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Posing in the "Sale House" of the Fort Nisqually Living History Museum, David Jepsen, right, and David Norberg co-authored a book on Pacific Northwest history in which the fort is mentioned frequently as being vital to the fur trade and local pioneer life in the 1850s.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST HISTORY

# Book details new regional perspective

## More than 200 years of history

BY ANDREA HAFFLY
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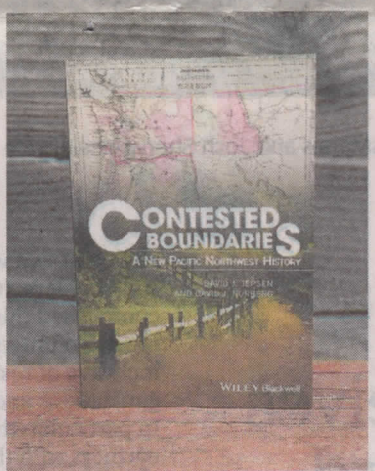
Those living in the Pacific Northwest know it to be a diverse region filled with the vibrant stories of the natives and pioneers who formed the fabric of the local, regional and national history.

However, the area has been neglected by historians outside of the region, a fact that local history professors David J. Jepsen and David J. Norberg seek to address

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"Contested Boundaries: A New Pacific Northwest History" was co-authored by two community

Northwest has always been a sub story within the larger American West story. We think it deserves more. We think it's unique, first, in its diversity... It's one of the most diverse regions in the country. 'Contested Boundaries' is an attempt to give (the region) a thematic structure."

Jepsen, 69, a history professor at Tacoma Community College, faced difficulty reaching students using currently available textbooks on Pacific Northwest history, the last having been published some 30 years ago. Norberg, 43, has encountered similar problems with his students as a history professor at Green River Community College.

"Working with students, I find

terpretative, than focused on facts."

"Contested Boundaries," published by Wiley Blackwell, features 12 thematic essays focused on the experiences of different groups within the Pacific Northwest, moving beyond previous narratives to include experiences from other groups such as Native Peoples, women, African Americans and more.

"The idea of 'Contested Boundaries' is that all people face boundaries," Jepsen said. "It's focused on all peoples ...We understand that history didn't start when the Europeans showed up."

Covering more than 200 years of history, the book contains essays on themes that involve the changes to the lives of Native Americans with the influx of European settlers and the fur trade, the racial hierarchy for people of color within the region, stories of the LGBT movement and an exploration of women and their role in the settling of the Pacific Northwest.

"Whatever your background is, you're going to find something to relate to in that book," Jepsen

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# BOOK

themselves represented in the stories in the book and where they came from."

Building a lasting interest in history is a goal of both Jepsen and Norberg, and of their text. By providing broader regional themes — rather than a load of overwhelming facts — the idea is that students will better remember the stories that frame local history.

"I think really the key thing is, we've hit this point were there's only one other book out there that fits the role of textbook in a Pacific Northwest history class," Norberg said. "Everyone's kind of feeling the point of needing something new."

"Contested Boundaries" is currently available through Amazon or the publisher, Wiley, and the authors are working to establish the book in local museums and bookstores.

> **"I THINK REALLY THE KEY THING IS, WE'VE HIT THIS POINT WERE THERE'S ONLY ONE OTHER BOOK OUT THERE THAT FITS THE ROLE OF TEXTBOOK IN A PACIFIC NORTHWEST HISTORY CLASS.**
>
> ***David J. Norberg, co-author on 'Contested Boundaries: a New Pacific Northwest History'***

"We think it has broad retail appeal," Jepsen said. "It's written for college undergraduates. It's very approachable, very accessible, not a dense book at all. We worked very hard to make it very clear and clean. We hope to reach a lot of people."

A love of history joins the two authors, with Jepsen turning to history after a 40-year writing career. Spreading this passion for history and interest in regional stories on to their students is a shared goal for both professors.

"Dave and I worked really well together. It was a perfect match. We really share a lot of values on how to reach students," Jepsen said. "I think a lot of students look at history like they do at chemistry or biology: They've got to take it and they're not particularly interested in it. So they dig in and never pick up another history book again. History should be different than that. We really should spark a long-term interest in history for students."

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