



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors



SUPERVISOR THOMAS EDWARD ROWAN

Term: 1887 - 1890
District: Third
Date of Birth: March 1, 1842
Death: March 25, 1901

Thomas Edward Rowan served as county supervisor for one term. He was elected in November 1886 and assumed office on Jan. 3, 1887.

Rowan was born March 1, 1842 in Elmira, N.Y., where he grew up and attended public schools.

In 1862, at age 20, he moved to San Francisco, got married, and two years later relocated to Los Angeles, where he entered into the bakery business with his father. Their store was located at the corner of First and Main streets, and was the first American bakery in town.

Rowan delivered bread for a short time but soon abandoned that for a career in politics. He held numerous public positions, including under-sheriff, county treasurer (1869-70), county supervisor, and mayor for one term (1892-1894). Rowan was a professional politician at a time when that was still rare.

Rowan faced many obstacles during his reign as mayor. In 1893 the Depression hit, and he pushed for public relief programs, including a public works program wherein the unemployed worked for \$1 per day on roads and parks. He was also active in trying to promote business growth.

Rowan's credits included membership in the Masonic Temple; founding member of the Los Angeles Social Club, one of the first such clubs in the city; and founding member of the "38's" - the city's first volunteer fire department.

On March 25, 1901, Rowan died. He was 59, and was survived by his wife, Josephine, and three children: Thomas, Josephine, and V. J.

Source: Biographical Dictionary of American Mayors, 1820-1980; Los Angeles Times, March 25, 1901.