

our legacy: THE COALSONS OF PARKER COUNTY

## THE LOCAL FAMILY CONTINUES A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE, BUILDING A LEGACY PLACE IN WESTERN PARKER COUNTY



In Northwestern Parker County, 3 miles north of Garner via FM 113 North, Coalson Acres sprawls across a large swath of the region's lovely rolling hills. It's a place flush with Parker County history—and the Coalson family legacy is clearly part of that history.

Home to six generations of Coalsons, the family ranch traces its beginnings to 1885 and an intrepid ancestor named Vines "Lindsey" Coalson. Having lost his home and livelihood during the Civil War, the Mississippian left Jackson for Texas, arriving in Fort Worth by train. He then walked to Weatherford (about 10 hours west on foot) where he purchased a tract of land. Known as the Old Horton Place, the acreage was studded with huge oaks that thrived in the rich sandy loam of the Western Cross Timbers.



Today, Mac Coalson, grandson of Vines Coalson, and wife Tommie Coalson are the patriarch and matriarch of Coalson Acres, working with their sons McAllen and Greg. Through thoughtful acquisitions, over the years the Coalsons have grown the original 181-acre farm bought by Mac's grandfather into a much larger Parker County spread, covering some 1,555 acres in the Bethesda community, some 12 miles northwest of Weatherford. Mac and McAllen are also longtime farm and ranch real estate brokers, with 55 and 36 years' experience, respectively. It doesn't hurt that 99-percent of their real estate business involves the buying and selling of ranches or ranch land—it has kept them in touch with property trends and opportunities in the area.

The Coalsons run cattle and raise cutting horses which Greg Coalson trains, shows and manages, along with son Ian Coalson who cares for the horses not in training, which includes those in the breeding program. In addition, McAllen governs the Bear Creek Ranch deer hunting and breeding operation, along with son Raleigh Coalson who works there.

It's a busy, multifaceted operation, but in today's farm and ranch climate, what is being produced on the land doesn't necessarily pay for the land.

"The biggest thing that has changed is the cost of the land," Mac explained. "Today you can't pay for it out [of the revenue from] cattle and horses, where in early days you could have. But I would wind up saying you can build a great asset. You can't pay it [the land] off, in other words." "Appreciation of land values," McAllen added, "is where the real money is made in the ranching world." Why? Because land is a limited commodity—they aren't making any more of it. So as demand increases so do property prices. The exception is if your ranching operation is further west where land prices are much lower and you can run "enormous quantities of cattle," Mac added. Put plainly: acreage near the Metroplex is very expensive.

What advice do the Coalsons have for aspiring young ranchers? Mac let out a whistle and said, "That's a hard question!" adding, "Be ready to get up early and stay late." McAllen said, "There's an old saying: 'Where there's a will, there's a way' ... It depends on how bad you want it." Both agree it



Children of Vines Lindsey Coalson and Mary Alford Coalson.  
John Alford "Teen" Coalson, Ala Mae Coalson Morris, Vines Allen Coalson

Toliver Farrell Coalson, Troy Coalson Morris

is getting harder to start up in ranching. "Cost of fertilizer is outrageous," McAllen continued. "It's hard to get good help. And of course, the more the land price goes up the harder it is to make it work. Really, what you need in order to do that is a family that already has land that is paid for. That's their best chance."

However, Mac pointed out that "every acre on this ranch we bought ... no inheritance." Having three sisters, Mac said he bought the land from his mother. "My father bought it from Grandpa, and we ended up buying it from my mother after Dad passed. Then we just kept adding property as the years went by. Of course, I started buying it back in the '60s when it was cheap." A relative word "cheap," as McAllen pointed out, pondering what his great-grandfather would have thought back in 1885 about the "cheap" prices Mac paid in the '60s: Sky high! Undoable! Cost of land remains the dominant factor in ranch building and development. And Mac, with wisdom gained over the span of five decades in the business, says



he expects property prices will continue to rise as more people and developers flood into this area.

But it's not all work and no play on the ranch. Asked to recall an interesting story from his ranching past, Mac obliged: "One of the greatest guys that I've ever known is Dr. Noel Bryan," he said with a smile taking over his face. "In the early days, we got into the registered Simmental business and Dr. Bryan would come out and surgically dehorn the heifers that we were going to get ready for sale. My father was getting older, and he happened to come up after Dr. Bryan had [already] deadened around a horn, and he's standing over there watching Dr. Bryan fixing to complete the dehorning on this heifer. [Dr. Bryan] gets this knife out and he starts cutting around that horn, then he cuts around on the other side, then he gets a little cable and cuts

that horn off. As he's cutting it the heifer never bawled or tried to get out of the squeeze chute or anything. So, my father says: 'Doc Bryan, I don't know too much about those ol' Simmental cattle, but they sure are tough.'" Mac broke into a laugh and added, "He didn't know that [Dr. Bryan] had already put deadening around their horns."

What's it like working side-by-side with family members to build a lasting legacy? "It's the greatest blessing in life, I think," Mac was quick to say. "Very positive," McAllen added.

Since McAllen and wife Karla Coalson have three children and two grandchildren, and Greg and his wife Shelly Coalson have two children and a grandchild, it seems certain the Coalson family will continue to thrive in Parker County.



Mac Coalson, Jonnie Coalson Crum, Margie Coalson Grissom, Alleen Coalson Stringer  
Gladys Burgin Coalson, J.A. "Teen" Coalson



Coalson Cattle Company in Garner Texas, early 1900's  
J.A. "Teen" Coalson, T. Farrell Coalson, Tom Massey - Friend & Helper





Millsap High School 1958  
Tommie Sawyer Coalson, Mac A Coalson



McAllen Coalson, Tommie Coalson, Mac Coalson, Greg Coalson