

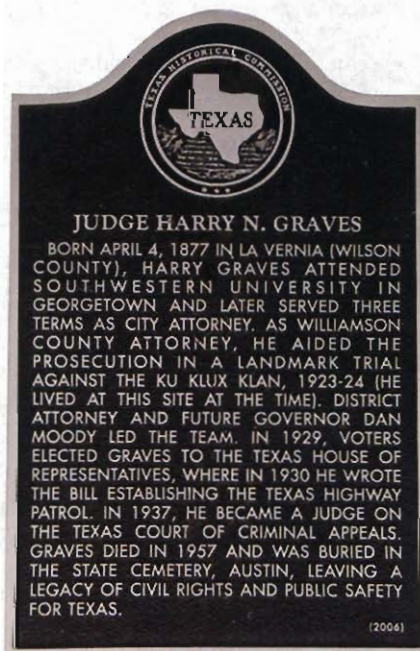


The Home of *Georgetown's Judge*

History lover works hard to preserve an exceptional residence on Olive Street.

By C. Wayne Dawson

Since Marietta Mugford and her husband Edward bought the Howren-Graves House at 1409 Olive Street in 1971, she's been determined to keep its history fresh. She loves to hand visitors an eight-page pamphlet that she researched and wrote about the home's storied past. The house has a great deal of history to preserve—its name derives from original owner A.S. Howren, and later resident Judge Henry Graves, a prosecutor in Georgetown's most famous court case, a landmark decision that mortally wounded the Ku Klux Klan and changed the country forever.



The land's first owner was none other than Albert H. Glasscock, son of the settler after whom Georgetown is named. He bought it in 1884 and later sold it to furniture merchant A.S. Howren, who commissioned Irvine Construction to erect a six-room house on the lot in 1885. He paid a total of \$656, including a \$200 down payment. It was the only home Irvine built in Georgetown, with the exception of George Irvine's personal residence at 409 E. University Avenue, which is featured on the cover of the Heritage Society's Driving Tour of Historic Georgetown.



Photo courtesy The Williamson Museum

Judge Harry M. Graves

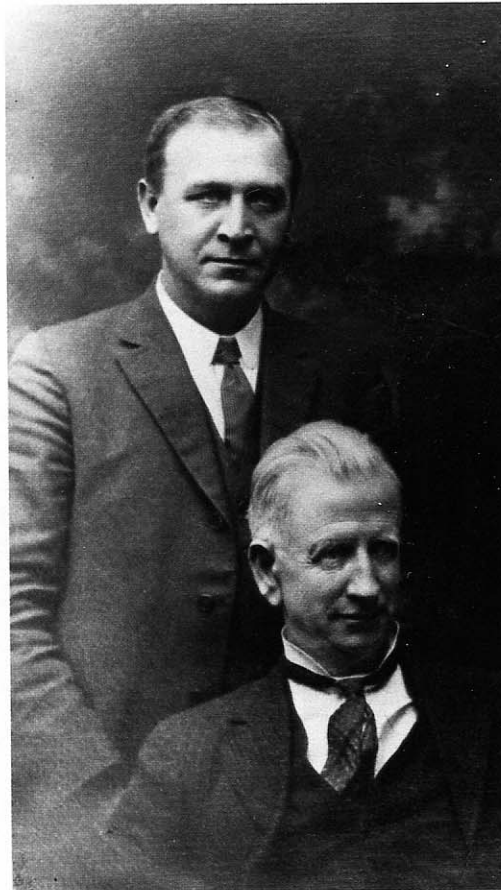
Six owners lived in the house until Maude Wilcox gave it to daughter Darthula Wilcox Graves and soon-to-be-famous son-in-law Henry Graves in 1915. Folks came to call the building the “Judge Graves House” because of Henry’s prominent role in local history, a story that begins with

“Folks came to call the building the Judge Graves House because of Henry’s prominent role in local history.”

events that occurred while the couple lived there.

By 1922, the Ku Klux Klan’s Texas membership skyrocketed to

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Dan Moody’s team of prosecuting attorneys, top row left to right, Richard Critz, Dan Moody, Harry Graves; bottom row, J.F. Taulbee and W.H. Nunn.

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170,000, with a nationwide total of four million. Sheriffs, judges, and politicians bowed to the Klan’s influence—it controlled the state legislature and even a U.S. senator. It discriminated against and violently oppressed blacks, immigrants, and everyone else who failed to live up to its moral code. And on Easter Sunday 1923, eight Klansmen pulled Robert Burleson out of his car and pistol-whipped him for appearing in public with a widow in an “adulterous” relationship. They pulled a sack over his head and tied him to a barbed wire fence, taking turns flogging him. Then they drove to the Taylor City Hall, bound Burleson to a tree, and poured hot tar over him.

Facing incredible odds, District Attorney Dan Moody’s team of

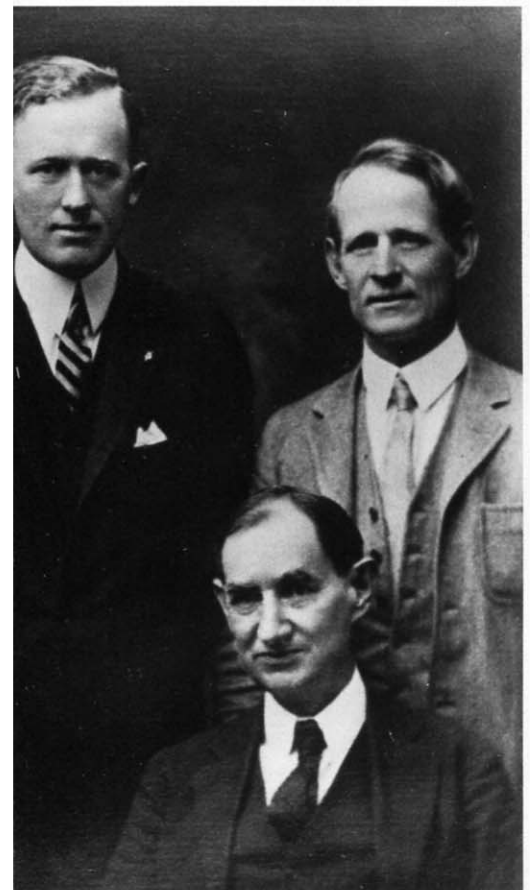


Photo courtesy The Williamson Museum

prosecuting attorneys, including former County Prosecutor Henry Graves, obtained the first U.S. conviction of Klansmen resulting in prison sentences.

After that, Henry Graves’ career soared. He won the 1929 election to a seat in the Texas House of Representatives, where he drafted important legislation, including laws creating the Texas Highway Patrol. He later earned the “Judge” moniker while presiding from 1937 to 1955 over the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the last public service position he held before retiring.

To this day in Georgetown, an annual play commemorates the courage of Henry Graves and the rest of Dan Moody’s prosecutorial team in achieving the landmark Klan convictions. And Marietta knows her house hosted much of that history.

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“Dan Moody in all likelihood came over here in the evenings to confer with Henry Graves,” she says.

After Darthula and Henry Graves moved out in 1929, the home passed through a succession of owners until the Mugfords bought it in 1971. At the time, Marietta taught history and Latin at Georgetown High School, while husband Edward was the first Curriculum Director at Georgetown Independent School District. “From the moment we came to this house, we always felt good vibes from it,” she says. “There were no ghosts. This neighborhood has always been populated by good, hard working, industrious, church-going people.”

The house was lucky to get the Mugfords. “In the early sixties, one of the neighbors attempted to buy the property and tear it down so they could expand their lot,” says Marietta. “People in that era preferred modern ranch style homes.”



Walking into the house conjures up images of 1885. One entry door contains a high window framed by palm-sized squares in the colors of the rainbow. Six-foot windows of wavy glass and ten-and-a-half-foot ceilings convey the Victorian exaltation of height. And the bedroom fireplace still has a dark coat from the days it burned coal.

Marietta keeps two bedspread-size sheets of the house’s original wallpaper. They’re decorated in a miniature floral design, and the back layer is thick cotton canvas.

Later residents added their own touches. It started out with six rooms, and it now features a sun porch and a third bedroom. Fortunately, past owners maintained the dining room’s vertical wainscoting—narrow strips of board

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stretching from the floor to waist-high—and horizontal wainscoting encompasses the entire kitchen.

Marietta keeps some of her own history in this house, too. She was born in one of the beds, an 1850s cannonball bed that features knobs on the frame for the anchor ropes people used in the days before box springs. She says the original mattress was stuffed with corn husks.

Marietta retired from teaching after 29 years, but true to her love

of history, Marietta continues to preserve the Howren-Graves House's history. She's the reason for its Texas State historical marker, which tells the story of Henry Graves, as well as its entry in the National Register of Historic Places. Both designations will help protect the home—hopefully for generations to come. Georgetown is lucky to have such a history, and it's even luckier to have people like Marietta to preserve it. ■

