

May Day Celebrations in the South Bay



The PTA of the F Street School sponsored annual May Day celebrations during the 1920s. (Photo from Chula Vista Library)

1915 - SENIOR GIRLS GO A'MAYING. Saturday morning, May 8th, at a quarter of nine saw a group of Senior girls gathered in front of The National City Store. Anyone listening to the general run of conversation would have gathered that they were going to have the time of their lives. At ten they were perched on the bleachers in front of the Normal school, eagerly listening for the first chords of the orchestra stationed at the entrance of the building. At last it was all over. The noble jesters and Robin Hood's men had done their bravest, the little flower girls had danced, and the Senior Normal school girls had wound the May pole in a beautiful drill. The Senior girls of the National City High School mingled with the crowd, then "hiked" to the Mission Cliff Gardens. (*The Red and Gray*, Senior High School, June 1915, p. 49.)



Queen of May Day 1930 is Eleanor Holt (top center), shown here with her court of honor. No one looks like they were ready to smile for the camera.

Sweetwater High School Queen of May Day in 1930 was Eleanor Holt (top center), shown here with her court of honor. Notice the girls in their "leafy" dresses. Eleanor Holt was born in North Bend, Oregon, in 1912. She came to Chula Vista with her parents in 1922 and was a graduate of Sweetwater Union high school in the class of 1931. The following year she was married to Joseph Connolly and lived at 266 J street. When she died at the age of 33 after a long illness, she left three small children, Judith, 8; Michael, 4, and Joseph, 3. (*The Star-News*, Mar 28, 1992, and Apr 13, 1945.)

1920 - ANNUAL CARNIVAL INAUGURATED A New Feature of Tent City Life. May Day Will Mark the Opening Of the Season Hereafter. Saturday, May 1, this year, was a memorable day for Tent City, for it marked a new departure in beginning the summer season, and has already proved so successful that it is expected to have similar "doings" each year after this. There was a great program of land and water sports, with wonderful illuminations on Glorietta bay at night; a child outdoor picnic, with May pole dances. The Coronado school won the cup for the best May pole, the Ratliff School for Dancing received the cup for the best dancers. It was estimated that about 50,000 people visited Tent City on this occasion. (*Coronado Tent City News*, 1920, p. 8)

1930/04/25 - CHILDREN WILL GIVE FETE. Colorful Festival To Be Given On The School Lawn. Next Friday, May 2, at 1:30 o'clock the Chula Vista grade school lawn will be transformed into a fairy garden. The children of the school will present a Mother Goose May Day. The festival this year promises to be most attractive and colorful, as the new lawn will be a lovely getting for the performance. Something a little different is in store for you. Mother Goose has invited the Flower Queen to visit her garden. When the eventful day arrives, Mother Goose is very much upset because her garden is bare. Before she has time to send flowers to beautify it the Queen arrives. Mother Goose explains the situation and the Queen very graciously sends for her flowers. The blossoms arrive and are welcomed by singing and dancing. They are ably assisted by a school chorus. The characters in order of appearance are to be: Little Boy Blue, Billy Masters; Mother Goose, Mildred Harris; Butterflies, Kindergarten; fairies, Grade 2B; Elves, Grade 2A; Miss Muffet, Mildred Roberts; Simple Simon, Donald Bennett; Mary, Quite a Modest Maid, Jean Dupree; Tom, the Piper's Son, Edward Eccles; Jack, Roberts Sprouse; Jill, Betty Horn; Red Riding Hood, Willadene Ford; Jack Be Nimble, Barney Hays; Bo Peep, Ann Boal; Little Jack Horner, Harry Sutherland; Heralds, Joseph Davies, Robert Sumner; Flower Queen, Marjorie, Linthicum; Her Attendants, Gladys Gosting, Norma Weber, Janet Benton, Dorothy Rankin, Helen Pappas, Osumi Hirai; Hollyhocks, Grade 6A; Roses, Grade 6B; Poppies, Grade 1B; Daffodils, Grade 1A; Violets, Grade 2A-3B; Goldenrods, Grade 5B; Clovers, Grade 5A; Tulips, Grade 4B; Daisies, Grade 3B; Nasturtiums, Grade 5A; Moming Glories, Grade 5A. (*The Chula Vista Star*, Apr 25, 1930, Page 1.)



May Day celebration at the F Street School in 1923. (Photo from Chula Vista Library)

1930/05/02 - MAY DAY FETE THIS AFTERNOON Mother Goose has her stage set for a May Day festival on the front lawn at the Chula Vista grammar school this afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. Everything has been prepared for the Flower Queen's annual visit and when she arrives at the appointed hour, Mother Goose will call on her children to assist in entertaining her. The Flower Queen according to advance information, will return the favor by calling on her fairies and elfin creatures and dance. May Day at the grammar school is an annual event in Chula Vista and hundreds of mothers and friends attend. (*The Chula Vista Star*, May 2, 1930, Page 1.)



Japanese students donned costumes for May Day celebrations in 1932. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Oct 16, 1986, Page 45.)

1933/02/24 - English May Festival To Be Given On Lawn. An English May day festival to be given on the lawn in front of the school some time in May, is planned by Miss Roberts. This is being given instead of the dance recital which was given last year. In the dance recital last year, only the girls in the dancing class took part, but this year in the May day festival all the girls, including those in the physical education classes, have the opportunity of trying out for a part in the festival. Miss Roberts has been teaching the girls English folk dances since the beginning of the year. Grimstock, Sweet Kate, and the Ribbon Dance are a few dances learned so far. The orchestra will play the accompaniment for the dance. (*The Chula Vista Star*, Feb 24, 1933, Page 7.)

1938/05/13 - 200 Students To Aid In May Queen Festival On School Lawn. Vocal, Instrumental Music To Mark Gala Event Wednesday Afternoon In Event After English Fete. Miss Catherine Santer Directing Huge Group For Public Program Replete With Songs, Color; Participating Pupils Are Listed. Assisted by a chorus of 200 children from the upper grades, Chula Vista Grammar school May queen will be crowned at an elaborate spring festival on the school lawn Wednesday afternoon. Directed by Miss Catherine Santer, school music supervisor, the third annual festival will be replete with dancing and color, patterned after the old

May fete. Identity of the May queen is being withheld and will not be disclosed until she emerges to the music of "May Day Dance," a familiar Morris dance collected in the English countryside. Sparkling instrumental music also will highlight the fete, to which the parents of all Grammar school children and the parents are invited. Speaking parts will be taken by Arthur Wilkinson, as the herald; Frank Franufelder, first villager; Margaret Davies, second villager; William Dugger, third villager; Wallace Hartin, jester; William Knight, Roy Livesay and Fred Hodges, trumpeters; Helen Davies, crown bearer and Sheila Burns, Janet Krantz, Helen Virginia Shelton, Gloria Wahler, Evelyn Johnston and Adeline Ludwig, May Queen attendants. Participating in the chorus and dancing will be: Kiyoko Yamamoto, Blanche Araumi, Barbara Wahler, Ramona Graham, Inez Horowitz, Jackie Dittmar, Joey Dittmar, Joyce Corbett, Ruth Olmstead, Jean Baehman, Jimmy Witkin, Tinie Urango, Gloria Ratcliffe, Darlene Aposhian, Alice Sano, Josephine Acosta, Lawrence Nissen, Billy Smythe, Walter Carey, Hugh Fullerton, Wally Hedrick, Donald Hendricks, Jim Kuhn, Fred Steiner, Pauline Anderson, Jeanette Boselli, Ann Capp, Joyce Gill, Dorothy Manos, Phyllis Mikkelsen, Mildred Pankhat, Rich Phyllis Sherman, Betty Ward, Masakazu Fujimoto, Nancy McDonald, Billy Thomas, Bert Gilbert, Jean Lyda, Stephen Cameron, Clare Pewtress, Barbara Shigeo Araumi, Apolonia Ttayde, Rosemary Bacchus, Catherine Churchill, Jean Robbins, Suzanne Senn, Doris Wolff, Ruth Toricellas, Margaret Wahler, Bob Hayes, J. R. Moore, Howard Sutliff, Henry Yamada, Mary Barrows, Lorraine Bechauer, Doris Bellante, Wanda Carter, Gladys Kushino, Jane Kushino, Jane Rooker, Sesaria Salas, Georgia Smith, Raymond Dunn, Bobby Bonner, Robert McDonald, Billy Crowe, June Miller, Patsy Sherman, Lois Hedrix, Cyril Pew Clinton, Hendrix, Elizabeth Meyer, Ellen McCan, Patsy Farrell, Phyllis Farrell, Joyce Hardy, Helen Brown, Valorie Pattison, Guilbert Lozano, Charles Robert Mendenhall, Revae Miller, Shizuko Araumi, Kathleen Kidd, Misako Maymi, Lois Rooker, Jean Sharman, Lima Jean Pickering, Gloria Esterbloom, Marvin (Roland) Neel, Patty Jo Farrah. Highlights of the May fete, to be presented on the Grammar school lawn Wednesday, will be given for Chula Vista P. T. A. at their meeting in the school auditorium Thursday afternoon, said Mrs. Ruth Drew, program chairman. (*The Chula Vista Star*, May 13, 1938, Page 5.)

1945/04/27 - May Day Program Held at Imperial Beach School. The Imperial Beach school will give a May Day program at the school on Tuesday afternoon from one o'clock till two, it was announced this week by Miss Lillian Oliver, principal. A cordial welcome is given to all parents and friends of the school to the lawn festival. The lawn festival will feature a double May pole dance and each grade will present a number on the program. (*The Chula Vista Star*, Apr 27, 1945, Page 1.)

1959/04/26 - MAY DAY BREAKFAST. Quite interested in the May 1 breakfast which is to be given by the women of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in the Hall are: Mrs. W. H. Beckett, who has lent her assistance to past breakfasts, the traditional event having originated about 36 years ago, and Mrs. Elwood H. Jr., general chairman of this year's breakfast. Five different menus will be served between the hours of 6 and 9 a.m. The public is invited to attend. (*The Star* Apr 26, 1959, Page 11.)

1961/05/18 - Eva Macias was crowned May Day Queen at the May Day festival at Sunset School in San Ysidro on Friday. Her special escort was Arturo De la Cruz with Olga Morena as Maid of Honor. Two attendants from each room at Sunset composed the court of honor. From Room 1, Susan Vargas and Victor Espares; Room 2: Laura Crow, Dean McKennon, Room 3: Victoria Nassi, and Abel Zuniga, Room 4: Lupe Preciado and Carlo De La Torres, Room 5: Marilyn Wruck and Ray, Room 6: Linda Bickell and George Bunch, Room 7: Martha Verduzco and Ernest Esperza, Room 8: Sylvia Silvas and Mario Ayala, Room 9: Angie Valenzuela and Genard Croce. The musical program was under the direction of Miss Jackie Weathers as was the supervision of the Dances. English May Pole Dance was performed by the Sixth Grade. Kindergarten Soloists from Mrs. Jones room were Christian Espinoza singing Little Boy Blue, Larry Smith who sang Humpty Dumpty, and Sports singing Little Bo Peep and Julie Castillo presenting Little Miss Muffelt. A German Folk Dance called the Kinderpolka was also presented by the Kindergarten. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, May 18, 1961, Page 11.)



School children dressed as flowers performing in May Day celebration at the F Street School in 1923. (Photo from Chula Vista Library)

1963/02/24 - F Street's 50th And Last B'day. The first PTA organized in Chula Vista will celebrate its golden anniversary and final birthday at F Street School Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. Commemorating the final year, the unit will present living pictures depicting the high points of the unit, beginning with its founding in 1913 and ending with the presentation of this year's honorary life membership. The unit was founded at what was then Chula Vista Union Grammar School by a group of mothers and teachers. Included in this group were Mmes. Clara B. Bradley, president, Hazel Goes Cook, C.S. Timmons, M.R. LaFollett and E. Austin. Each year during the 1920's, the unit presented a May Day Festival on the steps and lawn of the public library. A queen was crowned each year, among them Mrs. Anita Ames, whose daughter Sheila portrays the May Queen in one of the living pictures. During the years of the second world war, F Street School, as it was then, took its place as a leader in the war effort. In the school term 1943-44, students at this school purchased more than \$10,000 in war stamps and bonds. The school, after the war years, got together to plan one of the first Halloween carnivals in the district. It was also instrumental in arranging to have hot lunches served at the school and in establishing the Cerebral Palsy unit. The living pictures final scene will be one which has come down through the 50 years with the PTA. The presentation of the unit's final life membership will close the meeting, and the last major event the PTA will sponsor. And the unit secretary will close her book on 50 golden years.

of service to the school. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Feb 24, 1963, Page 7.)

1967/05/11 - Mrs. Cleveland Crowned At May Party. Mrs. Harold Cleveland was crowned queen of the Children's May Day Party In the Nestor Methodist (Mrs. Cleveland and her husband, prince consort, reigned over the party in grand style as more than 60 children and 40 adults spent the evening in a carnival atmosphere. Parades and games included a Lion Hunt led by Rev. J. Franklyn Taylor, pastor. The grand parade was the evening's highlight. After dressing in and original costumes, the children, toddler through 12, were led in a dizzy march by Mark McGuire and Gary Cline, grand marshals. The parade ended at tl refreshment table. The event was arranged by Rev. and Mrs. Taylor, chairmen, with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Taylor, co-chairmen. Committee members were Mr Mmes. Paul McGulre, Russ Gillmore, Eddie Driver Jr., Jim Rookwalter, Jim Robertson, Jim Jenkins, Don Fruit and Mmes. Mary Ann Feller, Fern Ahrendt & Hedrlck, A special Mother's Day observance is planned for Sunday's 8:30 and 11 a.m. services. Rev. Taylor will give flowers to mothers attending with the r children. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, May 11, 1967, Page 4.)

1970/04/30 - Annual May meal slated at NC church. The 47th annual May Breakfast will be held Sunday by the Women of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church church hall; 521 E. 8th St, National City. Serving of the breakfast, which is a fund raising event open to the public, will be from 8 am until noon. Mrs. Louis Vanlandingham of 6065 Boxer Road, Paradise Hills, is chairman. Mrs. Herbert Flgges, wife of the rector, and Mrs. J. C. Cox, president of the women's asse will be hostesses According to custom, women will receive a corsage and men, a boutonniere, as they enter the hall. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Apr 30, 1970,



School children dressed as flowers performing in May Day celebration at the F Street School in 1923. (Photo from Chula Vista Library)

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