

History illustrated in Canyon City



Cheryl Hoefler/Go! Magazine

A mural depicting Canyon City's history was painted by Larry Kangas of Beaverton in 1996 on the Patterson building on Park Street. The panorama is 18 feet tall and 88 feet wide.

By Cheryl Hoefler
Go! Magazine

CANYON CITY — We mostly think of walls only for their functional purposes — holding up buildings and separating rooms.

In Canyon City, several walls also provide illustrated history lessons.

Two murals, both facing Sproul Park, feature facets of this community's history and rich heritage.

Larry Kangas of Beaverton is

the muralist behind both works, which were painted in 1996. He was assisted by Jim and Marilyn DeRoy of Mt. Vernon.

The larger one on Park Street is a panorama of Canyon City around 1862, the year gold was discovered on nearby Whiskey Gulch. Scenes of townspeople, horse-drawn wagons and, of course, gold panners are set against a view of the canyon, drawing viewers back to those thriving days when Canyon City

was a growing community. Hard to believe, but it's claimed that 10,000 people lived in Canyon City at the peak of the gold rush — more than in Portland at that time.

The mural, which fills the entire length of the historic Patterson building, was feted at an event on July 14, 1996. The painting measures 18 feet tall by 88 feet wide.

A smaller mural on the Guernsey building, on the opposite side of the park, features a Fourth of July parade, circa 1890s, marching down Washington Street, which runs along the right side of the building. Visitors can nearly imagine the boisterous sights and sounds on that very street on that Independence Day.

The mural, which was finished

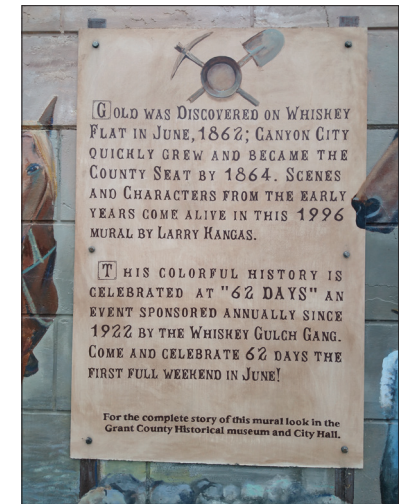
IF YOU GO

Murals in Canyon City depict scenes from the town's history. Visit them facing the town's Sproul Park. Canyon City is in Grant County, about 2 miles south of John Day on Highway 395.

in November 1996, was based on a photo of an 1886 Canyon City parade Kangas saw in a Portland museum.

Below the parade mural are panels painted by the "Aspiring Artists," a local 4-H group.

So the next time you're in the Canyon City area, take some time to appreciate these magnificent murals and enjoy a history lesson in the bargain.



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