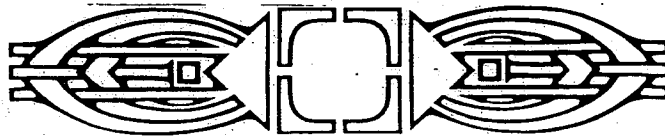


LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

# LOOKOUT AVE.

VOLUME 5, ISSUE NUMBER 2



OCTOBER 1981

GENERAL MEETING AND FALL PIE FESTIVAL  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2 P.M. - SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER

Bring your favorite pie - - - throw calories to the wind - - - gorge yourself! (Have you tasted Pat Kettler's pie crust!) Coffee and tea will be served.

After a brief business meeting, a program by Eric Sanders will be presented entitled "La Mesa Is Back On The Railroad Map." Eric will take a good hard look at the La Mesa Depot Museum, the Depot itself, its history, the rolling stock, the future of the La Mesa branch, and the Society's role in the Museum.

Come and find out what your Society is doing.

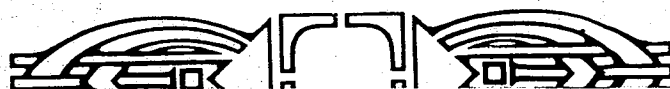
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we begin our seventh year together, we would like to express appreciation for all of the hardworking, supportive individuals who have contributed so much to the Society in the past. We hope that all members, both new and old, will avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in the variety of committees, events, and activities offered. A challenging year lies ahead of us.

Since the major restoration work at the McKinney House has been completed, other programs can now be created or expanded. The emphasis for the McKinney House itself will be directed toward the development of an interpretive plan for both house and yard plus the adoption of curatorial policies for the care of the collections. Other goals to be pursued include adopting needed By-Laws changes, beginning an educational program that will offer slide lectures and travelling exhibits, continuing to gather historical La Mesa artifacts and archival material, and enlarging the photo collection through the copying of loaned photographs. Our basic administrative costs have increased this year and it will be necessary to seek new sources of funding. The Society will also be assisting PSRMA in staffing the La Mesa Depot Museum, soon to be open on weekends.

If we all work together our goals can be realized. Since we are an all-volunteer organization what we accomplish will depend on you, our members.

Dorothy Griner





### JOAN LIGHT WILKEN

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Joan Wilken on August 16, 1981.

In 1975, Joan served as the chairman of the history subcommittee of the Bicentennial Committee and shepherded to a successful completion the writing of La Mesa -- A Brief History, a City Bicentennial project. With her family roots in La Mesa going back to the early years of this century and her deep interest in the community and history of La Mesa, it was natural for Joan to take an active part not only in the writing of the history but in another outgrowth of the Bicentennial--the new La Mesa Historical Society.

She was a founding member of the Society, served as secretary, and then from 1977-1979 served two terms as President. To a young Society that was enthusiastic but not sufficiently structured Joan brought organization, creating a strong foundation for the Society to build on.

One of her principal concerns was the restoration of the McKinney House, and she participated personally in the work. She was also instrumental in preparing the proposal for the HUD restoration grant we received from the City.

It is impossible to adequately describe all that Joan did for the Society and for the preservation of La Mesa history. She had a full and active life, with her teaching and other interests, but she gave so much of her time and herself.

Joan was a very special person to us, and we shall miss her support, her good company, and her friendship.

### WILKEN MEMORIAL FUND

It is the wish of the Wilken Family that contributions in Joan Wilken's memory be made to the La Mesa Historical Society. Since Joan was closely involved with the restoration of the McKinney House, memorial gifts will be used for that purpose.

In July of this year Joan gave \$500 to be used for the restoration of the upstairs floors. She also donated her baby clothes, a sewing cabinet c. 1915, and two oil paintings by La Mesa artist, Mary Garfield.

## THE SHENANDOAH

By Echoe Ahern

We are in the twenties and thirties of this incredible century. Grossmont High School perches on its lonely little hill. Freeways are just dreams dawning in the minds of their eventual builders. Paved streets in the Foothills are few and mighty far between.

But school must keep--even as it does today. I hear the GHS bells ringing for a change of classes, even as I write.

So is there a problem? Back then, yes. Getting the kids to school. Today the parking lot is full of cars and motor bikes. Bike racks stretch far away. The school is no longer in the boonies but is surrounded by a residential area, and kids can walk paved streets and sidewalks to school.

Flash back to 1922, when a train worked its way from La Mesa to Riverview High in far-out Lakeside to carry the likes of Jo La Moe who attended there. It also delivered passengers to Grossmont when the time came. But Hey! Somebody thought about a bus...one or more.

What about a bus, indeed? The Shenandoah rides again! Picture an open, convertible bus with ising-glass side curtains for damp emergencies and a "roof" with the same idea. It's gray in color, suiting its career in the Army in World War I. Everyone says, "It was high." Eva Quicksal remembers, "Big wheels!"

Shenandoah was shaped like a bullet. Or was it a dirigible? In any case, the kids who rode the strange contraption dubbed it Shenandoah, after the dirigible which went down over Ohio in 1925. You saw newsreel pictures of that disaster, remember?

Anyway, Gilbert Judy drove the Big S and recalls only one mini-disaster. He was teaching at Grossmont then and driving the bus, besides. He says that on one rainy morning the old girl broke down, and students aboard climbed down into the mire and hitched and/or hiked to class over hill, over dale, on a wet and muddy trail. Mr. Judy winds up the story by saying, "We got her fixed up somehow and got those kids home in the rain."

Marian Barnett caught the Shenandoah in mid-town La Mesa, she recalls. "It seemed 500 miles high...the funniest looking thing you ever saw in your life. But it was better than walking!" Walter Barnett describes it as "...an elongated bathtub." Warren Whiteman, who suggested the idea for this story, remembers there was no center aisle in the bus. Instead, eight doors let in and out the load of 48 Grossmonters. It is hard to picture the scramble.

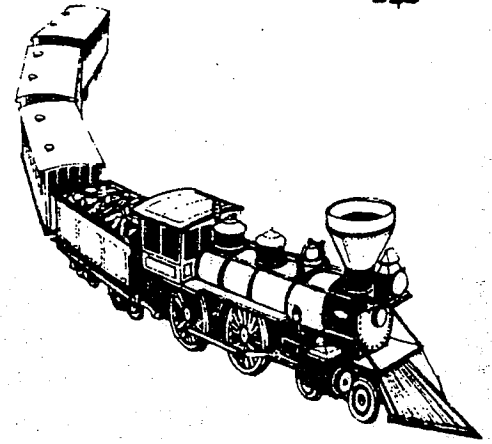
Of course there were other busses...from and to Lakeside, El Cajon, Spring Valley, Johnstown, and all over the place. Four hundred students were on campus then. Some drove their own cars. Warren Whiteman drove a Model T touring car his Dad had bought for \$25. There were car pools, too. He remembers getting his driver's license by walking into the Police Station where the La Mesa Furniture Store stands today...a simple application form and an even simpler test. He was 14 at the time and had to make out a second form and list his age as an elderly 15, snitching only a few weeks, since his birthday was just ahead.

Big comfortable yellow busses have served Foothillers and Highlanders and Braves and Matadors..on and on...for many years in the Grossmont Union High School District. In 1948, one could see a parade of the big vehicles loaded with kids enter practically at dawn and leave at day's end with the precious cargo every day.

And you know...nobody remembers any of those busses with the warmth and affection that riders of the Old Shenandoah recall...that bumpy, scrambling, lumbering, lurching old blunderbus of days long gone by.

CALENDAR

- Oct. 2,3,4 Oktoberfest
- Oct. 10 Library Friends Book Sale
- Oct. 17 LMHS YARD SALE 10am to 3 pm
- Oct. 25 LMHS ANNUAL MEETING AND PIE FESTIVAL 2:00PM



SATURDAYS - Docents have McKinney House open 12-3 pm  
 Saturdays and Sundays - Depot open

BAKE SALE AT OKTOBERFEST

The La Mesa Historical Society will be sponsoring a Bake Sale at the La Mesa Oktoberfest on Sat., Oct. 3 from 11 am to 5 pm. (Deliver by 11 am if possible). Our Bake Sale table will be in front of Sir Speedy Printing Store on La Mesa Blvd. a few doors east of Palm Avenue. We will appreciate all types of baked goods other than anything which contains cream fillings or tops. Let's support our Historical Society with an array of baked goods fit for a king!

ANNUAL PIE FESTIVAL

At 2:00 o'clock on October 25, 1981, the La Mesa Historical Society will hold its Annual Pie Festival at the La Mesa Senior Citizens Recreation Center, 8450 La Mesa Blvd. in conjunction with a regular Society meeting and program. We hope to have an excellent representation and the admission will be a PIE. Plan to participate! Come and view and partake of the delicious pies for which our members are so famous.

Mabel Perrapato

Hospitality Chairman

YARD SALE

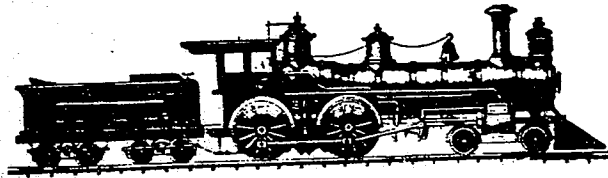
On Oct. 17th, the annual yard sale will be held at the McKinney House from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. Now is the time to gather together all your glorious junk. We will need plants, jewelry, books, clothes (clean and in good condition), household items, small appliances, furniture (small pieces) and decorative arts. If you are unable to bring your treasures to the McKinney House and leave them on the back porch, we will pick them up beginning October 12. Call Dorothy Griner at 460-3726 or Karna Webster at 463-1029 and we will arrange for a convenient pick up time. Please get your contributions to us as soon as possible so they can be priced.



OPEN HOUSE  
 MCKINNEY HOUSE  
 DEC. 12, 1981

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Bea Acers, Membership Secretary, is presently calling to remind members that our new year began July 1 and dues are payable NOW. Please send your renewals to the Society, Box 882, La Mesa, CA 92041.



## LA MESA DEPOT

By Eric Sanders

Restoration of the depot is almost complete and the La Mesa Depot Museum track is loaded with rolling stock. A small freight train leads into the depot. On the south track an operable Shay logging locomotive leads a "train" consisting of the other small locomotive, a troop kitchen car, a Union Pacific modernized heavyweight coach, a Union Pacific diner lounge and an Amtrak lightweight coach. The latter is a new acquisition.

On a pre-opening basis the depot is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays, including the Oktoberfest weekend.

A gala dedication and formal opening is yet to come.

Staffers are needed. There is an old expression: it's fun to ride the train when the train you ride is the Santa Fe. Well, it's fun to staff the depot when the depot is LMHS/PSRMA! So try once. Call Ellen or Eric Sanders, 469-1288, and volunteer for duty. Right away. The depot has lights and a telephone and even a vintage toilet!

Try it--you'll like it! The depot, that is.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The following note was received by President Dorothy Griner: September 3, 1981.

Thank you - dear Dorothy and all of you, (along with the grandchildren and friends) who made our 60th Anniversary so delightful.

It is a privilege to be a part of The La Mesa Historical Society Woody's foresight made possible. And we deeply appreciate the interest and effort that goes into the restoration and maintenance of the "McKinney House," only wishing we could do more.

It was great Don was doing so well he could help us celebrate.

May each of you, and the Historical Society, have a happy, contributing future - is the wish of RUTH AND JOYCE MC KINNEY.

P.S. (The \$60 is a love offering for our 60 good years together.)

## LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Officers elected May 17, 1981, were Dorothy Griner, President, Eric Sanders, First Vice-President, Pat Kettler, Second Vice President, Helen Odom, Third Vice-President, Brice Lockwood, Secretary, Clifford H. Asay, Jr., Treasurer, and Directors, Jean Guy and Donna Regan.

Some appointed officers follow: Community Liason, Helen Odom; Education, Eric Sanders, Betty Teague, and Pat Kettler; Parliamentarian, Betty Teague; Photo Archivist, Pat Kettler; Membership, Bea Acers; and Recorder/Archivist, Dorothy Griner.

Some standing Committee chairmen follow: Curatorial, Alexa Luberski; Historic Sites, Barry Worthington; Memorabilia, Thelma Todd; Oral History, Karna Webster; Quilters, Julie Bras; Restoration, Donna Regan; Publicity, Jane Fields; Historian, Eva Quicksall; Newsletter, Lucile DeWaide; Depot, Richard Teague, Chuck Bras, and Woody Linke; Hospitality, Mabel Perrapato; Telephone, Carol Lockwood; Tours, Kay Kester; and Yard Maintenance, Cliff Coates.

ORCHIDS TO YOU. Cliff Coates is keeping the YARD at the McKinney House! Says he likes the exercise. How about offering to assist if YOU have the same feeling!

Note elsewhere a list of new officers and appointees. These are hard at work already, but others are needed. If you'd like to join the ranks, just call Dorothy Griner, and you'll be getting ORCHIDS, too. Lookout Ave. always needs reporters, artists, mailers, etc. Call 463-6886 to volunteer.

Plenty of ORCHIDS are due those who have been polishing up the LA MESA DEPOT. That part of the work of LMHS is fast reaching the importance of a house restoration--a popular museum with La Mesa residents already!

MORE ORCHIDS to those of us who are of retirement age and still working full or part time. Nevertheless, many are still contributing efforts to LMHS in their spare (??) time.

## MCKINNEY HOUSE RESTORATION

-6-

The year 1980-1981 saw the completion of the McKinney House restoration work funded by the H.U.D. grant received through the City of La Mesa.

In January 1979, the La Mesa Historical Society requested that La Mesa allocate for the McKinney House restoration \$25,000 of fifth year Community Development Block Grant Funds. This application was approved, and under the terms of the contract between the Society and the City, work was to be done within 18 months, from October 1979 to April 1981.

Through the assistance of the City, many major projects were accomplished which would otherwise not have been possible.

A detailed list of expenditures follows:

Metal lining for kitchen chimney	\$57.24
Chimney Sweep	50.00
Rebuild two chimneys above roof line	590.00
Fumigation of house and garage	549.00
New cedar shingle roof	3,263.85
New water heater and electrical work	1,979.53
Reconstruction of 1908 front porch	4,571.67
Interior and exterior paint	329.29
Replastering	3,050.00
Supplies	35.41
Removal of later added paint from woodwork in office, upstairs hall, and kitchen	1,050.00
Interior painting (6 rooms), varnishing woodwork (3 rooms), painting back porch	2,100.00
Gutters for front porch overhang and back roof	356.00
Restoration of bedroom windows, new kitchen roof	2,406.08
Moving garage to back of lot	1,200.00
New sidewalk and garage slab, remove old	1,955.00
Refinishing hardwood floors downstairs (3 rooms)	600.00
Purchase of two smoke detectors	53.00
Electrical work--wiring garage and installing floodlights	185.00
Restoration of donated 1890 outhouse from Spring Valley	548.94
Replacement of kitchenette door	70.00
	25,000.01

In addition to the work funded by the H.U.D. grant, the preliminary restoration of the back yard was completed. This included disking, applying top soil where needed, planting grass, and constructing an arbor similar to the one the McKinneys had built in the early years. All of the work and the materials for the back yard, which totalled \$888.83, were donated.

LOOKOUT AVE. is the official publication of the La Mesa Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 92041. Tel. (714) 463-6886. Published quarterly.  
 Editor: Lucile DeWaide. Reporters: Eckoe Ahern, Lanette Wray, Jane Fields. Typist, Karna Webster.

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements  
July 1, 1980 to June 30, 1981

July 1, 1980-  
June 30, 1981

Cash Balance, Beginning of Period      \$    534

<u>Receipts</u>	
1. Membership Dues	\$ 2,323
2. Fund Raising	<u>4,056</u>
3. Donations	
4. Other	
Total	<u>\$ 6,379</u>

2,000 copies of La Mesa--  
A Brief History, were sold  
to the La Mesa Courier in  
November, 1980 at a cost of  
\$1 each. The money received  
from this sale has been placed  
in a restricted account and  
will be used for the future  
publishing of a new history of  
La Mesa.

<u>Disbursements</u>	
10. Mortgage Payments	
11. Donald McKinney	\$ 2,256
13. Postage	185
14. Supplies	218
15. Museum Restoration	81
16. Insurance	571
17. Preservation Photos	94
18. Loan Retirement	
20. Membership	
21. Docents	
22. Newsletter/Stationery	1,577
23. Oral History	
24. Yard Maintenance	259
25. Contingency	
26. Memorabilia	
27. Quilters	85
28. Utilities	119
Total	<u>\$ 5,445</u>

Cash Balance, End of Period      \$ 1,468

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
On June 30, 1981

Assets

Cash in Bank	\$ 1,468
Museum Building (Assessor valuation \$45,000)	34,333
Organization costs	<u>63</u>
Total Assets	<u>35,864</u>

Liabilities

Mortgage payable - first	22,127
Mortgage payable - second	<u>7,155</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>29,282</u>

Equity

\$ 6,582

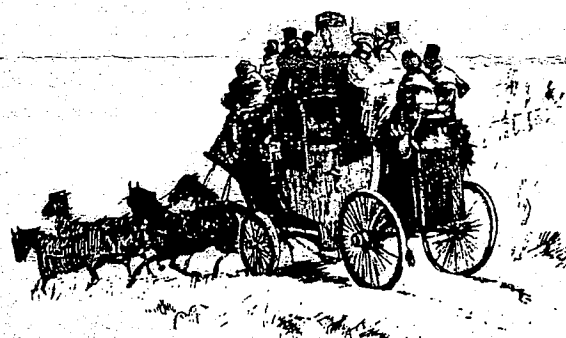
# "SAN DIEGO: HOLLYWOOD SOUTH"

## Early Film Making in San Diego and La Mesa

A short filmed interview with pioneer director Allan Dwan, including the presentation of a plaque in his honor, will open the San Diego Museum of Art's second film tribute to "San Diego: Hollywood South" on Friday, October 2, at 7:30 P.M.

Over a period of 50 years, Dwan directed at least 400 pictures and produced, wrote, or supervised as many more. The 96-year old Dwan began his distinguished career as a director while in Lakeside and La Mesa making films for the Chicago-based American Film Company. In August, 1911, after several months in Lakeside, Dwan and a company of actors and cameramen moved to La Mesa and set up offices and a film processing plant in a leased store building on La Mesa Boulevard. During the year that American worked in the La Mesa area they produced approximately 100 films, most of which were westerns. The filmed interview with Dwan will include a brief clip from one 1911 film, "The Poisoned Flume."

Also part of the program will be the showing of several films made in San Diego by other companies, beginning with newsreel footage from 1898, plus a panel discussion of early film history in Coronado, Balboa Park, La Mesa, and other areas of San Diego. Further details may be found on the separate flyer and reservation form inserted in this newsletter. Tickets may also be purchased at the door. For further information, call the Museum at 232-7931.



**LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**  
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