

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Johnnie Mae Thomas Greenwood**

Ms. Greenwood's parents were employed at the George Ranch by Mr. and Mrs. A. P. George as a housekeeper and general handyman. Johnnie was the first of their four children born at the ranch. Other than attending school out of the county, Johnnie lived at the ranch until she married in 1946. Her uncle, Willie Thomas, had a challenging career on the rodeo circuit but was finally inducted into the Texas Rodeo Hall of Fame in 2004. Mrs. Greenwood worked for Mrs. Mamie George as well as other prominent families in the county including the Moore's and Wessendorff's. She has been an active member of Pilgrim Baptist Church since 1946.

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Interview Summary

People (mentioned in the interview in alphabetical order)

Red Adair – international firefighter
 Dr. Frank Ammon – local physician
 Hattie Mae Bailey – employed by Mrs. Wessendorff
 Leonard Bailey – Hattie Mae’s husband
 Dr. Barky – local physician
 Jeff Blacknell (aka Johnny Thomas) – father
 Thomas Blacknell – grandfather
 Josephine Downey – mother
 Ferguson – prominent family
 Dave Field – George’s chauffeur
 A P George – rancher/landowner
 Mamie George – rancher/landowner
 Annette Delisa Greenwood – daughter
 Constance Greenwood Bowie – daughter
 Debra Darlene Greenwood-Sharp – daughter
 Mary Greenwood-Miller – daughter
 Larry Greenwood – son
 Patricia Ann Greenwood – daughter
 Robert Greenwood – spouse
 Robert Greenwood, Jr. – son
 Roy Milton Greenwood – son
 Verge L. Greenwood – son
 Willie Floyd Greenwood – son
 Dr. Johnson – local physician
 Mary Jones – George’s niece
 Rhydonia Jones – Mary’s mother
 Itilia Keys – George’s main cook
 Kian – Jane Long’s slave

Jane Long – celebrated as the Mother of Texas

Henry Kopycinski – farmer/landowner

Manning – prominent family

Bink Manning – firefighter

Miles – prominent family

Mary Greenwood Miller – daughter

Judge Moore – Congressman

Annie Sherman – local resident

Albert Starling – Lollie’s husband

Don Starling – Lollie’s son

Donna Starling – Lollie’s daughter

James Thomas – brother

Willie Thomas – brother

Lottie Thomas – sister

Grant Walker

Ms. Wallace – local resident

Bubba Watson – local resident

Wessendorff- prominent family

Janie Wessendorff – local resident

Places / Businesses

Astrodome, Houston, Texas

Bottles, Texas

Dunbar High School

Fort Bend County

Galveston, Texas

George Ranch

Madison Square Garden, New York City

Murphy Jones Cemetery

Pilgrim (Journey) Baptist Church

Richmond, Texas

San Felipe, Texas

Sealy, Texas

Sullivan's Addition

Temple, Texas

Thompson, Texas

Wharton County

Zion Hill Baptist Church

Events

Johnnie was born, lived and worked at the George Ranch.

She was a star basketball player while attending several black schools.

Johnnie married Robert Greenwood in 1946 and had ten children.

She worked for many of the county's prominent families.

According to Johnnie, her mother Josephine invented the fitted sheets for Polly Ryon Hospital as well as western shirts with snaps.