Over the past two decades (who can believe it’s been that long?) we have gathered with you daily and shared meals, dances, toasts and one adventure after another. The cyclists have stopped off mid-tour to recant their wild-eyed tales. Musicians, such as blues monster Paul deLay, the full-throttle Razorbacks and the legendary Holy Modal Rounders and Kingfish, have beguiled us with their mind-blowing, if not floor-shaking performances. There have been ethereal group ascents of Cascade Head and one ill-conceived Cosmic Tour from the Greenway. We’re still not even sure what that one naked brewer was up to. Through it all, there’s been much laughter, many lessons, some tears and an ocean full of good times.

In the summer of 1986, friends who were constructing the Lighthouse Square shopping center in Lincoln City’s north end asked, “How about bringing your Portland-area party to the beach—within the domain of the mighty Cascade Head?” Mike and Brian McMenamin couldn’t possibly say no. The pull was too great. Since childhood, the brothers had been coming to and around Cascade Head for memorable family gatherings. They set about creating a beach brewpub and in doing so made a bit of history, but at the time they had no idea that they were treading on ground that had rich history of its own.

The Lighthouse Brewpub straddles the bustling Highway 101 and Logan Road intersection on the north end of town. Here the highway turns almost 90 degrees, while Logan Road breaks off and heads due north toward other businesses including several Siletz Tribe-owned places, a large casino and the residential community of Road’s End. As the only road accessing the area, the name Logan is likely familiar to many in this coastal town, but the story of the Native American family for which it is named has been clouded by time.

Beginning in 1855, all of Lincoln County (and more) was part of the Coast Reservation, an area with 100 miles of coastline designated by the U.S. government. Ancestors of the Siletz had lived along the coast for generations, but the government forced Natives from other regions to relocate here. As was the unfortunate case throughout the West, however, soon, white settlement encroached on the land here.

The Lighthouse Brewpub and its immediate surroundings, the gateway to Road’s End, are where many original coastal residents and white settlers first began to live side by side. Road’s End was especially significant in this respect. The original landowners here were Natives—Lolla Widgeon and Abraham Logan. Records appear to show that by the turn of the last century Lolla Widgeon sold all of her land to other Native families and outside speculators. Abraham Logan and his family, on the other hand, remained on the land for five decades or more, integrating—at least partially—into the community that would become Lincoln City.

The original Logan home sat back from Logan Road 100 feet or so, just to the north and east of where the Lighthouse Brewpub now sits. Abraham and Louisa had 16(!) kids, though only eight reached adulthood. They farmed portions of their land and kept livestock, mainly sheep and dairy cows but most of their property seems to have remained fern-covered hills, wooded areas and pastureland. Their house was quite small, especially...
given the size of the family, and a barn stood opposite the driveway from the house. Later there was a larger home built and additional residences added for some of the kids and their families.

Around 1900 a post office went in just east of the Logan’s property in the community of Neotsu. Located on the northern end of Devil’s Lake, it put this area on the Anglo map and was a sign of unavoidable changes to come. An influx of new residents, however small at first, gradually changed the demographics of the quiet coastal town.

As interest in the natural beauty and resources of the area increased, the Logans and others began to realize that money was to be had by selling or leasing pastureland to newcomers. By 1930, with a few notable exceptions, the Logan farm was neighbored by non-Native families, farms and speculators. The rolling fern and tree-covered hills became acres and acres of pasture, potato fields and, of all things, peas. Yes, peas! Just to the north of the present-day brewpub, bordering Logan Road, was a ten-acre pea field run by D. Hendricks.

Early vacationers heading north to their Road’s End home would occasionally have to unload their supplies near the road’s intersection—perhaps right where the pub currently sits—and pack it in the mile or so to their beach homes. In a 1938 letter to an old grade-school teacher John Logan, son of Abe, commented, “First, we are out of the mud for we have the famous Coast Highway running through this neighborhood. We can see it from our house, it passes right through the head of [Devil’s] lake...”

While Hendricks and a few other newcomers during the 1920s were certainly a sign of things to come, nothing changed Lincoln City’s pastoral and isolated state more than the Theodore Roosevelt Highway, now known as Highway 101. Prior to its reaching this city in 1929, access was extremely limited and routes leading here were called “roads” mostly as a courtesy; a few were notoriously treacherous. With the introduction of a well-maintained thoroughfare, the pace of settlement and visitation to Lincoln City quickened substantially.

The new highway was a vast improvement, but most of the other roads remained unimproved until a decade or more later. The dirt and gravel surface of Logan Road, for instance, was often impassable due to the mud. Today there is no busier road in these parts than the “famous Coast Highway,” and no better place along its expanse than the Lighthouse Brewpub.

By the early 1980s, Northwest microbrewing revolution was in its infancy and McMenamins itself was just a small family of a half-dozen Portland-area pubs. Oregon’s pioneering craft breweries, Bridgeport and Widmer, had been established in 1984. Following the passage of Oregon’s brewpub law in the fall of ‘85, McMenamins had opened the state’s first brewpub, the Hillsdale Brewery and Public House, in October. Roughly ten months later, the Lighthouse brewpub became the third McMenamins’ brewpub and only the fifth in the state.

It was the first of its kind on the coast. In fact, there hadn’t been a brewery on the coast since the curtain of Prohibition fell in 1916. Until the Lighthouse Brewpub’s debut, taverns up and down Highway 101 retained much of the old-school qualities: no kids, few women and just one tap—either Oly or Blitz. So, the Lighthouse offered a new experience: a family environment, good food and a range of beers brewed right on site.

This love of beers was taken to new heights with initiation of the Lighthouse Brewfest in 1996. Still one the Lighthouse’s most popular events, breweries up and down the Oregon Coast as well as throughout the McMenamins Kingdom were rallied to come together at the Lighthouse for a confluence of music, food, fun and beer. The Mighty Beer Atom, Tiny Brewer Art and, of course, an endless variety of beer are just some of the delightful and creative features of the festival.

Recently, a remodel freshened up the 20-plus year old establishment and instilled the place with new energy and sense of purpose. With new artwork, photos, kitchen, architectural details and a nod to the past, the Lighthouse is set to be a beacon for weary travelers and eager locals for the coming decades. Now, we raise a glass to you and offer our thanks. CHEERS! 

Gregory Kebkey was the first brewer on the scene here at the Lighthouse Brewpub