The history of Mexican, Mexican-Americans, and Chicano as contributors to San Diego’s history has often been unregarded or overlooked. Our winter-spring exhibitions, “Plain Sight: Mexicans/Mexican Stories in San Diego”, documents the miles of Latinx individuals and families in building community and contributing to civic life during the twentieth century. The exhibition explores five core stories: La Jolla’s Pottery Canyon, Chicano Park and its national historic designation, Dr. Ramon Ruiz’s 1998 National Humanities Medal award, Latina “telephone monitors” working for the U.S. Office of Censorship during World War II, and the Lemon Grove school desegregation case.

Additional dimensions of the project include commissioned works by contemporary Latinx artists reflecting on the cultural and social issues raised by the stories, and a student project organized by our volunteers at Outside the Lens. I am extremely grateful to curators Natasha Brionilla Eckholm and Rebecca H. Morales for organizing the exhibition, and to the sponsors, artists, and volunteers who supported and participated in the project. You can see the exhibition at the Wisteria Cottage gallery from February 10 through May 20. We’ve expanded our public days, and are now open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 4 pm.

We have many exciting programs, activities, and events planned for the coming months: educational programs associated with the “In Plain Sight” exhibition, the 14th annual La Jolla Concours D’Elegance featuring the Lincoln as the thematic marque (April 7-8), a special event honoring the California Craftsmen architecture of the Lodge at Torrey Pines (April 18), and the 20th annual Secret Garden Tour with the theme “Cutting Across the Countryside” (May 18-19). You’ll find more information about our programs in this issue, and we look forward to welcoming you to these events!

Thanks to all of you who gave to our Annual Appeal year-end fundraising campaign—we’re very grateful for your generous donations! Every day we appreciate your participation and support through Membership in the Society. We hope your involvement brings the rich and varied history of La Jolla to you in meaningful ways, and helps inform your sense of community. If you ever want to check the status of your Membership, just call us at 858-459-5335 or email info@lajollahistory.org.

Many thanks to the Society’s Board of Directors for their contributions of time, talent, and treasure, and to all the Volunteers who support our gallery, programs, and events! There is much the Society has to offer in 2018, and we look forward to seeing you here!”

Heath Fox
Executive Director

For more than 27 years, the American Alliance of Museums has recognized superior graphic design, through the Museum Publications Design Competition, the only national juried competition of its kind. For 2017, the La Jolla Historical Society received recognition for the Cow on the Beach poster designed by Kelly Johnston and featuring Herbert R. Richts’ 1906 and Philipp Scholtz Ritterman’s 2016 photographs.

We’re in good company…
2017 – Award Winners for Posters First Prize Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service Washington, DC A Place Called Home: Introducing the National Museum of African American History & Culture
Honorable Mention Seattle Art Museum Seattle, WA
Graphic Masters La Jolla Historical Society La Jolla, CA
Cows on the Beach
For THE LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY archive five years ago from a private donor – ur cover this issue – a map showing California as Mexico, with a run-off of limited atlases by collectors and cartographers. In good condition it has an estimated retail value of $20,000 if sold in Madison Avenue galleries, although copies usually sell at auction for somewhat less, according to Alex Claussen, director of Barry Baumberg’s Antique Maps & Atlases gallery at 7463 Girard Avenue.

The Society’s copy shows signs of wear and use. It is, after all, over 200 years old. But the pages remain revealing of a very different world, indeed. Not only was California in Mexico, but a whole vast territory and more than half of the Continent answered only to the call of the wild.

Typically, the volume is leather bound.

Today, the 1814 publication with a run-off of limited copies, is considered one of the important early American atlases by collectors and cartographers. In good condition it has an estimated retail value of $20,000 if sold in Madison Avenue galleries, although copies usually sell at auction for somewhat less, according to Alex Claussen, director of Barry Baumberg’s Antique Maps & Atlases gallery at 7463 Girard Avenue.

The Society’s copy shows signs of wear and use. It is, after all, over 200 years old. But the pages remain revealing of a very different world, indeed. Not only was California in Mexico, but a whole vast territory and more than half of the Continent answered only to the call of the wild.
In L. Frank Baum's story, "Sea Fairies," an old sea captain with a limp and an adventurous young woman named Trot, row a skiff into one of La Jolla's seven caves on a fine and lovely summer morning. Up from the depths swims a sea fairy offering to lead them on fantastic underwater journey to her kingdom. Of course, they accept and we, as readers, come along.

Living in La Jolla for a brief time in the early 1900s, the famed "Wizard of Oz" author like numerous storytellers was captivated by the caves and the dark, deep secrets they might reveal if explored through fiction. In "Sea Fairies" a dive into the cave's murky waters leads to a magical kingdom ruled by a kindly king and queen and a friendly octopus who is mortified, however, that he is the symbol for the Standard Oil Company. The benign kingdom, along with its pair of new topside visitors, soon is threatened by an evil magician named Zog.

Baum’s "Sea Fairies" was published in 1911, years after La Jolla's caves already had entered the legendary realm of fantasy and fiction through narratives about its two most famous marine caverns: The White Lady and Sunny Jim. The White Lady's reputation was set after early visitors envisioned a bride's silhouette when looking seaward through its portal and Rose Hartwick Thorpe, a La Jolla poet and writer, published a story called "The White Lady of La Jolla" telling the sad tale of a young woman about to be married who was trapped in the cave with the oncoming tide. Sunny Jim's destiny was set in 1903 when Gustav Schultz, a German-born entrepreneur, decided to make one of the caves accessible from land by digging a tunnel to reveal a silhouette that resembled a historic cartoon character. He named the cave Sunny Jim after the cartoon and people have been tra dging down into the tunnel and paying money to see it ever since.

The caves, along with La Jolla sights such as Alligator Head and Cathedral Rock (both natural coastal geological formations that have disappeared due to tidal ebb and flow) were easy draws as tourist attractions in late 19th and early 20th century La Jolla. They were featured on numerous postcards and brochures as natural wonders well worth a visit to a small seaside location offering, at that time, little else. No restaurants, no galleries and only a single hotel with negligible running water. Tourists delighted in the caves. A San Diego Union newspaper account from the early 1900s attests: "An enthusiastic tunnel party explored the big cave Friday noon at high tide and enjoyed a fine spectacle as the flood of foam hurled itself upon the rocks, sprinkling the laughing spectators, who considered the ducking only a part of the fun."

Today, La Jolla's caves are popular kayaking attractions and continue to attract curious visitors. Among the more recent curiosity seekers was a film crew from the BBC (British Broadcasting Corp.) which filmed a travel segment with ex-cabinet minister Michael Portillo featuring some of the history of the caves, set to air sometime this spring as part of a travel documentary series. Contrary to common legends usually connecting caves with sinister, dark doings, La Jolla's caves seem much friendlier kinds of places connected with, well, sea fairies, as Baum suggested, who guided the intrepid Trot and the old captain home and out of the evil Zog's clutches as their adventurous day underwater ends. In Baum's propitious story all ends well. Trot and the captain arrive home just in time for some mom's apple pie and supper.

– Carol Olen
F or more than 30 years, starting in the mid-1950s and continuing until its final closure in 1987, Bennett’s wore the crown jewels as La Jolla’s finest nursery and garden center where quality mattered most and service ran a close second. Bennett’s promotion— the fine English pink one called Raphiolepis Springtime to sell the best whether the plant was a tiny blue from prime stock. Efforts at Bennett’s were always service ran a close second. Bennett’s prim roses—the delight to the senses. Bulb plants—daffodils, tulips, iris, hyacinths—were consistently resourced from prime stock. Efforts at Bennett’s were always to sell the best whether the plant was a tiny blue violet or one of the house specialties—the large white azalea known as Alaska because it was truly white as new snow. No one ever left Bennett’s with a flat of painting petunias or, worse, begonias with bugs!

Located first on Eads Avenue behind the classy Mayfair market (now CVS) and later moved to 7415 Draper Ave. (site of the present-day La Jolla Library), Bennett’s was the love and life of Norman and Ottile Bennett. Norman, the husband of the duo, handled the landscape aspect of the business devoted to the building of decks, patios and fences. Ottile, a petite blond woman with intense blue/grey eyes and a ready smile, was its soul—a student of horticulture and a lover of flowers with an amazing aesthetic and appreciation for color, form and arrangement.

“Norman was part of the business allright, but she was really the queen,” says John Alexander who began going to Bennett’s as a child, later worked there and now as a horticulturalist himself, thanks to Ottile’s encouragement. “She was always there behind the desk, super nice, and would sell you one plant out of a six pack if you were really interested.”

Ottile began her life in the La Jolla garden world as a young woman married to Milton Sessions, the nephew of Kate Sessions and a nurseryman to his own right. (See related story The Other Sessions, page 8.) For a brief time she managed the Sessions Garden Store and Nursery that Sessions had opened in the early 1940s at Torrey Pines Road and Girard Avenue. Her marriage to Sessions ended after she met Norman Bennett. She divorced Sessions, married Norman, their own Bennett’s garden center opened in 1956 featuring “potted plants, seeds, tools, pottery, choice plants and all types of fertilizers.”

The Bennetts lived at 5184 Chelsea St. in a small house by the sea where Ottile conducted continuing experiments in cultivating botanical varieties near the ocean. With Norman she wrote a column for the La Jolla Light called “Your garden...and mine.” On Feb. 7, 1965, she announced: “Last year we planted the Puluanya English primrose in our garden where they received a great deal of wind right off the ocean and they bloomed from mid-January through May. Beautiful shades of blue, yellow, gold, pink, orange maroon and white...” Other columns advised on the planting of new varieties of roses, such as Christian Diot, but cautioned to put in old varieties as well—Charlotte Armstrong, Peace and others.” On March 14, 1965, the column serendipitously reported “the first of the lawn mows have been flying at night.” Solution: A hefty skimming of “either arsenate of lead, chloridane or DDT.”

“Bennett’s built a real reputation for camellias, bamboo, azaleas and roses,” says Russell Ramsey who became manager of the nursery in later years. The staff included old-time gardeners who really knew their stuff. The Japanese gardeners working around the mansions on the hill would come in and pick up dozens of flats to plant huge beds of color. They always knew exactly what they wanted and wouldn’t accept just any color pansy. One gardener, to be known for being picky to their suppliers as well.”

Standing among La Jolla’s elite stores such as S. Magnis, Saks’ Fifth Avenue and John Hogan during La Jolla’s golden Mid-Century era of retail, Bennett’s was known for quality and expertise. Its customers included Cliff Robertson, the newspaper Copleys and any number of wealthy slightly eccentric moguls such as the customer (nameless) who repeatedly drove up in a Mercedes with 20 yapping chihuahuas.

Ramsey, who took the old Glencourt Bennett’s telephone number as his own when the store closed, recalls annual visits every February from a Frenchman who would arrive with caches of rare seeds gathered in travels around the world. One year he brought seeds from the exotic Matilja poppy known for its flattery white petals and delicate sulphur yellow center. To sprout, the seeds required exposure to hot fire. The Bennett’s crew scattered the seeds on an outdoor table, started a blaze—and neighbors called

Mememtos of Bennett’s linger in many gardens throughout La Jolla, plants still growing because they started with good roots, garden ornaments and planters still around because of the exceptional glazes lasting through time.”
FOR THE 1935 CALIFORNIA PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION IN BALBOA PARK HE TURNED HUNDREDS OF ACRES OF SCRUB AND CHAPARRAL INTO SPANISH GARDENS.

Milton Sessions, nephew of San Diego’s leading pioneer horticulturist – the formidable Kate Sessions – spent most of his lifetime working in garden and landscape design, existing both with and beyond his famous aunt’s shadow. He started working in his Aunt Kate’s West Lewis Street nursery (now the Mission Hills Nursery) in 1908 as a child. She made him a business partner in 1920 at the age of 20. A year later he started his own nursery business in Old Town, began travelling through Europe to look at landscape design with architect Richard Requa and by 1929 had established a highly reputable operation in a Requa-designed building at the Old Town site serving the landscape needs of some of San Diego’s prime neighborhoods including Coronado, Mission Hills and La Jolla.

In the early 1940s Sessions saw the opportunity in expanding his business into a singular more affluent neighborhood, he bought a triangular chunk of La Jolla land at Torrey Pines Road and Girard Avenue and opened the Sessions Garden Store and Nursery. His second wife, Octilie Sessions, became the manager and the couple moved into a small house at 733 Kline St. The business thrived here until the 1950s when Octilie left Sessions to marry Norman Bennett leading to the establishment of a new La Jolla nursery called Bennett’s (see related story, Remembering Bennett’s, pages 6). Milton closed the nursery in La Jolla in 1958.

Through the 1920s and ‘30s his reputation as a landscaper had spread considerably throughout San Diego. For the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition in Balboa Park he turned hundreds of acres of scrub and chaparral into Spanish gardens. For the same exposition he landed a $50,000 contract with the Ford Motor Corp. to create Roads of the Pacific, a replication of 14 famed coastal highways from various eras adjacent to the Ford Building where new Ford V-8s cruised the byways. Other major landscape projects included work for the old Naval Hospital in Balboa Park, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Roosevelt and Memorial junior high schools, the Naval Training Center, Presidio Park and the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club. Substantial residential projects in La Jolla included an Italian garden for Ruth Brafman in La Jolla Shores and a Mediterranean-style landscape for the Herbert Palmer-designed residence for Ray McClintock. Sessions is also remembered for his garden writing for the San Diego Floral Association.

Among his bon mots: “You can always sell a red flower over any other to a man, although that’s the color always less popular with a woman.”

Born in 1900, Sessions was the son of Frank Sessions, Kate’s brother who followed her to San Diego in 1895 from the San Francisco Bay area. As Kate became known for her horticultural expertise in young San Diego, Frank frequently joined her in business ventures buying plots of land for development and the planting of nursery stock, a practice Milton also supported through his aunt’s death in 1940. Frank’s major purchases in the early 1900s were large amounts of acreage in Pacific Beach for orchards and proliferating plants that would adapt to San Diego’s Mediterranean-like climate; Kate built a house on part of it and, remaining today, is Kate Sessions Park. Like many pioneer San Diegans, Frank’s business pursuits were known for their diversity and sometimes serendipitous nature. He once owned a trained circus of dancing steers who entertained on a vacant lot in San Diego.

In some ways, son Milton mimed his father’s business ways. In the late 1950s he decided to remove himself from the horticulture business and moved to Sonoma to raise cattle and thoroughbred horses. But by the age of 86, Milton was ready to retire for good and came to live with his fifth wife, Yolanda, in a La Jolla condo at 1135 Torrey Pines Road. He died at Scripps Memorial Hospital in 1995 at age 95.

In an oral history interview with the San Diego History Center five years before his death Sessions noted: “I never tried to get in the limelight that my aunt enjoyed a good part of her life... I was too busy with my own part of the work... When I left her and went into business for myself, sometimes she would drive by where I was doing a job to see how I was doing... she was a very strong-willed person.”

The Sessions family gather for repast in the early 1900’s. Kate is seated near center, brother Frank is at her left, nephew Milton stands in background. Below, Milton’s nursery truck. Photos courtesy of San Diego History Center.

A Mediterranean-inspired landscape by Milton Sessions graces Herbert Palmer-designed residence on La Jolla’s Sierra Mar Drive. Photo courtesy of San Diego History Center.
La Jolla is fortunate to have a plethora of open-air courtyard-type commercial and professional buildings in the downtown. These take advantage of our famed year-round climate, feature enjoyable garden amenities and contribute to the vibrancy of downtown’s pedestrian environment. Although the open-air courtyard building type goes back to the early Spanish settlement of San Diego, where patios and plazas added pleasurable communal gathering spaces, La Jolla’s first expression in the commercial sphere is the historic Arcade Building on Girard Avenue. Designed in 1926 by English architect Herbert Palmer, the Arcade follows English and European prototypes Palmer would have known from his early upbringing abroad. It features Mission Revival arched entries on Girard Avenue and Drury Lane that lead to an open-air pedestrian walkway, intermittently spanned by arches and lined with single-story shops. The walkway conveniently connected the main shopping area on Girard Avenue to the San Diego Electric Railway Depot that once stood at Fay Avenue and Prospect Street.

This unique commercial innovation didn’t find imitators until after World War II, when downtown began to expand in response to Post-War growth. Surprisingly, the first properties to use garden courtyards were medical offices—mostly notably the Streamline Modern complex at 7761 Herschel Ave. and the ranch-style grouping at 850 Prospect erected in 1953. Each complex covered two adjoining lots, but the new courtyards used the space differently. Occupying the front half of the lot, 7761 Herschel opened the courtyard to the street as a shared public amenity. In contrast, 850 Prospect, designed by its owner/developer Dr. John Lattimer, featured an interior courtyard surrounded by one-story offices. A street side concrete block blade sign and low-slung pergola obscured its verdant courtyard from public view. A third early medical court was Thompson Terrace, located at 7760 Fay Avenue. This began as a Pre-War multi-family complex, with a one-story duplex along the side property line and a two-story duplex at the alley. It was converted to office space in the mid-1950s by owner Clayton Thompson, a realtor specializing in multi-family apartments and co-op ownership opportunities. The front unit, built in 1958, completed the complex, where a secret garden with common interior walkways and private patios await behind the gate.

More professional and commercial courts were added to La Jolla’s downtown in the early 1960s, when developers Walter Helmuth and Larry Jackson built Fay Center, Crosby Center and the International Shops during a two-year period. A two-page spread in the La Jolla Light and La Jolla Journal from 1962 announced this ambitious duo’s plans for seven additional complexes on Herschel, Fay, Girard and Eads. The ads focused on professionals needing small shop or office space renting for $47-$65/month, where multi-paneled cottage windows and Dutch doors lent a cozy residential atmosphere, along with “a Californian patio center court, softened by the charm of used brick, lovely planting and quaint waterfalls.” Although none of these projects were realized, commercial courtyards developed by Helmuth and Jackson provided models for how La Jolla could densify without destroying the village scale of downtown. As development intensified in the 1970s, large-scaled commercial buildings continued to include courtyards, now encouraged by the newly adopted Planned Development Ordinance of 1984. These will be discussed in an upcoming issue of Timeskeeper.
The power of memory and history shapes our knowledge of who we are and where we come from. *In Plain Sight: Mexican|Chicano Stories in San Diego* examines the lives of Roberto Alvarez, Cornelio Rodriguez, Priscilla Yañez, Josie Talamanca, and Ramon Ruiz, PhD, as touchstones for understanding the contributions of the Mexican|Chicano community to San Diego. By remembering them, we have a fuller appreciation of how the Mexican|Chicano community shaped our city and region, and helps to form our shared future.

Roberto Alvarez

The stories begin in the 1930’s after the stock market crash of 1929 and during the Great Depression (1929-1939). Xenophobia fueled mass deportation of some 500,000 to two million Mexicans (most were US born citizens) between 1929 and 1936. Racist attitudes gave rise to the segregation of Mexican-American students with the rationale that their “language handicap” required they be “Americanized” before they could mix with white American children.

Thus, on January 5, 1931, Jerome T. Green, principal of Lemon Grove Grammar School, refused entry of seventy-five US citizen Mexican students (out of 169), and directed them to a two-room building commonly known as “La Caballeriza” (the barnyard).

However, the angered parents fought back. They organized, and through the Mexican Consulate, obtained legal counsel and support. The “Lemon Grove Incident” became a test case of the power of the District Attorney and the school board to segregate Mexican students into a separate school. Roberto Alvarez, was chosen to be the plaintiff in the class action suit, *Roberto Alvarez vs. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District*. On March 30, 1931, Judge Claude Chambers ruled in favor of the Mexican community, the first successful school desegregation court decision in the history of the United States. This largely unknown history is captured in a film by documentarian Paul Espinosa. *The Lemon Grove Incident* shown at the exhibit.

Ramon Ruiz

Ramon Ruiz (1921-2010) encapsulates the challenges and successes of Mexican immigrants who came to San Diego in the 20th century. Born in a modest home in then largely rural Pacific Beach, his formative years were spent at La Jolla High School, and San Diego State College. He later enlisted in the Army Air Corps and trained as a B-29 pilot and bombardier. After the war, he attended Claremont McKenna College and the University of California at Berkeley where he received his PhD. In 1970, the new University of California San Diego recruited Dr. Ruiz where he served as the founding Chair of the History Department and later developed the Hispanic Studies program.

By remembering them, we have a fuller appreciation of how the Mexican|Chicano community shaped our city and region, and helps to form our shared future.
Although he grew up in a period of turbulent border policies, prejudice and segregation in San Diego, Prof. Ruiz became a noted historian of Mexico and Cuba. He sought to bring his bicultural perspective to create a deeper understanding of Mexican and border history. In 1998 he was the first Mexican to receive the National Humanities Medal.

These stories – all related in the exhibition – are juxtaposed with the contributions of three emerging artists that bring the Mexican/Chicano legacy to the present: contemporary artist Noé Olivas, film-maker Omar Lopez, and performance artist Claudia Cano.

Cornelio Rodriguez

Cornelio Rodriguez was a skilled potter who brought his craft from Mexico to La Jolla in the 1930s with his brothers, Abraham and Ubaldo. They established a pottery business off Torrey Pines Road that became known as Pottery Canyon. The Rodriguezes dug clay by hand from the land, and used craft skills brought from Mexico. They molded unglazed roof and floor tiles common to the “Mission Revival” period and baked them in an oil-fired kiln, and fashioned ornamental pots on a potter’s wheel and baked them in an oil-fired kiln, and fashioned ornamental pots on a potter’s wheel and baked them in an oil-fired kiln, and fashioned ornamental pots on a potter’s wheel and baked them in an oil-fired kiln.

Diverse shapes and forms of pottery were produced by Rodriguez brothers. In the 1950s through the 1990s, a series of setbacks occurred culminating in the demolition of all but one of the buildings and the wood-burning kilns, despite their historic designation. As the land around Pottery Canyon developed, the pottery works became an anachronistic eyesore.

ultimately, Pottery Canyon became a victim of gentrification marking the passing of an historic trade.

Augmenting the picture of La Jolla and its Mexican community are insights into the making of a working-class community, restrictive covenants and the settlement patterns of Mexicans, the role tennis played in bringing Logan Heights to La Jolla, and the relationship between Cornelio Rodriguez and La Luz Clay Products in New Mexico.

Priscilla Yañez

Although discrimination against Mexican-Americans was common, World War II presented an opportunity for lessening social inequities. They joined the armed services in the hundreds of thousands, earned record numbers of Congressional Medals of Honor, served in the WAVES and WAVES and worked in manufacturing jobs producing aircraft, munitions and other matériel. Another untold number also served in intelligence, helping the U.S. gain an advantage over its adversaries through their knowledge of Spanish and Mexico, a country of strategic importance to the Western Hemisphere Defense Plan.

Priscilla Yañez was one of the Latinas who worked in intelligence for the Office of Censorship as a telephone monitor listening in on and translating critical conversations that took place between the United States and Mexico. Although classified, her job was as a civil servant working for the military that she undertook alongside other Mexicanas and Latinas. The contributions of largely female civilian censors have gone unrecognized. Now, however, the efforts of the many bilingual Mexicanas and Latinas who contributed to the war effort in intelligence services are finally coming to light.

Josie Talamantez

The 1960s and 70s were a period of widespread social and political activism in the U.S. including the beginning of the farmworker’s movement under César Chávez and the rise of the Chicano Movement reflecting the embrace of a new cultural identity. Many student and civic organizations were formed in San Diego committed to giving voice to a new-found power through protest.

When, in 1970, the residents of Barrio Logan learned that property in the heart of their community was to be converted into a parking lot and headquarters for the California Highway Patrol they, along with students, occupied theeland in protest. They formed the Chicano Park Steering Committee and negotiated with the state officials to create Chicano Park.

Long-time resident and member of the Steering Committee, Josie Talamantez worked for more than 14 years for Chicano Park to be included in the National Register of Historic Places, a recognition that finally took place in 2013, in 2016 it was designated as a National Historic Landmark. Situated under the Coronado Bridge, Chicano Park is known for its murals commemorating the history and lives of Mexican people. It is a gathering place and focal point for the community that represents the power of resistance and self-determination.

Miracle, PhD, co-curator, is a specialist on Latino/a culture focusing on international, regional economic and industrial development. She has advised the Mexican National Council on Science and Technology and co-founded New Economics for Women for low-income Latinas in Los Angeles. Eckholm, MA, co-curator, is an authority of photography in the United States and Latin America. Her scholarship on photography by Mexican/Cicicana women on the border was included in the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit www.calhum.org. Additional support provided by Eric and Marjorie Van Young, Ruth Cavett, Nell Watzl, the Florence Riford Fund of the San Diego Foundation, and ArtWorks San Diego. Institutional support provided by the City of San Diego's Commission for Arts & Culture and by the Members of the La Jolla Historical Society.
Robert Henri, The American Realist Turned Ex-pat, Completed 84 Canvases During the Short Summer He Spent in California in 1914. A Major Portion of Which Were Painted in La Jolla with Subjects Reflecting the Area’s Diverse Ethnic Culture and Varying Demographics. Only about two dozen of these paintings remain, part of private and museum collections around the world. Although Henri painted a fair number of seascapes (which he was dissatisfied with and destroyed almost immediately), the majority of the paintings were portraits of common people he found on the street and convinced to sit for him in the house and studio he and his wife and sister-in-law occupied on Coast Blvd. For subjects Henri was most interested in the street culture of everyday life particularly some of the new inhabitants arriving in San Diego to be part of the upcoming 1915-16 Panama California Exposition. They included Native Americans, blacks, Asians and Hispanics — some transients and others associated with a variety of jobs as day laborers. Henri called them his “interesting” people and shunned more formal portrait work of civic and social types during his time in La Jolla.

Henri’s La Jolla paintings were first shown as a group in Los Angeles shortly after they were completed and heralded as a fresh and realistic approach to portrait painting. Two canvases also were featured in the main show organized by Alice Klauber for the 1915-16 Panama-California Exposition. They included Native Americans, blacks, Asians and Hispanics — some transients and others associated with a variety of jobs as day laborers. Henri called them his “interesting” people and shunned more formal portrait work of civic and social types during his time in La Jolla.

Henri found selling newspapers at the train station in San Diego is depicted asleep in one such chair, the painting entitled “The Failure of Sylvester.”

Leeds comments that “the Henri’s (accustomed to the bustle of European café society) relished the physical beauty and remoteness of La Jolla, but hardly its cultural offerings; the artist commented at one point that “our excitement in La Jolla is one ice cream saloon and two movies.”
Frank Lloyd Wright called the Lincoln Continental – launched in 1939 and inspired by the streamlined, diesel-powered Burlington Zephyr train – “the most beautiful car ever made.” It became a flagship model for decades, known for classic lines, luxurious interiors and ability to glide down the road like a giant swan on wheels.

This year’s Concours d’Elegance held the weekend of April 6-8 culminating with the marathon automotive exhibition at La Jolla Cove will pay tribute to the Lincoln in all its various shapes, forms and historical derivations. The Lincoln began its journey to celebrity status in 1917 with a motor company established in Dearborn, MI, by Henry Leland named after Abraham Lincoln whom the automotive entrepreneur had voted for in 1864. When Leland experienced financial difficulties in 1922, his company was sold to Henry Ford for $8 million. Taken into hand by Ford’s son, Edsel, the Lincoln was developed as a luxury automobile, a counter to the practical Model T’s that had made the senior Ford a huge American success. Although Edsel is unfortunately remembered in history as the namesake for Ford’s monumental design failure (the Edsel), the junior member of the Ford clan soon began playing a significant role in developing Lincoln as Ford’s first luxury division known for style and appeal to a wealthier market. He gave the car an iconic hood ornament in the greyhound, eliminated running boards to suggest a swifter machine for the road and provided some models with special compartments for golf clubs. Edsel Ford also was instrumental in introducing a smaller version of the Lincoln, called the Lincoln Zephyr, to the market in 1936 which was a huge financial success. Four years later he brought the first Lincoln Continental into production with a design based on his own desire to have a more European-looking car to drive around on his Florida vacations.

The 1950s saw the creation of an entire Continental division within the company and the production of the Continental Mark II, a two-door hardtop coupe with the signature trunk lid styled with a tire-shaped bump. The Mark II became the flagship of the company at a base price of $10,000, comparable to the Rolls Royce Silver Cloud of the same era. In the 1960s the company introduced the Continental Mark III distinguished by the radiator-style grill. The 60’s also witnessed the Lincoln Continental becoming part of a sad moment in American history: The car President John Kennedy was travelling in when he was assassinated in Dallas in 1963 was custom built from a 1961 four-door Continental, code name SS-100-X.

― Carol Olten
WHAT IS PLANNED GIVING? Planned giving is a method of supporting nonprofit organizations that enables philanthropic donors to make larger gifts than they could make from their income. While some planned gifts provide a life-long income to the donor, others use estate and tax planning techniques to provide for the charitable organization, family members, and other heirs in ways that maximize the gift and/or minimize its impact on the donor’s estate. By definition, a planned gift is any major gift made during a person’s lifetime or at death as part of the donor’s overall financial and estate planning. Planned giving is a means by which anyone concerned with the wise use of personal resources makes a considered choice about their ultimate disposition. The La Jolla Historical Society’s most important asset, Wisteria Cottage, was a planned gift, donated by bequest from Ellen Revelle and her family.

LEGACY. Support from planned gifts aims toward the future, creating a legacy for the donor, and enabling the Society to create a legacy for the community. A strong portfolio of endowed and Board-restricted funds provisioned by planned gifts anchors the Society’s long-term health and sustainability of the organization. The Society’s future as a repository of history and memory for the benefit of successive generations is ensured by planned gifts.

STEWARDSHIP. The La Jolla Historical Society is deeply committed to the principle of stewardship for the careful management of assets entrusted to our care. The Board of Directors exercises oversight and fiscal responsibility for compliance with legal requirements, policies, and best practices. The Board has an updated set of Bylaws, a strategic plan, and current finance and investment policies. Board members are regularly and actively involved with long-range planning and implementation of all Society activities. Board members serve on various fiduciary, program, and fundraising committees that keep them involved with Society constituents.

ACCOUNTABILITY. The Executive Director and Board Treasurer are responsible for fiscal management and accountability, and work with a Finance Committee appointed by the President and chaired by the Treasurer. An Investment Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring the Society’s investment portfolio and implementing policies established by the Board or Finance Committee. Investments held by the Society have a primary objective of asset preservation and protection, with a secondary objective of total return for each category of assets. Board-designated investment reserves are held to support future years’ operations, provide a resource for contingencies, or to provide a source of funds for investment in the Society’s growth. Audited financial statements and Form 990 tax filings are available to the public upon request.

BASIC INSTRUMENTS. Will bequests, income gifts (pooled income fund, charitable remainder trust, charitable gift annuity), and asset gifts (appreciated property such as real estate or investment securities, and life insurance or retirement account designations) are accepted by the Society.

CONFIDENTIALITY. All information about a donor or income beneficiaries, including names, ages, gift amounts, and net worth will be kept strictly confidential by the Society unless permission is granted by the donor to release such information.
LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WINTER/SPRING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Costume designer Judith Dolan was a special guest at the opening of her Judith Dolan: On Broadway exhibition at the Wisteria Cottage galleries in September. She poses with Tony Award-winning costumes for 1997 production of Candide.

Ellen Browning Scripps luncheon in October was preceded with an evening reception hosted by Dave and Marlene Reynolds at their historic Wheeler Bailey House. Executive director Heath Fox (upper left) greets architect Ione Stiegler and Matt Mangano; host Dave Reynolds and Society archivist Mike Mischler (upper right). Reception honored luncheon speaker Thompson Mayses chatting with board vice president Weston Anson (bottom left). LHS group gathered on the oceanside patio included Society board president Judy Haxo (bottom right) and Melanie Shwartzler.

Visit: www.vibrantculturevibrantcity.com

SPECIAL THANKS!

to the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture for their financial support.
For members of La Jolla Historical Society, 5% of your total paint contract will be donated, in your name, to La Jolla Historical Society. It is a triple win: for you, for the Society and for the Peek Brothers. Interior, exterior painting, cabinet refinishing, entry doors and decks too! Low odor paints and even low odor oil enamel will allow you to stay in your home during your paint project. Contact us soon before the schedule fills up. www.peekbrotherspainting.com or 858.505.1361.

Thank you in advance for your referrals! They have been the lifeblood of our business for 30 years and the greatest compliment you can give us.
C O D A

AH Y- A  L A  J O L L A !

A R F  !


M I L T O N  S E S S I O N S
A M A S T E R  O F  L A N D S C A P E  D E S I G N
B Y  L I N D A  M A R R O N E

W ith the Society's Secret Garden Tour celebrating its 20th anniversary this spring, Carol Otten told me that she planned to write stories about the history of gardening in La Jolla and noted landscape designer, Milton Sessions in the newsletter. Milton Session designed many noteworthy gardens throughout San Diego and La Jolla and when Carol mentioned him, it brought back fond memories of when we purchased our home in 1987 and began the process of researching its history.

As part of the procedure to historically designate our home, it was suggested that we include an assessment of the garden, its design, and plants, since the garden and home were designed together. Milton Sessions was recommended to us as someone who was very knowledgeable about historic gardens and in 1988, he came to our garden to begin his work and research. Each time he visited I enjoyed talking to him about gardens, plants and his aunt, Kate Sessions, who he always referred to as "Aunt Kate." His stories were priceless and included accounts about the development of Balboa Park, the Sessions family poinsettia and nursery businesses and why certain plants and trees were chosen to be included in early San Diego’s evolving landscape.

While I always had the passion to garden, I hadn’t had the opportunity to try out the green thumb I thought I might have until we purchased our home. It was very important to me to be a good caretaker of the garden, but I also wanted to add my own touches to it. While many of the original vine-draped walls and plantings still graced our garden, Milton inspired me to continue the English Country theme that was already here and to add more of the plants you would find hugging the quaint cottages along the English countryside. One suggestion he had was to plant a flower border along one area of the brick pathway that rambles through our garden and I took his advice. Over the years I’ve planted the border with flowering perennials and roses and then I add an ever-changing array of colorful seasonal annuals, herbs and even vegetables - it is my Milton Sessions Border.

A few years before he passed away, I saw Milton at the Del Mar Fair, where he was receiving an award. He was in his early 90s by then and he still remembered me and our garden. I will always remember him and thank him for the inspiration to garden.

Thousands of archival pieces have accumulated through the years in the La Jolla Historical Society archives. Many, such as the photographic portraits of the Scripps half-sisters and iconic Irving Gill buildings, have been repeatedly reproduced over the years, thus developing an easy familiarity. This last page of ‘The Timekeeper’ is devoted to those archival pieces in the collection that have remained largely outside the public eye.