

## The Red Road

A Romance of Braddock's Defeat

By Hugh Pendexter

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

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### CHAPTER IX—Continued

With the shattered army in a wild rout the Onondaga and I fell back to the wagons where I had left the girl. I stepped over a man dying from arrow wounds and would have left him had I not recognized him as Busby, my old playmate. This was a sorry ending of all our boyish dreams, when we played at Indian fighting and always emerged the victors. For love of the old days, I caught him around the shoulders and yelled for the Onondaga to pick him up by the heels. The Indian had no desire to interrupt his fighting by helping one as good as dead. Yet he would not leave me, and he did as I directed, and we managed to get Busby to the first wagon.

Busby stared at me vacantly at first, then knew me, and tried to pull me down to him. I knelt and he faintly whispered: "What d—d fools we've been, Web. Tell Joe I'm sorry."

It was his last effort, and he was dead when I straightened up. The savages were now assaulting the wagons from both sides. We fought our way through the terribly unequal melee. It did look as if not a man would survive the day unless it be some of those who had taken to trees outside the road, or who had cut the horses loose from the wagons and had fled at the beginning of the battle. Dunbar the Tardy was still in the rear. It was just as well. The more men crowding into the road simply meant more victims.

"This way, Brown! Brown-hair's here!" howled a voice in my ear. Cromit was speaking. His mouth was fixed in a ghastly grin, his eyes set and staring. He was bleeding from a wound in the head.

"This is a severe wring," he shouted, and fired a soldier's musket at a painted face showing at the side of a tree.

Then with a screech that sounded above the groans and shrieks of the wounded and the yells of the savages, he dove into the bushes. The next moment he staggered back into the road, with a knife buried in his breast, and yet dragging after him a stalwart Ottawa he had clutched by the throat. The two fell at our feet, and with a final effort Cromit tore the red throat open; and so the two died and went among the ghosts.

Dun Morgan was down and the witch-girl was standing over him, an ax in one hand, her pistol in the other.

"Get out of here! Go to the river!" I cried to her.

"Can't leave him," she panted. "Kiss me, mister!"

I kissed her, believing it was very close to the last act in my life. And I pitied her as I had never pitied any one in my life. Morgan got up on his knees. He had been shot through the back of the neck, the ball passing through his mouth and taking several teeth with it. He gained his feet and pushed the girl toward us.

"Must get him!" he told me as I seized the girl and began working my way along the wagons. Many of the drivers already were in flight, each to announce himself to be the only survivor of the massacre, and I despaired of securing an animal for the girl.

Morgan went ahead; after the girl came the Onondaga and myself. Round Paw endeavored to shield her from the cross-fire of the hidden savages. He reeled, then raised his war-whoop and swung his ax, and I saw the white paw on the chest was turning crimson.

A wounded Potawatomi rolled from the bushes like a dying snake and coiled about his legs in an attempt to trip him and bring him to the ground. Round Paw quieted him with a swing of the ax and shouted:

"Yo-hah! It is good. They say two very brave men will soon die! Yo-hah!" Then in a mighty voice he told the concealed foe:

"I am a man of the Wolf clan. My teeth are sharp. Ho! Ho! Come on and help a brave man die like a chief."

He would have penetrated the cover in search of a worthy antagonist had I not forcibly restrained him. Dead man, dying men, crazy men; and the last were the worst of all. We ran almost as much risk from our own soldiers as we did from the fort Indians. Especially was this true concerning the Onondaga. Morgan was keeping his feet bravely and the girl was willingly accompanying him, and even helping him, so long as her backward glances told her the Onondaga and I were following. But did we pause to meet a rush from the woods, then did she hold back and attempt to gain my side.

With a hoarse cry Morgan seized a horse by the nose as the frightened animal burst through the bushes and into the road. Other hands tried to appropriate the prize, but I brushed them back and tossed the girl on the

back of the crazed brute. Morgan motioned for me to mount.

"Take her out of this! For G—d's sake lose no time!" I cried.

"She sorter seems to like you—" he began, but I lifted him up and placed him behind her and struck the horse on the flank with my rifle-barrel.

I knew she cried out although I could not hear what she said. She made to dismount, but young Morgan passed an arm around her slim waist, and the horse plunged down the road toward the ford. But I shall never forget the expression of her small face as she stared helplessly back at me and the Onondaga.

During this brief bit of action the Indian had been wounded again, this time in the head. We fell back, shoulder to shoulder. An arrow whizzed into my arm and the Onondaga broke off the quivering shaft. Arrow or bullet raked my forehead and threatened to fill my eyes with blood had I not snatched a neck-cloth from a dead man's neck and improvised a bandage.

The savages were now overrunning the first division of wagons, succumbing to their lust for plunder. Only this avariciousness saved those in the road below the wagons from being exterminated. As it was, fifty of the Indians pursued us to the Monongahela and killed almost at every step. The regulars had thrown away arms, accouterments and clothing and, when overtaken, died stupidly like oxen.

The curt crack of the rifles on each side of the road marked the cool retreat of our provincials. They were fighting steadily and composedly, and their resistance discouraged a final onslaught that might have cost the life of every Englishman on the fort side of the river. We were within a few rods of the river, which was filled with frantic fugitives, when five of the pursuing savages closed in on Round Paw and me. I had the barrel of my rifle left and my ax. One man went down beneath the barrel. I slipped and fell on him. A knife stabbed through the calf of my left leg, but the man under me was dead.

"Yo-hah! Tell his ghost I sent you!" yelled the Onondaga, and my assailant fell dead across me.

I got to my feet and beheld the Onondaga in the clutches of two savages, the fifth having passed on to overtake other victims. Before I could lend a hand one of my friend's assailants, an Ottawa, choked and went limp with Round Paw's knife through his throat.

"They say a brave man of the Wolf clan of the Onondaga will soon die!" panted Round Paw, and he essayed to sound his war-whoop as he and the remaining savage wound their arms about each other and fell.

I patted them apart and raised my ax, but the French Indian was dying by the time I could yank him clear of my friend. He was a Mingo, one of the Senecas who had preferred the Ohio to the Genesee.

"A brave man has killed me," he faintly said.

The Onondaga propped himself up on one elbow and feebly waved his ax, but his voice rang out so strong I did not believe he was seriously hurt. He proudly proclaimed:

"Yo-hah! A good fight! This man did me a very great honor. He fought well. But the Wolf has strong sharp teeth—Ha-hum-weh—Ha-hum-weh—Ha-hum-weh—"

And he dropped dead across the body of the dead man who had killed him.

I entered the river above the ford to escape the crowd of fugitives, some of whom were drowned in their mad haste to make the crossing. Busby, Cromit and Round Paw had paid the price of a stubborn man's ignorance. Of all those who would never return from the fatal errand I would miss the Onondaga the most; and after him Cromit of the mighty hands. And there was another ache in my heart as I visioned the fair Josephine, waiting in old Alexandria for her lover to return. Out of twenty-nine gallant men to ride from the old town, only four were to go back.

My last backward glance at the ford beheld Colonel Washington's horse crumpling beneath him. At first I thought he, as well as his mount, was hit. But he was quickly up and catching a riderless horse and swinging into the saddle. Then, with his back to the ford, he rode through the trees, now vanishing, now appearing, and close in front of him was a fringe of his riflemen, fighting calmly and deliberately. This action of the rear-guard was made up of many individual duels. The Virginians' trick of having two men behind a tree invigorated many a screaming savage into the path of a deadly bullet. A rifleman would fire, when sure of his target, and some painted warriors would rush to dis-

patch him before he could reload. His companion would fire and check the charge. This was repeatedly done, and done as calmly and coolly as a man would work in curing his tobacco.

There was no pursuit beyond the ford, although only weariness, or their love of plunder, prevented them from killing us for many a long mile. Later the colonials learned that Dunbar's retreat was unexpected and the French hastened back to the fort, still believing they would be attacked. Those who had fled on horses were well on their way to the first crossing, or far beyond it.

I suppose it was the evening of that same day that I came to a stumbling halt at the edge of an opening and stared across a large cleared space. The spot was familiar, and with a shock I suddenly discovered it was on the Allegheny and about half a mile above Duquesne. I did not lose my wits again. From that moment on my memory is painfully exact.

Savages were singing and dancing around some stakes. I counted twelve of the stakes, and to each was fastened an inert charred figure. From the red coats and other trophies being displayed I knew the dead men had been regulars and that they had died by torture. I was glad they were through with all and were beyond all further misery.

I must have been very weak when I came to my senses on the edge of the clearing, for I could not have tasted food during my blind wanderings. The shock of the twelve stakes, however, gave me something that answered for physical strength, and I fell back rapidly from the dangerous neighborhood.

There were no Indians abroad in the forest, for none was willing to miss the feasting and drinking and torture, let alone the distribution of the rich booty. Moving painfully and without sighting any human being I came to the rough country at the head of Turtle creek and forded and gained the army's camp on Rush creek. It did not seem possible that seventy-odd hours before Braddock's army had halted here. That was far back among the old things, as the Indians would have expressed it.

Then by slow stages I followed the Braddock road back to the Great Meadows. All along the road were muskets and accouterments, discarded by those who had passed over the road ahead of me; and there was no need to be saving of powder and lead. It did seem as if all the buzzards in North America had come to western Pennsylvania, and never have I seen bears so plentiful. There is a story based on the Monongahela battle to the effect that the bears grew to have a contempt for human beings after eating the dead of Braddock's army. I never placed credence in the story, but I can vouch that the brutes were not easily frightened by my approach. I shot several but depended upon rabbits, turkeys and a deer for food. More than once I had to fight my nerves before I could approach a huddled form in the road ahead, fearing it might be the girl. Just beyond the Meadows I came upon three men cooking deer-meat over a little fire. They were wild-looking creatures and at my approach sprang up and snatched for their guns.

"Have any of you seen a wagoner on a horse, Dan Morgan by name?" I called to them. "And was he riding double with a fellow younger than he?"

"Devil take your man Morgan and t'other feller!" cried one of them "Git out of sight afore I lose my patience. I promised my youngsters a French scalp. By the Eternal! Your hair might do just as well! Fat crops in and growing, and now we must quit 'em and fort ourselves. Curse the day we ever heard the name of Braddock."

"We'll do our own fighting in our own way next time," bawled one of the other men.

His words fell idly on my ears yet I was to live to recall them, and to realize the fellow had unwittingly uttered the one great truth that the battle of the Monongahela taught us—self-dependence. From the beginning of the colonies, we had relied on England, and now that the best she could give us for our protection had miserably failed, we were to learn self-reliance, and the few long rifles that allowed a fragment of the army to escape across the second ford were in my day to increase to thousands. But that knowledge was all ahead of me; and disheartened at not finding some trace of Morgan and the Din wold girl I left the sullen trio and continued my weary journey.

NEARBY AND YONDER By T. T. Maxey

### "God's Acre" Forlorn

DOWN on the lower East side of New York city, almost within the shadow of Brooklyn bridge—on New Bowers street, to be exact, behind a tall iron fence, a tablet carrying the following announcement unexpectedly attracts the attention of the passer-by: "This tablet marks what remains of the first Jewish cemetery in the United States, consecrated in the year 1060, when it was described as 'Outside the city.' During the War of the Revolution it was fortified by the patriots as one of the defenses of the city."

History records that this resting place of the departed was in high esteem for many years, many who were prominent in their day having been tenderly interred therein, but as the encroachments of the commercial activities of the living practically pushed the dead out of their own, many of the bodies were moved to a larger place then far beyond the city confines where supposedly they would remain undisturbed forever. But, as America grew and New York city expanded, this once beautiful place also had to give way to the march of progress.

All that is left of the original cemetery is a small plot of ground, containing probably one hundred tombs of unknown dead. The inscriptions have been worn by time to a state of illegibility, the actions of the elements have badly disintegrated the stones and caused the vaults to crumble in decay. The rear windows of surrounding apartment houses from upon this hallowed spot and an oil station adjoins to the south. A more forlorn sight would be difficult of imagination.

### Busy Water

NEWTON CREEK forms a part of the boundary line between Brooklyn and Long Island City. Its navigable length is approximately five miles, its maximum width probably is 250 feet and its greatest low-water depth is perhaps 25 feet. Four bridges enable vehicles, street cars and pedestrians to cross it at convenient street intersections. It empties into the East river, which separates Long Island and Manhattan Island, opposite Thirty-third street, New York city. Its eastern end is near the geographical center and its western end is near the center of population of Greater New York.

By virtue of the fact that its entire length is near to both the wholesale and the distributing centers of Manhattan and that it penetrates one of the world's leading manufacturing centers, which is growing with astonishing rapidity, this little creek has the reputation of being the busiest waterway of its size in all the world.

Statistics indicate that during a recent year receipts and shipments via this little waterway aggregated more than 5,000,000 tons of freight—manufactured products, sand, oil, stone, lumber and ore constituting the chief items, having an aggregate valuation of something like \$300,000,000. More than 10,000 arrivals and a like number of departing vessels were recorded during that time. Allowing for the additional tug, lighter and barge movements which necessarily took place, it seems safe to conclude that its waters were churned some 45,000 times during those twelve months.

### "The Corn Belt"

THE Corn Belt is generally and favorably known as the outstanding corn-producing section of America. It extends east to west from mid-Ohio to mid-Nebraska or about 900 miles and north to south from about 150 to 300 miles, including portions of ten states—Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota. Although this belt comprises only about 8 per cent of our national land area, it produces about 70 per cent of all the corn grown in America or about 40 per cent of the world's supply—to say nothing of staggering quantities of other crops.

Nature apparently intended this section for her prize-winning, corn-growing section, because conditions combine to make it ideally suited for that purpose. The loamy soil is particularly adapted, its general levelness conduces to ease of cultivation and operates to prevent the flowing away of rainfall; to grow rapidly corn should have hot nights and this region certainly has them during the corn-growing period; the crop usually has ample time to mature before frosty nights appear and experts declare that the dry, cold winters which often prevail in this area are beneficial from the soil standpoint. Big cities have grown up in and around it; its section, created made-to-order markets and hold an enormous consuming population. Half the population of the United States lives within 700 miles of the center of this great belt. Railroads criss-cross the territory and provide wonderful transportation. The "Corn Belt" is most appropriately named.

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### Should Have Been Tanned

"Her smile was so irresistible," said a resourceful husband in speaking of "the other woman" in a recent divorce suit, "that I couldn't stay away from her." He basked in the sunshine of her smile until he got sunburnt.—Farm and Fireside.

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It seems that an enterprising reader of the book wrote to Barrie and asked what was the particular tobacco mixture he had in mind. Barrie did not know the name of a single brand of tobacco, so he answered at random, naming one he saw advertised.

His fame was made, and out of curiosity Barrie one day tried a pipeful. "He liked it so well," chuckled Mr. Baldwin, "that he has kept it to ever since."—Kansas City Star.

**Russia's Use of Peat**

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The chief consumer of peat is the textile industry, although a number of important power plants use it as a fuel. More than 100,000 workmen are employed during the peat-producing season and there are about 2,000 machines in operation.

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