

Roesiger Diaries – Part 4

We started covering the life and times of Dick Roesiger, describing his adventures as a German-born pioneer who discovered and settled near the lake that was eventually named in his honor. We left off just after the birth of his first son. We'll pick up the story in 1895, when Dick found himself now a "family man".

1895 – Dick reported another year of early and late season heavy snows and rains: "Terrible heavy rains – lake rose about 1 foot and is as high as he will ever get. My spring is now like a river."

But Dick was to endure even worse weather at the Glacier Creek Camp where he had signed on as a blacksmith helper from September to Oct. 4 to earn some money. He left the Monte Cristo area without getting paid as the payroll clerk never appeared. He walked home, glad to be alive.

Desperate for some cash, Dick tried his hand at cutting cordwood and pulpwood, but soon gave it up as unprofitable and in his words: "A form of white slavery". At 80 cents per cord of pulpwood and one dollar a cord for cordwood, Dick ended owing the company \$4.05 for the cost of tools!

To raise some cash, Dick bargained with Dr. Chappell (who was also a rancher, in addition to being the first doctor in Granite Falls) to sell Prince for \$35.00 -- a loss, but the best the Dick could do.

Earlier in the year, Dick had written of his concern about his son Bruno's hand-to-mouth habits: "We can't watch him close enough. He puts feathers, hay, and straw into his mouth then evacuating same." On Oct 21st Dick wrote: "My little boy is sick. Won't eat anything for 2 days." Two days later: "Bruno discharged a grasshopper - - - what next?!"

"Trouble, trouble, - always trouble", moaned Dick when Bruno's chin became red and swollen. Dick followed doctor's advice: "It's an abscess. Apply flaxseed; steam over boiling water and open at the blue spot. Apply salve; give blood tonic 3x day after meals." Later Dick noted: "Bruno worse – lanced 2nd time and then abscess opened itself."



Comins

On Christmas Day Dick reported: "Had company over to the house – crowded. Had lots to eat and cider. Made the best of it."

1896 - Dick's seventh year at the lake began and ended with snow storms and freezing temperatures. Dick continued to state his concern that all settlers do their share of road clearing for better travel and future County acceptance. On Jan 1st he wrote: "Went with Comins to Snohomish to cut vine maples out of the road." On March 17th: "Worked on the road pm. Cleared it again so MH could get out. They ought to be ashamed of themselves. I have to clear it out or else it won't get done. CH takes a pocket knife and clears the road out: cuts ½ inch little switches off and leaves the road blocked."

On Jan 7th he and Comins tackled a huge fir: "C. helped me saw a big fir down. Sawed one block off the butt – a 7 hour job. We used lots of coal oil – struck seams of pitch – flowed like a spring of molasses. COUNTED 568 rings. HOLY MOSES, THAT'S 568 Comins YEARS OLD!"

Dick was still unsure that he had a good enough claim and continued to survey parts of it to establish and to protect his lines. On Feb 9th: “Ran a line with C. 400-500 feet further up the hill out to the water edge on the peninsula. A dry cedar stub hanging over the water on the middle lake is our boundary for now.”

On July 24th Dick and Caroline had a daughter they named Liska Rosella: “Liska weighs 10 1/3 pounds and is a big, well formed girl. Filled out birth record – registered Liska and Bruno – they are born at Lake Roesiger.”

The Nov 5th national election news provoked Dick to state: “Bad. McKinley is elected. We carried the County and State but lost the nation. Now chains on laborers and farmers – black and white – are fastened and money reigns. “

Dick was recognized by his neighbors and by officials at the US Land Office as an able witness at their homestead “proving up” hearings. On Nov 21st Dick wrote: “The examiner said of me, “It’s a pleasure to have a witness that knows what he is talking about.” However, when Dick served at his own Nov. 17th “proving up” hearing he complained in his diary: “Lawyers are leeches and the US Land Office advises poor settlers to patronize those leeches.”

“For Christmas we had a tree fixed up by the wife. I stayed up all night to make an express wagon for Bruno. Had dinner and supper with the McElroys – best supper I ever had. Brought wine to CH and McElroys.”



Lake Roesiger ca. 1909 (Left to Right) Charles Hawkinson, Charlie Carpenter, Charlie Hemstrom, Ira Carpenter (seated far right) - “CH”