

THE SHOSHONE INDIAN GIRL AND THE CHEROKEE WOMAN

By John F. Hall

In the 1800's a bandit called "Black Bart" terrorized Wells Fargo stagecoaches for 13 years in California and Oregon. His name caused fear in the stagecoach crews and their passengers. The bandits reputation was based on intimidation. Not a single one of his victims ever saw his face. He wore a black hood over his face. No artist ever sketched his face. No Sheriff could ever track his trail. He never fired a shot or took a hostage. He never stole money from women. He was credited with robbing 29 different stagecoach crews. His presence was enough to paralyze.

In 1976, Paula and I traveled out West and camped near Death Valley, California with our eight year old son John. We had a 1969 Ford pickup truck, F100. It had an automatic transmission but no air conditioning. Going up one of the mountain roads, the engine temperature reached dangerous levels. Death Valley is the hottest place on earth. The truck's engine temperature would go back to normal levels as we started down the mountain road. I was pulling a Starcraft pop-up camper. It was during the month of June when temperatures on the Death Valley desert floor reached over 125 degrees. I was concerned that the sustained over heating of the engine would damage the transmission as the engine radiator also cools the transmission. One night at a KOA campground, I removed the engine thermostat so the antifreeze would flow all the time. I included a picture of my son standing behind the passenger door of the truck; a picture of him sitting in a chair by the camper, and a picture of him holding the fish that he caught in a pond near Twin Falls, Idaho.

Getting back to the Wells Fargo bandit, there is another thief that's been around for a while, one who is still riding around the tumble weeds and trails today. You know him, but you have never seen his face. You can't describe his voice. But when he is near, you know it. He is the con man who convinced you to swap your integrity for popularity. It is the scoundrel, who whispered in your ear, "no one cares about you" when you felt the need to reach out for support. He's the Black Bart of the soul. He doesn't want your valuables. What he wants is your peace of mind. What he is after is your joy and to rob you from experiencing something new. His name is fear. He wants, as a Fort Campbell Chaplain once wrote, to take your courage and leave you trembling. He taunts you with the mysterious and the unknown. It could be fear of death, fear of failure, fear of rejection, and even fear of living.

I've met fear back when I was 17, I had a fear of heights. Then I found myself standing on a 50- foot wooden tower at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was in jump school and I was in a parachute harness and I was told to jump off the tower. I almost froze from the fear of the unknown. But I took a leap of faith. I faced my fear and said to myself, "here goes nothing." I jumped. Then it came time to jump out of a plane. I made sure that I was the last soldier to enter the plane, so I would be the first to jump out of the plane. The jumpmaster opened the plane's door. Again, I almost froze. But I was encouraged by a phrase found 88 times in the Bible. God tells us: "Don't be afraid!" Christ stands with us

as we face our fears. There is a liberating feeling when one faces down their fear. Most of the time what we fear never happens.

Remember the blood—thirsty bandit from Death Valley? Black Bart wore a black hood and had stagecoach crews shaking in their boots. Remember the movie the Wizard of Oz? Frank Morgan played the part of the Wizard. What did he say to the cowardly lion, the scarecrow and the tin woodman as they were scared and shaking in fear of the unknown? He said, “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!”

When Black Bart's hood came off, there was nothing to fear. The authorities finally tracked him down. They found a mild-mannered pharmacist from Decatur, Illinois. His name is Charles E. Boles. This bandit never fired a shot, because he never knew how to load his gun. The man behind the curtain was originally a carnival worker, before a tornado brought him to the Emerald City and he accepted the job as Wizard due to hard times. Certainly, President Franklin D. Roosevelt knew how to calm the Nation when he said: “All we have to fear is fear itself.” Fear should never stop anyone from following their dreams.

Benjamin Weisman and Fred Wise wrote the song Follow That Dream. It was a song by Elvis Presley. Some of the lyrics from that song are, Follow that dream, I gotta follow that dream. Keep a movin, move along,, keep a moving. I've gotta follow that dream wherever that dream may lead. I gotta follow that dream to find the love I need. When your heart gets restless, time to move along. When your heart gets weary, time to sing a song. But when a dream is calling you, there's just one thing that you can do. Well, you gotta follow that dream wherever that dream may lead. You gotta follow that dream to find the love you need.” What ever it may be, I tell others to have the courage to face their fears. They might say to themselves, “I have this fear, but I am not going to let it ruin my peace of mind. In Psalm 23, part of Verse 4: “I will fear no evil for you are with me.” It is true that there is no substitute for prayer and perseverance if we are to become all that Christ has called us to be.

We went from Death Valley to the Pacific Ocean in California, then up the coast to see the redwood trees, then onto to Crater Lake, Oregon. From there we camped at



Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. We stopped to fish near Twin Falls, Idaho. I paid three dollars for a one day fishing permit. At one of the rainbow trout impoundments, I was casting with an artificial lure. On the second cast, unknown to me, a small Shoshone Indian girl was walking behind me. One hook of my lure caught the back of this Indian girl's neck. She let out a loud scream. Her dad and several Shoshone Indian men came running over. Now, regardless of the

above paragraphs about fear, I was concerned that these Indians might think that what had happened was intentional. I did not know what was going to happen. The little Indian girl was crying. Her dad calmly took some cutters out of his pocket and cut the hook in half. He pulled it through and out of her neck. I

apologized and offered to pay to have her neck checked. Her dad said it was not necessary. This was the first time that I talked face to face with a Shoshone Indian. He was a very muscular Indian.

The Shoshone Indians left the trout impoundment and my son and I continued to fish. I was on the bank and I looked down and observed a large rainbow trout go into some rocks on the side of the bank. I put down my fishing pole. I laid down on the ground and put my hands in the water and grabbed the fish and threw it behind me. I'm guessing it weighted about four pounds. That night, I cleaned the fish and we had an enjoyable supper.

When you cross the Lake Barkley Bridge going into the Land Between the Lakes, you will travel about a mile and see a small body of water. If you make a left turn and go down the gravel road to this small body of water, on the left side of the road, you will see a large gate. If you stop at that gate, there is a small sign with the words Long Creek Cemetery. Inside the gate going up a very steep hill you will find the graves of my wife's descendants going back to the American Revolution.



(Pictured: Tombstones and a photos of **Francis Marion Oakley**, b. 23 June 1835 – d. 4 June 1906, KY, and his wife **Nancy Coleman (Bass) Oakley**, b. 12 March 1844 – d. 15 December 1909, KY, both buried in Long Creek Cemetery, Golden Pond, Trigg Co., KY, Children: Kansas Territory Oakley (1860-1947) & Margaret Frances (Oakley) Williams (1864-1947).

There are more Oakley's buried there than any other place in Trigg County. My wife's maiden name is Oakley. One of her ancestors, buried on the highest point in that cemetery is **Francis Marion Oakley**. His wife, **Nancy Bass Oakley** is buried next to him. On her tombstone he had these words inscribed, "She was not one of us. She done me no wrong." You see, Nancy Bass was a full—blood Cherokee Indian.



As this story comes to an end, there is one other thing worth mentioning about the trip out West. We had planned to camp near the Red River in Texas. We were delayed by a half day due to visiting one of Paula's school friends. The place where we had planned to camp that night was hit by a massive flash

flood. Several people drowned. I believe in Divine intervention that delayed our travel until after the flash flood.



Edna Massimilla wrote an excellent piece on faith. She wrote, "Because of faith, God grants us power, hope and peace through every hour. Because of faith, we now can be living abundantly. The world was helpless...with no way to escape, until the day when Jesus came to save each soul... He came to heal and makes us whole. Because of faith, we do believe life eternal we shall receive. Because of faith, our lives now glow, and we want the world to know...that on the cross we've been forgiven, and we'll have our place in Heaven. Because of faith, Jesus' love we claim...We praise God's holy, precious name."

John F. Hall

*Read other stories by John F. Hall at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>