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(WITH TONGUE IN CHEEK)

A TALE ABOUT GUNLOCK

BY

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Contrary to a long held belief, perpetrated by Washington Irving, Rip Van Winkle did not awaken in the Catskill mountains after his long sleep. He awoke in a cave hollowed out about half way down the black ridge east of Gunlock, Utah.

He slept seventy two years and his sleep was the result of drinking the home-made wine, fermented by the intrepid early settlers of Gunlock. These hardy pioneers found that Gunlock creek bottom soil produced Isabella grapes, succulent and plump with juice. The natural result was making wine.

Rip awakened in the fall of 1989, crawled out of his

cave, brushed himself off, looked around and said, " Well, I see my nap didn't take too long. Everything looks pretty much the same as when I went to sleep." He sloshed across the Santa Clara Creek which was low on water and surmised that the year had been a dry one.

He climbed a few fences to get to Main Street. "I'm sure those fences were not there when I went to sleep," he muttered. But then he discovered the log house where he once lived was gone, replaced by a white house with a white brick wall around it. "That's strange," he muttered. It was even a bigger shock to discover Main Street was no longer filled with warm red sand. Rip sighed. Gunlock was famous for horse races, down the length of Main Street from one end of town to the other. Before Rip went to sleep he loved the races, the smell of lathered horses, the damp sand, and the pungent bite of the willow tree perfume from the creek wafting across his face. The uneven and wavering black top of Main Street now did nothing to soothe Rip's senses.

In the middle of town, Rip came upon children playing in the street. They stopped their play as Rip approached. "I'll bet that man's been out in the hills hunting Indian graves," one boy whispered to the group. Our teacher told us there's a bunch of people doing that now. I think she said this guy's name is Moses," the boy added , noting Rips long beard and uncut hair.

"He's not either Moses," his older sister was indignant. "They're probably making a movie up at the town pond again and he's in it." She was remembering the excitement generated in Gunlock during the filming of scenes for the "ELECTRIC HORSEMAN," some years ago.. Those events had become legend in town for the children.

"Well, he sure looks silly in them baggy pants." Her brother was not to be outdone. "Looks to me like he lost a lot of weight in the legs, or his pants were too big to start with." Rip ambled past. His attention was on the new houses built since he went to sleep and the changes and additions to the houses he remembered. He glanced up at the late afternoon sky. His attention riveted on the street lights, now casting a soft amber glow. They ran the entire length of town.

He walked back to the playing children. Pointing to the lights, he asked, "how long have those contraptions been there?"

" 'Bout five years," the young spokesman answered.

"What are they?" Rip was sorely puzzled. Perhaps Gunlock had changed more than he thought.

"Street lights." The boy was as puzzled about Rip as Rip was about the town. "They light up the street at night."

Rip shook his head. Though time moved more slow in Gunlock than most places, it had moved some, he decided.

THE END