

THE SMOKY YEARS

By ALAN LE MAY

W.N.U. Release

INSTALLMENT II

THE STORY SO FAR: the opposition of his sweetheart, Jody Gordon, and her father. Daring raids upon Thorpe's Texas holdings wiped him out of the state. Roper then prepared for a great raid upon the vast herds on Thorpe's Montana ranches. Several

Dusty King and Lew Gordon had built up a vast string of ranches in the West. King was killed by his powerful and unscrupulous competitor, Ben Thorpe. Bill Roper, King's adopted son, was determined to avenge his death in spite of

CHAPTER XV—Continued

When Lew Gordon spoke, his voice was so quiet that its very stillness carried threat of imminent destruction. "Bill Roper sent a man to you?" "I didn't say that. He's a man who was with Bill Roper in the Texas Rustlers' War; he doesn't seem to be in the Montana raids."

"Yes, mam, I kind of did. I guess; and I got to be getting on there, Miss Gordon. If you'll just give me any message you want me to take, I'd sure like to be pulling out of here, before—" "All right. You be here with two good horses just after dark."

thousand Indians had gathered near the Canadian border to take every beef that was driven across. Shoshone Wilce, one of Roper's men, told Jody that her father's life was in danger, so she rode to warn him. He was surprised to see her

easy throw together three hundred head in a couple of days. That gives us a nice bunch of anyway two thousand. The more the better—but with two thousand we'll make our drive." They slept that night under the slowly falling snow. Roper himself made coffee and routed out his riders two hours before the first light.

"This man has talked with Ben Thorpe in Dodge," Jody told her father. "A lot of strange news is working down to Thorpe from up here in Montana. Some bands of rustlers are slashing up and down Montana throwing lead and leather into the Thorpe outfits under Lasham; they say he's badly hurt already—nobody will know how badly until the winter breaks."

"All right. I'll make the ride by myself." "Hey, look! You can't—" "Bill Roper isn't going to like this, Wilce."

For two days Roper watched the enemy camp while the snow held on, piling a deeper and deeper mat; then on the third day he returned to the rendezvous as the roundup men began straggling in. Tex Long was the first one back. "This range is plumb solid with stock," Tex declared. "How many head do you figure me and Kid Johnson scraped up, just us two?"



"I'd sure like to be pulling out of here before—"

Her father waited, his eyes angry. "The word from Dodge explains half the trouble that King-Gordon is up against," Jody said. "Thorpe can't believe that one lone cowboy, deserted by everyone who should have been his friend, could manage to smash his Texas holdings, and go on to cut away his herds in Montana. He thought that we were backing Billy Roper in the Texas Rustlers' War. And he believes that we're backing him now."

life ain't worth a nickel, either way," he almost whimpered. "You be here with the horses," Jody said. She turned and went into the house, leaving Shoshone Wilce standing unhappy and uncertain, ankle deep in the wet snow.

"Better'n six hundred head! Lord Almighty, Bill! Figuring they're worth twenty dollars apiece, and allowing that all the other boys do as good, we're liable to get out of here with around eighty thousand dollars worth of cattle! You realize that?" But Roper was thinking of the letter in his pocket; the appeal of a girl who needed him in some unknown way, and who did not even know why he couldn't come. All the next day they worked to throw the little bunches together into a trail herd. Not all of them had done as well as Tex Long and Kid Johnson, but most of them had done well enough. And then, at last, the first herd privateered in the Great Raid began to roll. A long unsteadily moving river of cattle poured northward, a dark welter in the thinning fall of the snow. White-faces mostly, blocky and heavy, well watered on the prairie hay—Roper counted two thousand six hundred odd!

"Well?" Lew Gordon said. "You mean to say you came all this way to tell me that?" "Ben Thorpe means to kill you." Lew Gordon's face showed no change of expression. But he did not reply at once.

CHAPTER XVI

"I don't doubt it," he said at last; "what would you expect? You bring war into a range and anybody is likely to go down." Jody's face was white. "You know what's at the bottom of all the trouble we're having," her father said. "You know as well as I do that two years of nothing but trouble lays square at the door of Bill Roper."

The rounding up of the wild bunch of riders lost Roper a few days; but within the week Bill Roper and Tex Long rode into the plains of the Little Dry. Here around a spluttering fire the riders crouched in their sodden blankets, like Indians, while Roper gave out his orders. Thirty-two men and six outlaw leaders were now in the field against Walk Lasham's powerful Montana outfits in the Great Raid.

Pressed hard by the heavy force of cowboys, the cattle bawled but humped along northward into the valley of the Prairie Elk. Rounding up within a day's ride of Miles City itself, Roper's men had taken this herd almost out of the very corrals of Lasham's outposts; and yet, so far as any of them knew, that swift-moving drive represented a harder blow than had ever been struck a cattlemen in a single raid. In all their months of effort the winter wild bunch had been unable to achieve an equal reprisal upon Lasham, and now they could hardly believe their own success. They forced the cattle hard, driving through the clogging snow at a rate incredible to men accustomed to handling market herds.

And now her father angered as she had seldom seen him anger. "You'll tell me nothing!" he roared. "Roper! I'm sick of hearing his name—a dirty outlaw whelp that knows nothing but kill and burn and raid!" Jody's eyes narrowed and filled with tears. "You may as well know this," she told her father. "The day that Billy Roper dies I want to die too."

Roper's first move had been to split his renegade riders into five bunches under the leaders that he knew—Tex Long, Lee Harnish, Dave Shannon, Dry Camp Pierce and himself. Hat Crick Tommy he sent to Miles City in search of further word from Jody Gordon; Hat Crick would later rejoin Roper as messenger and scout.

It was Roper's plan that he and Tex Long, with twelve men between them, should make the most daring raid of all; a raid upon the big herds which Lasham held between the headwaters of Timber Creek and the Little Dry. Of all the ranges in which the wild bunch was interested, this was the nearest Miles City—the most accessible, the most closely watched, the best protected. How many cattle he could transfer from this range to the starving Canadian Sioux, Roper did not know; but it was his hope to raise such a conspicuous and stubborn disturbance as would mask the operations of the rest of the wild bunch, and permit Pierce to work unimpeded.

For a moment Lew Gordon seemed bewildered; he stared at his daughter as if the devil had come up through the floor. The girl who faced him was entirely strange to him. He heard her say, "If you had stayed by him, as Dusty King would have done, Thorpe would have been whipped and through, long ago."

"The fourteen of us will split seven ways," Roper told them now. "I figure Lasham's look-out camp for this range is about twelve miles southeast. We'll comb every way but that way. I'm not telling you how to gather stock. Hunt 'em like you know how to hunt 'em. Move out one day's ride, spotting your cow bunches. Next day pick 'em up and work 'em this way. And on the third day throw your gader against a coulee or something where one man can hold 'em, and the other man can each pair ride back and meet me here. I figure this range is heavy with cattle. I don't see any reason why two good men can't

But now as he neared the head of the Little Dry, a rider came dropping down a long slope upon a racing horse. His carbine was held above his ragged sombrero in sign of peace; and as he came near they saw that it was Hat Crick Tommy. Roper jumped his horse out to meet Hat Crick. "What is it? Is there any word? Did she—" Tommy's face was haggard with fatigue. "She's gone!" he jerked out. "She's been to Miles City—and now she's gone!" "Gone? Gone where?" "Nobody knows. She's missing—disappeared—strayed or lost or rustled, I don't know which! Her father's wild crazy, and every K-G outfit in the north is combing the trails—"

"By God," he said, his voice unsteady with the repression he put upon it, "that closes the deal! I've kept my riders off him because of Dusty King, and I let him run on and on, rousing up a range war that has close to busted King-Gordon. But when it comes to tampering with you—it's the end! I'm through, you hear me?" He caught up his battered sombrero, and his spurs rang as he turned toward the door.

For several moments Jody Gordon stood motionless where he had left her. Then she turned and went out of the house to the long shed-like stable. Shoshone Wilce was loitering there in the shadow of the rear wall, an uneasy and restless figure. "Did you find out where Billy Roper can be reached?" Jody demanded.

Roper sat staring for a full half minute. Then his hands fumbled for his reata, shook out the loop. "Turn that roan pony! I've got to have a fresh horse..."

"I don't doubt it," he said at last; "what would you expect? You bring war into a range and anybody is likely to go down." Jody's face was white. "You know what's at the bottom of all the trouble we're having," her father said. "You know as well as I do that two years of nothing but trouble lays square at the door of Bill Roper."

Household News

by Lynn Chambers



'A PICNICKING WE WILL GO...'

IT'S PICNIC TIME! The soft, sunny days of late May and early June tempt even the most conscientious to turn their backs on work, and, since "the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it," a picnic is the answer! One reason for the nation-wide popularity of picnics is that they're easy on the lady of the house...

THIS WEEK'S MENU Bonfire Banquet \*Cheeseburgers With Piquant Sauce Sliced Tomatoes and Green Onions Raw Carrots Potatoes or Green Corn, Roasted over Hot Coals Cup Cakes, Pie (not juicy, please) or Fruit Coffee or Milk in a Thermos, or Lemonade \*Recipe given.

Here are more let's-have-a-picnic suggestions: Cole Slaw. (To Make "On Location") 3 cups finely shredded cabbage 1/2 cup mayonnaise 3 tablespoons french dressing 2 tablespoons thick cream Mix the mayonnaise, french dressing and cream together and mix into the cabbage just before serving. Add more salt if necessary. Old-Fashioned Potato Salad. 4 cups diced, boiled potatoes 3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped 1/4 cup finely minced sweet pickle 2 to 4 tablespoons minced onion 1/4 cup pimiento, chopped Salt, pepper and celery salt 1 cup cooked salad dressing 2 tablespoons mayonnaise Mix all ingredients together lightly. Let stand, chilling, for at least 1 hour. If desired, the onion and potato may be marinated overnight in french dressing before being mixed with other ingredients. Variations: Meats, such as diced tongue, ham or frankfurters may be added to the standard recipe, and seasonings of chives and green pepper may be included. Marshmallow-Graham Cracker Dessert Sandwich. For each person, allow 1/2 milk chocolate candy bar, 2 graham crackers and 2 marshmallows. Toast marshmallows, then place them on the chocolate candy that is on one graham cracker. Put the second graham cracker on top and it is ready to eat. The marshmallows should be hot and soft.

LYNN SAYS: When hamburgers are included in the picnic menu, form the patties of ground meat, mixed with minced onion and seasoning, before you leave home. Place between waxed paper, and they're ready to cook when the fire is ready. Hash goes upstage when it is used as a bun filler. Scoop out rolls, (leftover or fresh) butter insides and pile full of savory cooked hash. Brush top with melted butter or gravy and bake 15 minutes in moderate oven. Ideal for out-of-door suppers. To "dress-up" your picnic bill-of-fare, there are colorful oilcloth and/or paper tablecloths and napkins. You can find them designed to carry out nearly any theme you so desire. And, as an added tip, in case you're planning to spread an oilcloth covering on the ground, attach it to a pair of old curtain rollers. They'll prevent even the strongest wind from blowing it away! Good news for picnic lovers are the new "lunch" kits. In them you'll find two one-quart vacuum bottles, plus a metal lunch box. The bottles carry their own cups, nested within their screw tops. The nicest thing, however, is the leg which converts the inside lid into a table.

Things to do



Easy to Make the Pin-On Way.

HOW lovely that "impossible" old sofa becomes when you put a bright new slip cover on it! And you can easily make, yourself, the smartest of slip covers. Exact details of cutting and sewing this slip cover are described and diagrammed in our 32-page booklet. Also tells how to cover and trim different types of chairs. Tips on fabrics, colors. Send for your copy to: READER-HOME SERVICE 117 Minna St. San Francisco, Calif. Enclose 10 cents in coin for your copy of HOW TO MAKE SLIP COVERS.

HE FOUND A BETTER WAY HENRY MILL FOUND A BETTER WAY FOR SPEEDY WRITING. HE INVENTED THE FIRST TYPEWRITER IN 1714.



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.

Effect of Study As some insects are said to derive their color from the leaf upon which they feed, so do minds of men assume their hue from the studies which they select for it.—Lady Blessington.

FEMALE PAIN WITH WEAK, CRANKY NERVOUS FEELINGS— You women who suffer pain of irregular periods and are nervous, cranky due to monthly functional disturbances should find Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound simply marvelous to relieve such annoying symptoms. Pinkham's Compound is made especially for women to help relieve such distressing feelings and thus help them go smiling thru such "difficult days." Over 1,000,000 women have reported remarkable benefits. WORTH TRYING! Any drugstore.

WNU-13 22-41

We Can All Be EXPERT BUYERS In bringing us buying information, as to prices that are being asked for what we intend to buy, and as to the quality we can expect, the advertising columns of this newspaper perform a worth while service which saves us many dollars a year. It is a good habit to form, the habit of consulting the advertisements every time we make a purchase, though we have already decided just what we want and where we are going to buy it. It gives us the most priceless feeling in the world; the feeling of being adequately prepared. When we go into a store, prepared beforehand with knowledge of what is offered and at what price, we go as an expert buyer, filled with self-confidence. It is a pleasant feeling to have, the feeling of adequacy. Most of the unhappiness in the world can be traced to a lack of this feeling. This advertising shows another of its manifold facets—shows itself as an aid toward making all our business relationships more secure and pleasant.



(TO BE CONTINUED)