

NOTICES

Native History, by Native Historians

Book about Shasta Nation Opens Doors for Similar Books at Publishing Company

by Richard Walker, *Indian Country Today*

SAN JUAN ISLAND, Wash. — Betty Lou Hall and her daughter-in-law, Monica Jae Hall, recently wrote a book about their people, the Shasta Nation. They did it under a tight deadline and they didn't make a lot of money. But the result was worth more than they could have imagined.

Their book, an illustrative history of the Shasta people, is being used in schools and colleges. It gave the Halls a medium through which to set the record straight regarding historical events. And it set an example for what other tribal nations and Native historians can do.

Shasta Nation was published as part of Arcadia Publishing Co.'s *Images of America* series of books. The books are written primarily by local historians or historical societies, culling from local photo collections that often yield previously unpublished historical photographs.

There are more than 3,000 titles in the series, mostly about American communities and neighborhoods. *Shasta Nation* is Arcadia's first book about an American Indian nation and it is one of few books about the Shastas.

"It needed to be done. There was nothing else on the Shastas," Betty said. When their deadline was bumped

up, she and her daughter-in-law were undaunted. "We said, 'Let's go with it.'"

The Halls were prepared. Betty is Shasta Nation's historian and has devoted her life to recording and verifying Shasta oral history with documents, interviews and photographs. She has 16 file cabinets full of Shasta histories. She and Monica are partners in Shasta-Upper Klamath Research, which collects and preserves Shasta Nation history.

"I have been collecting information since I was 10 years old," Betty said. "I've got their stories. I've been gathering information for a long time."

Shasta Nation is the second Arcadia book for Monica, who co-authored *Western Siskiyou, Gold and Dreams* for Arcadia's *Making of America* series.

If a book proposal is accepted by Arcadia, authoring is relatively simple. Each book is photo-intensive and follows a set format: 128 pages, sepia-toned cover, a dedication page, table of contents, acknowledgements, introduction, and 180 to 240 images in up to six chapters. Text consists of between 8,000 and 18,000 words. The books sell, on average, for \$19.99, and authors receive a royalty of about \$1 per book.

The Halls' book is a comprehensive visual history of the Shasta people. As

the book states, for thousands of years before there was a California, the Shasta-Upper Klamath people had a successful society in an area stretching from Crater Lake, near Medford, Ore., to north of Redding, Calif.

The book tells of first contact with settlers and the ensuing years of death and dispersion, and continues into the resurgence of a people who have kept their culture alive and are thriving in a 21st century world.

The Halls don't gloss over painful events in history, even referring to the post-treaty massacre of thousands of Shastas as "genocide."

On Nov. 4, 1851, after Shasta leaders signed a treaty to establish a reservation, U.S. government representatives presented a celebratory feast. The food was poisoned, the book states. Only two of the treaty signers did not eat.

"They buried the dead along the trail for weeks," the book states. "About 170 warriors fled to the mountains. Vigilantes swept through the Shasta Nation, burning every village and slaughtering the people. They threw the dead and dying on fires."

Betty's informants included her grandfather, who cared for one Shasta man who had survived the feast and ensuing slaughter 50 years earlier. Regarding later events, Betty received information first-hand from informants born as early as the 1870s.

The book contains photographs of Shasta people born as early as 1820. One photo, taken in the 1920s, shows Frank Ruffy, wearing traditional headdress, at an event. He lived to be 115 and remembered the first white men to come to the valley.

The book also depicts the continuity of Shasta life, from the 1800s to present day: People at work in the timber industry, elders keeping the language alive, latter-day plank houses built the way the ancestors did, young people learning to hunt and ride horses, military heroes, family gatherings, weddings.

There's a picture of Nancy George receiving a medal from then-Gov. Ronald Reagan for designing a teaching plan for Yreka High School, a plan still in use today. George was a student at the school at the time. There's a circa 1960 picture of Kathryn Beatty, wearing her U.S. Women's Army Corps uniform. She was trained to be an Army secretary, but became an expert with the M-1 rifle and competed in the national rifle championships. As a civilian, she drove truck.

There are historical pictures of ancestors wearing regalia; one taken in the 1920s shows a traditional headdress and band with flicker feathers. Regalia

were traditionally buried with the elders and only a few photos remain, the Halls write. Another photo shows a rare event, the white deerskin dance.

While the Shastas are thriving again, they still must be on guard, as the book illustrates. There's a photo of the Ruff and Beatty families in 2000. The Ruffs had a land allotment with rocky, poor soil, and they abandoned it with a promise from the government of better land in Scott Valley. The new allotment was never assigned.

Arcadia's Pacific Northwest editor Julie Albright, who is based in Seattle, said she would like to see more books about American Indian and Alaska Native communities, but insists that the authors be from those communities.

"I believe that for any tribal history — or any history, for that matter — to be valid, it really needs to have the support and input of the communities involved," said Albright, who is of Mohawk ancestry.

"Even in my own little corner of the world, mainly settled by Scandinavian immigrants, there are people who write revisionist histories to reflect their own prejudices and their own background, completely ignoring the people who settled here. For a tribal history, it is even more important to make sure that the tribe gets to tell their own story, in their own words, of their own history."

Indeed, in *Jefferson County*, an Arcadia book about the county on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, the first of seven chapters — *In the Beginning* — is devoted to the First Peoples of that region. But that chapter contains only six photos. All told, the book — authored by the Jefferson County Historical Society — contains only nine pictures depicting Native people and Native life. That's short shrift considering the county is the historical home of the Chimacum, Hoh, S'Klallam, Snohomish, Quinault, and Twana peoples.

Shasta Nation sold out its first printing of 1,200, and is in its second printing. Betty said she and her daughter-in-law haven't made a lot of money, but the result has been worth it — *Shasta Nation* is used in schools and the authors have spoken at local colleges and before service clubs. Professor E.A. Schwartz cited the book in his book, *The Rogue River Indian War and its Aftermath, 1850-1980*.

For information about submitting a book proposal, contact Arcadia Publishing Co. at 415-543-4405 (San Francisco) or 843-853-2070 (Mount Pleasant, S.C.). Or visit www.arcadiapublishing.com.

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Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

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Age Brackets: 4-6 Grades
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MVP Awards and All Star Awards

Registration Fee: \$150.00

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245 James Frank Ave
Siletz OR 97380

Contact: Angela Martin
angelam@ctsinsn.us
(541) 444-8311
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Dead line for Registration: **April 13, 2007**

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