



**Stories to Inspire Visitors  
Every Experience Begins with A  
Good Story**



Every great visitor experience starts with an intriguing and inspiring story. A recent article in the Washington Post illustrated that a story can even set one on a spiral, up or down. Couples who told more positive stories were far more likely to be together in stable marriages than those who told negative stories. People who lead meaningful lives tend to tell stories about redemption, growth and love, and stories that move from bad to good. Stories are a very critical part of tourism marketing. They are what pull visitors into the experience while they are still reading, increasing the possibilities of a visit exponentially. When visitors can envision themselves in an experience, are are much more likely to visit. Below are four different stories. Three stories that feature a single location and a fourth, which tells the story of a Scenic Byway in four different ways. Use these stories to inspire you to create your own!



## **A Historic Town**

Take a walk around town. Stroll slowly up and down the hilly streets, past more than 300 grandiose beautifully detailed, dashing painted, historic homes. Stare at one house, larger than the next, as the newly rich, without land to inherit, tried to outdo one another with opulent living. Make your way along street after street, where amazing structures keep coming one after the other. But how, in the shadow of Penn State, you ask, how did they get here? Why were they built and by whom?

Listen closely and perhaps you can hear the the scrrreeeecccchhhhh of the whistle sounding as it did for more than 120 years, signaling another pour of molten iron.

A perfect storm of all the necessary ingredients for iron making, rich deposits of ore underground combined with limestone, thick forests, and swiftly flowing streams, made the roaring furnaces of Bellefonte the chief source of iron for the entire nation between 1800 and 1850. It was a critical time for iron, for farm machinery to support burgeoning agriculture and wagon wheels needed by the throngs of settlers making their way to new lives in the West. Cities were rising, bridges being built, roads criss-crossing the nation, all requiring the production of the iron masters. The first of the homes in Bellefonte were built by these wealthy individuals, Yet, iron began fading as ore from the Midwest started taking center stage.

Surrounded by coal deposits, the ingredients for glass making, vast forests which produced huge quantities of lumber, and rich farmland, when other early towns began to fade, Bellefonte continued to thrive. As the county seat of an area remote from the rest of the state, lawyers and bankers came to join the mix and the district of homes of the influential, the lumber and coal barons, and more, grew larger and larger. Soon after mid-century, realizing that a thriving agricultural community would be needed for the region to continue to prosper as natural resources depleted, several businessmen joined together to find a location for a farmers high school to instruct farmers in new methods of producing more robust crops.

Centre Furnace, the first of the iron furnaces, gave 250 acres for this new school and the rest, as they say, is history, Today that school with its very modest start is The Pennsylvania State University or Penn State. Today's State College was built by these same innovative iron masters. And Bellefonte can say proudly "Before Penn State, there was Bellefonte."



## **A Historic Story**

It is a melting pot, with very diverse cultural richness dating back 11,000 years. A rare find even in America. History in the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and along Los Caminos Antiguos “the ancient road,” dates back to prehistoric Folsom Man hunting in the San Luis Valley. Around 1300, residents from the Colorado cliff dwellers visited, joining the Native American tribes that lived in the area for millenniums.

Fast forward closer to the present and you’ll find the Spanish exploring in 1540 and famed explorer Zebulon Pike arriving in 1804. Hispanic settlers arrived in 1851 to

settle San Luis, Colorado's oldest town. Mormons began arriving in 1875. They were joined by German, Dutch, and Japanese settlers, and more recently, the Amish. Los Caminos Antiguos, a collection of traditional paths in the region, winds along the Upper Rio Grande River with views punctuated by 14,000 foot mountain peaks and the tallest sand dunes in North America. Today, sandhill cranes feed in the marshes, farmers still till the soil, and Mustangs roam free. Looking beyond the breathtaking scenery, historic adobe structures pepper the region, more than 50 murals adorn buildings, and some of Colorado's earliest history is on display. Widely varied cultural locations illustrate where waves of settlers descended on newly formed towns to make a new life for themselves and their families, intermingled their beliefs and traditions in close knit communities, and continue to thrive today. A rare piece of American history just waiting to be explored.





### **Tribute to an American**

It was the manifest courage of a woman that would change the lives of others and ultimately impact a country. Born into slavery on the Eastern shore of Maryland in 1822, Harriet Tubman fled her captors in 1849, traveling under cloak of night to freedom. Instead of remaining in safety, Tubman spent the next decade making treacherous journeys, risking life and limb, to bring her family and friends to freedom. Hiding by day and traveling by night through open fields, rivers, swamps, and woodlands, Tubman stealthily moved from the Philadelphia area into

Maryland 13 times, guiding more than 70 people to freedom without ever being caught. She is now recognized as one of the most prolific and famous conductors of the Underground Railroad, the organized and illegal secret network of people, places, modes of transportation, and methods of disguise, developed to assist enslaved African Americans on their flight to freedom.

At great risk to everyone's lives, African Americans were hidden in Quaker homes, barns and buildings, (called stations), handed off between various members of the network, and mile by mile, sent further north at each stop. This system is memorialized on the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, the journey that celebrates Tubman's life and legacy as it traces the routes taken by thousands on a quest to ultimately reach the Canadian border and the assurance of safety. Follow the path the freedom seekers used to escape, and reflect on the lives of ordinary people who did extraordinary things to help their pursuit of freedom. Discover the links to the historic communities along the way that still carry both painful and triumphant memories of the precarious mid-Atlantic passages to emancipation. Yet, this is not just the story of one woman. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is a record of African Americans' struggle for human rights and dignity over time. It was the start of today's Civil Rights movement, and the quest for equality, freedom, and justice for all.





### **An All American Road Scenic Byway's Story**

Millions of years ago, the earth's plates moved, the land sputtered and cracked, and molten lava burst through the ground, spouting high into the sky. All that fire and fury created the Ring of Fire, a circle of volcanoes in the Pacific Ocean, which today in some places is still active – with volcanoes ready to blow. This is an otherworldly volcanic landscape dotted with towering mountains, desert caves, natural bridges, and giant lava tubes, steam rising up from the ground in sudden

bursts, iridescent pools bubbling and gurgling, cracking fumaroles, banging mudpots, and plunging alpine waterfalls punctuating the sides of towering mountains dotted with brilliant wildflowers and jagged peaks lie as far as the eye can see.

One of the best places in the world to witness the results of this geologic activity is in the area that encompasses Northern California and Southern Oregon. The dramatic scenery and wild geologic history will be your constant companion on the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway All-American Road, a spectacular 500-mile route connecting Crater Lake National Park with Lassen Volcanic National Park. The Byway intertwines this intriguing geologic story of Crater Lake National Park, the deep caldera created when Mount Mazama's exploded 7,700 years ago, leaving behind the deepest lake in America, snow-capped, majestic Mount Shasta, Lava Beds National Monument with the largest number of lava features anywhere in the world, Medicine Lake, a geologic field and Lassen Volcanic National Park where some features just look like they fell off the moon, plus 20 other unique geologic attractions springing out of the landscape.



### **Experience One - Battle of the Titans**

Legend has it that many years ago, two Klamath gods got into a great fight. Llao, god of the underworld, lived deep beneath Mount Mazama but fell in love with the Chief's beautiful daughter. When she refused his advances, he became angry and hurled fire onto the village from an opening at the top of the mountain. Skell, spirit of the sky, decided to defend the villagers from Llao's wrath. A battle ensued, and as Llao and Skell hurled giant rocks at each other, the earth trembled and landslides of fire spilled from the mountaintops. Llao was eventually driven back into the underworld and in order to keep him there, Skell covered the opening of Mount Mazama and filled the pit with water. Today, we call that water Crater

Lake. One of the best ways to experience this natural wonder is on a drive along the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway All-American Road, a spectacular 500-mile route that runs from Oregon to California. But that is not the only story this stretch of the Byway has to tell. Millions of years after the mountains and volcanoes emerged from the land, another treasure revealed itself - gold. All it took was one shiny flake for boom towns like Redding and Yreka to spring up overnight with hopefuls in search of a new life and a little bit of gold. From historic Main Streets to museums full of fascinating artifacts, history will come alive right before your eyes as you travel along the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.





## **Experience Two - Nature's Wonderland**

Calling all wildlife and nature enthusiasts! The Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway All-American Road is a spectacular 500-mile route that runs from Oregon to California, but this stretch of the Byway is a veritable who's-who of the Pacific Northwest animal kingdom. Over 200 species of birds and dozens of animals like pronghorn antelope, mule deer, river otters, trout, and coyote live on the six National Wildlife Refuges nestled within Oregon's Klamath Basin region. Thanks to the thousands of acres of grasslands, forests, farms, and wetlands that make up this area, birds like bald eagles, sandhill cranes, pelicans, swans, and falcons have

been spotted amongst the trees. In fact, more than 80 percent of all migrating birds stop in the Klamath Basin, and in the spring and fall seasons, migratory waterfowl can number in the millions. Towering cattails, dense tule, aromatic sagebrush, and lush pine forests line the Byway as you venture deep into Northern California to visit towns like Weed, McCloud, and Susanville. Travel back in time with walks down historic Main Streets and let history be your guide as you learn the story of how the railroad and lumber industries played an integral role in the development of these communities. From homemade breakfasts at the local diner to antique furniture in 19th century inns, these cities are big on small-town charm and ready to introduce you to the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.





### **Experience Three - Fumaroles, Mud Pots, and Lava Tubes**

Imagine a landscape where steam rises up from the ground in sudden bursts, iridescent pools bubble and gurgle, brilliant wildflowers dot the side of towering mountains, and jagged peaks lie as far as the eye can see. No, you're not on the moon. You're in Lassen Volcanic National Park! The dramatic scenery surrounding this park tells the tale of the area's wild geologic history, and there is no better way to hear that story than on the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway All-American Road, a spectacular 500-mile route that runs from Oregon to California. On this stretch of the Byway, you'll wind through Lassen Volcanic National Park for 30 stunning

miles, and immerse yourself in the surreal world of cracking fumaroles, banging mudpots, and plunging alpine waterfalls. Then, take a deep breath as you leave the sulfurous volcanoes behind and enter the lush pine forests that surround the towns of Chester, Susanville, and Westwood. These historic lumber and mill towns were critical to the development of Northern California and still retain their community pride and small-town charm while serving as a fantastic home base for outdoor adventure activities like hiking, biking, and swimming. Take a dip in a shimmering lake, walk beneath the shade of towering trees, listen for the distant whistle of an eagle flying high overhead, and marvel at the geologic wonders found on the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.







#### **Experience Four - Notes from the Past**

Life in the Pacific Northwest was quite different 200 years ago. Most buildings were made out of wood, horse-drawn carriages grappled for space on city streets, and townspeople took bets on when the railroad would arrive and launch the community into modernity. Whispers of this era can still be heard throughout the region, and there is no better place on which to listen to the past than on the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway All-American Road, a spectacular 500-mile route that runs from Oregon to California. Sitting at the intersection of history and

geology, this route tells the tale of cities like McCloud and Mt. Shasta, where the burgeoning lumber industry helped create these mill towns practically overnight, and of Tulelake, which played a poignant role in the second World War. But American history is not the only story told on this Byway. Millions of years ago, the land sputtered and cracked and molten lava burst through the ground, creating an otherworldly volcanic landscape dotted with towering mountains, desert caves, natural bridges, and giant lava tubes. This section of the Byway takes you directly to locations like Medicine Lake, Lava Beds National Monument, and Crater Lake National Park, prime examples of this fascinating geologic era and where you can dip your toes in an alpine lake, thousands of feet above sea level.

