

# TAKE IT IN Museums

## GRANT COUNTY'S MANY MORE MUSEUMS

explore  
LIKE A LOCAL

During the inception of Grant County and its most populated towns, everyone came for the gold. Today, there's still treasure in the hills – more than just gold. Mining, immigration, rail line, ranching, logging, fossils – visit any museum in the county for a rich and interesting account of local history. Peek through the windows, into the past. Then step through the doors, into the legacies of Grant County.

### Sumpter Valley Railway Depot/DeWitt Museum



Originally constructed in 1910 as a passenger station on the Sumpter Valley Railway, the Depot's goal now is to stand as a caretaker of Oregon's most significant collection of narrow gauge railroad artifacts and historic documents.

Train services were on the ground floor: the waiting room, station agent's office, baggage area and freight room. The second floor provided living quarters for the station agent and family. In 1933 rail service to Prairie City was abandoned and the Depot closed.

In the 1970s the building was scheduled for demolition, but thanks to local interest, was instead entered into the National Register of Historic places, and the museum was moved into the building several years later. These days the Depot and museum house a vast collection of rocks, minerals and other relics from the DeWitt family, as well as photos, documents and historic items from more longtime area families, and a collection of various photographs and physical artifacts of life along the rail line.

The Sumpter Valley Railway Depot offers a look at a unique facet of local and area history. It is a stately centerpiece of Depot RV Park, which features camping facilities, a playground and a covered picnic area, on the banks of the John Day River at the corner of Bridge and Main streets

425 South Main St, Prairie City • 541-820-3330  
www.prairiecityoregon.com/prairie-city-oregon-dewitt-museum  
**OPEN:** Mid May - Mid Oct. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.,  
Wednesday - Sunday  
**ADMISSION:** \$3, children under 12 free



### JAYNE PRIMROSE

Jayne Primrose of Canyon City has been with the Grant County Museum for 18 seasons. Some could say she knows almost everything about the history of Grant County.

The Grant County Museum opened on Canyon Boulevard in Canyon City in 1953. Over 6,000 curious visitors came in to catch a glimpse of what this building had in store to document the history of the county.

Now, 63 years later, the museum sees close to 1,000 visitors a year, some from around the world.

What do visitors find most intriguing, you might wonder?

"Internet visitors come because they've heard about the skulls of the first two men hanged and about the two-headed calf," Primrose said.

Since Jayne has been working in the museum building for over 18 years she, too, has a few favorites in the museum.

"My favorite thing is the old Orient 1906 car that we've been restoring. Bob Stewart is our chief mechanic," Primrose shared. "I also think that the Joaquin Miller Cabin and the jail from Greenhorn are unique. The best thing is the museum collection reflects the lives of ordinary people."

With many interesting pieces that offer a look into the past, staying organized is crucial. Primrose likes to keep on top of things instead of letting them pile up.

"Our filing system was put together by Janice Justice during her tenure at the museum. It's cross-referenced in every direction so it's easy to find what you or a visitor is looking for," praised Primrose. "I say thank you to Janice many times each season as I look up things for visitors."

Jayne's favorite things about living in Grant County are the history, the scenery and the spirit of the people.

### Grant County Genealogical Society



281 W Main, John Day  
541-575-2757  
or 541-932-4718  
gcgcsociety94@yahoo.com  
**OPEN:** 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.  
Thursday-Friday  
and 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Saturdays.  
Also open by appointment.

Information available at the Grant County Genealogical Society Research Center includes cemetery books, obituaries, marriages, births, old atlases and local family histories. There are also reference materials, how-to-books, resources from Oregon counties and other states, and some photos. Staff is available to assist with research and answer questions.

### Grant County Historical Museum

101 S Canyon Blvd., Canyon City • 541-575-0362  
**OPEN:** May 15 - Sept. 30, Monday - Saturday,  
9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and by reservation during off season  
**ADMISSION:** Ages 7-17 \$2; 18-62 \$4; 62 and up \$3;  
7 & younger free

The museum exhibits focus on the day-to-day lives of the pioneers who first came to the area and the many who came for the gold, the Joaquin Miller Cabin and the jail from the now-ghost town of Greenhorn, which happened to mysteriously "show up" in the museum yard overnight in the 1960s. There are gold mining and Chinese artifacts, three large rock collections, ranching items and much, much more. Beyond the old relics, there are extensive files of old newspaper clippings, letters, paper items and over 5,000 old photographs.

### Grant County Ranch and Rodeo Museum



241 E Main, John Day  
541-820-3624  
or 541-575-0747  
**OPEN:** May 1 - Sept. 30,  
Thursday - Saturday,  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
**ADMISSION:** \$3, children  
under 12 are free.  
Also open by appointment.

The Ranch and Rodeo Museum offers a collection of photos, ranch and rodeo tools, leatherwork, saddles and much more, showcasing the times of local cowboys and rodeo competitors, many of whom have been and are national contenders. Grant County has a strong past and presence in ranching, cowboy culture and rodeo heritage, which the museum works to preserve.

### Long Creek Historical Society



The Long Creek Historical Society is a nonprofit 501c3 corporation, striving to relocate the fort built by settlers during the Bannock Indian War of 1878, and build a permanent interpretive site and museum. All are welcome to the Long Creek Historical Society's meeting, the fourth Friday of every month at 4 p.m. at City Hall.

www.cityoflongcreek.com/history • 541-421-3621