

December 2022
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McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS

CHANGING CHRISTMAS—OR NOT?



This brightly lighted radiant tree appeared in a December 1927 Beaumont newspaper. It was colorized by a former McFaddin-Ward House staffer.

By Judy Linsley

Every year we hear laments for the absence of “traditional” Christmas. The complaint itself has become a tradition. As the 20th Century dawned, many

people felt the same way, even though the Victorian Christmas that they were mourning—think Charles Dickens’ Christmas Carol—was itself

relatively new, those traditions having been established in the mid-19th century.

Another frequent complaint, that modern Christmases have

become too commercialized, doesn’t ring true when you realize that the first Christmas advertisements appeared in an 1820 newspaper. In 1900, this holiday ad appeared in the Beaumont Journal: “While you are treating your friends to Christmas presents don’t forget your horse. Buy feed from Brown’s Feed Store, Pearl Street.” Nowadays ads would more likely be for dog and cat gifts.

That said, some Christmas traditions were evolving at the turn of the 20th Century. Mamie McFaddin Ward, born in 1895, along with her brothers Perry and Caldwell (born 1897 and 1901 respectively), grew up in a time of broad technological and social change. Technological advancements affected holiday sights and sounds: colorful Christmas lights and German glass ornaments made

the holiday shinier and brighter, phonographs and loudspeakers made it louder, electrical appliances made meal preparation easier (and provided new ideas for gift-giving). Shoppers drove gasoline-powered automobiles downtown instead of taking carriages or streetcars, and cars themselves became Christmas gifts.

Socially, the holiday evolved from one that was mostly celebrated at home or church to wider community celebrations. New York City had its first community Christmas tree in 1912; Beaumont’s first municipal tree, strung with red, white, and blue light strings, brightened the downtown area in 1915 and provided a focal point for handing out gifts to local children. In 1922, the year that Mamie’s young cousins Teddy and Dab Caldwell spent Christmas with the McFaddins, Mamie’s diary entry records that the family

Director's Desk

Honoring Rosine Wilson



Rosine McFaddin Wilson
1927 - 2022

Dear Friends,

I want to take this opportunity to honor the memory of the President Emeritus of the McFaddin-Ward House Board of Directors, Rosine Wilson, who passed away on October 19, 2022.

A fifth generation Texan, she was descended from two signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence, Charles Stanfield Taylor, and Stephen William Blount, and two veterans of the Battle of San Jacinto, William McFaddin, and Stephen William Blount. Her great-great-grandparents, James and Elizabeth McFaddin and Hezekiah and Nancy Williams were among the first settlers in what is now Jefferson County.

She was recognized locally, regionally, and nationally for her passion and tireless support for historic preservation and the arts. She served as chairman of the Jefferson County Historical Commission, as vice chairman of the Texas Historical Commission and as president of the Texas Historical Foundation. Additionally, Rosine was chairman of the Trustees Council of the Texas Association of Museums, vice chair-

man of the Lone Star Historical Drama of Galveston when it was first founded, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the San Jacinto Museum of History.

Locally, Rosine was a founding member and president of the Beaumont Heritage Society and was instrumental in the Society's first project, the restoration of the John Jay French Historic House Museum.

But the McFaddin-Ward House Museum was the primary beneficiary of Rosine's knowledge and passion for historic preservation. For over thirty years, Rosine was actively involved with making this museum the standout it is today.

Rosine served as President of the Board of Directors of the McFaddin-Ward House from its inception shortly after Mamie McFaddin Ward's death in 1982 until May 2015. She spearheaded efforts to turn the home into a museum and encouraged her aunt in preserving her home for the people of Beaumont. Simply put, without Rosine's leadership and dedication, this museum, and its

contributions to our region, would not exist.

I know that Rosine took pleasure in seeing the McFaddin-Ward House handsomely decorated every year in anticipation of Christmas. I hope you, your family, and friends, will be our guests, and visit the historic house dressed in its holiday finest as we celebrate this most wonderful time of the year between now and January 15th. Our Holiday Open House from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Sunday, December 11th, offers great music, holiday treats, and the first opportunity to see the house magnificently decorated for the holidays. The event is free and open to the public.

We hope to see you there!

Tony L. Chauveaux



Curator's Corner

Seasons Eatings!

By Victoria Tamez

Curator of Collections

The collections staff at the McFaddin-Ward House would like to wish you Happy Holidays! We have been busy working on our newest display for the holiday season and hope you will enjoy the various objects we have pulled from the reserve collection for the holidays. Our theme this year revolves around food, and we cannot wait for you to see what's in store! Families often gather around the dinner table during the holidays to spend time together and celebrate the holiday season. The McFaddins enjoyed entertaining with wonderful food and drink for family and friends to enjoy while celebrating the holidays.

Come by and see sparkling gowns, nifty tuxes, and shining silver as you enjoy a merry time with the McFaddins. The dining room and the breakfast room reflect the extravagance the McFaddins and their guests often experienced during the holidays. Sterling silver

service plates accent red plates and glasses that adorn the dining table in an ode to the holiday season. Two of our larger pieces of furniture in the dining room have swapped locations for this new installation to allow a better view of our holiday objects.

The breakfast room is set for a festive party with dessert plates and compotes to hold yummy holiday treats. The magnificent silver punch bowl is ready for eggnog (and you can even see Ida's eggnog recipe when you visit the kitchen).

We hope you will join us at our Holiday Open House on December 11th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm! On behalf of myself, Collections Assistant Julianne Haidusek, part-time Collections Assistant Brianna Cross, Museum Techs Mary Acclis, Christal Coleman, and Desa Letulle, we wish you a happy holiday, and a wonderful New Year!



Dining room



Breakfast room



Entrance Hall

*My Eggnog -
To each egg yolk add 1 heaping
table spoon sugar - whip until
sugar is entirely dissolved.
1 1/2 quarts whiskey
1 qt Double Cream - pour/sing
together stiffly beaten whites
Plenty of nutmeg. - (1946)
-y Pi*

Ida McFaddin's eggnog recipe

XMAS

Continued from page 1

“took the kids to see the municipal tree.”

Christmas carol groups gathered at the municipal tree for a time. In 1944, however, Carroll Ward loaned “a hay-filled truck” to a group of Y.M.C.A. youths for caroling along Calder Avenue. Naturally, one of their stops was the McFaddin home for fruitcake.

Early on, Beaumont’s downtown attracted shoppers with lights. In 1906 the Beaumont Enterprise reported that “The Alamo block was beautifully illuminated by festoons of vari-colored electric globes and the splendid stores below were ablaze with electric brilliance.” After that, Christmas downtown light shows brought people from miles around.

In 1920, Gimbel’s Department Store in New York held

the first Thanksgiving parade, really a sales pitch to lure Christmas shoppers. Beaumont soon organized its own Christmas parade, and in 1930 the event featured real reindeer hitched to Santa’s sleigh.

Organized charity broadened its scope. Florence Stratton, reporter for the Beaumont Journal (and the McFaddins’ across-the-street neighbor) began the Empty Stocking fund in 1914. The McFaddins observed both public and personal charity; that year Mamie’s diary read that she and her brother Perry delivered a meal to a needy family on Christmas Eve.

Christmas dinners retained their basic menu of turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, and other sides. Menus for other entertainments evolved as the quality and variety of produce

(such as celery for dressing) improved with more rapid rail transportation and better refrigerated cars.

Mamie considered herself “old-fashioned” in many ways. More accurately, she cherished Christmas traditions but accepted new ideas as well—not so much “Out with the Old” as “In with the New.” She gave newly popular entertainments—cocktail parties and buffet suppers—but still hosted traditional receptions, teas, and luncheons, especially after Ray and Juanita Pinney opened a catering business in town.

Eggnog remained a perennial Christmas favorite at the McFaddins—with one major change. On December 23, 1938, Mamie proudly wrote, “Mother & I made 3 gallons of egg nog – I used electric beater for the first time.” Not

having to beat the eggs by hand with a rotary beater was one tradition she was happy to forsake. She also certainly appreciated the invention of 3M Scotch tape in 1930 for wrapping packages.

In 1938 Mamie and Ida had strings of Christmas lights put on the bushes in the yard. The Enterprise noted that the McFaddin house and other Beaumont homes were “well worth driving by.”

Whatever changes came, however, people continued to give gifts, send cards, sing Christmas carols, decorate trees, and eat sumptuous meals, while children patiently (or not) waited for Santa Claus. Those traditions will continue to be around for a long, long time.



In 1930 Beaumont’s Christmas parade featured live reindeer hitched to Santa’s sleigh.



Beaumont Firefighters continued an early 1900s holiday tradition by delivering food baskets to needy families in the 1930s.

Education

New Virtual Field Trip Experience



By Rayanna Hoeft

Director of Educational Programming

Museums throughout the world pivoted to a digital outreach education model as a way to maintain engagement during the pandemic closures. One of the unintended effects was that museum educators offered programming beyond their geographic areas which expanded their audience to include learners who never would've engaged with their content pre-COVID. Digital outreach also reduced barriers often associated with in-person field trips such as transportation cost, loss of instruction time, and not having enough chaperones necessary for student safety. As a past classroom educator, I often

utilized museum resources in my own teaching. Therefore, I recognize the importance of bringing the museum to the students.

I'm excited to introduce McFaddin-Ward House's first virtual field trip experience titled *Communicating Change: The Connection Between Civic Engagement and Access to Communication Technology*. The experience connects the lived experiences of the women of the McFaddin-Ward House to early 20th century technological change and how that impacted their varied civic engagement endeavors. The tour meets a variety of 4th grade TEKS and can be

modified to meet the learning objectives for additional grade levels. Students engage with digitized primary sources, interactive experiences, and hands-on, object-based learning activities through a museum-in-a-box deliverable. Through these types of experiences, students learn historical thinking skills and the reasoning processes of comparison/contrast, cause/effect, and continuity/change. This virtual field trip is deliverable in a multitude of ways, such as through Zoom or Google Meet, an in-person visit to the classroom, or independently through the classroom teacher, by simply sharing the Google Classroom

code where materials related to the experience are organized. This virtual experience is available for both classroom and homeschool workshop use beginning in January 2023.

If you're interested in learning more about our virtual field trip experiences and other educational programming possibilities, then please attend our upcoming event, *Wine & Wassail Teacher Appreciation Event* on Tuesday, Dec. 6th. Please RSVP directly to me at rhoeft@mcfaddin-ward.org.

Your programming suggestions and ideas are always welcome! Please reach out at your convenience.

'Other Views'

Christmas Traditions



This gift card came with a Christmas bouquet of roses that Carroll Ward gave to his mother-in-law Ida McFaddin. Mamie wrote "Mother" and "Red Roses" to help identify the gift and giver.

In the 4th century, the Christian Church officially named Christmas the time of the celebration of Christ's birth, with caroling part of the celebration. Early carols were liturgical songs - nothing like today's carols. Later, door-to-door caroling fit in with the "wassailing" custom, though the Puritans rejected the practice as being associated with drunkenness and rowdiness. It was in the Victorian era of the 1800s that the peaceful singing of Christmas hymns, either in church or

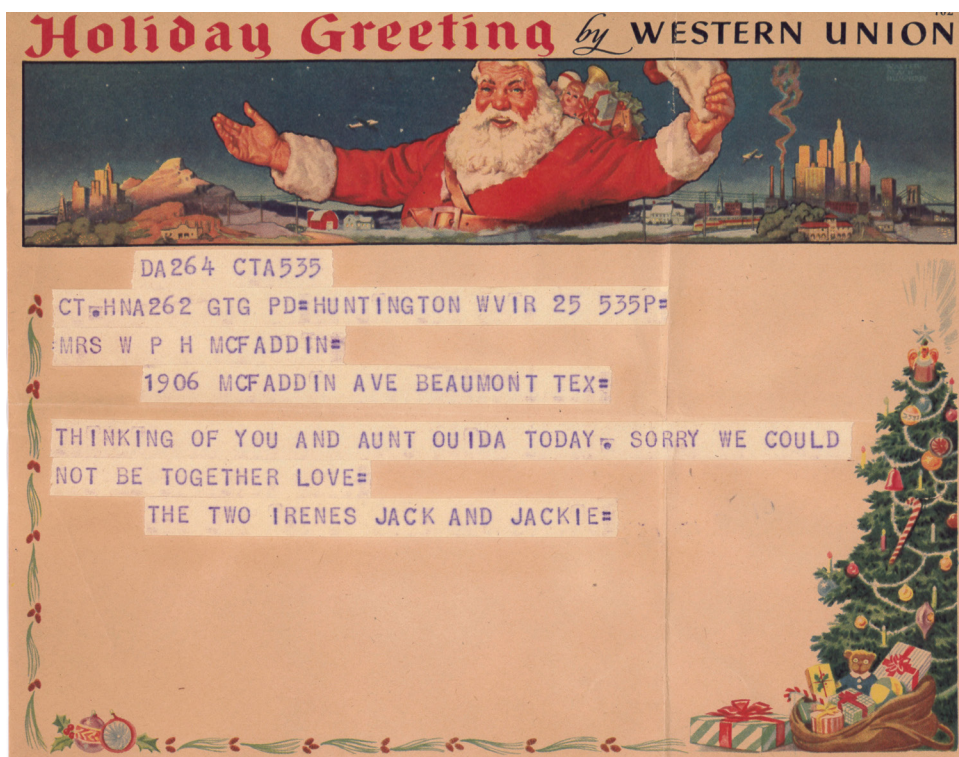
in the streets, popularized carols such as "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "The First Noel" and "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

Long before the Christian era, Northern Europeans celebrated winter solstice by decorating their homes with plants and trees. The tradition of the Christmas tree as we know it began in Germany in the 17th century, but it wasn't until author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe put one in his 1774 novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther" that the custom

By Arlene Christiansen

When we think of Christmas what comes to mind? Gift-giving? Caroling? Christmas trees? Santa Claus? As it turns out, those customs pre-date Christmas! Many "Christmas" traditions actually have roots in pagan rituals held during the winter solstice, which falls about the same time of year.

The custom of giving gifts is usually connected with the Three Wise Men bringing gifts to the infant Jesus. Around the 13th century, however, Christmas "begging" became popular, involving bands of young men in the lower economic classes demanding handouts at homes of the gentry. These "wassail" activities, as they were called, bore little resemblance to today's family-centered holiday. When Christmas traditions became more domesticated in the 1800s, gift-giving shifted from rowdy youths to children.



This ca. 1930s telegram with multiple Christmas symbols came to Ida McFaddin from her sister-in-law, Irene Caldwell, her niece and nephew Irene and Jack Neal, and their son Jackie.

spread across Germany. The Christmas tree was introduced in the U.S. in the 1830s, when Americans wanted to return to a more traditional holiday. The first Christmas tree image printed in the U.S. appeared in Boston in 1836. In 1848, a photo of German-born Prince Albert and his wife, Queen Victoria of England, standing next to a Christmas tree, led to mass appeal of Christmas trees on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Santa Claus tradition began in what is now Turkey with St. Nicholas, a monk, known for his kindness to children. Over time, St. Nicholas became the symbol of Christmas giving in many countries. In the early 1800s, Christmas in the United States was still a rowdy time of revelry. In an attempt to tame the holiday, John Pintard, a member of the New York Historical Society, introduced St. Nicholas; and in 1809, Washington Irving popularized St. Nicholas in his "A History of New York," mentioning him 25 times. Santa's modern image comes from the 1822 poem by Clement Clarke Moore: "An account of a visit from St. Nicholas," better known as "'Twas the Night Before Christmas." In 1881 cartoonist Thomas Nast drew St. Nick as a round man with a red suit trimmed in white fur. The name Santa Claus gradually evolved from "Sinter Klaas," the Dutch nickname for St. Nicholas. Today, Santa Claus can be seen everywhere at Christmas from movies to the mall.

Remembering Hermes

By Judy Linsley

The McFaddin-Ward House lost a valued and beloved former employee when Hermes Manuel died on September 12, 2022 at the age of 91.

Hermes "Helen" Gallow Manuel was originally hired by Mamie McFaddin Ward as her cook in 1976. At Mamie's death in 1982, according to her wishes, Hermes, along with Mamie's housekeeper Rose Spry, joined the McFaddin-Ward House Museum as museum technicians. Hermes stayed with the museum until her retirement in 1998.

Hermes' life epitomized strength and love. Born in Ville Platte, Louisiana, on November 2, 1930, one of 24 children, she married Lonnie Manuel, Sr., on October 9, 1944 and they had 13 children during their 60 years of marriage.

Hermes' obituary said she raised "6 generations through 9 decades in 2 millenniums" but that "raising" extended beyond biological family. Former curator Sam Daleo recalled that on his first day at MWH in 1983, Hermes welcomed him with her world-brightening smile, and in his words, "I knew right then that I had a friend." Hermes' obituary listed Sam and his wife Laura Scott as her "special" children. And when I returned to work after my husband's death, she enveloped me in a wonderfully warm, motherly hug that gave me lasting strength in a difficult time.

Rest in Peace, Hermes. You were greatly loved and will be greatly missed.



(Left to right) Hermes Manuel is photographed with Ida Pyle, Tim Matthewson, Jackie Bowman, Cecelia Smith, Matt White, Rose Spry and Rosine Wilson at the opening of the McFaddin-Ward House Historic House Museum in 1986.

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Public Programming Perspectives

By Bel Morian

Upcoming Lectures



January 19, 2023

*The Port of Beaumont: Inside the Port –
Operations, Military Command Logistics, and History*

The McFaddin-Ward House is excited to host a panel presentation on the Port of Beaumont, which is the #1 strategic military port in the nation and recognized as the busiest military port in the world. Panelists include Chris Fisher, Port Director, Lieutenant Colonel Tyler Olsen, Commander 842nd Transportation Battalion, and local historian Judith W. Linsley.



February 16, 2023

*Architectural Ornamentation -
How'd They Do That?*

Thomas Ashworth will share his experience, methods of creating historic plaster architectural ornamentation, and completed restoration projects. He will provide insight into the care of our local historic buildings. An accompanying architectural exhibit will be staged in the McFaddin-Ward Carriage House.



Holiday Open House
Sunday, Dec. 11 | 5 – 7 pm
Holiday Décor, Live Music,
and Refreshments

Follow the McFaddin-Ward House on social media for behind-the-scenes glimpses of museum life & historical happenings.



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Scan the QR code with your phone to preview upcoming MWH events.

