

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on March 17, 2015 honoring

Fenton Mercer Slaughter

Fenton Mercer Slaughter, who purchased 320 acres of the Yorba lands in south Chino Valley and Rincon, was the dominate pioneer landowner in the Chino Valley area. His Buena Vista Ranch and its headquarters, now the restored Yorba-Slaughter Adobe Museum, is a part of the present City of Chino. Mr. Slaughter was the son of a colonial-Virginia family originally from England. He was born in West Virginia in 1826. His adventurous biography is typical of the 19th Century western movement.

When he was nine, his father died and the family moved to Missouri. He served as an engineer on the river steamers and joined the U.S. Calvary at the beginning of the Mexican War, serving mainly in Indian country suppressing outbreaks. He was captured by Indians, but escaped back to American soil.

In 1850, he headed to the California gold fields. After a year, he helped organize a relief wagon train for migrants suffering in the desert crossing. He served with the Department of Indian Affairs, was a blacksmith by trade, raised sheep for wool, mined in the San Gabriel Canyon, and married into the Spanish Alvarado family.

In 1868, he bought a thousand acres in the Chino Valley from Raymundo Yorba and gradually tripled its size, calling it Buena Vista Ranch. In 1885, he sold two thirds of the property to Richard Gird, including the site of the present Los Serranos Golf Course. He raised sheep that included pure-bred Merinos imported from France, Red Durham cattle from England, and registered race horses. He also had a winery and produced raisins.

Mr. Slaughter was a State Legislator and County Supervisor. He served as a school trustee, and a member of the Masonic Lodge, California Pioneer Association, and Rincon Grange.

He and his wife, Maria Dolores Alvarado y Avila had ten children. He died May 29, 1887, at his ranch home at the age of 71. His daughter, Julia, restored the old family home and converted it into a museum. The Yorba-Slaughter Adobe is California Landmark #191.