

Coker Cemetery History #3

By Bob Battaglia

This is the third newsletter being distributed to all Coker Cemetery members. The hope in doing this is to give all who read these short stories a feeling for those that first settled this land. There are many stories that may never be written because I have not heard from more than five people in a year's time. Please take some time and write down what was passed down to you about these early years and send it in.

James Seaborn Jones (1856-1931), my great-great grandfather, and a son of **Amos Dickens Jones**, is buried at Coker Cemetery. His wife was **Rebecca Francis Kesterson** who died in 1902 while they were living in Hays Co TX, near Kyle. She is buried there. My grandfather, **Vincent Battaglia**, who married Seaborn's daughter, **Mary Maria**, was living with Seaborn's family in the 1900 census of Hays Co. After the death of Seaborn's wife, Seaborn and some of his children headed for Nevada/Arizona and the gold rush. After many very hard years and nothing to show for it, Seaborn returned to the Coker community. He was very well liked by all who knew him. One of his sons who went with Seaborn commented that gold-hunting was a very hard life. This son, **Soloman Amos Jones**, remembers one odd-job he took to make money for food – skinning mules! Soloman became a very prominent person in Navasota TX, but more about him another day.

Neill Brown Coker (1849-1932) married **Judith Hamlin Wilson** in Bexar Co 1872. Judith was the daughter of James Wilson and Mary Polly Johnson. Judith was a sister to **Sol Wilson**. Sol and his wife, Easter Johnston, had adopted Seaborn Jones's wife, Rebecca Kesterson. Easter Johnston was an aunt to Rebecca whose parents died when she was five years old. Sol and Easter Wilson are buried in Buda TX along with Rebecca's grandmother, **Rebecca Gatliff Johnston**. While this may be a little confusing for some, the purpose here is to show the activity that was going on in the Coker community. Sol Wilson was well-known to the Coker community and died in San Antonio while riding in a buggy.

Reference has been made to **Marion Taylor Jones'** Family Bible by a descendant – Mrs. Thelma L. Hunt of Rialto CA (correspondence was in 1971/2). She stated that the last known person to have this bible was her sister in Dallas TX, **Ida Maltzberger Terry**. She saw the bible and extracted data from it. She says that it is now (1971) missing. Marion Taylor Jones was first child born to Amos Dickens Jones. Marion Taylor married Clarissa Hopkins 1872 in Guadalupe Co TX. Does anyone know where this bible is today? Marion is buried at Coker Cemetery (1911) while his wife is buried in Rialto, San Bernadino CA (1940).

Samuel C. Jones, buried at Coker Cemetery in 1889, is not related to the Amos Dickens Jones line. Descendants of Samuel C. Jones state his father was born in N.C. and his mother's given name was Nancy Agnes ?? Samuel C. Jones was said to be red-headed, with blue eyes. Samuel said to be a horse trader and to have brought the first

Tennessee walking horses to San Antonio. Tradition says these horses were stolen by Mexicans and taken to Mexico. It is said that the other Jones, John A. Jones, living in the Coker community, was a brother to Samuel. Neither Samuel nor John Jones were related to Amos Dickens Jones or Joseph Coker until later generations when their children married Capps and children of Samuel or John. Joyce Capps in Fredonia, TX 76842, (915) 429-6320, is a descendant of Samuel and furnished the above information.

Joseph Coker was convicted of second degree murder in shooting **John Jones Jr**, who was apparently the son of **Samuel C. Jones**. The argument took place at a watering hole on the Salado. The following article was placed in the newspaper after a sentence of two years was assessed for the incident. Joseph Coker had escaped from the hospital where he had been sent to determine the status of his health before beginning his sentence.

*******Information Wanted*******

Mr. Joseph Coker, an old citizen of Bexar County, who was convicted of murder in the second degree and who escaped from the guard on the '13th of June, 1869 has been pardoned by the governor, and his return to his family is anxiously desired. When last heard from, he was in Bowie County, Texas. He is perhaps 70 years of age. The papers in Austin, and all over Texas are requested to copy this notice. (this is on page 3, col. 2 of the San Antonio Herald of 4/17/1870).

Why would Joseph Coker be in Bowie Co, up near Texarkana? Well Joseph's wife, Malinda Brown, had a sister Elizabeth who married **Levi Shockley** when they were all still living in Laurens Co. SC. Levi Shockley and family can be seen nearby on all census records as the Cokers travel from Tennessee/Alabama/Texas. Levi is mentioned several times in **Amos Dickens Jones** diary in East Texas. The main reason for this closeness was Amos's brother, **Joseph F. Jones**, had married one of Levi's daughters. As the Cokers and Jones came to Bexar Co., Levi and his family went on to Bowie Co. where they stayed. So it would appear that Joseph Coker might have gone to Bowie Co. because he had a sister-in-law and friends there.

How about some stories on the **Hampton** Family? I know that several descendants have been working on this history. Mrs. Carolyn Cunningham, Kristen Howell in Japan, Sandy Odom in Muskogee OK are Hampton descendants and Michael Ann Coker is also working on the Coker history.

The **Amos Dickens Jones** descendants might be interested to learn that I have located descendants of two of his sisters: **Tacy and Rebecca Jones**. Tacy married **Rev. Shadrack J. Moore** in Talladega and they ended up in Polk Co. AR (Mena). Tacy is buried at Paoli Cemetery in Paoli OK (1899). Rebecca married **John Wesley Goodwin** in Cherokee Co. TX and they are buried at Rocky Cemetery in Polk Co AR. These sisters were living near each other in the 1870's to 1900. I am still working on the other brothers and sisters.