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CHASING RUM-RUNNERS ON THE BORDER
Thrilling Battles Day and Night With Smugglers

How whiskey is smuggled into the United States as seen by a New York Herald man: "Came the booze carriers, each weighed down with forty cases of whiskey. . . . And well back, the customs car thundering in the alcoholic wake with men precariously hanging on the running board, pistols ready. . . ."

Firsthand Story of How
Eighteenth Amendment
Is Flouted by
Professional Bootleggers
and Vast Stream
of Liquor Pours
Across Border

RUM-running from Canada into the United States, especially across the New York State line, has made the Eighteenth Amendment a joke to thousands of citizens otherwise perfectly lawabiding. The whiskey smugglers are so bold in their extensive operations that conditions are unparalleled. To ascertain the actual facts and present to its readers a pen picture THE NEW YORK HERALD sent one of its staff men to the border. He was out both day and night with officials in the United States and Canada, and the facts he presents furnish a thrilling story seldom seen in actual news reporting. Possibly the only like smuggling incidents in history might be the brandy smuggling across the English Channel early in the nineteenth century or the cotton blockade runners of civil war days.

By W. A. DAVENPORT.

BETWEEN Fort Covington, N. Y., and the desperate collection of wheel ruts that connects Dundee and St. Agnes, Quebec, runs the Mary Reilly road. It is entirely proper to refer to the Mary Reilly road as running. Speed and vigor are its chief characteristics. It cuts a section of the border country so barren that, taking it from the natives themselves, migratory crows have learned to carry a lunch when compelled to traverse it.

It comes by its name from its once triumphant goddess who now has passed into history—Mary Reilly, whose road house, bisected by the Canadian-United States boundary line, was almost everything except a church. Only the foundations of Mary Reilly's remain. The place simply blew up one night. An ambitious young literary man will one day write the history of Mary Reilly's and thereby make himself famous. The chapter he devotes to the last night of Mary Reilly's will make him. Three murders before midnight was too much—entirely too much. No house could stand that. So Mary Reilly's blew up, burned down and all that remained was the ghost of the place—a he-ghost that sits upon the crumbling walls drunk and defiant and rejoicing in the fact that to-day the Mary Reilly road is lawless and wild.

It was for the Mary Reilly road we set forth much as one goes fishing or deer hunting. We knew that the game was there and knew that we'd hear and probably see it. The idea was to bag it.

More Booze Comes Over the Road
Than the Sheriff Can Estimate

"There's no use trying to estimate how much booze is coming into the States over the Mary Reilly road," said the Sheriff. "It can't be done any more than you can figure how much hootch is coming in over the fifty roads and gullies between Malone and Rouse's Point. All I can tell you is that it's coming in. Let's go!"

Twelve months ago, when rum-running from Canada to America was amateur sport, Government or county officials, becoming tired of the night riotings that were an integral part of the running, were wont to hop into a motor car and take up a stand along a main thoroughfare. When the smugglers came along the guardians of law and order would hold them up or scare them to death with bullets if they tried to avoid capture by stepping on the gas. Like as not the amateur, explaining that he had a few bottles under the seat, was given a

good talking to about noise and permitted to go.

But then there was plenty of liquor in the States. We didn't need to ask Canada for whiskey. You could buy your favorite brand in your favorite place at little more than your favorite price. The Eighteenth Amendment was nothing but an amendment and had nothing to do with a man's liquor.

Naturally enough we drank all that and finding our thirst unquenched struck out for more. So nowadays when liquor comes across the border it comes in automobile trains, three, four and five huge touring cars roaring down from Montreal night and day, forty, fifty, sixty miles an hour. They come down a hundred yards between cars. Left to themselves they take to and keep the side roads, eschewing the larger towns. But bedevilled by customs men, Volsteaders and sheriffs, they hang to the hardest and smoothest roads, the shortest routes, and may God protect the tourist. It used to be that they travelled at night—stealthily, fearfully. Now they travel when they get a careful, be it noon or midnight.

Watching the Booze Cars
Roar Through Malone

The scout car leads the way, its horn roaring and its exhaust pipe working like a machine gun. Through the main street of Malone the pilot roadster flew. The street had cleared. The startled citizenry had taken to the sidewalks much as folks used to take to the cyclone cellars on Kansas way—by instinct. The roadster was making fifty miles anyway, having slowed up a trifle for traffic's sake. Behind her, hanging on like hounds after a rabbit, came the booze carriers—a Pierce Arrow, a Packard and a Cadillac—each weighted down with forty cases of whiskey and gin, and maybe a little champagne. Sixty-six hundred pounds on each set of wheels travelling south and west at fifty miles an hour through the centre of a law abiding village! And well back, far in the rear, the customs car thundering in the alcoholic wake with men precariously hanging on the running board, pistols ready to open fire when the open country is reached—provided the bandits haven't run out of gun range.

But that's digressing too far. Besides, it's somewhat misleading. Most of the booze running is still done at night. But the amateur has stepped out of the game. It's no longer a game; it's an industry. Rough citizens pilot the cars these days and nights. They're the sort of men who make good aviators or drive taxicabs in Paris.

But it's time to get going to the Mary Reilly road.

We took the Constable road. There were three cars—the Sheriff's and two huge Packards that the customs men had seized from unlucky rum runners who either hadn't run fast enough or who weren't familiar with the roads or who lacked the nerve that the successful smuggler must have. We skirted Bare Hill, a desolate roll of chalky dirt, crumbling sandstone and bleak spruce trees that appear to be protesting against their loneliness. A well clouded sky dimmed the moonlight. It was clear enough to see forms on the road fifty yards away.

Past Mabel's Farm, a place full of reminiscence for Skid Metcalf, who drove the Sheriff's car. Past the Beaver Pines and Cascanet's to Trout River we drove and nothing happened. Charlie Cantwell, the customs man at Trout River, assured us that traffic was dull.

"Four cars went up but none has come down yet," he said. "Everything's straight enough so far to-night."

Back to Constable, where we took to a road which challenges the worst road on



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earth to a finish fight for the championship. And there we did some telephoning.

"A minute from now," observed the Sheriff, "every booze runner on the other side of the line will know we're out. Nothing but party lines, and as soon as a bell rings every party on the line's listening. And everybody's for the smugglers. A man can't steal a horse or a loaf of bread and get away with it. Folks won't let him. But you can't get it into the heads of folks that violating the Eighteenth Amendment's a crime—not yet you can't."

"Yes," added Skid Metcalf, "the booze runners know we're out. They knew it before we had left the village. They knew it in Fort Covington and Hogansburg and Dundee and Huntington before we were out into the open country. We ain't got no friends."

We bumped and careened along to the Pibald Farm. Skid turned the Sheriff's car into the lane leading up to the barn. The other cars hung back. The doors of the barn swung open and the yellow light of a lantern revealed a touring car backing out of the wagon shelter beneath the hay mow innocent of hay but full of booze. A grunt from the engine of our car and a flashlight swept the rocky meadow and came to a stop on the lane we occupied. The car booted back into the barn and the doors swung shut again. There was no longer any use for secrecy, so we shot up to the cobbled approach to the ramshackle building.

It was like sea raiding. We threw a crew aboard the booze car—a chauffeur and a customs man—and handcuffed the chauffeur

The trap was set and we lay beside the ruins of Mary Reilly's. The Sheriff had a Winchester. The others had pistols.

Suppose Walter Johnson or Grover Alexander decided to heave bricks at your head and each brick, carrying everything that either gentleman could put on it, grazed your ears! The writer hereof thought of just that when those rum-runners passed us on the Mary Reilly road. There were three cars in that train. And those three cars were loaded to their tops. They carried no lights. Their horns were howling like dissolute banishes. The left fork was blocked, but those alcoholic Valkyrie had no intention of taking that left fork. They rounded the turn to the right before the other official car had time to get under way. It was just as well. Had the right fork been blocked by a car there would have been chaos. The leading booze car took the tiny turn without slackening and it passed Mary Reilly's at forty miles an hour.

"Good God!" screamed Skid as he saw the turn made. "Barney Oldfield's driving that."

A better man than Eddie Rickenbacker must have been driving the second car, for the boy at the wheel of that juggernaut decided to run for it. He gave his car everything he could muster and she fairly hurled the bowlder that made the turn in the road dangerous.

And the third car followed suit!

There were fewer than ten feet between them. The Sheriff's Winchester began crackling. The customs men's automatics joined in the refrain. If any one of those cars was hit we didn't discover it.

Pursuit of Rum Cars
Futile as Chasing Bullets

We followed them, of course. We might just as well have tried following the bullets. We reached Fort Covington to find the village deserted save for Aaron Scattergood, who lives somewhere up the Salmon River and has some sort of a watchmanlike job that keeps him out all night.

"Did I see 'em?" sneered Aaron. "What the hell do you think I am—deaf? Blind? Unless they've turned turtle or hit something they're passing through Massena by now, and Massena ain't moved an inch since last night, when it was twenty miles down the river. What are you, Volsteaders?"

"No, Customs men."

"Fired all the Volsteaders in these parts, didn't they?" demanded Aaron.

"Yes."

"One afternoon," laughed Aaron. "I'm standin' right here, and two Volsteaders stop a Studebaker with a big load."

"What you got there?" says the biggest of the Volsteaders.

"Seen I'm caught, it's booze," says the driver of the Studebaker.

"Where you goin'?"

"New York," replies the chauffeur.

"How'll you split with good fellers?" asks the Volsteaders.

"Fifty-fifty."

"Let's go," agrees the big Volsteaders, climbing in beside the bootlegger. "With me on the seat nobody'll stop you."

Aaron paused for a moment and then said:

"And there are them who complains that this ain't a free country!"

Fort Covington is on the American side of the line. A step north and you're in Dundee. The Canadian customs men—Wilson, McMullan, McCaffrey and McNaughton—came in with three captured cars and six prisoners.

"What you got there, for God's sake?" roared the Sheriff.

"Yeh, what you know about this?" grinned Wilson. "Two women. Hell, I don't know what to do with 'em."

Vast Stores in Canada
Await Transport
Into New York and
Other Boundary
States—Even Women
Have Entered the
Illicit Trade

"Runnin' hootch?"

"Runnin' hootch?" roared Wilson. "If you say a Pierce Arrow with forty-two cases of Scotch aboard is hootch you're right. They can't redeem their car to-night and we're turnin' them over to the women folks to make comfortable 'til mornin'."

It must be explained here that the Canadian law differs from the American in that the captured booze car is not confiscated by the Government, provided the owner or driver thereof can produce instantly the monetary value of the car. The capturing customs man assesses the value, and if the captive can produce the money at once he or she is permitted to retain the car. But the booze is confiscated. On this side of the line everything is confiscated—the car, the booze and the driver—provided, of course, the outfit is captured.

"That's a new one—girls driving hootch—ain't it?" demanded Maury Lee, the Syracuse reporter, who had come on in the third car.

**Wilson Gives Them a Thrill
On the Salmon River Road**

"Comparatively," replied Wilson. "Practically everything's old nowadays."

We were getting under way again, for it was about 4 o'clock and we wanted to take up tactical positions on Bare Hill before daybreak.

"Say," yelled Wilson, "if you journalists don't mind a bit of a thrill and can take the gaff if it's handed to you you're welcome to hit the trail with us over on this side some night soon."

We took to the Salmon River road and struck off over Bare Hill on one of the twenty narrow paths that wind through the scrub pine and skinny spruces. They used to be farm paths and cow lanes, these roads over Bare Hill. Now they are good and hard from motor car travel—heavy motor cars filled with bottled depth bombs made in Canadian cellars and shafts overnight to satisfy the American demand.

We hung to the crest of Bare Hill, screened from the road by a brush copse. Thirty minutes passed. The now familiar roar was heard off to the west.

"Hitin' the Covington road with all he has," granted the Sheriff. "He's due for a tumble this time."

The tumble followed. The Covington road is wide and hard. It is surfaced with concrete, and any self-respecting car can do sixty or seventy miles an hour thereon. We turned out of the Bare Hill trail and onto the road going about sixty. We were on even terms with and abate the bootlegger.

"Where you goin'?" screamed the Sheriff, unlimbering the Winchester.

"Goin' to hell," was the response. "Comin'!"

The rum-runner tried to ride us into the ditch, swerving to the middle of the road and stepping on his accelerator. But Skid can drive. Skid refused to turn out and the rum-runner headed for the ditch at the side of the road. The lip of the gully crumbled.

It was admirable the way the bootlegger kept his wits about him. He had thrown on his emergency brake so hard that the heavy car, with its capacity load, bucked. But it had come to a stop, right side up.

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