

La Mesa Historical Society  
**LOOKOUT AVENUE**

Volume 35, Issue 1

Winter 2010



Colonel David C. Collier, an esteemed attorney, an early developer of La Mesa, donor of property for Collier Park, director General of the Panama-California Exposition of 1915, and owner of the first motor car in San Diego.

***Next Up: La Mesa during the War Years from the attack on Pearl Harbor to Victory on Two Fronts.***

This is set for 10 a.m., Saturday, at the Grossmont Health Care District auditorium at 9001 Wakarusa Street, adjacent to Briercrest Park. There will be speakers who spent those four war years in La Mesa, plus coverage from the La Mesa Scout of a momentous period in the history of this great country and our grand city. All LMHS members, as well as the general public, are invited. A mailing will go out to all members in February. Members, you are encouraged to invite your friends and family when you receive the flyer.

Aaron Landau

***For Your Calendar ...***

March 28, 2010      Antique Street Faire

May 1, 2010      Spring Tea and Annual Meeting



***Another fine home tour!***

The fourth annual historic home tour was November 7, 2009 and saw the

presentation of five great homes opened to visitors by their owners: Anne Erdman, Lane Rider, Wilson and Janine Schooley, Keith Okonski and Tim Katzman. Major sponsors EDCO Disposal Corp., Councilman Ernie Ewin and Bob and Laura Duggan were joined by Silvergate Bank, O'Dunn Fine Art and Alpine Windowerks in supporting this special event.

In four years, the Tour has presented 23 historic sites to 1338 visitors, generating a net income of \$18,504 for our preservation and maintenance activities.

△△△

***We Welcome Our New Members!***

- |                                  |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Robyn Natwick                    | Barbara Rose          |
| Dory Miller                      | Nita Swisher          |
| Marilyn Hallam                   | Margaret Tyler        |
| Jenus Smith                      | Burl and Flora Hogins |
| Karolyn Malmin                   | Edith Smith           |
| Judi Jeffery                     | Harold M. Brenner     |
| Claire Canaris                   | Becky Green           |
| Mary Earnest and Jonathan Parker |                       |
| Mike and Bonnie Stinchcomb       |                       |

We are delighted to have you with us!

**Brief Summary of the Financial Results  
Of the Year ended June 30, 2009**

Total Revenues	
Membership	3,800
Donations	1,400
Fund Raising Events	13,000
Sales	6,400
Interest	<u>800</u>
	25,400
Direct Costs	10,900
Expenses	
Preservation	5,300
Communication	1,200
Utilities	2,400
Office	1,100
General Business	<u>100</u>
	<u>10,100</u>
Surplus	<u>4,400</u>
Cash	55,400
Fixed Assets	<u>104,200</u>
	<u>159,600</u>

The fundraising events netted 9,400. The largest contribution was the Home Tour which gave us \$4,900 and the next most productive event(s) was the landmarking which produced \$2,100; this was due to the tremendous efforts of Gordon Jones and Donna Niemeier.

The Preservation expenses are led by insurance costs of \$2,600 and security and yard maintenance of \$1,000 each. Water & sewer topped the list of utilities at \$1,400.

The Cash is invested in Money Market and CDs. Only \$4,600 is in the checking account.

Rod Winslow, LMHS Treasurer

**2012 is coming!**

The La Mesa City Centennial Committee continues its work in planning for our fine city's centennial in 2012. The committee held its first meeting in July and met monthly since then on the third Monday of the month. It is taking a break in December for the Christmas season. The next scheduled meeting

is on Monday, January 18 at 4:30 pm at the Fire Station 11 conference room on Allison Avenue. The public is welcome.

The areas looked into so far concern event planning, communication to the public, public involvement, financing of the Centennial, and creation of a logo for the 11 month celebration which commences February 16, 2012.

The committee meetings are specially scheduled and agenda'd city council meetings with the city council in charge of the meeting and other city personnel in attendance. The committee consists of 15 non-city individuals who represent various elements of our community and who bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, dedication and passion to this wonderful upcoming (sooner than you realize) celebration.

Aaron Landau

**Christmas Open house – 2009**

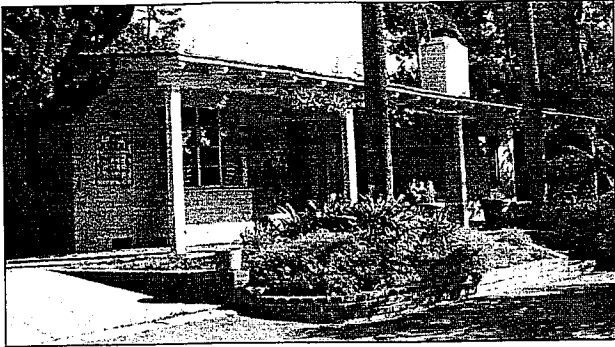


*Three welcoming smiles and an old-fashioned tree.*

Enjoying the Christmas Carols of the Adult Enrichment Center sing Along Group, a congenial gathering of LMHS members partook of Nieman Marcus cookies by Sharon Crockett, a tree by Ed Blackman and cookies by Donna Niemeier. Then came the Christmas raffle to the delight of many winners, with prizes donated by Carol Yaremko, Ruth Contino, Donna Niemeier, Sharon Crockett and Linda Rankin.

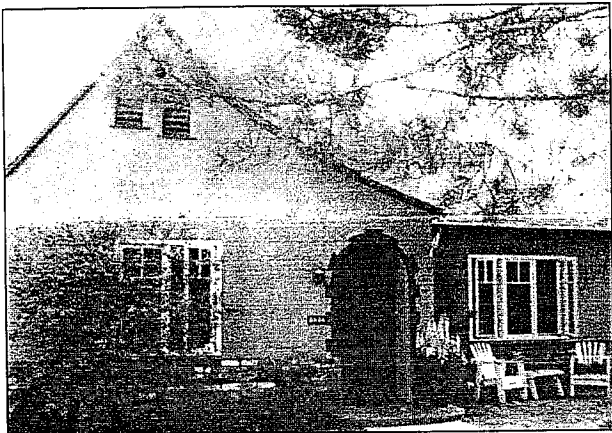
Lookout Avenue is a publication of the La Mesa Historical Society. Please let me know your comments and suggestions! Editor: Gordon Jones (619) 465-1883. [www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com](http://www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com).

## New La Mesa Landmarks!



### No. 34: Simard House

A Mediterranean-style house at 9339 Lemon Avenue designed by preeminent architect Lilian Rice, and built in 1938 by the commander of Midway Island, Capt. Cyril Simard, at the WWII Battle of Midway. It was landmarked by Tim Katzman.



### No. 35: Bengston House

One of a limited number of Tudor-style houses in La Mesa, at Fourth Avenue, built in 1931. It was landmarked by Freddie and Ellen Monfredi.



### No. #36: Dr. Alphonse D. Fouchy House

A Spanish-eclectic style house at 7910 El Capitan Drive designed by the prominent architect, Alberto Treganza, and built in 1931 by highly-regarded contractor Edmund Dunn. It was landmarked by Pat and Suzanne McHenry.



## President's Comments

Donna Niemeier

It was wonderful to see so many of you at this quarters' Round Table, at the Home Tour and the Christmas Open House. Being able to achieve the La Mesa Historical Society's goals depends on the continued support of our members. Thank you very much for your participation. I hope the Holiday season brought to mind good memories, special people, and great blessings for all of you.

The answer to the "Historic Highlights" question in the Fall Newsletter, "Who was the first physician to live in La Mesa?" is Dr. Joseph A Parks. He came to La Mesa in 1904 and established a Tuberculosis Sanatorium. I hope you enjoy the article about "Dr. Joe" and his family in this issue of the newsletter.

The new "Historic Highlights" question is: Where and when was the first Easter Sunrise Service held in La Mesa? If you know the answer, give me a call at 619-466-0197 or contact me at [www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com](http://www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com)

ΔΔΔ

## Board of Directors:

Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM.

President	Donna Niemeier
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Pres.	Aaron Landau
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres.	Ruth Contino
Secretary	Sharon Crockett
Treasurer	Rod Whitlow
Directors-at-Large	Ed Blackman
	Tom Hart
	Cherie Peacock
	Linda Rankin
	Pat Stromberg
	Kathy Tinsley
Past President	Gordon Jones

## DR. JOSEPH A. PARKS, FIRST LA MESA PHYSICIAN

The *La Mesa Scout* newspaper dated February 10, 1933 states "Dr. Joseph Parks was born in Franklyn, Tennessee on March 10, 1892, and graduated from Banderville College. He died February 8, 1933 and had lived in La Mesa for 27 years. He first visited La Mesa in 1902 while serving as assistant in charge of Pottinger's Sanitarium in Monrovia, California. He returned to La Mesa permanently in 1904 and established Parks' Sanatorium for Tuberculosis in a large two-story house which stands on El Cajon Avenue (now Blvd.).



[Parks Sanatorium stood on a 30-acre site bounded by Parks Avenue and the area around Blue Rock (?). The house was standing in 1946 at 7659 El Cajon Blvd.] Dr. Parks was a specialist in the diseases of the chest and an organizer of the San Diego Tuberculosis Society and its President for 20 years, as well as having served as President of the San Diego Medical Association. Dr. "Joe" as he was called around La Mesa was a president of the City Planning Commission and first President of La Mesa's Improvement Club. He was elected to the first City Council in 1912 and served on the council until his enlistment into the U.S. Army in 1917. He was first Commander of La Mesa Post of the American legion in 1924 and 1925, an active member in the La Mesa Rotary Club since its inception, and Trustee of La Mesa's Methodist Church for many years."

The La Mesa Directory for 1924 lists Dr Jos A Park as a physician with an office on East Lookout Ave. and a home on Lee Ave. Anna M. Gilbert in her book *La Mesa Yesterday and Today* states "After selling his first home, Dr. Parks bought thirteen acres adjoining the original tract. Here he built a new home from which he has a magnificent view of the bay, La Mesa, San Diego and the mountains. The entire plot is called Roseland Height and has been sub-divided, retaining walls and sidewalks being built. "This house with two

major additions still stands on one third of an acre at 4805 Lee Ave. The 1910 census indicates that Joseph A. Parks lived on El Cajon Road and was a widowed physician. In 1912 he married his second wife, Rose Miller.

Rose quickly became involved in her new community's activities when she joined the La Mesa Women's Club and the PTA. Rose worked as a volunteer and then as a staff member of the American Red Cross during both world wars. She became the first president of the American Legion Auxiliary and at the end of World War II was instrumental in helping to raise funds for a new American Legion hall in La Mesa. In the 1930's she helped with the organization of the La Mesa Welfare Association and its thrift shop, both of which still exist today.

Following her husband's death in 1933, Mrs. Parks was elected to a four-year term as La Mesa City Treasurer, and she was re-elected four consecutive times. She died in June 1952 during her fifth term in office.

The Park's had two sons. Their oldest son, Joseph A. Parks, after graduation from San Diego State was president and manager of the La Mesa branch of the First National Bank. He was active in many civic organization including the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce and Grossmont Hospital Association. He died in a motorcycle accident in August 1965 at the age of 51.

Their second son, James P. Parks, was a Navy Flier who lost his life in World War II. He was declared dead in December, 1944, a year after notification was given that he was missing in action. His plane, a dive bomber, was lost December 5, 1943.

This pioneer family left its mark on La Mesa history. Over a 50 year span their names appear in *La Mesa Scout* news articles. Dr. Joseph Parks impact on early La Mesa is chronicled in the February 10, 1933 *La Mesa Scout*. "The entire city mourned his dead. Throughout the day the usual transaction of business was secondary as the citizenry with moist eye and choking voice recalled the years of self-sacrificing service, the loving heart, and the hand ever ready to assist that marked the path Doctor "Joe" had traveled."

Donna Niemeier

## ***“The Depression in La Mesa”***

On Saturday, October 24, LMHS hosted “La Mesa in the 1930’s: Surviving the Great Depression.” There were three speakers on this formative decade in US history as well as local history. Two grew up in La Mesa – Norrie West, age 93, and Jim Polak, age 89, son of a former Mayor, Ben Polak. They gave their personal memories of growing up in La Mesa during those years. The third speaker was a younger Andy Smith. Andy recounted what his father, the town’s first osteopath, had told him about living in La Mesa in the 1930’s. Interspersed with these gentlemen’s narratives, Aaron Landau shared with the audience 1930’s articles and editorials of note from the local paper, the *La Mesa Scout*.

Aaron Landau

## ***This is our last call ... We Need Your Help!!!!***

### **Photos, Memorabilia, & Memories Needed for New History Book & Centennial Programs**

As noted in the last edition of Lookout Avenue we’re still looking for photographs, paper items, etc.

With the Centennial coming up, it is a logical time to supplement and update the Historical Society’s archival collections. The Society as most of you know, has a wonderful collection of historical photos, records, and memorabilia both projects—however as we look to cover the full history of the City and local environs up to today, we need additional images and memorabilia—especially those of individuals, institutions, and activities of the last 40 or so years.

Start combing through your old photographs, shaking loose your memories, and help identify long-time neighbors, residents, and community leaders who would be important subjects for interviewing as well. One goal is also to move forward with establishing an on-going oral history program as well. So please help us uncover and share our collective histories for current and future residents to enjoy.

We are looking to collect your memories through:

**Photographs:** Thanks to new technology we do not necessarily need to have you give us your photographs. Computer scanning has become such that digital images can be safely archived. Therefore if you are willing to share photographs (loose, framed, in albums) of La Mesa and the surrounding area please contact us.

**Memorabilia:** Objects other than photographs or items that can be scanned are also of interest. Street or business signs, maps, restaurant menus, advertisements, business letterheads & cards, contracts & deeds, event flyers, architectural plans, school yearbooks and other such items/objects may also be of interest.

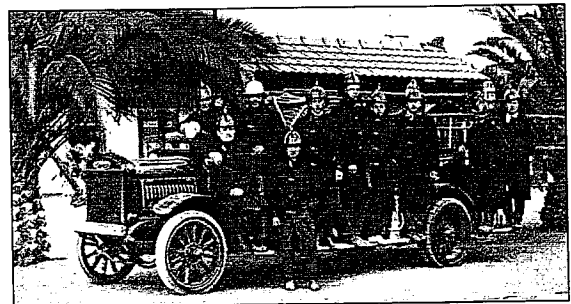
**Oral History Interviews:** Help us to identify those who would be great subjects for recording. We will also be needing volunteers to help with these activities—training will be provided.

*Just remember that your photos and memorabilia don’t have to be really, really old. Items from just a few years ago or ten or twenty years ago that document individuals and events are just as valid historical sources. Also, photos and stories of houses, buildings, families and everyday life don’t have to be “professional quality.” Sometimes that simple family snapshot has far more historical value than the professionals’ portrait of a building or business.*

All images and materials will be made available to benefit the programs of the Historical Society and our community partners. More information on these programs will be forthcoming soon.

If you would like to contribute, please contact the Society at 619-466-0197.

Jim Newland





NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EL CAJON, CA 92020  
PERMIT NO. 178

McKinney House Museum and Archives:  
8369 University, La Mesa  
Mailing address: P. O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944  
(619) 466-0197  
www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com

### Change Service Requested

Cut along line and mail the section below with your check.

## AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Application

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

The La Mesa Historical Society operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 house/museum located at 8369 University Avenue (at the corner of Pine Street) in La Mesa. Open 1-4pm every first and third Saturday of the month or by appointment. Group tours are available. Call (619) 466-0197 for further information. Lookout Avenue is the official quarterly publication of the La Mesa Historical Society. Our address is:

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

Lookout Avenue was the original name of La Mesa Boulevard from the 1890s until the city council voted to change the name in 1940. Lookout Avenue was La Mesa's main street.

- \$250 Patron
- \$100 Sponsor/Organization
- \$50 Sustaining
- \$20 Family
- \$15 Individual
- \$5 Student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be a volunteer in the following areas:

- Docent/Education
- Events

- Grounds/Building
- Archives/House