



March 2019  
Vol. 35/No. 2

# McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS

## THE BUSINESS OF HOME

By Judith Linsley

Upper-class Victorian families lived by the “cult of domesticity”: men went out in the world to make a living, while women, considered too delicate and innocent for such work, remained in the home. The home, then, was women’s business — literally — equal in importance, but not in power, to the men’s sphere of influence. A woman’s sphere of influence included not only household operations — cleaning, meals, domestic employees — but also charitable and religious work, children’s upbringing, and the doctrine of “conspicuous consumption”: the proper display of a husband’s wealth. Ida McFaddin and Mamie McFaddin Ward lived in the final years of this era.

Ida seems to have been well prepared for her role, probably by her mother, Mary Caldwell, and would have had access to numerous household management books as well. By all accounts, after her 1894 marriage to W.P.H., she did an excellent job of being not just a wife to him but a stepmother to three half-grown children. Ida then passed on her own skills to Mamie, who after her marriage to Carroll Ward in 1919 took on much of the household management.

Having good employees was of paramount importance for a matron, in order to ensure a smoothly run home. A full staff at the McFaddins’ consisted of a butler or downstairs maid, cook, upstairs maid, yardman, chauffeur for Ida, chauffeur for W.P.H., and laundress, plus a nursemaid when the children were small. Filling those positions would have been similar to hiring for a small company — one that just happened to run a large home. Ida’s niece, Ouida Caldwell Davis, recalled the “great working relationship between Aunt Ida and the staff. I wondered if she held a staff meeting every morning.... She knew what she was doing.”

Both Ida and Mamie took the task of hiring employees very seriously and were willing to pay better-than-average wages in order to get the best peo-



Percy Andrews, pictured ca. 1940, first worked as yardman for the McFaddins but after World War II briefly served as the butler.

See HOME, page 8

## Director's Desk

# SIMPLY REMEMBER MY FAVORITE THINGS

If someone asked you to name your favorite pieces in the McFaddin-Ward House collection, what would they be? As a collecting connoisseur, I had a very difficult time narrowing my favorites down to only five.

My educational background is in art history, architecture and fine and decorative art, although I also like to think my parents and grandparents instilled in me an eye for finer things. I am thankful for both resources because I can always find "treasures" at estate sales. Working at the museum also gives me a deeper apprecia-

tion for objects and the stories they tell in our lives. I leave the touching and handling to the collections department, but I still enjoy walking through the home to covet and daydream. Every piece in the museum has its own charm, but here are my most favored:

### Sleepy hollow chair

- Upon entering the music room, you're tempted by the chair's plush cushions, velvety arms and reclined back. It's the perfect combination for lulling you into a light sleep while

listening to a ticking clock or perhaps someone tickling the keys of the piano. I have never sat in this chair but I would really like to do so.

### Swedish Shower

- A Swedish shower lined in subway tiles, wildly popular in today's culture, was a unique way to combine cleanliness and efficiency. It makes my one-nozzle shower at home feel inadequate.

### Personalized Soap

- I mean. Why not?

### Wedgwood Plate

- I have always been drawn to Wedgwood, but this plate in the Devon Rose pattern makes me happy every time I see it. As you enter the butler's pantry from the main dining room, be sure to look up on the plate rail or you'll miss it!

### Painting by Thomas Lewis

- This painting by Texas born artist Thomas L. Lewis, located on the Sun Porch, has always been a favorite. Each year my family would make a pilgrimage to New Mexico, particularly the Santa Fe and Taos areas, sightseeing, singing and telling stories the whole way there. The painting, with the mountains in the distance, reminds me of how many times my brother and I would say, "Are we there yet?"

Ask any number of people for their five favorite objects, and you more than likely won't see a single one that I've listed. Boasting a collection of over 45,000 different objects, the McFaddin-Ward House Museum has something for every taste — and then some.

*Allen Lea*

This painting is by Thomas L. Lewis



A Sleepy Hollow chair



Mamie Ward's personalized soap.



A Devon Rose Wedgwood plate.





## *Hanging Out at the Museum*

# Something to Talk About

By Karen Chapman

We are often asked where we get our ideas for the museum's lecture series. The event has been popular since its inception five years ago when it evolved from yearly conferences and quarterly lectures to a full-blown monthly series open to the public. We decided that bringing interesting conversations in a kaleidoscope of topics is a more colorful way of fulfilling the museum's mission to educate. It also fills the seats. What is interesting to one person may not be to another, so in this way we attract genuinely diverse audiences. Over the years, we've seen everyone from gun slingers to art students at our lectures, and for this we are very proud.

So where do we get our ideas? First and foremost, we are dedicated to making our topics relevant to the McFaddin-Ward House. With all we have, just imagine the possibilities! Butlers, bad art, porcelain, funerals, architecture, food, birds, guns...the possibilities are endless. Stroll through the house someday and see how many different motifs you can find. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of lectures just waiting to be presented. Perhaps you will take this as a personal challenge and make suggestions. We always welcome your ideas.

The next step to finding a great lecture is to make a twist on the subject, to turn something dull into something fun and fresh. For this we move to the Internet, the place of a million ideas. Take almost any topic and someone has either



**Our first lecture of 2019 drew a packed house with JoAnn Dawson and her lecture "Bed, Breakfast and Beyond"**

written a book about it, painted a picture of it, or started a museum to display it. Did you know there exists a Salt and Pepper Museum and a Body Farm? I have even "uncovered" a Phallological Museum in Iceland. Somehow, I don't think we're ready for that just yet.

The final step in securing a great lecture is contacting our speakers and convincing them to come here for the small honorarium we pay. Very few have been unobtainable. The ones who are usually want too much

money and aren't our types anyway. Our email spiels must be persuasive, because we rarely have anyone turn us down; of course, our beautiful house museum speaks for itself, making the invitation even more tempting. Most, if not all, of our guests have been truly humbled that we reached out to them and are grateful for our hospitality by the time they leave. I can remember only one speaker who had the attitude he was doing us a favor. If you'd like to know who it was, just ask me.

I think the McFaddin-Ward House Lecture Series is what I am most proud of in terms of how we involve our community and offer something different to the public. For those who insist our town is boring, one need only point to what they are missing at the finest historic home in the country. For now, we plan to continue doing these worthwhile lectures and are dedicated to keeping them new and exciting. As always, the McFaddin-Ward House will give people something to talk about.

# Other Views: The Victoria McFaddins

By Arlene Christiansen

In the McFaddin family, W.P.H. was not alone in being a prominent man in the community. His brother, James Alfred McFaddin, was the eldest of the nine children of William and Rachel (Williams) McFaddin. He was born in Beaumont on May 5, 1840. In 1858 James struck out on his own and moved to Melone Creek in Refugio County, near Victoria. He started his first ranch there with 130 cattle from his father's ranch in Jefferson County.

In 1861, he married Margaret Virginia Coward (1840-1911). Their first child, Allen Minor (1863-1930), was born in 1863 while James was in the Confederate service. They also had a daughter, Emily, in 1877 who married James McCan. She had one son, Claude Kerry McCan, and died in 1943.

James joined the Refugio Guards in 1863 as a second corporal under Capt. Dan Doughty and was reported to have reached the rank of captain (though possibly colonel) by the end of the war. When the war was over he returned to Refugio County and resumed developing cattle ranching and farming in the area.

He was very well respected in his community and was called upon for many favors. He advised his neighbors in business ventures that proved profitable to the community. He also served as a "one man bank" in his community from 1867 to 1874, keeping his neighbors' money in his safe for them until a bank was established. It was said that he filled every safe in the town of Refugio with silver, had several boxes of it in McCampbell's store, had his own safe so full that you could not put another fifty cent piece in it and had two nail kegs full of it in his room. He was out of town very often, leaving Margaret alone with the domestic employees, but no one ever attempted to steal one cent of the money. The townspeople loved and respected the McFaddins so much that they considered all of the valuables placed in his care to be sacred.

By the late 1870s James began buying land in the fork between the Guadalupe and San Antonio rivers and moved his family there around 1881. The townsite of McFaddin, Texas, was actually located on the



James, W.P.H. McFaddin's brother, amassed a cattle empire in Victoria County.

ranch. In 1906 the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway established a station there and changed the name to Marianna. The little town had a depot, a Western Union Station, a Wells Fargo office, and a general store that the McFaddins operated. In about

1923, Al McFaddin, James' son, changed the name of the ranch community back to McFaddin. In 1931, the first oil well in Victoria County was brought in at McFaddin.

James McFaddin was one of the first cattlemen to incorporate the Brahman bloodline



writing that he was "no good & wanted off." After such an intense initiation, "wanted off" might have been an understatement.

Truthfully, Mamie spared no one during seasonal cleaning at the McFaddin home — not even herself. The doctrine of "conspicuous consumption" — public display of one's wealth — mandated an immaculate household. Cleanliness was, after all, next to godliness, and Mamie regarded housecleaning as her sacred duty. For weeks each fall and spring she and her employees tackled one room at a time, dusting, washing and waxing, until the entire house was clean as a whistle. The work took its toll on her; in October, 1940, she wrote: "worked all afternoon. Finished green room — Night — dead tired — heart palpitating — almost all in."

Household management for Ida and Mamie included overseeing repairs and remodeling and personally dealing with contractors. In 1938, Mamie recorded that she had "talked to Mr. Rice about painting Percy's porch & steps & kitchen steps." In 1940, remodeling her bedroom, she wrote "I drew plan for closet where hardware to be put." Mamie usually scheduled the biggest, most disruptive jobs for when her mother was out of town. In 1948, she had an elevator to the second floor installed while Ida was in Huntington. On December 6, Mamie wrote "home all day seeing to work; complications arose as usual — phoned for carpenter & electrician for A.M." The next day was no better: "carpenter & electrician came & all [got in] each other's way — had to tear off door facing [and] electrician put in cut off box."

Because we rely so much on Mamie's words, with relatively few from Ida, it often appears that Mamie ran the home single-handedly. Mamie said, in an oral interview: "The reason that Mother could do these things [charitable, social, and religious work] was because.... I've been running this house ever since I married." We know from correspondence and other family members' memories, however, that Ida usually had the final say. In November, 1943 she wrote to Mamie, who was apparently having work done on some of the rooms: "You are a precious to get up the glass curtains — but leave the draperies alone — also do not change my furniture. I want it just as it is."

Perhaps Ida could be compared to the CEO of the McFaddin house, while Mamie was the COO. Between them, they very efficiently handled the business of home.



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*HomeLIFT is the Original Invalid Elevator Built by Experts*



A magazine ad, above, for a Shepard Home Lift elevator; when Mamie had it installed in 1948 for her mother's use, she recorded every step of the work in her diary.

A page from the *Cyclopaedia of Social Usage* highlighting instructions for properly answering the door, left.

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**Cyclopaedia of Social Usage**

friend of his or her employer not with an abrupt "Yes," "No," "I dunno," but a civil "Yes, sir," "No, madam," "I cannot say, madam," or "I will make inquiries, sir, if you will step this way." If the ringer at her bell leaves but a message or a parcel, then the servant receives it with a "Thank you, sir," (or madam), and returns a pleasant good-day or good-morning with a "Good-morning, sir." Servants answering the door-bell should not volunteer a "good-day" to any save habitués of the employer's house whose friendly greeting they know is always forthcoming. In event of the appearance of an ordinary caller or a stranger, the maid or butler would wait civilly to be interrogated, and should always hold the door wide, inviting entrance for a friend or acquaintance of the employer before being asked any questions.

At the conclusion of any door-step interrogation when a caller does not enter, or when a servant opens a door for the exit of a caller or any member of the family, the rule of good manners exacts that the domestic stand by the open door till the departing individual has passed down the steps, into a vehicle, or beyond the entrance to the house.

When the mistress of the house is not visible through actual absence or disinclination to receive callers, the servant's reply to such questions as, "Is Mrs. A. at home?"—or "May I see Mrs. A.?" should be:

"Mrs. A. is not at home, sir,"—or

"Mrs. A. is ill to-day and regrets that she is not able to see any one,"—or

"Mrs. A. begs to be excused, as she is not well enough to receive to-day."

When a servant is aware that a degree of intimacy exists between her employer and a caller, she may

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## Viewpoints from

## And the Winner Is...All of Us!

By Becky Fertitta

The first installment of Viewpoints from the Visitor Center each March always recaps the accomplishments of volunteers during the previous year. It is a name-calling celebration of goals achieved and milestones reached. This March, along with the aforementioned name-calling, which is displayed in accompanying photos, we're going to highlight another type of recognition, one that comes directly from museum visitors.

Several years ago the museum's public relations coordinator, Karen Chapman, asked the visitor center (VC) staff to encourage visitors to give us a good rating on Trip Advisor (we're almost always the No. 1 attraction in Beaumont), and we're fairly good about remembering, maybe 60/40. Karen monitors Trip Advisor closely and responds to comments about the museum, especially those that are not complimentary — few and far between.

People write marvelous reviews about the McFaddin-Ward House, the tour, the carriage house, splendid words that give us the big head, let's face it! But more importantly, they often champion the docents, the VC staff and the overall excellent quality of everything. Could there be a better way to celebrate the important role our volunteers play as ambassadors to the visiting public than to share thoughts directly from their audience?



Volunteer coordinator Becky Fertitta recognizes Lyndia King for having 750 hours of service. Lyndia was also named 2018 Volunteer Innovation Personified.



McFaddin-Ward House Volunteer Service Council officers for 2019 (left to right) Barbara Smith, Kim Williams, DiAnne Thomas, Catriona Green, Joyce Gaskin, Sharon Passmore, and Kathleen Smith.

The first Trip Advisor review quote is from a Houston couple — I think they liked what they saw: "This fascinating home and carriage house tour will take you back in time. Not only is it beautifully preserved and decorated, but the best part is that ALL of the furniture, curtains, china, flatware, lamps, chandeliers, pictures, decorative art, and even displayed clothing, hats and shoes, are completely ORIGINAL TO THE HOME. The owners cared for and preserved everything they ever owned, meaning that you get a true sense of the time from the viewpoint of one very interesting family. The tour guides and curators are knowledgeable historians of the home and family and of the community generally. All questions we asked could be answered in depth. There is something for everyone to enjoy. The kitchen has a butler's pantry full of the women's collected china and porcelain pieces and the children's dining room has the most amazing stained glass wall you have ever seen. The top floor has a late 1800s/early 1900s "mancave," where the

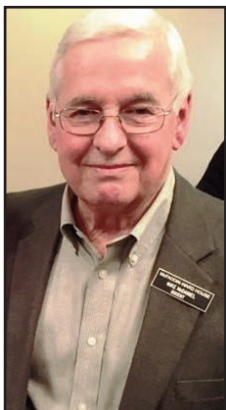
guys of the family shot pool and smoked cigars. The large carriage house has a very fine collection and tour of the lives of skilled African-American household employees who worked for the family during the late 1800s and into the 1900s, some of whom resided there in apartments. There is a rose garden that was so fragrant that we were surrounded by the intoxicating scent, even dur-



Incoming Volunteer Service Council President Kim Williams gives out-going president Laura Assunto a gift from her board members

# the Visitor Center

Mike McDaniel, left, receives the Guest Service Award for 2018, and Jerry Melancon is recognized for having 500 hours of service.



Volunteers left to right Catriona Green, Sharon Passmore, Laura Scott, and Kathleen Smith received the McFaddin-Ward House Service pin for over 125 hours.

ing mid-January. If you want to know about the method of the preservation and gentle restoration of the wallpaper, curtains, furniture and furnishings, the tourguide/curators can provide a wealth of detailed information on those efforts, including before/after pictures available in the rooms. Unbelievably, this tour, including a professionally produced film that starts the tour, was only a \$5 per person charge. We have toured some great American homes, including the Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Mark Twain, Harriett Stowe, Paul Revere, and others. We think the McFaddin Home ranks equally with these others because it is a rare view of wealth by an altruistic family in the southern part of Texas during a time when things were otherwise generally rather rough in this state, and also because of the incredible fact that all of the furniture, furnishings, art, and floor plans are original to the home, and further because of the incredible knowledge of the curating staff who takes you back in time. The basic tour can probably be done in a bit over an hour, if you don't have a lot of time; however, we wanted time to stroll the rose garden and to really enjoy an understanding of the history of the house and its family and employees, so we spent about 3 hours and feel that we really need to return for more time in the carriage house area, to better understand the lives of the home's employees during that very different time. We already have plans to return again soon for a second tour and more time in the carriage house!"

The tour guide/curator they mention again and again is the very talented docent Madlyn Benton. Thank you, Madlyn, for giving these guests an experience that could elicit this type of incredible review! The guests were obviously impressed with the beautiful home, the depth of the collection and the history we're able to put on display, but the shout out to the "tourguide" is especially noteworthy.

Only a few days later a visitor from Ohio penned this great review on Trip Advisor: "WOW!! Most Beautiful Original Southern Home I've seen! You don't want to miss this tour if your (sic) in Beaumont! The tour guides were very knowledgeable and most pleasant. The grounds and home are emaculent (sic), just a pleasure from start to finish." This shout-out goes to Sharon Passmore! Thank you, Sharon!

Another Houstonian writes: "My husband and I took advantage of a sunny Saturday in January to visit this beautiful piece of history in Beaumont. What a treasure! Had no idea this exquisite mansion existed and was thrilled to be able to learn and enjoy so much about the McFaddin-Ward families and their generous contributions to their community. We were warmly welcomed to this estate by Priscilla (Rouse), then guided by a charming and knowledgeable docent, Julianne (Haidusek)."

Still another satisfied guest writes: "So much more than a walk-through of a pretty old mansion. A brief film with history of the home and owners gives you a little background to imagine their life when you are

taking the tour. The mansion, grounds and carriage house are all beautiful and well-maintained. Our docent, Nathan (Lazenby — junior interpreter), was young and capable — he shared the things he especially liked during the tour, and that made for a refreshing discussion, rather than just a list of what we were seeing. The staff was very friendly and helpful. This is a top-notch experience."

Belaboring the point just a little!: "If you are looking for excellence in restoration with original antique furnishings, have a love for Texas family history, and enjoy well informed docent tours, then this is a must stop. Both Laura Assunto and Barbara Smith (Docent) are excellent. Don't miss the Carriage House self guided tour and the stories about the servants. This is the best of best. What a pleasant surprise in Beaumont."

And just one more: "This beautiful early 20th century mansion is a rare find that all the furnishings belonged to the home and are in amazing condition. I would like to mention how amazing and friendly all the staff were and especially our docent Ms (Catriona) Green. Definitely worth a visit if you are in Beaumont"

There are no words that can be added to those above, except to say that all our docents get excellent reviews from guests they've taken through the house, whether they get a review on Trip Advisor or not. It is a fact! Keep it up, ladies and gentlemen! The VC staff is bursting with pride and in your debt!

# McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS



**March 2019**

Published quarterly for volunteers of the  
McFaddin-Ward House and others  
interested in cultural and  
educational aspects of the museum.  
(409) 832-1906, office  
(409) 832-2134, visitor center  
[www.mcfaddin-ward.org](http://www.mcfaddin-ward.org)

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## Events Calendar



**Thursday, March 14**

Free Lecture:  
"The Tea Stylist"  
Linda Gaylard, presenter  
Visitor Center  
6:30 p.m.

**Saturday, March 30**

Junior Interpreter Day  
House  
9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
(closed for lunch)

**Thursday, April 11**

Free Lecture:  
"A Cowboy's Home:  
the Chuck Wagon Bromance"  
Ronnie Sexton, presenter  
Visitor Center  
6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, April 25**

Spring Picnic  
East Lawn  
5:30 p.m.



## Volunteer Calendar

**Monday, March 25**

Volunteer Swap Meet  
Lecture Hall  
11:30 a.m.

**Saturday, March 30,**

Junior Interpreter Guide Day  
Visitor Center  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 7**

Volunteer Exhibit Preview  
Lecture Hall  
10 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

**Monday, May 20**

Volunteer Book Club  
Lecture Hall  
11:30 a.m.