

MRS JOHN MARSHALL (MATILDA ELEANOR BLACK) SHIRLEY, 1816-1900

Matilda Eleanor Black was born in Abbeville District, South Carolina, Nov. 10, 1816, to Jonathan and Eleanor Sharp-Shirley. She was married to John Marshall Shirley November 13, 1834, probably in South Carolina.

This couple moved to Mississippi in 1844, and lived in many counties in that state until they settled in Covich County in 1858, at Crystal Springs, where John M. Shirley died in 1863.

While the Shirleys lived in Choctaw County, Mr. Shirley rode 20 miles on horseback, to bring Rev. Duskin, a Methodist minister, to organize a church, called Bethel, with a charter membership of five people. Mrs. Shirley was instrumental in the organization of a church wherever she moved to or lived.

After John Marshall died, Matilda Eleanor Shirley continued to live in Covich County with her children until her daughter, Mary Eleanor, who had married John Marshall Coalson, moved to the Bear Creek community, Parker County, in 1869. This group, with the additional children born at Bear Creek, moved to what is now known as Bethesda in April, 1874, and the 5th generation is still living on the farmland patented from the State of Texas, by John Marshall Coalson, in the late 1870's.

John M. and Matilda E. Shirley had eight children, in the following order. Robert Alexander, Mary Eleanor, Joseph Jonathan, Elizabeth Matilda, Martha Capers, Adelaide Celestia, Alice Ann