

## Coker Cemetery History #19 – April 2008

by Bob Battaglia

**James Newton Hampton.** Several of the descendants of James Newton Hampton have been trying to determine why he seemed to have disappeared around 1890. The following is the verbatim article found in the Galveston Daily News, Tuesday April 22, 1890. I'm sure it was picked up from the San Antonio Newspapers. This is a sad story amongst many good stories that took place in the old Coker Settlement. We now need to see if the final resting place for the remains of James N. Hampton can be found. His wife, **Melinda W. (Coker) Hampton**, is not listed in our Coker Cemetery although the newspaper obit says she was buried at Coker. It would be nice to be able to resolve this final mystery.

### **"THE DEAD BODY FOUND IN A PASTURE IDENTIFIED SAN ANTONIO, TX, April 21, 1890**

The inquest, upon the remnants to the human body discovered in **Amos Jones'** pasture some seven miles from here was concluded by Justice McAllister today. The man who was sent out yesterday afternoon to gather up the fragments of the body left by the vultures did not reach the city until noon today with his ghastly burden. Heavy rains and impassable streams impeded his progress. The testimony developed at the inquest went to identify the body of that of **James Hampton**, a well known farmer and a relative of **Jones**, who had lived on the Salado for many years and was in the habit of indulging in occasional sprees, which would last several weeks. He has not been seen since early in the month, and his family supposed he was in town taking his spree, and made no inquiry about him. Justice McAllister rendered a verdict that deceased came to his death from the combined effects of alcoholism and exposure. **Hampton** was about 47 years old and leaves a family."

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James C. Hatch and wife Melissa (Coker) Hampton  
with four of their eight children

**James C. Hatch** and wife **Melissa Hampton** were married Nov 17, 1883 according to Bexar County marriage Book H, p. 121. Melissa was daughter of **James Newton Hampton** and **Malinda Winneford Coker**. James C. Hatch and his wife lived most of their life in Pt Lavaca. They did return to live at 416 Cottonwood Ave in San Antonio late in life. This was due to their four daughters being married to San Antonio men.

James, in a letter written to a niece in 1930, talks of regular visits from his sister and brother-in-law, **Fannie and John Coker**.

"Fannie and John Coker live alone in the old Coker ranch House built in 1856 in Ante Bellum days. Their children five Girls and five Boys are all in Their own homes. John and Fannie travel around in Their Auto a great deal on all of Their trips several of their Boys or Girls go with Them ... every Sunday when at home their Children come to see Them and there are enough to fill the twelve foot Table three times ... "

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In the San Antonio Express, December 3, 1933, a lengthy and wonderfully written article was written commemorating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. The above picture was published with the article. The narrative describing how they met and how the wedding came about is three full-length columns. It is too long to include in the Coker Newsletter. James C. Hatch dictated most all of the narrative to the reporter, Fred Mosebach. At one point, James said: "Arrangements had been made to take place at the residence of Thad Smith on North Flores Street to be followed by a big dinner for the wedding guests, which included all the officials at the courthouse and many more. We reached the Smith home away ahead of anyone from the Coker Settlement." ..... "and the band playing the last tune after the final round of drinks at midnight. The scene shifted to the open road for the long ride back to Port Lavaca.....I bought a new Leudinghaus wagon from R.J. Hofheintz and my father had a new Michael Lewis both covered with 12 oz. wagon sheets stretched tight over the wooden bows. The wagons were tight and comfortable, supplied with many quilts and blankets...."

This article is amazing to read and hopefully we can put it on the website soon.

There are many more stories about the Coker Settlement that we have not found yet. Please send your stories and pictures. There was a lot going on in the Coker Settlement during those early years.