

## Yurok Tribe by Spencer



The Native American tribe that I studied is the Yuroks. Yurok means “downriver people” in Karok language. The Yuroks are originally from northern California along 36 miles of Klamath River near the Pacific coast. Some people believe the first Yuroks settled in northern California in the 1300’s. Because of the gold rush in the mid-1800’s, people began coming in and trying to take over their land. They ended up losing seventy-five percent of their people to disease and fighting. Even though their original language was Yurok, they were forced to learn English by the settlers.

Since they lived by the ocean and along a river, Yuroks were known for being good fishermen. They mostly ate fish, sea lions, and mollusks. They used sears, nets, and wooden fish traps to catch their food. They also hunted with bows and arrows. They caught deer, elk, and small game. The women collected acorns, seaweed, berries, and roots which they also used for food.

Yuroks built their houses and canoes out of redwood trees. Yuroks believed that redwood trees were sacred living beings. Their homes were built over a four foot deep hole.

Yurok men did not really wear clothes but sometimes they wore short skirts. Women wore long skirts made out of grass, shells, and beads. They did not wear shirts in hot weather but they wore deerskin ponchos when it was cold.

Yuroks enjoyed basket weaving, canoe making, storytelling, singing, and dancing. Dancing was important because they used dancing for prayers and to heal people.

Many Yurok children enjoyed hunting and fishing with their fathers. Yurok boys played a game called the Stick Game and the girls played with dolls.

The interesting thing that I found out was that Yuroks used shells called dentalia for money. The men would tattoo their arms to measure the length of their dentalia shells.