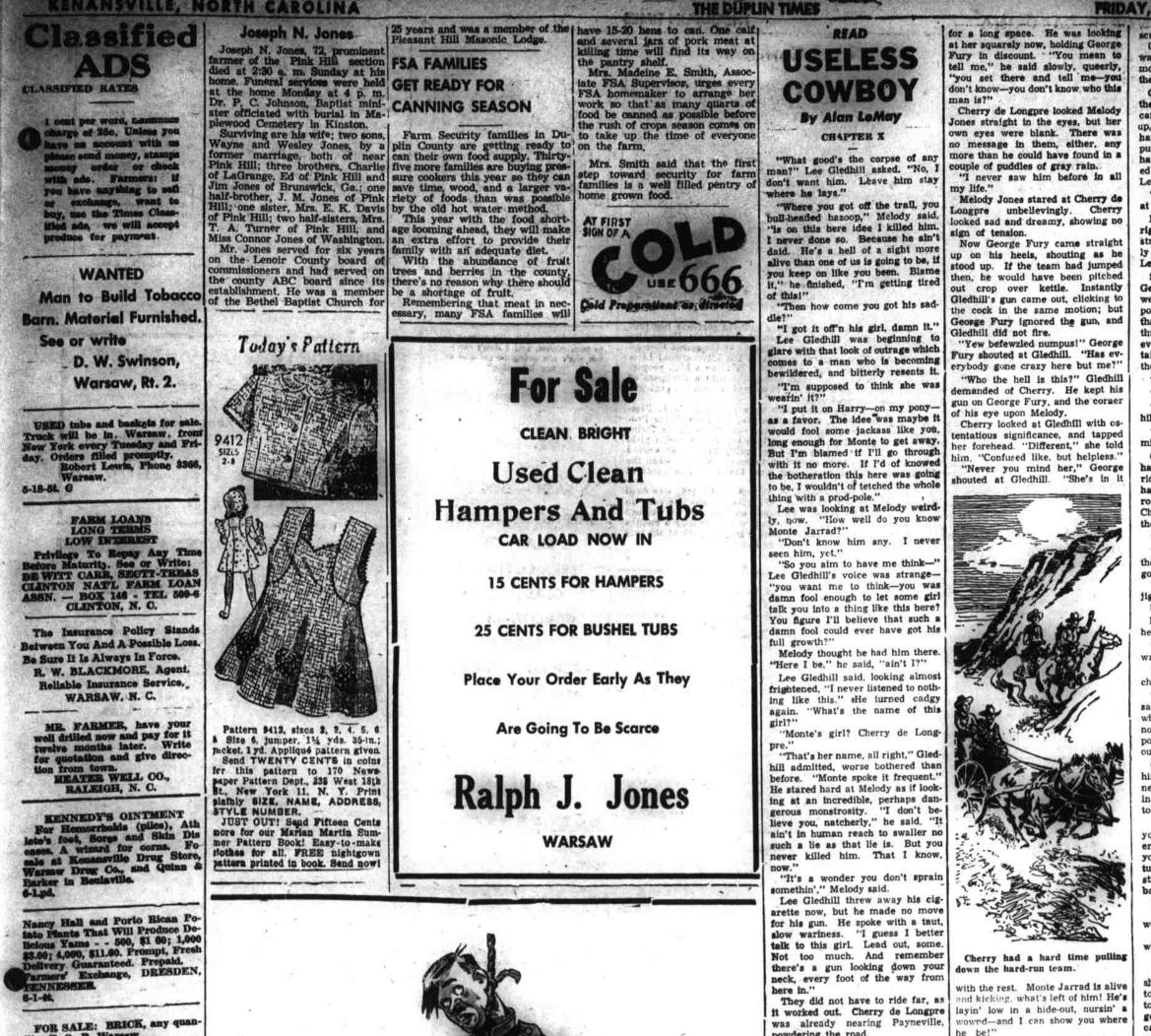
KENANSVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA



s, Soy Beans, Velvet

was already nearing Payneville, powdering the road.

It stirred up Lee Gledhill. "How As Melody and his captor topped a long rise, a tower of dust was far away?" boiling toward them. Lee Gledhill " 'Tain't so fur but what we can drew Melody off the road into the make it in time to eat!" Melody started to say, "Don't pay brush; but Melody almost immediately recognized the de Longpre buckboard, with Cherry driving, and George Fury beside her on the seat. George's horse was tied on behind.

FRIDAY, MAY 11th., 1945

scrabbled at her boots, unnoticed. Cherry stepped through the door-way after Lee Gledhill; and for a moment, because he was watching the others, his back was turned.

Cherry's right hand reached into the corner by the door where her carbine stood. The carbine whipped up, not smoothly, as a rifeman might have taken it, but with a direct, purposeful practicality, as she might have caught up a broom. She plant-ed the muzzle hard in the middle of Lee Gledhill's back.

"Get your hands up!" she blazed at him. "Melody, take his gun!"

Lee Gledhill's whole body went rigid with a jerk, as if he had been struck by lightning. Then very slowly his hands came up. Melody took Lee's gun, and recovered his own.

She snapped orders at Melody and George, and her cool, indifferent weariness was gone. "Saddle my pony," she flung at them. "I ride that old punkin-seed mare. Then throw down the corral bars, and turn everything out. Put those broomtails into a stampede that will carry them halfway to Texas!

"What about this feller's horse?" "We'll lead him with us."

"Horse thieves hang," Lee Gledhill said, "where I come from!"

"You'll find him tied about five miles down the trail."

George Fury kept Lee Gledhill's hands up while Cherry changed into riding clothes. By that time Melody had saddled her round-bellied old roan, and he held it for her to mount. Cherry came close to the animal, then stood hesitating.

"What you aim to do?"

"This time I know you're leaving the country! I know because I'm going with you and see that you do." "You think a heap of that Monte jigger, don't you?"

She didn't answer him. Melody looked depressed. "Okay," he decided. "You love him, then."

"I always thought I did. Since I was fourteen years old."

"And nothing he done ever changed it," Melody kept on.

"I don't change easy," Cherry said. "Who ever loved a man for what he did, anyway? That's got nothing to do with it. If it did, the population of this country would die out quick!"

Cherry stole a quick glance at him; but there was no more bitterness in his face than there had been in his tone. She spoke in a monotone, sot looking at him.

"There's one other thing I want you to do. Not now-sometime, after all this has blown over. I want you to come back here then, and turn up the express company's strongbox. I want you to give it back to the people it belongs to."

"Cain't." "I can't make you do it, if you won't."

"'Tain't that. I jest don't know where it's at."

"I'm going to show you."

He turned and looked at her, but she did not meet his eyes. "Monte told me where it is," she said. "He told me when he thought he was going to die. There's an old, old cabin that near everybody has forgot. Monte's used it before; but he'll never use it again. It has dobe walls, four feet through. There's a slab sill to the only window. Once when Monte was hiding out, he dug a cache in the wall, under that slab. It's near big enough to hide a man, if a man could breathe in there. And that's where the strongbox is, with more money in it than you ever saw in your life. So I guess you know I trust you, now."





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Melody was able to apprise Lee Gledhill in time for Lee to flag the buckboard. Cherry had a hard time pulling down the hard-run team, but got them stopped a hundred yards beyond. Her hands kept tensing and slackening the lines. to hold the rebellious horses, and she looked at Melody and Lee with poker-faced questioning as they came up. 'Well?''

Lee Gledhill took a good look at George Fury, then reached over and took Melody's gun out of his chaps pocket. He stuck it into the loose top of his own boot. George stayed quiet, but his eyes were bright and awake, like a watching owl.

"You again, huh?" Melody said to George.

George looked sheepish. "I come back," he grunted.

Lee Gleahill went to the buckboard wheel, backing his horse around in such a way that he could watch both Melody Jones and George Fury at the same time. "Your name Cherry de Longpre?" "Might be," Cherry said sharply,

like the snap of fingers. "Take off your hat, if you want to talk to me!" Lee Gledhill hesitated, annoyed that she should catch him up, and make a thing of it, when he was thinking about something else. Sniffsneer. Sulkily he obeyed, and start ed over.

"You maybe heard of Lee Gledhill," he said. "Uh huh-I see you have.

Anybody's heard of him." said Cherry noncommittally. "There's handbills out, even, offering a' reward."

A faint insolence came into Gledhill's tone. "Been readin', huh? All right, Good. Because I'm him. And seein's you study up every handbill you see, I reckon you know I side-ride Monte Jarrad."

"You might even be named Luke Packer, and work for the express company," Cherry said, with a lump of ice in every word. "All right," Lee said again. "Nev-

er mind who I be. It don't change what I'm here for, any. I want to ask you one thing. What became of Monte Jarrad?"

Her hands were motionless now. and the whole girl was motionless; she watched the riders sidelong, and for moments did not seem to breathe. "I suppose I must have seen him about twice in three years," she said at last. She looked at Melody with a hard, blank stars. "Who's that you've got there?" Lee Gledhill stuo. " "as standily

attention to the o "Shut up!" Lee stopped him. To George he said, "Take the lines, Mister. You're on your way. .

he be!"

Lee Gledhill kept them herded together when they dismounted at the Busted Nose

"Once and for all." George said to Melody. "I want you to take note who does the thinking here. I figured out where Monte is by using my head. I know where he's hid, and even how to git in it. He's been here the hull time, while you was messing around blind. And I've knowed thet sence we first rode in!"

"Shut up." Lee told him. "You're all going to be in trouble in about two jerks!"

George looked him over with slow dispraise; then led the way to the barn.

George Fury now took down the canvas windbreaker which hung upon what had once been the wall of a stall: the bales of ragged hay which were piled against the other side overhung the old wall now. There was nonchalance, even a touch of grandeur in George's gesture as he lightly tossed the windbreaker away. Dramatically, with motions of exaggerated finesse, he took hold of the nail on which the wind-breaker had hung, and pulled upon it.

Frantic now, George ran around the partition to look at the other side. Nothing but a disorderly pile of hay, a couple of bales deep against the wall, was waiting there. Some small animal might have been concealed there, or a tribe of rats, but not the hide-out of a man.

Cherry de Longpre stood in the broad doorway, silhouetted against the sunlight. She spoke directly to Lee Gledhill, ignoring the others. "There's coffee on the back of the stove." she told him. Her words sounded tired and subdued. "I'll show you the last word I got from Monte, if that will be any help."

Lee Gledhill considered for a long time, looking poker-faced from one to another of them. "All right," he said at last.

"Come on in the house," Cherry said, and led the way.

. On the gallery she held the broken screen door open for them while Gledhill made Melody Jones and George Fury precede him into the kitchen, and the chained bear cub

Ben Frank Outlaw

Ben Frank Outlaw, 86, died at his home early Sunday morning, 8 his home early Sunday morning, 8 long filness. Puneral services were held Mon-day at 4 p. m. at the home of his nephew, Norwood Summerlin, withof his community.

"Where did you say this cabin-" "I'm taking you there."

They rode a mile in silence. The slow dusk of the mountain country was closing in. "I suppose," Melody said at last, "you'll be going back to the Busted Nose, then, after you show me where it's at."

"I don't know. And I don't care much. I'm sick of the whole forsaken thing. But I'm going to see you fetched out of this, before I do anything else."

"Whut? Why?"

"Because you don't know how to take care of yourself, or what's good for you-that's why!"

"I don't know why," Melody said, "you set yourself to all this trouble, now."

There was bitterness in Cherry's voice, not his.

"I don't blame you for saying that," Cherry said. "If ever a man had a right to get sarcastic. you're it."

"I didn't mean it that way."

Cherry angered unaccountably. 'You never mean anything." she lashed at him. "You never complain about anything, or demand anything, or let out a holler-butter wouldn't melt in your teeth! But I know what you're thinking, just the same!"

"I carved his name on a tomb she whimpered, stone." "and dropped it square on top of yout How was I to know you wouldn't run? You spoiled everything just be-cause you wouldn't run. But I should have told you. I should have told you what I was trying to do, so you could have had open eyes."

Her voice sounded so queer that he leaned forward over his saddle horn to peer into her face; and he saw that she was crying.

"You'd of been wrong," Melody said gravely, "to of so done. Be-cause I'd of told you to go chase a ting-bee, and I'd of rode on." "I wish I was dead!" Cherry burst

out hysterically.

"Don't feel that way," Melody consoled her. "I wouldn't of misser

TO BE CONTINUED