

Take a stroll through LOCAL HISTORY

Baker Heritage Museum is open seven days a week

BAKER CITY — The Baker Heritage Museum is a place to learn all about the roots of Baker County — the settlers, the industries, the people who came before us.

Where else can you stand in one spot and learn about how a nun and a bank robber contributed to local history? (Spoiler: They didn't work together.)

The history museum, 2480 Grove St., Baker City, opened for the season on Saturday, March 20.

It is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Admission is \$7 general, \$6 for seniors and military, or \$25 for a family or group of four to six people. Admission is free for children age 12 and younger. Face coverings are required.

A new display greets visitors in the entry foyer with a detailed history of the building, which celebrates 100 years in 2021.

It wasn't always a museum.

The brick structure began life as a natatorium — known as "The Nat" — with an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Historic photos give a glimpse of that era, along with wool swimming suits that have been donated to the museum's collection.

In 1940 the Natatorium was conveyed to the state of Oregon for a National Guard Armory. It was then leased to Baker War Industries and used for fabrication and construction of equipment for the military.

After Baker War Industries closed in August 1945, the building sat unused and was nearly demolished.

It was saved thanks to the Baker County Historical Society.

The Society was founded in 1946. Museum exhibits were first displayed on the balcony of the old



Lisa Britton/Go! Magazine

The exhibit "Extraordinary Women," featuring women who left a mark on Baker County, may be viewed at the Baker Heritage Museum, which opened for the season March 20.

Citizens National Bank (1954) and then in the basement of Baker City Hall (1960s).

The county museum commission formed in the 1970s, and in 1976 the Natatorium was nominated and listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

Renovation work started in the late 1970s. In 1983, the Oregon Trail Regional Museum (its original name) opened for five days a week. The Cavin-Warfel Rock Collection, donated by two rockhound sisters, opened July 16, 1984.

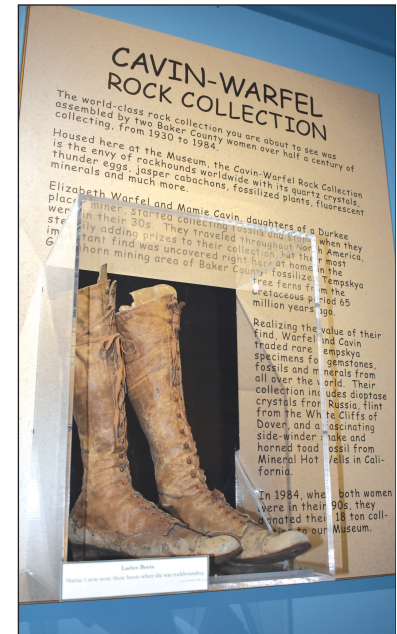
Fundraisers continued throughout the 1990s to support improvements and ongoing renovation.

This year, 2021, the Baker Heritage Museum celebrates its centennial year.

Displays tell the story of Baker County's history, from mining to

farming to small businesses that now exist only in memory.

The current central gallery exhibit, "Extraordinary Women of Baker County and North Powder,"



Lisa Britton/Go! Magazine

The museum foyer gives a preview of the extensive Cavin-Warfel Rock Collection.

highlights many local women such as Sister Stanislaus, the first Mother Superior of St. Francis Academy, and, perhaps on the other end of the spectrum, Nellie Blanchette McCarty, who participated in four bank robberies by the McCarty Gang in 1891 and 1892.

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GO!
WEEKEND OUTLOOK



FRIDAY
High 53 Low 28
Mostly sunny



SATURDAY
High 60 Low 33
Mostly sunny



SUNDAY
High 65 Low 34
Mostly sunny