

Kirkland House celebrates 120th anniversary

Descendants give speech and remembrance

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AUGUST 28, 2024



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The Kirkland House celebrated its 120th anniversary on Saturday to commemorate its longstanding history to Coppell. The event features guests of Kirkland descendants, who reminisce on their memories of the house. Photo by Wendy Le

Historical memorabilia, friendly chatter and a jovial mood fill the Kirkland House as Randy Banwart and Jack Brooks step inside. The first time they walked in was over 64 years ago, to visit their grandparents Sallie Gladys Kirkland and Harvey Dillard Brooks. The memories start rushing in and won't stop.

"If we got a little too noisy, we would go into the backyard." Brooks said. "I remember trying to sneak stuff from the counter and not get caught because there's always cookies or a cake. We never got up on the roof and jumped off, but that was one of our plans that we're going to do one of these times, but we didn't quite get a chance to do that."

The foundation of the house is the foundation of 120 years of memories. On Saturday, the Coppell Historical Museum celebrated the landmark's 120-year anniversary. Kirkland descendants Randy Banwart and Jack Brooks joined the festivities to discuss their memories about the house, their ancestry and overall experiences in Old Town Coppell around the 1960s and 1970s.

The Kirkland House was built in 1904 by John Marion Kirkland and Edna Jeanette Stringfellow, great-grandparents of Banwart and Brooks. Coppell Historical Society historian Philip LaBerge stressed the importance of recognizing the past as he records all significant events marking Coppell's history.

"I think it's so important to capture stories that were told today and preserve them for the people 120 years in the future," LaBerge said. "If we don't, all that is in the past. You have an understanding of where we came from so that you could use that in making decisions on where we go in the future."

Brooks appreciates his great-grandparents' dedication to shaping a piece of Coppell's history.

“I can look at what my great-grandmother and my great-grandfather built and put together,” Brooks said. “I hope my kids will keep coming to show this to their kids.”

Both Brooks and Banwart encourage younger generations to recognize their roots.

“It’s just important that the family tradition stays on,” Brooks said. “I have a lot of history from this side. I have history from my mom, but this is the only one we have that’s still around.”

Coppell Historical Museum intern Alyssa Gray, a junior at Coppell High School, is inspired to incorporate new tales about the Kirkland House into her work.

“This new information has really improved our tours,” Gray said. “We knew about the house but we didn’t know anything about the family.”

Guests appreciate the endurance and preservation of the house. “This house, in another 100 and 20 years will be 240 years old, and it tells a story about this town and the people who lived here and the people that founded it,” LaBerge said. “Kirkland House is really a treasure”

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