

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

# LOOKOUT AVE.

Vol. 1, No. 1

La Mesa, California

February 22, 1977

## THE MCKINNEY HOUSE AND ITS RESTORATION

by DONNA REGAN

The McKinney House, now the headquarters of the La Mesa Historical Society, was built in 1908 by Rev. Henry A. McKinney (1851-1930) and his wife, Florence. Originally from Illinois, the McKinneys and their two sons, Cromwell and W. Joyce, came to La Mesa in 1901 so that Rev. McKinney could serve as minister for the Methodist Church. Here, the youngest son, Donald, was born in 1906. The house continued to be occupied by a member of the McKinney family until it was purchased by the historical society in November of 1975. Donald McKinney will remain in the house as caretaker.

The structure is a two-story frame house containing seven rooms. Plumbing was added to the house about 1912, and electricity about 1920. The major change to the house occurred in the early 1920s, when the roof of the front porch was moved to the rear of the house to become the roof of an added kitchenette, and a new two-story porch addition was made to the front.

The McKinney House has been fortunate in that little has been done to modernize it over the years. The original woodwork still remains, although most of it was later painted over.

The hardware, the kitchen cupboards, the pull-chain toilet, and the footed bathtub have all been

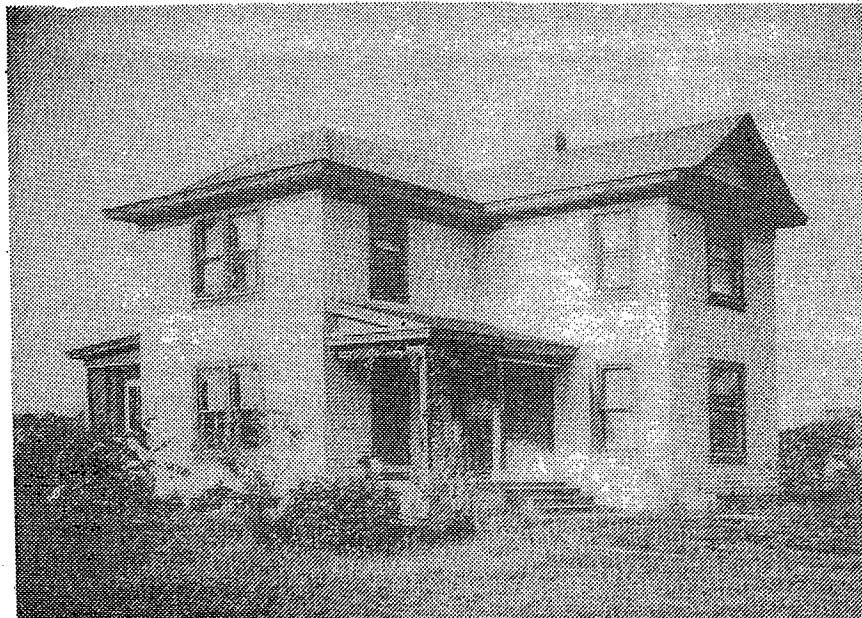
retained. Stencilled friezes still decorate the walls of two of the bedrooms. Several pieces of McKinney furniture stand in the same rooms they were in sixty-nine years ago.

The historical society plans to restore the McKinney House to its appearance in its early years, and there is much to be done. Volunteers have spent many hours working on the house so far. Those who have contributed time and energy include Thelma Todd, Bruce Kamerling, Pat Kettler and her daughter Erin, Dorothy and Lee Griner, Woody Linke, Lloyd Donahoo, Donna Regan, Louis Granger, Austin and Jim Hinck and the Lake Murray Kiwanis.

Any major restoration project, however, has thus far been prevented by a lack of funds. Money from fund-raising events and membership fees has been needed for the monthly house payments. While grants from public agencies remain a possibility and are

being investigated, we should not place any reliance on them when making our plans. It is apparent that most of the restoration will depend upon the involvement of members of the historical society and of the local community.

One of the first things to be done is the electrical rewiring of the house and, concurrently, the  
(over)



The McKinney House, c. 1916. Donald McKinney is standing in front.

repairing and replastering of the walls. Architect James Hart (AIA) has drawn up a set of electrical plans, and electrician Bill Williams is offering his expertise. Other projects for the coming months will be undertaken on the basis of priority and feasibility. These will include repainting the exterior of the house, reroofing the house and the garage, some interior repainting, removing paint from interior woodwork and refinishing the wood, plumbing, replacing window panes, rehangng double-hung windows, repairing the brick chimneys, replacing some siding, and various carpentry jobs.

Currently needed is assistance in replacing four panes of glass and reroofing the garage.

Individuals, businesses, or organizations may help by:

- (1) Volunteering expertise or labor for some project;
- (2) Donating specific needed materials or supplies; and
- (3) Sponsoring or contributing toward some specific project--for example, the reroofing.

Further research on the house and its period is also necessary. The McKinney family has a few early exterior photographs of the house, and these and the family memories have been most helpful. Any additional photographs or recollections of the McKinney House, or of other early houses in the La Mesa area--interiors, exteriors, and grounds--would be of great benefit.

If you can help in any way, let us know. Fill out and return the enclosed questionnaire. Also, please call Donna Regan, 460-3726.

## NOTICES

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL LMHS BANQUET? **1**

Members are reminded that the first annual banquet is set for Thursday, February 24, at the Bronze Room (Crest Room), 8998 La Mesa Blvd. Social hour begins at 6:30 p.m.; dinner will be served at 7:45 p.m.

Call Joan Knutson, 465-3436, no later than February 21 for your reservations.

Mrs. Woody Linke, chairman for the



The McKinney House in 1976. The two-story porch was added in the 1920s.

event, said, "This will be the first opportunity for all 350 plus members to meet each other at a social event. Members are also invited to bring guests."

La Mesa Pioneers have also been extended invitations.

A roast beef dinner is planned; cost is \$6.50 per person.

Members who have flowers are invited to bring them in containers, arranged for use. Flowers will be sold but containers will be returned.

The La Mesa Lamplighters will present one scene from "The Owl and the Pussycat."

A raffle and a door prize are also on the agenda.

HERE IS ANOTHER DATE FOR YOU:  
AT THE LA MESA LIBRARY

**2**

A presentation of microfilms of the La Mesa Scout, a special one-day historical display and a month's historical display are all scheduled by the society in March at the La Mesa Library.

Mrs. Pat Kettler said, "A La Mesa historical display including photos, costumes, and other memorabilia will be on exhibit at the library on Tuesday, March 22."

At 1 p.m. that same day additional microfilms of back issues of the La Mesa Scout will be presented to the library.

Refreshments will be served during the exhibit hours, 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Mrs. Kettler said.

Reprints of a La Mesa Scout of 1907 - third issue, to be specific - will be on

sale as will the brochure, "La Mesa - A Brief History."

Place the date of Tuesday, March 22 on your calendar as another LMHS event. A smaller display will be in the library for the entire month of March.

#### MICROFILMING OF LA MESA SCOUT CONTINUES

Many issues of the La Mesa Scout are available to the public by microfilm at the La Mesa Library.

Mrs. Pat Kettler, society director, said the first microfilming of the Scout was undertaken in 1968 by the La Mesa Junior Woman's Club. Cost of microfilming was paid out of proceeds of a book fair.

In 1976, with funds provided by La Mesa's Bicentennial Committee, additional microfilming was undertaken. Mrs. Kettler, who directed both the 1968 and the current projects, said that to date the years 1932 through 1936 have been microfilmed. By the end of this year, she said, issues for the years 1945 through 1949 will also have been microfilmed.

Issues published prior to 1916 and those published 1937 through 1945 are missing. Copies of the years 1918-1919 are now missing but were microfilmed before the loss. All copies of the La Mesa Scout which remain are in the newspaper's own files.

A second copy of recently-made microfilm is deposited with the society.

The Tempo Section of the Women's Club has just donated \$100 to the project.

#### LMHS MEMBERS ARE ENTITLED TO A COPY OF "LA MESA, YESTERDAY AND TODAY"

A new edition of Anna M. Gilbert's "La Mesa, Yesterday and Today" was reprinted by the La Mesa Rotary Club in December, 1975, for presentation to each member of the then-new La Mesa Historical Society.

Members who did not receive a copy may request one.

The booklet, originally published in 1924, provides readers with a thorough and fascinating look at the people, their homes, their organizations and activities of the days before 1924. The booklet of 52 pages includes several illustrations.

McKinney House address: 8369 University Ave.

#### LOOKOUT AVENUE

Lookout Avenue is the official publication of the La Mesa Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 882, La Mesa CA 92041, telephone 714-466-0197. Lookout Avenue is published quarterly as a service to members. Society officers are: Lloyd Donahoo, president; James Parker 1st vice pres.; T. William Orsborn, 2nd vice pres.; Woody Linke, 3rd vice pres.; Joan Wilken, secretary; Clifford Asay, treasurer; Pat Kettler, James Orsborn, Eva Quicksall, Eric Sanders, Dr. Andrew Smith and Thelma Todd, all directors. Lookout Avenue staff: Eric Sanders, editor, assisted by Donna Regan, Thelma Todd, Dorothy Griner and Ellen Sanders. Lookout Ave. mail to 7861 Normal Ave., La Mesa CA 92041.

#### The President's Corner

As we embark upon a new year, we look back and find that while we have accomplished much, many things we had hoped to accomplish, still remain undone. We intend to move swiftly now to put our house in order.

In this our first newsletter, you will be asked to help in various ways to bring the organization to that level of effectiveness you as members have a right to expect. The first year and a half has been one of working out problems on the McKinney House, while other important work has been neglected. We correct some of these problems with this first of many newsletters to the membership.

Many of our members have not received membership cards as yet; we would ask that if you are among the few who did not receive a card, please write Box 882, La Mesa CA 92041 and we will send your card out immediately. Charter memberships were held open until October 1976.

With your help we will strive to have a smooth running organization before the year is out.

Lloyd Donahoo  
President

#### TWO DATES FOR YOU A REMINDER

February 24	The Banquet
March 22	Visit the Library

FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1976 to JANUARY 20, 1977

ARCHITECTURAL MATERIAL RESCUED AND PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN

Phase One of La Mesa's redevelopment project called for the clearing of land bounded by La Mesa Boulevard, University, Allison, and extending eastward almost to Acacia. Among the buildings demolished or removed were several early homes, mostly dating from the 1910s or the first part of the twenties, which stood along Orange Avenue. Before demolition occurred, the La Mesa Historical Society took photographs of these buildings to be added to the Society's collections. Our photographers were Eric Sanders, Woody Linke, and Bill Orsborn.

The Society was also able to make arrangements to remove from the houses articles of historical or architectural value. For over three weeks in late November and early December various members spent time gathering doors, windows, molding, and some hardware and light fixtures. The task was time consuming; screws were buried under layers of paint, and solid wooden doors could be cumbersome and very heavy. The collectors included Pat Kettler, Barry Worthington, Rurik Kallis, Bill Orsborn, Woody Linke, and her six-year-old grandson, "Speedy," Dr. Andy Smith, Lee Griner, and Donna Regan.

The historical society hopes to use some of the rescued material in the restoration of the McKinney House. The rest will be made available to those who are restoring their own older homes in La Mesa and the surrounding areas.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY RECOGNIZED AT THE SOCIETY'S MUSEUM

The 55th wedding anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Joyce McKinney was recognized last August by the Board of Directors at a reception at the museum, the former McKinney home.

Mrs. McKinney said, "I think you're a wonderful group. It gives me much satisfaction to be part of it."

"We're living along with this house and we're happy the house will continue to be part of La Mesa," Mr. McKinney said.

Mrs. Woody Linke, society secretary, coordinated board planning for the reception.

Guests included Mrs. Ann Jacobs and Kris and Julie, and Mrs. Florence Drury and David.

RECEIPTS

Cash balance, beg. of period	\$	<u>608</u>
Membership		627
Life Membership		400
Social		<u>186</u>
Total Receipts		<u>1,213</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

Mortgage payments		840
Maintenance		<u>210</u>
Total museum costs		1,050
Postage and supplies		20
Members meetings and Bicentennial project		66
Insurance payment		94
Other operating expenses		<u>78</u>
Total disbursements		<u>1,308</u>

CASH BALANCE, END OF PERIOD \$ 513

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION ON DECEMBER 7, 1976

ASSETS

Cash in bank	\$	513
Museum building		34,333
Organization costs		<u>63</u>
		<u>34,909</u>

LIABILITIES

Mortgage payable-first (-0-month)		22,127
Mortgage payable-second (\$120 month, 8%)		<u>11,345</u>
Total liabilities		<u>33,472</u>

EQUITY

	\$	1,437
Clifford Asay		
Treasurer		

MORE PICTURES WILL BE DONATED TO THE LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mrs. Dawn (Watts) Stanley (husband is Andrew) are donating pictures of early day La Mesa homes and schools to the Society's growing collection.

Mrs. Stanley's grandfather attended the old Spring Valley Grammar School; Mrs. Stanley attended Grossmont High School the first year it occupied its permanent campus (In its first year the high school was housed at the old Riverview Union High School building in Lakeside).

The collection includes pictures of Riverview, the La Mesa Grammar School and La Mesa Heights School.

GET YOUR COPY OF  
"LA MESA - A BRIEF HISTORY"

Members and friends of the Society are invited to buy a copy of "La Mesa - A Brief History." Better still - pick up some copies to sell on consignment.

The 28-page, 61-picture booklet was researched and edited by the Sub-Committee for History Brochure of the American Revolution Bicentennial Committee of La Mesa. Your Society holds the copyright.

The text was written by Rita Larkin Wolin.

Mrs. Joan Wilken, chairman of the sub-committee, said the final task for her group is to promote sales so all bills can be paid.

Mrs. Wilken said copies can be obtained on consignment from Mrs. Thelma Todd or from Dr. Andrew Smith.

Individual copies may be purchased from Mrs. Wilken, Mrs. Todd, Dr. Smith, the La Mesa City Hall, the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, American Legion Post 282, the American Legion Auxiliary, La Mesa Drug Company, and La Mesa Camera and Sound. Other locations will be announced shortly.

The booklet covers La Mesa's history from its "ancient beginnings" to the Bicentennial Year, Mrs. Wilken said.

The cost - \$1. That's all! Buy one - you'll like it.

#### HISTORIC SITES SURVEYED

The San Diego County Cultural Heritage Committee, at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, is conducting an inventory of historic sites in San Diego County. The Committee has requested the assistance of local historical societies in this task so that the county's historical and archaeological sites can be identified, recorded, and, hopefully, protected.

The La Mesa Historical Society is currently compiling a list of historic sites in the La Mesa area to send to the Committee by March 1. Members can help by suggesting structures which they consider important to La Mesa and worthy of preservation.

The Cultural Heritage Committee would like the following information about each recommended structure, although it realizes that not all of the material may be

available at this time: (1) Name of the original owner of the house, or the original name of the building if it was not a residence; (2) Address; (3) Date of construction; (4) Significance--which may be architectural as well as historical; (5) Status--whether the structure has been moved or altered, or is still intact; (6) Priority for preservation.

Please send your suggestions by February 23 to Donna Regan, 8671 Tulare St., La Mesa 92041, or call Donna at 460-3726 or Thelma Todd at 466-5970.

## Atop Mt. Nebo

by THELMA TODD

There once lived in La Mesa in the area known as Mt. Nebo three very interesting women. They were neighbors on Vista Drive. May French Worth, Mary Waterman Todd and Evangeline Monbaron Graham.

Although of very different backgrounds they had much in common. They were strong individuals. They were well-educated and deeply religious women. They were compassionate, interested in people and their welfare. The civic and cultural life of their community was important to them, this concern was carried on into the state and national governments.

May French Worth was born in Virginia in the part that is now West Virginia. She was the daughter of a colonel in the Confederate Army who became a lawyer and judge in Virginia.

As a young woman she came to Phoenix, Arizona, with her small daughter seeking help for a respiratory problem. As she had been well trained in drama and music she opened a school, teaching elocution, singing and painting. Later she came to San Diego and with another woman who taught piano, opened a studio. She moved to La Mesa from San Diego. When she married Howard Worth, a San Diego business man, they built their home on Mt. Nebo in 1912.

Both Mr. & Mrs. Worth were active in the community. Her involvement in the La Mesa Woman's Club and in politics is covered in "La Mesa - A Brief History."

She was a gifted artist and during the time that Mr. Worth was president of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Army and Navy Committee, she made many portrait busts of important army and navy officers.

Mrs. Worth had a wonderful sense of

repairing and replastering of the walls. Architect James Hart (AIA) has drawn up a set of electrical plans, and electrician Bill Williams is offering his expertise. Other projects for the coming months will be undertaken on the basis of priority and feasibility. These will include repainting the exterior of the house, reroofing the house and the garage, some interior repainting, removing paint from interior woodwork and refinishing the wood, plumbing, replacing window panes, rehangng double-hung windows, repairing the brick chimneys, replacing some siding, and various carpentry jobs.

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