

Carbon Canyon and Rancho Santa Ana del Chino: Edwin T. Earl

Yet another consummate and highly connected businessman invested in the Chino Land and Water Company when it was purchased in 1905 by Edwin J. Marshall and associated was Edwin Tobias Earl. The only California native of the company's principals, Earl was born in Antelope near Red Bluff in the northern part of the state in May 1858. His father Josiah was another of the Argonauts who came to seek their fortunes in the 1849 Gold Rush, traveling from Indiana to New Orleans and then to the coast. Rather than dig for gold, he became a freight hauler and spent a couple of years in Los Angeles and then was in Stockton and in Sonoma County. Josiah married Adelia Chaffee, a native of Sandusky, Ohio who came overland to California in 1852 and whose brother was briefly a business partner of Josiah,

Josiah, who considered himself a physician by avocation, went to the Red Bluff area to farm, specializing in fruit orchards and ran a lumber business. Two sons were born to the family, Edwin and Guy, the latter becoming a successful San Francisco attorney. In the 1860s, the family moved to the silver mining boom town of Virginia City, Nevada and then to Independence, the seat of the small eastern California county of Inyo, where fruit farming and mining (more silver was found at nearby Cerro Gordo) continued to be the occupation of the Earls.

In 1872, after a massive earthquake rocked Independence and destroyed the family home and most of their possessions, the Earls relocated to Oakland with Josiah reestablishing himself as a merchant and his sons having better access to education. At age 18, however, Edwin went into the shipping of fruit to the eastern United States and quickly became a success and something of a prodigy. He started by shipping deciduous fruits from Lodi in central California to the east and specialized in this during the decade from 1876 to 1886. He then became one of the earliest forwarding merchants to send oranges from southern California on the newly completed direct transcontinental railroad (the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe route, specifically), with the first shipment leaving from the orange boomtown of Riverside in early 1886. The following year, he created the Earl Fruit Company to manage the handling of oranges for transport. Meantime, his father sought a business enterprise in Australia but died shortly after arrival there in 1884. Adelia Chaffee Earl died eight years later.

There was, however, an important inhibitor to the success of orange exports long distance: the tendency of the fruit to either freeze with existing ventilated boxcars or to be lacking in ventilation in all-refrigerated cars. Earl's solution, developed in 1890, when he was but 32 years old, was the C.F.X. ventilator-refrigerator car, used by the Continental Fruit Express company, which Earl formed to handle fruit shipments by the specific car he developed (rather than through his existing fruit company, which he intended to manage the ventilator-refrigerator car business.) After a decade, Earl was bought out by Chicago's mighty food-producing giant, Armour and Company, for some \$2.5 million.



Edwin Tobias Earl (1858-1919) was an investor in the Chino Land and Water Company from 1905.

Earl almost immediately took some of his fortune and bought the *Los Angeles Express*, a newspaper of about thirty years' operation in the city, and he joined the ranks of powerful publishers in Los Angeles like Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler of the *Times* and William Randolph Hearst of the *Examiner* (later the *Herald-Examiner*.)

Married to Emily Jarvis in 1884 with the couple having four children, Earl was a long-time resident of Wilshire Boulevard in the exclusive neighborhoods of west Los Angeles (his home was an early meeting place for the California Art Club, a noted arts organization started in the late 1920s). He also bought a large ranch in today's La Cañada Flintridge that he called *Alta Canyonada*. This was later subdivided by Earl's son, Jarvis, who, in 1927, built a home intended as a model for the upscale residences he intended to bring to the community and which still stands today.

He was also an investor, along with such notables as Harrison Gray Otis of the *Times*, Moses Sherman (Sherman Oaks developer), Leslie Brand (Title Guaranty and Trust Company executive and Glendale's Brand Library namesake), and railroad magnate Henry E. Huntington, in the San Fernando Mission Land Company, incorporated in 1905 (the year of the Chino ranch purchase) and which benefitted by the completion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct eight years later. It was widely claimed that, because Sherman was a member of the Los Angeles Board of Water Commissioners, there was inside information he passed on to his associates so they could buy the land cheap before word of the aqueduct project became public and sell dear for a \$5 million profit.

Earl, who considered himself a progressive Republican who was a major presence in Los Angeles politics, died in his Los Angeles home on 2 January 1919, at age 60. His brother's son, Guy, Jr., took over ownership of the *Los Angeles Express* newspaper and also was owner of the early area radio station, KNX, still operating as an AM news station nearly 90 years later. Guy Earl, Jr. sold the *Express* to William Randolph Hearst and the radio station to the Columbia Broadcasting System (it remains a CBS affiliate).