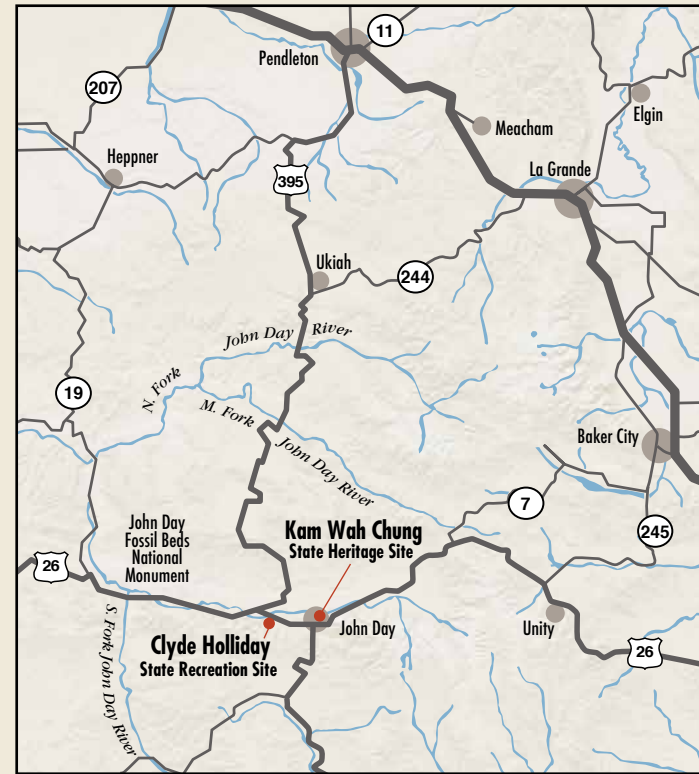


Loosely translated, Kam Wah Chung means “Golden Flower of Prosperity.”

The historic building was indeed a prosperous place—it was once a general store, an herbalist’s office, a place of worship, and a center of Chinese social life. Today, it is a heritage site that commemorates an important era in Oregon history and serves as a memorial to two prominent Chinese-American men.



Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site

John Day, OR 97845
541-575-2800



Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301
oregonstateparks.org



This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Call 1-800-551-6949. Oregon Relay for the hearing impaired: dial 711. Information and fees in this brochure subject to change without notice.



Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site

金華昌



Historic Building and Interpretive Center

A fresh start in the American West

During the late 19th century, waves of Chinese immigrants were seeking new homes on the west coast of the United States. Most were escaping economic and political instability in China. Many of the immigrants in the Pacific Northwest worked as gold prospectors, miners or railroad workers. By 1887, John Day, Oregon boasted the third largest Chinatown in the United States. An estimated 1,000 Chinese immigrants lived and worked in the small town.

Ing Hay and Lung On

Among the John Day residents were Ing Hay and Lung On, two Chinese men from the Guangdong Province. In 1887 they formed a partnership to purchase the Kam Wah Chung & Co. building and converted it into a dry goods store, herbalist shop and import business.

Ing Hay ran the herbal medicine arm of the partnership. Ing was a master in “pulse diagnosis” and quickly established himself as a medical authority in eastern and central Oregon. Ing became known as “Doc Hay” and people—both Chinese and non-Chinese—traveled great distances to be treated by his restorative infusions.



Ing Hay



Lung On

Lung On, a well-educated merchant, ran the dry goods store and an import business that supported local mining operations. Lung was fluent in both English and Cantonese, and worked as a labor contractor and translator for the Chinese community. He helped manage Ing Hay’s growing medical practice as well.

Ing Hay and Lung On owned and operated Kam Wah Chung for more than 60 years. Neither man ever returned to China; possibly because they feared the strict U.S. immigration laws would prevent them from reentering the U.S. Lung On died in 1940; Ing Hay in 1952. Both men chose to be buried in their adoptive country. Their gravesites are in the city cemetery, overlooking the John Day River.



The significance of Kam Wah Chung

Kam Wah Chung began as a business venture but evolved into a hub for the local Chinese community. Chinese immigrants were often subject to discrimination and even threats of violence in the late 19th century U.S., but Kam Wah Chung was a haven from the intolerance.

Today, the building that housed Kam Wah Chung & Co. is a National Historic Landmark. The interior remains much as it was in the late 1940s; many of the boxes and bottles that line the shelves remain unopened. More than 500 herbs are still preserved in Ing Hay’s apothecary. Together, they make up one of the largest collections of traditional Chinese medicine in the U.S.

In many ways, the story of Kam Wah Chung is classically American. Ing Hay and Lung On’s struggle to build a business amidst adversity is a familiar tale. However, their story is one shared by all Chinese immigrants in eastern Oregon: a determination to preserve their culture while helping to build the American West.

Visiting Kam Wah Chung

Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site is open daily May 1 - Oct. 31, 9 a.m. - noon and 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Admission is free. Entrance is only allowed with a free guided tour. Tours begin at the top of every hour; the last tour leaves at 4 p.m. Visit the interpretive center to pick up a tour ticket. Please note

A rattlesnake immersed in rice wine yielded a tonic used for medicinal purposes.

the historic Kam Wah Chung building is not ADA accessible. To contact staff at the interpretive center, call 541-575-2800.



Friends of Kam Wah Chung & Co.

The mission of the Friends of Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum is to preserve this heritage site for future generations and educate the public about the importance of Chinese immigrants to Oregon history. Please consider making a donation to support their work; visit their website at friendsofkamwahchung.com.