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Lindgren House: Ownership in question

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formalized.

"There are no official records. It was a good ol' boys' handshake of the day, so we're not even sure whom the rightful owner is other than the fact that it's been on our property so long."

Erik Lindgren built the cedar house for his family in 1922 along Soapstone Creek, which is off Highway 53 near Hamlet and east of Canon Beach. It was in the wilderness, which was his intent.

NEWSPAPER HISTORY

The Columbia Press, which had its beginnings in 1922 as an Astoria-based Finnish newspaper, kept a running commentary on Lindgren, his homestead and his family via articles in the weekly newspaper. Much of the information and photographs used by the historical society in its May 1971 booklet "The Pioneer Finnish Home" came from Columbia Press articles.

The house has been described as "America's foremost example of a hand-hewn cabin" and a prime example of "Wild West axmanship."

Each log in the five-room house was hewn by hand and, while there were hundreds of cabins in the rainforests of Clatsop and Tillamook counties, the Lindgren's was most likely the grandest and best built. It was held together by few nails, just wooden dowels and it was chopped by hand to keep the rain out.

THE HOME'S DEMISE

As Erik Lindgren and his wife, Johanna, aged and as the Great Depression had many pioneers struggling, the Lindgrens moved from their home and the land eventually was sold for delinquent property taxes to a paper company for timber.

And that led to destruction of a barn on the property and damage to the house as campers, picnickers and squatters pulled it apart for firewood. Some built fires inside in attempts to keep warm.

Those who knew the Lindgrens or their legend and Finns who believed the house was worth saving banded together and spent weekends dismantling the house, numbering each board and mov-

ing them to a county warehouse in Seaside.

County workers, the Finnish Brotherhood and Finnish social societies then turned to rebuilding the house after the county laid a foundation for it at Cullaby Lake.

For years, tours were offered by the Finnish American Historical Society each weekend, from mid-June through mid-September.

But the past couple of years, society members have grown elderly and no one comes to open the house for tours, the county's Meshke said.

A discussion last week about what to do with the house was postponed after a member of the Finlandia Foundation in Portland expressed interest in the house.

"It's something we're going to be discussing at our board meeting this weekend," said Jukka Perkiomaki, who serves on the Finlandia board. "It's certainly something we'd want to be in support of, but since we're based in Portland, it may not be something we'd be able to commit to."

Nominations sought for chamber service awards

Nominations are being sought for two public service awards issued annually by the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce.

The George Award and the

Richard Ford Distinguished Service Award are given to community leaders who work behind the scenes to make our community better.

The award winners will be announced at the chamber's annual meeting and banquet in January.

The awards honor citizens who give extraordinary service to the community, local people who give time and energy to make our region better.

Nominations will be accepted until 5 p.m. Dec. 1.

Learn more about nominating someone online at OldOregon.com or get a nomination form at the chamber office or Warrenton City Hall.

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