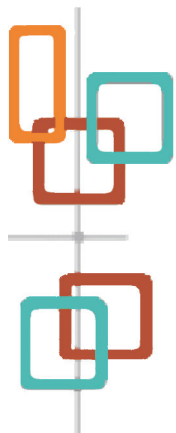


Winter-Spring 2021



lookout avenue



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2020 HOME TOUR

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LANDSCAPE

VERONICA MARTZAH
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MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

DAVID CLINE
ORAL HISTORY

NEWSLETTER

esencia
DESIGN AND BRANDING

LMHS ELECTION 2021-22

Proposed Board of Directors Slate

Officers (1 year term)

President – James Newland
Vice President – Veronica Martzahl
Secretary – Sharon Smith
Treasurer – Jeremy Martinson
VP Membership – Sheryl Castro

Board Nominees (2 year term)

Kristine Alessio
David Cline
Kari Dodson
Tracey Stotz

Continuing Board Directors through June
2022

Melody Andrews
Donna Bloomer
Don Cary
Steven Churchill
Michele Greenberg-McClung

Instructions for the 2021/22 Board of Directors Election

Members will be sent a link to an online survey. For those members who are not online, you may call the Society at 619-466-0107 and leave your name and vote on the answering machine.

You may also mail your ballot back to the Society.

La Mesa Historical Society
P.O. Box 882
La Mesa, CA 91941

Mailed ballots must be postmarked by June 26th, 2021.

On-line and phone voting will close on Saturday June 26th at 5pm PST.

LANDSCAPE PROJECT SLOWLY MOVING FORWARD

“Although we had hoped to have more of the project done by now we have at least made some progress the past few months,” said Tracey Stotz Landscape Project Chair. Funding and a lack of ability to schedule skilled labor for little projects have really slowed things down. “Donations haven’t been as high as we had hoped thanks to COVID but we have made some progress with the funds we have,” she said.



Local Scouts Help Keep Up McKinney “Historic” Landscape



Work continues to bring our McKinney House landscape back to its citrus ranch roots



Leave a legacy in La Mesa. It isn't too late to buy an engraved brick to support the McKinney House landscape renovation project.

<https://lamesahistory.com/product/buy-a-brick/>

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

QUIETLY PRODUCTIVE WINTER-SPRING

I open with the thought to once again, sincerely, hope that you and your families, friends and neighbors are well and continue to be so.

After a very active and challenging Holiday Season in which we rallied to successfully undertake our first “virtual Home Tour”, the Society slowed up a bit and reduced our public-facing output. This was a result of a combination of making sure that our Board, volunteers and supporters all had the time to deal with these unique and challenging personal and professional times as we navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic, and to re-charge and prepare for the eventual re-opening of our Society facilities, programs--and the rest of our community.

The combination of our Winter and Spring issues of the Lookout Avenue in this issue being just one of those practical decisions to help reduce responsibilities and workload of all involved.

Although you may not have seen the quantity of out-facing email blasts, Facebook or Instagram posts, or typical programming, the Society has still been busy. For example, work continues on the rehabilitation of the McKinney House landscape. Our new period-style fence (based on historic photographs) and gates have been installed, rainy-season weeds and growth addressed through the efforts of many (including our friends Steve Rotsart and Scout Troop 319), and planning and design for the next round of improvements continue. Our new pine tree is doing well—and as many neighbors noticed, and benefited, we had a bumper crop of Spring lemons. (Read more in Tracey Stotz's article

on the landscape project, our next funding and project priorities, and the local partners and donor opportunities for helping out).

We also have been in contact with our dedicated McKinney House docents and Archives Volunteers (Learn more about some of them in this newsletter). They have all been, or are in the process of, being vaccinated and are looking forward to our re-opening of the museum and research archives this summer. If you interested in becoming a Museum docent or Archive volunteer, please contact us at info@lamesahistory.com.

Similarly with our Research Archives, although still closed to the public, many continued to take advantage of our fee-based research services. Several of these researchers looked to gather information for future historic landmark nominations for properties both in the City of La Mesa and the unincorporated County areas. Others have engaged the Research service to learn more about the homes they have long-lived in or have just recently purchased.

Also, we have received a fair number of questions on various aspects of Greater La Mesa history through the Facebook page and Society website. In responding to these inquiries I have had the opportunity to dig into some long-standing topics and unearth some answers to new questions. I have written up some of these Q&A findings, and you can read about them in this issue.

“President's Address” Continued on Page 5

"President's Address" Continued from Page 4

Noteworthy is how many of you, and others, have reached out to donate items and archival materials. Read about some of these new fascinating and historically valuable donations in our Archives and Collections report.

We, of course, appreciate your interest and questions about when we will reopen the McKinney House Museum and Research Archives to the public. Although the Board is greatly encouraged by the positive trends in the fight against COVID-19, we have taken a cautious approach. The State's June 15th date for major reopening of all businesses and public venues is certainly welcome news. Our hope is to have all volunteers vaccinated and facilities prepared for reopening sometime this summer—as long as state restrictions are fully lifted. In the meantime, we are looking into possible Research Archives appointments as an interim measure. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for the latest.

Pending on the official reopening the Board is also working on reengaging our popular programs and events. Similar to last year, due to uncertainty with our holding our annual meeting and election in person this June, we are preparing to hold our Board of Directors Election on-line. As per our By-Laws, we need to hold our Board Election prior to the new fiscal year (starting July 1st). You will see the proposed 2021/22 Board of Directors Slate in this newsletter on Page 2, along with information on how to send in your vote if you are not online. We will be delaying our Annual Awards Event to coincide with our reopening of the McKinney House Landscape later this summer. Once again keep in touch via Facebook and our website on the latest for this upcoming renewal of the popular Annual Awards program and invitation to visit and celebrate the initial landscape renovation efforts.

Other efforts that we will be restarting and engaging include our Society's Branding and Identity efforts, the City's Historical Property

Survey, our support of an exciting new proposal from the La Mesa Village Association on a downtown community Gateway Sign project, partnering with Grossmont Center on their 60th Anniversary celebration and a new La Mesa Oral History program. Of course, we also have plans to return to our in-person La Mesa Home Tour event on Saturday November 6th. So Save the Date and follow us as more information becomes available.

As always, thanks for your support—and patience, WE KNOW THAT WE ALL SEE YOU SOON and feel free to contact me at info@lamesahistory.com with your thoughts.

Take care of yourselves, your families and our community,

Jim Newland

Jim Newland
President, La Mesa Historical Society

ARCHIVE REPORT:

Donations = New Collections Although our archives and museum has been closed to the public during the pandemic, our members, colleagues and new friends continue to look to the Society in preserving relevant archival and museum objects related to Greater La Mesa's history. We thought we would let you all know of several interesting recent donations.

Fiesta de Los Flores Programs

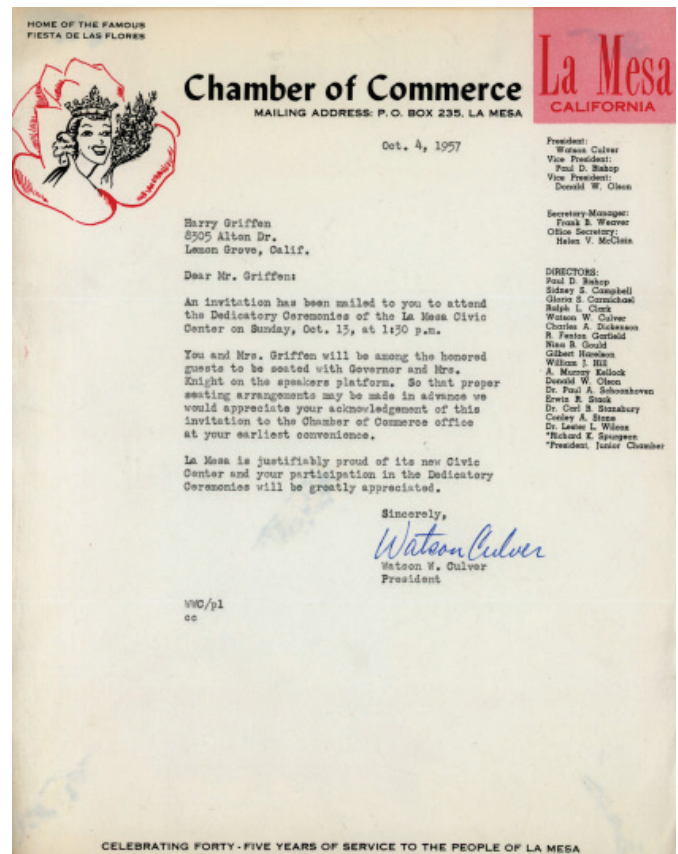
Long-time member Glenna Bloeman sent us a set of 3 original Fiesta de Los Flores programs from 1928, 1929, and 1930. The Fiesta de Los Flores was the long running flower show that brought many visitors to La Mesa each August from 1928 to 1958. Sponsored by the original La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, the Committee took on the San Diego region's appropriation of a mythical interpretation of our Hispanic heritage which was extremely popular in the interwar years.



1928 Fiesta de Los Flores Program

Harry Griffen Papers

Our colleagues at Lemon Grove Historical Society have sent us additional materials for our collections from the papers of long-time Helix Water District Board President Harry Griffen. Previous collections included photographs from the dedication of La Mesa's Harry Griffen Park (former site of Murray Hill/Grossmont Reservoir) and these latest materials include photographs, correspondence and memorabilia from Griffen's memberships in the Lemon Grove and La Mesa Rotary Clubs and his finance business on old Orange Avenue in La Mesa.



Invitation to Opening of new La Mesa City Hall, 1957. Griffen Papers

"Archive Report" Continued on Page 7

"Archive Report" Continued from Page 6



Harry Griffen, third from left at Lemon Grove Rotary event, 1954. Griffen Papers

Emmons/Craig Collection

Our members and volunteers Jim & Charlene Craig, both native La Mesans, continue to add to the materials in our archives (as well as being dedicated Archive volunteers). Charlene's father Bill Emmons being an avid photographer of the Greater La Mesa area. Here is an example of the fun and informative photo from 1980 at Rolando Elementary.



All of these 1980 "12-year-old" Rolando 6th graders can easily apply for their AARP cards today

Kygar Youth Baseball Trophy Collection

Ron Kygar presented us with the trophy collection of his brother 1957 La Mesa Colt League World Champion team member Roy Kygar. This adds

to the great story of when La Mesa was declared Youth Baseball Capitol of America.



Ron Kygar Youth Baseball Trophies, 1955-1957

Century Old Christmas Present Surprise

It is always good to know that the Society has gained a reputation as a professional-level history organization. Last fall we received a call from Drinda Frenzel in Orange County. She had come into possession of some personal items of local significance and felt we were the institution to best preserve these unique items. The objects are two matching clothing brushes featuring a special etching that connected these garment brushes to two Grossmont resident pioneers—namesake William Gross and world-famous singer Ernestine Schumann-Heink. The brushes were 1917 Christmas presents from Schumann-Heink to her long-time friend Gross. A wonderful addition to our Grossmont and Schumann-Heink collections.



One of two matching brushes featuring the etched message "Christmas Greetings, William B. Gross 1917 Love and Gratitude Schumann-Heink" donated to the Society's collections

"Archive Report" Continued on Page 8

"Archive Report" Continued from Page 7

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in volunteering despite not being able to come into the Archives Research Center and McKinney House Museum? Consider a transcription project! The LMHS Archives has many hand-written journals and diaries that are difficult to access due to their physical condition and the script they are written in. We also have sorting, indexing, cataloging and organizing tasks that can be completed without needing to be at the Archives physically. If you are interested in learning more about these opportunities, contact us at info@lamesahistory.com.

LIMITED RESEARCH SERVICE AVAILABLE

Recognizing the need for those with specific needs to access our unique archival collections during this period and complying with the public health safety for our volunteers and guests, along with preservation needs of our original materials, the Society is offering a research service for \$25 per hour to those with time sensitive research needs.

If conditions continue to improve, we also hope to have some individual appointment times available in June. If you have a research need, please contact us at info@lamesahistory.com to see if we have the capacity to assist you.

ACCESS TO OUR DIGITAL COLLECTION

One of the foundational principles of archival institutions is to provide access to the materials that they steward. Over the past few years, the La Mesa Historical Society has worked to expand the tools it uses to support this activity. To provide access, you must know what you have, and the Society is working to catalog its collections in the Proficio Elements collection management system. This is an online tool that allows us to create folder lists, collection descriptions and finding aids. The work of volunteers like Jim and Charlene Craig provides the important data needed to complete this work. Finding aids can then be shared through the Online Archives of California (OAC). The OAC provides free, detailed descriptions of collections maintained by over 200 contributing institutions throughout California and supports the discoverability of LMHS materials on our institutional webpage (<https://oac.cdlib.org/institutions/La+Mesa+Historical+Society>).

In addition, the Society is exploring the use of an online exhibit platform known as Omeka. You may have seen this site around the end of last year as we looked back at previous holiday events. (<https://lamesahistory.omeka.net/>).

Finally, the Society is looking to bring preservation and access together through our use of the Preservica trusted digital repository. Preservica is one of the leaders in digital preservation technologies and they recently offered free accounts to store, preserve and make accessible digitized materials from small historical societies. Of course we jumped right on that! Work will begin this summer to populate this repository with the recently digitized slides and other digital collection materials. If this is the kind of volunteer work you might enjoy, reach out to us. We will need a great deal of help on this project.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

JIM AND CHAR CRAIG CONTINUE CATALOGING ARCHIVE IMAGES DURING CLOSURE

Jim and Char Craig's families both have a long history in La Mesa so it isn't surprising that they volunteer with the La Mesa Historical Society. Jim's childhood home was on Lemon Avenue in the Village and they lived there after they were married. One of their grandfathers was an amateur photographer who captured many images of the area from roughly 1935 to 1949. An interest in the history of La Mesa comes naturally to them since it is tied to their history.

Most recently they became re-involved with the Society in November of 2019 when they moved back from Prescott, Arizona where they had also been involved with the local historical society. When COVID precautions shut down both the McKinney House Museum and the Archives the two had some time off but as soon as it was safe they were back quietly helping out behind the scenes in the Archives. Although the facility was closed to the public it was set up so the two could work in a separate building. "We are currently cataloging the Archives' image collection, consisting of prints, slides and negatives," said Jim. "We record the subject, date and other details, as well as where the images are located," he added. The goal is to have this information imported into a database that will enable researchers to search for images online. The two are also helping to select images to be digitized, so that many of the images will be viewable on-screen.

Using a magnifying glass, Char peers at a slide trying to determine what the image is. "It is a privilege to be able to see all these interesting images," said Char, "but I want them to be accessible so more people can see them." That is what motivates them both and why they donate so many hours each week.

"The work Jim and Char have contributed to the La Mesa Historical Society has helped us gain greater physical and intellectual control over our collections. Their work preparing materials for digitization will help us increase access and provide for new ways for us to share our content with the broader community. Jim and Char are also great to work with and they are up for anything we send their way," said Society Vice President Veronica Martzahl who is a professional archivist.

"Pre-Covid, it was enjoyable being around people researching and excitedly learning about the history of their home or neighborhood," said Jim. Hopefully that will be possible again soon, in the meantime, the Craigs will be helping to move the mission of the Society forward every Saturday as they sort through boxes of images with and without a magnifying glass.

If you are interested in helping with this kind of project please contact the Society. We have lots of work of this kind to be done.



Jim and Charlene Craig help prepare and catalog our image collections

2020 VIRTUAL HOME TOUR A SUCCESS!

It was quite a different La Mesa Home Tour experience, but it came off as a wonderful celebratory success story. Although the Society was not able to hold our traditional in-person annual Home Tour, we were able to produce a virtual “Home Tour” on Saturday November 14, 2020. Society President and historian Jim Newland hosted the 100-minute presentation featured on Facebook Live. We had over 300 participants watch the program live that morning and have had nearly another 1,000 views on our Facebook and YouTube pages.

Great kudos to all our dedicated sponsors, home tour alums and tour guests who supported us in this special home tour retrospective presentation. It was a wonderful opportunity to look back at the Society’s own history, including our former president and tour founder Gordon Jones, and how the La Mesa Home Tour has become one of the most beloved events of its kind. The program features a retrospective of all 14 home tours (2006 to 2019) along with information on the Society and its programs and activities. Our production team of George Fahouris, Tracey Stotz and Sheryl Castro made the day of the event run smoothly with a great look. Our generous homeowners, who provided interviews, were once again invaluable assets to our success. Their stories and personal reflections remind us how lucky we are to have them as community members and history stewards. These wonderful video pieces would not have been possible without the camera and editing work of filmmaker Max Mireles. The rest of our Home Tour team Donna Bloomer, Steven Churchill, Michele Greenberg-McClung, Sharon Smith and Alexander Quintero helped

with marketing, graphics, sponsorships and outreach. Another great team effort to provide our members and the community with a tangible example of our community spirit and benefit. As noted, you can re-watch the show on our Facebook site and YouTube channel.

We are hopeful that conditions will allow us to hold a more traditional in-person tour for 2021. Keep in touch with us as we monitor the situation and make plans for a La Mesa Home Tour 2021.



Screenview of the November 14, 2020 Virtual Home Tour program



Several of our Home Tour Alums provided video interviews on the fun of being Homeowner Participants of the La Mesa Home Tour

“2020 Virtual Home tour” Continued on Page 11

"2020 Virtual Home tour" Continued from Page 10



2020 VIRTUAL HOME TOUR SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



**ANONYMOUS
DONOR**

SILVER SPONSORS



Candenas
780-555-1000
candenas.com



BRONZE SPONSORS

Jason Kardos, Mt. Helix Lifestyle Real Estate

Our Tour Sponsors once again helped the Society make this a profitable endeavor for the Society



HOME TOUR HEROES OUR OWNER/PARTICIPANTS

2006
DAVID KIEVIT & DOT HARROP
KATHY TINSLEY
CHIP & NANCY SPLINTER
MARK GUNDELT & MARGARET LOZANO
RIENZI & ERIN HAYTASINGH
PACIFIC SW RAILROAD MUSEUM
LA MESA FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2007
LUCKY PUCKETT
MIKE & SUSAN STOWE
JOHN & SANDRA CAMP
CLARK MILES
RUBIELA & SABEL AGUIAR

2008
DANA SPOTTS
JANIE & PAUL KELLY
MICK ALLENSON
CHERIE PEACOCK & SOPHIA SPROULE
DAVID & HOLLY FIELDS

2009
ANNE ERDMAN
LANE RIDER
WILSON & JANINE SCHOOLEY
KEITH OKONSKI
TIM KATZMAN
CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

2010
PAM TOBIAS
DARIN & CATHY SIMMERMAN
LYNN REEVES & CLAUDIA POWELL
SCOTT & SHANNON WILSON
STEVE & JULIE LUCAS

2011
EDIE SMITH
JEFFREY KLEVE & VINCENT URSILLO
RICHARD & KELLY FORMAN
GENE VICINO & PAUL TURRO
JIM & JACKIE BARTELT

2012
CECILE WALTERS
MATT & MATINA KLEINER
AL SKALECKY & CARRIE SEBOLD
KEVIN & KNIKKI HEWITT
ROLANDO & RACHEL FLORES

2013
LAURA LOTHIAN
ROBERT WILDFONG
ROGER FEYEN AND SUSAN PRISE
STEVE AND CONNIE GARNER

2014
KEN & DONNA D'ANGELO
DELIARD & JOLENE HARWELL
DOM & ALO MUNIZZA
BUDD & VICKI WILLIS
PAT & BILL ALLEN

2015
CINDY DAVIS
JOHN & JEANNIE URBANEK
SHARON FITZPATRICK & LINDA DAVIS
MICHAEL & SUSAN STOWE
JEREMY & KATIE MARTINSON

2016
BRIAN & JORA VESS
STEVE CHRISTIANSEN & MARK REICH
SKIP CARTER & SUESAN WAY
CHRIS EVERETT & SARAH STREET
MARK & LORETTA CHAVEZ
MIKE & KRISTEN NALU
TODD PITMAN & CARMEN PAULI

2017
TRENT & MARIA TILTON
MIKE DESHAZO
DON & NANCY CARY
KRISTINE ALESSIO
GLORIA GALETKA
JOE & MARY BRAUNWARTH
ELLEN ARCADY

2018
DONNIE & CLAIRE MCKEE
JULIE WHITE
JIM & ANNEMARIE TANNER
STEVEN & PATRICIA CHURCHILL
STEVEN GARJIAN
MIKE NOVAK & JAMEY POKLUDA

2019
STEPHEN & SHERYL CASTRO
CHRIS CUNDARI & JIM O'DONNELL
ESTEBAN DEL RIO & ALICIA KEMMITT
JOE HOFMANN & ISREAL HUERTA
CORY & KAREN KILL
JESSICA NEWMAN & DAVID HOULE
MELISSA TRIZINSKY

Our Home Tour Honor Roll of Homeowner Participants

JUST CAN'T STOP LA MESA HISTORY...

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON WHAT YOU ALL WANT TO KNOW

Although the Society has had a relatively quiet winter and spring 2020-21 due to the public health restrictions that closed our museum and archive facilities, there has still been some interesting work undertaken. One of those activities where I have been occupied is responding to questions associated with our Greater La Mesa area's history.

Over the last year many questions have continued to come to the Society via our website, email and Facebook pages. Some of these inquiries required more extensive research, others were already known but needed retelling and others were new questions in need of an answer. Either way, it has been fun to address some of these topics.

In this Lookout Avenue feature article, I will provide a few examples of some of the findings triggered from your questions.

Q: Where o Where was the Grossmont Movie Studio located?

A question that has come up over the years has related to the La Mesa area's notable association with the early motion picture industry. Many have heard or read previously of the pioneering American Film Manufacturing Company's Flying A Films crew that spent about a year housed in the Wolff Building on La Mesa Boulevard from 1911 to 1912. La Mesa takes great pride in knowing that we had a pioneering motion picture studio just prior to the first studio opening in Hollywood.

Of course, Hollywood would eventually become the center of the burgeoning early 20th Century motion picture industry and La Mesa would not. But there was another "brick and mortar" attempt at establishing motion pictures in the area during the 1920s. The initial effort was Arthur Sawyer's S-L Studios starting in 1922. Sawyer promised development of a major studio full of movie stars that would bring fame and fortune to La Mesa. S-L purchased land in the Brier Tract near old Eucalyptus Reservoir (now Briercrest Park) and had a studio building constructed by mid 1923. However, by late that year it was clear that the company was in financial trouble. Local investors Ed Fletcher and Fred White took over and in early 1924 reorganized the company under the name Grossmont Studios. They found new investors and new management, who produced a few, not particularly notable, films and by late 1928 it was clear that the proposition was not sustainable. In 1931 Fletcher then leased the old studio building, located just off U.S. 80 for a roller rink and dance hall until it burned down in 1934.



S-L Studio Building, 1922. San Diego architects the Quayle Brothers designed this building

"Just Can't Stop La Mesa History" Continued on Page 13

"Just Can't Stop La Mesa History" Continued from Page 12

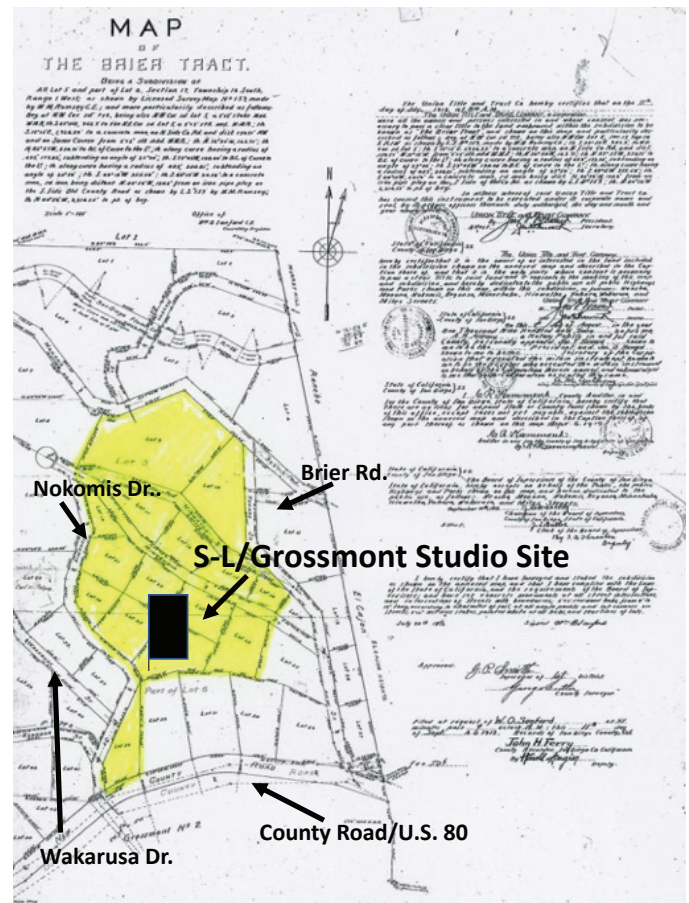


One of the Grossmont Studio outdoor sets, this one an Egyptian themed set for a reported biblical story film. The outdoor sets were located east of the main studio building, 1925

Many sources noted that the location of the old Grossmont Studios building was roughly "west of the lotus pond" (the natural spring-fed pond behind today's Anthony's Restaurant). In my "Around Mt Helix" book I repeated that general location reference but recognized that the historic photo of the S-L Studio is clearly not adjacent to the pond. This begged the question just how far west was the studio from the pond and Water Street (which paralleled the San Diego flume and San Diego and Cuyamaca Eastern railway (now the trolley line)?

Last Fall, Society member Rick Sweeney was continuing his research into his home neighborhood Severin Grossmont Hills that sits directly west of the pond up to Severin Drive. Rick and I had recently dug up some sources as to that area's history, especially on the area west of Severin up to the Grossmont Hospital and Grossmont Shopping Center (at various times known as La Mesa Knolls and the La Suvida neighborhood). Rick had recently done some deed research to confirm that the property adjacent to the pond was not the specific location of the S-L Grossmont Studio building. Information that he has shared publicly in a La Mesa Courier article last Fall.

But the question remained as to where was it specifically located? Upon Rick's request for use of the historic S-L Studio photo, I finally set some time aside to confirm the exact location of the studio. I dug out my old notes from the Ed Fletcher Collection held at UCSD Special Collections. There I found the documentation of the specific property purchased by the S-L Studio. The Company purchased 15 lots from the core of the 1912 Brier Tract subdivision including a lot that followed Nokomis Street to the County Road that was then the new state highway, and in 1926, became U.S. 80.

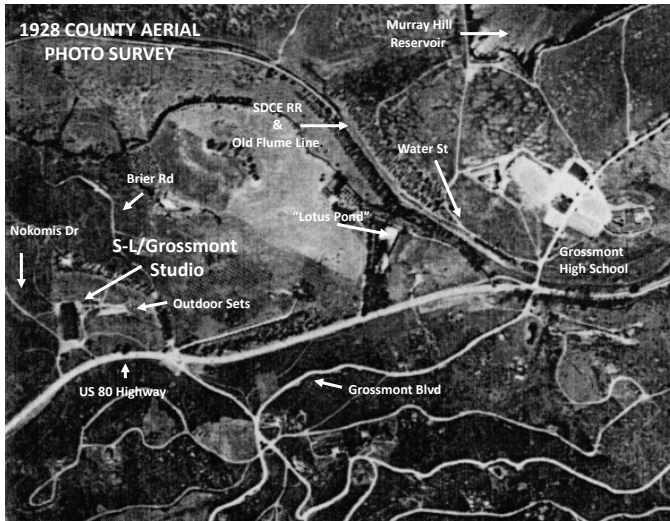


Shaded lots were those purchased by S-L Studios and transferred to Grossmont Studios. Existing Brier Tract streets are included for context

Then using the 1928 County Aerial survey photo the specific placement of the main Quayle Brothers' designed studio building was easily placed on their lots—with its additional outdoor sets to its east side. The building therefore was located within lots 34 and 35 of the Briar Tract.

"Just Can't Stop La Mesa History" Continued on Page 14

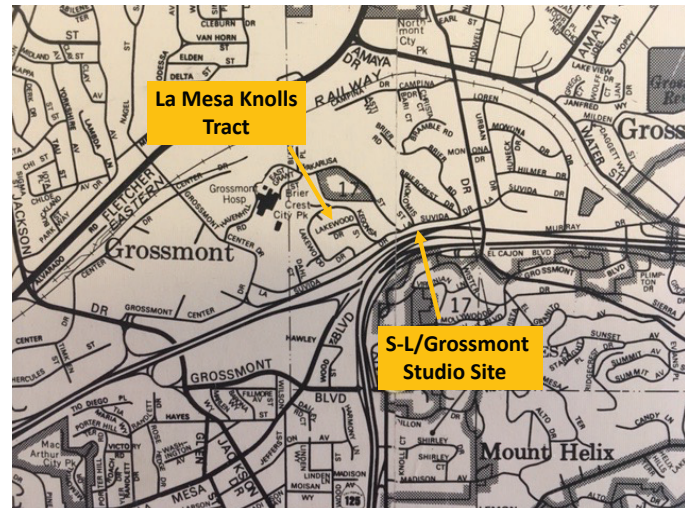
"Just Can't Stop La Mesa History" Continued from Page 13



This cropped image from the County's 1928 Aerial photo survey shows the location of the Grossmont Studio adjacent to Nokomis Street and approximately ¾ mile west of the "lotus pond"

So why has it been so hard to find this particular site today? Because those lots mostly don't exist anymore. First, starting in 1956 the U.S. 80 interchange with the new Bancroft Freeway (today's SR-125 south of I-8) required widening of the new U.S. 80 freeway to the north of its original route. Then in the late 1980s with the extension of the 125 north and construction of the massive interchange with Interstate 8 those original southern lots of the Briar Tract were taken out by CalTrans as well as the entire 1938 La Mesa Knolls neighborhood directly to the west. This area being fully demolished for the new freeway interchange. This required the removal of La Suvida and Lakewood Drives (which was a reroute of the old County/US 80 road seen in the earlier maps and its replacement with the current route of Murray Drive which was realigned to the north to connect directly with Grossmont Center Drive as it does today.

So, where was the old Studio location? Today that site is mostly in the middle of current Murray Drive near its intersection with the remaining northern half of Nokomis Street.



Crop of City Map from the 1970s shows the former Briar/La Mesa Knolls streets Kegonsa, Dahl, Lakewood and La Suvida that would be removed by freeway projects. Note: the fate of La Mesa Knolls and its amazing homes will be the subject of a future article

Q: Lincoln v. Jackson. What happened to Lincoln Street, and When and Why did it go away?

La Mesan Jason Klein has sent in a number of questions to our Facebook site on the naming and renaming of our streets and roads. One of the latest was: What Year was Lincoln Street renamed Jackson Drive? And what was the reason for the change?

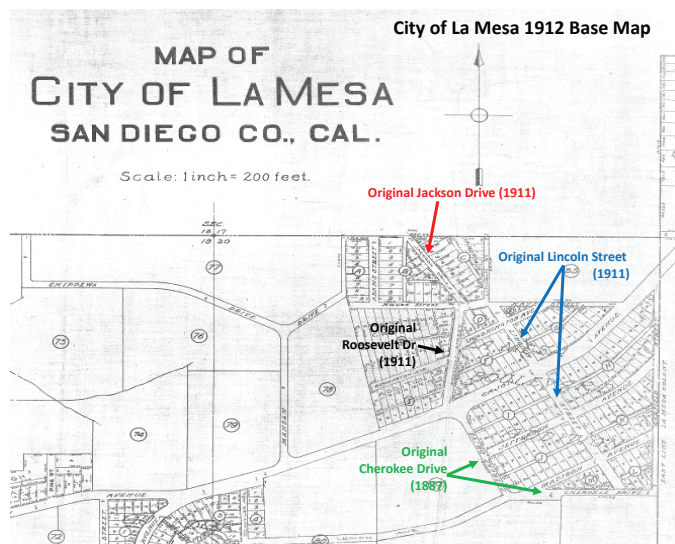
The origin of the "US president streets" in La Mesa dates back to the 1911 North La Mesa subdivision and its 1912 re-platting as the Boulevard Addition Tract. Today we know this area as a neighborhood of mostly 1930s and 1940s small minimal traditional homes located north of Lemon Avenue from Glen Street out to Garfield and north to Grossmont Boulevard. The 1911 North La Mesa tract including streets named for all the pre-1912 presidents plus some named for famous Civil War generals such as Logan and Lee and Revolutionary War hero Lafayette. Those with presidential knowledge recognize that the streets in this suburban tract include names from first president Washington up to 1912s brand new president Wilson. Washington, Garfield, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Wilson and Hayes being some of the

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"Just Can't Stop La Mesa History" Continued from Page 14

remaining streets. The others are lost to re-subdivision in 1912 and later name changes. However, perhaps the most revered of those early presidents is missing--Lincoln.

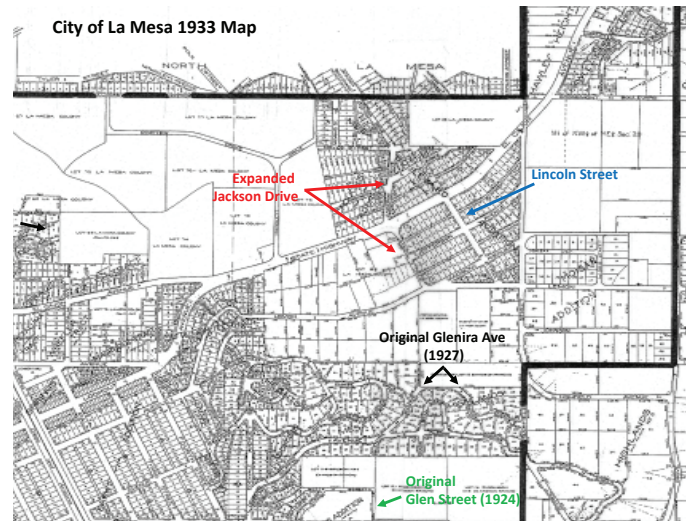
In fact, originally there was a Lincoln Avenue and a Lincoln Street in the 1911 tract. Lincoln Avenue would be near the current route of Grossmont Boulevard between Jackson and La Mesa Boulevard but appears not to be a part of the 1912 re-platting. Lincoln Street ran north from Lemon Avenue to its intersection with Hayes. Jackson Boulevard, later Drive, originally ran north from Hayes only.



Overlay of City of La Mesa 1912 base map, showing La Mesa Boulevard Addition re-platting of North La Mesa subdivision. Cajon Avenue is today's La Mesa Boulevard but was the old county road that had just become the State Highway. Cherokee, Chippewa and Mandan were streets dating from the San Diego Flume Company's 1887 La Mesa Colony tract. Lemon Avenue originated with the 1894 La Mesa Springs subdivision around the Allison Railroad depot and later Parks Addition and Outlook Terrace subdivisions to the east

After the 1925 Crouch Addition re-subdivided the streets to the west of then Roosevelt Drive, the Jackson Drive name was extended south onto what today is Glen Street (originally Roosevelt) north of La Mesa Boulevard. By 1933 the Jackson name also had been extended again south across La Mesa Boulevard to rename the

original San Diego Flume Company's 1887 La Mesa Colony Cherokee Drive (now Glen south of La Mesa Boulevard). Glen Street's origins being in the 1924 King Addition tract in the Highlands (between Butte and Mariposa streets).



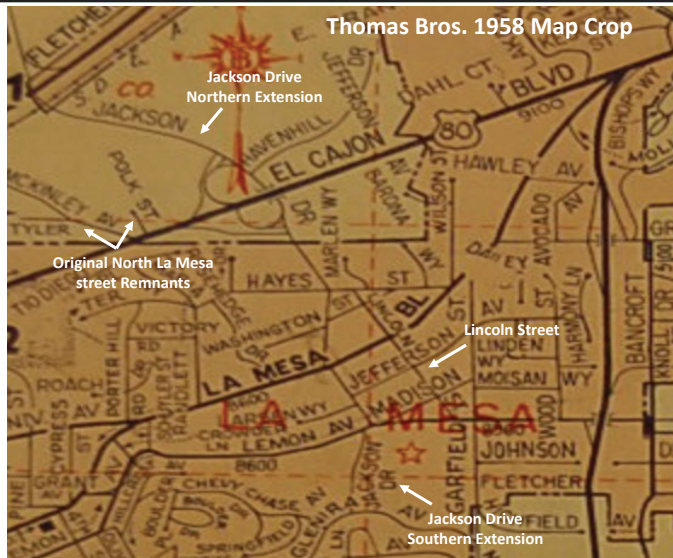
This crop of the 1933 City of La Mesa Map shows the initial extension of Jackson Drive south to the Lemon Avenue extension east to Mt Helix, both replacing Cherokee Drive. The King's Addition Glen Street and La Mesa Highland's Glenira can be seen in their original configurations

After the construction of Lemon Avenue School in 1942, a new road was then built up the steep hill to intersect with Glenira Avenue into the La Mesa Highlands tract. The 5-block long Lincoln Street was still in place into the early 1970s (from Lemon to Hayes).

Jackson Drive had therefore not only been extended south onto old Glenira Avenue along the current Glen Street route all the way to Alpine Drive in the Highlands, but far north into the 1950s annexed and built-out north City neighborhoods. Jackson Drive then being extended north past the freeway (1952), Grossmont Center (1961) and beyond through the Lake Murry Village (1955) and Murray Manor (1953) subdivisions where it connected to the City of San Diego's San Carlos neighborhood (1959).

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1958 Thomas Brothers San Diego County map, sheet 10, cropped with additions

That all changed when the La Mesa City Council approved the name change of Lincoln Street to Jackson Drive (from Lemon Avenue north to Hayes) in September 1971. At the same time the southern extension of Jackson Drive south of Hayes was all renamed to Glen (to match it with its Kings Addition tract street name that had been extended north from Alpine Drive). The multiple name changes of the pieces of today's Glen are physically evident as it does not have parallel interchange alignment at its crossings of Lemon Ave, La Mesa Blvd or Alpine Drive—all originally different streets that got melded together first as Jackson Drive, then in 1972 to Glen Street.

Property owners and businesses on Lincoln and the Jackson south extensions had until September 1, 1972 before the name changes became effective. The changes were made due to a large City capital outlay project that included the widening and realignment of major connector streets Lake Murray Blvd, Baltimore Drive and Jackson Drive. Jackson Drive was subsequently extended and widened south from the interchange with Interstate 8 to four lanes to La Mesa Blvd as the City realized the increased traffic needs on those connector streets in the growing community. Thus, La Mesa's Lincoln Street was wiped from the local map and Glen Street got a big extension. Note that Jackson

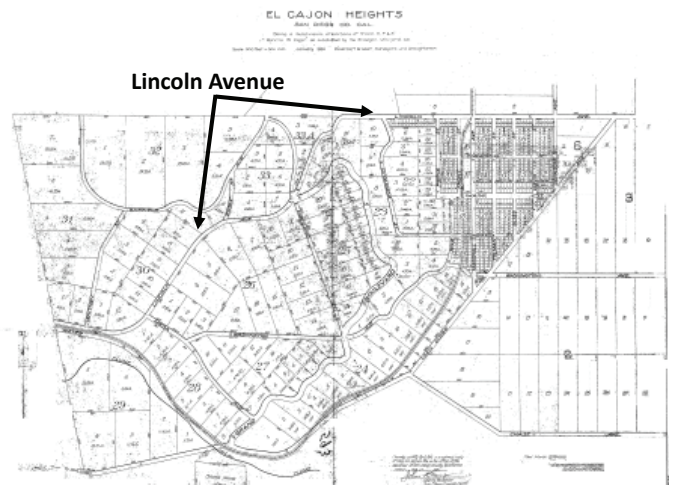
Drive was originally planned to go north through San Diego's San Carlos community to Mission Gorge then to cross the San Diego River to connect to new 1970s San Diego community Tierrasanta. The creation of Mission Trails Regional Park ended those connection plans.



This 1980s Aerial photograph illustrates the completed 4-lane Jackson Drive improvement project south to La Mesa Boulevard and the renamed Glen Street segments. La Mesa Historical Society Archives

Fletcher Hills Also Loses its "Lincoln" street

Speaking of local roads named for Lincoln, the main east-west road through the 1889 El Cajon Heights subdivision was originally named Lincoln Avenue. (This area is now the southern half of Fletcher Hills including the property that would become Grossmont High School and down the eastern slope into El Cajon). That Lincoln Avenue route ran roughly on today's Amaya Drive route that deadends into Murray Avenue and then heads down West Main Street to El Cajon.



El Cajon Heights subdivision Map, 1889. Lincoln Avenue is identified

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We assume that those listed on the plaque were friends or family of key donors—or perhaps passed away La Mesa Seniors group members. It would take some further research to clarify those specific individuals' connections to the project. Initial searches of those names in the both the Scout and Union-Tribune didn't lead to any particular information. Perhaps someone out there has some info to enlighten us?

Q: Where does the name Memorial Drive come from in MacArthur Park?

"Memorial" Drive

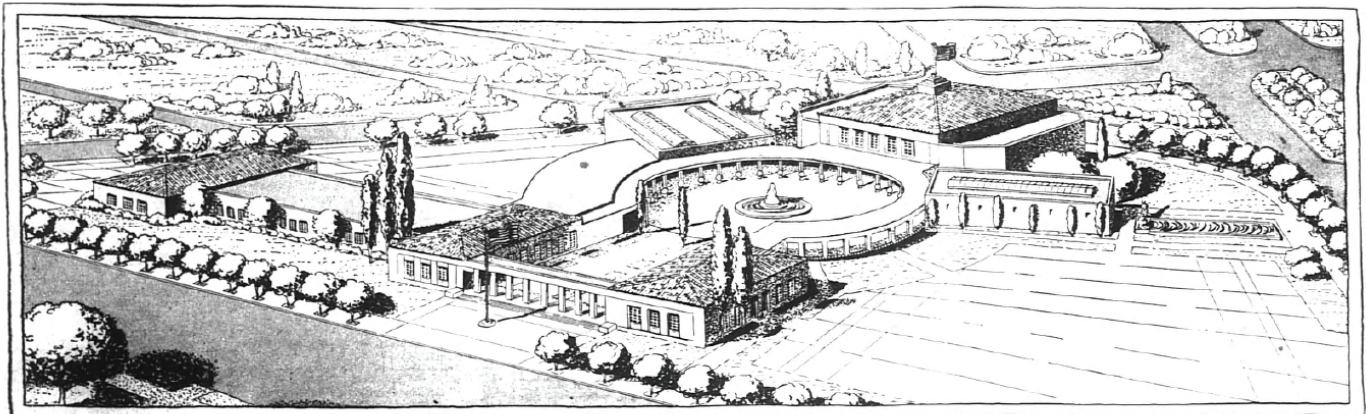
Many are aware the City is currently working on a big plan update for MacArthur Park. But as Kristen's question infers, most do not understand the historic effort that went into the

creation of this foundational city park. Here is a brief explanation of how the park was created--and named.

La Mesa's exponential growth during and after WWII led the City to consider a new larger park for the growing City (Collier Park was the only park at the time). Mayor Ben Polak's Greater La Mesa Committee was formed during World War II to address not only the initial growth during the War, but the San Diego Region's acknowledgment of coming growth in the Post-War period. The Committee's grand vision, approved by the City Council in 1943 for La Mesa included new parks and recreational facilities, a new City Civic Center, an industrial/manufacturing zone and a War Memorial Building.

LA MESA SCOUT, LA MESA, CALIFORNIA, AUGUST 18, 1944

La Mesa's Proposed New Civic Center



A. G. TREGANZA AND SAM W. HAMILL, ARCHITECTS

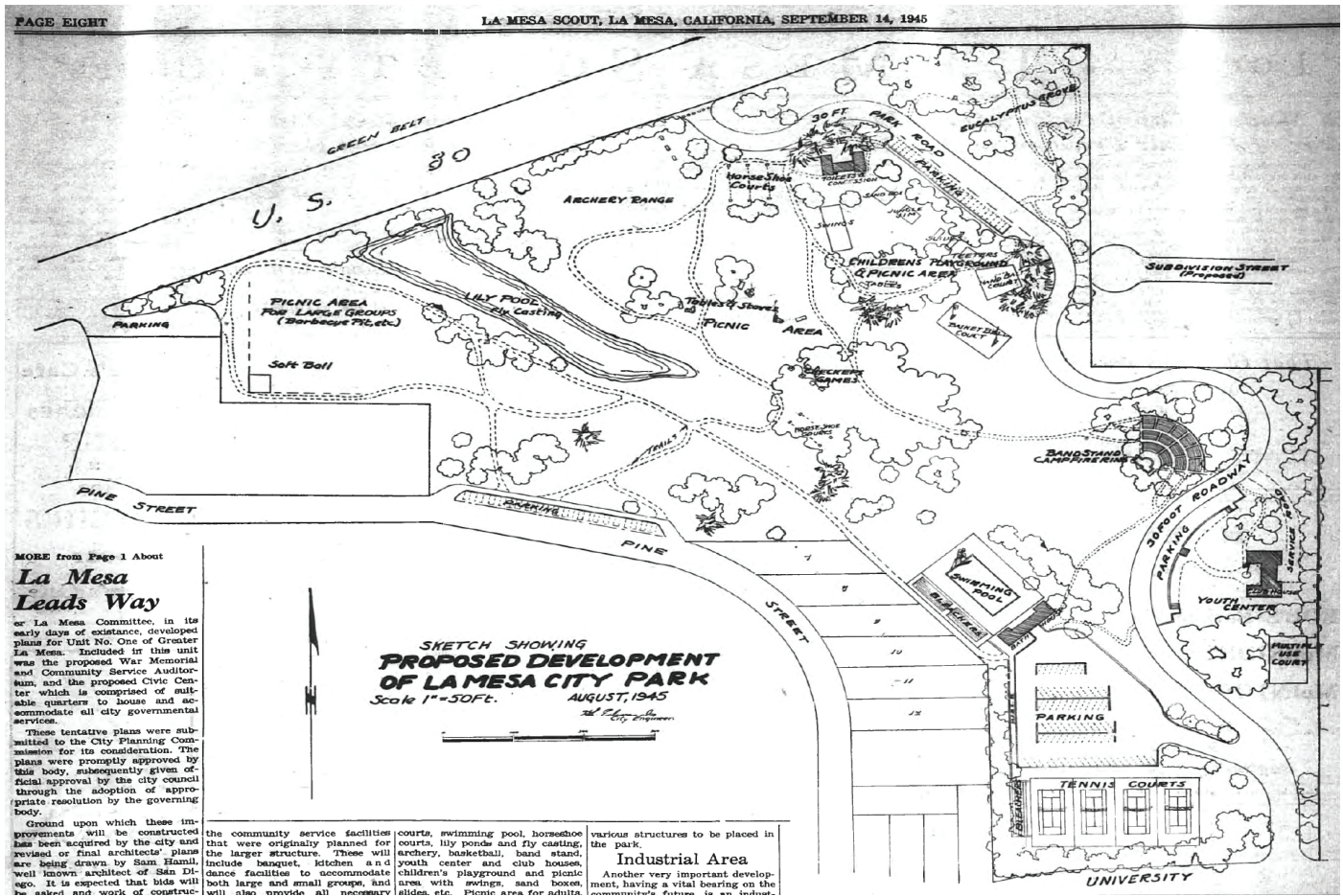
Architects' preliminary drawing for proposed Civic Center as one of La Mesa's post-war projects, showing War Memorial back of circular fountain. The site for the overall project, embracing city administration building, fire department, police department and other municipal functions, is located at Allison and University Avenues.

By August 1944 the City had developed concepts for a new Civic Center (on the current Alison Avenue Civic Center site) including a War Memorial Building facing today's University Avenue. Local architects Alberto Treganza and Sam Hamill's initial design for La Mesa's War Memorial Building was never built, but these concepts would later lead to the War Memorial Building in Balboa Park. La Mesa Scout August 18, 1944

Recognizing the need for significant improvements in recreational facilities and programs, especially for youth, City leaders moved to meet the demand. In 1945 the City purchased the property across U.S. 80 from the Porter Hall City Library building (site of the current Adult Center) from the Porter Family with plans for a new, larger "central" park for growing La Mesa. By September 1945 the initial proposal was out for review.

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Original concept plans for new central "La Mesa City Park." September 14, 1945 La Mesa Scout

During the next two years the plans were vetted. In 1946 the City considered the idea of incorporating the War Memorial Building into the park for use not just as a community meeting facility but a gymnasium. With the City's new priority for the park to include the proposed War Memorial Building, the park began to be unofficially identified as Memorial Park.

After notable California planning expert L. Deming Tilton weighed in in early 1947, the Park's plans began to crystalize. The first priority would be the Youth Building. Completed in 1948, it was the first improvement in the new Memorial Park (it still is in use today with dance floors and meeting rooms next to the Community Center). With Mayor Polak's hope that the War Memorial Building would be a key element to the new Park, the entrance road was named "Memorial Drive."

officials and community leaders were concerned with the unofficial name "Memorial Park." Some were in issue for the connotation, which was often associated with cemeteries (memorial parks). Others felt that a name with more public relations potential should be preferred.

Especially after Ben Polak left office in 1948 the interest in constructing the War Memorial Building in the new park began to be challenged. The new Mayors and Council members along with the Planning and Park and Recreation Commissions, saw other Post-War priorities such as developing a new Civic Center with City Hall, Police and Fire Stations, development of the Industrial Zone near the planned U.S. 80 bypass freeway, and more active recreation facilities (pool, ball fields, etc.) as higher, and more cost-effective and practical needs.

However, as early as Summer 1947, many City

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After the Youth Building's dedication in October 1948, the Park's initial improvements would eventually include the Municipal Swimming Pool complex in 1953, Nan Cout's Girls Cottage in 1955, Kuhlken Little League field in 1956 and the Golf Course in 1959. Porter Hall, the former City Library was moved across the street from its original location in 1964 to make room for the Senior Adult Center construction.

Naming the Park: Memorial vs. MacArthur

Although significant fundraising efforts had been undertaken, after 1950 interest would wane for La Mesa building a War Memorial Building. In the meantime, the new City Council, along with Mayor Miles Nagel were still looking for a permanent name for Memorial Park. In July 1951, following the completion of the State of California sponsored City Recreation Survey Report, and discussions undertaken by the City's Planning Commission, a majority of the City Council voted to name the Park. After four years of inactivity in naming the new park, the Council majority's decision took many by surprise and triggered concerns with both process and content.

City Council Gives Memorial Park New Name; Stirs Protest

It was not until the day after the La Mesa City Council named the Memorial Park "Douglas MacArthur Park" upon the recommendation of the city Planning Commission, that La Mesa boulevard began to buzz with arguments for and against the action.

Headline of surprise naming of MacArthur Park. La Mesa Scout July 26, 1951

The Planning Commission had made several recommendations to the Council that July in relation to the Park. One being to purchase additional land to the east of the Youth Building for needed parking (later site of the Community Center), and then to surprisingly adopt the

"Douglas MacArthur Park" name. Several Planning Commissioners and Councilmembers hoped the internationally renowned General would be invited to visit La Mesa and dedicate the park in his name.

The first to be concerned was Mayor Nagel himself. Nagel suggested a substitute motion for the Council to refer the naming recommendation to both the Mayor's Advisory Committee and the City's Park and Recreation Commission to get more public input. A Council majority however determined that they had the authority to take the action and the votes to implement it. One of their justifications being that the Park and Recreation Commission was not fully established via city ordinance.

According to the Scout, many were upset at the Council's apparent unilateral action. Alfred Nall, Park and Recreation Commission Chairman went on record to note that "the decision in connection with naming the park was made completely without consultation or discussion with the Park and Recreation Commission." Local matriarch Mrs. Nan Cout's was quoted: "Speaking as a citizen, I deeply regret that the Council did not sleep on the subject before taking action."

For context in Summer 1951, General Douglas MacArthur was an internationally known, but controversial public figure. He first gained infamy for his leading of U.S. troops against protesting veterans in Washington DC during the height of the Great Depression in 1932. Although noted for his military leadership during and after WWII in the Pacific, he had become an outspoken public figure. After leading the U.S. forces in the Korean Conflict in 1950, he ran afoul of President Harry Truman. Truman relieved MacArthur from command for insubordination in April 1951. MacArthur received both disgrace, but also significant public empathy and support after his dismissal. As such MacArthur was under consideration as a potential Republican Party candidate for the 1952 Presidential campaign. (General Dwight

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D. Eisenhower, far less controversial, would eventually get the Republican nomination and serve two terms as President). Coincidentally, the height of MacArthur's public controversy was in the Summer of 1951--the time of the majority Republican City Council's action.

Interestingly the Park naming controversy seems to have fallen away with the efforts of the Council in addressing the Park and Recreation Commission's role and status. During the next year the focus was on the formal establishment of the Park and Recreation Commission (now Community Services Commission) and its coordination with the City Council. During the following year, the Scout never referred to the Park by the MacArthur name—they simply referred to it as "Park."

By June 1953 however little had been addressed on the Park name issue. Scout columnist Jim Hill wrote that Mrs. Coutts had not gotten much traction on the idea of changing the name back, even after she became Park and Recreation Commission Chair. Hill joked that a compromise might be to rename it "MacMemorial Park."

Scans of the next couple of years of Scout issues indicate that the MacArthur Park name had been generally accepted for the park and was being used consistently. In both 1957 and 1958 Scout editor and columnist Jim Hill Interestingly brought the issue back. He was a strong supporter of the Memorial Park name to honor all La Mesans who had sacrificed during WWII and the Korean Conflict.

Finally in August 1958 after the Park and Recreation Commission requested authority to rename the park, the City Council concurred. In early December 1958 the Park and Recreation Commission provided its suggested new name, "Foothills Park." Their outreach efforts also gathering options including second choice "Cerro Verde," as well as "La Mesa" and "Central." The Commission reported no particular

opposition to their recommended new name.

At the next City Council meeting the Scout reported that the Council "acted as if they had never heard of the move to change the name" and simply asked for the Commission to return with their renaming justification. At the first Council meeting in January 1959 the issue returned for a Council vote. Former Planning Commissioner Austin Cordtz, who had led the MacArthur naming charge in 1951, was one of the half dozen speakers in opposition. Cordtz claimed the name change effort being a long-standing political response to "smirch" the name of the patriotic general and war hero. Commission Chairman Fred Lance's argument that the renaming would end the long-standing park-name confusion went on deaf ears as the Council unanimously rejected the change.

Scout editor Dick Sims disappointedly called it one of the most partisan issues in La Mesa in 1959, and cynically responded that when arguing to the Council that is "is best to ignore the facts" and just make the "biggest fuss." Thus, MacArthur Park is still the name today.

Interestingly the Park has really never been referred to as "Douglas MacArthur Park." Perhaps "MacArthur Park" may have been an unofficial compromise to address concerns with honoring the controversial namesake.

So Kristin, that is why we have a Memorial Drive--in MacArthur Park.*

*Final Note: Please no Richard Harris or Donna Summer questions. I also have no idea why someone in a real or fictional MacArthur Park would "leave a cake out in the rain."

By: James D. Newland

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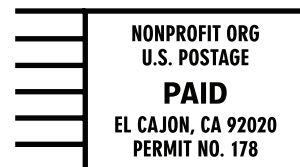
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