

A Parowan Indian Tale

During the Christmas holidays four of my daughters, their husbands and nine of my 15 grandchildren rented a home in North Carolina. One of the activities we engaged in was a hike to Jump Off Rock. Why was it called Jump Off Rock? Well, the legend goes that over 300 years ago a young Cherokee Indian maiden received word that her young Indian Chief had been killed in battle, so she climbed to the edge of the rock and jumped off. Indian legend has it that on moonlit nights you can see the ghost of the maiden on Jump Off Rock. This legend strangely reminded me of the story of Squaw Cave, a place I frequented as a boy, where it was said that an Indian princess was being chased, and to avoid being caught she plunged off the cliff and perished on the rocks below.

My Mother is from Parowan and the following tale is part of Parowan's pioneer lore:

Although Parowan was prepared for Indian trouble and annoyed by petty thievery and threats for some time, the settlement itself escaped depredations. One of its folktales, however, centers on a band of Indians who demanded a sack of grain apiece from Brother Davenport's meager harvest at threshing time. He countered by selecting, from the threshing crew, Bob Quarto with a pegleg, Robert Miller with a curly red wig, and Elder George A. Smith with his false teeth. "At a given signal, Bob Quarto gave a war whoop and unbuckled his peg leg and threw it in the air. Robert Miller, not to be outdone, gave another war whoop and threw his wig in the air, exposing his starry dome. The Indians stood wide-eyed, but when George A. Smith gave a howl and let his false teeth fall, they took to their horses and fled." (Luella Adams Dalton, *History of the Iron County Mission and Parowan, the Mother Town*, n.p., n.d., p. 91.)

Although the factualness of these accounts can be questioned, they have found their place in community lore, and add color to our rich pioneer heritage.