

Hello my name is Ben Brown and I'm the Director and Curator of the Clarke Historical Museum located in Old Town Eureka. While the museum houses this region's history, the museum itself has a great history. The Clarke Museum was founded by Cecile Clarke and was originally located at Eureka High school as she was the history teacher there. Once the collection outgrew the space, Ms. Clarke purchased the old Bank of Eureka building on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and E streets and moved the collection down in 1960. This building is by far our most cherished artifact, not only does it provide us shelter, but it is now 105 years old and is a beautiful example of Classical Revival building, constructed from local Mad River granite. At the time of construction, the bank touted that the building was a grade A fireproof building as it was constructed with no wood, safe guarding people's money from fires which were very common at the time.

Nealis Hall, the Native American wing, was once the Liberty Theater, where everything from vaudeville to movies were played. This building fell into disrepair and sat empty for many years until George Mann, the owner of the theater worked out a deal where he would donate the land to the museum if the City agreed to build the wing, which they happily did, completing construction in 1979. Today, this wing houses our world famous collection of local Native American baskets, regalia, and stoneware.

~~Currently on exhibit in Nealis Hall are the incredible Hover and Hailstone collections of baskets. These two Native American families generously donated their basket collections to the museum, and include baskets that were woven between the 1890s and 1970s.~~

On exhibit in the main hall is the fantastic new exhibit Cars, Culture and Humboldt County in the 1950s, an exhibit showing the impact of car culture in our region. From car clubs, to hard top racing at Redwood Acres and drag strip racing at the Arcata-Eureka airport in McKinleyville, including a section on women's fashion and many one of a kind artifacts, this exhibit has something for everyone. Of particular interest from the Carl Schneider collection is a trophy from Lou Brero who won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 1955 <sup>Salinas</sup> Stanislaus race. While Brero's racing prowess is well known, many speculate that the main reason he won was because the crowd favorite tragically died en route to the race on Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, the day before the race, and was none other than Hollywood star James Dean. Dean's tragic death sent shock waves throughout the nation as this young star's life was suddenly cut short in that terrible accident. This exhibit is co-curated by Jack Moore and Bill Morrill, with items loaned from Leon Warmuth, Carl <sup>chn</sup> Schneider and Chuck Ellsworth and is sponsored by AAA and will up until January 7<sup>th</sup>.

The museum always has a permanent section devoted to honoring local veterans, which currently has a display remembering the Korean War. On exhibit are uniforms from local men Robert Palmrose, Major Rucker, Grant Ferusen and Ernest Gutierrez with information on what many call the "forgotten war."

The Clarke Museum is always creating new exhibits, please come by for a visit and become a member <sup>or volunteer</sup> to help support local history as we are devoted to preserving and presenting this region's history. We're open Wednesday through Saturday 11-4 and every Arts Alive.