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# McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS

## Ida McFaddin's Lifelong Love for Music

By Judy Linsley

Ida Caldwell McFaddin's biographies and obituaries list in detail her contributions to the Red Cross, Daughters of the American Revolution, and other civic, religious, and charitable organizations. Less well documented is her lifelong love of and support for music, although the museum's basic interpretation includes two important events in her life that revolved around music.

First, there was a wedding. Ida had studied voice at Augusta Female Seminary in Staunton, Virginia. Her granddaughter, Rosine McFaddin Wilson, recalled that Ida came to Beaumont to visit her classmate, Sadie Caswell. Ida "had a slight chest problem" that hindered her singing, and the doctor, unaware of humid Southeast Texas, advised her that "Texas was hot and dry, and would help her lungs." Ida took the train to Beaumont, met W.P.H. McFaddin, and the couple married in 1894.

The second event was a musicale. In March 1907, soon after the McFaddins moved into the grand mansion, Ida hosted a musicale, featuring dancing, music, and recitation. As part of the program, she sang a solo, "The Journey Is Long." It was a

suitable inaugural evening for both Ida and her new home.

Ida held the musicale during a time when she was exceptionally active in the music scene. She was a charter member of the Matinee Musical Club, founded in 1905; and she was not only a charter member but also the first president of the St. Cecelia Society, organized in October 1906.

The St. Cecelia (or Cecilia) Society, named for the patron saint of music and musicians, was formed in order for its members "to become proficient in sightreading, to study the lives of great and famous composers, also the operas of the day." The Society presented its first musicale at the Oaks Hotel that November. Ida, described as having a "soprano voice of splendid range and clearness," sang "Dear Heart" "in good style." She had sung the same song years earlier in 1889, while performing at the Augusta Female Seminary Soiree Musical.

The museum's archives tell us a lot about the McFaddins' musical interests. Some files go back to Ida's youth in Huntington, West Virginia. A songbook, bound in red leather and inscribed "Ida R. Caldwell/ September 24, 1890," was obvi-



Ida McFaddin about the time she was a student at Augusta Female Seminary, ca. 1890.

ously something she treasured and brought to Texas after her marriage.

The archives also show that Ida made sure her children were exposed to music. Both Mamie and Caldwell took piano lessons, as attested by some

10 boxes of sheet music. One batch of sheet music dates from Mamie's time at Gunston Hall, the school that she attended in Washington, D.C., around 1910-1912.

Learning a musical skill, usually piano, violin, or

## Director's Desk

Dear Friends –

A primary responsibility of the Museum's Board of Directors is the physical preservation of the McFaddin-Ward House and its contents, and they have been quite diligent over the past two and a half years ensuring that obligation is met. In addition to the "regular" – albeit very thorough – museum maintenance schedule, two major projects have been undertaken since 2021

The first, protecting the 121 windows

and 17 doors on the historic house and carriage house from Hurricane-force winds and flying debris by installing a poly-carbonate product "Tuffak". The second – and current – project involves the herculean task of replacing the original knob and tube electrical wiring with a state-of-the-art commercial grade electrical system.

These two projects, as well as literally every major project undertaken since the Museum's opening in 1986, has been

performed by the Virginia-based Oak Grove Restoration. The late William Seale introduced this well-respected firm – specializing in historic restoration – to the Museum Board in 2001 when it was determined that the roof of the historic house was failing. Since then, Oak Grove replaced that roof (as originally constructed of cypress, copper, and lead), oversaw the reproduction and installation of the majestic columns flanking the entrance to the house, replaced the home's expansive porch, oversaw the third floor HVAC project, and re-roofed the Carriage House, in addition to the window protection and re-wiring projects referenced above.

With thanks to Oak Grove Restoration, the re-wiring project is nearing completion, and we are anxiously awaiting the fall months when we can fully re-open the McFaddin-Ward House to visitors, confident in the fact that it is ready for another 118 years of welcoming guests and sharing a wealth of information regarding life in Beaumont during the first half of the 20th Century.

It's with regret – but tremendous appreciation – that I announce Judy Black's resignation from the Museum Board. Since 2018, Judy has provided sound counsel and her remarkable aesthetic as the Board maneuvered through decisions affecting a significant period of the McFaddin-Ward House's museum journey, and for that we are most grateful. During that time, Judy was the Art Museum of Southeast Texas' board representative. We now welcome Beaumont attorney Mitch Smith to the Board as the art museum's representative. Active both professionally and civically throughout the region, we look forward to Mitch's service on the Museum's Board of Directors.



Tony L. Chauveaux



Oak Grove Restoration Co. removes the chandelier in the Primary Bedroom for rewiring.



Oak Grove led the roof restoration project in 2001.



# Curator's Corner

## Iridescence in Ice

By Victoria Tamez  
Curator of Collections



Platinum and diamond lorgnette

Faddin once owned this particular lorgnette, which she passed down to Mamie. Along with the lorgnette, we also have a design image that we believe was the first iteration of this piece. Based on letters and receipts, we understand that Ouida Caldwell Watts, Ida's sister, had this lorgnette made as a gift for Ida, possibly from the Charles H. Barnum Diamonds, Precious Stones, and Jewelry company in New York.

The lorgnette has a button to release two lenses attached at the top corner of the rectangular shape. When pressed, the button releases the glasses which will pop out rather quickly with one lens unfolding from the top of the other. To put the lenses away, you would simply fold the furthest lens from the base on top of the closer one and then fold both back into the rectangular shaped piece.



Design proposal for lorgnette

The most recent lecture of our lecture season, *Jewelry for America: History and Evolution of Jewelry in America* by Beth Wees, provided inspiration for the curatorial team to take a closer look at the jewelry once owned by Ida Caldwell McFaddin and Mamie McFaddin-Ward. The ladies owned a variety of beautiful and intricate jewelry pieces, many of which can be seen today in their portraits and in a few photographs held in the archives. One piece caught our attention due to its detail and hidden features: a platinum and diamond lorgnette with baguette and round diamonds on a platinum chain with more round diamonds.

A lorgnette is a pair of eyeglasses or opera glasses with a handle. The word lorgnette comes from the French word 'lorgner' which means to take a sidelong look at. Ida Mc-



Opened lorgnette with lenses, ca. 1890.



## MUSIC

Continued from page 1

Programme.	Part Second.
Part First.	Last Act of <i>Il Trovatore</i> .
1. OVERTURE—Fidelo, ..... <i>Beethoven</i> . Misses M. Stribling, Th. La Tour, J. Weeden, B. Morrison.	Dramatis Personæ.
2. VOCAL SOLO—Liete Signori, ..... <i>Meyerbeer</i> . Miss M. Chafee.	LEONORA, ..... Mrs. K. Wilson. MANRICO, ..... Miss M. Chafee. AZUCENA, ..... Miss A. Child. RUIZ, ..... Miss D. Holliday. COUNT DI LUNA, ..... Mr. J. J. Shirkey.
3. PIANO SOLO—Valse from <i>Faust</i> , ..... <i>Gounod-Liszt</i> . Miss J. Meetze.	OFFICERS AND ATTENDANTS.
4. VOCAL SOLO—L'Estella Waltz, ..... <i>Torrey</i> . Miss C. Clopton.	ARGUMENT.
5. PIANO DUETT—Second Rhapsody, ..... <i>Liszt</i> . Misses I. Jeter, M. Hudson.	An old Gipsy woman is seized and burnt alive for having bewitched the Count di Luna's son. Azucena, her daughter, to be revenged, steals the Count's son to burn him on the same pile with her mother; too late she is horrified to find that she has thrown her own child into the flame. She then rears Manrico as her own child. He distinguishes himself in wars and tournaments where he is crowned by Leonora and wins her love. Count di Luna, elder brother of the stolen child, is also in love with Leonora, but she rejects him for Manrico. Soon after Manrico is taken prisoner with his foster mother, the Gipsy Azucena, and they are condemned to die. Leonora obtains the pardon of her lover on condition that she will marry the Count. To avoid the marriage, Leonora takes poison, and flies to the prison to liberate Manrico. He suspects her sincerity and refuses to hear her prayer. Too late he learns she has sacrificed herself for him. The Count infuriated by the deed orders Manrico to instant execution. His exultation is converted into horror when told that the victim was his own brother.
6. PIANO SOLO—Tremolo, ..... <i>Gottschalk</i> . Miss A. Child.	
7. VOCAL SOLO—Dear Heart, ..... <i>Mattei</i> . Miss I. Caldwell.	
8. PIANO SOLO—Spinnerlied, ..... <i>Wagner-Liszt</i> . Miss L. Logan.	
9. VOCAL SOLO—Mexican Nightingale, ..... <i>Giorza</i> . Miss E. Scott.	
10. PIANO SOLO—Valse de Concert, ..... <i>Wieniawski</i> . Miss A. Wallace.	
11. VOCAL SOLO—O Luce di quest'anima, ..... <i>Donizetti</i> . Miss N. Estes.	
12. OVERTURE—Der Freischuetz, ..... <i>Weber</i> . Misses J. Meetz, W. Hughes, P. Myers, F. Paris.	

Augusta Female Seminary program, 1889, when Ida McFaddin sang "Dear Heart".

voice, was a popular "accomplishment" for young people, and teaching music was a respectable occupation for both women and men. The 1940 Beaumont directory lists 27 music teachers, including two McFaddin relatives, Rachel and Alice Kent, granddaughters of W.P.H.'s sister Drusilla (Druzilla) and her husband A.D. Kent. Rachel taught piano and Alice violin.

Other files in our archives contain programs from various groups, such as the Beaumont Conservatory of Music in 1900, and events, such as the Eighth Annual School Music Festival by Beaumont City Schools, National Music Week Observance in 1928, directed by Lena Milam.

Lena Milam was for many years the most important name in Beaumont's musical scene. In 1919 she became music

supervisor of Beaumont schools but soon brought in the wider community with establishment of Music Week and the Beaumont Music Commission. The resulting tradition of city-wide participation endured throughout the Great Depression and World War II. Milam also served on various state and national music boards. She was joined on the Beaumont Music Commission by Nancy (Mrs. Beeman) Strong, who brought in nationally and internationally renowned performers.

As the years went on, Ida no longer sang in public, but her support of music in Beaumont continued. In 1938, as a new member of the Beaumont Music Commission, she and Mamie hosted a tea, reported by the Beaumont Enterprise of April 24 to be Ida's "personal courtesy to the State Federation of Music Clubs," which was

holding its annual convention in Beaumont.

Mamie McFaddin Ward had co-founded the Magnolia Garden Club the previous year, so her diary notes on the tea consist mostly of floral decorations: lilies and rambler roses in the entrance hall, lilies in the parlor, lilies and sweet peas in the music room, mixed flowers in the library, gladioli in the sun parlor, white flowers in the breakfast room, and larkspur in the dining room. The house was adorned with "44 bunches of flowers downstairs and 23 upstairs." Mamie pronounced it as "lovely," noting that even the kitchen, back porch, and butler's pantry were "spotless."

The tea began at 4:00. Mamie wrote that "2 or 3 hundred called & all had a good time." A piano (surely an upright) had been delivered that morning and was installed in the sec-

ond-floor hall "for music". A chorus of men and women from Southwestern University sang ("lovely voices," according to Mamie). When the tea ended at 6:00, Mamie pronounced herself "dead tired" and went "right to bed," satisfied that the event was a success.

Throughout her life, Ida McFaddin supported music, whether with her voice, her funds, or her social skills. She also left an enduring family legacy. In our archives is a program from a 1942 Dick Dowling Junior High 8th-grade production of a musical comedy, "Jiminy Crickets." Ida's granddaughter, Rosine McFaddin, was in the cast. As an adult, Rosine McFaddin Wilson generously underwrote many local musical performances, including those by the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra (now the Symphony of Southeast Texas), which Lena Milam co-founded in 1953.



## Education

# Spring Homeschool Workshops

The McFaddin-Ward House Education Department hosted two successful homeschool workshops this spring.

During the March 17th workshop, homeschoolers learned how tea became a staple of high society along with proper Victorian and Edwardian etiquette during a St. Patrick's Day Tea and Talk.





# 'Other Views'

## Musicales - A Unique Form of Entertainment

By Arlene Christiansen



Ida McFaddin was a leader in Beaumont society when she hosted the musicale at the McFaddin home in 1907.

We know that Ida Caldwell McFaddin was very active in civic and social organizations. She was involved in the DAR, Colonial Dames, American Red Cross, Beaumont Children's Home, United Charities, Twentieth Century Club, Beaumont Music Commission and St. Mark's Guild, to name a few. But did you know that

in 1905 she was also a charter member of the Matinee Musical Club?

Some years ago, while doing research for an exhibit, researchers came across a 1905-1906 yearbook for the Matinee Musical Club and saw Ida's name listed. The discovery inspired additional research on the music scene in Beaumont.

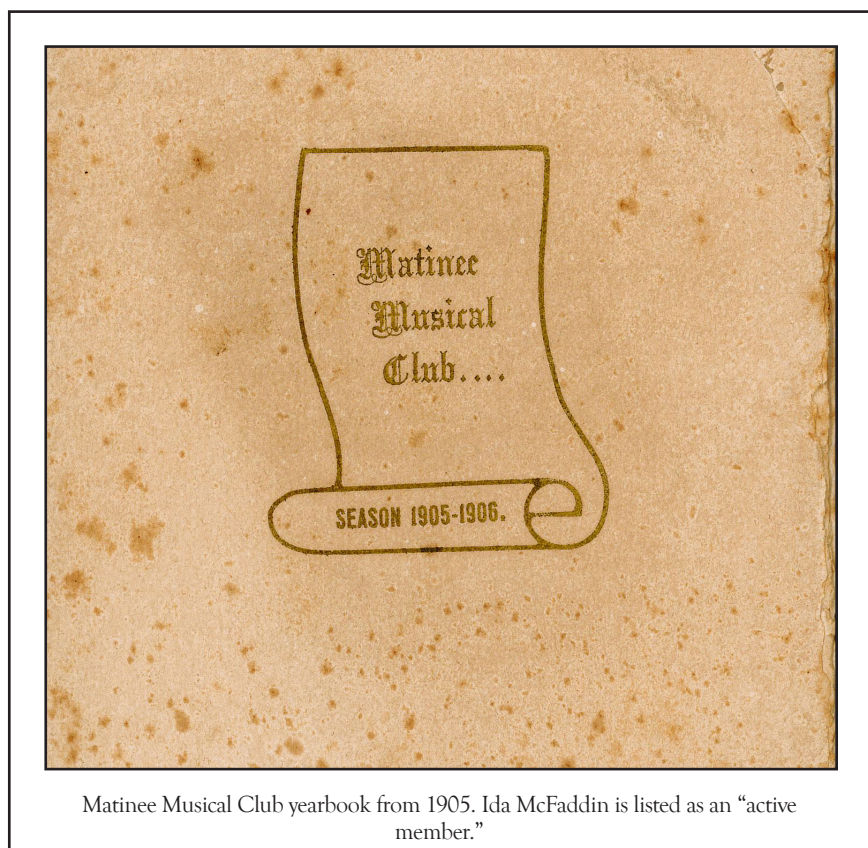
In the early Twentieth Century, when Ida was a young society matron, music was an important part of home life. It was common for middle- and upper-class families at that time to own a piano that symbolized their cultural refinement. In addition, it was thought that music provided "moral" training for children as well as entertainment.

The Matinee Musical Club consisted of

a group of about 30 women who organized for the "entertainment of our friends and the advancement of music..." The club colors were pink and green, and dues were one dollar per year. Failure to attend a concert, or meeting, resulted in a fine of 25 cents. A member who was scheduled to perform but could not and did not find a substitute was fined 50 cents. That was a hefty fine in

1905, so you'd better be there.

The research also enhanced our knowledge of the musicale, a popular form of social entertainment during this time, and of Ida's participation in them. Musicales were usually held in homes, but unlike parties or balls, where music was played in the background or for dancing, musicales were more formal, similar to concerts. Guests gave the



Matinee Musical Club yearbook from 1905. Ida McFaddin is listed as an "active member."





McFaddin-Ward House Music Room, ca. 1909.

performers their full attention, applauding after each number.

The first musicale was held in Beaumont on January 3, 1903, and was hosted by Mrs. M. L. Bixler. The Beaumont Journal congratulated Mrs. Bixler on the unique party, writing that "society has been overrun with card parties, dances and receptions..." The program included voice, piano, and violin solos, and a recitation, and was followed by a social hour with refreshments. To our knowledge the

only musicale held in the McFaddin-Ward House occurred on March 17, 1907, just after the McFaddins moved into the home. Although the museum staff knew of that musicale, finding the yearbook allowed them to learn much more about musicales in general and their social importance in the first years of the 20th century. Many musicales were covered by the Beaumont Enterprise and Beaumont Journal in their social columns up until World War I.

The Matinee Musical Club produced a yearbook for its initial season from October 1905 through June 1906. It seems that each meeting was conducted somewhat like a musicale, with a theme, musical numbers, and educational speakers. For example, Ida McFaddin performed a solo during a program that focused on Scandinavian music. At another meeting she sang for a concert of French music and gave a lecture on the origin and development of

the violin.

The Matinee Musical Club continued for at least another year after the 1905-1906 season, as the Beaumont Enterprise covered its spring concert in April of 1907. A Beaumont Journal article in July 1905 reported, "Although young, the Matinee Music Club has accomplished much and become firmly established in Beaumont. The band concerts at Keith Park are the results of the efforts of its members."

As you might expect, the Music Room in the McFaddin-Ward House Museum was featured in the McFaddins' 1907 musicale, and the Ivers and Pond piano that was played that evening is still there. Although not played regularly, it is kept in tune and available to be played when the need arises. When you go through the house and hear the piano being played, it harks back to times past, when live music was an integral part of family life.

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## Public Programming Perspectives

By Bel Morian

### SPRING PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS:

- March The inaugural SOAR Family Day on March 5th was attended by 700 visitors of all ages. Live music, food trucks, butterfly bikes, nature booths, crafts, and beautiful weather culminated in a fun day for all. In addition to Family Day, two *Music at the McFaddins'* events were enjoyed on the east lawn.
- April The museum was honored to present Ivan Schwartz from New York to discuss the artistry and history involved in creating iconic monuments seen at venerable institutions throughout the nation.  
  
The McFaddin-Ward House also welcomed the youth of our community at the Neches River Festival Farewell Brunch. Over 80 guests enjoyed a Springtime brunch on the front porch and under William and Rachael, our glorious oak trees.
- May A sparkling lecture by Beth Wees from the Metropolitan Museum in New York concluded the Spring 2023 Lecture Series. Guests were treated to a surprise display of beautiful museum-related jewelry.

### UPCOMING LECTURES AND EVENTS:

September will usher in our Fall Programming Schedule with a variety of lectures and offerings.

#### Dates for Your Calendar:

- Sept. 14 Lecture
- Sept. 28 *Music at the McFaddins'* featuring Jimmy Simmons and Friends
- Oct. 5 Lecture
- Nov. 2 Lecture
- Dec. 3 Holiday Photo Shoot
- Dec. 10 Holiday Open House

### JOIN IN:

The McFaddin-Ward House is actively recruiting Docents and volunteers in several different museum areas. Please call 409-832-2134 or email [visitorcenter@mcfaddin-ward.org](mailto:visitorcenter@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.

