

The Life of
Tignal Franklin (Frank) Cox
(1854-1940)

by **Great-Granddaughter Robin Yonash**
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Based on:
The Historical Record
The Cox-Nicholson Saga by LuDelle Cox Powell, 1967
A Narrative of the Origin and Wanderings of the Cox Family by Clark Cox, 1930
and other family memories

Also see the supplemental document
Places Where Frank Cox Lived and Worked

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Biography of Tignal Franklin (Frank) Cox (1854-1940)

Overview

The eldest of eight children born to James Clayton Cox and Mary Ann Nicholson, Tignal Franklin (Frank) Cox was named for his father's good friend, Tignal Coleman, and his mother's brother Frank. His life spanned from the era just prior to the Civil War, when there was still a frontier in America, through to the modern age of telephones and automobiles, paved roads and indoor plumbing.

Frank was an artist and an architect and builder, specializing in theaters, but also doing "regular" painting. He worked throughout the eastern half of the United States, especially in the mid-west and south. His best-known work is the 1895 Grand Opera House in Galveston, Texas which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

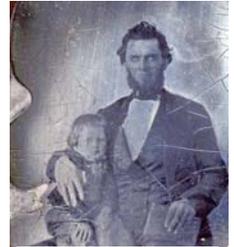
Early Years (1854-1870)

Frank's early years were characterized by frequent, and long distance, moves by his family. By the time he left home at 16 to do his own traveling, his family had relocated three times, traveling a total of about 1,150 miles (this doesn't count the 170 miles his parents moved while his mother was pregnant with him). He continued this peripatetic life as an adult, not settling down until well into his forties.

Frank Cox was born February 17, 1854 near Flat Rock, Shelby County, Indiana. His parents, who were strongly opposed to slavery, had fled here from Kentucky after Southern sympathizers burned them out the previous year.^a His mother, who was pregnant during the move, turned 18 the day after Frank's birth and his father was 26.

Frank was a toddler in 1857¹ when his father Jim decided to move his family further west, ending up in Wellington, Lafayette Co.,² Missouri, a trip of nearly 500 miles. Jim bought a farm near Wellington.^{a,b} The 1860 Census shows the family living in Clay Township, Lafayette Co., Missouri, which included Wellington.^c

The next year, when Frank was 6, war was declared between the north and south and Jim thought it best to leave Missouri, which was a slave state. The family ended up in Virden, Macoupin Co.,³ Illinois,^{a,b} a distance of nearly 300 miles. In Virden, Jim went into partnership with George W. Cox (no relation) in a store.^{a,4,5}



Frank and his father

When Frank was eight, his father enlisted as a Corporal in the War between the States on August 15, 1862 on the Union side, serving the state of Illinois, and was mustered out of Company G, 122nd Infantry Regiment Illinois on July 15, 1865 at Mobile, Alabama.⁶ Frank was 11 when his father returned home.

When Frank was 13, the family moved to Jasper County, Missouri, near Carthage, in 1867^a a trip of over 350 miles. There they settled on a farm near the new town of Georgia.

¹ Neither Clark or LuDelle gives a specific year for the move. Clark's narrative says "James and family, now augmented by the birth of Fanny Alice migrated to Lafayette Co., MO." LuDelle says "Soon after their daughter Fanny Alice (called Allie) was born on October 23rd, 1856 they left..." Since Allie was born in October, 1857 was used as the year of the move as that is "soon after."

² LuDell's saga misspells this as "Fayetville."

³ Clark's account misspells this as "Magoupin."

⁴ Clark's narrative says he opened a grocery business *after* the war. Probably Clark is correct because Jim's Civil War record shows his occupation as farmer when he enlisted.

⁵ The 1870 Census for Virden shows a George W. Cox, grocery merchant. George was a 1st. Sgt. in Company G with Jim. At the time of his enlistment he was a student, which is further evidence that the store business started after the war.

⁶ Civil War records

Artistic Beginnings (1870-1876)

In the Census on July 18, 1870 Frank Cox is listed with the occupation farmhand.^c He was 16. But instead of doing the work expected of him out in the field, he would be found sitting under a tree making pencil sketches of the beautiful surrounding country.^a By late 1870⁷ Frank wanted to leave the farm and try making his own way, doing the things he liked to do and felt fitted for. After talking it over with his parents, they reluctantly agreed and he left for the nearby town of Buffalo, Missouri. There he found an opening for a sign painter, and after trying his hand at it, and finding he could give satisfaction, he soon had all he could do. From this beginning he was able to work his way farther on, earning enough in one town to take him to the next.^a

He moved from town to town, doing sign painting in several states around Missouri. Eventually he began to give shows in towns along the way, calling them "Chalk Talks," in which he drew caricatures of famous people.

He later opened a scene painting business, furnishing all the stage scenery and advertising drop curtains for theaters.¹¹

Marriage and Children; Frank's Theater Work Expands (1876-1884)

On June 21, 1876 at age 22, Frank married Clara Elenora Atkins in Streator, La Salle Co., Illinois.^d She was the daughter of Davis Atkins and Elizabeth Batten.^d Their first child, Myrtle, was born March 10, 1878 and Zella followed on February 16, 1883.^d Nothing is known about why Frank was in Streator or how he and Clara met. Despite marriage and children, Frank continued his itinerant lifestyle.

- In 1878, Frank joined his father in Springfield, Greene Co., Missouri where they established a grocery business.^b The store was Cox & Co. at 220 College St.,⁸ Frank also did sign painting and the extended family lived at 410 E. Walnut St.⁹ He ran this ad in the City Directory:



⁷ LuDelle's account says he left at age 15, but since he was listed as a farmhand on the 1870 Census this is unlikely. While he might have already left home prior to the Census and the family simply included him in the tabulation because he might have been otherwise overlooked (this was a common practice), then wouldn't they have listed him as an artist rather than a farmhand?. Clark saga says he left when lead was discovered at Joplin. Lead was actually discovered there before the Civil War, but mining didn't really start until after the war. Joplin was formally established in 1871 by John C. Cox (no relation). *A History of Jasper County, Missouri, and Its People, Volume 1* by Joel Thomas Livingston, 1912
http://books.google.com/books/about/A_history_of_Jasper_County_Missouri_and.html?id=CX0UAAAAAYAAJ

⁸ The map at http://digital.library.umssystem.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?sort=umcscsanic_ti&sid=bba2f080ada8612a68ecc4a39bc66289&q1=springfield+1884&rgn1=umcscsanic_ti&c=umcscsanic&ox=0&oy=0&lastres=1&res=1&width=3231&height=3854&maxw=6463&maxh=7709&subview=getsid&lasttype=boolean&view=entry&viewid=SANBORN5758.JPG&entryid=x-sanborn5758.jpg&cc=umcscsanic&quality=1&resnum=2&evl=full-image&image.x=1962&image.y=917 shows the location of the family store on the south side of the street.

⁹ *History and Directory of Springfield and North Springfield* by George S. Escott, 1878
<http://books.google.com/books?id=k3gUAAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22History+and+Directory+of+Springfield+and+North+Springfield%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=fUQ9T-zWHeeWiALqy4CPAQ&ved=0CDYQ6AEWAA#v=snippet&q=cox&f=false>

- On June 8, 1880 the Census shows Frank, Clara, and Myrtle still living in Springfield with Frank's parents.^c
- In the 1883 Indianapolis City Directory Frank is listed as a "Scenic Painter" boarding at the Brunswick, so he was living there in 1882.
- An 1883 edition of the *New York Dramatic Mirror* says that Frank Cox has just completed a new drop curtain for the **Opera House in Batavia, New York**. It further ways that Frank is from Indianapolis.

While their children were born in Streator, Illinois, it's likely that Clara went home to be with her mother for the births, but Frank didn't live there. Possibly Clara simply moved back home in order to have some stability while Frank traveled. For whatever reason, she and Frank divorced about 1883-1884.

New York (1884-1890)

Around 1884, Frank went to New York and rented a loft in the Grand Opera House building on 23d and 8th Ave and opened up a Scenic Studio.^b In 1884-1885, Frank married for the second time to Ada Walser,¹⁰ "a striking brunette of South Bend Indiana"^b and continued his nomadic ways. (The 1900 Census shows Frank, Ada, and Frank's brother Clark boarding with a family in Anniston City, Calhoun, Alabama. In the 1910 Census, they are living in Chicago with his brother Eugene's family.^c)



Ada Walser

- In 1884, the *Citizen-Advertiser* of **Auburn, New York** reported that "The new curtain at the **Academy of Music** is the subject of much admiration. It is the work of Frank Cox, well known scenic artist, and represents a scene upon the coast of Scotland."
- *Harry Miner's American dramatic directory for the season of 1884-85* lists Frank as the Scenic Artist for the new **Smith's Opera House in Tarrytown, New York**. and for **Smith's Opera House in Batavia, New York**.
- The 1887 Lockport, New York City Directory lists him as a "Painter" boarding at 32 East Street, so he was living there in 1886.
- In 1888 the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that Frank had worked on **Boyd's Opera House, Omaha, Nebraska**; this would have been done in 1887.
- In 1888 the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that **Dohany's Opera House in Council Bluffs, Iowa** is closed for the season and is now having some fine scenery painted by Frank Cox, scenic artist, from the Grand Opera House, New York. Mr. Cox is the artist that did the fine work at Boyd's Opera House, Omaha.
- In an 1890 ad in the *New York Dramatic Mirror*, Frank lists **Boyd's Opera House in Omaha, Nebraska**; **Paddock's New Opera House in Beatrice, Nebraska**; **Doheny's Opera House in Council Bluffs, Iowa**; and an **Opera House in Vicksburg, Mississippi** as recent accomplishments.

¹⁰ August 1885 article in the *New York Clipper* (a trade magazine for theater and the arts) says "Ada Cox, wife of Scenic Artist Frank Cox..." is recovering from diphtheria." This means Frank and Ada were already married in 1885, contrary to their statement on the 1930 census that they had been married 12 years at that time.

Tramp Painter/Lightning Artist (~1888?)

At some point in his career, Frank began giving presentations billed as the “Tramp Painter/Lightning Artist” in various locales.

As "the Lightning Artist." he sometimes painted up to 50 pictures in one evening. As the oil paintings grew, both in size and scope, and his billing changed to "The Tramp Painter."¹¹

He often made oils of local scenes during his lectures. Sometimes he would pretend he was dissatisfied with the way a picture was turning out—green skies, blue grass, red splotches and gray spots. Suddenly he would turn the canvas upside down, and the audience would see an entirely different picture, with blue skies and green grass. One of these was a picture of The Garden of the Gods [Colorado] with the red rocks. The gray spot turned out to be Pike's Peak in the distance. One of his popular paintings was a 4-foot by 6-foot painting of the entrance to The Garden of the Gods.

Neither Clark or LuDelle gives a specific timeframe. LuDelle's narrative implies that it was prior to 1873. Clark implies that it was early in his (Frank's) career. A playbill, as shown to the right, for a “Friday evening, Feb. 17th” performance at the DeRemer Opera House, which was located in Pueblo, Colorado.

In an earlier edition of this biography, it was assumed that the Tramp Painter/Lightning Artist occurred early in his career, ~1871, because of the itinerant nature of the show appeared to conflict with other commitments later on. However, subsequent research has discovered that the DeRemer Opera House didn't open until 1885; it became Wonderland in 1891; Columbia in 1893; DeRemer again in 1897; and burned on May 1, 1899.

For the years that the DeRemer Opera House was operating under that name, February 17th fell on a Friday only in 1888 and 1899. In 1888, Frank was still somewhat itinerant. In 1899 he was entrenched in New Orleans and in the process of moving to Chicago. Thus it now appears that ~1888 was probably the timeframe for the “Tramp Painter/Lightning Artist”.

Copies of newspaper reviews are provided below.

NEW TO-DAY

DeRemer Opera 'House'

J. B.
DeRemer.....Proprietor
Geo. M. Hudget.....Manager

Friday evening, Feb. 17th

Frank Cox

The Lightning Artist

Oil Paintings
4x6 feet in fifteen
minutes

Charcoal Sketches
In 1 and 2 minutes

FIFTY SKETCHES

During the evening
accompanied by his popular lecture
“The Tramp Painter”

Tickets.....25 and 50c

¹¹ Beverly B. Ross, great-niece of Tignal Franklin Cox http://www.askart.com/askart/c/frank_cox/frank_cox.aspx

(The following news clippings, for which no date or location is available, were transcribed from the "Scrapbook" of Mary Ann (Nicholson) Cox by Ron Ritchie, husband of Mary Ann's great-granddaughter.)

THE TRAMP PAINTER

Mr. Frank Cox gave a unique entertainment last night to a well pleased audience at the DeRemer Opera House. Mr. Cox has been in Pueblo most of the winter, and recently painted a new drop curtain for the theater. Over two hundred drop curtains in different parts of the United States, Canada and Mexico have been painted by him in the last five years.

The entertainment was in fact an illustrated lecture, describing his varied career as a farmer's boy, deputy clerk, merchant and an irrepressible artist.; his travels through the country; his adventures in the southern states, Mexico and Texas and closing with an interesting description of the artistic beauties of the scenery about Mantoia.

A large number of rapid sketches were made with the brush, most of them humorous in character, one being that of a well known citizen of Pueblo. He also made several large oil paintings. One showed the different stages of a ship on fire at **s. Another was a ***** mare of colors with a green sky, a blue foreground, and two big splotches of red with a gray reflection of a cloud under them. The artist seemed himself to be dissatisfied with it, and turned the whole business upside down, whereupon it turned out to be a picture of the famous Gateway to the Garden of the Gods. The sky and the fields now in their proper colors, the red spots were the two big rocks, the gray "reflection" was Pikes Peak. All was done in about ten minutes.

The last sketch showed the artist in his nightgown blowing out the candle and saying goodnight.

Frank Cox

The sketches in oil and water color by Mr. Frank Cox are interesting works of art. Mr. Cox is a scenic artist of much ability and is at present engaged in this capacity at the Opera House. His central and largest piece was a view of Pikes Peak. He has also a large number of views of Colorado scenery. A little volume which many enjoyed examining, contained a sketch of the Swiss Cottage, the Old Brewery, the Spinning Mills, a view near the Illinois Central Depot, Chicks Mill and Cash Jones' residence.

A very true copy of the island down the river, is made in oils with the pallet-knife, without the use of a brush.

THE TRAMP PAINTER

Mr. Frank Cox gave a highly pleasing entertainment at the opera New Year's night. The attendance, owing to a number of causes, was not so large as is would otherwise have been, but those who were present enjoyed a rare treat. He drew a large number of character sketches, making each one in an incredible short period of time and the audience manifested their appreciation by liberal applause. As he proceeded with his drawings he gave a very instructive lecture on art, which alone was well worth the price of admission. He drew pictures in colors – the burning of a ship at sea and Eagle Point, not taking more than fifteen minutes in either case.

New Orleans (1890-1900)

In 1889^b or 1890, Frank moved his base of operations from New York to New Orleans. His younger brothers, Clark and Eugene, joined him for some of this time. An 1890 ad for **Folmar's New Opera House of Troy, Alabama**, in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* says "Scenery by Cox Bros, N. O."

Frank established the Great Southern Scenic Studio at the Grand Opera House in New Orleans.¹² The 1892 City Directory for New Orleans (data collected in 1891) lists both Frank and his brother Clark. Frank's residence is 422 St. Charles.

Next, Frank branched out as a theater architect. The 1894 City Directory for New Orleans (data collected in 1893) lists Frank as an architect with an office at 17 Baronne, Room 6 and a residence at 422 St. Charles. In the 1895 City Directory for New Orleans (data collected in 1894) Frank lists himself in the business directory under Architects. His address is 316 Baronne. The 1897 City Directory for New Orleans (data collected in 1896) lists Frank and his brother Eugene. Frank also lists himself in the business directory under Architects with the 316 Baronne address.

While Frank's base was New Orleans, he continued to travel around the south and Midwest as a theater architect and scenic painter. Some of his accomplishments include:

- September 28, 1891 issue of the *Fort Worth Gazette* in Fort Worth, Texas reported that the **Dallas Opera House** had just finished a major remodel. "The scenery was painted by Sesman & Landers of Chicago, and Mr. Frank Cox of the Grand Opera House, New Orleans. The work done by Mr. Cox is far superior to anything else in the house, and unquestionably the best even in the Southwest. Mr. Cox has had the entire arrangement of the stage mechanism, and at this work he has no superior."
- On July 16, 1892, the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that the Scenic Artist, Frank Cox, is making improvements to the **St. Charles Theatre and Academy of Music in New Orleans**.
- The February 25, 1893 issue of the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that the new drop curtain at the **Grand Opera House in Atlanta**, "which was painted by Frank Cox, of New Orleans, represents Shakespeare reading one of his plays to Queen Elizabeth, and is a beautiful work of art."
- An ad in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* on June 10, 1893 stated that **Wilkinson's Opera House in Denison, Texas**, ready to open September 1, 1893, was "built throughout by Mr. Frank Cox."
- On October 14, 1893 the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that "Frank Cox, the scenic artist, has been doing great work in the South during the past summer and has big contracts ahead for next season. He has just completed a new \$35,000 ground floor **theatre at Denison, Texas**: remodeled and refurnished the **Grand at San Antonio, Texas**; built and furnished **Austin's Opera House, Effingham, Illinois**; new scenery and stage work for **Grand at Nashville**; **opera houses at Waterloo, Illinois, Pleasant Hill, Illinois**, and **French Opera House [New Orleans]**. He has entirely remodeled and decorated the **Academy of Music** and rearranged the lobby of the **Grand Opera House, New Orleans**. He has under contract all the different **tableaux to be given by the various mystic societies in the theatres at Mardi Gras**."

¹² In 1892, Frank ran an ad in *The New York Clipper* for the Great Southern Scenic Studio at the Grand Opera House in New Orleans.

- The November 3, 1894 issue of the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that “Frank Cox, architect of theatres, has returned to the city [New Orleans] from Texas. He has completed the building of **Peterson's Theatre in Paris, Texas; Cox's Opera House. Sherman, Texas** (his own theatre), and has the **new Galveston Theatre under roof**. He has prepared **plans for remodeling the Grand Opera House in this city**, and is busily engaged on **plans for the new Lyceum Theatre, at Atlanta, Georgia**, to cost \$70,000; the **new Savannah Theatre, at Savannah, Georgia** to cost \$85,000; and for the **rebuilding of Sweeney and Coombs' Opera House, at Houston, Texas**, to cost \$25,000.”

- On May 10, 1894 the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that Frank Cox, the well-known scenic artist, manages the **Opera House at Sherman, Texas**.

- On January 12, 1895 the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that “The new **Grand Opera House at Galveston, Texas** opened on Thursday of last week. It was the most important theatrical event in that city for many years. ... It is said to be the finest theatre in Texas, and this fact reflects credit on Frank Cox, its architect, and Henry Greenwall, who associated with himself a number of local capitalists in the formation of a stock company that owns the house and the adjoining hotel. ... Mr. Greenwall is warm in his praise of Mr. Cox, and that architect **will direct the building of the theatres at Atlanta and Savannah** for the extension of the Greenwall circuit.



Galveston Grand Opera House

- The May 11, 1895 issue of the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that “The dedication of Henry Greenwall's **New Lyceum Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia**, last Monday night ... drew as notable an audience as was ever gathered in that city. ... The architect, Frank Cox, deserves great praise for the airiness and brightness of the auditorium, and the fresco artist deserves congratulation for the work which has made it one of the handsomest interiors in the country. ... On the curtain is a thoroughly artistic painting of "Sappho and Her Companions," by Cox Brothers. The background is a charming perspective overlooking a crystal lake.”

- On June 15, 1895 an article titled MR. GREENWALL'S NEW THEATRES in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* said:

“The coming season Henry Greenwall will control nine new ground-floor theatres in the leading Southern cities, which have been booked with gilt-edged attractions.

“The new **Opera house at Houston, Texas**, will be a model of architectural beauty. Work has been begun on it under the supervision of Frank Cox, the architect, and it will be ready to open by September 15. The features will be commodious tire exits, roomy stage, and beautiful decorations.



Lyceum Theater in Atlanta

“The old Savannah Theatre, the oldest in the United States, is being torn down, and in its place will rise an amusement, having every modern improvement. The theatre will be known as the **Savannah Opera House**.

“**New Orleans** will have the **Grand Opera House** entirely re-fitted and made the finest theatre in the South, its auditorium and stage being especially adapted for the comfort of both the public and combinations.

“The **New Lyceum in Memphis**, built at an actual outlay of \$200,000, is the pride of Memphis theatregoers.

“The **New Lyceum at Atlanta**, recently opened, takes rank among the leading theatres of the South.

“Two theatres will be controlled in **Nashville**—the **Theatre Vendome**, where the best attractions will appear, and the **Grand Opera House**, that will present the medium grade attractions at popular prices.”

Frank Cox would have a hand in most of these.

- In 1899, Frank was the Vice President of the "Artists' Association of New Orleans."¹³

In addition, Frank and Cox Brothers Studio designed and staged the Comus Parades (later called the Mardi Gras) and Grand Carnival Balls.^{b,14} Frank also superintended the building of the Grand Peace Jubilee Parade in Washington DC in 1899 to celebrate the end of the Spanish-American War.^b

Chicago (1900-1918)

The yellow fever scares and quarantines broke up the business in New Orleans^b and Frank moved his base to Chicago, where his two brothers soon joined him. On December 22, 1900, Frank ran an ad in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* saying that he was an “Architect, and expert builder and remodeler of theaters.” He gave an address of 3501 Wabash Ave. in Chicago.

In 1901 *New York Dramatic Mirror* had an ad for The Cox Brothers, a New Scene Painting Studio in Chicago, 1925-1927 Archer Ave., Corner of State, next to the Alhambra Theater. A 1903 ad gives an address of 1925 Archer, Chicago.

Frank disposed of his interest in 1903 to devote his time to theatrical building and Clark moved to Texas. The Studio was sold to Sosman & Landis, and Eugene stayed in Chicago with his own Scenic Painting business.^b Travel continued to play a large part of Frank's life.

- The 1901-1902 edition of *Julius Cahn-Gus Hill Theatrical Guide and Moving Picture Directory* lists Frank as the Scenic Artist for the **Temple Theatre in Alton, Illinois** and for **Klein's Opera House in Seguin, Texas**.
- On November 9, 1901 the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that “**Staub's Theatre, in Knoxville, Tennessee**, rebuilt from the ground up during the past summer at an expenditure of about \$40,000, was formally opened on Oct. 14.” ... The style is Empire, and the decorations, in old ivory, gold and crimson,



Vendome Theatre in Nashville

¹³ *Standard History of New Orleans* by Henry Rightor, The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago, 1900

¹⁴ *Encyclopedia of New Orleans Artists 1718-1918* by John A. Mahe

- In June, 1902, the *Montgomery Advertiser* reported on the remodel of the **Montgomery Theater, Montgomery, Alabama**. The work was done by Frank Cox, a theater architect and builder from Chicago. The article went on to say “He makes a specialty of building and equipping theatres. He is now rebuilding the **Vendome Theatre in Nashville** and has just completed new theatres in **Knoxville, Tennessee.**, and **Chattanooga, Tennessee**. Mr. Cox will remain in Montgomery throughout the summer and will personally supervise the work of remodeling the Montgomery Theatre.
- On July 5, 1902 the *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that “The work of remodeling the **Montgomery Theatre [in Montgomery, Alabama]** began last week. The contract was awarded to Frank Cox. a theatre architect and builder of Chicago. The work is to be completed by September 1. Mr. Cox is at present rebuilding and equipping the **Vendome Theatre at Nashville**, and **has just completed several others, located at Chattanooga and Knoxville, Tenn.** He will remain in this city until about September 1.”
- On July 29, 1907 the **Majestic Theatre in Streator, Illinois** opened its doors.¹⁵ Frank Cox was the architect.¹⁶
- On September 24, 1912, the *Alton Evening Telegraph* reported on the opening of the **Hippodrome Theatre in Alton, Illinois** the evening before. Frank Cox of Chicago was identified as the architect.



Los Angeles (1919-1940)

After his wife Ada’s death on May 5, 1918, Frank left Chicago and headed west. On the way, he stopped in Arizona, where he built two theaters, and then to Los Angeles,^b arriving around 1919 or 1920.¹⁷ Here he settled down at last, after over 60 years of nearly constant travel.

His daughter Myrtle and son-in-law George Leonardy soon followed him, settling in Covina. Daughter Zella, with his granddaughters Jacqueline and Gwendolyn and his ex-wife Clara Peddicord, also relocated around 1921. Frank remained active in the lives of his granddaughters, having them stay with him during vacations, taking them to dinner and events, and other get-togethers.¹⁸

On December 16, 1921 the Covina Argus reported on the opening of the **Covina Theater in Covina, California**. Frank was the architect. The theater was owned by his son-in-law George Leonardy (married to Frank’s daughter Myrtle) and his nephew Earl Sinks. George and Earl operated the theater for several years,



¹⁵ http://mywebtimes.com/archives/ottawa/print_display.php?id=303280

¹⁶ <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/5132>

¹⁷ His death certificate says that he had been in California 22 years at the time of his death, which calculates to an arrival in California of 1918. However, that can’t be right because it would put him in California prior to Ada’s death and wouldn’t have allowed time to build theaters in Arizona on his way to California. We know he is here by July 1921 because he is mentioned in the Covina newspaper.

¹⁸ Various articles in the Covina newspapers.

selling it in 1926. The site is now occupied by the Covina Center for the Performing Arts. An attempt was made to remodel the original building, but it was structurally unsound so was torn down and replaced. Replicas of the original marquee letters adorn the new building.¹⁹

Frank was connected for a short time with the Los Angeles Scenic Studios, then began to devote his time to easel work on water colors of California's wonderful scenery. He married for the third and final time on August 5, 1926, at age 72, to Ida Marie Glanzer in Hollywood.^b In the 1930 Census, Frank and Ida were living in a rental at 251 Olive St., Los Angeles, California. His occupation is "Artist in an art studio."^c He was 76.

On September 4, 1931, Frank designed and built the "World's Largest Birthday Cake" in honor of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Los Angeles. He was the designing artist and construction engineer for La Fiesta Association Ass'n, Ltd. and used his full name, Tignal Franklin Cox for the first time (see next page)

On March 30, 1940 Frank passed away at age 86 from chronic myocarditis. He was cremated and his ashes were buried with his parents in Oakwood Cemetery, Alton, Illinois.^d



¹⁹ <http://www.covinacenter.com/History-of-the-Covina-Theatre-Group.html>



The World's Largest Birthday Cake

La Reina de Los Angeles, 1781-1931

150 years old, Sept. 4th, 1931.

*Tignal Franklin Cox, Designing Artist and Construction
Engineer for La Fiesta Ass'n, Ltd.*

Map of Frank Cox Work Locations

For details on the locations, see the map online at <https://maps.google.com/?mid=1362957539>.



End Notes

^a *The Cox-Nicholson Saga* by LuDelle Cox Powell, 1967

^b *A Narrative of the Origin and Wanderings of the Cox Family* by Clark Cox, 1930

^c Census records

^d Official vital records