



December 2025
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VIEWPOINTS

McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE

McFADDIN WOMEN MADE IT A FLOWERY CHRISTMAS



Ida McFaddin poses for the camera in an elegant fur-trimmed ball gown, ca. 1905. Museum Collection

By Judy Linsley
Research Assistant

In Victorian and Edwardian society, a properly reared young woman was expected to possess a number of social skills, with the art of hosting successful gatherings considered paramount.

Ida Caldwell, hailing from a wealthy Huntington, West Virginia, family, came from this world, as her father, J.L. Caldwell, was a prosperous entrepreneur. Ida's granddaughter Rosine Wilson wrote that Ida and her daughters "became social leaders...and were seen in season at the fashionable 'watering places' such as White Sulphur Springs, and in the promenade of the Waldorf-Astoria called 'Peacock Alley'."

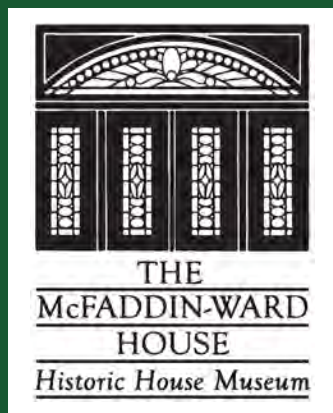
In 1894, Ida married W.P.H. McFaddin and came to Beaumont, then a bustling lumber town. Her East Coast background would have indicated to Beaumont society that she could be

a social maven, and she didn't disappoint. According to Rosine, even as a young matron, Ida "was in the forefront of women's activities, whether giving parties or organizing charities," and her parties were "memorable."

In addition to having the skillset, Ida seemed to genuinely enjoy the process, approaching each event with focus and forethought, as well as an artistic eye. Rosine recalled, "She loved to plan the decorations, often around a theme. Her large home lent itself well to the elaborate parties with flowers everywhere..."

Flowers and greenery always played a major role in Ida's parties, and the Christmas season was the perfect time to give her creativity full rein. In turn, society editors for the *Beaumont Enterprise* and *Beaumont Journal* were delighted to pass on

See FLOWERS page 4



Who We Are

Completed in 1906, the McFaddin-Ward House is a striking Beaux-Arts Colonial-style mansion and historic landmark in Beaumont, Texas. Fully restored and beautifully furnished with original pieces, the house offers a vivid glimpse into the lives of the prominent McFaddin family—who called it home for 75 years—and their enduring contributions to the economic, social, and cultural history of Beaumont and the Texas Gulf Coast.

The museum offers admission-free tours of the Historic Home, Carriage House, and Gardens, as well as engaging educational programming and year-round events.

Visit Today

Museum Hours

Self-Guided Audio Tours
Historic House 1st Floor, Grounds & Carriage House
Wed. – Sat. | 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sun. | 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Docent-Led Tours
Historic House 3 Floors, Grounds & Carriage House
Wed. – Sat. | 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

1906 Calder Ave
Beaumont, Texas 77701
mcfaddin-ward.org



Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

The staff of the McFaddin-Ward House Museum are busy preparing for the most festive time of the year. As I write, we are only a few days away from the Holiday Photo Shoot—our unofficial kickoff of the holiday season. The Entrance Hall, with its stunning staircase draped in beautiful festive décor, makes for a picture-perfect backdrop. We invite you to share your family photos from the event on social media. If you missed the event, which typically takes place on the second Sunday in November, please be sure to mark your calendars for next year.

Our Holiday Open House returns once again for two magical evenings—Saturday, December 6 and Sunday, December 7 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Guests will enjoy live music with a dulcimer group, festive treats, and children's activities in Santa's Craft Workshop at the museum's Visitor Center before making their way across the street to see the historic McFaddin-Ward House shining bright with holiday cheer and twinkling lights.

Carolers will greet guests on the porch. Inside the home, visitors will travel back in time to an early twentieth century holiday with the McFaddin family, touring the

magnificently decorated first floor, while traditional Christmas music plays on the Music Room's baby grand piano. Before departing, guests will have the opportunity to take photos with Santa on the front porch to complete the magical memories of the evening.

The museum's annual holiday interpretation, featuring over a hundred new objects, will remain on display through January. Each room reflects the elegance and joy of the season, from the sparkling silver serving ware in the dining areas to the glamorous party attire in the bedrooms. Visitors will also discover holiday surprises, like a vintage German toy train, sleighbells, and a copy of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, on display throughout all three floors of the house.

Regardless of the event, we look forward to hosting you and your loved ones at our house this holiday season.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey Richardson".

Jeffrey Richardson
Executive Director

Curator's Corner

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

By Victoria Tamez, Curator of Collections

Another busy curatorial year concludes with our annual holiday installation! Our most extravagant and stylish pieces make their way into the house in honor of the season. Shining silver, sparkling sequins, and glittering glass adorn the rooms, evoking the glamour and joy of a festive celebration.

The installation draws on hundreds of reserve collection items to create the inviting, luxurious atmosphere visitors have come to expect. Every room is carefully interpreted through a coordinated array of details—large and small—that bring the holiday vision to life.

To highlight some of these thoughtful touches, we are taking a closer look at a few accessories you can find throughout the house.

PINK PARLOR

A small silver mesh purse is displayed in the Pink Parlor as an accessory to the evening gown. The sterling silver piece belonged to Mamie McFaddin Ward, and the inscription reads, “Mamie L. McFaddin, Beaumont, Tex,” with a floral foliate design engraved on the reverse. Dated to around 1910, the purse adds a charming and elegant detail to this already delightful room.



Curator of Collections Victoria Tamez arranges the Breakfast Room dining table for the 2025 holiday season.



GREEN BEDROOM

A small, sterling silver compact is on display in the Green Bedroom. Made between 1900 and 1910 by R. Blackinton & Company, the piece belonged to Ouida Louise Caldwell (Ida Caldwell McFaddin's younger sister) and has an “OLC” monogram on the front framed within an oval floral border.

The compact features an intriguing collection of hidden features. Opening the compact reveals a mirror on one side and two compartments on the other—the upper designed to hold makeup, and the lower intended for a powder puff. The mirror panel then opens again to uncover even more delights: the reverse side includes a faux ivory sheet for jotting notes, while the facing panel provides a space for storing calling cards. Remarkably, the compact still contains a few of Ouida's own calling cards.

FLOWERS

Continued from page 1

rhapsodic descriptions of the decorations to their readers.

For New Year's 1900, Ida ushered in the new century at her then-home at 1316 Calder Ave., assisted by her stepdaughter Di McFaddin and members of the Twentieth Century Club. The *Journal* reported that the "artistic home" was adorned with palms, smilax, Spanish moss, holly, and sprigs of hidden mistletoe "hung with design to seal the fate of the unsuspecting maidens who passed beneath it." Ida "attracted universal admiration" by arranging yellow and white chrysanthemums in the shape of the club's initials. The *Journal* pronounced the party as "one of the society events of the season" and

complimented Ida and Di McFaddin on their "taste, cleverness and generous hospitality."

In 1911, by then living at 1906 McFaddin Ave., Ida gave another New Year's celebration, a dance for her daughter Mamie and Mamie's friend Leonora Norvell. Dancing took place on the wrap-around porch, which was well shielded from public view with vines, palms, and other greenery, according to the *Enterprise*. The interior of the home was lavishly decorated with poinsettias, evergreens, and garlands. The article attributed the "marvelous beauty" of the floral decoration to "Mrs. McFaddin's taste and ability."

After Mamie married Carroll Ward in 1919 and the couple moved in with her parents, she and her mother often entertained

jointly. This allowed them to combine their considerable talents for and enjoyment of flower arranging.

Ida could still go it alone, however, and sometime in the 1930s, she hosted a large tea party to honor visitors while Mamie was in Baltimore for an extended time. An undated *Beaumont* newspaper headline announced that "400 Received at McFaddin Home for Tea," with Ida listed as the only hostess.

Ida's floral talents were in evidence that day, as the society reporter noted the "wealth of gorgeous flowers" throughout the house. Red poinsettias enhanced the red and gold color scheme in the Entrance Hall. The Pink Parlor featured pink roses in silver vases. Tea was served in the Dining Room on a black crushed velvet cloth with a silver

border that enhanced the "handsome old English silver candelabra and vases filled with rich red roses." Another tea service in the Breakfast Room rested on a blue velvet cloth along with more pink roses. The reporter declared the gathering to be a "lovely party."

On December 29, 1940, Ida and Mamie held a large reception to honor out-of-town guests. By that time, large at-home receptions, teas, and dances were less common than they had been a generation earlier. The society editor acknowledged this, placing the event in a bygone day: "Harking to the mauve decade when social entertaining was on an elaborate scale, when Sunday afternoon at-homes were part of every representative family, and when the genteel art of hostessing was in the curricula of every well ordered lady's life, was the reception held Sunday afternoon in the W.P.H. McFaddin home on McFaddin Avenue, when Mrs. McFaddin, her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Ward, received from 4 to 6 o'clock."

As always, flowers and greenery got top billing. The *pièce de resistance* in the Pink Parlor consisted of orange antirrhinum in an "aqua and off-white fan-shaped vase." A "simple arrangement of white camellias as in a flower bed" complimented the white lace cloth and silver candelabras on the Dining Room table, while "state-

ly gladioli and white and red poinsettias" filled the Music Room, Library, and Breakfast Room. In addition to the flowers, all the mantels had holiday décor of pine and other native greenery and wreaths tied with red ribbons.

For that reception, Mamie's diary lists even more flowers, many sent by invited guests. She reported receipt of "6 dozen poinsettias & other flowers. We had 15 bunches of flowers sent us besides what we bought." They included pink and white gladioli, lilies, pink carnations, pink and red roses, mixed flowers, and orchids. The large number of poinsettia plants listed, 72 in total, provide evidence that Mamie's custom of massing poinsettias in the house at Christmas was well established by 1940.

Mamie seemed pleased with the outcome: "House looked lovely; had champagne punch, cocktails, sherry, coffee and tea—300 called and all had good time."

The reception in December 1940 may have been the last big entertainment that Ida and Mamie gave jointly, for a variety of reasons. World War II intervened, Ida occasionally spent Christmas in Huntington, and her health began to decline in the post-war years. But together, the two women left a legacy of decorating beautifully for the holidays with flowers and greenery that still inspires the museum's decorations every Christmas season.



Ida McFaddin in the Pink Parlor of the McFaddin home, ca. 1920s.
Museum Collection

Education Spotlight

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING MINDFUL

By Jennifer Lowrance, *Director of Education*

Journaling has long been recognized as a valuable practice for personal well-being. But did you know it has also played a vital role in preserving the history of the McFaddin-Ward House Museum? Both Ida and Mamie McFaddin kept journals for decades, and their writings are now preserved in the Museum's archives.

There are countless ways to journal. Mamie preferred to jot down the day's events, while others may sketch, reflect, or collect mementos from their travels. Whatever the style, journaling creates a record of one's life—capturing moments,

documenting goals, and preserving memories. For future generations, these writings offer a window into the past, providing insight into family heritage and safeguarding stories that might otherwise be forgotten.

Our homeschoolers enjoyed exploring the art of journaling at our September Homeschool Workshop, where they decorated their own journals to take home. Students practiced different journaling techniques and received 21 days of writing prompts to help them begin think creatively, express their thoughts, and observe the world around them.



Students kicked off October with a workshop focused on kickball skills, the history of the popular game, and the importance of sportsmanship. Everyone got to play a game and practice good sportsmanship by cheering on their teammates and congratulating both teams on a job well done.



School Tours



The Education Department welcomed Nederland 4th graders from Helena Park Elementary School in October for a tour and special presentation.

The students were studying the 1900 Galveston Storm, and we were fortunate to facilitate an amended talk from our October lecturer, researcher Shelly Kelly.

Two homeschool groups also toured the first floor of the home in November and enjoyed fall crafts while on campus.



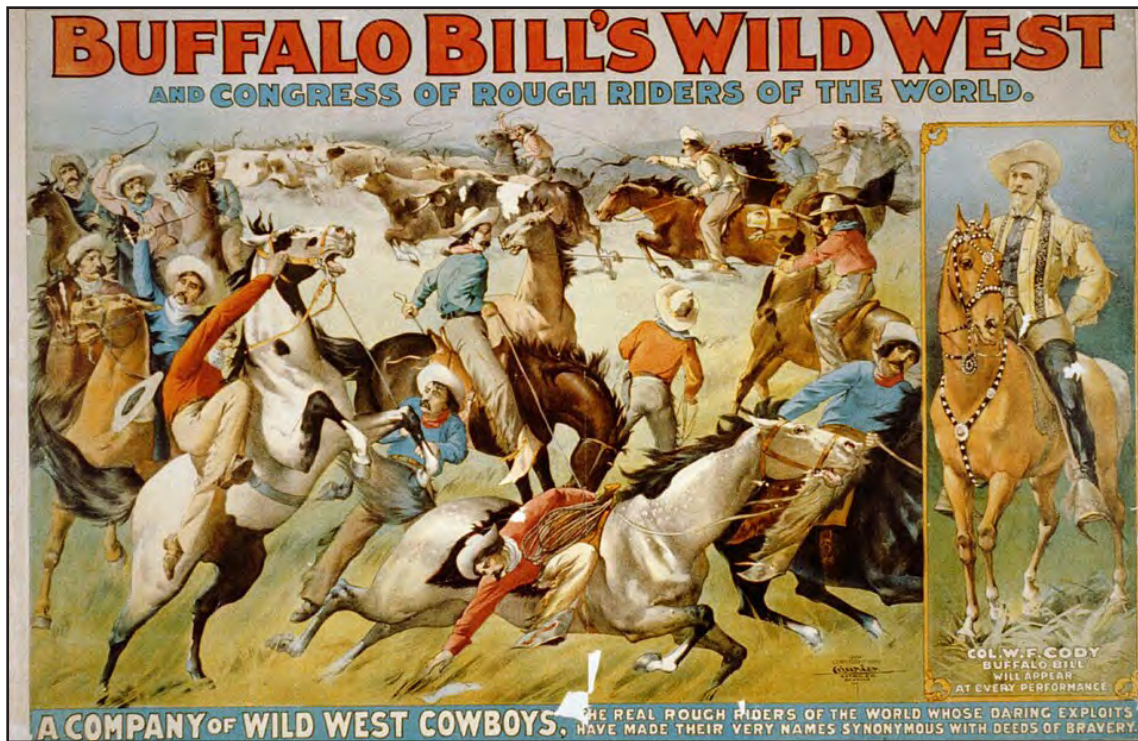
Both the Homeschool and Senior Craft & Share Workshop groups enjoyed a Watercolor Painting Workshop led by a local artist and teacher. Participants explored the color wheel, learned about complimentary colors, and practiced varying color intensity before putting their skills to work by painting a sunflower.

2026 Educational Programming

The Education Department's 2026 programming is now available on our website at www.mcfaddin-ward.org. Workshops are free and space is limited. For more information on workshops or school tours, please contact me at jlowrance@mcfaddin-ward.org.

'Other Views'

BUFFALO BILL VISITS BEAUMONT



By **Arlene Christiansen**
Assistant Director

Thousands of Beaumonters lined the streets in October 1900 to watch as Buffalo Bill, in a buggy drawn by two white horses, led his Wild West show performers through town. A band played "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." Tickets for the show itself were 50 cents. An estimated 4,000 people attended each performance, which included an Army fife and drum corps, Queen's Lancers, Cossacks, Arabs, Cuban scouts, Japanese soldiers, and German Cuirassiers. Some of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders re-enacted their famous charge up San Juan Hill from the Spanish-American War.

Because there were reports of "bad men" who followed the show to rob the public, the Pinkerton Detective Agency provided security. Fortunately,

no incidents were reported.

Mamie McFaddin would have been almost five years old at the time. The family of Ida and W.P.H. McFaddin lived at 1316 Calder Ave., as it was another seven years before they moved into the home at 1906 McFaddin Ave. The Museum has less documentation of their activities before the move, but given their love of circuses and other forms of entertainment, it is a safe bet that the McFaddins were part of that crowd for at least one showing of the Wild West show.

In 1883, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody launched Buffalo Bill's Wild West, a traveling show that blended entertainment with education. The show featured reenactments of famous frontier events, sharpshooting exhibitions, Native American performances, and thrilling displays of horsemanship.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West gave audiences a true spectacle. It showcased the drama and danger of frontier life, complete with cowboys, Native American warriors, and even buffalo. By incorporating real historical figures into performances, such as Lakota Sioux leader Sitting Bull, the show added authenticity to its portrayal of the Wild West, though it often exaggerated events and reinforced stereotypes of Native Americans.

The show was soon drawing huge crowds across the United States and even Europe. Audiences couldn't get enough of the blend of live action, storytelling, and cultural representation, making it one of the most talked-about attractions of its time. More than just a performance, it was early mass entertainment and set a new standard for theatrical productions.

The size of the Wild West

show was immense, requiring hundreds of performers, dozens of animals, and elaborate props. Technological advancements, such as electric lighting, and the growth of railroads, allowed the show to reach even wider audiences. Buffalo Bill's ability to manage such a large operation demonstrated his skill as both an organizer and a showman. His use of posters, photographs, and promotional materials helped to ensure his legacy as a legendary figure in American history.

Bringing the frontier to life, Buffalo Bill helped preserved its stories and spirit for future generations. As one of the first global entertainers, he transcended the boundaries of geography and culture. His story is a testament to the power of imagination, showmanship, and the timeless appeal of the American West.

Back on October 23, 1900, when Buffalo Bill brought his Wild West show to Beaumont, there really was a "Hot Time in the Old Town." The show was so well received that Buffalo Bill returned the following October. By then, the Spindletop oil boom had doubled the population, so the Wild West Show could play to a much larger audience. Buffalo Bill's Wild West, which went by various names during its 30-year run, continued until 1916.

**Image credits: Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders of the World - Circus poster, ca. 1899, Library of Congress.*

STAFFING UPDATE



NEW PROGRAM MANAGER KATHERINE MCATEE

has served as the Assistant Curator and Registrar of the McFaddin-Ward House Museum, gaining invaluable museum experience and developing a deep passion for the organization. During her work in the Curatorial Department, Katherine assisted with the planning and implementation of several programs.

These experiences inspired her to apply for the Program Manager position.

Katherine is excited to implement the ongoing programming at the Museum

and continue to foster strong relationships with the Beaumont community. With her keen knowledge of both the McFaddin-Ward Collection and the culture of Beaumont, Katherine brings a unique perspective to this new role. She is eager to partner with community members to create experiences and memories for people of all ages and is looking forward to getting out into the community for outreach, entertainment, and collaboration.

In her free time, Katherine enjoys spending time at her family's farm rescue, 3W Farm and Ranch Rescue, in Beaumont.

A Beaumont native, Katherine graduated from the University of Alabama in the fall of 2023, earning a bachelor's degree in history with a focus on the American South.

Since January 2024, Katherine

NEW DIRECTOR OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE KOURTNEY BONZO

A Southeast Texas native, Kourtney holds a degree in cultural anthropology from Utah State University and brings more than a decade of experience in marketing, event management, and volunteer coordination.

Her career has taken her through corporate marketing, the nonprofit sector, and most recently the City of Baytown, but it has always centered around connecting people and building community.

Kourtney's lifelong passion for history and engagement, paired with her

love of mid-century music and furnishings, made her instantly fall in love with the charm and character of the McFaddin-Ward House. She's excited to take on the role of Director of Visitor Experience to cultivate and grow the docent program, helping visitors discover new ways to connect with the stories around them.

Outside of work, Kourtney enjoys listening to spooky historical podcasts and spending evenings playing board games with her family.



UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC 2025
12/6 & 12/7
5-7 PM
HOLIDAY OPEN
HOUSE WEEKEND

JAN 2026
1/15
6:30 PM
- LECTURE -
BEYOND BELIEF: THE
TRANSFORMATION OF
SAINT ANTHONY
CATHEDRAL BASILICA
BY RUSTY CHIMENO

FEB 2026
2/19
6:30 PM
- LECTURE -
THE JUICY STORY OF
THE TEXAS CITRUS
INDUSTRY
BY DALE MURDEN

MAR 2026
3/1
11 AM - 3PM
SOAR FAMILY
DAY



McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS



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

The
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BEAUMONT, TEXAS
77701-1629
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McFADDIN-WARD
*Holiday
Open House*
WEEKEND
SAT 12/6 & SUN 12/7
5 PM - 7 PM
1906 CALDER AVE
BEAUMONT

FREE
ADMISSION

HOLIDAY SPLENDOR | LIVE MUSIC | FESTIVE TREATS

GET INVOLVED:

The McFaddin-Ward House Museum is actively recruiting docents and volunteers in several different museum areas. Please call 409-832-2134 or email 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.

