

NED THE COWBOY



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Title: Ned The Cowboy

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Language: English

Subject: Fiction, Literature, Children's literature

Publisher: World Public Library Association

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Ned the Cowboy

IT was a happy day for Ned when his father bought a ranch,—a real wild west ranch.

Ned's one desire was to be a cowboy and long ago he had bought a cowboy suit to play in but, although he had had great fun with his chums pretending all the scenes and experiences of *real* western life, it was truly only play after all. Plenty of excitement and earnest work filled the days of preparation and packing for the long railroad journey to the great plains

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of Arizona and as the time drew near for them to start Ned's heart and head were overflowing with longing really to live the life he had so often imitated in play.



“Shall I have a pony all my own to ride, father?”

Ned asked, for the hundredth time, as they sped swiftly over the wonderful prairies.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Brown. “I want you to grow to be a fearless rider and



NED AND HIS MOUNT

before long you will be able to master any horse."

It was a beautiful day when at last they reached the new house,—too beautiful by far to stay inside and Ned and his father did not resist the temptation to get acquainted right then and there with the novel scenes about them. They left, perhaps rather selfishly, Ned's mother and her woman helpers to do the unpacking and disappeared in the midst of the animal sheds as happy as could be.



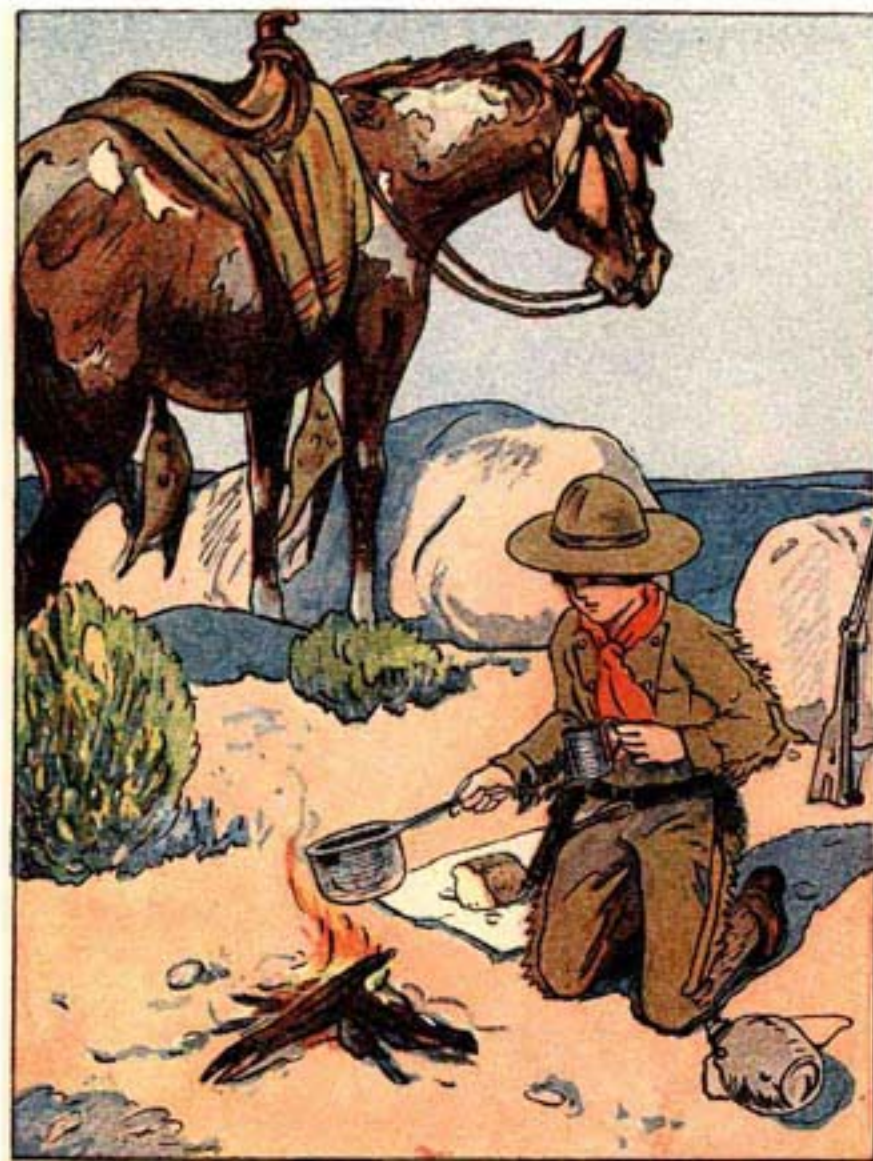
Mrs. Brown was busy making the long, rough living room of their ranch house comfortable and snug when sud-

denly she heard loud gleeful shouts and clatter of hoofs. Running to the door she saw something that almost made her heart stop beating. There, in a cloud of dust, were Ned and his father dashing past on the backs of two spirited little bronchos, as fearless as if they had always done it, waving their hats to her.

“Hurrah! this is bully!” cried Ned, pulling up before her.

“But, darling,” she said, “I am afraid something dreadful will happen to you if you are so daring. Edward,” she pleaded between tears and smiles, “don’t forget our boy is only twelve years old and let him take too great risks.”

“Now, mother,” said Ned, “don’t be foolish. I’ll be awfully careful and you



MAKING CAMP

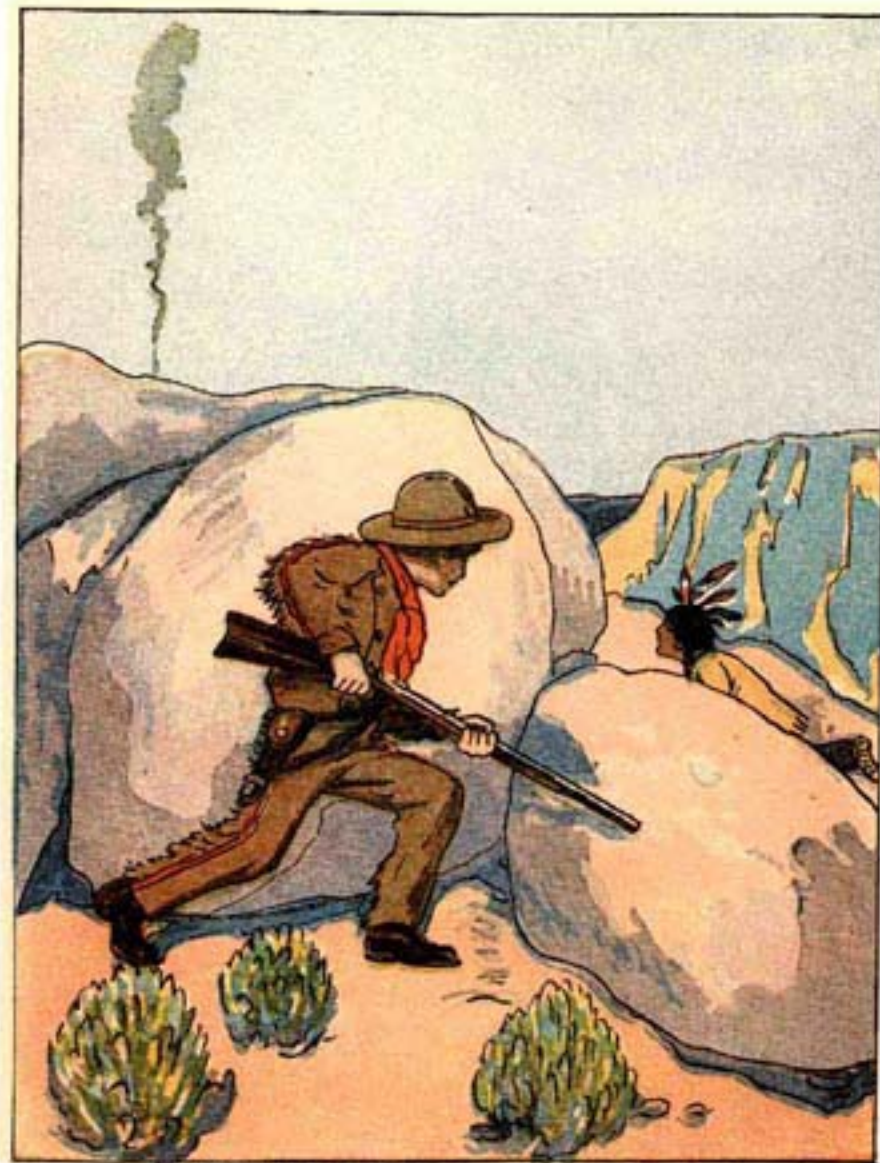
know this really is a dandy little pony, perfectly safe."

From that very moment began the sunniest and most joyous days for Ned Brown. He was just about the happiest boy that ever lived and became fast friends with the cowboys on the ranch. They were very good natured and kind to him and taught him how to do everything that a small boy, however hale



and hearty, had strength for. Ned rode with the men over the cattle-trails and soon got so well acquainted with the wild country that even his wise and loving mother felt quite at ease when Ned rode off with only his beloved pony for company.

One day the report that Indians were in the valley nearby reached them and although they were said to be peaceful Mr. Brown was not entirely satisfied and decided to ride over the prairie about a day's journey from the ranch to where his cattle were grazing and arrange further for their protection, should the savages prove to be the thieving sort. He expected to be gone only one night and return next day, taking several of his men with him.



ATTACKED BY INDIANS

“I’ll ride out and camp on the third ridge and wait for you father,” said Ned.



“Very well,” Mr. Brown replied, as he rode away, “keep a sharp lookout for the Indians and don’t be too venturesome.”

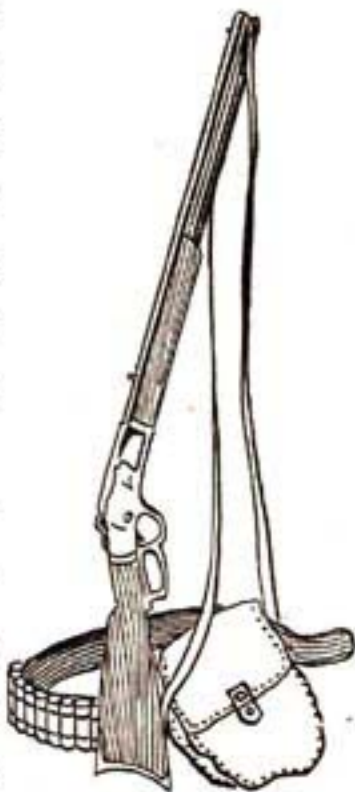
Next day Ned was up bright and early and saddled the mustang, named Pete. He could now ride any of the ranch horses and he thought since there was some hard climbing to do to gain the third ridge, he would not ride his own pony but select one of the stronger animals. Pete was among his favorites and would answer this particular purpose perfectly. It was almost noon when Ned reached the place where he intended to wait for his father. He got out his camping kit and soon had a fire crackling to cook his dinner. Beside him leaning against a rock was his gun. Ned's father had thought it wise for Ned to learn how to shoot and as soon as he had learned not only how to use the



FRIENDS

weapon properly, but how to avoid the dangers that always attend its careless and ignorant handling, he gave him a gun for his very own with the understanding that it was never to be used as a plaything. Ned was very proud of his gun and made up his mind that very moment that he would make himself worthy of the confidence his father had in him.

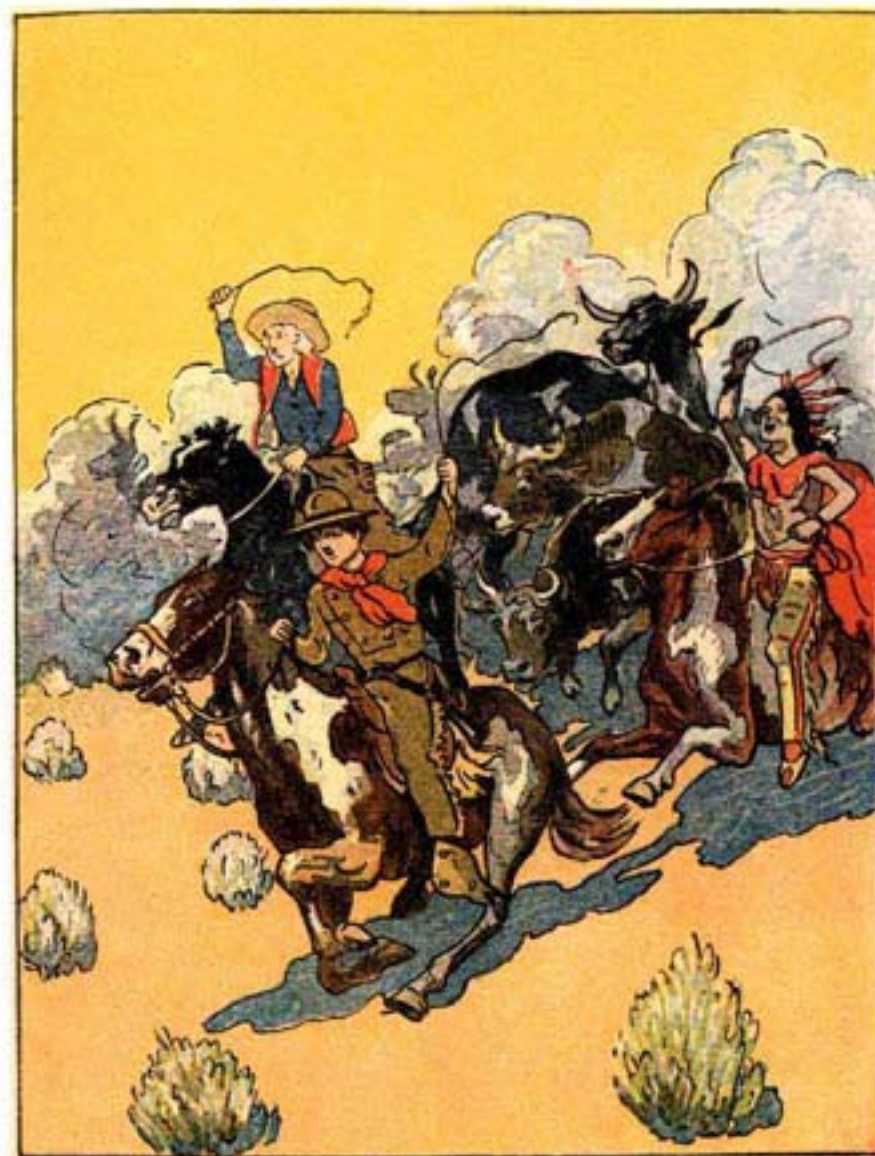
While Ned was busy turning over the potatoes that lay baking in the charring wood he heard a sound that made



him reach for his gun and look cautiously over the ledge of big rocks that formed a sort of fort all around him and Pete. What was his great surprise to see very near him creeping toward his camp, an Indian boy about his own age.

Quickly, gun in hand, he stealthily crept down the side of the hill keeping himself well hidden by the hugh rocks and low bushes. When he was directly opposite the sly little savage, Ned suddenly sprang up, giving a wild shout. At that very instant the Indian boy leaped into the air but Ned was too quick for him. "Hold up your hands!" he cried, shouldering his gun.

Little Black Hawk did as he was bidden for he had only a tomahawk and



THE STAMPEDE

his bow and arrow, and his keen wit told him they were no match for the firearms.

“Hugh,” he grunted, “me friendly.”

“I am, too,” answered Ned, “but I’d like you to put down your weapons and come up to the top of the ridge with me. I’m cooking dinner.”

Black Hawk came at once and before long Ned and the little redskin were good



friends and were enjoying dinner peacefully together. Black Hawk liked the things Ned had to eat and did full justice to the meal.

“Hugh,” he grunted, “Little White

Chief have good eats, fine clothes and beauty gun and pony."

Ned proudly showed him his gun and told him all about his home. While the boys sat talking they suddenly heard a heavy rumble like distant thunder. Both jumped to their feet but Black Hawk was first to speak for his keen, trained eye had detected the cause of the sound.

"Cattle running, great sport, good ride, come quick," he cried as he bounded down the ravine to where his pony stood hidden behind a great rock. Ned followed in a twinkling and through the dense cloud of dust that kept coming nearer and nearer he now could see hundreds of steers rearing and plunging in a wild mass. Here and there darted a man and



THE ROUND-UP

on one side he could make out his father helping to steer the mad rush of stampeded cattle.

The boys spurred their horses and eagerly dashed out on to the plains toward the corrals to where the cattle were headed. Black Hawk dashed in and out in the midst of the cattle where Ned dared not venture. He was simply fascinated as he watched the wonderful horsemanship and bold fearlessness of the little Indian.

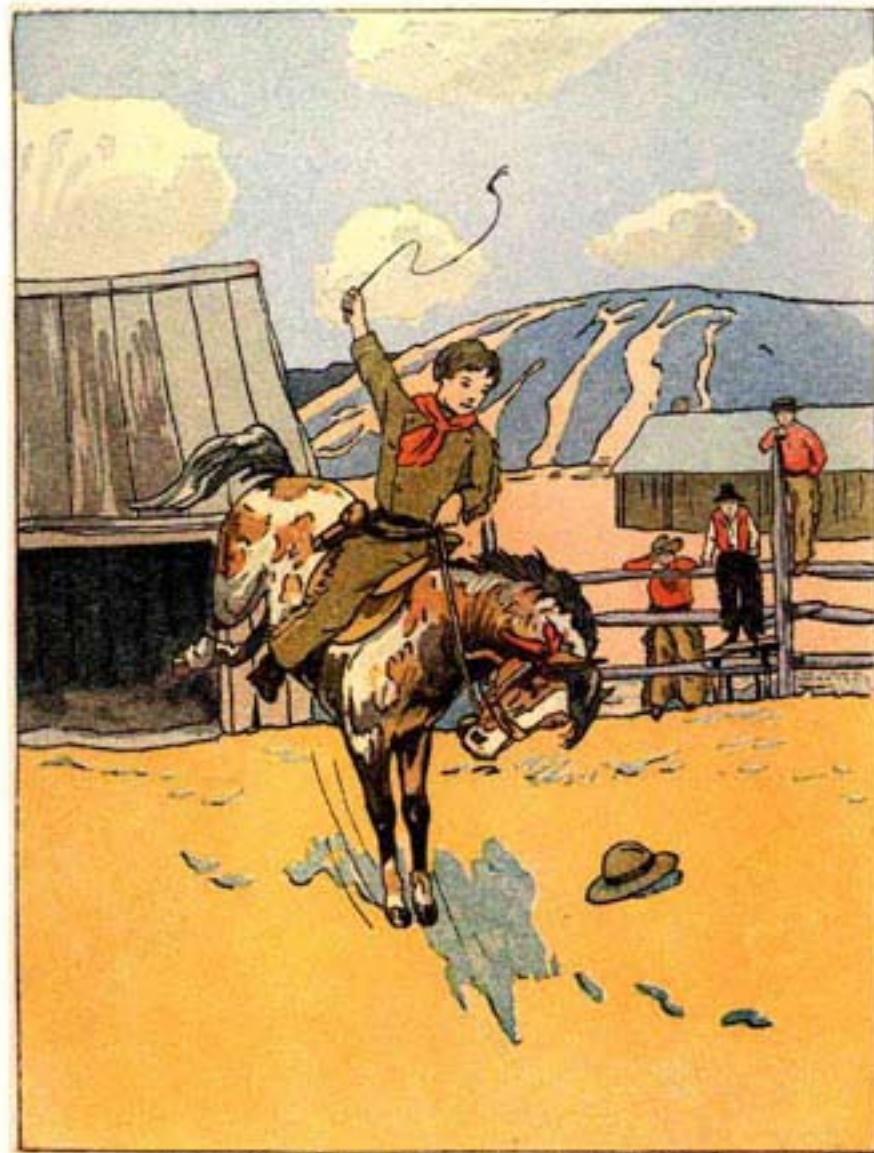


It was a mad ride, exciting alike to the men and their beasts, but soon they reached the ranch. Just then a calf broke

away from the herd and dashed off toward the yard surrounding the house. Quick as a flash Ned grabbed his lasso and swinging it above his head in true cowboy fashion rode after the runaway calf. Then just as it passed through the gate Ned threw the rope and—bravo—it dropped right over the calf's head. He pulled up his pony, down tumbled the calf and Ned felt quite the victor since it was the first time he had had a real chance to use his lasso.

Ned named the ranch the Golden Horn in honor of his first capture for as the calf developed into a steer he grew two beautiful shiny golden horns, Ned's pride.

One day Mr. Brown bought a drove of unbroken horses and exciting times



THE BUCKING BRONCO

followed for the men to train them to the use of the harness. Ned watched them every minute and when he could



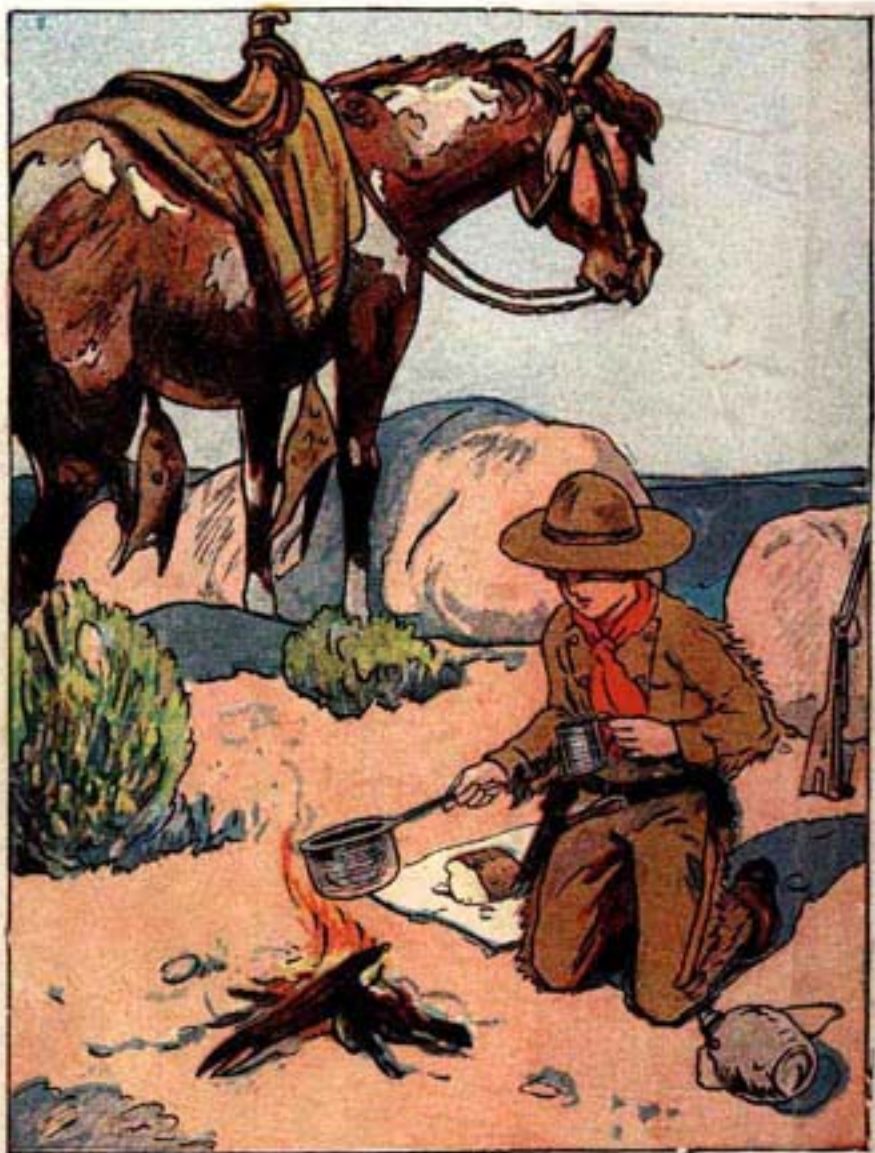
stand it no longer he begged his father to let him try to break in just one. Gaining his father's consent, he picked out a fine little broncho and at once began his difficult task.

As soon as the pony felt Ned on his back he kicked and bucked and reared and ran and tried dozens of ways to throw his rider but Ned stood the test well. He stuck to the broncho's back as if he had been glued and his persistence conquered the spirited little beast. Now

master of his mount, Ned rode past his father and the group of ranchmen watching him who cheered him lustily and praised his skill and courage.

“Father,” said Ned, “this is the life for me.”

“For me, too, Ned,” replied Mr. Brown. “And what a fine big manly fellow it is helping you to be. We are proud of our cowboy.”



The End.

