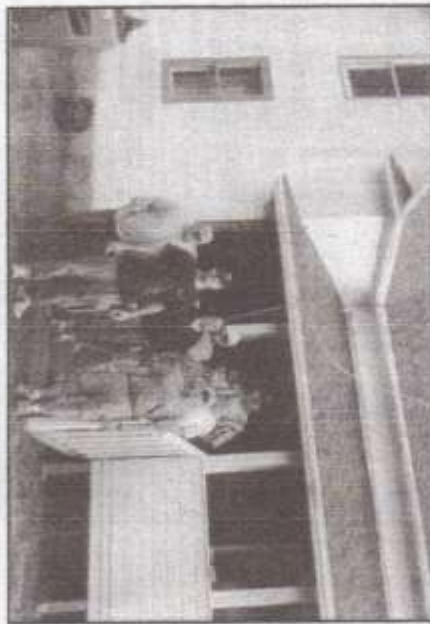


Grandchildren of Finnish pioneers work to restore home

Hanka cousins pose at the farmhouse painted in its original white with red trim. Submitted photo



By LINDA TYSSEN
Staff Writer

EMBARRASS — The ring outside the front door says a friendly

“Tervetuloa!” That’s Finnish for “welcome,” the message at the Hanka Homestead in Embarrass, where descendants have helped restore the home in the wilderness settled by their grandparents so many years ago. Hanka cousins gathered this summer to paint the

farmhouse and outbuildings white with red trim, as they remembered from their childhood when Gregori and Mary Hanka lived there.

Pat Hanka Heikkila of Aurora was instrumental in the project for Sisu Heritage, which has as its mission preserving the Finnish culture that has been the hallmark of Embarrass for generations. “We put that sisu to

Please see **HOME AS**



Pat Hanka Heikkila of Aurora is part of Sisu Heritage and was involved with the restoration of her grandparents’ Embarrass homestead. Photo by Linda Tyssen

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Submitted photo

Hanka family members spend a summer day restoring their grandparents’ Embarrass farmhouse. The farm is featured on the Sisu Heritage tours.

Home from A1 Pioneers’ house restored

work,” Heikkila said one of the cousins marked as they looked back on what they had accomplished. The Finnish word “sisu” can be translated as “stick-it-iveness,” or simply “intestinal fortitude.”

A grant from the Valspar paint company for \$1,000 covered the cost of paint and primer, to cover the green that was the house color when the second generation — Hugo and Elma Hanka — occupied the home with their family, which included Pat Hanka Heikkila. The Hanka turned the farm over to Sisu Heritage in 1990.

“Grandma and Grandpa would be so happy,” said Heikkila. And the cousins had great fun with the project, spending

sunny days on the farm together. For coffee breaks they ate pulla, Finnish biscuit, from the Nelimark farm, another Embarrass landmark. And they stayed at a Finnish bed and breakfast that was once home to the large Scherer family.

Heikkila has been pleased with the response from Sisu Heritage. “We had to have the original color, as people remember it,” Heikkila said. And the project had an additional benefit — it brought the whole family together.

The Hanka Farm is located off the Wahlsten Road (Highway 26) off Pylka Road. It is one of the places featured on the Sisu Heritage homestead tours. For information call 984-2084.