



ORANGE COUNTY PROGRESS REPORT: Reporting Change Over the Last 50 Years

INTRODUCTION

The year 2004 marks the 50th anniversary of the publishing of the Orange County Progress Report. So what progress has been made in Orange County over the last 50 years? This issue of the Orange County Profiles will look back at what the county was like in the mid-1950s and compare it to 2004. In recognition of its anniversary, the 35 volumes of the Progress Report were perused for information that provided snapshots of this growing county. Like the report, Orange County has grown by leaps and bounds and has matured and expanded in the last 50 years. For example, in 1954 there were 102,123 telephones in use in the entire county. In 2000, the Census Bureau reported telephones in 963,176 households; that does not include business phones or multiple telephones in a house. We will look at various aspects of the county and will discuss both demographic and economic facts, as well as a few items thrown in for amusement.

SUBURBAN BEGINNINGS

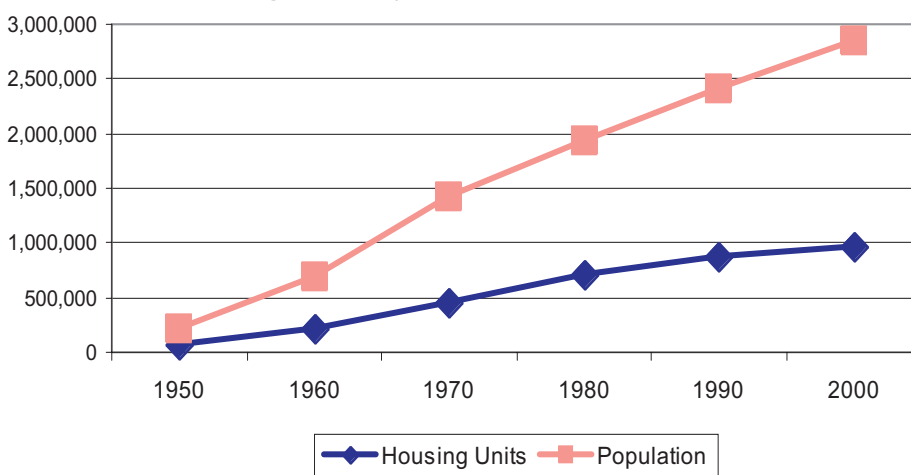
Prior to the 1950s, Orange County was primarily an agriculture economy with a relatively small population and limited urban development. Then, beginning in the 1950s, with no mere coincidence of the opening of the Santa Ana Freeway, the county began to expand its urban development, along with its population, and quickly became known as the suburban bedroom community of Los

Angeles County. The county's population, housing and economy continued to increase over the following decades. In addition to those increases, some notable events occurred which are associated with the county at large today. In the 1960s, California State University, Fullerton (then known as Orange County State College) and the University of California, Irvine opened their campuses and joined Chapman University as local higher education sites for the growing county. In 1967, the first commercial airport in the county was expanded to accommodate 400,000 passengers and, in 1979, the county supervisors approved a name change to John Wayne Airport. During this period, the county's first major sports team, the California Angels - formerly the Los Angeles Angels - moved to Orange County and played their first game in the newly built Angel Stadium in 1966.

PEOPLE

The most obvious forms of change in Orange County over the last half century have been its population growth and expansion onto undeveloped land. In 1954 there were 15 incorporated cities covering less than 20% of the county's

Figure 1
Housing Units and Population
Orange County, California, 1950 - 2000



Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing Unit Counts, 1990 CPH-2-1; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

1954 Quick Facts

15 incorporated cities



321,700 population

108,059 housing units

Life expectancy at birth

Males 65.6

Females 71.1

48,655 acres of
Valencia oranges



3 airports

67,483 school enrollment

71% population married

(Age 14 and over)



158,139 registered
vehicles

Price per gallon gas \$0.29



102,123
telephones

6 hospitals

9 public libraries



First class U.S.
Postage stamp
\$0.03

Loaf of bread \$0.14

Gallon of milk \$0.92

Retail sales \$321.5 million

Table 1
U.S. Census Housing Unit and Population Counts
Orange County, California, 1950 - 2000

	Housing Units			Population		
	Total Units	Decadal growth	Percent growth	Population	Decadal growth	Percent growth
1950	79,158	147,854	187%	216,224	487,701	226%
1960	227,012	236,187	104%	703,925	717,308	102%
1970	463,199	258,371	56%	1,421,233	511,688	36%
1980	721,570	153,502	21%	1,932,921	477,635	25%
1990	875,072	94,412	11%	2,410,556	435,733	18%
2000	969,484			2,846,289		
1950-2000 Growth	890,326	1125%		2,630,065	1216%	

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing Unit Counts, 1990 CPH -2-1; U.S. Census Bureau 2000

land. Fifty years later, that number has more than doubled to 34, covering over two-thirds of the county land. There was even a name change by Dairy City to Cypress in 1958, followed by the change to La Palma by the City of Dairyland in the early 1960s. In 1954, the county's population was 312,700. This grew 865% to 3,017,298 in 2004. That's an average of about 54,100 people every year or akin to adding the population of the City of Fountain Valley every year. The 1950 Census reported the County had 79,158 housing units. Over fifty years later, there were over a million housing units in the county. Between the 1950 census and the 2000 census, 890,326 units were added for an annual growth of 17,807 housing units per year or an average annual increase of 22% (Figure 1).

Table 1 reports the number of housing units and persons along with the decadal growth in number and percent. The largest growth in population was in the 1960s at almost 50% more than each of the other four decades. The 1970s had the largest housing unit growth with over a quarter-million units added in 10 years. That same decade was also the lowest ratio of persons to housing unit growth at 2 persons added for every housing unit built. The growth of housing units peaked in the 1970s and has declined ever since by a rate of about two-thirds of the previous decade's growth. The same is not true for population. The population growth in Orange County has consistently remained above 400,000 but has declined since the 1960s peak. As a result of the large population growth and decrease in the number of housing units added, the ratio of population to housing unit growth has increased to 4.6 and is currently at a higher level than any other in the past 50 years.

ECONOMICS

Today, Orange County is itself a major job center and, although a number of county residents still commute into Los Angeles County for employment, about the same number of people commute from Los Angeles County into Orange County for work (160,279 people commute from LAC into OC; 185,145 commute from OC into LAC). And now, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties have become the bedroom communities for Orange County as well as Los Angeles County, due to the availability of land and lower median home prices.

Table 2 shows the change in the economic structure of the county. Only four sectors showed an increase in the share of the labor market: services, government, wholesale trade, and finance/insurance/real estate. The other six sectors showed decreases in labor market share ranging from -30% (manufacturing) to -98% (mining). The county's namesake came from the dozens of orchards in the county over a hundred years ago. But now, the number of agriculture jobs decreased by one-half over the last fifty years, yet the market share dropped from 10% in 1956 down to 0.4% in 2004. Mining jobs dropped by three-quarters and the

**Table 2
Orange County Labor Market Information by Industry, 1956 and 2004**

Industry	July 1956		July 2004		Difference 1956-2000	
	Number	% of County	Number	% of County	Number	Percent
Agriculture	13,300	10.1%	6,200	0.4%	-7,100	-53.4%
Mining	2,100	1.6%	500	0.03%	-1,600	-76.2%
Construction	15,700	11.9%	87,700	6.1%	72,000	458.6%
Manufacturing	23,800	18.0%	180,700	12.6%	156,900	659.2%
Transportation/Public Utilities	6,600	5.0%	28,200	2.0%	21,600	327.3%
Wholesale Trade	4,400	3.3%	82,100	5.7%	77,700	1765.9%
Retail Trade	27,700	21.0%	155,000	10.8%	127,300	459.6%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	4,400	3.3%	125,500	8.7%	121,100	2752.3%
Services	25,800	19.5%	624,000	43.4%	598,200	2318.6%
Government	8,200	6.2%	147,500	10.3%	139,300	1698.8%
Total Employment	132,000	100.0%	1,437,400	100.0%	1,305,400	988.9%

Source: Orange County Progress Report, Volume 1, No. 8, August 1957;
California State Employment Development Department, <http://www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/indtable.htm>

market share is now 0.03%. The most dramatic increase in number of jobs for an industry is the finance/insurance/real estate sector, increasing over 2700% (4,400 to 125,500 jobs), yet the share of the labor market rose by just over double from 3.3% to 8.7% since 1956. The military was also a major presence in the county and in 1954, 11,000 acres in the county were dedicated to military uses. Today, there are two major military installations remaining (the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos and the U.S. Naval Weapons Station in Seal Beach) that cover just over 4,700 acres.

Along with the changes in the labor market industries and advancement in technology, a shift occurs in income and the price of goods one regularly purchases. In 1950, the U.S. Census reported that the county median family income was \$3,319. In 2000, that number was \$64,611. A gallon of gas was 29 cents in 1954 and in 2004 it has averaged about \$2.00. In 1956, Disneyland opened in Orange County and charged \$1.00 per adult admission and 50 cents per child; guests were charged per ride and the average amount spent on rides was \$2.73. Although Disneyland has added more attractions and expanded since it first opened, ticket prices are now \$49.75 for adults and \$39.75 for children. Across town, Knott's Berry Farm didn't charge admission until 1968. A gallon of milk is now \$3.23, up from \$0.92 in 1954, as well as a loaf of bread: \$0.14 to \$1.29 and a postage stamp: \$0.03 to \$0.37.

THE MAJORITY MINORITY SHIFT

The primary purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to discuss demographic issues in Orange County. In addition to the economic and developmental changes within the county, there has been a shift in the racial and ethnic distribution as well. The 1950 Census reported that 92% of the county population was native-born whites. Another 7% were foreign-born whites and the final 1% was non-white. Contrast that to 50 years later, while acknowledging that the Census has modified its questionnaire over time, the 2000 Census reported that 54.4% of Orange County residents were native-born whites. This shift of the racial and ethnic distribution of the county reached a pivotal point in 2003 (as documented by the U.S. Census Bureau in Sept. 2004) when the county's percent of non-Hispanic whites dropped to 49.5% of the population. This is termed "majority-minority", meaning that a majority of the County population (50.5%) is composed of minority groups. This is in line with the 2004 Orange County Projections, which projected that by July 2005, the county's minority population would comprise almost 54% of the county population, and it is projected that this will continue to be the case for decades to come.

2004 Quick Facts

34 incorporated cities

3,017,298 population

1,003,929 housing units



Life expectancy at birth
Males 74.4
Females 79.8

98 acres of Valencia oranges



2 airports

515,464 school enrollment



58% population married (Age 15 and over)

2,367,195 registered vehicles (December 2002)

Price per gallon gas \$2.14

963,176 homes with telephones

32 hospitals/ medical centers



47 public libraries

First class U.S. Postage stamp \$0.37



Loaf of bread \$1.29

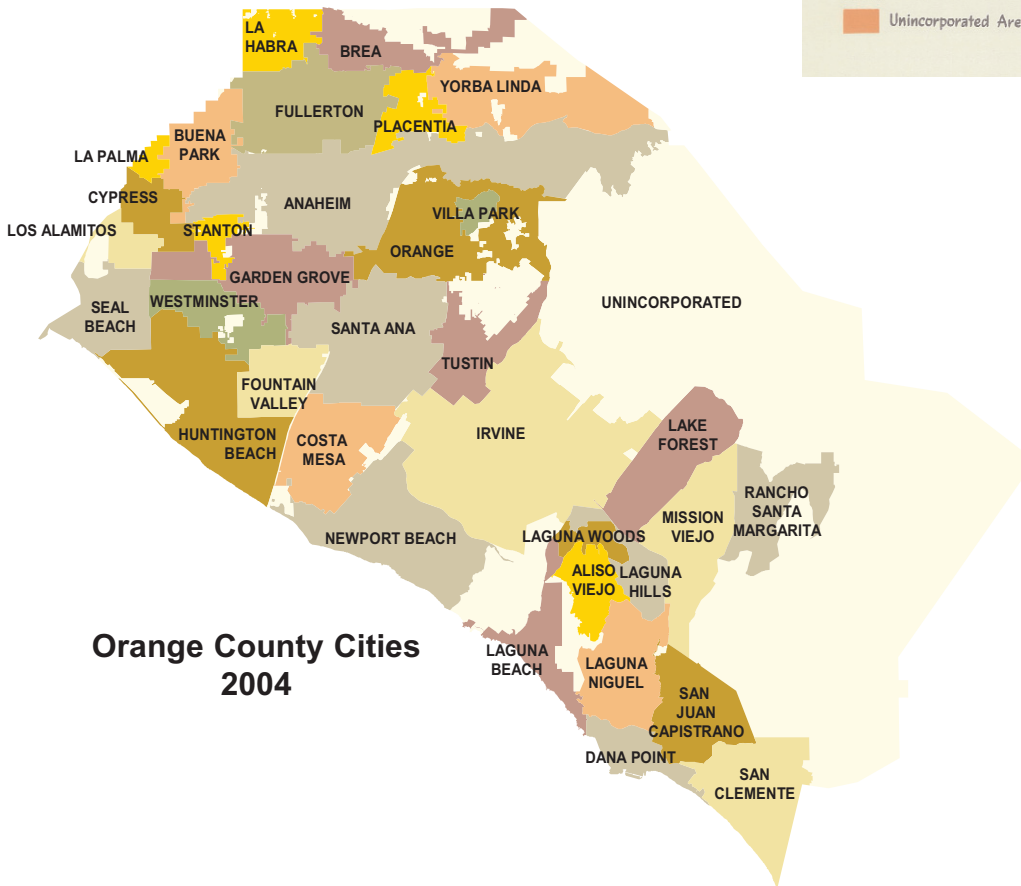
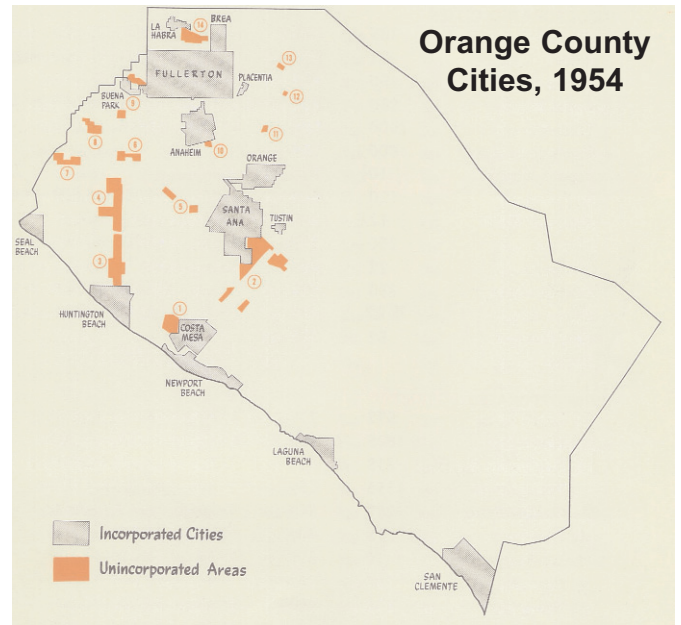
Gallon of milk \$3.23

Retail sales \$8.1 billion

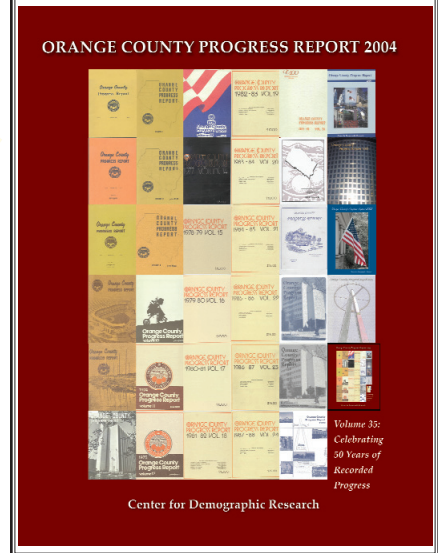
MAPS

To the right is a map of Orange County from the first volume of the Orange County Progress Report in 1954 depicting the county's 15 cities and unincorporated communities. Directly below is a map of Orange County city boundaries in 2004 and below to the right is the cover of the current Progress Report that depicts a collage of all 35 volumes of the report's history.

Data sources for this issue of *OC Profiles* was taken from the Orange County Progress Reports 1954-2004; California State Economic Development Department; California Department of Finance; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. CDC and NCHS and the following websites
http://www.kimandjason.com/pages/show_n_tell/time_capsule/1950s/1954.html
<http://www.fb.org/news/nr/nr2004/nr1004a.html>
<http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/decade50.html>
<http://www.aaa-calif.com/corpinfo/fuel/index-monthly.asp>



The 2004 Orange County Progress Report contains over 225 pages of current & historical demographic and economic data on Orange County. The report is available from CDR at the price of \$25.00.



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