Mary Morton Tenant House
1823 27th Street
South Part, lots 8 and 9, Southeast Outlot 65
Completed May 1903

- This one-story frame dwelling was built as tenant property for Mary Morton. When completed, the elevated single-family dwelling contained four rooms, one hall, one bathroom, and a pantry. Electric wires were inspected September 24, 1903, and approved September 30. The description of the building was included at the bottom of the original insurance record for 2710 Avenue P, another property owned by Morton, who owned multiple properties on the block, including 1813 27th, built on the north end of the lots in 1902. One of the first tenants to occupy 1823 27th was Harry E. Welch, an electrician. His sister, Ella, a stenographer, resided with him. A sampling of additional tenants over the years have included carpenters, contractors, marine engineers, and railway employees, just to name a few.

- Mary E. Morton *nee Bishop* was born in Ohio in 1839 and married Samuel Whittemore in Galveston in 1860. Whittemore operated a corner grocery at 27th and Avenue P in 1872 and by 1873 he owned all of the southeast quarter of Outlot 65. In 1878, the city directory recorded his occupation as a contractor who resided at 27th and Avenue P. After he died in 1881, Mary inherited the property and eventually remarried. In 1903 she relocated to Dallas where she died in 1915. Before she left Galveston, she sold her property at 27th and Avenue P to Alfred Olson, who resided on the southwest corner of 27th and P *(1901 27th, built 1886, extant).* Olson maintained use of the Morton houses as tenant property.

- Alfred Olson's grandsons Glenwood and Alfred Heizer inherited 1823 27th Street in 1950. They utilized the house as rent property until 1951 when they sold it to Lawrence and Olga Smith. Smith worked for Black's Hardware and resided at 1901 27th. After he acquired the properties, he continued to utilize 1823 27th as rent property. The Smiths made undetermined alterations to the property which likely included conversion from a single family home to duplex.

- Ralph and Helen Harmon purchased 1823 27th from the Smiths in 1973. The real estate transfer also included 1821 27th. From Lafayette, Louisiana, Harmon married Washington County native Helen Lipscomb in Galveston in 1970. He worked for the Texas Department of Transportation on the Galveston/Bolivar ferry and later for the City of Galveston, where he retired. Helen was employed by Gaido's Restaurant before she went to work for the school district. The Harmons briefly used 1823 27th Street as rent property

before they sold it but they maintained ownership of 1821 27th and utilized it as their residence until their deaths.

- Willis W. Goode purchased 1823 27th from the Harmons in September 1973 and sold the property to his sister, Stella, and her husband, Jesse R. Castilla, the following August. Castilla emigrated from San Luis Potosi, Mexico, in 1923 and arrived in Galveston in 1930. He initially worked for the Maceo's syndicate of night clubs before he was hired by the Gaido's family to manage their member's only venue, The Pelican Club, where he stayed for the next forty-five years.

- In 1958, Castilla married Galveston native Stella Maie Goode. Stella attended Galveston public schools and was a graduate of Galveston's Metropolitan Business School. During World War II, she worked from the Bell Telephone Company and at age 17 became the youngest switchboard supervisor at the local Bell office. She was devoted member of the catholic church, and served as financial secretary for Sacred Heart and also worked as the auditor for the Hotel Galvez.

- The Castillas were the first owners of 1823 27th to utilize the building as an owner-occupied dwelling. During their tenure as owners, they contracted for undisclosed improvements and updates to the building which may have included the automobile garage attached to the north side of the building. Although the Castillas initially utilized 1823 27th as their residence, they later returned use as rental property.

- After Jesse's death in 2005, Stella sold 1823 27th to Mary J. Fischer Ellis and Tom Schwenk in March 2006. After they acquired the house, Ellis resided there briefly. In November 2015, Schwenk assumed sole ownership of the investment property.

- The 1903 Mary Morton Tenant House at 1823 27th Street is located in the neighborhood of Kempner Park, which extends from 23rd to 35th Streets (east, west) and Avenue M to Seawall (north, south).