



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

SUPERVISOR FRANCES PLINY FISK TEMPLE

Term: 1852
District: Not Applicable
Date of Birth: Feb. 12, 1822
Death: April 27, 1880

Francis Pliny Fisk Temple served as county supervisor for one term. He was elected in 1852.

Temple was born in Reading, Mass., on Feb. 12, 1822, where he grew up and attended public schools with an emphasis in business.

In 1841, when he was 19, Temple moved to Los Angeles to join his brother, who had established himself as the one of the leading merchants of goods in the area. California was part of Mexico at the time, and Temple had to assimilate into the society by learning the language and becoming Catholic. For the next four years, Temple learned the family business and became a part of the Mexican culture.

On Sept. 30, 1845, Temple's priorities changed when he married the daughter of William Workman, one of the early pioneers of Los Angeles. Temple became involved with real estate, beginning with the purchase of the La Merced Rancho, consisting of more than 2,300 acres. He began breeding and selling cattle, and made a fortune doing so.

Temple's success in business did not go unnoticed in the political circles. In 1850 he was elected to be the Los Angeles city treasurer, followed by a seat on the County Board of Supervisors.

After leaving public office, Temple continued buying property, and became one of the richest landowners in California. He was half owner of Rancho Tejon, which covered more than 66 miles; and was part or whole owner of other ranch lands throughout Southern California, covering almost 500,000 acres. He also owned numerous lots and acre properties scattered all the way from Los Angeles to the ocean.

In 1868 Temple entered the banking business with his father-in-law and another early pioneer, Isaiah W. Hellman. Three years later Hellman dropped out of the business, but the partnership between Temple and Workman continued.

In 1871 the Bank of Temple and Workman opened its doors in downtown Los Angeles in an area that became known as the Temple Block, and the street bordering their business would later be named in Temple's honor.

In 1875 the Bank went bankrupt due to mismanagement. Both men lost everything. Temple never recovered from the financial disaster, and Workman committed suicide a year later.

On April 27, 1880, Temple died. He was 58, and was survived by his wife, Antonia, and seven

children: Thomas, William, John, Lucinda, Maggie, Walter and Charles.

Sources: Los Angeles County Records; From the Mountains to the Sea; History of Los Angeles County; Sixty Years in Southern California.