



Spring 2026
Vol. 42/ No. 2

McFADDIN-WARD HOUSE VIEWPOINTS



The Dining Room table is set for an elegant tea party this spring.



THE
McFADDIN-WARD
HOUSE
Historic House Museum

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,

Throughout 2025, the McFaddin-Ward House Museum strengthened its position as a cultural cornerstone in Southeast Texas, thoughtfully balancing historic preservation with meaningful public engagement. The year was defined by steady progress in programming, collections care, and community engagement, reinforcing the Museum's mission to preserve and share the stories of the McFaddin family and their lasting impact on the region.

The visitor experience remained central to the Museum's work. Tours, lectures, special events, and educational classes welcomed both returning audiences and first-time guests. A diverse schedule encouraged visitors of all ages to explore the house and its collection, while seasonal programs offered additional opportunities for the community to experience the site in unique and memorable ways. Together, these initiatives deepened appreciation for the historic house while underscoring its continued relevance as a place of learning and cultural connection.

Behind the scenes, 2025 was also a year of thoughtful stewardship. Ongoing preservation ensured that the house and its original

furnishings were maintained to the highest standards. Strategic planning and operational improvements supported long-term sustainability, positioning the Museum to responsibly care for its historic resources while remaining adaptable to future needs.

Looking ahead to 2026, this strong foundation of growth and stability sets the stage for continued momentum. Plans for expanded programming, ongoing preservation efforts, and new interpretive opportunities will further enrich the visitor experience while honoring the integrity of the historic site. With sustained community support and a clear sense of purpose, the McFaddin-Ward House Museum enters the coming year poised to deepen its impact and extend its legacy for generations to come.

Jeffrey Richardson
Executive Director



TEATIME AT THE MCFADDIN HOME

By Judy Linsley, Research Assistant



Ida McFaddin, ca. 1915. Museum Collection

During the Victorian era, the doctrine of “conspicuous consumption”—the ostentatious display of one’s material wealth—mandated that a wealthy society matron present the public with a beautiful, smoothly run home. Among many other requirements was the ability to host brilliant social events with skill, grace, and seeming ease.

Victorian culture, despite its restrictive reputation, supported a wide variety of social activities, one being the tea. By the early 1900s, the term “tea” in the United States covered anything from a small gathering to a reception for hundreds. Décor and refreshments were at the hostess’s discretion, and she did not even have to serve tea.

After her marriage to W.P.H. McFaddin in 1894, Ida Caldwell McFaddin stepped easily into her role as a leader in Beaumont society, hosting receptions, dinners, and card parties. She loved to entertain. In 1910, she honored her brother George Caldwell and his new wife Irene with a reception described by the newspaper as “unsurpassed in richness and splendor.” The guests were “handsomely gowned”—Ida’s dress was of “white satin with an over dress of duchesse lace,” trimmed in brown fur,

with a tunic of silver and crystal beads.

The society reporter praised the décor as “the most magnificent ever seen in Beaumont,” listing the wide variety of flowers throughout the house: American Beauty, Killarney and Maryland roses; white, pink, and lavender sweet peas; yellow jonquils; and narcissus. The punch bowl in the breakfast room was “embedded” in a variety of tropical fruit. The scene was a veritable “Garden of Eden,” and Ida chalked up another successful social event.

Even as she was honing her own hostess skills, Ida would have been aware of the need to pass on the art of entertaining to her daughter Mamie, preparing for her future role in society. According to granddaughter Rosine Wilson, Ida was both “an indulgent mother” and “a disciplinarian.” Mamie, born in 1895, played with dolls and children’s tea sets under her mother’s watchful instruction. Later, at Gunston Hall, her finishing school in Washington, D.C., she attended receptions at the grand mansions along Massachusetts Avenue that she recalled as “perfect.”

On her return to Beaumont in 1912, Mamie was ready to join the social whirl. In 1919, as a bride-to-be, she became the happy honoree of buffet luncheons, card parties, dances—and teas. In fact, the inaugural event was a tea, hosted by a Calder Avenue neighbor. A few days later, Mamie recorded three events in one day in her diary: a luncheon-card party, an afternoon tea (where the guests “hemmed dish towels”), and a “lovely dance” that night at a private residence.

After Mamie’s May 21 marriage, she and husband Carroll Ward honeymooned in Huntington, West Virginia, where Ida’s family lived. Mamie’s grandmother Mary Caldwell and her Aunt Ouida Watts hosted an enormous tea for 400 guests for her and another new bride. As was sometimes done, both wore their wedding dresses. “Everything beautiful,” Mamie recorded in her diary.

Back home again, Mamie began the life of a young society matron, often hosting major events with her mother. In 1921 the two hosted a “bridge tea” for Ida’s mother and sister.

Mamie’s diary entry read: “Fixed all day for party put baskets around with ‘Thousand beauties’ [a type of rose] in them.” Afterward, Mamie reported that it was a “lovely party.”

On April 29, 1938, Ida, assisted by Mamie, hosted a tea for the Texas Federation of Music Clubs meeting in Beaumont. The two women went all out, installing a piano on the second floor for a choral performance. The home was filled with flowers (44 bunches downstairs, 23 upstairs), and the dining room was resplendent with a Dresden China bowl filled with blue, pink, and lavender larkspur. Mamie recorded that 200-300 people attended “and all had a good time.”

(continued on page 4)



Mamie McFaddin Ward poses for a wedding portrait wearing her wedding gown while on her honeymoon in Huntington, WV, ca. 1919. Museum Collection

Curator's Corner

By Victoria Tamez, Curator of Collections

DO COME IN FOR A CUP OF TEA

Community engagement is our interpretive theme for 2026. The McFaddin family took great pleasure in participating in local civic and social life, and this year we aim to reflect that welcoming spirit.

To open the season, visitors are invited to an elegant tea party inspired by an event hosted by Ida McFaddin in 1938. The installation showcases outstanding tea-related objects, including exquisite Dresden and Dresden-style porcelain, paired with gleaming silver services displayed in the Dining and Breakfast Rooms.

Guests will also discover beautiful dresses and handbags—stylish accessories perfectly suited for an afternoon reception—in the Primary and Pink Bedrooms.

Together, the spring display offers a gracious glimpse into the community traditions that helped shape Beaumont's past.



The Breakfast Room dining table features a beautiful tea service this spring.

Object highlights from the new spring installation include two stunning silver tea sets.



A sterling silver tea service that belonged to Ida McFaddin commands attention atop the table in the Dining Room. Produced around 1910 by the Gorham Manufacturing Company of Providence, Rhode Island, the ensemble reflects the firm's renowned craftsmanship. The floral-engraved cream pitcher from the set, pictured, features graceful Art Nouveau styling and bears an "ICM" monogram at its center.



A second set in the Breakfast Room dates to about 1918 and once belonged to Ouida Caldwell Watts, sister of Ida McFaddin. Teapots are typically short and rounded to encourage proper circulation of the leaves during steeping; this one, however, is notably streamlined, shaped like a Roman oil lamp and engraved "OCW" on the front. Evoking the enchanted lamps of folklore, it may not grant wishes, but it surely helped create the kind of gracious gathering that reflects the McFaddin family's deep commitment to community life.

TEA TIME

Continued from page 2

Though they spared no expense in entertaining, Ida and Mamie were sometimes able to save both effort and money. In 1942 Ida held a "silver tea" for the Women of St. Mark's Epis-

copal Church, a fundraiser where guests placed "silver" coins into a silver bowl. The very next day Ida and Mamie gave a high school graduation tea for Betty McKee, daughter of Mamie's cousin Kydie McKee. The "spring flowers in artistic arrangements" mentioned in Betty's newspaper writeup doubtless did double duty for both occasions.

During their lives, Ida McFaddin and Mamie McFaddin Ward hosted numerous teas as well as other entertainments. Together and separately, they possessed both the training and creativity to do so successfully; and their beautiful home, with its spacious, interconnected rooms, provided an ideal venue. They left a memorable legacy of hospitality for future generations.

Education Spotlight

By Jennifer Lowrance, Director of Education



PRESERVING POLITENESS

Polite manners were essential when attending a proper Victorian or Edwardian tea party. Children practiced these skills until they were deemed ready for formal gatherings. While some customs have faded over time, many of these social graces remain important for today's personal and professional settings.

Homeschool students ages 8-12 are invited to our "Victorian Era Etiquette" Workshop to learn and practice etiquette in a fun, hands-on setting. Held each spring, this popular annual program explores the history of tea, how it became fashionable in the Victorian era, and which traditions have endured or evolved. Students will then put their new skills into practice during a formal tea party experience.



2026 Educational Programming

The Education Department's 2026 programming is available on our website at www.mcfaddin-ward.org. Workshops are free, but space is limited.

RECENT WORKSHOPS



Jan. 27 "Vision Board"
Homeschool Workshop



Feb. 10 "Building Bird Houses"
Senior Craft & Share Workshop



UPCOMING EVENTS

Homeschool Workshop
"Conservation with Sea Rim State Park"
March 17 | 10-11:30 AM
Ages 8-12

A Texas Parks and Wildlife Ranger from Sea Rim State Park will teach a lesson on the conservation of Texas coastal lands.



Senior Craft & Share Workshop
"Pressed Flower Project"
April 21 | 10-11:30 AM

Seniors 65+ will create pressed flower votives and bookmarks. We will talk about all things gardening and share book suggestions!

Ranching Roundup Summer Camp
June 2-4 | 10 AM - 2 PM

Campers ages 8-12, will learn about ranch life, discover how everyday life was lived in the early 1900s through hands-on activities and maker spaces, create crafts, and enjoy old-fashioned games and relays.

*Registration is required as space is limited. Cost per child is \$45. Registration opens April 23.



‘Other Views’ STYLES OF DINING

By Arlene Christiansen, Assistant Director



During the 2025 Summer Interpretation, the Dining Room table reflected an intimate family dinner for six.

The McFaddins often hosted elaborate dinner parties for a large number of people. When they had these parties, they used a style of service known as *service à la russe* or “Russian Service.” It originated in Russia in the 19th century and used fine China, crystal, and silverware to create an elegant table setting for a formal meal featuring courses ranging from appetizers to desserts. Each course was served in a specific sequence and at a pace that created a sense of expectation. Sometimes music and lighting were even used to enhance the dining experience.

Each dish was carefully plated and garnished, focusing on a visually pleasing presentation to showcase the ingredients and flavors of the dish. Carving took place on the sideboard, after which the server presented the various dishes to each guest individually. Ida’s granddaughter Rosine Wilson recalled, “The entrée trays were

very heavy, and I remember seeing the platters trembling from the strain on the butler’s arm as he extended the tray between the high-backed chairs.”

The server was essential to Russian Service. He or she greeted the guests, took orders, and presented each course with precision and flair while maintaining the flow of the meal. Servers required extensive training and knowledge of the menu, wine list, and formal dining protocols. They were expected to anticipate the needs of each guest and be responsive to any requests or concerns that might arise during the meal.

Another style of serving that was popular if there were many guests and numerous dishes was *à la française* or “French Ease,” an approach that resembled a buffet where diners helped them-

selves. Servers laid out dishes for each course and distributed condiments, drinks, bread, and clean plates and cutlery, but otherwise interrupted the diners as little as possible and generally withdrew completely after dessert was laid out. This enabled diners to see the various dishes and choose what appealed to them.

According to Rosine Wilson, at smaller, less formal family dinners, the service might be what was termed “English” or family service. The entrée was carved at the table and each helping placed on a dinner plate, which was then passed to a guest by the butler. The rest of the dishes were passed by the butler, and each helped themselves as in Russian Service. When the main course plates were removed, dessert followed. For less formal meals, desserts were brought in already plated, often on trays where diners could help themselves. For more formal occasions, diners received a doily and finger bowl with scented water and a rose petal. After fingers were “daintily” washed and dried on a napkin, dessert was then served.

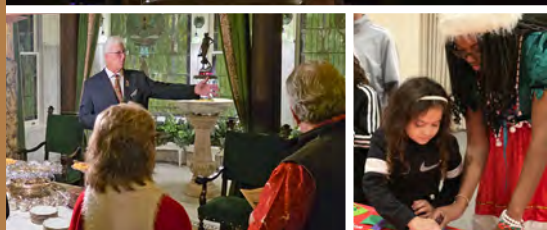
While French Ease is not mentioned in McFaddin-Ward House archives, Russian and family service were certainly used in McFaddin family dining. It is easy to imagine how these styles of service would have looked in the McFaddin-Ward House. The dining room is especially lovely when set with fine China, crystal, and silverware, complemented by beautiful flower arrangements and candles. No matter which style was used, the result would have been an elegant and memorable scene.



Closeup of a 2025 place setting.

RECENT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Dec. 2025 Holiday Open House
Total Attendance: 608



Jan. 2026 Lecture
St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica
By Russell Chimeno
Total Attendance: 155



UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

LECTURE SERIES

"Sterling Stories: 19th Century American Silver in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection" by Medill Harvey
Thursday, April 16 | 6:30 PM

Medill Harvey, The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Ruth Bigelow Wriston curator of American Decorative Arts and manager of the Henry R. Luce Center for the Study of American Art, will give a glimpse into the exceptional artistry, symbolism, and history of 19th century American silver, highlighting exquisite pieces in The Metropolitan Collection.



"Preserving the Past, Cultivating the Future: The Antique Rose Emporium Journey" by Jim Keeter Jr.
Thursday, May 7 | 6:30 PM

Jim Keeter Jr., co-owner of the Antique Rose Emporium in Independence, Texas, traces the popular tourist attraction's rise from humble beginnings to national recognition and how its legacy inspires a bold, blooming future for roses and gardeners alike.



Music at the McFaddins' Featuring The Stringbenders
Friday, March 27 | 6:30 PM

Music at the McFaddins' Featuring The Symphony of Southeast Texas String Quartet
Friday, April 24 | 6:30 PM



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

The
McFADDIN-WARD
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UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

March 17 | 10–11:30 AM

Homeschool Workshop
“Conservation with Sea Rim State Park”
Visitor Center Lecture Hall

March 27 | 6:30 PM

Music at the McFaddins’ Featuring
The Stringbenders
McFaddin-Ward House Lawn

April 14 | 10–11:30 AM

Homeschool Workshop
“Victorian Era Etiquette”
Visitor Center Lecture Hall

April 16 | 10 AM – 12 PM

Silver Identification Clinic with
April Lecture Speaker Medill Harvey
Visitor Center Lecture Hall

April 16 | 6:30 PM

Lecture: “19th Century American Silver”
By Medill Harvey, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Visitor Center Lecture Hall

April 21 | 10–11:30 AM

Craft & Share Workshop for Seniors
“Pressed Flower Project”
Visitor Center Lecture Hall

April 24 | 6:30 PM

Music at the McFaddins’ Featuring
The Syphony of Southeast Texas String Quartet
McFaddin-Ward House Lawn

May 7 | 6:30 PM

Lecture: “The Antique Rose Emporium Journey”
By Jim Keeter Jr.
Visitor Center Lecture Hall

For more details, visit mcfaddin-ward.org/events.

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.

