

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on April 12, 2000 honoring

Richard & Nellie McCarty Gird

Richard Gird - Chino's founding father, sought out Chino Valley to establish and agricultural and commercial center for Southern California. Adventurer, mining engineer, railroad builder, assayer and entrepreneur, this one time New York farm boy purchased the former Rancho Santa Ana del Chino land grant from the heirs of Isaac Williams, son-in-law of the original grantee, Antonio Maria Lugo.

With a fortune gained from his share of the Tombstone silver mine in Arizona, Mr. Gird created a ranch for himself, subdivided the valley into small farms, and laid out the town of Chino to be the service center. He provided a central park, opera house and school and helped establish the business community.

Interested in the scientific raising of crops and livestock, he developed a sugar beet industry which encouraged the Oxnard Brothers to establish a beet sugar factory here with his help.

Mr. Gird worked with the University of California at Berkeley to establish an agricultural experiment station, and on his home ranch south of town raised fine horses and cattle. He envisioned a railroad network reaching the tidewater and to San Diego, and built a narrow gauge system to connect with the main line in Ontario.

He was politically active at both county and state levels. In the 1890's, during a downturn in the economy, he found that his personal wealth could not sustain his goal for the Chino township, but Chino continued on as an enduring community which was destined to fulfill his dreams.

Nellie McCarty Gird was well known as her husband's partner, hostess and helpmate in the task of beautifying the home ranch and the town of Chino. Her chief role in the development of the community was as patron of the schools and students.

She personally directed the work of laying out and planning the park and the school yard with the skill of an artist, and a comprehensive knowledge of floriculture.

Always interested in children, she provided medallions in each class for students attaining scholastic and citizenship honors. She further provided athletic equipment, musical instruments, magazine subscriptions and an encyclopedia set for the school.

Ms. Gird held the first ranch school at her home, then served a Clerk of the Board of Trustees of the new Chino School District. She cut the ceremonial ribbon opening day of the Sugar Beet Factory, spoke out on the Prohibition Platform, and had a bell cast in San Francisco for the steeple of the Swedish Baptist Church, even though she was a devout Catholic.

This charming and energetic woman transformed the Gird home into a social center, visited by dignitaries of the day, including Collis P. Huntington and Leland Stanford. However, it was her school picnics, Christmas parties, and the hours spent with Chino children that brought her the most satisfaction.