

# LOVE ON THE RANGE

BY NELSON C. WY

## The Story So Far

A plot is on foot to smash the Rafter T, and "Blair" Ankrum takes a job there to help lovely Lee Trone. She saves his life by shooting an intruder, Ketter Dren, but he learns the only after Dren's accomplice, Betty, causes trouble between them. Ratchford, the sheriff, and Claydell, a neighboring rancher, both tell Ankrum that the other is after the Trone's land. Then Ratchford jails Betty. When Ankrum goes to her he is trapped.

## Chapter 20

### Message From Lee

I PIS twisting in a crooked smile. Ankrum whirled to find a gun jammed against his stomach and Ratchford's gloating face within short inches of his own.

"Go ahead," the sheriff jeered. "Grab your iron an' I'll get it over quick! I can't see as it'll matter much to you as it will to the other. If a blue whistler don't mow you down, within the hour you'll be stretchin' hem!"

Ankrum prepared to give Ratchford's confidence a jolt. "Too bad you can't cu. it, Ratchford," he said. "But you're a little late gettin' started. Claydell an' his men are on their way to town right now—must be nearly here by this time."

"So you've swung over to him, have you?" Ratchford scowled. "Well, let 'em come. I've got sixteen deputies in the street outside wh orders to shoot the minute Claydell shows."

"Got your Mex killer outside, too?"

Ratchford grunted an oath, but no reply.

"Look," said Ankrum softly, "what proof you got that I'm the one who shot Dren?"

"Miss Struthers seen you; she'll swear to it."

"What if she won't?"

"Don't matter. I've got her statement down on paper an' signed."

"You hear that?" Ankrum said for the girl's benefit. "You're in the same boat I am. He'll bump you off soon's he settles with me. You've played your part; your use is over."

The girl said nothing. Ratchford snarled. "Shut your trap or I'll shut it for you!"

Ankrum grinned. "What you waitin' for? Go ahead an' shoot."

"I'll shoot when I get ready," Ratchford growled. "This thing ain't over yet."

Ankrum regarded the sheriff's beefy countenance with speculative eyes. What was the meaning of those words? Ankrum was neatly trapped; what else had the sheriff planned?

He tried putting himself in Ratchford's place, tried imagining himself with Ratchford's personal ambitions, lack of moral scruples and ruthless drive for power.

The sheriff's first move at this time would, he felt, be the removal of Rafter T's forehead. He wanted to smash Trone's power, to usurp Trone's possessions. Already he had gone a long way in undermining the old man's nerve; Trone had taken to whisky to bolster his failing courage.

What he wondered would hurt Trone most? The answer came with a blinding flash. The most effective way of smashing Trone would be through Lee—it would prove the crowning blow to the old man's series of misfortunes.

He recalled that an attempt to get at Trone through Lee had once been made already. Only Ankrum's own interference that night in Pesto Pinto had caused the sheriff's plans to miscarry. He remembered that glowing iron with its Straddle Bug brand; he recalled the burly figure slouching past him on the street before that house and he knew that Ratchford was waiting for Lee now!

### No Vain Boast

ANKRUM stared at Ratchford's heavy features with new understanding and realized that nothing save death would ever stop him from carrying out his plans.

"D'amn you, Ratchford! You can't cut this thing!"

"Can't cut what?"

"What you've got in mind for Lee."

"So you've guessed it's her we're waitin' for, eh? Well, you're right about that; it is. She ought to be here now. I had things set for eleven o'clock."

"You loosed fool," Ankrum spat the words contemptuously. "The hand of every honest man in this country will be raised against you if you harm that girl!"

"You're wrong about that," Ratchford assured him with a lazy grin. "Not a one will dare say boo! I've got this range eatin' out of my trousers pocket, mister. Folks around here'll do what I tell 'em an' like it."

He looked at Ankrum amusedly. "Besides," he added, "I'm not figurin' to harm Lee Trone. I've got better sense than that. I'm gonna get the same results by marryin' her."

Ankrum laughed, and the sound brought a scowl to Ratchford's face.

"What's so funny?"

"The picture of you as Lee's adoring bridegroom. Why, she wouldn't wipe her feet on you!"

"That's all right," Ratchford's teeth showed in a smirk. "she wouldn't wipe her feet on you, neither. But she'll marry me to save your life, or I'll have you shot before her face—and in the end I'll get her anyway!"

Ankrum had an uneasy feeling that this was no vain boast. If he would be like Lee to sacrifice herself for him. On the other hand, if she refused, he believed that Ratchford would be fully capable of carrying out his threat.

Another thought struck Ankrum. Once Ratchford married the girl, there was nothing to stop him from putting Ankrum out of the way; there was always the Ley del Fuego! Escaping prisoners were shot at sight.

A devil's temper was stirring in Ankrum; a savage desire to get his hands on Ratchford and bruise and batter, a desire born of desperation.

But somehow he kept his head; held the turbulent fury under control. "Very slick, Ratchford; plenty slick," he drawled. "But you're forgetting one factor—a weighty one that's goin' to break your string."

"What am I forgettin'?" Ratchford growled.

"You're leavin' Claydell out of your calculations."

A deep chuckle of joy left the sheriff's mouth. "Claydell," he said, "is the gent that's out to smash the Rafter T. An' I got the proof at last—I've found out what he's after!"

"How're you figurin' to get away with that?" asked Ankrum, playing for time.

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# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

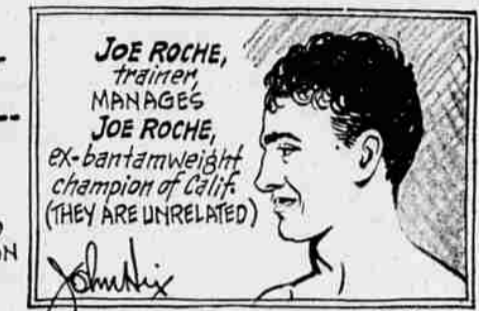


CINNAMON-10-year-old tomato owned by Marilyn Higgins, San Jose, Calif., BROKE A 7-DAY TREE-SITTING RECORD HE SET IN THE SAME 60-FOOT PALM 9 YEARS AGO! (April, 1938)

**RHODE ISLAND**  
SMALLEST STATE IN THE UNION, ONCE HAD TWO GOVERNMENTS AND FIVE CAPITALS AT THE SAME TIME! -1842-



CHRISTIAN IV. of Denmark, (1577-1648)-- CARRIED A SET OF TOOLS IN HIS WALKING STICK! HE WOULD STOP AND ASSIST ANY WORKMAN



JOE ROCHE, trainer, MANAGES JOE ROCHE, ex-bantamweight champion of Calif. (THEY ARE UNRELATED)

Multiple Government. Smallest state in the union is Rhode Island, whose official name is the longest of all—"State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations."

Fundamental law of Rhode Island until 1843 was the ancient charter of Charles II which had been in effect since 1663. This venerable document allowed political corruption to seep into the tiny state by granting suffrage only to freeholders having an estate worth \$137 or renting for \$7.00 a year, and to their eldest sons.

To combat this evil, a suffrage reform party was organized, a new constitution was framed, and Thomas W. Orr was elected governor in 1842 and inaugurated at Providence.

Concurrently, the charter government was still operating at Newport. Governor King, at the head of a military force, dispersed the "insurgents" and clapped Governor Orr into prison. Next year, however, a new constitution was adopted by the King faction.

By this constitution, assembly sessions were authorized to be held at Newport, South Kingstown, Bristol, East Greenwich and Providence, thus giving Rhode Island five different capitals.

Laboring King. A great architect in his own right, King Christian IV of Denmark knew all about the practical side of building. He built factories, mills, dikes, cities and strongholds.

Christian carried a walking stick fitted out with a foot rule, a level, a square, and other tools, which he used frequently when he stopped to help workmen.

Tomorrow: What country, with a 2,000-mile coastline, has its main seaport 30 miles inland?

at the 64th annual state medical society convention yesterday one heart attack was not necessarily followed by a second and victims might lead useful and fairly active lives for many years.

He said the life span had increased 10 years in the last two decades and persons stricken with arteriosclerosis, a common cause of instant death, might live 25 years or longer after the first attack.

MARSHFIELD FAVORS HIGH SCHOOL GRANT  
MARSHFIELD, Aug. 26.—(AP)—School directors went on record today favoring an application to the PWA for a 45 per cent grant on a high school costing \$25,000 or \$250,000 if a matatorium is added. A bond issue to provide for the district's 55 per cent will be voted on at a date to be set in September.

HEART SUFFERERS ARE ENCOURAGED  
TIMBERLINE, Mich. Hood, Aug. 26 (27)—Dr. C. C. Sturgis of the University of Michigan advised 200 persons

TAILSPIN TOMMY—That Strange Feeling!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—"Lady Luck"

THE NEBBS—You Tell Him, Rudy

Mexican Tariffs Due For Decline  
WASHINGTON, Aug. 26.—(AP)—The commerce department announced today Mexican tariffs on nearly all products except automobiles will be reduced Saturday to the rates prevailing before the steep increase which became effective in January.

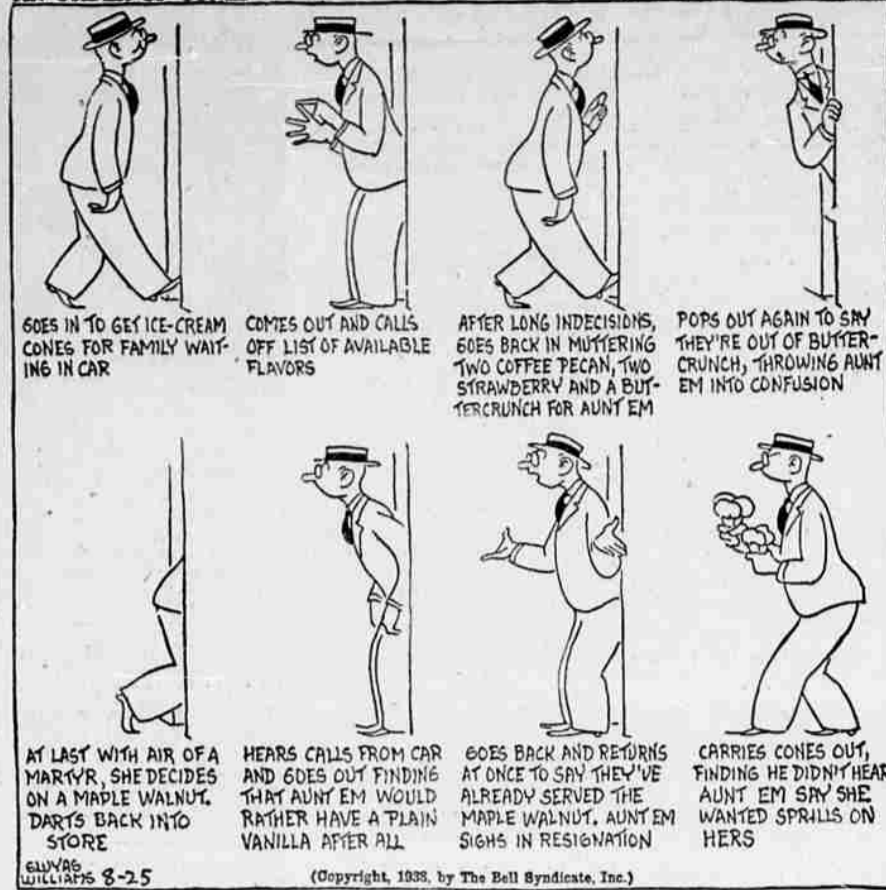
CAVE JUNCTION WILL HOLD ANNUAL JUBILEE SEPTEMBER 3, 4 AND 5  
CAVE JUNCTION, Ore., Aug. 26.—(Sp.)—The second annual miners' jubilee will get under way here Saturday, September 3, and continue over Labor day. The Queen's ball will open the festivities and there will be a rodeo on Sunday and Monday afternoons.

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# AN ORDER OF CONES

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



GOES IN TO GET ICE-CREAM CONES FOR FAMILY WAITING IN CAR

COMES OUT AND CALLS OFF LIST OF AVAILABLE FLAVORS

AFTER LONG INDECISIONS, GOES BACK IN MUTTERING TWO COFFEE PECAN, TWO STRAWBERRY AND A BUTTER-CRUNCH FOR AUNT EM

POPS OUT AGAIN TO SAY THEY'RE OUT OF BUTTER-CRUNCH, THROWING AUNT EM INTO CONFUSION

AT LAST WITH AIR OF A MARTYR, SHE DECIDES ON A MAPLE WALNUT. DARTS BACK INTO STORE

HEARS CALLS FROM CAR AND GOES OUT FINDING THAT AUNT EM WOULD RATHER HAVE A PLAIN VANILLA AFTER ALL

GOES BACK AND RETURNS AT ONCE TO SAY THEY'VE ALREADY SERVED THE MAPLE WALNUT. AUNT EM SIGHS IN RESIGNATION

CARRIES CONES OUT, FINDING HE DIDN'T HEAR AUNT EM SAY SHE WANTED SPRILLS ON HERS

# SMATTER POI

By C M PAYNE



VERY OFTEN I WONDER WHEN LUNCH WILL BE READY, AN I WONDER IF DINNER IS READY.

AN I WONDER HOW LONG TILL CHRISTMAS, AN I WONDER WHAT MY POP WILL BRING HOME FER ME.

MY FAMILY CALL ME THA WONDER BOY

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# By HAL FORRES'



I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE INTO COVERALLS. IT'LL BE PRETTY COLD AT THAT HEIGHT, TOMMY!

I WISH THAT BETTY-LOU WOULD GIVE UP. QUITE JUMPING, I

WHY DON'T YOU MARRY TH' GAL, THEN MEBBE SHE'D SETTLE DOWN!

CANT YOU EVER BE SERIOUS?

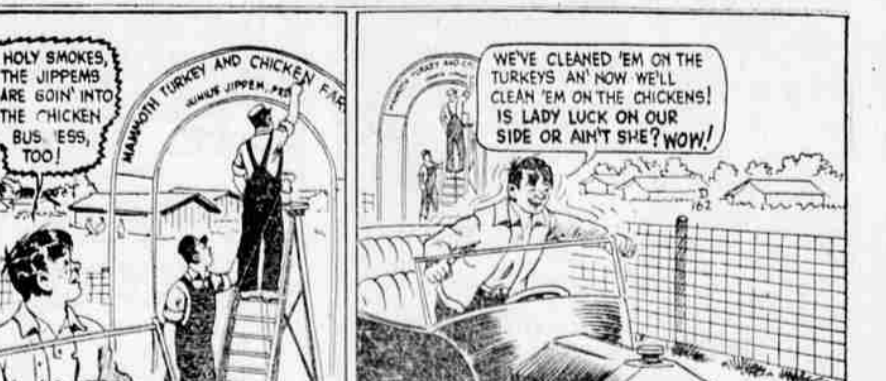
SHUCKS! YOU AINT GOT NUTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT. BETTY'S MADE TWO HUNDRED AN' SIX SWELL JUMPS

KNOCK ON WOOD, QUICK!

I KNOW SHE'S GOOD, BUT SOMEHOW TODAY, I'VE GOT A PERSISTENT, PECULIAR FEELING THAT SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN!

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# By EDWIN ALGER



DON'T ARGUE ABOUT PRICE, RUSTY—PAY ANYTHING THAT'S FAIR—YOU MIGHT TRY BUYING FROM FARMERS ALONG THE WAY, TOO.

HMMM—SOMETHIN' DOIN' AT THE JIPPEN PLACE—WONDER WHY THEY'RE WORKIN' ON THE SIGN—

HOLY SMOKES! THE JIPPENS ARE GOIN' INTO THE CHICKEN BUS ESS, TOO!

WE'VE CLEANED 'EM ON THE TURKEYS AN' NOW WE'LL CLEAN 'EM ON THE CHICKENS! IS LADY LUCK ON OUR SIDE OR AINT SHE? NOW!

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# By SOL HESS



HOW DO YOU LIKE THE PLACE HERE, SAMMY?

IT'S JUST A PLACE. I DON'T THINK YOU WOULD STAY HERE UNLESS YOU HAD TO

WE GOT LARGE, COOL, CLEAN ROOMS AND GOOD FOOD

IF YOU ARENT USED TO ANYTHING THIS IS SOMETHING

SAMMY, I'M SORRY YOU DONT THINK BETTER OF MY HOTEL CONSIDERING YOUR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE—BUT YOU LIKE MY FOOD—THE WAITRESS TELLS ME YOU LEAVE NOTHING ON THE TABLE. NOT EVEN A TIP

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