

Tragic news of missing girl has happy ending

Poem shares the 5-year-old's harrowing story

Blue Mountain Eagle

Five-year-old Emma Nelson went missing on July 4, 1896, for five days at Cress Hollows, west of Susanville. She was found by John Pierson at Hawkins Flat.

Former Bates resident Pat Cary Peck happened to meet Nelson's daughter, Irene Behymer, also a former Bates resident, on a trip to Alaska.

Behymer shared her mother's story with Peck, which appears in the book "Bates-Austin Remembered," a collection of memories compiled by Sonja Morgan.

Behymer said settlers came from miles around to celebrate at a Fourth of July picnic in 1896, but as the festivities began, tragic news of the little girl's disappearance spread.

She disappeared into the dense forest, and crews of men and dogs searched from daylight to dark.

After the fourth day, hope diminished, but some didn't give up, including family friend John Pierson.

On the fifth day, Pierson walked into a clearing in the forest at Hawkins Flat when he saw little Emma sitting on a log.

He quietly said hello, and the little one said, "Hello, have you seen my daddy?"

A poem at the Grant County Historical Museum in John Day, along with a picture of Emma, paints the amazing search and rescue.

A Mountain Idyl

By Miss Charlotte Brown

Settle Mountain is a dangerous place,
The bravest hunter fears to trace,
He fears to meet the old brown bear
In the fire pines and the black pines there.

Dangers beset it on every side,
There wild beasts roam, and reptiles hide.
The mount looks wild as a storm at sea,
And it's ever dense as the waves would be.

But amid all those vicious things
The Guardian Angel spreads its wings.
A child only four years old
Was lost six days on that mountain fold.

Six days is no little time
To live on berries what she could find.
But God, who hears the raven's cry,
Much more His children will supply.

She wandered from the picnic ground
To gather flowers that grew around.
Her brother saw her going that way,
But did not think she would go astray.

She wandered away many miles
Through trackless paths and dangerous wilds;
There she was with flowers in hand,
Amid beasts of prey on that mountain strand.

Did she laugh, or did she weep?
What thoughts into her mind did creep?
Thoughts of Mamma, Papa and brothers, who?
And the flowers she gathered, too.

She did get frightened, once, she said,
Frightened at where she made her bed.
It was upon a fearful steep,



Courtesy photo/Mr. and Mrs. T. Gail DeWitt

Five-year-old Emma Nelson, who went missing for five days at Cress Hollows on July 4, 1896.

She saw when she awoke from sleep.
She was too young to know much fear,
When the shades of night drew near,
When weary and along she lay down

Amid grasses on the cold, hard ground.
No Mamma there to sing sweet rhymes,
Naught but the winds sighing through the pines,
Or the screeching of the night owl,
Or the wild beast's more angry growl.

God and Angels heard her sighs
When she closed her baby eyes.
When the night dews kissed her cheek
Angels there a watch did keep.

Little Emma, beautiful child
On that dangerous mountain wild;
Naught but the starry Heavens above
That spoke of home, of joy or love.

Her father searched night and day,
And parties, too, in full array.
They searched hills, valleys and plain,
At first their efforts seemed in vain.

Her father came to a pretty brook,
Running through a lovely nook
Nearby grew a group of willows,
Sighing, waving, like the billows.

Her brother said, I think she's here,
Then came a voice so soft and clear,
"Oh papa! I know you would come,"
It was his child, his own dear one.

The lost was found — great was his joy,
No wealth could buy, nor wealth destroy.
The Lord he thanked in praise and prayer,
For His tender, loving care.

Oh could we have that child-like faith
While traveling o'er life's thorny path.
Her hope and faith, and trust were one;
"Oh, papa, I surely knew you'd come."

HOTEL

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floor. A spacious lobby gave the men a place to relax, talk and play cards. A basement provided storage space for extra belongings.

Cooking was not allowed in the rooms, so the workers ate home-style meals in a "cookhouse" restaurant near the store at the south end of the lodge. Lunches were packed for the men to take along on their long work days. A steam heat system kept

the lodge warm during Seneca's frigid winters.

The lodge closed in 1962, when Hines began to shut down its logging operations in the Seneca area.

Since that time, the former boarding house has been a private residence, a bed and break-

fast and, for a time, vacant.

In 2014, Grayback Forestry bought and restored the building for housing for its employees, returning it to its purpose as a home for woodland workers. While the transformation included several modern upgrades and recon-

figuring of some of the single rooms, great care was taken to preserve the historical ambience of the nearly 80-year-old building.

The stately Bear Valley Lodge is a gem in the treasure chest of Seneca's rich history and a reminder of its logging heritage.

LIVING

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their right mind would bring a girl of 7 to live in a rooming house with up to 60 single men."

Harrison said the men who roomed there ate their meals in a cookhouse. She recalls her mom washed all the sheets in the basement and handled all the paperwork. Her father enjoyed his supervisory position, which allowed him to work indoors.

During the holiday season, they made sure there was a big Christmas tree in the lodge's lobby, Harrison said. She added her mother had a green thumb and even had a knack for getting geraniums to bloom during Seneca's bitter cold winters.

"They were happy they had good jobs," she said. "Everyone respected my folks."

When the Hines ceased

logging operations in 1962, Harrison's parents bought the lodge building and continued to live in it.

Harrison attended Seneca School through eighth grade and then Grant Union High School, graduating in 1964. She lived at the lodge until she was 21, when she moved out to attend school in Portland. Her mother lived at the lodge until 1969.

Harrison, who lives in the Portland area with her husband, Jerry, reflects fondly on her growing up years in Seneca. In fact, it was there where she and Jerry met — in the third grade.

She loves telling people about her years living at the Bear Valley Lodge.

"I would have to say I had the perfect childhood," Harrison said.



Shirley Rushing with her dog, King, behind the Bear Valley Lodge in Seneca, 1960.

Courtesy photo Shirley Rushing Harrison

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