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## NEGLECT DECADES, 1950s–70s

The history of Davis (and of virtually the entire world) divides into “before” and “after” World War II. As a part of Davis, the history of the Terminal Building also divides into decades before that war (three of them) and decades after it (five of them).

The five decades after that war must themselves be separated into the some three decades in which a new Davis downtown was constructed by demolishing a good part of the existing town (1950s-70s) and the two decades of relatively little new construction or demolition (1980s-90s).

This chapter addresses the three decades of the 1950s-70s. The next chapter deals with the 1980s-90s.

Unlike the larger downtown, through all five decades of the 1950s-90s, the Terminal Building was in decline.

In order to understand this long-term decline, we need first to understand what else was happening in the downtown. This context helps to explain the building's neglect, which was part of a more general G Street "problem."

### 1) BUILDING A NEW DOWNTOWN

The events of World War II destroyed the "old world," both literally and symbolically. The late 1940s were the beginning of a "new world," in the United States, a world of fresh starts, new enterprises, and rapid economic development.

For California in general and Davis in particular, this meant rapid population growth and decisions about how to accommodate such growth. In a great many if not most towns and cities, accommodation took the form of encouraging (or at least allowing) peripheral shopping malls that had the effect of drawing business away from and ultimately decimating traditional, pre-World War II downtowns. As everyone knows from her or his own observation, the three-part complex of (1) the dead downtown, (2) the highway retail strip, and (3) the large shopping mall at the edge of or outside town is a virtually defining feature of the American landscape (Davies, 1998; Rome, 2001).

For complex reasons still not well understood, the economic and political elites of Davis reacted differently to explosive population growth than did those of many other communities. The G Street business crowd early-on viewed growth as a threat to the downtown. While they favored rapid **residential** growth at the edges of the town, they saw that large-scale retail at the periphery would undercut them. Indeed, this threat was so obvious to them and spoken about so often in the pages of the *Davis Enterprise* that one wonders why other downtown elites did not more often react like those in Davis.

One reason for this difference in reaction may reside in the nature of the Davis downtown as compared to the downtowns of other towns and cities. And, the nature of Davis' downtown has to be understood in the context of the nature of Davis itself.

This "nature" was that Davis in its entirety, including its downtown was, still in the late 1940s, **very small**. Its population of some 3,000 (Fig. 1.3) fit into an area well less than one square mile. The entire town barely spanned six blocks north to south and twelve blocks east to west. **The "downtown" of this late 1940s Davis was little more than one (or perhaps portions of a few) of the some seventy blocks making up the whole town!**

The reader can see this tiny Davis in its entirety in Figure 4.7. The downtown itself as it existed in 1941 is shown in Figure 4.10. The abrupt transition from commercial to residential shown in the upper portion of Figure 4.10 is particularly striking.

In a strict and traditional sense, when we speak of "saving" Davis' downtown we should be speaking of the area around G and Second streets (the area shown in Figure 4.10), for, only that area was the "classic" downtown.

But, the "downtown" that people commonly now think as having been "saved" in Davis refers in only a minor way to the historic G Street area. Instead, the geographic referent of the term has become, to a great extent, what was previously much of the entire town. This shift in meaning and referent had already taken place by the early 1960s. By then, the "downtown" was becoming a large part of the twenty-four blocks bounded by First and Fifth and B and G. **Many of what were previously residential blocks were now thought of as commercial blocks and, therefore, the "downtown."**

**The upshot was that Davis not so much "saved" its downtown (defined as the immediate Second and G area) as it started over and built an entirely new downtown on ground to the north and west of the tiny old downtown.**

From the founding of the town in 1868 up to the late 1940s, the "center" of the downtown was undisputedly the intersection of G and Second streets. With the 1950s-70s expansion, the center was consciously shifted two blocks west and one block north (which is shown in Fig. 5.1). In addition, Second Street had formerly been the main corridor from the train station to the UC campus. Corridor thinking now shifted north and centered on Third Street and the idea of a "Third Street Parade" or perhaps shopping mall (Fig. 5.1).

One can well ask, "How did all this happen?" The short answer is that the public and private political and economic elites formed a funding partnership that hired a San Francisco planning firm to create a plan for a new downtown. Significantly, the firm was provided a fairly detailed set of guidelines that were developed by a 50-member Core Area Citizen's Advisory Committee (*Davis Enterprise*, February 2, 1961).

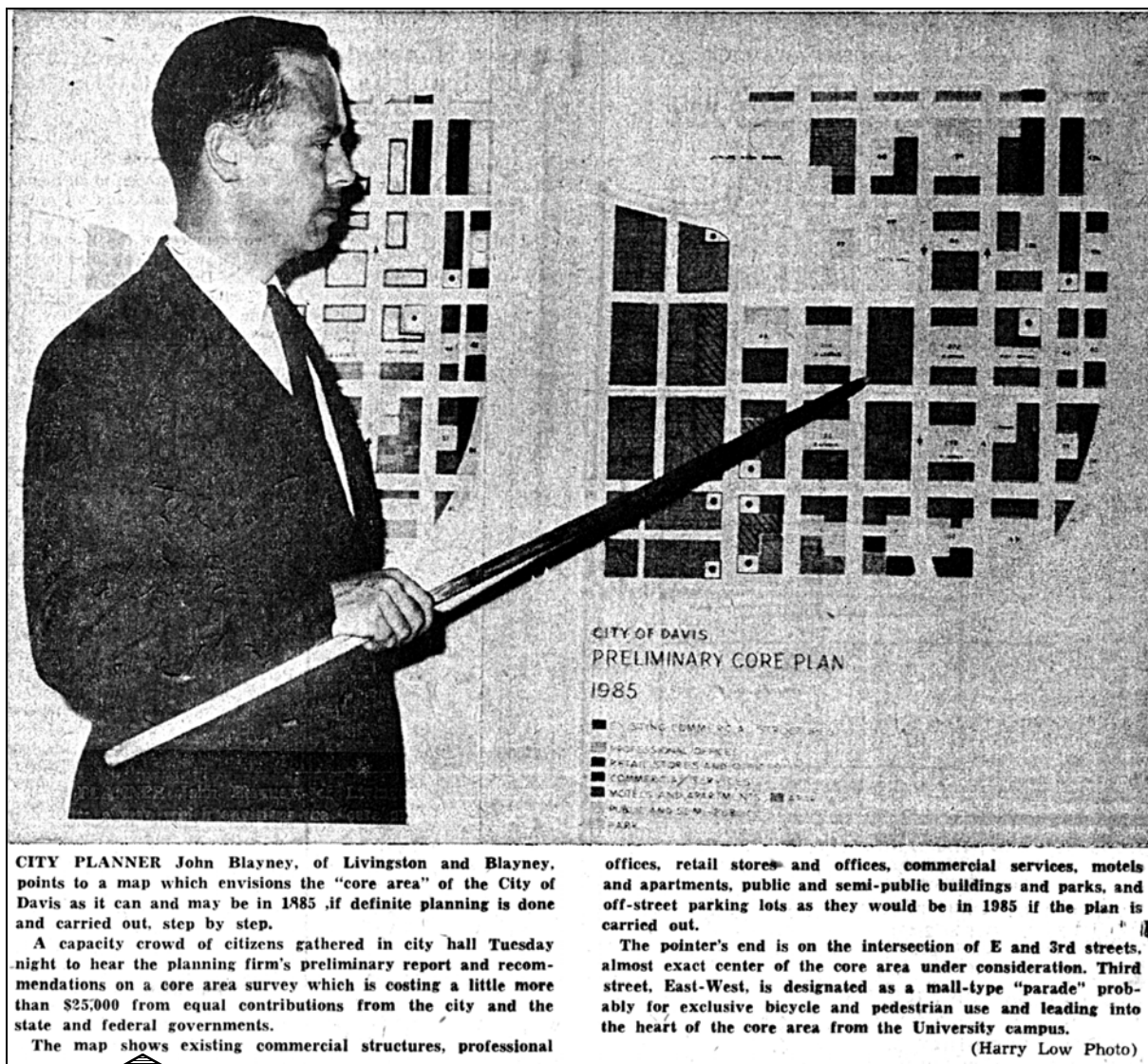
In Fig. 5.1, a Mr. Blayney from that firm is shown giving a public lecture on the just-delivered written plan. The caption to the photograph in Fig. 5.1 sums up the plan nicely: almost complete, large-scale reconstruction of residential areas adjacent to the old downtown and a Davis population of 75,000 by 1985.

The term "core area" that became standard in the Davis lexicon, meaning roughly the new, twenty-four block "downtown," was introduced by this planning firm. Indeed, their plan was titled *Davis Core Area Plan* (Livingston and Blayney City and Regional Planners, 1961). When the plan was under development in the early 1960s, *Davis Enterprise* editors often put quotes around "core area," suggesting that the newspaper thought the term an odd expression. (Notice

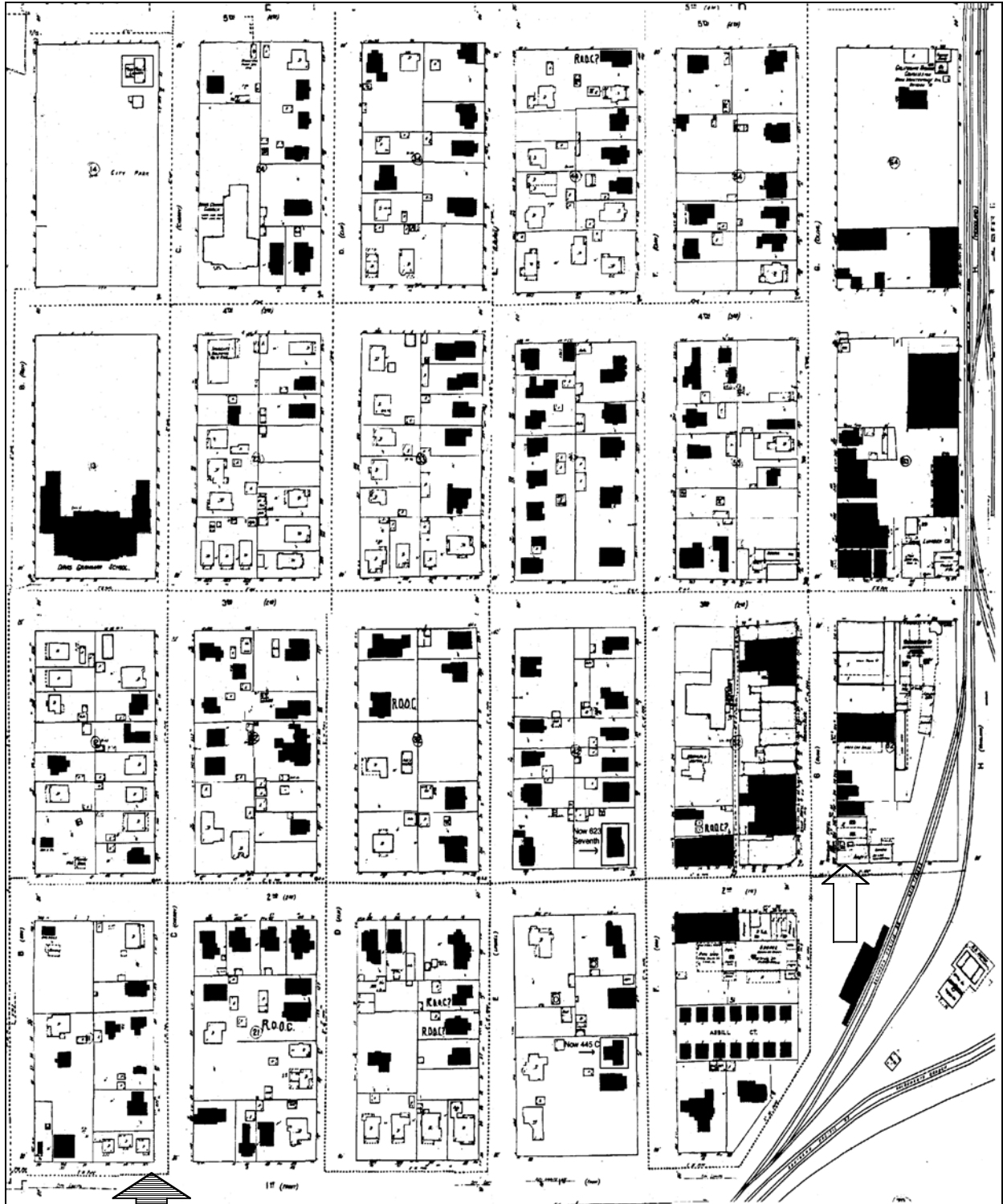
that the caption in Fig. 5.1 places the term in quotes.) By the late 1960s, though, this was no longer done.

On reflection, Livingston and Blayneys' renaming much of the original town of Davis the Core Area was a clever piece of strategic labeling. By means of this new name they sidestepped issues of what one "really" meant by such old terms as "downtown" and "business district." Instead, one was talking about something new: the CORE AREA!

Perhaps, also, this re-naming functioned in a way similar to the renaming that sometimes accompanies a person who undergoes a radical change of identity and self-conception, typically a radical religious transformation of identity. Among many examples, Malcolm Little became Malcolm X, the intent being to repudiate his now-rejected previous identity. In a similar fashion, Davis elites broke with and rejected their "old fashioned" and out-of-date past by going from the stodgy "downtown" to the hip Core Area.

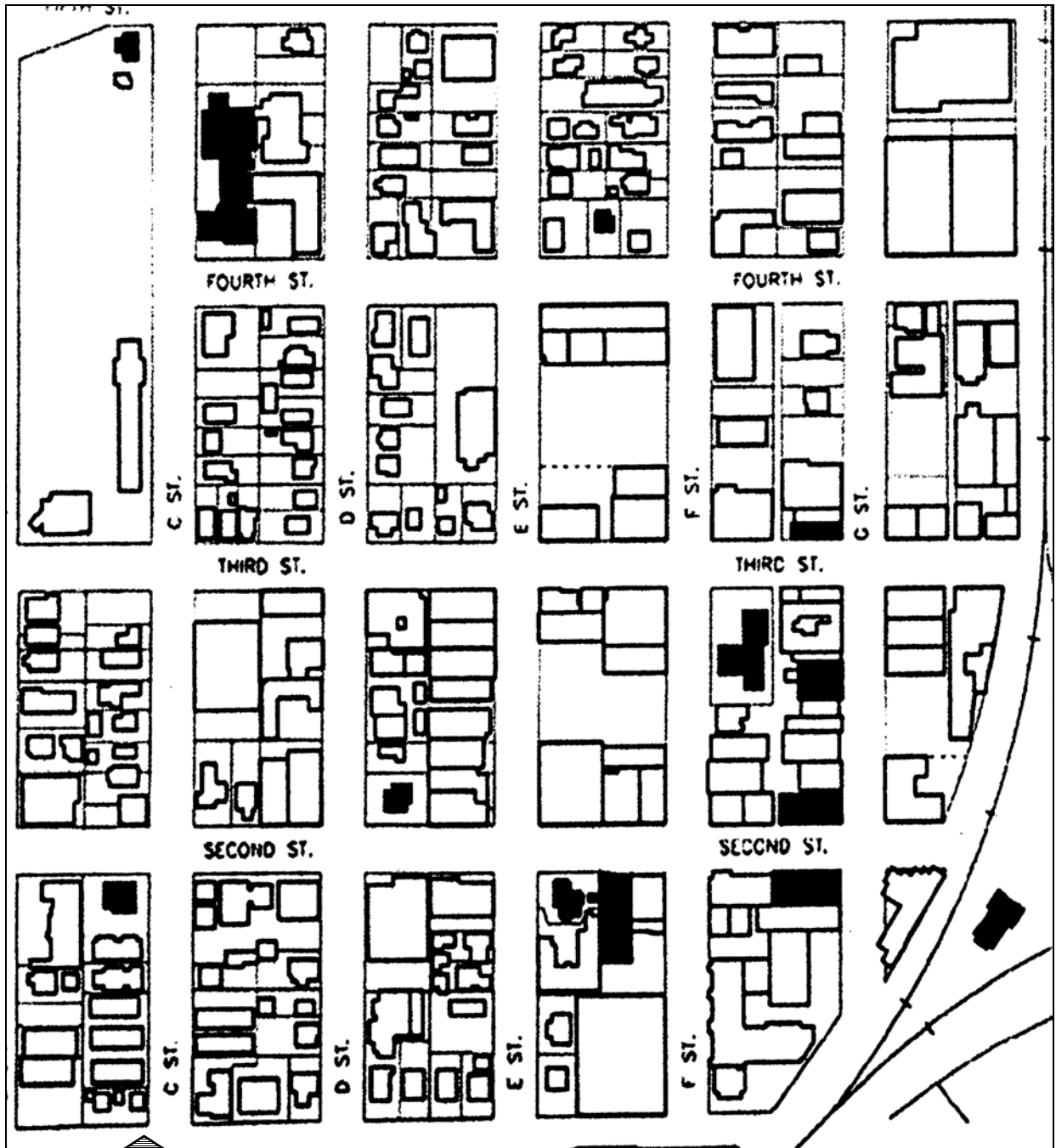


5. 1. May 18, 1961, *Davis Enterprise* photograph and caption reporting a plan for constructing a Davis downtown to be named the "Core Area."



5.2. 1945 Sanborn "footprint" map of the old downtown and adjacent Davis (First to Fifth, B to G streets). Buildings with black footprints were no longer there in January, 2000 (Lofland, 2000: 7). (The Terminal Building was, of course, still there. In the lower right, a white arrow points to it.)





5.3. 2000 map of the same area as shown in Fig. 5.2 (First to Fifth, B to G), showing the footprints of the buildings that replaced those existing in 1945. (This map is reproduced from City of Davis, 2001: 25. (The footprints in black are "Designated Historical Resources."))

## 2) DEMOLISHING PRE-WAR DAVIS

If one is going to build a new downtown (aka Core Area) consisting of Corbusier-style high-rises surrounded by large parking lots (which is what the plan showed in its schematics), then one has to get rid of the old town. And this Davis did—with seeming vengeance.

Curious about just how thorough the demolitionists of the 1950s-70s had been, in January, 2000 I used the 1945 Sanborn fire insurance map of Davis to count how many of those 1945 buildings were standing in 2000.

In 1945, the entire town had, by my count, 583 buildings (excluding garages and such). In December of 2000, I went lot-to-lot with the twelve sheets of the Sanborn map in hand and I counted 330 buildings as still there, a survival rate of 57% (Lofland 2001, 7).

However, the survival rates of the four areas of this pre-war town were quite different. If we define the "downtown" as the twenty-four blocks bounded by First and Fifth and B and G, 86 of the 233 buildings existing in 1945 had survived to 2000, a survival rate of 37%.

Fig. 5.2 shows the 1945 Sanborn map for the downtown as just defined. **The buildings with footprints in black—147 of them—no longer existed or were moved outside the downtown by the year 2000.** Notice that fourteen of the twenty-four blocks were either substantially or totally cleared for new construction. **Stated most simply, about half of the downtown area was cleared and some two-thirds of the buildings were removed.**

In order to appreciate just how fundamentally Davis people constructed a new downtown, one needs to compare the 1945 footprint map in Fig. 5.2 with the footprint map of the same area drawn in 2000. The 2000 footprint map is shown in Fig. 5.3. The major contrasts are that in 2000:

- (1) there were many fewer buildings than in 1945,
- (2) the many fewer buildings were much larger than before, and
- (3) large areas were left open and surfaced to become parking lots.

The maps reproduced in Figs. 5.2 and 5.3 provide accurate overview summaries of the downtown/Core Area transformation, but they fail to capture the "grit and crunch" of this dramatic change. Let me therefore try to provide at least a glimpse of these aspects of the process.

While pursuing this research, Debbie Davis, editor of the *Davis Enterprise*, gave me 83 huge bound volumes of the *Davis Enterprise* spanning late 1966 to 1983. Around the same time, a clutch of original *Davis Enterprises* covering much of the period from the late 1950s through 1966 were donated to the Hattie Weber Museum of Davis, named the Hubert Heitman Collection, and were available to me for reading and scanning.

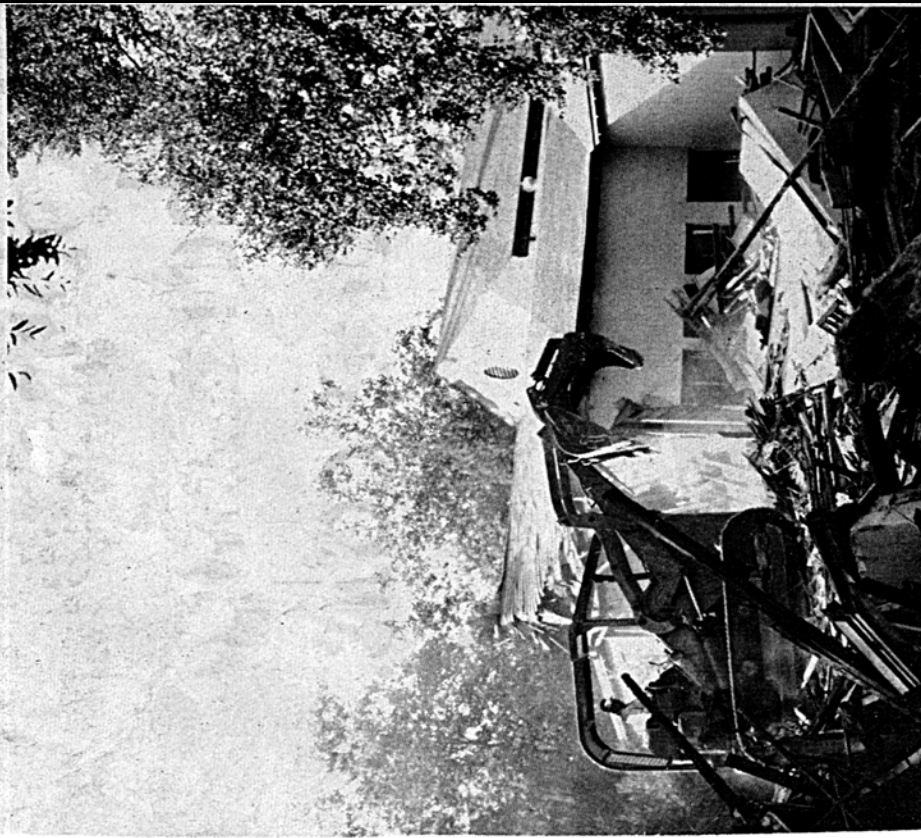
Reading these papers, I encountered dozens of stories on, and pictures of, the demolition of old buildings and the construction of new ones. It is not practical or useful here to reproduce this mass of pictures and stories, but I do want to provide a few, particularly of the demolitions, in order to convey the sense of the period—the grit and crunch of it. These few, representative episodes of demolition are given in Figures 5.4 through 5.11. Since each has a revealing caption from the period, each speaks for itself.

5.4. Davis Enterprise, May 21, 1958.

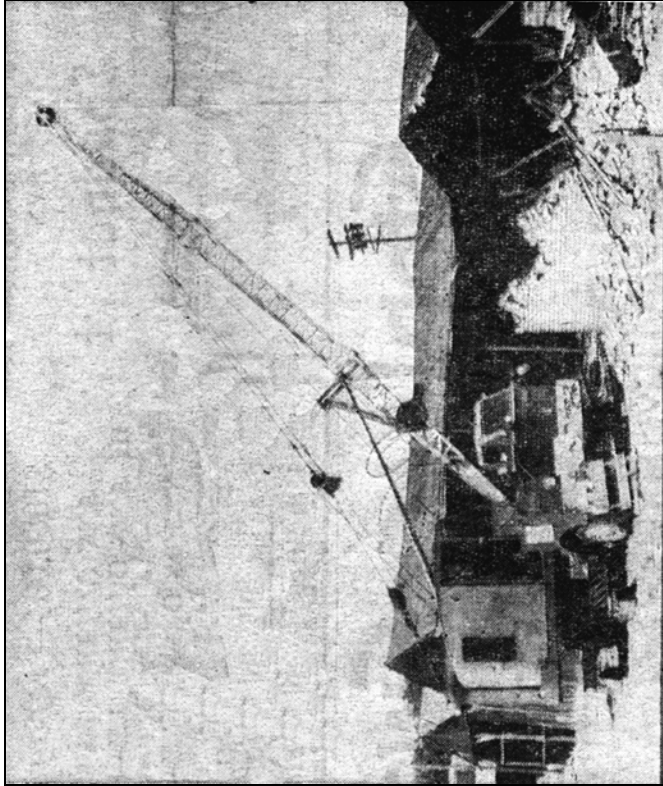


**DOWN SHE GOES!**—Scenes such as this will be a commonplace sight in Davis if and when a downtown redevelopment project gets under way, clearing out old substandard buildings to make way for the “new look” in the city’s central business district. Shown here is the giant wrecking crane as it started smashing and crashing an old residence at 229 F street to complete clearing the site for the construction of the Winger department store and Ben Franklin Variety store, due for completion in September. The residence, smashed to bits and its debris hauled away in huge trucks for burning, was occupied for many years by Joe Huberty, former Davis constable, and his family. (“Ed” Cottle Photo)

**COMING DOWN** — Razing of the old Central School where many a Davisite, both young and old, studied the three R's is under way. In its place will rise an Arden-Mayfair supermarket and a row of shops. First to go is the east wing and in the top picture the destructive force of the wrecking machine is portrayed. In the bottom photo the jaws of the monster are poised to wreak their havoc.



5.6. Davis Enterprise, September 21, 1966.



**REDEVELOPMENT**—Another big stride toward redevelopment of the downtown area of Davis is underway as this old building, the former Henry Oeste warehouse near Fourth and H streets, falls to the giant blows of demolition machinery. Rising on the site in the immediate future will be a modern building to cost around \$22,000 which will house the Nicholson Plumbing firm's operations. Miles Nicholson said he believes the old Oeste warehouse was one of the oldest structures in Davis. It was put together with square-cut nails used in the era of a past century and wreckers found the floors, of redwood, had been laid directly on sand, surviving more than three-quarters of a century without signs of termites or decay.

(Harry Low Photo)

5.5. Davis Enterprise, July 9, 1959.



5.7. Davis Enterprise, July 24, 1967.

**FEW TEARS SHED** — Foster's Freeze at the corner of Second and F Streets, for 17 years a favorite place for a quick sandwich and the number one spot in Davis for girl watching was demolished early today. Clay Quessenberry,

owner of the property will erect a modern two story building on the site. Shown operating the bulldozer is Roy Nielsen of Nielsen's Demolition Contractors of Sacramento. — Enterprise Photo



5.8. Davis Enterprise, December 14, 1967.

**JUNK YARD**—If you think you have ever had your yard piled with junk, take a careful look at this competitor. This F street house has trash blocking the door of the front porch.

Litterbugs do not live here. The house is one of the last homes on the site of the new E-F Street parking lot between 3rd and 4th Streets. —Enterprise Photo



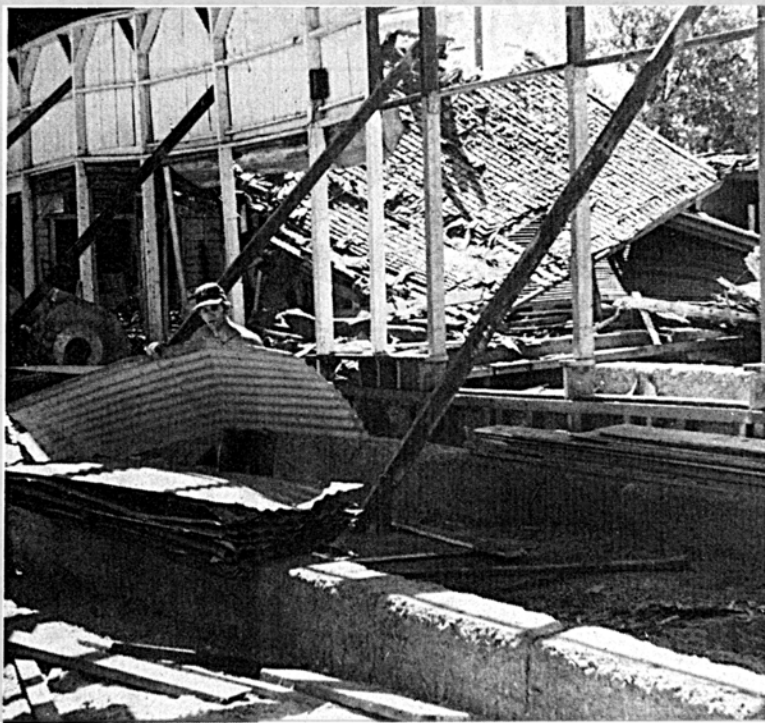


5.9.  
*Davis  
Enterprise*  
July 22,  
1970.

**STEEL AGAINST WOOD** — Downtown Davis is taking on a new look these days as the bulldozers moved in yesterday and started the demolition of old residences on

E street to make way for the new Bank of America building.

ENTERPRISE PHOTO



## Historic warehouse crumbles

5.10. *Davis  
Enterprise*,  
July 13,  
1972

Demolition began Wednesday of an historic grain warehouse that has been standing at the intersection of Fourth Street and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks here since 1908.

The building—or what's left of it—is owned by Raymond Donnell, who operated a business out of it from 1923 to 1967, a 45-year period Donnell thinks might be a record for businessmen in Davis.

Donnell bought the building in 1923 from its original owners, Walter and Jennie Read, who used the place for grain storage and almond hulling. Donnell turned it into a feed business, storing and selling grain to the many livestock owners in the area.

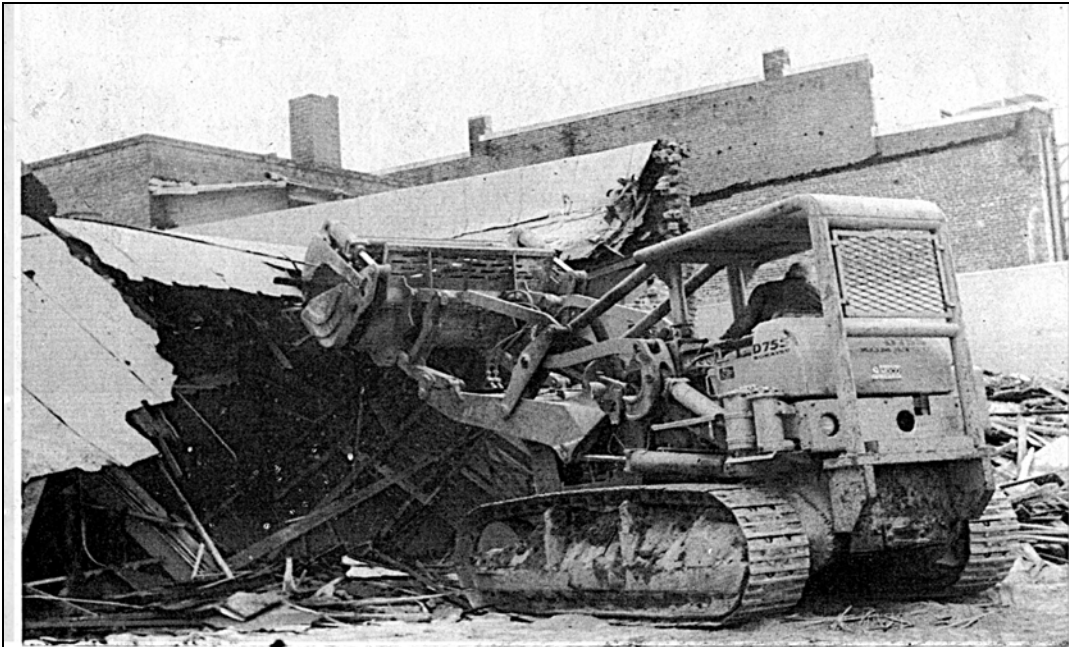
“When you've been in one spot for 45 years you do get attached to it,” Donnell commented ruefully. “But you can't live forever, I couldn't carry on, business changed and it's just one of those things.”

HISTORICAL RUINS are all that's left of a 66-year-old grain warehouse now in the process of being demolished by building contractor Jack G. Hayes. Owned by long-time Davis businessman Raymond Donnell, the building has been standing since 1908 and was used by Donnell from 1923 until 1967. New building codes have

declared the structure unsafe, and because remodeling the place is too expensive Donnell is having it torn down. Pictured helping demolish the place is Joel Vance, one of the workmen put on the job by contractor Hayes.

ENTERPRISE PHOTO

Demolition of the building will be completed in mid-August.



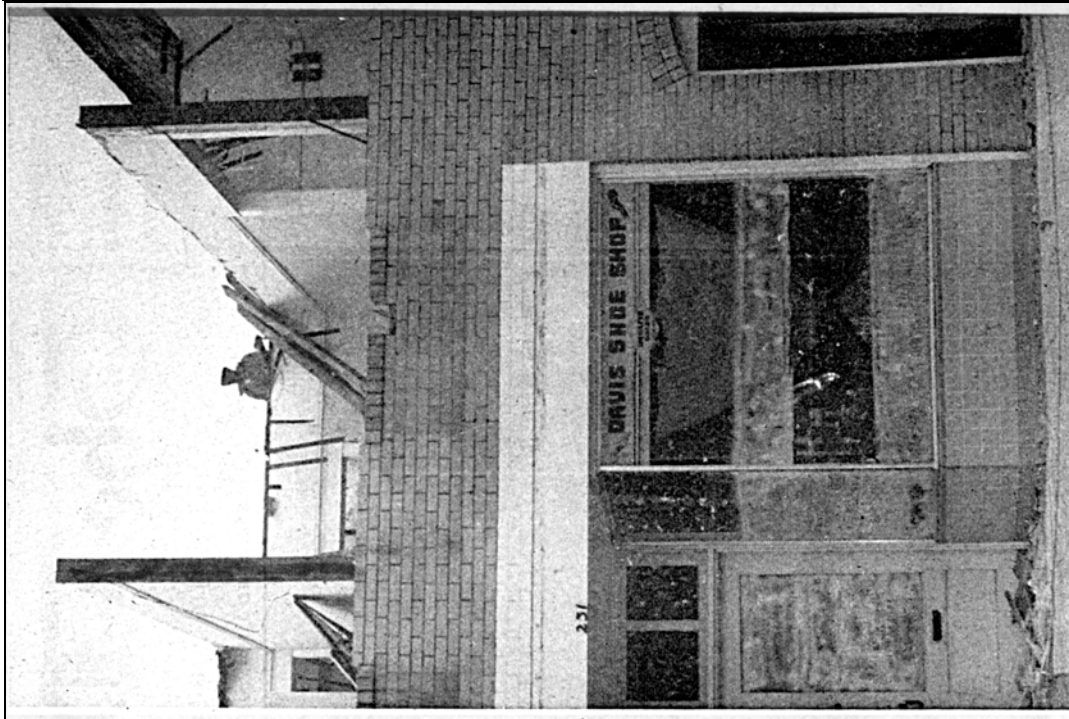
5.11 Davis Enterprise, March 1, 1973.

**DIME STORE DEMOLISHED**

THE CAPITOL Wrecking and Building Co. of West Sacramento bit into the old Riley's Five and Ten building at 233-35 G St. this morning, and by nightfall today the structure should be gone. Chief Building Official Doran Maxwell estimates the venerable landmark is 50-70 years old. There are currently no specific plans to replace the structure, owned by Warren Real Estate and Jim Adams of the Adams Construction Co. Adams told the Enterprise

this morning they had tenants for, and plans for a new building nearly approved when the City Council slapped a development freeze on the whole block four months ago. Since then the tenants have left, and the plans are obsolete. The freeze was lifted Feb. 20 and now a new building depends on what new tenants want, said Adams.

ENTERPRISE PHOTO



Enterprise photo

**WRECKED BUILDING**

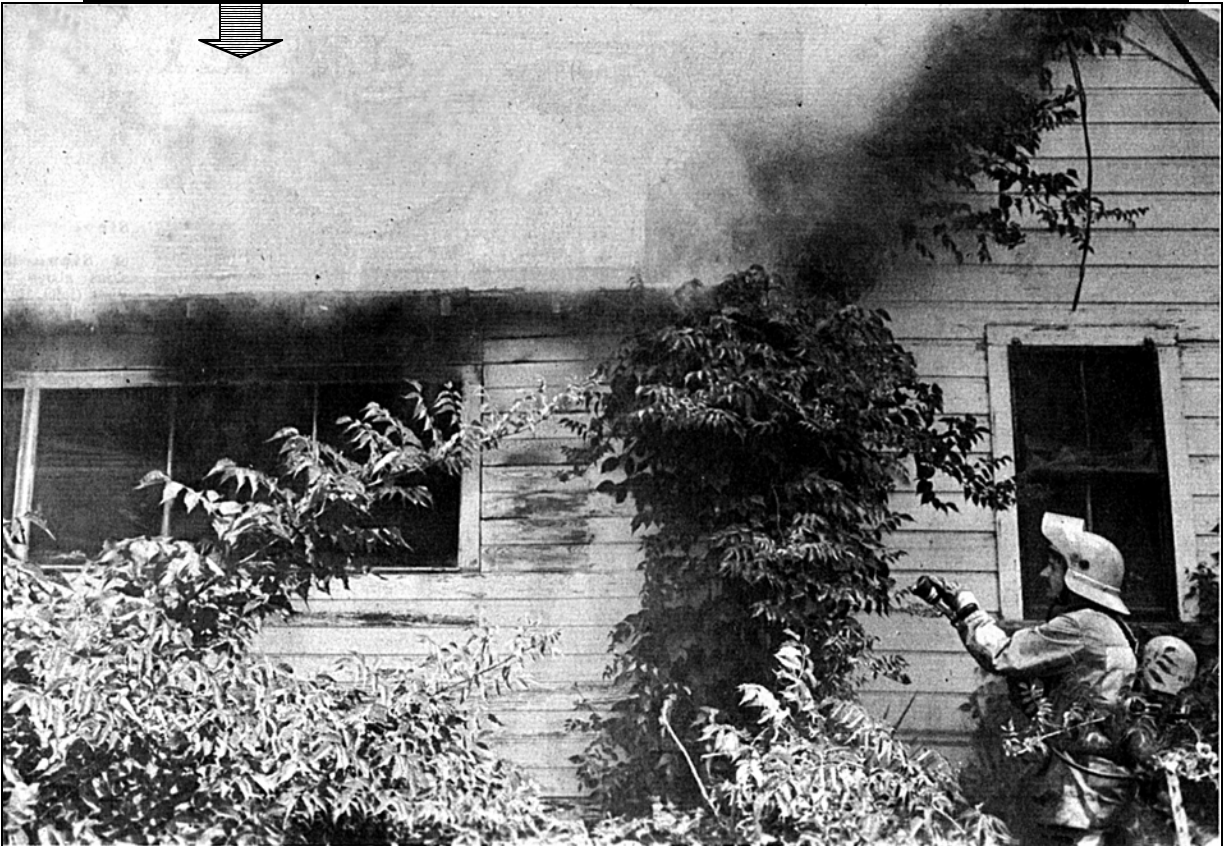
A WORKER peers down at the ruins of the partially demolished Davis Shoe Shop, 231 G St. The California Building Wrecking Co. of West Sacramento began demolition Friday to make way for a new two-story commercial building on the site. The remainder of the old shoe repair shop will be leveled when local rains cease. The new building will be built this Spring by Davis realtor Robert Warren and contractor James Adams.

5.12. Davis Enterprise, April 1, 1974.

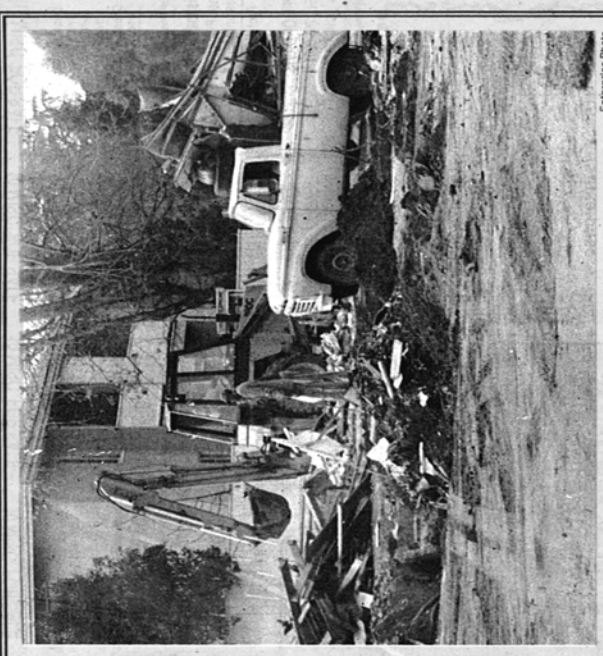




5.13. *Davis Enterprise*, June 22, 1979. Notice that the second and third caption columns are reversed.



The Davis Fire Department is deliberately burning a Davis home at 423 F St. so firefighters can gain experience. But don't worry because the house was condemned and uninhabited. Enterprise Photo



Enterprise Photo  
Bulldozer clears debris at site of Al Hatton's Chevron-Standard, Russell Boulevard and B Street.

So long, Al Hatton

## Davis landmark razed

Al Hatton's Chevron-Standard station bit the dust Tuesday. But Hatton, who had known of the impending doom for the past year, wasn't getting too sentimental. "I appreciate all the business over the years. It's been a good life," he said Tuesday.

Hatton has peddled gas on the corner of Russell Boulevard and B Street for the past 29 years. There has been a gas station on that corner for at least the last 50 years.

But Tuesday marked the end of an era as wreckers leveled out the last vestiges of a familiar Davis landmark. Hatton said Chevron-Standard decided to give up its lease with the owner of the land, who resides in San Jose.

He wasn't sure why. "Standard's closing a lot of its small stations," said Hatton.

It used to be a rest stop on the old Highway 40, between Sacramento and San Francisco. Hatton recalls when a restaurant was located on the site and when Highway 99W ran past as well.

There's not much to say now, said Hatton, the apparent victim of corporate change.

He said he's going to relax this month, and then beginning next year he'll start looking around for something else to do.

5.14 *Davis Enterprise*, December 19, 1979.

### 3) G STREET AND THE TERMINAL BUILDING

While developers were spiritedly tearing down residences and constructing commercial buildings in the new Core Area, Davis' original "Main Street" (named Olive in 1868 and changed to G in the early 1920s) was going into decline. And, with it, the Terminal Building at the center of the original town at Second and G.

After World War II, G Street became an embarrassment to local elites. In his 1959 farewell speech to the Chamber of Commerce, departing city manager Frank Fargo admonished the assembled business leaders, "You must clean up G Street, make it look more modern." The news report on this luncheon continued:

One guest in the audience said, "G Street now looks like the backdrop for a western TV show." Another said, "Why not an editorial about our business section called "Gunfight at the Bar B Saloon" (*Davis Enterprise*, January 15, 1959).

Fargo further proclaimed: "You need to get your redevelopment plan going. It is vital. New businesses won't move into an area that is so run down."

In a speech to the Davis Area chamber of commerce in January, 1961, planning consultant Lawrence Livingston declared, "the downtown Davis appearance is not too attractive . . ." Davis lacks "the special character of a college town center" (*Davis Enterprise*, January 19, 1961). The February, 1961 report of the Core Area Citizen's Advisory Committee characterized the "business district" as "presently drab and uninviting" (*Davis Enterprise*, February 2, 1961). In the "semi-final 'do or die'" report of the planners to citizens on July 31 of this same year, the vision was presented as a stark contrast with the "admittedly drab and uninviting appearance" of the downtown (Woodward, 1961).

Subsequent redevelopment actions in the key 200 block of G Street included tearing down most of the buildings on its east side, just north of the Terminal Building. Figure 5.15 shows that east side of G circa 1945. Only one of the ten buildings pictured in that photograph was still standing in 2001. (The Terminal Building is on the right.)



Fig. 5.15. East side of G Street, circa 1945. (Excerpt from Eastman B-2123.)

In addition, about half the buildings on the west side of G were demolished (Fig. 5.2). (Two of those demolitions are pictured in Fig. 5.9 and 5.10). This, though, was not enough to turn things around.

In 1973, downtown property owners announced what the *Enterprise* headlined as a "bold plan to pep up G Street." Actions included new facades, which the *Enterprise* described as "a facelift to dying G Street" in the hope of "a revival of the old shopping district" (October 13, 1973). Basic change was elusive, however. As late as 1982, a merchant left a G Street location because "the whole street has become tacky" (Joan Callaway, *Centering Gallery, 231 G, Davis Enterprise*, July 23, 1982). There was, in particular, concern over the recent opening of a video game arcade.

This is to say, the decline seen in the Terminal Building in the decades after World War II was part of the general sense of out-of-dateness and blight imputed to the entire G Street area in which it was situated.

The Terminal Building was owned jointly by George Tingus and James Belenis until Tingus bought out Belenis in 1946. It was subsequently deeded, in sequence, to these people and corporate entities:

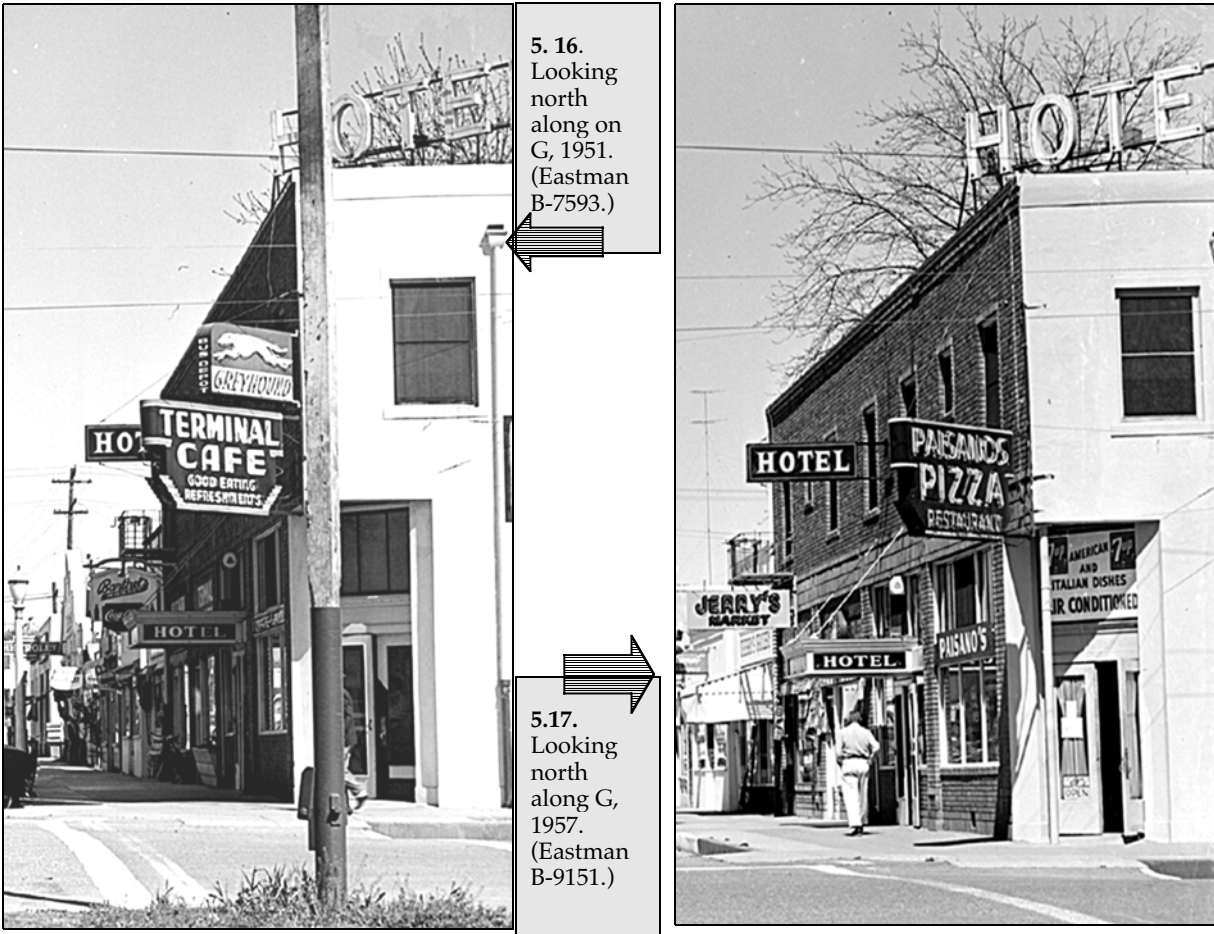
Childs and Nicolson, a general partnership, 1958  
Agnes Ramsey Barr, 1965  
Sarah Jane Eberle and O. J. Ramsey, 1968  
Antique Bizarre, Inc, a California corporation, 1972  
Milton J. Eberle and Sarah Jane Eberle, 1977  
Aggie Enterprises, 1977

For the purposes of this chapter, the list of owners ends in 1977. But for the sake of foreshadowing the longer term that I will treat in the next chapter, here is the rest of the list of owners:

To Lee-Jing Chen and Chao Chen (husband and wife), Yank Wang and Liang Wang (husband and wife), Fook, Shui and Lam, Pui Kwan (husband and wife) (each of the three couples with "an undivided one-third interest"), 1984  
from Fook-Shui Lam and Pui Kwan Kwok to Aggie Enterprises, 1997  
from Liang Wang, individually and as widow of Yank Wang to Aggie Enterprises, 1997  
from Lee-Jing Chen and Chao Chen, Trustees of the Chen Family Trust, established April 27, 1990 to Aggie Enterprises, 1997 (Fidelity National Title Insurance Company, 2001).

#### **4) 1950s-60s DRIFT**

Along with much of the rest of G Street, including the revered Anderson Bank Building, the Terminal Building appeared to "drift" without clear character or identity over much of 1950s and 1960s. However, the hotel still operated and a succession of retail entities and restaurants occupied the first floor spaces (Figs. 5.16, 5.17).



5. 16.  
Looking  
north  
along  
G,  
1951.  
(Eastman  
B-7593.)

5. 17.  
Looking  
north  
along  
G,  
1957.  
(Eastman  
B-9151.)

A stretch of sidewalk with no buildings was created when the structures north of the Terminal Building were demolished in the 1960s in order to create a parking lot in front of Davis Lumber. As an amenity, the sidewalk area was slightly widened and a fountain and other landscaping added in order to create what was named "the G Street Plaza."

Perhaps the most prominent and persistent early use of this Plaza was the vigil held there for 302 weeks, from March, 1967 to January, 1973, the end of the Vietnam war (*Davis Enterprise*, January 24, 1973). For whatever reasons, the *Enterprise* published a fair number of pictures of this vigil. We can see the Terminal Building in several of them, serving as a backdrop and itself a silent witness to a profound American struggle. The first of these 302 events—and showing the Building—is pictured in Fig. 5.18.

In the 1967 picture reproduced in Fig. 5.18, we see that the ugly "town and country" style shade structure has been added to the western façade of the building. Oddly, City records contain documents on many modifications to the building, but no there is no record of this one. Perhaps no permit was ever taken out, or it was lost, both quite possible in that free-wheeling period. In whatever event, the best guess is that the shade structure was put there in about 1960.

## 5) END OF AN ERA

James Belenis, one of the original partners who built and operated the Terminal Building, died in 1959, suggesting that an era had ended. (Fig. 5.19).



**Fig. 5. 18.**  
Davis residents conduct a vigil for peace in Vietnam on the G Street Plaza by the Terminal Building. (*Davis Enterprise*, March 16, 1967.)



## 6) NEW SEVENTIES IDENTITIES AND THE ANTIQUE BIZARRE ERA

As the area west of G Street was being built anew in the 1960s-70s using "modern" or even "futuristic" conceptions, G Street itself was moving toward a "funky," "hip," and rather "low rent" working-people identity that moved beyond blight embarrassment. E Street and its environments centered on middle class institutions such as banks and mortgage companies, while G Street was gravitating to alternative and working-class culture.

Signal in this was the opening of the Natural Food Works in 1971 (Fig. 5. 20). One of the earliest organic food stores in the United States, it operated in the northern-most G Street space of the Terminal Building until evicted by demolition in 2000. (Relocated to 624 Fourth Street, it acquired the distinction of being one of the longest operating retailers in Davis. It was rivaled only by the very early Davis Lumber and Hardware [which arguably died when it rejected its Davis name and became Ace Hardware in the late 1990s], by Carousel Stationery, and by deLuna Jewelers.)

At about the same time, the then-owners of the Terminal Building seemed to catch the new spirit of the immediate area and of the times by opening a slightly "alternative" eating and drinking establishment named "The Antique Bizarre." Over the decade of the 1970s, it would be a combination working-class hangout and young-band performance venue. Known as the "A.B." to its many fans and habitués, it became a kind of legendary place. At the celebration of the building held on the G Street Plaza, June 11, 2000, invited and open mike speakers alike spoke frequently and fondly of their experiences in and memories of the A.B. era. (This event is depicted in Chapter 9.)

## James Belenis, Well Known Davis Restaurateur, Dies

Many friends and relatives in Davis this week mourned the death of James Belenis, 69, a resident and business man here for 46 years and closely associated with the growth of the community from a village to its present size and importance.

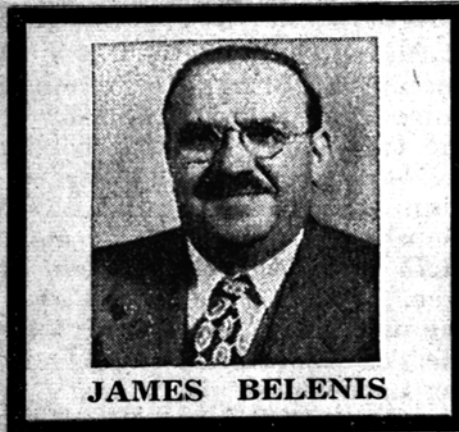
Mr. Belenis, ill with a heart ailment, had been under care in the Woodland Clinic hospital for several weeks before death came Sunday night, Sept. 20, 1959.

Trisagion (Rosary) was said Tuesday night at the Davis Funeral Chapel and at 1 p.m. Wednesday a short service was held for local friends at the chapel followed by funeral rites in the Greek Orthodox Church at Alhambra and F streets in Sacramento. Interment followed in East Lawn cemetery, in that city.

Born in Greece in 1889, James Belenis, at the tender age of 16 came by himself to the United States and found a job as a candy maker in Quincy, Mass. When war broke out between Greece and Turkey, he returned to his native land to fight under the Greek flag, returning to the U.S. following the war's end.

In 1919 he came to Davis and soon was associated with George Tingus in building the structure at 2nd and G streets where the two men operated the Terminal Cafe, later adding a second story for hotel rooms. In 1946 he opened the 2nd street restaurant known as Phil's Grill, later adding the annex known as the Brandin' Iron.

He retired in 1956 from active operation of his restaurant business, turning it over to his son, George J. Belenis. But, always a builder and planner at heart, the father was not content with idle retirement and at the time of his last illness he was having built the Bel-Arms apartments at 1st and C streets. That enterprise is due for completion about October 1 and will stand as a memorial to the Greek immigrant boy who



**JAMES BELENIS**

came to America and carved out a successful career for himself.

Mr. Belenis was a charter member of the Davis Chamber of Commerce and was a member of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek fraternity, Order of Ahepa.

Immediate surviving relatives include the widow, Mrs. Stella Belenis, residing at the family residence, 619 East 8th street, Davis; children, Miss Peggy Belenis, George J. and Nick D. Belenis all of Davis; daughters Mrs. Bessie Konaris of San Francisco, Mrs. Helen Gaines of Stockton, Mrs. Evelyn Jouganatos of Sacramento and Mrs. Cally Anagnos of Lodi; eight grandsons and two nephews, James Belenis of Quincy, Mass., and Phil Belenis of Minneapolis, Minn.

Pallbearers were John Shokos, George Tingus, both of Davis, James Kareofelas and Jim Pappas of Woodland, George Skinas of San Francisco and George Triphon of Sacramento.

5.19. End of an Era. Obituary of one of the builders of the Terminal Building, Davis Enterprise, September 24, 1959.

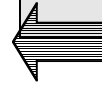


PROPRIETOR Bob Black points out the wide variety of nuts and beans which his natural foods store sells in bulk. As can be seen, his store makes maximum use of a limited

amount of space and has everything from "crunchy" pecan granola to wide-mouth jars.

ENTERPRISE PHOTO

5.20. *Davis Enterprise*, November 17, 1971. Just a few months after this photograph was taken, Bob Black would be elected to the Davis City Council in a sea change in Davis politics and serve as the Mayor of Davis in 1976-78.



The images presented in Figures 5. 21 through 5. 34 have been selected with the aim of evoking a sense of the spirit of the A.B. era. It is notable, I think, that most of these images are reporters' stories and photographers' pictures from the pages of the *Davis Enterprise*. Many of these are poignant and even touching. The fact that a local newspaper created them speaks well for the community sensitivity of the journalism of the period—and the judgement of *Enterprise* editors.



ANTIQUE BIZARRE'S most loyal and dedicated fan, Joe Irwin, is pictured on far right with the championship

team. B league city softball champions are (left to right) Lee Sessars, Ed Cornado, Bill Maloney, Specer Spece,

Mitch Mitchell, Ed Boosebark, Jim Willot, Paul McDonagh, Bernie Phipps, Terry Maple and Gary Mitchell

(4). Failing to make it were Peter 'Bobe' Barton, team's leading home run hitter and the Dodge boys.



5.21. The report accompanying this *Enterprise* photograph asks how was "a loosely organized bunch of drunks" transformed into a "highly coordinated, fast-driving, hard hitting group of drunks?" (August 1, 1973).



5.22. *Davis Enterprise*, September 26, 1973. We might assume that the major historical errors with which this ad is shot through is intentional irony and flamboyance.



**Get it on . . . Sleep it off**  
**ALL IN THE SAME BUILDING**

When hostleries were a must for the weary traveler . . . your Hotel Aggie was serving the public. Opened in 1890, the Hotel Aggie has seen the roaring days of the gold rush . . . the disappearance of the horse and buggy . . . the increasing popularity of the automobile and the establishment of the ultimate in travel . . . the jet plane . . . then came the dune buggy on the moon. And we are still here . . . Come relax with us . . . at the Aggie . . . refresh yourself at the Antique Bizarre. We are ready to serve your needs. Few establishments are so closely connected with Davis . . .

**THE HOTEL AGGIE and**  
**The ANTIQUE BIZARRE**

**Second and G Streets In Davis Since 1890 Davis, California**

.. Bob Yohn, manager of the Antique Bizarre, says: Beer, wine, live entertainment and movies..  
.. A family Day on Sunday, at reduced rates: \$1.25 on a large pizza, 75 cents off on a medium-size pizza and 50 cents off on a small pizza.  
.. We are open from 11:30 a.m. to 2 a.m.  
.. We serve breakfasts, omelettes, spaghetti, steaks, sandwiches, hamburgers.  
.. Our specialty is the Antique Bizarre: A sourdough garlic bun, with one third pound of hamberger, a strip of bacon, and a slab of sharp cheddar cheese.  
.. HORSE BOARDING: At the (AB) Please call 756-2948.

5.23. The March 15, 1976 *Davis Enterprise* featured the hotel portion of the Terminal Building, which had now been renamed the Hotel Aggie/Aggie Hotel.

PAGE 4 THE DAVIS ENTERPRISE, DAVIS, CALIF. MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1976

## Hotel Aggie - Davis landmark

By G.L. SILVERMAN

The Hotel Aggie looks like the kind of place an unsuccessful traveling salesman might use for a flop, but some visiting professors wouldn't stay anywhere else.

The decor is of the linoleum-and-metal-bedstead style, without even those lousy motel watercolor reproductions to break the monotony. Still, several harried mothers dreamily think of it as an escape-hatch paradise where they can stare quietly at the bare walls for 24 hours, away from the hassles of home life when they've had-it-up-to-here.

It's warm in the winter and warmer in summer. The noise of the jukebox, country-western singers and clientele of the Antique Bizarre downstairs wafts upwards into some of the rooms until 2 a.m. Yet long-term residents consider this interesting and lively, a plus.

The location at Second and G Streets catches the sights and sounds of boozey action from bars on two other corners in addition to drinking spots up the street. Trains screech into the depot across the parking lot. Hotel Aggie guests, however, point to the convenient location. Almost anything a person might want, they explain, is only a few steps away.

### Home away from home

To some it's home, a roost they return to after they mess up elsewhere. For others it's their first contact with Davis. When they reminisce about it later, they nod seriously and tell you they

were comfortable there. They convey the feeling that they would never shell out for a posh motel as long as the Hotel Aggie stands.

It's inexpensive, ideal for visiting relatives who never seem to complain about the far from luxurious accommodations, no matter what they've been used to in their travels. The most unlikely types have said they appreciate the "typical northern California" flavor, loose and tinged with an aura of the old west. There is a get-down atmosphere that gets to folks, even though the bathrooms and showers are down the hall.

### Foreigners intrigued

Most of the people who stay in the 22 rentable rooms (there are also two much-coveted apartments) are transients, including those waiting to catch a train. Many are students or newly-arrived residents who remain until they find the right apartment or roomie. Owners Milt and Jane Eberle say a lot of foreign students are especially pleased with the hotel. To some of them, the appointments are de luxe.

One from the Middle East thought it remarkable that the small hotel-size bar of soap was left in his room. When he checked out, he asked if he could take the remainder of the little bar with him, for friends at home. Eberle presented him with four extras, and the fellow was beside himself with delight.

### A public service

There are rarely many vacancies, although the Eberles always find room for people brought to the hotel by the police, STEAC or the Salvation Army.

"They're mostly people who are down on their luck," Eberle explained. "One night the police sent a woman whose boyfriend dumped her on the highway." The shaken woman was not only housed but given coffee and solace by the managers.

Another time, a man who was stuck here on Christmas day looked in vain for a restaurant that was open. Sensitive to his plight, the managers shared their Christmas dinner.

### Miss Dora

The present manager, Dora Donham, will retire in July and nobody can imagine the place without here. "Miss Dora," as everyone calls her, ran the hotel with Jessie Burns for almost 15 years, until "Miss Jessie" retired. They remained fast friends and have high hopes of traveling together now they both will have the time.

It's obvious to anybody who has stayed in the hotel for more than a day that Miss Dora deserves a rest from her everlasting rounds of cleaning, managing, waking people up and mothering.

Missy Rush, 18, now a cook at the Antique Bizarre, shared a room with co-worker Cheri Eberle (a daughter of the owners) for over two months, during which time Miss Dora was "just like a mom" to her. "I felt protected there," she said.

The sweet motherly qualities of Miss Dora's personality are tempered by the kind of gimlet eye most commonly seen on hardened house dicks. She has a perpetual twinkle, one guest noted, but you'd hate to be the one to disappoint her by unseemly conduct.

Hard cases melt into sheepish kids before Miss Dora. One man said, "I always felt embarrassed whenever I went up the stairs if I wasn't actually living there."

#### Toeing the invisible line

Miss Dora never deliberately snoops; it's just that nothing gets by her. She gives the impression that you can go to hell in your own way, if that's your pleasure, but don't get sloppy and annoy anybody else. Her own patience and kindness have made life easier for a lot of lonely people.

Although she's nobody's judge, people respect her and value her good opinion. "Whenever I took a girl up to my room," remembered a young man who was once a tenant, "even though it was just to sit and talk, I felt I had to introduce her to Miss Dora. Then it was okay. I didn't feel right otherwise."

When people find out about Miss Dora's imminent retirement, they immediately look dazed and ask, "What's gonna happen? Who they gonna get instead? Who COULD they get instead?"

The Eberles shake their heads in a gesture implying that Miss Dora is irreplaceable, and also that the Lord will provide a passable substitute. After all, the hotel has been a landmark in its present location since 1927. It has to keep going or, many folks insist, the town would collapse along with their Aunt Hester who has put up at the hotel for the past umpteen years.

#### Down by the station

Originally called the Terminal Hotel, it was built for the convenience of train travelers who had to stop overnight in Davis. George Tingus and James Belenis were partners in the enterprise when Davis was "quite a railroad center," said Mr. Tingus' wife Bess, with "as many as 18 trains coming through Davis every day."

Her husband George came here when there were only about 1,000 people. He had a restaurant below the hotel, called the Terminal Cafe, and the building looked about the same even then.

Mr. Tingus recounted that it was a home-type hotel. Both he and Jim Belenis gave it their personal attention. They were always on duty and the food was home-cooked. The university used to hold meetings there; so did various service organizations.

In addition to the corner restaurant, there were two other stores in the building: Barthel's Butcher Shop and Mrs. Irwin's gift shop. The restaurant had a beer bar, off to one side, with a special entrance.

#### Living history

The continuity of the names involved, down to this day, is reassuring to those with a feeling for history and tradition. James Belenis' son, George, is well-known here as the restaurateur "Mr. B." George's brother, Nick, is at Mr. B's Brandin' Iron along with his sister Peggy.

The Tingus' son, Jim, has a Davis men's store, and another son, John, is nearby in Sacramento, production manager for an advertising firm. George Tingus, himself, has been "more or less retired," according to his wife, but he's kept his hand in for the past six years by cooking for the Theta Xi fraternity.

George Tingus and James Belenis ran the hotel and restaurant themselves until Tingus bought Belenis out in 1943. Somewhere along the line, the name changed to Hotel Aggie, and the ownership changed hands in 1948.

#### Pleasure in people

According to Jane Eberle, the building was bought from Tingus by Nicholson (a plumber) and Chiles (more local history). Then Agnes Ramsey Barr acquired it from them. Mrs. Eberle inherited it from her mother-in 1966.

Jane Eberle minimizes the headaches inherent in any such operation, attributing the pleasure she gets from it to both customers and the managers. "The people have been darned easy to get along with," Mrs. Eberle said. "And the operation is small enough so you can get to know them. It's a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week business, but Dora and Jessie have been just great. It's made the whole thing fun."

And fun it has been, old-timers say, from the dormitory camaraderie of some years to the shenanigans of others. The simplicity and coziness of the hotel is touted by employees as well as owners.

#### Fast pitch

Late on a chilly afternoon last year, a man with the unmistakable gait of one who has spent most of his life on a horse rolled into the Antique Bizarre and inquired about a place to spend the night. Milt Eberle and the day bartender, Renee Burgoin, gave the poor fellow a pitch for the Hotel Aggie that had him swiveling his head from one to the other like a spectator at a rapid tennis match.

"Why not stay upstairs?" Eberle suggested. "Good beds, clean sheets, steam heat, and cheap."

"You won't have far to drag yourself after you get drunk in here," Ms. Bourgoin mentioned with a cynicism born of years of careful observation. "Stumble up the stairs in no time at all."

"Free music. You can hear the band in your room, easy," Eberle went on.

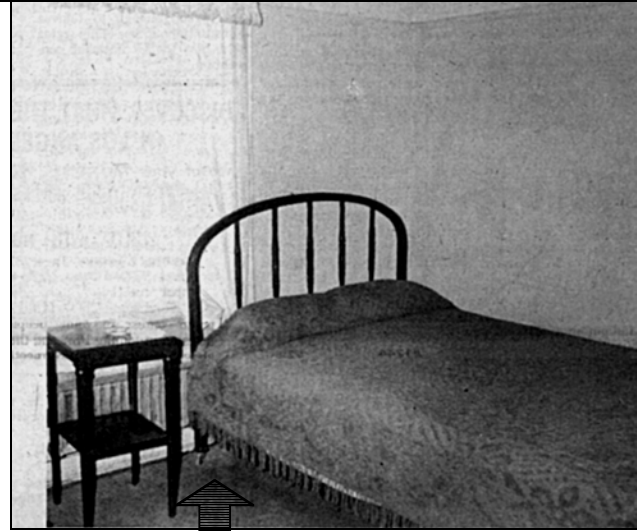
"Free coffee, too, down here or in the hall upstairs. Good grub. You'll love it," Ms. Bourgoin added.

Eberle put the clincher on it. "Where else," he demanded, spreading his arms wide to encompass the whole town, "could you get clean towels and a sweet little old lady to pat your fanny on your way to bed?"

Dazzled, the cowboy marched dutifully out and signed in.



5.24, Photo 1, captioned: "Miss Dora never deliberately snoops; it's just that nothing gets by her."



5.25. Photo 2, captioned: "Bare walls and simple decor satisfy most patrons who find the Aggie an inexpensive home or stopover between different homes and trains. Many like its old northern California flavor."



5.26, Photo 3, captioned: "Miss Dora . . . the proprietress of the Hotel Aggie will be retiring in July and many will miss her."

5.27. *Davis Enterprise*, August 26, 1976.  
Dedication of the Davis Arch Mural painted on the north wall of the Terminal Building.



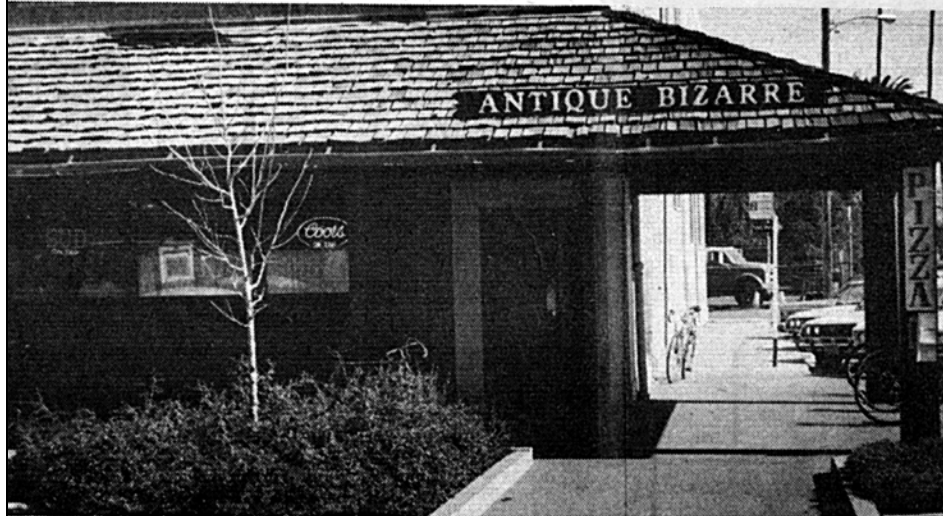
Photo by Karen Froyland

### Mural dedicated

The new mural depicting the Davis arches that graced the Second and G streets intersection from 1916 to the late 1920s was dedicated today by the Chamber of Commerce which sponsored the project. Painted on the north side of the Hotel Aggie Building on G Street just a few feet north of where the arches originally stood, the mural was described by Chamber President Al Smith as a result of cooperation between the city, UC Davis, and private citizens, representing a new spirit of unity in Davis. Shown standing in front of the mural during today's ceremonies attended by some 75 people, are Mayor Pro Tem Tom Tomasi; Karen Fox, chairman of the chamber's culture and recreation committee which organized the project; the artist, Terry Buckendorff; and Smith.



# Unique Antique Bizarre



DAVIS—The Antique Bizarre is an old fashion family restaurant with something for everyone. Live entertainment is featured nightly. Relics of the past are on display for quiet relaxation. Chess, checkers, cribbage and pool are available for a greater challenge.

There are 25 wine cocktails from which to choose, along with a selection of beer including Anchor Steam Beer. When the hunger pangs strike—try a pizza, sandwich or some homemade onion rings.

However you look at it—The Antique Bizarre is the place to be for good old fashion relaxation.

5.28. March 4, 1977 advertisement, *Davis Enterprise*.

This week the  
**Antique Bizarre**  
is featuring  
**Food, Fun, and...**

Thurs.—Scott VanLinge  
Fri.—Sibling Rivalry  
Sat.—Burgundy Bound  
Sun.—Quiet Night  
Mon.—Auditions  
Tues.—Yolo Causeway  
Wed.—Randy Fry

Corner of G & 2nd 756-7718

The advertisement features a cartoon illustration of an elderly woman with glasses, a large white wig, and a striped dress, holding a small bag. She is pointing towards the text. The text is enclosed in a rounded rectangular frame.

5.29. March 4, 1977, *Davis Enterprise* advertisement showing an active band schedule.

5.28.  
March,  
15, 1978  
Davis  
Enterprise  
story on  
a popular  
bartender  
leaving  
the A.B.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 1978

# The Antique's loss is antiquity's gain

By G.L. SILVERMAN

Every person who's spent any time at all in conversation with Antique Bizarre daytime bartender Renee Isaacs always wondered, "How long is she going to work here, for crying out loud?"

The answer is 10 years. Isaacs left Davis' landmark tavern Tuesday to work as an archaeological aide for the state of California.

This may seem a strange leap for a bartender, especially one with a BA in art from UC Davis. But Isaacs also studied anthropology and did two semesters of field work on two different sites in this valley.

In addition, she worked one summer with Earl Swanson and Jack Fitzwater of Idaho State University in "salvage work" for that state (excavating a site quickly to remove evidence for preservation; often done before heavy highway equipment devastates the site in the process of road building).

She spent another summer on the Olympic seacoast in Washington, working on an Ozette site for Washington State University. She did illustrations for the department of anthropology here and at Idaho State, and she was a medical illustrator for both UCD and the San Francisco Medical School.

"And then," Isaacs laughs, "I did 10 years of graduate work at the Antique Bizarre for my honorary degree in psychology!"

That degree might be a joke, but her informal qualifications for it aren't. In addition to dispensing beer and wine, Isaacs has provided a sympathetic ear and hard advice for bar "regulars," most of whom were on record as being in love with her.

One of the more familiar sights in town was a lineup of guys perched on barstools, gazing at her like a corral full of sick calves. When Renee Bourgoïn married former Enterprise photographer Paul Isaacs, the lovelorn moans echoed dismally all through town.

Even tourists weren't immune.

The story is told of a typical camera-breasted seersucker husband who stopped in for a beer one hot day. He perched on a barstool, with his eagle-eyed wife next to him, and did a double-take as he glanced at the picture of the nude hanging over the bar.

His reaction was commonplace, providing much entertainment for the regulars, because the lady in the picture is a redhead, bearing a slight resemblance to Isaacs.

The customer's eyes kept shifting furtively back and forth from the painting to Renee Isaacs. Finally, when his wife went to visit another section of the tavern, the tourist turned to a regular and whispered, "Is that picture of HER?"

"Why'n't you ast her?" was the amused reply. But by the time the wife returned, the gentleman still hadn't screwed up enough courage.

Actually, says Isaacs, "That painting was done by the mother of Nick Frisch, who managed the Antique before I came." She worked with Frisch for a spell, and now he's taking her place behind the bar.

And the model for that painting? If it isn't Renee Isaacs, who is it?

Now she can tell: "The one who posed for it was Nick's father!"

All in the family, indeed.

By this time, Isaacs is glad to leave, although she admits to mixed emotions:

"I'll miss the regulars, but I'm looking forward more than I can say to being outdoors. Besides, for the past 10 years, my vista has extended to the other side of G St. and no farther. It's going to be broader now."

She's also anxious to learn more about archeology, especially the historical aspect.

Certainly none of her customer-friends begrudge her the experience and change. But everybody feels the same way she does: "I'm happy and sad."

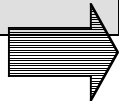


Renee Bourgoïn Isaacs

Photo by Karen Froyland



5.31. Davis Enterprise January 5, 1979 report on the A.B. becoming a key young performer venue.



# Live acts center at Antique Bizarre

The Antique Bizarre has been serving an important role in the development and showcasing of local musicians for the past decade. But with the demise of Cassidy's, the Antique takes on much greater importance as the primary, and almost only, music spot in town.

Offering live music Tuesday through Saturday nights, the Antique has been building the quality of its entertainment continually for the past two years, Michelle Keller says.

Keller, who does the booking, points to the wide variety of quality bands that have been performing there in recent months.

Each of several rock bands have something different to offer, she says.

One of the Antique's longest running acts, Cold Shot, also happens to be one of the best bands in town, if not the very best.

Cold Shot plays a variety of blues and country as well as a very heavy dose of vintage rock from the '50s and early '60s.

Section 8, formerly Causeway, plays more contemporary rock out of the late '60s and the present decade.

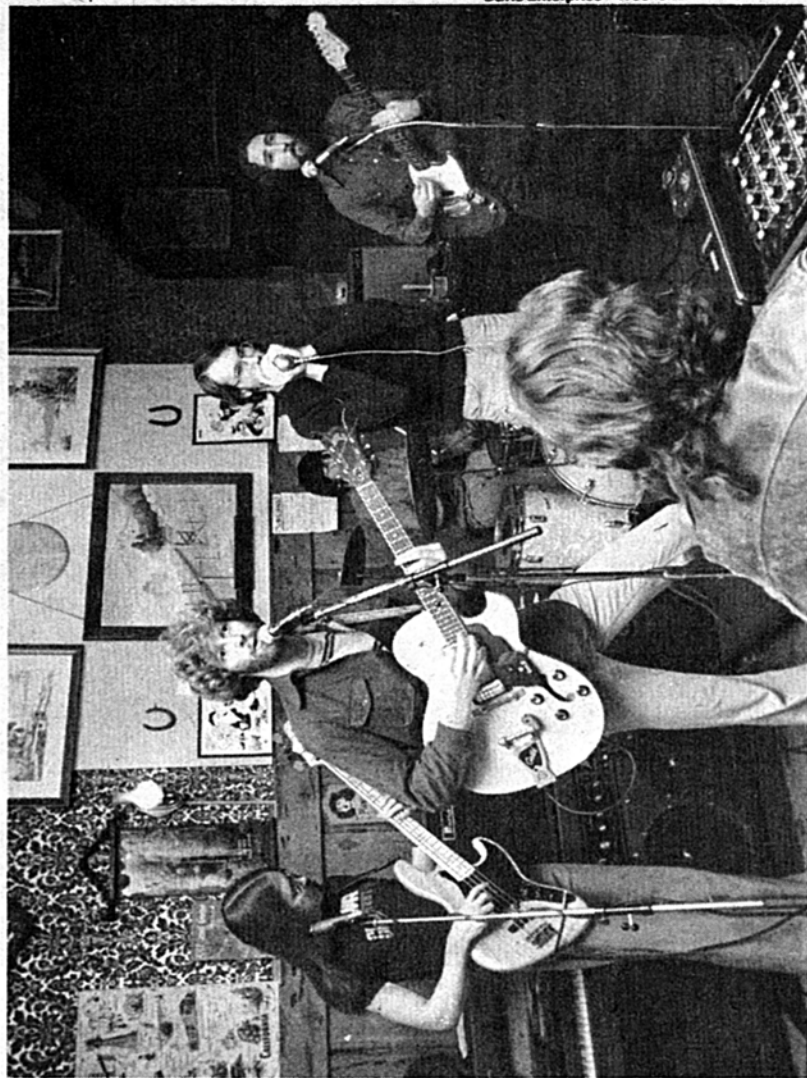
And it's not unusual to find the Yolo 3, composed of the heart of Sacramento's premier rock band, the Skins, playing at the Antique during an off night for the parent band.

A night of the Yolo 3's rhythm and blues, truck driving and country music, and rock standards never fails to pack the house, Keller says.

For original rock, Johnny Flash was building a strong following before their breakup, Keller says. But as usually happens when one act departs, another comes to take its place, and Keller says the Suspects will be booked several times in February.

The Suspects, Davis' only New Wave band, concentrates almost exclusively on material written by the band.

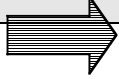
On another front, one of Sacramento's purest, and most experienced blues stylists, Nate Shiner, brings his current band into the Antique several times a month.



Davis Enterprise—Weekend

Section Eight, one of many Davis rock 'n' roll bands, only remaining Davis nightclub where the live music can be heard. provides live entertainment at the Antique Bizarre, now the heard.

5.32. October 5, 1979, Davis Enterprise portrait of the A.B. and its manager.



# music

## Antique Bizarre endures as other night spots fade

By CRAIG CHILDRESS

Some people say the place should be condemned. Other claim that it's the only building left in Davis with real character. Despite the differences in opinion, the Antique Bizarre remains the only nightclub in Davis to feature live music and nightclubs such as Cassadys, The Columbian, and Bobbie McClees have come and gone, the doors of the Antique Bizarre have always remained open.

"We've always been able to offer live music without having a door charge," says Bob Dunham, owner of the Antique. "Clubs such as Cassadys hired musicians from the Bay Area, thus forcing them to charge at the door to cover expenses."

The Antique hires almost exclusively local talent. "Some of the best musicians in Northern California live within a fifty mile radius of Davis," claims Dunham.

While Cassadys was charging a six dollar cover charge to see Norton Buffalo, customers in the Antique were seeing local harmonica players like Mark Miller (formerly of Powder River) and David Gage (of Section 8) for free.

"Miller and Gage could easily blow the socks off Buffalo," claims Dunham.

Also contributing to the longevity of the Antique Bizarre is its unique rustic atmosphere. "Many people are turned off by the sterile sets to stare at a DJ enclosed in a plastic box. I feel like I'd have to put on rubber gloves and a mask just to talk to him."

The Antique Bizarre is anything but "sterile." Antiques and just plain "junk" hang from the ceilings and walls. Ice tongs, rusted hay hooks, kerosene lamps, and worn-out farming tools find a home there.

"Most of our decor is old western," says Dunham. And with a cast-iron pig oiler used for a door stop and a five foot by eight foot painting of a nude woman hung behind the bar, there is little doubt that the Antique has captured the old western flavor.

The nude woman was painted by the bartender's mother (who used her husband as a model). "We get a lot of art students in here commenting on the painting," says Dunham. "Apparently they've never seen breasts that defy the law of gravity."

**Bob Dunham, manager of the Antique Bizarre, says the popular nightclub satisfies a wide range of customers, from "jazz intellectuals" to country-western fans.**

The Antique Bizarre's clientele is as diverse as the decor. "I've got PhD's and plumbers sitting at the same table discussing almost anything under the sun," says Dunham. Different types of music attract different types of crowds. On nights when country music is featured, the Antique gets a more serious older crowd as compared to the nights when the place is hopping with rock n' roll bands and college students.

And then there is the jazz crowd, often referred to as the "Chablis drinkers" or the "intellectuals." The jazz lovers come simply to enjoy fine music and a good glass of wine. Unfortunately not all the Antique Bizarre's clientele are as easy going as the Chablis drinkers. In the past the Antique has been the hot spot for some of the worst barroom brawls in Davis.

Prior to the change of ownership in 1976, a group of motorcyclists rode their bikes through the front door, through the bar and out the back entrance. "An experience that the eighty-year old building will hopefully never see

again," says Dunham.

During the past three years Dunham has been trying hard to change the rowdy image of the Antique. "The right thing to do was a definite step in the right direction," says Dunham. "When people drink they start taking the game far too seriously."

To help clean the air Dunham has posted a Persons Non Grata: a list of the more rowdy individuals who are no longer allowed service in the Antique Bizarre.

Although the Antique Bizarre has become notably calmer since Bob Dunham took charge in 1976, it still has its fair share of problems. "Anytime people bring their troubles to the bar, you're going to have problems," says Dunham. But despite the occasional disturbances, the Antique still manages to have the place packed at least three nights a week.

The Antique Bizarre features live music Tuesday through Saturday weekly, from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. It is located at the corner of 2nd and G Streets in Davis.



# The Davis Enterprise

28 PAGES

ESTABLISHED IN 1897

301 G STREET, DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616

15 CENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1981

## Antique Bizarre: landmark dies

By ROBERT STERLING

Elegies for a dying downtown Davis bar are being sung this week. In the dimly-lit beer hall at 200 G St. the band is playing, the dancers are dancing, the drinkers are drinking.

Some play cards in the cardroom like they always have, but this week many are listening — intently, periodically — to the flickering strains of music, song, folklore. Periodically, between sets, there will be a "remembrance," someone will get up to speak.

It's a wake of sorts, tributes to a longtime friend. But the religion here is rock and roll, the church house is filled with thick smoke, and the hallucinations ring out are to the glory of good times. Sometime early Sunday morning the Antique Bizarre's swinging

stead. "I don't know how it got that name," said Jane Eberle, who inherited the building from her mother, Agnes Ramsey Barr in 1966. "Two fellows from I think San Mateo opened the place up as the 'Antique Bizarre.' There was sawdust on the floor, peanuts, beer — the basic motif that it has now," said Eberle.

Current business operators are Bob and Kay Dunham, who took over in 1976. The owner of the building is Davis resident Lee Chen, who has plans of renovating the entire complex and one day converting the now-vacant hotel into office space.

"It's going to be like leaving home," said Dunham, drawing a glass of Anchor Steam beer for a

patron. He squints and surveys his place. The past five years have been "rewarding, hectic, traumatic," he said. But now it's time to move on. When Dunham, a retired Air Force man from Broderick, took over in '76 "there was a lot of plastic in here," which he duly replaced with his "antiques."

He strolled through the musty saloon this week, re-reading the anecdotes he knows behind the shrub box, buck saws, Civil War-era saddle, coal oil stoves, seed planters, wagon wheels, old skis, old beer cans, bay hooks, canteens, gopher traps, beaver trap lines, wine openers, the gold miners' pan now used as a wall clock, old broken radios, mirrors and more, as visitors know.

Then there's the life-size painting of the reclining nude woman behind the bar. It was painted, said

Dunham, by the 67-year-old mother of former bartender Nick Frich. The story goes (and others will attest) that the bartender's mother used her 71-year-old husband as the model. "Well look at it," said Dunham in awe. "She defies the law of gravity!"

UC Davis law student Corey Brown and UCD student and bartender Melissa Calhoun have been rallying folks to the A.B.'s cause. They met with the Romeros Tuesday and they held the recent evening meeting of concerned citizens.

The place has got character," said Brown. "It's someplace special, there's a lot of life here. It seems to represent Davis' beginnings, there's a feel for Western feelings. The woodwork, the things all over the walls and ceiling, they all have in-

dividual meaning." A small kitchen was removed last year to make room for the crowds packing the place, and the former billiards area was glassed in and converted to a card room in an effort to deter some of the pool-playing ne'er-do-wells.

Ron Goldberg has been playing guitar at the A.B. since 1975, and he played his last solo gig there Monday. Three people there were in attendance when Goldberg played his first show six years earlier. He will play again Friday with the band Moonshine.

He recalls days when members of several different local bands would "jam all night... those were the interesting times." He's seen a dozen dancers doing "what looked like the can-can" on

top of the bar. He's heard tell of the time a motorcycle gang loured the place on their bikes, or the time "a pretty loony guy" took an ax to the bar.

Although there have been "some acts of violence," said Goldberg. "I'm certainly saddened to see it go."

If it was Thursday, that meant Cold Shot was playing at the A.B. The group's bassist, Richard Urbino, still plays with the group and started at the A.B. when Cold Shot was a folk duo in '75.

"It's pretty crummy it's closing," said Urbino. "Clubs have come and gone in Davis, but the A.B. was just always there, it evolved. It never tried to do anything fancy. It just presented local entertainment, with never a cover charge."

5. 33. The Davis Enterprise editor thought the closing of the Antique Bizarre in February, 1981 merited the top story front page headline.

The bottom column to the left continues on the next page. At the bottom of that column, the story continues in the second column from the bottom on this page.

billboard door will squeak shut for good and the late-night revelers will bid the saloon adieu.

Next month the A.B. will become the La Fogata Mexican restaurant.

Is the esteemed clientele sentimental? Nah... well, maybe.

"Save The Antique Bizarre" leaflets were being circulated through the packed house last weekend. Nearly 20 dedicated patrons, beers in hand, gathered for their own town hall discussion in the dark tavern earlier this week.

Two hundred petitions welcoming new owners Joaquin and Linda

*"The place has got character. It's someplace special, there's a lot of life here. It seems to represent Davis' beginnings, there's a feel for Western feelings."*

Romero and urging them "to keep the unique atmosphere and continue the live music" have been printed.

But based on encouraging discussions with the Romeros Tuesday, organizers of the drive to preserve what they call "a symbol of Davis and the place to take out-of-town friends," have decided to hold off circulating the petitions and to wait and see what the Romeros' plans are.

Meanwhile, indeed, a wake has been scheduled for Saturday at 10 a.m. at 200 G St.

Of course, the place wasn't always the A.B.

Longtime Davis residents may remember Jim DeFazio's Deboes pizza parlor in the '50s and early '60s, or before that George Tingus' Terminal Hotel, bar and restaurant.

Tingus, who celebrated his 89th birthday this week and is now a cook for the Theta Xi fraternity, bought the site in 1922 and along with partner Jim Belenis ran the show beginning in 1926.

Davis resident Warren Westgate has photos of an old Davis Post Office at "200 G St." taken during the 1890s, and other shots showing the old Bank of Davis nearby.

The place was sold in 1948 and became the Hotel Aggie. Deboes ran out of business around 1967 and the Antique Bizarre was born in its

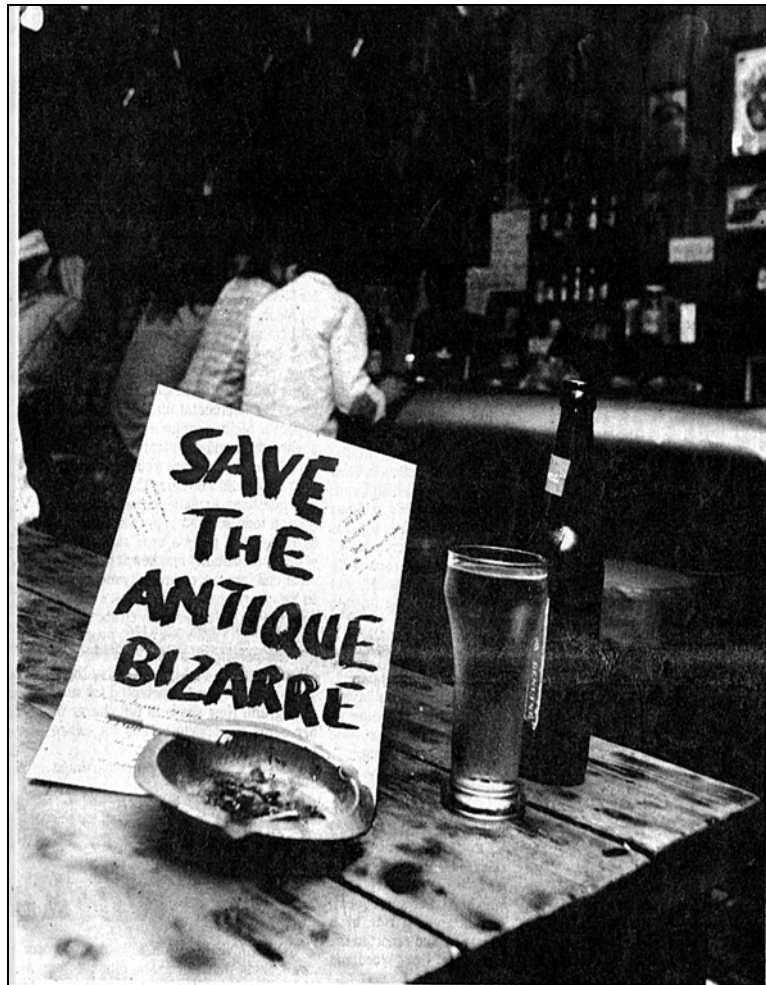


Photo by Ken Browning

### Quaffing a beer

This week marks the last waltz for Davis' Antique Bizarre at Second and G streets. It has been purchased by the owners of the La Fogata Mexican restaurant in Woodland. A wake is planned at the

A.B. Saturday at 10 a.m. and owner Bob Dunham said that "something special" may be planned Saturday night.

5. 34. This photograph accompanied the February 25, 1981 *Enterprise* report of the A.B. closing.

Column continuing from the bottom column of the previous page. At the bottom of this column, the story continues in the second column from the bottom of the page on the previous page.



## 7) THE LAST OWNERSHIP BEGINS

Lee Jing Chen and Chao Chen (Lee Chen and Grace Chen) were involved in acquiring the building in June, 1977 (Fidelity National Title Insurance Company, 2000). When properties such as the Terminal Building changed ownership in Davis, a resale inspection was required along with a new Certificate of Occupancy. Copies of inspection reports and letters in the City's files on the building suggested that the inspection was difficult to pass and the certificate was not easily forthcoming.

The Chens put the building on the resale market in 1978, but then withdrew it. At this point the hotel portion of the building was no longer operated, although the apartments in the rear were apparently rented, as were the retail spaces along G Street.

With the turning of the decade of the 1980s, the Terminal Building entered a new period of slow decline, a further phase of what some observers of older buildings such as this have called "demolition by neglect."

But before we turn to that final phase, let us look at the degree to which and the ways in which there were historic preservationist reactions to what we have seen about the 1950s-70s.

## 8) LOCAL HISTORY AND PRESERVATION: FRAGILE FORCES IN DAVIS

At the time of the Terminal's demolition in 2000, organized local history and preservation interests had existed in Davis since 1963—some 37 years. Surveying this sweep, I think we would have to say that these forces were most of the time rather fragile and, sometimes, marginal.

The dominant public mood, though, was not one of active hostility. Instead, it seemed more often one of masked skepticism, apathy, and foot-dragging, with occasional and grudging support, along with flashes of mass enthusiasm. Indeed, the conflict and campaign of 1999 and 2000 concerning the Terminal's fate, may have been one of the higher points in both zeal and animosity, although it was certainly far from the first moment of high preservationist drama in Davis history.

In addition, we need to bear in mind that demolish-and-rebuild was the cry of the day across the country during the 1950s, '60s and '70s and Davis was simply typical in its demolitionist ardor and only unusual in the manner in which it constructed a new downtown. As with the rest of the country, concern that perhaps people were going too far and too fast was not well articulated before the late 1960s.

Within this dominant public mood, the focus and shape of local history and preservation forces shifted and changed over those 37 years. By my reckoning, these shifts and changes divided into five periods, with differing emphases and levels of mobilization. In overview, these were:

1. 1963-68: Local History Research
2. 1969-77: Struggle
3. 1978-87: Crisis and the New Professionals
4. 1988-94: Percolating Quiescence
5. 1995-02: Resurgence and Reaction

The first two of these five periods were in the demolitionist 1950s-70s and I discuss them in this Chapter. The third period bridged the 1950s-70s and the contrasting 1980s-90s. Because the



third period ended in the 1980s, I will treat it in the next chapter, along with the fourth and fifth periods.

I recognize that I am oversimplifying in stating periods that appear to have clear boundaries and that give the appearance of being tight compartments of time. Obviously, the reality is much more overlapping and imprecise. Nonetheless, there were clusters of changes over these decades captured by this oversimplification. I have elected to pay the price of oversimplification in order to achieve a degree of clarity.

In addition, this is not an exhaustive inventory of local history and preservation activities. I include only those that I judge to be of major import or of a charming character even if minor. I apologize to everyone offended by my having left out their favorite activity, event, or person.

**FIRST PERIOD, 1963-68: LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH.** In the six or so years of the initial period, there were three main kinds of actions and activities.

**1. The 1963-68 “Commission.”** Organized local history and preservation activity in Davis can be dated from March 18, 1963, when then-Mayor Norman Woodbury personally convened and chaired a meeting of a quasi-official citizen’s “commission.” It had the charge of assembling Davis history, but it had neither staff nor legal powers, and met in the homes of its members rather than in City quarters. Although its official title was the Davis Historical Landmarks Commission, it was not, in the ways just mentioned, like other commissions.

This group’s picture was taken in January, 1968 and is reproduced in Fig. 5. 35. Inspecting it, we can see the members are, for the most part, rather older. One key exception is the woman fourth from the left in the photo, who is Joann Leach Larkey. In her mid-thirties in the early 1960s, she was the daughter of a well-known UCD professor, a graduate of UC Berkeley, and married to a local physician.

**2. An Archive and a Book, *Davisville ’68*.** Educated, intelligent, and energetic, Mrs. Larkey, assisted by many people, led the local history effort. Among other things, this effort resulted in an archive of photographs and other documents (now housed in the Yolo County Archives) and in the book *Davisville ’68*, which has endured as the indispensable chronicle of early Davis history (Larkey, 1969).

The labor for researching and writing this book was entirely volunteer. The 2,000 copy printing was subsidized in part by a loan from the City Council of some \$9,000 (which was finally paid off in 1975). (For perspective on local history as a type of social enterprise—of which the Davis instance is fairly typical—see Kammen, 1996; Russo, 1988; Parker, 1943.)

Also of special note in Fig. 5.35, the man standing second from the left is John Weber Brinley. Mr. Brinley was the grandson of George Augustus Weber, a gentleman who opened a saloon at the southwest corner of Second and G not long after Davis was founded in 1868 and, about 1880, built a mansion at the northeast corner of Second and E streets. Present at the founding of Davis, Mr. Weber was a first-generation pioneer.

Mr. Brinley’s father, Al Green (Sam) Brinley, came to Davis in 1912 as the telegrapher of the Southern Pacific station and subsequently married into the Weber family. He inherited the Weber properties and acquired yet others after he retired from the railroad in 1947 and established Brinley’s Real Estate and Insurance Office (Larkey, 1969, 222-3). His son, John Weber Brinley, inherited these holdings and he was a major Davis landlord of commercial buildings (an enterprise carried on by his son, John K. Brinley).

I digress on the Weber-Brinley family because of the clear way in which these four men tightly encapsulate the entire span of Davis history. The fourth of them, John K., was, in 2000, only the fourth generation since the founding of the town—and John K. was barely in his fifties.

This information is background to understanding that Sam and John Weber Brinley, both affable and popular, had, together, lived through a great deal of Davis history and knew virtually everyone. John Weber Brinley, in particular, was instrumental in encouraging Davis “old timers” to cooperate with this citizen history group.

One irony is that while Mr. Brinley was working so effectively in collecting Davis history, he was himself demolishing early Davis buildings. These included even the historic mansion his grandfather, George Weber, had built at the northeast corner of Second and E. (Today, the commercial building at that corner is called The Brinley Building. The mansion previously on the site is pictured in Larkey, 1969: 222; Lofland and Haig, 2000: 25.)

In addition, members of this “Commission” began developing a list of “landmark structures,” which might be seen as a kind of muted or backdoor resistance to the demolitions going on so energetically around them. So far as I can determine, however, this group never engaged in any public opposition to demolition.

**3. The 1968 Davis Centennial.** One of the most important early actions of this quasi-commission was to determine and to assert that 1968 would be the “centennial” of Davis’ founding. Fortunately for the production of “history-events,” both the University of California and the local public school district also claimed 1968 as their respective centennial years. So, schemes for celebrating Davis’ history could be and were coordinated with and augmented by these other centennials in the same year.

5.35. Davis Historical Landmarks Commission, *Davis Enterprise*, January 18, 1968.



FACT FINDERS – Members of the Davis Historical Landmarks Commission and members of pioneer families of the Davis area got together last night at city hall to help identify old photographs from Davis’ past in preparation for a centennial publication of the city’s history. Shown are commission

members (front row, from left) Katherine Campbell, Thelma Dietrich, Vere Asbill, Violet Gordon, John Rogers, Narcissa Pena, and (back row, from left) June Dolcini, Delpha Williamson, Joann Larkey, Chelso Maghetti, Gary Rowe and John Brinley. —Enterprise Photo

A Centennial Committee was organized by the Davis Area Chamber of Commerce (not the City of Davis). Its Co-chairs were John Weber Brinley and Joann Larkey. The climax event, among many other celebrations over the year, was a luncheon attended by about 500 people in UC Davis’ Freeborn Hall on Saturday, June 1, 1968. It was designed to honor “decendants of

pioneer families," as well as "past city officials and businessmen" (*Davis Enterprise*, June 3, 1968).

Also relevant, by the mid-1960s, history/preservationist sentiments were quickening across the nation. These stirrings were expressed perhaps most importantly in the United States National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which began the serious involvement of the federal government in preservation matters (Murtagh, 1977: Ch. 5).

**SECOND PERIOD, 1969-77: STRUGGLE.** The 1966 Preservation Act created the expectation, if not the requirement, that any upstanding local government needed a preservation commission.

**The Davis Historical Landmarks Commission, 1969.** Apparently wanting to be au courant, in late 1968 the Davis City Council created a true preservation commission, which met the first time on March 6, 1969. At that time, such commissions existed in about thirty of the some 500 California municipalities and counties (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1976). Most of these commissions were only a few years old. So, Davis was an early joiner of a new trend. (By the year 2000, virtually all California jurisdictions had some form of an official preservation program.)

The previous "Commission" continued a kind of shadow existence with a bank account in the name of The Davis Historical Society. It finally disbanded in 1975, when John Weber Brinley closed the account with a check for \$2,571.25 written to the City trust account of the new commission (Haig Collection, Box 5).

The new Commission began to develop a list of "historical landmarks," "primarily composed of structures around a hundred years old," which was then designated as such by the City Council (Taylor 1980, 5). In 1973, the City Council gave thirteen of these landmarks some protection by allowing delay of demolitions. The list grew gradually in subsequent years. Over the next ten years, the Council enacted a patchwork of three ordinances designed to designate "landmarks" and perhaps delay demolitions (Ordinance number 651 in 1973, number 722 in 1974, and number 882 in 1977).

**First Preservation Campaigns.** Many buildings were still being torn down with no adverse comment or protest, but at least three of them now began to attract preservationist attention.

**1. Murmuring: 417 G Street, 1973.** An especially striking Victorian with wooden ornamentation of the "Chalet" type at 417 G was demolished in 1973, but with public expressions of regret that seemingly no way could be found to save it.

**2. The First Grassroots Campaign: Second Street Houses, 1975.** In 1975, prolific local developer and builder Jim Adams fielded a plan to tear down all the heritage homes along the south side of Second Street between C and D streets and to replace them with a block-long commercial complex. A UC Davis undergraduate and artist, Julie Partansky, lived in one of the to-be-demolished homes. Personally subject to eviction, she sparked the first grassroots campaign for preservation (as distinct from the more establishment effort to save the Dresbach-Hunt Boyer mansion). In Fig. 5. 36, she is shown sitting in front of her threatened home.

This campaign is of special interest because it marks the debut of Ms. Partansky in Davis political life. After her house was demolished, she moved to a cottage on a graveled alley on D Street and then to a like-situated cottage on E Street. For the next fifteen years she lived in that neighborhood—now called the Old North—quietly and participated only on occasion in Davis politics. But then, in 1991, Davis Demolitionists again came calling at her door—almost literally,

not just metaphorically. It was a fateful moment because her encounter with them subsequently changed Davis history—as will be explained in the next chapter.

**3. The Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Mansion, Late 1970s.** In the late nineteenth century, a number of fair-sized mansions had been built on Second between B and F streets. By the early 1970s, only one of them remained. At the southeast corner of Second and E, it would come to be called “the Hunt-Boyer” (but formally named the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer). Built in 1875, this “last remaining” status appears to have sparked the first major effort to preserve a threatened heritage building in Davis.

This effort first took the form of a City Council decision to float a bond issue to save the building in connection with a new city hall on the site. This scheme failed at the ballot box in November of 1976 by a vote of 54% in favor, but with two-thirds required for adoption.

The owner of the mansion had taken out a demolition permit, but also said he was willing to sell the building and property for \$250,000. The Council acted to stall the demolition in the hope of another solution. A campaign called SAVE (for Save a Victorian Establishment) began to raise the money from private sources. Although led by and donated to by well-known Davis residents (including UCD Chancellor Emil Mrak and John Weber Brinley), the effort could come up with only \$26,772. The matter dragged on and the building was finally “saved” in 1978 when a partnership of developers met the owner's price and made preservation possible by building a complex of shops (called “Mansion Square”) behind the house (*Davis Enterprise*, May 30, 1978; December 21, 1979)

5.36. Julie Partansky, *Davis Enterprise*, November 19, 1975.



Julie Partansky lounges in front of her house at 412 Second St. Miss Partansky has taken on City Hall and the Bank of Dixon in a crusade to save old homes on First and Second streets. Enterprise photo

**Subway I, 1973.** A fourth episode in this period was not clearly a preservation campaign, but would foreshadow two, more preservation-like, episodes over the next decades.



South of the First and E streets intersection there was an automobile road under the railroad tracks. Called the "subway," or The Richards Boulevard Underpass, it was built in 1917. As the decades went by, developer forces increasingly regarded it as an obstruction to full car-oriented development of the downtown. They called for widening it to four or more lanes.

By the end of the twentieth century, the City Council would have made three efforts to widen it: 1973, 1988 and 1997. I will call these Subway I, II, and III. Each effort failed.

Voter failure to approve the widening plans was not necessarily a preservationist act. Often, indeed, such failures are not. Voters simply did not want to pay more taxes. Such was importantly the case in these three instances.

Even so, if we review the pro and con reasons stated in the campaigns, we see preservationist themes. There was at least the theme of preserving Davis as a "small town" place with a "real" downtown. (In Subway III, however, there was interest in preserving the Subway **itself** as a historic structure.)

Be these preservation ambiguities as they may, the Subway I (1973) bond proposal failed nearly 2 to 1 (62 to 38% with 9,541 people voting).

**First Owner Resistance to Designation, 1973.** Mrs. Iva M. Bruhn of 305 E Street appears to have the distinction of being the first of a series of owners who would oppose listing their properties as a "landmark" or a "historical resource." In a letter to the City Council dated October 28, 1974, Mrs. Bruhn declared "there are numerous sites in town where historical places have been and torn down. [Sic] There is nothing to show that they or mine are a historical place" (Haig Collection, Box 3). She also had an attorney write the City Council expressing her view. Her house at 305 E was dropped from the list of possible designated resources.

**The U.S. Bicentennial, 1976.** Davis local history buffs and preservationists organized to celebrate the U. S. Bicentennial. They also used the occasion to elaborate at least two local history angles.

First, a "see Davis history on your bike" route was mapped out and printed in a leaflet showing where to ride and what to see. Revised and refined several times, this would become a standard history-promotion item. Second, and as previously reported, the Chamber of Commerce organized the painting of history murals on buildings, one of which was the Arch Mural on the north wall of Terminal Building (shown being dedicated in Fig. 5.27).

**Davis' Three National Register Entries, Late 1970s.** The United States National Register of Historic Places, begun in 1966, had, in 2002, nearly 75,000 listings.

Four of them were within the Davis city limits. Three of the four were nominated for (and given) that distinction in 1976-79, a period when preservation in Davis was struggling and not especially assertive or successful. How did these achievements occur in such an inauspicious period?

It happened because the Federal process allowed individuals to make nominations to the National Register. Local government participation and approval could be helpful, but was not required. And that is what happened in Davis. Three enterprising and knowledgeable individuals carried out the process with little involvement in (or by) official Davis preservation circles and government. Thus:

- A student intern named Judy Bond at the State Office of Historic Preservation prepared and processed the case for the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Mansion at 604 Second Street and it was approved for the National Register on September 13, 1976. At that time the building was threatened with demolition and registration was seen as an effort to "legitimize . . . claims that the . . . structure is truly of historical significance" (*Davis Enterprise*, September 13, 1976).
- The case for the Southern Pacific Railroad Station, Second and H streets, was developed and carried through by a person whose role and identity no one I have asked can now recall: Robert M. Wood. It was approved on November 7, 1976. Indeed, Mr. Wood must be counted among Davis' truly unsung and unknown preservation heroes.
- The owner-occupant of the Joshua B. Tufts House at 434 J Street, Valerie Jones, brought about the listing of her own home on September 6, 1979 (*Davis Enterprise*, November 23, 1979). (The sources of the names of the above nominators are the respective nomination forms, which are on file with the City of Davis Cultural Services Manager and the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.)

## 9) TRANSITION

At the turn of the decade from the 1970s to the 1980s, the Terminal Building was no longer functioning as a hotel or boarding house, although the retail spaces were rented. And, it was continuing to decline.

In the next chapter, we will see how the Terminal Building owner's demolition plans collided with preservationist forces. This seemed to have produced something of a stalemate or stand-off that would not be broken for about a decade and a half.