

# Founding of the Free Library in Merced

## Merced Ladies Library Club



**N**elson Lowell Adams Cody is credited with starting one of the first public libraries in Merced. Born in Waukegan, Ill., on March 22, 1848, Cody came to California with his family in 1852. After operating pharmacies in different cities, he decided to come to Merced in March 1891. He purchased George Knox's drugstore business located at the corner of 17th and Canal Streets. This business became known as "Cody's Corner Drug Store." This is where his wife, Anna Marie Nelson Cody, started a social library.

**M**erced Ladies Library Club (also known as Merced Book Club) was founded by Nelson Lowell Adams Cody (pictured left) and his wife, Anna Marie Nelson Cody, in January 1901. It was located in the balcony of Cody's Corner Drug Store (pictured below). Mrs. Cody was the librarian. Two other founding club members were Mrs. Lillian Brouse and Mrs. O. A. Baker.

Annual membership of \$1.50 was collected to buy books and for use of the library. It was open Monday through Saturday from 7:30am to 9:00pm. Rent was free. By 1909, they had over 500 volumes of books. These books would ultimately be given to the Merced Public Library when it was established.

