

MENDOCINO COUNTY MUSEUM

PRESS & PUBLICITY ARTICLES

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ARCHIVE ORGANIZATION

We all know how things “pile up.” A box soon fills up with papers, to become two boxes, then three and pretty soon an attic or garage full and then to the Mini-Storage Unit. Museums have a similar problem on a much larger scale—whole buildings are needed to fill with shelving, file cabinets, special storage, and dust-free laboratories. Mendocino County Museum is fortunate to have a first-rate facility in which to pursue the preservation of heritage.

The Museum houses an archive of documents associated with the many facets of county history and heritage. Such documents must be sorted, organized, reviewed for relevance, indexed and eventually stored to support researchers and students now and in the future. Accomplishing this task falls to Archivists. While the museum for the past thirty years has made some progress in the archival division, Museum Director Herb Pruett states, “we have been most fortunate for the past three years to have the professional archival services of a husband/wife team on contract to continue the work of Mendocino County Archives at the Museum facility in Willits. Work begun with Director Mark Rawitsch and Curator Sandra Metzler, continued with Director Dan Taylor and Curator Rebecca Snetselaar, and has gained new prominence with Archivists Sylvia and Russ Bartley of Fort Bragg. Beginning several years ago, as volunteers, the Bartley’s began bringing order to the archival collections. Under their auspices, several new and important archival collections have been added to the Museum’s inventory; now numbering more than forty subjects of Mendocino County heritage.”

A 10,000 sq. ft. “Artifact (& Archival) Storage Building” was completed as an annex to the original museum building six years ago. The new storage rooms, laboratories, reading room, etc. are becoming a new and important research asset to the region. In present economic times, it has become increasingly more difficult to fund and perpetuate the work of archival organization, however to the museum’s good fortune, much is being

done, and this fine resource for historians everywhere will become a legacy for future generations. Director Herb Pruett adds, "I hope those looking to improve their tax situation and benefit their community at the same time, will consider a donation to the Museum Endowment Fund through the *Community Foundation of Mendocino County*, or directly to the Museum. We need furniture and equipment to make our archives the best local resource possible."

Please contact the staff at the Mendocino County Museum, 707-459-2736, to either make an appointment to access the Mendocino County Archives, or discuss a research visit.

Mendocino County Museum public exhibits are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Admission is FREE (donations however, are greatly appreciated). For a preview and additional information, visit the website at www.co.mendocino.ca.us/museum or www.gomendo.com.

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