here and there. In a trice Captain Hardeman rushed about one-half his men out to where the horses were left, the remainder of the men stayed in camp to protect it from any attacks that should be made by the Indians, for the prospectors felt sure of their presence nearby. Guards had been put out that night but the sly redskins crept up close, then made a dash for the horses. The Texans followed the frightened horses for about a mile, when they were overtaken and brought back. The Texans lost two horses that were hobbled; one breaking its neck, another its leg.

When within about 100 miles of home, the prospectors saw a herd of buffalo at Kickapoo Springs. Hungry for sport and buffalo meat, they dashed after these animals. Several of the animals were killed. Carcasses of these beasts were scattered here and there near the springs. These had evidently been killed by reckless and wasteful hunters. Three months passed before these adventurers returned to Llano County.

One of the events of that early day was the long journeys taken in driving the cattle to market. These journeys were not without hardships and dangers. It was on one of these journeys that young Cox had one of his narrow escapes from death. He with two other hired hands—John Crownover and Joe Smith—together with a Mr.

Cassiner, owner of the cattle, were driving a herd of 1,000 Spanish steers to Harrisburg, Tex.

Some twelve or fifteen miles east of Austin the cattle were driven into a lane. Mr. Cassiner and young Cox, who were behind the herd, had dismounted and hitched their horses. While some distance away from the horses, the steers, without a moment's warning, turned in a body and tore in the direction of the two men. Like the mad rush of some storm-tossed sea they swept toward the apparently helpless footmen. There was no chance to reach the horses, and to attempt to outrun the frantic beasts meant certain death. A crooked pine log lay a short distance away with the curve turned up. A poor refuge, but the only one left to the two men. Toward this log the men sped and quickly flung themselves underneath it. Nor had they any time to spare, for nearby could be heard the tramping of the terrified herd which hurled themselves over the log like an avalanche of death, and swept on till the thundering tread of their hoofs could no longer be heard in the distance. On crawling from the log a strange spectacle awaited them. Down the path over which the steers had rushed could be seen numbers of sablings, from three to four inches in diameter which had been twisted and torn, lay in a tangled mass on the ground, the whole scene looking as if it had been wrought by the mad havoc of an awful storm.

Mr. Cassiner sat down and wept like a child for he thought his cattle—the product of years of toil—would never be recovered. In a short while, however, the boys had overtaken and rounded up almost every steer in the herd. After this no one but Cox would agree to ride before the herd.

In 1861 young Cox enlisted as a soldier under the command of Colonel Allen and "Wash" Jones, first lieutenant. Young Cox was a young man of striking appearance at this time. This may be seen from a picture taken just before going on the firing line. It was at Milligen's Bend, La., where he first experienced the horrors of war. In this and other battles at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill, this young man saw his companions swept down at each elbow.

In speaking of these encounters he said: "I do not see how it was possible for me to come out of these engagements alive, for the air seemed full of bullets. I was never touched. On one occasion I had a bullet to pass through a sleeve of my coat. Colonel Allen was wounded in the battle of Milligen's Bend and was carried to a hospital some five miles away. 'Wash' Jones was then promoted to the colonelcy. Uncle Curd speaks of a Mexican soldier, Leon Garza, who was a valiant fighter among his comrades.

It was in the '60s the Indians became most troublesome to the settlers in this section. One afternoon Mr. Cox and Eli Shelly were hunting cattle in the lower