



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

SUPERVISOR PETER JAMES WILSON

Term: 1900 - 1908
District: Fourth
Date of Birth: Jan. 26, 1859
Death: May 13, 1931

Peter James Wilson served as county supervisor for two terms. He was elected in November 1900 and re-elected again in 1904.

Wilson was born Jan. 26, 1859, in Caledonia, Wis., where he grew up and attended public schools. After graduating from high school, he helped his father in the management of the family farm.

In 1884, when he was 25, Wilson moved to Los Angeles and took a job as a foreman of a food and supply warehouse. For the next six years he learned the trading and mercantile business.

In 1890 Wilson opened his own general merchandise business at the corner of Vermont and McClintock streets, the first store of its kind in the neighborhood. As the town began to grow, so did his business. With the addition of his brothers, Wilson founded the Wilson Brothers Grocery Company.

Wilson was a staunch Republican, and he became involved in civic affairs. For many years he was a leading figure in developing the southwestern part of Los Angeles. He also played a key role in the building of an eight-room public school house. In 1900 he was elected to the county supervisorial seat for the Fourth District.

Among his more notable achievements during his two terms was the implementation of oil sprinkling the roads to keep the dust down during busy traffic periods. The device was invented by Wilson and J. W. Earle, and worked like a water sprinkler.

In 1908, after leaving public service, Wilson went back into his grocery and merchandising business. In 1927 he was appointed fire commissioner, a position he held until his death.

On May 13, 1931, Wilson died. He was 72, and was survived by his wife, Carrie, and two daughters: Hazel and Juanita.

Source: Historical and Biographical Record of Southern California; Los Angeles Times, May 14, 1931.