

The Night Stampede

Dramatic Incident
from "The Cowboy"
by Philip Ashton Rollins



PHILIP ASHTON ROLLINS

INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

THIS is an anomaly in these Twentieth century days. That as the cowboy is passing from the West he bulks increasingly large in fiction. The presses of book and magazine publishers are apparently working night and day in turning out so-called "vibrant" stories of the Great West. Mostly this "popular literature" is devoted to cowboys who talk a lingo invented by writers who never heard a puncher talk; who are a fearful and wonderful combination of Don Quixote and Sir Lancelot; who always ride the best horse on the range, wear two guns and beat the head villain to the draw; who rescue distressed maidens from cattle-rustlers or Mexican bandits.

In the heyday of the ranching industry—1875-1892—the cowboy dotted the plains from Central Nebraska to the foothills of the mountains of the Pacific slope and from Montana to the Mexican border. Then came the homesteader, the farm and the fence. In 1892, during the "Rustler War" in Wyoming, the stockmen and the cowboy of the "Open Range" surrendered to the United States army and the farmer. In this year of grace 1922 A. D., there are still unfenced areas of grazing land open to the public. There are still large fenced ranches. But 1892 saw the end of the "Open Range" and the heyday of the cowboy.

Anyway, Philip Ashton Rollins in his new book, "The Cowboy," speaks of the cowboy in the past tense. He says in his preface:

The American cowboy, by reason of his picturesque quality, has been a frequent subject for the dramatist, the novelist, the illustrator, and the motion picture photographer.

All these producers have been limited by the technical requirements of their art, and have stressed the cowboy's picturesque quality to the exclusion of his other qualities. They have done this so definitely and attractively as to create an ostensible type which rapidly is being accepted by the American public as an accurate portrait of the now bygone puncher.

The portrait is often charmingly presented, but it is not accurate. The cowboy was far more than a theatrical character. He was an affirmative, constructive factor in the social and political development of the United States. Consequently he deserves to be assured more kindly treatment by ultimate history than presumably he will receive unless, while the testimony of eye-witnesses is still procurable, such testimony be gathered and recorded.

Mr. Rollins, a college man and now a New York lawyer, is not of those who seek experience to get local color for a book. He is of those who write down his experiences because convinced that they are too valuable to be lost to posterity. The writer hopes he is among those who convinced Mr. Rollins that "The Cowboy" should be written.

Following is the story of a night stampede during a cattle drive—one of the many dramatic incidents which an adequate book on the cowboy necessarily contains:

All through the darkness men of the "night herd," working in shifts of from two to four hours, rode about the animals; and as the men rode they constantly serenaded the beasts by crooning to their songs or chants, which, when so used, were entitled "hymns." This serenading was done partly to hold the cattle under the compelling spell of the human voice, and partly to disabuse from the mind of any fearsome member of the herd suspicion that either a puncher's silhouette against the sky-line or else the noise of his moving pony might represent a snooping dragon. The rider, when "singing to the cattle," as his vocal efforts were styled, disgorged all the words he knew set to all the tunes he could remember or invent, but omitted any sound or inflection which might startle. Sacred airs were usual, for from their simple melodies they were easy of remembrance, and also they still held the national popularity which since has passed to the tunes of the music-halls; but the words set to these churchly airs well might have surprised the clergy. The proper words,

accounts of horse-races, unflattering opinions of the cattle, strings of profanity, the voluminous text on the labels of coffee or condensed milk-cans, mere humming sounds, alike and with seemingly deep religious fervor, were poured on many a night into the appreciative ears of an audience with cloven hoofs.

Thus tired men, cat-napping but always crooning, were out in the black, their ponies steadily, slowly patrolling, though half asleep; but man and horse were ready to wake like a steer and to act the instant that a steer started to "roll his tail," or, in less technical English, to gallop with his tail humped up at its shore end, an infallible sign of confident expectation to disregard both distance and time.

All through the journey the animals had proceeded quietly and rested decently until one moment when there came a snort, a bellow. What caused the snort and bellow nobody knew or could stop to ascertain. Merely "tails" had "rolled," and a stampede was on.

From a common center cattle were darting toward every point of the compass. It was "all hands to the pumps!" and into saddle and on the run for every man. Riders armed with saddle blankets, with doffed coats, hastily plucked sage-brush plants, anything that could be waved, holding pistols, the only attainable objects that would make a commanding noise, galloped out beyond the fleeing animals, headed and flanked them, "cutting in" all incipient, bovine meteors. Finally, the frayed edges of the mass constricted, and the whole was reduced to a ragged, narrow, rushing column, one set of galloping cowboys guiding its van, another, as flank riders, guarding its sides and endeavoring so far as possible to soothe the animals. The forefront of this column was, under the pilotage of the attacking horsemen, swerved into the shape of a shepherd's crook, and a moment later the herd was pouring itself into the form of a capital letter "U."

When its two ends came opposite each other, they were welded together by a yelling, waving, shooting set of madmen on the backs of flying, snorting horses.

This started "milling," a merry-go-round which kept up until the participating cattle quit from exhaustion. Of course, milling did not take place in a circle, an ellipse, an oval, or in any other geometrical form. It occurred in an irregular chunk of grunting, bellowing cattle, overspread and surrounded by an unbreathable cloud of biting dust, with cursing cowboys acting as satellites.

A stampede at night and in a country beset with "cut banks," i. e., precipitous hillsides, beset also with deep canyons, with vertically sided arroyos, with gopher and badger holes, killed

many a steer, broke many a pony's leg, left many a rider lifeless on the ground.

After every night stampede there was a counting of human noses. This was done with anxiety which always was as tender in spirit as it was flippant in form. The riders, returning one by one during the next day's morning hours, came into camp, and an atmosphere of banter—banter which, in joking phrases and with several participants, ran on one occasion somewhat as follows. "Hulloa, Shorty, where'd you come from? Thought you was dead. . . . Where's Baldy? Guess he's gone off to git married. . . . No, he ain't Here he comes. . . . Everybody's in but Jack and Skinny. They must a ridden all the way to Omaha. . . . There's Jack now, comin' up over the top of that rise."

The banter suddenly ceased, for, as soon as Jack had come completely over the top of the hill and into clear view, he had begun to ride rapidly in a small circle. This was one of the equestrian Indians' two signals of important news or of request for strangers to advance for parley, and was often used by whites as a messenger of like import or of serious tidings. At the first circle, some one remarked "Mebbe Jack's playing with a rattler. No, he ain't. There he goes again. He's shore signalling," while some one else added "Jack wouldn't do that for no cows. It must be Skinny." The camp had risen to its feet and started for the tethered ponies.

Suddenly there floated down the breeze three faint sounds evenly spaced. The wind had shifted, and its new course straight from Jack to the camp carrying promise that sounds would carry thither, he had used his gun. The camp gasped, "My God, it's Skinny," and then the foreman said, with machine-gun rapidity but tely quiet tone, "Pete, quick, get them two clean shirts that's drying on the wagon tongue. We may need 'em for bandages." Nobody mentioned anything about a shovel, but a collision at the wagon's tailboard and the sound of rasping metal showed that three men instinctively had sought for the sometimes sad utensil, and that it was in hand.

In rapid strides of exaggerated length the punchers approached their horses. One beast shied away, but stopped the instant there rang out with tiny sound, "Damn you, Bronc, quit that," and thereafter the brute crouched and trembled and made no opposition to taking its bit and saddle. Bits were driven into horses' mouths like wedges into split logs. No effort was made to gather in cinches and offside latigos, to lay them atop the saddles, and to place the latter gently on the ponies' backs. The saddles, each grasped by horn and cantle,

were waved in air to straighten out the latigos, and were slapped onto cringing backs with a sound like that of a slatting sail on a windy day. At times like this when men were fierce and in a killing mood, their horses seemed to sense the situation. The most chronic buckers would forego their pitching avocation, and, squatting low in tremor, would receive their load and never make a single jump.

The camp moved out to waiting Jack, and with it went the two clean shirts, each clutched against a rider's chest.

There were jerky, vertical single nods of heads, Jack supplementing his own nod by one later, slow, horizontal turning of his head to right and then to left. A gentle sigh rose from the arriving punchers, two hands impotently opened and let two shirts flutter to the ground. Jack's inquiring look was answered by Ike's slight raising of the handle of the shovel, which thus far he had endeavored to conceal. Then came the first spoken words. Jack commenced the conversation, and in part it ran: "He's up at the end of the big draw, right by the split rock. Went over that high cut bank, him and a mess of cattle. He's lyn' under 'em. He never knowed what hit him. . . . No, I warn't with him. Just now seen his sign as I was coming across. I seen it was headed for the cut bank, so I chased over there." The foreman added: "Well, boys, let's get at it."

Then the little funeral cortege, having silently smoked a cigarette or two, fell into jiggling trot and headed for the big draw.

The funerals of the men who died in this way, of many Western men, were deeply affecting from their crude, sincere simplicity. About the open grave, which was at merely "some-where on the plain," would gather a serious-faced little group. The body, wrapped in a saddle-blanket, would be lowered gently into its resting-place, and then would come a pause. Each attendant strongly wished that some appropriate statement might be made either to God or about the dead; but each man felt himself unequal to the task, and stood nervously wiping his forehead. Perhaps the strain sprung from some one person a sudden ejaculation. If so, the requirement for utterance had been satisfied, and all the mourners felt a buoyant sense of relief. If nobody spoke, some wandering eye fastened on the shovel.

When the filled-in earth had been pounded to smoothness and had been overlaid with rocks, as a barrier to marauding animals, it was time to leave. That parting would not be accomplished or even begun until there had terminated the strained, awkward silence under which most American men cloak their deeper feelings. The silence usually was ended by an expression spontaneously emitted from overwrought nerves, and often profane in form though not in intent.

At the foot of one of the noblest peaks in the Rocky Mountains lies a grave. Its occupant died in a stampede. All that was said at the interment came out hesitatingly and as follows: "It's too bad, too bad, Tom, dig a little deeper there. Hell, boys, he was a man," and presently, when the burial had been completed, "Bill, we boys leave you to God and the mountain. Good-by, Bill. Damn it, Jim, look out for your bronc."

Rain Water and Pure Soap

Girls who pride themselves on their appearance know the value of a smooth and fragrant skin. . . Three generations of lovely women have set an example in using the pure cleansing lather of

COLGATE'S
Cashmere Bouquet Soap
Luxurious—Lasting—Refined

"Your Skin is So Fragrant and Smooth"

Large Size - 25c
Medium Size 10c

It is better to have loved and lost than never to have lost at all.

Fresh, sweet, white, dainty clothes for baby, if you use Red Cross Ball Blue. Never streaks or injures them. All good grocers sell it.—Advertisement.

Question.
"Truth lies at the bottom of the well." "An oil well?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Have You a Bad Back?

Are you lame every morning? Do you drag through the day with a steady, nagging backache—evening find you "all played out"? Probably your kidneys are to blame. Hurry, worry, lack of rest and a heavy diet, all tend to weaken the kidneys. Your back gives out; you feel depressed and suffer headaches, dizziness and kidney irregularities. Don't go from bad to worse. Use Doan's Kidney Pills. Thousands recommend them. Ask your neighbor!

A Nebraska Case

Noah Dale, section foreman, Hartington, Neb., says: "My kidneys and back were in a weakened condition. I had a dull, nagging ache across the small of my back and the kidney secretions were discolored and passed too often at night. This broke my rest. Doan's Kidney Pills cured me, so that I haven't been bothered since. My cure has lasted."

Get Doan's at Any Store, 60c a Box
DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS
FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

As Times Change.

"Do you remember the wicked old dance halls in Crimmon Gulch?"

"Yes," replied Pute Pete; "and I'm here to say them old dance halls would have had to close up if they tried to put on some of these here modern dances."

Skin Tortured Babies Sleep
Mothers Rest
After Cuticura

See 25c, Ointment 25 and 50c, Talcum 25c.

Western Canada
Land of Prosperity

offers to home seekers opportunities that cannot be secured elsewhere. The thousands of farmers from the United States who have accepted Canada's generous offer to settle on FREE homesteads or buy farm land in her provinces have been well repaid by bountiful crops. There is still available on easy terms

Fertile Land at \$15 to \$30 an Acre

—land similar to that which through many years has yielded from 20 to 45 bushels of wheat to the acre—oats, barley and flax also in great abundance, while raising horses, cattle, sheep and hogs is equally profitable. Hundreds of farmers in Western Canada have raised crops in a single season worth more than the whole cost of their land. With such success comes prosperity, independence, good homes and all the comforts and conveniences which make life worth living.

Farm Gardens, Poultry, Dairying

are sources of income second only to grain growing and stock raising. Attractive climate, good neighbors, churches and schools, good markets, railroad facilities, rural telephone, etc.

For certificate entitling you to reduced railway rates, illustrated literature, maps, description of farm opportunities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, etc., write

W. V. BENNETT
800 Peter's Trust Building
Omaha, Neb.

150 ACRE FARM FREE

Your Hair

need not be thin or streaked with gray—O'BAN HAIR RESTORER will quickly revive it and bring back all its original color and luxuriance. At all good druggists, etc. or direct from MESSIG-ELLIS, Chemists, MEMPHIS, TENN.

Nurses Needed Everywhere

American Hospital School of Nursing gives a complete course in nursing. Accredited School. Full maintenance and ample allowance to cover expenses. The Hospital is ideally located on the North side of the city, close to Lake Michigan within a few minutes' walk of Lincoln Park. For information, address Superintendent of Nurses, American Hospital, Chicago, Ill., Irving Park Boulevard near Sheridan Road.

What Is It Worth to Change a Tire?

On the road changing a tire is not an especially pleasant task. The dust or mud, the grease and grime, the tedious delay—all are things we like to avoid. But the time to think about these things is when you buy the tire—not after the blow-out occurs. For some tires blow out much more easily than others. Outward appearance counts for little. It is the material in the tire and the construction of it that determines its strength. Goodyear recognizes these facts and all Goodyear Tires are made of long staple cotton. Take the 30 x 3 1/2 Cross Rib Clincher Tire here illustrated, for example. It is made of Arizona cotton, the fibres of which average 1 1/2 inches long. Many 30 x 3 1/2 clincher tires are made of short staple cotton from 1/2 inch to 1 1/4 inches long. This means less strength and greater danger of blow-outs—more tire troubles. Yet this high grade guaranteed Goodyear Tire costs only \$10.95. You can buy some tires for even less than this but none with the fine materials and construction of this one. Can you afford to take a chance on more frequent tire troubles for the sake of the slightly lower price of cheaper tires?

GOODYEAR

10c Saves Need Buying a New Skirt
Putnam Fadeless Dyes—dyes or tints as you wish