La Mesa Historical Society
LOOKOUT AVENUE

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2 *WINTER 1992*

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE 1991

The 1991 Christmas Open House on December 7 was attended by an estimated 175 people. This year food offerings were varied, thanks to the hard work and outstanding results attained by Marilyn Webb, pictured at the right mixing up a fresh batch of scones. Served with strawberry jam and hand-whipped cream, the scones were a delicious addition to our traditional offering of gingerbread. Marilyn also prepared seedcake and crystallized grapes for our members and guests. Thank you, Marilyn, for your hard work!



Thanks also to our other volunteers, Ed & Beth Blackman (Ed was "elected" to hand-whip the cream), Mary Kelley, Betty Teague, Beatrice Acers,Doug & Brenda Neill, Miriam Plotkin, Charlaine Halgren, Harriet Aceves, Jane Donahoo, Pat Kettler, and MayAnn Ehlers.

Thanks go to Evelyn Estabrook for once again making the event come alive with the festive Christmas music played on the parlor organ. We really missed the presence of two special people this year. Dear Mabel Perrapato, who so enjoyed making our gingerbread in the McKinney house kitchen; and Lloyd Donahoo, whose beautiful Irish tenor voice and cheery smile was a finishing touch to the day's activities. Chuck Floto remembered Lloyd by joining Evelyn in singing carols.

The LMHS Quilters outdid themselves with hand-crafted items and baked goods selling in the Palermo Building. Thanks to all of these wonderful and talented ladies.

A special thanks to the membership for purchasing and selling drawing tickets; Donna Regan for keeping track of ticket sales; and Beatrice Acers for taking care of the drawing and sales at the Open House. This year's winners were:

1st prize clock - Margaret Pearson
2nd prize Elizabeth's Attic gift certificate - Myrl Randel
3rd prize Jamar's dinner for two - Ellen Sanders
4th prize cakeplate - Miriam Plotkin
5th prize Country Loft food basket - Ellen Adams



For Your Information

At its annual awards luncheon on September 18, 1991, La Mesa Beautiful presented the LMHS Rev. Henry A. McKinney House with the award for best landscaping in the semi-public facilities category. Present to accept the award for the Society were Pat Kettler and Donna Regan. La Mesa Beautiful was founded in 1974 to promote civic beautification.

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1,491 tickets were sold for the Christmas drawing. Including Quliter's sales of $258.75, donations and other sales of $49, the LMHS realized a profit of $1,576.75 (after expenses) from the 1991 Open House. Thanks again to everyone who bought tickets, and our volunteers at the event!

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A special thanks to Eileen McAlpin and Hank Shupbach, who volunteered to take care of mailings for the Society. Just as soon as they had volunteered, they were inundated with several mailings in about a two-week span of time! Their help in getting the newsletter, flyers, and other notices out to the membership is much appreciated.

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Contributing to this issue of "Lookout Avenue" were Beatrice Acers, Pat Kettler, and Donna Regan.

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Charlaine Halgren has joined the Board as a Director, following the resignation of Greg Truesdale.

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FROM THE QUILTERS

The Quilters are happy to report the return of Nadine Washburn to our group after an absence due to surgery. We are busy as always, making darling hand-quilted baby quilts, and doing custom quilting for those who have quilt tops that need to be assembled and quilted. When we have "taken the quilt off the frame" we all go to lunch to celebrate. We expect to have lunch at the Olive Garden Restaurant at Grossmont Center when we finish our current project. We meet Wednesdays at 8:30 am and break at lunchtime. Anyone who likes to quilt or wants to learn is welcome to join our group.

Our thanks go to Betty Burns' husband, Ralph; Irma Wiley's husband, Don; and Gay Tulp's husband, Gene for the many ways they have helped make our quilting projects possible and successful.

BRIDAL FASHIONS - CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE EXHIBIT





Elegant creations greeted visitors to this year's Christmas Open House exhibit, "On Her Wedding Day: Bridal Fashions 1870's - 1920's."

Newly donated to LMHS was the two-piece white cotton dotted Swiss wedding dress of Katherine Lutes (pictured above in 1902). Katherine married Scottish-born Daniel McNulty on April 12, 1902, in Illinois. After they came to California, Dan operated McNulty's Candy on La Mesa Boulevard from 1911 until shortly before his death in 1947. Generations of La Mesans enjoyed Dan's peanut brittle, Turkish cream nougat, and other confections. The dress was donated by the McNulty's daughter, Margaret Gleason; and granddaughter, Sandra McNulty.

Also from the Society's collection was the two-piece dress with train worn by Elizabeth "Bessie" Chapin when she married Dr. Henry Porter in Beloit, Wisconsin in April 1879. Soon after the wedding Bessie travelled with Henry on his return to China, where he was serving as a medical missionary. The Porters settled in La Mesa in 1904. Bessie's dress was donated in 1985 by her granddaughter, Anne Porter Hall; and her great-granddaughter, Christine Hall Trigeiro.

From the collection of LMHS member Jo Pearson were a two-piece satin and silk faille dress with large leg-of-mutton sleeves (c. 1895), a satin-trimmed dotted net dress (c. 1906), two silk and lace dresses with bead trim (World War I era), and an embroidered net dress (c. 1925). Also included were accessories, photographs, wedding books, and fashion plates.

Organizing the exhibit, which will continue through May, were Jo Pearson, Donna Regan, and Nancy E. Neffson.

SCENES FROM THE



Left and below, the "spread" on the dining room table





Beatrice Acers gets a volunteer to help with the drawing

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE



Old-time cars paid a visit

The Quilter's table in the Palermo Building





More of the Bridal display

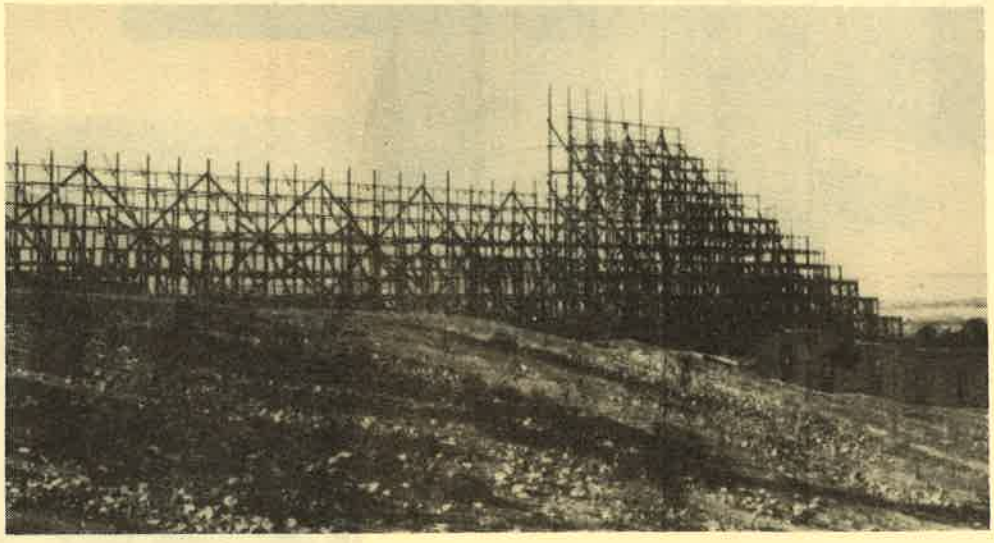
"THE EGYPTIAN EPIC"

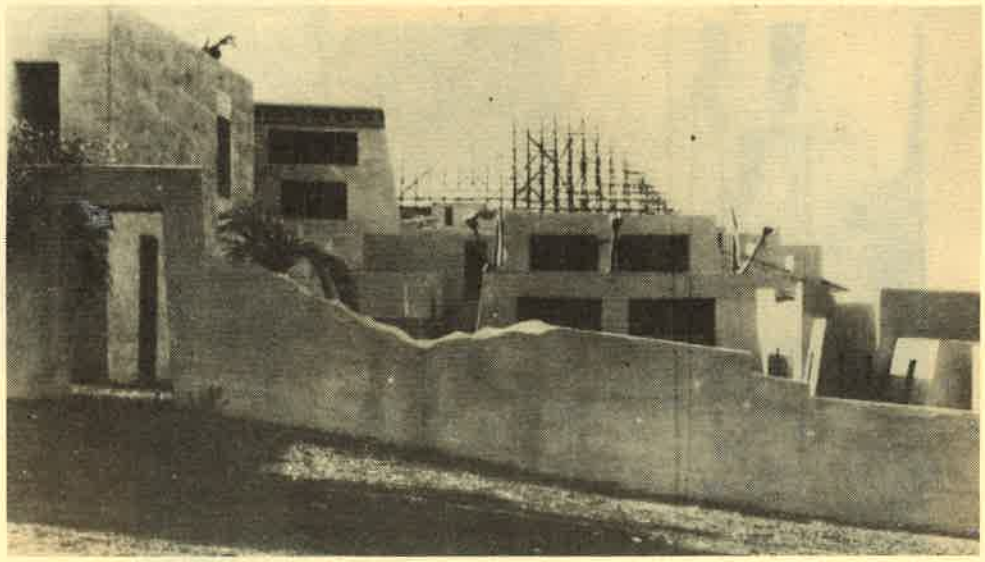
In 1924, according to the *La Mesa Scout*, over 5 acres were leased by the Hart-Loring-Wells Film Company from Ed Fletcher and the S&L Studios on Grossmont for various sets of an Egyptian-themed motion picture. Some of the sets included a rich man's home, a grainery, a garden, and a replica of a corner of the Pyramid of Cheops. The pyramid corner was 100 feet high and about 300 feet long at its base. The *Scout* stated that the entire set was to be the largest ever built in motion pictures, exceeding those of D.W. Griffith's production of "Intolerance".

The picture was to consist of ten reels, divided into five episodes of ancient Egyptian history. It was to be filmed over a three-year period. The paper also noted that Sid Grauman expressed a desire to show the film at his Egyptian theater in Los Angeles.

Whatever happened to the film is unknown to us, perhaps one day it will show up in someone's archives. The pictures below include an autographed photo given to Earl Roberts by Theobaldi, and two of the sets under construction.







CANDLELIGHT VIGIL SUPPORTS THREATENED MT. HELIX CROSS

On the evening of December 23, 1991, an estimated 500 people gathered on Mt. Helix for a candlelight vigil to demonstrate support for preserving the historic Mt. Helix cross, which has been threatened with removal by a recent court decision.

"Together we can save the cross and we will," vowed Dianne Jacob, one of the organizers of the event and a candidate for the County Board of Supervisors. Detailing the historic significance of the site was high school sophomore Sean Carroll, whose History Fair research as a seventh-grader had led to the designation of the Mt. Helix Nature Theatre as a County Historic Site in January of 1990., John Mead, president of the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association, reported that his group was willing to assume ownership of the cross, should this become necessary.

The event was organized by a committee which included Jacob, Carroll, Mead, Margie Carroll, Dick Gowans, Paul Russell of Christian Community Theater, La Mesa City Councilman Barry Jantz, and LMHS' Pat Kettler and Donna Regan.

An honored guest was 91-year-old Ed Fletcher, Jr., who as a young man had supervised construction of the project. The crowd moved in a candlelight procession up the mile-long winding road to the top, where they sang patriotic songs and Christmas carols as the cross was lighted.

The Mt. Helix Nature Theatre with its cross was built as a memorial to Mary Carpenter Yawkey by her children Cyrus Yawkey and Mary Yawkey White, after her death in 1923. Mary Yawkey had loved going up to the mountain top, where Easter sunrise services had been held since 1917. Designed by noted San Diego architect Richard Requa and San Francisco landscape architect Emerson Knight, the theater was dedicated on Easter Sunday of 1925. In 1929, the family presented the Nature Theatre to the county and set up a trust fund for its maintenance. Conditions of the deed included maintaining what had been built upon the site and holding an annual Easter service.

On December 3, 1991, a federal court judge ruled that the crosses on Mt. Helix and Mt. Soledad violated constitutional provisions for the separation of church and state, and would have to be removed within 90 days. Also ruled unconstitutional was the La Mesa police emblem which includes the Mt. Helix cross.

The decisions in all three cases are being appealed. In addition, the county is investigating the transfer of the property immediately surrounding the cross to a (private) non-profit organization.

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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REV. McKINNEY HOUSE MUSEUM
(619) 466-0197

LOOKOUT AVENUE is the official publication of the La Mesa Historical Society. The newsletter is published quarterly. Articles, photos, and letters are welcome from all members. Submissions may be edited due to space limitations. Contact Doug Neill at 697-7765 or 463-2230 for submissions.



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