

# THE HORSE THIEF BUSINESS IS ABOUT DEAD

**WHITE EAGLE OF WYO-MING TELLS HOW THE LAW MAKES LIFE UNHAPPY FOR THE MEN WHO FOLLOW DISHONEST CALLING IN THE GREAT HORSE AND CATTLE STATES** \* \* \*



EX-SHERIFF BUTLER

SCATTERED over the ranges of Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas are more than six million horses. These are rounded up once a year by their owners and those in shape are sold. The rest of the herds are left to roam at will the wide ranges until the next round-up.

Numbers of these range horses are often stolen. But not so frequently as one might at first imagine. The Horseman's Protective association, a very strong organization, with members scattered over all the range states, and money to back it, is ever active in attending to the matter of thefts of range stock. Besides the standing reward of the association of five hundred dollars for the capture of thieves, the rancher whose stock is stolen always offers an additional reward.

Sheriffs, stock inspectors, with frequently a posse of cattlemen, are the thief hunters. The sheriffs are always old-time cowboys, who know the country and can shoot, ride, and stand exposure with the best of them, and it is seldom that a thief gets clean away with a bunch of stock. Horse thieves are still hated in the West, but are not so summarily dealt with now as in earlier days when the jails and courts of law were few. Then the thief generally made a swift exit from earth at a rope's end. But law has long ago found its way into Cattlemen; telephones and telegraphs carry swift messages and automobiles make swift trips and the thieves generally land in state's prison.

However, there is one man who for the last six years has not only stolen almost when and where he pleased, but sold stock back to the owners, after the brands had been worked over, at which art he is a past master.

This man, William McCracken, a Texan, has repeatedly eluded and defied sheriffs and posses sent out to capture him. He first came to Belle Fourche, S. D., in the Spring of 1904. Belle Fourche, at that time, was the largest shipping point for beef cattle in the world. Shortly after his arrival McCracken got a job punching cows for the 3-V outfit, then the largest in the West. He was a very quiet young man, of good appearance and education, a good cow hand, and well liked by his bosses and the riders of the outfit.

Working for the outfit at this time was Thomas Tait, a young man since elected sheriff of Campbell county, Wyoming. From the time of McCracken's arrival and until his arrest by J. T. Farrell, then sheriff of Crook county, Wyoming, on information from Texas, Tait and McCracken were a good deal together as cowboys in the same outfit. Since being elected sheriff Tait has led in the chase after his once friend and comrade several times.

On a recent trip to Sturgis, S. D., with stock inspector Chuck Fitch, of Gillette, and the sheriffs of Miles City, Mont., and Sun Dance, Wyo., to inspect a bunch of horses in that district, the party arrested three men. The horses belonged to H. J. Chassell of Gillette and T. W. Matthews of Spearfish, S. D. The men arrested as the thieves were members of McCracken's gang, and now await trial at Sturgis.

After his arrest in 1907 by Sheriff Farrell, McCracken was taken back to Texas, where he was wanted for thefts of stock, bank robbery, bond jumping, and other crimes. He was helped out of these troubles by his father and, soon after, returned to Belle Fourche, accompanied by his wife, a very intelligent woman, and their little boy, and for a while, conducted a road house at Alzada, Mont., but later took up a claim on the head of Thompson creek and started in the stock business.

Soon after McCracken located the ranch horses in the vicinity began to disappear by ones, twos, threes, and

in whole bunches, and he was suspected at once. He had gathered around him a bunch of old cowboys whose reputations were as unsavory as his own. They were Bobby Shorthandle, Babe Ellis, "Poker Jim" Roberts, and Garfield McCoy.

Two deputy sheriffs, after skulking about among the hills and brush near the McCracken ranch, by the use of strong spy glasses, saw McCracken take a bunch of horses from a pasture and drive them to a corral that was hid in a washout. The officers followed and just as McCracken was about to run the brand on a horse which he had just roped from the wash and thrown, they rode up and covered him with their guns.

The outlaw hesitated a little when ordered to put his hands up, as if he was measuring chances, but as both guns were leveled at him, he obeyed. The officers then disarmed him, and as he seemed to be perfectly willing to go with them, they did not handcuff him or restrain him in any way.

As it was almost night the officers decided to go to the McCracken ranch and remain until morning. On their arrival Mrs. McCracken, who kept perfectly cool and seemed not at all worried over her husband's arrest, cooked a bountiful supper and all sat down in apparent friendship to eat.

The officers' skulking about in the hills so long on short rations had left them half famished, they ate punchingly, after which they moved their chairs back from the table and lit their pipes. That was the last they remembered until morning, when they awoke, rubbed their eyes and looked about stupidly. Their prisoner was gone. They looked at Mrs. McCracken inquiringly and that lady laughingly told them that she had placed some sleep medicine in their coffee so that her husband might make his escape without having to resort to shooting. The officers had to acknowledge themselves beaten and went away empty handed.

Soon after this word was received that McCracken was still around in the Thompson creek country, and staying with his family most of the time. Then Sheriffs John Thorn, of Crook county, Wyoming, and Hy Hance, of Butte county, South Dakota, rode out to investigate.

They kept watch on the place for several days by means of spy glasses when they saw, one morning, McCracken come out, walk around, and then re-enter the house. They then rode up to the place and the little boy came out to speak with them.

"Say, sonny," said Thorn. "Go tell your dad to come out here and give himself up. We know he is in there and have come to take him, dead or alive."

Thorn then rode to the top of a hill just in front of the house, while Hance rode to the rear and took up his position between the house and barn.

The officers had hardly reached their positions after sending the little boy in with their message when the door opened directly in front of Thorn. Mrs. McCracken stood in the doorway, while behind her her husband, with a Winchester rifle laid across her shoulder.

"Beat it," the outlaw yelled to Thorn. Thorn hesitated, whereat the outlaw fired, the bullet knocking the dust beneath the feet of Thorn's horse. But still the sheriff hesitated.

McCracken fired again and the bullet went through Thorn's coat, beneath his arm, and he hesitated no longer, but fled.

Hance, realizing, as had Thorn, that he could not shoot McCracken without the risk of hitting Mrs. McCracken, turned and was spurring his horse for the breaks as fast as he could go when McCracken ran around the house and emptied his rifle at him.

After the shooting the outlaw went to the barn, got his saddle horse and started away. Thorn and Hance got together and followed him for several miles, but the outlaw was well mounted and they could not, or did not wish to get near enough to have a shooting match with him.

Next day a posse was formed, and with a blood hound, "Dude," famous in that region, took up the outlaw's trail again.

The hound followed the trail for forty miles through that most desolate spot of land in all the Northwest, the Badlands of southeastern Montana, finally bringing the outlaw to bay in a lonely patch of pines. The sheriff then called upon him to surrender. The answer was a shot, followed by another and another, the bullets whizzing so close that the whole posse were held at bay until darkness, when McCracken made good his escape.

Mrs. McCracken and her little son still continue to reside at the Thompson Creek ranch and there are stories that the husband and father is a frequent visitor there, going and coming about as he pleases.

It is also stated that there is a tunnel leading from the house to the creek, and that a swift horse, fully equipped, is kept tied in the creek bed out of sight and when any suspicious person is seen approaching the outlaw reaches his horse through the tunnel, mounts, and is soon far away into the Badlands.

Horses are still being stolen in the country around the McCracken ranch, and officers have tried time and again to capture McCracken, who they feel sure is leader of the gang, but have so far failed. This gang operates over a large portion of Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota.

McCracken and those of his gang still at liberty know every foot of the desolate country that surrounds their headquarters at the Thompson creek ranch and have, besides, scores of friends, who, while they would not steal anything themselves, are true Westerners, in that they will not refuse food and shelter to a friend, although he be a thief.

It is the opinion of Sheriff Tait, who is as loyal in his official duties as he was in friendship when punching cows on the open range, that the gang is safe from capture for a long time. The country is sparsely settled and will so remain a great while, as few people would desire or attempt to make a home in that region, except those of the outlaw's own kind, and to anyone who craves fame or adventure the McCracken ranch on the head of Thompson creek awaits investigation.

Changefulness. "A wise man may change his opinion." "Yes," replied Senator Sorghum. "But it's like changing a twenty-dollar bill. If you're careless about it you finish with nothing worth mentioning."

Theory and Practice. "Do you believe in the theory of reincarnation?" "Yes, I think the theory is all right. But I have my doubts about its practice amounting to much."

Their Reading. "In old times, when men chased and knocked down maidens they wanted to marry, they changed an old proverb somewhat." "What was it?" "With them it was hit and miss."

Nonsense. "A little nonsense, you know, is relished by the best of men." "Yes," replied Senator Sorghum. "But some of us get so proud of our own particular product that we want it taken seriously."

## THE EUROPEAN WAR A YEAR AGO THIS WEEK

May 15, 1915.  
Russians completely driven from Jaroslav and all towns on west bank of San.  
Austrian Tenth army arrived in front of Przemysl.  
Russians drove Teutons back ten miles in Bukovina.  
Turks repulsed allies near Avi Burnu.  
American note on Lusitania delivered to Germany.  
Russian Black Sea fleet destroyed 24 Turkish vessels.  
German submarine sank Danish steamer Martha without warning.

May 16, 1915.  
British broke German line near La Bassee and won mile of territory.  
Lively fighting in Champagne.  
Russians massed behind the San and Austrians behind the Pruth.  
Germans defeated by Russians in Baltic provinces.

May 17, 1915.  
British made more gains in La Bassee region.  
French and Belgians drove Germans across Yser canal.  
Austrians captured Drohobycz, central Galicia.  
Russians repulsed Germans at Shavil.  
Zeppelins dropped bombs on Ramsgate.

May 18, 1915.  
French made gains near Ablain.  
Germans repulsed British south of Neuve Chapelle.  
Austro-Germans began bombardment of Przemysl forts.  
Russians attacked vigorously in South Poland.  
Two Zeppelins destroyed by allied fire.  
Premier Asquith announced reorganization of British cabinet.

May 19, 1915.  
Germans Captured French trenches on heights of Lorette.  
British repulsed near Neuve Chapelle.  
Austro-Germans forced crossings of the San river.  
Russians broke Austrian right in Bukovina.  
Turks drove allies from advanced positions near Kara Burnu, Gallipoli.  
German submarine sank two British steamers.

May 20, 1915.  
French advanced in Champagne and near Bagatelle.  
Tremendous fighting along the San river.  
Allies attacked Turkish positions at Krithia and Atchi Baba, Gallipoli.  
Continuous bombardment of Nagara, Turkey, by allied fleet.  
Przemysl bombarded by squadron of Austrian aeroplanes.

May 21, 1915.  
French drove Germans entirely from Lorette heights.  
Canadians captured German position north of Ypres.  
Desperate battle below Przemysl.  
British ship Glenholm sunk by gunfire from submarine.

### COLLECTED ITEMS

An electrically lighted cross revolves on top of a San Francisco steeple. The 554 people out of every thousand in Switzerland who save money must be compared with a meager 108 in this country, the difference accounting, according to a Chicago banker, for the fact that in our large cities one burial out of ten is made in a potter's field.

Pellagra may be prevented or cured by proper diet.

A large eastern railroad is instructing its signal erectors and testing its engineers' knowledge of signals by means of modern pictures shown in a car which travels over its lines.

"The flowers of Hawaii declare the glories of God, and the fish showeth his handiwork," declares a realistic writer in the Christian Herald, asserting, by the way, that nowhere else in the world can fish be found in so many and such variegated hues as in the waters of these Pacific possessions of ours.

Open air is the best spring tonic. Typhoid fever is a disease peculiar to man.

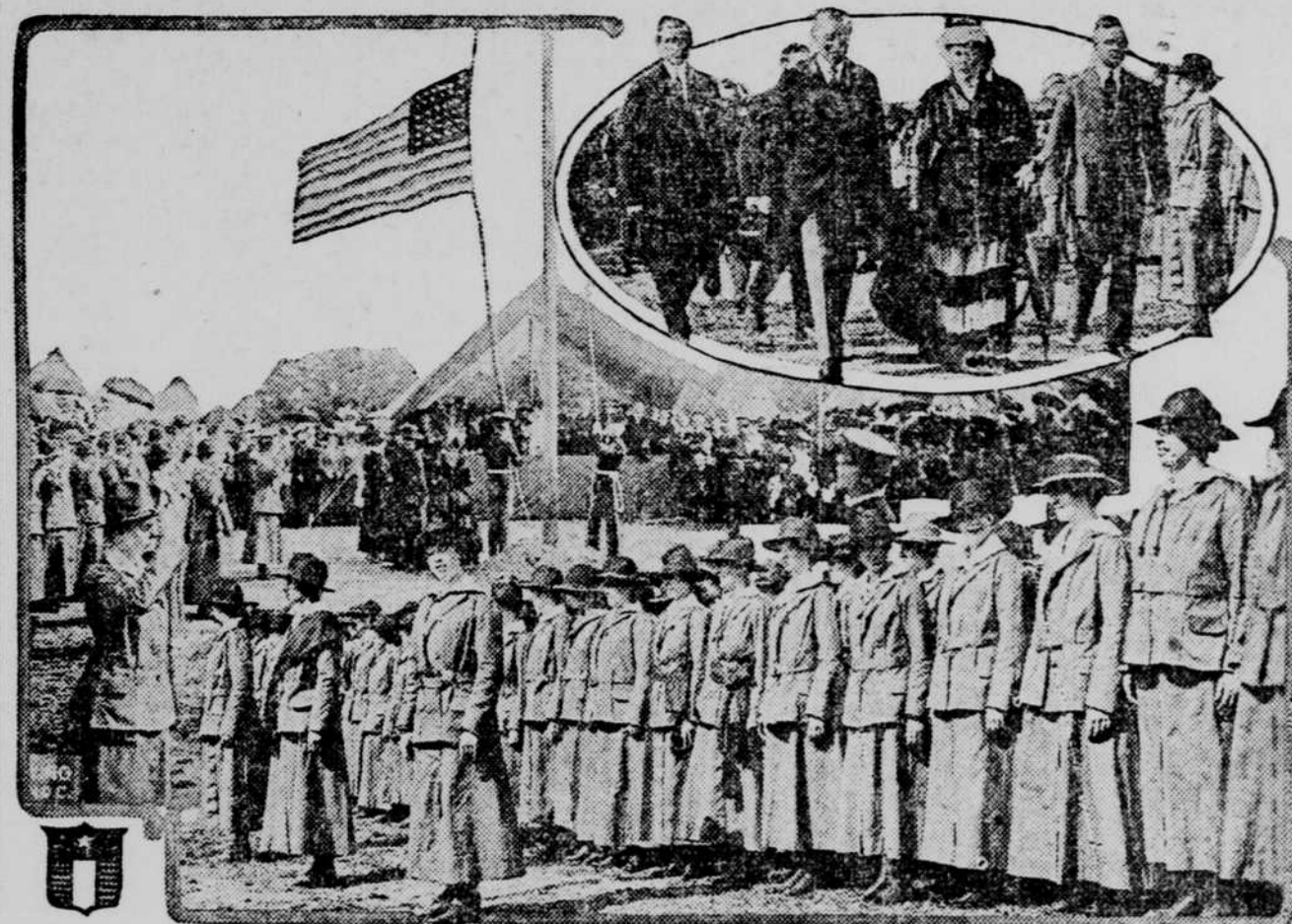
Mutual benefit insurance societies have been established in the public schools of Rome and other Italian cities. The underlying idea is that pupils shall pay small weekly sums to a general fund, from which certain amounts are paid out in case of sickness, accident or death. The system is said to be growing rapidly.

There is an unquestionable record of hearing the firing at Ypres at a distance of 140 miles and a somewhat doubtful one of 150 miles.

Complete Success. "Somebody told Vanessa that if she would walk backward down the stairs she would see her intended." "Did it work?" "Completely. She fell down the stairs and now she is engaged to the young doctor they call her in."

Feeding the Land. "Is this land rich?" asked the prospective purchaser, cautiously. "It certainly ought to be," replied the gentleman-farmer. "I have put all the money I had into it."

## FIRST PREPAREDNESS CAMP FOR WOMEN OPEN



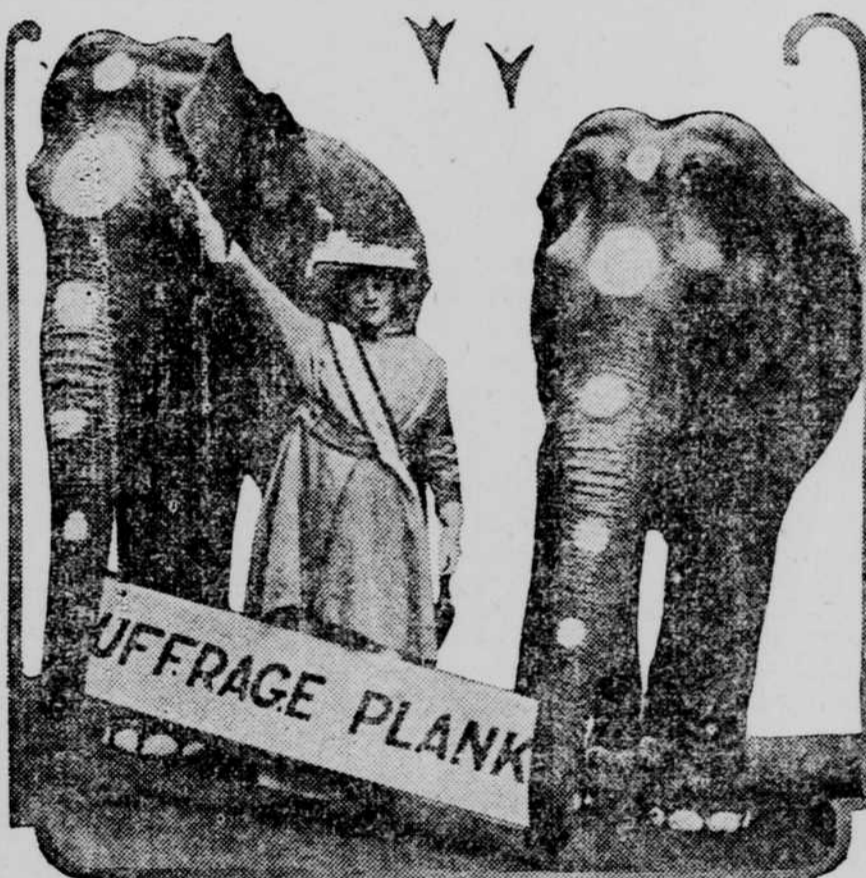
Scenes at the opening of the first preparedness camp for women at Chevy Chase, Md., near Washington, where a thousand society women are learning the essentials of war-time duty. In the center is shown the raising of the camp flag. Above is President Wilson marching to the ceremony. Below is a section of the khaki-clad campers.

### AT THE END OF SIX DAYS' HIKE



Companies D, E, F, G, and H arriving in camp "somewhere in Mexico" after a six days' hike across the desert.

### LEADERS OF THE SUFFRAGE PARADE



When the National American Woman Suffrage association stages its big parade in Chicago on June 7, the opening day of the Republican convention, the marchers will be led by these two elephants carrying the "suffrage plank." The combination will symbolize the demand of the women for a suffrage plank in the Republican platform. The elephants will be driven by Miss Portia Willis of New York, who is here shown between them.

### VICTIM OF AERO ACCIDENT



De Lloyd Thompson, the aviator who was seriously hurt in an aeroplane accident on Long Island. He is wearing the costume designed by Admiral Peary for aviators who fly in the higher altitudes.

### RANGE FINDING IN MEXICO



Soldiers of the expeditionary force practicing with the rangefinder on the open mesa of the Mexican plain.

### Needed Repairing.

Tommy, aged three, had fallen and hurt his knee, and as he sat rubbing the injured part he suddenly looked up and said: "Mamma, did God make me?" "Yes, dear," was the reply. "Well, then," continued the youthful philosopher, "if he had any pieces left, I wish he'd mend my knee."

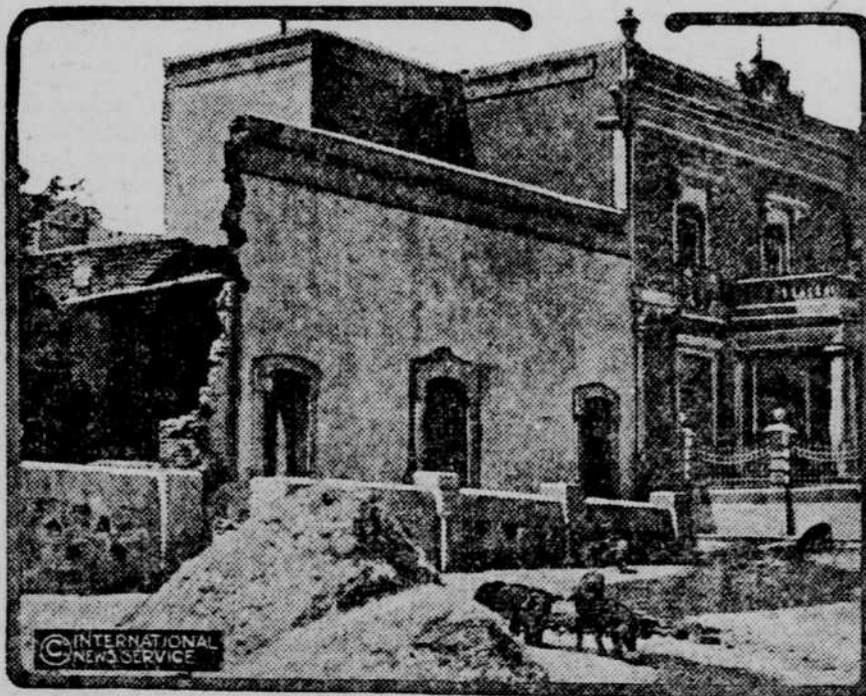
### Too Much So.

"The ordinance for all vehicles to carry a light was one much needed, especially on the roads. They are not enough lit up." "But a good many of the speeders are."

### Prepared.

"Married a cooking school graduate, you say?" "Yes, but he's no fool." "No?" "The first household utensil he bought was a can opener."

### HOME BUILT FOR VILLA'S FAVORITE



This residence in Chihuahua was erected by Villa at great cost for his favorite wife, "Luz." After he evacuated the city it was looted and partly destroyed by a mob.

### WORTH KNOWING

Michigan, with eighty-six automobile factories, leads the United States; New York is second, with 60 factories.

Statistics show that the number of automobile accidents is decreasing steadily as compared with the number of machines in use.

Most of the cost of government in Montana is paid by royalties on oil and mining development and leases on state lands.

Britain's regular army costs the government \$1,500 per year per man. British life insurance companies, so far, have paid more than \$20,000,000 in losses on war victims.

The chamber of commerce of Buffalo, N. Y., has gone on record as opposed to tag days.

About 100 different species of oysters have been classified by scientists.

Natives of Algeria bury with their dead all the medicines used in their last illness.

### GATHERED FACTS

In times of peace London contains 16 embassies and legations representative of foreign countries.

The stilted plover is so named because of its long, stiltlike legs. Only one species is found in England.

In the calendar year 1915, in which the United States made such marked advances industrially and in trade, the trade of the territory of Alaska showed an increase of more than \$12,000,000 over the preceding year.

A globular lifeboat which can carry 16 persons safely through the roughest water has been invented by a Dane who once saw an iron water tank floating several weeks after a wreck.

To protect a person's shoes from wear when walking over rough ground is the purpose of auxiliary soles to be strapped upon them that have been invented by an Australian.

Sun glasses have been invented for baseball players, so binged to a cap that a touch will drop them into position for a man to see a ball coming toward him while looking directly at the sun.

A patent has been granted for a handcuff that cannot be accidentally locked, therefore always is ready for use.

The tower of a tall church in Switzerland has been equipped to receive the time signals sent out by wireless telegraphy from the Eiffel tower in Paris.

An induction balance has been devised for the purpose of finding buried shells in the soil of a former battlefield, so that the farmer may go over it safely with the plow.

Some seeds have such hard coverings as to be almost impervious to water, but an Iowa man has invented a machine to scarify them and thus improve their germinating qualities.

A calculator that shows the money values of one country in the terms of several others and applies the values to various weights and measures has been invented by an Englishman.

As an addition to the Bertillon system of identification an Omaha dentist has perfected a way to register the ridges of upper gums, which, he says, never change and are different in every individual.