

# THE SMOKY YEARS

By ALAN LE MAY

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## INSTALLMENT 7 THE STORY SO FAR:

Dusty King and Lew Gordon had built up a vast string of ranches which stretched from Texas to Montana. King was killed by his powerful and unscrupulous competitor, Ben Thorpe. Bill Roper, King's adopted son, undertook to break Thorpe's power. His first step

was to start a cattle war in Texas. He made this decision against the opposition of Lew Gordon and the tearful pleading of his sweetheart, Jody Gordon. With the aid of Dry Camp Pierce and other outlaw gunmen, Roper conducted raid after raid upon Thorpe's

herds. Clevé Tanner, manager of Thorpe's Texas holdings, seemed helpless to stop him. In spite of his daring plans, Roper's resources had dwindled dangerously low by the time winter came. And Thorpe seemed not to feel the losses inflicted upon him.

### CHAPTER X

The winter dragged out slowly. Roper's plans, bold as they were, had been well laid. He had perceived from the first that success or failure depended upon whether or not he could make his war with Tanner self sustaining. To gnaw away at the Tanner herds was one thing; to turn their captures into cash was altogether another.

Roper had hoped that he could initiate his own drives to the north, but he had found this out of the question. On the other hand, the trail drivers had found themselves so vulnerable that none of them wanted to buy cattle of questionable ownership.

The Thorpe-Tanner organization did not have this problem; they took what they wanted and drove what they wanted, by means of their own trail outfits. But Roper could now only dispose of cattle for the trail through ranchers known to be scrupulous and established men.

This was the strategic purpose behind Roper's rehabilitation of the eleven outfits which Tanner had originally seized, and which Roper had now put back into the hands of their proper owners. These re-established ranchers had not only the sympathy but the respect of everyone who knew anything about Texas cattle. Through these men Roper now had a safe and sure outlet for the cattle recovered by Dry Camp's experts, while the gunfighters under such men as Nate Liggett, Tex Daniels, and Hat Crick Tommy supplied a much needed protection until they could get on their feet.

But this method, promising as it was, was slow. Of necessity the men whom Roper backed were cowmen without assets other than their disputed claim to their ground.

Sometimes by mortgage loans, but principally by silent partnerships, Roper had now obtained interests in nearly a dozen outfits. They should have been thriving outfits. But Roper found his money draining away with unforeseen swiftness, without hope of any financial return until the trail should open in the spring. Only the Mexican border operations, which depended upon Lee Harnish, continued to show a thin trickle of income through the winter months. As spring approached, Roper found himself near the end of his string.

Early in February, Shoshone Wilce came south seeking Bill Roper, and found him at the Pot Hook ranch.

"Find out anything?" Roper asked. Shoshone Wilce rubbed his badly shaved chin with horny fingers. "I don't know as you're going to like this so very good, Bill."

"Let's have the bad news first—I eat it up." "God knows there's enough of it; there ain't any other kind to be had. What do you want to know first?"

"How's Thorpe making out up above?" "I saw him in Dodge City; he was throwing money around with a shovel in each hand. You know what I think? I think he can go away and forget Tanner, and write everything he has in Texas right off the books, and never know the difference!"

Roper locked his hands behind his head and stared at the ceiling. Sometimes it seemed to him that trying to break Tanner was like trying to empty the Rio Grande with a hand dipper. The apparently unbounded resources of Ben Thorpe in the middle country and in the north, out of reach of the south Texas war, made up a vast reservoir which Tanner could draw on without limit.

"How is Tanner himself making out?" "Bill, I've been all up and down the north and east part of Texas; and I can't see where we've accomplished a damned thing."

"You don't know what you're talking about!" "You know what I think?" Wilce persisted. "I think there's more cattle in this country than the world has any use for. I don't think you can bother any man any more, just by fooling with his cattle."

"Never mind what you think. Let's have what you know." "I nosed around and tried to find out what promises Tanner's been making for cattle on spring deliveries. I didn't learn anything. Nobody learns anything. But I got enough to total up."

Shoshone Wilce hesitated, and didn't say any more until he had got a cigarette rolled. In the middle of rolling his cigarette he went into a coughing fit, and spilled the tobacco, so that he had to start over again.

"Bill," he said at last, "Clevé Tanner's going to drive more cattle this year than he's ever drove before. In just one bunch alone he aims to deliver fifteen thousand head on the banks of the Red!"

"He's crazy!" Roper shouted. "He can't do it—it's impossible!" "Well—he thinks he can. He

knows his cattle counts better than me. But—I've been all up and down this country, and I don't see but what he can."

"Well, anyway," Roper said, "the border gangs are going good. We'll go on with it, and keep going on..."

"Bill," Shoshone said, "how long can you go on, the way it's costing you now?"

"Not much farther, I guess." "You going to have to quit?"

Roper shook his head. "I'll never quit now, Shoshone; I can't quit. While I've got one rider left with me, or no riders, I'll still be working on Clevé Tanner. But I think we're going to beat him, Wilce. After all, the border gangs—we can count on them."

Roper continued to count on his border gangs for two weeks more. Then, in the middle of February, he learned that Lee Harnish was through.

The first word of difficulty came when Dave Shannon pushed a little bunch of seven hundred head through the river at Mudcat Turn, and found no vaqueros waiting on the other side. Shannon waited three days before he was forced to turn the cattle free and ride.

The complete news of what had happened never really came. What Roper learned came in bit by bit, by way of random riders who had talked with a vaquero here, another there.

Lee Harnish had been pressing south with a herd of twelve hundred head. He was two days into Mexico, and supposed that he was clear; he had never had much trouble, once he was well below the line.



Harnish took to the brush and the hills.

But now, one moonless night, a band reported as of at least sixty men struck from no place, scattering the herd, and blazing down on Harnish's riders almost before they could take to the saddle. There had been a sharp running fight as Harnish and his half-dozen boys took to the brush and the hills. Unsatisfied with seizure of the herd, the unknown band had spent three days trying to hunt down Harnish's riders.

Lee Harnish himself, wounded in the first skirmish, had had a hard time getting clear; it was not known whether or not all of his riders were elsewhere accounted for.

After an elapse of several weeks, an Indian-faced vaquero came hunting Bill Roper; he carried a written message from Lee Harnish:

"This thing is finished up. Don't let anybody tell you it was Clevé Tanner's men busted into us. What he's done, this Tanner has put some bunches of Mex renegades up to landing on us, they work with the Yaks, and his Indian scouts have spotted where we make our crossings. Seems like there's anyway a dozen bands of them haven't got anything else to do but lay watching those crossings, and wait us out."

"About half of them is carrying new American guns and plenty ammunition. They got our hide nailed to the fence all right and we are through."

It was a long time before Roper saw Lee Harnish again. He did not accept Harnish's statements off-hand; but when he had conferred with Dave Shannon, and others of the border men in whom he believed, he was forced to accede that the border-running phase of the attack on Tanner was done.

As February drew to a close, the big herds were once more being thrown together for the trail. From the eleven rehabilitated outfits in which Roper was now silent part-

ner, a little trickle of trail cattle began to move toward the gathering grounds on the Red. The income from these sales helped a little; but the proceeds were principally absorbed by debts incurred in behalf of the individual ranches. The improvement in his situation which Roper had hoped for did not come.

It was deep into March when Tex Long quit.

"Look," Tex Long said, "look." He did not talk easily; whatever he said was matter-of-fact, even now. "I got to pull out of this game."

Bill Roper looked at him, without expression. "All right. How much you figure I owe you?"

Tex smiled. "Nothing." "A very rare flush of anger came into Bill Roper's face. "Tex, what's the matter with you?"

Tex Long made a quick, futile gesture with his hands. "We used to be able to jump down on them. We can't do that now. The Bert Johnson place is studded with rifles until a man can't take a step. Every place you'll find out it's the same. There isn't going to be anything more we can do. We went good for a while. But they got organized, now. We're through."

Tex Long was only one of Bill Roper's picked gunfighters, but he was one of the best. As March drew on, Roper lost four more.

Into the Big Bend, into the valley of the Nueces, Clevé Tanner had flooded such a power of gunfighters as Bill Roper would not have believed. He had supposed that he could outpace and outsmart Tanner's warrior outfits. But now his raiding forces met everywhere a stubborn resistance.

Roper had discounted the quit of Tex Long; but now other news was coming in. The Graham outfit—the first of all those that the Roper men had taken—was again in the hands of Clevé Tanner; and Nate Liggett, assigned to protect Graham, had headed for the trail without even a report. Hat Crick Tommy was three weeks missing. The Davis outfit, left under his protection, had gone the way of all loose outfits, and Tanner's cowboys rode the range.

Dry Camp Pierce was almost the last to come in—of those who came in at all. Pierce rode into the Pot Hook Camp early in April. He was the same, small wiry man he always had been—his eyes watery, his jaws poorly shaven.

"Bill, I can't carry these camps no more. God knows we strung with you while we could. We've et beef, beef, beef without salt or flour, we've et bobcat meat. But Bill, there's no lead in our guns, and there's no patches in our pants, and it's time I got to let the boys go, to make out any way they can."

Bill Roper looked older than Dusty King had ever looked; his face was like granite, with hard lines cut into it by the weather.

"Okay," he said. "I understand how you feel, Dry Camp."

Dry Camp's anger was gone as quickly as it had come. "Bill," he said pleadingly, "it's only—it's only—"

"It's only that you've had a lot of men out working for us," Bill Roper said more reasonably.

"Near fifty men," Dry Camp said. "How many you got working now?"

Dry Camp Pierce hesitated. "Not a damned man," Bill Roper said bitterly. "And now you quit Dusty King."

"Look you here," Dry Camp said. "I've strung with you when I wouldn't have strung with any other man, let alone an upstart kid. I'll say this for you—you've made a game fight. But kid, take my word for it—they're too big, and they're too strong."

"You think so?" Bill Roper said. "I know so. I don't know what you had, made men like Lee Harnish and Dave Shannon and Nate Liggett throw in with you, but they did—the damnedest wild bunch Texas ever seen. Half the renegades of the Long Trail, and your part of King-Gordon, has gone into beating Clevé Tanner. And where are we now?"

"Well?" "We aren't any place! Kid, I tell you we're beat, and we're long beat!"

April melted into May, and Roper had nothing to fight with any more. Those units of his wild bunch that had not quit had not been heard from at all; he knew already that the ones who had completely failed. Clevé Tanner prospered, seemingly; and all was well with Ben Thorpe.

Bill Roper waited at the Pot Hook now, trying to think of some way that he had missed. King-Gordon denied him, and Lew Gordon expressly would advance nothing more against Dusty King's share of the partnership which had been broken by death.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



## WHO'S NEWS THIS WEEK

By LEMUEL F. PARTON  
(Consolidated Features—WNU Service.)  
NEW YORK.—Maj. Gen. Henry H. Arnold, chief of the army air corps who has just arrived in England to serve as an official observer of the war, is about the only officer remaining in active service who learned to fly under the personal supervision of Wilbur and Orville Wright at their school in Dayton, Ohio. Just two years previously the war department had accepted delivery of its first batch of airplanes and so his experience as a flier pretty nearly spans the complete period of army aviation.

Anyone who can recall the status of flying in 1911 will appreciate "Hap" Arnold's exploits in his first year of training as a young lieutenant, assigned to flight duty from the infantry, with a record of 140 flights, 29 hours in the air. In his second year of training he achieved honor as the first winner of the Mackay trophy awarded for excellence as a military pilot. In a day so blustery and cold as to keep all but 2 of 12 entrants out of the race he completed a 40-mile flight, originating at College Park, Md., at an average speed of 52 miles an hour.

Twenty-two years later he again won the trophy as leader of a flight of 10 twin-engined bombers from Washington, D. C., to Alaska and return. As early as 1911 he practiced at aerial bombardment and war department records credit him with being the pioneer in the successful use of the radio for military purposes in an airplane.

Quite at variance with the outward semblance of this slightly built, silver-haired soldier with his diffident smile, is his forthright utterances and writings concerning the airplane as a war machine.

"The only way to prevent air invasion is to attack the invader with superior numbers and knock him out of the air." He has been preaching this for years, his concern having ever been for the constant procurement of thousands of new, improved combat craft, training of thousands of new pilots, enlistment of tens of thousands of ground crew men, swelling of aircraft plants and acquisition of vital raw material for future aircraft production.

Still an active pilot, mounting administrative duties have cut down his time in the air and restricted his activity in two hobbies—cooking and writing fiction. Boys who remember his "Bill Bruce" books, including "Bill Bruce at West Point," "Bill Bruce at Flying School," and other breath-taking juvenile works, will regret the recent idleness of his pen.

PRONOUNCED feeling of good-will toward a nation where she has been most hospitably received, sentiment born of local pride and a high sense of honorable pre-eminence in the spirit of Good-Will.

Brazilian Senhora Christens Ship in the Spirit of Good-Will. The gesture which Senhora Peixoto employed in breaking the bottle containing champagne over the bow of the new Moore-McCormack passenger liner, Rio de Janeiro, as it slid down the ways in the shipyard at Chester, Pa., the other day. So acting, she represented her husband, Commander Ernani Do Amaral Peixoto, governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro—for which the vessel was named—as well as her father, Getulio Vargas, president of Brazil.

A petite, vivid woman, who has made a delightful impression upon those concerned in making the current visit of the distinguished Brazilian pair an important hands-across-the-sphere event, the senhora holds a degree in law, the result of study at the University of Brazil, a profession, however, in which she has never practiced. Marrying soon after graduation she eventually became secretary to her father, a position she now holds. Her hosts in New York have found her a fluent speaker of English.

This acquirement has made her of value to her husband as an interpreter when our idiom and more involved diction carry him beyond his depth. No one, it seems, has yet found her at a loss on economic, social, or political questions—in fine she is a brilliantly accomplished woman. Practical, too. When it became clear that certain handwork arts in Europe no longer would be available to American buyers she founded the Fundacao Anchieta in Rio de Janeiro which gives free training in fine needlework to Brazilian women.



## HEAVYWEIGHT FIGHT BROADCAST

... This is the sixth round of the heavyweight championship fight between Joe Louis and Pudge Goops. . . . Louis sends another left to the jaw by Louis. . . . Now Louis lands a right to the head by Louis. . . . Of Goops. . . . By Louis. . . . It's a terrific battle, folks. . . . Both boys are in the center of Louis. . . . of the ring. . . . by Goops. . . . of Louis. . . . It's a right by Louis to the jaw by Louis of Goops. . . . There's the bell! . . . Goops has been down six times so far. . . . The crowd is wild. . . . Nobody expected Goops would put up such a game showing!

"Seventh round, folks. . . . Louis is shuffling around. . . . He is staring at Goops. . . . This is a stare by Louis. . . . Of Goops. . . . Goops is not to be outdone and he sends a stare by Goops to Louis by Goops. . . . Louis delivers a right uppercut to the jaw by Louis. . . . A left by Louis. . . . A right by Louis. . . . Louis sends two lefts and a right to the jaw by Louis. Goops is down. . . . He is saved by the bell. . . . This showing of Goops has upset all calculations. . . . The crowd is cheering. . . . This is a sensational battle!

"Now comes the eighth round. . . . Goops makes a rush for his corner by Goops. He rushes out straight at Louis by Goops. . . . of Louis. . . . Now Louis floors him with a terrific left to the nose by Louis. . . . and two uppercuts by Louis to the jaw by Louis. . . . Goops is down. . . . He is up. . . . He falls into a clinch of Louis by Goops. . . . Louis just landed four straight smashes to the head by Louis. . . . Louis scores a terrific right to ear by Louis. . . . And a left jab by Louis to the face of Goops by Louis. . . . Louis gets in two stomach punches by Louis. . . . Goops goes down. . . . Goops has been down eleven times. . . . He hasn't landed a solid punch so far by Goops. But he is still in there. . . . All the expert predictions have been upset. . . . Goops has surprised everybody. . . . There goes the bell as Louis sends a hard right smash to the jaw by Louis.

"Ninth round, folks. . . . This is one of the greatest heavyweight championship fights in history. . . . Goops is down again from a left and right and left and right and right delivered by Louis to the jaw by Louis. . . . He is up. . . . He is in very bad shape. . . . He has no defense and doesn't seem to be able to land a solid punch. . . . He is certainly outclassed, but this is the ninth round, folks, and he has upset all the dope by still being in there. . . . Goops is putting up a wonderful demonstration of courage by Goops. . . . He is down again as Louis sends a left and a left and a left by Louis to the jaw. . . . Boy, what a fight!

"Now we are starting round ten in the greatest fight for the world heavyweight championship in years. . . . Joe Louis sends a left to the head by Louis. . . . Goops is down. . . . He's up. . . . I never saw such spirit. . . . Such courage by Goops. . . . Such fighting nerve and spirit. . . . Bam! . . . Goops is OUT!"

PROBLEM FOR WASHINGTON (A picture made entirely of hair from the heads of members of the Roosevelt family will be presented to the President.—News item.)

Please save your combings, Mrs. R. For Democrats declare that they would like the Hyde Park branch immortalized in hair.

Young John could pull a forelock out— Frank, Junior, some can spare, But what, oh, what, can Jimmy do To place his quota there? —X. Y. Z.

MOVIE VERDICTS "That Night in Rio."—an insult to South America done in technical color.

But if "Rebecca" was the year's best picture, as voted, then we'll take Mickey Mouse every time. And we thought Ginger Rogers as Kitty Foyle in the movie of that name was just another movie performer who hadn't read the book.

There are a lot of people in this country who will stand for most anything that may come through the war emergency as long as it doesn't interfere with bingo.

A recent newsreel showed a bunch of rookies leaping from planes in a parachute training test. Each carried two chutes in case the first one didn't work. In this picture one lad pulled both chutes. "Would you do that?" the girl ahead asked her boy friend. "Would I!" he frankly exclaimed. "Say, I'd pull both cords and yell for somebody to throw me a third." It must seem funny to London not to have any American notes around this week.

## Things to do



Pattern 6896.

A BRIGHT decoration in any room, this rug crocheted in four strands of string, candlewick or rags looks like a large chrysanthemum. Use two shades of a color, with white, gray, tan or three colors.

Pattern 6896 contains instructions for making rug; illustrations of it and stitches; materials needed; color schemes. Send order to:

Sewing Circle Needlecraft Dept. 82 Eighth Ave. New York Enclose 15 cents in coins for Pattern No. Name Address

## WE FOUND A BETTER WAY

Advertisement for Cytisbius, Greek Physician, featuring an illustration of a man and text: "Determined to find a better way to lift water. He invented the pump around 250 B.C. The better way to treat constipation due to lack of proper 'bulk' in the diet is to correct the cause of the trouble with a delicious cereal, Kellogg's All-Bran... Eat it every day and drink plenty of water."

As One Thinks Man is only miserable so far as he thinks himself so.—Sannazaro.

## That Nagging Backache

Advertisement for Doan's Pills: "May Warn of Disordered Kidney Action. Modern life with its hurry and worry, irregular habits, improper eating and drinking—its risk of exposure and infection—throws heavy strain on the work of the kidneys. They are apt to become over-taxed and fail to filter excess acid and other impurities from the life-giving blood. You may suffer nagging backache, headache, dizziness, getting up nights, leg pains, swelling—feet constantly tired, nervous, all worn out. Other signs of kidney or bladder disorder are sometimes burning, scanty or too frequent urination. Try Doan's Pills. Doan's help the kidneys to pass off harmful excess body water. They have had more than half a century of public approval. Are recommended by grateful users everywhere. Ask your neighbor!"

## DOAN'S PILLS

WNU-13 18-41

## BUREAU OF STANDARDS

A BUSINESS organization which wants to get the most for the money sets up standards by which to judge what is offered to it, just as in Washington the government maintains a Bureau of Standards. You can have your own Bureau of Standards, too. Just consult the advertising columns of your newspaper. They safeguard your purchasing power every day of every year.