

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Doretha Brown**

Ms. Brown was born December 29, 1931 in the Foster Community and was raised by her grandparents, Susie and Isaiah Watkins. Isaiah's nickname was Zeke and he was a blind sharecropper. Doretha, from the age of 12, helped her grandfather guide the mules to plant cotton and corn. She did this for 3 years until her grandparents began receiving a pension and they quit plowing. She attended two black schools sometimes walking five miles. She worked for 23 years as a cook for Texas Instruments' employee cafeteria in Stafford. Doretha was married to Henry Spates for 23 years and has three children. She now resides in Rosenberg.

12 Pages

∥ *Scroll down for Key Words from the Interview.* ∥

Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Renee Lamb – property owner
 Clemetee “Perk” Perkins – brother
 Rosenbush Family – property owners
 Halley & Walter – managed Rosenbush store
 Lulu Watkins – mother
 Isaiah & Susie Watkins – grandparents
 Isaiah “Zeke” Watkins – Uncle
 Junior Harris – neighbor
 Jeb Stuart
 Junior Hardy – drove her to school
 Artie May – teacher
 Nathaniel Ball
 Sandra Spates Guyton – daughter
 Mattie Marie Spates Mathews – daughter
 Henry Lee Spates, Jr. – son
 Henry Spates, Sr. – husband

Places / Businesses

Foster Community, Texas
 Fort Bend County
 Rosenberg, Texas
 Rosenbush’s Store
 Jones Creek School, Foster
 Spring Green School
 Spring Green Church
 Texas Instruments
 Massachusetts
 Sugar Land, Texas
 Stafford, Texas
 Barrett Bat School
 Schutches store
 Fulshear, Texas
 Houston, Texas
 Victoria, Texas

Events

Ms Brown was born on the Rosenbush property in the Foster Community on December 29, 1931.

For 3 years beginning around the age of 12, she had to guide the mules and plow the field with her blind grandfather.

As a black child, Doretha was mistreated at the Rosenbush store. She vowed never to return and she never did.

She saw a fellow employee ride his bike from Sugar Land to Texas Instruments in Stafford regardless of the weather. So she began driving him to and from work until he became too ill to work.

Doretha was a cook at Texas Instruments in Stafford for 23 years. She quit because of a bad manager.

Doretha tells the story of the day her mother walked back into her life for a brief time, getting off the “Dinky” train in Fulshear and walking 3 hours barefoot to her parents’ house.

She was married to Henry Spates for 23 years and has 3 children. She now has 3 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.