

Rider of Buck River

by WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINES Service

THE STORY SO FAR: Over Calhoun Terry's protests, the big ranches have imported a large number of Texas ex-peace officers to round up and kill suspected "rustlers." Several killings preceded this, and Jeff Brand, a rustler

CHAPTER XXVI

From the Box 55 to Lee Hart's place it was eight miles across the hills. Jeff rode fast.

Before he had covered half the way to the hill ranch he heard the sound of firing far to his left. First a single shot, and perhaps a minute later two more. Though he listened for more, no popping reached his ears.

To Jeff there seemed something sinister in these breaks disturbing the silence. His imagination pictured a man peacefully hoeing a potato patch or mending a fence. From the direction of the report it might have come from Wade Scott's place. If so, Wade would probably have been whistling, his mind on a girl in Cheyenne who worked in the railroad restaurant, one he was expecting to marry in a few months.

Instead of taking the gulch he followed the rim, keeping to cover as he came close to the edge. Looking down, his gaze swept the clearing and picked up details. He saw two men crouched back of the barn. Evidently there were others in it, for as he stood there a puff of smoke came from the window opening in the hayloft. At least one man was stationed in the bed of the creek a hundred and fifty yards from the house. A shot from that point told him so.

There was a small alfalfa field to the left of the house. It ran to the draw leading up to the ravine. He could see the ditch crossing it in the direction of the house. Rank grass covered the edges. A wild idea jumped to his mind. Why not get into that ditch, crawl along it till he was close to the cabin, and make a dash to join the defenders?

Near the top of the ravine he picketed his horse, then moved down it cautiously. As he came round a bend in the gulch, he looked down into the little basin which held the ranch. Thirty yards below him a man crouched behind a large boulder, a rifle in his hands. He was watching the log cabin, evidently hoping to get a glimpse of one of the defenders. Lower down in the draw and fifty yards to his right another marksman was also waiting behind cover for a shot.

Jeff tiptoed forward, revolver in hand. He had not been a big-game hunter for nothing. No perceptible rumor of his movements reached the lank Texan toward whom he was soft-footing. Unwittingly the sniper helped at his own undoing. Intensely preoccupied with the job in hand, his mind was following a single track which led straight from him to the quarry in the cabin. When Brand was about ten strides from him he drew a bead and fired. As the rifle cracked Jeff flung aside caution and took the last stretch on the run.

The Texan whirled, too late. The long barrel of the .45 smashed down on his lifted forehead. His body swayed, and collapsed.

Nobody had noticed what had taken place. Jeff helped himself to the man's rifle and cartridge belt. He moved to the left and stepped down into the dry ditch he had seen from the bluff above. Crouching low in it, he crept forward. The alfalfa hid him pretty well.

Crossing the field was a slow business. He went on all fours, dragging the rifle beside him. He was near enough to the cabin to see lead fling splinters from the logs.

He called softly, "Hello the house," and when no answer came back to him he called again, more loudly. It was after his fourth attempt that somebody inside answered.

"Who is it? What you want?"

"Jeff Brand. I'm gonna make a run for the door. Fling it open for me when I give the word."

There was a perceptible silence before the man in the house replied.

"How come you there—if you're Brand?"

"Don't talk, you fool. Do as I say."

Jeff came out of the ditch running. From the edge of the valley he heard a shout. Somebody had discovered the Texan he had knocked out and was spreading the news. The guns roared.

He bowed over, all the power knocked out of him in an instant. That he had been hit he knew, though he felt no pain. Still clinging to the rifle, he tried to clamber to his feet. The ground tilted up at him, and he went down again. Still conscious, he crawled forward a foot or two.

INSTALLMENT THIRTEEN

himself, traces them to Jack Turley, a "spy." Nor does Jeff like Calhoun, foreman of one of the big ranches. Ellen Terry seems interested in both of them. Lee Hart, a rustler-rancher, reports of the mobilization of the Texan invaders

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The cabin door was flung open. Two men showed at the entrance. One ran toward Jeff, in long, reaching strides. The other covered the rescue, firing at the figures which had come into the open to get Brand. It was a matter of seconds, but they stretched interminably. The man reached Jeff, gathered him up, and plunged back toward the house.

CHAPTER XXVII

Calhoun Terry and Larry Richards, on their way to Round Top to meet a cattleman who had a registered Hereford bull for sale, struck across country to hit Johnson's Prong and take the short cut down Box Canyon.

They traveled at a road gait, not pushing their horses, for there was a long journey ahead of them.

When they talked it was mostly about a new enterprise in which they were to be partners. They had made an arrangement with John Q. Powers to buy the old Terry Ranch once owned by Calhoun's father, and with it a fine stretch of river land adjoining. Larry had lately inher-



Jeff tiptoed forward, revolver in hand.

ed some money. This was to make part of the initial payment.

They came to the lip of a small mountain park and dipped down into it. Terry pulled up his cowboy and pointed to the opposite slope. A large body of men on horseback was moving down it.

"The Texas invaders," Larry said. "Yes, and we'd better get away from here," his companion decided.

Too late, they wheeled their horses. The sound of a rifle shot roared across the park. Larry's horse went down and flung him. His friend raised the palm of his hand to give the peace sign, but the answer was a splatter of bullets.

"Come a-running, Larry," called Terry.

Richards vaulted to the back of the horse, and they were on their way.

"We'll have to hole up at Lee Hart's till we get a chance to explain we're not the men they want," Terry said.

"Yep. There's Lee down there with his stock. He isn't waiting to ask questions either."

"Don't blame him. He's on their list."

They reached the clearing, flung themselves from the horse, and raced for the cabin by the creek. Once inside, they slammed and bolted the door.

"I'll try a white flag," Calhoun said. "If they'll hold back long enough to listen to us we'll be all right."

He found an empty flour sack, opened the door a few inches, and waved the white sack. He called out his name to Ellison. The noise of the guns killed the sound of his voice. Lead tore into the door.

"Quit that foolishness, Cal," his friend snapped. "You'll get shot up, first thing. The darned fools are crazy with the heat."

A foreman of the Circle C ranch, a big, blustering fellow who rode his men hard, was gesticulating violently and pointing toward the cabin. Apparently he was urging them to a charge. Terry shot him in the arm, and he took cover behind the barn. A few seconds later Calhoun's rifle scored another hit.

and how they chased two men into his cabin. He himself managed to flee without identifying them. The two men are Calhoun Terry and his foreman. But Jeff did not know this when he decided to aid them.

Both of them knew there could be only one ending to the battle if it went to a finish. But they were cool, game men, used to danger, and they could take whatever was in store for them without weakening.

The attackers grew more wary of exposing themselves. Presently the firing died down except for an occasional shot.

"Something's up," Calhoun said. "Probably getting ready to rush us." He laughed sardonically.

Larry was watching the attackers through his peephole. "They are getting their horses." His voice grew excited. "By the jumping horned frog, they're riding away. They figure it would cost too much to dig us out of our hole. Seems too good luck to be true."

It was too good to be true. More than forty men took a trail into the hills, but enough were left to keep up the attack on the cabin. Terry tried again, during the lull in the firing, to let Ellison know who they were, but he was fired upon the instant he opened the door.

At the end of an hour another plan was tried to dislodge the besieged men. Two horses were taken into the barn. A few minutes later they came out drawing a wagon with a hayrack on it.

The wagon was driven into a meadow of wild hay. Near the center of the field was the remains of a stack of hay, most of it weeds tossed aside as unfit food for stock. Men began to gather this trash with pitchforks and load it on the rack.

At first Calhoun was puzzled, but the purpose of this jumped to his mind. "Ellison is going to burn us out," he said.

Larry caught the idea. "Sure. They aim to get behind the hay and push the wagon by the tongue up against the house. Then they will set fire to the hay."

After a moment Larry spoke. "You've been favoring these fellows, Cal, and that was right so far. But no longer. They mean to kill us, even if they have to burn us up. It's them or us. I won't let them rub me out without fighting back."

Calhoun nodded agreement. "Nor I. But maybe the time hasn't quite come for that, Larry. The thing is to delay them all we can. Help is on the way to us by now, I expect. Hart could not have recognized us. He thinks we are some of his outlaw friends. When he reaches Black Butte he will start gathering men to save us. That will take some time, but not very much if we are lucky."

Terry was watching the wagon and the men with it. They had loaded the refuse hay and were picking up brush to pile on the top of it. The driver swung the team round to return to the gate. He was nearer the house than at any time since leaving the barn.

Calhoun took careful aim and fired. One of the horses sank to the ground.

"That will hold them for a while," he said.

A voice outside, not far away, hailed the house. It came from the side Larry was defending. Richards searched the alfalfa field and saw nobody.

"Someone has worked up right close to us," he told his companion. "Sounds like he's only forty or fifty yards away."

"Ask him who he is," Terry said. "We can send a message by him and tell Ellison who we are."

Larry shouted the question. The answer astonished him. He passed it on to his friend.

"Claims he's Jeff Brand and is going to make a run for the door. He must have crawled up the ditch." Larry demanded more information from the man outside. A moment later he cried in excitement: "Hell, it's Jeff, all right! He's coming on the run. . . . They've hit him. He's down."

Terry ran to the door and flung it open. He thrust the rifle into the hands of Richards and raced toward the man on the ground, who was crawling toward the house.

Stooping, Calhoun picked up Brand, the rifle still in his hand, and hurried back to the house. He reached it in safety and Larry bolted the door.

Terry put the wounded man down on the bed. "Where did they hit you?" he asked.

Jeff Brand did not answer. He stared at his rescuer in vast astonishment.

"They got him in the ankle," Larry said, pointing to a hole in Brand's boot.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

AROUND THE HOUSE

If dried fruits become undesirably dry due to improper storage, they may be restored to packing house freshness by steaming in a colander or coarse meshed sieve for about 15 minutes.

One teaspoon of cornstarch added to each cup of sugar used in making fudge will make it smooth and creamy with little beating.

It is a good idea to have the kitchen table on rollers so you can move it wherever you want or need it.

To eliminate the mutton flavor from lamb, cook it with raisins.

If stove polish is moistened with vinegar instead of water the stove will have a brighter polish.

To preserve leftover pickles or pimientos, put in a glass tumbler and cover with salad oil.

If metal tops come off of shoe strings dip them in mucilage. This will stiffen the ends and make it easy to put them through eyelets.

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Pattern 7002.

THIS crocheted bowl, filled with colorful embroidered roses is fascinating and varied needlework. Add this touch of decoration to your chairs.

In a Small Way

The mighty machines of the liner throbbed ceaselessly. The chief engineer wiped a perspiring forehead and scowled at the young man with the oil can.

"Look here," he growled, "you aren't helping me much with these engines, yet you said you knew something about the game."

"So I do," replied the other, "but on a smaller scale, you know."

"Well, what's your usual job?"

"Watch repairing."

Pattern 7002 contains a transfer pattern of a motif 13 by 8 inches and two motifs 8 1/2 by 5 inches; directions for crochet; illustration of stitches; materials needed; color schemes.

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NEW EFFECTIVE HAY FEVER RELIEF

Hay fever, which annually causes more sneezes, more inflamed noses and more red, streaming eyes than any other scourge, may have its final big fling this September, all because a Pennsylvania electrical engineer was served a dish of corn meal mush which was entirely too salty.

The engineer, sneezing, and with all other hay fever manifestations, stopped at a hotel where he was served a dish of mush which he considered sending back as it was much too salty. Finally he ate it, however; the hay fever attack lessened, ultimately ceased. Next day he had three meals, all over-salted, and experienced his most comfortable time in years in the "hay fever season."

His analytical mind quickly grasped the possibility that the saline substance in his food was responsible for his relief.

About this time, Dr. E. E. Selleck, a graduate of Columbia University, met the engineer, made notes, and when he returned to his home, began experiments. Today Dr. Selleck declares he has found a certain means of relief for hay fever and is supported in his contention by other medical experts, and a nationally known chemical manufacturing concern, the Hollings-Smith Company, at Orangeburg, New York, has taken over making the remedy, which is called Nakamo Bell.

Describing the experiments, Dr. Selleck said, "After I was sure I had found a means of quickly relieving hay fever through the chloride group, I tested it in the most practical way I knew. I held a three day clinic, to which many hay fever sufferers responded, from ages ranging from 10 to 60 years. Each person was given two tablets with a little water. Some relief came to all within ten minutes. Reports on these cases during the ensuing weeks showed practically a complete cessation of symptoms."—Adv.

Poor and Rich

No man is rich whose expenditures exceed his means; and no one is poor whose incomes exceed his outgoings.—Haliburton.

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