

# Granny Bush Rose

By Sandra Lynn Roberts Jones

*Editor's note: This article, submitted by Becky Hettinger, provides historical insight on a particular rose bush found at the Blackwell House. The bush is located on the south side of the house, behind the white fence at the north end.*

The cutting of the "Granny Bush Rose" originally came from Catherine A. Stadler Bush of Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Her daughter, Sarah Elizabeth Bush Stovall brought a cutting to Van Zandt County, Texas in 1892. Sarah Elizabeth was the mother of a past county judge, Edgar Christopher (E.C.) Stovall, and the great-great-grand-niece of Sarah Bush Johnson Lincoln, stepmother of Abraham Lincoln. She personally guarded two items on the move from Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Kentucky to Texas as they traveled by covered wagon and by train: a small flock of duck-legged chickens, and the rose bush cuttings. Unfortunately, the duck-legged chickens were lost in the 1920s, but rootings from the rose bush were passed on.

Sarah lived in the Grand Saline area and later near Canton. In 1902 when her daughter, Willie Lee Stovall married W. H. D. Roberts, she took a cutting of the plant to bring to her new home on the plot of land on the southeast corner of Texas State Highway 243 and Texas State Highway 47. In the mid-1950s, Willie Lee moved to Dallas, Texas and took a cutting of her plant. In the 1960s, Willie Lee broke up housekeeping and moved to the Crest Wood Nursing Home in Wills Point, Texas and later to Heritage Manor in Canton, Texas. In 1972, I moved into the Blue Springs Community north of Canton, and in 1975, another cutting was moved to the Wallace Community west of Canton. There are presently six bushes thriving in Van Zandt County.

I have always looked at this plant as one of strength, courage and determination and could compare it with all the trials and tribulations my ancestors had to endure to bring this plant to me. Willie Lee Stovall was my grandmother, and I called her "Granny Bush", and that is how the name "Granny Bush Rose" came to be.

In the late 1970s, the rose bush that Willie Lee Stovall Roberts planted on her new home place was destroyed to make way for better pastureland by a gentleman that had no knowledge of the history of the little rose bush. From 1892 until 2013, this strain of rose has been thriving in Van Zandt County for 121 years.

Thank you for allowing me to be able to share and continue to preserve a part of my family history in the rich soil history of Van Zandt County, Texas.

