



# **City of San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society P.O. Box 875, San Bernardino, CA 92402**

## **LIBRARY NEWS MAY 2011**

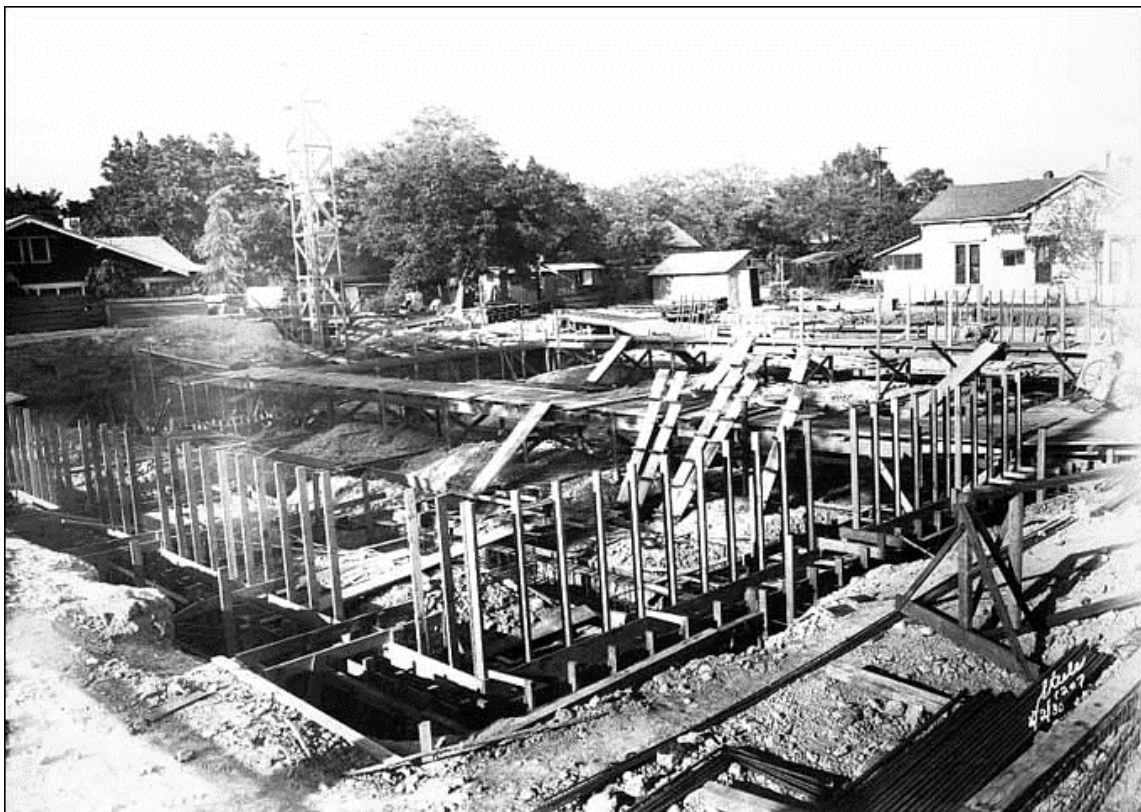
By Richard D. Thompson, Librarian

### **CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 1930 AND 1931 U. S. POST OFFICE, DOWNTOWN STATION, SAN BERNARDINO**

Recently President Steve Shaw obtained a set of 24 photographs taken during the construction of the post office at Fifth and D Streets in 1930-31. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. The architectural style is listed in the Register as "Other, Italianate, Beaux Arts." The architect was Louis A. Simon, and the builder was Robert E. McKee. Both men were leaders in their respective fields of endeavor. The photos are 6" x 8" and are of high quality, printed on thick card stock, and the back of each is stamped, "San Bernardino, Calif. P.O." Some are signed by the construction engineer, J. A. Kirk, and others have the stamp of O. A. Delapa Studios, San Bernardino. Below are five examples of the photos in the collection.



**Clearing the land. August 1, 1930.**



Foundation is laid and steel for walls is being placed. September 2, 1930.



Work begins on the second floor. November 1, 1930.  
This is the only photo in the collection that has the familiar "Steele"  
written in script (bottom right), from the studio of Walter H. Steele.



**Work nears completion. February 5, 1931.**



**Finished post office building. June 5, 1931.**



## **“IDLEWILD” AND THE PIERSON FAMILY**

The Society has been receiving a lot of requests from family members near and far seeking information about their ancestors. This is a result of posting an index to the files of genealogist Mary L. Lewis on our web site. The originals are housed in the Arda M. Haenszel room of San Bernardino’s Feldheym Public Library. Recently an inquiry was received from a descendant of Dr. John H. Pierson. Subsequent research not only found the relevant genealogical files in the Lewis collection, but also revealed that Dr. Pierson lived in a place named “Idlewild.”

It so happens that in 1989 local historian Arda Haenszel received a similar request from a Pierson descendant who lived in Canada and who was planning a trip to visit several sites in this area, including Trinity Episcopal Church in Redlands, Hillside Cemetery, and the doctor’s ranch in “Idlewild.” Arda knew of the church and the cemetery, but what of Idlewild? The spelling, unless it was incorrectly written, was an indication that it was not Idyllwild, the community located in the San Jacintos.

Arda published the results of her research in the March/April issue of the San Bernardino County *Museums Newsletter*. Ever the teacher, Arda not only tells you what she found, but also how she found it. I will not go through all of her investigations here, but suffice it to say she found that a place called Idlewild did exist: it was a commercial area at what is today the intersection of Redlands Boulevard and Mountain View Avenue. It had a general store that also housed the post office, a school and a nursery which served the horticultural area.



**Pierson home at Idlewild**

Arda discovered that Dr. Pierson was partner with his father-in-law James Grant, who was well known in the 1870s, having a staging business that operated between Los Angeles and Arizona. Dr. Pierson resided in Arizona at the time of his marriage; but was induced to move to the San Bernardino area in 1880.

Now we reap the benefits of the work done by Mary Lewis and Arda Haenszel. The data I forwarded recently to the Pierson descendant was sufficient enough that she was able to locate the Canadian Piersons, and much information was shared, including the photo of the house shown above and this excellent family photograph taken circa 1896 or 1897.



**Standing at the entrance of the Idlewild house is Dr. John Henry Pierson with wife and children.**

**Back row: Louisa Altha Grant (wife), Clarence Grant, Dr. Pierson and Mary Louise (Dolly).**

**Second row: Beatrice and Carrie**

**Front row: Ridgely John, Helen Marjorie and Frederic James**

**Saving The Past For The Future Since 1888**