



Wine 101 was the first retail business in this historic house.

12 Ross Barham House

1950

Helotes Ranch Acres was the town's first residential subdivision, opening with one to five-acre tracts in the summer of 1949. This unique rock house, now [The Cracked Mug Coffee House](#), one of the early residences in the new subdivision, was built in 1950 by Ross W. Barham (1895-1983), long-time resident and community leader. A contractor by trade and an amateur archaeologist and philanthropist by avocation, Barham purchased several hundred acres on the north side of Helotes Creek and developed many properties.

Now within the city's Old Town Historic District, the Ross Barham House was a residence until 2008, the year the

Shops at Old Town Helotes opened. Wine 101 was the first retail establishment in the Barham House, operating there from 2008 until 2015, when it moved to its new location across the courtyard.

A unique feature that Barham added on the side yard is the water fountain, which is composed of fossils and rocks Barham discovered on fossil hunting trips along Helotes creek and other Texas locales.

Ross, who was born in Dallas Valley, Arkansas, and wife Matilda Hollman (1894-1981) from Witting, Texas, moved to Helotes in 1923 and quickly became community leaders. A charter member of the Helotes Lions Club, Ross donated the grounds for the club's pavilion. He was also a charter member of the Helotes Historical Society. He was an amateur archaeologist and spent much of his free time hiking along Helotes Creek and in the hills searching for Indian artifacts, many of which he donated to the University of Texas at Austin natural history museum. In 1981, he and Matilda, who'd served as Helotes' postmistress from 1953-1966, established a trust for the benefit of The University of Texas System for scientific research in the fields of geology, astronomy, archaeology, and history.