

# Bob Davis Recalls

*A dramatic and true short story about "A Little Operation"*

By Bob Davis

"**W**HAT you don't know won't hurt you," is one of those ancient aphorisms that come so frequently to human lips. When in doubt that is the correct thing to say. It has no virtue except to halt conversation. Some people think it ends discussion. Well, let's see about that.

In 1910, after spending a month in the Yellowstone and the Madison River country, I came out of the Park through the Livingston exit. Finding some difficulty in getting accommodations over the Northern Pacific, I remained in Livingston until the next day and spent the afternoon roaming around the town to see what I could see. About half a mile from the entrance to the Park I came upon a camp of sagebrushers, which, in the parlance

Some

of the West, means persons who prefer the great outdoors to the hotel systems. As a rule they are sturdy people hiking on foot or on horseback, by buckboard or prairie wagon, and they pick up an existence from the game of the hills and the fish of the streams. The automobile had not yet put in an appearance in the Park region. The bunch that attracted my attention were engaged in broncho busting.

Several "outlaw" mustangs were sunfishing about the place, and the wild whoop of the cow-punchers was on the air. I found a comfortable seat



THAT BUCKING,  
CHURNING, SKY-  
HITTING, SUNFISH-  
ING MUSTANG

Copyright, by Robert H. Davis

on a pile of saddle blankets under a spreading pine and sat down to enjoy the show. After a time I was joined by an elderly man whom I afterward came to know as Dr. Nafsinger, from Detroit. He was greatly entertained by the horse breaking, and expressed astonishment at the violence of the exercise.

"It is inconceivable how these men survive the repeated shocks to which they subject themselves," was his comment. "The whole spine is racked and the joints seem to be thrown out of articulation."

I tried to explain to him that the true broncho buster moved with his mount, rising, falling, and sidestepping without resistance, something in the manner of the wet rag on the animated clothesline; that the contortion was the termination of a movement begun by the horse and not by the rider. While we were discussing this complicated business of endangering life and limb a pale young man, dressed in cowboy attire, came along and stood beside us in the shade. His hips were narrow and his waist like a girl's. The chest was full and high, the arms long and restless, the back flat and the whole body erect as a tree. He was slapping his chaps with a rawhide quirt in rhythm with a bucking roan that was doing his best to unseat one of the common enemy, five of whom he had already tossed into the dust.

"Gents," said the youth, turning in our direction, "I ain't been feelin' very well lately, but if that hoss puts this man off I shore will ride him myself, and that ain't no lie." From the glint in his eye he meant what he said.

The roan stuck his dusty muzzle between his legs, arched his back and did a sunfish. The rider snatched at the forbidden bucking strap, missed it and spraddled aloft.

"What a heck of a mess," hissed the youth with the quirt as the roan sidestepped and let his dismounted rider drop to the landscape. "Hyere's

where I ride him."

A pair of cow-punchers with lariats caught up the roan and brought him back to the center of operations. Our young friend came forward eagerly.

"You kain't do it, Ed," said one of the bunch. "You air a sick man, hombre, and I allows that you better lay off of this cayuse fer a spell."

"What's the matter of me, I ask you?"

"I ain't the man fer to say, Ed, but you been ailin' and I figgers fer you not to ride to-day."

"Who else can do it, 'ceptin' me? I'll bust him so he'll stay busted. Gimme that halter." With that command, which seemed to carry conviction, he seized the lines at the bit and literally "took" the roan from the objector.

"Shake off them ropes," he commanded the lassuers, and the command was obeyed.

"What a foolhardy exhibition!" exclaimed Dr. Nafsinger as Ed lifted his thin white hand to the pommel of the saddle on the back of the quaking animal. "He's a sick man. God knows what's the matter with him. He can't possibly conquer that brute."

The roan began to fiddler crab away from the human leech who followed him like a dancing master. The pair appeared to move as one object until the cowboy rose lightly from the running earth and instantly melted like a wet rag into the saddle. He became part and parcel of every movement the horse made, his whole body attached to the roan like some inhuman thing riveted there for all time. Nothing that exists in the long list of mustang trickery was overlooked by that bucking, churning, skyhitting, sunfishing mustang. He exhausted the whole bag of tricks in the increasing frenzy of his acrobatic swan song.

At the height of his maneuvering the wild look suddenly faded from his bloodshot eyes and he halted with his legs distended. A quiver passed

through his frame, and then he wilted. Like a centaur his rider became erect, sweat pouring from his chin, the face pale as death, the eyes gleaming with unnatural brilliance. Behind that weird fire were the ashes of agony, but the roan outlaw was licked for all the rest of his days.

Dr. Nafsinger, with professional zeal, took the broncho buster into a near-by tent and subjected him to an examination. When he came out his face was grave indeed. With no intention of trespassing, I asked for particulars, but elicited no response. Doctors always treat me that way when they are professionally preoccupied.

Later in the day, as I was about ready to leave Livingston for New York, I met one of the bunch of cowboys at the depot.

"How's Ed?" I asked.

"Kinder rotten. 'Pears as how he has to have some kind of a little operation inside of hisself."

"For what?"

"Search me. Doctor says to me, confidential, that Ed has got this here new disease what they calls cancer. Whatever that is. Ed ain't been told yet. Well, what he don't know won't hurt him."

I wonder?

## BOB DAVIS FINALLY RECALLS A WEDDING AND SO DOES IRVIN COBB AS CAKE GREET'S THEM AT JASPER



JASPER NATIONAL PARK.—No man can escape his past. If you don't believe that ask Irvin S. Cobb, noted humorist, and Bob Davis, whose column "Bob Davis Recalls" fascinates and delights a million readers.

Here, in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, where both of them are seeking to escape the urgencies of the crowd, Kismet hit them on the button and knocked them both out for the count of ten.

Twenty-nine years ago, Bob Davis, then a struggling, underfed reporter, who knew a great deal less about human nature and golf than he does today, stood up at the altar with a beautiful young woman.

Supporting him was Irvin S. Cobb, equally as unknown, although not so badly underfed.

The lady of the trio was the only one to remember what had happened twenty-nine years ago this date. She happened to mention the fact to a friend in Jasper Park Lodge yesterday morning. The friend was Walter Pratt, general manager of the hotel system of the Canadian National Railways, a bachelor, and, therefore, more sentimental in these matters than a benedict.

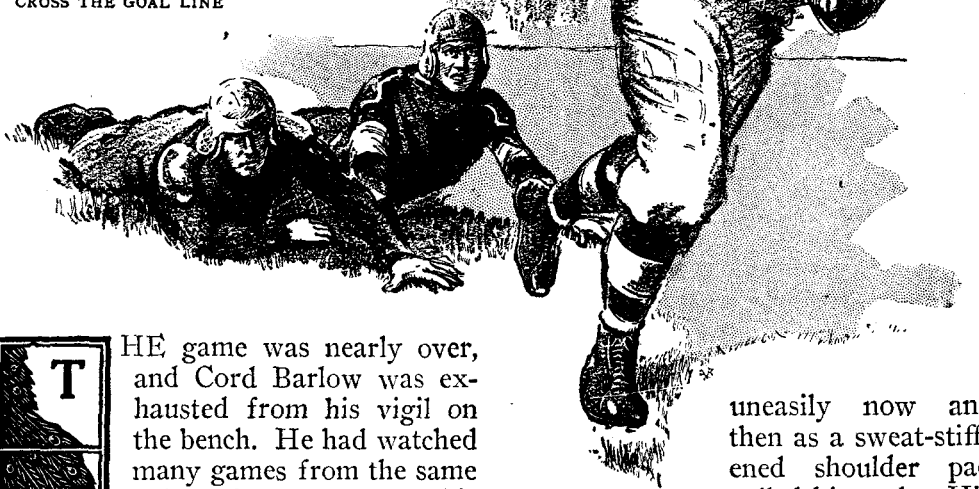
He invited the unsuspecting trio to a dinner last night and administered the knock-out blow to the man who can recall everything except his wedding anniversary by planting down before him and Mrs. Davis a three-layer wedding cake with orange blossoms, bells, hearts, and all the paraphernalia before which women worship and strong men shudder.—*From The Daily Province, Vancouver, British Columbia, September 20, 1928.*

# Forty=three Fifty=two

*The plaudits of the football crowd should have gone to the player who threw his personal devil for a total loss*

By Jackson Scholz

HE SAW CHUCK COLLINS  
CROSS THE GOAL LINE



HE game was nearly over, and Cord Barlow was exhausted from his vigil on the bench. He had watched many games from the same point of vantage, but this one, he reflected bitterly, would be his last.

They always tired him physically. He wondered dully why this should be so—merely watching them like this.

Barlow sat with a blanket pulled tightly over his shoulders, squirming

uneasily now and then as a sweat-stiffened shoulder pad galled his neck. His

eyes remained somberly fixed on a single dynamic figure on the field, the same player he had watched often before. It was almost a habit now.

It was a bad habit, too. He realized this, because the thing was slowly “getting” him. He had never before ex-