

December 2019  
Vol. 35/No. 4

# McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS

## McFaddins Enjoyed Christmas With All the Fixings

By Judith Linsley

Christmas was big business for the McFaddin women — not in a commercial sense, of course, but in the sense that it required an enormous amount of planning and execution, or, as Mamie McFaddin Ward often described it in her diary, “fixings.” She “fixed” for luncheons and for house guests and spent a lot of time “fixing” flowers and table settings.

We’ve established that Mamie and her mother, Ida McFaddin, always went the extra mile, and Christmas was a time for full-on celebrations. The ladies spent hours shopping for gifts, wrapping supplies, groceries, and decorations. There were gifts to deliver, parties and family dinners to give, houses to decorate, cards to send.

Mamie was hands-on when it came to wrapping gifts. Several downtown stores offered free gift-wrapping, but Mamie seemed to prefer to do her own, even readying Christmas boxes for mailing to West Virginia. In 1947 she started wrapping gifts on December 1; on December 4 she recorded that she wrapped “the rest,” “44 in all.” She wasn’t through yet. The next day she wrapped 7 boxes to be mailed out of town, along with her mother’s gift. Even then she wasn’t done, because on both December 15 and 16, she again recorded wrapping the “rest of the gifts.” The final tally came to more than 50 packages.

Mamie and Ida were less hands-on when it came to the kitchen. Albertine Parker, chauffeur Tom Parker’s wife and occasional cook and maid for the McFaddins, recalled that Ida enjoyed making Christmas fruitcake. Mamie even mentioned making it — once — in her diary, in 1923. Both women made eggnog from time to time, though employees usually recalled “Mr. McFaddin’s eggnog.” That might



Seawillow Ward Stafford, Mrs. W.M. Carroll, Carroll Ward, Mamie McFaddin Ward, Ida Caldwell McFaddin, King Ward, Clytie Carroll Allen, and Ethel S. Godwin after a lunch at the Beaumont Country Club, c. 1940.

have been because W.P.H. usually furnished the “nog” (whiskey), sending his chauffeur, Tom Parker, to pick it up from the local bootlegger.

After 1936, when she became president of her late father’s business, the J.L. Caldwell Company, Ida sometimes spent Christmas in Huntington, West Virginia, wrapping up the company’s year-end business. This was the case in 1946, but Mamie upheld the family tradition of hospitality by throwing a party for 125 guests on December 22. Typically, she started well ahead of time, on December 8 telephoning guests to invite them. “At phone

all morning,” she wrote in her diary. Carroll even “helped get telephone numbers.”

Every day brought more party preparations. Over the next two weeks, Mamie met with caterer Nita Pinney to plan the menu; went to Koch, Johnsen, and Feray’s florists to see about flowers and candles; ordered the liquor; bought paper doilies, flowers, greenery, bread, pies, fruit and vegetables.

At home, she got out serving pieces; had the silver cleaned; had Percy Andrews, the yardman, wash the windows “from music room

See CHRISTMAS, page 6

-- Director's Desk --

## Enjoy the Little Things

One of my favorite things to do at the museum is roam the house looking for things I have never noticed before. Since the museum boasts a collection of around 35,000 objects, that's quite easy to do!

When visitors tour the museum, the second room they enter is the parlor. This was the room where the family's guests enjoyed cocktails and conversation before heading into the dining room for their evening meal. Most conversations in the parlor were no doubt lively, but if for any reason they weren't, the

McFaddins had hundreds of unique items at their immediate disposal to pick up the party's pace - all of them tiny!

A cabinet of curiosities in the corner of the room contains a collection of various objects that Mamie and Ida picked up during their worldly travels. From a miniature painting of Rafael's *Sistine Madonna* to a group of little ivory mice the size of pencil erasers, this collection served as the family's travel remembrances and possible discussion topics with friends and family.

Parties at the McFaddin's grand home were coveted events, and I am quite sure proper discussions in the parlor rarely lacked interest; the family led fascinating and extravagant lives, after all. But if for any reason the conversation dwindled, all they had to do was look inside a beautiful display case and take their guests traveling all over the world.

*Allen Lea*



A cabinet in the Pink Parlor contains a collection of objects Mamie and Ida picked up during their travels.

## ‘Other Views’

# Carroll Ward: A Remarkable Man

By Arlene Christiansen

I think a lot about Carroll Ward; he must have been a remarkable man, living in the same house with his mother-in-law for 31 years — from his marriage in 1919 until Mrs. McFaddin’s death in 1950. That’s quite a feat! Even though he resided at 1906 McFaddin Avenue for 42 years, he’s probably the least well known of the people who lived out their lives there. The house, as a museum, is more focused on the women, Ida McFaddin and her daughter Mamie. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to bring Carroll “Doggie” Ward to your attention.

Carroll was a very diverse man; he did a number of things in his life. I guess he is best known for his football career at Allen Academy, Baylor and Texas A&M College (now Texas A&M University). He was considered a “phenomenal football player” and said to have more natural football ability than any player ever produced at A&M

College, according to Dean Kyle of the college’s agriculture department, one of the school’s most ardent football fans. Everywhere you see his name in our archives, football is mentioned, too.

Several years after starring on the 1909 and 1910 A&M teams, Carroll served in World War I, taking pilot training, but never going overseas. In 1919 he married Miss Mamie Louise McFaddin at her family home at 1906 McFaddin Avenue, where he resided until his death in 1961.

Carroll was born in 1891 in San Antonio but came to Beaumont as an infant. His parents, John C. and Belle Carroll Ward, were early settlers to this area, where his father was a rancher and lumberman. I have read that as a boy Carroll witnessed the Lucas Gusher when it came in at the Spindletop Oil Field south of Beaumont.

After his football days ended, he was a rancher and rice farmer and managed the muskrat operation for W.P.H. McFaddin for a few years. Along with his family, he owned the Texas Ice Company, where he was president for 18 years. While at the ice company he built an ice rink and started the Texas Ice Company Skating Rink. For a time, from 1939 to about 1947, he had a hockey team that played at the rink. His team was called the Rangers. We don’t have any win-loss statistics or even a list of all the teams they played, but I’ll bet it was exciting for the folks in Beaumont to be able to attend a hockey match.

Carroll was well thought of in town and had a wide circle of friends. He was a member of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, the Downtown Rotary Club, the Beaumont Club, the Town Club, the Beaumont Country Club and



Brothers Carroll, left, and Levy Ward pose with a hoop, ca. 1896.



Carroll Ward relaxes on the McFaddins’ front porch in his World War I uniform, ca. 1919.

the A&M Club. He and Mamie enjoyed going out and evidently loved the movies; in the early days they would sometimes go several times a week and occasionally even more than once in a day. They also traveled extensively.

Carroll had a colorful personality and was remembered for the twinkle in his eye and his great sense of humor. Rosine Wilson recalled in her “Recollections” that Mamie’s brothers, Caldwell and Perry, called him “Float” because of his ability to float on his back for long periods of time. Local farmer and rancher F.W. “Boots” Schroeder, who bailed

hay for Carroll, described him as “a swell guy. Old khaki clothes on and old run-down boots and an old floppy hat.” He recalled that Carroll loved his farm and ranch work so much that no matter how early they were scheduled to meet out at the rice field, Carroll would get there earlier to check things out.

Mamie and Carroll were apparently devoted to each other. When she wrote about him in her scrapbooks, she would sometimes put OOOs and XXXs by his name. I think theirs was truly a match made in heaven—after all, it lasted 42 years until his death in 1961.

## Hanging Out at the Museum



# In Memoriam

By Karen Chapman

My heart hangs heavy as I write this article for *Viewpoints*. One of us at the museum is gone for good. Museum technician Shirley Johnson died the morning of November 4th, not completely surprising us because she had been in the hospital's intensive care unit, but most definitely shocking us because we simply weren't ready for her to go.

Shirley was different from the others. She kept mostly to herself, working inside the museum every day. On a prescribed weekly schedule, she kept the house and its thousands of objects dusted, mopped, vacuumed, straightened, polished, and cleaned. It's one of those jobs most of us take for granted in our own homes until we go into a big house like the McFaddin-Ward and start looking around. I am amused when I hear visitors ask "who

cleans *this* place?" Shirley Johnson did, with a portable radio blaring Christian music and her cousin Mary Acclis by her side. For now, Mary is cleaning the house alone until they can find a replacement, but we all know there will be no *real* replacement for Shirley Johnson. She spent more than half her life working for the McFaddin-Ward House. She knew the place inside and out, and you just can't find someone who will love it like she did.

Shirley was not a woman of many words, at least not in my presence. Oh yes, she was quick with a gleaming smile when I walked in the room, but I often wondered if she liked me. She was cool, collected, and a little bit aloof, maybe that is why her approval of me was so important.

I wonder what she thought about during her days in the house - all those hours sitting quietly at a folding table in the dining room, pol-

ishing silver, being still with her reflections. Did she contemplate what it means to be alive? Was her purpose revealed with each swipe of the soft cloth? Did she see her dreams between each decorative curve of a pitcher? Shirley was only 61 years old when she died, only two months younger than I am. I can tell you with certainty that at that age, you begin

See SHIRLEY, page 7



Shirley and her cousin Mary Acclis, top, worked together cleaning the house. Shirley posed for a staff photograph, above, in 2012.

### Staff Memories of Shirley

*"Nobody had a smile like Shirley! She would brighten up your whole day, and I loved to see it."*

— Judy Linsley, Historian

*"I remember when Shirley worked on the grounds. I would see her pulling weeds and she was bent in the middle. I always wondered how she did that."*

— Arlene Christiansen, Assistant Director  
*"She will be a hard act to follow."*

— Allen Lea, Director

*"She was my biggest supporter from the very*

*beginning and always reminded me that everything would be okay with time."*

— Ashley Thornton, Curator

*"She planted flowers better than anyone I've seen. She was like a machine!"*

— Felix McFarland, Facilities Manager

*"She was a sweet and pleasant person to work with. Shirley had a beautiful smile."*

— Sandy Rostrom, Administrative Assistant

*"It is hard to say goodbye."*

— Mary Acclis, Museum Technician

## Collections Corner

# Christmas Treasures: Mamie's Hope Chest

By Ashley Thornton

In a ceremony held in the pink parlor on May 21, 1919, Mamie McFaddin gained a new last name as she married Carroll E. Ward. As a young woman anticipating marriage, Mamie would have collected household items like linens and clothing to store in a hope chest. Once married, a couple would incorporate the chest and its contents into their new home and life.

We see Mamie's own hope chest on the second floor hallway of the MWH, resting against the wall opposite her parents' wedding portraits. We can refer to the piece as a Korean bandaji chest, ca. 1910, made of teakwood and brass fittings. Records reveal little else about the artifact, however. Had it ever been opened in the museum's existence? What objects, if any, did Mamie wish to safely store away throughout her life?

Director Allen Lea stoked the flames of these burning questions and soon had everyone determined to discover the secrets of Mamie's hope chest. The mission proved toilsome, for it was a lock without a key. Literally. Not one key in our collection seemed to match the massive padlock sealing the chest.

After months of researching, we finally cracked the code, so to speak. The lock mechanism operates on prongs, rather than tumblers. We knew we needed a slender strip of metal that would compress the prongs and release the lock. A search party was formed, and museum volunteer Mike



Mamie's hope chest on the second floor of the MWH.

McDaniel stumbled across a small metal piece in the collections that perfectly fit the description. We inserted the key in the lock, but to no avail. One of the museum's security guards, Matt McAbee, then tried his hand at fashioning a makeshift key in the shape we needed. Voila! The chest was finally unlocked in October in a true show of teamwork. It seems fitting that Mamie's hope chest was opened 100 years after she married Carroll in 1919.

One glimpse to the bottom of the chest revealed a treasure trove of Mamie's belongings, some considered typical hope chest items. Embroidered linens complete with thread and patterns filled Christmas boxes. Other Christmas boxes displayed tags addressed to Mamie and Carroll. Mamie's new monogram, "MWM," personalized decks of cards. The cards rested on an endless pile of Bridge scoresheets, with one set encased in a brilliant pink cover depicting an Art Deco flapper girl. Imagine Mamie dressed as that classic figure while tallying the scores of her friends Betty, Ruth Tyrrell, Tassie Polk, Amizetta – all names penciled on the majority of the scorecards found.

The decks of cards and tally sheets date back to the 1920s, possibly into the 30s,

while one object seems to have been made a few years earlier. As we opened the hatch of the chest, a book with the words, "Our Baby," painted in bright blue hues sat directly in the center of the pile. Further inspection indicated the book's publisher, Rite Specialty Co., operated as a stationary company in the late teens. A crocheted baby's bonnet rested beside the book. Mamie never bore children, so finding these items in her hope chest raises several questions. Without evidence from written and oral record, however, we cannot explain the presence of the baby book and bonnet, for any interpretation would be purely speculative.

For years since the McFaddin home became a museum, and even prior, thousands of visitors have walked right in front of Mamie's hope chest, never knowing a time capsule patiently awaited its opening by curious minds. One hundred years after Mamie married and thirty-four years after she entrusted her belongings to the museum, we are still uncovering her journey in 2019. Time will tell what we discover next...

P.S. Keep an eye out for the Christmas boxes we found in Mamie's hope chest, on display this holiday season!



First look inside Mamie's Hope Chest after opening it for the first time in years.

# Christmas

Continued from page 1

to sun parlor"; hung wreaths; put out Christmas decorations and some of the flowers and greenery. On December 17, an electrician came to run a wire from the house and "put lights on tree outside."

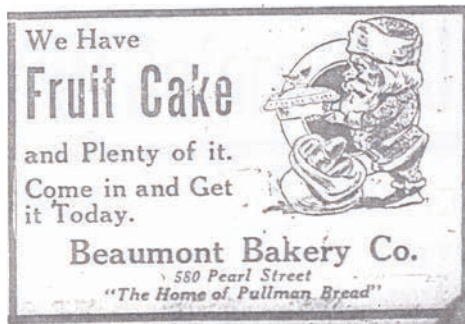
The day before the party Mamie put oil cloth on the kitchen tables; got out glasses, openers, pitchers, jiggers, spoons. She was "home all day putting around greens, flowers, fixing tables, fruit, etc.," and "worked all day doing 100's of things."

The day of the party Mamie wrote: "worked for party till about 2:30 — got our crocks, ice chests, tubs, etc. More flowers arrived, 9 bunches [that friends] sent me. Ready at 5 for our party at 6 of 125. The Pinneys here serving. Had turkeys, hams, crab meat in patties, deviled eggs, stuffed dates, candy, highballs, martinis, hot sausage biscuits and hot cheese sandwiches." After all her decorating efforts, she simply remarked, "The house looked pretty. Used candelabras and silver decorations in dining room." Her final comments were, "All over at 10. Got everything cleaned before we went to bed."

Well, not exactly "everything." The next day's entry began with "Spent the day getting cleaned after the party" and she and two employees, Cecelia Smith and Mollie, worked "till late afternoon" vacuuming, unsetting the tables, cleaning the candle wax off the candelabra. Mamie must have felt like it was worth all the effort, however, because "So many phoned to tell me how lovely the party was."

The busy season didn't end on December 25. Ida and Mamie often had family dinners and large receptions between Christmas and New Year's, and New Year's Day was sometimes set aside for a family dinner. Even after it was all over, the cleanup remained. On January 3, 1945, Mamie "fixed flowers, throwing away greens & putting up Xmas decorations." The next day she "wrote Xmas letters." Writing thank-you letters and notes for Christmas gifts received and parties attended was a near-sacred obligation for women in Ida and Mamie's socio-economic class.

Adding Christmas preparations to an already-full schedule of activities with home, family and community could have been overwhelming, but for the most part the ladies seemed to take the season in stride. Only once did Mamie indirectly acknowledge any tension, writing on December 17, 1945, "trying to



Ida and Mamie sometimes made their own fruitcake but could also buy them locally, as this 1915 Beaumont Bakery newspaper ad suggested.

get house clean for Christmas with Mother fussing about it."

Any less-than-pleasant moments were quickly surmounted by mutual love and affection. We have no diaries from Ida for a record of her Christmas "fixings," but we do have her letters and cards to Mamie. They were always eloquent and loving, but especially so at Christmas.

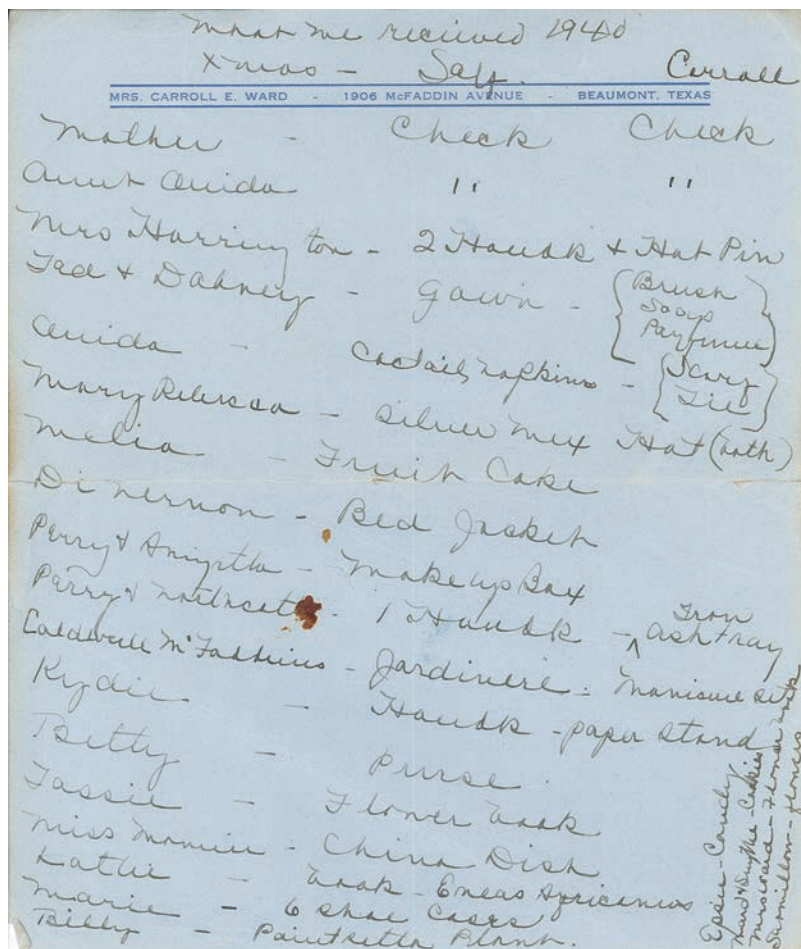
Sometime in the 1920s Ida attached a note to Mamie's Christmas gift: "With my whole heartfelt of love. May the sweet spirit of this

Blessed Season abide with my precious girl—Mother."

The day after Christmas in 1941, with World War II only recently declared, Ida wrote Mamie from Huntington: "My precious: How sweet your voice sounded yesterday — and was it good to hear from you directly. When anniversaries come, especially those of happiness and joy, we want our kiddies with us, for you know how I love — adore — my children, the telephone is next best."

She went on to send Mamie, Perry, and Caldwell "a big heartfelt of loving appreciation not only for the exquisite gifts, but that God has given me such a wonderful girl and boys." Two years later, with the war in full swing, Ida wrote Mamie: "I do hope we can spend a lovely, happy Christmas together, for God knows what another year may bring, and it is up to every one of us to make the very best of what we have, while we have it."

Wherever they were, whatever the circumstances, Ida McFaddin and Mamie Ward gave of their usual time, effort, and talents in order to fulfill their holiday obligations — providing family, friends, and community a Christmas with all the fixings.



Mamie carefully listed all the presents she, Ida, and Carroll received for Christmas in 1940. Both women kept extensive lists of activities.

# Viewpoints from the Visitor Center

## Spotlight on our Volunteers

By Becky Fertitta

The edition of Viewpoints that you receive in December looks back at the year just ending, but it also looks forward to a brand new year that is just around the corner. Now at the conclusion of 2019 it is necessary to thank all of the museum volunteers, adult and teenage, for their hours of service and their loyalty to our programs and activities. During 2019 the Volunteer Service Council (VSC) executive board, along with the two committees, education and social/hospitality, planned several classes for docents, arranged occasional trips, hosted receptions for numerous public and volunteer events, planned and carried out summer camp, all the while giving tours to visitors from all over the U.S. and 24 foreign countries. Our junior interpreters gave tours throughout the year and were a main-

stay during summer camp. On behalf of the McFaddin-Ward House, again, many thanks to all our very special volunteers.

In January, adult volunteers will gather for the annual meeting of the VSC and the election of officers for 2020. The proposed slate of officers for 2020 includes Barbara Smith, president; DiAnne Thomas, vice president; Joyce Gaskin, education committee chair; Marian Pekar, education committee co-chair; Sharon Passmore, social/hospitality chair; Kathleen Smith, social/hospitality co-chair; and Catriona Green, member-at-large.

Recruitment is underway for a docent training class which will begin in late February or early March of 2020. The six-week course prepares volunteers to give the hour-long docent led tour of the main house, and includes a study of the carriage house and the main features of our land-

scape. The class includes lectures, room studies, hands-on activities and much more. When candidates have completed the class portion of training, they practice giving tours to friends and family. Once practicing is done, docents share what they have learned with the museum staff who've taken part in the training. The entire process takes approximately two months.

Once the new docents have graduated, they begin giving tours to the public. Docents are scheduled at least twice per month, occasionally three times, for "tour duty." The obligation is minimal compared to many other organizations. Volunteers enjoy numerous activities planned on their behalf like hands-on classes, lectures, trips and socials. If you are interested in learning more about this great program, please contact Becky Fertitta at the McFaddin-Ward House Visitor Center, 832-2134.

## Shirley

Continued from page 4

thinking about your own mortality and whether you've done right by the people who matter. In all that time alone with her thoughts, I'm fairly sure Shirley Johnson had it figured out.

It is hard saying goodbye to those we love; I've done my fair share this year by losing my parents. Now, dear Shirley, I bid you farewell too. I hope God gives you the shiniest gold throne in the room where you can rest in peace and watch someone else do the polishing.

*The following article originally appeared in the March 2012 issue of Viewpoints. They are fond memories of Shirley by Volunteer Coordinator Becky Fertitta.*

### Keeping it in the Family

Shirley Johnson has been keeping it in the family here at the McFaddin-Ward House for nearly 25 years. When she began working at the museum in August of 1987, Shirley was the second person in her family to work here. Her mom, Hermes Manuel, had worked for Mamie McFaddin Ward as a cook, starting in about

1978, and stayed on to work as a museum technician. Her job was to keep the museum looking ship shape.

Although Shirley's first museum job was a part-time position in the building and grounds department, she remembers that her early training included learning museum-appropriate cleaning and artifact handling. "We watched videos that showed how to do the cleaning work in a museum," Shirley remembered and pointed out a VHS tape still in the library. From the beginning, a portion of her workday included maintaining the visitor center and staff offices; that spilled over into learning about the collections.

In her 25 years, Shirley admits that she has seen some changes. She has worked for five directors, and numerous curators and supervisors, but is proud to be among the elite group of employees who've stayed for the long haul. Shirley's baby daughter Erica was eight months old when she came to work here; that "baby," now 26, is getting married in April. Shirley is also the proud mom of two sons, Gary and Jeremy. If you have been around the McFaddin-Ward House a while, you've watched all these kids grow up.

Shirley laughs that, "Before I started at McFaddin, I had the jobs!" She was a manager

at Popeye's Fried Chicken. She also worked for the Sheraton Hotel, the Hilton and the Red Carpet Inn — all names long gone, but remembered by us older folks.

The work that Shirley performs for the museum calls for team work, because the proper cleaning and care of collections is an enormous task. She and another technicians keep the museum interiors looking fresh and clean. Their work is noticed and appreciated, not just by their fellow staff members, but also by visitors who comment frequently on the superior level of care that shows through in the gleaming and sparkling surfaces throughout the home.

Shirley's team is even a family affair. When her mother retired, Shirley's cousin Linda Johnson became the other museum technician for several years. And for the past nearly five years, Shirley has teamed up with another cousin, Mary Acclis; together they make us proud, keeping our museum looking first rate. The pride that Shirley takes in her work and in her long-term involvement with the museum is evident, especially when she looks up, flashes you that beaming, knowing smile and just keeps on working. Congratulations, Shirley, for reaching such an important milestone.

# McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS



**Vol. 35, No. 4  
December 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)

*2013 Press Club of Southeast Texas  
Excellence in Media Award winner for Best Newsletter*



**Blue Star  
Museums**  
[www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums)

The  
McFADDIN-WARD  
HOUSE  
725 North Third Street  
BEAUMONT, TEXAS  
77701-1629  
Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
BEAUMONT, TX  
PERMIT NO. 271

## Events Calendar

**Sunday, December 1**  
Holiday Photo Opportunity  
Grand Staircase in the Main House  
1-3:30 p.m.

**Thursday, December 12**  
Eggnog Open House  
Visitor Center  
5-7 p.m.

**Thursday, January 9**  
Free Lecture: "Blown Away," Alexander Rosenberg, presenter  
Visitor Center, 6:30 p.m.



## Volunteer Calendar

**Wednesday, December 4**  
Christmas Preview  
for Docents  
10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

**Saturday, December 28**  
Junior Interpreter  
Tour Day  
10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 28**  
Volunteer Appreciation  
Banquet  
The Laurels  
6:30 p.m.

**Monday, February 17**  
MWH Book Club  
Lecture Hall  
11:30 a.m.