

Buckskin Tom

Henry Thomas Stolworthy (1860)
by Matilda Staker

Grandpa Stolworthy was a cowboy. He was a foreman of the United Order Cattle and Sheep Company for 12 years, and the Indians blamed him for running cattle on the Buckskin Mountains, which they considered belonged to them.

One day Buckskin Tom as the Indians called him, rode out to see about the cattle. Old Moses, and Indian chief, watched him go, then took his gun and followed. When he came to a path between two rock cliffs, Old Moses, knowing that Buckskin Tom would have to come home that way, sat down to wait, intending to kill him as he came between the cliffs.

But just before Buckskin Tom got to the cliff he stopped his horse to see about some cattle there. A streak of lightning came from the sky and struck and killed the horse. Stunned, Buckskin Tom fell with the horse, and Old Moses thought he was dead. But he got up, pulled the saddle from the horse and went home.

Old Moses went back to the Indians and said. "Don't bother Buckskin Tom any more. If the Great Spirit can't kill him, the Indians can't." And after that Buckskin Tom lived a charmed life. The Indians were afraid of him.

JOHNNY MAKE THE BOX TALK

by Matilda Staker

One summer, in 1885, we were with Father at a dairy on Buckskin Mountain, north of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The Indians were mad at us, and just waited until my father, who was known to them as "Buckskin Tom" would go away, then they planned to kill all the people at the dairy and burn the house and corrals. This place is now known as Pipe Springs, and the Indians wanted to destroy the buildings that prevented them from getting water at the spring.

Before very long Father and the other men had to take 50 head of cattle to another ranch, and the woman and children were left alone. Just before dark, a band of Indians came and began building big bonfires around the place. The herd boys and five woman and three children who were there went into the house, barred the door and just dropped on their knees and asked God to help them. I can remember looking out the window and seeing the camp fires and the Indians dancing around them. In the house were Phoebe Clark, Lottie Webb, Lue Stolworthy Palmer, Aunt Johannah, Mother, three small boys, Charley Black, 16-years-old and myself. Charley had sneaked out and ran to tell

mother's brother's Silas and Terry Young, who were about five miles away, to come in. It was quite dark when the boys returned, so they slipped in without being seen.

Just before it got light we saw three men ride up to the Indians. They were my father, Buckskin Tom, and Ed Lamb, and Aunt Johannah's father, John Covington. They had been warned of the planned attack by a little squaw who had run 30 miles to carry the word to them. They had quickly changed to fresh horses and started back.

The Indians were waiting for daylight to make their attack, and had kept up their whooping and dancing most of the night, while we huddled in the dark house.

Now Buckskin Tom was a friend of the Indians and tried to talk to them. The older Indians listened, but the young ones still wanted to kill us all. When Johnny Covington saw that they would not listen to Buckskin Tom, he walked over and stood by a tree and started to play his violin. Now the Indians had never heard music before. They were so thrilled at the sound of the music made by pushing and pulling a stick across the box that they came closer and closer to Johnny. He stepped backwards, a little at a time, the Indians following him, and when daylight came they found themselves far away from the house and we were safe.

Johnny Covington was always called 'Johnny-make-the-box-talk' by the Indians after that.