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***Dunedin Thru The Years 1850-1978* by William F. Davidson**

Ken Ford

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*Dunedin Thru The Years 1850-1978*. By William F. Davidson. (Charlotte, N.C. Delmar Printing Co., 1978)

Interesting local history is difficult to write, but the author has made an attempt by including some unusual and little known facts about Dunedin that have not been brought forth in earlier histories of the city. The word “Dunedin” itself comes from the Gaelic name for Edinburg and is interpreted as “peaceful rest”, which the local citizenry decided upon in 1882 when they petitioned for a post office. The roots of those early Scottish settlers can be evidenced today in the Dunedin High School marching band with its array of bagpipes prominent as the Highlanders march in parades throughout the state and nation.

Davidson has done excellent work in researching the early records and interviewing old timers in the area. The early chapters dealing with settlement and incorporation add much to other work on the early history of the county.

The section entitled “Living in Dunedin Pre-Public and Winn-Dixie” was particularly noteworthy in describing everyday life in the late 19th century. One can’t help but wonder at the simplicity of life when the most controversial issue in the town for several years was the policing of the hog population by the town marshal, and a subsequent “raid” on the city pound to free the hogs by some of their owners.

Subsequent chapters dealing with the early social fabric of the community concentrate on the building of churches and congregations beginning with the Curlew Methodist Church in 1869 and followed soon after by the Presbyterian Church in 1871. The name “Curlew” is interesting in that it was derived from the thousands of pink birds gathered along the coast and inlets near the community. The first Episcopal service was held fifteen years later, which resulted in the formation of the Episcopal Church of The Good Shepherd. In conjunction with the formation of these churches, groups developed known as the “Yacht Club Crowd” and “East Side Crowd”, denoting the fact that a social strata was beginning to form.

Other chapters treat subject matter topographically as most local historians find convenient when dealing with areas such as transportation, schools, libraries, banking and economics. I thought the section dealing with the growth of the citrus industry from early groves to the coming of the concentrate conglomerates in the late 1940’s was both useful and informative for future historians grappling with economic development in the county.

One of the most interesting chapters describes the coming of the Brumby family, which is a reprint of the Brumby Family Diary preserved in the Southern Historical Collection at The University of North Carolina. The diary covers in great detail a 300-mile trek from Thomasville, Georgia to Dunedin by covered wagon in 1884. It covers twenty-four days and gives the reader an accurate account of what travel was like in the 19th century right down to the price of eggs, chicken, fish, flour and whatever else one could find along the way.

The social development of the community is outlined in those chapters devoted to garden clubs, golf courses, sports and other recreational pursuits. Among the most attractive aspects of

local histories are the numerous photographs found in the more recent publications such as this one. The remainder of the book deals with the depression, World War II, and the postwar era.

The major criticism of the book is the seemingly endless pages of names, that have little significance except to immediate family, friends, and old timers in the community who can recall most of this themselves. The value for future historians is obvious, but it is distracting and cumbersome for most readers. It would also be interesting to see more comparison of Dunedin to concurrent development on the peninsula.

*Ken Ford*

*Fireside Chats: The Depression of the 1930s.* By James L. Taylor, ed. (Dade City, Fla.: Social Science Dept., Pasco Comprehensive High School 1979. 165 pp. Illustrations.)

The catastrophic stock market crash of 1929 signaled not only an end of the prosperous "Roaring Twenties," but also initiated a dramatically new era, the "Depression years." *Fireside Chats—The Depression of the 1930's* lucidly illustrates the lives and struggles of individuals and their families during the Great Depression. Through the establishment of an oral history project at Pasco Comprehensive High School, Dade City, Florida, students interviewed older members of their community to collect a series of impressions of this area. The method of collecting historical data through personal contacts was as stimulating as the interviews recorded, since it actively involved students in the collection and compilation of materials. Their history class became something more than just textbook reading; it involved a personal contact with the events of the past.

*Fireside Chats* is a series of vignettes of personal experiences given by Dade City residents who were scattered across the nation in the 1930's. Its eighteen chapters and ninety-eight interviews are illustrated with student sketches, depicting several of the more picturesque stories. Although the individual experiences varied, the general themes of scarcity of food, sharing with others, and strong familial ties characterize most of the interviews. Glimpses of T.V.'s Walton family race through your mind as you read the sometimes sad, sometimes humorous personal experiences. Tales about "skunk bread," feedsack clothing, and "Hoover blankets" made from newspapers, are facets of the Great Depression which students would have otherwise never been aware of had it not been for their personal experiences in interviews. The colorful retention of local dialect in conversations and emotionalism of the stories add a dimension to the era which is seldom recorded in historical documentation. The touching personal views offer a delightful opportunity to witness the Depressions' effect on the everyday lives of Americans.

*Fireside Chats* will hopefully stimulate additional oral history projects, making history more interesting to students. An additional benefit will be that otherwise forgotten personal experiences will be recorded, and students may be stimulated to obtain a perspective of the past which is all too often ignored by younger generations. *Fireside Chats*, an exhilarating experience and accomplishment of high school students, serves as a model for others to involve students in the discipline of history.

*L. Glenn Westfall*