



# County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

## SUPERVISOR FELIX BACHMAN

Term: 1857  
District: Not Applicable  
Date of Birth: Not Available  
Death: Not Available

Felix Bachman was elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 1857. During that time the County of Los Angeles was not divided into supervisorial districts. He came to Los Angeles in 1853 where he resided at what was called Bell's Row "Dwelling-housing numbered in the order of visitation, 93rd Unit." Bell's Row was also known at one time as Mellus Row when Alexander Bell sold the property to Francis Mellus (supervisor 1858). Bachman was one of the first eight Jewish residents of Los Angeles, having been enumerated in the federal census conducted in January 1851. He and the other Jewish residents were merchants that occupied stores in Bell's Row, which was located at Aliso and Los Angeles streets. The location was one of the best areas suited for a business because customers arriving from inland ranchos, San Bernardino and San Gabriel areas had to approach Los Angeles via Aliso Street.

Bachman owned one of the largest stores in Los Angeles. His business venture consisted of general merchandise, part of which involved regular wagon train shipments to Salt Lake City. He played an instrumental role in opening trade between Los Angeles and Salt Lake. Bachman secured much trade with Salt Lake and in 1861 he opposed high freight rates. The Jewish people were well-known for their charitable giving and generosity. The independent Jewish businessmen were expected to provide social leadership to the community. Their prominence in the 19th Century was a contribution to all social contexts, such as fraternal life, politics, trade associations, and cultural activities.

At various times, Bachman partnered with Philip Sichel (supervisor in 1864 and Los Angeles city councilman in 1862). In 1857 he partnered with a group of Germans living in San Francisco and purchased 1,200 acres of waste, sand land which started the town of Anaheim (a name composed of the Spanish Ana from Santa Ana, and the German Heim, for home). In this partnership, Bachman served in the capacity of a sub-treasurer. The purchase of Anaheim represented the first settlement in that area.

In 1859 Bachman served on a committee with other townsmen in one of the first efforts toward the formation of a public library. One of the immediate and most important acquisitions was the collection of books that had been assembled by Henry Mellus (mayor, City of Los Angeles). However, because the effort did not receive sufficient monetary support from the public, it had to be abandoned.

In 1864 Bachman, along with his business partners Samuel Laubheim and Ben Schloss, sold their business. The closure was caused by a number of bad years. The firm was compelled to accept large parcels of real estate in exchange for payment on accounts receivable, causing the company to sacrifice its holdings and sell them for what was considered at that time ridiculous low prices.

After selling the business contents, Bachman moved to San Francisco. Although a very well-off individual at that time, he died a poor man in San Francisco at the age of nearly 100.

Sources:

Newmark, Harris, *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853-1913*. *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly*.