

ROBLEY D. EVANS -- THE FACTS

Born in Virginia 1846, son of a doctor. Reared in Southern tradition with a "Mammy", a pony, a gun, and a colored boy as possessions.

Went to Utah in 1859 in a wagon train which was ambushed, lost all its wagons and later its horses. Evans escaped with arrow through ^{both} his foot and his mule which pinned him to beast. Was taken to an Indian village where chief wanted to adopt him, promising him many ponies and one of his daughters to wife. Met Brigham Young. Reason he went to Utah was to be eligible for appointment to Naval Academy from that territory.

At Naval Academy when Civil War broke out. Naval Academy moved to Newport, Rhode Island for safety. Evans in dilemma about loyalty. Commandant, a remarkable man, induced him to stick with "the Old Flag". Mother terribly incensed, sent his resignation to Washington. Evans had resignation annulled. Mother disowned him.

Meanwhile brother had joined Confederate artillery and later became captain in Lee's scouts. Was badly wounded twice, nursed by his mother in Richmond.

Evans accidentally met brother in civilian clothes in Alexandria oyster house and gave his brother two dishes worth of oyster-consuming-time to escape. He and brother very close and no rancor over their divergent allegiance.

Evans in command of famous racing yacht America chasing Confederate raiders, later in Caribbean. Prior to Fort Fisher operation Evan's brother sent him a letter saying that "We will give you a warm welcome when you try to take Fort Fisher." Admiral violently upset about letter because the operation was supposed to be a complete secret.

On to Fort Fisher where amphibious assault was conducted under General Butler and Admiral Porter. Two naval battalions and one Marine battalion made frontal assault on the fortifications and were horribly battered -- not a single officer escaped at least one wound and only a handful of the men unscathed. Evans in hand to hand encounter with Confederates, wounded three times and left on beach for hours.

Evans to Norfolk where doctors decided to amputate both legs. Evans pulled pistol from under pillow and threatened to shoot anyone who touched him. By sheer will power and the expert nursing of a surgeon's daughter he pulled through. Was later operated on -- no amputation -- and went back to sea duty -- though he always limped thereafter.

Evans married a Washington, D.C. girl after the war. His career after that, boisterous, world-wide, and successful. He acquired the name "Fighting Bob" when, with one ship, he intimidated the Chileans into cancelling a declaration of war against the U.S.

He cleaned out the seal poachers in the Bering Sea and saved the animals from extinction.

In command of the battleship Iowa at the Battle of Santiago and there full of aggressive hellfire.

Story opens on Virginia plantation with focus on the conflicting of devotion and rivalry between two brothers. One loves the land, the other has a yen for the far places. One is high-spirited and impulsive, the other placid and deliberate. Butk both are attracted to the daughter of a near-by doctor. She likes the virtues of both lads but cannot make up her mind which she loves. Her attitude accentuates the divergent characters of the two boys and her indecision makes her appear as somewhat of a minx. What she really wants is a composite of the two temperaments.

In one scene where they are all children, she precipitates a fearful scrap between the two brothers. This ends with the two brothers completely reconciled and vowing that they will have done with women.

A few years later the boys, both in love with her, again are at odds. This time they do not make up so easily and one runs away to become a midshipman. The other, with an open field, cannot make progress with the girl, at all, now that his brother has left.

The Civil War breaks out. The midshipman is faced with a choice of remaining with the Union or going South. He has grave doubts and goes to see the girl. She spurns him for even doubting the justice of the Confederate cause and he goes away angry. His mother and brother side with the girl. He decides to stay with the North. His mother and the girl try to have him discredited with the Navy and thrown out as disloyal. This fails and off he goes to sea.

Meanwhile, the other brother enters the Confederate service. He tries to persuade the girl to marry him before leaving for the front but she refuses. He bears his brother no ill will, but feels that he will never win the girl unless he emulates his Northern brother's impetuosity.

He volunteers to go through the lines in civilian clothes as a courier. On this trip he encounters his Northern brother who faces the problem of arresting his brother or letting him escape. In the back of the Northerner's mind is the nasty kernel of an idea that with his brother in prison, he may at last have the girl to himself. His fraternal love wins and after exacting a solemn promise from his brother that he will take no military secrets back to the South, lets him escape in dramatic fashion.

The Fort Fisher amphibious assault by Northern Forces is now in the making. The rebel brother writes to his Northern brother about the sizzling reception that the South plans for the North when the attack starts.

In the battle, the two brothers face each other, one in the naval assault brigade, the other on the defended parapet. A Southern sharpshooter draws a bead on the Northern brother who is lying wounded and helpless in front of the fort. The Southern brother, after a momentary pause with the vision of the girl before him, knocks the sharpshooter's rifle and spoils the man's aim. Shortly thereafter, the Southerner is wounded himself. The last thing he sees before losing consciousness is his brother wounded again, apparently fatally.

The girl goes to Richmond to nurse the sick wounded Southerner. The wounded Confederate honestly believes that his brother is dead and tells the girl so. She finally consents to marry him.

Shortly after the marriage, she becomes pregnant. She ^{then} discovers that the Northern brother is still alive. She turns savagely on her husband, believing he had lied about the brother's death, and demands that she be given a pass through the lines to visit the Northerner in a Norfolk hospital. The Southerner helps her through the lines, then volunteers for a hazardous mission and recklessly tosses his life away in a cavalry charge.

The girl arrives at the Northerner's bedside and brings him back to health. The two hear of her husband's death and for the first time they really close ranks, each seeking support from the other. They are married and the happy closing thought is that she is bearing the brother's child, that their children will grow up without the agony of a divided family.