



#18: The Incorporated Town of Humble, 1911

In 1933, the citizens of Humble voted to incorporate Humble into a city. However, this was not the first time the citizens voted to incorporate. In its oil boom days (starting in 1904), speculators and the oil industry invaded the tiny town. Fortunes were made and lost in a day. Hotels, hardware stores, and saloons sprung up all over Humble, while the population swelled to nearly 10,000.

When the oil boom was over, and the speculators left to find their fortunes elsewhere, life in Humble continued for the better. The population dwindled down to a comfortable 2,000. Homes replaced the hastily built tents from the oil boom days, merchants established the businesses that we would later come to know so well, and Humble had one of the best paved roads in the county. The next step was a logical one: incorporate - establish self-government and derive the benefits of local administration. The goal was to improve the streets, create drainage and sewer systems, and establish police and fire protection. The citizens took a vote in December 1910 on whether to incorporate or not; it passed 92 to 72 (56% vs 44%). The next step was to hold an election for a mayor and a board of alderman. That election was held in January 1911. The original elected officials of the town were: Mayor T. J. Sloan; Aldermen E. H. Corley, George B. Orr, F. M. Burton, R. B. Rodgers, H. C. Duke; and Town Marshall J. F. Pruitt.

Yet, there were obviously many citizens that were still not in favor of the incorporation (at least 44%), stating that incorporation was an expensive luxury and not a necessity. They obviously did not appreciate the additional taxes they had to pay to maintain the town. Another election was held in April 1911. This election asked, again, whether incorporation should be maintained, and it also gave citizens a chance to re-elect the current officials or to elect new ones. The results were mixed. Incorporation was maintained, but almost half of the elected officials were replaced. Re-elected officials who embraced incorporation were four of the Aldermen: E. H. Corley, George B. Orr, F. M. Burton, and R. B. Rodgers. Newly-elected officials who opposed incorporation were new Mayor Nick Lambrecht, new Alderman Dave Echols, and new Town Marshall Walker Woodyard.

The battle for incorporation persisted, and was the focus of many arguments in Humble. By November 1911, another election was held to determine whether, again, incorporation would continue. This time, the Humble citizens voted to abolish the incorporation. However, it was not an easy victory. The results of the election were challenged in court. Those fighting the results in court claimed Humble Mayor Nick Lambrecht (who was against incorporation) was also one of the election judges and prevented people from voting who would have voted for keeping the incorporation in place. But, the following month (December 1911....one year after this whole affair had started), Judge Ashe of the Eleventh District Court ruled that there was no problem with the election...and the vote to abolish the incorporation was upheld. Humble went back to being just a simple, unincorporated town in Harris County. It would be nearly another 22 years before Humble would attempt to incorporate again.