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Mary Cox, descendant of Francis Scott Key

by Mary Wozniak and Jim Greenhill, News-Press staff writers

Mary Cox, who still rode horses at age 99 died **Friday (Feb 21, 1997)**

Horses were the Buckingham resident's first love. She rode with a North Fort Myers special equestrians group until her death. Cox had lived in a stilt house among 45 acres of orange groves since 1953. When asked her favorite memory, she talked of putting on the St Martin's Horse Show, a now-famous event in New Orleans. The show was Cox's idea, started because the women of Jefferson Parish in Louisiana wanted to raise money to build an Episcopal church.

In World War I, Cox drove a truck in the Illinois Motor Corps. She was the great-great-granddaughter of **Francis Scott Key**, who wrote the Star Spangled Banner. After the war, she met **Theodore Cox**. **They married in 1920**. But it was only after the family moved to New Orleans in 1936 that Cox got her own jumper, "Leaping Lena." Lena lived until at least age 30 and is buried in Cox's front yard.

Cox moved to Buckingham when her husband, an agriculture equipment executive with International Harvester, retired. **He died in 1974**. To her death, Cox liked bourbon and an occasional Manhattan. She had quit smoking two years ago, a habit she took up in the 1920s.

Had Cox thought she'd live to be 99? "Heavens, no," she said before her death. "It is unusual. You'd think your feet would give out. But they kept going."

Survivors include **Cox's son, Ted Cox, her daughter, Marguerite Cox Barrett**, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service is scheduled for 4 p.m. Wednesday at All Souls Episcopal Church in North Fort Myers. Donations to the church are requested in lieu of flowers.

Cremated and ashes buried at Wye House, on Bruff's Island road, NW of Easton, Talbot County, Maryland.

This is Aunt Scrap, Mary Edgar Lloyd, sister of Joanne's grandmother Marquerite Lloyd Rich. See also notes from conversation at Scrap's home in Fort Meyers between Scrap, Don Smith, Joanne W Bowie and Arthur F Bowie dated Feb 17, 1980