

1969 TAPE FROM JOHN SPENCER TO SIDNEY COX

Editorial Note: See background regarding this tape in the Editorial Note to the 1967 tape from John Spencer to Sidney Cox.

This tape was sent to Sidney in the aftermath of the death of his sister, Louise on December 23, 1969. This tape was recorded on December 24, 1969. It is one of the mediums used by those in England that knew him, to notified Sidney about the death of his sister.

Of note, the end of this tape has a dubbed in section that is possibly the voice of my grandmother, Violet Henderson Cox reading the 46th Psalms.

This recording is contained on Side 1 and Side 2 of the reel-to-reel tape. The quality is excellent.

J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. January 2009.

Side 1

Hello Cousin Sidney. This is John and Lilly from Northampton.

Somewhat of a sad day, and yet a happy one, in the sense that we now realize that your sister, Louie has arrived safely home. You will have received the airmail, and so that you'll know that she did not linger too long, or in much physical pain. But I think as I saw her in the hospital there laying unconscious, there was that serenity of mind and peace of heart even showing on her face. The years of time had not marked her badly, for she had borne the years I feel with much fortitude.

Somehow, we were always sorry for her being shut there in the village [of Naseby], and for the many, many hours she spent on her own. And yet, she always tried to impress us, when we visited her, that she was not lonely. A great thought. And she wrote so many times, "Now look after yourselves. Don't worry about me. I am quite all right. I have all I need, and I have good friends around, and I have Jesus with me, and I can think of Him."

You know I feel the happiest moments, and I'm not saying to you because it's your sister. I'm saying it because I really mean it. The happiest moments have been spent in her company.

Now when I...the last time, some friends took us over in their car. I had to sell mine - the doctor advised me against driving. I had driven for 40 years and not had an accident, and I didn't feel it right to be selfish and keep a car, liable to endanger someone else's life. So, I sold the car. Then I wanted Louie to speak to you, or sing that song, the hymn that probably you may have heard by now. But, I intend to put it onto the other side of this tape. I hope the recording is all right.

But what I was going to say, these friends took us [John and Lilly] over [to see Louie]. And they said...it was not a bad day, or a bad October I think, and they said, "We'll sit in the car. I have some knitting I can do," the lady said. And her husband Jack would sit and read. "We won't come in, we'll leave you to share." And I said, "Ah, you're missing something." Anyway, they stopped outside in the grounds, sitting in their car. Well, we'd had our little talk together, singing songs, and Louie, always anxious about other people said, "Did you say some friends had brought you over?" And, we said yes. And she asked Lilly, "Where are they? Are they good people?" So anxious that we should meet the right people. She [Lilly] said, "Oh, yes. They're Salvationists, and they've been excellent to me, they've been very kind." They've been our life savers this year in a sense. They brought Lilly to the hospital every day when I was there, wouldn't take a penny for their trouble, counted it a joy to service". Well, Louie said, "I want to meet them. I want to thank them. We did say they felt right a little shy about coming in and intruding on a kind of a family affair. But, she insisted and I went outside and said now look, "Put your feelings in your pocket if you feel a little shy, you come in and meet the grandest lady in the world, and you'll know I'm speaking the truth." So they said alright, and came in. And yes, Louie did give a benediction. Perhaps I'm using that word a lot. Yes, she thanked them for what all they had done for us, and said it was kind of them and blessed them in her way. She felt very happy that we were all there and we were all serving the Lord. But it was such a nice thought – fetch them in, don't leave them out there. They must share with us.

Now this lady, again since I've been ill, has come to our rescue, done some shopping and she actually brought us the news [presumably of Louie's death]...I'd asked her to phone Connie Scott¹ for me, to say she would come to visit us, and I said we weren't well, would she postpone her visit, and Connie Scott told these people that Louie had gone into a hospital. So they came back and told us and I visited the hospital twice, no three times. The first time they advised not to see her at all, she was unconscious and under sedative. Anyway, I went two or three times. But this lady who was the lady driver of the car actually, she said, "Oh, I'm so glad we were able to take you over that time and met this dear lady. What a wonderful soul. What a wonderful character. I feel privileged to have met her. Just once, but feel privileged".

So, one could go on, paying out tributes, and they wouldn't be one word too many, I feel. But you know your sister, of course don't you? But I would like to say that about her. We have not lost her. This is how I feel. Some of the little points she raised, some of the songs....

I got an old autograph. I say old because I never used it. It was given to me by a youth group when I left. They all signed it, but I never used it much. But the little saying that she wrote in her letters, I wrote down in this. And I have got them, and I've got these reminders of her impressions...in the sense of her words. And we shall ever hear her voice because we recorded it on tape and, well, the influence that she has spread around us, Lilly and I, she was so anxious that we didn't overdo things, that we must take care. Here's a lady of her age telling us years younger to go steady. Yes, she was anxious that

¹ This is likely a reference to one of the four daughters of Louise's sister, Clarice Cox Scott.

we should have the best of life. So concerned for others. Excuse my voice. This is a cold coming up.

As I say, one could go on forever saying the kind things. But I felt you should know how much we've appreciated her, and you will share with us not so much the loss, as her gain. I love the Army phraseology you know for this, "Promoted To Glory." I now hear my Dad over and over again saying he wasn't worried about dying, he was going to stepping from the kitchen into the parlor, right out of the shadows of life, into the sunshine of God. And when he said it, he meant it. He said it as if he meant it, and he did. I was able to speak at my Dad's funeral and I told people of this and his life in the home. It's wonderful to be a Christian. And I feel like you, because, "I Want To Tell You What The Lord Has Done".

Well now, I could go on like this for some time if my voice would let me. But let me say, that there was not many people able to follow, many crippled or very sick. Mary² did not come all the way from Naseby, but I don't think she's been too well, but I believe they will be present at the interment of the ashes³, and that's why I felt I must go. There was Connie Scott and Philip⁴, some slight relationship [Philip would have been Connie Scott's brother-in-law], and a bevy of friends which I didn't know. We were there to feel that she ought to have somebody by her side. Well, she had Jesus, of course. So, don't worry. Don't fret - a life well-lived given to peaceful meditation. But it wasn't shut within the walls. That's what I like. And she wrote to us one day says, "You know, I can't get out a lot, but now I've got my life back." Isn't that wonderful? "Now I've got my life back, I can write better, and I can write and tell people of the goodness of God." She wasn't ashamed _____ her Lord, nor to speak of His love towards her, and of her love towards Him. The vicar again this morning made reference to this.

Now I do see this tape is running out. And by the way, I believe this is one of your tapes, so it's quite all right. I'm so sorry about the 4-track, but I thought you had a four track machine. To remedy some of this, on the other side, I will put Louie's voice.

Now, I must leave off because I feel my voice is running out. In fact, I shall try to hear this tape to see whether it is worth sending. But, you'll forgive me, but I did so want to get you a message on this day.

So over to track 4 where its 4-1, 4-2...3 and the 4 tracks, I will say one and the other side 4, even if it is on a 2-track. We're still glad to hear from you at anytime, and to be of any

² This is likely a reference to Mary Hathaway, a lady who for years had been a caregiver to Louise. She lived in Rose Cottage with Louise. Upon Louise's death, and in light of the fact that she had no heirs in the area, she bequeathed Rose Cottage to Mary Hathaway.

³ The remains of Louise Cox were buried in the same tomb containing the remains of her first husband, John Halford in the church graveyard of the All Saints Church in Naseby. There is no marker on the grave of John Halford; however, I found the entry containing this information on the Register of Burials provided to me by the local vicar in 2008. J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox.

⁴ This is likely a reference to Phillip Knight. Phillip was married to Judeth Scott Knight, a daughter of Louise's sister, Clarice Cox Scott.

service that we can. And now, over on the other side while the tape is still running and my voice is still sounding.

Side 2

Well, here we are on this other track. And, straight-way I must begin with an apology. In fact, I'm disgusted with myself. I haven't now the voice of Louie. I can't understand it, I thought I'd put that on tape so safely away. I've gone through my book of records and I can't find it anywhere recorded that I've still retained it. I have over the last 2-3 months been cleaning a lot of stuff out that have served their purpose, and I can only say that I must have rubbed it out because it was on a track where there were some very poor recordings.

Now, this has got me worried, so if you can manage to get someone to play that 4-track over for you so that you can hear it, well, could you dub it onto another track, or even if you care to send that track/tape back as it is, if you can't hear it, send it back. I know Tom will, perhaps the message will be old, but I will put it on two single tracks for you or a 5", which will cover the lot, probably yes, I probably could do that for you. But you'll see, but it would be easier of course if you have the machine, to dub it over onto another spool, just the little part that I am so anxious to have. I'm going to have another good look around. I have a record of some of your thoughts and messages and little personal talks. Whether I slipped it on one of those, without making a note in the book - I do try to keep a record of those things. It saves a lot of searching, but here I've got to apologize that I can't even keep a promise like that on this day. But anyway, you have her voice. And, if at some further date in the future you can let me have a copy, or even the actual tape itself that I sent, I would be most delighted to receive this from you.

Now, I'm going to leave off for the moment because Lilly has just gone to do a little bit of final shopping, and I want to leave a little bit of space to see whether she will talk to you. Not that she doesn't want to, but talking in the mic rather worries her. She just wants to go to sleep in the chair. I'm afraid the operation she had many years ago, the effects rather, are having a toll upon her, and the anxiety of feeling that she might be left to struggle alone. Because, I'm not saying this braggingly, she does need me. She worries, you know. I think the Lord will leave me long enough to look after her, because I have to kind of prepare her for bed each night, and to clean her up. The colostomy is in her side you see. It is so difficult for her to attend to herself. That's why I'm glad I been able to be of this service ever since 1961. The Lord didn't give me any smell, you know, so the smell that emanates from it which is vile to Lilly sometime she said, I don't smell it and I can carry on doing the cleaning up process. The Lord has a purpose in most things, doesn't he?

Well, I'll leave off for now and talk to you later. And, I'll get this tape off tomorrow, that is before Christmas, 24th of December, and hope that you'll get it as quick as possible. Some of my letters from Canada by the way are taking nearly a month to come. I had a letter acquiring about something only the other day posted on November 12. The next day came from people in the same town, November 11, nearly a month to come. So I'm hoping you do get these things in good time. Well, for now we'll wait.

Hello. Well, here I am again, I better say it that way. I'm afraid I haven't persuaded Lilly to talk. I think she's catching the flu from me. She's coughing and sneezing. She's tired out and gone off the sleep.

Now, as far as tape recording is concerned, I'm really distressed. I've rubbed out by mistake using the wrong tape also Commissioner Brengle's.⁵ I don't know whether you could possibly send it again. This is asking too much of my silly mistakes. I had another tape of yours that I was going to use, and I was keeping this basically to do another tape of it.

There is one other thought that has come to me. This week in *The Musician*, someone has complained really about me. Not that that worries me. It was concerning Commissioner Brengle's, and he said, you see we had his paper, this editor of tape talk send up to the *The Musician* saying about this wonderful tape of Commissioner Brengle's that John Spencer had and would pass the word over to anyone interested. Some, I say silly fellow or lack of thought wrote up and said, "I don't know why John Spencer is claiming it to be unique." See, John Spencer didn't claim at all, it was sent in by this other man that I had his tape. As for it being a collectors' unique gem, you know, he said there are copies, in fact myself, I've had it for four years from another officer, who had it from an officer in America. So at least I know there's four copies. I don't know why he's got so 'et up about it. That means there is a copy in England. So I'm going to try and see if I can get a copy in case you haven't still got yours from that man. I'll get his address somehow if he belongs to a member of a tape fellowship, if not I'll write to the officer of the corps and ask him to forward the letter onto you. So I may be able to get it back in England. See, Harriet said that although background noises, because of the old recording can be heard, yet it is quite a good tape. This man said, "Oh my, speaking is very plain." Quite a lesson that came to me today about the letter, said Francine, "What did he want to go off the deep end like that for?" I said, "Well, I don't know the man, and he doesn't know me, so I'm not worried." I think we've got greater things than trivialities as to whether a word is unique, or "rare" should be used when we're expressing something of this. I am, and I shall do I think when I feel better, I'll write an article to *The Musician* and entitle it, "Take the lid off the box." Meaning, that if that tape has been in his possession for four years, and there's only four copies in England, well he has been very sadly lacking in passing on the word of God.

Well now, I will finish this tape with a little message from father's book by reading from Auntie....Eva.⁶

A tape is of no use shut up in the box. The message of the tape must be out, and it must be on the machine onto another tape. This is the value of taping.

⁵ Reference here is to Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle, an icon of the early Salvation Army in America and an acquaintance of Sidney Cox's.

⁶ It is possible that John Spencer mis-speaks here as he intended to refer to "Auntie Violet".

Well now, we'll have a word from father's book to finish the tape. And I have a recording of Auntie Violet's voice reading to us the 46th Psalm. Shall we read it together?

(Dub of "Auntie Violet" reading the 46th Psalm. This is possibly the voice of my grandmother, Violet. If it is indeed Violet, I'm unsure why Spencer would be sending it to Sidney, as the only way Spencer could have it would have been for him to get it from Sidney originally. Another possibility is that it is the voice of "Auntie Eva" that Spencer referred to above, and that he mis-spoke when he subsequently referred to "Auntie Violet." Nevertheless, on the tape box, Sidney wrote, "Violet's Voice.")

And so in saying, God bless you, and have a happy Christmas as possible. We leave you with that thought, God of Jacob is our refuge, a very present help in time.....(Audio ends)