



Poway Echoes

A NEWSLETTER OF THE POWAY HISTORICAL AND MEMORIAL SOCIETY

Preserving Poway's Past for the Future

Jeff Frye, President

SUMMER 2011

Joye Davisson, Editor

Julia S. G. Porter was a modern-day woman who loved art, traveled and lived in Europe, and in her later years enjoyed the simple life in Poway until her death in 1952. The Historical Society wishes to thank her granddaughter Julie Iavelli for sharing her grandmother's art with us.



Mrs. Porter was an artist of national fame having studied in New York, Paris and Montreal, Canada. She also loved music and could play a musical piece on the piano, just by listening to it and then repeating it.



Her home, which was originally near Lake Hodges, was also her art studio. The home was moved to Poway after a brush fire burnt some of the house in the early 1940's. The house is now in Old Poway Park and is used for many purposes, such as Park offices and meeting rooms.



The Poway Historical Society hopes that visitors to the Museum will enjoy the variety and scope of Mrs. Porter's art work. This exhibit will be shown in the Museum until mid-June. After that we will put up our annual 4th of July display, honoring our military veterans.

~ Cecelia Burr

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Are you interested in helping to Preserve Poway's Past for the Future? The Poway Historical Society and Museum may be just be the answer.

Volunteers are needed to docent in the Nelson House and in the Museum on Saturdays and Sundays. Schedules are flexible and you can volunteer weekly, every other week, once a month or even sign-up as a substitute.

If interested in helping, please contact Cecelia Burr at 858-486-0106.

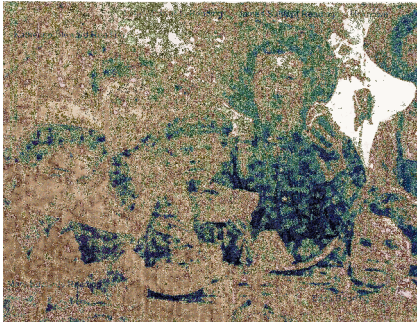
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The Board meets the second Monday of the month at 8:30 AM in the Museum. Members are welcome to attend.

READING FAMILY

The family enjoying the watermelon is the Reading family who lived in Poway in the early 1900s. Mr.



Reading was the stage stop caretaker. If you remember the large photos as you enter the Museum on the left hand side, depicting the north and south bound stages stopping at the

Poway stage stop in 1905, the people in the photos were either passengers disembarking after the long ride down Poway grade or people waiting to board the stage. The young boy on the mule was later interviewed by the San Diego Historical Society and recounted a fascinating history of those early days in Poway. Mr. Reading was the man in the front getting the news from the stage driver. Mrs. Reading would provide refreshments for the weary travelers.

How different travel was in the days before Interstate 15? Pomerado Road continued on to Escondido and points north. A trip not taken lightly in those days.

~Cecilia Burr

SEE YOU IN OLD POWAY PARK

Starting June 1st there will be a second Farmers Market every week on Wednesday, 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Don't miss this opportunity to get fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers in the middle of the week.

The Saturday Farmers Market will continue the regular schedule of 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM.

Old Poway Park will be alive with the sound of music this summer. First up is the Sam Hinton Folk Festival on Saturday, June 4th. You won't want to miss the annual Old-Fashioned Fourth of July celebration! There will be music in the gazebo all day and lots of good food and fun in the carriage turn and in the green park. See you there.

Concerts in Old Poway Park this summer include:

July 17	Susan Craig Winsberg & Blackwaterside
July 31	Dave Dekker and Swing West Band
August 14	Pomerado Community Band

Summer concerts begin at 5:30 PM. Bring a picnic supper and enjoy the music brought to you this summer by Sharp Memorial Hospital.

EARLY DAYS OF POWAY RECALLED BY BILL OTIS

This article written by Hal Davee first appeared in the Poway News Chieftain on February 10, 1973 and is reprinted here by permission.

William. W. (Bill) Otis has spent more than fifty years of his seventy-two in ranching, farming and chicken raising in the same location just off Poway Road. An outwardly quiet man with a subtle sense of humor, Bill is outspoken when the subject of Poway's growth is mentioned.

"Poway was a beautiful valley with miles of vineyards, acres of grain and beautiful peach and apricot orchards," recalled Otis, and he has the memory and photographs that span the years to prove his contention.

"Look at what has happened to Poway," he said, his

hands describing the panorama of cut hillsides burdened with tract homes which are visible from his residence.

"I can't believe it," he added. "If I were 10 years younger I'd move," he said, thumping the ends of a large photo album together with a resounding swish.

It is difficult for Bill to forget the peacefulness and beauty of early Poway and to accept the change, for he has reinforced his memory with thousands of pictures.

Bill refers to the valley not by streets or other familiar landmarks but by persons and acreage. As he became

Continued next page

absorbed in his memories, he said, "Look what happened to that forty down there," his arms and hands defining boundaries of an imaginary area somewhere to the northeast of Poway. Then he stopped and with a chuckle and a twinkle in his eye, he said "You know, it's hard to explain all of this to you 'cause you are too new around here."

Born in Clifton, Virginia, April 24, 1898, Bill was the third of four children born to Adele and Harrison G. Otis, an 1874 West Point graduate who, as a young Army Captain, spent nearly 5 years in Indian fighting.

Somewhat later in his father's career, as Bill recalls, he resigned from the regular Army and became associated with the Army Corps of Engineers.

"My father helped build Fort Sheridan," Bill said "and while there he received an urgent request from an old school chum, Ulysses Grant III, then building a hotel in San Diego, to resign from the Corps and accept a position as head construction engineer to complete the hotel." "My father later told me," Bill explained, "that Grant was not a businessman and that he was really being taken by unscrupulous contractors and was in serious trouble." Persuaded by Grant's offer, Otis, his wife Adele, Bill, his brother, Harrison G. Otis, Jr., and sisters, Fannie and Adele, arrived in San Diego in 1906.

During the years that his father was completing what is known as the US Grant Hotel, the Marston, Timkin and Bledsoe buildings and a group of buildings on 4th Avenue in San Diego known as the "Otis Block," Bill completed his primary schooling at Florence grammar school and graduated from San Diego High School.

"I had no idea what I wanted to do then," Bill said, "but my father's decision to realize a cherished ambition was the deciding factor."

The hotel and other buildings completed, Harrison G. Otis succumbed to a persistent longing to become a chicken rancher by purchasing 40 acres of land called Rancho los Olivos located east of Poway Road, between Evanston Drive and Ann-O-Reno Lane.

His father's purchase of the land helped Bill make a decision which he says he has never regretted. "My dad had arranged for my appointment to the academy at West Point," he said, "but I turned it down and the two of us came to Poway to start the farm."

It was in 1918 that he and his father came to Poway to start the ranch, and with the exception of several trips to Scotland, Bill has been a part of Poway ever since.

Leaning forward in his chair, Bill laughed quietly as he added: "I guess I was just cut out to be a Poway farmer."

Lacking any enthusiasm or desire for ranch life, Bill's mother, "a very refined lady," as Bill describes her, his brother and two sisters preferred the comforts of city life and remained in the large family home at Second and Thorn Streets in San Diego, where his sister Fannie still resides.

There was only one small house on the ranch at the time Bill and his father arrived in Poway, plus the usual outdoor facilities. "It was hardly a place that would appeal to my mother," said Bill, "but we did later remodel it to include probably the first inside bathroom in Poway."

Of immediate concern to Bill and his father was the need for water to irrigate crops and orchards which they planned and for the vineyard and olive trees already on the ranch.

A deep well was a necessity, and Bill remembers that Joe Anderson of Big Stone was one of the men hired to build the well. "They went down 100 feet," said Bill "and then tunneled laterally for about 80 feet."

"What kind of equipment was used to construct the well?" I inquired naively.

Bill looked as though he couldn't believe the question. "Pick and shovel," he said. Then he explained: "The men were lowered in a basket into the hole and they dug the well by hand. We are still using that well today and it is the water supply for 8 rentals that we now have. "That well has never run dry," Bill added with obvious pride. With plenty of water available, over 25 acres of the Otis' "forty" were transformed into vineyards and peach orchards, including "5 acres of oranges up on that hill," as Bill put it.

The small house had been remodeled to include two Poway firsts, an inside bathroom and gas to cook with (Flamo).

In 1923 the enterprising younger Otis turned his attention to other endeavors which included helping

to build Big Stone Lodge and a school bus to transport students in the newly formed Pomerado School District.

It was a fellow named Daniel Stuck who got me involved in hauling rocks to build Big Stone," said Bill. According to Bill, Stuck, who had 12 children, needed work and a friend of his, a Dr. Hansen from Los Angeles, put up the money and hired Stuck to build Big Stone.

"I had an old Model-T truck with hard tires and a chain drive," said Otis, "which I bought from John Lawson, and I hauled the rocks which were used to build the main building and the fireplace at Big Stone." According to Bill, the rocks came from a hillside west of what is now Carriage Road.

"That Stuck fellow was a wonder," said Bill "He would go up on the hills and mark the rocks he wanted. I hauled them down and when he put them together, darned if they didn't fit perfectly."

With the formation of the school district, Bill bought a new flatbed Model T truck, following his successful bid on a contract to haul youngsters to the Pomerado, Merton and Bernardo Schools. "I built that bus from the bed up," said Bill, "right at the place where I bought it in Escondido."

Bill hauled Poway students to the three schools for a period of 6 to 7 years. His pay, including the expense of the operation, was \$160.00 per month.

In 1926 romance entered Bill's life and he was married that year to Hester Flint, of Poway. In 1928 their only child, Delores, was born. Now Mrs. Rolf Steeve, of Bear Valley Road in Escondido, Delores was the light of Bill's life, and he was not sparing in his love and generosity. "I gave Delores several horses," Bill said, "including this one." He had extracted another picture from his album and he sat fondly looking at the picture for several minutes before showing it to me. "Delores loved to ride," Bill continued, "and that horse was a \$1,000 birthday present."

Bill went on to explain that he had built a riding ring on the ranch for Delores and how, with the help of Mrs. Tom Meanley of Scripps Mira-Mesa, she developed into an accomplished equestrienne and traveled to various horse shows with Mrs. Meanley.

Bill and Hester eventually separated and were divorced. Prior to his marriage, Bill recalled that his mother continued to live "in the big house in San Diego, but after we remodeled the small house she frequently spent the weekend with us in Poway."

"It was around 1927 or '28," recalled Billed, "that the telephone company installed the first Poway exchange in our house."

"We didn't have a lot of room in that house," Bill added, laughing, "but they managed to rig up a switchboard with which we could service the 8 or 9 telephones that were installed in Poway.

"You probably wouldn't remember it," Bill said, "but in those days we had a system of short and long rings to distinguish calls. "Once in a while you would get mixed up on the rings," Bill continued, "and that would cause a little confusion, especially if it happened to be 3 o'clock in the morning." For maintaining the switchboard, on a 24-hour a day basis, Bill received the grand sum of \$15 per month.

In 1928 Bill's father passed away and was buried at the National Cemetary in Arlington.

That same year the enterprising and energetic Bill became involved in another venture, although he says it took some urging.

The local post office at that time was housed in a store located at the intersection of Midland and Poway Roads. As Otis tells it, "One early morning, about 12:30 a.m., Louis Kent, one of the top Masons in San Diego County at that time, came by and said the store had closed and the fellow had moved the Post Office to Big Stone."

"We've got to keep the post office in Poway," Kent told Otis, "and we want you to take it over and be postmaster."

With only a small house, already crowded by the switchboard, Bill was reluctant, but he says because of Kent's urging and assurance that approval from Washington would be forthcoming, he agreed.

Following a Washington telegram authorizing him to take over the post office on a temporary basis, Bill went to Big Stone early one morning to pick up the equipment necessary to operate the post office.

To be continued in the Fall issue of Poway Echoes.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to the members of the "Poway Historical and Memorial Society" and welcome summertime! I have heard it said that "a work of art is never finished, it is merely abandoned." Can we relate this to Poway's history?

To think of history in this light provokes such melancholy. All of the people, places, and events in our walk through time. The preservation and study of history allows us to revisit times gone by. It gives each of us the resources to reflect and close these memories. Congratulations to our "Poway Historical and Memorial Society" for providing Poway with this service.

Year two of our "archival project" with the City of Poway is coming to a close. We are on course to meeting our goals to preserve and make our collections more accessible.

Cecilia Burr has worked many hours identifying and organizing our collections of family, event and organization materials. Jan Rubacky has been sorting, identifying and prioritizing our physical items. Jan, her generous friend Jennifer Rough, and Brian Bazzini have logged most of this project to software. We encourage our members to come by the museum and research any of your questions.

On Saturday, May 14, we held our annual rummage sale. This year we called the sale "Granny's Attic" as we sorted out our warehouse and sold antiquated items. The sale was held inside the museum. The Poway Arts and Crafts Guild sold wares on the boardwalk and the park hosted the annual Community Band Festival. These events blended into a quality experience and flowed with generosity and a sense of community.

Summertime is looking eventful for our Society. Including May, we have ten to twelve tours lined up. Cecilia, Jan, Nancy Higbie and Blanche Gunther currently handle most of this chore. Whether school groups, scouts, or private groups and clubs, they all seem to enjoy our facilities and leave well informed.

On Saturday, June 4, the park and The Folk Heritage group will present the annual "Sam Hinton Festival". This event celebrates the life of Sam Hinton, a great influence in the folk music world, and a long time resident of La Jolla.

"Old Fashioned Fourth of July" is just around the corner here at "Old Poway Park". If you haven't attended this event, you might enjoy all of the activity. The artists are selling their wares, musical groups come and go, western re-enactment groups work with the train, and lots of food. A great outing to enjoy.

We want to honor the military here at the museum for the Fourth of July. We encourage our members to contribute and volunteer any military materials you might like to share with the public.

The spring has brought us some new volunteers. Come on out to the park and help us welcome Barbara Nickerson, Jackie Kaufman, and Jennifer Rough. We plan to hold our annual "Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon" Sunday, July 17.

Of course summertime also means bar-b-ques, baseball, and lazy afternoons. I hope the summer brings all you wish for.

Thanks all,

Jeff Frye

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Barbara Nickerson
Mary Louise Reyen
Lynn Wolsey

It is refreshing to turn to the early incidents of our history, and learn wisdom from the acts of the great men who have gone to their account.

... **John McLean**



Where liberty dwells, there is my country.

... **Benjamin Franklin**

POWAY HISTORICAL AND MEMORIAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

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NEW

RENEWAL

Complete form and send with your
check to PH&MS

P. O. Box 19

Poway, CA 92074-0019

\$500 LIFE

\$17 FAMILY

\$75 BUSINESS

\$15 INDIVIDUAL

\$20 ORGANIZATION

\$10 STUDENT

Optional: I would like to help with: Artifacts

Docent in Nelson House

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Special Events

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Docent in Museum

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