

La Mesa Historical Society LOOKOUT AVENUE



Volume 16, Number 2

October, 1994

Historical Look at La Mesa's Police Department

By Pat Kettler

1911 - Year Before Incorporation

To date, the earliest known record of law enforcement within La Mesa comes from the January 13, 1911 issue of the *La Mesa Scout* newspaper.

According to this report, Fred O. Bloom had been "duly appointed" to a 4-year term as Justice of the Peace for the area known as "Mission Township".

This appointment had been made by the county Board of Supervisors, and it was reported that Bloom's office was to be located in the town of La Mesa.

The new Justice of the Peace was said to be very anxious to hire a constable for La Mesa. (At the time, El Cajon already had several.) In order to pay for the constable's salary, Bloom suggested that "the town's citizens furnish a bond to the county for a good man."

Bloom was also pushing for a jail in La Mesa that would be financially supported by the county. According to him, "there wasn't one jail in all of Mission Township." It took another 16 years before one was built in La Mesa.

The population of La Mesa in 1911 was about 400, including townfolk and those on outlying ranches.

Illegal sale of alcohol and public drunkenness were the two major

crime problems mentioned in the 1911 *La Mesa Scout*.

Alcohol was being shipped from San Diego by rail to La Mesa (where there was limited law enforcement). It was then off-loaded onto wagons and taken into El Cajon.

The big crime headline of 1911 was about the theft of three bicycles by a trio of San Diego boys. The lads were caught by San Diego Police.



It was reported that the father of the two young thieves returned two of the bikes, and paid the owners for the inconvenience. He also offered to replace the remaining missing bicycle with a new one.

1912 - Cityhood & New Marshal

By the year of incorporation, La Mesa had grown to over 700 souls. That year the position of City Marshal was established by a vote of the people.

The City's first marshal was A.C. Baldwin who held that job from April 1912 until September 1917.

Evidently there was a succession of deputies who helped Baldwin during his tenure, followed by men holding the office for short periods from 1917 until 1920.

In April of 1918, Rev. Henry A. McKinney was appointed Police Judge until his resignation in July of 1919.

1916 - "Boys Will Be Boys"

Early *La Mesa Scout* newspapers were not given to much negative news. Articles were mostly positive and upbeat to help build pride in one's community. When a negative article did appear on the front page, it really stood out.

For example, a 1916-style warning from the City Trustees was issued against rowdyism and misconduct of La Mesa boys on the streets of town at night.

They warned, "If it doesn't stop the city authorities will deal with the offenders in a manner that has heretofore been unknown to them and which they will not soon forget!" Some things never change.

What the City fathers actually did, or wanted to do, to curb this behavior could not be found in any succeeding *Scout* articles.

A later issue in 1924 does report that by then the town had a handle on the situation.

(continued, page 2)



See Related Articles:

Chief Buford "Jack" Mercer....p. 3
Sgt. Lloyd "Silver" Donahoo...p. 4

Police (continued from page 1)

1920 - Police History Begins

In March of 1920, Jack Foley was sworn in as La Mesa's City Marshal. The *Scout* reported, "The city has long needed some such official. Hitherto there has been scarcely any protection in this regard. In fact, a deputy had to take his man into San Diego to have him arrested."

In April of 1921, B. L. "Jack" Mercer became City Marshal after the resignation of Foley. A year prior to this appointment, Mercer had been hired by the La Mesa Board of Trustees as "special police" (deputy marshal), and to be called on when needed.

City Marshal, Dog Catcher, Etc.

The Board of Trustees (now called the La Mesa City Council) gave the City Marshal additional duties in 1924.

Apparently Marshal Mercer's job of keeping the peace didn't fully occupy his work day, so he was directed to become the City's dog and driver's license collector, building inspector, and plumbing and electrical inspector.

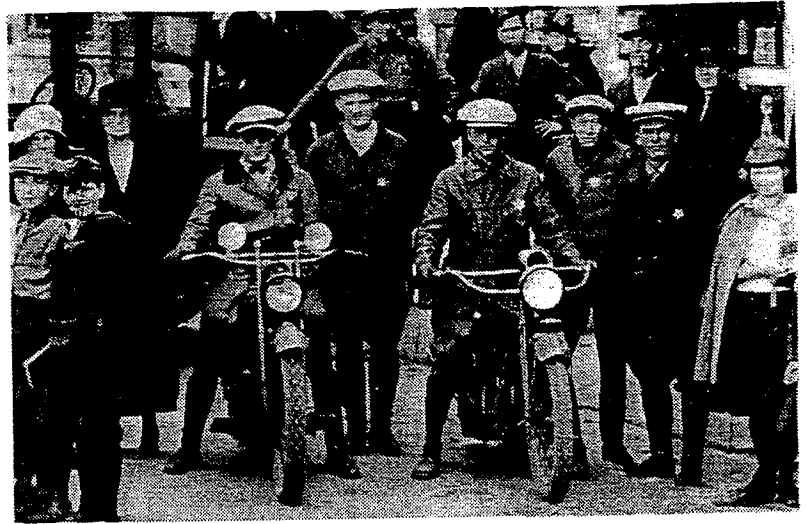
Mercer must have really been kept busy, because La Mesa was growing at this time. The 1923 local population was reported at 1600, up from a little over 700 in 1917. (By 1920, growth was recorded at 2,513.)

In February of 1925, the city fathers added duties to the Deputy Marshal's job. The Deputy also became janitor for both City Hall and the library. (The La Mesa Police Department occupied a room in City Hall during these years.)

1924 - Curfew Time

The *Scout* informed the townspeople in January of 1924 that Marshal Mercer was instructed to enforce Ordinance No. 85 of the City statutes, known as "The Curfew Ordinance".

It read: "It shall be unlawful for



LA MESA'S POLICE FORCE, c. 1926. (l-r): Arvilla Beckman, Police Matron (in black hat and coat); Ed Hinck, Hwy. Patrolman (on motorcycle); Dep. Jay Sperry; Jack Mercer, City Marshal; Dep. Austin Lott; and Dep. Homer Baker.

any minor under the age of 16 years to be on any public street, court, or alley after 8:30 p.m. of any day unless accompanied by one of his or her parents or guardian or has a permit signed by one of them."

An additional notice to all parents and guardians told them to be aware and instruct their children accordingly.

However, as summer vacation no doubt stretched out endlessly before them, three La Mesa lads decided to liven up the atmosphere in town.

They stole two sticks of dynamite, caps, and a fuse from city employees who were working on a sewer line on Orchard Street, and cooked up a plan to have some fun.

In the early evening, the lads blew up one stick of dynamite in Collier Park, and blew up a second stick about 9:00 p.m. a short distance south of the La Mesa Depot.

No damage was done, and no one was hurt. But, Deputy Marshal Homer Baker and Night Watchman William E. Sperry coralled the boys and hauled them into police court for "disturbing the peace and discharging explosives within the corporate limits of the city."

The culprits plead guilty. The two underage boys were put on probation and the older one fined \$5.

Halloween Was The Worst

During an interview with Jack Mercer in 1983, he reflected that the only really troublesome times with the town's boys and girls in the 1920's and 1930's was on Halloween night.

The young folks did everything from throwing eggs on buildings to throwing rocks at passing cars, and soaping windows and screens.

Some of the more adventuresome kids would paint the cement figures that decorated home lawns. They would also dismantle wagons, outhouses, or other portable items and reassemble them on the roofs of downtown buildings.

According to Mercer, those caught by him and his deputy were taken to City Hall (sometimes in handcuffs) where they awaited the arrival of their parents.

Mercer insisted that the experience taught the unruly Halloween pranksters a lesson not soon to be forgotten.

(continued, page 3)

Police (continued from page 2)

Marshal Gets New Title & Help

The title of City Marshal was replaced with that of Chief of Police in 1930. Chief Mercer's duties remained the same (including the duties added in 1924).

Homer Baker remained Mercer's deputy/janitor.

Sometime during Mercer's earlier tenure as Marshal, the city trustees had a City Hall telephone extension installed in his home. After normal business hours the Chief was responsible for answering all incoming calls pertaining to both city and police business.

This was particularly hard on Chief Mercer's health as his sleep was constantly being interrupted. Overworked and overtired became his way of life. It no doubt led to his decision on April 1, 1934 to resign as Chief of Police.

Much discussion must have ensued at City Hall because Jack Mercer returned to his job as of May 1 of that same year when the new City Council met to make appointments. That month, an additional officer, Clarence Keeter, was hired.

This new addition to the force created three 8-hour shifts. For many years prior to this, Chief Mercer had been on 24-hour call.

In order to make funds available for this new position, Mercer voluntarily offered to take a 25% cut in pay to partially pay for Keeter's salary which was set at \$75 per month. Mercer's own monthly salary was adjusted (cut) to \$100 monthly.

A "Modern" Up-To-Date Force

As of May, 1934, the Police Department owned one radio-equipped prowl car which was on call 24-hours a day. The car could be reached by phoning La Mesa City Hall.

A new motorcycle patrol was added to the department in 1937 when Chief Mercer was authorized by the city fathers to purchase a new radio-equipped motorcycle at a cost of \$460. Mercer had driven a cycle earlier in the 1920's (see 1927 group photo).

In 1939, a new Studebaker Commander Six sedan was added to the list of the department's vehicles, along with the addition of more policemen. At this time Mercer's deputies consisted of Amos Stuckey, Homer Baker, Dennis Smith, and Leland Ernest.

The La Mesa Junior Traffic Patrol came into being in 1938 and was

under the Police Department's supervision. The all-boy patrol had to pass Chief Mercer's authorization in order to aid school children on their way to and from school. The Junior Patrol was officially part of the city administration.

A responsibility of the Police Department in 1939 was to enforce dog licensing in the city. As of March 1st of that year, the department was instructed to arrest all owners of unlicensed dogs and take them to court where they would be subject to fines or other penalties deemed just.

(continued, page 4)

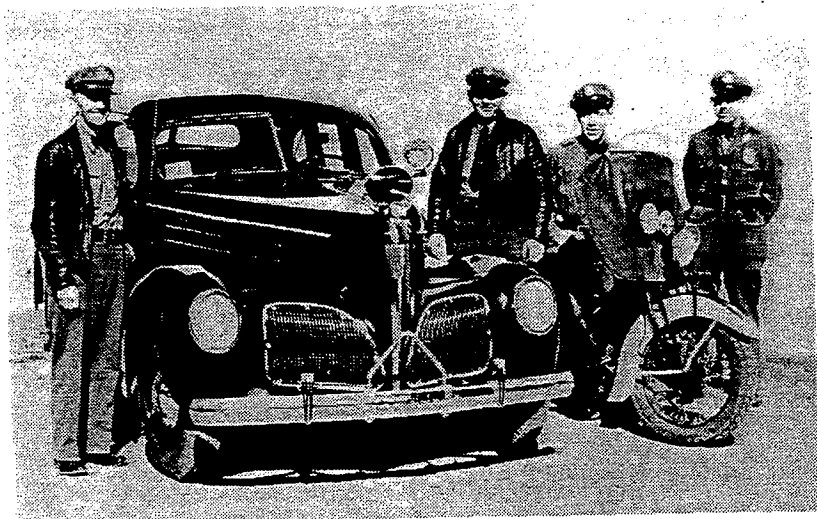


Buford L. "Jack" Mercer
La Mesa City Marshal and Chief of Police
from 1921 to 1940

A living presence connected to the early history of the La Mesa Police Department ended with the death of Jack Mercer in January of 1984 at the age of 90.

Mercer's career as deputy marshal, city marshal, and chief of police spanned two decades — a period of growth and development in which the small town of La Mesa changed into a bustling city with all its amenities and problems.

(continued, page 4)



LA MESA'S POLICE FORCE, c. 1939. Surrounding their shiny new squadcar (1939 Studebaker Six sedan) are (l-r): Chief "Jack" Mercer, and deputies Amos Stuckey, Dennis Smith (on motorcycle), and Ernest Leland.

Police (continued from page 3)

La Mesa's Polico Station & jail

From the 1920's through the 1940's, the La Mesa Police Department as well as the police court were located in City Hall, a two-story building on the east side of Spring Street between Allison Avenue and La Mesa Boulevard.

The Police Station occupied a room on the ground floor of the building, in a room next to the La Mesa Welfare Association. The remaining space in City Hall was used for city offices, with the upstairs used for council chambers and a police court.

By the Fall of 1927, La Mesa got its long-needed jail. (Remember 1911 and Justice of the Peace Bloom?) It was a small, one-person cell which was located off Nebo Drive, facing the alley which ran behind the shops on La Mesa Boulevard.

The jail cell was built under the stairway which led to the second story of the La Mesa fire Department (later called Nebo Hall). A prisoner could be held there briefly, or over-night, until transferred to San Diego.

Murder & Mahem, La Mesa-Style

Unlike today's news, it was rare to find front page reports of murders,

robberies or anything related during the teens, 20's and even into the 1950's -- at least in the La Mesa *Scout*. But it was known to happen.

In August of 1918, for example, a grizzly murder took place on Grossmont at the home of opera star, Ernestine Schumann-Heink. The family dog had unearthed the remains of the Madame's gardener in the orchard of the estate grounds.

The suspected culprit, who was the household's male cook, was nowhere to be found and was never formally charged with murder.

This crime was followed by one in 1919 in which a retired dentist, living on El Cajon Boulevard in La Mesa, shot and killed a deputy sheriff who had stopped to find out why the dentist was shouting verbal abuses at his neighbors.

After mortally wounding his deputy, the enraged man then turned the gun on the neighbor and his family and started shooting at them. No one else was killed or badly injured and the dentist was finally subdued, carted off to jail in San Diego, and shortly thereafter convicted of first degree murder.

No other murders were chronicled in the *Scout* in the 1920's. Marshal Mercer and Deputy Homer Baker were none the less busy during the decade with other problems,

(continued, page)



**Sergeant
Lloyd "Sliver" Donahoo**
Service from 1941-1947

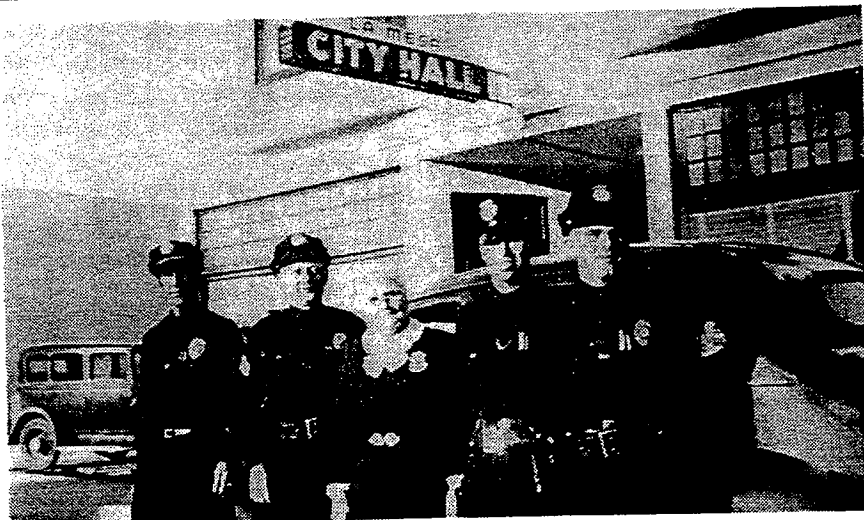
Lloyd Donahoo is remembered for his role in the history of La Mesa law enforcement in addition to service as the La Mesa Historical Society's first president.

On December 23, 1941, Donahoo joined the La Mesa Police Department. Later, in 1946, he was appointed Juvenile Officer, a job at which he was highly praised for his outstanding work.

Sgt. Donahoo retired from the position of Juvenile Officer, as well as the force, in 1947 to join his father, Roy Donahoo, in the contracting business.

Lloyd was a home town boy, born and raised. He was very much a part of his community, and when the La Mesa Historical Society formed in 1975, he became its first president.

Donahoo remained an active force in the Historical Society, and in other community activities, until his death in 1991.



LA MESA'S POLICE FORCE, c. 1943. Standing in front of Police Station, then located in the City Hall on Spring Street (left). D. Smith, A. Smith, and...

Police *(continued from page 4)*

like destroying a big liquor still they found on a 10-acre ranch located on Grossmont Boulevard.

They confiscated about 60 gallons of corn mash and a lot of equipment. The bootlegger was arrested, fined \$300, and given a six-month suspended sentence.

Smaller crimes included a house robbery on Grossmont, the stripping of an automobile, and the La Mesa Depot being robbed of \$20.

In a 1983 interview with Mercer, he said that some opium was being smuggled across the Mexican border into San Diego in the 1920's, but most of his time was taken up with locating and destroying stills during that period.

He and Baker also had to keep an eye out for bootleggers who drove "beer wagons" out from San Diego selling illegal liquor in the rural areas. Mercer also had to keep on top of the problem of transients who came through La Mesa and hung around town.

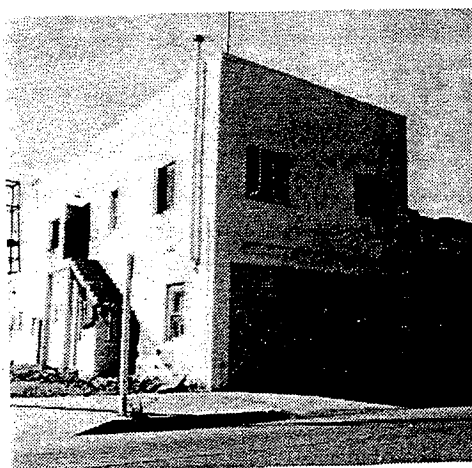
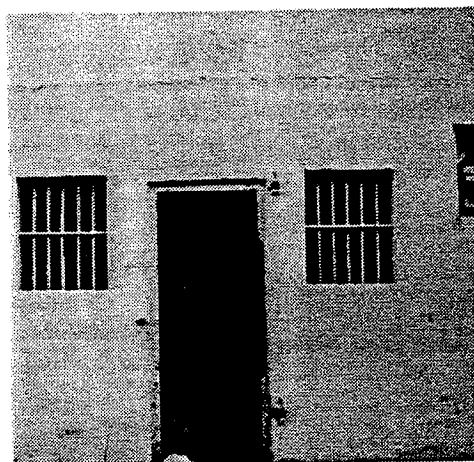
In August of 1934, Mercer and his deputies captured thieves who had robbed the Bank of America on Spring Street and La Mesa Boulevard.

Several years later they confiscated 15 slot machines that had been illegally set up in several La Mesa stores. Most of the machines were owned by a large gambling organization that placed the slots in the stores on a percentage basis. No shop keepers were arrested but they were given a warning about the illegal operation.

Mercer commented that he seldom used his service revolver to subdue anyone.

Pre-World War II & The 1940's

The population of La Mesa had grown to around 1400 by 1940. Services at City Hall were expanding, and there was a need for more office space for the Police Headquarters. The La Mesa Welfare Association



OLD LA MESA JAIL, off Nebo Drive. Photos taken in 1979 show: (top photo) side view of building as seen from alley off Nebo Dr. with jail located on ground floor to left of stairway; (middle photo) detail of jail entrance; (bottom photo) front view of building where both the old fire station and old jail were located.

moved elsewhere, and the Police Department took over its space. Shortly thereafter some renovations took place in the police court. A raised platform for the judge's bench was built, and additional spectator seating was installed.

Arvilla Beckman was hired as police matron in 1921. She was later honored for 22 years of continual service in 1943, and served as matron-on-call until her death in 1947 at 84 years of age.

One of Mrs. Beckman's jobs in the early years was to walk the streets of La Mesa after the curfew bell had rung and escort any stray children home. She also attended the movie matinees to watch over the children's safety in case of rowdiness.

During the war years, Arvilla Beckman chaperoned many of the USO dances in La Mesa. She was very well remembered and liked by the young people of La Mesa, according to their interviews given later as adults.

Another city job that was added was that of night watchman. Starting with Jack Stevenson in 1921, a night watchman was on duty. William E. Sperry succeeded Stevenson, and C.C. Sparks came next and held the job until at least 1936.

In March of 1940, Jack Mercer decided to retire as La Mesa's Chief of Police, after 20 years of service.

Two years later the jail was closed, following a grand jury investigation and recommendation that the jail not be reopened until an attendant was appointed to be on duty there at all times a prisoner was in custody. It is unclear as to whether the jail was ever reopened again.

Post-WW II & Changing Times

One officer was assigned night duty in La Mesa's downtown in 1947. His biggest complaint was that shop owners often left their businesses unlocked.

(continued, page 6)

Police (continued, page 7)

Seventy-one reports regarding unlocked stores and other businesses were filed by the Police Department that year. (Most townsfolk probably left their houses unlocked as well.)

After Jack Mercer's retirement, the La Mesa City Council named Dennis G. "Denny" Smith as the new Chief of Police on April 23, 1940.

On December 19, 1941, almost two weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Chief Smith requested a year's leave of absence in order to work with the FBI.

Six days later, on December 25th, Amos E. Stuckey, a member of the force since 1936, was appointed Acting Chief of Police. He later was appointed Chief.

Several years later, on February 1, 1946, the position of Police Chief was declared vacant by the La Mesa City Council. Later that month, on February 15th, 32-year old Sergeant Glenn B. Adams was selected to be Chief. He had been a member of the department since 1940.

In 1948, Chief Adams reported to the *La Mesa Scout* that the department had assisted 1900 people the previous year, and that crime cases were a small part of the job of the police department.

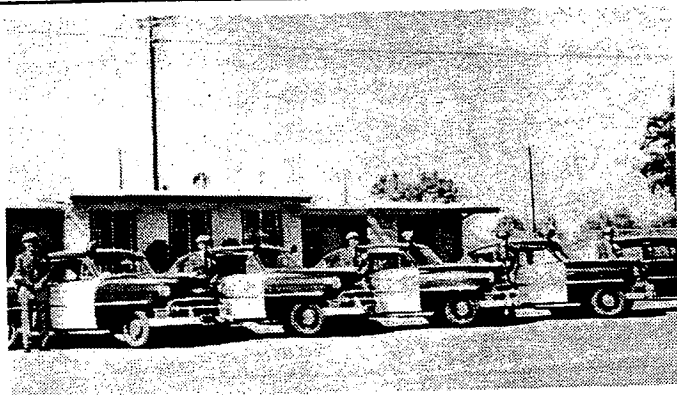
Adams praised La Mesa as being the most crime-free city in San Diego County, pointing out that the last murder in town was in 1945 when an out-of-town man shot and killed his wife while passing through. He went on to say that in the three years prior to 1948, La Mesa had experienced only three major crimes.

Glenn Adams served as Chief of the La Mesa Police Department for 27 years, retiring in 1973.

The 1950's to Present

In April of 1950, Sergeant Homer Baker, Jack Mercer's long-time deputy from the 1920's, retired after more than 25 years of service.

A new police station, on the east side of Allison Avenue, was dedicated on June 7, 1952. The staff consisted

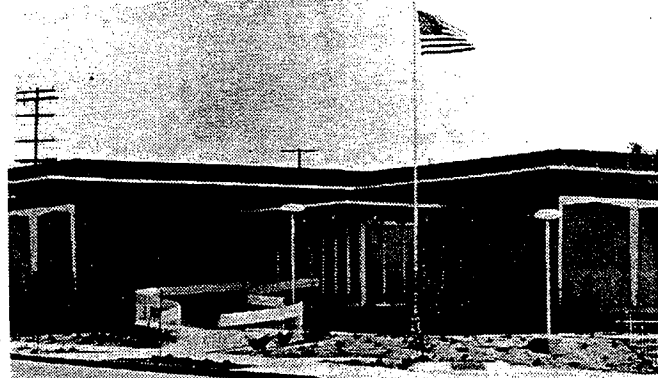


LA MESA POLICE DEPT.. c. 1952. Enlarged force of men and squad cars. City Hall would be built in 1958 to the right.

of approximately 12 officers and one chief. This building was quickly outgrown.

The La Mesa Police Department's staff in 1962 consisted of the chief, one lieutenant, eight sergeants, twenty-four patrolmen, and three secretary/matrons.

On December of 1966, the present police station was completed on the west side of Allison Avenue, at a cost of \$200,000.



CURRENT LA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT located on Allison Avenue. Completed in 1966, it includes a 6-cell jail.

In 1972, Donald G. Fach, a 22-year veteran with the department, became Chief of Police. Upon Fach's retirement in 1986, Robert R. Soto became the department's head man until his retirement in 1992. That year, Walter Mitchell became La Mesa's present Chief of Police.

Mitchell is the city's ninth Chief, not counting those who held the office from six months to a year between 1917 and 1920.

The current 1994 Police Department staff includes the chief, two captains, four lieutenants, nine sergeants, eight master officers (corporals), and thirty-seven police officers. There are also 13 dispatcher/clerk/matron positions.

In the 32 years since 1962, the La Mesa Police Department's staff has grown from 33 to 61, serving a current population of almost 56,000.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION LA MESA POLICE HISTORY

- La Mesa Scout newspapers
- La Mesa Board of Trustees (City Council) minutes, 1912 - 1950
- La Mesa Police Department, Lt. B. Barrett
- Personal Interviews
- La Mesa, A Brief History* - La Mesa Historical Society
- Grossmont Isn't Just a Shopping Center* - Herbert Guy
- The Evolution of the La Mesa City Government* - Howard C. Linke (pp. 16-17)

Mercer (continued from page 3)

Born on a farm in Breckenridge County, Kentucky on July 10, 1894, Mercer was given the first name of Buford by his mother. He was known throughout his life by his name "Jack".

Jack's father died before his birth, leaving his mother and three sisters to carry on as best they could. He remembers himself as a sickly, skinny kid, but a born survivor. The fact that his maternal grandmother had lived to the age of 102 was a source of pride.

As a teenager, Mercer left the family farm and took a railroad company job in Louisville, Kentucky. He said, "If I didn't like a job, I'd leave and go somewhere else. In those days (c. 1910) it was easy to get a job."

Mercer traveled around the United States by rail, finally ending up in New Orleans. While there he decided to head west to California, arriving in San Diego around 1914.

Sometime before America's entry into World War I, Mercer enlisted in the U. S. Army. He was stationed in the Philippines as a buck private in Company F, 13th Infantry, when war was declared. While there he

contracted tuberculosis.

When peace came, Mercer returned to San Diego. He met and married his wife, Bessie Hamilton, a widow. Soon after they married he adopted her two young sons.

In 1918, Jack became a San Diego County deputy marshal with duties that took him to the East County. On Sundays the Mercers would often go on outings to La Mesa where Jack would end up at the Noyes Drug Store and McNulty's candy and tobacco store talking to the local townsfolk. A good rapport developed and in 1919, Mercer was assigned to the La Mesa and surrounding areas.

In 1920, Mercer was hired as a La Mesa deputy marshal, and in 1921 accepted the position of City Marshal. In March of 1923, his new house at 4457 - 4th Street was under construction.

Jack considered moving his family to Oregon in 1924, but never did. Instead, he and Bessie opened Mercer's Cafe that year. It was located on the south side of La Mesa Boulevard, west of Palm Avenue. A year and a half later they found the restaurant business was more than they wanted to handle and sold it.

Bessie and Jack's two sons, Francis L. and Buford N. "Bud" grew up in

La Mesa and attended Grossmont High School. Francis, the eldest, joined the U.S. Navy, making it his career. He moved to Washington State, married and became the father of three children. As of 1963, Bud was living in Suncrest (Crest area).

In 1930, the title of City Marshal had a name change to that of Chief of Police. Mercer held this position until his retirement in March of 1940.

During the early part of World War II, Jack was hired by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to do investigative work connected with government shipping from San Diego to Washington State. Upon final retirement, Jack and Bessie returned to the San Diego mountain community of Suncrest (Crest) where she died in 1963.

Mercer moved back to La Mesa some time after Bessie's death, and lived in a trailer park on El Cajon Boulevard until late 1983. His fragile health had deteriorated and he was checked into the Veteran's Administration Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri.

It was in the Missouri hospital that Jack Mercer died on January 16, 1984, in his ninetieth year.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society depends upon membership dues, 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 include:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|----------------------|-------|
| Benefactor | \$250.00 | Sponsor/Organization | 25.00 |
| Life (Single) | 125.00 | Family (2 adults) | 15.00 |
| Patron | 40.00 | Individual | 10.00 |
| Student (under 18 yrs.) | | | 1.00 |

To join the La Mesa Historical Society, please complete and return this form with your check to: La Mesa Historical Society, P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

_____ I would like to become involved in the Society's work. Please call me.

FUTURE EXHIBIT PLANS FOR McKINNEY HOUSE

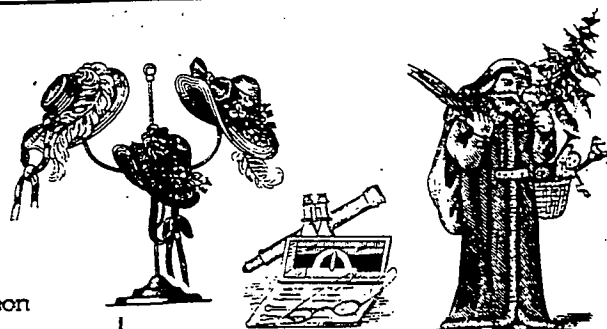
By Nancy Neffson

I'm back this year as chairperson of exhibits, but I'm busier than ever so I need your help. If you have time for research or can do paste-up and bulletin board work, please contact me.

The Christmas exhibit will hopefully go up sometime in early November. It will be titled "Celebrations of Christmas". If you have any memorabilia (photos, programs, etc.) of Christmas events at La Mesa area churches (as old as possible), or any old nativity scenes you are willing to lend, call me at the number below.

There will probably be a quilt show of some type after the Christmas exhibit.

The bulk of the Ice Cream Social exhibit will hopefully go up in March, since most of our school tours take place in April and May. The theme will be working days -- with an historic look at the trades and professions. If you have any uniforms, tools, photos of La Mesa businesses (preferably before 1944-1945), or other appropriate items you would be willing to lend, give me a call.



My plan is to have some small spot exhibits around the house called "Then and Now". Examples: a button hook, a zipper, a velcro closure; an old kitchen tool and a modern electric one for the same task; an issue of a publication from the 30's and the same publication in the 90's. Contact me if you're interested in doing one of these little spot exhibits.

If you or a friend have a special collection you would like to exhibit, something appropriate for our family-oriented historical society, I am making a list for future planning.

Upstairs in our main exhibit room, on the right hand side as you enter the room, there is a large display case with glass shelves. I would be eternally grateful to anyone who would donate or build a better one.

Please contact me at 469-8731 if you have any exhibit ideas or suggestions, or wish to help. I look forward to hearing from you.

VOLUNTEER HELP WANTED

La Mesa Historical Society needs assistance in cataloging its growing collection of artifacts which includes furnishings, kitchenware, tools, china, product containers, clothing and personal artifacts.

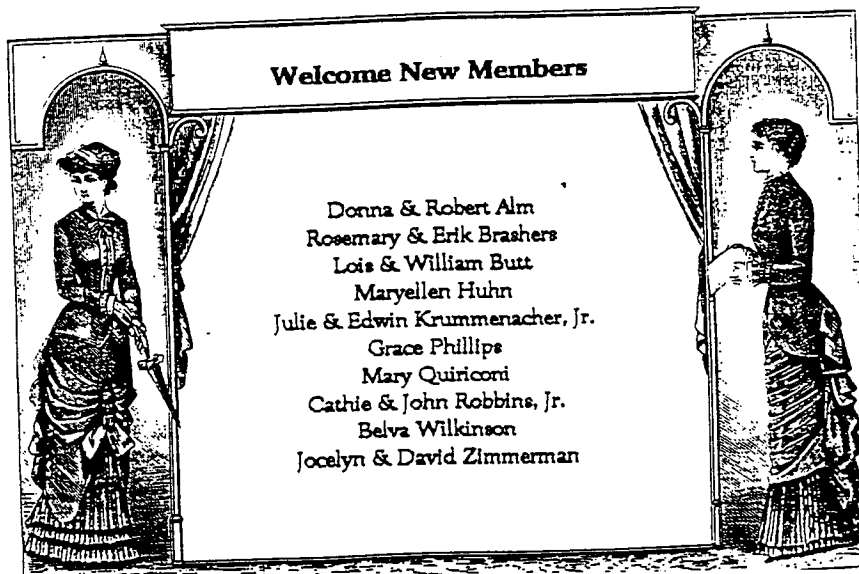
If you have special interest or knowledge in a particular area, or if you enjoy research, please join us.

In furnishing the McKinney House we accept items which would have been appropriate for this house in 1908 to 1920. We also collect artifacts from other periods which relate to La Mesa history, or which can be used in our exhibits.

For more information call Donna Regan at

Welcome New Members

Donna & Robert Alm
Rosemary & Erik Brashers
Lois & William Butt
Maryellen Huhn
Julie & Edwin Krummenacher, Jr.
Grace Phillips
Mary Quiriconi
Cathie & John Robbins, Jr.
Belva Wilkinson
Jocelyn & David Zimmerman



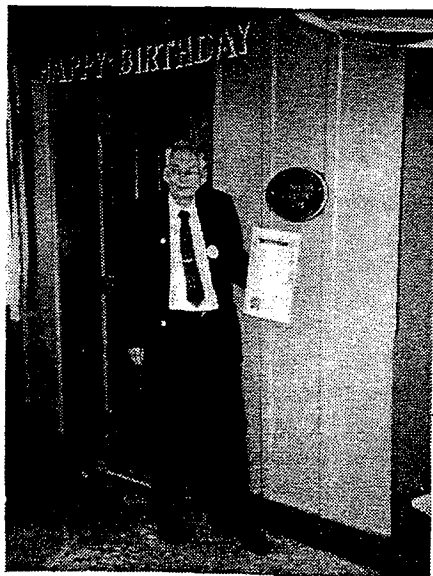
La Mesa Depot's 100th Birthday Celebrated

By Betty Teague

A proclamation commemorating La Mesa Depot's 100th Birthday was presented by Mayor Art Madrid at a special ceremony and Open House on May 29th.

The new plaque on the wall designates the Depot as La Mesa Landmark No. 6 in recognition of this historic building which was so important in the development of La Mesa.

Art Paget (below), director of the Depot, accepted the proclamation amid a celebration that included a large appropriately decorated birthday cake.



DEPOT DIRECTOR Art Paget receives proclamation during Centennial birthday celebration.

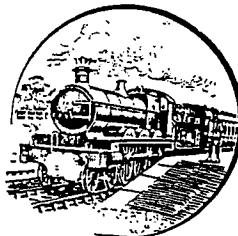
The La Mesa Depot is owned and operated by the San Diego Railroad Museum. It was returned to its original location and restored in the 70's with the support of the La Mesa Historical Society and the City of La Mesa.

A number of the Railroad Museum members, including Mr. Paget, are also members of the La Mesa Historical Society. The

Depot is often included with the McKinney House in field trips of school children.

Several volunteers have worked at both locations in the past, and continued to do so. Betty Teague is currently acting as liaison between the two museums.

La Mesa Depot is open from 1-4 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday, and by appointment for special tours.



Historic Preservation Commission to Add Landmark and Inventory Structures

By Donna Regan

For the past few months the La Mesa's Historic Preservation Commission has been working to further preservation in our community by placing additional structures on the city's Historic Resources Inventory and Landmarks Register.

The Inventory, a survey of structures with historical and/or architectural significance, now contains approximately 260 structures. Landmarks, which have certain restrictions on alterations or demolition, now number 11.

The Commission toured the early neighborhoods around the downtown La Mesa, especially the Date Avenue Historic District, Mt. Nebo, and Third and Fourth Streets, to identify potential additions to the Inventory.

Property owners invited to the Commission's April meeting viewed the LMHS slide presentation on La Mesa history and learned more about the city's preservation programs. Commissioners are now researching eight structures for inclusion on the Inventory.

Landmarks are designated by the City Council on recommendation of the Commission. Designation, made only with owner consent, offers substantial benefits. These benefits include waiving of fees, conditional use permits, and the use of Mills Act contracts for property tax reduction.

Several interested owners attended the Commission workshop on June 6th. Four are now seeking landmark status for their structures: the Villa Zeezaw (1931) on Mariposa Street, the Winslow House (1908) on Fresno Avenue, the Olaf Lingren House (c. 1911) on Acacia Avenue, and the Dr. Thomas Cunningham House (c. 1928) on Vista Drive.



President's Message

By Jo Coffey

It is a pleasure to be your President this year. I am looking forward to the challenge of getting more community and business support for Historical Society projects and activities.

At this point in setting up an agenda to get things rolling, I do know one thing for sure. **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!**

We have established several committees to plan and conduct various Historical Society activities during the coming year:

**Museum Exhibits
Ice Cream Social
Membership Brunch
Grounds (Gardening)
Museum Docents
Mailing
Christmas Open House
Museum Housekeeping
Quilters**

As you can see, we have a place for your interests. There are several ways you can help. Please give us the benefit of your experience. Give us your ideas.

Pick a committee and be an active member. Use your contacts to get donations of professional help (for instance, we need design, material and installation help to improve the appearance of the museum grounds). We also need museum quality donations for display.

We need YOU. Remember, this is the La Mesa Historical Society. It does not belong to any one individual or any one committee. It is YOUR historical society. Please help us get it on the map!

Microfilming Completed on La Mesa's Past Newspapers

By Pat Kettler

The final two years of the *Courier* (formerly *La Mesa Scout* newspaper) for 1984 and 1985 are on microfilm and have been presented to the La Mesa Library.

Past *Scouts* and *Couriers* which have now been microfilmed include the full years of 1916 through 1985. The *Courier* ceased publication in November of 1985. The years from 1907 (when the *Scout* began publication) to 1916 are also on microfilm, but they are not complete years.

Our sincere appreciation is again directed toward the La Mesa Community Welfare Association. They generously provided \$500 to the Society to complete the microfilming.



P. O. Box 882, La Mesa, California 91944

La Mesa Historical Society

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

Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
La Mesa, Ca 92041
Permit No. 208

La Mesa Historical Society

Officers and Directors

1994 - 1995

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| President..... | JO COFFEY |
| First Vice President..... | Open |
| Second Vice President..... | BETTY TEAGUE |
| Third Vice President..... | MAE KRAMER |
| Secretary..... | PAT KETTLER |
| Treasurer..... | MARIE CALENTINE |
| Past President..... | DONNA REGAN |
| Director (2 year term)..... | MARY LOU McCLELLAN |
| Director (2 year term)..... | MARJORIE CRAY |
| Director (1 year term)..... | NANCY NEFFSON |
| Director (1 year term)..... | KATHY TINSLEY |
| Docent Chair..... | CAROL LOCKWOOD |
| Mailing Chair..... | HANK SCHUPBACH |
| Membership Brunch Chair..... | MARY KELLEY |
| Publicity Chair..... | ROGER COFFEY |
| Quilters Representative..... | SANDY CAMPBELL |

A Very Special Thanks

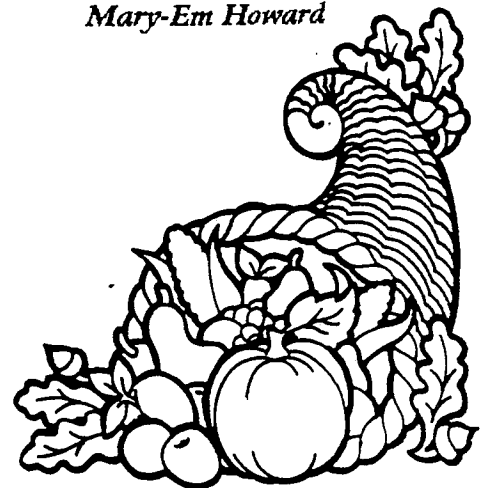
to outgoing board members who have
given so generously of their
time and talents.

Beth and Ed Blackman

Ruth Kramer

Frank Hunt

Mary-Em Howard



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 Marjorie Cray, editor, at 469-5045 regarding submissions.