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New Book Resurrects Old St. Helens

The fascinating history of St. Helens is the focus of a newly released book from Arcadia Publishing titled *St. Helens: Images of America*. Written by local author Tricia Brown in collaboration with Columbia County Museum Association board members, the 128-page book features more than 100 photos, etchings and maps reaching as far back as the early 1800s and into the early 1960s.

Brown and members of the CCMA Board will speak and offer a multimedia presentation on the book beginning at 6:30 p.m. Tues., June 16, at the Armstrong Conference Room in the St. Helens Public Library.

Brown, a Scappoose resident, has written two dozen books for adults and children, most of them focusing on Alaska, her former home. She holds a BA in Journalism from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Alaska Anchorage. Brown has long served as her family's historian and was excited to explore St. Helens' history with some of the same research methods she used as a professional journalist and as an amateur genealogist.

Chapters hold rich detail—in images and words—of the unique people, institutions, economic booms and storms that have made St. Helens what it is today. The last chapter, titled “Nearly Famous,” holds more recent memories shared by many residents, from the filming of *Halloweentown* and *Twilight* to other close brushes with fame.

“My colleagues at the CCMA were just amazing to work with,” Brown said. “They have such great depth of knowledge and wide personal contacts. Having their guidance and review made my job so much easier. Each one is devoted to collecting and preserving local stories and photos, and growing their membership.”

The CCMA board includes descendants of early families, individuals with expertise in logging, railroad history, law enforcement, quarrying, and other local business. Members include President Joanne LeMont Pellham, who is descended from a city founder; Curator Les Watters, whose ancestors arrived generations ago; Secretary/Treasurer Barbara Larsen, who co-wrote Arcadia's book on Vernonia's

history; Dave Parsons, whose expertise lies in logging and railroads; Duke Smith, who writes for and edits the association's biennial history publication; and David Sprau, an author and railroad historian.

Brown and the CCMA received vital support from the Columbia County Board of Commissioners, St. Helens Mayor Randy Peterson and the St. Helens City Council, the city's Tourism Committee, Diane Dillard, Vern Grimshaw, and the Columbia County Cultural Coalition in partnership with the Oregon Cultural Trust.



Caption:

Author Tricia Brown collaborated with board members of the Columbia County Museum Association, along with other volunteers and contributors, to produce a new book of St. Helens history in photos, released by Arcadia Publishing. Pictured clockwise, from lower left, are Barbara Larsen, Brown, Dave Parson, Les Watters, David Sprau, Duke Smith, and Joanne Pellham. *(Photo courtesy Crystal Farnsworth)*