

# The Red Road

## A Romance of Braddock's Defeat

By Hugh Pendexter

Illustrations by  
Irwin Myers

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### CHAPTER VIII—Continued

"Keep ahead of me," I directed. "We're almost at the mouth of the creek and the cabin is close by."

From the opposite bank of the creek came a demonic shout, and I believed we had been sighted. Yet the cry was different from a discovery-call. It was too ferocious. They had come upon the scalped Frenchman and were voicing their rage. I am convinced the dead man served us well by slowing up the pursuit until we had entered a natural opening, in the middle of which stood Frazier's cabin. The girl gasped and stumbled, and I almost fell over her. Once more I picked her up, this time carrying her cradled in my arms and then threw all my energy into my legs. Howls of triumph sounded in the woods behind me and on my right. Guns were fired, but I heard no sound of the lead.

"I'm all right! Let me down!" she begged.

But the goal was too near. The savages began to show at the end of the woods just as we gained the door, with me yelling for Frazier to open for us. There was no response and my heart sank as I pictured a locked door and the savages doing us to death while we made a last fight. Then my heart beat high as I beheld the rawhide latch string. In another moment we were inside and I was thrusting my long rifle through a loophole. I spoiled a brawny Huron as he was scrambling back to cover.

"You're powerful strong, mister," the girl shyly remarked.

There was a quality in her voice I had never heard before, and I glanced at her in surprise. The face was enlivened with color. She threw off her hat and allowed her brown hair to tumble about her shoulders.

"You're a mighty brave little woman," I awkwardly replied. "We'll hope to get out of this. But we mustn't be taken alive."

"Let's me! Fall into their dirty hands! Of course not."

And from her blouse she pulled forth a thirteen-inch Highland pistol. I always held the Highland to be more showy than useful, as its light weight and large bore made it kick villainously and shoot inaccurately. Yet it would remove one very quickly from all fear of the torture-stake.

I took time to glance about the room, at the shelves and stock of trade-goods, at the smith's tools in the corner, and some guns hanging from one wall. In surveying the room I discovered a most vital necessity was lacking. There was no water in the cabin.

I picked up two kettles and unbarred the door.

"You mustn't go out!" she shrilly screamed.

"We must have water. The creek is near. The Indians haven't had time to circle around to the south of us. You have the two rifles. Watch from the back of the cabin. Don't fire unless more than one breaks cover."

"I'll follow!"

"Watch out for me."

I was through the door with the kettles and running toward the creek before she could offer more objections. I reached the water, and dipped the kettles full before the savages opened fire. My dash to the creek had either taken them by surprise, or else they had withdrawn a bit to hold a pow-wow. I believe they had withdrawn with a few men standing guard; for the firing did not become general until I was half-way back. At that distance from the cabin I heard the girl's rifle go off.

Running gently so as not to spill any of the precious water, I was pronouncing my race won when a tall savage emerged from the woods on my left and approached at right angles. He fired an arrow while moving at full speed, and then dropped his bow to draw his ax. The girl appeared in the doorway with my long rifle and leaned the heavy barrel against the end of a log. As the whip-like crack rang out the Indian leaped high and came down in a heap.

Still controlling my stride, I was within two rods of the door, where the girl stood leaning against the rifle, when a savage turned the corner of the cabin and darted-between us. I set down one kettle and pulled my ax. To my surprise the Indian whirled about and jumped toward the girl. With a scream she sprang back and he followed, realizing it was excellent strategy to kill my companion and bar the door against me, leaving his companions to kill me leisurely.

With a howl of fear and warning, I dropped the remaining kettle and leaped after him. As my foot touched the threshold, the cabin was filled with a deafening explosion and much smoke, and the savage was falling limply into my arms. I hurled him outside, where he fell on his back, his face blown away. The girl was crouching on the floor, her hair partly concealing her face, the Highland pistol clutched in her two hands, and her eyes glaring like a cat's. I was reminded of the scene on Der Hexenkopf.

"Load the rifles!" I cried. Then passing from the cabin and falling to discover any of the enemy in the opening, I ran back to the kettle and completed my errand.

With the door secured, I surveyed the opening from the rear loophole. Something bronze on the grass, a dozen rods from the forest, attracted my attention and finally resolved itself into an Indian.

"Quick with a gun!" I told her. "There's one out there in the grass."

She sprang to my side with my rifle and gave a glance, and then said: "La-mister! He won't hurt nobody. That was my first shot when you was gone for water."

"My heart stopped pounding when you went with them kettles," she whispered, winking her eyes very fast. "There was no danger. We must have water. We'll be choking with



"More! More!" She cried.

thirst before night. And if they set the roof afire—"

"I know," she quietly said. "Cal'late I'll be loading that pistol. It shoots most mortal."

Leaving her to stand watch, I secured the muskets from the wall and rummaged the trader's stock until I had found powder and bullets. I loaded the weapons and set them aside. On a shelf I found a small quantity of smoked meat, tough as hickory bark yet a food one could manage to chew. I told the girl to eat while I took her place at a loophole.

"I'm thinking," the girl remarked—the branch of a tree moved slightly and I watched it suspiciously—"I'm thinking there's more'n one way to stop a fire," she went on, raising her voice to attract my attention.

"I'm thinking there's an Indian climbing a tree, but I can't see anything to shoot at," I grumbled. "If it would only rain!"

"I'm light and spry as a cat, and there wouldn't be any danger," she continued.

"What's on your mind, little woman?" I asked without turning from the loophole.

"These contraptions hides is on my mind most heavy. If we could use 'em they'd save what water we've got."

Now I was interested. She was standing by a pile of dried deerskins. She explained:

"If they was on the roof the fire-arrers would slide off. They're hard and smooth."

Her wit gave me hope, and I asked: "How to make them stay? We haven't time to peg them on. If we try that they'll rush us."

"I'm thinking," she muttered, tilting her small head and holding her chin in her hand. "Course you've saddled a hoss many times. Yes, I cal'late that would do."

Instantly she was all energy. From the collection of smithing tools she secured a sharp-pointed punch and with the back of an ax began making holes along the edge of a hide.

"Don't watch me. Watch outdoors," she sharply ordered.

I turned back to the peep-hole. I could hear her pulling the hides about

and talking to herself as she worked. She asked herself if she could find some rawhide strips and in the next breath told herself she could at least make some. Then she was cooing in delight. I stole to the door in time to see a bush move near the mouth of the creek. I stopped its agitation with a bullet from my rifle, but doubted if I had done the enemy any damage. Several shots from the opposite end of the cabin took me to the rear loophole. I stumbled over a pile of skins in passing, but had no time to observe the girl. Two or three balls chucked into the logs, but there was no Indian in sight. Fearing it was a ruse to hold my attention I darted to the door again and remained there while I reloaded my rifle.

"Lawful heart! If you wouldn't keep hypering back and forth," she complained. "Now you can look."

And she proudly dragged forward two deerskins, looped together by short sections of rawhide.

"We'll saddle the ridge-pole with these just the same as you'd saddle or blanket a hoss," she explained. "That'll be better than pegs. I'll git up on the roof and throw them over the ridge-pole as fast as you pass 'em up to me."

The scheme was feasible. It was simple. It would require but a few minutes to saddle the horse with hides. There would remain a strip on each side, but these I could reach from the ground with separate hides. However, I objected to her mounting the roof.

"Your job is to pass 'em up to me," she sternly retorted. "My part is as easy as slipping off a wet log. I can be up there before you could git started. If they come at us, I can be down and inside the door in a jiffy. Git 'em separated out so's we can work fast."

Then she unbarred the door.

Before showing ourselves we reconnoitered from all sides of the cabin. There was not much danger of a musket ball hitting her slim body; and arrows, to hit the roof, must travel so high as to give us warning. I gathered up several sets of the double skins and threw open the door. The savages must have been puzzled by our appearance. None showed along the woods, nor were any lead or arrows fired at us. I dropped the skins and gave the girl a hand, and she was scrambling up to the ridge-pole before the watchers could guess our purpose. I passed up two skins and she deftly draped them over the ridge-pole. I passed up two more. The Indians woke up and began screaming like demons. Guns began banging, and I called to the girl to come down.

"Throw 'em along! I won't budge till you do!" she cried.

I tossed up some more and ducked back to the door and secured both rifles.

"More! More!" she cried.

I handed them up, but warned her:

"Jump down at once. They're coming!"

She took time to fix them properly and then dropped lightly into my arms. Some fifteen savages were breaking cover at different points. I picked out the leader of the nearest band. He commenced leaping from side to side, but I was patient and shot him off his feet. The moment I fired, she had pressed the short French one into my hands. I fired it and missed. We entered the cabin and dropped the bar.

The Indians advanced swiftly, knowing our rifles were empty. Could they close in before we could reload, they planned to thrust their guns through the loopholes and stop our fire while they battered down the door. But they had not counted on the trademuskets. We emptied these rapidly. One man went down with a smashed leg. Two of his companions carried him into the woods. The others streaked back as rapidly as they had advanced. Thus far all the honors were ours. I made the girl drink some water and posted her at the back of the cabin while I covered the other three sides.

The Indians, however, had no stomach for another assault in force, and the forest became quiet. I told the girl she was to remain inside while I stepped out and covered the lower part of the two sides.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Old Year Dead When Harvest Is Gathered?

That the calendar by which we count our days does not fit in harmoniously with the seasons is pointed out by an editorial in Liberty Magazine.

"It has long been obvious," explains the editorial, "that starting the calendar on the first of January is all wrong. The year ends with the harvest, when the last grain is in, the leaves are fallen, and the earth has gone to sleep. The closing day of the calendar might well be that one on which we turn away from outward things and ask about the chances of having a little steam heat.

"It is unlikely on the whole, that the calendar makers will agree to end the year with the fall and begin it with the spring, as is meet and proper," concludes the editorial. "We must

take January 1 as the beginning of the year because Julius Caesar fixed it that way and nobody has changed it."

### Corncob Incense

By soaking dry corncobs in fragrant oils, such as that of sandalwood, cinnamon or cloves, and then grinding them to powder, an effective incense has been prepared, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. White smoke and ashes are produced, and the substance is said to be superior to various other kinds.

### Most Widely-Used Letters

The letter "e" occurs more often than any other in ordinary writing, according to Liberty. The letter "a" is next in frequency.

### Ancient Pistol

H. M. Raab, of Dallastown, Pa., collector of old horse pistols manufactured in the United States, recently came into possession of a weapon which was manufactured in Virginia in 1805. The weapon is said to be the oldest of its type in existence, as the oldest previous date for the style was 1805.

### Dorothy's Mother Proves Claim



Children don't ordinarily take to medicines but here's one that all of them love. Perhaps it shouldn't be called a medicine at all. It's more like a rich, concentrated food. It's pure, wholesome, sweet to the taste and sweet in your child's little stomach. It builds up and strengthens weak, puny, underweight children, makes them eat heartily, brings the roses back to their cheeks, makes them playful, energetic, full of life. And no bilious, headachy, constipated, feverish, fretful baby or child ever failed to respond to the gentle influence of California Fig Syrup on their little bowels. It starts lazy bowels quick, cleans them out thoroughly, tones and strengthens them so they continue to act normally, of their own accord.

Millions of mothers know about California Fig Syrup from experience. A Western mother, Mrs. J. G. Moore, 119 Cliff Ave., San Antonio, Texas, says: "California Fig Syrup is certainly all that's claimed for it. I have proved that with my little Dorothy. She was a bottle baby and very delicate. Her bowels were weak. I started her on Fig Syrup when she was a few months old and it regulated her, quick. I have used it with her ever since for colds and every little set-back and her wonderful condition tells better than words how it helps."

Don't be imposed on. See that the Fig Syrup you buy bears the name, "California" so you'll get the genuine, famous for 50 years.

### Immense Monolith

The largest marble monolith in the world, standing sixty-five feet high, measuring eighteen feet across and weighing forty tons, has been extracted from the famous marble quarries at Carrara, and will be presented to Mussolini for the new Fascist stadium to be erected at the Farnesina outside of Rome.

### Sister's Bob?

Visitor (speaking of little boy)—He has his mother's eyes.  
Mother—And his father's mouth.  
Child—And his brother's trousers.  
—Tit-Bits.

In the Knight engine, two sliding sleeves in each cylinder combine with the spherical cylinder head to form a perfectly sealed combustion chamber—ensuring high uniform compression at all times, at all speeds and with any gas.



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### Pathetic Faithfulness

A setter dog that refused to leave a canine pal in death caused motorists at Beaumont, Texas, to send a hurry call to police headquarters. The dog was sitting beside the body of his stricken comrade in the center of the highway, defying drivers to run him down as they had the other dog. One automobile had been thrown into the ditch to avoid hitting the setter. It was not until the dead dog had been moved to the side of the road that the other permitted traffic to move normally.

### Forewarned

"This is a cynical age," declared George Bernard Shaw, "and it all comes from the young people knowing too much. I was strolling through the lobby of the Carleton the other day when I heard a debutante say: 'Erwin says that I am the handsomest and cleverest girl he has ever known.'"

"To which her friend replied: 'My dear, you should never marry a man who deceives you during your engagement.'"

### Undecided

"So you call your canary Joe? Does it stand for Joseph or Josephine?"  
"We don't know. That's why we call it Joe."—London Opinion.

To hurry too much shows that you are not the captain of your time, though you may be of your soul.

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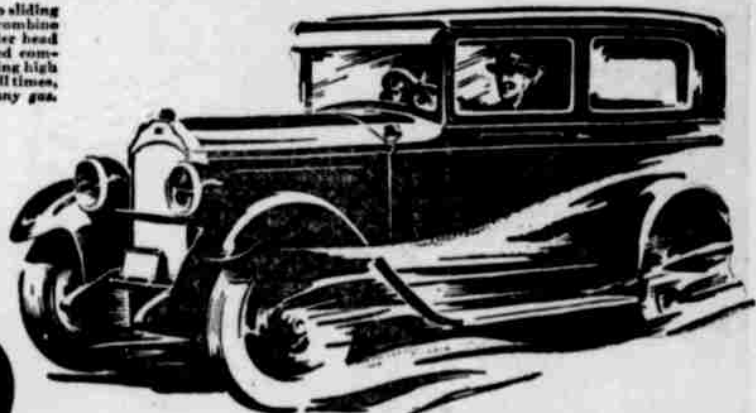
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### Youth and Age in Legion

The oldest and youngest members of the American Legion live at Miami, Fla. They are John W. Boucher, eighty-four, and George E. Mackenzie, twenty-three. Boucher served in the construction forces of the A. E. F. in France, getting into the Pershing army when he was seventy-three years old. Mackenzie ran away from home to enlist when scarcely thirteen.

The wedding tour is often the calm before the storm.



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