



*Born on March 27, 1910
in Pattison, Texas,
Redell Patterson Scott lived
through the Great Depression,
both world wars, and the
civil rights movement. In her
lifetime, Redell has seen the
invention of the toaster, hair
dryer, car radio, color TV, and
many more.*

Redell Patterson Scott still lives on their Katy family homestead, which was built in 1936, with her youngest daughter Nadine



Photo by Amy Salvato



Portrait of Redell Patterson Scott taken around 1942

105 Years Young

Katy's centenarian Redell Patterson Scott shares personal experiences from the past century

Written by Holly Leger

Any resident who has lived in Katy for the past decade has seen the city grow and change dramatically. But that's nothing compared to the changes that Redell Patterson Scott has seen. The 105-year-old woman moved to Katy in 1919 and has resided here ever since.

Horse and Buggy Days

Scott recalls riding a horse and buggy around the streets of Katy as a young girl. She remembers Katy as a town that was much smaller back then, and the roads were very different from the freeways of today. "It wasn't like this," she says, pointing to the paved streets. "It was muddy."

The only child of Lee Brandy Burg and Estella Sullivan, Scott was raised on a farm. The family grew vegetables and peanuts. While Scott can remember rationing food and gasoline during the Great Depression, she does remember the family's farming business kept them afloat. "It was pretty good for us," Scott says.

Katy Family Homestead

Scott married her first husband, Henry Patterson, who worked for the M-K-T Railroad when she was just 16 years old. Together, they had nine children, though two died as infants. After her first husband passed away, she later married Tillman Scott, after the two met at a church event. They raised their combined families together and were married just shy of 50 years.

Of Scott's seven children, four are still living. Henry Patterson Jr. is the oldest sibling at age 87. He lives in Katy and served in World War II. Leonard "L.C." Patterson lives in Houston and is a veteran of the Korean War. Kathryn Hearn lives in California; and Nadine Johnson, the baby of the family at 70 years old, is now retired and living with her mother at the original homestead that Scott built with her first husband in 1936.

Educational Equality

For over 50 years, Scott worked as a housekeeper in Katy in order to help provide for her children. In spite of their large family, Johnson says her parents never accepted any welfare

assistance and that her mother was determined to give her children the best. "She was always focused on all of her children receiving adequate education," Johnson recalls. "She worked very hard to see that that was accomplished."

Scott even played a key role in integrating schools in the community. Johnson remembers her mother fighting for her and her siblings to continue their secondary education in Katy, rather than being bussed to Cypress Fairbanks, as was custom then for African American residents in Katy. "My mother, along with a group of parents, met with the [school] officials," Johnson says. "They finally were able to attend the schools here in Katy."

Christian Roots

Faith is also very important to Scott. She has been a member at Antioch Baptist Church in Katy for most of her life and was an active participant on numerous church boards in the past, including serving as the choir's president for 20 years, not resigning until her 80s. "I loved working in the church," Scott says.

Her active faith has left an impression on many, including her son, Leonard Patterson. "The main thing she instilled in us was living in Christ Jesus," he shares. "She said to get myself right with God. I was raised up in the church, and that's the way I am today."

Legacy of Love

Not only does the centenarian have grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She even has great-great-great-grandchildren. But for Scott, having a big family simply means having more opportunities to love. It's a legacy she hopes to leave behind one day. Her advice to the next generation is to do the right thing and to never forget to love others. "I loved my children," Scott says. "I'm sure they all know I love them by the way I treat them and what I do for them. Love each other." **KM**

HOLLY LEGER is a writer who enjoys every opportunity to experience the past through the eyes of her elders.