

Coker Cemetery History #20 – November 2008

by Bob Battaglia

Lorenz Family Notes: I had the pleasure of meeting some Lorenz family descendants during their tour of the Coker Cemetery on October 5. They were curious about the iron fence enclosure with the name **Lorenz** on the gate. Inside the enclosure there were no markers. We consulted the Coker Cemetery burial list and there were no Lorenz markers recorded. I am taking this space to ask any Lorenz descendants that might know the story on this, contact me via email: info@CokerCemetery.com. I do not have the names of those Lorenz descendants who were visiting the cemetery on Oct. 5, but hopefully they will get a copy of this Coker Newsletter and send their names/addresses to me. It is a shame for this enclosure to be a mystery.

Looking at the 1880 Bexar County Census, Page 249B, we find Anton Lorenz 55 and wife Julia 42, both born in Hungary. They show 10 children, ages 17 to 2. The children all show born in Texas, so they arrived in Texas about 1863. Two families down on the census, we see **Amos Dickens Jones**, so we could assume that there was a relationship.

The Lorenz descendant I talked to on Oct. 5 said all the Lorenz families were buried at one of the nearby cemeteries (Wetmore, maybe? – I forgot the name). One assumption could be made that one or two of the young children died early in life and the enclosure was set up for them, but they never got around to erecting the markers. **If anyone knows the story here, please contact me.**

James Kelley Obit in San Antonio Light Newspaper 28 Jan. 1918. He was married to **Julia Emily Coker** 22 Feb 1885. She was daughter of **James Harrison Coker** and **Sarah Gann**. The obituary reads:

James Kell(e)y, 57 years old, died at a local sanitarium Monday night at 10:45 o'clock. He had been a resident of Coker Settlement, near San Antonio, for over forty years. Surviving him are his widow; six daughters, Mrs. M.L. Bailey, Mrs. A.A. Bailey, Mrs. Harland Harper, Mrs. W.T. Calvert, Misses Annie and Virginia Kelley; three sons of San Antonio, Edward, Marvin and Lawrence Kelley; his father, Patrick Kelley; two brothers, Edward and John H. Kelley and three sisters, Mrs. Annie Lothringer, Mrs. Kate Heyman and Miss Ellen Kelley, all of the Coker Settlement neighborhood. The funeral was held Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock from the chapel of the Zizik Undertaking Company, with services at the Salada Church, Coker Settlement. Services were conducted by Rev. Sloan Hatchelder, assisted by the Woodmen of the World Camp and Myrtle Grove, Woodmen Circle. Interment was the settlement cemetery.

The newspaper left the "e" out of the name; I added it in. I was impressed by the number of close relatives and pictured the number of people that must have attended this funeral and also how many lived in the Coker Settlement at the time.

Obituary in the Daily Light Newspaper, Friday April 17, 1896.....

"Mrs. A.D. Jones, wife of Amos Dickens Jones, a well-known farmer of Coker Settlement, about seven miles north of the city, died at her home Wednesday night, aged 71. The funeral took place yesterday, Rev. Shaw officiating. She had been sick about two weeks from "La Grippe ?". Her husband and nine children survive her. They have lived in the county the past forty years. Deceased was the mother of Mrs. Van Riper, wife of Deputy

*Sheriff James Van Riper". Mrs. A.D. Jones was **Jane Maria Coker, daughter of Joseph and Malinda Coker.** She married Amos Dickens Jones in Talladega, AL January 16, 1845.*

The Mrs. Van Riper was Malinda Catherine (Kate) Jones. She married James M. Van Riper 13 January 1870. The Van Riper family lived in the Coker Settlement when they first arrived in San Antonio. James and Malinda Van Riper are shown in the 1880 Bexar Co. census living next door to James Hampton and a "few doors down" from Amos D. Jones. Indian forays out of the western mountains were a common occurrence and James added to his Civil War reputation by joining the Texas Minute-Men – forerunners of the Texas Rangers. These Minute-Men chosen for their bravery and ability, were in the service of Texas about a year around 1873. They did not serve full time, they were in service before, during and after the full moon each month. This was when the Indians were most active at night – when they could travel by the full moon's radiance. Retribution doled out to the Indians by the Minute-Men was harsh and effective. The Minute-Men disbanded after the accidental slaying of John Green, the lieutenant of the company. John Green had been their leader during the Indian exploits. James Van Riper, having established himself as a brave Indian fighter, was appointed a deputy sheriff in Bexar Co. in 1876 under Sheriff Knox. He served under several other sheriffs during the next 8 years. After this, he entered Government employment and for the next 2 years was deputy United States marshal and was a river guard in the United States Revenue Service at Eagle Pass. After his Federal Service he entered the San Antonio Police Dept and served 2 years as a patrolman and detective. In 1901 Mayor Marshall Hicks appointed him Police Chief. James Van Riper had two sons who would later become Police Chiefs in San Antonio in the early 1900's. James and Kate are buried at the Masonic Cemetery in San Antonio.

The above paragraph is a condensed version of a lengthy article appearing in the **San Antonio Evening News on Friday, March 28, 1924.** It is very interesting and complete with photos of the 5 Van Riper brothers. They all served in the deputy marshal status at one time or another. There was only one left living when this newspaper article was written.

Send your Coker ancestor stories in. The Coker Settlement was an interesting part of Bexar County history. They were involved with San Antonio in many ways.