

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on April 5, 2011 honoring

Theodore F. White

Theodore F. White, the second San Bernardino County Supervisor to come from the Chino Valley (1899-1903), was an expert on road building; and as County Road Supervisor, he helped lay down the first oil treated roadways in the area, even before the automobile was a popular mode of transportation. He invented the oiling machinery and was known statewide as the “father of oiled roads,” having been the first to successfully apply oil to the dirt highways and byways of the era.

Mr. White came to the Chino Township in 1891 and became Superintendent of the Chino Land and Water Company. He later managed the L. W. Blinn Lumber Company, which provided much of the building materials for the new town.

Mr. White was born on a farm in Morristown, Pennsylvania in 1844. After attending public schools, Mr. White became a mining engineer. He graduated from the Polytechnic College of Pennsylvania in 1862. During the Civil War, he served in the State Militia.

Following the Civil War, Mr. White went to Nevada where he worked for three years as the superintendent of a mine, after which he worked for the Memphis & El Paso Railroad, and then came to California for the purpose of assisting in the building of the road to San Diego. Upon completion of that project, he became Chief Clerk and Draftsman in the Arizona Surveyor General’s Office, then President of an Arizona Cattle Company.

Mr. White and Miss Annie Maxwell, daughter of a San Francisco merchant, were married in 1876 in San Diego. They had four children.

As a resident of Chino, Mr. White served on the school board before being elected to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. He was reputed to be a man of great public spirit, intensely interested in programs that were beneficial to the public. He was active in the Baptist and Christian churches, a member of the Masonic Lodge, and served on the first Chino Incorporation Committee in 1897.

Following his term of office as San Bernardino Supervisor, Mr. White was a road construction contractor which took him around the State for about twelve years. During this time, he moved to Hollywood. On January 27, 1914, while inspecting flood damage to a road he was building in Colton, he slipped and fell into the rain-swollen Lytle Creek and drowned. As printed in the Chino Champion at the time, “All Chino people who knew Mr. White feel a keen personal loss for he was the kind of man, father, and citizen that makes for the betterment of the world.”