



Perris Press Release

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer
Phone: 951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org

"D Street: A Documentary" Set to Premier Later This Year

Filmmaker David Van Houten said he began recording events from Perris' Centennial in 2011 mostly as a favor to local historians and residents interested in documenting the City's 100th birthday.

But over the months he and his crew spent in Perris, Van Houten said the work took on a very personal tone. The descendant of Perris pioneers Mable and Albert Hook, who operated a mercantile store on D Street, Van Houten said the filmmaking experience became a personal journey into his own family's legacy and impact on Perris.

Eventually, Van Houten and his crew from Hollywood videotaped more than 100 hours of events that took place in Perris during the Centennial celebration. He's edited that down to about 55 minutes for a film called "D Street: A Documentary," which will premiere in Perris later this year.

Van Houten showed a six-minute clip of the film Sunday during the annual installation of officer for the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association, an event that drew about 150 people to the First Congregational Church on A Street.

"This project became quite meaningful to me," Van Houten said prior to showing the abridged clips. "Perris is unique in that there is a great deal of interest and caring about the history that was here before us. It has a small-town feel and integrity that so many cities would like to have but which Perris does have."

Van Houten and his crew videotaped the burial of the City's time capsule on May 26, 2011—the Centennial of Perris incorporation.

They were present at the multi-cultural festival, the day hundreds of school children learned about Indian culture at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area and during the City's Centennial exhibit at the Southern California Fair in October. He interviewed Mayor Daryl Busch, Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, local historians Katie Keyes and Dave Stuart and other long-time residents and civic leaders who provided insights from the time Perris served as an agricultural hub for Riverside County from the 1920s to 1960s.

Van Houten's ties to Perris run deep. His great-great grandfather, Albert Hook, and great-great uncle, Joseph Hook, began a mercantile at D and Seventh Street in the 1880s and was a mainstay in Downtown Perris for decades. The store sold everything from mining equipment and farm implements to blue jeans.

As he discovered more about Perris, Van Houten said he discovered more about his family and himself. His parents, Betty Hook Van Houten and Thomas Van Houten, operated a dry-cleaning business when he was a kid before moving out of the area. Family members still own the original Hook house on Seventh Street; Van Houten is still part-owner of the Santa Rosa Gold Mine in Gavilan Hills.

"History means different things to different people," he said. "Do we appreciate it because we appreciate our ancestors or where we live? Or is it just something that's nice to know about?"

Keyes, who stepped down as president of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association Sunday, said she hopes to screen the full-length version of the documentary in October.

"What a ride we've had in the last year!" Keyes said in remarks to the audience. "I believe we have the best volunteer museum in Riverside County, bar none. We've got the talent, the creativity and the hard-working people to get the job done."

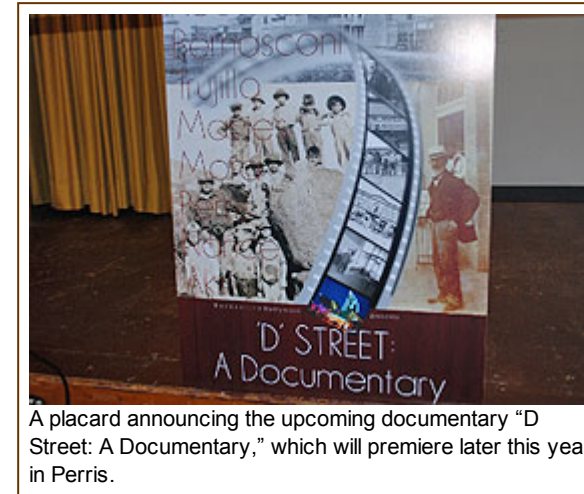
Supervisor Ashley said Perris has the strongest historical society in western Riverside County, one that is intent on preserving the City's past and proud of the legacy left behind by its founders. He noted that in recent years, the historical society has worked with the City of Perris, which has completed restoration of the Victorian-era Perris Depot building, the Bank of Perris, exterior renovations on many D Street businesses and creation of a series of panels celebrating 100 years of Perris.

"It makes me very proud that we are so committed to documenting our history," Ashley said.

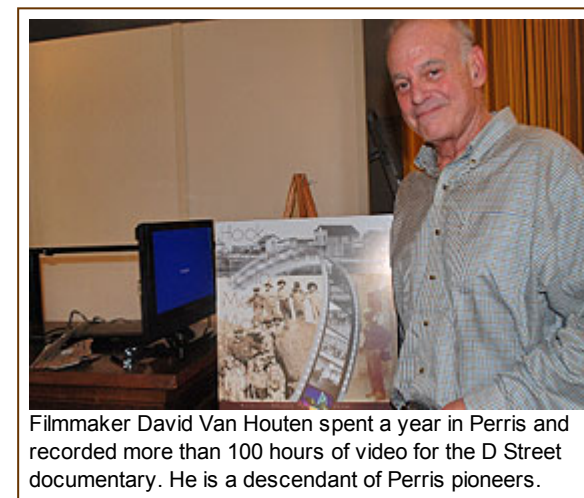
Van Houten makes documentaries for the entertainment industry, often telling the behind-the-scenes story of how specific movies and television programs come into being. He is working with actor/director Robert Redford on a documentary about the making of Redford's movie, "The Company You Keep" and is at work on a similar project about the television series "True Justice" with Steven Segal.

He said he expects copies of "D Street: A Documentary" will become available after its fall release.

Deborah Bowman was sworn in as the new president of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association. Other officers include first vice-president Paul Price; second vice-president Quinn Hawley; secretary Mae Minnich and treasurer Dennise Manning. Keyes will continue serving the organization as director-at-large.



A placard announcing the upcoming documentary "D Street: A Documentary," which will premiere later this year in Perris.



Filmmaker David Van Houten spent a year in Perris and recorded more than 100 hours of video for the D Street documentary. He is a descendant of Perris pioneers.



Kimberly Denu (left) administers the oath of office to new president Deborah Bowman and other officers of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association.



Outgoing Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association president Katie Keyes along with the new president, Deborah Bowman.