

Winter 2023

lookout avenue

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The NEWSLETTER of the LA MESA HISTORY CENTER

VOLUME 48, #1

Upcoming Events

LA MESA
History Center

La Mesa History Center Check Out Our Upcoming Events

February
11

The Past In Your Hands: Handicraft Traditions from Yesterday to Today

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Family Friendly!

Try your hand at a historic craft to see how similar we are to families long ago! Learn how to recycle t-shirts to make a braided rug, or weave a potholder to take home, and search for clues to the past inside the McKinney home.

March
11

Women's Club Celebration

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Tying in with international Day of the Woman, this event celebrates our acquisition of the La Mesa Woman's Club records. Activities include a workshop on preserving your scrapbooks (1:30 pm) and a tea party (2:30 pm).

March
19

Rolando Street Fair

10:00 am to 6:00 pm

Stop by and say "hi!" at the La Mesa History Center table at the 25th Annual Rolando Street Fair.

April
07

Join Us at the La Mesa Farmer's Market

3 pm - 7 pm in La Mesa Village

April
15

What's Cooking in the Kitchen

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Family Friendly!

Stop by the La Mesa History Center for a hands-on look at cooking and kitchen gadgets of the past.

For detailed information: www.lamesahistory.com
Unless noted, all programs are at 8369 University Ave, La Mesa

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

A New Year and New Opportunities

As we forge into 2023, I am heartened by our accomplishments in 2022 and excited by the many opportunities that are ahead for the La Mesa History Center in the upcoming year.

2022 saw the launch of new programs and the return of many of our core activities. The 2nd Saturday program launched in May with our Growing Up in the McKinney House event and June brought a return to participation in the La Mesa Flag Day parade. The LMHC was also able to hold its annual meeting in person on the grounds of the McKinney House in June. We wrapped up the Buy a Brick campaign and look forward to the final set of bricks being installed in the coming weeks. We rounded out the year with our annual holiday party. Despite a very rainy day, a good crowd gathered to talk, eat, bid on raffle baskets and complete a craft.

Without question, the biggest return to normal in 2022 was the return of the in-person Home Tour in November. I am so grateful to all of the volunteers who worked in the months leading up to the event as well as those who helped make the day run smoothly. Special thanks also to the home owners who allowed hundreds of people to walk through their homes and thanks as well to our partners at the Grossmont High School Museum for their assistance with coordination and logistics. The high school served as a wonderful home base and it was a special treat to be able to include the District Administration "Castle" Building

in the tour. And of course, the lynchpin for our success is our tour committee chair, Jim Newland! Many thanks to Jim for his tireless work in finding and researching homes, as well as pulling together the pre-tour Roundtable event.

Looking ahead, we will be continuing our 2nd Saturday events with a handicraft event in February, a celebration of the La Mesa Woman's Club in March and a cooking event in April (note that April will be the 3rd Saturday). Also look for the LMHC table at the upcoming Rolando Street Fair on March 19th and at the La Mesa Farmers' Market on April 7th. The initial phase of the landscaping will also be wrapping up with the installation of the final bricks, a new plaque in the Memorial Rose Garden and a new sign in the front yard. We look forward to jumping into the next phase of interpretive signage and additional display opportunities in the yard! Some of that work will be supported through a generous bequest from the Mary F. Kelley estate (more info on that in the coming months!) Also look for additional ways to learn about the LMHC collections as we grow our collection of online finding aids and exhibit materials.

Thank you all for your continued support of the LMHC as we build into the future.

*Veronica Martzahl, President
La Mesa History Center*

HOLIDAY PARTY WRAPS UP 2022 FOR THE LA MESA HISTORY CENTER

A steady stream of rain didn't dampen the festive spirit of those who attended the La Mesa History Center's annual holiday party on Sunday, December 11, 2022. While activities were confined to the McKinney House and the Research Room, over three dozen people gathered to share conversation, tasty holiday treats and warm cider. A particular favorite was Board Member Samantha Albert's lemon loaf, made using Meyer lemons from the trees in the yard. She has kindly shared her recipe with us and it is included in this newsletter!

The party also served as the launch of the new La Mesa Woman's Club exhibit (see Exhibit article for more details!) and offered attendees the opportunity to participate in the annual raffle. This year's raffle was a little different - tickets were only sold at the event and you needed to be present to win - but the new format seemed to run smoothly. Thank you to all the people and local businesses who donated items for the raffle and congrats to all the winners.

In addition to great conversation and plenty of food, attendees had the opportunity to make holiday ornaments to bring home. Ornament options included hot cocoa mugs, penguins, Christmas trees, and mittens.

Lost and Found

Are you missing a pair of sunglasses from the Home Tour? How about a jacket at from the Holiday Party? If either of those sound familiar, stop by the La Mesa History Center Research Room on an upcoming Saturday between 1pm and 4pm to claim them.

Congrats to our Holiday Party Raffle Winners!

Beverage Basket – Fallon McDaniel

Dick and Jane Quilt and Books Basket – Tracey Stotz

Gift Card Basket #1 – Donna Bloomer

Gift Card Basket #2 – Karen Kill

La Caramel Basket – Valerie Richardson

Playtime Basket – Evelyn Peirson

Succulent Plant – Tracey Stotz

Watercolor painting of La Jolla – John Hottel

Watercolor painting of Lake Murray – Evelyn Peirson



Thank you to the following donors who contributed to our Holiday Party Raffle Baskets

Amethyst Moon

Brew Coffee Spot

City Tacos

Curbside Eatery and Drinkery

Donna Bloomer

Donna Niemeier

Jim Newland

Johnny B's

Kristine Alessio

Maxwell's House of Books

Tracey Stotz



La LMHC Archives welcomes two interns for Fall 2022 semester



The LMHC Archives was pleased to have two interns to assist with processing and cataloging during the fall 2022.

Fallon McDaniel is a senior at San Diego State University and she completed her Anthropology 495 internship with the Archives. The focus of her work was on material culture, and she enhanced hundreds of cataloging records for our physical object collection, associating photos and accession information with the descriptive records. She also created an online collection of household objects that highlight the modernization and commercialization of household objects. These items can be viewed at <https://lamesahistory.omeka.net/collections/show/2>.

Brenna Peirson wrapped up her Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from Simmons University with her internship focused on the La Mesa Woman's Club Records. See the article on the new exhibit to learn more about Brenna and her work!

LEMON LOAF

Cake:

1 cup granulated sugar
Zest of 2-3 medium lemons
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp fine salt
3 eggs, room temperature
½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup sour cream
½ tsp vanilla extract

Glaze:

¼ cup lemon juice (1-2 lemons)
1 cup powdered sugar

Rub the lemon zest into the sugar with your fingertips or a spoon until the sugar is moistened; set aside.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and prep a loaf pan with baking spray or by buttering and flouring.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt and set aside.

Beat the eggs, sugar, oil, and sour cream until very well blended. It may take some elbow grease to come together well. Add the vanilla and mix until incorporated. Add the dry ingredients and mix gently until just combined.

Pour batter into the loaf pan and spread evenly. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until the loaf is deep golden and springs back, and/or a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

While the loaf is baking, add the lemon juice to the powdered sugar little by little in a 1 cup liquid measuring cup to make the glaze.

Once baked, pour the glaze evenly over the loaf—best done in two coats.

Allow the glaze to set and the loaf to cool before slicing and enjoying!

Notes and substitutions:

Use full fat Greek yogurt instead of sour cream

Combine or swap lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit or other citrus zest and glaze

Make a thicker or thinner glaze by adjusting the ratio of powdered sugar to juice

Bake in 2 round cake pans with parchment lined bottoms, or in a well-greased small Bundt pan instead of a loaf pan

For a glaze that seeps in and then creates a crackly thin crust on the loaf, pour it as soon as the loaf is out of the oven, or allow the loaf to cool before glazing if you prefer a thicker outer glaze.

This keeps a couple days at room temperature if well wrapped. It also freezes very well, unglazed.

Use lemons from your local History Center for an uncommonly tasty loaf!

16th Annual La Mesa History Center Home Tour “Fabulous Foothill-ers” A Rousing Success

La Mesa History Center welcomed all back for In-Person Home Tour

Featuring Brier Tract, Mt. Helix & Grossmont Hills neighborhoods

The La Mesa History Center Home Tour returned to its popular in-person format. Over 300 guests made their way through five outstanding examples of Grossmont, Brier Tract and Mt Helix foothill neighborhood architectural gems. In addition, the History Center partnered with the century old institutional landmark Grossmont High School and the GHS Museum to provide a special tour of its original, and rehabilitated 1922 “Castle” school building.

Thanks to all our Home Tour participant families for opening their homes, our crew of dedicated volunteers, our sponsors and of course all those purchased tickets and supported our efforts.





Two of the gorgeous homes featured on the History Center's 2022 Home Tour.





Highline Charters' buses and long-winded bus guides signal the return of the La Mesa History Center Home Tour.



Smiling docents and homeowners such as Michelle Hottel (L) and Catherine Binotti (r), helped tour visitors maximize their experience, guide them, and answer questions in their explorations of these distinctive and beautiful homes.



Home Tour Reunion! Former owners and tour participants Gene Vicino and Paul Turro with current owner Dania Conde-Barroso (above), and visitors comb through family memorabilia at Petersen estate (below).







Grossmont High School Museum volunteers manned the historic “Castle” building, educating guests on the wonderfully rehabilitated building, along with views of historic exhibits and building elements.

**Thank you to all our Home Tour 2022 sponsors.
Without you the tour would not be possible!**

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La Mesa Village Association

**Is proud to support the La Mesa
History Center's 16th Annual
Home Tour**



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As a La Mesa native, Andrea is proud to support the La Mesa History Center and the 16th Annual Home Tour!



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HISTORY ROUNDTABLE ILLUMINATES ON SIGNIFICANT LA MESA'S ART & ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATED WITH SAN DIEGO MODERNIST ICONS LLOYD RUOCCO & ILSE HAMANN RUOCCO

Thanks to all who attended our Roundtable Lecture on the art & architectural heritage associated with the History Center's 2022 Home Tour—"Fabulous Foothill-ers" held October 20th, 2022.

Historian Jim Newland presented on the history of the Grossmont, Brier and Mt Helix communities as well as previewed the amazing, featured tour homes designed by noted architects and builders including Stanley Scott, Cliff May, Harry Hayden Whiteley and Lloyd Ruocco.

Following Newland's presentation, he was joined by post war San Diego art and architectural historian/curator Dave Hampton and landscape architect and Lloyd Ruocco historian Todd Pitman. Dave and Todd helped explain the significance of these regional art, architecture and planning leaders' legacy—as well as their unique connection to La Mesa.

If you were not one of the Roundtable Lecture attendees, do not fret.

The video is now posted on the History Center's YouTube page:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yUi-zypFmM&t=41s>

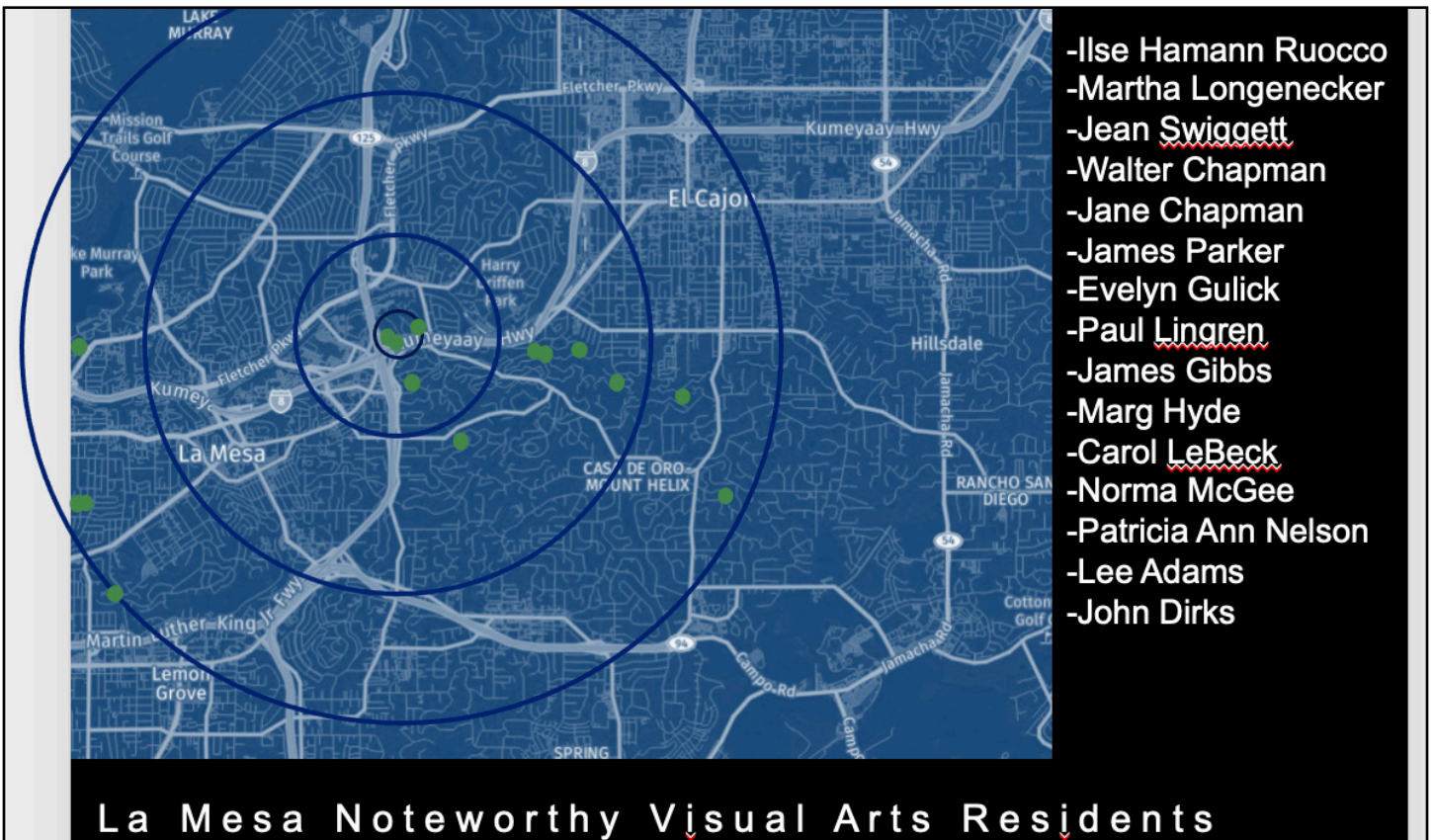
Keep an eye out for the next History Center Roundtable presentations.



*Jim Newland, Dave Hampton and Todd Pitman enlightening the Roundtable audience.
Photo courtesy Karen Austin.*



Photo of Lloyd and Ilse at their La Mesa home, known as Il Cavo. Photo courtesy Todd Pitman



Dave Hampton's map of notable Mid-Century artists who lived and worked in the greater La Mesa area.

LANDSCAPE RENOVATION UPDATE

Memorial Rose Garden a Highlight

Pedestrians walking by the McKinney House have literally stopped to smell the roses. Moving the memorial rose garden to the front of the property has brought attention and positive comments from the neighbors who have been spotted leaning over the fence to take a sniff of the fragrant pink blooms. Thanks to Board members Donna Bloomer and Sheryl Castro, who have been maintaining the garden, it continues to be a lovely addition to the landscape.



Board members Sheryl Castro (left) and Donna Bloomer maintain the memorial rose garden. If you are interested in helping with this effort please email info@amesahistory.com.



Volunteer Dianne McCann shares her knowledge and hard work with Sheryl Castro to keep our roses healthy.

The next big step will be the installation of the monument sign in the front of the property. In January, the City of La Mesa finally approved the La Mesa History Center sign, which will be installed at the corner of Pine and University. It is being manufactured now and will be in place as soon as it is completed. The design honors the history of the site while providing us with an opportunity to let the public know when the McKinney

House Museum is open.

A sign is also in the works for the memorial rose garden which will list all those recognized in the previous rose garden. Finally, all bricks from the Buy-a-Brick fundraising program have arrived and will be installed when the sign is put in.

After we get through those projects next on the list are as follows:

A large display case near the Archives Building to permanently display large objects such as a printing press from The La Mesa Scout and historic signage.

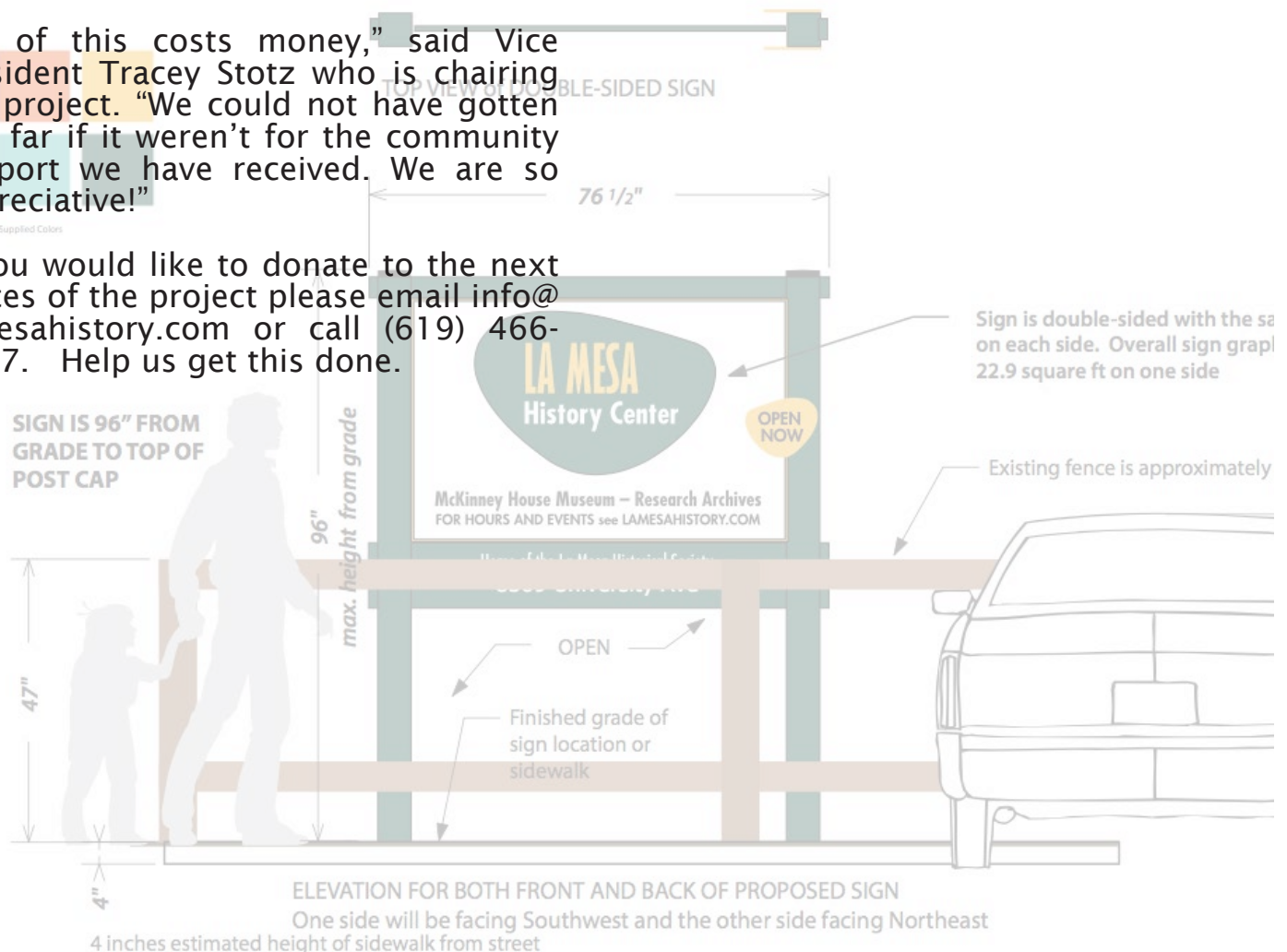
Interpretive signs throughout the site
A trellis/ramada to be placed near the southwest corner of the house to provide shade for summer programs.

"All of this costs money," said Vice President Tracey Stotz who is chairing the project. "We could not have gotten this far if it weren't for the community support we have received. We are so appreciative!"

If you would like to donate to the next pieces of the project please email info@lamesahistory.com or call (619) 466-0197. Help us get this done.

Volunteer Opportunities

Do you have one free Saturday afternoon each month? The La Mesa History Center is looking for docents to help with the McKinney House and to assist with our 2nd Saturday events. For more information, email info@lamesahistory.com or stop by the Research Room on Saturdays between 1pm and 4pm.



LA MESA HISTORY CENTER HELPS CITY WITH RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORIC LA MESA SPRINGS CIVIC FOUNTAIN AT LA MESA DEPOT

City Reconstructs Historic 1915 Springs Fountain at Depot Site

Collier Park Phase II Improvements Includes Rebuilding La Mesa Springs Fountain

The City is currently undertaking the Phase II Improvements project at Collier Park. Collier Park being the oldest and historically listed property. This is the second major project following up on the 2012 Collier Park Master Plan. One of the key questions during the planning and design for this phase of work was what to do with the 1965 era “La Mesa Springs” Fountain.

City Director of Community Services Sue Richardson reached out to History Center historian Jim Newland to inquire about the long-standing but non-functioning water fountain. Newland provided the history and historical context. The current fountain at Collier Park had been built in 1965 from remains of the original 1915 “La Mesa Springs Fountain” that stood next to the c1914 version of the La Mesa Depot. Water from the Collier Park springs (still running today) was piped to this public water fountain that helped promote La Mesa to visitors arriving via the San Diego and Cuyamaca Eastern Railway. In 1965 with the railroad not functioning and the depot building moved off site, the City dismantled the

1915 Fountain, moving it closer to the springs in Collier Park. The 1965 red brick base fountain stood there until its recent demolition during the Phase II project construction.

With no feasible location for placement within the Phase II improvements project, Jim suggested, and the City agreed to reconstruct the fountain up per its original design near its historic location adjacent to the now restored c1914 La Mesa Depot and Museum operated by the San Diego Railroad Museum. In addition, Mr. Newland and Dr. Issac Ullah arranged for a San Diego State graduate student to document the 1965 structure prior to its demolition and provided documentation and analysis for its historic reconstruction.

Recently the Fountain reconstruction was started. The main fountain structure is now complete, with project completion expected in early Spring 2023.

Thanks to Director Richardson and the City’s project management team for helping bring a piece of La Mesa history back home.

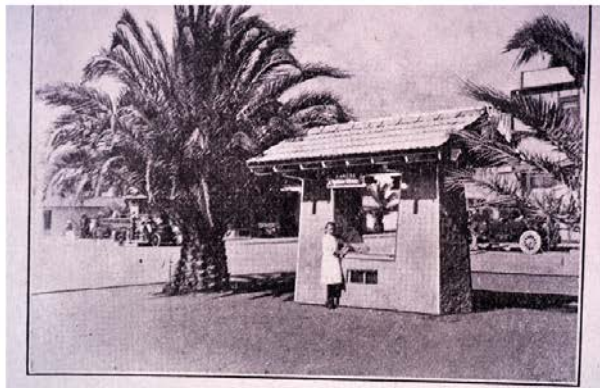


Reconstructed La Mesa Springs Fountain under construction awaiting its tile roof and finishing details, February 2023.

La Mesa Civic Fountain (1915-1965)



c1915



Public Drinking Fountain—La Mesa Spring Water



c1915



c1920



c1915



LA MESA DEPOT AND PUBLIC FOUNTAIN
The comprehensive program for the improvement of the La Mesa Spring Water...
BIG BENEFIT PLAN OF HELPING HAND
...
DEATH FROM
...



c1918

All images courtesy
La Mesa Historical Society

Historic images of the original La Mesa Springs fountain from the History Center's collections.

La Mesa Springs Fountain Historical Timeline – Key Events

1915, August 12 – Report improvements to La Mesa Depot, old depot moved to west of tracks, with remodeling to begin at once. Freight house to be moved north of depot toward water tank. Other improvements to follow. SDU

1915, September 12 – SDU reports completion of remodeled and relocated La Mesa Depot.

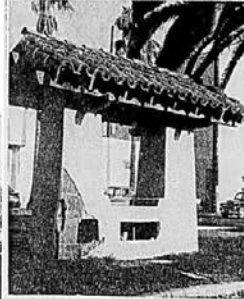
Photo also shows public fountain. In Mission style, similar to recently completed La Mesa Grammar School.

1965, January 14 – City Council announces that La Mesa Community Welfare Association will provide \$300 for the “relocation and restoration of the old public drinking fountain. The structure will be removed to Collier Park when the planned Spring Street reconstruction is undertaken. LMS

1965, July 22 -- La Mesa Scout announces completion of new fountain and publishes Photos. LMS



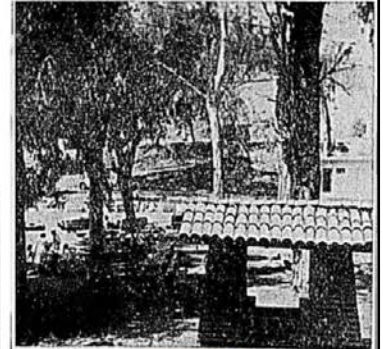
WHAT'S THIS? Hard to recognize (above) without its familiar Spanish tile roofing is the roof of the old La Mesa drinking fountain which is in temporary storage at the La Mesa City Public Works Dept. Checking over the structure is Chet Erler, storekeeper-clerk at the department. The roofing tiles were removed and stored when the drinking fountain was dismantled recently to make way for the widening of Spring St. in the center of downtown La Mesa. Standing beneath the palm trees by the railroad tracks since 1911, the fountain in recent years had begun to deteriorate (see below). When a sight is selected in Collier Park by Mayor Ray Fellows, the fountain will be reconstructed with funds supplied by the La Mesa Welfare Assn. and the Kiwanis Club.



La Mesa Scout
April 8, 1965



La Mesa Scout
July 22, 1965



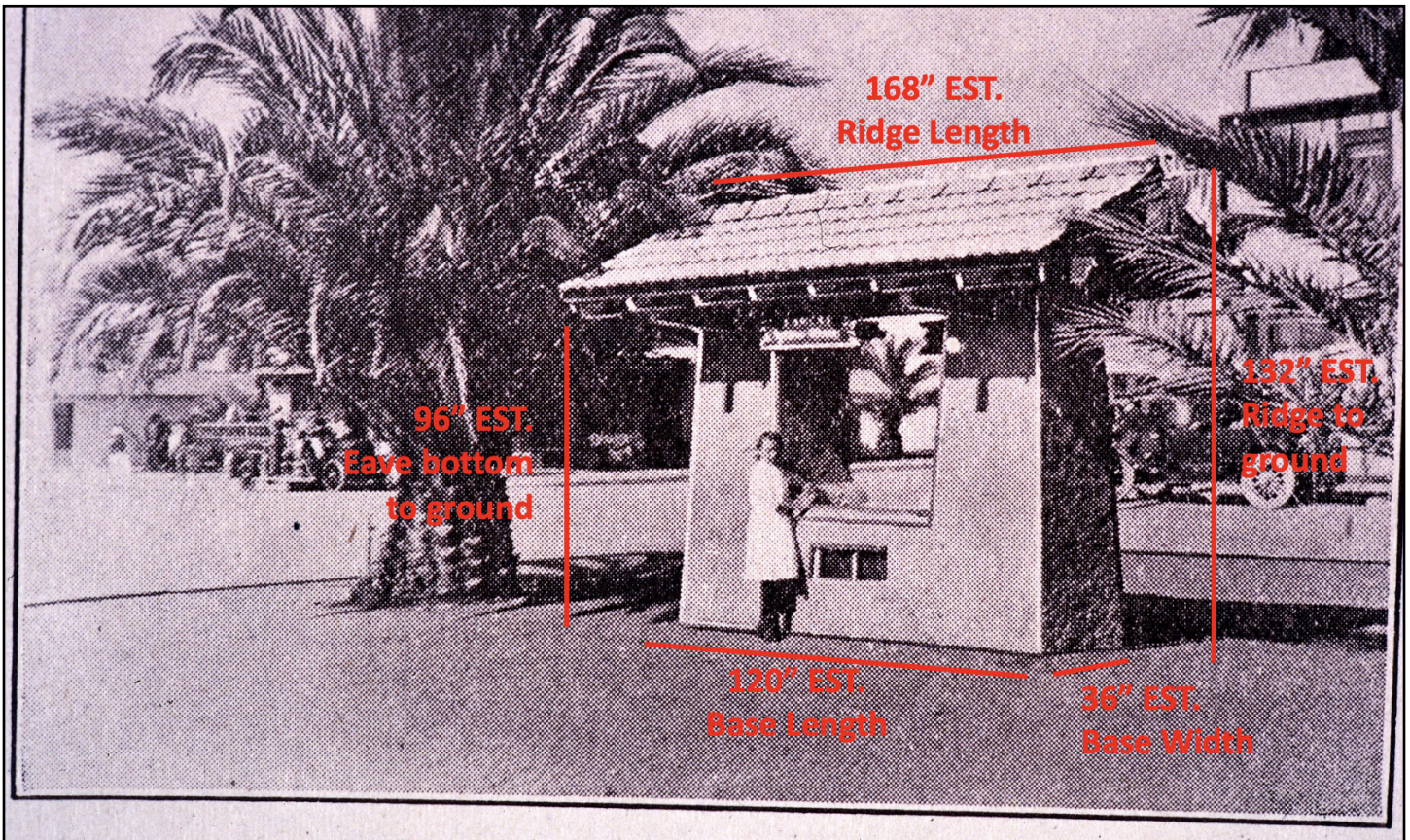
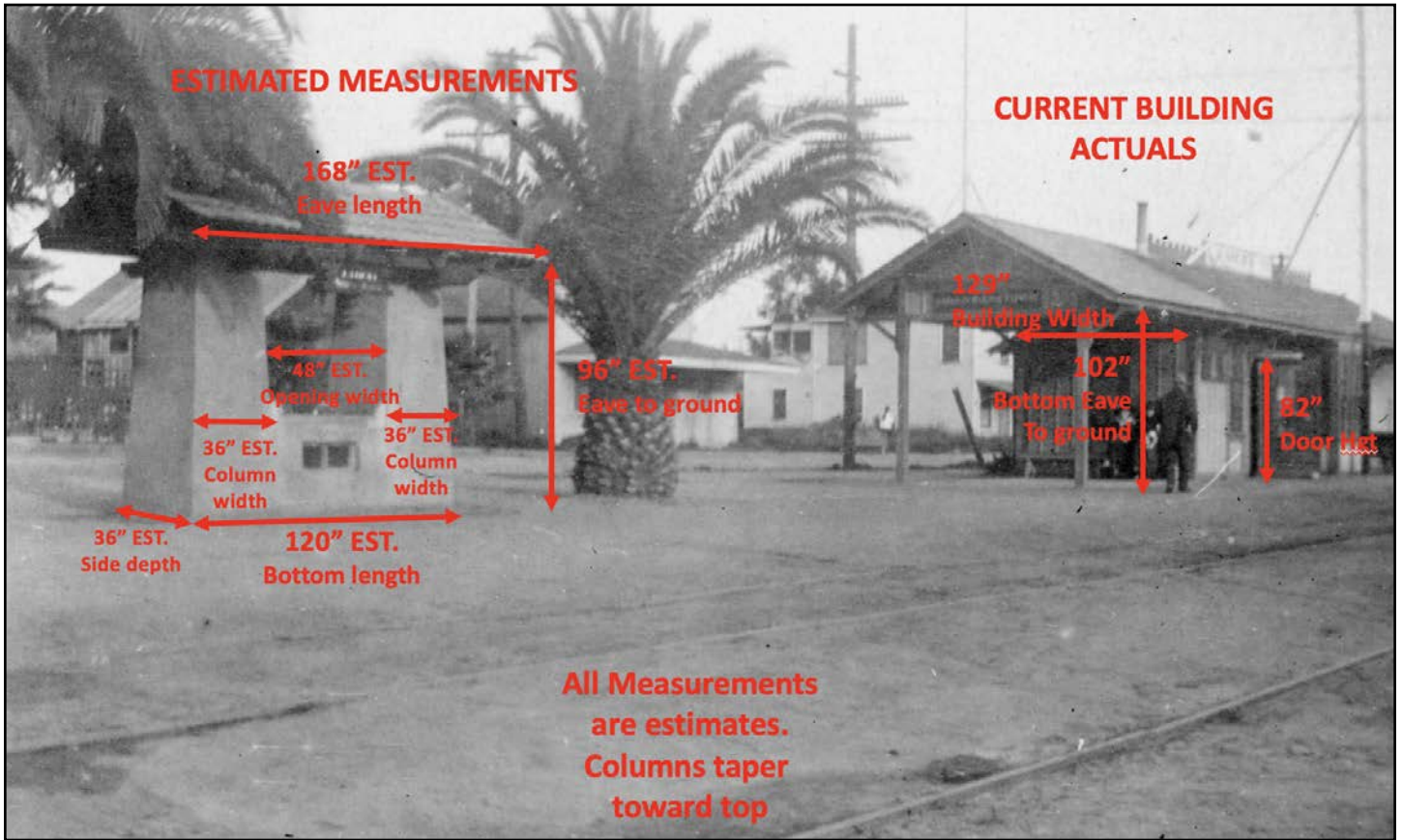
OLD DRINKING FOUNTAIN, which stood by the railroad tracks in La Mesa (above) since its construction by the railroad company in 1915, has a new home in Collier Park, La Mesa (below). The roof of the fountain is the same but the old hollow-tile walls would not stand moving, according to the City's Public Works Dept. The new fountain is built of red brick. A plaque on the wall of the fountain tells its history to all who visit the park and who want a cool drink.

WHAT'S THIS? Hard to recognize (above) without its familiar Spanish tile roofing is the roof of the old La Mesa drinking fountain which is in temporary storage at the La Mesa City Public Works Dept. Checking over the structure is Chet Erler, storekeeper-clerk at the department. The roofing tiles were removed and stored when the drinking fountain was dismantled recently to make way for the widening of Spring St. in the center of downtown La Mesa. Standing beneath the palm trees by the railroad tracks since 1911, the fountain in recent years had begun to deteriorate (see below). When a sight is selected in Collier Park by Mayor Ray Fellows, the fountain will be reconstructed with funds supplied by the La Mesa Welfare Assn. and the Kiwanis Club.



1965
images show
Hollow tile
structure
with plaster
“skin”





Additional historical documentation and analysis provided to City project and design team from History Center. Such information helped finalize reconstruction design and construction specifications.

Collier Park Phase II Improvements Project Update: Spring House Re-Use Planning Forthcoming

When City contractors began the demolition and grading work at Collier Park this Fall, the History Center received several inquiries about the plans for the Collier Park Spring House historic landmark and other features within the park.

Although the City was able to get local historic preservation design firm, Heritage Architecture, to complete a historic structural evaluation and preservation plan in 2022, the historic Spring House is not part of the Phase II project. It along with the old stone bridge and stairs near the spring outlet have been protected during the grading and construction work underway.

The La Mesa History Center has been, and will continue to be, involved in assisting the City on the rehabilitation and re-use planning for the City owned Spring House historic landmark at Collier Park.

Here is a summary/recap of the responses we provided and an update on the History Center's involvement and the City's plans for the historic Spring House:

The La Mesa Historical Society (now History Center) has been engaged with the City on the issues of protecting the listed historical properties at Collier Park for well over a decade.

Past President Jim Newland led the community-wide effort to ensure that the 2012 Collier Park Master plan included the preservation and planned rehabilitation of the Collier Park Spring House.

The City recently got the Spring House historic rehabilitation study completed. This report provides the direction for

completing that rehabilitation and provides needed information for scoping and cost estimation so that grant funds can be acquired.

(Back in 2010 the City considered demolishing the listed historical building as an option for the Master Plan, but the Society-organized campaign ensured the preservation and adaptive reuse of the Spring House. Subsequently the Plan includes the Spring House's rehabilitation and reuse as a future phase.

The Spring House restoration phase has yet to be funded, but the City will be working with the History Center and the public to engage on the reuse plan for the Spring House. (The Spring House, although never being used for commercial bottling since it became a park in 1915, had been used to hold special events and community-based classes, etc. before it was mothballed in the 1980s).

We certainly understand that change can be stressful, and Collier Park is undergoing some major upgrades, but the City is committed to implementing the Collier Park 2012 Master Plan. These improvements are planned to provide the community with a functional updated park, including a preserved Spring House, in order to meet current and future community recreation needs.

For current information on the Collier Park project, go to the project website: <https://www.cityoflamesa.us/1652/Collier-Park>

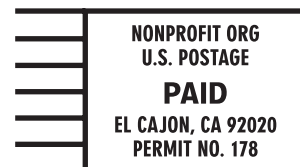
We appreciate everyone's interest and concern in joining the History Center in protecting and improving the City's oldest and most historical park.

***Jim Newland, Past President
La Mesa History Center***



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The La Mesa History Center is an all-volunteer non-profit 501c3 corporation charged with preserving the history of the greater La Mesa area. The La Mesa History Center operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 House Museum and the History Center Archives Research Facility located at 8369 University Avenue in La Mesa, California.

The ***Lookout Avenue*** is the official quarterly publication of the La Mesa History Center. Closing dates for submitting contributions are the 1st of every March, June, September, and December. Word document and jpeg image files preferred.

Submit contributions via email, or email the Editor at info@lamesahistory.com