

Joseph and Frances Gengler House, Built 1905
2102 Avenue P

In 1904, Joseph Gengler (1872-1919) married Bowie, Texas, native Frances Ellen Beaver (1885-1961). Gengler was president of the Gengler Grocery Company, founded by his father Peter Gengler in 1854. Once located on the south side of Market between 20th and 21st Street, the store was known as the best-stocked and best equipped grocery in Texas. In addition to fresh produce, milk, every-day staples, and a butcher, Gengler's featured a delicatessen and bakery which offered customers "fancy goods" that included everything from Russian caviar to Swedish breads.

A year after they married, the Genglers hired William Janssen (1876-1946) and his firm Janssen & Zempster Contractors to build this high-raised Victorian L-plan house. Founded in 1904 with partner James Zempster, the construction company rebuilt The Breakers and Murdoch's bathhouses after the 1900 Storm, worked on a variety of buildings designed by architect George Stowe, and frequently fulfilled building contracts for Galveston County municipal projects.

After Janssen & Zempster completed the Gengler's house, the *Galveston Tribune* included the "artistic cottage" in a January 1906 newspaper article that highlighted new residences. The report described the five-room house, painted white with moss-green trim, and detailed interior design features that included every modern convenience, polished oak woodwork, and mentioned the wallpaper patterns and color palette of each room. The article reported the ground-floor basement included a stage for "amateur theatricals and music," detailed the electric lights strung "artistically" about the ground-floor and included high-praise for the seating, built into the walls, that "obliterated the carrying back and forth of chairs when pleasures were in progress."

The Genglers remained together at 2102 Avenue P until they divorced in 1909, after which Gengler and his young daughter, Audrey Cecile, maintained the residence on the corner of Avenue P and 21st. In 1913, Gengler retired and before he relocated to San Antonio, Gengler sold the house to wholesale grocer Frederick Egner (1864-1939) and his wife, Alma Malthes (1864-1944). The Egners emigrated from Germany and were married at Galveston's German Lutheran Church in April 1886. After they purchased the house on Avenue P, they resided there until their deaths. Afterwards, their children and grandchildren occupied the house and maintained ownership until 2006.

The current owner acquired the Gengler House in 2006 and shortly after they completed rehabilitation of the building the property was featured on the 2008 Historic Homes Tour. Located on a corner lot in the San Jacinto Neighborhood, the Gengler House features a wrap-around porch that takes advantage of breezes from the Gulf of Mexico located one block south.