SANTA CLARITA HISTORY CENTER

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Will Rogers' house is gone, after surviving 100 years of wildfires. Eaton Canyon Nature Center is gone. Are we next?

The devastating fires that have plagued Southern California serve as a reminder that flames do not discriminate and often destroy everything in their path. Museums and historic sites are losing their collections or buildings in a moment and some may never recover.

For the last 50 years, the SCV Historical Society has been collecting and preserving artifacts representing life in the Santa Clarita Valley and storing them within the buildings at the Santa Clarita History Center. The recent fires and loss of more than 32 historic properties in the Southland in the last week have prioritized our efforts to consolidate our collections in facilities that are safe, secure and climate-controlled.

Many of our mentor museums — The Autry, the Natural History Museum, the Getty — have off-site buildings where they can curate their collections and keep artifacts not currently on display in safe, stabilized environments, impervious to fires, floods, and other natural disasters. This is not the case for the SCVHS, which has run on donations and volunteer labor for most of its existence.

Hart Park, the home of the Santa Clarita History Center, has a direct corridor from the West if predicted winds shift to an onshore flow that could bring destructive flames right to our doorstep. We have fire-hardened our wooden buildings as best we can but are in the highest fire danger zone in a park with heavy vegetation. Our collection of more than a million photographs, thousands of document pages and physical artifacts are housed on site.

Historical Society staff is scrambling to remove our collection items from the wooden buildings and relocate them to off-site storage. You can help by making a donation to cover rental fees at a secure storage facility, which run about $500 a month, along with one-time costs for racks and appropriate containers.

Over the years, thousands of school children, visitors, and local residents have learned about the area's colorful history from our docents and displays. We are so close to opening the Saugus Train Station Museum. Won't you help us continue that forward progress and

protect the carefully curated items from the past for future visitors? Any amount will help and is appreciated immensely!

I WANT TO HELP THE SCVHS

Thank you for supporting an organization that has cared for its community for the last half-century as it continues to evolve. Together, we look forward to celebrating a centennial as a museum of note highlighting the unique legacy of one of California's most historic regions. The SCV Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax deductible.

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