

# FROM DAYS GONE BY

## BACK TRAILING ON OPEN RANGE by Luke D. Sweetman Illustrated by L.D. Cram

### Sunday Creek

I was heading for the upper reaches of Sunday Creek one bright sunny day—it was calm and springlike. Snow had disappeared from valleys and for the most part the hills were bare. Cattle and horses grazed contentedly on old bunch grass now in sight everywhere. Near the head of the creek I came face to face with a band of grey wolves (often called loafers or buffalo wolves). They were coming down the creek straight toward me, traveling at

### Second in the series...

*Excerpts from classic hunting and outdoor literature.*

*This issue's excerpt was selected by the Club's Director of Big Game Records, Jack Reneau. The book was written by an old cowboy in 1950 and is about his experiences in eastern Montana during the 1880s.*

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So I said inwardly, "Here's where I may get a shot or two at easy range," and examined my six shooter as I rode on toward the wolves. I now realized they numbered at least two or three hundred and were not changing their course in the least but proceeding down the creek in defiance of what they saw, and all wolf rules and laws. Always under similar circumstances the wolf veers from his course, but they usually travel in pairs—seldom not more than four, and only once had I seen as

many as six together. Though buffalo hunters claim wolves sometimes traveled in large packs during the time of large buffalo herds, this may be due to the fact that buffaloes are good fighters themselves, and wolves who preyed on them stood a better shot when banded together in large numbers.

These shaggy monsters were as an army bearing down on me. It was evident they realized their strength; not at any time did one of them give an inch of ground while I rode half a mile steadily through the center of the pack. They passed within six feet of me on each side at the same time. Again neither of us changed our course or speed but the nearest ones looked straight into my eyes and took pains to show plenty of white teeth as if to challenge me. I could almost have poked the muzzle of my six-shooter against a wolf's ribs. Surely I would have got at least one or two wolves with six good bullets and until the last moment fully intended to do that but suddenly changed my mind, for blood starts a wolf when nothing else will. I thought fast, and said to the pack, "Hold your fire and I'll hold mine," for if blood had been drawn then how easy for a wolf to hamstring my horse, another to cut his throat—that done and the entire pack could have been on us in a moment, making my six-shooter valueless. That was the first and only pack of wolves I ever saw, and the only time I ever backed down on such a proposition, but I was grateful for a six gun full of lead to finish my ride through the pack and grateful for the small voice telling me what to do, otherwise I would not be here now to tell the tale. ■

