

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

News Release

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The Last Rafter: David Bronson and the St. Croix Lumber Industry

Washington County, Minn. – Robert Goodman, author of the new *History of Washington County*, will sign his new book, *The Last Rafter*, at the Warden's House Museum in Stillwater on Saturday, December 12th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The Last Rafter is the story of David Bronson, who came to the St. Croix Valley as a young clerk to Isaac Staples and stayed to play a major role in developing the lumbering and rafting industries in the valley. When Bronson stepped off the boat in Stillwater in 1855 the logging boom was just beginning. When he retired from lumbering and rafting in 1918, the last deadhead had been lifted from the river, the last lumber raft had cleared the Point Douglas bar, and the St. Croix boom had closed forever.

Goodman traces the career of this remarkable man and his family through 65 years of boom and bust, and shows how the life of one man has impacted the fortunes of many people who have made the St. Croix Valley their home.

Along the way, the author tells the story of lumber transportation on the St. Croix, from the early floating log rafts to the powerful rafting boats of the late 19th century. The book carries the Bronson story into the mid-20th century, and concludes with the Bronson heirs who created the St. Croix Foundation, now the Hardenbergh Foundation.

The book is lavishly illustrated with many never-before published pictures of early Stillwater and the lumbering and rafting industries that complement the text. The 100-page soft-cover book is fully indexed. It was published with the aid of the Hardenbergh Foundation by the Washington County Historical Society and costs just \$15.

For more information about the book or the event on December 12th, please contact the Washington County Historical Society at 651-439-5956 or visit online at www.wchsmn.org.

Founded in 1934, the Washington County Historical Society is a private, donor-supported, nonprofit organization with more than 700 individual, family, and business members. WCHS is supported by individual gifts, memberships, earned income, and foundation grants. For more information, please visit www.wchsmn.org.