

DELL  
PUBLICATIONS

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# TALES OF WELLS FARGO

starring  
DALE ROBERTSON

Two exciting Jim Hardie Adventures:

- THE MAN THEY COULDN'T DROWN
- THE SKELETON CAVE





## Jim Hardie

### The Man They Couldn't Drown



When Jim Hardie is caught offguard by a stealthy outlaw ambush, his own life and \$100,000 on the Bitter Creek stage seem doomed . . .



Until the resourceful agent rises from a watery grave like an avenging phantom to spring a clever trap.

### The Skeleton Cave



As hate-filled Apaches swoop down on Jim Hardie, he takes refuge in a last cave.



In desperation, he uses a grisly discovery as his last hope for survival.

# TALES OF WELLS FARGO

## THE MAN THEY COULDN'T DROWN



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...MADE WITH SHAVED-UP PLUS TOBACCO AND **KINKIKWICKI!** THAT'S KENO CROW-FOOT'S MIXTURE! HE'S PART INDIAN, LIKE HIS SMOKE! OF COURSE, IT'S NOT **PROOF**--



HERE'S WHERE THEY WENT OUT WITH THEIR HORSES--ALL SHOD!



...AND NOW THE TRAIL ENDS! NO MARKS--NOT EVEN A HORSESHOE'S SCRATCH ON THE BARE ROCK! AND THAT'S **QUEER!**



OH-OH! **THIS IS THE ANSWER!** THEY PULLED THE HORSESHOES THEY'D TACKLED ON--AND DROPPED THIS ONE! FROM NOW ON I'LL LOOK FOR **BAREFOOT TRACKS!**



...AND HERE THEY ARE!



I REMEMBER THERE USED TO BE A FEW SMALL ABANDONED MINES BACK IN THOSE HILLS! THEY'D BE GOOD HIDE-OUTS!



MILES FARTHER INTO THE HILLS, JIM MEETS THE TRAIL'S FIRST LIVING CREATURES...



SHOOT YOU?  
WHY SHOULD I,  
OLD-TIMER?



I THINK I'LL RIDE UP THERE AND FIND OUT!



YOU'RE CRAZY, MR. HARDIE!  
THERE ARE FIVE HORSES—AND  
THAT MEANS FIVE RIFLES, PROBABLY!  
MAYBE THEY'RE **ALL** TRIGGER-HAPPY!

I MIGHT AS  
WELL BE SHOT AS  
DIE OF CURIOSITY!

HUMPY!  
"CURIOSITY  
KILLED A  
CAT!"



THE TRAIL OF FIVE  
HORSES THAT I'M  
FOLLOWING HOLDS  
STRAIGHT FOR THE  
OLD MINES!



**KRANG!**

**PING!**



OH, IT'S YOU, WEND!  
YOUR IDEA OF A  
LITTLE JOKE?

YEAH! TRAIL'S KIND OF  
DANGEROUS AHEAD, HARDIE!  
THOUGHT I'D BETTER WARN  
YOU! STAY PUT TILL I GET  
DOWN THERE!



I HEARD THAT THE OLD SLEW FOOT MINE WAS RE-OPENING! DO YOU KNOW WHO'S THERE, KENO?

FRIENDS OF MINE! THEY'D LIKE TO MEET YOU, HARDIE! JUST LEAVE YOUR HORSE HERE --AND WALK AHEAD!

TAKING MY GUN, KENO?

SAFER FOR YOU, HARDIE! A COUPLE OF MY FRIENDS GET KIND OF SPOOKY AT THE SIGHT OF A STRANGER WITH A SHOOTING IRON!



OKAY, SLINGER! IT'S ONLY A WELLS FARGO AGENT PAYING US A LITTLE CALL!

WHY DID YOU BRING HIM HERE?



JIM HARDIE, HERE, WAS INTERESTED IN OUR LITTLE MINING OPERATION, SLINGER! WANTED TO ASK QUESTIONS!

SUCH AS... HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WILL STAY A SECRET?

LONG ENOUGH...

...LONG ENOUGH, HARDIE, FOR A REAL NOSEY GENT TO TURN UP MISSING! MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE LONGER, IF IT SUITS US!







SOON...

WE'RE OUT OF  
SIGHT, HARGIS!  
LET ME GO NOW!

NOT TILL  
I'M ON MY  
HORSE!

ALL RIGHT, NOW!  
TELL YOUR FRIENDS I'LL  
BE SEEING THEM LATER  
IN JAIL!

I'VE A HUNCH THAT SLINGER'S  
BUNCH WERE SADDLING UP TO MEET  
THE NEXT WEST-BOUND STAGE SOME-  
WHERE! IT'LL BE CARRYING **ONE  
HUNDRED THOUSAND** IN  
GOLD BULLION!

IF THEY STILL GO  
THROUGH WITH IT, THEY'LL  
PICK SOME PLACE LIKE APACHE  
GULCH--BUT I'LL MEET THE  
STAGE AHEAD OF THEM!

TAKING A SHORT CUT THROUGH A MOUNTAIN PASS,  
JIM STOPS AT A BEAVER POND HE KNOWS...

NOW WE'LL  
COOL OFF,  
JIBBLEE!



TASTE'S GOOD, DOESN'T IT--AFTER EATING DESERT DUST?

GG-ZZIP!  
GG-ZZIP!



AND THAT FEELS GOOD TO YOUR SWEATY BACK, I'LL BET!

HUR-UMPH!



GOO

I'LL HAVE ENOUGH TIME FOR A GRIM! IF THOSE STAGE ROBBERS ARE PLANNING TO HOLD UP THE WEST-BOUND COACH, THEY'LL LIKELY TAKE THEIR TIME--AND A DIFFERENT ROUTE!



AMH! THIS FEELS GREAT!

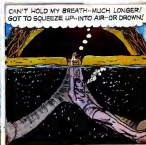


HALF AN HOUR LATER...

I DON'T WANT TO, BUT I'LL HAVE TO GET BACK INTO THE SADDLE!



BRR-RR-RRY!






ANH! AIR! **GASP!**  
AND NO BEAVERS  
AT HOME!




YOU GOT HIM,  
SLINGER--WITH YOUR  
FIRST SHOT!

MAYBE! WE'LL WAIT  
AWHILE! HE MIGHT  
COME UP YET!



VOICES--COMING IN THROUGH THE  
AIR HOLE! I HAVE COME UP--AND  
I COULD WAIT ALL DAY!

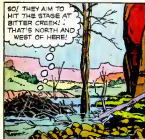


HE'S NOT A RISH, SLINGER! OKAY--CIRCLE  
EVEN A BEAVER WOULD THE POND  
HAVE TO COME UP FOR AIR TO MAKE  
BY NOW! HARDIE'S DEAD! SURE HE  
ISN'T  
HIDING!



NO SIGN OF HIM, SLINGER! HE'S A DEAD DUCK!

WE'LL BE RIDING THEN!  
NOT TOO MUCH TIME BEFORE  
THAT WEST-BOUND STAGE IS  
DUE TO PASS BITTER CREEK!



UH-HUH!  
WHAT ABOUT  
HIS CLOTHES  
AND SADDLE  
BEAR, SUNGER?



UH-HUH-  
HUH-HUH!

WE'LL MEET THE STAGE ABOUT  
TEN MILES NORTH OF HERE--AND  
TWO MILES EAST OF BITTER CREEK!



THAT'S CUTTING IT PRETTY CLOSE  
TO THE HOLD-UP SPOT--BUT THE  
STAGE MIGHT BE EARLY!



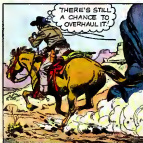
THERE'S THE ROAD! AND I THINK  
THERE'S A LITTLE HAZE OF DUST  
ABOVE IT! THAT'S BAD!



IT'S JUST GONE BY!  
IT WAS EARLY!



THERE'S STILL  
A CHANCE TO  
OVERHAUL IT!



HANK, THERE'S A RIDER  
FOLLOWING US--FAST! MAYBE  
ANOTHER HOLD-UP!



GIDDAP!  
COME ON,  
HOSES! SHAK!  
A LEG!



WHEN HE COMES IN RANGE,  
I'LL LET HIM HAVE IT! HE CAN  
GEE I'M COVERING HIM!



HEY! HE'S RAISING HIS  
HANDS—EMPTY! AND STILL  
COMING FAST! MAYBE  
IT'S A TRICK!



IT'S JIM HARDIE!  
OUR SPECIAL AGENT! PUT  
DOWN THAT SHOTGUN,  
JOE! WHY-A, HOGGIES!

JIM HARDIE!  
SURE ENOUGH!  
I'VE GOT HIM!



WHAT'S  
WRONG,  
JIM!

HOLD UP—WAITING  
FOR US AT BITTER  
CREEK!



WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO—TURN  
BACK NOW? WITH THIS HUNDRED  
THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF  
GOLD? WE HAVE NO PASSENGERS—

GOOD! HAND  
DOWN THE STRONG  
BOX, HANK!  
I'LL HIDE  
IT OFF THE  
TRAIL!



...AND  
THEN  
WHAT?

WE'LL FIX A LITTLE SURPRISE  
FOR THOSE OWL-HOOTERS! ONE  
THAT THEY WON'T GET OVER  
FOR QUITE A WHILE!



WE'LL COVER IT WITH  
ROCKS AND DIRT AND  
BRUSH OUT OUR TRACKS  
JUST IN CASE OUR  
LITTLE SURPRISE  
PLAY DOESN'T PAN OUT!

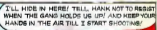
SUPPOSING  
NONE OF US  
COMES OUT  
ALIVE, JIM?



WELL'S FARGO  
WILL STILL GET  
THE BOX! I'M  
WRITING DOWN WHERE  
WE'VE BURIED IT--  
AND TYING THE NOTE TO  
THE BUTT OF HANK'S  
TEAM WHIP! NEXT  
DRIVER TAKING  
THE WHIP OUT OF  
THE SOCKET  
WILL FIND IT!



I'LL BE BACK FOR  
YOU, JUBILEE--I HOPE! AND  
I WON'T BE LONG!



I'LL HIDE IN HERE! TELL HANK NOT TO RESIST  
WHEN THE GANG HOLDS US UP! AND KEEP YOUR  
HANDS IN THE AIR TILL I START SHOOTING!



ALL RIGHT,  
JIM!



MINUTES LATER...

BITTER CREEK IS  
HEAD AHEAD!



HERE SHE COMES!  
REMEMBER, BOYS-- WE  
ALL STEP OUT TOGETHER--  
KING AND BOOMER READY  
TO GRAB THE LEAD HORSES  
IF THEY DON'T STOP!





WHERE'S  
THAT STRONG  
BOX?

LOOK INSIDE!  
WE AREN'T  
STOPPING YOU!

I'LL HAVE  
TO TIME THIS  
RIGHT!



# TALES OF WELLS FARGO

## THE SKELETON CAVE

... WOULD PROBABLY AGREE WITH YOU, MR. HARDY! BUT I AM TAKING THIS STAGE! I'M NOT AFRAID OF THE APACHES!

MRS. DREW, I BEG OF YOU TO WAIT FOR THE NEXT STAGE TO FORT CAREY! BY THAT TIME THERE WILL BE A CAVALRY ESCORT TO PROTECT YOU! YOUR HUSBAND, CAPTAIN DREW...

IF THE RISK IS NOT TOO GREAT FOR THE ORNER AND A WELLS FARGO AGENT, IT IS NOT TOO GREAT FOR AN ARMY OFFICER'S WIFE! SHALL WE START?

LET'S GO, BEN! SHE'S DECIDED FOR US!

YOU'RE IN COMMAND, JIM-- YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED HER!

DON'T GONE! CARRYING AN ARMY PAYROLL AND A CASE OF DYNAMITE IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH-- WITH-  
OUT A WOMAN!

I COULDN'T HAVE STOPPED HER-- WITH-  
OUT USING FORCE, BEN! AND ONE DOESN'T FORCE AN ARMY OFFICER'S WIFE!

THE DYNAMITE IS WELL PADDED-- AND THE BOX OF CARS IS HERE ON THE SEAT WITH US! THE REAL DANGER, BEN, IS APACHES!

YEAH! THEY'VE BEEN RAIDING, JUST WEST OF HERE!



LATE THAT AFTERNOON, AS THE STAGE  
NEARS THE NEXT STATION...



WHAT'S  
WRONG  
JIM?

THERE'S NO SIGN OF LIFE--NO  
HORSES IN THE STATION  
CORRAL! AND THE ROOF IS  
SOME--BURNED  
OUT!



GIVE ME THE LINES, BEN--AND  
YOU TAKE MY RIFLE! QUICK!

HUH? WHY?



I SAW AN APACHE'S HEAD DUCK  
BEHIND A ROCK, DOWNSTREAM! THIS  
IS AN AMBUSH, BEN! AND WE'VE  
GOT JUST ONE  
CHANCE!



WHAT'S THE IDEA, JIM? THE  
BANK PINCHES OUT HERE!



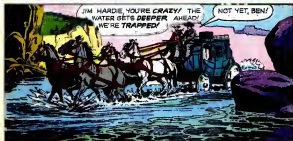


HEY! YOU'LL TURN US OVER, JIM! HE-HEY!

YELPING LIKE HOUNDS ON A HOT SCENT, THE APACHES BREAK OUT IN PURSUIT...



WAAH-WAAH-WAAH!  
YIP-YIP-YIP!



JIM HARDIE, YOU'RE CRAZY! THE WATER GETS DEEPER AHEAD!  
WE'RE TRAPPED!

NOT YET, BEN!







WITH DEAFENING THUNDER OF FALLING ROCK AND BOULDER, THE CANYON WALL COLLAPSES--CHOKING THE GORGE...







AREN'T YOU COMING WITH US NOW, JIM?

NO, BEN! THERE'S STILL THE WELLS FARGO STRONG BOX TO GUARD! RIDE WITH MRS. OREN! SET TO THE FORT! SEND HELP!



YOU'RE FOOLISH, JIM, BUT--GOOD LUCK!



NO STRONGBOX IS WORTH A MAN'S LIFE, BEN!

THAT WAS JUST AN EXCUSE, MA'AM! JIM HARDIE IS STAYING BEHIND TO KEEP THE APACHES OFF OUR BACKS--THAT'S ALL!



I'VE GOT TO FIND A PLACE TO FORT UP BEFORE THOSE INDIANS GET HERE!



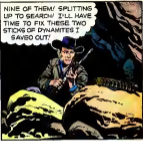
LOOKS AS IF THERE MIGHT BE A PLACE ALONG THAT SIDE OF THE CANYON!





ONE MAN  
HINDS-MA-  
BE HURTY!

TWO WARRIORS FIND  
HIM! OTHERS FIND  
TRAIL OF THOSE WHO  
RODE AWAY!



NINE OF THEM! SPLITTING  
UP TO SEARCH! I'LL HAVE  
TIME TO FIX THESE TWO  
STICKS OF DYNAMITE I  
SAVED OUT!



IF THIS DETONATING SHOULD GO  
OFF NOW, I'D BE  
MINUS A JAW! BUT  
WITHOUT CRIMP-  
ING FLIES,  
TEETH WILL  
HAVE TO  
DO THE  
JOB!



THAT'S ONE STICK  
READY! I'LL MAKE  
THE OTHER FUSE  
A LOT SHORTER!



UMM! THOSE TWO  
ARE GETTING CLOSER  
THAN I LIKE! IT'S  
TIME TO OPEN  
THE BALL!



YIP!



ONE OF THE ARCHERS NEAREST JIM'S CAVE TRIES FOR A QUICK LOOK...



A VOLLEY FROM THE RIVER ANSWERS JIM...





LUCKY THIS CAVE  
ISN'T CROWDED--  
EXCEPT WITH BONES!  
MAYBE ISLANDING  
BULLETS KILLED A  
LOT OF THE OLD  
DEFENDERS!



ANOTHER HOUR TILL  
SUNDOWN! THE ARACHES  
WON'T WAIT LONG  
ARTER THAT!



I'LL HAVE TO MOVE OUT JUST BEFORE  
THEY MOVE IN--AND LEAVE A WELCOME  
HERE FOR THEM!

AGAINST THE SUNSET GLOW, A COYOTE  
LIFTS HIS WEIRD EVENING SONG...



OW-OW-OW-OW!  
YIP-YAP-YAP-YAP!

AS THE SHADOWS DEEPEN IN THE  
CANYON, A NIGHT BIRD'S CALL RISES  
SILVERLY CLEAR, FROM  
AMONG THE ROCKS...



WHIP-POOR-WILL!  
WHIP-POOR-WILL!

THAT WHIPPOOR-  
WILL WAS A SIGNAL!  
THEY'LL BE COMING  
NOW-- ANXIOUS FOR  
REVENGE!



I'LL MAKE A SLING FOR  
THE BOX-- WITH MY  
SHIRT!



AND NOW-- THIS!



THE SHADOWS  
WILL HIDE ME AS  
WELL AS THEM--  
I HOPE!



THERE THEY COME-- LIKE SHADOWS--  
STRAIGHT FOR THE CAVE! THAT  
DYNAMITE IS ABOUT  
READY TO--



BOOM!







JUST WHERE I FIGURED THEY'D BE!



I'LL HAVE TIME TO TURN THEM LOOSE!



WHOOF-EE-E!!

YIP-YIP-YIP! YEEHOOO!  
SCATTER, YOU PONIES!

BRRRT!



ONLY ONE APACHE RIFLE ANSWERS JIM'S TAUNTING YELL...

YEEH-HOO-OOO!



THEY WON'T BE FOLLOWING ME--AND I HOPE THEY'LL LEAVE THE STAGE ALONE! FOR ALL THEY KNOW, IT'S BOOBY-TRAPPED!

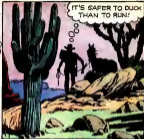


IF BEN AND THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE DIDN'T RUN INTO ANY OTHER BANDS OF INDIANS, THEY SHOULD HAVE REACHED THE FORT JUST ABOUT DARK!





HORSES COMING!  
IT COULD BE  
ANOTHER  
WAR PARTY!



IT'S SAFER TO DUCK  
THAN TO RUN!



NOW-- I'LL  
STEP OUT AND  
HAVE A LOOK!  
AND YOU'LL STAY  
PUT, PONY!



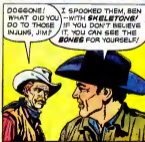
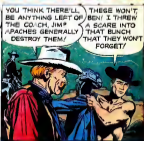
THERE THEY  
ARE! TOPPING  
THAT RIDGE OF  
GROUND!



HALT! LISTEN!  
WHO'S THAT, BEN?

IT'S JIM! JIM  
HARDIE!

HELLO, TROOPERS!  
OVER HERE!



A FLEDGE **DELL** TO PARENTS  
COMIC

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PETE! YOU'RE  
BACK FROM  
PRISON!  
ANY NEWS  
OR MAIL?

NO LETTERS!  
BUT I'VE GOT A  
MONTH-OLD  
NEWSPAPER!

## THE MINER'S FRIEND



IN LONELY MOUNTAIN OSSINGS, GOLD RUSH MINORS  
LONGED HUNGRILY FOR NEWS FROM HOME AND LOVED  
ONES FAR AWAY.



WHEN AT LAST THE WELLS FARGO COACHES REACHED  
THESE ISOLATED COMMUNITIES WITH MAIL THEY  
WERE WILDLY CHEERED.



AND THE NEWS, WHETHER GOOD OR GRIEVOUS, LINKED  
THESE SO SPERATELY LONELY MEN WITH THEIR WIVES,  
MOTHERS, SWEETHEARTS.



THE WELLS FARGO AGENT PERFORMED ANOTHER  
SERVICE-HE MEASURED THEIR GOLD ON HONEST  
SCALES AND INSURED DELIVERY.



WELLS FARGO EMPLOYEES WERE EXPECTED TO RISK  
THEIR LIVES. BAD TRAILS, FLASH FLOODS, BADMEN,  
BLIZZARDS, ALL TOOK THEIR TOLL!

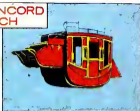


THERE WERE LOST SHIPMENTS, BUT WELLS FARGO  
INSURED THEM, AND PAID IN CASH FOR EVERY  
DOLLAR'S WORTH.

## THE CONCORD COACH



WELLS FARGO COACHES WERE ALL MADE IN THE TOWN OF CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE, BY MEN WHO TOOK PRIDE IN THEIR PRODUCT.



THE BODY WAS STOUTLY BUILT TO CARRY NINE PASSENGERS, INSIDE AND A NUMBER OF OTHERS OUTSIDE WITH THE DRIVER.



THE RUNNING GEAR WAS MADE OF TOP-GRADE HARD WOOD, HEAVY AND STRONG TO STAND THE SHOCK OF MOUNTAIN TRAILS.



THE BODY WAS CRADLED ON SPECIAL SLINGS, OR "THOROUGHBRACES," MADE OF TOUGH LEATHER, TO STAND ANY STRAIN.



ON ROUGH TRAILS THE FAMOUS CONCORD COACHES PITCHED AND ROLLED ON THEIR THOROUGHBRACES, LIKE SMALL BOATS IN A CHOPPY SEA. THEY WERE WELL WORTH THE BLOOD IT COST WELLS FARGO TO HAVE THEM BUILT AND DELIVERED.