

12/12/03 Clarke Exhibit Depicts Yurok Daily Life



The Eureka Reporter/Wendy Butler

Dale Ann Sherman is curator for Clarke Historical Museum's Nealis Hall. She is shown here with part of the museum's newest exhibit, a model of a Yurok house constructed by Michael Meuser.

The Clarke Historical Museum has opened a new exhibit exploring traditional Native American life at home, featuring a full-sized diorama and a scale model of a traditional Yurok house.

The exhibit is on display in the museum's Nealis Hall. Curator Dale Ann Sherman said the exhibit is part of an effort by the museum to portray contemporary Native American life while preserving tradition.

The diorama includes traditionally dressed mannequin placed in front of an 1890s' photograph-mural of a Yurok village. The figures are depicted performing daily tasks.

For instance, a man prepares to go fishing with a net and spear while a woman grinds acorns and a child plays with a toy canoe. Cases which display items related to fishing, hunting, acorn-grinding and jewelry are in cases in front of the diorama.



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The Clarke Historical Museum in Eureka unveiled a new exhibit this week in its Nealis Hall. The exhibit includes this diorama of a traditionally dressed family in front of an 1890s photograph-mural of a Yurok village.

Local craftsman Michael Meuser constructed the house model with assistance from Ernie Albers, and Marlon and Dale Ann Sherman. It is modeled after Yurok houses at Patrick's Point, constructed to one-sixth of their average size. Its traditional components include old-growth redwood planks lashed together with grape vines. One side of the house is open to show its interior.

The exhibit was made possible by a grant from the Simpson Fund, museum Director Pam Service said.

"We are very grateful to Simpson ... and Mike Meuser's work shows that traditional construction skills continue today," she

said. "The exhibit should give museum visitors a glimpse of what daily life was once like here."

The Clarke Museum is located at 240 E St. in Eureka. Hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is free. For more information, phone (707) 443-1947.
