

Coker Cemetery History #25 – March 2011

by Bob Battaglia

Short story in the San Antonio Express Jan. 3, 1925 which leads into the obituary of William M. Maltsberger.

"In the 1880's a drove of horses from the San Antonio territory was being driven to Kansas and the Northern markets, and in the lot was one beautiful paint pony that attracted the fancy of an Indian chief while passing through the Indian Territory. And from that fancy of the Injun there arose trouble. The chief demanded the horse as tribute for passing through, and the owner refused to give him up. Then the chief got the horse, anyway, and took some more at the same time. The horses were the property of some two or three men, all traveling together for the sake of company. One man in the party advised the owner of the horse to let the Indian have the coveted paint animal; but the owner refused to heed the advice, with the result already noted. The way the Indians finally got the coveted paint pony, and some others, was by stampeding them at night. That was their method. The men lost a lot of time, and, as said before, several of the horses were not recovered at all. The man who offered the advice was **William Maltsberger**, who died Friday, Jan. 1, 1925 at his home in the Coker Settlement on the North Loop, and who was laid to rest in the Coker Cemetery, San Antonio Texas, Saturday afternoon."

"Mr. **Maltsberger** had a great career, In the pioneer sense. Born at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., Nov. 10, 1863, he came to Texas in a covered wagon with his parents as a small child, settling on the Salado Creek, out near where he lived and died. Through his father's illness, he became a cowman from 1875 until the close of the Chisholm Trail. Upon returning from a drive in 1887, he was married to Miss Ruth Ann Coker and took up residence where he lived ever since, and where he died. For 25 years he was a member of the Central Christian Church, this city, and the funeral Saturday afternoon was conducted by Dr. Hugh McClelland, assisted by Rev. John W. Smith. Surviving him are his widow, 3 daughters and 3 sons: Mrs. W.T. **Bivins**, Mrs. Harry **Teel**, and Mrs. Ed **Carey** and Roy, Charles and Albert. His pioneer mother, Mrs. Aaron Maltsberger, also survives him."

Note: Thanks to Linda Perry who has this in her genealogy (2003) and Michael Ann Coker who reported it from her research of newspaper articles.

Commissioner's Court, San Antonio Gazette Aug.8. 1908:

"The petition for widening the Lockhill and Selma road was granted. The following jury of view was appointed: **James Kelley, N.B. Coker, W.W. Maltsberger, John Coker and L.B. Jones.** The John Coker named was

probably **John Harrison Coker**. The W.W. Maltsberger may be a misprint and was actually **W. M. Maltsberger**.

San Antonio Light Newspaper, Jan. 18, 1909:

"Fortunata Battaglia, executrix of the estate of **Angelo Battaglia**, deceased, to **Albert W. Bitter**, May 7, 1903 deed to 80 acres of **John Coker** survey 12. consideration \$1225.

*Note: **Angelo Battaglia** died 1901. His wife, **Fortunata**, sold the 80 acres in 1903. They had been using the land to grow onions. Angelo had a produce shop in a building on W. Commerce St. The family lived on the 2nd floor and had a basement where they made home brew. It was torn down for HemisFair in 1960. The building was behind the old Joske's building at Alamo & Commerce. My grandfather, **Vincent Battaglia**, worked the 80 acres and that's how he ended up marrying **James Seaborn Jones's** daughter, **Mary Maria Jones** in 1895. Vincent Battaglia is pictured in the "Coker Hunting Camp" that is shown in the Coker Cemetery Website. My father, **Anthony M. Battaglia**, was born in Seaborn Jones's home in 1897 which was located on the approach pattern for the San Antonio Airport and therefore was torn down. Angelo and Fortunata had 12 children and arrived in San Antonio about 1884 after first living in New Orleans for about 7 years.*

Lurinda Finto (1845-1881) and Sarah Finto (1867-1880):

In the interest of identifying some burials at Coker Cemetery that are not in the main-stream of Coker relationships, these two burials have mystified me for years because there is a distant relationship between the **Finto** family and **Battaglia** family. I found that Lurinda's husband was **John Finto** and they were married Feb. 10, 1866. They had seven children, 5 boys and 2 girls. One girl, Sarah, died at age 13 and is buried next to her mother (Lurinda) in Coker Cemetery. John Finto married secondly, **Mary Irwin** July 30, 1887. This ties in to my grandfather Vincent Battaglia who married secondly **Annie Irwin** in 1909. Vincent's first wife, Mary Maria **Jones**, died in 1908. John Finto died 1905 in Wilson County. To keep the story short, it appears that John Finto was close to **Ransom Capps**. Evidence of this is found in a deed which conveys 160 acres of land in the Wetmore community to John Finto. Ransom Capps witnessed the conveyance. There are a couple of other instances where Capps is signing instruments for John Finto. Also the 1880 census of Bexar shows John Finto & family living right in the middle of the Coker Community. If you know of a descendant, please contact me.