

Pena descendant was active in local affairs

By Jerry Bowen

Saturday, May 17, 2008

In 1868 Juan Felipe Pena's granddaughter, Maria Delores Pena, married John Patton. John's father, Albert Lyon, first arrived in the Vacaville area in 1847 and settled north of the Pena Adobe. Lyon Road is named after the Lyon family. His son, John Patton, married Maria Delores Pena on June 2, 1868, and they had a son, John Edward Lyon, who married Josephine Hanna Murray. Ramona Urusal Lyon was born 12 May, 1904, in Vacaville to John Edward Lyon and Josephine and is the subject of today's column.

Ramona's mother, Josephine, came in the late 1870s to Vacaville with her parents, Joseph B. Murray, born in England, and Matilda Nelson Murray, of Birds Landing. Joe Murray was employed as a house painter and paperhanger until his death in 1905 in Vacaville.

Ramona spent her young childhood days in Elko, Nev., and Ogden, Utah, where her father was a signal supervisor for the Southern Pacific Railroad. When she was 7 years old, she and her siblings returned to Vacaville with her mother Josephine, and grandmother, Matilda. Her father returned to Vacaville, where he began working for the Vacaville Power and Light, and later opened the Lyon's Electrical Shop.

Ramona had a normal childhood, attending parties and, along with her brother, Leland, was part of a choir at the Elmira Cemetery for the memorial services held in 1915. In 1918 she had a part singing in a grammar school program and later was a member of the Saturday Club, a Vacaville Club.

Ramona graduated from the Vacaville Grammar School with honors. She entered Vacaville High School. She was noted as an outstanding student. In 1918 she was elected freshman vice president. Ramona was involved in publishing the Ulati School yearbook as a member of the staff in 1920. In her junior year, she was elected school officer for girl's athletics, appeared in several plays, and as a tennis player, she played doubles. In her senior year, she was part of several plays given by the high school. She graduated in on June 1, 1922.

After graduation, Ramona attended Teachers College in San Francisco from late 1922 until 1924, and, in 1925, began her teaching career at Patrick Henry School in San Francisco. She taught there for nearly 15 years until moving to San Anselmo in 1940.

Ramona met her future husband, Jack E. Dodson, while picking fruit one year in

Vacaville. Their romance blossomed and they were married in San Francisco on Dec. 18, 1930.

In the 1930 census, Ramona was listed as living with her sister Vera and husband at 1375 34th Ave., San Francisco, and was a schoolteacher. There were three children: Eugene Jeffery Dodson, Jacqueline Jean Dodson and Susan Jeanette Dodson. All three children are living in and around the Bay Area. She returned to Vacaville to attend the Vaca, Pena and Berryessa reunion in 2005 at the Pena Adobe.

Ramona died on Saturday April 26, 2008, at the age of 103 under the care of her daughter and grandchildren in Sonoma. She was buried in the family plot at Elmira Cemetery.

My thanks to Richard Lyon of Texas for the background information about Ramona's life.

Downloaded from the Solano History Database

<http://www.solanohistory.org/407>

<http://articles.solanohistory.net/407/>