

DELL  
PUBLICATIONS

# Johnny Mack Brown



DELL  
COMIC  
NO. 519

10¢

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# CAPT. HARRY WHEELER

## Sheriff, Soldier and Arizona Ranger

**H**ARRY C. WHEELER GREW UP AROUND ARMY POSTS. HIS FATHER WAS A COLONEL IN THE REGULAR ARMY AND BELONGED TO A LONG LINE OF DISTINGUISHED OFFICERS. WHEN IT BECAME TIME FOR HARRY TO ENTER WEST POINT, IT WAS FOUND THAT HE WAS NOT TALL ENOUGH TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MILITARY ACADEMY. HOWEVER, HIS LACK OF STATURE DIDN'T SEEM TO IMPAIR HIS ABILITY AS A FIGHTING MAN. WHEN IT CAME TO HOLDING UP HIS END IN A BRAWL, HARRY WHEELER WAS A REGULAR BUZZ SAW. THEY MADE HIM CHIEF OF THE APACHE SCOUTS AT FORT SILL, AND FOLKS WILL LOOK A LONG TIME BEFORE THEY'LL FIND A MORE CAPABLE FIGHTING CREW THAN THESE BOYS. HARRY SERVED AS A REGULAR SOLDIER IN THE

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR. AFTER THE WAR HE DRIFTED INTO ARIZONA, WHERE HE JOINED THE ARIZONA RANGERS IN 1902. FOR THE NEXT FIFTEEN YEARS HE SERVED AS A RANGER, A DEPUTY, OR A SHERIFF. HE WAS KNOWN TO BE ABSOLUTELY FEARLESS, A DEAD SHOT, AND CHAIN LIGHTNING ON THE DRAW WITH A SIX-GUN. THEY TELL ABOUT THE TIME TRACY, THE OUTLAW, SHOT CAPTAIN WHEELER IN THE STOMACH AND IN THE FOOT. THE CAPTAIN DREW HIS GUN AND SHOT TRACY THREE TIMES THROUGH THE BODY BEFORE HE FELL. WHEELER WAS A CAPTAIN OF RANGERS WHEN THIS GREAT ORGANIZATION WAS DISBANDED IN 1909. DURING WORLD WAR ONE HE WAS AN OFFICER AND SAW ACTION IN EUROPE. HARRY WHEELER DIED IN 1925. HE WASN'T A VERY BIG PERSON BUT HE WAS A BRAVE MAN.



# JOHNNY MACK BROWN

## "GOLD of the ARIVAIPAS"



WELL, REUBEN, GETTING READY FOR ANOTHER PROSPECTING TRIP UP THE PECOS!

NOPE! THIS TIME 'A CON' AFTER INJUN BURIED TREASURE! TAINT TOO FAR FROM HERE EITHER!

ONE MORNING IN BLUE SANDS, JOHNNY MACK BROWN GREET'S AN OLD FRIEND ...



BETTER KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, REUBEN! SOME FOLKS WOULD STOP AT NOTHING TO GET IN ON A DEAL LIKE THAT!

HEBBS SO! BUT THEY'D HAVE A HARD TIME READING THE MAP I'VE GOT!



BINKY WATSON HAD IT FOR A LONG TIME AND COULDN'T MAKE HEAD NOR TAIL OF IT TILL A COUPLE WEEKS AGO! BY THEN HE WAS ON HIS 'DEATHBED' 'N' IT WAS TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!



SO JUST AFORE HE DIED 'TOTHER DAY, HE GAVE IT TO ME! HE DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO 'READ' IT FOR ME, THOUGH! I DID THAT ON MY OWN!



YOU FIGURED IT OUT?

YEP! I AIN'T LIVED AROUND INJUNS ALL THESE YEARS WITHOUT LEARNIN' HOW TO READ THEIR SIGNS! S'LONG, JOHNNY!



Y'KNOW, I COULD SURE USE SOME O' THAT TREASURE!

HE, TOO! SUPPOSE WE GET OUR HORSES AND DO A LITTLE TRAILING!



FEW MINUTES LATER...  
SAY, GABE! INSTEAD OF FOLLOWIN' LANE TO THE TREASURE, WHY DON'T WE JUST TAKE THE HAP AWAY FROM HIM NOW?

THAT WOULD BE OKAY... EXCEPT FOR ONE THING! HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO READ IT!

SEVERAL MILES OUT OF TOWN, GABE AND JOE GAIN A VANTAGE POINT...



LOOK! HE'S TURNING OFF ON THE OLD BISON CREEK TRAIL! LET'S GO!

NO HURRY, JOE! LANE'S A SLOW WALKER! BESIDES, HE'D BETTER WAIT TILL THE STAGE HAS GONE BY!



LATER...

IT'S CLEAR NOW! LET'S GO!

WE'LL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL HE DOESN'T SPOT US!



MEANWHILE, THE STAGE FALLS INTO TOWN...



WELCOME HOME, MARSHAL! DID YOU HAVE A GOOD TRIP?

FINE! THANKS FOR PINCH-HITTING FOR ME SO I COULD GO, JOHNNY!



I WANT YOU TO MEET CELIA MOORE - RUBEN LANE'S GRANDDAUGHTER! COME FOR A SURPRISE VISIT! CELIA, THIS IS THE FABIOUS JOHNNY BUCK BROWN!

HOW DO YOU DO, MISTER BROWN! DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND GRAMPS?



NOT EXACTLY! HE HEADED EAST OUT OF TOWN ABOUT HALF AN HOUR AGO! YOU PROBABLY PASSED HIM... IF HE STUCK TO THE ROAD!



HE DIDN'T! I SAW HIM TURNIN' OFF AT THE BISON CREEK TRAIL! SORRY I DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEED HIS KIN, HISS! TD O' STOPPED!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT! I AM DISAPPOINTED, THOUGH!



I'VE GOT AN IDEA, MISS CELIA! SUPPOSE YOU AND I RIDE AFTER HIM? I'LL GET YOU A HORSE!

THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL! I'LL BE WITH YOU AS SOON AS I CHECK IN AT THE HOTEL AND CHANGE MY CLOTHES!



A LITTLE LATER ON BISON CREEK TRAIL...

OH-OH! LOOKS LIKE A COUPLA COYOTES'EB TRAILIN' ME! MUSTA HEARD ABOUT MY TREASURE MAP!



I'LL FOOL 'EM! I'LL BURN IT! I SHOULD'A BURNED IT ANYWAYS...AS SOON AS I FIGURED IT OUT!



I THINK HE SPOTTED US, JOE! BUT LOOK... WHY IS HE GETTIN' FIRE TO THAT BLANKET?

THE AMP! IT MUST HAVE BEEN WOVEN INTO THE BLANKET! THE INDIANS USED TO HIDE SECRETS IN THEIR BLANKETS WHEN THEY WERE BEAVIN' 'EM!



YOU HANDLE HIM, GABE! I'LL GET THAT FIRE OUT!

OKAY!



YOU BLASTED POLECATS! IF I HAD A GUN!...

BUT YOU HAVEN'T!



SO TAKE THIS ONE! AND PLEASANT DREAMS!



THE BLANKET'S ALL RIGHT!... ONLY A CORNER IS BURNED!

JOE! TWO RIDERS... CORING THIS WAY!... AGEEY HAY! IT'S A WOMAN! AND JOHNNY MACK BROWN!... HIT THE BREEZE!



GABE! MAYBE LANE WAS FIRIN' THIS BLANKET TO THROW US OFF THE TRACK! MAYBE THE REAL MAP'S IN HIS ROCKET!

IT'S TOO LATE TO SEARCH HIM NOW!



JOHNNY! THAT MAN ON THE GROUND! IT'S GRAMP! HE...HE'S HAD AN ACCIDENT!



IS HE... DEAD?

NO! HE'S GOT A BAD CUT ON HIS HEAD AND... WAIT! HE'S COMING TO!

OH MY!



EASY FELLA! EVERYTHINGS OKAY NOW! WHAT HAPPENED?

TWO BANDITS... GOT MAP... SQUAW ROCK... TALL POLE... GOLD... *Boooooo!*



HE'S LOST CONSCIOUSNESS AGAIN! WHAT WAS HE TALKING ABOUT?

BURIED TREASURE AND A PAIR OF CROOKS! I'LL HEAD AFTER THEM AS SOON AS I SEE YOU HEADED FOR TOWN WITH HIM!



BUT MY LITTLE BASS CAN'T CARRY DOUBLES! HOW ON EARTH CAN I TAKE GRAMP?

EASY! I'LL BUILD AN INDIAN DRAG!



A SHORT TIME LATER ...

REUBEN MAY HAVE A CONCUSSION, CELIA! BETTER HEAD STRAIGHT FOR THE DOCTORS!

I WILL! AND, JOHNNY... PLEASE BE CAREFUL! ANYBODY THAT WOULD DO THIS TO A HELPLESS OLD MAN WOULD DO ANYTHING!



NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT REUBEN WAS TRYING TO TELL ME WHERE THE BANDITS WERE HEADING!



I KNOW WHERE SQUAW ROCK IS! BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE MEANT BY 'TALL POLE'!




MAYBE IT'LL FIGURE ITSELF OUT BY THE TIME I REACH SQUAW ROCK! UP, REBEL!



A BANWHILE ...

RECKON YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT THAT BLANKET BEING A TRICK, JOE! I DON'T SEE ANYTHING ON IT THAT LOOKS LIKE A MAP!





IT WOULDN'T LOOK LIKE A MAP, GARE! THOSE INJUNS WERE REAL SMART! THEY WORKED THEIR SECRETS IN AS PART OF THE DESIGN!



WHAAAA... THIS STICK WITH THE WIGGLY THINGS ON IT IS TILTED! LIKE IT WAS POINTING TO SOMETHING!




RIGHT, JOE! BUT IT ISN'T A STICK! IT'S A STAFF WITH EAGLES AND TURKEY FEATHERS LIKE THE NAVAJO BOYS'RE SUPPOSED TO CARRY!...



ALL! IT'S POINTIN' TO A POLE WITH A SQUAW BEHIND IT!

I SNAWY A POLE! BUT WHAT'S A SQUAW GOT TO DO WITH IT?



IT COULD MEAN SQUAW EDDY! THAT WAS ARIVAIPA COUNTRY BACK IN THE SEVENTIES! THOSE INJUNS HAD PLENTY OF GOLD!

IT'S SURE WORTH TAKING A LOOK! FOLD UP THE BLANKET AND LET'S GO!

GABE! I JUST THOUGHT... IF BROWN SPOTTED OUR TRACKS, HE'LL BE HOT ON OUR TRAIL BY NOW!

DON'T WORRY! HEAD STRAIGHT FOR BISON CREEK! WE'LL THROW HIM OFF BY RIDING IN THE WATER ALMOST TO SQUAW ROCK!



TAKING A SHORTCUT TO SQUAW ROCK, JOHNNY SUDDENLY REINS IN...

HOLD IT, REBEL! THOSE ARE FRESH HOOPRINTS!



TWO RIDERS WENT BY HERE A SHORT WHILE AGO! AND IN A POWERFUL HURRY TOO!



BISON CREEK RUNS NEAR SQUAW ROCK! SO THESE RIDERS COULD BE THE HORRORS WHO SLUGGED REBEL!



THE TRACKS END HERE! AND NONE ON THE OTHER SIDE! THEY MUST'VE TAKEN TO THE WATER TO HIDE THEIR TRAIL... WHICH IS SOMETHING HONEST MEN WOULDN'T DO!



I MUST BE ON THE RIGHT TRACK! SQUAW ROCK'S NOT TOO FAR BEYOND THAT BEND YONDER!



AND JUST AROUND THE BEND...

DON'T BE SO JUDGY,  
JOB! EVEN JOHNNY MACK  
BROWN CAN'T FOLLOW HOOFPRINTS  
IN WATER!



SAYS YOU! LOOK! THERE'S  
BROWN NOW! ROUNDIN' THE BEND!  
HOW IN BLAZES DID HE GET ON  
OUR TRAIL SO FAST?

I DON'T KNOW...  
GET UNDER THE  
TRESTLE! QUICK!  
HE'S TOO GOOD A  
SHOT TO SNAP LEAD  
WITH OUT IN THE  
OPEN!



TWO RIDERS!  
I WONDER IF THEY  
COULD BE THE  
PAIR  
I'M AFTER!



I RECKON  
THAT  
ANSWERS THE  
QUESTION!



LUCKILY, JOHNNY HEADS  
FOR COVER! THEN...

THEY'RE UNDER  
THE OLD TRESTLE!  
I'LL HAVE TO USE  
GOOD OLD-FASHIONED  
STRATEGY TO GET  
AT THEM!



**JOHNNY SENDS REBEL ON ALONE...**



KEEP GOING, REBEL!  
BUT NOT TOO FAR! I'LL  
BE NEEDING YOU AGAIN  
SOON, I HOPE!

**AND UNDER THE TRESTLE...**



GABE! I HEAR  
A HORSE UP  
ABOVE!

SO DO I! BROWN  
MUST BE CIRCLING  
AROUND TO THE OTHER  
SIDE! I'LL COVER IT!  
YOU STAY THERE!

**MEANTIME, JOHNNY  
WAS MOVED FAST...**



THERE'S ONE OF  
THEM! IF I CAN RING  
HIM ON THE FIRST TOSS,  
THE ODDS WILL BE EVEN!



**HEY!**

GABE!  
HELP!

ADD HAT!  
BROWN'S ROPED  
JOE!





REGAINING HIS BALANCE,  
JOHNNY YANKS WARD ON THE  
ROPE...



WHIRLING, JOHNNY MAKES A LIGHTNING DRAW...



HEN LEAPS FOR GABE...



BUCKS UNDER A WIDE SWING...



HEN UNLEASHES A PARALYZING LEFT...



SEVERAL DAYS LATER...



BY GLORY!  
THE GOLD OF THE  
ARIZONAS!

OH, GRANDP! ISN'T IT  
WONDERFUL NOW YOU  
CAN TAKE IT  
EASY  
IN YOUR OLD  
AGE!

WHICH MAKES  
FOR A HAPPY  
ENDING,  
ALL AROUND!

# JOHNNY MACK BROWN

in DANGEROUS DESTINATION

**A**S JOHNNY MACK BROWN BREAKS CAMP IN WESTERN COLORADO, THE SUNRISE STILLNESS IS SHATTERED BY HOOFBEATS. A MOMENT LATER, A QUARTET OF SHYSTER, HARKED AWAY THUNDER OVER A HERRY RISE...



I WONDER WHETHER THEY'RE COMING FROM TROUBLE OR HEADING FOR IT? AT ANY RATE, THEY LOOK SUSPICIOUS!



TRAILING 'EM MAY GIVE ME THE ANSWER! LET'S MOVE, REBEL!





**A FEW  
MINUTES  
LATER...**

**SHEEP! RECKON  
THE PICTURE'S  
CLEAR ENOUGH NOW!**



**LOOK, GAD!  
RIDERS!**

**YOU MEAN RAIDERS!  
THOSE MEN ARE  
BASKED!**



**TRY TO ONE,  
IT'S GANNETT,  
BOSS!**

**LET'S NOT TAKE ANY  
CHANCES!... DUCK FOR  
COVER... AND GET SET  
TO FIGHT!**



**REMEMBER, BOYS! DON'T WASTE BULLETS  
ON THE WOOLIES! WE'LL RIMROCK THEM  
AFTER WE TAKE CARE OF BUNTS AND  
HIS MEN!**





AND HE'S A SURE-NOUGH  
SUNSHARK, TOO!

I'M NO ROOKIE  
MYSELF! I'LL STILL  
SHOW HIM!



BUT AS DARK FIRES.



HE'S SMART, TOO!  
DUCKED THAT FIRST  
REAL NEAT-LIKE!

QUIT NAPPING  
AND THROW LEAD!



YI-I-I!

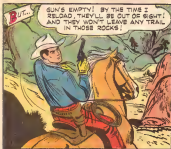
THAT DOES IT! WE'RE  
CLEARIN' OUT-COR NOW!



SCRATE! RATTLE  
YOUR HOCKS!  
WE'RE OUSTIN'!

BE RIGHT THERE,  
BOSS! AFTER...





SO HELP ME, I'LL GET 'EM FOR THIS IF I HAVE TO HIRE MY OWN GANG O' SUNGLINERS TO HELP ME!



THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY! I'LL GET THEM...LEGALLY!

A U.S. MARSHAL!



RIGHT! THE NAME IS JOHNNY MACK BROWN.

WINE'S CURLY CLARK! AN' I'M RIGHT PROUD TO MEET YOU! AFTER HEARIN' SO MUCH ABOUT YOU!



THAT GOES FOR ME, TOO! I'M RUFUS BLYTHE! AN' THIS IS MY DAUGHTER, JULIE!

HELLO!

HONDY! NEED ANY HELP STRIKING UP THAT WOUND?



NO, THANKS! IT'S ONLY A CREASE! BUT DAD WON'T DO ANY MORE SHOOTING FOR A FEW DAYS!

WHICH MEANS I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP, TRYIN' TO REACH PINON VALLEY BY THURSDAY!



SANNETT'S NOT THROUGH WITH ME! HE'LL BE BACK! HAYES WITH MORE SUNHANDS! IT'S A CINC H YOU AND CURLY CAN'T HOLD 'EM OFF ALONE!





I'LL RIDE WITH YOU! BUT TELL ME - WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GET TO PIGEON VALLEY BY DAY AFTER TOMORROW?

BECAUSE THE LAW SAYS I HAVE TO SPEND ONE DAY A MONTH ON MY HOMESTEAD CLAIM OR FORFEIT IT!



AND WE'VE BEEN GONE A MONTH, COME FRIDAY! SURE AS FATE, GANNETT'LL BE THERE ON THE DOT O' MIGHT TO JUMP MY CLAIM!

WHO IS THIS GANNETT? AND WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE HE STAGED THIS RAID?



I RECOGNIZED HIS VOICE! HE'S A CATTLEMAN! THINKS ALL PIGEON VALLEY'S HIS PRIVATE PROPERTY!

LET'S GET MOVING! MAYBE WE CAN CHANGE HIS MIND FOR HIM!



**A** LITTLE LATER...

BOSS! THAT GUNSHARK'S SIGN' ON WITH BLYTHE!

DON'T LET HIM WORRY YOU, JOE! THROVIN' LEAD ISN'T THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THAT OUTFIT!



HEY, BOSS! SCRATCHES GOT ME ALL FIXED UP! NOW WHAT?

HIGH-TAIL IT FOR THE RANCH! TELL PETE AND MAX TO HEAD FOR THE PIGEON VALLEY END O' BLACK ROCK CUT AN' WAIT THERE FOR US!



I HOPE TO STOP BLYTHE LONG BEFORE HE GETS TO THE CUT! BUT IF I DON'T, I'LL SURE AS BLAZES STOP HIM THERE!

**TOWARD SUNDOWN IN A NARROW VALLEY, JOHNNY SUDDENLY PULLS UP...**

JOHNNY!  
WHAT'S UP?

SMOKE AHEAD!  
THE GRASS  
IS ON FIRE!



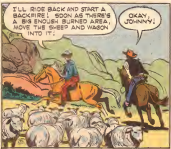
AND THERE ARE  
THE POLECATS WHO  
STARTED IT!

GANNETT'S  
GANG! NO  
MISTAKIN'  
THAT BLACK  
STALLION!



I'LL RIDE BACK AND START A  
BACKFIRE! SOON AS THERE'S  
A BIG ENOUGH BURNED AREA,  
MOVE THE SHEEP AND WAGON  
INTO IT.

OKAY,  
JOHNNY!



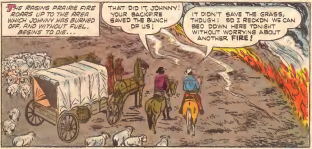
THIS OUGHT TO  
DO THE TRICK!



**THE BURNING AREA FIRE  
ROARS UP TO THE AREA  
WHICH JOHNNY HAS BURNED  
OFF, AND WITHOUT FUEL,  
BEGINS TO DIE...**

THAT DID IT, JOHNNY!  
YOUR BACKFIRE  
SAVED THE BUNCH  
OF US!

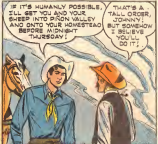
IT DIDN'T SAVE THE GRASS,  
THOUGH! SO I RECKON WE CAN  
BED DOWN HERE TONIGHT  
WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT  
ANOTHER FIRE!





RIGHT! BUT THERE'S STILL GANNETT! WE'LL STOP AT NOTHING TO GET MY LAND!

WELL, HE WON'T GET IT AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE AND KICKING!...



IF IT'S HUMANLY POSSIBLE, I'LL GET YOU AND YOUR SHEEP INTO PINON VALLEY AND ONTO YOUR HOMESTEAD BEFORE MIDNIGHT THURSDAY!

THAT'S A TALL ORDER, JOHNNY! BUT SOMEHOW I BELIEVE YOU'LL DO IT!



LATE THAT NIGHT...

HERE'S THE PLAN, BOYS! THE GIRL AN' BLYTHE ARE PROBABLY IN THE WAGON! JOE'LL HANDLE THEM! SCRATE AN' I WILL TAKE CARE O' CURLY AN' THAT GUNSHARK!

GANNETT AND HIS GANG MOVE SILENTLY TOWARD THE SLEEPING CAMP...



...BUT JOHNNY IS SLEEPING WITH HIS EAR AGAINST THE GROUND...





... AND THE MURLED HOOFBEATS  
ROUSE HIM...

RIDERS! HEADED  
THIS WAY!



CURLY! GET AWAY FROM  
THE FIRELIGHT! AND FILL  
YOUR HAND! COMPANY'S  
COMING!

WHAT -  
WHERE...?



OVER THERE! BEYOND  
THE WATER BARREL!

GANNETT  
AGAIN! THAT  
BUZZARD!



BOSS!  
THEY'VE  
SPOTTED  
US!

YOU'RE TELLIN' ME!  
THAT SHOT CAME CLOSE  
TO BLOWIN' OUT MY LAMP!  
SET YOUR SINS GOIN'!



JULIE! GET  
BACK IN THAT  
WAGON!

NO! I'M GOING TO EVEN  
THE SCORE WITH  
THOSE KILLERS!



SOUNDS LIKE YOU  
MADE THE GRADE!







DROP THOSE  
SUNS AND REACH  
FOR THE SKY!

CURLY! AN  
THE SUNSHARK  
-WASIN' A  
LAWMAN'S  
STAR!

BUT I  
JUST SAW  
'EM DOWN  
BELOW!



YOU SAW BLYTHE AND HIS DAUGHTER!  
ON OUR HORSES! WEARING OUR  
CLOTHES! WE RODE THE WAGON  
HORSES, AND HAVE BEEN WAITING  
HERE FOR YOU SINCE  
BEFORE DAWN!



NOW  
ELEVATE -  
AND FAST!

YOU'RE  
NOT TAKIN'  
ME IN!



JOHNNY RISKS A  
DERRING SHOT...



...AND IT PAYS OFF...

WHAT A SHOT!  
YOU KNOCKED  
THE HEEL CLEAN  
OFF HIS BOOT!

CLEAN OFF  
HIS FEET,  
YOU MEAN!



PART OF  
HERE  
ARE YOUR  
DUDES,  
CURLY! THANKS  
FOR LOANING  
THEM TO ME!

DON'T MENTION  
IT! TO O' DONE  
A HEAP SIGHT  
MORE'N THAT,  
TO SPOIL  
GANNETT'S  
GAME!



JOHNNY, RUNNIN'  
INTO YOU WAS THE  
LUCKIEST THING  
EVER HAPPENED  
TO US! WE'RE  
NIGHTY GRATEFUL!

SO AM I - TO YOU!  
FOR YOUR HELP IN  
PUTTIN' GANNETT  
AND HIS GANG WHERE  
THEY BELONG!



At the sound of the footsteps, the bearded man with wind-reddened eyes ducked behind the trunk of a giant pine. Here he waited tensely, fingers gripping his six-gun.

The footsteps came nearer . . . rounded a high hummock, and the bearded man choked back a chuckle. The maker of the footsteps was only a freckle-faced, snub-nosed boy. Around the boy's head was an Indian head-band, decorated with two eagle feathers.

The bearded man waited until the boy was well past the giant pine. Then, with the stealth of all hunted creatures, he followed the lad. Wherever the boy was headed, there was sure to be food, water, and shelter. Perhaps even money.

Matt Wheeler fought the gusty wind for control of the back door and slammed into the warm kitchen redolent with the spiciness of a hot apple pie which Laura was just taking from the oven.

"Blowin' up cold," said Matt, ringing the higher of two wall pegs with his battered hat. "Hecoon winter's on the way."

His daughter, pretty in a blue gingham dress, stiffened, but she took no other notice of his words. Setting the pie to one side, she began to stir some stew in a large iron pot.

Matt stifled a sigh and, stepping to the sink, started to wash up. His thoughts were on Laura. Why couldn't she be happy here? Goodness knows, she had not been happy back East. After her husband's death, she and Teddy had nearly starved before he'd found out and sent for them. True, they were not

wealthy now, but his diggin's provided enough and a little over. And, some day, maybe he'd hit a pocket of nuggets. He'd thought things would work out with Laura, but he guessed they never would. If she'd only try to adjust to make friends, Teddy had done both.

As if in answer to his thinking the boy's name, Matt heard a whistle and light, running footsteps. Then the kitchen door banged open and slammed shut behind a smiling, freckle-faced, snub-nosed boy.

"Teddy Marlin! Take off that horrible head-band!"

Laura's words banished Teddy's smile. Removing the headband, he hung it carefully on the lower wall peg.

"Outside!" snapped Laura.

"But the wind'll break the feathers," said Teddy, "and White Bear had an awfully hard time getting them for me."

"Outside!" Laura repeated.

Teddy flashed his grandfather a pleading look, but before Matt could speak, Laura turned on him.

"Don't say it, Pop!" Her voice and eyes were angry.

"I've gotta!" Matt declared. "Just 'cause you've got a hate on against the Indians ain't no sign Teddy's gotta feel the same way. Besides, this is his home. He's got a right to keep a present from his friend—"

"Don't call that dirty old Indian his 'friend!'" interrupted Laura.

"Mom!" Teddy protested. "White Bear's old — that's for sure. But he ain't dirty — not very dirty, anyway. And he's taught

me an awful lot. How not to get lost in the woods, and how to build different kinds of fires, and today—" He broke off as Laura stalked across the kitchen, snatched the headband from the peg, and headed for the back door.

As she reached the door, it opened. And the doorway framed the bearded man — and his gun.

"Stub Sloan?" gasped Matt.

The door closed behind the bearded man.

"How come you know my name, old-timer?"

"Saw your picture on a reward poster," replied Matt.

"So did I," said Teddy. "The printing underneath said you'd killed three men."

"Four," corrected Sloan with a wry grin. Pulling a chair to him, he sprawled down into it and flourished his gun at Laura. "Get back to your cookin', woman," he barked. "I'm powerful hungry."

Laura dropped the headband into Teddy's lap, saying, "Too bad your Indian 'friend' didn't teach you how to handle a situation like this."

"Maybe he did," said Teddy — under his breath.

Sloan glared at Matt. "Hand over your gun!" When Matt tossed the gun on the table, Sloan drew it to him with his left hand and tucked it in his belt. He kept his own gun trained on Laura who had returned to the stove. "Any more guns in the house?" Sloan included Teddy in the question.

Teddy nodded. "A rifle — in my room."

"Get it!" Sloan ordered. "But no tricks, or your Ma—"

"I understand," said Teddy, and left the room.

When Teddy returned, he had the rifle but not the headband. At Sloan's directing nod, he stood the rifle nearby, then went to the stove and looked up at Laura. "It's kinda chilly in the rest of the house, Mom. Hadn't I better make a fire in the front room?"

Laura turned to Sloan. "Any objections?"

The outlaw shook his head. "Not if he don't leave the house, but if he does. . ."

Teddy glanced at the gun trained on his mother. "No danger of that." He smiled at Laura — and again left the room.

Fifteen minutes passed during which the

wind died down: "snow store mornin'," thought Matt when he realized it. Laura dished up a plateful of stew which Sloan, using a spoon and his left hand, noisily consumed. Now and then, sounds came from the front room . . . the thud of falling wood . . . the clang of a poker.

Matt frowned puzzledly. What in terarnation was taking Teddy so long? "He's up to something," Matt told himself. "But hanged if I can figure out what!"

Five more minutes went by. Somewhere in the gathering darkness, an owl hooted. A moment later, Teddy returned to the kitchen to sit, tensely, on the corner stool.

Sloan did not seem to notice the boy's return. He consumed a second helping of stew and was starting on a huge wedge of apple pie when the back door flew open. Turning at the sound, Sloan found himself looking into the muzzles of three guns — each held by an Indian brave. Matt recognized the middle Indian; he was White Bear.

It seemed but seconds before Sloan was disarmed, roped, and led out by two of the braves, who would take him to town and the sheriff.

When the door closed on them, Laura looked at Teddy. "I don't understand, son."

Teddy grinned. "It's simple, Mom. Today, White Bear taught me some smoke signals. I said I'd practice them when I got home, so he said he'd be watching."

"When we see signal for help," White Bear said, "we come fast. Boy promise not send that signal unless in big trouble."

Matt grinned at Teddy. "That's why you took so long buildin' the fire!"

Nodding, Teddy looked apologetically at Laura. "I'm afraid I rained my jacket, Mom, slappin' it over the fire. But there's a big reward for Stub Sloan and —"

Laura's eyes shone with tears, but her voice was gay as she interrupted. "And after you divide it with White Bear, there'll be plenty left over for a dozen jackets!" She held out her hand to the old Indian. "I hope you'll let me be your friend, too, from now on, White Bear!"

Matt smiled to himself. He wondered what Stub Sloan would say if he knew how he'd helped things to work out for three people on the right side of the law.

# Ace meets his match...

**FIVE HOURS, SAM DONLEY,  
AGENT OF INLAND RAILROAD  
STATION, HAS AN UNWELCOME  
CALLER...**

LISTEN OLD-TIMER! IF YOU DON'T  
QUIT STALLIN' AN' OPEN THAT SAFE...

I'M N-NOT STALLING!  
YOUR S-GUN MAKES ME  
SO NERVOUS, I C-CAN  
HARDLY WORK  
THE DIAL!



TH-THERE!  
IT'S OPEN!

OKAY! DRAG OUT THE  
STRONGBOX!



**BUT SAM REACHES FOR A GUN INSTEAD!**



YOU BLASTED SOBOWINDER!  
I AINT NERVOUS NOW!

**TWO GUNS BLAZE, BUT ONLY ONE BULLET  
FINDS ITS MARK...**



THOSE SHOTS'LL BRING THE WHOLE TOWN! BUT I'M NOT LEAVIN' WITHOUT THIS CASH!



SHERIFF: WHAT'S ALL THE SHOOTIN' ABOUT?

DON'T KNOW, JOE! THE SHOTS SOUNDED LIKE THEY CAME FROM THE STATION!



THEY SURE DID! LOOK! A MASKED HONKERS!

AND HE'S CARRYING A STRONGBOX! ROLL YOUR GUNS, MEN! IT'S A HOLDUP!



WANG! IT! MISSED HIM!



JOE! YOU CHECK ON SAM! THE REST OF YOU MOUNT YOUR HORSES FAST!



MOMENTS LATER...

SHERIFF! SAM'S NOT HURT TOO BAD! HE'LL BE OKAY!

GOOD! NOW, LET'S MOVE, MEN! THAT POLICEBOAT'S HEADED FOR MULEBACK RIDGE!



THEY'RE GAININ'  
ON ME! GOTTA  
GET UNDER COVER!



NOT MUCH COVER HERE  
BUT... THAT BREAK IN  
THE ROCKS! IT LOOKS  
WIDE ENOUGH FOR ME  
AN' THIS CAYUSE!



IT'S A TIGHT SQUEEZE! BUT  
GOD A NOOSE!



THERE THEY GO,  
THE CROCKHEADS!  
RECKON NOBODY  
IN THIS NECK O'  
THE WOODS CAN  
GET THE BETTER  
OF ACE  
JENNER!



LOOKS LIKE THIS PASSAGE  
GOES THROUGH TO THE OTHER  
SIDE O' THE RIDGE! GUESS  
I'LL FIND OUT FOR SURE!



A RANCH! I'LL GET GRUB  
AN' A FRESH MOUNT THERE...  
THEN HEAD FOR  
THE BORDER!





**LITTLE LATER...**



Y'KNOW, DAVE, YOUR PA ISN'T GONNA LIKE YOU AN' TRUDY BEN' LEFT HERE ALONE!

IT'LL ONLY BE TILL THE BOYS COME IN FROM THE RANGE, TOBY! AND WONG'S REAL SICK! HE'S GOT TO GET TO THE DOCTOR!



OOOH!... WONG VELLY ILL... NOT TALK... GO!

DON'T WORRY, TOBY! I'LL PROTECT US WITH MY TRUSTY SLINGSHOT! I'M GETTING REAL GOOD WITH IT!



WHAT A SETUP! ONLY TWO KIDS TO HANDLE!

...GEE?

???



DOSSONIT, TRUDY! DAD MUST'VE BEEN LUCK TO GIVE YOU THAT SLINGSHOT!

BUT I'M NOT OLD ENOUGH FOR A GUN!



AND AS I'M GONNA TO BE A SHERIFF WHEN I GROW UP, MAYBE HE FIGURED IT WOULD HELP ME DEVELOP MY AIM!



HORSEFEATHERS! WHO EVER HEARD OF A WOMAN SHERIFF?

THEY WILL - WHEN I'M BIG! CRON! LET'S GET SOME LUNCH!

**FEW MINUTES LATER...**

**DAVE! LOOK!  
A REAL LIVE  
SINGSINGER!**

**WHO ARE YOU,  
MISTER? AND  
WHAT DO  
YOU WANT?**

**MY NAME DON'T MATTER!  
JUST HAND OVER SOME  
FOOD, AN' THAT BLAZE-  
FACED BAY IN THE  
CORRAL!**

**SINGER? Y'  
HE'S MY  
HORSE!  
YOU CAN'T  
TAKE HIM!**

**THIS SHOOTIN' IRON SAYS I CAN...  
AN' WILL, SISTER! NOW,  
SING ME SOME O' THAT GRUB!**

**TAKE IT ALL! -  
DAVE!  
SOCK HIM!**

**WHOOPEE!  
RIGHT IN THE  
BREADBASKET!**

**OOOPE!**

**DAVE'S AWFUL GOOD WITH HIS  
FISTS! BUT HE'S NO MATCH  
FOR THAT COYOTE!**

SO I RECKON I'LL HAVE TO LEND HIM A HAND!



THEN GET THE SKILLET! HURRY! I'M RUNNING OUT OF STONES!

YOW!



LATER...

I'M FLABBERGASTED! YOU KIDS CAPTURING ACE JENNER - WANTED IN SIX STATES - WITH BARE FISTS, A SLINGSHOT, AND AN IRON SKILLET!

AND BUNTY OF TEAMWORK!



YEAH, AN', BELIEVE ME, IF YOU'RE EVER SHERIFF I'LL STEER CLEAR OF YOUR TERRITORY!

OH, I'LL MAKE IT ALL RIGHT! I CAN'T MISS WITH A SHERIFF FOR MY DAD!





# Old Bill Williams

## Plainsman, Preacher and Scout

**N**OBODY IS SURE WHERE OLD BILL CAME FROM AND HIS PAST IS JUST AS MUCH OF A MYSTERY. HE WAS AT ONE TIME A CIRCUIT RIDING PREACHER IN MISSOURI, BUT QUIT THE MINISTRY AND WENT TO LIVE AMONG THE INDIANS OF THE OSAGE NATION. LATER HE DRIFTED WESTWARD INTO NEW MEXICO AND COLORADO AND JOINED THE UTEB. DURING THE SUCCESSING YEARS BILL TRAPPED FOR BEAVER ALL ALONG THE RIVERS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN AREA AND THEN DRIFTED INTO THE HIGH PLATEAU COUNTRY OF NORTHERN ARIZONA. FOR MONTHS ON END OLD BILL WOULD TEND HIS TRAPS, THEN WITH THREE OR FOUR

THOUSAND DOLLARS' WORTH OF FELTS IN HIS PACK, HE WOULD RETURN TO TAGS, AND CONVERT HIS TAKE INTO CASH. THERE HE WOULD STAY UNTIL HE WAS BROKE. FEW MEN KNOW THE MOUNTAINS AS WELL AS

BILL. GENERAL FREMONT CHOSE HIM AS HIS GUIDE WHEN HE SET OUT TO CROSS THE SANGRE DE CRISTO MOUNTAINS. CAUGHT IN AN EARLY SNOWFALL, THE PARTY ALMOST PERISHED. FREMONT UNJUSTLY BLAMED BILL FOR THE FAILURE. OLD BILL WAS SORELY HURT. HE LEFT THE COUNTRY AND DISAPPEARED. NOBODY KNOWS WHERE HE WENT. HE NEVER CAME BACK. BUT ARIZONA REMEMBERED. THEY NAMED A MOUNTAIN, A RIVER AND A TOWN AFTER HIM.



