

ROBERT S. CARLISLE

By John C. Funk



LITTLE of the early life or ancestry of Robert S. Carlisle has been preserved. He was a Southern man by birth and sentiment and a native of Kentucky. He was born about 1830 and was well educated, energetic, instinctively a good businessman and conducted his business and personal life wisely. He was of fine appearance, genial disposition, was widely known and socially popular. He had resided in San Jose for some time before coming to Southern California in about 1856 or 57.

When Colonel Isaac Williams died in 1856, the bulk of his estate was left to his two daughters, Maria Merced, who later married John Rains and lived on the Cucamonga Rancho, and Francesca. Their mother was a daughter of Don Antonio Maria Lugo and sister of Jose Maria Lugo, Jose Del Carmen Lugo and Vincente Lugo who, between them, owned the large San Bernardino Grant. Robert Carlisle

and Francesca Williams were married on May 13, 1857. He was twenty-seven and she was sixteen. Following a year or so of residence in Los Angeles, Robert and Francesca returned to the 35,000 acre "Santa Ana Rancho Del Chino," which Robert managed with great efficiency, the work being done by about one hundred Indians who had comfortable adobe quarters near the main ranch adobe. Due to his popularity and business acumen, Robert Carlisle won the first Supervisorial District nomination and election in 1862 and served on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors from November 17, 1862, until November 21, 1864, succeeding Richard Varley and being succeeded by Henry Suverkrup. Mr. Carlisle was elected Chairman of the Board on November 21, 1862, and held that position during his two year term of office.

Mr. Carlisle became deeply involved in the settlement of the estate of his brother-in-law, John Rains, who was foully murdered in 1862 largely due to his secessionistic sympathies and affiliations. Robert Carlisle, exercising his sister-in-law's power of attorney in an estate settlement matter became bitterly involved in a dispute between the King brothers of Los Angeles and was himself shot to death on July 6, 1865. Mrs. Francesca Carlisle later married the wealthy Dr. F. A. McDougal of Los Angeles and, following his death, a Mr. Jesurum. She was a lady of considerable wealth, social prominence and ostentatious charity. Robert and Francesca Carlisle had four children; Laura, Mary E., William J., and Eugene A. Carlisle.

It is of interest to note that it was the offer by Colonel Isaac Williams in 1847 of the sale of his large Chino Rancho to the Mormons for \$150,000 which brought them here in 1851. When Colonel Williams would not agree to the terms of payment proposed by the Mormon leaders, Lyman and Rich, the offer was withdrawn and the Mormons purchased the present City of San Bernardino, then comprising some 77,000 acres of undeveloped land, from the Lugo brothers, brothers-in-law of Colonel Williams. Following the Colonel's death in 1856, his vast Chino Rancho estate fell into the capable, but short-lived, hands of his sons-in-law, John Rains and Robert Carlisle.

