

Mary Eleanor Coalson, daughter of John Marshall Shirley and Matilda Eleanor Black-Shirley, was born in Abbeville district, South Carolina, June 17, 1839. and died at her old home in Parker County, Texas, March 28, 1928, and was buried at Bethesda Church Cemetery the following day. She moved to Mississippi in 1844 with her parents, coming to Texas in 1869. She was married to John Marshall Coalson April 9, 1856. He died February 3, 1897. (Bethesda; buried there.)

To this union was born eleven children; two of them died in infancy; two others died a few years ago; several children survive her. She was converted in 1853 and joined the Methodist Church.

Grandma Coalson, as she was affectionately called by all who knew her, lived a very consistent Christian life; was faithful to her church through all the years of her long life. Even in her last days she was always present and helped the church in every way that was in her power. She grew very feeble and almost blind in her last days, yet her faith never faltered. She encouraged every one to love and serve the Heavenly Father.

Our church has lost one of its most faithful members. She belonged to Bethesda Church for over fifty years--was a charter member of that church. We feel a great loss on the account of her departure. It was a great benediction to be with her in her last days on earth. Prayer was held often in her room. She would quote scripture and was very calm and had great trust in her Savior, Whom he had served so long. She talked of her departure to all her loved ones; among her last words she said she was trusting in her Savior, Jesus Christ.

May all her loved ones serve her Saviour as she did and all meet her in the land of happy reunions, where parting will be no more.

One that loved her,

HER FRIEND.

Grandma Coalson moved to the community that later became Bethesda in April, 1874. They built a double log cabin, and immediately, Grandma invited the neighbors to her cabin to have Bible reading and sing hymns on Sunday. From this nucleus evolved what is now the Bethesda Methodist Church, the second church in Parker County, Texas, that Grandma Coalson helped get started; the first one was on Bear Creek in south east corner of the county, some time around 1869-70.