

## **LEGEND OF THE INDIAN MAIDEN ON FREMONT PEAK.**

*Excerpt from Daily Record, Yesteryear by U. Michael Welch*

Looking at the surrounding mountains, there is a mystique about various shapes, especially the ones steeped in legends. The most notable is Fremont Peak to the west of Cañon City. Where locals are aware of and visitors can see an outline of a sleeping Indian on the horizon.

As to legend, Cañon City was once the spot for Native Americans to spend the winters, where they bathed in the hot springs, searched for comfortable shelter and hunted.

One year the Utes were camped near the river when a band of Blackfoot Indians came into the area. While living in the -area, the Blackfoot braves could not find enough to eat, and they noticed there was food hanging in the Ute encampment.

In desperation the Blackfoot braves crept into the other camp and stole some meat to keep from starving. However, the Chief of the Utes, Gray Wolf discovered the theft and tracked the thieves back to the Blackfoot camp.

Gray Wolf vowed all of them would die and he told his warriors about the theft, and to kill them all. He watched the Ute warriors kill the sleeping men, women and children. At the end of the battle, he suddenly heard a noise and saw a Blackfoot Indian holding a bundle up to him. As he lifted his knife to plunge into her, a Ute woman grabbed the baby from her, and she asked her to keep the belt because it would someday save the baby's life.

She grew up, she turned into a beautiful maiden, and enjoyed listening to the Utes telling stories around the camp fire, especially tale of the Indian, who had died and turned into a star. Because of this legend, she spent many hours sitting on a tree stump looking into the stars. She did it so much Utes nicknamed her "Star Watcher."

Sometime after growing up she was betrothed to Running Deer the son of Gray Wolf.

In the meantime, the Blackfoot Indians remembered the slaughter of their people and waited patiently until Gray Wolf and his band camped in the same spot as the slaughter had occurred.

One day when they arrived in the area, the Blackfoot crept into the camp, while Buffalo Chief watched in the same way Gray Wolf had done so many years before.

When he noticed a young Indian maiden crawling toward him holding something in her hand, he killed her. When he looked down, he saw the belt, the one he had given to her so many years before. To his dismay, it was his daughter, who he thought had been killed.

*According to the Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center archives.*