

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on May 5, 2009 honoring

Isaac Williams

Isaac Williams, the man who originally put the name Chino on the map was an American adventurer turned Mexican-California landowner. A product of a Pennsylvania farm, born September 19, 1799, Mr. Williams came west with a team of trappers and settled in Los Angeles, where he married one of the daughters of one of the area's foremost dons, Antonio Maria Lugo, grant owner of vast lands including Rancho Santa Ana del Chino.

Through his marriage to young Maria de Jesus Lugo, "Don Julian" as he was known, became half owner of the 56,000-acre Chino Ranch, and prominent cattle baron. He played a major role in helping immigrants from the east continue their trek to the gold fields and other parts of California, offering them rest, supplies and even horses to the gold seekers, and sending out rescue searches for others. The record book of overland visitors kept at the Chino ranch now can be found at the Huntington Library, a lasting tribute to Colonel Williams' humanitarianism.

He became involved in the first California "battle" of the war with Mexico. Unfortunately, because of his part in the Chino ranch house skirmish which pitted him against his Mexican in-laws who were resisting American encroachment, he antagonized some of the other Americans who felt betrayal and had his honors withdrawn by a subsequent California state legislature. The slight was corrected 92 years later.

After helping with the establishment of San Bernardino County, he died in 1856, leaving his share of the ranch to his daughters. In 1891, the ranch was sold to Richard Gird, who established the town of Chino.

The story of Isaac Williams remains an important part of the history of Southern California, and its transition from Mexico to the United States.