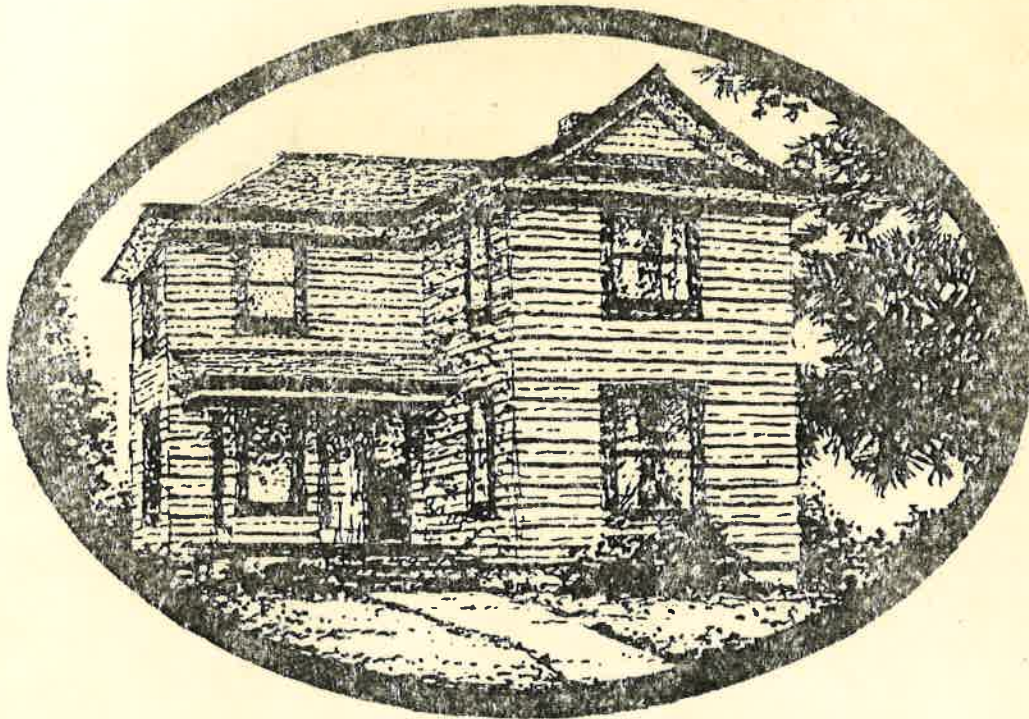




REVEREND HENRY A. McKINNEY
HOUSE

La Mesa Historical Society
P.O. Box 882
La Mesa, CA 91944

REV. HENRY A. McKINNEY HOUSE

1908

8369 University Avenue
La Mesa, California

May 7, 1985

LA MESA HISTORIC LANDMARK
NOMINATION FORM

1. Name

historic Rev. Henry A. McKinney House

and/or common McKinney House

2. Location

street & number 8369 University Avenue ___ not for publication

city, town La Mesa ___ vicinity of

state CA code 06 county San Diego code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☒ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☒ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	☐ in process	☐ yes: restricted	☐ government
	☐ being considered	☒ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☒ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☐ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name La Mesa Historical Society

street & number 8369 University Avenue

city, town La Mesa ___ vicinity of state CA 92041

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Recorder, San Diego County

street & number 1600 Pacific Highway

city, town San Diego state CA 92101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic & Cultural Resources Inventory

title Historic Preservation Element, has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

La Mesa General Plan

date June, 1984 ___ federal ___ state ___ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Office of the La Mesa City Clerk

city, town La Mesa state CA 92041

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☒ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☒ unaltered	☒ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Shaded by a tall and imposing Monterey Pine over ⁶⁰50 years old, the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House today sits on an ell-shaped lot at the corner of University Avenue and Pine Street. Although its original surrounding two and one quarter acres planted in lemon trees have been reduced to one third of an acre, the house still evokes middle-class, semi-rural life in La Mesa early in this century.

The McKinney House is a well-preserved example of a vernacular or "carpenter" style of architecture now often designated as the Homestead House, which traces its development from the rural farmhouses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A simple two-story house, frequently ell-shaped, with a gable roof, the Homestead House found favor at the turn of the century in suburban and urban settings. The McKinney House is a particularly pleasing realization of this style--simple and economical in construction, yet elegant and balanced in design. The gable end facing the street is reminiscent of the pediment on earlier Greek Revival houses. The plain horizontal and vertical boards which delineate windows, doors, and eaves are highlighted by the original three-color paint scheme. The ceilings in this house are lower than is typical for the period, which results in an overall lower-to-the-ground exterior appearance.

The McKinney House, built in 1908, is a two-story, ell-shaped wood-frame structure with clapboard siding. The leg of the ell facing the street has a medium gable roof, while the other leg is covered by a hip roof. The roofline ends in deep, gently flaring eaves. Immediately below the boxed cornice a plain band frieze extends around the house and forms the top portion of the window casings on the second story. The windows are double hung. Tucked into the ell is a one-story front porch with a shed roof supported by two square pillars. The front door is set diagonally into the angle of the ell. At the rear of the house is a one-story kitchen and service porch with a shed roof.

Between August, 1921 and December, 1922 the McKinneys removed the original one-story front porch roof and moved it to the rear of the house where it became the roof of a small added kitchenette attached to the downstairs bedroom. They then built a two-story screened porch which filled in most of the ell. In 1980, as part of a restoration program undertaken with Community Development Block Grant funds allocated by the City of La Mesa, the La Mesa Historical Society removed the later front porch and

built a reconstruction of the original. The kitchenette was retained, however.

Another addition in the 1920's was a concrete porch covered by a wooden trellis outside the rear kitchen and service porch.

In 1938 the McKinneys constructed a detached garage with wood clapboard siding and a gable roof behind the house. Included in the Historical Society's restoration project was the relocation of the garage from its original site adjacent to Pine Street into the ell at the back of the property.

Located at the rear of the yard is a gable-roofed outhouse. Although in the approximate location of the McKinneys' original outhouse, this one was built circa 1890 on a ranch in Spring Valley which would eventually become McGowan's turkey farm. It was donated to the La Mesa Historical Society by the Spring Valley Historical Society and brought to the site in 1977.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☒ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☒ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☒ other (specify) cultural

Specific dates 1908

Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Rev. Henry A. McKinney House is significant as an architectural survivor of La Mesa's lemon ranching era, built in 1908 when the community's transition from an agricultural to a residential area was just beginning. A well-preserved example of a turn-of-the-century Homestead House, the McKinney House is simple yet elegant in design. The McKinneys were prominent early settlers whose association with La Mesa began in 1899. Rev. McKinney was one of the first ministers of La Mesa's Methodist Episcopal Church, an early businessman, lemon rancher, town librarian, and school trustee; his wife Florence was noted for her work in the church.

Henry Albert McKinney was born September 14, 1851 in Livonia, Indiana, one of twelve children of William A. and Caroline McKinney. Later that year the McKinneys moved to a farm near Argenta, Illinois, in the vicinity of Decatur, where Henry was raised.

Henry graduated from the University of Illinois and was in the furniture business in Illinois before entering the ministry. In 1887 he was made a Deacon, and in 1889, at the age of 38, an Elder, in the Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His pastorates there were to include such towns as Perry.

On January 20, 1891 Henry McKinney married Florence Cromwell, the daughter of Dr. Nathaniel and Mary Frances Cromwell. Born September 4, 1864 in New Canton, Illinois, Florence had worked for several years as a school teacher before her marriage. The McKinneys' first son, Henry Cromwell McKinney, was born October 19, 1891; a second, Wilfred Joyce McKinney, followed on November 4, 1895.

When Henry's health failed, doctors advised him to move to a warm climate, and in 1898 the McKinneys came to California, settling first in National City. In 1899 Henry was appointed supply minister for the Methodist Episcopal Church in La Mesa and began to commute by train or by horse and buggy to preach on Sundays. The church, which had been organized in La Mesa in 1895, was then holding services in the one-room Allison School. Florence McKinney became the organist for these early services and also taught Sunday School.

In 1901 the McKinneys moved to La Mesa, where they lived in a house on Date Avenue and took care of the surrounding citrus orchard for its absent owner. At this time La Mesa (called La Mesa Springs until its incorporation in 1912) consisted mainly of a few buildings clustered near a lemon packing house, general store, depot and school, surrounded by scattered five- and ten-acre "lemon ranches." Lemon production was to remain the community's principal industry for several years.

Henry retired from the active ministry in 1905, having served here as supply minister for most of the intervening years since 1899. After that he preached when needed, and both he and Florence continued to labor devotedly for the development of their church.

The McKinneys' third son, Donald Chase, was born December 22, 1906.

On January 27, 1908, Henry McKinney purchased from Sherman C. and Lillian Grable and Charles C. and Fannie Park the east half of Lot 72, La Mesa Colony--approximately 2½ acres planted in lemon trees, lying on the south side of what is now University Avenue. The property extended from Cypress Street west to the present Pine Street and from University south approximately half way to Allison Avenue. A \$500 mortgage placed on the property in February, 1908 probably provided part of the funds needed to construct the two-story, seven-room wood-frame house. Also built were an outhouse and a small barn. While living here the McKinneys were to supplement their income by growing their own vegetables, raising rabbits and chickens, and selling milk and eggs.

By this time the transformation of La Mesa from an agricultural area to a residential community had already started. Beginning in 1906, developer Sherman C. Grable and his partner Charles C. Park subdivided and sold a substantial portion of the property in and around central La Mesa. Houses were built on town lots, and a small commercial district was established on La Mesa Boulevard near Spring Street. By 1912 the population had grown to over 700 and La Mesa residents voted to incorporate.

An active participant in this early commercial development was Henry McKinney, who about 1908 or 1909 opened on La Mesa Boulevard what was, so far as is known, the community's first furniture store. The McKinneys continued to operate the store until about 1918 or 1920. From 1910 to 1913 the furniture store served as the home of La Mesa's library, then a rotating collection of books provided by the state library, and Henry was the elected librarian.

Henry McKinney's community involvement included several years of service on the Board of Trustees for the Allison School District, the forerunner of the La Mesa Spring Valley School District,

beginning in 1908. He also worked toward the establishment of a high school in this area so that students would not have to commute to San Diego High. He was a charter member of the La Mesa Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges. In addition to her church work, Florence McKinney was a charter member of the La Mesa Woman's Club, founded May 17, 1902.

During the 1920's the McKinneys began accepting roomers, a practice which continued until the La Mesa Historical Society acquired the house in 1975. At this time they added a kitchenette to the rear of the downstairs bedroom to create an apartment and built a two-story screened front porch.

Henry McKinney died on September 28, 1930 at the age of 79. Friends and longtime residents mourned the loss of this pioneer La Mesan whose life was described in his La Mesa Scout obituary as having exerted a strong influence on the growing community.

Florence McKinney remained in the McKinney House until her death on February 3, 1956 at the age of 91. During the intervening years the property was gradually sold off until it was reduced to its present size of one third of an acre. In 1939 the property was resubdivided as part of Harold Square, and the house now sits on Lot 12 of this subdivision.

The contributions of the McKinneys to the Methodist Church in La Mesa were recognized in 1948 when the church honored them with the dedication of its new McKinney Education Building.

Following Florence McKinney's death the house passed to her three sons. Cromwell, the eldest, had spent twelve years in Central and South America as a missionary with his wife Marie before returning to La Mesa to live in 1929. He worked for the county welfare department and as a teacher in adult school prior to his passing in 1960.

Joyce, the middle son, spent his professional life as a chemist for the oil industry in the Los Angeles area and at present lives with his wife Ruth in Northern California.

Donald McKinney, who died in 1984, was to continue to live in the McKinney House until ill health forced him to enter a convalescent home in 1981; even after the Historical Society's acquisition he remained in a portion of the building. He was employed by Maxwell Furniture in La Mesa.

On October 13, 1972 the McKinney House was sold by Joyce, Donald, and Marie McKinney, Cromwell's widow, to Forrest and Pearl McKinley. With the assistance of the McKinney family, the newly-incorporated La Mesa Historical Society purchased the building for use as a house museum and society headquarters on October 20, 1975. The house has been carefully restored to the period 1908 to 1920 and today interprets middle-class life in La Mesa at that time as exemplified by the pioneer McKinney family.

9. Major Bibliographical References

First United Methodist Church, La Mesa, California 1895-1975.

Gilbert, Anna M. La Mesa, Yesterday and Today, 1924.

Grant Deed, Book 432/Page 237, January 27, 1908. San Diego County Recorder's Office.

Greater La Mesa News, February 7, 1947.

"Homestead House, The," Old House Journal, March, 1982.

La Mesa Scout, July 2, 1915.

La Mesa Scout, November 11, 1921.

La Mesa Scout, October 30, 1930.

La Mesa Springs Scout, February 10, 1911.

La Mesa Springs Scout, September 29, 1911.

Wolin, Rita. La Mesa--A Brief History, 1976.

McKinney family records.

Interviews: Joyce McKinney, Florence McKinney Drury.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.3 acre

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 12 of Map 2239, "Harold Square," in the City of La Mesa,
County of San Diego

11. Form Prepared By

Craig Jones, Associate Planner, City of La Mesa

Donna Regan, La Mesa Historic Preservation Commission

Karna Webster, La Mesa Historic Preservation Commission



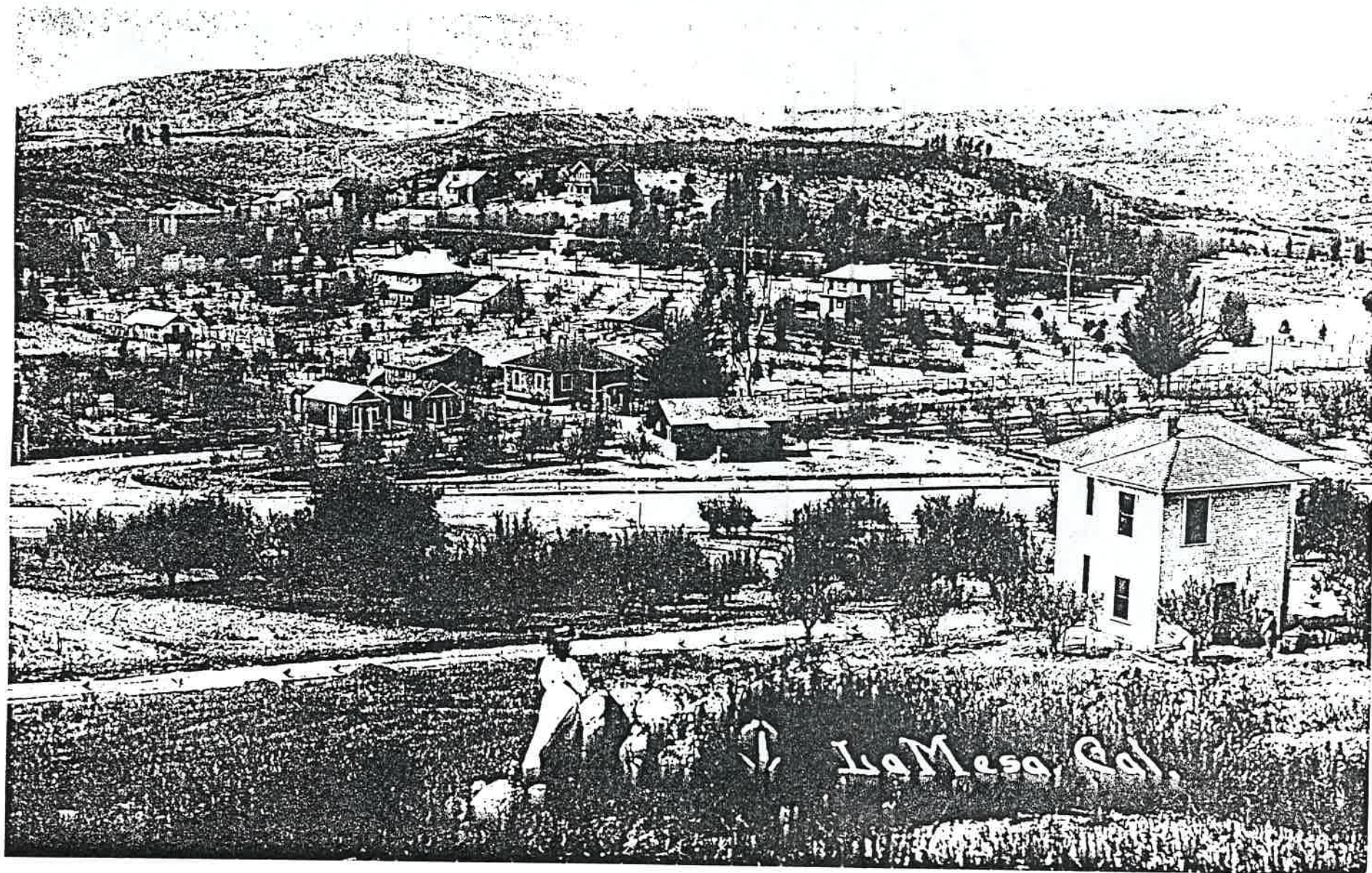
The McKinneys in front of their house, circa 1909--Rev. Henry A. McKinney, his wife Florence, and sons Donald (left) and Joyce (right).



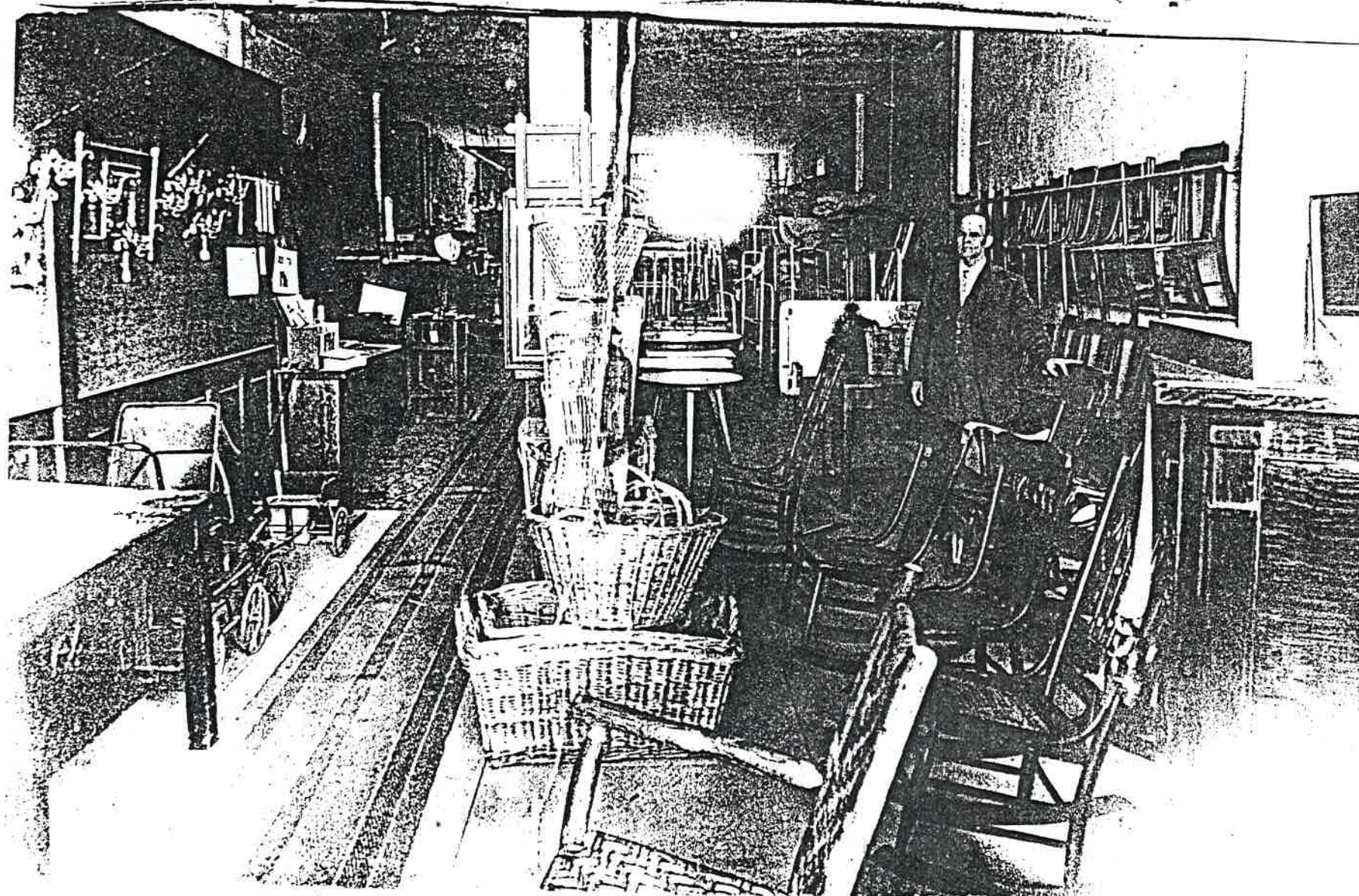
The McKinneys in Illinois, 1896: Rev. Henry A. McKinney (1851-1930), Mrs. Florence Cromwell McKinney (1864-1956), and sons Henry Cromwell (1891-1960) and Wilfred Joyce (born 1895).



The McKinneys on their front porch, August 21, 1921: Rev. McKinney, Donald, Florence, and Ruth and Joyce. Middle son Joyce had just been married to Ruth by his father in the front room.



Looking northwest across La Mesa from the hillside above Lemon Avenue near where Grant Street dead-ends, circa 1908. At right center is the rear of the McKinney House and its surrounding orchard.



Henry McKinney in his furniture store, circa 1910. The store was located on La Mesa Boulevard and later on Nebo Drive.

FURNITURE STORE WILL OCCU-
PY NEW LYON BUILDING.

H. A. McKinney, proprietor of La Mesa furniture store, has completed arrangements for leasing the lower story of the Lyon building, now in course of construction, for a furniture store. Mr. McKinney will move from his present quarters into the new building as soon as it is ready for occupancy.

La Mesa Springs Scout
September 29, 1911

HOME GOODS FOR GOOD HOMES

La Mesa Furniture Store
H. A. McKINNEY, Prop.
HOME PHONE 251

AGENCY

THE BENBOUGH FURNITURE CO.
BRADLEY & WOOLMAN, Undertakers

La Mesa Springs Scout
February 10, 1911



SHADES, CURTAINS
OR PORTIERES

—it's all the same to us. We have a splendid showing of shades and draperies of all kinds for every room in the house. Made of quality materials, perfectly woven in novel and artistic designs, they would be well worth the money if we charged fifty per cent more for them than we do.

H. A. McKINNEY

La Mesa Scout July 2, 1915

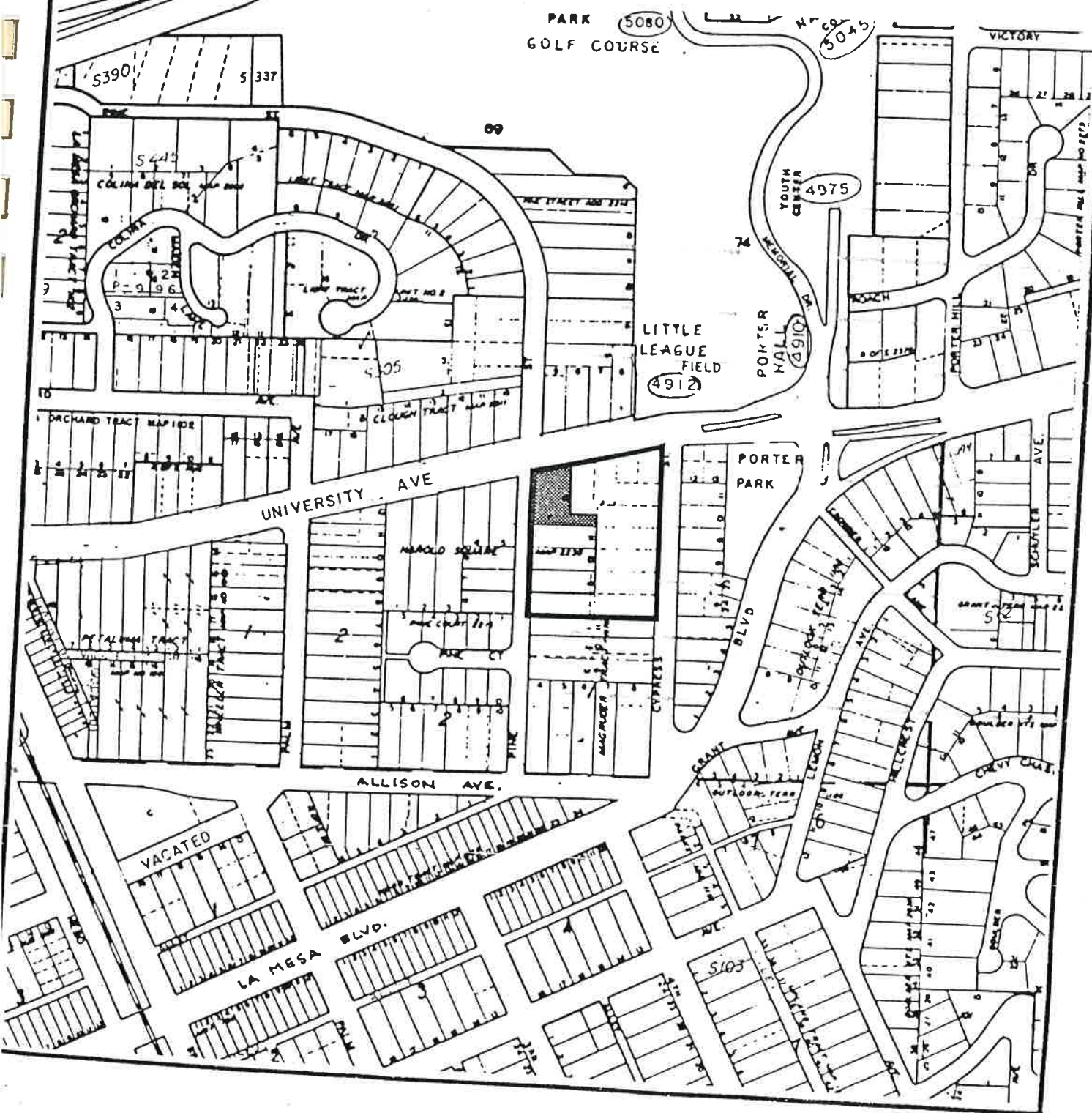
REV. HENRY A. MCKINNEY HOUSE
8369 University Avenue
La Mesa



Present McKinney House lot



Original 2 1/4 acres



REV. H. A. M'KINNEY, PIONEER LA MESA PASTOR, IS BURIED

Rev. Henry Albert McKinney, retired La Mesa minister, was the first of a family of seven brothers and sisters to be called by death. He died Sunday, at his home here, just two weeks after his 79th birthday. The six surviving brothers and sisters—of whom he was next to the eldest—all were residents of distant points and unable to come here for the funeral, which was held Wednesday from the Erickson mortuary, with entombment in Greenwood mausoleum.

The life of Rev. McKinney had been a full one. A native of Indiana, his parents took him to Illinois while he was still an infant, and he was raised and educated near Decatur. In 1885 he entered the ministry in the Methodist church, and attained great success as a pastor and as an evangelist. So strenuous was the life that his health was broken, and he was sent by physicians to California in 1898, locating in National City.

In 1899 he became pastor of the La Mesa church, which was holding its services in the schoolhouse. He did not move his residence here, however, until 1901. He served La Mesa M. E. church actively until 1904, when he retired from the ministry.

Rev. H. A. McKinney was a charter member of La Mesa Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges. He also was a K. P. and a member of the Knights and Ladies of Security.

His life exerted a strong influence on the growing community, and the close friendships which were formed during his active days have still survived. Most of those at the funeral were old time La Mesans—many of them as old or older than Rev. McKinney, who happily outlived the allotted

(Continued on Page 8.)

La Mesa Scout

October 3, 1930

Rev. H. A. McKinney Dies in 80th Year

(Continued from page 1)

three score and ten by nearly a decade.

Almost until the time of his death he was called upon to perform wedding ceremonies for the young people who had been children in his pastorate.

At the funeral there was a profusion of flowers seldom equaled. The services were in charge of Rev. W. Clyde Beecher, pastor of the church for which Rev. McKinney had labored so long and so lovingly. A number sung by H. A. Hall was a hymn, the words of which had been written by Rev. McKinney. Another of his poems also was read during the service by Dr. Beecher.

Rev. McKinney is survived by his wife, Mrs. Florence C. McKinney; three children, H. Cromwell, Donald C. and W. Joyce McKinney, and the following brothers and sisters: Miss Elizabeth McKinney, Cerro Gordo, Ill.; Mrs. Minnie Glens, Pueblo, Colo.; Mrs. Anna Zinn, Kansas City, Mo.; Elmer E. McKinney, Fort Dodge, Ia.; Rev. John E. McKinney, Sturgess, S. D.; and Mrs. Ida Wheeler, Mansfield, Tenn.

Attending the services from out of town were a number of relatives, including Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Mallory of San Fernando; Mrs. Nina Hotchkiss, Mrs. Robert M. Jones and Mr. Archibald Jones of Pasadena; and W. Joyce McKinney of Los Angeles.

The song by Mr. Hall was to the tune "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go." Rev. McKinney's verses follow:

O Thou that blessed life's opening
day,
That crowned the noontide with Thy
grace
And cheered the long, declining way;
Still shines through evening's length-
ening ray
The love-light of Thy face.

And when we near the shining sea
I'll launch my bark at Thy command.
Enough, to flow on with Thee;
Enough, Thy love-lit face to see;
Enough, to hold Thy hand.

As water-lilies burst in bloom
And spread their sweetness o'er the
wave,
So shall life blossom from the tomb
And raise to Him a rich perfume
Who triumphed o'er the grave.

This modest hymn of love and praise
My grateful heart to Thee would
bring;
Thou King of Kings, Ancient of Days,
To Thee for Whom all hymns we raise
May praises ever ring.

Friday, February 7, 1947

McKinney Family Pioneered La Mesa

To a remarkable degree the pattern of living of La Mesa's first citizens is still reflected in community life: a deep interest in church work, a spirited participation in cultural clubs, a vigorous surmounting of physical obstacles in the path of building the city.

In the small but active person of Mrs. Florence McKinney, of far more than three score and ten, these civic characteristics are personified. Mrs. McKinney is the widow of the beloved Henry McKinney, La Mesa's first minister.

She is the only living charter member of La Mesa Woman's Club. For almost half a century she and her family have actively participated in the development of La Mesa, the 38-year-old McKinney home, 2369 University, being the first house to open up that part of town as a residential area.

"We saw the sun every day our first five years in California." As Mrs. McKinney spoke, standing by the tall row of sweet peas whose fragrance hung heavy on the heat of Monday this week, a chill seemed to creep across her garden . . . those years of sunshine without rain.

The McKinney family came to San Diego county in 1898, the year rainfall records stood at 4.67.

Three "dry" years later the McKinnys established their home in La Mesa. The lemon groves which covered the present residential area were drying out, dying.

Mrs. McKinney remembers buying bottled water for her family to drink, recalls how the little McKinney boys, Cromwell, Joyce and Donald, used to carry the family laundry down to the spring, the only place with water for washing.

But the McKinnys and the other pioneer residents didn't move away from La Mesa. Instead they did with what they had, planned and worked for a system of dams to conserve rainfall to tide over dry periods, for a pipe system to

bring water to homes and gardens and groves.

Henry McKinney had already learned the hard lesson of making adjustments to "the impossible." A graduate of the University of Illinois, a minister of the Illinois Conference Methodist Church, fired with the purpose of his calling, Henry McKinney discovered one day in 1898 that his health was gone, undermined by the duties of a circuit pastor in rural Illinois.

La Mesa climate gave Mr. McKinney a measure of health and six days a week he worked as a builder out-in-the-open as the doctors ordered. The seventh day found him in the pulpit, first in the old Allison school, used for church services Sundays.

The whole McKinney family worked with the others of the tiny congregation to build the first Methodist Church (now the Vernon Apartments) and although Henry was to sit more often in a pew there than to stand up front preaching he took his place without murmur. As his health permitted he acted as supply minister, served on the school board 8 years, worked for a union high school, not achieved in time for his son's education. The McKinney boys traveled by train to attend San Diego High.

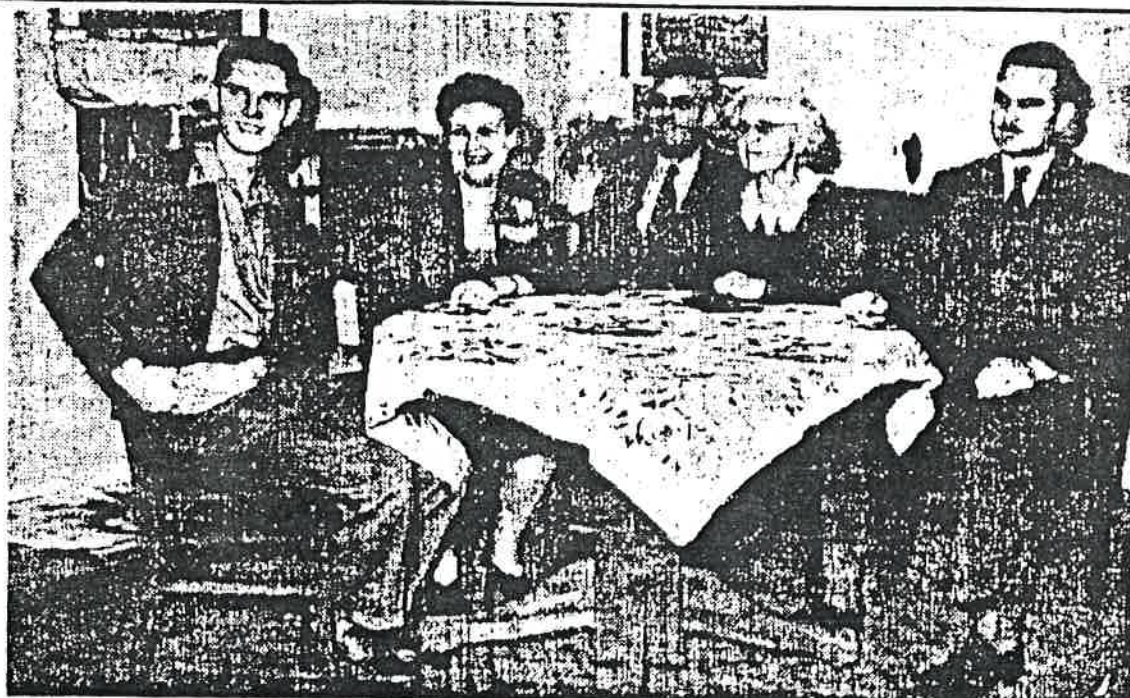
Son Joyce, upon graduation, went away to U.S.C., became an oil chemist, has lived ever since in the Long Beach area. Out of the meetings and Sunday school classes held in his home there grew a church in which the Henry McKinnys had a distant pride. Joyce's children, Ann and Carl, are grown now, married, parents themselves.

Son Cromwell married Marie, daughter of another pioneer family, the William Maxwells. For 12 years, until 1929, the Cromwell McKinnys lived in mountainous Bolivia, elevation 12,500 feet, first teaching and doing missionary work in the rural areas, later being assigned to La Paz.

Their three children were born

Greater La Mesa News

February 7, 1947



MRS. FLORENCE MCKINNEY PICKED THE THREE CHERMOYAS on the table in front of her from a tree grown from a seed son Cromwell sent her when he first went to South America. Left to right: Bob, his parents, Marie and Cromwell; Mrs. Florence McKinney, son Donald.

there but grew up in La Mesa, graduating from Grossmont. Their daughter Marjorie is Mrs. Carl C. Hunter, lives in Chico, has three children, Patricia Marie, Richard Bruce and Michael.

World War II found two generations of the McKinney family in service. Donald, youngest Henry McKinney son, served 3½ years with the army, taking part in the African, Sicilian and Italian campaigns. Bob, Cromwell's son,

served in the navy, is now attending State.

His sister, Florence, named for her grandmother, served as a chaplain's assistant, is married to David Drury, lives in Washington.

The Cromwell McKinneys live at 4162 Palm. Cromwell works in the County Welfare Dept., teaches Spanish two nights a week at Hoover. Marie teaches Americanization, is busy planning the courses she will take the new se-

mester at State.

And Grandmother McKinney keeps busy as usual around home. She has an outdoor garden and indoor plants galore, African violets blooming with hothouse perfection.

Mrs. McKinney doesn't hold with the old saying "we never miss the water till the well runs dry." She believes we should be saving water right now.

"Leaking faucets, children washing their hands under a stream of running water instead of in the washbowl, rinsing dishes under a faucet from the hot water tap, that's the way to bring a dry year. That's waste," says the little lady who knows first hand what drought means.

Greater La Mesa News

February 7, 1947 (cont'd)

COMMUNICATION

Dear Mr. Editor:

I was pleased to note your account of the program given at the last Rotary luncheon on the slogan, "Know Your Home Town," and am greatly interested in the data collected and tabulated by your committee on the development of La Mesa.

I am quite sure you will pardon any amusement I may have entertained, however, on reading the statement that "La Mesa was founded in 1907," when ten years earlier would have been late for its actual birth.

I came to La Mesa about the middle of June 1899 and have been a permanent resident of the city since the first of November, 1901, and at that time I was told that the little town was about ten years old, and that it was founded by A. Smith Crowder, who laid it out by platting and recording and putting on the map of the county the La Mesa Springs townsite, which included four blocks and two half blocks lying between Lemon avenue on the south and Orange avenue on the north and extending from Palm avenue on the east to half a block west of Date avenue.

I have not the complete data of this townsite at hand, but if memory is not at fault this statement approximates nearly the date of the founding of the City of La Mesa though that given is the data referred to above and I submit them only for what they may be worth in making up complete data of our city.

I presume the date 1907 would be about the time that La Mesa was found by the Park-Grable people, and having found it dead they put new life into it, until through their efforts and others who came after them, together with the hearty cooperation of the people, the little townsite of La Mesa Springs has grown by additions and subdivisions until it has come to be the splendid city of La Mesa of today with almost boundless possibilities for the future.

H. A. McKinney
(from the La Mesa Scout Sept. 9, 1927)

Reprinted in La Mesa Historical Society
newsletter, Lookout Avenue April, 1983