

# FRANK WILLIAMS ATTENDS THE ROLLER MARDI GRAS

BY ARTHUR MORGAN LANGWORTHY

FRANK WILLIAMS lost no time in accepting his city cousin's invitation to attend the great Roller mardis gras. This occasion was to mark the grand opening of Joe Fisher's new business enterprise, the Star roller skating rink, and Frank wouldn't have missed it for a great deal, especially as he held the high and responsible position of grand marshal.

But the office provided another and grayer responsibility than the mere management of the affair. Ben Jordan's hostile band had been very active lately, having inflicted several humiliating defeats on Joe Fisher's crowd. Frank Williams was the only boy who could ever fight Ben's crafty ways successfully, and it was feared that Ben would take special pains to bring disaster on the Star rink. There was double reason for this apprehension, as Frank had once before signally defeated Ben when the Crystal ice rink was opened last winter.

The Star roller rink occupied an empty warehouse in Joe's neighborhood. The building was owned by the father of one of the young capitalists in Joe's company, which may have had something to do with the surprisingly low rental paid. Fortunately the floors needed but little repairing, so, having installed a main entrance and a box office and made arrangements for night sessions by having the light turned on, the roller rink was ready to be launched.

Joe called the grand opening the Roller mardis gras, as it was to be a masked fancy dress affair, no skater being allowed on the floor unless in mask and costume. Joe had a good deal of business ability and he saw to it that a good slice of the company's capital went into advertising.

Special prizes were to be offered for the best costumes, and while the management didn't guarantee to gratify the guests with great moving "floats" such as the open air mardis gras provides, yet the public was assured it would be treated to "sensations on sensation as the gorgeous and glittering spectacle unfolded to the delighted gaze."

Frank Williams, who wrote that notice, would have been a very much astonished boy if he could have foreseen what one of those "sensations" was to be.

A splendid crowd turned out on opening night. Frank, in the full glory of his drum major's uniform, was busily engaged in his duties of forming the masked skaters in line for the grand march when a note was passed to him by one of the directors of the company. He read it, asked the assistant grand marshal, Charlie Woodward, to look after things and went to the box office. He found the chief stock holders of the Star rink, all in costume, gathered around a very much excited young clown.

"Tell Frank!" cried Napoleon Bonaparte, whose voice identified him as Joe Fisher.

"Ben Jordan's here. He's come as Captain Kidd and we'd never have known it if I hadn't happened to see him accidentally drop his mask," explained the clown, who in private life was Norrie Hicks.

"Did he see you?" asked Frank.

"No, he looked around to see if he was noticed, but I ducked," answered Norrie.

Frank thought hard. Probably Ben's whole masked gang was scattered about the skating hall. Something must be done in a hurry, but what could be accomplished with the enemy effectually disguised in the throng of masked skaters? Yet Ben was recognized. Ben didn't know it and finally a plan evolved from this fact alone.

Frank returned to the skating hall, where the first thing he did was to put the unsuspecting Captain Kidd in a certain part of the rapidly forming line. Frank then placed Napoleon, the clown, the sultan of Turkey, Little Nemo and a dozen others whom he knew by their costumes. These members of Joe's crowd he assigned directly in front and in the rear of the pirate enemy.

Then Frank waved his drum major's baton, the band burst into a march and the gay paraders skated slowly ahead, following the grand marshal's lead. The grand march had begun. Now the large main floor of the old warehouse was not the only available skating area. There were various dark nooks and corners at the back of the building, toward which Frank led the winding procession. Captain Kidd was seen to enter the darkest, most obscure room but he didn't leave it, at least not with the parade!

Many of the paraders wondered why the parade came to a stop for a minute or two, yet all was managed so well and quickly that none of Ben's crowd knew he had been quietly captured behind the momentarily closed door.

It was easy to overpower Ben when his section of the parade entered the room, as unfortunately for Ben, "his" section consisted of more than half of Joe Fisher's crowd. He was bound,



"Ladies and Gentlemen, I Wish to Give a Special Medal to Mr. Ben Jordan; I Think He's Earned It!"

gagged and hauled into a closet. Then the grand marshal was instructed to start the parade again and Ben's gang passed unsuspectingly right by the closet door.

After the parade returned to the main hall Ben was spirited away by the back stairs to an empty room on the floor above, where Frank went immediately, the parade disbanded and skating began. Frank didn't wish to lose any time in making the next move, for every minute that passed increased the chance of Ben's prolonged absence alarming his faithful followers.

You may imagine poor Ben's disgust when Frank coolly forced him to change costumes. And when Frank boldly walked out masked and dressed as Captain Kidd no one not in the secret would have guessed it wasn't Ben, as the two boys were about the same height and build.

He had hardly entered the skating hall when several of Ben's followers surrounded Frank, asking him where he had been so long. Frank answered in a disguised voice, which Ben's adherents naturally thought was put on for the enemy's benefit. A lot of whispering now took place, and Frank's adroit questions soon gave him complete information of Ben's plans. He also found, much to his relief, that the time for Ben's attack on the skaters was set for 10 p. m., which gave Frank more than an hour to make his preparations.

Frank soon found a pretext to separate from Ben's crowd, and, after assuring himself that he was not followed, made a dash for Ben's prison, where the other leaders of the rink

would sweep the unprepared skaters before them with the rope into a frenzied, panic stricken herd until the other end of the hall was reached, and the rush would culminate in a mixed up tangle of fallen and shrieking victims. Then they would complete their work by wrecking the hall and escape before Joe's crowd could recover its wits.

That was the plan. Would Frank dare to give the next signal? He hesitated, and then, even as he drew his sword again to give it, his followers, anticipating, started their forward movement with a yell. But what was that? Intent on trapping the crowd in front they didn't see more than a score of figures suddenly swoop in from the main entrance behind them and spread out fan shaped as they noiselessly ran forward to overtake Ben's line in the rear.

The yell wasn't out of the enemy's mouth before Ben's line went down, each with a man on his back, and then one of the most exciting conflicts you ever saw took place. It was "just like a bunch of fighting cats all tangled up in a rope," as Frank afterward described the battle. But the Jordan crowd, taken completely by surprise, didn't have a chance to win. Almost before the startled onlookers knew what had happened every man in Ben's crowd was overpowered and a prisoner, and thus ended Ben Jordan's crafty plan of revenge.

It took some time to restore order, so great was the excitement over the affair. Finally Frank was able to make a speech, in which he explained all, and the truth so enraged the maskers they could hardly be restrained from mobbing the bound and trembling ill-doers, who had the greatest surprise of their lives when "Captain Kidd" unmasked and revealed Frank instead of their "peerless leader," Ben Jordan.

As a fitting punishment they were propped against the wall and compelled to remain until the evening was over, when they were treated to a most humiliating tableau. Just before the time arrived to judge the costumes Frank, who was one of the judges, paid Ben a visit and compelled Ben to don his Captain Kidd costume again. Then Ben was forcibly escorted into the hall and confronted with the rest of his band. This was bad enough, but Frank intended, for once, to teach Ben a lesson he should not forget.

The prize for the costumes were now awarded. Bella Oakley won the prize for ladies as Miss Columbia, Charley Woodward took the gentlemen's prize as Little Nemo, the prizes being handsome and useful gifts. Then Frank drew general attention to the sullen, helpless leader of the enemy, and, walking up to Ben, hung a large piece of circular cardboard around his neck.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to give a special medal to Mr. Ben Jordan; I think he's earned it," and Frank twisted the cardboard medal around until the crowd could see what was on the other side. How all roared with laughter as they read just two words painted in large, black letters! The words were: "Foiled Again!"

## AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY

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we took long trips on the lake we never seemed able to have any luck in the photographing of a moose.

But one day we were out canoeing, keeping well in toward the shore. We had seen neither moose nor deer so far, and had about given up hope of getting a glimpse of one, much less a picture. Then as we were gliding smoothly along a large, dark object appeared ahead of us.

As we got nearer we saw what we had long been looking for. Yes, it was a moose! Oh, if we could only get up close enough! Quietly and quickly the canoe sped along, leaving little ripples in the water behind it. The moose, standing in the water, placidly took a drink, not being a whit disturbed by our approach. It seemed almost as if it knew what we wanted and was posing for us. As the canoe noiselessly drew nearer and nearer to the motionless animal papa gently raised the kodak and aimed it—and still the moose made no move to depart. Papa put his finger on the button, and so great was our suspense that we fairly held our breath until a soft click told

us that the picture was taken. Then we breathed once more.

As if it had been waiting for just that signal, the big moose turned around and, with a farewell shake of its head, stalked into the forest. The suspense was ended. We gleefully discussed our success, wondering if the pictures would be good and thanking the absent moose for its thoughtfulness.

We turned the canoe around and started for home, chattering eagerly the while. We were well on our way when mother picked up the kodak and patted it lovingly, thinking no doubt of the treasure within. Then suddenly her expression changed and dismay overspread her features.

"Oh!" she gasped, and we all watched her in alarmed silence.

"What is the matter?" I asked at last. "The stopper," moaned mamma. Then, too late, we remembered the cover over the lens of the kodak, put there for protection. It had surely proved a protection. For a while there was a profound silence. Our hopes had been rudely shattered. Then the funny side of the affair struck us and we laughed until the woods around echoed with the noise. And that is how we took a picture of a moose.