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FRIENDS OF THE STARR FAMILY HOME

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STARR FAMILY HOME STATE HISTORIC SITE

407 West Travis St., Marshall, TX 75670
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VISITORS GUIDE

STARR FAMILY HOME

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —
Marshall, Texas



Welcome to the Starr Family Home State Historic Site. The house interprets two generations of the Starr family at Maplecroft, the 1871 home of Frank and Clara Starr, with other buildings located on the property that are part of the story.

Visitors are invited to explore the home of the Starr family and learn how their business enterprises played an important role in Marshall and Texas history during the formative years of the Republic of Texas and throughout the state's rapid growth into the 19th century.



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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JAMES AND HARRIET STARR

Dr. James Harper Starr (1809-1890) was a successful physician, Secretary of the Treasury for the Republic of Texas, and president of the Board of Land Commissioners for Nacogdoches County. It is this last position that in 1841 caused him to change careers and become a land agent for those who exchanged property for Republic of Texas debts. During the Civil War, he served as an official in the Postal Service of the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederacy. He was also a banker and considered an expert on Texas real estate law.



Dr. Starr and his wife Harriet raised their five children, as well as two of their grandchildren. Dr. Starr and his oldest son, James Franklin "Frank" Starr, moved with the extended family from Nacogdoches to Marshall in 1870 to relocate the family's profitable land agent's office. They chose Marshall because of the town's amenities, location, and telegraph service. After the Starrs opened their land agency in Marshall, business grew quickly. They loaned money out of their land agency and, as a result, operated the first bank in Marshall. The state was awarding land grants to encourage railroad construction, and the Starrs acquired many tracts of land as payment for surveying and mapping services.



Dr. Starr bought land on the edge of Marshall in 1870, establishing this site as the family's home and residing in Rosemont with his wife Harriet and their granddaughters. A fire in the late 19th century destroyed the main house, with a single wing remaining today.



FRANK AND CLARA STARR



Frank Starr married Clara Fry Clapp in 1868 and built the family home, Maplecroft, in 1871 on land deeded to him by his father. Maplecroft was built in the Greek Revival style, typical of Texas homes built in this time period.

Frank and Clara Starr raised six daughters at Maplecroft. The Starr girls received their early education in a schoolhouse on the property that had been built as a former slave's retirement home. Four of the of the Starr daughters, Clara, Harriet, Sallie, and Ruth, remained close by building homes within walking distance of their parent's house. Of the other two daughters, Pamela and her husband lived at Maplecroft with Mary visiting frequently. This created a complex of family buildings spanning more than 100 years and kept multiple generations of the family close as their households grew.



LEGACY

Ruth Starr Blake, second youngest child of Frank and Clara Starr, was widowed as a young woman. She moved out of her home, the Blake House, still on the grounds of the Starr Family Home State Historic Site, into Maplecroft to care for her aging widowed mother. Upon her mother's death, she inherited Maplecroft and its environs. With no children to pass the family home, Mrs. Blake left it to her beloved niece, Clara Pope Willoughby. Mrs. Willoughby granted the



property and its contents to the State of Texas upon her death in 1985. The site opened to the public as a museum in 1986, preserving the house as Mrs. Willoughby left it.

In 2019, Maplecroft's service wing was restored to its 1880s appearance. Over the years, the family modified the rear portion of the house to suit their changing needs, but it always contained the kitchen. In the 1880s, this kitchen was presided over by the family's hired cook Lucy Patterson. Today, the kitchen is fully equipped as it would have been in the 19th century, and we welcome you to experience wood-stove cooking and the stories of the women who made this space the "heart of the home."

