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McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS

McFaddin Kitchen Changed with the Times

By Judy Linsley

At the McFaddin-Ward House, we're always hoping to find out more about the family and the house. Even when there's not a lot of specific information in our archives, the museum's library can provide general historical context for place and time; and there's always the Internet.

We've often wished for more information on what the house interior looked like when the McFaddins moved in. Our archives contain numerous photos of the outside and yard and some beautiful ones of the first-floor public rooms, made for a 1909 magazine article. But there are no images of the kitchen, second floor or third floor.

Unlike today's kitchens, which are often part of the living and entertaining area in a house, in the early 1900s the kitchen was still a private space, not meant to be seen except by family, household employees, or service people. Photographs of kitchens from that era are relatively rare. We often utilize contemporary household guide manuals, which tell us a lot about the ideal appearance and arrangement of an early 20th Century kitchen.

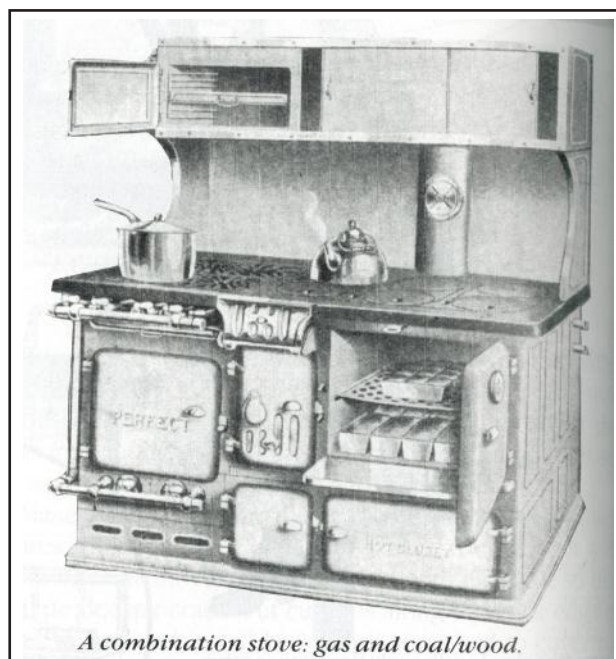
Most household manuals of that era stressed two necessary features for modern kitchens: sanitary conditions and convenience. In the 1903 manual *Household Discoveries and*

Mrs. Curtis's Cook Book, Sidney Morse declared that the kitchen was "the workshop of the house [and] should be perhaps the lightest, airiest, and most cheerful room in the house....much more attention might well be given to the matter of kitchen conveniences."

Morse advised that all surfaces should be washable. Floors should be of tile, linoleum, or well-sealed hardwood. Walls should be covered with plaster, tile, or the new "sanitary" wallpaper (coated with varnish or shellac). Sinks should be cast-iron lined with white ceramic and should be open beneath to allow for air circulation and cleaning, though pipes could be painted to match the wall.

Equally important, a properly organized kitchen should contain convenient and labor-saving features. Experts advised allotting ample space for both work and storage. A free-standing work table was essential. Larger kitchens might also have built-in cabinets with flat tops for even more work space, or more than one free-standing table.

Though some early 20th Century kitchens show built-in storage, the free-standing Hoosier cabinet was a staple in many kitchens between 1890 and 1930. So called because most were made in Indiana, they varied in size and design and uti-



A combination stove: gas and coal/wood.

Although cook Louis Lemon preferred a wood stove, the McFaddins updated to a stove that ran on both wood & gas.

lized every inch of space for storage that ranged from revolving spice racks to flour bins. Ads billed them as "The kitchen cabinet that saves miles of steps." During the 1920s, more than one in ten American households had a Hoosier cabinet.

Armed with these general recommenda-

tions for the perfect kitchen, we can compare them with what evidence currently remains from the original McFaddin kitchen. Certainly, its three tall windows would have let in plenty of light and air, plus a round vent (now covered) high on the north wall

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Director's Desk

“A museum is only as good as it is of use”

It's my true pleasure to lead the work of The McFaddin-Ward House, one of the finest examples of historic preservation, not only in Texas, but the nation – and a spectacular example of the power of place to inspire. I look forward to working with the board and staff team to connect this incredible historic site and landscape to visitors – in person and online – from throughout the country.

In this age of COVID, we're anticipating what the “new normal” for the McFaddin-Ward House may be. For the immediate future, our “new normal” includes ensuring the health and safety of every visitor, volunteer, and staff member while on the McFaddin-Ward campus.

Thinking about “what's next” for the McFaddin-Ward House, I find that most people don't spend much time thinking about what goes on in museums. We may go to see exhibits,

and hopefully learn something when we do, but that's about it. But from the museum perspective, a museum is only as good as it is of use – in other words, a museum must be responsive to the needs and wishes of the community. For example, with the Coronavirus pandemic, much attention is now focused on all of the learning that is occurring outside of the classroom, the ways in which our different institutions fit into our learning ecosystems, and, in particular, where museums and libraries fit into those ecosystems. And this is true, not just for K-12, but for lifetime learners. Today, the three “C's” – communication, cultural competence, and collaboration, all skills learned outside the classroom – are just as important as the three “R's”.

Looking forward, Bel Morian, the Museum's Director of Public Programming, will be exploring new ways to engage the community with innovative

programming, utilizing the Museum's collections and grounds in new ways. And, while we will continue to engage visitors with exceptional objects enriched by the story of the McFaddin family, we hope to extend our hand to our cultural neighbors in the greater Beaumont area, exploring ways to collaborate whenever possible to grow public appreciation for the history and culture of Beaumont and the greater Gulf Coast region.

It's our goal to make the McFaddin-Ward House Museum an even more valuable component of Beaumont and the surrounding area.

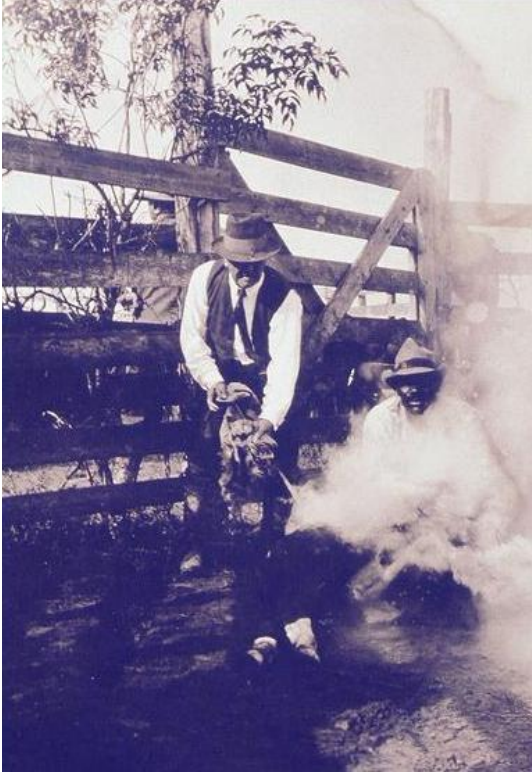


Tony L. Chauveaux



Intern Insights

Finding beauty around & within



W.P.H. McFaddin branding cattle

By Katherine Leister

Bob Kahla, self-proclaimed “Cowboy Poet,” began writing poems in 1990, only one year before “Troubles on the Mashed O” was published. He has received no formal training in poetry, and according to Kahla, to whom I spoke on the phone, it all comes natural to him. He can write a poem in twenty minutes, and once it’s written, it sticks to the page just like that. Kahla performed “Troubles on the Mashed O” during a tape-recorded oral interview conducted by historian Judy Linsley in 1991. This taped interview remains a part of the McFaddin-Ward House Museum Archive collection, which includes nearly 200 oral interviews. The Mashed O was the brand registered to the McFaddin ranch, which was, according to Kahla, proud of their “rank” horses. This poem was inspired by Lester Jackson, a Black cowboy and top hand who once worked for the McFaddin ranch. Kahla describes a time he watched a fifty-year-old Lester ride a bucking horse across the pasture to try and “break” him - a task Kahla is certain he

“Troubles on the Mashed O”

Bob Kahla

Gather round boys
For my tale of woe
And I’ll tell you ‘bout my troubles
On the ole Mashed O.

Tell you ‘bout the horse
That changed my ways
And really put an end
To my wranglin days.

Down in the marsh
Where the bayou flows
And the skeeters and the gators
And the salt grass grows

Was a line back dun,
Stood sixteen hands
And there on his hip
Was the Mashed O brand.

Cold as a cotton mouth
Lean as a wolf
Was the meanest ole critter
Ever walked on a hoof.

A hide full of ugly
And chuck full of mean
Was the rankest ole bronc
That I ever had seen.

The boss steps up
And he says to me,
“On this outfit
Ain’t nothin’ free.”

You eat my chuck
And you draw my pay,
You’ll ride ole Dunny
Till the end of the day.

All of a sudden
I yearn for the sound
Of the streets of the city
And the lights of the Town.

A hitten ‘em high
Down the trail I go.
I’m a gettin’ me gone
From the Ole Mashed O.

I sweeps pool halls
For my bed now.
There’s no more a chasin’
Of the Zebu cow.

Of a Cowboy’s Life
I want no more.
Rather clean the John
And sweep the floor.

I have no need
For boots or hat
Or chaps or spurs
Or none of that.

I want no part
No more I know
Of the broncs and the brehmers
On the Ole Mashed O

*The “Mashed O” was the McFaddin’s ranch registered brand.

accomplished.

Kahla’s poem perfectly embodies the values of folk art, which is my area of academic study. Folk art originally referred to American “folk” objects,

such as antique furniture, weathervanes, and duck decoys that reflected growing nostalgia for a pre-Industrialized America at the turn of the twentieth century. This

cultural moment also influenced the Colonial Revival movement seen in the McFaddin-Ward House architecture and

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BEAUTY

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the Arts and Crafts movement (explained beautifully by Rainey Knox in the September 2020 issue of Viewpoints).

Furthermore, the surging subversion of Modern art in the 1930s and the opening of Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery in New York City brought an overwhelming critical insistence that these folk objects contained aesthetic forms, not merely nostalgic content, and were worthy of contemplation. This movement elevated everyday objects into the ranks of fine art. Today, many institutions, like The Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, collect folk art deeply rooted in cultural traditions, but the sentiment everywhere is the same - an insistence on the aesthetic and nostalgic appreciation of all forms of personal, cultural, and artistic expression, no matter the manifestation.

Although some folk art does not contain formal skill that many art critics deem valuable, Kahla's poem demonstrates the work of a natural poet. Try speaking the following stanza aloud: "Down in the marsh/ Where the bayou flows/ And the skeeters and the gators/

And the salt grass grows." The addictive repetition of the "g" and "s" sounds is the work of a true wordsmith, and one can't help but smile while saying it. The same effect lies in the last stanza: "I want no part/ No more I know/ Of the broncs and the brehmers/ On the Ole Mashed O." The disembodied subject, too, of "A hide full of ugly/ And chuck full of mean" creates a visceral, complex image of the horse from the perspective of the terrified narrator. Kahla's work embodies the values of folk art in the sense that he is an untrained artist but still a natural one, and his writing is deeply embedded in the syntax and imagery of the culture in which he grew up.

This insistence on the sanctity of ourselves and the immediate world around us is central to the McFaddin-Ward House. The museum collection houses myriad unused calendars, makeup jars, matchbooks, and pens, items that many of us would have thrown away. There is also the vast assortment of fine china hand-painted by Mamie and Ida themselves. It does not matter that these porcelain pieces are beautiful (although they are) or that the everyday objects in

the collection are now old and unique, but their creation and existence insist that each of us, regardless of training or knowledge, age or status, have the capacity to create and to live lives that are worthy of contemplation and preservation.

An essential idea of folk art is that there is no bad art, only art that we do not yet understand. The good news is that most forms of expression are striking and deeply moving without our having to try so hard. Kahla's poem does its part in teaching us this and in asserting that all of us can be great artists right now, no matter our levels of training or skill. Whether it is community theater productions of Shakespeare, blurry photos of the sunset, a grandmother's gingerbread recipe, Felix "Fox" Harris's recycled art garden (on permanent view at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas), the generational traditions of the Gee's Bend quilters, or the collection and archive of the McFaddin-Ward House, we can find in all things the innate aesthetic symmetry and breathless beauty of the world around and within each of us.

Curatorial Corner

Farewell, McFaddin-Ward House

By Ashley Thornton

To my dear friends of the McFaddin-Ward House Museum, I would like to take this time to thank you for allowing me to serve alongside you for the past three years. My time as the Curator of the McFaddin-Ward House has come to a close. Words cannot describe the gratitude I feel toward each

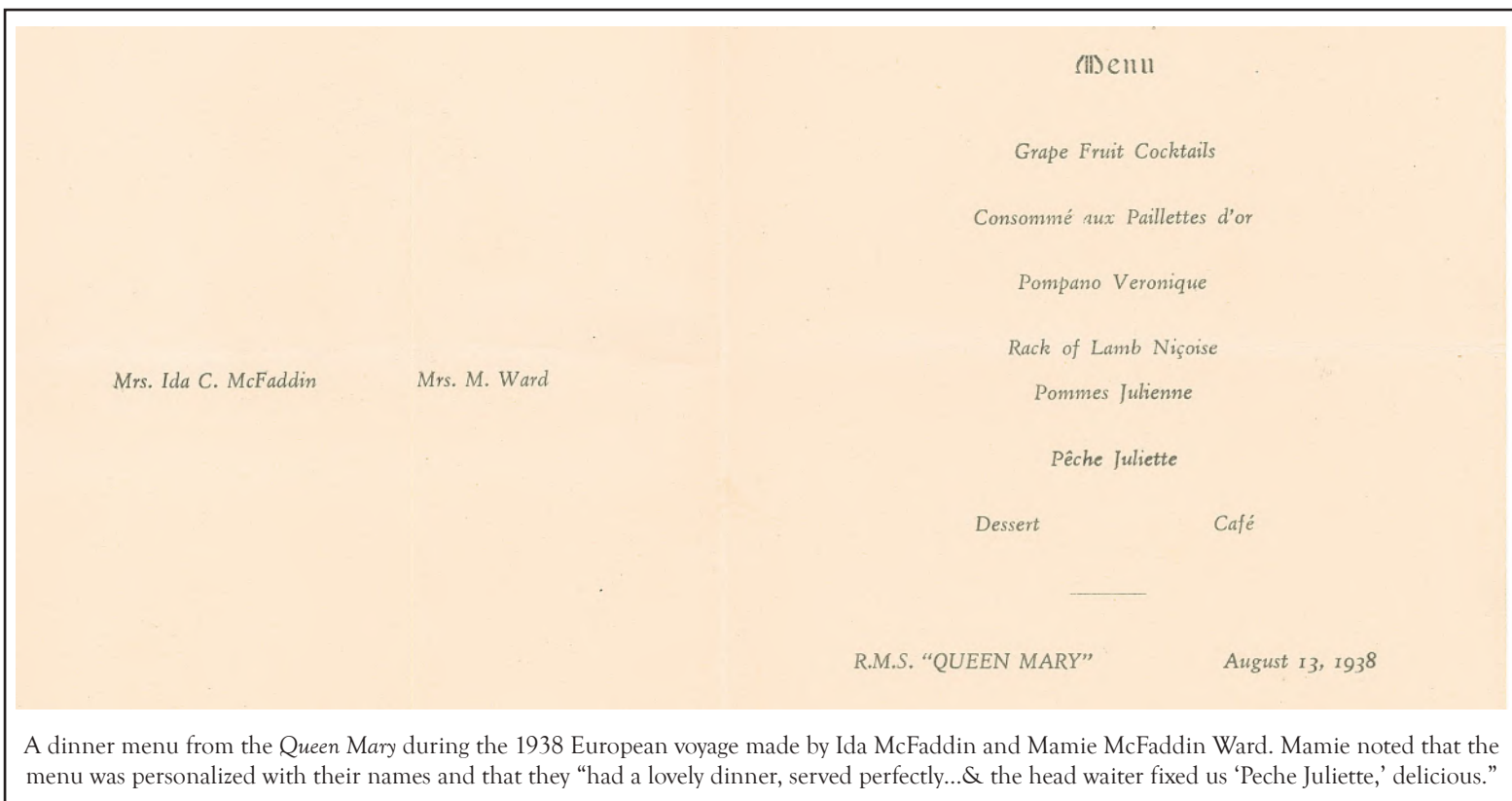
person I have encountered as a result of serving here. Not only have I grown in historical stewardship, I have learned to lead in new ways and through different avenues. I have learned more about life, integrity, and family through the eyes of docents, staff, friends, and Mamie alike. Each person who

enters this museum becomes a vessel of its history, transporting its core values through its walls and outward into our community - a community that I will dearly miss. In short, working at the McFaddin-Ward House has changed my life and has prepared me well for new adventures. Thank you.



'Other Views'

A Trip to Europe



A dinner menu from the *Queen Mary* during the 1938 European voyage made by Ida McFaddin and Mamie McFaddin Ward. Mamie noted that the menu was personalized with their names and that they "had a lovely dinner, served perfectly...& the head waiter fixed us 'Pêche Juliette,' delicious."

By Arlene Christiansen

Ida McFaddin and Mamie McFaddin Ward loved to travel, shop, and dine, and they planned to do a lot of all three on their trip to Europe in 1938, as Mamie noted in her diary. One might ask why anyone would want to sail to Europe just as Hitler was beginning to run rampant? Well, our archives contains a Cook's Tours itinerary in March of 1938, touting a summer trip to Italy, Austria, and Germany. But with Hitler's annexation of Austria in March, the trip was scrapped. By midsummer, though, things seemed quiet enough that Ida and Mamie decided to travel only to England, Scotland, Switzerland and France. We now know their timing was bad, of course, but that's hindsight.

On July 26, a Mr. Moseley from Cook's Tours in Houston came to the house to assist Ida and Mamie in planning their trip. (Interestingly, a large percentage of Cook's travelers were single or unescorted women; an escorted tour provided them

with both protection and independence.)

They didn't have much time to prepare. Their ship, the *Queen Mary* of the Cunard Line, left New York on August 10, but their train left Beaumont on August 6. Mamie immediately started "getting things ready." She and Ida obtained their passports from the post office in only two days.

"Getting ready" included shopping for clothes and luggage, and oddly, cleaning out drawers in the house. Perhaps Mamie wanted everything to be straight when she came back? She purchased traveler's checks at the Southern Pacific Railroad office (not the bank?), then locked up the silver, linen and china. On August 5, Irene Sparks, their hairdresser, came to the house to give them a shampoo and manicure.

On August 6, Mamie gave last minute instructions to the help and told them goodbye. With family and friends at the

train station to see her and Ida off with gifts of candy and such, they departed Beaumont for New York. Mamie cried because she hated to leave Carroll, but finally "unlaxed." They reached New York on August 8, where for two days they shopped and dined, enjoying one meal with Carroll's brother Levy, who lived in New York.

Early on August 10, Carroll called; Mamie wrote, "Bless his heart how I hate to leave him behind." Once on the *Queen Mary*, they enjoyed the sendoff: fruit, flowers, candy, letters and telegrams in their room. They located their deck chairs, dining table ("by a porthole"), and even their lifeboat.

On the voyage, the women read, dined, walked, wrote letters, lounged on the deck, and made friends. Ida won \$19 at Keno on Saturday night, then went to church

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the next morning. Mamie wrote, "time flies," and she was right as each night the ship's clock was advanced "so we lose an hour."

Ida and Mamie probably didn't know that on August 12, the political situation worsened when Hitler mobilized the German Army and demanded that Germany be given the Sudetenland, a German-speaking province in Czechoslovakia.

The ship docked in Southampton August 15 and they rode a "funny looking" train to London. They revised their itinerary "to suit us," and continued to tweak it along the way. Fortunately, a Cook's representative seemed always to be nearby.

They first toured London and much of England in a multi-passenger "motor coach." Then it was on to Scotland, to Glasgow and Edinburgh, where Mamie saw movie star Loretta Young in their hotel. They returned to England on August 30.

Mamie loved the picturesque villages, the historic sites (Sir Walter Scott's home) and the grand cathedrals (York) with their stained glass, but did not care for the "big ugly cities."

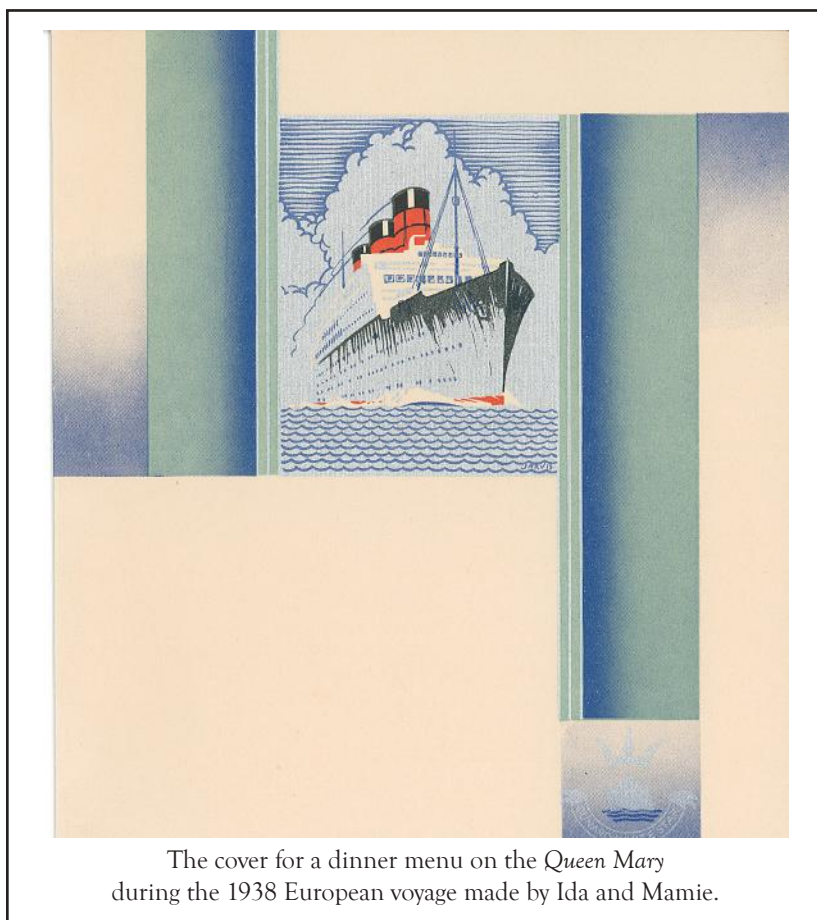
On Sept. 4 Ida and Mamie ate at the "flat" of Mamie's longtime American friend, Josephine "Jodie" Proctor Weber, who lived in London. The next day they crossed the Channel to France, then took a night train to Lucerne, Switzerland.

On September 10, they took the train to Interlaken, where Mamie loved the beauty of the Jungfrau summit "so majestic & covered with snow." Two days later they traveled to Geneva, and there reality came crashing in. On September 13, they met an American student studying in Germany, whose parents had cabled her to leave. Mamie wrote, "first we realized of serious conditions over here."

The next morning they left for Paris, riding in a hot, dirty, uncomfortable train compartment. There, neither Cook's nor the American Consulate were "very encouraging." "No one knows what will happen," Mamie wrote. She and Ida were "dead tired and worried." They decided to cut three days off their trip and return home immediately.

Over the next few days they contacted Cook's and the French, U.S.A., Cunard, and Canadian Pacific lines for tickets. The two women had originally been booked to return on the *Normandie* but finally got tickets on the *Champlain*, another French liner. On September 15, Mamie reported that "[British Prime Minister Neville] Chamberlain flew to [Germany] to confer with Hitler." The next day she wrote "War news discouraging."

The *Champlain* departed Le Havre on September 17. Carroll had cabled Mamie that he was "glad" they were returning. The ladies bought perfume (Guerlain and Shalimar)



The cover for a dinner menu on the *Queen Mary* during the 1938 European voyage made by Ida and Mamie.

before taking a "boat train" to the wharf. The *Champlain* was smaller than the *Queen Mary* but "very nice," in Mamie's words, although tubs and sinks held only sea water.

The passage home was rough and choppy but otherwise uneventful. En route, Mamie attended a concert and was "bored to death." On September 24, they celebrated Ida's birthday with cocktails, dinner, and a birthday cake.

The ship docked in New York on September 25, only a day earlier than their original return date. Mamie called Carroll when they got to the hotel.

On September 30, France and England signed the Munich "appeasement," giving Hitler the Sudetenland province of Czechoslovakia. Mamie wrote, "Hitler & Chamberlain & others decided on Czech question & averted war." If she

thought that she and Ida came home too early, she didn't mention it.

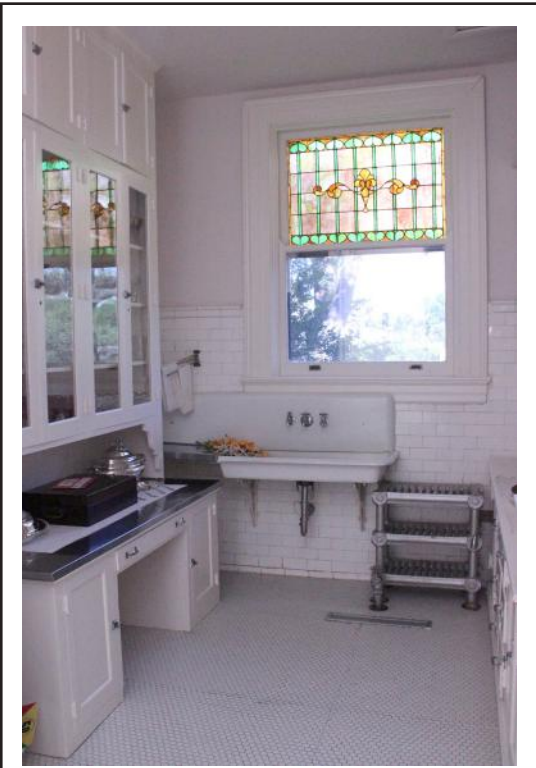
Ida and Mamie stayed in New York, sightseeing and shopping, until October 1, when they boarded a train for Texas. On October 2, Mamie wrote "home tomorrow thank goodness."

The train arrived in New Orleans at 7:45 a.m. on October 3, and before their train left for Beaumont at 10:40 a.m., the ladies managed to check their bags, have breakfast, and go "up & down" Royal Street, where they bought three beautiful silver pieces for the house.

When they got home, friends and family were there to welcome them. Mamie wrote, "House looked so pretty. Carrie [longtime maid] had it all cleaned....Carroll looks fine." She and Ida were safely home, and all was well again.

KITCHEN

Continued from page 1



The plate warmer to the right of the sink would have been considered a modern convenience in a 1907 kitchen.

would have provided further air circulation.

Early 1900s communications technology made life more convenient for the family. The Annunciator Box signaled household employees from a designated room, and the Interphone allowed verbal communication within the house and connected the house with the carriage house. Other up-to-the-minute devices included a service elevator and a plate warmer, both located in the original butler's pantry area.

The original kitchen stove in the McFaddin house burned wood; the ornate rectangular vent for the stovepipe is still visible on the wall behind the current stove. Longtime cook Louis Lemon cooked only on a wood stove. Years later, when Louis was ill or on vacation, the family installed a stove that ran on both wood and gas to placate substitute cooks who didn't cook with wood.

Further possible evidence can be found in the museum's reserve collection. The McFaddins were savers, storing unused furniture and objects on the third floor or



The tall windows in the McFaddins' kitchen would have satisfied early 1900s guide-book recommendations for a light, airy, and cheerful room. That would also have been a good space for an L-shaped work table.

in the carriage house; these objects are now included in the museum's reserve collection. Sitting among old tubs and sinks is an L-shaped wooden table that could have fit nicely into one corner of the kitchen for work space.

The original kitchen sink would probably have been in the same location as the current one. The cast-iron sinks still in the reserve collection aren't of kitchen design, but they're all cast-iron with white enamel coating, and there's still a working cast-iron sink on the back porch, with exposed plumbing. That indicates the likelihood that the original McFaddin kitchen sink was also of cast iron and installed the same way.

We know that the original ice box, which was cooled with large blocks of ice, stood on what was then an open porch. Later, when the space was taken into the house for the butler's pantry, an ice door allowed the delivery man to put the ice in without coming into the house.

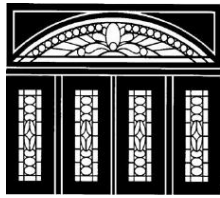
Again, we are not certain what kind of storage the McFaddins had, but the kitchen was spacious enough to

hold a work table, sometimes called a "baking table." Tables were popular kitchen fixtures for years and years; one is part of the permanent house exhibit, and two are located in the reserve collection.

After the McFaddins settled in, of course, they began making changes, and most of these are better documented. We have records of the 1907 addition of a two-room brick milk room and lock room along the outside of the kitchen; the 1912 butler's pantry expansion that created an indoor passage from kitchen to breakfast room; and the major remodeling in the 1940s and finally the 1950s that gave the kitchen the look it has today.

The final verdict is that, while we do not know what the kitchen looked like in 1907, we can hazard a few guesses. More than likely it was a combination of built-ins and free-standing furniture, and it certainly reflected early 1900s trends. It looked very different from what it does today, even though its current appearance seems very dated to us. Time—and change—march on!

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Public Programming Perspectives Flexibility is “name of the game”



Docents listening to Curator Ashley Thornton present on the 2020
Holiday Interpretation

By Bel Morian

It is a pleasure and honor to have Tony Chauveaux join our museum team as director. Tony brings innovative ideas to the McFaddin-Ward House, and I am so excited about the future possibilities in my new role as Public Programming Director. We all look forward to seeing our campus vibrant and bustling with activity.

Currently we continue to reach out to our community via virtual programming, and audio tours accompanied by docent ambassadors. Flexibility has been the name of the game as we follow our mission of offering tours, educational programs, publications, and exhibits during the pandemic. We are so pleased that visitors, both in-person and online, continue to enjoy the museum and remain curious

about the history, architecture, and culture encompassed on our campus.

Our deepest appreciation and admiration is extended to the Volunteer Docents who have assisted with our adjusted touring schedule since the museum reopening in September 2020. Docere is the Latin word meaning “teach” and the role of docent at the McFaddin-Ward House is certainly a vital one.