A BRIEF HISTORY of BONITA MUSEUM

The Bonita Museum was established as a 1987 Bonitafest function. It was housed in the shopping center at 4108 Bonita Road. Photographs of the South Bay, memorabilia from the past Bonitafests, the Bonita-Sunnyside Fire Department and the dairy industry were placed on display. A reception was held for the Bonitafest dignitaries, the families of the long gone dairy industry and the community.

After a very successful Bonitafest weekend, the museum continued to flourish under the sponsorship of the Bonita Business & Professional Association (BBPA) and the County's Community Enhancement Fund.

In January 1992, a fire destroyed the museum and much of the shopping center. Most of the museum's historical collection was saved through the efforts of many volunteers who stored the artifacts in their garages. Then the "trunk museum" was established. Photographs were carried to the local schools in trunks of cars and the teaching of history continued.

In July 1992, the Bonita Historical Society was incorporated. Regular board meetings were held as stated in the organization's By-Laws.

Through the generosity of the members of the Fire Board of the Bonita-Sunnyside Fire Protection District, the old firehouse at 4035 Bonita Road was made available for use by the Bonita Historical Museum.

The Museum's first reception at this new location was an "As It Is Party" in December 1992. The "Grand Opening" was held on January 24, 1993.

In mid 2003 Supervisor Greg Cox announced that the county would be constructing a new Bonita-Sunnyside Library and a community space in the heart of Bonita across the street from the Vons shopping center on Bonita Road. It was noted that there was enough room to possibly relocate the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center to that same area. The county would provide $250,000 subject to a dollar-for-dollar match from community fundraising as a challenge grant earmarked for the construction of the Museum. Fund raising began in late 2003. Thanks to our willing community, we raised well over the $250,000 goal.

The library and museum buildings were completed in November 2005. The museum moved into their new facility in late November and began installing new exhibits. A "Grand Opening" took place on February 3, 2006.

The museum continues to educate its visitors about the history of the Sweetwater Valley by changing exhibits and events. The society maintains a permanent collection which is also on view.