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SEPTEMBER 2013

We the People

Shirley Godfrey and other DAR members keep history alive through Constitution Week

House on the Hill
At Home With Johnnie Wright

Plus:
Seeing Without Sight
Reaching Out
More Than a Transaction
In the Kitchen With Jayne Dawson



Publisher, Connie Poirier

General Manager, Rick Hensley

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor, Becky Walker

Weatherford Editor, Amber D. Browne

Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Editorial Assistant, Beverly Shay

Writers, Lisa Bell . Johnita Darton

Gregg Davis

Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony

Pamela Parisi

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Casey Henson . Martha Macias

Felipe Ruiz . Arlene Honza

Brande Morgan . Shannon Pfaff

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose

Photographers, Sarah McVean

Vanessa Polozola

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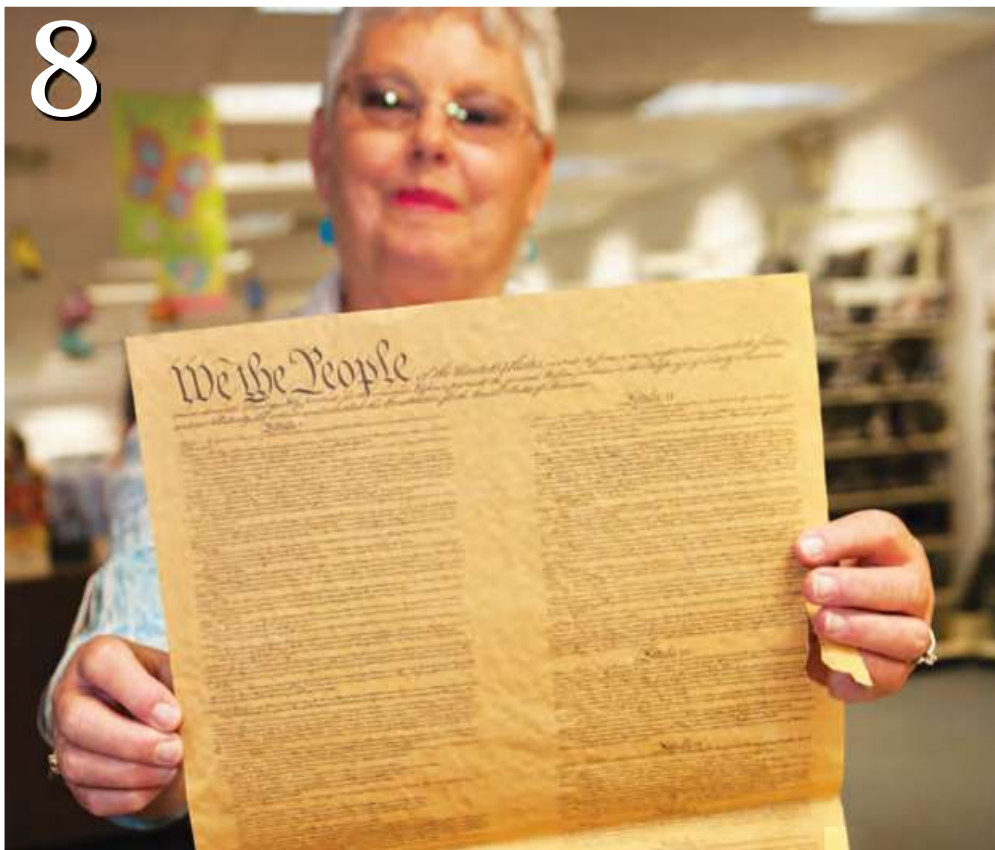


Shirley Godfrey helps preserve history through education.

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

I love fall! The cooler breeze; watching the leaves change to bright shades of red, orange and yellow; and, of course, the realization the holidays are right around the corner.

September is a time of celebration for me, but also a time of remembrance as my birthday falls on 9/11. I take time on my birthday each year to remember those who perished on September 11, 2001. The terrorists who attacked the U.S. 12 years ago meant to break our strength and spirit, but their

actions brought the country together in solidarity.

September 11 is now referred to as Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. It's a time to come together with others in the community and volunteer to serve others. It's a great opportunity to find a nonprofit or other group to help those in need.

Take care,

Amber

Amber D. Browne
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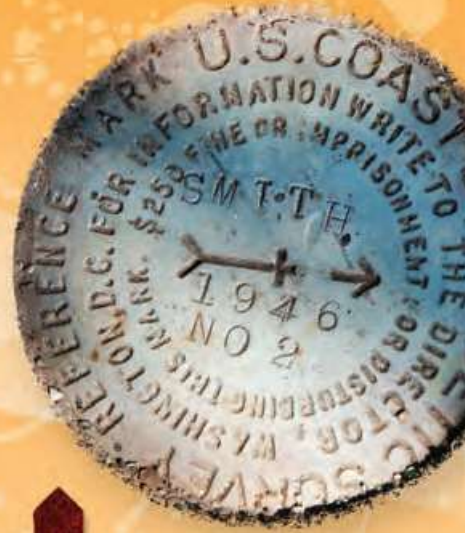
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HOUSE ON THE HILL



— By Amber D. Browne

You can see for miles and miles while standing atop Johnnie Wright's property in Weatherford. Her house on Newsome Mound Road gives visitors a birds-eye-view of surrounding locations, including the downtown Fort Worth skyline and Eagle Mountain Lake. "You can see forever up here," Johnnie proclaimed. She and her late husband, Bob Wright, moved onto Shell Rock Farm in 1968 after his father passed away. "Bob's dad used to be able to see 11 towns from up here. But, you can't distinguish them now because there are so many lights."

Bob's great-uncle traveled to the area from Oklahoma in 1907. "He came in a covered wagon and lost two children from the flu going around at that time," Johnnie explained. "They're buried



AT HOME WITH
Johnnie Wright



off the hill, but we don't know for sure where. But, that's why this is called Newsome Mound, because it's kind of a cemetery." Inside the home is a framed, black-and-white photo from 1912 that includes the entire Wright and Newsome families.

Johnnie's in-laws bought the property in 1937. A barn and dairy were built in 1938 near Highway 730 just east of her current home. The Wrights added a farm house about a year later, and Johnnie's only son, Weldon Wright, now lives there.



Their house was built on 32 acres of the original property back in 1967, on a hill that is one of the highest points in the area.

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Johnnie moved to Weatherford from Fort Worth at the age of 13. She met Bob while at Azle High School, where she taught for 23 years. The two were married for 55 years before he passed away.

Their house was built on 32 acres of the original property back in 1967, on a hill that is one of the highest points in the area. The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, now known as the National Geodetic Survey, placed three bronze

disks on the property back in 1946. The disks sit on buried concrete posts. Each marker has an arrow pointing to one of the other markers in a triangular shape. The house was built between the markers, so it wouldn't disturb them. "A lot of surveyors come by here," she explained. According to NGS documents, the property sits 997 feet above sea level. The

NGS periodically checks the markers on Johnnie's property to make sure they are in good condition.

Plenty of places can be found to plop down under shade trees or taste some fresh fruit from a peach tree while enjoying the view. Comfy chairs on the front porch provide seating to watch bunnies hop by, listen to the birds sing



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or just enjoy some iced tea with a friend. In her manicured yard, Johnnie has transformed an old cast iron bathtub into a garden with squash, tomatoes and okra. An old red tractor sits in the front yard, which is full of oak and elm trees, where rusty wagon wheels lean, giving a feel of old country life. Wooden Christmas carolers donning cloth attire and a statue of the Madonna are also displayed in the yard. "I'm not Catholic. I just liked the statue," she said, chuckling. She also has a chicken coop where her eldest great-granddaughter, Bobby Daye, raises chickens.

Bobby, her father, Zach Wright, and her sister, Jesse Kay, live further east on the farm. The girls spend plenty of time at their great-grandmother's house. They even have their own rooms. Bobby sleeps on a white rod iron bed that is, according to Johnnie's cousin, believed to be more than 100 years old. "She just had it lying out in a pasture," Johnnie said. So, she offered to take it off her cousin's hands. A shadow box full of arrowheads, which Bob found in the local area or were gifted to him by friends, hangs on one of the wood paneled walls in Bobby's room. Her sister, Jesse, has a room full of dolls. One painting in Jesse's room depicting two young girls with dark hair was given to Johnnie by a friend. The girls in the painting actually resemble the sisters. Johnnie has also displayed two schoolhouse paintings from 1945, which she purchased for \$2 at a Goodwill store.

In the master bedroom, the bed is covered with beautiful beige and maroon bedding embroidered with small flowers. A photo of Johnnie and her second husband, Paul Busby, is also displayed in the room. The two were married for about three years before he passed away during surgery in 2011. The photo provides a beautiful memory for Johnnie, with the two of them sitting in a car with a rainbow crossing the blue sky behind them. A child-size dresser from Wales lines one wall and gives a home to Johnnie's African jewelry and figurines. "I bought all of these in Africa," Johnnie recalled. She and her sister, Betty Russell, like to travel and have visited Germany, China, France, England and other locations across the globe. Now she and



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her son, Weldon, take off once a month on a vacation in her motor home.

When she's not on the road traveling, Johnnie enjoys spending time at home with her family. Her house is full of antiques, with two wooden chairs that are over 100 years old in the living room. She often uses one of them to rock her younger great-grandchildren to sleep in front of the fireplace. She has an antique china cabinet full of tea sets she's collected over the years. She also enjoys collecting ceramic roosters and has a small collection of old cow bells from the now closed dairy. At an estate sale, Johnnie purchased a painting that resembles her late daughter, Judy, who passed away in an automobile accident when she was just 17 years old. The painting hangs in her living area where you can hear the antique grandfather clock chiming in the background.

She has plenty of space to host family gatherings for holidays, birthday parties and baby showers. Many family members don't have to travel far to visit, because they live just down the road. "They're usually hollering at me to pick them up something," she said, laughing. "I love to be around my family. Everybody's so close." Her son and grandson live nearby, and her other two grandchildren visit as often as possible. Her grandson, Alex Wright, and his wife, Kimberly, recently had their first child, Monty. Her granddaughter, Kate, often brings her two other great-grandbabies, Gemma and Eli, over for a visit. Kate and her husband, Nick Webb, have a third baby on the way, and Johnnie plans to spend some more time in her antique rocking chair lulling him to sleep.

"They keep me busy," she said. But, she enjoys time spent with them. "We've raised our kids to be all together as a family." **NOW**

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