

DICKINSON INCORPORATION TIMELINE

ELECTION #1 – JANUARY 1958	
VOTES FOR	VOTES AGAINST
129	877
George Flowers, Zackie O’Neil, LWV, COC	George Franks, Mrs Zackie O’Neil
Fear of annexation by League City and Texas City.	Taxes, with no additional benefit.
DISD area excluding Bacliff & San Leon and West of Dickinson Bayou to Galveston Bay. Prevent Texas City from annexing any land North of Moses Lake. Dissolve WCID1. Walter Hall said “these limits are immoral; value grab is immoral.”	Two other petitions for incorporation filed – Dickinson Pine area to prevent commercial bsuinesses along Pine Dr and area East of Dickinson
Most business owners are non committal – Fuhrhop “no comment” Another “I live in this town, do business with the ‘pros’ and the ‘cons’. I can’t afford to say what I think.	
ELECTION #2 – JUNE 1963	
VOTES FOR	VOTES AGAINST
544	711
Cecil Palmer, Ray Gillis, Darvia Winick Charles Brown, Ed Watsin, AA Hester, LWV	
A dead cat in the road, the water table going down, a night spot in a residential area, garbage collection, fear of annexation, Taxes and the government.	Taxes and government
ELECTION #3 – APRIL 1966	
VOTES FOR	VOTES AGAINST
Margin 8	Margin 9
Jim Simpson, LL Warner, Herb Kavanaugh, Dr Louis Riley, COC, Jaycees	Louis Caserta, LP Gallagher, Joe Malloy, Col Edward Lobit, W Marschall, SN Smith
21.75 Sq miles, building codes, law enforcement, growth, garbage, livestock on road, apartment house in residential area	Against taxes and more government

A group of Bayou Chantilly petitioner attempt to incorporate their subdivision.

ELECTION #4 – OCTOBER 1969

VOTES FOR	VOTES AGAINST
936	1357
Bud Saunders, Lucia Gurley, Joan Granitz, Nancy Faget, Phil Storms	John Roeser
Saunders: “Selected areas would be double taxed if we are annexed – city & WCID1 tax”	Roeser: “It doesn’t make good sense, The peoples taxes will be raised with no compensating benefit.” Tax rate in city would be 150% of the highest in the county.

The central issue debated was finances and Dickinson’s ability to support itself.

FAILED ELECTION - MARCH 1970

A failed effort to call an incorporation election was spearheaded by J.A. Newborn, publisher of a weekly newspaper in Dickinson. His plan showed the sales tax and utility franchise tax being sufficient to meet the city’s financial needs. Any property tax levy would have to be approved by the voters. This one man effort failed.

ELECTION #5 – MARCH 1972

VOTES FOR	VOTES AGAINST
1506	1507
John Powers The territory to be incorporated is all of the land presently not inside the city limits of Texas City, League City and Hitchcock.	

Citizens “For: requested a recount of the ballots. Ballot box and stub box had been taken to the County Courthouse and locked up until Judge Holbrook returned on Monday. Several ballots were believed to have been deposited in the stub box. Monday it was discovered that the stub box was inadvertently burned by a clerk following an incorrect routine procedure. Twenty-five to thirty of the paper ballots were mutilated and not readable. The Court ordered another election.

ELECTION #6 – SEPTEMBER 1972

VOTES FOR	VOTE AGAINST
1480	2220
Gunn, Hancock	
Gunn: “Unincorporated area are in need of land use controls. Federal revenue sharing is not available to communities unless they are	

incorporated.”

ELECTION #6 – AUGUST 1977

VOTES FOR

VOTES AGAINST

940

859

Marlow Preston, Larry Kelly, Chuck Dunbaugh, John Caulfield, Bert Trotta, Esther Batistoni, Rev M.I. Lewis, Wilson Deats

Louis Casserta, JJ Roeser, Edward Lobit

Keep taxes lower, control of rates of utilities, better police protection, definite guidelines for growth.

Surrender part of our self-government, taxes will increase. Will still pay all taxes currently paying plus city taxes. City will issue bonds and taxes will increase. Cannot support city on 25 cent tax rate, Fear the city will annex to gain additional tax revenue.

Incorporation passes and village is limited to 10,000 population and 25 cent tax rate.

LOUIS V CASSERTA, MILTON GAASLAND, ET AL VS THE VILLAGE OF DICKINSON

Plaintiffs claim violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the 14th Amendment, and the 15th Amendment. Specifically contending the boundaries were drawn to exclude certain minority groups. File as class action suit. A temporary injunction issued to maintain the status quo prior to the incorporation election. Three courts involved” State District Court, United States District Court and appeal to US Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit.

VILLAGE ELECTION – NOVEMBER 1977

Mayor

Bob Holley

Aldermen

Jasper Liggiuo
Edward Hogan
Lucia Gurley
Louis Gill
Chester Magruder
James Abbott

Marshal

James Abbott

The elected officials had to rely on donations, loans, and free office space while the injunction was in force.

COURT RULINGS – NOVEMBER 1980

All court rulings were in favor of the dependents. Courts ruled there was no intent to exclude any class of voter. Restraining order was lifted allowing Dickinson to operate as a village.

HOME RULE CITY

January 1985 Charter Election

In January 1987 Dickinson Citizens voted to approve the charter which changed Dickinson from a Village form of government to a Home Rule City form of government removing the population limit and tax rate limit. Mayor Bob Holley was quoted as saying “Dickinson cannot survive with the existing revenues.” It was no long before Dickinson began annexing the surrounding unincorporated areas.

LOOKING BACK

The road to incorporation was long, contentious, and emotional. Many newspaper articles document the battle, but the following short article, I believe, shows the true spirit of Dickinsonians.

Putting the issues aside, there is no doubt that this is a “gentlemanly conflict.” During the breaks at the trial, people on both sides of the question have joked and talked to one another.

One simple anecdote characterizes the mood between the opposing sides.

Holley Chipped in one day and helped the plaintiffs’ lawyer lug his huge stack of papers, studies, and other documents to the courtroom on the sixth floor of the federal building.

“This trial may not seem like much to someone who doesn’t live in Dickinson,” one woman said, “but I live and die with everything that goes on in that courtroom.”

THE FUTURE

Julie Robinson, City Manager, believes the greatest and brightest days are still to come for Dickinson. The City Council, Dickinson Economic Development Council, and City Staff are currently working hard on multiple projects already in the pipeline that will bring prosperity and growth in both the commercial and residential areas.

SOME POPULATION STATISTICS

		<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
DICKINSON	10.3Sq Mi.	4,715	10,776	12,093	18,680
LEAGUE CITY	53.0Sq Mi.	2,622	10,818	45,444	83,560

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DICKINSON INCORPORATION TIME-LINE

All of the information in this lime-line of the Dickinson Incorporation was taken from a review of incorporation related articles in the Galveston County Daily News from 1958 to 1987. There were many more people involved on both sides of the issue than those mentioned in the articles. But, I

chose to stay with the names and facts reported rather than attempt to identify all those involved because I would surely miss a large number.

I was able to verify many of the events by visiting and talk with people. One was County Judge Ray Holbrook Ret., who vividly remembers those days. He would never speculate on the reported destruction of the voting stub box destroyed before a recount could take place in the March 1972 election.

It is interesting that many of those I talked to still have strong opinions on the incorporation elections.

Ken Hufstetler.