

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

THE PITTENGER FAMILY

Number 925

1989

According to the 1910 Census Marion Pittenger was born in Montana, and was eleven years of age. She was born in 1899. Her mother was listed as having been born in Missouri and her father in the "United States." [These were her natural birth parents.]

She was adopted by Dr. Fred A. And Alice Butterworth Pittenger, both of whom were physicians. Mrs. Pittenger did not practice after their marriage on January 12, 1902. The Pittengers came to Boise in 1905¹ and, having no children, reportedly decided to adopt a child orphaned by the San Francisco earthquake of April 18, 1906.² Mrs. Pittenger was active in a number of civic organizations, including the founding and running of the Children's Home Finding and Aid Society. The only photograph of Marion in the Historical Society's collection is one showing her on the steps of the Children's Home, with Governor Gooding and Mayor Haines, on the first Tag Day--which was a fund raiser for the home. Volunteers sold tags on the streets of Boise to raise money for the Children's home. The society was founded in 1908 and the home opened in 1910, so the photo must date from about that time.

No school records were found indicating where Marion attended school in Boise. She is not listed in the Boise High School, St. Teresa's, or St. Margaret's graduation or classes during the years she should have been in school. The first real mention of her in the papers is the following:

Idaho Statesman, July 1, 1917, p. 6, column 3:

ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCED.

Dr. and Mrs. Pittenger announce the engagement of their daughter, Marion to Lieutenant Oscar T. Yates, U.S.A. Their marriage will probably take place before Lieutenant Yates is ordered away.

Idaho Statesman, July 15, 1917, p. 4, column 2:

YATES-PITTENGER.

Of a semi-military nature was the marriage of Miss Marion Pittenger, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. F. A. Pittenger and Lieutenant Oscar T. Yates, F. A., U.S.A., which was solemnized at the home of the bride's parents Thursday

morning at 9 o'clock by the Rev. David H. Jones of Christ Church, Episcopal. The dainty little bride wore a short frock of filmy tulle over white silk, made with ruffles and finished with a girdle of cloth of silver. Her tulle veil was fastened with a bandeau of silver ribbon and she carried a beautiful arm bouquet of bride roses. Miss Margery Yates, sister of the bridegroom, who wore a blue Georgette crepe, held the bride's bouquet. The bridegroom wore his uniform and the ceremony was performed in front of a huge garrison flag. The mountain syringa, Idaho's state flower, was used in further decorating the house. Mrs. F. L. Coats played the wedding march as the bridal party appeared in the drawing room. The bride was given away by her father. Immediately after the ceremony a wedding breakfast was served to the wedding party, which included only the immediate relatives of each family. In the center of the table, which was arranged for 18, was a crystal bowl filled with bride roses and at each end were bowls of syringas and Dorothy Perkins roses. The place cards were in the form of tiny army tents surmounted by flags, and the ices of the last course was surmounted with tiny silk flags. Lieutenant and Mrs. Yates left immediately after breakfast by auto for Guyer Springs, where they will spend their honeymoon.

The 1917 and 1918-19 City Directories list Marion Pittenger as living at home [148 E. Jefferson] as a student. The Pittenger house is first listed in the 1906-07 City Directory, so it was built soon after their coming to Boise.

In 1928, Mrs. Fred Pittenger and Marion Pittenger Yates attended a biennial convention of the General Federation of Women's Clubs which was held at San Antonio, Texas.³ The only other mention of the Yates was in the 1929 City Directory, which lists them as rooming at 148 E. Jefferson, the Pittenger home. They are not listed in subsequent city directories. Apparently around this time the Yates were divorced and she married John B. Corcoran. While they were attending the Chicago World's Fair which ran from May 27 to November 12, 1933, Corcoran developed amebic dysentery and died. It has not been determined if he died in Chicago or elsewhere.

The final chapter of the life of Marion Pittenger was on the front page of the Idaho Statesman on July 3, 1934:

**LOCAL COUPLE DIES IN WRECK
TRAGIC MOUNTAIN CRASH SNUFFS OUT LIVES OF 2 POPULAR YOUNG
BOISEANS**

Dr. W. B. Evans-Lombe, young Boise physician, and Marion Pittenger Corcoran, daughter of F. A. Piteenger [sic], plunged to their deaths when the car in which they were riding left the treacherous Lowman grade Saturday night

and hurtled 1000 feet into the rocky canyon of the south fork of the Payette river. They were on their way to visit the Charles Mack family at the Mack cabin on Five Mile creek.

The tragedy was not discovered until 1 o'clock Monday afternoon when Jim Charters, a packer for the Civilian Conservation Corps, saw the demolished auto as he rode along the edge of the embankment on horseback.

Details of the accident reaching Boise Monday night indicated the packer immediately descended into the canyon to investigate the results of the auto's wild plunge toward the river.

Girl Killed Instantly

Three hundred feet below the road Charters found the body of Mrs. Corcoran. It was believed she had been killed instantly.

At the edge of the river and a thousand feet below the highway Charters found Doctor Evans-Lombe near death but still conscious.

"Leave me," he told the packer, "Get a doctor."

Charters climbed back to the highway and hastened to the Gallagher CCC camp five miles west of the scene. There he found Dr. W. C. L. Frasier, an army physician, and a rescue party was organized.

Asked for Water

The CCC party arrived at Doctor Evans-Lombe's side about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

"Give me water," he asked, over and over again. Doctor Frasier gave the injured man water several times and the CCC workers made preparations to take him to camp.

The long and laborious climb was finally started and often the rescue party had to use ropes to make their way along the precipitous route back to the highway.

Half way up the embankment Doctor Evans-Lombe spoke feebly again.

"Give me water."

A few moment[s] later he died.

The recovery of Mrs. Corcoran's body was a still more difficult task, CCC workers said.

Never Reached Destination

Crushed by the impact of her body against rocks, she was believed to have died instantly. It was necessary to lower men over the canyon wall on 300-foot ropes to reach her body. Capt. W. S. Fowler, camp commander, directed a crew of 10 men in the rescue work.

Dr. Evans-Lombe and Mrs. Corcoran left Boise Saturday afternoon for the Mack place.⁴ They never reached their destination. Workers at the Gallagher CCC camp said the couple was seen driving up the road and past the camp late in the afternoon. They were scheduled to arrive at the

Macks' home at 7:30 p.m., but were never seen again until Monday afternoon, at least 40 hours after the accident.

What caused the accident had not been determined late Monday. The supposition was that the couple had turned out for another car as their auto wound its way upward along the rough and narrow grade, that the motor stalled and that the machine slipped backward and plunged over the embankment on the dangerous turn where traces of the tires were last seen.

Franklin Coats, who with Quinten Mack and Doctor Pittenger, drove from Boise to join the rescue party, said Monday night he planned to return to the scene of the tragedy Tuesday to investigate further the cause of the accident.

Bodies in Boise

The bodies were brought to Boise Monday night by CCC ambulances and are now at McBratney's.

Mrs. Corcoran was not believed to have lived long after the crash. Doctor Evans-Lombe, however, must have suffered for hours, since he was still conscious when found. His head was crushed, he suffered a concussion of the brain and a crushed chest. Pneumonia and exposure were believed to have been the direct cause of his death.

Doctor Evans-Lombe, 33, was born in Edna, Kansas. He came to Boise 12 years ago and soon afterward Doctor Pittenger became interested in the youth and persuaded him to take up a medical career. In 1930 Doctor Evans-Lombe was graduated from the school of medicine at Northwestern University with a magna cum laude degree.

He served a two-year internship at the University of Pennsylvania hospital in Philadelphia and had been practicing for two years in Boise as an assistant to Doctor Pittenger. Surviving the young doctor are his parents in Coffeyville, Kans., and an aunt, Mrs. A. E. Bartlett of Eagle.

Marion Pittenger Corcoran was an adopted daughter since childhood of Doctor and Mrs. Pittenger. She was educated in the Boise public schools and was the widow of Jack Corcoran of Boise and Twin Falls. Besides Doctor and Mrs. Pittenger she leaves a brother, Edwin Hinks, a newspaperman of Baltimore.⁵

Idaho Statesman, July 4, 1934, page 1:

CRASH VICTIMS' FUNERAL TODAY

Double Service Will Be Held for Dr. Evans-Lombe and Mrs. Marion Corcoran

Double funeral services will be conducted at the McBratney chapel at 11 o'clock Wednesday morning for Dr. Walter B. Evans-Lombe and Mrs. Marion Pittenger Corcoran, victims of a tragic auto accident on the Payette river road

near Lowman Saturday.

Mrs. Corcoran was dead and Doctor Evans-Lombe dying when found Monday afternoon in the canyon, where their car had plunged over a 1000-foot embankment. The young Boise couple was en route to visit Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Mack on Five Mile creek when the accident happened.

Dean Rhea to Officiate

The Very Rev. Frank A. Rhea of St. Michael's cathedral will officiate at the funeral service today. The coffins will not be opened at the service and there will be no flowers by request.

Following the service Mrs. Corcoran's body will be taken to Portland for cremation. It will be accompanied by her foster parents, Dr. and Mrs. F. A. Pittenger.

Dr. Evans-Lombe's body will be taken to his birthplace, Coffeyville, Kan. for burial later in the week. Relatives will accompany the body east. Besides Doctor and Mrs. Pittenger, Mrs. Corcoran leaves a brother, Edwin Hinks, of Baltimore, Md. Doctor Evans-Lombe's parents, in Coffeyville, Kan., and an aunt, Mrs. A. E. Bartlett, of Eagle, survive him.

Revisits Scene

Franklin I. Coats of Boise, who assisted Monday in recovering the bodies from the Payette river canyon, revisited the scene of the accident Tuesday to investigate further the cause of the car's plunge over the grade. He reported no new information and it is still believed the auto went over the precipice when it stalled after turning out for another machine.

No attempt was being made to recover the car, friends said, since it was in such an inaccessible place that recovery was believed impossible. Only parts of the machine were being salvaged.

According to Morris Hill Cemetery records, Marion Pittenger was not interred in the mausoleum until February 15, 1957, three years after her mother's death and 23 years after Marion's death.

It was rumored that her ashes were in an urn on the mantle in the Pittenger home until that time. Mrs. Pittenger died December 25, 1953.

MRS PITTENGER, CIVIC LEADER, DIES IN BOISE

Mrs. Alice Butterworth Pittenger, 84, who had been prominent in Idaho Girl Scout, women's clubs and civic activities for many years, died Friday morning in her home at 148 East Jefferson street following a long illness.

Born at Chicago, Ill., July 19, 1869, Mrs. Pittenger attended grade and high schools at Chestopia, Kan. She also attended the Boston Conservatory of Music for a year and a

half.

She was graduated from the St. Louis School of Medicine in 1884 and practiced medicine in Kansas for two years before moving to Chicago as assistant to Dr. John Streeter, a gynecologist.

She was married to Dr. F. A. Pittenger Jan. 12, 1902, at Chicago and the couple moved to Boise in 1905.

One of Mrs. Pittenger's chief interests was Girl Scout work and she presented the site at Payette Lakes where Camp Alice Pittenger is now located. She also was head of the committee that raised funds for the Boise Children's Home Finding and Aid Society and served as member of the society's board for many years.

She also served as state president of Idaho Women's clubs, state president of the Women's auxiliary of the American Legion and as a director of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and was a delegate to the World's Women's conference in Europe. For many years she was one of Idaho's outstanding horsewomen.

Services for Mrs. Pittenger are pending. Dr. Pittenger has requested that friends do not send flowers.

Idaho Statesman, December 26, 1953, p. 7, c. 1

Dr. Pittenger died February 12, 1964.

DEATH TAKES WELL-KNOWN AREA DOCTOR

Dr. Fred A. Pittenger Dies at Home at 87; Boise Medic 58 Years

Dr. Fred A. Pittenger, a well-known physician in Boise for the past 58 years, died late Thursday night at his home at 148 East Jefferson Street following an extended illness. He was 87.

Except for a five year period when he was associated with Dr. Charles Adams, a well-known Chicago surgeon, Dr. Pittenger had practiced medicine in Boise since he was licensed by the state on April 4, 1905.

He founded the Pittenger Medical Center on College Boulevard and was its senior physician until his death.

Born in Ohio

Born in Cardington, Ohio, Oct. 15, 1875,⁶ Dr. Pittenger came to Boise in 1891 after spending two years in Beaverhead County Mont.

Dr. Pittenger attended public schools in Cardington, and completed two years of pre-medical studies and two years of medical training at the State University of Iowa in Iowa City. He attended the Iowa university from 1894 to 1896.

In 1895, he entered the Chicago Homopathic Medical College, from which he received his M.D. degree in 1899. Following his graduation, he interned for two years at the Chicago Homeopathic [sic] Hospital.

After his internship he became an assistant to Dr. Adams at Cook County Hospital and held this position until April of 1905. While he was working with Dr. Adams, Dr. Pittenger was attending Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago. He completed his courses there and graduated with the class of 1904.

Married in 1902

He married Alice Butterworth, also a Chicago physician, on Jan. 12, 1902. They had one child, Mrs. Marion Cochran [sic] of Boise, now deceased. Mrs. Pittenger also preceded him in death.

In 1912, Dr. Pittenger became a captain in the Idaho National Guard's Medical Corps. He served as surgeon general of Idaho in 1913.

Dr. Pittenger went on active duty with the guard in 1916. Serving first along the Mexican border in 1916 and 1917 and later during World War I. At the time of the armistice, he was a major in the Army Medical Corps and was stationed at Fort Riley, Kan., as commander of an Army sanitary train.

Soldiers' Home Surgeon

He served as surgeon to the Idaho State Soldiers' Home for 32 years and as Boise city physician for a period of 12 years.

The Pittenger Medical Center, which he founded, is one of the Gem State's largest clinics. It was located first at 500 Eastman Street, but now is situated at 2121 College Boulevard.

Dr. Pittenger was a member of the Ada County Medical Society, an honorary member and past-president of the Idaho Medical Association and was a member of the American Medical Association and the American College of Physicians and Surgeons.

He served on the State Medical Examining Board for five years and was elected chairman in 1926.

Masonic Member

He was a member of the Masonic Lodge, having taken the commandery degrees in both the York Rite and Scottish Rite bodies. He also was a member of the Mystic Shrine and the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks.

In addition to these, he held memberships in the Hillcrest Country Club, the Boise Commercial Club and the University Club. He was also a member of the Association of Military Surgeons in the United States.

He was widely traveled and found time to raise livestock and take an active interest in sports.

Services will be announced by Summers Chapel.

Idaho Statesman, February 14, 1964, p. 16, c. 5

The Pittenger house was moved to a site near Caldwell on

November 6, 1964. The redwood tree, reportedly planted by Dr. Pittenger many years before, became a Christmas tree, decorated by St. Luke's Hospital for several years.⁷

By Marjorie J. Williams

FOOTNOTES

¹Dr. Pittenger had lived in Boise for a few years prior to that time. He is listed among the members of a Boise Fire Department Rescue unit of 1894.

²The Red Cross found homes for children orphaned by the earthquake. The Earth Shook: The Sky Burned, by William Bronson (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1959), 127. No record of an actual "orphan train" has been found.

³Golden Idaho, June-July, 1928, p. 20.

⁴The Mack cabin was 12 miles above Lowman at Five Mile Creek. It was later sold to Bishop Spofford of the Episcopal church.

⁵There was an Edwin S. Hinks who was Dean of St. Michael's Cathedral from April of 1903, when Dean Charles E. Deuel resigned, until 1908 when Rev. Hinks and family moved to Warrenton, Virginia. Possibly the Hinks adopted Marion's blood brother.

⁶Dr. Pittenger's mother, Margaret C. Pittenger, married Dr. Harlan P. Ustick, also a prominent Boise area physician for many years.

⁷See Statesman article of February 25, 1976, p. 3, c. 1.