



WHAT'S YOUR OREGON STORY?

(YOU GOT 'EM, WE WANT 'EM)

No one knows Oregon like you, so we wouldn't be able to celebrate the sesquicentennial right without your help. We're collecting Oregon Stories, and we want you to share yours with us. Tell us something about Oregon that you cherish—the way things used to be, or what you hope they can become. Tell us about a hardship you've faced. Tell us a joke. Tell us about your hometown, your family and your friends. Tell us what you would like other Oregonians to know and remember.

Then, we'll share the best stories with you. Starting in September 2008, and continuing every week throughout the year, we'll share your Oregon Stories with the whole state in print, on radio and the web.

To help you get started, we've put together a tool kit of ideas and examples of how to tell your story. Keep in mind that these are only suggestions, and that, just like in Oregon itself, your imagination is your only limit. Write it, sing it, sew it—just as long as you share it with us.

HOW DO I TELL MY STORY?

ESSAYS

Whether they're recollections of the past or manifestos about the future, all good essays share one thing—a strong voice. Your essay can address any aspect of Oregon life and doesn't need to be a masterpiece of proper grammar. It should, however, be about 200 words and feature your singular perspective.



EXAMPLES

The annual Best American Essays series is a good source for essays in a variety of voices and on a variety of subjects, though they tend to be lengthy. NPR regularly broadcasts shorter essays as part of its *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* programs.

The Op-Ed sections of most newspapers, such as *The New York Times*, as well as many web blog posts, often contain good examples of concise personal essays.

ORAL HISTORY

By recording or transcribing a firsthand account of a historical event, an oral history is a great way to capture the distinctive voice of a time and place. But oral histories also present their own challenges. Check out our checklist for pointers on how to conduct an interview, and then see our examples for what a successful oral history looks like.





- Everyone has something to say, but make sure they are willing participants. Some people are uncomfortable speaking about themselves at length.
- Have questions prepared beforehand to keep the conversation flowing. We've put together a list of sample questions on our website to get you started. You can find them at www.oregon150.org/oregon-stories/.
- Be mindful of energy levels, and not just your interviewee's. Speaking for an hour or more can be exhausting!

EXAMPLES

The Smithsonian Institute maintains a vast archive of material from throughout American history. Learn more at www.si.edu.

The Oregon Historical Society has oral history tapes and transcripts focusing on Oregon history at www.ohs.org.

StoryCorps is an invaluable resource for learning how to record living history at www.storycorps.net.

PHOTOGRAPHS

While personal essays and oral histories can be accompanied with an image, you may want to submit an exploration of Oregon through a series of photographs. A continuous theme running throughout the series—such as all the churches or movie theaters in your town—can serve to help maintain interest from beginning to end.

EXAMPLES

Many magazines, such as *Life* and *National Geographic*, have built their reputations partly on the quality of their photo essays.

On www.flickr.com, photosets are often organized by theme and offer some simple ideas for adding appeal to your everyday snapshots.

OTHER

Maybe your Oregon Story is best captured on video, or in a poem, or in a song. Great! We welcome whatever you're inspired to submit. Remember, only stories that meet the requirements listed on the submission form can be shared with the rest of Oregon via radio, print or the web. All your stories, however, will be saved for future generations to explore. So keep them coming!

