

MENDOCINO COUNTY MUSEUM

PRESS & PUBLICITY ARTICLES

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MARK WALKER SCULPTURE RENOVATION

Mark Walker was born in 1892, in the former community of De Haven in Mendocino County. He to be 107 years old and left a legacy that lives on to today. Walker not only lived through the development of Mendocino County but was instrumental in helping interpret this history by being an artist, musician, sculptor and an oral historian. His artistic and fanciful sculptures are seen everyday by those who drive US 101 south of Willits. The "*Pioneers Ensemble*" folk figures are located two miles south of Willits on the west side of the highway. A covered wagon shelters "*Ma & Pa*" from Mendocino rain and dust, accompanied by a tan-bark laden mule. Tanbark Oak provided important tannin used in preparation of leather goods, especially tack for horses, and represents a one time important Mendocino County industry. Mark worked in the tan bark industry as an adult—it's a business that no longer exists.

This 1988 art project is reminder of by-gone days and a history that should not be forgotten. Fortunately, Mark Walker, man of many talents, also had the wisdom and foresight to provide an endowment at Mendocino County Museum to maintain his sculptures in perpetuity. Nick Stratton was recently commissioned by the Museum to repair, repaint and restore this wonderful roadside attraction to its original vibrancy.

Walker's art has statewide recognition. The *California Council for the Humanities* and the *Barnet Segal Trust* both provided funding for an exhibit called "From Old Timer to New Timer" and produced a pictorial catalog called "*Life and Works of Mark M. Walker.*" This souvenir quality presentation is a 24-page illustrated booklet with essays by Jo Farb Hernandez, Sandra Metzler and Mark Rawitsch and is available for \$3.95 at the Mendocino County Museum Book Store.

Mendocino history buffs will also be delighted to find that Mendocino County's community museum displays additional Walker sculptures, one of his homemade violins and two uniquely and colorfully painted snakes! Mark left an invaluable and extensive oral history of tan-barking in the 19th Century as well as photographs and other memorabilia now in the archives of the Museum.

The Museum is OPEN Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., and admission is FREE, though donations are greatly appreciated, or visit the website at WWW.CO.MENDOCINO.CA.US/MUSEUM or WWW.GOMENDO.COM.

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