

San Diego's Normal Heights: The Growth of a Suburban Neighborhood, 1886–1926

Suzanne Ledeboer

On December 1, 2001, the City of San Diego's Commission for Arts and Culture held a "Living Traditions" retreat at the House of Hospitality in Balboa Park. The purpose of the retreat was to launch neighborhood cultural councils in the Gaslamp Quarter, Sherman Heights, and Normal Heights. These three neighborhoods were asked to create cultural councils that focused on traditions that would promote cultural heritage tourism in their neighborhoods.¹

An early part of the morning was devoted to group brainstorming sessions on how Normal Heights perceived itself and, additionally, how it was perceived by the other two neighborhoods. Demographics showed that Normal Heights had the highest racial diversity of the three: 53 percent white, 25 percent Hispanic, 13 percent Afro-American, and 9 percent Asian. It had a median age of 31 and a



Banner reads "Normal Heights, 1906-2006: Celebrating 100 Years," July 2006. On May 9, 2006, designated "Normal Heights Day" in San Diego, the neighborhood celebrated with a dinner where guests spoke of their affection for the area and recalled the battles fought and won that prevented their community from becoming another distressed, urban neighborhood. Author's Collection.

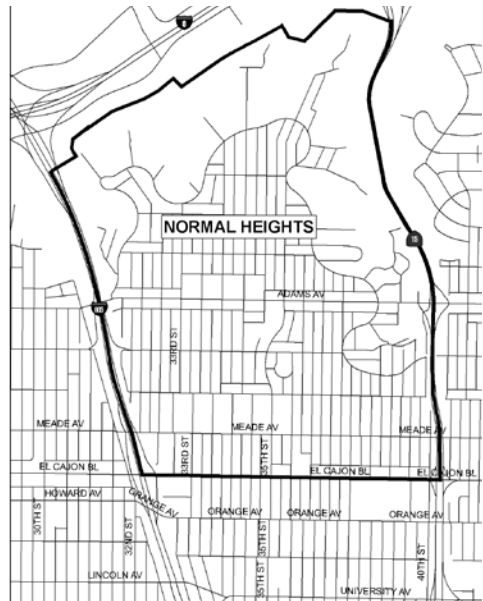
Suzanne Ledeboer received her M.A. in history from California State University, Los Angeles in 1988 and taught history at Woodbury University in Burbank, California. She then taught in Japan for four years and moved to Normal Heights in 1996, where she continues to research the history of her neighborhood. The author thanks Dr. Molly McClain for her editorial assistance.

median income of \$33,000. Participants voiced negative comments that ranged from “there is nothing for kids or teenagers,” to “easy access to cheap drugs,” to “tacky, cheap Mom and Pop stores.” On the other hand, positive remarks emphasized the good weather, central location, absence of strip malls and chain stores, and the presence of antique, book, and record stores owned by experts. Others noted that, while largely underground, a thin vein of peaceful anarchy ran through some of its residents. Normal Heights was summed up best that day as “non-conformist.”²

Normal Heights, founded one hundred years ago, in 1906, began as a grid of dirt roads and streets more than a mile from the end of the No. 11 trolley line in University Heights. Today, Normal Heights is bounded by El Cajon Boulevard to the south, Mission Valley to the north, Interstate 805 to the west, and Interstate 15 (affectionately known to locals as “the Moat”) to the east.³ The name “Normal Heights” was adopted from the State Normal School built in University Heights in 1899. By the end of the 1920s, Normal Heights was a largely working-class community with two churches, modest bungalows, and a variety of small businesses. The history of its development forms part of the larger story of San Diego.

Early Development

In 1887, at the height of San Diego's land boom, numerous investment companies incorporated and proceeded to buy and sell lots and to deliver water to property on the mesa above Mission Valley. A year later, the real estate market collapsed. Paper profits on the speculative buying of lots and flipping them for a quick profit turned to ashes overnight. However, at least four companies weathered the collapse: the College Hill



Map prepared for the Normal Heights Community Enhancement Project, February 1997. These are the official planning boundaries for Normal Heights and were reaffirmed in the Mid-City Community Plan of 1998.



Map showing Normal Heights, ca. 1907, produced by the Southwestern Investment Company. Originally, Normal Heights was bounded by Monroe Avenue on the south, Ward Road on the east, the canyon on the north, and Boundary Street on the west. Over time, Normal Heights and the Teralta subdivisions south of Monroe Avenue merged into one neighborhood. Author's collection.

Land Association, the Teralta Land and Water Company, the Combination Land Company, and the South-Western Investment Company.⁴ The mesa they developed, according to a 1909 map, was slightly more than four miles from Horton's New Town. Populated mostly by jackrabbits running through brush-covered territory, it was outside the coastal fog belt, but close enough to the bay to enjoy the westerly breeze.

The shareholders of the College Hill Land Association owned or controlled 1,600 acres on the northern boundary of what was then known as City Park. Rather than selling lots piecemeal, they combined their real estate assets and formed the College Hill Land Association. Their stated purpose was "to buy, sell, improve, mortgage, lease and otherwise generally deal in real estate in the County of San Diego, State of California."⁵ They also hoped to build a branch of the University of Southern California on a portion of their acreage, but the land bust of 1888-89 quashed that dream.⁶ The stockholders of the College Hill Land Association included Richard A. Thomas, Douglas Gunn, C. C. Seaman, James McCoy, Daniel Choate, J. R. Thomas, and G. C. Arnold. They invested a total of \$865,500 in the Association, although their initial goal was for a capitalization of \$1,500,000.⁷ Today, their venture is the neighborhood of University Heights.

The Teralta Land and Water Company purchased 462 acres of land and recorded Subdivision Map No. 265 with the County on July 14, 1887. Its stockholders included Richard A. Thomas, G. Frank Judson, William E. Robinson, Theodore J. Wrampelmier, and Lucius F. Doolittle.⁸ The company could promise water rights to investors as the main water line of Doolittle's San Diego Flume Company ran down El Cajon Avenue.⁹ The sale of one acre or two and one-half acre lots began on July 18, 1887, "with a throng of purchasers in waiting." An advertisement in the magazine, *Golden Era*, extolled the virtues of Teralta and described the water rights for each lot as "one-fifteenth of one inch, or about 300,000 gallons per acre per annum for the nominal price of \$3 per year."¹⁰ The math was slightly incorrect, a forgivable bit of hype, because the actual deeds stated the water rights in hundredths of a miner's inch, and the cost per annum was in multiples of \$3.00, depending upon the size of the lot.¹¹ The ad also stated that "The electric motor road. . . will run through the center avenue of Teralta. The rails are now being laid." However, the advertised and anticipated trolley line heading east along El Cajon Boulevard never materialized. Instead, El Cajon Boulevard developed as a major thoroughfare for motorized vehicles while University Avenue gained the trolley. Nevertheless, over a short period of time, the Teralta Land and Water Company sold off many of its 462 acres for the subdivisions that became Teralta Heights, Teralta Heights No. 2, West Teralta, Davis' Subdivision, Sterlingworth, and W. P. Herbert's Subdivision.¹²

The Combination Land Company, incorporated March 7, 1887, was fully capitalized from the beginning. The majority of its 10,000 shares were held by two men, H. A. Howard and Thomas Fitch.¹³ The three other investors, Eugene E. Ellis, R. W. McGaine, and T. J. McCord, each held ten shares valued at \$100. In the Normal Heights area, Combination Land purchased from Teralta Land and Water Company, for \$8,000, on December 21, 1887, lots ten through nineteen in Block M of Teralta.¹⁴ Today, Block M is bounded by Monroe, Meade, 33rd, and 35th Streets.

South-Western Investment Company incorporated in San Diego on November 25, 1899 and began to acquire holdings of other companies. By March 1907, South-

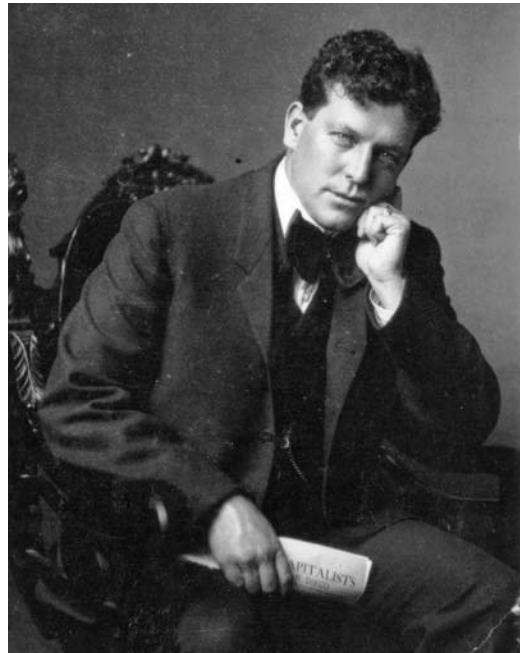
Western controlled close to 100 percent of the stock of the College Hill Land Association, and Colonel D. C. Collier, Jr. (Vice President) and George M. Hawley (Secretary) controlled 14,924 of College Hill's 15,000 shares. In October, D. C. Collier's Ralston Realty purchased Hawley's interests, which were combined with those of South-Western Investment. The firm profited handsomely the following year when the College Hill Land Association and the University Heights Syndicate were absorbed by the Western Investment Company of San Diego.¹⁵

George M. Hawley and David Charles Collier, Jr., in particular, recognized the potential for development in Normal Heights. They were deeply involved in real estate developments through the College Hill Land Association, Ralston Realty, Easton-Collier Company, the University Heights Syndicate, South-Western Investment Company, and the Western Investment Company of San Diego. They were credited with developing all, or parts, of University Heights, Point Loma, Teralta Heights, East San Diego, Encanto, Ramona, Ocean Beach, Point Loma Heights, and Normal Heights.

"D. C." Collier was born in 1871 in Central City, Colorado, to David Charles and Martha Maria (Johnson) Collier. He came to San Diego in 1883 where he completed his schooling, passed the California Bar, and became a member of the elder Collier's law firm in 1891. But, he was drawn more and more to real estate and, in rapid succession, opened Ralston Realty (1904), the Easton-Collier Company (1905), and was an organizing member of the Western Investment Company of San Diego (1907).¹⁶ His legacy to Normal Heights was the development of Bonnie Brae (Subdivision Map No. 1244), which he purchased in 1910. Collier's impact on the construction of San Diego's suburbs was on a par with that of Oscar Cotton's Pacific Building Company, and his service as Director General for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition was its "driving force," according to George Marston and other San Diegans.¹⁷ It was Collier who insisted that Bertram Goodhue, renowned architect, design the Exposition's buildings and that landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead be chosen to design and supervise the planting of the Exposition's grounds.¹⁸

Collier's title of Colonel was honorary, given to him while he was on the staff of California Governor James N. Gillett. His friends, however, called him "Charlie," which seemed to suit his character. Photographs show Collier dressed almost casually, with tousled hair and wearing a floppy bow tie.

George Mann Hawley was born in San Francisco in 1862. His father,



David Charles Collier, ca. 1890. Collier and his partner George M. Hawley are credited with developing all, or parts of, University Heights, Point Loma, Teralta Heights, East San Diego, Encanto, Ramona, Ocean Beach, Point Loma Heights, and Normal Heights. ©SDHS #81:10843.

George T. Hawley, owned hardware stores in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego, but in 1888, the senior Hawley's San Diego Hardware Company was struggling to survive. George was given the task of making it a paying enterprise, which he did. He then proceeded to open Pierce-Fields Hardware Co.; Todd & Hawley—another hardware store—in partnership with a former San Diego Hardware Company employee; the San Diego Vehicle and Implement Co.; and Hawley, King & Co. of Los Angeles.¹⁹ Soon he was deeply involved in real estate development where he concentrated his interests until his death in 1935.

The Hawley family, George, Edith, and their two daughters, Wilma and Madeline, lived in a handsome Hebbard and Gill home at 4744 Panorama Drive which still has a commanding view of Mission Valley, albeit vastly changed since 1907.²⁰ Except for Hawley Boulevard, the only reminder of the Hawleys in Normal Heights is the Wilma Place historical stamp that was cut out and put back in new sidewalks at the southeast corner of Copley Avenue and East Mountain View Drive in March of 2002 as part of a City of San Diego construction project.

The University Heights Syndicate incorporated August 22, 1905, with \$500.00 cash raised from its five shareholders: C. O. Reinbold, Arthur Small, George D. Easton, G. F. Hoff, and I. L. Pierce. George M. Hawley was President and Carl O. Reinbold Secretary-Treasurer.²¹ With the surveying and mapping completed by P. P. Wheaton and J. F. Covert, Civil Engineers, in January 1906, the Syndicate filed their Subdivision Map No. 985 of Normal Heights with the San Diego County Recorder on May 9, 1906. That same day the map was accepted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, and Normal Heights was born, if not in fact, at least as a development idea in the minds of Hawley, Collier, Reinbold, and the other shareholders.

Lot sales at the new development along Adams Avenue were slow, despite weekly advertisements in the *San Diego Union* that implored prospective buyers:



This Wilma Place (Copley) name stamp was re-installed on the southeast corner of East Mountain View Dr. and Copley Street in 2002. Wilma Hawley was the elder daughter of George and Edith Hawley. Author's collection.

The Time Is At Hand when a definite date can be promised for the completion and operation of the new electric road out Adams Avenue, and the time for investment at original opening prices on Normal Heights is strictly limited. The new auto speedway around Mission Drive, overlooking the valley, has been completed and miles of new streets have been opened and graded.

The time for profit-seekers on Normal Heights is right now, when improvements have only fairly started. Wait if you must, but pay more money if you do. Today 50-foot lots, level and smooth, can be had for \$200, \$20 down and \$20 per month.²²

The incorporation of the Western Investment Company of San Diego on November 30, 1907 was one important turning point in the development of Normal Heights. On February 2, 1908, the *San Diego Union* reported that two companies—the College Hill Land Association and the University Heights Syndicate—had been absorbed by Western Investment.²³ This consolidation gave Western Investment all remaining unsold parcels in College Hill and Normal Heights. But much more was needed to bring new residents out to Normal Heights to buy, build, and live permanently.

Infrastructure and Population Growth

Developers promoted San Diego's first suburbs based on access to local roads, streets with public transportation, and, of course, water. The growth of University Heights was fueled by the No. 1 trolley line running along Park Boulevard to



People gathered at a tent to commemorate the opening of the Adams Avenue line of streetcars, Ralston Realty, August 1907. ©SDHS #7774.

Adams Avenue with access along the way to the State Normal School and, at its terminus, the Ostrich Farm and Mission Cliffs Garden. Oscar Cotton's Pacific Building Company built and sold blocks of houses near the No. 2 trolley running east from Park Boulevard along University Avenue to Fairmount. Cotton, the ultimate "Booster," purchased in 1911 the remaining 4,000 to 5,000 lots of the Columbia Real Estate Company and became the major developer of the area that became the City of East San Diego and today's Mid-City community of City Heights.²⁴ Finally, Kensington Park blossomed when a bridge was built across Ward Road and Ward Canyon in 1913, making that area more accessible to public and private transportation. This mantra of "follow the roads and public transportation" was crucial to the development of Normal Heights and its neighboring communities, especially Kensington and the City of East San Diego. Transportation also was crucial to building a sense of community and a connection to the city itself.

Normal Heights, surveyed and mapped by the University Heights Syndicate by January 1906, was one of the first "ring," or "streetcar," suburbs. A shuttle trolley from Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue served Normal Heights in 1907, becoming a full-service line from downtown San Diego to Kensington at the end of the decade. Ralston Realty used the promise of transportation to promote lot sales in Normal Heights. "Work Has Commenced on Construction of the Adams Ave. Car Line," read the heading of Ralston Realty's ad in the *San Diego Union* on May 30, 1907. The ad continued with the news that "a good big crew of men is employed and the line will be rushed to completion."²⁵

At this time, Normal Heights had scattered farms but few good roads and even fewer services. The 1910 U. S. Census counted 810 residents in the "Normal Heights Village" in Mission Township. Professionals included one teacher, six nurses, and one physician who was an osteopath. Other residents reflected the blue-collar character of the area: carpenters, teamsters, concrete workers, bakers, and those who did odd jobs. As is typical for Southern California, nearly everyone was from somewhere else in the United States. There were 117 enumerated who were children born in California, a large number of naturalized citizens originally from Germany and Sweden, and a miniscule number of Japanese and Chinese.²⁶ By 1920, the population of Normal Heights, including the Teralta subdivisions, had grown to 1,267.²⁷

In order to improve the quality of life in the area, a group of residents organized the Normal Heights Improvement Association in 1911. The first seven directors were Max Distel, who was employed as a finisher in a piano factory; John Carlson, formerly a machinist with the General Electric Company, but now the proprietor of a hardware store²⁸; Albert Gipperich, a tinner at the San Diego Hardware Company; Coreal R. King, a real estate broker; J. P. Chiado, a building contractor; Otto W. Porter, a foreman with the Cuyamaca Water Company; and Axel Stone, a carpenter. All, except Gipperich, lived in Normal Heights and each purchased two shares in the Association at \$5.00 per share.²⁹ The Association's offices were located at 3937 Adams Avenue (3465 Adams Avenue today) on the southwest corner of Adams Avenue and 40th Street (Mansfield Street).³⁰

The Association worked to establish a free branch library in Normal Heights, and in 1914, County Librarian Jennie Herrman presented a petition from Normal Heights to the County Board of Supervisors at their Adjourned Meeting of May



Normal Heights Central School, 1912, located at Adams Avenue and 40th Street (Mansfield).

6, 1914.³¹ This was the first step in establishing and maintaining county, and later, city, branch libraries in Normal Heights. On August 31, 1914, Normal Heights opened its first branch library in the Normal Heights Central School at 4011 Adams Avenue on the southeast corner of Adams Avenue and 40th Street (Mansfield).³² Mrs. Georgia Welty, a teacher and the wife of principal Howard O. Welty of Garfield Elementary School, served as custodian.³³ A reading room opened to the public on December 2, 1915. A note in *News Notes of California Libraries*, a publication of the California Library Association, stated, "Club women care for the reading room alternate months."³⁴ The county library changed locations several times before being replaced by a temporary city branch at 4691 41st Street (35th Street) in 1925.³⁵

Streets were surfaced once Normal Heights became a part of County Road Improvement District No. 2 in 1913. George H. Oswald, concrete contractor, was hired to surface the streets and to install concrete gutters, curbs, and sidewalks throughout Normal Heights from Mission Drive (Mountain View) to Monroe Avenue and from Boundary Street to Ward Road. When the work was finished, a property owner filed a complaint that Oswald's work was not done with "due diligence."³⁶ The Supervisors decided they needed opinions from a committee of experts and appointed five men--Thomas Neal, Oscar Marshall, R. J. Goodbody, Lew B. Harris, and Henry G. Fenton--to inspect the work and report their findings to the Board.³⁷ Within a week, the committee reported to the Board of Supervisors that a few "corrections, alterations or additions were needed."³⁸ Finally, the work was completed, accepted, and bonds issued in the amount of \$315,260.95, to be

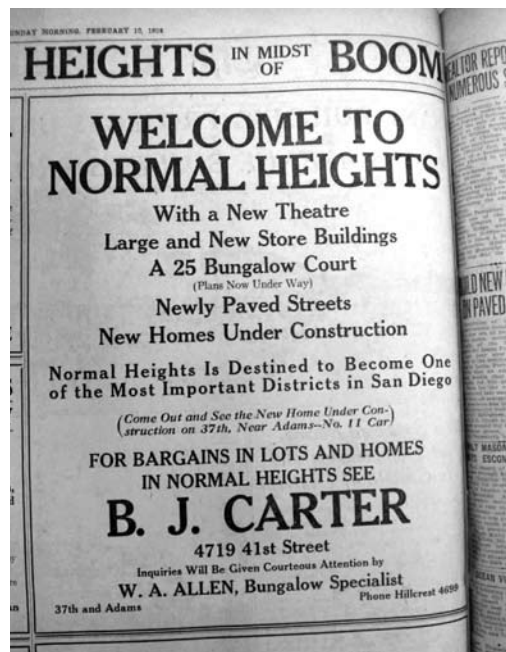
delivered to George H. Oswald by the County Treasurer.³⁹ In some areas of Normal Heights, Oswald's 92-year-old sidewalks remain in remarkably good condition; in other areas they have deteriorated to classic "trip and fall" hazards.

The bridge over Ward Road to Kensington Park was another important piece of infrastructure for Normal Heights. In August 1913, County Supervisors instructed the clerk to write William Clayton of the San Diego Electric Railway "requesting that they make an appropriation for the bridge over Ward Street [sic] connecting Normal Heights and Kensington Park." In addition, they ordered County Surveyor George Butler to prepare the necessary plans and specifications for "the construction of a twelve span timber trestle bridge on Adams Avenue, near Kensington Park, San Diego." A contract was let to Silver Gate Construction Company on November 19, 1913, and four months later on March 3, 1914, the Supervisors accepted, on the recommendation of the County Surveyor, the Kensington Park Bridge on Adams Avenue.⁴⁰

The "center," or business district, of Normal Heights was built around the intersection of 37th Street (Felton) and Adams Avenue as a result of the efforts of Bertram Carteri, a carpenter, developer, businessman, and visionary who recognized the potential in Normal Heights. Carteri moved to the neighborhood in 1916 bringing his wife and four children. In 1920, he purchased lots along 37th (Felton) and 38th (34th) Streets. He then built solid homes in the \$5,000 to \$8,000 price range on 50-foot wide lots that cost \$400 to \$1,000 per lot. At least five of these remain and are occupied, including the Louis J. Gill-designed home at 4728 Felton.⁴¹ What set Carteri apart from most of the other developers was that he lived and worked in Normal Heights; he was not a speculator or an absentee landlord.

Carteri's commercial strip remains mostly intact, although modified, at the intersection of Adams Avenue and Felton. His 1924 advertisement in the *San Diego Union*, the largest on the page, pointed out that "Normal Heights Is Destined to Become One of the Most Important Districts in San Diego, with a new theatre, large and new store buildings, a 25-bungalow court, and newly paved streets."⁴² El Sueno Court, the Adams Avenue Pharmacy building, and part of the former home of the Bank of Italy are on the north side of Adams, with the old Carteri Theater building, minus its original marquee and box office, on the south side of the Avenue. They stand as monuments to the man who saw the potential in Normal Heights, created its central business district, and spent his fortune making his vision a reality.

Normal Heights boomed in the 1920s. An article in the *Saturday Real*



A 1924 advertisement in the *San Diego Union* welcomes potential buyers to Normal Heights. Courtesy, Special Collections, San Diego Public Library.



Three Normal Heights homes at 4838, 4840 and 4842 35th Street. Author's collection.

Estate and Development Section of the San Diego Union, published February 10, 1924, gave above-the-fold prominence to the neighborhood with the headline "Many Building Projects Under Way in Normal Heights." Six photographs and a lengthy commentary on the benefits of living in this "wide-awake, steadily growing, enterprising community" were included.⁴³ Page 2 of the section featured ads for the businesses already developed along Adams Avenue: the Normal Heights Electric Company, the Adams Avenue Garage, the Avenue Pharmacy, W. A. Allen, Bungalow Specialist, and B. J. Carter [sic]. This "enterprising community with its progressive spirit," according to the article, was more than homes and businesses; it also became home to the first radio station licensed to broadcast in San Diego.

San Diego's first radio station, KFBC or "The Normal Heights Station," began broadcasting on Friday, July 14, 1922. The station was operated by the Reverend Wilson K. Azbill, a ham radio operator who lived in Normal Heights at 5038 Cliff Place. Azbill built his station out of "old telephone parts" and needed only a "limited commercial" license. Since there was no federal regulation, he shared airtime with all the other stations in the city. By 1924, KFBC was a Class A station broadcasting two days each week, Thursdays and Sundays, from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. As one might expect, the broadcast on Sunday included a sermon. The little station above Mission Valley continued to operate until 1926. In 1927, KFBC's call letters were changed to KGB, along with a change in ownership and a move downtown to the Balboa Theatre Building.⁴⁴

The trolley line to Normal Heights was particularly important to residents. When work crews began tearing up the trolley tracks on Adams Avenue at midnight on Saturday, August 26, 1922, a "riot" erupted. According to the *San Diego Sun*, Walter Church took his gun, test-fired it, and then drove his automobile onto the tracks in order to stop the destruction. Work halted as the workmen took cover. Soon Mayor John L. Bacon appeared with a squad of police and arrested Hugo A. Kuehmsted, chief engineer of the San Diego Electric Railway Company. Mayor Bacon called an emergency meeting of the Common Council, and Judge C.

N. Andrews issued a writ of mandate compelling the company to restore tracks and service on Adams Avenue by Wednesday morning. Thus ended the "Battle of Adams Avenue" with trolley service restored that week, but the tone was set for an attitude that could be described today as "dauntless."⁴⁵

Annexation

In order to continue to grow, Normal Heights needed infrastructure that only annexation to the City could provide. Sewers were nonexistent and a reliable water supply uncertain, at best.⁴⁶ In 1924, the Normal Heights Assembly, a group of civic-minded residents and businessmen, led the movement for a special annexation election. Their original members were Major William Anshelm, retired; George E. Blackburn, electrician; Simon H. Metcalf, a motion picture operator at the Pantages Theatre and owner of a radio supply store on Adams Avenue near 37th Street (Felton); William W. B. Seymour, a public stenographer and president of the Normal Heights Assembly; and the Reverend Ray Willing Smith, pastor of the Normal Heights Methodist Episcopal Church from July 1924 through June 1927.⁴⁷ Petitions opposing and favoring annexation were circulated in Normal Heights and Teralta between December 15, 1923 and March 15, 1924, with the pro-annexationists outnumbering the anti-annexationists by 537 to 287.⁴⁸ Anti-annexationists believed that union with the City of San Diego would be an "unnecessary expense."⁴⁹ However, the Assembly had gathered more names than necessary to meet the 25 percent requirement of 261 voters needed to call a special election.⁵⁰

The special election took place on July 22, 1924. Only one of the five precincts was open for voting, the McKinley Precinct in the garage at 4210 Jefferson (Collier Avenue today), and there was only Proposition I, the question of whether or not the area known as Normal Heights should annex itself to the City of San Diego. Given the number of registered voters, 1,047, the turnout of slightly more than 47 percent was disappointing. When the ballots were counted, the measure was defeated by a vote of 370 to 126. The result was reported to the Common Council, and made official by Council Resolution 31934.⁵¹

The Normal Heights Assembly, in January 1925, approached the Board of Supervisors regarding the formation of a Sanitary District. They were particularly concerned to make arrangements with the City of San Diego to dispose of Normal Heights's sewage "in cesspools to be built in Mission Valley." However, City Clerk Allen H. Wright advised the Supervisors "that the Common Council is opposed to allowing said district to connect its sewer system to the City's sewer system until said district votes favorably to annex to the City of San Diego, California."⁵² At a Common Council meeting on January 12, 1925, and reported in the *San Diego Union* the next day, the Council was blunt: "If Normal Heights desires to partake of the advantages of the City of San Diego, for which San Diego taxpayers have paid or are still paying, annexation to the city is the one and only way to obtain all these benefits."⁵³ The Councilmen stated that Normal Heights was enjoying the benefits of the municipal harbor, city parks, fire protection and paved highways, for which the city was heavily bonded, without helping to pay for these improvements. The use of San Diego's sewer outlets, for which the taxpayers of the city had paid, was a different proposition.

Between December 19, 1924 and January 12, 1925, the Normal Heights Assembly again gathered signatures in favor of annexation with the City.⁵⁴ This time, they explained the situation to Normal Heights' residents more clearly. Anshelm spoke before the Common Council and outlined the benefits to be gained from annexation:

Annexation will give Normal Heights and Teralta many advantages now lacking in these sections. It will give us fire protection, police protection, improved sanitary conditions and cheaper water. It will enable us to give our children better schools and will increase the value of property. Many people with money come out and look over the property, but when they find that we are not in the city, that we have no sewer system, antiquated schools, no fire or police protection they buy elsewhere.

There is a plan on foot now to organize a sanitary district to install a sewer system. In common with many others, I believe this work could be handled much more economically if we were in the city. This district, if organized, will put almost unlimited power in the hands of the sanitary commission. They might even order every street and alley paved "for sanitary purposes" and without any petitions from property owners.

Fire insurance in Normal Heights is \$12 a \$1,000. In the city it is \$7. Water costs more in Normal Heights than it does in the city. These savings would make up for much of the tax-rate Normal Heights would pay as part of the city of San Diego.

We need better school facilities here and as the situation stands, we cannot get another school unless there is a bond issue. Annexation would remedy this.

Normal Heights must stand or fall with the city. For this reason and for the economic benefits we would obtain, I believe a majority of the thinking people of my district will favor annexation.⁵⁵

Anshelm was correct. At the special election held March 31, 1925, the voters of Normal Heights and Teralta decided, 738 Yes to 300 No, to annex to the city and assume a portion of its bonded indebtedness of \$16,421,399.83. At this election, all five precincts were open: McKinley, Garfield, Harding, Teralta, and Normal Heights. The turnout of 1,038 voters (nearly 64 percent of those eligible) indicated a first-class education and get-out-the-vote campaign by the Normal Heights Assembly.⁵⁶

The local newspaper, *Community Facts*, displayed a bold headline in its May 1, 1925 issue: "Normal Heights to Celebrate Annexation with 'Jollification,' Saturday, June 6." The paper praised the Assembly for what their members had accomplished:

They succeeded in getting Adams Ave. paved, paid for your fire protection, improved street car service, put over annexation and are now working for the sewers. You will find a petition for the sewers in both drug stores in Normal Heights and one in the barbershop in Carteri Centre, which you should sign.⁵⁷



The polling place for the Normal Heights Precinct during the 1925 annexation election was in this garage behind 4805 Hawley Blvd., and faced Jefferson (Collier) Avenue. This precinct, according to the 1924 Great Register of San Diego, had 369 registered voters: 222 republican, 94 Democrat, 5 Socialist, 1 Prohibition Party, and 47 who chose Non-partisan.

Streets were renamed and renumbered as a result of annexation with the City of San Diego. The first forty-six changes took place with a Common Council Ordinance issued October 26, 1925. Lost to local history was Perfect Street, which became 34th Street from El Cajon Boulevard to Monroe Avenue. In addition, two east-west streets had their names changed: Jefferson became Collier and Copley replaced McKinley. Mission Drive, a wide, meandering street north and south of Adams, became Mountain View. Ward Road was realigned and met Mountain View Drive, causing the disappearance of two original streets, Elvira Place and Reed Place.⁵⁸ Other changes occurred in 1930, 1932, and 1939. The five Normal Heights precincts lost their proper noun names (Normal Heights, McKinley, Garfield, Harding, and Teralta), and were reconfigured as eight numbered precincts, 27 through 34. By the end of 1926, there were 2,360 registered voters in Normal Heights, an increase of 731 in two years.⁵⁹

The city also began the long-awaited



Home of Margaret Gibson Collins, the city librarian at the first Normal Heights Branch Library when it was located at 4691 35th Street in 1925–1926. Born in Kansas in 1889 to a patent attorney and his wife, she was a 53-year resident of San Diego and lived in this South Park Craftsman home at 1545 Grove Street until her death in 1968. Author's collection.

process of installing sewer lines and hooking up the neighborhood to the city's outfall sewers in Mission Valley. This did not include Collier's Bonnie Brae, however, which was still pleading with the City Council for this amenity as late as 1935.⁶⁰ In addition, a temporary city branch library was opened at 4691 35th Street, with Margaret Gibson Collins in charge.⁶¹

Long-time residents remember few major changes after annexation. Life was low key, although the automobile was beginning to change how people lived, where they worked, and how they spent their leisure time. The residents of Carteri's El Sueño court had their own parking garage. So did nearly all other homeowners, even if they did not have an automobile. Walking remained a fact of everyday life; it was not just healthy exercise, it was a necessity. Young people walked or biked to school, to the local Piggly Wiggly Market, to Saturday afternoon movies at Carteri Center, and to church on Sunday. Children roamed, especially down into Mission Valley. The area north of Adams was referred to as the "boonies" because it was open land with few houses. Lot sizes were generous, many 50 feet wide by 100 feet deep (street-to-alley lots) that accommodated gardens, chickens, and the occasional cow living in the family garage.⁶²

By the end of the 1920s, Normal Heights was a blue-collar community of homeowners and small businesses, but Adams Avenue was not the main shopping street for the neighborhood. That was University Avenue where shoppers found a J. C. Penney and a Lerner's, an automotive supply store, plus shoe, dry goods, and hardware stores; Adams Avenue was considered a secondary shopping street. The neighborhood had two handsome new churches, the Normal Heights Methodist



Henry Ford Grocery at 3644 Adams Avenue on the day after Christmas. A boy buys gumballs from a machine outside the shop while two boys with bicycles look on. ©SDHS OP #15746-863.



Southern Trust and Savings Bank, 1926, located at the northeast corner of Felton St. and Adams Avenue. F. L. Byrum Normal Heights Electric was located on the east side of the building (now destroyed). ©SDHS #8351.

Episcopal Church (1926) and St. Didicus Roman Catholic Church (1927). The Carmelite Monastery near the end of Hawley Boulevard was built in 1932.

The old Normal Heights Central School, built in 1908-09, was replaced with the first John Adams Elementary School at Adams and Mansfield.⁶³ Around the corner from the school, at 3491 School Street, was a branch of the San Diego Public Library, with Dorothy Boettiger as librarian. This small, bungalow-style building was originally the University Heights Branch Library located on the grounds of the Garfield School on El Cajon Boulevard between Louisiana and Mississippi. That branch, built in 1914, became surplus property after University Heights opened its handsome new library at Park Boulevard and Howard.⁶⁴ The City then purchased a lot in Normal Heights and moved the small 20 feet x 30 feet building to School Street in 1926, where it served the children and residents of Normal Heights until its closure in 1954.⁶⁵

The End of an Era

The No. 11 Trolley still clanged up and down Adams Avenue when the neighborhood entered the Great Depression. In 1930, Normal Heights had a population of 8,243 people; San Diego had 147,995.⁶⁶ True to its blue-collar roots, there were more bricklayers, maids, truck drivers, and electricians than lawyers, teachers, doctors, or geologists. The majority lived south of Adams Avenue in a crowded, congenial neighborhood where families represented a cross-section of languages and cultures. The area just north of Adams was thinly populated, but it hosted the neighborhood's only known speakeasy on Hawley Boulevard near Mountain View Drive, accessed through a trap door leading down to the basement of an ordinary home.

It is difficult to assess the effects of the Depression on San Diego communities. Nevertheless, it appears that Normal Heights may not have been too badly

affected. One long-time resident recalled that there was work with the local utility companies, in the shipyards, or in factories and businesses that supported the Navy. During the 1930s, many of the Navy personnel, or “gobs,” and their families settled in the neighborhood. However, San Diego County had “16,000 people unemployed and 4,000 families on direct relief.” Property taxes were delinquent and there were bread lines and food banks. The County Board of Supervisors routinely approved aid to children from the Orphans State Aid Fund, aid for the needy aged, and the blind, while the County Welfare Commission asked the Supervisors on a monthly basis to approve charity rate transportation costs for families leaving San Diego.⁶⁷ Property was deeded to the county in “consideration of aid,” and page after page of Record Books for the County Board of Supervisors list the names and addresses of San Diegans who signed over their property to the County in order to go on general relief in the 1930s. Many owed as little as \$5.00 in property taxes and could not pay even that. The impact on families and children must have been devastating.⁶⁸

The Normal Heights Methodist Episcopal Church, dedicated on April 28, 1929, struggled as an institution during the Depression. A poignant note in church records for October 1929 reads simply, “Church on the Verge of Bankruptcy.” In August 1930, the church began locking up the collection plates during church services. In August 1932, Reverend Sutherland requested his annual salary be reduced from \$3,000 to \$2,400 until financial difficulties improved; in January 1934, his salary was \$2,000. Unable to pay its mortgage, the church was asked to vacate the property in October 1934.⁶⁹

By 1933 the country was into its fourth year of the Depression, and over the next few years, San Diegans were as susceptible as many Californians to utopian schemes that promised a return to the prosperity and good times of the 1920s.



Pepe's Market located on the northeast corner of Felton Street and Adams Avenue in what remains of the Southern Trust and Savings Bank building. Original murals on the ceiling remain intact. Author's collection.

Technocracy was one such movement, as was the Utopian Society and a popular, but impractical, 1938 idea known as “Ham ‘n Eggs for California” or “Thirty Dollars Every Thursday.” Its promoters, brothers Willis and Lawrence Allen, were owners of a Los Angeles advertising agency. They wanted to give thirty dollars per week to every unemployed Californian over the age of fifty. Their plan, Initiative Proposition Number 25, would have been funded through an income tax on individuals and businesses and the sale of state bonds. San Diego voters supported this scheme by 3,000 votes in the 1938 general election; the following year they rejected it. Statewide, nearly 1.5 million voters approved the measure but they failed to win passage of the legislation.⁷⁰ Two individuals, however, did have an impact throughout California and the nation: Dr. Francis Townsend’s Townsend Plan proposed giving every American over 60 an income of \$200 per month. The “catch” was that the money had to be spent within the month in order to keep money circulating. Upton Sinclair, author, Socialist, curmudgeon, and general thorn in the side of the Republican establishment, ran for Governor of California in 1934 on a platform of End Poverty in California (EPIC). Briefly, Sinclair advocated that the State purchase all farms and factories, form them into cooperatives, and issue scrip to replace money. Even the Communists denounced Sinclair and EPIC.⁷¹

The war in Europe improved San Diego’s economy by providing opportunities for businesses to supply Britain, France, and the Soviet Union with war materials, in particular, airplanes. By 1940, Consolidated Aircraft employed 9,000 people, including school teachers on summer breaks from classrooms. In that pivotal year, Normal Heights welcomed the new San Diego County Library’s Administrative Headquarters on Meade Avenue, built in 1940 with funds provided by the Works Project Administration (WPA) and the State Emergency Relief Agency (SERA).⁷²



Restored 1920s bungalow at 4964 Hawley Boulevard, Normal Heights. Author’s collection.

Normal Heights Today

In recent years, there has been block-by-block renewal in Normal Heights by urban pioneers. They are professionals, working class people, and retirees; one-member households, single parents, married couples, and couples with gay and lesbian partners. They have purchased small homes with large mortgages, which they maintain and repair. They also have created activist coalitions within the larger neighborhood. The 37th Street Neighborhood Association, one block long, has painted, repaired, landscaped, and replaced 92-year old sidewalks. A small coalition of neighbors on two streets expanded to include several streets and worked with state, county, and city law enforcement officers for three years to close down a neighborhood bar that was a drug and gang nest. Perhaps without realizing it, these residents have created the "street neighborhoods" Jane Jacobs wrote of in her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.⁷³

Although Normal Heights has many historical homes, new property owners are not as interested in restoration as they are in maintenance and upgrades. The upgrades include new windows, roofs, new paint, and landscaping. Developers are converting apartments to condominiums, building in-fill housing, and erecting Proposition 13 remodels. These remodels grow on parcels where small houses originally stood. The foundation and one wall are left in place, and a two-story, neo-Craftsman, vinyl clad residence is built. There is an ongoing dialogue over whether or not this type of replacement housing truly improves the character of Normal Heights, because the traditional one-story, single-family residences are slowly disappearing.

What has not disappeared is the thin vein of peaceful anarchy. When residents of three apartment complexes became frustrated with their lack of on-street parking spaces, their solution to the problem combined precise planning, coordination, and stealth, along with white paint, brushes, and a total lack of fear. Persons unknown painted nine diagonal parking spaces in front of the apartments (increasing the number of spaces from six to nine) and eight parallel parking spaces on the opposite side of the street. When this do-it-yourself parking engineering was discovered by the City, all white lines were eliminated and the parking returned to its original configuration.⁷⁴

In 2004, the Normal Heights Cultural Council created and published a "Neighborhood Tour Brochure" containing a pictorial map for use as a self-guided walking tour of Normal Heights. The Council's aim was to introduce the



Normal Heights home at 4504 36th Street (ca. 1935). It was built from a kit ordered through Sears, Roebuck "Modern Homes" catalog and occupied by the Leeper family. In 1930, the elder Mrs. Leeper founded "Mrs. Leeper's Egg Noodle Company" in San Diego. Author's collection.

neighborhood to residents, visitors, and an active population of runners, walkers, and bike riders. Several historical homes are pictured in the brochure. North of Adams Avenue is a stunning 1922 Craftsman that rivals bungalows in South Park or Mission Hills; a 1913 Craftsman with Tudor and Gothic Revival features; and a 1912 all-cobblestone Craftsman at the entrance to Collier's Bonnie Brae. South of Adams Avenue are two one-of-a-kind residences: an 1889 Colonial farmhouse that is probably the oldest home in Normal Heights and a home on 36th Street that was built in the 1930s from a kit ordered through a Sears, Roebuck "Modern Homes" mail order catalog.

As San Diego prepares in 2006 an update to its General Plan, there is a sense of returning to the early years of the twentieth century. The plan envisions a City of Villages connected by rapid transit that would provide access to employment centers, shopping, recreation, libraries, and educational facilities. Anyone living south of Interstate 8 understands that this means higher density in the Mid-City. And, just as the lack of sewers, a strained water supply, and inadequate police and fire protection spurred the 1925 annexation of Normal Heights to the City, residents remain concerned about their deteriorated infrastructure and the means to pay for it.⁷⁵

NOTES

1. "Living Traditions" Retreat Agenda, Commission for Arts and Culture, City of San Diego, December 1, 2001. Gaslamp Quarter, Sherman Heights and Normal Heights were chosen from a longer list of 102 neighborhoods.
2. Author's notes from "Living Traditions" Retreat, December 1, 2001. An earlier survey reached similar conclusions. Between September 1996 and February 1997, the Normal Heights Community Planning Committee and the Normal Heights Community Association surveyed residents in an effort to determine what impact the completion of I-15 would have on Normal Heights and the area immediately adjacent to what would become the 39th Street Park. Survey respondents liked the "small town" neighborhood feeling, but lamented the lack of infrastructure. They also wanted to keep the older architectural style of homes, decrease density, and increase police patrols. Normal Heights Community Enhancement Project, February 5, 1997, p. 4.
3. The final Mid-Cities Community Plan, issued August 4, 1998, presented in detail a proposed future for Normal Heights and made official its boundaries. The author thanks Melissa Devine of the City of San Diego's Planning Department, for her help obtaining a map.
4. College Hill Land Association was incorporated on July 17, 1886; the Teralta Land and Water Company was incorporated on July 14, 1887; the Combination Land Company was incorporated on March 7, 1887, while the South-Western Investment Company was incorporated on November 25, 1899.
5. College Hill Land Association of the City of San Diego, Articles of Incorporation, 1886, California Department of State (CDS), Corporation Number 15623 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2005).
3. The author is indebted to Genevieve Troka, at the California State Archives, for her diligence in locating and photocopying documents of the many, sometimes obscure, development corporations that conducted business in Normal Heights between 1886 and 1920.
6. The failure to build a branch of the University of Southern California, however, did not mean there would be no college. The State Normal School, a teachers college, was constructed at Normal Street and Park Boulevard in 1899 in the community of University Heights and moved in 1931 to its current location, where it eventually became San Diego State College and, more recently, San Diego State University. Alexander D. Bevil, *The Adams Avenue Line 11 Historic Trolley Tour* (San Diego: Save Our Heritage Organisation, 1992), 15–17.

7. C. C. Seaman invested \$272,000; Daniel Choate, \$177,000; James McCoy, \$144,000; R. A. Thomas an even \$100,000; J. R. Thomas, \$65,000; G. C. Arnold, \$71,500; and Douglas Gunn, \$36,000. College Hill Land Association of the City of San Diego, Articles of Incorporation, 1886, CDS, Corporation Number 15623 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2005), 3.
8. Teralta incorporated with five stockholders and with a projected capitalization of \$140,100. In reality, their subscribed stock amounted to \$12,500, with each stockholder purchasing fifty shares at a par value of \$50.00 each. Teralta Land and Water Company, Articles of Incorporation, 1887, CDS, Corporation Number 15340 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2005), 2.
9. Lucius Doolittle's San Diego Flume Company collapsed in a feud with John D. Spreckels. The company lost their major customer, the City of San Diego, and was no longer in business after 1906. Water continued to flow to the new developments, however. George Marston and Colonel Ed Fletcher, who bought the equipment and distribution lines of the Flume Company in 1910, renamed it the Cuyamaca Water Company, and upgraded the entire system. Water remained available to El Cajon, Lemon Grove, East San Diego, Kensington Heights, and Normal Heights. Eventually, for \$141,000, the City purchased the distribution lines in East San Diego, Normal Heights, and Kensington Park. Colonel Ed Fletcher, "History of Water Development in San Diego County," *History of San Diego County, Part II, Narrative*, ed. Carl H. Heilbron (San Diego: San Diego Press Club, 1936), 387-390.
10. *The Golden Era, An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 36, no. 8 (1887); Teralta, *A Brilliant Success* (San Diego: The Golden Era Company, 1887), San Diego Historical Society Research Archives (SDHS). The ad stated pointedly that there were no "Jim Crow" lots. San Diego County, Deed Record, Book 133, 80-92, SDHS.
11. A "water-inch (or miner's-inch) is, in hydraulics, a measure of water equal to the quantity discharged in 24 hours through a circular opening of one inch diameter leading from a reservoir, under the least pressure, that is, when the water is only so high as to merely cover the orifice. This quantity is 500 cubic feet very nearly." That quantity works out to 325,000 cubic feet. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1945). The author thanks Bob Forsythe and the County of San Diego's groundwater hydrologist for their help, along with Bill Ledebor for the precise calculations.
12. Many of the original lots surveyed and sold by the Teralta Land and Water Company were south of El Cajon Avenue and were incorporated into the City of East San Diego in 1911. The College Hill and Teralta companies remained buyers and sellers of land until 1908 and 1905, respectively, before suspending business. Union Title Insurance, "Names of Subdivisions, Catalog of Recorded Plats in San Diego County, California," (San Diego: Union Title Insurance and Trust Company, 1948), 8, 13, 16, 28, 47, 66, 68, 74; Box File, Real Estate, SDHS; San Diego County, Cartography Department, Davis' Subdivision, Map No. 506; Combination Land Company's Subdivision of Teralta, Map No. 580; Teralta Heights, Map No. 1009; Teralta Heights Subdivision No. 2, Map No. 1017; West Teralta, Map No. 1019; W. P. Herbert's Subdivision, Map No. 1108; Sterlingworth, Map No. 1526; and Bonnie Brae, Map No. 1244. The author thanks Bob Forsythe, former Senior Planner with the County of San Diego, for his assistance in navigating the map retrieval process.
13. Each owned 4,985 shares at a par value of \$10.00 per share, for an individual total of \$49,850.
14. By 1905, Combination Land was no longer doing business in Normal Heights. Combination Land Company, Articles of Incorporation, 1887, CDS, Corporation Number 16064 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2005), 2; San Diego County, Deed Record, Book 110, p. 208; SDHS; Subdivision Map No. 580, County of San Diego, Operations Center, Cartography Department.
15. The original investors were George T. Hawley of San Francisco, and D. C. Collier, Jr., George M. Hawley, L. A. Wright, W. R. Andrews, G. W. Jorres, and G. B. Grow, all of San Diego. They invested a total of \$700 in a company that had plans "to acquire water...to conduct fisheries...to deal in live stock...to borrow money...and to loan money." South-Western Investment Company, Articles of Incorporation, 1899, CDS, Corporation Number 29629 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2005), 3; *San Diego Union*, January 1, 1909, 6; Western Investment Company of San Diego, Articles of Incorporation, 1907, CDS, Corporation Number 52480 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2005) 1-2; Emil C. Reinbold Scrapbook, 1908-1952, Elizabeth C. MacPhail, comp. SB7, SDHS; *San Diego Union*, "Two Large Firms Consolidate," February 2, 1908, Section Two, 13.
16. Heilbron, ed., "D. C. Collier," *History of San Diego County, Biographical Section*, 171.
17. *San Diego Union*, May 12, 1910, 6; Heilbron, ed., "Oscar Cotton," *History of San Diego County*,

THE JOURNAL OF SAN DIEGO HISTORY

Biographical Section, 209; Oscar Cotton Scrapbooks, Vols. I–II, SB72, SDHS.

18. Heilbron, ed., “D. C. Collier,” 171; See also the Richard Amero Collection, Notebooks 28 and 29, Vols. 1–2, SDHS.

19. Hawley Hardware Co. (San Diego Hardware Co.), *San Diego City and County Directory* (San Diego: San Diego Directory Company, 1901), 118; “George Hawley, S. D. Real Estate Broker, Expires,” *San Diego Union*, November 18, 1935, 1; “Private Rites Scheduled for George Hawley,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, November 18, 1935, 2.

20. Bruce Kamerling, “Hebbard & Gill, Architects,” *The Journal of San Diego History* 36, nos. 2 and 3 (1990), 116. The present occupants of the Hawley residence have lived there since 1965. Interviewed by the author, January 12, 2006.

21. University Heights Syndicate, Articles of Incorporation, 1905, CDS, Corporation Number 43759 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2004), 2.

22. Collier and Hawley’s advertisements for Ralston Realty, *San Diego Union*, January 1, 1909, 3; May 8, 1906, 2, and June 12, 1906, 2.

23. *San Diego Union*, May 30, 1907, 3; “Collier Acquires Hawley Holdings,” *San Diego Union*, October 12, 1907, II, 9:2.

24. Cotton Scrapbook, SB72, Vol. II, SDHS.

25. *San Diego Union*, May 30, 1907, 3.

26. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1910 U. S. Census, California, San Diego, Mission Township, 50 images, Series: T624, Roll: 95, Page: 178. Forty-seven of fifty images were accessed through HeritageQuest on the Carlsbad City Library’s website <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com> (accessed 12/18/05, 12/20/05). Images 11, 14, and 47 were accessed through Ancestry.com at the Carlsbad City Library (in-house use only), Carlsbad City Library, Cole Branch, Carlsbad, CA, <http://Ancestry.com> (accessed 12/27/05). The author thanks Laura Ledebouer at the Cole Branch of the Carlsbad City Library for her skill accessing these census databases.

27. The minor portions of Kensington, east of Ward Road, added another 120, bringing the total to 1,387. Department of Commerce, U. S. Census Bureau, 1920 Census, Normal Heights, San Diego Township, Series: T625, Roll: 130, Page: 271. Fourteen images accessed through the Carlsbad City Library, Cole Branch, Carlsbad, CA, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com> (accessed 11/29/05 and 12/20/05); 1920 U. S. Census, Peralta [sic Teralta], San Diego Township, Series: T625, Roll: 130, Page: 265. Twelve images accessed through the Carlsbad City Library, Cole Branch, Carlsbad, CA, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com> (accessed 12/21/05, 12/27/05); 1920 U. S. Census, Kensington, San Diego Township, Series: T625, Roll: 130, Page: 278. Twelve images accessed through the Carlsbad City Library, Cole Branch, Carlsbad, CA, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com> (accessed 12/20/05).

28. Carlson’s residence, in the 1913 *San Diego City and County Directory*, is written as “w s Mission Dr. r of 3 n of Jefferson.” The author interpreted this as “The west side of Mission Dr., rear of 3 (third house) north of Jefferson.” There is an intact house at 4846-1/2 East Mountain View Drive that fits this description.

29. The Normal Heights Improvement Association was incorporated on March 2, 1911. It aimed “To further all matters relating to the improvement of that section of the County of San Diego known as Normal Heights and its vicinity; to consider, act upon and further all matters of civic interest to the citizens of the County of San Diego; to present to the officials of the County of San Diego, and City of San Diego, for their consideration, proposed reforms in the political and civic life of the City and County of San Diego.” Normal Heights Improvement Association, Articles of Incorporation, 1911, CDS, Corporation Number 64523 (California State Archives: Sacramento, 2004), 1; *San Diego City and County Directory* (1913), 221, 137, 313, 408, 561, 780, 935.

30. In 1917, the Association sold its building, by then dubbed the “Normal Heights Civic Center,” to the Normal Heights Methodist Episcopal Church for \$75.00, with the conditions that the Association could use the building for one year to hold meetings, and they retained “exclusive use of the roll-top desk.” Howard O. Welty, principal of the Garfield School, was listed as President and John Carlson as Secretary-Treasurer. San Diego County Deed Book 739, p. 324; Map 1312, Re-Subdivision of Block 40, Normal Heights, 1911, Cartography Department, County of San Diego; *San Diego City and County Directory* (1915), 857.

31. Jennie Herrman was hired by San Diego County in 1913 to be the first County Librarian, in charge of all the County's Free Libraries. She was thirty-six years old; her salary was \$2,000 per year, while her assistant was paid \$50.00 per month. Her most trying year was undoubtedly 1916 when the worst floods in the history of San Diego inundated Mission Valley, damaging books throughout the library system and destroying the entire library in Bonita. San Diego County, Board of Supervisors (BOS), Record 33, December 2, 1912–October 10, 1913, 61, 68, 157. Miss Herrman had held the same position with Tulare County for the previous three years. BOS, Record 34, October 11, 1913–September 2, 1914, p. 258.

32. This early attempt at "joint use" was inconvenient for adults, so the library's books were divided. Books for juveniles remained at the school; other books were in one room of a hardware store owned by John A. Carlson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Normal Heights Improvement Association. This division became permanent after an outbreak of smallpox closed the school and its library for several weeks in 1915. Carlson's store was at 4687 41st Street (35th Street), two buildings south of Adams Avenue. Eventually, the library was located at 4109–11 Adams Avenue. The approximate location today is the parking lot of the Corner Wash Laundromat. During the next ten years, the library moved to 4115 Adams Avenue and returned to 4687 41st Street.

33. Only those individuals, usually women, trained and certified by the California Library Association were allowed to use the title "Librarian."

34. California State Library, *News Notes of California Libraries* 9, no. 4 (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1914), 832, 835. The author thanks Cindy Mediavilla at UCLA for direction to this valuable resource and Susan Negreen of the California Library Association for her assistance.

35. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of California, San Diego Public Library, Newspaper Room, Reel 53, Vol. II, 1920 (Sanborn Map Company: New York), 299C. This map shows the library at 4691 41st Street next to a building that was probably Carlson's hardware store. *San Diego City and County Directory* (1913), 221; *News Notes* 10, no. 2 (1915): 351; *News Notes* 10, no. 3 (1915): 643; *News Notes* 10, no. 4 (1915): 910; *News Notes* 11, no. 1 (1916): 158; *News Notes* 16, no. 2 (1921): 156; and *News Notes* 17, no. 4 (1922): 674; San Diego County, BOS, Record 33, December 2, 1912–October 10, 1913, 60, 148; *San Diego City and County Directory* (1909), 383. First listing for the Normal Heights Central School, Evelyn Cone, principal.

36. The following day, the Board of Supervisors appointed a superintendent of cement work and gave Oswald and the Normal Heights Improvement Association ninety days to finish the work. By September, the County Surveyor and the District Attorney were asked to determine if the road improvements at Normal Heights were acceptable. Inspections were postponed for two weeks in order to publish notices in the *San Diego Sun* and to hear objections to accepting Oswald's work. BOS, Record 33: 198, 293, 352.

37. BOS, Record 34: 369–370, 380B, 385–386, 388, 392.

38. The committee noted that the following improvements were needed: (1) Rocks removed from alleys and alleys leveled; (2) irregular surface on the sidewalks on the east side of 40th between School Street and Adams should be smoothed; (3) the north end of Cliff Place should be brought to grade; (4) Cobblestones to be removed from 41st Street north of Adams; (5) Madison Avenue from Boundary east should be smoothed; (6) "parkings" (parkways, perhaps), should be raked and leveled to conform to the sidewalks. BOS, Record 35: 2, 40.

39. The bonds were payable at no more than 1/20 of the aggregate per year on January 1 and July 1, each year, at 6 percent interest to be paid in gold coin.

40. BOS, Record 35: 47–50; Record 33: 285; Record 34: 187; San Diego County Works Project, Road Bridge, Adams Avenue, Kensington Park in Normal Heights, specifications, elevations and plot plans, 3 blueprints, County Surveyor's "Specifications for a Timber Trestle, Adams Avenue Kensington Park, San Diego," October 1913, SDHS Architectural Files; *San Diego City and County Directory* (1913), 891. Listing for Silver Gate Construction Company. The bridge was replaced in 1959. Frank Graham, "City to Raze Its 'Orphan Bridge,'" *San Diego Tribune*, November 13, 1959, B1; "Old Adams Avenue Bridge To Make Way for Progress," *San Diego Independent*, November 15, 1959, 15.

41. Bevil, *The Adams Avenue Line* 11, 52–55.

42. *San Diego Union*, February 10, 1924, 2.

43. *San Diego Union*, February 10, 1924, Real Estate and Development Section, 1.

44. Marie Brenn Crane, "The Development of Commercial Radio in San Diego to 1950," (master's

THE JOURNAL OF SAN DIEGO HISTORY

thesis, San Diego State University, 1977), 48–52. The author thanks Pat Meyer of the Love Library at San Diego State University for retrieving this thesis. Bob Forsythe, “KGB Rocks San Diego,” *Adams Avenue Herald*, April 2006, 7.

45. Walter Church lived at 2686 Adams Avenue. “City Wins First Legal Fight To Compel Car Co. To Obey The Law,” *San Diego Sun*, August 28, 1922, p. 1; Richard F. Pourade, *The Rising Tide. Southern California in the Twenties and Thirties* (San Diego: Union-Tribune Publishing Co., 1967), 6:21–22; Bevil, *The Adams Avenue Line* 11, 42, 45. Pourade refers to the City Council when discussing the 1922 Adams Avenue streetcar riot. San Diego changed to the City Council/City Manager form of government in 1932; a Common Council and Mayor governed in the 1920s.

46. BOS, Record 33, p. 68.

47. Major William Anshelm lived at 4210 Jefferson (probably 3552 Collier today); George E. Blackburn lived at 4732 Hawley Boulevard where the Four Winds Apartments now stand; Simon H. Metcalf lived at 4725 38th Street (34th Street), a property currently developed with condominiums; and William W. B. Seymour and his wife Betty were public stenographers who had offices in the Spreckels Building downtown on Broadway but lived at 4226 Adams Avenue. *San Diego City and County Directory* (1924), 210, 250, 663, 825. There was no listing for the Rev. Ray Willing Smith, former pastor of the Normal Heights Methodist Episcopal Church.

48. It will come as no surprise to some current residents of the neighborhood that the parents of contractor Ray L. Huffman were in favor of annexation. City of San Diego, City Clerk’s Archives, Box 0007057, Folder 1, “Annexation - Normal Heights Inhabited-Failed 7-24-1924”; Document Numbers 159482 and 159498, Protest of Normal Heights Residents Against Annexation, March 12, 1924; Document Number 159781-1/2 Petition of Residents for Annexation, March 12, 1924. The author is grateful to Jerry Havin and Sandy Proa in the City Clerk’s office for their patient help and guidance.

49. The anti-annexationists headed their petitions with a two-paragraph statement: “The undersigned residents and voters of Normal Heights and vicinity, feel that the City of San Diego is being put to unnecessary expense for calling of a city election for the annexation of this territory, as a large majority in our opinion, are not in favor of annexation. After many weeks’ strenuous efforts on the part of the annexationists, less than twenty percent of the residents signed a petition for annexation. The undersigned feel that the time is not opportune for annexation at this time and respectfully petition you to refrain from taking any action calling a special election for the annexation of this territory. It is a waste of money at the present time and only engenders discord among us.” Index to the Great Register of San Diego County 1924, County of San Diego, Registrar of Voters, Teralta Precinct, 8. The author thanks Bob Pennisi and his staff at the Registrar’s office for locating the registers for the precincts in Normal Heights, making them available for photocopying, and sharing the author’s enthusiasm for this project. A special thanks to the long-time employee “in the back of the room,” who knew the Registers existed and where they were located. City Clerk’s Archives, Box 0007057, Folder 1, Protest of Residents, Documents number 159482 and 159498.

50. In a letter dated March 27, 1924, to City Clerk Allen H. Wright, the County Clerk, J. B. McLees, certified a total of 1,047 registered voters between January and March 1924, and the City Clerk then certified to the Common Council that there were sufficient names to meet the 25 percent requirement of 261 voters needed to call a special election. City Clerk’s Archives, Box 0007057, Folder 1 (no document number), Communication from City Clerk to Common Council Certifying Sufficiency of Petition for Annexation, March 12, 1924. There was also on file a petition containing forty-one names from the residents of Kensington Park who were opposed to annexation, in spite of the fact that the proposed annexation did not include their neighborhood. Additionally, there were 132 names on the anti-annexation petitions that a precinct-by-precinct and page-by-page check of the County’s 1924 Index to the Great Register showed were not registered to vote by the end of 1924. A similar examination found 200 names on the pro-annexation petitions of residents who were not registered to vote at the end of 1924. The discrepancies between the 1924 Register and the first quarter of 1924 may be simply that there was an exodus of disgruntled residents who wanted no part of being annexed to the City, although that does not explain why 200 pro-annexationists dropped from the rolls by the end of 1924. City Clerk’s Archives, Folder 1, Documents Number 159482 and 159498; Great Register of San Diego 1924. The Register listed 958 Republicans, 366 Democrats, 25 Socialists, 20 Prohibitionists, and 260 registering as No Party.

51. *Community Facts* 1924 2:7, Box 1, Folder 3, SDHS; City Clerk’s Archives, Folder 1, Document Number 162748, July 28, 1924, Resolution Number 31934 Declaring Result of Normal Heights Annexation Election - Failed.

52. City Clerk's Archives, Box 0007057, Folder 2, "Annexation – 'Normal Heights – Inhabited' – effective May 10, 1925," Document Number 168060, Letter of January 8, 1925 from the Board of Supervisors to the Common Council, regarding the formation of a Sanitary District in Normal Heights; City Clerk's letter of January 13, 1925 (no document number), responding to the Board of Supervisors' letter of January 8, 1925.
53. "Normal Heights, Teralta Seek Annexation to City," *San Diego Union*, January 9, 1925, 1; "Must Vote Annexation To Get City Advantages," *San Diego Union*, January 13, 1925, 22.
54. The Assembly filed new petitions with the City Clerk on January 8, 1925. There were 520 names on the petition. The County Clerk did not allow sixty-six names because they were not registered voters. The remaining 454 were sufficient to satisfy the requirement that 25 percent of the registered voters in Normal Heights were calling for a second annexation election. City Clerk's Archives, Box 007057, Folder 2, Document Number 168263, Petition of Residents for Annexation of Normal Heights, January 15, 1925. There were no anti-annexation petitions in the file. "Normal Heights Petitions Show Enough Signers," *San Diego Union*, January 16, 1925, 1.
55. "Normal Heights Assembly Urges Annexation To San Diego City," *San Diego Union*, January 20, 1925, 1; City Clerk's Archives, Box 007057, Folder 2, Document Number 168614, Communication from Fred A. Scheidle, President of the Young Men's Business Club regarding Annexation of Normal Heights and Teralta.
56. The precincts were in the following locations: McKinley, garage, 4210 Jefferson Avenue (3552 Collier), Garfield, garage, 4503 42nd Street (Wilson and Monroe), Harding, Oneira Club, corner of Hawley Boulevard and School Street (4649 Hawley, the Normal Heights Community Center), Teralta, Allen's Real Estate Office, 3688 Adams Avenue (near 33rd Street), and Normal Heights, garage, 4805 Hawley Boulevard (Hawley and Collier). A certified copy of Ordinance No. 9876 was sent on May 6, 1925, to Secretary of State Frank Jordan, City Clerk's Archives, Box 0007057, Folder 2, Document Number 168603 of Ordinance Number 9790, Calling Special Election; Document Number 171514 of Resolution Number 33754, Declaring Result of Election, May 6, 1925; Document Number 171526 of Ordinance Number 9876, Annexing Territory Known as Normal Heights, May 6, 1925; and May 8, 1925, date of filing Ordinance Number 9876 with the Secretary of State, effective May 10, 1925. The author thanks Mary Allely at the National City Public Library's Local History Room for taking time away from moving to National City's new library and allowing the author access to microfilm copies of the *National City News*, 1924–1925.
57. *Community Facts* (1925), 13:1. A framed front page of this issue is at the Adams Avenue Business Association's office, 4649 Hawley Boulevard in Normal Heights. Apparently, there are only two extant copies of this community newspaper: the framed copy at the AABA and the extremely fragile copy at the San Diego Historical Society. The author thanks Judy Moore and the late Marco Anguiano of AABA for loaning their copy.
58. It was the author's privilege to meet Mr. Phillip Ward, the grandson of Martin Luther Ward for whom Ward Road was named. The Normal Heights Community Planning Group and the Normal Heights Recreation Council are heading up the movement to change the name of the 39th Street Park to Ward Canyon Park in honor of Martin Luther Ward, well-known San Diego attorney, County District Attorney, 1893–1895, Director of the Board of Public Works, 1899–1902, and State Senator, 1903–1905.
59. Some streets names were not changed: Cliff Place was not changed to 32nd Street, and Benton Place remains Benton, instead of the suggested Maury's Place. City Clerk's Archives, Ordinance Number 10193, An Ordinance Changing the Names of Certain Streets and Naming of Certain Unnamed Streets, in the City of San Diego, California, October 26, 1925; Ordinance Number 12833, An Ordinance Changing the Names of Certain Streets in the City of San Diego, California, May 12, 1930; Ordinance Number 76, New Series, An Ordinance Changing the Name of Mechanic Street, in the City of San Diego, California, to 33rd Place, Book 43, Page 377, October 29, 1932; and Ordinance Number 1702, New Series, An Ordinance Changing the Names of Certain Streets, or Portions Thereof, in the City of San Diego, California, November 27, 1939, Book 47, Page 302. The author thanks Jerry Havin in the City Clerk's office for locating and photocopying these ordinances; Registrar of Voters Office, The Great Register of San Diego County, 1926.
60. *News Notes of California Libraries* 21, no. 1 (1926): 27. The author thanks the reference librarians at the San Francisco Public Library and George Glonka of San Francisco, Shirley Hallblade of Occidental College, and Pat Lambert and Paul Chan at the Pomona Public Library for access to complete sets of

THE JOURNAL OF SAN DIEGO HISTORY

News Notes. "San Diego Obituaries," Margaret Collins, *San Diego Union*, December 9, 1968, C9, 1; "City Hall Notes," *Evening Tribune*, January 21, 1935, 2.

61. Collins remained with the City as a librarian and lived in her family's Craftsman-style home at 1545 Grove Street in South Park until her death in 1968.

62. On a walk over every street in Normal Heights for a community infrastructure survey, the author found only two short blocks with such narrow lots, 25-feet wide, that no curb cuts for driveways were possible. They appear to be the only lots where the family automobile, if there was one, had to be parked on the street. Zelda Deatrick, "Memories -A Little House on Wilson Avenue," *Adams Avenue Herald*, October 2005, 15; Suzanne Ledeboer, "Memories of Normal Heights," *Adams Avenue Herald*, September 2005, 11.

63. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Reel 53, Volume III, 1921–1955, 299B. Note that School Street no longer cut through to 35th Street.

64. San Diego Public Library Papers, Board of Library Trustees, Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees, Box 2, Folders 2–5, September 10, 1913, 102; October 7, 1913, 103; April 13, 1914, 112, San Diego Public Library, California Room. The author thanks Susan Painter and Richard Crawford at the California Room and also wishes to thank Barbara Quinn of the SERRA Research Center for providing direction to information on the branch libraries in Normal Heights. *News Notes* 9, no. 3 (1914): 568; *News Notes* 20, no. 3 (1925): 201–202; *News Notes* 21, no. 2 (1926): 150; and *News Notes* 21, no. 3 (1926): 252; *San Diego City and County Directory* (1926), 358.

65. *San Diego Union*, October 16, 1934, 9; "Branch Library To Be Reopened," *San Diego Union*, January 22, 1935, 2:8; "Plan to Move Library Hit," *Evening Tribune*, B9, November 25, 1953. Closing the Normal Heights branch and consolidating it with the branch in Kensington was not a popular move in the neighborhood. Protests from the Executive Board of the John Adams Elementary School PTA, the San Diego Uptown Lions Club, and the Adams Avenue Business and Civic Club were sent to City Manager O. W. Campbell, Councilman Chester Schneider, and the Board of Library Trustees. One sixteen-page petition signed by residents was forwarded to the City Council, along with several other petitions. The City Librarian, Clara Breed, and the Board were sympathetic, but the move was formalized on December 8, 1953 by the City Council with their approval of Ordinance No. 5878, which appropriated \$3,300 for the purchase of the Kensington Branch Library from the County of San Diego. "Manager Asks Repairs To Branch Libraries," City Clerk's Archives, Ordinance No. 5878, Document No. 481482, December 8, 1953.

66. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1930 U.S. Census, California, San Diego, San Diego Township, Images 548-718, Series: T626, Roll: 191, Page 217. HeritageQuest images were accessed through the Carlsbad City Library's website, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com> (accessed 3/7–3/16/06).

67. Pourade, *The Rising Tide. Southern California in the Twenties and Thirties*, 149-154; BOS Record 69, November 16, 1932–March 1, 1933, p. 4, 36–43, 189–198, 333–342; BOS Record 70, March 2, 1933–June 30, 1933, p. 60–69, 198–208, 281, 336–345. The "charity rate" included a small stipend for food, usually \$2 to \$5 dollars, depending on the number of people in the family and the length of their journey.

68. BOS, Record 79, April 13, 1935–July 19, 1935, 387-393; BOS Record 80, July 22, 1935–October 31, 1935, 89-92.

69. Normal Heights Methodist Episcopal Church records, 1929. The author wishes to thank Mrs. Marian Martin, Church Secretary, for the loan of these records from 1910–1935.

70. Pourade, *The Rising Tide. Southern California in the Twenties and Thirties*, 234, 236, 246, 248; Andrew Rolle, *California: A History*, 3rd edition (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1978), 353-54; Walton Bean, *California. An Interpretive History*, 3rd edition, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978), 347.

71. Pourade, *The Rising Tide. Southern California in the Twenties and Thirties*, 219-221; Walton Bean, *California. An Interpretive History*, 3rd edition, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978), 347. Many historians consider the Townsend Plan the impetus for the Social Security Act of 1935. Greg Mitchell, *The Campaign of the Century. Upton Sinclair's Race for Governor of California and the Birth of Media Politics* (New York: Random House, 1992); BOS, Record 78, December 14, 1934–April 11, 1935, 282-283. The supervisors voted, 5-0, on February 25, 1935, to support H. R. Bill 3977, the "Townsend Old-Age Revolving Pension Act." Pourade, *The Rising Tide. Southern California in the Twenties and Thirties*, 249.

72. Pourade, *The Rising Tide. Southern California in the Twenties and Thirties* <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/books/pourade/chrono.htm> (accessed 5/25/06); Constance Bowman and Allen, Clara Marie, *Slacks and Callouses*, (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1944); "Hundreds Attend Groundbreaking For Library Unit," *San Diego Union*, February 25, 1940, A8; "Library Headquarters Moves To New Building," *San Diego County Employees' Association Newsletter*, May 1968, Subject Files, Libraries – San Diego (County), SDPL, California Room. The author thanks Marianne Greene who first noticed the library as a mere speck on an old (1967) USGS map and also Ellen Zyroff, Public Information Officer for San Diego County's library system, who shared her primary source documents with the author. The headquarters, built of reinforced concrete in an H-shape on a lot that was 100 feet wide by 400 feet deep, had an outdoor reading area and ample parking. The headquarters remained at 3532 Meade Avenue until 1968, when the property was sold, the building razed, and the Villa Andorra apartments built on the site.
73. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 118, 119, 133.
74. Normal Heights Community Planning Committee, Agenda and Minutes, October 7, 2003, Action Item No. 6, Parking Spaces Along West Mountain View, North of Adams Avenue. Committee will be considering whether to remove the spaces or have the City redo them to standard specifications. After a few humorous comments from the Board and the audience, the representative for Normal Heights from Council District 3, who was not at all amused, stated that the spaces were not to standard and would be removed. The Committee asked for additional parking in Normal Heights, including angle parking on some streets and requested, by a 9–0 vote, a study of West Mountain View Drive to maximize parking, possibly to include diagonal parking, within the regulations of the Street Design Manual. The spaces were removed. Presumably, the stealth painters were located, admonished, and, possibly, fined.
75. Supervisor Ron Roberts, whose Fourth District includes Normal Heights, issued a proclamation on May 9, 2006 that congratulated the residents of Normal Heights on the 100th birthday of their neighborhood and declared May 9, 2006 "Normal Heights Day" in San Diego County. Similar congratulations came from 3rd District Councilmember Toni Atkins, who represents the Mid-City area, and who also declared May 9, 2006 "Normal Heights Day" in the City.