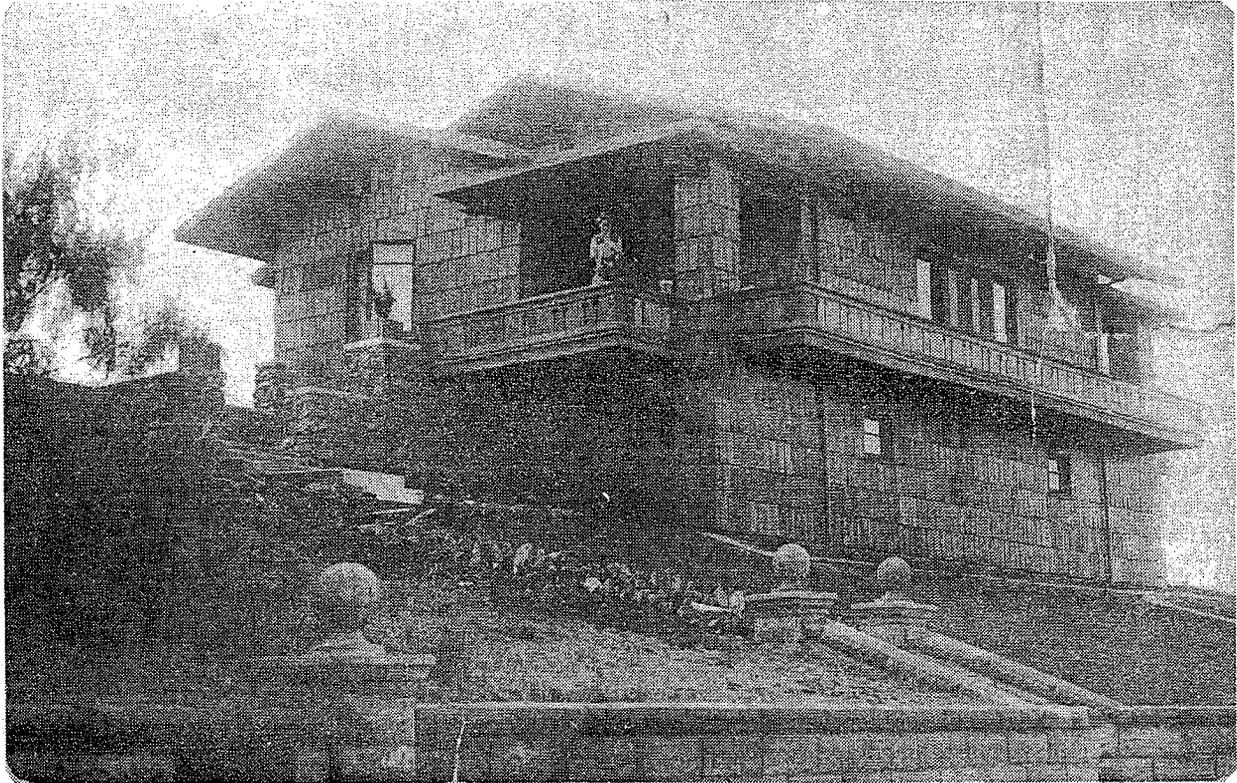


LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

# LOOKOUT AVE.

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2

MAY, 1987



The Harry C. Park House on Lemon Avenue, circa 1914.

## Harry C. Park House Designated La Mesa Landmark

On April 28, the La Mesa City Council voted to place the Harry C. Park House, built in 1911, on the Register of La Mesa Historic Landmarks. The house joins the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, Sherman C. Grable House, and Collier Park/Spring House, which were designated in 1985.

Located on Mt. Nebo at 8069 Lemon Avenue, the Harry Park House was purchased about a year and a half ago by realtor Jesse Bailey and his wife, Marian, for use as a rental. The structure required extensive repair and renovation due to water damage and other problems. After all of the time and effort he had spent on the project, Mr. Bailey wanted to see the house preserved for the future and

requested that it be added to the register. The Historic Preservation Commission recommended landmark designation to the City Council.

This house is significant as the former home of Harry C. Park, an important La Mesa businessman, banker, lumberman, and officer of the Park-Grable Investment Company.

Harry C. Park purchased the lots on which this house stands from Mrs. Jane Harris: lot 10 on December 24, 1910 and a portion of lot 9 on August 25, 1911. He probably had this house constructed soon thereafter, since it appears in a

(Continued on next page)

photograph taken around 1914. The home was designed in the Craftsman style with some Prairie influence in its strong horizontal lines. The name of the designer is unknown. The exterior featured four-foot-long redwood shingle siding, a balcony with decorative sawn balusters, and low gable roofs. These features can still be seen today.

Harry Park was the son of Charles C. Park, who is regarded as one of the major developers of La Mesa. With partner Sherman C. Grable, C.C. Park helped subdivide 200 acres of land into hundreds of "town lots" in the heart of what is now the City of La Mesa. The rapid increase of population caused by this development led to incorporation of the city in 1912.

Harry C. Park came to La Mesa around 1908 to assist his father in various family enterprises. He was an organizer and cashier of the Bank of La Mesa and served as secretary of the Park Lumber Company. (This pioneer business is known as the La Mesa Lumber Company today.) He was also the secretary of the Park-Grable Investment Company.

H.C. Park became a leader in community activities and organizations which included the La Mesa Masonic Lodge and the La Mesa Methodist Church. When he passed away in 1928 at the age of 43, he was mourned by the entire city.

Harry Park sold this house in 1920 to H.H. Balthis, and many different owners and renters have lived there since that time. Over the years, the structure has

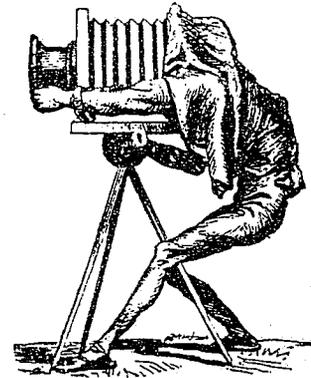


The La Mesa Historical Society operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 house museum located at 8369 University Avenue (corner of Pine Street), La Mesa. Hours are 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. Saturdays, or by appointment. For information call 460-3726 or 463-0197.

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undergone some alteration including room additions and conversion of the ground level into a second living unit. Nevertheless, the redwood shingles and the distinctive balcony remain, a reflection of the original charm of the Harry Park House, the former home of one of La Mesa's best-known citizens.

NOTE: The history of the Harry Park House in this article was prepared by Karna Webster for the Historic Preservation Commission.



#### PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION ACQUISITIONS

The Society thanks those who have recently donated photos:

- Tom Cox - La Mesa postal workers, 1967, 1972.
- Anne Porter Hall - Porter family photos, 1920's.
- Jerrie Martin - La Mesa Post Office, 1948; postal workers, 1948; Christmas card from the Simeon McKinney family.

Thanks also to those who have lent photos to be copied:

- Tom Cox - La Mesa postal workers, 1949.
- Lloyd Donahoo - two portraits of his mother, Frances Donahoo, c. 1916.
- Elmer Drew - Drew Garage, 1920's; Date Avenue, 1919; family photo, 1920's.
- Anne Porter Hall - Porter family photos, 1920's.
- Lornelle Grable Jeffers - Lornelle and Geraldine Grable, 1920's.
- Bill Orsborn - Orsborn and McCarthy children, 1920's.
- Mabel Perrapato - Mabel and Pete Rapp and Chink, 1920's.

- Pat Kettler

## IN MEMORIAM

The La Mesa Historical Society extends its deepest sympathy to the families of:

John Ahern  
Beverly Clemesha  
Lorena Hodges  
Col. Robert C. Howard  
James A. Parker

## LA MESA HISTORY SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

Pat Kettler has been kept busy presenting the Society's slide programs to a variety of groups: Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church married couples group, Fletcher Hills Kiwanis, La Mesa Optimists, Grossmont Gardens retirement group, an eighth-grade class at La Mesa Junior High, the La Mesa Chapter of the American Association for University Women, three third-grade classes at Lemon Avenue School, and La Mesa Soroptimists.

## 1890's HOUSE DEMOLISHED

Early in the morning on Monday, December 15, the small Victorian house at 8087 La Mesa Boulevard fell to the bulldozer. A new two-story office building is now rising in its place.

Both the La Mesa Historical Society and the Historic Preservation Commission had made efforts to publicize the plight of the house. The property owner had expressed his willingness to work with anyone who wished to move the structure. An illustrated article in the Daily Californian and a story by reporter Lena Nozizwe on the Channel 8 evening news drew calls and inquiries, but no one could be found to move and preserve the house.

Built in the 1890's, the house was one of the few which remain from La Mesa's early lemon-ranching days prior to the turn of the century. The walls were board and batten; the flat top of the hipped roof had once been bordered by ornamental cresting. Single-wall construction was used.

The loss of the La Mesa Boulevard house leaves six other houses which have been identified as having been built here in the 1890's: the Roach/Porter House on Porter Hill Road; the Alvin W. Gray House on Culowee Street; the William Gilcher House on Juliette Place (moved from 70th Street); the George Brown House on Echo Drive; the Jerry Waite House on Waite Drive (with additions circa 1920); and the Martin House on West Point Avenue.

- Donna Regan

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The La Mesa Historical Society extends a warm welcome to members who have recently joined and thanks to those who have renewed at a higher level:

Eileen Adams  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Berg  
Mr. & Mrs. Edwin W. Bingham  
Jane Clune  
Beverly J. Dostal  
Glenna Feters  
Ted Feters  
Sharon Fitzpatrick & Yvonne Campbell  
Videlle Gray  
Mr. & Mrs. William Gutgesell  
Charlaine Halgren  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Huskey  
Cathleen Pearson  
Bobbi Peterson  
Joan Pudvan

Margaret Barksdale  
(Individual to Life)  
Dr. Kurt Bohnsack  
(Individual to Life)  
Gail Chance & Steven Chance  
(Individual to Family)  
Elizabeth Garretson  
(Individual to Life)  
Evert Hodges  
(Individual to Life - In memory of his wife, Lorena Hodges)  
Ruth Kramer  
(Individual to Life)  
Mr. & Mrs. Kelly Krueger  
(Individual to Family)

Those students who were winners in the La Mesa History Special Awards competition of the San Diego/Tijuana International History Fair received gift memberships, as did their parents. Congratulations and welcome to:

Sharon Hudson  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Hudson  
Jennifer Long  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Long  
Sarah Mincks  
Mr. & Mrs. John Bartman  
Jean Stollenwerk  
Mrs. Janet Stollenwerk  
Vance Vanier  
Mr. & Mrs. Denis Vanier  
Sandra Williams  
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Williams  
Jora Zulauf  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Zulauf



## MEMORIES OF JOHN AHERN

No doubt the only time little red-headed, freckled Johnny Ahern skipped school was the first day at grade school in Calmar, Iowa, in 1910. Not that he didn't like school! Or being with all those kids or the teacher! He just thought school was out and raced down the street where he could count on two champion cookie-baker aunts waiting for a customer. Needless to say, the school-skipping was the last until John had to drop out of 9th grade to help support his family. School may have been over, but, by now, many a good La Mesa Historical Society baker can attest to the Ahern interest in cookies.

John loved being with people and being in community life...church, music groups (some in St. Paul, where he grew up), the St. Paul Winter Carnival, drama clubs, the Y. Lots of people, lots of fun, lots of helping hands for those needing help.

Most of all, John loved numbers, and next in line came the railroad. After a job in a telegraph office, he moved into the accounting department at the NP Railroad. Then, the Depression came along.

As a grocery salesman and later as an auditor, John worked the Minnesota countryside in all kinds of weather, until he enlisted in the Army. Or tried to. They didn't like his heart.

Well, I did like his heart, and he liked mine, so we married and came to California to live, back into a community life, again, for John.

First, we became associated with the Grossmont Union High School District. Talk about community! Within a year, John was helping with the founding of a credit union and within another year involved in it forever, almost. Joining La Mesa Central Congregational Church soon led him to its treasurership for 31 years, and much of that time, he also was either a deacon or a trustee. (Church suppers are great for cookies.) The La Mesa Kiwanis was next to add John to a membership where he served as treasurer for 19 years and became an expert at selling raffle tickets...especially for apples. All these activities called for night meetings of boards of directors and committees of all kinds...along with cups of tea and cookies.

Then, one day after we had joined the La Mesa Historical Society, we attended the celebration where someone asked John to help dish out ice cream. He tilted his red-white-and-blue-trimmed "boater," rolled up his sleeves and went to work. When the food was all gone, someone saw

John standing around doing nothing and yelled, "Here, John, help me count this money and roll it!" That did it! From then on, John worked at the money, went to Board meetings, budget committee meetings, and to the bank. He loved it.

Once on the way by the McKinney House for a festival, we stopped with a tray of my brownies-minus one. On our way to pick up my Mom for the occasion, John turned toward me, shook his now very white head thoughtfully, and said, "Even though I love St. Paul and the Mississippi and Phalen Park, I really know right now that La Mesa is my home-town."

I heard the catch in John's voice... but I'd snatched one of Vivian Higgins' cookies...so all was well.

- Eckoe Ahern

Members of the La Mesa Historical Society were saddened by the loss of John Ahern in December of 1986. He was then serving as Associate Treasurer.



## JAMES A. PARKER MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The La Mesa Historical Society gratefully acknowledges contributions in memory of James A. Parker received from:

Eckoe Ahern  
Lillian Durlin & Violet Heyer  
Faculty Friends of James Parker at  
Grossmont High School  
Gilbert & Nova Lee Judy  
Grossmont Alumni Association  
Dr. & Mrs. John S. McKee  
Mary P. Packard  
Mabel Perrapato  
Blanche M. Peterson  
Donna Regan  
Dr. & Mrs. Andrew Smith  
M. Fred Tidwell  
Dr. Amorita Treganza  
David H. West

## ORCHIDS TO

- May Ann Ehlers and Joyce Radcliffe for their handsome calligraphy on the La Mesa History Special Awards certificates.

- Tanya and Larry Rose of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association for the use of their Kroy lettering machine in making newsletter and flier headings and exhibit labels.

## LMHS MAY MEETING

Historic preservation and reminiscences about early La Mesa highlighted the La Mesa Historical Society's General Meeting on Sunday, May 3.

The meeting was held in the La Mesa Masonic Temple at the corner of Date and Orange Avenues, itself a building of historical significance in the community. One of La Mesa's first fraternal organizations, the local Masonic Lodge was founded in 1910. The present temple, built in 1930, is a two-story Spanish-style structure with stucco walls and a red tile roof.

Kenneth McKinney was present to share his memories of early La Mesa. Mr. McKinney (no relation to Henry and Florence McKinney) came here as a small child in 1910 with his parents, Simeon and Maggie McKinney. Of special interest were his stories about the inventive Halloween exploits of the boys in the town around the time of incorporation. Residents would awaken the morning after Halloween to find a jackass in one bell tower of the schoolhouse and a calf in the other, a Studebaker farm wagon on the roof of a downtown store, or a solid wall of wooden fruit crates nailed together across La Mesa Boulevard. (Mr. McKinney assured his listeners that he was very young then and was not a participant.)

Main Street, a film presentation from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, provided a look at the downtown revitalization phenomenon in cities and towns across the country.

The Society presented two Historic Preservation Awards for contributions to preservation in La Mesa: one to Daisy and Bruce Johnson, for restoring the Sidney Holland House (circa 1910) on Lemon Avenue; and the other to Diana Hinck, for moving and preserving the Lucius C. Miles House (1909) on Urban Drive.

Elected to the 1987-1988 Board of Directors were:

President	Donna Regan
1st Vice President	Brenda Neill
2nd Vice President	Mary Kelley
3rd Vice President	Mabel Perrapato
Secretary	Susan Taylor
Treasurer	Beverly Dostal

Directors 1987-1989	Pat Kettler
	Chuck Levy

Continuing on the Board:

Director 1986-1988	Lloyd Donahoo
Director 1986-1988	Vincent Odom
Director 1986-1988	Dennis Tuttle
Immediate Past President	Anita Underwood

The Nominating Committee consisted of: Mabel Perrapato (Chairman), Brice Lockwood, Donna Regan, Brenda Neill, and Nadine Washburn.

BOO THE VILLAIN! CHEER THE HERO!  
LA MESA MELODRAMA PLANNED

The first of La Mesa's two encounters with the early film industry began in 1911 with the arrival of the American Film Manufacturing Company (Flying A). To commemorate this episode in La Mesa's history, the Melodrama Subcommittee of the city's 75th Anniversary Committee has developed a script for a melodrama from synopses of the movies made here from 1911 to 1912 by Flying A. The stars of this melodrama will be La Mesa's mayor, city council members, and others well known in the community. Two performances will be held at the Ben Polak Fine Arts Center, one on Friday, July 31, and the other on Saturday, August 1. Tickets for the performances will be available at the door at a nominal cost. What an opportunity to hiss and boo the villain and cheer the hero and heroine! More information will be forthcoming in local newspapers or may be obtained by calling La Mesa City Hall's special number - 463-6750 - twenty-four hours a day for taped messages about the upcoming events and dates during the year-long celebration.

## QUILTERS NEWS

After the most successful Christmas Open House boutique sale yet (over \$330 profit), the Quilters were soon hard at work again. Baby quilts continue to sell well, so the Quilters have been kept busy replenishing their stock. At the beginning of the year they finished restoring an antique "crazy quilt" top and making it into a wall hanging for Dr. and Mrs. Andy Smith. They also quilted a double-bed-sized top in the Double Wedding Ring pattern for Eleanor Doerr, a member. Their most recent project was quilting a Tree of Life top.

The Quilters are adding to their number, as three new ladies have joined the group since the first of the year. With all the work to be done there is still room for more people. The Quilters are now meeting on Wednesday in the afternoon as well as in the morning. If you have any free time and would like to buy or make a quilt or just visit us at the McKinney House, just call Beatrice Acers at 466-5812. We would certainly like to have you.

- Julie Bras

FEBRUARY CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH -  
MEMORIES OF LA MESA

Our annual brunch at the American Legion Hall on Sunday, February 15, was well attended by 90 members and guests. This year La Mesa is celebrating its 75th anniversary as an incorporated city, and Lloyd Donahoo, Chuck Floto, and Chuck Levy planned the program around this theme. Everyone enjoyed their boyhood reminiscences of La Mesa. Lloyd's family, which came to La Mesa a few years prior to its incorporation, owned several businesses in town, including a plastering and a cement business. The Donahoo name can still be seen stamped in some of the older sidewalks around La Mesa. In 1919, Chuck Levy's father, Henry Levy, settled in La Mesa and purchased the La Mesa Hardware Store from W.E. Lyon. Chuck was in the first graduating class at Grossmont High School. Chuck Floto's father, Dr. A.E. Floto, came to La Mesa with his family in 1923 and opened his dental office that year. He continued his practice here for over four decades.

Several people were recognized who, as children, lived in La Mesa at the time of its incorporation: Loretta Livett Cox, Elmer Drew, Olive Lott Mannen, Kenner Park, and Kenneth McKinney. Others whose families had come to La Mesa from the 1890's through the 1930's were also recognized. The program ended with Lloyd and Chuck Floto singing "La Mesa, the Jewel of the Hills," accompanied by Evelyn Estabrook, who wrote the music and lyrics.

On exhibit were fifteen large photographs of early La Mesa and of some of its people. The LMHS Quilters had hand-quilted baby quilts for sale and also displayed a 19th century crazy quilt which they had restored for Mary and Andy Smith.

We'd like to thank those who helped make our Sunday brunch so enjoyable: Margaret Barksdale, Donna Regan, Chuck Levy, Mary Kelley, Russ Tipple and his father, Beatrice Acers, set up; Richard Barksdale, providing the orange juice for the punch; Shirley Walker, telephone reservations; and Nancy Neffson, reservations at the door and sales items. As usual, the food served by Gene Farnum and the American Legion men and women was plentiful and delicious. So, a special thank you to them for all their efforts.

- Pat Kettler

1986 CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE DRAWING

The drawing this past Christmas realized a net profit of \$965.22. The winners were: (first prize) Daniel Edgar - 1890's Waterbury mantle clock; (second prize) Pat Kirchen - coffee maker donated by Beatrice Acers; (third prize) Kristi Kettler - brass, black onyx and cinnabar necklace designed and donated by Nancy E. Neffson; (fourth prize) Eula Garland - pie from Baker's Square.

A very special thank you to all those who sat in banks, at the Oktoberfest, and at the Grossmont Bazaar selling tickets for this drawing: Beatrice Acers, Margaret Barksdale, Julie Bohnsack, Jo Coffey, Lucile DeWaide, Lloyd Donahoo, May Ann Ehlers, Mary-Em Howard, Mary Kelley, Pat Kettler, Brice Lockwood, Dorris Palley, Nina Reed, Donna Regan, Dennis Tuttle, Greg Tuttle, Alexandra Tuttle, and Sandia Tuttle.

Thank you also to the following businesses who let us sell drawing tickets inside their buildings: Central Savings, La Mesa Springs Shopping Center; Great American First Savings Bank, Grossmont Center, Lake Murray Boulevard, and Navajo Road; and Wells Fargo, La Mesa.



1986 CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

RECEIPTS

Drawing . . . . .	\$ 1040.00
Donations . . . . .	12.00
Misc. fund raising . . . . .	
(sale of "Home Remedies")	24.00
Quilters sales . . . . .	337.30
Sales (song, postcards) . . . . .	6.25
Gross Profit	\$ 1419.55

EXPENSES

Printing drawing tickets . . . . .	74.78
Postage for flier . . . . .	31.20
Printing flier . . . . .	32.07
Paper for flier . . . . .	8.96
Food & supplies . . . . .	24.58
Christmas tree . . . . .	10.57
Rental of ticket hopper . . . . .	9.01
Total Expenses	\$ 191.17

Net Profit \$ 1228.38

\*Clock purchased for 1986 Christmas Drawing prize in February, 1985 for \$175



"MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS PAST: TOYS AND BOOKS OF THE 1920's" CHRISTMAS EXHIBIT

A teddy bear with a skeptical expression, a ballerina spinning top, a Noah's ark with its paired animals, a doll buggy and high chair, and a colorful selection of children's books were among the children's mementos from the 1920's at the December 13 Open House. Also on view were photographs of children in La Mesa in the 1920's: Joan Light Wilken, Anne Porter, Lornelle and Geraldine Grable, Lloyd Donahoo, Mabel Rapp and her brother Pete, and group photos of Orsborn and McCarthy cousins.

Those lending toys and books for the exhibit were Anne Porter Hall, Jo Pearson and her associates in the Ah Sew Perfect Doll Club, and Nancy Neffson. Photographs were lent by Anne Hall, Lornelle Grable Jeffers, Bill Orsborn, Mabel Rapp Perrapato, and Lloyd Donahoo.

- Donna Regan

HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT SCHOOL CONFERENCE

On February 10, Pat Kettler, Donna Regan, and Lucile DeWaide decorated a booth at Loma Elementary School for a La Mesa-Spring Valley School District Social Studies Conference.

The auditorium was packed, so these members were able to share many, many fliers about Society activities such as McKinney House visits and the slide presentations which Pat does so well. An adjacent booth was manned by Eric Sanders and Margaret Barksdale, representing the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, whose beautifully restored La Mesa Depot stands on Nebo Drive next to the tracks.

- Lucile DeWaide

OCTOBER GENERAL/BOARD MEETING

LMHS members gathered at Porter Hall in La Mesa on Monday, October 27th at 7:00 p.m. for the combined Board/General Fall meeting. The featured speaker was Marc Devaulx of the San Diego Historical Society. He presented a slide program which highlighted growth and development in San Diego from 1850 through 1921. Prior to the presentation, a brief board meeting was held. At the conclusion of the meeting and program, refreshments provided by Society members were enjoyed by all.



MEMBERSHIP IN THE LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society depends upon membership dues, contributions, bequests, and fund-raising activities to support restoration and preservation of local history.

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

Membership categories:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Life (Single) ..... \$100.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Patron ..... 25.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor/Organization ..... 15.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family (2 adults) ..... 12.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual ..... 7.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student (under 18 yrs) ..... 1.00

Please complete and return this form to:  
**La Mesa Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 92044

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_ City State Zip

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in being involved in the society's work. Please call me.

## LA MESA HISTORY SPECIAL AWARDS - 1987 HISTORY FAIR

Donna Regan

The Grossmont Christmas Pageant, the wooden flume bringing water from the Cuyamaca Mountains, and Col. Ed Fletcher were among the subjects of the winning projects in the La Mesa History Special Awards competition in this year's San Diego/Tijuana International History Fair held March 20-22. La Mesa Mayor Fred Nagel presented these awards at the History Fair ceremony on March 27; the winners were also recognized at a City Council meeting held April 28.

As part of the 75th Anniversary celebration, the City of La Mesa and the La Mesa Historical Society encouraged La Mesa area students to increase their knowledge and appreciation of local history by participating in the History Fair.

The Fair is sponsored by San Diego State University and the Autonomous University of Baja California. This year approximately 400 projects were accepted for the fifth annual Fair, which was held at San Diego State. Junior and senior high school students from both side of the border competed for prizes by entering research papers, exhibits, audio-visual presentations, and dramatic performances on subjects of San Diego/Tijuana history.

In addition to the regular prizes presented by the Fair itself, organizations and institutions may sponsor special awards for projects on specific topics. The City's 75th Anniversary Committee, in conjunction with LMHS, initiated awards for projects dealing with the history of the La Mesa area, including Grossmont and Mt. Helix. Winners received cash prizes from the City (junior high \$25, senior high \$50) plus a family membership in the Society and a copy of La Mesa - A Brief History.

LMHS members Pat Kettler and Donna Regan met with school principals and social studies chairmen to explain the Special Awards and prepared a list of suggested topics and resources. Students from La Mesa Junior High and Grossmont High participated. Lucile DeWaide, Donna Regan, and Mildred Bryan served as La Mesa judges.

La Mesa Junior High teacher John Law found History Fair participation a valuable experience for his eighth grade class. Students had to use a variety of resources. They looked at early maps and photos; read early La Mesa Scouts on microfilm; visited the McKinney House,

City Hall, and the La Mesa Library; and interviewed local people such as Elmer Drew, Anne Porter Hall, and members of the La Mesa Fire Department. They taped oral interviews, took photographs, wrote papers, and built models. For several weeks the McKinney House was a busy place on Saturday afternoon.

The La Mesa History Special Awards winners were:

### Junior Division

- Research Paper: Vance Vanier - 8th grade, Gompers Secondary School; teacher, Mrs. Marty Peinemann; "Colonel Edward Fletcher: A Living Legend"
- Individual Exhibit: Sharon Hudson 8th grade, La Mesa Junior High; teacher, John Law; "San Diego Flume: Why Was It There"
- Group Exhibit: Sarah Mincks  
Jennifer Long  
8th grade, La Mesa Junior High; teacher, John Law; "La Mesa Fire Department: From the Beginning"
- Group Historical Performance:  
Sandra Williams  
Jora Zulauf  
8th grade, La Mesa Junior High; teacher, John Law; "The Building of Allison School"

### Senior Division

- Research Paper: Jean Stollenwerk 11th grade, Grossmont High; teacher, William Manderson; "The Past, Present, and Future of the Grossmont High School Christmas Pageant"

All of the La Mesa winners also received recognition from the History Fair. Vance Vanier won Grand Prize - First Place for Junior Research Paper and Jean Stollenwerk won Grand Prize - Second Place for Senior Research Paper.



# La Mesa Incorporated on February 16, 1912

Karna Webster

On February 7, 1912, La Mesa citizens, including many women voters, flocked to the polls in a special election to decide for or against incorporation of the city. The issue was the main topic of conversation in town and had been discussed for months. Many residents promoted incorporation as a forward step for the city. They pointed out that Chula Vista had incorporated in October of 1911 and El Cajon residents were thinking about it. La Mesa was now large enough to incorporate, too.

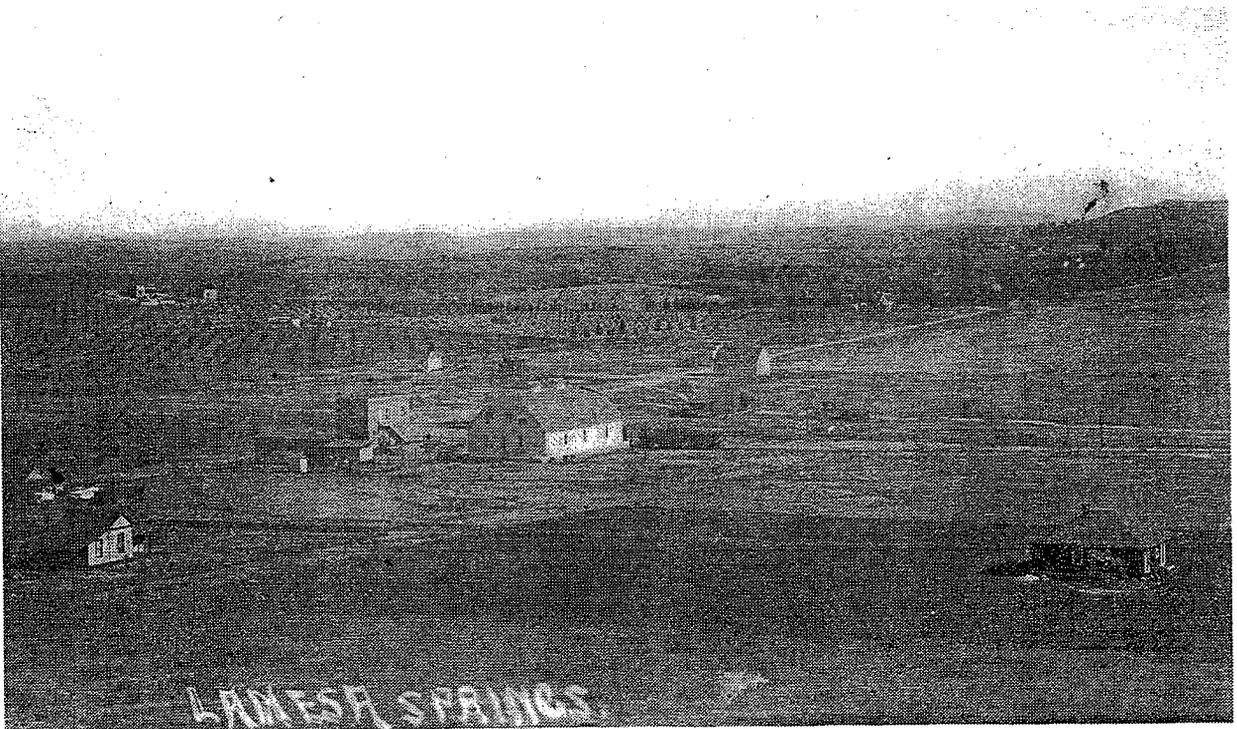
La Mesa had grown rapidly from a handful of lemon ranches in the 1890's to a town with a population of over 700 by 1912. Developers Sherman C. Grable and his partner Charles C. Park had contributed to the booming population increase. Beginning in 1906, the men had subdivided 200 acres into 50 by 100 foot "town lots" in the heart of the community. As a result, many homes had been built along Date Avenue and other nearby streets.

By 1912, La Mesans could point with pride to a railroad station with daily

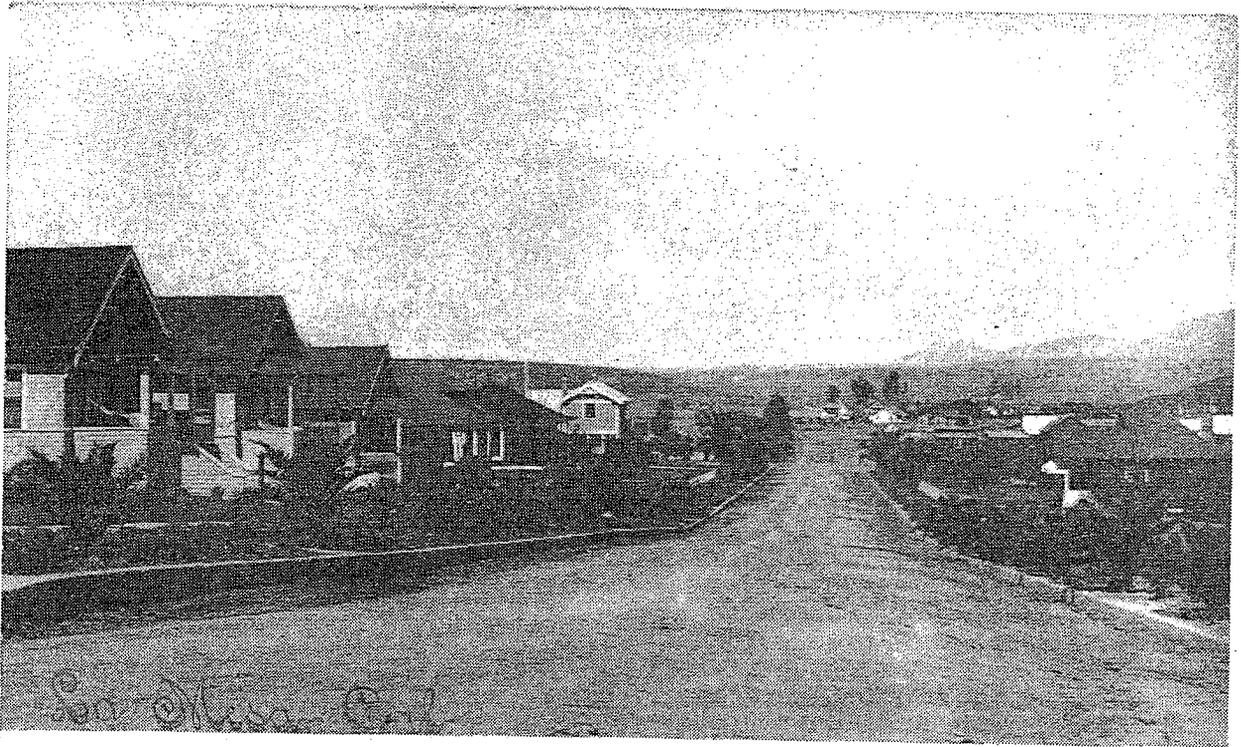
passenger and freight trains to San Diego, a lemon packing plant, a lumber yard and planing mill, a bank, a hotel, a mortuary, an opera house, a newspaper, and other amenities. Small businesses and shops lined Lookout Avenue, later renamed La Mesa Boulevard. In August of the previous year, the American Film Manufacturing Company had arrived in La Mesa and set up a motion picture studio. During the 11 months it remained in La Mesa, the company produced more than 100 one-reel films, most of which were westerns.

Although many citizens believed that incorporation would bring additional growth and prosperity, the issue was debated hotly by a few. Some people, who worried about higher taxes, opposed incorporation. On the evening before the election, the anti-incorporation forces held a meeting at the opera house in a last-ditch effort to defeat the measure.

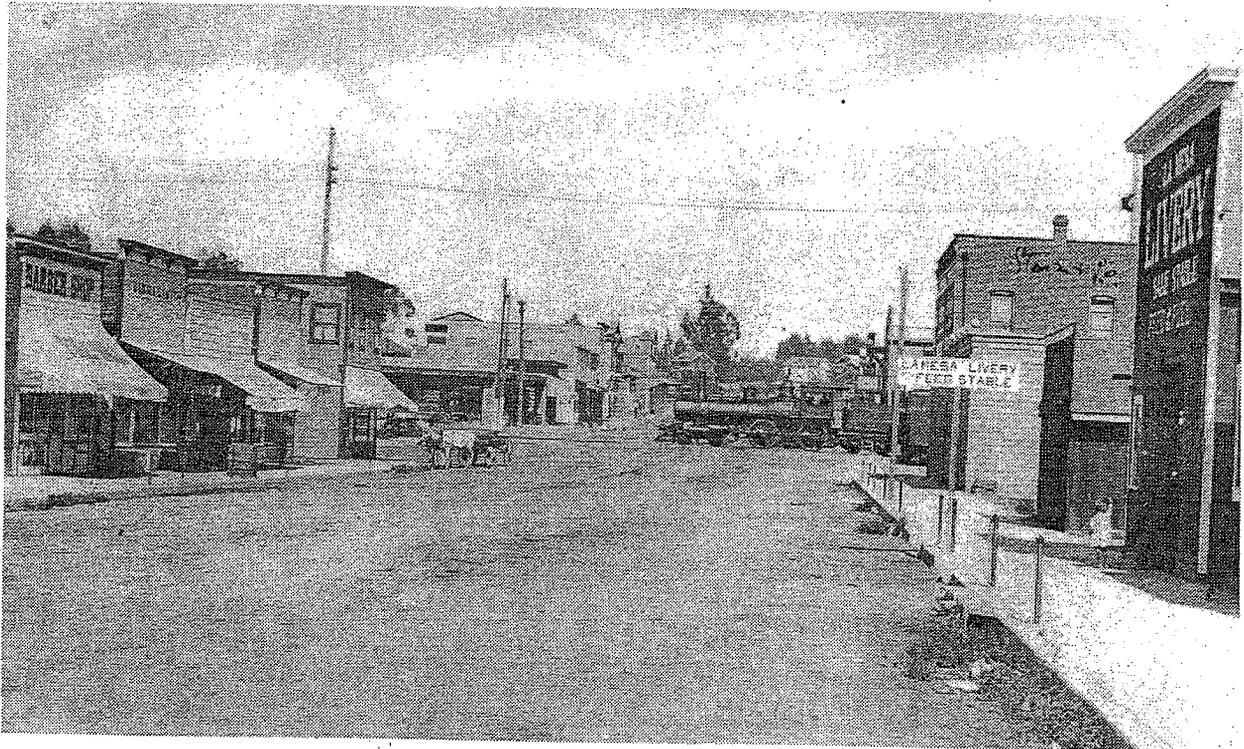
On election day, the incorporation measure won easily with 249 votes for and 60 against, and the incorporation papers for the City of La Mesa were filed on February 16, 1912.



View northeast over La Mesa from Mt. Nebo, circa 1896, with the two-story brick La Mesa Lemon Company Store and the lemon packing house at what is now the southwest corner of La Mesa Boulevard and Nebo Drive. The community was known as La Mesa Springs from 1894 until its incorporation in 1912.



View north along Date Avenue from Finley Avenue, circa 1910. Sherman C. Grable began his development activities in La Mesa in 1906 with the filing of the subdivision map for Grable's Addition, which included Date Avenue. Soon Grable, his partner, Charles C. Park, and others had built homes along this street.



Looking east on La Mesa Boulevard (then called Lookout Avenue) from Date Avenue, circa 1910. A small business district had developed rapidly along the boulevard near the intersection with Spring Street.

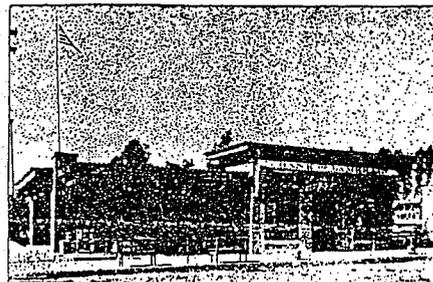
## LA MESA HAS

- 1 Methodist Episcopal Church.
- 1 Congregational Church.
- 1. Baptist Church.
- 1. Adventist Church.
- 1 Sanitarium.
- 1 Opera House.
- 1 Masonic Organization.
- 1. Odd Fellows Organization.
- 1 Eastern Star Society.
- 1 Redmen Organization.
- 1 M. W. A. Organization.
- 1 M. E. A. Organization.
- 1. Boy Scout Organization.
- 1. Old Soldier's Fraternity
- 1 Woman's Club.
- 1 Boy's Club.
- 1 W. O. T. U. Organization.
- 1 Merchants Association.
- 1 Volunteer Fire Company.
- 1 Town Improvement Club.
- 6. Street Arc Electric Lights.
- No Gambling Dens.
- No Saloons.
- 1 Bank.
- 53 Business Houses.
- 1 Billiard Hall.
- 4 Grocery Stores.
- 950 Population.
- 3 Mutual Water Co's.
- 350 Nice Homes.
- 2 Livery Stables.
- 1 Men's Furnishings Store.
- 1 Motion Picture Factory.
- 1 Hotel.
- 2 Apartment Houses.
- 2 Barbershops.
- 1 Dry Goods Store.
- 2 Plumbing Shops.
- 1 Jewelry Store.
- 1 Hardware Store.
- 1 Electrical Store.
- 2 Blacksmith Shops.
- 1 Graded School, 4 Teachers
- 1 Steam Laundry.
- 3 Physicians.
- 9 Miles Cement Sidewalks.
- 2 Dairies.
- 2 Meat Market.
- 1 Pool Room.
- 1 Lumber Yard and Planing Mill.
- 1 Racket Store.
- 1 Bakery.
- 1 Furniture Store.
- 1 Garage.
- 1 Planing Mill.
- 1 Chinese Laundry.
- 2 Fruit Packing Houses.
- 1 Telephone Office.
- 3 Insurance Agencies.
- 1 Cleaning and Dyeing Establishment.
- 1 Produce Store.
- 3 Real Estate Offices.
- 3 Shoe Shops.
- 1 Harness and Shoe Store.
- 2. Restaurants.
- 1 Mason Contractor.
- 1 Newspaper and Job Printing Office.
- 1 Nursery.
- 1 Cement Contracting Co.
- 1 Post Office.
- 1 Telegraph Office.
- 1 Railroad Depot.
- 1 Feed and Fuel Store.
- 2 Mutual Water Co.'s
- 1 Excellent Sewer System.
- 1 Drug Store.
- 1 Concrete Block Works.
- 1 Photographer.
- 1 Justice of the Peace.
- 1 Tin Shop.
- 1. Civil Engineer.
- 1. Lawyer.
- 1. Express Office.
- 1. Woman's Exchange.
- 8. Building Contracting Companies.
- 1. Undertaking and Embalming Establishment.

*You'll Want to Live In La Mesa Sometime.  
Why Not Secure a Home Site Now?*

## We Have Largest Listing of La Mesa Property and We Can Fit Your Needs

*We Believe We Can Furnish From Our  
Listing a Home to Suit Your  
Wants. Try Us.*



### HOMES

75x140, 6 room bungalow, modern-splendid view	\$2800.00
80x140, 5 room bungalow, new, lawn, fruit trees, good view	\$3500.00
50x110, 5 room cottage, modern, close in, on wide street—a bargain	\$2500.00
50x100, 5 room, new, veneered concrete blocks—a bargain	\$2000.00
50 foot frontage on two streets, cosy little bungalow, nicely located	\$1700.00
50x140, 2 story, 7 rooms, modern—fine location; terms	\$2500.00
50x100, 5 rooms, modern	\$2400.00

### LOTS

3 lots 50x240, each	\$175.00 each
50x140, 4 blocks from postoffice	\$215.00 cash
50x140, 4 blocks from postoffice	\$200.00 terms
50x140, 3 blocks from postoffice	\$525.00
50x104, 2 blocks from postoffice, on 75 foot street	\$550.00
50x140, sidewalk, curb and sewer	\$350.00
50x135, sidewalk, curb sewer and trees	\$400.00
50x150, corner; sidewalk, curb, sewer; trees; close in	\$600.00

### SMALL CHICKEN RANCHES

2 lots, 100 feet frontage on blvd; 4 room new house; 50 chickens, houses and yards; suitable to care for many more—close in	\$1750.00 terms
2 large lots, almost an acre, on fine 75 foot street—well built 5 room house best of soil, a bargain at	\$2500.00
3 acres, no buildings, a nice piece of ground	\$ 750.00
2 1-2 acres no buildings, some deciduous trees	\$ 600.00
Over 1-2 acre, small house	\$ 800.00

*La Mesa has Water System, Sewers, Sidewalks, Graded Streets,  
Gas, Electricity, Telephone, Telegraph, Schools and Churches.*

# Park-Grable Investment Co.

San Diego Office 1533 D Street

La Mesa, California

## CITIZENS OF LA MESA VOTE TO INCORPORATE

Ante-Election Tactics of Opponents to Movement Have Little Influence

Special to the Union

La Mesa Feb. 7 -- By a sweeping majority of 189 votes the citizens of La Mesa at a special election today decided to incorporate. The vote as counted tonight stands 249 for and 60 against incorporation.

Voting was lively at the polls in the morning, 180 having cast their ballots before noon. Not a few women took interest in the election and did their share of the voting.

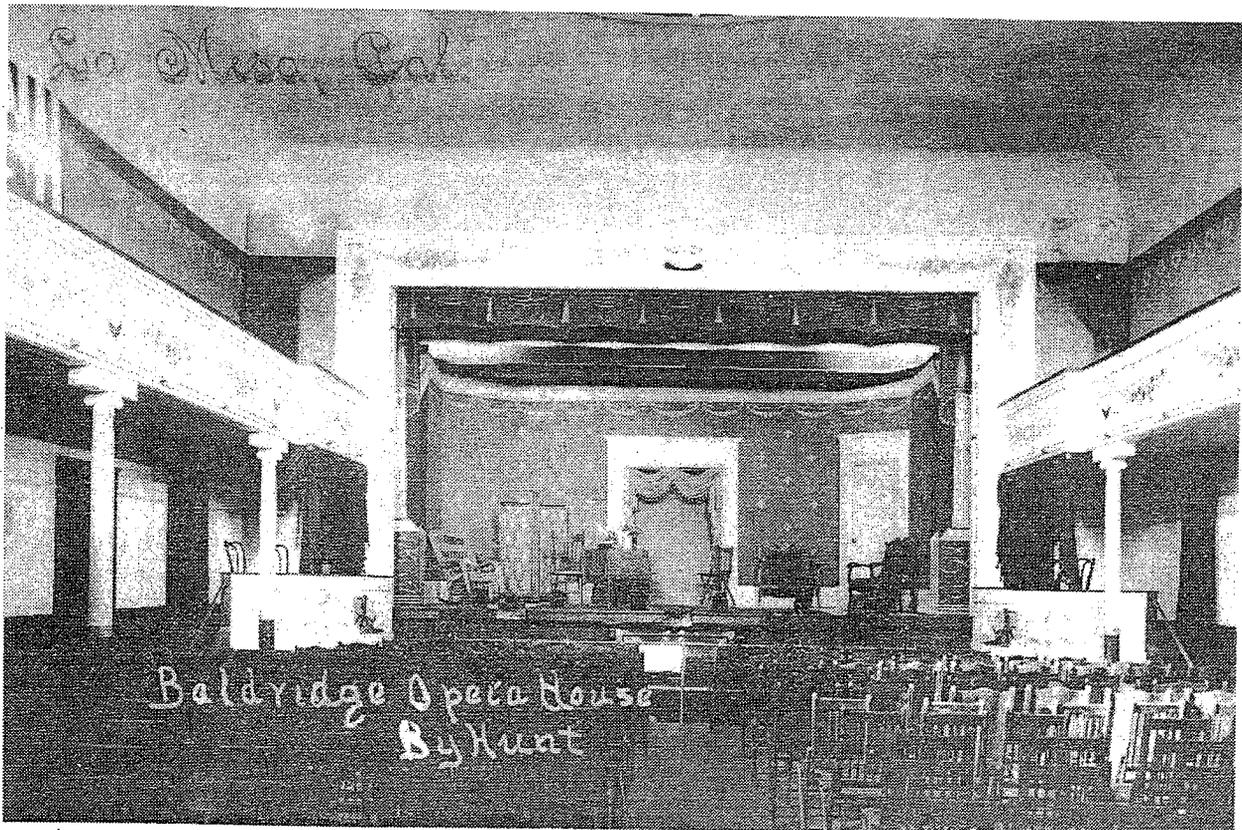
Officers were elected as nominated at the mass meeting held a week ago. Following is a list of the new elects:

Trustees, E.A.D: Reynolds, Dr. Charles Samson, Dr. J.A. Parks, J.A. McRae, and S.R. Canon; city clerk, E.C. Upp; city treasurer, K.B. Finley; city marshall, Frank M. Oliver.

An attempt was made last night to win votes for the opposition and defeat incorporation by the calling of a meeting in the La Mesa opera house, but it proved a miserable failure. The previous day handbills had been distributed about the town, announcing that Judge S.D. O'Neal of San Diego would speak on "Incorporation," nothing being mentioned to the effect that it was in opposition to the movement. Judge O'Neal, who probably had not been fully informed of the situation, delivered an address, citing many reasons for and against incorporation. When he had finished, H.A. Marshall, who has bitterly opposed incorporation throughout the campaign, monopolized the stage and began flaying everybody and everything in connection with the movement. Before he had finished talking practically every one in the hall arose and walked out.

La Mesa has experienced a remarkable growth during the last few years, and now has a population of more than 1000. The incorporated district comprises about three square miles of territory, about two miles long and a mile and a half in width.

San Diego Union, February 8, 1912, page 13. California had granted women the right to vote in October of 1911, so La Mesa women were able to participate in this election.



The Baldridge Opera House, built in 1908 at the northeast corner of La Mesa Boulevard and Palm Avenue, was the setting for musical and dramatic presentations, offerings of local talent, and a variety of meetings - including an unsuccessful attempt to defeat incorporation.



La Mesans celebrate the Fourth of July, 1911, on La Mesa Boulevard east of Spring Street. By this time La Mesa had become a thriving community with a population approaching 700.

