

Vernonia Pioneer Museum Preserves Historic Treasures *continued from front page*

project manager. Treasurer Tobie Finzel conducted the research and wrote the text for the book, including the captions for almost 200 photos. President Carol Davis and Vice President Ralph Keasey helped gather photographs and stories from the community and proofed the manuscript for historical accuracy.

"We logged, (an apt pun!) between the four of us, about 500 hours," said Finzel. "It was very labor intensive."

"Arcadia Publishing contacted us and asked us if we would be interested in publishing a photographic history of Vernonia," said Finzel explaining how the project came into being. "We decided as a Board to go forward and decided early on that the Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association would be the author. Therefore, any royalties from the project would come back to the museum." Arcadia absorbs the initial cost of the publishing; the Museum Association had to purchase a scanner and "...lots of ink," according to Larsen. But otherwise, the project was risk-free for the museum.

Arcadia Publishing makes the process of publishing a local historical book as easy as possible. "They have their process for their 'Images of America' series that is very formulaic-- 128 pages, no more than 18,000 words, approximately 200 photographs and they give us all the specifications for sizes and how to scan the images," said Finzel. "We wrote a proposal about what we thought we would do and they accepted. We received our contract in March of last year. So we only had six months to complete the whole project from there."

"We thought six months was a long time," said Larsen, laughing.

"One of the toughest things was getting photos that we didn't have in our collection," said Finzel. The Association used its connections to long-time residents and networks and solicited the old families from Vernonia for suitable photographs and received many treasures from many sources.

Finzel and Larsen both commented on the difficulty of winnowing down and eliminating photos, and the time it took to write the captions and put together a cohesive story. According to Finzel, like any project, a lot of the work happened in the last few weeks. "We had photographs coming in right up until the end," said Finzel. "We didn't decide until the very end what was going to be included," said Larsen. Finzel noted that the research and verifying facts was also tricky. "You know how it is in Vernonia-- there's about three different versions of every story," she said with a laugh.

According to Finzel, having Ralph Keasey, a fourth-generation Vernonian, review the work as they went along helped immensely.

As references, Finzel used *Pocket in the Woods* and *The Oregon-American Mill* books, the Vernonia Walking Tour Booklet, the 75- and 100-year Vernonia History magazines that were published locally, along with local lore and firsthand stories.

Finzel and Larsen said one of the hardest tasks was finding a suitable photograph for the cover of the book. "The Publishers had very clear requirements and specifications about what they wanted for a cover

photo, and they rejected everything we sent them," said Finzel. "Arcadia said, 'Just send us everything you have and we'll try to pick something out.' The day we were sending everything in, I was confirming some last minute information about Bob Spencer and found this one photo tucked behind some other things. And I knew immediately that was it!" The photo was taken by noted photographer Clark Kinsey and was used with permission from the University of Washington Libraries.

The *Vernonia* book project was a real labor of love that shows the real spirit of Vernonia and its volunteers.



The Vernonia Pioneer Museum

The Vernonia Pioneer Museum is one of Vernonia's best kept little secrets. According to Finzel and Larsen, the museum often gets visitors who say they've lived their whole life in Vernonia and never visited before. "We encourage school tours to come in and we open for special hours," says Finzel. "It's a discover your own discoveries kind of museum."

"Even as long as I've been volunteering here, I still see things I've never noticed before," says Larsen.

At one time, the Pioneer Museum had resident curators, but now depends on volunteers to open the museum, preserving the artifacts and giving tours to visitors. Different members of the community have helped design displays. "We can always use more volunteers," adds Finzel.

"There are two things I'd really like to do here," says Finzel. "One is a better display that walks people through the history of the O-A Mill. The other is to get all the equipment that is outside on the property under some kind of protective cover." Larsen added that there are two basement spaces that could be cleaned out and would make a nice display space.

Last year, the county obtained grants to replace the roof and do repairs to the building's foundation. The county also pays for all the building utilities.

A new wood-carved loggers memorial will hopefully be installed in the near future. A small group of citizens is raising money to complete that project.

With a new book documenting the community history and the potential for new artifacts to be released from under lock and key, things are looking up for one of Vernonia's best little secrets.

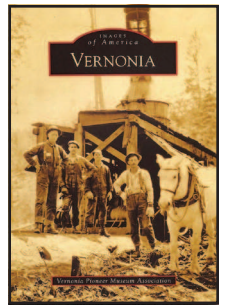
The Vernonia Pioneer Museum Assoc. launched sales of the new book Vernonia at the Vernonia Library on February 6. Museum Assoc. members from r-l Ralph Keasey, Barb Larsen, Tobie Finzel and Carol Davis signed copies of the book.



Images of America: Vernonia - A Review

By Scott Laird

The new book *Vernonia*, published by Arcadia Publishing, as part of their Images of America series is a real treat. Published in collaboration with the Vernonia Pioneer Museum and authored by museum staff, the new book is full of many, never-before-seen photos from local family collections and tells a condensed and very readable history of Vernonia from the earliest settlers up to the Flood of 2007.



Vernonia's history is told in six brief chapters which give details of early farming life, logging and the mill, and recreation and celebration in the community. But most impressive is the array of photos and captions used to tell the story of our town.

Photographs of the first families to settle in the Upper Nehalem Valley and some of the first structures give a clear picture of what life was like in the beginning for Vernonians. As Vernonia grew and expanded, photos show the arrival of the first passenger train, the opening of the Vernonia Airport and stores and businesses along Bridge Street. School photos show what life was like for young children. The chapter on recreation and celebrations show early hunting and fishing photos, organized sports teams and events, parades and, of course, early Friendship Jamboree photos. There are some wonderful images of the Oregon-American Mill and of logging in the woods around the region. What a kick to see photos of some of my friends here in town when they were young women, including current Mayor Sally Harrison and Janelle Thomas Cedergreen. And the photo of Shirlee Daughtry as a little girl is priceless!

The book is well-organized, easy to read, and offers a unique view of a very unique place. It is an incredible collection of memories and history. Arcadia Publishing did an amazing job of bringing the photos to life; most of them are clear and show incredible detail. The numerous families who loaned the Pioneer Museum their photos are to be thanked for sharing them with the rest of us. And the volunteers from the Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association are to be commended for a job well done.

Copies of *Vernonia* can be purchased at the Vernonia Pioneer Museum for \$21.95. You can order them by mail from the museum by sending \$25 to VPMA, P.O. Box 26, Vernonia, OR 97064. It is also available through Arcadia Publishing at www.arcadiapublishing.com or (888) 313-2665.

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