

Ida Porter (1863 - 1947)

Ida Porter was born on September 19, 1863, in Normal, Illinois. She was the daughter of Solomon and Amanda (Shueey) Porter. Solomon was born on December 25, 1828, in Ohio, and his family moved to Ohio as pioneers in 1806. Amanda was born in Ohio too, on October 20, 1839. After getting married, Solomon and Amanda moved to LaSalle County, Illinois, in 1857, and then to Normal, Illinois, in 1858. There, Solomon bought a large farm of 378 acres and became a successful farmer.

Ida had six siblings, but only four lived to become adults: Walter, Weldon, Bessie, and William. After Solomon passed away, Amanda and her three sons moved to Franklin County, Iowa. Amanda died on October 2, 1910, and was buried in Bloomington, Illinois.

Ida was very well-educated. In 1889, at 26 years old, she traveled by ship to Paris, France, to study. She sailed on the Red Star Line, which was only for people who could afford to travel in the ship's cabins. While in Paris, Ida studied at the Academy of Music and learned singing, dance, piano, French, and public speaking under famous Italian teachers.

After finishing her studies, Ida returned to the United States on May 10, 1890. She performed many concerts across the country in cities like Bloomington, Peoria, and Omaha. She was known for her powerful voice, singing in English, German, French, and Italian, and she was praised by many newspapers for her singing ability. One review described her voice as "full, rich, round, and sweet." Her brother Walter, an attorney, managed her singing career.

Around 1893, Ida began teaching voice lessons and became the manager of the Bloomington Conservatory of Music. She taught singing and voice techniques, and a 45-minute lesson with her cost \$12.45, which would be about \$254 in 2005.

In the later years of her life, Ida moved to Monona County, Iowa, where her brothers lived. She died on August 17, 1947, at 84 years old, in Onawa, Iowa. She was buried in Bloomington, Illinois, at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery with the rest of her family.