

March 2023
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McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS

MAMIE'S CARE FOR HER HOUSE



This aerial view of the McFaddin-Ward House shows the house and yard as they looked ca. 1930s.

By Judy Linsley

The ongoing work on the electrical system at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum echoes similar activities of Ida McFaddin and her daughter Mamie McFaddin Ward during their years in the home. Soon after moving in, Ida made a number of changes. In 1907 she added a breakfast room, an upstairs bedroom, and a milk room and lock room. In 1912 she added two bathrooms and a sleeping porch and expanded the butler's pantry, and in 1920, she added a sun porch.

After her 1919 marriage, Mamie gradually assumed the housekeeping responsibilities, which included remodeling and, by then, repairs. Household records and invoices in the museum's archives provide dates of work

and cost and quantities of material as well as labor. Mamie's diaries are not only excellent sources for details of the work, they also give us a glimpse of the extent of Mamie's involvement in these projects.

Friends, family and contractors all recalled Mamie's exacting standards. While her approach to work on the house might not have been "hands-on," it would definitely have been "eyes-on," as she kept very close tabs on things. In one marathon session in October 1936, a Mr. Heartfield, a local tile craftsman, started installing tile floor in the morning, while Mamie watched "all day to see it's done OK." That night, Mamie "sat up till tile floor finished got to bed at 1:45 A.M."

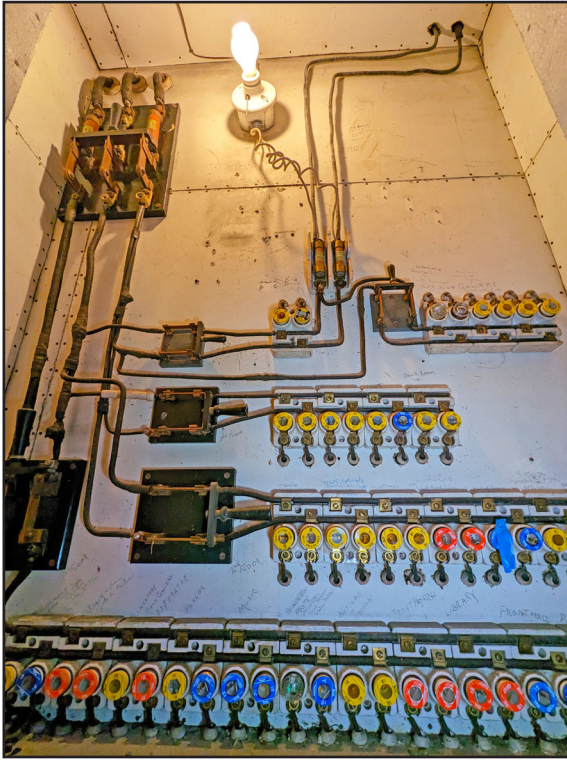
We have to wonder if that happened often in Mr. Heartfield's line of work.

Every project also involved household employees, male and female, who had to move the furniture and contents ahead of the work, clean up afterward to Mamie's satisfaction (which usually involved a more thorough cleaning), then put everything back in place.

The year 1940 seems to have been an exceptionally busy period for work on the house. On April 8, Mr. King started repairing the southwest chimney foundation. At that time Mamie was installing new curtains and bedspread in Ida's bedroom and considering re-covering the furniture there.

See HOUSE page 4

Director's Desk



The McFaddin-Ward House's main electrical closet has utilized the original knob and tube wiring to run power throughout the home since its construction.

Dear Friends,

Preparation for the McFaddin-Ward House's next 100 years commenced on January 16, 2023, as the work of re-wiring the historic house began. Needless to say, a 118-year-old house, built of wood, continuing to rely on the tube and knob electrical wiring originally installed was cause for concern, and as a result, the museum's board authorized not just the replacement of the wiring within the walls, but also the repair and re-wiring of all the light fixtures, and other needed electrical upgrades.

Oak Grove Restoration Company, headquartered in Virginia, is overseeing the work. This is the same company that over the years has replaced the roof, the pillars, and porch of our historic house, as well as installed the protective polycarbonate on all 218 windows and 17 doors of the house and carriage house early last year.

While the historic house will not

be available for tours during this important work, McFaddin-Ward House programming continues full-tilt. With the on-going Lecture Series, tours and special exhibits in the Carriage House, the popular *Movies at the McFaddins*, and *Music at the McFaddins* events, and other programming opportunities still on the drawing board, the McFaddin-Ward House will not be an idle place! Deserving special mention is the museum's new community outreach program - SOAR - premiering throughout the month of March.

Finally - and sadly - I want to take this opportunity to honor the memory of one of the museum's board members, James Potter, Jr., who passed away on November 20, 2022. James served his community, leading by example, on the boards of the Beaumont Independent School District, Kelly High School, St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica, and of course the McFaddin-Ward House. His

wise and generous counsel was always offered with his easy-going manner and wit. To James' wife and children - Lula, Watson, Paige, and James, III - our deepest sympathies.

Tony L. Chauveaux

Curator's Corner

An Enlightening Process

By Victoria Tamez

Curator of Collections

Boxes, objects, and tables currently fill the space in the collection's storage building. Objects as far as the eye can see! Due to the electrical project, the curatorial team relocated over 3,000 objects from the house to the collections building for assessment and temporary relocation. The moving process encompassed the curatorial team's world for weeks in order to get all the most breakable and delicate objects out of the house. The process was long and is still ongoing, but we now have the opportunity to provide new condition assessments for our house objects and retire those that need a little break.

The house has been virtually emptied of all the smaller, non-furniture type of objects. The whole museum staff rallied together to safely and carefully package and transport the objects back to our collections storage area. Each individual object was carefully wrapped in various layers of archival packing materials to ensure that no cracks, breaks, or chips occurred upon transport to the back. They were then placed in archival boxes which were also filled with packing material to ensure that the objects did not crush or smash against each other on transport. The boxes were then loaded up on either carts or in museum staff vehicles to bring them over to the back where they await their new temporary homes on our storage shelves.

Each individual object that

has been brought back to the collection's storage area needs to be condition reported. According to Museum Registration Methods, a condition report is an accurate, informative descriptive report of an object's state of preservation at a particular moment in time. Due to the length of time that certain objects have been in the house and the fact that each of the house objects have been through a movement activity, they need to be condition

time since every issue found on the object needs to be documented. This documentation helps us to figure out whether an object has new issues that have arisen and keep track of any problems as they progress further. The condition report makes up only one step in our paperwork process for each of these objects.

Every object taken out of the house and moved into storage has been placed on a movement sheet that we use to keep

full of information that we use for exhibits and research. Each folder has a document called a Location Tracking Sheet where we keep track of where an object is and where it has been. Since the house objects have changed location, we are also updating those tracking sheets for the object records.

This paperwork process can often work in conjunction with our putting away process. Once an object has been found a place, we can update the paperwork and then put the object away for temporary storage.

The curatorial team has been up to our ears in boxes, objects, and paperwork while we work to place each object into their temporary homes as they await their return to the house. Although it has been a long process, we are looking forward to getting a closer look at the house objects. We also have the opportunity to introduce new reserve objects into the house for a fresh look! We hope you come by to see the house after the electrical project is completed and look out for a few new objects in each room!



Boxes of objects await shelving in the Collections Building.

reported for our records and to inform the curatorial team of any issues that each object may have. Commonly, condition reports include information about the object's identification number, name, description, measurements (usually in centimeters), condition issues that each object may have, a description of those issues, a sketch, the reason for the report, who made the report, and the date the individual made the report. Condition reports can prove to be quite tedious, and they do take some

track of each object when it is moved. The movement sheet contains location information such as where the object was and where it is going along with some other details such as identification number, name, description, and date of movement.

Once we have those pieces of paperwork completed, we move onto the individual files for each object. Every object has a folder



Each object is being condition reported.

HOUSE

Continued from page 1



Mamie and Carroll Ward were visiting her brother Caldwell McFaddin when this snapshot was taken of them with Caldwell's children, Ida, Jim and Rosine in the late 1930s.

In June, Mamie began talking with contractors and architects. She initially wanted to add a bay window and dressing room to her bedroom and possibly expand the butler's pantry, but after much discussion, abandoned the idea.

On July 9, Mamie and Carrie Chatman, the upstairs maid, moved Mamie and Carroll's things into the blue bedroom in preparation for work on her bedroom. By mid-July, nearly every day brought a new problem. She spoke with the Carrier air conditioning man one day and the York air conditioning man the next, learning that she would have to run separate electrical lines for the air conditioner. She spent mornings on the telephone. She scoured shops in Beaumont and Houston, searching for fabric, paint, wallpaper, tile, bathroom hardware, rugs and furniture.

In early August, the work—and the problems—ramped up. On August 14, Mamie wrote, "I [was] busy & hot all day...I can't get paper I ordered - phone men [came] out twice; [it] looks like I can't get a phone." On August 23, she "Talked to all workmen - men scraping Carroll's floor, plumbers still here.... [I] stopped [at]

Standard to look for lights. Home with workmen, talked [to] Mr Winkler....Talked to Gulf States men about power....fuse blew....Cecile & I cleaned Hall after scraping & back room." By

then, "Cecile"—Cecelia Smith—had taken the place of Carrie Chatman, who quit unexpectedly. Cecelia had known Mamie since childhood and, after 20 years of working in Galveston, returned to Beaumont to work for Mamie until Mamie's death in 1982.

On October 12, Mamie decided on a "soft pink" for her bedroom color. Beaumont interior designer Thyrsa Looney helped her with this decision. Using home-dyed fabric samples, the two women worked out a color that pleased Mamie. This marked the beginning of a longstanding working relationship and friendship.

On October 21, Mamie started fall cleaning, a nearly sacred ritual. Her diary entries enumerated the rooms being cleaned alongside the work being done. Fall cleaning lasted until November 6.

Mamie did take a few breaks. She attended two A&M football games with Carroll, and on November 5 she celebrated her 45th birthday; Carroll gave her a radio, her Aunt Ouida a pair of Sevres vases, her mother-in-law a makeup box, and her sister-in-law a hamper. "All pink," she reported. That night she

and Carroll listened to election returns, Mamie reporting that "Roosevelt [was] elected for the 3rd term."

Finally, on November 30, Mamie wrote, "Got Mr. Warren to come finish carpenter work on porch...Tile man here to finish tile work (patching) in pantry. I [was] watching [it] all. My furniture came from Houston - real pretty." She must have been delighted to be able to write "finish" twice.

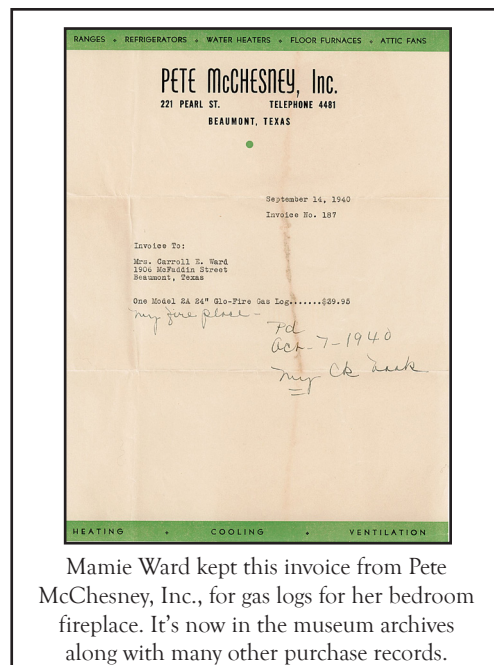
On December 11, Mamie was up at 7 and "spent day in kitchen." The workmen finished after lunch. Then Mamie and the employees "started in moving" and didn't finish until after 7:00 that night. "I moved as help cleaned; John on cabinets & Louis, Cecelia & Leonard cleaning pots & pans." John Plummer was the butler, Louis Lemon the cook, Leonard Lindsey the chauffeur, and Cecelia, already named, was the maid. Everyone was involved. After it was done, Mamie, at least, felt it had been worth the work. "Kitchen looks so nice," she proudly wrote. "Stainless steel tops, cabinets, new stove, water heater & sink," new linoleum, new paint. "A really pretty kitchen."

Two days later Mamie wrote, "Thank goodness my Summer & Fall work is about complete—[I] am so tired." She had overseen every detail of several major projects—work on her chimney, remodeling her bedroom and bathroom, installing new kitchen cabinets, counter and floor, repainting

the butler's pantry, installing a phone and an air conditioner—as well as minor projects along the way—new curtains in Ida's room, repairs to the porch and to the tile in the butler's pantry, shortening the legs on a radiator, sprucing up a chiffonier.

The work was finished just in time for Christmas—and for Ida's return from Huntington, West Virginia, on December 19. On December 18, Mamie bustled around the house, "getting everything perfect for Mother." The next day she met her mother's train in Houston. The two women shopped, then came home for the holidays to a refurbished and very clean house.

Every time we undertake a preservation project here at the museum, we remind ourselves just how much Ida McFaddin and Mamie McFaddin Ward cared for their home, and how hard Mamie worked to ensure that things were done right. As Cecelia Smith once said, Mamie wanted things to be "just so," and so do we.



Mamie Ward kept this invoice from Pete McChesney, Inc., for gas logs for her bedroom fireplace. It's now in the museum archives along with many other purchase records.

Education

Spring Education Programming

By **Rayanna Hoeft**

Director of Educational Programming

We're excited to kick off our spring education programming by offering homeschool workshops and an Earth Day Family Event. Our hope is to serve our learning communities by providing engaging workshops related to social studies, science, technology, and the arts. The workshops are free of charge and serve ages eight and older, depending on the program. For more information please contact the Director of Educational Programming, Rayanna Hoeft, at rhoeft@mcfaddin-ward.org.

Upcoming Programs Include:

Friday, March 17 | 10:00 a.m.

**St. Patrick's Day Tea and Talk Homeschool Workshop
For Ages 8-18**

Guests will learn how tea became a staple of high society and also learn proper Victorian and Edwardian etiquette at a tea party. A sampling of treats and tea options are available for all attendees. Victorian or Edwardian attire is recommended, including hats and gloves. Period dress is not required for participation.

This workshop is currently at capacity. You're welcome to join the waitlist by emailing rhoeft@mcfaddin-ward.org.

Saturday, April 15 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Earth Day Family Event - Open to the Public

Come celebrate Earth Day a week early at the McFaddin-Ward House!

Join the McFaddin-Ward House for a free Family Day Event on Saturday, April 15th from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Visitors are invited to stroll the beautiful gardens, enjoy hands-on activities, science experiments, games, and refreshments.

For more than 50 years, people worldwide have celebrated Earth Day on April 22 to promote environmental awareness.

Friday, April 28 | 10:00 a.m.

**Earth Day Homeschool Workshop
For Ages 8-12**

This workshop celebrates Earth Day by exploring the history of the day, environmental science topics, and hands-on activities. It's a great way to learn more about the natural world in the beautiful gardens of the McFaddin-Ward House.

*Register through the website (mcfaddin-ward.org) under the events tab.

Friday, May 12 | 10:00 a.m.

**Communicating Change: Technology's Connection to Civic Engagement Homeschool Workshop
For Ages 8-12**

Workshop attendees connect how access to communication technology affects civic engagement. Through an immersive virtual tour and accompanying activities, children learn how the McFaddin women organized for the war effort after President Roosevelt declared war on Japan in December of 1941. Attendees will then explore the various tools and methods of organizing with contemporary communication technology.

*Register through the website (mcfaddin-ward.org) under the events tab.

Come celebrate Earth Day a week early at the McFaddin-Ward House!

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, APRIL 15 | 10 AM - 2 PM

MCFADDIN-WARD HOUSE GARDENS



The education department at the McFaddin-Ward House is excited to welcome Sophia Bouey to the team! Sophia comes to us with cultural heritage and community outreach experience. She's a local artist who lovingly shares her talents through teaching at various sites in our community. Sophia is excited to represent the museum in our community, so be on the lookout for us at local events and festivals this year!

'Other Views'

Miss Beaumont 1933

By Arlene Christiansen



and pie-eating contests, freckle-face competition, foot races and sack races. It was the fourth year the group had hosted a day-long celebration and they hoped to make it permanent.

(The *Beaumont Journal* also reported that Beaumont's African American community would hold their own Independence Day celebration at the Fairgrounds on July 5. The program included a musical choral program, a parade, a baseball game, and various contests.)

In the "Miss Beaumont" contest the first prize winner was awarded \$50 in cash. That would be equivalent to \$1,147.53 in 2023 money. Other winners received

merchandise prizes ranging from \$25 for second place to \$5 for tenth.

The contestants were advised that in the interest of fairness, the judges would all be strangers and would come from out of town. They did indeed come from other places: Miss Mabel Reade from New York, Houston Baird from Houston, and James McNeill from Nederland. Whether they were actually strangers is another matter.

Indications were that the competition would be strong; by June 10 there were already sixteen entries for the show and it was believed that somewhere between 35 and 40 women would finally be entered. An elimination event would be held on July 3, with the winners from that event taking part in the final contest the next evening.

The article stated that participants

had to be at least five feet tall, specifying that "Pint Sized" girls shorter than that wouldn't be allowed into the show. On the other hand, there was no limit to how tall the girls could be. Evidently in 1933 there was no shame in calling out "Pint Sized" girls. In 2023 that term would be considered politically incorrect. In fact, these days there probably isn't any official height limit allowed, either tall or short.

Other requirements were that all contestants had to be at least 18 years of age, though again, no maximum age limit was set. Participants had to be of good moral character and unbecoming conduct on the part of any applicant would result in "disbarment."

The Miss Beaumont contest was held as planned, and the *Beaumont Journal* of July 5, 1933, announced that the winner was Miss Kathryn Humphrey, a young lady from the South Park neighborhood. A "beautiful girl with an engaging personality," she had been the second-place winner in the 1932 contest.

Kathryn Humphrey went on to compete in the bathing girl revue several nights later at the Jefferson Theater for the title of "Miss Sabine District," against beauties representing "all parts of east Texas and western Louisiana". Unfortunately, she didn't win that title, coming in fourth behind Miss Jasper, Miss Opelousas, and Miss Port Arthur. But at least she won another \$10 in cash for her effort, giving her a total of \$60 in winnings, or \$1,369.80 in today's money.

According to the *Journal*, the announcement of the winner was greeted with tremendous applause. It sounds like a good time was had by all, and the YMBL hoped it would become an annual event.

According to an article in the *Beaumont Journal* on June 10, 1933, the Young Man's Business League sponsored a "Bathing Girl Revue" in conjunction with its annual Fourth of July celebration. The event was to be held at the South Texas State Fairgrounds and would result in selection of a "Miss Beaumont."

I am quite sure that neither Ida McFaddin nor Mamie McFaddin Ward were party to any such contests, but the article struck me as being an interesting piece of Beaumont social history. Even in the dark days of the Great Depression, Beaumont leadership tried to provide some light moments.

The Revue was only one of many July 4 events that the YMBL sponsored at the Fairgrounds that year. Other events included a Baby Parade, cracker-eating

SOAR Family Day • March 5, 2023



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Public Programming Perspectives

By Bel Morian

VISITORS IN 2022

The museum was enjoyed by 1,926 touring visitors and 2,394 special event visitors in 2022.
Visitors receiving Docent-Led or Audio Tours hailed from 40 states and 13 countries.

UPCOMING LECTURES AND EVENTS:

The beginning of March brings the opening of our month-long outdoor celebration, SOAR.
Springtime is filled with delightful music events, community partnership events, and our final two lectures until September, both presented by nationally renowned speakers from New York.
The summer will usher in outdoor movies and Summer Camp.

- March 10** *Music at the McFaddins: Back Porch Friends Dulcimers*
- March 30** *Music at the McFaddins: Night and Day Orchestra*
- March 30** Beaumont Rotary After Hours at the Carriage House
- April 13** *Music at the McFaddins: Western Bling*
- April 20** Lecture: Ivan Schwartz, Sculptor and Visual Storyteller
Monuments and Symbols in American History
- April 23** Neches River Festival Farewell Brunch at the McFaddin-Ward House
- May 18** Lecture: Beth Wees, Metropolitan Museum
Jewelry in America

JOIN IN:

The McFaddin-Ward House is actively recruiting Docents and volunteers in several different museum areas.
Please call 409-832-2134 or email rhoeft@mcfaddin-ward.org for information.

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.

