

NOV.-JAN.

101



Gene Autry's **Champion**

• A DELL COMIC •
DELL
• A DELL COMIC •
• A DELL COMIC •



NIGHT HORSE

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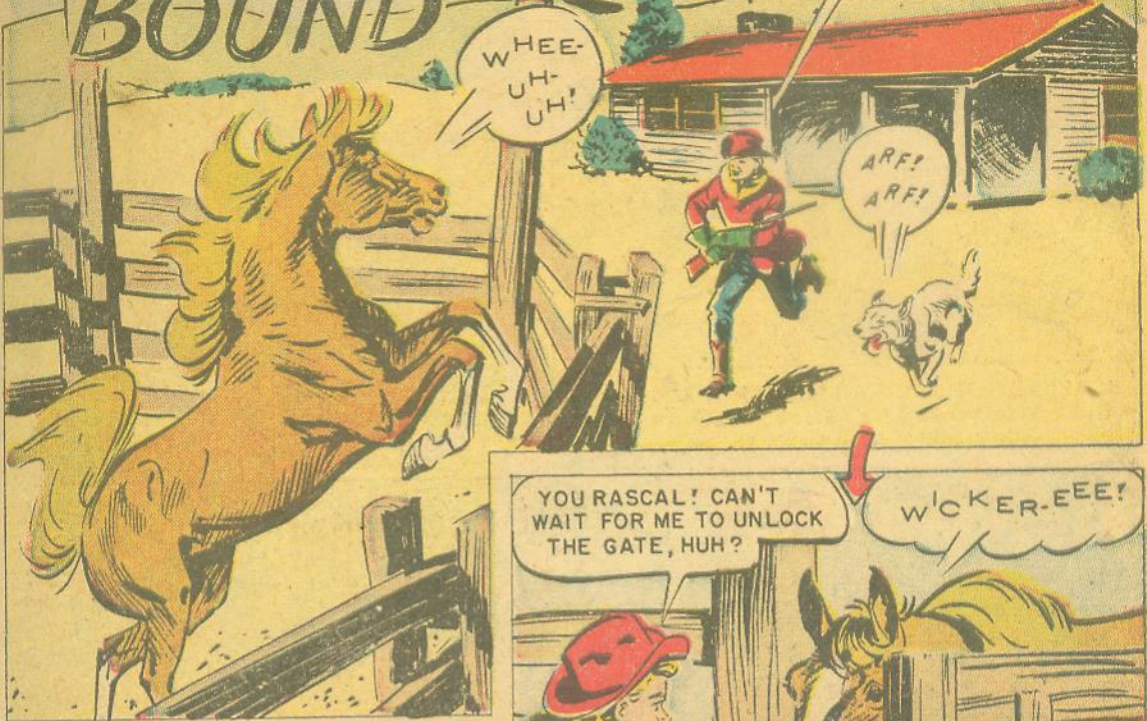


AFTER A HARD WORKING DAY DRIVING CATTLE, THE WRANGLER TAKES ALL THE HORSES OUT TO GRAZE, EXCEPT, OF COURSE, THOSE BEING USED BY MEN WATCHING THE BEDDED DOWN HERD. ALL THE OTHER COWPUNCHERS TURN IN AND THIS MAKES IT HARD TO DEAL WITH ANY SUDDEN EMERGENCY SUCH AS A STAMPEDE. LONG AGO, CATTLEMEN ESTABLISHED THE CUSTOM OF KEEPING A "NIGHT HORSE" ALL READY TO GO. HE IS NOT USED DURING THE DAY SO THAT HE WILL BE RESTED AND READY. HE IS USUALLY KEPT TIED TO THE CHUCKWAGON OR A PEG DRIVEN IN THE GROUND AND HIS SADDLE AND BLANKET ARE ALWAYS NEAR BY, READY TO BE THROWN ON HIM AT AN INSTANT'S NOTICE. AND HE'S USUALLY THE BEST HORSEFLESH THE RANCH OWNS, A FINE, STRONG HORSE, USED TO WORKING CATTLE AT NIGHT AND IN DIFFICULT, DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.

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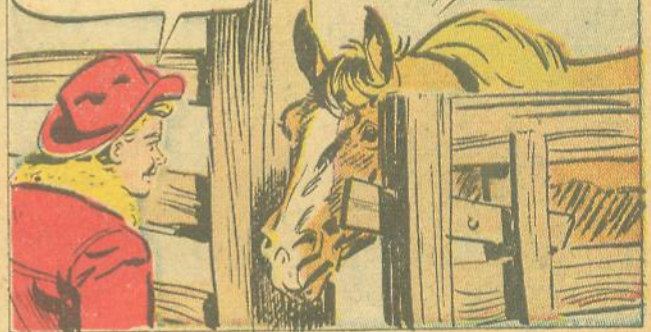
BLIZZARD BOUND

ONE WINTRY MORNING AT THE FLYING-A...



YOU RASCAL! CAN'T WAIT FOR ME TO UNLOCK THE GATE, HUH?

WICKER-EEE!



IF YOU'RE GOING RABBIT HUNTING, RICKY, BETTER STAY CLEAR OF THE HILLS! FEELS MIGHTY LIKE SNOW!

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT, THOUGH!



DON'T WORRY, UNCLE SMOKY! WE'LL BE BACK BY SUPPER-TIME!

MAKE IT EARLIER'N THAT IF YOU GET SOME COTTON-TAILS! MY MOUTH'S WATERING FOR FRIED RABBIT!



LATER...

WOOF!

WOOF!

MOVE, CHAMP! REBEL'S
FLUSHED SOMETHING!

A YOUNG
GRIZZLY!

NO SENSE SHOOTING FROM THIS ANGLE! I'D
ONLY WOUND HIM! EVEN A YOUNG GRIZZLY'S
DANGEROUS WHEN HE'S HURT!

REBEL! COME BACK HERE!
WE'RE AFTER RABBITS!
REMEMBER?

HALF AN HOUR LATER...

JEEPERS! IT'S SURE BLOWING
UP COLD! MAYBE WE'D
BETTER TURN BACK!

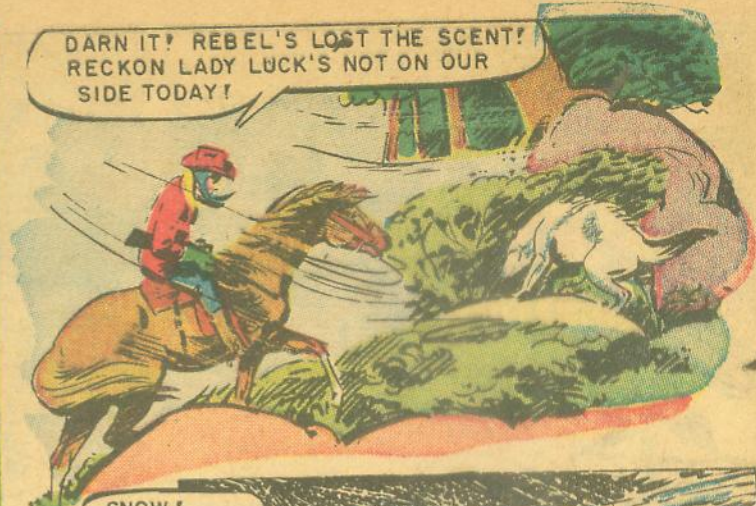
BUT AT THAT MOMENT...

WOOF!

A COTTONTAIL! LET'S
GO, CHAMP!



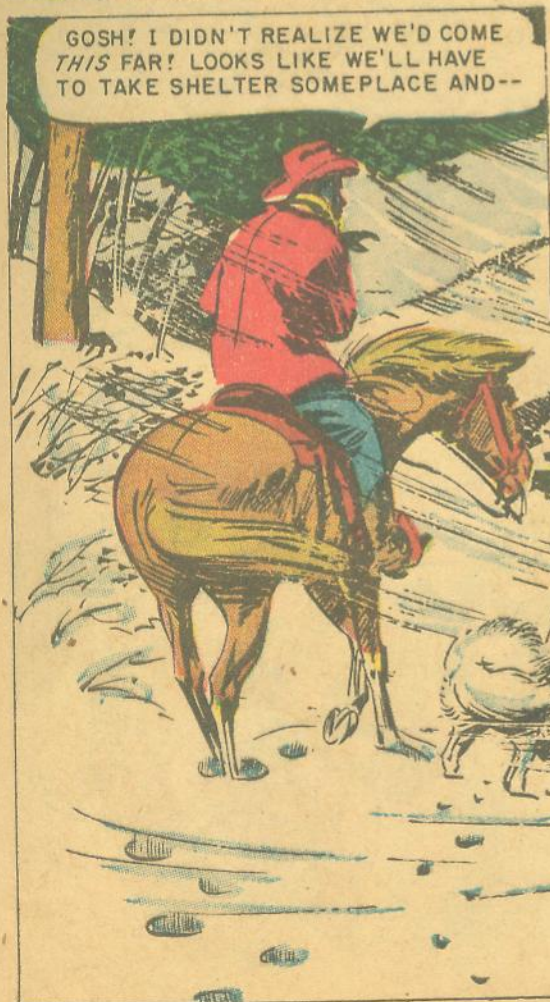
DARN IT! REBEL'S LOST THE SCENT!
RECKON LADY LUCK'S NOT ON OUR
SIDE TODAY!



SNOW!
COMING DOWN
THICK AND FAST, TOO!
WE'D BETTER GET
OUT OF THESE
WOODS PRONTO!



GOSH! I DIDN'T REALIZE WE'D COME
THIS FAR! LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE
TO TAKE SHELTER SOMEPLACE AND--



I KNOW! RANGER
KELLY'S CABIN!
WE'LL MAKE FOR IT
AND WAIT TILL
THE STORM
BLOWS OVER!



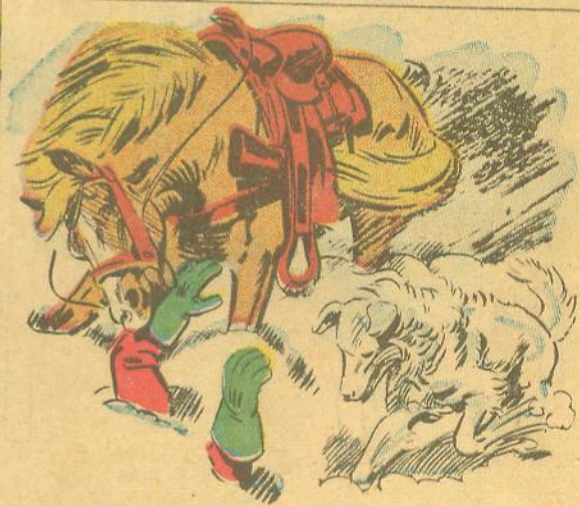
THE STORM'S FURY MOUNTS...

GOLLY! I CAN'T EVEN SEE WHERE I'M GOING! WE'VE GOT TO FIND SHELTER FAST!



SUDDENLY..

DOOMPH!



WOW! THAT WAS A SPILL! (PUFF!) KNOCKED THE BREATH OUT OF ME!



WE'VE GOT TO KEEP MOVING, FELLAS! OR WE'RE DONE FOR!



A LITTLE
LATER ...

KEEP GOING, CHAMP! IF WE CAN
GET UNDER THAT ROCK LEDGE,
WE'LL BE OUT OF THIS WIND!



WE MADE IT!



WE'LL KEEP EACH OTHER WARM AND
GET SOME REST! I'M ABOUT WORN
OUT!

WHUH!

WHUFF!

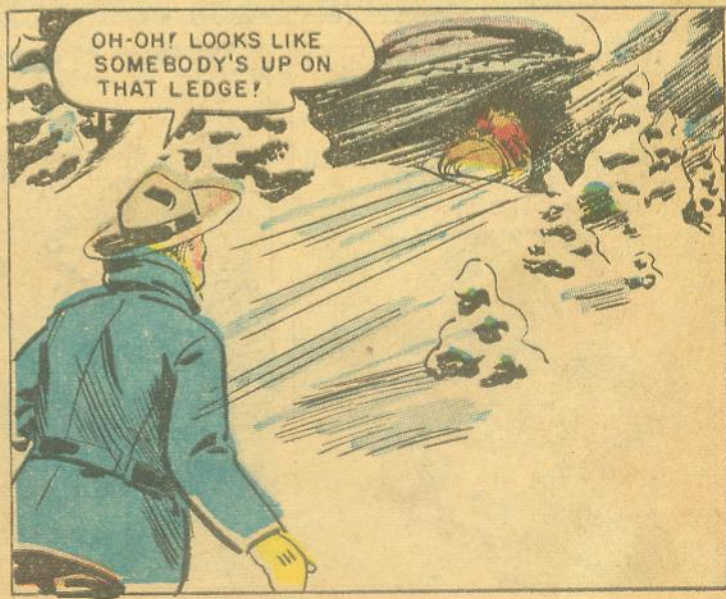


AT THE SAME TIME, FOREST RANGER,
TERRY KELLY, BATTLES THE STORM.

I'M SURE I HEARD A DOG
BARKING! BUT TRYING TO
SPOT ANYTHING IN THIS
BLIZZARD — — —

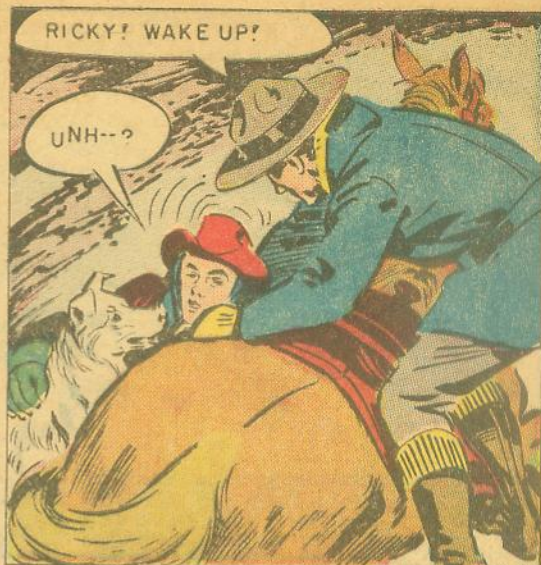


OH-OH! LOOKS LIKE
SOMEBODY'S UP ON
THAT LEDGE!





WHY, IT'S CHAMPION!---
AND REBEL--- AND
RICKY WEST!



RICKY! WAKE UP!

UNH--?



RANGER KELLY?
GOSH! I MUST'VE
GONE TO SLEEP!

LUCKY I SPOTTED
YOU, OR YOU MIGHT
NEVER HAVE WAKED
UP! MY CABIN'S
CLOSE BY! THINK
YOU CAN MAKE
IT?



WE CAN TRY,
EH, BOYS?

WHUH-UH-UH!

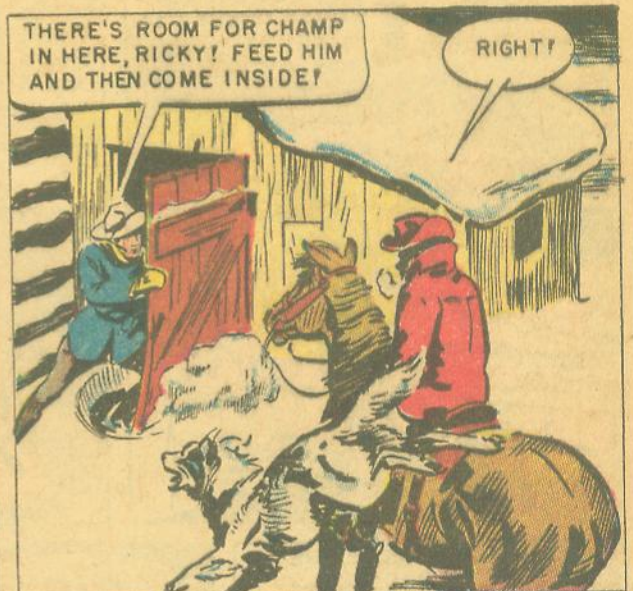
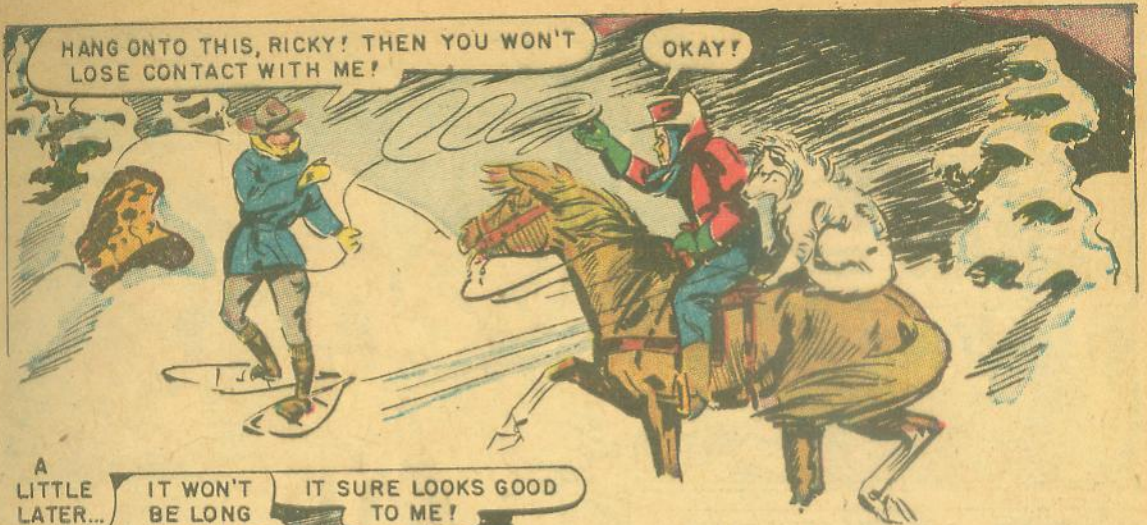
ARF!



I HATE TO MAKE YOU PUSH ON
BUT I'VE GOT TO GET TO A PHONE
AND CHECK ON THE WELLS FAMILY
IN PIÑON PASS! JIM WENT TO
TOWN YESTERDAY FOR SUPPLIES!
AND THERE'S A NEW BABY! IF
THEY GET SNOWED IN---



DON'T WORRY! WE'LL GET THERE SOME-
HOW! I'LL TAKE REBEL UP WITH ME! HE
COULDN'T GO TEN FEET IN THOSE
DRIFTS!





AFTER WE EAT, I'M GOING TO TRY TO MAKE IT INTO THE VALLEY ON FOOT! I'LL GET WORD TO SMOKY THAT YOU ARE OKAY!



I HOPE YOU GET THROUGH! THIS STORM'S A LULU!

I'VE BEEN OUT IN WORSE ONES! I'LL MAKE IT!



THERE'S PLENTY OF FOOD AND WOOD HERE! YOU SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT TILL I GET BACK!

SURE THING!



THAT NIGHT--- ABOVE THE ROAR OF THE STORM...

NEE-AUGH!

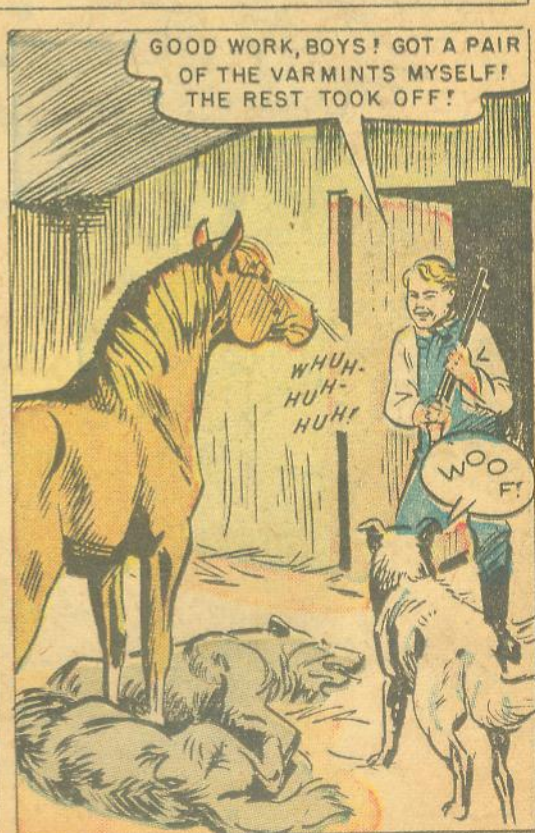
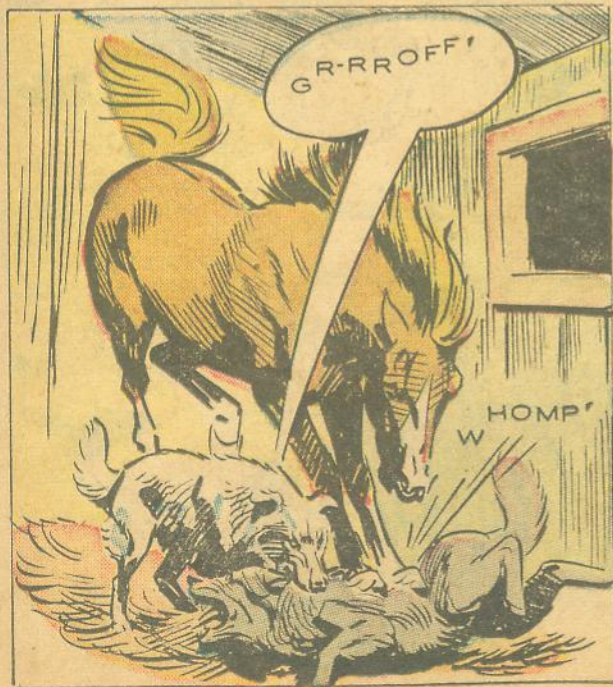
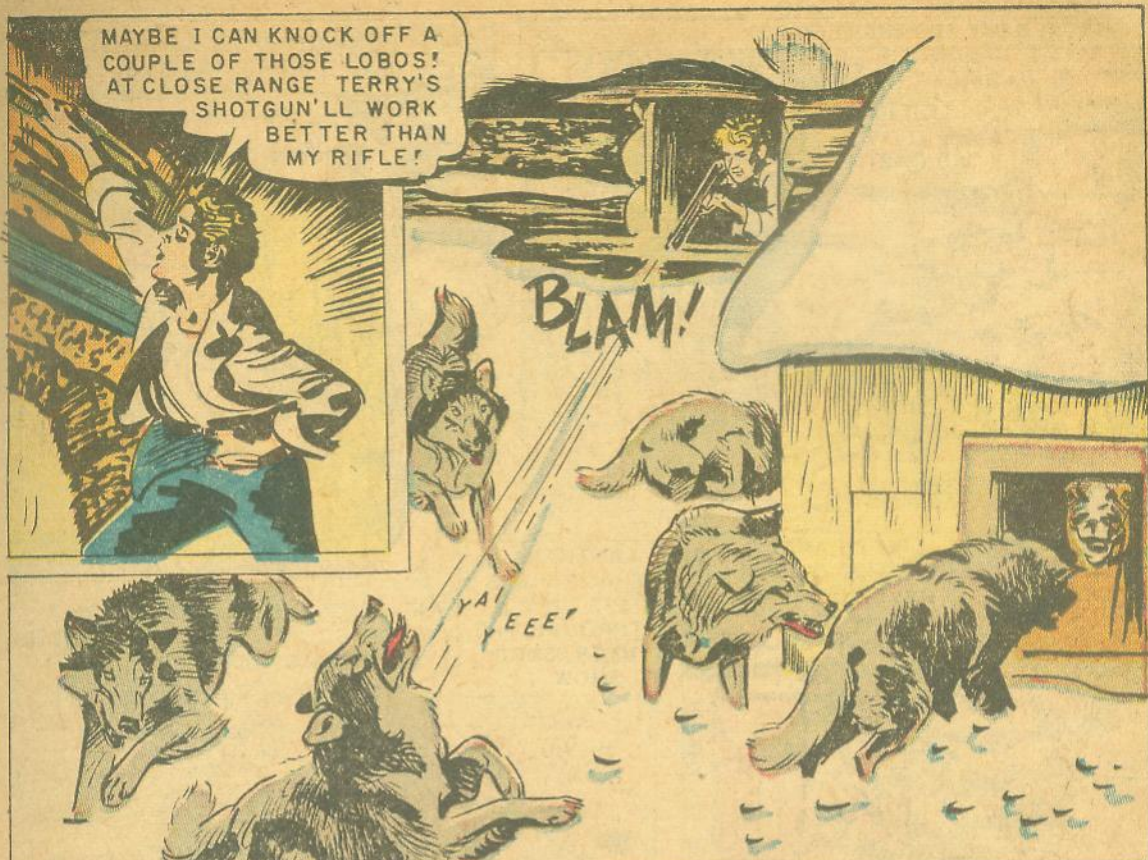
THAT'S CHAMP! SOMETHING'S WRONG!

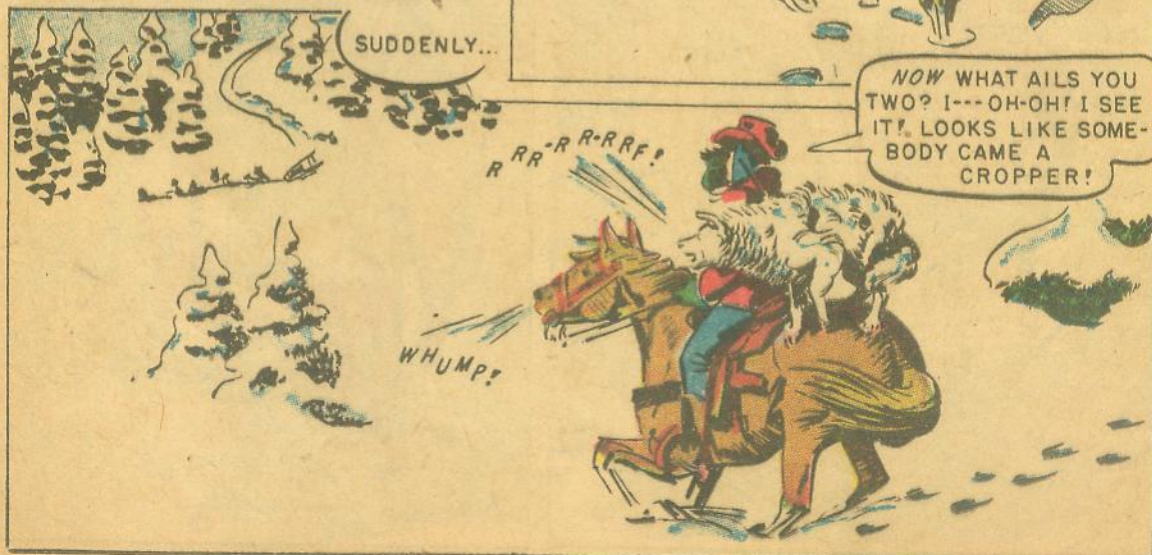
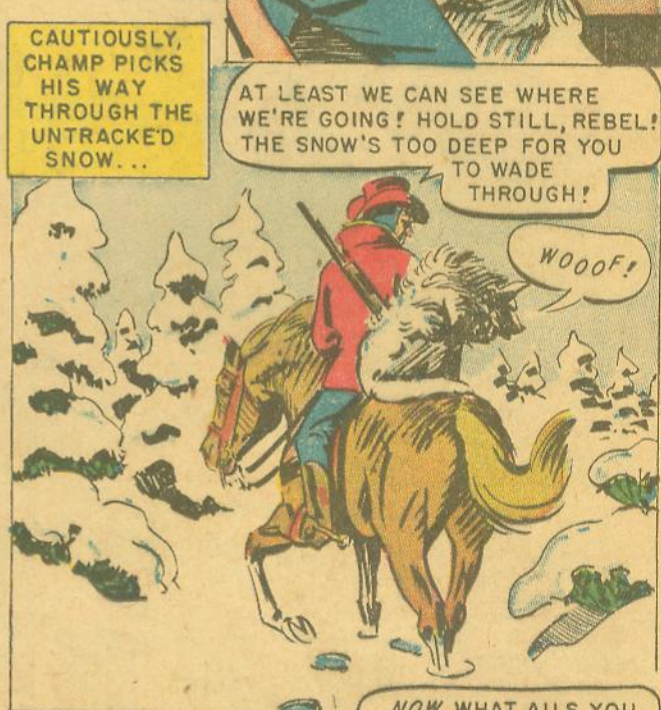
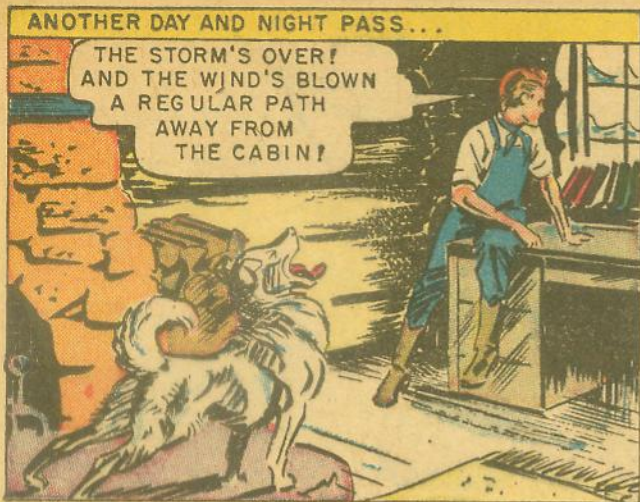


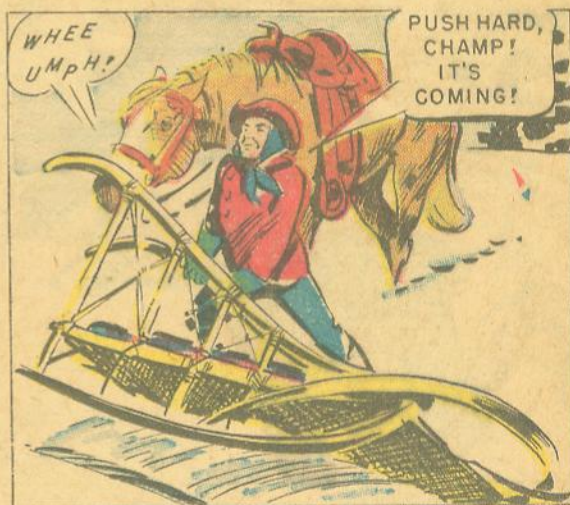
TIMBER WOLVES!

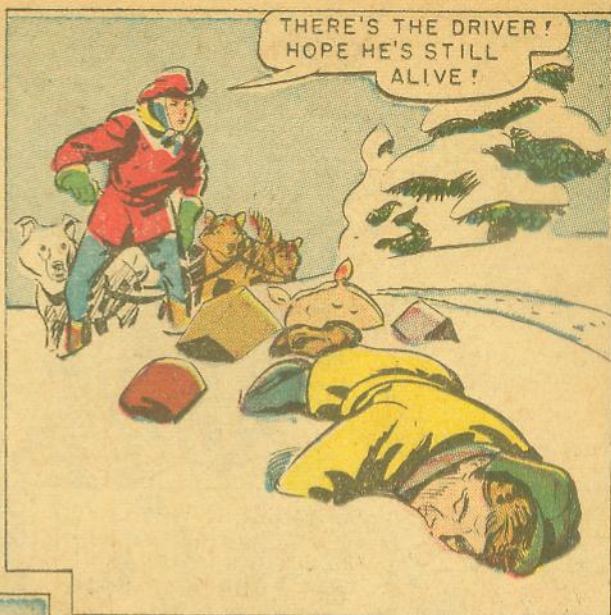
WHEE-AW!

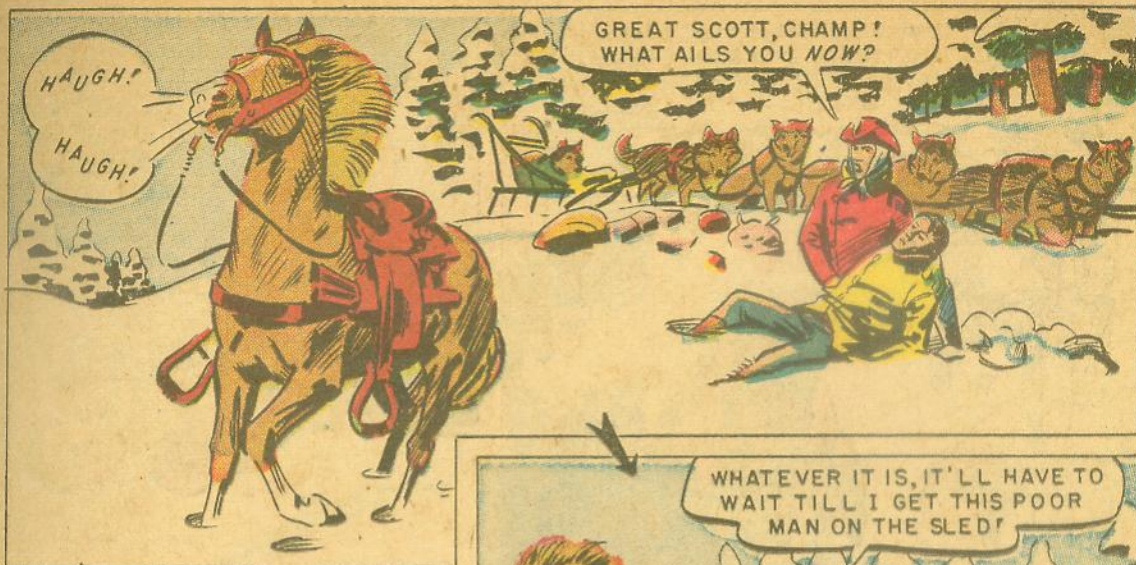
AAARGH!!

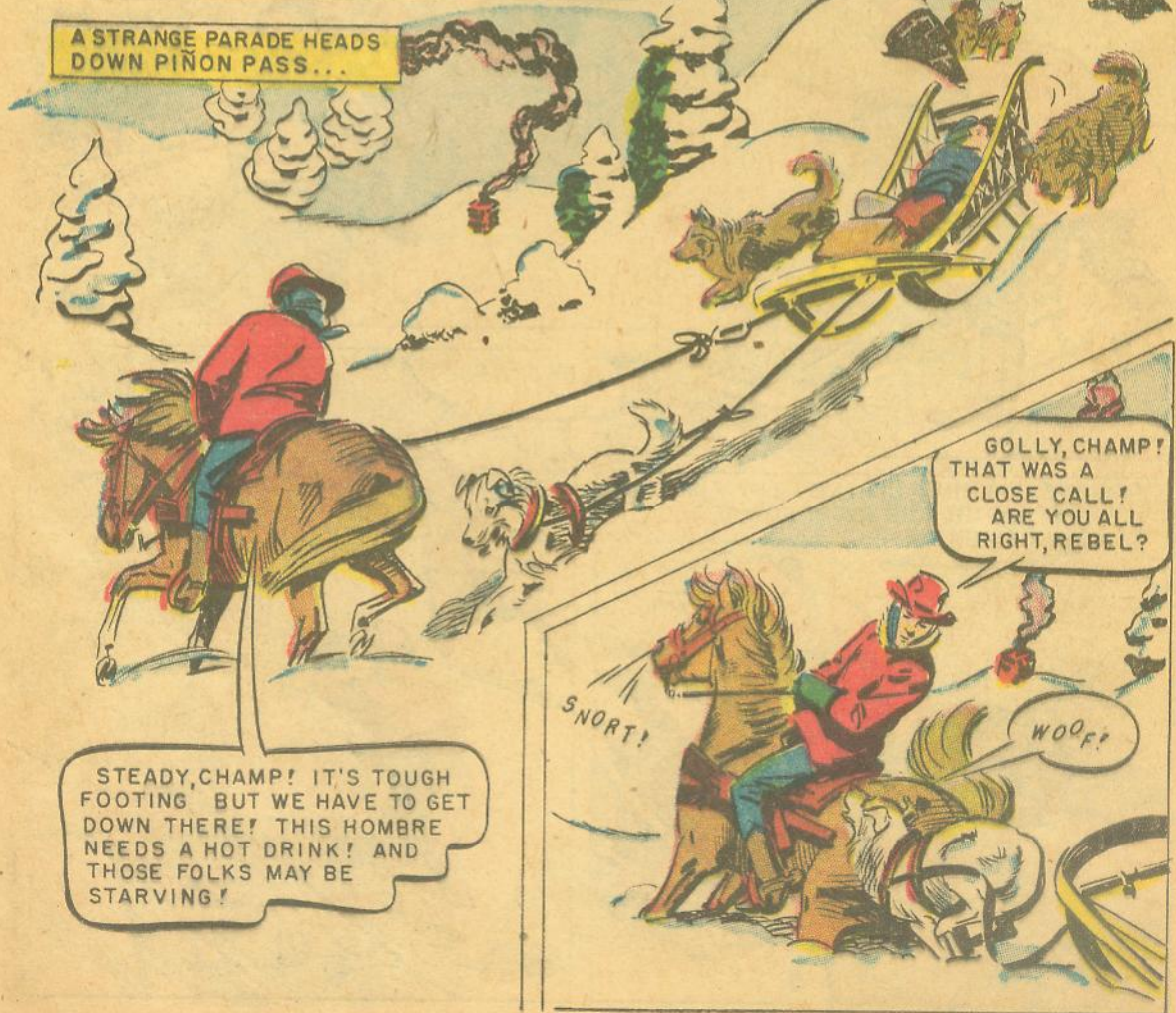


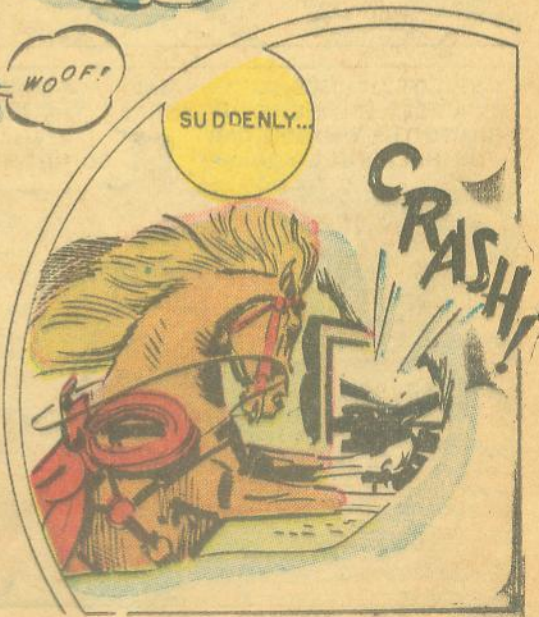
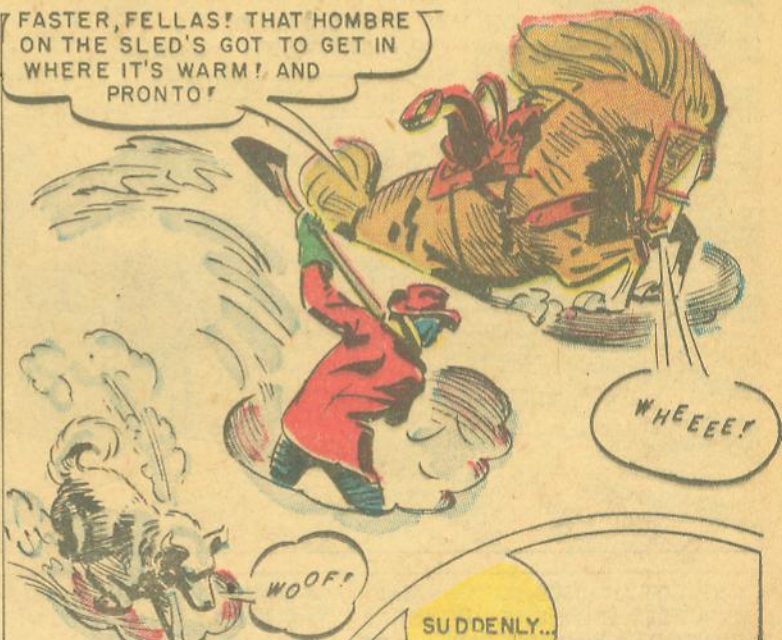


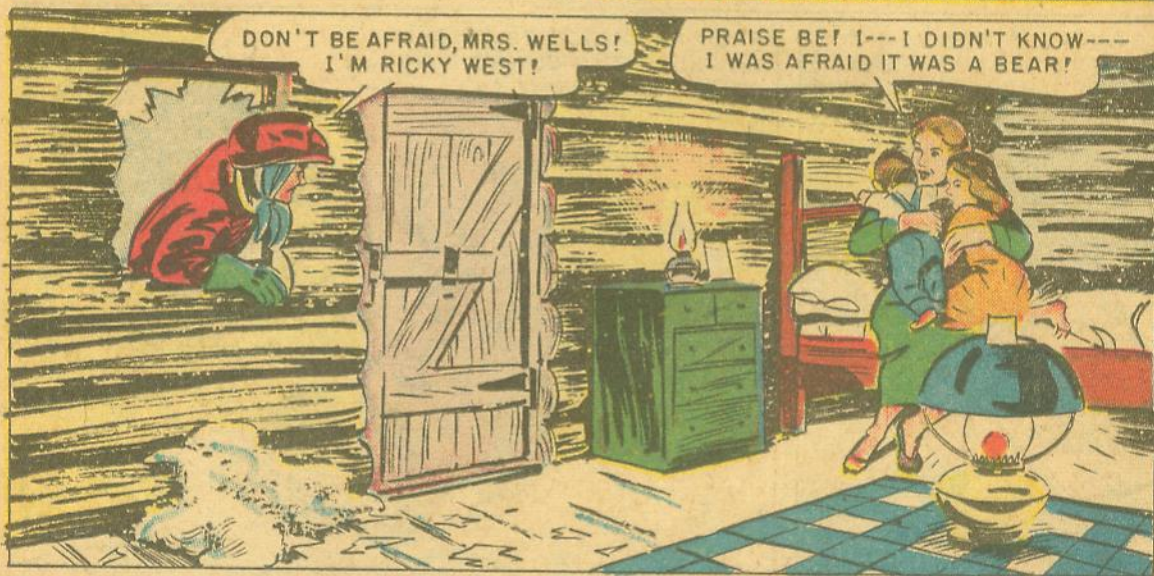


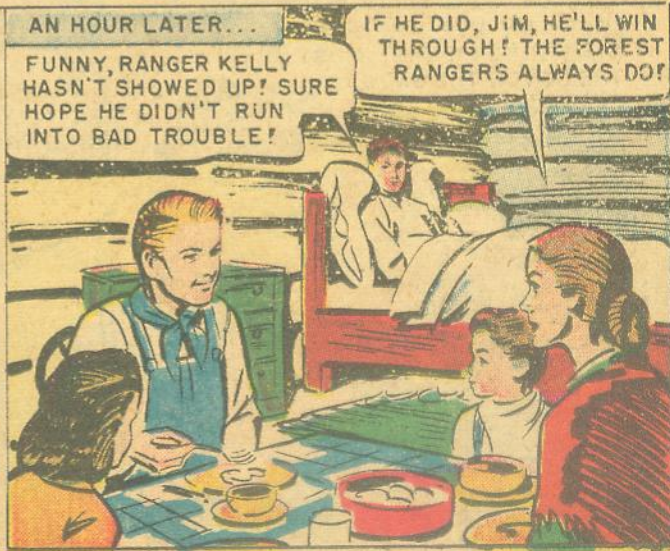










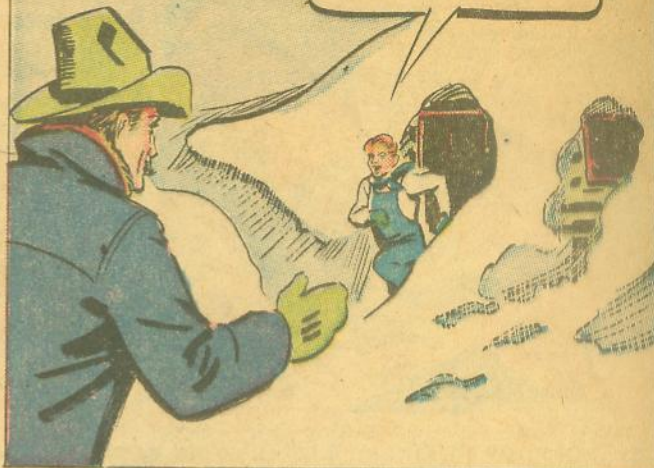


YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN, MRS. WELLS! HERE HE COMES NOW WITH HALF A DOZEN---GOSH! THERE'S UNCLE SMOKY!

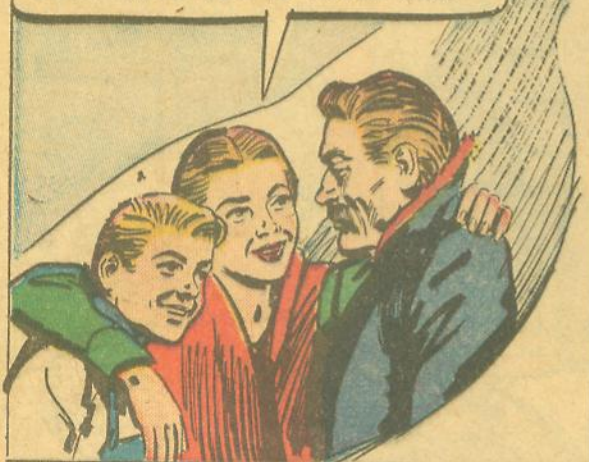


RICKY! YOU OKAY?

SURE! AND SO ARE THE WELLSSES! THANKS TO REBEL AND CHAMP!

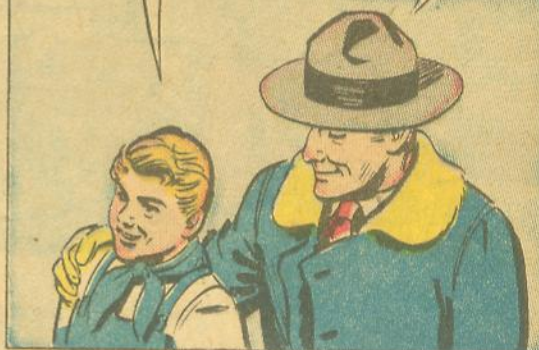


TO SAY NOTHING OF THIS BRAVE BOY! HE SAVED JIM'S LIFE---AND OURS! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK HIM!



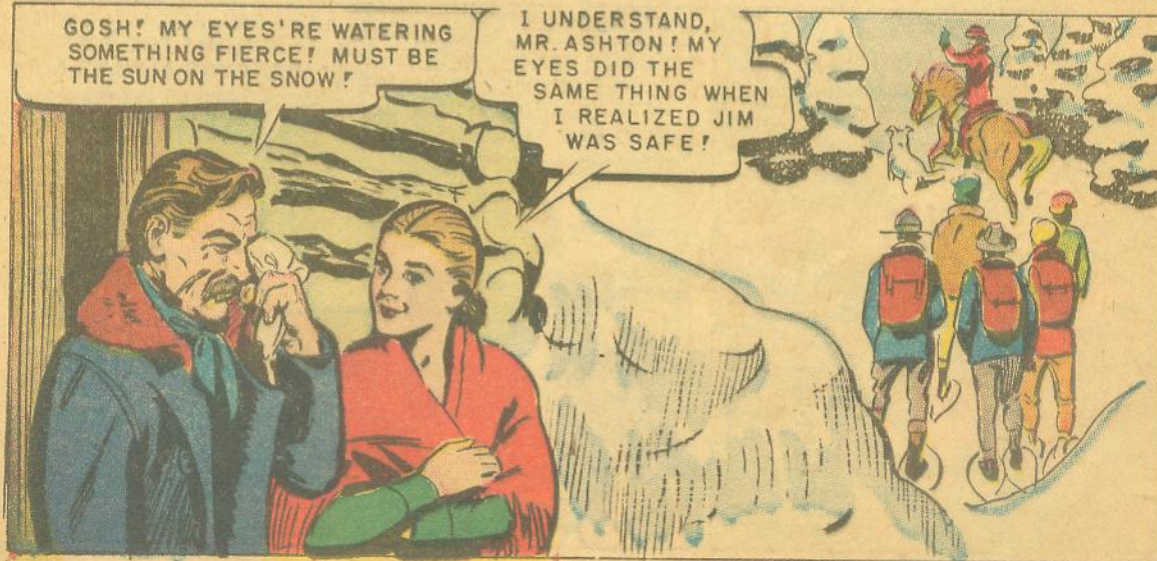
DON'T TRY, MA'AM! JUST PUT IN A WORD WITH RANGER KELLY FOR ME IN CASE I WANT TO JOIN THE SERVICE WHEN I'M OLD ENOUGH!

I HOPE YOU DO, RICKY! WE CAN ALWAYS USE MEN LIKE YOU'LL TURN OUT TO BE!



GOSH! MY EYES'RE WATERING SOMETHING FIERCE! MUST BE THE SUN ON THE SNOW!

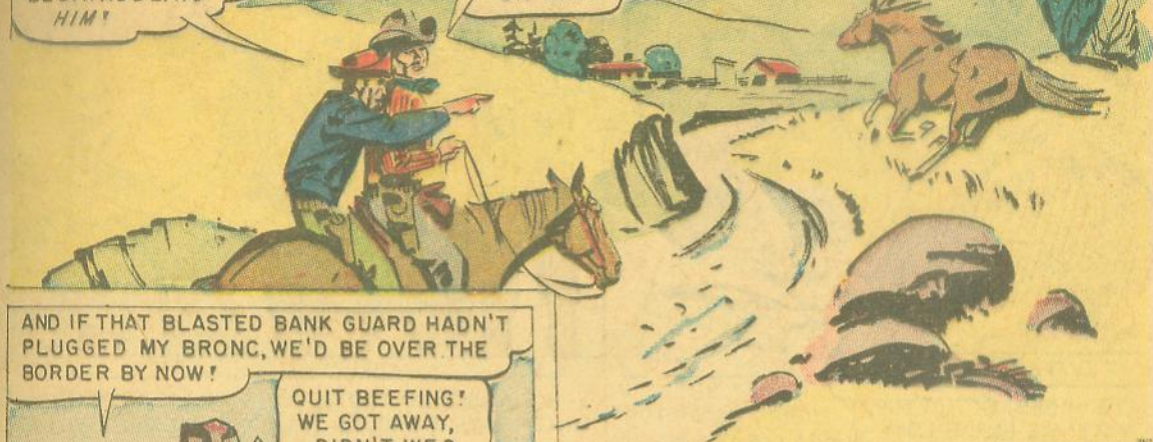
I UNDERSTAND, MR. ASHTON! MY EYES DID THE SAME THING WHEN I REALIZED JIM WAS SAFE!



TWO-WAY ROUNDUP

JAKE! LOOK AT THAT STALLION GO! WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE TO BE STRADDLING HIM!

SAME HERE! IF THIS CAYUSE WASN'T READY TO DROP, I'D TRY TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO THROW A ROPE ON HIM!



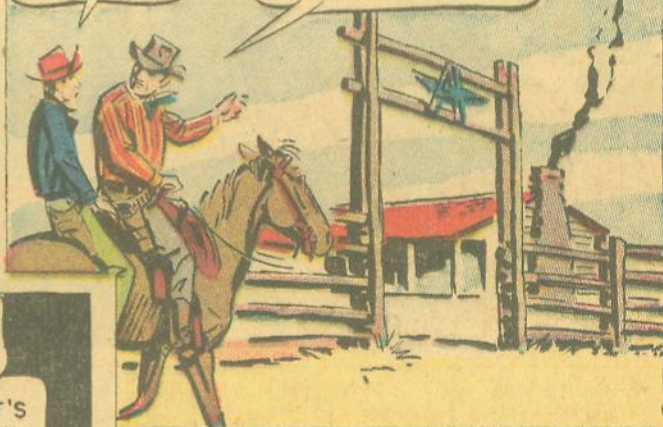
AND IF THAT BLASTED BANK GUARD HADN'T PLUGGED MY BRONC, WE'D BE OVER THE BORDER BY NOW!

QUIT BEEFING! WE GOT AWAY, DIDN'T WE?



SO FAR! BUT I'VE GOTTA GET A MOUNT OR ---

YOU WILL! AT THAT RANCH YONDER! WE'LL HAND THE OWNER A SOB STORY! HE WILL SELL US ONE!



HOWDY, MISTER! WHAT'S CHANCES OF BUYING A HOT MEAL--- AND A HORSE? HAD TO SHOOT MY PARTNER'S! BROKE HIS LEG IN A GOPHER HOLE!

THAT'S TOUGH LUCK!



YOU'RE WELCOME TO A MEAL! BUT I DON'T KNOW AS I CAN SPARE A HORSE WITH FALL ROUNDUP STARTING TOMORROW!



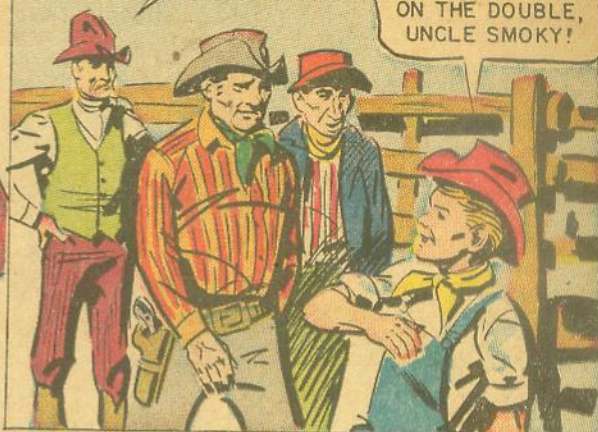
MAYBE WE HAPPENED BY
AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME!
CAN YOU USE A COUPLE
OF EXTRA HANDS "

I SURE CAN!
COME ON! I'LL
HAVE MY NEPHEW
TAKE YOU TO
THE WAGON
BOSS!



RICKY! TAKE THESE BOYS TO TOM MACK! TELL
HIM I'M PUTTING THEM ON FOR ROUNDUP! THEN
SEE THAT HOP KEE FEEDS THEM!

ON THE DOUBLE,
UNCLE SMOKY!



A LITTLE LATER...

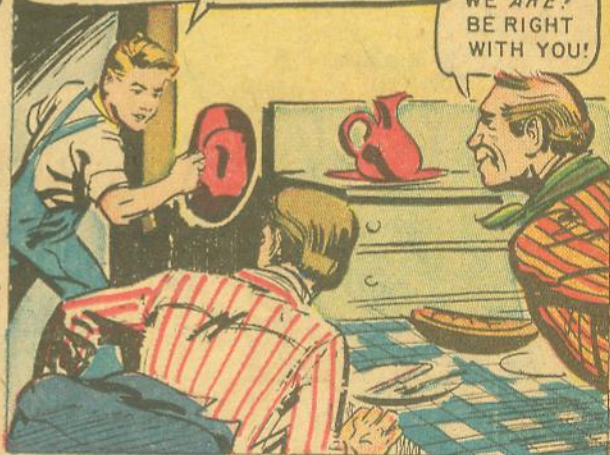
IT'S A PERFECT SETUP,
MATT! WE'LL LIE LOW
HERE TILL THE
HEAT'S OFF!

YEAH! BUT IT
BURNS ME UP TO
WORK WHEN WE
ARE LOADED WITH
CASH! I---



TOM'S ASSIGNED YOU BOYS TO WILLIE BLAKE'S
UNIT! SAYS I SHOULD TAKE YOU TO MEET WILLIE
WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH EATING!

WE ARE!
BE RIGHT
WITH YOU!



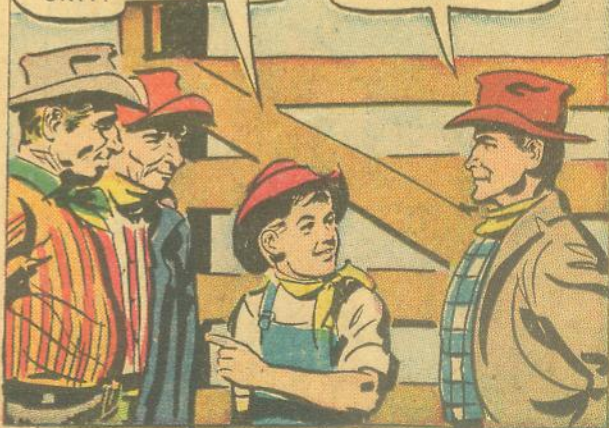
SURE SEEMS
FUNNY--- BEING
ON THE OTHER
END OF A
ROUNDUP!

I'M SATISFIED!
JUST SO LONG AS
IT ISN'T THE
WRONG END OF
A ROPE!



WILLIE---MEET JAKE
WINTERS AND MATT
COX! THEY'LL BE
RIDING WITH YOUR
UNIT!

GOOD! WE'LL BE
HEADIN' OUT BEFORE
DAWN SO YOU'D
BETTER TURN
IN EARLY!



Y'KNOW, RICKY, THAT HORSE OF YOURS IS SOME CRITTER! WANT TO SELL HIM?

NOT ON YOUR LIFE, JAKE! CHAMP'S THE SMARTEST, FASTEST, KNOWINGEST HORSE EVER FOALD! WON'T LET ANYBODY RIDE HIM BUT ME!

THE
NEXT
MORNING

HEAR THAT, MATT? RECKON YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK WHERE THE CHESTNUT'S CONCERNED!

AW, RATS! ONCE IN THE SADDLE, I CAN HANDLE ANY BRONC!

THE ROUNDUP GETS UNDER WAY...

KEEP A SHARP EYE OUT FOR SLICK EARS AN' MAVERICKS! WE---

WILLIE! SOMETHING'S MOVING IN THE BUSH YONDER, I'LL GO SEE!

YIPPEE-KI-YI! HAZE 'EM, REBEL!

GEE, BUT THAT KID, HORSE AND DOG SURE WORK WELL TOGETHER!

YEAH! BUT I DON'T COTTON TO THE DOG! HE'S TAKEN TO GROWLING AT ME!

THAT AFTERNOON...

YOU BLASTED MUTT!
GET AWAY FROM ME
OR I'LL---

REBEL! QUIET! DON'T
KICK HIM, MATT! HE NEVER
FORGIVES ANYONE WHO
HURTS HIM!

GRRRR!

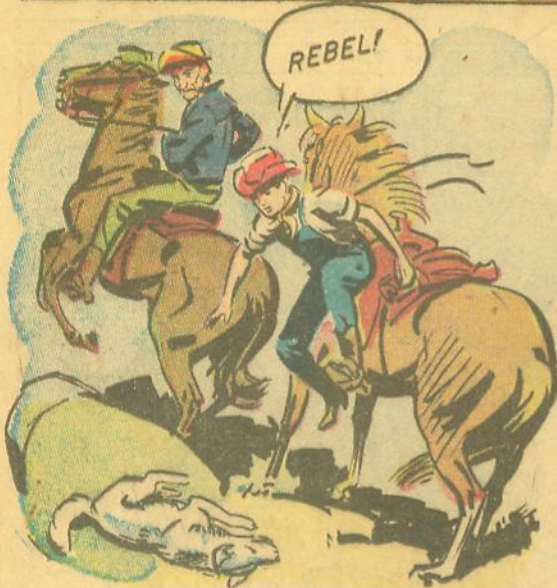


THAT'LL SETTLE YOU, YOU
MANGY CUR!

AREEYOW!



REBEL!



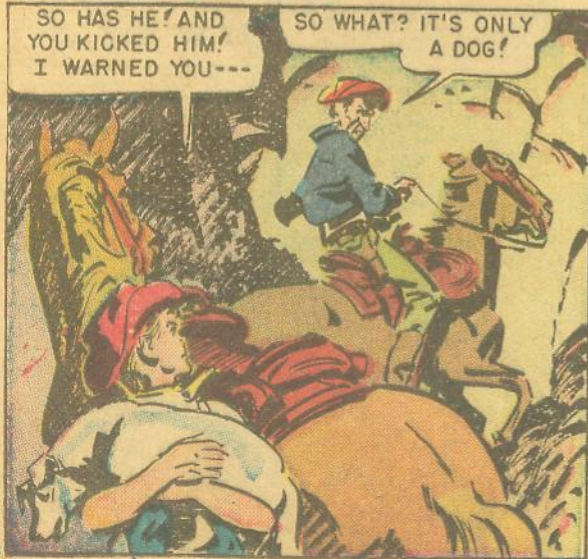
I'M REPORTING
THIS TO MY
UNCLE, YOU--
YOU---

THE BRUTE ATTACKED ME!
I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO
PROTECT
MYSELF!

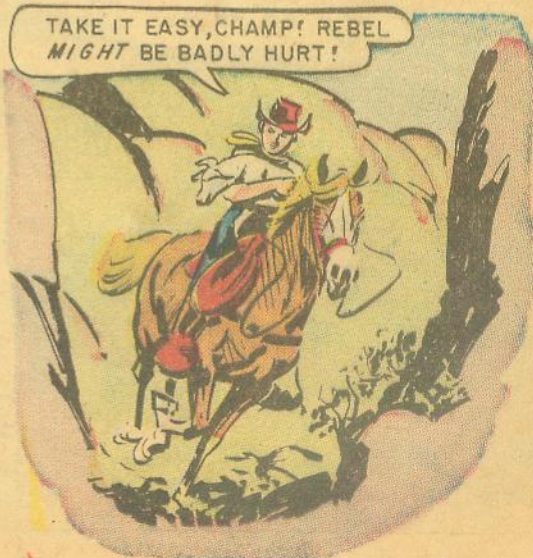


SO HAS HE! AND
YOU KICKED HIM!
I WARNED YOU---

SO WHAT? IT'S ONLY
A DOG!



TAKE IT EASY, CHAMP! REBEL
MIGHT BE BADLY HURT!



AFTER SMOKY HEARS RICKY'S STORY.

WILLIE! SEND THOSE TWO BIRDS TO ME PRONTO!

RIGHT! IF I'D SEEN THAT HOMBRE BASH REBEL, I'D HAVE FIXED HIM! BUT I WAS ROUTIN' OUT A COUPLA STRAYS IN THE CANYON!



THAT'S SOMETHING HE DOESN'T DO! BESIDES, I SAW THE DOG WHEN RICKY BROUGHT HIM IN! HE WAS OUT COLD!

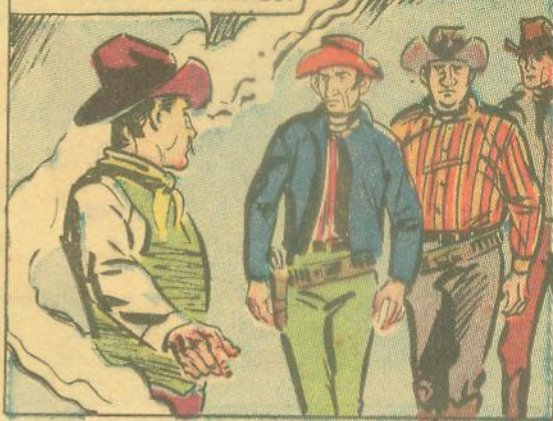
OKAY, ASHTON! IF YOU TAKE THE KID'S WORD AGAINST MINE, I QUIT!



A LITTLE LATER...

COX! YOU NEARLY KILLED THAT DOG! I DON'T HOLD WITH MISTREATING ANIMALS!

I ONLY TAPPED HIM! IF THAT KID TOLD YOU DIFFERENT, HE LIED!



ME, TOO! YOU CAN PAY US OFF! AND WE'D AS SOON HAVE A HORSE AS CASH!

I'LL SEE YOU IN BLAZES BEFORE I'LL LET YOU HAVE ONE O' MY HORSES! OR ANY CASH EITHER!



YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO US! WE---

SHUT UP AN' GET MOVING! OR, SO HELP ME, I'LL WIPE UP THE GROUND WITH YOU!



GEE, UNCLE SMOKY! THEY'RE AWFUL SORE!

SO AM I! BUT I'M MIGHTY GLAD TO SEE THE LAST O' THAT PAIR! IT JUST DOESN'T PAY TO HIRE DRIFTERS!



THAT EVENING, IN THE HILLS...

JAKE, I'LL GET EVEN WITH ASHTON
IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!
BUT HOW TO DO IT IS---

I'VE GOT
AN IDEA!

AFTER THE CAMP'S ASLEEP, WE'LL
HELP OURSELVES TO SOME CATTLE
AND THE KID'S STALLION! THAT'LL
MAKE UP FOR THE PAY WE DIDN'T
GET AND THEN SOME!

IT'S A DEAL!

JUST
BEFORE
DAWN...

SWELL! BUT WE'LL HAVE TO HURRY!
AT THE FIRST STREAK OF DAYLIGHT,
THIS CAMP'LL COME ALIVE!

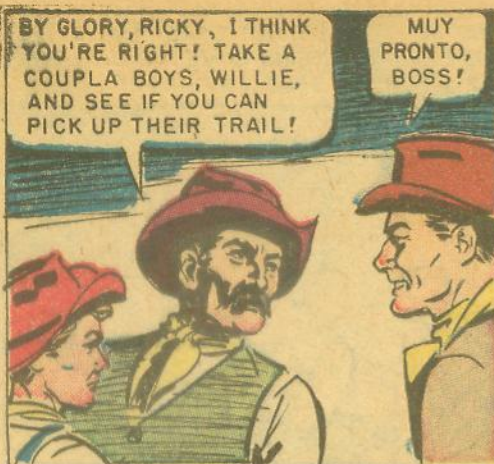
WHADDYA SAY
WE ROPE YOU
A FRESH HORSE,
JAKE?

SHAKE A LEG, MATT!
I GOT ME A FRESH
MOUNT!

THERE'S THE BABY
I WANT!--- THAT
STALLION!

WHEE-E-AW!

BLASTED
SNORTER!
I'LL SHOW
YOU!



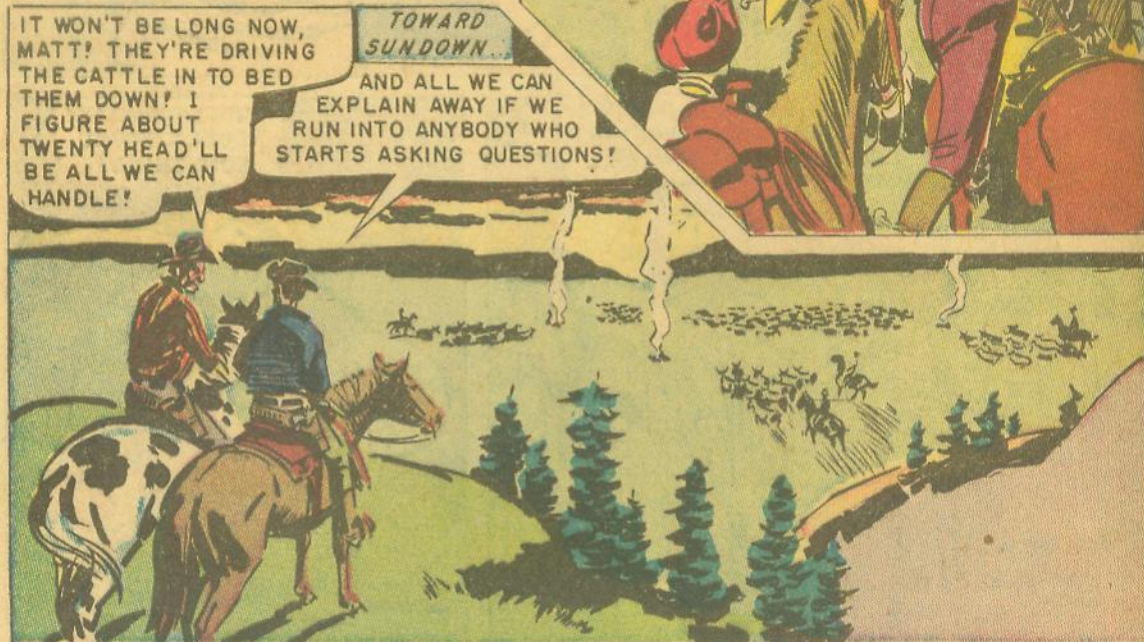
BY GLORY, RICKY, I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT! TAKE A COUPLA BOYS, WILLIE, AND SEE IF YOU CAN PICK UP THEIR TRAIL!

MUY PRONTO, BOSS!



LATER... WE FOUND THE TRAIL OKAY, SMOKY--- BUT LOST IT UP IN THE HILLS!

THAT PAINT'S EASILY IDENTIFIED! I'LL SEND WORD TO THE SHERIFF! HE CAN BROADCAST AN ALARM!



IT WON'T BE LONG NOW, MATT! THEY'RE DRIVING THE CATTLE IN TO BED THEM DOWN! I FIGURE ABOUT TWENTY HEAD'LL BE ALL WE CAN HANDLE!

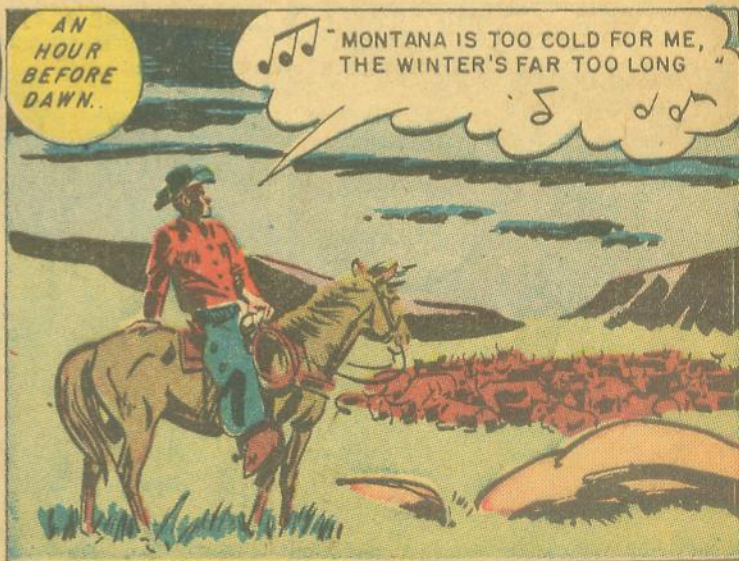
TOWARD SUNDOWN

AND ALL WE CAN EXPLAIN AWAY IF WE RUN INTO ANYBODY WHO STARTS ASKING QUESTIONS!



I DON'T SAVVY!

IT'S SIMPLE, JAKE! WE'LL SAY WE WERE HIRED FOR ROUND-UP AND ARE BRINGING IN STRAYS!



AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN.

MONTANA IS TOO COLD FOR ME, THE WINTER'S FAR TOO LONG

WHAT LUCK! ONLY ONE NIGHT HERDER
HERE! WE'LL JUMP HIM, CUT OUT THE
CRITTERS AND BE WELL AWAY BEFORE
HIS RELIEF SHOWS UP!



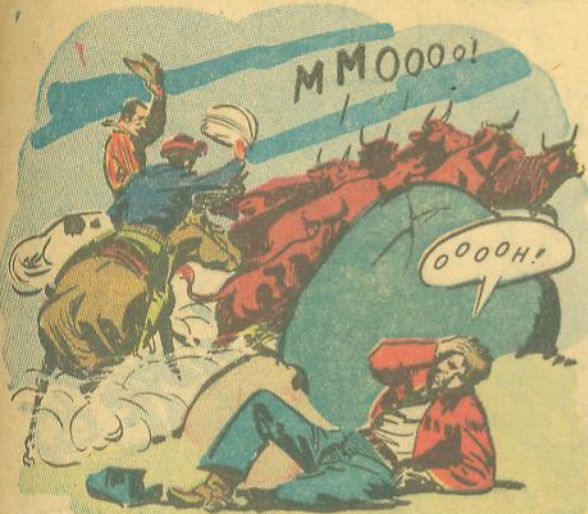
WHAT THE ---
UH!

THAT TAKES
CARE OF HIM!
LET'S GO!



MMO0000!

OOOOH!



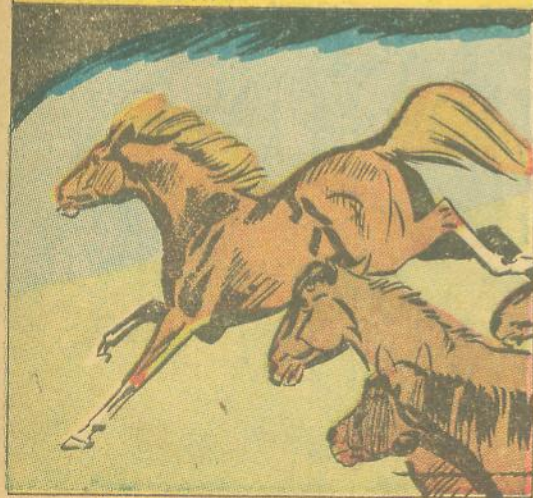
BUT THE RUSTLERS RECKON WITHOUT
CHAMP...

MMO0000!

VHEE-
UH-UH!



IN A FLASH, THE GREAT HORSE LEAPS
INTO ACTION...

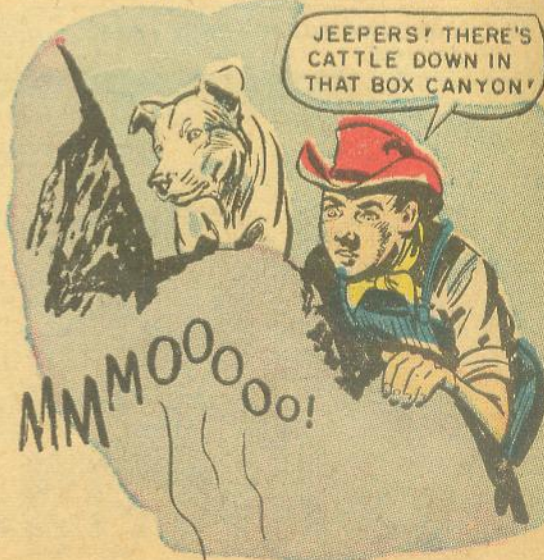
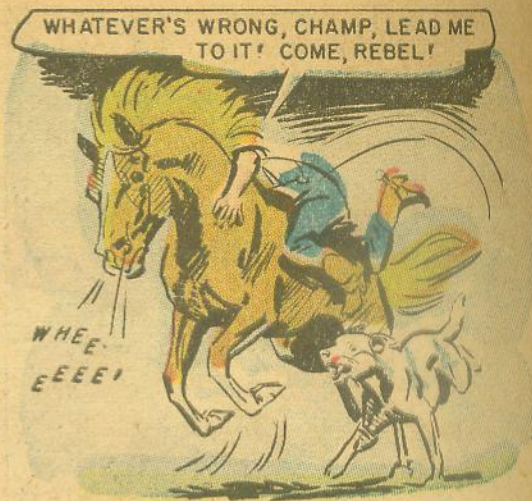
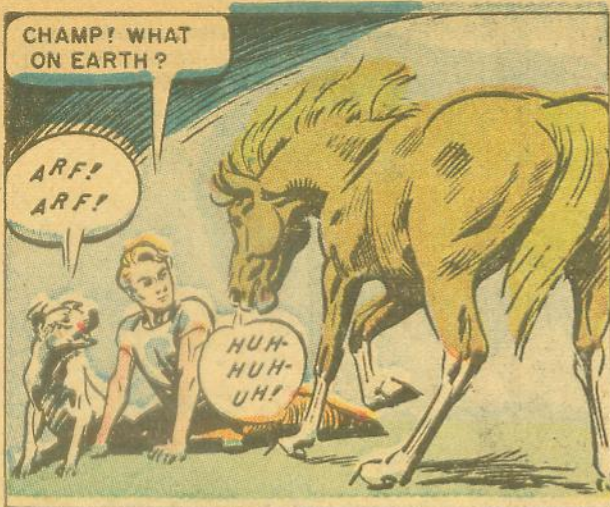


AND RAGES FOR RICKY...

WHAUGH!
HAUGH!

WOOF!
WOOF!





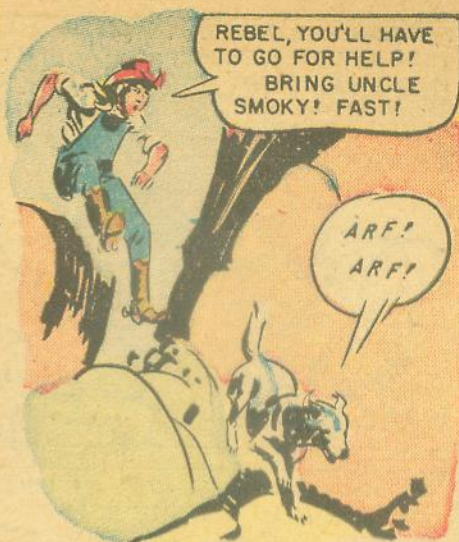


OUR CATTLE!
AND THE STOLEN
PAINT HORSE!
AND JAKE AND
MATT!

WISH I KNEW HOW TO
KEEP THEM HERE
TILL UNCLE SMOKY
AND THE BOYS
SHOW UP!



WHUMF!



REBEL, YOU'LL HAVE
TO GO FOR HELP!
BRING UNCLE
SMOKY! FAST!

ARF!
ARF!

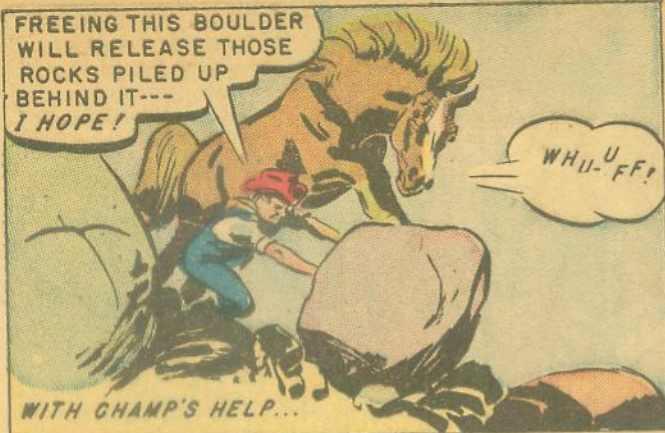


COME ON, CHAMP! WE'LL KEEP
A LOOKOUT! SO THEY DON'T
GET AWAY!



CHAMP! I'VE GOT IT! WE'LL
START A ROCKSLIDE!
BOTTLE THEM UP!

WHAUGH!



FREEING THIS BOULDER
WILL RELEASE THOSE
ROCKS PILED UP
BEHIND IT---
I HOPE!

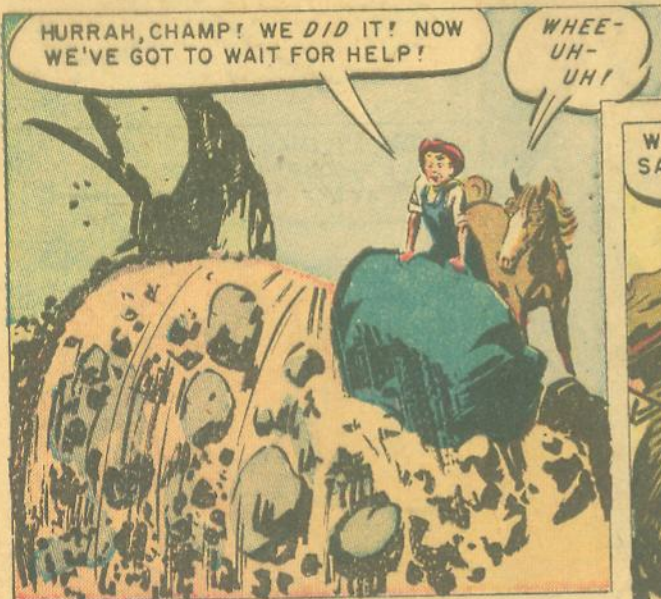
WHII-UFF!

WITH CHAMP'S HELP...



RICKY DISLODGES THE BOULDER...

IT'S MOVING!
OUT OF THE
WAY, BOY!



HURRAH, CHAMP! WE DID IT! NOW
WE'VE GOT TO WAIT FOR HELP!

WHEE-
UH-
UH!



WHAT THE
SAM HILL?

A SLIDE!
DUCK FOR
COVER!



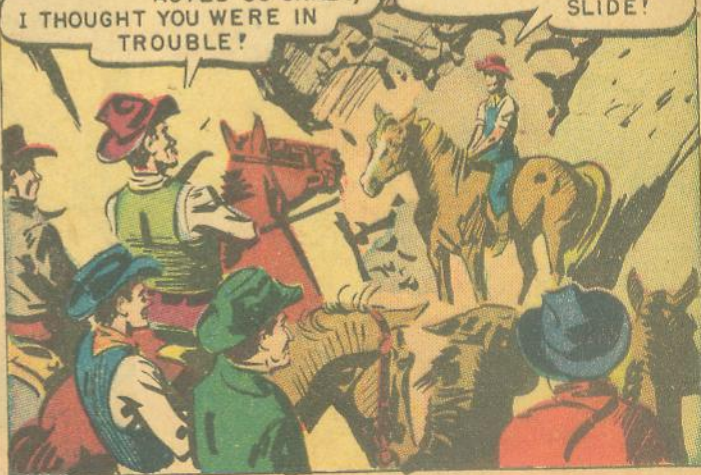
TRAPPED!
THIS IS
A FINE
MESS!

IT'LL BE A WORSE ONE
IF WE DON'T GET OUT
OF HERE! C'MON!
WE'VE GOTTA CLEAR
A PATH THROUGH
THOSE ROCKS!

AS USUAL,
REBEL
COMES
THROUGH
AND...

RICKY! YOU'RE
OKAY! REBEL
ACTED SO CRAZY,
I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN
TROUBLE!

NOT ME! IT'S MATT
AND JAKE! THEY'RE
BEHIND THAT ROCK-
SLIDE!



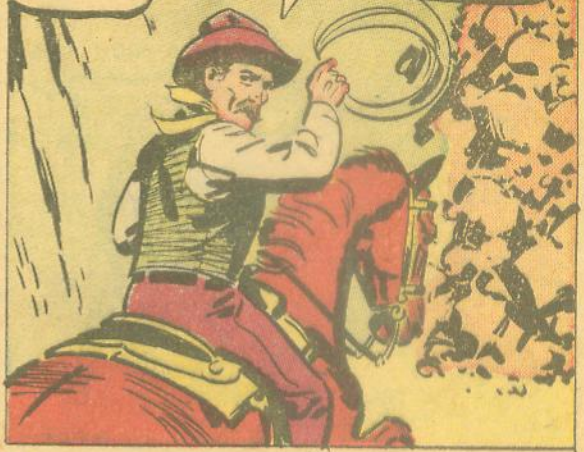
AFTER RICKY EXPLAINS.

WE'LL HAVE TO CLEAR
THE ROCKS AWAY, WILLIE!
BUT WE'VE ONLY GOT
ROPES TO WORK WITH!

I'LL SEND A
COUPLA BOYS
BACK FOR WHAT-
EVER TOOLS
THEY CAN FIND!



HANGED IF I CAN BEAR THIS WAITING! LET'S
TRY TO *PULL* SOME O' THE ROCKS AWAY!
BUT WATCH OUT! I DON'T WANT ANYBODY
'HURT'

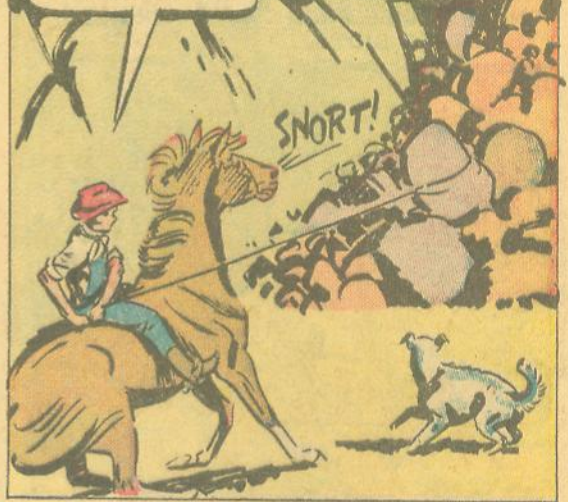


PULL HARD,
BOY!

COME ON, CHAMP! WE
CAN DO THAT, TOO!



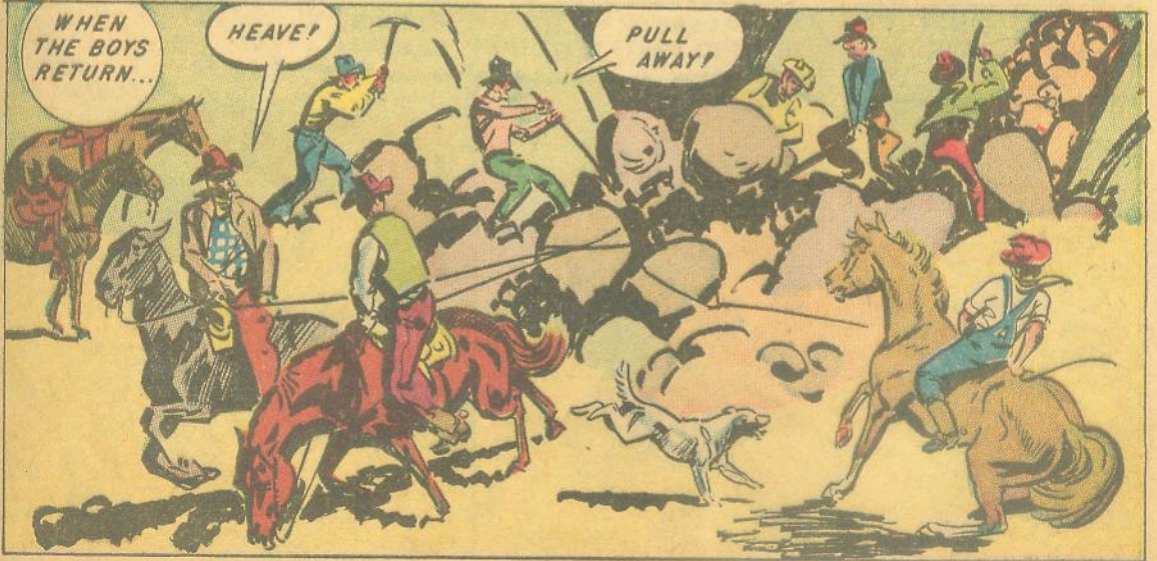
JEEPERS! THOSE BIRDS SURE ARE
WALLED IN!



WHEN
THE BOYS
RETURN...

HEAVE!

PULL
AWAY!



AT THE SAME
TIME, ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF
THE BARRIER...

BLAST THE LUCK!
THIS INFERNAL
ROCKSLIDE'S WORSE'N
JAILHOUSE BARS!

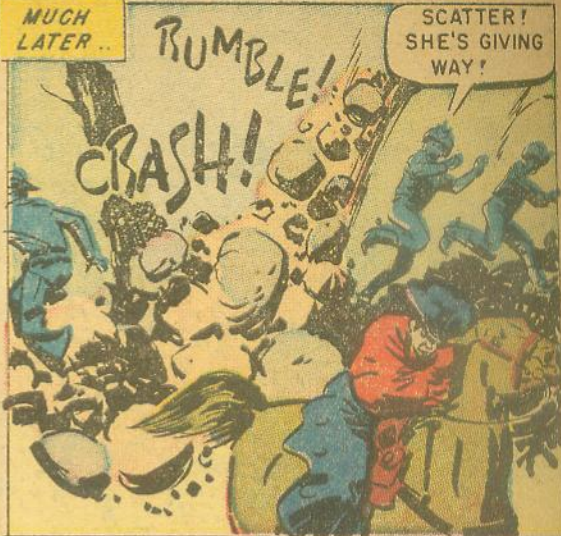
RIGHT!



MUCH
LATER...

RUMBLE!
CRASH!

SCATTER!
SHE'S GIVING
WAY!



ASHTON AND HIS MEN?
THEY'VE BEEN WORKING
ON THIS SLIDE FROM
THE OTHER SIDE!

WONDER
HOW THEY
TRAILED
US?



WHO CARES? I'M
MAKING A BREAK
FOR IT!

NOT WITH MY SHARE
OF THAT BANK CASH!
WAIT!



NOTHING DOING! IT'S
EVERY MAN FOR
HIMSELF NOW!



CHAMP! ONE OF THEM'S
GETTING AWAY! MOVE!



GET HIM,
CHAMP!

NEE-AUGH!

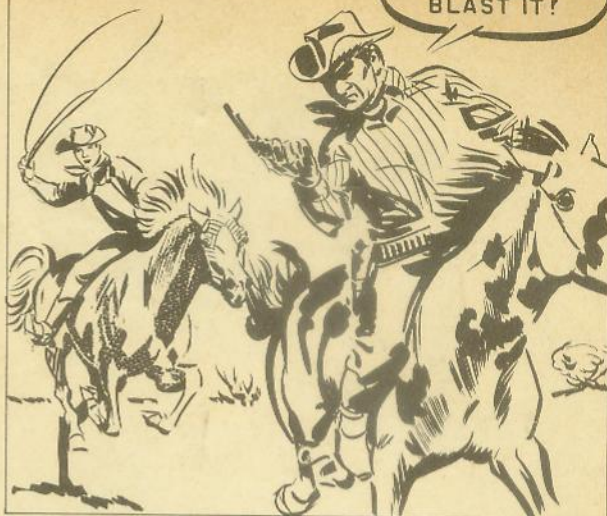


I CAN'T SHOOT BACK! BUT
MAYBE I CAN ROPE HIM!
FASTER, CHAMP!

ZING!



GUN'S EMPTY,
BLAST IT!



OOOMPH!



ON YOUR FEET, JAKE! AND NO TRICKS OR I'LL
TURN CHAMP LOOSE ON YOU!

DON'T WORRY!
I KNOW WHEN I'M
LICKED!



MEANWHILE...

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE OUT O' THE
RUNNING, MATT!

YEAH! BUT I WOULDN'T BE
IF THOSE COW CRITTERS
HADN'T GANGED UP ON ME!





WHERE IN TARNATION DID
RICKY GO TO?

OVER THERE, BOSS! ROUNDING THE RISE!
LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOT THE OTHER ONE!



HE SURE
HAS! NICE
WORK, RICKY!

THANKS! BUT, LIKE
ALWAYS, CHAMP
DESERVES MOST OF
THE CREDIT!



LATER, BACK AT THE
ROUNDUP CAMP...

RUSTLING AND BANK
ROBBERY! WHEN THAT PAIR
GETS OUT O' JAIL, THEY'LL
BE WEARING LONG WHITE BEARDS.



AND JUST THINK! IF IT HADN'T
BEEN FOR REBEL MISTRUSTING MATT
AND CHAMP GIVING THE ALARM THIS
MORNING, THEY MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN
AWAY WITH IT!



NOBODY GETS AWAY WITH ANYTHING WITH YOU
THREE AROUND! YOU'RE SURE A TOPNOTCH
TRIO!

WHEE-
EEE!