

# BOB HAMPTON of PLACER

By RANDALL PARRISH AUTHOR OF "WHEN WILDERNESS WALKING" "THE LADY OF THE NORTH" "HISTORIC ILLINOIS, ETC."



"Thought not; always heard you fought with a gun. Caught no sight of the feller after ye got up?"

"All I saw was the crowd blocking the doorway. I knew they had caught me lying on Slavin, with my hand grasping the knife-hilt, and, somehow, I couldn't think of anything just then but how to get out of there into the open. I've seen vigilantes turn loose before, and knew what was likely to happen!"

"Sure. Recognize anybody in that first bunch?"

"Big Jim, the bartender, was the only one I knew; he had a bung-starter in his hand."

Mason nodded thoughtfully, his mouth puckered. "It's him, and half a dozen other fellers of the same stripe, who are kickin' up all this fracas. The most of 'em are yonder now, an' if it wasn't fer leavin' a prisoner unprotected, darn me if I wudn't like to mosey right down thar an' pound a little hoss sense into that bunch o' cattle. That's 'bout the only thing ye kin do fer a plum fool, so long as the law won't let ye kill him."

"I'm really sorry that you got mixed up in this, Buck," said Hampton, "for it looks to me about nine chances out of ten against either of us getting away from here unhurt."

"Oh, I don't know. It's bin my experience that there's allers chances if you only keep yer eyes skinned. If we kin only manage to hold 'em back till after dark we maybe might creep away through the bush to take a hand in this little game. Anyhow, it's up to us to play it out to the limit. Bless my eyes, if those lads ain't a-comin' up right now!"

better skin down, fer I reckon it's liable ter be rife next."

It was rife next, and the "winging" of Big Jim, however it may have inspired caution, also developed fresh animosity in the hearts of his followers, and brought forth evidences of discipline in their approach. Peering across the sheltering dump pile, the besieged were able to perceive the dark figures cautiously advancing through the protecting brush; they sped out widely until their two flanks were close in against the wall of rock, and then the deadly rifles began to spit spitefully, the balls casting up the soft dirt in clouds or flattening against the stones. The two men crouched lower, hugging their pile of slag, unable to perceive even a stray assailant within range of their ready revolvers.

"This whole name country is full of discharged sojers," he growled, "an' they know their biz all right. I reckon them fellers is pretty sure to git one of us yit; anyhow, they've got us cooped. Say, Bob, that lad crawling yonder ought to be in reach, an' it's our bounden duty not to let the boys git too gay."

Hampton tried the shot suggested, elevating considerably to overcome distance. There was a yell and a swift skurrying backward which caused Mason to laugh, although neither knew whether this result arose from fright or wound.



"Hi, there!" he called, his voice harsh and strident. "You fellers are not invited to this picnic, an' there'll be somethin' doin' if you push along any higher!"

The little bunch halted instantly just without the edge of the heavy timber, turning their faces up toward the speaker.

"Now, see here, Buck," answered one, taking a single step ahead of the others, and holding his hand as a trumpet to speak through. "It don't look to us fellers as if this affair was any of your funeral, anyhow, and we've come 'long ahead of the others just on purpose to give you a fair show to pull out of it afore the real trouble begins. Sabe?"

"Is that so?"

The little marshal was too far away for them to perceive how his teeth set beneath the bristly mustache.

"You bet! The boys don't consider that it's hardly the square deal you takin' up agin' 'em in this way. They 'lected you marshal of this yer camp, but it warn't expected you'd ever take no sides 'long with murderers. That's too stiff fer us to abide by. So come on down, Buck, an' leave us to attend to the cuss."

"If you mean Hampton, he's my prisoner. Will you promise to let me take him down to Cheyenne fer trial?"

"Wal, I reckon not, old man. We kin give him a trial well 'nough here in Glencald," roared another voice from one of the group, which was apparently growing restler over the delay. "But we ain't inclined to do you

no harm unless ye ram in too far. So come on down, Buck, throw up yer cards; we've got all the ace, an' ye can't bluff this whole durn camp."

Mason spat into the dump contemptuously, his hands thrust into his pockets. "You're a fine-lookin' lot o' law-abidin' citizens, you are! Blamed if you ain't. This yer man, Bob Hampton, is my prisoner, an' I'll take him to Cheyenne if I have ter brain every tough in Glencald to do it. That's me, gents."

"Oh, come off; you can't run your notions agin the whole blame moral sentiment of this camp."

"Moral sentiment! I'm backin' up the law, not moral sentiment, ye cross-eyed beer-slinger, an' if ye try edgin' up thar another step I'll plug you with this '45."

There was a minute of hesitancy while the men below conferred, the marshal looking contemptuously down upon them, his revolver gleaming ominously in the light.

"Oh, come on, Buck, show a little hoss sense," the leader sang out. "We've got every feller in camp along with us, an' there ain't no show fer the two o' ye to hold out against that sort of an outfit."

Mason smiled and patted the barrel of his Colt.

"Oh, go to blazes! When I want any advice, Jimmie, I'll send fer ye."

Some one fired, the ball digging up the soft earth at the marshal's feet, and flinging it in a blinding cloud into Hampton's eyes. Mason's answer was a sudden fusillade, which sent the crowd flying helter-skelter into the underbrush. One among them staggered and half fell, yet succeeded in dragging himself out of sight.

"Great Scott, if I don't believe I winged James!" the shooter remarked cheerfully, reaching back into his pocket for more cartridges. "Maybe them boys will be a bit more keertful if they once understand they're up agin the real thing. Well, perhaps I

rinths of bush, only to halt petrified upon the very edge of that inner barrier. No fragment of imagination, but the glowing reality of flesh and blood, awaited him. She had neither seen nor heard his approach, and he stopped in perplexity. He had framed a dozen speeches for her ears, yet now he could do no more than stand and gaze, his heart in his eyes. And it was a vision to enchain, to hold lips speechless. She was seated with unstudied grace on the edge of the bank, her hands clasped about one knee, her sweet face sobered by thought, her eyes downcast, the long lashes plainly outlined against the clear cheeks. To draw back unobserved was impossible, even had he possessed strength of will sufficient to make the attempt, nor would words of easy greeting come to his relief. He could merely worship silently as before a sacred shrine. It was thus she glanced up and saw him with startled eyes, her hands unclasping, her cheeks rose-colored.

"Lieut. Brant, you here?" she exclaimed, speaking as if his presence seemed unreal. "What strange miracle an' idle thought can work!"

"Thoughts, I have heard," he replied, coming toward her with head uncovered, "will sometimes awaken answers through vast distances of time and space. As my thought was with you I may be altogether to blame for thus arousing your own. From the expression of your face, I supposed you dreaming."

She smiled, her eyes uplifted for a single instant to his own. "It was rather thought just merging into dream, and there are few things in life more sweet. I know not whether it is the common gift of all minds, but my day-dreams are almost more to me than my realities."

"First is was moods, and now dreams." He seated himself comfortably at her feet. "You would cause me to believe you a most impractical person, Miss Naida."

"If that were only true, I am sure I should be most happy, for it has been my fortune so far to conjure up only pleasure through day-dreaming—the things I like and long for become my very own then. But if you mean, as I suspect, that I do not enjoy the dirt and drudgery of life, then my plea will have to be guilty. Back of what you term practical some one has said there is always a dream, a first conception. In that sense I choose to be a dreamer."

"And not so unwise a choice, if your dreams only tend toward results." He sat looking into her animated face, deeply puzzled by both words and actions. "I cannot help noticing that you avoid all reference to my meeting with Mr. Hampton. Is this another sign of your impractical mind?"

"I should say rather the opposite, for I had not even supposed it concerned me."

"Indeed! That presents a vastly different view from the one given us an hour since. The distinct impression was then conveyed to both our minds that you were greatly distressed regarding the matter. Is it possible you can have been acting again?"

"I? Certainly not!" and she made no attempt to hide her indignation. "What do you mean?"

He hesitated an instant in his reply, feeling that possibly he was treading upon thin ice. But her eyes commanded a direct answer, and he yielded to them.

"We were informed that you experienced great anxiety for fear we might quarrel—so great, indeed, that you had confided your troubles to another."

"To whom?"

"Miss Spencer. She came to us ostensibly in your name, and as a peace-maker."

For a moment she sat gazing directly at him, then she laughed softly.

"Why, how supremely ridiculous; I can hardly believe it true, only your face tells me you certainly are not in play. Lieut. Brant, I have never even dreamed of such a thing. You had informed me that your mission was one of peace, and he pledged me his word not to permit any quarrel. I had the utmost confidence in you both."

"How, then, did she even know of our meeting?"

"I am entirely in the dark, as mystified as you," she acknowledged, frankly, "for it has certainly never been a habit with me to betray the confidence of my friends, and I learned long since not to confide secrets to Miss Spencer."

Apparently never cared to discuss the problem longer, yet he remained silent considering those questions which might decide his fate.

"You speak of your confidence in us both," he said, slowly. "To me the complete trust you repose in Mr. Hampton is scarcely comprehensible. Do you truly believe in his reform?"

"Certainly. Don't you?"

The direct return question served to nettles and confuse him. "It is, perhaps, not my place to say, as my future happiness does not directly depend on the permanence of his reformation. But if his word can be depended upon, your happiness to a very large extent does."

She bowed. "I have no doubt you can safely repose confidence in whatever he may have told you regarding me."

"You indorse, then, the claims he advances?"

"You are very insistent; yet I should not answer. Without at all knowing the nature of those claims to which you refer, I have no hesitancy in saying that I possess such complete confidence in Bob Hampton as to reply unreservedly. But really, Lieut. Brant, I should prefer talking upon some other topic. It is evident that you two gentlemen are not friendly, yet there is no reason why any misunderstanding between you should interfere with our friendship, is there?"

She asked this question with such perfect innocence that Brant believed she failed to comprehend Hampton's claims.

(To be Continued.)

ers fell on every day but the 10th and thunder storms occurred on the 7th and 9th. The sunshine averaged 51 per cent. of the possible amount. Sunshine and dry weather are needed. — Local Office, Weather Bureau.

Elm Grove, Ohio — Thunder showers occurred daily from the 5th to the 9th. The days were warm and sultry. — J. W. Baird.

Fairmont, Marion — Heavy rain (1.55 inches) fell from 2 p. m. to 4 p. m. on the 9th. Showers also fell on the 5th, 6th and 7th. — H. Glenn Fleming.

Lewiston, Kanawha — The weather was very showery. Heavy rain fell on the 9th. — W. C. Henson.

Glennville, W. Va. — The fore part of the week was cool and partly cloudy. Thunder was heard on the 7th and 9th. The sunshine averaged about 50 per cent. of the possible amount. — S. W. Wilson.

Lost Creek, Harrison — The weather was very cloudy, with frequent showers. — Allen Smith.

Mannington, Marion — Showers fell on the 5th, 6th and 9th. The sunshine averaged about 50 per cent. of the possible amount. The week opened very cool. — James A. Morgan.

Moundsville, Marshall — Thunder storms occurred on the 8th, 9th and 10th. The mornings were foggy. The sunshine averaged 44 per cent. of the possible amount. — C. E. Haddock.

Parkersburg, Wood — The temperature averaged 1 degree below the normal and the rainfall was .15 of an inch below the normal. A moderate shower fell on the 5th and a very light shower on the 7th. The sunshine averaged 62 per cent. of the possible amount. — Section enter.

Phillipi, Barbour — The week was cloudy, showery, and unfavorable for outdoor work. The mornings of the 3d, 4th and 9th were foggy, and thunder storms occurred on the 7th and 9th. The sunshine averaged 50 per cent. of the possible amount. — J. D. Daddsman.

Rowlesburg, Preston — Showers fell on the 4th, 6th and 10th, being heavy on the 6th. — F. R. Proudfoot.

Weston, Lewis — The weather was cloudy and showery. The nights were cool and the days moderately warm. The mornings were foggy. — Miss C. M. Davis.

Wheeling, Ohio — The weather was partly cloudy to cloudy, with occasional showers. — Miss M. B. Forsyth.

H. C. HOWE, Section Director.

CHAPTER XXI.

"She Loves Me; She Loves Me Not."

It was no claim of military duty which compelled Brant to relinquish Miss Spencer so promptly at the hotel door, but rather a desire to escape her ceaseless chatter and gain retirement where he could reflect in quiet over the revelations of Hampton. In this quest he rode slowly up the valley of the Bear Water, through the bright sunshine, the rare beauty of the scene scarcely leaving the slightest impress on his mind, so busy was he, and so preoccupied. He no longer had any doubt that Hampton had utilized his advantageous position, as well as his remarkable powers of pleasing, to ensnare the susceptible heart of this young, confiding girl. While the man had advanced no direct claim, he had said enough to make perfectly clear the close intimacy of their relation and the existence of a definite understanding between them. With this recognized as a fact, was he justified in endeavoring to win Naida Gil- lins for himself? That the girl would find continued happiness with such a man as Hampton he did not for a moment believe possible; that she had been deliberately deceived regarding his true character he felt no doubt. That the girl was morally so far above him as to make his very touch a profanation, and at the unbidden thought of it, the soldier vowed to oppose such an unholy consummation. Nor did he, even then, utterly despair of winning, for he recalled afresh the intimacy of their few past meetings, his face brightened in memory of this and that brief word or shy glance.

All the world loves a lover, and all the fairies guide him. As the officer's eyes glanced up from the dusty road, he perceived just ahead the same steep bank down which he had plunged in his effort at capturing his fleeing tormentor. With the sight there came upon him the desire to loiter again in the little glen where they had first met, and dream once more of her who had given to the shaded nook both life and beauty. He swung himself from the saddle, tied a loose rein to a scrub oak, and clambered up the bank.

With the noiseless step of a plainsman he pushed in through the labry-

rinths of bush, only to halt petrified upon the very edge of that inner barrier. No fragment of imagination, but the glowing reality of flesh and blood, awaited him. She had neither seen nor heard his approach, and he stopped in perplexity. He had framed a dozen speeches for her ears, yet now he could do no more than stand and gaze, his heart in his eyes. And it was a vision to enchain, to hold lips speechless. She was seated with unstudied grace on the edge of the bank, her hands clasped about one knee, her sweet face sobered by thought, her eyes downcast, the long lashes plainly outlined against the clear cheeks. To draw back unobserved was impossible, even had he possessed strength of will sufficient to make the attempt, nor would words of easy greeting come to his relief. He could merely worship silently as before a sacred shrine. It was thus she glanced up and saw him with startled eyes, her hands unclasping, her cheeks rose-colored.

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## WEATHER BULLETIN

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MONDAY, AUGUST 12TH, 1907.

The temperatures on the 5th averaged about 10 degrees below the normal, but they were practically normal during the rest of the week. The highest temperatures occurred on the 8th. The rainfall was generally slightly deficient over the northwest counties, and moderately heavy in sections of the southwestern and north central counties. The falls were generally slightly above the normal in other sections. Showers were general on the 5th and 9th, being heavy on the 9th in sections of Putnam, Kanawha, Marion, Taylor and Harrison counties. Over some of the central counties showers occurred daily from the 5th to the 9th, inclusive.

There was much cloudiness in all sections until the 10th and the sunshine averaged only about 55 per cent. of the possible amount. The week was unfavorable for outdoor work.

Remarks by Correspondents.

(Name of postoffice is following by name of county.)

**Panhandle Section.**

Bayard, Grant — The weather was showery and generally cloudy. The sunshine averaged about 48 per cent. of the possible amount. — Solomon Clark.

Burlington, Mineral — The conditions were favorable for growth, but were unfavorable for outdoor work. The weather was cloudy and showery, with considerable fog. — J. W. Vandiver.

Charles Town, Jefferson — Outdoor work was much retarded by frequent showers. The conditions were favorable for growth. — W. T. McDonald.

Franklin, Pendleton — The weather was showery and unfavorable for outdoor work. — Rey. S. S. Oliver.

Harpers Ferry, Jefferson — Showers fell on the 4th, 5th, 9th and 10th, giving a total rainfall of .38 of an inch. The conditions were favorable. — S. W. Lightner.

**Southern Section.**

Bancroft, Putnam — Showers fell on the 5th and 7th. Very heavy rain (2.65 inches) fell from 10 a. m. to 1:30 p. m. on the 9th. The mornings were foggy. The sunshine averaged about 55 per cent. of the possible amount. — James Hill.

Duncan, Jackson — Showers fell on the 5th, 7th and 9th. The rest of the week was generally fair. There were three foggy mornings. — J. S. Harvey.

Elkhorn, McDowell — Showers fell on the 5th, 7th and 9th. The week opened cool. — John J. Lincoln.

Mountain Cove, Fayette — The weather was showery and warm. — L. P. Willis.

Oceana, Wyoming — The weather was showery and moderately warm. — E. M. Stenter.

Priestley, Lincoln — Rain fell on the 5th, 7th and 10th. The weather was cool. — Miss Norma Clark.

Princeton, Mercer — The weather was pleasant and the winds were very light. The nights were cool and there were no high day temperatures. Showers fell on the 5th, 7th and 8th. The sunshine averaged about 60 per cent. of the possible amount. — H. Scott.

Ravenswood, Jackson — The weather was generally cloudy, with fog on every morning but the 5th. Showers fell on the 5th and 9th. The sunshine averaged about 50 per cent. of the possible amount. — C. T. Perry.

Williamson, Mingo — The weather moderately cool and pleasant; but the sunshine only averaged 45 per cent. of the possible amount. The rainfall was light. — J. F. Keyser.

**Northern Section.**

Creston, Wirt — The weather was showery and the temperatures were moderate. — J. M. Reed.

Elkins, Randolph — The temperature was about normal and the rainfall was .46 of an inch above the normal. Show-

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J. S. HAYDEN, Vice President.

WALTON MILLER, Cashier.

Directors: A. B. FLEMING, J. S. HAYDEN, J. E. WATSON, M. L. HUTCHINSON, F. E. NICHOLS, O. S. MCKINNEY, C. E. MANLEY.

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