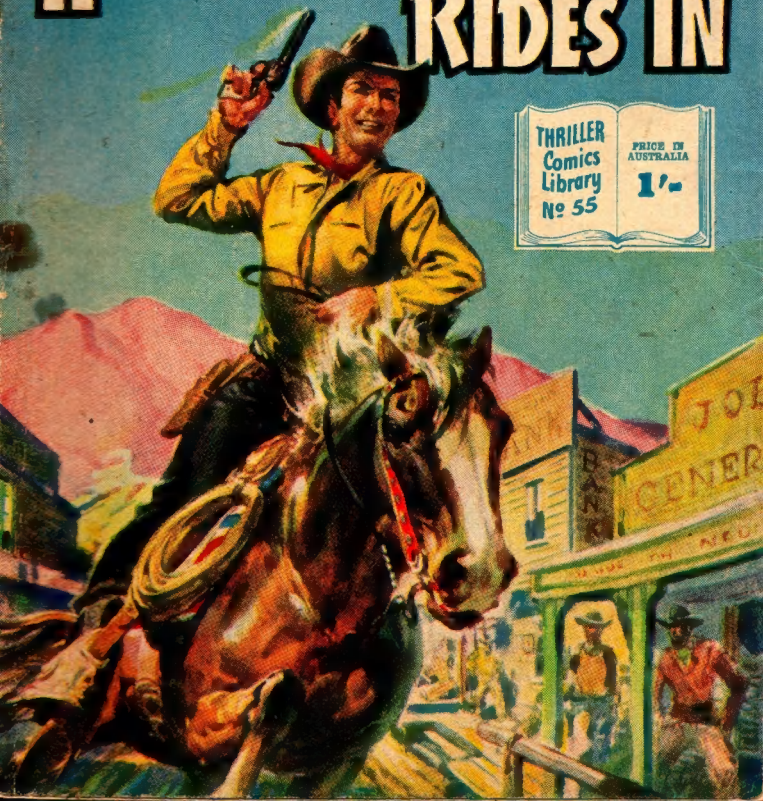


TOLD IN PICTURES

HOPALONG CASSIDY RIDES IN



Thriller Comics No. 56

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HOPALONG CASSIDY RIDES IN

Based on the Novel "The Coming of Cassidy" By
CLARENCE E. MULFORD

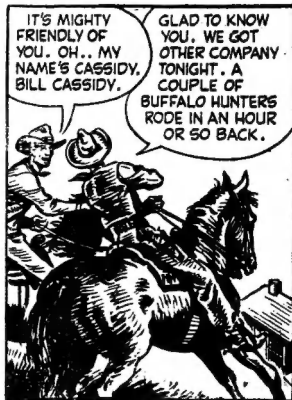
BILL CASSIDY RODE STEADILY NORTH ACROSS WILD, RUGGED COUNTRY. FOR THREE DAYS HE HAD SEEN NO HUMAN BEING... ONLY THE GREY WOLF, THE BUFFALO, THE ANTELOPE AND THE PRAIRIE DOG. AS BILL DROPPED DOWN TOWARDS SNAKE CREEK, THE BARREN GROUND LEVELLED TO A ROLLING, FERTILE PLAIN.

WITH DUSK FALLING, HE CAST ABOUT FOR A GOOD SPOT TO CAMP FOR THE NIGHT.

HOWDY!
YOU' PLUMB SURPRISED
ME! I DIDN'T RECKON TO
MEET ANY COWPOKES
IN THIS STRETCH OF
COUNTRY!

HOWDY,
STRANGER!







BUT BILL CASSIDY SMILED, AND SHOOK HIS RED HEAD. SOON AFTER DAWN NEXT DAY, HE RODE ON HIS WAY.

A black and white illustration of a cowboy, Bill Cassidy, riding a horse. He is wearing a cowboy hat, a light-colored shirt, and dark pants with a belt. He is looking back over his shoulder. The background shows a rocky, hilly landscape with a large tree on the right.

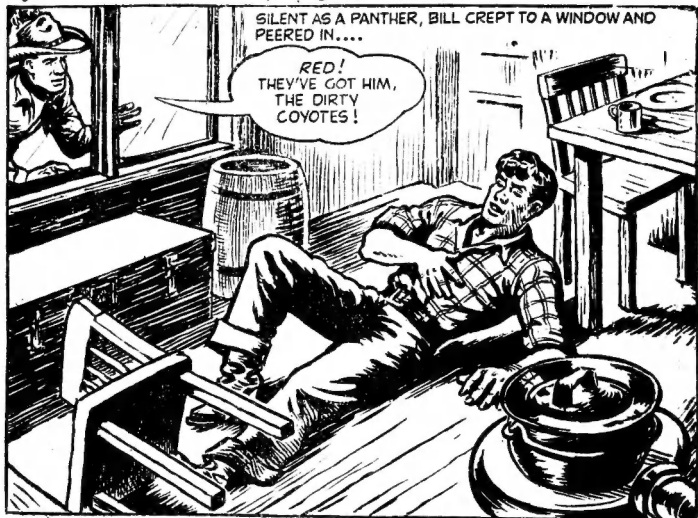
I GOT A QUEER
TINGLING IN MY BACK
THAT TELLS ME WE'RE
BEING TAILED, WHITE EYE.
NOW THAT AIN'T
FRIENDLY!

IN THE SHELTER OF THE FOOTHILLS, BILL TURNED OFF THE TRAIL AND WAITED.

A black and white illustration of Bill Cassidy crouching in a rocky, hilly area. He is looking towards the right. In the background, there are mountains and a group of people on horseback.

HM! THE BUFFALO
HUNTERS! NOW WHY
SHOULD THEY BE
TAILING ME? RECKON
WE'LL DO SOME
BACK-TRACKING,
WHITE EYE!





THE BUFFALO HUNTER HAD
ENTERED NOISELESSLY...
BUT AS HE STRUCK,
BILL CASSIDY SEIZED
HIS KNIFE ARM....



... AND THREW THE CROOK
OVER HIS SHOULDER....



THE BUFFALO HUNTER WAS
NO MEAN OPPONENT!



YOU'VE
ASKED FOR
IT, MISTER!



BY THE GREAT GREEN RATTLER! THIS
FELLER CASSIDY'S FORKED LIGHTNING
WITH A GUN!



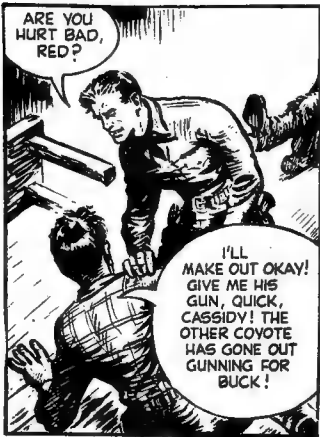
BILL CASSIDY LEAPED IN AND CRASHED A MIGHTY LEFT TO THE FELLOW'S JAW.

AAAAGH!

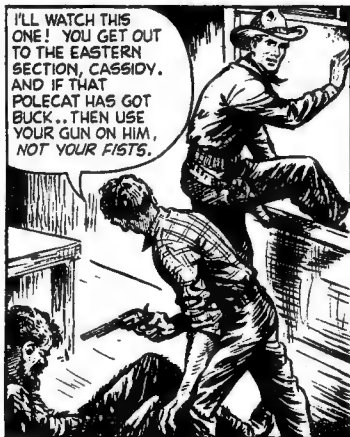
A black and white comic panel showing a man in a light-colored shirt and dark pants (Bill Cassidy) leaping forward and punching a bearded man in a dark, patterned shirt. The bearded man is recoiling with his head back and mouth open in pain. The background shows a simple wooden door.

ARE YOU HURT BAD, RED?

I'LL MAKE OUT OKAY! GIVE ME HIS GUN, QUICK, CASSIDY! THE OTHER COVOTE HAS GONE OUT GUNNING FOR BUCK!

A black and white comic panel showing Bill Cassidy helping a man in a plaid shirt (Red) who is on the ground. Cassidy is leaning over him, looking concerned. The background shows a wooden structure, possibly a fence or part of a building.

I'LL WATCH THIS ONE! YOU GET OUT TO THE EASTERN SECTION, CASSIDY. AND IF THAT POLECAT HAS GOT BUCK.. THEN USE YOUR GUN ON HIM, NOT YOUR FISTS.



BILL CASSIDY RODE HARD FOR THE RUGGED HUMP OF HILLS THAT FRINGED THE EASTERN SECTION OF THE BAR-20...

KEEP MOVING, PAL!
WE'VE GOT TO... AH!
THAT WAS A SHOT....
AND ANOTHER!



AND ON THE FAR
SLOPE OF THE
RIDGE THE SECOND
BUFFALO HUNTER
LOWERED
HIS RIFLE.

I ONLY WINGED HIM,
DURN IT! AND NOW
HE'S GONE TO COVER
BEHIND THAT ROCK...
WAAL, WE'LL SOON
GET HIM WHEN
JAKE COMES OUT
FROM THE
RANCH.... HE
SHOULDA FINISHED
OFF CONNORS
BY NOW!



MY SIX-SHOOTER
AIN'T MUCH GOOD AGAINST
HIS RIFLE. THAT
POLECAT HOLDS ALL
THE CARDS!



BUT THERE WAS ONE CARD
WHICH NEITHER BUCK PETERS
NOR THE CROOKED BUFFALO
HUNTER HAD RECKONED
WITH - AND THAT WAS
BILL CASSIDY!

HE'S MOVIN'
ROUND TO GET A
SHOT AT
BUCK PETERS!
RECKON THIS IS WHERE
I TAKE A HAND!



AS THE BUFFALO HUNTER REACHED
HIS NEW POSITION
AND TOOK AIM...



BEFORE THE SURPRISED CROOK COULD
RECOVER FROM HIS SURPRISE HE FOUND
HIMSELF
CONFRONTED BY
BILL CASSIDY...

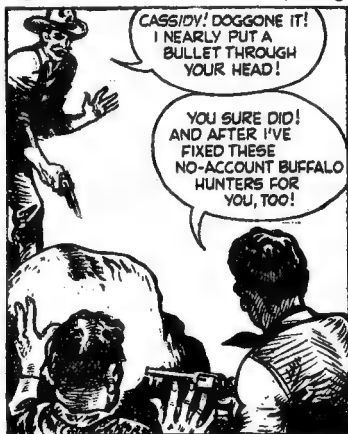


RIGHT! STAY
LIKE THAT, FELLER,
WHILE I GIVE
PETERS A YELL!



BY THE
GREAT HORNED
TOAD! HEY, PETERS!
QUIT FIRING!
IT'S ME...
CASSIDY!





NEXT MORNING BUCK TOOK THE TWO CROOKS INTO SHARPSVILLE. WHEN HE RETURNED AT DUSK

THOSE TWO COVOTES ARE SAFE IN GAOL. NOW LISTEN, BILL CASSIDY, IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE THE BAR-20 YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGHT YOUR WAY OUT. RED AND ME ... WE WANT YOU TO STAY!

SURE!

RECKON YOU'VE PERSUADED ME! I KINDA LIKE THE COMPANY HERE ... O.K., BUCK... FROM NOW ON YOU'RE THE BOSS!



Chapter 2. CASSIDY TAMES A GUNMAN

AND THAT'S HOW BILL CASSIDY CAME TO THE BAR-20 RANCH. AS THE WEEKS WENT BY, BUCK BROUGHT IN MORE CATTLE TO STOCK THE RANCH, WORKING THE WHOLE RANGE WITH HIS TWO-MAN "OUTFIT". BUT AS WINTER PASSED, AND SPRING WARMED THE RANGE, THE NEED FOR ANOTHER HAND BECAME VITAL.

ONE MORNING, AS BILL AND RED WERE BRANDING SOME NEW STOCK....

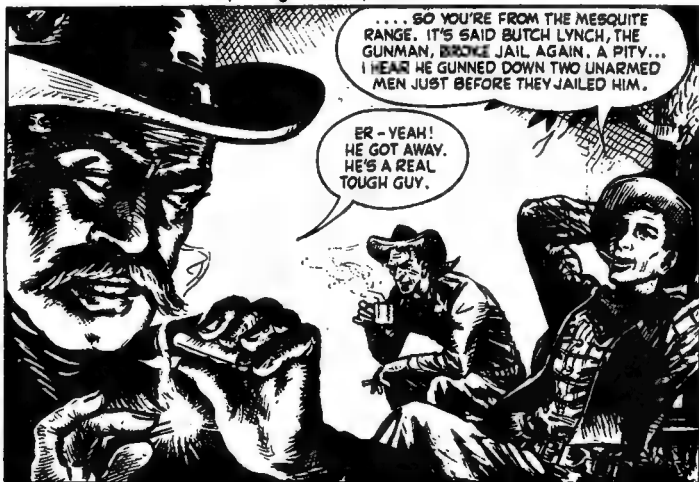


JUST PICKED UP SOME MAIL AT SHARPSVILLE! THE TRAIL BOSS AT SCORIA IS SENDING UP LANKY SMITH FOR THE BAR-20!

WE SURE NEED SOME HELP, BUCK!







SOON AFTER DAWN
LANKY PREPARED
TO SET OFF....

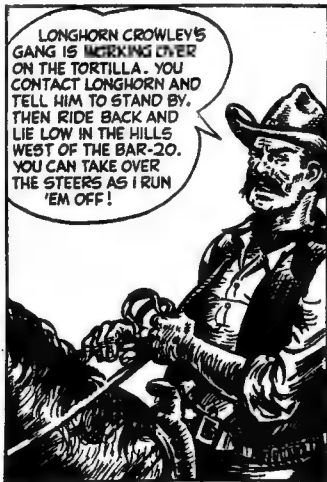
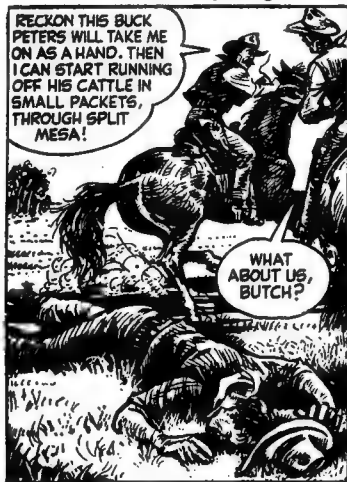
WELL, SO LONG,
FRIENDS. I WANT
TO REACH THE
BAR-20 JUST AS
SOON AS I CAN.

SO LONG ...
GREENHORN!

THE GUNMAN FIRED AND THE UNSUSPECTING
LANKY DROPPED TO THE GROUND.

THAT MAKES
ROOM FOR A
SUBSTITUTE AT
THE BAR-20!



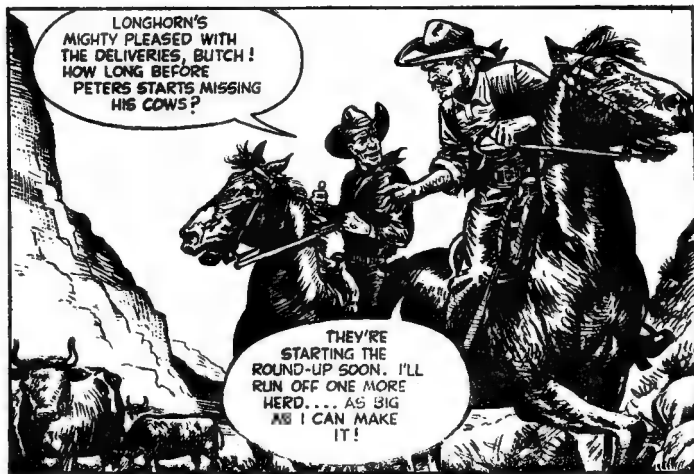




BILL CASSIDY'S INSTINCTIVE DISLIKE GREW STRONGER AS THE DAYS WENT BY. AND YET THE NEWCOMER SEEMED TO DO HIS JOB WELL ENOUGH.

ON THE WESTERN SECTION OF THAT VAST, SPREADING RANGE, THE MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF GEORGE FREKE, FOUND HIS PLANS GOING SMOOTHLY..

.....



NEXT DAY,
SHORTLY
BEFORE NOON..

HOLD UP, LANKY!
I CAN SEE THE
RANCH-HOUSE
AHEAD! YOU'LL
BE OKAY ONCE
YOU CAN REST.

AW, STOP
NURSING ME,
YOU LONG
GALOOT!

SKINNY THOMPSON, FOLLOWING UP HIS
PARTNER'S TRAIL, HAD BEEN JUST IN
TIME TO SAVE LANKY'S LIFE.

WHY, YOU SAWN-OFF
LITTLE RUNT! YOU
AIN'T FIT TO BE LET LOOSE
ON YOUR OWN! CAN'T
EVEN RIDE FROM SCORIA
TO THE BAR-20
WITHOUT GETTIN'
SHOT UP.

WRANGLING AS USUAL,
THE TWO CLOSE FRIENDS
CAME TO THE RANCH-
HOUSE.

LANKY! AND SKINNY AS
WELL! HEY, THE NEW
FELLER SAID YOU WERE
OVER IN PANHANDLE.
THAT'S WHY THE
TRAIL BOSS SENT
HIM UP.

WHAT
NEW FELLER?

WHEN BUCK PETERS DESCRIBED THE 'NEW FELLER',
THE SECRET WAS OUT!



ON HEARING THIS, ~~BUCK~~ PETERS JUMPED ON
TO HIS HORSE.

I'M RIDIN' OFF TO
ROUND UP THE BOYS!
BILL CASSIDY WAS
GETTING MIGHTY
SUSPICIOUS ABOUT
SOME MISSIN'
STEERS!

HOLD IT,
BUCK! I'M A-COMIN'
AS SOON AS I'VE
GOT LANKY TO A
BUNK!



BUT BUTCH LYNCH HAD OVERHEARD
WHAT WAS SAID.....

AND HE LOST NO TIME IN RIDING OFF TO
WARN HIS GANG.

THEY DON'T KNOW I'VE
BEEN WARNED, SO THEY'LL
WASTE TIME GETTING
CONNORS AND CASSIDY!
RECKON I CAN JUST GET
THE ~~HERO~~ THROUGH
SPLIT MESA IF THE BOYS
AND ME LOOK LIVELY!



WHEN LYNCH REJOINED HIS GANG,
HE QUICKLY GAVE HIS ORDERS.

I'LL DRIVE THE
HERD THROUGH! YOU
TWO GET PERCHED UP
ON TOP! YOU CAN HOLD
OFF AN ARMY FROM
THERE!

OKAY,
BUTCH!

IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE BUCK
ARRIVED WITH SKINNY AND RED.
AND THEN THE SHOOTING STARTED.

WISH I
WAS ONLY
LANKY'S SIZE
RIGHT NOW!

WE CAN'T
BREAK THROUGH!
WE'LL HAVE TO STALK
THOSE FELLERS ON
THE HEIGHTS!

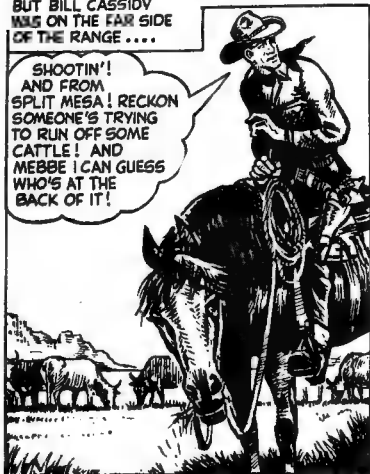
WHILE BUTCH LYNCH HERDED THE STEERS THROUGH AT THE FAR END, THE SKIRMISH AT THE CANYON ENTRANCE WENT ON... AND RED CONNORS LAMENTED TO BUCK AND SKINNY --

DURN IT! PITY WE COULDN'T ROUND UP CASSIDY IN TIME! WE COULD USE ANOTHER MAN RIGHT NOW!



BUT BILL CASSIDY WAS ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE RANGE....

SHOOTIN'! AND FROM SPLIT MESA! RECKON SOMEONE'S TRYING TO RUN OFF SOME CATTLE! AND MEBBE I CAN GUESS WHO'S AT THE BACK OF IT!



GIDDAP! C'MON, WHITE EYE! WE'LL HEAD ROUND THE SPUR AND COME OUT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF SPLIT MESA!



MEANWHILE, ON THE CANYON SLOPES... SKINNY THOMPSON STOOD WITH BLAZING GUN.

AH!
THERE GOES ONE
OF 'EM! I BET HE
DOESN'T STOP
RUNNING TILL HE
REACHES MEXICO!



BUCK PETERS AND RED WERE FAR FROM IDLE! WHILE ONE OF THE CROOKS WAS KEPT PINNED DOWN BY RED'S DEADLY CROSS-FIRE, BUCK CREPT UP BEHIND HIM

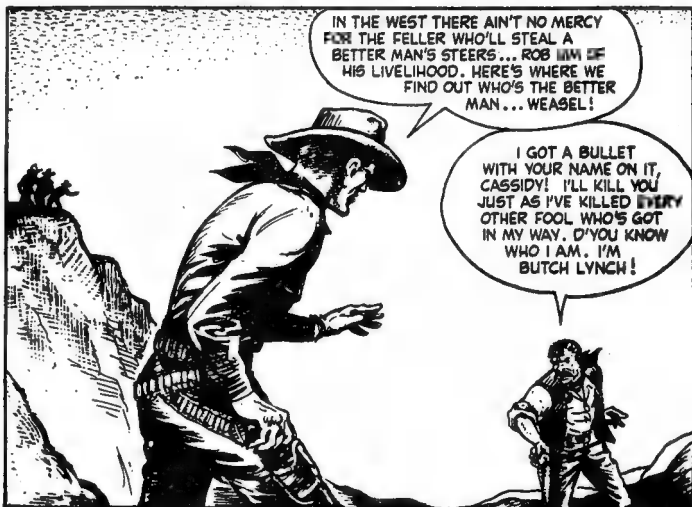
HOPE RED
CAN KEEP HIM
BUSY! I AIN'T KEEN
ON SHOOTING A
FELLER IN THE BACK...
NOT EVEN A DAWG!





BUTCH LYNCH, ALIAS GEORGE FREKE, HAD WORKED THE HERD CLEAR OUT ON TO THE PLAIN, WHEN SKINNY THOMPSON SAW HIM AND DRAWING HIS GUN, FIRED!





FROM ABOVE, THE BAR-20 MEN WATCHED IN AWE AS THE TWO GUN-MEN PACED STEADILY TOWARDS EACH OTHER... CLOSER.... CLOSER....

FOR PETE'S SAKE, WHY DON'T CASSIDY DRAW AT LONG RANGE? IT'S HIS ONLY CHANCE!

KEEP LOOKIN', FRIEND. YOU AIN'T SEEN BILL CASSIDY DRAW. A GUN YET... IT'S MIGHTY INTERESTING!



WITH ONLY TEN PACES SEPARATING THEM, BUTCH LYNCH'S HAND SWEEPED SMOOTHLY FOR HIS GUN WITH BLINDING SPEED.



AND THEN...!

RECKON YOU WEREN'T QUICK ENOUGH, LYNCH!





DISARMED AND OUT-FOUGHT, BUTCH LYNCH SURRENDERED. THEN HE WAS TIED UP AND SLUNG INTO A BARN. THAT NIGHT....



Chapter 3. THE RUSTLERS ROUNDED UP

ALL NEXT DAY, BILL CASSIDY
RODE HARD AND FAST UNTIL HE
REACHED LONGHORN CROWLEY'S
RANCH.

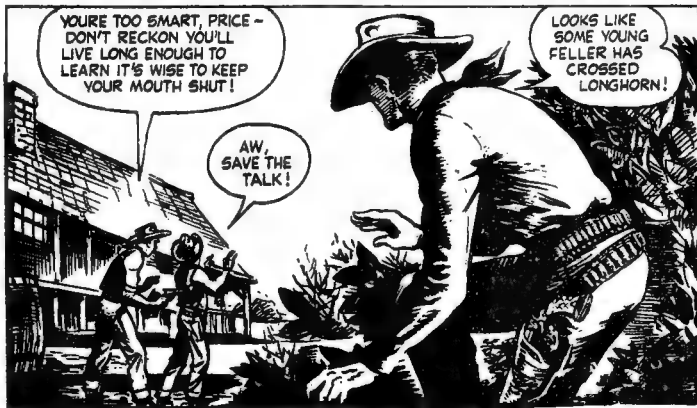
RECKON
YOU'D BETTER
WAIT HERE,
OLD-TIMER.
I'M GOIN' TO
SNEAK AROUND!



YOU'RE TOO SMART, PRICE -
DON'T RECKON YOU'LL
LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO
LEARN IT'S WISE TO KEEP
YOUR MOUTH SHUT!

AW,
SAVE THE
TALK!

LOOKS LIKE
SOME YOUNG
FELLER HAS
CROSSED
LONGHORN!



THE YOUNG FELLOW WAS POWERLESS TO RESIST WHEN HE WAS MARCHED INTO A BARN AND LEFT BOUND HAND AND FOOT.

CAN'T
EVEN ROLL
MYSELF A
SMOKE,
BURN IT!

AS SOON AS THE GUNMAN HAD GONE, BILL CASSIDY RAN OVER TO THE BARN DOOR....

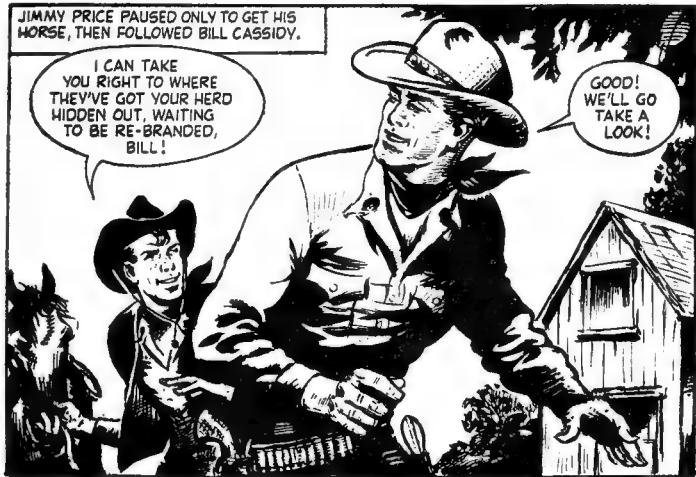
RECKON
I MIGHT LOOK
INTO THIS
BUSINESS!

HEY!
WHO'RE YOU,
MISTER?

KEEP YOUR
VOICE DOWN, KID!
IF YOU'RE
LONGHORN'S ENEMY,
I GUESS THAT
MAKES YOU MY
FRIEND!



JIMMY PRICE PAUSED ONLY TO GET HIS HORSE, THEN FOLLOWED BILL CASSIDY.



THE BAR-20 BOYS WILL
BE HERE SOON AFTER DAWN.
IF WE'RE SMART, WE COULD
HAVE THE HERD MOVING
BY THAT TIME.



WE'LL
HAVE TO BE
LUCKY, AS WELL
AS SMART!

THERE'S YOUR HERD,
MISTER. AND THERE'S
THREE, MEBBE
FOUR MEN
WATCHING IT!



OKAY, KID.
NOW LISTEN, AND
I'LL TELL YOU HOW
WE HANDLE
THIS...

THE GUARDS, SPREAD WIDE AROUND THE
SCATTERED HERD, WERE EXPECTING
NO TROUBLE BILL CASSIDY CROPT
UP BEHIND THE NEAREST ONE





SOME DISTANCE AWAY, JIMMY PRICE
WAS ALSO AT WORK.....





LEAVING HIS VICTIM ROPED AND GAGGED,
JIMMY PRICE PROWLED ON....

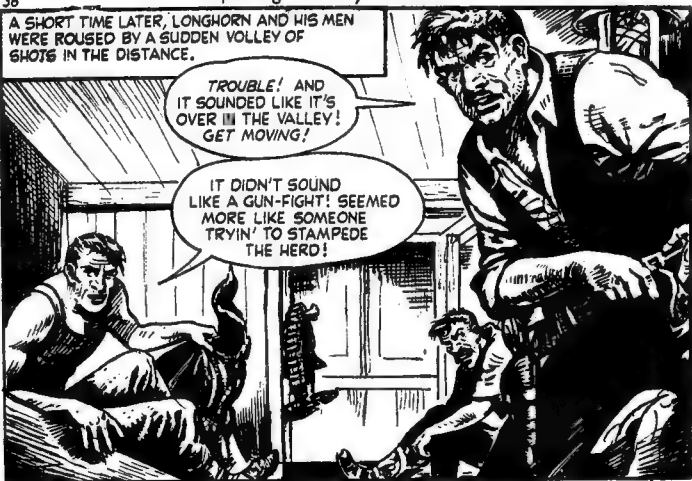




A SHORT TIME LATER, LONGHORN AND HIS MEN WERE ROUSED BY A SUDDEN VOLLEY OF SHOTS IN THE DISTANCE.

TRUBLE! AND
IT SOUNDED LIKE IT'S
OVER IN THE VALLEY!
GET MOVING!

IT DIDN'T SOUND
LIKE A GUN-FIGHT! SEEMED
MORE LIKE SOMEONE
TRYIN' TO STAMPEDE
THE HERD!



THEY'RE
AFTER US,
CASSIDY!

I'LL HOLD 'EM BACK AS WE
CROSS THE RIDGES! YOU'LL
HAVE TO HANDLE THE
HERD, KID!



AS JIMMY DROVE THE HERD, THE RUNNING
FIGHT ACROSS THE PLAIN WENT ON.
BILL CASSIDY ACTED AS A REARGUARD....

I'M SURE
HOPING BUCK AND
THE BOYS SHOW UP
SOON!



CASSIDY'S HOLDING 'EM OFF ... BUT
LONGHORN MUST HAVE AT LEAST
EIGHT MEN WITH HIM!







IT'S THE BOYS!...
C'MON, WHITE EYE!
HERE'S WHERE WE
STOP RUNNING
AWAY!

YIPPEEE!

YAHOOOO!

BAR-
TWENTEEE!

THE SUDDENNESS OF THE ATTACK BROUGHT SWIFT AND CRUSHING DEFEAT.

DROP YOUR GUNS! NICE GOIN', BILL! WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?

DON'T SHOOT.. DON'T SHOOT! WE QUIT!

A KID NAMED JIMMY PRICE. A GOOD KID. BETTER LET ME AND RED FOLLOW UP AND HELP HALT THAT HERD!

WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE COYOTES!

THE HERD WAS HALTED, THEN DRIVEN ON AT AN EASY PACE OVER THE LONG STRETCH TO THE BAR-20. BACK IN THE RANCH-HOUSE.....

WHAT A DAY! LANKY AND SKINNY ARE RIDING INTO TOWN TOMORROW WITH BUTCH LYNCH AND WHAT'S LEFT OF LONGHORN'S BUNCH OF CROOKS. AS FOR YOU, JIMMY PRICE....

WE'VE TALKED TO HIM, BUCK, AND IT'S SETTLED. THE KID'S HERE TO STAY!

YEP! I LIKE THE COMPANY!

Chapter 4. THE APACHE RAIDERS

AND SO YOUNG JIMMY PRICE JOINED THAT LOYAL AND COURAGEOUS LITTLE GROUP AT THE BAR-20.

IT WAS SOME WEEKS LATER THAT BILL CASSIDY RODE FAR TO THE EAST WITH JIMMY ON BUSINESS FOR BUCK PETERS. ON THE RETURN TRIP, WHEN ONLY TWO DAYS' RIDE FROM SNAKE CREEK, THEY FOUND GRIM EVIDENCE THAT A RAIDING BAND OF APACHES WERE AT WORK.



TWO HOURS LATER....



THE TRAVELLERS WERE GEORGE AND TOM FRENCH, AND THEIR SISTER, MOLLY.
SOME TIME LATER...



IT'S BEEN NICE
HAVING COMPANY, MISTER PRICE.
I GUESS WE'RE ONLY A FEW
MILES FROM LOGAN NOW. BUT
WHY DOES YOUR FRIEND KEEP
RIDING UP INTO THE
HILLS?

OH-ER-WELL,
YOU SEE, MA'AM,
MISTER CASSIDY
KINDA LIKES THE
EXERCISE!



UH-HUH! SEEMS
LIKE MISTER CASSIDY'S
FOUND WHAT HE WAS
LOOKING FOR!



SWIFTLY BILL CASSIDY TOOK COMMAND. HE LIFTED MOLLY ON TO HIS HORSE AND HIS BROTHERS CLIMBED UP BEHIND JIMMY.

WE'LL GET YOU SAFE HIDDEN, THEN TAKE THE WAGON AND TRY TO LEAD THEM AWAY!



THEY CLIMBED HIGH UP THE RIDGED AND
PITTED FACE OF THE ROCK.

GOOD
LUCK,
MISTER!

...AND
THANKS!

HAVE YOUR GUNS
READY, BUT DON'T
SHOOT UNLESS THINGS
GO WRONG. WE'LL TRY
AND BEAT THE APACHES
INTO LOGAN, THEN COME
BACK FOR YOU WITH
A BIG PARTY!



WHEN THE APACHES CAME RIDING
OVER THE FAR RIDGE

SEE!
A WAGON
OF THE
PALEFACES!





THAT ACCIDENTAL SHOT ECHOED
THROUGH THE HILLS.



A MOMENT LATER BILL CASSIDY
DRAGGED HIS HORSE
TO A HALT.



BILL CASSIDY ~~WIPED~~ **WIPED** HIS HORSE TOWARDS THE FOUR PURSUING BRAVES WHILE BULLETS WHISTLED AROUND HIM. AND THEN

SAVE
YOUR BULLETS!
WE HAVE ONE
OF THE DOGS!
AND WE SHALL
SOON HAVE
THE OTHER!

SEE!
HE FALLS!

BILL CASSIDY HUNG
LIMPLY FROM THE
SADDLE, ONE FOOT
CAUGHT IN A STIRRUP.
HIS HORSE GALLOPED
ON

AS THE RUNAWAY HORSE CHARGED
THROUGH THE TRIUMPHANT APACHES
THE SEEMINGLY LIFELESS FIGURE
WENT INTO ACTION !



IN ANOTHER SECOND, IT
WAS ALL OVER....



WHEN CASSIDY REACHED THE ROCK-STREWN FOOT
OF THE SLOPE, THE OTHER APACHES HAD ALREADY
BEGUN AN ATTACK ON THE CAVE....

RECKON
THIS IS GOING TO
TURN INTO A GAME OF
HIDE-AN'-SEEK!



AMID GULLIES, BOULDERS AND ROCKY
OUTCROPS, THE STRANGE CAT-AND-MOUSE
FIGHT WENT ON....

THAT'S TWO
HE'S PICKED OFF! THEY
DON'T KNOW WHERE HE
IS FROM ONE MINUTE
TO THE NEXT!

YEAH! BUT
HIS LUCK CAN'T
HOLD OUT FOR
LONG!



MOLLY, HER FACE SET, SCRAMBLED TO A VANTAGE POINT ON A TOWERING ROCK...

BEHIND
AND ABOVE YOU,
MISTER CASSIDY!
YOU GOT HIM!

THANKS,
MA'AM!

MOLLY FRENCH HAD A GRANDSTAND VIEW AND WAS MAKING GOOD USE OF IT! BILL CASSIDY WAS WARNED OF EVERY MOVE THE APACHES MADE!

TWO MORE
COMING UP BEHIND
THAT CLUMP OF
MESQUITE, MISTER
CASSIDY!

FOR OVER AN HOUR THAT STRANGE BATTLE WENT ON, AND THEN....

AWAY, BROTHERS!
THE OTHER PALEFACE
HAS BROUGHT MANY
MEN FROM THE TOWN!
AWAY!



BILL CASSIDY BROUGHT DOWN THREE MORE APACHES AS THEY RACED FOR THEIR HORSES AND TOOK FLIGHT.

HEY, BILL!
LEAVE SOME FOR THESE
FELLERS TO CHASE!
THEY'VE BEEN LOOKING
FORWARD TO IT!

JUST
KEEPING MY
HAND IN WITH
THE LONG
GHTS, KID!

LATER, WHILE THE
BROTHERS ROUNDED UP
THREE RIDERLESS
APACHE HORSES....

WHEN YOU RIDE
INTO LOGAN, YOU'LL
FIND YOUR WAGON
SAFE AND SOUND,
MA'AM!

THANKS! AND THANK YOU,
MISTER CASSIDY! GEE! I'M
HOARSE WITH SHOUTING!

RECKON
WE MADE A
FINE TEAM,
MA'AM!

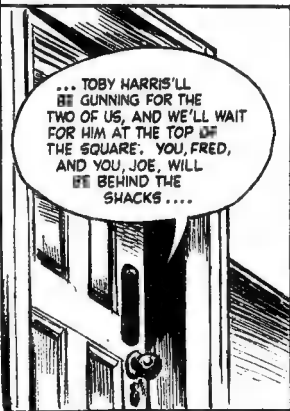
Chapter 5. THE GREAT CATTLE DRIVE

IT WAS NOT LONG AFTER BILL CASSIDY'S FIGHT AGAINST THE APACHES THAT THE LITTLE TOWN OF CLAY GULCH WITNESSED THE INCIDENT WHICH EARNED CASSIDY A NICKNAME A NICKNAME WHICH BECAME FAMED AND HONoured THROUGHOUT THE COW-COUNTRY.

IN CLAY GULCH, AT THE VICTORIA HOTEL, TWO GUN-MEN NAMED GEORGE AND ART THOMAS WERE PLANNING THE DOWNFALL OF A TOUGH, WIRY LITTLE LAWMAN NAMED TOBY HARRIS. TOBY WAS MARSHAL OF TUXEDO



IT CHANCED THAT BILL CASSIDY WAS SPENDING THE NIGHT AT THAT HOTEL.



BILL CASSIDY SLEPT PEACEFULLY THAT NIGHT AND ROSE EARLY. IT WAS TWO HOURS AFTER DAWN THAT MARSHAL HARRIS RODE IN....

GET CLEAR!... IT'S
TOBY HARRIS
COME FOR THE
THOMAS BOYS!

THEY'RE
WAITING FOR HIM
IN THE SQUARE!



HOWDY,
CASSIDY! JEST KEEP
SPECTATING, WILL
YOU? I'M TAKING
THEM ON MY
OWN!

SURE, TOBY,
SURE! THESE
THOMAS BOZOS
ARE ALL YOURS!



A HUSHED SILENCE HUNG OVER THE SQUARE AS TOBY HARRIS MOVED STEADILY TOWARDS THE TWO GUNMEN, WAITING FOR THEM TO DRAW. AND THEN.....



THE MARSHAL'S QUICK BRAIN TOOK IN THE SITUATION AS BILL CASSIDY SHOUTED. HE SPUN ROUND AGAIN, GUNS FLAMING....



PANIC-STRICKEN, GEORGE THOMAS RACED FOR HIS HORSE. THE WOUNDED ART THOMAS GATHERED HIS FAILING STRENGTH.....



CASSIDY WAS WATCHING WITH COOL INTEREST TO SEE IF GEORGE ESCAPED.....



ART THOMAS FIRED AND BILL CASSIDY COLLAPSED WITH A GROAN. MEANWHILE GEORGE THOMAS SPURRED HIS HORSE TO A GALLOP....



CASSIDY AND THE THREE BADLY WOUNDED MEN WERE TAKEN AWAY FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION. LATER, IN DOC RYAN'S SHACK.....

WELL, IT'S FIXED. NOW I MUST GO AND SEE TO THOSE THREE RUFFIANS. BUT YOU WON'T WALK IN A NORMAL WAY AGAIN, CASSIDY. YOU'LL HAVE A LIMP. YOU'LL KINDA HOP ALONG, I GUESS!

HOP ALONG, HUH? HOPALONG CASSIDY!

HOPALONG CASSIDY! I'VE GOT A FEELING THAT NAME'S GOING TO STICK!

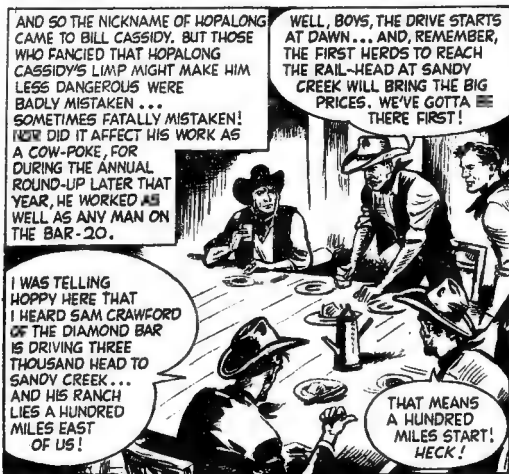
AND SO THE NICKNAME OF HOPALONG CAME TO BILL CASSIDY. BUT THOSE WHO FANCIED THAT HOPALONG CASSIDY'S LIMP MIGHT MAKE HIM LESS DANGEROUS WERE BADLY MISTAKEN ... SOMETIMES FATALLY MISTAKEN! DID IT AFFECT HIS WORK AS A COW-POKE, FOR DURING THE ANNUAL ROUND-UP LATER THAT YEAR, HE WORKED AS WELL AS ANY MAN ON THE BAR-20.

I WAS TELLING HOPPY HERE THAT I HEARD SAM CRAWFORD OF THE DIAMOND BAR IS DRIVING THREE THOUSAND HEAD TO SANDY CREEK... AND HIS RANCH LIES A HUNDRED MILES EAST OF US!

WELL, BOYS, THE DRIVE STARTS AT DAWN... AND, REMEMBER, THE FIRST HERDS TO REACH THE RAIL-HEAD AT SANDY CREEK WILL BRING THE BIG PRICES. WE'VE GOTTA BE THERE FIRST!

THAT MEANS A HUNDRED MILES START! HECK!

WE'VE GOTTA BEAT HIM! AND THE BIG TRICK FOR BOTH TEAMS WILL BE GETTING THEIR HERDS ACROSS THE COMANCHE RIVER. IT'S RUNNING HIGH, IN FLOOD!



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, THE BAR-20 MEN DROVE THE CATTLE AND THEMSELVES UNSPARINGLY. JIMMY PRICE RODE AHEAD, REPORTING BACK EVERY TWO DAYS TO GIVE NEWS OF THE DIAMOND BAR'S PROGRESS.

CRAWFORD'S
DRIVIN' HARD AND
WE AIN'T GAINED
MORE THAN A
FEW MILES ON
HIM!

'LO THERE,
JIMMY!
WHAT'S THE
NEWS?



THAT NIGHT...

HAVE
SOME COFFEE,
HOPPY?

THANKS,
BOSS! I'VE BEEN
THINKING ABOUT
THE COMANCHE
BEIN' IN FLOOD...



WE OUGHT TO BRANCH
OFF NORTH SO THAT INSTEAD
OF HAVING ONE BIG RIVER TO
FORCE THE HERD ACROSS,
WE GO HIGHER UP AND
CROSS THE FIVE LITTLE
RIVERS THAT JOIN UP TO
MAKE THE COMANCHE!

WITH THE
NORMAL FORD
FLOODED, CRAWFORD
MIGHT GET STUCK!
WE'LL TRY IT!



FIVE DAYS LATER THE D'AMOND BAR
HERD REACHED THE COMANCHE RIVER...



IT'S NO GOOD, MISTER
CRAWFORD! WE'LL NEVER
GET THE HERD ACROSS
HERE. WE'LL HAVE TO TURN
AND DRIVE NORTH UNTIL
WE REACH THE
SHALLOWS!

NOT
ON YOUR LIFE!
THIS WATER'LL
FALL BY MIDDAY
TOMORROW!
WE'LL WAIT!

BARNES, THE TRAIL BOSS, SHRUGGED. THE
WATERS DID NOT FALL THE NEXT DAY... NOR
THE DAY AFTER THAT. CRAWFORD WAS
FRANTIC. HE ORDERED HIS MEN TO FORCE
THE HERD ACROSS!

IT'S CRAZY,
BOSS! WE'LL
NEVER MAKE IT!

KEEP 'EM MOVING!
KEEP 'EM MOVING!



THEY'RE
TURNING! THEY'RE
BREAKING!

THE HERD BROKE, FLED BACK FROM THE RIVER, AND SCATTERED FAR AND WIDE IN SMALL, TERRIFIED GROUPS ALL OVER THE PLAIN! TWO MORE PRECIOUS DAYS WERE SPENT IN ROUNDING THEM UP AGAIN. AND THEN THEY WERE TURNED NORTH ALONG THE BANK OF THE SWOLLEN RIVER. FOUR DAYS LATER ...

LOOK AT THESE TRACKS. ANOTHER HERD CROSSED HERE TWO DAYS AGO!

THAT MEANS THE BAR-20 HERD'S OVERTAKEN US! TO HECK WITH BUCK PETERS! AND ALL HIS ROUGHNECK CREW!

TWO DAYS AHEAD, AND WITH ONLY FIFTEEN DAYS DRIVE TO GO, THE BAR-20 BOYS WERE IN HIGH SPIRITS.

HOW WING CRAWFORD WHEN YOU RODE BACK TO SEE HIM YESTERDAY, HOPPY?

MIGHTY SORE, BUCK! MIGHTY SORE!

THAT NIGHT, TROUBLE HIT THE HERD...

WHAT..?

HOPPY! SKINNY! GET MOUNTED! QUICK! SOMETHIN'S STAMPED THE HERD!

THE NEXT TWO HOURS WERE PACKED
WITH DESPERATE ACTION....

TURN,
YOU BONE-HEADED
CRITTERS! TURN!



AT LAST...

WE'VE HELD 'EM. THEY'RE CALM
NOW. BUT IT'LL BE A MIRACLE
IF ALL THE BOYS ARE STILL
ALIVE!

HERE'S
LANKY.





THE OTHERS ARE OK, 'CEPT SKINNY'S GOT A BUSTED ARM. I RODE OUT TO FIND YOU TWO, AND I FOUND SOMETHIN' ELSE ON THE WAY...!

NEXT DAY, HOPALONG CASSIDY RODE INTO THE DIAMOND BAR CAMP....

WELL, CASSIDY... YOU BEAT US. WE'LL NEVER CATCH THE BAR-20 HERD. BUT THERE'S NO HARD FEELINGS. SET DOWN AND GRUB WITH US.

'LO BARNES. HOWDY, FELLERS!

CASSIDY! I THOUGHT... HERE, GET OUT OF MY CAMP!



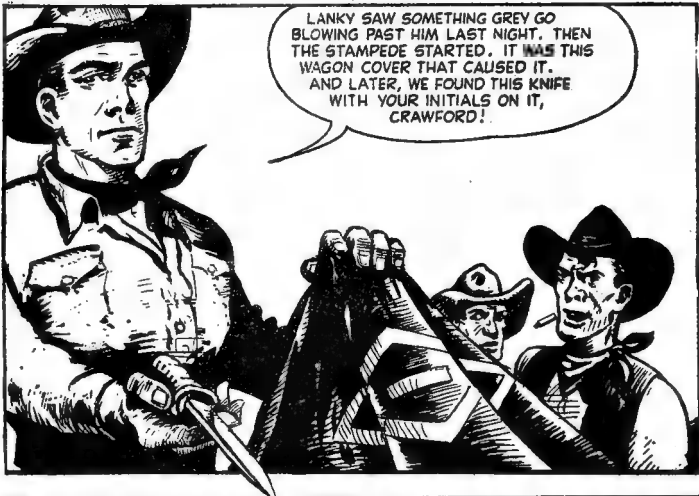
IGNORING CRAWFORD, HOPPY DISMOUNTED...

SAY, BARNES. WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO ANYBODY WHO DELIBERATELY STAMPEDED YOUR HERD?

GET OUT, I TELL YOU!

I'D SHOOT THE SKUNK!





LANKY SAW SOMETHING GREY GO
BLOWING PAST HIM LAST NIGHT. THEN
THE STAMPEDE STARTED. IT WAS THIS
WAGON COVER THAT CAUSED IT.
AND LATER, WE FOUND THIS KNIFE
WITH YOUR INITIALS ON IT,
CRAWFORD!



HOPPY TURNED BACK
FOR HIS HORSE.....

YOU.. YOU LOW-DOWN
COVOTE! DURNED IF I'LL
WORK ANOTHER DAY
FOR A MAN WHO'D
DO THAT!

WE'LL
TAKE OUR
PAY-OFF
NOW.

DRIVE
THE HERD
ON YOUR
OWN,
CRAWFORD!

THE WRATH OF HIS MEN STUNG CRAWFORD TO ACTION...

DURN YOU, CASSIDY! YOU'LL PAY...

LOOK OUT, CASSIDY!

HOPPY'S HAND MOVED WITH EYE-BAFFLING SPEED

I'M LETTING YOU OFF EASY, CRAWFORD. BUT YOU BETTER GET OUT OF THIS TERRITORY!

HECK! CRAWFORD HAD CLEARED LEATHER BEFORE CASSIDY HAD STARTED TO DRAW!

THE BAR-20 BOYS WERE JUST BEGINNING TO GET ANXIOUS ABOUT HOPPY WHEN HE RODE CHEERFULLY IN TO REJOIN THEM ...

YOU DURNED CRAZY GUN-SLICK, HOPPY! FANCY RIDIN' ALONE RIGHT INTO CRAWFORD'S CAMP!

OK, BUCK. NO NEED TO DRIVE SO HARD NOW. CRAWFORD'S HERD'LL BE GRAZING FOR A WEEK! BARNES GAVE THE ORDER JUST BEFORE I LEFT!

TEN DAYS LATER, THE BAR-20 HERD REACHED SANDY CREEK... THE FIRST COWS TO REACH THE RAIL-HEAD!

THAT CLOSES THE DEAL! AND A MIGHTY HANDSOME DEAL FOR YOU, MISTER PETERS!

WE SURE EARNED IT!

WE'VE MADE IT, BUCK. FROM NOW ON THE BAR-20 IS GOING TO BE A BIG-TIME RANCH!

YEAH! WE ALL DONE WELL. BUT WE OWE MOST OF IT TO HOPPY. IT WAS A LUCKY DAY FOR US WHEN HE RODE IN TO OUR SPREAD,

YOU C'N SAY THAT AGAIN!

SO ENDED THE FIRST OF MANY YEARS OF STRUGGLE AND ADVENTURE FOR THE BAR-20 RANCH. THEY WERE YEARS IN WHICH THE NAMES OF BUCK PETERS, JIMMY PRICE, LANKY SMITH AND THE OTHERS BECAME KNOWN FAR AND WIDE THROUGHOUT THE WEST....

BUT ONE NAME WAS RENOWNED FAR ABOVE ALL OTHERS...
.... THE NAME OF
**HOPALONG
CASSIDY!**

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