

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on May 17, 2022 honoring

Brenton K. Galbreath

Brenton K. "B.K." Galbreath, foremost merchant, builder and civic leader, played an important role in the early development of Chino.

He was born on April 3, 1852, near Salem, Ohio. He married Miss Martha Van Sync on September 30, 1873. They had four children - Sons: Leslie Albert, Enoch Russell, and Omar E. (Omar died at the age of 11); and Daughter: Ida Mae.

Mr. Galbreath spent his early life as a millwright before coming to California. B.K. Galbreath came to Chino in 1894, after operating a bakery business in Pomona for a short time. He entered into the general merchandise business when he purchased a retail shop from Constable W. J. Tebo, located on D Street. In 1907, as business continued to prosper, B.K. and his sons built a concrete building on the corner of 6th and D Streets using cement bricks he made himself. For years, B.K. Galbreath & Sons general merchandise store was the largest in town and he continued as a prominent merchant until his retirement in 1918, when he and his sons sold the building.

B.K. Galbreath and his wife, Martha, were active in the community. B.K. was at the forefront of incorporating the City of Chino. In 1905, he was elected as chairman of an organization to incorporate. Mrs. Galbreath was elected as the first local president of the W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union). As an early service project to keep alcohol out of town, the W.C.T.U. built a drinking fountain on the corner of 6th and D Streets, next to the Galbreath store. In 1895, B.K. was part of a group of businessmen who organized the volunteer Fire Company #1. He became the first president and two years later was treasurer. In 1937, he was on the Chino Valley Pioneers Association committee.

In 1913, he built a ten-room family residence on Central Avenue with the same cement bricks he manufactured for his store. It was known as the largest and finest in town. In his retirement, he built an apiary in his attic to collect bees for their honey, and was known as the Keeper of Bees. He also collected rocks and cacti. His cactus garden was one of the most noted in the southland and was visited from all over.

Mr. Galbreath was one of the first merchants to have electricity and installed an electric coffee mill. He hauled materials with his delivery truck to help build the Hoover Dam. In 1902, he developed an apparatus for saving fine gold.

Brenton K. Galbreath died at his residence in Chino on October 28, 1940.