

1889 – 2009
HAPPY 120TH BIRTHDAY
ORANGE COUNTY



**Presented by Assistant Archivist Chris Jepsen
to the Orange County Board of Supervisors
August 4, 2009**

The Orange County Archives
www.OCArchives.com

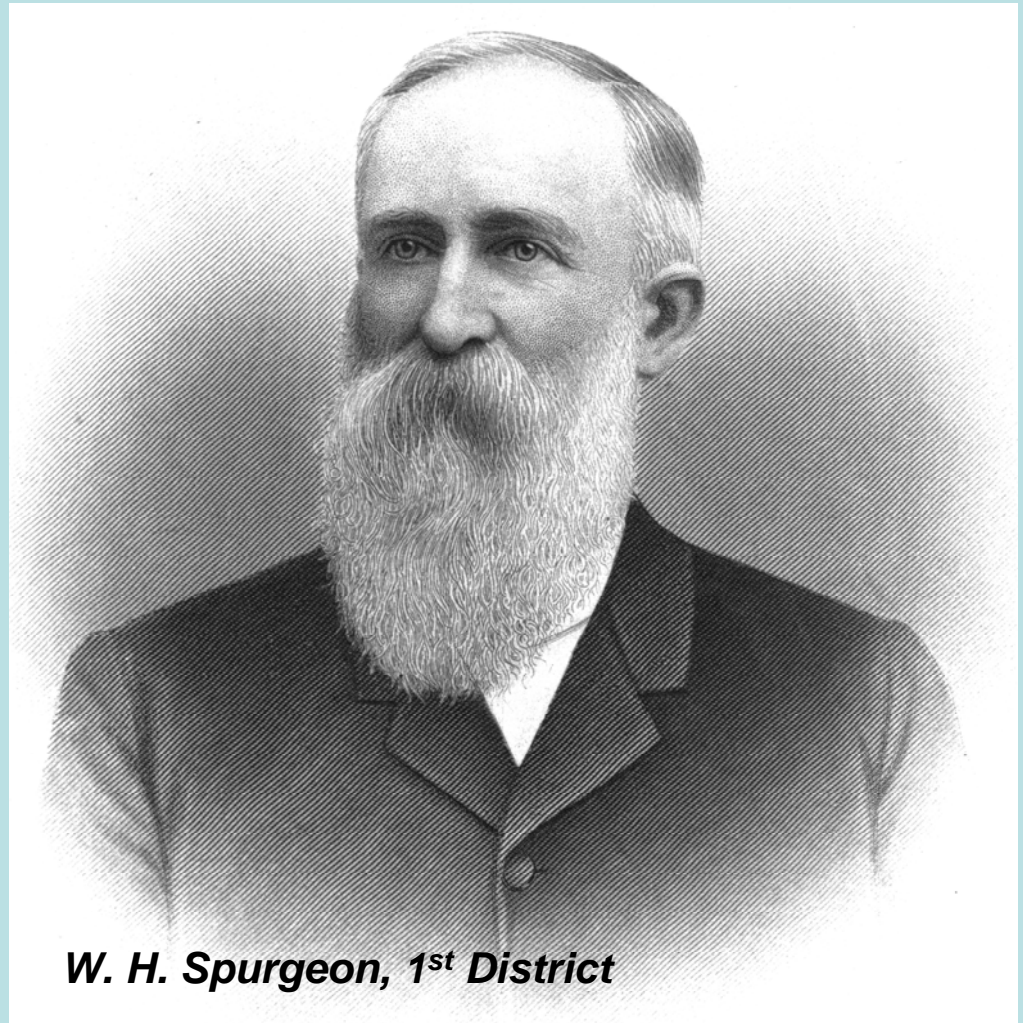
120 years ago, on August 1, 1889, Orange County officially separated from Los Angeles County.

On August 5, our first Board of Supervisors meeting was held in a room above the Beatty Bros. Store at the corner of 4th St. and Sycamore St. in Santa Ana. The weather was tropical, and the five men sweltered in their wool suits.



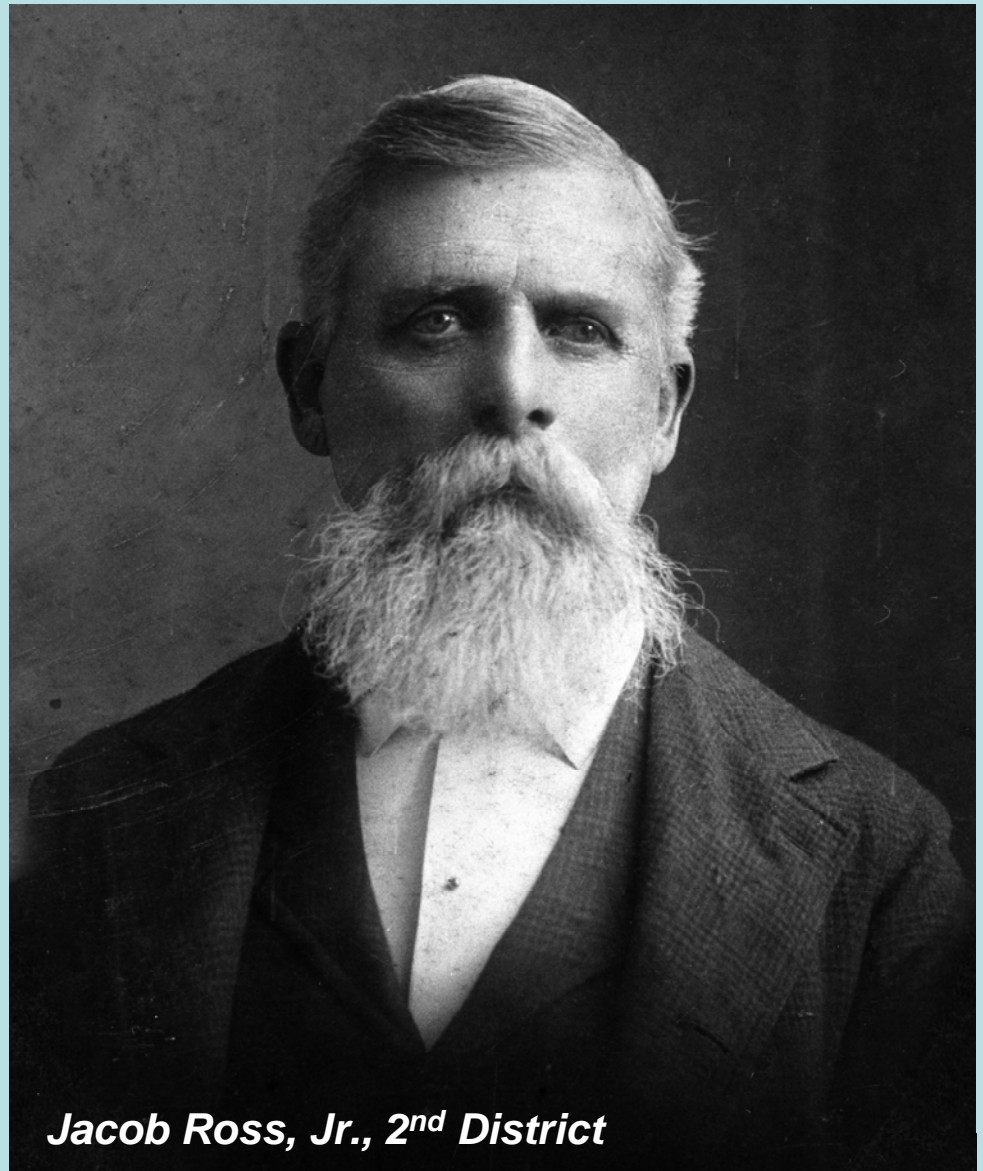
Fourth Street, Santa Ana, circa 1889

The legislation that created Orange County also dictated that the First District Supervisor would serve as Chairman. That made William H. Spurgeon the first Chairman of the Board. He had already served as the first Mayor of Santa Ana, an Assemblyman, and a Los Angeles County Supervisor. Spurgeon, a Democrat, founded Santa Ana, owned its first general store, was its first postmaster, and was something of a one-man chamber of commerce.



W. H. Spurgeon, 1st District

The Second District Supervisor, Democrat Jacob Ross, had been Santa Ana's Justice of the Peace and an L.A. County Supervisor. Only marginally literate, he owned the *Santa Ana Herald*, and its sister newspaper, the *Santa Ana Times*. He owned a good deal of land in Santa Ana, inherited from his father, pioneer Jacob Ross, Sr.

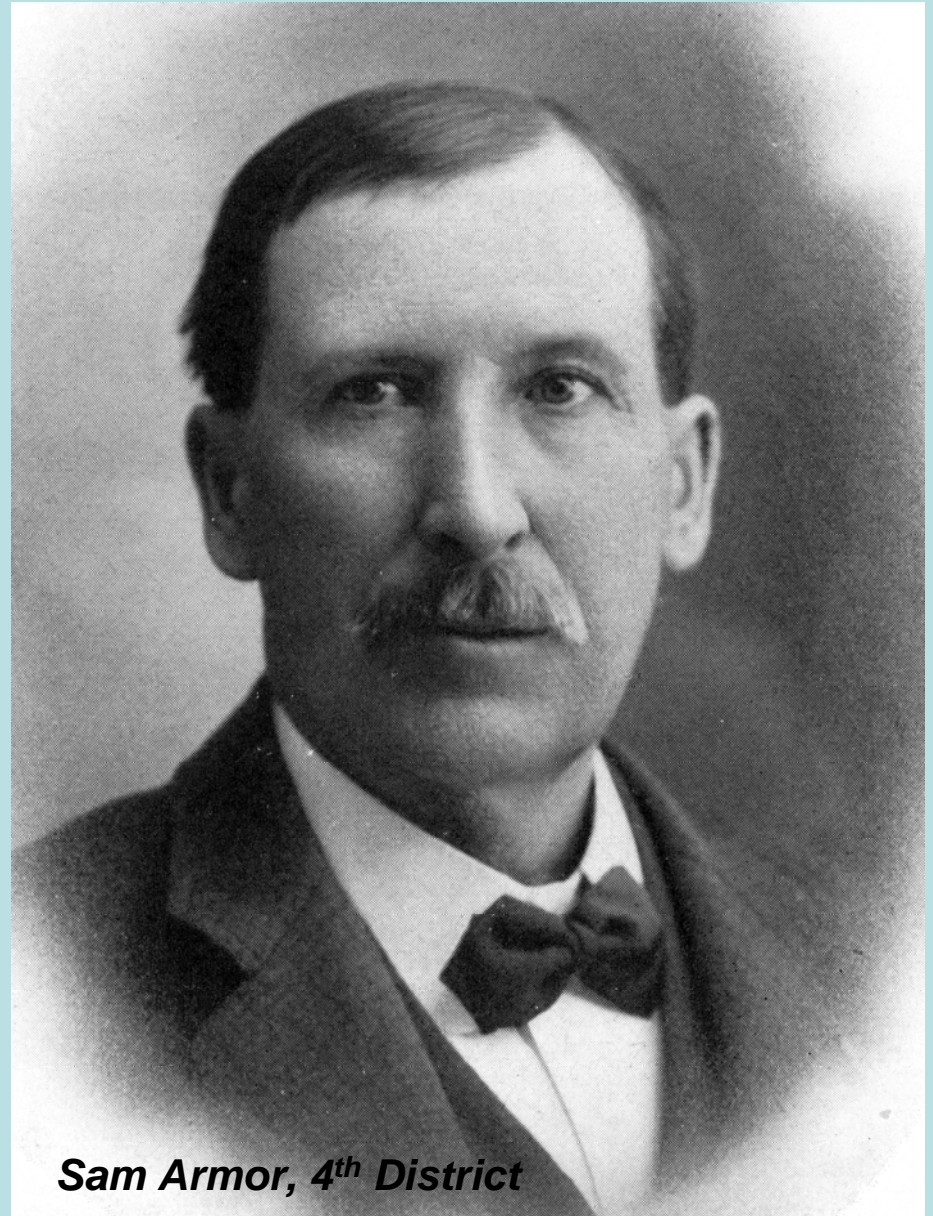


Jacob Ross, Jr., 2nd District

Third District Supervisor Sheldon Littlefield was yet another former L.A. County Supervisor. He was a real estate developer, a Republican, and an Anaheim City Councilman. He'd been successful in mining, beginning in the goldfields of Yuba County. He later became a produce merchant in San Francisco before moving to Anaheim in 1887 to stay close to his real estate investments.



New to elected office was Fourth District Supervisor Sam Armor, who won by only four votes. He was a Republican, a prohibitionist, a former schoolteacher, and a Union Civil War vet. He sold books and boots in Orange. Although wet-behind-the-ears and notoriously long winded, Armor was the only original Supervisor returned to the Board in the 1890 election.



Sam Armor, 4th District

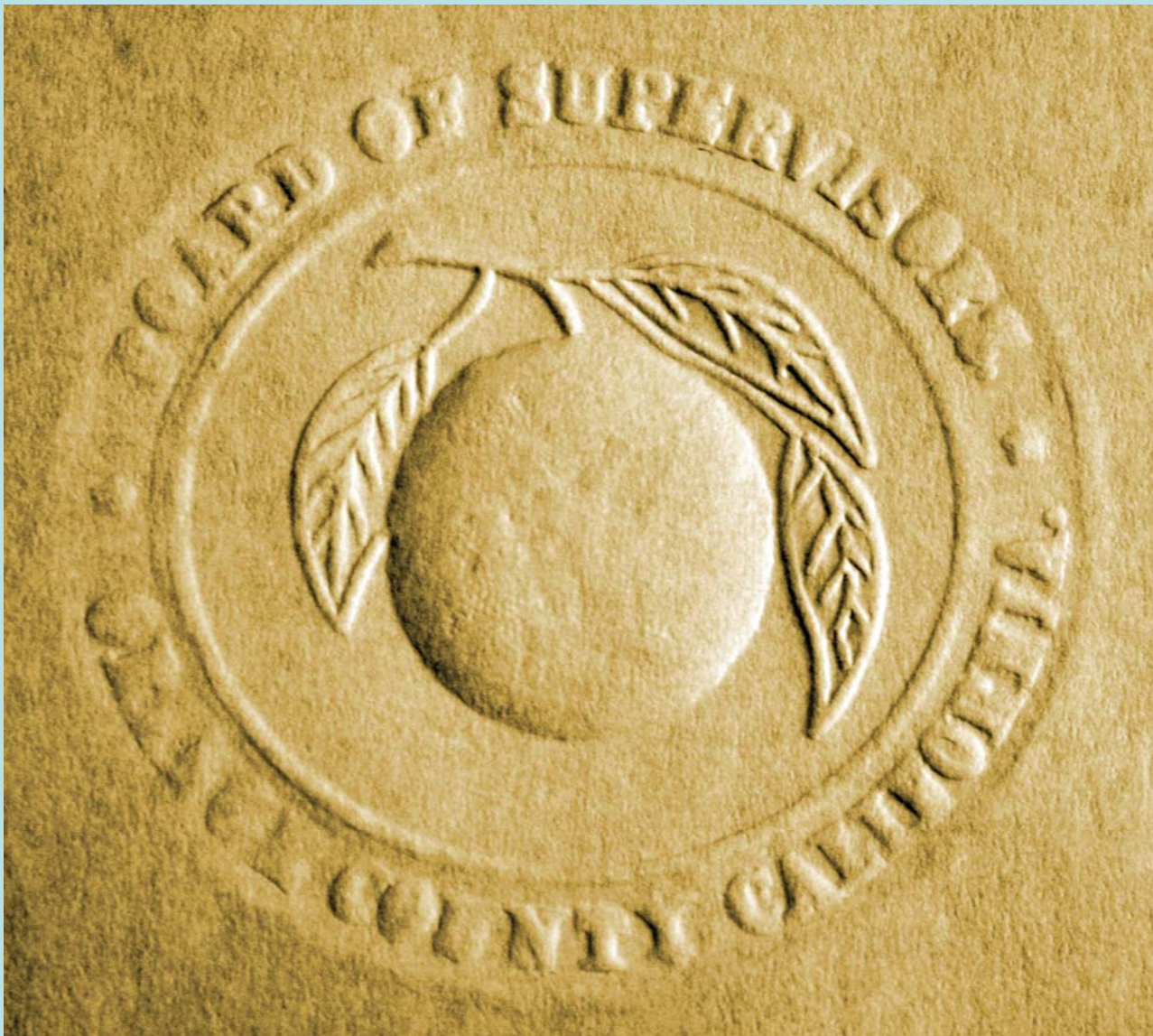
Also new to elected office was Fifth District Supervisor A. Guy Smith, a Republican and rancher from Tustin. In 1890, he became the first Assemblyman elected from Orange County. Two years later he chose not to run for re-election, claiming that Sacramento was “too wicked,” after which he was elected to another term on the Board of Supervisors. Sadly, there are no known photos of him.



At their first meeting, the Board asked the new county's officials what supplies they needed, made nominations for the Board of Education, agreed to search for rental space for county offices, made plans to have assessment rolls transcribed, and pondered the design of the county seal.



First County offices, Congdon Block, E. 4th St., Santa Ana, circa 1895



Littlefield wanted grapes on the seal, in honor of Anaheim's wine-making pioneers. However, a design with an orange with three leaves was adopted.

Littlefield nominated his real estate partner, Jason B. Pierce, as Anaheim's new Justice of the Peace. It was the first appointment by the Board and established the practice of district prerogative, allowing individual Supervisors total discretion on matters involving only their own district.

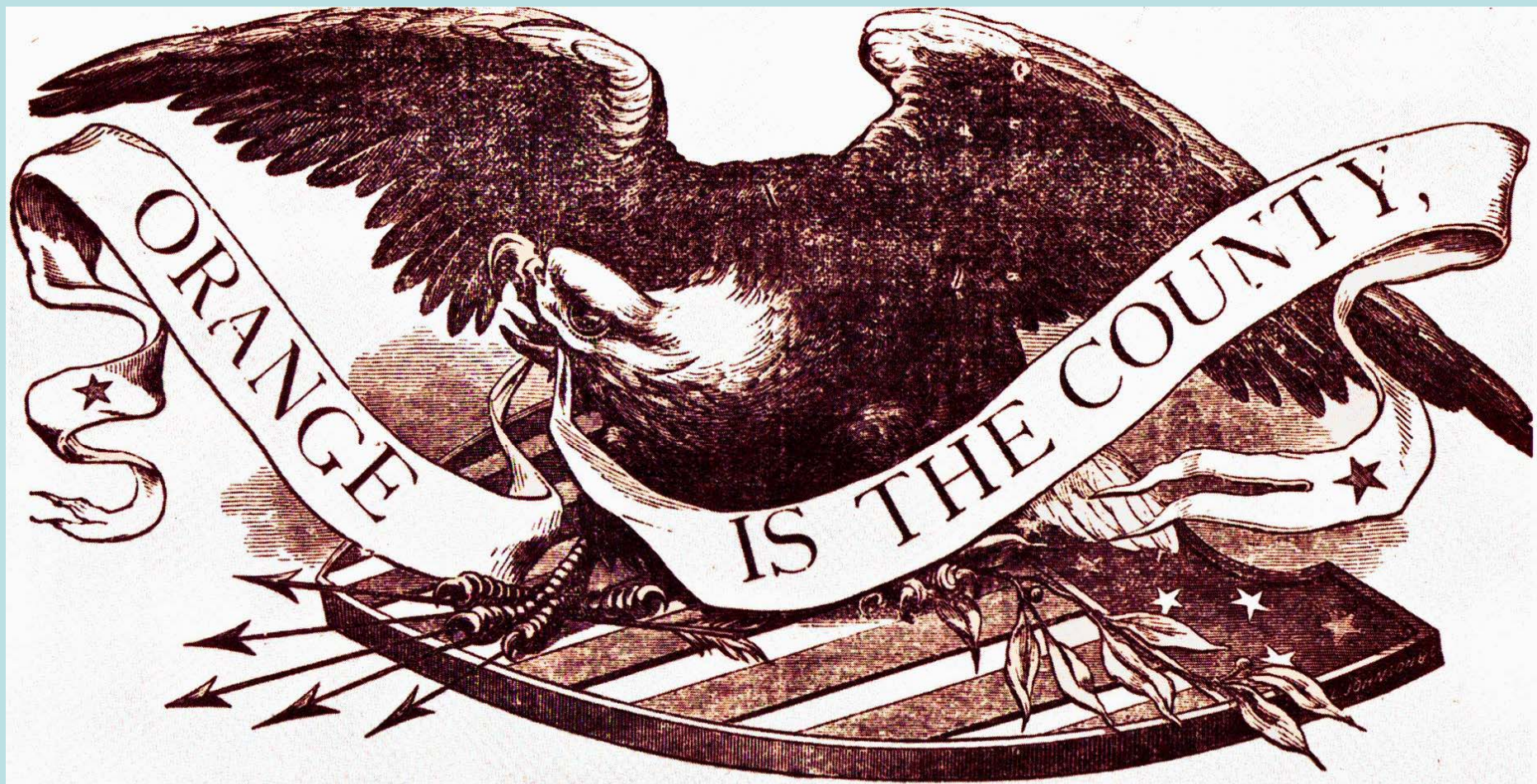
The City of Anaheim





The Plaza, Orange, 1887

On that day, 120 years ago, Orange County had 14,000 residents, three incorporated cities, and no paved roads. Much has changed, but we continue to enjoy the benefits of self-governance, self-determination, and taxation ***with*** representation.



AND WE ARE THE PEOPLE!!

The Orange County Archives

www.OCArchives.com

Orange County Clerk-Recorder Dept.
Tom Daly, Clerk-Recorder