

DELL
COMIC
10¢

1953 - April

Gene Autry's

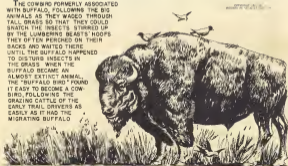


Champion



THE COWBIRD

THE COWBIRD FORMERLY ASSOCIATED WITH BUFFALO, FOLLOWING THE BIG ANIMALS AS THEY WAGED THROUGH TALL GRASS SO THAT THEY COULD SNATCH THE INSECTS STIRRED UP BY THE LUMBERING BEASTS' HOOPS. THEY OFTEN PERCHED ON THEIR BACKS AND WAITED THERE UNTIL THE BUFFALO HAPPENED TO DISTURB INSECTS IN THE GRASS. WHEN THE BUFFALO BECAME AN ALMOST EXTINCT ANIMAL, THE "BUFFALO BIRD" FOUND IT EASY TO BECOME A COWBIRD, FOLLOWING THE GRAZING CATTLE OF THE EARLY TRAIL DRIVERS AS EASILY AS IT HAD THE MIGRATING BUFFALO.



BUT THE STRANGEST THING ABOUT THIS UNIQUE BIRD IS THE FACT THAT IT NEVER BUILDS NESTS. WHEN AN EGG IS Laid, IT IS DEPOSITED IN THE NEST OF SOME OTHER KIND OF BIRD. WHEN THE UNSUSPECTING VICTIM RETURNS HOME, SHE NEVER SEEMS TO RESENT THE SUBSTITUTION. THE EGG IS DULY HATCHED AND THEN THE TROUBLE BEGINS! THE LITTLE COWBIRD ALWAYS GROWS MUCH FASTER THAN THE FOSTER PARENT'S OWN BABIES AND SOON HE IS RULER OF THE ROOST, SHOULDERING THE OTHER YOUNG BIRDS ASIDE WHEN THE PARENT RETURNS TO THE NEST WITH A WORM OR OTHER FOOD. THE COWBIRD ACTUALLY STARVES THE OTHER YOUNG BIRDS TO DEATH WITH HIS GREEDY SNATCHING AFTER FOOD OR FORCES THEM OUT OF THE NEST BECAUSE OF HIS LARGER SIZE. IT IS SAID THAT THE LIVES OF TWO TO FIVE OTHER BIRDS ARE DESTROYED FOR EVERY COWBIRD.

CHAMP STRIKES GOLD



I'VE WANTED TO DO IT FOR WEEKS—
EVER SINCE I STARTED COMING
DOWN HERE TO WATCH THE
HORSES! ARE THEY
ALL YOURS?

NO! UNCLE
SMOKY'S! HE
OWNS THIS
SPREAD. BY
THE WAY, I'M
RICKY WEST!

HOWDY? I'M JAMEY! I USED TO
LIVE IN AN ORPHANAGE BUT MISTER
BLAKE ADOPTED ME LAST MONTH!
I SURE LIKE IT OUT IN THE
COUNTRY!



ONLY I DO WISH WE
HAD A HORSE! POP
BLAKE SAYS HE'LL
BUY ME ONE SOON
AS HE STRIKES
IT RICH!

THEN HERE'S
HOPING HE
DOES IT
REAL
SOON!

MEANWHILE, HOW ABOUT
RIDING TO THE HOUSE
WITH ME? IT'S
NEARLY NOON AND
I'M STARVED!

THANKS! I'D
LIKE THAT!
CAN I RIDE
THE COLT?



BETTER NOT! HE ISN'T BROKEN! CHAMP'LL
CARRY DOUBLE! C'M ON! I'LL BOOST
YOU UP!

JAMEY! IS THIS THE
WONDER HORSE
FOLKS TALK
ABOUT?

YES! HE'S THE
SMARTEST
HORSE IN THE
WORLD!





A FRIENDSHIP RIPENS WITH THE PASSING WEEKS...

"FIP-PEET!
FASTER,
CALICO!"

"YOU'RE GETTING TO BE A
REGULAR BRONCOBUSTER,
JAMEY!"



AS RICKY AND JAMEY FISH MOUNTAIN STREAMS...

"GOSH, JAMEY! THAT'S A
WHOPPER! YOU'RE SOME
FISHER MAN!"



HUNT GOTTORTAILS AND COYOTES...

"SOUNDS LIKE
REBEL'S FLUSHED
A RABBIT!"

"I HOPE SO! I'M GOING
TO TRY OUT THE
RIFLE YOUR UNCLE
GAVE ME!"



...AND RIDE LINE, CHECKING FOR FENCE BREAKS.

"I TRIED TO TALK POP INTO
GETTING A RANCH JOB! BUT
HE'S GOT GOLD FEVER
TOO BAD!"

"THE ONLY CURE
FOR THAT IS
HITTING
PAY DIRT!"



"HE THINKS THERE'S A LODE
NEAR OWL CREEK! HE'S
FOUND A COUPLE OF PAIR-
SIZED NUGGETS UP
THERE LATELY!"

"GOSH, JAMEY!
DON'T SPREAD
THAT NEWS
AROUND!"



"MORE THAN ONE HOMBRE AROUND HERE
WOULDN'T STOP AT MURDER TO MAKE
A REAL STRIKE!"



I KNOW, POP WARNED ME! BUT HE SAID I COULD TELL YOU!

THAT MAKES ME REAL PROUD! NOW, PROO THAT PONY! WE'RE JOY! BUE HOME BEFORE SUNDOWN!



THE NEXT MORNING

YOU-HOO-OOD! JAMEY!



THAT'S FUNNY! HE USUALLY COMES OUT ON THE BOUNCE! THAT SMORE MEANS HE'S HOME! RUN AHEAD, REBEL--- FETCH HIM!



GEE, SOMETHING MUST BE MIGHTY WRONG FOR YOU TO ACT LIKE THAT, REBEL!



JAMEY! JAMEY! WHERE ARE YOU?



GOOD GRIEF!





I DON'T KNOW!
I GUESS I FAINTED
OR SOMETHING!

HMMH
WHERE'S
YOUR POP
NOW?



UP BY OWL CREEK? HE
LEFT EARLY THIS MORNING!
SEE, I HOPE AN'S OKAY!
THAT MAN MIGHT'VE---

DON'T BORROW
TROUBLE,
JAMEY! WE'LL
RISE UP AND
SEE!



SUDDENLY, FROM
ACROSS THE
RAVINE ...

JAMEY!
HELP!
HELP!

IT'S POP!



NICKY! THAT'S HIM!
HE'LL HURT POP!
HURRY!

WATCH IT, JAMEY!
REMEMBER! HE'S
GOT A GUN!

BUT POP HAIN'T! HE FORGOT HIS
THIS MORNING! SO IF I DRAW
THAT COYOTE'S FIRE, MAYBE
POP CAN GET AWAY!







HANG ON TIGHT, JAMEY! EASY, CHAMP! WE'VE GOT TO SAVE HIM!

WHEE-
UN-UN!



RICKY! HURRY!
I CAN'T HOLD ON
TOD LONG!

DON'T TALK! SAVE
YOUR STRENGTH!



YOU'LL HAVE TO HELP ME, CHAMP!
JAMEY'S TOD BIG FOR ME TO
LIFT BY MYSELF!



MY HANDS 'RE
GETTING
NUMB!

IT WON'T BE LONG
NOW, JAMEY!



DEAR LORD, PLEASE HELP US!
DON'T LET JAMEY FALL!











A LITTLE LATER.

NOTHIN' LIKE JAVA TO PERK A BODY UP! ASHTON! I'M READY TO HEAD FOR TOWN ANY TIME YOU ARE!

NO NEED TO HURRY! BESIDES, WE'RE ALL REAL ANXIOUS TO HEAR POOP STORY!



"THE FIRST TIME SCUDDER'S TRAIL AN' MINE CROSSED WAS ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO."

HAVIN' ANY LUCK, MISTER?

NOTHIN' TO BRAG ABOUT! NO MATTER HOW MANY HOURS I PUT IN, I CAN'T SEEM TO MAKE MORE THAN COFFEE - AN' BEANS MONEY!



"NEXT TIME, I HAD TO PULL MY GUN ON HIM..."

DON'T TOUCH THAT POKE, SCUDDER! AN' GET GOIN' BEFORE I CREASE YOUR SKULL!



"ONE DAY, HE TRIED TO SCARE ME WITH A POT SHOT..."

I SEE YOU, SCUDDER! YOU DIRTY BUSHWHACKER!



"HE HUSTA TRAILED ME TO MY CABIN AN' WAITED FOR ME TO LEAVE THIS MORNING..."

S'LONG, JANEY! SEE YOU TONIGHT!

RIGHT? AN' WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THIS'LL BE OUR LUCKY DAY!



YOU KNOW THE REST! THANK GOODNESS, NOBODY GOT REAL BAD HURT! BUT IT'D O' BEEN NO BREAKFAST FOREVER FOR ME IF RICKY HADN'T COME BY WITH CHAMP AN' REBEL!





RICKY'S PALS COME THROUGH



IT IS KIND OF
ROUGH ON LUKE
ROBEY, UNCLE
SMOKY, HAVING
TO MOVE ALL
THE TIME!

HUMPH! HE WOULDN'T
AWAY TO---IF HE'D OUST
"SQUATTIN'" ON OTHER
FOLKS' PROPERTY AND
GET SOME LAND
OF HIS OWN!

I SHOULD THINK HE AND
HIS SNOTHER WOULD
PART THEIR OWN LAND
AND A BETTER HOUSE
THAN THAT SHACK
THEY'VE GOT!

RIGHT, RICKY!
THERE'S PLENTY
OF LAND AROUND
HERE OPEN FOR
HOMESTEADIN'!



BUT LUKE AND FRANK ARE
TOO DOBBERE LAZY AND
SHIFTLESS! THEY DON'T
WANT TO WORK! AND IT
TAKES PLENTY OF ELBOW
GREASE TO HOMESTEAD!

A FEW MILES FURTHER ON

I'LL GET OFF HERE, UNCLE
SMOKY! I WANT TO FIND
CHAMP! HAVEN'T SEEN
HIM IN SEVERAL DAYS!

SOON AS YOU FIND HIM,
HEAD FOR HOME! I'LL
HAVE SUPPER WAITIN'!
IT'S NOP'EE'S
NIGHT OFF, YOU
KNOW!



SO! WHEN SMOKY REACHES THE RANCH

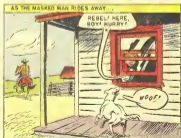
THIS IS A REWARD, CHAMP,
FOR GETTING US HERE AHEAD
OF UNCLE SMOKY!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IF
YOU WERE RIDIN' CHAMP,
YOU'D GET HERE FIRST!

WHEE-HE-HE!



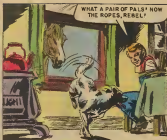








COME ON, REBEL!
THROUGH THE
WINDOW!



WHAT A PAIR OF PALS!
HOW
THE ROPES, REBEL!



"HE MORE YANK OUGHT TO DO IT, REBEL!"
--- AH! THAT DID IT!



SHORTLY...

NOW, BOYS! WHAT DO
YOU SAY WE DO AFTER
THAT LOW-DOWN HORSE
THIEF?

WHUMPH!

ARR-ROO!



MEANWHILE, AT THE GOODE RANCH...

... I WARNED JESS, SHERIFF! BUT HE
SAID LUKE'S ALWAYS BLOWIN' A FUSE---
AND NOTHIN' EVER COMES OF IT!

IT DOESN'T! THAT'S WHY I'M
ALMOST SURE IT WASN'T LUKE WHO
DRYSULCHED ME!

WE'LL FIND OUT SOON AS WE GET HIM AND CHECK HIS GUN AGAINST THE BULLET DOC TOOK OUT OF YOU!



HMMM... LOOKS LIKE THE ROBEY BROTHERS ARE HOME! RECKON I'LL SNEAK DOWN! MAYBE I CAN FIND OUT IF LUKE REALLY DID SHOOT MISTER GOOSE!



BUT, LUKE, YOU WOULDN'T REALLY DO ANYTHING DIRTY TO GET EVEN WITH JESS!



"COURSE NOT! HE OWNS THIS LAND! HE'S GOT A RIGHT TO PUT US OFF! BESIDES, I LIKE HIM!

I JUST HOPED IF I GOT MAD ENOUGH, JESS'D CHANGE HIS MIND! HE DON'T--- SO I RECKON WE BETTER GET READY TO MOVE ON!



GOSE! I'VE GOT TO FIND THAT POSSE PRONTO! AND TELL THEM LUKE ISN'T GUILTY!



TWO-TO-ONE, THEY'VE LEFT DODGE'S BY NOW! BUT IF WE HEAD OVER THE RIDGE, WE MIGHT RUN INTO THEM!



A LITTLE LATER—ON THE RIDGE...

A RIDER? COME! THIS WAY! I'LL HIDE IN THE BUSHES AN' MAYBE HE'LL GO ON BY!



BUT REBEL'S KLEN HOSE GETS THE SCENT...

WHAT'S UP, REBEL? CORNERED A COTTONTAIL?

RRR-RUFF!



THE HORSE THIEF? YOU THROWING DOWN ON ME IS GETTING TO BE A HABIT!

PIPE DOWN! AN' STAND UP! THE DOG'S HARDLY SCRATCHED!



CHAMP! GET UNCLE SMOKEY! MOVE!

WAAA—OOO!

WHAT A LAUGH! SENDING A HORSE FOR HELP! HA-HA!

BEFORE THIS DAY'S OVER, MISTER, YOU'RE LIABLE TO BE LAUGHING OUT OF THE OTHER SIDE OF YOUR MOUTH!



THAT'S WHAT I TOLD JESS DODGE
THREE YEARS AGO WHEN HE TESTI-
FIED AGAINST ME AN' -- --

HOLY SMOKE!
YOU'RE THE
HOMRE
WHO TRIED
TO KILL HIM!

TRIED? THEN HE'S NOT DEAD! I
THOUGHT MY SHOT WAS RIGHT!
RECKON I'M JUST AS GLAD! AFTER
ALL, KILLIN'S TOO EASY FOR HIM!



IF I'D KNOWN YOU WERE GOIN' TO KEEP
POPPIN' UP, I'D HAVE BROUGHT MORE
ROPE! WELL, THIS BELT'LL HOLD
YOU FOR A WHILE!



MEANTIME, MY GUN BELT
CAN PINCH 'NIT AN' -- --

GET HIM,
REBEL!



WHAT THE -- --

LET HIM GO, REBEL!
RUN FOR HELP! QUICK!
BEFORE HE GETS UP!

GET HIM,
REBEL!



REBEL DOES NOT HAVE TO BE TOLD TWICE

I'LL STOP YOU,
YOU
FOUR-LEGGED
TORNADO!

RUN, REBEL!

BANG!
BLAM!





NO USE TRYIN' TO CATCH THAT STREAK OF LIGHTNIN'! GUESS I'LL HEAD FOR GODGE'S PLACE AN' DO WHAT I PLANNED ON GOIN' IN THE FIRST PLACE!



A BIT LATER

HA-HA! IT'LL SURE BREAK GODGE'S HEART AN' POCKETBOOK WHEN HIS STEERS LAP UP FOGG'S STUFF! IT'S A FAIR EXCHANGE---THREE YEARS IN PRISON FOR A HERO OF DEAD CATTLE!



A POSSE---SURE AS SHOOTIN'! GUESS THAT RIO'LL KEEP TILL I SEE WHAT THEY ARE UP TO!



YOU'RE NOT TAKIN' ME' IN, SHERIFF! I DIDN'T SHOOT ANYBODY---INCLUDIN' JESS GODGE!

THEN YOU'VE GOT NOTHIN' TO FEAR, LUCE! BETTER COME PEACEABLE!



FRANK! DON'T DO THAT!

MR. I JUST SHOT OVER THEIR HEADS TO GIVE US TIME TO BREATHE! LOOK! THEY'RE RUNNIN' FOR COVER!



MAN! THAT SHOT WAS TOO NIGH! LIKE HE WAS WARNIN' US TO KEEP OUR DISTANCE!

QUICK FOR COVER! LOOKS LIKE LUCE WANTS TO FIGHT IT OUT!

THE OUTLAW GETS AN IDEA.

SO THEY THINK FRANK BLOKE SHOT
GODDE! WHAT A BREAK FOR ME!
I'LL DRAW THEIR FIRE!



WHAT THE
SAM HELL?
WHO ---

UP THERE, SMOKY! AND
FRANK SHOT WAS NO
WARRIN'! THAT HONOR
IS IN DEAD EARNST!



TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS TEMPORARY
DISTRACTION, THE ROBEYS MAKE A
BREAK FOR IT, BUT...

DOOM!
MY
LEGS!

KEEP RIDIN', FRANK!
ONCE WE MAKE THE
RIDGE---



I CAN'T, LUKE!
YOU GO ON!
THEY'VE GOT
NOTHIN' ON ME!

OKAY! BUT IT DON'T
SEEM RIGHT!



AS LUKE GAINS THE RIDGE...

WHAT
THE---

EASY PARDNER! I'M THE
GUY WHO FIRED DOWN
AT THE POSSE. THOUGHT
I'D SHOW YOU A GOOD
PLACE TO HOLE UP!



THANKS! CAN'T FIGURE WHY
YOU'RE DOIN' THIS! BUT---
LEAD THE WAY!



MEANWHILE AT THE FLYING...

WHUCKER-
EE-EE!



FINDING NO ONE THERE...



CHAMP DECIDES TO RETURN TO RISKY.



SUDDENLY, A STRANGE SMELL STOPS HIM



REALIZING SOMETHING IS WRONG.



HE TRIES TO WARN THE APPROACHING CATTLE...



BUT THE STOCKERS WANT WATER.



MEANWHILE, THE POSSE HAS LOST THE TRAIL.

WE'LL GET FRESH HORSES AT YOUR SPREAD, SMOKY! AND---

GREAT SCOTTY! HERE COMES REBEL! THE WAY HE'S TRAVELIN', *SMOKY*'S WRONG!



HE'S BEEN HURT! LOOKS LIKE A BULLET GRAZED HIM! I'LL GIVE DOGS RICKY'S IN TROUBLE!

THEN WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR? REBEL WILL TAKE US TO HIM!



MAYBE THEY MET UP WITH LURE? BUT I NEVER FIGURED HE'D SHOOT A DOG OR HARM A KID!

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT A MAN'LL DO, SMOKY, WHEN HE'S MAD!



IN THE MEANTIME

RICKY WEST! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE? AN' WHAT'S THE IDEA OF THE GUN, MISTERY?

I AIM TO TIE YOU AN THIS LITTLE FLEA UP TOGETHER--- NICE AN' DOZY--- LIKE!



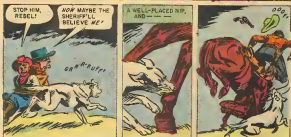
I'LL TURN YOU LOOSE IN THE MORNIN', BOBEY--- NEAR TOWN WHERE THEY'LL BE SURE TO PICK YOU UP! AND SLAP YOU IN JAIL FOR SHOOTIN' DOGS AN' POISONIN' HIS CATTLE!

WHAT ABOUT THE KID?



I'M KEEPIN' HIM AROUND IN CASE SOMETHING GOES HAYWIRE! HE'LL MAKE A GOOD NOSTAGE!





QUICKLY, RICKY TELLS HIS STORY...

AND BADSON WAS GOING TO LET LUKE TAKE THE BLAME FOR POISONING THE NEW HERD, TOO!

GREAT GRIEF! WE'D BETTER GET TO THAT WATER HOLE FAST!

RIGHT, SMOKEY!



mighty good work, rebel! but you can't rest yet! come on!

arf! arf!



I sent Champ for you, Uncle Smoky! Did you see him?

No!— Good heavens! I hope he didn't get over on Jess' new range and take a drink of that poisoned water!

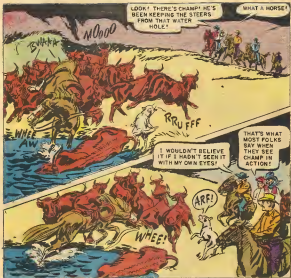


At the water hole, Champ is still putting up a gallant fight.



Suddenly, he hears a familiar bark.





LOOK! THERE'S CHAMP! HE'S BEEN KEEPING THE STEERS FROM THAT WATER HOLE!

WHAT A HORSE!

WHEE AW

RRUFF

WHEE AW

I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT IF I HADN'T SEEN IT WITH MY OWN EYES!

THAT'S WHAT MOST FOLKS SAY WHEN THEY SEE CHAMP IN ACTION!

ARF!

WHEE!



WE'LL GET THESE STEERS TO ANOTHER PASTURE! COME ON, REBEL! YOU CAN HELP!

I'LL TAKE CHAMP HOME! HE'S SURE EARNED A REST!



YOU WERE WONDERFUL, CHAMP! WE'LL JUST MOSEY ALONG SO'S YOU CAN TAKE IT EASY!

WHEE AW

LATER, IN TOWN...

YOU'RE FREE TO GO NOW, FRANK! BUT NEXT TIME, DON'T GO SHOOTIN' AT A POSSE--- EVEN OVER THEIR HEADS!

THERE WON'T BE A NEXT TIME, SHERIFF! DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT---EXCEPT I WAS SCARED!

WELL! CHAMP AND REBEL MADE A NEW MAN OF ME! RECKON WE AREN'T TOO OLD TO WRESTLE WITH A HOMESTEAD, ER, FRANK?

RECKON NOT! LET'S TRY IT ANYWAY!

NEXT MORNING, AT THE DODGE RANCH...

--- SO IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR REBEL AND CHAMP, JESS, THIS STORY'D HAVE HAD A MIGHTY DIFFERENT ENDIN'!

I KNOW! AND I'M SURE GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU!

HOWDY, LUME! COME ON IN!

I JUST WANTED TO SAY I'M SORRY FOR CAUSIN' SUCH A RUCKUS! FRANK & ME ARE MOVIN' ON TODAY!

NO NEED TO DO THAT, LUKE! I'VE DECIDED YOU BOYS CAN HOMESTEAD THAT SECTION IF YOU'VE A MIND TO! SHERIFF MELLISH TELLS ME YOU ARE AWIN' TO WORK THE LAND!

RIGHT! IT'S ABOUT TIME WE DID SOMETHIN' BESIDES "SQUAT"!

BUT WE'D LIKE MIGHTY WELL TO GIVE OUR STOCK TO YOU, RICKY! ON ACCOUNT OF YOU'RE THE "PAPPY" OF THOSE TWO WONDER ANIMALS! I'D BE A DEAD SACK NOW, EXCEPT FOR THEM!

OH, NO! I COULDN'T--

HOLD ON, LUKE! I'VE GOT SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO SAY ABOUT THAT!



THAT STOCK CHAMP AND REBEL SAVED FOR ME IS WORTH PLENTY OF MONEY! SO I'M GIVIN' RICKY A BIG REWARD!

GOLLY! THANKS, MISTER DODGE!



LATER--

GOSH, UNCLE SMOKY! CHAMP AND REBEL DESERVE MEDALS FOR THEIR DAY'S WORK!

I RECKON THEY'LL SETTLE FOR SOME APPLES AND A STEAK! MEDALS WOULD BE MIGHTY HARD TO DIGEST!

