

# James C. Cox Civil War Record

According to Ludelle Cox Powell and Clark Cox

Compared to the Historical Record

**Based on extracts from the following documents:**

*The Cox - Nicholson Saga* by LuDelle Cox Powell  
*A Narrative of the Origin and Wanderings of the Cox Family* by Clark Cox  
James C . Cox Official Military Records

## LEGEND:

Green highlighting indicates agreement the historical record

Yellow highlighting indicates consistent with the historical record, but can't be verified

Gray highlighting indicates conflict with the historical record

## **The Cox - Nicholson Saga by LuDelle Cox Powell**

On the following March 7, 1861 Clark Alonza was born. One month later war was declared between the North and South, and Jim thought it best to leave Missouri. After selling the farm he moved his family to Virden, Illinois, where he went into partnership with George W. Cox (no relation) in a general merchandise store. Business was good and they were saving money, but Jim grew more and more restless as the war progressed and was eager to join the Union Army.

Mary was grievously distressed to see her husband's wild excitement on hearing the drums calling the men to town meetings. Many times he would stop short in the midst of a meal, and grabbing his hat, dash out the door headed for the gatherings. It was useless for Mary to undertake to dissuade him, for his mind was made up. He was most determined. In August 1862 he enlisted under Captain Cowen and General<sup>1</sup> John T. Renicker<sup>2</sup> in Company G, 122rd Illinois Volunteer Regulars,<sup>3</sup> stationed at Carbondale, Illinois.<sup>4</sup> This town being nearby, Mary was able to visit him often.

Jim liked good coffee and found it hard to the watery brown fluid served as such in the mass hall. Almost at once he began supervising the coffee making and was soon being called "Coffee Cox", a name endured throughout the war period.

~~~

Soon after Jim's return to Carbondale,<sup>4</sup> his company was sent farther South and Mary was left desolate, along with her three small children. On November 8th, 1863 Ona Etta was born, named for Jim's niece Ona McCalip. Neighbors and friends were more than kind throughout the weary times that followed.

By this time Jim was deep in the throes of war. At the battle of Kennesaw Mountain<sup>5</sup> he was shot through the chin, leaving a hole so large he was forced to wear a beard ever after.<sup>6,12</sup> Later, while on a burning ship in Mobile Bay, he was compelled to slide down a rope in order to save his life.<sup>7</sup> This so severely burned the inner parts of his hands he was never able to open them part way. At another time he was confined in Libby Prison,<sup>8</sup> suffering illnesses from which he never fully recovered.<sup>9,15</sup> These were his battle scars.

~~~

Jim was away on one of his trips, later going to Alton, Illinois on business. He loved this hilly old town on the Mississippi river, always having been an admirer of rolling country. He remembered well having been there before, during the war when helping to guard the Federal Penitentiary near the river front.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Rinaker was a Colonel at the time. He didn't become a General until after the war.

<sup>2</sup> Rinaker is the correct spelling of his name.

<sup>3</sup> This matches the historical record.

<sup>4</sup> The historical record shows that the 122<sup>nd</sup> was mustered in at Carlinville, Illinois, not Carbondale. Further, Carbondale is nearly 150 miles from Virden, not at all close in 1861 travel terms. Carlinville was only 20 miles from Virden.

<sup>5</sup> Jim could not have been wounded at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia (June 27, 1864), because at the time his Regiment was over 300 miles away fighting the Battle of Tupelo, Mississippi. Also, during this time, Jim was absent on sick leave at the barracks in Cairo, Illinois, where he had been put in charge as the Superintendent on March 17, 1864.

<sup>6</sup> He did wear a beard after the war. See discussion in Clark's section, below, about Shiloh for the probable location of this injury.

<sup>7</sup> This is consistent with the historical record. Jim's regiment traveled by steamer from New Orleans to Mobile Bay, Alabama in March 1865, just prior to the Battle of Fort Blakely on April 9. See also the discussion in Clark's section.

<sup>8</sup> This is not supported by the historical record. Libby Prison was in Richmond, Virginia and the 122<sup>nd</sup> was never in Virginia. Further, Libby Prison was reserved for Union Officers and as a Corporal, Jim was a non-com. According to the historical record, Jim was never confined to a *Confederate* prison. He was briefly captured at the battle of Jackson in Tennessee on December 20, 1862, then paroled. The *Union* Army sent him to the Benton Barracks near St. Louis, Missouri where he reported on February 26, 1863, two months after his capture and parole by the Confederacy. Among other things, Benton Barracks was used as an encampment for paroled Federal POWs released from the Confederacy. These paroled prisoners were released by Confederate authorities on the condition they would "not bear arms against Southern forces until the expiration of parole". By March 31 Jim was AWOL, and was officially reported as "deserted" on July 12, 1863. By September 1863 he was back with his Regiment in Tennessee.

<sup>9</sup> These illnesses may have happened at Benton Barracks or/and at the Cairo Barracks. The winter of 1862-1863 was especially tough for all soldiers at the Benton Barracks. Besides being very cold, a small pox epidemic broke out ([www.usgennet.org/usa/mo/county/stlouis/benton.htm](http://www.usgennet.org/usa/mo/county/stlouis/benton.htm)). Jim was there during this time. In addition, his war record shows he was on sick leave at the Cairo Barracks from June 16, 1864 until September 1864.

<sup>10</sup> Although Jim was assigned special duty as the Superintendent of the Cairo Barracks, the prison for the Cairo Barracks seems to have been located in Alton, not Cairo. See <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~prsjr/wars/cwar/pow/0index.htm>

## ***A Narrative of the Origin and Wanderings of the Cox Family by Clark Cox***

James and family, now augmented by the birth of Fanny Alice, migrated to Lafayette Co. Missouri and settled on a farm near the village of Wellington where on a stormy night, March 7th 1861, Clark Cox was born. Shortly after this event the feeling between the North and South became so intense that James C., whose sympathies were with the north, was compelled to abandon what had not been confiscated and make his way at night across the river into the Federal lines in order to save his life, the family following as soon as he made proper arrangements. They were assisted in every way by the next door neighbors who, although sympathizing with the south, were, nevertheless loyal friends.

They located in Virden in Macoupin Co., Illinois and one of my first memories is of Father holding me up for a view of Abe Lincoln who was on the rear platform of the train taking him to his home in Springfield [Illinois]. Father was home on furlough at the time.

After getting the family settled and making arrangements for their welfare he enlisted in company G, 122nd Reg. Illinois Volunteers under Capt. Cowan<sup>3</sup> and during the war became a bosom friend of Col. John I. Rinaker who was instrumental in securing sutler's privilege for him which enabled him to provide for the family and give them some luxuries.<sup>11</sup> He was wounded at Shiloh and paroled home during convalescence<sup>12</sup> and afterward was in charge of the barracks at Cairo Illinois.<sup>13</sup> and the family was with him there for six months.<sup>14,13</sup> He was wounded again on the transport ship between New Orleans and Mobile<sup>15</sup> and drew a pension which was a great help to his widow after his death.<sup>16</sup>

He served throughout the war and was mustered out at Jefferson Barracks at St Louis.<sup>17</sup> On Nov 8th 1864 while sleeping on his arms on the eve of Battle he dreamed of the birth of a daughter Ona of which he wrote home directly after the battle and some of the details were almost miraculous as she was born that night. He was a great lover of sea food and never tired of telling of the feasts at Spanish Fort at New Orleans and always did contend that the oysters of Navy Cove on Mobile bay were the finest in the world, and Spanish Mackerel the finest fish.<sup>18</sup>

~~~

I had my first voice test on a dark and stormy March night [March 7th 1861] in a farm house in Lafayette County near Wellington Mo. Father being in sympathy with the north had to get out between two days and we joined him at Virden Illinois where he located us and went to fight for the Stars and Stripes. He was home once on furlough and toward the close of the war<sup>19</sup> [we] joined him for six months at Cairo Ill. where he was in charge of the barracks there.<sup>13,14</sup> It was here that I have my first memory. When the soldiers broke camp early in the morning they tramped my playhouse into the ground and I was some angry kid. When we went to Cairo we went by train but Father made arrangements for us to take the steamboat as far as St Louis on our return.

---

and [http://www.factasy.com/civil\\_war/content/alton-prison-%28union%29](http://www.factasy.com/civil_war/content/alton-prison-%28union%29). This was about 180 miles up the Mississippi River. Mary Ann's Civil War Journal said that Jim was in Alton to guard the prison in October 1864.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Ann Cox's Civil War Journal has some entries which appear to support this.

<sup>12</sup> Jim could not have been wounded at the Battle of Shiloh as it was on April 6-7, 1862, which was before the 122<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Infantry was mustered into service. From the context, he was probably injured at the Battle of Jackson, where he was briefly captured by the Confederates and then paroled and sent to Benton Barracks, Missouri. From there, he went AWOL, so his convalescence at home was not sanctioned by the Army. See footnote in LuDelle's section re Libby Prison for more details.

<sup>13</sup> Jim's service record shows that he was detailed on special duty as Superintendent of the Barracks at Cairo, Illinois on March 17, 1864 and on June 16, 1864 he went on sick leave until September 1864. This totals six months at Cairo.

<sup>14</sup> As mentioned in the footnote above, Jim was at Cairo Barracks for six months from March 1864 to at least September 1864. Cairo is about 230 miles due south of Virden, well within Mary Ann's travel ability.

<sup>15</sup> Jim's service record shows that he was on sick furlough starting May 30, 1865 in Montgomery, Alabama but doesn't reveal the exact illness. Regimental history shows that the 122<sup>nd</sup> traveled by steamer from New Orleans to Mobile Bay, Alabama starting March 6, 1865. By March 23<sup>rd</sup>, they were at Blakely and Spanish Fort to provide the eastern defense of Mobile, Alabama. The Battle of Fort Blakely was on April 9<sup>th</sup>. By April 26<sup>th</sup> the Regiment was in Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>16</sup> There is a record of Jim applying for invalid benefits in 1879 and of Mary Ann applying for widow's benefits in 1903.

<sup>17</sup> The 122<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Infantry was mustered out in Mobile, Alabama on July 15, 1865.

<sup>18</sup> This is consistent with the historical record, since we know Jim was in all of these locations.

<sup>19</sup> Jim was in Cairo starting in March 1864. The war didn't end for another 16 months, so this was hardly "toward the close of the war"