

WESTPORT ILLUSTRATED

Descendant of community's founder chronicles fish canning, logging

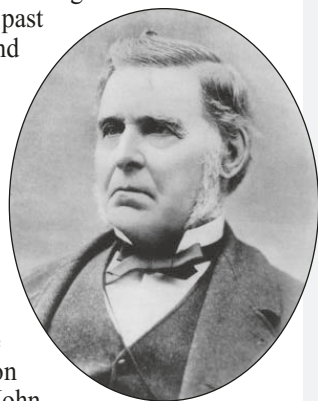
By PATRICK WEBB
Special to The Daily Astorian

WESTPORT — Jim Aalberg is happy to report his mission is accomplished. The Portland man has self-published an illustrated history of Westport, a company town which prospered for a dozen decades sawing giant logs and canning salmon.

Aalberg is a senior executive for the Kroger Co., which owns the Fred Meyer stores. His work, "Westport Oregon: Home of the Big Sticks and Gold Medal Salmon," is the product of "two solid years" of writing and obtaining photo permissions, plus "staggering" hours delving into archives during the past 30 years. His wife, Jan, and son, Bryan, helped.

"I have always been very interested in genealogy — I'm a history buff," he said. "I enjoy research and especially historical research. It's like treasure hunting."

The topic isn't random. Aalberg, 66, is the great-great-great-grandson of Westport's founder, John West.



Spawned from Cumtux articles

The 212-page book was spawned from articles he researched for Cumtux, the quarterly magazine of the Clatsop County Historical Society, of which he is a longtime member. He discovered at least three surviving descendants of Westport Lumber Co. pioneers were keen to have their stories told.

- Don Taylor, whose father, Jack, ran the planer mill and whose mother, Jean, created an extensive photo collection of village life and company activities;

- Gloria Fahlgren Turner, whose father was Archie Fahlgren, who supervised the loading docks and was the appointed town marshal;

- Francis V. Anderson, whose father was Andy Anderson, head butcher at the company's meat market.

"They started pushing me," said Aalberg, joking that they considered him "the chosen one" to write their history. "They pretty much railroaded me into it."

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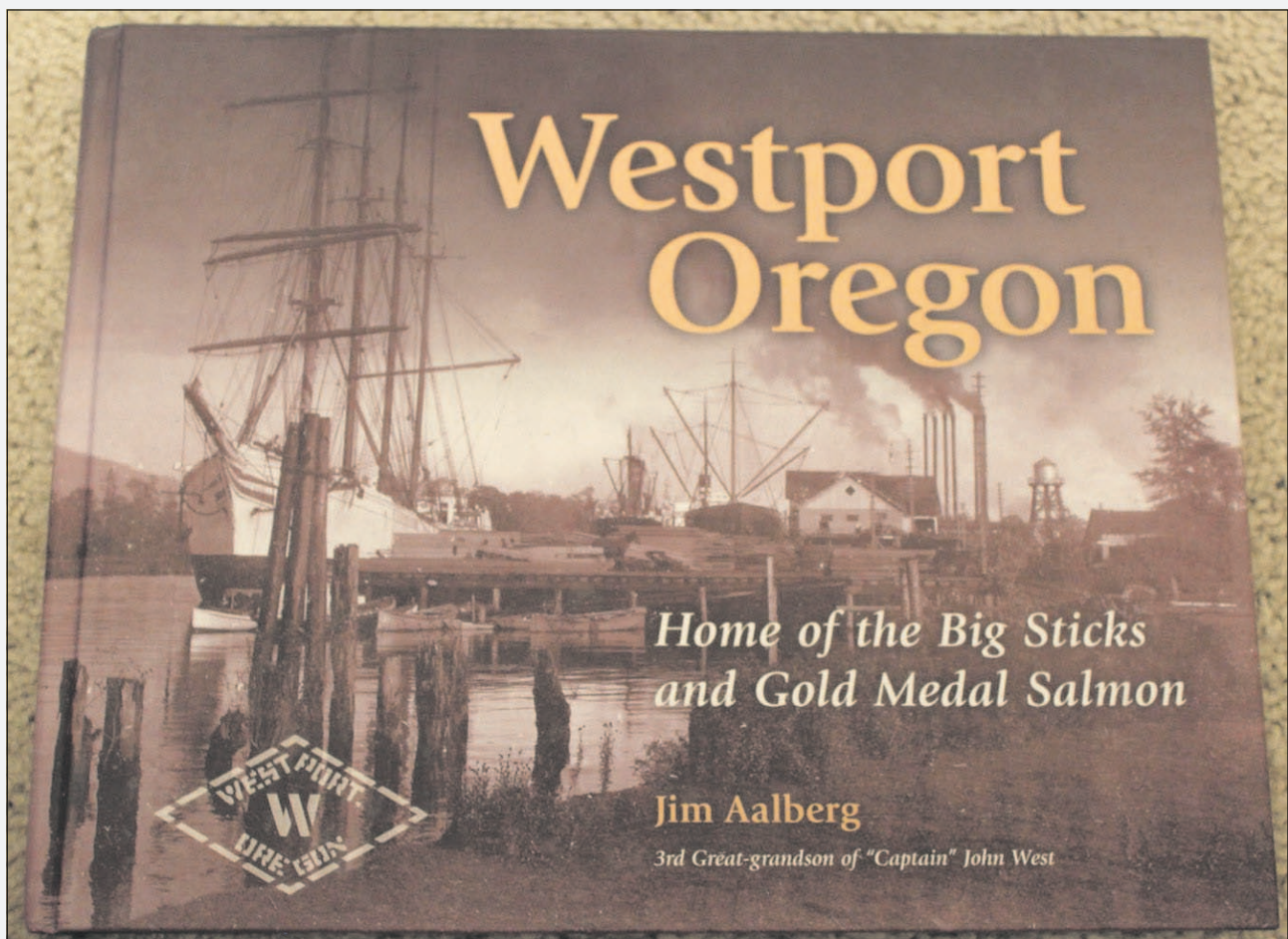


Jim Aalberg is the great-great-great-grandson of "Capt." John West, the founder of Westport. He is pictured looking out over the Columbia River where, in past years, scores of sailing vessels and steamships traveled to the flourishing sawmill at Westport to load lumber that was exported all over the world.

Patrick Webb
For The Daily Astorian

Photo courtesy Clatsop County Historical Society

LEFT: Scotsman "Capt." John West founded Westport and created a saw mill and fish cannery on his donation land claim.



Patrick Webb/For The Daily Astorian

"Westport Oregon: Home of the Big Sticks and Gold Medal Salmon," by Jim Aalberg.

The American steamship Latoka with a four-masted schooner docked at her stern in Westport in 1919.

Photo courtesy Clatsop County Historical Society



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