

The Story of a Forgotten Battle



THE BATTLE OF ROGERS' ROCK
Painting by Ferris, Courtesy Glens Falls Insurance Co.

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

THIS is the story of a forgotten battle in American history and of a forgotten leader. It took place 172 years ago and was only a minor incident in the long series of wars which decided definitely the question of French or English supremacy on the continent of North America. So that may be why it is forgotten. He made an enviable record during those wars but when there came the war from which we date the history of the United States as a nation, he "guessed wrong" as to where his allegiance should be. And that may be the reason why he is forgotten.

But in the military annals of America the Battle of Rogers' Rock, fought on March 13, 1758, near Lake George in New York holds a place that is almost unique. Attacked by a force of 100 French and 600 Indians, Maj. Robert Rogers and 151 of his Rogers' Rangers, fought from three o'clock in the afternoon until nightfall before retreating. In that battle the Rangers killed 150 of the enemy but they suffered a loss of 100 killed—one of the largest casualty lists, in proportion to the number of men engaged, it is believed, in American warfare.

Yet this was only one of a number of desperate enterprises which made the name Rogers' Rangers a synonym for a daring and resourceful type of fighting man and which caused his enemies to regard him as a "dreaded partisan." Rogers was born in Dunbarton, N. H., in 1727, the son of James Rogers, an early settler of that place. His youth was spent as a hunter and trapper in the forests of New England and Canada and his familiarity with the Indians and Indian methods of warfare were to make him invaluable to the British generals in the French and Indian war. At the opening of that conflict in 1755 Rogers led a force of hardy woodsmen from New Hampshire to Albany, N. Y., where the British and Colonial forces were being assembled for an attack on the French forts at Crown Point and Ticonderoga. He is described at that time as "over six feet high and physically the most powerful man in the army." Sir William Johnson, the great Colonial leader, knowing of Rogers' reputation, used him and his men as scouts. Making his headquarters at Fort William Henry, a new post erected by the British at the south end of Lake George, Rogers began a series of forays against the French and their Indian allies.

His courage and skill exceeded only by his boldness, Rogers' exploits have made him an almost legendary figure so that it is difficult to separate the fiction from the fact in some of the stories told about him. One incident is typical. Accompanied by two companions, Rogers set out in a canoe on a scouting expedition toward Ticonderoga. They were discovered by a party of French encamped on the shore of Lake George, but instead of beating a hasty retreat they pretended to be fishermen and all day long they floated within gunshot distance of the enemy, baiting their hooks and dropping them into the clear waters of the lake. Then, so the story goes, they had the frontory to sell their catch to the French and at evening pushed on toward Ticonderoga. Failing in their desire to capture a prisoner, they made their way back to the British lines under cover of a snowstorm.

So valuable did Rogers and his New Hampshire woodsmen prove to be as scouts and fighters that at the opening of the spring campaign in 1756, he was given a special commission by the Earl of Loudon, commander in chief of the British forces in America, to raise a picked corps of bush fighters who were to receive the same pay as the regulars but who were to carry on their operations in their own way. Thus came into existence that splendid body of military irregulars, known as Rogers' Rangers, whose prowess won the respect of both the British and the French. One of Rogers' lieutenants was another New Hampshireman, John Stark, later the victor at the battle of Bennington. Another who was closely associated with Rogers in some of his most daring exploits was from Connecticut—Israel Putnam, "Old Put" of Runkers Hill and Long Island. Both Stark and Putnam received from Rogers training in military leadership which stood them in good stead during the Revolution. But the fame which it brought them passed by their old commander and comrades in arms.

From time to time during the war the Rangers were gradually increased from their original strength of 62 men to more than a thousand. Their official instructions were "to use their best endeavors to distress the French and their allies, by sacking, burning and destroying their houses, barns, barracks, canoes, batteries, etc., and by killing their cattle of every kind; and at all times to endeavor to destroy their convoys of provision by land and water, in every part of the country." And no body of troops ever carried out their orders more thoroughly than did these partisans. At that time the French were offering the Indians sixty francs for every English scalp taken but they would willingly have paid a hundred times that amount for the scalp of Robert Rogers. All during 1756 the Rangers harassed the enemy.

In May, 1757, the Rangers were sent to Halifax to join the expedition against Louisbourg and during the absence occurred in August the siege and capture of the fort and the terrible massacre which followed. By December, however, Rogers and his men were back on their old stamping ground again giving the French commanders something to worry about. One of his most daring, as well as most impudent, exploits took place on Christmas eve of 1757. In a sudden dash against Ticonderoga he set fire to the woodpiles of the garrison and killed seventeen head of cattle. To the horns of one of the heaves he attached a note to the commander in the fort which said: "I am obliged to you, sir, for the repose you have allowed me to take. I thank you for the fresh meat you have sent me. I will take care of my prisoners. I request you to present my compliments to the Marquis de Montcalm. (Signed) Rogers, Commander of the Independent Companies."



JOHN STARK



ISRAEL PUTNAM



MAJOR ROBERT ROGERS

But the French were soon to have an opportunity to pay off some old scores against the daring Ranger. On March 10, 1758, Rogers was ordered to lead an expedition of 180 Rangers against Ticonderoga. Since the capture of Fort William Henry, the enemy had been very active and strong forces of the Indians were scouting the country in every direction. Knowing this, Rogers protested that the force given him was too large for a scouting party and too small to hold its own in a pitched battle. He asked for 400 men but his request was refused. With 15 Rangers on skates as an advance guard, Rogers' little army advanced by night over the frozen surface of Lake George to within eight miles of Ticonderoga. There his advance guard saw what they believed to be the glow of a campfire. But when Rogers marched forward swiftly to attack, no sign of an enemy could be found and the commander concluded that his scouts had been mistaken.

As a matter of fact, they had not been. For the enemy had hastily extinguished their camp fire when the approach of the Rangers was discovered and had sent word to the fort of the coming of the English. Early the next morning Rogers and his men resumed their march on snowshoes through snow four feet deep. Early in the afternoon the Rangers discovered a party of about 100 hostile Indians near at hand and immediately attacked, killing nearly half of them. Believing this was the entire force of the enemy, Rogers pushed on, only to find himself facing over 600 well-armed Indians and Canadians who had been sent from Ticonderoga to meet him.

The Ranger captain, seeing that his little force would soon be wiped out, ordered them to retreat to their former position near what is now known as Rogers' Rock. But before they had reached there more than a third of their number had been slain. With cool desperation, Rogers and his men made a stand there and tried to beat off the angry horde which surged around them. On the left of his line, where he had posted a detachment to prevent his being flanked, Lieutenant Phillips and ten men were taken prisoners by the enemy, tied to trees in sight of their friends and hacked to pieces by the Indians.

Seeing that his command was doomed if he tried to hold his ground, Rogers, with 20 men, rushed to an icy precipice over a hundred feet high which sloped abruptly down to the lake. Jumped over the brink and slid down to the lake with terrific force. This place, on the shores of Lake George, known as "Rogers' Slide" or "Rogers' Leap," is pointed out to the tourist of today who is told how the Ranger leader escaped there from the Indians who, believing he had slid down the precipice under the protection of the Great Spirit, made no attempt at further pursuit. However, Windsor, the historian, says, "The legend of Rogers' slide near the lower end of Lake George has no stable foundation."

Reports on the casualties of the two forces also vary. One version is that Rogers had 170 men and lost 100, as against the enemy's loss of 150 of their 700. Another version says that Rogers lost "108 of his force of 180." An official French report states that Monsieur de la Durantaye, "an officer of the colony at the head of 200 savages and some Canadians, entirely destroyed a detachment of 160 English whom they met three leagues

from the fort. We lost in this occasion, 20 savages killed and wounded."

There was great rejoicing among the French that this "dreaded partisan" had been killed and his followers annihilated. But they were mistaken in regard to Rogers. During the fray Rogers had cast aside his coat, in the pocket of which the French found his commission. This gave rise to the belief that he was dead. But he was very much alive and early in 1759 he was again at the head of a party of Rangers, acting as advance guard for the magnificent English army which General Abercrombie was preparing to hurl against Ticonderoga. He served valiantly in that campaign which ended in such a dismal failure, due to the stupidity of the English general, and distinguished himself by cutting to pieces the advance party of 300 French under Langy. In this fight Rogers captured 150, killed 100, leaving only 50 to escape to Montcalm's party.

Later that year Sir Jeffrey Amherst sent Rogers and his Rangers to destroy the Indian village of St. Francis near the St. Lawrence river, which he did successfully, killing 200 Indians, taking many prisoners and laying the village utterly to waste. "Then, to elude parties endeavoring to cut him off, he retreated to Lake Memphremagog to Charlestown, on the Connecticut, enduring as he went the excruciating horrors of famine and exhaustion." The next year he was ordered by Amherst to take possession of Detroit and other western posts that were ceded by the French after the fall of Quebec. Ascending the St. Lawrence with 200 Rangers, he visited Fort Pitt, had an interview with the great chief Pontiac at a place which is believed to have been the present site of Cleveland, Ohio, and successfully took possession of Detroit.

After the war he visited England and suffered from poverty until he borrowed money with which to print his Journal, which is the principal source of information about his famous career. He presented this to the king and in 1765 was appointed commandant at Michillimackinac. While holding this office he was accused of plotting to plunder his own fort and hand it over to the French. He was sent to Montreal in irons and court-martialed. In 1769 he revisited England but was soon imprisoned for debt. Later he returned to this country and as the Revolutionary struggle drew near it became apparent that he was doubtful whether to cast his lot with the Patriots or the Tories.

In 1775 it was rumored that he had been in Canada and had accepted a commission under the king. He was also accused of dressing as an Indian and acting as a spy on the Patriots. Washington was so suspicious of him that he ordered him arrested, although Stark and others who had served with him in the Rangers do not seem to have shared the distrust of him. Eventually he was placed upon parole, but, embittered, it is said by his treatment, broke his parole and openly joined the British forces. He accepted a commission of colonel and raised a command called the Queen's Rangers.

In 1776 he narrowly escaped capture by the Continentals and soon after this returned to England. In 1778 he was proscribed and formally banished. In England his later career was described as "wild, improvident and extravagant." He was divorced by his wife and is said to have died some time after 1800, "a victim to his evil habits."

Prejudice against the Tories among the early American historians, no doubt, is largely responsible for the fact that Maj. Robert Rogers is a "forgotten leader." Had fate intervened differently when he was wavering between his king and his native land, he might have shared with Gen. Daniel Morgan that intrepid leader's fame as a commander of a "partisan corps" during the Revolutionary struggle. For certainly Morgan's Rifle men served no more brilliantly during the struggle for American independence than did Rogers' Rangers during the struggle to establish English supremacy over the French a decade earlier.

THE ADORABLE LIAR

By D. J. Walsh

THESE are various factors involved in the choice of a husband and Rita Langdon tried to consider them all. Not that Rita deliberately set herself to the task of achieving matrimony. That would have been no task at all, but even the most confirmed business woman looks forward eventually to a husband, babies and a home. And Rita was no exception.

For the present she was well satisfied with her position in the office of the Carpo bookbindery. There were a number of nice boys employed in the bookbindery, but one after another Rita had eliminated them as prospective suitors. Then two new additions to the office staff came to claim her lagging interest—the boss son and the new young man. And Rita took special care with her dainty brown hair, her clear young complexion and her tidy dresses.

Rita was sitting very quiet, but quite occupied in an obscure corner of the dingy sockroom. Soon John Benson, the new young man, came in and busied himself with a pile of book covers on a bench across the room. Rita remained silent, but observant. In a few minutes the apple man came into the room. Every one in that district knew the apple man, a small, gray, bent and feeble old man who tottered from office to office selling apples to clerks, bookkeepers and sundry workers.

"Hello, Dad," greeted Benson as the old man shuffled into the room. "Feeling pretty spry today?" "Pretty spry for my age, I reckon," answered the apple vendor. "And I've got another birthday today."

"Really? Congratulations. And how old are you, if I may ask?" "Guess," invited the old fellow.

Benson wrinkled his brows in an appraising look which was calculated to convey the impression of being very keen and searching. "Not much over sixty, I should judge," he finally ventured. "I'd say about sixty-four."

"He-he-he, you're way off," chuckled the old chap in delight. "I'm eighty-four today."

"No," gasped Benson, as if greatly astonished. "You surely don't look it. Why, you're as spry and youthful as a man of sixty."

"Yes, sir," chuckled the octogenarian. "I ain't many men of my age can get around like I can."

Just then Sam Carpo, son of the boss, came into the room. The apple man turned to him in anticipated delight. "Got a birthday today, but you can't guess how old I am."

Carpo glanced casually at the wrinkled face and stooped figure, then replied: "Oh, about eighty-four or eighty-five."

The old man's face drooped perceptibly and his body sagged even more, if that were possible. All the joy went out of his dim eyes.

"Do I look that old?" he asked slowly.

"Oh, he just overheard you telling me, that's how he knew," exclaimed John Benson, striving hastily to reassure the old man. "And say, I'm just starving for some apples, give me about a dozen of them."

After the apple man had left Benson turned angrily upon the haughty offspring of his employer.

"Say, you're a fine egg, you are," he accused. "Couldn't you have lied a little to the old man—told him he looked younger, just to make him feel good?"

"Well, he looks all of eighty-four, doesn't he?" argued Carpo.

"Sure he does," agreed Benson, "but it wouldn't have hurt you to guess twenty less just to make the old fellow happy. There's so much misery often you can make a person happy with just a simple little lie."

"Huh, why should I worry?" answered Carpo nonchalantly as he left the room.

As the door slammed behind him Rita came out of the concealment of her obscure corner and confronted John Benson.

"Pardon me for listening in," she announced, "but I heard you lie to the old man."

Benson turned with a start. "Didn't know you were in here," he said. "I'm afraid you've got me catagorized now as a—er—a penurious fabricator."

"Not at all," Rita replied sweetly. "I think that an adorable lie. It was really a gallant gesture and shows a fine consideration for other people's feelings. I like folks who are kind and thoughtful of others."

"Thanks—oh—an apple," the young man stammered. Now, this tale is merely intended to

illustrate the great influence of small events in shaping our destiny. Of course, it may be that John and Rita would have fallen in love and married even without the initial impetus of this "adorable lie" incident. I don't pretend to know what might have happened.

But I do know that on this afternoon they sat perched on high office stools munching apples, munching, swapping family histories and telling secrets. I am also told that young people work fast these days, and this information I deem quite correct, for that very same night John took Rita to a theater. Within two weeks they were engaged and within two months they were married.

The following year John set up in business for himself, with Rita's help, and established the Benson bookbindery. A year later Rita dropped definitely out of all business activity, for a certain John Benson, Jr., demanded much time and attention.

Every day a decrepit old man, bent and gray, comes into the Benson bookbindery with a basket of apples over his arm. The head of the firm invariably buys an apple, then remarks how young and spry the vendor appears.

"Yes, sir," chuckles the old man, happily. "Ain't many men my age can get around like I can."

And John Benson nods in fervid agreement, for he is conscious of a deep obligation to the old man. Besides, he must maintain his reputation as an "adorable liar."

Falls of Niagara as Pictured by Hennepin

Father Louis Hennepin saw Niagara when he went West to the upper Mississippi with La Salle's expedition in 1678. He had a poor eye for distances, for in successive narratives he measures Niagara's height as 500 and 600 feet, instead of its maximum of 162, but he had a flair for vivid word pictures:

"Betwixt the Lake Ontario and Erie there is a vast and prodigious cadence of water which falls down after a surprising and astonishing manner, in form that the universe does not afford its parallel. 'Tis true Italy and Switzerland boast of some such things, but we may well say they are but sorry patterns when compared to this of which we now speak."

It (the River Niagara) is so rapid above the descent that it violently hurries down the wild beasts while endeavoring to pass it to feed on the other side, they not being able to withstand the force of its current, which inevitably casts them down headlong above 600 feet. . . .—New York Times.

Norwegian Hero
Olav Trygvasson was king of Norway from 1000-1014. He began his career in exile, fought for the Emperor Otho III and frequently raided the coast of France and the British Isles until he became converted to Christianity. He went to Norway and was accepted as king in 965. He immediately began to convert the country to Christianity. Olav was defeated in battle by the combined Swedish and Danish fleets. He fought to the last on his great ship known as the Long Snake, and finally leaped overboard and was seen no more. After his death he became the hero of his people, who constantly looked for his return.

Wasted Regrets
Regrets are a sheer waste of time. When we indulge in them, we again come the experience we are regretting. So in a measure we suffer our sorrow and discontent again. Surely, to live over again the unhappiness of life is folly of the worst kind. And yet many of us love to keep friends with the untoward happenings of our past. Strictly speaking, we ought to have done with them. They belong to the limbo of the past—there let them lie.—London Tit-Bits.

Dahlia Originally Wild
The dahlia was first discovered in Mexico in 1615, where it was growing in the wilderness of the Sierras in myriads of colors. The Spanish botanists Cervantes and Cavanilles were the first to appreciate the greatness of this flower. Seeds of the dahlia were received at the royal gardens at Madrid in 1789 by Abbe Cavanilles.

The first of these seeds flowered in 1790, producing semi-double flowers, which were named after Dr. Andrew Dahl, a Swedish botanist.

Grammatical
An authority on correct English speaks as follows in regard to the position of personal pronouns connected by the conjunction: "When two or more personal pronouns in the singular are connected by 'and,' the second person precedes the first and the third, and the third person precedes the first; when the pronouns are used together in the plural number, the first person precedes the second and the third, and the second person precedes the third."

Standards of Beauty Vary the World Over
Standards of beauty differ all over the world and, as the modern western woman knows to her cost, with her decade. In Morocco a bride is delightfully fattened up with all sorts of "beauty foods," mostly cereals, milk and dates; in New Ireland in the South seas they will keep a girl literally years to make her plump enough for loveliness according to the local standard. I have seen utterly "fat" beauties in the Near East and the utterly flat, un feminine-looking womanhood of China, where curves are regarded as the height of immodesty. Chinese women strap down their breasts from girlhood, in every way suppressing any suggestion of femininity.

Care of the hair is an inextinguishable subject; the Eskimo lady uses reindeer marrow for pomatum; in Fiji they use scented oil and the gum of the breadfruit tree as a kind of stiffener; in the Society Islands of the South seas, where burnt coral serves as hair dye, there is even a god of hair dressers. Totoropova is his

name. The Japanese woman, whose coiffures tell the history of her life and status, sleeps on a wooden pillow in order not to disturb the arrangement which takes hours to achieve, as I know to my cost, having awaited "my turn" in a Japanese hair dresser's shop.

Permanent waving was known to beauties in the time of Nero, according to historians who credit a favorite of the emperor with having made the initial experiment by remaining three weeks in a hot Roman bath, her hair in curlers securely packed with clay. Chinese wear a "bang" plastered down with gum; the Near Eastern woman rejoices in henna dye which strengthens and thickens the locks and is valued not only as a hair dye but also to tint toes, heels and finger tips. The great majority of women in oriental countries stain their feet with henna, sometimes binding their legs with ribbons sandalwise before applying the dye, in order to produce a patterned effect.—Lady Drummond Hay in the Mentor Magazine.

A Few Little Smiles

EASILY EXPLAINED

Dear Old Lady—You say you were the only survivor of all the twelve ship-wrecked sailors?
Old Salt—Yessum.

Dear Old Lady—How was it you lived when all the rest died?
Old Salt—Well, you see all we had to eat was our shoes.

Dear Old Lady—Yes, but how did you—
Old Salt—Oh, I wore bigger shoes.

WIDOW'S WEEDS



Miss Perch—How nice of you to trim your hat with widow's weeds in memory of your dear husband.
Mrs. Trout (a widow)—And so in expensive, too. It's sewed!

Waiting for a Ride
The gangster's time slips on its way. With care he must employ it. He grabs a fortune in a day. But can't live to enjoy it.

As Advertised
Installation Collector—See here, you're several installments behind on your piano.
Purchaser—Well, the company advertises, "Pay as you play."
Collector—What's that got to do with it?
Purchaser—I play very poorly.

Getting Thawed Out
Blinks—His wife looks like she might have been weaned on snowballs and brought up in a refrigerator.
Jinks—Yes, and living with a human icicle like that you can't blame him for sneaking out with a red-hot mamma now and then to get thawed out.

Absolutely Fresh
Customer—Are these eggs really fresh?
Grocer—Madam, if you'll step over to the phone and call up my poultry farm you will be able to hear the cackle of the hens that laid those very eggs.

Why the Traffic Jams
"I hate those imprudent complexions, don't you?"
"What do you mean?"
"Those they make up as they go along."

OVERTRAINED



"The great athlete dies because he was overtrained."
"Yes; fell under the cars and was out in half."

Learning to Shoot
There, little boy king, don't you cry. You'll be a gunman Bye and bye!

No Quarrel Possible
"Do you ever quarrel with your wife?"
"Never," answered Mr. Meekton. "My parents thoroughly impressed me with the impropriety of interrupting a lady when she is talking."—Washington Star.

Restless
"Jim, I hear you've retired."
"Yes."
"Well, how are you old boss?"
"Well, I miss the harness."

Issue Undecided
"Why didn't you go to the help of the defendant?" asked the examining counsel. "You saw that the two men were fighting."
"Yes," said the witness, "but I had no means then of telling which one was going to be the defendant."

Mail Student
"Why do you always address the letter carrier as 'professor'?"
"It's a sort of honorary title. I'm taking a course by mail."

Holding Them in Line
"However do you manage to hold your constituents in line?"
"By means of the social instinct," answered Senator Sorghum. "For some mysterious reason everybody likes to shake hands."—Washington Star.

Ingenuous Idea
Hat-Shop Assistant—What size of hat does your husband take, madam?
Customer—I'm not sure of the size, but try them on this melon. His hat fits it exactly.—Humorist.