



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

SUPERVISOR ANTONIO F. CORONEL

Term:	1860
District:	Not Applicable
Date of Birth:	Oct. 21, 1817
Death:	April 17, 1894

Antonio Franco Coronel served one term as county supervisor. He was elected to office in 1860.

Born Oct. 21, 1817, in Mexico City, Coronel was the son of Ignacio and Francisca Romero de Coronel, the third oldest of 11 children. In 1837 his father moved the family to Los Angeles, where he struggled for several years to make a living but finally became a schoolteacher and minor civic official.

Coronel followed in his father's footsteps and became involved in politics, holding several seats in many local offices. In 1846, when U.S. troops invaded California, he attempted to reach Mexican Army officers in Sonora to seek assistance, only to turn back when he encountered American troops. In 1848 he went north and became a successful gold miner, but in the following years threats of violence against non-Americans soured him on gold mining. He returned to Los Angeles, where he owned and managed several orchards and vineyards.

When an American government was being organized in Los Angeles, Coronel found an opportunity to transition back into local politics. In April 1850, the first Los Angeles County election was held. Coronel was elected county assessor, and three months later was elected city assessor. In 1853 he was elected mayor of Los Angeles, the first and only Hispanic to hold that title until Antonio Villaraigosa was elected in 2005. Coronel's major achievement during his one-year term as mayor was council suspension of payments to private schools and establishment of a board of education to provide for the construction of a public schoolhouse and to obtain money from the state school fund.

In 1854 Coronel was elected to the City Council and served nine terms between 1854 and 1867. During those years he was also twice appointed to the board of education, and in 1860 was elected to the county Board of Supervisors. During this time he became a leading member of the Democratic County Central Committee. By 1867 he had become one of the leading Hispanics in the Democratic Party and was nominated for state treasurer. Although he won that office, his unfamiliarity with English limited his political future in the increasingly Anglo-dominated South.

He served briefly on the Water Commission in 1870 but mostly confined himself to managing his property in Los Angeles, with several intensive agricultural operations near downtown.

In 1873 Coronel married Mariana Williamson. He was 56 and she was 22. The couple remained socially prominent and never had children. Historians say for the thoroughly Americanized city of the late nineteenth century, the Coronels symbolized the romantic aspects of Southern California in the years of the Mexican dons.

Coronel's credits included being a member of the State Horticultural Society, president of the Spanish American Benevolent Society of Los Angeles, and founding member of the Historical Society of Southern California.

On April 17, 1894, Coronel died at age 76.

SOURCES: Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, 39 vols., *History of California* (San Francisco, 1884-90), vols. 18-24; H. D. Barrows, "Antonio F. Coronel," *Historical Society of Southern California* 5 (1900); Antonio F. Coronel, "Cosas de California," Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California; Richard Morefield, "The Mexican Adaptation in American California, 1846-1875" (M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1955)., R. David Weber