

EXTRACTED FROM THE SOUTHERN STAR, AUGUST 5 1903 (Ozark AL)

MR COX (WILLIAM FLETCHER COX) WRITES OF OLD TIMES

Mr Editor I have been ruminating over the days when I was a boy, and the things that happened then. I will first commence my on generation and their happenings. My great grandfathers came over from Ireland at an early day. They were of Scotch and Irish blood, and settled in North Carolina about the middle of the 18th century, the sir names of both being Cox. My grand father Edward Cox married Nancy Cox, and they moved to Georgia where they lived for awhile and then moved to Alabama on Pea river. As they came through the Indian Nation, one night while asleep, the Indians killed one of the oxen, took the hide off one hind quarter, built a fire and "jerked" it in the road.

My grand father had three brothers. They followed Daniel Boone's track west. My grand mother had two brothers who moved to Alabama, Charles Cox settling in Russell Co, and Manuel (probably Emanuel) Cox in Barbour Co, in about 1816 or 17. When the Indians put on the war paint in 1836, the white settlers had to build forts or block houses for protection. A fort was built at Fort Gaines Ga, out of logs set on end stockade fashion. It was for the women and children, while the men scouted the woods for Indians. Finally, peace was restored, and they went to their Homes. The settlements were far apart, with no roads except Indian trails along the rivers. There was an Indian trail leading up the Chocktawhatchee river on the east side to Eufaula, then called Erwinton, an old Indian trading post, and another out to Pea river.

A man by the name of Cooley living near Columbia, Al, went to the upper settlement in Barbour Co and swapped for an Indian pony, and brought it home. Soon after this, the pony left him. He mounted his crop-eared pony with a hunter's wallet and rations across his saddle, and hatchet in hand to blaze the trail. They travelled through the woods for this was a desert then, no one living near. The pony took a northwest course, heading the Big Mercy and then struck the Chocktawhatchee river near the old block house that Jackson's Army built for the protection of women and children from the Indians. The horse crossed the river there, then crossed Hurricane Creek where Thomas Andrews afterwards built a mill. The horse then took the ridge as the Newton and where Hometown road now runs, and made a turn at China Grove Camp Ground, taking route now known as the Daleville and Louisville road. Mr Cooley blazed the trail as he went and returned the same way.

My father settled on Claybank Creek about the year 1829. There being but few living near, and Indians roving the country over. One day while at work, he heard a gun fire and the cows came running home. He knew that there was trouble at hand, as frontier men were always on the alert. He gathered his neighbors, Henry Stokes, Noel Dowling, Samuel Hallford, Gordon Hallford, and others, and went on trail of the cows. They soon found father's bell ox shot down and the bell gone. They went on a little further and found the Indians. Noel Dowling being the first to see an Indian, fired but missed his man. The Indian fell down, rolled over and over like a dog to his wigwam, and sixteen warriors came up with guns in their hands. They denied having the bell. The way the posse had of getting away from the Indians was by yelling "come on boys we have got em." The Indians took fright and left. This happened on the flat where S M Blackman now lives.

THE PANTHER;

A man by the name of King built a mill where Jordan Brook's mill now stands, and a man by the name of Allen Carter was the Miller. One day while he was down in the pit at the meal chest he saw something jump in at the door. He thought it was a yellow dog. The next thing he knew a panther jumped on him. The floor being made of boards and not nailed down, the panther got his foot in a crack, and Carter held him down, until some men at work near by could come and kill the beast with their grubbing hoes.

HAMPTON PARRISH AND THE BEAR;

A man by the name of Hampton Parrish, who lived where Jason Fain now lives (1903) went out to look after his cows on Favorite Branch right over back of where Charlie Stokes' field now is. He heard a hog squeal and went to see what was the matter. A bear had the hog. Mr Stokes hollowed at the bear. When

the bear discovered him he made for him and ran Mr Parrish up a sapling. Having a woodsman's hunting knife, Mr Parrish struck the bear in the eye and left him.

WILD CAT:

A man by the name of Jack Matthews lived near Coffee Springs in Coffee Co. A wild cat went in his house in the day time and jumped on him. Mr Jack Sasser who lived at what we know as the Billie Blackman place near McSwain's Mill, was at work in his field and one attacked him. It was nothing uncommon to hear the screams of wild beasts. Over near Sylvan Grove late one evening while a Negro woman was gone to the spring for water she heard her baby scream. She hurried back and found a raccoon trying to drag her child out the door.
(End of WFC ruminating)

The following is from an article in The Southern star of 1903, written by W. F. Cox, the setting being about 1835 and out toward Fort Rucker. (Provided by Glenda Haskins): "This was wild country back then and the early settlers had many thrilling experiences. Bear and panther were common when Dr Adkins first settled below Peter's old mill place. He set out some peach trees, and as soon as they began bearing, the bear began to eat the fruit. Late one Saturday night while all were asleep, old bruin decided to sample the peaches good. He broke the limbs down and ate as many as he wanted. On Sunday morning, the doctor saw the sign and he said "Boys, lets have some fun!" He called John, George and Lewis, his three sons, and Frank and Mike, his two Negro men, all being regular hunters, and then he called up his pack of hounds. He had a brindled colored, bobtailed catch dog, a species of wolf and dog mixed, which was called Bone. When they blew the horn, every dog answered with a yell. and soon they were on bruin's trail. They quickly found him in a thicket and gave chase. They ran him round and round, and as he came near John Adkins shot and crippled him. The boys then turned old bone loose, and he soon covered him. Bone had many hard battles with the bear family in which he had come out first best, and this gave him confidence. But this was his fateful fight. Brer Bruin backed himself back under a clay root and when faithful old bone went in after him, he squeezed him so hard that bone died of his injuries. But the bear did not escape. While he was so lovingly embracing his antagonist, the Negro man, Mike, ran up and shot him in the shoulder, which made him turn bone loose, and put an end to him."