



La Palma . . . Orange County's Dairyland

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**Presented by Archivist Phil Brigandi
to the Orange County Board of Supervisors
July 26, 2005
The Orange County Archives**

- ◆ La Palma is the only city in Orange County that went straight from farm land to incorporated city. There was no town, no commercial center, no schools, no post office . . . just a group of tough-minded farmers who wanted to preserve their rural way of life.
- ◆ The next slide is the earliest picture of the La Palma area we could find in the Orange County Archives. We're on Walker Street, looking north at Crescent in 1931.



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- ◆ It was in the 1940s that dairy farmers began moving into the area north of Cypress. New tracts were pushing the dairies out of Los Angeles County. From Torrance, Bellflower and Norwalk, from Paramount and other places. Most of the dairy farmers were Dutch, but there were also a few Portuguese and Belgian families.
 - ◆ By the early 1950s, there were about 30 dairy farms in the area, along with a few chicken ranches and some row farmers. Plus a few scattered homes of people who just wanted to live out in the country.
 - ◆ But by the early 1950s, Orange County was changing. Urbanization – or maybe we should say “suburbanization” – had arrived, and communities were incorporating and annexing like mad.



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- ◆ Buena Park incorporated in 1953, and after just two years had tripled its size through annexations. Then early in 1955, they announced plans to annex a big chunk of the agricultural land south of the city.
 - ◆ The dairy farmers knew that once they were in the city limits, subdivisions were sure to follow and they didn't want to get squeezed out again. So they decided to do something about it. Rather than get swallowed up by Buena Park, they came up with a unique solution – why not create their own city, a rural city, without any subdivisions?
 - ◆ And they decided to call it Dairyland.

SAMPLE BALLOT

(This number shall be torn off
by Inspector)

No. 1234

MARK CROSSES (X) ON BALLOT ONLY WITH RUBBER STAMP;
NEVER WITH PEN OR PENCIL

(Absentee Ballots May Be Marked With Pen and Ink or Pencil)

(Fold ballot to this perforated line, leaving top margin exposed)

OFFICIAL BALLOT

SPECIAL ELECTION

INCORPORATION OF CITY OF DAIRYLAND

COUNTY OF ORANGE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1955

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: To vote "For Incorporation" or "Against Incorporation," stamp a cross (X) in the voting square next to the right of the answer you desire to give.

To vote for a candidate of your selection, stamp a cross (X) in the voting square next to the right of the name of the candidate. Where two or more candidates for the same office are to be elected, stamp a cross (X) after the names of all the candidates for that office for whom you desire to vote, not to exceed, however, the number of candidates who are to be elected. If the ballot does not contain the names of candidates for all offices for which you may desire to vote, you may vote for candidates for such offices so omitted by writing the name of the candidate for whom you wish to vote in the blank space left for that purpose. To vote for a person not on the ballot, write the name of such person under the title of the office in the blank space left for that purpose.


All marks, except the cross (X) are forbidden.

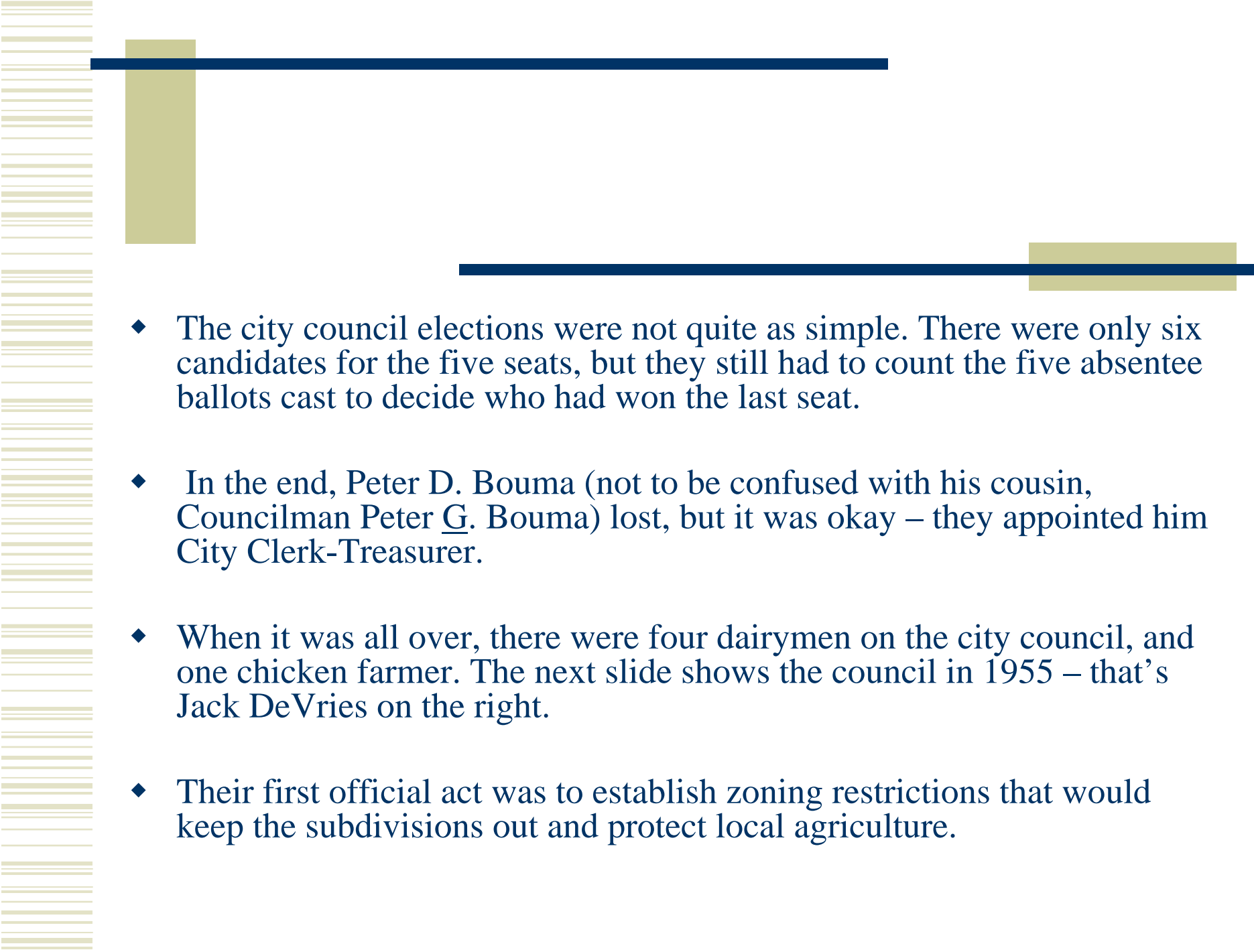
All distinguishing marks or erasures are forbidden and make the ballot void.

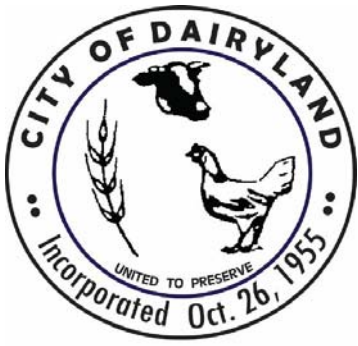
If you wrongly stamp, tear or deface this ballot, return it to the Inspector of Election and obtain another.


On absent voter's ballots mark a cross (X) with pen or pencil.

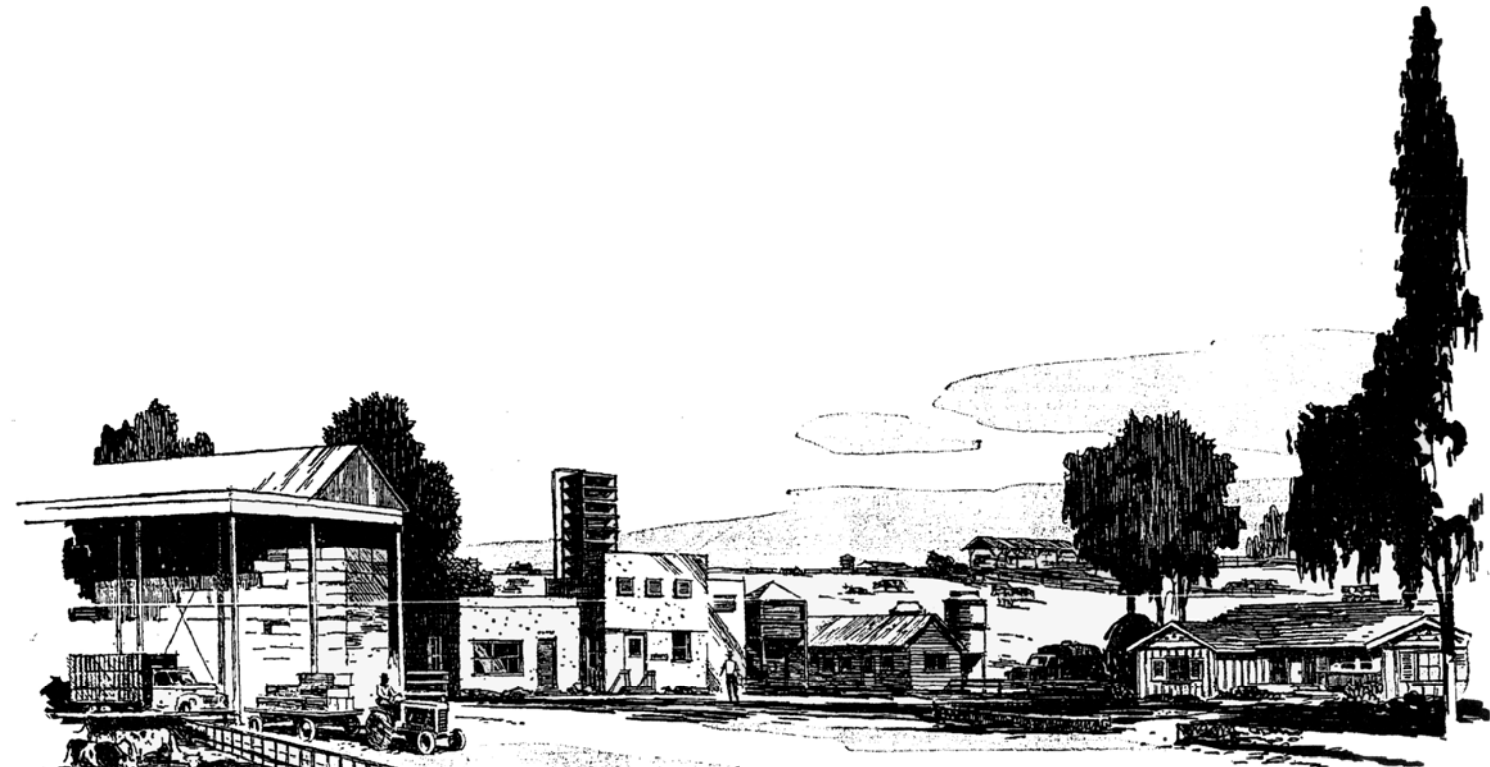
MEASURE SUBMITTED TO VOTE OF VOTERS	MEMBER OF CITY COUNCIL	Vote for Five
FOR INCORPORATION	PETER D. BOUMA Rancher	
AGAINST INCORPORATION	PETER G. BOUMA Dairyman	
	PETE DE GROOT Dairy Owner	
	WILLIAM DE JAGER Dairy	
	JACK DE VRIES Dairy	
	PAUL C. FURMAN	

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- ◆ I always thought it was interesting that *Dairyland* was incorporated in the same year that *Disneyland* opened. But Jack DeVries, their first mayor, says there's no connection. It was our land, and we had dairies on it, he said!
 - ◆ The proposed city of Dairyland was just a mile and three-quarters square, with a population of a little over 500. The incorporation election was held on October 11, 1955. There was just one polling place, in a garage at one of the homes. They got a pretty good turnout – 74 out of the 92 registered voters – and the incorporation vote was decisive – 55 for and only 19 against.

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- ◆ The city council elections were not quite as simple. There were only six candidates for the five seats, but they still had to count the five absentee ballots cast to decide who had won the last seat.
 - ◆ In the end, Peter D. Bouma (not to be confused with his cousin, Councilman Peter G. Bouma) lost, but it was okay – they appointed him City Clerk-Treasurer.
 - ◆ When it was all over, there were four dairymen on the city council, and one chicken farmer. The next slide shows the council in 1955 – that's Jack DeVries on the right.
 - ◆ Their first official act was to establish zoning restrictions that would keep the subdivisions out and protect local agriculture.




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- ◆ This seems to have been the first time that a city was incorporated just so the area could stay agricultural. But the idea caught on. In 1956, Dairy Valley was incorporated just over the line in Los Angeles County. They changed their name to Cerritos in 1967.
 - ◆ And here in Orange County, Cypress was incorporated as Dairy City in 1956 – though they changed their name back to Cypress just a few weeks later. Dairyland and Cypress shared a lot of their municipal operations in the early days – they even shared their city manager, Burt Wesenberg.





FOR CONTENTED 'RESIDENTS'

Cities Born to Keep Cows in; People Out

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- ◆ A few more dairies moved in, but Dairyland remained Orange County's smallest city – both in area and in population. During the first half of 1962, the population grew by just six people. By the middle of 1963, there were still only 649 people in Dairyland.
 - ◆ By that time, there were rumors that subdivisions were coming.
 - ◆ You can see them in the next slide starting to creep in towards the dairies in this view along Moody Creek.



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- ◆ The real problem, though, was that the schools were coming. Dairyland was split between five different school districts – Centralia, Buena Park, and Cypress elementary, Anaheim Union High, and Fullerton Union High. And the school districts had figured out that land in La Palma was cheaper than land in the residential areas.
 - ◆ In 1963, Dairyland only had about 50 kids in public schools, but there were three schools inside the city limits, and more on the way. Most of the land was taken by condemnation, through eminent domain. Eventually, the schools took up a tenth of the city.
 - ◆ So Dairyland was finally forced to give up. In 1964, they wrote a new master plan for residential and commercial development that predicted a city of 18,000 people. The plan was submitted to local voters in February, 1965, and approved.

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- ◆ At the same time, local residents also voted to change the city's name to La Palma. It was actually named for La Palma Avenue, which, they said, was “destined to become the city's main business street.”
 - ◆ The first residential subdivision opened in the fall of 1965, and one by one, the dairies began leaving town.
 - ◆ Dairyland was no more. The modern city of LaPalma had begun.



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



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