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DHS NEWSLETTER
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1. AGENDA OF THE FEBRUARY 15 BOARD MEETING.
By John Lofland

The winter quarter meeting of the DHS Board will convene at the Hattie Weber Museum (Fifth and C) at 3 pm on Sunday, February 15. DHS members, as well as members of the public, are cordially invited.

In addition to regular agenda items and new items that members submit, I will present two items for discussion and possible action.

The **first item** concerns continuing lack of success in recruiting an editor for the monthly newsletter. As an emergency matter, I have produced it. You are reading the fifteenth issue I have written.

I do not have the time any longer to prepare the newsletter. The Board should consider the question of appointing a new editor or discontinuing the newsletter.

The **second item** concerns my assessment of where we are after one year of operation. While one can put a happy face on our situation, as I have done before now, there is also another face.

In my view, the number of people with an active interest in Davis history is very small, likely too small to field a full organization of the sort we have attempted.

I have therefore come to consider the possibility that the DHS should “downsize.” In a memo I will provide before the February 15 meeting, I will outline what downsizing might mean and how it might be done.

2. NEW PUBLICATION ON DAVIS HISTORY: “THE GERMAN PRISONER OF WAR FARM LABOR CAMPS IN YOLO COUNTY”

Douglas Brown of Penryn, California has been researching the topic of World War II German prisoners of war in California. One part of his research focuses on the “farm labor branch camps in Yolo County.”

It seems that there were three such camps, one of which was near what is now the UC Davis campus airport.

His report on these camps is published as a twenty page, eight and one-half by eleven inch booklet. It is available at the Yolo County Archives in Woodland for \$4.00. In the booklet, his address is given as 2810 Wildcreek Road, Penryn, CA 95663

3. DAVIS HISTORY MOMENTS, # 3: DAVIS ASKED TO BECOME BETTE DAVIS, NOVEMBER, 1940.

The week-end of November 9, 1940, a “publicity man” for Warner Brothers named Tom Foudy came to Davis and asked leaders if they would like Bette Davis’ next motion picture to premiere there, complete with a personal appearance by Miss Davis.

Leaders responded enthusiastically, but there was a catch. As part of the deal, the town’s name had to be changed to Bette Davis. This part was not received enthusiastically and no deal was made. Instead, editor Maghetti penned, “Davis will remain [a] retiring . . . little village along the north bank of Putah Creek . . .” (*Davis Enterprise*, 11-15-40).

4. DAVIS HISTORY MOMENTS, # 4: HIRIAM JOHNSON APPROVES SUPPRESSING LIQUOR IN DAVIS, MARCH, 1911.

After the State Farm was located near Davis, prohibitionists set about to end-run local voters who had already twice voted not to close the saloons (in 1874 and 1907). Turning to the State Legislature, George Pierce lobbied for a state law banning saloons so as to protect tender students of agriculture.

Pierce had served as a member of the Assembly and therefore knew the mechanics and politics of law-making. His journal thus reports such actions as, "Had Judge Shields draw bill for liquor suppression" (*Pierce Diary*, January 27, 1909). Interestingly, several members of the Legislature he approached declined to introduce the bill. But, on February 11, 1909, he wrote, "Finally got no-saloon bill fathered by Senator Black of Santa Clara." Subsequently, the case was carried successfully by Senator A. Boynton in SB 935. In March 1911, it finally passed both houses "like greased lightning," in the words of Editor Scott (*Davis Enterprise*, March 11, 1911).

It had then to be signed by Governor Hiram Johnson. At the request of what the *Sacramento Union* called "the saloon men of Davis," the Governor granted a special appeal hearing before him, held later that March. Representatives of both sides appeared. The pro-salooners argued that closing would hurt the local economy and that students did not frequent the saloons anyway. Jackie Grieve, owner of the Buena Vista hotel (which had a bar) pointed out the irony that the saloon owners had vigorously contributed both time and money to getting the State Farm, only now to be betrayed. She declared that the "residents would rather have the saloons than the Farm if the choice had to be made between the two."

Anti-saloon claims included the assertion by a University Farm administrator that saloons were "having a deterrent effect upon the attendance, and that one boy had been expelled for drunkenness"

As is well known, the Governor decided in favor of liquor suppression. This policy was not changed until the Legislature acted to lift the ban starting January 1, 1979.

(George Pierce's desire to protect students from liquor and his own teetotalism did not stop him from entering in his diary on August 20, 1928, "Went again [into Davis] in p.m. for a pint of liquor for medicinal purposes.")

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