



GARDEN GROVE: The Birth of a City

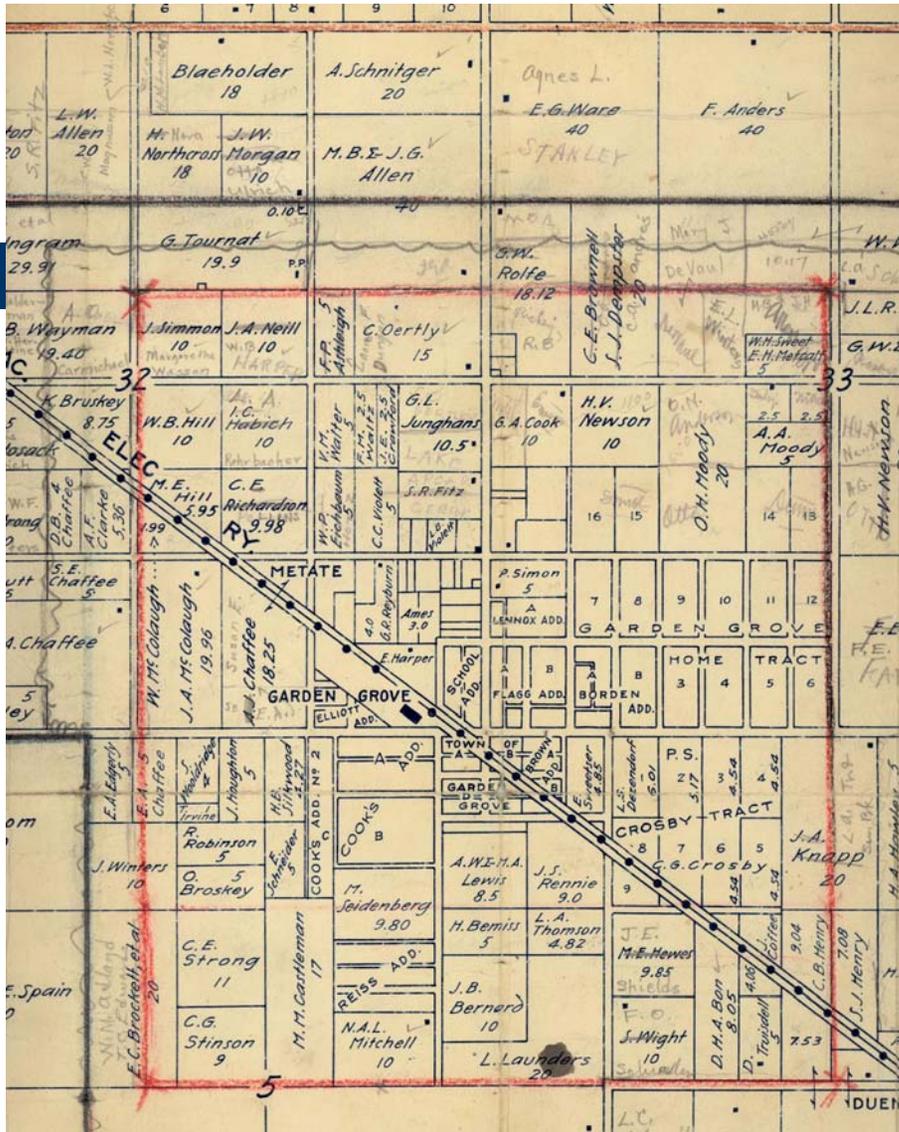
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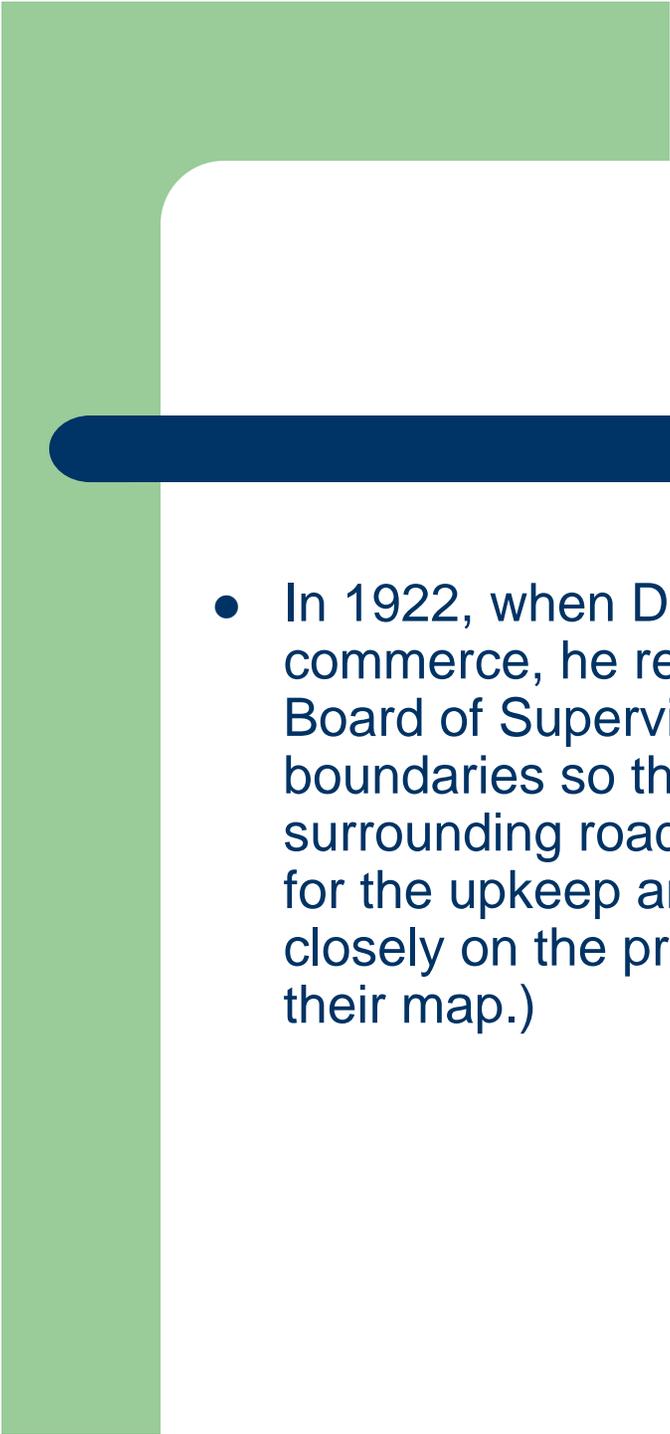


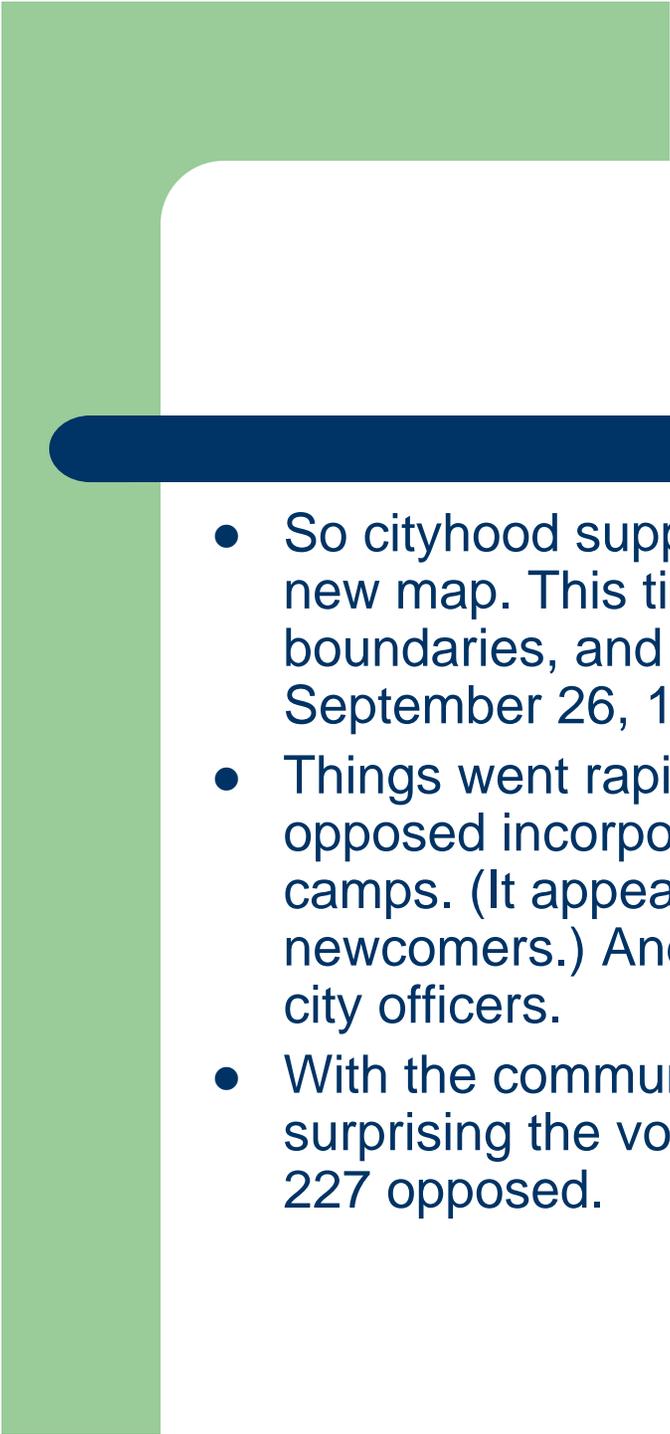
Presented by Archivist Phil Brigandi
to the Orange County Board of Supervisors
April 19, 2005
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- Garden Grove is one of those towns that never really got founded – it just sort of happened.
- It was a pretty small place until the arrival of Pacific Electric’s “big red cars” in 1905. By 1916, it had grown to about 35 businesses, including a bank and *two* doctors.
- That’s when the first incorporation drive began . . .
- The *Garden Grove News* began the call. They proposed a city of only about one mile square, centered around Main Street and Garden Grove Blvd. The first petition was presented to Board of Supervisors in September 1917.
- But the Garden Grove Businessmen’s Association took a straw poll and decided there just wasn’t enough support, and the petition was withdrawn.



Map of the proposed city of Garden Grove

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- In 1922, when Dr. C.C. Violette was president of the chamber of commerce, he revived the cityhood idea. Their first petition to the Board of Supervisors was refused because they had drawn the boundaries so that the city lines ended on the *inside* of the surrounding roads – meaning the county would still be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of those roads. (If you look closely on the previous slide, you can see it's drawn that way on their map.)

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- So cityhood supporters prepared new boundaries and submitted a new map. This time, the Board of Supervisors approved of the boundaries, and set Garden Grove's first incorporation election for September 26, 1922.
 - Things went rapidly downhill from there. The local farmers opposed incorporation, and even the proponents split into two camps. (It appears to have been the old timers versus the newcomers.) And both sides each nominated their own slate of city officers.
 - With the community split in so many different directions, it's not surprising the vote went down to defeat – 186 votes in favor, and 227 opposed.

SEND THIS UNSEALED TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE

COPY OF THE

RESULT OF THE VOTES CAST

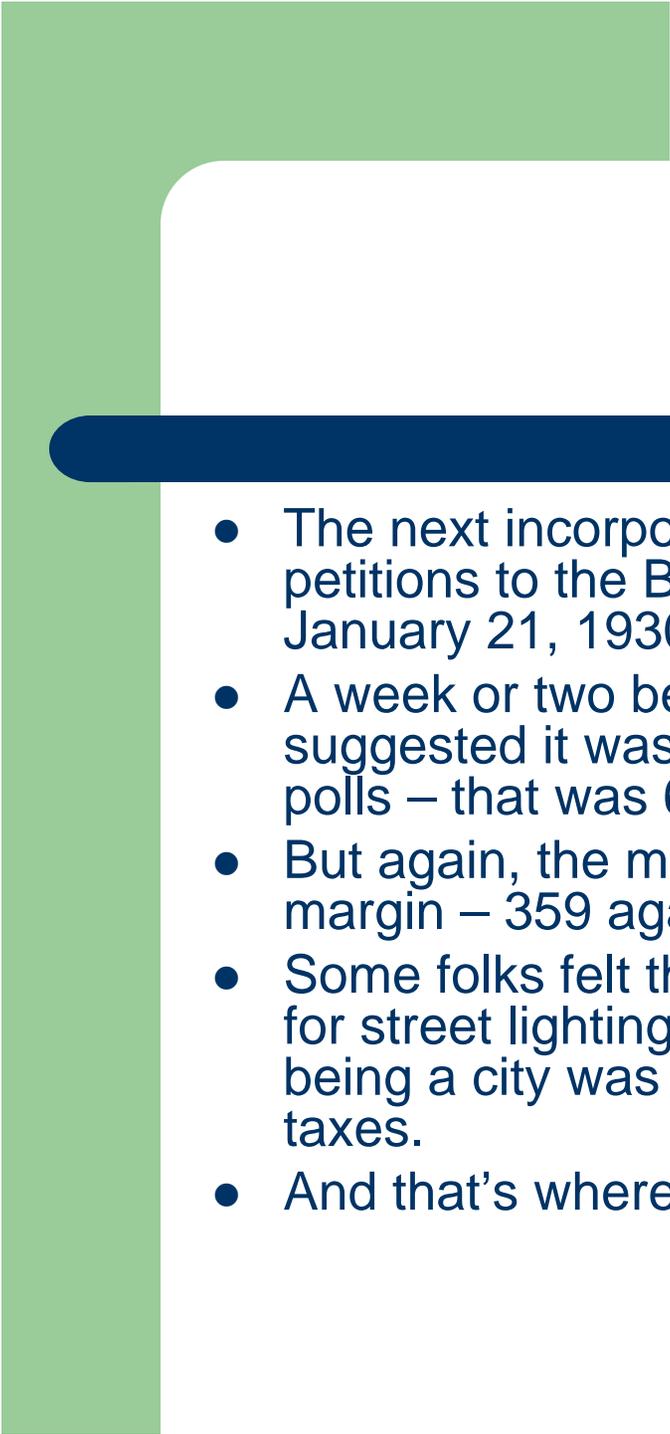
At Incorporation, Garden Grove Ward _____ Precinct. Total Votes Cast _____

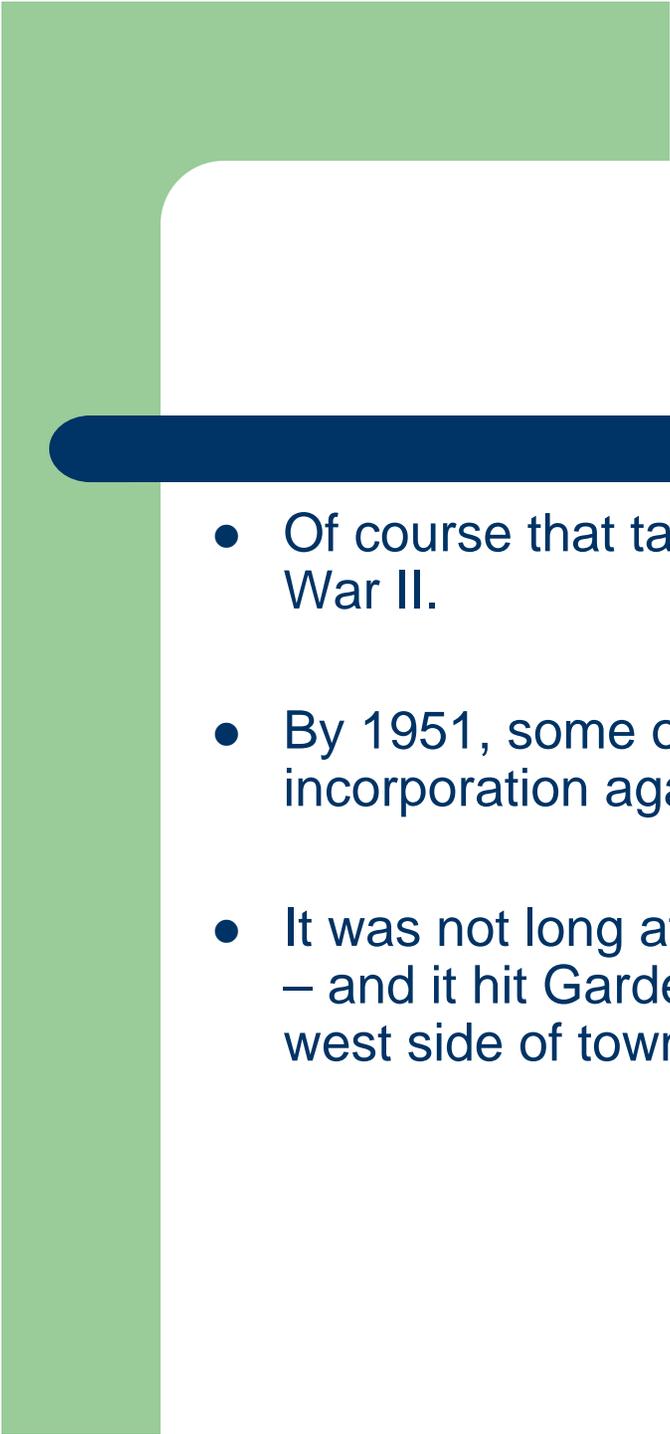
The board must, before it adjourns, make copies of the result of the votes cast at such polling place, which copies must be signed by the members of the board and attested by the Clerks; one of such copies shall be posted on the outside of the polling place, and one copy sent in unsealed envelope to the Clerk. It shall be a misdemeanor for any person to remove or deface such copy of the result. See Section 1261, Political Code.

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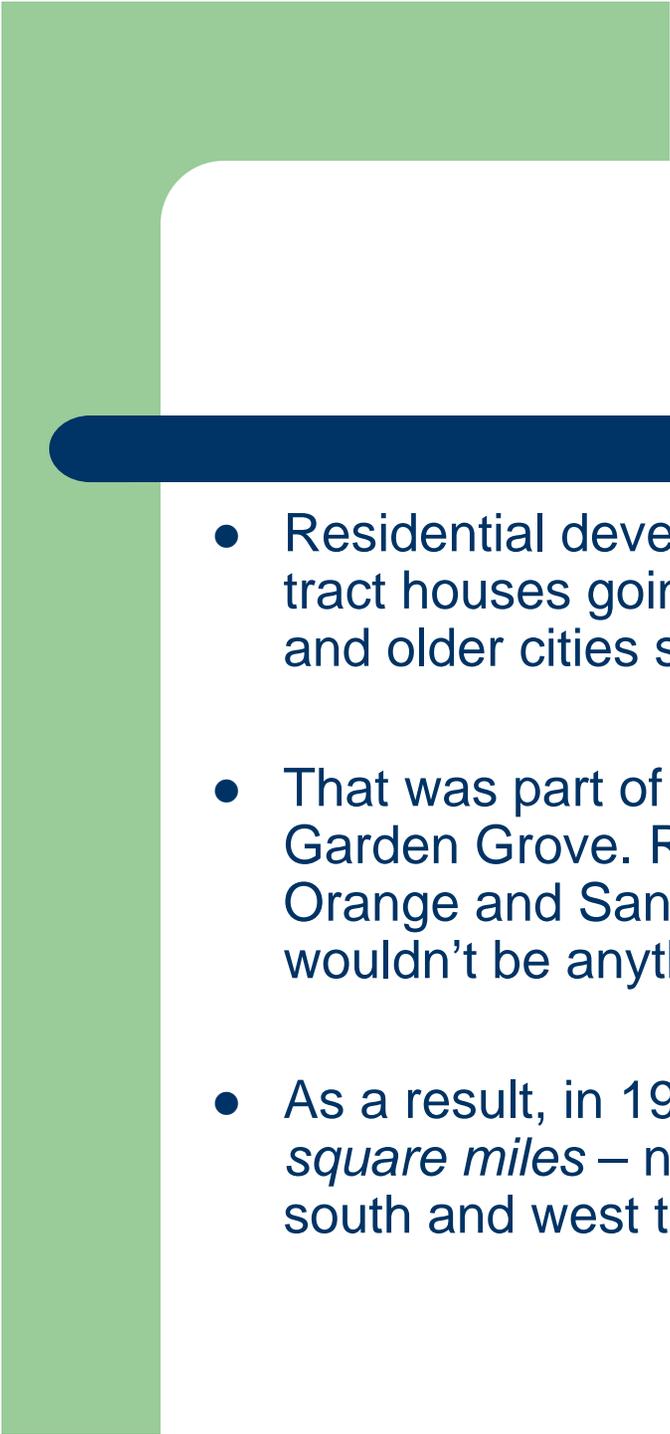
Name of Office and Candidate	Votes Received	Name of Office and Candidate	Votes Received
Incorporation Yes	186		
Incorporation No	227		
Clerk P. E. Gerren	231		
Clerk W. M. Adland	5		
Clerk Simon Harpuz	1		
Clerk F. L. Doepke	1		
Treas. F. L. Doepke	199		
Treas. A. A. Lake	15		
Treas. P. E. Gerren	1		
Trustee Claude Crosby	182		
Trustee C. B. Henry	139		
Trustee O. N. Larson	141		

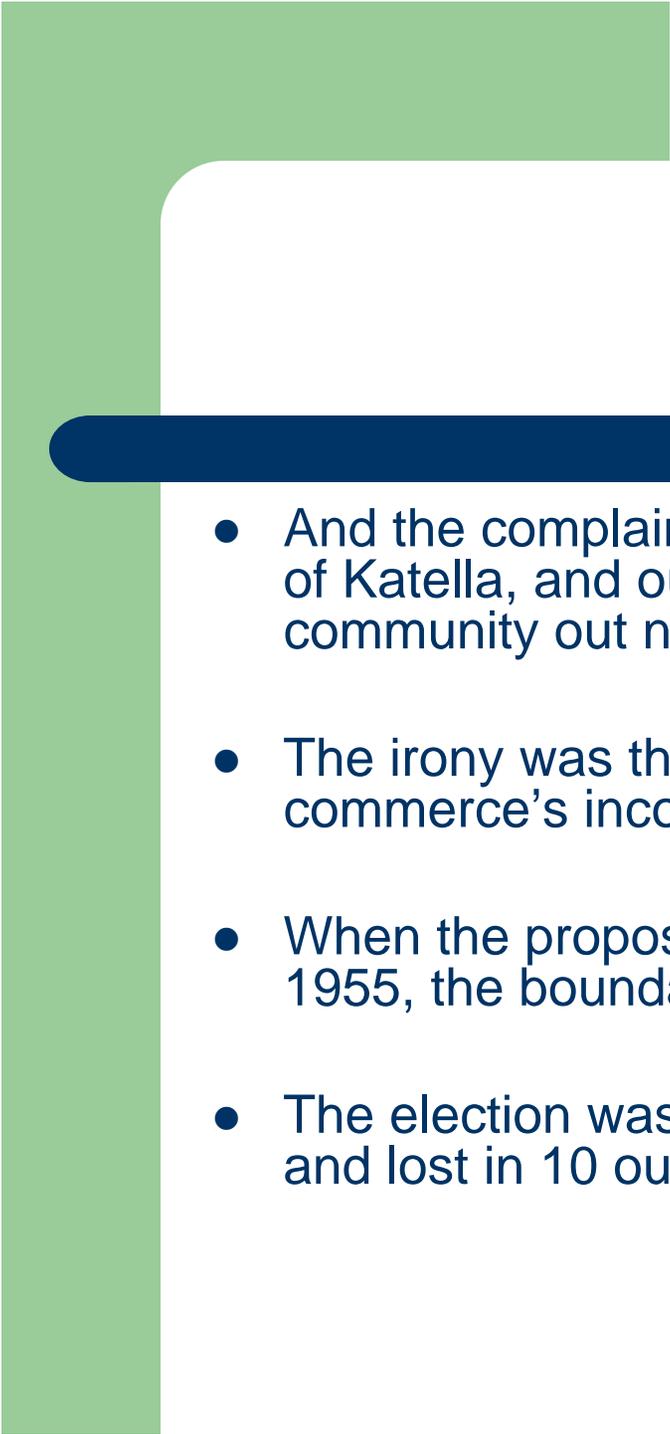
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- The next incorporation drive began in 1928. They presented their petitions to the Board in November, 1929, and the vote was set for January 21, 1930.
 - A week or two before the election, an informal poll around town suggested it was going to pass, and they got a 95% turnout at the polls – that was 621 voters!
 - But again, the measure failed – and this time by an even bigger margin – 359 against and only 262 in favor.
 - Some folks felt they didn't need a city – they had special districts for street lighting, sanitation and fire protection. Some said *not* being a city was a plus – they had most city services without city taxes.
 - And that's where the matter stood for the next 20 years.

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- Of course that takes us through the Depression years, and World War II.
 - By 1951, some of the folks in Garden Grove had started talking incorporation again, and by '53 they were hosting public meetings.
 - It was not long after that that the housing boom hit Orange County – and it hit Garden Grove especially hard. Here we are out on the west side of town in one of the '50s tracts.



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- Residential development began to flood into the county – with tract houses going up everywhere. New cities were incorporated, and older cities started annexing in every direction.
 - That was part of the reason for the next push to incorporate Garden Grove. Residents worried that if they waited, Anaheim, Orange and Santa Ana would annex so much territory there wouldn't be anything left for them.
 - As a result, in 1954, cityhood supporters proposed a city of 23 *square miles* – north to Anaheim, east to the river, and far enough south and west to even make Westminster a little nervous.

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- And the complaints started up immediately – from the folks north of Katella, and out west in places like Sun Gardens, a little community out near Newland and Garden Grove Blvd.
 - The irony was that Harold Ansell, the chairman of the chamber of commerce’s incorporation committee, was from Sun Gardens.
 - When the proposal finally went to the Board of Supervisors in 1955, the boundaries were set at just under *nine* square miles.
 - The election was held May 10, 1955. They got a 74% turnout—and lost in 10 out of 14 precincts.

OFFICIAL BALLOT
SPECIAL ELECTION
INCORPORATION OF CITY OF GARDEN GROVE
 COUNTY OF ORANGE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 1955

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: To vote "For Incorporation" or cross (+) 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 (+) 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 (+) 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.

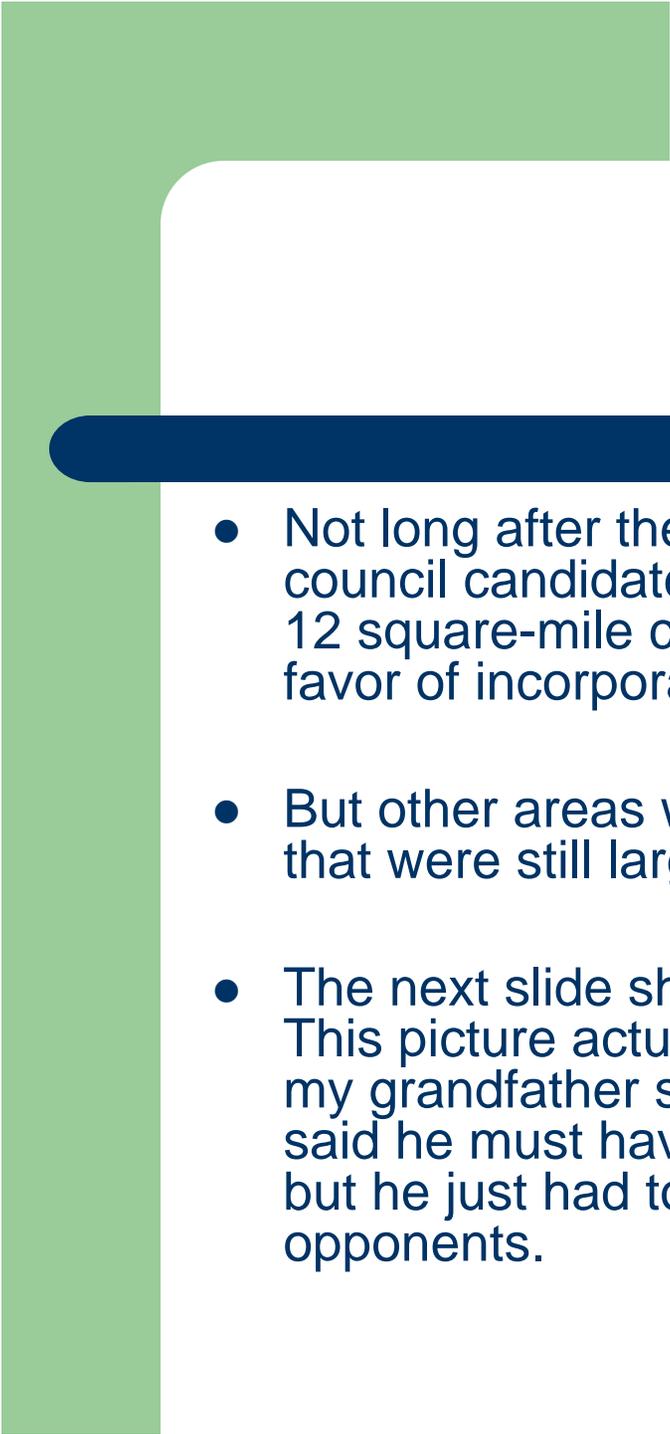
All marks, except the cross (+) are forbidden.

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

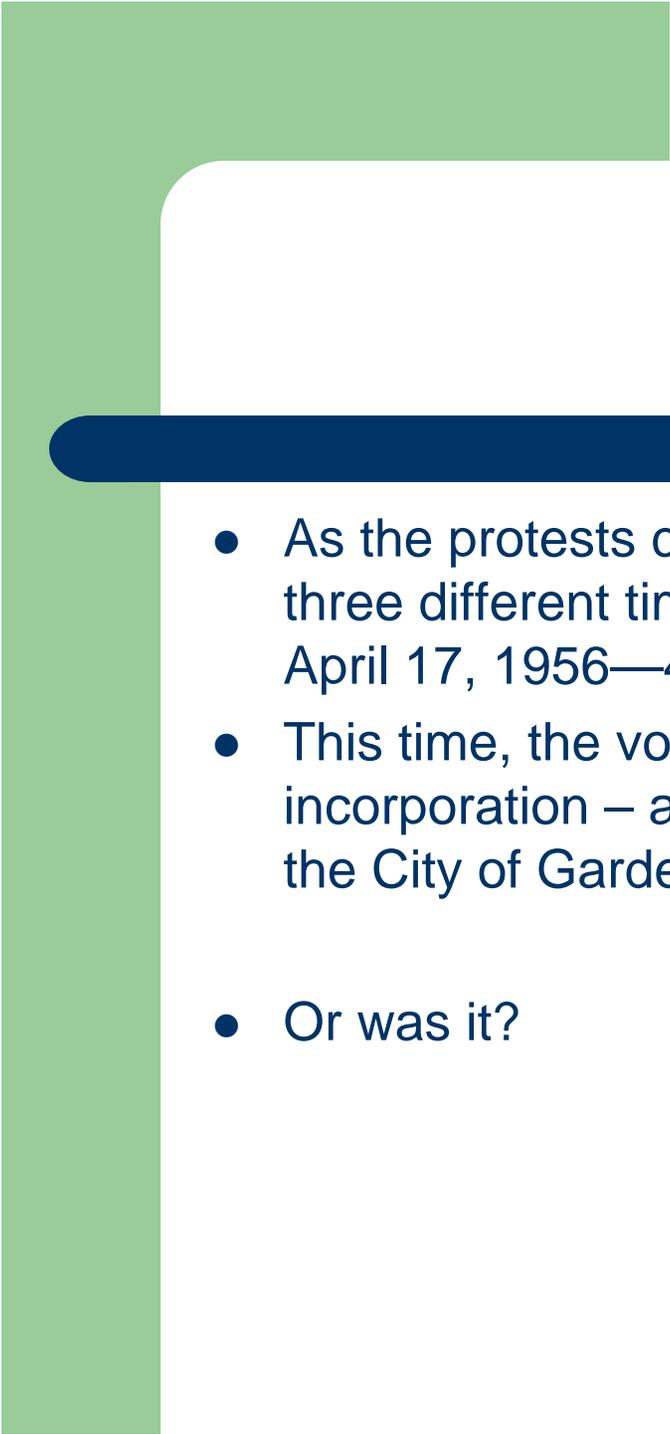
If you wrongly stamp, tear or deface this ballot, return it to the Inspector of Election and obtain another.

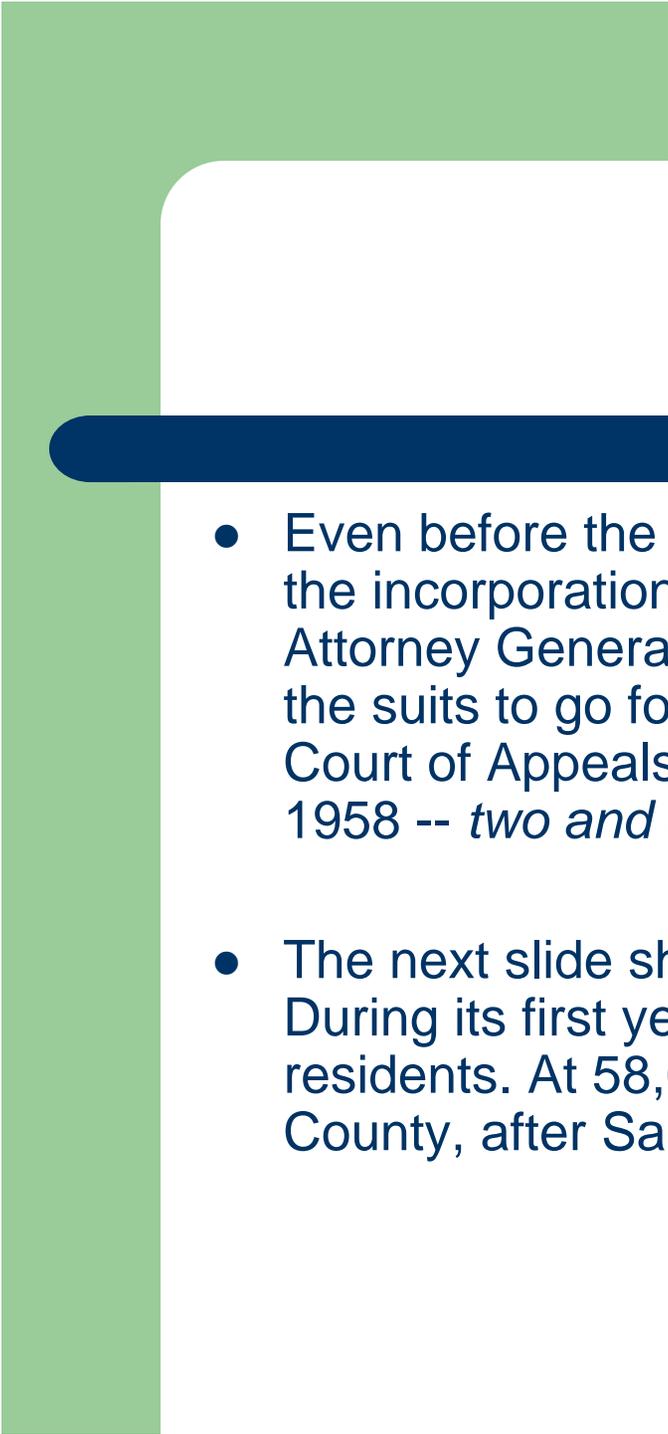
On absent voter's ballots mark a cross (+) with pen or pencil.

MEASURE SUBMITTED TO VOTE OF VOTERS	MEMBER OF CITY COUNCIL	Vote for Five
FOR INCORPORATION	FRANK ABBOTT Real Estate Broker	
AGAINST INCORPORATION	FLOYD E. ANDRES	
	EMORY L. ANKROM Manager of Hardware	

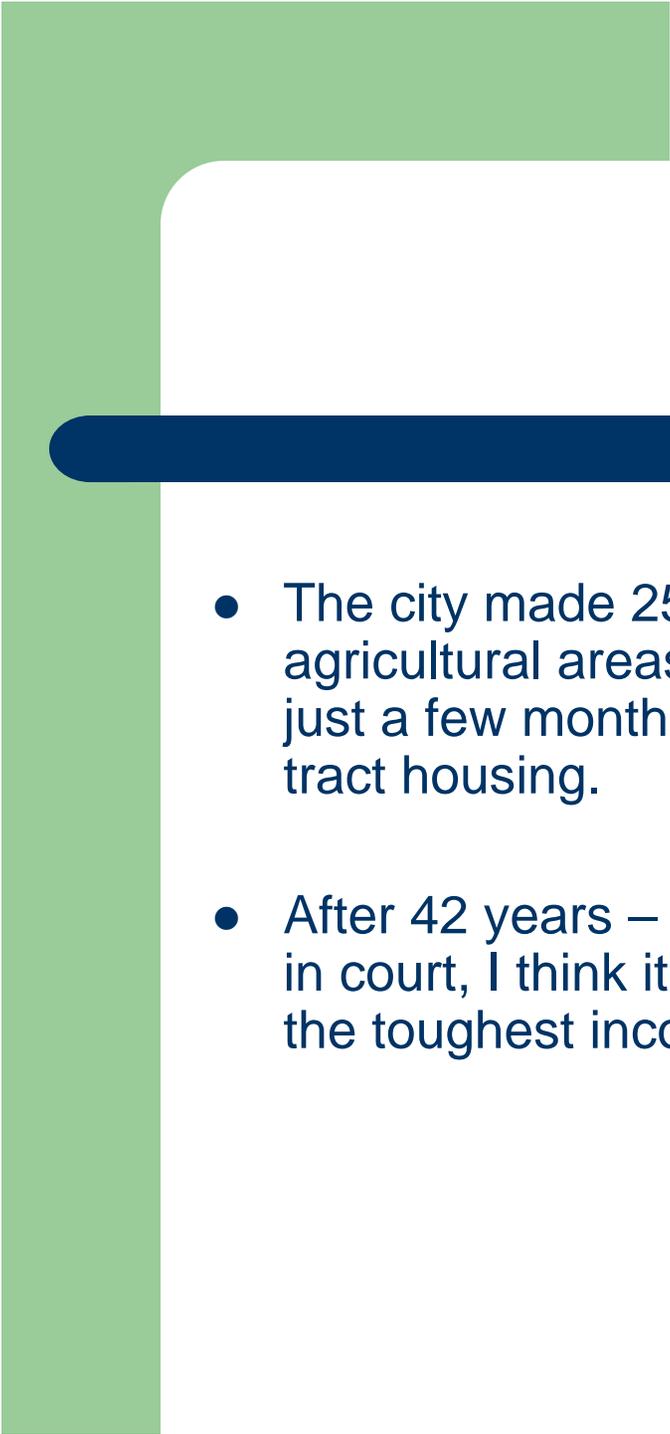
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- Not long after the election, the five top vote getters among the city council candidates started a new petition drive. They called for a 12 square-mile city, *including* Sun Gardens – which was now in favor of incorporation.
 - But other areas were still fighting against it. Especially the areas that were still largely agricultural.
 - The next slide shows one of the Board hearings from 1955 or '56. This picture actually comes from my grandmother: You can see my grandfather sound asleep in the front row. My grandmother said he must have had a long day at the office – he was a doctor – but he just had to be there. By the way – he was one of the opponents.



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- As the protests continued, the Board set the date for the election three different times – on February 20th, March 6th, and finally on April 17, 1956—49 years ago this week.
 - This time, the vote was decisive – 2,346 votes against incorporation – and 5,780 for it. After 40 years of talk and trying, the City of Garden Grove was finally born.
 - Or was it?

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- Even before the election, the opponents had gone to court to stop the incorporation. Several lawsuits followed, and the state Attorney General – Pat Brown – even stepped in to allow one of the suits to go forward. One case got all the way to the 4th District Court of Appeals, where it was finally dismissed in December, 1958 -- *two and a half years* after incorporation!
 - The next slide shows what downtown looked like in those days. During its first year as a city, Garden Grove added 17,000 new residents. At 58,000 people, it was the third largest city in Orange County, after Santa Ana and Anaheim.



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- The city made 25 annexations that first year, adding a lot of the agricultural areas which had wanted nothing to do with cityhood just a few months before. Now, they were being plowed up for tract housing.
 - After 42 years – six attempts – four votes – and two and half years in court, I think it's safe to say that the City of Garden Grove had the toughest incorporation battle of any city in Orange County.



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