

SIX-GUNS & SORCERY



Castle
Falkenstein

SIX-GUNS & SORCERY



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THE AMERICAN DREAM

Dawn. A beautiful painted sunrise rose up behind me. I stood on a slight rise, an insignificant speck in the vast Great Plains of the North American continent. The grasslands rolled on before me endlessly, stretching away until the curve of the Earth swallowed them. Even though it was early, the sun shone warm on the back of my neck, and gave a golden hue to everything. The air smelled sweet with the scent of grain rustled up by the stirring breeze.

I heard distant singing. As the early morning mist cleared, I could see an Indian village before me, the colorful markings on their tipis almost glowing in the sunshine. I felt peaceful watching them go about their business. The village woke up in ones and twos, and I saw the braves tend to their horses and hunting gear, and the squaws look after their duties of cleaning and preparing a morning meal. The industriousness of the adults was balanced against the joy of the children as they danced endlessly, weaving their way through the village. It was their singing which I had heard.

Everything was as it should be. The children provided the peaceful air the adults needed; their singing kept the work from being drudgery. The adults provided for the care of the children, and their love for each other was apparent as well. I watched as the women shared in each other's chores, I watched the affectionate farewells passed between families and lovers, and I watched as seasoned friends rode away for the hunt, full of good cheer. The air itself seemed pithy with the fullness of this life.

Yet, in a few short breaths, everything changed.

It felt like a spiritual dam bursting.

The wind picked up. What had been a slight breeze bringing the smells and sounds of the camp in my direction suddenly turned without warning and became a cold, hard wind. It plastered my shirt to my back and whipped my hair about my face, and carried the tang of iron. I glanced over my shoulder and saw the sun pale. Dark clouds, driven by the east wind, veiled it with foreboding. A few fat drops of icy rain spattered my face.

Huddled against the chill, I turned back to the Indian camp. The women scurried about, gathering the washing, covering their food, and placing shields to protect the campfires. All joy was stripped from their movements, leaving only frantic haste. The children, oblivious, kept dancing and singing and playing, but their voices were drowned out by the wind in my ears.

The sky grew darker still, and the wind began to howl. The tipis swayed against the pressure of the gale. The women gathered possessions onto travois with great urgency. I looked about and saw the braves thundering back from their aborted hunt, riding low against the necks of their frothing mounts.

As they reached the camp, terror truly took hold. Men, women, horses, and domestic animals alike all began to panic. Even the children were seized with the fear, although a few tried to resume their games.

That was when I realized that the Earth itself was trembling.

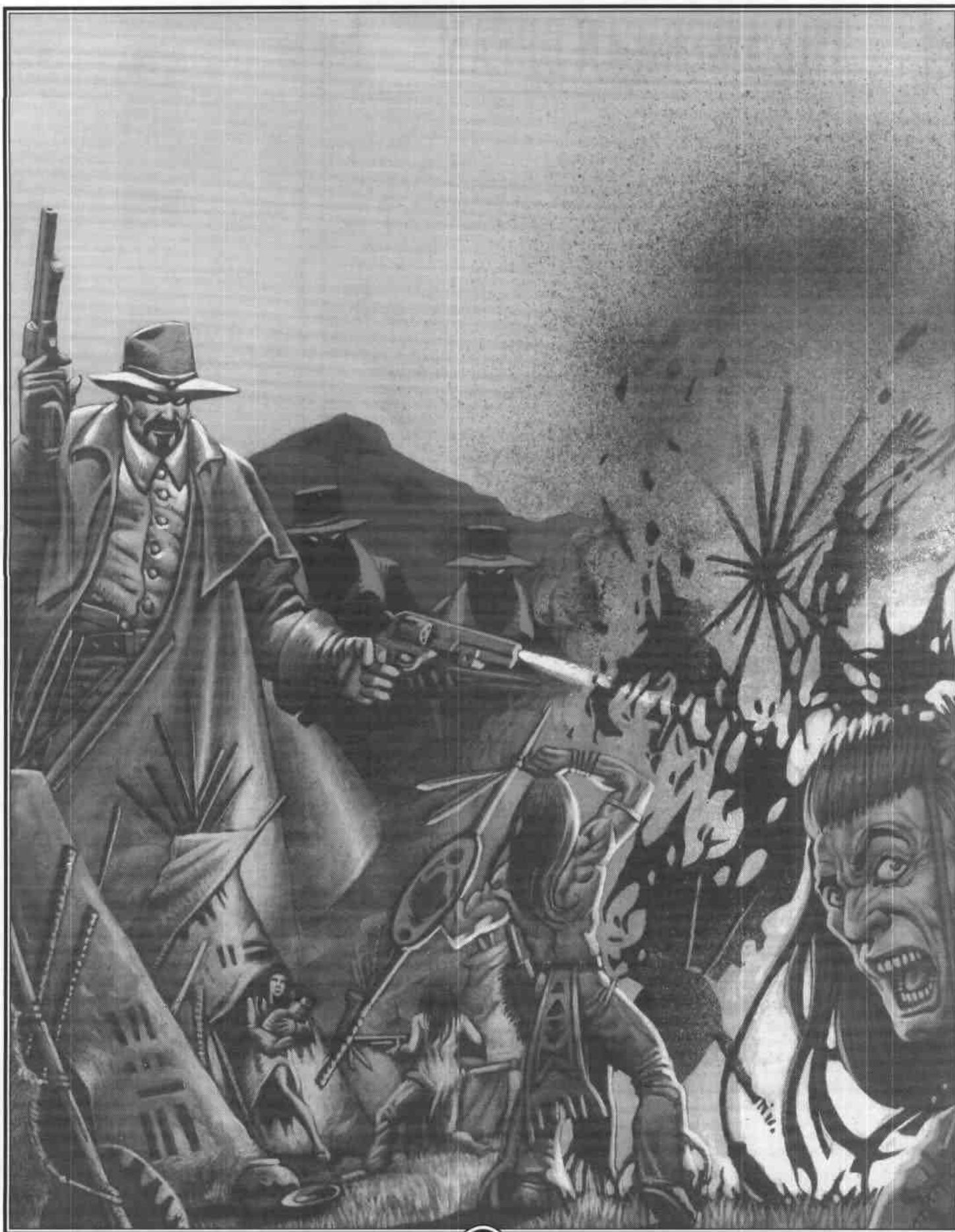
The men drew their bows and tried to calm their horses, and formed a skirmish line facing me at the edge of the camp. I turned to see what the Indians were preparing for.

Then I saw them.

They were huge. Four colossal men, towering against the sky, the very clouds of the storm raging upon the shoulders of their black leather dusters. In the gathering darkness I saw that their eyes were narrow slits, glowing a hellish red. One of them stepped forward toward me, eclipsing the sun with the brim of his flat-brimmed black hat.

I never saw the sun again.





Who were they? God only knows. They looked like the very image of the Western Villain, the cold, heartless killers of lore. Large black hats without ornamentation, gritty shirts, heavy gloves and dusters, worn jeans (one had cracked leather chaps), and heavy, dusty boots. Strangely, I remember vividly that one of them had a railroad for a belt; his spurs dug long, bloody furrows into the land as he walked.

Their glowing eyes robbed their impassive faces of any personality, but their actions spoke for them. They strode across the land without remorse, crushing everything in their path, a huge deathly cloud of dry, gritty dust dogging their heels like a hungry dog. One stepped on a herd of buffalo, leaving bleached bones in his bootprint. Gobbets of flesh and bloody rags of fur left clinging to his boot heels dropped off and became circling vultures.

Even as they walked, the one in the center pulled out an impossibly huge revolver, and, without seeming to look, aimed it at the Indian village. He pulled the trigger, once, twice, three times; each time the hammer fell on an empty chamber with the sound of a tolling bell. On the sixth pull, it fired like a thunderbolt, blowing the village apart and sending torn and broken bodies skyward like so much chaff. Somehow the tinny screams of the Indians finally reached my ears, drowned beneath the raging storm.

I ran to the village to try to help the wounded. Big mistake.

I only wish I could forget what happened next. The titans reached the village, and they actually turned to look at it, although they never did show any expression of interest. The Indian warriors attacked them desperately, spears and arrows sticking uselessly into the enemy's thick leather boots. The giant men casually crushed them, grinding their bodies into the earth like cigarette butts. The monster in the center reached for the village itself, long sharp talons like scythes erupting from the fingers of his gloves.

The claws dug furrows through the ground, scooping up and rending tipi and villager alike. I ran and dodged among the wreckage, narrowly escaping being sliced myself by those monstrous razor-edged claws. I remember the reek of slaughter, and the ringing steel song of those blades as they cut through everything in their path. The gore was indescribable. Blood ran like streams across the naked earth, pouring endlessly into the furrows dug by the giant's paw with the sound of a stream cascading into a bottomless pit. I probably would have passed out from the nausea had I not been so terrified.

I found refuge in the lee of a sagging tipi. I looked around, seeing nothing but total destruction. That didn't matter to them; still they came on, crushing, grinding, rending. The screams were fewer now, but more painful, and the sky was nearly black. In what dim light remained, I saw a young woman cradling a child in her arms, running, panic-stricken, through the devastation. I yelled to her, waved for her to join me in my scant shelter, where, with luck, we might escape notice.

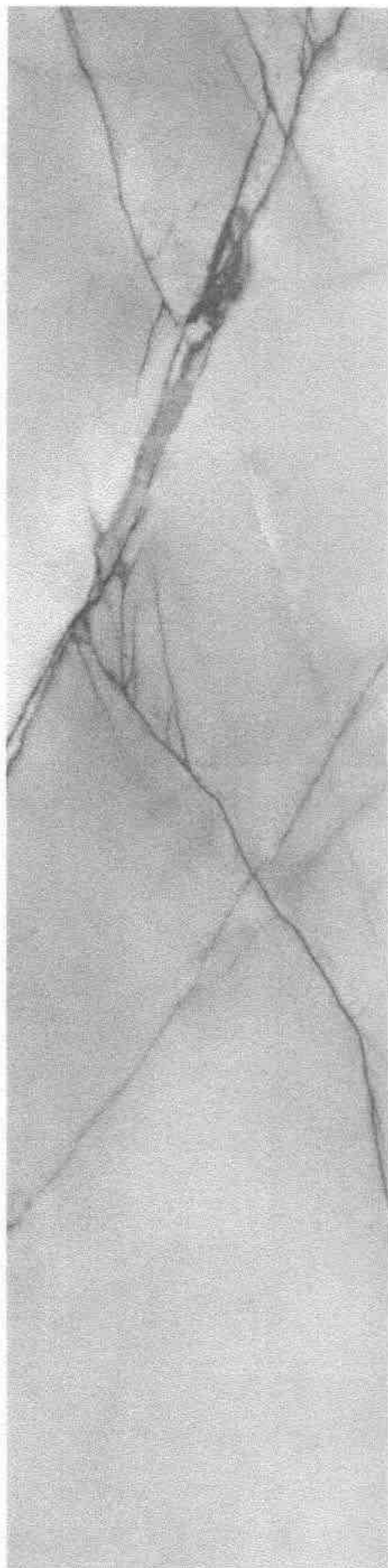
She ran for me, slowed by her child, but still surprisingly fast. I thought for sure she was going to make it. But then, with just ten yards to go, the giant's talons speared down and snipped her in half like scissors. She looked at me, imploring, as she died.

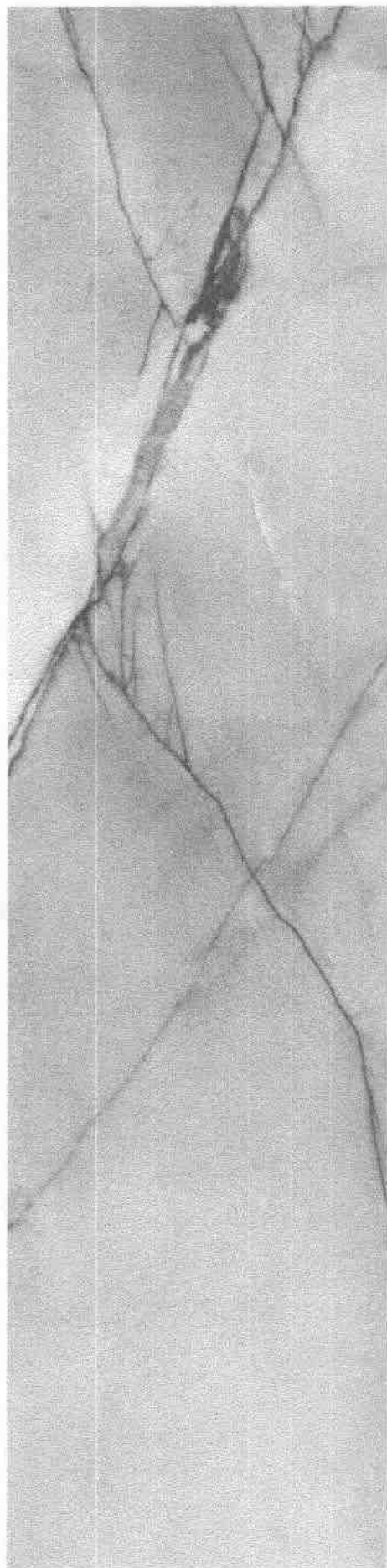
I ran for her kid, took it from her twitching arms. I think he was a little boy, as chunky as he was, no more than two years old. As I grabbed him, I looked up, and saw the sky filled with the impassive face of one of the giants, lit only by the glow from its vacant eyes. I could tell that I was the center of its attention. I couldn't think of any other way to save the child than to distract the thing, so I pushed the boy behind me, drew my sword, and bellowed a challenge.

Then I charged—

—and woke up. I lay tangled in my sweat-drenched sheets, my pillow pushed behind the small of my back. The doors to my apartments flew open as Tarlenheim and Auberon burst in, armed with sword and spell. As they checked the rooms for any lingering danger, Marianne ran to my side. "Tom! Are you all right?"

But I really couldn't give her an answer.





DREAM COME TRUE



fter Tarlenheim was finally convinced there was no threat within the castle walls, we all met in the dining room. I had a cup of hot chocolate heavily spiked with brandy to chill out. It was tough, because the dream felt so real. And I missed having Bailey's. Oh, well.

I told everyone the gory details of my dream while the images were still fresh. I think I spent too much time on the details—I can get pretty graphic at times—and they lost interest in the event itself. To me, the dream was very important, and I wanted them, the experts in magick and stuff like that, to tell me why. But the harder I tried to convince them that this was more than a just-a-dream type of dream, the more they thought I was just being my usual crazy self. It was easier for them to believe that I'd just had a rotten nightmare than that I'd had a strange and spiritual visitation in dreamland. They dismiss a lot of my habits as baggage carried over from our world.

Tarlenheim was snoring audibly when I finally gave up. Auberon and Morrolan had even just about convinced me that it was nothing but a dream, and that I wouldn't have remembered the half of it if I hadn't woken up immediately afterward to the sound of them busting into my bedroom.

I finished my hot chocolate (my fourth cup) and rose wearily to my feet. I was slightly drunk. Morrolan and Marianne escorted me back to my bedroom. Marianne gave me a neck rub, and Morrolan wove a spell which muted both light and sound so I could sleep more easily. What I didn't know was that when Marianne went back to her room, she wrote down everything I said about the dream. Otherwise I might have had a more difficult time recreating the details the next day, when it became important.

I slept late. When I finally awoke, I was pretty well able to keep the dream out of my mind. I went about my business with a smile. Occasionally a chill shudder interrupted my day, but it wasn't until shortly after dinner that my dream rose up again to slap me in the face.

I'd been in Starnberg for a few hours, looking after various petty bureaucratic garbage and flirting with a very cute foreign delegate's aide who didn't speak a word of either English or German. I ate dinner alone at a favorite restaurant, soaking in the calm and pretty normalcy of the Bayernese evening and unwinding. I was just leaving for my hotel when Auberon appeared quite suddenly in front of me. I'm not sure whether he deliberately tried to startle me, or just happened to step in front of me when I was looking elsewhere. From the look on his face, I knew something big was going down.

"Come with me, Thomas." It wasn't a request.

He wouldn't answer any of my questions as we hopped a cabriolet and lit out for the city center. We pulled up in front of the Starnberg Police Department and hopped out. Auberon made straight for the back rooms behind the main desk. His flashing Faerie eyes silenced the police officers as we passed. Sometimes I wish I had The Look like he does. It's a scary thing.

He led me straight to a room in the back of the building. I'm not sure how he knew where to go, since many of the police we met in the halls looked surprised to see him. He just swept in. The room was occupied only by a police officer writing a report, and a cadaver covered by a white sheet. The officer also looked confused to see Lord Auberon and myself suddenly make an appearance, but kept his silence. We're big shots.

Auberon moved to the foot of the body and spun about dramatically to face me. "Well?" he demanded.

"Well what?" I asked, clueless.

He swept the sheet off the corpse with the flourish of a stage magician. It was an Indian, a chief or a medicine man by the look of it.

"There's your nightmare," he said.

THIS LITTLE INDIAN

One shot," said Auberon. "Close range. American service revolver. Death was instantaneous." I didn't ask him how he knew. He likes to keep his little secrets. Also, I've never known Auberon to be wrong, except when he's talking about himself. Then he has a tendency to exaggerate. Badly.

For a long minute I stared at the dead Indian. He looked about sixty-five, with pepper-gray hair pulled back into a neat ponytail. His face was beaten down with the cares of many seasons on the prairie. His clothes, though rough and better suited to the plains than to the city, were neat and clean, except for a blood-stained hole over his heart. He looked calm and strong, even in death. In fact, he had a look about him that seemed almost like self-satisfaction. A strange expression for one who'd just been blown away in a foreign land.

I studied him for a long time, scoping out his features, jewelry, fetishes, and stuff, until I noticed that Auberon was still staring at me with an expression of impatience. Seeing those burning Faerie eyes gave me the kick-start I needed.

"We're taking over this investigation," I said in my best German, turning to the policeman. "This is now a secret police matter, and you've been commandeered for the duration. We need your complete report, including how and where he was found, a complete list of his possessions, and all eyewitness accounts. I need to be taken to the scene of the crime, and everyone even remotely involved in this must be sworn to secrecy. Also, if you have an Eleusinian or two in the city, we need them as well. We could use their magickal touch. Is that clear?"

One thing I've always loved about the Germans, they are nothing if not efficient. Within five minutes, everything I'd asked for was in my hands: a sheaf of papers, a box filled with a beaded medicine bag and various other carefully wrapped items, a complete inventory of everything found on the body, and a list of everyone who said, saw, or did anything on the case, complete with descriptions and addresses. The only thing lacking was someone from the Order of Eleusis, but a dispatch had already been sent to München to grab one off the streets.

I set the box on the floor beside the dead Indian, and began to flip through the official paperwork. As I did so, I felt the hairs on my head begin to stand on end. At first I thought I was just getting the creeps, but then Auberon took the papers from my hands with a wry smile. Just as I let go, there was a sharp crack and Auberon, the Indian, and the box of evidence were gone, leaving a whiff of magickal ozone in their wake.

I turned back to the policeman. "You won't need to worry about hauling the body to Castle Falkenstein," I said calmly. "We can handle that ourselves."

I hate it when Auberon does that.

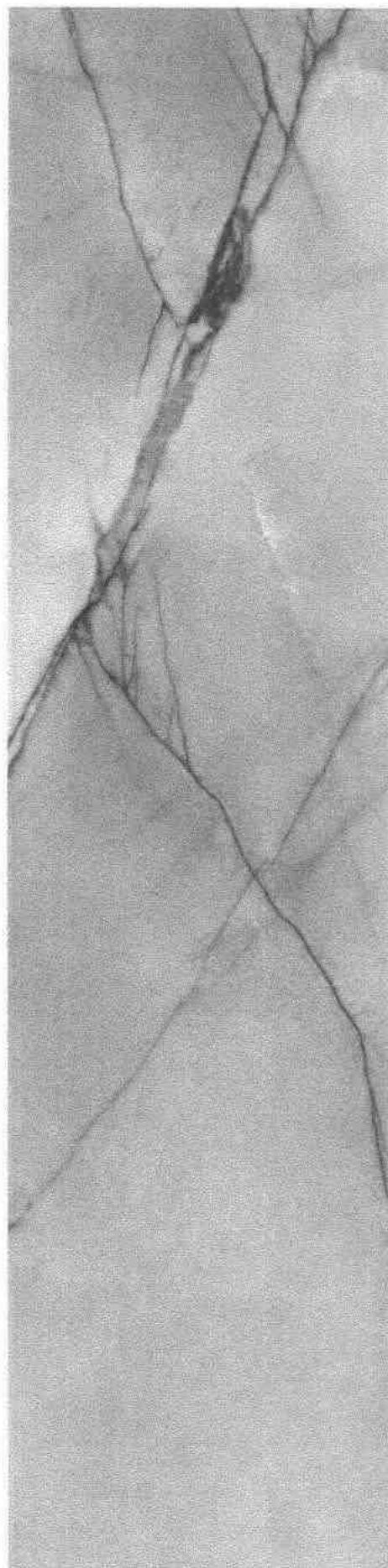
Next the policeman took me to the scene of the crime, which was an alley near the riverside. The officer explained how the Indian had been found sprawled against the wall. I figured that meant he hadn't been moved after being shot. The police officer agreed, adding that it appeared none of the Indian's stuff had been taken either. Scratch theft for a motive. We were also able to determine that the late Indian had arrived on the most recent ship, a trading vessel which regularly plies the waters between Starnberg and München. He hadn't made it far into Starnberg.

But none of that explained why he was here, in the heart of Bayern. Nor why he was dead. Aside from the gunshot, I mean. I headed back for the Castle to see if they'd found a clue among the dead man's possessions. Which, in fact, they had.

As I entered the north gate to the Castle, a servant sent me immediately to the Throne Room. Everyone was waiting for me in there, even the King. The King, obviously impatient, waiting for me!

"Um, what's the deal?" I asked. "Sire. You find something?"

King Ludwig held up a piece of paper, sealed with wax. "It's for you," he said.





The paper, which was just addressed to me (much to Ludwig's annoyance), was scrawled with an inept hand, almost childish in its unevenness. The seal was also poorly done, and didn't have any kind of sigil pressed into it. At first Morrolan wasn't willing to accept the letter as genuine, until I reminded him that most Indian languages have no written form, so Roman lettering would be a problem. The wax was also obviously bee's wax (it still smelled good), which told us it was not from an industrialized country.

It was obvious that they hadn't already opened the letter thanks to Victorian manners—it was addressed to me, after all—but they were dying to know the contents. To appease everyone, I read the letter aloud in the Throne Room. It was written in pidgen English, and a few sentences took me several running starts to struggle through. The gist of the letter seemed to be that the dead Indian had been sent by the Twenty Nations to smoke the peace pipe with me (I actually said "with us", so as not to offend Ludwig further). There was also some mention of "our attackers" and a few elliptical references I didn't get at all.

"What the deuce is a peace pipe?" asked Morrolan.

"It's really just a tobacco pipe, but it has special meaning to the Indians," I started to reply.

King Ludwig cut me off. "Well, then, we should thank them for the gift. But I do wish they'd informed us that their messenger was coming. We could have offered him protection. Then we could have had a gala reception, with waltzing, fancy pastries—"

"There's more to it than that, sire," I continued. "Remember, traditionally, Indian tribes have no written language. They don't write, they hang out and talk. They don't sign treaties like we do; they make promises. The peace pipe is their way of sealing a promise."

"Do you mean they're petitioning for an alliance?" asked Morrolan.

"Basically, yes. As I read it," I said.

"There's more to it than that," interjected Tarlenheim. "Consider these points: He came over more or less incognito. We received no notice. There was no fanfare. Further, the emissary had no entourage: no aides, no social secretary, no bodyguards. This implies that, as far as the Twenty Nations are concerned, this was a secret mission. And since he was coming over secretly, I'd say they figured there was an inherent danger should other nations find out."

"Danger indeed," added Marianne sadly.

"Would that I knew whether the discovery of this mission proved a threat to our kingdom as well," finished Tarlenheim.

There was a long silence in the Throne Room.

Finally King Ludwig broke the silence, heaving a great sigh of tension. "Ach ... politically speaking," he said slowly, "there's no reason we shouldn't ally with the Twenty Nations. After all, the more allies a sovereign nation has, the greater her safety amongst those who work against her. Now, we know that the Twenty Nations and the United States have been at odds for quite some time. The United States has close bonds with the Steam Lords of England, and England has her treaties with Bismarck himself. So as far as I can see, we could ally with the Twenty Nations simply because they're the enemy of our enemy, in an indirect sense."

"That's true," I added. "Our history shows that the U.S. is a powerful ally, with a lot of resources and really tough soldiers. Even though the U.S. is smaller here than it is in my world, the bulk of the industry and population still lies on the East Coast. Should war break out between Bayern and Prussia, it's likely that the U.S. and England will send expeditionary forces which will fight like rabid badgers. Having the Twenty Nations on our side will help even the odds."

"So be it," decreed the King with an air of pompousness. "We shall ally with the Twenty Nations."

"Well, we can't bloody well do it now," Morrolan commented dryly. "Pardon me, I mean to say their emissary is dead. How do you propose to go about negotiating an alliance with a corpse?"

THE PLAN

gunboat diplomacy," I said.

"What the deuce are you talking about, Tom?" said Morrolan.

"Oh, yeah, uh, you probably haven't heard that one yet. Give it another fifty years or so." They hate it when I pull something from the future. "Look. We can't exactly go hopping over to the Twenty Nations, because you know the U.S. won't be keen on the idea. They'd find a way to stop us. Even if we sailed directly from Wurtzburg to, say, Houston, we'd probably end up dead in a tragic sailing accident. Or if we made it to the U.S., there'd be a terrible train wreck, or we'd get food poisoning.

"So instead, we capitalize on Ludwig's image as an eccentric. The King arbitrarily decrees that there shall be a grand diplomatic tour of the U.S., Texas, and California. In, say, ten days' time."

"*Il n'est pas possible!*" said Marianne. "It is too soon."

"That's exactly my point," I said. "It should look poorly thought out."

"But, *mon cher*," asked Marianne, "would it not be *déclassé* to avoid the Twenty Nations?"

"Balderdash!" exclaimed Morrolan with great amusement. "Think of Pfistermeister! He'd plan the whole affair, being chamberlain and all. He's so stuffy—I can hear him now. 'Oh! I cannot bear the thought of those primitive and barbaric heathens!'" he said, his voice taking on a whiny falsetto. It was an uncanny imitation of the chamberlain's fussy tone. "How could I possibly subject myself to making do without a bubble bath, a hot toddy each night, and spinach quiche for breakfast? Mercy! Where are my smelling salts?" Indeed, it would be expected he'd give them a miss."

"There we go," I said, laughing. "We leak statements like that one. Unofficially, of course, and we always deny them to save face. But we get the Prussians to think Pfisty would never deign to sit his keister on the ground, let alone hold a powwow. Then we're off the hook. We plan a grand tour down the East Coast and across to the Pacific. Somewhere along about Dallas you drop me off, and I skedaddle up to the Twenty Nations and check things out. Then we can hook up in San Francisco when I'm done.

"And the beauty of it," I added, "is that we don't rely on other people's luxury liners or trains. We bring our own transport. We go in the *Stauffenberg*, our fastest aero-cruiser. The sight of seeing such a huge and deadly ship in their skies will make them think twice before they try to do something to bother us, even if they do catch wind of what we're really up to."

"Ah," said Auberon, "so that's gunboat diplomacy."

"We approve," said Ludwig. And so it became a plan.

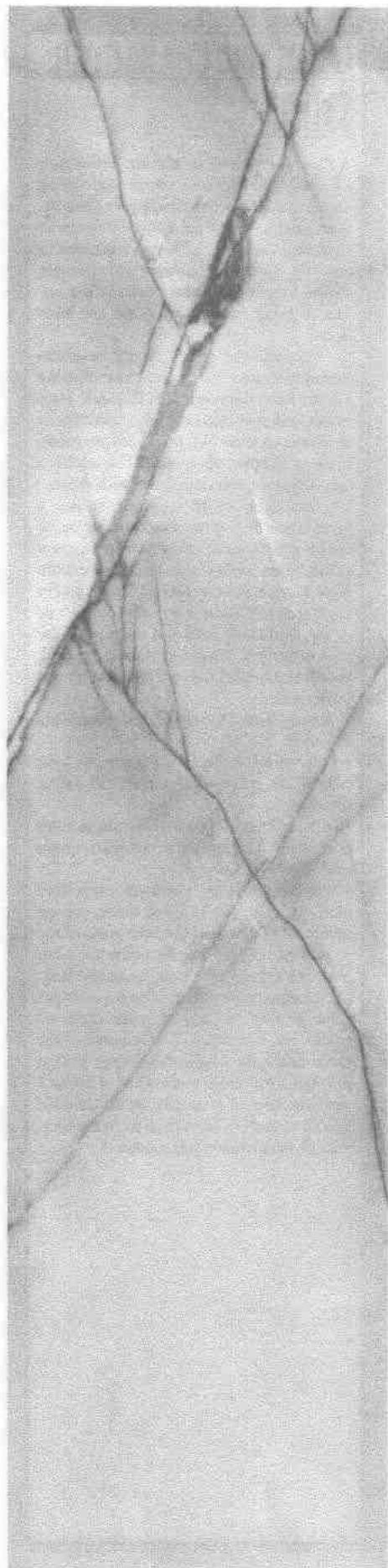
The next ten days were spent feverishly making arrangements, planning the itinerary, and awaiting replies from the North American governments. Emperor Norton, President Houston, and President Grant all expressed delight (in their own ways) that we were coming to visit. Norton also wanted a demonstration of the *Stauffenberg's* capabilities.

We needed to bring a lot of people with us, the better by which I could slip away unnoticed. We also had to pack a lot of food and other supplies. Beyond my uniforms and survival gear, I found myself only able to bring basic drawing supplies. I'd have loved to do another set of watercolors, but there was just no way I could have hauled a bunch of paintings around. And, as it turns out, I'd have lost them anyway. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Everything came together with remarkable speed. There was quite a commotion around the Castle and down in Friedrichshaven for several days.

And then, one morning, I was winched on a cable car from the shores of the Bodensee and onto the floating decks of the *Stauffenberg*.

And we were off.



DRAMATIC CHARACTER: SAILOR

You were drawn to the sea. From your earliest childhood memories of playing with toy boats to the stories your grandfathers used to tell of fighting Nor'easters or rounding Cape Horn, the sea has called to you. As soon as you were old enough, maybe sooner, you went down to the sea. You've been around the world and back again.

Crossing the Line into the southern hemisphere and riding out the Roaring Forties has toughened you. In exotic ports of call, bars, and taverns, you've learned how to handle yourself. Yet, there remains something of the poet about you. The sea has a special wisdom she only shares with sailors.

Serving on board a ship of the line, a great clipper ship of the merchant marine, or as a hand aboard one of the tremendous new ocean liners plying the sealanes between New Europa and the United States, you've sailed them all. There is no knot you can't tie or slip. You know ships and the ways of the sea instinctively. Whenever you are on land, your first thought is of your ship and returning to sea.

- **Strong Suits:** Courage, Helmsmanship, Physique
- **Possessions:** Rope 10', belaying pin, boat hook, knife, souvenirs of ports of call, sailing schedule.
- **In Your Diary:** Names of women in every port, accounts of travels, sea chanties, names of ships you've sailed.
- **Why You're Here:** Every sailor falls from grace with the sea. In those times, you go ashore, until you hear the siren song of the sea calling to you. The Americas are a big place and there is always call for an able-bodied seaman. Some more adventurous types come looking for you to guide them on cruises into adventure. You've heard of the Great Lakes, the Mighty Mississippi flowing through a continent to the Gulf of Mexico, and even tales of a salt lake in the far west! You've decided to experience them for yourself. All ashore that's going ashore!

THE JOURNEY



he voyage to the New World was uneventful by Falkensteinian standards. We suffered no storms, we weren't attacked by Sky Pirates, and we had no mechanical disasters, yet there was plenty to remind me that I'm in a different world. Beyond the fact that I was riding on a secret mission for a mad king with an elf-lord in a Dwarfen-crafted magickally driven battle zeppelin, I mean.

Auberon was with us for the greater part of the journey across the North Atlantean. For whatever reason, he had no desire to actually set foot on American soil, so he intended to make his way back to Falkenstein before landfall. One evening, while Marianne and I were standing on the forecandle, watching the sun set, he came out to join us.

"Are ye enjoying yourself, Thomas, me boy?" he asked, a lilt in his voice.

"Yes, we are," I answered pointedly. To be honest, I was kind of miffed to be interrupted. "It's very peaceful and quiet out here." I gave my best shot at giving him The Look, but he didn't notice. Guess I'll have to practice.

"It only seems peaceful, lad," he said, "and quiet can be a dangerous thing. Allow me to demonstrate, aye?" Auberon stepped up onto the handrail of the forecandle as easily as a cat. Then he jumped.

I gasped involuntarily, and Marianne gripped my arm more tightly. Even though we know he's a darned powerful mage, we felt a momentary pang of fear for his continued health. We watched as he fell, executing a perfect swan dive with his short cloak billowing behind him. A few seconds later a small white mark where he hit the water was all that was left.

"So what the heck has gotten into him?" I asked, shaken.

"I do not know," said Marianne. "It is always with him one thing, if not another."

We watched the sea for a few moments. At first, all was still. The foam from his dive faded away, and the waves did their wavy thing. Then the water began to roil, like a pot of water just starting to boil or something. It even seemed to change color somewhat. Then Auberon burst back out of the water and into the air ...

And some things reached after him.

Leviathan gray-green tentacles! I mean these things were huge, two hundred yards long if they were an inch! Auberon soared like a sparrow zipping between the giant reaching appendages, teasing and frustrating them for several long minutes as they beat and thrashed the air all around him. The surf was whipped into froth with the frustration of whatever it was down there. Finally, Auberon broke off and soared back up to our deck. As he did, I saw one huge flat eye stare up at us hungrily for a long moment before the creature sank back into the depths.

Auberon landed lightly on the deck beside me, looking as innocent as a cat that had just eaten the family parakeet. He brushed some imaginary lint off one cuff. He was, of course, dry as a bone.

"What the hell was that?" I blurted out, overlooking the fact that there was a lady present.

"Mm?" replied Auberon innocently. "Ah, that. That, Thomas, was a kraken. A fairly good-sized one at that, although I've seen bigger. Would ye like to go for a closer look?" He offered me his hand.

"No thanks, I've seen quite enough for the moment," I replied.

"There are other things down there, as well. Perhaps—"

"No. Thanks." I said flatly. He smiled and left.

Marianne and I remained on deck for a while longer, but I no longer appreciated the sunset. I was too busy thinking about how brave the sailors of this world must be. And how tempted I was to join them, just to see what other things were out there in the depths. I held Marianne closer.

TRANS-ATLANTEAN SOCIETY

Not everyone travels from New Europa to the Americas in a zeppelin. Most people do not. Though it takes longer, making the trans-Atlantic crossing is usually done by ship. The trip can take between a week and two weeks, depending on the vessel and the weather. The Steam Age has seen great luxury liners designed specifically for carrying passengers ply the north Atlantic sea lanes. New York to Southampton, England or La Harve, France are the two most common passenger routes. As the American elite travel to New Europa for the Season and New European aristocrats go in search of adventure in the Wild West, an entire social scene has developed around Making the Crossing.

BON VOYAGE

The Bon Voyage Party is a social institution unique to travelling aboard ship and particularly to making the trans-Atlantic crossing. The night before a ship sails such a party will take place either ashore or more traditionally aboard ship. Well wishers make merry to see the departing travellers on their journey. The celebratory atmosphere makes saying goodbye less painful. Rather than a reserved ball, the Bon Voyage Party is more like a carnival with colorful streamers and decorations. The mood is very relaxed and attire need not be strictly formal. Gaiety replaces strict social behavior for one night.

THE SWAY OF THE GRAND SALON

Anyone who is anyone travels in a First Class cabin while at sea. If you are travelling in any other class, relax, try to enjoy yourself but do not expect more than transportation. Second through Fourth Class accommodations are increasingly cramped and Steerage is little more than a bunk deep in the bowels of the ship. Only First Class passengers have full access to the ship's amenities and the social round.

Social life aboard ship revolves around three activities, eating, dancing and going on deck.

Though he may be a nobody ashore, at sea the captain of a ship is the person with whom to dine. An invitation to take dinner at the captain's table is a social coup and a mark of your importance. Even if you would never think to lower yourself to accept such an invitation, it is still to be sought after and only good manners to accept. Dining at the captain's table aboard ship is the equivalent of being seated at the head table of a dinner with nobility or having the most desirable table in a cafe or bistro. It is the place to be seen dining.

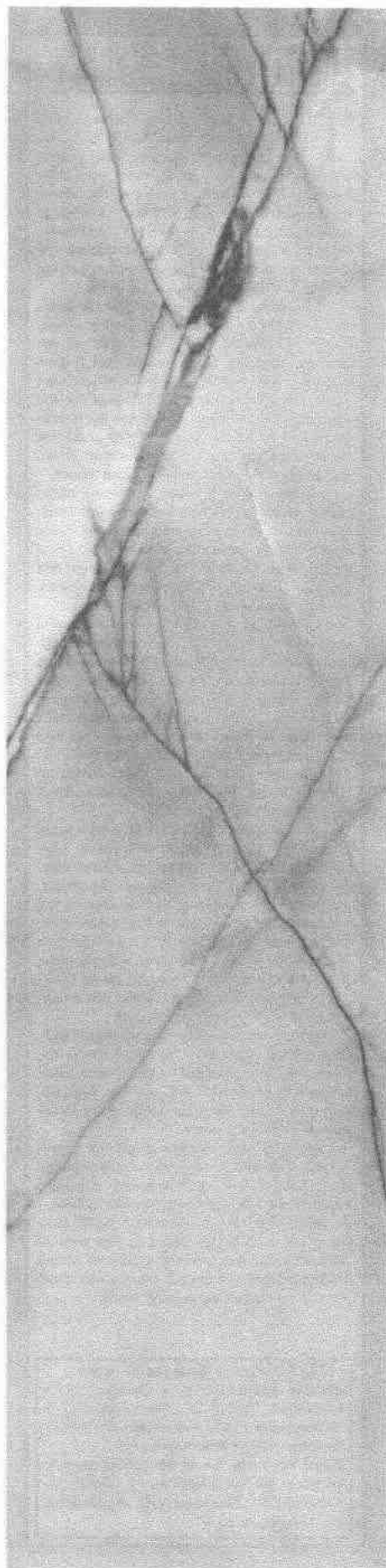
Every evening following dinner, passengers may retire to the Grand Salon. Formal attire is mandatory. Steam Age luxury liners are palatial floating hotels. The Grand Salon is part drawing room and part ballroom. Great paned windows will be hung with drapes of velvet brocade, woodwork will be of mahogany or teak with gilt trim and crystal chandeliers will illuminate the room. There is always a band shell and a ship's band to provide music for dancing. This is where well-to-do passengers mingle. Acquaintances made here have led to more than one shipboard romance. Wealthy industrialists, aristocrats or potentates are more approachable because the realities of life aboard ship throw people together, who might otherwise never meet. You would be advised to take full advantage of this opportunity but beware. Spies and criminals are not unaware of these opportunities.

During the day, passengers may go upon deck, weather permitting. A strict segregation of passengers is enforced based on class of passage. The deck chairs best positioned to catch the sun are reserved for First Class passengers. Deck games are a favorite pastime and less restricted. Of course, proper young gentlemen and ladies should conduct themselves as such. Class will tell. Then again, who's to know once the ship makes port?

MAKING PORT

Traditionally, a Grand Ball is held the night before a ship makes port. This is the Bon Voyage Party's opposite number. The Ball is held in the Grand Salon and it is strictly tie and tails. This is where shipboard assignations often have their tearful ending. On a happier note, plans may be made to meet with new friends at a later date or to continue on in one another's company.

If port is made in New York, it is a simple matter to make arrangements for hotels or continuing transportation. In Southampton, a train ride to London is often the next order of business, while in La Harve, passengers are usually on to Paris. The ship's concierge can aid in making any necessary arrangements you might require. Have a safe journey.



THE GREY GHOST OF FUNDY

The Bay of Fundy, located between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, is haunted—like much of America's eastern seaboard. These are appropriate waters for ghosts, as they are home to some of the fiercest storms on the east coast, with gale-force winds and sixty-foot swells. The ghosts of Confederate privateer Mogul Mackenzie and his vessel, the *Kanawha*, sail these treacherous waters, preying on ships as they did during the Civil War.

Mackenzie was one of the best privateers the Confederacy ever sent to sea. He was a modern-day Blackbeard, the Jean Lafitte of the northern Atlantic. He was a wild man, fearless in battle, and merciless to his captives, who would often be tortured or mutilated for the most trifling of reasons. There was not a man who sailed under the Union flag who did not fear spotting the slim, rakish silhouette of the *Kanawha*, or the wrath of her devilish master.

At the end of the war, Mackenzie disappeared. Nothing was heard of him until 1865, when merchantmen who sailed northern waters reported being pursued by a pirate ship. These reports were discounted by both American and Canadian authorities, who believed that piracy had been eradicated. Yet reports continued.

In May, an American gunboat pursued a ship that matched the descriptions of the *Kanawha* off of Nova Scotia. The ship refused to heave to, and did not fly any identifying colors. When ordered to stop, the phantom ship made for the Canadian shore at high speed, eventually disappearing in the treacherous passages and bays near Cape Sable. Later, a schooner was chased by the phantom privateer from Nova Scotia to Portland, Maine, the pirate veering off to sea as the schooner put in to port.

All doubt was erased a few days later when a whaler arrived at Portland with proof. They had found the merchantman *St. Claire* abandoned in the Bay of Fundy. The crew was absent, the strongbox was missing. But the ship was still under sail. The whaler put the *St. Claire* under tow, and brought it into port. Tied to the stern of the *St. Claire* was a small boat, with the name *Kanawha* painted on it. Obviously, the *St. Claire* had been attacked by the *Kanawha*, the strongbox taken, and the crew disposed of.

Action was now taken. The warship H.M.S. *Buzzard* was dispatched to hunt down the *Kanawha*. The *Buzzard* searched such likely hideouts as St. Mary's Bay at Haut Isle (also known as *Ile aux Morts*, the Island of the Dead) without finding the pirate.

Sightings of the *Kanawha* continue to this day, and ships still fall victim to the ghostly pirate. Pirate hunters, even with magical assistance, have had as much luck finding the Grey Ghost as the *Buzzard* did. No one who has seen the Grey Ghost has lived to tell about it, but mystical authorities speculate that the spectre of Mogul Mackenzie inhabits its rotting body, which allows the spectre to affect the physical world.

• **Mogul Mackenzie (malevolent spectre)**
Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Courage [GR] •
 Etherealness [EXT] • Fencing [EXC] •
 Helmsmanship [EXT] • Marksmanship [GR] •
 Perception [GR] • Social Graces [GD]
 Mogul Mackenzie has all the abilities given to
 specters in *The Book of Sigils*, pg. 91. His ship, the
Kanawha, is a Phantom Ship, as detailed in
The Book of Sigils, pg. 91.

LAND, HO!



he New World. We saw the coast, Newfoundland, to be exact, mid-morning one day. We passed over fishing vessels, saw the industrious logging going on at the coastline. It looked nice, calm, and serene. The archetypal country lifestyle, with little cottages in the woods, a small plume of smoke the only way to mark their existence from this high up. The ship's commander, Captain Lückner was with me, and I'd just commented on how nice it would be to live like that, when Auberon's words returned to my memory.

"It only seems peaceful, lad, and quiet can be a dangerous thing."

I knew that the Elf Lord had gone back home, but his words rang very clearly. So I paused, and checked the panorama again. The fishing vessels were actually whalers, hotly pursuing a pod of beleaguered humpbacks. When I saw that, I wanted to blast them out of the water, but we didn't even have any bombs. I knew the King wouldn't consent to interfering, either. Diplomatic brouhaha and all that. Damn it all, anyway. It would have been just like *Star Trek IV*. Panic those little buggers and send 'em home.

I looked at the coast, too, and I saw that the loggers had been clear-cutting. As near as I could see, there'd been no replanting. Last year's cut was just a naked scar, filled with rotting logs and scrub brush. Same with the year's before, and the one before that. They had no clue. Or they didn't care. Damn it all, anyway.

We continued across the Gulf of St. Lawrence and up the waterway to Quebec. With the benefit of our aerial view, I could see the beginnings of pollution already. Various junk that had been tossed into the drink over the years had sunk in slow or shallow water. It probably wasn't visible to those sailing the river, but it was plain to us.

We put down in Quebec for provisioning, and also for a short diplomatic reception, which, frankly, I wasn't all that excited about. In fact, I didn't want to go to any of the countless receptions Chamberlain Pfistermeister had planned on our itinerary; I just wanted to get to the Twenty Nations. Find out what was up. Do something other than hang out with a bunch of self-important politicians and eat hors d'oeuvres.

But I had to go anyway. It was short, it was dull, it was full of great pompousness and poor champagne. Martin von Hubel, our diplomat, gave a pleasant if long-winded speech. The locals did the same. I spoke with Pfistermeister afterwards, and he reminded me that Canada had not had independence for long, only since 1868. Canada is still little more than a colony. Von Hubel's goal was to give a speech that talked a lot without actually saying anything, to give the Commonwealth intelligence agents a pile of crap to wade through.

And so I realized that we were not so much getting a boring reception from the Canadians, we were more getting a cool reception from one of Bayern's enemies: the Empire of Great Britain.

Fortunately, England (and therefore Canada) is Bayern's enemy due to its close ties with Prussia, not because of any direct conflict, although I will say they expressed an uncomfortable amount of interest in the magical engine of our aerocruiser. Naturally, we showed them nothing and told them little, all of it contradictory. We also tripled the watch while we were set down. I got to pull the graveyard shift, from midnight to three in the morning. Mm boy.

After that dull reception and a night spent on guard, we were glad to leave the city and press onward to the United States. We crossed the St. Lawrence and made for New York City. The Big Apple.

And that was when it finally hit me: I've been on this side of the Faerie Veil for how many years now? I've lost track. And I'd never set foot on the soil of my native country ...or at least the Falkensteinian equivalent of it. It wouldn't be that different, would it? Would it?

I had no way of knowing. But suddenly, there I was. And I hadn't a clue what to do.

THE DOMINION OF CANADA



Population: 2.6 million • **Government:** Parliament, subject to the British throne • **Alliances:** England • **Enemies:** United States, Twenty Nations • **Position:** Still recovering from the Crisis, and still acclimating to being a united Dominion.

EARLY HISTORY

Originally settled by the French in the early 1600's, British settlers started to arrive with the formation of the Hudson Bay Company in 1670. Conflicts between the two groups began immediately. Determined to control Canada, the Hudson Bay Company incited British settlers to provoke the French. The resulting French and Indian War proved disastrous for the French, and by 1763 the British controlled most of Canada.

The Hudson Bay Company, known simply as the Company, wanted Great Britain to conquer the U.S. to pave the way for the Company's economic domination of all of North America. This was not to be. During the War of 1812, U.S. troops won easy victories in the Ottawa Territory. Great Britain could not spare troops from the Napoleonic Wars, leaving no choice but to recognize the United States' claim to Ottawa as war reparations.

THE CANADIAN CRISIS OF 1837

By 1837, the Company dominated the Canadian economy but was unable to fully establish control, so no central colonial government existed. Instead, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick each had its own colonial governor, who made his own policy. Determined to increase its political power by unifying the Canadian provinces, the Company engineered a severe economic depression. As calls for economic reform circulated, the French-speaking settlers of Quebec rose in rebellion, incited by agents of the Company. Surely now, the Company's directors thought, the British Parliament must act.

Across the border, even though Ottawa was officially a United States territory and unaffected by the economic manipulations of the Company, the French settlers there joined the rebellion. This unexpectedly widened the conflict. Seeing an opportunity to retake its lost possessions, the restored Bourbon monarchy of France invaded New Brunswick, landing French Expeditionary Forces. The divided colonial governments of Canada were unprepared to deal with both a rebellion and an invasion.

In Washington, D.C., President Martin Van Buren had just been inaugurated as the eighth President of the United States, and wasted no time dealing with the Canadian Crisis. Declaring Ottawa to be in rebellion against the Union, and the French force in New Brunswick to be in violation of the Monroe Doctrine, he dispatched troops to the north and west.

In short order, the rebellion was put down and the French expelled from New Brunswick. Thanks to U.S. intervention, the British colonial forces were able to quell the rebellion in Quebec. Grateful for assistance against the French, and unwilling to risk another war, the British agreed to cede New Brunswick to the United States. Subsequently, in 1846, Ottawa was granted statehood and New Brunswick became a state in 1858.

DOMINION

Shocked by the events of the Canadian Crisis, the British Parliament determined to act. A royal commission determined that what was required was a unified Canadian government. In a secret report to Parliament, the shadowy role of the Hudson Bay Company was revealed, but the Company's political influence in Great Britain resulted in the report being kept quiet rather than risk a scandal.

Initially reluctant to grant Canada independence, in 1848, Parliament agreed to allow the United Provinces of Canada, Quebec and Ontario, self-government. However, this fell short of full independence and the colonies of British Columbia and Nova Scotia remained separately administered.

By 1867, the British government was ready to grant Canada full independence, incorporating the Dominion, but leaving British Columbia a separate colony. Only the continuing power of the Company, which controlled all of the land around Hudson Bay and the Northwest Territory, gave the British pause. The Company's role in the Canadian Crisis had not been forgotten. Weakened by the loss of holdings, the establishment of the Dominion, and revelations about its role in the Crisis, the Hudson Bay Company agreed to sell its land holdings for 300,000 pounds and stretches of arable land in the central Great Plains. In 1868, the British North

American Act created the Dominion of Canada, and late that year the Hudson Bay Accord transferred title of the Northwest Territories to the Dominion.

THE MANITOBA CONFLICT

Stung by the loss of its vast territories, the Company plotted its return to power. The lands in the Great Plains it had acquired were potentially valuable, but they were occupied by the powerful Blackfoot-Cree Indian Confederacy. To the east in the Red River area, the half-Indian metis, descendants of white trappers and Indians, regarded themselves as an independent people.

When the new Dominion attempted to exert control over the metis in 1870, they rebelled, allying with both the Company and the Blackfoot-Cree Confederation. Led by Louis Riel, the metis seized control of the Red River area and held off what limited attempts the new government could make to take the territory by force. Negotiating a solution, the Red River area was declared the independent province of Manitoba in 1870. While technically part of the dominion, it is governed by President Riel from Winnipeg.

THE MOUNTIES

With Manitoba admitted into the Dominion, the Conflict has died down. It has, however, not disappeared. Louis Riel secretly plots to create an independent Manitoba allied with the Blackfoot-Cree Confederacy and the Twenty Nations to the south. The Hudson Bay Company supports Riel's plans and but has also provided limited information on his activities to the Canadian government. Playing both sides off against each other, the Company intends to come out on top by playing kingmaker, extracting concessions for its support from both sides. To that end, Company agents have been inciting the Blackfoot-Cree against the Canadians, meanwhile encouraging white settlers to move onto Indian land, technically owned by the Company. With tensions in the west rising dangerously, the Canadian government has created a special military force to deal with the situation. The North West Mounted Rifles, or Mounties, are the only law between Calgary and Thunder Bay. Charged with keeping the peace, the Mounties are the government of Canada's only presence in a 300,000 square mile area. Numbering only 300 men, the Mounties are based in Fort McLeod. Caught between the rival interests of the Company, the metis, and the Blackfoot-Cree Confederacy, the Mounties are Canada's last, best hope for peace.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Far to the west, British Columbia is the next to last remaining British colony in North America not fully incorporated into the Dominion of Canada. Initially underpopulated, during the Fraser River Gold Strikes of 1858 the population of British Columbia exploded. Populous and wealthy, Vancouver is known as the San Francisco of the North. The colony's only real problem has been its isolation. The heart of the Bear Flag Empire is far to the south and the Canadian heartland far to the east.

While British Columbia has been approached by the Dominion about joining, the Columbians have refused full partnership until a Canadian Pacific railroad is built, linking Vancouver with Montreal. Initial progress has been slowed by resistance from the Blackfoot-Cree Confederacy and by government scandals. With its wealth, British Columbia doesn't truly need to belong to the Dominion, but the Dominion needs British Columbia's wealth and its excellent Pacific port. British Columbia has made suggestions of joining to the Bear Flag Empire, but nothing official has come of this yet.

CYMRU NEWYDD

Cymru Newydd is a Welsh-Indian settlement in the Canadian Rockies. They keep pretty much to themselves, though they have good relations with Manitoba. For a description of the history and peoples of Cymru Newydd, see *The Book of Sigils*.

CANADIAN CURRENCY

Being a part of the Commonwealth of Great Britain, Canada uses the same currency as England. For more details on the British currency system, see *Comme Il Faut*, pg. 45. For exchange rates and other information on money in the Americas, see pg. 39.

THE LEGENDS OF AMERICA

Every place has its own myths and folklore; and the Americas are no exception. In this, as in everything else, America is a mix of the old and the new. The oldest spiritual inhabitants are the Indian powers; The Great Spirit, Coyote, The Great Beasts, and many many others. While some of these beings are actual spiritual beings of great power, on a par with or more powerful than the most powerful European Faerie lords, others are creations of belief. These beings are simply the power of the land given form, in a way, by people willing them into existence. These beings are known as Legends.

An interesting thing has begun happening in the lands once home to the Indians that have come to be dominated by Europeans. The Indian Legends have begun to fade away as the people who believed in them were driven out. They have begun to be replaced with European Legendary figures. While walking through the woods, or riding the Texan plains, do not be surprised if you run into Paul Bunyan or Davy Crockett.

The important thing to remember is that a Legend is not a mortal human, even if it looks like one. The Davy Crockett you meet today is not the same being who fought at the Alamo. It is a manifestation of the powers of the land, given shape by the people who live in the land. While most Legends are based upon the memories of real people, like Davy Crockett, others are based on folktales that enough people have begun to believe in, like Pecos Bill.

Legends, because of their nature, are more powerful than humans, and may have abilities resembling those of the fae. They cannot be summoned, controlled, or killed. However, they may be called by need, if that need is great enough. If a town is being menaced by a Hoop Snake of extraordinary size, and the populace decides that only a tough hombre like Pecos Bill can rid them of the monster, then their collective need for Pecos Bill may cause him to manifest. Or, maybe not. Legends, like the land that gives birth to them, are fickle. The rhyme or reason behind what makes a Legend, and what powers it has, are unknown.

CANADIAN LEGEND: PAUL BUNYAN

So many remarkable stories surround Paul Bunyan that it is uncertain whether the fabled backwoodsman is simply a human of extraordinary skill and stature or something more, perhaps a supernatural being of some sort. Only the latter would truly explain the impossible deeds that are credited to him.

Clouded by the many years that have passed, the date and place of birth of the Master Lumberjack are not precisely known. Thought to be of French descent, he probably grew up on the border between America and French Canada, in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, during the early decades of the 1800s. A large, strong child, Paul quickly gained fame far and wide for his feats of physical prowess. When he was only four years old, he managed with only his bare hands to kill a hungry young timberwolf that attacked him while he played in the woods. And when he was twelve, Paul swam across the ruined locks of Sault Sainte Marie, destroyed by the Americans in the War of 1812, thus crossing the vast channel connecting Lake Superior and Lake Huron. As if these exploits were not fantastic enough, the tall tales make even more incredible claims. One asserts that when Paul was only three weeks old, he had already grown so large that he knocked down four square miles of standing timber during a restless night rolling around in his cradle.

All exaggerations aside, it was in the Papineau Rebellion of 1837 that Paul Bunyan truly came of age. Throughout the early part of the decade he had been working as a lumberjack with great courage and skill in the thick woods of Ontario. When the standard of French Canada was raised against the English, Paul and many of his fellow loggers flocked to the call. It was in the Two Mountains country, specifically at St. Eustache, that they first saw battle. There Paul cut through the renowned soldiers of the Queen like a newly sharpened scythe through wheat. For years afterward men would talk of the huge, roaring berserker that stormed into the fray with a stout cudgel in one great fist and a mattock in the other. Paul Bunyan had become a legend.

After the Rebellion was over Paul returned to his true calling, lumberjacking. He worked his way from Ottawa down into America, clearing acre after acre of virgin forest as he went. In the summer of 1855, he took up more or less permanent residence in a vast logging camp. There he found himself in the middle of the largest expanse of hardwood forest in all of North America. Paul believed in the value of a hard day's work, and as he stood on the porch of his new bunkhouse that summer, he knew he had many in front of him.

Within five years, Paul Bunyan's logging camp was providing timber for the whole of the American midwest. The booming operation attracted many of the greatest frontiersmen ever to push west of the Appalachians: Ford Fordsen, camp tinkerer and inventor; Hels Helsen, the chief foreman men called the Bull of the Woods; Johnny Inkslinger, timekeeper and figurer; and Hot Biscuit Slim, the cantankerous cook.

In addition, while wandering through the primeval forest one day, Paul found himself a pet who would soon become his constant companion. He bounded across a high mountain ridge and all but tripped over a blue ox calf nestled against its dead mother. Paul carried the orphaned calf back to camp and weaned it on Hot Biscuit Slim's gigantic flapjacks. Eating such fare, the ox quickly grew to a prodigious size; one camp wag said it was at least 42 axe handles and a plug of tobacco between horns. Paul, who had a devious sense of irony, called the huge animal Babe, in memory of the day he found it. It became his best friend, and every day he would proclaim that it was smarter than most of the men he had known.

Because of the skill of Paul Bunyan and his loggers, the woods around the camp, thought to be inexhaustible, had been logged out by 1870. The camp disbanded and Paul headed west into the territory of the Twenty Nations, looking for the next great forest to fell. He is still seen from time to time, walking with his great blue ox Babe in tall tree country.

• Paul Bunyan (Legendary figure)

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Fisticuffs [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Physique [EXT]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible or insubstantial and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

Perform a Great Work: As per the Brownie ability (CF pg. 174), but only applies to logging.

• Babe (Legendary ox)

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [PR] • Physique [EXT]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: Babe possesses the capacity to be invisible or insubstantial and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

Perform a Great Work: As per the Brownie ability (CF pg. 174), but only applies to logging.

Rule the Animals: As per the Faerie Animal ability (CF pg. 174)

I DISCOVER AMERICA

W

e went to New York. Yeah, you know: the Greatest City in the World. The city of my birth. Ah, New York, with Yankee stadium, football fans packing the bars, street vendors selling awesome hot dogs, crowded streets, taxi drivers cussing in Bengalese, boomboxes, endless traffic noise, stale subway stations, laundry hanging in the sooty breeze, winos and artistes, Fifth Avenue, Central Park, the whole shebang.

None of that was there.

Until that point, I'd been able, on a subconscious level, to dismiss the world of New Europa as a curio, a novelty, a sort of live-in history-lesson-turned-Disney-movie. I was having fun, you know. Playing around, actually doing all those things that before I'd only ever dreamed of, drawing them for computer games. Victorious, not vicarious. I kept Falkenstein from fully touching me. It was easy. So easy I didn't notice. I mean, fantasy Europe has always been a weakness of mine, and, on some level, it was obvious to my mind that this was just a long-winded fantasy. So, unknown to even myself, I was living in this world as though I were a tourist, enjoying myself and being one of the gang but without really making any long-range plans. Playing mind games, learning, living, and meddling with history, but not being a part of it.

I wonder if somehow Marianne sensed that?

In any case, there I was, suddenly in the city where I took my first breath of cold smoggy lead-encrusted air. I remember, as we hopped off the zep at Central Park, saying, "Ah, the Big Apple." Some nearby local dignitary said, "Hey, that's a good one. I'll have to use that." And that's when reality hit me in the face like a cold wet mackerel.

Yeah, under the right circumstances, sometimes even I can smell fish.

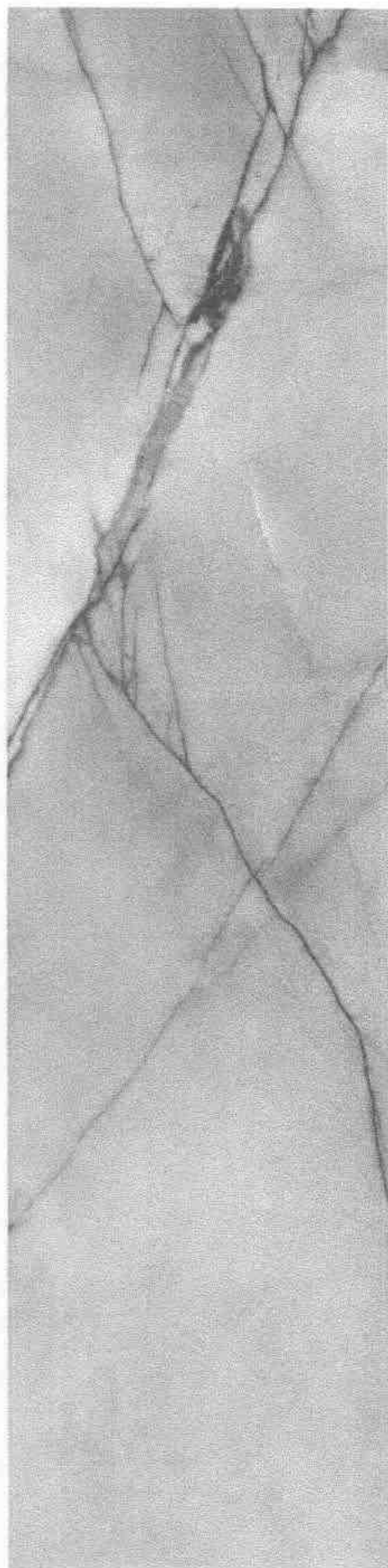
This is my town, Mike, where I was born, and yet, it's only just begun. Being here is like looking at your parents when they were babies—not in pictures, but in real life. I just coined the term "Big Apple." I can recognize just a little of my town in the layout of some of the streets and a few of the historical buildings (which, of course, shine like new). All the stuff I was weaned on hasn't happened yet!

It was so weird. The front page of the New York Times talks about the Home Insurance Company of Chicago. They're just making plans for a new building—it'll be the tallest building in the country, they claim even in the world, topping the charts at an amazing nine stories! And the Times editorial staff thinks The Empire State has to keep up with the Joneses! Oh, God, Mike, if they only knew. I want to scream at them not to do it, before we all get walled in by metal and glass, and yet that's what my New York is like. How could I possibly miss that? Jeeze, Mike, the place I was—will be—born in hasn't even been cleared yet. It's nothing but a big clump of sticker bushes and scrawny trees and stuff.

Anyway, I'm losing track of what I'm talking about. Enough to say that it hit me deeper than I'd have ever thought possible that *all this counts*. All this is real. All this as I toured the embryonic beginnings of my megalopolis. And I really started to miss Marianne like nohow.

Unfortunately, she was off with one half of the entourage, while I was with the other half. I presume she was meeting with women's guilds and talking about quilting and stuff. I don't know. She was pretty quiet on the matter at the time, and I've forgotten to ask her since. I figure, though, that given the repressive Freemasonic influences (more about which you'll read later), that this is the sort of lame stuff she was up to.

Me, I was working for the King. And where the King's name goes, things are great. Or so they seemed.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK

They had everything arranged for us. When we arrived, we were ushered immediately to a festive reception in Times Square. A bandstand had been set up, and a small military band kept the mood light and cheery. Patriotic bunting hung all over the place, making it seem like the Fourth of July. I have to admit, I got swept up. I was getting into the whole Americana business, forgetting that this was not my land. I remembered that when I saw the police.

Yeah, American police, like police everywhere, have always been tough. Well, except maybe for Italy or Mexico, where they're basically corrupt criminals. But these police were beyond tough. They bordered on the brutal. They were the sort of cops I might have expected to see guarding Bismarck's offices. Or maybe Capone's.

I saw one of them roughing up some hapless street kid. To be as fair as possible, the kid was an urchin, or at least from the wrong side of the tracks. He was barefoot, scruffy, dirty, and wore clothes a size too small. A poor kid. Now I don't know what he had done, if anything, but this officer was roughing him up. Had his nightstick around the kid's throat, even though the kid was a scrawny fourteen at best.

Well, you know me, I'm impetuous. I grabbed this guy's arm, pulled him around and told—no, ordered him to let the punk go. He moved fast, for such a big guy. He shoved the kid aside and whipped around with his billy club raised to clobber me upside the head. I had my saber already half-drawn before he stopped short. I guess he recognized me. If not me, then at least the uniform. His eyes narrowed.

"You'd best mind your own business, kraut." Okay, he recognized the uniform. "You're in our land, now," he said. "Remember that, and you won't make a damn fool of yourself by getting slapped in chains. You hear me?" And with that, he turned and walked away, absently tapping his night stick against his thigh.

Several of our people (and several Americans) quickly but inconspicuously surrounded me. Squash that commotion. Everything's just fine. They gently ushered me away from the crowd and toward the stage, where the mayor of New York was just about to make a speech. I was guided to the rest of the senior people in our delegation.

Speeches. Ho boy. My favorite. But hey, what do you know? These politicians kept their speeches short. At least, shorter than the average camera hog I grew up with back on your side of the Veil. Yet another compelling reason to live in New Europa.

Then came the food, thank God.

We went to a catered affair at the best hotel in the city. I tell you, they knew how to put on the spread. Seven courses. Three plates per course. You do the math. That's a heck of a lot of china. And silverware—real silver, of course. And crystal. And each plate was so carefully prepared, so beautifully designed, so impeccably arranged, that it seemed almost a crime to eat it. After the incident that afternoon, I wouldn't have been shocked if it were. These servings were works of art.

But if it looked like art, let me tell you, it tasted like heaven. I have never had food like that. Never. It was pure torture to restrain myself from chowing down on everything. I did, because I knew I'd have to save room for the rest of the courses. I barely made it.

After port and a fine cigar, we retired upstairs for the evening. Posh like I haven't ever seen, and that's the norm. I tell ya, we've lost a lot in modernization. Each room was a suite, with a plush velvet couch, queen bed, down comforter, and all those fancy little accessories which I couldn't name, but which turn a bedroom into a place of lavish luxury.

Looking out the window, I could see the *Stauffenberg* hovering gently over Central Park. Stationed just high up enough that no one could bother it, yet low enough to let all of New York get a good long look at it.

It and its guns.



NEW YORK CITY

Talk about the Big City—they don't come much bigger than New York, on either side of the Atlantic Ocean. But before you set off exploring, there are a few things you should know that will make your visit more pleasant, and less dangerous.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF NEW YORK

New York City was founded in 1624 as New Amsterdam by the Dutch West India Company. In 1626, the colony purchased Manhattan Island from the Indians for 60 guilders in trinkets. Peter Stuyvesant, the colonial governor from 1647 to 1664, insured the city's future prosperity by establishing New Amsterdam as the premier port in North America. These first Dutch colonists and their descendants, known as Knickerbockers for the knee leggings they wore, have formed the social and economic upper classes in New York since the earliest times.

By the Treaty of Westminster, signed in 1674, New Amsterdam was ceded to the British. The city was promptly renamed in honor of the Duke of York. When the Revolutionary War broke out in 1776, New York City was occupied by the British and became a haven for Tory sympathizers. Only at the conclusion of the war in 1783 was the city turned over to American forces. Between 1785 and 1790, New York was the capital of the United States. The city quickly became the largest, most cultured, and most prosperous city in the United States, and so it has remained.

CITY GOVERNMENT

New York City is governed by an elected mayor. Since 1800, the mayor's office has been controlled by the Democratic Party of New York, popularly known as Tammany Hall. Since 1806, Tammany Hall has been a corrupt political machine that uses intimidation, blackmail, bribery, and election fraud to remain in power. The bosses of Tammany Hall, known as Grand Sachems, have used their control of the mayor's office to embezzle city funds on a grand scale. William "Boss" Tweed is the current Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall and has absolute control over the governments of both the state and city of New York. Next to President Grant, he may be the most politically powerful man in the United States.

THE SECRETS OF TAMMANY HALL

Tammany Hall is named after the Delaware Indian chief Tamanend, and the title Grand Sachem is also of Indian origin. Unknown to all but a few, Tammany Hall is a Sorcerous Secret Society that practices Indian magicks forced from the Delaware by torture. The Sachems of Tammany Hall have used these magicks, in addition to political corruption, to remain in power. Boss Tweed has expanded Tammany control from New York City to the state government and he intends to eventually control the White House.

All that stands in Tweed's way may be the crusading newspaper reporter and cartoonist Thomas Nast and the civil reformer Samuel Tilden. In a series of political cartoons and articles, Nast has focused public attention on Tammany Hall. Tilden, a noted New York lawyer, has used this opening to begin an investigation into political corruption in New York City. Boss Tweed has marked both men for elimination, but must move carefully to avoid being exposed or creating martyrs.

The Freemasons, of course, have agents placed inside Tammany Hall. Currently, they are assessing which course of action would benefit the Freemasons the most; wiping out Tammany Hall, or letting it achieve its goals.

THE PHANTOM EMPIRE

Behind Tammany Hall lurks the Phantom Empire. From its underground headquarters in the Unorganized Territories, the Phantom Empire plots to use Tammany Hall to take over the United States. It secretly funnels money, political intelligence, and manpower to Boss Tweed. This fact is known to only the Grand Sachem, Boss Tweed, and his inner circle.

Tammany Hall's use of Indian magicks remains unknown to the Phantom Empire. Much as the Invisible Emperor thinks to use Tammany Hall, the Grand Sachem plans to overthrow the Emperor. For now, the Grand Sachem cooperates with the Invisible Emperor but is not above using agents to infiltrate the Empire's headquarters to gather intelligence and in an attempt to learn the Invisible Emperor's true identity. A showdown for control of the Empire is inevitable.

A QUICK GUIDE TO NEW YORK CITY

- **Wall Street**—If you're in New York on business, you will probably end up visiting Wall Street, the city and the United States' financial center founded in 1792. This is where you will find the Stock Exchange, major banks, trading houses, accounting firms, and law offices. Expect to rub shoulders with Robber Barons, and be careful lest you become caught up in their financial schemes.

- **Fifth Avenue**—This is where the fashionable set lives. Anyone who is anyone will have a Fifth Avenue address if he can afford it. Whether you socialize with the Astors or Vanderbilts, this is where you will find their homes. Fifth Avenue is also where the wealthy shop. The Ladies Mile is especially famous as that part of Fifth Avenue that caters exclusively to the genteel sex and is a place to see and be seen.

- **The Academy of Music**—This is where the Knickerbocker elite hold court. The Academy is the finest concert hall and stage in the city and the Knickerbockers control the seating, reserving the boxes for their exclusive use. Newly wealthy families like the Vanderbilts are unable to obtain box seats or even seats in the dress circle, but must take their place in the stalls before the stage. This has led to plans for a Metropolitan Opera House that will be free of Knickerbocker control.

- **The Parks**—Located in the middle of Manhattan, Central Park is far from where most New Yorkers live at the southern tip of the island. Consequently, few but the wealthy can afford the time to take in the park's breathtaking beauty other than on weekends. Battery Park at the southern tip of Manhattan is where most people go. If you wish a romantic spot for a walk or a carriage ride, Central Park is safely free of the city's distractions.

- **Coney Island**—Located at the northern tip of Manhattan, Coney Island is New York City's great getaway. The island has public beaches, shops, hotels, resorts, amusement parks, and even a casino that is a widely known secret. All of the attractions are spectacular and done up on a fantastically grand scale, often copying architectural styles from Rome, Egypt, India, China, and the palaces and castles of New Europa.

Coney Island's attractions are owned by several different Showmen, but the man behind the marvels is Ulamo Ferroni, an Italian immigrant and a mechanical genius. He is responsible for the island's clockwork attractions and steam-powered wonders. He has also been dead for three years.

As he neared the end of his life, Ulamo dreamed of creating a clockwork body with a Babbage Analytical Engine for a brain, into which he could transfer his knowledge and life force. He almost succeeded. Ulamo's knowledge was transferred to his creation but nothing more. The Automation, Ulamo II, has a cold calculating intelligence, and has been able to masquerade as the reclusive Ferroni. Having observed Coney Island's frolicking visitors, Ulamo II is convinced that humanity is inferior to clockwork mechanisms. In its secret lair beneath the island, Ulamo II is creating an army of clockwork men and plans to replace key political and military figures with clockwork replicas before unleashing his army of conquest.

When you visit Coney Island, have fun.

- **Broadway**—The Great White Way is the home of New York's theaters and music halls. Performers like Sarah Bernhardt, Lily Langtry, Josephine Baker, and Little Egypt entertain the public. The notorious Robber Baron James Fisk is one of the many wealthy men and women who back the stars on Broadway. Taking in the theater or a musical is part of living in New York and part of what makes the city the cultural capital of the United States.

- **The Bowery**—When visiting New York, you do not want to visit the Bowery. This area is the home of criminals, scoundrels, and the desperate poor. The Dead Rabbits, a gang lead by the Criminal Mastermind known only as Springheel Jack, control the area. Honest folk who venture into the Bowery often don't come back. Even the police avoid the Bowery when possible. From his headquarters in Red Hook, it is believed that Springheel Jack coordinates every major crime in the city. Of course, that's just a rumor.

- **Saratoga**—Up the Hudson River, north of the state capital in Albany, Saratoga is the site of America's most famous spa. Though not in New York City proper, this is where everyone goes to "take the waters." It is quite the fashionable destination and not one to be missed if you long for New European spa society.

THE PINKERTONS

Justice has a name—Pinkerton—and a price. A Chicago native, Allan Pinkerton is a former Cook County, Illinois deputy sheriff, who in 1850 resigned from the Chicago police force to found the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. Its agents are renowned for their bulldog tenacity and ability to get rough if that's what it takes to crack a case. The Pinkertons will ensure that your valuables or your person are secure and that wrongdoers are brought to justice.

The Pinkertons first gained national prominence in 1860, when Pinkerton detectives uncovered a plot to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln. During the Civil War, Pinkerton put his detectives at the disposal of the Union as intelligence agents. Under the name E. J. Allen, Pinkerton personally headed up the effort to obtain military information in the Confederacy. It was during this time that Pinkerton encountered the man behind the failed assassination, General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the head of Confederate Special Operations. The two operatives would duel in cat and mouse games throughout the war but never actually meet.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, Forrest disappeared and Allan Pinkerton returned to running his detective agency. Pinkerton, however, continued to pursue Forrest. His efforts uncovered Forrest's plan to assassinate President Lincoln using the Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth. Warned by Pinkerton, the Secret Service was able to capture Booth's accomplices, but was not in time to prevent the shooting of the President. Fortunately, Lincoln's life was saved by a Bonifacio sorcerer. Forrest remained at large despite a \$10,000 reward and an intense manhunt.

In the years following the Booth Affair, Forrest continued to plague the United States. On the run and in need of money, Forrest began executing a series of daring robberies, becoming as great a Criminal Mastermind as he had been a military man. In 1866, Forrest masterminded the robbery of the Adams Express Company, which netted the fantastic sum of \$700,000. Tracking the thieves to their lair in the ruins of Atlanta, Pinkerton and Forrest finally met face to face. In the ensuing struggle atop an ammunition magazine, there was an explosion. Pinkerton was rescued from the rubble. When the debris was cleared, the stolen money was recovered but no sign of Forrest was found. He is presumed dead, killed in the explosion, by all but Allan Pinkerton, who remains convinced that his nemesis still lives and that they will meet again.

THE NIGHT STALKER

I didn't find out until later that John and William Rockefeller had paid for the entire banquet we'd had. And our hotel rooms. And all the room service we might want. It was some sort of business expense for Standard Oil, I heard. They got bucks.

The next several days were much the same. Outings to the country side with Cornelius Vanderbilt and friends, dinner with the Astor family (William, his son John, his son William, and his cousin John), a sailing excursion with the mayor and the governor, parties and receptions without end. Vanderbilt even took us on a tour of Grand Central Terminal, which is almost complete. Yeah, it was clean. Nice. Little does he know what they're building.

At each of these soirées, everything was perfect. The food. The dress. The etiquette. The conversation. The smiles. The fact that we were always busy being entertained, and had very little time to be with each other, compare notes, check up on each others' doings. One reception in particular stands out; it was supposed to be some sort of diplomatic reception where we could meet the leading citizens of the city. I spent the entire evening waltzing. Not that I have any objection to spending several hours dancing with the cream of American society, but I began to realize that all the smiles were the same, and that I was being manipulated out of the proceedings. I did not meet a single male during the course of the evening. I tried, but every time some young debutante would appear out of nowhere and flirt with me. Gratifying, yes, but also annoying. There's just no polite way to turn down a charming young sixteen-year-old who desperately wants to have a dance with a dashing young Bayernese hussar. And I'm a sucker for smiling young women.

That evening, back at the hotel, I knocked on the doors of Captain Lückner and Martin von Hubel. They were less than happy to be woken up, but I managed to convince them that we needed to take a walk. I also got Theo Zeilinger, one of the Bayernese Air Marines, to accompany us. Just in case New York at night was a more modern city.

"Gentlemen," I asked once we were outside, "what do you think of the hospitality?"

"It's impeccable," said von Hubel. "Absolutely perfect. We have been very well received. I cannot fault them on a single point."

"Personally, I think it shows their weakness," said Lückner. "Whatever is most important to a person is for that person critically important. That they spend so much effort on social affairs tells me that they have nothing more important to worry about. They have money and power, so they fret about trivialities, and make them into great issues."

"Both true," I said. "But I think there's a deeper level than that. Lemme explain. My brother's engineering firm went to China once. The Chinese made every effort to make them uncomfortable by being as polite as they could possibly be. At dinner, if they noticed my brother didn't like something, someone would offer him more. He'd refuse, which is only the polite thing to do. So the guy would say, 'Oh, no, please, have as much as you like, let me serve you,' and dump a pile more on his plate."

"But I quite enjoy Chinese food," protested von Hubel.

"Whole roasted sparrow? Guts, head and all?"

"Oh. I see," said von Hubel weakly.

"But it goes beyond surrounding us with perfection," I said. "We haven't yet been able to take time out like this to regroup. At the party this evening, how many times were you two able to speak with each other?"

"None," said Lückner bluntly.

"Right. That's because they don't want us to. They don't want us to compare notes. They don't want us to have each others' support. Tonight Marianne and the other women were pulled away by the ladies' auxiliary, I danced all night, and you two were kept separated. As, I'm sure, was Pfistermeister. It's divide and conquer. They're using the welcome mat as a disguise for their real motives. This is psychological warfare, here."

"Ah," said Lückner. "That explains why we're being followed."

I saw von Hubel stiffen out of the corner of my eye. Zeilinger, soldier that he is, didn't flinch at all. I was glad we didn't have Pfistermeister with us. He'd have cracked for sure.

"He's good, that one is," said Lückner. "He's about half a block back, on the far side of the street."

I glanced in a shop window, and pretended to study the clothing. I actually looked at the reflection in the glass. "I see him."

"Wh-what do we do?" von Hubel stammered. "They're after us."

"Yeah, but we already knew that," I said. "And if they wanted us dead, we'd be dead already. So the question is, who's after us?"

"We could ask him," said Lückner.

I smiled. "Good idea, but first we have to figure out if anyone else is shadowing us. Let's keep walking, see if they have a team. And if not, then we can ask."

Several blocks later, we figured there was only one man tailing us. Not too surprising, considering they probably hadn't figured the Bayernese delegation would go for a post-midnight stroll. Up to tonight, our movements had been predictable. Too predictable, because the Americans gracefully controlled the agenda.

But all that was second to the fact that we were being shadowed. Von Hubel wanted to let well enough alone and go back to bed. Personally, I didn't like this skullduggery. I wanted to rough this guy up, and find out what was going on. My view won. Next we had to make a plan.

That's when Zeilinger spoke up. "Herr Lückner," he said quietly, "it is you three who are being followed. I am but a marine. I respectfully suggest that I hide myself as we pass around this corner ahead. You three continue, and I shall find out who follows us."

"Done," said the Captain.

We turned the corner, and Zeilinger neatly swung himself up onto a fire escape. We kept strolling and chatting. Fifteen seconds later, there was the sound of an impact. Had sort of a meaty sound to it. Gratifyingly meaty. It's amazing how few people ever look up. I turned back, and I could see Zeilinger's teeth shining brightly from beneath his bushy German mustache. He shouldered the limp man, and we ducked into a nearby alley.

Being in the Bayernese Secret Service, I have a few interesting gadgets on my person at all times. One of these is a small vial of smelling salts. Our victim woke up in a matter of seconds. Zeilinger clamped his callused hand over the guy's mouth just as he came to.

I took the pistol (which I had liberated from his shoulder holster) and pressed it into his navel. "Who sent you?" I hissed.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Cool.

"Well, if no one sent you, then no one will miss you," I said. "Right?" I took his wrist with my free hand and twisted it around painfully. He didn't respond, so I put the icing on the cake. "I was born here. I know where to toss a body in the Hudson so it'll never be found."

"If I go missing, the other Pinkertons'll be all over you like ugly on an ape, kraut."

I shrugged. "Two words: diplomatic immunity. So. Who sent you?"

"Fields," he said finally.

"Which Fields? W.C.?" (Okay, so I slipped in my anachronisms. Sorry.)

"Water closet? I don't think so, kraut. I don't know. They just call this the Fields case."

"Why are you shadowing us?" I demanded.

"If we knew, we'd arrest you. I'm supposed to see if you do anything suspicious."

"I think we just did," said von Hubel helpfully.

"Fine. Zeilinger? Tie him and gag him."

"Aye, sir." He was grinning again. At least he liked his work.

We left the Pinkerton thug in the alley to wait until daylight, when he'd certainly be discovered. We talked some more on the way back to the hotel, then turned in for the night.

The next morning, as we were seated around the table eating our breakfast, a very well dressed older man strode up to us. He carried a silver salver in one hand. "Important message for you, sahs," he said, extending the tray towards us.

"I think we are in trouble," von Hubel said.



KNICKERBOCKER SOCIETY

THE KNICKERBOCKERS

New in town? Well, don't count on being accepted into New York society. The Knickerbockers, descendants of the Dutch settlers who founded New York, dominate society and prefer their own company to yours. These are old money families who lead comfortable lives in identical brownstone townhouses. They are neither showy nor fashionable. They are soberly prosperous.

William Astor, son of John Jacob Astor, is New York City's leading real estate developer, business owner and the millionaire patriarch of the old line Knickerbocker families. His wife, Caroline, is the domineering matriarch of Knickerbocker society. If Mrs. Astor doesn't know you, you are no one in society. Her ballroom holds precisely 400 people. When you are one of The Four Hundred, regularly invited to her annual ball, you know you have arrived. Until then, just leave a calling card.

NOBS AND SWELLS

Despite Mrs. Astor's best efforts, newly wealthy industrialists and financiers continue to attempt to force their way into society, as if money could buy good breeding. These Swells are showy, flamboyant, and altogether too loud. Lest they disrupt the orderly functioning of society, Mrs. Astor has commissioned Ward McAllister as a social secretary to deal with these newcomers.

Mr. McAllister's plan is simplicity itself. A group called the Patriarchs will be formed from the twenty-five leading families of New York. Not only will Knickerbockers, called Nobs, be included, but select Swells as well. The Patriarchs will host three balls a year at which each Patriarch will be able to invite four ladies and five gentlemen. In this way, the Nobs will prevent the Swells from challenging the social order by allowing the best of the Swells into the social elite.

THE VANDERBILTS

By design, the Patriarchs can only include so many of the newly wealthy. Everyone else is excluded. But Progress continues to create instant millionaires, who resent being told they cannot be part of society's elite. No one resents Mrs. Astor's death grip on New York society more than the foremost family of Robber Barons, the Vanderbilts.

Though William Astor and Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt are not business rivals, the Astor and Vanderbilt women are fierce social rivals. Alva, the wife of William Vanderbilt, the Commodore's son, has made it clear that she intends to contest Mrs. Astor's title of Grand Dame of New York society. Already, she is laying plans for a sumptuous mansion that will make the best brownstone seem like a cave. She has also begun to host parties that make Knickerbocker affairs seem dull by comparison. If you are new in town, you are far more likely to be invited to a Vanderbilt function than an Knickerbocker affair. Of course, in accepting, you will be drawn into the societal civil war that has begun to rage in New York society. But it won't be dull.

TO MARRY AN ENGLISH LORD

In comparison to New York society, the society of New Europa is far more accepting of newly wealthy Stream Age industrialists and financiers. The New Europeans welcome American vitality, opulence, and wealth (especially wealth). The marriage of daughters of American Tycoons, Buccaneers as they are known, to New European nobility, particularly that of Britain, has become increasingly fashionable.

These marriages give American families status and a glamour denied them in New York. While the Knickerbocker families look down on New European society, none can deny the cachet of a noble title. The marriages also serve to establish links between American Robber Barons and the British aristocracy of the Steam Lords. The marriages make both social and business sense.

Once a Buccaneer has married her nobleman, she often returns to New York for protracted visits. The trans-Atlantic crossing has become quite fashionable in its own right as luxury liners ply the sealanes. Unmarried sons and daughters of American industrialists travel to Europe for the Season and then return. In this way, New York society is evolving and taking on a more Continental flare.

YACHTING SOCIETY

New York may have a wonderful harbor for ocean liners, war ships and cargo vessels, but it is hardly the place for a yachting excursion on a lazy Sunday afternoon. The summers in New York make for dreadfully hot affairs. Not much of a refreshing sea breeze makes it to Fifth Avenue. One simply must get away. If you will not be making the trip to New Europa for the Season, you will head for Newport, Rhode Island.

Newport has a fine, quiet harbor where the Robber Barons and other wealthy scions of New York society keep their yachts. Cool sea breezes fan the sumptuous mansions of the wealthy that cluster around the seashore at Newport. This is the American Season, a retreat from New York's summer heat. Yachting excursions and fabulous balls, perfect for showing off your palatial summer mansion, are all the rage.

Each society matron attempts to outdo her rivals by building the biggest and best mansion. Calls are paid here much as in New York City but the social hierarchy is much more relaxed. People who simply would never be seen in New York may be entertained here in the spirit of being in the country. All the more reason not to be seen to be outdone by someone who would be your social inferior in New York. Mansions are put up, torn down, and rebuilt with alarming frequency.

TUXEDO PARK

A landlocked version of Newport, Tuxedo Park is a picturesque community nestled around a mountain lake just to the north of New York City and to the south of West Point Military Academy. Here the fabulously wealthy build mansions with spacious grounds overlooking the lake.

Now something of a social backwater, Tuxedo Park remains one of the haunts of the very rich. Americans, unlike their New European cousins, have a limited capacity for social convention. Tuxedo Park is where the wealthy go to "get away from it all", at least for a time, in "simple" 30 to 60 room country homes.

An invitation to spend a week in Tuxedo Park is unheard of unless you are marrying into the family. To be invited to enjoy the pleasures of this mountain retreat is more than a mark of social distinction. It is a sign of highly personal regard and friendship.

DEBUTS, LEVEES, AND PRESENTATIONS

A debut is the occasion of a young woman's introduction into society, as a levee is for a young man. Both take place between the ages of 16 and 18. On the occasion of a young person's debut (or levee), they will be presented to a select assembly by her Hostess or Host, usually a parent. Dress is formal, and debutantes always appear in white. Debutantes are also always accompanied by three male escorts. It is considered a high honor if you are chosen as an escort.

Refreshments are served, and dancing is common. It is critical that all goes well. A poor or ill-attended debut or levee can leave a social stigma that is hard to overcome.

Related to the debut and the levee is the presentation. Similar to a debut or levee, it is given to introduce persons of note, visiting dignitaries, government officials, or military heroes to society. The Host or Hostess is usually the person best acquainted with the honoree or the person with whom the honoree is staying. A presentation is a singular honor.

WOMEN IN AMERICA

America is frontier land. While it's true that New Europeans have been coming to American shores since 1492, the sheer size of the North American continent has proven difficult to overcome, let alone tame. The practical consequence has been that every able-bodied person, man and woman, has had to chip in to blaze trails, clear timber, bust sod, and lay the foundation for the new nations of America. This pioneering spirit is unique to America, and American women reflect that spirit.

SEÑORITAS AND SOCIALITES

In the Spanish West, women brought civilized amenities to what would have otherwise been bleak outposts of the Spanish Empire. The Conquistadors may have conquered the land, the Missionaries may have set up the first New European outposts, but it was the women of the Haciendas that made California a place of culture and sophistication—a place worth living in.

Despite the importance of their civilizing influence, women in the Spanish West did not enjoy many freedoms. Without exception, they were confined to traditionally women's roles. This all began to change when Fremont seized California and declared it independent. With the rise of Emperor Norton and the overthrow of the Cabal, women in the Bear Flag Empire became truly emancipated.

Emperor Norton is a firm believer in equal rights for all his subjects. Religious freedom, racial equality, and full rights for women were written into the Bear Flag Constitution at the Emperor's insistence. Nowhere in America do women have more freedom. In the Bear Flag Empire women have the vote, run profitable businesses for themselves, manage sprawling ranches, and serve in all branches of the government, even the military, though they are prohibited from serving in combat units. In San Francisco society, women are more than mere hostesses. They are powerful figures in their own right.

THE SUFFRAGETTES

In stark contrast to the freedom enjoyed by women in the Bear Flag Empire, those in the United States have far less liberty. Women cannot vote or be seen to smoke in public, nor may they drink at a public house except in the company of a gentleman. Women do not work outside the home. Those that do are of a lesser class—poor immigrants, blacks, or women of loose morals. There are, of course, exceptions, like the Witch of Wallstreet, Hetty Green, but they are not the rule. If Hetty were not so wealthy, she would have a much harder time of it.

At the same time women are expected to behave in a traditional manner; in their homes, each is a domestic goddess. Women rule the roost. They are the undisputed social arbiters in New York, Washington, and Chicago. Behind the scenes, women in the United States exert a tremendous power. In their eyes, they do not need the vote. Theirs is an intimate power born of hearth and home. They control the hearts and purses of their menfolk, leaving the drudgery of work outside the home to men. However, not all women feel this way.

YELLOW ROSES OF TEXAS

Texas women, Yellow Roses, are a puzzle. One minute they are sweet, shy, and demure, visions in chiffon and lace. The next, they are hellcats in leather and boots, capable of roping, riding, and punching a lot more than just cattle. Women in the Texas Republic reflect life in a country still more than half wild. The wealth of the Cattlemen and the Oil Barons has turned Fort Worth, Houston, and Austin into first class cities, but Abilene and San Angelo are still cowtowns, while Laredo and Tombstone are filled with outlaws and gamblers. The most sophisticated Texan's grandfather probably just barely got by until striking it rich.

So, while Texans like their women proper and prim, befitting Texas' image of itself as the equal of any New European nation, they respect the pioneer spirit that still fires every Texan's blood. Women in Texas embody this double standard. They are expected to be sophisticated in polite company but ready to mix it up on the trail. Not surprisingly, this can come as something of a shock if you've never before been to Texas. To their credit, women in Texas manage with great style, at home in the drawing room or out on the range. Without question, women in Texas have a glamour all their own.

SOUTHERN BELLES

No discussion of women in America would be complete without mention being made of the Southern Belle. No image of American women is more common than these daughters of the southlands. Before the Civil War, southern hospitality and Southern Belles epitomized the region from Savannah to New Orleans. During the war, the plantations that supported the genteel southern lifestyle were heavily damaged in the United States. The women of the former Confederacy have had to learn to become self-sufficient and self-reliant, not unlike the flower of Texas womanhood. Only in Orleans does the plantation lifestyle continue.

Women in Louisiana are entirely free. Marie Laveau long ago saw to their emancipation in New Orleans. In the parishes, there is no one to say that a woman can't do as she pleases. Along the Mississippi and in the delta, there is no time for frivolity. Women must know how to survive and you will meet not a few female pirates. Yet, no matter their circumstance, there is an exotic sensuality about women in Louisiana. The Knickerbockers of New York would call it loose morals. The women of Louisiana call it being natural. There is something unaffected and free about these women, something wild and untamed.

DRAMATIC CHARACTER:

BELLE

Whether you're from the Old South, a proper Bostonian, or straight from the Wild West, you're a lady. If someone doesn't treat you like one, you'll deck him. Beneath all the ruffles, finery, and elegant speech, you're a woman who can take care of herself. You enjoy the social scene, but it can get frightfully dull. You want all that the world has to offer, but only on your terms. There isn't a single gentleman or scoundrel who can resist your wiles and charms.

- **Strong Suits:** Exchequer, Fisticuffs, Social Graces

- **Possessions:** Gowns, parasol, calling cards

- **In Your Diary:** Accounts of your romantic interests, travel itinerary, and financial accounts.

- **Why You're Here:** You're taking the grand tour of the exciting continent that is North America. You meet new and exciting people everywhere you go, and your adventures are greater than anything you could have ever imagined back home.



DRAMATIC CHARACTER:

SWELL

You grew up in New York as the son of immigrants. When your family finally made it out of the bowery, you were sent to the best schools. However, the old-money families never accepted you into their social circles. You had to fight to get any respect. You showed 'em how they do things down in the bowery. Though a bit of a dandy, you're not afraid of hard work or a good fight. You find Knickerbocker society too stuffy for you, but the Vanderbilt parties are just your style.

- **Strong Suits:** Athletics, Education, Physique

- **Possessions:** Varsity letterman sweater, top hat and tails, diamond stick-pin, brass knuckles.

- **In Your Diary:** Ticket stubs to Harvard/Yale rugby game, ticket stubs to a Broadway show, accounts of your athletic achievements.

- **Why You're Here:** Before you settle down to run the family business, you want to see the world. Rather than take the grand tour of the Americas, you've struck out on your own, to find adventure and prosperity wherever you come across them.

RAILROAD TYCOONS & ROBBER BARONS

CAPITALISM UNCHECKED

Since the end of the Civil War, consumer demand and Steam Age wonders have created an expanding economy. Enterprising businessmen have taken advantage of this economic climate to ruthlessly organize industry on a national scale. They also bribe government officials, use monopolistic trade practices to drive opponents out of business, and commit fraud or other crimes to build their empires. These are the Robber Barons. Unlike the Steam Lords of Britain, the Robber Barons do not seek to control the government. Their only concern is that government not impede their business ventures.

NEW YORK CITY

New York City is the financial capital of the U.S., home of Wall Street, the New York Stock Exchange, and the Robber Barons. Wall Street is where all of the banking houses, law offices, and stock brokerage firms are located. The Stock Exchange is where the Robber Barons do battle, fighting for control of vital shares of stock and issuing bonds to finance their financial empires. A seat on the New York Stock Exchange is the sign you have arrived as a Robber Baron.

FISK AND GOULD

Perhaps the greatest Robber Barons are the partners Fisk and Gould. Jay Gould is a Railroad Tycoon, owning an entire system of railways. James Fisk is known for his flamboyant salesmanship of stocks and bonds.

In 1867, Vanderbilt attempted to seize control of the Erie Railroad from Fisk and Gould. To prevent this, the partners issued thousands of fraudulent shares, defeating the takeover attempt by flooding the market with more stock than Vanderbilt could buy.

THE COMMODORE

"Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt is Gould and Fisk's chief rival in the railroad industry. Having made his fortune in the shipping business, the Commodore has turned his attention to railroads. Despite losing millions in the Erie Railroad fight, he remains fabulously wealthy and continues to acquire railroads in the hope of controlling the lucrative New York to St. Louis route.

MR. MORGAN

Of course, not all Robber Barons are industrialists. Several are financiers. John Pierpont Morgan is one such rising star in the field of investment banking. Morgan does not own industrial concerns, but provides capital to men like Vanderbilt. Through shrewd financial arrangements and by backing winners, Morgan has earned a reputation on Wall Street as a financial wizard. Many expect that it is only a matter of time before Morgan founds his own banking house.

THE WITCH OF WALL STREET

Henrietta "Hetty" Green is universally acknowledged as the foremost financial mind of the day. In 1865, "The Witch of Wall Street" inherited ten million dollars. Since that time, she has more than tripled that sum and shows no signs of slowing down. Hetty personally oversees every aspect of her portfolio and is often sought out for financial advice. Lately, Hetty has been backing two of the less powerful Robber Barons—Andrew Carnegie, who controls Keystone Steel, and John D. Rockefeller, founder of Standard Oil. She seems to think they have potential.

ANDREW CARNEGIE

In 1873, Andrew Carnegie got out of the crowded railroad business and put all of his money into steel production. Though only

three years old, Keystone Steel is already one of the fastest growing companies in the U.S., gobbling up its competitors. Unusual for a Robber Baron, Carnegie gives lavishly to charity and is quite generous.

J.D. ROCKEFELLER

In 1859, oil was discovered in Pennsylvania. J. D. Rockefeller, another up-and-coming Robber Baron, got into the refining business in 1865. Initially owning but one of thirty Cleveland refineries, by 1870 Rockefeller was the largest shipper of oil in the United States. Standard Oil of Ohio continues to grow under his guidance. J. D. Rockefeller is one of a new breed of Robber Barons, who are finding their fortunes in the western United States.

CHICAGO

This great metropolis on Lake Michigan is home to the Chicago Board of Trade, the agricultural equivalent of the NYSE. Producing its own brand of Robber Baron, Chicago's industrialists have made their fortunes providing for the folks on America's frontier and selling the agricultural products they produce.

Settlers need manufactured products. Marshall Field and his partners have made it their business to provide these supplies in a chain of dry goods stores. Marshall Field & Company is the premier department store west of Pennsylvania. Its only rivals are Alexander Stewart's stores in New York City that bear his name.

When Texas cattle are sent to market, they end up in Chicago. The meat packing center of the United States, Chicago is the home of Armour and Company. Philip Danforth Armour is the wealthy industrialist who has come to dominate this field.

The noted engineering Mastermind Cyrus McCormick invented his Reaper in 1834 and revolutionized farming. Still going strong at 67, Cyrus controls the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company. From his Chicago factories, McCormick ships agricultural implements around the world. Thanks to machines like the Reaper, the Wire Binder, and the brand new Steam Combine, the United States produces more grain than any other country in the world.

The great Railroad Tycoons may call New York City home, but when they need rolling stock, they look to Chicago. In 1865, George Pullman put the Pullman Sleeping Car into production. From New York City to San Francisco in the Bear Flag Empire, Pullman's cars are the epitome of luxury.

These four men and their companies represent the growing economic might of the heartland of the United States. Together with their eastern counterparts, these Captains of Industry have made the U.S. the single most powerful country in North America and the rival of any New European nation. Whether speaking of industrial goods or agricultural products, the Robber Barons, like the Steam Lords of Great Britain, are among the most powerful men in the world.

COMPANY TOWNS

The success of the Robber Barons has come at a price. Perhaps, their most insidious practice is the establishment of Company Towns. The company builds a town and requires workers to live there. The company owns all the housing, runs every store, and regulates every aspect of the workers' lives. Some company towns have even begun to issue their own money! Because the towns are located near the factories, usually in rural areas, workers have no practical choice other than to use the company run stores and pay prices set by the company! The result is virtual economic slavery. Not surprisingly, workers have organized into Labor Unions to fight conditions in the Company Towns, as well as the unsafe conditions in the factories. Ignored by management, the Unions' only way to fight back is by going on strike.

RAILROADS IN AMERICA

Nothing epitomizes the Steam Age like the Steam Locomotive. Railroads were the first great Steam Age invention and the high-balling locomotive remains one of its most potent symbols. Throughout North America, railroad tracks criss-cross the land like steel ribbons. Only the Twenty Nations have resisted the Iron Horse.

THE UNITED STATES

The United States boasts more miles of rail than either the Texas Republic or the Bear Flag Empire. From the teeming cities of the Eastern Seaboard to the rolling corn fields of Illinois, the United States is bound together by rails. The late Civil War did much to disrupt rail traffic but most of that damage has been repaired. Five great rail lines now serve the U.S. and competition among them is fierce.

From New York, through Washington, Richmond, and Atlanta to Montgomery, Alabama, and on to New Orleans, the Great Eastern is the nation's longest railroad. It carries more passengers and freight than any other. This is the empire of Cornelius Vanderbilt, the Commodore.

Rivaling the Great Eastern, the Erie Railroad runs from New York, through Boston and Cleveland to Chicago. Though shorter, it is almost as profitable. Jay Gould and James Fisk, the two most notorious Robber Barons, successfully defeated the Commodore's attempt to wrest control of this railroad from them, but tensions remain high.

It was after the Civil War that the Commodore bought up the main southern trunk lines to complete the Great Eastern, establishing himself as the nation's leading Railroad Tycoon. His chief rival in the south is the former Confederate Tycoon Milton Hannibal Smith. The Mississippi Railroad, nicknamed the Confederate Railroad, runs from St. Louis to New Orleans. This is Smith's road. Heavily resisted by Mississippi River shipping interests as well as by the nearby Twenty Nations, the Mississippi Railroad is a monument to Smith's perseverance. Still, he is thinking of expanding.

In the north, James J. Hill, along with several partners, has built the Pennsylvania, running from Philadelphia to St. Louis. A more direct route from east to west than either the Erie or the B&O, it is rapidly gaining popularity in the shipping market.

The last major trunk line is the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, running from Baltimore to St. Louis via Cleveland and Chicago. Backed by Hetty Green, the Witch of Wall Street, the Baltimore & Ohio is a serious challenger to the other east to west rail lines, the Erie and Pennsylvania. Already each of the other Railroad Tycoons has made Hetty an offer. She just smiles as the offers grow larger.

ORLEANS

Orleans has never managed to scrape up the capital to build rail lines. Instead, an agreement between Orleans and Texas allowed for the extension of the Santa Fe and Lone Star Railroads through Orleans to Jackson and New Orleans, respectively. These railways mainly serve to transport cattle, and give Orleans revenue in duties.

THE TEXAS REPUBLIC

The great Texas railroad is the Lone Star. Unlike other lines, the Lone Star Railroad was not built to carry freight or passengers. The Lone Star was built by the Texas government to move troops swiftly along the border with Mexico. Still run by the Republic, it runs from New Orleans to San Antonio, through El Paso, on to Phoenix, and terminates in Yuma. The Lone Star now carries passengers and freight as well as soldiers, with profitable spurs running from San Jacinto to Fort Worth and El Paso to the Santa Fe Railroad.

The famous Texas cattle drives originated as the only way Cattlemen could get their cattle to market. With the completion of the Lone Star Railroad, Cattlemen would drive their cattle to the nearest railhead, where they could be loaded on trains headed for market. Cyrus Kurtz Holliday, distant relation to Doc Holliday, and Tom Scott decided that a railroad designed to better serve the Cattlemen by reducing the distance they needed to drive their herds would be a money maker. They were right. The result was the Santa Fe Railroad, connecting Needles in the west with Jackson in the east, via Santa Fe, Abilene, and Fort Worth. Connecting to both the Mississippi and the Union Pacific, the Santa Fe is the linchpin in a transcontinental rail link, profiting considerably.

THE BEAR FLAG EMPIRE

In the days of the Cabal, before Emperor Norton appeared on the scene, the only railroad in California was the Union Pacific Railroad, running from San Francisco to Los Angeles and on to Las Vegas. Collis Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford, and Charles Crocker, as the Pacific Associates and supporters of the Cabal, ran the railroad as they saw fit and without competition. With the Cabal gone, these members of Nob Hill society continue to run the railroad but they've got competition.

Seeking to break the Pacific Associates' monopoly on rail transport in the Bear Flag Empire, Emperor Norton looked around for men capable of financing such a venture. James Fair, John Mackay, John Jones, and Adolph Sutro, The Silver Kings, were just the men he needed. Fabulously wealthy from exploiting the riches of the Great Basin silver mines, these men needed a railroad to get their ore out of the mountains. As newly wealthy members of Nob Hill society, they had no connections with the Cabal and were willing to make a deal with the Emperor. Along with William Sharon and Darius Ogden Mills of the Bank of California, they agreed to build the Bear Flag Railroad.

Initially, the railroad ran from Virginia City to San Francisco via Sacramento. When Emperor Norton convinced the Indians and settlers living around Portland to join the Empire, the Bear Flag railway was extended north to Seattle. Finally, the railroad has been extended south to Los Angeles to hook up with the Union Pacific.

Competition between the Union Pacific and the Bear Flag Railroad is fierce. Emperor Norton, a major shareholder, would like to see the Bear Flag Railroad extended to the Texan border. The Pacific Associates would like to see Norton gone and have joined forces with the Mayor of San Francisco and leader of the revived Cabal, Christopher Buckley, to see if that can't be arranged.

THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY

There is no Transcontinental Railroad. By travelling on the Great Eastern, the Santa Fe, and the Union Pacific Railroad, it is possible to journey from New York to San Francisco by rail in about a month and a half. This is known as the Transcontinental Railway. It is not a true railroad because it is not a unified system. The track changes gauge at least three times.

The gauge of a track is a function of its width. Each of the great railroad systems was built independent of any others, rarely using the same gauge track. Even within a railroad, the gauge may frequently change as new feeder lines or spurs are acquired. Trains are built to only run on a specific gauge. This means that you have to change trains every time the gauge changes!

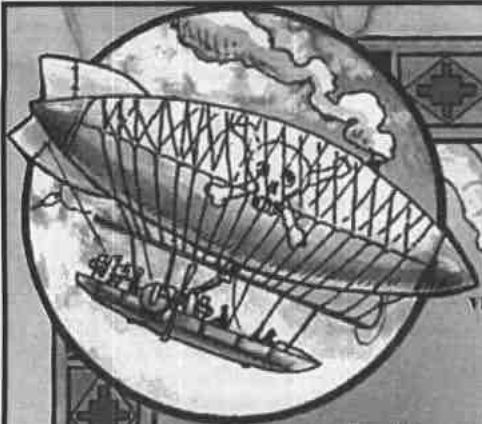
TRAIN ROBBERS

Train robberies are a constant hazard. Trains often carry payrolls, valuables, or wealthy passengers. They make a tempting target for outlaws.

In the United States such robberies are uncommon. Occasional robberies will occur in the south, perpetrated by former Confederate soldiers turned outlaw, like General Nathan Bedford Forrest. Otherwise, only the Mississippi Railroad has a serious problem with robbers. Indians from the Twenty Nations will occasionally cross the Mississippi River to tear up tracks. More menacingly, the James Gang will frequently rob Mississippi Railroad trains, operating from their hideout in the Ozark Mountains.

By comparison, train robberies are common in Texas. In the Northeast of Texas, to include Orleans, the James Gang and the allied Younger Brothers are the most notorious train robbers. To the west, the Clanton Gang and the Dalton Gang are just as infamous. Mexican Banditos and the dread Comancheros also occasionally rob trains. Despite the best efforts of the Texas Rangers, the robberies continue. Both the Santa Fe and the Lone Star Railroads have begun to hire Pinkertons or other private guards to ride on trains believed to be targets for robbery.

The Bear Flag Empire has its share of train robberies, too. It is altogether safer than the Texas Republic, but less so than the United States. In the south, Texas gangs crossing the border are the biggest threat. Elsewhere Black Bart stages daring robberies. The Wells Fargo Express Company has taken the lead in attempting to track these outlaws down but has had only limited success.



Pacific
Ocean

THE BEAR FLAG EMPIRE OF CALIFORNIA

FL Winfield Scott
Presidio
Castroville Madera

SAN FRANCISCO

Oakland

San Jose

Monterey

Santa Barbara

Los Angeles

San Diego

Tijuana

Ensenada

BAJA CALIFORNIA NORTE

**BAJA CALIFORNIA & SONORA ARE
PROTECTORATES
OF THE BEAR
FLAG EMPIRE**

BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Victoria

Vancouver

Seattle

Portland

Aurora

Medford

Sacramento

Sutter's Fort

Berkeley

Virginia City

Carson City

Mormon Station

Bodie

Columbia

Las Vegas

Fort Baker

Yuma

Phoenix

Tucson

Tombstone

Nogales

Bisbee

Fort Davis

San Antonio

Abilene

Fort Belknap

Waterloo

The Alamo

San Antonio

Laredo

Monterrey

Mammoth

Chihuahua

Culiacan

San Lucas

La Paz

Ciudad Obregon

Nogales

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San Lucas

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Ciudad Obregon

Nogales

Bisbee

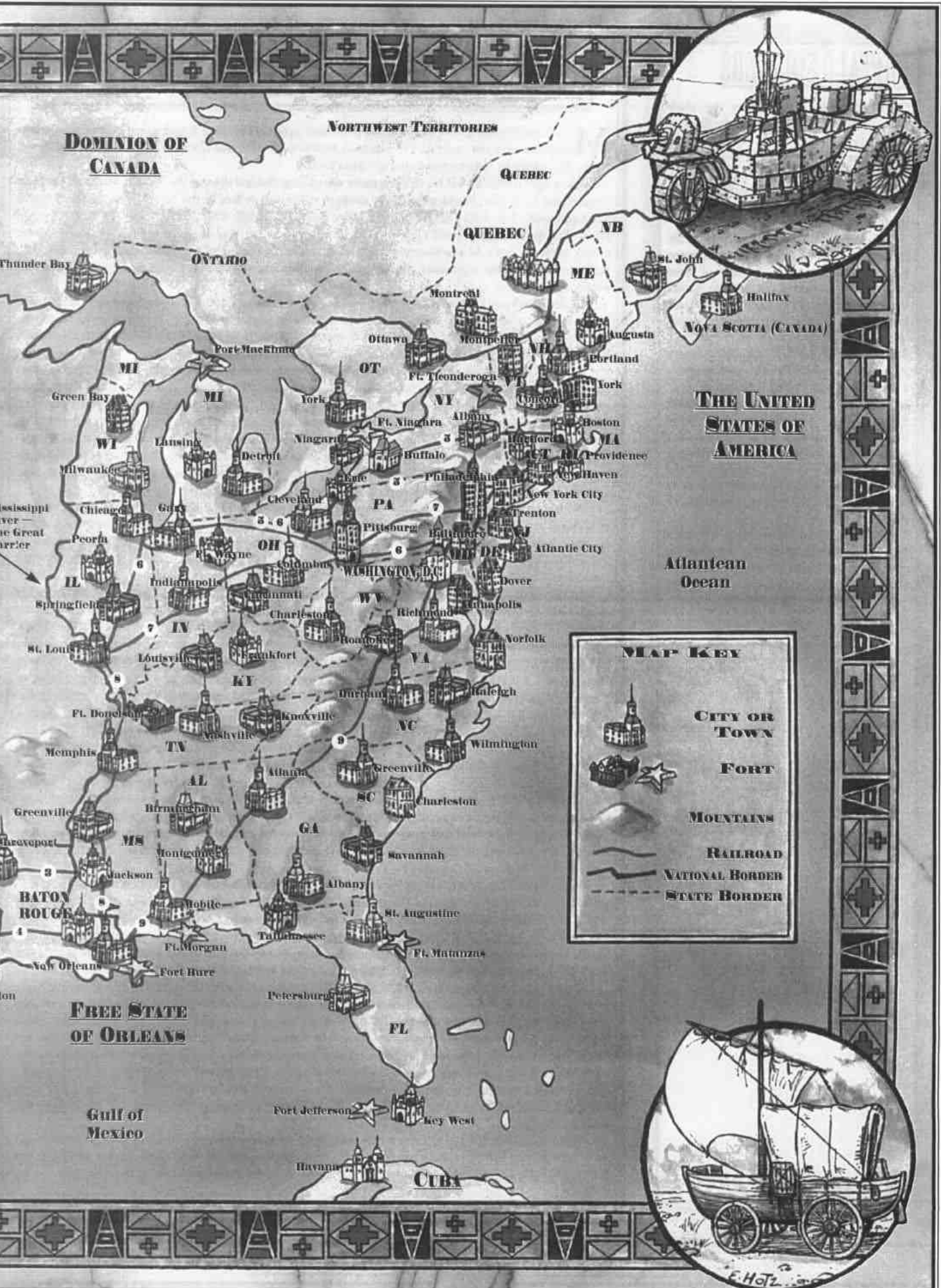
Fort Davis

San Antonio

Abilene

Fort Belknap

Waterloo



**DOMINION OF
CANADA**

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

QUEBEC

QUEBEC

NB

ME

St. John

Halifax

NOVA SCOTIA (CANADA)

ONTARIO

MI

MI

OT

Montreal

Ottawa

Montpelier

Augusta

Portland

York

Boston

Providence

New York City

Trenton

Atlantic City

Dover

Richmond

Norfolk

Wilmington

Charleston

Savannah

St. Augustine

Fort Mautanas

Petersburg

Fort Jefferson

Key West

Havana

CUBA

FL

GA

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MS

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NM

AZ

CA

**THE UNITED
STATES OF
AMERICA**

**Atlantean
Ocean**

MAP KEY



**CITY OR
TOWN**

FORT

MOUNTAINS

RAILROAD

NATIONAL BORDER

STATE BORDER

**FREE STATE
OF ORLEANS**

**Gulf of
Mexico**



BUFFALO SOLDIERS

The "Buffalo Soldiers" are the black troops who are stationed in the Army of Observation on the western border of the United States. Their duty is to guard the frontier against invasion from the Twenty Nations Confederation, and to participate in occasional reconnaissance missions across the border.

The term "Buffalo Soldier" is generally attributed to the Indians, who say that the black faces and short, kinky hair of these troops remind them of the buffalo. Rather than taking this as an insult, these black troops take it as a high compliment, thinking of the strength and power of the buffalo. The insignia of the all-black 10th Cavalry features a triumphant buffalo standing above a war bonnet and crossed tomahawks.

Following the exemplary record they set during the Civil War, black troops continue to perform as well as, if not better than, their white counterparts in the army. Even during this time of relative peace, several Congressional Medals of Honor have been awarded to black soldiers in recognition of their deeds.

Currently, there are no black officers in the United States army, but a promising young lieutenant named Henry O. Flipper is about to become the first black graduate of West Point Military Academy. He is expected to go far.

BLACK AMERICA

More than anything else, nothing has provoked reactions varying from heated debate to outright violence than the condition of blacks in America. Their status has ranged from slaves with fewer rights than dogs to full citizens equal in status to all.

The plight of blacks has never been more dismal nor divided than in the United States of America. Prior to the Civil War, blacks were either slaves in the South or free in the North. The northern blacks lived alongside their white neighbors in relative equality, though with certain restrictions placed upon them that made them second-class citizens. During the Civil War, regiments of black soldiers were raised, with the 54th Massachusetts setting an outstanding record of valor and accomplishment. The performance of these regiments swayed public opinion and resulted in a slightly better standard for blacks after the war.

In the southern United States, black slaves were forced to endure the suppression of their magical abilities and of their rights as human beings in equal measure. Despite the work of the Underground Railroad and northern abolitionist activities, it wasn't until the Civil War that southern blacks received the same legal rights that their northern cousins had.

When the Civil War ended, the whites in the South were terrified by the possible revenge that freed blacks would wreak upon them. However, except for certain isolated instances, the freed slaves were less interested in revenge than in economic betterment. Southern blacks could now get access to schools and jobs previously unknown to them. Many southern blacks still live and work on the plantations where they were slaves, only now they earn wages and are sent to school. Some of the plantations have been divided up into small farms that they work for themselves. Public schools have been set up to educate the freed slaves' children and to teach their parents to read and write. Most of these schools are volunteer-run and are chronically short of funds.

Another area where blacks now became active was politics. They were alert to any threat to their new freedoms. When white politicians began trying to pass the "Jim Crow" laws, to limit black access to the election process and to decent schooling, they responded immediately. Activists such as Frederick Douglass, organized church groups, and subtle campaigns of terrorism waged by southern hoodlums assured the failure of anti-black legislation and politicians.

In the years before the Civil War, and still in a lesser degree, true freedom for blacks lies either north or west. The Underground Railroad smuggled innumerable slaves north to Canada, where the practice of slavery had long been illegal. Another route to freedom was westward into Orleans, Texas, California, or Indian lands.

In Orleans, slavery was practiced until 1864. Burr, realizing which way the political winds were blowing at the end of the Civil War, abolished slavery to avoid hard feelings with his allies. The influence of President Burr's magically-potent Creole mistress had resulted in Orleans' continued neutrality during the Civil War, and the abolition of slavery as well. The large number of black pirates, upon whom Orleans' economy depends, was another factor contributing to this decision.

In Texas, the status of the black man was equally confused. The Texan constitution declared that slavery was illegal in the country, with exceptions. The buying and selling of slaves within the borders of Texas is illegal. A slave brought into Texas was still a slave, but his descendants were not. Finally, in a concession to his Indian allies, any person taken as a slave by Indians in war was a slave. Many escaping southerners brought their slaves with them into Texas only to discover that there were no laws to recover escaped slaves and that many of the Texans were downright unhelpful to the slaveowner. Many blacks went out west to Texas on their own, where land was plentiful. There they took up ranching and farming. Black cowboys are a familiar sight in many parts of the west.

In the Bear Flag Empire, there never has been any official slavery and the black population is simply one of several ethnic groups living there. Before Norton's reign, Blacks were free, if somewhat unequal, citizens in California. They could attend schools, vote in elections and were granted full protection under the law. However, that law could sometimes turn a blind eye on those that harassed them. Under Emperor Norton, true equality is granted to all peoples in the Empire. Aside from a few scattered incidents, Norton's empire remains one of the safest places in the Americas.

Over the years, thousands of blacks found their way into the arms of various Indian tribes and were given shelter there. The Creeks, Cherokee, and Seminole in the south were the closest tribes, and they were quite willing to accept the runaways. Once an escaped slave had reached a friendly tribe, there was no way for the master to track him down. The "black Indian" became a member of the tribe and often married into it, bringing his own magic and culture to his adopted peoples. His understanding of how the white man's world worked was crucial to the development of the Indian Nation's strategies in dealing with all the American Nations. Black Indians also brought with them important skills like blacksmithing, carpentry, and farming. They helped to increase the quality of life among the Indians dramatically.

Once only slaves, blacks in America, men and women, can now hold their heads up with pride. Through their own actions and the actions of concerned whites, black people are now equal citizens (although the farther west you go, the more equal they are), ready to meet the challenges of life in the Americas.

THE NIGHT OF THE BALL

Perhaps we were in trouble, but at least it wasn't the immediate type we feared. Instead of a legal writ or a warrant for our arrest or something, the piece of paper given to us was an invitation. To a formal ball. As if everything else we'd done was casual.

This invite was seriously impressive. Gilt-edged, hand-engraved, printed on very fine parchment paper and wrapped with a silk ribbon bow. I kept mine in one of the tubes I use to protect my drawings. If it had survived the trip, I'd have had it framed and put it up in my room. It was that nice.

I'd managed to speak with Marianne early that morning. She was off doing a little shopping with one of the cooks from the Stauffenberg. Lückner, von Hubel, Pfistermeister, myself, and two senior diplomatic aides were waiting for her at the breakfast table. She finally arrived, and, after some debate, we all ordered the same item for our breakfast meal.

While the waiter was gone, she poured us all a cup of tea, ever the coquette.

"Are you sure this is necessary?" asked von Hubel quietly.

"Yes. Don't worry about it," I said.

"Are you sure what's necessary?" asked Pfistermeister.

Lückner immediately stood, holding up his teacup. "To Bayern!" he said proudly.

"To Bayern!" We all drank. Marianne refilled the cups.

I stood and followed Lückner's lead. "To the success of this tour!"

"To success!" We all drank.

"To Peace!" This from Marianne. We all drank.

"Ah, breakfast is served," said Pfistermeister.

"Better eat it while you can," I muttered.

"Excuse me, Herr Olam?"

"Nothing. Just thinking out loud. Drink up."

An hour later, we were all back in bed with fevers and nausea. Nothing like having Chamberlain Pfistermeister zook in the elevator to clear your social slate for the day. Whatever those herbs were that Marianne put in the tea, they did the job they were supposed to. We were hot and bothered, you might say. The effects would only last for a few hours, but they ensured that we had nothing to do for the day. We could take the time to update each other, assess the opposition, and come up with a strategy to field whatever balls were thrown our way at the dance that evening. It also gave us the psychological edge inasmuch as the Americans would assume we were still languishing under the effects of food poisoning or the twenty-four hour flu. In reality, we'd be just fine, even well rested after a day off. I just hoped they didn't come down too hard on the kitchen staff. It's always the folks at the bottom of the pile that get stepped on.

We all got together in von Hubel's suite and got down to business. We tallied everything we'd learned, and it wasn't a whole heck of a lot.

Marianne reported that the women appeared to have been cut out of the inner workings. While it was obvious they were the social sharks, their contribution was more like accessories after the fact. Sort of like a press agent makes all of a celebrity's appointments, but the power is with the celebrity. So we figured the true power in the U.S. to be some sort of boys' club or all-male cabal. It was pretty obvious, the way the men retired to the den and the women to the drawing room at every party, that the sexes were effectively segregated. Doing some research on the laws of the land would help figure out who was in power and how. We decided to give that job to one of the junior aides, with a couple of Marines to help him fetch books at the library.

They were suspicious, these Americans. Von Hubel suggested it was lingering paranoia over the fact that the noted criminal Anthony Savile had magicked his way through the land not long ago. Speaking of which, we had seen very little of magick in the time we'd spent in New York; that was an avenue worth investigating. Why were there no sorcerers around? What did they think we were up to? And who was Fields, anyway?

It all came together at the ball.

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: INDUSTRIALIST

Wherever you look, you see opportunity. And you are determined to take advantage of it. The marvels of the Age of Steam are just waiting to be harnessed. New products and new manufacturing techniques, driven by the power of steam and controlled by the Babbage Calculation Engine, promise a new era in human progress and a sizable fortune to the men and women who control that progress. Thanks to ingenuity, hard work, and a little luck, you count yourself among these Captains of Industry. You understand Steam Technology but you also understand high finance, and you know what will sell.

You have a reputation as a shrewd business person. In the cutthroat world of the Robber Barons, you fight fire with fire. But you also understand the human dimension of progress and feel an obligation to give something back to the nation which let you rise on your own merit. While you are ruthless in your business dealings, you endow charities that enrich the lives of many.

They say the United States has no royalty. You are as close as it comes. The very name, Robber Baron, bespeaks nobility. But your wealth is newly acquired, putting you at odds with the old-money families which dominate New York society. New York is the financial capital of the United States and you would live nowhere else. You will not tolerate being treated as anyone's social inferior! Just as you conquer your business rivals, removing any obstacles that stand in your way, by fair means or foul, you are determined to win acceptance in society.

- **Strong Suits:** Connections, Exchequer, Tinkering

- **Possessions:** Bankroll, stock certificates, ledger with financial accounts and the address of your broker, seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

- **In Your Diary:** Names of your business partners and rivals. Plans to expand your business concerns. Inside information and stock tips.

- **Why You're Here:** Business. What better reason is there? If you don't seize new opportunities, someone else will. You didn't get to where you are by sitting in the office. You learned your business hands-on and you still trust the business instincts you developed more than any stock tip. You personally supervise your operations and are always willing to investigate new inventions or inventors. Opportunity is out there, waiting. It is up to you to go out there and track it down. But enough talk; you have business to attend to.



The ball was fantastic. Or at least it would have been, if I'd been able to enjoy it. By playing on our earlier "illness", we were able to get away with all sorts of faux pas. And find stuff out.

Disturbing stuff.

Fields turned out to be Marshall Fields, another name which meant bucks. Like Rockefeller, Astor, Vanderbilt, and the others, all of whom were apparently influential in the political arena. Marianne was able to discover that the social scene in New York is dominated by "the 400", the cream of the crop of wealth and influence. These guys were a part of that set. The 400 also has direct ties with the U.S. government, being rich businessmen. That meant the U.S. government is, at least in part, involved in shadowing us and directing our daily lives. And the most powerful of the 400 all had sigils on their persons. Rings, fobs, tie tacks, whatever.

Freemasons.

The ultimate boys' club.

This was corroborated by the draconian laws which our aide dug up. Sorcery was severely regulated on this side of the Atlantean. So was everything else, for that matter. But to practice sorcery legally, you had to be of a "politically correct" Order, get a license, and expose yourself to constant regulation, investigation, and harassment. Or else join the Freemasons.

The mundane laws were equally severe. We're talking a corporate fascist state in the making. It was beginning to look like the Freemasons were making a play for the reins of power in the U.S.. Proscribing free thought, free speech, free behavior. Shaping the course of the nation by controlling the way the upper class functioned. Direct those whom everybody admires, and the whole nation follows. It was looking like they might actually succeed.

But wait—hadn't Benjamin Franklin been a Freemason?

Maybe they'd already won.

We had a farewell reception to attend the morning after the ball. We were going to pull up stakes and head for the nation's capital. The farewell reception turned out to be nothing of the sort. We were expecting a party of the sort they'd been giving us all along. But instead we met with several of the 400 in an otherwise empty hall. Lots of nice furniture, no decorations. The lights weren't even on, and what natural light there was gave the place a gloomy feel. No food. No water. No guests. No smiles.

No fun.

I don't even know who the spokesman for these people was. I only knew that they were from the 400 by the way they carried themselves. They made no introductions. They didn't even ask us to sit down. So I did anyway, just to cop an attitude.

Their spokesman had a raspy voice. "I don't know what you guys think you're up to, but you know as well as I do that this isn't a diplomatic mission. Anyone who has Illuminati in their cabinet is an enemy of ours. If you think you can come over here with your high-flying barge and impress us with a couple of cannons, you'd best think twice. We don't impress very easily. And you can act important and powerful, and even rough up one of our citizens, but if you step out of line again, we will beat you like a drum, diplomatic immunity or no.

"And you, Mr. Olam," he said with a hiss. "You were born in the United States, weren't you?"

I didn't answer.

"Yeah, I thought as much. I've a mind to have you brought up on charges of treason. Did you ever forswear your citizenship? Or do you think you can get away with aiding and abetting a foreign power intent on overthrowing our government and trampling on our Constitution?"

That did it. I shot to my feet, only to have Lückner's hand clamp on my shoulder quite firmly. "*Rube, soldier,*" he ordered softly.

"I thought so," said the guy. "And you dare to call yourself an American. You're a traitor and a spy. And if we ever catch you, I will personally see to it that you hang by the neck. Now get your sorry face out of our town before I change my mind."

THE FREEMASONIC LODGE IN THE UNITED STATES

The Freemasons are a little more sinister on the this side of the Atlantean, having succumbed to the basic human emotion of greed. After the Americans successfully broke free of Britain, a continental congress was convened to create a new government for the fledgling union. The majority of this congress, and future first President George Washington, were all Freemasons. They saw in this a chance secretly to control the United States so as to further their goals. Or, as Washington put it, "We must keep a firm hand upon the reins of America's destiny, lest she stray into the mire of monarchism."

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

At the same time that the Constitution of the United States was drafted, a set of documents called the Foundations were written in secret. These documents, hidden (but superior) to the Constitution, outline the Freemasons' plans and strictures pertaining to the running of the country. Portions of these documents were later made into Federal laws, but others remain secret to this day.

In addition, Benjamin Franklin secured the assistance of an enlightened alchemist, a man as versed in the fashionable material sciences as he was in the established magical lore. This alchemist, together with the leading twelve members of the Continental Congress (one from each of the participating colonies—Rhode Island refused to participate), which included men such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison, met in the basement of Independence Hall. There they created a mystic talisman for the United States, binding the people to the land, suppressing native magical powers in favor of European magicks; and setting the stage for the usurpation of the land from the native powers by the white man's myths and legends.

The power of this Talisman, and thus the power of the Freemasons, increases with the amount of land inside the boundaries of the United States. If the doctrine of Manifest Destiny is ever successful, the Freemasons may well become the most powerful sorcerous order in the world. However, as demonstrated in the Civil War, if the political body

of America is ever sundered, disaster results. During the Civil War, divided loyalties nullified the power of the Talisman, resulting in a resurgence of the native powers of the land and a dwindling in the efficacy of New European magick. Only Lincoln's lenient Reconstruction allowed a complete return to normalcy, in terms of both the political situation and the power of the Talisman.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE FREEMASONS

Following are the precepts that have been institutionalized and affect daily life in the U.S. Firstly, all Presidents of the United States must be a Freemason, either before he is elected, or else indoctrinated soon after his election. As a Freemason, the President is subject to the directives of the Grand Masters of the Lodge. Secondly, all Sorcerous Orders other than the Freemasons are prohibited from establishing lodges or temples in the United States. The only legal lodge is the Freemasons. Exceptions to this are that members of the Templars, the Eleusinians, and the Order of St. Boniface may serve the U.S. Military or practice their arts as Physicians under license from the U.S. Government. Similarly, professional sorcerers such as dentists, physicians, or police inspectors may practice their art, unattached to the Freemasons, with the proper license. Anyone caught practicing magick who does not belong to the Freemasons is immediately press-ganged into joining. Any licensed practitioner caught practicing magick he is not licensed for, or anyone belonging to a proscribed order, is deported.

Unwritten, but still a fact, is a prejudice in favor of Freemasons. Government contracts are awarded to Freemasons, as are important political positions. While it is desired that all members of the U.S. Supreme Court should be Freemasons, this cannot always be slipped past Congress. Thirdly, If you want to get anywhere or be anyone in the United States, you had better be a Freemason. If not, you had better watch your back. Constantly.

For more information on the practice of Magick in the United States, see *The Book of Sigils*, pg. 68.

FAERIE IN AMERICA

America is a land where the Faerie are both able to move freely, as in New Europa, and a land where they are often unwelcome visitors. In the United States, where the native powers of the land have been lessened by the American Talisman and the expulsion of the Indians, Faerie may walk freely. In the rest of the Americas, both North and South, Faerie are on lands not their own. Faerie, being foreign spirit powers, upon stepping onto American soil outside of the United States receive the same treatment as outsiders do upon entering the Twenty Nations (see *The Book of Sigils*, pg. 80). The amount of time it takes for the visiting Fae to be noticed by the local spirits varies; Lesser Fae will be noticed within a month, High Fae instantly. The more powerful a Fae is, the less likely he will be welcome.

Most Faerie also must request permission to practice their own brand of magick on American shores. Those that don't tend to have unfortunate accidents befall them. The native American spirits can be subtle or aggressive but are usually quite effective in the areas where they hold sway.

In the United States, the Freemasons keep a close eye on all Faerie they detect and have been known to cause them some discomfort. The United States is ill at ease with foreign magicks. Faerie may be asked what might seem like impertinent questions by the local constabulary. Many Faerie find it more convenient to glamour themselves to look human. Only Dwarfs find themselves truly welcome in the United States, but only if they work for a major corporation, such as Standard Oil or Winchester Arms.

The Bear Flag Empire is far more lenient and even welcomes most Faerie. They put little or no restrictions upon visitors except that they must obey local laws. However, visiting Fae are requested to appear before the Emperor when convenient, as he finds great delight in conversing with Fae.

The Texas government is neutral. As long as visiting Fae don't cause a ruckus, or disturb any native spirits, you don't bother them, they won't both-

er you. Texas has a mix of native and New European magicks that can be confusing at first. Faerie should be cautious about stirring up the magical energies in this area, as there are many things in Texas that are best left sleeping.

Orleans is pretty friendly, though it's not the sort of friendship one can necessarily trust. Faerie are recommended not to drink anything anyone offers them, or to agree to any kind of business deal proposed by anyone they meet. As Voudon magicks can be dangerous to Faeries, it is the better part of valor to treat them with wariness and caution.

The Indians vary in their opinions about Faerie according to the feelings of their own particular spirits. Most Native American spirits are neutral to Faerie and don't begrudge them a little vacation. However, some Spirits don't cotton to Faerie and can be downright hostile to the incautious visitor. Unseelie will have a particularly bad time of it, unless they stay in the United States. The Inuit in the far Northwest are the most unfriendly, possibly because of all the Russian Unseelie so close by.

There are some Faerie who have decided that America is very much to their liking and have settled down permanently. They have usually formed an agreement with the local spirits, or at least they stay away from each other.

Now, just because the native powers prohibit the High Faerie from remaining upon American soil does not mean that they have no interest in North and South America. There is evidence that it was the influence of the Adversary that sent the conquistadores to Mexico. He possibly also has influence upon the Freemasons and Tammany Hall, as the spread of the United States and subsequent displacement of the native powers would allow the Adversary and his minions into the New World. In a similar fashion, Auberon may be covertly aiding Texas, California, and the Twenty Nations. Preserving the native powers' hold upon the land thwarts the Adversary and serves Auberon's purposes, admittedly in an oblique way.

UNITED STATES LEGENDS

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

Every part of the United States has its own unique collection of spirits intricately linked to the character of the region. The Northeast, with its dark, dreamy forests and quiet river valleys, is replete with local ghosts and nature sprites, some benign and some as malevolent as Old Scratch himself. Perhaps the strangest of these is the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

An explorer wishing to find the haunting grounds of this particular shade would travel first to the tiny village of Greensburgh, sometimes called Tarry Town, a rural port nestled in a cove on the eastern shore of the Hudson. This cove is easily found by all and sundry, for it lies close to the vast expansion of the river dubbed the Tappan Zee by the old Dutch navigators.

About two miles from the town as the crow flies, up in the high hills, there is a secluded valley that has been called the quietest place in the whole of the world. A tiny brook glides through the vale, whispering just loudly enough to lull passersby into sleep. Only the soft whistle of quail and the faint tapping of woodpeckers ever disturbs the serenity of this Sleepy Hollow.

A dreamy, enchanted feeling hangs over the land like smoke. Some say that a German doctor bewitched the valley during the early days of Dutch settlement. Others believe that an old Indian shaman conducted magical rituals there centuries before Hendrick Hudson came upriver. Whatever the cause, some witching power definitely holds sway over the place and its people.

The leader of all the nightmares of the region, the commander of the spirit powers, is an apparition of a tall figure on horseback without a head. Many believe it is the ghost of a Hessian trooper, a poor soul whose head was taken away by a cannonball in some forgotten battle of the Revolutionary War.

The apparition is usually seen on gloomy, moonless nights when the north wind scrapes cold through the valley. His realm seems to extend from Sleepy Hollow out along the adjacent roads to an undetermined distance, but he is most often sighted in the vicinity of an old church. Local scholars have concluded that the body of the Hessian trooper is buried here, and that the ghost rides forth in search of his head from the church yard to the ancient scene of battle. Sometimes the Horseman puts on a terrifying blast of speed, racing through the Hollow as if the Devil himself was behind him. These are the nights that he is late, and must hurry to return to his grave before daybreak comes.

Many are the stories told about this fearsome spectre, not the least of which is the tale of Brom Bones and the disappearance of Ichabod Crane, but those are best left for another time.

• The Headless Horseman (malevolent spectre)

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Etherealness [EXT] • Perception [GR] • Riding [EXT]

The Headless Horseman has all the abilities given to specters in *The Book of Sigils*, pg. 91. The Horseman occasionally wears a Jack-o-lantern, carved into a terrifying expression, where his head used to be. Its hellish flames light the spectre's way. He is particularly adept at throwing his head at fleeing targets. His horse is also a spectre.

THE GLOUCESTER SEA SERPENT

Another of the bizarre legends of the Northeast is the Gloucester Sea Serpent. For the entire summer of 1817, a gargantuan sea serpent was seen repeatedly in and around the deep harbor of Gloucester, Massachusetts, thirty miles north of Boston, as well as in monster-haunted Nahant Bay. Hundreds of people claimed to have seen it, and all agreed on a description. It was a huge creature with smooth skin of black or dark brown and a tongue of remarkable length that darted out of its reptilian head. Its

bright eyes were widely described as being similar to those of an ox. The beast was usually seen rolling through the waves, an undulating length of serpentine coils, though it was occasionally seen half in the water and half on shore. And how big was it? One skipper swore that it took him fifteen minutes to sail the length of the monster even with a six-knot tailwind. In truth it was probably well over 100 feet in length and a little more than three feet in diameter.

A wave of fear swept across the New England coast as it damaged three ships in the month of August alone. Soon a large reward had been posted for the beast, dead or alive. Veteran whalers took to the sea in large boats and a revenue cutter prowled the coast with guns at the ready. Before anyone could collect the money, though, the Gloucester Sea Serpent disappeared. Sightings have been reported as recently as 1864, but they are unconfirmed.

• The Gloucester Sea serpent (fantastic beast)

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Physique [EXC] • Stealth [GR]

Raise Nature: As per the Lake Lady ability (CF pg. 175). The Serpent uses this ability to raise storms to confound pursuers.

PHANTOM SHIPS

The east coast of America, particularly the area around Massachusetts, is home to a flotilla of ghostly sailing vessels. These vessels are by no means shy or retiring; they sail directly into harbor or within plain sight of other ships with regularity. Oftentimes, these ships come so close to the living that their spectral crews and their lost wails can be plainly discerned. It is impossible to catalog in its entirety this spectral navy; however some of the more famous manifestations are listed below.

One of the first sightings was in New Haven, Connecticut. It was recorded in Cotton Mather's *Magnolia Christi*, and witnessed by resident James Pierpont. In his words, "Seemingly with her sails filled under a fresh gale ... she continued under observation, sailing against the wind for a space of half an hour ... The vessel came so near some of the spectators, as they imagined a man might hurl a stone on board her; her main top seemed to be blown off, but left hanging in the shrouds; then her mizzen-top; then all her masting seemed blown away by the board; quickly after the hulk brought unto a careen, she overset, and so vanished into a smoky cloud" Thus, a ship that set sail for England from New Haven returned home to re-enact her demise.

Block Island, off the coast of Rhode Island, receives an annual visit from the burning ghost of either the square-rigger *Palatine* or the bark *Princess Augusta*. Both ships sank in this stretch of sea; locals still argue about the identity of the floating conflagration. The only thing that is certain is its appearance every year between Christmas and New Year's.

Gloucester, Massachusetts has more than a sea serpent. The ghostly *Alice Marr* calls this port home as well. Local legend states that anyone who sees this lost schooner cutting through the waves in an attempt to make harbor will lose the person he loves the most. Waiting for the *Alice Marr* at the dockside is the schooner *Charles Haskell*. This ship has not yet gone to a watery grave, but it is haunted. Returning from a fishing trip in 1869 during a hurricane, the *Charles Haskell* accidentally rammed and sank another boat, the *Andrew Johnson*, out of Salem, while in a stretch of ocean known as Georges Bank. Since then, the ghostly crew of the *Andrew Johnson* appears on deck every time the *Charles Haskell* sailed through the Georges Bank and went about their normal routine. When the ship approached Gloucester, the ghostly crew climbed over the side and walked across the waves toward Salem. Since April 1870, when this story was published in a local newspaper, the *Charles Haskell* has not left port, as no man will sail on her.

For more on phantasmal ships, see *The Book of Sigils*, pg. 91.

COASTING

I was glad to leave New York behind. We all were. Granted, we were high-ranking Bayernese officials on a military warship, so everything was still formal, and much more cramped. But it was a relaxed formality. It also reeked of military honesty as opposed to the grease-palmed two-faced high-society charade which we'd been immersed in. I like honesty.

Our plan was to go south by way of the coast. I really wanted to see Boston, but for whatever reason, Pfistermeister hadn't put it on the plan. Then we turned inland for Philadelphia. The City of Brotherly Love.

I had a feeling that it wouldn't live up to its name.

To my surprise, I was ... surprised. The people of Philadelphia were very congenial. I figured it had to do with the tradition of openness the city'd had since Penn's days. Religious and political tolerance. That and the continued influence of the nearby Amish; if they can't make you cool your jets, no one can. Pfistermeister, less optimistic than I, figured they were hospitable thanks to the fact that New York City had finally upstaged Philly in the global trade arena. Forced some humility on them. Personally, I think Pfistermeister was still a little cranky about the tea incident. I haven't told him the truth yet.

We were again treated to a parade, which ended in Penn Square in the center of the city. From there, a guide took us on a tour of the city. We were shown City Hall and the State House (which I know as Independence Hall).

I asked about the Liberty Bell, because I never had the chance to see it while I was over on your side of the Veil. To my surprise, it was still hanging in the bell tower. "Really?" I asked. "Didn't it crack?"

"Oh, yes, sir, it did," said our guide. "Local sorcerors repaired the damage, sir."

"Geez," I said. "I don't know if I'd have done that."

"Pray tell, why not, sir?"

"Well, it's a historical landmark. Cracking when the Declaration of Independence was signed and all. Seems like an act of God, that it would only ring that once."

"Pardon, sir," he said, "but I'm afraid you're mistaken. The bell cracked the first time in 1752. It's cracked several times since then, most recently during the Centennial festivities. We repair it whenever necessary." The benefits of magick.

"But if it cracked in 1752, what about the words on the bell?"

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," sir. Leviticus 25:10."

"Wasn't that a little premature?" I asked. "I mean, the U.S. didn't declare independence for another, what, two dozen years?"

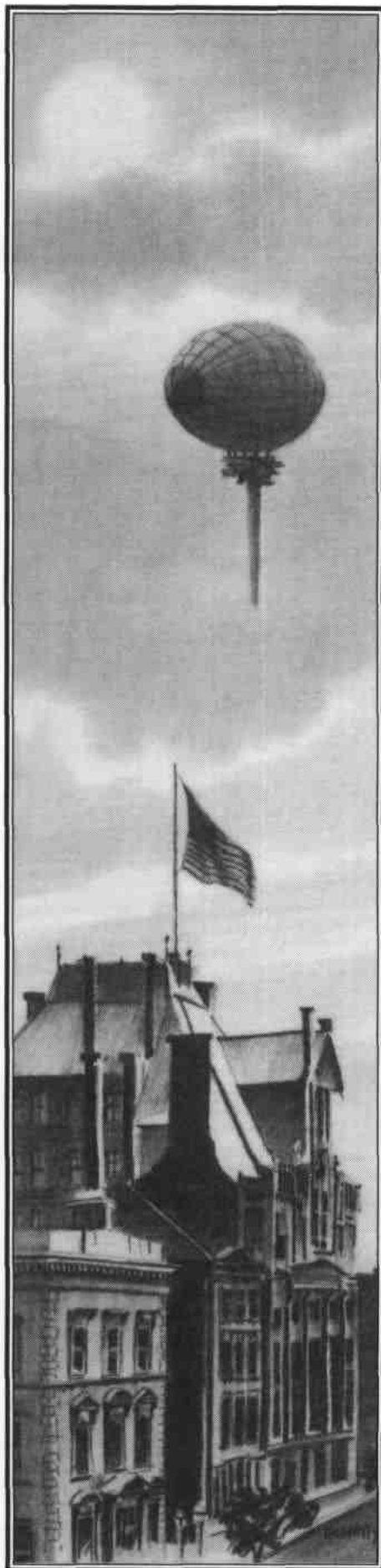
"It's never too early for liberty, sir," said the guide. "And freedom will rise wherever she can." He had a point.

From there we went to the Carpenters' Hall. The guide said that this was where the Continental Congress met for the first couple of years. Carpenters' Hall. Lückner nudged me as we approached, and nodded inconspicuously to the archway over the door. And there it was. Proof that we were right. The sigil of the Freemasons.

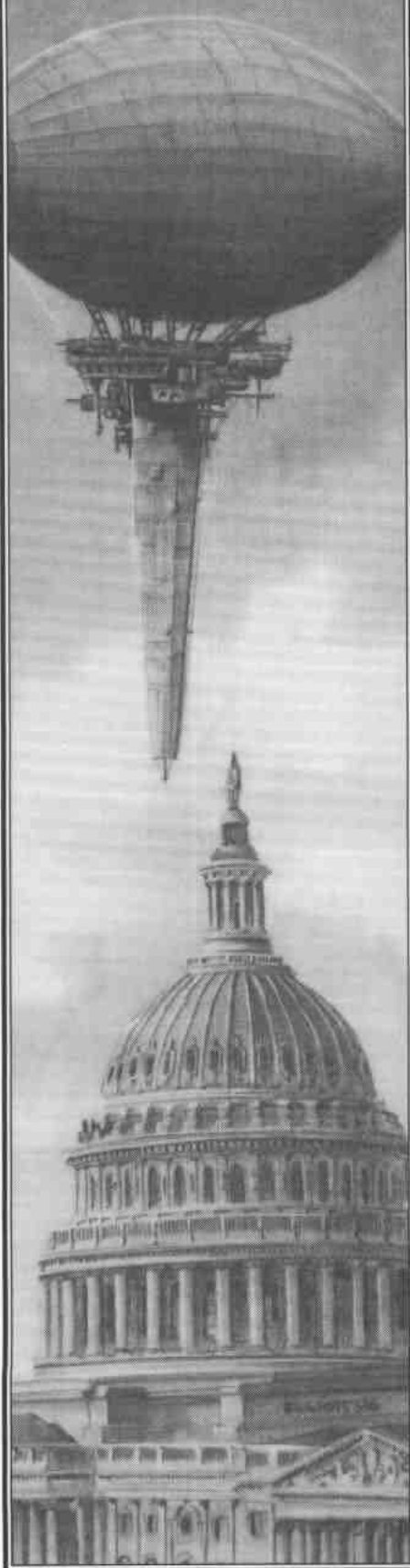
The Freemasons were the architects of freedom in the United States. And it appears that they had never let go of their influence. Suddenly I wanted to go and hang out with the Amish. At least there I wouldn't feel like I was surrounded by smiling enemies. The only thing more dangerous than a smiling Klingon is a friendly Freemason.

The rest of our stay was congenial, and far less hectic and socially structured than New York. We were able to spend a good amount of time in the parks. Philly's got a lot of parks. Unfortunately, we'd only allotted two days for the town. It's too bad, too. We should have cut our New York stay short and come here instead.

One of the city elders suggested we take our tour guide with us. Seemed like a good idea, so we did. Then we left for D.C. proper.



WASHINGTON, D.C.



Our coastal tour took us over Baltimore, Fort McHenry, and Chesapeake Bay on our way to the capital. We didn't stop. But I saluted as we passed over Fort McHenry. I got some curious looks from several of the crewmen, but hey, I've studied the War of 1812. Those guys at McHenry hung tough. And I was in uniform. I had to salute.

When he saw it, our guide came over and shook my hand. "I'd heard you were an American," he said. His name was Don Chandler. As we passed over Maryland, he mentioned that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had reached as far west as St. Louis. Somehow I could tell he was talking in the past tense when he said that, so I asked what happened. He told me. Eeesh. But despite the setbacks, the B&O seemed to be doing well. I considered advising him to sell any stock he might have, but decided against meddling too much in history. It's not like I haven't done enough already.

He also talked about the USS *Constellation* and other points of interest about the place. He was very gregarious, and he talked constantly. He knew a lot of trivia. I guess that's why he was a guide. He also flirted incessantly with Marianne and the other women on board. It was very hard to ignore his presence, and you had to respond to his smile. That should have given us a clue.

It wasn't until a long time later that I figured out who he was. But I'll save that story for later.

The weather was hot and hazy the day we reached the capital. The first landmark I could see was the Washington Monument. It's always been one of my favorites. Of course, it wasn't quite finished yet. Looked kinda like a bomb had taken the top off. But it was cool. The White House, the Senate, it was all there, like a giant map with miniature people everywhere, all looking up at us. We gave the city a lazy circle, like we were sizing up our prey. Which, in a way, we were. So were they.

We eventually came in to land at the foot of the Washington Monument. That's where they'll eventually put the Reflecting Pool, if in fact the Lincoln Memorial is built. After all, Lincoln didn't get killed over here. The *Stauffenberg* tied off on the Washington Monument itself. I didn't think that was kosher, but I guess they figure if it hasn't been dedicated yet, no harm done.

We had a welcoming parade in our honor. Oh boy. Another parade. I've already petitioned Ludwig not to give visiting dignitaries welcoming parades unless they specifically request one. I'm tired of them. Sit and wave and smile and pretend you're happy to have all these thousands of people watching you sit and wave and smile and pretend you're happy. Yah. Thrills.

We also met with the various top political dogs. President Grant, and his cabinet. Who, basically, were all friends of his. Not your cabinet built on, say, capability, but hey, I'm sure they all got along well. They shared several drinks with us. We met the Speaker of the House, the Senate leaders and whips, and several other important politicians.

Us? We were cordial, even friendly. We chatted like oblivious morons. And every single one of them we met, we checked. Sometimes it took a while, but we were always proven right. Every single time.

Freemasons. Even President Grant.

We spoke about that later that evening in our hotel. While I could see that the Freemasons might accept a man like Grant, I was unsure that he would want to be a part of their organization, especially since it was apparent that he had no magical inclination. Why was he a member?

Von Hubel hit it dead on, I think. He figured that the Freemasons, since they were in control of the country, would see to it that any President, if not already a Freemason, would take an oath shortly after being elected to office. "Congratulations, Mr. President. Now swear your allegiance to us." Great. Just great.

ULYSSES S. GRANT

THE GENERAL

The son of a tanner, Ulysses Grant attended West Point to escape the life his father led. Graduating twenty-first out of thirty-nine cadets, Grant was distinguished only by his natural ability for horsemanship and a gift for mathematics. Assigned to one small post after another, he quickly grew tired of military life. Routinely a quartermaster, Grant saw little action in the years preceding the Civil War and resigned his commission in disgust in 1854. Instead, he took up farming in southern Illinois, having married in 1848.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Grant returned to the military as a volunteer. Through the influence of a family friend in Congress, Grant was made a brigadier general before having ever seen action. He was, however, more than ready for command. Grant's natural ability with mathematics and his experience as a quartermaster gave him a unique ability to apply his forces where they would do the most good. No tactical genius, Grant was the master of dogged strategy.

On February 16, 1862, Grant won the first major Union victory at Fort Donelson, along the Cumberland River in Tennessee. Desperate for a commander who could get things done, President Abraham Lincoln appointed Grant overall commander of Union forces in 1864. Grant was the man for the job. With his knowledge of logistics, Grant brought the full weight of Union numerical superiority to bear against the Confederacy, grinding them into defeat.

THE LEGEND

Having won the Civil War, General Grant is a genuine national hero. His drinking, cussing, and cigar smoking are the stuff of legend. In fact, Grant took up drinking during his early Army career to relieve the tedium of his assignments, but he is hardly a drunkard. Similarly, while enjoying a good cigar and having developed a military man's familiarity with plain language, Grant is no buffoon. If he has a failing, it is also his greatest strength. Ulysses Grant is a likeable man who likes people. He is a man you instinctively trust and his instinct is to trust in return. In 1868, the legend and the man became the Eighteenth President of the United States, running as a Republican.

PRESIDENT GRANT

After the Civil War, Grant toured the South at President Lincoln's request. He agreed with Lincoln. Reconstruction must be swift and lenient. As President, Grant has continued Lincoln's policy, granting Confederate leaders amnesty and protecting black civil rights. This has put him at odds with the radical Copperheads of his own party, led by Senator Thaddeus Stevens, who would see the South suffer.

Stevens wants nothing less than to be president himself and works to discredit Grant. In this, he has sought to utilize magick in staging Grant's downfall. Grant, however, is immune to sorcerous attack. His personal aide since the Civil War has been Ely Parker, a Seneca Indian and a shaman. Parker protects Grant against both the magicks of Stevens' mages and the Hodano Medicine Society.

Unfortunately, President Grant has not been lucky enough to have more such friends. The Secretary of State, General Philip Sheridan, is involved with the corrupt Credit Mobilier corporation, using his position to skim money from government contracts let to the corporation. Secretary of War William Belknap accepts bribes in exchange for military contracts. Secretary of the Interior Benjamin Bristow is involved in the Whiskey Ring of bootleggers avoiding the liquor tax. Grant's personal secretary, Orville E. Babcock, makes a fortune being paid to keep Grant unaware of the wrongdoing around him, and Grant's brother-in-law, Abel Corbin, and his wife, Julia Grant, have kept the President from interfering with the "Goldbugs", the Robber Barons Jay Gould and James Fisk.

Despite mounting evidence, Grant refuses to believe the tales of corruption. He is trusting to a fault. Increasingly, the President turns to drink and the social round to escape the pressures of the office. Ely Parker, the President's personal aide, and James Brooks, the head of the Secret Service, know what must be done and act, virtually alone, in the best interests of the President and the country.

THE ANTI-MASONIC MOVEMENT

The domination of American politics by the Freemasons is not unresisted. In the mid-1820's, notable people such as Martin van Buren, Aaron Burr, and Thurlow Tweed noticed that Freemasons had more than their fair share of representation in business and politics. Particularly, all but two state's governors were Freemasons. Many prominent business positions were also held by Freemasons. Van Buren and Tweed responded by forming the Anti-Masonic Party and campaigning for political office. This effort was to prove to be short-lived.

In 1826, a former Mason named William Morgan disappeared soon after breaking his vow of silence and publishing an exposé of the Freemasons' activities. The exposé was banned by the government and possession of a copy was punishable by severe fines and imprisonment. Although officially no trace was ever found of Morgan, rumors spread that he had been tied up with heavy cables and dumped in the Niagara River. When no indictments were brought against those suspected of kidnaping and murdering Morgan, local Masons were accused of obstructing justice.

Needless to say, nothing ever came of this affair, and it has been hushed up. It does not appear in any history book published in the United States, and it is not wise to speak of it. The Anti-Masonic Party soon broke up as its members disappeared, suffered accidents, or were harassed into giving up their memberships.

Interestingly enough, when Martin van Buren later ran for President in 1836, he was a fervent supporter of the Masons. What changed his mind, he will not speak of. In fact, when asked, he denied ever being opposed to the Freemasons, whom he described as "champions of the cause of liberty and freedom, and bringers of the kind of order necessary to hold a nation together during troubled times."

The movement has never quite gone away, despite official acts of suppression by the government. Underground anti-Masonic cells can be found, if you know where to look and whom to ask.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Population: 35 million • **Government:** Representative Democracy, controlled behind the scenes by the Freemasonic Lodge • **Alliances:** England, Prussia • **Enemies:** Twenty Nations, Bear Flag

Empire • Position: Expansionist, militaristic, planning to fulfill the Manifest Destiny of the United States to spread from coast to coast.

THE FLEDGLING NATION

The first successful New European colony in America was established at Plymouth in 1620. As the New European colonies expanded in America, they experienced growth pains. Conflict with the native Indians was common, as were disease, hard winters, and famine. Some colonists were able to get along with the Indians, learning their ways and Lore to adapt to a new land. Others reacted in typical New European fashion.

THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

The practice of magick in the Americas was dealt a serious blow in the Massachusetts colony in 1692. The small village of Salem was a Puritan colony, and strict religious principles were followed there. One of these principles was that magick was only to be practiced within the church, under strict supervision. Any other use of magick was seen as man trying to imitate God, and therefore it was the work of the devil. This perception made life very difficult for local hedge-wizards, midwives, healers, and others who had the Talent. It was especially hard for those who consorted with the Indians—"devilish savages" who practiced heathen magick. At this time, young girls in the village became "afflicted" with unexplainable fits. The girls accused women in the village of being witches, and being in league with Lucifer. From this small seed, hysteria blossomed. During the course of a year, at least twenty people were put to death for being "witches." The killing stopped when several prominent people, including the governor's wife, were accused. However, this prejudice against the practice of the Art has lingered in New England to the present time.

THE FRENCH-INDIAN WAR

The Seven Years' War, as it was also known, was waged across the American continent from 1756 to 1763. England saw a chance to wipe out the colony of New France and sent nearly their entire army to America. Though they suffered many setbacks, in the end England was victorious. In 1759, English General Wolfe successfully laid siege to Quebec, and in 1760 Montreal surrendered to General Amherst. The war was officially brought to an end with the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

The revolution that exploded in 1776 built up slowly following the Seven Years' War. Confident with its triumph, England soon began strongly to assert its authority in the colonies. English troops remained in the colonies following the war, and Parliament passed the Stamp Act, the Townshend Duties, the Tea Act, and the Coercive Acts. Resistance to these policies included boycotts, riots, the Boston Massacre, and the Boston Tea Party.

This unrest turned into a shooting war in 1775. The colonials, using mainly skirmish tactics, fought bravely against the British Thin Red Line. The war was waged on a diplomatic level as well; on July 7, 1776 the American Congress signed the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming America free from British rule. The American cause was aided in 1778 when war broke out between France and Britain. France sent troops and ships, and the war turned in favor of the colonials. Finally, in 1781 an overwhelming force of French and Continentals surrounded the British army at Yorktown. After a short siege, British General Cornwallis surrendered. The war for independence was over.

A CONSTITUTION AND A FOUNDATION

With their independence declared, the colonies set to the task of self-government, defined by the Articles of Confederation. This government was mostly penniless and powerless. Poverty and unrest led to armed revolt. In 1783 George Washington headed off a potential coup by the Continental Army, who faced being disbanded without back pay or pensions. In 1786, farmers in Massachusetts, facing debtor's prison, rose in an armed revolt led

by Daniel Shay. Lacking arms and suffering through a bitter winter, the revolution was soon put down by local militia.

An opposition group known as the Nationalists, backed by the Freemasons, gained power and influence until in 1787 they overwhelmed all opposition and called for a new, stronger national government. As a result of this, in May 1787, delegates from twelve of the thirteen states (Rhode Island, a state full of monarchist sentiment, refused to participate) gathered in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. There, led by visionaries such as Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified on September 17, 1787. A new government for the people, by the people had been created.

THE FIRST YEARS

Soon the Federal Government was set up. The fledgling United States managed to stay out of foreign conflicts, including the French Revolution, until 1804, when it went to war against pirates. It had been a long-standing tradition for ships sailing the Barbary Coast to pay tribute to the pirates who sailed those waters. President Jefferson refused to pay tribute, and he dispatched eight ships to blockade Tripoli. A force of U.S. Marines soon captured the city, U.S. military sorcerors defeating the Barbary wizards and their djinn allies. The Barbary Pirates swiftly made peace with the United States.

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

In 1800 Spain secretly ceded the Louisiana Territory, comprised of the middle third of the continent, and control of the Mississippi to the French. American farmers lost the right to reload cargo in New Orleans, and cried for war. In response, President Jefferson sent James Monroe to France, with instructions to purchase New Orleans and portions of the Gulf Coast for two million dollars. A recent slave revolt in Haiti, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, had driven the French out. Without Haiti, Napoleon had no interest in New Orleans. Therefore, the French were willing to sell not only New Orleans, but the entire Louisiana Territory. For the trilling cost of \$15 million, Jefferson doubled the size of the United States.

However, this did not sit well with the Federalists, Jefferson's opposition. They saw it as making a mockery of the Constitution, and a threat to the Union itself. In response, the Federalists concocted a plan for a Northern Confederacy, which would include New Jersey, New York, New England, and Canada, to be created with the backing of Britain. This plan was first proposed to Federalist leader Alexander Hamilton, who refused to split the United States. The conspirators then turned to Vice President Aaron Burr, promising him Federalist backing when he ran for the position of Governor of New York. Burr agreed, but was thwarted in his plans by Hamilton's opposition, which included substantial Freemasonic influence. Enraged, the anti-Freemasonic Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel, and killed him on July 11, 1804.

His career a ruin and his life in a shambles, teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, Burr made a desperate act that he knew would either save him or earn him death for treason. With the aid of General George Wilkinson, Burr set up his own sovereign state in a portion of the Louisiana Territory. Burr had outfoxed the United States, and won his own kingdom—for the moment.

THE WARS OF 1812

This period was a chaotic one abroad as well as at home. Napoleon declared war on Britain in 1803, followed by a French naval disaster in 1805 at Trafalgar. To try and strangle British trade, Napoleon ordered that any ship that had traded in a British port before reaching France be seized. Britain responded by seizing any ships that traded in a French port. Britain also claimed the right to stop any foreign vessel and press-gang any British subjects on board into the British Navy. By 1811, nearly 10,000 Americans, most of them not British subjects, had been impressed.

The United States cried for war. Jefferson, rightfully feeling that the United States was unprepared for war, tried instead closing American ports to the British. In the end, this trade embargo hurt the U.S. economy more than Britain's or France's. Before he retired from office, Jefferson repealed the embargo, and it fell to James Madison to act. Madison tried peaceful solutions, but fared as poorly as Jefferson. War was declared in the summer of 1812.

The war of 1812 started disastrously for the United States. With a standing army of 7000 untried troops and a twenty-ship navy, she was woefully unprepared. American strategies called for a three-pronged attack into Canada, in the hopes that capture of strategic cities would force the British to change their trade policies. These hopes were smashed along with the

American army. What turned the tide of the war was, surprisingly, naval victories. American vessels were more suited to the Great Lakes, and the U.S. Navy won key battles. In October 1813 the Americans wrested control of Lake Erie from the British, and forced them to retreat into Canada. The army then rallied, pushing the British further back and seizing key positions in the Ottawa territory, including the towns of York and Kingston. This left the United States in control of Lake Ontario. Then, in 1814, British veterans of the now-ended Peninsular War arrived. These troops invaded America in three separate places: New York, Chesapeake Bay, and through the Free State of Orleans, planning to capture New Orleans as their own in the process. In the north, the British were stopped at Fort Niagara. In the east, they successfully burned Washington, D.C. to the ground, but were then repulsed at the battle of Fort McHenry.

The south was the battlefield of Major General Andrew Jackson. In March, he defeated the Creek Indians, who had allied with the British. He then marched to meet the attack on New Orleans on January 18, 1815 (officially, two weeks after the end of the war). He marched a small force into New Orleans, where he received President Burr's permission to bring his army onto Orleans soil. Jackson's men, along with Lafitte's pirates, met 10,000 British and turned them back.

Having successfully defended the city, Jackson then informed Burr that Orleans was being annexed by the United States. That night, Lafitte's pirates forced Jackson and his men out of New Orleans, where they were met by an army of Zombis, courtesy of Burr's mistress, Marie Laveau. Unable to deal with an army that did not die and whose ranks swelled with every U.S. soldier that died, Jackson began a retreat through the bayous of Orleans that soon turned into a rout. Two weeks later, Jackson's general staff bodily dragged him across the border into the United States. No one else made it out alive. President Monroe wisely decided to let Orleans alone.

Meanwhile, the negotiations started in August 1814, in the Belgian city of Ghent, had finally concluded. The British demanded territorial concessions, but the Americans had refused. In response, the Americans demanded a return to pre-war conditions, plus the acquisition of a portion of the Ottawa Territory below the 45th parallel as war reparations. Britain, weary from twelve years of war in New Europa, viewed the war in the Americas as an expensive one that was impossible to win. Britain agreed to all demands.

QUESTIONS OF LIBERTY

Now the United States turned west. Americans began to settle the vast empty spaces of the Great Plains. This was also a time when the U.S. secured its borders. The Florida territory, still under Spanish control, was used by pirates and renegade Indians as a sanctuary to raid the United States from. To end this, Monroe authorized General Andrew Jackson to lead an expedition into Florida. This Jackson did, nearly exterminating the Seminole Indians and overthrowing the Spanish governor as well. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams declared that Spain would have to check incursions into the United States, or hand Florida over. The Spanish ceded the Florida Territory in 1819.

The next crisis to face the United States was the Missouri Compromise. Slave and free states were clearly demarcated east of the Mississippi by the Mason-Dixon line. Lacking a natural boundary, the Compromise allowed states west of the river to decide for themselves. This temporarily settled the question of slavery, but not permanently.

THE WALL TO THE WEST

The Missouri Compromise was effectively rendered null and void on March 5, 1830. On this day, Indian shamen gathered together and wiped the city of St. Louis completely off the face of the earth. Indian war parties then herded all remaining whites across the Mississippi. Following this expulsion came a delegation led, surprisingly, by a protégé of Andrew Jackson: Sam Houston. Houston declared the Ten Nations Confederacy, and the U.S. declared war. The "Two Week War" was a disaster, and the U.S. officially recognized the new Indian nation. Subsequently, St. Louis was rebuilt in Illinois, directly across the Mississippi from its old location.

THE CANADIAN CRISIS

Finally came a crisis the United States army was prepared to handle. In 1837, the French in Canada rebelled. The army was then dispatched into Ottawa to quell the rebellion. In the meantime, France dispatched troops to support the French Canadians, landing in New Brunswick. President van Buren cited this as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, and declared war on France. U.S. troops engaged the French Expeditionary Forces and drove them back into the Atlantean. Because of the actions of the United States, the small garrison of British troops stationed in Quebec were able to put down the rebellion there. In gratitude, Canada ceded New Brunswick to the United States.

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

The years following the Crisis were a time of social upheaval. The status quo was constantly changed by movements for religious freedom, women's equality, and worker's rights. Furthermore, the North was in the midst of an industrial revolution. Within twenty years, the northern half of the nation had almost completely changed from an agrarian society to an industrial one.

This dramatic change in culture, as well as geographical limitations, were to spark the next war in the United States—the Civil War. The economy of the South was still an agricultural one, and it was entirely based on slavery and the expansion of that "peculiar institution." But, since the Great Barrier had gone up, that expansion had been restricted.

Since the Missouri Compromise in 1821, Maine (1821), Michigan (1837), Ottawa (1846), Wisconsin (1848), and New Brunswick (1858) had been admitted to the union as free states. Only Missouri (1821) and Florida (1845) had been admitted slave, and Missouri was lost in 1830. Worry among Southerners turned into desperation in 1858 during the Lincoln-Douglas debates, in which Presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln declared "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free." This statement clearly showed which way the political winds were blowing, and Southern Democrats began looking for ways to increase the number of slave states, and thus their power in congress.

They turned their eyes to the island nation of Cuba. It was a known fact that the Cubans were not happy under their Spanish masters, so it was assumed that they would seize any chance to throw off their chains. Southern agents were dispatched to contact revolutionary groups, and the planned revolution became fact later that year. However, once free of the Spanish, the Cubans were not ready to acknowledge the Americans as their new masters. Rather, they informed Washington, D.C. of what had been going on in Cuba.

President Buchanan was incensed. The idea that half of the United States was making its own foreign policy had him in a towering rage. Before stepping down, he apologized publicly to the new Cuban government, and promised that the Southerners who had committed such treason would be found and dealt with. Southern congressmen then appealed to the nation's new President, Abraham Lincoln, asking him to annex Cuba. Lincoln showed even less sympathy than Buchanan. Truly desperate, Southerners then demanded that Lincoln invade and annex Orleans. Again Lincoln refused. Seeing themselves as a perpetual political minority, and the northern majority as a threat to their very way of life, the South saw no other alternative. In February of 1861 the Southern states seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. On April 12, Confederate naval forces opened fire on Fort Sumter and the Union forces stationed there. The United States Civil War had begun, and would end only after three years of blood and horror (for complete information, see pg. 54).

RECONSTRUCTION

Following the end of the Civil War came the assassination attempt on President Lincoln's life. With the assistance of the Order of St. Boniface, Lincoln's life was saved. Thanks to the persistence of the Pinkertons, John Wilkes Booth was captured and brought to justice. Popular sympathy for the recuperating President swept the nation, and as a result Lincoln not only pushed his lenient reconstruction plan through Congress, but was re-elected in 1865 with a landslide vote. Under his firm, compassionate hand, the Union is healed. Burned farms and cities are rebuilt, veterans are taken care of, blacks are educated and given equal rights under the law, and the Southern economy is kept from bottoming out thanks to a program of federal aid.

In 1868, after eight years of competent, wise leadership, Lincoln stepped down, passing the reins of power to war hero Ulysses S. Grant. While an able commander on the battlefield, Grant proved to be not quite as skilled on the civilian front. Between the scandals caused by his wife, Julia, and his cabinet members, Grant has had a rocky time during his administration. While pretty much leaving things alone at home, Grant has had a very expansive foreign policy. His most memorable act as President was the attempted annexation of the Dominican Republic. This attempt was finally put down by Charles Sumner, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, when unethical dealings pertaining to the annexation came to light. In light of all this, it is doubtful that Grant will run for re-election.

UNITED STATES CURRENCY

The standard unit of currency in the United States of America is the dollar. The dollar is divided into the quarter, dime, nickel, and penny. For more details on the United States currency system, see *Comme Il Faut*, pg. 45. For exchange rates and other information on money in the Americas, see pg. 39.

FROM THESE HONORED DEAD



That Saturday, we were honored to be allowed to attend a ceremony which had the whole capitol all abuzz. No one was really sure what it was about, but everyone was excited.

It was a huge ceremony, big even by my jaded twentieth-century standards. It was held in the park next to the Washington Memorial. We'd been asked to "move our blimp" by the authorities—Lückner was pretty peeved at that comment, but held his tongue. Red, white and blue garlands hung from all the trees. Flags were everywhere, swaying limply in what little breeze there was. There was food and drink, and a military band played on the main stage. It was still hot and muggy, unfortunately, but good old-fashioned American lemonade helped to take our minds off that problem.

We did not have an official escort to this event, although I was able to pick out several unofficial chaperones tracking our every move. Keeping track of where we went and who we spoke to. Writing things in little notebooks.

Pinkertons, probably. The only thing I remembered about the Pinkertons from my high school education was that they were pretty vicious in putting down trade unionists. So I'd always thought that they were basically a gang of thugs. But no, between watching them and checking out the newspapers, it became obvious that they were trained professionals. Detectives. Part of a nationwide agency. I just wish they'd quit detecting us.

But now I have to wonder if they were deliberately being visible, even slightly careless, to distract us from our other shadows.

At 1:30, the actual festivities were just about to begin. The Bayernese delegation was seated in a grandstand to one side. We had seats, unlike most of the people there. And there were some important people present. Governors, mayors, high-profile figures from all over. Lots of military uniforms, too. The crowd quieted as the mayor of D.C. gave his welcoming address. It was short. Thankfully. Then came the main speaker. Abraham Lincoln. The Great Emancipator.

The old beanpole himself took the stage, stood tall behind the rostrum. He was tall, more so than I expected. He looked about six-four, but taller still with his stovepipe hat. We'd studied up on him and Grant before we came over. I had no idea he'd suffered so many failures in his life, and still came through to be the President. The crowd fell completely silent as he looked over them. I can't tell you how thrilled I was. I could hardly breathe. My heart was going a mile a minute. Here I was, just some guy, and I was going to get to hear him speak. And speak he did.

"It has been ten years since the Guns of April were finally silenced," he said. "Brave and glorious men struggled, brother against brother, father against son, in the greatest and most painful conflict to which this world has yet been witness. In its final resolution, the Union has been preserved, a government fittingly dedicated to and deriving from the people themselves. Today we meet in the capital of that great Union. We meet here not because this city is of itself important, but because it is the seat of the dreams of the nation for which these men fought so long and so valiantly. It is the brazier of the flame of freedom. We come here not to celebrate the victory of one side over the other, for in truth, in this War Between the States we all share equally in victory and defeat. Instead we commemorate the bravery and devotion of the fighting men on both sides, the palpable love they had for their country and their fellow man. Today we dedicate this ground as a memorial to these courageous men. This we do, not to heap laurels upon these valiant dead, for they have wrapped themselves in eternal glory by yielding up the ultimate sacrifice, but rather to keep the memory of their duty and honor and loyalty foremost in our minds. That with these memories kept ever in the forefront of our thought, we shall never again falter in the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, and that the bright and brilliant spark of freedom shall never perish from this Earth."

My God—Lincoln's Memorial.

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

They unveiled a scale model. The crowd was allowed to file past for a look. And, of course, right before you got to look at it, they handed out a flyer. I read mine.

Lincoln had done this himself. He wanted a memorial for the war dead of both sides. The land came from the government. The funding for the memorial came from private citizens. The pamphlets we were given asked for donations for enhancements to the grounds.

Despite the fact that it was called the Memorial of Peace, I knew that in popular parlance, it would be called the Lincoln Memorial. After all, he did it. From the drawings, it looked the same as your Lincoln Memorial. The difference, of course, was that Lincoln was not in it. Instead of him sitting in a chair, the memorial had a Civil War soldier, a private by the look of his uniform, standing as if on guard duty. Guarding the peace against all enemies, foreign or domestic. The whole thing was marble, of course, so there was no blue or gray. The uniform was designed in such a way that you couldn't tell if the guard was Union or Confederate. That's Lincoln for you.

I thought it was great. The memorial and Lincoln's speech both were targeted at sealing the rift between the states. Von Hubel had to put his spin on it, though. He thought that the reason we were treated to VIP seating was that they wanted us to see that America is united, strong, and powerful. They had us there in case we had any delusions as to their weakness or divisiveness. He also pointed out that Lincoln's lenient Reconstruction policies might have had a lot to do with the fact that he didn't get the nomination for a third term. His conciliatory approach honked off a lot of rich industrialists. Probably Freemasons, one and all.

We had an appointment the next day to meet with another Freemason: Lincoln's successor, President Grant. I guess Sunday was the only day he had nothing going. I looked forward to that, too. Talking with the man behind the defeat of the Rebels.

We got the grand tour of the White House. Except a lot of it was still new. The Oval Office I thought was especially cool. Great design.

We were seated in one of the other rooms (I forget which one) over cigars and port. Von Hubel, Pfistermeister, Lückner, myself, and the two senior diplomatic aides. My official role was that of bodyguard. Like they believed it. But that's one of the strange customs of diplomacy. Never own up to a lie, even if you're caught in it. Everyone there knew who I was, yet I was still "just a bodyguard."

Grant wasn't there. Instead, we met with his Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton. He looked in poor health. "So what do you think of the memorial?" he said sourly.

"I quite like it," said von Hubel. "I have always admired the American war memorials. You Americans have a way of honoring your warriors without rattling sabers. You honor their courage, and their sacrifice, without glorifying the killing they do. If you could teach that to the Prussians, it would make New Europa a more palatable place."

"That doesn't mean we're not willing to fight," said one of the aides. "We're always ready, and we always win."

I interrupted quickly. "Given the hard feelings many people have to the Southerners, wasn't it kind of hard to get everything together?"

Stanton looked at me. He smiled briefly. It just as quickly vanished. "Mr. Lincoln took care of the subscriptions. President Grant rammed the land grant through Congress. It was hard, but it was his fight. Like Harrison here said, when we fight, we make sure we win."

"We all do," said Harrison. "America has never lost a war. And we never will."

I was already getting tired of Harrison's little speeches. Fortunately, von Hubel circumvented the rest of them. He leaned forward to face Stanton.

"The President is not here," he said. "Nor was he intended to be. What's the real reason you brought us here?"

JULIA WARD HOWE

Julia Ward Howe leads the Suffragette Movement. Born in 1819, educated at Radcliffe, Julia is a powerful and charismatic speaker. Some say she is also a menace. The Suffragettes have formed Women's Leagues in most cities in the United States. They conduct public marches for the vote and engage in acts of civil disobedience, smoking in public, wearing pants, and demanding the right to work outside the home. More radical Suffragettes have turned to violence, bombing men's clubs, papers that refuse to publish Suffragette manifestoes, and businesses that will not hire women. Alarmists see Julia Ward Howe as a female John Brown who would arm women and force change upon society. In fact, they are right. Women were active in the Abolitionist movement and some, Julia Ward Howe among them, believe John Brown had the right idea at Harper's Ferry.

• Julia Ward Howe, Anarchist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GR] • Perception [GR]

REGIONAL TERMINOLOGY

In a world where the United States only extends to the Mississippi, the terms "mid-west" and "west" carry different meanings.

The eastern seaboard, from New Brunswick in the north to Florida in the south, comprise the Northeast, East, and Southeast.

Similarly, the states along the Mississippi, from Michigan to Mississippi, comprise the Northwest, West, and Southwest. Although, confusingly, the term "West" can also apply to all areas west of the Mississippi, namely California, Texas, and the Twenty Nations.

The states of Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia comprise the Midwest. Oddly, there is no Mideast.

The South is generally defined as those states that seceded during the Civil War, while the North are the states that remained in the Union; although there are exceptions, as noted above.

Stanton took a sip of port.

"I don't know exactly what you folks are up to over here," he said. Sheesh. Americans are so suspicious. Not that there weren't ulterior motives to our little tour, but still ...

"Other than trying to impress us with your blimp out there," interrupted Harrison.

Stanton silenced him with a stare before continuing. "I don't know, and frankly, I don't care. What you do is your business, at least until your doings cross my interests."

He took another long draw on his cigar.

"I should warn you, though, one friendly nation to another, that you'd better make sure your interests stay on your side of the line. There have been those in the past who have not done so. They have regretted their decisions."

"Are you giving us an ultimatum, Mr. Secretary?" asked von Hubel quietly.

"Good gracious, no," he said, laughing a wheezy chuckle. A professional killer's laugh, I guess. "I'm not threatening you. A mother will tell her child not to play with matches or he'll get burnt. Is that a threat? No. It's just a fact of life. The mother doesn't even have to do anything. The matches can do it all themselves, without any help."

"And let's face it, you boys are from the other side of the Atlantean," said Stanton. "You don't really belong out here as anything other than visitors."

"Monroe Doctrine time," I said disrespectfully.

"That's right!" spat Harrison. "And you better listen good."

"It might help if you spoke properly," I observed.

"Shut up, the both of you," said Stanton. Yep. He was a man used to giving orders. "The Monroe Doctrine simply says that you have no business meddling in our affairs. Let's take a few examples of when folks have ignored it. Consider the Canadian Adventure."

"That was only barely covered by the Monroe Doctrine," said Pfistermeister. Score.

Stanton sighed wearily. "The Monroe Doctrine did not make America none of your business, any more than Isaac Newton made apples fall. It merely confirmed what was already the case."

Oops. Point: Stanton. Score: fifteen-love. But we still had the moral advantage.

"The French-speaking folks in Canada are Americans. They live here, they die here. They aren't Europeans. Yet when they rose up in arms against their legitimate government, the French thought they could barge right on in and reassert their colonial ambitions. Basically, they were saying that the Frenchies up there belong to France. That's like saying we belong to England because we speak the same language. Balderdash.

"The French tried to interfere. With Canada, and with us. They paid the price when we routed the French Expeditionary Force. Did they learn? No, they didn't.

"They tried it again in Mexico, putting Max on the throne. They even convinced the Austrians to send some 'volunteers', to shore them up. There was a long campaign, and once again, the French were thrown back. The Austrians, too.

"The French didn't learn from their mistake. But you can. It's just a fact. You European boys just don't belong over here. We proved it in 1776 and 1812. We'll prove it over and over and over until we beat it through your skulls. So why don't you just make it easy on yourselves and stay out of our business? Stay on your side of the Atlantean. It's the smartest choice you can make."

"That's right," I said. "Cuz you guys have never lost a war."

"And we never will," said Harrison. Some guys are so predictable. It was too easy.

"So what about the Twenty Nations? Orleans? The Bear Flag? How are those wars going?"

Harrison stormed to his feet, only to be restrained by others on the Secretary's staff. I, along with the other five, was quickly ushered out of the room to the sound of Harrison spewing curses.

Life can be fun.

IRON WILL

The person who ushered me out turned to me and apologized for the rather brusque departure. "Sorry about that, but it seemed that the two of you might shortly fall to blows, and I couldn't allow that. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm James J. Brooks."

"Glad to meet you," I said lamely.

He looked at me oddly. I suppose he was expecting more of a reaction than that. "I'm the head of the United States Secret Service. If you gentlemen would come with me, please?"

Oops. If Fritz ever found out I didn't recognize Brooks' name, I'd be in big trouble. Agents of the Bayernese Secret Service are supposed to know things like that. He escorted us out of the White House and into a waiting carriage. It took us a few blocks away to a comfortable hotel. It took a while, though, because there were crowds of people. It seemed like some sort of celebration was up, perhaps a party for the Memorial of Peace.

I was just getting an idea. One thing I'm starting to get used to, is that characters I've always considered fictional actually exist on this side of the Faerie Veil. "Wait a second," I said, turning to Brooks. "You're the head of the Secret Service, right?"

"That is correct," he said. "Part of my duties is to attend to your safety and comfort."

"Do you happen to have a couple of agents named James West and Artemus Gordon working for you?"

He looked at me blandly. "You realize that if there were, I could neither confirm nor deny it."

"If I could, I'd really like to meet them some day. I watched—uh, rather, you might say I'm a fan of theirs."

He laughed. "I'll see what I can do."

Brooks took us to a very nice suite in the hotel. Lunch was served shortly after we arrived. I don't know how they do it. It takes us at least a half hour to get lunch back in Falkenstein. Several others showed up over the course of the next hour. Harrison was not among them. Bummer. Some people are just too much fun to bait.

After lunch, Brooks got back to business. "Mr. von Hubel, it is obvious that your presence here, as well as that of Mr. Pfistermeister, is superfluous, a mere cover for your real activities. Mr. Lückner is here to hang the threat of violence over our heads. And Mr. Olam, everyone here knows you are a member of the Bayernese Secret Service."

I started to protest, but he held up his hand. "Your nominal supervisor is Colonel Fritz Tarlenheim, but you are allowed great latitude in your operations. You speak with the authority of King Ludwig himself. You are effectively a free-lance. And yet you are masquerading as a lowly bodyguard. By your very presence, you prove that the purpose of this mission is more than mere diplomacy. In short, you are a grave threat to our national security."

I couldn't let that go. "With all due respect, Mr. Brooks, you're assuming that I have a mission beyond making sure that people like Martin and Pfisty here aren't chopped into little bits by overzealous paranoid control freaks and their Pinkerton stooges." Gosh, I can be so diplomatic when I want to be.

He smiled. "Were security the only concern, Mr. Olam, Colonel Tarlenheim would be here. He is more than adequate to the task, and his purpose would not be misconstrued. Furthermore, had you purely diplomatic notions, it would not be necessary to galivant about in a war craft. 'Three tons of Dwarfen death,' I believe was the quote from your Minister of War? No, it is obvious that you are up to something meddlesome. And we will find out what it is. In the meantime, I have something which might interest you."

He stood up and led us out of the suite. Down a hall we went, then into an empty ballroom. I could hear noise coming in from outside. Sounded like a celebration.

Brooks opened a door to a balcony. Noise washed over us like a wave.

Brooks spoke over the crowd's cheers. "Before you consider your next move, gentlemen, I bid you step outside with me."

PAYING YOUR WAY

MONETARY UNITS FOR AMERICA

	Currency	4 to 1	10 to 1	20 to 1	100 to 1
BEAR FLAG	IMPERIAL				
EMPIRE	DOLLAR	QUARTER	DIME	NICKEL	PENNY
DOMINION OF					
CANADA	POUND	HALF-CROWN	FLORIN	SHILLING	PENNY
REPUBLIC OF					
MEXICO	SILVER PESO	N/A	10 CENTAVOS	5 CENTAVOS	CENTAVO
REPUBLIC OF					
TEXAS	STAR BILL	QUARTER	DIME	NICKEL	PENNY
UNITED					
STATES	DOLLAR	QUARTER	DIME	NICKEL	PENNY

While nearly all nations have switched to paper for their main unit of currency, there are exceptions. Texan Star Bills and Canadian Pounds are only available in paper form. Mexican Pesos are only available as silver coins. American Dollars are available in paper or silver coins. Californian dollars are available in paper or gold coins. Californian half-dollars are silver coins.

The Orleans Free State issues Burr Scrip. See pg. 57 for more on this currency.

The Twenty Nations Confederation deals in gold, silver, or barter only.

MONETARY CONVERSION TABLE

The money you are carrying is listed in the column on the left. Find the money you are converting to in the columns to the right, and perform the operation listed.

For example, to convert from Californian Imperial Dollars to United States Dollars, find Imperial Dollar in the left hand column. Index right to Dollars, and then multiply the amount of Imperial Dollars by 2.5 to convert to United States Dollars.

Similarly, to convert from Texan Star Bills to Pounds, find Star Bill in the column at left. Index right to Pounds, and then divide the amount of Star Bills by 2.5 to convert to Pounds.

	SILVER	IMPERIAL	STAR
YOUR MONEY	DOLLAR	PESO	DOLLAR
DOLLAR	N/A	EVEN	÷ 2.5
SILVER PESO	EVEN	N/A	÷ 2.5
IMP. DOLLAR	X 2.5	X 5	N/A
POUND	X 5	X 5	EVEN
STAR BILL	EVEN	EVEN	÷ 2.5

THE U.S. SECRET SERVICE

In the year 1860, the United States stood poised on the brink of civil war. When Allan Pinkerton's detectives foiled a plot to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln in Baltimore, Congress was prompted to take measures to protect the President's life. At the same time, Congress was also seeking to prevent the counterfeiting of United States coins, bills, and securities. The Secret Service was created to deal with both matters and was made part of the Treasury Department.

THE WAR YEARS

During the course of the Civil War, Herman C. Whitley, the first Director, was hard-pressed to create the type of agency he thought the Secret Service should become. The Confederacy knew that its manpower and material were inferior to that of the Union. To offset the Union's advantage, President Jefferson Davis sought aid for the Confederacy overseas in New Europa. The Confederate Foreign Service sent agents to secure that aid. It was up to the United States Secret Service to stop those agents.

Throughout the war, the undermanned Secret Service fought a clandestine war in New Europa with Confederate agents, planting disinformation, assassinating Confederate sympathizers, and blackmailing New European politicians and nobility. While ultimately successful, this was not the type of behavior or agency that Whitley had wanted to create. When the War was over, Whitley was tempted to disband his group of agents and start fresh, but he recognized the need for such tactics and feared that he had created a monster he could not simply abandon on the doorstep of an unsuspecting world. His solution was to place his existing agents in a Clandestine Operations Section, recruiting new agents to guard the President and protect the currency.

THE BOOTH AFFAIR

In the aftermath of the Civil War, Allan Pinkerton, while in pursuit of his arch-nemesis, Confederate Spymaster turned Criminal Mastermind General Nathan Bedford Forrest, discovered Forrest's plan to assassinate President Lincoln using the actor John Wilkes Booth. Although informed of the plot by Pinkertons, the Secret Service was unable to foil the assassination attempt at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. They were, however, able to capture Booth's accomplices, who let the secret service know that the plot was much greater than was publicly revealed.

Relentless in his pursuit of the wrongdoers, Whitley uncovered a deeper conspiracy to kill the President. Upset over Lincoln's plan for a short and lenient period of Reconstruction, then-Secretary of War Stanton along with other Conservative Republicans had plotted to have the President killed. Former Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest was to have been the means to accomplish their foul end, providing a convenient scapegoat that would have destroyed any hopes for an easy period of Reconstruction! Forrest, Whitley discovered, only acted out of a mistaken belief that Vice President Andrew Johnson, a native of Tennessee, was secretly a Confederate sympathizer. To Whitley's dismay, the connection between Stanton's conspirators and Forrest was Whitley's own Secret Service! Rogue elements of the Clandestine Operations Section had learned of Stanton's feelings and offered their services as go-betweens in exchange for control of the Secret Service under a supposed Johnson Administration.

Quietly, the conspiracy having been exposed, Secretary of War Stanton was persuaded to resign. Other conspirators, one Senator Thaddeus Stevens among them, were absolved by Stanton, who claimed sole responsibility and knowledge of the plot. The Clandestine Operations Section was purged, but not before several of the agents involved vanished into the West.

THE SECRET SERVICE TODAY

Under the Grant Administration, the Secret Service has grown to a total of thirty-eight active agents, supported by a small army of secretaries, assistants, and informants. Most agents act independently, reporting to field offices for orders and assistance. Field offices are maintained in New York City, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Nashville. All are administered from Secret Service headquarters in Washington, D.C., where James J. Brooks, who became Director in 1875, has his offices. Also located in Washington are the Secret Service records center, which boasts a top-of-the-line Babbage Analytical Engine, and the crime lab, which produces the arsenal of gadgets at an agent's disposal. At any one time, at least ten agents will be assigned to the Washington headquarters on Presidential Protection Detail.

Director Brooks reports directly to Secretary of the Treasury Lot M. Morrill, one of the few Cabinet Secretaries untouched by scandal, and takes orders exclusively from him or President Grant. Under Brooks' guidance, the Secret Service has become a special multipurpose task force. When a job is too hazardous for the police and too subtle for the Army, the Secret Service is called in.

RENEGADES, MAGICIANS, AND MASTERMINDS

Secret Service agents are never at a loss for something to do. Threats to national security come in a variety of deadly forms that challenge the best agents. Luckily, these agents are up to the challenge.

When the Confederacy lost the Civil War, she still had armies and operatives in the field. Not all of them put down their arms. Some escaped to the Caribbean or the West. Others remained behind to form secret societies dedicated to the maxim "The South Shall Rise Again." It is the Secret Service's job to see to it that this doesn't happen.

Director Brooks is also aware of the magical threat posed by the Hodona Medicine Society to rid the Americas of New Europeans, though not its precise nature. The attempts by various New European Sorcerous Societies and Voudon Cults to set up shop in the United States are also known. However, these magical threats are ones the Secret Service is particularly ill-equipped to handle.

The Director's response has been to begin recruiting agents adept in the sorcerous arts. The five such agents already on duty have had their hands full tracking down particularly elusive quarry and have had to turn on several occasions to private parties for assistance.

The greatest threat with which the Secret Service has had to deal has been that posed by Criminal Masterminds. The United States as a leading technological nation has its share of these madmen who threaten world domination, mass destruction, or insidious extortion. None have succeeded in their nefarious schemes, but it has been a close thing. No Mastermind is more wanted than Dr. Inigo Lovelorn, who before being stopped by Secret Service agents had succeeded in taking over Washington, D.C. with his Mind Control Ray. Director Brooks is yet unaware that Dr. Lovelorn is also behind the rise of the Phantom Empire!



SECRET SERVICE GADGETS

The United States secret service prides itself upon being able to meet the challenge of any threat to national security. To enable agents to do this, agents are issued specialized equipment. A list of commonly issued articles is below.

- Sleeve gun.
- Belt grapple (can be fired from the sleeve gun).
- Boot knife.
- Thermite bombs in boot.
- Acetylene pencil.
- Dagger in the back of jacket collar.
- Saw in hat band.
- Garrote in hat band.
- Portable telegraph in boot (needs assembly).
- Cigar knife.
- Blowtorch in boot.
- Smokebombs, stored in boot or gun holster.
- Gun, stored disassembled in boot.
- Bullets stored in belt buckle.
- Lockpicks in lapels.
- Rapier in walking stick.
- Explosive pocket watch.
- Vials of sleeping gas in boot heel.
- Wire lock pick in waistband of trousers.
- Magnesium strips.
- Thermite vest buttons.
- Blow-torch cigar.
- Explosive putty.
- Pen lock pick.
- Smoke bombs in walking stick.
- Magnetized exploding coins.
- Sleeve knife.
- Vial of acid in boot heel.
- Bullet-proof waistcoat.
- Explosive cigars.
- Rappelling gear.
- Knife concealed in braces.
- Ring containing pop-out blades.

MAD SCIENTISTS IN AMERICA

THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION

In this year 1876, the United States celebrates its 100th birthday. In commemoration of that event, the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 is being held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Exhibition is held on specially prepared grounds in buildings built just for the occasion. In the Art Hall, Horticultural Hall, Machinery Hall, Agricultural Hall, Carriage Hall, United States Government Building, Women's Pavilion, and State Buildings, the finest in American arts, crafts, produce, and manufacture are on display. In the Main Building, additional exhibits as well as restaurants are open. The governments of Denmark, Egypt, Italy, France, Prussia, Bayern, England, Brazil, and Japan have all opened national pavilions. A special railroad has even been built to carry visitors around the site!

While the public gawks and enjoys the bands, fireworks, and other festivities, America's Mad Scientists, Inventors, Masterminds, and Scientists rub shoulders and meet in private. These men and women are drawn to the Exhibition. Here they can show off their accomplishments, see the creations of others, and talk with people who understand their obsessions. You positively couldn't keep them away, and the authorities are unlikely to recognize the difference between a world-threatening device and a new farm implement. By accident, the Exhibition has become the first Masterminds' Convention, unintentionally sponsored by the United States government!

"I KNOW THIS WILL WORK!"

America is the Land of Inventors. From Benjamin Franklin and his Electric Kite to Cyrus McCormick and his new Steam Combine, Americans are obsessed with building a better mouse trap. Nothing will do but Americans buy a new gizmo only to tear it apart and see if they can't make it work better or do more things. Farmers and lawyers, factory hands and doctors, all seemingly spend their spare time tinkering. Sometimes, it seems everyone has a tool shop attached to their carriage house or barn. In truth, many American fortunes have been made in just this way and everyone thinks they have the next great Technological Breakthrough out back or down in the cellar.

For Inventors, Scientists, Masterminds, and Mad Scientists, America is the Land of Opportunity! Americans are an ingenious people who pioneered a continent and they respect ingenuity. The practical effect for the would-be Mad-Scientist or Mastermind is that it is possible to hide in plain sight or even operate openly! However, there are some uniquely American dangers inherent in doing so.

Every city and village in America has its Crazy Old Inventor. He is an American institution. He may live in a rundown old mansion on the edge of town or operate out of his tool shed attached to his barn. Still, these putterers and tinkers have actually created some of the amazing inventions that have revolutionized Science and Industry! It is a simple matter then for an American Mad-Scientist or Mastermind to pose as just one more kooky bit of local color. The only thing you will have to look out for are the prying kids who want to see what you're up to. They too are an American institution.

Some Mad Scientists or Masterminds can even operate openly. So long as you keep your infernal contraption from making too much noise or causing too much damage and it appears to have some beneficial or practical use, Americans are all for you. Before you know it, salesmen will come calling, trying to sell you their widget or to get exclusive distribution rights for your new Particle Beam Mechanical Plow. Though annoying, salesmen make great test subjects for your inventions.

While nosy kids and their dogs can be a bother to deal with, the greatest danger a Mad-Scientist or Mastermind will face in America is his own success and the Americans' love of technology. A failed and embittered farmer, Cyrus McCormick set out to devise a machine to exact revenge on those who had run him out of business. The Reaper was to be an agricultural horror designed to wreak devastation on unsuspecting farms. The first time he tried it out, his neighbors loved it! Of course, they had a few suggestions about how to improve it, like a grill to keep cattle from being sucked in, but otherwise they just loved the idea! Thus was the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company born. Cyrus McCormick is now lionized by farmers and inventors across America as a genuine success story. McCormick the Mastermind has become a Robber Baron, a victim of his own success and America's love affair with technology. If you build it, America will come, and probably pay you for it.

"HAND ME THAT WRENCH!"

Unlike their New European counterparts, most American Mad Scientists and Masterminds are not formally educated. For them, the Education ability represents pure mechanical aptitude and genius. They just seem intuitively to know how things work. More than a few look down their noses at formal education as useless. They value practical knowledge.

Perhaps this comes from having to make do. America is only recently industrialized and much of the country is still untamed wilderness. Glass retorts can be hard to come by in some parts and you may have to make do with Mason jars. American Mad Scientists and Masterminds excel at making something from nearly nothing. This is the scientific equivalent of living off the land. New Europeans speak of Astounding Engines. Americans build Infernal Contraptions. The difference is not so much one of quality, though that can be a factor, but of attitude. There is an orneriness and a cussedness, even a sense of humor, to American Mad Scientists and Masterminds that you won't find in the smoothly sophisticated New Europeans.

THE STATE FAIRS

American Masterminds and Mad Scientists are remarkably collegial. As the Centennial Exhibition has demonstrated, America's thinkers enjoy getting together and comparing notes. Captain Nemo may isolate himself on an island but his American counterparts are going to the Fair!

Throughout the land, State Fairs are an annual institution, especially in the South and Midwest. Farmers may come to show off their livestock and compete in pie-eating contests, but the Machinery Halls belong to the backyard inventors! Local would-be Mad Scientists and Masterminds come to show off their latest inventions and compare notes with one another. They don't worry at all about apprehension, since few laymen understand what they are looking at. More than one threat to world peace has a blue ribbon to his name! In a way, the Centennial Exhibition is nothing more than a national State Fair.

When attending a State Fair, Masterminds call a truce with one another. Any rivalries are set aside in favor of socializing and shop talk. Unlike New European Masterminds and Mad Scientists, their American cousins are fiercely competitive and may pose as much of a threat to one another as any law enforcement agency. At the Fair, all that is put aside in celebration of the human capacity for invention and technical innovation. If you would have a Mastermind lay out for you exactly how his Oscillating Seismic Cannon works, spend a day at the Fair and buy the man a corn dog. He'll talk your arm off.

DR. INIGIO LOVELORN

Dr. Inigio Lovelorn is the most infamous mad scientist in the Americas, and one of the premier twisted geniuses in the world. His name appears on the most wanted lists of the secret services of several countries, and several secret service agents have lost their lives attempting to apprehend him.

Very little is known about the man behind the legend. Once he was a promising graduate student at Columbia University, doing his doctoral research work at the New York Analytical Engine Research Center. He was expelled for performing "reckless, dangerous, and scientifically unsound experiments", a black mark that he took personally. It was at this point that Dr. Lovelorn vowed to get revenge upon all those who had called him mad, and just about everyone else for good measure.

Dr. Lovelorn suffers from an excessive case of Napoleonic Complex. He is the same height as the conqueror of New Europa, and even claims to be related through a Spanish branch of the family. Whether or not there is a grain of truth in any of this, the self-styled "Napoleon of the Americas" has made it his goal in life to live up to that nickname.

For several years, Dr. Lovelorn attempted to take over the United States using Infernal Devices and Formulations of his own creation. These included an extremely destructive new explosive, an army of clockwork knights, a machine to move people across great distances through specially prepared mirrors, a steam-powered automaton soldier, a ray device that produces exact duplicates of people, and a mind-control ray. It was this last device that was the most successful, allowing Dr. Lovelorn to take over the city of Washington, D.C. on September 10, 1867. He held the nation under his control for nearly a week before top agents in the U.S. Secret Service were able to capture him. Dr. Lovelorn was charged with treason, convicted, and thrown into a maximum security prison. From which he promptly disappeared.

The world has not seen the last of Dr. Lovelorn. After escaping from prison, he left the United States for Texas. Eluding Secret Service agents in the deep desert, he hid in an abandoned copper mine. This mine proved to be an entrance to the rumored Phantom Empire. Using his twisted genius and his mind-control ray, Dr. Lovelorn soon set himself up as the hooded Invisible Emperor. From this secret base of operations, Lovelorn weaves his schemes to take over the United States and California, which he has recently laid claim to.

Dr. Inigio Lovelorn Mastermind

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Education [EXC] • Fisticuffs [PR] • Perception [GR] • Tinkering [EXT]



DRAMATIC CHARACTER: SOLDIER

To Protect and Defend your nation. That is the oath you've sworn. And you've been trained to do just that. Being a soldier in America doesn't quite carry the prestige and glamour that it does in New Europa, and your uniform may not be as fancy, but you're a better fighter, and able to prove it.

Until hostilities break out, you live on the Army post and train. If you are lucky, you may be assigned as an honor guard or serve in the War Department itself. Better yet, you may get embassy duty, on a diplomatic mission or at a consulate in another country.

Some few soldiers are selected for Special Operations. These men receive specialized training and go where they are needed by their government. You never know where you will end up on detached service.

- **Strong Suits:** Courage, Fencing, Marksmanship
- **Possessions:** Rifle, sword, sidearm (if an officer), saddle and mount (if in the Cavalry).
- **In Your Diary:** A list of the campaigns and expeditions you've been on, the medals you've been awarded, your dates of promotion, and accounts of your travels.
- **Why You Are Here:** You are on assignment, probably on detached service. Your government needs you and you answer the call. Away from headquarters, you remain in all things a soldier. You represent your nation and you won't forget it. Duty, honor, country.

WAR TOYS ON PARADE

My God. It was a parade. Not your average let's-have-a-good-time parade, it was a parade to show off military power. The sort of parade you'd expect in Nuremburg or Red Square. The boots of thousands of American soldiers tromped in unison, a thundering drumbeat in the capitol streets. I knew that Brooks had specifically brought us out here like this to surprise us and intimidate us. Suddenly ripping the veil off American military might and all that. It worked.

Rank after rank after rank of foot soldiers passed by in their dress uniforms. I have to admit, it looked awesome. Stiffly marching soldiers, perfectly dressed, perfectly disciplined, long polished bayonets stabbing the sky. Our balcony was right above the reviewing stand, so they all turned in our direction to salute.

And they kept coming.

And coming.

The cavalry, horses frisking about from the pure excitement which saturated the air. Swords gleaming in the sunshine as the officers raised them in salute.

The artillery. Huge cannons, from the standard six-pounders to Victorian howitzers, designed on the same basis as the Verne cannons and fired with magically enhanced powder. The American Aerialist corps drifted overhead at the same time, the spotters for the artillery pulled along the parade route by special horse teams.

Then a new, slower beat began to be heard. I'd gotten used to the steady rhythm of the marching soldiers, but this was deeper, slower, more powerful.

More dreadful.

I saw them. I'd heard them mentioned in passing, but never seen one. Not even schematics.

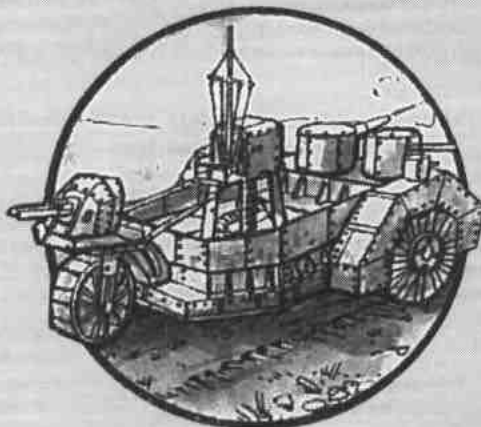
The American Land Leviathans.

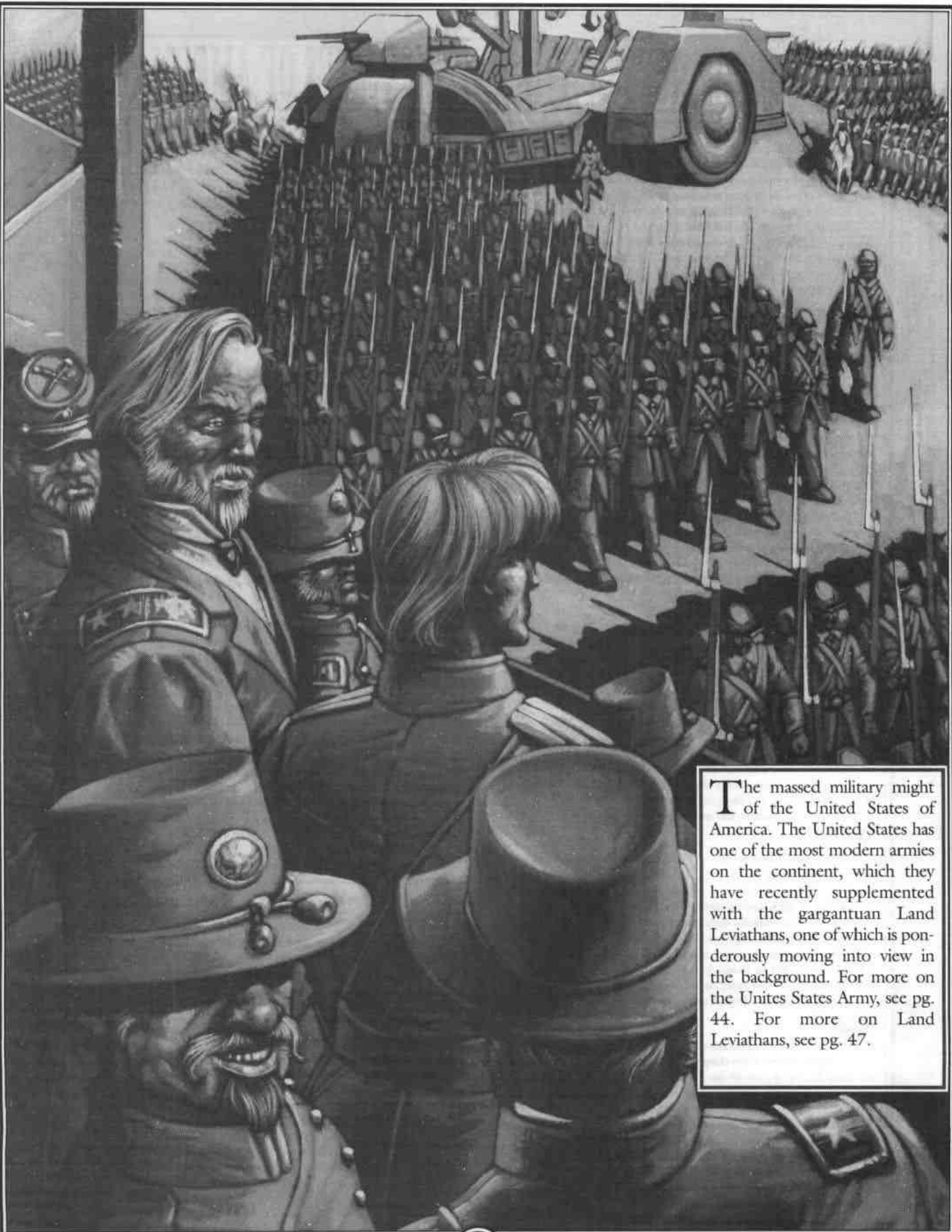
They were big. The crawling ironclad battlewagons from hell.

The deep thumping sound was from the engines driving their cleated wheels. They were easily one hundred feet long, heavily armed, and with three turrets containing automatic artillery guns, capable of firing shells, grapeshot, or chain-shot. Firing slits around the sides indicated that each land leviathan probably carried a squad of sharpshooters as well. The armored sides would make them harder to kill with a bomb.

As I said, they were big. I could hear the cobblestones cracking under their weight. They were easily as intimidating as the Prussian Landfortresses, but I had stood up to those, so I could stand up to these. I glanced over at von Hubel. He was talking to Brooks.

As, carefully, pretending to try to hide it, he yawned.





The massed military might of the United States of America. The United States has one of the most modern armies on the continent, which they have recently supplemented with the gargantuan Land Leviathans, one of which is ponderously moving into view in the background. For more on the United States Army, see pg. 44. For more on Land Leviathans, see pg. 47.

ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Armed Forces of New Europa and those of the United States of America are very different. In many ways, the New European military is still the province of the younger sons of the nobility, who make up the majority of officers and dress to fit their social station. On the other hand, the military services of the United States are very utilitarian and egalitarian. Recently tempered in the Civil War, the bloodiest war fought on American soil, the United States Armed Forces are the most powerful in the western hemisphere—at least on land. The Navy, while it has far-flung posts in the Pacific and the Mediterranean, suffers from poor staffing and disorganization.

THE UNITED STATES ARMY

On the other hand, the United States Army is the pride and joy of Washington. They enjoy the full fruits of American industry, and the full backing of political and industrial notables. Where the Navy needs to fight for funding, the Army simply has to ask. Organized into the traditional branches of Infantry, Artillery, Cavalry, and Engineers, the Aerialist Corps was added during the Civil War as an independent branch of arms. The most recent addition to American armed forces are the Mechanated Battery Divisions. Mechanated Batteries are diminutive cousins to the titanic Prussian Landfortresses that hold New Europa in the iron grip of fear. These paragons of steam power are grouped under the Artillery, as per their primary purpose—mobile, armored artillery.

After the Civil War, the army was demobilized. The maximum strength of the army currently stands at approximately fifty thousand, the majority of which are stationed along the Mississippi River, keeping a close watch on the Twenty Nations Confederation. Known as the Army of Observation, these units man border forts and keep constant watch for Indian raiding parties, all the while reconnoitering Indian lands in preparation for a future invasion.

Standard armaments for United States troops include the Colt Single-Action Army pistol; Colt Woodchuck carbine; Winchester model 1873 or 1876 lever-action rifle; and the ubiquitous Bowie knife. The uniform of the United States Army, except where otherwise noted, is a dark blue jacket, sky blue trousers, and short boots. The piping color, displayed in jacket edging, stripes on trousers, and rank stripes, differs by branch.

AERIALIST CORPS

The Aerialist Corps is the latest addition to the Army. Originally they were a sub-unit of the Signal Corps, and utilized hot-air balloons for reconnaissance, troop direction, and artillery spotting. Early in the war, a Confederate Dirigible was captured and turned over to Army headquarters in Washington. Within months, several squadrons of this new weapon were produced, and the Aerialist Corps was born. Today's Aerial Steam Dirigibles are a match for their Prussian cousins, and ply American skies on the lookout for Indian incursions and Air Pirates. Knee-high boots, worn over the trousers, are worn instead of the customary short boots. The branch color is black. The arm-of-service badge is a dirigible over a pair of wings.

ARTILLERY

The artillery are traditionally used to soften up enemy forces in preparation for an infantry or cavalry charge. After the Aerialist Corps, the Artillery is the most modern section of the Army. Alliances with the Steam Lords of Britain gained the U.S. breech-loading cannon (standard caliber: 3" for field models), while contact with Prussia resulted in the birth of the Mechanated Battery Divisions, which crew the formidable Land Battleships. These leviathans are one hundred feet long, eighty feet in width, weigh over three hundred tons, mount four-inch gun batteries, and can cross nearly any terrain on their steam-powered, forty-foot diameter, armored wheels. The branch color is red. The arm-of-service badge for normal artillery is crossed cannon barrels; mechanated artillery adds a gear where the cannons cross.

CAVALRY

The mobile striking/scouting force of the Army. Though most of its recon role has been eclipsed by the Aerialists, the Cavalry carry out the most active probes into the Trans-Mississippi territory, constantly testing the limits (and effects) of the "Great Barrier." The branch color is yellow. The arm-of-service badge is crossed sabers.

ENGINEERS

Engineers in the east (in concert with the Artillery) are responsible for the network of coastal defense forts, while in the west, they aid the other branches of the Army regarding river crossings and navigation. The branch color is red, with white piping. The arm-of-service badge is a castle with three towers.

HOSPITALS DIVISION

At this time there are no field medical units. Hospital staff wear Army uniforms, with yellow-piped, green half-chevron on the sleeves, bearing a caduceus.

INFANTRY

As ever, the infantry is the mainstay of the Army, marching into the jaws of death to seize victory for their country. The branch color is light blue. The arm-of-service badge is a bugle.

SIGNAL CORPS

The signalmen man telegraph, heliograph, and semaphore to keep the Army informed. Branch color is orange, with white piping. The arm-of-service badge is two crossed signal flags, one red and one white.

STANDARD UNIFORMS

The uniforms of the United States are functional and utilitarian. The current uniform pattern was introduced in 1851, and has been relatively unchanged since. It consists of a dark blue tunic without any piping on the body. The collar is dark blue with light blue piping, with the regimental number in

gold at the ends. Light blue pointed cuffs, light blue epaulettes, and gold metal shoulder scales complete the tunic. Service dress replaces this tunic with a short-skirted dark blue jacket with a simple turn-down collar. Pants are gray-blue, with a stripe of the branch color on the outseam.

RANK DISTINCTIONS

United States uniforms are light on decoration. Sergeants add a red sash, tied around the waist underneath sword and pistol belts. General staff officers can wear a black felt hat decorated with an ostrich plume.

STANDARD ARMAMENTS

Standard armaments are for Infantry, Colt Single-Action Army pistol, Winchester Model 1873 rifle. Cavalry may also carry a Colt Woodchuck carbine. Cavalry carries a heavy saber. Artillery and Engineers carry a Colt Single-Action Army pistol and a light saber.

THE UNITED STATES NAVY

Within a year of the end of the Civil War, the number of naval vessels dropped from nearly 1000 to just over 100. Most vessels date to the Civil War, if not before, and are stationed overseas. Thanks to captured Confederate documents, the submersible squadrons are quite advanced, but the traditional Navy resists their inclusion. The traditional Navy, in fact, resists all modernization. The United States still builds mixed steam-and-sail vessels, constructed primarily out of wood. The Marine Corps (a proudly separate branch since Revolutionary War times) is limited to ship-board troops in this period. However, they are armed and equipped to Army standards, and do not suffer from the qualitative problems that plague the Navy.

ARMS COMPANIES OF AMERICA

Between the War of 1812, the Texan Wars for Independence in 1836 and 1848, The Canadian Adventure of 1837, and the Civil War, the demand for newer, more reliable, and more accurate firearms is high in North America. To meet this demand, several noted industrialists and inventors stepped forward and founded highly successful companies. The five major U.S. arms manufacturers are the Colt Patent Arms Company, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, Smith & Wesson, Remington Arms Company, and the Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company.

Samuel Colt's company was founded in 1836, and is based in Hartford, Connecticut. Colt's success was assured by supplying the Union Army in the Civil War. Shortly before his death in 1874, Samuel Colt hired a Dwarf named Woodchuck to design the Model 1874 Pump-Actuated Repeating Revolver. This earned Woodchuck the surname of Gunsmith. Soon after this, all arms companies hired Dwarfish gunsmiths to be able to compete.

In 1849 Tyler Henry, Horace Smith, and Daniel Wesson established the Volcanic Arms Company. Their arms used caseless ammunition but lacked power and never caught public fancy, leading to bankruptcy eight years later. The company was bought by Oliver Winchester, who renamed it the New Haven Arms Company. In 1862, the extremely reliable and popular Henry Repeating Rifle came out. Four years later, the company was reorganized as the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. Recently Winchester has been experimenting with the Volcanic line of arms, with more powerful primers. These new models are enjoying more success than their predecessors.

Undiscouraged, Smith & Wesson formed their own company in 1855. The strength of the Smith & Wesson revolvers over Colt's were their rim-fire metallic cartridge ammunition and their stronger, bored-through cylinder. Their weakness was small calibers—a .44

Smith & Wesson did not appear until 1869. Matters took a turn for the better in 1870, when Smith & Wesson supplied the U.S. Army with two thousand .44 caliber No. 3 revolvers.

The Remington Arms Company began making excellent rifles in the 1820's. Their first revolver, which used a revolutionary solid frame, appeared in 1860. However, charges of shoddy workmanship damaged their reputation with the armed forces, and has continued to plague their revolvers. However, their rifles are serious competitors with Winchester.

The Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company, maker of the Sharps Rifles and Sharps Carbines made legendary in the Civil War, is failing. It is likely that the company will file for bankruptcy within five years.

Despite the quality and dependability of American-made firearms, there is not much of a market for them in New Europa. Dwarfish craftsmanship has made the pepperbox a viable concept, and they are now light enough and accurate enough to rival a Colt's. Apparently, it is simply that New Europeans prefer the pepperbox to the new-fangled revolver. Colt had a manufacturing plant in London for a time, but sales were so poor that the plant soon closed. The same matter of preference appears to apply to Winchester—New Europeans would rather use more traditional rifles such as bolt action or rolling block rifles.

There is one market that does help American gun manufacturers, but it is a "gray" market. It is a U.S. federal law that no weapons made in the U.S. may be sold to the Twenty Nations Confederation. However, U.S. Army scouts have reported Indian war parties armed with Winchester and Colt's pistols, so it would appear that Texas and the Bear Flag Empire, who are friendly toward the Nations, are overbuying from the manufacturers and selling the surplus to Indians. The United States is very annoyed by this, but as it has no proof, there is nothing it can do at the moment.

WEAPONS OF AMERICA: PISTOLS

• Statistics for these weapons appear in *Comme Il Faut*, pg. 81

COLT

• .36 Colt 1861 Navy

Often called one of the best balanced and easiest handling percussion pistols, over 200,000 of this model have been manufactured to date. The .36 caliber round delivers quite a punch, and recoil with this weapon is negligible.

• .44 Colt 1848 Dragoon

Manufactured shortly after the first Texan War of Independence (1836) as a horse pistol, this weapon soon came to be considered the ultimate in fighting pistols. The Dragoon has good balance and its weight aids in absorbing recoil, as its loads approach carbine strength. The weapon's sheer power assures its continued popularity.

• .44 Colt 1860 Army

This revolver is the successor to the Dragoon, first issued to Cavalry units in the Army of Observation. Lighter, faster, and quicker-aiming than the Dragoon, it lacks the earlier revolver's ruggedness. It was the sidearm of choice during the Civil War, and so was widely copied by Southern manufacturers.

• .45 Colt 1873 Single-Action Army

The "Peacemaker" of fame; Sam Colt's great equalizer—simple, rugged, dependable. The SAA was the first widely manufactured heavy-caliber pistol to use metal-cased ammunition. While accurate to fifty yards (like most handguns), in the hands of a true sharpshooter, its effectiveness could stretch as far as four hundred. After an extensive evaluation period, it became the standard-issue pistol for the U.S. Cavalry in 1873.

REMINGTON

• .44 Remington 1863 Army; .45 Remington 1875 No. 3 Army

Both of the Remington Army models were beaten out by Colt for government contracts, and as a result they are not as popular. Their balance is not as good as the Colt's, but they are as reliable and a wide trigger gives one a little more control.

SMITH & WESSON

• .32 Smith & Wesson 1861 No. 2

Popular as a backup or hideout gun for both troops and officers during the Civil War and after. It uses tilt-frame loading and a spur trigger to reduce size. S&W stopped production in 1874, but it is still available in large numbers.

• .44 Smith & Wesson 1869 No. 3

The No. 2's big brother, the No. 3 was the first Smith & Wesson pistol to use metallic cartridges.

VOLCANIC

• .38 Volcanic 1860 Pistol

The Volcanic Pistol was a revolutionary design. It was a lever-action pistol with a magazine that held eight shots. The ammunition was caseless; the primer and powder were held in a concave cavity in the back end of the bullet. Winchester's Dwarf gunsmiths have set to the task of ironing out the problems in the Volcanic designs, in preparation of reissuing them. An accurate, if unusual, sidearm.

WEAPONS OF AMERICA: RIFLES

• Statistics for these weapons appear in *Comme Il Faut*, pg. 81

COLT

• .50 Colt 1873 Gatling Gun

The Gatling Gun is a fearsome weapon, developed in 1862 by Richard Gatling. It is a hand-cranked rapid-fire field piece, available in various calibers, and is not man-portable. Its six to ten barrels are capable of firing up to 1200 rounds a minute on the most recent models. Colt has begun experimenting with steam-powered gatling guns, and expects to achieve a rate of fire of up to 2400 rounds per minute.

HENRY

• .44 1862 Henry Rifle

The first widely accepted lever-action rifle. It had quite an effect on the American scene—when the Henry patent ran out in 1868, due to clerical error, a special Act of Congress allowed Oliver Winchester to renew it. Used by both sides during the Civil War (when they could get it, as it was not standard issue at the time), Henrys still see use today. Its only drawback is a tendency for the barrel (which lacks a wooden forearm) to become hard to hold during sustained fire.

REMINGTON

• .45 Remington 1873 Rolling Block Rifle

Weighing around eight pounds, this is a very comfortable gun to use. The rolling-block action is one of the simplest—and strongest—rifle actions ever made and is made for multiple hunting calibers. The ruggedness, accuracy, and use of metallic cartridges has guaranteed the acceptance of the 1873 Remington as the military rifle of choice in almost a dozen countries.

SHARPS

• .44 Sharps 1874 Buffalo Rifle

This is the most popular hunting rifle on the continent. It is so well liked that its users have given it the nickname of "Old Reliable." Accuracy is exceptional: A skilled shooter can place several rounds within a 3" circle at 300 yards, over open sights.

• .50 Sharps 1866 Rifle

Extremely popular during the Civil War, due its being the standard issue rifle of both armies, it has since been surpassed in popularity by the Winchester.

VOLCANIC

• .44 Volcanic 1857 Carbine

Winchester and Henry's first attempt at a lever-action rifle. Even with Dwarfen improvements, the weapon suffers from low-powered ammunition, a consequence of its caseless design.

WINCHESTER

• .44 Winchester Model 1866

This was the first rifle to bear the Winchester name. It is available in carbine, rifle, and military configurations.

• .44 Winchester Model 1873

This model, like the 1866, is available in carbine, rifle, and military configurations. Recoil is negligible, even with the high powder loads this gun is capable of chambering. It is the most popular rifle today, due to its accuracy, reliability, and availability.

MARTIN, GREENER, REMINGTON, AND OTHERS

• Double-Barreled Shotgun; Double-Barreled Shotgun, Sawn-off

Shotguns are a popular weapon among stagecoach guards and anyone who needs to clear a room in a hurry. Shotguns are produced by every gun manufacturer, in varying gauges, although 10-gauge (.77 Caliber) and 12-gauge (.72 Caliber) are the most popular. 32-gauge (.50 Caliber) was often cut down and used as a horse pistol. Single and double-barrel models are available. The newest shotguns are pump-action. Older models are of the break-open type; when a catch is released, the barrels drop down on a hinge located just in front of the triggers. Two shells are then loaded, and the barrels closed. A shotgun blast will hit all targets in a six-foot cone in line with the barrel, out to its maximum range; a sawed-off shotgun blast encompasses a nine-foot cone. Targets near the gun may protect targets behind them from being hit. All targets may make an Athletics Fear to avoid being hit. Ten-gauge shotguns do 6/7/8(E) damage, while 12-gauge does 7/8/9(E), with the same ranges listed in *Comme Il Faut*.

WEAPONS OF AMERICA: COLT PUMP-ACTION REVOLVER

In 1873 Samuel Colt was looking to revolutionize firearm design again, the same way he did with his original Patterson revolver. To this end, he hired a Dwarf gunsmith named Woodchuck. The two of them sat down and worked out the design

Colt needed—the Model 1874 Pump-Actuated Repeating Revolver "Woodchuck." This design was so revolutionary that it earned Woodchuck the surname of Gunsmith. It combines the accuracy and dependability of a Colt pistol with the range and ammunition capacity of a Winchester rifle. It caused quite a stir when it was released, and its popularity has increased every year.

The design is based on the frame of a model 1848 Dragoon, the Single-Action Army frame being too light, but there all similarity to previously existing firearms ends. The barrel has been extended to an 18" length. A detachable stock comes with the gun, but it would take a very strong person indeed to use the gun without it. The standard cylinder has been replaced with a receiver similar to the one found on Winchester rifles, and a tubular magazine has been mounted underneath the barrel. The magazine is fed via a loading gate located just forward of the trigger. Instead of a lever-action, so popular on Winchester rifles, the Woodchuck uses a new pump-action. The majority of the



gun is made of very strong, light weight Dwarfish alloys.

The most amazing thing about this gun is what is loaded into the magazine; not shells, but disposable, four-chambered cylinders machined out of light weight Dwarfish metals. Each

cylinder holds four .45 Long-Colt bullets, and seven of these cylinders can be loaded into the magazine, with an eighth loaded into the receiver, ready to be fired. On the right-hand side of the receiver is an ejection port. At the back of the gun is a hammer, as on any revolver, but the action is more like that of a Winchester Rifle in that when the hammer drops, it does not hit the bullet, but rather hits a striker which sets off the round.

The Woodchuck is fired as is any single-action revolver. The hammer is cocked by hand, the round fired, and then the hammer cocked by hand again, indexing the cylinder for the next round. After all four rounds have been fired, pumping the pump-action back ejects the spent cylinder through the ejection port and forces back the striker, which cocks the hammer. Pushing the pump forward closes the ejection port, loads a new cylinder into the receiver, and returns the striker to its firing position, readying the gun to fire. This unique mechanism allows the firing of thirty-two rounds without reloading!

Type	Effective/ Max Range	Magazine or Total Load	Conceal	Wounds P/E/H	Damage Rank	General Cost
.45 Colt Woodchuck	100/300	32	L	4/5/6	D	80c

FANTASTIC WEAPONS

LAND LEVIATHAN

The Land Leviathan is the brand new weapon in the arsenal of the United States of America. It was developed in the early 1870's with help from their Prussian allies. However, due to the high cost and long construction time, only eight of these monsters have been constructed. Furthermore, due to the high maintenance required to keep these vehicles running, only four out of the eight are in operating condition at any time. Fortunately for the South, this weapon missed the Civil War, but unfortunately the Army R&D have begun researching a way to get these monsters floated across the Mississippi River and into the Twenty Nations. Due to the high maintenance mentioned above, the Army Command refuses to put this invasion plan into effect until some way to keep the Leviathans supplied and operating for an extended time in hostile, inhospitable country is devised.

The Land Leviathan is a monstrous construction of blackened steel plates covered in huge flat rivets. Its four wheels, each forty feet in diameter, propel it unflinchingly across most terrain. These wheels support three hundred tons of armored chassis, one hundred feet long by eighty feet wide. Its crew of thirty includes command staff, gunnery crew, and engineering staff.

LAND LEVIATHAN

Cost: 171 days at 17,100c

Size: Large [160 wounds]

Powered By: A spherical brass boiler covered with hundreds of tiny rivets and jets of pressurized steam hissing from spigot-shaped safety valves

Operation Time: Up to a week

Operates With: A captain's wheel; and thick metal cables and greasy iron rods pulled by ranks of numbered handles

Moves With: Clanking metal treads with lots of driving wheels

Armed With: Six rapid-fire artillery guns in paired turrets

SUBMERSIBLE

Based upon primitive Confederate "Davids" captured during the Civil War, the modern United States Submersible displays substantial improvements. Firstly, it is larger, with a crew of four rather than one man squeezed into a floating coffin. In addition to a pair of improved clockwork-guided torpedoes, a small artillery cannon is mounted on deck for surface engagements.

Its armor of blackened steel plates is proof against arms fire, and fish-eye observation bubbles allow for a view of the surface while running with decks awash. Its twin screws are capable of propelling the submersible at an astounding rate of eight knots on the surface and up to four knots submerged!

SUBMERSIBLE

Cost: 38 days at 3,800c

Size: Medium [140 wounds]

Powered By: Banks of Fuming Lead Acid Batteries driving whirling and sparking Electrical Engines

Operation Time: 24 Hours

Operates With: A Captain's Wheel and a Complex Arrangement of Levers

Moves With: Shiny Brass Propellers that spin on ornately mounted drive shafts

Armed With: A pair of self-guided clockwork torpedoes and a rapid-firing artillery gun

STEAM WAR DIRIGIBLE

During the Civil War, Confederate Agents acquired information from the Union government, and from Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, via espionage. From this developed the steam-powered Confederate War Dirigible. The Union lost no time in capturing one and improving upon it. When the Confederacy lost the war, War Dirigibles, and their crews, turned south into Orleans and Texas, becoming pirates. The War Dirigible, unlike its New European counterpart the Prussian Steam Zeppelin, carries some armor and a battery of gatling guns.

Steam War Dirigibles are currently in use by the United States, the Republic of Texas, the Bear Flag Empire of California, and Aero Pirates everywhere.

STEAM WAR DIRIGIBLE

Cost: 80 days at 8,000c

Size: Large [80 wounds]

Powered By: A spherical brass boiler covered with hundreds of tiny rivets and jets of pressurized steam hissing from spigot-shaped safety valves

Operation Time: 6 hours

Operates With: A complex clockwork and attendant Levers

Moves With: Shiny propellers on Intricate Shafts

Armed With: A Bomb Rack, Two Gatling Guns

CORTADOR MADERA

The *Cortador Madera*, or "Wood Cutter", is the infernal device that kept San Francisco free of invasion during the Gold Rush, before California had begun to build a modern navy.

Emplaced in the Marin headlands overlooking the Golden Gate, the *Cortador Madera* is a truly astounding device that combines the latest in super science with the magical lore of the Order of the Golden Mean. The *Cortador Madera* uses the Earth's natural magnetic energy to hurl projectiles at amazing velocities over long distances. The resultant static electric discharge that accompanies the projectile along its trajectory causes additional damage to the target. The two devastating forces together have proven to be enough to send United States warships directly to the bottom. The *Cortador Madera* can hit any target sailing towards the Golden Gate, or within the mouth of the bay itself. It is unable to aim at targets within the Golden Gate.

The operation of and theory behind the *Cortador Madera* are extremely secret. No one person, except perhaps the Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Mean in San Francisco, knows all of the details pertaining to the *Cortador Madera*. A regiment of Imperial troops is constantly on guard at the site, and access is extremely controlled. The perimeter of the emplacement is under constant surveillance, both normal and magical. Perhaps the only place as guarded or as secret is the Landfortress Werks in Prussia.

CORTADOR MADERA

Cost: 190 days at 19,000c

Size: Immense (covers an entire mountain top) [200 wounds]

Controlled By: Long metal levers that crank complex arrangements of gears, and thick metal cables pulled by ranks of numbered handles

Range: Hundreds of miles.

Damage Level: Ghostly

Affects: Immense Objects

MILITARY SORCERY

Military Sorcery, like Military Intelligence, is somewhat of a contradiction in terms. Most sorcery associated with military actions is practiced well behind the lines. A sorcerer is a valuable resource, and unless it is absolutely necessary, you don't want him on the battlefield, where a stray bullet or Landfortress could kill him. Sorcery has had very little direct effect on recent wars. For example, the Battle of Königsgieg was decided by Landfortresses and Aerovettes, not sorcerers shooting lightning at each other.

Instead of throwing fireballs with the troops, you will find military sorcerers performing very specialized roles. Members of the Order of St. Boniface and the Order of Cassandra will staff hospitals, tending to the wounded. Or you will find them in the general's tents, attempting to spy on the enemy with scrying spells, at the same time maintaining spells to keep the enemy from spying on them. You will also find them well behind the lines in military research labs, attempting to develop more powerful gunpowder, fabric which stops bullets like armor plate, or a better explosive. The less (controllable) risk a military sorcerer is exposed to, the happier he, and his superiors, are.

Another reason that sorcerers do not frequent the front lines is the limited efficacy of their efforts. Any sorcerer who watches another casting a spell can see the other's weaves of thaumic energy, and thus gain an idea of what kind of spell, if not the exact spell, is being prepared. Given the time it takes to cast a spell with enough range or subjects affected to be useful on a battlefield will give the opposition enough time to cast a counterspell. Thus, telescopes, observation balloons, or scrying globes can allow sorcerers to see what their enemy is doing, and prepare a defense. So, even if one side manages to make it rain, or causes an earthquake, it will not be long until the other side nullifies it.

Sorcery has had limited military application in America due to many factors, including the witch hunts, Freemasons, and the nature of the peoples living in America. In the American Civil War, military sorcery was very limited due to the disruption of the Talisman (see pg. 29). Sorcery in the Texan Wars of Independence (see pg. 73) was limited by the nature of the participants. Indian sorcery is primarily of a defensive or support nature, not offensive. On the other side of the border, Mexico is a Roman Catholic country laboring under an Aztec curse. The Catholic church condones no use of magick outside the church (see *The Book of Sigils*, pg. 20), and the Curse of the Aztecs makes sorcery an unhealthy practice for those of Spanish descent. These same factors limited the use of magick in the Bear Flag Revolt (see pg. 154).

WASHINGTON SOCIETY

A CAPITAL CITY

The election of General Ulysses S. Grant as the 17th President of the United States has revolutionized Washington society. Prior to the Grant Administration, you socialized with either the Hunt Country families or the civil aristocracy of senators, congressmen, and government officials. Hunt Country families, the well-to-do of the area surrounding the Capital, never before accepted the governing elite as their social equals. After all, were they not mere bureaucrats? Well, that was before General Grant came to town.

President Grant is a man blessed with a common touch, who enjoys good company, good whiskey, and good cigars. Rather than entertaining solely in the White House, as his predecessors have done, President Grant goes abroad freely. No longer is the President only seen socially in the White House, but may be encountered at any number of social functions about the Capital. He has also opened the White House to social callers to an extent unprecedented in Washington history. The White House now plays host to dinners, receptions, and balls at which all of Washington society is welcome. You need only leave your calling card. Of course, a personal invitation to the White House remains the social coup.

In his wake of broken social conventions, President Grant has brought together old-line country squires from Maryland, Congressmen and Senators, Virginia plantation owners, foreign ambassadors, government ministers, and that new breed of Washington wild life, the lobbyists. A new spirit of social equality is sweeping the Capital. Combined with an almost desperate desire to escape the drabness of the Lincoln Administration, so closely identified with the War Between the States and Reconstruction, the President and First Lady preside over a vigorous social scene unparalleled in the Capital's history.

THE CAPITAL GANG

Second only to the President in social prominence are the powerful Senators and Congressmen who control key committees in Congress. Whom you know can make or break your reputation in Washington society. Money and good breeding count, but Washington is unique to the degree that sheer power is a social advantage. The most backwoods Senator may rise to a committee chairmanship or even the Presidency.

THE SOCIAL ROUND

Generally, Americans are far less formal than New Europeans. In a Capital where a new administration may come to power every four years and every two years sees new faces in the House of Representatives and the Senate, there is little chance for custom to develop on a New European scale. What Washington society lacks in tradition, though, it more than makes up for in vigor. Whether hunting in the Virginia countryside, picnicking alongside the Potomac River, yachting on Chesapeake Bay, or enjoying the hospitality of one of the Capital's many fine homes, you can count on Washingtonians to bring to their entertaining a sense of excitement and adventure. After all, it was not so long ago that President Andrew Jackson's Inaugural gala became such a city wide riot of celebration that the President was forced to flee his own inaugural ball!

If there is a rhythm to Washington social life, like that of the New European Season, it can only be the result of the presence of New European embassies in the Capital. In addition to receptions and dinner parties held to entertain American decision makers, each New European embassy holds lavish balls on state occasions. Birthdays of heads of state or national holidays are favorite occasions. Not to be left out, the embassy of the Bear Flag Empire holds a costume ball on the birthday of Emperor Norton that you have to see to believe, and not to be outdone, the embassy of the Texas Republic hosts balls on the birthdays of both Sam Houston and Steven Austin!

Unique to Washington society is the diplomatic reception at which foreign dignitaries are welcomed to the United States or American dignitaries pay official calls on foreign embassies. A diplomatic reception is part salon and part dinner party. There are usually a welcoming ceremony, short speeches by the host and the visiting dignitary, then polite conversation and introductions all around. Dress as you would for a dinner party. Hors d'oeuvres and other light refreshments will be served.

FOREIGN INTRIGUES

Each nation's embassy is headed by an ambassador, who is assisted by a consul general and attachés for diplomatic, military, and cultural affairs. It is

an open secret that among the embassy staff will be a spymaster charged with maintaining surveillance on other New European embassies as well as acquiring intelligence on American military and diplomatic secrets. Far from München, Berlin, London, and Paris, the Great Game is played out in the American Capital. Of course, the Secret Service is a player as well, protecting the interests of the United States and acquiring intelligence on the endless plots and schemes of New Europa. It is against the backdrop of Washington society that the spies and spymasters play out their dangerous games, meeting at dinner parties to arrange clandestine assignments or to exchange secrets between dances at the ball. But the comings and goings of kings and countries, presidents and potentates pale against the intrigues of even darker cabals.

SORCEROUS CONSPIRACIES

When American Indian shamen stopped the westward expansion of the United States on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers in 1830, they were able to do so chiefly because of Cotton Mather's purge of colonial sorcerers. Seeing both the danger and potential of native American magick, the Sorcerous Orders of New Europa determined to fill the vacuum created by the purges. Quietly, as only the Freemasonic Lodge may operate legally within the United States, they made the trans-Atlantic crossing, finding safety in diplomatic entourage and in diplomatic pouches.

In the same social whirl frequented by socialites and spies, the Sorcerous Orders play out their ages-old intrigues in the face of new challenges. The embassy of the Twenty Nations is a prime target of the Sorcerous Orders, bent on discovering the secrets of Indian magick, but they must move ever so carefully lest their presence be uncovered by the authorities. They must also contend with the Hodano Medicine Society, a loose amalgamation of Native American shamen who seek to protect indigenous magicks from appropriation and who secretly plot to rid the Americas of the White Man.

POLITICAL LIFE

Foreign or domestic, politics is the topic of conversation in Washington. To be considered well informed is essential in Washington society and that requires you to have a knowledge of Republican and Democratic Party politics. Foreign relations hold the fascination of faraway lands, but domestic issues are Washington's life-blood. Two men dominate domestic politics.

Republican Senator Thaddeus Stevens is the most outspoken member of that faction of his party which advocates a more harsh position toward the former secessionist states. Known as the Copperheads, these Republicans oppose the favorable terms of Reconstruction that the Lincoln Administration followed and which President Grant has also adopted. The conservative Stevens is a major thorn in President Grant's side, despite their shared party affiliation.

On the opposite side of the aisle, Democratic Senator William Jerome Bryant leads the opposition to the Copperheads. Known as the Free Silver Democrats, Bryant's followers favor a less restrictive monetary policy that would help the recovery of the Southern economy. Free Silver Democrats would move away from a gold standard to one based on silver. President Grant is concerned that such a policy could spark rampant inflation and hurt the United States by devaluing the dollar.

To avoid the social misstep, you should know which topics to avoid in Republican or Democratic company and always be prepared to knowingly nod when a subject comes up. In this manner, you will be well on your way to attaining much sought-after recognition as a Washington Insider.

SCANDAL

If politics are not to your taste, don't worry. There is one thing Washingtonians love more than politics—a scandal. President Grant is a personally honest man but somewhat too trusting. Unscrupulous members of his administration have become involved in shady dealings, leading to a series of scandals that have become a public sensation. Juicy gossip is always welcome.

The Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and Secretary of the Interior are all involved in scandals involving the abuse of their offices. President Grant's personal secretary is similarly involved in covering up others' wrong doing. Even the President's brother-in-law has played upon the President Grant's good nature to aid unscrupulous Robber Barons. The President could use some honest friends.

SOUTHERN BALL

On Monday, we took a train to Richmond for the final dedication festivities. Don Chandler got us there just as the dance began. He said it was another conciliatory gesture to hold the final celebration in the former CSA capital.

Just walking in, I could tell it was going to be a late night. I mentioned this to Chandler, who said he'd already reserved some rooms for us at a nearby inn.

The dance here was so much different than the ones in New York. Here they were less formal, yet somehow more refined. It's like it came naturally to them, instead of it all being an act or a social battle where everyone maneuvered for position.

All sorts of important people were there. Grant, Stanton, and Brooks. Henry Wilson, the veep. Most of Grant's cabinet. Several generals from both sides of the war. But some were missing. Jefferson Davis sent his regrets due to failing health. I asked Chandler if Robert E. Lee might be attending, but he told me he had died several years earlier, aged beyond his years.

With so many important men in attendance, you know the cream of Richmond's female crop showed up. And they had the greatest accents. Marianne might have gotten a little jealous, but she was targeted by every eligible male in the place, so she had no time to notice.

And so we danced the night away.

GETTING FROM PLACE TO PLACE

THE UNITED STATES

The United States is the most advanced in terms of transportation. Railroads crisscross the nation, with smaller trunk lines branching off the main ones. Toll roads and turnpikes connect major cities, with smaller roads and country lanes meeting up with them. Dating from earlier times is a network of nearly 4000 miles of canals. Using the canals, which charge a small toll to pay for upkeep, one can travel from the eastern seaboard to the Mississippi River. Major canals include the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal, the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, the canals which connect the Great Lakes with each other, and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which connects the Great Lakes with the Mississippi. Road travel is still done using horse and wagon, but Steam Automotives are enjoying increasing popularity.

TEXAS

The Republic of Texas is held together by rail and wind. The two Texan railroads, and smaller branch lines, tie the major cities together and provide the Cattle Barons with a method to get the fruits of their labors to market. Outside of the railways, the Windwagon is king. The stagecoach has almost been abandoned in favor of the Windwagon, for which the flat plains of the Republic are perfectly suited. Established roads, as they are understood in the United States, are nonexistent in Texas outside of cities. What connects the cities is a network of dirt trails, which are more suited to horses than Automotives, which are as scarce as roads.

CALIFORNIA

The place where the Steam Automotive is enjoying popularity is the Bear Flag Empire of California. Thanks to the Order of the Golden Mean, Automotive boilers are not heated by coal but rather by magicked iron spheres that constantly give off heat. This freedom from coal means that the range of a Steam Automotive is limited only by how much water is available. Major cities such as San Francisco and Sacramento are rapidly improving their roadways to accommodate the Automotive.

Outside of the cities, roads are almost as scarce as they are in Texas. The El Camino Real, which runs from San Diego to San Francisco, is paved within city limits, but otherwise is little more than a dirt trail. However, on the El Camino, there is always a town within a day's ride. As elsewhere, overland transport in California is by rail, stagecoach, or Windwagon.

California is the first American nation to investigate "modern" methods of transportation. San Francisco has a network of cable cars that transverse the city. Aerial travel is a reality thanks to the Avitors (see pg. 161).

OTHER PARTS

The rest of the continent is nowhere near as organized. Canada has a few canals and roads, but no railways to speak of. Mexico has started laying track to compensate for their poor network of roads. There are, of course, no established roads of any kind in the Twenty Nations Confederation or the Unorganized Territories. Orleans has two railways built by Texas, and a sketchy assortment of toll roads. The terrain of Orleans is not terribly hospitable to Windwagons, so anything not sent by rail is transported via horse and wagon.

ACROSS THE SOUTH



The Stauffenberg picked us up outside Richmond, where we also took on provisions. After some reluctance on his part, we convinced Don Chandler to stay with us. He had been hoping to return to Philadelphia, but once he decided to stay on, he threw himself into his job with reckless abandon, becoming a one-man guide, navigator, tour guide, activity director, and spontaneous point source of trivia factoid emissions.

As we rose above Richmond, we could see the remains of the breastworks and trenches which surrounded the city. Ugly scars spoiling the landscape. They were slowly being swallowed back up, but they still looked nasty.

I asked Chandler to give us a run-down on the course of the Civil War, which he was happy to do. "Basically, the Union strategy was based on Lincoln's decision to attack on several fronts at once. He figured that while the North had more men, the South had better ability to concentrate themselves for battle. We were advancing into their territory, after all, and those backwoods fighters knew every inch of it. So the only way Honest Abe figured to do them in was to attack with superior forces at several different places at the same time. That way, the South couldn't concentrate better forces at each place, and they'd have to give ground somewhere."

He'd just written the epitaph of small, professional armies. Soon everyone would be fielding huge armies of conscripts. The results would be the same, but a lot more people would be killed getting there.

"Once we pushed the Rebels back," he continued, "we could hold onto it, as long as we kept pushing. More than that, we had to make it hurt. Some people say the North went too far, and maybe they did. Atlanta shouldn't have burned, I don't think. But, as General Sherman observed, war is hell indeed."

And, as we flew across the South, we saw it. The South is gorgeous. Stunning. Wide open land, stately plantations, sedate way of life. Marshes glinting in the sun, colorful birds singing, the buzz of cicadas. White carriages trotting pleasantly down shady country lanes. I'd just get used to it all when we'd fly over something different. A scar.

Right in the middle of nowhere, we'd come across a plantation house, burned. The bare skeleton still standing, blackened by fire and bleached by the southern sun. Vines and weeds growing in it. Nearby, the wreckage of the barn, roof collapsed. Furniture rotting on the lawn. The Southerners have been working hard to rebuild their homes, but I suppose not all the Southerners made it back to try.

Once, somewhere along Sherman's route to the sea, we passed over a village. Burned. All of it. Even some of the trees still showed the scars. It's not too tough to rebuild a damaged home, but these were burned to the ground. Nothing left but foundations. I guess the locals decided the pickings were better elsewhere. It's not like anything was keeping them there any more. And I suppose the memories of whatever dark night it was that the town had burned were too bitter.

Still, the South seemed to be bouncing back. We stopped in Raleigh, Charleston, Atlanta, and Mobile on our way to the Texas Republic. Nice parties. Southern hospitality. Barbecue to die for. Better yet: no burning crosses. No carpet baggers. No poverty. No lingering resentment. The Reconstruction had gone so well that the attitude across the South was one of a fair fight lost. They shrugged it off and got on with their lives. And you can bet everyone in Congress paid a little more attention to their grievances.

As Don Chandler put it, while we were playing badminton on a perfect lawn somewhere in the middle of Nowhere, Georgia, "The Southerners had to give up their country and their slaves. They decided they weren't going to give up their way of life on top of that. So instead, they make do with Congress and hired help. And they will continue to hold to their genteel style of doing things."

I nodded. "Yeah," I said, smiling.

PIRATES OF THE GULF

It wasn't until we were leaving Mobile that Chandler told us that Orleans, what I had known as Louisiana, was a free state, not affiliated with the Union. I'd heard that New Orleans was a free port; I just thought that meant it was fast and loose and unpoliced. But no. It's a free port. An international way station and, for all practical purposes, capital of a free state.

The U.S. doesn't like that getting out. Looks bad. It's a major embarrassment.

No one else really cares, I guess.

We all stood on the forward observation deck as the aerocruiser cruised in over the bayous and backwaters of the Mississippi delta. Cool swampland. I've always wanted to cruise over it like we were doing now. Gnarled trees, streams slithering slowly where they will, alligators and crawdads and Cajuns. Cool stuff. It was really beautiful from our vantage point, even though I knew I wouldn't actually want to muck around down there.

Then we saw the city itself.

Pfisty turned to Chandler. "A free state, you say?" he asked. "Perhaps we should pay a visit."

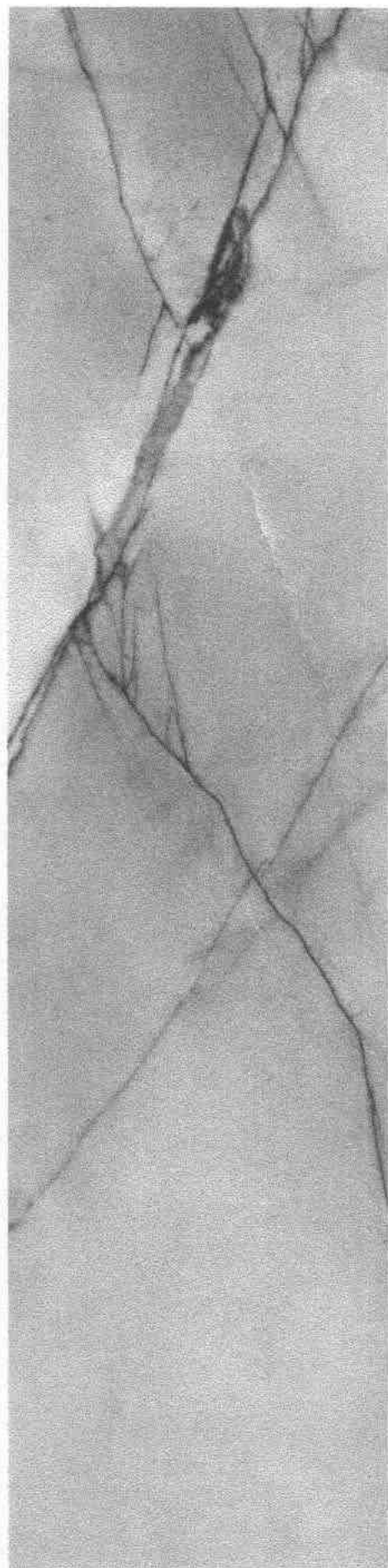
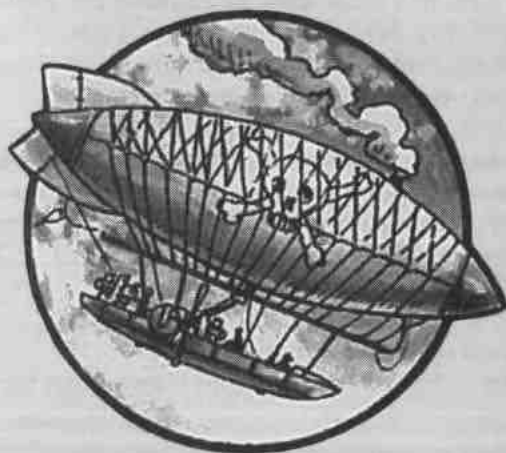
"Well," said Chandler, "that might be a bit tricky. The nominal power in Orleans is Aaron Burr, the self-proclaimed President for Life. Now as far as I know, nobody has seen him since about 1850. You could talk with his lady, Marie Laveau, as she exercises a good degree of political clout. She's also some kind of voodoo sorceress. Since there is no real centralized government, each parish is more or less autonomous, which means that the *maire* of New Orleans makes all the decisions regarding that city, and a third share of the decisions that effect the country. New Orleans being so big and important, you understand. So I guess we could try to look him up. I'll see if I can't pull a few strings." He stopped, and pointed to our port quarter.

"Oh, look," he said. "Here comes an escort."

Two steam-powered dirigibles were closing in on us. They were smallish, and very odd-looking. I guess I was just used to the clean, Dwarfen-crafted lines of the *Stauffenberg* and the *Königssieg*. These were more kitbashed together from a Civil War blimp and a steam-driven propeller shaft. In fact, they were pretty darn ugly.

"If those aren't the gol' darnedest contraptions I've ever seen," said Chandler. "I'm going to go get my telescope and give them a closer look." He headed back inside.

Then the air was ripped by gatling guns.





ATTACKED!

There were two of them. They had positioned themselves on either side—just like escorts—before they opened up. Bullets flew, glass shattered, and the air was suddenly filled with shouting and screaming. I dove for the deck, tackling Marianne and Pfisty. Lückner was already down under the protective cover of the gunwale, dog-crawling for the bridge. There's those military instincts again. I'd swear he was hitting the deck before they opened fire.

The bullets made this hideous sort of musical spanging sounds as they struck the Dwarf-alloy armor of the *Stauffenberg*. The gunwale was protecting us, but there was a chance the dirigibles might rise up and try descending fire, so instead of just hunkering down, I crawled off the observation deck. Through someone's blood.

Just as I entered the map room, I heard Lückner yell, "Olam! Go with him!" He was pointing to a young lieutenant. I scrambled after the guy.

He led me through the interior of the aerocruiser. The wounded were being helped to the sick bay. I could already tell there were too many. Many of the crew knew it, too. Guys with light wounds—like a mere three bullets in one arm—were asking to be placed in their bunks until the serious cases were taken care of. Truly the age of wooden ships and iron men. I just hoped we wouldn't lose the iron men too soon.

The lieutenant took me to the head of a small ladder and slid down. I dropped down, too. We were inside one of the turrets. A pair of 1.46 caliber rapid-fire cannon.

Hoo—yah.

We had some ammo with us, even though we were on a diplomatic mission. You don't send an aerocruiser anywhere without at least some ammo. We just didn't have much. I grabbed a couple shells as the lieutenant opened the breeches.

Two more crewmen slid down the ladder. One stepped to the view slit. "They are closing," he said. "They have grapples out, and—" Anything else he said was lost in the noise of a burst of gatling gun fire hitting the armor of the turret.

Both cannons were loaded. The ammo hoppers had extra, and I was filling them even more. The second crewman cranked wheels to raise the elevation of the cannon, sighting them on target.

"At this range we can hardly miss," I yelled.

"Fire!"

I whipped my arm out of the way just in time as the barrel bucked backwards. We fired off a six-round burst, three from each cannon. Major loudness. Now I could understand why everyone shouts on a ship in battle. My ears were ringing. Listening to those guns in a small space like a turret can probably do you some permanent damage if you don't have protection. Yeow. I wish I were on the bridge, like I was at the Battle of Königssieg. On second thought, I was actually doing something here. Not just watching and cheering.

"Bring the turret around to 277," shouted the spotter.

No matter that he was a crewman ordering a lieutenant and a captain of the secret service. He knew what was going on. We jumped for the crank. It was a big two-man job at the back end of the turret. We started whipping that sucker around, the lieutenant and I. The indicator slowly crawled. 272. 274. 276.

"Clear!" yelled the lieutenant. I covered my ears.

"Fire!" Another six-round burst.

Silence. Aside from the ringing in my ears.

"Kaput," said the crewer simply. He stepped down from the view port. "Want to see?"



I had to look. I stepped forward, peered out through the slit. The dirigible was veering off, peppered with gaping 1.46 caliber holes. It looked like the second volley had severed the struts holding the forward part of the cabin to the gas bags. Now it was only held on at the back, and hanging down at a dangerous angle. The rear propeller was chewing into the bottom of the gas bag. Even as I watched, another strut came loose, tilting the cabin a bit to one side.

"Shall we finish them?" This from the lieutenant.

"Nah," I said. "I think they've learned their lesson. They're so badly damaged, they might not even make it. But who am I to deny them that chance?"



THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR



AS REPORTED BY TOM OLAM

On the trip over, I began to wonder how this different United States had fared during the Civil War. In point of fact, I'd been so busy in New Europa that I'd missed all the coverage on the Civil War. But while in New York (in between dodging bad guys), the chance cropped up to look in on a series of public and private libraries, several of which contained narratives on the "recent unpleasantness."

It appears that Americans would have ended up killing each other anyway, regardless of the situation. Louisiana seems to have always been the Orleans Free State, with its existence guaranteed jointly by the U.S. government and Texas. With the former Canadian provinces of Ottawa and New Brunswick coming into the Union and Texas also being an independent republic, the Old South felt pretty hemmed in, I guess. So the Old Southerners started forming secret societies.

About this time, some guy named Walker became involved in a little banana-republic dust-up down in Central America and the Southern societies felt they could do just as well here at home. So they achieved that goal of Cold War pundits everywhere—a Cuban revolution! These Southern-born Castros goofed up, though. The bulk of Cuba's revolutionaries were slaves, mixed with a few peasant farmers. They weren't about to trade a bad Spanish master for a not-so-bad American master! To make matters worse, President Buchanan finally woke up and took a stand; half the United States couldn't be allowed to make its own foreign policy. Radical Democrats in both houses of Congress tried to push through a bill for the annexation of Orleans as a response, but Buchanan held them off with a series of vetoes until the 1860 election. Lincoln reiterated the power of centralized government over state or regional initiatives. The South didn't take that too kindly, and next thing you know, it was April 1861, and the shells were flying...

I think the weirdest thing was the effect of the Indians' "Great Barrier" on the war. There was no Texas, Arkansas, or Missouri to provide troops and provisions; that whole "Trans-Mississippi" region they talk about in Westerns never existed in the first place. There was no real Indian threat at the time; the Civilized Tribes had no reason to get involved, because their economies weren't connected to the South like they were in my timeline. Some fought for the South anyway, just to hurt the White Man for past wrongs; Stand Watie and his renegades are prominent in the history books, repaying the Union for the Trail of Tears. But the border remained mainly quiet, allowing Lincoln to shift the majority of the Army of Observation into immediate action.

His forces were evenly matched by experienced volunteers of the Cuban Adventure, who were a veteran cadre for the Southern armies to form around. Led by Sam Houston (fightin' mad over the dissolution of the Union, but loyal to his people and region), Texas declared neutrality. In order to act as a safety valve for Texan sentiments, Houston wisely allowed volunteers from Texas to serve "whatever cause they deem closest to their hearts." As a result, Texas contributed to the war, just not in the numbers that made her #2 behind Virginia, as I was taught.

Speaking of being taught, the first two years of the War in the East seemed to go by in much the same manner as I remember watching on Public Broadcasting specials: First Bull Run, Jackson's Valley Campaign, Seven Day's Battles, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredricksburg. The only change is that slowpoke martinet McClellan isn't in charge for most of it; he's just Inspector General. Lincoln kept McDowell in command for a while after Bull Run—guess he thought any man could have one bad day. In the West, however, things changed right from the start.

After a rousing victory in August of 1861 over a small Confederate force at Paducah, Kentucky, a young Illinois general named Nathaniel Lyon nursed his wounds and planned a series of downriver drives to reopen commerce and communication with the Orleans Free State. He spent the first few months of '62 attempting to sell his idea to Henry Halleck, Union supreme commander of the Western Theater. Another Illinoisian, Ulysses S. Grant, was unsuccessfully attempting to secure central Kentucky for the Union as well.

Mid-to-late '62 unfolded right out of the history books: Forts Henry and Donaldson, Shiloh (only it's Joe Johnston who's wounded there; I was to meet Albert Sidney later in my trip, still commanding the Army of Texas.), Corinth (where the mercurial Earl Van Dorn stops the Union drive; this time, Grant's doing the attacking) and Perryville. Stones River closed the year as Grant and Rosecrans drove on Chattanooga. But if Grant's still in Tennessee, what about Vicksburg? Where were the swamp marches, gunboats running past the forts; the siege that won ol' "U.S." fame? "Lyon's Mississippi Valley Campaign—Memphis, Baton Rouge, Port Hudson, Vicksburg?" What's this?

It seems that the young firebrand convinced Halleck that a lightning campaign would secure the defense of Orleans and open the Confederacy to a strategic backstab. Lyon set up a base at Island No. 10, below the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and proceeded to attack Memphis with a naval bombardment and amphibious raid. Suffering a minor setback when Rebel steam rams put up a fight, he still panicked the Confederates into abandoning the city. The next target in his sights was Vicksburg, but fate (and Gen. John C. Pemberton) intervened.

The South decided that the Free State of Orleans could be safely incorporated into the Confederacy at that time (the massive revenues generated by the port of New Orleans don't hurt either). Texas was torn by neutrality, and hesitated to act. The Union blockade extend across Orleans, but was only empowered to stop military vessels. Occupying Orleans would've opened a direct route to Texas and given blockade runners breathing room for a few months. In this, Pemberton had stuck his hand into a hornet's nest.

With the speed and dispatch that earned him the title of "The Union's Jackson" from foreign observers, Nathaniel Lyon threw his troops aboard steamers, rushed the entire fleet (transports, gunboats, and all) 300 miles downriver, and sent them storming ashore at Baton Rouge—straight into the teeth of the oncoming Army of Mississippi. The resulting action (the only house-to-house street-fighting of the entire war) set Pemberton back on his heels, won Lyon a promotion and his second battle wound, and saved the Union cause in Orleans—not. Lyon was a little too hasty; the Confederates pushed him out of the burning city, and he fell back to Port Hudson, fifteen miles upriver. On August 8, Pemberton attacked and was repulsed, but it was a near thing. Lyon, ill from his wound, felt his position was too exposed, so the Army of the West withdrew slowly, hugging the river bank, covered by the cannon of A. H. Foote's squadron. Vicksburg's guns covered the river, not the land; the town fell quickly to the Union. The next three months find Lyon and his army recuperating there. To make matters worse, Pemberton's rear suddenly became untenable; Gen. Dick Taylor entered the Red River valley with Texan troops. He marched from Shreveport to Yellow Bayou and threatened to build batteries closing the Mississippi to all military traffic, Union and Confederate alike. Under protest, the Army of the Mississippi withdrew its garrisons from the Baton Rouge-New Orleans area, concentrating near Jackson, Mississippi; they waited for Spring—and "fightin' weather."

The volume I'm forwarding to you with the manuscript is *Reminiscences of a Blockading Admiral*, the War Diary of David G. Porter. It's an autobiography from the kid brother of Farragut... you know, "damn the torpedoes" and all that. Porter commanded the

Atlantic Blockading Fleet, while big brother got the Gulf Blockading Squadron. Besides his general reports on capturing blockade runners and blasting Confederate shore positions like Hilton Head, Fts. Pulaski, and Sumter, and Cape Hatteras, he gives some stories about his famous brother in action.

Your friend would love this, Mike; it's like the buccaneers had returned. There were four open ports in the Gulf and Caribbean: Nassau (in the Brit-held Bahamas), Brownsville/Matamoros (where neutral Mexico and Texas meet), Havana (in newly independent Cuba) and of course, New Orleans. I'd heard rumors, and this book adds weight to them; there may have been substantial Prussian, as well as British, technical support for the Confederacy. All somewhat hush-hush, but the result was a more substantial Rebel navy and the earlier completion of ocean-going, steam-powered battle-rams like the CSS Stonewall. Farragut's forces operated from bases at Key West and Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, along with Ship Island near Biloxi, Mississippi. Suddenly, the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits of Florida were full of raging sea actions as the CSN tried to shoot open shipping lanes for their blockade runners. Key West itself was bombarded; heck, the turret frigate USS Roanoke battled the Stonewall right in the mouth of Havana harbor! Roanoke got her guts rammed out and was run aground and burned, but the Cubans couldn't do anything; they had no navy. It wasn't until a class of ocean-capable monitors, like the USS Kalamazoo, Protector, and Puritan, were launched in mid-'64 that the situation settled down in favor of the USN.

Speaking of armored steamships, it's the technical innovations that continue to be most surprising. The list is amazing: reconnaissance balloons (a boon to blockade running) and steam zeppelins on both sides (if that's not a Prussian tip-off, I'll eat my reciprocator!); breech-loading cannon for the Union; steam submarines with spar torpedoes for the Confederacy; automatic support arms for both (Gatling machineguns in Blue, Williams light autocannon in Grey); even advanced germ-killing medicines straight from New Europa made an appearance. 1840's standards rubbed elbows with 1890's-1900's advances—and it all worked! With all these aids to killing, I can't believe that casualties were actually less than our Civil War—thank the St. Bonifacians for that.

But I'd better finish this up; I've got watch soon. We're up to '63, I think... Ok, war in the Eastern Theater. Hooker was in charge of the Army of the Potomac after Lee handed Burnside the Fredericksburg disaster. He tried to get fancy at Chancellorsville, and Lee whipped him the first four days of May 1863, losing Jackson as before. When the Pennsylvania invasion began at the end of the month, Lincoln refused to change horses in mid-stream and Hooker retained command. So, Gettysburg was fought a little differently, 'cause "Fighting Joe" wanted to prove he could do it. Instead of the Rebels holding the initiative the entire battle, Hooker used the Union's superior numbers and launched his own attack the third day! Pickett's Charge became a desperate counterattack to stop the Blue drive; a Gray counterpunch by Stuart's cavalry met George Custer's troops in a swirling fight—and the whole thing ended as a bloody draw. Then it's a race to the Potomac... and the Army of Northern Virginia came smack up against a flooded river. In the only case of active battlefield sorcery I can find for this war, somebody lowered the Potomac—could be Indians, Druid volunteers from Europa, anybody... I don't know and they won't say. But Lee got across and kept retreating, Hooker hot on his heels.

This mad race halted somewhere between the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers, with the armies exhausted. The subsequent Mine Run Campaign (Oct.-Nov. 1863) was called on account of rain. Joe Hooker's double attempt to flank Lee came to a bad end on December 1st, when he drowned during yet another crossing of the Rappahannock. So both sides returned to winter quarters.

In the Western Theater, Rosecrans wouldn't pursue Gen. Bragg following the brutal Stones River fight at the end of '62. Instead, the Army of the Cumberland gathered supplies and replacements for a

fresh try at Chattanooga on his own terms. Newly reinforced and spoiling for a fight, Nathaniel Lyon's Army of the West moved out of Vicksburg to confront Pemberton's Army of Mississippi. Over three days (April 12-15), Lyon fought two battles; tumbling Pemberton's Confederates back to their Jackson starting point. Another month saw him besieging the Rebel concentration point at Meridian (on the Mississippi-Alabama border). There, his luck ran out; he is wounded a third time and invalided out of the war, missing the triumphant resolution of the siege. Meridian surrenders July 4, 1863, yielding the biggest haul of war material until the capture of Atlanta. But without Lyon's drive, the Army of the West's operations stagnated, and most of it was seconded to Grant's force at the end of the year.

And he was sorely in need of such a force by that time. The Army of the Cumberland outflanked Bragg, pursued him into northern Georgia, and got itself surprised at Chickamauga (Sept. 18-20, '63) and surrounded at Chattanooga (Sept.-Oct.). Grant replaced Rosecrans as army commander and began preparing a breakout. With a daring night attack on Oct. 28, the Army of the Cumberland penetrated the Confederate lines and headed for Nashville. Most soldiers thought it was the end of the campaign, but U.S. Grant only paused for a rest, before reentering the ring for another round. The Army of Tennessee attempted to outflank Grant and enter Nashville behind him, but three days of fighting between Spring Hill and Franklin said otherwise (Nov. 23-25, 1863); the Rebels charged five times, but no luck; it was the total ruin of their force. As a result, Grant triumphantly returned to Chattanooga for the winter.

Spring of 1864 sees the still-intact Army of Mississippi shipped to Georgia and combined with the dregs of the Army of Tennessee. The new force was dedicated to the defense of Atlanta. Leaders changed as well: Braxton Bragg was out, replaced by Joe Johnston, fully recovered from his critical wound at Shiloh. The lack of Trans-Mississippi states had begun to tell—supplies and munitions were at an all-time low, and there was no manpower reserve. The South had to win or stalemate by the fall, or else give it up.

Grant was called eastward to assume leadership of the Army of the Potomac; Lincoln needed a fighting general that could turn stalemate into victory there; command in the West passed to Sherman. He made his textbook drive on Atlanta, fighting nine battles between May and September of 1864. The reckless John B. Hood was killed in the defense of the city, so Jeff Davis retained Johnston in command. Fighting "the greatest delaying action since Napoleon in 1814", the Army of the Tennessee contested with Sherman all the way to Savannah (Oct. 15-Nov. 20, '64). Three field battles, an assault on Ft. McAllister and an eight-day siege later, Gen. Joseph Johnston surrendered the city of Savannah and the Army of Tennessee (reduced to a tenth the size of Sherman's force) on November 28. The Deep South was lost.

The final curtain rang down in the Eastern Theater, as well. Grant ground up the Army of Northern Virginia in the Wilderness (May-June, 1864). He then pinned Lee inside the defenses of Richmond and Petersburg; both armies entered trench warfare. The siege ran four months (July-October), at which time, Lee informed Davis that the lines could no longer be held—Richmond must be evacuated and the army withdrawn. In a week-long series of neat battles and maneuvers (Dinwiddie Court House, Five Forks, Jetersville), Lee showed his best generalship and disengaged himself from Grant's grip. By the time Sherman was capturing Ft. McAllister and calling for his siege guns, the last Confederate field army was halfway to the North Carolina border, moving fast. Lee pushed hard, staying ahead of Grant for a week. He fought a quick rear-guard action at Raleigh, N.C. on November 26, and was approaching the Cape Fear River with the plan of crossing at Fayetteville when he heard of Savannah's (and Johnston's) surrender. Stating "... that despite the strong condition of this army, there is no sense in prolonging a conflict whose time is done," Robert E. Lee returned to Raleigh and surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia on the last day of November 1864.

HISTORY OF ORLEANS



Population: 800,000 • **Government:** Elective mayoral body • **Alliances:** Mexico, Texas, Twenty Nations • **Enemies:** United States • **Position:** A poor free state with a thriving business in tariffs, piracy, and voodoo. Orleans is kept alive by New Orleans, gateway to the Mississippi river.



DRAMATIC CHARACTER: EX-CONFEDERATE

Now that the Civil War is over, you have had to make your own peace. Your home is not much different than you remember it. The blacks are free but that was never what the war was about in the first place. States' Rights was the cause to which you rallied. Those rights are now sharply abridged.

Some Ex-Confederates have continued to fight on. Confederate Renegades still plot Dixie's liberation, sporadically attacking Federal troops. Others have turned to crime. Still other Ex-Confederates have formed mercenary bands, like the Tennessee Volunteers, that sell their services to the highest bidder. Outlawed in the United States, these groups operate out of Orleans for the most part. In the Bear Flag Empire, racist Ex-Confederates are attempting to create a New Confederacy. Defeat is never easy to accept, especially when it was your home and your way of life for which you fought. You carry on, still holding your head high.

- **Strong Suits:** Charisma, Courage, Social Graces.
- **Possessions:** uniform, pistol, sword.
- **In Your Diary:** Your remembrances of the War, accounts of your travels since, letters home.
- **Why You're Here:** Your family's plantation was heavily damaged in the War. The loans the family has been forced to take out have put them in debt to Yankees. You seek a way to save the plantation.

Don't expect Orleans to make sense. It is an outlaw nation of pirates, thieves, and riverboat gamblers. New Orleans, Orleans' largest city, is a Free Port and a law unto itself. The President for Life of Orleans, Aaron Burr, is well over 100 years old and hasn't been seen in public for over a quarter century. His mistress, unofficially the First Lady, is reputed to be an ageless voodoo priestess, keeping him alive. The capital, Baton Rouge, is little more than a sleepy river town, with no signs of an organized government. Each Parish, or county, is essentially autonomous.

EARLY HISTORY

The French established the first colonies in Orleans in 1700, founding New Orleans in 1718. In 1762, France transferred Orleans to Spain and it was the Spanish governor of Orleans who granted the Cajuns a home in the bayous. The Spanish also signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo with the United States in 1795, guaranteeing the rights of free navigation down the Mississippi River and storage in New Orleans, vital if American goods were to reach international markets.

In 1800, the French Emperor Napoleon coerced Spain into ceding Orleans to France and in 1802 the Treaty of San Lorenzo was abrogated. President Thomas Jefferson, acting quickly to protect American interests on the Mississippi and in New Orleans, entered into negotiations for a Louisiana Purchase. The purchase went through, and the size of the United States doubled.

Independence came for Orleans in 1806, when a ruined Aaron Burr and his friend General James Wilkinson successfully incited open revolt. With the United States driven out of the immediate area, Burr acted swiftly. A politically ambitious man, he declared Orleans independent, with himself as President and Wilkinson as Vice President. He successfully gained recognition from Napoleon by stating he would uphold French interests. Recognizing the possibility of war over the new nation, Jefferson reluctantly recognizes Orleans. To appease Jefferson, Burr restored the terms of the Treaty of San Lorenzo (for more information, see pg. 34).

AN OUTLAW STATE

Desperate for cash, Burr came up with a plan that has shaped Orleans's history. For years pirates had preyed on shipping on the Mississippi River and in the Gulf of Mexico from bases in Orleans. In 1807, Burr issued the Free Port Declaration, making New Orleans an open port and suspending the laws of admiralty. Pirates flocked to the city, safe in the knowledge that they would go unmolested by the authorities so long as they "tithed" a one-eighth share of all prizes taken to Orleans authorities. Burr institutionalized the "tithe" to raise revenue, taking care to arrest those pirates who failed to pay and claiming that his government was "getting tough on crime."

New Orleans became a den of thieves. The Maire of New Orleans, taking his lead from the President, legalized gambling and prostitution and began taking kickbacks. Police protection was available only in those neighborhoods willing to pay for it. Not much has changed.

THE BATTLE FOR NEW ORLEANS

The United States had not expected Burr to declare Orleans independent and was not happy about piracy. When the War of 1812 broke out, President Madison determined to do something. Fearing the British would capture the vital port of New Orleans, as Orleans had neither a standing army nor navy, Madison dispatched General Andrew Jackson to lead an Expeditionary Force to secure the port. Jackson's secret orders were to hold Orleans and bring it into the Union.

When Jackson's American Expeditionary Force arrived in New Orleans in December 1814, President Burr was there to welcome him. At the President's side was the notorious pirate Jean Lafitte and Marie Laveau, President Burr's mistress and a voodoo priestess. Burr calmly informed General Jackson that he need not have bothered coming but as long as he was there, he was welcome. Seeing no apparent defense of city underway, Jackson took over, preparing to meet the British invasion. When the attack came, Jackson, with Lafitte's help, won the day.

THE ZOMBI WAR

The British defeated and his troops occupying New Orleans, Jackson declared Orleans a territory of the United States. He and his troops were in for a rude shock. In a night action, pirates led by Lafitte attacked the American forces, driving them from the city. Before the Americans could regroup, rising from the cemeteries and bayous came an army of Zombis, summoned by Marie Laveau and her compatriots forced the Americans into panicked flight. Fighting a rear guard action, the Americans slowly retreated before an army of the dead. In a defeat as bloody and horrifying as it was short, in two week's time, no Americans remained on Orleans soil.

ORGANIZED ANARCHY

When Vice President Wilkinson died in 1820, President Burr declared himself President for Life. Born in 1756, Burr was 64 years old. Rather than live in the Capital of Baton Rouge, President Burr chose to live in New Orleans with his mistress, but increasingly absented himself from public life.

President Burr has now not been seen in public in a quarter century. The First Lady, as Marie Laveau styles herself, maintains an active social life but plays no role in politics, except to collect government revenues. In this vacuum, the Parishes, led by wealthy plantation owners, have established what civil government there is in Orleans. The Maire of New Orleans has become Orleans's defacto head of state. Both the Gulf Pirates and the River Pirates control large stretches of territory and conduct themselves much like predatory nobility.

That Orleans remains independent is no doubt due in part to the memories of the Zombi War. However, with the rise of the Republic of Texas and the Twenty Nations, Orleans is now a buffer state between these nations and the United States. Each of these nations guarantees Orleans's freedom from domination by any of the others.

NEW ORLEANS

Along the banks of the mighty Mississippi River, life is good and the living is easy. Founded by the French in 1718, New Orleans enjoys a sheltered position at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Gateway to the interior of North America, New Orleans is also a great port city, where clipper ships and vane clipper stand ready to take on the cargo being offloaded from the sidewheel and paddlewheel riverboats.

The colorful life of the river has helped shape New Orleans. Keelboatmen, river pirates, and those genteel thieves, the River Boat Gamblers, all call New Orleans home. They have imparted to the city a shady, rough hewn elegance. The rhythms of the river as it meanders its way through a continent, reflect life in New Orleans; slow, lazy, but powerfully vibrant.

No less have the denizens of the bayous shaped New Orleans. Gulf pirates, like the legendary Jean Lafitte, sailed from hidden bases, bringing their prizes to New Orleans to sell. Some still do, although as a whole piracy has moved on. Those that remain have a swashbuckling bravado that mirrors New Orleans' own swagger. The Cajuns ply the bayous in their flatbottomed skiffs and supply New Orleans with much of its distinctive cuisine, taken from the black waters.

Before the abolition of slavery in 1864, Negro and Indian slaves worked the plantations of Orleans. Mixing with settlers of French or Spanish extraction, they gave birth to the Creole culture, unique to Orleans. Along with former Negro and Indian slaves, the Creole give New Orleans much of its exotic feel.

This is New Orleans, a city of diverse people. Strolling through the French Quarter, alongside the docklands and quays or past one of the many overgrown cemeteries, New Orleans has a timeless atmosphere. This is a city of mystery, of power, and not a little madness.

ORLEANS CURRENCY

Orleans' standard unit of currency is Burr Scrip. All nation's currency can be exchanged for Burr Scrip. Professional money brokers, both honest and crooked, are as common as rats in New Orleans. For exchange rates and other information on money in the Americas, see pg.39.

THE SOCIAL SCENE

THE OLD SOUTH

Orleans is not part of the United States and did not suffer the devastation of the Civil War and Reconstruction. When you visit Orleans, you are stepping back in time to the Antebellum South of plantations, gracious living, Southern Belles, Gentlemen Farmers, and King Cotton. Once, all of the Southlands enjoyed this opulent lifestyle; now it is largely confined to Orleans.

It is important down here to always remember your manners. Southern Hospitality is quite real, but one is expected to behave as a gentleman or a lady. Never question a man's honor or a lady's virtue, unless you are prepared for a duel. The Duel of Honor is a time-honored institution and a gentleman is not afraid to be Called Out or to Demand Satisfaction. Even the poorest classes try to behave properly and will exact certain satisfaction for any slights.

THE MAIRE

The Maire is the elected head of New Orleans, though voting fraud is so common that Maires usually serve for life. In the absence of President Burr, the Maire is Orleans' most powerful official and by default the spokesman for the Territory. He is also the unofficial head of New Orleans' flourishing criminal society. Pirates, smugglers, thieves, prostitutes, and crooked gamblers all pay the Maire for protection. Every year prior to Mardi Gras, the Maire unofficially holds the Gentlemen's Ball at which all of New Orleans criminal society turns out to pay their respects. Despite his less than savory manner, the Maire is universally respected and if you are a person of note visiting New Orleans, it is common courtesy to pay a call at the Mayoral Mansion. For better or worse, the Maire is all the government Orleans has got.

THE FIRST LADY

The Creole beauty and voodoo priestess Marie Laveau, President Burr's mistress, looks not a day over thirty. Styling herself The First Lady of Orleans, she collects government revenues and spends them on a liberal and lavish lifestyle. Many are the balls, parties, and river excursions she sponsors, equal, wags say, to the number of her paramours. At her mansion in the French Quarter, she always has a warm welcome for visiting persons of note and loves nothing better than an excuse to throw another ball in someone's honor.

The First Lady, however, stays almost completely out of politics. That she leaves to the Maire. In return, no one questions her collection of state revenues.

In her own way, she gives something back to Orleans. She lends grace and elegance to what would otherwise be all too clearly seen to be a den of iniquity. The threat of her Zombis should also not be underestimated. When Marie does make a suggestion about something, she is taken quite seriously. Most people find it only prudent to pay a call.

THE KREWES

Apart from the First Lady, society in New Orleans revolves around the city's many Krewes. Fraternal organizations formed by various segments of the population, Krewes are unique to the city. Membership in a Krewe is essential for social advancement. Who you are is linked to the Krewe to which you belong. Every group, business, and class in New Orleans has an associated Krewe, often more than one. Relations between Krewes determine with whom it is proper to be seen in society. Think of a Krewe as a social street gang.

If you belong to wealthy plantation society, membership in The Mystic Krewe means you have arrived. Industrialists belong to the Krewe of Rex. Pirates and criminals make up the Krewe known as the Order of the Moon. The Krewe known as the Kwoore and its rival, the Krewe of Zulu, are exclusively black tribal organizations, consisting of smaller family groups known as Dyow. The Knights of the White Camellia are a Krewe of white supremacists, opposed to racial equality. The Krewe of Venus is exclusively female, with something of a scandalous reputation.

In addition, there are sorcerous Krewes. The Krewe of Proteus claims knowledge from Ancient Egypt and may have connections to the Temple of Ra. Both the Kwoore and the Krewe of Zulu have voodoo associations. Perhaps the strangest Krewe is the Atlanteans, who claim to be descendants of Atlantis! The truth is unknown, but this Krewe is very selective in its membership and very secretive.

MARDI GRAS

Mardi Gras is the annual carnival for which New Orleans is most famous. For a week the city is a riot of celebrations, parades, fireworks, dancing in the streets, and total debauchery. Mardi Gras is sponsored by the Krewes with each responsible for a different portion of the festivities. For once, all of the Krewes cooperate.

Masques and costumes are the order of the day, and night. Many dress as Carnival Indians. Mardi Gras Queens, women, and men dressed as women, scantily attired and dancing provocatively, are also popular. If you can visit New Orleans but once, do so during Mardi Gras. Just remember to leave your inhibitions at home.

CAJUNS AND CREOLES

French exiles from Canada, the Cajuns (originally Arcadians) were given permission to settle in Orleans' swamps. Left to their own devices in this primitive backcountry, the Cajuns have developed their own traditions and society, distinct from any other. Masters of their environment, the swamps and bayous provide all of the essentials of Cajun life. The Cajuns are a clannish yet friendly people. Blacks and Indians living in the swamps are accepted into Cajun society, even if intermarriage is uncommon.

A Creole is not the same as a Cajun, though some use the term interchangeably. Creoles are persons of French, Spanish, or Indian descent who have intermarried with Orleans' black population. Where the Cajuns are predominantly a rural society, Creoles are largely urban. With colorful and distinct traditions of their own, it is best not to confuse a Creole with a Cajun.

IMPERIAL STYLE

After his defeat at Waterloo, Napoleon was exiled to the island of St. Helena in 1815. According to legend, the Francophile Maire of New Orleans, Henri Girod, determined to rescue the Emperor and bring him to freedom in Orleans. In 1816, Girod is said to have outfitted a rescue mission commanded by Jean Lafitte. Successfully replacing Napoleon with a double, the Emperor was allegedly spirited away and housed in secret rooms above a bar in New Orleans, the now famous Napoleon House, owned by the Maire. Of the circumstances of Napoleon's departure from Orleans little is known.

The whole affair is a widely believed rumor. What is certain is that since Napoleon's supposed arrival, New Orleans has fancied itself an imperial city on a New European scale. French is the language, food, architecture and style of choice. New Europeans will feel more at home in New Orleans than in any other city in North America. *Vive L'Empereur! Vive La New Orleans!*

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: GAMBLER

Whether it's up and down the Mississippi, on the Barbary Coast of San Francisco, in the mining towns of the West, or in the dance halls of New Orleans, you can be found wherever dice are rolling and cards are being dealt. No one is your equal at games of chance. From chuck-a-luck to *vingt-et-un* to poker to the aristocratic king of games, *faro*, you are the undisputed master. You're charming and smooth, a good judge of character and odds. You know how to cheat but rarely find it necessary. Sometimes your reputation precedes you; at times it's best not to share your name for fear of scaring off the marks. You may be a gambler who wanders from town to town, or you may stay in one place, dealing *faro* for the house and splitting the profits with the owner.

To apply the Gambling ability to the American Gambler, a Poor Gambler wins very seldom, and when he does, it's by cheating. An Average Gambler is a bit better, but he'd still cheat his own mother. A Good Gambler can hold his own in most games. A Great Gambler has made a name for himself, and hardly ever has to cheat. An Excellent Gambler is a professional, and is trusted to run games at saloons. An Extraordinary Gambler is legendary, can count cards in his sleep, and hears the cards calling to him before he lays down his money.

Strong Suits: Charisma, Comeliness, Gambling

Possessions: Deck of marked cards, loaded dice, Derringer

In Your Diary: Who owes you money and how much, accounts of your greatest winnings, and notes of the house rules of the places you frequent.

Why You're Here: Showman P. T. Barnum once said "there's one born every minute", and that applies to your profession as well. Somewhere, there's always someone ready to lose all his money at a game of chance, and it may as well be you who wins it.

THE BIG EASY

Don Chandler was stunned by the whole affair. "Honestly," he said, studying the dents in the observation deck gunwale, "I knew New Orleans was a rough place, but I didn't think air pirates would be bold enough to attack a ship like this."

"Obviously, they didn't know how well armed we were," said Lückner. "They probably thought they could suppress the crew and either shoot out the air bags to bring us down, or else board us and capture us. Either way, they wanted to get the *Stauffenberg* whole. A ship like this would make quite a prize."

"What I'd like to know," I said, "is how they knew where we'd be."

"You're too suspicious, Thomas," said von Hubel. "A vessel like this is hard to miss, and we made our itinerary public. They probably just waited for us, then attacked."

"Thomas is right. Why the attack?" asked Marianne. "Why here, just outside of the United States? Why, when there are easier people to be robbed than us? Perhaps the Americans put these pirates up to this atrocity."

"No," said Chandler. "The U.S. would like to consider Orleans to be theirs. To have you shot down here would be an embarrassment to the government."

"You overstate the fact, *monsieur*," she replied. "They could use this *contretemps* to justify invading Orleans again, and embarrass Bayern's navy, also."

"No, I have to agree with Martin," I said. "Thanks for sticking up for me, Marianne, but I think he's right. Never put down to conspiracy what you can attribute to pure stupidity. They just thought they could take us."

"And Orleans has long had a problem with pirates," added Chandler. "However, if you put in a stern word with the Maire, he can probably see to it that you have no further difficulty with the locals."

"What, is he a crime lord?" I asked.

Chandler winced. "I wouldn't put it exactly that way, but he does have, oh, regulatory powers on all businesses in his parish."

Despite the advantage of having Dwarf-metal armor, we had taken some damage. No armor is perfect, and having two supposed escorts open up on us with gatlings at practically point-blank range did us no good. We also lost several crewmen to the attack, and many more were injured.

After that attack I would rather have given New Orleans a miss, but we had to put down to get the injured better attention than we could arrange on board ship. We circled the city twice, not just to get their attention but also to evaluate the best place to put down. We finally settled on a spot in the Mississippi that had a long dock and no ships around. We figured we'd settle down slowly until the rudder touched the bottom of the Big Muddy. We hoped the river would be deep enough so that we could get the cabin pretty close to the dock.

We got close enough that we could lower the able-bodied onto the dock by rope. I was lowered down, as were Lückner, von Hubel, and a few Marines. I always thought they should be called *aeros*, since in an *aerocruiser*, it was unlikely they'd ever be in the water. Anyway, we walked down the dock together, toward a party which waited for us.

There were ten of them. They all had weapons. They were, thankfully, wearing some sort of uniform, so I doubted they were thugs or pirates, but still, it was an inauspicious beginning.

"Good day to you all," said Martin. "We are here on the behalf of his Majesty King Ludwig of Bayern." He smiled winningly.

They were unimpressed. They spoke among themselves for a few seconds, then one of them stepped forward. He spoke with a heavy accent. "You are to being held. Here. Not to go noplac. *Je vous mettre en quarantaine, vous comprenez?*"

Some welcoming committee.

EPIDEMIC

W

e sent for Marianne. She spoke French. She spoke with the guards for several minutes before she caught us up. "There is a quarantine everywhere," she said. "They say it is yellow fever, and we are not allowed to leave until they are certain we are not infected. To make sure we do not leave, they are going to keep some of us away from the ship at all times."

"Yellow fever? We have to protect ourselves," said Lückner.

"How is it spread? Human contact, right?"

"Actually, by mosquitoes," I said. "Look around. There's swamps everywhere. Mosquitoes could spread a disease in a place like this with no problem."

"Don't be ridiculous," said Lückner.

"Seriously," I said. "Mosquitoes suck blood. So if a mosquito goes from one person to another, it can pick up the disease from the first person's blood and inject it into the other. Trust me, they do inject stuff. That's why you get that little welt."

"So if we kill the mosquitoes, we stay healthy?" Martin asked.

"No. By then it's too late. We have to avoid being bitten."

"But how?" asked Marianne.

I thought for a moment. "Citronella candles. Or incense. Smoke of any sort. That, and mosquito netting spread over all the open doorways."

"We don't have any of that," said Lückner.

Marianne stepped in. "I will go buy some."

"No, Marianne, it's too dangerous," I said.

"Nonsense. I speak French, so I can shop more quickly than any of you," she said.

"Okay," I said, "but I'll go with you. Wait a second—" I sniffed the air. "It smells like, what, roofing tar or burning rubber. Ask 'em what's up."

Marianne spoke with the guards again. "They say the people, they burn tar for protection against the evil spirits."

"There you go, Captain," I said. "Have the crew burn tar at all the doorways and windows. We probably have some in our patch kits, right? That'll keep the mosquitoes at bay until we get back with something that'll smell a little better."

After hitting up the ship's clerk for some cash, we hailed a carriage to take us shopping. Lückner, von Hubel, and a few others were taken as "guests of the Maire" to a hotel, there to remain under "protective guard." Yeah, right. The guards are going to stop the mosquitoes. Marianne and I were as efficient as we could possibly be, buying mosquito netting, incense galore, and arranging for medical supplies to be sent.

Everything went as smooth as silk, as they say. We were finished inside of two hours. It seemed a pretty face, smooth French, and a pocket full of Bayernese gold went a long way in this town. Too long, in fact.

We stepped out of the last shop we visited to find our carriage wasn't waiting for us. It had moved a block down the street. But there were people waiting to greet us. Five of them. Swamp dregs. Grinning. Because they had swords drawn, and we didn't.

I stopped and looked them over with a slightly impatient expression. I've found a good front of confidence can do a lot to stop thugs. "If you Cajun boys are looking for trouble, you've looked in the right place, 'cause we'll give it to you."

"That's Creole, you iggerant pup," he said. "An' your gonna turn over yore swag and yore wench, either willin' or daid."

Just then, another carriage rode up. A large one. With guards. With rifles. And one, looking to be an officer, said, "I wouldn't do that, if'n I were you, Sedge. It'll look mighty bad when you pay your taxes using coin stolen from guests of the Maire."

Sedge protested, all innocence and sugar. "Aw, I was just bien' funny."

"Looking," I added. Sedge glowered at me.

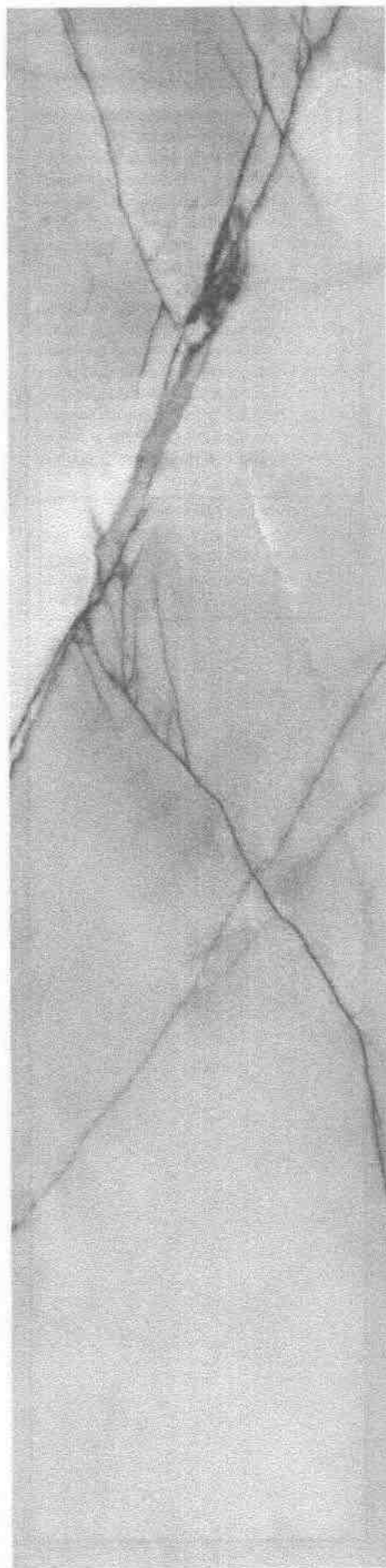
But he didn't dare.

CALAMITY JANE

Born in 1852 in northern Orleans, Jane Canary, better known as Calamity Jane, has done a lot in a short amount of time. She has fought Indians in the Twenty Nations; chased outlaws and ghosts in the Ozarks; punched cattle in Texas, been a Union spy in the Civil War, a gunslinger in Tombstone, and a Mississippi River pirate; and on a trip to the Bear Flag Empire, she broke Emperor Norton's heart. If you believe the stories she tells at her bar in the French Quarter, that is. But you'd best not make some comment about her being not much older than twenty. It is certain that Jane has earned her ill-starred moniker with a mean temper. Wherever she goes, trouble seems to follow. A true daughter of Orleans, there is no freer spirit than Calamity Jane.

• Calamity Jane, Gunslinger

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Gunslinging [GR] • Perception [GR] • Renown [EXC] • Stealth [GD]



"Our apologies," the watch officer said to us. "We had no idea you were the Bayernese delegates. Word hadn't gotten down that you were going to drop on by."

"Well, it was sort of a last-minute change of plans," I said.

"Bad timing," he said. I could only agree.

We spoke with the men of the watch for a few minutes as they escorted us to our carriage. (The ruffians had brow-beaten the driver into moving a short distance away. He probably hung around hoping to bilk us for a fare to the hospital.) They were employed by the Maire of New Orleans, of course. Their job was to protect the peace, first against outside interlopers, then within city limits. Within reason, and with great prudence. No sense in annoying those who bribe you—I mean, pay their taxes.

We had hoped to meet with the Maire, but he was down with the yellow fever. No fun. However, Marie Laveau, the First Lady of Orleans as she calls herself, was using her magickal powers to try to heal the Maire, as well as several other persons of note about town. No chance of a reception by either of them. One too busy healing, the other too busy barfing. So I presented the watchmen with calling cards to give to the Maire and Mme. Laveau, as well as anyone else they thought should have one.

Disappointed, though still in one piece, we left the watchmen standing by the side of the road and went back to the *Stauffenberg*. The place was smoking up royally when we returned, and we installed our new curtains at every outside opening of the ship. It would have been easier and cheaper had the pirates not shot out our windows.

We stayed inside several days, eating our rations and tending to our wounded. The officer of the watch we'd spoken to earlier came by the aerocruiser once a day to see if we needed anything. Good man. I'd have to recommend him to the Maire for a promotion. If we got the chance to meet him. If anything, the epidemic was getting worse. We saw fewer and fewer people on the streets as the days passed. I guess too many people were at home taking care of their sick relatives. Or maybe they didn't know that if you survived, you got an immunity. Still, it seemed like we were an island of health in the Big Easy.

Until Marianne started vomiting.

She was late for breakfast, so I went to her cabin to fetch her. She hadn't gotten up. Her head and back were aching, she said, right before she rolled over and loaded the waste basket. And hot? Let me tell you. And by the time I got back with the ship's doctor, it was noticeably worse.

What could we do? I had no idea. We asked for a medical guide from our friendly neighborhood watch officer. The ship's doctor had only a sketchy outline in his books. Basically, we just did what we could to keep her fever down. Moral support. That sort of thing.

And everyone else burned a hell of a lot of citronella.

Two days later, she got worse. Her pulse started slowing down. She lay listless in bed, her skin yellow with jaundice, only occasionally rolling over to retch up some blood-tainted bile. It was bad. I spoke with the doctor, who'd been studying the medical books we'd gotten. Between his books and the ones given us by the guards, one thing was certain. Marianne was dying. It might take as long as a week, but as near as we could tell, she was a goner without some sort of help. We moved her into a sunny portion of the ship, to help with her jaundice. And that's when it hit me. There are some times that I am so glad I'm from another planet.

This was one.

"I'll go for help," I said to the doctor.

"It's dangerous, Kapitän Olam," he said.

"Listen," I said. "She's dying. I'm not. I'm gonna help her, either with you or without you. Now there's a voodoo witch out there, and I'm going to find her. I'll pay whatever it takes to get her to help Marianne."

"But you might catch the fever!" he said.

"Not to worry, doc. I've been inoculated," I said. I turned to leave.

"At least I think I was," I muttered.

Finding Marie Laveau was not hard. Getting her services was. Even with my calling card, it still took some persuasion. I guess the calling card was only good enough to let me speak with her. She was tall, and rather good-looking. I was surprised, because I'd expected to find an old woman instead of a young one with curling black hair and fine red-brown skin. But then I remembered she was a voodoo witch. She could probably look as young as she wanted. And, considering the crow's feet around her fierce black eyes, she'd probably been exerting most of her magickal power to heal those around her.

In fact, every sorcerer in the city was doing the same.

Which led us to our current problem, once I had managed to procure Marie's assistance through a combination of diplomacy, bribery, and good old-fashioned whining.

"There is no power for me to use," she said as she looked over Marianne.

"Isn't there something you can do?" I asked. Marianne was delirious. And getting weaker and yellower by the hour.

"The fever has gone on too long," she said. She had a curious accent. It was at once compelling and unnerving. Especially knowing she was a voodoo priestess or something. I'm sure it's just prejudice on my part, but when I think voodoo, I think zombies. Marie looked Marianne over carefully again and clucked. "I do not know that I can gather enough power to heal her body. All magickal power in the city is taken by others. There are too many patients for us to cure."

Then I remember something Morrolan had mentioned once. I touched Marie on the shoulder. She turned. "Unravel me," I said.

She looked at me long and hard. Longest, most intense look I've met, outside of Marianne. "I can't," she said.

"Why not?"

"It does not work that way," she said. "I cannot unravel you unless I sacrifice you, kill you for your life energy." I started to reply, but she put her finger to my lips. "There are spirits around you who will not let me do that. But because I can see how important she is to you, and you to these spirits, I shall unravel myself. It should not hurt me much." She turned back to Marianne. "Leave us now," she said to me.

"And next time," she said, "do not wait so very long to get my help."

I shut the door behind me, and suddenly I realized that there was nothing I could do. I hate that feeling. So I decided to find something to do. I looked for Don Chandler. I found him in the cargo area at the bottom of the aerocruiser. The bomb bay, but now it was stocked with food and supplies. He waved as he saw me approach.

"We'll need to leave soon," I said. "The epidemic is running its course. But before we can go, we need to hire us some new crewmen to replace those who were killed by the air pirates. Got any suggestions on where to go?"

He looked up with a smile. "I don't know the place, but I know just the person to fit the bill!"

"You're kidding."

"Not at all!" he said. "I'm a very well-traveled man. And, if I recall correctly, there is a man by the name of Johann Schoenfeld. He'd work for you. Probably has a few friends, too."

"Johann?"

"He didn't like 'John.' It was too common for him."

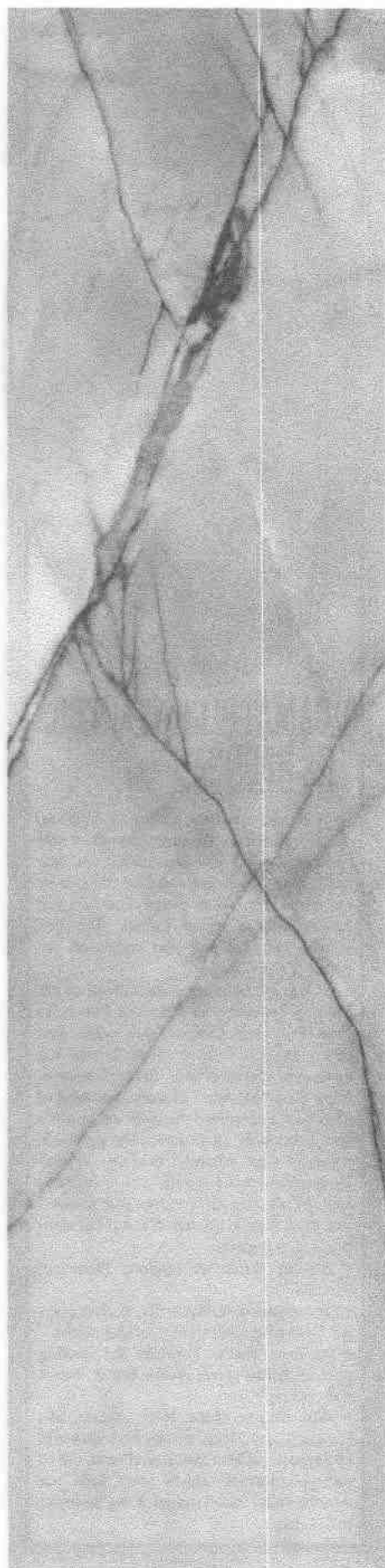
"Is he safe?" I asked. "The U.S. is kind of after us ..."

"He's an ex-Confederate balloon corps man. Moved here after the South lost. He's your man. We can go check out his old haunts."

And, after some work, we did find him. He was a cool, clean-cut, reserved kind of guy, and a fourth-generation Low German from New Braunfels. Very gentlemanly. Soft-spoken. A good guy. I liked him instinctively. With his help, we were able to find a few other aerosailors who could take care of the grunt work that needed tending. Belay that line and all that stuff. So we hired four new guys and returned to the *Stauffenberg*.

By the time we got back, Marie Laveau was gone.

And Marianne, though weak, smiled at me.



VOUDON IN ORLEANS

THE VOUDON QUEEN

Voudon is a thriving religion in Orleans, enjoying a popularity equal to Christianity, and Marie Laveau is the Voudon Queen of New Orleans. Her name is whispered in the drawing rooms of the elite and chanted in Congo Square on ritual nights. A devout Roman Catholic, she is also the Chosen of Damballah, the rainbow serpent. It is hard to differentiate between fact and fiction concerning Mam'zelle, and the truth may in fact be all that is said. Feared as the greatest practitioner of Voudon in New Orleans, she is also a New World Florence Nightingale, often seen tending victims of yellow fever as well as running a halfway house for runaway slaves and orphans. More pragmatically, she is a highly sought after hairdresser and procuress for the many quadroon and mulatto maidens that attend the nightly Quadroon Balls.

Her house stands on St. Anne's Street, a gift from the father of a young white man whom she saved, the steps scrubbed with bright red brick dust to ward off bad luck. It is a half block away from Congo Square, the site of her many open rituals. Farther away, on the banks of the great Mississippi, the great rituals are held at a cabin on St. John's Bayou, the drums beating, the candles reflecting in the dark waters.

Mam'zelle was also the one to institute the greatest religious observance for all voodoo, June 24th, St. John's Eve. In preparation for this ritual, Mam'zelle is not seen for nine days before. At the feast the night of St. John's Eve when everyone calls on her, she rises out of the waters of the lake with a great communion candle on her head and another in each of her hands. She walks upon the waters to the shore and the loa possesses all the priests and priestesses as soon as her feet touch the shore. When the feast is over, she goes back into the lake and is not seen for another nine days.

Born sometime in 1796, you might believe Mam'zelle to be an old woman in her seventies, but you would be wrong. Some time in 1869, she walked into the cabin on St. John's Bayou one night and emerged the next morning a young woman. This miracle only compounded her already great power. To meet Mam'zelle today you would find her a beautiful woman of twenty.

Shortly after this rebirth, Mam'zelle was challenged to a conjuring match where she did battle with Malvina LaTour, a rival voodienne, to determine who would be Voudon Queen of New Orleans. The battle raged for three nights, strange lights and horrible noises coming from the house on St. John's Bayou. At the end, Mam'zelle was triumphant and Malvina went her own way in peace.

Be warned, traveller to New Orleans, if you seek Mam'zelle Marie Laveau. Her worshipers are extremely protective, and many women will tell you they are sure to weed out the true seekers from the false.

THE RAINBOW AND THE SERPENT

Voudon is woven into New Orleans the way that the smoke and whiskey permeate the French Quarter. Both religion and occult science, the signs of Voudon and its practitioners are seen everywhere, from the red brick dust scrubbed on house steps to the street houngans selling their gris-gris, powerful voodoo charms. An African magick, Voudon came across in the slave ships, hiding itself in Roman Catholicism to escape destruction. The deities, the loa, are not so much gods as the Western mind may perceive, but archaic forces of nature, both capricious and benevolent.

The loa are many, and occult texts speak in more detail than can be gone into here. Cataloguing the loa is a task made even more difficult by the fact that each individual loa has a multitude of names, as well as being able to manifest itself in its "children." A brief description of some of the prominent members of the voodoo pantheon is listed below:

- **Aida-Wedo:** Goddess of the sky and the giver of blessing, she is the wife of Damballah. Her symbol is the rainbow, which decorates all voodoo temples. One of her manifestations is Erzulie.
- **Damballah Wedo (The Great Serpent):** God of wind, water, and fire. He is the Sky-Serpent, and is credited with creating the Earth. Firm and temperamental, he is the loving father archetype. His symbols are the color white and the serpent.
- **Elegba Eshu, Legba, or Maître Carrefour:** Trickster, linguist, warrior, god of crossroads. He is the sun, the guardian of the center, and the opener of gates. He is the husband of Erzulie. As Maître Carrefour, he is the patron of sorcery.

- **Erzulie, Maitresse Erzulie, or Oshun (Mother of Charity):** Goddess of love and the moon. Beautiful, seductive, versatile; the ideal woman.
- **Guedé:** Guedé is the Loa of death, healing, and the protector of children. Guedé more commonly manifests as the **Death Gods**, or the **Three:** Baron Samedi, loa of the dead; Baron Cimetière, loa of the cemetery; and Baron La Croix, loa of the cross. These loa are also associated with debauchery and buffoonery. Their symbols are coffins and phalluses, and they are depicted as being dressed like undertakers in top hats and tails.
- **Ogoun:** God of iron, fire, lightning, and the sword. He is a warrior and a blacksmith, and a quietly dangerous man. He is symbolized by the color red.

Only the priestesses and priests may call upon the loa, and it is difficult to say if they call upon them or the reverse. Great are the powers of the voodoo priesthood when the loa "ride" their chosen, a type of possession not duplicated in western sorcery. Beware the Chosen of the Loa, for they wield the powers of their gods in their possessed state.

The greatest of the voodoo ritual days is St. John's Day, also known as Midsummer's Day. It is a great celebration and the chosen time for the most complicated of rituals.

RANSOM THE DEAD

Only the priesthood can raise or make zombi. The number of zombi raised or made in a single night is determined by the power of the priest or priestess. It is not a common practice, both because of the complicated nature of the ritual and because if the priest is not strong enough, the zombi can throw off his will. A zombi under no control but its own is mad and craves only one thing: human flesh.

When raising the dead, the ritual requires a great deal of blood, either chicken or black cat, to create the blood circle that the priest must stand in while calling the zombi back from the dead. Also required are large quantities of the *coup poudre*, a secret magical powder which facilitates the creation of a zombi. The greater the number of zombi called, the more blood required. Once raised, the zombi's soul is captured in a *canari*, and the zombi is bound to the priest until such time as she binds them back to his grave with salt and his own blood. For more on zombis and their creation, see *The Book of Sigils*, pg. 89-90.



DRAMATIC CHARACTER: THE HOUGAN

Houngans are the priests of Voudon. Mambos are the priestesses. Since you were little, you knew you would join their ranks. Born with a caul, you were touched by the spirits. You know things others do not and see things others cannot. The Loa answer your call and you command the power of the zombi.

Deep in the swamps and bayous of the south, you build your Places of Power. In cities like New Orleans, you wield that power. In New Orleans, Marie Laveau is a force to be reckoned with. In San Francisco, Mary Ellen "Mammy" Pleasant, a protégé of Marie Laveau, runs a network of brothels and informants that make her politically powerful. In Miami, Ernesto "Papa" Domingues leads a santería sect, a uniquely Spanish offshoot of Voudon that controls that city's Spanish quarter. You too can command such respect.

- **Strong Suits:** Perception, Physician, Sorcery.
- **Possessions:** Zombi powder, chalk or powder for drawing vevs, rum, candles, herbs.
- **In Your Diary:** Formulas for creating potions, herbal cures, rituals, lists of friends and enemies.
- **Why You're Here:** New Orleans, San Francisco, and Miami already have powerful Houngans and Mambos, so you've set out to seek your fortune. Maybe you'll strike out into the West. Indian magick is not dissimilar to Voudon.

AERO PIRATES

Although the origins of the practice of piracy are lost in the mists of history, the origins of sky piracy are clearly located in the United States. The name suggests acts of piracy committed by airborne raiders against airborne targets; however, this is not generally the case. Aeroraiders primarily concentrate upon ground targets—trains, ships, even settlements. This is more due to a lack of aerial targets upon which to prey than any other factor. There have been reports of aerial vessels attacked by sky pirates, but they are rare occurrences. As the number of commercial aerial vessels increases the frequency with which they are attacked by aeroraiders is bound to increase. (For a broad overview of sky piracy see *Steam Age*, pg. 100.)

The first aerial raiding vessel, the *CAS Macon*, was commissioned as a privateer, but its crew of Confederate soldiers meant that it was never considered to be anything but a warship. The first true act of sky piracy was committed during the war by an independent party. Jack Roberts, upon hearing of the *Macon*, built a small airship and proceeded to raid stagecoaches throughout the Republic of Texas and Mexico. Initially successful, Roberts' career was brought to an abrupt and fiery end when a flaming Apache arrow found its mark in his gas bag.

As others heard of Roberts' exploits, they too took to the role of aerial buccaneer. Jean-Claude Davout of New Orleans was the next infamous air pirate. New Orleans, and the Orleans Free State, was once a haven for Caribbean buccaneers and thus no stranger to the rough trade of piracy. Davout and his followers had taken up residence in the old pirate haunts of Barataria—a vast wet plain crossed and recrossed with hundreds of placid bayous and covered everywhere with rustling marsh grass stretching southward from New Orleans on the Mississippi for 60 miles to the Gulf of Mexico. The inaccessibility by boat to this area made it a natural haven for sky pirates who made their bases on the *chenières*, islands made up of silt and shells and covered with oak trees, which dot the region. From here the raiders employed a network of smugglers familiar with the waterways of the area to transport their "goods" to market in New Orleans, or to ferry individuals to their bases to hold private auctions for particularly interesting or hard to get merchandise.

In order to preserve its neutrality in the war, Orleans had to "officially" engage in an active program to put down Davout and others who had followed his lead. However, the decrease in trade caused by the Union blockade of New Orleans meant that the locals were only too happy to assist aeroraiders by giving them a market for their ill-gotten booty, while well placed bribes by Davout ensured that patrols were few or in the wrong places at the right times. Sky pirates who could not afford to pay for such protections did not fare as well. The heads of several convicted aeroraiders decorated the fence around Burr Square in New Orleans.

With the end of the Civil War, several renegade Confederate crews made off with their airships and turned to open piracy. But, with the return of open trade, the government of Orleans found itself less and less able to overlook acts of sky piracy. Soon bribes were not enough to protect even Davout, who had become a well known and admired citizen of New Orleans during the War. Davout knew when enough was enough and quietly retired after having purchased a pardon from the Orleans government. He is rumored to have moved to Baton Rouge and married.

Others decided to continue their life on high. A very few of these airborne Baratarians remained in their old haunts. Most chose to find bluer skies elsewhere. Following the example of Jean Lafitte, terror of the high seas, some of these pirates moved their base from New Orleans to Galveston, an island off the coast of the Republic of Texas, while others moved eastward into the vast swamps of Florida. Texas initially turned a blind eye to these activities, as long as raids were primarily conducted against targets in or from the United States or Mexico. However, it was not long before the U.S. tracked the raiders back to their new base and delivered an ultimatum to the Texan government. Unless Texas took steps to eradicate the air pirates, the U.S. would send in the Marine Corps to clear them out. Not wanting a major war over a minor problem, the Texans moved against the pirates. In the ensuing raid, in which the entire city of Galveston was nearly razed, only a handful of aeropirates were captured. The remaining crews fled north into the Unorganized Territories or south into the Gulf of Mexico. Texas would hereafter no longer tolerate acts of piracy within its borders.

Although fewer in number than those which relocated to Galveston, the aeropirates of Florida fared better. The first base of operation in Florida was established in the panhandle, in an area known as Boggy Bayou. From there the pirates moved east and south to the Big Cypress Swamp and the Everglades. Here the pirates joined forces with the remaining Seminole Indians. The remoteness of the region combined with both the pirates' experience at using such terrain and the Seminoles' knowledge of the area have made it almost impossible for the U.S. to root them out. Organized under the joint leadership of a former Confederate, Maj. Ezekiel "Zeke" Stannage, and Swamp Fox, the pirates have a good knowledge of both aerial and guerrilla tactics as well as a common dislike for the Federal government. As such they target primarily American shipping, both land- and sea-based. Furthermore, they are surprisingly well equipped when compared to other pirate bands, and there are rumors of aid being funneled to the raiders by an outside agency. After several attempts to dislodge them from their hideouts, the Floridian pirates remain the most effective group of sky pirates in North America today.

Those from Galveston who arrived in the Unorganized Territories began to make small raids across the border of the Bear Flag Empire against the Comstock Silver Mines and small isolated gold prospectors. Because this was initially seen as a small threat by the Imperial Court, and because it amused Emperor Norton no end to have pirates in his Empire, little was done aside from strengthening security around the larger mining installations. It was not until the during night raid against the Imperial Mint in San Francisco itself, in which \$100,000 (roughly 300 pounds) in gold was stolen, that the Bear Flag Empire took the threat of aeropiracy seriously. In the now famous telegraphed warning to the rest of the coast, Samuel Clemens urged the people of the Empire to "Watch the Skies!"

Although responsible for the single largest raid in the brief history of aeropiracy, these western pirates lack the organization required to become a true threat. Known as the Badlands Pirates, they are primarily composed of small groups, each of perhaps half a dozen men, acting alone. Sandwiched between the Bear Flag Empire to the west and the Republic of Texas to the south, both of which have taken steps to eliminate sky piracy within their borders, these desperate men must content themselves with fewer and smaller targets upon which to prey. Isolated gold miners, homesteaders, the occasional stagecoach or train, and most rarely lone Steam Wells are the primary victims for these bands. In fact there is much speculation as to whether such a group could have staged the San Francisco raid without the aid of either the World Crime League or the Phantom Empire.



DRAMATIC CHARACTER:

AERO PIRATE

Maybe you once wore the gray uniform of the Confederate Balloon Corps, and refused to surrender after the War. Or perhaps you and your comrades took to the air under your own flag, looking for adventure and plunder wherever the winds carried you. Either way, with the end of the war aeronauting was looked on less favorably around your old haunts. So you moved on to bluer skies, to the Florida bayous, or Texas until the sack of Galveston. You followed the winds and your luck, using your wits and your sword to stay alive. Sometimes you sell your services to the highest bidder; other times you pick your own targets. It's a rough life, but you live it on your own terms. Now, if you only had on of those newfangled aerovettes ...

- **Strong Suits:** Courage, Helmsmanship, Marksmanship
- **Possessions:** Cutlass, revolver, sextant and compass (to chart your course with), airship (check with your Host).
- **In Your Diary:** Maps to treasure you've secreted away, or secret hideouts known only to you; train and stagecoach schedules for you to plan raids; observations on banks or outposts; records of your exploits.
- **Why You're Here:** Maybe you still fight for a cause. Perhaps you're just looking for your next prize to take. Are you on the run from the law? Or do you work for them now? Are you still a pirate, or have you taken a Letter of Marque?

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: YANKEE SORCEROR

What good is magick and newfangled steam technology if you can't sell it, bottle it, or put it to some practical use? Your specialty is doing just that. You leave the theory and grand designs to others, concentrating on turning a profit from your small but more useful inventions and magical creations. Part Yankee trader, part Ben Franklin, and part Merlin, you sell to whoever's buying, travel the world looking for new markets, and bring the best the world has to offer back to the United States. You're a steam-powered, magickal jack-of-all-trades.

- **Strong Suits:** Performance (sales pitch), Sorcery, Tinkering
- **Possessions:** Toolbox, portable alchemy kit, sample bag, walking stick.
- **In Your Diary:** Spells, notes on new spell combinations, mechanical designs, sales records and accounts of your journeys.
- **Why You're Here:** You're on yet another trade venture, looking for exotic items that your acquaintances in New England simply *must* have. Orleans is rich in voodoo; many outlandish things can be found there. Texas and California yield Spanish and Indian objects, and lord only knows what waits in the Unorganized Territories. A true coup would be travelling in the Twenty Nations, but are you ready to risk that?

GULF COAST LEGEND: JEAN LAFITTE

Late in the summer of 1803, a pair of brothers named Jean and Pierre Lafitte made their way to New Orleans from Marseilles. The city, indeed the entire region, was never the same after their arrival. By 1815 they had become the most infamous pirates ever to ply the Gulf Coast.

When the Lafittes first reached New Orleans, it was a sleepy city of no more than thirty thousand, a proud bastion of French culture in the middle of a dense swamp. They soon owned a huge blacksmith shop between Bourbon and Dauphine streets and a small army of slaves to work it. But the Lafittes, Jean especially, aspired to be more than simple merchants. Their opportunity came out of the political instability of the times.

As the Napoleonic Wars commanded the attention and resources of New Europa, all the Americas from Canada to Argentina chafed under a suddenly loosened bridle. Scattered acts of colonial rebellion came more and more frequently, threatening to turn into full-scale revolts. The republic of Cartagena, a tiny seaport on the coast of Columbia, began to issue letters of marque against Spanish shipping. France and America targeted British vessels. A new kind of adventurer arose in this storm, the gentleman privateer. With sturdy ships, brass cannons, and saber-wielding crews, these rogues quickly became the terror of the high seas. But where did the brothers Lafitte, reputable merchants that they were, fit in?

To the east of New Orleans the Mississippi River spreads out into a gargantuan delta of bayous and trackless meres; to the west lies the great Bayou La Fourche. In between is an expanse of water called Barataria Bay. Hidden among a scattering of nameless cays and reefs is an island with an excellent harbor called Grand Terre, sometimes Barataria. All the privateer activity in the Gulf of Mexico was centered here. The Baratarians sailed out of their aptly named "Smuggler's Retreat" and plundered the ships of a dozen different flags. They brought whatever goods they took to New Orleans, though it could be difficult for them to trade there. Revenue officers came out in droves whenever they had word of a privateer coming in, and the Baratarians were by their nature opposed to paying tariffs. The bayous offered approaches to the port that no tax collector could follow, so all they needed was a local to be their agent and banker. In stepped Jean Lafitte.

Jean was a charming, energetic man who spoke four languages and could swing a sword like a seasoned duelist. With such a broker to fence their take, the privateers grew bold, attacking the richest, best-protected shipping lanes. Lafitte became a powerful man, and soon the step from factor to chieftain was a small one indeed. Boosted by the fame he won in the War of 1812, in early 1813 Jean Lafitte, his brother Pierre beside him, took control of the Baratarians. Though a fair commander, he demanded total obedience. There was in his band a man named Grambo, a rogue from an earlier, rougher time. One night Grambo declared himself a pirate in the mold of old Blackbeard, and called upon his comrades to cast down the soft privateer who had come to rule them. When Lafitte heard of this, he searched out Grambo and shot him through the heart. Thereafter his rule was unquestioned.

Under Lafitte the privateers were wildly successful, and the consequences of their success meant that soon they had to relocate. Jean moved his base to Galveston Island, where he lived in a splendid manor called Maison Rouge. It was whispered that the house had been erected in a single night by the Devil himself. Whether or not this was true, Lafitte certainly possessed the kind of luck only a deal with Old Scratch could provide. While captaining a raid, a Spanish man-o'-war blew his ship out from under him. He was found days later, barely alive, clinging to a piece of debris. No other survivors were found.

It was Lafitte's subsequent vendetta against the Spanish that drove him to the greatest of his exploits. In late 1820, he attacked and captured a convoy of bullion ships headed for Cadiz from the South American gold fields. It was a haul richer than any pirate had ever seen before. Lafitte knew that Spain would send the bulk of its navy to find him, so he quickly hid the gold somewhere along the Gulf coast, and disappeared. One rumor states that Lafitte lived out his life as a pirate lord in a fortress in the Yucatan. Another states that he married, changed his name, and settled down to a normal life. The story continues that he then used his treasure to finance the first printing of *Das Kapital*, several of which were given as presents to Senator Lincoln.

Which account is true remains, like Lafitte's treasure, to be discovered.

• Jean Lafitte (Legendary figure)

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Connections [GR] • Fisticuffs [EXC] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Physique [GR]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible or insubstantial and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

Raise Nature: As the Lake Lady ability (CF pg. 175). Lafitte uses this ability to evade pursuit.

THE LONE STAR REPUBLIC

From there, we went westward again. Texas. It's going to take me a little while to deal with different countries on this continent.

We went along the coast for a short while. I turned my spy glass toward the coastal swamps, looking for alligators and roseate spoonbills. The waters of the Caribbean were beautiful from above, crystal clear. We even saw some rays swimming along in formation.

We got to Galveston, still recovering from the fire, then turned toward Houston. Really, I have to wonder what it would be like to have a city named after you, even if you were president of the country. I'd spent some time in Houston on your side of the Veil. I was somewhat disappointed with what I saw here.

Northward. I was standing on the poop deck with Chandler, watching the rolling brown hills pass slowly beneath us. There wasn't a whole heck of a lot a self-appointed tour and activities coordinator could do out here. No real sights, no nifty place to touch down. We ended up talking about the U.S. government. He could tell I was not very happy with them. I told him about the whole Monroe Doctrine blood and thunder speech that Stanton gave us. He smiled.

"I'd say that Ed Stanton is taking more credit than he quite deserves," he said. Then he lowered his voice. "Now just between us two, the U.S. had nothing at all to do with driving the French and Austrians out of Mexico. They could have done it, yes, but they didn't. Not directly.

"President Buchanan backed Benito Juarez against the conservatives in their civil war. After their defeat, the Mexican conservatives fled to Europa. They returned within the year with European soldiers. By that time, of course, the States were fighting among themselves. They didn't have the time or energy to spare to keep Juarez afloat.

"With French and Austrian support, the conservatives took Mexico City and drove Juarez towards the Rio Grande. He needed help to win the war. And he received help," he said, smiling, "from the very man whom you are going to meet."

"You mean Houston?" I asked.

"Precisely," he said. "The Civil War was over, and the Texans were tired of fighting what they considered other peoples' wars. A lot of Lone Star men and supplies went to support the South—strictly volunteer, you understand, under Hood's command. The South still lost. Well, now the Mexicans were having troubles, and no one particularly wanted to send the boys back out to war on the side that was losing. They'd just gotten home. So the Republic was going to turn a blind eye towards Juarez, and just let the Europeans stay in Mexico City. Sam didn't cotton to that idea, so he filibustered the Senate to keep the issue unresolved. Meanwhile, he pulled some of his strings, and by George if some of Sam's old friends in the military didn't get careless and misplace some of their supplies right into Juarez's hands.

"About the same time, France and Austria started pulling their troops out. They felt the need was more pressing back home, where Bismarck was starting his rise. Juarez drove back to Mexico City and defeated Maximilian. Sam Houston withdrew his bill to support Juarez and a few generals apologized on behalf of their quartermasters.

"So really, the United States had nothing to do with driving the Europeans out of Mexico. It was Houston and his people who gave Juarez the extra support he needed." He paused. "On the other hand, the US had everything to do with '76, 1812, and the Canadian Adventure, and they helped Juarez set up shop in the first place. So who can blame Stanton for trying to claim a little more glory than he earned? The good old US of A certainly has the military strength to back him up."

"I appreciate your honesty," I said. Which I did. Especially in this age and place where everyone seems to be ready to say anything in defense of their flag, true or not. My estimation of Don went up a notch.

If I'd known him better, it would have gone up two.

"S he's the sweetest rose of color this cowboy ever knew, Her eyes are bright as diamonds, they sparkle like the dew.

You may talk about your dearest maids and sing of Rosalie,
But the Yellow Rose of Texas beats the belles of Tennessee."

—"The Yellow Rose of Texas"

This popular song was written in praise of Emily West, a mulatto girl who distracted Santa Anna, allowing Sam Houston to take him by surprise at San Jacinto.

THE HOOP SNAKE

The hoop snake is a thankfully rare predator of the Texan plains. It is nearly indistinguishable from a rattlesnake, except for its size. Hoop snakes average six feet long. They are ill-tempered and extremely poisonous. A hoop snake also possesses the ability to bite its tail, making itself into a hoop. It can then roll along quite rapidly.

This ability is the reason the hoop snake confines itself to open plains. Because of the high speeds a rolling hoop snake can reach, it is extremely difficult to shake off its pursuit. Occasionally, a traveller will disturb a hoop snake and commence running for his life as the snake rolls in pursuit, yellow venom drooling from its fangs. The hoop snake, unable to stop of its own volition, will continue until it catches what it is pursuing. The only way to shake a hoop snake is to let it catch up, and then jump through it and run back the way you came. Unable to stop itself, the snake will continue rolling in the opposite direction.

• Hoop Snake

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [PR] • Mesmerism [GD] • Perception [PR] • Physique [GD]

Bite: As a Small to Large animal, plus Poison.



THE CACTUS CAT

The cactus cat is another ornery inhabitant of the Texan plains. While not as aggressive as the hoop snake, it is equally ferocious if provoked.

The cactus cat resembles a lynx crossed with a porcupine. It is a dusty tan in color, and instead of fur it possesses a coat of spines. It spends its days resting in shade of cacti, which makes up part of its diet. The cooler twilight and night-time it spends hunting reptiles and rodents, which make up the rest of its diet.

Anyone who disturbs the rest of a cactus cat will find he has put his hand in a hornet's nest. They are fast runners, and can shoot their spines at targets with deadly accuracy. While the spines are not poisonous, they are still a hazard as they can easily go all the way through a man's arm. The cactus cat is constantly growing new spines to replace ones that get broken or used in hunting or defense.

• Cactus Cat

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GR] • Stealth [GR]

Claw or Bite: As a Small to Large animal.
Spines: As a thrown Dagger, or as a Bayonet if someone sits on the cat.

One thing I'll tell you about the Southwest, it's hot. Even the vultures seemed to want to circle in the shadow of the *Stauffenberg*. And it's pretty darn dry and brown. But hey, this is the Lone Star State. Who needs an excuse?

We cut north from Houston, heading for Fort Worth. That took us across East Texas. East Texas was pretty much as I reckoned it would be, pardner. Not a whole heck of a lot to interest me. It's a natural barrier, though. Piney woods, scrub oak, and miles and miles of bramble thickets. Not surprising many settlers decided they didn't want to go further west badly enough to push their way through. Nope. Just stopped where they were and lived there, instead. I was awfully glad to be floating above it all. I couldn't think of a place I'd less rather crash-land an aerocruiser than right smack in the middle of The Great Thicket.

I hadn't been to the desert yet.

We passed over a number of Indian settlements. And hunting bands. More than I would have thought. I found out later that these were the same Cherokees that Houston brought down to kick Santa Anna's butt at the Alamo and Fort Defiance. They made some agreement to settle here, out of the reach of the American armies. I can think of worse ways to defend your frontier than with a million acres of brambles and ten thousand Cherokee braves. The Republic of Texas was starting to look pretty darn secure from up here.

We picked up the Brazos River and followed that. It was heading in our direction, and it was the most reliable landmark we had. Of course, I personally wouldn't call an overwide mud-flow a river, but hey, Texans are like that. I prefer the glacial run-off type. Real bone-bruising white water. That's a river.

Out in the middle of nowhere we passed over some construction and a whole campful of tents. There was a rail line nearby, but that was it. We were all on the bridge at the time. I nudged Chandler. "What do you suppose that is?" I asked.

"That's the Texas Republic Agricultural and Mechanical College. I read about it in the newspapers. Basically, it'll be the Republic's military academy. Someone named Mr. Ross is overseeing its construction, and he'll be its first President."

I looked all around. There was nothing but miles of empty Texas countryside. Except for a muddy river. "Why would anyone want to build a college out here? I mean, this isn't the end of the world, but you can sure see it from here."

Von Hubel answered me. "Precisely because it is considered worthless land. No citizen would object to the Republic giving up this land for a school. More valuable land, they would want to keep. But not this."

"Plus, for a military education, it's better not to let the soldiers have the comforts of a modern city," Lückner added.

"Yuck. I'd never want to go there," I said.

"That," said Lückner, "is precisely the attitude the military does not want in its soldiers."

Good point.

You don't join the Army for the education or the condos or the chance to travel. You join to fight for your country.

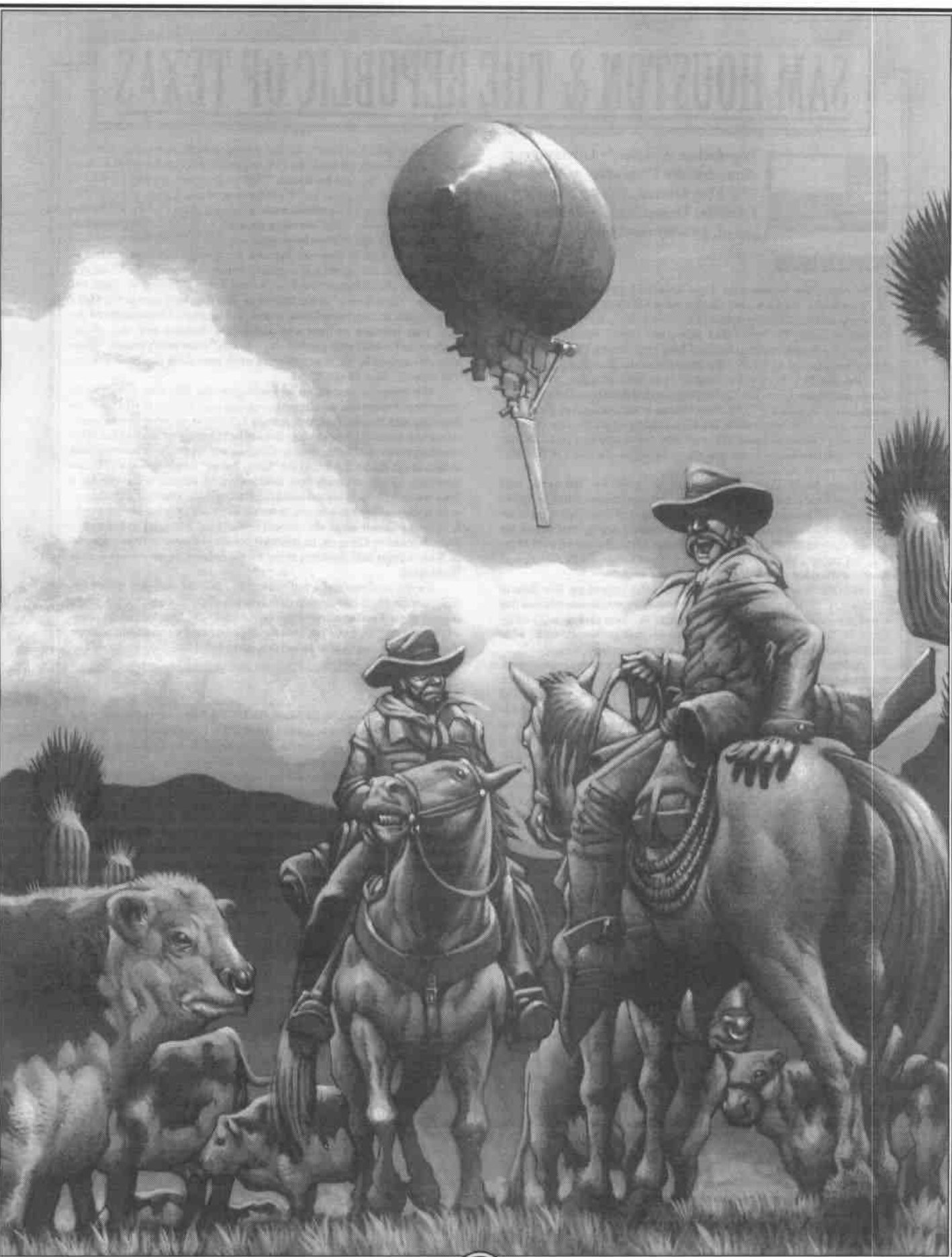
We arrived in Fort Worth just before sundown. I was expecting to see a fort, a stockade to protect against Indian raids. Nope. Just a settlement. A big one, though. Off to the east I knew there'd be another town by name of Dallas. Maybe I'd buy some property around here. Just as an investment.

Like Houston, Fort Worth had a railroad. Unlike Houston, it also had a whole lot of cattle. As we approached, you could just tell that the place was growing. It had that feel. Too many people for the buildings, new houses and stores opening up, and the train station looked like the center of activity. A boom town. Cool.

We approached the appointed place where we were supposed to touch down. True to their word, the Texans had built a tethering post for the aerocruiser, and a tower by which we could disembark. It even had an elevator. Powered by a team of horses, but an elevator is an elevator. Saves a mess of stair-climbing. And it was surprisingly smooth.

I stepped off the wooden floor of the elevator car.

And onto the dusty soil of a foreign country.



SAM HOUSTON & THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS



Population: 4 million • **Government:** Representative Democracy • **Alliances:** Bear Flag, Orleans, Twenty Nations • **Enemies:** United States • **Position:** A proud, growing republic

THE DAWN OF THE LONE STAR

The region now known as the Texan Republic began as a land of Indians. Karankawas, Tonkawas, and Caddos roamed the area, living a mix of simple, aboriginal lifestyles and proto-nomadic hunting. It was the Caddos that gave the land its name. The tribe called each other *Tayshas*, meaning "allies" or "friends"; the Spanish modified this into *Tejas*, which Anglos spoke as Texas. All these tribes were lost to history a few decades after the Spanish arrival.

The first New Europeans to land in Texas were stragglers, followers of Cortez arriving too late to join the campaigns against the Aztecs. Rebuffed, they pushed north in August of 1519. Alvar Cabeza de Vaca, along with three companions, traveled the length of the Texas coast and far up the Rio Grande before returning to a hero's welcome nine years later. His descriptions paved the way for later explorers, such as Coronado, who traveled into the center of the continent.

Having found Texas, Spain ignored the place for 160 years, until Frenchman Rene LaSalle landed near Matagorda to establish a colony in Spain's back yard. The attempt failed, but the encroachment of France into a previously Spanish region spurred the Spanish into colonial activity that would last through the mid-1700's. By that time Spain had settled the eastern third of the land and traded with the French on one side and fought the Comanche and Kiowa on the other. At this point the Americans arrived.

With the Burr-Wilkinson coup of 1806, which created the Free State of Orleans, Spanish Texas entered a chaotic period of inter-American relations that would not end until the Texan Revolution of 1835. There commenced a struggle by the Spanish authorities to control outside immigration and trade, while simultaneously building up their own presence and commerce.

As Mexico fell into revolution (1811-1821), Texas wavered between joining her, fighting off American expeditions, and ignoring the whole thing. In the end, the future of Texas was joined to the destiny of the United States. Behind the American pressure during this period was simple greed, the unquenchable search for new land that was already driving American settlers westward to the Mississippi. The greatest of those entrepreneurs that attempted to tap and control that drive were Moses and Stephen Austin. The Austins worked tirelessly for over a decade to reconcile differences between Mexicans and Americans, along with promoting pro-Mexican settlement that would bind Texas more closely to the Mexican government. But the ascension of Antonio de Santa Anna set the Texas pot to boiling over. Into this atmosphere of dissatisfaction rode an itinerant lawyer with an almost infamous reputation.

THE FLIGHT OF THE RAVEN

Samuel Houston, foremost friend of the Indian and a founder of Texas, was born March 2, 1793 in Virginia; the family moved to Tennessee in 1806. Young Sam spent his teen years among Indians along the Tennessee River. Their chief, Oo-Loo-Te-Ka, adopted Houston and named him *Co-lon-neh*, "The Raven." His best friends were Cherokee, and this period molded his life-long attitudes. Houston maintained strong bonds with the tribe all his life; in 1830, he was made a member of the Cherokee Nation, and he spoke fluent Cherokee.

Joining the Army in 1813 (under General Andrew Jackson), Houston fought Creek Indians in the Alabama campaign of 1814. Staying in service until 1818, he was Jackson's assistant on Indian affairs. This period forged a friendship and political apprenticeship with Jackson.

Afterward, Houston was an Indian agent along the Mississippi. In 1821 he joined Congress as a Representative of Tennessee. While in Washington, Houston supported the Jackson Democratic line. On his return to Tennessee, he was elected state governor in 1827. After just a year Sam resigned, departing Tennessee over a scandal involving his new wife. Leaving civilization behind, the Raven returned to his true family, the Indians across the great river.

He returned to Oo-Loo-Te-Ka's tribe after an eleven-year absence. Dressing in Indian regalia, Co-lon-neh the Raven acted as his foster father's representative and a negotiator with other tribes. Over the next two years, his reputation as a spokesman and strong friend spread throughout the Civilized Tribes, and he became drawn into Oo-Loo-Te-Ka's plans for a unified Indian Nation.

During 1828, Oo-Loo-Te-Ka sent a message to the remaining Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole still inside the U.S. to join the other Civilized Tribes along the Mississippi. This was his famous "Wall to the East" speech, a revival of Tecumseh's dormant plan—and the beginning of the Twenty Nations. The United States was ignoring treaties made at the turn of the century, and the last civilized Indians came under increasing pressure. To them, the reappearance of The Raven was a sign of Providence; great acts were in the making.

In 1830, Jackson drove the Removal Act through Congress, voiding all previous treaties and expelling all organized Indians from east of the Mississippi. In response, the shamans of the Ten Civilized Tribes destroyed St. Louis and raised the "Great Barrier" at the Mississippi. Ten days later, even as the whites still struggled to comprehend these actions, a delegation of Indians entered the U.S. They intended to meet with authorities, display a new map of the Frontier, and solidify their position through this "white men's magic." They were ably advised by the most influential white man along the Indian border: The Raven... Sam Houston.

The delegation pushed on to Washington the following spring, as the Raven hoped to use old governmental contacts (not the least of which was his friendship with the new President, Andrew Jackson) to secure diplomatic agreements with the U.S. Unfortunately, Jackson had campaigned as an Indian fighter and supporter of Manifest Destiny. Congress was opposed to accommodation in light of the Removal Act, and the "Great Barrier" simply fanned anti-Indian sentiment. Houston stoically bore this disapproval, virtually being branded a "race traitor." He spiritedly defended the Nations' ideas wherever and whenever he could—whether in a tavern, or on the Floor of Congress. Houston publicly beat a Congressman who accused him of fraud during his Indian agency years. Arrested by Congress, he defended himself in a series of ringing speeches. Such reaction held slanderers at bay for the duration of the Raven's time in Washington.

For the next two and a half years, Sam Houston struggled to establish diplomatic protocols and develop trade between a hostile, suspicious U.S. and a country they refused to acknowledge even existed. The backdrop of this political play was the "Trail of Tears", the forcible removal of the remaining Indians to the Trans-Mississippi area. Jackson's support faded fast, and old friends' disagreements became heated.

THE RAVEN GOES TO WAR

The final straw was Justice Marshall's 1833 decision that the Removal Act was unconstitutional. People ignored the ruling and Jackson openly flouted it. At the White House, harsh words and fierce oaths were spoken. Leaving Washington the following spring, Houston's last words were, "If he wishes to speak to me again, Mr. Jackson can find me sitting atop the ruins of St. Louis!" Infuriated and disgusted, Sam Houston returned to the frontier, determined that the Nations should make their own way, holding the Barrier against all. No sooner had he settled along the Arkansas than his eye turned to Texas.

In the mid-1820's, Houston bought shares in the "Texas Association of Tennessee", a speculative company created in the wake of Austin's "colonization contract" with Mexico. He'd followed the successes and travails with half an eye, as Indian problems had occupied his time. In the Spring of 1834, Sam Houston arrived in Nacogdoches, determined to practice law, while observing the political storm. The next eighteen months were a flurry of conspiracies, travel, and consultations with Stephen Austin, who knew a crisis was coming, but also knew that the population had formed no real response to the increasing Mexican despotism. Sam Houston had ideas: resistance and independence!

In early '35 Austin was imprisoned while on a diplomatic mission to Mexico City. Houston began organizing militia. That October, as the crisis accelerated, by order of the "Permanent Council & Consultation", he became the commander of all East Texas troops. Skirmishes between Texan insurgents and Mexican troops had been going on since June.

It was at this time that he first encountered the discordant independence of Texan thought and action. Throughout the Winter, the Consultation advanced various schemes for Army organization and invasions of Mexico. The only helpful accomplishments were the promotion of Houston to Commander in Chief and the idea of negotiating with the Texas Cherokee.

The coming year of revolution would be one of the hardest periods of Houston's life. He would preach prudence and caution at all times, despite the aggressiveness of his government and the bull-headed glory-seeking of his "subordinates." His own reticence of thought and deed produced a storm of accusations of military mismanagement. But Houston knew the balance sheet: The Texans were ill-trained and ill-supplied, and could raise only a fraction of the forces Mexico could. At the same time, he was trying to deal with the Consultation on Texan independence and creation of a constitution.

The spring of 1836 brought action. Santa Anna moved an army into Texas, bent on exterminating the revolutionary flare-up. He overran and massacred every garrison he met; the Alamo was under siege by the end of February. Houston was negotiating with Chief Bowl of the Texas Cherokee the same day Santa Anna's soldiers began their assault.

Returning to the panicked capital of Washington-on-the-Brazos, the best he could do was organize a relief effort. Defeating the besiegers was an impossibility, but a series of "demonstrations" could give a chance for the defenders to escape.

He arrived in San Antonio with a small group of Cherokee on March 6, as the final assault commenced. The best that could be done was a lightning raid against the thinnest part of the lines, allowing a few men to go over the walls and onto the backs of Indian horses. Out of 185 defenders, eleven were rescued. It was small compensation for the men and effort expended. As far as Houston was concerned, the Alamo, for all its heroism, was a costly mistake caused by a lack of discipline and attention to his orders. This continued to plague him, as two further garrisons were surrounded and destroyed later that month.

Appearing before frightened Consultation delegates a week after the Alamo relief, Sam Houston took command. He accelerated the independence deliberations (and was first to sign the declaration), regrouped the army under a unified command (his), sent Stephen Austin, returned from Mexico, to secure supplies in the U.S., asked the Cherokee for further reinforcements, and sent the government eastward for safety. In his own words, "I was to produce a Nation; I was to defend a People; I was to command the resources of a Country, and I must give character to an Army." The next four weeks would see the test of this statement.

The government's evacuation spread panic throughout Texas; civilians were in flight everywhere, and Army morale ran up and down like a roller-coaster. Threatening and cajoling, Houston nursed his meager force eastward, part of the general "Runaway Scrape." He would not counterattack, despite pleas from his officers and a continuous stream of threats from Consultation president David Burnet. Driven almost to a frenzy by the constant harping, the Raven mastered himself and stayed his course. His control of the restive soldiers was slipping when he saw the chance he'd been waiting for at San Jacinto. Many men had been lost to desertion, but a force of Cherokee and Choctaw braves were nearby. He wrote, "This morning we are in preparation to meet Santa Anna. ... We go to conquer. It is wisdom ... out of necessity to meet the enemy now ... the troops are in fine spirits, and now is the time for action." For years afterwards, political and social foes would use his actions at this time against him, but he never complained, never explained ... and so weathered every storm.

Houston, well informed by his scouts, mustered his army on the morning of April 20, 1836. He sent them into action that afternoon. Half the Mexican force was lost; Santa Anna himself was captured. With Indian reinforcements, Houston met the detachment of General Cos the next morning and dealt them a similar blow, sustaining a serious leg wound in the process.

Despite Texan urgings towards revenge, Houston gave generous treatment to Santa Anna, urging him to sign an armistice and prepare the way for permanent peace recognizing Texan independence. By early May, the condition of his leg would force Houston to turn control of the Army over to Secretary of War Thomas J. Rusk and take ship to New Orleans for treatment. There he met his future wife, Margaret Lea, for the first time.

Meanwhile, Texas remained in chaos. During Houston's convalescence, the incompetent president Burnet was losing control of the Army to unsatisfied veterans and unprincipled officers like T. J. Green and Felix Huston. At this time, the Treaty of Velasco was signed by Santa Anna, but not confirmed by Mexico City. Alarmed, many prominent citizens implored Sam Houston (the only man that had both the goodwill of the army and the confidence of the populace) to lead the new Texan government being formed that September.

PRESIDENT HUSTON

Houston would not campaign, and originally proposed Thomas Rusk for the office when asked. Eventually, the citizens of San Augustine placed him on the ballot, and he won 79% of the vote on his reputation alone. With trusted men like Rusk and Austin in his Cabinet, Houston felt he could now work swiftly toward recognition by the United States and New Europa. Still smarting from his clash with Jackson over the Indian question, the idea of annexation by the U.S. (advanced during the election) was firmly rejected.

During the interwar decade (1837-1845), Sam Houston was active at the front of several critical issues affecting Texas: annexation, the economy, the Indian/government relationship, action against Mexico, and others. He would deal with each, whether president or not, in the same style as always: taking no counsel, and then accepting all criticism stolidly. Criticism of his policies during this decade would be loud and strong on almost every issue he touched.

In regard to the annexation offers, he managed to persuade intervening presidents to his view that Texas would survive better as a new republic separating the U.S. and Mexico. Later, that was expanded to include acting as an arbitrator and agent for British dealings with both countries, as well.

Economically, Houston attempted to simultaneously establish a single national bank and develop trade relationships with the leading countries of New Europa. He was less successful against inflation, and resorted to the issuing of "Texas Star Bills." Much of the thrust of New European recognition was simply to find willing foreign investors—and markets for the Texan resources that would flow from such investment.

The relationship between Indian and White was a far rockier thing. Despite their gratitude, the Texan government wavered on full implementation of the treaties negotiated during the war. A growing flood of settlers washed against the East Texas region in which some 8,000 Cherokee and Choctaw had settled just two years before. Events came to a head in July 1839. President Mirabeau Lamar had campaigned on a platform of Texan security against Indians; he had been opposed all the way by Houston in a series of speeches decrying the government's mismanagement. "It is wiser to have them trade than raid," he said, but none would listen. Lamar and his Indian-hating military assistant, Hugh McLeod, then launched the "Cherokee War", an attempt to drive all Indians from the lands between the Trinity and the Sabine Rivers.

Sam Houston went berserk. For the first time in over a decade, Houston gave in to the temper of his Washington, D.C. years. He wore pistols openly, and launched a verbal counterattack that left many, even his friends, dismayed and offended. His final threat, half bombast, half real, was that he would return to the Nations, rally the Civilized Tribes, and seek redress by force of arms if necessary. That thrust prompted McLeod to issue a direct challenge ... only to receive a strange reply. Houston would meet him, but not with pistols; it would be tomahawks instead, at mid-stream at a crossing of the Neches River; Chief Bowl of the Cherokee would be his second. That last incited McLeod to accept the unusual terms. The two met the next month, with whites from nearby Nacogdoches on one bank and a mix of Indians on the other. Though 46 years old, with a leg permanently lamed, Sam Houston proved himself, once and for all time that day, the foremost champion of the Indian among Whites. The Raven took the first wound, but struck down his foe with two fierce blows. It was the last duel Houston ever fought, but it was his greatest. Afterward, survivors of the Alamo, and the more charitable veterans of San Jacinto, began to step forward and remind people of the unacknowledged debt owed the Tribes by the young republic. These voices of reason—combined with the unspoken threat of the fate of St. Louis—curbed hasty actions, and contributed to the downfall of Lamar's government and the return of Houston to the presidency in 1841. From that time, Texan sentiments about Indians tended to divide them between the "good" Cherokee of the East and the "bad" Comanche of the unsettled West—who remained implacable foes of the whites for thirty more years.

Texas had now been recognized by the United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the Germans. The stickiest problem of these years was recognition by Mexico, which continued to harbor dreams of returning Texas to the fold. A couple of filibuster attempts on the part of Texas, followed by two abortive Mexican invasions, kept relations hot throughout the period, and full recognition would not be won until after the Second War of Independence.

Sam took time off from these momentous events to be married. The frail, but religiously stalwart Margaret Lea became his wife in a ceremony on her father's plantation May 9, 1840. She was half Houston's age, and most of his friends thought the marriage would never last. But Margaret remained his faithful wife; disdaining public life, she cured him of most of his vices—excessive drinking being the foremost.

While serving on the 1845 committee that revised the original Constitution, Houston appended an amendment that allowed Texan Presidents to serve successive terms. In a masterpiece of political maneuvering, he contrived to do so during the reign of a popular opponent, Anson Jones. Jones responded by recalling "Old Sam Jacinto" to the Commander-in-Chief's position when Mexico declared war in early '46.

THE SECOND WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

Houston was determined to forestall the problems of the original revolution; he kept tight control over his subordinates, and fought a war of primarily defensive goals. When faced by popular outcry to invade Mexico and avenge Texan wrongs, he did so on his own terms, and would gain praise years later for showing prudence in his withdrawal after Buena Vista. At the same time, he was opportunistic enough to take advantage of the conflict, pushing Texan land claims all the way to the Colorado River.

In the matter of U.S. volunteer troops there were deeper currents. In his first Presidential term he had curtly rejected U.S. annexation appeals, and would not even seek commercial contact until after Jackson's successor, Martin van Buren, came to power. By 1846 James K. Polk was president, and seeking closer ties with Texas in order to counterbalance the strong British influence there. Houston distrusted "Young Hickory" (considered Jackson's greatest protégé after Houston himself) and persuaded Jones to reject Polk's final annexation

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offer immediate military protection and counter invasion of Mexico in return for Texas' joining the Union. Ever the political schemer, Polk responded with the suggestion that, instead, volunteers could be paid in land grants rather than scarce cash (designed to counter the controlled American immigration of Houston's presidencies).

President Jones was convinced, but Houston kept a tight rein, putting the Americans under the severe discipline of Brigadier S. W. Kearny, originally the U.S. military observer. When a group of volunteers got into an "adventure" on their own initiative at the port of Tampico, Houston used it as an excuse to send the majority home, paying them in spoils captured at Matamoros and Monterrey. Those that remained were granted their settlements—in New Mexico Territory, far from the center of Texan commerce and politics.

The successful conclusion of the conflict swept Anson Jones into the first presidential secession in Texas history, with Houston as vice-president. His primary actions were administration of the new western territory and establishing relations with the new California Republic, which Texas now adjoined. Houston disliked President Fremont and was suspicious of his shadowy backers, including expansionist U.S. Senator Thomas Benton.

As his vice-presidential term passed, the 1850's became known as the "wilderness years" to Sam Houston. He settled down to the life of a rancher with occasional service in the Texan Congress, while attempting to rebuild his meager fortunes squandered in the cause of Texan freedom over the last two decades. His only cause of note was to push for the route of a new railway that would link the U.S. with the Bear Flag, through Texas. Both Houston and Texas softened toward the United States in these years. British influence and investment began to wane as controls on American immigration and business loosened.

Houston needed those quiet years, as he now had a wife and family to support. Margaret bore him two sons and three daughters between 1843 and 1859: Sam Jr., Nancy, Mary, Margaret Lea, and Temple Lea. Margaret tried to woo him from the political life, but he had always had an inner spirit that told him he would be a commanding man all of his days. He gave her anything she asked—except his undivided attention.

TEXAS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

The issue that drew his attention as the decade ended was the same issue affecting all America: slavery. The Texan position on slavery was somewhat ambiguous, reflecting both White and Indian practice.

If you were a slave in the territory of Texas when it became a Republic, you remained a slave, but your descendants were free.

If you were brought to the Republic as a slave, you remained a slave, but your descendants were free.

The form of individual, body-servant style slavery, as practiced by the Cherokee and other Civilized Tribes, remained legal for those tribal members residing within the Republic.

Texas had signed agreements on suppressing outside slave trade as part of her commercial treaties with Great Britain, but fortunately, Texan agriculture and industry were not labor-intensive. Houston himself would own up to a dozen slaves during his lifetime.

Sam Houston was still a National Man, deeply concerned about issues and politics in his home country, despite the fact that he had turned his back on her twenty years ago. He felt the call to office again, convinced that the ship of state would need its strongest hand at the wheel during the coming storm. When secessionist talk spilled over from the U.S., to become discussions on whether Texas should ally itself with one region of the country against another, Houston remarked humorously that if the people wanted excitement, he might as well give it to them as anyone.

He was elected president for the third time on August 1, 1859 and remained so throughout the Civil War years, stepping down in 1867. Shocked

and saddened by the extreme lengths to which sectionalism and secessionism took the U.S., he stayed loyal to his new home, serving her best by keeping Texas neutral. He had hoped to be an international arbitrator, but could not ignore strong Southern sentiment running throughout the country. As a result, he allowed people to "vote their conscience" and "follow their hearts" by volunteering for either side as they wished. A few regiments' worth served the Union, but two whole divisions fought for the Confederacy, and the old Ranger, Ben McCulloch, was to die leading one of them.

Houston held the reigns of government tightly in those years, clamping down on talk of active alliances and selective trade. The old specter of Mexican intervention raised its head again. Benito Juarez, on the losing end of Mexico's current civil war and Maximilian's invasion, was driven into the wilds of the Mexico-Texas border. While making fiery speeches in the Texan Senate against filibustering, he secretly instructed Gen. John Magruder to "dump" older, surplus war material "into" the Rio Grande. Somehow, it always ended up on the other riverbank—and in the hands of Juarez.

At the same time, he cut relations with France. Houston explained to angry Texas importers that while French investment had been a helping hand in the foundation of the Republic, direct military intervention by New Europe was a threat to all North American nations, regardless of alignment. He would have taken the same action had the Union suffered similar intervention, he said, and cautioned the Confederacy against seeking support beyond simple recognition. To emphasize his neutralist stance, he sent Gen. Taylor into the Orleans Free State to chase out Southern and Northern troops operating there.

Because it became a major transshipment route for Southern supplies and wasn't under the Union blockade, Texas did not suffer postwar depression. Its paper currency, strengthened by wartime trade, also became fully solvent for the first time. It was his stand on foreign issues, not his economics, that brought Houston's presidential run to an end.

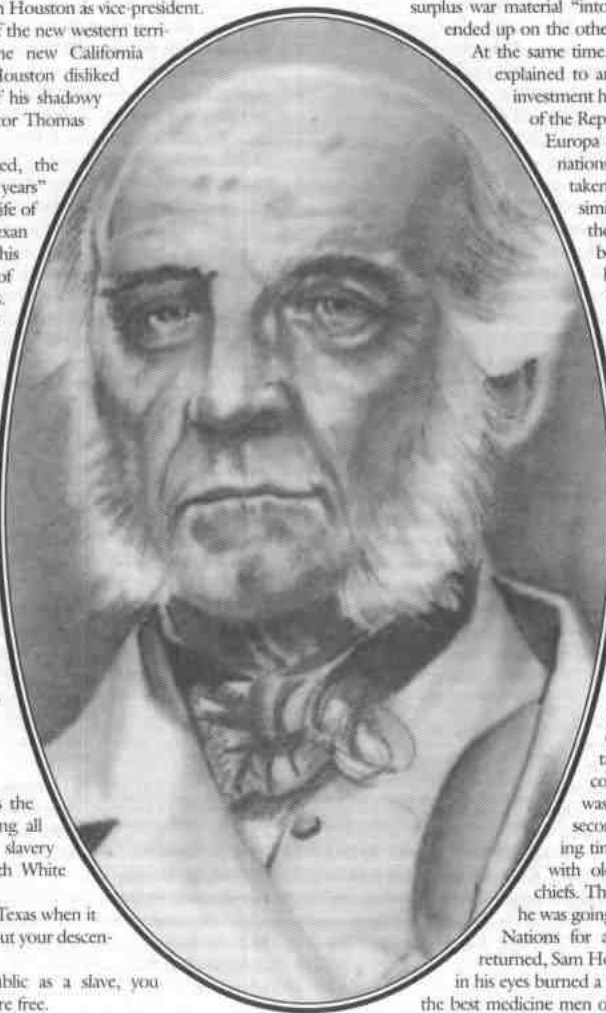
TEXAS TODAY

Sam Houston was 66 years old when he started his third three-year Presidential term, and he had begun to feel every year of it. Old wounds, heavy drinking, and rough field conditions had taken their toll. But the Raven could not come to roost yet, not while the country was in crisis. Around 1863, as he entered his second successive term, Houston began taking time away from presidential duties to meet with old friends: the Cherokee and Choctaw chiefs. That summer, he kissed Margaret goodbye; he was going on a "medicine journey" to the Twenty Nations for a couple of weeks, he said. When he returned, Sam Houston stood a little straighter and the fire in his eyes burned a little brighter. By calling upon the spirits, the best medicine men of the Civilized Tribes came to aid of the man they owed so much. Co-lon-neh the Raven was given a new lease on life; the ravages of age would affect him—but slowly, far slower than before. He would have the time he needed to secure Texas' future.

With the drive of a man ten years younger, Houston regained the presidency in 1871 and held it for six years more. In that time, he supported Juarez's liberation of Mexico from Maximilian and cooperated with Lincoln in his Reconstruction plan for the former Rebel states. His crowning glory, the accomplishment with which he hopes to end his last presidential term, is the complete revision of the Constitution of 1845 at a convention this year. Sam Houston, who has framed a place in history for himself many times over, believes that the Constitution of 1876 will frame Texas' place in the next century.

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS CURRENCY

The standard unit of currency in Texas is the Texan dollar, commonly known as the Star Bill. For more details on Texan currency, see pg. 39. For exchange rates and other information on money in the Americas, see pg. 39.



HOUSTON IN FORT WORTH

Sam Houston was waiting for us. I'd heard once, a long time ago, that you could track Sam Houston unerringly, as long as you waited nine months and followed the trail of pale Indian babies. But I also knew that he led the fight for the Republic's independence back in the 1830's. And that was a long time ago.

I'm not sure what I expected to see. I mean, I knew he'd be an old man, but I never saw a picture of him. So I guess I was expecting a shriveled old guy with quivering arms and eyes of fire or something. A crotchety dirty old man.

I was wrong. For one thing, I had to look up at him. He was a good six foot three inches tall, and he stood so straight it made him seem taller still. He had heavy eyebrows and a high smooth forehead. A smat of wispy white hair made him seem all the more intellectual and authoritarian. Even noble. And—Eyes of fire.

He shook our hands in welcome. He had a powerful grip, sure and strong. And a deep voice which was used to command. He had that air of a ruler about him, yet he wore it as casually as I wear a T-shirt. Which made him seem all the more a commander.

He looked at us, and our expressions. "Y'all look surprised," he said. "Maybe y'all reckoned on an octogenarian? Well, I am and I know it. I feel it, deep inside. I know I don't look it, but that there's on account of the Indian magick. The Cherokee and Choctaw medicine men keep me looking young and healthy. Hell, they even help me keep my teeth. I haven't aged a day in thirty years. Can't afford it, there's still too much work to be done making this damn Republic."

Here he paused, and looked westward at the setting sun. "But I'm almost done," he said absently. "I'll be ready to retire soon. Got just about everything all rigged." Suddenly he cheered right up again. "In the meantime, I got some chores that need looking after. Sam Junior here will lead y'all into town and fetch you supper. We got us a dance at the hall tonight, if that suits your fancy. And we'll talk in the morning. Nice meeting y'all. And welcome to my country."

With that, he waved and walked off, flanked by advisors.

Sam Jr. took Marianne's arm and escorted her to a waiting carriage. "*Mon cher*," said Marianne, thickening her accent, "you have, how you say, limping in your leg."

He helped her climb in. "Shiloh," he said. "I volunteered for the South during the Civil War. I got captured, then sent home when the war was about over." A fighter. Like father like son.

We had a country dinner, served family style at the inn next to the capitol building. Fresh barbecued beef and a big old pile of mashed potatoes. Mmm. And—would you believe it?—a piano player in the corner. Cool.

Pfisty was put off by the casual air the Texans had. I loved it. He thought they were unrefined. I think he was just angry because the table didn't have a tablecloth, and he snagged the sleeve of his silk shirt on a sliver. After dinner, Pfistermeister decided to go up to his room and pout. The rest of us walked down the main street to the dance hall. I'd half expected to see drunken cowboys in the streets shooting off their pistols, but no.

Another Hollywood stereotype shot to hell.

The dance hall was filled. The air smelled of cheap cigars, beer, and sweat. Couples two-stepped across the floor. A cheap and out-of-tune band did their best on a low stage. Shouting and laughing threatened to blow out the walls. This was great. After all the posturing and pretentiousness of the Northeast, even after the civil politeness of the South, it was nice to be able to cut loose and party. It was a boot-stomping good time. I two-stepped with several ladies. Some of my spin moves surprised them, but what the heck. Then Marianne and I ten-stepped around the dance floor, and it drew an audience. Guess they hadn't seen it before. Others joined in, and the band started playing faster, which got us more attention so even more people joined in.

Yee haw. It was great. But we paid for it in the morning.

BELLE STARR

Myra Belle Shirley married Sam Starr, an outlaw, and became Belle Starr, far outdoing her husband in his chosen profession. Throughout America, Belle Starr is one of the most notorious and wanted outlaws. Headquartered in the Texas Republic, Belle and her gang rustle cattle, rob stage coaches, and hold up banks. Occasionally, she will venture into the Bear Flag Empire and, rarely, into Orleans or the southern United States. A proper flower of Texas womanhood, Belle acts demurely to throw off her marks before whipping out her six-shooter.

• Belle Starr, Gunslinger

Abilities: *Comelines* [GD] • *Courage* [GR] • *Education* [GD] • *Fisticuffs* [GD] • *Gunslinging* [GR] • *Perception* [GR] • *Renown* [EXT] • *Riding* [GD]

THE TEXAS RANGERS

When Texas declared its independence in 1836, it was surrounded by hostile Indians to the west and the belligerent Mexican government to the south. Three hundred men, the first Texas Rangers, were all that stood between the Texas frontier and chaos. In mounted groups, they rode the border areas, keeping the peace and maintaining law and order. Under the leadership of founder Jack "Coffee" Hays, the Texas Rangers, part soldier and part marshal, quickly earned a reputation as superb horsemen and crack shots. The motto of the Rangers soon became "One Riot, One Ranger" due to their reputation and skills.

With the outbreak of the Texan-Mexican War in 1848, the Rangers were pressed into military service. Conducting lightning raids behind Mexican lines, the Rangers disrupted Mexican military planning and supply, buying time for the Texas regular army and providing crucial intelligence. Hoping to bring the western territories of Arizona and New Mexico into the Republic, Albert Sidney Johnston, Commander-in-Chief of the Texas Armed Forces, sent in the Rangers to aid the Indian tribes of the territories, who had long fought against oppressive Mexican rule. The Rangers so impressed the Indians with their courage and fairness that the Apache, Navaho, Hopi, and Zuni agreed to enter the Republic as autonomous tribes.

Today, the Texas Rangers continue to patrol the length and breadth of the Texas Republic. In many places they are the only law and the only representatives of the Texas Republic. The mestizo Comancheros still raid outlying towns and ranches. Mexican banditos still cross the border to loot and pillage. Outlaw gangs of bank robbers, train robbers, and cattle rustlers are all too common. When local sheriffs can't handle things, they call for the Texas Rangers to ride to the rescue. The Rangers enjoy excellent relations with local law enforcement authorities, the Army, and the Indians. Their word is their bond and they are incorruptible.

Recently, a new unit has appeared among the Rangers. As of yet only thirteen in number, these Texas Arcana Rangers form an elite team dedicated to protecting Texas from magical and supernatural threats. Currently the Arcana Rangers include a Spellslinger, a dragon, and an Apache shaman. The team is led by long-time Ranger William "Bigfoot" Wallace, who claims to have seen so many strange things during his life that nothing surprises him any more. Usually straightforward and honest, William becomes strangely reticent when questioned about his nickname.

The Arcana Rangers are constantly looking to expand their membership, as they are severely overworked. Cases they are currently working on include observation of the Phantom Empire and an investigation into what is lurking in Carlsbad Caverns.

• William Wallace, Soldier

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Charisma [GD] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GR] • Fencing [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Physique [EXC] • Riding [EXC]

We were so tired. But after a long, leisurely breakfast with lots of eggs and coffee, we felt better. I love country cooking. Then we went to the capitol building. It was nice, but pretty rustic. Parts of the interior were still being finished. We were ready to get down to business, but Sam Houston hadn't showed up yet. Sam Jr. was present, however, and decided to give us a run-down on the Republic's position. Including, intentionally or otherwise, some insights into his father's head.

"Basically," he said, "the Republic is a mixed bag of Americans, Mexicans, Indians, and Negroes. We don't care none. We got French and Germans. We got Apaches, Pueblos, Cherokees, Comanches, and Choctaws." He paused. "As you might figger [he actually pronounced it that way], we also got half-breeds of every type. Mulattos, mestizos, mules, we got 'em all. It don't matter where you come from, here. You just do an honest day's work, and you can call yourself a Texan.

"Basically, no one cares where you're from because we ain't got time for that. We got a hell of a lot of land—pardon me, missus—and not a whole lot of people. We figger we could have twenty new people for every one we got now, and you still couldn't see your neighbor if you didn't want to."

"But *monsieur*," Marianne said, feigning her accent again, "what if someone anyway despise another for the *couleur* of the skin?"

"Well, my dear," he said, "I tell you right now I know several men from the Alamo that'll whup the tarnation out of anyone what dares talk poorly of the Indians. I seen myself how tough the Union Negro soldiers were. You fight against a man, you learn to respect him. You fight side by side him, you get to like him. Now we ain't gonna tell anyone he can't hate whoever he wants to hate. But down here, a man's got friends, and even if'n you hate a man, you'd best treat him fairly just the same." What a concept.

"So you have a low population," said Lückner. Just like a soldier. Enough of the social problems. Let's talk defense.

"Yes, we do," he said. "And a whole heck of a lot of territory to spread 'em out in. We'd be hard pressed if someone were to launch a major invasion of the Republic."

"I don't agree," I said. But then I cut myself short. Texas hadn't joined the South, so Sabine Pass hadn't occurred on this side of the Veil. Instead I just said, "It'd be far from hopeless."

"They wouldn't have an easy time of it, no sir. We could hold someone off, but maybe not everywhere. Not all at once."

"So that's why the Republic has remained so carefully neutral," said Martin.

"Yes, sir. We've tried to keep ourselves on everybody's good side. Mexico likes us—Juarez saw to that—and so does the Bear Flag. Pa has got real good relations with the Nations, and we've got European investors helping to boost our businesses. And now that Andy Jackson is dead, Pa's even willing to be all nice and cordial with the United States. Well, speak of the devil. Howdy, Pa."

Sam Houston walked over and pulled up a chair.

"Y'all are looking mighty interested in your conversation. I reckon your visit here has more on the docket than just a sociable call."

Pfistermeister started to answer. "Well, President Houston, sir, the government of Bayern, in its continued drive to see the world become a more peaceful place for all nations, has commissioned us with the task of—"

"To be blunt," said von Hubel, interrupting, "we're here to talk business. We'd like to negotiate treaties, political, military, or economic."

Houston nodded. Obviously he liked concise statements as much as I do. Pfisty blustered briefly, but since no one noticed, he stopped.

"One other thing," I said. Everyone looked at me.

"Well," I said, "I could also use a bit of a favor from you. I've got some other business to attend to while I'm here."

"That's what I've heard," said the older Houston. "So why don't we move somewhere less public? I've taken care of what I need to do here, so we can pack up and head for my estate."

"Where's that?" asked Pfistermeister.

"Washington on the Brazos," he said. "Can I hitch a ride?"

THE TEXAN WARS FOR INDEPENDENCE

THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE: 1835-1836

Texans' original fight for freedom was a spontaneous affair. It started with Texans forcing the Mexican garrison at Anahuac to surrender in June of 1835. Santa Anna then dispatched General Cos to Texas to settle the rebels. Cos and his men attempted to do so at Gonzales, but the Texans there rallied and, through a show of force, compelled Cos to retire. This "Gonzales affair" became a shooting war on October 2, 1835, when a subsequent effort succeeded. By that time, Stephen Austin had returned from Mexican detention, joining the war party and calling for full independence.

Sam Houston commanded all militia in East Texas, but could do nothing about the South Texas commands of Travis, Jim Bowie, James Fannin, and others. Against Houston's council, they pushed an idea of "On to San Antonio!", feeling that one good attack on Cos' concentrated force there would rout the Mexicans. This cocky idea, that a single good battle (followed by an invasion) would end their Mexico troubles, persisted for the next thirteen years.

This Texan overconfidence was increased by the siege of General Cos at San Antonio in early December, where Cos was outnumbered, unnerved, and forced to surrender. However, Cos merely marched as far as the border, where he met up with Santa Anna's advancing army.

Justified in their aggressive policy, the Texans occupied San Antonio, Goliad, and other outposts. For their success, the independent commands received the bulk of the volunteers that arrived over the winter. What was not realized was that few of the volunteers were armed, and fewer had any military experience. Santa Anna, however, possessed a New European-trained army with a decade of civil war behind them.

As a result, the siege of the Alamo (February 24-March 6) was a foregone conclusion. The nearest garrison, Fannin's at Goliad, would not march to its relief, and only Houston's desperate ride with a "flying column" of Cherokee braves pulled any survivors out of the overrun Alamo. Fannin paid for his reticence when Goliad itself was surrounded in mid-March. Upon surrendering his command, it was promptly massacred as part of Santa Anna's "no quarter" policy.

With the Alamo and Goliad disasters as examples, Sam Houston (now in overall command) was determined to keep his army together. Houston would not seek action until the Mexicans reached a point of maximum dispersion—while his own troops (a mixed Texan/Indian force) were fully concentrated. Finally, on April 20, in twenty minutes of swift savage battle, Santa Anna's force was swept from the field of San Jacinto. The next day, reinforced by a strong Cherokee contingent, Houston repulsed General Cos' approaching column, and with Santa Anna in his hands, the war was over.

THE INTERWAR YEARS: 1837-1845

During the first years of independence, the Army of Texas was almost an equal threat to the young republic. Many of Houston's governmental struggles involved heading off schemes to invade Mexico and bringing the Army to heel. Texas, for most of the period, simply did not have the money to maintain a solid standing army, nor the time to train and organize it. Most defensive work was done by the capable volunteers of the Texas Rangers, of whom Jack Coffee Hays, Ben McCulloch, and Rip Ford were the most famous leaders.

THE SECOND WAR OF TEXAN INDEPENDENCE: 1846-1848

As the era came to a close, Texas had withstood almost a decade of constant border raiding by Mexican bandits and Indians, along with two limited invasions in 1842. Her military maintenance problem was partially solved by English and French suppliers, while a trained cadre sprang from a flood of German immigrants in the late 1830's. Texas now sported a standing army of 3600 troops with a 280-man mounted border regiment (not counting the Rangers), all under West Pointer Albert Sidney Johnston as Secretary of War.

Mexico had not stood still during this time. Revolution, counter-revolution, and foreign intervention had put Antonio de Santa Anna on top of the political heap again by the spring of 1846. Santa Anna determined that the best way to sway people to his rule was to make good on the long-standing Texas invasion threat. In early April, General Pedro Ampudia set up artillery batteries covering Fort Texas, a fortified garrison opposite the Mexican town of Matamoros. On April 23, the war commenced as General Mariano Arista and his army of 4500 joined the 3000 already in the area. Fort Texas was put under siege on May 1, and remained so for the next nine days until arrival of a company of Rangers under Capt. Sam Walker.

During these first weeks Johnston ordered the army concentrated at the Nueces River. To command in this critical hour, he recalled to service ex-president

Sam Houston. The old warhorse put 3500 veterans in the field to face 6000 of the enemy. On the morning of May 10, as Arista threw an advance guard across the Nueces at the village of San Patricio, Houston hit him hard. Rangers and mounted rifles who crossed upstream harassed the flanks as a solid infantry attack drove home from the front. Arista fell back in confusion, beginning a withdrawal towards Matamoros, shadowed by Houston all the way.

The next conflict came at Point Isabel on the Laguna Madre. This broad bay, twenty miles from Fort Texas, was a perfect place to land supplies for either side. General Arista had taken a position at the village of Laguna Vista, commanding the approach to Pt. Isabel. On May 16, the Texans pinned the center of the Mexican line with artillery and beat off a series of flank attacks by deadly lancer cavalry. Once again, the Rangers were decisive: A company led by Ben McCulloch overran the enemy supply train, burning it. As a result, the entire Mexican army broke and fled to the safety of Matamoros.

For the next three months, the war moved to the upper Rio Grande, where Ranger companies and the Border Regiment battled "rancheros" (vicious mounted guerrillas) under known renegade leaders Antonio Canales and Blas Falcon. While Secretary Johnston organized a militia, General Houston defended the border. In late August, Arista, with a few thousand men, skirmished with an equal force at Laredo, prompting Houston to hurry his plans for a punitive invasion of northern Mexico. During this period as well, President Anson Jones told U.S. President Polk that the Republic would accept American volunteers, to a maximum number of 7000. By the time Houston invaded, the quota was more than filled. Along with these men came Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny, a Mississippi frontier veteran, as a U.S. military observer and President James Polk's "man on the spot." Despite the fact that Jones and Houston together had given a final "No" to American annexation proposals, Polk is keenly interested in the outcome of the war—and whether or not the U.S. could take advantage of the situation.

The Texan army—3200 regulars, along with 3000 militia—followed Houston into Mexico in September. Houston sent Johnston to invade the New Mexico territory and occupy Santa Fe. Meanwhile, General Ampudia organized a 10,000 strong force to oppose the Texans at Monterrey. On September 21, Houston began the attack with an assault on some hills nearby. After ferocious street fighting, the Texas flag was raised over the Grand Plaza. It would be four months before the Mexicans could raise an opposing force again.

During this truce time, the army settled in and welcomed the arrival of the first U.S. Volunteers, 1600 men under John Wool. Another 2300 arrived over the winter, prompting Houston to give Kearny command of the Brigade of U.S. Volunteers. Now Houston had some 7000 men and was contemplating his course when his old rival, Antonio de Santa Anna challenged him to battle.

The resulting Battle of Buena Vista (February 2-3, 1847) was almost a disaster for Texan forces. Kearny fought well enough, but poor defensive coordination between his wing and Houston's placed the entire army in peril. Santa Anna outnumbered them almost three to one, but the position south of Monterrey that Houston picked for defense negated most of the advantage. In the end, not wanting to be besieged in Monterrey, Houston yielded and withdrew to Laredo. To forestall protests that he had given up all offense, he detached John Hays and the Ranger companies to raid toward Chihuahua.

Meanwhile, Johnston's forces, together with an 800-strong volunteer mounted rifle brigade from Illinois under Alexander Doniphan, captured the New Mexico territory. Texan occupation remained peaceful for four months. But in December, 1846, bloody revolt broke out, taking two weeks to be suppressed. Johnston then decided he must push on into the Gila River region, near Tucson. He released Doniphan's men from his service, fully supplied them, and sent them to join Houston on January 2, 1847.

Doniphan arrived in Chihuahua five weeks later, meeting up with Hays. On the last day of February, the combined forces met Mexican troops at the Sacramento River and were victorious. Doniphan and Hays occupied Chihuahua for a month, then realized their untenable position. A swift, 400-mile march brought them to Houston's positions on May Day 1847.

As far as Houston was concerned, Mexico had been punished for her invasion, and the war could be settled by negotiation from this point on. In April 1847 President Jones sent Ashbel Smith, Texan Secretary of State, to work for peace; he was joined by Charles Elliot, British minister to Texas. Unfortunately, they found that Santa Anna has been overthrown in another revolution; negotiations dragged on all summer. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed at the end of July, recognized the independence of Alto California and Texas, plus all Texan claims to the New Mexico territory. At last, Texas had true freedom.

ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

A PROFESSIONAL ARMY

Quite possibly the most experienced army on the continent as of 1876, Texas maintains approximately 10,000 men under arms—not including Indian auxiliaries and the Rangers. This is barely 15% more than the total kept under arms during the Second War of Texan Freedom (1846-48), and that was counting militia and volunteers. Today, thanks to President Houston and three-time Secretary of War Albert Sidney Johnston, the Texan Army is an all-professional force whose primary duties are watching the Mexican border, security of the Orleans Free State, and suppression of rampaging Indian tribes within the Republic itself. The current arrangement of troops is as follows:

ARTILLERY

The weakest branch of the Army, artillery is primarily limited to a group of field batteries attached to the Infantry Division, plus a few gun sections assigned to the biggest of the western forts. The cavalry is trying out some automatic guns like the Gatling and the Agar "coffee mill", but on a trial basis only.

BORDER BRIGADE

From Brownsville on the Gulf, through El Paso, to Yuma at the California border, the Border Rifles (whose heritage dates back to the early 1840's) maintain garrisons at the primary crossing points: Brownsville/Matamoros, Laredo/Nuevo Laredo, El Paso/Ciudad Juarez, and Nogales. They also patrol the wide-open spaces in between. Though leaving most law enforcement up to the Rangers, the Border Rifles will back them up when the opposition is unusually well organized or numerous, such as when Gen. Juan Cortina raided up and down the Big Bend country during the 1860's.

CAVALRY

Texas maintains two Cavalry Divisions, stationed in the north and west of the Texan interior, with a few posts in the eastern New Mexico Territory. The last decade and a half has been spent suppressing rebellious Indian tribes. As the Comanche are the best light cavalry found anywhere, Texan horse soldiers are probably the best military horsemen on the continent.

ENGINEERS

Organized into companies, duties are defined by which side of the country they're stationed on. In the west, they build and maintain forts and roads; in the east, bridges over rivers and swamps are their concern.

INFANTRY

To this division is assigned the majority of the field artillery and engineering assets available to the Texan armed forces. Assigned to the eastern border, the infantry division is ready to move at any time. They are assisted by Cherokee auxiliaries.

INDIAN AUXILIARIES

When the western territories were brought into the Republic, it was largely Indian cooperation that made this possible. Fighting as irregular cavalry or infantry, the Apache and Navajo auxiliaries are masters of guerrilla warfare. Together these tribes are a highly effective fighting force.

RANGERS

Superb shots mounted and on foot, the Rangers are the elite of the Texan fighting forces. They served with distinction during both wars of Independence. In mounted groups they ride the borders, keeping the peace. Rangers are part soldier and part marshal, and often cooperate with local sheriffs to enforce the law in the wilds of Texas.

STANDARD UNIFORMS

The uniforms of Texas are influenced mainly by the Confederate States of America, whom Texas unofficially supported during the Civil War. The standard uniform is gray with silver buttons. Piping, collars, and cuffs are colored according to the branch of service. All branches wear a double-breasted shell-jacket. Standard headgear is a "hardee" or "slouch" hat, with dyed feathers on the left side. Narrow trousers are the standard except for the Cavalry and the Rangers, who wear chaps over the trousers. Boots are black, knee-length, vaquero-style. In the fashion of the United States, gaiters are not worn. For cold or inclement weather, gray dusters are worn.

An exception is the Indians who serve as auxiliaries in the army. They tend to wear their normal clothes while in service, simply adding the uniform jacket, hat, or both.

RANK DISTINCTIONS

The Texan uniforms are light on decoration. For example, Rangers often go without any insignia at all except the star of Texas, which may be of gold, silver, or cloth. Sergeants add a gold sash, tied around the waist underneath sword and pistol belts. There are no other specific distinctions for other ranks.

STANDARD ARMAMENTS

For Infantry, Colt Single-Action Army pistol and Winchester Model 1873 rifle. For Cavalry and Rangers, a pair of Colt Single-Action Army pistols and Winchester Model 1873 carbine or Colt Woodchuck carbine. Cavalry carries a heavy saber, while Rangers carry a Bowie knife. Artillery and Engineers carry a Colt Single-Action Army pistol and a light saber. Indian Auxiliaries are typically issued the same weapons as the Infantry, although many carry their own weapons.

THE TEXAN NAVY

Despite the fact that revolutionary privateers had served from the very beginning of the Republic, Texas didn't have a navy again until recently. The last

"real" naval squadron was at sea during 1840-43, but in that time they carried out four major cruises, participated in a six-month Mexican blockade, and fought three major actions—all while operating on so miserly a budget that there was an unsuccessful mutiny over back pay. Despite this, the ships were soon laid up, then sold for salvage. During the 1846-48 war, there was no Mexican naval threat and so no need for a naval response. But the American

Civil War and the possible extension of the Union blockade provided need, and Texas looked to Great Britain. Six steam screw sloops fly the ensign of the Texas Navy in ports throughout the Gulf and the Caribbean. In addition, Texas purchased eight of the flat-bottomed gunboats formerly belonging to the Mississippi River squadron. These would be used to support any future actions in Orleans.



Division	Coat	Cuffs	Collars	Piping	Pants	Badge
Artillery	gray	gray	red	wht-red-wht	gray	crossed cannons
Border Brig.	gray	green	gray	wht-red-wht	brown	crossed rifles
Cavalry	gray	white	gray	wht-red-wht	red	crossed sabers
Engineers	gray	gray	white	wht-red-wht	gray	the Alamo
Indians	brown	gray	gray	wht-red-wht	N/A	buffalo
Infantry	gray	red	gray	wht-red-wht	gray	bugle
Rangers	gray	gold	gray	gold	brown	star

WASHINGTON ON THE BRAZOS

W

e backtracked down to the former capital of the Republic of Texas. "Yessir," said Sam as we cruised through the air, "this is where we signed the Texas Declaration of Independence."

"Why did you move the capital?" I asked.

"Well, we decided it would be smarter to have the capital be on a trade route, so we had a vote. Fort Worth beat Houston two to one. I don't guess a lot of Texans have really seen a port town; all they know is ports get burned like Galveston. So I'm not all that surprised."

"What about Austin?" I asked. I'd been there once.

"Austin?" he asked, confused. "Where the hell's that?" His son pulled out a map, and I gave it a careful look. All I could find was a small town named Waterloo. Oh, well.

We weren't sure how we were going to disembark when we got there, but Sam had it all figured out. Magick. He had several of his cabinet waiting for us at his ranch house, including his Minister for the Magickal Arts and several Cherokee medicine men. A scaffolding was magically built in a matter of minutes.

Sam's estate was much more to Pfistermeister's liking. Very nice. Clean. Painted. Polished tables. With tablecloths. Yeah, the President of Texas had done himself well. We all sat in his parlor with fine wine and talked. Easily the best negotiating sessions I'd been in on, although it took Pfistermeister a while to get used to the beaded-leather-and-feathers look of the Cherokee. Good thing they weren't wearing war paint.

Sam's wife, Margaret, was a gracious hostess. We also got to meet the other Houston kids: Nancy, Mary, Margaret Lea, and Temple Lea. Temple was a real fireball. He was studying to be a lawyer, but also had learned some gun-fighting from Ben Thompson. Whenever we took a break from the negotiations, Temple and I would end up in the back lot trading swashbuckling and gun-slinging tips. The kid was good. Pegged a tin can at thirty yards. From the hip. Before I could get off a shot.

The talks went well. Very well. Texas wasn't really in a position to offer a military alliance, but suitable mutual defense agreements were hammered out. Trade agreements, too. The fundamentals of an exchange program. And Albert Johnson, commander-in-chief of the Texas Army, wanted to work out something so he could lease an aerobattle-ship. They have problems with sky pirates down on the Gulf Coast.

But I had my problems, too. I knew this was all important stuff that the diplomats and ministers were working on. It'd help both Texas and Bayern. But the more time passed, the more I got impatient. Marianne and I took walks while the rest of them sorted out details, because I could feel the weight of the dream pulling my spirit down. I wanted to leave. Go north. Instead, I was stuck in the middle of Texas, I didn't have a horse, and I knew nothing of how to get into or across the Twenty Nations' land. But I had to go. Soon.

One night, after the talks were all finished, I couldn't contain it any longer. It seemed like the officials had about run out of stuff to cut deals over, anyway. We were sitting around watching the embers of a fire and sipping brandy. "Sir," I said, "there's something I need your advice on. You see, I had this dream. A really bad dream."

I felt everyone turn and look at me. I plowed ahead, self-conscious. "See, I was standing in the middle of the Great Plains, and—"

"Mr. Olam," said von Hubel, "I hardly think that this is of particular relevance. If you must speak of a dream, at least make it a pleasant one."

"Hear, hear," said Pfistermeister. Lückner didn't say anything. That meant he agreed.

"*Non!*" said Marianne, rising to her feet. "It was not just a dream! It was important! It is the *raison d'être* for this entire charade. I have here all the notes I take of his dream. It is not to be laughed at!" And she held up a leather book. She'd had her notes bound into a book. With a lock.

And on it, in gold ... The King's personal seal.



COWBOYS & THE CATTLE DRIVES

Of the different kinds of frontiersmen that have struggled to open America to settlement over the years, the cowboy has the tightest grip on the imagination of the world. Perhaps this is fitting, for the cowboy is really a composite of the rest: the mountain man, the buffalo hunter, the gold miner, the Indian fighter, and a hundred others. His job of driving cattle to market may seem a mundane one on the surface, but just as often the cowboy is fighting life-and-death battles with rogue Apache or Comanche, or hunting a lost mine, or protecting a wagon train on a solitary trail, or saving a gold shipment as a range detective, or fanning his six-gun in a saloon brawl.

The story of the cowboy begins in Texas. Since the eighteenth century, great herds of beef cattle have been raised and tended on the flatlands near the Rio Grande. The animals comprising these herds are descended from longhorns abandoned at Vera Cruz by Spanish Conquistadores in the sixteenth century. Untended and unvalued for the most part, these cattle slowly worked their way north toward the Rio Grande, multiplying as they went. By the time of the Civil War, wild livestock numbering in the hundreds of thousands roved over the uninhabited land on both sides of the border. They constituted the prevailing form of wealth in the region, and as such they were coveted by all manner of rustlers and thieves, be they Americans, Indians, or Mexicans. Such men usually raided the great herds already gathered into ownership by others, driving animals away by the thousands to sell on the hoof or simply killing them for their hides.

The borderlands have quite an amazing tradition of violence surrounding cattle, but the bloody atrocities committed in the years following the war far surpassed anything that had come before. Many of the eastern farms and plantations had been ravaged beyond repair; not since the razing of Carthage had a land been so thoroughly destroyed as Georgia at the hands of Sherman. The country desperately needed food, and Texas beef fit the bill nicely. Great corporate ranches began to consolidate the ownerless herds, marking them with private brands to proclaim rightful ownership. Soon giant cattle trains were departing Fort Worth bound for Shreveport and the rest of the United States. Steam ships sailed from the Texas Gulf ports with great regularity carrying cattle the seamen called "coasters" or "sea lions." Regardless of their moniker, the beasts fetched nearly their weight in gold at market in New Orleans and Mobile. It was no longer just the locals preying on the longhorns of the Rio Grande, but also ruthless fortune hunters looking for some easy money. Almost without exception, they were bad men as apt to kill you as shake your hand. The border became a war zone.

In this dark storm, an old and noble profession suddenly took on new importance. The age of the cowboy had arrived.

For years the cowboys have tended the great herds of Texas, defending them against the small-time rustlers and driving them to market when necessary. They wander the open ranges in squads of four or five, scouting the desolate wilderness for any stray animals bearing the brand of their employer and camping wherever night overtakes them. It is also entirely legal to capture an unmarked and unbranded animal as long as it is over one year old. The work is hard and lonely and monotonous. The vast majority of the time the cowboy has no companion except his horse, generally a Spanish mustang. A cowboy's best friend and sole mode of transportation, a horse has to be stalwart enough to break down an angry bull, agile enough to cut a scared calf off from its mother, and fearless enough to ride into a hail of lead. Good horses are treasured above all else.

Time after time the cowboy rides out into range country to do his work, always trusting that his mount will bring him out of the

wilderness in one piece. The land is harsh. Known as the *brassada*, the brush country, it is replete with all sorts of growths, almost all of which are thorned. Alternately it is swept by choking gray dust borne by blistering winds, drowned by deluges that hiss when they strike the hot earth, and beaten by blizzards from the north. Interlocking thickets enclose clearings of mesquite grass where cattle can graze by the thousands and hardly be seen by horsemen. There are precious few rivers, and these run in deep trenches cut so abruptly that the channel usually cannot be seen except from the brink itself. It is an altogether inhospitable place where danger lurks behind every boulder. There are the aforementioned cattle thieves, warrior braves from the Twenty Nations, Mexican banditos, and even the occasional catamount or rattlesnake. And for all the hardships, hazards, and toil, the cowboy is paid the sum of fifteen or twenty dollars a month in gold or silver.

Due to the constant adversity and poverty, cowboys have never been much to look at. A majority are bearded rather than clean-shaven. Texas nights are frequently cold and it is reckoned a good thing to have some insulation against the chill. Their garments have evolved into a uniform of sorts, though with individual variations: a shirt of rough cotton flannel in a bright solid color or gaudy pattern of checks, stripes or plaid, sometimes covered by a cloth or leather vest but rarely a jacket; stout denim trousers with copper rivets reinforcing the points of greatest wear; leggings of tough hide to shield the legs while riding through the thorny brush; high boots with large spurs of silver or iron; around the neck a tough silk bandanna used for everything from filtering out dust while breathing to blindfolding a recalcitrant calf; and last but not least a wide-brimmed hat with the crown dented into a pyramid or flat to keep away the pressing light of the sky. Other parts of a cowboy's rig included a Texas saddle with a high cantle, heavy stirrups, a metal pommel to which a lariat of hemp rope could be affixed and perhaps a worn bedroll.

Beginning in the late 1860's the cowboys were pressed into service as range soldiers by the wealthy ranch-owners so recently spawned in the country's discontent. The private armies of the JA, the Matador, the Morgan, and the Three D Ranches became infamous. Whereas before their utilitarian knives had been enough, the cowboys began to carry guns. The .45 caliber single-action revolver known as the Peacemaker was favored above all other arms for its reliability. These were usually worn dangling from tooled leather cartridge belts in fast-draw holsters. Another weapon that gained notoriety on the prairies of Texas was the Winchester rifle, a solid piece of armament accurate to over 200 yards. Firearms like these became the primary tools used to fight the bands of organized rustlers that had cropped up all over Texas.

By the middle of the 1870's, the great cattle companies with their armies of cowboys had engineered a tense stalemate with the rustlers. Yet still the range wars flare up occasionally. Most of the skirmishes are now focused along the Rio Grande between the Pecos and Mexico Bay, the region where the cattle industry got started. To get away from the hostilities, a few ranchers have moved westward, skirting south of the Twenty Nations. Some have reached as far as California. The ranchers who stayed have gotten tougher. They are now breaking out new weapons in their fight for an honest profit. To the dismay of the cowboys, a new invention called barbed wire has recently appeared on the ranges. The fencing off of open pasture lands promises the eventual end of the cowboy way of life, but the cowboys, the knights of the frontier, will not go down without a fight. That is one thing they have grown to know well in recent times.

LONE STAR LEGENDS

The Lone Star Republic has known some of the greatest of American heroes, men who fought and bled their way into the annals of history beneath Texas skies of perfect, cloudless blue. Of all the fantastic characters who have roamed the vast prairies, Davy Crockett and Pecos Bill stand out as the most memorable.

Davy Crockett was not a Texan by birth, but he was certainly adopted by the people of that territory. He was born in the backwoods of western Tennessee in 1786, a child of the savage frontier. In the town of Limestone, near Greeneville, he grew up unfettered, with not a teacher or truant officer to keep him from his beloved outdoors. By his tenth summer young Davy could hunt, shoot, and track better than any full-grown man alive. More than anything, he loved to test his mettle in contests of skill and strength. The grizzled brawlers who lost to him spread word of his great prowess.

They said that Davy Crockett came out of his mother's womb with a Kentucky long rifle in his hands. He could wade the Mississippi, ride a raw streak of lightning, and slip down a honey locust without a scratch. Beneath Davy's rude, uncouth surface breathed a spirit as brave and chivalrous as any. Eventually the call of the wilderness grew too strong, and Davy Crockett left for Texas in 1835.

It was in San Antonio that he would carve himself a place in the history of the West. Late in 1835 Crockett wandered west out of Galveston. It was the height of the Texas Revolution, and troops under the feared General Santa Anna raged through the territory trying to defend Mexican holdings. Crockett reached San Antonio just as Santa Anna crossed the Rio Grande. Though their plight seemed hopeless, Davy joined the tiny garrison of the Alamo, a converted chapel outside the town proper. Just 150 men joined battle with the three thousand strong Mexican army. It came down to hand-to-hand fighting within the walls of the fortress. James Bowie and William B. Travis, two other famous frontiersmen, were killed by sharpshooters as they fought with knife and cutlass. Davy Crockett was one of the few people still alive when Sam Houston and reinforcements arrived. In a valiant rescue effort, Davy and the other ten survivors were spirited away from the Mexicans.

The terrible defeat roused Sam Houston and the rest of Texas to white hot anger. A few months later at San Jacinto a force of Texas militia, reinforced by 2000 Cherokee and Choctaw irregulars, overwhelmed Santa Anna. Cries of "Remember the Alamo!" were heard everywhere. At San Jacinto, Davy outdid himself in feats of courage and fighting, and passed into Legend.

• Davy Crockett (Legendary figure)

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Fisticuffs [EXC] • Marksmanship [EXT] • Perception [GR] • Physique [EXT]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible and insubstantial, and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

Though next to nothing is known about him, the man called Pecos Bill is widely held to be a wilder hombre than Davy Crockett ever was. He rides the ranges with a pair of six-shooters on a horse called Widow-maker, and he is undoubtedly the greatest cowboy the Southwest has ever seen and the king killer of bad men.

Though the exact circumstances of his birth and rearing are a mystery, the people of Texas have chosen to believe an outlandish tale written up by an Amarillo newspaper reporter. According to the story, Bill's mother weaned him on moonshine when he was only three days old. He cut his teeth on a Bowie knife and went out to play with the catamounts. When Bill was a year old, the clan decided to move further west. As they crossed the Pecos River, young Bill fell out of the wagon. Because his parents had seventeen other children to deal with, nobody missed him for four or five weeks. Though they traveled back to look for him, the lad was nowhere to be found. The coyotes of the Pecos had adopted him as one of their own.

Being raised by coyotes is the only possible explanation for the man's feral toughness. In the eyes of most Texans, Pecos Bill is the meanest galoot ever to put on a pair of spurs. Another story about Bill has circulated around the Republic of Texas for the past few years. It seems Bill was mightily bored one day when he decided he would go out and join the hardest cow outfit in the world. Not just any ordinary bunch of cow-stealing amateurs, but a real tough herd of murderous hellions who took some pride in their work. Bill rode for days across the prairie before he came upon an old man, who told him that the outfit he sought was just a couple hundred miles further on. Bill was driving his mount down a long draw when the animal broke a leg. Cursing his bad luck, Bill walked on, saddle slung over his shoulder.

Now Bill had always had a special way with all kinds of creatures, a deep connection that allowed him some mastery over the beasts of the wild. When a ten-foot rattlesnake reared up in his path, he was in no mood to play. Inside of a few minutes, he had whipped the very poison out of the rattler. Bill walked on with the thing in his hand, swinging it at the Gila monsters he passed.

Fifty miles further on, a huge mountain lion leaped out at Bill and froze stiff at the sight of the rattler. Always a little on the crazy side, Bill quickly cinched his saddle onto the big cat and took off, whooping and hollering at the top of his lungs. When he pulled into the cutthroat camp, he was still riding the cougar and swinging the giant rattler around his head. Before anyone could say a word, Bill shouted out, "Who the hell is the boss around here?" A grim, one-eyed man over seven feet tall with pistols and knives galore sticking out of his belt rose up and said, "Stranger, I was. But now you are."

• Pecos Bill (Legendary figure)

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Fisticuffs [EXC] • Gunslinging [EXT] • Physique [EXC] • Riding [EXC]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible and insubstantial, and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: COWBOY

You grew up in the saddle, punching cows and chewing trail dust. The Cowboy's life is hard, but you love the freedom of the open range. Whether on a cattle drive or in the cow towns you've learned to handle yourself. You're tough in a fist fight and a gun battle—you never back down. Your best friend is your horse.

• **Strong Suits:** Courage, Fisticuffs, Riding

• **Possessions:** Horse, bedroll, lariat, six-gun.

• **In Your Diary:** Simple wisdom, details of cattle drives you've been on, and plans to start your own spread.

• **Why You're Here:** Stuffy eastern society has never appealed to you. There are too many rules, and it's all just too darn complicated. As a cowboy, life is simple. You drive cattle, sleep on the range, live life to its fullest, and if anyone gives you a hard time, you put 'em straight with your fists.



DRAMATIC CHARACTER: BOUNTY HUNTER

Everybody needs a little extra money sometimes, and becoming a part or full-time bounty hunter is one way to do it. The number of desperadoes wanted by the law, and the number of bolt-holes they can hide up in, are as limitless as the Texas prairie. As a bounty hunter, you must possess a keen eye, an iron will, and an endurance to match. Your quarry are wanted men, and while they can run, they can't hide.

• **Strong Suits:** Courage, Marksmanship, Riding

• **Possessions:** Horse, bedroll, rifle, six-gun.

• **In Your Diary:** Wanted posters, lists of desperadoes you've captured, lists of known hideouts.

• **Why You're Here:** You found yourself needing more money than your previous profession could give you. Or, you felt a need to bring bad men to justice, but felt too limited being a marshall. Perhaps the need to get revenge for the death of your family drives you. In any case, one thing is for sure. Being a bounty hunter, you can make sure your quarry gets the justice he deserves. After all, you get your reward whether you bring him in dead or alive.

THE STEAM WELL

Crawling across the oil fields of Texas, Steam Wells are the mountainous products of advanced engineering and the Oil Barons' ceaseless search for oil. Conventional oil drilling requires an oil derrick to be erected at each drill site. Odds favor hitting a dry hole instead of a gusher. The derrick must then be dismantled and moved to the next location. When a well does strike oil, pumps must be brought in. The Steam Well does away with all this.

From a platform, mounted on huge caterpillar treads, a permanent oil derrick rises high above the front of a Steam Well. At the base of the derrick and to the rear, a giant oil pump is flanked by two huge storage tanks. Behind the pump is the great Engine that powers the vehicle. A cantilevered control tower rises from the back of the monster. Built in amidst the clanking machinery are quarters for the drill crew.

Ponderously rolling across the landscape, a Steam Well can stop to drill and immediately move on if it hits a dry hole. When an oil strike is made, the giant pump is engaged and steam injection is used to speed pumping. The oil is stored in the onboard storage tanks, which can be removed and replaced by service cranes that retract into the body of the Steam Well when not in use. When the oil runs out, the Steam Well fires up its Engine and moves on.

Ranchers hate Steam Wells because they stampede cattle with their infernal roaring. Few ranchers will willingly allow one on their property. This does not stop Rogue Well Crews from trespassing to find and extract any oil. All Steam Wells are armor-plated and mount gatling guns fore and aft. A lookout is also maintained, as the slow-moving Steam Wells are easy targets for not only ranchers but Aero pirates, with whom epic battles have been fought.

Delaplane Oil, run by J. R. and Robert Delaplane, manufactures most Steam Wells in its Dallas factory. Barnett Oil, run by Clifford Barnett, is the other major manufacturer. The Barnetts and Delaplanes are among the most prominent Oil Barons and are fierce rivals.

John Chisum, perhaps the leading Cattleman in the Texas Republic, is the sworn enemy of both the Delaplanes and Barnetts. Backed by other Cattlemen, he has repeatedly sponsored bills in the Texas Legislature to ban Steam Wells altogether or to fine heavily Rogue Wells. The Oil Barons have successfully been able to resist such measures thus far, but it's a good thing Texas is as big as it is.

STEAM WELL

Cost: 74 days at 7400c

Size: Large [160 wounds]

Powered By: A spherical brass boiler covered with hundreds of tiny rivets and jets of pressurized steam hissing from spigot-shaped safety valves.

Operation Time: Up to a week.

Operates With: A Captain's wheel, and thick metal cables and greasy iron rods pulled by ranks of numbered handles.

Moves With: Clanking metal treads with lots of driving wheels.

Armed With: Two gatling guns.

"A dream is a dream, Countess," said Pfistermeister, "and—"

"Please," said Sam. His deep voice cut right through everybody else's chatter. "Let Mr. Olam speak."

I looked at the Captain, von Hubel, Pfisty. "Sorry, you guys. Only the Inner Council knows. We decided it would be best to keep the rest of you in the dark. Less chance of leaks. But it was more than just a dream."

"Because someone was killed for it."

I debated asking to speak with Sam privately, but I decided against. Lückner didn't seem wounded to be kept in the dark, but Martin and Pfisty seemed put out. It would have bothered them even more to be booted out while Sam Houston and a bunch of anonymous Cherokee got to hear the good stuff. Besides, it was only the U.S. that we didn't want to know, and we were beyond their clutches.

Or so I thought.

Marianne handed the book to me. Using it for reference, I told him the whole story. How the Indians were, the coming of the American cowboys. The weather, the violence, the complete destruction of the village, everything. Sam asked a few questions. The Indians, none. Even Martin and the rest got caught up in the tale; having Marianne's notes really helped me to embellish it and add detail. And when I get on a roll, I can be a pretty darned good speaker. Really.

Then, when I was finished with the dream, I went on. I told them the story of the Indian emissary we found. How he'd been killed, what we found on his body. All the mysteries that remained. And how we decided on our course of action.

I made Auberon seem a lot less annoying.

When I finished, I think that the crew was pretty shocked all around. Not that I credited that to my amazing story-telling sense. It's just a weird story. And anything that involves a mysterious and anonymous death gets interesting pretty fast.

"So the plan from here is for us to go up to the border of Texas and the Twenty Nations. I get dropped off in the middle of nowhere. That way no one sees me. Then I go into the Twenty Nations and try to find someone who knew this guy. See what they want, and try to negotiate something. But basically, I can't really decide what I have to do until I can figure out everything that's going on. And to find that out, I have to go there."

"Obviously," I added, looking at my group and theirs, "this is top secret. No one is supposed to know. If the U.S. knew, they'd try to stop me. So, until I make it to San Francisco, none of this can leave this room."

That's when I heard a thump in the next room.

I was already standing, so I leapt for the door, pulling my reciprocator. I burst through, waving it about, looking for a target.

No one was there.

"Please, *mon cher*," said Marianne, "you are getting jumpy. It is all this talk of ghosts."

"I heard something," I said. "I know I did. Could it have been a ghost?"

"There are no angry spirits here," said one of the Cherokee flatly. He left no room for doubt.

Sam stood up and walked over to the wall next to the door. He pointed at one spot. "There is a dumbwaiter right here, Mr. Olam. Let me show you." He left the room and walked around to the kitchen. I heard him say something to his wife, or maybe one of his daughters. There was a pause.

Thump.

Yeah, I felt like an idiot.

Looking back on it, though, I think that was my big mistake. Just like at the start of the adventure, I let Morrolan and Auberon talk me out of the significance of my dream, now I let Sam Houston talk me out of the significance of that noise. That's my hunch. Unfortunately, I'll never know. Anyway ...

Sam came walking back in. "Nevertheless," he said, "I find your dream very strange. And very important."

"It is no dream," said one of the Cherokee. A different one.

"It is a spirit walk."

"So what's a spirit walk?" I asked.

"Well," said Sam, "it's kind of the way Indian magick works. In part." He turned and looked at the oldest of the Cherokee present, and spoke a few words. In Cherokee, presumably. It was all Greek to me. The old man answered, his voice crusty with age. Sam translated for me. As best he could.

"A spirit walk is. It is a part of life, a test that all Indians go through, just like waking up in the morning is a test to every living creature. The spirit world is above us. We see it in dreams, we see it in omens, but in a spirit walk we do not just watch, we move. We walk upon the spirit world. We are no longer in this world, although our body waits for us to return, like a good wife waits for her brave to return from the warpath.

"Some get lost in their spirit walk, or injured, or killed, and they cannot return. Eventually the body gives up waiting and goes away. Sometimes someone else returns to the body and uses it. Sometimes the body goes into the spirit world to try to find its spirit, and no one ever sees it again, because bodies cannot return from the spirit world.

"In the spirit world, all is truth, and all is tricks. The Great Spirit holds all in the spirit world. Sometimes the Great Spirit sends other powerful spirits to test you. Sometimes the Great Spirit lets you meet other spirits which are there, and you must fight them. Sometimes the Great Spirit makes you meet yourself, and you must fight yourself until you win and die. Always the spirit walk is a challenge. Always there is great wisdom to be learned. Always there is great danger." At this, the old Cherokee stopped talking.

"A spirit walk is dangerous," repeated Sam. "Much like the truth."

"So why don't people do spirit walks over in New Europa?" I asked.

"European magick doesn't quite work the same way as Indian magick," he said. "People's beliefs influence magick just as much as magick influences people. In the white man's culture, magick is codified. It's a science. It's neither as dangerous nor as exciting as a spirit walk. Do you know what white man's magick is, Mr. Olam?"

I shook my head.

"Writing. White men trap the truth onto paper. I can read a book, and hear what someone else said a long time ago. Hundreds of years, even. With novels, fake people become real, and I know them. Or I can look at an architect's plan, and see the house it will make. Right?"

I nodded.

Sam walked over and looked out the window. "In fact, that's how we set up the Twenty Nations. Tecumseh, when he was courting Patty Galloway, decided he must know the white man's culture before he could marry her. He also felt she should know the red man's culture. So he would spend a year overseas, and she'd spend a year with his people."

He turned around and stared hard at me, lowering his voice with anger. "But when he got to Oxford, he saw a map on the wall. A map of America. And on the map, all the Indian lands had already been claimed by the U.S.. The United States ran all the way to the Bear Flag. That's when he realized that in the white man's mind, the Twenty Nations were already dead. That's why the Indians had been losing all that time. It was the magick of maps and symbols. So he stole the map, canceled the rest of his trip, and came right back here."

He sighed with the weight of memory. "It was a hard time for many years. We couldn't figure out how to stop the white man. But then my father, Oo-Loo-Te-Ka, cried out that we needed a wall.

"A Spirit Wall.

"Together we organized the Dance and whupped St. Louis as a show of force. Well, actually, we destroyed it. With great magick. Then a group of chiefs and I rode across the border and demanded to be taken to the White House. When we got there, I threw a buffalo hide on the President's desk. The hide had a map on it marking the borders of the Twenty Nations. I used the white man's magick against him, and declared the Twenty Nations a sovereign country.

"And it was."

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: SHOWMAN

P.T. Barnum and Buffalo Bill Cody are your heroes. Like them, you put together traveling attractions that astound and entertain the multitudes! You've performed before presidents, Oriental potentates, and the Crowned Heads of New Europa. You're welcomed wherever you go and are always on the lookout for new talent.

However, you don't need a three-ring circus to be a Showman. Just about anyone who astounds and amazes an audience for profit could fall into this category. Snake-oil salesmen, travelling phrenologists, Hellfire & Brimstone preachers, or even Inventors could be considered Showmen.

- **Strong Suits:** Charisma, Performance, Social Graces

- **Possessions:** Traveling wagons, tents, performer contracts, strong box.

- **In Your Diary:** Playbills, broadsides, invitations from important people, and tales of your fantastic exploits

- **Why You're Here:** Where else would you be? You've scoured the earth to find the most exciting, unusual, daring, and death-defying acts imaginable, and now you're on tour. Step right up and witness these marvels of the age, brought to you by yours truly!

THE SOCIAL SCENE IN TEXAS

Everything is bigger in Texas! Stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to within miles of the Gulf of California, Texas sits astride a continent and Texans always ride tall in the saddle. Texas is a land of Cowboys, Indians, Mexican Haciendas, Oil Barons, and Cattlemen, and they have all helped shape the wildest, woolliest social scene, north, south, east, or west of the Brazos. So feather out compadre, it's time to get there with both feet, Texas style!

COWBOY CULTURE

Whether you call them Cowboys or Vacaros, the men who ride the range give Texas the rough-and-tumble personality that permeates Texas society. Fancy manners are for city dudes from back east, who haven't got the horse sense to know that the measure of a man isn't taken in a parlor but underneath prairie skies. Of course, Texans mind their manners, always taking their hats off in front of a lady and treating people with the respect they deserve. But Texans don't let that stand in the way of having a good time and if you want a Texan's respect, you'd best be prepared to earn it. You see, even the most highfalutin' in Texas society have spent time in the saddle and have had a dust-up or two in their time, even the ladies.

THE CATTLEMEN'S CLUB

The chief occupation in Texas is ranching cattle. The owners of the biggest spreads are as wealthy and powerful as any New York industrialist and they can be just as ruthless. These big time operators have come together and formed the Cattlemen's Club. Part gentleman's club and part saloon, the Cattlemen's Club is located in Fort Worth, but there are Cattlemen's Clubs in San Antonio and Abilene as well. Within the leather-lined confines of the Cattlemen's Club cattlemen relax, socialize, and wheel and deal as only Texans can. Once a year in July, the Club hosts the Cattle King's Ball. This is the premier social event of year and invitations are as scarce as hen's teeth.

THE OIL BARONS

Second only to ranching, oil is the biggest moneymaker in the Texas economy. Wildcatters who have brought in gushers have gone on to become the industrialists of Texas, importing or building great steam-powered drilling rigs and pumps. Much like the Robber Barons of the United States, these Oil Barons have had to fight to be accepted into a Texas society dominated by Cattlemen. The Cattlemen consider the Oil Barons dirty moneygrubbers. The Oil Barons think of themselves as progressives and the Cattlemen as simple cowboys, afraid of Steam Age Progress. The social competition and one-upmanship between Cattlemen and Oil Barons, usually peaceful, is as big as Texas.

The Oil Baron's Club is the Oilmen's answer to the Cattlemen's Club. Located in Dallas, the Club hosts the Oil Baron's Ball once a year in August. This is fast becoming as elaborate an affair as the Cattle King's Ball, as social competition between the two groups intensifies.

THE HACIENDAS

In the border areas of Texas from Laredo to El Paso to Tucson, wealthy Texans of Mexican descent own huge self-sufficient ranches and farms known as Haciendas. These Haciendas are what remain of the society of Old Mexico that existed before Texas won its independence. Life here is civilized and refined on an almost New European scale. While people of Mexican descent enjoy full rights in the Republic, the Haciendas also have a distinct society of their own that preserves their Mexican heritage. The Hacienda owners, or Rancheros, take turns hosting fiestas, bullfights, and rodeos at which everyone is welcome. Rancheros pride themselves on their hospitality and welcome guests, even uninvited ones. You can be assured of a welcome and can expect to be feted and entertained for days or even weeks.

THE PUEBLOS

Depending on whom you ask, Texas has perhaps the best relationship with its Indian citizens of any nation, with the possible exception of the Bear Flag Empire. The Apache, Hopi, Navaho, and Zuni tribes all consider themselves Texans but live autonomously in the Arizona and New Mexico territories, much as they always have. Non-Indians refer to Indian society as the Pueblos. Like the Haciendas, the Pueblos exist apart from the rest of Texas society by choice. In this way, the Indians preserve their cultural traditions.

Not unfriendly to outsiders, the Indians are cautious toward strangers but once accepted by a tribe, you could not find better company. Much of Indian society revolves around religious observances and hunting. In this, the Indians share a love of hunting common with most Texans.

SNAKESKIN COWBOYS

Unique to Texas are the number of Dragons that make their homes within the Republic. Perhaps it is the memory of their prehistoric ancestors who soared above these same skies that draws them from New Europa. Whatever the reason, Dragons seem to love everything about Texas, but retain a New European sense of style. You can expect to meet Dragons in Ten Gallon Hats, fancy suits, and cowboy boots. There are Dragons that are Cattlemen, fewer that are Oil Barons, and more than a few that find the perfect blend of New World and Old among the Haciendas. Some dragons have even been known to join the Texas Rangers! Throughout Texas society, Dragons have become not uncommon sights. Derisively called Snakeskin Cowboys, it would be best not to call a Dragon this to his face.

THE TEXAS BARBECUE

The Texas Barbecue is a uniquely Texan social institution. It cuts across all social, ethnic, and class distinctions. Oil Barons rub shoulders with Cattlemen. Cowboys swap stories with Indians. Rancheros and Dragons compete to see who can appear most resplendent. No one is left out and everyone is invited.

Barbecues are informal dinner parties with music, dancing, and eating all going on at once. Usually fatted calves are roasted over an open pit barbecue, while smaller barbecues prepare special side dishes. Chili is another staple, the hotter the better-Texas style! Everyone is expected to dig in and have a good time. Kegs of beer are freely tapped.

The biggest barbecues are held in Fort Worth on Texas Independence Day, on Steven Austin's Birthday and on Sam Houston's Birthday. Each of these barbecues is sponsored by Fort Worth, and draws between seven and ten thousand attendees. The barbecues start at about nine in the morning and continue far past sundown. When you attend, forget your table manners and don't expect to waltz.

WALTZING ACROSS TEXAS

Texans love to dance. New Europeans whirl around gilded ballrooms. New Yorkers promenade in their brownstones. San Franciscans cavort in the public rooms of that city's fine hotels. Texans cut the rug. This isn't a country much for waltzing. Doing the Texas Two-Step or the Cotton-Eyed Joe, dancing Texas style is not something at which most folks are skilled. Oh sure, there will be a waltz or two at the Cattle King's or the Oil Baron's Balls, but sooner or later that fiddler is gonna cut loose.

In country areas, especially in south and east Texas, the Barn Dance, often in celebration of a successful barn raising, is a social institution. This is where young men and women meet under the watchful eyes of their elders. There is always a pot luck dinner spread out on tables covered with checkered cloths and something to wet your whistle, but the main attraction is the dancing. Life in the west can be very hard and pretty monotonous for work-a-day folk. In these areas, Barn Dances are looked forward to with great anticipation.

THE CHURCH SOCIAL

More than in the United States or the Bear Flag Empire, a pioneer spirit remains in Texas. Distances are vast. Towns are separated by miles of rolling prairie, deserts, and mountains. Something about this vast openness brings men to church. In small towns, the local church will often be the center of town life, right after the saloon. Sunday services are frequently followed by a Church Social.

A buffet-style meal, the Church Social is put together by the women of the church. For unmarried young women it is a chance to show off their cooking skills. Everyone visits while they eat. Visiting is a combination of polite conversation, swapping news, and gossiping. It should not be confused with the highbrow table talk of New York, London, or Paris. Texans are just not impressed by that sort of thing. It's not that they are uneducated, but that they have far more immediate concerns in a land still only half tamed.

"Woah, wait a minute, Sam," I said. "You're losing me with all this map stuff."

"I was trying to explain why the white man's magick doesn't allow for spirit walks, son. To the American sorcerer, magick is a science. They have lore books and magickal theorems and proofs. It's like math. Everything is defined. And in a science like that, there's no room for a spirit walk. A spirit walk is an art, not a science."

"But magick isn't a hard science," I protested. "There's harmonics and stuff."

Sam paused, thinking. "Did you know that some Indian cultures only have two colors? One color is for blue, green, gray, and purple, and the other color's for red, orange, yellow, and brown."

"Well, that's stupid," I said. "Anyone can see there's a difference between blue and green!"

"That's exactly my point, friend," said Sam. "In your mind, you have colors finely divided into specific ..."—he waved his hands helplessly—"colors. You, sir, know the difference between blue and green, and even turquoise."

"Or the difference between fuchsia and magenta," added Marianne. Her and her color sense. Amazing.

"That's right," said Sam. "Your mind works by categorizing things. Understanding them by chopping them into little pieces. To them, your words fuchsia and magenta are meaningless. They wouldn't understand, because their way of thinking takes things as a whole. They don't know from lemon yellow, because they don't care. So while the sorcerers of the American colleges learn magick and increase their power by studying papers, the Indians do the same thing by taking spirit walks. They learn it all at once with their whole spirit, not a piece at a time by reading with their minds and then practicing with their hands."

"I get it," I said. "Book learning is like getting out of a hotel by taking the stairs. A spirit walk is like jumping out your window. You either do it all at once, or you break your leg."

"Close enough, yes," he said. "Except you risk more than your leg."

"So why did I have a spirit walk in Bayern? Or was that just a dream?"

"You're an odd one, Mr. Olam," he said. "So no, it wasn't no dream. I think it was a genuine spirit walk. So do these gentlemen," he added, indicating the Cherokees. "I think you had the dream because the medicine man was near to you, so he brought his beliefs to your land. He also had the call of a hundred thousand voices behind him, which made him stronger. And I believe you had the dream because you are who you are."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You're a man out of time," he said. "You are an oddity in this universe. Strange things happen around you."

"You know all that?" I asked.

"Word gets around," he said. "When Ludwig returns from nowhere, Bismarck suffers his first defeat, the famous Savile foils an assassination attempt on Empress Sisi, the Prussian rocket program fails, dirigible battleships start flying over the Alps, and medicine men all across the land start having dreams, word gets around."

So much for being a *secret* agent.

"So what is Thomas supposed to do about this spirit walk?" asked Marianne.

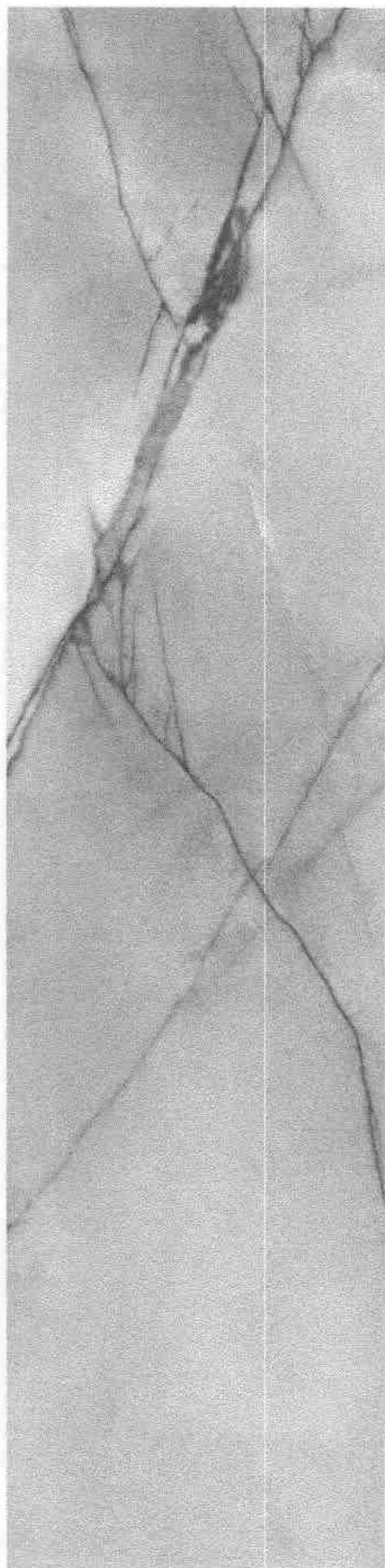
"He needs to go to the Great Council in the Twenty Nations. He needs to speak to them, because his spirit walk took place in their lands. But I reckon he'll have to take another spirit walk and fight those things."

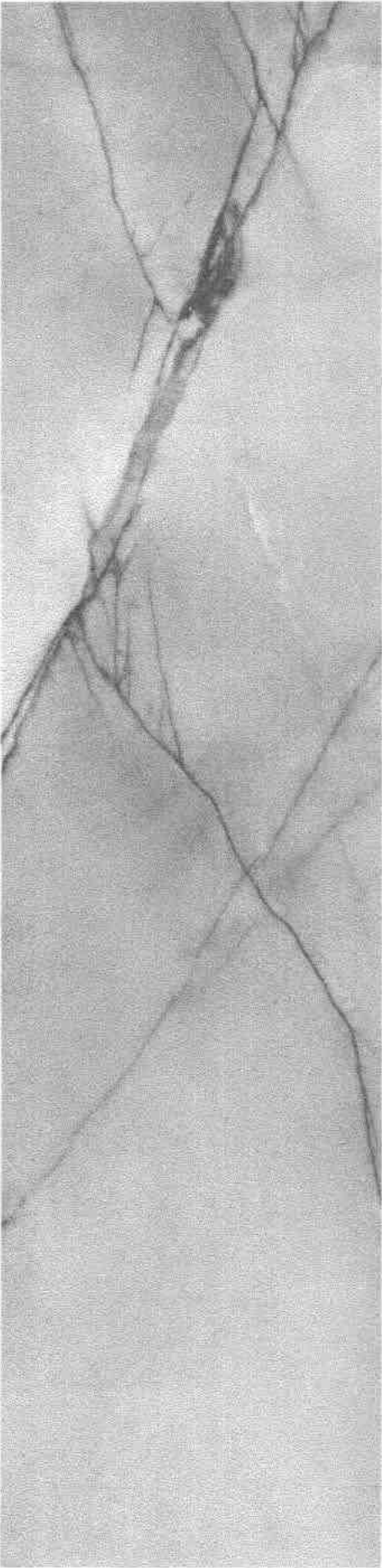
"Oh, give me a break!" I said, jumping from my seat. "You didn't see those things! They were huge! I didn't have a chance! No way, man, if I try to fight those things, you're gonna have to put a For Rent sign on my corpse, 'cause no one's gonna be coming back home!"

The oldest of the Cherokees laboriously struggled to his feet.

"You must show the path, White Coyote," he said. "Your walk says you must."

"Or we die."





Great. Talk about pressure.

"You are a mighty brave," the old Cherokee said, "and all Twenty Nations fight with you. But you must show the path."

He stared at me, hard, with those ancient eyes. It's like he'd been there in my dream, seen the death. He knew what was coming. And he was looking to one person for guidance. One clueless untrained person.

Me.

Unfortunately, no one else could do it. "Okay," I said.

He merely nodded and sat back down.

So we started making plans. Sam got me a fine horse with a good saddle and a whole pile of provisions. He also gave me a cloth that had a black raven embroidered on it. He said his personal symbol would get me just about anything I wanted. He gave me a map and directions, showing us the best place to drop me off and the best routes to take north.

"Are there any particular hazards I should be careful of?" I asked.

"Well, yeah," said Sam. "The Spirit Wall. That's what the Twenty Nations uses to defend against the Americans."

"That map wasn't enough, huh?"

"Nope. Now when I gave them the map, I knew darn good and well that as soon as we left, the good folks in Washington would start planning to take us over anyway, drawing lines and arrows and moving little blocks of wood on their new map. That's why I'd set up the Dance. It's a great magick spell summoned by the medicine men that do the Dance. It invokes the spirits of the land to defend it against invaders. So what happens, is when someone crosses the borders of the Twenty Nations, the spirits seek him out. The more people there are in the group, or the more the person has hate on his mind, the sooner the spirits show up.

"When the spirits find the person, he goes on a spirit walk. Maybe he succeeds, maybe he fails. But after the spirit walk, you are either allowed to come and go as you please, or you are sent away. Some folks who are sent away just get lost and find themselves back on the other side of the border. Some are never seen again."

"Oh, great," I said.

"Don't fret, now, son," he said. "You're only one person, and you've got good heart and you're going for a good reason. In fact, since you're heading there to take a spirit walk, I doubt if the spirits will make you take another just to get in. They ain't wasteful like that."

The old Cherokee spoke again. "The path of the White Coyote will be easy."

"Uh, Sam? Why does he keep calling me that?" I asked, pulling him aside.

He smiled. "He had a recurring dream that a white coyote came from the east, flying toward him and landing on its hind legs. Now you have to understand, to an Indian, the coyote brings knowledge, but it is also a cheat. Its gifts are usually painful to receive. Now in the dream, the coyote was lost, and asked how to go to the Dance. The first time, he tricked the coyote so it got further lost. He got back home and everyone was dead. The second time, he tried to bargain with the coyote, but there was nothing the coyote wanted, so it left. He went home, and everyone was dead once again. The third time, he just told the coyote how to get to the Dance, and the dream ended. After that, he came and told me his dream. The next day, we received word of your plans to visit."

Creepy.

Beyond that, there was really nothing more to do. The treaties were hammered out in concept, I had everything I needed, we were done. We gave Sam and several of his cabinet a ride back to Fort Worth. They were good company. We had another party there, a bon voyage Texas style.

And then we were off again. North past Abilene, and then to a secret place where they could drop me off.

We never quite made it.

THE WEST GETS WILD

N

orth from Abilene. Then I'd cut out for the Twenty Nations. I thought we'd made it. I thought we were beyond the reach of the United States. But no. Not only were we under surveillance, they were much closer than we could ever have thought. We were undone. Outmaneuvered.

Lunch time. That's when it started. It was hot. Naturally. It was north Texas. Lückner, Marianne, von Hubel, and myself were seated at one of the tables in the galley. Don Chandler begged out, feeling ill. Pfisty was limpid with the heat, and decided to stay in his bunk sipping iced tea. Personally, I didn't complain that either of them didn't show. The rest of us could relax and talk. Don was a regular chatterbox, and Pfisty, well, you know.

We ate. It was a good meal. However, in the middle of the entree, the *Stauffenberg* lurched. It was almost like what it might feel like to run into something, but reversed. You know, the whiplash effect of a crash comes kind of at the end, but this time it came at the start. It was weird. The waiter stumbled, spilling lemonade across the floor.

Lemonade. The least of our worries.

Lückner signaled one of his crew. "Leutnant! Go to the helmsman and find out what the difficulty is."

"Aye, sir." He left. I stood up.

"I have a bad feeling about this," I said. Boy, did I.

"I understand your concern, Herr Olam," he said. "It's probably a mechanical difficulty. The *Stauffenberg* took a shell to her rudder at Königssieg. It felt similar. My hope is it's nothing serious. Perhaps a cable has snapped."

I had to admire his calm in the face of potential disaster, but I didn't feel it. I glanced out to the lookouts. None of them seemed concerned, so I guess no one was firing howitzers at us. Still ...

"I'm going to check on it anyway," I said, and left for the helm. I ran into the lieutenant on my way. Literally. "Report?" I asked.

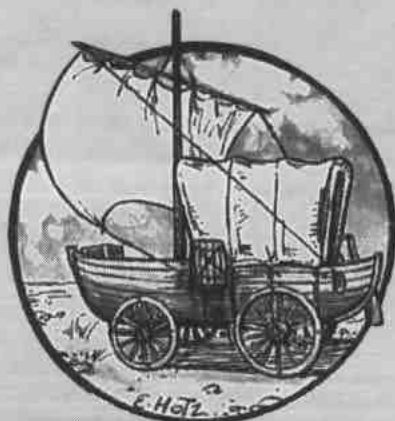
"No difficulties on the bridge. Yet we are gaining altitude. They are compensating by using the magnetic engine to pull us down."

At that moment, another sailor came running down the corridor. He saw me and saluted. "Report, sir. The aft lookout reports what appears to be a small explosion beneath us, slightly to aft. No sign of hostile forces. No sign of anyone, actually."

"Quickly!" I ordered the sailor. "Lead me to the ballast room! Lieutenant? Order general quarters!"

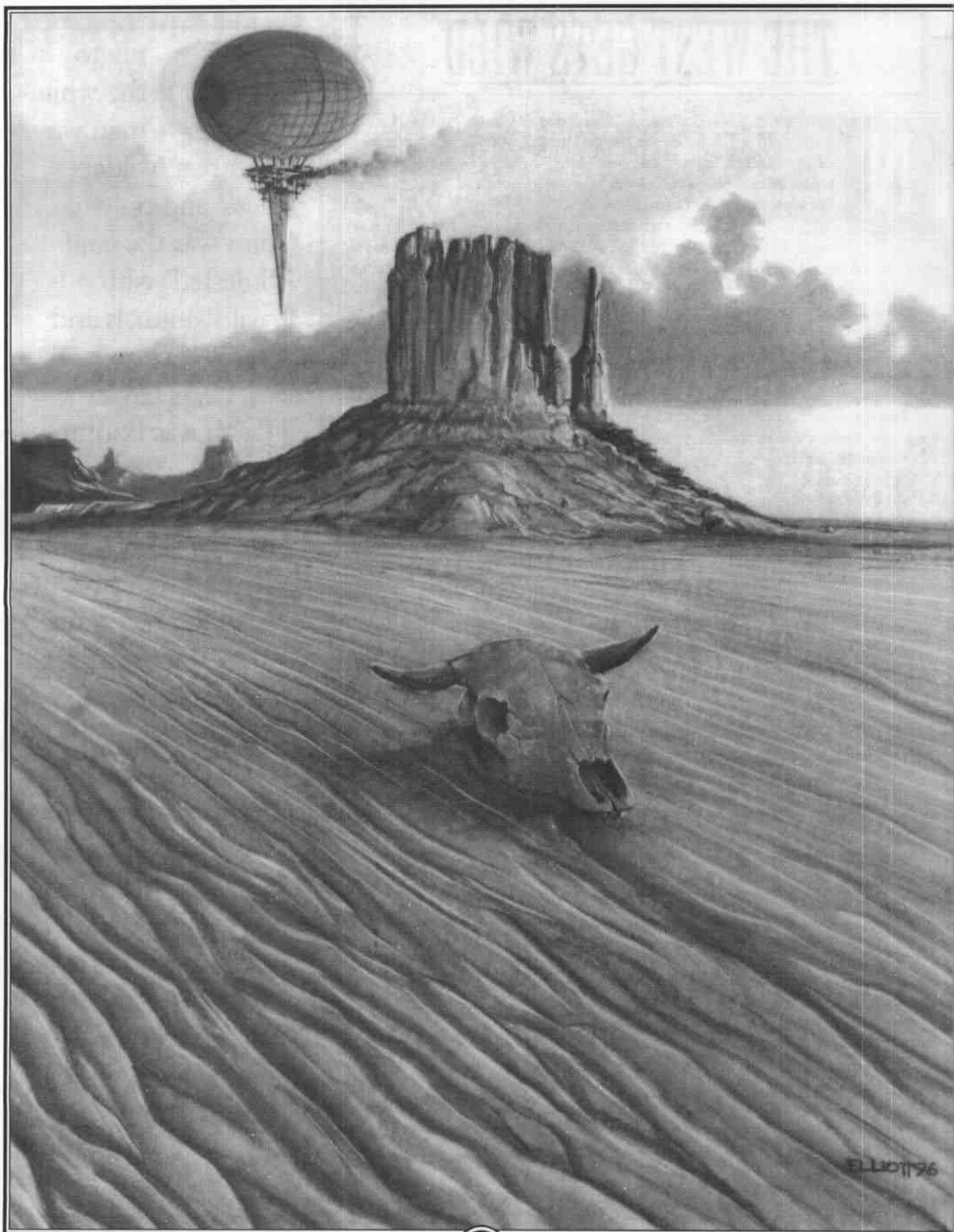
"Aye, sir!"

In five minutes, I'd either be a hero or a laughing stock.



“Only to the white man was nature a ‘wilder-ness’ and only to him was the land ‘infested’ with ‘wild’ animals and ‘savage’ people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery. Not until the hairy man from the east came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved was it ‘wild’ for us. When the very animals of the forest began fleeing from his approach, then it was for us the ‘Wild West’ began.”

—Chief Luther Standing Bear, Ogala Sioux.



It took us no more than twenty seconds to get to the ballast room. There was a sailor there, unconscious. The ejection hatch was open. And all the ballast was gone. "God help us!" I yelled. "We've got to get to the magnetic engine! Now!"

We passed a Marine on one of the decks as we charged up the ladders to the engine room. "You're with me!" I yelled. We were one deck below the engine room when the *Stauffenberg* lurched again. Harder.

Much harder.

The force of the lurch threw the Marine off the ladder. I heard him land with a hard thud. I muttered a silent prayer that he was all right and pressed on. So close. We ran down a short corridor to the door to the engine room. The engine room: a large two-deck atrium strung with catwalks, in the middle of which was the large thrumming sphere which pulled the *Stauffenberg* along the Earth's magnetic field. Applied sorcerous mechanics via steampunk technogibberish, based on Leonardo da Vinci's works. The central drive system of the ship. We opened the door.

It was quiet.

The lieutenant gasped. Two unconscious engineers lay at our feet, bound and gagged.

The odds on being a hero had just gotten a lot worse.

At that moment, the general quarters bell rang. About time. Why so slow? Maybe the lieutenant had stumbled during that second lurch. Maybe it just seemed like forever, because I thought I knew who we were dealing with. Maybe it took Lückner a moment to really catch a clue. I don't know.

Damnation. I didn't have my sword or service pistol handy. I was at lunch 3,000 feet in the air in a heavily-armed aerocruiser in the middle of nowhere, Texas, for Pete's sake, I shouldn't have to face down a saboteur without getting some kind of warning. Then I remembered that even off-duty cops are supposed to carry a gun at all times.

Oops.

Guess I'd have to revise the Bayernese Secret Service manual.

Fortunately, as a member of the Secret Service, I had a few tricks up my sleeve. Literally. I have a quick-draw Derringer worn around my right forearm. I wear it so often, it's like a part of me. I pressed the release at my elbow, and it popped into my waiting hand. Okay, so it was just a Derringer. Better than nothing.

"Sailor," I said, "go get the Chief Engineer. We need to find out how bad they messed up the engine. I'll stay here in case the saboteur is still around."

He saluted and left.

The magnetic engine, as I've said, is encased in a giant sphere. This provides all the support it needs for its workings, which to me look like clockwork spaghetti designed by H. R. Giger. I don't mess with magical engines. But certain specially trained engineers do. That's why there are access hatches all over the surface of the metal casing. And catwalks stretched all around it, so we can get to all those hatches. Not the best of places to hunt a saboteur. But not the best of places to try to hide, either. I moved the two unconscious engineers against the door to slow down anyone who might try to slip out.

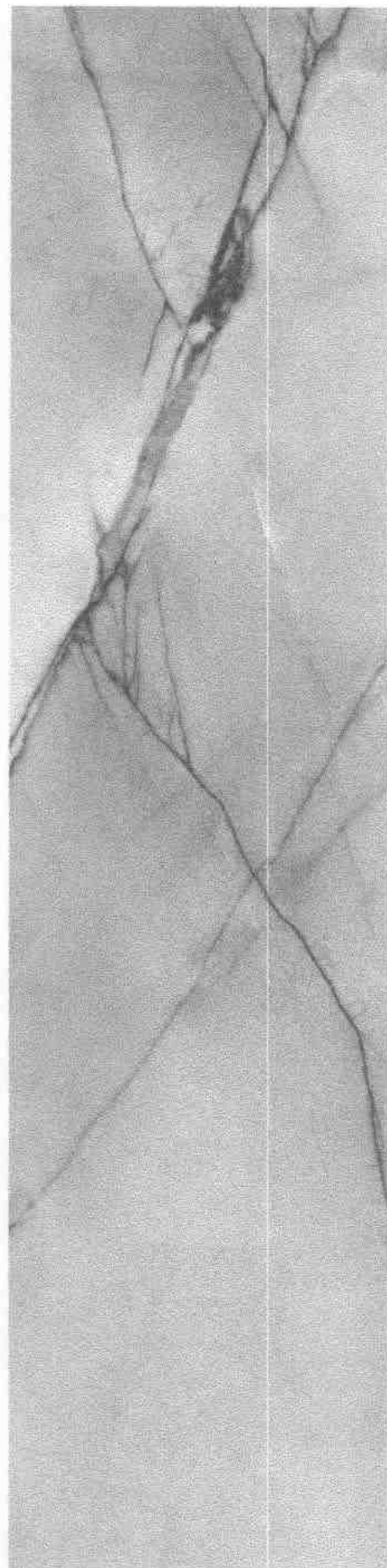
Then I began to hunt.

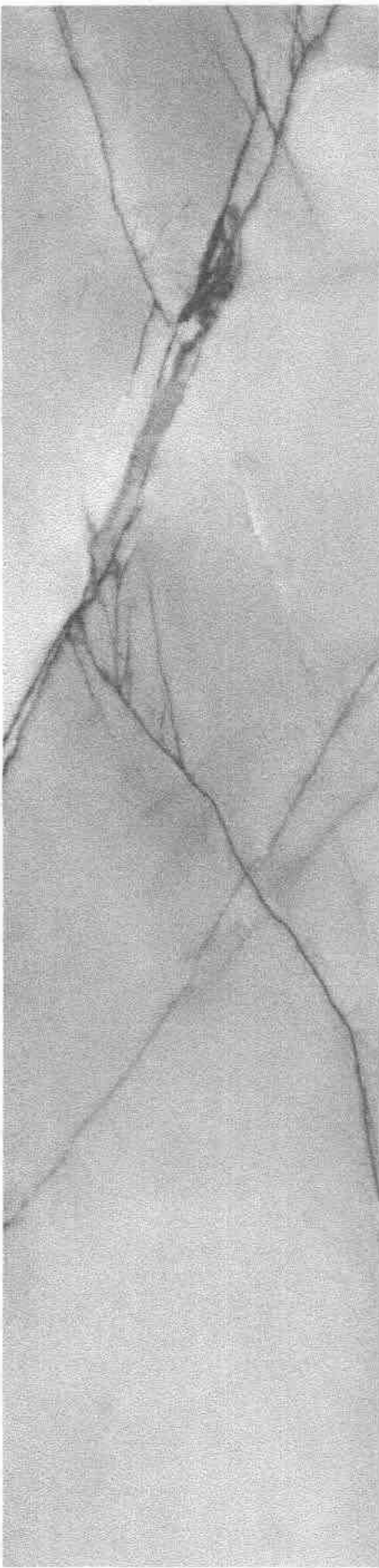
I moved silently, cautiously, searching among the catwalks, occasionally opening larger manways into the body of the engine. I thought I could hear someone, but I wasn't sure if it was the echo of my own movements.

Not until he hit me. Something warned me. You know that feeling of being watched? It's much more intense when you're being attacked. I turned at the last moment, saw someone leaping through the air, both arms extended. I fired as he struck me, arms coming down squarely on my shoulders. Bang! Crunch! Man, that hurt. The railing behind me cracked, and we both tumbled off onto the catwalk below.

I landed awkwardly, got the wind knocked out of me. I felt someone grab my collar and haul me to my feet. I saw a fist cocked back for a haymaker right to the jaw.

Stars.





NIGHT OF THE SABOTEURS

I came to a few seconds later.

Boy, he had a punch.

If he ever changed careers from sabotage, he'd have a bright future as a boxer. I was lying on the floor of the engine room, and I saw my assailant climbing up the ladder for the door. He wore a sailor's uniform. He was one of us. I looked for my Derringer, but I couldn't find it anywhere. It was probably on one of the catwalks. I had no idea.

He reached down to move the two engineers aside. And it all came together.

"I know you!" I said. "It has to be! You're—"

"Johann Schoenfeld," he said with a smile. He lifted one engineer to the side. "You hired me in New Orleans."

"Ha!" I barked, and immediately regretted it. My head felt terrible. "You're Secret Service. And that means ..."

He shifted the second engineer aside, pulled the door open a crack, and peered out.

"That means that Don Chandler is your partner!" I said.

He tossed off a casual salute to me for figuring it out. A tip of the hat, if he'd been wearing one. I always loved it when he did that.

I was torn between anger and admiration. "You—you—you magnificent bastard! Why do I have to fight you, of all people? I am not a criminal!"

Did he listen? No. He left. I got up and staggered my way back to the door. I'd just gotten there when the Chief Engineer and Captain Lückner burst in with a few other sailors. Way too late.

"Captain," I said, "alert everyone. Johann Schoenfeld and Don Chandler are saboteurs. They're secret agents. A team. Probably the best in the U.S. Secret Service. Johann is extremely dangerous. So is Chandler, but he's an actor, so he'll probably try to bluff his way out of trouble. Whatever you do, don't let them get away!"

Lückner simply gestured, and two of the sailors ran off to tend to the orders. "We shall get them yet, Mr. Olam. And what is the state of the engine?"

I shrugged.

The Chief Engineer trotted over to the main access panel and opened it up. Ribbons of metal flew out, leaping at him like an Unseelie jack-in-the-box. For a moment, I thought he'd be cut to shreds, but no. It was only the main spring of the magical engine. Only?

The Chief Engineer sagged, surrounded by bouncing coils of spring steel. One end kept slowly unspooling itself out the opening. He looked inside the engine case. "*Mein Kapitän*," he said, "The mainspring is bent and unraveled, the linchpin is missing, and it appears that one of the camshafts has been blown off. There is also a monkey wrench caught between two of the main gears. They have each lost several teeth."

Speaking of which, I felt my jaw. I was luckier.

"How much time to repair this?" asked Lückner.

"Perhaps a month. If I had a clocksmith, a blacksmith, and parts, and I were back in Bayern."

"That's bad," said Lückner.

"No, that's good," I said. "It'll give me more reason to hunt that guy down. Maybe I'll be able to get his autograph." Now I had a better feeling of how people felt about going up against the Red Baron. How do you fight the best, anyway?

By doing your best.

Lame, I know. But that's all I could come up with.

A small but powerful smoke bomb, courtesy of Seelie alchemy, was hidden in the back of my belt buckle. I pulled it out and held it in my right hand. In my left, I grabbed a small iron bar. It was too short to stick out on either side of my hand, but it gave my fist a little extra weight. A trick I picked up from one of the Spenser novels.

Outside the engine room, I tried to think. Where would I go, if I were them? They'd been discovered, so they'd try to rendezvous, make a new plan for escape. But where? Probably the place that we'd least likely search.

A place as far from escape as convenient.

The hull.

Where they keep the gas bags.

I climbed up the ladder into the gas bag chamber. In case you don't know, the top of an aerocruiser is a shell filled with gas bags. The shell, in our case, was made of a thin skin of Dwarf-crafted alloy. Very thin, very light, very strong. It's supported by a skeleton of beams in a sort of geodesic design. I was tempted to try to show the Dwarfs how tensegrity worked, but I never understood it well enough myself. Anyway, inside the shell are a good dozen or so bags which hold the actual hydrogen the ship uses to float. They have loops which strap them to the girders so they don't all mash against the ceiling. Ladders and catwalks run around inside to let us slap seals on any tears or leaks we get.

And somewhere in the cavernous interior, I could hear two hushed voices talking.

Bingo.

I leaned back out of the hull—that's what we usually call the gas bag chamber—and snapped my fingers at a nearby Marine. He looked up. I signaled him that the fugitives were inside. He smiled. He grabbed a short pike—six feet long, a holdover from sailing days—and silently climbed the ladder.

Together, we snuck through the chamber until we saw them. They were just finishing their plans. I was tempted to shout a warning, just because chivalry is a habit for me now. But ... nah. He didn't give me a warning.

It was time to return the favor.

We charged.

I threw the bomb at their feet to confuse them. Flash, smoke, surprise, boys! Chandler seemed to be caught off guard. Not too surprising; he was busy applying a new beard. Schoenfeld turned and ran as soon as the bomb went off.

Boy, he was fast.

I left the Marine to take care of Chandler. I chased Schoenfeld. I tackled him on one of the catwalks. We sprawled to the floor. We scuffled, giving each other body blows, me miraculously blocking two of his powerful right hooks. Finally I had him almost pinned, but he got his feet under me. And shoved. Hard. I flew.

That guy could brawl. As I picked myself up, I saw him slip to the side, behind one of the gas bags. I didn't think he saw me, so I climbed up and crawled across the top of gas bag itself. I didn't have to worry about making noise; he was the one running on a wood and steel catwalk. I was scooting on a bag as soft as a pillow.

And I knew where the ladder back down was.

Johann Schoenfeld was trying to circle around the gas bag to get back to the ladder. I could hear him, trying to step softly on the catwalk. I moved straight across the gas bag to cut him off. There wasn't a lot of room for me between the bag and the ceiling, but there wasn't enough pressure to make the squeeze uncomfortable. There was enough support to put me above Schoenfeld's head. He started walking by ...

Closer ... I swung a roundhouse, and was rewarded with a gratifying impact. It put him flat on his back. He shook his head, rubbed his chin. Suave even under the worst of circumstances. Gotta love it.

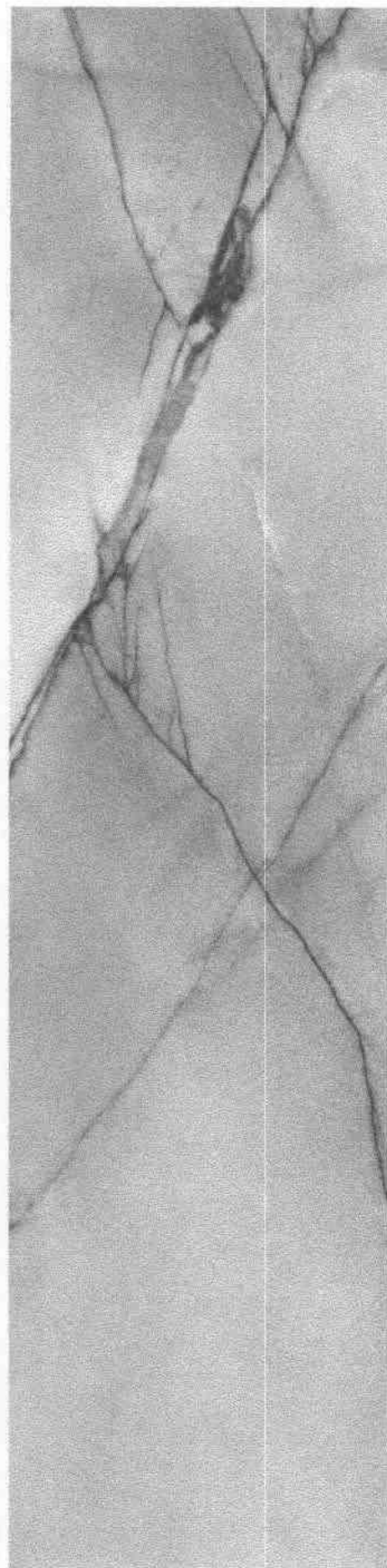
"I have you now," I said. Wait. I'm sounding like Vader. I'm a good guy. "So, ah, let's sort out our misunderstanding, okay?"

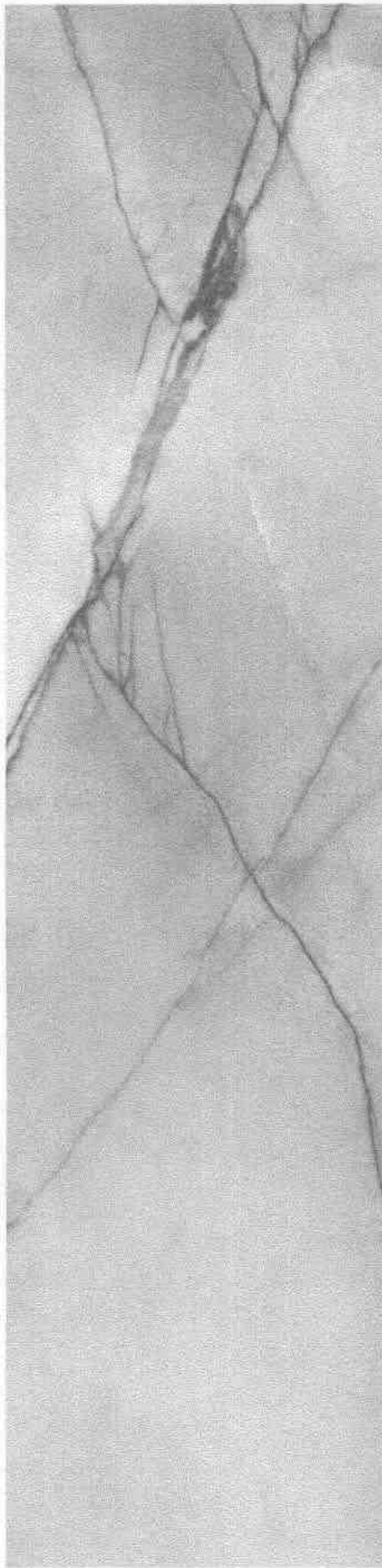
He clicked his feet together. A dagger sprung from the front of his boot.

Oh yeah.

He swiped his foot out, slicing a long tear into the gas bag. It deflated. Pretty damn fast. With 182 pounds of me on it, the tear widened, and in no time I was sinking into a mush of limp cloth. How annoying. How does he always do stuff like that?

By the time I clawed my way out of the deflating gas bag, he was gone. Damn. It didn't *take* me that long! I ran for the ladder. One Marine. Limp. Obviously Chandler was a little tougher than he gave him credit for. The Marine had a nasty bruise developing over his left eye—some things happen a little differently than they do on TV.





I slid down the ladder to the deck below. It was pretty easy tracking the guy. I just followed the trail of unconscious or groggy sailors.

Schoenfeld ran forward. I don't know why. Perhaps he was counting on Chandler's new disguise to keep him out of trouble, and needed to buy some more time for him to make whatever preparations they needed for their escape plan. I knew I'd need more than just me to beat him. It usually took about six or eight, right? I mean, that's the way it's always been for every secret agent, from the Scarlet Pimpernel to James Bond.

I rallied several marines and sailors, each armed. Swords, pistols, rifles, pikes. Yeah, now we're talking. Under my command, we swept the corridors heading forward, in parallel. I found him in the navigation center, the command office right behind the forward observation deck. Just below the bridge.

"It's no use running," I said. "We have you cornered, outnumbered, and outgunned. You've done your damage. Give it up." Several additional sailors and marines showed up behind me, adding their guns to my persuasive words. I tried to give him a Look. Didn't work.

He dove down behind a desk, and my sailors opened fire. Pens, papers, and splinters of wood flew through the air as the bullets chewed into the polished oak. Then I saw a small silver ball arc over the desk toward us.

Oh yeah. Forgot about those.

I knew what was coming. No time to shout a warning. I lunged forward, behind the protection of our map cabinet. Kaboom. I heard the men cry out in surprise and pain. But I couldn't worry about that. I saw a shadow run onto the forward observation deck.

I was hot on his heels.

I was bound and determined to stop him. He managed to change my mind. Just as I ran out onto the forward balcony, I saw him turn to face me. Suddenly a Derringer appeared in his hand, pointed right at my face.

Oh yeah. That thing.

My ears were still ringing, but the pocket pistol spoke plenty loud enough. Derringers may be small, but they look a whole heck of a lot bigger when you're staring down the business end of one. I leaped back into the substructure of the *Stauffenberg*, back into the map room. The glass of one of the windows shattered over my head as I lunged for cover. Thank you for missing.

I needed something to shoot back with. I looked around the smoke-filled room. Glass, splinters, papers, blood ... and a Reciprocator pistol. I guess it had been dropped by one of the sailors. I crawled across the floor and grabbed it. Then I ran, ducking low, to an overturned chair. It would give me at least a little cover, plus it gave me a clear shot at him. I glanced up. He was messing around with his gun. I aimed. Fired.

Click. Click click click click click. Damn! The reciprocator was empty! Stupid sailor! He'd probably unloaded it firing at Schoenfeld. I looked out at my adversary. He had a small metal object attached to the front end of his Derringer.

Oh yeah. That, too.

He fired it, pointing somewhere aft. I leapt over the chair to lunge for him. Not too gracefully, though. I stumbled a bit getting my feet. I could see there was a fine cable attached to the back end of the thing he'd shot from his pistol. He had it wrapped around one of his hands. I ran at him. As I charged, he jumped up and kicked me square in the chest with both feet. I flew backwards, hitting the railing on the far side of the deck. Thank God it didn't break.

He, on the other hand, was pushed in the other direction with the force of his kick. Over the top of the railing. Brave guy. Swinging like a swashbuckler 3,000 feet in the air, suspended only by a length of cable and whatever little grappling hook he fired from his derringer. I watched helplessly as he swept in a graceful arc to grab hold of another deck at the other end of the *Stauffenberg*. Bet he was glad he had leather gloves.

I ran aft. It was a heck of a lot slower than swinging through the air, but hey, I wasn't willing to risk it. Unfortunately, everyone else on the ship seemed to be running forward, presumably to help me capture the slippery Secret Service agent from Hell. The wild wild widget wizard. Professional respect aside, I was really starting to dislike him. And I'd been such a fan all these years.

I tried to get people to go aft with me, but between the wounded, the noise (most of which I think was caused by our own people), and everything else, all I seemed to be able to do was add to the confusion. So I gave up and went back there alone. I just hoped someone else would show as much sense as me.

I wondered what Johann was up to. Obviously, he must be making some sort of play for his escape. Probably his partner had found enough time to do whatever it was they were trying to do. But where would they escape from?

The bomb deck.

If they had parachutes, or 3000-foot rappelling lines, or even impact air bags, that'd be the place to jump from. It's loaded with non-strategic supplies like food and cigars and champagne, so there are massive places to hide. It's not the first place you'd think of for an escape, either. You'd think of parachuting off the deck, or leaping from a turret. Something dynamic, as opposed to the pantry hatch. So that's where I ran, thinking all the time, *Please don't let Don Chandler have magical abilities—it wouldn't be fair.*

I heard the clash of steel even before I got to the bomb deck. Swordplay. He does that, too? Jeez. I opened the door.

Johann.

As expected.

And Marianne.

I could only watch. They were moving too fast for me to try to intervene, not when each of them was swinging three feet of surgical steel with intent to kill. I'd sooner try to fish a ring out of a blender. Blindfolded.

They moved about, swords singing with every lunge and parry. After just two minutes, flour and sugar and eggs littered the floor, seeping from pierced bags all over the place. Now, I've seen Marianne handle a sword. She's darn good. That's why I was surprised it took her more than two minutes to win the duel. But win she did.

With a flourish.

She pulled a little disengage move, bringing her blade under his, and with a snap of her wrist, she flung his sword so hard it went into a bag of beans up to the hilt. I grinned. That's my girl. Course, I'd never let her hear me say that.

"Good job, Marianne," I said. I picked up a utility knife hanging against the wall and advanced. "And now, sir, please come along peaceably."

"I don't think that will be necessary," said a voice behind me. I had a feeling I knew what was about to happen. Marianne and I turned around slowly. I was right. A double-barreled shotgun stared back at us.

I dropped my knife. Marianne dropped her sword. We both raised our hands. I didn't recognize the guy holding the shotgun. But I knew anyway. He was in a sailor's uniform, and had a full beard.

"Darn," I said. "Just as I was getting to like Don Chandler, you had to go and change on me."

"Fine whiskers, *monsieur*," said Marianne.

Behind us, Schoenfeld opened the bomb bay. "C'mon, let's get out of here," he said. We heard the sound of some sort of equipment being ... what, set up? used? launched?

"I'm afraid I have to go now," said Chandler. He kept the shotgun trained expertly at my heart while he leaned forward and kissed Marianne's hand. "I do so hope we can meet again, under more congenial circumstances. But until then, *adieu, mademoiselle*." Boy, did he know how to lay it on.

"*Enchanté*," said Marianne.

He moved behind us. Another sound. Cautiously we both turned around. Gone. And, a hundred yards below us, circling on the thermals, two steam-age hang gliders.

I never got the chance to tell either of them how much I admired them. Not that it was likely I'd do that now. I hate losing, and they'd pretty well pissed me off. But I would have to look up Brooks next time I was in Washington. Have a little chat.



PHANTOM AIRSHIPS

The *Stauffenberg* is not the first spectacular airship to grace the skies of the Americas. For several years now, travellers throughout Texas, California, and the Unorganized Territories have been turning in reports of "Phantom Airships."

Reports of these airships vary, from glowing clouds to lights in the night sky, to actual sightings of craft shaped like the cylindrical gasbag of a zeppelin. Some even have wings. Some people claim these airships are accompanied by a buzzing noise, and a feeling in the air like just before a thunderstorm. Others claim these craft move silently, while executing lateral movements and right-angle turns impossible for normal airships.

None of these mysterious craft have ever landed, nor have their crew ever been seen, although some claim to have heard the voices of their crew. Pursuit of these craft by Californian Aviators or United States dirigibles has proved fruitless, as the Phantom Airships fly off at speeds deemed impossible by authorities including Count von Zeppelin. Some claim these Phantom Airships are simply Robur's *Albatross*, but Robur himself has publically denied this. The United States Secret Service believes that they belong to the Phantom Empire, but there is no evidence to confirm this.

Until such time as one is caught in the air, or lands, these Phantom Airships will remain one of the mysteries of the Americas.

I walked several fast laps around the *Stauffenberg* to let off some steam. Then I went back to the bridge to find out how bad things were. The whole time, people avoided me.

I was not in a good mood.

Lückner, the Chief Engineer, and the senior staff were all in the bridge by the time I got there. "What's the situation?" I asked.

Lückner turned to face me. Stoic. The very face of military discipline in the face of utter defeat. "The magnetic engine is completely useless," he said. "We have lost all our ballast, and we are gaining altitude. We are drifting off course to the west. It looks like we may be here a while. We're going to make an effort to repair the engine, even though we can't succeed. And we'll keep track of where we go. The rest of our plan we will have to make up as we go along, because we don't know how high we'll drift, nor where."

He paused and took a deep breath. "Those two were very effective, Herr Olam. It's a pity that you couldn't catch them." Then he turned away to the charts. I'm not sure if he was rebuffing me or not. I decided not to press the matter.

It seemed that the sun took a lot longer to set than normal. Probably it was just psychological. I knew we weren't actually gaining altitude that fast, but we certainly were going up. Way up.

By the next morning, it was obvious that we weren't going to stop gaining altitude soon enough. The air was getting very cold and thin. I kept thinking about the combat pilots and air crew in World War II. They did this. But then again, they had heat. Not us. We began to bleed hydrogen from the gas bags, decreasing our buoyancy. Yeah, it meant we might not make it across the Rockies, but better to fly too low and land than go too high and freeze. We were doing okay.

Until the time bomb went off. Took out four gas bags. Thank God our hydrogen was magically enchanted to be less flammable. We didn't go up in a *Hindenburg* fireball.

But we still started going down in earnest.

I don't know why the time bomb took so long to go off. Maybe it was to lull us into a false sense of security, or maybe it was supposed to go off a few minutes after they left, but they set it improperly. Who can tell? All I can say is it's fortunate we had all the accessways open to help the hydrogen bleed away. It helped vent some of the force of the explosion, and that saved several gas bags. Otherwise, we would have dropped like a Dwarf-alloy rock. Even so, life had been damn annoying lately.

Sinking and adrift, we weren't looking forward to our landing. Aerozepts aren't made for it. They're supposed to just hang over the *Bodensee*, not bounce on the ground. The whole situation was made worse by the fact that we had a long time to think about it. It was kind of like one of those slow-motion falls you have in your dreams.

Then the navigator shouted. "*Kapitän!* We may be able to call for help!"

"What's that?" Lückner bellowed.

The navigator pulled out a chart. "I believe the town of Santa Fe should be thirty miles to the south," he said. "If I am right, we could try to signal them. Then someone will know where we are."

With the aid of a spyglass, the lookouts confirmed the navigator's calculations. They could just make out some of the buildings. Lückner ordered rockets to be fired, and every signal light we had flashed a distress call in sync over and over again. The rockets were fired at one-minute intervals until we ran out, but we kept up with the signal until the town was no longer visible. Maybe they noticed. Maybe they didn't. In a sense, it didn't make any difference.

We were going down.

Lückner ordered crash stations.

Then we hit.



AIRSHIPWRECKED!

Once we'd picked ourselves out of the wreckage, we got ourselves oriented. Our points of reference were the sun and the wreckage of the *Stauffenberg*. We'd have the North Star once it got dark. We didn't have a detailed map, and the ship's compass was broken in the crash. Not good.

We were surrounded by what I figure were ancient Indian cave dwellings, high in the cliff walls. Someone found a telescope which made it through the landing in good shape, and I scanned the pueblos with it. I didn't see anyone up there, but then again, the place didn't appear to be run down, either.

Oh, if only we'd known why.

LEGENDS OF THE DEEP DESERT

QUEJO

Mothers have always told stories about the bogeyman to frighten their children into obedience. In the deep desert regions of the American southwest, the monster is real. Quejo's first name, if he ever had one, has been lost in the passing years. Half-Indian and half-white, he was born to a maiden of the Cocopah tribe sometime in the 1840's. Just after Quejo was born, the village shaman threw the wailing infant over the side of a cliff. Heartbroken, she crept out to the base of the cliff as the village slept, only to find that the child was still alive. Fleeing into the night with him, she wandered for many days, eventually becoming lost in the twists of the great Pyramid Canyon. Two weeks later, a pair of Paiute Indians found her dead, the infant Quejo still suckling at her breast. The Paiute buried the woman and took the child back to their village, where he was adopted by the tribe. It was a decision that has to date cost twenty-three people their lives.

Quejo quickly became a loner. Taunted relentlessly by the other Paiute youths, he started to do odd jobs in a nearby white settlement. By the time he was a teen, he was an expert horseman, marksman, and tracker. One night, he was taunted by a Paiute youth with the unlikely name of Bismarck. Quejo went to his dwelling and quietly packed his things, walked his horse up to Bismarck's fire, and shot him in the head. Then he raced away.

Quejo melted into the night. Though no trace of him could be found, he had not gone far. A few months later, he killed two more Paiute. Quejo's next victim was an elderly white homesteader named Woodward, for whom he had once worked. As a posse gathered, word came that the operator of the Gold Bug Mill, located five miles distant, had also been shot. Reward notices were posted and warrants were issued for his arrest to no avail.

Never had the Southwest seen a manhunt of such magnitude or ferocity. As always, it turned up nothing. Indian Shamens began to worry about Quejo, afraid that he had allied himself with dark powers in his quest for vengeance.

Quejo is still at large. He strikes like a rattlesnake and disappears again before he can be apprehended. The thought of meeting him on a dark trail has caused many brave men to sign on with large parties before traveling through the region.

• Quejo (Legendary figure)

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [EXC] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Physique [EXT] • Riding [GR]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible and insubstantial, and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

ADRIFT IN AN OCEAN OF SAND



tranded in the desert. Short of the cliffs, which were a fair ways away, there was no commanding rise for the Captain to stand on, so instead he surveyed the wreckage from the pitiful vantage of a wobbly footstool. It must be some sort of officer thing to want to be higher than those around you. From where I stood, feet planted firmly on the ground next to him, things didn't look good. From where he stood, they couldn't have looked any better.

The once-great aerocruiser *Stauffenberg* lay pathetically on its side. There ain't nothing that looks more useless than a huge pile of wreckage, let me clue ya. The rudder blade, slung below our ship, had struck first, and it had dug an impressive trench in the desert for about fifty yards or so. That drag had turned the substructure sideways. (The substructure is what you think of as the ship's superstructure, but we don't call it that because it hangs below the gas bags.) If the rudder had broken off, the substructure might have landed upright, and we could have used it for shelter. Or, if we'd been going slowly enough, we might have just settled in place, balanced on our rudder. But no, neither was the case. The substructure wasn't heavily damaged, but it was turned on its side. No one wanted to try to hang out in a sideways lounge. Fortunately, the armored hull holding the gas bags hit the ground before the substructure did, and it absorbed a lot of the damage. Otherwise a lot more of us would have been injured or killed. Count your blessings where you can.

So our airship was stretched out like a beached whale, magickal engine wrecked, 1.46 caliber cannon pointing uselessly in random directions. A few of the turrets had actually come off. The substructure as a whole lay on its side, the hull was mangled, and many of the gas bags were torn, leaving the hydrogen to bleed off into the air. Even if we could have repaired the magickal engine and the hull damage, I had no idea where we'd get more hydrogen to get us back off the ground. Time to settle in.

It was already mid to late afternoon, and it was hot and dry. The first order of business was to evaluate the threat of the natives, if any. I chose several people and led an away team to investigate. Always wanted to do that. We beamed over to the pueblos by applying the considerable energy of our feet, and checked them out.

It was spooky.

First we saw the conquistadors. Eight guys, stretched out on the ground. In a line. I figured their buddies must have left them like that, although I wondered why they hadn't been buried. Someone suggested maybe they all died in their sleep, but they still wore their tarnished breastplates and helmets. Normally people don't wear helmets to sleep. They were mummified. Their leathery skin was drawn tight over their bones. They looked so small inside their armor, with their rotting clothes and boots sagging over their limbs. Yech. We decided we'd come give them a decent burial in the morning, because there wasn't enough light left today.

Then we checked out the cliff dwellings. The pueblos were in perfect order. Furniture, pots, bowls, beds, blankets, clothing, everything was there. The places were clean, like someone had swept them recently. Some dust here and there, but not much. It was all so orderly, I half expected to see a fire still going in one of the fire pits.

I couldn't figure out what had happened. Everything they owned was still here. Or so it seemed. It was like everyone got up and went for a walk, all at the same time. And not that long ago. The only clue that pointed to the actual amount of time passed was the desiccated vegetables dangling from the wall.

No other interesting evidence was there to be found, so we headed back for the *Stauffenberg* to help set up for the night. I made my report to the Captain.

"Looks like they all just up and left," I said.

"Maybe they will be back," said Lückner.

I wish he hadn't said that.

Pfistermeister had broken his wrist in the crash. Fine by me. I'd hate to think how much he'd have whined if he hadn't had a real live injury to focus on. Instead, we got to put him with the wounded and leave him there for the medical personnel to look after. Maybe seeing the guys next to him with broken legs would sober him up some. That left Lückner, von Hubel, and myself to debate our course of action while Marianne supervised the treatment of the wounded.

Unfortunately, we made several mistakes.

"Well, then, gentlemen," said Lückner. "It looks like we change our itinerary. Suggestions?"

"We're already tending to the injured and taking stock of our supplies," I said.

"But considering what we've lost, we'll have to play it conservative."

"We should probably try to make for the town we passed," von Hubel said, "but I think it's too late in the day to start now. Let's just camp here and wait for morning." (That was one.)

"We'll stretch the gas bags overhead for tents, I said. "But just in case there are any roving Indians about, we should keep the campfires to a minimum." (That was two.)

"So let it be done," said Captain Lückner. He cast an eye back at the cliff homes. "From what you saw, there'll be no trouble tonight," he said. "We will only need two guards, one at each side, just in case some animals get curious. The rest of us can get a good night's sleep." (And that, Mike, was three.)

We spent the next hour or two pitching ersatz tents, building a few small fires, fixing a mediocre meal with what food and gear we had, and generally taking stock of the situation. We also found our Bayernese flag and pitched it high. Image, don't you know. It also did wonders for morale; made the place seem more like a camp than a wreck somehow. Go figure.

Marianne and I managed to grab a little quiet time while we were eating our meal. Things had been tense since the sabotage, between the fight and flying out of control and the bomb and waiting for the impending crash. It's amazing how much you can unwind once the troubles are there in your face, instead of looming over your head. So we found a place with a nice view of the cliffs, sat, and ate. And unwound.

"This land, she is very large," she said.

"Yep," I said. "And widely varied. I've seen a lot of it, you know, on the other side (I no longer said back home), everything from wooded mountains to seashores to cities you couldn't imagine."

"Ah, *oui*, the future, she is yours," she said with a giggle. "Your homeland must have tamed the wilds, *non*?"

"Yes and no," I answered. "There are still large wild places out there. Jungles, tundra, deserts, the deep ocean. And there always will be wild areas. Where I came from there are still rumors of monsters, things like giant sea creatures and Sasquatch and stuff. And we have discovered some animals which were thought to be extinct for millions of years. So you never know what you might find."

"But in the cities you are safe," she asked.

"Unfortunately, no," I said with a sigh. "It seems that as we've conquered the wilds, the dangers lurking out there have taken new forms and moved into the cities. You used to have to worry about poisonous snakes; now you have to worry about dealers selling drugs to your kids. The rabid wolves have become predatory rapists. They may look human, but they still act like monsters. Sometimes I think Morrolan is absolutely right, that the Unseelie are behind it all. How else can you explain violent gangs suddenly cropping up in placid little country towns?" I sighed with the weight of remembering.

"No, Marianne," I said, "I'm afraid that there will always be things lurking out there in the dark."

The sun set, as it always does. It was beautiful, of course. Foolishly, we were glad the sun was going down, because it was hot, and we didn't have a whole heck of a lot of water.

It gets awfully dark in the desert.

LEGENDS OF THE DEEP DESERT

THE ANASAZI

The ancestors of the modern day Hopi, Zuni, and the Rio Grande Pueblo peoples were the Anasazi, who lived thousands of years ago in an area that stretched from the eastern areas of the Bear Flag to western Texas.

These ancient peoples survived, at first, on fishing, hunting small animals and birds and the gathering of wild foods. Their culture, centered on the Great Basin region, lasted for ten thousand years in the arid conditions of the desert. Around 1,000 B.C. farming was introduced to the region, giving rise to the Hisatsinom civilization, better known by their Navajo name, the Anasazi, or "Ancient Enemies."

The Anasazi people started off by living in underground dwellings that gave them protection from the desert's harsh weather. Eventually they moved to above-ground adobe houses, but their previous abodes remained a place of deep spiritual meaning for them and even when they built new cities these pit houses, or Kivas, were included.

The Anasazi people ruled their world unchallenged for many thousands of years, during which time they built an extensive network of trade and relations with cultures all over the southwest. Until, that is, the Navajo and Apache nations in their southward migration encountered them.

Hostilities between the competing cultures flared immediately. The battles that ensued caused great damage to both groups, and many Anasazi fled the area to become the Hopi, Zuni, and Pueblo tribes. Those that remained defended their cliff-side homes with courage and ferocity matched only by that of their invaders.

However, it soon became apparent that the Navajo and Apache were too strong to be resisted forever. The Anasazi shamen got together in the Kivas and spent weeks debating what was to be done. Finally a decision was made: The Anasazi shamen drew up a great magick from the bones of the earth and shifted their entire people to a shadow world where they could continue their way of life unchanged.

Something went terribly wrong when the shamen opened their gate to a shadow world. When the Navajo and Apache warriors finally stormed the Anasazi cliff dwellings, they found them empty, and an inexplicable aura of menace lingering about the place.

To this day no one will stay long in the Anasazi's lands if they can help it. The magick there is tainted and difficult to wield, harmonics are stranger even than normal, and people mysteriously disappear. The Anasazi, it seems, do not want to be found—or something is preventing their being found.

NIGHTMARES ...

The first clue we had that we were in big trouble came just after the last sliver of the sun had slipped below the horizon. The sky was still bright and colorful, but the earth itself was kind of dark. You know; it was that time of day when the streetlights start coming on.

A mist started to rise. I had a bad feeling right away. This was the desert, man; there ain't supposed to be a mist out here. Not a pea-souper like the one that showed up. A heavy thick mist, so heavy it almost drizzled. You could swear it almost peeled itself off the cliff walls, poured out of the abandoned pueblos. Looking back, I'm sure it did.

As the evening progressed, several of the crew began to sing songs around the scant campfire, play whist or bridge, or simply swap stories. I walked around the camp, generally keeping an eye on things. I had to stand the first command watch, which I did, saber and pistol in my belt. Macho me. Marianne graciously opted to come with me on my boring route, circling the camp, checking on the guards, checking on everything, getting involved in nothing. The mist got thicker. On a hunch, I knelt down and felt the ground. Rubbed the dirt between my fingers. Dry as a bone.

Probably not the best of comparisons, but it told me that the mist might be falling, but it was never hitting the ground. So where was it going? I looked up and saw a sailor running for me. I had a feeling I was just about to find out.

"Herr Kapitän Olam!" he said. "You must come to the hospital! Immediately!"

Marianne and I followed him to where we'd placed the injured. There was a lot of coughing and hacking going on. Didn't sound good. The ship's doctor—who, thank God, had not been injured—turned to us with a look of confused concern. "Something is wrong here, sir. I do not know what. But everyone is fast becoming ill."

I looked around the room. Patients all over were coughing. One right in front of my suddenly regained consciousness, convulsing, his eyes bugging out. Marianne and I grabbed him to hold him steady. "Roll him on his side," she ordered.

We did. He choked and gagged, and suddenly hacked up an incredible amount of water. The fit wouldn't leave him; he kept coughing and whooping as more water and mucus drooled out of his mouth. Then blood. And more blood. His face paled as I watched. He clawed the air, frantically trying to get some oxygen into his lungs. But he wouldn't—couldn't—stop coughing. Every time he inhaled, I could hear bubbling and a sort of wheeze in his lungs. His face faded to white. Then blue.

I held him upside-down, tried to squeeze him, force the water out. But I was too late. The doctor peered over my shoulder. "It is like they are drowning!" he said.

The other patients continued their wheezing and hacking. Listening to it, I suddenly realized I'd been coughing slightly all night. That meant—Good Lord. It all came together. I jumped over to another patient, this one with two broken legs. I remembered him, because I'd pulled him out of the wreckage and he'd had to be sedated. I knelt down at his head, brought the lantern in close. His face was blue. His chest was still.

And the mist was pouring itself into his open mouth.

"Doctor!" I yelled. "Wake all the patients up! Everyone must be conscious! And—I don't know, tie rags around their mouths, like bandannas! They can't breathe the mist! Quickly!" I pulled off my cravat and tied it around my head, just like a western bandit. Block that damn mist from crawling down my throat.

But the noise that filled the area when the patients were woken up was horrible. Two dozen men all waking up at once, their lungs half-filled with water. The burbling, the retching, the sound of water and blood splattering on the ground. I wondered how many of them would make it.

That was when we heard the first scream. And I mean a scream. There's very little more blood-curdling than hearing a grown man scream in absolute terror.

There was a single gunshot. I glanced at my watch. Almost midnight.

... AND DEATH

M

arianne and I ran like the wind to the sound, following the line of curious faces. Crowds are great to navigate by. The first thing I saw was a man. Lying on the ground. One of our men. With a sword through his heart. An old, rusty sword.

He was dead as a doornail, his pistol still smoking. His face was a perfect mask of shock and terror. He held a lantern in one hand. The other held a smoking pistol. Then I heard someone stumbling in the haze. A clank and a creak. I took the guard's lantern and swept it toward the sound. I saw a shadow in the mist, staggering awkwardly. I moved closer, Marianne at my side. She gasped.

It was a conquistador. Minus the head.

A bit of mummified gristle and the lower jaw at the top of the neck told me what had happened. This *thing* had tried to sneak up on the guard. It had skewered him, and he had blown its mummified head off with his pistol. The thing turned toward me, groping blindly. I pulled my saber. Marianne pulled hers. And we chopped that bastard into bits.

"There were eight of them," I said. I pointed to two nearby sailors. "You! Grab guns and stand guard! Now! Marianne, organize here. I'll go tell Lückner."

Honestly, Mike, I don't know where this leadership stuff comes from, shouting orders and all. I'm no leader, I'm an artist.

I moved back into the camp to try to find Lückner, but I heard a commotion in the hospital area. I went over there, sword out, when I met an aide coming to find me. I knew whatever he had to say wasn't going to be good. I was right. "Herr Kapitän Olam," he said, "It's the hospital. The wounded. They—they're ...I think you should come see for yourself." His voice trembled.

I didn't think I really wanted to go, but it was my duty. I am an officer, after all, of the Secret Service. I was one of the head honchos of this little expedition. It's just that sometimes I'd rather blindly follow orders. There are disadvantages to seeing the big picture. Like when you realize everyone is going to die.

I stumbled into the hospital area to find chaos. It was worse than I expected. You remember that guy with two broken legs? He had a sheet over him. But he sat up. I didn't recognize him at first, until I tried to calm him. He looked at me. Vacant, dead eyes. Blue lips. He drew a deep burbling breath through his tortured throat and gargled something at me. A language I did not know, the voice of the dead. And his hands slipped around my throat.

I screamed. Big mistake. Lost all my oxygen as his cool hands started to squeeze. I'd dropped my sword to try to help the guy, and my hands frantically searched for it. He was pulling me to my feet. I could no longer touch the ground.

But then, a ray of hope! My fingers brushed against the ornate hilt guard, snagged one of the loops. I grabbed my saber as firmly as I could and tried to hack his arms off me. No use. I bashed the blade again and again into his elbow, but he didn't notice. The dead feel no pain. I was starting to black out, burning all my oxygen like that.

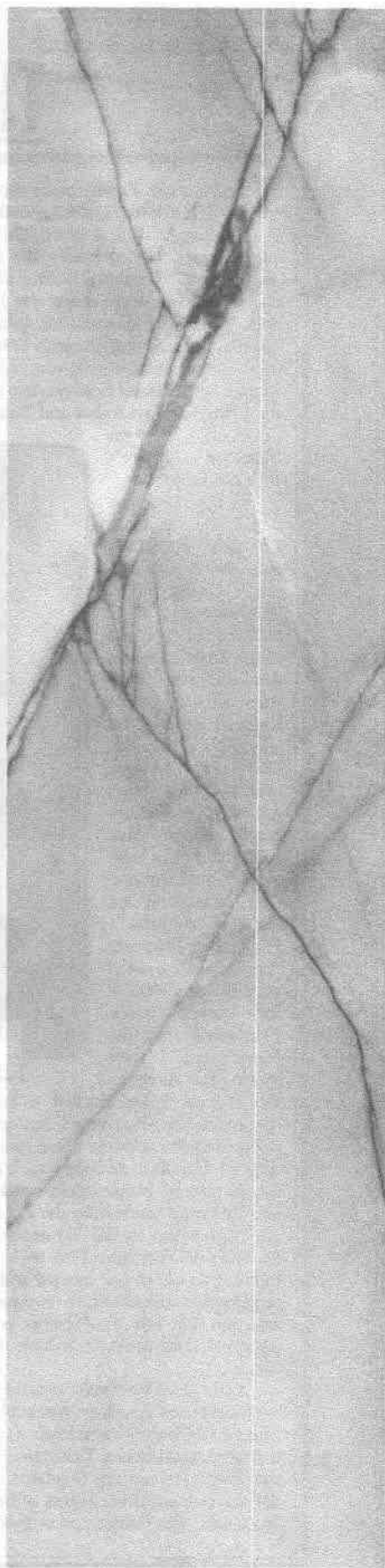
Suddenly, an idea.

I slipped the point of my weapon between his arms, twisted my wrist around, and thrust upwards, driving the blade into his eye. Again, into the other eye. There. Blinded, just like his headless Spanish friend. And with my last gasp, I swung my arm over both of his, turned abruptly ... And passed out.

I woke up after just a few seconds, I think. My chest heaved. The air felt so good. I opened my eyes, and in the mist I saw my attacker moving off, stumbling blindly on his two broken legs, bones and splints creaking and cracking in the haze.

Screams and gunshots echoed across the camp.

And the mist was thicker still.



THE PHANTOM EMPIRE

The Phantom Empire poses the single greatest threat to the United States, the Republic of Texas, and the Bear Flag Empire, and it is practically unknown. The United States Secret Service knows the Empire exists but little more. Sir Kit Carson, Minister of War of the Bear Flag Empire, knows more about the Empire's operations but does not suspect its continent-spanning threat. Pat Garrett has encountered the Empire's Phantom Riders but thinks them strange outlaws. No one knows where the Phantom Empire has its secret headquarters and no one suspects that the Criminal Mastermind and Scientific Genius, Dr. Inigio Lovelorn, is the Phantom Empire's Invisible Emperor!

In the northwest of the Texas Republic, spreading over the border into the Unorganized Territories, is a haunted land. Ruins of the Anasazi Indians dot the arid landscape. Strange visions shimmer in the desert sun and Spook Lights flit by night. No one much comes here, not even the Indians. None can say what spirits haunt this land, but not all the mysterious goings-on are the work of ghosts.

The Phantom Empire has existed since the early days of the United States. Convinced that the Freemasons were moving too slowly, and the United States needed a king, the arch-Federalist Alexander Hamilton urged his friend George Washington to proclaim himself one. When told of the plan, Washington ordered Hamilton to forget such nonsense and Hamilton quietly took his plans underground. With Hamilton's death in a duel with Aaron Burr, the Phantom Empire languished until discovered by the Tammany Hall organization. The Sachems of Tammany Hall took control of the Empire, thinking to use it as a catspaw and transforming it into an organization dedicated to conquest. It was under their direction that John C. Fremont was recruited and sent to capture California, only to have victory forestalled by Kit Carson.

As the Civil War broke out, the Phantom Empire began to reassert itself. Southern sympathizers within the Phantom Empire saw in the Confederacy a chance to seize control of half the United States. Reluctantly, Tammany Hall allowed the Empire to aid the Southern cause. With the South's defeat, these southern agents of the Empire fled west into Texas with many other ex-Confederates.

By 1867, the Phantom Empire was split in thirds. Tammany Hall, the California Cabal and the Phantom Empire in Texas were only loosely cooperating, and the Empire was little more than a name. Enter Dr. Inigio Lovelorn.

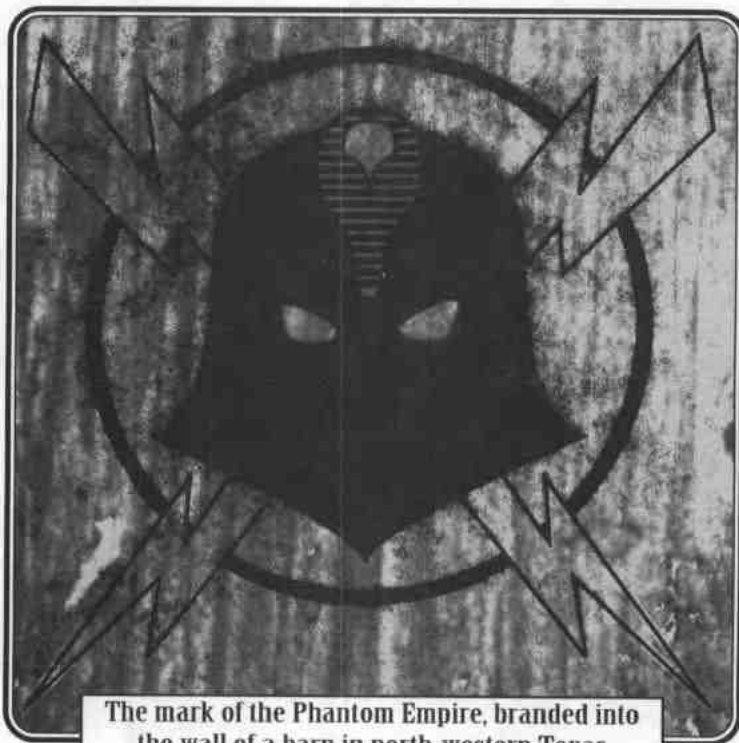
Lovelorn had attempted in 1867 to seize the United States government using his Mind Control Ray on Washington, D.C.. He was foiled by Secret Service Agents and captured. Dr. Lovelorn escaped and fled west, thinking to lose his pursuers in the desolate northwestern region of the Republic of Texas. The good doctor

gave the Secret Service the slip and discovered the Phantom Empire's headquarters, then little more than an abandoned mine. Using his Mind Control Ray, Lovelorn learned the whole truth.

Seeing in the Phantom Empire a perfect tool for his plans, Dr. Lovelorn set himself up as the perpetually cowed Invisible Emperor. The mine was driven deep into the mountainside and the entire mountain hollowed out. From this underground headquarters, Lovelorn sends forth the Thunderbolt Riders, mounted men in outlandish capes and hats that

give them a spectral appearance, who add to the area's already spooky reputation. These Riders, armed with Lightning Ray Guns designed by Lovelorn, capture or kill any trespassers and rob stages, trains, and banks in more settled areas to finance the Empire's operations. In addition, steam-powered automatons resembling skull-headed knights have appeared. These terrifying sights spread fear, leaving silvery metal disks bearing the sigil of the Empire behind as a reminder: a hooded skull and crossed lightning bolts. This sigil is also left branded on the houses of those who oppose the Empire.

With his headquarters secure and a steady supply of funds, Dr. Lovelorn has turned his attention to other matters—bringing the California Cabal and Tammany Hall fully under his control. While he has managed to put loyal agents in each organization, Boss Tweed resists this unseen Emperor and Chris Buckley, Mayor of San Francisco and a protégé of Boss Tweed, is equally suspicious. The Phantom Empire is once again a force to be reckoned with but it is not a unified organization. Yet.



The mark of the Phantom Empire, branded into the wall of a barn in north-western Texas

THE END DRAWS NEAR

Fighting raged all across the camp. It was impossible in the thick fog; you couldn't see whether or not someone was alive or dead until he was on you. More than just the hospital patients had drowned in the mist. Many others had simply drowned in their sleep. Thank God more of us hadn't turned in early.

But we were fighting our own people. No one wants to kill his buddy, even if he is cold and blue and attacking you. Everything was confused. And I had that sinking feeling. That empty pointlessness of staring straight into the face of the void, and knowing that you're just bastard enough to have to fight it even though you know you're going to lose.

"We can't fight these, Lückner," I yelled above the sounds of battle. "We're too exposed, too disorganized, and they don't die like they're supposed to. Every person they kill joins them. Let's pull back into the hull. It's Dwarf-alloy, and it only has a few entrances. We've already cleared most of the gas bags out, so we should be safe in there."

"You are right, Olam," he said. "Give the word." As I turned to leave, he grabbed my arm. "And pray," he said.

I moved through the mist, shouting orders. Human shapes loomed in the night, some living, some dead. The dead I tried to kill, but I quickly found you had to hack them apart to make them quit moving. But everyone was awake now, and most people wore masks, so we were able to get a good portion of the crew back as ordered.

Trapped. That was how I felt once we had moved everyone we had left into the empty hull of the *Stauffenberg*. We were inside a giant Dwarf-metal shell supported by girders and catwalks, many of which were bent from the crash. The fog was even pretty thick in here. A few gas bags hung about the ceiling, adding to the weird feel of the place. We sealed the hatchway which lead to the substructure and dismembered the body parts of those zombies which had made it in. Lückner and his officers got the crew organized as best they could for our last stand.

Thankfully Marianne had made it in. She looked exhausted. I gave her a big hug, but we couldn't quite meet each others' eyes. We just held each other. And for a while, all was quiet. We waited. Then it came.

We never heard it. That was weird. We smelled it first, a stench like rotting flesh and acid. It was close. But it made no noise. Everything was quiet. Until someone shouted.

Half-seen in the mist, some big horrid thing was reaching into the cavernous space through a small split in a seam of the hull. We could see about a dozen long, thin tendrils reaching through, groping for fresh meat. We backed up, trying to keep as much distance as possible between ourselves and the moldy-colored tentacles. I watched in shock for a moment, and I began to realize that whatever it was, it was herding part of the crew into a corner like some satanic sheepdog. I called a warning to them. Too late.

One of the tentacles snared a sailor. In a flash he was wrapped up tight in its coils and pulled out the torn seam. Most of him made it out. Gross, but probably quicker that way. En masse, the rest of us charged the thing with sword, pikes, and pistols. God, the noise was deafening inside the hull, but somehow it still registered that the creature made no noise at all. It was just wrong.

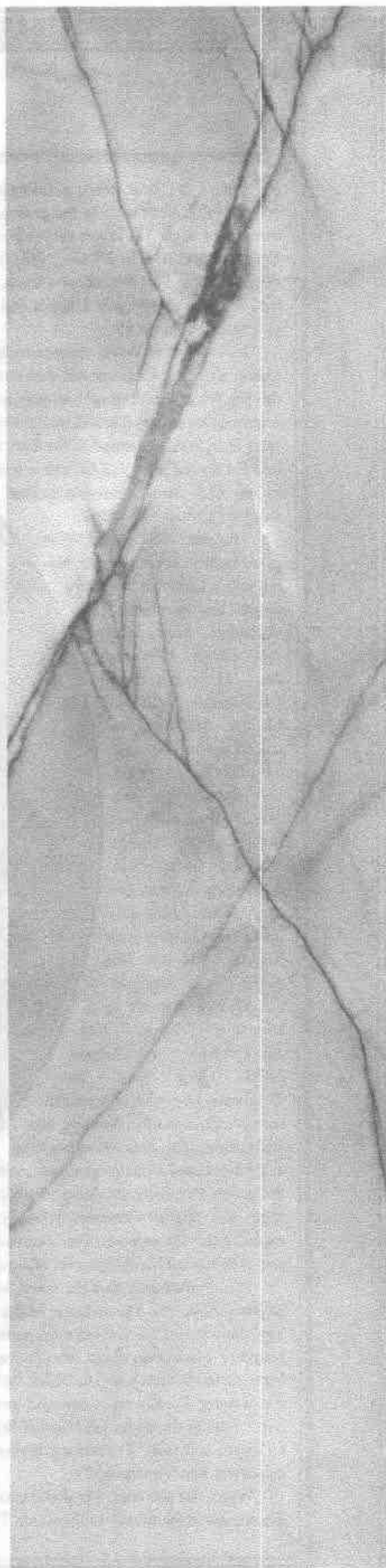
Our weapons were useless, Mike. We fought like badgers, but it was no good. The thing's hide was like tire rubber. Imagine attacking the wheels of an earth mover with a butter knife. That's what it was like. We began to panic. We were goners.

Then a deafening crack echoed through the night. Lightning incarnate or something. The tendrils froze for a second. Another crack. And another. And another. And in the blink of an eye, and equally noiselessly, the tendrils zipped out of the hull. The mist immediately stated thinning. Impossible.

We heard a smart knock on the hull. Shave-and-a-haircut.

"Open up in there," said an authoritative voice.

"I'm Wyatt Earp, and you'll have no more troubles tonight."



WYATT EARP

One of the most feared gunslingers, and certainly one of the most patient men in the west, is Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp, marshal of Santa Fe. Wyatt grew up on his father's farm, first in Kentucky and later in Illinois. Nicholas Earp, who had served in the first Texan War for Independence, instilled in Wyatt a respect for law and authority, and a high moral code that has served Wyatt well throughout his life.

In 1863, after Wyatt unsuccessfully attempted to enlist in the Union army, the Earps moved west to the Bear Flag Republic. On this trip Wyatt practiced with six-gun and rifle every day, acquiring his remarkable skill with firearms. A few years later, Wyatt returned to the East, where he held several jobs. He became a scout for the U.S. Army, a railroad worker, and later a scout for settlers.

The year 1871 found Wyatt in Amarillo, Texas, where he ran into a group of legendary scouts and gunmen; Jack Gallagher, Jack Martin, Billy Dixon, Billy Ogg, Jim Hanrahan, and James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok. Hickok convinced Earp to become a buffalo hunter, citing the fact that he had earned thousands of dollars at this trade. Earp soon became one of the best hunters on the plains. He also gained a reputation as an honest, honorable man in the Twenty Nations.

Wyatt's first act as a lawman came in Albuquerque in August 1873. Billy and Ben Thompson, two lethal gunmen with a reputation for shooting first and talking later, were whooping it up at a saloon, and arguing up a storm with the people they were gambling with. One of these was Sheriff Chauncey Whitney, a close friend of the Thompsons. The argument grew heated, and Billy turned his shotgun on Whitney, killing him instantly.

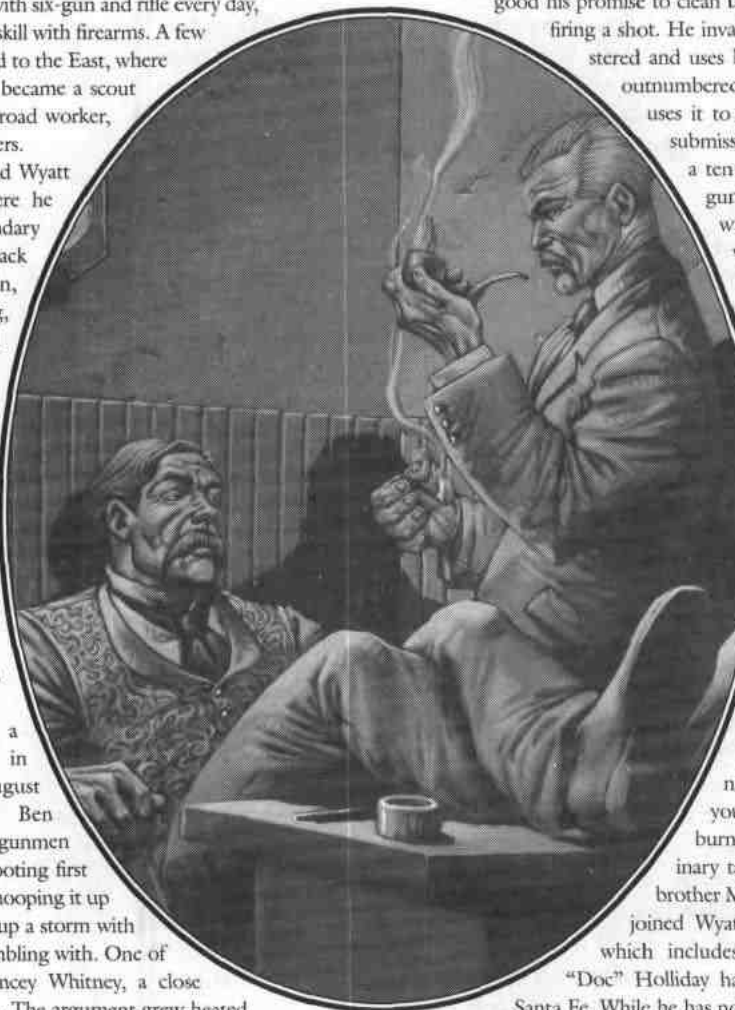
Billy immediately fled the town, while Ben stayed behind to weather the storm. Mayor James Miller demanded that the surviving Marshal and his Deputies do something, but they were too scared of Thompson. Earp, who had watched the entire incident from across the street, said to Miller, "It's none of my business, but if it was me I'd get me a gun and arrest Ben Thompson or kill him." Pulling the badge off Marshal Norton's chest, Miller gave it to Wyatt, and said, "I'm making it your business. Get some guns and arrest Ben Thompson."

Wyatt did just that. He confronted a shotgun-wielding Ben Thompson in the middle of the street. Thompson recognized Earp

and asked him what he wanted. Earp demanded that Thompson put down the shotgun. Thompson asked, "What are you going to do with me?" "Kill you or take you to jail," was Earp's succinct reply. Thompson went peaceably to jail, was fined for disturbing the peace, and was released.

Earp was offered the job of sheriff but declined, saying that he was going to go into the cattle business with his brothers. However, his destiny pursued him. In 1874 he rode into Santa Fe, where the Mayor made him Chief Deputy Marshal. Earp made good his promise to clean up the town, mostly without firing a shot. He invariably keeps his six-gun holstered and uses his fists instead. When he is outnumbered, he draws his pistol—and uses it to pistol-whip miscreants into submission. Once he participated in a ten-minute boxing match with gunman George Peshaur, who was a giant of a man. Peshaur was carried off to jail. When Abel "Shanghai" Pierce, cattle baron, rode into town at the head of a mob of cowboys and a herd of cattle, trouble followed. Their fun was short-lived. Wyatt calmly walked up to Pierce, dragged him from his horse, and pistol-whipped him. As Pierce was dragged off to jail, his men stood by, too stunned to do anything. However, Wyatt had enough occasions to use his gun that the *Santa Fe Times* warned gunmen not to draw on Earp "unless you got the drop and meant to burn powder without any preliminary talk." In early 1876, Wyatt's brother Morgan came to Santa Fe and joined Wyatt's contingent of deputies, which includes the Masterson brothers.

"Doc" Holliday has also recently drifted into Santa Fe. While he has not put on a badge, preferring a life of gambling and drinking to upholding the law, he is usually with Wyatt, and quite willing to assist him. The Wyatt Earp of today retains his honest streak, and a strong opinion on what is right and what is wrong. This may result in his being a little hard on miscreants, but it keeps the streets of Santa Fe safe. As long as you are a decent, law-abiding citizen, you'll have no troubles. Cross the line, and you better get out of town fast.



• Wyatt Earp, Gunslinger

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Charisma [GR] • Courage [EXC]
Fisticuffs [GR] • Gambling [GR] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Perception [EXC] • Renown [EXC] • Riding [GR]
Possessions: Colt 1873 Peacemaker, Winchester rifle.

LAWMEN OF SANTA FE

Nobody seemed particularly reassured that there was a person out there bad-assed enough to drive away that thing. Nobody but me, that is. It took me a few seconds to get over the shock.

"Wyatt Earp!" I yelled. "I don't believe it! How the hell are you?"

"Well, it's a mite foggy out here, but we're just fine, thank you."

"We'll be right out," I called. I ran to the blocked hatchway and opened it. Sword in hand, just in case. No zombies. Just zombie parts.

Okay. I took a squad of sailors with me, and we skirted the hull looking for Earp. And there he was. The Lawman. Himself.

He was so recognizable. I think I'd have recognized him anywhere. He looked quite a bit like Kurt Russell; he was wearing a black duster, a black hat, black boots, the whole black thing. He had that typical western handlebar mustache and eyes as hard as granite. He looked like the law up there on his horse.

There was a guy sitting on a horse next to him who I didn't recognize. He was flushed and robust-looking, almost a little chubby, sweaty with energy. He couldn't sit still. I introduced myself. They dismounted, Wyatt slowly but his friend with an energetic leap. Wyatt shook my hand. "Wyatt Earp, at your service. This here's John Holliday."

"Doc Holliday?" I asked. "But I thought you had tuberculosis!"

"Ah'm feelin' right fine now, thank you for askin'," he said with a smile.

I decided not to press the matter. Besides, I had another question. "What—how—why are you here?" I stammered. I can be so cool and collected. Yup.

"We saw your signals," said Wyatt. "We reckoned you might come down around here. That being the case you'd need a helping hand." Doc just giggled.

"There's no way we can thank you ...," I said.

"You're mighty welcome," he said. "But it is our job."

I brought the two famous gunslingers in to meet the rest of the command staff. I think my excitement showed, because, like Doc, I couldn't quite stand still. Earp and Holliday. Too cool. I wanted to wait around for another five years or so, see the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Maybe I could arrange some vacation time around then ...

The mist lingered, so Earp and Holliday organized a group of us to go kick some more supernatural butt. Wyatt was incredibly good with a pistol-whip. Damn fast, too. And Holliday? Jeez, I don't know what to say about him. His gun was like your worst nightmare. It made that horrific cracking sound we'd heard, and it didn't shoot lead, it spat a lethal bolt of magical energy. I asked him about it, and he simply said, "Why, I am a dentist turned Spellslinger, dear sah."

In the morning, we burned whatever bodies we could find. There were too many dead to bury, and the ground wasn't the best anyway. Furthermore, Wyatt said that even if we buried them, they'd come back up. Burning was the only way to be sure. That, or nuking the place from orbit. I kept myself a conquistador's helmet and sword for mementos. Then I thought better of it, and tossed them in the fire, too.

By the time we were done, it was approaching noon. A couple of wagons and a bunch of extra horses showed up. "Hey, Wyatt," I asked, "who are these guys?"

"Folks from Santa Fe," he answered. "I ordered them to come up here last night when we left. Doc didn't think we'd be helping haul anyone back to town, but I figured if you were clever enough to build that sky barge of yours, you'd be clever enough to stay alive until we got here."

"You mean Doc Holliday thought we'd all be dead?" I asked.

"Yup."

"Well, why'd he come along?"

"He's like that," said Earp.

Then we loaded up and went back to Santa Fe. I'd heard of it, sure. Never been there. But I didn't care what it was like. Didn't even ask. It had to be better than here.

PAT GARRETT

Pat Garrett is a cowboy but there is something different about him. He doesn't look very much out of the ordinary and he is friendly enough. It is only when you get to know him that you realize that strange things just seem to happen when Pat's around. He's not jinxed, but he's got some odd luck. Pat Garrett was born under a Wandering Star.

Born Patrick Floyd Garrett in 1850, Pat Garrett is one of the top cow hands working the Texas range, but he isn't a native Texan. To escape the impending Civil War, Pat's family moved west from Alabama in 1858. Settling first in Orleans, the decadent atmosphere of New Orleans proved no place to raise an impressionable youngster. Young Pat was fascinated by the exotic sights and sounds of the city and insisted on sneaking off to explore. During one such excursion, young Pat met Don José "Pepe" Lulla, New Orleans' greatest duelist at D'Aquin's Green, that city's notorious dueling ground. Don Pepe's second having failed to arrive at the appointed hour, Pat volunteered, to the cheers of the crowd that had gathered to watch. After dispatching his opponent, Don Pepe offered to teach the precocious youngster the art of the duel. Pat accepted. When his parents found out, it was time to move.

Pushing on into Texas, the family settled in Fort Worth. A big brawling town, it was in Fort Worth that Pat saw his first cowboy. He father worked in a saloon and young Pat would help out as best he could. The cowboys would tell stories of their adventures and life on the range, and Pat was fascinated. With characteristic determination, he resolved to become a cowboy. Before long he had developed into an excellent horseman. His ability with a gun, thanks to Don Pepe's teaching, surpassed men twice his age.

At fourteen, Pat ran away to join his first trail drive. By the time he was sixteen, he was a full-fledged Cowboy. His strange luck kept him out of harms way. Sort of. It seems that Pat Garrett is always in the wrong place at the wrong time but somehow manages to come out in one piece. Who else has punched cows for the biggest Cattlemen—Chisum, Goodnight, Cartwright, Loving—in the middle of range wars and made it through? Who else has stared down killers like Johnny Ringo? Who else has faced the Cult of Hanisheon in the depths of Carlsbad Caverns? Who has survived attacks by the Comancheros that left whole towns smoldering ruins? Pat Garrett. No one knows the west Texas Frontier like he does. Pat Garrett has worked with the Texas Rangers as a guide and has friends among the Indian tribes. The shamen recognize in him the strange magic of the Wandering Star.

For his part, Pat just continues to work with his crew, taking those jobs that come along. He doesn't see himself as particularly special and sometimes wonders if he will ever lead a normal life. It doesn't seem likely in the near future.

• Pat Garrett, Gunslinger

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Charisma [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Renown [GR] • Riding [GR]

Possessions: Colt 1873 Peacemaker, Winchester rifle.

THE WHITE STALLION

Running forever across the plains of America is the Phantom White Stallion, also known as the Ghost Horse of the Plains and the Deathless White Mustang. Many have tried to capture this magnificent animal, but all have failed. With an iridescent white coat and regal, sparkling eyes, the White Stallion is the fastest thing on the great plains. No matter how fast he is pursued, the Stallion can run faster. And faster. Forever, if need be. He never stumbles, even over the most broken of terrain. He shuns the company of everything except the wind.



THE DEVIL STALLION

Known as El Diablo Negro, The Black Devil, the Blue Streak, or the Raven. Indians know him as the Black Death. The Sioux have another name for him: Wanagi Shunka-Wakan Sapa, the Black Ghost Horse. Sixteen hands high, larger than any horse known to man, the Devil Stallion wanders the great plains of America, causing terror wherever he goes. His skin and mane are as black as obsidian, and his eyes glow like coals. Legend has that he is invulnerable, and that bullets and arrows simply bounce off him. When El Diablo Negro leaps into battle, he screams like a panther. When he chooses, the Black Devil is capable of human speech. Occasionally, the Devil Stallion is fond of eating human flesh.

There is only one human the Devil Stallion calls friend, and that is El Diablo Rojo—the Red Devil. Actually a Mescalero Apache Shaman named Buffalo Hawk, once his entire family was murdered by Mexicans. Since then, Buffalo Hawk has lived to exact his revenge upon Mexicans—any and all, he's not particular. The two devils met by chance in the desert one day. The Black Devil spoke to the Red Devil, telling of a time when he was nearly captured by Mexicans. Brought together by mutual hatred, the two occasionally team up, riding through the desert, hunting their favorite prey. Attempts to capture either have failed.

While the sire is shunned, his get is highly prized by the Indians. The get of the Devil Stallion, sired upon black mares, share their father's abilities, and it is said they can pass them on to their riders.

SANTA FE, TEXAS

W

e got back to Santa Fe just after sundown. What was left of us, that is, after the horrible events of the night before. After all was said and done, we'd lost twenty-three people. We'd probably lose one or two more, they being in terrible shape after nearly drowning, staying up all night, then riding in a wagon across the desert. But I had my hopes. So, too, did certain families back in Bayern, I'm sure.

As we settled down to dinner, I noticed Doc Holliday was looking less energetic than he had last night. I sat down beside him. "So what do you guys know about that mist last night?" I asked. I'm sure I could have come up with another way of starting a conversation, but I was kinda preoccupied.

"Well," said Doc, in his thick Georgia accent, "a long time ago, that location was occupied by an Indian tribe. The Anasazi, ah do believe they referred to themselves. Anasazi, you do understand, translates as 'the ancient ones.'"

I swear, that accent was so thick you could slice it up and serve it with ice cream. "Go on," I prompted.

He coughed a couple times, holding a hanky up to his lips, and took a sip of whisky. "Hundreds of years ago, the Anasazi up and left their homes. It was a mighty curious occurrence. Even the Apache are not sure why they left, for they did not move their belongin's with them. Mighty curious.

"Now the Apache talk about a drought that took place at the same time. It did not rain for some years. That is an exaggeration, ah am sure. However, the Apache do claim that the Ancient Ones caused the drought and left, or maybe that the drought caused them to leave their homes. Now ah think these are both incorrect. Ah believe," he said, leaning forward, "they brought on some curse which destroyed the rain and made them all flee their homes in terrah."

"How's that?" I asked.

He took a deep breath, and ended up in another short coughing fit. He was getting pale, and red around the eyes. He took another drink. "There is an evil magick about the place," he said.

"Yeah, that's kind of obvious," I said.

"If you were a sorcerah, sah, you would better understand my meanin'," he said. Somehow, I didn't doubt it. There was a weight to his words. "There are a very few Indians that speak of That-Which-Must-Not-Be-Named. They say it is a great and self-ish spirit. They say it is like a worm, deep beneath the ground. Most Indian tribes, it appeahs, have deliberately forgotten about its existence, they fear it so. It may be that the Anasazi did something which was of great importance. And ah do think they succeeded in attracting its attention." He took another drink and lit up a cigar.

"All ah do know for sure," he said, "is that the worm, whatever it is, is filled with evil magick. And it is a very *vigorous* individual. Do you play poker, sah?"

Wyatt telegraphed back to Fort Worth for instructions. Not that it wasn't obvious we were foreign delegates, but being a lawman, he had to have confirmation. Sam Houston requested he afford us every courtesy. Which, by the time the telegraph actually came back, he had already done. He was nothing if not a good host.

He saw to it that the crew of the *Stauffenberg* was placed in comfortable boarding, although that required leaning on many fine families around the city. It's amazing how many spare bunks can turn up when it's Wyatt Earp asking.

For my part, I stayed up until all hours with Wyatt, Doc, and Lückner playing poker. Lückner had to learn the game on the fly and keep a crib sheet of the hands, but he was a quick study. Even though Doc's condition worsened as the hours passed, we had a good time, between the games and the drinks and the company.

The town was quiet. Everyone was relaxing. Business could wait until morning.



NEW ABILITY: GUNSLINGING

This ability is related to Marksmanship, but is different in its use. While Marksmanship is the ability to use firearms, Gunslinging is the skill used by Gunslingers and Spellslingers to ply their trade. Performing a fastdraw, a trick shot, or shooting from the hip are all applications of Gunslinging. Gunslinging also applies to rifle-class weapons: spin-cocking a lever-action rifle, pumping a shotgun with one hand, and trick shooting with a rifle are all applications of Gunslinging. As a general rule, a Poor Gunslinger drops his gun when he tries to quickdraw. An Average Gunslinger is good enough to man the local posse. A Good Gunslinger is a notch above the average posse thug, and has come through a few gunfights. A Great Gunslinger has gained a reputation as someone who can hold his own and come through a gunfight unscathed. He can out-draw most people. An Exceptional Gunslinger is one of the best alive, and has a fearsome reputation. An Extraordinary Gunslinger is the best of the breed, and is known throughout the land for his shooting ability. Generally even the most ornery cowboy will apologize before he will draw against this person, as an Extraordinary Gunslinger hits whatever he shoots at. When he quick-draws, it's a blur. Wyatt Earp is an Exceptional Gunslinger, and Doc Holliday, feared Spellslinger, has Extraordinary Gunslinging.

THE CHALLENGE

Of course, once morning came, conducting business was a pain. I stretched, I drank coffee that was really terrible, I ate a good breakfast. It didn't help. Doc really pushed us last night, and I was worn out. My whole body felt like the roof of my mouth tasted. Terrible.

Once I was reasonably conscious, I stumbled down the uneven sidewalk to the sheriff's office. Wyatt was already there, as was Lückner. We sat around and talked about Santa Fe while we waited for von Hubel to show up. Pfisty was playing his broken wrist for all it was worth, so we didn't expect him to make an appearance.

Martin did eventually show, escorted by Doc Holliday. Doc was pale and had a sheen of sweat. And he already had an aroma of liquor. "Why, ah just can't seem to start up a good game of faro this heah mornin'," he said, "so ah guess ah'll jest set a spell with you."

Earp smiled beneath his mustache as he pulled out a chair for Doc. "Deal us a round of poker, Doc. No wagers. It'll give us something to do with our hands."

"No wagers?" Doc protested. "Where's the fun in that?" But just the same, the suggestion perked him up. Cards started sliding around the table.

As we played, Martin explained our diplomatic mission. He recounted the events in brief, and told of our impending appointment with His Majesty, Emperor Norton I of the Bear Flag. I added the story of my dream and the Indian's murder, and my need to go to the Twenty Nations. Lückner filled in all the points we overlooked. Through it all, Wyatt and Doc listened attentively.

"Unfortunately," I finished, "the *Stauffenberg* isn't quite up to crossing the mountains, and the horse broke its leg in the crash. We had to put it down. So that leaves us stranded here."

"Gee, what a shame," said Doc, shuffling the cards and coughing. Yep. He was looking pretty damn ill this morning.

"You're not entirely stranded," said Wyatt. "We do have a railroad here. At that end of town," he said, pointing over his shoulder. "We could arrange for your whole gang to get a ticket to San Francisco in light of your accident. Heck, the Bear Flag's got so much money, we could probably send you collect on delivery."

"Do not forget, seating might be a tad difficult," said Doc. "The trains often run full."

"Yeah, but we could send a few on each westbound train. They'll still all get there," he answered. "As for you, Mr. Olam, we can't just pass out a horse and harness to you. But I can arrange something better. There's a trapper in town who owns a Windwagon. He travels up in the Twenty Nations area all the time. I'll pay him to ferry you up to the Council. It'll be quicker than on horseback, and you'll have a guide."

"Sounds great," I said.

"I'd like to go with you, Thomas," said von Hubel.

"That wasn't in the plan," I said. "Not that I object ..."

"The sabotage wasn't in the plan, either," he said. "Part of the reason we didn't originally plan for anyone but you to go was that we felt you could slip away unnoticed. I couldn't. But now everything's gone awry. Our party will be going west on a space-available basis. No one is going to notice if I'm not there immediately."

"True," I said, "but it'll take you a heck of a lot longer to go with me to the Twenty Nations and back than it'll take everyone else to hop the train to the Bay."

Martin shrugged. "Our itinerary has changed. This is a chance for me to speak with the leaders of the Twenty Nations while attracting minimal attention. I can't very well pass it up. I'm sure that Herr Kapitän and our esteemed Chamberlain can come up with some sort of excuse for my temporary absence."

I was just about to agree to let him come along, when we were interrupted by a loud voice from the street.

"Marshal! Marshal Earp! We're callin' you out, you son of a no-good hound dog!"

BANDITS AT TWELVE O'CLOCK

Get your hide heeled and out here, you polecat Wyatt, and let's end this once and for all!"

Good Lord, they actually talk like that?

Wyatt stood up with a sigh. "Ah, hell," said Doc. He stood, too, staggering slightly.

Martin looked confused. "Gunfight," I said. "Better keep down." I wished I'd brought my pistol with me. But then again, I knew these affairs were as much intertwined with honor as any duels in New Europa. Two gunslingers facing each other down in the middle of the street.

Wyatt loosened his guns in their holsters. He reached for his duster, then thought better of it. He straightened his tie, put on his hat, and walked to the front door. Holliday pulled his gun and checked it. That was a bad news gun, I could just tell. It was all carved up with runes, and had beads and feathers all over it. He adjusted the stuff, but didn't look to see if it was loaded. Satisfied, he casually clasped his hands behind his back, gun in hand. He followed Earp to the door.

Then some small boy yelled, "Pa! Pa! The cowboys are throwin' down on Marshal Earp!"

Boy, did that change things.

Wyatt was just pulling the door open. Hearing those words, he jerked himself back just as a shotgun blast blew through the door. Glass flew. Lückner hit the dirt real fast. I took the cue and did the same.

"Damn!" I heard Doc say. I looked up. He covered half his face with one hand. His face had several bleeding gashes in it. I couldn't tell if it was from buckshot or flying glass. Then a strange change came over him. He got this grin. The fun-time-psycho type of grin. He pulled his hand away from his face, and traced a bloody line down the top of the barrel of his gun. Bad news a-comin'.

More bullets flew into the room, blowing holes in the windows and thunking into the wood. Great. There must be a half dozen of them out there, emptying their revolvers at us. Wyatt rolled across the floor in front of the open door, firing off a flurry of bullets. I combat-crawled over to the rifle rack and grabbed a shotgun. Checked it. Loaded. Good. I scuttled for a window. Lückner grabbed a rifle.

Peering out, I could spot four gunmen. The guy with the shotgun was hunkered down behind his fallen horse, blasting the building from behind his barricade of a half-ton of horse meat. Covering for his buddies. I saw one of them scamper across the street and fired with both barrels.

Ooh, that's gotta hurt.

But I stayed up too long. Shotgun. I dropped like a rock, but I still felt some buckshot graze my scalp. Dazed, I looked around. Doc pulled out a small bottle of whisky he had in his pocket and stuck his cigar in the neck. Wyatt was reloading. Lückner made a break for the stairs. Good man. Get the drop on them with a rifle. But we were all pinned down here, so even up top, Lückner might be in trouble. Then I saw Doc toss his bottle out the door. Shotgun blast. The bottle shattered, and the alcohol caught fire from the cigar. Flames.

Doc sauntered out into them. There was a vicious crack, and a bright neon flash in the gunsmoke. The shotgun guy screamed. It was horrible, inside-out, like if you could scream while inhaling. Now that—whatever that was—*that's gotta hurt big time.*

Wyatt leapt out the door, too. Brave man. More gunshots. Another crack. Oh, what the hell. I went out, too, keeping low. I kept alongside the buildings, and quickly stepped out of the powder smoke hanging in front of the building. I saw a gunman trying to mount up his horse, but before I could raise my shotgun, Wyatt came out of nowhere and pistol-whipped him. Ouch. Another horseman burst past at full gallop, making for the edge of town. A boom from Lückner's rifle dropped him.

Doc was standing on top of the dead horse. He screamed a manic war laugh, turned and walked back into the marshal's office. He didn't look pale any more.

And as quickly as that, the streets were silent.



NEW ABILITY: RENOWN [♠]

Renown is used by Gunslingers and their ilk instead of or in addition to Connections. Renown is a measurement of how well known the character is and how exaggerated his deeds are. Poor Renown means you are just starting out, and no one has heard of you. Average Renown means you are known of in your town. Good Renown means everyone in your town knows you, and if you have committed any crimes there is a \$500 reward out for you. Great renown means you are known in your state or territory, and if you have committed any crimes there is a \$1000 reward out for you. Exceptional Renown means you are known throughout the country, and if you have committed any crimes there is a \$5000 reward out for you, just like Frank and Jesse James. Extraordinary Renown means you are famous world-wide, like Buffalo Bill Cody. It also means that if you have committed any crimes there is a \$10,000 reward out for you, like Belle Starr.

Renown also determines the degree of exaggeration your reputation suffers. The number of ranks of Renown you have is a multiplier to everything you have done. For example, "Curly Ben" Wright is an up-and-coming Gunslinger with a Great Gunslinging skill and an Exceptional Renown. He has gunned down four desperadoes, but his Renown gives him a multiplier of 5 (PR, AVG, GD, GRT, EXC) to all his deeds. So, even though he has only killed four men, he is reputed to have killed 20.

"DOC" HOLLIDAY



John Henry Holliday, aka "Doc", was born to a rich southern family in Griffin, Georgia in 1852. He was raised to be a polite southern gentleman, and his family sponsored him in getting a magick practitioner's license so that he could become a practicing Dentist at age eighteen, which he did whenever his funds were low.

He soon grew tired of the limited scope of magick use involved in the practice of dentistry, and wanted to expand his skills. However, the idea of joining the Freemasons held no appeal for him, so he left the United States for areas where magick use was not as restricted.

His travels found him in the Republic of Texas in the winter of 1872. He settled briefly in Dallas, where he lived a free and easy life, spending most of his time in saloons, dance halls, and bordellos.

Holliday gradually moved westward, earning a living as an in-house cardsharp at saloons. Suckers played against Holliday and invariably lost, Holliday splitting the take with the saloon owners, who financed the game. Over the next year, Holliday acquired a reputation as a deadly Gunslinger. While Doc never went out of his way to find a fight, he eagerly accepted it when faced with one. Similarly, Doc was never involved in a constant stream of gunfights, but every one he was in, he was the one left standing at the end.

In November of 1873, a vague feeling drew Holliday into the Unorganized Territories. There in Tse-bi-gay, the "Land Among The Rocks", he found an ailing Navajo sorcerer. He used his magickal abilities to save the delirious man, and in gratitude the sorcerer gave Holliday a very special gift. The man, Watcher-Of-The-Skies, was a member of that rarest of orders, the Spellslingers. He taught Holliday his arts, and created a Spell-gun for Holliday the likes of which the world has not seen. It is a fusion of Holliday's Colt and the Silver Sword of Cortez. Before Cortez left for Mexico, he was presented with this sword, which was blessed by the church. Cortez then proceeded to slaughter the Aztecs with this weapon, twisting the blessing and giving the sword a taste for blood. When the Aztecs cursed the Spanish church, the blessing became a curse, and the sword began to hunger for life energies. This weapon was stolen from Cortez, and passed from owner to owner, finally ending up in the hands of Watcher-Of-The-Skies.

Holliday's Spell-gun, technically a Widomaker, hungers for life energies as the Sword of Cortez did. Anyone killed by the Gun has his life energy devoured by it. If several days go by without Holliday killing anyone with the Gun, it begins feeding off of him, leaving Doc pale, shaken, and feeble.

After leaving Tse-bi-gay, Doc wandered back into Texas and picked up his life again, settling into a saloon in Flagstaff. He soon realized the horrible curse his Spell-gun carried (wryly commenting "Well, isn't this a Daisy.") but found himself unable to rid himself of it. He buried the gun, and an earthquake cast it up at his feet. He threw the gun in a river, and the river flooded, washing the gun up at the door of the saloon where Doc was staying. After this, Doc took refuge in drink, to dull the pain of the gun feeding off him, and to dull his sense of remorse at having to engage in frequent gunfights. Night after night, Holliday would look for new challenges, forcing issues, trying to engage bar patrons or green cowpokes in gunplay. When Doc shot the wrong man, he was run out of town and found himself in Santa Fe, where he met Wyatt Earp. Doc and Wyatt quickly became fast friends, and Doc remains in Santa Fe to this day.

Doc is a difficult man to get along with, and his only true friend is Wyatt Earp. He has a caustic tongue, with a gift for sarcasm and wit. His attitude is bleak and fatalistic, and he spends all his time drinking, gambling, or reading. His favorites are Coleridge and Poe, especially when he is feeling particularly morose.

• "Doc" Holliday, Spellslinger

Abilities: Courage [EXC] • Education [GR] • Gambling [EXC] • Gunslinging [EXT] • Perception [GR] • Physician (Dentistry) [GD] • Physique [PR] • Renown [EXC] • Sorcery [EXC]

Possessions: Colt 1873 Peacemaker, Spell-gun, silver hip flask, *Collected Works of Coleridge*.

• "Daisy", Holliday's Widomaker

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Courage [GR] • Education [GR] • Glamour [GR] • Perception [EXC]

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE GUN

In the post-Civil War period, a new American warrior arose—the Gunfighter. Whether lawman, bandit, or wanton killer, not one “would have hesitated to put up his life as the stake to be played for”, in the words of Bat Masterson, possibly the most articulate of the breed. Gunfighters were an incredibly mixed lot. Among their ranks could be found army scouts, ranchers, hunters, displaced Confederate soldiers, lawyers, even a New European-born dandy; all had the equal mix of audacity, resourcefulness, and grim humor that allowed themselves to put their lives on the line for whatever issue they deemed important. The roll of their names and deeds is far too long to reproduce in its entirety here, so instead we present a select few.

LAW-DOGS & HONEST FOLK

In the west, far from the civilized United States, towns are infrequent and the rule of law even more irregular. In these areas the law is one man, and he carries a gun. These men, and women, serve as sheriffs and marshals on the frontier, the star they wear, along with their guns, is the symbol of their authority and power. However, not everyone who lays his life on the line for what is right in the west wears a badge. Many who don't are more honest than those who do, in fact. All it really takes out here is honor, integrity, and courage.

• “Longhaired Jim” Courtright

Timothy Isaiah Courtright, aka Longhaired Jim, served with distinction during the Civil War under his friend General John “Black Jack” Logan. After the war the pair moved to Texas, where they served as Scouts in the Texan Army. His reputation and service record were enough to secure him an appointment as marshal of Fort Worth in early 1876.

• “Wild Bill” Hickok

James Butler Hickok is one of the most well known gunfighters and lawmen in the west. Born the son of an Illinois farmer, James learned to champion the cause of good at an early age. His father's farm was a station on the Underground Railroad, and James helped many a fugitive slave escape to freedom. During the Civil War, James fought on the side of the Union as a spy and a sharpshooter. It was during the war that he earned the nickname “Wild Bill.” After the war, he began to earn his reputation as a gunfighter, and served as a scout for the US Army under George Custer. After mustering out of the army, he went to Amarillo, Texas, where he was elected sheriff. His deeds as sheriff were rewarded in 1871 when he was made marshal of Abilene, a booming Texas cowtown. In Abilene, Wild Bill had to face down many gunfighters, including the notorious John Hardin and Ben Thompson. Later that year, Wild Bill accidentally shot and killed Mike Williams, a friend. Bill was so depressed about this that he resigned as marshal, and swore off killing.

• “Bat” Masterson

William Barclay Masterson was born a Canadian and moved with his family to the United States and then Texas. When he was fourteen, William and his brother Ed left the farm to work on the Santa Fe Railroad. Unhappy with this line of work, he later became a buffalo hunter and then a scout for the Texan Army. Leaving the army he wandered around and settled in Mobeetie, Texas, where he was involved in a gunfight with a Texan trooper over a local bar girl. Surviving this fight, he travelled to Santa Fe, where he has recently hooked up with town marshal Wyatt Earp.

NO-GOODS

However, not all people feel that the lawlessness of the west means they should take the law into their own hands. Rather, they take advantage of the lawlessness for their own personal gains. Such desperadoes live and die by the gun, rustling cattle, robbing banks, and picking fights to increase their reputation. Crossing these men is about the worst idea a greenhorn, and even some accomplished gunfighters, could ever have.

• John Hardin

John Wesley Hardin is the most feared gunman in Texas, and the most unlikely desperado ever seen. Born to honest, hard-working parents in Texas in 1853, raised properly by his father, a Methodist preacher and the descendant of Texan statesmen, soldiers, and a signer of the Texan Declaration of Independence. But southwestern Texas is a harsh, unforgiving land, and this shaped the young John Wesley. As a boy he practiced his skills with a six-gun by shooting at effigies of Abraham Lincoln, and he killed another boy at the tender age of eleven. He went on the run from the law in 1868 after killing one of his uncle's slaves, and he has remained on the run ever since. The master of a blazingly fast cross-draw, Hardin to this date has killed, according to his own careful count, forty men.

• John “Kingfisher”

A Texan born and bred, John King Fisher has been in trouble since he could ride a horse. His first crime, in fact, was horse theft. A shrewd gambler, Kingfisher has made quite a name for himself as a cattle rustler. He claims to have killed seven men, not including several Mexicans. A colorful personality, Kingfisher favors wearing fringed shirts, red sashes, and bells on his spurs. He is extremely sensitive about his dandyish appearance, and anyone who mocks Kingfisher answers to his guns.

• “Johnny Ringo”

In many ways, feared gunman John Ringgold, aka Johnny Ringo, is a dark reflection of the Deadly Dentist, “Doc” Holliday. Like Holliday, Ringo attended college in the United States and is fond of quoting Shakespeare. While he is a true desperado who drinks hard and has done his share of hurraing towns, Ringo adheres to his own peculiar code of morality, which definitely raises him above the usual scum that infests the west, such as Ike Clanton. This code surfaces most often in his treatment of women, which rivals that of any Southern gentleman. While he has spent most of his time as a cattle rustler, he has also been a deputy sheriff in the past. Which side of the law Johnny ends up on is anyone's guess.

• Ben Thompson

Ben Thompson was born in Yorkshire, England and migrated to Austin, Texas in 1849. He killed his first man in 1858, and went on from there to become a printer and later a bookbinder in New Orleans. Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, he enlisted in the Confederate Army, where he served with distinction, all the while gambling and smuggling whiskey on the side. After being discharged because of wounds, he got involved in a shootout in Austin which landed him in jail. Escaping, he fled to Mexico, where he served as a mercenary for Emperor Maximilian. There, he distinguished himself as much as he had fighting for the Confederacy. Returning to Texas, Thompson ran a saloon in Abilene, but eventually sold it. The year 1873 found Ben and his brother Billy in Albuquerque. There, Billy accidentally shot the sheriff, C. B. Whitney, who was a friend of the Thompsons. Ben told his brother to get out of town, and stayed himself to face the music. He eventually surrendered his guns to Wyatt Earp and went along peacefully. Thompson is an even nattier dresser than Kingfisher, clothing himself in the fashion of a New European gentleman and keeping his six-gun in a leather-lined coat pocket. Bat Masterson called him the best gunfighter of the age, saying, “Others missed at times, but Ben Thompson was as delicate and certain in action as a Swiss watch.”

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: GUNSLINGER

You're pretty fast with a six-gun. When you walk into a place, people get really quiet and move out of the way. No sense looking for trouble. Sometimes you wear a badge; sometimes you don't. Perhaps you're the kind of gunslinger who feels that it's up to you to help bring law and order to the frontier. You wield your gun to defend those who can't defend themselves. You're on every posse that is formed, and you may have served terms as sheriff or marshal. Then there's the other side of the coin. To you, the lawlessness of the frontier is a good thing, and something to be preserved. You gamble, rustle, and “hurrah” as you desire. Doesn't matter. You can look down the barrel of a gun without flinching.

All that you're sure of is that there are two types of Gunslinger: those who follow the Code of the Gun, and cowards. The Code of the Gun is an unwritten law that every Gunslinger worth the name follows in one way or another: Do not war without fresh offense, openly given. Do not smile and shoot. Never shoot an unarmed man, and never shoot an unarmed man. But sit with your back against a wall, so you don't have to worry about the cowards.

• **Strong Suits:** Courage, Gunslinging, Renown

• **Possessions:** Six-gun, hold-out Derringer, hat, duster

• **In Your Diary:** Folded wanted posters, a list of the gunfights you've fought, and a list of the people who owe you money.

• **Why You're Here:** It's a wild, untamed land, and proficiency with a Peacemaker is the premiere way to make a name for yourself. Beats slaving away on a farm for the rest of your life. You spend your time riding the range and sleeping under the stars.

THROW DOWN!

GUNSLINGING IN THE GREAT GAME

A Gunslinging Duel is a specialized form of gunfight. It is not the free-for-all that usually happens in bars late at night—this situation is resolved as normal combat. Rather, a Gunslinging Duel is along the lines of the O.K. Corral, or the fight between Peden and Cobb at the end of *Silverado*. A Gunslinging duel is always instigated by calling the other party out. There is no set procedure or diction for this; "I'm calling you out" generally works. A time and place is arranged; this can be anything from now, outside to high noon, Wednesday, the O.K. Corral. Weapons are usually six-guns, although this is not carved in stone. Furthermore, each gunfighter could use a different weapon. One famous gunslinger used a Winchester rifle, while his opponents generally used six-guns. When the time comes, both duelists take up positions, generally within one hundred yards of each other. The two then stand still until after the **Fast Draw**, at which point it is perfectly acceptable to dive for cover.

HIGH NOON

All Gunslinging Duels begin with a face-off. The participants meet each other, get settled in position, and size each other up. Sometimes words are exchanged. Other times, just lead. In this part of a Gunslinging Duel, two things occur: a **Duel of Renown**, and a **Fast Draw**.

In the **Duel of Renown**, compare the participants' Renown abilities. The gunslinger with the lower Renown must take an additional number of Rests per Round equal to half the difference in Ranks between Renown levels (rounded up). Note that a Gunslinger *always* gets to play one non-rest card during a Round, no matter how many Rests he is required to play. Furthermore, the winner of the **Duel of Renown** gets to inflict additional damage on his target, for the **Fast Draw** shot *only*. This additional damage, in points or in ranks, is equal to half the difference in Ranks between Renown levels, rounded down.

Next comes the **Fast Draw**. This action is what begins the actual Duel. The participants perform an opposed Gunslinging Feat. The highest total wins, with that player out-drawing his opponent and shooting him. Damage is determined by referencing the table on page 194 of *Castle Falkenstein* (substitute *Gunslinging* everywhere it says *Fencing* in the text explaining this table). No cards may be played by the loser of the **Fast Draw** if you are using "Fearful Harm and Great Danger" from *Comme Il Faut*.

Any gunfire following this, if both participants are left on their feet, is performed as a normal Duel, which is explained on page 192 of *Castle Falkenstein*. Only the rules that are different for a Gunslinging Duel are explained here.

WHAT DO THE CARDS MEAN?

- **Red cards will always represent Attacks.** This is one bullet fired from your gun. The only time you may fire more than one bullet with one card is when you fan a revolver (see below).
- **Black cards will always represent Dodges.** A Dodge card automatically cancels out an Attack. You "dodge the bullet," as it were.
- **Face cards represent Rests,** pauses in combat to catch your breath. Rests are very important, because you will be forced to play a certain number of them each Round, based on your Gunslinging Ability.

Gunslinging Skill	PR	AV	GD	GR	EXC	EXT
Rests per Round	5	4	3	2	1	0

TWO GUN MOJO

Any character who has the Gunslinging Ability may use two weapons of the same kind at the same time, suffering a one-rank reduction in his Gunslinging Ability while doing so. If your Gunslinging Ability is Excellent or better, you may mix weapons. So, "Rattlesnake" Jim, who has a Great Gunslinging, may fire two Colt Peacemakers or two Winchester Rifles at the same time, obviously spin-cocking the Winchesters. However, "Curly Ben" Wright, who has an Exceptional Gunslinging, may stride into a gunfight with Colt Peacemaker in one hand and a Winchester Rifle in the other. A character gains no increase in the rate of fire nor does he incur any other penalties. The main advantage to being able to use two guns at the same time in *Castle Falkenstein* is that your ammunition capacity is doubled.

While using two guns during a duel, it is assumed that you are alternating guns during an exchange—the first shot with the left hand gun, the

second shot with the right hand gun. Again, reduce your Gunslinging level by one.

FAN THAT SMOKEWAGON!

One of the advantages to revolvers is that the rate of fire can be increased by fanning the hammer. By repeatedly pulling back and releasing the hammer with a fanning motion of the hand, three bullets may be fired per round rather than just one.

The disadvantage to this is there is a severe reduction in accuracy. Expert gunslingers rarely fan their gun, as they have learned that it is the steady man who takes his time that wins a gunfight, not the man who fans wildly, hoping to unnerve and perhaps even hit his opponent with a shower of lead.

In game terms, when a weapon is fanned, it fires three shots per round rather than one. Each shot requires a Feat Test, at a two-rank penalty to the shooter's Gunslinging Ability (Average Gunslingers also subtract two from their cardplay, while Poor Gunslingers subtract four). The shooter must declare he is fanning before he lays down any cards. You may also fan against multiple targets (up to three), but with an additional one-rank reduction to your Gunslinging.

In a Gunslinging Duel, fanning is handled differently. You must declare you are fanning after both participants select their cards but before they are laid down. One of the attack cards you lay down this Exchange represents an attack where you fanned your revolver. You may only fan once per exchange. Either all three shots you fired with this attack hit, or they all miss. While fanning during a duel, you do not reduce your Gunslinging ability by two ranks. Rather, if the fanning attack hits, it is considered to be a double hit at one Gunslinging rank higher (i.e. a Good Gunslinger who hits with a fanning attack against another Good Gunslinger would inflict a Full Wound—a double hit at Great Gunslinging Ability). When an Extraordinary Gunslinger fans and hits his target, he still scores a double hit, but his target is considered to be one Gunslinging rank worse than he actually is to determine damage (i.e. an Extraordinary Gunslinger who hits with a fanning attack against another Extraordinary Gunslinger would inflict a Full Wound—a double hit against an Exceptional Gunslinging Ability). Any further attacks played during the same Exchange that hit are single hits at your real Gunslinging ability level.

AWW SHI...

So, what happens if you run out of ammunition during a gunfight? First, make an opposed Feat check; your Courage vs. his Renown. This is to see whether or not you lose your nerve and panic ("I'm fighting Wyatt Earp, and I'm outta bullets? Aww Shi..."). If you succeed, you keep your courage up. You can still play Defense cards to dodge your opponent's shots, and may break for cover to reload by succeeding at an Average Athletics Feat. If you fail, you panic. You may only play Rest cards, and must succeed at a Great Athletics feat to find cover and reload.

GUN MISFIRES

Even the most reliable gun can get a bit cranky at times. At the Host's option, he may call for a player to turn over a fortune card to determine if his weapon misfires. Common situations which would call for such a draw are: the weapon has been fired continuously for a while and has heated up; the weapon is dirty or rusty; the ammunition is home-made and may contain bad powder or the wrong amount of powder, &c.

Card	Result
Joker	Dud: round doesn't fire. Powder or percussion cap faulty.
Ace of Spades	Explosion/Chainfire. In the case of an <i>explosion</i> , the round currently in the chamber explodes, damaging the weapon. It may not be used again until taken to a gunsmith. In a <i>chainfire</i> , which occurs only in black powder revolvers, every round in the cylinder fires simultaneously. This inflicts 1/2/3 (Harm Rank A) wounds to the firer (more if the weapon is an old Colt Revolving Rifle, in which case you lose your left hand).
Ace of Clubs	Jam: the round fires, but the cartridge cannot be extracted normally.

In all other cases, the weapon fires normally.

SPELLSLINGERS

REBORN IN BLOOD AND FIRE

The founder of the Brotherhood of Spellslingers has passed from this world into history or legend. Some who have survived him know his name, but will not speak it. Once he was a Templar, who was ordered to lead his men into battle and destroy the last of the Aztec Priests, who had hidden in a mountain fortress along with their followers. He and his men went in bearing steel and fire. They returned bearing ashes and blood. While he was killing Priests, his men, on different orders, butchered women and children. He was rewarded for his loyalty with excommunication. His superiors informed him that he had committed an atrocity unforgivable by man or God. The blame and responsibility was his alone; his hands alone were blood-stained.

Cast out of the Templars, he wandered north, having lost faith in his God and his purpose, looking for something to fill the hole in his soul. In the Land Among The Rocks he found an ancient, wizened Indian Shaman. The Shaman took him in and taught him. On a spirit walk, he realized the errors of his life. To work for good, one must work to maintain the balance of all things.

So he became a warrior with a new cause. To fight for his new cause, he needed a new weapon, as he had abandoned the sword. The warrior became a Gunslinger, but the Gunslinger found that guns were not enough. The Gunslinger and the Shaman, using lore the Gunslinger had found in Persia, combined their efforts and power to forge a new weapon—the Spell-gun. The Gunslinger then began to gather people handy with guns, strong in the ability to use magick, untainted by the training of other Sorcerous Orders. He taught them to use their unschooled talent to wield the raw, untamed magickal energies of this new land. These new knights errant were Bonded together by common purpose, strict oaths, and the harrowing ritual of creating their Spell-guns. The Spellslingers now wander the west, preserving the balance of things, and defending innocents from the ravages of High Sorcery gone wrong. Despite this admirable mission, Spellslingers are generally looked upon with suspicion.

HIGH PLAINS SPELLSLINGERS

One cannot become a Spellslinger without a mentor, someone who helps him create a Spell-gun and teaches him Spellslinging. A Spellslinger's relationship with his mentor is one of friendship and mutual respect, as the mentor seeks out new Spellslingers; one cannot join the order by volunteering or by force. Eventually, most Spellslingers will become mentors themselves. The knowledge of Spellslinging seems to weigh on the mind. That's not too surprising, considering the cause Spellslingers fight for.

THE MAGICK OF THE WILD WEST

As stated above, a Spellslinger is a raw, untrained magickal talent. Mentors will only approach untrained Wizards, so as to find sorcerous talent unmarred by the prejudices of established orders. As untrained mages, Spellslingers cannot draw thaumic energy on their own. They rely on their Spell-gun to do it for them (see article on Spell-guns). Because of this dependency, Spellslingers cannot draw thaumic energy on their own until their Sorcery level increases to Excellent. It is at this point that they become Mentors, with the ability to draw Thaumic Energy and cast all of the spells available to the Order. Very rarely is a trained mage, such as Doc Holliday, made a Spellslinger.

Spellslingers are a very secretive order. They do not socialize or talk shop with mages. In a truly American fashion, they want to stand alone, apart from others. Their lore is a secret, kept secret by oath. Why would they want to learn other spells when their lore fits their needs, and their most potent spell treats all power as aligned? Furthermore, if any Spellslinger breaks his oath of secrecy, all the others will know of it, and mercilessly hunt him down.

All Spellslingers are killers. They kill to maintain a balance. They may kill upholding the law. They may kill violating the law. But all Spellslingers kill. A Spell-gun is a weapon and it is designed to be a particularly deadly one. No one learns to be Spellslinger solely for self defense. When you make a Spell-gun, it's because you intend to use it to kill. This marks you. People seem to instinctively recognize Spellslingers and tend to be suspicious if they don't avoid them altogether. Some are even downright hostile.

THE SCOURGE OF GOD

Some Preachers are only nominally men of God, though they carry a Bible and dress the part. They are in fact religious fanatics who believe that Spellslingers are evil incarnate and pawns of the Devil. Maybe they're right.

Roaming throughout the West, Preachers stir up townsfolk against Spellslingers. Daring Preachers may even attempt to kill Spellslingers they encounter. Most, however, are just annoying crackpots. But some are sorcerers. These men and women pose a genuine threat to a Spellslinger. Called Dark Preachers, they seem to share information and coordinate their activities. They also have an uncanny ability to track Spellslingers who cross their path. It is widely believed these Preachers are part of some unknown organization. Thankfully, Dark Preachers are rare.

TOMBSTONE

If there is place to go to find a Spellslinger or to become one, it is the aptly named Texan town of Tombstone, located south of Phoenix. Something about Tombstone attracts Spellslingers, for it seems you can always find one there. A town looking not unlike any of a dozen other frontier towns, there is an air of menace and danger in Tombstone. The town seems to brood. Many get a chill the first time they sight it over the rise. Tombstone seems to watch you, waiting with a malignant expectancy. Some get over this feeling after being in town a few days. Others never do. They leave.

Outside of the city limits is a bleak, windswept hill. A lone tree provides little shade for the bleached white tombstones beneath it. This is Boot Hill. It is a shrine to the Spellslingers. They find a peace here in life, even as others do in death. Many's the time a lone figure standing silently beneath the tree will be a Spellslinger newly arrived in Tombstone. Some say this is what draws Spellslingers to the town, a desire for absolution only the dead can give. They say Boot Hill exerts an irresistible pull that a Spellslinger can ignore but never escape. Whatever the truth of the matter, death is every Spellslinger's companion.

GHOST TOWNS

Ghost Towns dot the western landscape where dreams died, violently or with but a whisper. Most folks pay them no mind. Many ghost towns are reputed to be haunted, but such places can be easily enough avoided after sundown. Spellslingers don't have it quite as easy. Day or night, the presence of a Spellslinger in a ghost town raises the unquiet spirits of the dead. Occasionally the ghost town will spring to life as the spirits of the town go about their business as if alive. More often, the ghosts will rise to stalk and slay the living who violate the realm of the dead. Spellslingers are the first to be attacked.

Among the most dangerous of the ghostly menaces a Spellslinger's presence may invoke is the Spectral Gunman. Armed with a six-gun, the Spectral Gunman will call out the Spellslinger. If the Spellslinger makes a successful Courage Feat against a Exceptional Level of Ability, the Spectral Gunman will be laid to rest. If the Courage Feat is unsuccessful, the Spectral Gunman becomes completely substantial but able to be hurt only by magick. In such event, the Spectral Gunman must be killed as if real or it will continue to pursue the Spellslinger, slaying any who get in the way. Spectral Gunmen are not bound by the city limits of the ghost town and may pursue a Spellslinger for years.

THE SPECTRE

There is a legend of a Spellslinger dressed all in black, riding a pale horse. He never loses a gun battle. Never. No matter how many men he faces. They say his Spell-gun leaps from its holster to his hand of its own accord. They say he can fire spells faster than humanly possible. They call him the Spectre. According to legend, he lives for the kill, seeking out powerful Spellslingers to challenge. Some say he's a force for good, others evil. One theory is that he was the very first Spellslinger, now immortal. Another is that he is an extremely powerful Spectral Gunman. Yet another states that he was a sheriff who was bullwhipped to death by desperadoes while the people of his town watched on. None can say for sure.

The Spectre doesn't say much and never sticks around to answer questions. He appears from out of the distance, only to vanish after his job is done. Old Spellslingers listen to the tales and nod, knowingly. They don't know if the legends are true but they know that they could be. Who or what the Spectre is, none can say. How he might perform the acts attributed to him is another matter. Spellslingers, like all sorcerers, have their secrets.

SPELL-GUNS



DRAMATIC CHARACTER: SPELLSLINGER

You have the potential to be a Wizard, but for some reason, joining a restrictive Order never appealed to you. Your spirit is as wild and untamed as the spirit and magick of the West. You have always felt the need to do something, to take care of what ain't right. Most orders seemed to be too concerned with their own agendas for your tastes. The lawless, open spaces of the west appealed to you, so that's where you went. Out in the trackless emptiness of the west, you found a Mentor, and he accepted you. Together, you made a Spell-gun. Now, you still go heeled, but you pack a much deadlier load than mere bullets. When you get in a gunfight, bolts of energy shatter the air. You're a Spell-slinger. You're a rogue sorcerer, wandering the lands without law, maintaining order and balance.

- **Strong Suits:** Gunslinging, Renown, Sorcery
- **Possessions:** Six-gun, Spell-gun, hold-out Derringer, hat, duster
- **In Your Diary:** Folded wanted posters, spells, a list of the gunfights you've fought.
- **Why You're Here:** In the United States, you're a pawn of the Freemasons. Elsewhere, you're the pawn of another order. Only in the West are you free to practice your art as you wish. Only as a Spell-slinger can you answer the calling that has always burned in your veins. You spend your time riding the range and sleeping under the stars.

A Spell-gun, whether you call it that or instead Hexgun, Lightning Rod, Thunder Stick, Hex iron, Spell-shooter, Boom Stick, or Mage Gun, is a fearsome object. Spell-slingers carry these weapons in addition to normal six-guns. Only one of the higher-ranking wizards in the Order of Spell-slingers know the arcane process of creating a Spell-gun, and they only perform this ritual when they are inducting a new member to the Order.

THE BOOK WITH NO NAME

Spell-slingers have one grimoire, mostly passed on through word-of-mouth. It has no name, and written copies are very rare. It contains five spells: *Magick Bullet*, *Create Focus*, *Create Spell-gun*, *Channel Power*, and *Blood Binding*. *Magick Bullet* (6*☆) creates a bolt of raw magickal energy. It is an unaligned spell; all thaumic energy drawn to cast this spell is treated as aligned power (thus the * instead of a suit). However, it will still have harmonics associated with it. A Hearts-aligned *Magick Bullet*, in addition to damaging the target, will traumatize him, making him wary (if not fearful) of Spell-slingers. A Diamonds *Bullet* will produce material side effects, such as burns that leave scars whether or not magick is used to heal them. Spades and Clubs will produce similar side effects. For the amount of physical damage the spell does reference the amount of Thaumic Energy (including Focal power multiplier) put into the spell against the tables on pages 78 & 79 of *Comme Il Faut*. *Magick Bullet* is the only spell available to those who are not Mentors. *Create Focus* (6♦) allows for the creation of magickal foci, as detailed in the *Book of Sigils*. *Create Spell-gun* (12♦) is the ritual used to forge a new Spell-gun. This is a long, difficult ritual, the process of which is detailed below. *Channel Power* (12♦) is the enchantment cast on a Spell-gun to allow it to draw one Thaumic Energy card per pull of the hammer, and focus spells down its barrel. *Blood Binding* (10♥) is the spell cast on the new Spell-slinger at the completion of the forging of his Spell-gun. It not only binds the Spell-slinger to the gun, but binds the 'Slinger to the Oath of Secrecy, and allows all other 'Slingers to know if he ever breaks it.

FORGING A WEAPON OF DESTINY

Creating a Spell-gun is not a simple matter, and this process is the one true secret of the Spell-slingers, passed on by word of mouth and hands-on demonstration. The ritual to create a Spell-gun is a long, arduous process that takes months, and in the process shortens the participant's lives by five years for each pound the gun weighs. These years lost are unrecoverable, even through magickal means. As with other foci, Spell-guns work best when made of items that belong to the user and are dedicated to the purpose of destruction or killing. One of the items that makes up a Spell-gun must be the Gunslinger's Six-Gun (the ritual *only* works on six-guns). The second item can be any other object. A weapon is preferable. Silver swords or Templar silver crucifixes work well. Certain forms of crystal, such as diamond or obsidian, also work well. As it is melted down in the process of creating the Spell-gun, its size and shape does not matter. The second item must be melted in the flame of a Salamander, Firecast from a Dragon, or similar Magickal fire. While it is still molten, it is poured into the barrel of the six-gun, and the spells *Create Spell-gun* and *Channel Power* are cast on the gun. The molten material is now a solid, and is fused to the barrel of the gun. The remaining material left over from the second item is cast in bullet molds to create slugs, the exact shape and size of a bullet. Each slug is then made into a Magickal Focus dedicated to *Magick Bullet*. Then come the finishing touches. The hammer is cut down so that it will no longer come in contact with the Foci. Finally, the gun is decorated with glyphs of power and fetishes appropriate to the creator. New Europeans would incise Qabbalistic symbols, a Native Americans would paint pictographs and attach feathers, &c.

SPELL-GUNS IN THE GREAT GAME

As stated earlier, most Spell-slingers do not know how to draw Thaumic Energy on their own. The Spell-gun does it for them. Every time the hammer is pulled back, the Spell-gun turns over the top card in the sorcery deck. The Spell-slinger, using his own knowledge, must then immediately use this energy, multiplied by one of the six foci in the cylinder, to cast *Magick Bullet*. The magickal energies in the gun are discharged when the hammer strikes the focus, usually when the trigger is pulled. Once a Spell-slinger's Sorcery ability becomes high enough, he may draw thaumic energy on his own, and add that power to the power drawn by the Gun. Every time a Spell-gun is fired, the Spell-slinger must draw on the Spell-gun Misfire Table on the next page. In order for a Spell-gun to work, all six *Magick Bullet* foci must be loaded in the cylinder. If even one is missing, the Spell-gun will not fire.

It is widely but erroneously believed that it is impossible to fan a Spell-gun as you would an ordinary six-shooter to increase your rate of fire. It takes at least an Excellent Sorcery Ability to fan a Spell-gun. When a Spell-gun is fanned, wild magick effects are more likely. For the purposes of determining wild magick effects on the Spell-gun Table when fanning a Spell-gun, the Spell-slinger's Sorcery Ability is considered as two levels worse than it actually is. For reason unknown to the Spell-slingers, the Spectre does not suffer from this penalty.



WIDOWMAKERS

A Widowmaker is an intelligent Spell-gun. Widowmakers will have statistics for Charisma, Courage, Education, Perception, and Glamour. Education is the measure of the Widowmaker's raw intelligence and cleverness, not knowledge, and will always be above Average. The Widowmaker's Glamour Ability is only usable on its wielder and may be detected through Perception and overcome by Courage. The process for creating a Widowmaker is harrowing. It is the normal Spell-gun creation process, but a human sacrifice is also required. Tales are told of extremely old or storied Spell-guns spontaneously becoming Widowmakers, and some of these are true. Also, any Spell-gun that is forged out of a cursed item will be a Widowmaker (whether or not the sacrifice occurs), and will retain all properties of the curse. The personality of a Widowmaker will vary, but most will tend toward the sinister. A Widowmaker can telepathically communicate with its wielder as long as worn or held. It will use its abilities to persuade its wielder to undertake actions it thinks best. If it so chooses, it can leap from its holster to its wielder's hand automatically.

SPOOK GUNS

Akin to the Widowmaker is the Spook Gun. A Spell-gun is often almost a part of a Spellslinger. When that Spellslinger dies, occasionally his spirit will remain attached to the Spell-gun. Spook Guns are haunted Spell-guns. The Spellslinger who comes into possession of a Spook Gun gains an invisible companion. Sometimes the relationship with the spirit will be friendly. If it is not, the Spellslinger may be in trouble. The spirit may attempt to possess the Spellslinger in a contest of Courage Feats. If possessed, only exorcism or a successful Courage Contest, possible once a day, can reverse the possession. Beyond a ghostly sidekick that may try to possess you, Spook Guns have one definite advantage. They allow the wielder to cast a Fear Aura, like the faerie special ability Terrifying Apparition, by manifesting the power of the haunting spirit.

SPELL-GUN MISFIRES

There is a hazard in using Spell-guns. The lower the user's Sorcery skill, the more chance that the Gun will misfire when used. Wild Magick is the result of this. Whenever the Spell-gun is fired, the wielder performs a Sorcery skill test by turning over the top card in the Fortune Deck. See the table below for the result of this test.

Sorcery Level	Misfire if card of this suit is turned over		
GD	♣	♠	joker
GR	♠	joker	
EXC	joker		
EXT	—		

If a misfire occurs, Wild Magick is let loose. See pg. 93 of *Comme Il Faut* for a guide to Wild Magick effects.

"I hope you never have to shoot any man, but if you do, shoot him in the guts near the navel. You may not make a fatal shot, but he will get a shock that will paralyze his brain and arm so much that the fight is all over."

—Wild Bill Hickok

WAGON, HO!



And so, in the morning, after Martin and I said goodbye to Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, we climbed into a Windwagon and began the long and very bumpy ride to the Black Hills, where the Twenty Nations Council waited. Supposedly Doc Holliday had sent a messenger—or perhaps a magickal message—ahead of us, to announce our arrival. I wasn't sure if the message would make it, but on the other hand, I had a feeling they'd know I was coming whether we told them or not. I mean, how did that guy in Stamberg know where to look for me? Probably had a dream.

I wonder if he knew he'd be killed?

Now there's a thought to chill your blood.

Anyway, Martin and I made ourselves as comfortable as possible in a Windwagon driven by a sour and unwashed old coot of a trapper. I got the distinct feeling he was driving us north just for the money. He was so standoffish that I never really did get his name. We called him "Trapper." I'm not sure if that was the name he went by. Maybe it was, but only because he never told anyone his real name, so they had to use something. Trapper.

Definitely the least enjoyable character we met. Including Brooks.

The Windwagon didn't make passing the time any better, either. It was a low-slung cart or wagon, with very large wheels mounted at each end. The sides of the wheels had what looked to be small vanes or paddles on them. I figured out later that they were used to help paddle the Windwagon across rivers and stuff. They were turned by a hand crank. Or you could use your feet, sort of like bike pedals. Maybe it wasn't the most efficient way of plowing across a stream, but it beat wading when the wind wasn't strong enough to blow you across the water.

As I said, the wheels were big. Their size made the ride somewhat smoother. I'm very glad that they weren't small, or my kidneys would have died on me. The axles were mounted on top of the wagon body, so the entire carriage hung lower to the ground. I guess that helps keep them from tipping—less wind profile, lower center of gravity. The Windwagon had a pair of sails, one large, one small, to give it the push it needed. Of course, the boom had to be able to swing about freely, which limited the amount of cargo you could pack in the thing. Speaking of which, the boom did swing freely. And Trapper, since he was not used to passengers (so he claims), kept forgetting to warn us whenever we put about. After a few of those, we learned to anticipate his moves and duck. That, of course, meant he didn't have to bother to learn to warn us. Such are the life and manners of a wilderness hermit.

The steering mechanism was something to look at. It was complex. Each wheel turned in tandem. When you turned left, the front wheels turned left and the back wheels turned right. Sort of like a moon buggy. Gave the Windwagon the ability to corner like hell. He ran circles around a mad buffalo that took a few charges at us. And the whole thing was controlled by this viciously complicated set of rods, pulleys, ropes, and winches. Yuck. I'd sure hate to be a mechanic for one of them things. I wasn't entirely sure how it worked, either.

I just knew we had to be careful when stepping into or out of that thar durned thang.

That was how we crossed the Great Plains, puffed across the land by the fickle wind. Normally, it wasn't too bad, except for the heat and the dust and the constant bouncing. Don't drink and drive. You'll spill. Puts a whole new spin on the phrase 'on the wagon.' We made good time, though, and once Trapper was convinced that we, too, could drive, we were able to keep moving for twelve hours a day or more, snacking on preserved fruits and vegetables and pemmican for lunch. The wind was pretty reliable, and it happened to be going more or less in our direction, so we didn't have to tack all that often.

The trip, overall, was uneventful. We only had one real problem. And even that problem was, in itself, uneventful. It came when we were suddenly struck windless.

Four days.

With nothing but Trapper.

Yeah, Martin and I had each other to talk to, but Trapper had this dour way of dampening a conversation just by being there. Especially since we were largely relying on his ability to cook. None of his cans were labeled, and there was no method to his packing style. He just knew where everything was. It was a long four days before the wind picked back up. Four windless nights, sitting around the campfire with a wet rag staring at us. Four mornings with a silent and apparently resentful breakfast cook. Four long days with nothing to do. We could have taken a walk, sure, but it was flat. We could already see every place we might walk to. I suggested we pull the wind wagon, just to make some progress, but Trapper warn't havin' none o' thet thar nonsense.

Sheesh.

The only other incident of interest was when we took our Spirit Walk. As Sam had told us, The Dance is what maintains the Spirit Wall which guards the Twenty Nations. Everyone who passes through must take a Spirit Test. The larger the crowd, or the more aggressive their intent, the sooner the test comes. You can also invite a test by calling to the spirits. We did nothing, we were only three, and we had the best intentions, so it took a little while for the spirits to come to us. But come they did. They always do.

I was standing on the open range, just after dawn. The early morning mist was being boiled off the Great Plains by the newly risen sun. I could hear singing, somewhere off to the north. I walked in that direction, curious.

I saw the village after a short while, as the mist cleared. Yeah. Peace, contentment, nostalgia for a time I have never known. I sat down and watched them go about their morning business. Tending horses, preparing fires and food, arts and crafts. And I saw the source of the singing. A bunch of old men.

That's when it struck me. It seemed wrong, somehow. Shouldn't the children be singing? I could see the line of old men, dancing in full regalia. Ah, there; children danced with them, too. Why couldn't I hear them? Then they split. The old men started moving toward me, still dancing in a kind of Indian conga line. The kids kept going in circles around the camp.

The dancers came closer.

Closer.

When they got to me, they surrounded me, dancing in a circle. I checked over my shoulders as they passed, and that's when I noticed that Martin was sleeping next to me. Trapper was also asleep, but he was a good twenty yards away, on the outside of the circle of dancers. Now that they were close, I could see the detail on their coats, their masks, their totems. Several had large, wicked-looking tomahawks. Abruptly, their chanting stopped. The medicine men all turned to face me.

Then *They* came.

The Giants.

The dull booming of their boots hitting the earth was the first warning. Boom. Like the closing of a door, the firing of a cannon, the pounding of an anvil, the heartbeat of a man in mortal terror. Boom. The Indians all turned to look, saw their black dusters and glowing eyes through the mists, blocking the sun with their size. Boom.

They were still a long way off. One of the Indians turned and spoke to me in perfectly good English. "We cannot stop them," he said.

"I know."

"Can you stop them, paleface?"

I turned to look. They were huge. Somehow I knew they were deadly, what it would feel like to be killed by the likes of them. No glory, no vengeance, no remembrance. No purpose. Just have the life squished out of you like a bug. The memory of your fight would last only as long as it took for them to scrape their boots off. The end.

I turned back to the Indian who spoke.

"I don't know."

DRAMATIC CHARACTER:

SCOUT

Frontiersman. Mountain man. Woodsman. You've been called them all, and worse. Your manners are coarse, but you're honest and proud. You're an expert hunter and can track a man or beast to the ends of the earth. You've done both and lived to tell the tale. You're not afraid of nothin'. As a Scout, you keep a map of every foot of territory you've ever walked in your head, and always known where the best trails are. However, you're not a decrepit, greasy, long-bearded, hide-wearing fright who speaks with an illiterate Kentucky drawl. That's an Eastern stereotype. You're a young man who dresses in bright cotton clothes. You wear showy blanket coats, and probably have something garish like a tattoo or an earring. In addition to English, you speak French, Spanish, and at least one Indian language. When you need money, scouting for the Army or settlers is very profitable.

- **Strong Suits:** Courage, Perception (tracking), Physique
- **Possessions:** well broken hat, hunting rifle, hand axe, Bowie knife
- **In Your Diary:** Notes on weather signs, animal spoors, edible plants, native tongues and rendezvous sites.
- **Why You're Here:** Perhaps you simply don't like cities and the press of humanity. You love the open, high country, with its trackless forests and deep mysteries. Perhaps you prefer the company of the "savage Indian" to that of "civilized man." Or you're just looking for adventure in country where excitement lurks around every bend in the trail. You've come to "see the elephant."

WINDWAGONS

In the days before the Railroads, the problem that faced everyone was fast and safe transportation. Horse-drawn wagons were too slow for many people, and the steam-powered automobile had not yet been devised. River transportation served this need until one reached the Mississippi River. While officially the Twenty Nations were not opposed to use of the river for transportation, nonetheless ships that strayed too close to the western bank of the river were sometimes attacked. Thus, inventors with a certain bent to their imaginations set out to fuse the two.

In 1853, an inventive man in Illinois named Thomas persuaded a group of investors to back his idea—a mad scheme to create a fleet of wind-powered wagons to take freight in between St. Louis and Santa Fe. When his prototype was ready, Thomas raised the sail at a public test. The wagon soon reached a high speed, faster than anyone had thought possible. Thomas then tried to alter his course, and an errant gust of wind whipped the wagon around, and out of control into a fence. Humiliated, Thomas ran to the second prototype and sailed out of town, unwilling to face his angry investors.

After that, several individuals tried to perfect the idea and failed. A man from Holland tried the unique idea of mounting a windmill on a wagon. The turning of the windmill was to drive gears and a drive shaft, turning the wheels of the wagon. The contraption proved to be top-heavy and unstable, and crashed on its first trial. In 1860, a man by the name of Samuel Peppard, having read of Thomas' work, built his own light windwagon to carry freight. It too soon reached prodigious speeds, faster than anything else on the road. However, it was such a light craft that a heavy gust of wind was able to lift the wagon into the air. As soon as the treacherous breeze dissipated, the wagon crashed to the ground and was wrecked.

The most successful of these contrivances was devised by a Texas dairyman by the name of Gail Borden in late 1860. His machine was an amphibious wagon, secured against the intake of water, with a sail that could be easily lowered and stowed. Christened with the ungainly name of the "Terraqueous Machine", it was successfully tested twice before production began. The first trial was a night-time sail, witnessed by Borden's dinner guests. Accompanied by a delightful chorus of screaming women, the Machine sailed down the beach off Galveston Island. The next test was during the daylight hours, in front of a crowd of witnesses. Borden drove his sail-powered wagon up and down the waterfront at a respectable speed until satisfied with its performance on land, at which point he turned into the water. He then engaged a small steam engine that drove the wagon's wheels, effectively turning them into underwater screws. To the delight of the crowd, Borden putted up and down the coast for a goodly half an hour before returning to shore. Mass production of the device, under the more pronounceable name of the Borden Windwagon, began later on in the year.

Originally used only to deliver Borden's dairy products, it was soon adopted by many other private and public interests. It was the preferred method of transport, especially upon the Mississippi. If you were menaced by thieves upon the shore, you took to the water. If you were menaced by Indians while in the river, you turned to the eastern bank and continued on land. Though still in use, the popularity of the Windwagon has waned since the introduction of the railroads. The most popular use of Windwagons today is among the travelling Showmen, Circuses, and Carnivals. The Windwagon allows them to get from town to town faster than with horse-drawn wagons, which saves them money and allows them to put on more shows. Scouts, trappers, and traders also make use of windwagons, especially when travelling the Texas plains or the Unorganized Territories. In these arid lands, not having to worry about feeding or watering horses makes travelling much easier. Due to the easy maintenance, rapid travel, and high reliability of Windwagons, they are replacing the stagecoach as the preferred method of transportation in the flat, windy areas of Texas, California, and the United States. Another group that makes use of this invention is the Windwagon Pirates. These pirates, flying the Skull and Crossbones from their masts, can be found in Texas, the Unorganized Territories, and certain areas of Orleans. The wagons they use range in size from four-man "pinnaces" to twelve-man "barques", and reliable witnesses have reported seeing a Windwagon "galley" crewed by at least forty men and mounting several small cannon! Anyone seeing these vicious outlaws is advised to run, as they do not take prisoners.

WINDWAGON

Cost: 20 days at 2000c

Size: Medium [60 wounds]

Powered By: A spherical brass boiler.

Operation Time: Up to an hour.

Operates With: A Captain's wheel.

Moves With: High wooden wheels and a sail.

Notes: The boiler only provides enough steam to turn the wheels when the wagon is in the water. It is effectively useless on land. On land, the wagon's sole source of mobility is the sail.

BUFFALO HUNTING

The American bison or buffalo, the largest wild animal in North America, dominated the continent for many thousands of years before the settlers came. In the early part of the nineteenth century, great herds of the beasts numbering in excess of two or three million roamed the Great Plains, while smaller groups ranged from Georgia to Hudson Bay and from the Appalachians to beyond the Rockies. The buffalo population at the time was estimated at somewhere between 60 and 75 million head. As Captain Benjamin Bonneville wrote in 1832 after encountering a herd along the Brazos River in Texas, "As far as the eye could reach, the country seemed blackened by an angry wildfire."

For the Indian tribes of the Great Plains, the buffalo herds were a way of life. They were a source of meat, tough hides that were cured for use as clothing and shelter, and bones that were carved into tools and charms. White frontiersmen soon learned the value of the huge animals, and commenced hunting them with a furious dedication. By 1850, buffalo were all but extinct east of the Mississippi and the total population had been halved. A new profession arose as the demand for buffalo hides quickly outstripped the supply: the buffalo hunter.

The buffalo hunters were brave men, though they were not generally the heroes depicted in dime novels and paintings. Rather than charging into a roiling mass of buffalo on horseback brandishing a rifle, six-shooter, or lance, the buffalo hunters more often employed stealth in their trade. A hunter would usually crawl toward a herd against the wind and lay behind a rock or bush. He would then rest his rifle, too heavy for easy use from horseback, in the crook of a Y-shaped stick planted in the ground. His aim thus steadied, a hunter could often down several score of buffalo from a safe distance before the herd became alarmed and fled.

As the surviving bison turned tail and galloped off, the skinners would haul up in their mule-drawn wagons and begin their grisly work. Unlike the Indians, who used almost the entire creature, the whites usually took only the hide and the tongue, considered a delicacy in the East. The skinners moved as quickly as they could, rolling one body out of the way to make room for another. They left behind them carnage that was awesome in its scope. Skelton Glenn, a hunter of some repute, said that he had seen skinned bodies piled so thick they looked like a forest of trees knocked flat by a tornado. "If they were lying on a hillside, the rays of the sun would make them look like a hundred glass windows. A man could ride over the prairie and pick out the camps that were making the most money out of the hunt."

Because the Indians of the Twenty Nations did not take kindly to intruders on their land, the buffalo hunters were left to ply their craft on the dusty steppes of Texas. Only a few skilled men, notably Wyatt Earp, Pat Garrett, and Bat Masterson, were given permission to cross over the border and hunt in Indian territory. The rest of the hunters had little trouble tracking the herds across the grasslands of the Lone Star State. As they moved from one area to another, the grazing buffalo left behind them a swath of devastation miles wide. Once they ran across such a trail, the hunter and his skinners would simply follow it until they caught up to the herd.

While buffalo hunting was fairly straightforward, it did not always go off without a hitch. Buffaloes were large, unpredictable animals with deceptive speed and as numerous hunters found, there was not an animal anywhere in the world as fierce and forbidding as a buffalo bull during rutting season. However, the most terrifying danger came when something startled a herd and a stampede resulted. In 1867, John Brewerton and several companions camped one night after a thunderstorm. The earth started rumbling strangely but the men, thinking it was another peal of thunder, ignored it. As the sound approached them, they swiftly realized the noise was actually a stampeding herd of buffalo headed directly for their camp. "The dark mass," Brewerton wrote later, "moved across the prairie as fast as a horse could gallop, yet remained compact. The earth shook from the pounding of thousands of hooves." Brewerton saw only one chance. He had the other men line up single file, each holding his horse behind him. As the herd approached, Brewerton fired at the lead animals, killing several and splitting the herd around them. It took more than an hour for the stampede to pass and the dust to clear.

By 1870, buffalo hunting had hit its stride. While a few old hunters were starting to proclaim that the Texas herds were thinning dangerously, they were regarded as crackpots. Most laymen saw the buffalo as an inexhaustible resource. But the hunters themselves knew that some parts of Texas were being hunted out. In such regions, the land was being snapped up and fenced off by cattle ranchers and their barbed wire.

Today, while it is no longer the booming business it once was, there is still a profit to be made off of buffalo. Enterprising ranchers, such as John Chisum, have begun purchasing large lots of land near the border of the Indian Nations, fencing them off, and using them as buffalo ranches. Buffalo hunters, wise in the ways of these shaggy beasts, are hired to supplement the complement of cowboys that work these ranches.

The wisdom of this idea becomes obvious when one considers the increasing feeling of insecurity among the peoples of the Twenty Nations. Whereas it used to be that Indians might ignore a lone hunter, that is no longer the case. Now any hunter on Indian land, if spotted, will be investigated. If he is not a man known and trusted by the Indians, such as Wyatt Earp or Pat Garrett, that man is run out without anything he has taken while hunting. If he is found again on Indian land, he is killed on the spot.

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: BUFFALO HUNTER

As far as the eye can see, they stretch to the horizon. A living carpet, they make the ground shake and fill the prairie sky with dust as they move. Millions of animals make up a single herd. These are the buffalo. You've come to kill them.

Bringing a Buffalo down is not a problem. The herds are so dense you can hardly miss. You just point and fire, and keep on firing, until the herd stampedes or you run out of ammunition.

When it's over, hundreds of buffalo will lay dead on the prairie. That's when your work really begins. All you're interested in are the hides. Buffalo skins make warm, serviceable blankets and coats but you've got to kill a lot of buffalo to make any money, and you'll never get rich.

Skinning buffalo is hot, dirty, tiring work. Outside of your hunting party, you haven't seen another human being in over a month, except for Indians and they don't count. Indians are your enemy. The tribes of the Twenty Nations forbid your slaughter of the buffalo.

Only in the Texas panhandle can you operate freely. Otherwise, you have to cross over into the Twenty Nations, which can be quite dangerous. The Indian tribes will not tolerate such incursions but you go anyway. If you had many other skills, you wouldn't be a Buffalo Hunter. You'll take your chances.

- **Strong Suits:** Marksmanship, Perception, Stealth

- **Possessions:** Mule team and wagon, buffalo gun, skinning knife.

- **In Your Diary:** Letters you've written that you will mail when you get back to a town, drawings of the plains, a record of the number of hides you've got.

- **Why You're Here:** You do not have many useful skills, but you can kill buffalo. Some of the Texas ranchers hire you to kill off as many buffalo as you can. But they don't pay much. The real money, such as it is, comes from the United States government. As General Phillip Sheridan is fond of saying, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." Kill all the buffalo and you destroy the Indians' way of life. To that end the United States government will secretly pay you for every buffalo shot and even let you keep the skins! You figure that sort of makes you a soldier.

LAND OF THE DEAD



I couldn't tell you why that answer was good enough for the spirits. It certainly wouldn't have satisfied most of the people I know. Maybe they knew I was willing to find out. Maybe they knew I wouldn't run. Or maybe they were just scared off by the impending arrival of the terrible titans. I know they scared me. And I was getting tired of having them in my dreams. Several times a night, just as I was starting to drift off, I'd start awake again, heart pounding, certain I was being attacked. I've never slept so poorly.

But I passed.

Martin was still with us, so I had to assume he'd passed, too. He didn't want to talk about the dream much. Apparently the Indian spirits tortured him to try to make him prove he was violent. He just let them, tried to talk them out of it as they did horrible things to him. So, in apology, they gave him a beautiful Indian princess for a wife. I don't think it was remembering the pain that made him not want to talk about it. I think it was waking up and finding out that the maiden was just a dream. Or, worse yet, an allegory. Because Indian dreams can come true in a very real way.

But allegories remain allegories.

Poor guy.

So now you know everything of interest that happened for the first part of the journey. The rest is boring. Not as boring as driving through eastern Montana and North Dakota, but darn close. But for the jolting of the Windwagon, it would have been a sensory deprivation box on wheels.

Eventually we came across an Indian village. A real one this time. Not an idyllic one like I met in my dreams, but a real one. Idyllic? No.

Fearful? Yes.

Trapper said they were Arapaho Indians. Whatever they were, they're what I typically thought of when I thought of Indians. Buckskins, feathered headdresses, bone breast pieces, the whole works. Generic Indian in my book. Since then, I've found out a whole lot about the tribes. Better late than never.

One of the things I noticed right off was that the whole camp had their tipis facing the same direction: west. I would have thought it'd be east, to greet the rising sun. The people were going about their business, sure, but not with the same enthusiasm, the same love, the same *joie de vivre* (as Marianne would say) that I had seen in my dreams. It was kind of listless, or maybe furtive.

We pulled the Windwagon up to the edge of the camp and stopped. I staggered out, glad to stretch my legs and aching back. When I finished stretching, I noticed that everyone was staring at us. I'm not that charismatic when stretching. No, it was fear.

Rustic lifestyle? In your dreams, paleface.

I stood and waited. After a few moments, a chief and a couple other Indians came up to meet us. They were unnerved. Tentative. I probably shouldn't have worn my uniform and saber, but the uniforms were all I had and putting on the saber is just second nature to me now. We greeted them, Trapper and one of the braves acting as interpreters. Once the formalities were over with, I quickly excused myself and put my saber back in the Windwagon, burying it under some furs. I figured that would help.

Everywhere we walked through camp, wide eyes followed us, as if they expected us to leap on them at any moment. Yeesh. As we approached, people edged out of our path. They looked away when we looked at them. And they stared at our backs after we passed. It was creepy.

We were taken to the chief's tent, where we sat down. I didn't want to sit, I wanted to stand, keep off my aching butt, except it would have been impolite. There wasn't enough headroom anyway. We talked briefly, exchanging the usual formalities.

Then I asked, "Why does everyone seem so nervous, chief?"

He said just two words. "Evil dreams."

INDIANS IN WHITE AMERICA

Not all Indians live within the borders of the Indian Nations. Many choose to live in the Bear Flag Empire, the Republic of Texas, or the United States. You might suppose that these people would be resentful, living in lands that were once theirs alone. Some are. More discover that they share a common love of the land that unites them with Americans, Mexicans, Californians and Texans, who find New Europa as foreign as any Indian might.

THE BEAR FLAG EMPIRE

American Indians living in the Bear Flag Empire move smoothly in the mainstream of Imperial society, holding important positions in Emperor Norton's government, the military, and as merchants and tradesmen. Nowhere else in White America will you find Indians more readily accepted. In California, a process of integration has been ongoing for over three hundred years, dating back to the Spanish mission system. Emperor Norton's policy of reconciliation has completed this process. While maintaining their cultural traditions, Indians in the Bear Flag Empire see themselves as Imperial citizens like any other.

American Indian citizens of the Empire do play a unique role in the Imperial Diplomatic Corps. No one else can move as skillfully from the marble halls of Washington to the council fires of the Twenty Nations to a Texas barbecue. In dealing with the tribes of the Northwest and the Great Basin, Indian diplomats have been instrumental in securing important treaties as well as helping to secure the Silver Secret for the Empire. The successes of the Empire in foreign relations are due in no small part to these diplomats.

Decimated under the Spanish Mission system and persecuted under Fremont, California Indian populations are on the increase under the benevolent Emperor Norton. The indigenous peoples and cultures of California, once in danger of dying out completely, are now a respected, integral part of the Empire.

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

Much the same is true in the Republic of Texas. Sam Houston, himself adopted by the Western Cherokee, understands that the key to the survival of an independent Texas is a society where Indians, Mexicans, and Americans are integrated into a single people—Texans. Under his leadership, this vision has come true. Indians in eastern Texas are as fully integrated into Texas society as the Indians you find in the Bear Flag Empire.

Indians in western Texas remain largely autonomous but are still Texans. The Apache, Navaho, and Commanche tribes form the core of the Texas Irregulars and, with the Army of the Brazos and the Texas Rangers, guarantee the freedom of all Texans. The Hopi are among the greatest Indian shamen and support the Texan forces with their healing magicks. This mix of forces has given the Republic of Texas an unusual but highly effective fighting force, renowned throughout the Americas and beyond.

Not surprisingly, as in the Bear Flag, Indians in Texas serve in important government and business positions. Their skills are especially welcomed by the cattle barons who have now expanded their businesses into herding buffalo. Buffalo ranches with Indians on staff produce healthier animals, and more of them survive the rail trips to markets in the United States, bringing more profits to the Buffalo Barons.

THE UNITED STATES

Unfortunately, the situation you will find in the United States is not as harmonious. It is with the United States that wars were fought. It is the United States that forcibly expelled Indians westward along the Trail of Tears. It should come as no surprise that hard feelings remain. Indians in the United States are still too often subject to prejudice, usually subtle but occasionally violent. Indians who have attempted to integrate themselves into society often face obstacles to their advancement. This has led some to abuse of alcohol. Others have persevered and through their efforts are gradually changing the perception of Indians in the United States.

THE WILD WEST SHOWS

Throughout White America, some Indians have seen in the stereotype of the noble or blood-thirsty savage a way to perpetuate something of their customs and turn a profit at the same time. These are the Indian Showmen of the Wild West Shows that are all the rage in the United States and New Europa. Touring in most major cities, these Wild West Shows give audiences a glimpse of a way of life vanished in all but the Indian Nations, the Bear Flag Empire, and the Republic of Texas. In the United States, Indian Showmen may be the only Indians many citizens have ever seen. Because their travels take them into the heart of White America, most Wild West Shows have one or more secret agents from the Twenty Nations among their number. In recent years, these agents have uncovered evidence of a plot that threatens the peace between the Twenty Nations and the United States.

THE HODANO MEDICINE SOCIETY

When Tecumseh led the Iroquois west in 1812, he was widely praised as a hero and a statesman, but he was also condemned as a traitor, principally by the shamen of the Iroquois medicine societies. Many of these shamen refused to leave the sacred places around the Finger Lakes in New York State. These shamen organized the Iroquois that remained behind. Later, joining with Cherokee and Seminole escapees from the Trail of Tears, as well as the remnants of other Eastern tribes that had refused to move west, they founded the Hodano Medicine Society in 1841.

The goal of this secret society is the expulsion of all New Europeans from the United States and, ultimately, all of North America. To accomplish this, the Hodano seek to discover the latent magick powers of the old Mound Builder civilization that flourished over a thousand years ago in the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys. To date, they have concentrated on the Serpent Mound in Ohio and the Great Cahokia Mound in Illinois.

The Society has also begun to infiltrate the Twenty Nations, seeking recruits to their cause and have successfully infiltrated the embassy of the Twenty Nations in Washington, D.C.. It is here that they have discovered, and come into conflict with, the New European Sorcerous Societies and their quest for the secrets of Indian magick. In the Capital of the United States, a clandestine war against these New European sorcerers has begun.

THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENTS: PLACES OF POWER IN TEXAS

When the White Man puts his stamp on the land, the magick of the land changes and the Indians' Places of Power lose their magick. East Texas, like the United States, once had Places of Power. Now you will only find such Places in the Texas territories of New Mexico and Arizona, where the autonomy of the Texas Tribes preserve the mighty magicks of the land.

Places of Power are endowed with a natural force that sorcerers can tap. If the sorcerer is an Indian, he can draw two magick cards at a time. Any other sorcerer will only be able to draw a single card, and the magicks at his command will always be wild. Some places of Power have additional spell effects as well.

The Indians of the Southwest have traditionally seen Places of Power as the means to make mighty magicks to help the people of this world with the Power of another. These Indian sorcerers manipulate the energies of the Places of Power freely for their own ends. While they respect the Power, they do not worship it as the Twenty Nations do, nor hold it in awe as the Tribes of the Far West. Theirs is an intimate familiarity and cooperation with powerful neighbors who share the land.

Note that creatures who dwell in Places of Power may be found outside of these Places (Sasquatch are found all across America), but they are most common within.

The **Grand Canyon** is an immense gorge cut away by the Colorado River and stretching for miles along the river's course. It is but the most majestic of a series of canyons formed by the Colorado as it flows from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of California. In some places over a mile wide, the Grand Canyon presents a vast vista of startling beauty and color.

All who see the Grand Canyon come away affected by it. This effect is due in part to the presence in the Canyon of the *Powatakan*, the Dream Visitors. The Grand Canyon is home to these spirits and they swim there, unseen in airy spaces between the Canyon walls. Many are the visions they can inspire.

• Powatakan (aka Dream Visitors)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [PR] • Fisticuffs [PR] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [AV] • Stealth [EXT]

Spiritual Essence: The capacity to be invisible and insubstantial, and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts, or items that affect spirits will harm them.

Vision Dreaming: The ability to shape someone's dreams or cause them to have visions. The dreams or visions will be acted upon as if real unless a Perception Feat is successful against a Great Level of Ability.

The **Painted Desert** lies just to the south and east of the Grand Canyon. The sands here are so marvelously colored they give the desert its name. When the sun rises or sets, the desert seems to shift in rainbow patterns of twilight.

This is a Place of great Power and the home of the *Kokkookwe Kachinas*. Masked spirits, the Kachina are beings of this world and the unseen world. Many are their individual powers and personalities and a wise proceed respectfully.

• Kachina

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GD] • Physique [GD] • Stealth [GD]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: Like the Powatakan special ability, except that Kachinas can take full physical form when desired, at which time they will have typical abilities that reflect their particular type of Kachina.

Spell Use: The ability to cast spells.

Manifestation: The ability to manifest a special ability connected to its nature. For example, a Rain Kachina could cause rain to fall.

Monument Valley, near the Texan border, is so called because of the great rock outcroppings that rise sharply from the desert floor to heights of hundreds of meters. In the shadows cast by these monuments, there is a great stillness and men are made to feel small. The feeling is as though some great force lies sleeping.

The Indians call the Spirit of the Valley *Kyaluanna*, the Mysterious Power. It does not make itself known to man save as *Aluil*, the power to heal or to make ill. All who visit here will experience Aluil at the silent command of Kyakyauna. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerers have no cost based on the number or complexity of the elements involved.

Meteor Crater is the site of the most perfectly preserved celestial impact site on Earth. Over five hundred feet deep, the Crater lies south and west of the Painted Desert, east of Flagstaff. The ejecta cone is so well dispersed that the Crater is practically hidden from casual inspection.

The Black God of Fire, *Hanabeshedzhini*, makes his home here. The *Tenaldlooshi* skinwalkers, humans possessed of the ability to take on other shapes at will, serve the Black God and demand tribute from all who pass this way. Spells cast here by Indians have no cost based on the nature of the subject of the spell.

• Yenalldlooshi (aka Skinwalkers)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GD] • Physique [GR]

Shapeshifting: The ability to take on the form or appearance of any animal or human being known to it. If taking on animal form, it will have all of the animal's typical abilities but retain its own mind. If taking on a human's appearance, it retains all of its typical abilities.

Spell Use: The ability to cast spells.

The **Superstition Mountain Range** lies just to the east of Phoenix. A twisted maze of mountains, the Superstitions are believed to hide a fortune in gold. These rugged mountains are also said to be the home of the gods.

The *Gabe*, or mountain spirits, dwell among the jagged peaks and seek only solitude. The *Hactin* are their servants, personifications of the power of natural forces. They are akin to New European elementals. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerers have no cost based on spell duration.

• Gabe (aka Mountain Spirits)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GD] • Physique [GD]

Spiritual Essence: As the Powatakan special ability.

Rule the Animals: As the Faerie Animals ability (CF pg. 174).

Raise Nature: As the Lake Lady ability (CF pg. 175).

• Hactin (aka Elementals)

Typical Abilities: Fisticuffs [GR] • Perception [PR] • Physique [EXT] • Stealth [GD]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: As the Kachina special ability, except that a Hactin can take full physical form when desired, at which time it will have the typical abilities listed.

Elemental Command: The ability of a Hactin to command his element

White Sands is so named after the glittering white gypsum sands that form this albino desert. East of the Superstitions, White Sands is blindingly bright and seems to almost float in the air.

The *Kanaakwe Kachina* call this desert home. The Kanaakwe are the enemies of the Kokkookwe Kachinas of the Painted Desert but are otherwise similar. Those who are known to have drawn power from the Painted Desert would be well advised to avoid White Sands.

Carlsbad Caverns stretch for miles underground, south of White Sands. The Caverns are a phenomenally beautiful collection of wildly shaped passages and caves of myriad soft colors. Cool and dark, they offer a respite from the heat above.

Few Indians willingly come to this Place of Power except in dire need. The Caverns are home to *Hanideomon*, *The Dweller in the Soil*. A giant muckworm, Hanideomon is a terrible creature best avoided. More immediately dangerous are the White Men from nearby El Paso who have discovered the Caverns, fallen under the influence of *The Dweller in the Soil*, and begun to worship it.

Taos is an area of wondrous natural beauty. High in the southern Rockies, its slopes and peaks are softly forested, lingering between earth and sky. This is a magical land.

The *Shiwanma Cloud People*, who bring the storms, dwell here at the higher elevations. Dwelling on the lower slopes are the *Wemaawe*, or *Beast Gods*. As the White Men become more numerous, the spirits who live here begin to retreat to more remote places. However, as long as they remain here, no wild spells are possible. Jokers are discarded and another card is drawn.

• Shiwanma (aka Cloud People)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GD] • Physique [EXC] • Stealth [EXT]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: As the Hactin special ability.

Raise The Storm: Unlimited ability as per the spell.

Spellcasting: The ability to cast spells.

• Wemaawe (aka Beast Gods)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GR] • Stealth [GR]

Portend Danger: The ability to sense oncoming danger.

Camouflage: The ability to blend into surroundings. The Wemaawe are all unnaturally intelligent animals and will merely appear as normal animals to the casual observer.

THE JACKALOPE

In the great Republic of Texas, everything seems to exist in an order of magnitude beyond the normal run of things. The sky is bluer, the prairie is emptier, the rivers run colder, the cattle grow bigger, and the thieves are meaner. Even a small creature of the canyon country, frequently overlooked by people who notice only the grandeur of the region, transcends the conventional. The rare and mystical jackalope is by far the oddest being in the whole of the Americas.

Jackalopes are usually encountered in the badlands of West Texas, among the tortured buttes and mesas where the storm winds and lost souls howl. Though one of the solitary creatures was repeatedly sighted on the outskirts of Roswell by numerous inhabitants of that fair city, they generally reveal themselves only to lonely travelers. For jackalopes are sensitive to the reactions of humans, who are often taken aback by their appearance. They appear to be a cross between a jack rabbit and an antelope, but they have faces far more mobile than any beast could possibly possess. They can speak better than most men, not just English, but Spanish, Portuguese, and Swedish if the stories can be believed. They can mimic exactly any sound they have ever heard, and they are able to throw their voices up to a hundred yards. At times they can change their shape, or vanish into thin air, as if they had suddenly stepped through a doorway to another world. The one telling feature about a Jackalope is its high-pitched cackle, like that of a hysterical woman.

Magick flows through the veins of jackalopes, and they do not hesitate to use their powers for their own purposes. Punishing the wicked seems to be one of these. Jackalopes have a highly developed sense about the goodness of the people they encounter; an evil man has much to fear out in the badlands. Witness the story of Jake Grubaugh, notorious Indian killer and thief. Jake was the worst of a vicious gang of outlaws that tore through Texas in 1863, robbing banks and slaughtering innocent people. Their most awful crime was the total destruction of a small Hopi village. This brought the Texas Rangers after them, forcing the band to hole up in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, jackalope territory.

Late one night, drunk on vile moonshine, Grubaugh wandered away from camp toward the sulfurous hot spring in which the outlaws had been bathing. Just then, a jackalope leapt out from behind a boulder howling like a tortured banshee. Startled out of his wits, Grubaugh fell backward into a sinkhole filled with sticky, reddish mud. He pulled himself out of the hole with his gun at the ready, but the jackalope had already disappeared. After searching for the creature in vain, he tried to clean himself up in the spring but was so completely coated in mud that he soon gave up and fell asleep. In the early morning, Grubaugh was trudging back to camp when he was shot in the belly by one of his associates. It seems the hungover gunman had seen his reddish skin and mistaken him for an Indian. Jackalope justice was done.

Sometimes Jackalopes simply practice random acts of maliciousness. Many people gone missing in the badlands are said to have been "git by the Jackalope."

But the jackalopes are not always avenging spirits. Sometimes they are angels of mercy. In the summer of 1871, a penitent priest named Mark Robadou was traveling through West Texas in the company of a wagon caravan bound for Los Angeles. Father Robadou became separated from the caravan in the desert outside Santa Fe when a terrible sandstorm kicked up. Totally alone and blinded by the swirling sand, his situation became next to hopeless when his horse stumbled into a dry wash and broke its leg. He could do nothing but put down his mount and wait for the storm to break.

Three days later, when the weather finally cleared, Robadou was nearly dead from thirst. He staggered out into the wasteland trying to make it to a settlement, but collapsed a few hours later. Then a jackalope came to him. It coaxed him to his feet with soothing words and managed to lead him to a towering butte which concealed a cool spring. Father Robadou quickly regained his strength and began to explore the oasis. It was then that he discovered the second gift of his savior. Four years before, a group of thieves had robbed the Fordham Bank in Santa Fe, making off with over fifty thousand dollars in gold bullion. Chased by an angry posse, they had sheltered at the butte for a short time to tend their wounded. However, their pursuers arrived sooner than anticipated and they had to leave most of their loot behind. Robadou found it stashed in a deep crevice in the rocks. He would eventually use the gold to construct a wondrous church at Santa Barbara. The Jackalope-funded chapel is one of the shining jewels of the Bear Flag Empire.

How does one explain the capriciousness of the Jackalope? Grizzled hermits, who spend their lives in the trackless wastes of the desert, simply shrug at this query and reply "Ya cain't spend yer days out under this sun without goin' just a tad funny in th' head."

• Jackalope

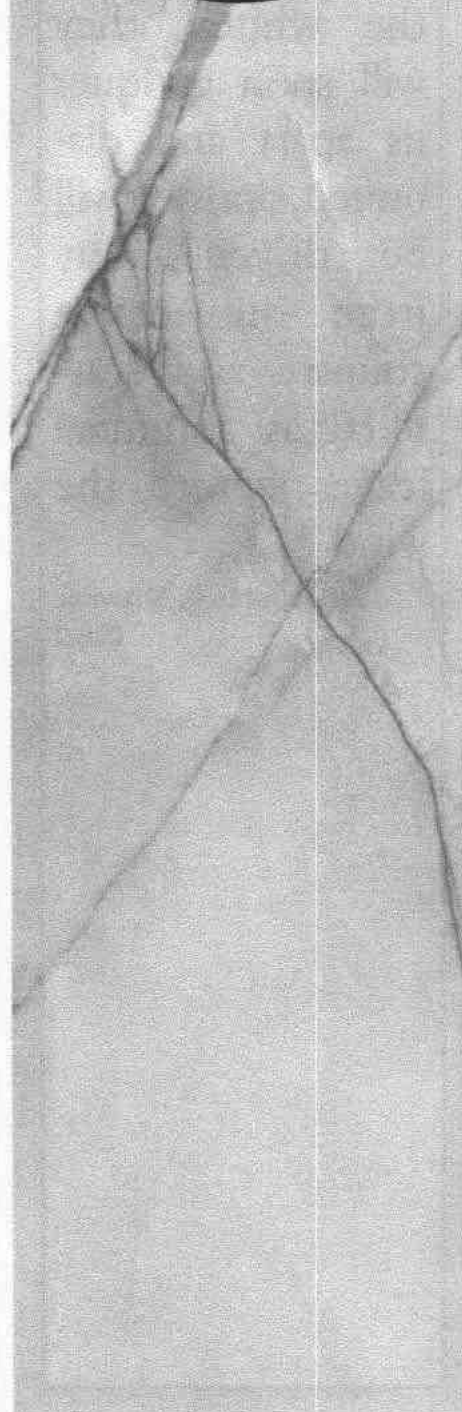
Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GD] • Stealth [EXT]

Be Unseen: As the Fetch ability.

Mimic: Jackalopes can mimic any sound or language they have ever heard.

Shape Change: Jackalopes can change their shape to mimic any object or animal they have seen, but may not shape change into anything larger than they are. Therefore, fortunately, humans fall outside their shape change ability.

Ventriloquism: Jackalopes may throw their voices up to one hundred yards distant.



Unless every tribe unanimously combines to give a check to the ambition and avarice of the whites, they will soon conquer us apart and dis-united, and we will be driven away from our native country and scattered as autumnal leaves before the wind."

—Techumseh, Shawnee Chief

I looked at Martin. He looked as surprised as I did. In a way, I expected the answer, but sometimes it's most surprising to hear exactly what you expect to hear.

"Is that why all your tipis face west?" I asked. I can be so undiplomatic sometimes. But what the heck.

"Yes," came the answer. "There is bad medicine in the air. A bad wind blows from the white man's lands. The Spirit Wall grows weak. White Gods eat the strength of Thunderbird and Raven. All the spirits of the Dance die slowly. Soon the White Gods will come."

White Gods? Didn't sound like the guys I knew.

"Who are these White Gods?" I asked.

"They are many. One is a great man who carries an axe. He has an animal. A great bison that is the color of the sky. I have not seen this one, but I have heard. He kills the trees near the great waters of the north."

Paul Bunyan?

No. Can't be.

But then, isn't that the way magick works around here? Just as Thunderbird and Raven and the other spirits are made manifest in the Great Plains, couldn't American legends be made real, too? Don't see why not. And that would sap the magickal power of the land. Less power to go around, so the Indian spirits would get weaker. Bad news.

"I understand," I said. "I have also had evil dreams. I have dreams of great men dressed in black—ah, the color of night. They come from the east, and kill all they meet." The chief nodded sagely. "We do not come from the east. We come from Bayern—ah, the other side of the Atlantean—that is, we come from across the great water. This man," I said, pointing to von Hubel, "is a great chief among our people. We have come to talk to the chiefs of the Twenty Nations. He comes to speak chief to chief. I come to understand my dreams." Martin looked a little surprised to be called a chief, but he remained silent.

Then Trapper spoke up. "Yep. We're looking for the Council, and any he'p you can give us would make us be mighty happy."

The chief spoke briefly to the others with him. "Running Bird will take you to the Council. He has been there many times. He knows the path."

I glanced sidelong at Trapper. Saw his reaction. That was when I figured out that Trapper hadn't the slightest idea where the Twenty Nations Council actually was. Sure he'd have gotten us within, oh, a hundred miles of it, I'm sure. Jeez. Some guys.

We spoke a while longer, had some food, hung out. I think it was all because the chief had to make us welcome. We were, after all, big chiefs from a faraway land, heading for the Big Cheese of the Twenty Nations. Far be it for us to bring a bad report on him.

Running Bird turned out to be a capable guide and good company besides. And, now that the pressure was off, Trapper loosened up, too. Just a little bit. Only those who'd been stranded with him for four days would ever notice.

Running Bird caught us up on the whole situation with the Indian tribe and the dreams they'd been having. Everyone had had them at one point or another. Big western dudes coming in and blowing the place all to hell. Sounded familiar. Except none of them featured an attractive blond hussar to save the day. Well, it couldn't be expected. They were mostly dead by the time I got there in my dream.

One day I was looking over Running Bird's equipment, getting familiar with their lifestyle. "Hey, guy," I said. "Looks like your lance is a little bent here."

"That is how it is," he said.

"Why not make a new one?"

"Some Arapaho braves carry crooked spears. We carry crooked spears to say we will never retreat in battle. With my spear, I have no fear of the enemy."

No retreat. I thought of the giants I'd seen in my dreams. Small warped pig-sticker. Gigantic razor-edged talons from hell.

Short fight.

THE BLACK HILLS

We were expected. As we neared the Black Hills, Indian scouts were waiting for us, watching us.

That was fine by me. We needed an interesting change of pace. We'd been moving northward at the edge of the Great Plains for too long, with the Rockies passing on our left. Finally, ahead, we could see the Black Hills. About time.

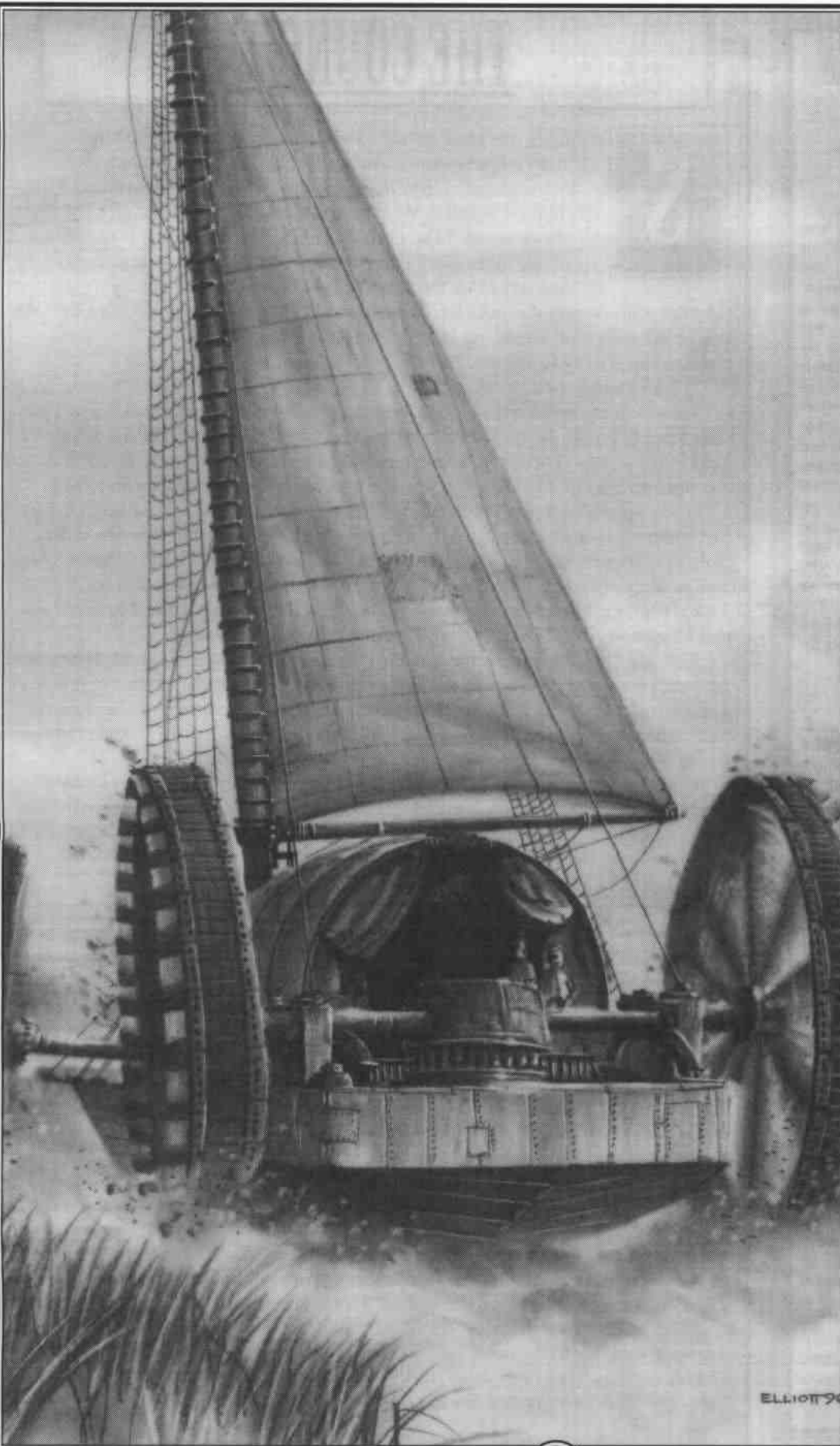
The terrain became more difficult. Higher hills, rocky protrusions, thick woods. The end of the line for the Windwagon.

Running Bird had us stop at the base of a bare-topped hill. Trapper turned around and headed south. Running Bird, Martin, and I climbed up the hill with a couple of armloads of wood from Trapper's wagon. We built up a fire and sent smoke signals.

Smoke signals! Talk about catering to the dreams of every young boy in America. Standing on top of a hill at the edge of the Great Plains with an honest-to-God Arapaho sending smoke signals across the prairie.

So we camped out there for the better part of a day. Finally two braves came riding up, leading three horses. Obviously someone at the Council had been planning ahead, otherwise it would have taken a lot longer for our transportation to arrive.

The Indian tack and harness took some getting used to, but we were once again making progress. To the Council. To my dreams. To face the unknown.



ROLES WITHIN INDIAN SOCIETY



THE CHIEF

When you think about Indians, you probably picture an Indian Chief in a feathered war bonnet leading his tribe. To many, this is the Indian equivalent of a New European king wearing his crown. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indian tribes are indeed led by Indian Chiefs, but only the Plains Tribes wear war bonnets. No Indian Chief is the absolute ruler of his tribe. They are selected by the Tribal Elders and can be deposed at any time. The Elders of a tribe may be men or women, but will usually be men. The Iroquois Confederacy are an exception, with only female Elders. The position of Tribal Elder is not an official one but one conferred out of respect for one's age and experience.

THE TRIBAL COUNCIL

A more formal body is the Tribal Council. This is an official position, and members of the Tribal Council are selected based on their ability as hunters or warriors. The Council Members are expected to advise the Chief. Only the most respected Chiefs can disregard the Tribal Council's suggestions, and most wise Chiefs will not make a habit of it. Aged members of the Council usually retire to become Tribal Elders, with some tribes having an Elders Council. Rarely, Tribal Elders may oppose courses of action decided upon by the Tribal Council. This type of dissension can cripple a tribe and usually ends with one group or another splitting off to form a new tribe, called a Band.

SOCIETY

A unique aspect about Indian Tribes is that all of the groups within a tribe get along most of the time. There is little political intrigue or infighting beyond purely personal rivalries. When a tribe is split by dissension, both sides usually choose to go their own ways, breaking off to form new tribes, called Bands, rather than fighting about the matter. In this way, Indian tribes spread out into networks of related Bands that consider themselves one people and will come to each other's aid.

THE COUNCIL

So what's this place called?" I asked as we entered the village. "I do not understand what you are asking," said Running Bird. "This place," I repeated, gesturing around. "This village. Here. Where the Council is. What do you guys call it?" He shrugged. "The Place Where the Council Meets. Dance Village. The Circle in the Black Hills. Great Chiefs' Powwow. Where Oo-loo-te-ka Sang and Made the Spirit Wall. All Tribes Meet There." "But wait, doesn't this place have a real name?" I asked. "Like I'm Tom Olam, or you're Running Bird, something like that. You know. A name like ours." Running Bird looked at me. "Why?" "Never mind."

We rode into the village, whatever its name was. I was tempted to call it The Place with Many Names or None of the Above or something. Dancington, District of Indians. Yeah, there you go. There were several pine lodges and longhouses around, and quite a few semi-permanent dwellings. On the edge of town, tipis housed transient nomads.

It was a pretty cool place. Just walking through town, I began to get a better feel for the variety of Indian tribes. There were Indians here with different haircuts, different clothing, different ways of being. You could tell, like you could tell different New Europeans apart if you got them together, especially if they were wearing traditional dress. I asked Running Bird about the various people. Shawnee, Iroquois, Cherokee, Seminole, and I forget who all else was around. I lost track. It was a good sign.

Running Bird took us to the lodge of the Twenty Nations' Council. When we entered, I presented the Black Raven symbol that Sam Houston had given me. It didn't seem to make a difference, though. I was already completely welcomed. It seems my reputation had preceded me. Running Bird introduced me around. I wish I could remember all the names, they were pretty colorful. Sitting Bull was there.

Once I was over my shock and amazement—this had certainly been a freaky trip, meeting all these people I'd only ever dreamed of—I could hear a chant. It sounded like about two dozen guys, and they sounded pretty pooped. I asked about it.

"That is the Dance," said one.

"Which Dance?" I asked.

"Come," said Sitting Bull. "Look."

We walked out of the lodge, through a door on the far side of the building. There was a fire smoldering in a fire pit, and twenty guys (I counted) dancing in a circle around it. As I watched, a pair of Indian women walked through the circle and sprinkled something on the fire. Seeds, or leaves, or something. Smoke rose up, and a really funky smell hung in the air.

I looked at the dancers again. They were all men, ranging in age from about twenty to easily over sixty. They all looked like medicine men or spiritual leaders. They had bells, feathers, rattles, medicine bundles. They wore paint or masks. They sang. And sweat dripped down their faces and plastered the buckskins to their backs. I looked at the circle they danced. Oh my God. They had worn a rut easily a foot deep.

Just as this was beginning to register, I saw another medicine man come and stand beside the circle. Somehow there was some sort of signal passed between the men. I don't know how. But the new guy jumped in and started dancing, and the guy behind him stepped out of the circle, limped forward a few steps, and flopped on the ground. He was exhausted, panting, sweaty hair drooping from his hanging head.

"How long have they been doing this?" I asked.

"This is the Dance that saves the Twenty Nations," said Sitting Bull. "This is the way we give power to the Spirit Wall. Twenty medicine men dance, one for each of the Twenty Nations. They must dance, or the Spirit Wall will fall down and the white man will come. They have chanted like this now forty-six winters."

"Forty-six years?" Martin gasped. "Come rain or shine, heat or hail?"

Sitting Bull just nodded.

Woah. These guys were deadly serious about their defense. I think Martin was blown away. He grew up in Bayern, where you keep pretty normal hours and sleep on a feather bed. You don't dance for hours on end in a blizzard unless you're Otto Wittelsbach. Maybe Martin thought the Indians were crazy. Regardless, their dedication and perseverance impressed us both. And they must be going through the boot leather like crazy. Blisters, too. Yeow.

Put a whole lot more weight on those dreams.

Time to get down to business. Any time I could save these poor dancing fools would be time I'm sure they'd appreciate being off their feet. Although I was beginning to get the idea that they didn't mind dancing and chanting like that. Maybe they even enjoyed it. In a way, it would be very gratifying work. You'd know that you were invaluable, personally responsible for saving the entire nation from imminent death and destruction. Not many jobs offer such straightforward perks. And it'd keep you in shape. Aerobically fit. I think I was starting to understand these guys.

Maybe I'd call this village The Circle of Extreme Suffering for the Sake of All.

I turned to the chiefs. "Okay, I'm here. Powwow time." We went back into the Council lodge and sat down. I looked at each of them in turn, and asked, "I came because you sent for me. What do you guys want me to do?"

One of the other chiefs, a real old guy whose name escapes me, answered. "The Dance will not work forever. The Spirit Wall is weak. We have seen death coming for us from the rising sun. We do not know how to save our people."

"You are not of the white man's people, but you know the white man's ways. The spirits say that you come from the land of the morning, the place beyond today. You have seen what will happen. You know the wrong things that we do."

"Excuse me, chief, but that's not entirely accurate," I said. "See, I came from the other side of the Faerie Veil. It wasn't this world, just similar, and—" He held up his hand. I held my tongue. He had The Look, too. But somehow he had it without changing expression. Even Auberon might be impressed.

"The spirits say you came from tomorrow land by crossing through the spirit lands," he said. "They say that you are a trickster, but we have no other hope. It is better to trust a trickster than to lose."

Martin leaned over to me. "Tom? Are they calling you a liar?"

"No, I don't think so," I said. "Being a trickster isn't necessarily evil or malicious, if I remember right. It's just—tricky."

"Oh, like the Faerie?" he asked.

"Yeah, I think so." Then, speaking to the chiefs, I asked, "So what now?"

"You take this robe and this pipe," he said, nodding to where they sat, "and go to the sweat lodge. We have made the lodge ceremonially clean. The fire is burning now. It will be very hot. Go into the lodge, take off the robe, and smoke the pipe. Clear your mind. Think of nothing. Dream. When you are done with your dream, come back and tell us of your Spirit Walk. We believe that what you see and what you do in the Spirit Walk will tell us how to face the white man and live."

"Sounds easy enough," I said.

"It is dangerous," he warned me.

"Yeah, but so was coming over here." I got up, walked over to the robe, and started to unbutton my hussar's coat. Everyone else got up and left.

Martin was the last one out. "Good luck," he said.

I finished undressing and put on the robe. It was actually a cloak, but I'm not going to split hairs. I picked up the pipe and walked to the sweat lodge. I could tell which one it was, because all the chiefs were in front of it, chanting and praying. My heart started to pound. I didn't want to face those bloodthirsty behemoths again.

Hoo boy.

Out of the frying pan and into the sweat lodge.

ROLES WITHIN INDIAN SOCIETY

MEDICINE MEN

Medicine Men, and Medicine Woman, are the holy people, healers, and sorcerers of a tribe. Smaller tribes may have but a single medicine person, while larger tribes may have one

or more Medicine Societies. Medicine people also advise the Chief and the Tribal Council. Many older medicine people become Tribal Elders but, unlike older warriors who retire from the Tribal Council, they usually remain active members of the Medicine Societies as well. Medicine people are usually the most powerful persons in a Tribe after the Chief and may even assume leadership roles themselves.

A Shaman's responsibilities are many and heavy. As the first line of defense for the tribe from the spirit realms, they have to put themselves between the tribe and any harm that the spirits might do. They have to heal the sick of mind and body, and keep the traditions of the tribe alive. Shamens accomplish this aim differently based on the traditions of their tribes, but almost all Shamens use a combination of dance, song and prayer (see *Indian Magick*, pg. 130).

BRAVES

Warriors, often called Braves, form their own Hunting Societies or Warrior Societies. Smaller tribes may have no such Society, while larger tribes often will have more than one. Membership is not necessary to becoming a warrior but it is as mark of respect and honor. A Chief will have to consider the wishes of any such Societies in his tribe and mediate any disputes.



THE TWENTY NATIONS CONFEDERATION

Population: Unknown, perhaps as many as one million. • **Government:** Tribal Council of Chiefs • **Alliances:** Republic of Texas, Orleans, Bayern (recently) • **Enemies:** United States • **Position:** Stable, seeking alliances to aid in its survival.

Nothing springs into being without first being born. To understand the history of the Twenty Nations, you must understand the history of the Ten Nations. To understand the history of the Ten Nations, you must understand the history of the Iroquois and the Cherokee. The true history of the Twenty Nations begins almost one hundred years ago.

THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY

Long before the White Man came, the Iroquois had established a Confederacy of Iroquoian tribes. The Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk formed the core of the Iroquois Confederacy. The White Man would call these the Five Civilized Tribes because the Confederacy was highly organized and advanced, with a system of laws from which Benjamin Franklin would borrow in helping to craft the Constitution of the United States. The Tuscarora were also admitted to the Confederacy but lived south of the Finger Lakes region of New York, where the rest of the Confederacy dwelt. The Huron and the Cherokee are also of Iroquois stock but never belonged to the Confederacy. The Huron were the Confederacy's greatest enemy and the Cherokee lived far to the south.

When the French and the British struggled for control of the continent they recruited allies from among the Indians. But when their wars were done, the New Europeans cared little for their Indian allies. When the United States was founded in 1776, the Iroquois were in the way of westward expansion. In 1778, the Cherry Valley Massacres broke the power of the Iroquois Confederacy. The Iroquois had been determined to fight for their land, but they knew they had been beaten. The White Man stripped the magick from the land as more settlers pushed westward. Without their magickal defenses, the Iroquois were outnumbered, outgunned, and without allies.

THE CREEK CONFEDERACY

Far to the south, the Creek Indians had created a powerful Confederacy of their own, coming to dominate both the Cherokee and the Choctaw. Maintained by the British as a buffer against hostile western tribes, the French, and the Spanish, when the Revolutionary War broke out, the Creek fought for the British. The British lost and abandoned the Creek. By 1781, the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole were in much the same situation as the Iroquois. However, they were far more numerous and occupied much more land.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

If the Indians had any hope of being able to live in peace with the Whites, it ended in 1786. That year the Ordinance for the Regulation and Management of Indian Affairs was passed by Congress. It defined Indian rights in the United States and set up enclaves where Indians were supposed to live. Once, Indians lived wherever they chose.

In 1787, the Northwest Ordinance was passed by Congress, further defining Indian rights. Make no mistake. When Congress defined Indian rights, what they were really doing was limiting them. The Indians were not blind to this fact.

The final blow came in 1790 with the beginning of the Miami War. Little Turtle led the Miami Indians of Indiana against the United States. He successfully defeated troops sent against him until 1794. In that year, at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, General Anthony Wayne decisively defeated Little Turtle and the Miami, opening the way for full scale westward expansion.

TECUMSEH

Born in 1768, Tecumseh was a Shawnee chieftain. Prior to 1800, he served the British, rising to the rank of general. Toward the end of that time, he met Rebecca Galloway, an Englishwoman with whom he fell in love. Travelling with her to New Europa, Tecumseh learned much of how the White Man thought. He realized that the White Man's obsession with borders and land ownership meant doom for the Indians. He also discovered how technology strips away magick from the land. Determined to help his people, Tecumseh began studying New European sorcery. Ultimately forced to choose between his people and the woman he loved, Tecumseh returned home in 1810.

Upon his arrival in the Indiana Territory, Tecumseh found his brother, the Medicine Man Tenskwatawa, engaged in a simmering conflict with White settlers over land. Joining forces with Tenskwatawa, Tecumseh prepared to rally his peo-

ple for war. It was at this time that Tecumseh received a visit from the elderly Miami chieftain Little Turtle. Little Turtle told Tecumseh that defeat was inevitable because the Whites were too many and stripped the magick from the land. He suggested that Tecumseh instead lead his people west, where the magick of the land was still strong and there make a stand. Tecumseh would not listen, convinced that a united Confederacy of tribes could win the day.

Learning of the growing Shawnee threat, William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory, determined to act to avoid a prolonged war. In 1811, while Tecumseh was away attempting to gain aid from other tribes, Harrison attacked Tenskwatawa's encampment at Tippecanoe. The Shawnee fought bravely, but Tenskwatawa's magick failed him. He was killed in the fighting.

Tecumseh learned of the battle from the spirit of his brother, who appeared to him. He told Tecumseh to listen to Little Turtle and that the Great Spirit would aid him. Hurrying home, Tecumseh arrived in time to help rally the survivors. The next day Tecumseh set out, travelling from tribe to tribe, urging them to go west and make new lives away from the White Men. Everywhere he went, he preached that the Great Spirit would send a sign. Tecumseh was met with skepticism, but in 1812 a powerful earthquake occurred near the west bank of the Mississippi river. The Mississippi flowed backward and the tremors were felt as far as the east coast. This was the sign and its meaning was clear. Now, Tecumseh was believed.

For the next two years, Tecumseh continued to travel among the eastern tribes, persuading them to go west and found a new nation. The Iroquois Confederacy, now hard pressed on all sides by the growth of the United States, agreed to follow Tecumseh west in 1815. However, a significant number of Medicine People, who would later become the core of the Hodano Medicine Society, refused to abandon the Places of Power among the Finger Lakes, calling Tecumseh a traitor and false prophet. Tecumseh was less successful among the southern tribes. Only the western Cherokee agreed to go west.

CROSSING THE MISSISSIPPI

When the western Cherokee crossed the Mississippi in 1816, they were met by a party of Osage chiefs and Medicine Men. The Cherokee, the Osage said, had been expected and were welcome to settle in the lands south of the Ozark Mountains, where the Osage lived. The Caddo Indians who had lived here, never a numerous people, had begun to vanish some time ago. Though the Osage could not say exactly why, they attributed it to the will of the Great Spirit, making way for the western Cherokee. Thus began the great friendship between the Osage and the Cherokee.

The Shawnee, Miami, and Illinois Indians were likewise met by the Missouri Indians, who greeted them warmly and made them welcome. The Missouri had long had good relations with the Illinois, and many Illinois already lived west of the Mississippi.

The Iroquois were not so lucky. The north woods of the Minnesota River, Wisconsin River, and the headwaters of the Mississippi reminded the Iroquois very much of their now abandoned eastern woodland home. However, these were the lands of the Santee Sioux. The Santee Sioux would not move and refused to allow so many to live with them. The result was the Iroquois War.

The war lasted from 1816 to 1819. The Iroquois were desperate, had the element of surprise, and outnumbered the Santee Sioux. They were also superior woodsmen, the Sioux being originally Plains Indians. Though the Sioux fought bravely, the Iroquois gradually pushed them back onto the Great Plains. Beneath the trees, Sioux reinforcements from the Plains Sioux were ineffective, relying as they did on horses. By 1819, the Iroquois were firmly in control of the north-woods. Grudgingly, the Sioux made peace. Tecumseh, having seen his dream fulfilled, died not long afterward.

THE CREEK AND SEMINOLE WARS

In 1814, General Andrew Jackson defeated the Creek Confederacy. Many Creek Indians decided to go west and were welcomed by the western Cherokee. Having defeated the Creek, Jackson attacked the Seminole. The ensuing Seminole War lasted from 1817 to 1819. Like the Creek, the Seminole were defeated. Like the Creek, the majority of the Seminole decided to move west and were welcomed by the western Cherokee. Those Seminole that remained behind retreated into the Florida swamps.

It was at about this time that Sam Houston came to live among the Cherokee. Not satisfied with having merely defeated the Creek, in 1826 the United States Congress ordered all Creek Indians expelled from the United States. Lands west of the Mississippi and north of Orleans were recognized as Indian Country,

though Congress carefully avoided recognizing Indian sovereignty over these lands. In fact, the United States already recognized the city of St. Louis, on the other side of the Mississippi, as United States territory.

Seeing what had happened to the Creek and Seminole, the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians voluntarily decide to move west in 1827, leaving only the eastern Cherokee still living in the United States. Again, the western Cherokee welcomed the refugees. However, the territory south of the Ozark Mountains now became overcrowded. The western Cherokee began to move further west to make way for the new arrivals, coming into contact with the Kiowa, who agreed to allow the western Cherokee to settle the easternmost plains.

THE TEN NATIONS

The last of the southern tribes still living in the United States, the eastern Cherokee adopted a constitution in 1827 which was promptly nullified by the Georgia legislature, which declared that Indians have only those rights granted to them by the state. The Cherokee challenged this action in federal court in the case of *Georgia vs. The Cherokee Nation*, which eventually would reach the United States Supreme Court.

Incensed at this action, Chief Oo-Loo-Te-Ka of the western Cherokee, Sam Houston's adopted father, issued call for a sorcerous Wall to the East against the White Man. He also called on the Five Southern Tribes to unite with the Iroquois to the north. After consultation, the Osage agreed to act as mediators between the two groups and to join the new nation.

The Iroquois Confederacy and the Five Southern Tribes agreed to work together without much persuasion being necessary, for they remembered Tecumseh's words. However, alone they did not possess the sorcerous might to raise a mystic wall along the Mississippi River. They needed the help of the Plains Tribes, who had access to Places of Power the newcomers did not.

Envoys were sent among the Plains Tribes. The tribes were offered membership in the new Indian nation in exchange for helping stop the advance of the White Man on the Mississippi. While there were simply too many Plains Tribes to agree easily or quickly on joining together, they could all agree that the White Man must be stopped on the Mississippi. The stories told by the Iroquois and the southern tribes painted a grim picture. It was agreed.

Gathering together at the place now called Devil's Tower, the Indian Medicine Men unleashed the destructive power of the land. St. Louis was obliterated and the mystic boundaries of the land that would become the Twenty Nations were established. The spirits of the land would ward the Indian lands against intruders, turning back or destroying all who came uninvited. Sam Houston and a party of Indians rode into Washington D.C. afterward and announced to the world the founding of the Ten Nations. The United States protested, declaring that the Indian Lands belonged to the white man, fairly purchased from the Indians. To make everything "legal", the leaders of the Ten Nations "paid" for their lands by sending the President a box containing \$25.00 worth of beads and trinkets.

Shaken, the United States government hastily recognized the new nation. As if to solemnify this recognition, Congress then declared war on the Ten Nations. In a three-pronged offensive, United States forces crossed the Mississippi at Memphis and St. Louis, while another force set out from Fort Madison, Wisconsin. The southernmost force simply vanished. The St. Louis expedition pushed inland some twenty miles before finding themselves back where they had originally crossed the river. Despite repeated attempts, they could make no headway. To the north, the Iroquois had been spoiling for a fight since coming west. The spirits of the land never had a chance to defeat the U.S. forces. The Iroquois got to them first. Two weeks after declaring war, the United States agreed to end hostilities, accepting Sam Houston as an ambassador.

THE TRAIL OF TEARS AND THE KIOWA CONFLICT

In 1831, the United States Supreme Court finally decided *Georgia vs. The Cherokee Nation*. Writing for the Court, Chief Justice William Marshall declared all Indians a Domestic Dependent Nation. The Indians were determined to be non-citizens, with only those rights defined by the federal government.

Now President, Andrew Jackson, the old Indian fighter, became angry at what he saw as an impediment to the United States' westward expansion—The Ten Nations. Unable to do much about it, President Jackson began pressuring the remaining Indians, particularly the eastern Cherokee. In 1835, a treaty was signed with the eastern Cherokee in which all Cherokee lands were ceded to the government. However, the treaty was not signed by the chiefs of the tribe and the Cherokee refused to honor the treaty. Needing no more excuse, President Jackson began the forced deportation of the eastern Cherokee and any other remaining Indians that could be located. Between 1833 and 1838, the eastern Cherokee were forced out of the United States along the Trail of Tears. Thousands died along the way or fighting deportation.

Those that survived the Trail of Tears were welcomed into the Ten Nations, rejoining the western Cherokee as a single people. However, the influx of the eastern Cherokee violated land agreements with the Kiowa. For the next five years, the Cherokee and Kiowa fought over the south central plains. The final peace was brokered by Sam Houston, now President of the Republic of Texas.

THE FLATHEAD WAR

To the north, all was not well. The Santee Sioux, displaced by the Iroquois, in turn displaced other tribes, who displaced still others. In 1840, this brought the mighty Cheyenne Nation into conflict with the less numerous Flathead. The Flathead refused to give up territory to the Cheyenne because to do so would mean being forced into the less hospitable Rocky Mountains. The conflict might have been over soon enough but for the entry of the northern Shoshone. An immensely powerful tribe, entry of the Shoshone into the war, allied with the Flathead, raised the specter of a Cheyenne defeat. The Sioux, who also feared Shoshone expansion into the Great Plains, allied with the Cheyenne. The ensuing war was long and bloody, lasting until 1844. However, it cemented relations between the Cheyenne and the Sioux, who prevailed.

THE GREAT COUNCIL OF NATIONS

Black Kettle, Chief of the Cheyenne, saw wisdom in the words spoken by Oo-Loo-Te-Ka, Chief of the Cherokee, so long ago. In 1845, after the Flathead War, the Cheyenne along with the Sioux approached the Ten Nations about joining, urged on by Black Kettle. It was agreed that a great Council of Nations would be held in the central grasslands to discuss the matter. All of the Ten Nations sent representatives as did the Cheyenne and Sioux. Other tribes were also invited and even those with no interest attended for fear of being left out.

The Council was not harmonious. Many tribes feared an alliance between the Cheyenne, Sioux, and the Ten Nations. The Sioux themselves were not fully reconciled with the Iroquois tribes. Black Kettle tried desperately to have the tribes see the wisdom of Tecumseh and Oo-Loo-Te-Ka but it was the fifteen-year-old Satanta who convinced them.

A Kiowa, Satanta had no love of the Cherokee, having fought them during the Kiowa conflict after Cherokee had killed his father. However, Satanta knew the price of war. Now he spoke for peace and unity. So powerful were his words, he persuaded many hesitant tribes to give Black Kettle's proposal a chance. The remaining tribes opposed to joining gave in, seeing the overwhelming support among the other tribes. With Satanta's help, Black Kettle carried the day. The Twenty Nations was born.

THE TWENTY NATIONS

The Twenty Nations are composed of the five Iroquois tribes—Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk—as well as the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Osage, Cheyenne, Sioux, Crow, Arapaho, Pawnee, Kiowa, Missouri—including the Illinois, Miami and Shawnee—Ponca, Kansa, Anikara, Hidatsa, and Mandan. While more than twenty Tribes make up the Twenty Nations, the name reflects the Ten Nations and the first ten plains tribes who agreed to join immediately.

The Council of Nations is the governing body of the Twenty Nations. Each tribe may send five representatives to the Council, but each tribe has but a single vote. Tribes remain autonomous within their individual territories. The Council has authority to settle intertribal disputes and to conduct foreign affairs. It also has authority to set pan-tribal policy. However, the Sioux, Cheyenne, Iroquois Confederacy as a whole, Cherokee, and Kiowa all have the ability to veto any pan-tribal initiatives. By tradition, the Council Leader of the Council of Nations is an Osage. Only the Council Leader can recognize a speaker and declare the Council open and closed. The Council meets but twice a year in the summer and winter, unless otherwise necessary.

Since its founding, the Twenty Nations has carefully maintained neutral relations with the United States—the best to be hoped for under the circumstances. Friendly relations are maintained with the Bear Flag Empire, but the Twenty Nations fear the Empire's expansion into the Unorganized Territories. Similarly, they have no desire to become Imperial citizens. The Twenty Nations enjoys its best relations with the Republic of Texas, where Sam Houston is still President.

In the Twenty Nations the Five Southern Tribes, led by the Cherokee, have taken the lead in trying to develop ways to use the White Man's technology without scarring the earth. To a lesser extent, the Iroquois Tribes of the north woods have done much the same. The Plains Tribes continue in traditional ways and will not hear of any but the most superficial changes, though they will trade for guns and ammunition. Only Black Kettle of the Cheyenne is more progressive. However, all of the tribes are determined to maintain their heritage and to protect the Earth that gives them life. In the Twenty Nations, the Buffalo will always roam.

INDIAN CULTURES

There is no one Indian culture. Each tribe has a distinct culture of its own, though related tribes will share certain similarities. All tribes share a worshipful reverence for nature, practice shamanistic magick and regard other members of the tribe as an extended family. Beyond these similarities, where a tribe lives will determine much about its culture. With the coming of the New Europeans, new plants, animals, and technologies have disrupted Indian ways of life, but the tribes have learned to adapt. More devastating has been the forced relocation of many tribes and the outright extermination of others at the hands of the New Europeans. Still, the Indians survive, even prosper.

THE EASTERN WOODLAND AND GREAT LAKES TRIBES

In the northeastern United States, the land is heavily forested with rocky hills and poor soil. The Adirondack Mountains dominate most of New York State, while the White Mountains extend into New Hampshire and Vermont, along with the Green Mountains and the Catskills which extend into Massachusetts. Forests cover much of Pennsylvania. Ohio and Michigan are forested and surrounded by the Great Lakes. The main tribes of the woodlands include the Algonquin peoples, the Abenaki, the Delaware, and the Iroquois tribes. The Shawnee, Sauk-Fox, Chippewa, and Ottawa all live in the Great Lakes region.

Hunting, especially deer, is the chief way of life for these tribes. Some small farming is practiced, but generally the soil is too poor to support more extensive planting. Fishing is common, especially among the Great Lakes tribes. Buckskin leggings and shirts, often fringed, are commonplace, adorned with colorful thread or beadwork. Because winters in the northeastern woodlands tend to be severe, the Indian Tribes must dress accordingly.

Wood, being plentiful, is used to construct longhouses, communal lodges, and log cabins, not unlike those used by the settlers. Villages are common and the tribes tend not to migrate, as hunting is plentiful in every season, even winter. In a few places, settlements may be as large as a small town, but the Indians of this area have no cities. Wood is also used, especially birch bark, to make the canoes that are used to travel the many rivers that flow through this area.

Of the native tribes, only the Abenaki, Passamaquoddy, and Micmac remain, living in remote mountain areas. Most Algonquin tribes along with the Delaware and all the Great Lakes tribes, have been exterminated or driven into Canada. The Iroquois have moved west and now belong to the Twenty Nations. They still live in the fashion of the eastern woodlands tribes in the North Woods of the area of the Minnesota and Wisconsin Rivers.

THE SOUTHEASTERN TRIBES

In the southeastern United States, the land rises from a fertile coastal plain to thickly forested highlands that eventually become the Appalachian Mountains. The warm climate and fertile soil make this land agriculturally rich. The main tribes of this area include the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole.

Hunting is still a mainstay of the southeastern tribes' way of life, but farming is much more important. Large farms are maintained and the tribes trade extensively in agricultural and manufactured goods. These tribes, like those of the woodlands, use wood to build their lodges and distinctive circular or oval houses. However, these houses are gathered into much larger villages and towns, though still falling short of what we might call a city.

The Iroquois are called the Five Civilized Tribes, but the tribes of the southeast are just as advanced. They alone among Indian peoples have concepts of rulership that approach hereditary kingship. Certainly, there is a pomp and ceremony adopted by their rulers that few other tribes can equal. Elaborate tattooing is peculiar to these tribes.

Now only some Seminole remain, protected by the deep swamps of Florida, still fighting to preserve their way of life. The other tribes have been exterminated or forced west along the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and the bulk of the Seminole now live across the Mississippi River north of Louisiana and the Texas Republic, having become part of the Twenty Nations.

THE PLAINS TRIBES

West of the Mississippi River, north and west of the Ozark Mountains, the Great Plains sweep across the continent until they reach the Rocky

Mountains. From the Mexican border to the Arctic circle, the land flows in a flat sea of grass. This is the land of the immense buffalo herds. The tribes of this area are among the most colorful, known for their elaborate feathered warbonnets, including the Kiowa, Arapaho, Pawnee, Cheyenne, Crow, Mandan, and Sioux.

The buffalo define life on the Great Plains. The soil is rich, but the millions of buffalo that migrate every year from north to south make large scale agriculture impossible. Indian culture on the Great Plains revolves around hunting buffalo. The buffalo provides food, shelter, and clothing for the Plains tribes.

The Plains Indians are all nomadic. They move from place to place following the buffalo migrations or going where the hunting is good when the buffalo move on. Tipis made of buffalo skins are used for shelter and can be easily disassembled and moved. Plains Indians build no villages or towns. Encampments of tipis can become quite large when all the bands of a tribe come together but eventually the bands will go their separate ways.

Horses, introduced by the Spanish, have had the greatest impact on the Plains tribes. It is widely acknowledged that the Plains Indians are the finest light cavalymen in the world. The horse is now as important to Plains cultures as the buffalo. Wealth is measured in buffalo and horses. Because of the founding of the Twenty Nations, the cultures of the Plains Indians are largely undisturbed.

TRIBES OF THE SOUTHWEST AND GREAT BASIN

The southwestern lands of the Texas Republic are arid desert, split by the forested slopes of the southern Rocky Mountains, where it regularly snows. The tribes common to this area include the Apache, Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Pueblo. South into Mexico will be found the Pima, Papago, and Yaqui.

Hunting is a chancy thing in this climate. Farming is more certain, despite the heat. All the tribes practice a little of both. Herding of goats and sheep is also common, and the wool is woven into brightly patterned cloth. Wood is readily available from the mountains and adobe can be made from the soil to build homes. Villages and towns are common. The cliff dwellings of the Pueblo Indians and the great kiva complexes of the Navaho and Hopi might even be considered cities. Most tribes are therefore settled. Only the Apache remain semi-nomadic. All of these tribes retain their traditional lifestyles as autonomous people within the Texas Republic.

North into the Unorganized Territory, the Rocky Mountains grow to their greatest extent, encompassing many individual ranges. While the mountains themselves are full of game, the basins and tablelands are nearly desolate. Tribes here include the mighty Shoshone, Paiute, and Ute. These tribes are among the most warlike. As other tribes displaced by New European settlers have been forced into this area, a series of intertribal wars have occurred. Hunting is widely practiced but gathering is as common. Tipis, mixed with wooden lodges, are the basic types of shelter. No villages will be found here.

TRIBES OF THE NORTHWEST AND PLATEAU

In the northernmost reaches of the Bear Flag Empire, great rainforests of pine and fir trees cover the coastal mountain ranges. Inland, a plateau stretches away to the Rocky Mountains. The Salish, Kwakiutl, Klamath, and Haida are among the larger coastal tribes, while the plateau is home to the Modoc, Yakima, Cayuse, Nez Perce, and Flathead.

As the buffalo dominates life on the Great Plains, fishing dominates life in the northwest coastal areas. Elaborately carved and painted wooden canoes are built for fishing and hunting seals. Wooden-beamed and sided houses are also elaborately carved and painted. Villages and towns are common in this area, with much trading taking place.

In the plateau region, hunting is more important, though the salmon which spawn in the area's rivers are a welcome resource. Instead of wooden houses, tipis and pole lodges are common. Elk are plentiful and are an important source of food and clothing.

The coastal tribes and those of the western plateau are now part of the Bear Flag Empire. While granted full citizenship, many tribes are happy to live in the old ways, and Emperor Norton has not attempted to force them to change. The Cayuse and Flathead live free in the Unorganized Territories and are loosely allied with the Shoshone, Paiute, and Ute in a growing confederation.

ALL THAT IS SACRED

If you have never seen the Great Plains of America, it may be almost impossible to understand the buffalo herds. The Great Plains stretch in an unending sea of waving grass from horizon to horizon. Gently rolling rises, not even hills, are all that varies the predominantly flat terrain. From isolated outcroppings, bluffs, or true hills that rise from the prairie, it is possible to see hundreds of miles in every direction. A single buffalo herd can stretch farther than your eye can see. Hundreds of thousands of animals moving as one make up but one of dozens of herds that roam from just below the Arctic circle to the panhandle region of the Texas Republic. The lives of the Indian Tribes of the Great Plains are governed by the annual migration of these millions of buffalo.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BUFFALO

To the Plains Indian the buffalo is more than just an animal or a food source. All things in their lives come from the buffalo. The meat of the buffalo feeds the tribe. The hide is made into clothing, covers for tipis, and bedding. The bones are formed into cooking utensils and weapons. Sinew is made into thread for sewing and the fat is rendered and used for light. Rope is made from buffalo hair, sled runners from the great ribs of the buffalo, ceremonial objects from hooves, horns, and skulls, and fuel for fires from the buffalo chips. The travois which the Plains Indians pull behind their horses to carry their belongings when they move and their shields are all made of buffalo skin and bones. No part of the buffalo is wasted.

Compare this to the White Buffalo Hunters, who shoot the herds for the skins and leave everything else to rot in the sun. To the Plains Indians this is criminal, and Plains Indians of the Twenty Nations will attack White Buffalo Hunting parties on sight. By treaty, Buffalo Hunters are forbidden to operate within the Twenty Nations but daring, or foolish, Buffalo Hunters persist. The United States has not forgotten the destruction of St. Louis and still longs to expand westward beyond the Mississippi. General Phillip Sheridan, now Secretary of State, is the man who coined the phrase, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." He has instituted a program that pays Buffalo Hunters a bounty for every buffalo killed. Sheridan realizes that if you kill all the buffalo, you will destroy the Plains Indians' way of life. That is precisely what he intends to do.

DANCING BACK THE BUFFALO

It should come as no surprise that the buffalo is the center of Plains Indians' religious and cultural life. Plains Indian stories abound with tales of the buffalo. Ta Tanka, the Spirit of the Buffalo, lives in the Place of Power called Yellowstone. The Buffalo Dance, common among all Plains Tribes, seeks Ta Tanka's aid to bring back the herds. Dancers dress as buffalo and pantomime the herds and the hunt. Buffalo Dances are not uncommon before a hunt, but are always performed at the spring equinox to ensure the return of the herds. The buffalo also features prominently in the Sun Dance, perhaps the most well known ceremony of the Plains Indians.

The Sun Dance is an annual ceremony dedicated to the veneration of Brother Sun, without whom no life could exist. It is performed by Plains Tribes as well as many of the Plateau and Great Basin Tribes. During the Sun Dance, the skull of a buffalo is painted and stuffed with prairie grass and serves as a sacred object. The most important of the summer ceremonies, the Sun Dance is usually held during a full moon in June or in late summer when berries ripen. The bands of a Tribe come together and set up their tipis in a great circle. Men and women socialize together and court one another. Horse races are held along with other games. Band leaders

smoke tobacco and re-establish tribal unity. The rituals of the Sun Dance are numerous and complex, many of them involving drumming, singing, and dancing. The entire ceremony lasts between eight and twelve days.

PIPE SMOKE

The Calumet, or Sacred Pipe, has special ceremonial significance for all the Indian Tribes, not just those of the Great Plains. Pipes typically have intricately carved bowls of stone, antler, or bone with long wooden (often ash or sumac) or reed stems, decorated with quills, beads, feathers, fur, and horsehair. Among the Plains Tribes, buffalo bone or antler bowls are common. The Calumet common to the Sioux is made from the leg bone of a Buffalo calf. White Buffalo Woman, a figure from ancient stories of the Lakota-Sioux people, brought knowledge of this sacred object in the distant past.

Calumets are used in a variety of ceremonies, including preparation for war, as well as peacemaking. For many tribes white feathers hanging from the pipe are for peace, while red feathers indicate war. The pipe is a channel between this world and the Spirit World, carrying wisdom and knowledge. When seeking understanding, an Indian will often say, "Let me smoke on it."

LIFE ON THE GREAT PLAINS

The Indians of the Great Plains are primarily hunters of the buffalo. They kill only what they need and can reasonably use. Farming is out of the question, because the tremendous herds of buffalo make this impossible. However, some small farming does take place in sheltered areas, along with the gathering of wild plants and berries. Similarly, the Plains Indians do not build cities. Instead, they nomadically follow the buffalo herds along their annual migration route from north to south and back again.

Tribal hunts are conducted in late spring and summer, though this will vary from tribe to tribe as the buffalo herds move from one tribe's territory to another. Smaller hunting parties go out in winter. Horses, introduced by the Spanish and gone wild, have been tamed by the Plains Tribes and are used to hunt the buffalo. However, older methods, including stalking on foot and deadfalls, are still used as well.

THE GREAT WHITE BUFFALO

Among the most powerful figures in the mythology of the Plains Indians is the Great White Buffalo. No figure is more sacred or more awe inspiring. A buffalo's coat is normally brown or black. White hair is extremely rare. The Great White Buffalo is a mystical figure which appears to guide and protect the herds in times of terrible danger. More rarely, it may also appear to aid or guide Indian Tribes. The Great White Buffalo is extremely intelligent and can telepathically communicate with Indians. Other buffalo will obey the commands of the Great White Buffalo without hesitation.

A bull buffalo may stand between six and seven feet tall at the shoulder and weigh between 700 or 800 pounds, some even larger. Generally docile animals, when angered or frightened a buffalo becomes a fearsome opponent, more than capable of defending itself.

Controlling a herd numbering in the hundreds of thousands, the power at the Great White Buffalo's command should not be taken lightly. Nothing can stand in the way of a stampeding herd of buffalo, as some Buffalo Hunters attempting to operate en masse within the Twenty Nations have learned only too late.

INDIANS OF NOTE

Across the continent, Indian men and women have taken their place, sometimes overcoming great adversity, among the leaders and visionaries of the new North American nations.

THE UNITED STATES

In all of North America, the United States is most hostile to Indians. It is therefore surprising to find an Indian as President Grant's personal aide. A Seneca whose family chose not to go west with the other Iroquois, Ely S. Parker, born in 1828 and educated in New York State, attended the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, becoming a civil engineer. His successful career took him to Galena, Illinois in 1857, where he met a man named Ulysses S. Grant. The two took an instant liking to one another and so began a lifelong friendship.

During the Civil War, Parker served as Grant's aide-de-camp, rising through the ranks to become a full colonel. When Grant became president, nothing was more natural than he have his long-time friend by his side. Parker's success has not gone unnoticed. He tries desperately to protect President Grant from the worst excesses of his corrupt Cabinet Secretaries, but his opponents use his Indian heritage against him. Still, he perseveres and has done much to see that the Grant administration is as successful as it has been thus far.

Tanawee Parker is Ely's younger brother and in every way his opposite. When Ely enrolled in school, Tanawee began studying sorcery, eventually joining the Hodano Medicine Society. He is now one of the leaders of the Medicine Society and seeks nothing less than the destruction of the very government his brother strives to protect. The two no longer speak and do not consider themselves brothers. Ely considers Tanawee a criminal and Tanawee sees Ely as a sellout and a traitor to his people. Each believes that he knows best what Indians in the United States must do to survive.

The Seminole Swamp Fox is another Indian whose parents decided not to go west. Avoiding the Trail of Tears, Swamp Fox's family hid in the Everglades. Growing up to hate the White Man, Swamp Fox now leads the remaining Seminole still holding out in Florida, in a shaky alliance with the Aero Pirates. He has been approached by both Tanawee about joining the Hodano Medicine Society and by Ely Parker on a personal mission for President Grant. Grant is offering the remaining Seminole the entirety of the Everglades as an autonomous region, much like those so successful in the Texas Republic. However, Swamp Fox is understandably skeptical.

THE TWENTY NATIONS

The Twenty Nations is blessed with some of the finest leaders on the continent.

Satanta, born in 1830 among the Kiowa, grew up fighting. The Indians pushed west, particularly the western Cherokee, by the Trail of Tears were welcomed by the Osage but not the Kiowa, who fought to keep their land. At the same time, Texan squatters were encroaching on Kiowa territory with predictable results. In an effort to aid the Cherokee, who had adopted him and helped defeat Santa Anna, as well as to secure the Texas Republic's northern border, President Sam Houston agreed to meet with the leaders of the Kiowa in 1840. Representing both the Texas Republic and the western Cherokee, Houston pleaded for peace. Only ten years old but already a veteran of the constant fighting, Satanta stood and pleaded for peace as well. So great was his eloquence that the Kiowa were persuaded. Houston called him The Orator of the Plains.

In 1845 Satanta was chosen as one of the envoys to the Council of Nations called to discuss unifying the Ten Nations with the Plains Tribes. Again Satanta spoke with powerful eloquence, persuading the Plains Tribes to make common cause with the Ten Nations. It is for this reason that Satanta is also known as the Father of the Twenty Nations. Today Satanta is widely seen as the spokesman of the Twenty Nations, though in fact he is but one member of the Council of Nations, representing only the Kiowa. However, he has travelled widely, impressing everyone he meets with his friendly, somewhat mischievous, open demeanor, utterly charming them all.

Sitting Bull is another member of the Council of Nations, representing the great Sioux Nation. Born in 1831, he is the leader of that group of tribes who resist changes to traditional Indian ways. A great leader and powerful Medicine Man, Sitting Bull resists every change to traditional ways proposed by the Council. He is always thoughtful and intelligent, but he would rather die than see the Plains scarred as the eastern lands have been by the White Man's technology.

Crazy Horse, born in 1842 among the Sioux, is Sitting Bull's greatest supporter. A fiery warrior, Crazy Horse leads the Ogala-Brule Sioux. Unlike his ally, Crazy Horse has no qualms about resisting change violently. As a young man he had a dream of a rider on horseback in a storm, which was interpreted to mean he would be a great warrior. Crazy Horse is very sympathetic to the Hodano Medicine Society's aim of ridding America of all New Europeans.

Opposing Sitting Bull around the Council fire is Black Kettle, representing the mighty Cheyenne Nation. Born in 1812, Black Kettle has seen the progress of the White Man across the continent and the senseless violence that has followed. He wants more for his children and grandchildren. Black Kettle leads those tribes who would find ways of coexisting with the New Europeans. He respects the old ways but believes change is natural and must be accepted. A courageous war leader and diplomat, Black Kettle walks unafraid into the heart of his enemies' camps to try to prevent further violence between Whites and Indians on the Great Plains.

THE TEXAS REPUBLIC

Cochise, born among the Apache in 1812, is the elder statesman of the Indians in the Texas Republic. A fierce fighter, he long fought the Spanish, Mexicans, Californians, and Texans, keeping his people free. When Texas offered to aid the Indians to overthrow the Mexican territorial government, granting them citizenship but allowing them autonomy, Cochise did not hesitate to accept. He firmly believed he would be betrayed, but planned to turn the tables on the Round Eyes. Much to his surprise, the Texas Rangers proved worthy allies and President Houston kept his word. Cochise still leads the Apache against the hated Mexicans, but he now does so as a General of the Texas Auxiliaries, allied with the Navaho, Zuni, and Hopi.

Geronimo, born among the Apache in 1829, is the future leader of the Apache, and an uncertain future it may be. Like Sitting Bull, Geronimo has little patience with White ways. He is a brilliant tactician, blessed with keen judgment and a warrior's spirit. He respects the Texans, but no more. As a leader in the Auxiliaries, he often acts without orders. While usually successful, his unpredictability has caused several diplomatic incidents with Mexico and the Bear Flag Empire. Geronimo cares only for the Apache.

Luckily, Geronimo listens to Lozen. Born in 1840, Lozen is a warrior, strategist, and healer of great renown. Lozen is also a woman and Geronimo's chief lieutenant. She is cautious and meticulous in everything she does and has a greater appreciation for the Texas Republic than Geronimo. While unmarried, there is no hint of romance between her and Geronimo.

THE BEAR FLAG EMPIRE

The Bear Flag Empire has not seen the rise of many prominent Indians, as the California tribes are rather disorganized and would rather be left alone. The Indians of the Pacific Northwest, while more organized and stronger politically, are so far away from the heart of the Empire that they have not had much of a chance to come into the public eye yet.

The one Indian of note in California at this time is Keintpoos of the Modoc, also known as Captain Jack. The Modoc, like all the other tribes, were shabbily treated by the Fremont administration. In fact, before the Cabal was done away with, there were rumors of a plan to forcibly move the Modoc north out of California. This did not sit well with the Modoc, especially with Keintpoos, and others of his tribe, began to talk of war with California. As the Modoc possessed more tribal solidarity than practically all other California Indian tribes combined, this was a genuine threat. Furthermore, Keintpoos' father had been killed by white settlers in 1852, so he had an axe to grind with the Californians.

Fortunately, 1865 saw the fall of the Fremont Cabal and Emperor Norton fully coming into power. Norton dispatched emissaries to the Modoc immediately to stave off the crisis, but Keintpoos refused to talk to anyone except Norton. A few months later, Norton and Keintpoos met on the boundary of Modoc land. Keintpoos asked that the Modoc be granted sovereignty, and be allowed to be their own independent nation. Norton countered with an offer of reparations for past injustices, and offered Keintpoos the government position of Minister of Indian Affairs, so that he could be sure that not only the Modoc, but all Indians in the Empire, were treated fairly. Keintpoos accepted, and he remains a Minister in Norton's Cabinet to this day.

PIPE DREAM

I was hot. Sweat dripped off my nose. My hair hung limply around my face. It was hard to breathe, as humid as it was, but I took another long drag on the pipe and let it out slowly. The smoke curled around my face, dimming my sight. My head started to buzz, but I couldn't tell if it was because of the pipe, the heat, or the fact that I wasn't breathing right.

And really, I didn't care.

I didn't care because all was right with the world.

Joy. That was the first thing I felt, standing there on a slight rise lost somewhere in the vast prairie. Joy. A new day was dawning, clouds of vibrant colors hung in the sky. A mist was rising with the sun, cool sweet dampness filling the air with that raw-bread grain smell. I took a long deep breath and savored it all. The sky grew brighter with the new day.

I heard singing, a long way away. A simple song, but pretty. As the mist rose, it got burned away by the rising sun, and I could see a distant village in front of me. That was where the singing came from. I wanted to just sit there and watch. Relax and enjoy the day. Get a feel for their way of life, share in their lifestyle. After I knew what they were like, I'd mosey on down and talk with them. Share myself, and learn.

That's what I wanted to do. But I couldn't.

I wanted to relax and be there, but somehow I was too agitated. Too much energy. I stood there, staring in their direction, shifting my weight constantly from one foot to the other. Trying to burn off the nervous energy I felt. But the more I did, the more tense I became. It was like my fight-or-flight reflex was kicking in. I looked around, trying to figure out why I was so uneasy.

And I heard them.

Deep, heavy booming steps, like a million soldiers marching in slow lockstep. A heavy, slow tread, almost too deep for my ear to hear. I felt each beat as much as I heard it, a sickening thud in my chest. I heard someone cry out, faintly, from the east. I turned and looked, shielding my eyes against the sun. And I could see them, just barely. Four huge humanoids. When I realized how very far away I was from them, and that I could still see them, I realized just how big they were.

Huge. And they had guns.

I knew I had to warn the Indian village. Even from here I could tell those giants were coming to kill. Maybe not from hatred—as far as I know, giants eat humans from habit as much as anything. But dead and eaten is still dead and eaten. And those were big freaking guns.

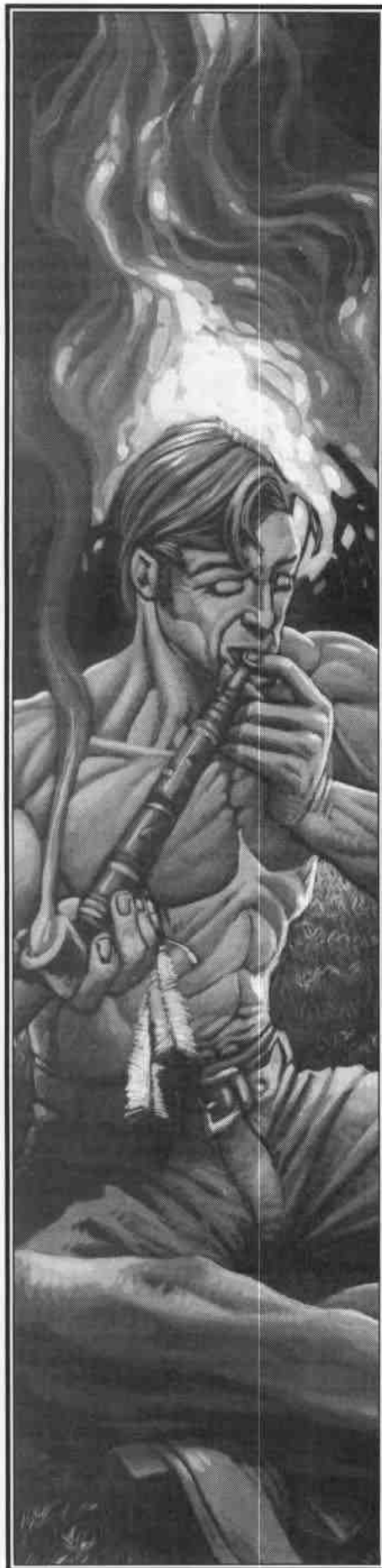
I turned and ran for the village. My legs were powerful, but my feet were clumsy. As I ran, I sailed through the air with powerful leaps, but every time one of my feet touched down, thorns and brambles tripped or snared me. I pushed as hard as I could, leaping in long arcs over the land. Once I got the hang of it, I stopped stumbling. Instead, I just pulled my feet through the brambles or crushed them beneath my boot as I landed. And I was almost soaring like an eagle.

I finally made it to the village, landing at the edge of their encampment. Everyone was watching me. Standing and waiting, as if they'd been expecting me. Everyone but the kids, who kept up with their singing and dancing. But no one stepped forward to talk to me.

I ran up to a group of adults and said, "There are giants coming—from the east!" But they didn't understand. They just stared at me. I pointed. "Look!" I yelled. "There they are! You can see them! They're coming this way!" And the Indians looked, and they nodded, but I could just tell they still didn't get it.

I yelled at the top of my lungs, shouting, "They're going to kill you!"

And a small voice at my elbow replied, "We know."





DRAMATIC CHARACTER: SHAMAN

A Shaman, or Medicine Man, is both healer and spiritual advisor to his tribe. His role is vitally important to the tribe's survival. He forecasts weather, tracks the migration of the herds, keeps track of the passage of time, keeps the sacred tales and legends, communicates with the spirits, appeases the dead, performs the rituals that protect the tribes, and keeps the tribe in good mental health through a combination of ritual and common sense advice.

Becoming a Shaman is an arduous process. Even after the spirit world has accepted you there is still much training to go through. Years can be spent learning herbology, rituals, and the proper names for all things. Vision quests must be embarked upon and meditations must be performed. A shaman must know himself intimately, must be sure of himself and his abilities, and yet remain modest in his wisdom.

There are three ways to be set on the path to becoming a Shaman. You can be born with the gift of sight and start training at a very early age. You can nearly die, and your close brush with death can bring you into contact with the other side. Finally, you can go insane and come out the other side with the necessary insights to be chosen by the spirits.

- **Strong Suits:** Courage, Education, Sorcery.
- **Possessions:** Ceremonial headdress and clothes, paint or colored sand, bundle of herbs and totems.
- **In Your Diary:** As Indian cultures generally have no written language, you keep your diary in your head in the form of memorized tales.
- **Why You're Here:** It has become a common practice for all people training to be a shaman to travel for several years, so as to see the world outside of the Nations. This experience allows the would-be shaman to become familiar with the ways and the dangers of the white man's world.

I turned to see who had spoken. It was one of the kids, but his face was like an old man's face. In fact, he was an old man, just small and withered with age. His eyes spoke volumes. They had seen a lot of life, and certainly a lot of death, too, out here on the Great Plains. His face was lined and tanned like well tooled leather. It showed no expression, but his eyes were very much alive. I looked over at all the other kids, and they were old, too. I'd just thought they were children from their small size.

But the one who spoke to me looked familiar. Something about his face, his hair, his clothes. His bag, with a piece of paper sticking out. It took me a while to put it together. "You're the guy in Stamberg!"

He nodded.

"But, you're dead!"

He shrugged.

"Oookay," I said. I could tell he didn't want to talk about it. So I got straight to the point. "You know there are four giants coming. They're not that far away. And they'll kill you."

He nodded. "Yes, we heard them coming. We hoped our singing would stop them, but they hear a different song. Theirs is the song of iron. Our song has no more magick."

"You've got to get away," I said. "There's still time. Pack everything you have and get away."

"We cannot," he said sadly.

"You have to," I argued. "Those guys are seriously bad news! They'll destroy everything when they get here."

"They will follow. Where can we go that is too far for the giants to walk? They can step over the mountains, they can wade across the great water. They can reach the sky and pull it down. They do not feel the winter as we do. They do not know hunger or thirst. They will go everywhere, until they have been across the world. We will wait no more. We shall face them here. On this day, forever."

"You're gonna try to fight?" I asked. I wanted to scream, I was so frustrated. All around me I saw people about to throw away their lives pointlessly. Down to the babies they carried in their arms. "You're crazy. Do you want to die?"

"No," he said. "We do not fear death, but they do not know death. We cannot kill them. They are too big for us. We cannot fight, but we must stand. If we stand, they fall. You, White Coyote, must show us how to stand." He stepped back one step, folded his arms across his chest, and stared at me. The most prideful, yet somehow humble student, I could ever ask for.

And I couldn't think of a thing to say.

The weather had turned at some point, getting chill and dim, but I had been so pre-occupied with the Indians that I hadn't noticed. But now the weather got even worse, a cold wind driving big fat drops of evil rain. I looked up, and with a strange sense of *déjà-vu*, I saw one of the titans step in front of the sun, eclipsing it with his flat-brimmed black hat. I grabbed the old man's hand and ran with him to the center of the village. The rest of the shamens gathered around me and began a different chant.

The old man from Stamberg spoke once more. "Watch them, White Coyote. We chant for you. You must stand against them." He gripped my hand tightly, and someone else took my other hand.

He was right. I had to stand, because I wanted to stop them. Even if I couldn't, I felt the need to try. I had the *cajones*. I would stand.

To the death.

But then doubt and despair hit me. Hard. I'd seen this all before, read it somewhere, studied it. It was an old tale to me, a hundred years old and full of pain. They couldn't be stopped. They'd keep on coming until nothing was left. I'd read it all, in history books. It was a foregone thing.

"No, White Coyote! That's their magick! Stand!"

INDIAN MYTHOLOGY & RELIGION

When we think about Indian religion, it is important not to confuse it with Indian mythology. Each tribe has a unique mythology, though there are some broadly common myths. In these myths, many spirits and beings are named. However, almost without exception, none of these spirits or beings are worshiped. They are given respect. They are honored with special ceremonies. They are propitiated to secure their friendship and favors, but they are not worshiped, as a Christian worships. Only the **Great Spirit**, known by many names, is truly worshiped. All other spirits and beings are but manifestations or creations of the Great Spirit. Thus, just because Indians sacrifice to the rain spirits or perform the Sun Dance every year does not mean that they are worshipping either the rain spirits or the sun. White Men erroneously speak of Indian Rain Gods or Sun Gods. But these are White concepts falsely applied to Indian ways.

THE GREAT SPIRIT

The Great Spirit is the creator of the universe and all life. Every tribe recognizes the existence of but a single creator and life-giving force in the universe. Though the name of the Great Spirit varies from tribe to tribe, many of the names can be roughly translated as the **Great Mystery**. Indians do not pretend to understand the Great Spirit. They do not see him as a single being with a definable personality. The Great Spirit may take many forms and is present in all things. It is neither good nor evil. It is. Good and evil are the characteristics of beings created by the Great Spirit. Evil is generally that which harms **Mother Earth** and good that which protects her.

MOTHER EARTH

Mother Earth, or nature, is the chief creation of the Great Spirit. Nothing is more sacred, though Indians do not worship the earth. They respect it. To live in harmony with the earth is every Indian's spiritual goal. To do otherwise is unnatural, sick, or evil. Many Indian ceremonies are designed to bring the people into harmony with nature. There are many nature and animal spirits with whom the Indians share Mother Earth. Learning to live together and cooperate is essential. Life and death, the physical and the Spirit World are all part of creation and are interconnected. Medicine Men understand these connections better than most.

CREATION MYTHS

There is no universal agreement among Indian tribes about how the earth or human beings were created. However, most creation myths fall into four broad groups. Many tribes, particularly those of the southwest, believe that this world is but one of several connected worlds. Our world emerged from these earlier worlds and human beings climbed out of the ground, travelling from the earlier world. Other tribes believe just the opposite. The earth was created from the sky and human beings came from the sky to live on the earth. Still other tribes believe that the earth and mankind were created from mud brought up from the bottom of a primordial sea by a diver. Finally, celestial twins who fight and argue are frequently credited with having created the world.

THE CHILDREN OF THE GREAT SPIRIT

The Great Spirit created all life, but not all life was created the same or equally. There are spirits, human beings, animals, and plants. None are superior to the others but some are more powerful. Throughout Indian mythology, certain beings appear with great regularity. These are among the most powerful of the Great Spirit's children, almost what New Europeans would call gods.

The **Coyote** is the most common such figure. He is always male and both a trickster and the bringer of civilization. His tricks are not always pleasant and his gifts, while helpful, often bring as many problems. Similarly, while very clever, the Coyote has been known to outsmart himself. He is not infallible and often comic. Yet, despite his tricks and surprises, the Coyote is ultimately a friend and champion of Indians. In some tribes, the **Rabbit** takes the place of the Coyote.

The **Raven**, like the Coyote, is also a trickster, but he is not comic. He is sly, deceptive, and generally untrustworthy. The Raven is fond of starting arguments and conflicts but usually comes out on the losing side. It is the Raven who brought light to the world and fire to man. He teaches the animals, names the plants, and is a spirit of great knowledge. Shamens must be very careful dealing with the Raven, however, for he is not so certain a friend as Coyote. In some places, the Raven is known as the **Crow**.

Another common figure is the **Thunderbird**. An elemental being of wind, rain, storms, and lightning, the Thunderbird or Thunderer is a spirit of weather but also war and destruction. He is easily angered and takes terrible vengeance. The Thunderbird is a protector as well, who wars on evil. Unlike the Raven and Coyote, the Thunderbird is not approachable. He is a much more distant figure. The Thunderbird is also known as the **Eagle**.

One of the few female figures common among the tribes, the **Spider** or **Spider Woman**, is always female. She is helpful but dangerous if crossed or if not given proper respect. Spider Woman taught human beings weaving and travels in the Spirit World to aid mankind. She is always willing to help or guide human beings, particularly with agriculture. She is also a powerful sorcerer.

If there is a truly evil figure common to most Indian mythologies, it is the **Snake**. Occasionally just sly, the Snake is more often harmful and an enemy of mankind. The Thunderbird is the Snake's great enemy. The Snake often causes jealousy, selfishness, and hatred. However, the Snake must still be given respect and can sometimes even be helpful, particularly with water and wells.

THE GREAT BEASTS

Like the Snake, not all spirits are friendly; some are malevolent almost beyond belief. The worst of these, the **Omemihoethesiwak** or **Great Beasts**, have been imprisoned since ancient times. The Coyote is credited with confining the Great Beasts. Over time, however, the Beasts have partially freed themselves or have somehow become free so that they may once again walk the earth during part of the year.

The most powerful of the Great Beasts is **Maskwamiy**. Winter is when Maskwamiy walks the earth and his power is that of freezing cold and ice. Once he all but ruled the world, when great sheets of ice covered the ground. Now he is imprisoned in the north and can only break free once a year.

Related to Maskwamiy is **Kogukhupuk**. The spirit of frozen ground, Kogukhupuk prevents plants from growing and kills men and animals who sleep upon the earth. Kogukhupuk is imprisoned in the ground of the far north. Of all the Great Beasts, his prison is the strongest. It is said that were he to break free, he would explode out of the ground to ravage and kill.

The **Wendigo** is the best known of the Great Beasts because he is so frightening and almost completely free. The spirit of famine and starvation, the Wendigo is a terrible cannibal giant who strides across the land. Any he meets he devours or changes into **Witiko**, hairy cannibal humans.

The last of the Great Beasts is **Ohgeenay**, the spirit of illness. The sickness Ohgeenay brings is not merely disease of the body but corruption of the spirit. Those so corrupted do unnatural acts, committing murder or wanton destruction. Some Indians say the coming of the White Man is Ohgeenay's doing.

Coyote will fight against any of the Great Beasts and seek to keep them imprisoned, but he is flighty and easily distracted. Medicine Men are often left to fight the Great Beasts alone. Some become fatalistic and choose to serve the Omemihoethesiwak. Luckily, such evil is easily visible and these Shamens are quickly killed or driven out of the tribe.

PUKWOOGIES

In a lighter vein, Indians believe in a variety of little people who inhabit the woods and forests. Though they go by any number of names, the greatest body of stories about such beings call them **Pukwoogies**. Mercurial and mischievous, Pukwoogies can be helpful or harmful. They have the ability to shrink or enlarge any being, become invisible, and cause good or ill luck. Some have sorcerous abilities. They all love food and flattery. Many become infatuated by handsome men or beautiful women. All will become insanely angry if their forest is threatened.

DEATH

Indians do not fear death. Death is a natural part of life. There is no Indian equivalent of Hell and Damnation. Spirits move on to an afterlife not unlike this one and join their ancestors. Because the Spirit World and this world are but parts of a whole, neither are the dead leaving their families behind. They may still watch over them. For this reason, Indians are often fearless in battle. When they become so old or sick that they become a burden on their families, they often go off to die. Many can sense when this time is near, though it may pass and is not always final.

INDIAN MAGICK

Baxbe is the spiritual power a Shaman, or Medicine Man, wields. It comes from the Great Spirit through the spirits of nature and the animal powers. The Shaman calls upon this power by using symbols of the power to call down spirits to aid him. This is true even of Indian Lorebooks. The Lorebooks record common ways of calling upon spiritual power in long-recognized patterns. However, Baxbe can also be called upon by means other than the spells in an Indian Lorebook.

INDIAN LOREBOOKS

Indian Lorebooks record spells and function in all ways like New European Sorcery. What is unique about Indian Lorebooks is that the spells are not researched but taught by the spirits. The spells are ways of directly tapping spiritual power without the need to call upon a spirit every time you wish to cast a spell. It is for this reason that Indian Magick is more limited. The spirits will only reveal so much in the form of spells. In all other matters they must be dealt with directly. Indian Magick recorded in Lorebooks is limited to weather, healing, personal enhancement, and nature spells. You can assume that there are Indian equivalents of all New European spells that deal with these types of magic. Evil Indian sorcerers will have access to all necromancy spells. Indians also have their own spells, reflecting the conditions under which they live.

SONG OF THE DEEP WOOD

History & Secret Knowledge: This Iroquois lorebook is recorded on an intricately beaded wampum belt. It contains spells that increase the caster's woodcraft. *Track of the Rabbit* (6♦) shrinks the caster to a height of one inch so that he can fit down a rabbit or squirrel hole. *Brush Walk* (8♦) allows the caster to move through dense brush unimpeded and without leaving a trail. *Treeskin* (10♦) allows the caster to briefly meld into a tree. *Silence of the Wood* (6♦) allows the caster to move without making a sound. *Call of the Wild* (6♦) allows the caster to imitate the call of any animal.

MEDICINE BUNDLE OF THE PLAINS

History & Secret Knowledge: This Crow lorebook is a medicine bundle containing items symbolic of each spell on which the spell is recorded. It contains weather-related spells. *Ride the Cyclone* (12♦☆) summons a tornado which will bear up the caster, who can direct its destructive path. *Frost* (12♣☆) allows the caster to chill a person, object, or area to below freezing temperatures; damage depends on how cold it gets. *Wind Song* (6♣) carries a simple message on the wind over any distance. *Scent the Wind* (6♣) allows the caster to mask his scent or reveal that of another by briefly turning the direction of the wind.

THE HEALING WAY

History & Secret Knowledge: This lorebook of the Hopi is inscribed on a sheepskin scroll. It contains healing magicks. *Spirit Cleansing* (10♠) cleanses a person's spirit of misdeeds and satisfies any offended spirits. *Purification* (12♠) repels evil spirits from an area. *Blessing Chant* (8♥) increases a person's rate of recovery, healing wounds as blows and blows as shocks. *Spiritual Trance* (10♥) gains a person health equal to a random draw from the sorcery deck. *Spirit Walk* (14♠) transports the caster to the Spirit World to receive an answer to a question.

THE TOTEM STAFF

History & Secret Knowledge: This collection of Salish lore is carved into staves resembling a totem pole. It reveals animal magicks. *Animal Speech* (10♦) grants the caster the ability to communicate with animals, who can perform simple tasks or answer simple questions. *Eyes of the Owl* (6♦) allows the caster to see perfectly in the dark. *Otter's Tail* (6♦) allows the caster to swim like an otter. *Salmon's Song* (6♦) caus-

es fish to school. *Animal Sense* (8♦) raises one of the caster's senses to unusual sharpness.

SPIRIT WAYS

A Shaman may also call directly upon the spirit powers, summoning them to him or tapping their power to aid him. However, the spirits will only grant such aid under certain conditions. There are rules that a Shaman must obey to call successfully upon the spirit powers. First, the caster must always show respect for Mother Earth, the spirits of the land, animals, and human beings, even one's enemies, taking only what is needed and never wantonly destroying. Second, the Shaman must always be responsible, protecting and supporting his people, never acting selfishly or evilly. Third, the Shaman must take an apprentice to whom he must pass on his knowledge. Finally, the Shaman represents the community in the Spirit World and must lead them in the seasonal festivals that bind them together and mark the passage of time.

The simplest way to call upon spirit power is to call upon the Great Spirit for aid. Any Indian can do this, not merely Shamens. The Indian merely asks for assistance from the sky, rocks, trees, or water. If the Indian's heart is true and his cause just, the Great Spirit will send aid. The wind might shift to slow a grassfire; rocks might tumble to block pursuit; trees or plants might impede or entangle a foe; or water might carry you swiftly and safely away. On rare occasions, such help might be much more powerful and dramatic. Only if the Indian is a Shaman do the above rules for summoning spiritual power apply. Of course, Shamens have other ways of channeling spiritual power, as well.

FALSE FACE MASKS

Iroquois Shamens are known for carving grotesque wood masks known as False Faces. These masks represent different spirit powers. A Shaman who dons such a mask appears to the spirit powers as if he were one himself. His chances of asking for and receiving specific aid are greatly increased. In game terms, a successful Performance Feat will secure aid from any Indian supernatural being.

SHIELD MAGICK

Cheyenne Shamens construct elaborate ceremonial shields which can be used by any Indian. The symbols of the spirit power, often elemental, to be called upon are worked into the shield design. The exact manifestation of the power being sought is painted in the center of the shield, often symbolically. In game terms, possession of a Magick Shield will grant the possessor either immunity from an elemental form of attack or the ability to cast that elemental attack once per day.

SAND PAINTINGS

Navajo Shamens sift colored sands into elaborate paintings. These paintings focus spiritual power to aid the caster in working magick. In game terms, Sand Paintings lower the Thaumatic Energy requirements for a spell by the amount of time spent preparing the Sand Painting. Each day spent preparing the Sand Painting reduces the Thaumatic Energy requirement by half.

TOTEM POLES

The Indian Shamens of the tribes of the northwest carve huge pillars, usually in excess of 30 feet tall, into a series of stacked images, which are then brightly painted. Atop each pole is the stylized image of a totem animal associated with the family represented by the rest of the totem pole. Once created, any member of the family, not just Shamens, to whom the pole is dedicated can call upon their totem animal spirit for aid. This spirit will send aid in the form of natural animals of its kind, which will help the Indian calling for aid if the Indian performs a successful Charisma Feat.

I looked up at the gigantic western killers. Closer still. The nearest one was looking straight at me, the fire in his eyes burning hotter, fiercer. He began to pull out his revolver. It was hopeless.

"Jesus Christ," I said, "We're history!" I pulled out an oversized version of my college freshman history text and flipped it open. "See? Right there! The Twenty Nations are gone! It already happened! We lost ..." I noticed something wrong. Real wrong. The U.S. border ran well up into Canada. Ottawa was a state, as was—

"NO!" The old man struck the book from my hands with the sound of a thunderclap. When it hit the ground it splattered like a tomato, billowing out into a buffalo hide. Blew my mind. Something was moving beneath the fur. I reached down, grabbed the edge farthest from me, and flipped it over. It sounded like a giant whip cracking, or perhaps a bolt of lightning.

There was a map on the other side.

A new map.

I spread it out to get a better look. It was beautifully rendered; I wished I'd drawn it. Marked very clearly were the borders of the Twenty Nations, the USA, Canada, Texas, and the Bear Flag. And all through the Twenty Nations were cities, Miliwaukee and Village of Winds in the north, Changing Hands down around Missouri, and Wampum toward the southern part of the Twenty Nations. Places I'd never heard of.

Suddenly there was a thunderous noise. I looked up again, and saw that one of the giants had fallen. He had tripped over a small village and fallen to one knee. He tried to get up, but as I watched, the village grew. It was weird. The buildings were large, like American buildings, but had a distinctly Indian flavor. Architectural impossibilities like a five-story longhouse office building. They rose up around his ankle and held him fast. The people came out with their goods—blankets, baskets, jewelry—and began to bury him. The fire in his eyes grew dim, and he had a slight expression of bewilderment as he turned to look at me.

I looked north to the monster with the railroad belt and the long spurs. He was caught as well, his spurs hung up on a rail line which stretched across the land. He struggled to free himself, but he couldn't.

I turned toward the south and saw another giant, this one dressed in dark buckskins, still striding purposefully forward. Blood dripped wholesale from the fringe of his jacket and pants. His boot came up over a herd of bison, and I knew he would crush them to bones. But then I saw mounted Indians with impossible shepherd's crooks quickly usher the buffalo out from under the shadow of his foot. His foot came down, hard, on empty land.

And in the blink of an eye, he was nothing but bleached bones.

It looked strange to see his skeleton standing there, slacked-jawed in surprise, buckskins hanging gaunt on his frame. But there he stayed.

The buffalo were herded toward the rail line which held the second creature. They were ushered onto the rail lines, standing with hooves straddling the irons. Suddenly they all lurched forward and rocketed down the line, disappearing eastward. As they hit the giant's spurs he, too, was dragged into the distance. With his departure, only one giant remained: the soldier.

I could see now that his black clothes were in fact a uniform, with bone and iron the decorations on his sleeves and epaulettes. He pulled out a Winchester rifle which had been slung across his back. Cocked it. Aimed.

Fired.

The village all around me blew apart at once in a mighty explosion. I was tossed high and came down hard. It hurt like hell. Screams of anguish were all around me, as were bright red blood and the brimstone stench of battle. I looked up and saw the soldier creature standing over me, a wan smile of cruel satisfaction beneath his infernal eyes. He cocked the rifle again. Aimed. At me, personally. I closed my eyes.

There was a great explosion.



DRAMATIC CHARACTER:

BRAVE

Warriors, often called Braves, are the primary hunters in Indian society, as well as being the core of Indian fighting forces. Ever since you were a boy, you watched the men return from a day's hunt, bearing buffalo, deer, and other meat to feed the tribe with. During times of trouble, you watched them put on war paint and go off to fight. While they were gone, you and your friends played at being Braves, dreaming of the excitement, not even wondering if all of them would return.

Now that you are grown, you know that the truth is a little different, but you have a strong heart, and you know that what you do is, and always will be, for the good of the tribe. You aspire to become a member of a Hunting or Warrior Society. If you build up enough of a reputation for bravery and wisdom, you may even become a chief one day.

- **Strong Suits:** Courage, Marksmanship, Perception

- **Possessions:** Bow or spear, rifle or pistol, paint, and, depending on your tribe, a horse.

- **In Your Diary:** As Indian cultures generally have no written language, you keep your diary in your head in the form of memorized tales.

- **Why You're Here:** With the permission of the tribal council, you are travelling the world to gain experience and wisdom beneficial to the tribe. Maybe you have left to prove something, to the Council or to yourself.



I waited, expecting my kidneys to be ripped to shreds by jumbo economy-sized buckshot. It didn't happen. I cautiously opened one eye. Then both. The titanic soldier was staggering, a gaping, raw, bloody wound in his chest. I looked west and saw another giant, this one Indian. He wasn't nearly as huge as the Anglo monstrosity, but plenty big enough in my book. He rode on a pinto, and carried a cannon in one hand. He aimed the cannon again, holding it by the trail of the carriage. He fired, hitting the soldier in the shoulder and spinning him to the ground.

Then the soldier got pissed.

The fires in his eyes grew white-hot, and he actually snarled in hate. Let me tell you, it worked for me. I about wet my pants, he looked so mean. He fired his Winchester at the Indian, blowing a hole through the horse's head and striking the Indian in the chest. Then, badly wounded himself, he crawled away.

For now.

I knew he'd be back. Sometime.

I got to my feet and surveyed the wreckage around me. It looked bad, but the Indians were in good spirits. They started singing again, this time a victory song. They sang as they tended to their dead and wounded, sang as they rebuilt their village. I wandered around until I found the old shaman from Stamberg. He just smiled at me and vanished.

I went to look after the Indian warrior. Maybe check out the cannon. I climbed a hill to get a look, and I saw him struggling to his feet, a hand clutched to his side. And then other Indians came. Giants, like him. From the north came a wizened old man, holding a long peace pipe and wearing a robe white with snow. From the west came another, herding a bison alongside. From the south, two more, one carrying quills, ink, and leather; the other carrying two baskets, one filled with Indian goods and the other filled with machine-made tools. And, turning east, I saw another giant standing right behind me, holding a heavily decorated hoe and fishing pole. Animals came, too. A wolf, a rabbit, a raven, a deer, a bear, and many others.

I admit, I don't know my American Indian tribes. I wouldn't know a Sioux from a Sockitoomee. But I could tell that these were different tribes. They dressed in varying fashion and seemed to have their own lives. They all had some modern tools as well. And yet they all gathered, talked, and smoked.

It was cool.

Real cool.

"I am now advanced in years and... have studied a great deal to find out a plan to save our people from wasting and destruction. We are now to be settled beyond all the settlements of white people, and there is no reason to fear that the whites will ever penetrate beyond us in consequence of the grand prairie...

"My plan is to have our brothers of the old nation remove to this country. If they wish to become independent now is the time and the only time. *Let us unite and be one people and make a wall to the east which shall be no more trodden down or ever passed by whites.* Thus may we plan for our posterity for ages to come and for the scattered remnants of other tribes. *Instead of being remnants and scattered we should become the United Tribes of America* and preserve the sinking race of native Americans from extinction."

—Chief Oo-Loo-Tc-Ka of the Western Cherokee, in a speech delivered to the remaining Eastern tribes, reigniting Tecumseh's Great Dream of 1828.

THE SACRED LAND: PLACES OF POWER IN THE TWENTY NATIONS

The Twenty Nations is the stronghold of the Indians in North America. Here the old ways are still practiced and the earth is held sacred. The White Man has not brought his Steam-Powered wonders to strip away the magick of the land and the Places of Power are mighty indeed. Places of Power are endowed with a natural force that sorcerors can tap. If the sorcerer is an Indian, he can draw two magick cards at a time. Any other sorcerer will only be able to draw a single card and the magicks at his command will always be wild. Some Places of Power have additional spell effects as well.

The Indians of the Twenty Nations believe that Great Spirits inhabit the Places of Power. These spirits are revered as manifestations of the Great Mystery that created the universe. To the Indians of the Twenty Nations there can be no more sacred sites than these Places of Power. Here, you are on holy ground.

Yellowstone is the place where the earth boils. Located in the northwestern extent of the Twenty Nations, Yellowstone is renowned even among the White Men for its hot springs and geysers. Nestled in a valley of incredible natural beauty and drama, this is an area of great power.

Ta Tanka, the Spirit of the Buffalo, resides here. Protected by great wolf packs, Yellowstone is also guarded by the entities known as **Raw Gums**. Appearing as cannibal infants, Raw Gums can command the skeletal remains of all of their victims. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerors have no cost based on the number of subjects affected, but entreaty must be made to Ta Tanka.

• Raw Gums

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Physique [GR]
Terrifying Apparition: As per the Haunt ability (CF pg. 175).
Animation of the Dead: Like the spell.

The **Medicine Wheel** is located to the east of Yellowstone and is a man-made Place of Power. Here the Indian medicine man **Burnt Face** drew upon the ground a great wheel aligned with the heavens. In many ways, the Medicine Wheel in the Indian equivalent of Stonehenge. It is place of sacred knowledge.

The spirit of **Burnt Face** still watches over the Medicine Wheel and guides Indians on vision quests. **Paiyuk**, simple forest animals that feast on human flesh, inhabit the area surrounding the Medicine Wheel. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerors have no cost based on the knowledge of the subject of the spell.

• Paiyuk

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GR] • Stealth [GD]
Camouflage: Paiyuk appear as otherwise normal animals.
Frenzy: A berserk bloodlust that raises all abilities by one level for one hour.

Devil's Tower rises to the east of the Medicine Wheel, just west of the Black Hills. A great, corrugated cylinder of rock, it rises high above the surrounding forests. Legend has it that this is a place where one is made safe from his enemies.

Taku Skanskan, the Spirit of the Four Winds, dwells atop Devil's Tower. **Indacinga**, giant owls with great strength, nest in the surrounding forests. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerors have no cost based on the range of the spell but entreaty must be made to Taku Skanskan. It was here that the magicks that destroyed St. Louis were wrought, and hence the name bestowed by the White Men—Devil's Tower.

• Indacinga (aka Giant Owls)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Perception [EXT] • Physique [EXC] • Stealth [GR]
Fly: The ability to fly.

The **Black Hills** loom in the land of the Lakota between the Medicine Wheel and the Badlands. Here the prairie gives way to rolling hills. The thickly wooded hillsides look black from the middle distance. There is no more sacred place in the Twenty Nations.

The Spirit of the Bear, **Wacabe**, lives in the Black Hills. Many of the animals who live here are **Sendeh**, shapeshifters and tricksters. No one hunts or trespasses in this land. Indian sorcerors cast spells within the Black Hills as if they were of two levels higher in ability. If the sorcerer is

of Exceptional level, he gains one level and +2 to his cardplay. If he is of Extraordinary level, he gains +4.

• Sendeh

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GD] • Stealth [GD]
Take Human Form: As per the Mermaid ability (CF pg. 175).
Enchantment: As per the Faerie Lord ability (CF pg. 175).

The **Badlands** of the Lakota are a twisted maze of rock gouged into the earth. The land is broken but with a great majesty that gives it a stark beauty. This is a place of great vision quests and mystical retreat.

The **Wakanapi**, ancestral spirits, are more easily contacted within the Badlands. However, such undertakings are dangerous, for the Badlands are home to **Unhecgila**, a serpentine dragon-like creature, unrelated to the dragons of New Europa. Indian sorcerors cast spells in the Badlands as if they were of one higher level of ability. If the sorcerer is of Extraordinary level, he gains +2 to his cardplay.

• Unhecgila

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [EXT] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [EXT] • Stealth [GR]
Raise Forces of Nature: As per the lorebook of spells.
Allure: As per the Nymph ability (CF pg. 174).

Chimney Rock rises out of the prairie like a lone sentinel. It marks the beginning of the sacred lands to the north. This pillar of rock is similar to those found in Monument Valley to the southwest, though no connection between the two sites is known.

The Spirit of the Hawk, **Cetan**, often perches atop the spire. The wind that seems to moan around the rock is said to be the sound of **Pakahk**, invisible skeleton spirits. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerors have no cost based on duration, but entreaty must be made to Cetan.

• Pakahk (aka skeleton spirits)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Physique [GD]
Insubstantial: In their natural state, Pakahk are noncorporeal, invisible, and unable to affect the living world or be affected by it. Only when they take physical form can they act.
Terrifying Apparition: As per the Haunt ability (CF pg. 175).

Castle Rock, like Chimney Rock, is a lonely outcropping in the vast prairie. Massive and squat, Castle Rock is surrounded on every side by the waving central grasslands. The Indians of the Twenty Nations use Castle and Chimney Rocks as landmarks in the sea of grass.

Okaga, the Spirit of the South Wind, frequents Castle Rock and is responsible for the great storms that lash the southern prairies. When, on still days, the tall grass seems to gently wave beneath the rock face, it is said that the **Nahgane**, invisible Grass Giants, are out hunting.

• Nahgane (aka Grass Giants)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [EXC] • Perception [GD] • Physique [EXC]
Invisibility: The Nahgane are naturally invisible. They only become visible when they choose to be.
Live in the Earth: The ability to meld and live within any earth or stone massing more than ten cubic meters.

The **Ozark Mountains** are the oldest mountain range in North America, worn down by time to little more than a tangle of almost inaccessible rocky hills. Amidst the thick woodlands, south of the Missouri River, the Ozarks are filled with hollows, caves, and hidden springs. Meremac Caverns and the Arkansas Hot Springs are two of the most notable.

Mysterious to even the Indians, the Ozarks are regarded with superstitious awe. They say the hills have eyes. So primitive are these back woods that outlaws from Orleans and Confederate Renegades, like the notorious Jesse James, have been able to set up hideouts and hidden communities in the Ozarks, safe even from the knowledge of the Indians. Few posers that have come in search of these outlaws have returned. Whether they became lost or met with hostile Indians, outlaw ambush, or something that moves silently through the hills is unknown.

DREAM INTO MOTION

Hot. Suddenly I was very hot. And ill. I couldn't figure out where I was, until I realized I was sitting on a wooden bench in the sweat lodge. I could hardly see; my eyes were swimming. I couldn't take any more; I had to leave.

I completely forgot to grab the robe they'd given me as I staggered out of the sweat lodge. I stumbled through the village, heading blindly for the council hut.

I must have passed out as I crossed through the door.

When I came to, I was lying between fur blankets. Warm. Comfortable. Clean. Two Indian women were present; one gave me some water to drink, while the other went to get the elders. I drank the water and had a bit of cold venison, and actually I felt pretty darn good. Tired, but good. Clean, inside and out. So I got dressed and stepped outside.

The shamen and chiefs were coming to see me, and were mildly surprised I was on my feet. I asked (politely) if I might go for a short walk before I told them of my dream. That way I could get my blood flowing and spend a little time gathering my memories. They agreed, and went into the council hut to wait for me.

I walked around the village, feeling that same peace that I felt in the dreams. I watched the villagers at their work, tanning hides, preparing food, tending to the children who played in the dirt. It's amazing how imaginative kids are. Even without all the Power Rangers toys. But then I got to the east end of the village. Looking toward the horizon, I thought I could see a smudge. Perhaps it was my imagination, perhaps it was smoke from the coal-burning plants on the other side of the frontier. Perhaps it was a remnant from the dream, a lingering vision of things to come.

But they didn't have to be.

Dread hit me. I turned and ran back for the lodge where the council waited for me, my mind bursting with things to say.

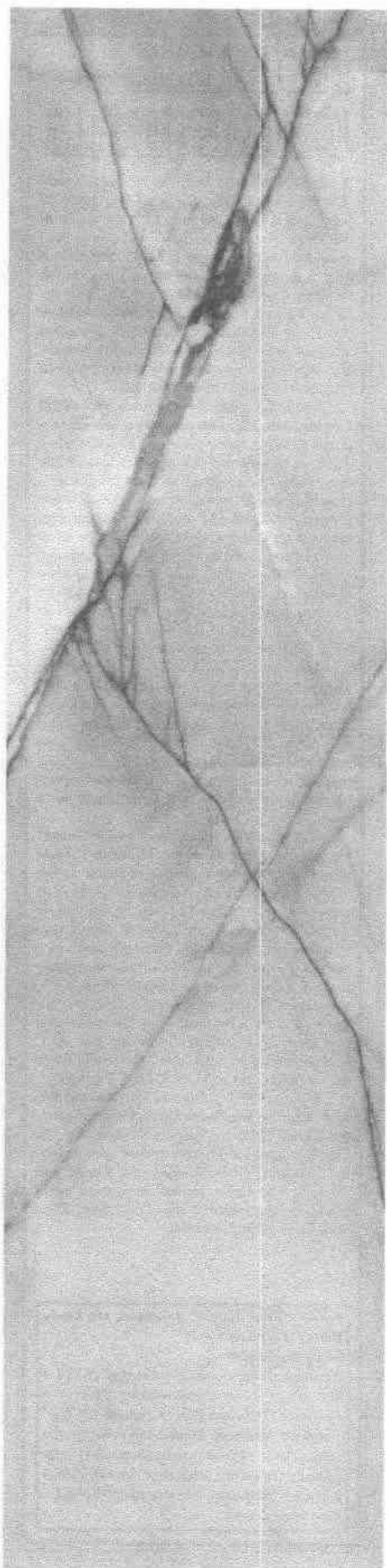
I spent the next hour or three talking to the chiefs and shamen. They asked a lot of questions, probing for details I wasn't even aware that I remembered. And they asked questions about the strangest things—what color were the feathers on the warrior, were there pebbles on the ground, things like that. It was an eerie feeling, talking about all this dream stuff with the continuous chant of *The Dance* as a soundtrack. Having them take all this talk of giants and stuff seriously. Weird. They even had some guy there taking notes. I guess he must have been Cherokee; I think they're the guys who have their own written language. Either that, or he was literate in English.

Finally there was a long pause. One of the chiefs stood up. This guy was seriously old. I'm amazed he could stand under the weight of everything he wore. "You are brave, White Coyote," he said. "We give you great thanks. You show us Tomorrow Path. Now we decide how to walk that path. You may go." I stood up. He turned away from me to face the other chiefs.

"Excuse me," I said.

He turned back to face me very slowly. I think I'd just stepped on a few chiefly toes standing up to him like that. But I had to take the plunge. "With all due respect, chief, I'd rather stay," I said. "Yeah, you guys are the ones who are good at interpreting dreams. Heck, I never have figured out why I keep meeting hippos in mine. But I think I should sit in on this anyway, because I understand American culture better than you do. I know what their goals are, what their industry is like. Maybe I can spot something you guys overlook, something that will help you in the long run. Give you folks a different perspective on things. A perspective from the future, in a way. So I'd just as soon stay and listen."

He smiled slightly. And I knew he'd wanted me to say that. I grinned back and sat down. And we started to talk for real.



JOHN "LIVER EATING"

JOHNSTON, THE CROW KILLER

John Johnston, aka Jeremiah Johnson, is truly a giant of a man. Six feet, two hundred pounds of red-bearded fury, he is the terror of the Crow Nation. His history is vague, and shrouded in the mists of tall tales, but here is what is generally surmised about him. He left the United States in 1843, wandering into the Indian Nations to become one of that rarest of breed, the mountain man. Like all mountain men, Johnston got along well with the Indians, and they with him, until two events occurred that would change things drastically.

The first happened when Johnston was still a young man. He came upon what was left of a settler family's wagon-train on the Musselshell River, in the middle of Crow territory. While most tribes were willing to let a lone wagon cross the nations, provided they eventually left Indian land, or tolerate mountain men building cabins in the Nations, the Crow wanted none in their territory but the Crow. The entire family, except for the mother, Jane Morgan, had been slaughtered, and she had been driven mad by what she had witnessed. Seeing her touched so by the Great Spirit, the Crow had left her alone. Johnston took her in, and cared for her.

Eventually, Johnston fell in love with a Flathead woman, who loved him, married him, and became pregnant by him. One black day, when Johnston was out trapping, a Crow raiding party fell upon Johnston's cabin, and butchered his wife and unborn child. Returning to the scene of carnage, Johnston vowed bloody revenge upon the Crow. And so it began.

The man who became famous for harboring the crazy woman of the Musselshell River now became a legend, a god of death to the Crow. Mountain men who knew Johnston at this point and witnessed his acts report that he would kill people as casually as he would trap beaver. Once, a man who hired Johnston as a guide witnessed him attack a Crow camp single-handed, killing two and severely wounding several more. As the others fled, Johnston sat down and casually butchered the dead and wounded, eating their livers on the spot. Johnston did this so that the Crow would know who stalked them—"Liver Eating" Johnston.

Up to 1860, Johnston had claimed the lives of at least two dozen Crow. He returned to the United States to fight for the Union in the Civil War, and is rumored to have died in battle. However, his body was never found, and after the war Crow Indians were once again found missing their livers. The Crow Killer once again stalks the plains.

• John "Liver Eating" Johnston, the Crow Killer (Legendary figure)
Scout and Soldier

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Courage [EXT] • Fencing [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Perception (Tracking) [GR] • Physique [EXC]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible or insubstantial and to fly naturally. Only spells, artifacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

I won't even try to transcribe the talk we had. But basically, it all boiled down to one concept: Evolve or die. Check your Darwin. The United States (and the rest of the world) has a growing culture. The Twenty Nations' cultures haven't grown significantly in hundreds of years, notwithstanding the effects of exposure to the colonists. Although The Dance had maintained the Twenty Nations' frontier for forty-odd years, it was weakening. Classic American folklore tales had come to life every bit as much as the Indian myths had, and they were sapping the strength of the barrier. It would collapse. And when it did, the settlers would come.

In order to be able to withstand the pressure of the Americans, the Twenty Nations had to grow themselves, to try to keep pace with the States. They had to become a modern nation, yet without sacrificing their heritage to industrialization. The map I had seen in the dream was the same map that Sam Houston and Tecumseh presented to President Jackson in 1830. Of course, there was something new on my version.

The Indians had to build cities. Not your typical New European-style metropoli, but they had to centralize themselves. This would give the tribes greater interaction, and provide sites for light industry, a better economic base for their population, and springboards for military defense and supply. It also would give foreign merchants a single place to come and trade. That in turn would help smooth relations. As they buried the economic giants of the world under a pile of Indian goods.

Trade would give the Indians access to modern equipment. According to my dream, they'd be able to get advanced weaponry from the Bear Flag Republic to help stop the invasion we all expected. I talked to them for a while about military tactics. The old skirmish-and-run tactics wouldn't stop the American armies. Nor would they have the manpower to fight with standard tactics; they'd be defeated just like the Confederates were, overwhelmed by numbers. Instead, I taught them some modern concepts. Many Indians are excellent horsemen, and I figured they could make great light cavalry. That, combined with blitzkrieg tactics, would be able to keep the invaders at bay.

They couldn't win; Americans will keep coming back. Americans hate losing. But if they held the Americans off, that would give them time to convince the Americans that they were a real civilization, and peace could be had with honor. Once peace came, trade would increase.

Of course, they had to be able to transport their goods, hence the need for railheads. The rail line from my dream did not go from horizon to horizon. The Indians instead opted to build railheads leading to the planned sites of two large cities, one leading south and the other west. That's it. Everything shipped in or out would have to go overland to the railheads. Transcontinental tourists would still end up shunting south to take the trains through Texas. Not many tourists crossing Indian lands.

I didn't see any fences in the dream, nor any massive one-crop plantations. But changes were there. That Indian leading the bison was obviously some sort of herder. He was even wearing Indian-painted chaps. Puts a whole new spin on the phrase "cow-boy and Indian." And another Indian had farming tools.

This was the topic we talked about longest. Several chiefs wanted to hold to the old ways, while I advocated wholesale modernization. We all eventually agreed that the buffalo herds should be managed—not corralled—and modern agricultural techniques could be used to help the land provide more food without wearing it out. Not so much farming, but nurturing the land to do its wild thing.

The last item we talked about was what everyone should do. And it was decided that everyone should do what they do best. Which, ultimately, is what people want to do, and what keeps them happiest. The plains Indians, instead of wandering around and hunting buffalo, would lead a more orderly nomad lifestyle, herding the buffalo to the best grazing areas and carefully culling the herds. There'd be an annual drive to the railheads to export bison meat to the eastern metropoli.

The original Five Tribes would be the nerve center of the nation. They'd be the lawmakers, the statesmen. It would be their job to take a loose confederation of tribes and form it into an effective nation. They had that experience.

And so on, for each of the tribes in the Twenty Nations. It would work.

GO WEST, YOUNG MAN

W

ell, that was easy," I said to Martin as I left the council. He laughed. It had taken three days of intense discussion. Heck, the only way I could tell how much time had passed was to count the number of meals we were served in a single session. But hey, we're planning a nation here. No need to rush it.

Then it was Martin's turn.

Martin von Hubel, Bayernese diplomat, had the honor of being the first representative to negotiate formal treaties with the newly reorganized Twenty Nations Confederation. I just wish Pfisty had been here, because I could have talked a bunch of warriors into putting on full warpaint and scaring him to death late one night. I would have gotten a reprimand from Ludwig for it, but it would have been worth it.

While Martin worked out the treaty stuff, I amused myself in the village. Some braves took me hunting. I learned a little about weaving, too. Probably just enough to get me in trouble. But mostly I played with the kids.

They're why I came, right?

Many of the kids had never seen an Anglo before, let alone someone with blond hair and blue eyes. I'm so Nordic. So I flopped on my back and let them pig-pile on me. You ever tried to wrestle a half-dozen or more energetic little kids at the same time? Without hurting any of them? It was fun. And a good workout.

I never did see the kid from my dream. I'm not sure whether or not I expected to, but it was kind of a disappointment that I didn't. Of course, he was probably some allegorical symbol of the energy and potential of the Twenty Nations culture or something, but still, he was a bugger. I wanted to see him, pick him up and hold him under better circumstances. You don't have much time to appreciate the warmth of human contact when you're dodging giant razor-edged talons.

Finally Martin finished. One of the items they had negotiated was a proposal that the Twenty Nations join the Second Compact. Von Hubel hoped that a similar proposal might be negotiated with the Bear Flag. Then, if he could bring both of those back to Bayern, the two countries could support each other, and their involvement would improve the odds that the Republic of Texas would join as well. We've got Bismarck pretty well walled off in Europe, so now Martin was working on walling off the Freemasons of the United States. What a guy.

Soon Martin was finished here as well. The basics had been hammered out; the proposals he had needed to be approved by Ludwig and the rest of the government, or else the Second Compact as a whole. I, of course, was ready to go any time. I was tempted to stay, but the thought of what was waiting for me in San Francisco made all the difference.

Marianne.

Yep. Time to roll.

The Indians pulled together and gave us a lot of supplies for our horses and guides to lead us westward across the Great Plains, the unorganized territories, and the Rocky Mountains. They had already sent riders along our route to ensure that we got food and shelter along the way.

We mounted up: Martin, me, and two braves. The whole village turned out to see us off. The Council stepped forward and presented Martin with a peace pipe and several other tokens for King Ludwig. Then they came over to me.

One of them, I think he was the one who was in charge of the Dance, spoke. "We called for you, White Coyote, and you came. You came only because we called you. You were not of our people, but you came. You came, and you are now of our people. You are White Coyote. What you bring is hard to accept, but we must take your gift to survive. We thank you for your great help. Take our gift of thanks." He held up a robe.

My God, it was beautiful.



THE SNAKE PEOPLE

In the most remote part of the Rocky Mountains dwell the horrific Snake People, a tribe of Indians not part of the Twenty Nations and avoided by all tribes that walk in the light of day.

The Snake People have their own language, customs, and culture that is known as the Way of the Viper. Never confuse them with the Shoshone, who are nicknamed the Snake Indians. All shun the Snake People, even the Apache, who are regarded as the most cruel and hostile of tribes.

The god of the Snake People is one that slithers upon the earth. In the inhospitable, forsaken heart of the Rockies is a pit, easily fifty yards across. From the unknown depths (unknown because no man has descended into them and come out alive) constantly drifts a damp mist that covers the surrounding area with a clinging, musky odor. In the depths dwells a titanic pit viper, whose slitted yellow eyes sit a yard apart on its head, and whose tongue darts out six feet from its mouth to search for prey. The Snake People follow the trails of flattened, crushed vegetation the viper leaves behind when it hunts as roads. The venom of the viper is extremely lethal and corrosive. Anyone bit dies almost instantly as the part of their body around the bite dissolves, enough venom to kill two hundred men coursing through the victim's veins.

Each spring, the Snake People make sacrifices to insure the safety of the tribe. They often paint their bodies with the snake's spoor, so that they will smell like the snake and not be mistaken for prey. All animals and people not of the tribe are fair game for their god, so travellers in the Rockies should be extremely cautious. They should also always run instead of investigating or fighting.



GIANT SNAKES

The god of the Snake People is not the only giant snake in the Americas, but it is the largest known. Pit vipers seem to show the most propensity for gigantism. Giant diamondback rattlesnakes are a fairly common sight in the deserts of Texas and southern California, with twenty foot long specimens reported in the wastes of Death Valley.

Fortunately, the average giant snake is not as ornery as the god of the Snake People. In all respects, they behave just as their smaller cousins do. They are fairly easy to avoid, as they tend to seek out cool, shady places during the day and tend to avoid conflict except as a last resort.

The next most common variety of giant snake is the King Snake, who increased in stature to continue preying on its favorite meal, the diamondback rattlesnake.

What a robe. It was perfectly crafted, and colorful. I thanked the chief as best I could while getting choked up, and put it on. Then we rode out of town. No, not into the setting sun, it was the start of the day. But I turned to wave a final goodbye and saw the sun rising over the village, breaking through the clouds on the horizon.

Yeah.

During the long ride west, our guides explained the symbolism of the patterns and pictures on the robe. Together they told the whole story. But most importantly, all around the shoulders was a thick, plush coyote pelt, paws coming around the front, and bushy tail dangling down my back.

A white coyote pelt.

No, not a light-colored one, not a pale gray, but white. It had to have been an albino, because it was as pure as snow. And thick! Let me tell you, I could easily see standing in the middle of a blizzard in this thing and staying warm.

The guides told me that while I was in the sweat lodge, the coyote had walked into the village. No one dared to touch it. It walked slowly, not trotting like coyotes usually do. It didn't look to either side, didn't stop to sniff anything. And it walked straight up to the sweat lodge. It stopped and lay down. It stayed there the whole time, standing guard. Then, right before I stumbled out, it rolled over onto its side and died.

Sometimes I'm glad I don't understand how the universe works.

It took us about a month or so to get to the Bear Flag Empire. I didn't see the point of counting the days when it wouldn't actually change the distance we still had to travel. Instead, I tried to learn as much as I could. We passed through the area of Yellowstone and the Tetons on the way. It was, of course, beautiful. I'd been there, years ago, but it looks so much different without the paved roads and speed limit signs and bear-proof garbage cans and wilderness interpretation centers.

And we didn't have a mobile home, either.

Well, actually, we did. We called it The Great Outdoors. Our room was our tent. The kitchen was that vague area where if you tripped you might fall into the fire. The bathroom was at least a hundred yards away from the nearest water. And our living room was as far as the eye could see. *Now that's living.*

We learned a lot during that time. Von Hubel had more to learn than I, because he'd never been camping. On the other hand, when I went camping, I usually had a state-of-the-art backpack, nifty propane camp stove, and freeze-dried food. I had a lot to learn, too. Our guides showed us how to track, how to kill and clean animals, how to watch the weather. It was great. Even after spending all night in a tent in the rain in Wyoming being cold and wet, I'd get up the next morning and watch my breath mist the air and think to myself, *Now this is living.*

By the time we got to the Bear Flag, we—that is, Martin and myself—were tanned and trail-hardened. The changes that time had had on us were noticeable to all. When we got there, I noticed all the staff treated Martin with a lot more respect. No more the pallid palace diplomat for him. But there were two minor incidents which stand out from those weeks which I should tell you about.

The first happened one evening after sundown. We were camping with some Shoshone. A small Comanche band had chanced upon us, too. We were sitting around our fire, just finishing our dinner of jackrabbit, roots, and preserved buffalo, when I saw some unusual lights on the horizon. It sort of looked like heat lightning looks never really visible itself but lighting up the sky.

But it was more regular than heat lightning. And it had distinct colors to it. It didn't move around the horizon, either. I watched it for about a quarter hour before I knew for certain my mind wasn't playing tricks on me. "What's that over there?" I asked, pointing.

They all got quiet really fast.

THE UNORGANIZED TERRITORIES

Surrounded by the Bear Flag Empire, the Twenty Nations, and the Republic of Texas is the area referred to as the Unorganized Territories. It encompasses the Rocky Mountains generally west of the Continental divide, to include much of the Plateau region near the Bitterroot Mountains, a substantial portion of the Great Basin, the area around the Great Salt Lake, and the Canyonlands. This area is home to outlaws, several tribes of Indians, and the Mormons. It remains unorganized chiefly because of the tacit alliance between the Mormons and the Indians of the area, both determined to live as they choose. Equally responsible is the desire of each of the nations surrounding the Unorganized Territories to claim the area. None of them have quite figured out how to do so without provoking the others. Each attempts to woo the Indians of the area, who make up the bulk of the native population. The Indians have their own ideas.

THE LAST REFUGE

For many tribes the Unorganized Territories represent the last place where they can truly be free. Not every tribe welcomed incorporation into the Twenty Nations, the Bear Flag Empire, or the Texas Republic. By choice or by force, several fled into the Unorganized Territories. Not surprisingly, this brought them into conflict with the tribes already there, making already belligerent tribes downright bellicose.

When the Iroquois moved west in 1812, they started a chain reaction of jostling for territory among the Plains Tribes, as the Five Civilized Tribes displaced the easternmost Sioux. As one tribe after another edged westward, it was the Flathead Indians who bore the brunt of the process. Pressed against the Rocky Mountains, with nowhere to go, the Flathead stood and fought against the tribes of the Twenty Nations. The Northern Shoshone, similarly squeezed, joined the fight. In the end, the Twenty Nations were simply too powerful. Both the Flathead and the Northern Shoshone retreated into the Unorganized Territories.

When Emperor Norton convinced the Indians of the northwest to join the Bear Flag Empire, the Cayuse, always a quarrelsome people, refused. The Nez Perce, as slow to anger as the Cayuse are quick, declined the invitation out of an abundance of caution. Both groups retreated into the Bitterroot Mountains, where they coexist uneasily.

It was a different story in the Nevada Territory. The tribes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains willingly agreed to join the Empire, revealing the Silver Secret in the process. The Southern Paiute and Southern Shoshone, occupying the bulk of the territory that would come into the Empire, did not. Imperial forces pressed forward anyway to establish a buffer zone beyond Virginia City. While the Indians of this territory have been generally well treated, they still harbor resentment about their incorporation and consider themselves Shoshone first and Imperial citizens second.

THE MOUNTAIN WARS

The Indian Tribes native to the Unorganized Territories include the Ute, Northern Paiute and the main body of the Shoshone. The Shoshone are a mighty Indian Nation. With Northern and Southern branches, they are as large, powerful, and capable a tribe as the Cheyenne or Sioux Nations. The Northern and Southern Paiute are almost as large. Despite an impressively large territory, the Ute are not as numerous a people.

When the flow of refugees began, the Shoshone had no hesitation about accepting their Northern and Southern cousins. However, this put enormous pressure on the Paiute and especially

the Ute. As Shoshone allies in the recent war, the Flathead were also accepted but given lands claimed by several smaller tribes. War was the inevitable result as each tribe fought for territory. Between 1830 and 1840, a series of wars caused by the influx of the Flathead and Northern Shoshone were fought among the tribes of the Unorganized Territories. Again in the 1860's, wars consumed the tribes as the Southern Paiute, Southern Shoshone, Cayuse, and Nez Perce all retreated into the Territories. In the end, the Ute lost the most territory to make room for the other tribes.

THE MORMONS

In between the Mountain Wars, the Mormons moved into the valley of the Great Salt Lake, founding Deseret. The Indians regarded the Mormons as crazy to want to live so near undrinkable water and crazier still when they discovered their beliefs. The Mormons, believing them to be the Lost Tribes of Israel, treated the Indians well, though they insisted on trying to convert them. For the most part, the Indians ignore the Mormons. The Mormons have, however, won some grudging respect. Without fail, Mormons will heal, feed, and clothe any Indian in need, asking only that the Indian listen to a sermon. The Indians respect both the kindness and the craziness of such behavior. All of the tribes of the Unorganized Territories have agreed that the Salt Lake is neutral territory and hold parleys on its islands.

AN INDIAN CAESAR

In the Unorganized Territories, from the mighty Shoshone Nation has arisen a warrior. Little is known of him beyond his name, Burnt Feather. What is certain is that he is bringing together a confederacy of tribes that may eventually rival the Twenty Nations. The Shoshone alone are as powerful as the Cheyenne or Sioux. The Paiute and Flathead are almost as strong and have both joined the Confederacy, while the Cayuse and Ute are still considering. If they join, Burnt Feather will be more than a force to be reckoned with. Only the Nez Perce have refused to join.

Already there have been skirmishes with the Bear Flag Empire and with the Twenty Nations. It seems certain that Burnt Feather means to take back lands the Shoshone lost to both nations and perhaps extend his Confederacy. If true, in the process he will plunge the west into a series of Indian Wars unparalleled in American history. This prospect is not lost on the Twenty Nations, the Bear Flag Empire, or the Texas Republic. All have sent peace envoys to Burnt Feather, with no response. Covert expeditions have failed to return.

Rumors have it that the Mormons, fearing eventual incorporation into one state or another, have agreed to use their magick to aid Burnt Feather. If true, the danger posed by his Confederacy is all the greater. Similar rumors involve the Hodano Medicine Society. Without question, the Unorganized Territories are a powderkeg and are becoming more dangerous all the time.

A HAVEN FOR OUTLAWS

Contributing to the danger is the presence of numerous outlaws. The Outlaw Trail, connecting Virginia City in the Bear Flag Empire and Amarillo and Santa Fe in the Texas Republic, runs through the Unorganized Territories. Poses attempting to apprehend outlaws fleeing into the Unorganized Territories have to contend not only with increasingly hostile Indians, but also the tortured Canyonlands, twisting mazes of rock in which the outlaws have their hideouts. Such hideouts are notoriously well defended.

THE MORMONS

The Mormons believe that the New Testament does not reflect the last teachings of Jesus. Rather, they believe that his further teachings are revealed in the divinely inspired Book of Mormon. Known for their practice of polygamy, the Mormons believe that the Indians are the lost tribes of Israel. In this, the Mormon faith is uniquely American.

A peaceable, industrious people, the Mormons have been hounded and persecuted for their beliefs. Driven from the United States, the Mormons, led by the visionary Brigham Young, made their way west, searching for their promised land. They settled around the Great Salt Lake. The surrounding mountains and Indian territories have finally given the Mormons the security to practice their faith in peace.

Mormon relations with the Indians are complex. The Indians think the Mormons are crazy and leave them alone as long as they stay in the valley where they have built Deseret. The Mormons treat the Indians with respect, believing them to be the lost tribes of Israel, but still feel a need to convert them to Christianity. Relations are correspondingly rocky at times, but for the most part the Mormons and the Indians peacefully coexist.

In the great Tabernacle they have built in Salt Lake City, the Mormon Elders practice a highly specialized kind of sorcery. The Elders are an elite Sorcerous Society that guides the Church of Mormon. They believe spellcasting to be presumptuous and an affront to God if practiced by man in other than a holy ceremony calling upon divine aid. The Lord has given man the ability to use magick as a tool to aid him upon this earth, but only as a tool. Man must not wield the power of God as if he were a god.

Accordingly, the Elders do not cast spells except to create artefacts, which are tools to be used freely as God intended. Of course, the problem with creating artefacts is that they can only be created through Use and Intent. While Mormon artefacts are not common, they are more so than might be supposed. The creation process involves entire congregations.

The artefact is designed, shaped, and crafted by the Elders. They determine the Intent of the artefact. In secretive rites conducted in the Tabernacle, an artefact will be passed among the congregation after they have been told of its Intent. Each member grasps the artefact and concentrates his thoughts upon it, willing it to function, before passing it on to the next member, who does the same. Called Imbuing, the artefact gains power through Use in this manner. Each service during which an artefact is Imbued gives that artefact one hundredth point of Thaumic Energy. A side effect of this process is that Mormon artefacts are only useable by Mormons. Of course, normal Use of an artefact will also increase its power.

One of the Comanche finally answered me. "That is the white man's town. They came from the East many seasons ago, when my father was a boy. They walked through the Spirit Wall together, singing a great chant, and it did not stop them. When we saw that they crossed through the Spirit Wall, we did not attack them, because their medicine was too strong. They came and they built their town by the shores of the bitter waters. They worship their God in that place, and their magick is very powerful.

"They say their land is a land which is across the Great Waters. I do not understand those words. Because we do not understand, we do not go there often. They are happy to be left alone, and we are happy that they leave us to live as we want."

I watched the lights for another quarter hour.

Powerful indeed.

The second incident took place after that, so I figure we must have been in the Bear Flag's territory already. There's just not a whole lot out there in eastern Nevada, so I'm not sure. Anyway, a thunderstorm was rolling across the western sky. It was gorgeous. We were actually dry, but we figured we'd get plastered shortly. We enjoyed the view while we could, watching lightning crawl all over the clouds, followed by deep rolling peals of thunder. Exactly the sort of weather where I'm happier on the ground than I would be in an arozep.

I don't know where it came from, but suddenly I found myself humming a song. A song from your side of the Veil. "Ghost Riders in the Sky". I don't even know the words, I just know the tune and the chorus, sort of. I just started humming along. It fit the mood of the desert thunderstorm perfectly. American gothic goes west.

And then I saw them.

Good Lord, Mike, they were there. I was struck speechless. They were hard to see, indistinct. Every time I tried to focus on them, they disappeared, but in my peripheral vision they were clear as a bell. A tolling bell. A herd of vicious red-eyed cloven-hoofed longhorns stampeded across the sky, kicking up sparks and cinders when their deadly horns speared the stars. And then the Ghost Riders, doomed to chase the wild bulls for eternity, never quite getting them under control. Like I say, they were clearest in my peripheral vision, so you'd think I wouldn't get much detail, yet somehow I could still see the raw sweat dripping down their backs, the desperation and exhaustion carved into their faces. Their horses were foaming at the mouth, frenzied, and they too kicked up sparks as their hooves struck the ether.

What a fate.

I couldn't watch any more. I turned to look at the others, see if they saw them. The Indians were all studiously looking down or staring into the fire. Von Hubel stared happily skyward.

He noticed me looking at him. "Great meteor shower, wouldn't you say, Tom?"

I glanced up again. Another shooting star shot across the sky.

But to me, it was still an ember.

It was a long night.

Aside from those two events, and the day I surprised a skunk, the trip was quiet and enjoyable. Yeah we went rather hungry a few times, and we started rationing our supplies, but we were never in any great danger. We got to ride through some of the most beautiful country in the land, as well as some of the most inhospitable. I think that by sharing the Indian guides' lifestyle, and telling them stories about our homeland, that I may have done my small part to bring our cultures closer together.

I was kind of depressed when we saw the first signs of Bear Flag civilization. That was just a couple of small miner's shacks that we came across along one of the rivers. Nothing at all compared to a real town, let alone a city. But we had to go back to civilization if we were to meet up with Marianne, Lückner, and the rest of the Bayernese crew.

Plus, I must admit, I had a real strong desire to meet Emperor Norton.

Collecting crazy kings was getting to be a hobby of mine.

SILVER FEVER

The trails became more distinct the more we traveled. Wider and more defined, although not necessarily any better. In fact, parts were really bad. But that's what I figured. Everyone here was far more concerned with mining silver than maintaining a trail.

Silver. Out in this corner of the Bear Flag Empire, silver is what it's all about. Mines, where you sling your picks to pry it out of the earth.

And crazy, wild, loud-mouthed, boot-stompin', moonshine-swiggin', gun-slingin', honky-tonk little boom towns like Virginia City where you spend it.

Virginia City happened to be exactly where we went. You remember how in Fort Worth, I said another Hollywood stereotype was shot to hell? In Virginia City, it rose again with a vengeance. It's amazing what a lot of money and a lack of law will do to people. The place was a hoot.

Virginia City's sole reason for existing was to grab all the silver (and gold) out of the Comstock Lode. Every last little bit. Men worked day and night at the task, each working their claims, or jumping the claims of their neighbor, or holding up someone else who'd already done the dirty work. Whoever's hand the silver ended up in was lucky, because he could go back to town and squander it on beer and women and food and general carousing. Then he'd spend whatever was left on supplies so he could go back to work the claims the next week.

The main street was a pot-holed muddy swath of dirt lined by two rows of unfinished wooden buildings. Every building had a clapboard wooden sidewalk and hitching posts. Boot scrapers stood outside every door. Hopefully the patrons would be sober or conscientious enough to use them instead of just tracking mud and dust and horse manure into every building in the city.

Every town needs its impossible dreams, right?

And chaos? Plenty of it. Stone-drunk cowboys staggered in the streets. Unwashed panhandlers displayed their complete lack of manners. And the bar wenches? They're braver than me. I didn't even like sitting next to one of those grimy miners, and they were going to bed with them. Yuuuuck. We poked around the town for a while. I was entering yet another new world. Seems like I've been doing that since I crossed the Veil. They had it all. Boots, tack and harness, general store, the works. The stamp mill pounded ore endlessly and noisily. The energy was infectious. So, feeling flush with a pocket full of Bayernese schillings, I invited our guides to the saloon with Martin and me. It was packed. Noisy. Party time.

If only I'd known.

THE NAVAJO RIVER OF SILVER

The deserts of the west hide many secrets. Some simply wait to be discovered. Others are jealously guarded. One of these secrets is *Pish-la-ki*, the "River of Silver."

The Navajo are one of the more peaceful tribes of the southwest. They are brave warriors when violence is necessary and staunch allies of Texas. However, they are more known for their peaceful philosophy, and for being skilled artists. This skill is displayed by the ornate jewelry they make out of silver. Once white men began associating with the Navajo, they began hearing tales of a vast, inexhaustible river of silver, from which the Navajo mined their silver.

The exact location of *Pish-la-ki* is unknown. It is rumored to be somewhere in *Tie-bi-gay*, the "Land Among the Rocks", which, on white men's maps, is in the Unorganized Territories north of Flagstaff. This is a dry, desolate area, not to be ventured into lightly. Vegetation is almost nonexistent, and waterholes only slightly more common. The southern deserts of the Unorganized Territories are home only to rattlesnakes, scorpions, and jealous Navajo.

The chief of the Navajo in this area is Oshkanninee. When the white men made their greed known by trying to obtain the location of *Pish-la-ki* through money or violence, Oshkanninee and the Navajo elders determined that *Pish-la-ki* was not for the whites to have. If they knew where it was, they would plunder it, strip it bare. Then the Navajo would be without silver.

Oshkanninee, out of friendship, sent a dispatch to Sam Houston, stating that any whites found north of the Texan border would be treated with suspicion, and, if their motives were determined to be suspect, would be treated harshly. This declaration was spread throughout Texas, to try to save the Texans from their own greed. Needless to say, it was not universally heeded. Every so often, expeditions set out north to find the River of Silver. All they found was trackless desert. Water, if they found any, was fouled and undrinkable. Eventually, nearly all of these raiders found nothing but death, either at the hands of nature or the Navajo. The occasional survivor, invariably blinded so that he cannot lead anyone back, is sent into Texas as a warning. There have been grumblings for the Texan Army to march north and eradicate the Navajo "menace", but most Texans, remembering the part Indians played in the Wars for Texan Independence, simply shake their heads and figure that anyone stupid enough to ignore the Navajo's warnings simply get what they deserve.

There are rumors that Oshkanninee has told Sam Houston the location. There are also rumors that say that Emperor Norton knows. Both statesmen deny these rumors.



THE COMSTOCK SILVER LODE

In the decades after the discovery at Sutter's Mill in California, "gold fever" gripped the miners and prospectors of the West. Few men thought of silver. Some even shoveled ore rich in the metal aside, not recognizing it for what it was. Only Norton, ruler of the Bear Flag Republic, was prescient enough, or crazy enough, to grasp the vast potential of this lesser element.

In 1866, hoping to further strengthen his burgeoning empire, Norton signed treaties with the Indians of the Northwest and the Great Basin. Unlike his own people, who thought he was a few nickels short of a sawbuck, the Indians regarded Norton as a kind of shaman, a man touched by a higher power. In return for his support against the Twenty Nations, the Indians of the Great Basin revealed what became known as the "Secret of Silver", the location of a fabulous lode of ore in the mountains of Western Nevada. After quickly dispatching a regiment of his army to guard the site, Norton issued a proclamation in San Francisco. Anyone willing to work the diggings in Nevada for the greater glory of the Bear Flag could keep twenty percent of his take.

Inside of a week all of the itinerant prospectors, fortune hunters, and rogues in the West were headed for the Washoe region of the High Sierra.

The rush centered around Sun Mountain, which was bracketed on the North and South by gulches dubbed Six-Mile Canyon and Gold Canyon respectively. Nowhere else on earth was there such a concentration of silver, with vast amounts of gold tossed in for good measure. The lode itself could be traced on the surface by scattered outcroppings of quartz, but this only hinted at the real wealth underground. The rich ore was hidden, but in some places it was buried so close to the surface that a man could practically scuff it up with his boots. Someone with a strong back and a pick, digging in the right place, would make himself a fortune.

The first men to reach the scene included a pair of Irish immigrants, Patrick McLaughlin and Peter O'Riley, a wanted murderer named James Finney, and a Canadian-born rogue named Henry P. T. Comstock. McLaughlin and O'Riley staked their claim between the terminals of the two gulches at an altitude of 6,400 feet. They began to dig near the head of Six-Mile Canyon, washing their dirt in a tiny stream that ran down the gulch. Fortunately for them, the flow was inadequate for their needs, and they decided to dig a small reservoir. Four feet down they hit a layer of a blue-black material, quite different from the yellow sand and clay they had been working. It was silver ore in a hitherto unknown form. A sample was soon assayed and valued at more than \$3,000 per ton.

Before the Irishmen had even realized what they had found, Henry Comstock, known far and wide as Old Pancake because he was too lazy to bake bread and consumed flapjacks instead, appeared out of nowhere claiming that the land was his. A notorious blowhard, Comstock quickly convinced the gullible immigrants to take him on as a partner. Considering his role as a bully, it is quite an injustice that the find came to be called the Comstock Lode.

A mine was quickly started on the site. It was called the Ophir, after the fabled source of King Solomon's gold. However, mining the unstable blue ore was difficult. Though the deposits were large, they were interspersed with belts of decomposing porphyry, huge sheets of clay, and reservoirs of hot water. Shafts dug in the area had a tendency to collapse, even when reinforced with great timbers. It was a Bavarian from the Freiberg School of Mines, Philipp Deidesheimer, who eventually came up with a solution. He designed a system of timbering called "square sets" involving short, massive timbers mortised and tenoned at the ends so they could be assembled into strong, hollow cubes. The cubes were then interlocked in a manner similar to a honeycomb. Within a few years, the Ophir and subsequent mines had been opened to great depths.

And what did James Finney, called Old Virginny after his birth state, have to do with all this? One night, while wandering drunk along the Ophir line, he dropped his whiskey bottle and broke it. Trying to make the best of his misfortune, he proclaimed loudly, "I christen this ground Virginia!"

Virginia City was born. What was once a grubby mining camp rapidly became a bustling city. The transport of machinery and timber in, and of ore out, necessitated a railroad. A line was completed to Carson City, blasted through solid rock much of the way, in under a year by a crew of mostly Chinese and Dwarfs. Perhaps the crookedest railroad ever built, its 21 miles included 6,120 degrees of curvature, the equivalent of seventeen complete circles. In spite of this, Virginia City was connected. The population was about 25,000 in 1870, many of them miners living in unpainted shacks and boarding houses with thin plank partitions. This was in sharp contrast to the carved woodwork and hewn stone of the six-story International Hotel, widely regarded as the most opulent establishment of its kind between Chicago and San Francisco. The mines, which show no signs of playing out, have so far yielded over \$300 million.

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: PROSPECTOR

You'll show 'em. They call you crazy but you know better. There is gold in them thar hills! Gold and silver. You aim to get your share. That's why you've become a prospector. Some places, it's as easy as bending over to pick up a fortune. Of course, you haven't been that lucky—yet.

Everybody's heard about Sutter's Mill in California. They found gold there in 1848. You were one of the Forty-Niners that came west the next year, looking to strike it rich. When the gold played out, you got yourself another grub stake and headed on to the next boom town. Virginia City!

What Sutter's Mill was to gold, Virginia City is to silver. That old madman Norton got the Silver Secret out of the Indians. Then it wasn't a secret no more. You and about half of everybody else picked up stakes and headed just the other side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Virginia City was the result. The mother lode was so rich they even built a tunnel clear through the mountains to make getting the silver out that much easier!

When the silver plays out, you'll be moving on to the next strike. If things get slow, maybe you'll light out for the Superstition Mountains down in the Texas Republic, near Phoenix. That's where the Lost Dutchman Mine is supposed to be. You could be the one to find it!

The life of a prospector isn't easy. It's lonely, hard work. A prospector's got to be careful. Claim-jumpers will try to steal your claim. Assayers will try to cheat you when you come to get your gold weighed. Toughs will try to rob you no sooner than you walk out the door. Mining camps are the worst. No place is rougher, meaner, or more deadly than a mining camp. Of course, if you do strike it rich, you'll probably just blow your money in a dance hall, but at least you'll have had a good time, if you can remember it!

• **Strong Suits:** Fisticuffs, Marksmanship, Tinkering (Prospecting)

• **Possessions:** Mule, pick, shovel, gold pan, and bedroll

• **In Your Diary:** Your claim registrations, assay receipts, treasure maps, descriptions of where you believe you might find gold or silver.

• **Why You're Here:** To get rich! You know that gold and silver built San Francisco and Virginia City. You know that the high society of those places were once no better off than you. It can all be yours with determination and a little luck. You can smell the gold. Or is that silver?

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: DANCE HALL GIRL

The dance hall is to the west what the theater or the opera is to the east. It is a place to socialize, drink, and view what are quite possibly the only women for a hundred miles—the Dance Hall Girls. Some performers in dance halls are simply that—performers. That may be you—a travelling singer, dancer, or musician. However, the majority of Dance Hall Girls moonlight in the world's oldest profession, and are known by many names: cyprian women, soiled doves, magdalenes, filles du joie; in other words, prostitutes. You are an accepted part of life in western towns, and you go by a colorful monicker like Rose of Cimmaron, Irish Molly, or Cotton Tail. However, you're not a common streetwalker—you have much more class than that. You're the western equivalent of a geisha, and you combine elements of the Adventuress and the Demimondaine. This profession is gaining you a level of economic freedom you could not have otherwise, and to top it off you're charming, intelligent, and can out-shoot and out-drink most of your customers. Squirrel Tooth Alice and Big Nose Kate Elder are good examples to refer to.

• **Strong Suits:** Comeliness, Marksmanship, Performance

• **Possessions:** Derringer, knife, immodest dresses for work, modest dresses for going about town

• **In Your Diary:** Playbills, gossip and tidbits picked up while working

• **Why You're Here:** Face it—dressmaking, teaching, and baking are nice, respectable professions, but they're dull and aren't lucrative enough. As a Dance Hall Girl, you're somebody. The menfolk treat you with consideration and respect, like you were a real Lady. You keep your own hours, choose your clientele, and meet lots of interesting people. Beats working.

THE UNION BREWERY & SALOON



I walked up to the bar, leaned up against it casually, and put my foot on the rail. The bartender was drying glasses with his apron. There was a big mirror behind the bar, and several unpolished brass spittoons. I was tempted to order whisky in a raspy Eastwood whisper. Isn't that what you're supposed to do? But then a mug of beer went sliding past me to the end of the counter. A real microbrew. Bingo.

I walked back over to our table carrying a pair of beers in each hand. It was torture. We'd been riding all day, and the malt smell drove me nuts as I walked back to where Martin and our guides were waiting. I was well through my first beer before I decided I'd better order us some food. You know how I am when I drink on an empty stomach. I turned to look for a waitress when a shadow fell across the table. A cowboy glared down at us. A big one.

He stood right behind one of our guides, who was slouching with his eyes closed and relaxing. The cowboy grabbed the back of his chair and pulled it to the side, twisting as he did so. The guide fell to the floor with a thump. "Git your damn redskin butt outta my chair," the cowboy said.

"Excuse me," I said, offended. I stood.

"Git your carcass on outta here, y'damn injun lover," he said. "And take these ugly things with you." With this, he shoved our other guide onto the floor, too. He picked up the second chair and started taking them over to his friends.

I saw red. Now, I can be pretty stupid when I get mad. I didn't pay any attention to the fact that he had me beat by fifty pounds and four inches, and he had more friends. I walked up and tapped him on the shoulder.

Yeah, I can be pretty stupid. But at least I wasn't dumb enough to be carrying a couple of chairs when a "damn injun lover" took a swing at my prejudicial face.

Silence. It lasted for about three seconds as the cowboy buckled from my sucker punch. Then all hell broke loose. His friends charged, I charged back. My Indian guides regained their feet and dove in, too. Saloon brawl.

All was chaos. I remember early on someone came right at me, arms out for my neck. As he grabbed me I rolled backward, getting my feet under his chest, and flipped him bodily over me. I heard the sound of breaking glass. Was that mine? I hope so. Always wanted to throw someone through a window. But then I had to crawl under several tables to escape some thug who was trying to kick my ribs in. When I finally got to my feet, I was seized by the heat of the moment and tried to break a chair over someone's back. Those things are heavy! I heard something crack, and I don't think it was the chair. As near as I can figure, the furniture is built well enough to withstand daily abuse, so a mere brawl is nothing at all.

It was crazy. Wild. I got punched, kicked, thrown, and had things fall on me. I even have one snapshot memory of Martin von Hubel diplomatically breaking a bottle over someone's head. Sure beat paintball for sheer adrenaline. But unlike most of the cowboys, I had training in this stuff, and a full head of steam.

I don't know how long it lasted, but suddenly everything was quiet. The bar was a wreck, and for just a moment no one was fighting. I was standing on top of the bar, teeth bared, hunched over and framed against the mirror which someone had broken with his head. I had a broken bottle in one hand and a turkey leg in the other. I have no idea how I got the turkey leg.

"Anybody else got a problem with Indians?" I bellowed. Silence. "Any of you homeboys still want to talk trash on my buds?" Everybody sat down. Slowly.

I must've had The Look.

I glowered once more at everyone in the bar, just for good measure. Then I hopped down and limped back over to Martin. I checked to see if any of the unconscious guys was smeared with turkey gravy. Nope. Oh, well.

I could just tell I was going to regret this when the adrenaline wore off.

Von Hubel was sitting in the corner with someone who looked rather familiar. "Thomas," he said, "allow me to introduce to you Mr. Samuel Clemens, Privy Minister to Emperor Norton. Samuel, this is Kapitän Thomas Olam, of His Majesty's Secret Service."

"Samuel Clemens!" I said. "For real? Wow!" I'd never read much of his stuff, but I've loved what I read. Especially *The War Prayer*. Then it hit me. Minister. Privy Minister. To Norton. The Emperor's right-hand man. Oops. "Er, what, exactly, are you doing out here?" I asked. Best I could do on the spur of the moment.

He smiled, a twinkle in his eye. "I'm inspecting His Excellency's domain," he said. Woah. What a Missouri drawl—except here, it's a riverbank-Illinois drawl. "Ensuring that all is right and proper."

"Oh boy," I said. "I can explain ..."

"On the contrary," he said. "I quite approve. Too much lawfulness breeds a cheerless and tedious municipality, in my opinion. I find this place to be suitably animated. As my responsibility here is forthwith executed, I shall return to San Francisco. Perhaps the two of you would care to join me?"

Cool.

We walked out of the saloon. My whole body was beginning to throb. The bruises were swelling. And I was thinking to myself, *If only I'd known*.

If only I'd known, I'd have headed straight for the bar instead of wasting time wandering around the town.

We made our farewells to our guides, who, having had enough of western civilization, left for home. We headed west for Sutter's Fort. Let me tell you, the ride was torture. I've never had so many bruises in my life. Like Virginia City, Sutter's Fort is a world of its own. It's another of the countless small bits of civilization spread across the Bear Flag. Another outpost that would be too tiny to put on a map were there anything bigger anywhere nearby. But that's the point.

There wasn't.

Sutter's Fort had to be self-sufficient. Forts are like that. They're made to be used when times are hard. But even during peacetime it had to take care of itself, because nothing else was around.

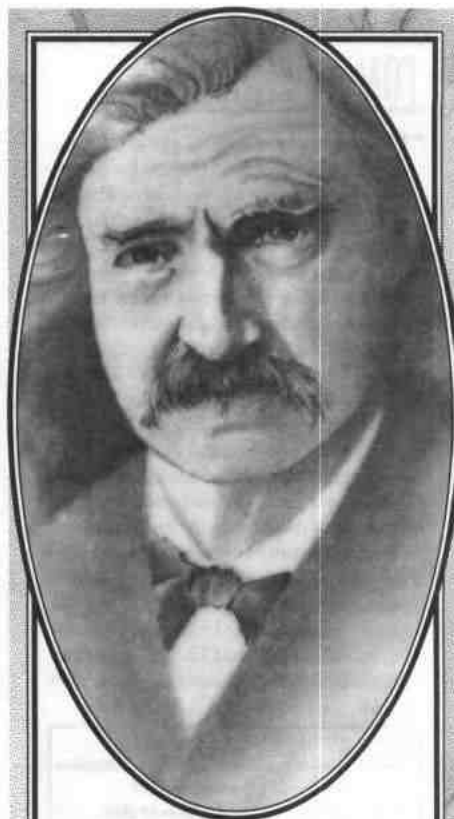
It had tall white adobe walls. Big old walls, thick enough to take a pounding. On the inside, riflemen could climb on the building roofs and still take cover behind the walls. Two small towers stood at opposite corners of the fort. Inside, the fort had a courtyard and parade grounds, a laundry, a couple of barracks, a command office, stores, smithy and forge, woodshop, you name it. If it was necessary, they had it. If it was unnecessary but desirable, the soldiers had to look to the local civilians for it.

Yes, there were soldiers there. It was a fort, after all. It's just that when we got back, there were more soldiers than normal. The Bear Flag Empire was rotating its troops' billets, apparently. I'm not sure whether assignment to Sutter's Fort was considered easy, because there were no threats for a hundred miles; or punishment duty, because there was nothing to do for a hundred miles. But soldiers there were.

The guards at the gate recognized Sam Clemens immediately and opened the gate for him. They stared suspiciously at my uniform, but didn't give me any troubles. Inside, the troops were going through a changing of the guard ceremony. March, drill, pass in review, etc. I didn't understand the significance of all of it, but it was fun to watch. At last it ended, and the troops dispersed. One half went to the supply wagons and began pulling out their packs and campaign gear. The other half went straight to the barracks, and within a few minutes began returning to the field with packs and gear on their backs. Once the supply wagons were empty, the departing troops began loading them with their own supplies.

During all this happy confusion, Sam led Martin and me to the reviewing stand. As Clemens climbed the stairs, he was greeted by all the officers present. One in particular he directed to us. He introduced us in his lazy yet genteel manner.

Sir Christopher "Kit" Carson, Commander in Chief of the Bear Flag Imperial Army.



SAMUEL CLEMENS

At age thirty-three, Samuel Clemens summed up his life as "a foolish life made up of apprenticeships." The various trades that Mr. Clemens has been an apprentice at are printer, riverboat pilot, miner, and reporter. It is at this last that he has been most successful. Writing as a humorist, under the pen name Mark Twain, he has come to enjoy syndication in newspapers throughout the continent. Both his writing, and his speeches, which are always in demand at social occasions, are full of intelligence, wit, and humor.

Mr. Clemens arrived in the west in 1861, when his brother Orion secured a position as secretary of the Territory of Nevada from President Fremont. Being completely unsuccessful as a miner, he asked his brother to use his influence to secure him a job as a reporter. In July of 1862 he moved to San Francisco to take a job with the *Morning Call*. Freelancing for other newspapers such as the *Enterprise*, the *Californian*, and the *Dramatic Chronicle*, he earned a reputation as a Bohemian jester, the embodiment of carefree irresponsibility.

This lifestyle, which gained him much notoriety but not much else, was to change in 1864. California was looking for a new President, but no one wanted to be a part of the corrupt government. As a joke, Twain wrote an article for the *Call* on how a local eccentric, Emperor Norton, was the perfect man for the job. It was taken seriously, as many of his articles were, and Norton was elected. Twain was rewarded with the position of Personal Secretary to the Emperor. He now attends all state functions with the Emperor, and frequently travels abroad to represent the Emperor at various public functions that the Emperor is unable to attend. In 1871 he received the post of Ambassador to the United States. In 1874 he became the Privy Minister to Norton.

TOMMY-KNOCKERS

The mines of America, particularly the west, are home to "Tommy-knockers". Tommy-knockers are a subspecies of Kobold, and the only faerie other than Dwarfs to successfully establish themselves in America, due to it being a land already rich in powerful, native spirits. The presence of tommy-knockers can be identified by the sounds of single-jacking, clicking, and hammering with no discernable source. The disposition of a Tommy-knocker is a whimsical one; as with all Kobolds, treat them well, and you will benefit. Treat them poorly, and you will suffer.

Benign Tommy-knockers, like their New European brethren, will lead miners to veins of ore and protect them from cave-ins. Benevolent Tommy-knockers will play potentially fatal practical jokes—knocking ladders from under foot, tripping people, causing rock falls, extinguishing lamps, causing mine air to become "dead" and filling miner's lungs with choke-damp, and crushing people with ore cars.

• Tommy-knocker: 300

Typical Abilities: Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GR] • Physique [GD] • Stealth [AV]

Portend Danger: As per the Kobold ability (CF pg. 174).

Stealthy Tread: As per the Faerie Animal ability (CF pg. 174).

Smell Rare Earths: As per the Kobold ability (CF pg. 174).

LOST MINES

Legends of "lost" mines, sources of fabulous amounts of ore, are as numerous as the grains of sand in the desert. Whether or not these mines actually exist is still a secret of the desert, but any old prospector could sell you a map to any of them. The most commonly sought-after mines are listed below.

- Lost Bonanza Mine
- Lost Breyfogle Mine
- Lost Crazy Woman's Mine
- Lost Dutchman's Mine
- Lost Frenchman's Mine
- Lost Jim Bowie Mine
- Lost Phantom Mine

MINING TOWNS

After the California gold strike of 1848 had demonstrated to the world the great wealth hidden in the earth, miners descended on every likely piece of wilderness. Yet it was not always a yearning for wealth and luxury that drew them on. Often it was simply adventure. A man never knew when he might spy a glint of bright metal in a remote stream or isolated ravine, but the constant possibility was intoxicating. Once gold fever had set its jaws, no mountain was too steep to scale, no gorge too treacherous to explore, no river too swift to cross.

Most of the greenhorns who poured overland through Texas or by ship into San Francisco knew little about finding precious metal. They usually headed for established diggings where they learned from the experienced miners, known as sourdoughs. Though book learning in geology was rare, these veterans had absorbed enough lore over the years to know where gold was likely to be found. Worthless rivers of quartz and other rock, called gangue by the miners, sometimes hid particles and veins of gold. When such lodes were exposed to the weather, erosion broke down the gangue into fragments, sand, and eventually dust. Carried by rain and mountain streams, the gold settled in placers, deposits of sand, dirt, or clay, when the water could no longer carry it. Nuggets dropped first, followed by flakes and tiny motes called flour or flood gold. The richest finds were usually in the foothills of a mountain range, where the terrain flattened and the streams lost their power.

A large bonanza of silver could be just as lucrative as one of gold, though they were much harder to find. There was no reliable field test for silver because it combined so readily with other elements. In the fabled Comstock Lode, the metal mixed with gold to form an ore of dark blue clay. In other mines where silver mixed with lead the ore was as black as tar. Elsewhere, silver ore was yellow, dark red, brown, and even pale green.

When a big strike of either metal was made, word spread like a grassfire, and prospectors quickly rushed in. With them came a landslide of fortune hunters more interested in digging gold out of the miners than out of the ground. Ragged camps of tents were turned into towns almost overnight. The wagon freighters arrived first, and with them came merchants and shopkeepers, who used rough planks propped upon barrels as their counters. Soon gamblers, madams and whores rode into town. Real-estate hucksters arrived with grand plans to create the next San Francisco. Gold also drew professional criminals, petty swindlers, and sneak thieves who preyed upon the greenhorns. Much was tolerated in boom towns, but miners would not abide claim-jumping, theft, or murder. Frontier justice was swift and violent. The Hangman's Tree of Grass Valley earned its name many times over.

Placerville, California started as a typical mining town. In 1864, a traveler recorded his thoughts. "There were few houses completed with many under construction. People were camped around in wagons, tents and temporary brush houses. Business in the town consisted of saloons, gambling houses and two or three tiny stores stocked with general merchandise and provisions." Just three years later the town was a sprawling oasis for 30,000 miners, replete with 38 houses of prostitution, 114 gambling dives, and 90 full-scale saloons. Sixteen more drinking establishments were not counted because they sold only beer. Placerville even boasted six churches and a public schoolhouse.

The morality of the town was never called into question; it had none to speak of and the inhabitants knew it. "In the evening," noted Eastern traveler Jonathan Mulholland in 1875, "we saw Placerville by gaslight—an awful spectacle of low vice." The townsfolk might well have taken this for a compliment, for Placerville seemed to revel in its reputation as the ornier place this side of hell. Everything and everyone was focused on a single goal: separating the hapless miners from as much of their loot as possible. Cutthroats lurked in the back alleyways with rough-hewn cudgels, aching for the chance to bash an unwary prospector and steal his poke. Con artists could be found everywhere. One of them, Soapy Smith, went so far as to bribe the barbers in the town to mark new arrivals by cutting a "V" into the back of their hair. Then he and his cronies would lure the greenhorns into rigged games of chance at the Correnti Gambling Hall. But the whores were the undisputed champions at relieving miners of their heavy gold burdens. Women were as rare as diamonds in the West; the few there were commanded respect verging on worship. High-class madams charged exorbitant rates for their best girls, who often had scales by their bedside for measuring out gold dust. Though they were ruthless in extracting money from clients, prostitutes like the Irish Queen, Em' Straight Edge and Contrary Mary were universally adored.

The gambling and rampant drinking were the worst problems Placerville faced, though. More gambling went on in the mining towns of the West than anywhere else in recorded history. Men who had struck it rich yesterday, or hoped to do so tomorrow, had a ridiculous optimism that compelled them to stake their fortunes on the unlikely propositions. The Durham House was the largest and most famous of the reputable gambling houses in Placerville. A long, low one-story structure, 150 feet by 42 feet, it had log walls and windows and roof of white sheeting. In this magnificent palace congregated hordes of swarthy men well armed and in rough costumes. Games went on all day and all night at more than a dozen tables. One gambler in a woolen shirt and jockey cap made over a hundred dollars a day running three-card monte. The house made most of its profits from the bar, however, which sold enormous quantities of cigars and liquors. Some men consumed a quart of whiskey a day.

Though it is a textbook study of the baser sins, Placerville serves as a good example of a boom town on the rise. Most mining communities never made it so far. When the original strike invariably petered out, boom town would become ghost town. Unless a new discovery was made in the area, the miners would move on, always searching for El Dorado.

SUTTER'S FORT

Now, when I think of Kit Carson, I think of a western trapper kind of guy, with a Bowie knife and a coonskin cap running around in the woods tracking beavers or something. I was expecting a cheerful guy with boyish, youthful good looks. Just like on TV.

Nope. I won't say he wasn't striking. He had severe eyebrows and high cheekbones adding punch over his mustache. He was wearing a striking uniform with a lot of gold braid on it. And he just had that look that said he'd spent many years looking out after himself in the worst conditions. Gruff. Grizzled. Warrior. Pioneer. His wrinkles said it all.

And he had a handshake like iron.

He gave us a brief tour of the fort while his men were loading and unloading. That's how I know about the fort. He'd already given the inspection, but that still didn't keep the men from being jumpy every time he entered a room with Martin and me in tow. Maybe he's mean when it comes to inspections.

After the tour (during which he let me fire off a cannon) we stepped into the headquarters and had a glass of water. "Tell me, gentlemen," Carson said, "whereabouts are you going next?"

"To tell the truth, Sir Christopher," answered von Hubel, "we don't have a strict itinerary, but we are supposed to rendezvous with the rest of our people in San Francisco, and that is where we hope to go next."

"So be it," said Kit. "I'm sure the men will be happy to escort you to the Bay. It's not every day they get the opportunity to be the honor guard for a visiting diplomat. Yes, I'm sure that can be arranged. See to it, Wilson," he said to one of his lieutenants.

"Excuse me, Mr. Clemens?" I said quietly, pulling Sam aside. "This isn't really necessary, you know. I mean, King Ludwig, sure, they could escort him, but we're just a couple of employees, you know? We don't need to divert a brigade or whatever it is just for us. We'll be fine."

I could see a twinkle in his eye, even through the haze of smoke from his cigar. "Don't be so damnably arrogant, Mr. Olam," he said. "Nothing of the sort is happening here. This brigade is being reassigned to Fort Winfield-Scott in San Francisco. They're going our way, as they say. Simply put, it wouldn't be politic for Sir Christopher to ask a royal Bayernese delegation if you wish to ... tag along with a bunch of foot soldiers, hm?"

"Gotcha."

So we set out. Probably, we were actually slowed down by the brigade marching along with us. Between the fact that the soldiers were on foot, and the supply wagons occasionally had trouble, I'm sure we could have made better time. On the other hand, we wouldn't have had someone else set up our tent, cook, post a guard while we slept, and pack everything again in the morning. The price of being important. I decided I could cope.

Sam, Kit, Martin, and I rode at the head of the column. There were flankers out on horseback, even though they were in the middle of friendly territory. No unit of Carson's is ever going to get bushwhacked, not under any circumstances.

On the other hand, despite his appearances, Carson was good company. Clemens I already knew would be a great addition to any conversation. And so we talked a lot about life, philosophy, politics, Bayern, Texas, the U.S., the Twenty Nations, Mexico, everything.

As we got closer to the San Francisco Bay, I asked them about the Bear Flag Empire. I already knew the basics, how Norton was declared Emperor and everything, but what about now?

"For starters, San Francisco is the capital and crown jewel of the Bear Flag Empire," said Carson.

"Really?" I asked. "What about L. A.? Portland? Or Seattle?"

"L. A.?" he asked. "Oh, Los Angeles. Let's see, that's about 50,000 people, I think. Portland is smaller than that, and Seattle? That's a logging town way up north, isn't it? Compare those to San Francisco, which has around 200,000 citizens. There's no comparison. San Francisco is the largest city in the Empire. It's also quite pretty. I think you'd find that in matters of beauty and culture it compares with the cities of New Europa."

"Oh, I'm sure it would," said Clemens. "In every way."

I managed to disguise my laugh as a cough.

THE LOST CEMENT

MINES

Mammoth Canyon is a region of heavy volcanic activity. Located near Mono and the Devil's Postpile in the Sierra Nevada, Mammoth Canyon is the home of a fabulous, lost gold deposit. Legend has it that in the early 1860's three Germans, fleeing from hostile Indians, arrived at the head of the Owens River. There they found a ledge of rusty-colored cement, two thirds of which was pure gold.

They extracted some ore, covered up the ledge, and resumed their journey. Two perished in the trip through the mountains and the third, arriving at a mining camp, was deranged. Since then, several expeditions have set out into "the burnt country", as it is known, searching for the fabulous Lost Cement Mines. Most have perished, due to exposure, bandits, or encounters with hostile Joaquin Indians, who may be guarding the treasure. Some have returned bearing large quantities of gold, but they tend to become deathly ill and not live to enjoy their fortune.

DRAMATIC CHARACTER: REPORTER

You're an ace investigative reporter for one of the big newspaper syndicates. People all across the nation and around the world read what you write and they count on you to discover the truth and report it. That's a heavy burden but one you willingly shoulder. You believe in the truth and the public's right to know.

As a war correspondent, you travel to where the fighting is heaviest. It's a dangerous job. Politicians, statesmen, and military commanders only want the public to know their side of the story; they will try to use you as a propagandist and maybe even a spy.

Writing for the society column, you are hardly in less danger. Gossip can destroy careers and reputations. There is no way to know to what ends people will go to protect their affairs, assignments, and rendezvous. But the public clamors for these juicy details and, after all, these public figures don't complain when the press is good.

The crime beat is a little bit like being a war correspondent and writing for the society page. The public clamors after news of these fiends as if they were characters in the penny dreadfuls. You know they're real. Criminals are always dangerous, but none more so than the masterminds you track across continents to follow up on the lead that will uncover their nefarious plans. Even law enforcement officials can be trouble when you have to refuse their requests to reveal your sources.

Through it all, you keep digging. You can smell a good story and you know when people are covering something up. You're always in search of the big scoop that will land you on Page One. A lot of people owe you favors, and if your contacts can't help you ferret out the truth, you have charm and cunning to spare.

- **Strong Suits:** Charisma, Connections, Perception

- **Possessions:** Note pad and pen, press credentials

- **In Your Diary:** Addresses of contacts, pages from the social register and Who's Who, invitations to society or diplomatic receptions, accounts of stories you're working on, and your press clippings.

- **Why You're Here:** You're travelling across America following up on a lead that you think will develop into a major story. Society matrons court you, thinking you are doing a story on some juicy scandal. Politicians are trying to avoid you. Someone may even be following you. You're on to something. That's for sure. You'll watch your step, but you won't be deterred from learning the truth and reporting it to your loyal readers.

SUTTER'S FORT & THE GOLD RUSH

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, California on January 24, 1848 was a quiet event that soon proved to be earth-shattering in its impact on the West. As the year opened, John C. Fremont had managed to shake off the yoke of the Mexican government and consolidate many disparate holdings into the California Republic. Yet it was a sleepy territory with few immediate prospects. Fremont's Republic was tenuous at best, and while the potential of its fertile grasslands was well known, California was simply too hard to reach to be a viable economic power. Indeed, through most of the 1830's, the non-Indian population of the entire region barely topped 10,000. Civilization consisted of a string of missions from San Diego to the San Francisco Bay, a few old military outposts, struggling towns at Los Angeles, San Jose, and the capital of San Francisco, and twenty or so large ranchos. All this would change in a whirlwind of greed.

The story really starts with the man who owned the mill, an immigrant named Johann August Sutter who came to California by way of Indiana, Santa Fe, Oregon, Hawaii, and the Inuit lands of the northwest. Deeply in debt in Bavaria, he decided to take a chance on a fresh start in America. Changing his name to John Augustus Sutter, he eventually made his way to San Francisco, then a tiny village called Yerba Buena, on July 1, 1839 with a modest sum of money obtained through a successful trading venture. His desire was to construct a great ranch in the California interior, a paradise of mild climate and rich soil, according to the Mexican traders he talked to. Sutter sailed up the Sacramento River, finally erecting a strong fort on the American River that he adorned with three brass cannons he had brought from Hawaii. He called his domain New Helvetia.

Over the next few years he prospered, running blacksmith and carpentry shops, a tannery, and a distillery catering to the American and British settlers trickling into the area. Ironically, it was this success that eventually ruined him. Timber was scarce on his land, so Sutter decided to build a sawmill forty miles to the northeast, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. He charged one of his carpenters, James Wilson Marshall, with the project and construction began at Coloma on the south fork of the American River.

On that fateful January day, as the mill neared completion, Marshall made his discovery. The night before he had run water from the millpond into the tailrace so that the channel would be washed free of dirt and debris. In the morning, as he surveyed the results, he spied a gleam in the cold water. It was a small bit of yellow metal, one of many such pieces scattered about. Ordinarily a calm man, Marshall could barely contain his excitement. He put the metal through the simplest test he knew: He pounded it with a rock. Unlike fool's gold, which was brittle and easily shattered, this soft metal flattened. Marshall headed for Sutter's Fort.

Soaked to the skin and dripping water, he burst into Sutter's office on the 28th. Locking the door, the two men consulted an encyclopedia and rigorously tested the sample. After no doubt remained that it was gold, Sutter traveled to the mill to see for himself. When he saw that the golden specks were abundant, he realized that his quiet paradise was about to end, buried by an avalanche of fortune hunters.

However much he would have liked to, Sutter could not keep the gold a secret. Soon his men started to leave their jobs to look for the precious metal. Traders took the news downriver, setting San Francisco abuzz. But it took a shrewd Mormon elder by the name of Sam Brannan to really kick the Gold Rush into high gear. Brannan owned a store in a town near Sutter's Fort and knew that prospectors in the area meant business for him. He went to San Francisco with a bottle of gold dust and paraded through the streets crying, "Gold! Gold from the American River!"

The population of San Francisco, capital of the great California Republic, hovered around 3,000 at the time. It soon dipped under a hundred as every able body headed for the interior. By the next year, ships were pouring through the Golden Gate loaded with "49ers" bound for boom towns like Angels Camp, Grizzly Flats, and Placerville. When all was said and done, three quarters of a billion dollars had been pulled from the Sierra Nevada, and California was one of the richest nations on earth.

John Sutter, however, received none of this bounty. Workers, gold seekers, and squatters overran Sutter's property, stealing, looting, and killing his livestock. The expenses incurred in repairs and replacement of animals were a constant drain on Sutter's finances. When the courts denied him title to lands he had been granted in Mexico, he was ruined. He and his wife moved to the United States in 1851, and he went bankrupt in 1852.

CHINESE IN THE BEAR FLAG EMPIRE

San Francisco, February 2, 1848. The American brig *Hawk* arrived from Canton, China. Among its many passengers it carried two Chinamen and a Chinawoman, who were looked upon as curiosities by the people of San Francisco, many of whom had never seen subjects of that nationality before.

A few short weeks later, news of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill burned through San Francisco, changing the course of California history forever. It became apparent early on that the riches buried in the Sierra Nevada would draw fortune seekers from around the world, but no one could have guessed that the largest group would be from the Far East. Or that the yokels who had gawked at the Oriental passengers of the *Hawk* would soon be dining in Chinese restaurants and having their shirts cleaned at Chinese laundries. The Chinese made an impact on California so quickly that in 1853 President Fremont, fearful that continued immigration would change the balance of power, signed into law the Foreign Miner's Tax, which forced Chinese prospectors to pay a stiff levy on their earnings. Fremont hoped this would stem the tide. It did not. By 1870 there were 65,000 Chinese living under the Bear Flag.

Conditions under the Manchu Emperor were so bad at the time that the Chinese would have suffered almost any indignity for the chance at a fresh start. Their world was one of famine and disaster; the unpredictable flooding of the Yellow River killed tens of thousands of people each year, bad weather frequently ruined entire crops, and the Opium Wars with Britain raged interminably. The promise of wealth and work in America was beyond their wildest dreams.

To undertake passage across the Pacific, they signed documents committing them to service in the mines for many years. Some secured loans from labor contractors or shipowners by promising future earnings. Yet even if they figured out a way to pay for their journey, they were not out of the woods. Stories like that of the trading ship *Libertad* were all too common—of 500 passengers, 200 died in dark cargo holds never meant for human occupation.

Most of the Chinese who managed to reach California were not true immigrants, rather sojourners who hoped to amass quick fortunes and return to their families. They poured through the Golden Gate and headed straight for the mines, where they were nicknamed "Coolies", from the phrase *ku li* ("bitter strength"), because they took on all the arduous tasks no one else wanted. Without a word of complaint, they carried heavy loads of equipment, fetched water, led trains of packmules, and worked the new hydraulic nozzles built by the Dwarfs. The Chinese were welcomed with open arms in the insular mining camps; at least, they were once the miners found out they preferred to work abandoned claims others considered worthless rather than compete for new strikes. This goodwill soured quickly as the industrious Chinese started pulling large amounts of gold out of these supposedly worked-out claims.

In the mid-1860's, as the gold fields started to peter out, thousands of Chinese men were left searching for work. They found the Bear Flag Railroad.

The Bear Flag Railroad had started as an ambitious project to connect San Francisco with Las Vegas and Santa Fe, but by 1865 only thirty-one miles of track had been laid. Charles Crocker, director of construction, insisted that Chinese be hired to lay track. Other executives doubted that the small Chinese could do such hard work, but Crocker argued that if they could build the Great Wall of China, they could probably build a railroad. A week-long contest was devised, pitting a Chinese crew against an Irish-American one. The Chinese settled all doubts, laying more track, straighter and neater, than the Irishmen. Eventually, ninety percent of the workers on the Railroad were Chinese. A correspondent from the *Boston Globe* wrote, "They were a great army laying siege to Nature in her strongest citadel. The rugged mountains looked like stupendous anthills. They swarmed with Celestials shoveling, wheeling, carting, drilling, and blasting rocks and earth."

While the majority of Chinese immigrants worked in the boomtowns and later on the railroad, many never made it that far. Segregated Chinese communities sprang up in cities throughout the West. San Francisco's Chinatown was the first, largest, and most bizarre. Within, the immigrant's homeland was duplicated as much as possible. Once past the gates, one was no longer in California, but in China.

Outside Chinatown, the obstacles the Chinese faced in California were manifold, not the least of which was rampant discrimination. Like Blacks and Indians, they had no rights under the law. As the years passed, President Fremont grew increasingly paranoid about the so-called "yellow menace", enacting a series of ridiculous laws designed to frustrate the Chinese. The first of these was the aforementioned Foreign Miner's Tax. Later came the Cubic Air Ordinance, which aimed at overcrowding in China Town by proclaiming that each person must have at least 500 cubic feet of air, and the Pigtail Ordinance, which required any Chinese arrested to have his pigtail cut off.

As it turns out, the Chinese had the last word. In 1863, a drunken Fremont beat his manservant, the son of the head of the Ning Yeung Tong, half to death. He was assassinated a few weeks later, it was rumored by magical means. Norton, his successor as President, was much friendlier to the Chinese, even accepting a gift from the Dragon Emperor of a regiment of bodyguards led by the hero Fong Sai Yuk. Under Norton, the dream of Gum San, the fabled Mountain of Gold, remained alive in California.

"Gold! Gold!
Gold from
the
American River!"

—Sam Brannan

SIR KIT CARSON & THE IMPERIAL SCOUTS

MOUNTAIN MAN AND FRONTIERSMAN

Born in Kentucky, Christopher "Kit" Carson began his adventurous career at the age of 15, running away from home to join a caravan of traders headed for Santa Fe. For the next fifteen years Carson followed the life of a mountain man. It was during this time that Carson travelled among the Indians of the Great Plains and the Great Basin, trapping and trading. He learned their ways and earned their respect. Like few white men before him, Carson did not look down on the Indians and treated them fairly, gaining a reputation as someone to be trusted.

With a knowledge of the American west second to none and his friendship with the Indians, Carson was the perfect choice as a guide for expeditions headed west. The United States was determined to expand its borders westward and began financing topographical expeditions to map the area. They chose the explorer John C. Fremont, "the Pathfinder", for the job. Kit Carson was to be his guide. Between 1842 and 1844, Carson guided Fremont on two mapping expeditions in the west. What had begun as a chance acquaintance developed into a true friendship.

THE CALIFORNIA EXPEDITION

In 1845 Fremont was once again preparing to set out on another mapping expedition. This time the goal was to reach California, at that time held by the Spanish. Kit Carson was once again to be Fremont's guide. Unknown to any but Fremont and the United States government, the true mission of the expedition was to overthrow the Spanish government in California and bring California into the Union.

Unknown to even the government of the United States, Fremont had been recruited as an agent of the Phantom Empire to wrest California from the Spanish and hold it as an independent nation, controlled by the Empire. Arriving in California, Fremont overthrew the ill-prepared Spanish government and declared California an independent Republic on July 4, 1846 as planned. Seizing control of the Presidio, the Spanish fort that guarded the entrance to San Francisco Bay, Fremont drove off the United States ships sent to support the coup and proceeded to mop up scattered resistance.

THE CABAL

With no advance knowledge of Fremont's plans, Kit Carson was taken aback. Like it or not, he was part of a rebellion against the United States! He could hardly return to his former life. When Fremont offered his friend a position in his new government, Carson accepted. Fremont wisely calculated that with the legendary Kit Carson as Minister of War, the United States would hesitate before attacking. He was right. The United States left the new Bear Flag Republic alone, at first.

It was only a matter of time before Carson discovered the real power behind the government and their goals. From the first, Carson rebelled against the agents of the Phantom Empire that made up a portion of Fremont's new government. The rest of the Cabal were corrupt friends of Fremont's from the United States. The Cabal didn't much care for an outsider like Carson in such a prominent position. Carson warned Fremont against his benefactors and the Cabal urged Fremont to agree to "disposing" of Carson. The Cabal needed Fremont as a frontman and Fremont would abandon neither Carson nor the Cabal. So a secret war was fought within the Republic's government.

EMPEROR NORTON

When President Fremont was assassinated, the Cabal was unable to seize absolute control of California. One man prevented the Phantom Empire's

agents from beginning a true reign of terror—Kit Carson. Carson's knowledge of the Phantom Empire and control of the military gave him a strong bargaining position. It was Carson who first proposed that the Cabal support Joshua Norton's election. Left with no real choice, the Cabal agreed, thinking to control Norton.

It came as an unpleasant surprise to the Cabal that Norton was not the dupe they had hoped. To make matters worse, shortly after Norton's election, Kit Carson told him everything about the Cabal, Tammany Hall, and the Phantom Empire. Aghast, Norton secretly joined forces with Carson against the remaining members of the Cabal, continuing the secret war.

SIR KIT CARSON

When agents of the United States attempted to topple the Cabal, it was Kit Carson who saved Norton's life from the assassins. For his service to the Empire, Christopher Carson was knighted, becoming the first peer of the realm.

With the Cabal removed by the assassins' bullets, Norton was finally in charge. Besides redistributing the Cabal's ill-gotten gains and drafting a new constitution that recognized the equality of all citizens, the Emperor determined to create orders of knighthood to recognize service like that of Sir Kit Carson.

The Order of the Golden Bear was the first order created, with Sir Kit Carson its Grandmaster. Dedicated to the preservation of the Empire, membership in the League of Gold recognizes accomplishment in military affairs, magick and the arts and sciences in service to the Empire. Each peerage carries with it an annual government stipend and the right to style one's self a knight with the title Sir.

The counterpart of the League of Gold is the Order of the Silver Society. Dedicated to the service of the Emperor's person, membership in the Silver Society is the mark of Imperial favor. Each peerage carries with it a fanciful title bestowed by the Emperor and a modest stipend. Sir Kit Carson was the first member inducted, but refused the office of Grandmaster and any title other than that of a knight.

CARSON'S SCOUTS

Kit Carson used his position as Minister of War to keep the military out of the Cabal's control. A charismatic leader known for his bravery, daring and loyalty, Carson easily commanded the military's devotion. One of the first units Carson formed were the Scouts.

Men skilled in tracking and survival, as well as counter-insurgency tactics, search and rescue operations, and guerrilla tactics, Carson's Scouts specialized in upsetting the Cabal's plans and keeping them off balance. Throughout California, they protected the Republic's citizens from the worst of the Cabal's excesses. Though they could not prevent the Cabal from using the government for its own ends, Carson's Scouts could keep the Cabal from securing their grip on California.

Though the ruling members of the Cabal are gone, many who benefitted from them or sympathized with them remain, particularly among some of the Nob Hill families. The Phantom Empire has been quick to organize these forces, even managing the election of one of their agents, Christopher Buckley, as Mayor of San Francisco, the Imperial Capital!

The Emperor and Sir Kit Carson dare not move openly against a duly elected official. Neither can Carson's Scouts defeat this political enemy on his chosen battlefield. The Mayor moves subtly and with great craft. Therefore, the Scouts must play Mayor Buckley's game of political intrigue, turning the tables on him when they can.



ARMED FORCES OF THE EMPIRE OF CALIFORNIA

The Armed Forces of the Bear Flag Empire are unlike those on the rest of the continent, being modeled on New European armies, specifically the French army. Like the New European military, advancement is easier for the nobility of the Empire, but like the French army it is on the whole egalitarian. The Bear Flag has one of the smallest armies on the continent, fielding only 20,000 regular troops plus about 5,000 Indian reservists, resulting in a field strength of no more than two brigades per service branch. The Navy is even smaller, with a fleet strength of eight ships. The majority of Bear Flag Empire military strength comes from mercenaries, which it has plenty of money to hire.

THE IMPERIAL ARMY

The Imperial Army is Emperor Norton's pride and joy. The Army simply has to ask for anything it needs. While it does spend a lot of time on the parade ground, Sir Kit Carson makes sure it is also an effective fighting force. Its branch organization reflects its small size. There are two branches of light horse: the Rangers and the Scouts. The Rangers serve as mounted infantry and are trained to function equally mounted or on foot. The Scouts double as reconnaissance and special forces. The Indian reservists make up a smaller unit of light horse. The smallest regular branch, the guards, is only one brigade strong. These lancers make up the Emperor's personal guard. Currently an aerialist branch is under consideration.

ARTILLERY

The artillery are traditionally used to soften up enemy forces in preparation for an infantry or cavalry charge. The Imperial Artillery is the most modern section of the Army. In addition to traditional cannon and rocket artillery, there is the fearsome *Cortador Madera*. Elite, trusted troops are stationed at this prestigious assignment.

ENGINEERS

Engineers (in concert with the Artillery) are responsible for the network of coastal defense forts, as well as aiding the other branches of the Army in regard to river crossings and navigation.

GUARDS

This prestigious, but mostly ceremonial brigade serves as the Emperor's personal guard. They are light horse, armed with lances. They are stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco, and while they receive the same training as other branches, they have yet to see any kind of combat. Many guards are drawn from the Vaquero families of Southern California.

INDIANS

The Indian Reserve brigade serves as supplemental light infantry. As reservists, Indians in this brigade are never on constant duty. As with any militia, they are ready to be called to active duty at a moment's notice.

RANGERS

The Rangers are the main forces of the Imperial Army, serving as light cavalry and infantry. They receive intensive training that allows them to perform equally well in either role.

SCOUTS

The Scouts are Sir Kit's elite troops. They serve as reconnaissance troops, as well as border guards, marines, or special forces. They also perform limited intelligence missions.

STANDARD UNIFORMS

The uniforms of the Bear Flag are more stylish than functional and are influenced by the armies of many countries, as suits the eccentricity of the Emperor. The standard uniform is dark blue with gold buttons. Piping, collars, and cuffs are colored according to the branch of service. All branches wear a double-breasted Attila jacket, with short skirts and braid loops across the front. All jackets have epaulettes on the shoulders, with pom-poms on the outer edges, colored the same as the jacket collars. All branches except the Scouts and the Indians wear a waistcoat at all times. Standard headgear is a "Belgie" model shako with a high false front. This is trimmed with a hat cord, cockade, and a small tuft for the line, but plumes of dyed ostrich feathers for dress. Cord and tuft are the same colors as the jacket cuffs, while the cockade is the gold-red-gold of the Bear Flag. Tight trousers with leather in seams are the standard issue for mounted troops. Engineers and Artillery wear wide trousers, after the French style. Calf-height Hessian boots are standard issue. In the fashion of the United States, gaiters are not worn. For cold or inclement weather, dark blue greatcoats are worn.

Exceptions of note are the Scouts and the Indian troops who serve as auxiliaries in the army. The Scouts are styled after the Texas Rangers, and wear a more utilitarian uniform than the rest of the Bear Flag armed forces. Instead of a shako, they wear "hardce" hats like the Texas Rangers. Indians tend to wear their normal clothes while in service, simply adding the uniform jacket.

RANK DISTINCTIONS

Sergeants add a red sash, tied around the waist underneath sword and pistol belts. Colonels and superior ranks add a red and gold sash, tied around the waist underneath sword and pistol belts.

STANDARD ARMAMENTS

Standard armaments for Rangers and Scouts are Colt Single-Action Army pistol, and Winchester Model 1873 rifle. Both branches may also carry a Colt Woodchuck instead of a Winchester. Rangers carry a heavy saber, while Guards carry a light saber and a lance. Artillery and Engineers carry a pistol and a light saber. Many Indian Auxiliaries carry their own personal weapons. The Bowie knife is ubiquitous.

IMPERIAL NAVY

For most of its existence, the Californian Navy has used old Spanish ships captured at Monterey at the time of the Bear Flag Revolt. These vessels rapidly became obsolete, and many are now rotting at anchor. Recently, the idea of a modern navy struck the Emperor's fancy, and he ordered new steam dreadnoughts from Britain. The first recently arrived in San Francisco. Until fleet strength is built up, the Empire relies, as ever, on the *Cortador Madera*.



COCKADES: GOLD-RED-GOLD

Division	Coat	Cuffs	Collars	Piping	Waistcoat	Pants	Badge
Artillery	blue	gold	red	red	red	red	cannon over crossed rockets
Engineers	blue	black	black	red	red	red	castle
Guards	red	blue	blue	gold	gold	red	laurel wreath around star
Indians	green	black	black	blue	n/a	n/a	eagle head
Rangers	blue	blue	red	gold	red	black	bear with crossed sabers
Scouts	green	gold	gold	red	n/a	gray	bear over star

“Whoever after due and proper warning shall be heard to utter the abominable word ‘Frisco,’ which has no linguistic or other warrant, shall be deemed guilty of a High Misdemeanor, and shall pay into the Imperial Treasury as penalty the sum of twenty-five dollars.”

—Emperor Norton

That actually diverted us into a conversation about my impressions of New Europa. I regaled them for a short while with my travels about the continent. I was just describing München to them when we crested a rise.

Looking down, we saw the whole thing.

The Bay.

I knew there wouldn’t be the skyscrapers, the Coit Tower, the Embarcadero, the Transamerica building (always one of my favorites), none of the modern stuff. But I expected other landmarks. I missed the Golden Gate Bridge immediately. But there was ...

“The Bay Bridge!” I said.

“Captain Olam,” said Carson quietly, “it is properly named the Emperor Norton Bridge.”

“Ah,” I said. “I was wondering whether or not it would be there.”

Carson looked at me, somewhat confused, then explained. “Six years ago the Emperor decreed that it be built, so he might be able to use it to cross to his summer retreat in Oakland. It has just this past month opened to general traffic.”

“Oakland?” I said. “Why would anyone want to go there?”

“What do you mean?” asked Kit. “It’s a very nice town, populated by the best and wealthiest people.”

“I believe that was the good captain’s point,” muttered Clemens. I tried to cover another spurt of laughter, though I think I was less than successful. That was when I decided that Sam had to be my tour guide. The guy was too cool.

Shortly after that conversation, we (Sam, Martin, Kit, and myself) took our leave of the military column and headed for a luncheon at the ranch of John Coffee Hays. I was surprised that Kit came with us until I remembered that he was not the brigade’s commander, so he could come and go as he liked.

John Hays had a big old ranch. You’d expect that from a wealthy stockman and businessman, but there was more to it. He was also the city founder and first mayor of Oakland. All of Alameda County had been his. Okay, he had megabucks. (Made me think some more about investing in some property, say around San Fran.) Aside from all that, Hays had been one of the founding members of the Texas Rangers and once had been the California Imperial Surveyor General. And I’m sure he wore a few other hats as well. Those are just the ones that Sam Clemens attributed to him that I thought were believable enough to list here.

We had a very enjoyable lunch, which stretched well into the afternoon, but we took our leave to be able to get into town before dark. We rode into town and hired a carriage to take us the rest of the way. We passed through Oakland on our way to the Bridge.

Oakland. You know all those gorgeous Victorian houses by the MacArthur Maze? The ones that people—at least some of them—are trying to renovate? That’s the sort of stuff we have here. Only bright, new, solid, well painted. And without the razor wire on top of the chain-link fences. They were built a little too close together for my taste, but that’s the way it’s always been here. But they were fine houses. And the streets? Well, they were rutted and unpaved. Much like what’s there across the Veil. As we drove through, I could better understand what Clemens meant when he slammed Oakland. It’s not all that exciting here. On the other hand, I’ll take boring any day of the week over the excitement they have there now.

We didn’t get rocks thrown at our carriage.

Then we crossed over the bridge. First thing, if you’re ever in San Francisco, or in fact anywhere else in the Empire, don’t call it ‘Frisco. Don’t. It’s not worth it. Emperor Norton has decreed that anyone calling it ‘Frisco shall be fined five and twenty dollars on the spot by any law enforcement official who happens to be nearby. I never thought it was a disrespectful name, but hey, that’s Norton. “San Fran” is fine, “That Old Cesspool at the West End of the Bay” is acceptable (I heard Clemens call it that once), but “Frisco” is right out. Go figure.

That’s Norton for you.



THE BEAR FLAG EMPIRE OF CALIFORNIA



Population: 1 million • **Government:** Hereditary Monarchy with Parliament • **Alliances:** Bayern, China, Texas • **Enemies:** United States • **Position:** The richest nation

on the American continent.

SPANISH CALIFORNIA

The first New European colonists arrived in California in the late eighteenth century. They found the area occupied by a large population of disorganized, mostly pacifistic Indian tribes. In 1769 the Spanish viceroy of Mexico dispatched land and sea missions from Baja California to explore Alta California, and Friar Junipero Serra established the first of the Spanish missions at San Diego. In 1770 a military outpost was built in Monterey. Finally, in 1773, an overland supply route across the treacherous southwestern deserts was charted, and colonization began in earnest. Eventually, twenty-one missions were founded to Christianize the Indians. The Indians resisted, sometimes violently, but they were no match for the Spaniards, either militarily or sorcerously. The California Indians were virtually enslaved at the missions, and were forced to accept Christianity and New European ways through beatings and torture. The Comte de la Pérouse, a French explorer, commented in 1786 that the California Mission Indians were held "in bondage analogous to that of the Negro slaves of Santo Domingo."

The secularization of the missions began in 1821, when Mexico became independent from Spain. The Californios, Spanish-Mexican settlers of California, desired the land the missions occupied. Thus, in the years following 1833, the mission ranches were split up and parceled out to political favorites by the government of Mexico. By this time, the Indian population had been reduced by one fifth due to disease and mistreatment. The mission Padres withdrew, but the position of the Indians did not improve. They were still used as a cheap, expendable source of manual labor by the hacienda and pueblo owners, and their numbers continued to diminish.

THE BEAR FLAG REVOLT

It was around this time that the steady flow of non-Mexican immigrants began. The first were the fur trappers and mountain men from the United States, and later Texas. In 1841 the first wagon train of settlers left Illinois for California via Texas, along the Gila River Trails. One of the people to arrive in California in 1845 was John C. Fremont, "the Pathfinder." Fremont, recently of the U. S. Topographical Corps, was sent on several government-sponsored explorations of the west. He left St. Louis in 1845 on his third and final mission. The public goals of this mission were to explore the Great Basin and the Pacific Coast. The secret goal of this mission was to foment revolution against Mexico and bring California into the United States. Fremont went west, accompanied by sixty soldiers, twelve Delaware Indians, and two guides: Joseph Walker and Kit Carson. By September they reached the Great Salt Lake, with Kit obtaining them passage through the Nations. In December he arrived at Sutter's Fort. In May 1846, after a period of exploration, Fremont set up an armed camp in the Sacramento Valley.

At this same time, Texas declared war on Mexico, drawing Mexican troops away from California. In June of 1846 a band of armed American settlers captured the home of General Mariano Vallejo in Sonoma, took him under arrest, and raised the home-made Bear Flag (upon which the current Imperial flag is based), declaring the birth of the California Republic. Fremont marched into Sonoma on June 25, assuming command of the "Bear Flag Revolt."

On July 4, Fremont declared the California Republic independent of Mexico and placed it under martial law, which would be enforced by his 234-man California Battalion. The battalion soon marched south, gathering recruits of settlers and Indians who wanted revenge on the Californios. The northernmost military outpost of the Mexican government was Monterey, which fell during a surprise attack by the California Battalion on July 7. When ships of the U. S. Navy, under the command of Commodore John Sloat, arrived to take possession of California, Fremont responded by firing upon them with the Presidio's guns, driving them away. Fremont's Indian coast watchers turned the tides against Sloat, preventing him from approaching the coast.

With the support of naval vessels seized from Monterey, Fremont continued his advance down the coast, winning battle after battle. At the Battle of La Mesa, on January 8, 1847, the Bear Flag armies smashed the last California resistance. On January 13, Fremont accepted formal surrender from the Californios at the Capitulation of Cahuenga. Fremont granted the them generous terms, guaranteeing the Californio's persons and property, and assured them equal rights under the new government. The only condition imposed was that they lay down their arms and promise to keep peace. In light of this generosity, the Californios surrendered possession of California to Fremont unconditionally.

PRESIDENT FREMONT, GOLD, AND CORRUPTION

On March 26 Fremont set up the Republic Government in a temporary headquarters in Sonoma. After becoming the first President of the California Republic, Fremont sent letters to all the friends and people he owed favors to, promising them positions as ministers. To a man they accepted Fremont's offers. On May 31, 1847, the Republic capital was changed to San Francisco, with the government offices moving into what had been the Jenny Lind Theater. President Fremont and his cabinet ministers then drew up a California Constitution. This constitution allowed the government to make appointments, enact legislation, raise and keep armed forces and a secret service, and levy taxes. The constitution was ratified in a private vote by the ministers and Fremont. This was the first sign to politically aware Californians that their new government was not entirely honest.

In 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill. By the end of March, the news was all over San Francisco, and the California Gold Rush began. Prospectors poured into California to work the gold fields, coming around Cape Horn, across the land through Texas, and across from China. Various mining techniques were developed to mine the gold efficiently, from placer mining in the stream beds to hydraulic mining that washed away entire mountains to quartz mining that sunk great shafts into the earth. By 1865, when most of the gold fields petered out, the total value of all the gold extracted exceeded \$750,000,000, making California the wealthiest nation on the American continent. This ushered in an era of prosperity in California that was, and is, the envy of the world. However, millionaires are few, as Fremont's government rapidly moved to take advantage of the situation. Fremont's corrupt cabal of sycophants passed new tax laws that diverted most of the newfound wealth into the Republic Reserves and the pockets of government officials. Important businessmen and friends of the government found themselves exempt from the new taxes and became very well-to-do. This new wealth brought a brief increase in crime; in 1849, independent Vigilance Committees, that operated as police force, judges, and executioners, kept the peace. Then, under public pressure, a legitimate police force was established. This new wealth also brought people of refinement to California. Southern California remained relatively wild and woolly, but the north, particularly the rapidly growing capital, quickly cleaned up, civilized, and became at least outwardly respectable. Fremont, now obviously President-for-Life, built a lavish President's Mansion on Nob Hill. The President's cabinet soon became an incredibly corrupt oligarchy, with new offices created for members of the biggest families in San Francisco, including the Bentons.

However, the Fremont Presidency was not completely smooth. The Indians, in a holdover from Spanish days, were still treated as slaves. Similarly, the Chinese flooding into California to work the gold fields were exploited as cheap labor. This spread ill-will among the New Europeans in California, especially among the Californios of the south, who saw jobs being taken away. In Los Angeles, Indians charged with being drunk, or other petty crimes would be auctioned off to perform labor as atonement. This government-sanctioned mistreatment of Indians provoked uprisings and rebellions among many tribes, mostly in the extreme north or south. The Yuma Indians of southern California clashed many times with the armies of the Republic, starting in 1849. Similarly, the Modoc Indians in the north had a history of violence against whites, starting in 1852.

The Chinese experienced the same kind of discrimination and mistreatment, especially in the capital, San Francisco, where they were most numerous. The Chinese gold miners had saved enough money to create a beautiful Chinatown, with grand buildings that rose for eight stories above the street and often sank into an underground city eight stories deep. Many

Chinese found work as domestic servants, where they were often paid twice as much as servants of other races. However, a large number of Chinese were working poor, who were paid pennies for long, hard work, often under inhumane conditions. Chinese also had the same rights as Indians and Blacks under the law—namely, none. Eventually, the rulers of Chinatown grew tired of this, and began looking for an opportunity.

The eruption of the United States Civil War brought more wealth into California at the same time it divided the Republic. During this time large deposits of copper ore and petroleum were discovered, and a sizable amount of money was made exporting these high-demand resources to the United States. After three weeks of debate, Fremont abolished slavery within the Republic and declared support for the Union. However, Confederate sympathizers remained vocal, and many prominent Californians left to fight for the Confederacy. The most sinister of these sympathizers were the Knights of the Columbian Star and the Knights of the Golden Circle. These were secret societies, each with its own rituals, secret passwords, and handgrips. Their purpose was to smuggle recruits and wizards out of California and into the Confederate Army. They also spread dissent, inspiring divisive unrest in the Californios and the Indians. Secret Service raids broke up every lodge they could find, and these orders soon went underground. However, they still exist, and are nursing schemes, of course, to overthrow the current government and replace it with one based on the Confederate States of America.

In 1863 the opportunity the Lords of China Town were waiting for arrived. In a drunken rage, Fremont beat his Chinese houseboy nearly to death. Unfortunately, this boy was the son of the leader of the Ning Yeung Company, one of the most powerful groups in Chinatown. Soon after, Fremont was assassinated. It was a professional job, with no witnesses or clues. Rumor had it that the Ning Yeung had sent a magical assassin, but this could never be proved. This left the ruling oligarchy in a quandary. No one trusted any of the others to be President, but each wanted to maintain the status and lucrative income his position currently provided. They settled on a distinctly American solution—they called for nominations, to be followed by an election. By this time no rational citizen trusted the government or wanted anything to do with it, so, needless to say, nominations were nonexistent. Then spoke Samuel Clemens.

AN EMPEROR IN RAGS

Mr. Clemens, aka Mark Twain, was a newspaper reporter for the *Morning Call*. For several years he had been following the career of a noted San Francisco eccentric, Emperor Norton. Who he really was, and his history, was unknown. What was known was that he believed himself to be the Emperor of California, and he published his proclamations in the *Alta California*. He wandered the streets in discarded army uniforms, ate at the free lunch counters, sold Imperial Bonds for fifty cents, and was a wonderful curiosity and tourist attraction. When no one volunteered for nomination, Clemens nominated Norton. All of San Francisco, which had ten times the population of any other city in the Republic, voted for their beloved Emperor. The Fremont Cabal, seeing in Norton a harmless lunatic they could easily control, abided by the decision of the people. In January of 1864, a delegation arrived at Eureka Lodgings, 624 Commercial Street, and paid a call on Norton in his spare room that cost fifty cents a night. They told him that his beloved subjects had rallied behind him, and that he was now President of California. He was whisked off to the Presidential Mansion, where he was cleaned and attired to suit his office. Despite this change in Presidents, nothing changed. Norton continued insisting he was Emperor, and the Cabal continued to run the Republic behind the Emperor's back. The new Emperor was soon brought up to date on the viper's nest he had stepped into by Kit Carson, but was powerless to affect any changes. This year also saw the opening of a rail line between San Francisco and San Jose, which led to increased trade.

The closest California came to fighting in the Civil War was in 1865, when the Confederate commerce raider *Shenandoah* appeared off the coast of California. Ships of the California Navy shadowed the *Shenandoah*, protecting merchant shipping and ships flying the Bear Flag. It was in this year that the Emperor began to have meetings with the Californio hacienda owners of the south, in order to reconcile the difficulties between them and the northern mercantile interests. This year was momentous for another reason, however. In January, on the anniversary of his becoming President, Norton ordered a review of the Army. The parade went as scheduled, with Norton, Secretary of War Kit Carson, and

Samuel Clemens occupying the front seats of the review stand. Suddenly, the United States Secret Service struck. Jealous of the wealth California possessed, the U. S. had sent a team to topple the Californian government, so as to make California a state. As the rest of the cabal, who occupied the rear of the review stand, were killed, Carson raised his sidearm in defense of Norton. Stationed around the stand were a hand-picked group of Rangers, and at Carson's signal they fired one well executed volley. All of the agents perished, shot down with deadly accuracy. For his service to the Empire Kit Carson was knighted.

VIVE L'EMPEREUR

Norton's next act was to redistribute the wealth the Cabal had embezzled, beginning a new era of prosperity for California. The Republic gold reserves were entrusted to the well-established and reliable bank of Wells, Fargo, & Co. Then he began to make things better for the Chinese and Indians. He abolished all discriminatory laws and made them full citizens of the Republic. Women were also given equal rights under California law. Next, he graciously offered his protection to Baja California and Chihuahua against Maximilian I of Mexico. Juarez, hard-pressed leader of the Mexican troops fighting for freedom, accepted, and the two states became protectorates of the Empire. Next, he opened negotiations with the Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest and the Great Basin, and asked them to join the Republic and enjoy the protections and rights of being full citizens.

The Oregon and Washington territories had known the innocuous presence of settlers since the 1840s. In 1853, extensive negotiations resulted in the establishment of the city of Portland, on the Columbia River. Portland quickly grew into a large trading city, run by a ruling council composed of settlers and Indians. Both Indians and white settlers welcomed the idea of joining the Republic. In light of Norton's reforms, the Pacific Northwest tribes accepted and joined the Republic in 1868. Portland remains an important city in the Republic, and is home to Henry Weinhard's Brewery, brewers by Appointment to the Emperor.

The Great Basin Indians proved to be a bit less trustful, so Norton traveled by himself to meet with representatives of the tribes. Impressed by this act of bravery and lunacy, they agreed to join the Republic, and bequeathed the secret locations of the silver mines in the Great Basin to Norton. Boom towns quickly grew up around the silver veins, and by 1870 the Comstock Lode near Virginia City was producing \$36,000,000 worth of silver annually. Gold and silver veins discovered in other parts of the Great Basin produced similar annual output.

The wealth of the California Republic and Norton's reconciliatory actions appeased the Dragon Emperor of China, who had been most upset by Fremont and his policies, and later in the year a Chinese Embassy opened in San Francisco. Along with the Embassy came Chinese martial hero Fong Sai-Yuk, at the head of a group of martial artists, who called themselves the Imperial Dragons. Fong revealed to Norton that the Dragon Emperor had sent them to be Norton's bodyguards, and they now serve side by side with the Imperial Guard unit of the regular army.

In four short years, the kindly Norton had changed the Republic from a state rife with dissent and poverty, ruled by corrupt, self-serving individuals, to a golden land of prosperity and promise. To celebrate, in 1869 Norton was officially proclaimed Emperor of the Bear Flag Empire of California by a grateful populace. In 1870 he decreed the building of a vast Bridge between San Francisco and Oakland. Thousands of Dwarfs and Chinese turned their efforts to this labor. The spring of 1873 saw the establishment of Seattle, another trading city in the far north of the Empire. In 1874, Golden Gate Park was opened. Norton also ordered an imperial palace be built, and in 1875, the Palace Hotel, more lavish than anything the Emperor or his staff could have imagined, was finished. Norton moved into the top floor of the Palace, and moved most government offices in as well. In the summer of 1876, Norton married Miss Minnie Wakeman, the intelligent, beautiful daughter of Captain Edward Wakeman, a seaman who had once served on the San Francisco Vigilance Committee. Also in 1876, the Emperor Norton Bridge was opened, amidst an Empire-wide week of celebration and festivities.

BEAR FLAG EMPIRE CURRENCY

The standard unit of currency in California is the Imperial Dollar, commonly known as the Bear Bill, or Bear Buck. For more details on Californian currency, see pg. 39. For exchange rates and other information on money in the Americas, see pg.39.

E CLAMPUS VITUS

The Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus was founded in a mining camp buried under Sierra Nevada winter snows, in 1851. At this momentous time, a group of miners pledged allegiance to a new fraternity, whose motto was *Credo quia Absurdum* ("I believe because it is absurd"). The Clampers dedicated themselves to drinking and hell-raising, but were equally bound to the aid of widows, orphans, and civic works.

After the miners dug themselves out in the spring thaw, word of the Clampers spread so that today there is not a community on either side of the Sierras without a chapter. Members are summoned by long, flatulent blasts on the Hewgag, a long tin trumpet kept by the Noble Grand Humbug, the head of the local chapter. The Hewgag is blown to summon lodge brothers to fight fires, capture miscreants, collect money for widows and orphans, or simply to announce it is time to commence festivities.

The Clampers also exist to protect the local merchants. In a community where there is a chapter of E Clampus Vitus, you will find that all the shopkeepers are members, and townsfolk will only do business with Clampers. This is done to protect their business from interlopers and cheats. If a travelling salesman wants to do business in a town of Clampers, he will have to become one.

Anyone can ask to join the Clampers. The chapter will then convene to evaluate the prospective member. The Grand Humbug asks a battery of embarrassing questions, followed by a thorough and inventive hazing of the new member by the lodge brothers. If the initiate puts on an admirable show, he is inducted with a flurry of violent handshaking. Occasionally an important person is inducted without undergoing the hazing. He is blindfolded, and kneels on a cushion. He is then dubbed a Clamper by having his shoulders touched with the Sword of Mercy, a seven-foot wooden sword kept in velvet and decorated with the Clamper's mystical symbols.

The Clampers are also dedicated to preserving the colorful history of California. Many important people, including prominent Indian leaders, businessmen, and Emperor Norton himself, are all members of E Clampus Vitus.

"Why is San Francisco so important to the Bear Flag Empire?" I asked as we crossed the bridge.

"Put simply," said Clemens, drawing, "it is the essence of American culture, cured and distilled into its purest form for the edification of all."

I had read enough of his writings to know that he was being entirely sarcastic and facetious. I knew exactly what his view of "the essence of American culture" was. So I had to smile. But Kit? Talk about a straight man. The seriousness with which he took Clement's comment made it all the funnier. I had to turn my face away and pretend to be looking at the countryside to keep from laughing in his face.

"That is exactly true," said Carson. "It is the cultural center of the Empire. But its value is far greater than that. Militarily speaking, it has a sheltered port guarded by a narrow channel, and it has temperate weather year-round. Inside the Bay, we have fisheries, shipyards, trade companies, and industry of all sorts. San Francisco goods and services are sent all over the Empire, too."

"Now that is true," said Sam. "They send regular wagons to Virginia City, taking oysters and crab over, and bringing back silver and gold."

"Oysters?" I asked. "So that's what that smell was."

"Yup," he said. "Piles of oyster shells outside of town. There's also a regular laundry run."

"Now I know you're kidding me," I said. "No one's gonna want to haul someone's dirty socks from Nevada to the Bay."

"Why not?" said Kit. "San Francisco has the best Chinese laundries in the Empire, and the miners in Virginia City certainly have enough money to make it profitable. I send all my uniforms to San Francisco."

Woah. San Francisco, the heart of Norton's California, sending her seafood and starched shirts to the most remote corners of the empire. No wonder it was so important to them. "Okay, so it's important. At least it should be easy to defend."

"That is true," said Sir Kit. "We have the *Cortador Madera* to the north, to repel warships. If a pirate slips through or the *Cortador* is defeated, we have the forts on Fort Winfield-Scott and Alcatraz Island. It can skip cannonballs across the entire channel. And we have the army barracks on Angel Island. But the problem is, that's the lion's share of the Empire's military strength."

"We have only a handful of naval warships, and most of them are obsolete. We've ordered some new vessels, but even so, we have a long coastline to defend. An invader could put ashore wherever he chose and march on San Francisco. That's why we keep most of our standing military near the Bay, and why we spend so much on defenses like the *Cortador*. Above all else, we must preserve the Bay for the sake of the Empire. If we lose it, the Empire is lost."

"Very true," said Clemens. "This is the heart of the Empire. As well its brain, made manifest in Emperor Norton the First."

I suffered another fit of coughing.

I thought San Francisco was beautiful before. You should have seen it back then. None of the neon, the gaudy paint, the cars, the smog. Just the essence of the city. Just the feel. We went straight away to the Turkish baths in the Montgomery Block to unwind. Apparently it was a Clemens tradition. Afterward we went to the Palace to sleep. Martin and I especially had been on the trail a long time. About the Palace, I have one thing to say:

Wow.

Anything else I could say would only detract from it.

We spent the night sleeping like logs. In the morning, fortune was with us. Sir Kit had to leave on some business, and Sam Clemens volunteered to take Martin and me on a tour of the city. All right.

SAN FRANCISCO

W

e stopped at the top of Market Street, looking down toward the pier. You wouldn't have believed it. Where you deal with a concrete, steel, and glass canyon, the largest building I could see was eight stories tall. Just eight.

From there Sam "accidentally" took us through the Barbary Coast, where the gambling houses and cat houses and opium houses and Lord only knows what else were to be found. Yeah, that's

Sam. I thought it was interesting, but von Hubel, blue-nose that he is (to quote Clemens), insisted that we not stop.

I also wanted to go by Fisherman's Wharf. Sam was all for it, but after the Barbary Coast, Martin was hesitant. I insisted. Martin protested. Sam ignored him. I just had to go there. See what it was like when the wharf was filled with fishermen and piles of fish, instead of piles of tourists who gawk like fish. My impression? It smelled fishy. But at least it was real.

We went all over the city. Including Ghirardelli's for some of their chocolate. It helped to appease Martin after Sam and I had dragged him through the less savory parts of town. I was surprised; I hadn't expected them to be around yet. Then, when I found they were, I was annoyed that they didn't have their trademark neon sign. Pavlovian association, I guess.

After supper, Clemens cheerfully lit up a cigar. "Well," he said with a smile, "I do think it's time to arrange and execute a series of editorial conferences, if I'm not mistaken."

Von Hubel was confused. "Don't you mean ministerial conferences? Don't you have a secretary to attend to those tasks?"

"No," said Sam, "not ministerial conferences. Not ministerial anything. It's after supper, and I hereby relinquish my duties for the day." He leaned forward conspiratorially. "For you see, my *nom de plume* is Mark Twain."

I already knew that, of course. Somehow the subject had never come up. Fortunately, Martin was surprised enough for the both of us, so Sam's great revelation had an appreciative audience. "You?" whispered von Hubel. "A member of the Emperor's cabinet?"

"Indeed," he answered smugly. "By night I am a field reporter. I find all the interesting stories there are to be found, and get them published."

I leaned forward, too. "I think that you find a lot of interesting stories that are not there to be found, also," I said.

He dismissed my point with a wave of his hand. "I personally consider the semantic discrimination between conventional fact and fancy to be inherently irrelevant to the pursuit of a good story," he said.

"You lie in the papers?" Martin asked, genuinely surprised.

"Never," Sam answered. "I always present events exactly as they happen. However, I also choose to write about interesting incidents I find that do not occur."

Understanding dawned on Martin's face in a broad smile. With that, we stood and left for the first of many editorial conferences. There were a startling number of bars, saloons, and breweries around the city. Prohibitionists would have died of shock. But we did our best, walking, staggering, riding, and, if my memory is accurate, crawling from place to place. I'm sure a great many stories were born that evening, both real and fictitious.

In the morning, we had a late breakfast. Very late. Very very late. With lots of orange juice. When we were done—and felt much better—Sam Clemens cleared his throat noisily and lit a stogie.

"It's time you met Emperor Norton."

POKER ALICE

Poker Alice Ivers was born in England and speaks with a distinct British accent. When it suits her purposes, she convincingly pretends to be of ancient, but unspecified, noble lineage.

She came to San Francisco shortly after the fall of the Cabal to assassins' bullets. A familiar figure in the saloons along the Barbary Coast, in the gambling dens of Chinatown and anywhere she can find a card game, Alice is the Queen of San Francisco gamblers. Poker is her game but she is adept at most games of chance. Having long ago won herself a fortune, she now plays for excitement—the higher the stakes, the better.

• Poker Alice Ivers, Gambler

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Comeliness [GR] • Education [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Gambling [EXC] • Perception [EXC]

EMPEROR NORTON I

THE EPIC OF AN EMPEROR

On May 2, 1820 a boy named Joshua Abraham Norton arrived at the Cape of Good Hope with his parents, John and Sarah. Except that the boy's name wasn't really Joshua Abraham Norton, although that is the name he goes by now, and John and Sarah weren't really his parents. The boy was actually a Bourbon, a crown prince of France who had been smuggled out of the country the second time Napoleon ascended the throne, and sent to South Africa to escape assassination. The young prince lived the uneventful life of a common child until 1849, when, provisioned with his inheritance, he sailed to San Francisco. On Saturday, September 17, 1859, His Highness abolished the Republic and proclaimed himself Emperor of California. For the next several years, His Highness lived in temporary lodgings, until a sufficient Palace could be constructed, and issued royal decrees regarding the running of the Empire. However, this was a strife-filled period, as the government of the Republic ignored his decrees and pretended to be the legitimate government. In 1864 the citizens of the Empire, tired of the impostor politicians, rallied behind the Emperor and acknowledged his legitimacy.

THE HONEST TRUTH

That's the official history. That is what's printed in all of the history books, in all the museums, and what any court official, up to the Emperor himself, will tell you. Now, for the truth. Joshua Abraham Norton did emigrate from England and arrive in Algoa Bay, Cape of Good Hope, with his (real) Jewish parents in 1820. They settled on one hundred acres on the Great Fish River. Just across the river, in fact, from Kaffaria, home of the hostile Xhosa tribes. At the time there was no temple in South Africa, but John and his neighbors helped to build the first Anglican church on the frontier. Joshua received a Jewish upbringing at home, but learned Christian doctrine at school. He grew up reading the Bible, and hearing countless stories of royal infants abducted from France and reared as commoners.

When Joshua reached twenty-one, his father gave him the capital to open his own ship chandlery. Eighteen months later, "Joshua Norton & Company" went bankrupt. In 1841 the Nortons moved to Cape Town and, to his parents' dismay, Joshua renounced Judaism. Soon after, Sarah died, followed by the eldest Norton son, Louis. In 1848 John Norton returned to England for health reasons, whereupon he too promptly died. In this manner Joshua received his inheritance.

THE ROAD TO RUIN AND MADNESS

Joshua then moved to San Francisco. There he ran several businesses, all of which ended in failure. Finally he tried to corner the rice market, three days before China opened its doors to trading, flooding the market with cheap rice. This disaster cost Norton his real estate, savings, and sanity. Finally, on September 17, 1859, the destitute, mad Joshua Norton

delivered his first proclamation to the editor of the *Bulletin*. Now completely denying his childhood and heritage, he signed the proclamation "Norton I, Emperor of California." To this day he refuses to answer to the name Joshua. Only Norton I remains.

Over the next several years, Norton published many proclamations in the *Bulletin*, generally disapproving of the corrupt Republic government and encouraging citizens to ignore their false acts. At one point he commanded the Commander-in-Chief of California's armies to march upon the government buildings and clear them out, using whatever force was necessary. This, along with his other decrees, was ignored.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD ...

He was ignored until 1863, when John Fremont was killed in a mysterious fashion. In 1864 Norton's acquaintance Samuel Clemens nominated him for President. Norton won by a landslide. In deference, he was addressed as "Your Majesty", instead of "Mr. President." The Empire now entered a period of prosperity. In 1865, the last vestiges of the corrupt Republic government were swept away. In 1869 the Emperor ratified treaties with the Indians living in the Great Basin and Pacific Northwest areas, bringing them into the Empire as Citizens. From the Great Basin tribes Norton received the Silver Secret, bringing new wealth to the Empire. To celebrate Norton's deeds and the phenomenal prosperity California was enjoying, Norton was officially crowned Emperor of the Bear Flag Empire of California.

So much for Norton I, the mad monarch. As for Norton I the person, one could not hope to find a kinder, gentler man. He is fond of all his subjects, especially the children. On his frequent walks about San Francisco, he will often usher a herd of children into a candy store (all candy stores in San Francisco are Confectioners by Appointment to His Imperial Majesty) and command that bonbons be given out to his entourage. Despite his humble roots he is a man of learning, and is very knowledgeable and rational about any given subject, particularly history or science, except himself, where it all becomes confused. He is a great lover of libraries and the arts, frequently patronizing the Mechanic's Institute, the Bohemian Club, and the California Academy of Natural Sciences. During his days as a merchant he was a member of the Freemasons, in the Occidental Lodge. Now that he is Emperor, he has been made honorary President. He no longer attends meetings, as he dislikes the political agenda they push, and he dislikes their connections to the United States. He is temperate in his habits and does not drink. His only vice is chess, which he is very good at. The Emperor attends Synagogue on Saturday and church on Sunday. "I think it my duty to encourage religion and morality by showing myself at church," Norton explains, "and to avoid jealousy I attend them all in turn." All in all, one could not hope for a better man to be, by the Grace of God, Emperor of California and Protector of Mexico.



THE SOCIAL SCENE IN SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco is one of the most European of American cities. But don't expect to find the sort of society to which you may have become accustomed. New European society revolves around the great royal and noble houses, with a few elite private clubs and sporting societies that add variety. Society in San Francisco reflects the unique background of this cosmopolitan city which built itself practically overnight.

THE GRAND HOTELS

In San Francisco there are few private houses which can support a ball for four hundred on a New European scale. The majority of citizens live in hotels or boarding houses. Even some of the social elite live in hotels like the Lick House and must entertain from there. The Palace Hotel, where Norton I resides, is the premier residence in the city, yet it still rents rooms by the night as well as by the month. Debutante balls and official functions are held at the Palace or at nearby Bear Flag Square, the town plaza of Steam Age San Francisco. Most parties and entertainments which are not suitable to one of the theaters or concert halls are given in the huge ballrooms of such hotels.

NOB HILL

Railroad, financial, and banking center of the West Coast from Mexico to British Columbia, as well as capital of the Bear Flag Empire, there is real wealth and power in San Francisco, rivaling that of New York, London, or Paris. The tycoons, financiers, and power brokers, along with their ladies, have created for themselves a miniature version of New York society, suitable to their position in the Empire and complete with exclusive balls, musicales, and charity dinners. The houses of the Crockers, Stanfords, Coits, Sutros, and their peers cluster atop the hill which overlooks Bear Flag Plaza.

This is Nob Hill. A nob is another name for a swell or a toff, the self-described upper crust. If the hill which carries their name ever had another, it has been forgotten.

The society of Nob Hill is insular. The Nobs don't mingle. Yet, these Nobs are the great patrons of the city, funding art, music, magick, and all variety of cultural affairs. Think of them in the grand tradition of the Italian noble merchant families of the Middle Ages. It is at their parties that you will hear the finest music and see the best of American and New European art. For the most part, their balls and musicales are held in their homes. Their great dinner functions take place at the St. Francis Hotel on Bear Flag Square. Getting an invitation is the tricky part. It is all too easy to overlook, or be overlooked by, this closed society of the wealthy and powerful.

THE EMPEROR'S PLEASURE

Emperor Norton is, somewhat reluctantly, invited to attend the Nobs' social gatherings. Somewhat reluctantly, and chiefly out of a sense of duty, the Emperor will usually make a brief appearance. The tentative relationship between the Nobs and the Emperor is due in no small part to the fact that some few Nobs were involved in the corrupt Cabal that had thought to make the Emperor a mere figurehead. That some still plot a return to the "good old days" does nothing to help the awkward social situation. The Emperor does allow a debutante ball to be given once a year under his patronage because "it wouldn't do to disappoint the little dears."

Receptions for the diplomatic corps are regular fixtures of the capital social scene and the Emperor always puts in an appearance. Similarly, the Emperor can be counted on to attend charity functions. Norton is nothing if not civic minded. Charity events are favorites of the Emperor's, not the least because his presence and philanthropy shame the more penurious Nobs to appear and contribute in equal measure. While the Emperor puts up with the society affairs and diplomatic receptions and enjoys charity affairs, for both civic and personal reasons, left to find his own way, the Emperor prefers a far different sort of company.

THE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES

The old aristocracy of San Francisco, before the Nobs created their own society, were the Volunteer Fire Companies, which were social as well as utilitarian institutions. Each company pooled funds to build a well equipped fire house and to afford the largest, glossiest, hand-pulled pumper engine to be shipped from back east. Initially, groups of well born bachelors formed the VFC's and competed not only to fight fires, but to throw the best parties! When these bachelors married, rather than give up valued friends and a good time, they continued to belong to the VFC's and formed ladies' auxiliaries for their wives.

Each year the companies join together to sponsor a Halloween Ball. No hostess in Nob society dares offer a party on that evening, because for one night Nob Hill doesn't matter. Emperor Norton much prefers to attend the dances and picnics given by the VFC's throughout the year, rather than more tony affairs. It is a measure of his sympathies that one of the first factories given Norton's Royal Patent was the Excelsior Fire Engine Manufacturing Works, a joint investment of several fire companies to produce steam-powered pumps.

THE ART AND LITERARY SCENE

San Francisco has always had a large complement of writers and artists. A number of such people have joined with some of the less stuffy members of Nob Hill to form the Bohemian Club, at whose functions good conversation is paramount. On occasion the Bohemian Club sponsors a visiting lecturer, usually a famous explorer or a noted literary figure, but most of the time members just meet to exchange gossip and talk about art. The most illustrious members of the club are Robert Louis Stevenson, his bride-to-be Fanny Osbourne, Joaquin Miller, and the librarian-poetess Ina Donna Coolbrith.

Rivaling the Bohemian Club is the Art Student's League. Mrs. Mark Hopkins, widow of the railway magnate, has decided her splendid mansion to the Art Students' League, maintaining a small suite of rooms on the top floor. The mansion sits atop Nob Hill, affording fine views for the art students to draw. The League gives a fund raising ball every year at Mardi Gras, a fancy-dress event that brings out the whole city.

The unquestioned leader of artistic society, however, is noted artist William Keith. His majestic landscapes and portraits have so won the hearts and the pocketbooks of native sons and visitors that many a local artist has given up the battle to compete and begun selling paintings with Mr. Keith's forged signature. For his part, Mr. Keith has made peace with his role as a celebrity who must be visited. On Tuesdays and Thursdays he gives a tea at his studio to any would-be patrons who drop by to pay a call. The rest of the time, his door remains locked while he works.

Various bars and cafés exist to serve the art and literary crowd. They are open to any visitor of talent or to anyone buying a round. This is as close to the café society of Wien or München as you will get on this side of the Atlantic.

SPA SOCIETY

In New Europa it is fashionable to travel to Baden Baden or other spas to take the waters. In the United States, the place to go is Saratoga, New York. In the Bear Flag Empire, the premier spa is Calistoga, just north of San Francisco.

Run by Mr. Sam Brannan, Calistoga is a geothermal hot spring converted into a spa offering therapeutic mineral baths. It received its name during its dedication ball, at which the drunken Mr. Brannan attempted to say that it was the "Saratoga of California" but ended up saying the spa was the "Calistoga of Sarafornia." The name stuck. Calistoga is the center of spa society for the elite of the Bear Flag Empire and where everyone goes for the "cure."

THE OCTAGONS

It must be something in the air, or maybe the water. Citizens of the Bear Flag Empire are obsessed with living a healthy lifestyle. In the late 1850's and early 1860's, it was all the rage to build octagonal houses with domed cupolas and dormer windows. The Octagons, as they came to be known, were supposed to be conducive to living longer and healthier lives. Though the fad died out after a few years, there are still those who cling to the Octagons.

Clustered at the east end of Golden Gate Park and just to the south, an entire neighborhood is given over to octagonal buildings. The residents are dedicated to healthy living and have formed communes to run stores that stock the special foods they prefer. Made fun of by many of the city's more traditional citizens, the residents of the Octagons have developed their own society and a militant, even radical philosophy. Every so often they march on City Hall to demand change.

More than local color, the Octagons are a place where free thinkers congregate. Persons ostracized by San Francisco's mainstream society can find ready acceptance among the Octagons. Theirs is a counter culture but no less important to the city's life. It is rumored that before he became Emperor, Joshua Norton lived for a time in the Octagons and that the memory of the kindness he received is one reason the occasional excesses of the inhabitants are tolerated by the city.

POLITICS & IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

The "Mad Emperor Norton" is not mad. Since assuming the presidency and becoming Emperor, he has proven himself an able leader and a notable reformer. The Bear Flag Empire enjoys an enlightened Constitutional Monarchy, with the Emperor as hereditary monarch.

THE BEAR FLAG CONSTITUTION

The Bear Flag Constitution guarantees all Imperial citizens equality before the law without regard to race, religion, or creed. Every citizen of 21 years or older is eligible to vote and serve in the House of Representatives. Women enjoy full equality with men and freedom of speech, religion, and association is guaranteed. Slavery is illegal and a system of tariffs, fines, and excises takes the place of an income tax.

THE CALIFORNIA PARLIAMENT

Modeled after the British parliamentary system, the Parliament of the Bear Flag Empire is divided between an upper House of Peers and a lower House of Representatives. The House of Representatives is the chief law-making body of the Empire, while the House of Peers functions as an oversight committee which must approve all Imperial appointments and treaties, as well as any tariffs, fines, or excises passed by the lower house.

Representatives are elected at large within four Imperial Districts—San Francisco, Los Angeles, Virginia City and Portland. Each district elects ten Representatives based on popular vote, each citizen having only one vote. Representatives serve three-year terms with one third of the House up for reelection every year. The constitution limits Representatives to four terms.

Membership in the House of Peers is by Imperial appointment and a simple majority vote of the House of Representatives. Membership is for life on good behavior and regular attendance at all sessions of Parliament. The Emperor routinely confers fantastic, but meaningless, titles on all Peers.

THE IMPERIAL CABINET

The Imperial Cabinet is appointed by the Emperor and consists of nine Ministers selected from members of Parliament, or from special appointments by the Emperor. The Ministers include the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Minister of State, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of War, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Minister of Trade, the Minister of Indian Affairs, and the Minister of Justice. In addition to the official members of the Imperial Cabinet, the Emperor takes council from many personal friends, to the most prominent of whom he grants the title Imperial Plenipotentiary.

THE FOREIGN SERVICE

The Foreign Service answers to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and is worth mentioning because a majority of its

operatives are Indians. As the Bear Flag Empire negotiated alliances with the Indians of the Northwest, Emperor Norton was impressed with the way they handled the negotiations and dealt with white settlers in the area. In dealing with the Indians of the Great Basin, Emperor Norton was similarly impressed. Determined to do more than add Indian lands to the Bear Flag Empire, the Emperor encouraged Indians to take up careers in the Foreign Service, realizing that their help would be invaluable in dealing with the Indians of the intermountain region, Canada, and the Twenty Nations. The result has been a spectacular success that has given the Bear Flag Empire an enviable reputation and relationship with the Indian nations.

THE DISTRICT COUNCILS

Recognizing that the Bear Flag Empire is composed of many different peoples who need to remain unified, Emperor Norton authored the section of the Constitution that created the four Imperial Districts and authorized a semi-autonomous Council in each. This limited self-government allows each Council to craft local laws that reflect the different cultural traditions of the peoples of each District. At the same time, the Districts are so large that no one group can control the Council of a District. This has done much to reconcile the people of the Empire to one another, as a two-thirds vote of a Council is necessary to enact legislation.

POLITICS

All politics are local. No one political group dominates the Parliament or the District Councils. The wealthy industrialists tend to congregate in San Francisco and, along with the small farmers of the San Joaquin Valley, control the San Francisco District Council. In the south, the Los Angeles District is run by the Spanish Hacienda owners and Indians. The Virginia City District is home to the big mining interests but also numerous small stake holders, as well as the Indians of the Great Basin. To the North, the Indians and white settlers share power in the Portland District.

Politics at the Imperial level reflects these same divisions. The result is that compromise rules the day, because no one group has truly imperial scope. Even the secret societies that would return to the days of the Cabal, institute a sorcerous takeover of the government, or revive the Confederacy in the far west have a hard time making headway in the Parliament and must work outside the political system. This tends to confine their activities to urban areas where they are more likely to be able to hide their activities among the crowd.

While compromise is common, don't think things aren't lively. With a third of the House of Representatives up for election each year, politics are constant and contentious. The divergent interests of the people of the Empire also insure that compromise is not reached easily once a Representative makes it to San Francisco. Things tend to work out in the end, but you won't fall asleep along the way.

EMPEROR NORTON

Really?" I blurted. "We'd be most honored," said Martin, somewhat more restrained. What else would I expect from him? He hadn't lived in the Bay Area like I had. He hadn't known of the petitions to rename the Bay Bridge to the Emperor Norton Bridge. He hadn't steeped in Nortonia like us eccentric Bay Area weirdos. I was excited. I wanted to meet the loony whose self-proclamation became a self-fulfilling prophecy on this side of the Veil. It was too much.

When I first heard about Emperor Norton, I figured it was one of those Bay Area quirks in an area filled with flakes. But I kept seeing him. As a statue on Pier 39, rendered on canvas in the Bank Exchange Restaurant, as a figurehead on a cruise ship. It all blew me away, until I got the joke ... that there was no joke. So when I found out that on this side of the Veil he'd been elected Emperor, I laughed so hard it hurt. The joke that wasn't became the joke that was. Only a certified loon should be appointed Emperor of California, and what do you know? One was.

"The trick, of course," said Sam, "comes in locating him."

"How come?" I asked. "Why not just go to his throne room or whatever?" Man, I can be so dense sometimes.

"What a devilishly brilliant idea," said Clemens with a demonic twinkle. "How embarrassing for a Privy Minister to overlook such obvious and simple solutions. How do you do it? It must be your uniform. We're off!" He dashed outside and hailed a carriage.

I sunk into the corner of the carriage as we left for the Palace. 'Cause I could feel them. Coals. And Clemens was hauling me over them. Slowly.

We arrived at the Palace, and Sam burst out. "We're here to see the Emperor!" he proclaimed. "The Privy Minister with some very important and intelligent guests!" He stormed into the lobby and up the grand staircase. We followed, me doing my best to both keep up and hide in the shadows. He burst into a second-floor ballroom: The Imperial Throne Room. "Your majesty!" Clemens bellowed, bowing.

His words echoed in the empty hall.

An elderly butler shuffled up. "Can I help you, Mr. Clemens?" he asked timidly.

Sam turned around, perplexed. He spread his hands helplessly. "Wh—wherever is the Emperor?" he sputtered.

"He's not back from his morning constitutional, Mr. Clemens. You know he doesn't come back until dinnertime."

"DAMN!" shouted Sam. "And it was such a good idea!" He stormed up to me. "Have you any others?" he asked quietly.

"Ha," I said. "Ha. And ha." I gestured to the front doors. "After you?"

His point made (and mine), Clemens led us at a more sedate pace out of the hotel, scrounging some fine pastries to fuel our search for the Emperor. We checked at the Mechanics' Institute, the Bohemian Club, the Waterfront, and other places whose names escape me. Obviously, there was more to finding this doddering Emperor than I'd thought.

"I once called him a lovable old humbug," said Clemens during the search, "but that was before I met him. I regret those words, for while I will not retract that appraisal, I certainly could have done him more honor. Oho!" And he pointed.

Ahead of us was a crowd of squealing and laughing children, all gathered around a candy store on a corner. There was a pack of them. Forty at least, all ages. The proprietor was going to make out like gangbusters, assuming he could keep order. And his sanity. The crowd of kids seemed to be turning itself inside out, with children crowding in the door while others pushed their way to freedom, holding candy in the air like trophies. And then, walking like a show dog among puppies, we saw him.

Emperor Norton I.

The children flocked around him, jumping up and down in their glee. A chorus of "thank yous" rang in the air. He lifted a regal hand in imperious acknowledgment of their gratitude. Inside I could see the shopkeeper smiling as the children scattered.

"As you can see," said Clemens, "we have an unconventional system of government."

THE AERIAL STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

In 1869, two men with a vision got together. Fred Marriot and Andrew Hallidie teamed up to form the Aerial Steam Navigation Company. They built a curious combination of a dirigible and a stub-winged monoplane called the "Avitor". On July 2, 1869, at Shellmound Park, a race-track near Oakland, the machine was given its first test. The *Avitor's* steam-driven propellers cranked up, and she rose into the air. No pilot was in the gondola—this first test was unmanned. Men holding onto guide ropes dragged the *Avitor* around the track. The second flight took place on August 14. The forty-foot prototype was loaded with passengers, including the Emperor, and it made a flight from Shellmound Park to the Presidio. Immediately, the Emperor ordered the government to invest money in the company. Major investors did also. One year later, the 160-foot *Emperor Norton* made its first passenger flight from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Now, the Aerial Steam Navigation Company has a fleet of six Avitors, and other companies have formed to produce their own. Avitors, capable of amazing top speeds of one hundred miles per hour, are now making regular flights out of Oakland Imperial Aerodrome. No flights currently go to the United States, but non-stop flights out of Oakland Aerodrome are available to as far away as Seattle and New Orleans. The Imperial Army is now researching the possibility of using armed Avitors in an Imperial Aero Force.

Andrew Hallidie would go on to provide another great service for the empire by designing a system of Cable Cars for San Francisco. This system went into operation in 1873, and has operated flawlessly all across the city ever since.

AVITOR

Cost: 64 days at 6,400c

Size: Large [60 wounds]

Powered By: A spherical brass boiler covered with hundreds of tiny rivets and jets of pressurized steam hissing from spigot-shaped safety valves

Operation Time: One month

Operates With: A Captain's wheel; and thick metal cables and greasy iron rods pulled by ranks of numbered handles

Moves With: Large wooden propellers spinning on ornately-mounted drive shafts (wings only aid in lift)

COMMUNICATIONS IN AMERICA

Modes of communications in America is almost as disorganized as methods of transportation. Parcels and mail are carried by horse or train within and in between the nations of America. Unfortunately, these methods of delivery are subject to delays, destruction of track, and robbery. Shipping packages or mail via agencies such as Wells, Fargo, & Co. is a little more reliable, but still far from certain.

The most reliable form of communication is the telegraph. Telegraphy was developed early in the nineteenth century in New Europa. With advances made in the 1850's by Samuel Morse, telegraphy became practical and lines began springing up across New Europa and America. Telegraphy in America boomed with the development of the sounding key (which allowed operators to "hear" incoming messages) and the establishment of the Western Union Telegraphy Company in 1856.

Since then, thousands of miles of telegraphic cable have been laid across America. With the development of quadruplex lines by Thomas Edison in 1874, it is possible for four messages to travel along the same line at once. Via telegraph, it is possible to transmit a message from San Francisco to Washington D.C. for pennies in a matter of minutes, as opposed to the time and expense it would take to send it overland using conventional means.

Unfortunately, telegraphy is still far from perfect. Heavy snow or rain can down lines, as can vandals and hostile Indians. No telegraph lines cross the Twenty Nations yet, but rogue braves sometimes cut lines that run near their borders just for spite. The Bear Flag Empire is investigating the notion of burying telegraph lines underground, but no steps have been taken yet.

So, in front of a candy store in the middle of San Francisco, we met Emperor Norton. He was an interesting character, different than I'd expected. I'd always seen him wearing those shabby second-hand uniforms in all the photos. But here, when he had the backing of the Imperial Treasury, he looked different.

Very different.

I will never forget the scene. He had the same blue military uniform, but this time it wasn't a threadbare private's coat and pants bought at a pawn shop. He had a tailored dark blue coat, covered with gold frogging and braid and epaulettes the size of saucers, with a boutonniere in his lapel. Or maybe it was better called a gold frogging coat with occasional bare patches of blue. He had wide, heavily starched white collars and cuffs, and a white waistcoat meticulously embroidered. A gold watch chain and dark blue satin cravat added decor. He wore white pants, loose and baggy in the Continental fashion, with incredibly wide red and gold piping down the sides. For some reason, he still wore broken-down unpolished brown leather boots. It looked like the toes were starting to split. He had a saber, of course, and a royal scepter, one of many I was to see in the coming days, made of dark hickory and sporting a silver shield inscribed with his name. It was a gag gift some years earlier on the behalf of an anonymous admirer. And to top it all off... his hat. Lord help me, his hat.

It was a giant white fur shako, festooned with ostrich plumes in a mind-numbing array of colors. Centered on the front was a large, ornate, gold N surrounded by golden laurel leaves. Beneath it: Norton I, *Dei Gratia Imperator*. Looking at the whole package, my eyes hurt. Suddenly his boots started looking awfully attractive.

Sam Clemens didn't seem to notice. Or perhaps, more frightening, he'd gotten used to it. He introduced us all around. I'm not sure what sort of reaction I was expecting from the Emperor, but clear-voiced and regal formality was not it.

"We are very pleased to make your acquaintance," said he.

"I—uh, I'm honored," I stammered. I felt like I was face to face with a superior intellect, albeit one with a fiendishly impaired aesthetic sense.

"Honored indeed, your majesty," said Martin. "But what of the rest of our delegation? Aren't they here yet?"

"No, we are afraid they have not yet journeyed to our Empire. We learned via telegraph that they are detained in Texas finishing the repairs on your airship, and though our patience is taxed, we have chosen to be most accommodating in light of their recent unfortunate experiences." He looked about, dazedly. "Attend us now, and walk this way."

Norton and von Hubel walked in front, leaving Clemens and I to follow. After a mere ten steps, two Asians appeared out of nowhere. Deadpan expressions, bald heads, long queues down their backs. They dressed in loose clothes, and had that easy predator's gait about them. Black belts? Tonges? I nudged Sam.

"Oh, pay them no mind," he said. When I protested, he added, "They're gifts from the Dragon Emperor of China. They're called Imperial Dragons, students of Fong Sai-Yuk. He's reputed to be some sort of big juju fighting kind of gent, and his entire secret school was relocated here to protect the life of our Emperor."

Martin and the Emperor spoke for a half hour, while Clemens filled me in on the local color. Despite the fact that we meandered into the bad part of town, we had no trouble. Everybody loves Norton. Suddenly he stopped. "And now, I think it is high time we withdrew to the Mechanic's Institute. We are gravely in need of a game of chess. Minister Clemens, if you would be so kind as to attend to the details of the agreements we have made with Mr. von Hubel, we shall have Captain Olam entertain us forthwith."

Sam shrugged and led Martin to a cable car. It didn't seem strange to him that he was being given no details of those agreements; he'd have to rely on Martin. Unconventional government indeed.

We went to the Institute and played chess. He slaughtered me. Seven times in a row. Less than twenty moves each time. Just as I was getting really frustrated, he looked up.

"There's more to the game than you know," he said.

CHINATOWN

China is here. Located in the heart of San Francisco, Chinatown is home to San Francisco's Chinese population. A completely different world lies behind the great red gates that mark the border. The people speak Chinese. They dress in Chinese fashion. The signs are in Chinese. The architecture is Chinese. Chinatown is a city within a city and a nation within a nation. San Francisco's police do not patrol Chinatown and Chinatown has its own mayor. Yet the two cities are bound together in mutual dependence. The Chinese provide labor to San Francisco and San Franciscans come to Chinatown to sample its exotic, and often illegal, wares. Merchants cater to both Chinese and non-Chinese populations, selling mining supplies cheaper than white competitors. Street vendors weigh and sell fresh fish from wicker baskets. Delivery boys run through the crowded streets balancing packages on the end of long poles slung over their shoulders. Guards lurk in the doorways of casinos where Chinese often lose their money at *fantan*, Chinese bingo, or dominoes. Ethereal music from one-stringed fiddles and clanging gongs float out of old theaters. Opium can be bought for 25c a 12-pipeful jar. Wooden-soled sandals, coats of quilted cotton, and long pigtailed are the norm. Anything can be had for a price.

Six organizations of extended families run Chinatown. They elect the mayor and they control all of the legitimate businesses. The Sam Yup, See Yup, Ning Yuen, Yeung Wo, Hop Wo and Hip Kat Companies have split Chinatown up into feudal domains, each ruled by a Mandarin Warlord. These Warlords live in sumptuous mansions and their word is law within their domain. The mayor is but a figurehead to divert attention from the Mandarins.

Operating alongside the Six Companies is the San Ho Hui, or Triad Society of Heaven and Earth, led by the Overlord. This is the Chinese Mafia, and it controls all illegal activity in Chinatown. However, the Triad Society is made up of a number of individual Tongs or gangs. Each Tong is controlled by a Lord who controls some aspect of crime or vice within Chinatown. The Tong Lords often war to see who will be Overlord. Leading Tongs include the Progressive Pure-Hearted Brotherhood, the Society of Pure and Upright Spirits, the Society of Secured and Beautiful Light, the Peace and Benevolence Society, the Perfect Harmony of Heaven Society, and the Society as Peaceful as the Placid Sea. Despite their names, the Tongs are ruthless. Their warriors, known as *boo how doy* or Hatchetmen, are skilled martial artists and assassins that a Tong Lord will not hesitate to use against opponents, Chinese or otherwise. Armed with knives, hatchets, guns, or only their martial abilities, these warriors fanatically enforce the will of the Tong lords. A fist fight between a Hop Sing and a Bow Leong once escalated into a deadly brawl with fifty hatchet-wielding men on each side. When a person crosses the boundary of China Town, the power of the Tong Lords, hidden in their secret fortresses, is absolute.

Prostitution is the chief illegal activity in Chinatown. Common prostitutes can be had in narrow stalls called Cribbs. Oriental bordellos called Parlor Houses cater to upscale clientele. Slavery is a related vice. Chinese girls are sold to the Tongs to be used as prostitutes or to wealthy Chinese or white buyers for their private pleasure. White slavery is also practiced by several Tongs, though this risks police involvement. After prostitution and slavery, Chinatown is known for its Opium Dens and Gambling Houses. Many such operations are located in the upper levels of the maze of tunnels beneath Chinatown.

Space is perhaps the most precious commodity in Chinatown. Landlords burrow deeply beneath their buildings, add balconies many stories above the ground, and build sheds and lean-tos in already crowded territory. Buildings in Chinatown rise to seven and eight stories. Beneath these buildings a complex of tunnels descends ten stories below ground! The rambling catacombs are the stuff of legend. The upper levels of these tunnels are controlled by the Six Companies. The middle levels are the province of the Tongs. The lowest levels are spoken of only in hushed whispers of "Chinese Black Magick!"

Immortal Chinese Sorcerers live in Chinatown. They are feared by even the Tongs! Rumor has it that a great gilded city had been constructed deep under China Town by sorcerers devoted to the dread Immortal known as Lo Pan. It is said no white man has ever set foot there and returned. Lo Pan plots nothing less than to rule the world. To this end he practices black magick deep in Chinatown's tunnels, weaving his inexorable spells of power. Alchemists and Sages are sought out by common people seeking protection from such sorcerers. The magickal wars that are fought are as deadly as any Tong War.

Oriental Dragons also live in Chinatown. Some choose to lair in deep tunnels when they tire of their houses. Oriental Dragons are mercurial and magical creatures. You can never be certain if one will aid or harm you. They make fierce enemies, but you could not find better allies. It is believed by many that these Dragons are the true masters of Chinatown. The mythical Dragon Emperor of Chinatown may be more real than any suspect.

A NOTE ON ORIENTAL DRAGONS

Over the millennia that Dragons have existed upon the Earth, a new species developed that spent most of its time on the ground. Thus, these Dragons lost their wings, their bodies becoming longer and more serpentine as a result, but they kept their magical flying ability. Eventually, these wingless Dragons were crowded out of New Europa by their winged cousins, and they went east, settling in the high mountains of China and Japan. Revered by the humans who lived in these lands, the Dragons soon became the subjects of many many paintings and legends, as their sinuous bodies were seen dancing through the clouds. The Dragons exploited this reverence, and set themselves up as the Dragon Emperors. Oriental Dragons possess the same abilities as their New European cousins.

ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF CALIFORNIA

Local Indian legends state that thousands of years ago, before the white man even dreamed of leaving New Europa, other beings stalked the land.

GIANTS IN THE EARTH

On Lompoc Rancho in 1833, a group of Mexican soldiers, digging a pit for a powder magazine, unearthed a giant skeleton lying beneath a layer of cemented gravel. It was twelve feet tall and had double rows of teeth on its upper and lower jaws. It was surrounded by burial offerings: carved shells, huge stone axes, and porphyry blocks covered with hieroglyphs.

Local Indians panicked, and the skeleton was reburied. Similar remains were also found in the Nevada Territory. Indians in these areas were familiar with the giants, and spoke of them with fear and hatred. They said their ancestors had fought great, bloody wars to drive these giants out of their territories. Whether these giants are truly extinct or are simply in hiding, building their strength until they can reclaim their lands, is unknown.

EMPIRE OF THE LIZARDMEN

Hopi Indians say that Mount Shasta was home to an ancient race of lizardmen. The Lizard People built thirteen cities along the Pacific coast. One was beneath Mount Shasta; the largest, and the capital, was beneath the present-day city of Los Angeles. These underground cities were built after a great holocaust swept the southwest three thousand years ago, to shelter the tribes against future disasters.

Legend says that these underground cities house a thousand families each, along with stockpiles of food. The Lizard People bored the tunnels out of solid rock using a "chemical solution" that melted the rock. They are also rumored to possess troves of golden tablets that chronicle their race's history, the origin of humanity, and the story of the world back to creation.

AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR



I admit, I was completely off balance now. I was expecting to find a half-senile half-deluded old man. I mean, the guy once walked around the streets in ragged clothes, half-starved, declaring himself to be Emperor. Crazy, declaring yourself the Emperor. But now he *was* Emperor. So was he insane?

I didn't know. The fact that he was Emperor now didn't remove whatever paranoid schizophrenia it was that had caused him to make the claim in the first place. His clothing and eccentric habits only confirmed that he was a few bricks shy. At least so far as you think modern society and convention are the marks of sanity. Yet everything else he did and said pointed to an amazingly sharp mind. He slaughtered me at chess, and I'm pretty good at it. In our conversation during the course of the chess games, he displayed an amazing knowledge of current events, science, political and religious theories, you name it. And I had no doubt now that he would remember every detail of the agreements he had made with Martin. He had an amazing ability to retain and synthesize facts. Madness or genius?

"There are those rebellious persons who call us mad, Captain Olam," he said. Then without warning he sat up straight, and looked all about him like a trapped rat. "We cannot discuss this here. Come, attend us." He stood up and had a carriage hailed. *Uh oh*, I thought, *here he goes. Over the edge.* But he didn't.

The carriage took us out to a hill in one of the city parks. It offered a beautiful view of the entire bay. We walked to the top of a hill, the two Chinese bodyguards dutifully taking up positions discreetly out of earshot. Emperor Norton sat down and took off his shoes. Fur shako. No shoes. Okay ...

"There are those rebellious persons who call me mad, Captain Olam," he repeated. I noticed that he dropped the royal "we", but I restrained myself from asking him why. Maybe he knew I'd be more comfortable with it. "To that I can only admit that I have given myself great leniency in my comportment. However, such leniency is not a sign of madness. It is a freedom I offer myself in compensation for the heavy mantle of duty which I bear for the betterment of the Empire. I grant myself freedom in whatever respects shall not impair the governing of the State."

He picked up a long stalk of grass and began idly chewing it before he continued. "Despite the vicious accusations of detractors, I am not mad. I am a dreamer. In that regard, I am not that different from you, Captain Olam. We are both dreamers, you and I."

This looked like it might be a long one. Interesting, but long. So I sat down, too.

"I became Emperor seventeen years ago," he said, "That was my dream: to be Emperor, and to do a far better job of administering the land than could be done by those in power in San Francisco. The government was divided and squabbling; the people themselves could not see the big picture. What they needed was a gentle but firm hand upon the tiller of the state. They needed a vision that could see beyond the fence posts of their property. They needed a dream. That hand was mine. That dream was mine. And my dream was to forge the nation into a united whole, with liberty, equality, justice, and opportunity for every single person.

"And I am succeeding. My empire now stretches from the Baja Peninsula to Puget Sound, and from the Pacific Ocean to the Great Plains. All of my loyal subjects are happy. We are the wealthiest country in the Western hemisphere, perhaps the world. I had hoped also to govern the rest of the Continent, to free the United States from the grip of their corrupt government of insiders, but I can see now that they are not ready for a true benevolent monarchy. Someday I shall. Someday they shall see my dream. And when they see the greatness of the dream, they shall swear their fealty to me.

"That is the strength of dreams. I saw the future, where the whole land was rich and prosperous and happy.

"And I made it happen."

THE WINCHESTER MYSTERY HOUSE

South of San Francisco Bay, the town of San Jose nestles at the foot of the Santa Cruz Mountains. A sleepy town, San Jose is home to one of the heirs of the Winchester rifle fortune, Sarah. Sarah married William Winchester in 1862. Always of delicate temperament, when she lost her one-month old baby she began to lose touch with reality. When she lost her husband to an assassin in 1872, she lost her mind.

Living in New Haven, Connecticut, seaside home of America's Robber Barons, Sarah sought out a psychic in Boston to make contact with her dead husband. William told her, "The dead do not rest. The spirits of all those killed by Winchester firearms are restless. You must go west, where so many have been killed by our guns, and build a home for the dead. Build it near the calm ocean, so that the spirits will rest. So long as you continue to build, the dead will be at peace." Frightened out of her mind, Sarah immediately headed west with her \$20 million inheritance, settling in San Jose. There she built her house.

THE MYSTERY HOUSE

The house Sarah bought had eight rooms. Construction began immediately and room after room was added with no plan. Staircases went nowhere. Doors opened on tremendous drops. Sarah spared no expense, employing the finest craftsmen, but would not slow down construction to plan the house. As the building took shape, the workmen grew increasingly uneasy. They could feel that they were not alone. The spirits of the dead had taken up residence in Sarah's house. Nonetheless, building continued.

Concerned when some of his workmen became lost in the house for days, the contractor hired an architect to come in and create a master floorplan of the structure. Much to the architect's amazement and consternation, the house proved impossible to map. Rooms were built at odd angles and the geometry was dizzying. The house even seemed to shift rooms at random. Working late one night to solve the mystery of the Winchester House, the architect vanished. His fate remains one more mystery.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

The Winchester House has indeed become home to the restless dead. Any sorcerer attempting to cast a necromancy spell in the house or on the grounds draws five cards per round instead of one. However, the spirits of the dead do not like to be disturbed. All face cards have their normal numerical value but also function as jokers, resulting in wild magic effects. All spells also generate harmonic, whether or not power is unaligned. If power is aligned, use the suit of the spell to determine the harmonic.

ODD GEOMETRY

Something about the way the Winchester House is built is very wrong. Those encountering its twisting labyrinths for the first time often experience fainting spells. In truth, the geometry of the house has passed beyond the physical laws of the universe. Doors in the house may connect to anywhere. You can step as easily from the Winchester House to President Grant's study in the White House, an English farmer's cottage in the Lake District, or Chancellor Bismarck's war room as you can from your own doorstep to your walk. Unfortunately, no one has devised a way to predict where you will end up!

Just as easily as the doors within the Winchester House can take you anywhere, others may end up in the House. Becoming lost in the Forbidden City of China, Castle Falkenstein, or the Bowery of New York could all result in an unexpected trip to San Jose, California. Some sorcerers knowledgeable about the Mystery House speculate that the doors do not merely lead anywhere but also anywhen and even to alternate universes. Of course, this is just speculation. Or perhaps not.

THE OUTSIDER

Ominously, something unexplainable seems to have entered the house from Outside, infusing the house with a malignant presence if not intelligence. A dark shape has been seen at the windows just after sundown. Workmen have reported glimpsing a dark man dressed all in black. Where the house was once spooky, it has become terrifying. Sarah has had to double the workmen's pay. Even she will not leave her suite of rooms at night. Most of the servants have fled or disappeared. Those that remain bolt their doors.

The power of the House is growing. Any sorcerer attempting to cast a necromancy spell in San Jose draws two cards per round instead of one. Sorcerers in San Francisco have marked this development and dispatched two teams of investigators to discover the truth. Neither returned. In Chinatown, the Chinese have started to hang charms from their wash lines and on their doorposts but nervously change the subject if asked why. Something is happening. A shadow is spreading across the Bay.

MAMMY PLEASANT

Mary Ellen "Mammy" Pleasant is another woman who thrives in the freedom the Bear Flag Empire offers to all women. A protege of Marie Laveau, the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, Mammy Pleasant is a strikingly beautiful Creole woman. She is undoubtedly one of the most powerful women in San Francisco. Her sorcerous ability is legendary. While most everyone also knows she runs the fanciest bordellos by the Bay, few would imagine that her girls are an incomparable information-gathering network. Mammy knows practically anyone who is anyone's secrets, sexual and otherwise. When Mammy speaks, politicians, tycoons, and, some say, even Emperors listen.

• Mary Ellen "Mammy" Pleasant, Mambo and Demimondaine

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Comeliness [GR] • Connections [EXC] • Education [GD] • Perception [GR] • Physician [GR] • Sorcery [GR]

BEAR FLAG LEGENDS

THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN OF THE MOTHER LODGE

At one time, Joaquin Murieta was the Bandit Chief of California. His successful career as a desperado resulted in stacks of dime novels, legions of manhunts, and, finally, his head on display in a jar. He was born in Sonora, Mexico in 1830. In 1850 he moved to California with his young bride to work the gold fields. There he ran into exclusionary laws and a gang of white toughs. After binding and gagging Joaquin, the toughs informed Joaquin that his kind wasn't wanted, and then they raped his wife. Taking the hint, he moved to Calaveras County, where he met up with his half-brother, who gifted him with a stolen horse. When Murieta ran into the horse's rightful owner, a disagreement occurred. After listening to the statements of the two brothers, Joaquin was horsewhipped, and his half-brother hung.

Following this outrage, Murieta organized a gang of Mexicans and proceeded to take revenge upon the lynch mob. From this petty act of revenge, Murieta's career grew and grew, moving on to horse thievery, murder, and stagecoach robbing. Finally, Fremont could tolerate no more of Murieta's activities. A \$6,000 reward was placed on Murieta's head, and a posse of California Rangers put on his trail. He was captured and his head was cut off so that it could be put on display in King's Saloon on Sansome Street in San Francisco. Admission, \$1.00.

Since then, many lonely travelers on moonlit nights have been confronted with Joaquin Murieta's headless specter. Astride a hellish coal-black horse, clad in a black capote and charro pants, Joaquin Murieta rides the mother lode country by night. Rumbling out of his headless body, like a subterranean grumble out of a bottomless well, comes the unearthly howl of, "Give me back my head!"

Murieta's victims number almost as many after his death as they did during his life. One man from Boston, confronted by Murieta, died instantly of fright. A judge, confronted in his courtroom in the middle of the day, lost his mind and spent the rest of his days a drooling idiot, repeating endlessly "I don't have it! I don't have it!" A pregnant woman, seeing his ghastly visage, had a miscarriage on the spot. Her husband, arriving on the scene, blew his own brains out with a pistol. The woman spent the rest of her life in a madhouse, singing "Do I have it? Do you have it? Does he have it? Do we have it? No! No! No!" After her death, pallbearers heard her corpse singing, "I really don't have it! Hee hee hee!" A group of Irishmen was confronted by Murieta, and one had his head twisted off its shoulders by the phantom!

Murieta's head is still kept pickled in alcohol at King's Saloon. For two bits, the bartender will remove the green velvet cover and reveal the ghastly thing. However, every August 12, the anniversary of Murieta's death, the saloon is empty. Into this abandoned house of debauchery Murieta comes riding in on his ghostly horse, its smoking hooves tearing up the floorboards as it canters up to the bar. There Murieta makes futile attempts to pry the lid of the jar off with his skeletal fingers to retrieve his head.

• Joaquin Murieta (malevolent spectre)

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Etherealness [EXT] • Perception [GR] • Physique [EXC] • Riding [EXT]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible and insubstantial and to fly naturally. Only spells, artefacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

Life Drain: As per the Spectre ability (BOS, pg. 91)

Stealthy Tread: As per the Faerie Animal ability (CF, pg. 175).

Sense Life: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

Telekinesis: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

Teleport: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

Terrifying Apparition: As per the Haunt ability (CF, pg. 175). Murieta's horse is also a spectre.

THE DESERT GALLEON

In 1610, the King of Spain sent Captain Cordone to explore and hunt for pearls in the Gulf of California. Three ships were built in Acapulco; when completed, they sailed to the Gulf. Pearl dives proved to be extremely profitable, so the ships continued up the Gulf. By the time the expedition reached the point where the gulf narrows, only one ship and one Captain, Juan de Iturbe, was left, the others having turned back or been sunk. He sailed through the narrows until it opened up into a large inland sea. Believing he had found the sought-after connection between the Atlantean and the Pacific, he explored the area. Finding it to be only a small inland sea, he turned around to return to Mexico. Unfortunately, he found that while he had been exploring, the water level had fallen so that he was unable to return to the Gulf of California. He sailed about, until the water disappeared and his vessel grounded.

Current prospectors of the southern California deserts claim to have seen the bleached bones of the ship. Indian legends tell of a time when the desert used to flood. *During one of these floods, they say, a great bird with white wings came floating from the south until it reached a certain hill, where it settled. The water went away, leaving the bird stuck in the sand, where its white wings fell down, leaving tall bare trees sticking up. The wind blew the sand on top of the bird and covered it up.* Believers in this legend maintain that this ship lies somewhere in the desert near San Bernardino, buried under one of the constantly shifting sand dunes that are the only things to populate the region. They claim the ship is loaded with pearls and other treasures, waiting for someone to come and claim them. Each year valiant men strike out into the hellish heat to scour the sand, and so far each expedition has found only trackless wastes.

THE DARK WATCHERS

The Santa Lucia Mountains are wild, relatively untracked mountains that run southeast from Monterey to San Luis Obispo. These jagged mountains are home to the Dark Watchers. The Dark Watchers are black, human-like phantoms who stand silhouetted against the sky on the Santa Lucia's ridges and peaks. Nobody knows who or what they are, where they came from, or what they are doing in the mountains. For as long as there have been people in California, the Watchers have been spotted on their hilltop posts, seemingly doing nothing but staring into space.

One eyewitness report describes a "dark figure in a hat and long cape, standing on a rock across a canyon and slowly surveying the surroundings." When the witness called out, the phantom vanished. All efforts to approach the phantoms or to find out where they come from have met similar failure.

• Dark Watchers

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Etherealness [EXT] • Perception [EXT] • Physique [EXC]

Clairvoyance: As per the spell.

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: They possess the capacity to be invisible and insubstantial and to fly naturally. Only spells, artefacts, or items that affect spirits will harm them. They can take full physical form when desired.

Sense Life: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

Teleport: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

THE MAGICK LAND: PLACES OF POWER IN THE FAR WEST

In the Bear Flag Empire, the relationship between the Indians and the land has endured the coming of the White Man. Places of Power are endowed with a natural force that sorcerers can tap. If the sorcerer is an Indian, he can draw two magick cards at a time. Any other sorcerer will only be able to draw a single card and the magicks at his command will always be wild. Some Places of Power have additional spell effects as well. The Indians of the Far West have traditionally seen Places of Power as magickal but have tended to avoid disturbing them. This respectful distance and the sheer magnitude of these sites has allowed them to survive the coming of the Whites.

Crater Lake in the Pacific Northwest was formed from the caldera of an ancient volcano. The forested sides of the volcano rise on every side of the lake, hiding it from casual view. In the center of the lake, a wooded island called Wizard Island is all that remains of the sunken volcanic cone.

This is the home of the Spirit known only as the *Gatherer on the Water*. A cannibal, the Spirit must be propitiated by all who venture here. *Ecan*, ghosts that re-enter and animate dead bodies, guard Crater Lake and the surrounding wooded hills. Indian sorcerers cast Necromancy spells here as if they were of one higher level of ability. Extraordinary sorcerers gain a +2 to their card play.

• Ecan

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Perception [PR] • Physique [GD] • Stealth [PR]

Insubstantial: In their natural state, Ecan are noncorporeal, invisible, and unable to affect the living world or be affected by it. Only an appropriate detection spell will reveal the Ecan's presence.

Possess the Dead: The ability of the Ecan to enter a dead body and animate it, whereupon the typical abilities are gained. These abilities may be greater or less depending on the dead body possessed. *Banish to Eternal Rest* will drive an Ecan from a body for the remainder of a day, but the Ecan may move on to other remains.

Mount Shasta, several hundred miles north of San Francisco, rises high above the surrounding forests. Snow-capped throughout the year, the mountain is an inactive volcano. It is not only exceptionally beautiful but exudes an air of power readily perceived by all who view it.

That some great spirit lives here is beyond doubt. The exact nature of the spirit is open to much speculation. Even the Indian legends contradict one another. It is taboo to climb above the timberline, so as not to offend the spirits. Local Indians have often reported "the laughter of children" heard throughout the nearby woods. Hopi Indians say that Mount Shasta was home to a race of lizardmen thousands of years ago, before a great holocaust swept the southwest. Wild men, known as *Gagixit* or *Sasquatch*, are frequently seen in the area and some say they guard the mountain. Whatever the truth, Mount Shasta is a place where the most complex magicks can be successfully cast. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerers have no cost based on the number or complexity of elements involved.

• Gagixit (aka Sasquatch)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GR] • Physique [GR] • Stealth [GR]

Forest Movement: The ability to move through the forest at great speed without being impeded by undergrowth and without leaving a trail, except for large footprints, with an Athletics Feat. The difficulty of the Feat is determined by the amount of undergrowth.

Be Unseen: As the Fetch ability (CE, pg. 174).

Yosemite is the name given to a region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains several hundred miles south of San Francisco. This is an area of spectacular waterfalls, canyons, mountain peaks, and forests. It is possibly the most magickal Place of Power in North America.

Tegm, the Spirit of the Woods, dwells here. His solitude is guarded by the *Sanopi*, shapeless men made of pitch, and the *Stcemqestint*, animated trees. Spells cast here by Indian sorcerers pay no cost based on the number of subjects affected or on the range of the spell.

• Sanopi (aka Men of Pitch)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Physique [GD] • Stealth [GR]

Liquid Metamorphosis: The ability to transform from a solid to a liquid state while maintaining bodily integrity. In their liquid state, the *Sanopi* can move normally and seep into any absorbent substance or through small openings or cracks.

Elongation: The ability of the *Sanopi* to stretch out limbs and attack at a distance of up to ten feet or to bridge chasms or gaps at twice that distance.

Immunity to Missile Fire: The ability to take no damage from gunfire, arrows, or other projectiles. They pass harmlessly through a *Sanopi*'s body.

• Stcemqestint (aka Tree Men)

Typical Abilities: Fisticuffs [PR] • Perception [PR] • Physique [EXT] • Stealth [PR]

Camouflage: The ability to blend into surroundings. *Stcemqestint* appear as nothing but ordinary trees until they move.

Live Roots: The ability of the *Stcemqestint* to move its roots beneath the ground to attack an unsuspecting victim above the ground. The roots can burst forth from the ground, anchoring the victim in place or pulling the victim beneath the earth to suffocate unless freed.

Death Valley, hundreds of miles northeast of Los Angeles, is an aptly named wilderness of burning, sunbaked desolation. There is little water and less life. Once a civilization to rival the Aztecs existed here, but its wickedness led to destruction and desolation.

Chingichmich, the Earthquake Spirit, now lives here, alone. However, legends say that the city of the ancients appears out of the distance on the hottest days. The *Surem*, or Ancient People, are said still to live in the city. Legends describe the *Surem* as a fair-skinned race of underground dwellers. Their secret underground passages crisscross the valley, coming to the surface in secluded areas. They speak a foreign tongue, dress in clothes made of a leather-like substance, and illuminate their tunnels with a greenish-yellow light of unknown origin. They mummify their dead and entomb them among piles of gold bars and other treasure.

• Surem (aka Ancient People)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Fisticuffs [PR] • Perception [GR] • Physique [GD] • Sorcery [EXC] • Stealth [GD]

Spellcasting: The ability to cast spells. The *Surem* are reputed to be great sorcerers practiced in the magicks of the Aztecs and illusion.

The **Mojave Desert** in southern California is a magick land of wind and sand. Mesquite, sage, and the strangely twisted Joshua trees make this a very green desert. The Mojave, purple at sunrise and sunset, is green and brown during the day. The heat that shimmers during the scorching days seems to cluster around the Joshua trees, giving them an ethereal air.

Unique to the Mojave, each Joshua tree is said to be the home of a wind spirit, or *Nilchi*. The *Nilchi* are harmless unless their tree is threatened for they can live nowhere else. Nonetheless, travelling in the Mojave is not a good idea. Beyond the hazards of the desert climate, the desert is home to the *Haakapainizi*, giant grasshoppers!

• Nilchi (aka Wind Spirits)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [PR] • Fisticuffs [PR] • Perception [GD] • Physique [PR] • Stealth [EXC]

Invisibility: The *Nilchi* are naturally invisible. They have no form and cannot be seen except as a shimmer of heat, though they can be detected.

Insubstantial: The *Nilchi* have no substance. They are creatures of pure spirit. As such they cannot be harmed by physical weapons unless magickal. Destroying a *Nilchi*'s tree will not destroy the spirit but will make it attack suicidally.

Scirocco: The ability to create a burning wind that does damage like a dragon's Firecast.

• Haakapainizi (aka Giant Grasshoppers)

Typical Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Fisticuffs [PR] • Perception [PR] • Physique [EXC] • Stealth [PR]

Camouflage: The ability to blend into surroundings. The *Haakapainizi*'s coloration makes it indistinguishable from a rough patch of ground from a distance of 100 yards or more.

Great Leap: The ability to leap great distances, up to 50 feet.

Flight: The ability to fly.

Swarm: The capacity of a group to increase their abilities (except Stealth) and damage by acting communally, doubling for every 10 individuals in the swarm.



“LOOK! UP IN THE SKY!”

Norton stood up quickly with the excitement of his yell, pointing, almost jumping in his enthusiasm.

It was the *Stauffenberg*, coming in over the bay, glowing in the golden sunset light. I have never seen a sight more welcome than that—except for when I saw Marianne smile at me when we were reunited shortly afterwards. The acro-cruiser slid toward us smoothly, as gracefully as the swan which was emblazoned on its side. Oh, the feeling, the overwhelming *relief* of seeing it again!

I gave a whoop of joy. A long and loud one.

And Norton? Our excitement was feeding on each other's. He quite unimperiously grabbed my shoulders, staring at me with wildly burning eyes. He had a smile of pure rapture on his face. He thrust a finger at the *Stauffenberg* dramatically.

“That is what I’m talking about!” He shouted, more at the acroship than at me. “That is your dream incarnate!”

He whirled to face me again. He looked almost psychotic in his emotion. Man, he had more dramatic states than Robin Williams. “They tried to stop you,” he said. “They tried to sabotage your dreams, mock them, frighten them out of existence. They tore your dreams from the gossamer sky and threw them to crash and burn in the forsaken desert, never to be seen again. But you wouldn’t let your dream die. You carried on. And lo! Your dream rose again from the ashes of defeat, like a Phoenix!”

“That is the strength of dreams, Thomas. If you believe in them, they never die. If you pursue them you can make them real.” He paused. “Just look at me.”

Suddenly he was all composed again. "Our strength, yours and mine, Thomas, is not simply that we dream. The Empire is a nation of dreamers, really. We have dreamers of all sorts here, those with financial acumen, those with an astounding understanding of the principles of physics, and so on. And like all dreamers, they make their dreams come true. Everything we have here is all due to people having a dream, and risking everything they have to pursue it.

"No, sir, our strength is not in our dreams, nor in the fact that we pursue them relentlessly. Our strength lies in the fact that we can make other people's dreams come true. We look about ourselves, me to my subjects and you to your friends and to those who come supplicating your attention, and we see their need. They tell us their dreams, and we listen. We feel their hunger, we know their longing. They have dreams as well, but sometimes they do not have the wherewithal to pursue them aggressively enough. It may be a lack of drive, finances, or some other handicap that holds them back. It matters not. For when they come to us, we cannot help but to try to make their dreams come true. It is written into the very marrow of our being. That is what defines our existence. Our greatest strength is not just that we try, but that we succeed.

"Always hold to that, Tom. It is what makes you most valuable to this world. You see beyond the fence posts. You are willing, in fact compelled, to reach a loving hand out to your neighbor, and it is a strong hand, and capable. Just as I have forged California into a rich and vital Empire, so too do you forge misery into joy, weakness into strength. You lend your dreams to others. Your dreams, in fact, are that others' shall come true. Hold to that.

"Never stop dreaming."

The *Stauffenberg* was getting closer, and slowing down.

"I can see that the duties of state call us," said Norton. Once more he was the prim, proper, noble regent. "I command that you block the view of the airship until such time as we have put our boots back on." Yeah. What a despot.

The *Stauffenberg* slowed to a stop, hovering over our heads. The two bodyguards showed up, suddenly appearing at our elbows like shadows. I didn't hear them coming. I prefer to think that it was the noise of the aerozep that drowned them out. The other possibility makes me too nervous.

The *Stauffenberg* lowered a basket on a winch to pull us up. The bodyguards preceded us, of course; they had to make sure the *Stauffenberg* was safe. They climbed up the ropes of the basket. Quickly. I bet Lückner was surprised. After they were aboard, Norton and I climbed into the basket. Up above, a couple of crewmen began winching it up. It gave us a good view as we rose up to the aero-cruiser. We were halfway up when Norton turned to me one more time.

"There is one last duty which you must perform for us," he said.

"Name it, your majesty."

"Just as there are bright dreamers, there are also creatures of darkness. The Unseelie, nightmares made manifest. Theirs are not dreams, theirs are schemes. They are the ones who bring despair to the fire, and cold to the light. They are all around us, everywhere.

"When we became Emperor, they nearly destroyed our dream by bringing despair to those around us. They did not want our Empire to be what we have made it.

"So, too, are they around you, Captain Olam. They know you, and hate you. They are capable of great guile. They shall send themselves against you in the guise of beauty, using other mortals for their tools: dupes and servants. That is what you must remember for us. Some of the dreams out there are nightmares. You shall try to realize their dreams, and be injured. You shall try to cure their dishonesty, and be crushed. You shall try to heal those poisoned of soul, and be killed. Keep dreaming, but always remember:

"There are some you cannot save."

THE GHOST OF THE BORREGO BADLANDS

The Borrego Badlands are a stretch of blasted desert located in between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, eight miles east of Borrego Springs in southern California. The Badlands are haunted by a horrifying phantom. An eight foot tall skeleton with a lantern-like light flickering through its ribs, stalks the barren wastes. It ranges throughout the badlands, as well as just south, in the Superstition Hills. Legend says it is the ghost of a miner who died in the desert, looking for the lost Phantom Mine. After perishing of thirst, vultures and other scavengers picked his bones clean. Undaunted, he still searches, his ghost wandering the desert, driving people away from his claim. Some say the light in his ribs is given off by his restless soul; others simply say that inside a rib cage is a convenient place for a skeleton to put his lantern. No one has been able to get a good enough look to settle the debate.

• The Borrego Phantom

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Etherealness [GD] • Perception [GD] • Physique [EXC]

Enhanced Spiritual Essence: He possesses the capacity to be invisible and insubstantial, and to fly naturally. Only spells, artefacts, or items that affect spirits will harm him. He can take full physical form when desired.

Stealthy Tread: As per the Faerie Animal ability (CF, pg. 175).

Sense Life: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

Telekinesis: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

Teleport: As per the Ghost ability (BOS, pg. 91).

Terrifying Apparition: As per the Haunt ability (CF, pg. 175).

MORE EQUIPMENT

America is truly a different land than New Europa, and it has things that those stuffed shirts in New Europa would never even think of, let alone need. This list is presented as a supplement to those already published in *Castle Falkenstein* and *Comme Il Faut*.

CLOTHING

(see also *Castle Falkenstein*, pg. 166)

Buckskin jacket	3c
Chaps	1-2c
Duster	5c
Hat	1c
Levi Strauss & Co. denim trousers	50p

LIVESTOCK

Buffalo	10-50c
Cattle	5-30c

MISCELLANEOUS

(see also *Castle Falkenstein*, pg. 166)

Dice (pair)	20p
Rope (per foot)	10p
Safe, small	25c

MOUNTS & TACK

(see also *Castle Falkenstein*, pg. 66)

Mule	1-2c
Saddle & kit	35c
Saddle bag	5c
Spurs	2-8c

TRAIL GEAR

(see also *Castle Falkenstein*, pg. 166)

Bedroll	2c
Canteen	1c
Trail utensils (set)	2c

TRANSPORTATION

(see also *Castle Falkenstein*, pg. 166)

Buckboard wagon	50c
Carriage, 1 to 4 horses	30-300c
Conestoga wagon	200c

WEAPONS

(see also *Castle Falkenstein*, pg. 166 and *Comme Il Faut*, pg. 81)

Dynamite (stick)	1c
Fuse (foot)	50p
Pistol holster & belt	4c
Rifle holster	2c

EPILOGUE

That was the last time that I was able to really talk with Emperor Norton. I never saw that side of him again, either. The rest of our stay he was his regal and imperious self, which means he used the royal "we", and occasionally was hard to locate because he was off gallivanting on some great cause like finding a better boutonniere or procuring more candy for the children ("Buying future votes," as Clemens put it).

In fact, as of this writing, that was the last I was able to speak to any of the famous people of America. Not that I particularly noticed. I was back with Marianne after a long absence. Nothing like packing back and forth across the Great Plains in a wind wagon and on a horse to make you truly appreciate the warmth and comfort of a woman's embrace.

We also had a long talk, about everything I'd discovered about myself on this trip. Things are going a lot better for us now.

We swung back across the Southwest to the Caribbean and across to the Atlantean. With a few, ah, diplomatic mission layovers. In the Bahamas, Puerto Rico ... that was living. With sincere regret we finished up our "business" and set course for Bayern.

We had a lot of time for debriefing as we returned home. It had gone quite well. We had a better understanding of the United States, both in military capability, the social scene, and the true power in the White House. And, I think, we had succeeded in intimidating them. I'm sure Brooks had some explaining to do when the *Stauffenberg* made an appearance off the Florida coast. It was supposed to be destroyed, right?

We had treaties in principle with the Republic of Texas and the Empire of California. Our presence there will help knit the two of them together, and also give them greater security against any threats the U.S. might level at them. Stanton (and therefore Grant) knows that the Bayernese aerofleet can show up off the coast at any time and wreak holy hell with his merchant ships.

And, of course, there was the Twenty Nations Confederation. Not only did we have a treaty in principle with them, which would further stabilize the area, but I had helped them to make their dreams come true. The nightmare would not come to pass, but a new age for the Indians would dawn. As I write this, we've gotten some preliminary reports back from the Twenty Nations. They are busy building new towns and purchasing light industrial equipment. Apparently those in Washington have been caught completely off guard. The industrial equipment was sold before the Senate could levy any kind of export laws or tariffs, and the industrialists are completely ignoring the U.S. government which demands to have a committee study the situation before sanctioning the action. The Twenty Nations are also allowing one of Texas' rail companies to run track into their territory. The Texan rail barons are already bidding for the contract.

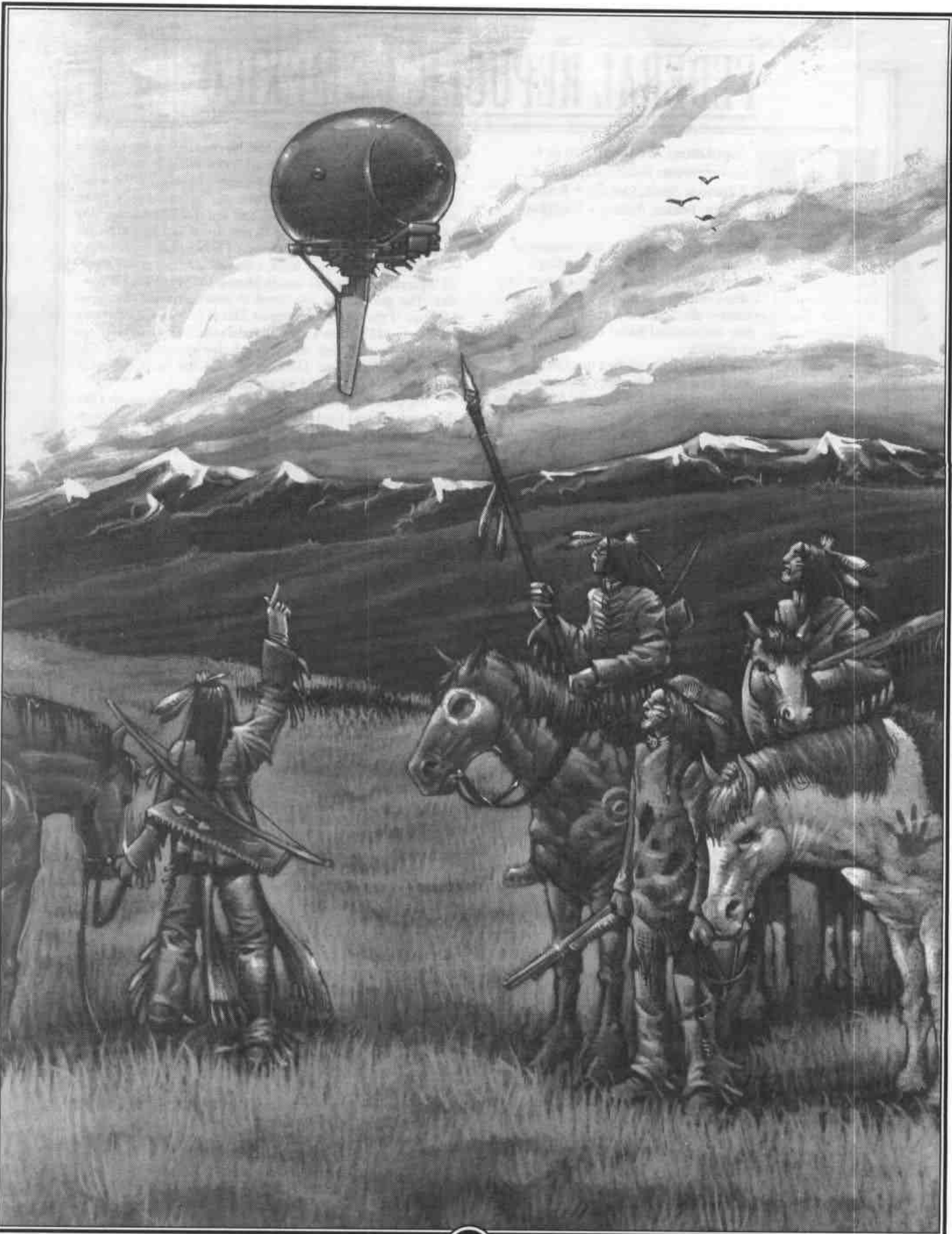
In short, the Twenty Nations are so busy building relations with the actual merchants and residents of the U.S. that the government is still running to catch up. I think they'll make it.

For myself, I was very happy to get back home. Yeah, America was fun, but it took a long time, and I'm tired of pacing the deck of an aerocruiser and staring at the ocean below. I was very glad to be back in the Black Forest, wandering the trails, smelling the air, just passing time with Marianne. Living. Dreaming.

But by far the best thing about being home is one which I would not have thought of before. And it's the one thing I've enjoyed most, because it is such a counterpoint to the entire time I was across the ocean.

And that was having a leisurely meal with good friends in the dining hall of Castle Falkenstein. Sipping wine and watching the magnificent view from the mountaintops. Unwinding in front of a roaring fire with a good book. And then going to bed, a plush bed, and curling up in the sheets.

And having a long, peaceful, dreamless sleep.



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF MEXICO



Population: About ten million •
Government: Federal Republic •
Alliances: Spain, Orleans • **Enemies:**
 Britain, France, Austria • **Position:**
 Stable—for now.

The history of modern Mexico begins with the conquest of the Aztecs by Hernán Cortez in 1519. Commanding a force of less than 600 men, Cortez landed near what is now Vera Cruz and scuttled his ships, making it impossible for his soldiers to retreat. The *conquistadores* allied themselves with local tribes unhappy with Aztec rule, and marched inland at the head of a growing force of native auxiliaries.

In November of 1519 the Spanish reached the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, on the site of what is now Mexico City, and took the emperor Montezuma prisoner. For a few months Montezuma ruled as a puppet of the Spanish, until some of the Aztec nobility attempted a rebellion. Cortez crushed the uprising with some difficulty and executed Montezuma.

With the Aztec empire dissolved, Cortez renamed Mexico New Spain and completed the conquest of Latin America. For the next 250 years Spanish administrators, missionaries, inquisitors, and Templars did their best to obliterate any trace of the Aztec civilization. In its place they constructed a hybrid culture tied closely to Spain.

Mexico's vast gold and silver mines made it the jewel in Spain's imperial crown. All of Spain's other possessions were secondary; Mexico was the center. Mexican treasure built the Spanish Armada, paid the Hapsburg armies of the Thirty Years' War, and adorned the Vatican in Rome.

When Napoleon conquered Spain and drove the Royal Family into exile, it was the beginning of the end for Spain's American Empire. Though the Viceroy remained loyal, it became clear to everyone that Spain was far too weak to hold a colony the size of Mexico. The other great seafaring nations of New Europa were tired of being excluded from trade with Spanish possessions in the New World. They wanted a share of the profits, and so encouraged the independence movements.

The leader of Mexico's independence movement was Agustín de Iturbide. He negotiated with the Spanish Viceroy for a peaceful withdrawal of Spanish rule, and proclaimed Mexico independent on September 27, 1821. The next year Iturbide declared himself Emperor of Mexico.

Having just disposed of a King, most Mexicans didn't want an Emperor, and the country dissolved into a long civil war. Iturbide was driven into exile, returned, and was killed. During the next thirty years Mexico had four constitutions, and only two presidents left office peacefully. Royalists fought republicans, centralists fought federalists, and oligarchists fought democrats. The two major factions were a federalist, republican, middle-class party which looked to the United States as a model and source of support, pitted against a centralizing, monarchist, upper-class party with support from New Europa. The leading figure in Mexico during the first quarter century of independence was Antonio López de Santa Anna, renowned as the "Napoleon of Mexico."

If the constant civil strife were not bad enough, Mexico had to deal with several foreign wars. In 1829 the Spanish attempted to recapture the country but were soundly defeated. Santa Anna was elected President in 1833. The Texans rebelled against the government in 1835, and won their independence with help from the Twenty Nations. Santa Anna lost office after being captured by the Texans at the Battle of San Jacinto. In 1838 he regained power after leading the Mexican forces opposing a French landing at Vera Cruz in the brief "Pastry War." He was exiled to Cuba in 1844,

but returned in 1848 in time to lead his country's forces to defeat at the hands of Texas and the United States. While Santa Anna was in exile, Mexico lost California to Fremont. Having lost about half his country to the rebels, Santa Anna did the only logical thing: He proclaimed himself dictator and ruled autocratically until 1855, when the Revolution of Ayutla drove him into exile. He returned to Mexico during the reign of Maximilian.

After the fall of Santa Anna, a liberal constitution was adopted, separating church and state in Mexico and broadening democracy. The government attempted to nationalize the enormous holdings of the Church in Mexico. This prompted a conservative reaction in 1857, as the Church and the old elite tried to block any changes. Another civil war erupted, lasting until 1860. The Conservatives captured Mexico City and the heartland, while Juárez held Vera Cruz and the north.

The governments and financiers of New Europa decided that they were sick and tired of upheavals in Mexico, which interrupted payments on Mexico's large foreign debt. With the United States embroiled in civil war, France, Britain, and Austria agreed to intervene in Mexican affairs and put things in order. The Austrian Emperor's younger brother Maximilian was persuaded to accept the position of Emperor of Mexico. With the French Foreign Legion and some Austrian volunteers, Maximilian arrived in Mexico in 1862. The crack French troops quickly defeated the Mexican army, and soon Maximilian reigned as Emperor in Mexico City.

President Juárez refused to give up, however. The Foreign Legion drove his forces into the far northwest, where the loyalists could get supplies from California and Texas. Juárez's army could hold off Imperial raids, but didn't have enough force to march against the capital. Some relief came for Juárez when Baja and Chihuahua became protectorates of California. Meanwhile, in Mexico City, Maximilian tried unsuccessfully to build a power base among Mexican conservatives, but even they hated the idea of a foreign Emperor.

The situation lasted until 1864. The United States finished its Civil War with the largest and most experienced army in the world, and the State Department made it very clear to Napoleon III that Washington was not pleased with his solution to the Mexican problem. In New Europa, Bismarck's armies were on the march, and so Napoleon III brought the Foreign Legion home. Maximilian found himself scrambling for supporters while Juárez swept down from the north in an almost bloodless campaign.

Maximilian refused to flee, though his cause was obviously hopeless. The Republican army captured him, and he was executed in 1867. His wife, the Belgian princess Charlotte, went spectacularly insane after his death. The Empress had her husband's body preserved by powerful spells, and now she wanders about New Europa with the corpse, trying to gain support for a new attempt to reconquer Mexico.

Mexico is organized as a federal republic, with a constitution patterned on America's. There are twenty-five states, and a Federal District surrounding the capital. Under the Mexican constitution, the President is a much more powerful figure than in America.

The chief figure in Mexican politics recently was President Benito Juárez. Señor Juárez was the first pure-blooded Indian to achieve national office, and his administration was noted for efforts to improve the lot of Mexico's Indians. Unfortunately, after a sudden illness, Juárez died in 1872.

He was followed by President Lerdo, who oversaw the completion of the Mexico City-Veracruz railroad. This year, Porfirio Díaz, a protégé of Juárez, was sworn in as President. Once again, a peaceful, bright future lies ahead for Mexico.

SELECTED PERSONAGES OF THE AMERICAS

WILLIAM ASTOR

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [GR]

BLACK BART

Gunslinger, School Teacher, and Poet

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Courage [GD] • Education [EXC] • Exchequer [GD] • Gunslinging [GD] • Renown [EXC] • Social Graces [GR]

SAM BRANNAN

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [EXC] • Exchequer [EXC] • Marksmanship [GD] • Social Graces [EXC] • Tinkering [GD]

JAMES J. BROOKS

Secret Agent, Director of the US Secret Service

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Courage [GR] • Education [GD] • Marksmanship [GD] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GD] • Stealth [GR]

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

Diplomat, Mayor of San Francisco

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GD] • Education [GD] • Marksmanship [GD] • Perception [GR] • Social Graces [GD]

BURNT FEATHER

Brave

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Leadership [EXC] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Military Strategy [GR] • Social Graces [GD]

AARON BURR

Diplomat, President of Orleans

Abilities: Connections [PR] • Courage [GR] • Education [EXC] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Physique [GD] • Politics [GR]

ANDREW CARNEGIE

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Gambling [GR] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [GR]

SIR CHRISTOPHER "KIT" CARSON

Soldier, Minister of War for the Bear Flag Empire

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GD] • Fencing [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GR]

"DON CHANDLER"

Secret Agent, US Secret Service

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Charisma [GR] • Connections [GR] • Courage [GD] • Dignity [EXT] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Social Graces [EXC] • Stealth [EXC] • Tinkering [GR]

JOHN CHISUM

Cowboy

Abilities: Connections [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Exchequer [EXC] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Riding [GR] • Social Graces [GD]

SAMUEL CLEMENS

Diplomat, Writer, Privy Minister to Emperor Norton

Abilities: Charisma [EXC] • Connections [GR] • Education [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Marksmanship [GD] • Perception [EXC]

COCHISE

Brave and Diplomat

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Courage [EXT] • Education [GR] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Riding [EXC] • Social Graces [GR]

"LONGHAIR JIM" COURTRIGHT

Gunslinger

Abilities: Charisma [EXC] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GD] • Gunslinging [GR] • Renown [GR] • Social Graces [GR]

CRAZY HORSE

Brave and Diplomat

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Marksmanship [GR] • Perception [GR] • Riding [GR]

CHARLES CROCKER

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GD] • Exchequer [GR] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [GD]

PORFIRIO DIAZ

Diplomat, President of Mexico

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Courage [GR] • Education [GD] • Perception [GD] • Politics [GD]

JAMES FISK

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Connections [GR] • Exchequer [GR] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [GD]

NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST

Soldier and Mastermind

Abilities: Courage [GR] • Education [GD] • Fencing [GD] • Marksmanship [GR] • Military Strategy [GD] • Social Graces [GD]

GERONIMO

Brave

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Courage [EXC] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Riding [GR]

JAY GOULD

Industrialist

Abilities: Connections [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [GR]

ULYSSES S. GRANT

Soldier, President of the United States

Abilities: Fencing [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Leadership [GR] • Marksmanship [GD] • Perception [GD] • Physique [GD]

HENRIETTA "HETTY" GREEN

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Perception [EXC] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [GR]

WOODCHUCK GUNSMITH

Dwarf Craftsman

Abilities: Beer Brewing [GD] • Education [EXC] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Perception [GR] • Physique [EXC] • Tinkering [EXC]

ANDREW HALLIDIE

Inventor

Abilities: Connections [GR] • Education [EXC] • Exchequer [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Perception [GR] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [EXC]

JOHN HARDIN

Gunslinger

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Courage [GR] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Renown [EXC] • Stealth [GR]

JOHN "COFFEE" HAYS

Soldier

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Connections [GR] • Courage [GR] • Exchequer [GR] • Fencing [GR] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Social Graces [GD]

"WILD BILL" HICKOK

Gunslinger and Showman

Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Charisma [EXC] • Courage [GR] • Education [GD] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Physique [GR] • Renown [EXC] • Stealth [GR]

SAMUEL HOUSTON

Diplomat, President of Texas

Abilities: Charisma [EXC] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GD] • Fencing [GR] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Leadership [EXT] • Physique [GR] • Politics [GR]

JESSE JAMES

Gunslinger

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Gunslinging [GR] • Renown [EXC] • Social Graces [GD]

JOHN "KINGFISHER"

Gunslinger

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Courage [GD] • Education [PR] • Gunslinging [GR] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GD] • Renown [GR]

MARIE LAVEAU

Mambo, Mistress of Aaron Burr, President of Orleans

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [EXC] • Exchequer [GR] • Perception [GR] • Physician [GR] • Social Graces [GR] • Sorcery [EXC]

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Diplomat

Abilities: Connections [EXT] • Education [GD] • Fisticuffs [GD] • Leadership [EXT] • Marksmanship [GD] • Oratory [EXT] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GR]

JIM MASTERSON

Gunslinger

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Courage [GR] • Exchequer [GD] • Gunslinging [GR] • Renown [EXC]

WILLIAM "BAT" MASTERSON

Gunslinger

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GD] • Courage [EXC] • Exchequer [GD] • Fencing [GR] • Gunslinging [GR] • Renown [EXC]

CYRUS MCCORMICK

Mastermind and Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GR] • Education [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Social Graces [GD] • Tinkering [EXC]

JOHN PIERPONT MORGAN

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Social Graces [EXC] • Tinkering [PR]

EMPEROR NORTON I

Noble, Emperor of California

Abilities: Charisma [EXC] • Connections [GD] • Education [EXC] • Exchequer [EXC] • Leadership [GR] • Perception [GD] • Politics [GD]

OSHKANINCE

Brave and Diplomat

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Leadership [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC]

LO PAN

Wizard and Immortal

Abilities: Athletics [PR] • Charisma [GR] • Connections [EXT] • Courage [GR] • Education [EXT] • Physique [EXT] • Social Graces [EXC] • Sorcery [EXT] • Enhanced Spiritual Essence

ALLAN PINKERTON

Consulting Detective

Abilities: Courage [EXC] • Education [GD] • Marksmanship [GR] • Perception [EXC] • Physique [GD]

LOUIS RIEL

Diplomat, President of Manitoba

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Connections [GD] • Courage [GR] • Education [GD] • Marksmanship [GR] • Perception [GR]

"JOHNNY RINGO"

Gunslinger

Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Courage [GR] • Education [GR] • Gunslinging [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Renown [EXC] • Stealth [GR]

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [EXC] • Connections [GR] • Exchequer [GR] • Social Graces [GR] • Tinkering [GD]

FONG SAI-YUK

Soldier, member of Emperor Norton's Imperial Guard

Abilities: Athletics [EXT] • Charisma [EXC] • Camelines [GR] • Courage [EXT] • Fencing [GR] • Fisticuffs [EXT] • Leadership [GR] • Social Graces [GD]

GENERAL ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA

Soldier and Politician, Mexico

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GD] • Exchequer [GD] • Marksmanship [GD] • Military Strategy [PR] • Social Graces [GD]

"JOHANN SCHOENFELD"

Secret Agent, US Secret Service

Abilities: Athletics [EXC] • Charisma [GR] • Connections [GD] • Courage [EXC] • Fencing [GR] • Fisticuffs [EXC] • Gunslinging [EXT] • Social Graces [GR] • Stealth [EXT] • Tinkering [GR]

PHILIP SHERIDAN

Soldier and Politician, United States

Abilities: Connections [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Fencing [GR] • Marksmanship [GD] • Social Graces [GR]

ALBERT SIDNEY

Soldier, Commander of the Army of Texas

Abilities: Connections [GD] • Courage [GR] • Exchequer [GD] • Fencing [GR] • Marksmanship [EXC] • Military Strategy [GR]

SITTING BULL

Brave and Diplomat

Abilities: Athletics [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GD] • Fisticuffs [GR] • Marksmanship [GD] • Perception [GR] • Social Graces [GD]

LELAND STANFORD

Industrialist

Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Charisma [GR] • Connections [EXC] • Exchequer [EXC] • Social Graces [GR] • Tinkering [GD]

ETHEL STANNAGE

Aero Pirate

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Connections [GD] • Courage [EXC] • Exchequer [GD] • Helmsmanship [EXC] • Marksmanship [GD]

ADOLPH SUTRO

Industrialist

Abilities: Athletics [GD] • Charisma [GD] • Connections [EXC] • Exchequer [EXC] • Physique [GD] • Social Graces [EXC] • Tinkering [GR]

BEN THOMPSON

Gunslinger

Abilities: Charisma [GR] • Courage [EXC] • Education [GR] • Gunslinging [EXT] • Physique [GD] • Renown [GR] • Social Graces [GR]

WILLIAM "BOSS" TWEED

Mastermind

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Education [EXC] • Perception [EXC] • Politics [GR] • Sorcery [GR] • Tinkering [PR]

"COMMODORE" CORNELIUS VANDERBILT

Industrialist

Abilities: Charisma [EXC] • Connections [EXC] • Education [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Social Graces [GR] • Tinkering [GD]

SARAH WINCHESTER

Gentlewoman

Abilities: Charisma [GD] • Connections [GR] • Exchequer [EXC] • Physique [PR] • Social Graces [GD]

BRIGHAM YOUNG

Diplomat, Wizard, Head of the Mormon Church

Abilities: Charisma [EXC] • Connections [GR] • Courage [GR] • Education [EXC] • Exchequer [EXC] • Perception [GR] • Sorcery [GR]

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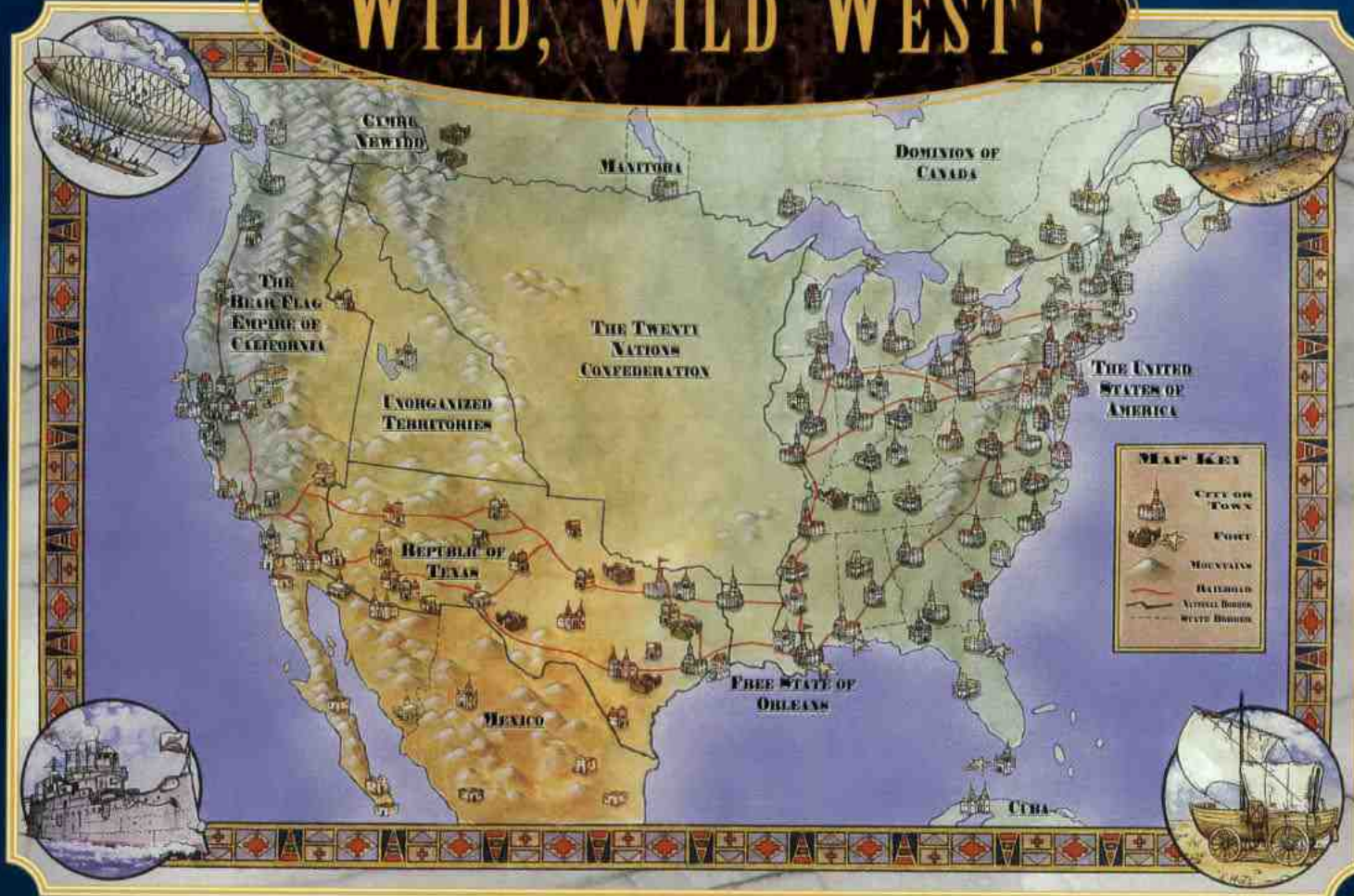
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WILD, WILD WEST!



America, 1876. Tom Olam has finally returned to the land of his birth, and finds it very...*Falkensteinian*. The United States is run from behind the scenes by the Freemasons; Voudon haunts the Orleans Free State; Sam Houston is on his seventh term as President of the Republic of Texas; the Great Plains is home to the Indian Twenty Nations Confederation; and the Bear Flag Empire of California is ruled over by the highly eccentric Emperor Norton I.

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