

EDWARD TRAVERS COX

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Edward Travers Cox was born in Culpeper County, Virginia, April 21, 1821, and died at Jacksonville, Florida, January 6, 1907.

The family, when the boy was but four years of age, moved to New Harmony, Indiana, joining the communistic colony founded by Robert Owen. Here he was educated, pursuing his geological studies under David Dale Owen, whose assistant he subsequently became on the geological surveys of Arkansas and Kentucky. After the death of Owen, in 1860, Cox became engaged in commercial work, and in 1864, in company with R. E. Owen, made examinations of mining properties in New Mexico, including the Spanish Peaks and Raton coal fields and the copper and iron mines at the upper Gila River. In 1865, at the request of State Geologist Worthen, he made an examination of the coal beds of Gallatin County, Illinois, and later those of the southern portions of the same State, the results being published in the reports of the State survey for 1875. In 1869, with the organization of a fourth attempt at a systematic survey, he was appointed State Geologist of Indiana, which office he continued to hold until 1880, in the meantime occupying also the chair of geology in the University of Indiana.

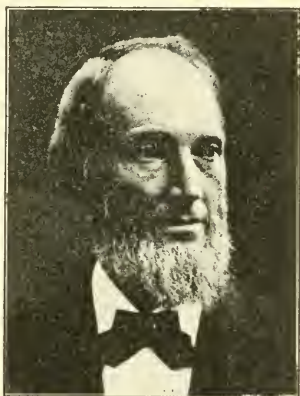


FIG. 24. Edward Travers
Cox

Annual reports were issued for each of the ten years which marked the life of this survey. Those of 1869 and 1872 were accompanied by county maps, though no geological map of the State in its entirety was furnished. A colored section across the State from Greencastle to Terre Haute accompanied the report for 1869.

Cox was assisted during the entire period or for a part of it by Frank H. Bradley, Rufus Haymond, G. M. Levette, B. C. Hobbs, R. B. Warde, W. W. Borden, M. N. Elrod, John Collett, and E. S. McIntire, the fossil flora being described by Leo Lesquereux and the

fauna of Wyandotte Cave by E. D. Cope. Zoölogical and botanical subjects were treated by D. S. Jordan, J. M. Coulter, and J. Schenk.

These reports as a whole contained little that was new or impressive. In the eighth, which was the most comprehensive so far issued, Cox himself called attention to the fact that the geological history of the State "appears tame and devoid of the marvelous interest which attaches to many other regions, and that there is not a single true fault or upward or downward break or displacement of the strata thus far discovered." The oldest rocks of the State were found in the southeastern portion, extending from the Ohio River near the mouth of Fourteen Mile Creek to the eastern boundary line. These are the so-called Hudson River rocks of Hall, which Cox correlated with Safford's Nashville group, and which Worthen and Meek had included under the name of Cincinnati group. He regarded the Silurian strata as uplifted, not by a local disturbance, but "by an elevating force that acted very slowly and extending over the entire central area of the United States." The seat of greatest force, he thought, however, was not limited to southwestern Ohio, but was to be looked for in Kentucky.

Cox accepted the general theory of glacial drift as at present understood, and conceived that the climatic changes might be due to the relative position of land and water, possibly a change in the course of the Gulf Stream. He could find no evidence of a subsidence of the land to terminate the glacial period, nor could he find in Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois anything to militate against the commencement of a glacial period in Tertiary times and its continuation "until brought to a close by its own erosive force, aided by atmospheric and meteorological conditions. By these combined agencies acting through time the mountain home of the glacier was cut down and a general leveling of the land took place."

After retiring from the survey, in 1880, Cox once more resumed private work, making New York City his headquarters. Becoming interested in the phosphate deposits of Florida, he removed to that state, taking up his residence at Albion, in Levy County. For a time he was employed as chemist of the Portland Phosphate Company, and from 1896 to 1902 served also as postmaster at Albion. In the latter year he retired from active work and removed to Jacksonville, where he died on January 6, 1907, at the ripe age of eighty-five years.