

## HISTORY OF TEMPLE CITY

Behind the story of the proud family bearing the name of Temple, lies the romance of missions and ranchos, the gallantry of the pioneering dons and beautiful señoritas, and the history of the San Gabriel Valley including the derivation of many of the street names in Temple City.

William Workman was an Englishman by birth. In 1823, he met John Rowland at Taos, New Mexico, and accepted him as a partner. Both Workman and Rowland married Spanish women. During the revolution in Texas, they were forced to flee with their families in fear of their lives.

They had heard of a fair land in the west and traveled to see it. They followed the old Chihuahua trail through Silver City, Yuma, and Palm Springs, west of the area now known as the Salton Sea to Indio and through the Cajon Pass. The journey covered 1,200 miles. The party that arrived in California consisted of 40 persons, including riders at the head, scouts, and roustabouts with pack animals, herds of cattle, and covered wagons.

After leading his friends to the beautiful San Gabriel Valley, Rowland and his friend Benito Wilson petitioned the Spanish government at Monterey for some of the San Gabriel Valley Mission lands. Rowland and Workman were granted the "La Puente" site of 48,000 acres, where they built ranchos and settled down. They paid a sum of gold and promised to care for the Indians already living on the land, in accordance with an agreement made with the San Gabriel Mission priests and the governor.

William Workman became acquainted with Pliny Fisk Temple, who married Workman's daughter. Pliny had been baptized in the Catholic faith at the San Gabriel Mission shortly prior to accepting the Christian name of Francisco P.F. Temple.

Temple was the son of Pliny Fisk Temple of Massachusetts. Pliny's eldest brother, Jonathan, or Don Juan as he became known in Alta, California, was the first merchant of the Pueblo de Los Angeles in an adobe building at the intersection of what is now Spring and Main Streets. They later built the first important buildings there, including a market, a theater, and a courthouse. In 1841, at the age of 17, Pliny Fisk Temple joined his brother at the Pueblo de Los Angeles.

That same year, the Workman-Rowland party arrived in Los Angeles from Santa Fe, New Mexico, which was then part of Old Mexico. The party was the first immigrant caravan to travel the trade route to Southern California. Trade caravans, which ran from Santa Fe to Los Angeles and back in the early 1830's were the only overland connection Los Angeles had with the East. The Workman-Rowland expedition brought rugs, blankets, and other native goods from Santa Fe. Workman and Rowland did not make the trip for commercial reasons, however, they intended to settle in the San Gabriel Valley with their families.

In 1850, "Templito," or "Little Temple" as Pliny had been nicknamed by the natives because of his five feet, four inch height, was granted the Las Merced Rancho 12 miles east of Los Angeles where he made his home. He planted a vineyard of 30,000 vines, 30 acres of fruit trees, and a beautiful garden. This was near the site of the original San Gabriel Mission founded by the Franciscan Fathers next to the rich bottom lands of the San Gabriel Rivers called "Rio de los Temblores", or "River of the Earthquakes."

During the years at La Merced, 11 children were born to Pliny and his wife; the 10th child was

Walter P. Temple. In 1903, Walter Temple married Laurenza Gonzalez, a member of an early Spanish-California family, who, it has been said, was related to half the residents of San Gabriel. Some years later, Temple purchased 400 acres of land four miles east of San Gabriel which had been part of Lucky Baldwin's vast Rancho Santa Anita.

Envisioning a community where people of medium income could afford to live and own their homes, he divided the area into lots and laid out the park facing Las Tunas Drive. He named other streets after those close and dear to the family, such as Workman, Kauffman, Temple and Agnes. Bond issues initiated by Temple were responsible for street paving and electrification.

He also petitioned the Pacific Electric Railway Company to extend its Los Angeles to Alhambra line to a depot adjacent to Temple City Park. Residents and merchants attributed the steady growth of Temple City to the extensions of the railway to the community.

In 1936, the town officially was designated Temple City, but remained a City in name only until after the post-World War II population explosion and incorporation of the community on May 25, 1960.