

# 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, Brond! 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 dived 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.

Dan 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 boss!" 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 despairing 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 men, 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 braced 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 whipped 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, accoutrements 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 pawed 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 rearguard was made up of many individual duels. The Virginians' trick of having two men behind a tree inveigled 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 accoutrements, 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 birds 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 'other feller!" cried one of them. "Git out of sight afore I lose my patience. I promised my youngers a French scalp. By the Eternal! Your hair might do just as well! Put crops in and growin', 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 Dinwiddie girl I left the sullen trio and continued my weary journey.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

# ATWATER KENT RADIO

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## Scientists Unable to Do Away With Fogs

On a small scale and in favorable circumstances fog can be dispelled, but all known methods are too costly for commercial use, and so could not be applied on the vast scale on which many fogs occur, even were they of proved use. A great deal of time and labor has been seriously expended in the effort to suppress fog. The London county council has from time to time given some encouragement to various schemes presented, but all have failed. No less a distinguished scientist than Sir Oliver Lodge has struggled with this problem and he thought he had solved it, but practical demonstration of his electrical scheme failed. Various suggestions have been made to clear aviation landing places, but all have been discarded and the solution of the problem seems to be no nearer than it ever was.

## New Irish Coinage

The ancient Irish harp will replace the profile of the king on the new coinage of the Irish Free State. The principal features of the industrial and sporting life of the country and its cultural development are represented. But St. Patrick, the national apostle, has not been remembered in designing the new coinage of the realm. A horse, a bull and a hen with a brood represent agriculture. A salmon and woodcock represent sport. A round tower and a wolfhound symbolize the ancient dignity of Ireland. New currency notes and coins will not be in circulation for a few months yet.

## The Eighth One

Office Manager.—Here, this will never do! Why is it you are late for your very first morning's work?

New Office Boy.—I'm sorry, sir. There are eight in our family and the alarm was set for seven.

## Value of Cool Mind.

If a man keeps cool, he commands himself and others.—Chicago News.

## Most people never know the sweet contentment of becoming thoroughly fatigued.

## This Mother Had Problem



As a rule, milk is about the best food for children, but there are times when they are much better off without it. It should always be left off when children show by feverish, fretful or cross spells, by bad breath, coated tongue, sallow skin, indigestion, biliousness, etc., that their stomach and bowels are out of order.

In cases like this, California Fig Syrup never fails to work wonders, by the quick and gentle way it removes all the souring waste which is causing the trouble, regulates the stomach and bowels and gives these organs tone and strength so they continue to act normally of their own accord. Children love its rich, fruity flavor and it's purely vegetable and harmless, even for babies.

Millions of mothers have proved its merit and reliability in over 50 years of steadily increasing use. A Western mother, Mrs. May Snavely, Montrose, California, says: "My little girl, Edna's, tendency to constipation was a problem to me until I began giving her California Fig Syrup. It helped her right away and soon her stomach and bowels were acting perfectly. Since then I've never had to have any advice about her bowels. I have also used California Fig Syrup with my little boy, with equal success."

To be sure of getting the genuine, which physicians endorse, always ask for California Fig Syrup by the full name.

## Jewels in Chaldean Tomb

Rings of gold and silver, intaid gold in rosettes and small animal figures of the precious metal were among articles found in the tomb of the Sumerian queen Shub-Ad, unearthed recently by members of the joint expedition of the museum of Philadelphia and the British museum, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. The jewelry is over five thousand years old and adds to the interest of the discoveries in recent expeditions to Ur of the Chaldees.

## Two Birds With One Stone

Sue—So you always serve doughnuts when Fred calls?

Ethel—Yes, that's the way I try to remind him of rings and dough at the same time.—True Story Magazine.

## A man always credits himself with firmness and charges the other fellow with obstinacy.

## Petition to Heaven Out of the Ordinary

"Bob" Edwards, a Canadian member of parliament, who founded a little paper called the Calgary Eye Opener among the Northwest Mounted Police, about a quarter of a century ago, composed at the time a little prayer, perhaps in emulation of that of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Quoth Bob: "Lord, let me keep a straight way in the path of honor—and a straight face in the presence of solemn assees.

"Let me not truckle to the high, nor bulldoze the low; let me frolic with the jack and the Joker and win the game.

"Lead me into Truism and Beauty—and tell me her name.

"Keep me sane, but not too sane. Let me not take the world or myself too seriously, and grant more people to laugh with and fewer to laugh at.

"Let me condemn no man because

of his grammar and no woman on account of her morals, neither being responsible for either.

"Preserve my sense of humor and of values and proportions. Let me be helpful while I live, but not live too long. Which is about all today, Lord Amen."

## 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.

## Automobile Note

It doesn't help much to tell the nurse you had the right of way.—Toledo Blade.

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## Overcoming Disease

Statistics show that the length of the average human life is steadily increasing and is much greater than it was half a century or a century ago. Of course this does not mean that the average individual is healthier or stronger. The increase is due chiefly to the conquest of disease, control of epidemics, better infant care, etc.

## Put It or Take It

Bob—What did you do when Mabel said you were odd?

Bill—I told her I would get even.

## Cost Little to Produce

The approximate cost of the production of 2-cent stamps per thousand is 8 1/2 cents.

# -take it! It's Bayer



The nurse tells you to take Bayer Aspirin because she knows it's safe. Doctors have told her so. It has no effect on the heart, so take it to stop a headache or check a cold. For almost instant relief of neuralgia, neuritis, rheumatism; even lumbago. But be sure it's Bayer—the genuine Aspirin. At druggists, with proven directions for its many uses.

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