

Bonny Doon residents find town's mystique

Authors of new novel explore 200 years of hamlet's history

By JONDI GUMZ
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Twenty-six years ago, Barbara Louv and her husband decided to bail out of New Jersey.

It was getting too crowded, and they loved the outdoors, so they packed everything into a U-Haul with their two children and headed west.

They settled in San Jose, but Barbara felt "like a caged animal," so they took a ride over the hill. A real estate agent showed them an acre of land with sunshine and redwoods.

"We fell in love with it," Barbara said.

That was her introduction to Bonny Doon, the mountainous rural outpost north of Santa Cruz, where people are only a few steps away from a pleasant hike.

Barbara is one of a dozen people who collaborated to produce a new history of Bonny Doon, "Memories of the Mountain." About 200 copies will go on sale today from 1 to 4 p.m. at Bonny Doon Presbyterian Church, 7065 Bonny Doon Road. The price is \$20.50.

The authors belong to the Ladies of Bonny Doon Club, a group founded in 1942 to roll bandages for the war effort. They realized

Bonny Doon history

WHAT: 'Memories of the Mountain,' first locally published book of Bonny Doon history from 1800 to 2000, researched and written by the Ladies of Bonny Doon Club.

WHEN: On sale for \$20.50 today.

WHERE: Bonny Doon Presbyterian Church, 7065 Bonny Doon Road.

ALSO: Available at Amazon.com and at local bookstores.

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they would lose their history unless someone pulled it together.

"So, we decided to do it before it was too late," said Barbara, 66, who was a teacher in Soquel.

For those who haven't been to Bonny Doon, it stretches from the coast to the crest of Ben Lomond Mountain (not to be confused with the community of Ben Lomond on Highway 9).

Physically, Bonny Doon is almost as big as San Francisco, according to Donald Coyne of the Rural Bonny Doon Association, but far fewer people live there, although it's difficult to know exactly how many. Coyne said "4,000 is the figure that's tossed



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

These 12 Bonny Doon residents want to preserve the history of the town, so they published a book on the town's history.

about."

The Bonny Doon book project took two years.

Cecelia Hunter served as the editor and Nancy Andreasen helped shape the book, which covers 1800 to 2000. Rose Gallagher and Joan Nielsen did interviews, Charlotte Lyons did research, and Mel Mosley, Gerald Pitman, Susie Seydel and Sue and Ed Oliver pitched in as writers. Suzanne Hunter designed the book cover.

Each writer was assigned a specific topic. For example, industries included the lime kilns, lumber, Lockheed Martin and grapes.

"We have a very interesting history during Prohibition," Barbara said.

Her assignment was religious groups, partly because she was a member of the Bonny Doon Pres-

byterian Church, which had kept many photos over the years.

She learned about a Catholic seminary that was active in the 1940s, the Mormon camp at the end of Empire Grade, the Bosch Baha'i community, and Baba Hari Dass, the "silent monk" who is revered at Mount Madonna.

Some writers interviewed old-timers. Others researched the founding of the California Youth Authority camp, the films made, such as "Maid of Salem," and The Lost Weekend, a tavern that became a grocery and then a winery.

Proceeds from the book go to the ladies club, which is clearly one of the community assets along with the elementary school, the volunteer fire department and the churches.

Barbara and her husband once discussed whether it was time to move on. His employer relocated from San Jose to San Ramon, outside the commuting range.

"He retired and I kept teaching,"

she said. "The beauty of the area is what keeps people here."

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