

Excerpted from “Black Hawk Adventure”
By Nancy, Gresham, Oregon

...

Black Hawk Adventure Part Four – Billie Rich and the Pinto Named Pal

One of those sparkling mornings I was wandering down the Upper High Street road in that “phase” I spoke of earlier. Accordingly I was decked out in my red cowboy hat with white trim. My six guns hung from a no hip frame. As I passed one of the houses I heard a friendly “Hello”. This was followed by an inquiry about my get up. Although that was a most reasonable question the ‘Great Shroud of Shyness” came over me. I was witless. I was speechless. I was shy with the stutter and stammer and rub your toe in the earth shy. I had an urge to duck my head and scamper off somewhere but I was too intrigued to leave. I had all those feelings and did all those things the day I met Billie Rich. He was a year older than I was so he must have been all of 9. Living in a town like this full time would have been a very different experience. I know with my adult mind that Billie’s last name, Rich, was surely a misnomer. His mom worked at the grocery store. I recall no dad or siblings. They must have been hard pressed living full time in this backwater former boom town. I knew less than nothing about this unlikely friend of mine. He was simply there at the perfect moment for me and where he came from or where he might be going was of no concern to me. All I needed to know was that he had a horse. This was big! It wasn’t just any horse but a former circus horse named Pal. He would lift his front hoof for you to “Shake” upon request. He seemed to roam about the town at will. We had that in common.

After Billie and I met my mornings changed. I would still get up at 8:30 but some days, if I was lucky, Billie would come by and we would ride bareback up the mountain compliments of that broad backed and sure footed Pony named Pal.

I would love to provide you details of our conversations or how this sweet chapter in my childhood ended but I have nothing to offer for me or for you. One day was surely our last but I didn't recognize it at the time. I think that may have been for the best.

...