



Dr. Henry D. Porter

Lookout Avenue



Volume 25, Number 2 Fall 2003

La Mesa - remembrances of times past

by Roy Edwards; compiled by Pat Kettler

The following excerpts are taken from a letter written in 1969 by Roy Edwards to the Mayor and La Mesa City Council reminiscing about La Mesa and about his tenure as city engineer from 1930 to 1952. Roy passed away in 1977 at the age of 86.

Roy Edwards arrived in La Mesa in 1926 with his wife, Marie, and their 2-year-old son, Richard. At that time the population of the town was approaching 2000. The old opera house still stood at the northeast corner of Palm and La Mesa Boulevard, and La Mesa Boulevard was called Lookout Avenue. Roy humorously referred to the intersection of Lookout Avenue and Spring Street as "Lookout and Jump." It was every bit as busy for those days as it is for our time. Roy and a partner opened a survey and engineering service in La Mesa in 1927, and in 1930, he was offered the city's new state-authorized position of city engineer – a part-time job at first.

Roy Edwards in his own words...

Jack-of-all-trades

It was in the spring of 1930 that the City of La Mesa offered me the job of city engineer. I had never been so flattered in my life, and besides, the pay was \$50 per month! I jumped at the honor. A year later, upon the renewal of my employment with the City, additional duties were given to me: superintendent of streets, building inspector, electrical inspector, and plumbing inspector. Dog catcher was not mentioned, but I was that too. And the pay was raised to \$75. However, it was really an easy job now because the city had become so affluent that I had two city employees assigned to assist me. Homer Baker, or "Bake," was one of them. He was also a part-time police officer and the La Mesa Police Department always had prior claim to his services.

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**** Dr. Henry D. Porter grew up in Green Bay area of Wisconsin and graduated from Beloit College in 1867. He received a degree in theology from Andover Seminary and a medical degree from what is now Northwestern University. In 1872, Henry went to China as a missionary where he stayed for 30 years. In 1904, Henry and his family arrived in La Mesa and rented the Roach House with its 10-acre citrus grove. They purchased the home in 1905. He was a pioneer in the growing community of La Mesa until his death in 1916.***

A note from the LMHS president

by Gordon Jones



Things just keep getting better and better! Many new members, new volunteers, expanded activities, and more. We're seeing many individuals interested in researching and

landmarking their homes, starting with our archival materials. Several of those should be fait accompli in the next few months.

The series of "Did You Know" historical vignettes designed for the newsletter of the La Mesa Village Merchants Association has drawn

interest, as have our newer publications and video tapes. In September, we are conducting a walking tour of La Mesa Village, in cooperation with the Adult Enrichment Center.

La Mesa Historical Society, Board of Directors

July, 2002-June, 2003

President: Gordon Jones

1st Vice President: Donna Niemeier

2nd Vice President: Carol Lockwood

3rd Vice President: Ruth Contino

Secretary: Sharon Crockett

Treasurer: Donna Niemeier

Past President: Karna Webster

Directors-at-Large:

Leslie Tonkinson

Stephanie Glazer

Ed Blackman

Kathy Tinsley

Best of all, we're doing enough substantive, interesting things to actually fill our newsletter several times each year. But, new assistance is always critical to come up with fresh ideas that we can implement for the benefit of our membership. Give us a call at (619) 466-0197. We do enjoy what we do.

Our newest business partners

The next time you are in downtown La Mesa, you might drop in and acknowledge the support of La estancia Imports – owned by Edward Guishard and Salvador Carrillo.

They are supporting your La Mesa Historical Society. Take a look at what they have to offer, too.



La estancia Imports
8290 La Mesa Blvd.
(619) 337-0113

Volunteer orientation off to a great start

For the first volunteer orientation in many a moon, we had several individuals join us on a Saturday in August to learn more about the LMHS. Four or five of the volunteers will serve as regular or on-call docents for the McKinney House and our research facilities.

Others are willing to assist with exhibit design and of course, with our activities at Oktoberfest.

Our thanks to **Janis Schlundt, Virginia Hill, Darby Michaels, Duane Jackson, France Dodson, Susan Mullert, Dot Harrop and David Kievit.** Though they had to miss this particular session, we're also looking forward to the involvement of **Sandy McNulty and Julie Jessop.**

**This newsletter is created by LMHS
Newsletter Editor, Stephanie Glazer.
For information or suggestion,
contact her at (619) 466-0197.**

Geneological yardsale Saturday, Oct. 18

The Geneological Society is having a rummage sale, which is open to the general public, at the McKinney House, 8369 University Ave.

All proceeds benefit the Geneological Library in El Cajon.

For information on how you can donate, call Karna Webster at (619) 463-1029.

LMHS annual report fiscal year ending 6/30/03

As of June 30, 2003, the LMHS has a total of \$42,118.17 in monetary assets. The Histories CD, Capital Improvements CD and \$2,971.92 of the savings account are restricted funds and can only be used for specific expenditures.

Monies were held in the following:

Checking	\$1,788.28
Savings	\$23,448.67
Histories CD	\$9,280.55
Capital Improvement CD	\$7,600.67

Total gross receipts	\$11,263.24
Contributions	\$1,198.50
Special Events/Fund Raising	\$1,978.00
Sales	\$4,602.41
Membership	\$3,155.00
Investment Income	\$329.33

Total expenses	\$12,577.98
Special Events/Fund Raising	\$1,242.79
Sales	\$503.40
Promotional/Admin.	\$1,878.24
Utilities and Maintenance	\$7,541.47
Preservation	\$1,412.08

To increase revenues, more videos and the downtown walking tour book have been added to the society's inventory. Also, merchant ads have been included in the downtown walking tour booklet.

The increase in utilities and maintenance for the 2002-2003 fiscal year is due to the leasing of a copy machine and added expense for the Post Office and insurance fees. If you would like a copy of the itemized spreadsheet showing specific income and disbursement, call Donna Niemeier at (619) 461-2419.

LMHS attends Fallback Festival

The third annual Fallback Festival has invited LMHS back – with our antique toy and games exhibit – to the Children's Historic Street Faire on Sunday, Oct. 26.

Several thousand children and their parents attend the event. This is a great celebration, and if you have a few extra hours and an interest in exposing children to a little bit of history in a fun way, give us a call. We're doing this because we truly enjoyed it last year!

Save the date!
**La Mesa Historical Society's
Holiday Open House,
Sat., Dec. 6, 1 to 4 p.m.**

Walk into history at La Mesa's Oktoberfest

Stop by the La Mesa Historical Society's booth at the annual La Mesa Oktoberfest and let them walk you through history.

Find out

- where La Mesa's first post office used to be,
- where the Piggly Wiggly store once stood,
- what is the oldest building in town,
- where the Hollywood film industry got its start

The La Mesa Historical Society will have copies of its newly published Downtown La Mesa Walking Tour on sale for \$10.

Visit The La Mesa Historical Society's
*booth at the corner of La Mesa Blvd. and Nebo Dr.
near the La Mesa Depot*

Fri., Sat. and Sun. Oct. 4, 5 & 6

*Interested in volunteering?
Call Stephanie Glazer at (619) 460-2826*

La Mesa's newest landmark No. 18 – Roach-Porter House



The Roach-Porter House is one of the few remaining pre-1900 buildings left in La Mesa. With its wrap around veranda, high foundation and hip roof with flared eaves, it exhibits some French Colonial influence in its design.

It was built in 1893 for Henry Roach, who served in the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. In 1904, Dr. Henry Porter purchased the house and named it the house "Ping An Shan," Chinese for "Hill of Peace." Porter family members continue to live in this house – as they have for the past 99 years. La Mesa Historical Society member Ann Porter Hall is the present owner of the house.

Summer was sizzling at LMHS summer celebration

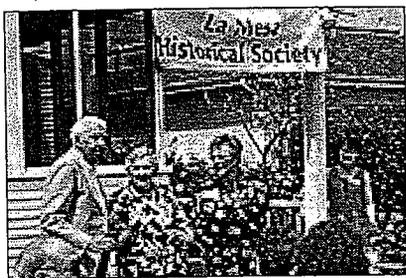
Chairperson **Leslie Tonkinson** reports that the July 12th summer celebration was a huge success. About 125 members and the community joined together for a wonderful afternoon. Music by Bow Willow was enjoyed by everyone. Hamburgers by Johnny B's Burgers and Brew were fabulous, the drinks hit the spot (it was a very warm day) and the various varieties of ice cream were perfect desserts for a hot summer day.

The plant sale, thanks to **Ed and Beth Blackman**, was a huge success. Many thanks also goes to member-sof the Foothills Art Association for sharing their talents with us and for their generous donations for the raffle. A special thanks also goes to the **Pearson Family** for bringing their Classic Model A's for everyone's enjoyment.

The raffle grand prize was won by **Aileen Teague**. Other winners include **Nancy and Ernie Ewin**, and **Linda Michaels**, Lamplighters Theatre tickets; **Elizabeth Howe**, Railroad Museum tickets; **Jan Covey** and **Susan Mullert**, Johnny B's gift certificates; **Chuck Bras**, rolling backpack; **Jim and Allison Dossett**, See's Candy gift certificate; **Ruth Hanson**, Grossmont Center gift certificate; **Charlene Day**, Pacific Theatres gift certificate and note cards; **Michael Rummel**, butterfly picture; **Jacqueline May**, garden basket; and **Sandra McNulty**, note cards. All proceeds from the summer event, about \$1,500, help the society with its efforts to preserve our community's history. Next year's summer event will be just as enjoyable and we hope you will be planning on joining us.

Everyting come up roses at Rose Garden celebration and English Tea

On Saturday, May 17, the Rose Garden Celebration and English Tea, chaired by Donna Niemeier, was held at the McKinney House. The following people were honored during the celebration: **Bernice Alspaugh**, granddaughter of ex-mayor George Sheldon; **Lily Shaw Bowers**, owner of La Mesa Paint Store on La Mesa Blvd. from 1922-1942; **Benjamin Burdick**, construction foreman for the building of Erickson Mortuary; **Evelyn Reeser Esabrook**, pianist and music director for Grossmont High School and author of "La Mesa-Jewel of the Hills;" **Dr. Robert Jackson**, who helped open College Park Hospital in 1960; **Agnes "Marie" Parkhurst**, 50-year La Mesa resident and member of the quilting circle since 1981; **Jonathan and Jo**



Pearson, members of the Model A Car Club and vintage clothing collectors; **Lisle Shoemaker**, La Mesa resident since 1924 and a former sportswriter and war corespondent; and **Captain Mac Wordell**, founder of La Mesa Beautiful and a 33-year La Mesa resident.

*ROY, continued from Page 1***Early Halloween activities and the police**

This was a period in time when all the kids looked forward for weeks to Halloween. On that evening they soaped up a few store-front windows in the downtown and then waited for the police to "arrest" them and hustle them off to City Hall (also the police station).

At City Hall they were confronted with tubs of water and floating apples and oranges, licorice candies and other goodies. If any youngster got missed, he phoned the La Mesa Police Station and demanded to know why Bake had passed him by. He would then wait happily for the promised paddy wagon to pick him up and transport him to the police station. A few of the luckier kids were escorted across the railroad tracks from the station and put behind the bars of La Mesa's one-man jail cell for a few moments.

I fancy they still tell their kids and grandkids about that thrilling experience. But, alas, more intellectual and better informed folks were moving into town – the kind that would have read and followed Dr. Spock, had his book been written then. A group of them got together with the crestfallen City Council and patiently explained that such police brutality might affect a child's whole future life. So, thereafter we had regular Halloweens like everybody else.

In a future edition of the Lookout Avenue we will continue with some of Roy's memories of La Mesa.

LMHS is grateful for its recent donations

Jerry Fite Tufeland has donated several primitive pieces to the LMHS collection, including baskets, stocking stretchers and cigar molds.

Duane and Carol Dubke presented the LMHS with a Blickenderfer 9 typewriter, with its case. This working marvel dates from near the turn of the last century (and we hope to incorporate it into the next exhibit at the McKinney House – machines and mechanical things).

Jim and Charlene Craig gave the society photographic prints of earlier La Mesa, some of which he salvaged from trash cans at the old La Mesa Scout.

We thank these people who have shared their treasures with society members.

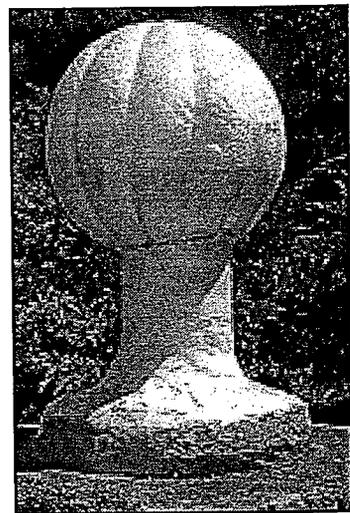
LMHS welcomes its newest members

La estancia Imports, Edward Guishard and Salvador Carrillo; Mark J. Gundert; Roger Lohse; James and Jacqueline Dowdy; Jerry Lester; Muffy Owens, The Box Shop; James and Charlene Craig; Debbie Tonkinson Petrea; Richard and Lori Trout; Michael and Dorothy Gaspar; Tom Hurner and Brenda Potts; Virginia Hill; and Carroll Boone.

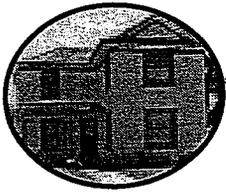
Do you know what a "pumpkin finial" looks like?

They were a feature of certain developments in early La Mesa, crowning retaining walls. Many of those finials are still in place.

Charlene and Jim Craig, who own a home on Lemon Avenue, are attempting to arrange for the reproduction of those finials for their house and are seeking others who might like to do the same.



Call our office (619-466-0197), leave a short message and we'll pass on your interest to the Craigs.



La Mesa Historical Society

Museum: Rev. Henry A. McKinney House (1908)
8369 University Ave., La Mesa, CA 91941
Mailing address: P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA. 91944

Change service requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
La Mesa, CA 91941
Permit No. 208

An invitation to join the La Mesa Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The society depends on membership dues, bequests and fund-raising activities to support the restoration and preservation of local history.

The La Mesa Historical Society operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 house/museum located at 8369 University Ave. (at the corner of Pine Street) in La Mesa. Open 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday or by appointment. Group tours are available. Call (619) 466-0197 for further information. Lookout Avenue is the official quarterly publication of the

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

Lookout Avenue was the original name of La Mesa Boulevard from the 1890s until the city council voted to change the name in 1940. Lookout Avenue was La Mesa's main street.

- \$250 Patron
- \$100 Sponsor/Organization
- \$15 Individual
- \$50 Sustaining
- \$20 Family
- \$5 Student

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Ph () _____

Memberships and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.