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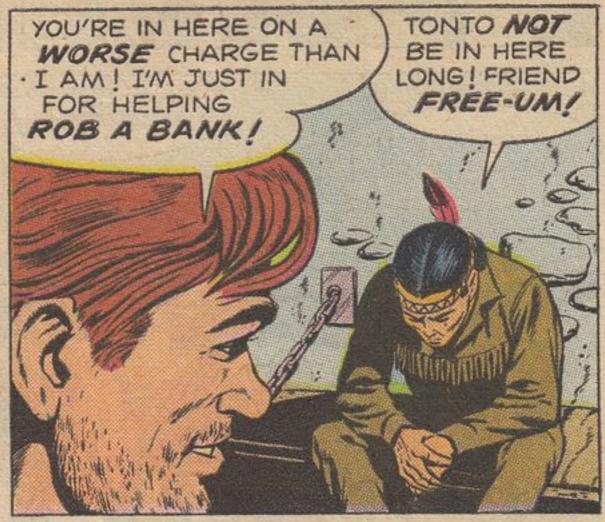
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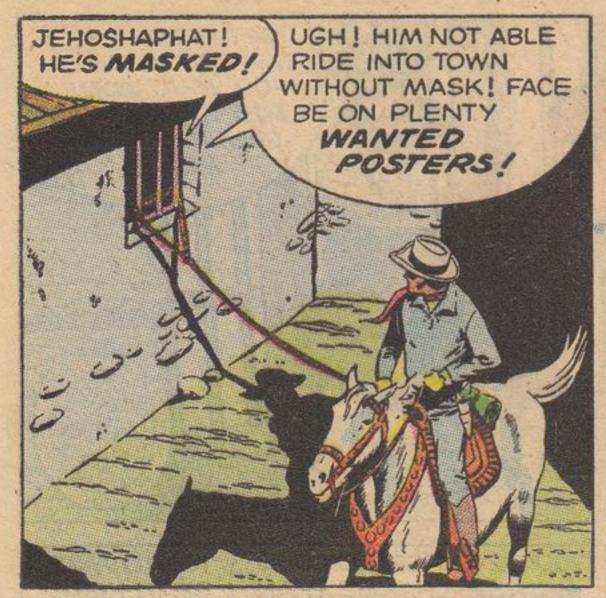






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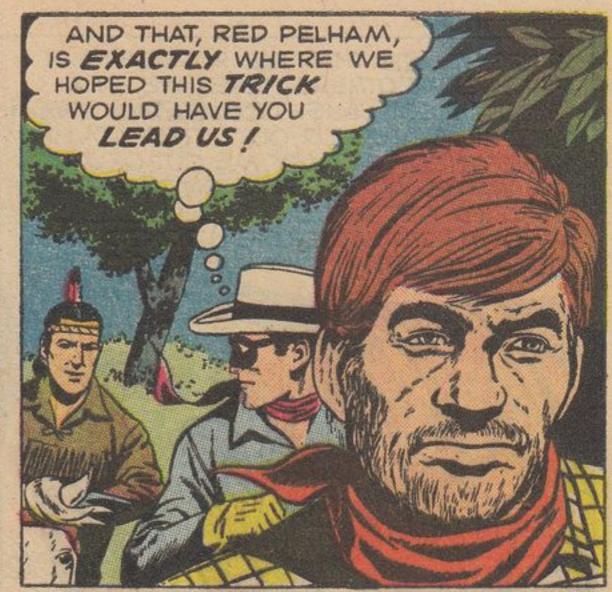












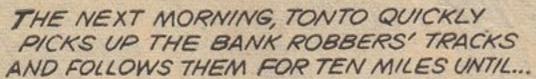
























A NUDGE FROM THE LONE RANGER SENDS TONTO'S EYES TO THE TELLTALE HORSESHOES...

AND AS THEIR VOICES CARRY ON A CONVERSATION, SO DO THEIR HANDS ...

























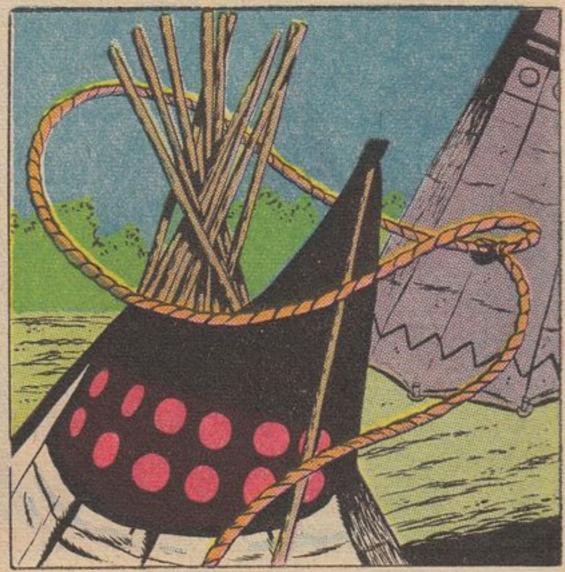


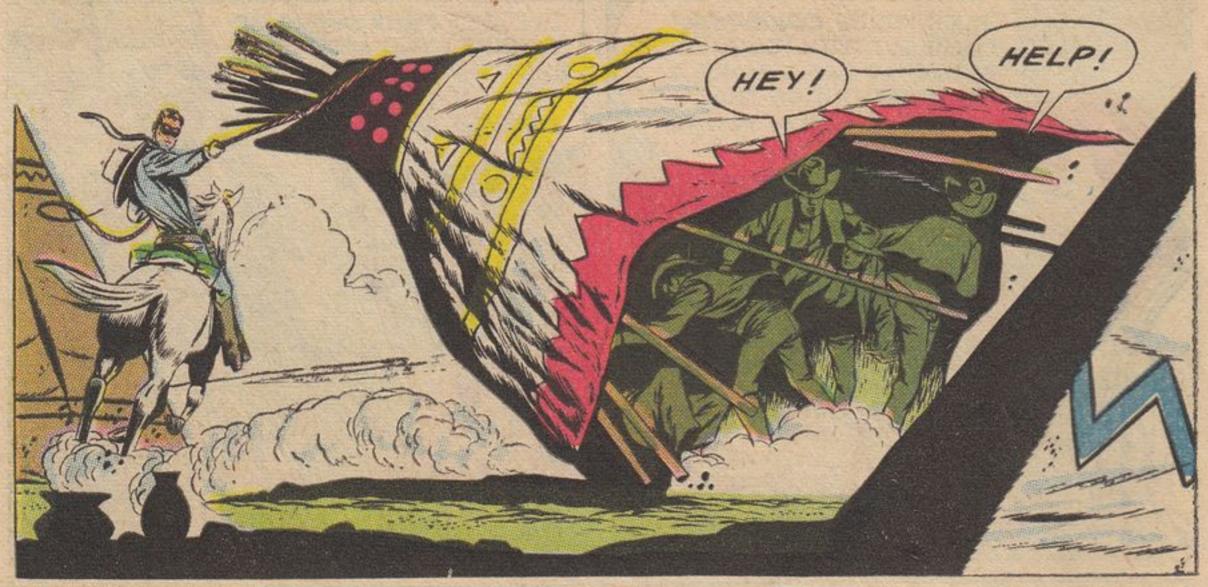




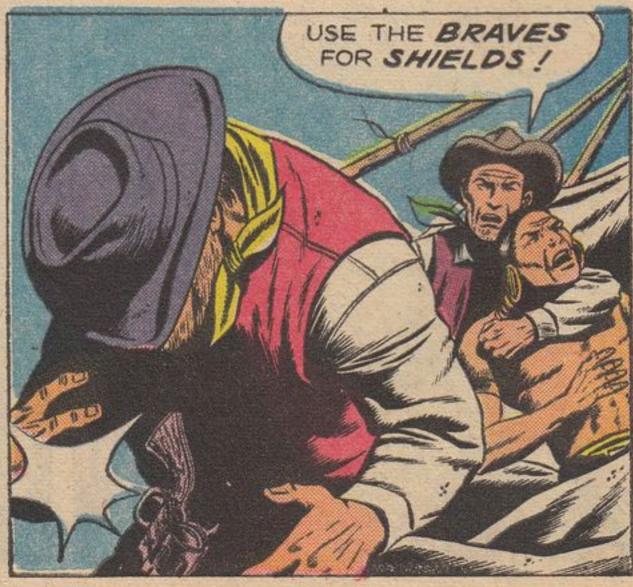














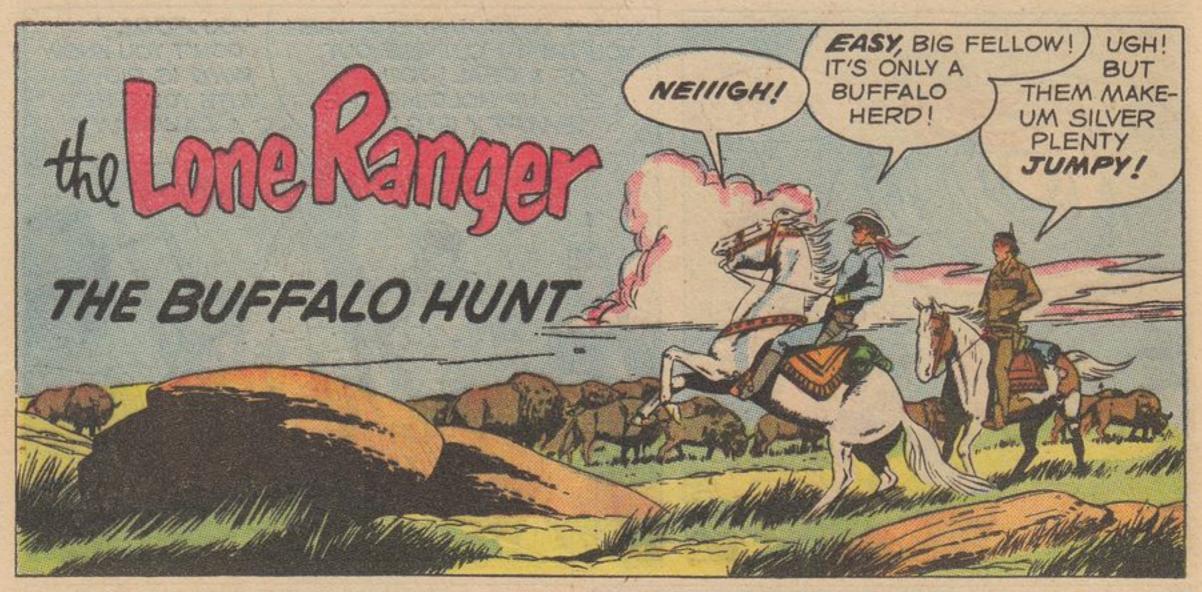




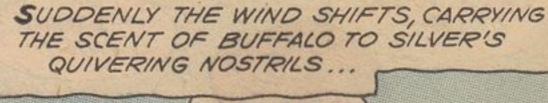


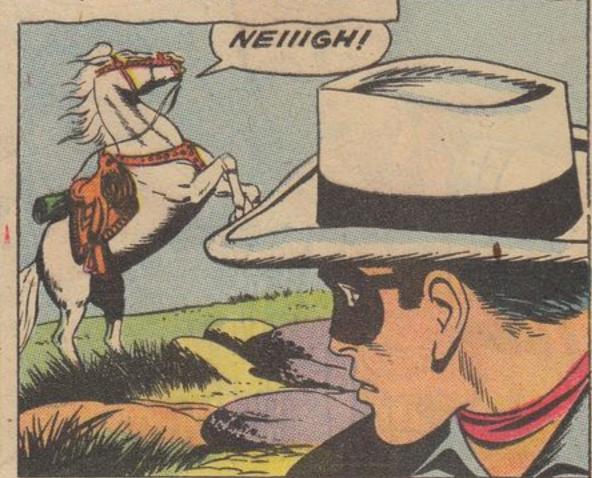










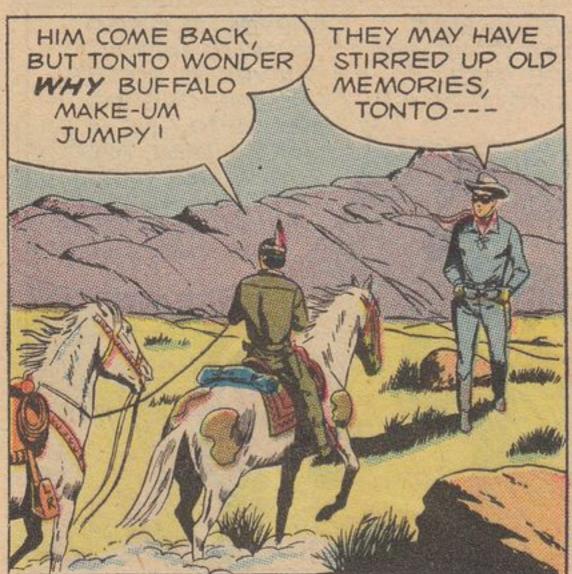


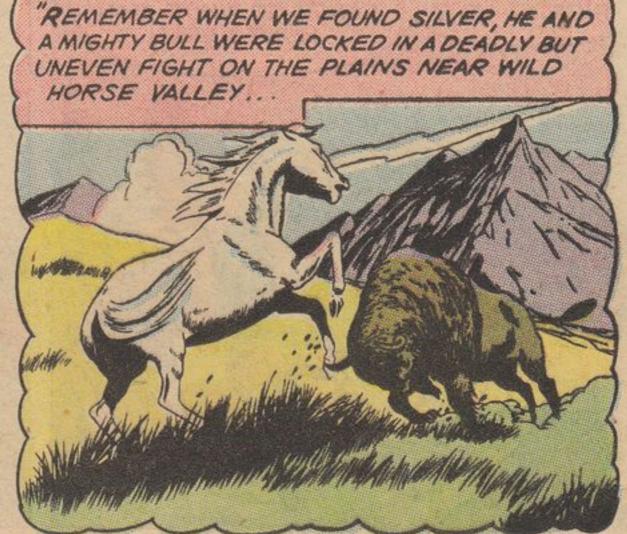


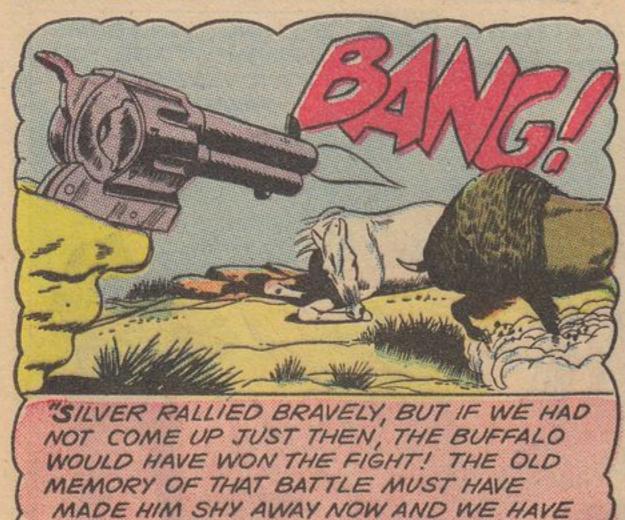












TO CURE HIM OF THAT ... "







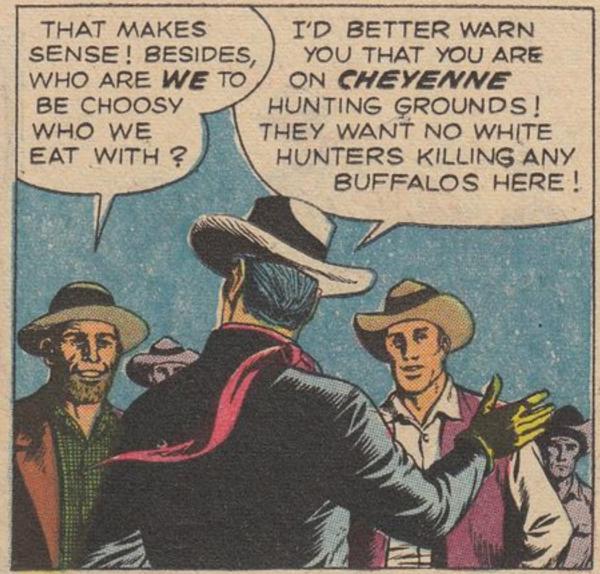














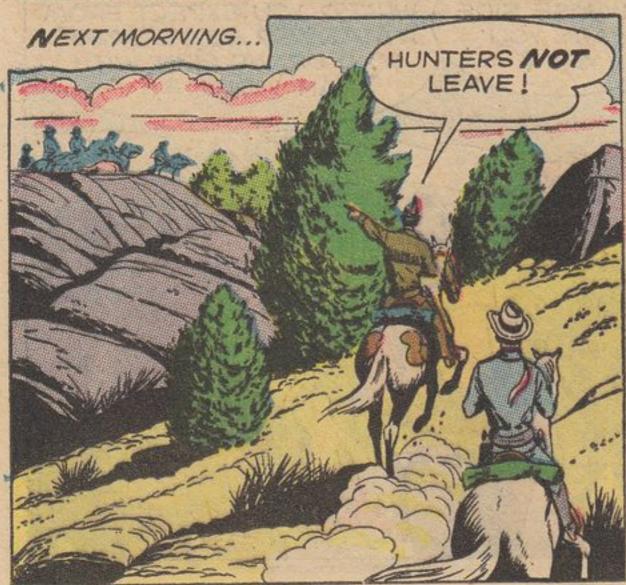












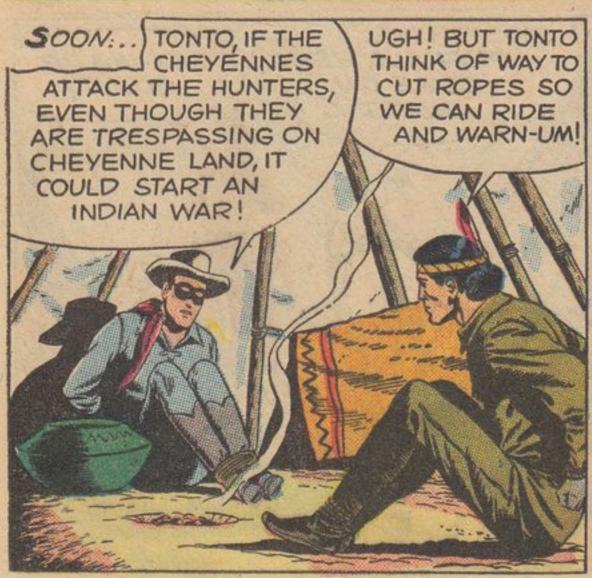










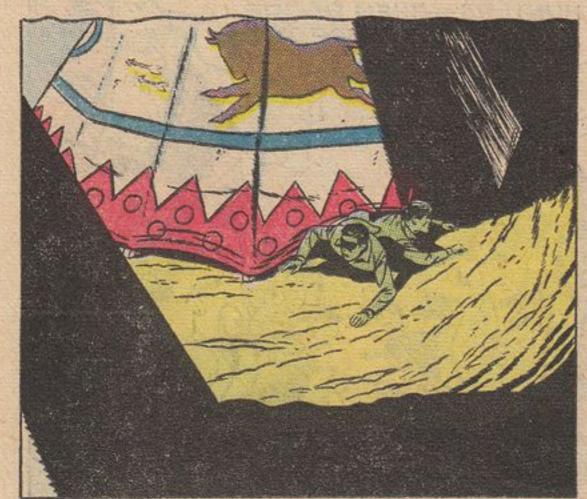






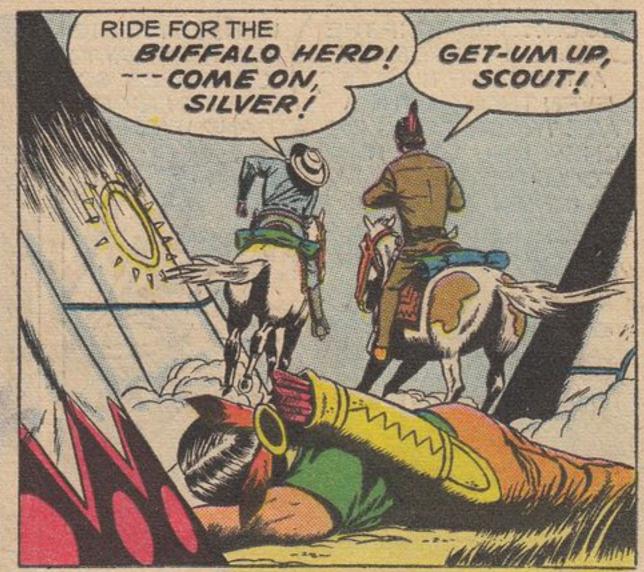


# QUICKLY, THE LONE RANGER FREES TONTO AND THEN CAUTIOUSLY...







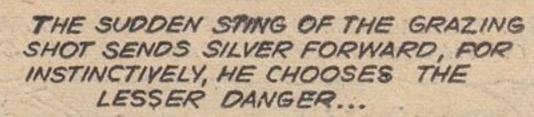


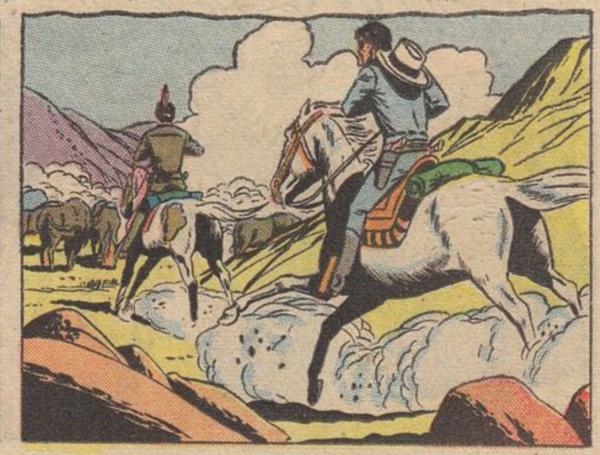




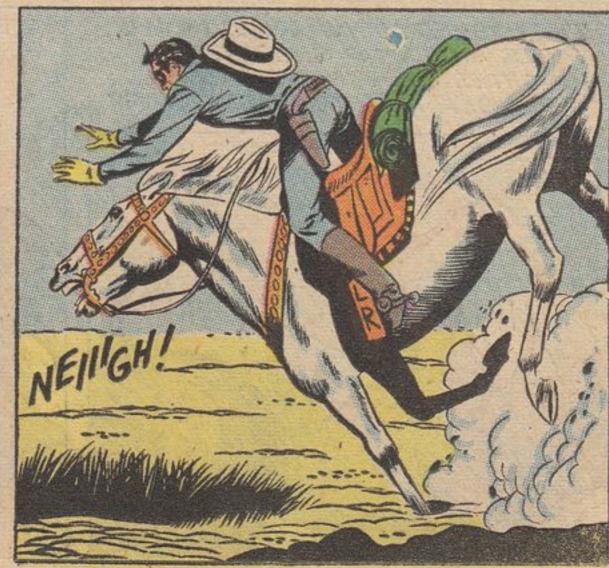




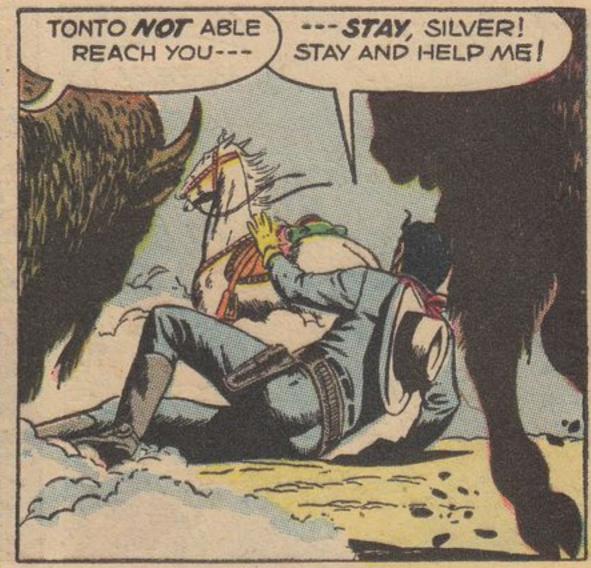




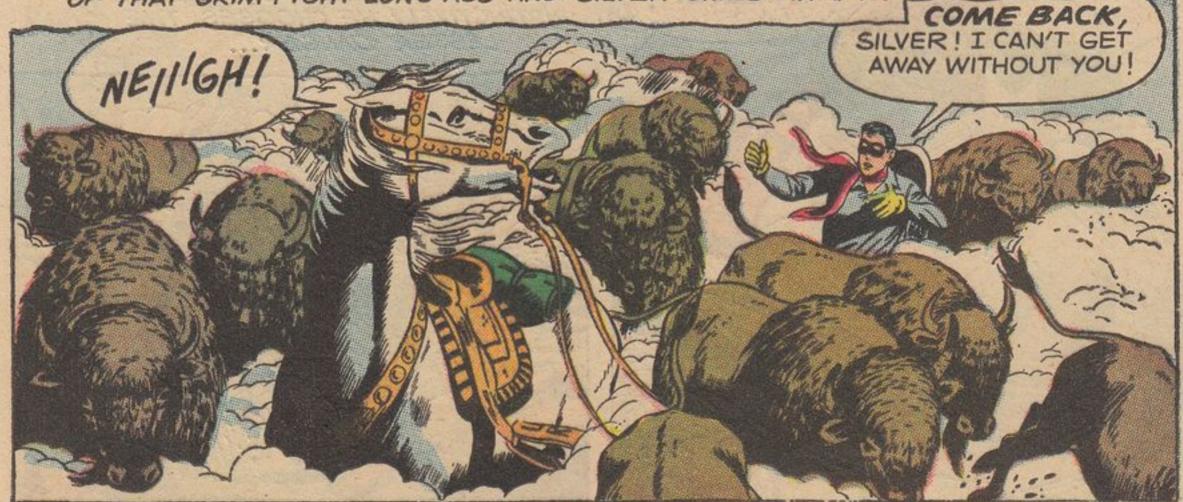








BUT THE MENACING SIGHT OF THE BUFFALO HORNS BRINGS BACK MEMORIES OF THAT GRIM FIGHT LONG AGO AND SILVER SHIES AWAY ...

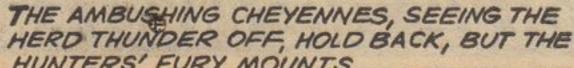


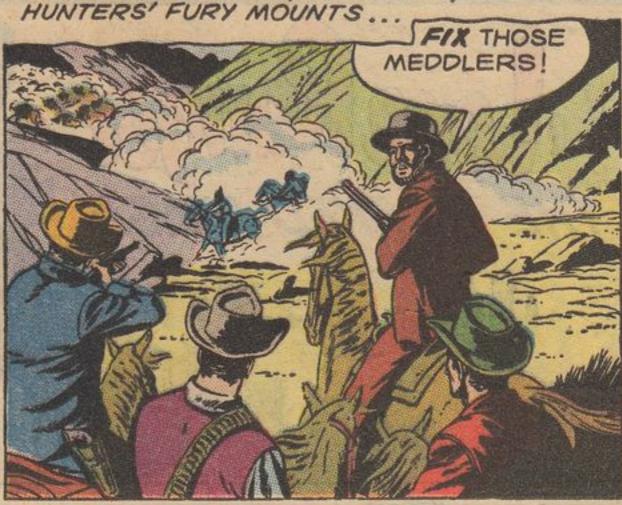
THE MASKED MAN'S URGENT CALL PULLS SILVER UP SHORT! THE LONG TIES OF FRIENDSHIP ARE STRONGER THAN THE MOMENTARY







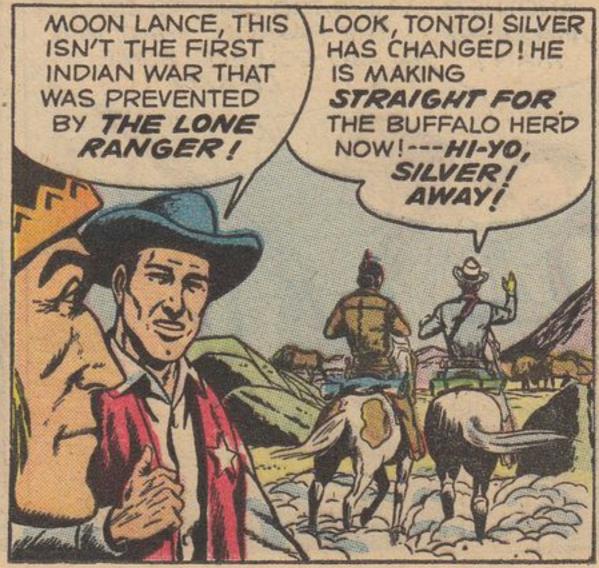




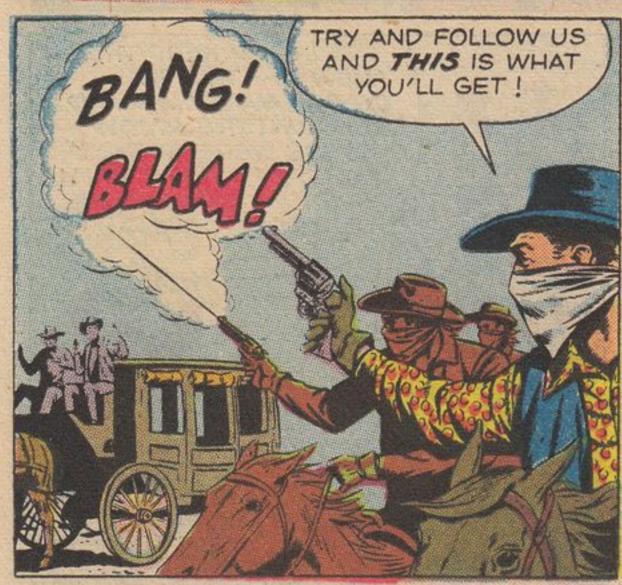


















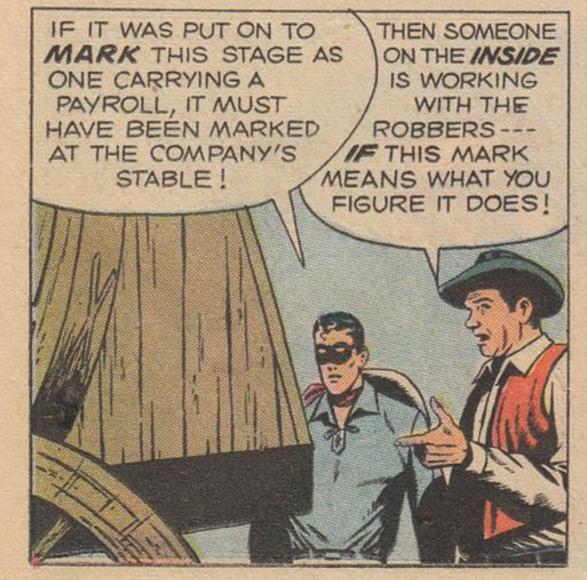




QUICKLY THE DRIVER DESCRIBES THE ROBBERY ...





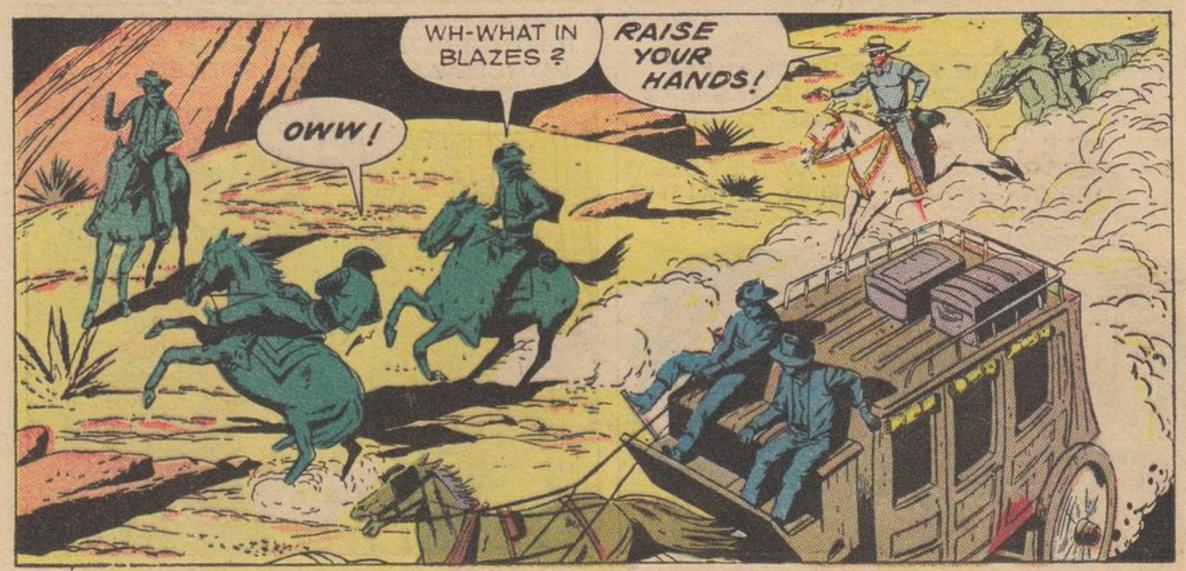


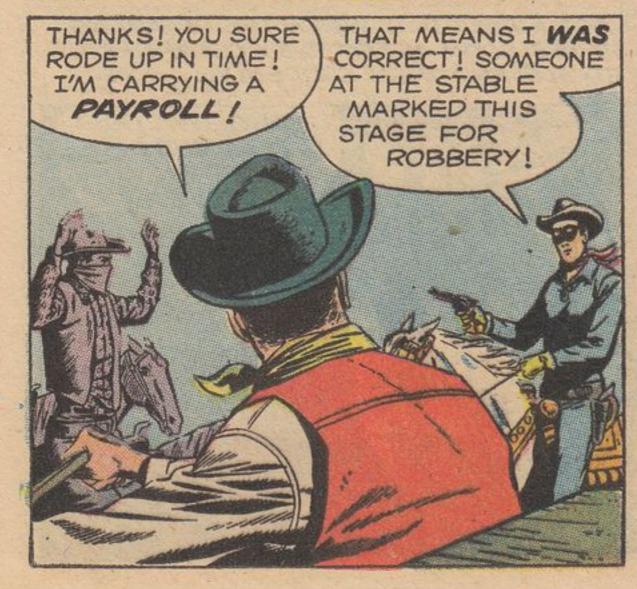
FOR A WEEK THEY WATCH THE DEPARTING STAGES SOON AFTER THEY LEAVE THE STABLE AND THEN SUDDENLY...













RACING BACK TO THE STABLE, THE LONE RANGER HAS THE STAGE HANDLERS

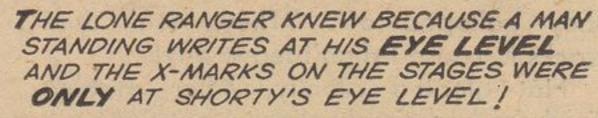




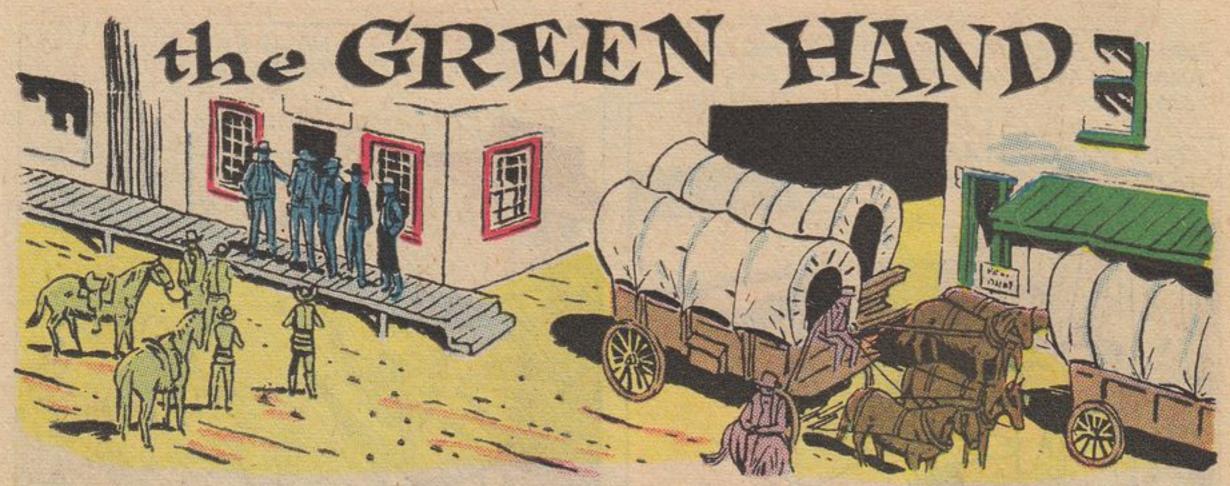












Sheriff Matt Mason needed some paper. At Fred Greene's General Store, Mason was careful to avoid the wooden posts. They glistened bright green with a sign—FRESH PAINT. Fred had been painting all morning, off and on, between customers.

Inside, Fred wasn't around. Then Mason heard a muffled groan and found Fred behind the counter, tied hand and foot.

"Robbery!" choked Fred when Mason removed his gag. "Man with a mask over his face. Just five minutes ago, right after I finished painting outside. Hurry, sheriff ... he can't be far out of town."

Mason dashed back to his office. "Split up," he told his two deputies. "Between the three of us we can cover the hills, the low trail, and the range. One of us is sure to pick up his fresh trail."

"No they won't!" thought Nat Thatcher to himself, leaning idly at the corner as they galloped off. "They won't find tracks because I didn't leave any!"

Nat gloated silently. After robbing Fred, he had simply slipped out the back door, then removed his mask to reappear on the street, innocently. Why leave town? That was the last "hideout" anybody would expect.

Nat was a town loafer— Folks were used to seeing him around. After sticking in town a few days he could ride off, scot-free, with the loot. It was perfect.

Returning hours later, the baffled sheriff and his deputies reported to Fred Greene that they could find no trail of the thief. grily. "You couldn't miss it. What kind of lawmen are you?"

"I'll . . . er . . . need a posse," mum-

"But it was a fresh trail," said Fred an-

"I'll . . . er . . . need a posse," mumbled Mason. "I'll swear in any idle men in town."

Soon, the volunteers gathered before the store. The sheriff made them take the oath, then pinned deputy badges on them. Nat Thatcher was among the men rounded up. He, the thief, would be made a deputy to hunt himself! What a big joke on this dumb lawman!

Nat grinned as his turn came, holding up his right hand to be sworn in. But instead of handing him a badge, the sheriff suddenly clapped handcuffs on him. "I arrest you for the robbery, Nat Thatcher. I figured that if the bandit left no trail, he never left town."

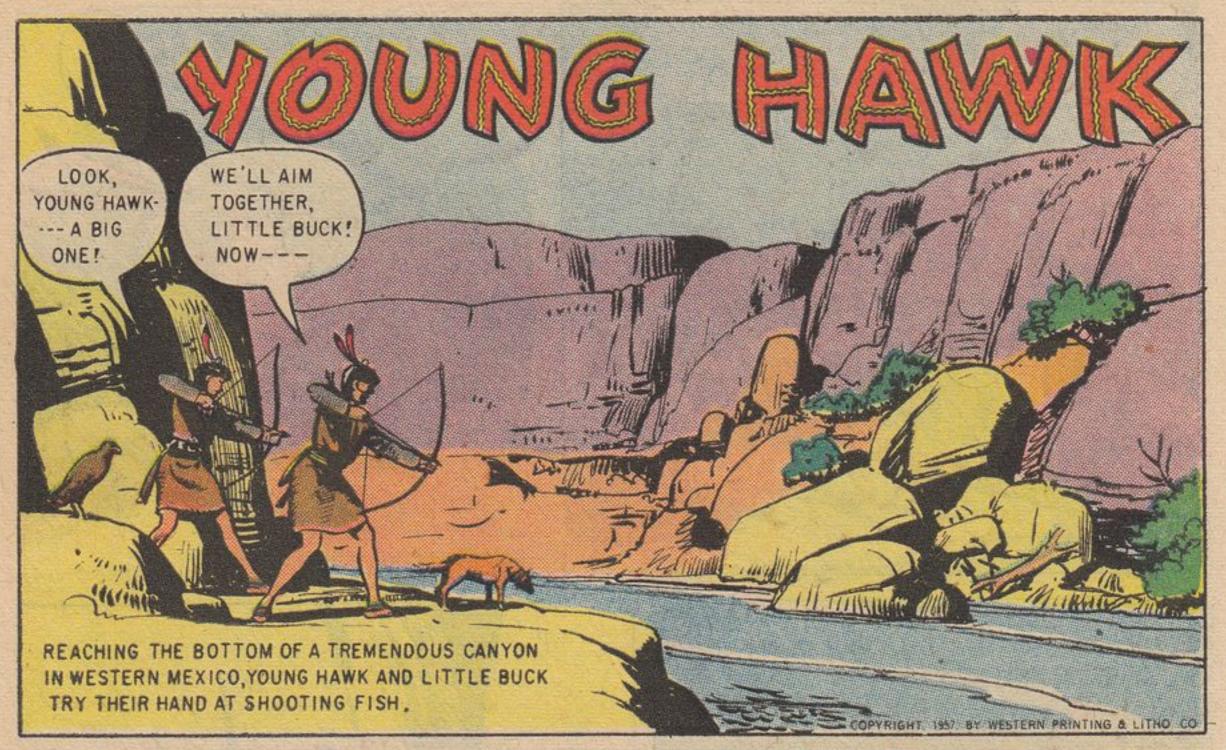
Mason found the stolen money in a flat pouch inside Nat's shirt, convicting him.

Nat finally found his tongue, stunned at the swiftness of it. "But—but how could you pick me out of thin air like that?"

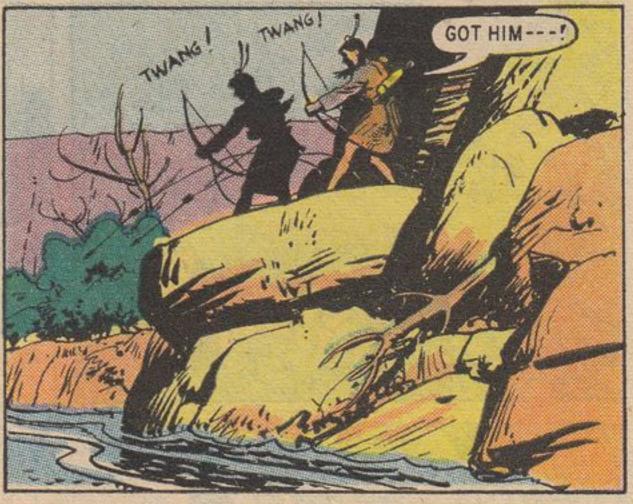
"Well, first of all," snapped Mason, "swearing in a posse was just a trick. I only wanted to get the men to raise their right hands for the oath. Look at your right-hand index finger."

Nat started, seeing the green smudge on his finger.

"You're one of those people who just can't resist a FRESH PAINT sign," grinned the sheriff. "I saw your finger-mark in the paint. And the bandit was the first man to come to the store after Fred finished painting. You might say you fingered yourself!"







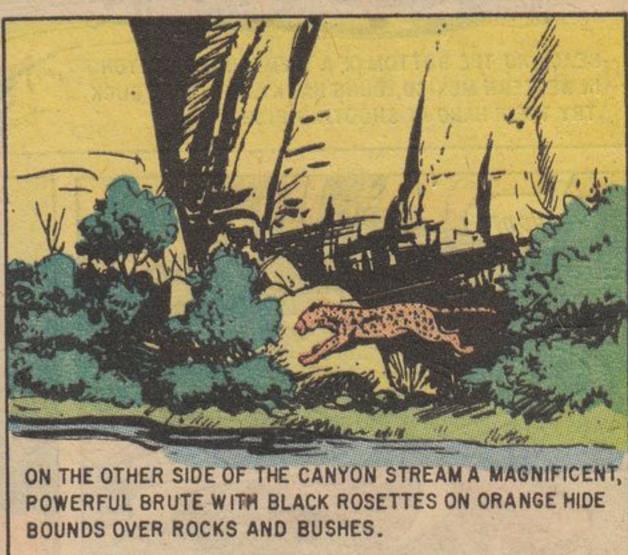




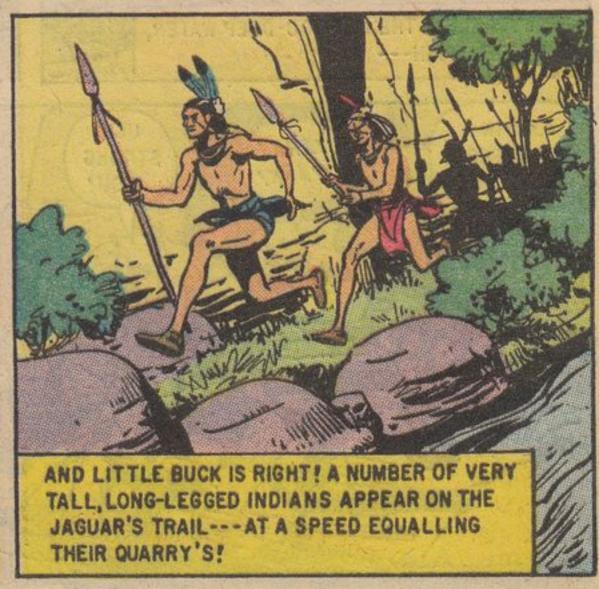








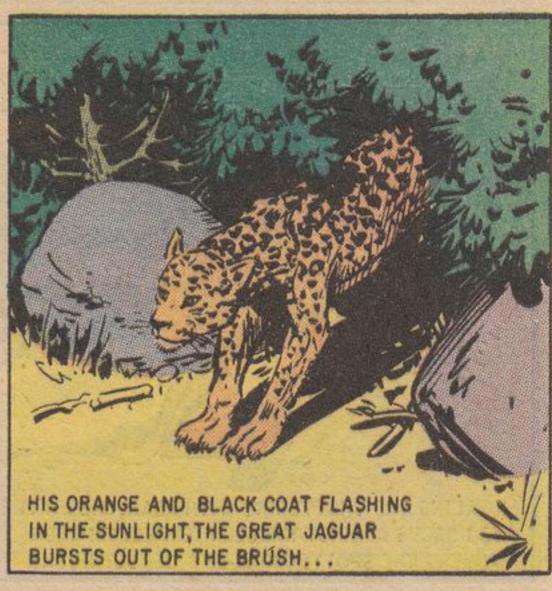




















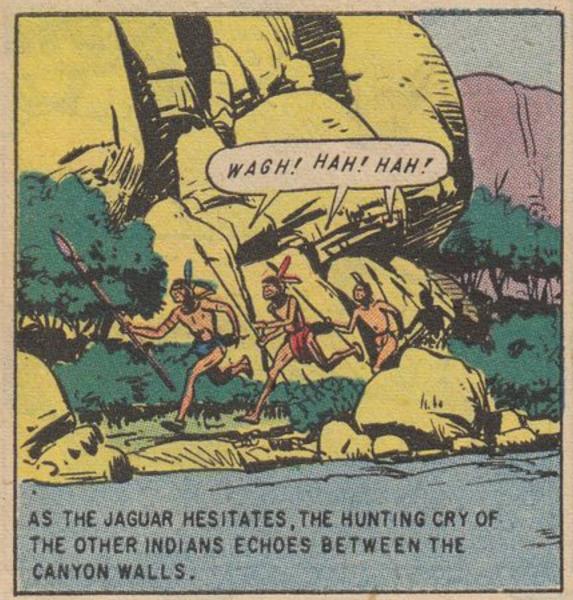
BUT SUDDENLY HE CATCHES A DREADED SCENT!



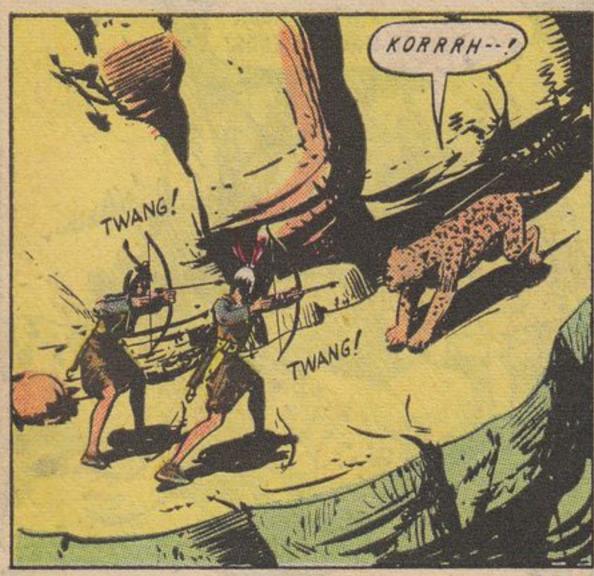


TAKES A NEW DIRECTION!





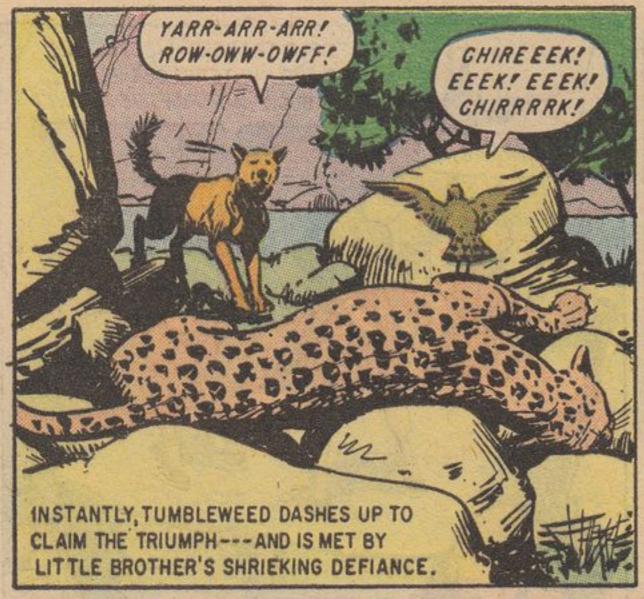










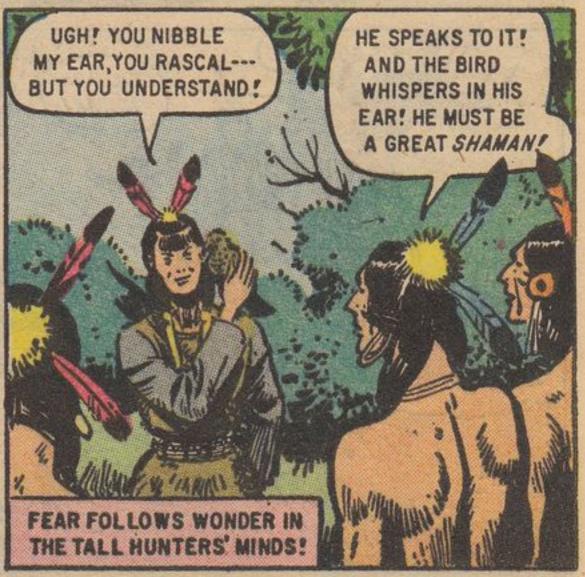






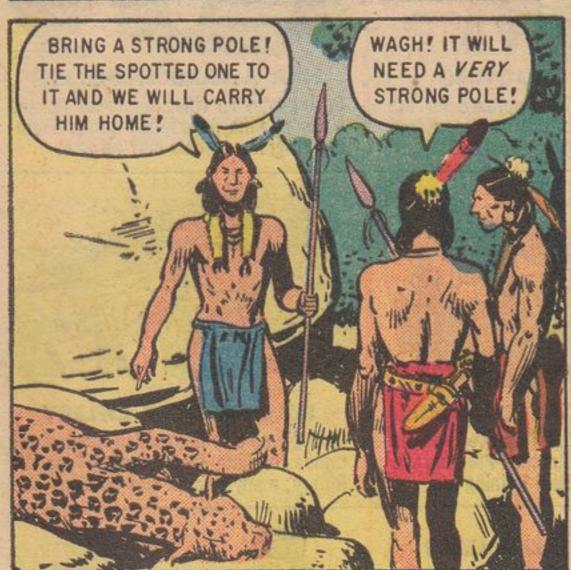




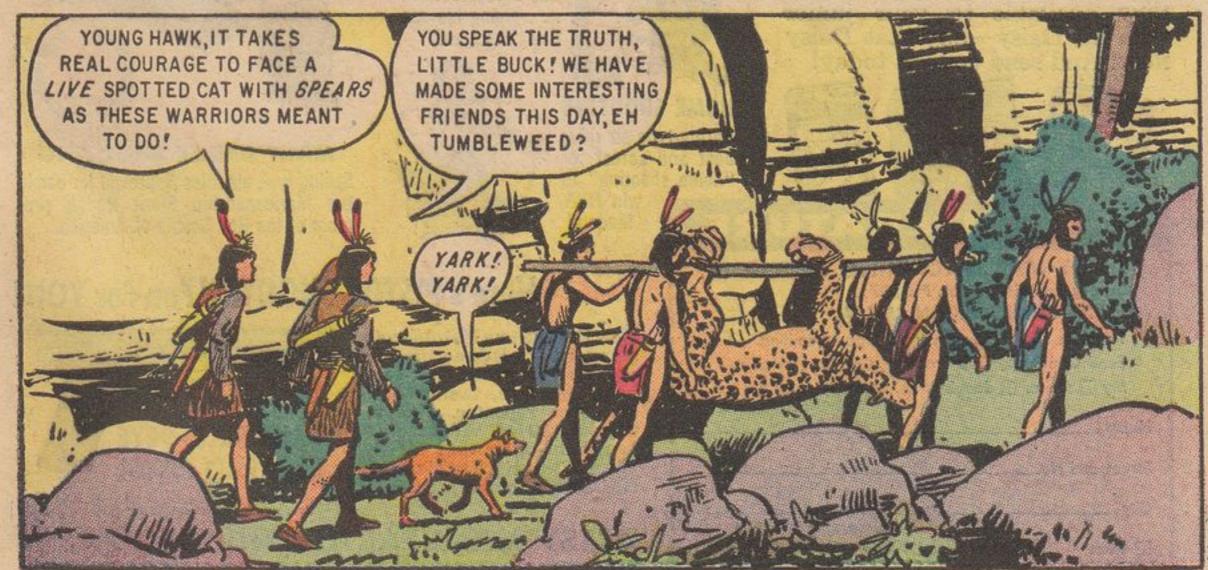


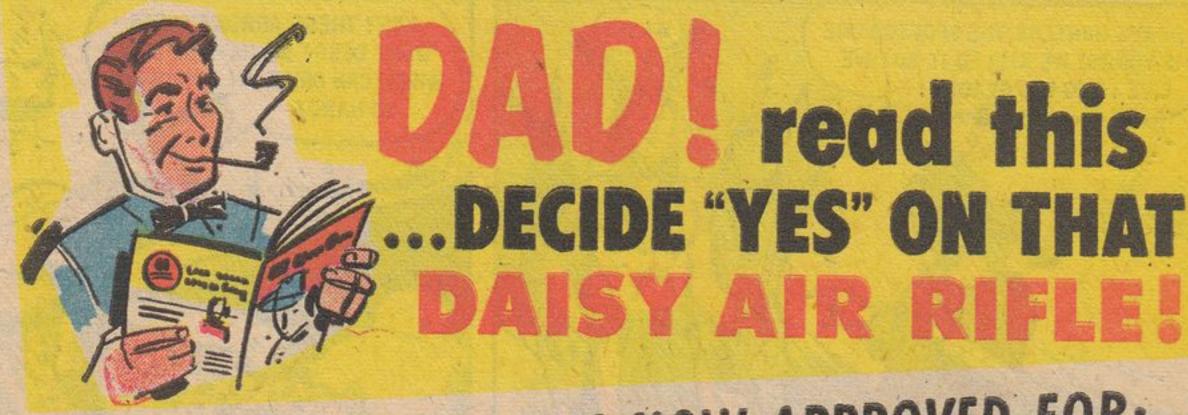












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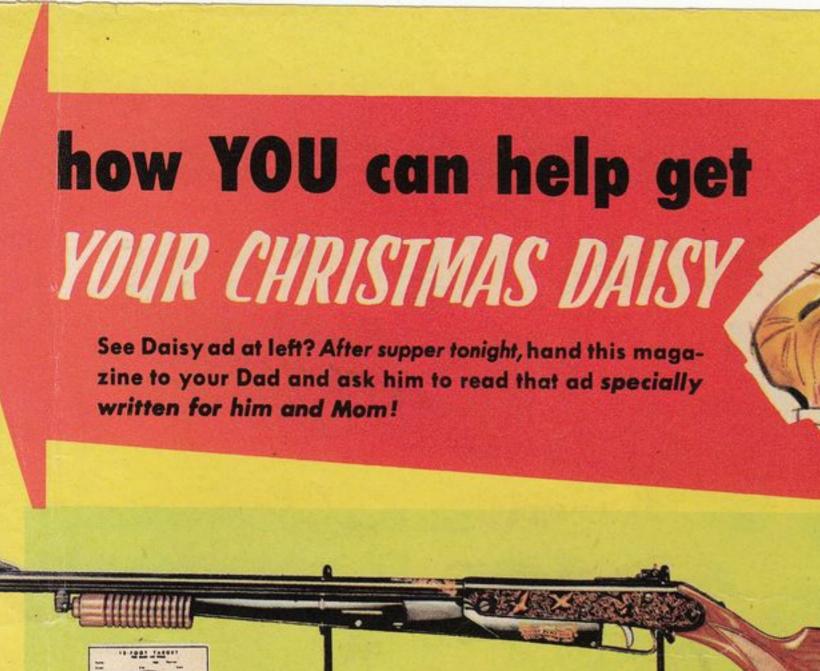
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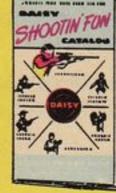
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