

Bear Story

Linda Walker 2022

Daddy, will you tell us a bear story? My dad was a great storyteller. The best stories were told around a brush fire. Every so often dad would have stacked up enough brush, that he had cut on our farm, for us to have a brush fire and roast hotdogs. And tell us his stories too.

Now, when I was a child there were no bears on our side of West Virginia. Bears were over in the mountains in the east part of the state.

But bear stories were a part of my childhood. Stories like Goldilocks and The Three Bears, stories about Daniel Boone and bear hunts.

I never saw a live bear all those years Dad was telling us those bear stories. When I met my husband to-be and visited his family, I did see a real bear skin. They had one which had come from a bear at the old Bickel Estate. The Bickles were oil rich. They had a huge estate a mile from our farm. On the estate they had a zoo. A collection of exotic animals which had included the bear from which the skin had come. I don't remember how my husband's family came to have the skin but there it was, laying on the piano bench in the living room. That was as close to a bear as I had been when I came to Florida.

My neighbor was out walking his dog when he saw a bear a couple of streets over. The dog barked and the bear climbed up a tree. The neighbor put his dog in the house and we both walked over to see the bear.

Yep, there was the bear up in the tree. And the tree was surrounded by neighbors taking pictures and gawking at the bear. I stood back a-ways from the tree. I didn't want to be too close in case the branch broke and the bear fell out of the tree. I wanted to live to tell this bear story. I think the bear was more frightened than any of the people. Soon the police showed up and made everyone leave so the bear could get down out of the tree and be on his way. So ends my bear story.