



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors



SUPERVISOR ASA ELLIS

Term: 1864 - 1866
District: Not Applicable
Date of Birth: July 6, 1817
Death: Aug. 20, 1890

Asa Ellis served one term as county supervisor. He was elected in 1864.

Born in St. Louis, Mo., on July 6, 1817, he was the son of Benjamin Ellis, a lumberman. Young Ellis followed in his father's footsteps, learning the lumber trade and becoming a successful businessman.

Ellis became involved in politics and served as sheriff and assessor. In 1849 he was appointed regent of the University of Missouri and served until he left for California in 1852. For the next nine years he resumed his career as a lumberjack in Central California, and later in the redwoods of Santa Cruz County.

In 1861 ill health brought him to Los Angeles County. He bought land near El Monte and established himself as a rancher. In 1864 he was elected county supervisor and served until 1866. In 1867 he was elected a state assemblyman. He also served two later terms, 1871-72 and 1877-78.

In the Legislature he pushed to protect agricultural land from the cattle ranchers. Up until then, it was a long established custom of allowing cattle to roam freely over the plains, thereby damaging the land. Ellis spearheaded a bill on Feb. 14, 1872, protecting farmers and their land. This bill helped change the growth of Los Angeles County from a grazing pasture to an agricultural and horticultural focus.

Honors included membership in the Lexington Masonic Lodge and the San Gabriel Valley Farmers' Club.

In 1883 he became county tax collector and in 1885 President Cleveland appointed him collector of Internal Revenue in San Francisco. Upon his retirement, Ellis moved to Fresno, where he devoted his efforts to developing irrigation systems and horticulture on a large scale.

He died Aug. 20, 1890. He was survived by a daughter, Victoria Ellis; a son, Frank Ellis; and two grandsons.

Sources: Historical Record and Souvenir