

Riders of Buck River

By WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE Service

THE STORY SO FAR: Over Calhoun Terry's protest, the big ranches have imported a large number of Texas peace officers to round up and kill suspected "rustlers." Several killings preceded this, and Jeff Brand, a rustler

CHAPTER XXVI

From the Box 55 to Lee Hart's place it was eight miles across the hills. Jeff rode fast.

Before he had covered half the way to the hill ranch he heard the sound of firing far to his left. First a single shot, and perhaps a minute later two more. Though he listened for more, no popping reached his ears.

To Jeff there seemed something sinister in these breaks disturbing the silence. His imagination pictured a man peacefully hoeing a potato patch or mending a fence. From the direction of the report it might have come from Wade Scott's place. If so, Wade would probably have been whistling, his mind on a girl in Cheyenne who worked in the railroad restaurant, one he was expecting to marry in a few months.

Instead of taking the gulch he followed the rim, keeping to cover as he came close to the edge. Looking down, his gaze swept the clearing and picked up details. He saw two men crouched back of the barn. Evidently they were others in it, for as he stood there a puff of smoke came from the window opening in the hayloft. At least one man was stationed in the bed of the creek a hundred and fifty yards from the house. A shot from that point told him so.

There was a small alfalfa field to the left of the house. It ran to the draw leading up to the ravine. He could see the ditch crossing it in the direction of the house. Rank grass covered the edges. A wild idea jumped to his mind. Why not get into that ditch, crawl along it till he was close to the cabin, and make a dash to join the defenders?

Near the top of the ravine he picked his horse, then moved down it cautiously. As he came round a bend in the gulch, he looked down into the little basin which held the ranch. Thirty yards below him a man crouched behind a large boulder, a rifle in his hands. He was watching the log cabin, evidently hoping to get a glimpse of one of the defenders. Lower down in the draw and fifty yards to his right another marksman was also waiting behind cover for a shot.

Jeff tiptoed forward, revolver in hand. He had not been a big-game hunter for nothing. No pipe-rumor of his movements reached the lank Texan toward whom he was soft-footing. Unwittingly the sniper helped at his own undoing. Intensely preoccupied with the job in hand, his mind was following a single track which led straight from him to the quarry in the cabin. When Brand was about ten strides from him he drew a bead and fired. As the rifle cracked Jeff flung aside caution and took the last stretch on the run.

The Texan whirled, too late. The long barrel of the .45 smashed down on his lifted forehead. His body swayed, and collapsed.

Nobody had noticed what had taken place. Jeff helped himself to the man's rifle and cartridge belt. He moved to the left and stepped down into the dry ditch he had seen from the bluff above. Crouching low in it, he crept forward. The alfalfa hid him pretty well.

Crossing the field was a slow business. He went on all fours, dragging the rifle beside him. He was near enough to the cabin to see lead flung splinters from the logs.

He called softly, "Hello the house," and when no answer came back to him he called again, more loudly. It was after his fourth attempt that somebody inside answered.

"Who is it? What you want?"

"Jeff Brand. I'm gonna make a run for the door. Fling it open for me when I give the word."

There was a perceptible silence before the man in the house replied. "How come you there—if you're Brand?"

"Don't talk, you fool. Do as I say."

Jeff came out of the ditch running. From the edge of the valley he heard a shout. Somebody had discovered the Texan he had knocked out and was spreading the news. The guns roared.

He bowled over, all the power knocked out of him in an instant. That he had been hit he knew, though he felt no pain. Still clinging to the rifle, he tried to clamber to his feet. The ground tilted up at him, and he went down again. Still conscious, he crawled forward a foot or two.

The cabin door was flung open. Two men showed at the entrance. One ran toward Jeff, in long, reaching strides. The other covered the rescue, firing at the figures which had come into the open to get Brand. It was a matter of seconds, but they stretched interminably. The man reached Jeff, gathered him up, and plunged back toward the house.

CHAPTER XXVII

Calhoun Terry and Larry Richards, on their way to Round Top to meet a cattlemen who had a registered Hereford bull for sale, struck

INSTALLMENT THIRTEEN

himself, traces them to Jack Turley, a "spy." Nor does Jeff like Calhoun, foreman of one of the big ranches. Ellen Terry seems interested in both of them. Lee Hart, a rustler-rancher, reports of the mobilization of the Texan invaders

across country to hit Johnson's Prong and take the short cut down Box Canyon.

They traveled at a road gait, not pushing their horses, for there was a long journey ahead of them.

When they talked it was mostly about a new enterprise in which they were to be partners. They had made an arrangement with John Q. Powers to buy the old Terry Ranch once owned by Calhoun's father, and with it a fine stretch of river land adjoining. Larry had lately inherited some money. This was to make part of the initial payment.

They came to the lip of a small mountain park and dipped down into it. Terry pulled up his cowpony and pointed to the opposite slope. A large body of men on horseback was moving down it.

"The Texas invaders," Larry said.

"Yes, and we'd better get away from here," his companion decided.

Too late, they wheeled their horses. The sound of a rifle shot roared across the park. Larry's horse went down and flung him. His friend raised the palm of his hand to give the peace sign, but the answer was a splatter of bullets.

"Come a-running, Larry," called Terry.

Richards vaulted to the back of the horse, and they were on their way.

From the ridge they headed down into a country of huddled hills and



Jeff tiptoed forward, revolver in hand.

ravines where outlaws had their abode. The roan gelding did its best, but when Larry looked back he knew the race would be a short one.

"They're coming hell-for-leather," he said. "We won't reach the hills."

He held up his hand in the peace sign, but it did not stop the crashing of the guns.

"We'll have to hole up at Lee Hart's till we get a chance to explain we're not the men they want," Terry said.

"Yep. There's Lee down there with his stock. He isn't waiting to ask questions either."

"Don't blame him. He's on their list."

They reached the clearing, flung themselves from the horse, and raced for the cabin by the creek. Once inside, they slammed and bolted the door. From the window Larry saw the leader of the regulators disposing of his men.

They could hear bullets thudding into the logs. One shattered the other window.

"We'd better move back out of sight," Larry suggested. "Have to dig holes between the logs to shoot through."

"I'll try a white flag," Calhoun said. "If they'll hold back long enough to listen to us we'll be all right."

He found an empty flour sack, opened the door a few inches, and waved the white sack. He called out his name to Ellison. The noise of the guns killed the sound of his voice. Lead tore into the door.

"Quit that foolishness, Cal," his friend snapped. "You'll get shot up, first thing. The damned fools are crazy with the heat."

A foreman of the Circle C C ranch, a big, blustering fellow who rode his men hard, was gesticulating violently and pointing toward the cabin. Apparently he was urging them to a charge. Terry shot him in the arm, and he took cover behind the barn. A few seconds later Calhoun's rifle scored another hit. A lumbering Texan behind a cottonwood tried to improve his position by running to another tree closer to the house. He stopped before he reached it, lurched sideways, and fell to the ground. With scarcely a moment's delay he began crawling back to his original position.

"You got him!" Larry cried.

"In the leg. I didn't want to kill him. Maybe his friends will get the

idea that they haven't been invited to come any nearer."

"Some folks can't take a hint unless a Methodist church falls on them," Larry said lightly. "Wish I had a rifle too. My six-gun won't carry that far with any accuracy. Looks like I'll have to be an innocent bystander until they begin to crowd us."

Both of them knew there could be only one ending to the battle if it went to a finish. But they were cool, game men, used to danger, and they would take whatever was in store for them without weakening.

The attackers grew more wary of exposing themselves. Presently the firing died down except for an occasional shot.

"Something's up," Calhoun said. "Probably getting ready to rush us." He laughed sardonically. "I never was in this kind of a jam before. All we have to do is let them know who we are and they would let us alone, but as soon as we poke a nose out to tell them they blast away at us."

Larry was watching the attackers through his peephole. "They are getting their horses." His voice grew excited. "By the jumping horned frog, they're riding away. They figure it would cost too much to dig us out of our hole. Seems too good luck to be true."

It was too good to be true. More than forty men took a trail into the hills, but enough were left to keep up the attack on the cabin. Terry tried again, during the lull in the firing, to let Ellison know who they were, but he was fired upon the instant he opened the door.

At the end of an hour another plan was tried to dislodge the besieged men. Two horses were taken into the barn. A few minutes later they came out drawing a wagon with a hayrack on it.

The wagon was driven into a meadow of wild hay. Near the center of the field was the remains of a stack of hay, most of it weeds tossed aside as it had been used. Men began to gather this trash with pitchforks and load it on the rack.

At first Calhoun was puzzled, but the purpose of this jumped to his mind. "Ellison is going to burn us out," he said.

Larry caught the idea. "Sure. They aim to get behind the hay and push the wagon by the tongue up against the house. Then they will set fire to the hay."

After a moment Larry spoke. "You've been favoring these fellows, Cal, and that was right so far. But no longer. They mean to kill us, even if they have to burn us up. It's them or us. I won't let them rub me out without fighting back."

Calhoun nodded agreement. "Nor I. But maybe the time hasn't quite come for that, Larry. The thing is to delay them all we can. Help is on the way to us by now, I expect. Hart could not have recognized us. He thinks we are some of his outlaw friends. When he reaches Black Butte he will start gathering men to save us. That will take some time, but not very much if we are lucky."

Terry was watching the wagon and the men with it. They had loaded the refuse hay and were picking up brush to pile on the top of it. The driver swung the team round to return to the gate. He was nearer the house than at any time since leaving the barn.

Calhoun took careful aim and fired. One of the horses sank to the ground.

"That will hold them for a while," he said.

A voice outside, not far away, hailed the house. It came from the side Larry was defending. Richards searched the alfalfa field and saw nobody.

"Someone has worked up right close to us," he told his companion. "Sounds like he's only forty or fifty yards away."

"Ask him who he is," Terry said. "We can send a message by him and tell Ellison who we are."

Larry shouted the question. The answer astonished him. He passed it on to his friend.

"Claims he's Jeff Brand and is going to make a run for the door. He must have crawled up the ditch." Larry demanded more information from the man outside. A moment later he cried in excitement: "Hell, it's Jeff, all right! He's coming on the run. . . . They've hit him. He's down."

Terry ran to the door and flung it open. He thrust the rifle into the hands of Richards and raced toward the man on the ground, who was crawling toward the house.

Stooping, Calhoun picked up Brand, the rifle still in his hand, and hurried back to the house. He reached it in safety and Larry bolted the door.

Terry put the wounded man down on the bed. "Where did they hit you?" he asked.

Jeff Brand did not answer. He stared at his rescuer in vast astonishment.

"They got him in the ankle," Larry said, pointing to a hole in Brand's boot.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

PATTERNS SEWING CIRCLE



proval. Note the soft gathers below the shoulder yokes.

Pattern No. 8005 is designed for sizes from 8 to 16 years. Size 10 middy top portion requires 1 1/4 yards 35-inch fabric, skirt, cuffs and ties require 2 yards. For this attractive pattern send your order to:

SEWING CIRCLE PATTERN DEPT.
106 Seventh Ave. New York
Enclose 15 cents in coins for
Pattern No. Size.....
Name

Wise in Time
After getting married to his late secretary, he remarked:
"Well, my dear, I suppose I must get someone to take your place in the office."
"I've been thinking of that," responded the bride; "my cousin is just leaving school."
"What's her name?"
"John Henry Briggs," said the bride sweetly.

Tick Tock
He was telling her his family history. "My grandfather was a poor, hard-working clockmaker. When he died a few years ago he left his estate, which consisted of two hundred clocks, to my father."
"How interesting," she said, "it must have been real fun winding up his estate."

EQUILIBRIUM
"Why does a person always lower his voice when asking for a loan?"
"I suppose it's for the same reason he raises it when he doesn't get it."

Modern streamlined war may have changed the arms and methods of Uncle Sam's soldiers, but it hasn't changed the Army man's smoking preference. For more than 20 years Camels have been the Army man's favorite cigarette. Today, actual sales records show Camels not only are the favorite with men in the Army, but with men in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard as well. With men in the service giving cigarettes first place in the gift line-up, it's natural that local tobacco dealers are featuring "Send a Carton of Camels" as the ideal gift for the service men from the folks back home.—Adv.

Household Hints

Vinegar added to dried glue will make it usable again.

Pongee must be dry when ironed. It will spot and streak if ironed when damp.

Half a teaspoonful of soda added to boiling frosting will keep it from being runny.

A serve yourself center piece for the table is a time saver. Gaily decorate a large platter of cold meat, salads and hard cooked eggs, with relishes, buttered bread slices and dabs of jelly or jam.

To get the best service from felt hats, brush them frequently with a soft brush (not a stiff whisk broom) with the grain of the felt.



Twice to Stumble
It is disgraceful to stumble against the same stone twice.—Old Proverb.

Dad Expected Memorial To Be a Speaking Likeness

Mrs. Woop had died, and Dad wanted to put up some sort of memorial to her. A stained-glass window in the local church being suggested. Dad agreed, and left all arrangements with the minister. At length the window arrived. Dad, unusually excited, set out to view it.

The minister escorted the old chap into the church and, with a flourish, indicated the window, which depicted an angel.
"How do you like it?" said he.
Dad gazed at it thoughtfully.
"No good," he grunted.
"Why, what's your objection?"
"Tain't a bit like my old woman."

Smile Awhile

Double Up
"The best way to get the most out of life is to fall in love with a great problem or a beautiful woman!"
"Why not choose the latter and get both?"

Misunderstood
She had visited every department in the big shop and worried the salesmen, without buying anything. At last one weary assistant thought a protest was due.
"Pardon me, madam," he said, "are you shopping here?"
"Certainly," she snapped.
"What else should I be doing?"
"Well, madam," he replied meekly, "I thought you were taking an inventory."

Definite
"Afraid you're going to have insomnia? What are the symptoms?"
"Twins."

Surprise!
"Then I tried to drive round the corner."
"Well, what happened?"
"There wasn't one."

DON'T LET CONSTITUTION SLOW YOU UP

When bowels are sluggish and you feel irritable, headachy and everything you do is an effort, do as millions do—chew FEEN-A-MINT, the modern chewing gum laxative. Simply chew FEEN-A-MINT before you go to bed—sleep without being disturbed—next morning gentle, thorough relief, helping you feel swell again, full of your normal pep. Try FEEN-A-MINT. Tastes good, is handy and economical. A generous family supply costs only **10¢**

No Ill From Love
Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.—Romans 13:10.

If you bake at home, use **FLEISCHMANN'S FRESH YEAST**

RICHER in VITAMINS

The Household Favorite of Four Generations!

AND THANKS FOR THE CARTON OF CAMELS — YOU PICKED THE RIGHT BRAND

CAMELS ARE GRAND. EXTRA MILD — WITH LESS NICOTINE IN THE SMOKE

THE SMOKE OF SLOWER-BURNING CAMELS CONTAINS **28% LESS NICOTINE** than the average of the 4 other largest-selling cigarettes tested — less than any of them — according to independent scientific tests of the smoke itself!

Actual sales records show the largest-selling cigarette in Army and Marine Corps Post Exchanges, and in Navy Canteens and Ship's Service Stores is Camel.

R. J. REYNOLDS Tobacco Co. Winston-Salem, N. C.

CAMEL — THE CIGARETTE OF COSTLIER TOBACCOS