

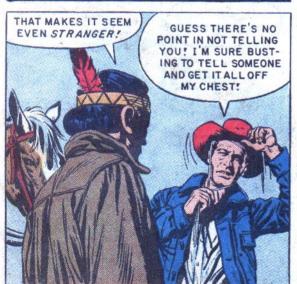


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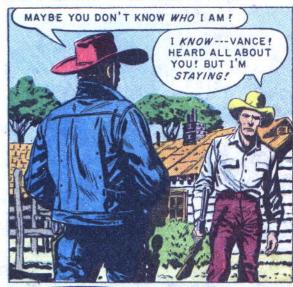
ASK ANYONE IN MODOC WHO'S THE TOP GUN-



"I RODE OVER TO JEFF CALDER'S DIGGINGS!
A NICE PIECE OF LAND! I ALWAYS LOOK AT LAND--WAS RAISED ON A FARM! IN FACT, I'VE BEEN
PUTTING ALL MY GUN-EARNED CASH INTO
FARMLAND..."

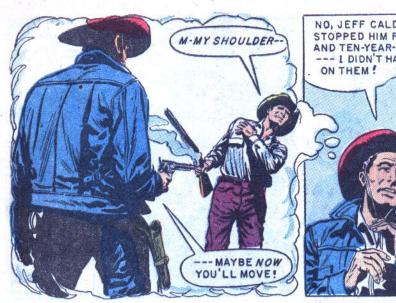




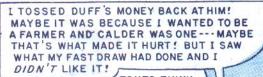




















THIS IS RIGHT UP YOUR ALLEY! I'M HAVING A

FREIGHT WAR WITH THE TAYLOR STAGE LINE!

































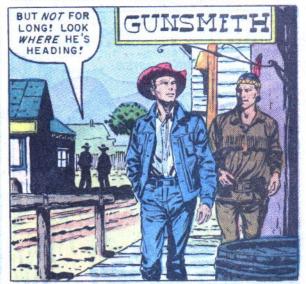










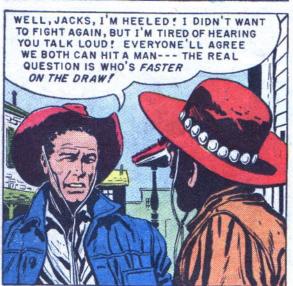




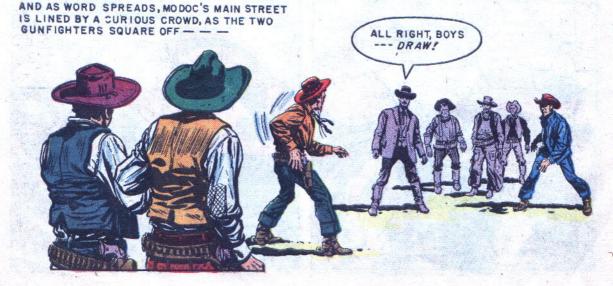








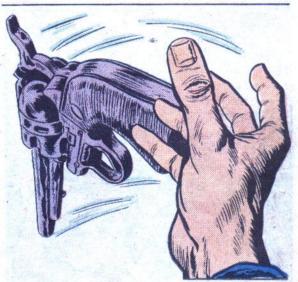




LIKE LIGHTNING, JACKS' HAND STREAKS FOR
HIS GUN...





























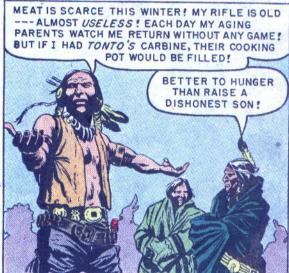


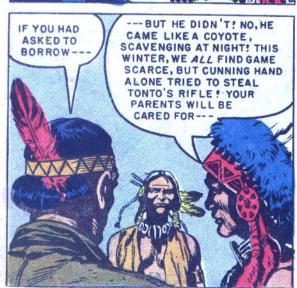


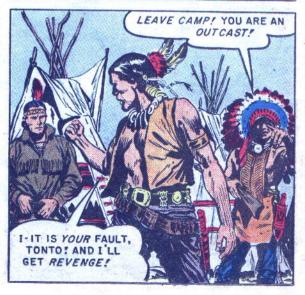












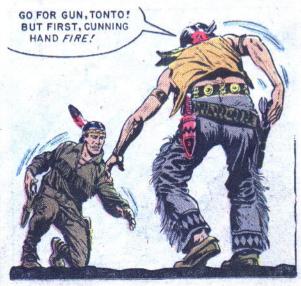


























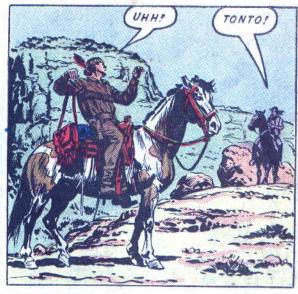














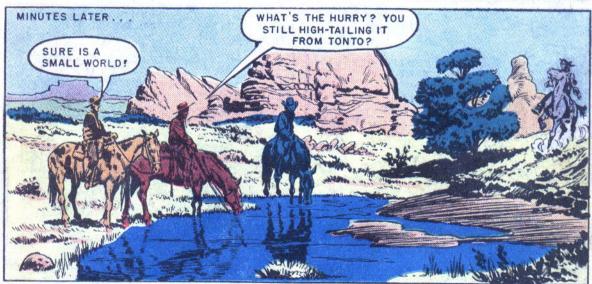


































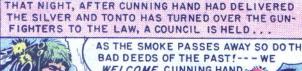








--- NO, CUNNING HAND, I ONLY PRETENDED TO BE SICK! I REALIZED THAT LETTING YOU DELIVER THE SILVER WOULD GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO REDEEM YOURSELF WITH OUR TRIBE! I FOLLOWED YOU WHEN I SAW YOU DEFENDING THE SILVER! YOU PROVED MY TRUST WAS RIGHT!

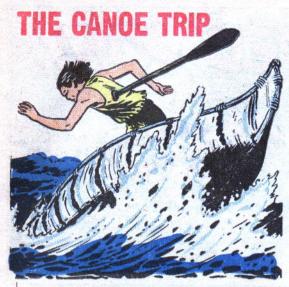












Little Elk stood by the shore of the great lake that lay before the Algonquin camp. Timidly, he refused to climb into the light birchbark cance that his two nine-yearold friends held for him.

"Get in, Little Elk. You can swim. Even

if it tips over, you will still be safe."

"No," Little Elk stammered. "I would rather not try paddling by myself today. The wind is too strong. Maybe it would blow me across the lake or overturn me far out—"

"He always has an excuse. He is just afraid!"

With a wave of their hands, the two boys left Little Elk. They had each taken the frail canoe out alone and brought it back. There was little risk or danger and Little Elk was an even better swimmer. They were not the only ones who witnessed Little Elk's refusal to try his paddle alone. Bold Arrow, his father, had watched the scene from the nearby pines. The great brave's face was sad. He was always chosen to lead the war parties, and that fearful boy was not acting like his son. True, as a child, Little Elk had been very ill and was still not as strong as the others, but to take a canoe out alone did not demand great courage.

"I will sit in my canoe," Bold Arrow said gently. "Paddle to the island, Little Elk. If your canoe overturns, I will be there to help you. But, even if I were not, you are a good swimmer."

For a moment, the young Algonquin hesitated. Then, as his father watched, he carefully boarded the birchbark canoe that rode high in the water and stroked for the island. A feeling of triumph filled his father—but not for long. Suddenly, far short of the island, Little Elk swung his canoe about and raced for the safety of the shore.

"Th-There was a bad wind out there, father. If I went any further I might have

been overturned "

All that night, Bold Arrow tried to think of a way to get Little Elk to make the trip to the island. If he could overcome his son's needless fear just once, all would be well. Little Elk would gain confidence and his friends would mock him no more.

Next morning, Little Elk was awakened by his father's groans. The warrior clutched his stomach and sent Little Elk running for the Medicine Man. Outside the tent, Little Elk waited, wondering what the wise shaman would find. "Get your canoe," the Medicine Man commanded. "Paddle to the island. Bring me some of the juniper berries you will find there."

"T-To the island? But I cannot-"

"There is no one else around to send! Do you want your father to get well? Then

paddle there swiftly!"

Love for his father overcame his fear. Little Elk dug his paddle deeply, shooting across the waters toward the island. But a rising wind caught the high riding bow. The water became choppy. Still he paddled on. Then a sudden gust struck the bow. Over went the light canoe, spilling him into the lake. For a moment, he thought of swimming for shore, but his father needed the juniper berries. Carefully, Little Elk righted the canoe and climbed in.

Some time later, from the tent, his father and the Medicine Man watched the triumphant, smiling boy paddle homeward. The Medicine Man turned to the happy Bold Arrow, "You had better lie down again and pretend to be sick!"

"The juniper berries are good medicine," Bold Arrow replied. "I do not need them, but they cured Little Elk. He knows now he can handle a canoe alone. Never again will he be needlessly afraid!"





THEN THE PAINTED PONY SEES THE SOURCE OF THE TASTY SMELL . . .





SUDDENLY, HE DIGS HIS HINDLEGS INTO THE GROUND AND PULLS UP SHORT! THERE IS ANOTHER SCENT BEHIND THE CORN'S - - - A DANGEROUS SCENT. . .

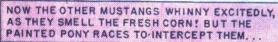


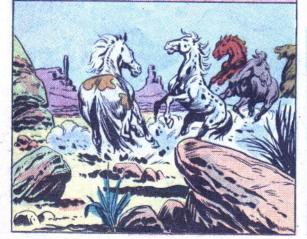
THERE UNDER A CLEVER COVER OF BOUGHS, HE FINDS WHERE THE THREATENING SCENT ORIGINATES! THIS IS THE WORK OF HIS ENEMY -- MAN! THE CORN WAS TO LURE HIM INTO THE TRAP...

AS THE WIND CARRIES THE TEMPTING SCENT OF THE CORN TO HIS NOSTRILS, THE PAINTED PONY LASHES OUT AGAINST THE TRAP THAT KEEPS HIM FROM HIS PRIZE...



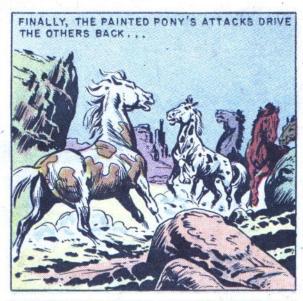






PUZZLED BY THE PAINTED PONY'S STRANGE ACTIONS, THE OTHERS SLOW DOWN! WHEN THEY TRY TO PRESS ON TO GET THE CORN, THE PAINTED PONY NIPS AND BUCKS IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO KEEP THEM OUT OF THE TRAP. . .





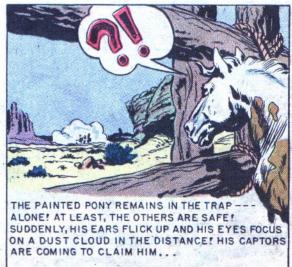
























AT LAST, HE IS OUT! BEHIND HIM, HE HEARS THE

DEFEATED CRY OF THE MEN HE HAS ELUDED! AND

THE PAINTED PONY GALLOPS OFF TO REJOIN THE

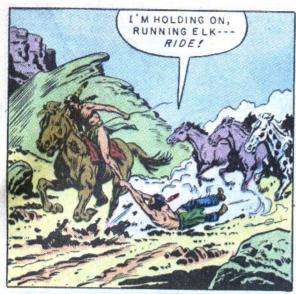
OTHER WILD MUSTANGS HE SAVED FROM







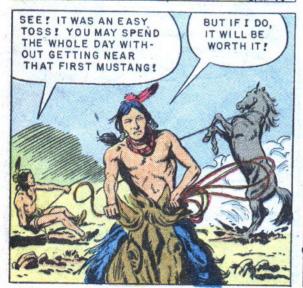














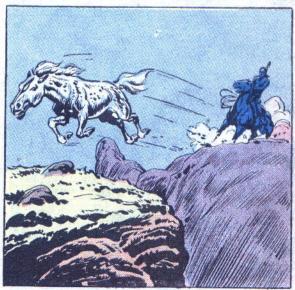


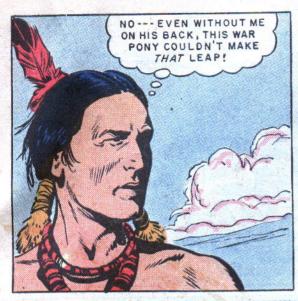


































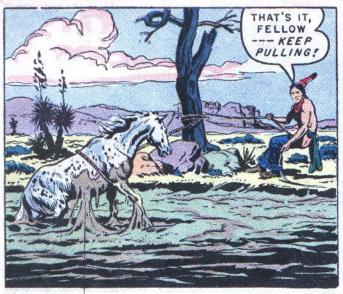


















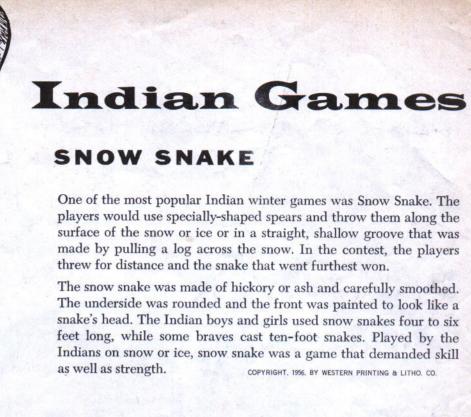
Had the masked man's nephew teamed up with outlaws?

It seemed impossible, yet . . .



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