

"THE MAVERICK"

By R. E. SHAFF

EIGHTH INSTALLMENT



SYNOPSIS

Robert Ashley, wanders away from home and gets lost, but is believed to be burned to death in a fire which destroyed his home.

He is found by Joe MacDonald and the story continues 15 years later when we find that young Ashley is known as Robert MacDonald, or "The Maverick," as he had been called since MacDonald found him on the desert. He enjoys the company of Ida Peterson, a girl living near the MacDonald ranch and he and Roger Hines become bitter enemies over her.

While chasing a coyote he crosses the line and on the Grue ranch where he finds Old Grue ill in bed and unable to care for his sheep. The Maverick cares for the man and sheep but is afraid that his father will find it out and cause a bad situation, as the sheepman and the cattlemen are on unfriendly terms. Roger sees The Maverick at the Grue place and then gets a half-breed Indian, Joel Lamosch, to change the brand on one of Joe's yearlings into that of the Maverick's and then gets Joe to investigate. The Maverick goes to the Grue place for the last time and old Grue shows him a bear's tooth bound with gold and his money which all bore the same date.

Joe, thinking Bobby has been re-branding some of his cattle tries to get Bobby to tell him where he had been the night before but the Maverick refuses, and leaves home. After looking for work for several days he gets a job with a draying company and while unloading a box he slips and bumps into a pedestrian and turning to apologize finds that it is Ida Peterson.

Now go on with the story—

"Well, of all things," she said; "what are you doing here in the city?"

He colored. "Haven't you heard, Ida?"

"No, why did you leave the Cross Bar?"

"Well, you see, I had a little trouble," Bob stammered.

"She did not wait for him to go on. 'I see, you ran away from home. You naughty boy. How could you leave mom. Did you bring old Blue and Queen with you?' There she stopped, 'Why, Bobby, don't take it so hard—what's wrong?'"

"It's all right, now, I guess. I was a fool for doing it, but I just can't go back now."

"Look here, Bobby MacDonald; you're coming up to see me tonight. You're homesick. That's all that ails you. Don't tell me you're not, because I can see it in your eyes. Why didn't you write me, or look me up since you've been in town." She was smiling now.

"Well, to tell the truth, I lost your address and there was no way I could get it here," Bob told her.

"Foolish, you knew I worked at the hospital. All you had to do was come up there and call for me. Now, tonight, at eight, I want you to be there," she handed him a card and was gone.

Now he felt worse than before. How could he tell her why he was here? How he wished he could cry on her shoulder.

He wondered why he felt like that.

Cooper's Plains was full of excitement. Doctor Humphrey stopped at the court house to advise the minion of the law that old man Grue was dead. Word had reached the doctor that he had better go out—that the old man was sick. No one knew that Roger Hines had started the story. The old man lay on the cot—dead. A big black bruise was on the side of his temple.

The doctor turned him over. On the back of his head was a deep gash. It must have been caused by Grue's falling on or against some sharp object. He looked around the shack. There were signs of a struggle. By the blood, the doctor was able to piece together what had happened. Something had come down with force on the old man's head. He had been picked up bodily and dropped to the cot, and left there. The shack had been thoroly ransacked.

Joe went at once to the shack. He did not get any thrill because his arch enemy was dead. Instead he solemnly agreed that whoever had done this thing to an old, helpless man, must pay for it. The first thing he did when he returned to the Plains was to check up to see who was missing from town. The breed was the only one who was not found and could not be accounted for.

The doctor thought that Grue was dead for about three days. The breed had also been absent for the same length of time. The fact that Lamosch was in the habit of going out to spend some time with the old man each spring helped the strong arm of the law to come to the conclusion that he was the man to find.

True, The Maverick had been gone for the same length of time, but Joe put that idea from him. The Maverick was not hardened enough to do this, no matter how queer he might be, even to the extent of branding over some of his foster dad's cattle. The thing to do was to find the breed. Where was this town that he was known to frequent when he went north? He would notify the authorities to keep a sharp lookout for the breed.

Twilight was falling about the breed as he pushed his jaded horse farther north. There was a water hole somewhere around there where he could get a drink. They had covered a long stretch of rough land since the last wet camp. The only thing that interested the horseman was the far North country. Coyotes faded from sight up draws, jack rabbits were rushing from their hiding places in the long grass in the lower places. His horse was tired from the rapid pace that he had kept up. Saddle galls were breaking out to sap the strength that had flowed so smoothly at the start of the journey. The grain fields were beginning to stretch across their trail and must be avoided. The breed laid the quilt across the rump of the horse. It stung, and the horse quickened its pace to a longer stride.

Suddenly horse and rider crashed sideways to the ground, one broken leg of the horse still firmly held in the opening of a badger hole. There had been no time for the breed to save himself, so suddenly had the thing happened. There he lay, the weight of the horse across his leg. There was a numb feeling in his hip. He heaved with all his might, but in vain. Terror began to creep over him. He felt alongside the animal. Its front leg on the farther side was jammed into the hole to the shoulder. The one on his side was twisted outwards and the bone was thru the skin. The leg that was wedged into the hole took some of the strain from the front shoulder of the animal. The hind quarters had pitched around out of the line of travel. Popping the left leg still in the stirrup. The breed lit a match.

His leg was twisted and pain shot thru him every time that he moved. If he were only able to free the left foot from the stirrup he might by using the horse to push against, remove his leg, but it was no use. Then he tried thrusting his good foot under the edge of the saddle to relieve the pressure on the other foot. The more he did this the more the other foot pained, but he kept on lifting with all his might. Each time, thrusting with the good foot. The pressure on the injured foot was becoming unbearable. He tried to wriggle his toes. Suddenly the horse heaved and then settled back. The breed managed to remove his injured foot, but the other was still under. He felt the member over. No bones had come thru the skin. There was still the good leg to get out, and the saddle was beginning to cut into it. The horse had fallen with him on the lower side. Each time that the breed pushed the horse from him, the upper hind leg kept him from moving it back up the hill. The breed slid his hand to his hip. As he brought it up there was a spurt of fire. The horse gave a mighty heave and settled back, but the breed was free.

He stood up and put the gun in the holster. But one leg refused to hold his weight so he tried to hop off on the good one. Every time he hopped the injured member flopped, so he took to crawling. This way he topped the rise, so he sat down and rubbed the now swollen leg. As he sat there a light twinkled in the distance. There was no choosing. He must make for that light—come what may. Distance is deceptive in the prairie country. That light might be near and then again it might be miles from him. His whole leg was getting numb, his life might well depend on his reaching that light.

It took determination for him to drag that useless leg for long distances at a time. Thirst came to torture him. Time after time the breed collapsed on the ground, only to struggle on again.

Morning found him on the brink of a low knoll overlooking a group of claim buildings. They were stretched out below basking in the early sun. The breed sat up and took stock of himself. His gloves had protected his hands. The useless leg, now swollen and numb had not fared so well. The knee was completely gone from his trousers, the flesh showing red and raw where the Russian thistles and rough stubble had removed the skin.

Some one came from the house going towards the barn. The breed gave as lusty a shout as possible, tore his hat from his head and frantically waved it back and forth. The man looked up at the breed and turned and made for the house. Soon a woman appeared in the door

to stand beside the man. He pointed at the breed and together they came up across the field where the man had slumped after his shouts for help.

The breed lay there and studied them as they approached. The woman was the taller of the two. A figure eight of loosely done grey hair danced on the top of her head. They were close enough for the breed to note the deep lines that threw her whole face into relief, backed by a pair of eyes that seemed too large for their setting—eyes that held the breed fascinated, pierced him thru. The eyes of a starved animal staring at its captor. Yet, the next instant they were full of pity as she knelt there by the side of the breed and took in the sight before her. Those eyes had become wells of sympathy when she exclaimed, "You poor man. How did you do this?" She was master of the situation at once.

"You take that side and I will try and take this," she directed the other.

As the breed tried to rise she cried, "No! Don't try to stand. Just put your arm around our necks. This way." But the breed was too far gone to even do that.

"It's no use, George. Let him down. We'll have to get the horses and the plank sled," she told the man, and he was off at a run.

Her white teeth flashed against the bronze of her face. "How did you ever do this?" she asked, pointing to the useless leg.

"Horse stepped in badger hole—fell on leg," the breed murmured. He was as near white as mixed breeding would permit.

She knelt there beside him and ran her cool hand over his forehead. "You are a sick man all right. I don't see how you ever stood it to get this far."

The man had returned with the team hitched to a low plank sled. Carefully they put him on and went to the door of the shack. Getting him inside required the united efforts of both. Yet, it was finally accomplished and the breed found himself in the first clean, white bed that had been his resting place for years. He had slept in livery stables so long that this seemed like fairy land to him. The boot had been cut from the useless leg. He had been washed from head to foot by George. The woman put him to bed and expertly dressed his leg.

For days he lay there gazing at a round face topped with grey hair. She had twinkling eyes, that woman, who seemed to make the pain easier. She would ask, "How is our invalid today?"

In all the years that the breed had seen, no one had ever spoken to him like this. She did not seem afraid of him like the other women that he met. She even came and sat by his bed and tried to talk to him, but he was no talker. George had found his horse and brought in the saddle and other things and they were laid in one corner of the room where he could see them.

The grey-haired lady with the wonderful eyes came and sat by the side of his bed for hours. The breed just lay there and gazed at her, spellbound. He answered some of her questions in a guarded way—never giving her any knowledge of his past. She told him that she had no husband. He was dead. She had lived there for years, had hired help, and carried on the farm. Those great grey eyes filled with tears at the mention of "her man."

"You see, my man died of a broken heart," she stated, "he died right here in this room in my arms. God only knows how I stood it—to have my boy burned to death and then to have Roy pine away and leave me all alone. When we came here we had a little boy—we called him Bobby. You understand, we both lived for that boy."

The breed could not take his eyes from her face.

"One day we had a terrible storm. The lightning and wind were terrible. Bobby used a hole in the hay at the bottom of the stackroom for a playhouse—he called it his den."

"When the storm struck, I ran to find him. And as I looked, I thought that I saw him go in the sod cellar, but I wasn't sure. If I had only gone to the stack he never would have been burned up. You see, I went to the cellar to look for him when all the time he must still have been at the stack. When I came up the cellar steps the plank from the door crashed down on my head and I didn't get to the stack."

"The neighbors buried Bobby out there by the side of the house. When you can walk, I will show the grave to you. Roy is buried there too. It broke his heart to think of Bobby out there all alone. How I've ever stood it, God only knows, but when I pray to Him, something tells me to keep on."

The breed turned his face to the wall shaming sleep. Yet she kept on: "Bobby had a dog. The two were always together," she paused. "But we never found the dog. It seems as tho I've always had misfortune. When Bobby was just large enough to walk he ran away and wandered off up the trail. We were living in the forest country. Great trees were all around and there were wild animals that cried at night. When Bobby ran away I was frightened and when he was found there were three great gashes on his arm where a baby wild cat had torn it as he reached for the 'nice kitty.' I was worried all the time, so we moved from there, selling the mill and timber."

"We then came here and purchased this place. As soon as we got this built up, and a fine crop of wheat to harvest, along came this fearful, dreadful storm. It left the wheat but took our boy. Roy built up the building again, but from then on he was never the same—his heart was broken. How I ever lived thru those years is still a mystery to me. Those years were spent in work, and lots of it. Roy did his best to make it up to me, but all the while he kept going down and down until at last he took to his bed. Then pneumonia got hold of him one spring, and we laid him out there beside the little mound where he had spent so much time.

"The doctor came out here and stayed all the time he could spare; he sat by his bed day and night to the last. He was delicious for days. In one spell of fever, he raised up in the bed and screamed, 'No, no! She must not know.' Time after time he did this. Once when I left him sleeping and I was working in the kitchen something caused me to go to the door. There stood Roy in the middle of the room pointing down. 'Those are not Bobby's bones—those are the bones of the dog. Bobby wasn't burned, he was lost.'"

"He dropped to the floor. I ran over to him and knelt by his side. He died in my arms. God is the only one who knows what I've suffered since then. I try to tell myself that it was only the fever that made him say those things. I have held on with the hope that some day perhaps I might find out more. Roy had guarded himself all the time, even at night when he was asleep. He used to rise up and ask if he had been talking in his sleep."

"If he had only lived long enough to have told me. If it had been the truth, I might not have been haunted by all kinds of fears." She paused. Then, after a slight dab at her eyes with her handkerchief, she went on: "Suppose he is still alive; suppose he needs me now, and I am not able to go to him. Perhaps he needs money—money that does me no good. Oh, if I were only sure that he was dead."

Her head dropped to the edge of the bed, great sobs shaking her slim body. The breed reached out his hand to stroke that grey hair.

"Don't do that, lady. Joel will help find your boy."

Every fiber in the breed's body was tingling, scenes floated before his closed eyes like heavy mists blown by soft breezes along the breast of a wide river. A muddy boy, a savage dog, miles of prairie, the camp at Sand Butte, the race around the fire and then the crash. He also knew that Joe MacDonald had found the lad. He and Mom MacDonald had brought him up at the Cross Bar ranch.

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A battle was going on inside the breed. Should he keep his silence and save his skin, or tell all and have the law punish him? Well, he knew that the strong arm of the law must, by now, be reaching out for him. If he took this woman back to the Plains to find her boy, it meant that he must break his word to the foreman of the Cross Bar.

The outcome was sure to get him into trouble. How had the episode in the draw come out, he wondered? Had Roger set the law after him? True, he had given Rodge his word to keep going and a man's word was supposed to be law. Yet, come what may, there was a strong portion of Indian blood in him and he had spent his youth in the midst of them and their belief, if someone saved your life, your life belonged to them. He would give, that she might find her boy.

The hand that lay on the grey head was as steady as one heven from marble. The breed spoke. "Lady, I know where that boy is."

(CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK)

Boys Put Railroad Irons on Track

Frank Young, 15-year-old Cananda boy, son of Samuel Young, and Charles Vanbuskirk, also 15, son of James Vanbuskirk of the town of Allen, were before Children's Court Judge Walter N. Renwick, Friday, on the serious charge of delinquency in having placed railroad irons on the Erie tracks just east of the Belfast viaduct on August 3rd. Discovery averted a wreck. The irons were left at three points, ten rail lengths apart. The two boys were also accused of destroying two "No Dumping" signs in the town of Belfast. The complainant in the railroad case was Erie Police Sergeant W. B. Benedict.

Young was sentenced to the Industry State School for an indeterminate term and was taken to that institution Saturday by Sheriff Ed. A. Brigham. The Vanbuskirk boy was paroled in the custody of Mrs. Frank W. LeClere, children's agent.

GREENWOOD

(Mrs. H. C. McCaffery, Reporter)

Former Greenwood Boy Very Ill

Relatives here are pleased to learn that Kelts C. Baker of San Antonio, Texas, son of A. W. Baker of this place is recovering slowly from a very critical illness as the result of an operation for appendicitis. Mr. Baker is still confined to the hospital.

Preaches in Boyhood Town

Rev. and Mrs. Shirley Travis were in Savona last week Sunday where the Rev. Travis preached at the regular Sunday morning service, which was the closing meeting of Old Home Week there. Savona was the boyhood home of Rev. Travis.

From Savona Rev. and Mrs. Travis went to Lake Lamoka where they were guests at the Jaynes cottage.

Home Bureau Conference

A conference of the officers of the Steuben County Home Bureaus will be held at the Masonic Hall in Greenwood, Friday, August 24th. It will be an all-day meeting, beginning at 4 p. m., the public is invited to visit the display of Home Bureau projects.

Returns From Hospital

Mrs. Frank Krusen has returned from St. James Mercy hospital where she underwent an operation and is being cared for at the home of Mrs. George Slocum.

Burger Reunion

Mrs. Carrie Tyler, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Wallace, Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Scribner, B. E. Burger and daughter, Louise and Mrs. Milton Chaffee were in West Clarksville, Saturday to attend the Burger reunion.

On Trip to Chicago

Ernest Scribner, Clarence Reimann, Milton Cline and Carleton Reimann left Saturday for the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago. The boys are making the trip in a roadster with a trailer attached for carrying the necessary supplies for camping. They were accompanied by Howard Spencer of Ascola, Pa.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Goodno and son Redmond and Miss Grace Young spent Friday and Saturday in Ithaca, guests of Mr. and Mrs. Harland Knight.

Mr. and Mrs. Ordo Williamson and sons were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Bennett of Young Hickory. Miss Esther Williamson returned home with them after a week's visit there.

Mrs. Archie Stephens and three children and Merritt Atkins have returned from spending a week with Mr. and Mrs. Ruben Aman of Irondequoit.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Richmond and twin daughters of Whitesville were recent guests of Mrs. Addie Coston.

Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Buck and Theodore Cobb were among those from this place who attended the Harvest Festival in Rexville last Thursday.

John Williamson has returned to the Kellogg home after spending two weeks with his sister, Mrs. Miner Streeter.

Miss Mildred Udyke was a recent guest of her aunt, Mrs. Harry Ellis of Andover.

Mrs. B. E. Burger has been confined to her home with an attack of tonsillitis.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fish of Canisteo were in town Thursday evening.

Miss Louise Burger and Miss Pauline Murray left Sunday morning for Chicago to attend the Century of Progress.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Robertson and son of Hornell spent Sunday evening at John Wallace's.

Mr. and Mrs. H. C. McCaffery were in Belmont Sunday, to attend the Bloss reunion.

Mr. and Mrs. Prentice Drake and family of Jasper spent Sunday with her father, Fay Taylor.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Bassett and family of Bennetts Creek were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Osmin.

Mrs. Emma Rollins is spending the week with her daughter, Mrs. Anna Jeffers in Canisteo.

Mr. and Mrs. Ross Woodworth spent the week-end in Rochester.

Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Holly, Mrs. D. D. Baker and Miss Una Morton were shopping in Hornell, Saturday evening.

M. F. Jones of Horseheads was a business visitor in town, Friday.

E. V. Youmans of Westfield, Pa., had business here Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Dunkell of Canisteo were in town on business one day last week.

Mrs. Byrne Johnson of Harrison Valley was in town, Thursday.

Miss Una Morton attended the Preston reunion in Bowles Grove, Canisteo, Thursday.

Walter Redmond is a guest at the Physical Culture Hotel in Dansville.

Arling Cobb has returned from attending the league ball games in New York and the horse races at Goshen. Mr. Cobb motored down with his brother, T. Churchill Cobb of Canisteo.

Mrs. Earl Foster attended the Stephens reunion held at the home of Caleb Stephens of Canisteo.

Mrs. Bess Coston of Washington, D. C., is spending a few days with Mrs. Addie Coston.

In the absence of Rev. Shirley Travis, Sunday morning, Harland Knight of Ithaca preached in the Methodist Episcopal church. Rev. Travis occupied the pulpit of the Park M. E. church in Hornell.

Miss Jennie Waters of Hornell spent Sunday with her sister, Mrs. John Wallace.

Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Plaisted are passing a few days with relatives in Factoryville, Pa.

Mrs. G. C. Lewis had business in Hornell, Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Dennis left Saturday night by train for Denver, Colo. They were accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Elmer George of Heintzelton.

Miss Grace Kellogg is spending some time at the Clifton Springs sanitarium.

Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Scribner and family of Kent, Ohio, have been recent guests of relatives here.

Miss Ruby Tyler has returned from Chicago where she attended the Century of Progress.

Mr. and Mrs. John VanAllen and daughter, Virginia, of Oregon and Mrs. George Kemp of Buffalo spent Wednesday night and Thursday with Mr. and Mrs. John Wallace.

Miss Ruth Rudman of Brockport spent Monday night and Tuesday of last week with Mrs. Leonard Dennis.

Mrs. A. L. Thompson, J. B. Williamson and Clifford Price of Canisteo were calling here Tuesday.

Miss Irene V. Stephens of Hornell has been visiting friends and relatives here.

Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Woodburn of Canisteo were dinner guests of Dr. and Mrs. L. T. Hardenbergh.

Miss Reba Scott is spending a few days with Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Fish of Canisteo.

Mrs. Miner Streeter and son Maurice and Mrs. F. E. Carney and son Nelson were in Buffalo, Sunday.

Fred Miner was in Whitesville on business Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Preston of Woodhull called on Mr. and Mrs. Claud Case, Sunday.

Mrs. Ray Shattuck and Mrs. Ella Green of New York City and A. W. Barney of Whitesville called on Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Green, Monday.

Dr. Miriam Ferguson and daughter of New York City, Mr. and Mrs. L. S. Robbins, Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Woodburn and Mrs. Mary Bell of Canisteo called on Dr. and Mrs. L. T. Hardenbergh, Sunday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Scribner, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Dennis, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Scribner, Miss Alberta Dennis and Walter Dennis attended the Sherman-Scribner reunion at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Peterson at Russell, Pa.

Miss Grace Young returned last Thursday from a house party on Lake Ontario.

Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Kellogg, daughter Jane and son William, Mrs. Mabel Stevenson and daughter Eleanor and Miss Nere DeRon returned Sunday from a two weeks stay at Conesus Lake.

Miss Roberta Baker is spending a few days with Mr. and Mrs. C. A. McEnroe of Petrolia.

George Rollins and R. P. Holly have returned from a business trip to New York City.

Mr. and Mrs. George Bentley of Pittsburgh were guests of Mr. and Mrs. A. L. York last Tuesday evening.

Miss Margaret Miller of Brooklyn has been visiting her brother, J. K. Miller.

Notice to Creditors

Pursuant to an order of Hon. Walter N. Renwick, Surrogate of the County of Allegany, notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against the estate of James P. Cannon, late of the Town of Andover, N. Y., deceased, to present the same with proper vouchers thereof to the undersigned administrators at the Office of the Administrators at the James P. Cannon Company Store in the Village of Andover, N. Y., on or before the 20th day of January, 1935.

Dated July 9th, 1934.
SARA R. CANNON,
MARY ELIZABETH CANNON,
EDWARD R. CANNON,
Administrators

Crayton L. Earley,
Attorney for Administrators,
Andover, New York.