



THE *Journey Through Time*

SCENIC BYWAY



Uncommonly rich in history, this Byway reveals tales of pioneers, towns boomed and busted and creatures that wandered this terrain millions of years ago.

The Journey Through Time Scenic Byway stretches 286 miles through north central to eastern Oregon. Beginning in the community of Biggs and ending in Baker City, this Byway meanders through ghost towns and small farming communities that bring the Old West to life. The “Wild and Scenic” John Day River—North America’s second longest undammed river—parallels much of the route, offering excellent rafting, fishing and camping. Geology buffs—and anyone who’s curious about fossils—will take great pleasure in the interpretive trails at the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Historic commemorations of more recent times, such as the Sherman County Museum in Moro, the Kam Wah Chung Museum in John Day, the gold mining remnants in Sumpter and the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center near Baker City offer telling windows into Oregon pioneer life.

Leaving the Columbia

Your Journey Through Time begins in the town of Biggs, 17 miles east of The Dalles on I-84. You’ll move south from Native American salmon-harvesting spots on the Columbia toward Wasco, site of the original Columbia Southern Railway depot which dates back to 1898 and still stands. Be sure to visit the Sherman County Historical Museum in Moro. The museum includes over 15,000 artifacts and exhibits on Native American life, Oregon Trail migration, rural living, and wheat farming.

Shaniko to Antelope

With Mount Hood and Mount Jefferson looming in the west, you’ll reach Shaniko—the Wool Shipping Center of the World in the 1880s, and now a “living” ghost town. The recently renovated Shaniko Hotel is open for business, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. From here, take Route 218 to Antelope. The hills of this region provide habitat for the town’s pronghorned namesake, and were the site of Rajneeshpuram, a religious community that briefly flourished and disbanded in the early 1980s.

Fossil and Fossils

East of Antelope, you’ll come to the Clarno Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The three units of the Monument comprise a well-preserved fossil record of plants and animals dating back 6 million to 54 million years—The Cenozoic Era, or Age of Mammals and Flowering Plants. The Clarno Unit consists primarily of hardened mudflows or lahars, which captured and fossilized plants and animals in their wake. Visitors can walk several interpretive trails. Eighteen miles farther east, you’ll come upon the town

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John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

The John Day River basin is home to a well-preserved fossil record of plants and animals, spanning more than 40 of the 65 million years of the Cenozoic Era (the "Age of Mammals and Flowering Plants"). Casts of turtles and saber-toothed cats, among other animals, can be viewed along the trails of the Monument.

of Fossil, established in the 1880s—and named for a fossilized mammoth bone found in the vicinity. Fossil offers amateur archeologists a chance to do some free prospecting for leaf imprints at the public fossil-collecting site in town. A few motels, B&B's and restaurants are available.

Service Creek to Kimberly

Heading south from Fossil, the Journey Through Time Scenic Byway joins the "Wild and Scenic" John Day River at Service Creek, an old stagecoach stop; the river skirts the Byway for the next 100 miles. Next, you'll reach Spray, site of a key early 20th century ferry crossing that allowed travelers to reach The Dalles Military Road farther west. The North Fork of the John Day joins the mainstem of the river at Kimberly, which is known for its bountiful orchards of cherries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, apples and pears.

Cant Ranch National Historic District, across the highway from the new Thomas Condon Visitor Center, headquarters of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, features displays of old farm equipment plus descriptions of sheep and cattle ranching in the early 1900s.

Kimberly to John Day

The stretch of Highway 19 from Kimberly to Dayville showcases the beauty of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Rimrock flanks the roadway, and the river winds below while raptors glide in the ther-

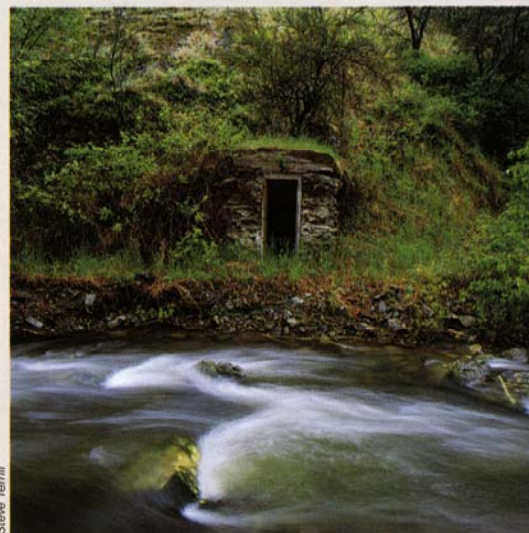
mals overhead. Two noteworthy formations, Cathedral Rock and Mascall Overlook, can be viewed from the road. Passing through rich cattle country, you'll soon reach John Day, famous for the annual cattle drive that goes through town. It's also home to the original Chinese medical clinic—Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site, which honors the culture of the Chinese railroad workers and miners who settled here in the 1880s.

Strawberries and Blues

Pushing east from John Day you soon reach Prairie City, home of the DeWit Depot Museum, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Strawberry Mountain overlooks the town, creating one of the most photogenic vistas on this Byway. The Byway now heads in a northeasterly direction on Oregon Route 7, leaving the John Day River and climbing through the foothills of the Blue Mountains. You'll pass through Whitney, one of Oregon's more accessible ghost towns, and then reach Sumpter.

Sumpter to Baker City

Sumpter was a major gold mining center in eastern Oregon. Gold was extracted from the valleys of the Blue Mountains with a 1,240-ton dredge. Long piles of gravel tail-



Steve Terrill

ings are still visible along the Byway, and the dredge has been restored. Train buffs will want to visit the original narrow gauge steam train of the renamed Sumpter Valley Railway. The train runs Memorial Day through September. East of Sumpter, the Journey Through Time Scenic Byway joins the Elkhorn Drive Scenic Byway (see page 40) and offers breathtaking vistas of the Blue Mountains and Elkhorn Range. You'll make a gradual descent to Baker City, with its historic downtown. Just east of Baker City is the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.



Photo: (opposite page) rock formations in the Sheep Rock Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Photo: (above) a shelter along Canyon Creek near the town of John Day.

Trip Tips - Distance: An engaging 286-mile drive. **Best Time:** Year round; summer temperatures rise in the valleys; and winter snows fall at higher elevations. **Minimum Driving Time:** 8-10 hours. **Medical Services/Hospitals:** The Dalles, Madras, John Day and Baker City. **Rest Areas:** Several parks and campgrounds are located along the route. **Gas:** Open stations may be hard to find. Don't let your tank get low.