



By JEAN KAY

The diary of Quincy's Orville Hickman Browning – U.S. senator, friend and counselor to President Lincoln as well secretary of interior for President Andrew Johnson – was published in 1927 by the Illinois State Historical Library.

The two-volume diary covers the years 1850 through 1881 and has become a valuable source of information for Lincoln scholars. Many familiar Quincy names are mentioned in its pages, yet some names over the intervening years have been lost. Such is the case with the Cox family.

*Quincy – Friday, June 17, 1853 – Charming day. At work in office. Cox and wife took tea with us. Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Cox, Miss Bettie and self went to Kendall's Hall at night to see McAllister.*

*Quincy – Tuesday, September 6, 1853 – Cloudy and in consequence of the rain last night cool. Mrs. Cox and boys dined with us, and they and all of Mr. Erskines family took tea. At work in office.*

So read entries in Browning's diary for a couple of summer days. There were frequent visits by the Coxes, who were not further identified in the diary for nearly a decade. Orville and Eliza Browning spent many hours with the Cox family. Who were they? Apparently Theodore Calvin Pease, the editor of the Browning diary, didn't know. Although he identified most other Browning associates whose names appear in the diary, Pease had no such enlightening commentary about this Mr. and Mrs. Cox.

Browning offered a few clues, and eventually their identity was revealed with this entry on Dec. 10, 1859. The notation revealed a close Browning-Cox relationship:

"Jno. (Note: In the diary, this term was used for Jonathan) C. Cox came this evening to stay with us till Mrs. Cox's return, who has gone East to spend the winter."

By the time of the entry, Cox, eleven years Browning's junior, had become one of Browning's proteges and closest friends.

John C. and Anna Rowland Cox had left Philadelphia in 1846 to settle in Quincy. Although John was a lawyer by profession, when he came to Illinois he purchased a farm fronting on Twelfth Street and extending from Cedar to Locust, naming the property Glen Annie. Here the family – sons Harry and Rowland, daughter Annie John, and Anna's brother Joseph G. Rowland – lived in a country house on the road north out of town.

The Cox family, though settled in the west, still had many ties to the east. When Harry and Rowland were old enough, they were sent east to further their education, which Browning related in this diary entry:

*August 14, 1859 – "Cox just got home from Princeton where he had placed his boys at college."*

Once Abraham Lincoln was elected president, Browning used his relationship with Lincoln to seek positions for many of his friends. He recommended John C. Cox for the job of auditor in a governmental department, but Cox did not receive the coveted spot. Cox had an interest in politics, having run unsuccessfully for the legislature in 1852 and 1854.

In 1861 Browning was appointed senator to serve the remaining two years of the late Stephen A. Douglas's term. Now a resident in Washington, D.C., Browning visited Lincoln often and used his influence with the president to seek positions for other friends, including an officer's commission for Rowland Cox.

After President Lincoln's death on April 15, 1865, Vice President Andrew Johnson assumed the presidency. In June of 1866 Browning was still attempting to get Cox an appointment. This time it was a mission to The Hague. Then on July 27, 1866, President Johnson informed Browning that he wished to send Browning's name to the Senate for nomination as secretary of the interior. Quickly confirmed,

Browning could at last provide a much-wanted position for his friend. John C. Cox became clerk to the secretary of the interior.

Browning attempted several times during 1868 to have President Johnson nominate Cox as Commissioner of Patents but to no avail. John and Anna Cox would have been comfortable with such a political appointment. Anna's father, Judge Joseph G. Rowland, had served on the Supreme Court of Delaware and also had served in the state legislature.

At the end of President Johnson's term, the Brownings returned to Quincy, but the Cox family remained in Washington. Their two sons had established a successful law firm dealing in trademark and copyright law in Washington. With none of the immediate family members left in Quincy, part of the Glen Annie farm became a subdivision called the John C. Cox Addition.

The Quincy Herald reported that John C. Cox did visit his Glen Annie farm in Quincy once more, returning the day before his death on March 30, 1872. The obituary likely was written by editor Joseph G. Rowland, Anna Cox's nephew and Quincy mayor. Dear friend Browning had called on Cox the evening of his arrival home but did not see him. Browning went home but in a short time was summoned by Mrs. Cox to return. He reached Cox's bedside to see him breathe his last. Browning's last service to his longtime friend was to act as pallbearer at his funeral. The burial was in the Woodland Cemetery. Resting beside him is his son Harry, who returned to Quincy to die in 1878.

Rowland Cox remained in the east, married and had several children, including a boy named Archibald, who married Frances Perkins. She was a granddaughter of William M. Evarts, a lawyer for President Andrew Johnson at the time of his impeachment in 1868.

Archibald and Frances had a son, who also was named Archibald. This child, the great-grandson of John C. and Anna Rowland Cox of Quincy, was Archibald Cox, Jr., who would serve as U. S. solicitor general under President John F. Kennedy.

On May 19, 1973, Archibald Cox Jr., accepted an appointment as the first Watergate special prosecutor during the administration of President Richard Nixon. The president fired Cox in what became known as the "Saturday Night Massacre" when Cox's investigation led to a subpoena of tapes of the president's Oval Office conversations. It led, ultimately, to the only resignation of a U.S. president.

Before his death in 2004, Archibald Cox, Jr., who traced his lineage to 19th century Quincy, was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Bill Clinton.

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