

Steve Bauer - The Old Homestead

The author for some of this story might have been Gerald Bauer, son of Steve Bauer.

(This story was typed by April, a middle school student at Nestucca Valley Middle School in 2003 as part of her word processing/keyboarding assignments in her technology class. In addition to keyboarding lessons and other technology lessons students did the "real" work of typing local history documents to be placed on the web.

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The government allotted homesteads to all that wished to prove up on them.

So on June 25, 1893, my father took up his homestead and with other gentlemen I am going to tell about settled what is known as Neskowin Creek, but better known as Slab Creek which the old timers called it. Mr. Steve Bauer's homestead is situated six miles up Neskowin Creek which is almost on the trails-end as one would say. These settlers all helped build a trail to pack in supplies on horse-back to their stock. After a time this trail was widened so they could drive a team through to bring in their families and what few belongings they possessed, for none had much wealth.

These families had to all live in temporary cabins hewn from logs or, rather, trees. Finally after years of hard labor each had finished a nice cabin which looked something like Abraham Lincoln's.

It took four days and a half to make the trip from Portland, Oregon which was one hundred miles away, so you can imagine what good roads do to speed up traffic of today which only takes three hours at the most. Most all of the old timers had to leave home to find work to support their families, so Mr. Bauer worked for a time as helper in a cheese factory to learn the trade.

After years of slashing and cleaning the land, he erected a small cheese factory of his own and began to make cheese which he sold to Portland markets. It had to be hauled out for there was no other transportation in those days. I loved to listen to Mr. Bauer relate the many tales of thrilling adventures.

There was the time the bears stole some hams Mr. Bauer was smoking. The fish used to come up the streams to spawn, and the settlers would go downstream with hay forks and catch all they wanted for canning and smoking. And for fruit they gathered the wild gooseberries, huckleberries and thimble berries.

One time Steve was away from home, and his sister-in-law, Mrs. Emma Bauer, stayed with his wife so she wouldn't be so lonesome. It became milking time. Emma decided to hunt for the cows, but she became confused and lost She wandered around in circles. As she told it, she heard a crashing of brush and heavy trodding of steps behind her for you see it had become quite dark. Imagine to her surprise a large bear was walking towards her wondering what this strange thing could be in his domain. Onward sniffing the air came the bear so what to do? Emma had not much time to think. Finally she thought she might try to strangle this beast with her apron. By this rapid movement of grabbing for her apron the bear turned and walked away. It is said a bear is easily frightened by a quick movement when approaching a person, but I have my doubts.

But never-the-less I wouldn't have wanted to change places with Mrs. Emma Bauer that night years ago in an uninhabited forest.

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Maybe some of you readers have met Mrs. Bauers and heard her retell her experience. Not long ago I heard her tell this experience which I had heard her tell the first time twenty-odd years ago. It is still quite clear in her mind although she is now quite a little old lady in her seventies.

Time marches onward. On the Bauer homestead more modern equipment was added to make the home more comfortable and convenient with electricity driven by water power. This, of course, was an added attraction for they had at that time the only electric lighting system in for far and near.

Mr. Bauer, up until the time of his death last summer was the only settler to stay on through all the years of hardship while the rest of the settlers moved away years ago to look for an easier way of rearing their families and make a living.