La Mesa Historical Society

LOOKOUT AVENUE

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1 MAY, 1993



The Todd House (1911) on Vista Drive is one of six La Mesa landmarks now protected by Mills Act preservation agreements.

MILLS ACT AGREEMENTS PROMOTE LA MESA PRESERVATION

Action by the La Mesa City Council at its February 9, 1993 meeting brought the number of local landmarks protected by Mills Act preservation agreements to six. The council approved contracts with the owners of the Lucius C. Miles House (1909) on Urban Drive and the Harry Park House (1911) on Lemon Avenue. These agreements help La Mesa preserve its historic resources while providing substantial property tax savings to landmark owners.

Under La Mesa's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City Council may designate properties as local Historic Landmarks only with owner consent. Landmark designation imposes restrictions on demolition and exterior alterations. At present there are eleven landmarks in the city. To encourage more property owners to seek designation, the City Council on May 1, 1991, adopted

a program of incentives recommended by the city's Historic Preservation Commission. In addition to Mills Act agreements, these incentives include the waiver of building permit and other fees for work done on landmark structures; flexible parking standards; and adaptive reuse, which may allow such uses as professional offices or bed-and-breakfast inns in residential areas.

The Mills Act agreements have proven to be an attractive and successful incentive. Under existing state legislation, owners of landmarks who enter into a contract with the city to preserve their historic structures may receive significant property tax reductions. These contracts are for a ten-year period and automatically renew. For the owners of the three residential structures participating last year, tax savings averaged 70 percent. For example, one owner whose home was landmarked last year paid $1800 in taxes for 1991 and $516 for 1992.

In addition to the two contracts approved in February, preservation agreements are in effect on four other landmarks: the James M. Morrison House (1910) on Grant Street, the Frank M. Oliver House (1907) on Fourth Street. the Todd House (1911) on Vista Drive, and the Albert W. Gray House (1891) on Culowee Street.

THE YEAR IN FOCUS . . . .

ICE CREAM SOCIAL - 1992

- The La Mesa Middle School Band performed under the direction of teacher Joe Dyke. The Helix High bagpipers also performed.

- Beverly and Bill Decker were in charge of the ice cream table with help from Doug Neill.

- Beth Blackman headed up the food to accompany the hamburgers and hot dogs prepared by Konrad Andersen and his helper, Ralph Arden. Many hands made lighter work helping Beth serve.

- Patricia Andersen gathered, prepared, and sold a great assortment of "White Elephants". She was aided by some dedicated helpers.

- Ed Blackman and Brenda Neill were in charge of the Plant Sale. The orchids went fast!!

- Nancy Neffson, Donna Regan, and Jo Pearson prepared "The Fifties - A Look Back", an exhibit of costumes, furnishings, artifacts, and La Mesa photographs from the 1950's.

- The Quilters displayed their quilts for sale and held a baked goods sale.

A very belated thank you to all who helped greet, docent, sell drawing tickets, serve food, set up and clean up, and work at all stations that day. Your assistance is much appreciated by all. The 1993 Ice Cream Social will be on Sunday, June 13.

Winners of the 1992 drawing for the quilt and other prizes were:

1st prize:	Jo Coffey - the quilt
2nd prize:	Jo Coffey - $20 gift certificate (she got lucky)
3rd prize:	Randi Lockwood - gift from Coffee Merchant
4th prize:	Cathie Sable - lunch for two at LinLee's

OKTOBERFEST 1992

A special thanks to all who worked at our table on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 2nd through 4th, at La Mesa's annual event. We were not able to set up in front of Sir Speedy as in past years and instead located ourselves on La Mesa Boulevard in front of the La Mesa Depot. Thanks to the staff at the depot, too, for letting us be there and also for helping us set up, etc.

1992 CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

The wonderful aroma of scones, gingerbread, and spiced cider filled all the rooms of the McKinney House on Saturday, December 12. Christmas music from the parlor organ being played by Evelyn Estabrook could be heard mingling with the happy voices of all who attended our annual community open house. Members of our La Mesa City Council—Mayor Art Madrid, Barry Jantz, Ruth Sterling, and Donna Alm—were there to serve coffee and cider and to greet people at the door.

Many thanks to Marilyn Webb and her daughter, Susan Platt, for working so hard in the kitchen preparing the tasty scones, and to all who prepared the gingerbread. Thanks to Beth and Ed Blackman and Brenda Neill who worked in the kitchen putting the food together, serving it, and whipping the cream. Thanks to Beverly Decker for preparing the coffee and delicious spiced cider and to all who helped in so many ways.

The drawing winners were:

1st prize	- clock	Dan Owens of Lemon Grove
2nd prize	- gift certificate, Oh! Video	Donna Alm of La Mesa
3rd prize	- gift certificate, Broadway	Alma Diaz of La Mesa
4th prize	- meal for two, Chop Stix Inn	Doug Neill of La Mesa

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USED SLIDE PROJECTOR NEEDED

The Society is looking for a good, used carousel slide projector to use for its slide presentations at schools and for various service clubs—up to ten presentations some years. For several years we were able to borrow a store's projector but it now costs us $15 each time we rent one (a new projector would cost around $400). If you can help, please call Pat Kettler at 463-0197. Thanks!

NEW MEMBERS. . . . . .

We welcome the following new members: Pamela Connelly, France B. Dodson, Mildred Kane, Dorothy Nottingham (Life), Howard Owens, J. Arthur Paget, Tiger Reprographics, Kathy Tinsley, John and Kathryn Whitehouse, Mr. and Mrs. Donald C. Wiley, and M. Betty Williams.

Those who have increased their levels of membership are: Dieter Fischer (Life) and Bernis W. Wall (Life).

IN MEMORIAM. . . . . .

The La Mesa Historical Society extends its deepest sympathy to the families of Kelman R. Aiken, Ruth Gutschow, Lornell Grable Jeffers, Dr. Ralph M. King, Salome Rothenberg, and Gertrude Tonkinson.

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH AND ELECTION OF 1993-1994 OFFICERS

The annual membership brunch was held on Sunday, March 28, at the La Mesa Woman's Club from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Over 100 people attended the event, which featured the historic 1924-1925 black-and-white film showing the construction of the Mt. Helix Nature Theatre and cross and the dedication of the amphitheater in April of 1925.

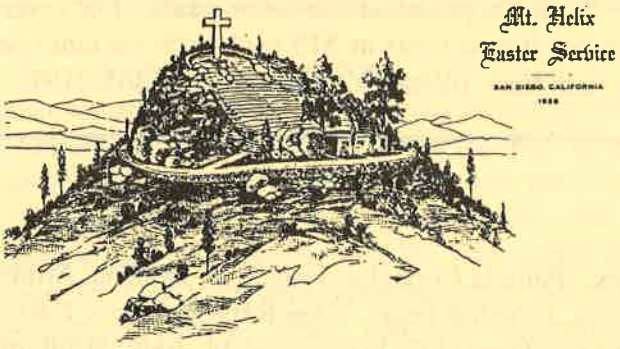
The election of officers was held with the following result:

President:	Donna Regan
1st Vice President:	Beth Blackman
2nd Vice President:	Mae Kramer
3rd Vice President:	Mary-Em Howard
Secretary:	Pat Kettler
Treasurer:	Marie Calentine
Directors 1993-1995:	Cathie Sable
	Jo Coffey
Director 1992-1994:	Franklin Hunt (one year)

The following officers will continue to serve their terms:

Past President:	El Blackman
Directors 1992-1994:	Betty Teague
	Ruth Kramer

We began offering our Ice Cream Social drawing tickets to the membership and had our first prize quilt on display. Also available for sale was the Hubert Guy book, Grossmont Isn't Just a Shopping Center, and Hubert was on hand to autograph each book sold.



From the Easter Sunrise Service program, 1926

MT. HELIX VIDEOS

Videotapes of the 1924-1925 construction and dedication of the Mr. Helix amphitheater and cross are on order and will soon be available through the La Mesa Historical Society at a cost of $20 each. This black-and-white video is the same as the film shown at our 1993 Champagne Brunch in March, except that it has the added feature of sound. Ed Fletcher, Jr., who was the project's boss, will be heard giving interesting comments about what you will see. The tape is approximately 20 minutes in length. Call 463-0197 to reserve your video.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

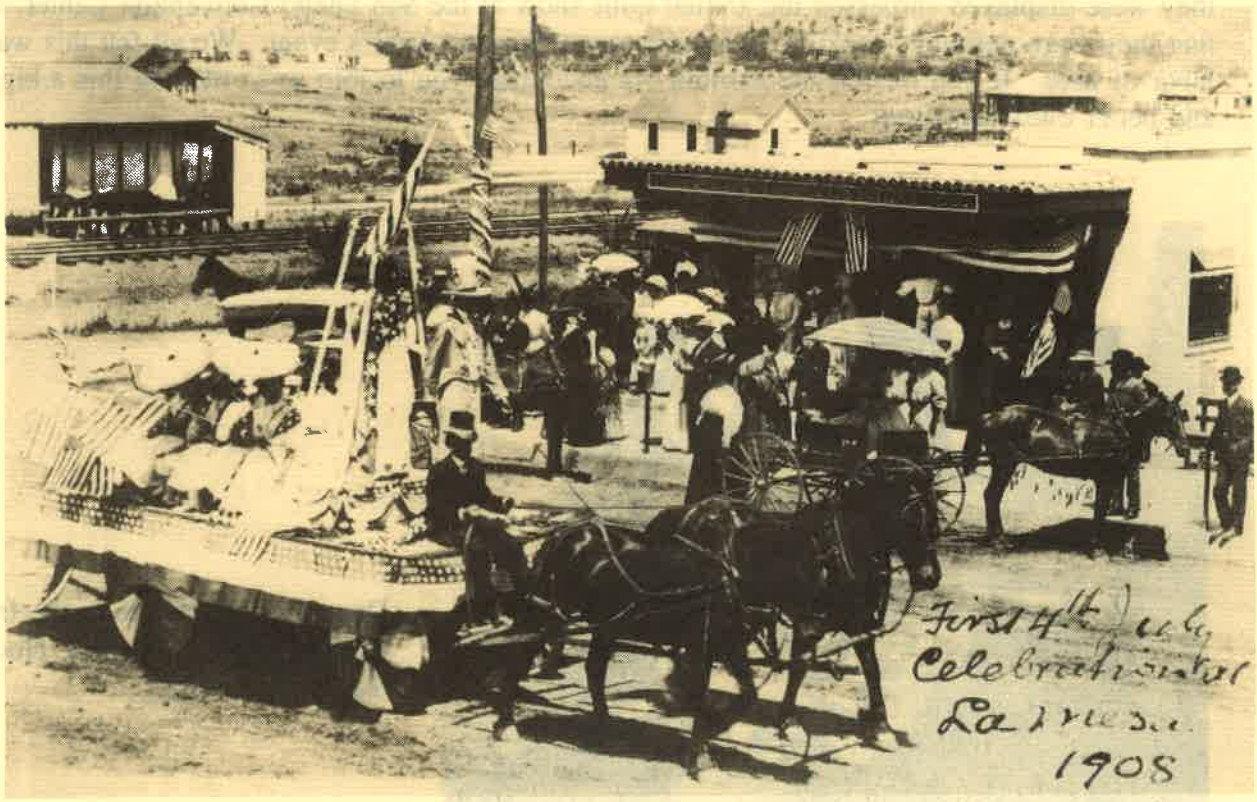
SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 1993

This year the Ice Cream Social will highlight the Fourth of July and what it meant to celebrate it in years past. It was a bigger community event than Christmas, with parades, picnics, speeches, and people remembering the people and events that made us a nation—just good old American pride!

Come join us on Sunday, June 13, from noon to 3:00 p.m. for hot dogs, lemonade, ice cream, and fun. The La Mesa Middle School Band, under the direction of their teacher, Joe Dyke, will be performing music to fit the mood of the day. There will be exhibits, photos, and of course, a lovely hand-quilted quilt sewn by our own La Mesa Historical Society Quilters that will be our first drawing prize. There are three additional prizes which are: $25 gift certificate to Chang Restaurant, Grossmont Center; $20 gift certificate to the Broadway; a gift from the Etcetera Shop for cooks in La Mesa. We are asking a donation of $1.00 per ticket. If you need further information or a book of tickets, please call Pat Kettler (463-0197).

We will be needing all kinds of help setting up, serving food and ice cream, being a docent in the house, and cleaning up. Please call Ed Blackman to volunteer whatever time you can (460-4405).

There will also be a plant sale. If you have any plants for this sale, please call Ed.



La Mesa's first Fourth of July parade, 1908. A decorated wagon passes in front of the northeast corner of La Mesa Boulevard and Spring Street.

FIRST ANNUAL QUILT EXHIBIT

It was with great pleasure that on Saturday, March 20th, the Quilters of the La Mesa Historical Society held their First Annual Quilt Exhibit. The McKinney House, the Thelma Palermo Building, and the yard were bedecked with gorgeous quilts dating from the late 1800's to the present. The 72 exhibited quilts came from quilts which had been donated to the La Mesa Historical Society, privately owned quilts which had been group hand-quilted by the Quilters, personal quilts of members, and other entrants from our community.

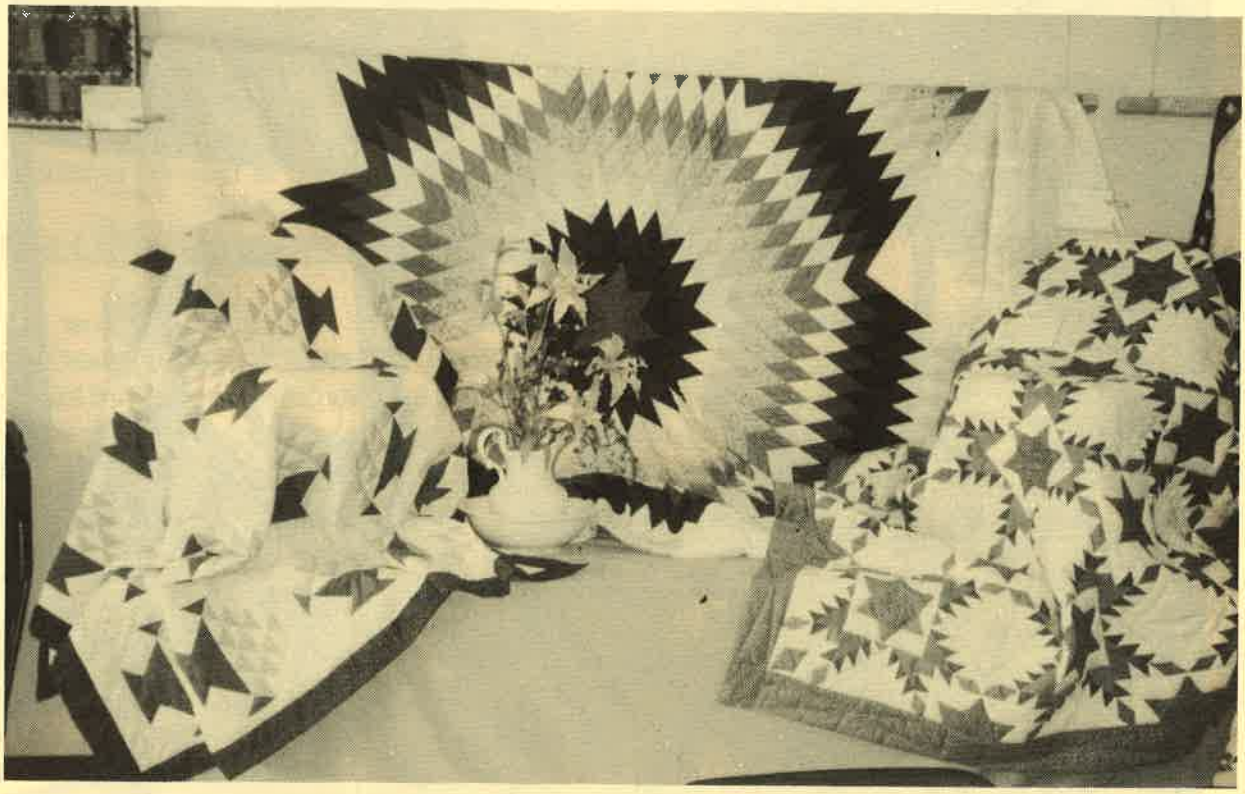
Planning for this event was started approximately five months in advance. Irma Waggoner-Wiley chaired this first exhibit, with Gay Tulp as assistant. Publicity was coordinated by Julie Bras, Elaine McAlpin, Beth Blackman, and Mae Kramer. Guests were greeted by Mildred Kane and Eleanor Doerr. Set-up and creative display were handled by Ann Skalecky; Jean Ohmstede; one of our newest members, Sandy Campbell; and Irma Waggoner-Wiley. Ticket sales for the quilt which will be first prize in the Ice Cream Social drawing were supervised by Nadine Washburn. The docents in the McKinney House were Bernis Wall, Pat Kettler, Sandy Campbell, Evelyn Fegan, Mary Kelley, May Ann Ehlers, Donna Regan, Ruth Kramer, Jo Coffey, Henrietta Schupbach, and Betty Teague.

In excess of 300 guests signed our guest book and came to feast their eyes on the extraordinary patterns and colors of the quilts. The white-gloved docents and quilters tactfully answered guests' questions pertaining to the quilts, the art of quilting, and the origin or heritage of the quilts. Also, there was a display of vintage sewing articles.

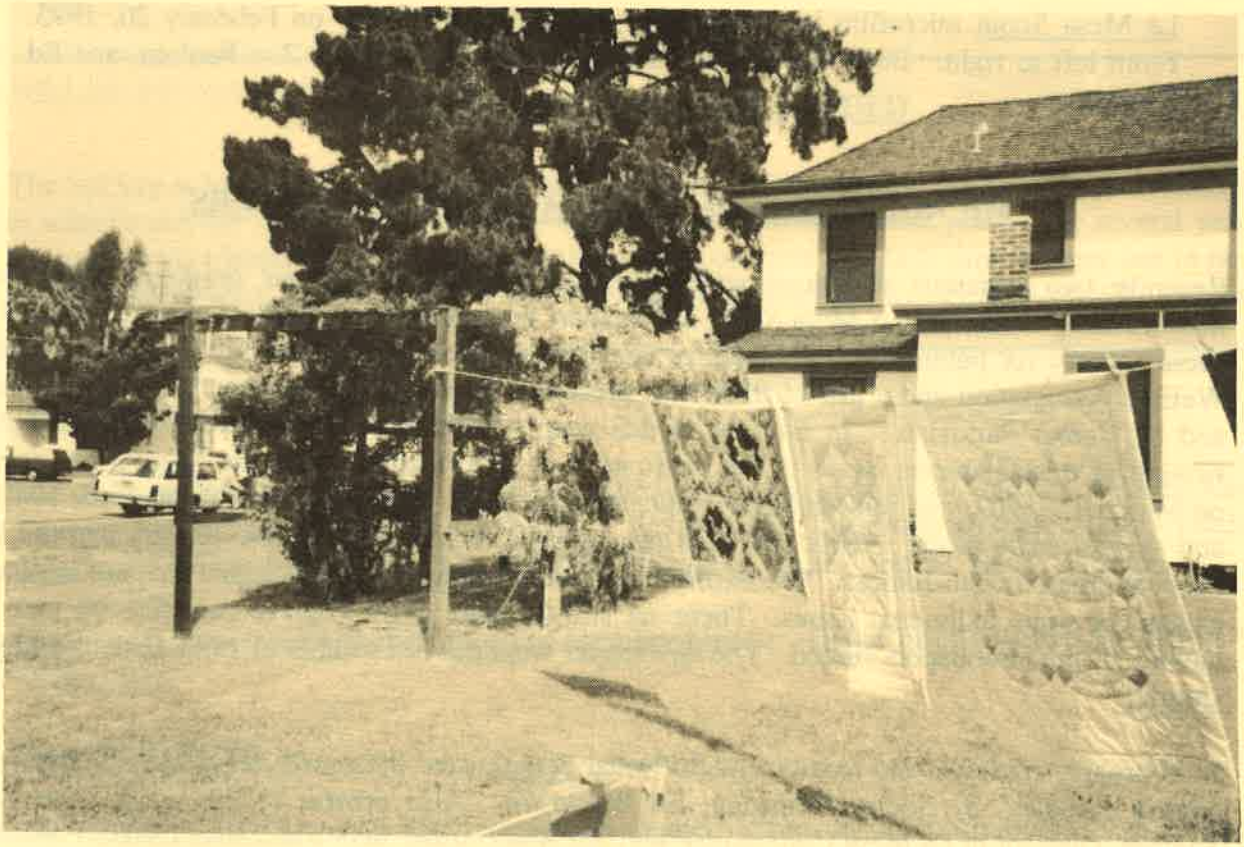
Guests were overheard saying that they felt the quality of the quilts and the artful way in which they were displayed surpassed the annual quilt show at the San Diego Convention Center, and that they were definitely looking forward to attending next year's event. We all felt this was a labor of love. If you missed the exhibit, we encourage you to join us in making this a bigger and better event next year.



Draped on the settee in the front room of the McKinney House: Star within a Star.



In the Palermo Building: (left to right) Grandmother's Flower Basket, Texas Star, and Blazing Star.



Baby quilts made by the Quilters are for sale in the back yard of the McKinney House.



La Mesa Scout microfilm is presented to the La Mesa Library on February 20, 1993. From left to right: Beth Blackman, Pat Kettler, Marcia Stradley, Zoe Paulsen, and Ed Blackman.

MICROFILMING OF LA MESA SCOUT NEWSPAPERS

Recently two generous donations were given to the Society for our on-going project of microfilming all the old La Mesa Scout newspapers and presenting a copy of the film to the La Mesa Library for public use. A check for $2,500 was received from the La Mesa Community Welfare Association and a gift of $500 was presented from Society member Dr. Chip Splinter and Dr. James Sarkisian. In January of this year, ANACOMP of San Diego completed the filming of miscellaneous issues in the years prior to 1916 (starting with the Scout's first issue on March 15, 1907) and miscellaneous years through 1963. The years 1916 through the 1940's and several years in the 1950's had been microfilmed in past years by the Society and the La Mesa Woman's Club Juniors. The earliest years of the Scout, 1907 through 1915, are missing, except for some individual issues. There are still 22 more years to go to complete the task of having all the newspapers filmed. The newspaper went out of business in 1985 as the La Mesa Courier.

In February, copies of the recently microfilmed Scouts were presented to La Mesa's librarian, Marcia Stradley, by Society President Ed Blackman. Also present at this event were Zoe Paulsen, Director of La Mesa Community Welfare Association; Beth Blackman, LMHS Publicity Chairman; and yours truly.

Pat Kettler

RECENT DONATIONS TO THE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

Thirty-four photos by photographer Mac Miller were donated to the Society. Many of these pictures are aerial views of La Mesa in the late 1940's, 1950's, and early 1960's, and are interesting and informative additions to our collection, which numbers well over 2,000 photographs. Louis Granger recently donated four photos of late 1940's, early 1950's La Mesa Little League baseball teams. Bill Orsborn donated copies of photos and negatives of La Mesa's mayors from 1912 through 1958. Barry Worthington donated black and white snapshots he took of the area west of the railroad tracks in 1979—just west of the railroad tracks and on the north side of La Mesa Blvd.

Special thanks to Becky Gauger, Michele Cowdery, and Becky and Scott Wilkens for helping to get a large number of photos in safe order for storage in the Archives Building. We met several times on Saturday mornings and wrapped oversized photographs and panoramas in Mylar plastic. We have recently acquired a fireproof filing cabinet for the Archives Building to hopefully ensure the safety of our original photographs, negatives, and films for future La Mesans.

RECENT DONATIONS AND PHOTO ACQUISITIONS

Thank you to the following people for their outright donations and to those who loaned their photos to the La Mesa Historical Society to copy:

MARTHA ANDERSON - whose husband, Enoch Anderson, owned the Erickson-Anderson Mortuary until 1967. He was Mayor of La Mesa from 1948-1950. Loaned photos to copy.
- 1920's street scenes of La Mesa.
- 1929/30's view of the mortuary under construction and its completion.

CHARLENE CRAIG - whose grandparents, the Emmons, lived on Lemon Ave., east of Schuyler St. in the 1930's. Loaned photos to copy:
- view of the Emmons' Lemon Ave. house and surrounding area - 1930's.
- street scenes in La Mesa - 1930's.
- La Mesa Post Office on Palm Ave. - 1930's.
- aerial view of Alpine St./Mission Bell Lane area and groves - c. 1935.
- Flower Festival parade scenes - 1950's.

BETTIE BISHOP LANIER - lived on Lemon Ave. in the 1920's -30. Loaned photos to copy.
- group photos of the Grables, Thieles, Bishops, Nicks, Flotos, and Hurlburts - 1920's.
- Bishop/Cassidy family - 1920's/30's.
- La Mesa Grammar School class photo, 1928.

EXHIBITS, PRESENTATIONS, AND MCKINNEY HOUSE TOURS

Recent LMHS activities have included photograph exhibits at the Grossmont branch of HomeFed Bank March 17 through 24 and at the Grossmont Mt. Helix Improvement Association dinner May 10, and a showing of the Mt. Helix video to the La Mesa Sunrise Rotary on April 2.

On April 21, fifty-seven third-grade students from Maryland Avenue Elementary School enjoyed their tour of the McKinney House. Serving as docents were May Ann Ehlers, Donna Regan, and Pat Kettler; Betty Teague was docent at the La Mesa Depot, which the students also visited.

P. O. Box 882, La Mesa, California 92044

La Mesa Historical Society

Museum: Rev. Henry A. McKinney House (1908)
8369 University Avenue

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LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 1992-1993

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	Ruth Kramer
	Donna Regan
	Mary-Em Howard
QUILTERS REPRESENTATIVE	Gay Tulp

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.