

DELL
COMIC

JULY-SEPTEMBER

10¢

THE *Lone Ranger's* FAMOUS HORSE

HI-YO

SILVER



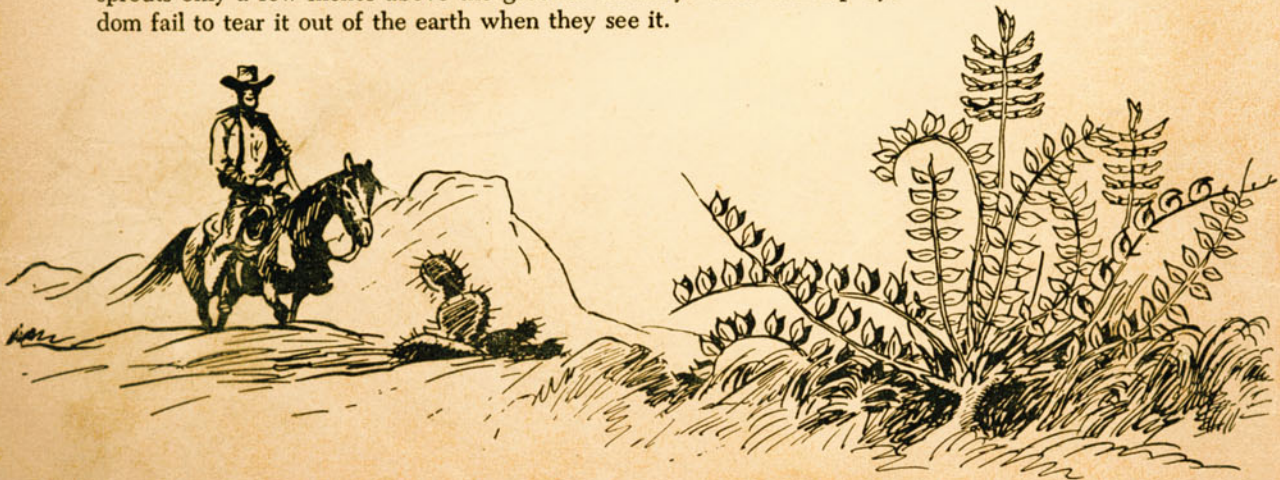
LOCOWEED

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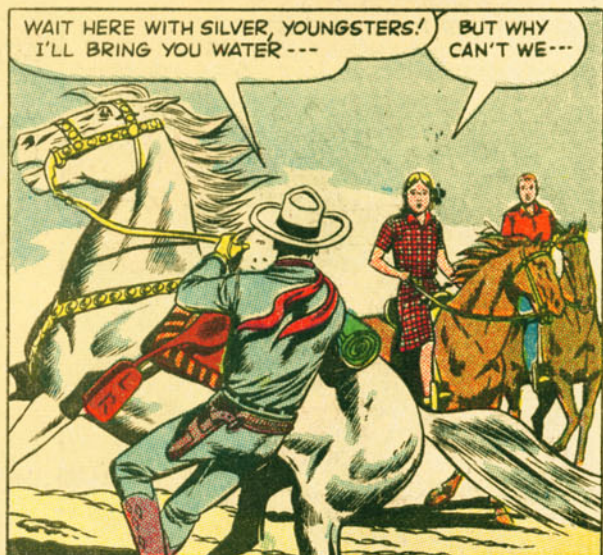
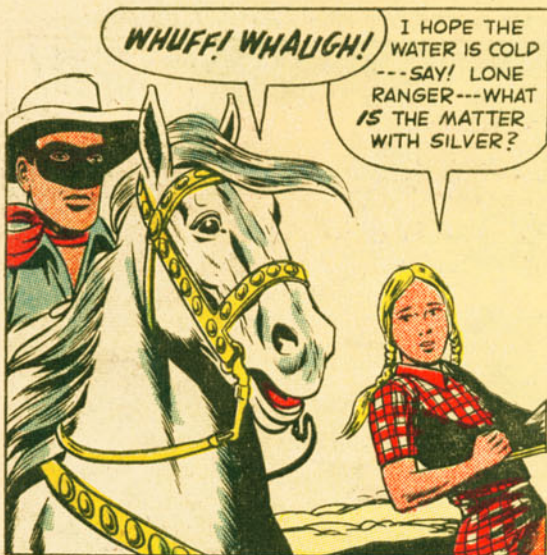
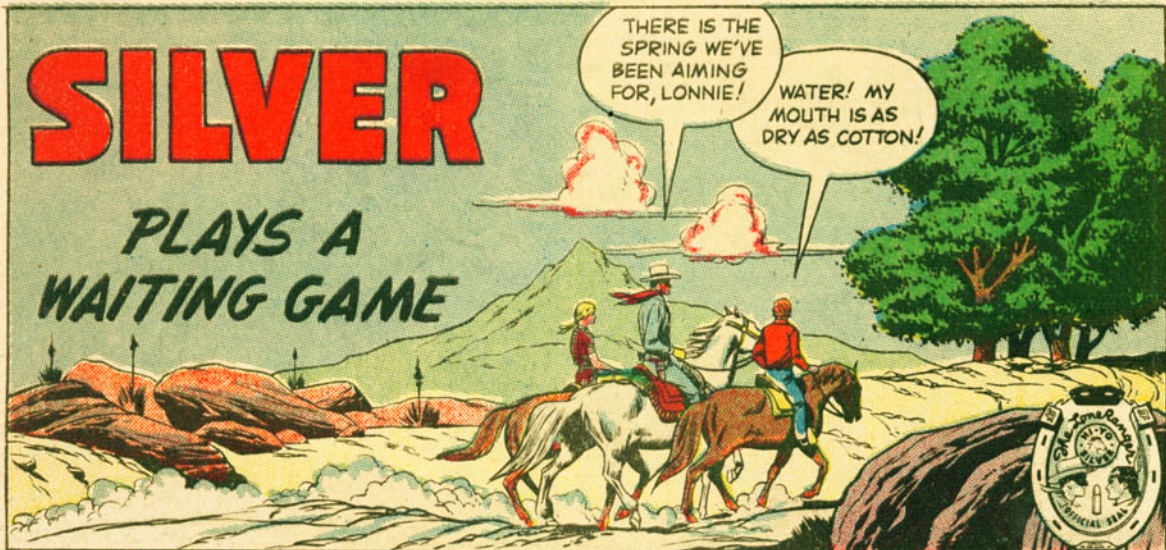
Indian horse hunters and wild animals are not the only things horses have to fear in Wild Horse Valley. A little plant grows there called locoweed because it drives horses mad when they eat it. Most older horses know about it and leave it alone. Colts, however, sometimes acquire a taste for it and have to be driven away from the dangerous weed. And sometimes, too, a fully-grown wild horse crops up the short weed by mistake along with good grass. Soon, he goes crazy, raging and stamping across the prairie, kicking and biting all who come within reach or standing still and trembling as though in a deathly fright. When this happens, a stallion very often has to protect the members of his band, fighting off the locoed horse and driving him away from the colts and peaceful mares until he recovers his senses or dies from the poisons the weed contains. Even if the horse does recover from the weed, he is a very dangerous animal after that because from then on, he seems to want to eat the plant no matter what the effect.

The locoweed is easy to recognize. It has blue-tipped closed flowers on some of its stalks, while thick, short leaves grow on the others. At certain times of the year the plant also bears small, green pods that contain seeds. The stalks grow from a thick, leaf-tipped shoot that sprouts only a few inches above the ground. Cowboys have a sharp eye for the weed and seldom fail to tear it out of the earth when they see it.



SILVER

PLAYS A WAITING GAME



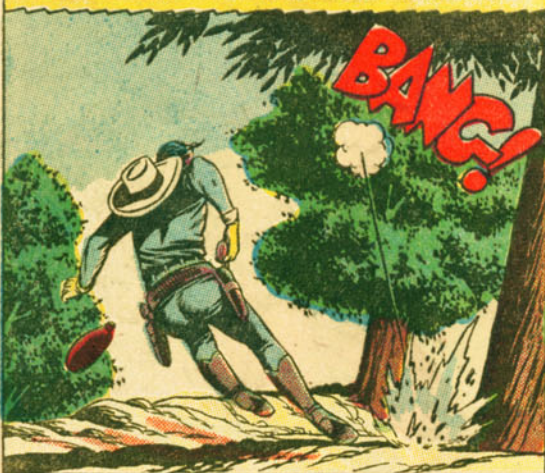
WHISTLING A CARELESS TUNE, THE LONE RANGER WALKS TOWARD THE SPRING, HIS TWIN GUNS HOLSTERED---



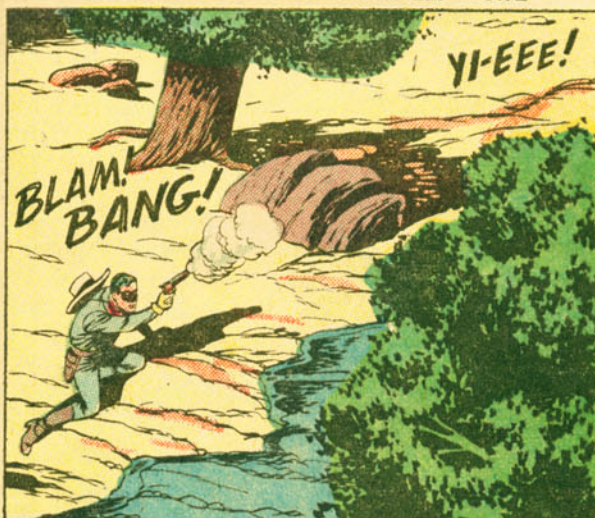
AND, HIDDEN IN THE THICK FOLIAGE OF ONE OF THE TREES, A HOSTILE APACHE SIGHTS DOWN THE STEADY BARREL OF HIS RIFLE---



NERVES KEYED TO THE HIGHEST PITCH, THE LONE RANGER THROWS HIMSELF SIDEWISE--A SPLIT SECOND BEFORE THE APACHE'S RIFLE ROARS---



HIS TWO SWIFT SHOTS BRING A STARTLED HOWL---



---AND THE THUD OF A FALLING RIFLE.

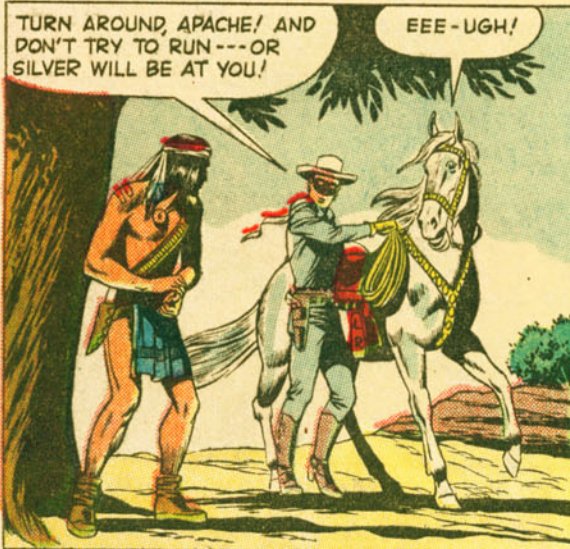


NURSING A NUMBED HAND, THE SAVAGE SLOWLY DESCENDS.



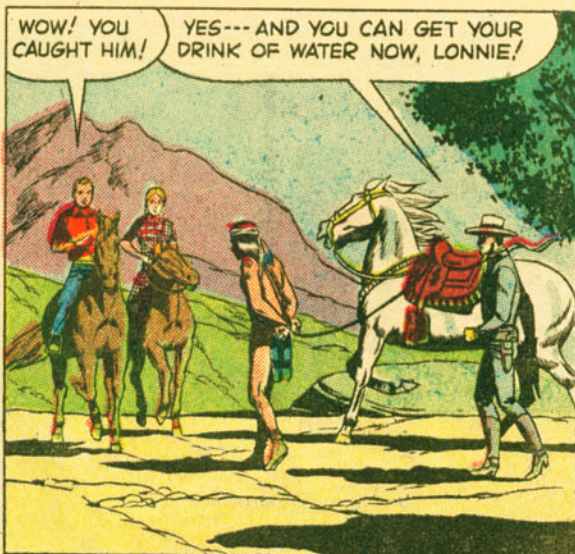
TURN AROUND, APACHE! AND
DON'T TRY TO RUN---OR
SILVER WILL BE AT YOU!

EEE-UGH!



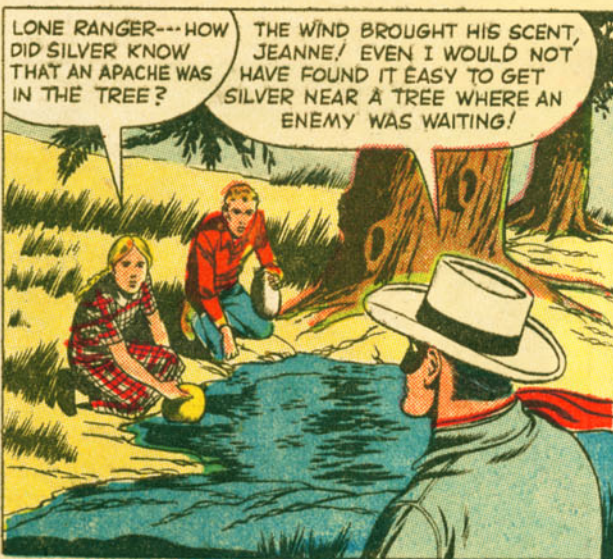
WOW! YOU
CAUGHT HIM!

YES--- AND YOU CAN GET YOUR
DRINK OF WATER NOW, LONNIE!

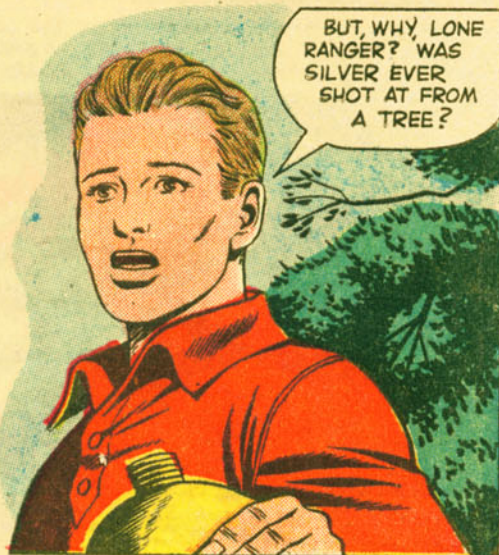


LONE RANGER---HOW
DID SILVER KNOW
THAT AN APACHE WAS
IN THE TREE?

THE WIND BROUGHT HIS SCENT,
JEANNE! EVEN I WOULD NOT
HAVE FOUND IT EASY TO GET
SILVER NEAR A TREE WHERE AN
ENEMY WAS WAITING!



BUT, WHY, LONE
RANGER? WAS
SILVER EVER
SHOT AT FROM
A TREE?



YES, HE WAS, LONNIE!
AND BY AN APACHE NAMED
KEENAY! WHILE WE ARE
RIDING BACK TO THE
WAGON TRAIN WITH OUR
PRISONER, I'LL TELL YOU
THE STORY OF *SILVER'S*
WAITING GAME!



"CAMPED IN THE HILLS ABOVE WILD HORSE VALLEY,
KEENAY BROODED OVER HIS MANY FAILURES TO
TRAP THE SILVER COLT--- BUT HE HAD NOT GIVEN UP!



"AT LAST HE WORKED OUT AN IDEA---



"IT WAS A RISKY IDEA--- BUT KEENAY HAD RISKED HIS LIFE BEFORE, TRYING TO CATCH SILVER. CAREFULLY HE CHOSE TWO SMOOTH STONES, THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF A HEN'S EGG,



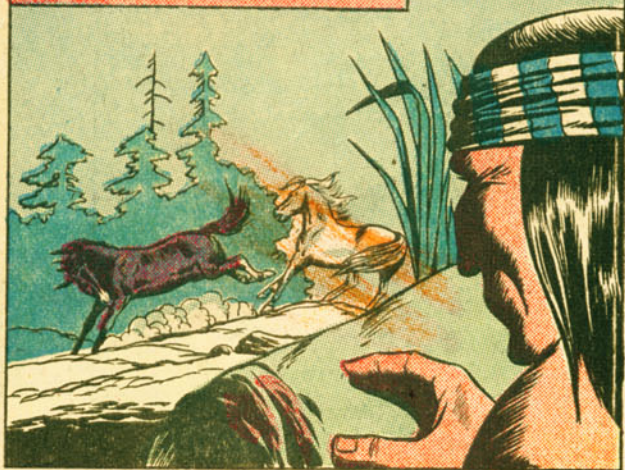
"WITH STICKY PINE PITCH AND RAWHIDE WRAPPING, HE FASTENED EACH OF THE STONES TO THE END OF AN ARROW SHAFT.

"WHEN HE FELT SATISFIED WITH THEIR BALANCE, HE TOOK HIS BOW---



"--AND, WITH ALL THE ROPES IN CAMP, HE STARTED DOWN INTO WILD HORSE VALLEY.

"AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, HE FOUND SILVER ALONE WITH HIS SMALLER FRIEND, BLACK SCAMPER--ROMPING MERRILY, UNAWARE OF DANGER.

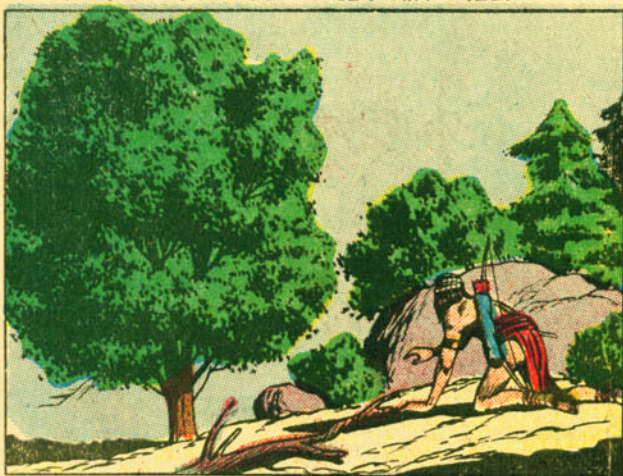


HUNHH! BLACK COLT HAS
A SCATTERBRAIN---LETS
SILVER COLT THINK FOR HIM!



"KEENAY, THE WISE OLD HUNTER OF HORSES,
SIZED UP SCAMPER IMMEDIATELY--AND KNEW
HOW THE BLACK COLT COULD BE USED."

"TAKING NOTE OF THE WIND'S DIRECTION---AND THE
DIRECTION IN WHICH THE COLTS WERE MOVING,
KEENAY PICKED OUT A CERTAIN TREE."



"UP-WIND FROM THE COLTS, HE STEPPED OUT FROM
BEHIND THE TRUNK, AN ORDINARY BLUNT ARROW ON
HIS BOWSTRING."

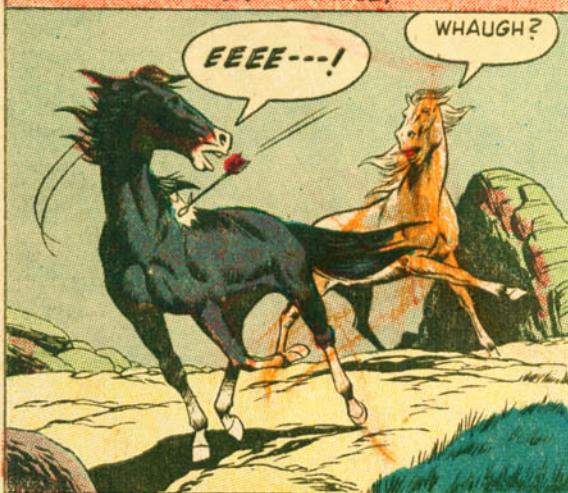


"HIS AIM WAS QUICK AND SURE."



---MAKE SURE SILVER
COLT RUNS *THIS* WAY!

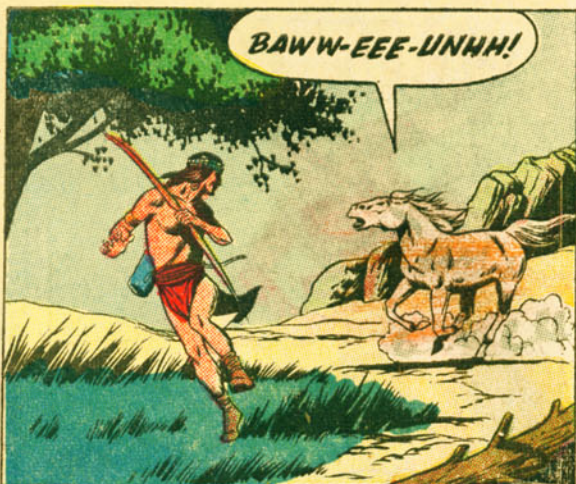
"AT THE ARROW'S IMPACT, SCAMPER SQUEALED,
IN HURT SURPRISE!"



EEEE---!

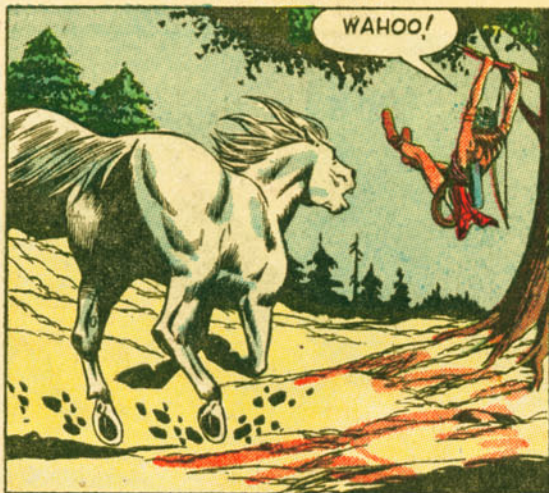
WHAUGH?

BAWW-EEE-UNHH!

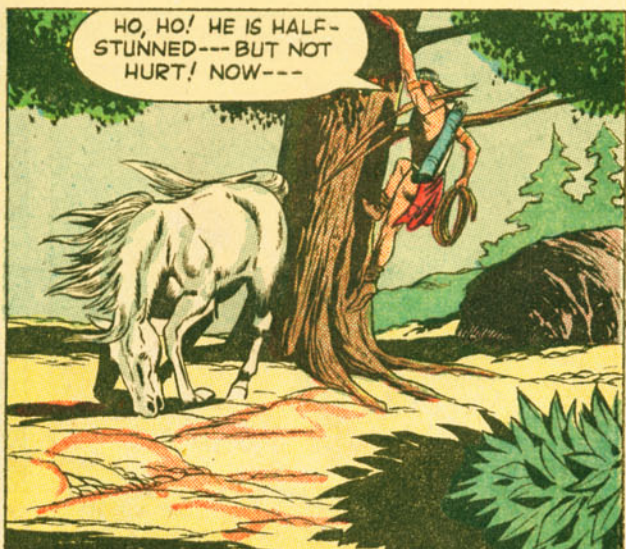


"BUT SILVER'S RESPONSE WAS PURE RED RAGE! HE
KNEW HIS ENEMY---AND DESPISED HIM!"

"WITH A TAUNTING YELL, KEENAY SWUNG UP INTO THE BRANCHES---"



"THE TURKEY CALL BROUGHT SILVER TO STIFF ATTENTION! AND IN THAT MOMENT---



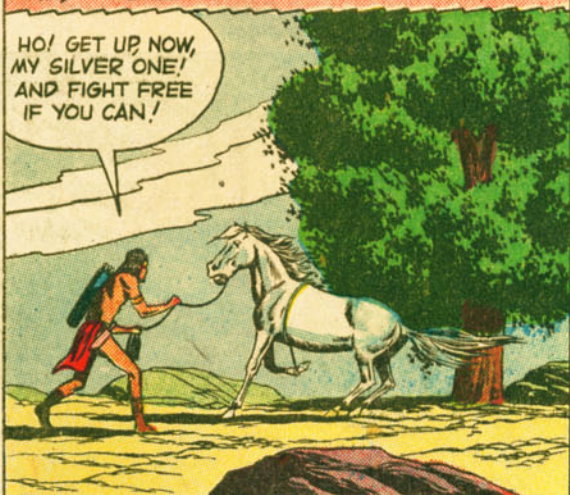
"EXPERTLY THE OLD HORSE HUNTER TIGHTENED A ROPE ABOUT SILVER'S BARREL---"



"NOT A MOTION WAS WASTED! IN MERE SECONDS THE APACHE HAD ATTACHED AND TIGHTENED HIS ROPES---"



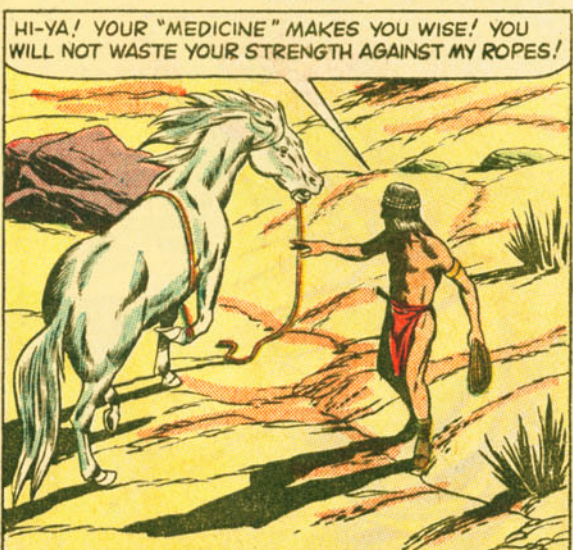
"---INCLUDING ONE ABOUT SILVER'S LOWER JAW, IN PLACE OF A BIT AND BRIDLE."



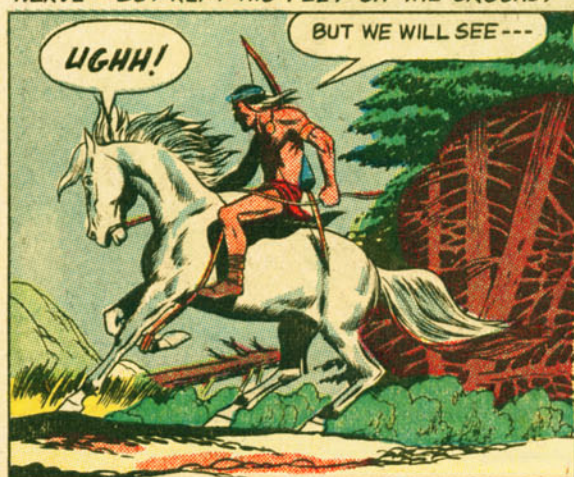
"STILL A BIT DAZED FROM THE STONE ARROW'S BLOW, THE TALL COLT CHAMPED AT THE STRANGE THING IN HIS MOUTH---IT HAD THE HATEFUL TASTE OF **MAN!**"



"BUT ONCE IN POSSESSION OF HIS SENSES, SILVER STOOD STILL WITHOUT PANIC, HE KNEW IT WOULD DO NO GOOD TO FIGHT---**YET!**"



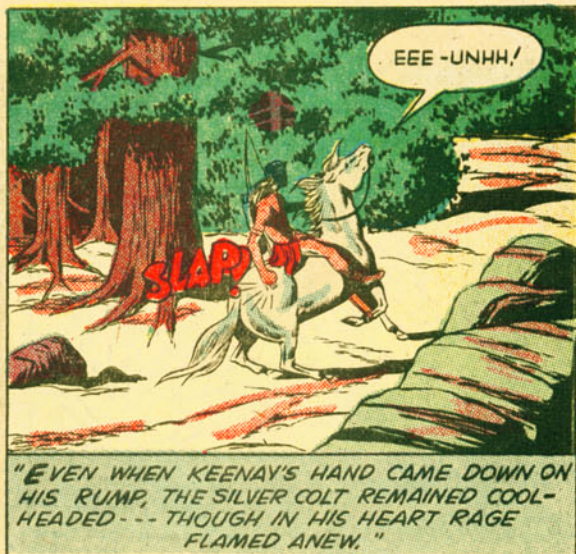
"WITH A SUDDEN LEAP THE APACHE SPRUNG ASTRIDE! SILVER QUIVERED IN EVERY OUTRAGED NERVE---BUT KEPT HIS FEET ON THE GROUND."



"FROM A DISTANCE BLACK SCAMPER WATCHED IN WONDER AND DISTRESS."



"BUT KEENAY WAS NOT DECEIVED! HE KNEW THAT BETWEEN HIS KNEES MOVED AN ENEMY AS DEADLY AND DETERMINED AS ANY HUMAN FOE."



"HE SAW HIS SILVER HERO, SEEMINGLY OBEDIENT TO HIS WORST ENEMY, MOVE FROM THE VALLEY UP A WOODED DRAW,"



"BEFORE STARTING ON, HE RELEASED THE COLT'S RIGHT FOREFOOT."

NOW YOU MAY WALK ON **FOUR** LEGS!



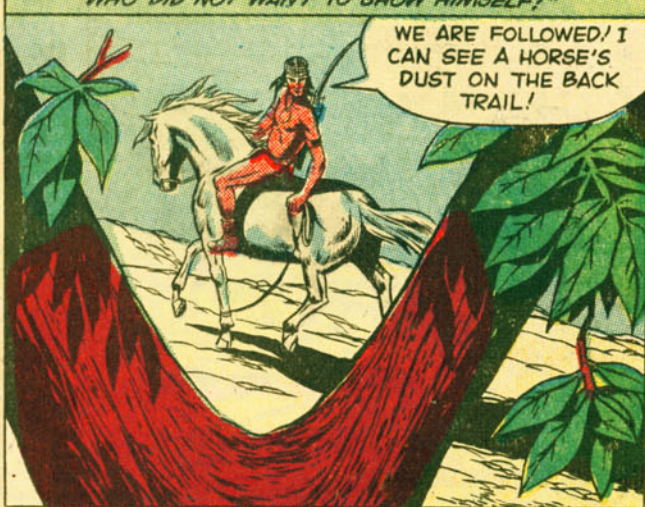
"IT WAS A RISK HE HAD FIGURED ON! NOW SILVER **COULD** MAKE A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM--- IN SPITE OF THE JERK ROPE STILL TIED TO HIS LEFT FOREFOOT---BUT THE COLT WAS TOO WISE."

YOU KNOW **TOO MUCH**, MY SILVER ONE! YOU WILL NOT FIGHT UNTIL YOU HAVE **ME** IN A TRAP!

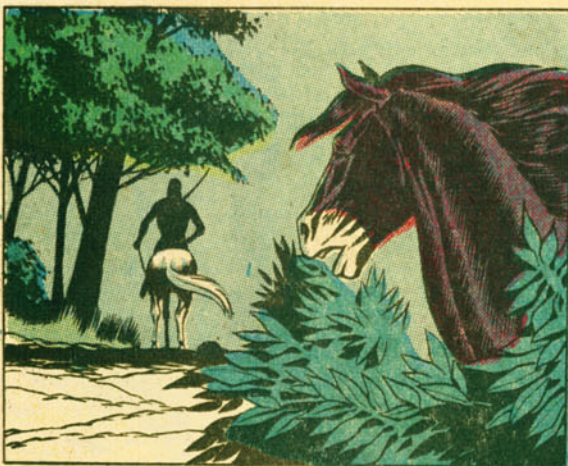


"AS THE DAY WENT ON, KEENAY BEGAN TO WONDER IF HE WOULD EVER REACH APACHE LAND WITH HIS PRIZE,

"ANOTHER THING BOTHERED THE APACHE: A TRACKER WHO DID NOT WANT TO SHOW HIMSELF!"

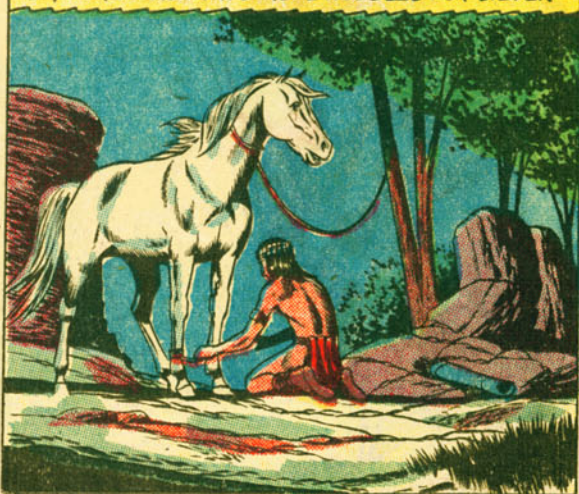


WE ARE FOLLOWED! I CAN SEE A HORSE'S DUST ON THE BACK TRAIL!



"HE DID NOT GUESS THAT IT WAS BLACK SCAMPER ---WHOSE LOYAL HEART FORCED HIM TO FOLLOW, DESPITE HIS FEAR OF KEENAY."

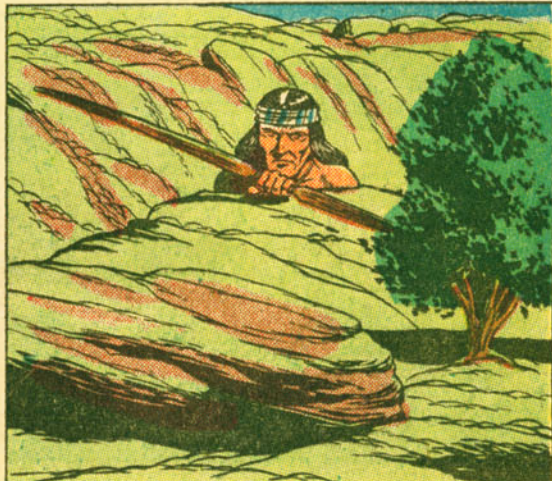
"WHEN DARKNESS FELL, KEENAY LIGHTED NO FIRE. HE QUICKLY FASHIONED ROPE HOBBLIES FOR SILVER--"



"---AND LEFT HIM TIED TO A TREE---THEN WITH HIS WEAPONS, HE DUCKED INTO A NEARBY ARROYO---



"---TO AMBUSH THE SUPPOSED ENEMY WHO HAD BEEN FOLLOWING HIM ALL DAY!"

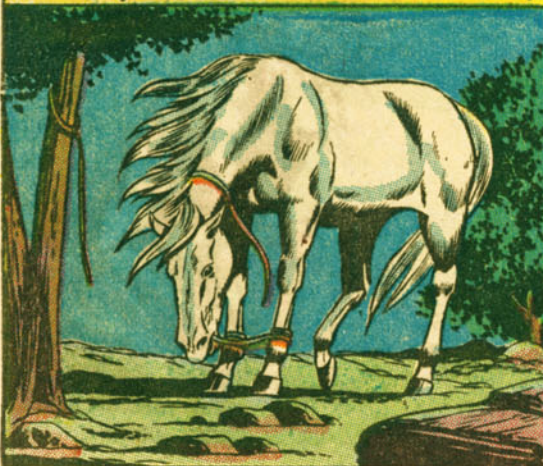


"BUT BLACK SCAMPER CAUGHT THE APACHES SCENT, AND WAS CAUTIOUS! THROUGH THE DARKNESS HE SENT HIS CALL OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE SILVER CAPTIVE."



"DARKNESS WAS WHAT SILVER HAD BEEN WAITING FOR! UNSEEN BY KEENAY, HE PUT HIS RAZOR SHARP FRONT TEETH TO WORK."

"IN A FEW MOMENTS HIS TETHER WAS CUT! THE ROPE HOBBLER WERE A TOUGHER PROBLEM, BUT EVEN THEY COULD BE SAWED!"



"AS HE RAISED HIS HEAD---FREE AT LAST---BLACK SCAMPER'S NOSE REACHED OUT THROUGH THE GLOOM TO TOUCH HIS!"



"AT SCAMPER'S GENTLE SNORT, KEENAY TURNED HIS HEAD! HE HAD NOT HEARD THE BLACK COLT'S CAT-FOOTED APPROACH."

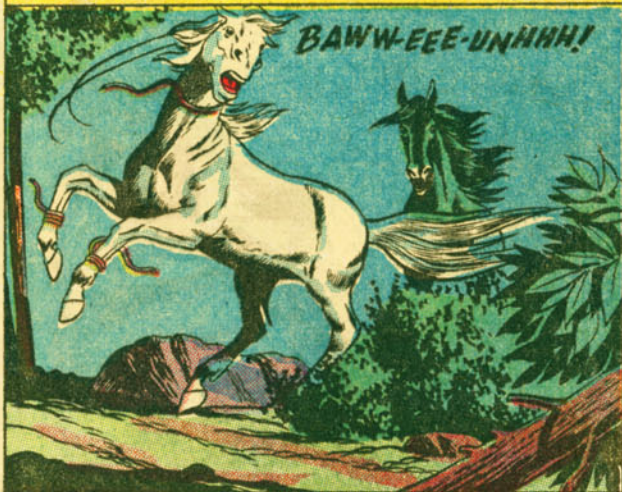


"THE APACHE BEGAN TO TREMBLE, IN SUPERSTITIOUS TERROR! HE COULD SEE NO HUMAN SHAPE--- SO HE REASONED THAT A SPIRIT HORSE HAD FREED HIS SILVER CAPTIVE!"

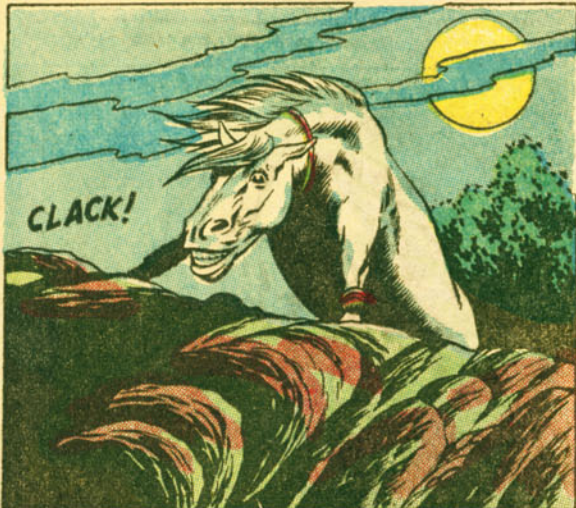
"HIS TEETH BEGAN TO CHATTER AS HE SHOOK WITH A NERVOUS CHILL,"



"THE SOUND REMINDED SILVER OF HIS ENEMY'S PRESENCE! WITH A BAWL OF RAGE HE WHIRLED---"

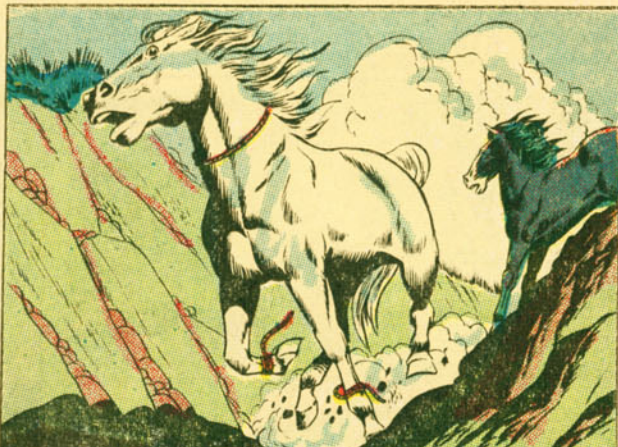


"---AND CHARGED THE ARROYO! KEENAY'S SECOND STONE-HEADED ARROW, HASTILY AIMED, ONLY GRAZED THE COLT'S SHOULDER."

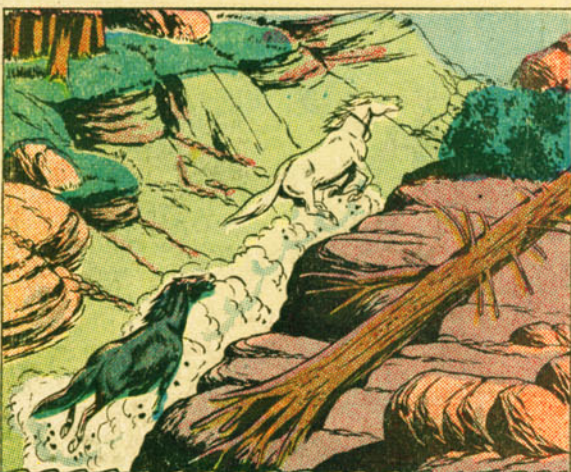


"HIS JAWS CLICKED LIKE A STEEL TRAP---"

"BUT KEENAY WAS NOT THERE! HE WAS DARTING DOWN THE TWISTING, SHADOWY ARROYO LIKE A COYOTE WITH A COUGAR AFTER HIM.



"SOMETHING FAR MORE DEADLY THAN A COUGAR WAS AFTER THE APACHE---A SILVER STALLION OF SUPERB INTELLIGENCE AND DETERMINATION, WHOM NO ARROW COULD STOP.



"CLOSE AT HIS HERO'S HEELS RACED BLACK SCAMPER. THE NARROW WALLS OF THE GULLY SHIVERED AT THE THUNDER OF THEIR HOOF.

"KEENAY SEEMED TO BE DOOMED---BUT HE STILL HOPED FOR A WAY OF ESCAPE---



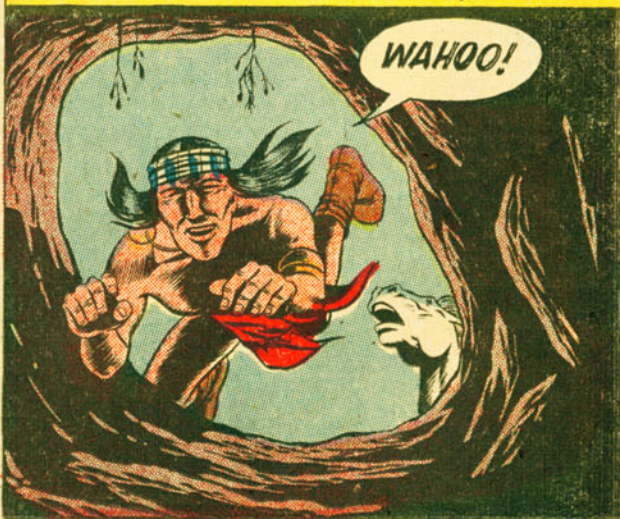
EEEE-UNHH!

"---AND SUDDENLY HE SAW IT! A HOLE, DUG BY A COYOTE, AND ENLARGED BY FRESHET WATER!"



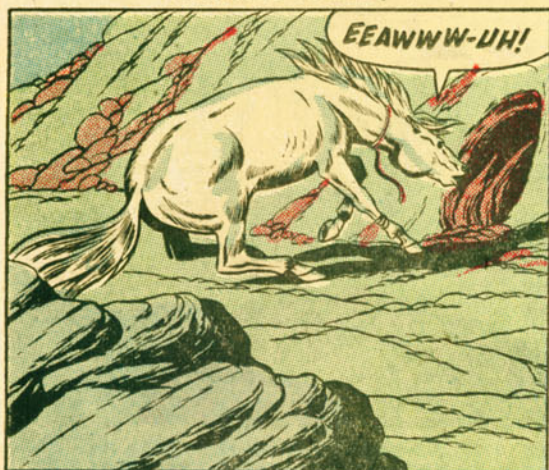
AHHH---

"WITH A YELL OF DEFIANCE HE DIVED FOR IT, HEADFIRST!"

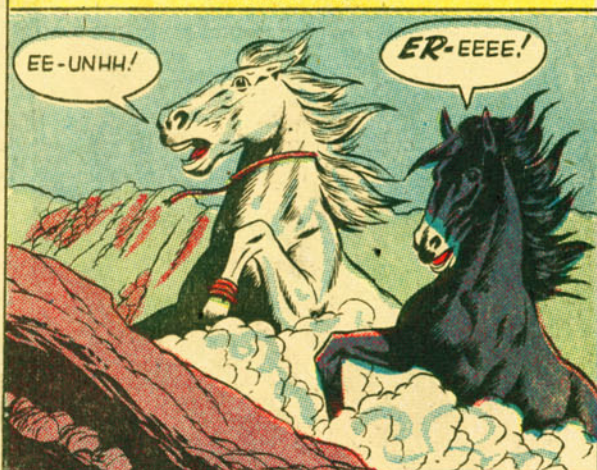


WAHOO!

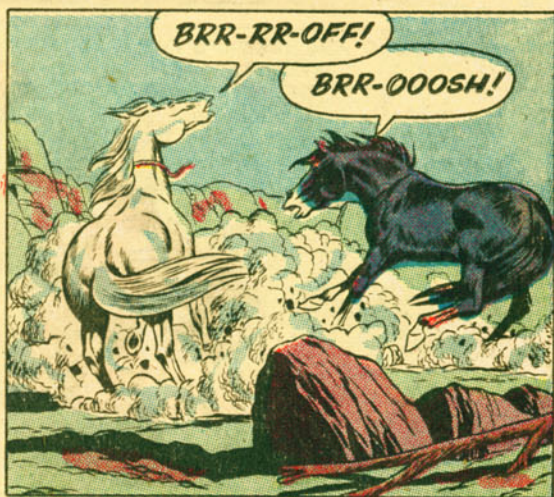
"SILVER'S FOREHOOF SLASHED AT THE HOLE---
AND HIS SCREAM OF BAFFLED ANGER WAS
TERRIBLE TO HEAR---!"



"SQUEALING IN SYMPATHY, BLACK SCAMPER JOINED
HIS FRIEND IN A FURIOUS EFFORT TO REACH THEIR
COMMON FOE."

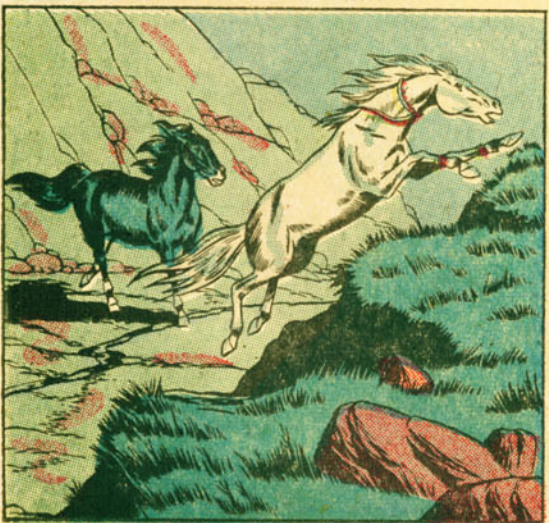


"BUT INSIDE THE WATER-WORN HOLE, THE OLD
HORSE HUNTER CHUCKLED TO HIMSELF, KNOWING
HE WAS SAFE."

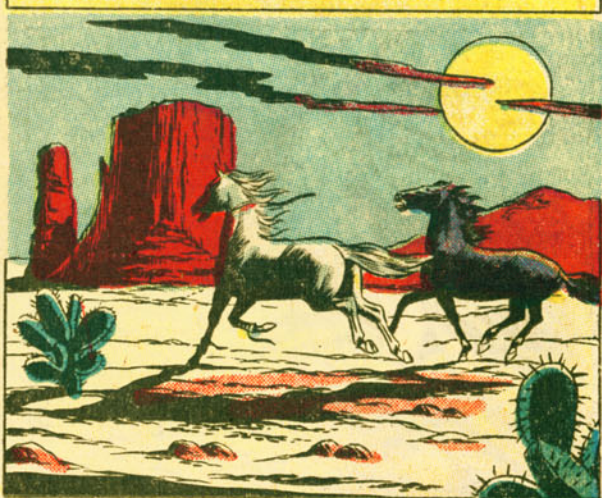


"FINALLY THE TWO COLTS QUIT---HALF-CHOKED
WITH THE DUST THEY HAD RAISED."

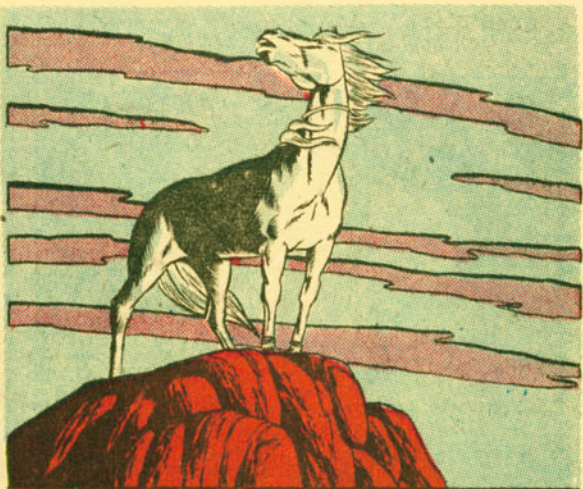
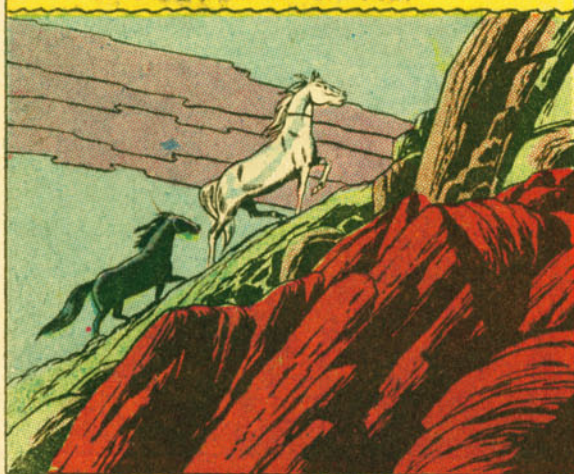
"CLAMBERING OUT OF THE ARROYO ---"



"---THEY HEADED BACK TOWARD WILD HORSE
VALLEY ACROSS THE MOONLIT DESERT,"



"IN THE DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN THEY CLIMBED THE ROCKY SLOPES DOWN WHICH THEY HAD COME--- FOR SILVER HAD A PURPOSE.

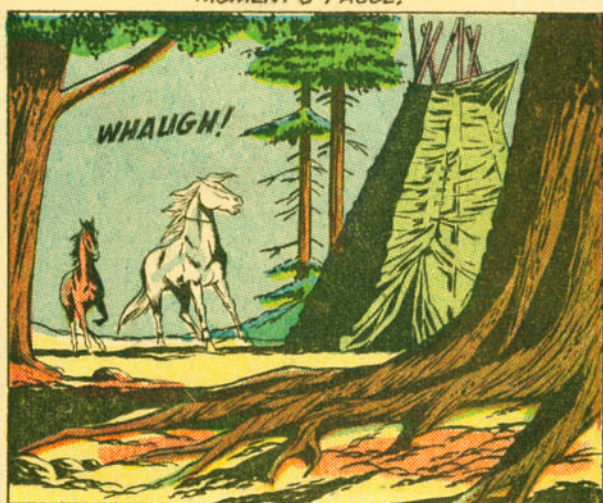


"ONLY FOR A MOMENT DID HE PAUSE ON THE TOP-MOST RIDGE TO TEST THE AIR FOR SCENT OF ENEMIES.

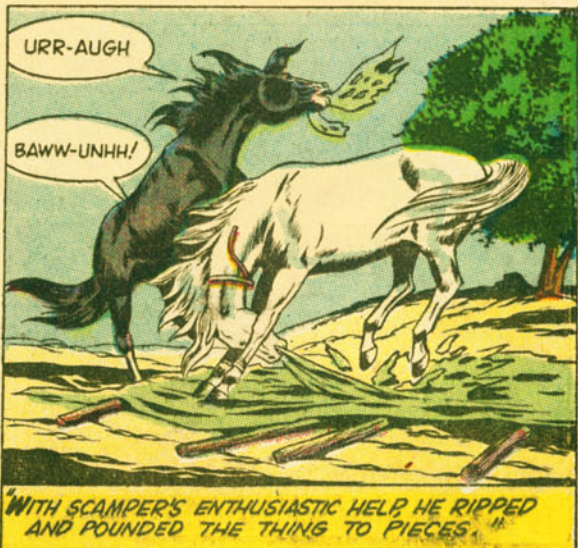
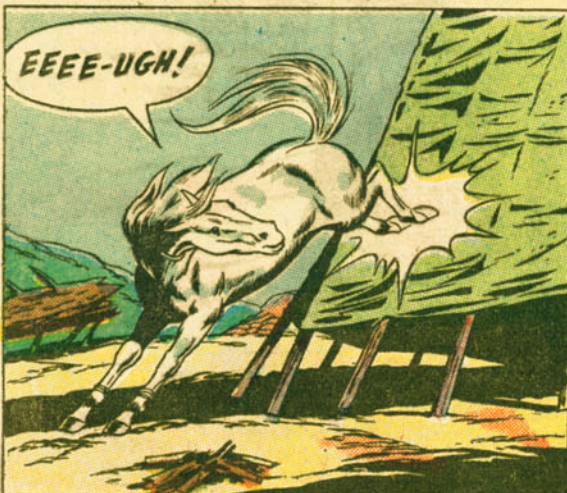
"THEN, STRAIGHT FOR KEENAY'S OLD CAMP HE RACED.



"THE STRONG HUMAN SCENT GAVE HIM BUT A MOMENT'S PAUSE."

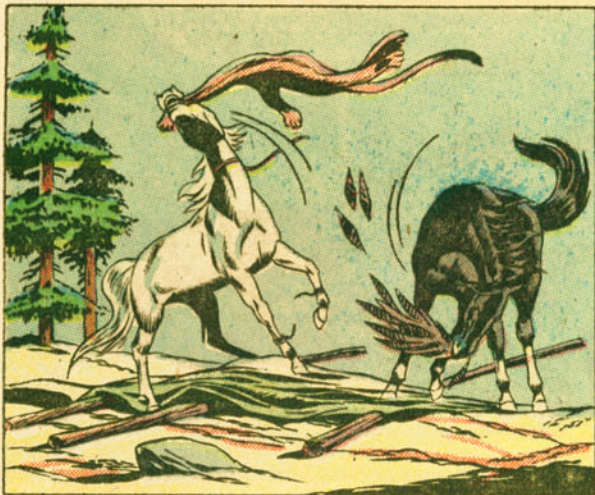


"THEN HE SPUN ABOUT--- AND HIS HEELS CRASHED THE TEPEES' SUPPORTING POLES."



"WITH SCAMPER'S ENTHUSIASTIC HELP, HE RIPPED AND POUNDED THE THING TO PIECES."

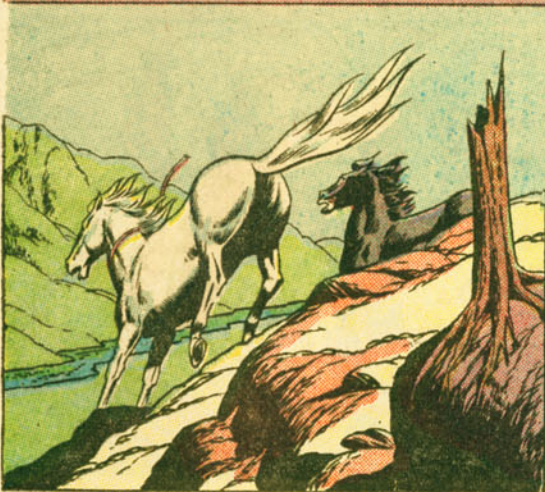
"A COUGAR SKIN--- AND KEENAY'S OLD TURKEY COSTUME CAME IN FOR THEIR SHARE OF ATTENTION.



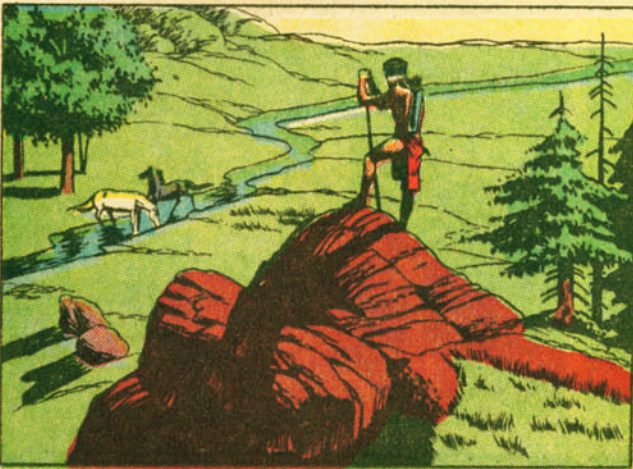
"WHEN THEY COULD FIND NOTHING MORE TO DESTROY---

"---THEY MADE THEIR WAY DOWN TO THE GREEN GRASS AND COOL WATER OF WILD HORSE CREEK.

"HOW GOOD IT TASTED--- WASHING AWAY THE DUST AND TAIN OF THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!



"AT SUNSET THEY WERE STILL THERE, DRINKING IN THE WILD SWEETNESS OF HOME AND FREEDOM--- AND THERE KEENAY, THE HUNTER, SPOTTED THEM!



SOME TIME MY TURN WILL COME AGAIN, SILVER ONE! SOME DAY OLD KEENAY WILL RIDE YOU BACK TO HIS HOMETLAND IN TRIUMPH! SOME DAY--- BEFORE I DIE!

"KEENAY, FOOTSORE AND BONE-WEARY, BUT UNMOVED FROM HIS LIFE PURPOSE, HAD RETURNED, TO RENEW HIS VOW."

SILVER

AND THE FLAGS OF VICTORY

WELL, LONE RANGER---WE'VE COVERED MORE THAN HALF OF OUR LONG TRAIL TO CALIFORNIA, THANKS TO YOU AND YOUR GREAT HORSE, SILVER!



I AM GLAD YOU INCLUDED SILVER IN YOUR KIND COMPLIMENT, CAPTAIN! I VALUE HIM AS I WOULD A HUMAN PARTNER!



SILVER IS ALMOST HUMAN IN WHAT HE KNOWS! HE CAN SPOT A HOSTILE PERSON QUICKER THAN A MAN CAN! AND YET HE'S SO GENTLE TO HIS FRIENDS!

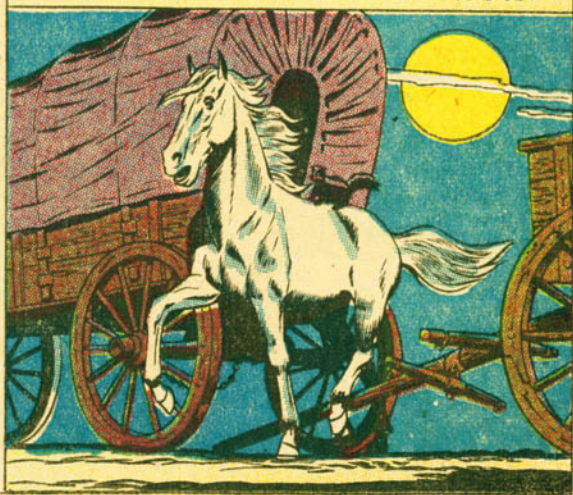


WHUH-HUH-HUH?

THAT'S SILVER'S CALL NOW--- HE'S ASKING PERMISSION TO ENTER OUR WAGON CIRCLE!--- ALL RIGHT, SILVER! COME!



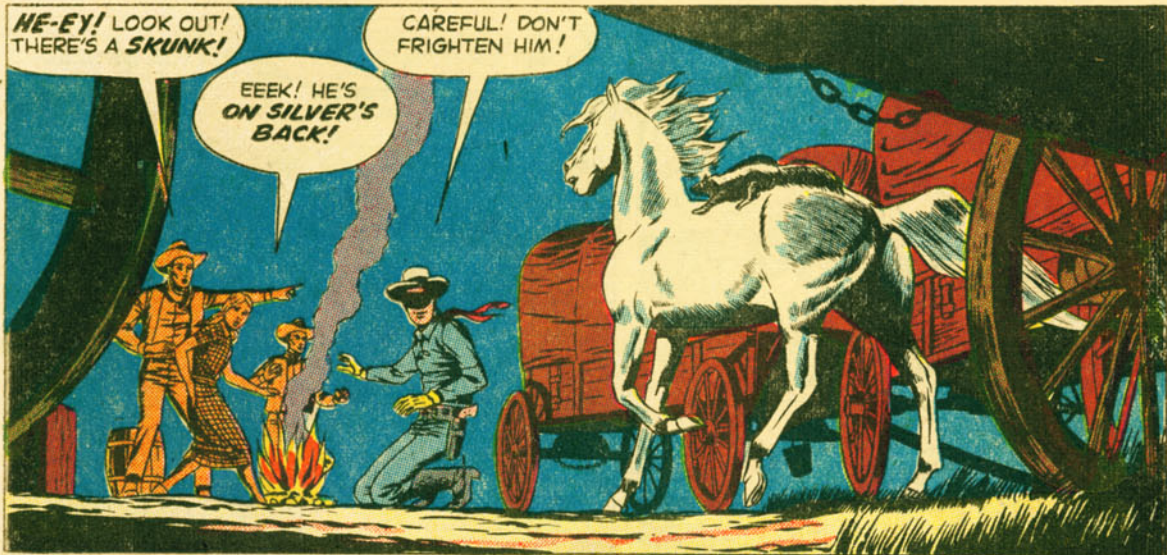
CAREFULLY, THE GREAT HORSE STEPS THROUGH A NARROW OPENING BETWEEN THE WAGONS.



HE-EY! LOOK OUT!
THERE'S A **SKUNK!**

CAREFUL! DON'T
FRIGHTEN HIM!

EEEK! HE'S
**ON SILVER'S
BACK!**



WELL, WELL! YOU BROUGHT YOUR LITTLE
FRIEND TO SEE ME, DID YOU, SILVER? I'M
GLAD YOU DID!

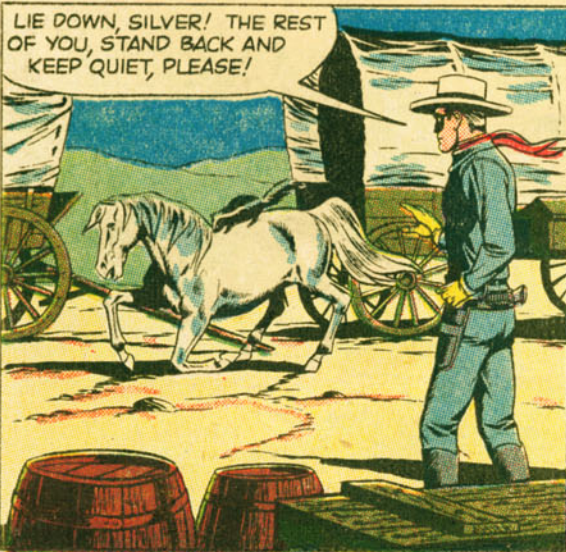


HAW, HAW! YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO
RIDE THAT SILVER HORSE FOR THE
REST OF THE TRIP WEST, LONE
RANGER! NOT AFTER THAT
SKUNK---

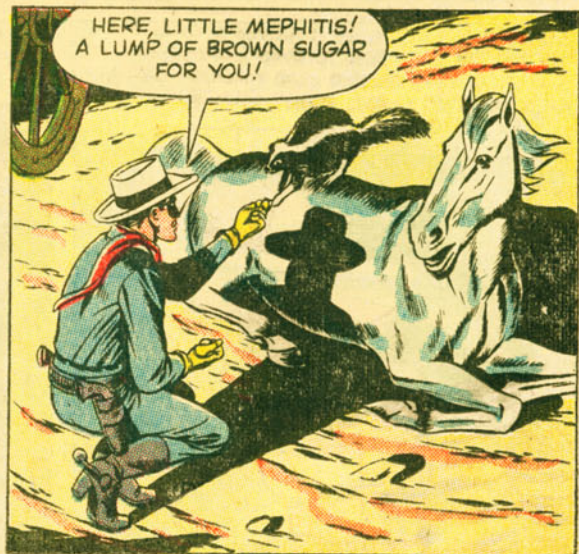
HA, HA, HA!
SILVER WASN'T
SO SMART
LETTING **THAT**
CRITTER CLIMB
ABOARD!



LIE DOWN, SILVER! THE REST
OF YOU, STAND BACK AND
KEEP QUIET, PLEASE!

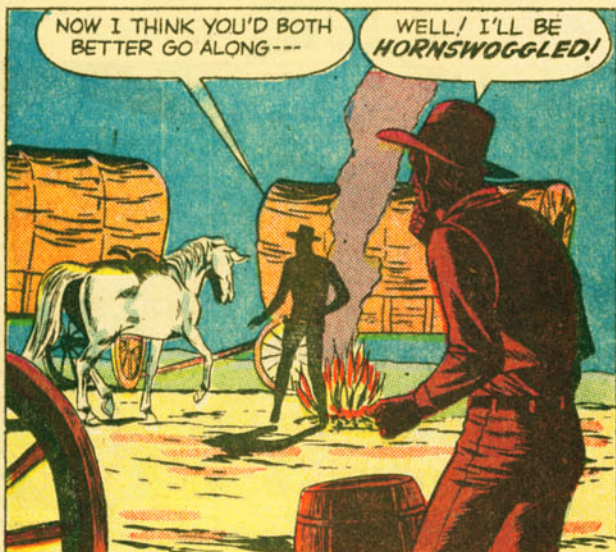


HERE, LITTLE MEPHITIS!
A LUMP OF BROWN SUGAR
FOR YOU!





AND HERE'S ONE FOR YOU, SILVER, BOY!



NOW I THINK YOU'D BOTH BETTER GO ALONG---

WELL! I'LL BE HORNSWOGGLED!



JUST LOOK AT THAT! BOTH OF 'EM MINDING THEIR MANNERS!

IT'S THE LONE RANGER'S WAY WITH ANIMALS THAT DOES THE TRICK!



TELL US, LONE RANGER--- HOW DO YOU TRAIN 'EM LIKE THAT? A **SKUNK**, OF ALL THINGS---

I DIDN'T TRAIN THAT SKUNK, MY FRIEND!



SILVER HAS A SPECIAL FONDNESS FOR THOSE LITTLE STRIPED RASCALS---EVER SINCE HE WAS A COLT---SKUNKS SAVED HIS LIFE ON TWO OCCASIONS! JUST BECAUSE THEY'D BECOME HIS FRIENDS!

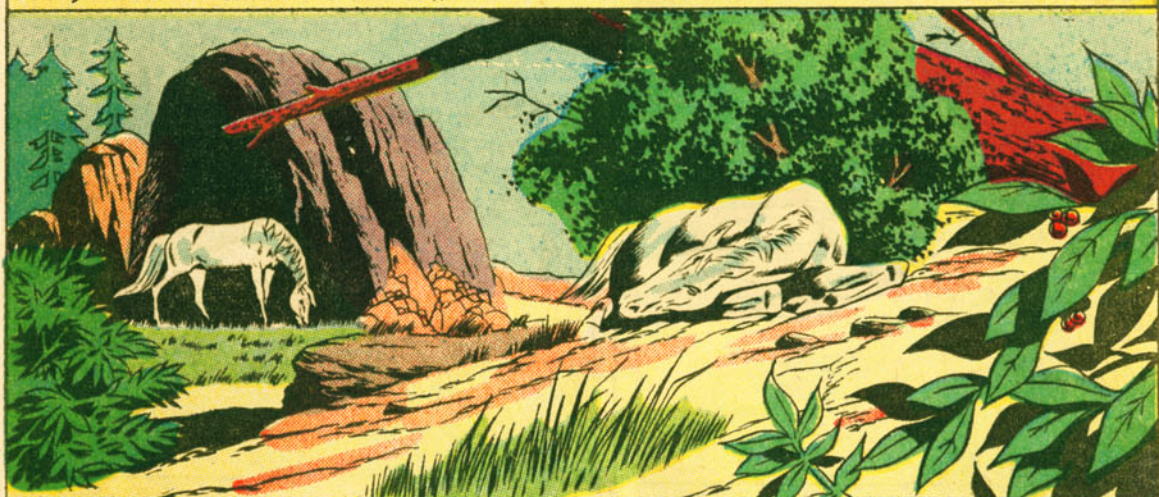


OH! TELL US ABOUT IT, PLEASE, LONE RANGER!

YES, PLEASE!

VERY WELL, IT'S A STORY I LIKE TO REMEMBER, TOO!

"ONE DAY, WHEN SILVER WAS BARELY TWO MONTHS OLD, HE WAS DOZING IN THE SHADE OF A BUSH, AFTER FINISHING HIS DINNER! HIS LIPS WERE STILL WET AND HIS BREATH SWEET WITH MILK!"



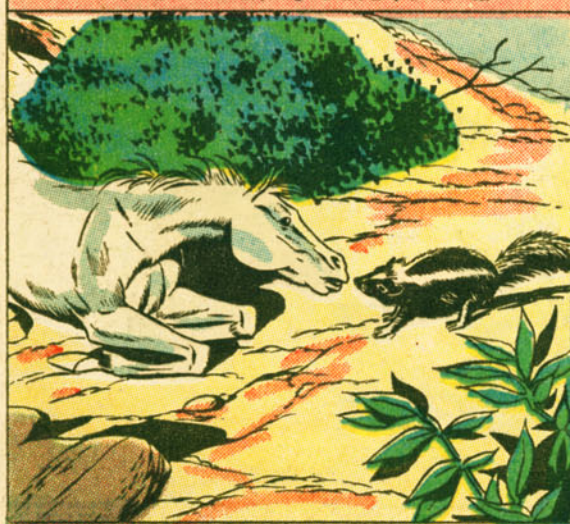
"IT WAS THIS SWEET SCENT WHICH REACHED THE NOSE OF A BABY SKUNK, ORPHANED BY A MARTEN, AND HUNGRY FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS."

SNIFF-SNIFF!

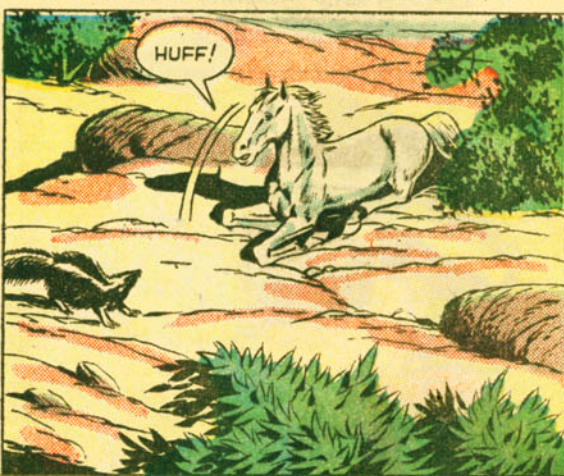


"FOLLOWING HIS NOSE, HE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE DROWSING COLT--"

"---AND BEGAN LICKING SILVER'S LIPS."



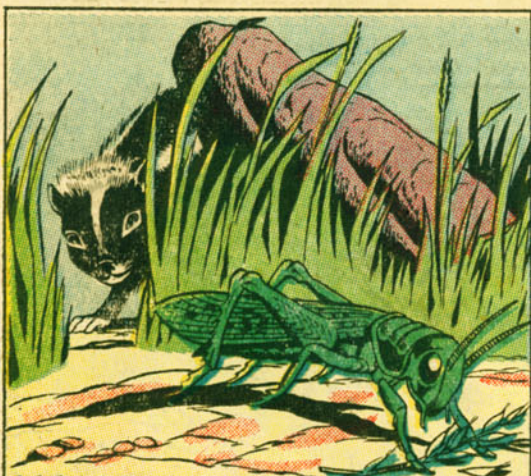
"THE GENTLE TICKLING SENSATION WAKED SILVER! HE SNORTED IN MILD SURPRISE---BUT HIS SMALL VISITOR SEEMED HARMLESS."



"GINGERLY, HE REACHED OUT TO TOUCH NOSES AGAIN
---AND THUS STARTED A LASTING FRIENDSHIP!



"SOON, BOTH YOUNG THINGS WERE ASLEEP. MEPHITIS,
THE SKUNK, CURLED UP IN THE HOLLOW OF SILVER'S
WHITE THROAT.



"THE NEED TO HUNT FOR A LIVING OCCUPIED
MOST OF MEPHITIS' TIME THAT SUMMER! HE
STALKED GRASSHOPPERS---



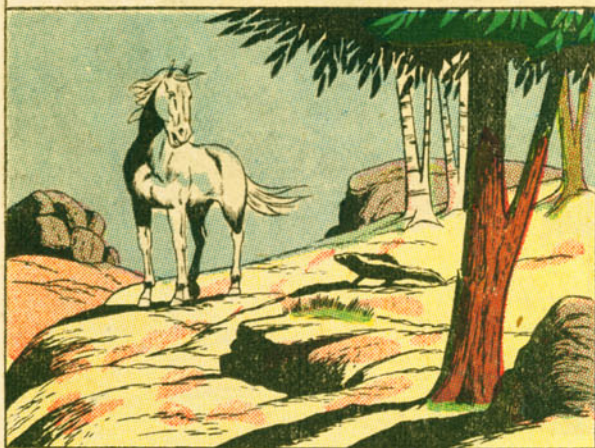
"---AND CAUGHT THEM WITH SURPRISING SKILL.

"LATER ON, MORE THAN HALF-GROWN, THE YOUNG
SKUNK TACKLED LARGER GAME---ONCE IT WAS
A SLEEPING SAGE HEN---FOR MEPHITIS
HUNTED NOW AT NIGHT!

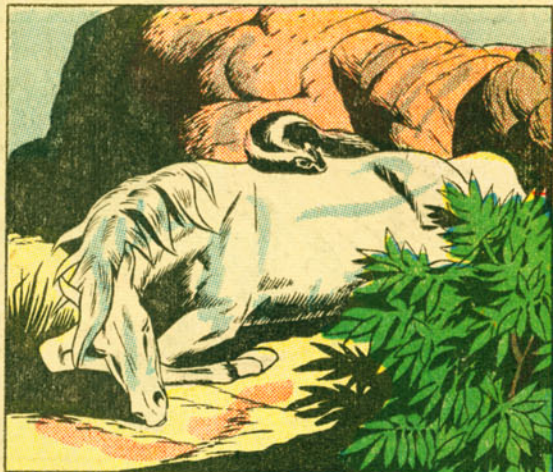


"THAT FEAST LASTED HIM FOR TWO DAYS!

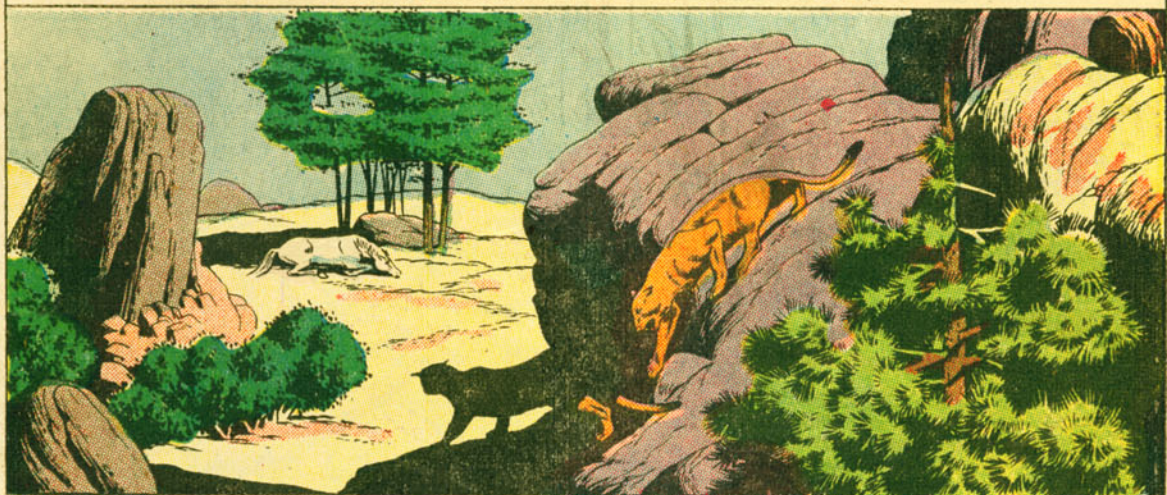
"WHEN NOT BUSY HUNTING OR FEASTING, MEPHITIS COULD GENERALLY BE FOUND IN SILVER'S COMPANY. NEEDLESS TO SAY, HIS MANNERS TOWARD HIS LONG-LEGGED FRIEND WERE PERFECT.



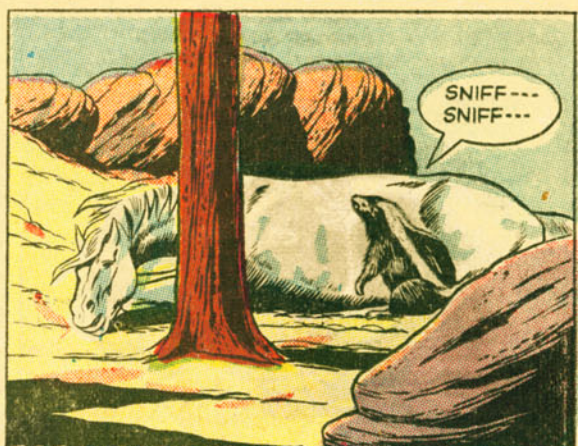
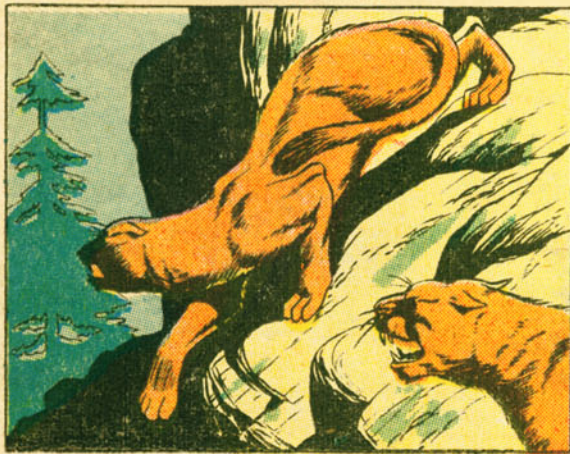
"HIS FAVORITE SLEEPING PLACE WAS SOMEWHERE CLOSE TO THE COLT'S WARM SILKY HIDE---USUALLY ON HIS BACK.



"BUT MEPHITIS WAS NOT IN SIGHT ON THAT EARLY MORNING WHEN TWO HUNGRY COUGARS SPOTTED A BREAKFAST OF YOUNG COLT LYING READY FOR THEIR TAKING!

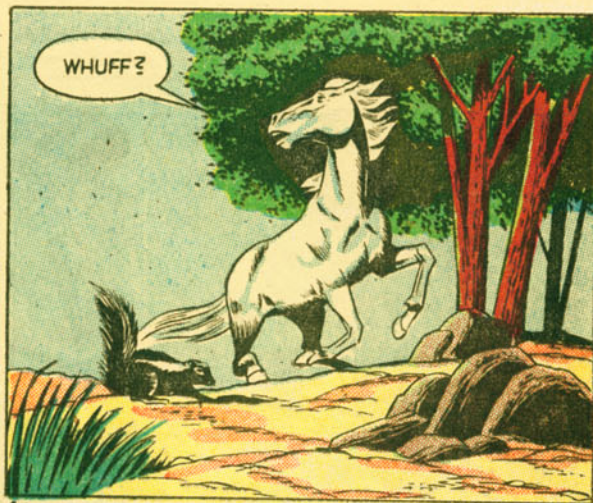


"KNOWING THAT THE COLT'S MOTHER WAS PROBABLY NEARBY, THE BIG CATS ALMOST SANK INTO THE GROUND IN THEIR EFFORT TO APPROACH UNSEEN AND UNSCENTED!



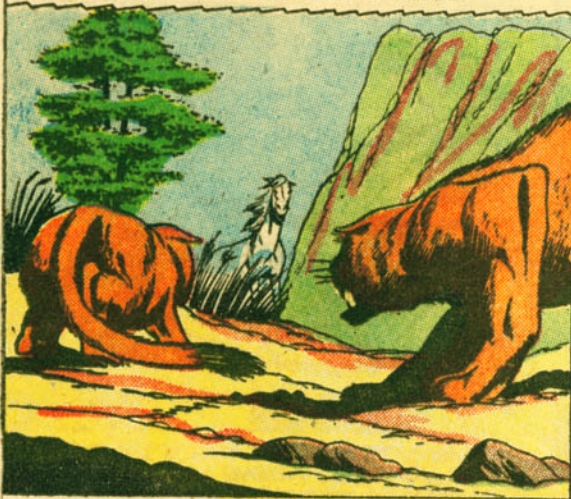
"A DAWN BREEZE IS TRICKY---IT CHANGES DIRECTION MOST UNEXPECTEDLY! SO IT WAS THAT MEPHITIS, SNUGGLED CLOSE TO SILVER'S BACK, CAUGHT THE DREADED ODOR OF CAT."

"STANDING UP HE THUMPED HARD WITH HIS LITTLE FOREPAWS AGAINST SILVER'S BACK --- A SKUNK'S SIGNAL OF DANGER!"



"INSTANTLY WIDE AWAKE, SILVER CAME TO HIS FEET AND MEPHITIS RAISED HIS BATTLE FLAG!"

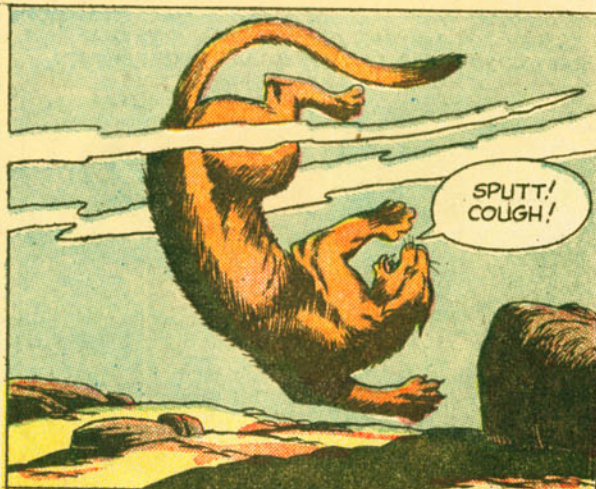
"THE COUGARS KNEW IT WAS NOW OR NEVER! THEY GATHERED THEMSELVES---



---AND LEAPED---

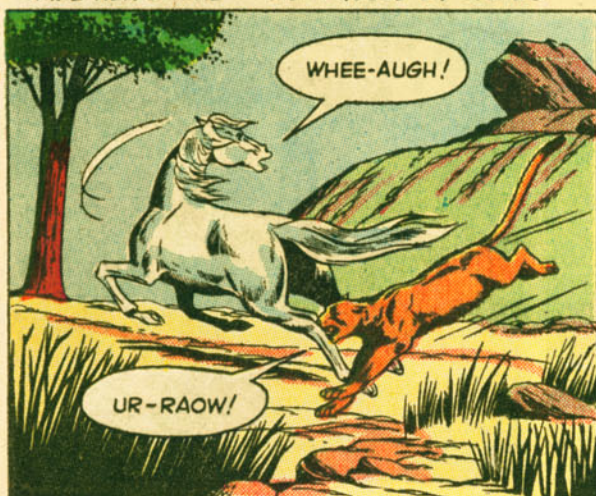


"---STRAIGHT INTO THE LITTLE CLOUD OF MEPHITIS' GAS ATTACK!"

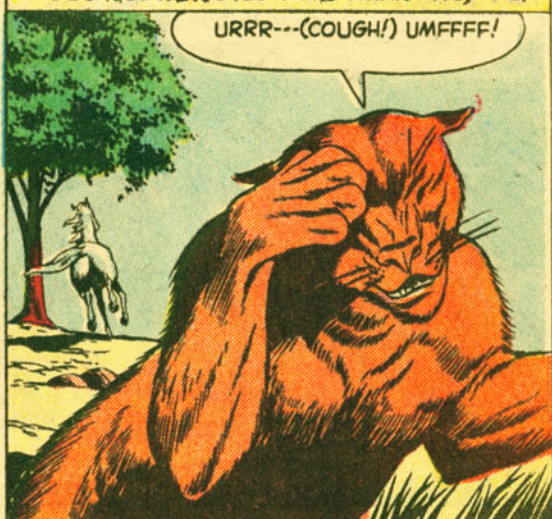


"THE MALE CAT WENT ROLLING OVER AND OVER--- BLINDED, CHOKING, AND WRETCHED!"

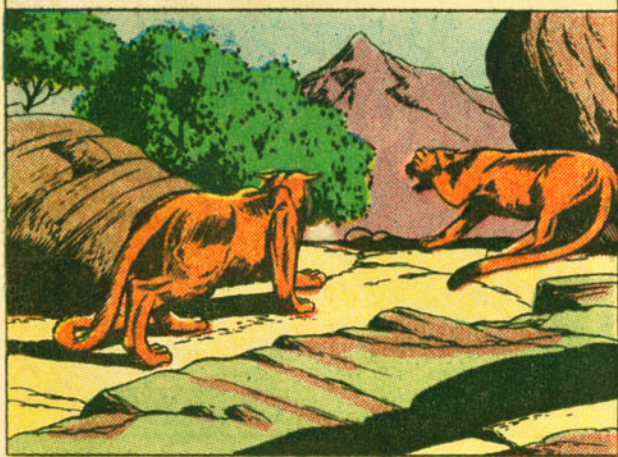
"HIS MATE, WHO HAD CAUGHT A Milder DOSE OF GAS, MADE HER STRIKE--- BUT MISSED BY INCHES---"



"---BECAUSE HER EYES WERE SMARTING, TOO!"

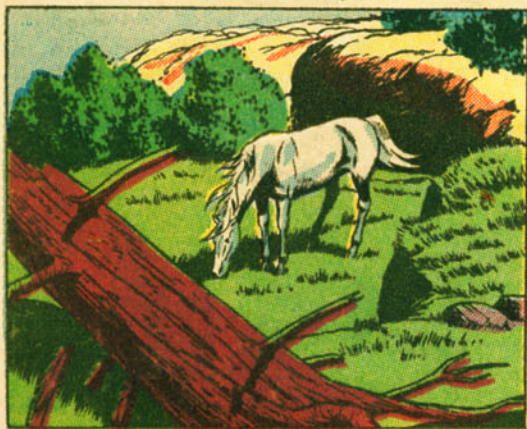


"SPITTING AND SQUALLING THEIR RAGE, THE TAWNY HUNTERS DRAGGED THEMSELVES BACK INTO THE BUSH --- WITH THEIR APPETITES SPOILED FOR MANY HOURS TO COME!"



"BUT MEPHITIS STALKED WITH PROUD DIGNITY AFTER HIS SILVER FRIEND, HIS STRIPED BANNER WAVING IN TRIUMPH!"

"A WHOLE YEAR PASSED! SILVER, NOW A TWO-YEAR-OLD, OFTEN WANDERED AWAY FROM THE OTHER WILD HORSES--- TO A WOODY GLADE WHERE THE GRASS GREW ESPECIALLY GREEN AND TENDER."



"ONE DAY, UNKNOWN TO SILVER, AN APACHE HUNTING PARTY SPOTTED HIM FROM THE RIDGE ABOVE."

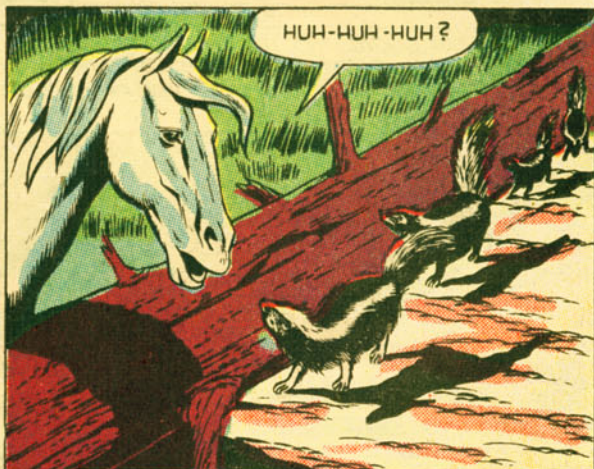
"ONE GLIMPSE OF THE HANDSOME COLT WAS ENOUGH! THEY DECIDED TO STALK HIM ON FOOT, WITH THEIR CATCH ROPES."



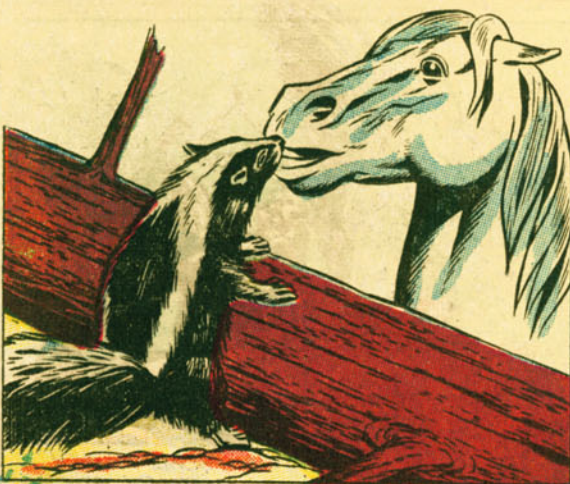
"THE WIND WAS TOWARD THEM AS THEY CREEPT THROUGH THE WOODS LIKE WOLVES,"



"THE LAST FEW YARDS THEY CRAWLED LIKE SNAKES ON THEIR BELLIES, AN INCH AT A TIME."

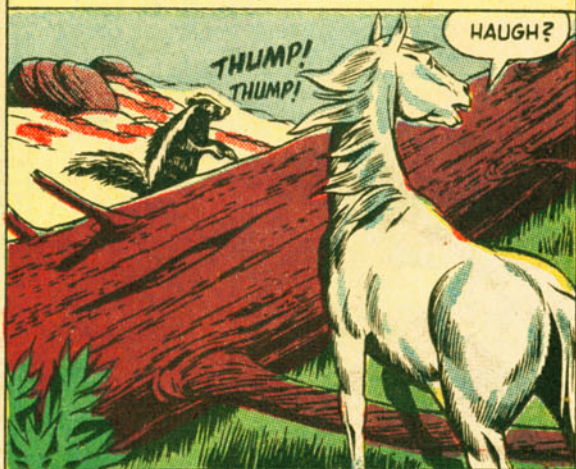


"AT THAT MOMENT, SILVER SAW SOMETHING BEHIND THE MOSSY LOG AT THE CLEARING'S FARTHER EDGE --- MEPHITIS AND HIS NEW FAMILY!"



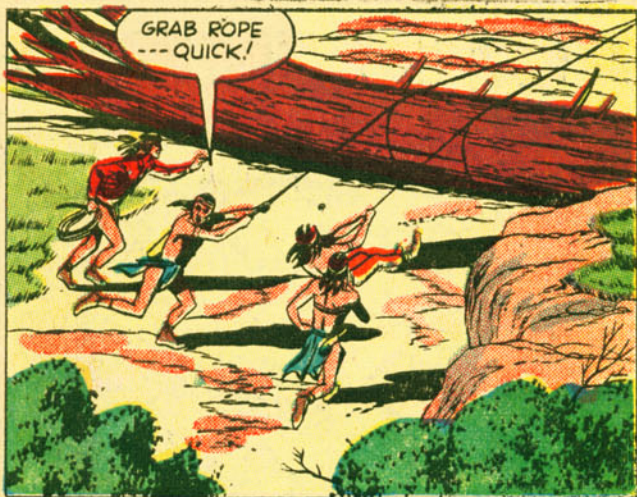
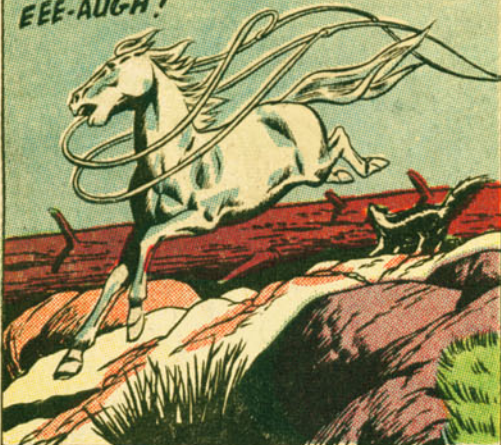
"REARING UP ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE LOG, TO GREET HIS TALL FRIEND---

"MEPHITIS SAW THE CREEPING INDIANS--- AND THUMPED HIS WARNING! SILVER TOOK ONE BACKWARD GLANCE---



"---AND LEAPED STRAIGHT OUT OVER THE LOG, AS TWO HURLED NOOSES SETTLED OVER HIS HEAD!"

EEE-AUGH!



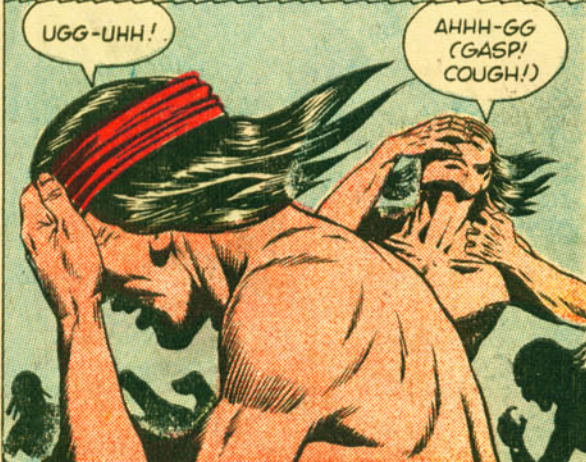
"THE MIGHTY LUNGE OF SILVER'S WEIGHT CARRIED THE ROPERS ALONG---ACROSS THE FALLEN LOG---"

"---RIGHT INTO A GAS CLOUD WHICH EXTENDED ITS WHOLE LENGTH!"



UGGG--AHHH!

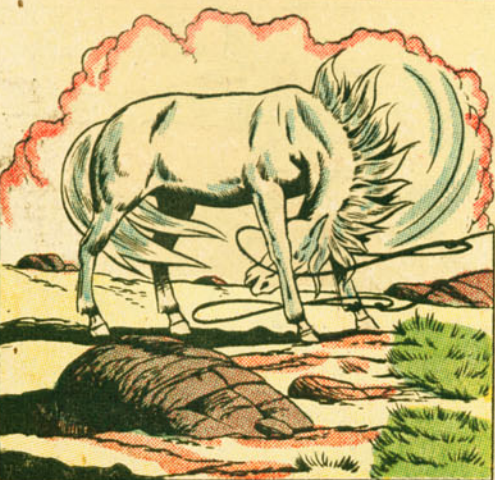
"CHOKING FOR BREATH, WITH EYES AND NOSES SEEMINGLY ON FIRE, THE LUCKLESS INDIANS REELED ABOUT LIKE BLIND MEN!"



UGG-UHH!

AHHH--GG
(GASP!
COUGH!)

"WHILE SILVER, AT A SAFE DISTANCE, PAUSED TO RID HIMSELF OF THE ROPES---



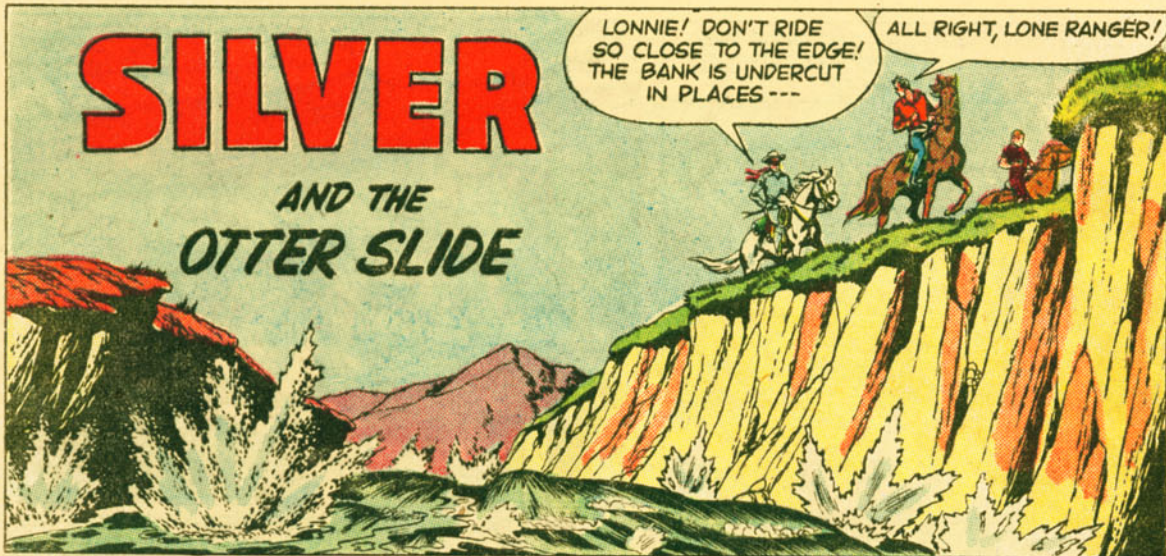
"---AND MEPHITIS LED HIS HANDSOME FAMILY AWAY WITH STRIPED FLAGS OF VICTORY WAVING GENTLY ABOVE THEM!"

SILVER

AND THE OTTER SLIDE

LONNIE! DON'T RIDE
SO CLOSE TO THE EDGE!
THE BANK IS UNDERCUT
IN PLACES ---

ALL RIGHT, LONE RANGER!



WITHOUT WARNING THE UNDERCUT SOD GIVES
WAY---

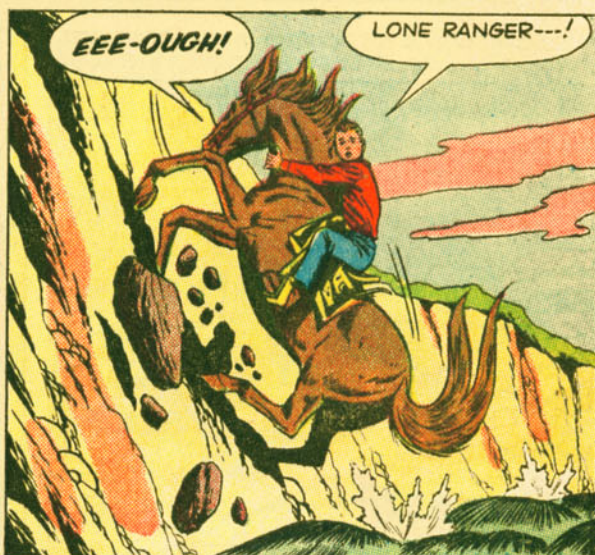
I'LL BE
CAREF---
YEEOW!

WHUFF!



EEE-OUGH!

LONE RANGER---

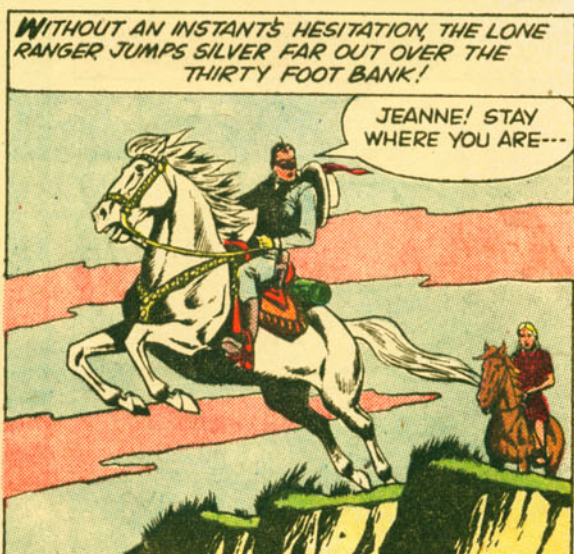


---HELP!



WITHOUT AN INSTANT'S HESITATION, THE LONE
RANGER JUMPS SILVER FAR OUT OVER THE
THIRTY FOOT BANK!

JEANNE! STAY
WHERE YOU ARE---



WITH A TERRIFIC SPLASH, HORSE AND MAN HIT THE DEEP WATER.

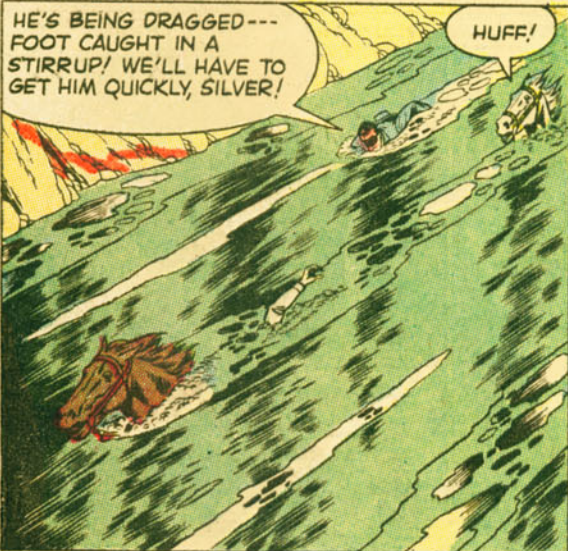


BUT NOW, THE RIDER IS OUT OF THE SADDLE, SO AS NOT TO HINDER HIS GALLANT MOUNT.

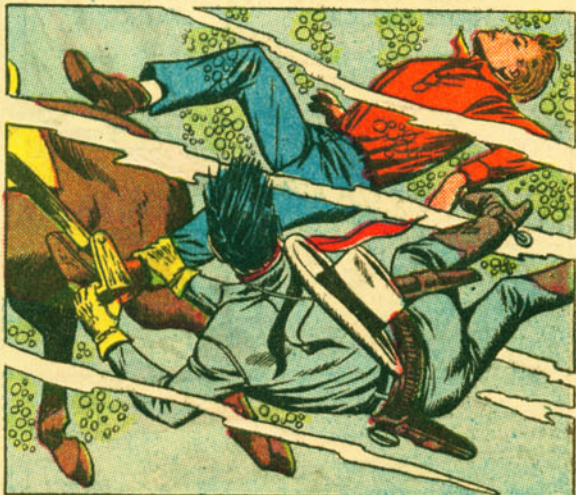


HE'S BEING DRAGGED---
FOOT CAUGHT IN A
STIRRUP! WE'LL HAVE TO
GET HIM QUICKLY, SILVER!

HUFF!



WITH QUICK, SURE STRENGTH THE LONE RANGER'S
HANDS FREE THE TRAPPED BOY---



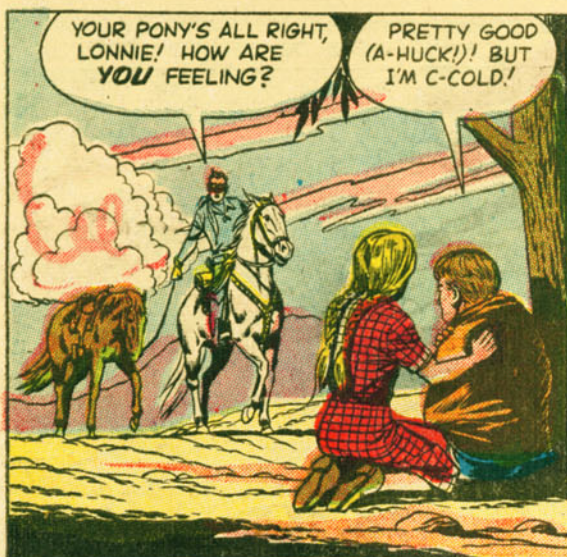
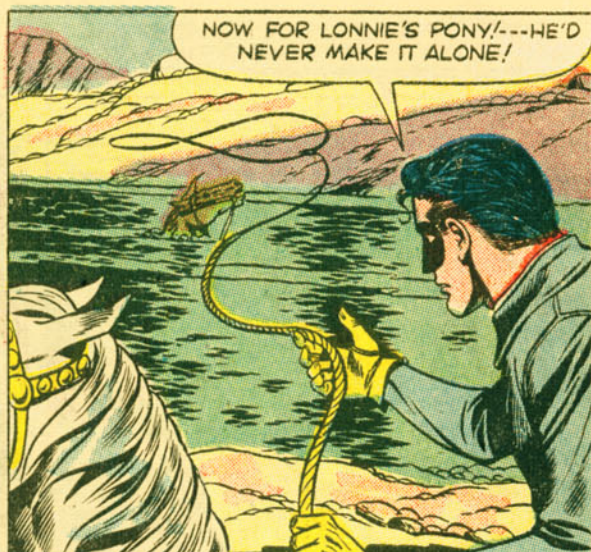
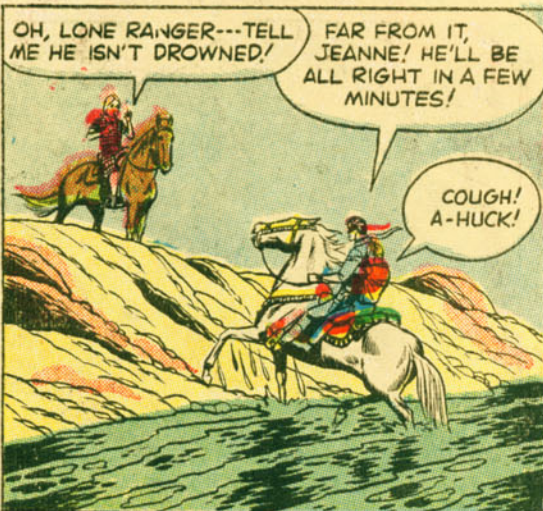
GOOD BOY, SILVER!
I KNEW YOU'D WAIT---



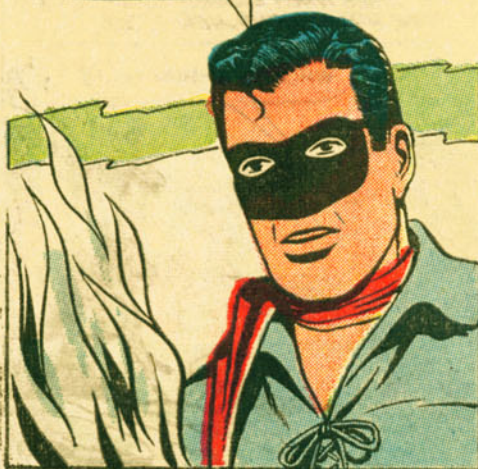
DOWNSTREAM, SILVER!
WITH THE CURRENT! I SEE
A LANDING PLACE!



A QUARTER MILE DOWNSTREAM---



---ABOUT SILVER AND THE OTTER SLIDE THAT SAVED HIS LIFE ONE DAY!



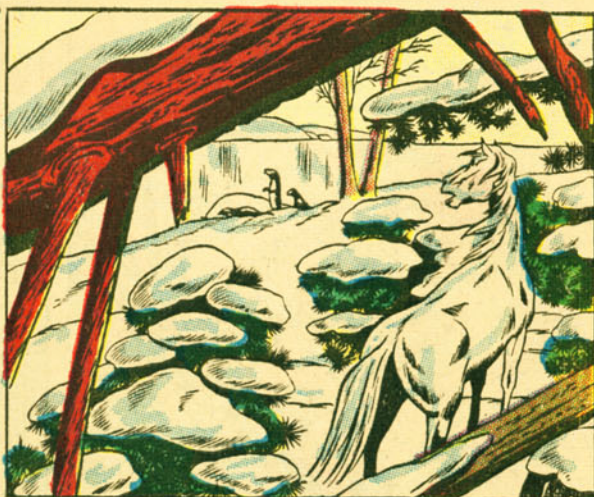
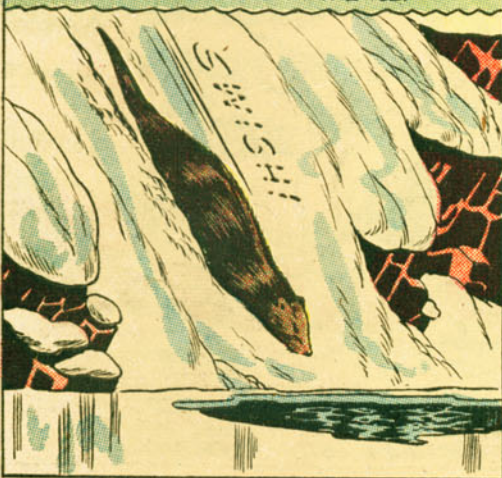
"IT WAS DURING SILVER'S FIRST WINTER---HEARING A SLIGHT SOUND OVER THE EDGE OF THE CREEK BANK, HE PEEKED OVER, AND SAW---



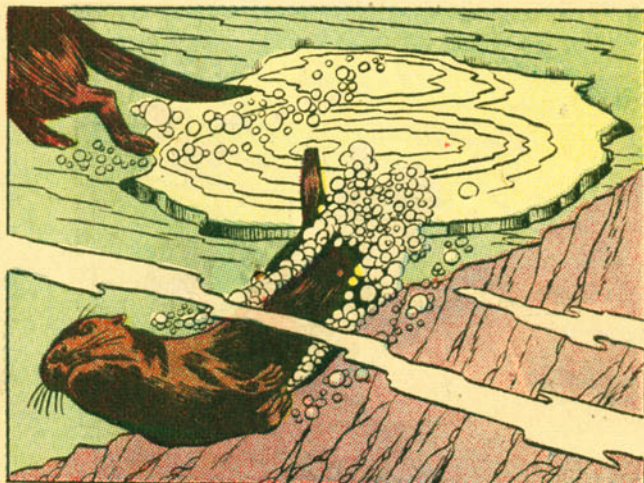
"---A WHOLE FAMILY OF OTTERS CLIMBING THE SNOWY SLOPE! AS THEY CLIMBED, THE WATER SHED FROM THEIR FUR TURNED QUICKLY TO ICE.



"THEN THE BIG OTTER TOOK A HEADER, SLIDING ON HIS BELLY---STRAIGHT FOR THE BLACK HOLE IN THE ICE.



"AT THE TOP OF THE BANK THEY GATHERED, AS IF TALKING SOMETHING OVER---

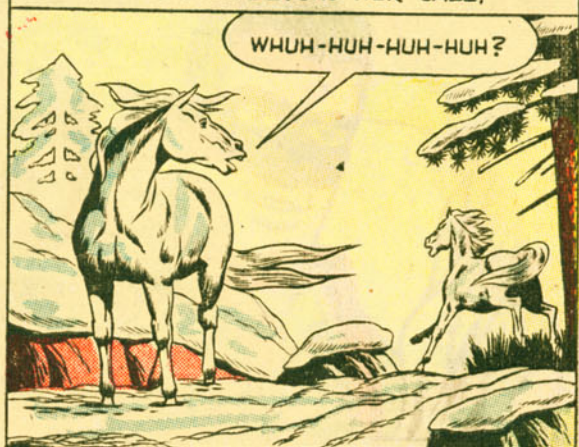


"THE OTHERS FOLLOWED, LIKE SMALL BOYS WITH SLEDS---AND WITH EVERY PASSAGE THE SLIDE GREW BROADER AND ICIER.



"FOR AN HOUR OR MORE EACH DAY, SILVER WATCHED THE PLAYFUL OTTER FAMILY---SHARING THEIR FUN FROM A DISTANCE! EVEN MOUSSA KNEW THERE WAS NO HARM IN THE FURRY CLOWNS."

"MOUSSA, HIS GENTLE MOTHER, DID HER BEST TO KEEP TRACK OF THE LIVELY YEARLING--- BUT THERE WERE TIMES WHEN SILVER'S ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT TOOK HIM BEYOND HER CALL."



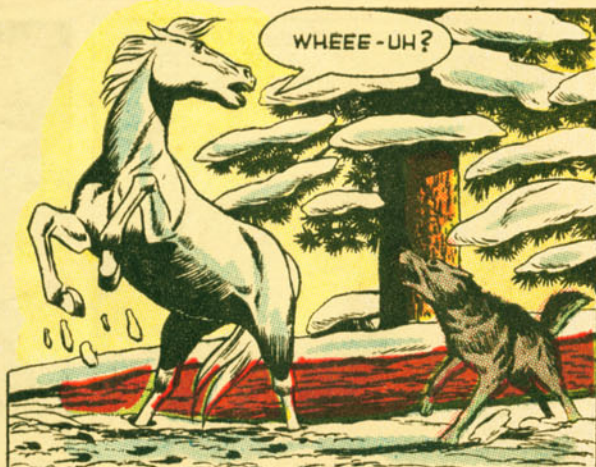
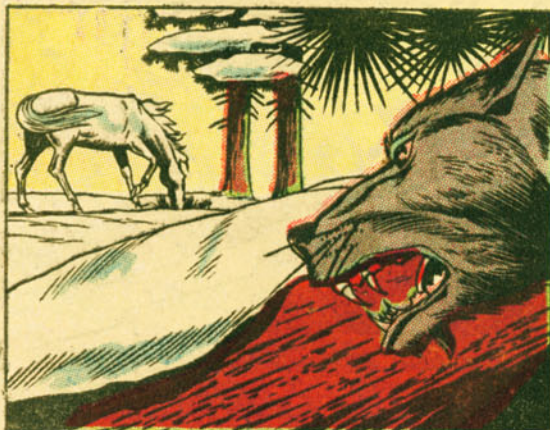
"LARGE FOR HIS AGE, SILVER WOULD OFTEN BE FOUND ROMPING WITH THE TWO-YEAR-OLD BACHELOR COLTS! ROUGH PLAY--- BUT NOT TOO DANGEROUS!"



"ONE DAY THEIR ROMP CARRIED THEM NEAR THE BRUSH WHERE A LEAN OLD TIMBER WOLF LAY, HOPEFULLY WAITING FOR ONE OF THEM TO STRAY OFF ALONE."



"AT LAST THE HORSE-PLAY STOPPED--- YOUNG SILVER, CLOSER TO THE BRUSH THAN THE OTHERS, BEGAN PAWING DOWN THROUGH THE SNOW FOR SOME BROWN DEAD GRASS--- THE WOLF GATHERED HIMSELF---

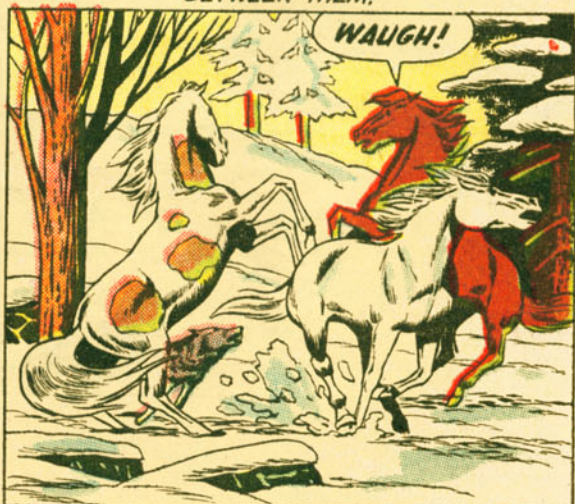


"THE SLIGHT WHISPER OF THE KILLER'S PAWS WARNED SILVER BARELY IN TIME! HE SPUN ABOUT, WITH A WHISTLE OF FRIGHT---

"---AND HEADED FOR THE NEAREST BACHELORS' PROTECTION! IN THE MIDST OF ANOTHER MOCK-BATTLE, THE BIG COLTS DID NOT SEE THE WOLF AT FIRST."



"WHEN THEY DID, SILVER WAS ALREADY DARTING BETWEEN THEM!"



"THEIR STARTLED DEFENSE DELAYED THE OLD WOLF..."



"...ENOUGH TO GIVE SILVER A GOOD HEAD START! BUT IN THE SNOW THE WOLF WAS FASTER."



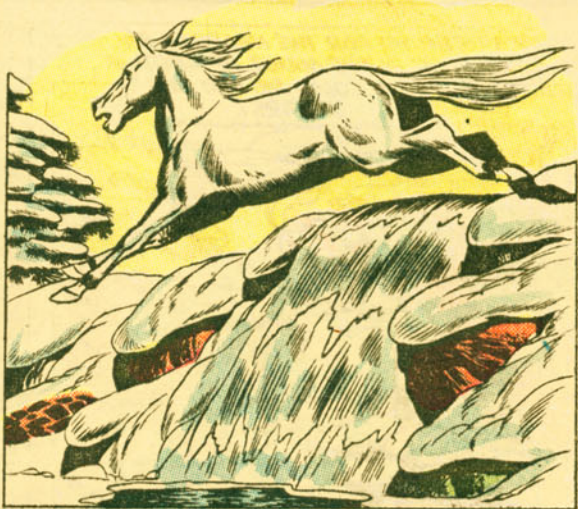
"AS THEY RACED ALONG THE CREEK BANK, THE GRAY KILLER LIFTED AT SILVER'S HEELS! THE YEARLING ALMOST HIS VOICE IN A SHRILL SCREAM FOR HIS MOTHER!"



"MOUSSA ANSWERED! BUT A SHARP BEND OF THE CREEK SEPARATED HER FROM HER YOUNGSTER--AND THE WOLF WAS CLOSE!"



"SILVER TOOK A SHORT-CUT--- LEAVING THE TOP OF THE BANK FOR THE SLOPE! AHEAD THE OTTER SLIDE STRETCHED, A BROAD BARRIER OF ICE!"



"THE TERRIFIED COLT TOOK IT IN ONE WIDE LEAP--"

"THE WOLF, WITH HIS EYES FIXED ON HIS INTENDED PREY, LANDED SQUARELY ON THE ICE--

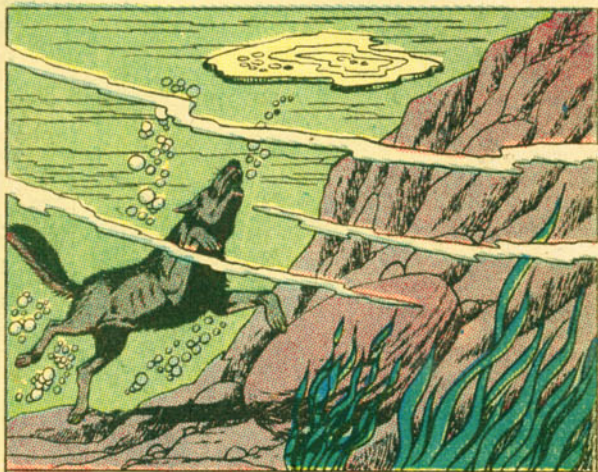


"--AND INSTANTLY LOST HIS FOOTING!



"THE SHOCK OF COLD WATER BROUGHT A YELP--WHICH WAS QUICKLY CHOKED OFF."

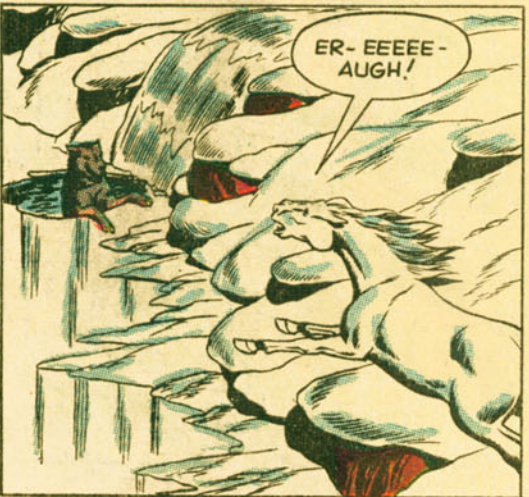
YIKE!



"THE WATER WAS DEEP AT THIS PLACE--WHICH WAS WHY THE OTTERS CHOSE IT! HALF-STRANGLER, THE GRAY KILLER SWAM BACK UP TO DAYLIGHT."

"HE CAME UP, GASPING, ONLY TO HEAR MOUSSA'S SCREAM OF FURY, CLOSE AT HAND."

ER- EEEEE-
AUGH!

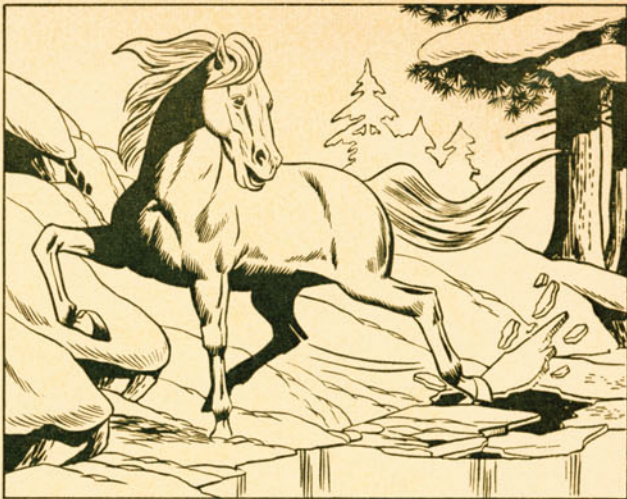


EE-AUGH!



"BEFORE HIS PAWS COULD GET A GRIP ON THE ICE, THE WHITE MARE'S HOOF KNOCKED HIM UNDER."

"EACH TIME HE CAME UP FOR AIR MOUSSA STRUCK AT HIM! HE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE DROWNED---



"---HAD NOT MOUSSA'S FEET SLIPPED! THE ICE CRACKED BENEATH HER WEIGHT---

AND NEARLY LET HER THROUGH!"



"REACHING THE TOP OF THE BANK, SHE HUSTLED HER COLT AWAY FROM DANGER."



"WHEN SHE HAD GONE, THE OLD WOLF STRUGGLED AGAINST SLIPPERY ICE AND THE COLD THAT NUMBED HIS BODY, HE WAS NEARLY DONE FOR."



"AT LAST HE DID PULL HIMSELF OUT."

"ICE WAS ALREADY FORMING IN HIS FUR AS HE SHOOK HIMSELF---



"---BUT HE WAS LUCKY TO BE ALIVE! WITH HIS EMPTY STOMACH CLAMORING FOR SOMETHING TO FILL IT HE SLUNK OFF INTO THE WOODS,

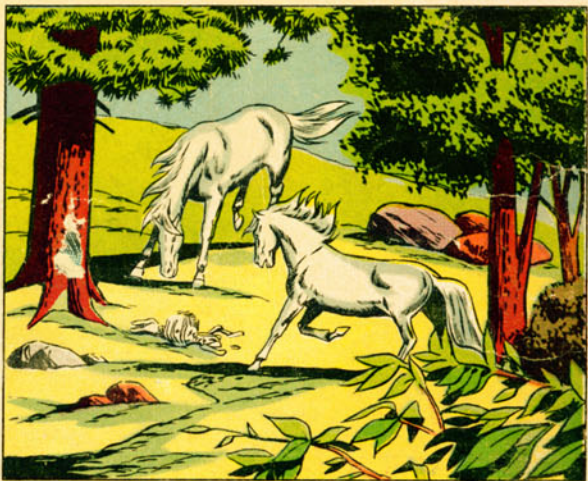


"AND THERE, AS HE CROUCHED, HALF-FROZEN, BESIDE A RABBIT RUN, TWO STARVING CANADA LYNXES FOUND HIM.



"THE FIGHT WAS SHORT AND FIERCE--- AND THE OLD WOLF LOST IT!

"FOR THE REST OF THE WINTER THE OTTER FAMILY USED THEIR SLIDE, UNDISTURBED, AND SILVER FORGOT ABOUT THE GRAY KILLER---



"---UNTIL THE NEXT SPRING, WHEN HE AND HIS MOTHER CAME ACROSS SOME OLD BONES, STILL SMELLING FAINTLY OF WOLF."