

The Lowell Davies house at 395 First Avenue was demolished in the 1960s.

1927 - Robert Lowell Davies (known as Lowell Davies) was born in 1895 in New Almaden, California (near San Jose). Young Davies, the son of a miner, first attended elementary school in a one-room schoolhouse near Mariposa, but his father's continual search for the mother lode kept the family on the move from one Sierra Nevada mountain town to another. As a child, Davies enjoyed theatre and once stated that he would sometimes play "hooky" from classes on Friday afternoons so that he could go see a play. Times were lean for Davies's family, and at the age of 13 he had to quit school in order to help support himself. He worked a number of odd jobs in the northern California area during this period, such as running errands for a pharmaceutical company and working in a curio shop. He learned how to type and to take shorthand. Although Davies never graduated, he began high school in San Francisco. Davies eventually joined the Field Artillery branch of the U.S. Army in 1917, and was stationed at Fort Rosecrans in San Diego until his discharge in 1920. Soon after leaving the Army, he found work as the secretary to newspaper magnate, E.W. Scripps. Davies would later give credit to Scripps for instilling in him the desire and motivation to earn a college degree. Getting into college, however, was not an easy task for Davies as he had not graduated from high school. Davies eventually did make-up those deficiencies earning all A's, and graduating Phi Beta Kappa. After graduation, Davies entered Boalt Hall School of Law. He passed the bar examination in 1927 and returned to San Diego where he began practicing law as the Chula Vista City Attorney (San Diego County). On October 28, 1929 he married Ethelind Thompson. They later had four children. Davies worked for the city until the late 1930s when he began his private law practice, but he continued to hold onto his love of theatre. He once commented that he would often take the bus to see a show put on by an amateur troupe—known as The Barn Players—at the original Old Globe Theatre. In fact it was a chance encounter at the theatre one day that inspired Davies's long-time professional association with the organization. In 1937 one of the actors, who knew of Davies's law practice, asked him if he would come to the group's Board meetings and offer them sorely needed legal advice. Davies signed on as an advisor until he was elected to the Board in 1939 and then to the presidency in 1945. During his involvement with the Old Globe Theatre, Davies was credited with organizing the Globe 400, a group of patrons whose donations provided a scholarship fund to assist promising amateur actors. He also established the annual Old Globe's Summer Shakespeare Festival. During the summer of 1949, Davies arranged for the world-renowned Shakespearean director, B. Iden Payne, to direct plays at the Old Globe. This was the beginning of a collaboration that lasted for many years. (Lowell Davies Papers 1911-1988, Special Collections MS-0046, San Diego State University.)

1935/09/20 - One day Fiesta de la Luna will be Oct. 4, people will wear Spanish costumes, big parade at 2pm under auspices of Rotary Club with R. Lowell Davies as chairman, in evening will be dinner and floor show with reservations for 300. (Chula Vista Star, Sept. 20, 1935.)

1947/09/05 - Lowell Davies, pres of SD Community Theatre for past 3 yrs, will reactivate the Globe players in Balboa Park after suspension during war years when they were unable to perform in the park. (Chula Vista Star, Sept. 5, 1947.)

1949/07/07 - Audiences at "Rose of the Rancho," to be staged tonight and tomorrow and Sunday nights as a main event of Chula Vista's 15th Fiesta de la Luna, will see a play of early California enacted against the backdrop of one of the most striking sets attempted locally by an amateur theater group. "And it's probably one of the largest," says the designer Caradoc Rhys, who has faithfully created a replica of an Old California Mission. Thirty feet high, the mission is the colorful play's main set. It provides the background for the first act of "Rose of the Rancho. When reversed, elements of the mission set serve also for the play's second and third acts," Rhys says. Rhys, of Welsh descent, has been a San Diegan 5 years but has been designing stage sets for almost 20. He did his first when he was 18 and a student at the University of Arizona. Born with but one hand, the left, he has

never let the handicap slow him down in his backstage avocation. His sets have won awards at the famed Pasadena Playhouse. Unmarried, Rhys is a civilian at the Naval Air Station at North Island. (San Diego Tribune, July 7, 1949, Theatre Guild Scrapbook, Local History Collection, Chula Vista Public Library.)

1954 - Helen Davies and George Peppard were married in 1954 at St. John's, then went to NYC. I was at USC, and my brother was in the Army, so at that time only my parents and my younger sister Estelle lived in the family home at 395 First (1st and G St). Helen and George did not live there, had been at Ashland together, and then I think were either in college or whatever until the wedding. My parents moved to Mission Hills in 1955, rented the old house for a few years, and then when I came back to SD as a young Navy officer, my wife and I and Son #1 moved into the house for 1958-1959, until we went to Berkeley for law school. Between pictures, Helen and George moved in when we moved out. They were there a couple of years, and in 1962 my brother Tom and his family moved in. A few years later he tore the house down, subdivided the property, and built four homes on spec. Bradford lives in the Bay Area, and Julie lives in LA. (John Davies Interview Sept. 17, 2008.)

1954/01/21 - (photo) Mrs. Lowell Davies elected to 3rd term as VP of Girl Scout Council of SD (Chula Vista Star, Jan. 21, 1954.)

1954/01/28 - Helen Davies marriage to George Peppard (photo) p 3A (Chula Vista Star, Jan. 28, 1954.)

1961/03/05 - George Peppard will appear at theater party of the CV unit to Children's Hospital Auxiliary on Mar. 14, proceeds to go to the San Diego Society for Crippled Children for the Easter Seal drive. The party will feature the film "Home from the Hill," starring Peppard at the Vogue. Peppard lives in CV with his wife, the former Helen Davies of SD and their two children, Bradford 5 and Julie 1. He met Miss Davies at Ashland Summer Playhouse in Oregon in 1952 (Chula Vista Star-News, Mar. 5, 1961)

1961/03/09 - (photo) George Peppard will appear at theater party of the CV unit to Children's Hospital Auxiliary on Mar. 14, proceeds to go to the San Diego Society for Crippled Children for the Easter Seal drive. The party will feature the film "Home from the Hill," starring Peppard at the Vogue. Preceding the movie at the Vogue, Peppard will be honored at a reception at the Leader Department store. Peppard's current picture is Paramount's "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and he has co-starred with Gregory Peck in "Pork Chop Hill" and with Leslie Caron in "The Subterraneans." (Chula Vista Star-News, Mar. 9, 1961)

1961/05/04 - George Peppard at Mental Health Assoc lunch with 2 men (UT85-B6504 neg) (SDHS photo archive)

1984 - Davies retired from the Old Globe's Board of Directors in 1976 and was elected to the newly created position of Chairman of the Board. On April 8, 1979, he married Darlene Gould. In January 1983, he was named Honorary Life Chairman. Lowell Davies passed away three months later on April 29, at the age of 87. He had given 43 years of service to the Old Globe Theatre. In 1985, the outdoor Festival Stage, which had been destroyed by arson fire in 1984, was rebuilt and renamed the Lowell Davies Festival Stage. One of three venues within the theatre complex, the Festival Stage operates only during the Summer Shakespeare Festival season. (Lowell Davies Papers 1911-1988, Special Collections MS-0046, San Diego State University.)

1994 - The obituaries yesterday for George Peppard mentioned only one of the actor's three ex-wives by name: actress Elizabeth Ashley. But locals with long memories may recall his first wife, the woman who lived with the young Peppard when he was a struggling actor here. That would be Helen Davies Peppard, daughter of Old Globe Theatre founder Lowell Davies and sister of prominent SD

Atty. John Davies. Neighbors remember Helen and George Peppard when they lived together in Chula Vista and he was an intense, young man on the skinny side of stardom. That was in the late '50s, before his big break in the movie, "Home From the Hill," when most of Peppard's personal appearances, they say, were with a cue stick at Chub's Pool Parlor on Third Avenue. (Tom Blair in San Diego Union-Tribune, May 10, 1994) (San Diego Union-Tribune, May 10, 1994)