

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



This oral history is copyrighted 2019, by the Fort Bend County Historical Commission. All Rights Reserved. For information contact: Fort Bend County Historical Commission, Attn: Chairman-Oral History Committee, 301 Jackson St., 5th Floor, Richmond, TX, 77469.

Terms and Conditions

These oral histories do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the County Historical Commission or Fort Bend County. This file may not be modified or changed in any way without the express written permission of the Fort Bend County Historical Commission. This file may not be redistributed for profit. Please do not 'hot link' to this file or repost this file.

Abstract: **Larry Callies**

Mr. Callies, has created and runs the Black Cowboy Museum in Rosenberg, TX. He is an expert maker of saddles and owner of a saddle shop, a rodeo contestant, retired postman, former cowboy, and musical singer/performer. He and his father were cowboys who worked on many famous Texas ranches. His maternal great great grandfather was a slave owner and his mother was born of mixed race.

Larry's love of country music and singing became a paying hobby but his race kept him out of many clubs. He would sing and play at various venues while working for the post office during the day. Larry shares many stories about his family's history that began in Hallettsville and Edna in the 1700s as well as some very intriguing stories about black cowboys in Texas.

16 Pages

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

Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Dwight Callies – cousin
 Dylan Callies – son
 Inell Mitchell Callies – mother
 Khristi Callies – daughter
 Andrew Callies – brother
 Leon Callies, Sr. – father
 Matthew Callies – paternal great great grandfather
 Marvin Callies – brother
 Leon Callies, Jr. – brother
 Nathan Callies – paternal grandfather
 Valerie Callies – sister
 Willie Callies – uncle
 Whitney Callies – daughter
 Naomi Mitchell Carrier – distant relative
 James Kerr Crain – author
 Calvin Greedy – cousin & best calf roper
 Miss Greenwood – Willie Thomas sister
 Edmond Issa – landlord & friend
 Major James Kerr – great great grandfather served in the Republic of Texas Army
 O. C. Marsh – paleontologist
 Annis Sally Mitchell – maternal great great grandmother

Isaac Newton Mitchell – maternal great great grandfather & slave owner
 Mary Margaret Kerr Mitchell – wife of Isaac Newton Mitchell
 Bill Pickett – rodeo cowboy
 Charley Pride – famous country singer
 Willie Thomas – rodeo cowboy from Fort Bend
 Travis Tritt – famous country singer
 Carl Waldrep – saddle maker
 Fred Whitfield – calf roper
 Sloan Williams – rodeo stock producer
 Tex Williams – rodeo cowboy & cousin
 Erv Woolsey – manager

Places / Businesses

Edna, Texas
 Fort Bend County, Texas
 George Ranch
 Hallettsville, Texas
 Gilley's in Pasadena, Texas
 Riverside Hall
 Rosenberg, Texas
 Simonton Rodeo, Simonton, Texas
 West Columbia, Texas

Events

Larry Callies has lived an interesting life and shares numerous stories about his family's unusual history and his life as a cowboy, a singer and saddle maker.

He is of mixed race dating back to the 1800s when his great great grandmother was a slave and became pregnant by her white slave owner. A secret that Larry had to dig out of various relatives and thanks to a book by James Kerr Crain titled *A Texas Family*.

Larry worked on several ranches in Texas from as early an age 12 when his dad was a cowboy.

His first love was singing. He shared the same road manager and band as George Strait until he lost his voice. Larry played at Gilley's and opened for Travis Tritt, Collin Raye, Selena, and Emilio.

He worked for the US Post Office for 34 years until he retired to open a saddle shop. He loved to work at the George Ranch to share stories about black cowboys in Texas and collect black cowboy history. He amassed enough of a collection to open the Black Cowboy Museum in Rosenberg so the lives of early black cowboys would remain alive.