

3411 Avenue O

Lot 5 and part of 6, Northwest Outlot 62

Built 1896

Two-story frame house originally roofed with slate and metal. The nine room dwelling contained four halls, eight closets, four porches and one bathroom, later amended to two. The 1919 insurance record notes first floor ceilings of eleven feet and ten and a half foot ceilings on the second floor. Accessory structures to the main house included a two-story “servant’s” house, a one-story wood house and a one-story frame garage, added between 1912 and 1947. A cistern was also on the property, furnishing fresh water for the occupants.

The house was built by Ida B. Baden. The tax assessor books note an “improvement” to the property in 1897, not noted in 1896, with the improvement being the completion of the house.

Ida Baden lived at 1919 37th Street, built in 1899. It is possible that she lived on Avenue O prior to moving to 37th Street but facts about her life remain a mystery. Baden does not appear on the 1900 census at either 37th Street or on Avenue O. The Avenue O house, although completed by 1900, isn’t even included on the census record. Baden also managed to avoid inclusion in city directories during the twenty years she lived on the island.

Ida Baden died on September 26, 1906. Her estate, at the time of her death, was valued at \$50,000, the equivalent of roughly \$1.4 million today. Baden’s estate included her residence on 37th Street, a building on two lots on Postoffice Street, near 25th, and 3411 Avenue O. In addition, she had approximately \$2700 in cash in her bank account; 50 shares of the Galveston Wharf Company, appraised at \$4500; five Seawall bonds; 12 shares of the Texas Land & Loan Company; 8 shares of The People’s Loan & Homestead Company; and “a lot of jewelry consisting of pins, rings, and broaches”. She had no debts.

When Baden prepared her will in 1901, she hired the best lawyers in Galveston, including Marcellus E. Kleberg and Matt H. Royston. Banker-capitalist John Sealy handled the sale of her property and advanced large sums of cash to Baden’s only heir and sister, Mrs. Minnie Oline Garceau of Boston.

It would be expected that someone as affluent as Baden to have had a lengthy obituary in the newspaper, but that was not the case. The Galveston Daily News printed two-lines about her death on September 30, 1906: *Died September 26- Ida Baden, 43 years, intestinal obstruction.* Because of her accumulated wealth and the fact that her Postoffice property was identified as a “female boarding house”, a frequently used euphemism for a brothel, it is possible that Ida Baden was a brothel owner, or a madam, as owners of brothels were sometimes referred to as.

Chain of Ownership:

Dr. Louis E. Edmondson, dentist. Lived on the northeast corner of Avenue P and 35th Street. Edmondson owned the entire northwest quarter of outlot 62 in 1880. His acquisition of the property may go further back. According to the tax assessor books at the Galveston and Texas History Center, Edmondson paid taxes on the property through 1890.

John D. Settle. Settle was a cotton classer. He owned the property until 1896, when he sold it to **Ida B. Baden**. Owned the property until her death in 1906, when it was passed to her sister, **Minnie Garceau**, of Boston, who used the house as tenant property. She sold the house in 1911 to **Alexander Price** *. Born in California in 1860, Price was the Texas agent for Warren Jones & Gratz (St. Louis), a cordage, cotton tie and bagging firm. Price used the house as his private residence. After his death in 1916, his daughter, **Mary Farquhar Price**, inherited the property. She and her husband, Barrell Cox, continued to live in the house until they relocated to Houston. In 1939, the property was sold to

Charles Pickens Kennedy *. Kennedy was a North Carolina native who worked in Galveston as an agent for the Southern Pacific Lines. He and his wife, Cora, resided at 3411 O until they sold it in 1962 to

Rhoda M. Thompson *. Born in Galveston in 1905, Thompson utilized the property as both her private residence and her business (Thompson Antiques). She sold the house in 1966 to

Joe D. Ellis *. According to the 1968 Galveston City Directory, Ellis was the director of special education for the Galveston school district. He resided at 3402 Avenue O and used 3411 O as rental property. Thompson continued to rent 3411 O from Ellis, living there through the early 1970s. City directories during the 1980s and early 1990s note the house as vacant. By 1992, Ellis was living in Grand Prairie, Texas.

In 1995 and 1996 (the last year directories were issued in Galveston), Ted and Patrick Kubick were noted as occupants of 3411 O. Ted was still living there in 2002, indicating he may have been an owner of the property.

**Price, Kennedy, Thompson and Ellis are noted on the property's 1919 insurance record.*

Owners Edmondson, Settle, Baden and Garceau were discovered through the old tax assessor record books, dated 1880 through 1914.

The following owners are noted on the Galveston Central Appraisal District website:

Harry Rice. Date of acquisition not noted. Harry first resided at 3328 Avenue O. In 1993, Harry resided at 3401 Avenue O and was still living there in 2002. I suspect he purchased 3411 O during this time period but that is unconfirmed.

Jeffry Bruce Collins. Deed of Gift from Harry Rice, dated January 25, 2007.

Current owner. Purchased November 21, 2017.