

Part II - Evidence Analysis
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Research Question – for Part II, state your one research question here which applies to all sources.
Who was the mother of Esther (McLawhorn) Cox, wife of S. J. Cox, who was born 28 February 1900 in Pitt County, North Carolina, and died on 12 November 1939 in Craven County, North Carolina?

Document 1-Original Record-Death Certificate for “Ethel” McLawhorn Cox

<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1121/images/S123.1207-0200>

1) Citation

1) “North Carolina, U.S. Death Certificates, 1909-1976,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1121/images/S123.1207-0200> : accessed 20 March 2025)>Craven, 1939, certificate 2, Mrs. Ethel McLawhorn Cox, age 39, image 30 of 32; North Carolina Death Certificates. Microfilm S. 123, Craven-11, North Carolina Archives.

2) Source Analysis – Standards 12, 24, 41, 35, 37-39, 44

- a) Use the Source Analysis Factors found on page 10 of the assignment and discuss the ones you think are relevant to this source.
- b) Note if it is an original, derivative, or authored source and why.
- c) Determine and briefly discuss reliability.

2a) Contextual Elements: North Carolina began issuing death certificates on a statewide basis in 1913. They are considered public record, as are birth and marriage records. To request a certified copy through the NC Vital Records website of Register of Deeds, one must be a spouse, sibling, direct descendant, stepparent or stepchild. This certificate occurred before 1971, which requires a contact to the NC State Archives. There are fees, which depend on copies requested and if certified or not.

Recording Elements: Esther and informant, Mr. S. J. Cox, lived in Cove City, North Carolina at the time of her death, at RFD, “Rural for Delivery” in Perfection Section Village, No. 9, Registration District 2508. This does not give an exact location of residency, but indicates their mail was delivered to them in a rural area. The nickname “Ethel” is given; however, on other records is listed as “Esther.” The M. D. who signed for the deceased, lived in New Bern, Craven County, where she die Dr. C. Barker reported his address as 121 Broad Street, New Bern, North Carolina. There is a time lapse of almost 2 months from the date of decease (12 November 1939) to the signing of the registrar (4 January 1940).

Physical Elements: The presentation form is slides of images on *Ancestry*. There is no first page of a book to refer to. The images were originally microfilmed from rolls Microfilm S. 123, rolls 19-242, 280. 212-682, 1040-1297 North Carolina Death Certificates. The first screen says, “Craven-11.” The image is very clear, the document free of tears, rips, smudges.

b) The death certificate is an **original source**, coming from the North Carolina Archives. The image has been copied from Microfilm S.123. Rolls 19-242, 280. 313-682, 1040-1297 and is exact. This was viewed on *Ancestry* database online. The certificate shows the original signatures of the registrar and the attending M.D. This is not a transcribed copy but a image of the original and therefore exactly as the image is.

c)The reliability of this can be trusted. The image is a photocopy of the original record and has been stored in the North Carolina Archives. It features original signatures of the Registrar, Mrs. M. N. Whitley, and the attending physician, C. S. Barker, M.D. The cause of death is written in the

penmanship of C. S. Barker. The remaining information was created by a typewriter, which is appropriate to the time period of 1939, as the typewriter was used commonly after 1900.

3) Information Analysis – Standards 35, 42, 45

- a) Information Item(s) related to research question
- b) Informant – name or hypothesize the informant and describe relationship to research subject
- c) Information Type – did the informant have primary, secondary, or undetermined knowledge of this information item? Describe.
- d) Determine and briefly discuss potential accuracy

3a) The name Mrs. Ethel McLawhorn Cox is the given name of decease. Ethel was born in Pitt County, North Carolina, 28 February 1900, and died on 12 November 1939 at 39 years of age. Ethel is the daughter of Fannie Heath and her father is Charles McLawhorn, both born in Pitt County. Her husband is listed as S. J. Cox. Ethel died in Craven County. Each item of information reinforces the identity of Ethel/Esther McLawhorn Cox’s identity and will allow us to know who her mother was.

b) S. J. Cox of Cove City, NC, RFD, is typed as informant in question number 17 on form. He is also listed as husband in question number 5a on form. S. J. Cox is the husband of Ethel McLawhorn Cox who died on 12 November 1939 in Craven County. The informant (husband) connects the information on the marriage record, Find a Grave, and the marriage index, which are consistent. The informant was her husband and he would know her identity, her parents who outlived her, the date of her death, and place of her death.

c) The informant had secondary knowledge of Ethel’s birth date, and **primary** knowledge of her date of death, residency, full name, cause of death, and may have known the names of her parents having lived in the same small town. Her husband was not at her birth and would only be able to verify what he was told by Esther or the attending physician, nurses, and family present at her birth. Her husband had secondary knowledge of her birth.

d) The potential accuracy is great due to the exact nature of details given, and the familiarity of life in a small town. The deceased passed at a young age, so the informant himself was 51 years of age at the time of his wife’s death, which is not elderly. The M.D. may have known the deceased and her family in such a small town. An area to research for accuracy is the nickname “Ethel” versus given name, “Esther.” The informant also could have listed “Esther” (her given name) and yet the clerk recorded “Ethel.” Ethel may have been a nickname, pet name, or abbreviation for a middle name, used by her husband.

4) Evidence Analysis – Standards 40, 43

- a) Determine if the evidence in your information item is direct, indirect, or negative. There could also be no evidence based on your research question. Describe why.

4a) The evidence in the information is **direct** as the death certificate for “Ethel” McLawhorn Cox, born 28 February 1900 in Pitt County, died on 12 November 1939 in Craven County, married to S. J. Cox, showing the mother, Fannie McLawhorn.

1) Citation
Find a Grave, database with images (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/157572031/esther-cox : accessed 20 March 2025), imaged gravestone for “Esther ‘Ethel’ (McLawhorn) Cox, died 12 Nov 1900, wife of S. J. Cox,” tombstone photographer, L. Ball, Maintained by Jerry and Roger (Contributor 47745731); citing Ayden Cemetery, Ayden, Pitt County, North Carolina, USA.
2) Source Analysis – Standards 12, 24, 41, 35, 37-39, 44
a) Use the Source Analysis Factors found on page 10 of the assignment and discuss the ones you think are relevant to this source. b) Note if it is an original, derivative, or authored source and why. c) Determine and briefly discuss reliability.
2a) Contextual Elements: Find a Grave is an online data base of cemetery records. A researcher can request a photo of a grave marker and a local volunteer can meet that request and share it. Information about the deceased such as dates of birth/death, location, site of grave, plot, row, parents, siblings, children (including names and dates), links to the graves of family members, can be accessed. It is also useful to search the nearby plots and see if other family members with that surname may be buried there as well. Recording Elements: The contributor Jerry and Roger are managers for the memorial of Esther McLawhorn Cox. The Memorial was originally created by GrammieK on 29 January 2016. The relationship of the managers to Esther is unknown. They could be volunteers or family members who created the site. Esther had been deceased since 1939 for 77 years before the creation of the online memorial. Physical Elements: Find a Grave is an online database of grave records which can be searched by first/last name or by location. Photographs may or may not be present and can be added by the creator of the memorial or a volunteer of that grave. The physical condition of the site is excellent. It is clear, easy to read, highly organized, can be updated, and errors reported. It is free of any marks. The font is computer generated and free of marks. It allows input to outsiders of the memorial. Management is transferred over time to new managers, when requested. It is common for family members to request the management of the page, if desired. b) The Find a Grave is an authored source because it is a narrative of details compiled by the person(s) who gathered and posted the information online. Names of family members, dates of birth/death, and the introductory statement regarding the name “Ethel” are all given by the author of the memorial from the information they have gathered by various sources. It is possible the manager used primary records, or a hodgepodge of information told to them. c) The Find a Grave page is as good as the sources the creator has sourced. The user should recognize that the information is subject to the author’s accuracy. The information can come from various relatives, handwritten records, oral stories, and family bibles. It can be highly inaccurate and the wrong grave shown, or the wrong identity and facts listed. Find a Grave should be seen as a place to seek clues to consider and lead to research of original records when available. It is also helpful in linking families and allowing the user to observe various members and their details with little effort.
3) Information Analysis – Standards 35, 42, 45
a) Information Item(s) related to research question b) Informant – name or hypothesize the informant and describe relationship to research subject

c) Information Type – did the informant have primary, secondary, or undetermined knowledge of this information item? Describe.

d) Determine and briefly discuss potential accuracy

3a) Information items related to the research found on Esther “Ethel” (McLawhorn) Cox Find a Grave page, is her name, date of birth, 28 February 1900, Pitt County, North Carolina, date of death, 12 November 1939, Cove City, Craven, North Carolina, burial in Ayden Cemetery in Ayden, Pitt County, North Carolina. She was the wife of S. J. Cox (inscribed), and her father Charles Heber “Henry” McLawhorn and mother Susan Frances “Fannie” (Heath) McLawhorn.

b) The informant was originally manager, Grammie K, created 29 January 2016, and then later managed by Jerry and Roger. The tombstone photo was taken by L. Ball. The relationship is not known between the managers of the page, and Esther. The relationship between the photographer and originator of the page is also not known. It could be volunteers and it could be family members. A family member may have access to personal information not known by the public.

c) The information on the page is **indirect** and was not observed due to the time period of Esther’s life. The informants were not at the event nor witnessed any details given, considering the life span. The tombstone could be indirect information composed of dates that no one witnessed, however her parents may have directly given the information of Esther’s life, outliving their child. In this case, considering the tombstone appears to be original to 1939, and if her parents attended the funeral in a small town, the tombstone may serve as primary information of Esther’s life. Esther’s parents were at her birth, may have attended her wedding, and been present at her death, attesting to the information on the tombstone.

d) The potential accuracy of this page allows for clues and further research. The creator has assembled the names and dates which they believe to be true, or have been told. Original records should be searched to determine each point.

4) Evidence Analysis – Standards 40, 43

a) Determine if the evidence in your information item is direct, indirect, or negative. There could also be no evidence based on your research question. Describe why.

4a) The evidence in the Find a Grave page is **direct information** answering the question of who is the mother of Esther “Ethel” (McLawhorn) Cox, which is Susan Frances “Fannie” (Heath) McLawhorn. Fannie is a nickname for Frances. Esther’s mother goes by Susan and Fannie.

1) Citation
1) North Carolina, U.S., Marriage Records, 1741-2011, database, <i>Ancestry</i> (https://www.ancestry.com/search/connections/60548/records/15369398 : accessed 21 March 2025), S. J. Cox-Esther McLawhorn, 4 May 1918; image 39 of 407, citing North Carolina County Registers of Deed, Microfilm, Record Group 048, North Carolina Archives.
2) Source Analysis – Standards 12, 24, 41, 35, 37-39, 44
a) Use the Source Analysis Factors found on page 10 of the assignment and discuss the ones you think are relevant to this source. b) Note if it is an original, derivative, or authored source and why. c) Determine and briefly discuss reliability.
2a) Contextual Elements: The purpose of the marriage index is to provide an abbreviated listing of marriages in order of occurrence in a locality that can be referenced with ease. The index allows the researcher to quickly see the age of the wedding candidates, the names of the parents, the date, the name of the officiant, and the witnesses present. Recording Elements: The scribe has written on the index carefully in cursive penmanship and the source appears professionally completed. The uniformity of handwriting gives credibility to the creation of the index. Physical Elements: The index is a photo copied image of a book with the words, “MARRIAGE REGISTER” at the top of the pages in heading. The pages of the book are separated by stick-on letters, A, B, C. and so on. Page 1 of the microfilm show code, “C 079 63002”. Page 2 shows, “Microfilmed by: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Raleigh, NC.” Page 3 lists “PITT COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS MARRIAGE REGISTER-WHITE, VOL NOT #, YEARS 1866-1924, PAGES NOT #, FILMED 2 July 1963 RED. RAT. 16: 1.” The image was viewed online on Ancestry database. The index is free of tears, rips, smudges. There is one line crossed out below the midway point and eliminated from the book, due to race collection of white and “colored.” It is highly legible, and the penmanship easy to read. b) The marriage index is a derivative source created by prior records, which was the original marriage record. The clerk copied the originals to compose this marriage index at a later time. The index is a compilation of marriages that occurred at a similar time in a similar geographical location. c) The reliability of this record is good; however, a researcher must keep in mind there could be transcription errors. The original should be researched for accuracy when available.
3) Information Analysis – Standards 35, 42, 45
a) Information Item(s) related to research question b) Informant – name or hypothesize the informant and describe relationship to research subject c) Information Type – did the informant have primary, secondary, or undetermined knowledge of this information item? Describe. d) Determine and briefly discuss potential accuracy
3a) The name of bride, Esther McLawhorn, age 18, S. J. Cox, groom, name of mother, Fannie McLawhorn, are listed on the marriage register. This information can be compared to the other records to affirm consistency in the research and establish identity, as long as it is accurate. Because the record is derivative, the original marriage record should be searched to affirm, if

available. The clerk may impose the wrong name in a transcription or misspell a word or number, and the risk increases the more the record is copied by hand.

- b) The informant of the marriage register is most likely the clerk of the Craven County Courts after 1918 when the wedding occurred. We do not know the name of the clerk, nor their relationship to the marriage party, if any.
- c) The informant has an undetermined relationship to the information item. We do not know who was in attendance of the ceremony (other than the officiant and the witnesses), and we do not know who the clerk is, therefore it cannot be determined. There is always a possibility a witness could be a county clerk, and that could be researched, if needed.
- d) The record appears to be accurate, although it should be compared to the original marriage record, if possible. The clerk was very detailed in the creation and details given, and the record professional. The names appear as on other documents, using the consistent S. J. Cox initials, the nickname of the bride's mother, Fanny. All marks made by hand have been given proper attention, even when edited, such as the elimination strike of the couple due to race.

4) Evidence Analysis – Standards 40, 43

- a) Determine if the evidence in your information item is direct, indirect, or negative. There could also be no evidence based on your research question. Describe why.

4a) The evidence in the marriage index is **direct** evidence as it lists the answer to the research question that Fannie McLawhorn is the mother of the bride, Esther McLawhorn. It is directly written on the marriage register for Pitt County for whites (1867-1948). The register allows for the name of the mother of the bride to be specifically listed, the father, her age, city, date, officiant, and witnesses.