

REPORT to the LA MESA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: October 4, 2022

SUBJECT: Project 2022-1417 (Jones) – Consideration of a request for a property preservation (Mills Act) agreement for the Roach-Porter House, a locally designated historic landmark located at 4990 Porter Hill Road, APN 494-820-05-00 and 494-820-06-00, in the R1 (Urban Residential) zone

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issue:

Should the City enter into property preservation (Mills Act) agreement with the owner of the Roach-Porter House, a locally designated historic landmark?

Recommendation:

Adopt a resolution (**Attachment A**) recommending to the City Council authorization of a property preservation (Mills Act) agreement with the property owner.

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is 0.75-acre site located on the west side of Porter Hill Road, north of Roach Drive, in the Porter Hill neighborhood. Single-family residential development surrounds the site to the north, south, and east. The La Mesa Community Center, which is part of MacArthur Park, abuts the property to the west. Existing improvements consist of a one-and-a-half-story residence on a high raised foundation, a detached workshop building, and mature landscaping. A vicinity map is shown below, and the Assessor Parcel Map is provided as **Attachment B**. Photographs are provided as **Attachment C**.

The residence on the site, the 1893 Roach-Porter House, obtained historic landmark designation from the City in 2003. Resolution No. 2003-090 is provided as **Attachment D**. It is one of only a few surviving 19th century residences remaining in La Mesa and is an unusual example of French Colonial design influence. The original owner, Henry Roach, was a Civil War veteran and Texas merchant who had the house built for use as a summer home. By 1905, Henry and Elizabeth



Porter had acquired the property from Henry Roach's wife and renamed the house "Ping An Shan," or Hill of Peace. The Porters had lived in China for 30 years before retiring to La Mesa at the outset of the Boxer Rebellion. One of their children, James T. Porter, was a well-known artist and sculptor. The accessory structure in the rear yard was Mr. Porter's art studio. The full statement of significance and physical description are provided in the landmark nomination report, **Attachment E**.



California Government Code Section 50280 et seq. authorizes local governments to enter into property preservation agreements with owners of qualified historical properties for the purpose of preserving, maintaining, and restoring historic properties through reduced property tax assessments. Locally designated historic landmarks are eligible to participate in the program, which is known as the Mills Act. A Mills Act agreement has a 10-year term that self-renews annually on the anniversary of its effective date. The annual renewal automatically adds one year to the initial term of the agreement, so that the remaining term is always 10 years unless either party files a notice of non-renewal.

#### DISCUSSION:

The property was until recently in the ownership of descendants of the Porter family. A Mills Act agreement was not put into place at the time of landmarking because it would not have provided any tax benefit to the long-time owners. The property was recently sold and the new owner is requesting a property preservation agreement in order to utilize the Mills Act reassessment.



The resource is currently in excellent condition. Two alterations have occurred since historical designation in 2003. The first was a re-roofing project in 2012 to replace wood shake shingles with simulated shake asphalt shingles. The second project involved alterations to the detached accessory structure in the rear yard. Certificates of Appropriateness were granted by the HPC for both.

The new owners have already completed upgrades to electrical and plumbing systems and foundation repairs. Future improvements identified by the owner are listed below. The improvements would be funded with the Mills Act tax savings and are proposed for inclusion in the Mills Act agreement:

- Install additional exterior porch lighting (by 2026)
- Replace HVAC system, remove window AC units, and either install central air or mini split units in each bedroom (by 2028)
- Repair or replace in-kind damaged garage doors (by 2028)

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution (**Attachment A**) recommending that the City enter into a property preservation (Mills Act) agreement with the property owner.

Submitted by:



Allyson Kinnard  
Associate Planner

Attachments:

- A. Draft Resolution
- B. Assessor Parcel Map Sheet
- C. Site photographs
- D. Resolution No. 2003-090
- E. Historic Landmark Report

RESOLUTION NO. HPC 2022-xx

RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA MESA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ENTER INTO A HISTORIC LANDMARK PROPERTY PRESERVATION AGREEMENT WITH THE OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4990 PORTER HILL ROAD, APN 494-820-05-00 AND 494-820-06-00 KNOWN AS THE ROACH-PORTER HOUSE, IN THE R1 (URBAN RESIDENTIAL) ZONE

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WHEREAS, Jeffrey W. Jones and Julie A. Jones, owners of the property located at 4990 Porter Hill Road, APN 494-820-05-00 and 494-820-06-00 in the R1 (Urban Residential) zone wish to maintain the historical integrity of the property;

WHEREAS, the property owners wish to enter into an Historic Landmark Property Preservation Agreement with the City to both protect and preserve the characteristics of historical significance of the historic property and to qualify the historic property for an assessment of valuation pursuant to the Provisions of Chapter 3, part 2, of Division 1 of the California Revenue and Taxation Code;

WHEREAS, the Historic Landmark Property Preservation Agreement is subject to designation of the property as a local historic landmark;

WHEREAS, the property addressed as 4990 Porter Hill Road was designated as a historic landmark by the City of La Mesa in 2003;

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission did receive and consider a staff report on the request; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of La Mesa did hold a duly noticed public meeting on October 4, 2022, and accepted public testimony in considering Project 2022-1417, a request by the owners to enter into a Historic Landmark Property Preservation Agreement with the City as authorized under the Mills Act.

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FINDS AND DETERMINES AS FOLLOWS:

1. That the project is exempt from environmental review under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Sections 15301 and 15331. Section 15301 exempts activities involving negligible or no expansion of use of an existing facility. Section 15331 exempts the preservation and conservation of historical resources when carried out in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The project serves to protect the resource by ensuring that future alterations are subject to the standards described in Section 15331. The project meets the criteria for the exemptions and none of the exceptions listed in Section 15300.2 apply.
2. That the project complies with California Government Code Sections 50280 et seq. as set forth in the Historic Landmark Property Preservation Agreement.



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of La Mesa as follows:

1. The foregoing findings of fact and determinations are true and hereby made a part hereof.
2. The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the City Council approve the Historic Landmark Property Preservation Agreement for the historic landmark known as the Roach-Porter House at 4990 Porter Hill Road, subject to the following improvements to be completed as listed:
  - a. Install additional exterior porch lighting (by 2026)
  - b. Replace HVAC system, remove window AC units, and either install central air or mini split units in each bedroom (by 2028)
  - c. Repair or replace in-kind damaged garage doors (by 2028)

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of La Mesa, California, held the 4<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2022, by the following vote, to wit:

Aye:  
Nay:  
Abstain:  
Absent:

I, Kerry Kusiak, Secretary of the La Mesa Historic Preservation Commission do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and exact copy of Resolution No. HPC 2022-xx, duly passed and adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission.

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Kerry Kusiak, Secretary  
La Mesa Historic Preservation Commission



  
  
 SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
 ASSESSOR'S MAP  
 BOOK **494** PAGE **82**

**ATTACHMENT B**





Current street view from Porter Hill Road.



View of south elevation from 2004.





Current exterior views of the house and accessory building

Project 2022-1417 4990 Porter Hill Road

RESOLUTION NO. 2003-090RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE ROACH-PORTER HOUSE LOCATED AT  
4990 PORTER HILL ROAD AS A HISTORIC LANDMARK, HPC-03-05

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WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of La Mesa did hold a duly noticed public hearing on July 22, 2003, and accepted public testimony in considering HPC 03-05, a request to designate the single family residence located at 4990 Porter Hill Road in the R1 (Urban Residential) zone as a Historic Landmark in the City of La Mesa; and,

WHEREAS, the designation of this subject property as a Historic Landmark is found to be Categorically Exempt from environmental review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, Class 31; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission did receive and consider a staff report for the proposed Historic Landmark designation of 4990 Porter Hill Road; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission did adopt Resolution HPC-03-01 on June 3, 2003 recommending to the City Council the designation of the Roach-Porter House as a Historic Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the City Council did hold a public hearing on July 22, 2003 and considered the record of the Historic Preservation Commission and public testimony for the proposal.

BE IT AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of La Mesa, that the City Council finds and determines as follows:

1. HPC 03-05 is found to be consistent with the La Mesa General Plan.
2. HPC 03-05 has been found to be consistent with the established criteria of Section 25.03.010 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, finding that criteria A, B, C, E and F of the Section apply to the historical and cultural significance of the residence and the site.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA MESA AS FOLLOWS:

1. The foregoing findings of fact and determinations are true and hereby made a part hereof.
2. HPC 03-05 complies with Section 25.03.010, the Historic Landmark and Historic District Criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.



3. The City Council designates the Roach-Porter House and grounds located at 4990 Porter Hill Road, and as further described in Exhibit A, as a Historic Landmark.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at an adjourned meeting of the City Council of the City of La Mesa, California, held the 22nd day of July 2003, by the following vote, to wit:

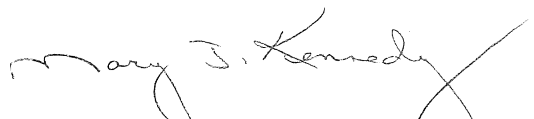
AYES: Councilmembers Allan, Ewin, Jantz, Sterling and Mayor Madrid

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

#### CERTIFICATE OF CITY CLERK

I, MARY J. KENNEDY, City Clerk of the City of La Mesa, California, do hereby certify the foregoing to be true and exact copy of Resolution No. 2003-090, duly passed and adopted by the City Council of said City on the date and by the vote therein recited.

  
MARY J. KENNEDY, CMC, City Clerk

(SEAL OF CITY)

4

8810

EXHIBIT A

All that portion of Lots 21 and 22 in Block 11 of PARK'S ADDITION TO LA MESA SPRINGS, in the City of La Mesa, County of San Diego, State of California, according to Map thereof No. 993, filed in the Office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, June 5, 1906 described as follows:

Commencing at the Northeasterly corner of said Lot 21, running thence Southerly along the Easterly line of said Lot, 30 feet; thence at right angles Westerly on a line parallel with the Northerly line of said Lot to the South line thereof; thence West along said South line to the Southwesterly corner of said Lot; thence Northerly along the Westerly line of said Lots 21 and 22, 34.55 feet; thence at right angles Easterly on a line parallel with the Northwesterly line of said Lot 21, 140 feet to a point in the Easterly line of said Lot 22, thence Southerly along said Easterly line of Lot 22, 10 feet to the point of commencement.



*Roach-Porter House*  
1893

LA MESA HISTORICAL LANDMARK  
NOMINATION FORM

THE ROACH-PORTER HOUSE

1893

May 19, 2003

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**Cover design and photo by Stephanie Glazer - 2002**

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### **APPENDIX**

**Early photo of Roach-Porter House**

**Photo of Roach-Porter House - 1912**

**Photo of wall dormer - 2002**

**Photo of entrance stairs - 2002**

**Photo of pipe organ cactus - 2002**

**Photo of James T. Porter's studio - 2002**

**Assessor's Parcel Map**

**R of S Map No. 2872 June 20, 1952**

**R of S Map No. 8453 Feb 7, 1980**

**Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1929**

**Deed - Douglass, et al to Henry Roach 1/13/92**

**Chain of Title**

**San Diego City and County Directory listings**

**Henry Roach in Texas - two articles**

**"Death of Henry Roach"**

**"News of the Superior Court"**

**The Porter Siblings (from *La Mesa Through the Years*)**

**"Among the Church Founders"**

**Dr. Henry D. Porter obituary**

**"Tell Him Now" (Edwards W. Porter)**

**"Edwards Porter, La Mesa Pioneer Called By Death"**

**"Way Back When" (James Tank Porter)**

**"James Tank Porter Here in 1904"**

**"Branam-Porter" (marriage)**

**"James Tank Porter, Early La Mesan Dies"**

**"Sculpture Exhibit Opens" (at SDHS)**





# HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION FORM

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
Planning Division  
8130 Allison Avenue, La Mesa, CA 91941 (619) 667-1177

## 1. NAME

Historic:  
and/or common: **ROACH-PORTER HOUSE**

## 2. LOCATION

Address: 4990 Porter Hill Road  
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91941

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>PRESENT USE</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> Site			<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<u>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</u>		<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress		<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Anne Hall, Tr. (Anne & Eugene Hall 1990 Survivors Trust)  
Address: 4990 Porter Hill Road  
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91941

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc.: San Diego County Recorder/Assessor  
Address: 1600 Pacific Highway  
City: San Diego State: CA Zip: 92101

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Title: La Mesa Historic Resources Inventory  
Date: June 1984  
Depository for Survey Records City Clerk, City of La Mesa  
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91941

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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CONDITION☐ Excellent☒ Good☐ Fair☐ Deteriorated☐ Ruins☐ UnexposedCHECK ONE☐ Unaltered☒ AlteredCHECK ONE☒ Original site☐ MovedDate April 2003

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**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:**

The Roach-Porter House, designed as a country farm house, is a symmetrical, one and one-half story wooden frame house with large dormers providing added living space on the upper floor. The high foundation of cobblestone, concrete block, and latticed archways, adds almost another full story. A spacious veranda with a balustrades and turned posts, wraps around three sides of the house. Wide, wooden, exterior stairs with balustrades lead from the ground to the veranda on the north and south sides of the home.

The shingled hip roof, the veranda, and the high foundation hint of some French Colonial influence in the design. These features are found in some 19th century homes built in Louisiana and some parts of Texas. The wide exterior stairs are similar to those found on some southern homes.

Other features of the Roach-Porter House include a central platform with balustrades at the roof peak. Most windows are tall and double hung with angled bays on the east and west sides. On the east side, a large gabled wall dormer with knee braces underneath is above an angled bay. Wooden doors in the foundation open at ground level and were used as a wagon entrance to bring lemons into the basement storage area. The home has wide, horizontal, wooden siding.

Apparent alterations include the replacement of or addition to small gabled roof dormers with larger shed dormers on three sides of this house and partial enclosure of a portion of the veranda with glass windows and a door at the southwest corner. In the foundation on the west side, a garage door now leads to a ground level garage and storage areas.

Additional features on this property include a redwood shed used by James Tank Porter as a studio and workshop and a very large, old, pipe organ cactus.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Economics	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Social /
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Exploration /	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics/Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)

SPECIFIC DATES:

1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT:

Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Roach-Porter House has major significance as one of the few remaining pre-1900 buildings left in La Mesa. It represents La Mesa's late 19th century citrus ranching era. The architecture of this greatly admired farm house is unique. With its wrap-around veranda, high foundation, and hip roof with flared eaves, it exhibits some French Colonial influence in its design reminiscent of homes that can be seen in Louisiana and parts of Texas. The house is also historically important because of its connection with its pioneer owner, Henry Roach, and as the home of prominent Porter family members: Dr. Henry D. Porter, a medical missionary, and his son, James Tank Porter, a noted artist and sculptor. The Porters named this house "Ping An Shan," Chinese for "Hill of Peace." Dr. Porter's brother, Edwards Porter, also lived in this house for a time. He served as La Mesa's mayor from 1920 to 1924. The Porter family contributed much to the cultural, civic, religious and artistic life of La Mesa.

On Jan. 13, 1892, Henry Roach purchased for \$1300 a ten-acre property in La Mesa Colony (Lot 79 and a portion of Lot 74). He had the house constructed on this land in 1892 or 1893. Roach might have hired John Stannard, a noted San Diego architect, to design the house. During the 1890's, Stannard designed some homes and other buildings in the East County area near La Mesa such as the Julia Liffreing House on Hillsdale Road in 1893 and school houses at Santee and Hillsdale. A January 1, 1892 *San Diego Union* newspaper article indicated that Stannard was planning a house for Henry Roach in Texas. There is a good possibility that Stannard could have planned Roach's La Mesa home as well. The estimated date for construction of this house is based in part on a statement by James Tank Porter who said he knew "the house to have been at least 12 years old" when his family purchased the property in 1905.

Henry Roach was born in London, England on Mar 12, 1845. His parents brought him to America in 1852. The family settled in Constantine, Michigan. During the Civil War, Henry joined the Union Army at Kalamazoo, Michigan on Feb. 14, 1865 at the age of 19. He served as

a private in Company E, 11th Michigan Infantry and was discharged as a sergeant on Sept. 28, 1865. He later served in the U.S. Army from 1866 to 1872.

By 1876, he had settled in Brackett, Texas and opened a mercantile business selling "a little of everything." The town of Brackett, later renamed Brackettville, was about 150 miles west of San Antonio on the well-travelled California trail. Some of Roach's best customers were the military officers and soldiers of the U.S. Army stationed at nearby Fort Clark. The 1880 federal population census showed that Roach had a wife, Susan, age 28, and two children, Sarah, age 6, and John, age 3. Henry was also listed as living in Brackettville in the 1890 Veterans Schedule and recorded in the same town on the 1900 census.

Henry's Brackettville business prospered, and partners made it possible for him to spend some summers in San Diego County, California. In January 1892, he purchased the land on which this house stands in La Mesa. He may have had the house built as a summer home or possibly as a place to live during his retirement years. A ten-acre lemon orchard was planted on the property. Henry Roach sold the house on Oct. 3, 1895 to Susan Roach for \$5500. The price indicates that a house had been constructed on the property before the time of this sale. Apparently, the new owner was his wife or ex-wife, Susan, and they might have been divorced by this time.

Around 1896, Henry married a second wife, Viola M., who was about nineteen years his junior. When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, Henry Roach, who was a patriot, went to Michigan and volunteered his services to Governor Pingree. As a result, Henry became the regimental quartermaster for the 34th Michigan Regiment. He went with this unit to Cuba and participated in the fighting there. When his unit was ordered home after the capitulation of Santiago, Henry Roach remained behind to act as adjutant general on General Lawton's staff. Unfortunately, while serving in this capacity, Henry Roach contracted malaria and became so ill he had to be taken back to Texas in December 1898.

He came to San Diego with his second wife, Viola, in April 1902 to spend his remaining days here and died three months later on July 24, 1902 at the age of 57. He was buried in the GAR section of San Diego's Mt. Hope Cemetery. His large gravestone also names his widow, Viola M. Carling, who died on Jan. 15, 1910 and was buried near him. Henry Roach died a fairly wealthy man with considerable estate in both California and Texas. His heirs included his widow, his son, John, and his daughter, Sarah (Mrs. Otis) Farnsworth. Although he was often called "Major Roach" by La Mesa citizens, it is not at all certain that he attained this rank in the United States Army.

Meanwhile, Susan Roach, who acquired the La Mesa property in 1895, apparently rented out the house and orchard. A severe drought began around 1897 and lasted until about 1905. Many of the lemon trees in the La Mesa area died. Susan F. Roach mortgaged the property for \$3500 on Sept. 13, 1899, and after she paid that back, she borrowed \$2,000 from George J. Chambers, but for some reason she failed to fulfill the terms of the contract. On March 26, 1904, Mr. Chambers sued Susan Roach, who by that time lived in San Antonio, Texas. On August 17, 1904, at the direction of the court, the house with its orchards was sold at auction on the courthouse steps to the highest bidder, George Chambers, for \$2798.

In 1904, Susan had rented the home to Dr. Henry D. Porter and his family. A year later, on Sept. 19, 1905, Susan Roach and George Chambers sold the Roach house with its citrus groves to Dr. Henry D. and Elizabeth C. Porter. Dr. Porter named the home "Ping An Shan," Chinese for "Hill of Peace," and they lived there for the rest of their lives.

Henry Porter grew up in the Green Bay area of Wisconsin and graduated from Beloit College in 1867. He received a degree in Theology from Andover Seminary and a medical degree from what is now Northwestern University in Chicago. In 1872, Henry was commissioned to go to northern China as a missionary. He remained there nearly 30 years. In 1878, he returned briefly to the United States and married Elizabeth Chapin in April 1879. Dr. Porter and his bride returned to China where they served in a village 250 miles south of Peking, establishing a hospital, evangelizing, and building up a school for boys. Henry and Elizabeth raised three sons in China: Lucius, Chappell, and James Tank Porter.

At the turn of the century, Dr. Porter, suffering from poor health, fled from China with his family and sister, Mary Porter. They returned to the United States when the Boxer Rebellion erupted. For over a year, a Chinese secret society, known by foreigners as "The Boxers," had murdered over 200 foreigners and many Chinese Christians. In 1904, the Porter family arrived in La Mesa and rented the Roach house with its ten-acre citrus grove. They purchased the home and surrounding orchards in 1905.

Dr. Porter never again resumed his missionary work due to declining health, but retained a keen interest in world affairs, church work, and the growing community of La Mesa until his death in 1916 at the age of 71. He and Elizabeth were active in the formation of La Mesa's Central Congregational Church and were among its charter members.

James Tank Porter, the son of Dr. Henry D. and Elizabeth Porter, was born in Tientsin, China on Oct. 17, 1883. He fled from China with his family and in 1899, entered Beloit College in Wisconsin. While at Beloit, a football injury developed into a bone disease which resulted in the loss of one foot. He came to La Mesa with his parents in 1904 and for the next five years was bedridden due to his injury. During this time, he experimented with designs and models for airships and was inclined to become an inventor.

In 1910, James attended Pomona College and became interested in music and art. After his graduation in 1914, he studied drawing and sculpture in New York. He attended the Beaux Arts at Columbia University in 1916 and placed second in the Prix de Rome competition. When he returned to San Diego after World War I, he met Lenore Branam and married her at North Bend, Washington on Aug. 22, 1923. After their marriage, James and Lenore made their home with his widowed mother, Elizabeth, at 4990 Porter Hill Road. In 1924, a daughter, Anne, was born to James and Lenore, and today Anne lives in the house that belonged to her grandparents and parents.

In 1926, James T. Porter was one of four San Diego sculptors who attended a class in bronze casting at the Santa Barbara School of the Arts. Later, he started a foundry near his home in La



Mesa so that he could cast his own work. He also cast work for other local sculptors. The majority of Porter's sculptures were portrait busts and figures of children. Perhaps his best-known work is the *Testimonial* for Ellen Browning Scripps given by the people of San Diego to the people of La Jolla in 1925. It consists of a figure of a girl in bronze kneeling over a small pool facing a curved limestone bench carved with dancing children in incised relief. It was San Diego's first free-standing public sculpture.

A respected member of San Diego's art community, Porter was appointed first president of the eleven member Contemporary Artists of San Diego, when it was formed in 1929. He also served as president of the San Diego Art Guild in 1932 and 1933. He was a member of the Foothills Art Association and was an authority on Chinese art, on which he lectured. James Tank Porter became a nationally recognized sculptor. His work was exhibited in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and throughout California. He won a number of awards, and was asked to be on the jury of several exhibitions. During the Depression years, Porter began to use his foundry for the manufacture of bronze sprinkler heads. He owned the Browning Manufacturing Company from 1936 to 1956, and had several patents, including one for a rotating sprinkler that watered a square lawn. For thirteen years, Porter served on the La Mesa Planning Commission and was one of the first to move his business to 8120 Center St. in the new La Mesa Industrial Center when it opened in the early 1950's.

James Tank Porter passed away on March 13, 1962, and after his death, the painter Alfred R. Mitchell, a close friend, organized a memorial exhibition at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery in the fall of 1962. The exhibit contained twenty of Porter's works in bronze, stone and plaster. After James Tank Porter's death, his wife Lenore continued to live at the Roach-Porter House. On May 22, 1977, Lenore Porter quitclaimed the home to her daughter, Anne, a trustee under a declaration of trust created on March 31, 1977. Lenore died on Aug. 1, 1980. Her daughter, Anne Porter Hall, still lives in this house

Lenore Alice Branam was born on Oct. 19, 1887 in North Bend, Washington, a tiny town near Seattle. She was the only one of her young lady friends to leave home for the big city. She went to Seattle, took a course in a business school and became the "girl Friday" for a dental supply company. She was a woman's libber of the 1900's - loving every minute of her independent life in the big and exciting city. Ever ready for adventure, she tried anything new and exciting: riding a new-fangled motorcycle, going down in a diving bell. She invariably accepted whatever seemed a worthy challenge, and even when she was well into her 70's and 80's, she outdistanced and amazed her younger companions as she climbed pyramids, scaled peaks and sailed the seas. She married James Tank Porter in 1923, and together they shared many things and traveled to many places, camping, driving, flying near and far. They had one child, a daughter, Anne. Today, descendants of James and Lenore still live at "Ping An Shan."

The Roach-Porter House is one of the most significant buildings in La Mesa because of its unique architecture and as one of the few remaining structures from the citrus ranching era. The Roach and Porter families were La Mesa pioneers and are historically important. The Porters contributed much to the cultural, civic, religious and artistic life of La Mesa.

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**9. SOURCES**

*In Memorium, Lenore Alice Branam Porter*  
*Kinney County, 125 Years of Growth 1852-1977*, Kinney County Historical Comm. 1977  
*La Mesa Historic Resources Inventory*, June 1984  
*La Mesa Scout* newspapers, various issues  
*La Mesa, the soul of a community...*, LMHS 1987  
*La Mesa Then and Now*, Gilbert  
*La Mesa Through the Years*, West, Webster, Kettler & Lockwood 2001  
*Official Souvenir, Michigan Volunteers of '98*, G.F. Sterling & Co.  
*Our 50th Anniversary 1909-1959*, Central Congregational Church, La Mesa  
*San Diego Union* newspapers, various issues  
*U.S. Army Historical Register 1789-1903*, Vol. 2

Abstract of Title - Lot 79, La Mesa Colony, Union Trust & Title  
Building Permit File - City of La Mesa  
Mt. Hope Cemetery burial records  
Mt. Hope Cemetery tombstone inscriptions  
San Diego County Recorder/Assessor Records & Maps  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, La Mesa 1929  
Social Security Death Index ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com))  
1880 Federal Population Census, Kinney County, Texas  
1890 Census, Veterans Schedule, Kinney County, Texas  
1900 Federal Population Census, Kinney County, Texas  
La Mesa Historical Society clipping files  
La Mesa Historical Society photo collection

Interviews with Anne Porter Hall  
Cover Photo by Stephanie Glazer

## HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION FORM

### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 494-820-05 & 06  
Portion Lots 74 and 79, La Mesa Colony

All of Lot 79 of La Mesa Colony, in the City of La Mesa, County of San Diego, State of California, according to Map thereof No. 346 filed in the Office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, March 8, 1887.

EXCEPTING therefrom the Easterly 405.00 feet. Said Easterly 405.00 feet being measured along the Northerly line of said Lot; the Westerly line of said land being parallel with the Easterly line of said Lot, TOGETHER WITH the Easterly 35.00 feet of Lot 74 of said La Mesa Colony.

ALSO EXCEPTING from all the above that portion lying Northerly of a line described as follows:

Commencing at the intersection of the Northerly line of said Lot 79 with the center line of Porter Hill Road as shown on Map of Porter Hill No. 2273, filed in the Office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, June 1, 1942; thence along said center line, South 00 deg. 53'00" East, 190.00 feet to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING; thence South 89 deg. 17'00" West, 185.00 feet to the Westerly line of the Easterly 35.00 feet of said Lot 74.

AND ALSO EXCEPTING therefrom that portion of said Lots 74 and 79, lying Southerly of a line described as follows:

Commencing at the intersection of the center line of said Porter Hill Road and the Northerly line of said Lot 79; thence along said center line South 00 deg. 53'00" East, 388.87 feet to the Northeast corner of the land described in deed to Wilford E. Reese, et us, recorded July 19, 1974 as File No. 74-193771; thence along the Northerly line of said land Sought 89 deg. 07'00" West, 185.00 feet to the Westerly line of the Easterly 35.00 feet of said Lot 74.

### 11. FORM PREPARED BY

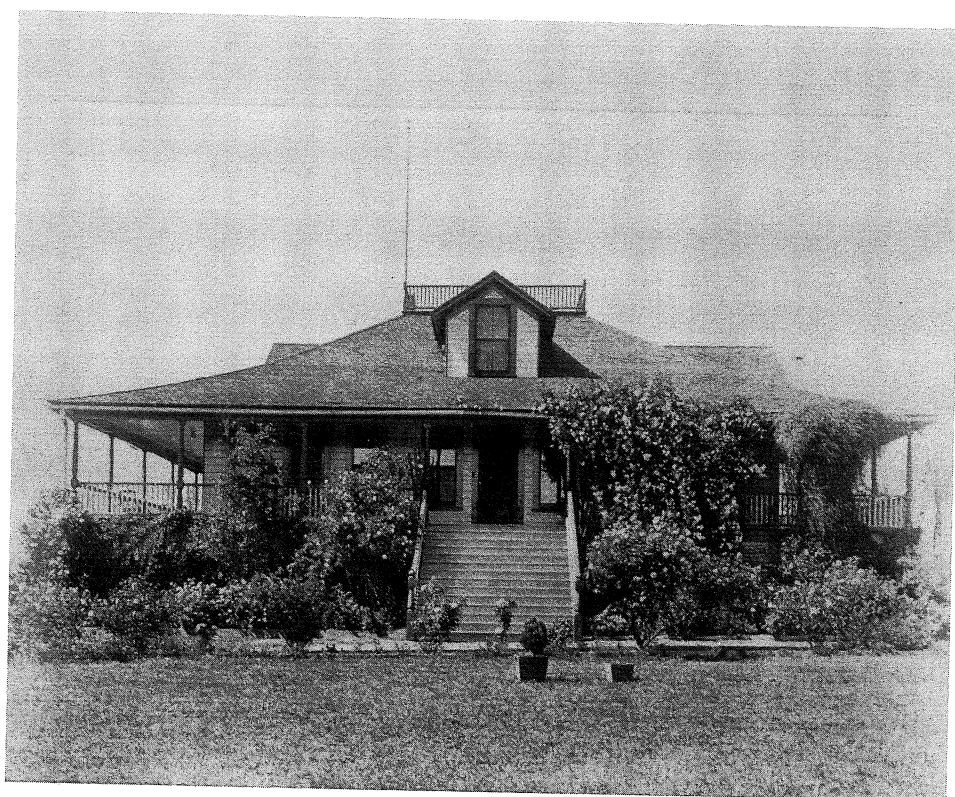
Karna Webster M.A. History  
Stephanie Glazer (Cover)

Date of Application:

May 19, 2003



Early photo of the Roach-Porter House



**ROACH/PORTER HOUSE — c. 1912**

One of the few houses remaining from La Mesa's early lemon ranching days, the Roach/Porter house was built by Major Henry Roach around 1895 at the top of a gently sloping hill. In 1904, the house with its surrounding 10 acres planted in lemon trees became the residence of Rev. Henry D. Porter, his wife, Elizabeth, and their three sons, Lucius, James Tank, and Edwards Chappell. The Porters, who had lived in China for many years where Dr. Porter served as a medical missionary, named their home "Ping An Shan," Chinese for "Hill of Peace". Following the deaths of Henry and Elizabeth, Ping An Shan remained the home of James, his wife, Lenore, and their daughter, Anne. James Tank Porter was a noted local sculptor.

---





Wall dormer over angled bay on east side.



Entrance stairs on the south side.





Very old pipe organ cactus.



James Tank Porter's redwood studio on the grounds of the Roach-Porter House.

VICTORY ROAD

494-82



S 89° 24' E  
405 FT. FR.  
NE. COR. LOT 79

PORTER

4990 Porter Hill Rd

HILL

18

DR.

17

ROACH

RD

BLVD

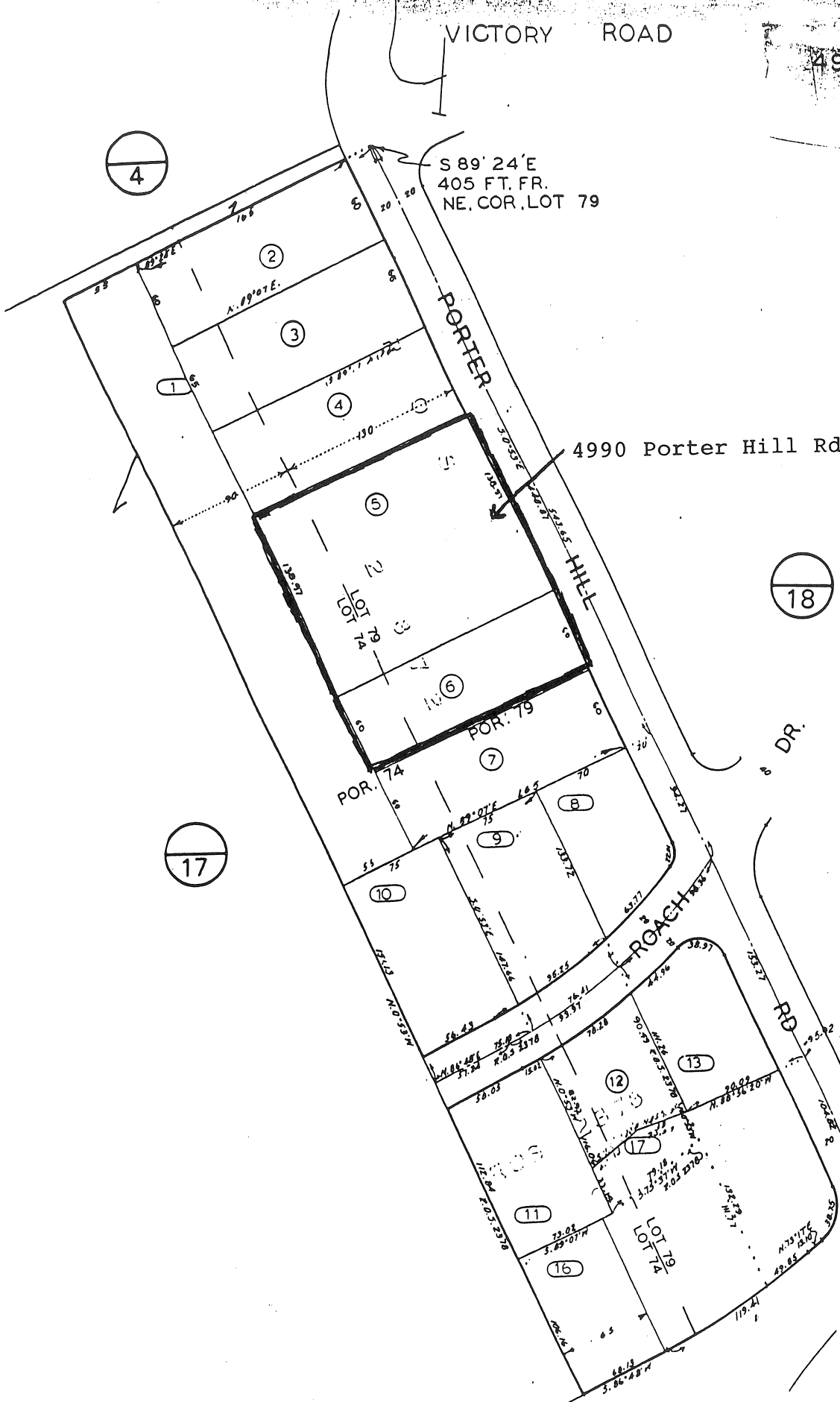
MESA

LA

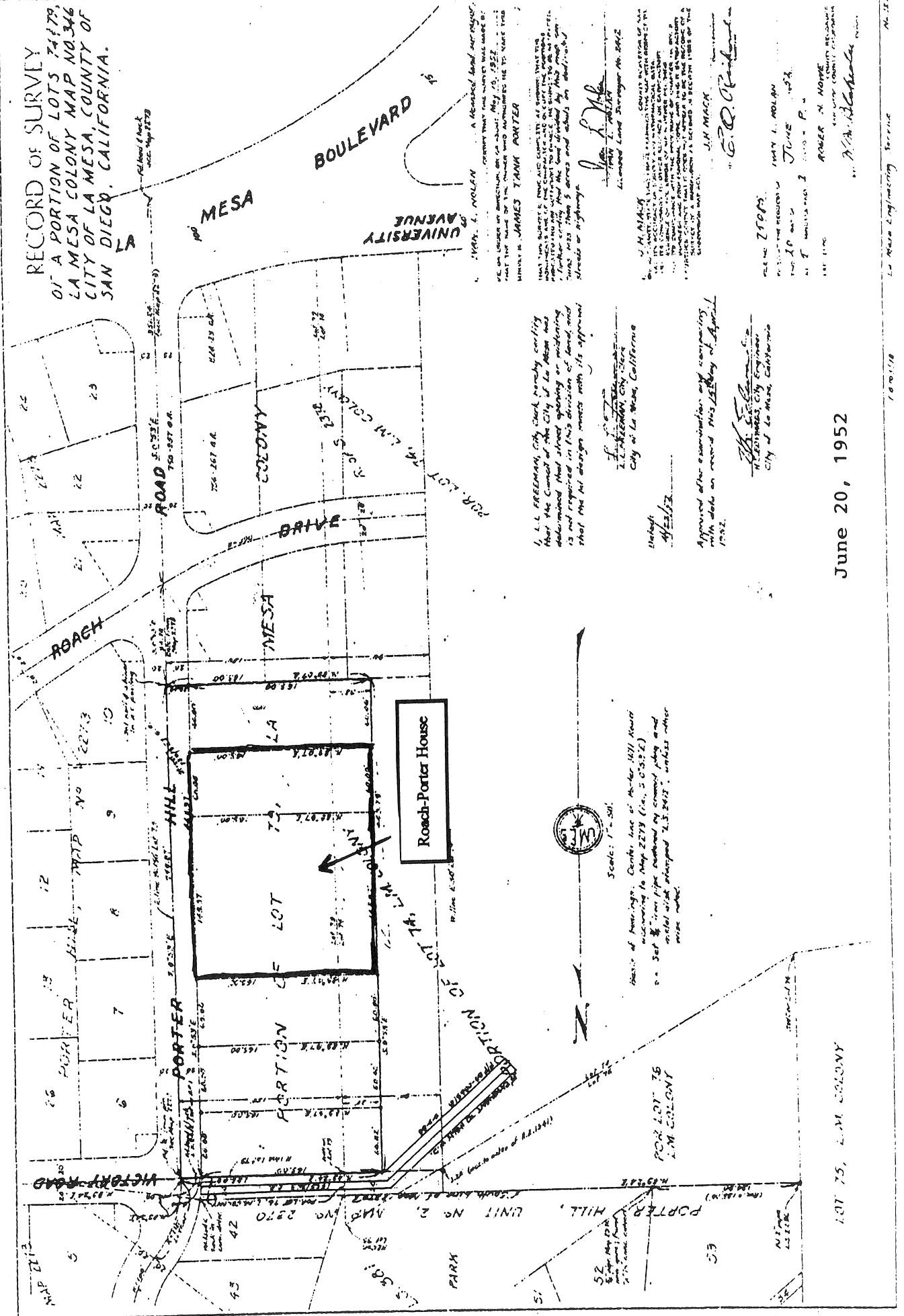
29

UNIVERSITY AVE.

MAP 346 - LA MESA COLONY  
R.O.S. 2872, 2378



RECORD OF SURVEY  
OF A PORTION OF LOTS 74179,  
LA MESA COLONY MAP NO. 346,  
CITY OF LA MESA, COUNTY OF  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.



Roach-Porter House



Scale: 1" = 50'

Notice of Postings: Center line of Hill Road, 100' wide, according to Map 2279 (S.D.S. 50521) is set 1/2" from right boundary of corner plat and is set with sharp 2.5 2012, unless otherwise noted.

LOT 75, L.M. COLONY

June 20, 1952

J. L. FREEMAN, City Clerk, County of San Diego, has determined that the City of La Mesa has determined that street opening or widening is not required in this division of land, and that the design meets with its approval.

J. L. FREEMAN, City Clerk, County of San Diego, has determined that the City of La Mesa has determined that street opening or widening is not required in this division of land, and that the design meets with its approval.

J. L. FREEMAN, City Clerk, County of San Diego, has determined that the City of La Mesa has determined that street opening or widening is not required in this division of land, and that the design meets with its approval.

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J. L. FREEMAN, City Clerk, County of San Diego, has determined that the City of La Mesa has determined that street opening or widening is not required in this division of land, and that the design meets with its approval.

RECORD OF SURVEY  
OF

A PORTION OF LOTS 7A AND 7B OF  
LA MESA COLONY, MAP NO. 336,  
IN THE CITY OF LA MESA, COUNTY  
OF SAN DIEGO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

0.2

- MONUMENT BEING SET UP BY CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP.
- MONUMENT BEING SET UP BY CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP.
- ▲ MONUMENT BEING SET UP BY CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP.
- MONUMENT BEING SET UP BY CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP.
- MONUMENT BEING SET UP BY CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP.

### BASIS OF REAKJNGS:

BASIS OF MY REPLY:  
15. A SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT CASE ON RECORD  
INDICATES THAT (A) WHILE (B) IS EXAMINING RECORDS  
ON SIVAN, HE HAS NOT YET BEEN INFORMED BY

SU2570K'S CLRT:F:CAT:

THIS MAP CORRECTLY REPRESENTS A SURVEY MADE BY ME OR  
UNDER MY DIRECTION IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS  
ON THE LAND SURVEYOR'S ACT AT THE REQUEST OF 7-1-6  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES 19-20

1/22/80  
L. F. Kelly & Sons

CITY: Y  
ENGINEER: S  
CERTIFICATE:

THIS MAP HAS BEEN EXAMINED FOR CONFORMANCE WITH THE  
REGULATIONS OF THE LAND SURVEYOR'S ACT THIS / 24  
DAY OF / 1920

CONFIDENTIAL

میں نے اپنے دل سے کہا:

RECEIVED: 1971-10-13

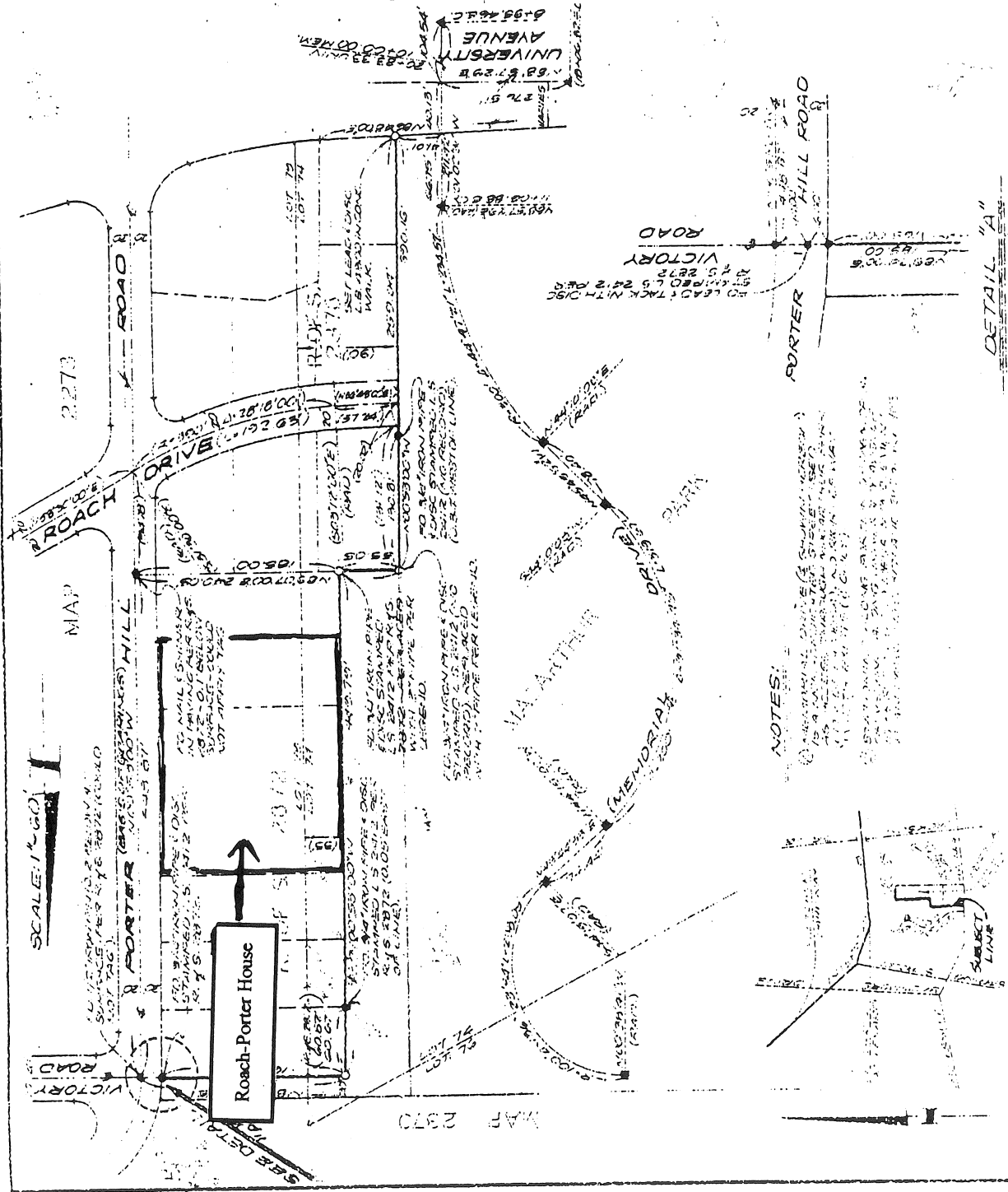
1970-1971  
1972-1973  
1974-1975  
1976-1977  
1978-1979  
1980-1981  
1982-1983  
1984-1985  
1986-1987  
1988-1989  
1990-1991  
1992-1993  
1994-1995  
1996-1997  
1998-1999  
2000-2001  
2002-2003  
2004-2005  
2006-2007  
2008-2009  
2010-2011  
2012-2013  
2014-2015  
2016-2017  
2018-2019  
2020-2021

**Figure 1**

t. Dillinger

Feb 7, 1980

1911-12-15





223

Sanborn Fire Map 1929

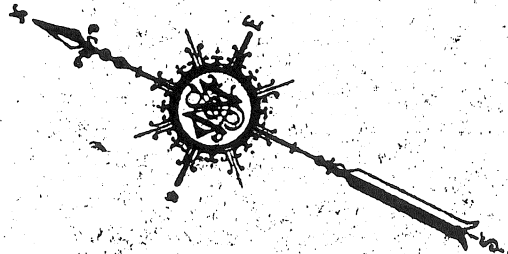
La Mesa, California

229

Roach-Porter House

222

228



E. EL CAJON AV. S.

SCHUYLER

CROWDER LANE

E. LOOKOUT

3

CYPRE

D E E D.

T. J. Douglass and Emma S. Book 194 Page 201  
Douglass, his wife and C. Q.  
Stanton, and Ida D. Stanton  
his wife. Dated January 13th 1892

-to-

Henry Roach Consideration \$1300.00

Grant situate in La Mesa Colony, in the County of  
San Diego, State of California, and described as follows:  
(with other property)  
Lot No. Seventy-nine (79) as designated on the plat  
of La Mesa Colony, as surveyed and platted by Wm. M.  
Fitzhugh, C. E. and now on file in the Recorder's Office  
in said County, containing ten (10) acres, together with  
the right to take water from the pipes or flumes of the  
San Diego Flume Company at the rate of one miner's inch  
measured under a four inch pressure for irrigation and  
domestic purposes for said Lot 79, subject to the payment  
of \$30.00 per inch per annum water rates therefor and to  
such rules and regulations as are specified in a deed  
made by said Company to J. S. Gordon, Aug. 20, 1887, and  
recorded in Book 95 page 319 of records for deeds for  
said County.

T. J. Douglass  
Emma S. Douglass  
C. Q. Stanton  
Ida D. Stanton

State of California  
County of San Diego SS

On this 13th day of January, 1892, before me,  
Thomas Higgins, a Notary Public in and for said County,  
residing therein, duly commissioned and sworn, personally  
appeared T. J. Douglass, Emma S. Douglass, (his wife) and

ROACH-PORTER HOUSE 4990 Porter Hill Road

Chain of Title

Deed Book 194 p. 201 - Jan 13, 1892

T.J. Douglass et al sell Lot 79 La Mesa Colony plus por. Lot 74 (10 acres) to Henry Roach for \$1300.

Deed Book 255 p. 425 - Oct. 3, 1895

Henry Roach sells to Susan F. Roach 10 acres for \$5500

Mortgage Book 107 p. 125 - Sept 13, 1899

Susan Roach mortgages property for \$3500  
(This mortgage paid Dec 30, 1899)

Mortgage Book 110 p. 10 - June 8, 1900

Susan Roach mortgages property (George J. Chambers) for \$2000 for one year.

Superior Court Case No. 12495 - March 26, 1904

George J. Chambers files a complaint against Susan Roach. Mortgage has not been paid.

Superior Court - Commissioners Certificate of Sale on Foreclosure - Book 4, p. 178

House sold at auction Sept 17, 1904 to George J. Chambers \$2798.10

Deed Book 360 p. 234 - Mar 19, 1905

George Chambers and Susan Roach sell house to Henry D. and Elizabeth C. Porter

Deed Book 760 p. 364 Aug 30, 1918

Henry D. Porter to Elizabeth C. Porter

Official Records 63-174208 (Release) Sept 30, 1963

Estate of James T. Porter to Lenora B. Porter includes house

Quitclaim May 22, 1977

Lenore Porter quitclaims property to daughter Anne, trustee of a Declaration of Trust dated Mar 31, 1977.

## City Directory Listings for 4990 Porter Hill Road

Note: City directory listings for La Mesa did not include street addresses for this area until about 1924. Until Porter Hill Road was completed, the house had an El Cajon Ave. address.

1897 - Mrs. Roach  
1905 - Porter, H. D.  
1906 - Porter, H. D.  
1907 - Porter, H. D.  
1908 - Porter, H. D.  
1909 - Porter, Henry D. rancher  
1910 to 1913 Porter, Rev. Henry D.  
1914 and 1915 Porter, Henry (Elizabeth) h. n.s. El Cajon av.  
1917 - Porter, Elizabeth (wid Henry D.)  
Porter, Henry D. Rev. minister  
1918 - Porter, Elizabeth (wid Henry D.)  
1920 - Porter, Elizabeth (wid Henry D.)  
Porter, Jas T.  
1924 - Porter, Elizabeth C. wid H.D. h 500 El Cajon av  
Porter, Jas T (Lenora B) sculptor h 500 El Cajon av  
1930 - Porter, Jas T. (Lenore B.) sculptor h 510 El Cajon av  
1932 - Porter, Jas T. (Lenore B) h 8370 El Cajon av  
1934 - Porter, Jas T (Elnora) h 8500 El Cajon av  
1935 - Porter, Jas T. (Lenore B) sculptor 8480 El Cajon Av  
1960 - Porter, Jas T. h 4990 Porter Hill Road  
1961-62 Porter, Jas T. h 4990 Porter Hill Road  
1963 - Porter, Jas T h 4990 Porter Hill Road  
1971 - Porter, Lenore B (wid James T) retd h 4990 Porter Hill Road  
1975 - Porter, Lenore B (wid James T) retd h 4990 Porter Hill Road

## HENRY ROACH

**from Kinney County, 1852-1977, p. 72**

"Henry Roach opened his general mercantile store in the building later known as the Blue Goose Saloon in 1876. In 1880 Brackett had a flood called the "Big Flood" - so there must have been minor floods before 1880. There was an even Bigger Flood in 1899.

After the "Big Flood" Mr. Roach moved his store into the Cornell Building, later the McCabe Drug Store (now demolished).

From there Roach moved his store into a new building across the street which now forms the western half of the Rio Grande Electric Co-Op offices. He took a partner and the firm became Roach and Mahon.

Niels Petersen became a partner when Mr. Mahan retired because of ill health and the name was changed to Roach and Company.

On June 14, 1899, came the "Bigger Flood." Water was five feet deep in the store. It had rained 18 inches in six hours during the night.

In 1903 Mr. Roach died and Mr. Petersen bought his interest."

**from Brackett News Stories December 10, 1898**

"Mr. Henry Roach who has been all through the Spanish American war from start to finish returned to Bracketville Monday. He is home sick with fever contracted while in Cuba. We are sorry that he is ill, but hope that he will soon recover."

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txkinney/brackettnews.html>



# THE DEATH OF HENRY ROACH

Closing of the Eventful Life of a  
Patriot—Had Fought Through  
Two Wars—Funeral Will  
Be Sunday After-  
noon.

Tomorrow afternoon will be held the funeral of Henry Roach, whose place among men will be missed not only in this community, but in other cities and circles in which he moved. Death came to him on Thursday after an illness which had kept him in bed for several months, and from which he was aware that he would not recover unless by almost a miracle.

Mr. Roach was born in London, England, on March 12, 1845, and was therefore a little more than 57 years of age. He came to this country with his parents while he was yet a child, and was brought up in Constantine, Mich. He reached early manhood at the time of the rebellion, and as soon as he could be accepted, threw himself into the war with the zeal of a patriot, enlisting as a private in one of the Michigan regiments, and finally receiving his discharge as a first sergeant of Company E of the Nineteenth Michigan infantry. The discharge is signed by George S. Pierce, battalion major of the U. S. A., and captain of the Nineteenth infantry, commanding Company E, and to the end he has appended the remark, "A faithful and valuable non-commissioned officer—an intelligent, honorable, high-minded man."

At the close of the war, he moved to Texas, where he began a mercantile life, and where for thirty years he was a member of the firm of Roach & Co., of Brackettsville. He was also a member of the younger firms Hobbs & Roach, at Spofford, Tex., and of Roach, McLymon & Co., of Del Rio, Tex. In all of these establishments he retained his interest to the time of his death.

For many years, he spent his summers here, and became interested as a stockholder in several banking institutions, and he was well and most favorably known to a large number of San Diego's citizens.

When the Spanish-American war broke out in 1898, Mr. Roach was attending to his business at Del Rio, Tex. He often said that he felt a personal call to take part in another war for the flag, and feeling that his services should be given to the state which appreciated them in the former war, he went to Michigan and offered them to Governor Plingree, who made him regimental quartermaster of the Thirty-fourth Michigan regiment, with which body of men he went to Cuba, reaching there just a few days before the memorable sea fight which ended in the destruction of Cervera's fleet. When the regiment had landed, he had to remain on board ship, getting off the stores and ammunition, so that he was one of the few army officers to see and participate in the memorable fight.

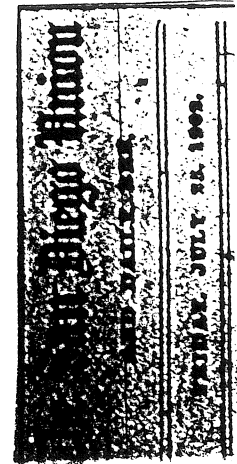
He was so close up with the fighting that when it was nearly over, and had been carried by the Brooklyn and the Oregon to the westward, he was placed in charge of the boats which were taking the men off the beached Spanish cruisers Oquendo and Maria Theresa. When that work was finished, he joined his regiment on shore, and took part in the fighting which ended in the capitulation of Santiago. The regiment was soon ordered home, but Mr. Roach was detained to act as adjutant general on Gen. Lawton's staff.

It was while he was so acting that he contracted a violent case of Cuban malarial fever, and became so ill that he had to resign his position and consent to be brought back to this country. He was at his home in Texas, when Lawton was ordered to the Philippines, and it seemed to be the trial of his life that he could not go with him. The Cuban fever had taken too strong a hold on him, and he could not go.

Some three months ago, he came to San Diego, saying that he was going to spend the remainder of his days here whether they were many or few. He was compelled to take to his bed soon after coming here, and he did not rise from it. So well did he love the old flag, that he had his good wife drape it over the head of his bed where he could see it all the time, for his was a deeply patriotic character. He had a faculty of drawing everybody to him, and he was beloved by all for the sweetness of his disposition. He felt that the end could not be avoided, but it was his saying, "To live in the hearts of those we leave behind, is not to die."

Mr. Roach leaves surviving him a widow, Mrs. Viola Roach; a daughter, Mrs. Otis Farnsworth of San Antonio, Tex.; a sister, Mrs. Sarah Timmis of White Pigeon, Mich., and a brother, Mr. John Roach of Arkansas.

The deceased was a member of the Alamo lodge No. 44, F. and A. M. of San Antonio, Tex., and of W. H. Lewis post No. 17 of Fort Clark. He often expressed the wish that when he was to be laid away, it should be done by the Grand Army, and the members will have some part in the funeral services, which will be held tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock from the under-



taking rooms of Johnson & Connel at the corner of Seventh and D streets. The interment will be at Mt. Hope cemetery.

# NEWS OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

## Viola Roach Asks Letters of Administration on Her Husband's Estate.

Will of Robert Hauser Admitted to Probate—Stipulation Filed in the Cactus Oil Company Case.

Through her attorneys, Puterbaugh & Puterbaugh and J. S. Callen, Viola M. Roach filed a petition yesterday afternoon for letters of administration on the estate of the late Henry Roach. The petition shows the following property: Undivided half interest 1,040 acres of ex-Mission lands, also 604 acres in Riverside county, valued at \$3,000; 150 shares San Diego Savings bank stock, \$15,000; 4,000 shares Grant ledge gold and copper company, valued at \$1 per share, \$4,000; life insurance policy, \$6,710; 43,240 pounds wheat, \$350; nine notes to the value about \$50,000; total value of the estate in this state, \$18,000; total value of the estate in Texas, \$60,000. The heirs are Viola Roach, the widow and petitioner; J. M. Roach, Elmer Timmls, Amy Timmls, Mrs. Mary Huff, Mabel Timmls and Sarah Farnsworth.



Edwards 1888



James 1885



Dr. Henry 1890

### The Porter Siblings

**James, the eldest, never married. He joined his brothers and sister in La Mesa in 1916. He died in 1934 at age 98.**

**Edwards, active in the business community, was the mayor of La Mesa from 1920-24.**

**Henry, a doctor, was a medical missionary in China. He settled in La Mesa in 1904. One of his three sons, James Tank Porter (pictured below) was a noted sculptor.**

**Mary, who was not married, served as a missionary in China, along with her brother, Henry. In La Mesa, she lived with her brothers, James and Edwards, in a home they called Rose Hedge.**



Mary 1885



James Tank 1928

## AMONG THE CHURCH FOUNDERS

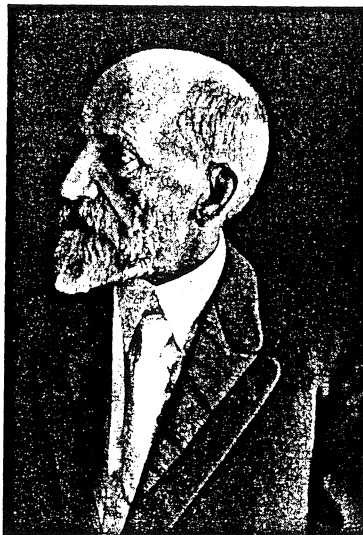


MR. and MRS. JAMES O. YOUNG were early settlers in La Mesa. They were among the people of this community who helped to found and establish Central Congregational Church.

DR. HENRY PORTER (right) Medical Missionary to China under the auspices of the American Board of Foreign Missions. He was very active in the formation of Central Congregational Church

MRS. ELIZABETH PORTER served with her husband in China for many years. She was the daughter of Dr. Chapin, former President of Beloit College, Wisconsin. She and her husband retired in La Mesa after the Boxer Rebellion in China.

MRS. GRACE YOUNG CANNON (far right) is the only living charter member of Central Congregational Church.



**PORTER**—At La Mesa, Oct. 23, 1916, Dr. Henry D. Porter, husband of Elizabeth Porter of La Mesa, father of Lucius Porter of Tung Chou, North China, James T. Porter of La Mesa, Edwards Chappell Porter of New York City, N. Y., and brother of James W., Edwards and Miss Mary Porter of La Mesa; a native of Wisconsin, aged 71 years, 2 months, 4 days.

Funeral services will be held at the Congregational church Saturday morning, Oct. 28, under the direction of E. H. Stokes, Rev. C. W. Hill officiating. A memorial service will be held at the Congregational church Sunday morning at 11 o'clock.

Henry Dwight Porter was born in Green Bay, Wis., August 19, 1845, the son of a minister, Rev. Jeremiah Porter. He was a frail child, but grew into a vigorous manhood and was able for years to endure both intellectual and physical labors quite beyond the ordinary. He was graduated from Beloit College in 1867 and in the four succeeding years took courses in theology and medicine in Andover, Mass., New York and Chicago, receiving his degree in theology from Andover Seminary and in medicine from Chicago Medical College, which is now connected with North Western University.

In 1872 he went under commission of the American Board to North China as a missionary. There for nearly thirty years he was "in labors abundant." As a single man and one of the very few medical men in that part of the country, he was called upon for service in different stations and by all sorts and conditions of men, from the wealthy Russian tea merchant to the humblest Chinese peasant.

In 1878 he returned to the United States and after a brief stay went back in 1879 to his missionary field, accompanied by Mrs. Porter, a daughter of President A. L. Chapin of Beloit College, whom he had married in April of that year. The larger part of the remainder of his service in China was in the village of Pang Chuang about 250 miles south of Peking. There he established a hospital, did continuous evangelistic work and built up a boy's school, which bears his name, as does also one of the fine new buildings of the great hospital, which has grown from the meagerly equipped institution to which he gave such devoted and skilled service. The hospital is now under the Rockefeller Foundation.

In broken health, he was called by the exigencies of the Boxer uprising in 1900 to yet more arduous and untiring labors. They proved too much for his weary frame and he returned the next year to the United States, a suffering invalid.

In 1904 he found in California a climate better suited to his needs than any which he had tried and came to La Mesa, where he spent the last eleven years of his life. Never able to resume any professional work, he had intervals of comparative comfort and was always keen in his interest in the church and community life.

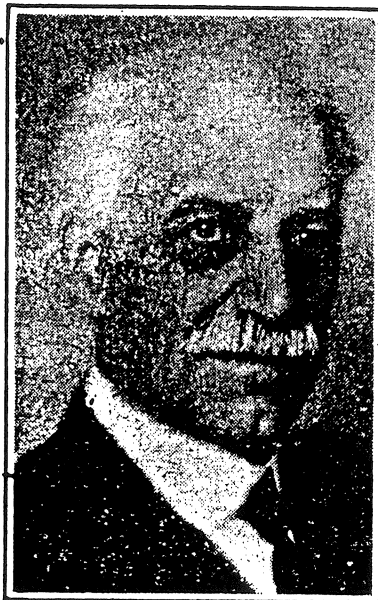
His wide range of study and thought kept him always busy with books or pen, and his warmth of heart and balance of judgment made him a greatly valued neighbor and friend.



# Tell Him Now 31

Scout Jan. 23, 1925

"—If you think some praise is due him,  
Now's the time to slip it to him,  
For he cannot read his tombstone,  
When he's dead."



Edwards W. Porter, Patriarch of La Mesa, 84 years young, as he puts it, on his birthday, next month. Few men have established a more enviable record for service to this community than has Mr. Porter—Mayor Porter, as he is still fondly termed, though relinquishing that honor a

ming of perspective, and content with the statu quo, caused no doubt by the numberless disappointments, disillusionments, failures to achieve the goal, all met with in life's journey, and which generally result in the firmer conviction that there is nothing new under the sun. But not so with Mr. Porter. He still looks to the front and has not succumbed. He is partial to youth; its aims, ambitions, fevers, and total disregard of the past fascinate him, and he still retains his youthful enthusiasms.

Consequently he is progressive in heart, always deeply interested in improvement, betterment, going ahead, and in this way has made his influence widely felt upon the community.

It was under Mr. Porter's regime as mayor that the city first undertook the reconstruction and re-habilitation of the city's sewer system, which is now about to be completed with the installation of the Collier's addition mains. He started the movement for the discontinuance of the numerous little mutual water distribution companies within the city limits and their consolidation under the city's management. He has worked hard for paving, for better equipment to carry on the city's business, for increased fire protec-

tion, for all those things which go to make La Mesa the well improved city it is today. And naturally he has been deeply interested in the water problem, and has lent all his energy and influence to the back country's cause against the encroaching claims of the big city to the west. Mr. Porter is a mighty valuable citizen, and it is with sincere pleasure that we "tell him now," that his service has been appreciated.

He came to La Mesa in November, 1904, from Detroit. His business career has been varied and covering a wide range of experience. A druggist in Chicago, railroad contractor in Michigan, Indiana, purchasing agent for the Canada Southern, now part of the Michigan Central, for five years, and manufacturer of patent brushes for six or seven years in the city of Detroit, Mr. Porter has been all through the business mill. The last 20 years of his life, here in La Mesa, have been spent in retirement.

Mr. Porter's first appearance in the public life of the community came with his appointment to the city council to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Dr. J. H. Mallery. He served that unexpired term, was re-elected, and appointed chairman of the board, which position he held four years, from 1920 to 1924. Upon his retirement from the council he was appointed city planning commissioner, which position he now

holds.

Mr. Porter has one son living, Dr. Edwards H. Porter of Tiffin, Ohio, and two grandchildren, a boy, Edwards Noble, and girl, Alice Louise, both of Tiffin.

# EDWARDS PORTER, LA MESA PIONEER, CALLED BY DEATH

Funeral services were conducted Wednesday over the remains of Edwards W. Porter, who passed away at his residence in this city Monday after an illness of ten days. Mr. Porter's death resulted from an attack of bronchial pneumonia, and his passing was a source of sorrow to the entire community.

A large number of his bereaved friends assembled at the Congregational church Wednesday at 2 o'clock to pay their last respects to the departed. Services were conducted by Rev. W. W. Scudder, assisted by Rev. Charles William Hill, and were a touching tribute to him as a man and citizen.

Mr. Porter was a native of Green Bay, Wis., and came to La Mesa 24 years ago. He was 87 years of age. He is survived by a brother, James H. Porter, and a sister, Miss Mary H. Porter, both of whom reside here, and a son, Mr. Edwards H. Porter of Tiffin, Ohio, who was present at the ceremonies, and two grandchildren.

Mr. Porter's body was cremated at Greenwood.

The following eulogy and biographical sketch was read at the funeral by Rev. W. W. Scudder.

Edwards Porter deserves the name of La Mesa's foremost citizen. He would have been the first to protest any such title—an honor usually given to men less modest than he. But his fellow-citizens will gladly accord it to him for his sterling integrity, nobility of character, unselfish service and the universal esteem in which he was held.

To know a man one must know his ancestry.

Edwards Porter sprang from one of the finest family strains in our nation. It would be difficult to match the distinguished achievements and influence of his parents in laying the foundations and shaping the structure of the religious life of our great west. They were home missionaries from New England of remarkable consecration and ability.

Jeremiah Porter, his father, organ-

## Edwards Porter Called By Death

(Continued from page 1)

ized the first church in Chicago. Eliza Porter, his mother, taught the first school in Chicago. In other sections of the west they left similar enduring monuments of their devotion to our country's highest welfare. They were foremost in organizing the great foreign missionary outreach of the churches of their day, and as a consequence the influence of that family is as great in its world-wide sweep today as it has been in our own land.

Their home was a station in the underground railroad. Throughout the Civil war Dr. Porter served as a chaplain in the army, and Mrs. Porter—a frail bundle of 100 pounds weight—is said to have closed the eyes of 1,300 soldier boys in hospital and field—besides ministering to thousands who struggled back to health—in a tireless service of mercy and relief.

In such a home Edwards Porter was born on February 23, 1841. He graduated from Beloit college in 1862, an institution in which the Porter family have large interests. During 1872-1876 he was construction agent for the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern railway, and from 1876 to 1879 was general passenger agent for the Michigan Central railroad. Then for 20 years he engaged in manufacturing in Detroit, where incidentally he supervised the erection of three churches with which he was connected.

In 1904 he came to La Mesa, bringing with him his invalid brother, Dr. Henry Porter of China, whose family still resides here. For twenty-four years he made his home in La Mesa with his older brother James and his sister Mary, one of the best known missionaries of the American Board Mission in North China.

Edwards Porter built his life into this community. With other La Mesa pioneers he saw the town incorporated, for four years served it as mayor, and was instrumental in starting the improvements and the public progress we enjoy today. He was a member of the Country club and chamber of commerce and president of the La Mesa Building and Loan association, which has had so successful a career. He undertook this latter responsibility at the age of 86, when most mortals are through active service, and was ever the kindly advisor of all who sought his counsel.

In character Mr. Porter was gentle, modest, courteous, democratic, great-hearted, and a quiet but very earnest Christian. With his brothers he helped to organize the Central Congregational church, acted as treasurer of its building committee in the erection of its new edifice, supervising with infinite pains every detail of its structure. He did not—as many public-spirited citizens do—limit his community-building efforts to material interests only. He placed the higher spiritual values first, and around those grouped all his efficient services. He was always in his place with his fellow-Christians on the Sabbath, never making business or pleasure the lame excuse for neglecting the cultivation of his spiritual life. He was a man whom everyone could trust. Those higher qualities of character that have never sprung from mere material progress, are a substantial evidence to us all of the touch of God on human life, and of the future existence into which a great soul has been ushered.

## Way Back When—

By Marie Edwards



James Tank Porter was born in China and came to La Mesa, an invalid, in November 1904. For seven years Southern California had suffered from a drought, and most of the orchards were dead, but this winter of 1904-05 the rains began again and water was once more running in the flume. With each ten acres of land, in those days, the purchaser paid \$1,000 for water rights, built the necessary flume to carry the water to his own land, and then paid \$30 per year for one inch of water, which was said to be all the water that could be used on 10 acres.

Rev. H. A. McKinney was already here at that time, and had gathered a small group together for Sunday services, which group was the nucleus of the present Methodist church, according to Mr. Porter.

In 1906, Mr. Porter came in contact with the La Mesa grammar school and found that the enrollment was the large number of 27 pupils.

Col. James F. Randlett, an Indian agent and retired army officer, was the closest neighbor of Mr. Porter, for many years living at what is now known as Rose Hedge. "He was one of the most interesting men in the community. His cook for an untold number of years was a Chinese by the name of Mok. It was Mok that set out all the trees around this beautiful home and he who planted the Cherokee rose hedge which was cut down two years ago when the boulevard was widened to 100 feet. Although the Colonel ruled every one with an iron hand," said Mr. Porter, "he was in turn ruled by Mok."

The Porter home is known as "The Hill of Peace" and was purchased from Major Roach in 1905. Mr. Porter knows the house to have been at least 12 years old at the time of purchase, but with all the years that have passed the home seems to become more beautiful and substantial.

Besides the McKinneys and Col. Randlett, there were hardly more than a half a dozen other families in the community and only a general store, packing house and post-office at the time Mr. Porter came to La Mesa. He believes that the ranches in those days were real ranches with a glamour and beauty about them and the whole country that seems to be fast becoming lost in the rush of today.

Mr. Porter is a sculptor by profession and has done some very noted works of art which have found their place in various memorials placed

about San Diego county.

His 28 years of residence in La Mesa place him among the old-timers here, although he is still young in point of years.

GREATER LA MESA NEWS

Oct. 18, 1946

## James Tank Porter Here In 1904

James Tank Porter had been living in La Mesa with his parents 2 years in 1906, living in the home he and Mrs. Porter occupy today, 5020 Porter Hill Road.

When the Porter family moved here in 1904 it was at the end of a 7-year drought and many of the lemon groves planted earlier had died for lack of water. But by 1906 new groves were being put in.

Mr. Porter remembers well La Mesa's only 2 story building of that time, a brick structure, Nebo at Lookout (La Mesa Blvd.) which housed the Post Office. Remodeled over the years to serve various tenants, the building today houses the El Cajon-La Mesa Savings and Loan Company and the Chamber of Commerce.

## James Tank Porter, Early La Mesan Dies

James Tank Porter, 78, died Tuesday at his home, 4990 Porter Hill Rd., where he lived since 1904, after coming to this country from Tientsin, China, where he was born.

Services will be at 10 a.m. today in Erickson-Anderson Mortuary with cremation following. His ashes will be buried in Glen Abbey Cemetery.

Porter, listed in Who's Who in American Art, was a retired inventor, manufacturer and nationally known sculptor. He was the inventor of irrigation sprinkler systems, and owned and operated Browning Manufacturing Co., 8120 Center St., 25 years until retiring in 1957. During the 1930's, he maintained a New York studio two years, where he did his sculpturing.

He came here with his parents, the late Dr. Henry Dwight and Elizabeth Chapin Porter, pioneer La Mesans. His father had retired as a medical missionary in China.

Porter was a member of the La Mesa Planning Commission for 13 years. He was a member of the San Diego Fine Arts Society, Foothills Art Association, San Diego Art Guild, San Diego Art Institute and San Diego Audubon Society. He was an authority on Chinese art, on which he had lectured.

He remained active in his home studio until the last few months. His last commission was a memorial plaque of Dr. James Stuart Holmes, founder of Dover-Foxcroft Academy in Maine. He also produced a bronze bas-relief

plaque of the late Dr. Clinton G. Abbott, former director of the Natural History Museum, where it is displayed.

Some of his works are in the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery's permanent collection. His sculpture also has been exhibited at Yale University; Beloit College in Wisconsin; the National Academy of Design in New York City; the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Golden Gate Exposition of 1939.

Porter was educated at Pomona College, Claremont, and the Art Students League and Beaux Arts School at Columbia University in New York City. Before coming here, he was an assistant to the late Gutzon Borglum, creator of the Mt. Rushmore memorial in the Black Hills, South Dakota. He worked in Borglum's studio at Stamford, Conn.

Surviving are his wife, Lenore; a daughter, Mrs. Anne Hall of Lemon Grove and two grandchildren.

LA MESA SCOUT

Aug. 24, 1923

### BRANAM-PORTER

Word was received this week of the marriage in North Bend, Wash., at the home of the bride's father, Mr. K. F. Branam, of Miss Lenora Alice Branam and Mr. James T. Porter, son of Mrs. E. C. Porter of La Mesa. The ceremony was performed Wednesday afternoon, August 22. Both the bride and groom have been residents of La Mesa for some time past.

Following the ceremony the couple left by automobile for a leisurely trip south to La Mesa, where they will make their home at the Ping An Shan ranch at Lookout avenue and El Cajon boulevard.

Mr. James W. Porter, Miss Mary H. and Mrs. E. C. Porter sailed from San Pedro harbor last Friday for Seattle to be in attendance at the wedding, following which they departed for Chicago via the Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad.



# History News

PUBLISHED BY THE SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Sculpture Exhibit Opens In Research Archives

A new exhibit "San Diego and the Art of Sculpture" will open in the reading room of the SDHS Research Archives on Saturday, January 2, and run through the month of March. Over twenty-five pieces, mostly from the Society's collections, will feature the creations of sculptors who worked in San Diego before 1940. Also included will be a number of photographs of sculptors and some of their larger works around the community.

Although San Diego was never known as a center for the art of sculpture, a number of prominent and talented sculptors were attracted to our city. Perhaps San Diego's best-known sculptor was Donal Hord, the only local artist to be named a full Academician of the National Academy of Design and a Fellow of the National Sculpture Society. Hord's first award winning sculpture will be shown, as well as the original plaster models for some of his more famous projects such as the *Guardian of Water* fountain and the *Angel of Peace* for the American Cemetery at Henri-Chapelle Belgium.

Other works to be seen in the exhibit include three rare plaster studies by Arthur Putnam, creator of the large bronze *Indian* and *Padre* at Presidio Park; two important bronzes by James Tank Porter as well as his small plaster study for the Ellen Scripps testimonial in La Jolla; and a selection of small bronzes by Isabelle Churchman.

One of the highlights of the exhibit

will be Marco Zim's *Portrait of My Father*. This bronze bust was awarded a silver medal at the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego in 1915. Along with the bust, the actual award medal will also be on display. Marco Zim helped Maurice Braun found the San Diego Academy of Art in 1911, and his father was one of San Diego's first rabbis. The bust and medal are on loan from the artist's grandson, Roger Zim of

Pacific Palisades.

Among the other sculptors whose work will be shown are Anna Valentien, Allen Hutchinson, Felix Peano, Celeste Bastiste, Anna Coleman Ladd, and Frederick Schweigardt. Learn a little more about San Diego's artistic heritage by visiting this exhibit at the Research Archives, open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 AM to 4 PM.



— James Tank Porter's *Ellen Scripps Testimonial* dedicated in La Jolla in 1926 was San Diego's first free-standing public sculpture. One of the small plaster studies for the piece will be included in the exhibit "San Diego and the Art of Sculpture" at the SDHS Research Archives reading room.