

JOHN MARSHALL AND MARY ELEANOR (SHIRLEY) COALSON

The migratory Coalson family was in Virginia in 1653; then, descendants migrated to North Carolina, Kentucky, and Mississippi before settling at Bethesda, Parker County, Texas, in 1874.

The entourage consisted of the widowed Matilda Eleanor Black-Coalson and her family with John Marshall Coalson, his wife, Mary Eleanor (Shirley) and their family. Their arrival was April.

The first child, Willie, born and died, Crystal Springs, Mississippi. The children who came to Texas with their parents were John Black, Ora Estelle, Luther (died Bear Creek, Parker County), and Mary Eleanor II. Alma Matilda and Vines Lindsey II were born at Bear Creek community. Twins, Joseph Robert and Allen Holbart, Myrtice Malinda and Harriett Elizabeth were born at Bethesda.

Upon completion of a double log cabin on the west banks of Rippy Branch (named for early family murdered by Indians), Mrs. Coalson immediately organized a Sunday School in her home where the neighbors came to read the Bible and sing songs. From this nucleus, the first church was officially recognized by the Central Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on September 8, 1876.

Mrs. Coalson was known far and wide for her services to her fellowmen, often riding horseback to help with the sick or with the birth of babies. She said that she never refused to help when