



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

SUPERVISOR CRISTOBAL AGUILAR

Term: 1854 -1856
District:
Date of Birth: 1825
Death: April 11, 1886

Cristobal Aguilar assumed office as county supervisor in 1854 and was re-elected again in 1855 and 1856.

He was born in Los Angeles in 1825 to Don Jose and Dona Maria Aguilar. His father was a farmer and was among the wealthiest men in the village.

The family lived in an adobe house which faced what is now north Main Street. This old adobe was a prominent landmark, once serving as the town 'calabozo' or jail, and then as the town's first hospital in 1858.

At the age of 25, Aguilar married Dolores y Orba, who was 16 at the time.

The first city election under American rule was held July 1, 1850, when the Mexican 'ayuniamiento' system of town government was replaced by the U.S. mayor and council. Aguilar was elected a member of the first city council for a one-year term.

In the 22 years following this he was active politically in municipal and county affairs. He served as councilman at four different times, as mayor twice and was elected county supervisor three terms.

Aguilar was a Democrat and a Roman Catholic. The first census of the pueblo of Los Angeles, taken in 1850 when Aguilar joined the first elected council, numbered 1,610 people (excluding Indians).

During Aguilar's administrations, the park site was created which later became Pershing Square (1866 ordinance); the first agricultural fair was held at Exposition Park; the first city directory was printed (1872); the first steam fire engine was commissioned by the fire department; the Spanish-language newspaper La Cronica began; a woolen mill opened in the city, as well as the first town bank; an ice factory began selling ice at 4 cents a pound; the Merced Theatre opened (1871); and a race riot broke out in October 1871 where at least 22 Chinese were lynched and no one arrested for the crimes. A council ordinance banned the carrying of firearms, knives, and swords, but nobody obeyed it.

One issue that Aguilar faced and could not readily solve during his years in leadership was the town's water supply problem. Mayor Aguilar vetoed a scheme for city purchase of a private water works. Records show that during both of his mayoral terms the populace was distressed by either flood or drought, and that some sort of adequate water system for the city was the acute

recurring never-ending discussion before the council. At the time Aguilar also served as 'zanjero', or water chief. That office was considered more important than that of mayor; it paid more salary than that of the chief executive.

Aguilar died of a heart attack on April 11, 1886, at the age of 61.

SOURCES: California Biography File , Los Angeles Public Library; J. M. Guin, History of California and Extended History of Its Southern Coast Counties (Los Angeles , 1907), vol. L; Los Angeles Times, April 13, 1886 (obituary); John Waugh , "Los Angeles Mayors, The Great, Near-Great , Un-Great, " Los Angeles Times West Magazine, May 25, 1969.