

Blizzard!

by Franklin Folsom

63

1 *George McJunkin was a cowboy who lived in the southwestern United States in the late 1800s. No one was better than he at taming wild horses, and very little escaped his keen eyes. The following is the true story of how he saved fourteen lives during a dangerous blizzard.*

2 Late in 1889 George McJunkin was on his way to a roundup at the Pitchfork Ranch. His boss, Dr. Owen, owned many cattle that were grazing far away on the open range. The cattle were fat enough now to send to market. George was to go with a group of cowboys to round them up.

3 George was the foreman of another ranch. At the Pitchfork Ranch Dr. Owen's brother John was in charge. The roundup party was made up of twelve other men, more than a hundred horses, a cook, and a supply wagon.

4 One morning after they had set out, the weather turned cold. George was glad he had remembered to bring along his sheepskin coat and raingear. By afternoon rain began to fall. Some of the men were soaked through, and everybody was cold. During the night the rain turned to snow. Worst of all, the wind began to blow harder and harder.

5 Before George went out on patrol, he tore a strip from his blanket and wrapped it round his head to protect his face and ears. The other cowboys silently followed his example.

6 For two days and nights the storm continued. The more the wind blew, the harder the cattle tried to move away from it. The men had to struggle to hold the herd together and keep themselves from freezing.

7 George was alarmed. He had never seen



such a storm. There was no sign of its stopping. By this time most of the extra horses had wandered off. The men were so numb with cold that they could hardly ride. And the drifting snow had changed the landscape so much that John Owen and the others admitted they were completely lost.

8 George had ridden over this country many times. In spite of the drifts, he thought he recognized a fence that led to Harvy Bramblett's cabin. His cabin was small, but it was their only hope. If they didn't reach it soon, they would all die of cold.

9 "We've got to give up the cattle," George shouted to John Owen. "It's them or us."

10 John was too exhausted to answer.

11 "I think I can get us to Bramblett's," George went on. "But everybody's got to stick together and follow me close."

12 "Try it," John said, letting George take charge.

13 George turned his weary horse and rode straight into the driving blizzard. The animal stumbled again and again as it broke a trail in the deep snow. Night came, but George kept forcing the men and horses on.

14 He had begun to give up all hope of reaching shelter when he saw a light flickering in the darkness ahead. This had to be the light

that Harvy Bramblett put in his window whenever there was a storm.

15 "How did you stay alive?" Harvy exclaimed when George and the others stumbled through the door.

16 "We just about didn't," George replied. "And we wouldn't have if you hadn't set your light where we could see it."

17 One after another the men sank to the floor exhausted. The room was crowded. They took turns sleeping or gazing out the window, which was rapidly becoming blocked with snow.

18 The days wore on, and the group of men slowly ate their way through Harvy Bramblett's food supply. By the tenth day of the blizzard, they were out of food. On the eleventh day, the snow ended. Outside the cabin blinding sunlight poured down on a completely white landscape.

19 It took them a while to shovel paths and get things back to normal. Unfortunately the Pitchfork herd was probably frozen in the storm. And all the horses had wandered off. It would be a big job to get the ranch running again. But George had the satisfaction of knowing that he had saved all the men from freezing to death in the storm.



How Well Did You Read?

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- 1 Why did the men have a hard time controlling the herd?
 - a They couldn't see where the animals were going in the storm.
 - b The animals couldn't see where they were going in the storm.
 - c The animals kept trying to move away from the storm.
- 2 Why couldn't the men find their way home?
 - a They were unfamiliar with the area.
 - b The heavy snow made the area unrecognizable.
 - c They were forced to keep moving.
- 3 Why did the men decide to let the herd go?
 - a They thought the animals could take care of themselves.
 - b They would have frozen to death themselves if they had not given up the herd to seek shelter.
 - c They knew there was no hope of finding the animals in the blinding storm.
- 4 Which of these events happened last?
 - a George saw Bramblett's light.
 - b George found Bramblett's fence.
 - c George remembered Bramblett's cabin.
- 5 What did Harvy Bramblett do that helped to save the men?
 - a He organized a search party.
 - b He put a light in his window.
 - c He got in extra stores of food.
- 6 Why was it going to be a big job to get the ranch running again after the storm?
 - a It would take a lot of time to clear away the snow and find the animals.
 - b It would take a lot of time and money to repair the damaged buildings.
 - c It would cost a lot to replace the cattle.

- 7 What was Harvy Bramblett's attitude when the men arrived at his cabin?
 - a He was amazed that they were alive.
 - b He was sorry that he had no food.
 - c He was surprised that they saw his light.

Learn about Words

Vocabulary

- A You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1 feeding on grass (2)
- 2 guard duty (5)
- 3 afraid (7)
- 4 unable to feel anything (7)
- 5 tired (13)
- 6 looking; staring (17)
- 7 happiness; feeling of contentment (19)

- B A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning depends on the way it is used. The word *watch* is an example.

A guard stood *watch*.
My *watch* is fast.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **heavy type** is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Write a or b.

- 8 **range** (2)
 - a field
 - b stove
- 9 **party** (3)
 - a group
 - b social gathering
- 10 **driving** (13)
 - a operating a vehicle
 - b pushing ahead with great force

Word Study

- C act + **or** = actor (one who acts)
enjoy + **ment** = enjoyment (result of enjoying)

Many nouns end in *or* and *ment*. Often *or* means "one who," and *ment* means "result of." Read each word in **heavy type** and the incomplete definition of it. Write the word that completes the definition.

- 11 **instructor**: one who ____
- 12 **improvement**: result of ____
- 13 **movement**: result of ____
- 14 **visitor**: one who ____
- 15 **sailor**: one who ____
- 16 **government**: result of ____
- 17 **agreement**: result of ____
- 18 **editor**: one who ____

- D The small boat/swayed in the wind.
(Subject) (Predicate)
The baby/cried all night.
(Subject) (Predicate)
Diane and Ann/walked to the park.
(Subject) (Predicate)

Each of the sentences above has a subject and a predicate. Read the sentences below and notice the words in **heavy type**. If those words are the subject of the sentence, write S. If they are the predicate, write P.

- 19 The president of the company **gave a speech**.
- 20 The cook **stuffed the bird**.
- 21 **Sam and Bernie** ate the cake.
- 22 **The small boat** floated out to sea.
- 23 Her team **won the ball game**.
- 24 **Lorraine and Colin** walked home.
- 25 **Samson's sister** drove us to the park.
- 26 Joan flew her kite.

E If you want information from an encyclopedia, you have to decide where the information you want is most likely to be found. For example, if you want to know how long pandas live, you would probably decide to look in the *P* volume for an entry called "Panda." Complete each statement below by writing the word that names the most likely entry.

- 27 Chris wants to know how bread is made. She should look up (Toast, Bread, Lunch).
- 28 Sam wants to take up photography as a hobby. He can learn about it by looking up (Photography, Hobby, Film).
- 29 Diane wants to know where llamas live. She should look up (Living, Llama, Animal).
- 30 Miguel wants to find out about the Aztec people. He should look up (People, Mexico, Aztec).
- 31 Anita wants to know how drinking water is purified. She should look up (Purity, Water, Thirst).
- 32 Sada wants to know how blind people are able to read. She should look up (Blindness, Books, People).
- 33 Beth wants to know how to grow corn. She should look up (Growing, Food, Corn).