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The Boys of 1776 and the Boys of 1913



Photos by American Press Association.

THE COWBOYS' 4TH

By CLARISSA MACKIE.
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PINK DEERING threw a leg over the pommel of his saddle and rested his sharp chin in one hand. His black eyes roved from the mass of horned cattle moving slowly ahead and turned to his three companions.

"Tomorrow's the glorious Fourth," he drawled.

"That's so. Guess I'll go over to Three Forks and fire some caps off," responded Mathews.

"What's the matter with the whole crowd going over there tomorrow night and showing them peaceful citizens how to celebrate their country's birthday?" Ferd Lathrop was the speaker, and outwardly he was as reckless a desperado as ever was pictured on the lurid cover of a nickel weekly. Actually he was a mild and inoffensive wage earner and excellent cattle herder. "Let's shoot up the town," he suggested bloodthirstily.

"Let's!" mimicked the fourth cowboy.

"Let's don't do anything so slow. I got a better plan," murmured Pink. "You all know the schoolma'am?"

The three others laughed ruefully. "I guess we know the schoolma'am," Pink, remarked Phillips ironically.

"I know her so well that she felt free to give me a piece of advice."

"What was it?" demanded Pink swiftly.

"I suggested that Squibs was wearing a plain trail across country to her door."

"Oh, Lordy!" yelled Mathews. "You never put your foot into it that way?"

"Plumb in!"

"What advice did she pass over?"

"It won't bear repeating—not to the ears of mockers," Phillips sighed gustily and wiped an imaginary tear from his handsome eye.

"That won't prevent our carrying out our plan," said Pink Deering.

"Let's hear the plan now you're satisfied that we know the schoolma'am."

"It's this way. You know she was going back home to Ohio the day after school closed, but the Clarks persuaded her to stay over until after the Fourth and see what a regular Montana celebration can be. So she stayed, but this very morning Clark had a message from Helena saying that his father had a stroke or something and he rushed off, and of course the celebration at Clark's is all off."

"Well, isn't likely Mrs. Clark will invite us to come over and fire off the rockets when there's sickness in the family," observed Ferd.

"She don't have to. Listen. It's my idea to lay in a supply of the finest kind of fireworks and then ride over to Clark's and fire 'em off on the pasture."

"That's a good idea," said Phillips.

"Suppose Squibs is there making a call?"

Pink laughed heartily. "Squibs had a urgent message to come at once to the west side of Cold Creek, where one of our horses had broke a leg. So he went pounding off just before we

did." "What horse was it?" asked Phillips innocently.

"It happened long before you ever came to the Big Q," retorted Pink. "The note never said when it happened."

His companions roared with delight over the joke he had put up on the unsuspecting Squibs.

"It's ten miles over to Cold Creek," chuckled Pink.

"And it's ten miles back," added Ferd.

"Miss Paige will be all complimented by the time he gets back."

"It's kind of a blazing serenade, eh?"

"Sure thing. Where's those roman candles?"

Moving quietly around the dim pasture, the four celebrators made their preparations for the display. The first bomb that would announce to Miss Paige that something was going on outside was to be fired at 9 o'clock, and when everything was in readiness the four sat down and smoked until Pink Deering replaced his watch and announced that the hour had come.

The light still shone in the upper window that little Sam Clark had announced was the teacher's.

After the screaming hiss of the first bomb had ended in a shattering explosion of sound the light in that window went out, and the celebrators were jubilant over the success of their plans.

"She's got her blue eyes glued on this here exhibition, all right," chuckled Pink Deering as he touched off the first skyrocket.

"Swish-h-h-h!" it went up and broke into a shower of balls that burst into many colored flowers.

"Whoop-ee!" yelled the cowboys excitedly.

It was a gorgeous celebration. Pin-wheels sizzled and whirled in dazzling confusion of fire; bombs exploded occasionally just to let Miss Paige know when especial tidings were going to happen—as, for instance, just before that set piece of a basket of flowers or another of intertwined hearts.

Red fire blazed there on the pasture and turned the whole landscape to a ruddy glow. They saw faces at the window and were themselves observed. They leaped into the air and whooped joyously, and when the fire died out they started more rockets toward the zenith.

When the last rocket had exploded in mid-air and they had watched the last fire balloon sail away beyond the late rising moon the four celebrators stamped out any sparks that might remain in the grass, knocked down the wooden framework they had brought for the set pieces and tossed it away and sought their horses.

They rode sedately to the piazza of the old Clark house and found the windows brilliantly lighted.

Mrs. Clark met them at the front door with a welcoming smile.

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"That was a lovely celebration, boys!" she cried heartily, and as she noted their heads craned toward the interior of the house she understood all at once the meaning of the whole thing and was immediately sympathetic.

"Come right in, do! The children made ice cream today, and you must have some. Tell me how you happened to think of the celebration."

"It was a blazing serenade for Miss Paige," said Pink, still peering around for a glimpse of the schoolma'am.

"That is too bad," cried Mrs. Clark. "She would have enjoyed it so much!"

"Would have?" Pink's color deepened. "I take it the schoolma'am wasn't to home?"

"No. Isn't it a pity? We were sitting on the piazza when Mr. Clyde came up and said he had to go over to Cold Creek tonight to see about a horse which had broken a leg. He invited Daisy to ride along with him and see the moon rise over Cold Creek. They should be home before long. It is too bad they missed it."

"It was too bad, ma'am," said Pink courteously. "No, thank you; we won't stop. We just came in to ask how Mr. Clark's old man is getting along?"

"Better—much better—thank you. Won't you stay until they come home? You can amuse yourself with the phonograph. We have a lot of new records," urged Mrs. Clark, sorry for their disappointment and knowing they were to suffer a keener one before long.

They met their disappointment sooner than she expected. They had galloped away from the Clark place in silence eloquent of their disgust. All the time and money and enthusiasm they had expended upon the celebration had been wasted upon Mrs. Clark and the children.

Suddenly a horse and rider came into view and were silhouetted against the horizon. It was not one horse, but two, and they were so close together and the riders were so absorbed in each other, the man's arm around the girl's waist, that neither saw the four celebrators riding silently past.

"I reckon the next celebration that the schoolma'am takes part in will be one with white satin ribbons and plenty of rice and old shoes," observed Pink gloomily.

"And from the looks of things I opine that Squibs will be there, too," said Ferd conclusively.

Shelter of Safety.

"Let us go into this department store until the shower is over."

"I prefer this harness shop," said her husband. "You won't see so many things you want."—Pittsburgh Post.

Not Necessary.

Wife—What do you mean by telling Mrs. Crews's husband you never ask my advice about anything? Husband—Well, my dear, I don't. You don't wait to be asked.