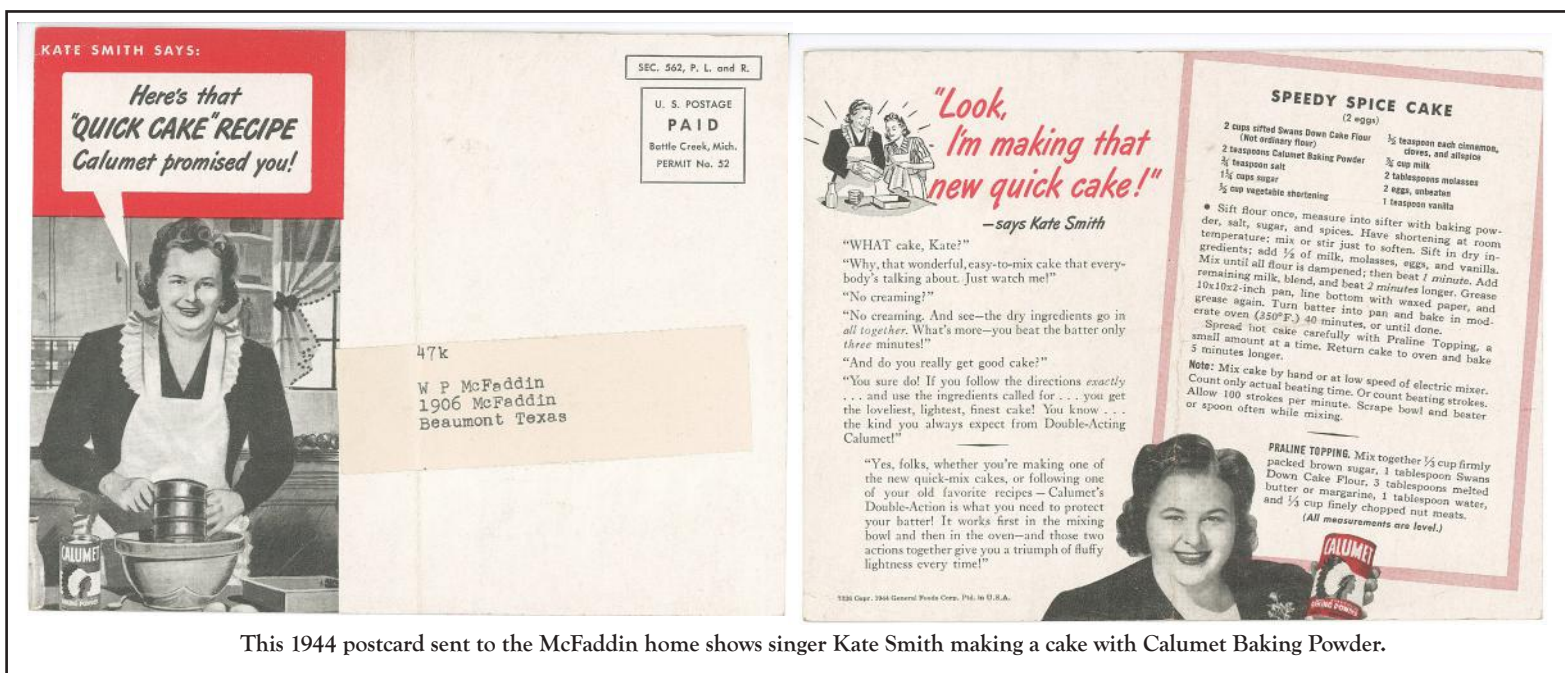




McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS

June 2021
Vol. 37/ No. 3

There's No Living without Cooks



This 1944 postcard sent to the McFaddin home shows singer Kate Smith making a cake with Calumet Baking Powder.

By Judy Linsley

*"We may live without poetry, music & art
We may live without conscience and live
without heart;
We may live without friends,
We may live without books
But civilized man cannot live without cooks"*

Mamie McFaddin Ward wrote this bit of verse inside the front cover of her cookbook. It nicely prioritizes cooks in life and culture. (It was written in 1860 by Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, son of the author of *The Last Days of Pompeii* and of the infamous sentence, "It was a dark and stormy night.")

Just as kitchens evolved over the years, so did cookbooks, from handwritten volumes to earliest printed ones. Around 1861, Mrs Beeton's *Book of Household*

Management came out, containing not only recipes but complete instructions for running a household, including child and animal care, medical treatment, home repair, management of household employees, and moral and religious instruction. It's no wonder that housewives began calling these books "kitchen bibles."

Young women also assembled their own handwritten manuals of recipes, household hints, and home remedies gathered from family and friends. These manuals, along with hope chests, allowed them to properly enter into married life.

By the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Ida Caldwell McFaddin and her daughter Mamie Ward were keeping house, they had access not only to purchasable books

containing instructions for just about everything, but to blank recipe books with pre-marked tabs for various categories. Additionally, newspapers and magazines provided a steady source of recipes and food ideas.

The McFaddin-Ward House archives contain an abundance of handwritten, printed, and clipped information about cooking and meal planning. (In 1992, selected recipes from the museum's archives were published in *Perfectly Splendid: One Family's Repasts*.) We can't always tell who compiled them, though most of the cookbooks appear to be Ida's.

In theory, neither Ida nor Mamie would have needed to know how to cook, only

See COOKS page 4

Director's Desk

A Look at the Year Ahead

Dear Friends,

As one can surmise from this edition of *Viewpoints*, lots of folks have been very busy preparing for what we hope to be "Business as usual" in the coming months – or perhaps I should say, "Business as usual on steroids."

Perhaps most significantly, the Museum's Board of Directors, led by Leslie Wilson, has adopted a new Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and a new three-year Strategic Plan which sets the McFaddin-Ward House on a new course of service throughout Southeast Texas. Exciting programming is destined to attract larger and wider audiences to enjoy the marvels of this beloved historic house museum.

A look at Bel Morian's report in this issue of *Viewpoints* will give you a glimpse of things to come, which I know will bring expansive audiences to the McFaddin-Ward House.

In June, Victoria Tamez will arrive as our new Curator of Collections, and we're looking forward to the energy and ideas she will bring to that important role. We are also excited to welcome Julianne Haidusek, a familiar face to the MWH, to her position as Collections Assistant. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of Judith Linsley, the MWH Historian, and Katherine Leister, the MWH Intern, who have admirably overseen our Collections during the process of identifying our new Curator.

We also look forward to the arrival of Rayanna Hoeft as Museum Educator in July and the possibilities her arrival will entail.

Kara Timberlake, our Communications and Marketing Manager, has been busy, not only bringing new content to all of our social media outlets, but also planning cohesive branding opportunities – including a new and improved MWH website.

While the winter blast took its toll on the region, the MWH gardens have bounced back nicely under the guidance of Felix McFarland, our Facilities Manager. I invite everyone to admire the newly – and expertly – trimmed azaleas, bushes, and even palm trees! The Rose Garden, in particular, has made a spectacular recovery from the freeze. Additionally, repair to the Rose Garden brick walkways is nearing completion and well as newly laid sidewalks near the Carriage House and Maintenance Shop. Some exciting plans are underway to provide better public access to the MWH gardens for all to enjoy.



Tony L. Chauveaux



A view from the Rose Garden

Mission Statement:

In the spirit of fostering community responsibility and life-long learning, the mission of the McFaddin-Ward House is to engage its resources and exceptional collection for preservation and education, specifically:

- 1. To maintain, protect, and conserve the McFaddin-Ward House so that it is enhanced and unimpaired for future generations; and*
- 2. To preserve, interpret and share the legacy of the McFaddin family, and their contributions to the economic, social and cultural history of Beaumont and the Texas Gulf Coast.*

Vision Statement:

The McFaddin-Ward House will be a continuing source of inspiration and education, known and sustained for its exhibitions, programs, and partnerships that encourage life-long learning, inspire an appreciation for the past, and encourage commitment for future civic engagement.

Intern Insights

A Note for the Archive



Mildred Yates, left, and Mildred Hall

This photo was used in the April 1995, Vol.11/No.3 edition of *Viewpoints*.

By Katherine Leister
Collections Intern

When I began my time at the McFaddin-Ward House, I was expecting to find a lot of things ~ furniture, yellowing diaries, shelves and shelves of vintage clothes ~ but I never imagined I would find my grandmother. A few weeks in, however, while rummaging through the archive, I found her, stumbled over her, practically. Her name was Mildred Hall, and she was born in Orange, but lived in Beaumont most of her life. She was a member of one of the first docent classes here at the McFaddin and dipped her hands into many other local history organizations. She passed away when I was young, and all I have left of her, really, is some jewelry and a raincoat and occasional remarks from people I encounter only briefly about how much they admired her. I try to piece them together to find some way to know her.

But on a random Thursday in the archive, I found her. She was sitting in a filing cabinet ~ impatiently, I imagine ~ with almost 200 others,

all waiting to have their say. I put her transcript through the scanner, carefully, and placed her cassette tape into a tiny machine that would convert her into an MP3 file, so she'll have a new home in the computer. The oral interview, conducted by Judy Linsley, records the memories of life in early Beaumont from my grandmother and her lifelong friend, also named Mildred. I didn't remember her voice sounding so high and friendly. I felt lucky that someone captured it and put it someplace safe.

Of course, it wasn't luck that saved my grandmother's voice but a consistent and attentive oral history project that was undertaken at the McFaddin-Ward House in the 1980s and 90s. There are over 200 tapes with interviews featuring a vast array of people ~ relatives of the McFaddins, former employees and their relatives, cowboys, nurses, and the descendants of prominent pastors and school teachers ~ and it has been my job the last few months to digitize the tapes and their transcripts. I am thankful that the archive has welcomed them.

However, it is important not to forget the ways an archive can become complicit. Griselda Pollock, in *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, space and the archive*, describes a "fetishism" of the archive created from the assumption that history can be pieced together and known through fragments, which inherently is what an archive (and a museum) is: a collection of fragments (12). Pollock explains that archives are "pre-selected in ways that reflect what each culture considered worth storing and remembering, skewing the historical record and indeed historical

writing towards the privileged, the powerful, the political, military and religious. Vast areas of social life and huge numbers of people hardly exist, according to the archive" (12). Thus, archives often exist simply as reproductions of the structures of power that created them.

And the stakes of this reproduction are by no means low. Pollock explains that our understanding of the past informs our understanding of ourselves, which ripples through the kind of future that we are able to create. And through our attempts to know an unknowable past, "we become spies, voyeurs, subject to fantasies and identifications, idealisations and misrecognitions" (Pollock 12). In many ways, through an over-zealous reliance on the archive, history can cease to resemble the cut-and-dry, scientific process we want to believe it is. In many ways, history will never live up to those standards. And in many ways, history is not much more than a culturally-created story that we tell ourselves.

This is what makes the oral history collection at the McFaddin-Ward House so special and so urgent. Whether we call it micro-history, folk history, or anything else, the preservation of oral histories and personal testimonies, and the insistence upon their validity as primary sources, is a radical subversion of the archive and the ways that history is typically created.

This is especially true when we notice that the oral history collection includes a diverse array of people often excluded from Western historical narratives, whether for their gender, race, or class. For

ARCHIVE

Continued from page 3

this, we should consider ourselves lucky.

However, just as we question the archive, we should also question the personal beliefs and understandings of the interviewees and ourselves. Pollock explains that “beyond what we can monitor in ourselves is the unconscious, always at work, itself an inaccessible but active archive” that is both highly personal and culturally created due to the worldview we inherit from the culture in which we are raised (12). And how can we trust our own mem-

ories, anyway? How do we reckon with the discrepancies among oral histories (of which there are many)? What other ways of creating history do we have?

I, myself, am more interested in the stories, the colorful ways people remember the past, beyond any standardized history. When I put on my headphones and listened to my grandmother talk about how they used to wash clothes, I relished the fact that no amount of magnetic tape and paper will allow me to know her. I almost feel closer to her because of that.

At any rate, I invite you to visit the archive. You may have a relative there, and even if you don’t, you should still visit because the archive belongs to all of us, and all of us make up the archive by holding a tiny fragment of knowing that no one else has. The stories we tell, no matter how unavoidable their complicity, are worth telling, as long as we never stop questioning, doubting, dreaming of another way. I wish that we could zoom out forever and accession it all.

COOKS

Continued from page 1

to plan meals and hire competent cooks to ensure that their family ate well. Both women were skilled organizers and planners, as the records they left behind can attest. But in order to properly train and supervise, it was necessary to have basic knowledge of preparation and procedures—hence the abundance of recipes and cookbooks.

There was always a cook in the McFaddin home, of course, and Ida sought the best. Rebecca Collins, family cook until the 1920s, was so good that when Ida went to Winslow, Arkansas, for the summer in 1917, she took Rebecca with her. Some years later, Ida hit the jackpot with Louis Lemon. First employed at the McFaddin ranch, he came to the house in town to fill in and then about 1923 became permanent until his death in 1952. He could fix a meal for one person or a houseful, and his delicious dishes—broiled chicken breast, chocolate cake, teacakes—achieved legendary status among McFaddin friends and family.

After Louis came, of course, neither woman would have ventured into the kitchen to cook. Louis was well-known for not wanting other people around. But it’s interesting to wonder whether in

the early years they ever tried out any of their many recipes.

Records indicate that Ida actually did take a lively interest in both food acquisition and preparation. According to her granddaughter Rosine Wilson, Ida “collected recipes,” often on her travels, and later introduced them at her own parties or dinners. She also critiqued them with the notation “Splendid” or “Perfectly Splendid” on her favorites.

Ida was very much a hands-on person in cooking projects. As a founder of the renowned and long-running Chili Supper at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, she spent many hours working in the kitchen there. Before Louis came, she occasionally busied herself in her own kitchen, usually working with the real cook. Albertine Parker, who worked for the family as a seasonal or substitute maid and cook, recalled making candy and fruitcake with her.

In her summer in Winslow, Ida asked her husband to send her fresh vegetables from the McFaddin farm—beans, corn, tomatoes, potatoes, rice, okra—on the train. She sent W.P.H. fresh apple jelly and huckleberry preserves that she made in Winslow. She instructed him to take

their surplus vegetables to the Red Cross canning factory in Beaumont for seven cents a can, because “it may mean all of our can goods for the winter.” (The United States had just entered World War I.) She noted that apples were only a dollar a bushel in Winslow and that blackberries were “so cheap” that she canned them for pies “this winter.” After putting up the blackberries, she wrote, “I guess I should have been a farmer’s wife, I’d so much rather do these things than do society.” Rebecca was there to help her, of course.

Mamie, far from wanting to be a farmer’s wife, seemed to prefer the organizational and social aspects of dining—planning and arranging, décor and details—to preparation. At any rate, she had less opportunity to be in the kitchen, as Louis came to cook when she was still a young wife.

When Mamie entertained, she often wrote the menus in her diary for her records, but seemed more interested in overall success than recipes. (Her entry for a beach luncheon in 1936 described

See COOKS page 7

‘Other Views’

Even the Plants have History at MWH



Mamie McFaddin Ward lilies

By Arlene Christiansen

I have been worried about “Mamie,” the Corn Plant (*Dracaena*) that sits in the reception office at the Administrative Office. She isn’t looking good, and I think she may be getting rootbound. Felix McFarland, the facilities manager, and I have been trying to decide what to do. We have her in about the biggest pot we could find, so what comes next? Maybe it’s time to cut her back again; we do that every few years when she actually hits the ceiling.

“Mamie” has a story. When I came here in December 1987, she was already here. She had belonged to Mamie McFaddin Ward (hence the name), and when the house became a museum she was moved to the garage at the Carriage House. I was tasked with taking care of her. She was in a black plastic pot, the kind you get from the nursery, and was only about a foot tall. In the 33 years I have been caring for her,

she has grown to 10 feet tall - the height of the ceiling in the Administrative Office - several times.

She’s even bloomed occasionally, but that’s not good. Her flowers are the foulest-smelling things you can imagine, so when I see blooms forming I cut them off. The first time she bloomed, Matt White, the museum director then, met me at the office door. He said that there was an awful smell in the office and he thought that maybe some animal had gotten in and made a mess, but he couldn’t find it. After spending what seemed like hours trying to find the source of the smell, we discovered that it was actually Mamie’s blooms. Hence, she is not allowed to bloom.

Mamie is still here, of course, and we’ll figure out what best to do with her. After tending to her for so long I can’t let anything happen to her. She’s part of the

museum.

Of course, most of the plant life associated with the museum is outside on the grounds. Nearly everyone familiar with the museum has heard the story about the two huge live oak trees, William and Rachel, located on the west side of the house. Back in the late 1800s, William McFaddin, Mamie Ward’s grandfather, attended a reunion of veterans of the Battle of San Jacinto, brought back the acorns that became William and Rachel, and planted them. That makes them well over 125 years old now.

Around the time the museum opened in 1986, the oaks were registered with the Louisiana Live Oak Society, making them among the elite of oak trees. The trees registered with the society have to have a minimum girth, or circumference, and they have to have a name, so William and Rachel were named after Mamie Ward’s McFaddin grandparents. I don’t know for sure how many trees are members of the society, but there are pages and pages of them on their website. There is only one human officer in the society; all of the other officers are oak trees. I don’t know whether or not William or Rachel have ever served as officers.

Needless to say, the oaks have weathered many storms over the years. They were pretty shaken when Hurricane Rita hit in 2005, but still stood strong. However, when Hurricane Ike hit in 2008, Rachel was partially uprooted and fell onto her side. Not willing to lose the tree, the museum’s Board of Directors decided to build a retaining wall around her exposed root ball and leave her in that position, loading her up with nutrients.

See PLANTS, page 6

PLANTS

Continued from page 5

LIVE OAK SOCIETY **OF THE LOUISIANA GARDEN CLUB FEDERATION,** **INC.**

Registrations beginning in 1934
(Coleen Perilloux Landry, chairman, 2002)

Reg. #	Name of Tree	Location	Parish	Girth	Owner/Sponsor
1081	ROMANTIC OAK	Pierre Part, LA	Assumption	18.05	Mr. Lester Chedotal
1082	HILARY	Franklin, LA	St. Mary	13.00	St. John Elementary
1083	PRAXEDA	Franklin, LA	St. Mary	14.09	St. John Elementary
1084	FRANCES	Franklin, LA	St. Mary	12.00	St. John Elementary
1085	MS. PAUL	Franklin, LA	St. Mary	12.06	St. John Elementary
1086	MOREAU (deceased March 2017 from disease)	Franklin, LA	St. Mary	14.06	St. John Elementary
1087	GRACE	Franklin, LA	St. Mary	14.01	St. John Elementary
1088	WILLIAM MCFADDIN	Beaumont, TX		19.09	McFaddin Ward House
1089	RACHEL MCFADDIN	Beaumont, TX		17.06	McFaddin Ward House

It was touch and go for a while, but she has hung in there and is slowly returning to her former glory, even if it is sideways.

The McFaddin-Ward House is widely known for its rose garden. Roses here bloom almost year-round. They're not the same roses that were here originally, but the garden occupies the same footprint. It is located behind the main house and is divided into four beds. The roses are pruned in the early spring and fall to promote healthy growth and are meticulously maintained and cared for by the facilities manager. This past winter was particularly hard on them, but they've come back very nicely.

Mamie even had a flower named after her. Mamie McFaddin Ward day lilies, which are located in the southeast corner of the east lawn, are a variety hybridized by Edgar Brown in Orange, Texas. The plant was donated to the McFaddin-Ward House during the restoration period before the museum opened and was registered as the Mamie McFaddin



William (left) and Rachel (right) are twin live oak trees that are over 125 years old.

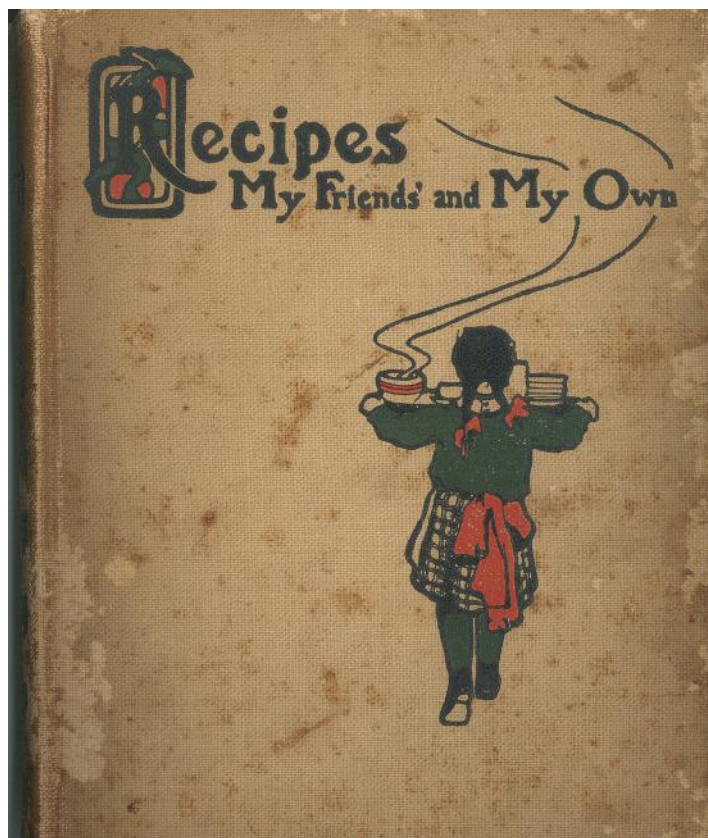
Ward variety.

The next time you are over this way, even if you don't have time for a house tour, stroll around the grounds to the west side of the house to admire those old survivors, the oak trees. Then walk around to the back and check out the rose garden. Finally, as you swing back

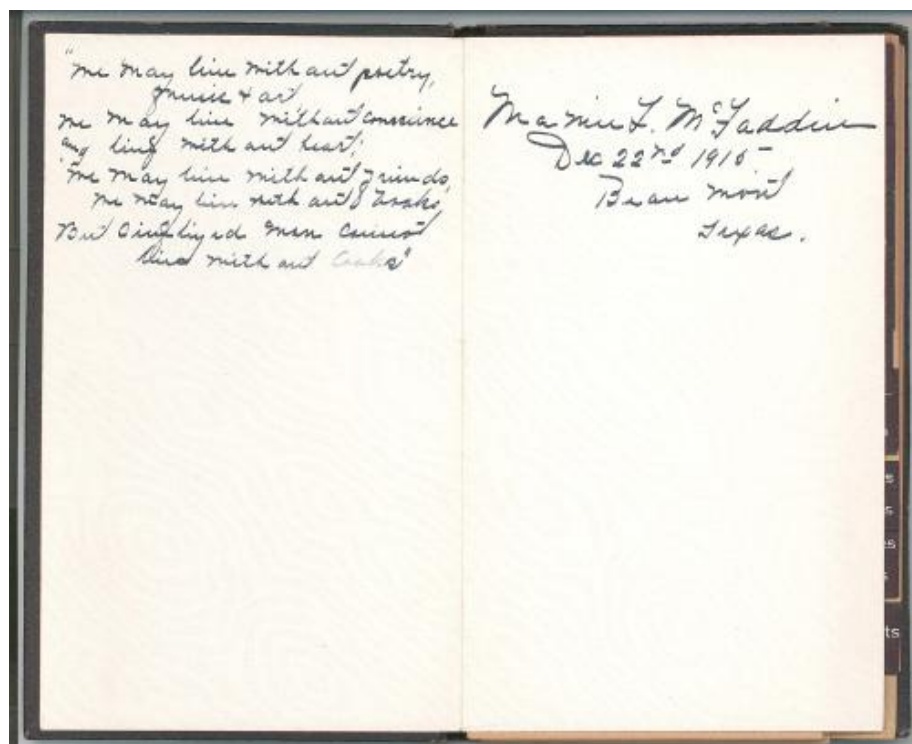
toward the front of the house, look to your left in the southeast corner of the yard to see whether the Mamie McFaddin Ward day lilies are blooming. The things that grow in the ground (or in pots) around here deserve a look just as much as the objects in the house!

COOKS

Continued from page 4



There are actually two copies of this recipe book, *Recipes-My Friends' and My Own* in Ida McFaddin's files. Both copies were well used.



Mamie McFaddin acquired this recipe book in 1915 just before Christmas.

the table, "lovely with purple blue bells & shell dish with fruit & colorful china"; the food, "shrimp salad, cheese, tomatoes, eggs, crackers, orange juice & cake"; and the conclusion "a delightful day").

Mamie's diaries serve as excellent records of her entertaining, shopping, gardening, and other projects, as well as her daily routine. Her entries often mentioned "ordering" for the day, a morning ritual when she instructed the household staff on what they, she, and Ida would be doing. This would have included consulting with Louis what to prepare for dinner and supper. Again, she rarely commented on specific dishes.

When eating out, Mamie commented freely on the quality ("good," "bad," or once, even "rotten"). In 1938, bound for Europe on board the *Queen Mary* with Ida, she described the food as "lovely," "delicious," and "served perfectly," especially the "Pêche Juliette" at one meal. The *Queen Mary* menu is in our archives, but no recipe for Pêche Juliette. On the other hand, I can't find one online, either, so maybe it was the chef's secret.

Of course, at nearly all socio-economic levels, collecting and exchanging recipes and household methods served as social ritual as much as homemaking necessity. Witty or wise personal messages often accompanied the recipes. When Mamie and Carroll married in 1919, their friend Lottie Cox Averill sent Mamie a roll recipe with the note: "Whenever Carroll gets cross and says I wish you could cook like Mother give him Hot Rolls for 6 o'clock dinner."

Both Ida and Mamie took the job of managing and feeding a household very seriously. When we think of their role in food preparation, however, we don't necessarily picture them physically bustling about a kitchen, wearing an apron and wielding a spoon. Apparently Ida occasionally stepped happily into that role, but perhaps not Mamie. Both women, however, would have agreed with Bulwer-Lytton that "civilized man cannot live without cooks"—whoever they might be.

McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS



Vol. 37, No. 3
Summer 2021

(409) 832-1906: Office
(409) 832-2134: Visitor Center
www.mcfaddin-ward.org

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

Public Programming Perspectives

By Bel Morian

How encouraging it is to continue to see visitors every day at the museum. Despite many factors, our Docents and Visitors Center Managers happily greet guests each day – rain or shine or COVID!

It is also very encouraging and exciting to plan for our Phase 2 Re-Opening in September. This will include: expanding the touring schedule, inclusion of docent-led tours, and programming events. We have great things in store to offer our community.

Community outreach is one of the museum's top priorities. Some projects in development are:
-A partnership with the Lamar University History and Fine Arts departments is being planned to create a Museum Day for students.

-Inclusion of several diverse community musical groups for Music In The Gardens.
-Porch Parties for area clubs that have interests aligned with those of the museum. The museum will offer the clubs a place to gather, socialize, and share their interests.
-Currently the museum is working to build a relationship with the Lamar University Hispanic Society to explore avenues of engagement.
-The Beaumont Art league has been contacted regarding a Plein Air Painting Day offering by the museum.

It is an honor and a pleasure to share this beautiful museum and grounds with our community through meaningful programs and events.

Public Programming 2021-22

Aug. 23	Docent Refresher Course
Aug. 30	Docent Kick Off Luncheon
Sept 1 – Jan. 7	Apron Strings Exhibit
Sept 1	Phase 2 Re-Opening Plan
Oct. 21	Lecture: Michael Weinreb: Season of Saturdays, A History of College Football
Nov. 8-11	Our House Is Your House Key Hunt
Nov. 18	Lecture: Joe Holley: Intriguing Texans Who Have Slipped Out of the History Books (Or Never Were There)
Dec. 5	Holiday Photo Opportunity
Dec. 6	Docent Holiday Preview
Dec. 12	Christmas Open House
Jan. 13	Lecture: TBA
Feb. 10	Lecture: Jennifer Thalheimer: Louis Comfort Tiffany; Morse Museum
Feb. 24	Music In The Gardens
March 10	Lecture: Harry Rinker (Antiques Roadshow): What Cha Got?
March 11	Appraisal Appointments: Harry Rinker
March 31	Music In The Gardens
April 14	Lecture: Jessica DuPuy: Viva Texas Vino & History of Texas Foods
May 5	Music In The Gardens
May 12	Lecture: Ken Farmer (Antiques Roadshow): Conservation
May 13	Conservation Appointments: Ken Farmer
June 9	Music In The Gardens
June 23	Movies By The Decade: Movie on the Lawn
July 7	Movies By The Decade: Movie on the Lawn
July 21	Movies By The Decade: Movie on the Lawn