

Kerbyville Museum a centerpiece in community with varied artifacts

History abounds in displays and on the grounds

A visit to the Kerbyville Museum History Center in Kerby, and several businesses in the vicinity -- including It's A Burl, Dovetail Joint, and Kauffman's Wood Products -- are worth the trip.

Larger than it looks from the outside, the museum and its grounds, which include a barn, a one-room schoolhouse and a Takilma Indian pit house replica, offer guests a unique glance of time gone by. The schoolhouse, believed moved from the White Schoolhouse Road area of rural Cave Junction, is thought to be perhaps the last standing example of its type in Oregon. Plans are in the works to restore it.

Several museum exhibits tell of Illinois Valley's earliest days -- gold mining, Chinese immigrant labor, logging, and the rise of the railroad -- all played significant roles.

Yet, what makes touring the museum and adjacent Stith-Naucke House truly impressive is the sheer number of treasures housed inside. It's estimated that there are more than 16,000 artifacts. Antique clothing, china, shaving razors, tobacco cans, women's purses and shoes, dolls, quilts, bottles, weighing scales, Native American baskets and more are displayed. The museum even has an old Linotype "hot lead" machine used for printing the "Illinois Valley News" years back, a loom, a collection of various telephones, which the museum houses for a valley resident, and several sewing machines.

There are lots of pianos and organs too. Approximately 90 percent of the museum's items were donated by valley and Josephine County residents, although not all share history specific to the area, and the museum continues to receive donated items.

Since the museum runs on the efforts of just a handful of volunteers, the history of many of its items has not been researched; and therefore not much of an explanation, if any, is listed.

But for the imaginative mind, such relics conjure their own stories of hardship and riches, pioneer journeys, and varied lives spanning the decades.

One area of the museum, surely not to be missed, is a room off the back that holds an array of military objects, including a drum carried by a 15-year-old Union Army soldier in the Civil War. Also on display are a mourning hat, bag and handkerchief carried by Eleanor Johnson Webb at Abraham Lincoln's funeral.

While the importance of the museum as a tool to help share the area's history with tourists is noted, also emphasized is its significance within the community.

The Illinois Valley Women's Club started the Kerbyville Museum in 1959, after purchasing the Stith-Naucke House and grounds. When it opened, the house was actually the museum. The current museum building was constructed years later, as the artifacts had outgrown the house. Built in the early 1880s, the Stith-Naucke House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Mr. Naucke was a candy maker in the East, and his family moved to Kerby and operated a general store, which was located across the street from where the house stands.

The Kerbyville Museum is located at 24195 Redwood Hwy. For more information, phone 592-5252, or stop and visit.

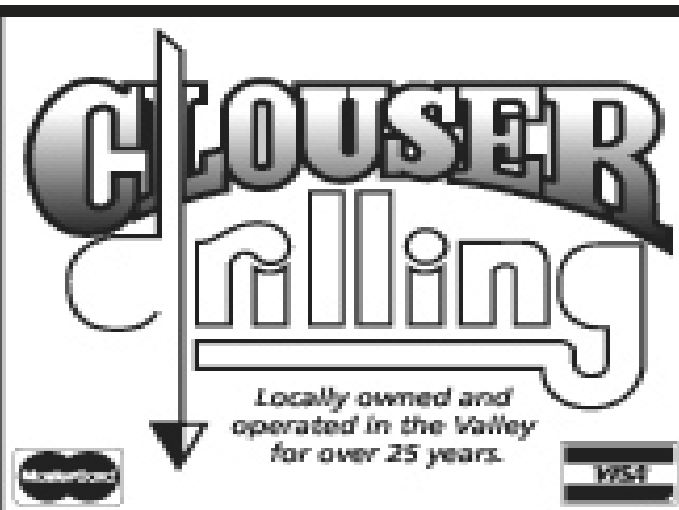


Photos on this page and facing page are by Dale Sandberg.

**Need more information about Illinois Valley and environs?
There are several sources:**

On the Web, you can use cavejunctionoregon.com, thanks to I.V. Chamber of Commerce & Bill Reid of Oregon Mt. Real Estate.

Or phone the chamber, 592-3326; or the I.V. Visitor Center, 592-4076.



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