

A 52 PAGE MAGAZINE

Gene Autry

Comics



Worth going out on a limb for—

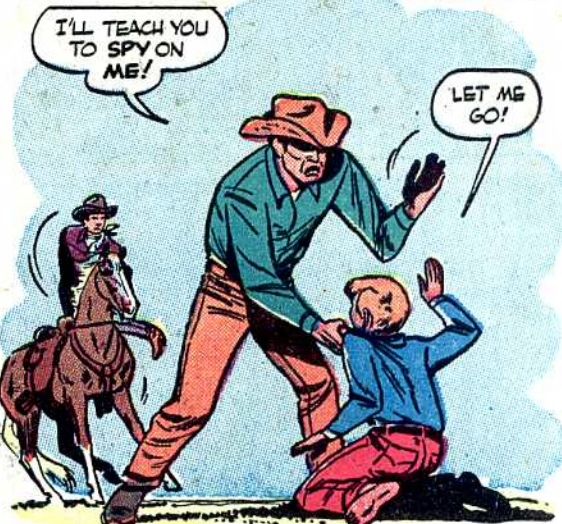
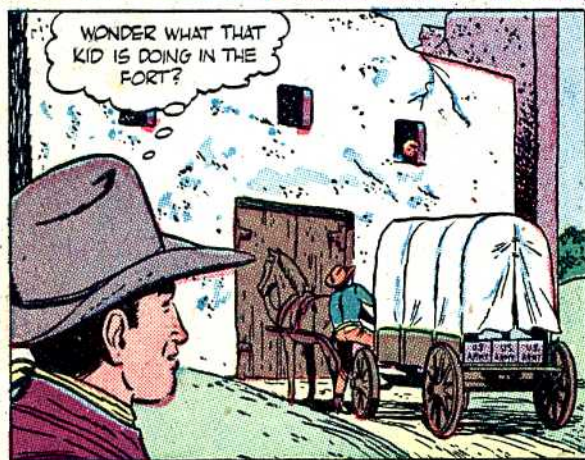
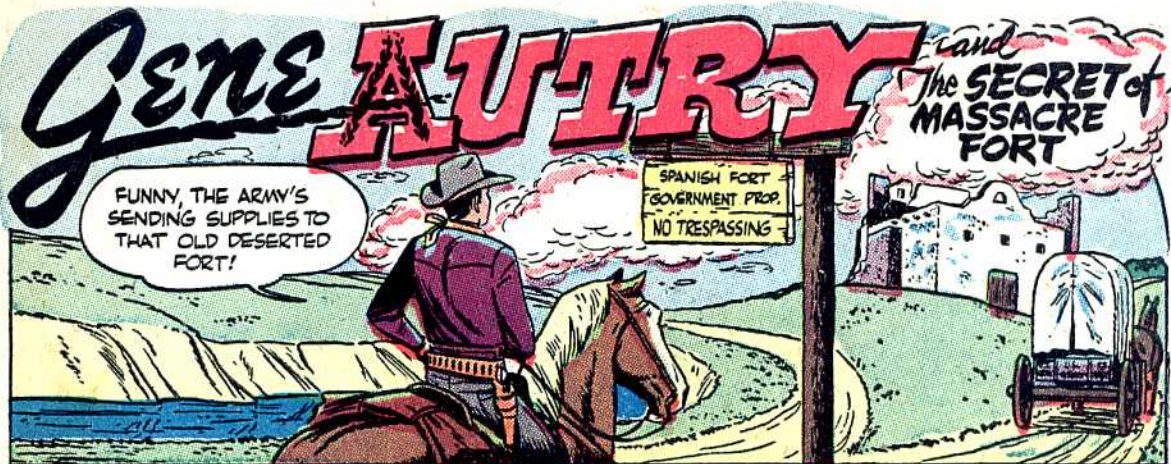
Yet all you have to do to get your Milky Way is dig up a few pennies and spend 'em for one of these luscious bars. Then sink your teeth into smooth, soothing chocolate that treasures within it a sumptuous layer of creamy caramel and a heaping helping of rich, malted milk nougat.

"So much for so little," you'll say.

The name is...



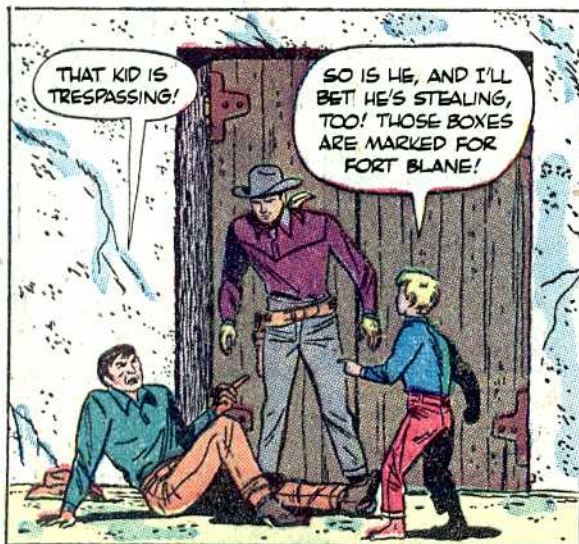
M-m-milky Way...
your money can't buy more "m-m-m-m"!

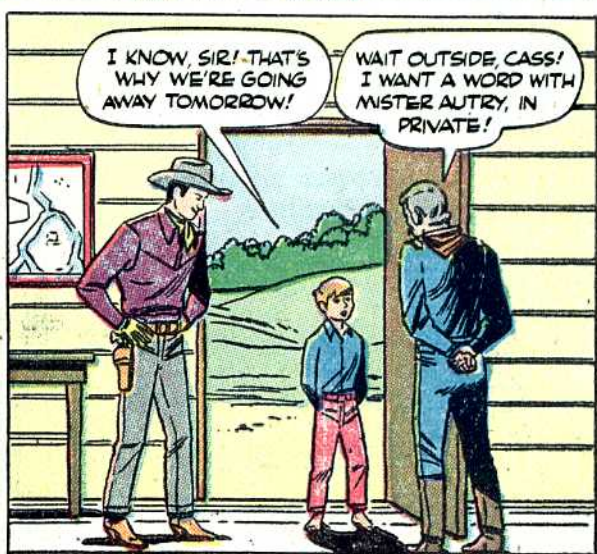
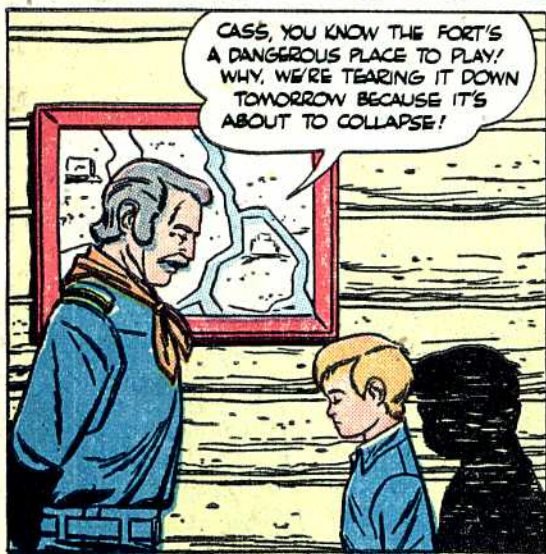
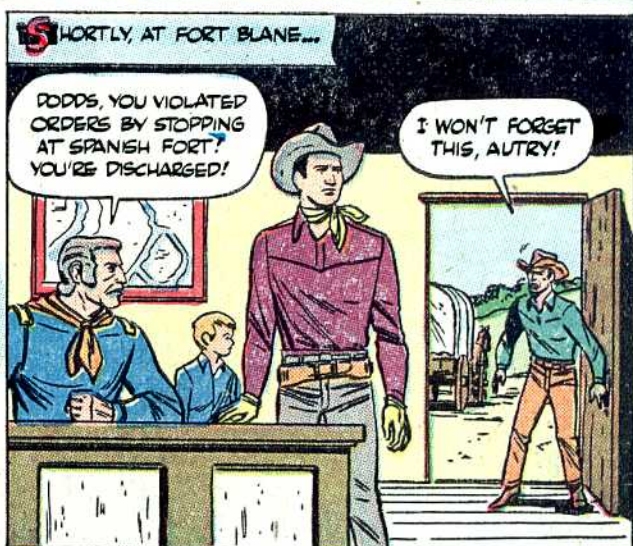
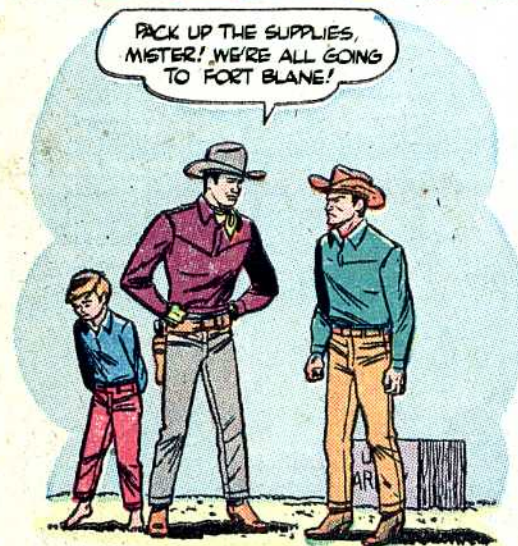
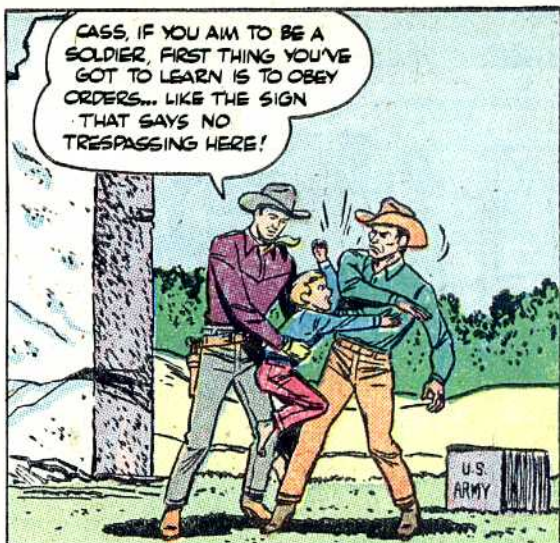


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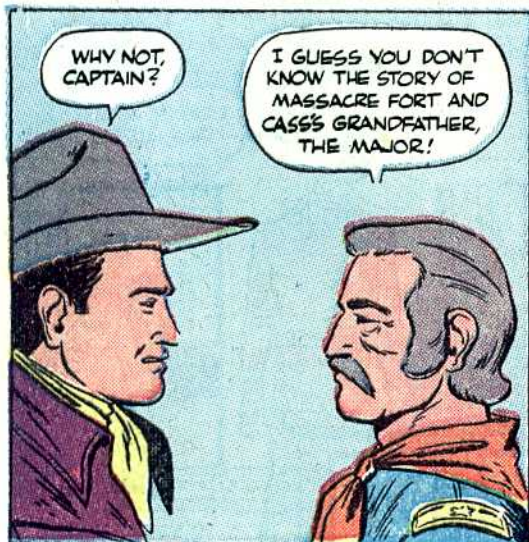




I UNDERSTAND CASS'S GRANDMOTHER IS SELLING HER BELONGINGS TO RAISE MONEY! WOULD YOU TAKE THIS AND BUY SOMETHING FOR ME?



I CAN'T DO IT MYSELF BECAUSE AN ARMY MAN CAN'T OFFICIALLY HELP A BRISTOW!



WHY NOT, CAPTAIN?

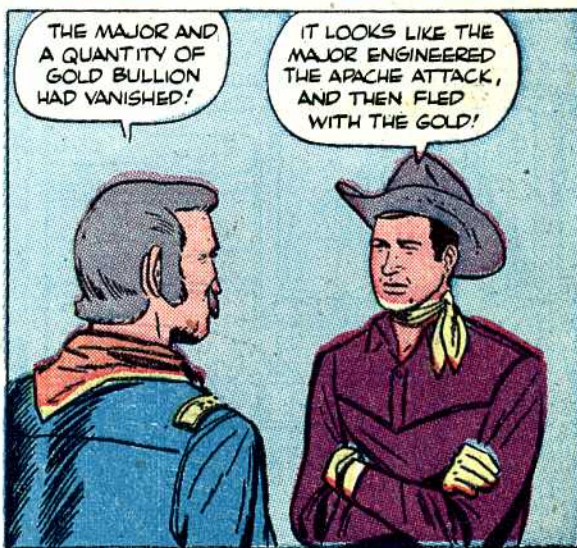
I GUESS YOU DON'T KNOW THE STORY OF MASSACRE FORT AND CASS'S GRANDFATHER, THE MAJOR!



MANY YEARS AGO THE ARMY TOOK OVER THAT OLD SPANISH FORT TO POLICE THE APACHES! MAJOR BRISTOW WAS IN COMMAND!



ONE MORNING, EVERY MAN... EXCEPT MAJOR BRISTOW... WAS FOUND DEAD AT HIS POST, MURDERED BY THE APACHES!



THE MAJOR AND A QUANTITY OF GOLD BULLION HAD VANISHED!

IT LOOKS LIKE THE MAJOR ENGINEERED THE APACHE ATTACK, AND THEN FLED WITH THE GOLD!

YES, BUT CASS'S GRANDMOTHER NEVER BELIEVED HIM GUILTY! SHE SAID SHE'D WAIT FOR THE MAJOR'S RETURN, AS LONG AS THE FORT STOOD!



NOW THE FORT'S TO BE DEMOLISHED AND SHE AND THE BOY ARE FINALLY GOING AWAY!

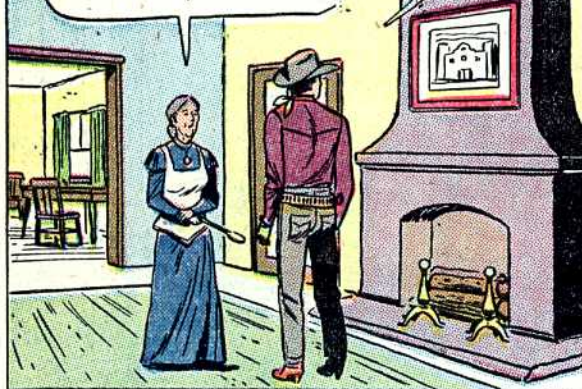
I'LL BE GLAD TO HELP THE BRISTOWS IN ANY WAY I CAN, CAPTAIN!



PRESENTLY...

SEEMS LIKE I'VE ALREADY SOLD EVERYTHING I CAN SPARE, MISTER AUTRY!

WHAT ABOUT THAT PICTURE, MRS. BRISTOW?



IT'S A MIGHTY FINE DRAWING OF SPANISH FORT, MA'AM!

THE MAJOR DREW THAT JUST BEFORE... HE WENT AWAY! IT'S NOT FOR SALE!



I GUESS NOBODY'S COMING, GRANDMA!

I LEFT WORD IN TOWN FOR A MAN WITH A WAGON TO TAKE MY FURNITURE TO THE RAILROAD STATION TOMORROW!

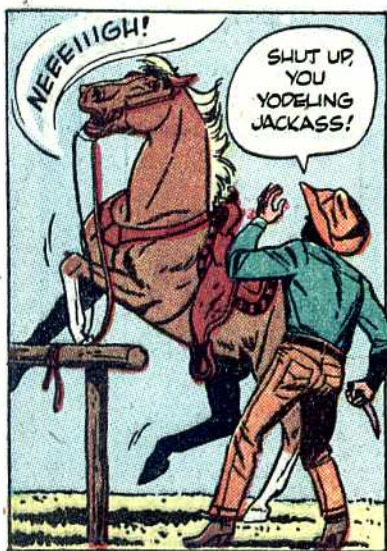
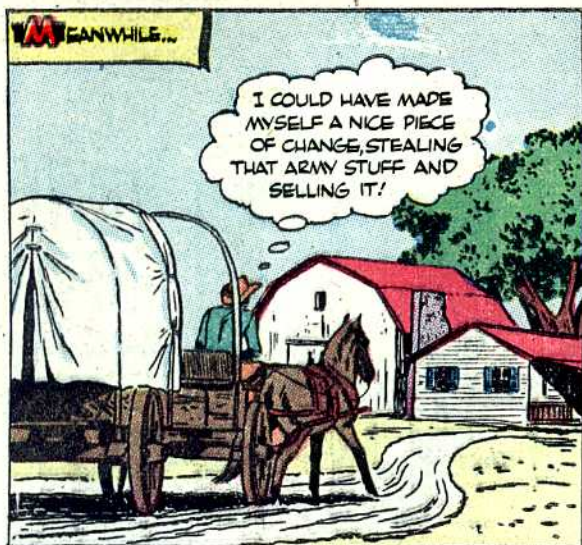


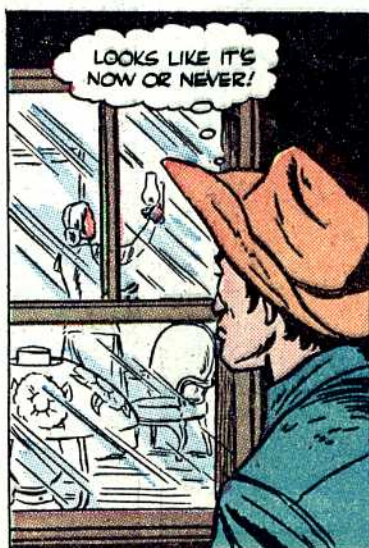
WHAT'LL WE DO IF NOBODY COMES, GRANDMA?

IN THAT CASE, I'LL JUST ROUND UP A WAGON FOR YOU MYSELF!

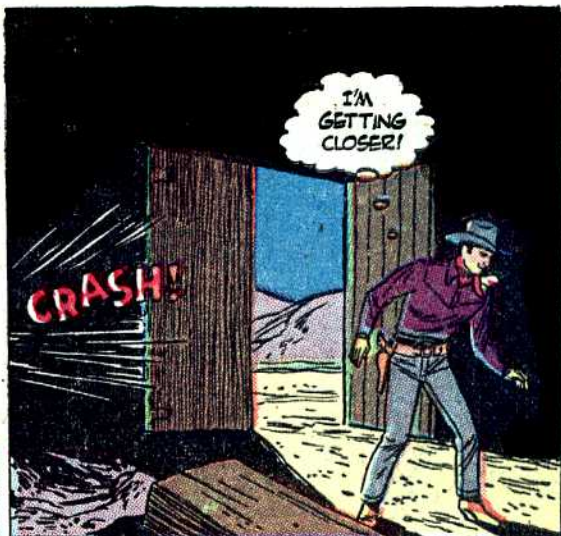


MEANWHILE...



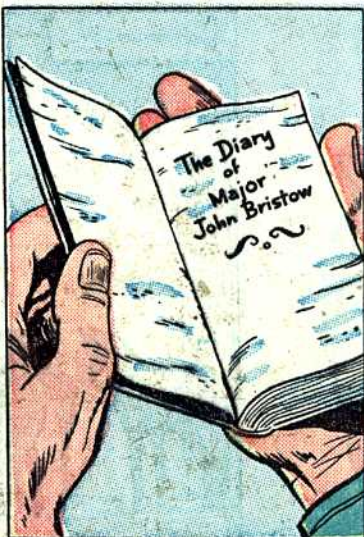


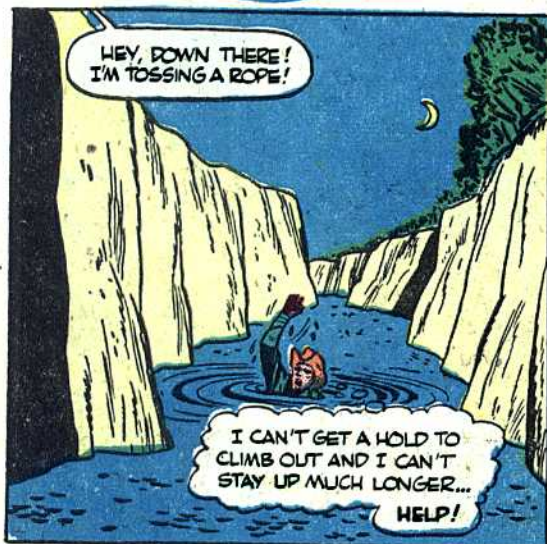


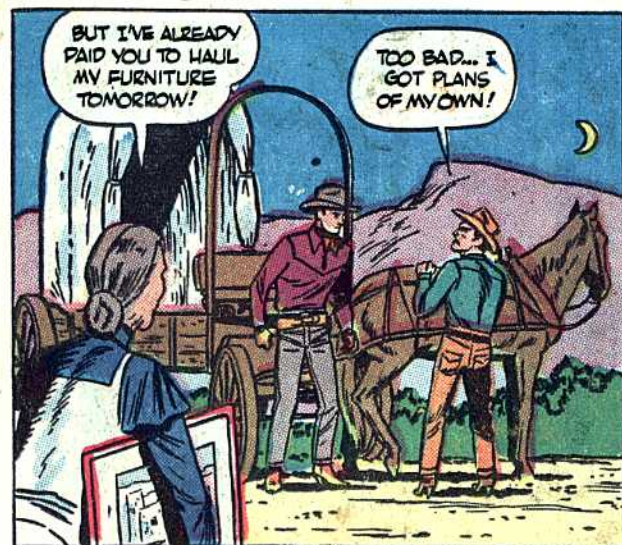


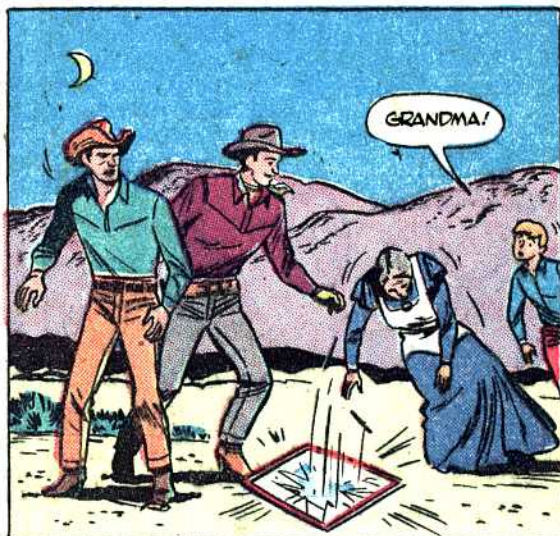
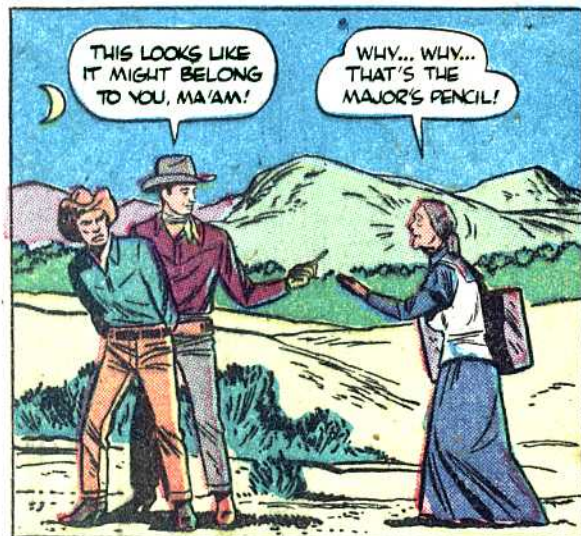


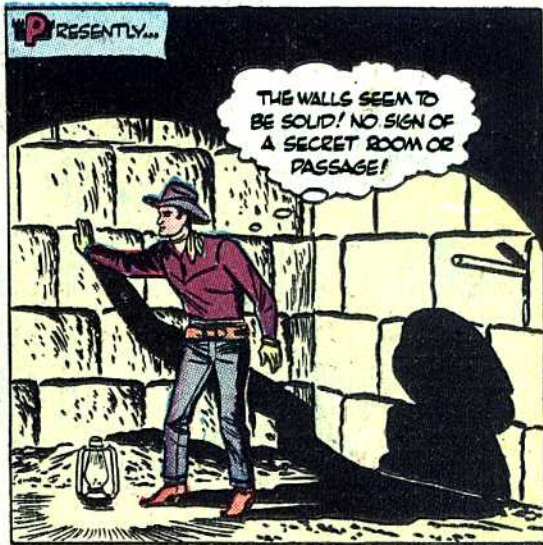
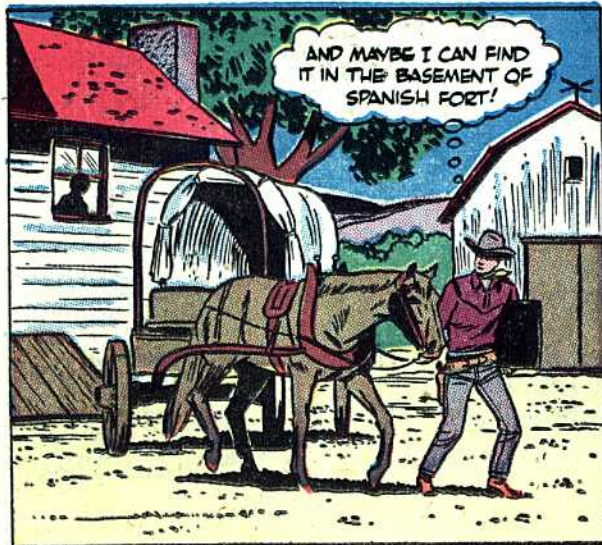
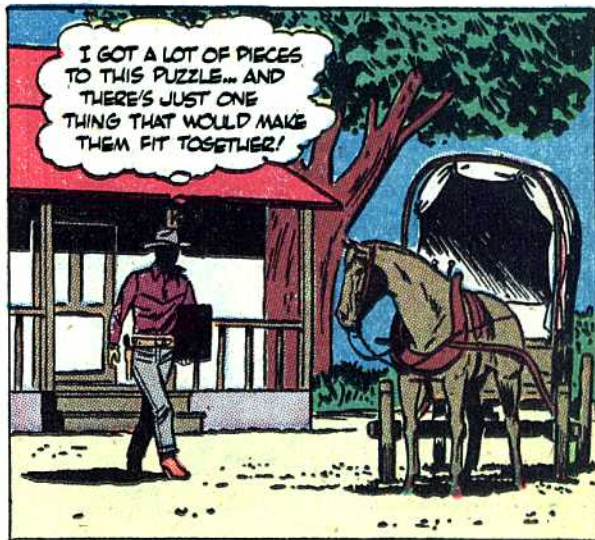
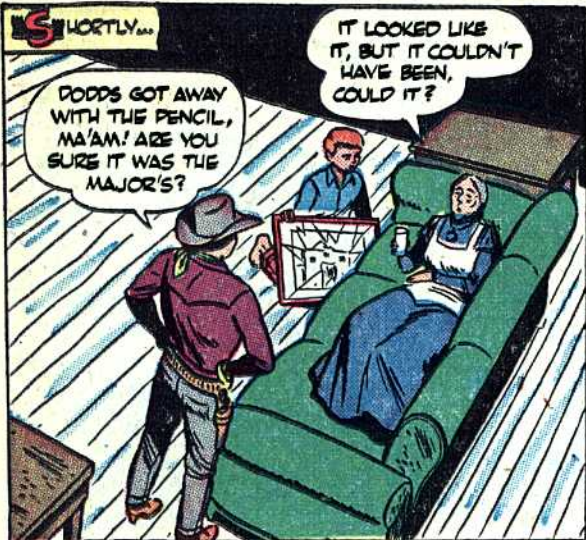
MEANWHILE...



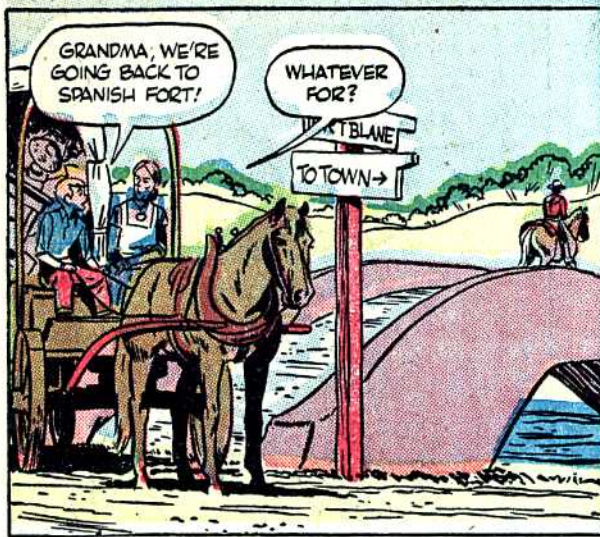


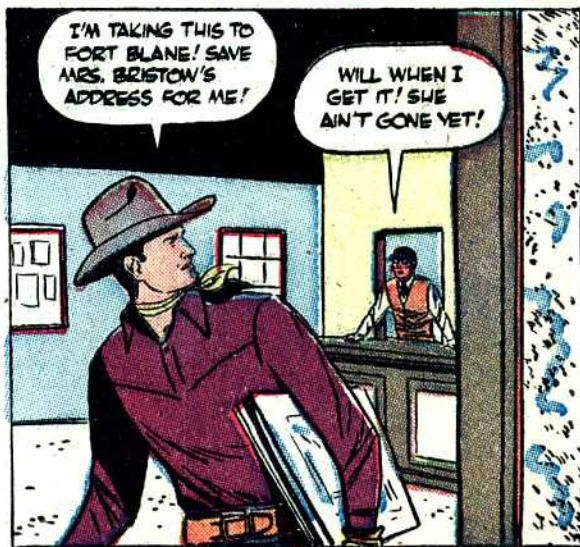
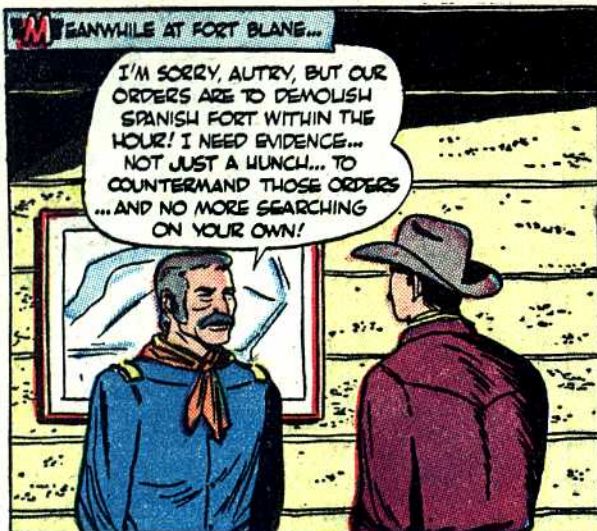






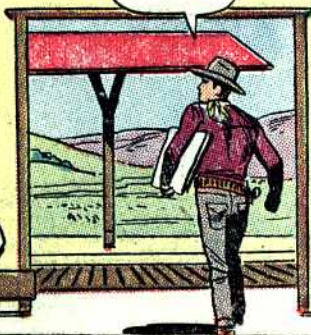






I HELD THE TRAIN LONG AS I COULD! MAYBE THE BRISTOWS ARE STAYING OVER TO SEE SPANISH FORT BLOWN UP!

NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!

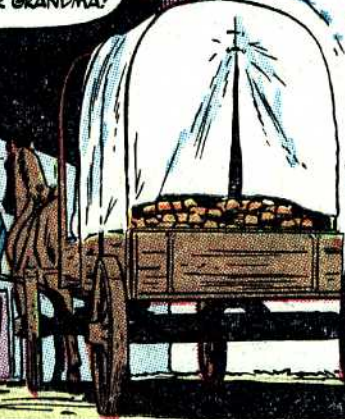


SOON...

I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN THAT KID WOULD KEEP LOOKING FOR TROUBLE TILL HE FOUND IT!



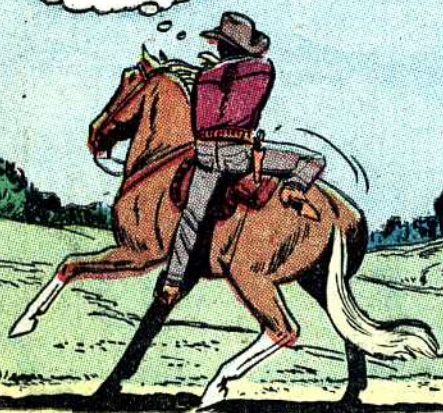
NOW JUST PUT ON ENOUGH FURNITURE TO COVER THE GOLD, SONNY! THEN YOU CAN PITCH THE REST DOWN BELOW WITH YOUR GRANDMA!



I DON'T DARE JUMP DODDS IN THE BASEMENT! HE'D GET THE BOY OR MRS. BRISTOW FOR SURE!



I'LL JUST HAVE TO GO IN THROUGH THE BACK DOOR!



ACCORDING TO THE MAJOR'S DRAWING, THE RIVER ENTRANCE SHOULD BE RIGHT ALONG IN HERE!

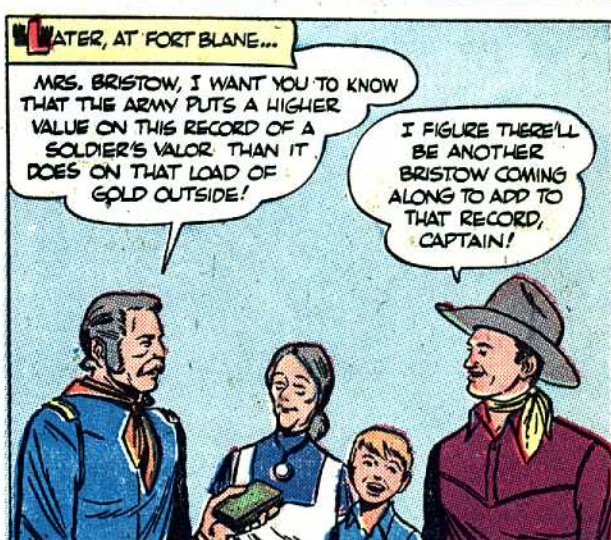
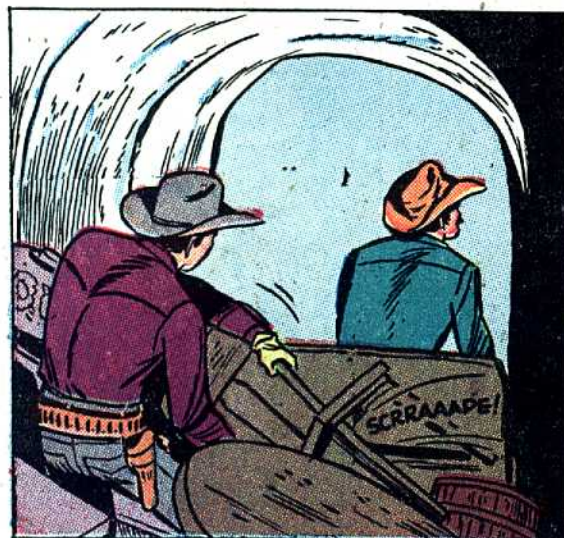
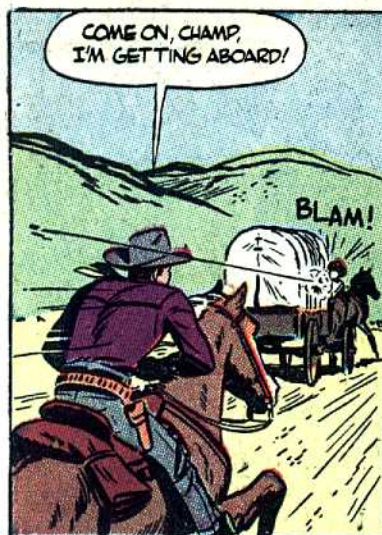












OL' BESSIE

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"I've shore got myself a fine pack of drivers!" Jess Whalen snorted. "Not one of you is man enough to drive the stage through to Big Rock City!"

The three men stood there silently, eyes averted.

Jess jumped to his feet. "You, Karl," he said, shoving a forefinger against the stocky man's chest. "I've seen you shoot a cigar out of a man's mouth, with that Winchester of yours!"

He stepped in front of the next man, a tall, lanky fellow with a dapper little mustache. "And you, Dan — I've seen you clean up a whole saloon full of drifters, just because someone called you a hillbilly!"

"And you, Gill!" Jess moved over before the third man. "Two hundred pounds of bone and muscle — the fastest driver in this part of the country!"

He stepped back, glaring at the trio. "All right — if you're afraid to go it alone, will you make the trip together? One as driver, one as guard, and one inside! What do you say?"

The three men looked at each other. Gil was the first to speak.

"You know we ain't afraid of no one, Jess!" he sputtered. "But, this Farley gang — there's an even dozen of 'em! It just ain't worth it, Jess!"

Dan straightened up, pulling at his mustache. "Me, I got a wife and two kids, Jess! Sorry!"

The stage line manager turned to the third man. "Well, Karl?"

The stout man sighed. "Guess there's nothin' more to say, Boss! None of us willin' to commit suicide, I guess!"

Jess sank back into his chair. "If we don't make the run this time," he said wearily,

"we're through! We'll have to shut down for good!" He raised his voice. "Do y' hear? Everyone in this company — forty-eight men — will be out of work! But you three . . . you can move on up North and get jobs!"

His voice softened, pleading. "The rest of us have got families! This's our home! It'll RUIN us!" He looked up, half-smiling. "What do you say, Boys — will you get the payroll through to Big Rock?"

Gil and Dan walked out of the office without a backward glance. Karl stepped up, rested a brawny hand on the manager's shoulder for a moment, then, without a word, turned away!

Jess leaned over his desk, head in his arms, alone and dejected.

"Someone says you're lookin' for a driver 'round here!" The speaker, a small, grizzled old man with an old-fashioned shotgun hooked under one arm, settled himself on the corner of the manager's desk. "I'm willin' to come out of retirement this one time, seein' as how you're in a kind of hole!"

Jess smiled wanly. "Oh, it's you, Shotgun! Thanks, but —"

"Now, you listen to me, Jess Mastin!" the old man declared, pounding a bony fist on the desk. "Folks laugh at me and Ol' Bessie, here" — he patted the big-bore gun affectionately — "but time was when we got the stage through Apaches, renegades, and the Union Army! And that's a fact!"

"I know, Shotgun," Jess said kindly. "You were the best in the business!" He sighed. "But times have changed! That gun of yours wouldn't stop twelve men — not the Farley gang! No, Shotgun . . . nice of you to offer, but —"

The old man stood up, erect, a new authority in his voice. "I'm a-goin' to do it, Jess!

You've got nothin' to lose, and you know it! It's either me and Ol' Bessie — or you fold up, and half the town's out of work!"

"I'd be sendin' you to your death, Shotgun!" the manager protested. But he was weakening.

Shotgun pushed his advantage. "You're not sendin' me — I'm volunteerin'! Besides, I'm gettin' old, and I'd rather go out shootin', than sit around waitin'!" He grinned. "But I've got a hunch that Ol' Shotgun won't be movin' to Boot Hill for a long time yet!"

He pulled up a chair, his eyes crackling with excitement. "Now, here's my ideal! First . . ."

Late the next afternoon, when the masked Farley gang stopped him just two miles out of Big Rock, Shotgun pulled the team to a halt and then rose in his seat, his gun at the ready. "Stand back, you young whipper-snappers!" he yelled fiercely.

The bandits laughed uproariously. "Toss that old blunderbuss down in the weeds, Pop!" one of them shouted. Then as Shotgun stood there, hesitating, the man added in a cold voice, "Throw it, Pop — quick!"

Shotgun, who knew a killer's voice when he heard one, did as he was told. But he winced visibly as Ol' Bessie landed in a clump of bushes.

"All this play actin' won't do you no good!" he declared. "Ain't nothin' aboard this stage but a few letters and some dress material!"

"Probably right, Boss," one of the men sneered to their leader, a slim man astride a sleek black horse. "They wouldn't send this ol' codger along with any payroll!"

"Maybe," the leader mused. "Then, again, maybe Jess Mastig did this on purpose, to throw us off guard!" He singled out two of

the gang. "You, and you — go over that coach with a fine-toothed comb!"

The pair did so but, shortly afterward, jumped down and walked up to their leader. "The ol' coot's right, Boss!" one of them growled, disgusted. His companion nodded. "No payroll there — I'd stake my life on it!"

As the two mounted their horses, Shotgun stood silently, waiting nervously for a quick-tempered trigger to cut him down.

But the gang's chief raised his hand and, without another word, the entire troupe rode off.

Shotgun sat down for a moment, weak with relief. Then, smiling, he jumped down to the side of the road to retrieve Ol' Bessie.

When he drove into town two days later, the old driver screamed a wild Apache yell to insure an audience. Then, with most of the town gathered around, he announced to one and all that the payroll had gone through. And he enjoyed his triumph to the last drop, shaking hands with every man, woman and child in the crowd.

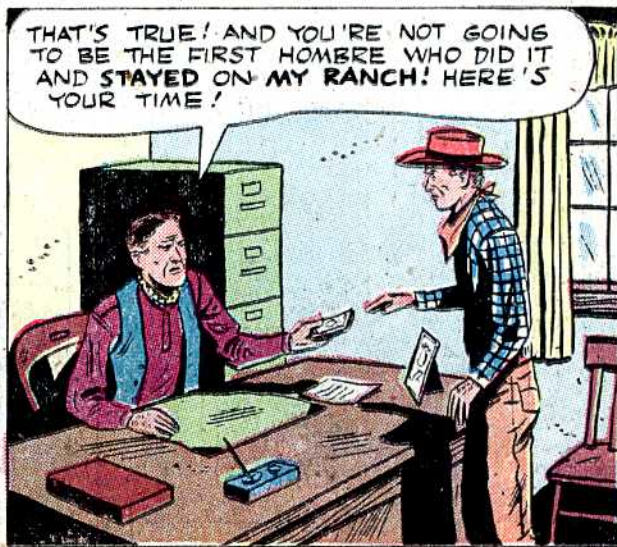
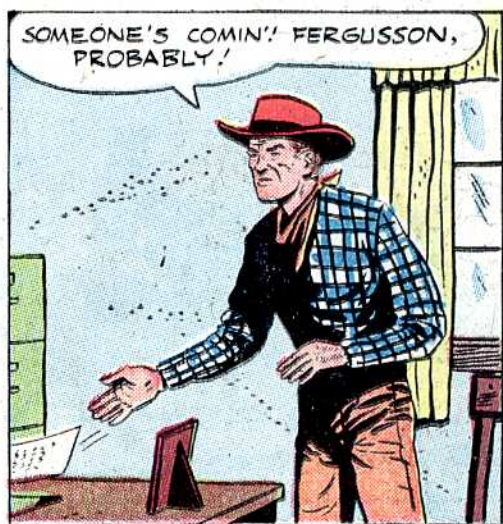
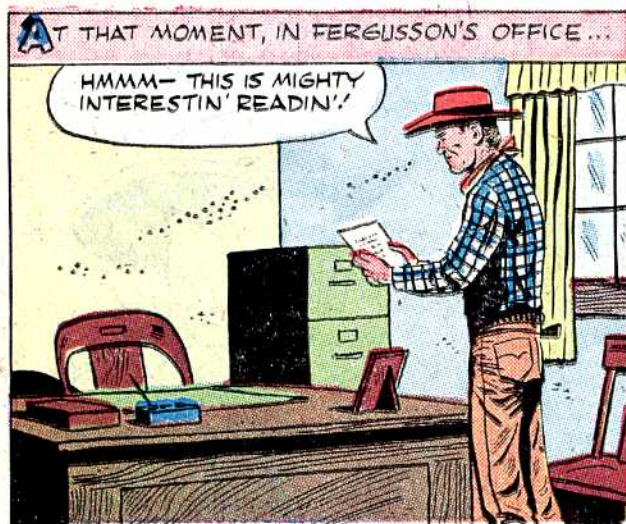
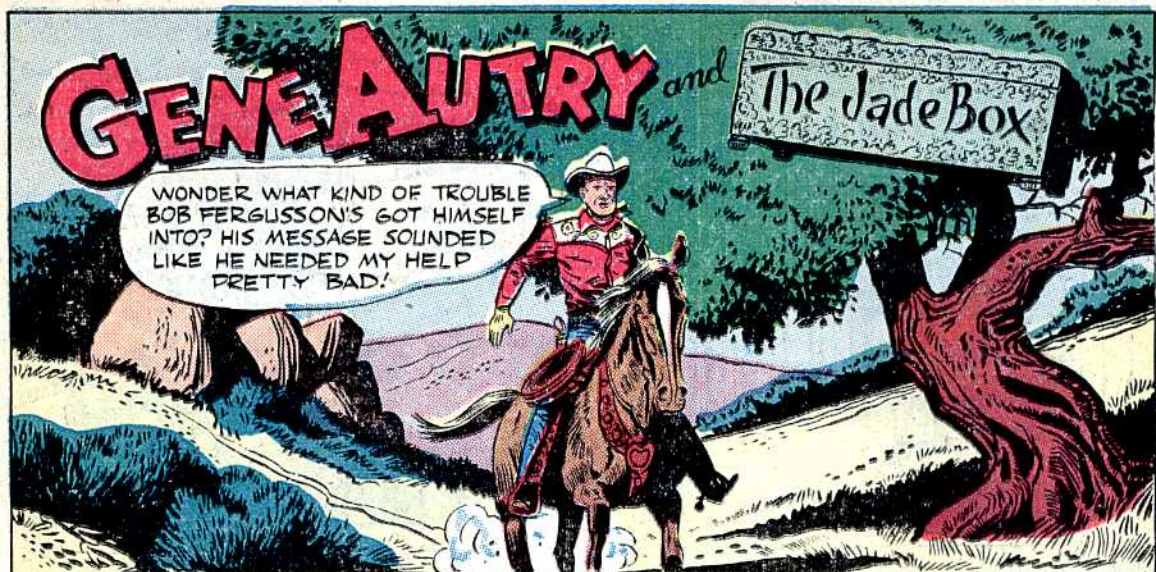
Later, inside the stage line office, the three young drivers pressed him for details.

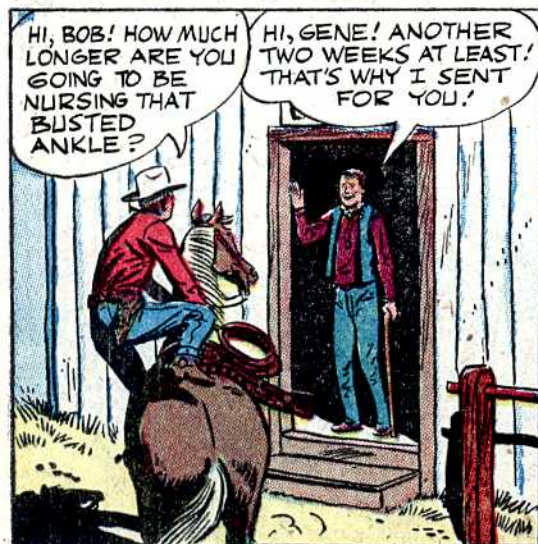
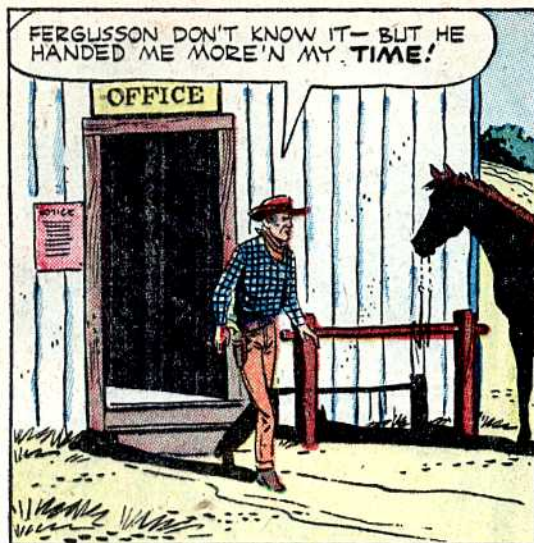
"Just plain, common, old-fashioned hoss sense!" Shotgun gloated. "I got Jess here to change that money into big bills — Ol' Bessie did the rest!"

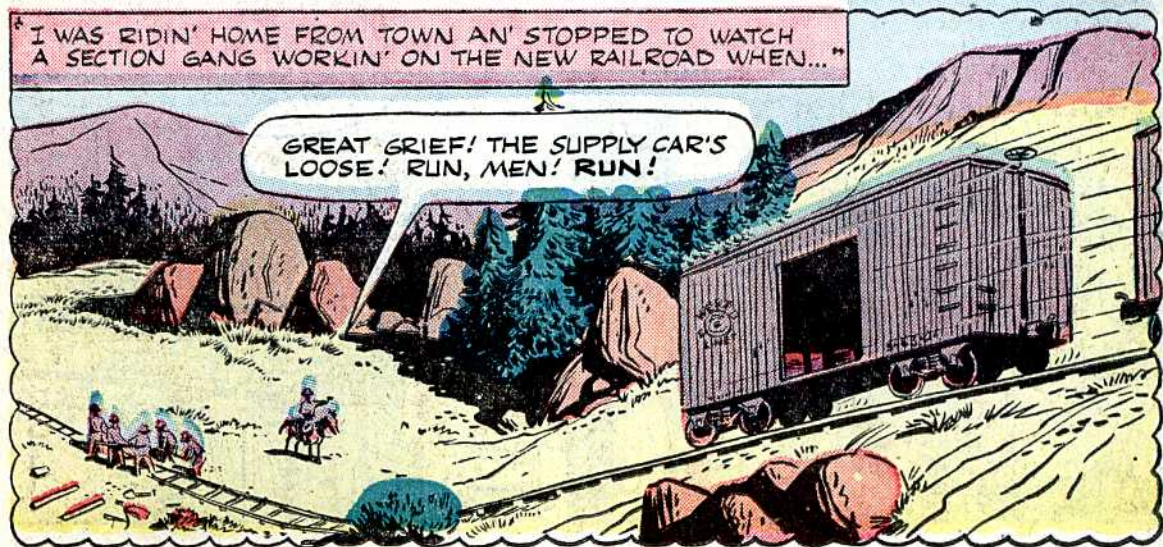
Dan, the tall driver, shook his head in disbelief. "You mean you backed down the whole Farley gang — with that moth-eaten ol' double-barrel?"

A happy grin spread over Shotgun's face. "This moth-eaten ol' double-barrel can do a lot of things your new-fangled peashooters will never do!" He chuckled. "Ol' Bessie carried that payroll right through the whole Farley gang without firin' a shot — she was muzzle-loaded with them big bills!"









"THE MEN SCATTERED FAST! BUT ONE OF THE CHINESE CAUGHT HIS FOOT IN THE TIES..."



"IT PANICKED HIM AN' HE COULDN'T GET FREE"



"I GOT HIM LOOSE JUST IN TIME!"

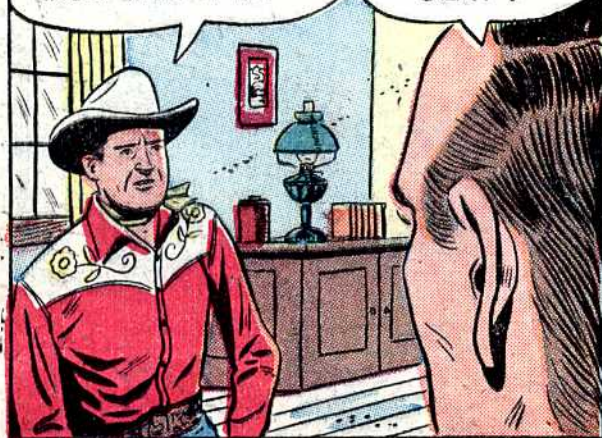


I TALKED HIM INTO GIVIN' UP RAILROAD WORK AN' COMIN' TO COOK FOR ME! WHEN, SIX MONTHS OR SO AGO, HIS UNCLE DIED IN CHINA, I GAVE HIM THE CASH TO GO BACK! THAT'S THE LAST I HEARD OF HIM TILL YESTERDAY!



THAT PROBABLY EXPLAINS WHY HE WANTS TO GIVE YOU A FORTUNE! DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS?

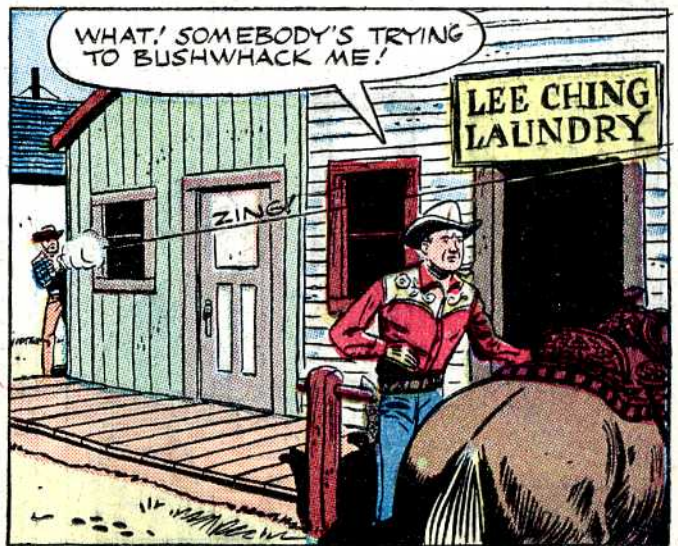
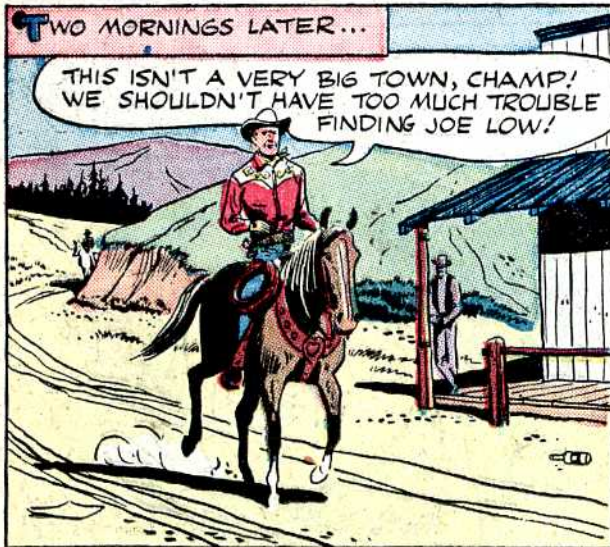
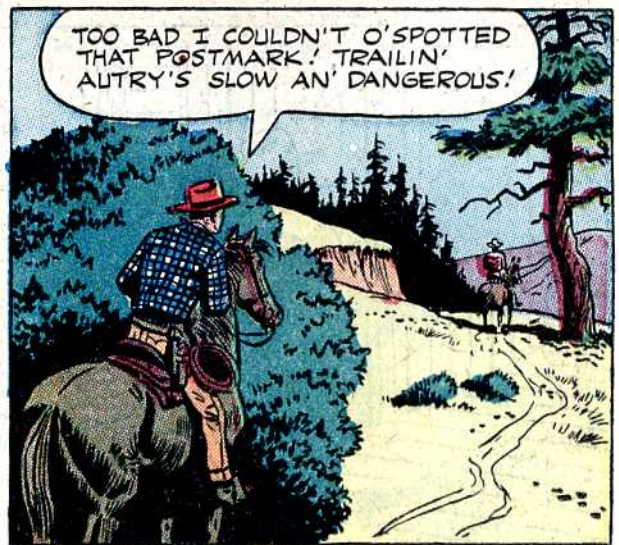
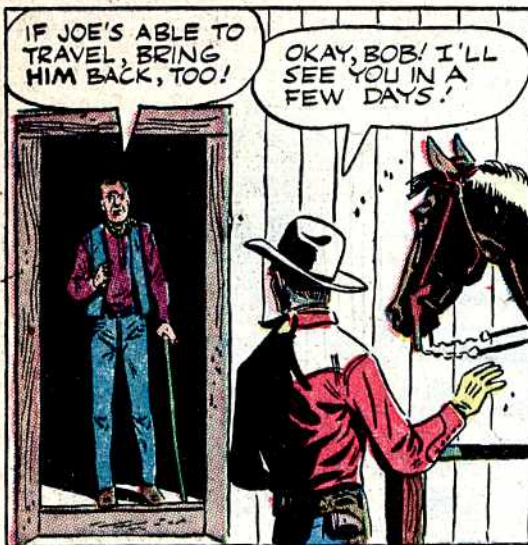
NO! AND THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE YOU TO FIND OUT! OKAY?

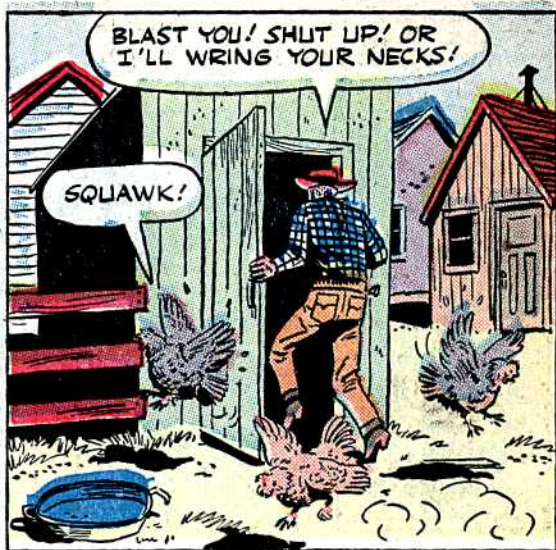


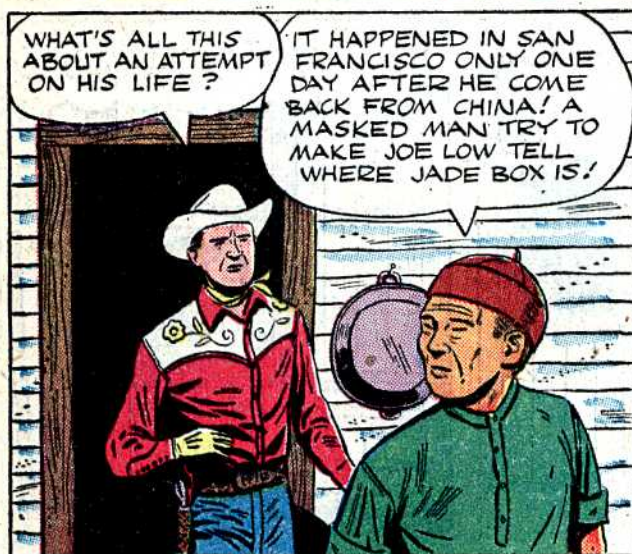
I'M ON MY WAY!

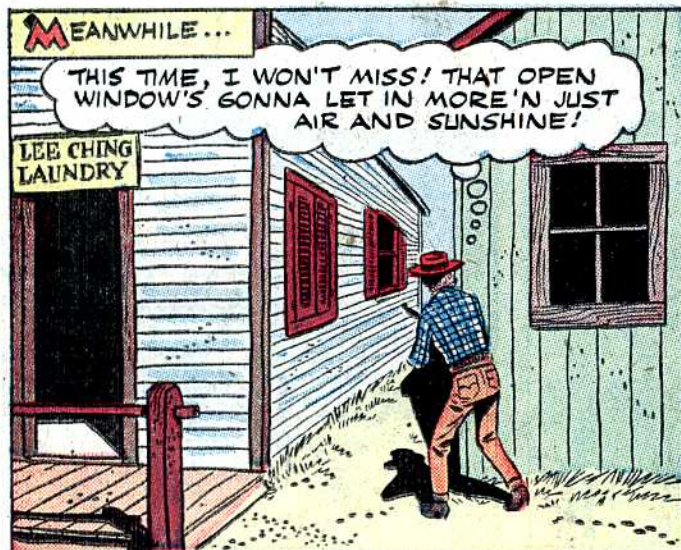
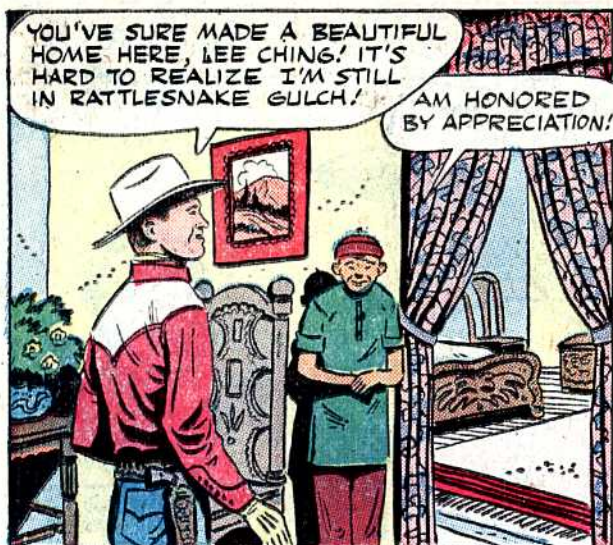
WAIT! HERE'S A NOTE AUTHORIZIN' YOU TO ACCEPT WHATEVER IT IS! JOE KNOWS YOU SO YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE!

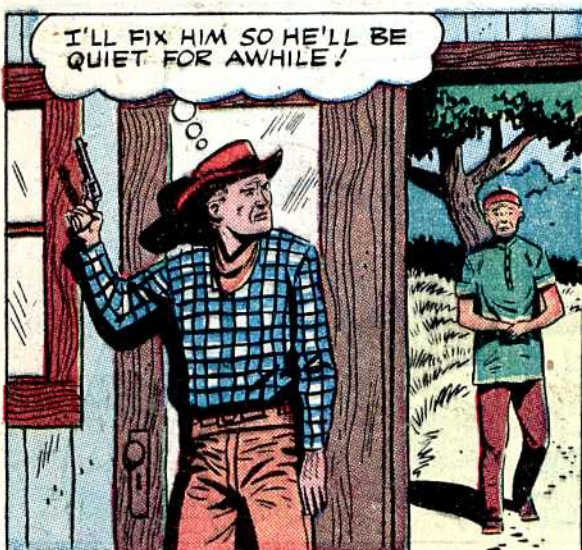












AFTER I TAKE CARE O' AUTRY, IT
OUGHTA BE EASY TO GET THAT
FORTUNE FROM JOE LOW!



MIGHTY QUIET IN HERE! WONDER
WHERE THEY ARE?



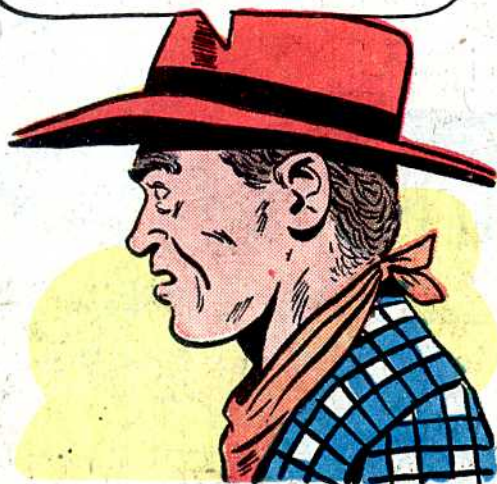
IT'S JOE! ALONE AN' SLEEPIN'!
THIS IS LUCK!



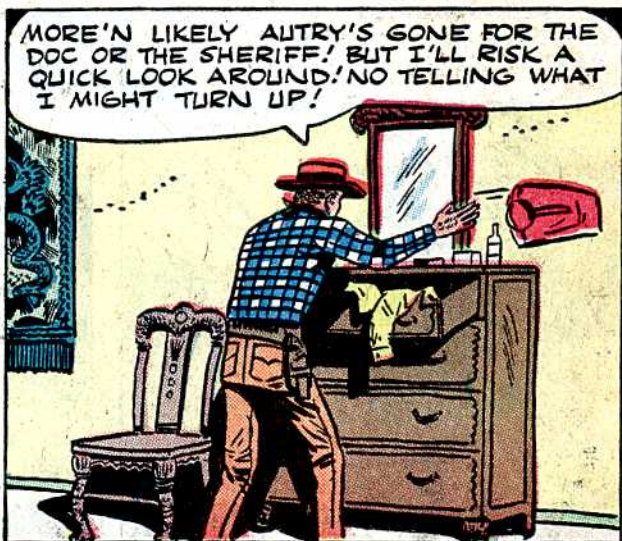
COME ON, JOE! WAKE UP!



GREAT GUNS! HE'S DEAD!



MORE'N LIKELY AUTRY'S GONE FOR THE
DOC OR THE SHERIFF! BUT I'LL RISK A
QUICK LOOK AROUND! NO TELLING WHAT
I MIGHT TURN UP!



MEANWHILE AT THE ANTLER HOTEL...

HOWDY, HERB!

GENE AUTRY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP HERE?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I'M ON THE TRAIL OF A FORTUNE!

DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE GOT AN ATTACK OF GOLD FEVER!

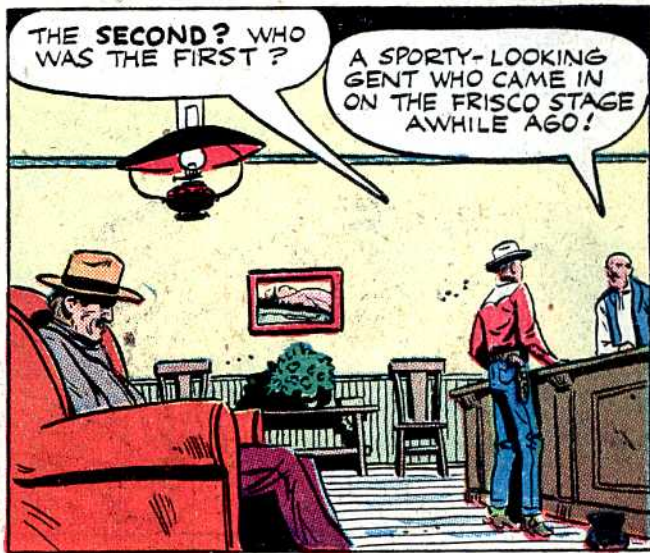


NOT EXACTLY! DO YOU KNOW JOE LOW, LEE CHING'S COUSIN?

NO, I DON'T! BUT YOU'RE THE **SECOND** PERSON TODAY WHO'S ASKED ME THAT!

THE **SECOND**? WHO WAS THE FIRST?

A SPORTY-LOOKING GENT WHO CAME IN ON THE FRISCO STAGE AWHILE AGO!



LET'S SEE— HE REGISTERED... HERE WE ARE! RAN BITTINGER! DO YOU KNOW HIM?

YES! AND I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING **GOOD** ABOUT HIM! IS HE IN HIS ROOM?

NO! THE LAST I SAW OF HIM HE WAS HEADING FOR THE BLUE EAGLE CAFE! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

I'LL TELL YOU LATER... AFTER I FIND BITTINGER!



SO, THAT TINHORN'S INTERESTED IN JOE! I'LL BET HE'S THE HOMBRE WHO BEAT JOE UP IN SAN FRANCISCO AND TOOK THAT SHOT AT ME!



I'M LOOKIN' FOR A TALL, REDHEADED, FLASHILY-DRESSED HOMBRE! SEEN ANYBODY LIKE THAT?

A FELLOW WHO LOOKED LIKE THAT JUST LEFT—ABOUT TEN MINUTES AGO!



DID HE SAY WHERE HE WAS GOING?

NOPE! HE JUST ASKED ME IF I KNEW A CHINESE NAMED JOE LOW! I SENT HIM TO SEE LEE CHING!

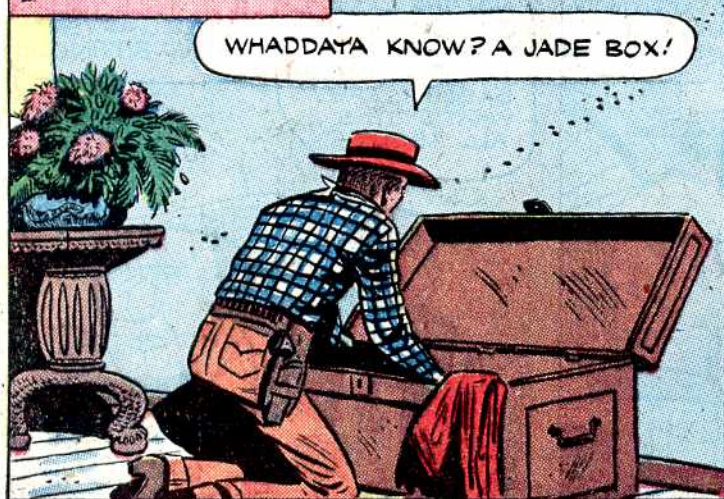


SOMETHING TELLS ME I'D BETTER GET BACK TO JOE, PRONTO!



IN THE MEANTIME ...

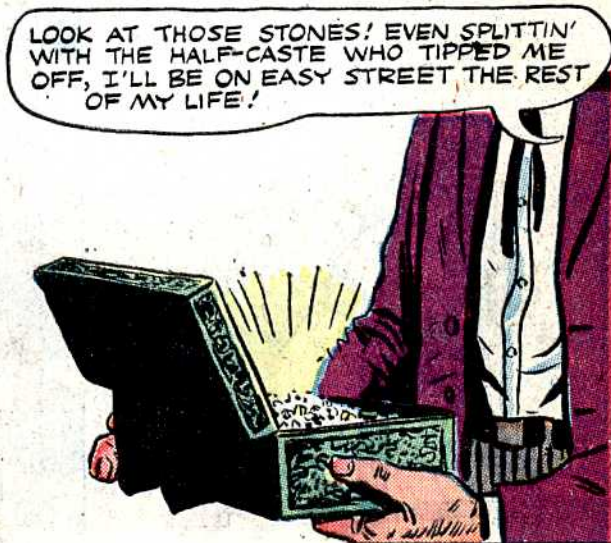
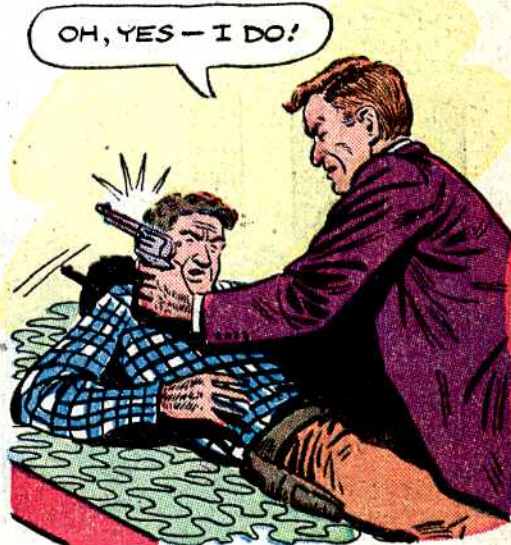
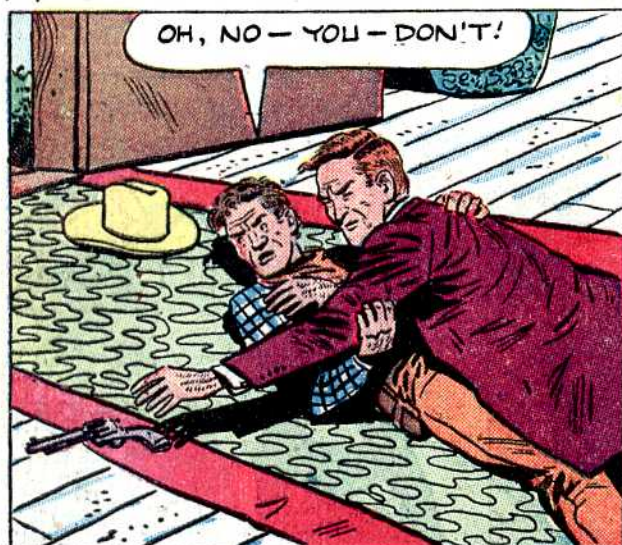
WHADDAYA KNOW? A JADE BOX!

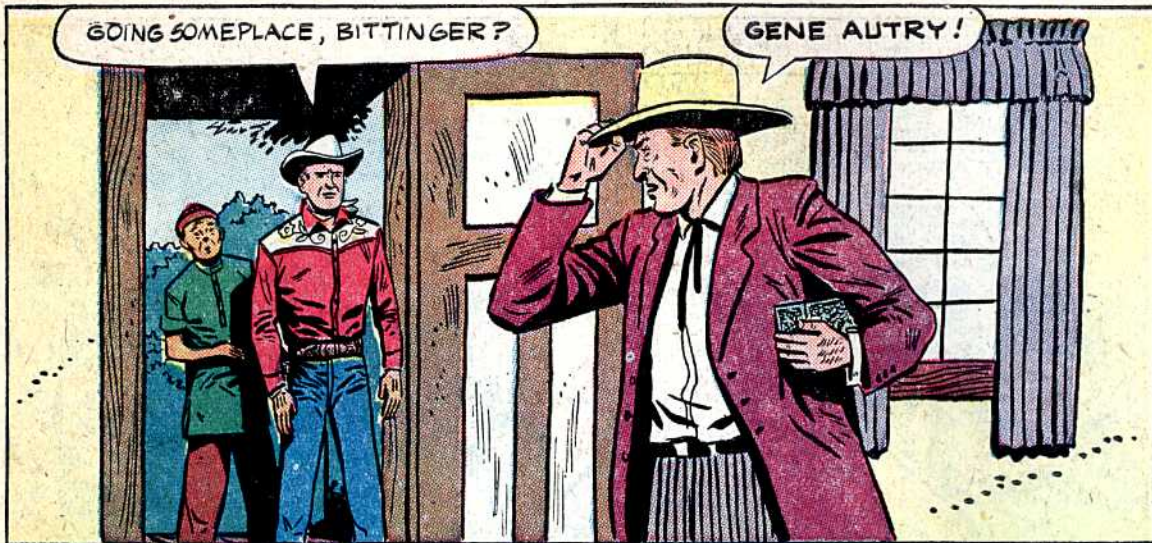


THERE'S NO LOCK ON IT! HOW IN THE BLAZES DO YOU OPEN IT?









AFTER SPIKE TELLS HIS STORY...

I DIDN'T KILL JOE! I SWEAR IT! I WAS GONNA STEAL THE JADE BOX, BUT THIS HOMBRE TOOK IT AWAY FROM ME!



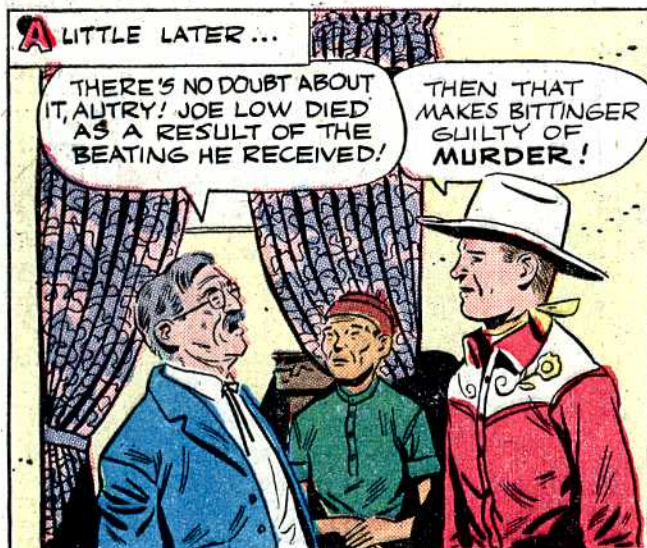
I RECKON THAT'S ENOUGH TO HOLD BOTH OF YOU ON ATTEMPTED ROBBERY CHARGES! MOVE! I'M HANDING YOU OVER TO THE SHERIFF!



A LITTLE LATER...

THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, AUTRY! JOE LOW DIED AS A RESULT OF THE BEATING HE RECEIVED!

THEN THAT MAKES BITTINGER GUILTY OF MURDER!



WITHOUT WITNESSES, WILL BE DIFFICULT TO CONVICT HIM, MISTER AUTRY!

NOT IF I CAN PROVE HE WAS IN SAN FRANCISCO LAST WEEK AND THAT HE FOLLOWED JOE HERE! I'M SURE THAT WON'T BE TOO HARD!



A MONTH LATER...

THAT WAS MIGHTY FINE WORK, GENE! BITTINGER NEVER WOULD O' BEEN CONVICTED WITHOUT THE EVIDENCE YOU DUG UP!

NOW JOE LOW SLEEP IN PEACE!

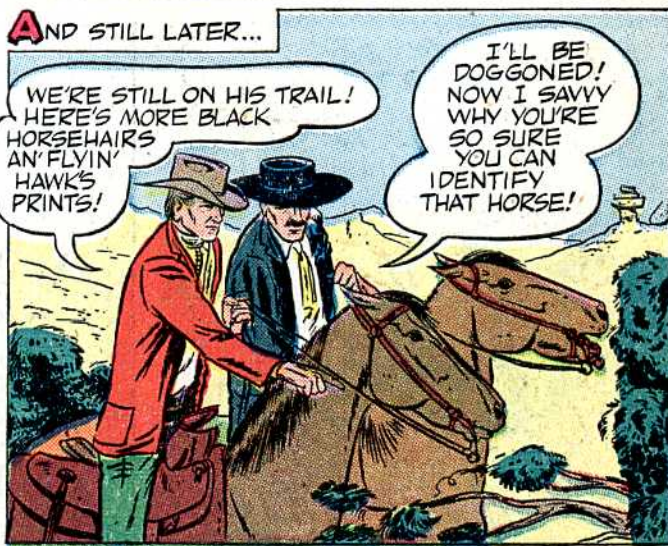
I RECKON WE ALL WILL, FERGUSSON!



the HITCHHIKING bandit

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AFTER ANOTHER HALF-
HOUR'S RIDING...

FUNNY THE
THIEF'D RIDE
ALONG HERE! THE
TRAIL'S SO EASY TO
FOLLOW IN THESE
CINDERS!

MAYBE HE WAS
TRYIN' TO CATCH
THAT TRAIN
YONDER!

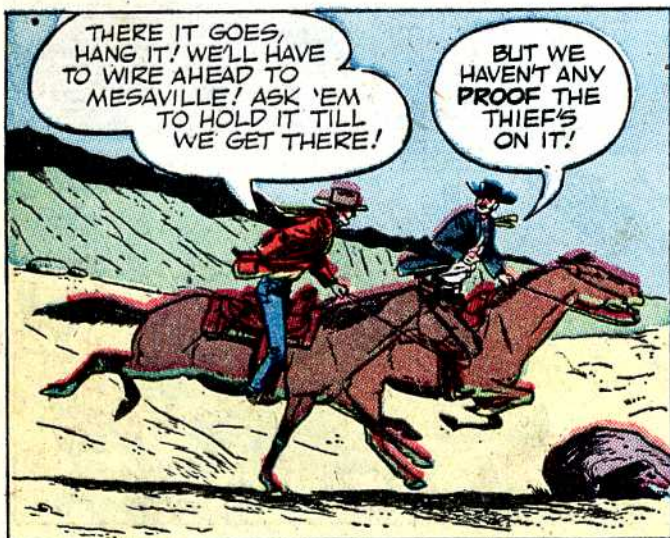


IN THAT CASE
WE'D BETTER GET
A MOVE ON! SOUNDS
LIKE THAT TRAIN'S
ABOUT READY
TO PULL OUT!



THERE IT GOES,
HANG IT! WE'LL HAVE
TO WIRE AHEAD TO
MESAVILLE! ASK 'EM
TO HOLD IT TILL
WE GET THERE!

BUT WE
HAVEN'T ANY
PROOF THE
THIEF'S ON IT!



I DON'T
NEED ANY
MORE PROOF
THAN THOSE
PRINTS,
SHERIFF!

RIGHT!
AN' JUDGIN'
FROM WHERE
THEY STOP, I'D
SAY FLYING
HAWK'S BOUND
FOR
MESAVILLE,
TOO!



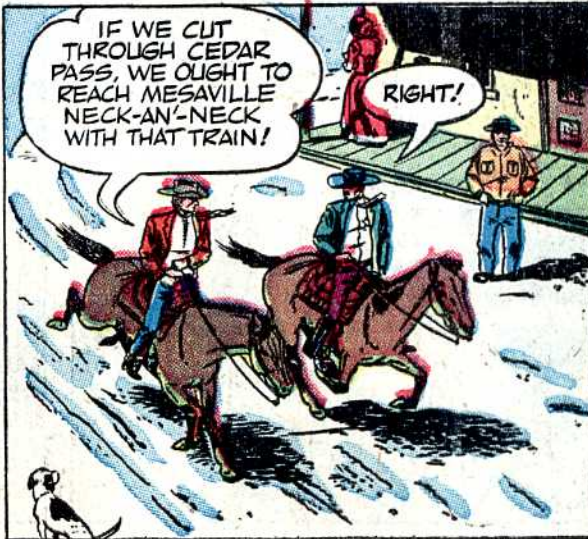
TOM! GET
THIS WIRE OFF
PRONTO! IT'S MIGHTY
IMPORTANT!

OKAY!

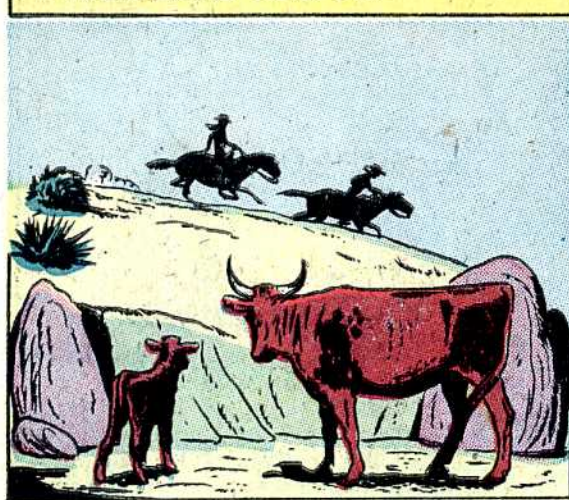


IF WE CUT
THROUGH CEDAR
PASS, WE OUGHT TO
REACH MESAVILLE
NECK-AN-NECK
WITH THAT TRAIN!

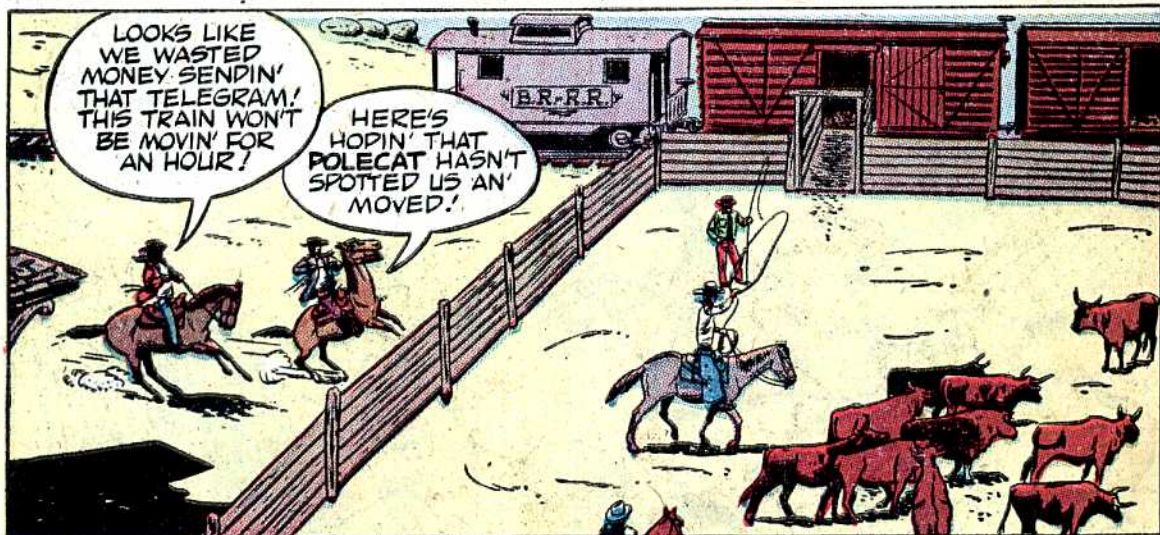
RIGHT!

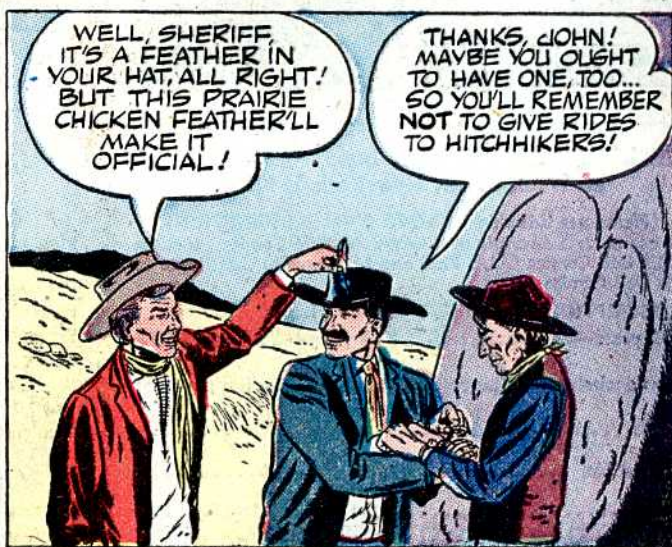
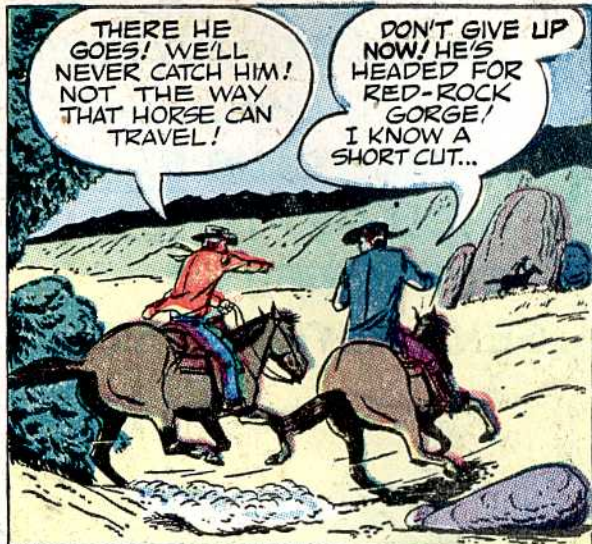


THE MILES FALL AWAY UNDER THUNDERING HOOFS...



AND BEFORE TOO LONG...





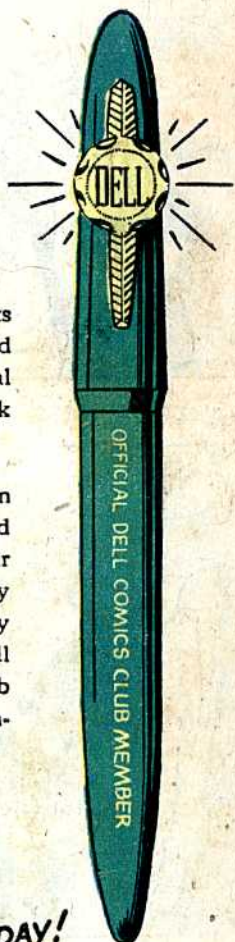
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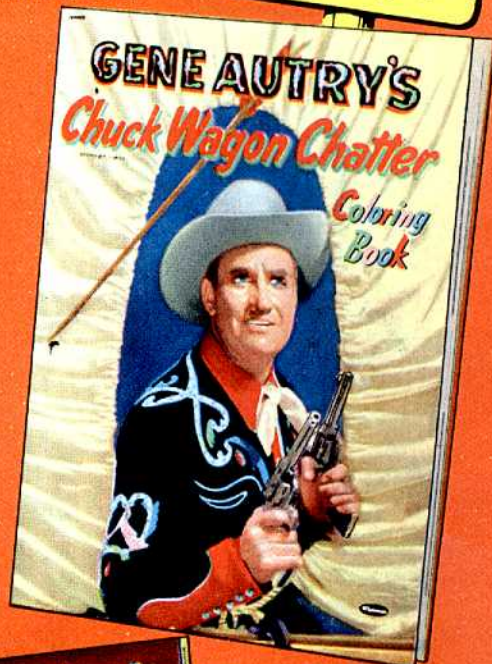
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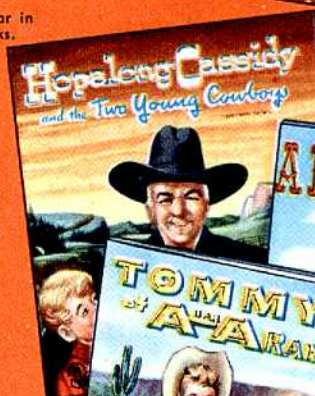
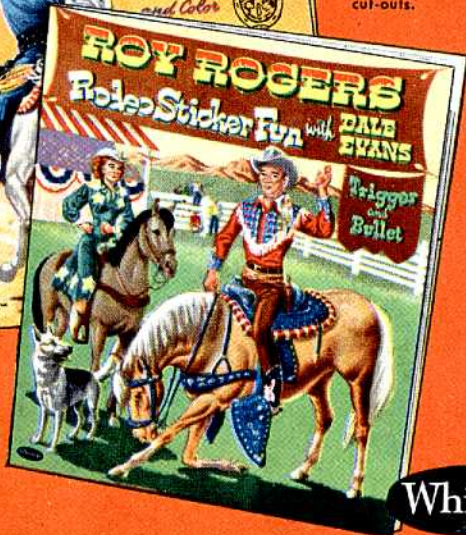
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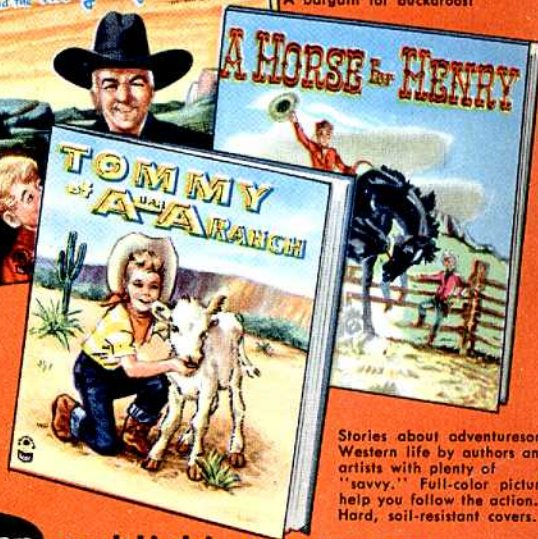
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WHAT SPARKS A CHAMPION SPARKS YOU!
and Champions choose Wheaties!

HEY, GANG! THERE'S FERRIS ON THAT TRUCK SIGN! CAN WHEATIES HELP SPARK ME, TOO, FERRIS?

I'LL SAY! IT'S REAL ENERGY FOOD

"GAME TIME"

WHITE SOX ARE FIGHTING TO HOLD ONE RUN LEAD AS RIVALS HAVE MAN ON 1ST, ONE OUT IN 9TH INNING

WE OUGHTA BUNT-BUT THAT FAIN CHARGES BUNTS TOO WELL!

I'LL FAKE A BUNT TO DRAW HIM IN THEN HIT THE BALL PAST HIM- OKAY?

