

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Barbara Burnette Roane Bleil**

Mrs. Bleil provided two interviews: one taken in 2012 talks about being born in 1935 in the historic Hillyer House in Rosenberg and living in Fort Bend County; the second took place in 2015 when she talks about her ancestors who settled in Texas including a great-grandfather who was a county commissioner in Fort Bend County. She also has ancestors who served as a governor, a state Supreme Court judge, a US Senator and US Representative. Barbara has many relatives that fought in the Civil War and other wars.

Her father, George G. Roane II, was a life-long and renowned attorney, a state representative and a county judge as well as raising a few cattle on some ranch land he owned in the county. Barbara, as well as her mother, were active in many social organizations in the county.

Barbara provides stories about her ancestors moving to Texas to farm and raise a family. She is related to the DeWalt family; and shares stories about the Rhones, the DeWalts, the Cessnas, the Kneitzes and others.

26 Pages

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Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Dr. Armstrong – doctor

Dannie Roane – aunt

Louis/Alouise Kneitz – grandfather

Knjac – original spelling of grandfather's name, changed to "Kneitz" on immigrating

W. T. Hawkins – home owner

Jean Canale – neighbor

Nelson Bass – neighbor

Mrs. Werler – seamstress, dressmaker

Shirley Temple – 1930's child film star

George Grant "GG" Roane III – brother

George Grant Roane II – father, lawyer, state representative, FBC County Judge

Ann Crosser, Joanne Anderson, Carolyn Culpepper, Sandy Scott – friends

Dean & Jackie Lehmann – friends

Ursuline Nuns – religious charitable sisterhood

William Roane – first ancestor in America

Mary Ball – William's wife

Thomas Roane – son of William & Mary

Henrietta Hearn – Thomas' wife

Thomas Jefferson Roane – Thomas & Henrietta's son

Mary Grant – Thomas Jefferson Roane's wife

Dr. Thomas Ruffin Rusk Roane – T. J. & Mary's son

Mary Cochran – Rusk's wife

George Grant Roane I – Barbara's great grandfather, Rusk & Mary's son

Marie Louise Cessna DeWalt – George's wife

Daniel "Danny" Joseph DeWalt – Marie's first husband

Aline DeWalt – Marie & Daniel's daughter

Thomas Waters DeWalt – Civil War doctor, Jay Bird member

Dannie Joseph – Marie's daughter

Aline Joseph Pope – Marie's daughter

T. Martin – Aline's first husband

Jim Buckley – Aline's second husband

Jack Adams – friend and son of Walter

Walter and Miss Lucy Adams – friends

Rusk Roane – Barbara's uncle

Jimmy Roane – Barbara's uncle

Beulah Roane – Barbara's aunt

Gordon Lee and Marie Bledsoe – cousins

Green Kennedy Cessna – Mary Louise and Aline's father, Civil War veteran

Mary Athena Houston – Green's wife, Mary Louise and Aline's mother

Archibald Roane – with Washington crossing the Delaware and at Yorktown, governor of Tennessee, multiple judicial appointments.

Judge Spence Roane – Virginia Supreme Court

William Henry Roane – United State Senator from Virginia

Joe Clyde Wessendorff – friends

Hilmar Moore – friends

Dolph Briscoe – Texas governor

Joseph Knajc – great grandfather

Antoinette "Toni" Kneitz – grandmother

I. H., "Denny" Kempner, Junior – friend
 Mr. Ike (I. H.) Kempner, Senior
 Lyda Ann Kempner Quinn – Ike's
 granddaughter, Barbara's friend, former
 Galveston mayor
 Henrietta Kempner – Ike's wife
 "Big" Lyda Ann Kempner – married Art
 Art Quinn – Lyda's father, "Big" Lyda's husband
 Penny Quinn – Art's daughter
 Jerry Thomas – Lyda's husband
 Harris and Carol Masterson - friends
 Philemon Waters – Revolutionary War soldiers
 Thomas Waters DeWalt
 Charlotte Brown – married T. W. DeWalt
 Daniel Joseph DeWalt and Thomas Waters
 DeWalt, Jr. - sons of T. W. and Charlotte

Places / Businesses

Rosenberg, Texas
 Kinch Hillyer House – earliest Rosenberg
 Hospital
 Polly Ryan Memorial Hospital, Rosenberg,
 Texas
 Oakbend Medical Center, Rosenberg
 Fort Bend County
 Needville, Texas
 Missouri City, Texas
 DeWalt Plantation
 Houston, Texas
 Czechoslovakia
 University of Texas
 Robert E. Lee Elementary
 Rosenberg Junior High
 Richmond, Texas

Lamar Consolidated
 Palace Grocery Store
 Schaeffer's Drug Store
 Pickard & Huggins
 U. S. Army
 Austin, Texas
 Girl Scouts
 Kappa Kappa Gamma, UT sorority
 Fairchild, Texas
 DeWalt, Texas
 DeWalt Plantation
 Civil War
 Holy Rosary Catholic Church and
 Lourdes Grotto, Rosenberg
 Sacred Heart Catholic Church,
 Richmond
 America
 Virginia
 Antietam, Gettysburg, Civil War battles
 Polk County, Texas
 Harrisburg, Texas
 Blodgett, Texas
 Sandy Point, Brazoria County, Texas
 Jaybirds – Fort Bend County political
 faction
 Meyerland, Texas
 Galveston, Texas
 Freeport, Texas
 South Texas Law School, Houston
 Saint Thomas Central High School,
 Houston
 World War II

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| Office of Strategic Services (OSS) precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) | Peter Cooper Village Apartments, New York City |
| Trieiha, Czechoslovakia | Vietnam War |
| Schulenberg, Texas | Florida |
| Dubina Church, Schulenberg | California |
| World War II Prisoner of War Camp, Rosenberg | Rockingham, North Carolina |
| Old Fort Bend County Fairgrounds | Newberry District, South Carolina |
| Germany | Texas |
| DeWalt Cemetery Foundation | Houston Heritage Society |
| Bert Bleil – Barbara’s husband | Dew Plantation |
| Imperial Sugar Company | DeWalt Cemetery |
| Sugar Land, Texas | Sienna Plantation |
| | Fairchilds Dance Hall |

Events

Born in 1935 in the still standing residence called Hillyer House in Rosenberg, Barbara has lived her entire life in Fort Bend County.

She shares many stories about growing up in a small town, learning to swim in the Brazos River, having her clothes made by a dressmaker; and raising her own family with her husband Bert.

Barbara also provides details about her ancestors, dating before the Civil War, and moving to Texas to become ranchers, farmers and raise a family. She has many prominent, elected officials in her family including her own father, George G. Roane II, who was the county judge in Fort Bend County.

Barbara is also related to the DeWalt family and provides several stories about the DeWalt plantation. She is also the custodian of the DeWalt Cemetery located in the Lake Olympia subdivision.