

Maybe they couldn't read, write nor cipher, but each was known by his or her mark, sure as I live.

In the will of Mary Colton, "widow and relict" of Jacob Coalson, Mary Burton Davis signed her will with her mark: thusly :



Her son was John Colson, who used this mark on his will:



John Jr, son of the above John Colson, sued this mark:



Agnes Leggett was a witness who signed:



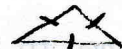
John Leggett was a witness who signed:



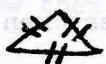
I found that some used a plain X; as:



Other marks found on legal documents were:



and:.



Various spelling were used because those who could read and write at all put down what they thought they heard. In one will, I found two or three spellings of the name COALSON; in another, the same thing.

When I was in about the third grade in school in Ranger, the teacher asked me what my last name was, and I said "Cosson". You run COALSON thru real fast, and you may get "Cosson", too. She asked me to spell my last name and when I spelled it COALSON, she said, "Oh, COALSON" and I said that's what I said, Cosson.

Sanders Coalson, 1765-1853 (to distinguish him from many other men by the same name but with differen dates) mentions in his will his wife BASHABAY. Her name was Bathsheba, and you can run Bathsheba thru by putting the accent at the first of the word, and you might get BASHABAY. Try it for size. No wonder we have so many variations of the same surnames in the United States, but thank goodness for any spelling that gives us family history. Thank goodness for old legal records, for Bible records which were so diligently kept; for tradition as handed down from one to another.

My sister argues that nobody kept records "that far back" but I say they did or we would not have the genealogy of Christ in the Bible; they did it by memory, I suspect before they could read or write. They were taught the important things to remember and to know. Like "how to survive".