

THE MCKINNEY-MCDONALD HOUSE

Welcome to the McKinney-McDonald House, an 1890 Victorian residence that stands as both an architectural treasure and a living piece of Galveston history. Built by Liberty S. McKinney, a prominent importer and wholesale grocer, this home reflects the craftsmanship, scale, and design sensibilities of a bygone era, carefully preserved and thoughtfully restored for modern appreciation.

Defined by its striking presence on a prominent corner lot, the home showcases classic Victorian architecture with distinctive Eastlake influences. Expansive double galleries, intricate curvilinear woodwork, and detailed millwork create a façade rich in character, while patterned shingles and ornamental elements speak to the artistry of late 19th-century design. Subtle nautical motifs, including mariner's wheel details woven into the gallery arches, offer a unique nod to Galveston's coastal heritage.

More than its beauty, the home carries a story of resilience. The McKinney-McDonald House famously withstood the Great Storm of 1900, one of the most devastating natural disasters in United States history. Historical accounts indicate that Liberty McKinney and others rode out the storm within these walls, reinforcing the home's role not only as a survivor, but as a place of refuge during one of the island's darkest moments. Through the decades that followed, the home endured numerous coastal storms, standing as a testament to the strength of its original construction.

That strength was revealed again following a significant fire in 1993, which exposed the home's underlying structure of dense, vertically run wood framing extending from its elevated brick base to the roofline. This construction, uncommon by today's standards, helps explain the home's remarkable longevity.

In the years following, the property entered a new chapter. After acquiring the home post-fire, the current owner undertook a decade-long restoration driven by a deep respect for its history and architectural integrity. Every effort was made to preserve original elements wherever possible, while sourcing or replicating materials true to the home's period when needed. The result is a rare and thoughtful restoration that honors the past while ensuring the home's future.

Recognized by the Galveston Historical Foundation and included in historic home tours, the McKinney-McDonald House remains a celebrated example of Victorian architecture on the island. Today, it stands not simply as a residence, but as a legacy property—one that tells a story of craftsmanship, survival, and stewardship across generations.