

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

LOOKOUT AVE.

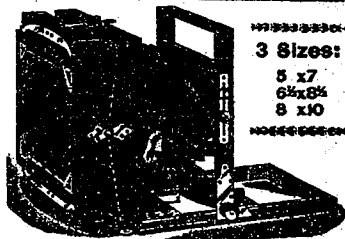
VOL. No. 3, ISSUE No. 6

DECEMBER 1979



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CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

COME ONE - COME ALL - to our Christmas Open House - on Saturday, December 8, from 11:00 to 4:00. See the display of ANTIQUE CAMERAS. We hope to show OLD MOVIES, too. The QUILTERS will be on hand to show and sell their lovely hand made Christmas items. There will be furniture in the doll house! We are always looking for pictures of early La Mesa, so look through your goodies and see what you can find to display. We have BEAUTIFUL CALENDARS with pictures of early San Diego County that make great stocking stuffers, stationery with drawings by local artists of La Mesa Landmarks, and last but not least--

THE RAFFLE.

It costs only a dollar for one ticket, but the prizes are wonderful - a SX-70 Sonar Polaroid Camera. Everyone will want that - it's so easy to use, and you have the picture in your hand in 60 seconds. Grant Jewelers donated a beautiful Jade and Cultured Pearl drop necklace and earrings set. Last, but not least - a Sporting goods item - so you see - Something for Everyone, and just \$1.00 per ticket. The DRAWING will be at 4:00 on this same day, and you need not be present to win. DOCENTS in costumes reminiscent of the early 1900s will act as hostesses. Get into the HOLIDAY SPIRIT and join us.

By Jean Guy, Fund Raising Chairman

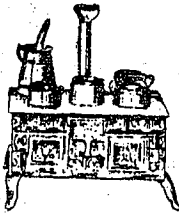


It is with mixed emotions that I write this "Merry Christmas" note to you, when our country is facing a serious political crisis. Many times, since the birth of our nation, we have faced emotional turmoil, within and without. Now, in what is usually our happiest season, we and our leaders are confronting horrendous situations. There is no need to be ashamed of our stand. We are the greatest and most generous nation, and we have done more for the world than any other country. It is time to stand up and be counted. How? Take time to write your representatives in government. Let them know that we still believe in those concepts on which this country was founded. Please join me in prayer for Peace on Earth, Good Will toward Men... of all nations.....

Helen Wood Linke, Pres.

CORRECTION. So sorry. Our new reporter's name was omitted from her article about The Whaley House in Old Town. Her name is Lanette Wray. She is a Monte Vista Junior, very busy just now on the Annual. Lanette is an enthusiastic member of LMHS. Welcome, Lanette! We need you and appreciate you. We hope for many more of your well-documented, interesting stories.

HELP WANTED. This Newsletter needs a good typist and layout person. Always needed--reporters. How about a poet? Call 463-6886 for information.



QUILTERS will be meeting two Mondays each month at The McKinney House. Pat Kettler.

LANDSCAPING PLANNED FOR The McKinney House by George Felix and Committee will be in keeping with the rural uses of the McKinney family (in a limited way--no cow pasture, for instance), still including floral areas. They are compiling a list of appropriate flowers.

ORCHIDS

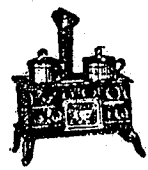


MEMORABILIA. We have been very fortunate of late. Gertrude Bailey donated a Dresden Plate Quilt. It is in prime condition and beautifully quilted. Mrs. Bailey has been very helpful and has given the La Mesa Historical Society many interesting articles. Ruby Peters Machado has been interested in the growth of the LMHS and has made many contributions--the last, a set of crocheted place mats and some dollies made by her mother in the early 1900s and a pressed glass dish of that period. Our thanks to these thoughtful ladies.

NOTICE. New address and phone--Mrs. Jack Cauthen (LMHS Publicity Person), 17754 Plaza Acosta, San Diego 92128. ph. 485-7518. Jack Barnes, 466-6593. Inez Dufford, 466-5175. Thomas T. McCarthy, 4451 Parks Ave., La Mesa. 461-7643. Mr. and Mrs. Pete Palermo, 462-1445. Irene Vita, 461-4554. Richard E. Wilken, 565-4137. George Felix (office) 462-3000.

FUNDRAISING STILL NEEDED. Thankyou's to the members who help with garage sales, quilting projects, ice cream socials and other activities to further work toward the museum, photo reproduction, document storage and many to come.

YARD SALE. Thank you ALL for your participation and support for "The Gigantic Yard Sale." It was such a success that we have...



NEWS

DINING ROOM RESTORATION. Visitors to the December 8 OPEN HOUSE this year will find holiday decorations trimming a restored McKinney House dining room.

THE WOODWORK in the dining room, which appears to be Douglas Fir, was originally stained and finished with shellac or varnish. Some time after 1920, Mrs. McKinney in a reaction prevalent at the time, decided that the room was too dark and had the woodwork painted white. As a part of the restoration, the white paint was carefully removed during the first half of this year. The natural wood could be seen at the Ice Cream Social in July. In August painter Roy Swarengin applied a varnish to the wood, having mixed a color similar to that of the front room woodwork which had never been painted.

THE DINING ROOM WALLS, according to the McKinney family recollections, were originally unpainted sand and finished plaster. In the late 1920s or 30s the wallpaper, still there when the Historical Society acquired the house, was added. It had, however, become too badly stained and faded to retain. Although there was no paper in the house during the period of its interpretation--1908-1920, the decision was made to re-hang paper in this room because it had been used there later and would have been appropriate for the earlier period. It was decided to try to find a documentary reproduction wallpaper from the period 1908-1920. The one selected was reproduced from the Barton House, a house in Texas that was built in the same period as the McKinney House. It is a background paper somewhat similar to the original McKinney paper. The small gold flecks in the paper give it a changing appearance at different times of the day. The wallpaper manufacturer, reproductions for historic restorations for more than fifty years. Roy Swarengin prepared the plaster walls and hung the wallpaper. By Donna Regan.

RESTORATION. On October 16, 1979, the contract was signed for our \$25,000 grant for the restoration of the McKinney House. This grant was given to us by the City of La Mesa from Community Development Block Grant funds received through the Office of Housing and Urban Development. We hope that this grant will cover the major projects left in the restoration, such as the re-shingling of the roof. Some expenses, however, cannot be allowed out of grant money--for example, the purchase of custom made dark green window shades and appropriate curtains. The first work done under the grant was the fumigation of the House for termites in early November. Green tarp went up on the three structures on the property--including a small one for the outhouse. This treatment plus the yearly termite insurance should keep the building secure. Donna Regan.

GRAPEFRUIT DAZE are coming, but a freeze in Borrego is needed to ripen these juicy PINKS. Advance orders can be made by calling Thelma Todd, 466-5970, or with Jean Guy at the DECEMBER 8 OPEN HOUSE. Watch the December papers for PICK-UP DAZE at McKinney House. This is one of our best FUND RAISING activities. Tell friends!

CHRISTMAS DINNER WITH THE MCKINNEYS

By Eckoe Ahern

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Christmas Day in 1922 was lovely and fair. The night before, the family had gone to services in the First Methodist Church in La Mesa, where the Reverend Mr. Henry McKinney had assisted, and carol singing and piece-speaking were features of the program. At home, later, the quiet beauty of Christmas Eve settled over the house at the southeast corner of Pine and University.

But not for long. Early in the morning, Mother McKinney was in the kitchen. Christmas Dinner was set for 1:00 p.m., and the turkey she had raised (on bread, milk and pepper, to keep "them" warm) was stuffed and in the oven of the cookstove. The chores--milking, caring for the chickens, turkeys, rabbits, and ducks--went on as usual. Only the household aromas changed, as the turkey and stuffing asserted their appetitie power.

Presents, after breakfast, were useful things, for the most part, since ministers' families had few financial sources. They made things for each other, and once in a while, there would be something special, like the dress from Madam Kriet's Cromwell gave his mother one year later or the telescope he gave Joyce...a real milestone in Joyce's life.

The table, set with white linen, would hold too much food to allow for much decoration, and anyway, Mother McKinney thought candles too fussy. That linen, by the way, would not be entrusted to the 1922 washing machine. Mother McKinney would use the washtub and washboard...the sunny clotheslines in the back yard... to take care of that. She would wash clothes in the afternoon to use hot water from the solar heater on the roof.





*Clara
Gress 79*

Donald McKinney, who had just turned 16 on the 22nd of December, Cromwell and Marie McKinney, who had just returned with their two-year-old and four-year-old daughters from five years as missionaries in Bolivia, were there. Marie McKinney's parents, the Maxwells, and her grandfather, Mr. Baldwin, along with Dr. and Mrs. Mallory, also celebrated the day at the McKinney house.

Dinner was served. Mother McKinney had reached into the tiny storage area in the dining room (the door is twelve inches wide by 42 inches long) for preserves she had made during the long summer days. Now seated by the kitchen door, she had placed steaming bowls of vegetables on the table, and the golden turkey sat in front of Father McKinney at the other end of the table, awaiting the carving knife. But first...the Christmas Blessing.... California Holly from the hills, a cypress branch, or a small Christmas tree, which the boys themselves had fetched from the woods decorated the living room. Great loops of popcorn--grown, popped, and strung by the family--along with paper chains and cut-outs, decked the tree.

Because the fireplace didn't work very well, a heating stove, burning homegrown eucalyptus wood, stood in the living room, where, in the northwest corner, was the beloved organ. Nearly everyone could play it, but Mother McKinney usually played for carol and hymn singing. With Christmas roses and geraniums the rooms were bright.

After dinner, the "girls" did the dishes, little girls took naps, and the men walked about the yard, talking and remembering the fine dinner which had ended with squash pie. Thereby hangs a crisis. Mother McKinney wanted to serve ice cream with that pie, but the ice cream wasn't available. The local druggist, who supplied such a delicacy, had closed his establishment and gone home for, of all things, Christmas dinner.

No matter. Much later in the day, when other friends dropped by, another meal miraculously appeared, with more of the goodies which had been prepared in that little kitchen you can see today. Plus ice cream!

Merry Christmas!

The real Christmas tradition lies within the hearts of the young and the old alike.

-- Lanette Wray



CONSTRUCTION OF THE LA MESA DEPOT MUSEUM TO BEGIN SHORTLY

On December 6, 1979, the City of La Mesa is expected to award a contract for Phase I of the La Mesa Depot Museum. The City's Contract Documents and Specifications for La Mesa Depot Museum and Historic Site, 4695 Nebo Drive, street address of the Museum, bears the identification Project 56-2015 and Bid No. 26-79. Initial construction, which is expected to be completed by April 1, 1979, includes site work, plumbing, and move-on of the building.

The Museum site is on the west side of the railroad tracks between La Mesa Blvd. and Lemon Avenue. Phase I is being financed by the City's (federal) Community Block Development funds. The cost of restoration of the station building (Phase II) is the responsibility of the joint sponsors, the La Mesa Historical Society (LMHS) and the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association (PSRMA). The City will enter into a legal agreement with PSRMA, the owner of the station, but the operation and maintenance of the building will be by both groups through a joint agreement which is now being written.

Today's old-timers remember the station site as being on the east side of the tracks, sitting in what are now the parking area and southbound traffic lanes of Spring Street. True--that was the station location between 1915 (?) and 1954. The original location, however, was on the west side of the tracks where Nebo Drive was once known as Railroad Avenue. Indeed, the station yard included a portion of Railroad Avenue itself.

The planning and decisions to date have been undertaken by the PSRMA/LMHS Joint Committee for the La Mesa Depot Museum with the approval of the Boards of Directors of both sponsoring organizations. Larry Rose, Lee Lourenco and Dennis Tuttle have done most of the technical work; the writing, planning and discussion have also involved many other members of both organizations, including Joan Wilken, Woody Linke, Dorothy Griner, Donna Regan, Richard Teague, Lloyd Donahoo and Barry Worthington.

Volunteers will be needed for the depot restoration, other preparation and staffing of the Museum. Hopefully, the La Mesa Depot Museum project will become a community project with many La Mesans and La Mesa organizations involved. (Are you listening?)

One requirement is a "historical statement." Some LMHS members and friends have volunteered to share their recollections of the depot and depot activities when it was prominent in the lives of citizens. One or two lists have been "lost." Please step forward and volunteer again. Please call Joint Committee Chairman Eric Sanders, 469-1288.

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