

Cemetery Stroll

ADA CORKHILL

My, It sure is nice to have so many visitors. My name is Ada Lovinia Corkhill and I was born on April 18, 1885, the 4th of eight born to William and Lucy Corkhill. My father, whom you met on a prior stroll, was a house painter and wallpaperer by trade. He was born in Manchester, England. He met my mother, Lucy Pearl Ashton, when he settled in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Myself, and three siblings, Lucy, Myra and Charles were born in Pittsfield. In 1887, in search for a suitable home for his brood, he took advantage of a \$1.00 railroad fare for a trip west. He ended up in South Riverside, now called Corona, liked what he saw, and sent for mother and us children. We disembarked at the old Santa Fe Station in 1888. There were very few homes, but lots of cactus, snakes and scorpions. Shortly after arriving, my brother William Junior was the first boy born in South Riverside. He was followed closely by Harold, Amy and Ruth. Amy, born in 1893, died of whooping cough before she reached her first birthday. Ruth, died from spinal meningitis at 14 and 10 months. They both lie at rest here at Sunnyslope as do my parents and brother William.

Our first home was on Ramona Street, between 7th & 8th. We attended Sunday school at the Congregational, until the Methodist church was built. The back door of the one room school building was almost at our back door. No excuses for being late for school or not coming right home.

My father took great interest in our community and when the rains came in 1891 and 1892 he was on the committee of 10 men who were to find an acceptable place for a new cemetery that wouldn't wash out. They choose the parcel of land you are now standing on and bought it for \$2,000. Plus 20 shares of water stock. The committee of 10 became the trustees of Sunnyslope Cemetery.

With a father so civic minded, how could I not be?

I attended school up to eighth grade and then found my passion as a nurse, receiving training at Arlington Hospital. I graduated in 1909 at the age of 24.

Most doctors made house calls and I was often summoned to care for patients with Typhoid, broken bones and fevers of unknown origins. Crude surgeries, and child deliveries, were sometimes performed on kitchen tables. Many died because of the unsanitary conditions.

The United States entered WWI on April 6th, 1917. I joined the Nurse Army Nurse Corps on January 10th, 1918 at the age of 33. I was sent to Camp Cody New Mexico for further training where thousands of soldiers were preparing to go to war. There were numerous accidents, injuries and sickness including the Spanish Flu. I became one of the head nurses at the Camp. It was hard work, but I was well prepared when transported to Toule, France to assist the Red Cross at their large base hospital.

When I returned home in 1919, I had several years of experience and a dream. My dream was a proper hospital for Corona. The makeshift influenza hospital set up while I was overseas was open just a few weeks during the epidemic.

The A.W. Bates house, located at 1002 Main Street in Corona, was adapted for use as such. It had two stories, and was large and centrally located. Only three rooms were completely furnished when it opened. Mrs. Walter Clayson was the first patient and their daughter was the first baby to be born in the new Corona hospital. Infor: Clayson was lawyer- firm located on 6th and Main

Shortly before the hospital opened in April of 1921, The Woman's Improvement Club members decided to give a linen shower for me. They noted that anything in the way of linen would be acceptable and will be used for hospital work, so, whether or not they match would be of little consequence.

In May of 1921, I was presented with another most practical gift. A group of dignitaries surprised me at the hospital saying that wanted to give me a token of their appreciation for my service during the war and opening up the much needed hospital. The gift was a large and comfy wicker rocking chair. I will also remember that day for another reason. It was National Hospital Day, proclaimed by President Harding in honor of Florence Nightingale's birthday.

After my mother died in 1926, I moved to Pasadena, and then Monrovia California with my father. I worked in a sanitarium and did private nursing.

I passed away on May 8, 1966 in Los Angeles at the age of 81. I am at rest in the Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California.

I enjoyed your visit and hope you did too.