





Happy New Year!



It's been one heck of a year out here in the Weird West. Before you knew it, Father Time was on his way out, and Baby New Year was sauntering into the saloon, loaded for bear. *Deadlands™: The Weird West™* started out set in 1876, but a lot of water (and a heap o' blood) has gone under the bridge since then. Now it's 1877 already.

If you've been watching closely, you know a lot of things have been going on in the Weird West. Well, that sure hasn't changed. *Tales o' Terror: 1877* is packed with all sorts of details about the current state of affairs in War Between the States, the Great Rail Wars, and the rest of the West.

Not only that, there's a passel of new rules for heroes and Marshals alike, including new ways to make large fights run quicker than ever. With these, you can fine-tune your game until it purrs like a well-oiled steamwagon.

This book picks up where the ever-essential *The Quick & the Dead* left off, and it hits the ground running. If you want the real scoop on what's been happening in *Deadlands: The Weird West* over the course of the past year, you've come to the right place, partner!



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Tales o' Terror: 1877

CREDITS

Written & Designed by: Steve Long, Christopher McGlothlin,
John Hopler & Shane Lacy Hensley

Developed by: Hal Mangold

Editing & Layout: Hal Mangold & Matt Forbeck

Cover Art: Brom

Logo: Ron Spencer

Interior Art: Tom Biondiolillo, Paul Daly, Marcus Faulk,
Geoff Hassing, Ashe Marler, Andy Park, Jacob Rosen,
Kevin Sharpe & Brian Wackwitz

Maps: Jeff Lahren

Cover Design: Hal Mangold

Weird West Logo: Charles Ryan

Special Thanks to: Barry Doyle, Michelle & Caden Hensley, Christy Hopler, Ann Kolinsky,
Private Abednego Benjamin Ratliff (10th Kentucky Cavalry Regiment, Company G, CSA),
Audrey Anne Sukacz, Dave Seay, Matt Tice, Maureen Yates & John Zinser



Pinnacle Entertainment Group, Inc.

P.O. Box 10908

Blacksburg, VA 24062-0908

www.peginc.com or deadlands@aol.com

(800) 214-5645 (orders only)

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Dedicated To:

All the fans who've been with us since 1876.

Visit our website for regular updates.

Deadlands created by Shane Lacy Hensley.



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POSSE TERRITORY





CHANGIN



POSSE 4



CHAPTER ONE: THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Thanks to all of you have been with us since the beginning, and welcome to all you newcomers who are just joining us. For those of you not in the know, the campaign timeline of *Deadlands™: The Weird West™* started out in 1876. A lot has happened since we first released the game in 1996, and we reckoned it was time to move things forward a little bit and let you know how things are progressing in the Weird West.

The first chapter of this book brings together a number of new basic rules that are sprinkled about some of our other books, plus there are a bunch of all-new rules designed to make your game run more smoothly than ever. Have fun with these.

The second part of the book is the *Tombstone Epitaph's* 1877 update. Those of you who read *The Quick & the Dead* (and shame on you if you haven't—a lot of the information here is strongly related to that essential book) should recognize the format.

The third chapter gives the Marshal the lowdown on what's really happening in 1877. Players should keep their noses out of there and save some surprises for the game.

NEW YEAR, NEW RULES

We figured that since *Tales o' Terror: 1877* updates the events of the Weird West, we might as well take this opportunity to update the rules too.

The amended rules you see here have been argued up one side and down the other by us and our fans. What's here is the result of good suggestions, heated discussion, the keen knowledge of experts who read our earlier works and told us we were loco, and a whole Hell of a lot of playtesting.

MAIN RULES

Here are the changes to the basic rules.

UNSKILLED CHECKS

We've simplified how a fellow goes about making an unskilled Aptitude check.

A character with a particular Aptitude now rolls the associated Trait dice (using Coordination as its "Aptitude" level), but must subtract -8 from the total.

Related Aptitude checks are now made at -4.





UNSKILLED TABLE

Condition	Modifier
Related concentration	-4
Unskilled	-8

CONCENTRATIONS

Under the old system, it's way too expensive to learn a new concentration of a skill, so we've made things much easier.

Your character can learn additional concentrations of a skill for a flat 3 Bounty Points, regardless of how high the skill itself is.

This counts during character creation and once play begins. If your hombre already has *shootin': pistol* at level 5, he can pick up *shootin': shotgun* at level 5 for 3 Bounty Points.

BOUNTY POINTS

We've found folks only get 1-2 Bounty Points per session, and the Marshal has a hard time keeping up with those silly "leftover" points, so we're going to amend things slightly.

The Marshal no longer gives out Bounty Points. He simply gives out Fate Chips.

Between game sessions, you can convert your Fate Chips into Bounty Points and save them or use them to improve your character just like always. As before, whites are worth 1, reds 2, and blues 3. Chips are usually the only way you get Bounty Points, so don't blow them all in the game if you can help it!

Improving your character like this doesn't take any particular amount of time to do, other than how fast you can acquire and spend your points, but no ability should be raised more than 1 level between game sessions.

"EXPERT" APTITUDES

Once an Aptitude gets to level 5, your hero is an expert, and it costs twice as many points to raise it again. A level-6 skill costs 12 Bounty Points, level 7 costs 14, and so on.

Don't make characters in your game who currently have skills higher than 5 pay anything. They get in under the "grandfather" clause. If you implement this rule, further raising of Aptitudes should abide by this new rule.

MIRACLES AND FAVORS

The more astute of you (okay, those of you playing a blessed or a shaman) may be thinking,

"I just got buffaloed! I gotta raise my Aptitude (*faith* or highest ritual) to get new powers."

Hey, we're on your side. The cost to learn a new miracle or favor is a flat 5 Bounty Points. Any other rules, like the Onerous (7) *faith* total required for a new miracle, are still in effect.

EARNING CHIPS

Okay, we told you the Marshal wasn't going to give out Bounty Points any more, so we need to elaborate on just how you earn those oh-so-precious Fate Chips.

The Marshal's going to toss chips your way when you do one of three things: roleplay, solve problems, or just make him chuckle.

ROLEPLAYING

This is where your Hindrances really start to shine. Sure you get points for them when you first make your character, but no one's going to *make* you roleplay or suffer from those Hindrances later on. The Marshal might enforce them if she thinks of it, but running a roleplaying game occupies enough brainpower that she may often forget about all your character's problems. So we're going to make you remember.

Roleplay your Hindrances, and you get chips. The more severe your disadvantage is, the higher value chip you get. It's as simple as that.

Say your preacher has taken a vow to kill every one of LaCroix's walkin' dead he can lay his hickory stick into. If he hears about zombies nearby, he has to go and do something about it. The Marshal should chuck a white chip your way. When your preacher finds the walkin' dead and realizes he's hopelessly outnumbered, you earn a red chip for talking the rest of the posse into sticking around at their own peril. Finally, when it looks like your posse is losing, the hero might net a blue chip for not running away even when death is imminent. The more inconvenience it causes you and your companions, the greater the reward.

ABUSING HINDRANCES

Here's the sweet part: You can't. If you never roleplay a Hindrance, you never get chips. It's okay if you got points for it earlier. That was really just built into the system anyway.

The other extreme is someone who milks a Hindrance for all it's worth. Say your Texas ranger has a *hankerin'* for alcohol, so you say he takes a drink at every opportunity so you can





beg for chips. The Marshal might fall for this trick a few times, but she's only supposed to reward you when your character's Hindrance is truly an inconvenience. If your ranger gets drunk, who cares? If he's drunk when the wall crawlers attack, then you get some chips just before your hero bites the dust. Congratulations!

MORE ON ROLEPLAYING

Sometimes you may roleplay something that isn't covered by one of your Hindrances. Maybe your shaman isn't particularly brave or heroic, but when he hears a weeping mother's tale of her child being abducted, he feels he must act.

That's okay. The Marshal should still reward you just as if your character actually had the *heroic* Hindrance. The reward is for roleplaying, after all, and that might not always fit the Hindrances you chose. It's best if it does, but don't feel confined by them. Don't decide your hero can't be a hero just because he isn't *heroic*.

If it becomes a habit—your hero is always running off to save folks—then you should pick up the *heroic* Hindrance and make it official. Otherwise just accept that the rules don't always fit the situation and your Marshal wants to reward you for helping create an interesting and memorable story.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The Marshal also rewards those who overcome the many obstacles you face in *Deadlands*. This includes defeating monsters, solving puzzles, and even working out the inevitable complications that arise when a bunch of hardened warriors with different attitudes start adventuring together.

Again, the chip the Marshal rewards you with depends on how great a clue you found or problem you solved. Find a journal that holds a few key clues, expect a white or red chip. Help a town ward off a bandito raid, and you can expect a blue chip to fall from the sky.

THE MARSHAL'S WHIM

The last occasion a Marshal might give you chips is (drum roll, please) whenever he feels like it. Maybe he likes the way your gunslinger stylishly met his opponent in the street at high noon, grumbling a cool line in an *overawe* attempt. Or maybe you said something that's got the whole group in stitches.

Sometimes your character just does something clever, something original that helps





in her current situation That's worth a white chip the first time someone does it.

When these things happen, maybe, just maybe, chips will fall from the sky just for helping everyone have a good time.

And *that's* what it's all about.

A NOTE TO THE MARSHAL

The Marshal needs to be on her toes about awarding Fate Chips. An average player who gets an equal amount of time as the rest of the posse should probably get a couple of whites, one or two reds, and one blue in a night. With luck, he should be able to convert 2-4 Bounty Points worth of Fate chips each session.

Sometimes a player may spend more than he gets. This usually happens if there's a big fight with not a lot of roleplaying.

If there's tons of roleplaying and hardly any combat, the player may have a stockpile.

It's up to you to judge how freely to distribute Fate Chips, but don't feel bad holding back if there hasn't been much to "bleed them off" in a while. By the same token, don't be too stingy, or your posse may never advance and the players may feel cheated.

COMBAT

Got all that? Good. Here's some changes to combat, as well as some clarifications to commonly asked questions and misunderstandings.

ROUNDS

Each combat round is 5 seconds long.

Each round is further broken down into "segments." Each Action Card (from Ace down to Deuce) represents these segments. The King is a segment, the Queen is a segment, and so on, all the way down to a Deuce.

MAXIMUM CARDS

No matter how high your *Quickness* total is, you can never have more than 5 Action Cards without supernatural aid (such as a huckster spell or a Harrowed power).

SPEED

Here's a dirt-simple explanation of what "Speed" means and what a hero can do in an action.





SIMPLE TASKS (SPEED 0)

A character can perform a simple task in coordination with any other rolled task. A simple task is one that doesn't require much concentration, such as saying a few quick words, resisting a test of wills, or moving.

SHORT TASKS (SPEED 1)

Short tasks are things like drawing or cocking a gun, firing a gun, making a test of wills, or concentrating on a supernatural ability of some sort. Short tasks are declared and resolved on a single Action Card.

LONG TASKS (SPEED 2+)

Long tasks are things like searching through a backpack, reading a long, arcane text, or firing up a gizmo of some sort. Long tasks are strung out over 2 or more Action Cards. When you start a long task, declare the task your character is beginning, and use the cards as they're called out by the Marshal. Resolve the task as you spend the last card required.

If the Marshal doesn't have a good idea of how long something like this should take, roll 1d6. It takes that many Action Cards to complete the task.

Below is a table that summarizes all this business about tasks.

TASK SPEEDS

Type	Speed	Example Actions
Simple	0	Saying a single short sentence, moving, making a stun check, resisting a power or test of wills.
Short	1	Saying a few short sentences, drawing a weapon, cocking a weapon, making a recovery check, making a test of wills, reloading a single shell or clip, climbing, jumping, or making any kind of movement that requires an Aptitude roll.
Long	2+	Relating complex information, making short speeches, using some powers and spells, or readying a gizmo.

CHEATIN'

If you want to interrupt someone else's action with a card up your sleeve, you have to beat her in an opposed *Quickness* match. A success means the actions are simultaneous. A raise means that character goes first. You're never guaranteed to beat someone just because you've got a cheat card, but you've got a chance.

Assuming you don't use it, you can hold on to your cheat card until the fight is over, you draw a Black Joker (see below), or an opponent forces you to discard it through a test of wills.

JOKERS

Jokers have a few new special effects. Read on, muchacho.

RED JOKERS

The Red Joker allows your character to go at any time during the round. He can even interrupt another character's action without having to make a second *Quickness* check. In a nutshell, your hero can go whenever he wants this round.

The downside is that, since you can't put a Joker up your sleeve, you only get this advantage for one round. If you don't use it before the round is over, you have to discard it. You can still have a normal card up your sleeve, however, and you can even use them both at the same time if you like.

The second advantage to drawing a Red Joker is that you get to draw a random chip from the Fate Pot. Congratulations, bunkie!

The Marshal doesn't get a draw from the Fate Pot by drawing a Red Joker for the bad guys, but he does get one when the posse draws a Black Joker (see below).

BLACK JOKERS

The Black Joker is bad news. It means your character hesitates for some reason. Maybe he's starting to feel his wounds, or he's distracted by the bad guys. Whatever the reason, the Joker is discarded, and you have to discard any card up your sleeve as well.

The other downside to the Black Joker is it gives the bad guys (run by your Marshal) a draw from the Fate Pot. Your side doesn't get a draw when the Marshal gets a Black Joker, however. Who said life was fair?

There's one last side effect to drawing a Black Joker. Your side's Action Deck is reshuffled at the end of the current round. This counts for both the posse and the Marshal.





QUICK DRAW

Single-action weapons (guns that have to be cocked, then fired) are tough to model in a roleplaying game because they're really just not *that* much slower than double-actions in real life (at least when in the hands of a skilled shooter). So we've made this compromise.

Your hero can still fire his single-action every segment, and he may not have to "shoot from the hip" if he's willing to make an easy skill roll. The danger, of course, is that he may fail, even though it's unlikely to happen to a really skilled gunslinger.

The *quick draw* skill now lets your hero draw a weapon as a simple task, and also cock it as well. The TN to draw or draw, cock, or draw and cock a weapon as a simple task is shown on the Quick Draw table.

If the roll is made, the weapon is drawn, or drawn and cocked, or cocked (whatever is needed). If you roll a 5 or 6 while trying to draw and cock a weapon, the gun is drawn but not cocked. You have to spend another action to get that hogleg smoking. Hope your opponent is slower than you are my friend, or you may end up with a severe case of lead poisoning.



QUICK DRAW TABLE

Task	TN
Quick draw	5
Quick cock	5
Draw & cock	7

FANNING THE HAMMER

Fanning is no longer a skill of its own. It's simply a maneuver your hero can perform if he has at least 1 level in *shootin': pistol*.

Characters that have already sunk tons of points into *fannin'* should be compensated in some way. We'll leave that up to you, Marshal.

Here's how to resolve fanning.

The rate of fire is 1 to 6. It's the shooter's choice as to how many bullets he wants to waste. Even if a gun holds more than six rounds, that's the most a gunslinger can fan in one action. Fanning one shot isn't really worth while, but it can be done.

To resolve the attack, pick a target and figure out the TN based on the range and any other modifiers. Fanning a pistol isn't very accurate, so the shooter has to subtract -2 from his roll for slapping his gun around like a redheaded stepchild. This is on top of the "shooting from the hip" modifier, so the total penalty is -4.

A success and each raise thereafter causes a bullet to hit. The firer chooses which targets he hits, though any after the first must be within 2 yards of the last target hit.

A shooter can't draw a bead when fanning, though he can make a called shot on the first bullet only. Figure the TN for the first shot. Any raises after that hit random locations as normal. Fanning should only be used in close quarters and desperate circumstances.

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

Automatic weapons spray lead at the expense of accuracy. To make things easy, we don't roll for every bullet. We roll for each burst of three bullets. That's why automatic weapons have Rates of Fire of 3, 6, 9, 12, and so on. A character must fire all three shots of a burst. He can't choose to fire only one or two shots unless the weapon's description says otherwise.

The character's *shootin': automatics* roll determines how many rounds from each burst actually hit. Make one *shootin'* roll per burst. Every success means one of the three bullets hits its target. Raises past the second are lost.



MULTIPLE TARGETS

Multiple targets can be hit by a single burst. Each raise means another bullet found a target.

Choose a primary target. The first bullet hits this fellow. A raise could hit a second victim up to 2 yards away, and another raise could hit a third target 2 yards away from the second.

To hit targets further than 2 yards from the primary target requires a second burst. (Others may be hit by the Innocent Bystanders rules: see the *Deadlands: The Weird West* rulebook.)

Determine each round's hit location and damage separately.

The player must assign his hits before rolling damage or resolving a second burst. In other words, roll all your attacks, assign hits to targets, then go back and roll hit location and damage for each. That way you can't see if the first bullet in a burst kills some poor fool before assigning your second or third.

A character firing an automatic weapon can never draw a bead or make called shots.

RECOIL

Firing off a hail of automatic fire is hard to control. Each burst fired after the first in a single action suffers a -2 recoil modifier. This is cumulative, so the third burst in an action suffers a -4, and so on to a maximum of -6.

BRACES

A good brace such as a sling or a bipod reduces the recoil penalty to -1 or even 0. Gatling guns always have stable platforms that reduce recoil to 0.

ARMOR

Each level reduces the die type of damage by -1 step, as usual. An attack that uses d20s (like dynamite) is reduced to d12s by a single level of Armor. Two levels of Armor drops the damage to d10s, and so on.

Here's the new part. If the die type is dropped below a d4, drop the number of dice instead. An attack reduced to 0d4 does no damage.

A 3d6 bullet that goes through something with an Armor of 1, for instance, is reduced to 3d4. A 3d6 bullet that hits something with an Armor of 2 is reduced to 2d4.

LIGHT ARMOR

Light armor is armor that isn't thick enough to stop damage cold, but it does afford some sort of protection.



A negative Armor number such as -2 means the armor is light protection such as leather hides or thick, winter clothes. Armor -4 is heavier, such as boiled leather. Deduct this number directly from the damage total. A 14-point attack that hits a cultist wearing thick leather (-4) does 10 points. Get it? Good.

ARMOR-PIERCING AMMUNITION

Some weapons have armor-piercing ammunition. Each AP level reduces the Armor level by -1. Thus a weapon with AP 3 ammunition reduces a target with 6 levels of Armor to Armor level 3. Reducing armor to a negative number has no additional effect on damage.

MASSIVE DAMAGE

Certain things, like explosions and fire, cause "massive damage" to many parts of the body in one fell swoop. You don't get extra dice for hits to the head or gizzards from massive damage. It's just too spread out to hit something important. Explosives with shrapnel or other penetrating types of massive damage have special rules telling you how to handle them.



Disperse massive damage by rolling the damage, determining the total number of wounds, then assigning them by rolling various hit locations for each. Remember, no bonus dice for head or gizzards!

So how does armor protect against massive damage? Easy. After you've assigned all the damage from an attack, reduce the total number of wounds by -1 for each level of Armor in that location. When all is said and done, a hero with four wounds to the head and 1 point of Armor there (due to a helmet of some sort) would end up with only three wounds.

LIGHT ARMOR AND EXPLOSIONS

For light armor, roll a d6. If the roll is less than or equal to the protection the light armor provides, it reduces -1 wound level. For example, thick leather chaps reduce damage rolls to the legs by -2. A cowpoke who got his shins singed by an unfortunately placed bundle of dynamite and took four wounds to the legs would roll a d6. On a result of 1-2, the wounds are reduced by -1 for a total of three wounds.

EXPLOSIVES

Some folks think explosives don't have a big enough boom in *Deadlands: The Weird West*, so we've changed how the Burst Radius spreads to work with our armor system.

Explosives affect anyone who happens to be close enough when they detonate. Everyone within the Burst Radius of the explosive takes full damage. After that, the damage drops by -1 die type each time it crosses a Burst Radius.

Once the die type is reduced to d4, subtract the number of dice. The explosion has no force once it reaches 0d4.

See **Massive Damage** to find out how to disperse these wounds.

SHOTGUNS

Shotguns and scatterguns unleash a hail of tiny balls, filling the air with lead. This makes these weapons ideal for unskilled shooters, though they cause less damage as the buckshot spreads.

Anyone firing a shotgun adds +2 to her *shootin'*: *shotgun* roll. Its damage decreases the further it travels, as shown on the table below.

Note that a regular shotgun is slightly more accurate than a scattergun (a sawed-off shotgun) since the Range Increment is 10 for shotguns and 5 for sawed-offs.

SHOTGUNS & SCATTERGUNS

Range	Damage
Touching	6d6
1-10	5d6
11-20	4d6
21-30	3d6
31+	2d6

SLUGS

Both shotguns and scatterguns can also fire slugs, which are basically huge, self-rifled hunks of lead.

Slugs subtract -2 from the attacker's roll. Its hard to aim that big a chunk of lead properly. On the plus side, they do 6d6 damage regardless of range. That's one big ol' can of whup-ass.

DEVIATION

When bullets and other objects miss their target, you can usually forget about them. If you're really worried about who might be in the way, use the **Innocent Bystanders** rules from the *Deadlands: The Weird West* main rulebook.

For some weapons, however, like grenades, missiles, or even area-effect spells that have a chance to miss their target, you need to know just how far the shot deviates.

First determine the direction by rolling a d12 and reading the result as a clock facing centered on the attacker. Thrown missiles deviate 1d20 yards in that direction.

Projectiles fired from a launcher of some sort deviate 10% of the total range, plus 2d20 yards in the direction indicated by the d12. If the shot deviates backward, it still travels at least half the distance from the shooter to the target.

On a bust, the round jams or is dropped and detonates at the shooter's feet.

VAMOOSIN'

One clarification and one small change. First, *dodge* is used against missile attacks, *fightin'* is used against hand-to-hand attacks.

The change. Your hero can try his vamoose after the bad guy's attack has hit, but before damage has been resolved.

BRAWLIN'

Here's the new scoop on nonlethal damage, often referred to as brawlin' damage. Certain kinds of attacks, like *fightin'*: *brawlin'*, can be



used to put someone down without killing her. When one fellow hits another with his bare hands or a light club (like a chair leg or a bottle) he rolls his damage dice (usually *Strength* plus 1d4 if he's using a light club). Other types of damage listed as nonlethal or brawlin' damage generate a normal total as well.

The target then makes a *Vigor* roll. If the damage is greater, the victim takes the difference in Wind. No wounds are usually caused by nonlethal damage.

Heavy clubs like pistol butts, ax handles, or entire chairs allow the attacker to choose whether she would like to cause lethal or nonlethal damage. If she just wants to cause Wind and try to knock her opponent out without causing serious injury, she can do so. Or she can bash the other fellow's brains out to her heart's content.

THE HARROWED

We're a little red-faced about this one. Seems we forgot to actually say the Harrowed can ignore stun. Well, they can, unless the source is magical. Then they have to roll like anyone else.

MARSHAL'S SHORTCUTS

We had a bit of a brainstorm on how to better keep up with the hordes of bad guys that Marshals tend to throw at their posses. We showed you this one in *Law Dogs* as well, but in case you missed it, here's the dirt once more.

COMBAT SHORTCUTS

Sometimes there's a lot of bad guys. You don't want to keep track of 15 banditos' *Quickness* totals, wounds, Wind, and wound modifiers when you're trying to describe the scene and help the heroes resolve their actions. You've got better things to do.

ACTIONS

Of all the tricks we give you, the Action Deck is the niftiest. You don't have to roll an initiative number for each bad guy and then try to remember it. You just lay down a few cards behind your screen and wait until they come up in the round. Then the bad guy takes his action, and you move on.

Roll *Quickness* totals for major bad guys and important critters. For numerous extras, deal one card for each group. It's your call as to what each group is, though usually it's each set of bad





guys that have the same statistics. If the group is really fast (usually extras with *Quickness* of 3d8 or better), give them two or more cards to act on. You could even roll *Quickness* totals once for the entire group each round if you want. It's your call.

If a group gets a Joker, pick one of them to get its effects, and deal another card for the rest of the group.

The downside for the bad guys is that they only get one card. The upside is they all get to go together like one big happy family. It all balances out in the end.

WOUNDS

Here are some easy ways for you to keep track of wounds for tens or even hundreds of bad guys—without ever touching a piece of paper.

You have to use miniature figures, however, or something else to represent the heroes and the bad guys. Besides letting you use these Marshal's cheat, minis help your players understand the scene better, which is especially important in a big fight. This gives everyone a good tactical sense of what's going on and encourages them to visualize and use the environment instead of just saying "I shoot it" every action.

Pinnacle makes a bunch of minis for just this purpose. If you're gun-shy about minis, you can use dice, coins, tokens from a game ("I'm the shoe!"), or even pieces of paper with your posse's names written on them.

Once you've got them, place the minis on a map of some sort, with the terrain sketched in to complete the scene. Big sketch pads work great, and good hobby shops have erasable battle-mats as well.

There's the pitch for using minis. We won't ram it down your throat. We'll give you the cheats soon, promise. But first a disclaimer. Don't use this shortcut for important bad guys or really unique monsters. You should use the more detailed wound system for anything that spectacular. You should also use the regular wound system if there are only a few thugs involved in a fight.

Okay. Enough disclaimers and preaching about miniatures. Here are the shortcuts.

Marking Wounds: Whenever a player character makes a successful attack, go ahead and let her roll hit location to determine the effects of cover and see if she gets any extra dice for a hit to the gizzards or noggin. Use the damage total to determine how many wounds

the opponent takes, then place a chip under the miniature's base to mark its wound levels. Assume all the hits go to the thug's guts area. Now everyone knows which bad guys are fresh and which ones are on their last legs.

Wound Penalties: The chips also tell you what kind of penalty to assess the bad guy when it makes an attack. Check the Wound Table for these.

Make the Posse Work: The best part? You can even tell the players their opponent's Size and let them "chip" your bad guys for you. That way you can keep even a really huge combat moving faster than a three-legged toad by letting the players do some of the work for you.

Here's a quick table to sum up the wound levels, the corresponding colors of chips to mark it, and the wound penalties to the unfortunate dreg's actions.

WOUND TABLE		
Wound	Chip	Penalty
Light	White	-1
Heavy	Red	-2
Serious	Blue	-3
Critical	Blue+White	-4

WIND

So you're thinking, "Okay, smart guys. But some attacks only do Wind damage. What about that?" We got you covered, bub. Treat Wind just like damage. Every increment of the bad guy's Size in Wind raises the Wound level a notch just like any other damage. It all balances out when taken together with the Wind the victim should be taking with any real wounds.

STUN

You might not want to keep track of stun for all the bad guys. Don't worry—the rules are as complete as we could make them so you can dig into the details when it matters. You don't need this much detail all the time. When you do, this cheat can help you keep track of stunning as well.

Place a stunned figure on its back *on top* of its wound chip. That reminds you to have the creature make a stun check on its next action. If it makes the roll, stand the sucker back up on top of its wound chip.

How do you tell the stunned figures from the dead ones? Take the chip out from under the dead ones, silly.



Time Marches On

The Tombstone Epitaph's 1877 Update



Our staff of intrepid correspondents brings you the latest news on...
The War Between the States! ♦ The Great Rail Wars! ♦ The 1876 Elections!
Hell's Half-Acre! ♦ The Red Lantern Gang! ♦ The Vigilante Torquesa!
The Children of Hasteli! ♦ Colonel Custer & the Sioux! ♦ The Serpent Mound!

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The Battle of Washington, 1871: Confederate cavalry routs a group of Union troops. US forces were driven half way to New York before they rallied.

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Introduction

Welcome back, friends and neighbors. It's been over six months since we published *The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West*, but a lot can change in that length of time—especially west of the Mississippi. Because of our dedication to truth and accuracy in our reporting, and our commitment to provide you with the latest information from around the West, the *Tombstone Epitaph* is proud to present you with *Time Marches On: The Tombstone Epitaph's 1877 Update*. Lesser guides to the Weird West are only good for use in the outhouse by now, but thanks to the *Update*, the *Tombstone Epitaph's Guide* is as timely—and as useful—as ever.

For those of you who may be new to the *Epitaph Guide* series, or who haven't perused your *Guide* in a while (and have still managed to stay alive), allow me to (re-)introduce myself. My name is Lacy O'Malley, and I'm the chief reporter here at the *Epitaph*. I've traveled all over the West, reporting on the doings of the day for our fine readers. Many of the events described in the *Guide* and in this *Update* are things that I've witnessed with my own two eyes.

The basic information supplied in the *Guide* about prices, travel, law, and the like hasn't really changed much since the *Guide* was published, so it's not going to be repeated here. Instead, we're going to provide you the most up-to-date information about what's going on with the War Between the States, the Great Rail Wars, and in the heart of the West and other regions. No matter where or when, the *Update* brings you the unvarnished truth about what been going on here in the Weird West. Count on it!

One feature of this *Update* that I'm particularly proud of is our reporting on the latest events of the War Back East—and sometimes here out West. We've made use of our legion of correspondents all over the country to gather up the facts about the latest offensives, skirmishes, and battles, as well as the events leading up to them. And of course we've provided complete coverage of the 1876 presidential elections in both the USA and CSA.

Even with as many reporters as we've got here at the *Epitaph*, we're always looking for additional talented correspondents. The *Epitaph* pays top dollar for good material, and we're constantly in need of more. If you think you've got what it takes, and you can dig up the kind of stories we want, please get in touch with us here in Tombstone!

Chapter One: The War Rages On

Everybody that's drawn a breath these last few years knows about "The Late Unpleasantness" between Johnny Reb and Billy Yank, but like most things these days, there's a far sight more going on than the papers Back East are telling.

You are by now aware of the *Epitaph's* commitment to report the facts other so-called newspapers are afraid to print, and to that end we publish the following letter. It was written by a person who must remain nameless for reasons soon evident.

The author is a highly placed person in the Confederate War Department, and while this does lend a Southern slant to the document, I can personally vouch for his honor and veracity. By our combined efforts, we can now tell the real story of the war (or as much of it as we currently know) and what has gone before.

War Without End

November 24, 1876
Richmond, Virginia, CSA

Dear Mr. O'Malley,

I write this letter to the people of the Union and the Confederacy, risking both life and honor to tell what my conscience will no longer allow me to conceal. It is my firm conviction that the bitter war between our countries has been both prolonged and irrevocably altered by sinister forces beyond our ken. Furthermore, these strange happenings, when viewed together, lead to the inescapable conclusion that we are condemned to a ceaseless struggle, a war with no end save for our mutual eradication.

This War Between the States has, I am sure, claimed a husband, father, son, brother, or friend of everyone who now reads this, and we are led to believe that they died honorably for the principles they believed in. It is not the courage or cause of the soldiers that I seek to impugn, but rather the Union and Confederate governments. It is they who keep these truths hidden and leave us in a state of imperiled ignorance. If we are to avoid mutual annihilation, we will do so in spite of the efforts of Richmond and Washington.

Hereafter I will report to you certain things I know to be true, but I must confess I am at a loss to explain most of them. Therefore, I leave it to you to make of these revelations what you will. You may chose to disbelieve them, but I beg you, in the name of the Almighty, do not disregard them.



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The Brothers' War

Some too young then to recall now, are unaware of how the election of 1860 caused the conflagration that now engulfs both North and South. The victorious Republicans' agenda called for a tremendous increase in the power of the national government, so as to promote industry (which was found almost exclusively in the North) and abolish slavery (practiced mostly in the South). This meant an end to the limited national government and paramount states' rights most Southerners believed proper, as well as an end to the plantation agriculture the small, wealthy aristocracy who monopolized Southern politics had based their fortunes upon. Before this could happen, 13 Southern states voted to secede and form the Confederate States of America, hoping for a peaceful separation from the old Union.

Such hopes were forlorn, because the people of the North believed the American republic, unique in all the world for the freedoms granted its citizens, could not survive dividing itself into quarreling factions. The Union must then be preserved, by force if need be, and the Republican government raised an army to do just that. These disagreements literally turned brothers against one another, and thus the bloodiest war in memory commenced.

In the Beginning

The Union enjoyed seemingly overwhelming advantages in manpower and industry, but superior Confederate leadership and determination sustained their efforts through two years of total war across the length and breadth of the continent, winning them major victories at Manassas and

Chancellorsville, to name but two. Only in the summer of 1863 did the North finally appear to be marshaling its troops in an effective manner, with Union forces almost scissoring the Confederacy in half along the Mississippi River, as well sharply reducing its foreign trade with a naval blockade. As a result, the Confederacy gambled all in hope of a victory that would finally break the Union's will to continue the War. For three days in July 1863, two massive armies clashed at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to decide the ultimate fate of their nations, but unforeseeable events conspired to delay any such verdict, perhaps for all time. Because on those days, in that place, things began to happen. The course of our nations and our peoples was forever altered.

The High Tide

The gallant charge of Gen. George Pickett's Confederates on the last day of the Battle of Gettysburg is known to us all, but few know it was in truth the high tide of a world now lost, where all things were known or seemed knowable. It was the last event set into motion by generals alone, and the first whose outcome was decided by circumstances beyond all our understandings.

Many attribute the escape of Gen. Robert E. Lee's army after the battle to incompetence on the part of Union General George Meade, but they are without exception people who did not witness the battle firsthand. The accounts given by those who did are compellingly similar, but also almost wholly unbelievable.

The Union

Captured Yankees recount that immediately after Pickett's Charge, Meade was preparing to counterattack with all the men he could gather, but he was prevented from doing so by an apparent mutiny in his own ranks. For nearly two days, Yankee soldiers fought against these mutineers, whose motives still remain unknown, and eyewitnesses describe them behaving almost mindlessly, committing unspeakable atrocities against their former comrades. If any of the insubordinate troops were interrogated or even taken prisoner, there is no record of it, so there is nothing even to suggest why these men would revolt immediately after their greatest triumph of the war.

The Confederates

The Confederates were not left untouched by unexplainable events. The infamous madman known as the Butcher horribly mutilated our wounded in the aftermath of the battle, and he is rumored to be still at large in places as far west as Kansas. How such an infamous man has eluded capture is unfathomable to me.

For those of you who consider the Butcher to be an invention of delirious soldiers, let me assure you that I have myself viewed his grisly handiwork. It was my great honor to meet General John Bell Hood not long after Gettysburg, and his story haunts me still. He told me of receiving the wound that rendered his left arm useless, and then of the strange man who amputated his healthy right arm, ending Hood's gallant service to our country. I have prayed ever since that someone will soon dispatch this Butcher to the Perdition he has so richly earned.



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The Plague City

As the Battle of Gettysburg concluded, other strange events began to unfold in far-off Vicksburg, Mississippi. After a months-long siege, Confederate General John Pemberton prepared his army for the formal surrender of the starving city to Union General Ulysses Grant on July 4, 1863. This was to be a considerable blow to Southern hopes, as Vicksburg was our last major link across the Mississippi River, but what followed instead caused great controversy on both sides. On the night of July 3, Pemberton and his army escaped the encircling Union troops and left the city. Shortly thereafter, the Union garrison abandoned Vicksburg as well, for reasons never fully explained.

The North accuses Pemberton of feigning surrender to facilitate his escape, and of rendering Vicksburg uninhabitable to this very day by poisoning the city's water supply. Pemberton, for his part, denies any poisonings occurred and maintains that it was the Federals who acted treacherously. He charges that Southern soldiers and civilians were killed by Union troops after the surrender had been announced, and thus he had no choice but to attempt escape before a wholesale massacre was perpetrated.

I know both sides to be lying, each for their own reasons. General Pemberton's celebrated escape from Vicksburg was in reality the flight of a disorganized mob from an even more disorganized foe, based on the reports of those present. The cause of the confusion is unknown and likely to remain so because of a later tragedy I will elaborate upon shortly. For want of a better source, I can only repeat rumors of what else occurred that night in Vicksburg. Some stories tell of human corpses found slaughtered as if by a butcher, while others claim the bodies seemed to have been devoured alive by a pack of rats.

The Wasting

Regardless of the truth or falsehood of these rumors, Vicksburg was soon overcome by an unexplainable malady whose existence I can confirm as being all too real. Those afflicted with it gradually starve to death, regardless of how much food they consume. Those who remained uninfected referred to the illness as "The Wasting," and before the Yankees evacuated the city, over 10,000 well-fed soldiers and civilians perished in agony from it.

Yankee recruiting posters would soon blame the Rebels for somehow poisoning



A Union Gatling-gun crew hurls leaden death at the CSA lines.

the city before they fled, but in truth both governments know the Wasting was responsible. Further outbreaks during the sieges of Port Hudson, Chattanooga, and Petersburg have proven the disease's existence, and the graves near Vicksburg and these other cities bear grim witness to that fact.

The New Orleans Massacre

In the aftermath of that same fateful July 3 night, news of the New Orleans Massacre spread throughout the land. The entire 5,000-man Union garrison of that city was literally murdered in their beds, apparently by the craven citizenry. After this, the same citizenry filled the lower Mississippi River with torpedoes and sank an entire Union flotilla bringing soldiers to recapture the city.

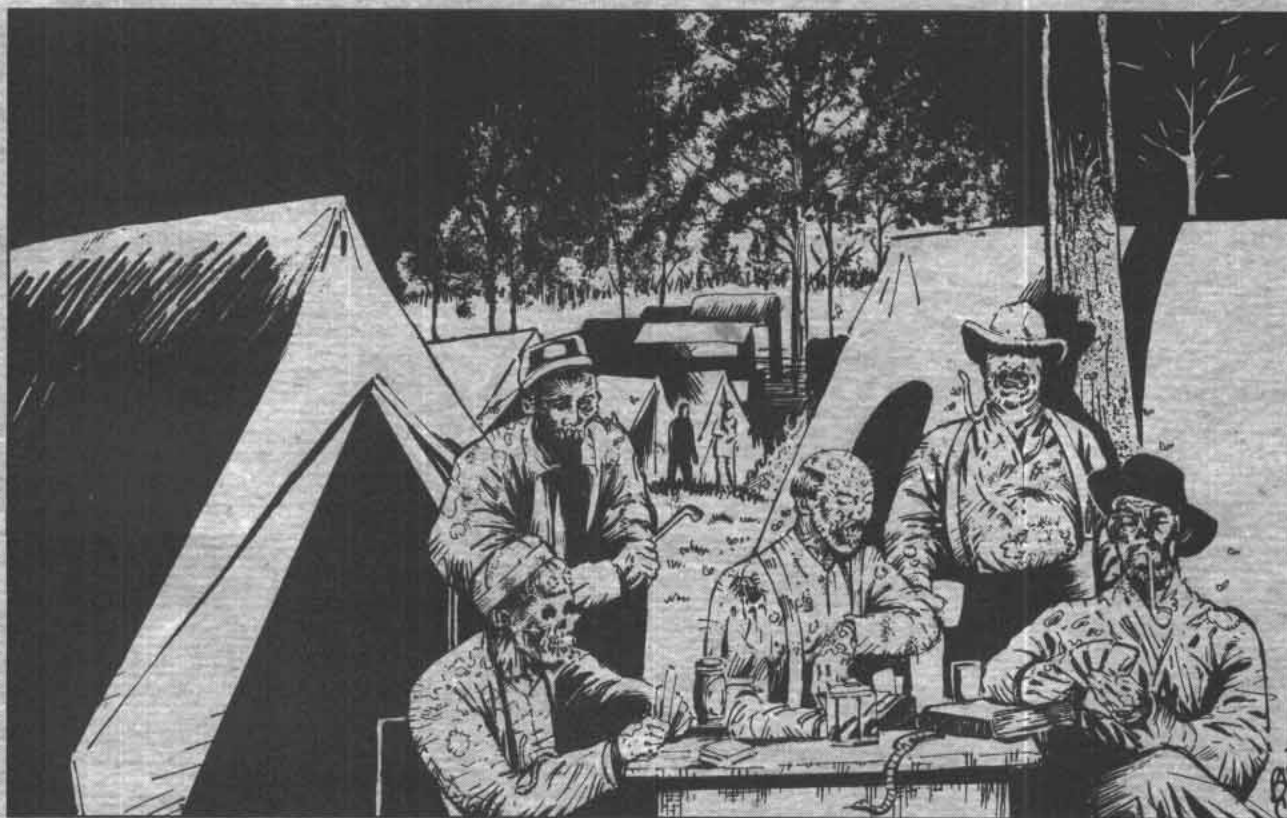
Despite some posturing by my government that the New Orleans garrison had received its comeuppance from a populace they had long abused, no one in the Confederacy has any explanation for how a group of unarmed civilians killed 5,000 armed men in a single night and then swiftly manufactured enough explosives to destroy an entire flotilla of warships.

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A rare photo of the aftermath of the New Orleans Massacre. Soldiers were found dead where they slept, sat, or even stood.

A Night of Blood?

I have since spoken to several of New Orleans' citizens, both respectable and otherwise, and no one openly admits to knowing anything about the massacre. I have heard whispered rumors of Union soldiers found dead where they stood, but the tales of how they appear to have died are quite gruesome, so much so that I best not repeat them without confirmation.

Yankee soldiers and sailors who were sent to retake New Orleans tell us that sometime after dark their ships began to sink rapidly after hitting what they believed to be a large sandbar or torpedo, though none recalled hearing any explosions. A few less-reliable sources report seeing huge black snakes leaping from the river onto the ships' decks before they sank.

While questions are many and answers few, I have reached one very instinctual conclusion about the city of New Orleans during my time spent there. Something very powerful and very secretive lurks in its shadows, and whatever it may be, it has both the power and the ruthlessness to kill thousands of men at once to achieve its ends. So the next time you find yourself on a paddle-wheeler happily

bound for the Crescent City, in between sips of juleps and games of chance imagine how equally unconcerned those soldiers must have felt on the night of July 3, and consider yourself forewarned.

Madman Across the Water

When Americans "Back East" speak of the other side of the Mississippi River, they make it seem almost as far away and alien as the heavens themselves. This sort of thinking is reflected in how the war has been fought thus far, with the politicians Back East keeping the men and materiel there and sending them West only when necessary. That is, until an undistinguished officer on the "other side" caused a crisis in the Union war effort.

Schofield's Tyranny

John Schofield was once better known for solving proofs and theorems as a mathematics professor at West Point than as commander of Union forces in the state of Missouri, far from the important campaigns Back East. That changed when violence escalated in mid-1863 and large, well-armed bands of marauders began to prey upon Missouri civilians,

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which the Union authorities seemed powerless to stop. When the people criticized Schofield, he retaliated with surprising swiftness by jailing their spokesmen for sedition and suspending the civil liberties of all. As the lawlessness grew more widespread, the citizens appealed directly to Union President Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln repeatedly wrote to Schofield, asking him to change his policies, until it was revealed to the President that the general was in fact covertly supporting the marauders with equipment and funds while simultaneously hampering Federal efforts to suppress their activities. Union General John Pope was dispatched to arrest Schofield and his outlaw band, but he arrived too late to capture either. Schofield and his men had fled.

The damage had been done in any event. Confederate General Sterling Price and a force of mounted infantry entered the state in the summer of 1864, and thousands of Missourians joined their ranks, blaming the Union government for Schofield's actions. Price continued to gather men and support from the populace as he fought his way northward, until the entire state south of the Missouri River was reclaimed for the Confederacy.

To this day, Schofield and an undetermined number of his marauders commit assorted acts of murder, robbery, and mayhem in northern Missouri, and both the Union and Confederacy offer sizable rewards for his capture. Several people are trying to collect, but even with the number of soldiers already after him, the former general amazingly continues to elude his many pursuers.

A still-greater mystery remains. What possessed a teacher turned second-rate general to abandon both his country and cozy position to become an outlaw? I suspect that if Schofield is caught he will be in no condition to reply to questions, but if I am wrong, the answers he might provide could prove stranger than any speculation.

Fire Down Below

Subscribers to Smith & Robards' catalogs and *New Science* magazine are no doubt familiar with travel under the water in submersible boats, and they assume it to be just another wondrous invention of the Age of Steam and Steel. But long before anyone had heard of ghost rock, the Confederacy employed such vessels as a part of our war effort. The first of these was the *C.S.S. H.L. Hunley*, and her exploits may yet to have ended, despite what you may have heard.

The *Hunley*'s last known voyage was on February 17, 1864, as she ventured forth in search of Union warships in Charleston Harbor. Such targets were plentiful in the days before the blockade was lifted, and before the night had ended, the *U.S.S. Housatonic* lay on the bottom of the Harbor. Sadly, it seemed the *Hunley* had joined her there, for the submersible has not been heard from since.

Few were surprised, as the *Hunley* had already claimed the lives of 33 of her own crew during tests, and it is a testament to the courage of Lt. George Dixon and his men that they even stepped aboard her that February night. Even if the *Hunley* had lacked the tendency to drown her crews, her spar torpedo (90 pounds of black powder attached to the boat by a wooden pole) must have surely proven fatal to both her and her intended victim. Of course, no one could know for sure, and it is this lack of certainty coupled with other incidents in Charleston Harbor that now troubles me.

In the years since the *Hunley* was lost, Charleston has once again become a busy port of call for ships of most nations, but during that time several vessels have been sunk there without definite cause. The Confederate government naturally accuses the Yankees of secretly trying to maintain the blockade of the 1860s, but I do not think them responsible. The Union has precious little to gain by violating international law, and a great deal to lose should they be caught doing so. The closing of one port, albeit a busy one, is insignificant compared to the risk of provoking a neutral power such as Britain or France into war.

Lurker in the Harbor

The question of who is responsible remains. Sailors who lived to tell about the sinking of their ships report an underwater explosion, suggesting a torpedo of some sort. Several others, who I have good reason to trust, also claim to have seen a submersible boat, and their descriptions of it match the *Hunley*. For obvious reasons, the rather dangerous design of the *Hunley* was not duplicated in any other craft, so if the stories are accurate, it is almost certainly her.

Why anyone, especially a man of Lt. Dixon's unimpeachable character, would continue to use any vessel as hazardous as the *Hunley* is beyond comprehension. Anyone with the resources to do so could surely afford a more effective means of sinking ships. I have heard that General Beauregard and Charleston's wealthy businessmen are understandably anxious



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Soldiers flee the Wilderness while their brethren perish in the inferno.

about this threat to the trade the city's fortunes rest upon, and they are funding some sort of investigation into the loss of ships. God protect and preserve them from the answers they may find.

Bloody Roads South

General Grant sought to end the War in the spring of 1864 with a relentless drive to Richmond, grinding up Lee's army as he went. Since the Union could now put twice as many men in the field as the Confederacy, success for Grant seemed an inevitability.

However, the genius of Robert E. Lee preserved both his army and the Southern capital until circumstances allowed him to reverse the situation a year and a half later. During this time, many things happened which defy rational explanation, and I will tell you what I know of them.

The Wilderness

Lee and Grant first battled in the dense Virginia woods known as the Wilderness, and the results were foretold by the skeletons of the unburied dead still there after the Battle of Chancellorsville the year before.

The Battle of the Wilderness was terrible indeed, with many wounded men burned alive when the woods caught fire. However, stories are told of fleeing soldiers being pulled into or held within the flames by masses of underbrush from which they could not escape. While some may have become tangled of their own accord, the sheer number of these stories suggests some more sinister possibility.

Spotsylvania

The armies' next deadly meeting was at the crossroads town of Spotsylvania. The two sides exchanged a continuous, murderous hail of musket fire so great that a tree 22 inches thick and between the opposing battle lines, was felled by it.

The armies left the town hastily on their way to the next battlefield, but the killing there has not stopped. A series of most brutal murders began in Spotsylvania not long after the battle, with the victims found bled to death and missing their jawbones. While a connection between the murders and the battle is unproven, one still seems likely to exist.

Cold Harbor

General Grant showed his ruthlessness at the next battle at Cold Harbor. After a 40,000 man charge at the Confederate entrenchments ended with a bloody repulse and 7,000 Union dead, Grant refused a truce to remove the wounded from the battlefield.

The Southern soldiers listened in horror as thousands of wounded men cried out in agony for seemingly endless hours. Later that night, they were understandably surprised when those wounded soldiers attacked them, and these broken and maimed men once thought pitiable are said to have acted as viciously as the mutineers at Gettysburg.

Lee and his army left Cold Harbor to protect Richmond soon after, but since then reports have persisted of Union soldiers, presumably deserters, attacking civilians in the area. While such actions are not unknown from deserters, it remains a mystery why they remain so far behind enemy lines and why the Confederate government has not dispatched troops to deal with them.

City of Graves

I loved Richmond upon my arrival here 15 years ago, but the War has irrevocably altered the character of this once stately place.

Foremost among the changes is the proliferation of graves of all kinds. There



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are the simple graves of the many thousands of soldiers who have died here over the years, and the more elaborate tombs of the well-to-do, politicians, and the like.

I have noticed that since Jefferson Davis designated Richmond the Capital District and transferred its jurisdiction from state to national, many of those sepulchers and crypts have been filled by those who were at personal or political odds with the President. I would hope that this fact is just an uncomfortable coincidence.

The Crater

As one moves south toward Petersburg, the mysterious Crater becomes visible through the cordon of soldiers that have surrounded it since it appeared in 1864. At that time, the Union army attempted to conclude their siege of the city by burrowing to the Confederate entrenchments, exploding 900 pounds of black powder underneath them, and then taking Petersburg by storm by rushing troops through the resulting hole.

The plan worked to perfection until the Union soldiers sent inside the Crater realized they had not been given anything to scale out of it with, and they were soon after shot down like the proverbial fish in a barrel.

The Crater has been kept from close scrutiny ever since for reasons of public safety, according to the government. What exactly the public is being protected from remains an enigma, but all the sentries there complain of the smell of brimstone. In a place where so many died so horribly to achieve so little, I can almost believe an opening to Perdition itself has in fact been created.

Here Lie The Fallen

On the outskirts of Petersburg, the mass graves begin to appear. Approximately 35,000 men are buried here and, along with them, the Union's hopes for a quick end to the War. The Federal troops had grown anxious when General Lee's men broke through the Union siege lines at Fort Stedman and captured their supply base at City Point in March 1865, but anxiety turned into panic when the Wasting, that horrid disease I mentioned earlier, began to spread through the Confederate ranks.

Lee soon attacked their dwindling ranks and, in a series of brilliantly coordinated moves, pushed Grant from the outskirts of Richmond to the outskirts of Washington. Still, one cannot help but wonder, as he stands before the endless, unmarked mounds of earth, if it was ultimately worth the cost.

The Georgia Wastelands

While Grant moved against Petersburg, Union General William Sherman ended a string of Federal defeats in the West by recapturing Chattanooga, Tennessee, which the Federals had surrendered the previous year after a siege and the Wasting claimed most of the Union Army of the Ohio. Sherman's superior numbers and leadership soon forced Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston and his army to retreat to the fortifications of Atlanta, and Southern defeat seemed imminent. President Davis relieved Johnston and replaced him with a maverick young general named Patrick Cleburne, and this gamble changed the course of the war.

Rapidly shifting his forces, Cleburne thwarted three successive attempts to encircle Atlanta and lay siege to it, inflicting heavy losses each time. Sherman awaited reinforcements and halted his attacks, but Confederate cavalry regularly disrupted his supply lines. Frustrated, Sherman secured permission from Grant to risk a move that could both secure a supply source for his army and deal a serious blow to Southern morale.

Sherman's March

Sherman abandoned his supply and communication lines to Atlanta on November 7 and marched his army toward the city of Savannah, vowing to "make Georgia howl" along the way. To this end, Union soldiers fed themselves with supplies taken from Georgia civilians and destroyed all that remained. The women and children in Sherman's path could only watch as their homes and crops burned and their slaughtered livestock rotted.

The Federals sought to justify their actions by claiming that the starvation and misery they were causing would hasten the end of the war, as if the sorrows to date were not enough to end a thousand wars by that token. When Sherman completed his march, he had cut a barren 60-mile swath from the outskirts of Atlanta to Savannah on the Atlantic Coast, and the cold, hungry winter to come would leave far fewer Georgians to "howl" as Sherman had wanted.

Sherman had failed in other aims as well, for his arrival in Savannah brought him news that General Cleburne had captured Nashville four days earlier. Shortly thereafter, the arrival of British and French warships in Savannah's harbor forced Sherman and his army to evacuate to Kentucky, and Cleburne drove them from that state the following year.



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General Sherman had gained little and lost much, leaving behind dead lands to mark his failed efforts. To this day, nothing grows in this part of Georgia, and deprivation remains a fact of life, just as it did in the winter of 1865. Tales of people driven mad by their hardships abound, and while descriptions of depraved acts committed by them are surely exaggerated, no doubt the people who remain there are desperate. Consider yourselves warned, all ye who would venture there.

Andersonville

Andersonville, Georgia, is located near Camp Sumter, which was the largest prisoner-of-war facility south of the Mason-Dixon line by late 1864.

The camp had become dangerously overcrowded after the mass surrenders of Union troops at Port Hudson and Chattanooga, and when General Grant refused to exchange them back into Union hands, they became the responsibility of a blockaded Confederacy which could not even provide for its own people. Union prisoners were given the same rations and medical care as Confederate soldiers, but any Southerner who was alive during this time can attest what a pittance that was.

Conditions worsened during Sherman's march through Georgia, as his armies consumed or destroyed the sustenance of both Southern civilians and the prisoners at Camp Sumter. Malnutrition and an almost total lack of shelter left the prisoners to face the ravages of disease and the elements.

In their extreme hardship, the Union prisoners turned on each other, and gangs of "raiders" preyed upon their fellow inmates for what little they had in the way of food and clothing. While some of the raiders wound up on the end of a rope strung round their necks by a tribunal of aggrieved prisoners, the misery continued through the winter and early spring.

The camp was closed when Grant resumed the exchange of prisoners in May 1865, but by that time over 20,000 inmates had died there. Their bodies were dumped into hastily dug furrows which became their graves, and they remain there today, entirely unmarked and untended.

The camp was abandoned as it stood, and few sane people have been there since. The few who have gone there returned to tell of vicious bandits trying to rob travelers of all they had, including their lives. While southeastern Georgia has no shortage of desperate characters, any who would inhabit such accursed grounds must be of a particularly sinister type. A place to be avoided, to be sure.

The St. Albans Raid

No one could have ever imagined that a botched bank robbery could change the War into a global conflict, but this all very nearly came to pass on October 19, 1864. On that day, 25 Confederate operatives crossed the border from Canada into Vermont with orders to cause as much distraction for the Union government as possible, to aid us on other fronts.

The sum of their efforts was robbing a bank in St. Albans, which they fled with a mob of angry townspeople in pursuit. The mob eventually caught a few of the robbers after they had recrossed the border, but the arrival of Canadian authorities caused the situation to grow tense. Refusing to hand over the captured men, the mob then turned violently on the Canadian gendarmes, and an armed skirmish raged until sufficient help arrived to subdue the townspeople.

International Unrest

News of this incident reached Her Majesty's Government in London and caused an immediate outrage, one that still resounded in the halls of



Sherman surveys his handiwork in the city of Savannah.

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Parliament when word came of the Confederate Congress' passage of Davis' plan to emancipate Southern-held slaves. With that, the remaining voices of dissent were stilled, and the British Empire officially recognized the Confederacy as an independent country. Days later, the French followed suit, and together with the British dispatched warships to lift the Union blockade—which they now considered a violation of international law—by force if necessary.

The stage was set for a confrontation, as Britain and France allied themselves with the Confederacy, and Prussia and Russia offered their support to the Union. However, calmer spirits prevailed until the February 1865 Hampton Roads Conference, wherein the Union agreed to lift the blockade in exchange for pledges of continued British and French neutrality in the war. However, by finally being recognized as a member of the family of nations, the Confederacy had still won a major victory for itself.

An Agent Provocateur

The strangest part of this bizarre turn of events is why a group of normally even-tempered Vermonters provoked a violent international incident, and once again the explanation may lie in testimony suppressed by the authorities.

Many residents of St. Albans recall the mob being moved to violence by a man not native to their town, one they had not seen before or since. They could not explain why the man's words seemed so persuasive or how he led them into the deeds that they committed. But lead them he did, only to vanish in the wake of the damage he caused.

To make things still more interesting, his description matches that of a man blamed for similar rabble-rousing during the New York City draft riots, as well as a host of other incidents of civil unrest in both the North and South. If I am right to match these pieces of testimony, then a man moves about our lands as the greatest mischief-maker on this continent since the demise of Aaron Burr.

Peace Nevermore

Since the end of 1865, the War has changed from one of bold maneuvers and sweeping campaigns to a bloody stalemate. Though the rapid capture of Washington in 1871 by our forces raised expectations that the struggle might finally end, the wondrous devices fueled by the newly-discovered ghost rock faltered just as our hopes did. When the Yankees



Was this man responsible for the St. Alban's incident?

built ghost-rock-powered weapons of their own, the War once again resumed its previous status quo, though now the efficiency of the slaughter has greatly increased.

In Closing

All of this points to the futility of this War. The Yankees began it to bring the Southern states back under their dominion (a dominion they see as the just and natural order of things).

However, their 15 years of failure should surely make them realize that this shall never happen. Later, the Northerners decided to make the abolition of slavery in the Southern states their goal, while hypocritically preserving their own right to maintain "the peculiar institution." But even after the Confederate States ended slavery within its borders, the Federals continued the war. Since then, even our own President Davis has abandoned all talk of a peaceful settlement. With both sides now vowing to fight the war to the finish, where does this leave our two peoples but unthinking enemies until the death of us all?

Until such time as that occurs or our better natures prevail, I remain,

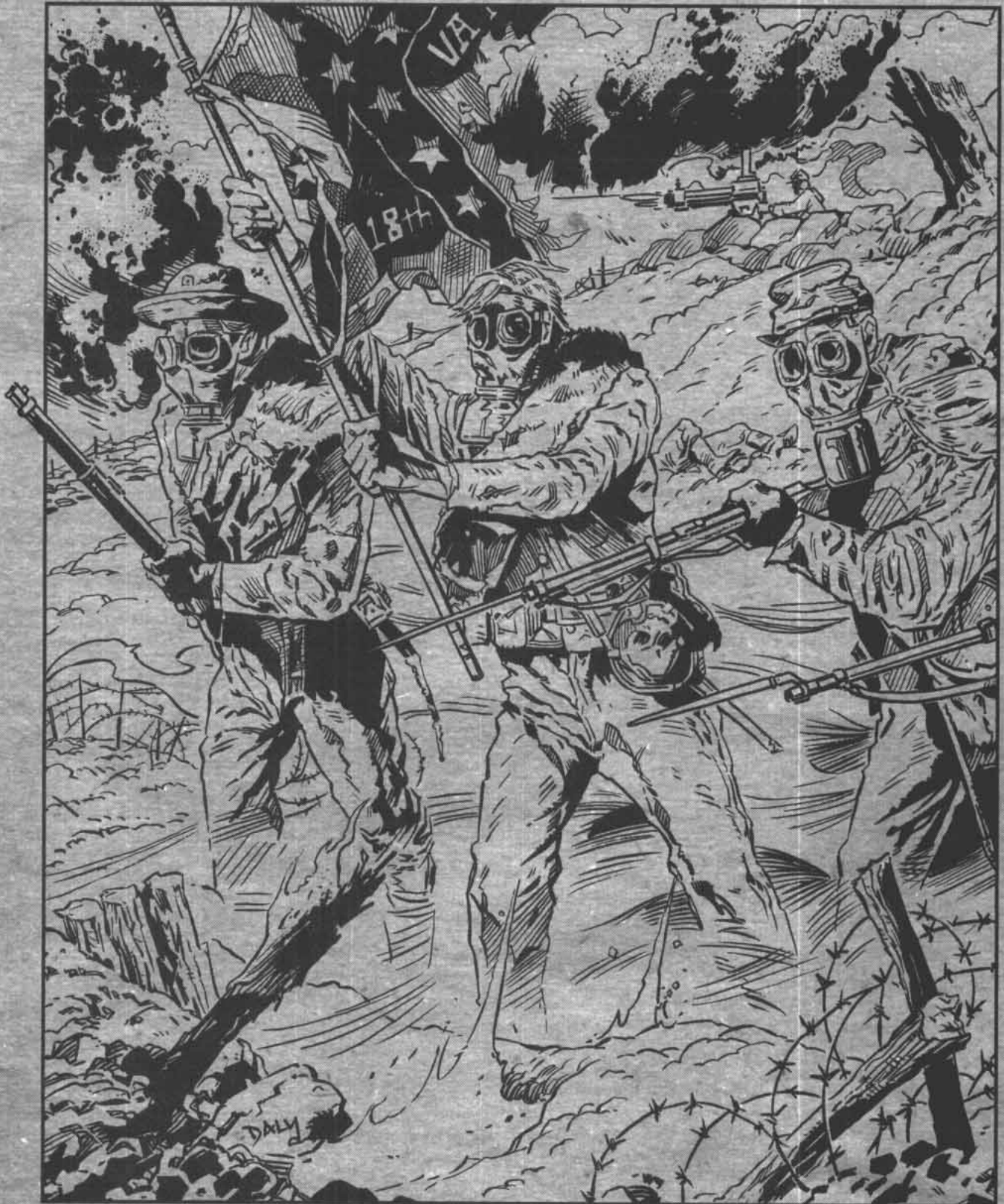
Your obedient servant,
The Southern Sentinel

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Troops of the 18th Virginia raise the CSA colors high. The terrible weapon that they unleashed at Sixth Manassas changed the course of the battle.

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Chapter Two:

The November Offensives



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The coming of autumn meant it was election time again, and as you savvy readers already know, that means the armies were on the move again. You've probably heard some of the details already, but I've asked my good friend the Southern Sentinel to give us his expert account of this year's events. I'm sure you'll find his latest letter of interest, so without further ado, here's the scoop on the November Offensives & Elections.

Setting the Stage

*January 15, 1877
Richmond, Virginia, CSA*

Dear Mr. O'Malley,

I am deeply saddened by the fact that even before the ink had dried on my initial correspondence to you, the soldiers of both American nations were once again shedding their blood to secure votes for opportunist politicians. It is in memory of these men that I herein document their brave deeds and the boundless ignorance of the leaders they helped elect at the cost of their very lives. Let me begin by first setting the stage for the bloody drama to come.

Dead Mens' Junction

Northern Virginia today is virtually unchanged from a decade ago. Both armies remain sheltered in their miles of entrenchments and fortifications, separated by only a few miles of barren no man's land. Soldiers continue to die, but four Battles of White Plains, two Battles of Centreville, three more Battles of Manassas, and the celebrated capture of Washington have ultimately gained neither side so much as an inch of ground. New and improved weapons have made no lasting changes, other than increasing the tempo of the slaughter.

The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, numbering around 60,000 men, is entrenched along a 50-mile front along the Bull Run and North Fork Rivers, halting at the Blue Ridge Mountains. General Robert E. Lee retired in 1870 for health reasons, though he still retains his position as General-in-Chief of all Confederate armies and has from time to

time resumed command of the A.N.V. at President Davis' request, such as during the Battle of Washington. Lee's "Old War Horse," General James Longstreet, is in command all other times.

The 75,000-strong Union Army of the Potomac's trenches run parallel to their enemy's. General Grant yielded command in 1871 to General Meade when the former became President, but Meade passed away a few months later. General Edward Ord was appointed to take Meade's place, but Grant still personally oversees the army as much as his Presidential duties will allow.

Across the Blue Ridge Mountains is the Shenandoah Valley, home to the Union and Confederate cavalry corps. The 15,000 well-armed Yankee riders under General Phillip Sheridan continue their efforts to raze the so-called "Breadbasket of the Confederacy," but they remain frustrated by the superior horsemen under Confederate General Wade Hampton, though they number only 10,000. Part of their difficulty stems from the fact that the always lengthy Union supply lines are still the prey of "The Grey Ghost," Colonel John S. Mosby. Though his men number at most a battalion, their skill and daring ensure the valley remains very much "Mosby's Confederacy."

The battles in northern Virginia center around the railroads which connect each of the armies to their supply of fresh troops, materiel, and ghost rock. Both armies rely on their halves of the old Orange & Alexandria Railroad to link them with their capitals, and the Confederates also depend on the Manassas Gap Railroad to connect them to the Shenandoah Valley. Manassas Junction, where the two Southern railroads meet, is the most fought-over piece of land in America. The Confederates call it Dead Men's Junction for the many thousands who have died there, and the fall of 1876 further justified the name.

Dark And Bloody Ground

Unlike the static trench warfare of Virginia, the war in Kentucky is one of rapid movement, with each side's fortunes constantly changing. Battles large and small have been fought all along the Ohio River, and the sheer breadth of the land here prevents either side from concentrating its forces into a clear-cut advantage. New scientific weapons have been introduced here, but their impact is diminished in the wide-open spaces of Kentucky, compared to their effectiveness in the more closed terrain of northern Virginia.



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The Confederate Army of Kentucky can muster about 50,000 men, and it remains under General Patrick Cleburne's leadership. The South also has the Army of the Mississippi of about 20,000 men under General Nathan Bedford Forrest, which frequently operates within the Bluegrass State. However, cooperation between armies is rare because Cleburne and Forrest have autonomous commands and answer only to General Lee (when he is recalled to active duty) and President Davis. Further, both men have a personal animosity for one another and do not communicate at all unless a direct order or dire emergency forces them to do so.

No such problem exists on the Union side. The 80,000 men of the Army of the Ohio are formally under the command of General Oliver Howard and have been since Sherman was appointed Union General-in-Chief in 1871. The Army usually operates under Sherman's direct command, but Howard has never been bothered by this arrangement.

The largest battles in Kentucky center around Louisville, as it remains the key to control of the state. The city seems to change hands between North and South annually, and began this year in Confederate control. By New Year's, Kentucky would live up to its name, which comes from an old Cherokee word meaning "dark and bloody ground."

Stonewall of the West

Few men have done more to transform the society and battlefield fortunes of the Confederacy than General Patrick R. Cleburne. This Irish-born veteran of the British Army had moved to antebellum Arkansas, and he enlisted as a private in the Confederate army when the war began. By the end of 1863, his accomplishments in battle had made him a general commanding an entire army corps, and his men had given him the honored sobriquet "Stonewall of the West," after the late, lamented General "Stonewall" Jackson.

While Cleburne's star was rising, the Confederacy as a whole was gradually being worn down by the Union's superior numbers. This led Cleburne to advocate a plan wherein any slave who enlisted in the Confederate military would be given his freedom, which he felt would eliminate both the South's manpower shortage and the North's claim to the moral high ground in the war.

For Cleburne, the war had always been about states' rights, not slavery, but the influential few who disagreed with him conspired to halt his promising career. Only after

Sherman was at the gates of Atlanta did Cleburne receive another promotion, and only then because Davis did not want to give command to his personal enemy William Hardee. The move was controversial everywhere but in the ranks of Cleburne's army, and those soldiers soon followed their new commander to victory after victory, saving Atlanta in the process.

At the same time, President Davis was urging Congress to adopt an emancipation plan similar to Cleburne's. While debate would have normally drag on for months, news of Cleburne's triumphs began to reach the capital, and support for the plan grew accordingly. When General Lee personally endorsed the measure, Congress swiftly passed it, and Davis signed it into law on November 11, 1864. The Confederacy won European recognition and freed the remainder of its slaves soon after.

Though Cleburne won the eternal enmity of slavery's staunchest advocates, he became a hero to most Southerners, as he soon after freed both Tennessee and Kentucky from Yankee occupation. In the November campaign to come, the fate of the Confederacy once again rested in his hands.

Blood on the Prairie

For the first time, the War has spread directly into Kansas, but more than just the upcoming elections have provoked this action in the so-called Disputed Lands. Events this past summer have forced the Union military to move into the state in force, but to fully understand why we must first look at events in years past.

The Trail of Tears' End

The Coyote Confederation's land was once simply called the Indian Territory and was divided among the Five Civilized Tribes: the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole. By the start of the War, they had largely abandoned the Old Ways in favor of the white man's, including plantation agriculture and the owning of slaves.

Their way of life and their history of mistreatment by the Union Government predisposed these tribes toward the Confederacy, and when the South made and honored guarantees of voting representation for the Five Tribes in the Confederate Congress (not land in Texas as some have reported, though the South did pledge to uphold the tribes' current borders), a solid alliance was forged. Their fortunes now intertwined with the South's, the Five Tribes began to muster troops to fight against the Union. For 11 years they fended off Federal

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incursions into their lands and often defeated forces many times their own numbers. It seemed the Five Tribes united could not be defeated in battle, but ultimately a different enemy would be their downfall.

The plague known as "the Walking Death" first appeared in the fall of 1872 among the Chickasaw, and from there it spread like a wildfire to the other tribes. People began dying by the thousands, and nothing could save them, even as entire villages were wiped out. By the following spring, four of the once-mighty Civilized Tribes had been reduced to mere hundreds each. Only the Cherokee managed to survive in greater numbers, but even they felt as though the Trail of Tears had brought them to an even more sorrow-filled destination.

Degadoga's Vengeance

Among the first to hear of the tribes' virtual extinction was Confederate General Stand Watie. He had been born Degadoga of the Cherokee and was now their Principal Chief and leader of the famed Cherokee Mounted Rifles. Watie had proven his military genius through 12 years of exploits that even then were legendary. He and his men carried out daring raids against their enemies and then disappeared like the wind itself. They captured unwary Union ships on the Arkansas River and made off with their cargoes before even a telegraph could summon help. Most famously, they forced the surrender of Fort Gibson, the base of all Union operations in Indian Territory. But while Watie had looked invincible, part of his soul seemed to perish after he learned of the deaths of so many of his people.

It was only natural Watie would conclude the Union had spread the Walking Death, because the Federal armies had from the beginning waged war against the women and children of the tribes. Blue-clad soldiers had destroyed their farms and livestock and had prevented supplies from reaching needy villages. Watie had heard stories of white men knowingly spreading diseases to Indians through knowingly contaminated goods, and he believed this is what had been done to the people of the Civilized Tribes.

Other tribes moved into the depopulated Indian Territory in 1874 and formed the Coyote Confederation, which the remaining people of the Civilized Tribes joined. With the last of his people now cared for, Watie began a series of brutal raids against Union forts in Kansas, which he views as retaliation for the extermination of his people. While the



CSA General Stand Watie at Fort Scott, Summer 1876.

Coyote Confederation attributes these raids from their lands to "rogue warbands," Watie's responsibility is no real secret.

This past summer, Watie and his men attacked Fort Scott, located in eastern Kansas on the edge of Confederation territory, after cutting its supply lines a week prior to the assault. The starving garrison could offer little resistance by the time the Cherokee attacked, and it surrendered in short order. Despite this, Watie and his men massacred the entire garrison and left their bodies for the vultures. This incident made front-page news, and public outcry in the North was both swift and furious. The Union government had no choice but to act.

The Cavalry Arrives

President Grant and General-in-Chief Sherman dispatched their old and trusted comrade Phil Sheridan and 15,000 veteran cavalrymen from the Army of the Potomac to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas with orders to hunt down Watie and his men. It is unknown if those orders include authorization to pursue the Cherokee into the Coyote Confederation, but if Sheridan has such orders the consequences could be grave indeed for the people of Kansas.

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The Cherokee Mounted Rifles today number around 5,000 men. The nearest assistance Watie could call upon for them would be General Richard Gano's brigade of Texas cavalry, nearly 5,000 strong, stationed at Fort Smith in western Arkansas. Gano and Watie worked together successfully for over a decade, but the two have had no contact since the Cherokee lost interest in fighting any war other than his own. Gano would certainly be willing to help his old friend if asked, but given Watie's current state of mind, it is far from certain that he would request aid from anyone.

The British Are Coming

To make matters worse for the Union, the situation along the Canadian border had grown more tense than ever. This tension originates from the Hampton Roads Conference years ago, and while war with the British Empire was averted by the concessions made there, the Union came away from it entirely disgruntled.

The Yankees' national mood did not improve in the following years. Canada continued to serve as a base for covert Confederate operations and a haven for Northern men seeking to avoid the draft.

Finally, when an attempt by Confederate Secret Service agents to falsify vote counts in the 1872 US Presidential elections was thwarted, their base of operations was exposed as Canada. This triggered a firm response from President Grant, as he repudiated the 1817 Rush-Bagot Agreement and began at once to fortify the Union's northern border.

Canadian Prime Minister John MacDonald turned to Britain for assistance. President Davis had also been petitioning the British government for assistance, dangling the carrot of Confederate ghost-rock shipments in front of the English Parliament. Davis had even invaded Washington to demonstrate the value of Confederate resources to the Empire.

Her Majesty's Government responded by dispatching troops to both Canada and the Confederacy, though the troops dispatched to the north were of significantly higher quality than the forces that Davis received. President Davis has left his token share in Charleston since the day they arrived. The East Indian sepoy and the line regiment granted him have gone completely unused, except as a garrison force.

While the British military presence in the Confederacy consists of but one regiment, their troop commitment in Canada is known to be considerably greater. Exactly how much greater remains a mystery, but their

commanding officer, Brigadier Sir Jeffrey Hall, is known to be a veteran leader. The Union has about 15,000 men spread from Maine to Minnesota under the overall command of General John C. Maniha, who faces obvious difficulties coordinating troops scattered over those distances. Neither side seems likely to benefit from a direct military confrontation, but as history attests, men and nations do not act by reason alone.

Decisions, Decisions

Not all fateful choices were to be made on battlefield. For the first time, the Union and the Confederacy held simultaneous presidential elections, and both were to be among the closest races in history.

Jefferson Davis

Incumbent Confederate President Jefferson Davis has progressed during his tenure from the most beloved to the most controversial man in the short history of the Confederacy. When Southern fortunes were riding high in 1866, Southerners successfully lobbied for a constitutional amendment so that Davis could be reelected.

Despite this, Davis repeatedly refused to run again until the only announced candidate, then-Vice-President Alexander Stephens, declared his support for reinstituting slavery in the South. The 1867 election was a landslide victory for Davis, but he would soon suffer a reversal in his popular esteem.

By 1873, the War had stalemated, and the once-revered Davis was blamed by Southern "fire-eaters" for not taking the offensive. He was also widely viewed as a despot, since he ruled by decree when the Congress was not in session, and ignored it when it did meet. The states had convened a constitutional convention to nullify his usurpation of power and find some way to oust him from office, but the convention gave up on the latter part when Davis seemed certain to lose the upcoming election.

Davis faced Senate president pro-tempore Robert M.T. Hunter, and "Run Mad Tom" seemed ready to ride the wave of anti-Davis sentiment into office until he was found dead from indeterminate causes just days prior to the election. With no other candidate in the race and major battles in progress in Virginia and Kentucky, Davis first postponed the elections and soon after declared martial law in the absence of a duly-elected Congress.

Most Southerners were too involved in the war effort to do much to oppose these



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moves, but popular discontent has grown to the extent Davis has had no choice but to allow elections this year.

Ulysses S. Grant

Union President Ulysses S. Grant was also at one point reluctant to seek political office, but pleas from President Andrew Johnson and the Republican Party had persuaded him to be Johnson's running mate in 1868. Grant cared little for the Vice-Presidency or politics in general, but Johnson and his shadowy campaign advisors convinced the General that only his presence on the ticket would prevent the election of an antiwar candidate. With Grant on the ticket and the oft-repeated campaign promise of a "secret plan" to end the war, Johnson drew the votes he needed to win. Grant quickly returned to command of the Union armies after the inauguration.

However, the war remained a stalemate, and Johnson was harshly criticized both for that and not adequately helping California after the Great Quake. The (albeit temporary) Confederate capture of Washington, DC, in 1871 was the final straw for the Northerners, and Congress impeached President Johnson and removed him from office as soon as they returned to their capital.

Though Grant had to relinquish field command of the Union military to General Sherman when he became President, his ascension to that office seemed to restore the faith of the whole nation. Most Yankees still viewed Grant as the man who would have won the War in 1865 had not the hated Johnson and other events intervened, and he later parlayed that reputation into an easy victory in the 1872 election. Grant was not, however, to remain an object of universal esteem.

Whatever skills he possessed as a military leader seemed eventually to desert Grant in political life, and his administration has proven the most corrupt in Union history. Rumors of widespread graft and nepotism have plagued his administration from the outset. In addition to the scandals, the War shows no more sign of ending than before, and opposition to it continues to grow.

Protests from young people are growing especially vociferous, as they feel most affected by the now-draconian-draft laws necessary to continue the Union war effort. Also, the situation in Canada has been allowed to fester into a confrontation with the British Empire (which I will discuss a bit later), making for an altogether difficult tenure for the former general.

Cry Havoc!

After a massive, yearlong build up of materiel on both sides, the storm that was the 1876 Offensives finally broke on November 1st with the Sixth Battle of Manassas.

Bone Against Steel

The battle began as usual, with a protracted barrage from the Union's long-range artillery and their cannons powered by ghost-rock vapor. The bombardment ceased an hour later, and Confederate soldiers looked up to see a new Yankee instrument of war. They appeared to be a trio of giant wagons, made entirely of iron, and with stacks trailing ghost-rock smoke. These land ironclads, as they became known, made their way ponderously toward the enemy until the Confederates came within range of their guns. They were accompanied by a host of smaller but no less threatening armored steam vehicles, the fruits of the Union's recently intensified military research program.

While the land ironclads' opening volleys caused no particular alarm, the fact that no weapon on the Southern side could damage the metal behemoths did. The men of Richard



One of the Union's smaller steam behemoths at Sixth Manassas.

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Union air carriages *Lyon* and *Sedgewick* rain fire upon Richmond.

Anderson's I Corps refused at first to yield their ground, but a general retreat ensued as the ironclads shot or crushed the powerless Southerners.

A sizable gap had been torn in the Confederate line, and General Winfield Scott's II Corps moved to exploit it. The last pockets of Confederate resistance were eliminated by General James Monaghan's famed Irish Brigade, equipped with Winchester repeaters and flamethrowers, and the road to Manassas Junction seemed clear.

Watch the Skies

General Longstreet rushed troops from John Gordon's and Jubal Early's Corps to Groveton and New Market, where they hastily formed a new line of battle with the survivors of Anderson's Corps. The situation looked grim, but fortunately for them the stand Anderson's men made earlier in the day, as well as the land ironclads' slow pace, had delayed the Union advance just long enough for night to fall. Darkness gave the Confederates time to regroup and entrench and to telegraph Richmond for reinforcements. However, the Capital District was to have troubles of its own.

Terror from the Skies

Unseen by most eyes (and disbelieved by the rest), three cigar-shaped forms made their way southward through the crisp, autumn air. Just after midnight, the crews of these amazing conveyances spied the few dim lights on Richmond's Main Street through their telescopes and then proceeded to carry out their orders.

Captain Charles Gates aboard the Union air carriage *Meade* gave the order to release its bomb load at precisely 12:30 A.M., and explosions soon rocked an entire city block. The fires enabled the *Lyon* and the *Sedgewick* to follow suit, this time with greater accuracy, and six city blocks were then ablaze. Soon after their supply of explosives was exhausted, the air carriages made good their escape, largely unseen. While they had missed their intended target, the vital Tredegar Iron Works, the Union War Department deemed this attack upon Richmond a successful test and planned a second such raid for the following night.

The panic in Richmond was immediate and widespread. While Longstreet's reinforcements were held back in the Capital District to extinguish the flames, both the citizens and their government wondered how they or any other city in the Confederacy could be safe from now on. The leaders in Richmond knew a defense for the new Yankee terror weapon was needed, and they correctly guessed that they had less than 24 hours to devise one.

The Long March

Shortly after the land ironclads had achieved their breakthrough, the Union launched supporting attacks along the length of the Southern trench lines, which were repulsed at substantial cost to both sides. Though the Confederates held their ground, they could divert no more troops to patch up their lines elsewhere. Longstreet needed to buy time for fresh troops to arrive from Richmond, and he realized his only hope lie in a counterattack. All the guns he could muster opened up on Union positions at New Market, and two full divisions from Early's III Corps, led by the stalwart Long's Division, marched behind it. The Yankee gunners cut down many of them with cannister and chain-shot rounds, and Gatling guns took their toll as well. But after the Confederate grenadiers advanced close enough to douse the blue lines with choking gas, a breakthrough was achieved.

The Southern soldiers were retaking lost ground when the land ironclads appeared once again, and neither their Martini-Henry

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rifles nor their bayonets were a match for rolling ghost-steel. Early's men were driven back with substantial losses, but with their lives they had bought time enough for the Confederates to regroup their defenses. The road to Manassas Junction was now laden with a weapon Longstreet had once, years ago, forbidden: land torpedoes. The General knew all too well they would do no more than further delay the Federals, so he prepared to make a stand at Dead Mens' Junction.

Jeff Davis' Flying Circus

Back in the Capital District, President Davis had summoned his Cabinet to consider how to defeat the Union aerial menace. At the suggestion of Vice-President Judah Benjamin, experts in the scientific arts were called into the meeting as well. The plan these men designed was to employ another wondrous new invention to defeat that of our enemy.

To that end, all ornithopters and qualified pilots in Richmond were rounded up and pressed into military service, though their numbers were few. The pilots were briefed on what they were expected to do, and as their craft were modified for the task, the already odd-looking ornithopters began to appear stranger still. While our battle flag was being painted on their wings, Captain Peter Hill, a former army officer chosen to lead the group aloft, commented that they looked like something from a circus. I could not disagree, but we all knew too well this flying circus act was now our only chance to save Richmond.

Birds of Prey

Captain Hill and his pilots could only guess at the time the Union air carriages would return, but Yankee punctuality, which mirrors that of the machines they seem to adore, would make the guess a certainty. The infernal Yankee contraptions returned at the same time as the night before, but due to the daring and skill of Capt. Hill and his men, this time they would do no harm to the capital. Losses were suffered on both sides, but those of the Yankees were far larger. The War Between the States that had begun on our land and spread to the seas had now taken to the air, and likely not for the last time.

One Breath

After our hearts soared along with the flyers above Richmond, mine would soon weigh heavy with feelings of guilt and sadness. I have always been taught the word "can" is not a synonym for

"should," and yet I made a choice that day contrary to that lesson and my deepest principles. I have opened the box like Pandora's, and it cannot now be closed no matter how terrible the contents.

We made the plans that saved our capital from judgment from the sky, and then a decision was reached to end the battle at Manassas. The tool we would employ should provoke most justly His wrath against us. It was rushed from Richmond in the dead of night, and it was ready for use by dawn. General Longstreet was not told, for he would have objected, and he would have been right, and we know it all too well. The instrument of our vengeance was given to the 18th Virginia Infantry Regiment alone. They had gone forward with Pickett at Gettysburg, and their duties in the day ahead would call for such devotion and courage.

Into the Jaws of Death

The Union II Corps advanced to Manassas Junction at sunrise, and the sun reflected off the accompanying land ironclads, making a silhouette foreboding to our eyes. The land torpedoes added thunder, lightning, and a rain of blood to the battlefield, and the Union advance slowed. With their ranks in disorder and the



Grenadiers of the 18th Virginia unleash the CSA's secret weapon.

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torpedoes exhausted, Longstreet's planned counterattack began, and the Yankees braced for the assault. Though the confusion scattered their volleys, the Northerners fought magnificently and bravely until the ironclads cleared the way. The Yankee reserves were brought up, and the Virginians raced to their objective before the fresh troops barred their path.

A rapid dash and a "Rebel yell", and they were through. The results would make me wish they'd failed. The Yankees probably did not see the strange masks worn by the Virginians, or the fate those inhuman visages presaged for them. It was too late to avoid the force of the green spray, the horrible smell or the burning in their lungs.

Conscience forbids me to give further details about the carnage, but our collective wrath had then been given form. The Yankee lines fell like wheat before the scythe, and those who were able fled. When the green clouds sank low, we saw that their war machines had ground to a halt. The Yankee advance had turned in to a rout, and they fled until they reached the security of their trenches.

Only the men who had fallen from the green mist remained. Most lingered for days in our hospitals, and no amount of chloroform dulled their agony. Cries of pain would issue past their plum-colored lips as late as five minutes before they gave up this mortal coil. I would have given anything to have imparted to these gallant men one breath without pain, but I knew they were only the first of many who would suffer this fate in the years to come.

Prayer for the Dying

The Sixth Battle of Manassas had come to a close, though both sides would continue to hurl cannon shells at each other until the ballots were counted a week later. The Union had lost nearly 15,000 men those two days, and the Confederates slightly more. Neither side gained and held so much as a single inch of ground. The Yankees had left three of their land ironclads in Southern hands, and both sides will no doubt have them at Seventh Manassas in greater numbers. That battlefield will be doused with green toxic clouds sown by both sides, and thousands will die to gain not another inch of ground.

There were gains, but of a different sort than the politicians intended. Rather, they took place wherever compassion ruled the day over rancor, as when the Yankees halted to share their canteens with dying Confederates. The victories were won as a priest of the

Confederate Chaplain Corps appealed for a miracle to ease the pain in the scorched lungs of a Northerner, and then said a prayer for the dying when his mortal enemy passed beyond our world.

Irrelevant, you may say, compared to battles involving thousands of soldiers and new weapons capable of killing them all in short order. However, I believe these gallant acts of mercy are the victories that shall carry us past the fear and loathing to triumph over a greater foe, one imperceptible to eyes blinded by rage.

The Kentucky Campaign

As it does annually, the fighting in Kentucky began, again on November 1 with an early-morning assault on the fortifications of Louisville. Under covering fire from Union gunboats on the Ohio River, army engineers assembled two massive prefabricated pontoon bridges which enabled General Sherman's army to move directly from New Albany, Indiana, to Louisville's outskirts. The two rapidly moving columns attempted to encircle the city in a giant pincer movement, which forced General Cleburne to hastily abandon Louisville to avoid entrapment there.

Home Fires Burning

While the Confederates marched toward Elizabethtown to regroup, Sherman ordered an unprecedented evacuation of Louisville, giving its thousands of citizens until nightfall to leave. Promptly at sundown, Union soldiers began to set fire to homes and businesses in the city, until all of Louisville was an inferno. The blaze was visible to Cleburne's gathering forces, and they received Sherman's message that this year's campaign was to be very different.

The March to Elizabethtown

Cleburne had gathered his army by November 3, and word reached him of the fighting in Virginia. When efforts to contact Forrest's army failed, the Army of Kentucky knew it stood alone against a much larger force. To add to their troubles, they faced a foe who had finally learned from past mistakes, so the Yankees would not divide their forces by leaving garrisons behind to be defeated piecemeal by the Confederates.

Sherman had always felt the strategy he had employed a decade ago during the March through Georgia would have ended the war had not fate turned against him, and he intended to reuse it now in Kentucky. To that end, Sherman employed an array of new

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inventions to wreak havoc as he went, such as ghost-rock powered rail-splitting devices to tear up the track of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.

When Sherman finally reached Elizabethtown on the November 4, the Confederates were entrenched outside of town and ready for an assault. The fighting began at dawn, and seven Union charges, each bloodier than the one before, were necessary to breach the Confederate lines. Each bloody repulse had raised Southern hopes that the Federals would fall back, but with no Louisville behind them and no Confederate reinforcements in front, there would be no retreat.

The breach in their lines caused Southern morale to fail, and Cleburne's army fell back toward the Green River. Only General Joseph Wheeler's cavalry screening their retreat saved the Confederates from further routs, but without fortifications, numbers, or a divided enemy to seize upon, Southern chances still seemed awfully slim.

The March Through Kentucky

The Battle of Elizabethtown had inflicted over 20,000 casualties, mostly on the Union side, but Cleburne was canny enough to realize this would be touted as a victory in the Northern press. This meant votes for Grant and a prolongation of the war, so Cleburne vowed not to give Sherman any similar vote-getting opportunities if at all possible. The Army of Kentucky retreated across the Green River and waited for the ballots to be counted.

Sherman unleashed the full fury at his command on Elizabethtown and all points ahead. Not only were miles of track destroyed and buildings looted and burned, but crop lands and wells were poisoned by an elixir previously unknown. Fertile ground was rendered desolate, and drinking water lethal, perhaps forever. Panic spread throughout the Bluegrass State as news of the razing reached the people, and the roads and rails became so clogged with refugees that no help could now reach the Confederates, had there been any.

The Union Army would eventually cut a path of destruction a hundred miles long to the city of Bowling Green, where beyond lay Tennessee and the Southern heartland. Cleburne would have to make a last desperate attempt to halt Sherman there, and the War would be won or lost at that day and time. While the armies gathered their strength for the carnage that lay ahead, others were seeing to it the Northern lands did not remain unscathed.



The Devil rides out: Nathan Bedford Forrest on the move.

The Devil Forrest

Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest had begun life with a third-grade education, but he had gone on to become the third-richest man in the antebellum South. When War came, he became a hero to the Confederacy for never losing a battle, even when outnumbered two to one. He was known as "the Devil Forrest" by the Yankees for that same reason. Forrest was an authentic military genius, and he employed that gift in a brutal style of warfare rare on the Confederate side, most notoriously permitting the massacre of surrendering Union troops at Fort Pillow, Tennessee. He had personally slain over two dozen men in battle, and after being shot point-blank by a disgruntled subordinate, had to be physically restrained from adding a 25th, exclaiming, "No damned man kills me and lives!"

Forrest had taken issue with Cleburne years ago when the latter advocated emancipation, and when messages came asking him to aid Cleburne at Elizabethtown, he opted to leave Cleburne to his own means. Instead, Forrest moved his army toward the strategic city of Cairo, Illinois, located at the confluence of

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the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. An early morning mist shrouded Confederate movements toward the city's defenses until Forrest moved into position and seized Union Forts Holt and Jefferson with minimal losses.

By this time, word of Sherman's actions in Louisville and elsewhere had reached the Confederates, and Forrest believed the Yankees had just run up a bill which he aimed to collect. The forts' captured garrisons likely feared going to a prisoner-of-war camp, but they need not have worried. They would find themselves bodily thrown into the icy waters of the Ohio, save for their skins, which would remain behind with Forrest. The massacre was totally unwarranted, but it proves an ancient rule: Barbarism begets barbarism.

Glory at Second Bowling Green

Sherman's men advanced on Bowling Green on November 7th, appearing to the Confederates as a mass of blue locusts. Still outnumbered, the gray ranks felt no fear, but likewise held out little hope of success. That is, until General Cleburne himself appeared before them, eschewing his usual mount to stand before the ranks. He spoke to the men of Stephen Lee's II Corps first, reminding them of the things which

had sustained them thus far in the brutal struggle. He concluded with the words, "Who will die with me this day, to save his home and his family, and Our Sacred Cause?" The shout that issued forth must have been heard all the way to Sherman's headquarters.

Once again, the Union charged the Confederate earthworks and was repulsed, and seven more charges after that met a similar fate. The field before the Southern lines had turned to blue and red when Cleburne once again appeared before his men and repeated his admonition from earlier that day, drawing his sword in the direction of the Union masses. The whole of his army stepped forth to follow him in this gallant counterattack, which had surprised the Federals with its timing and audacity.

The Battle Joined

Blue and gray met on the field, and a desperate melee ensued. Valor was in great evidence on both sides, but the Federals began to push back the Confederates, inch by bloody inch. Just as the Confederate effort seemed spent, the Union army was struck from nowhere by a seemingly invulnerable regiment clad inexplicably in black uniforms. Their assault, a desperate bayonet charge launched with a reckless abandon, turned the tide of battle when the Union corps commanders presumed them to be Confederate reinforcements. Fearing a rout at the hands of fresh Southern troops, Sherman ordered his near-exhausted, bloodied soldiers back to their own lines.

The Confederates were too battered to pursue and had been left leaderless in the waning moments of the battle. A Yankee bullet had found its mark and struck General Cleburne, and only the quick actions of the Chaplain Corps saved him from a would-have-been-mortal wound. Without his direction, the Confederates could only idly watch as the Federals withdrew back across the Green River the next morning.

War correspondents on both sides reported the miraculous appearance of the black-clad soldiers and heralded them as saviors of the Southern army that day. However, few noted that black uniforms are not used by any Confederate regiment, or that the entire strangely garbed lot vanished without a trace immediately after the battle, having said a word to no one. Bearing in mind there were no reinforcements to be sent, or any rapid means to get them there, it is as if our Sacred Cause had been saved by ghostly spirits. If that theory strikes the reader as unsatisfactory, I can assure him that in all the time since the battle, a better explanation has yet to present itself.



General Patrick Cleburne throws himself into battle at Bowling Green

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Aftermath

Forrest's men captured the city of Cairo on November 8, putting it to the torch just as Sherman had done in Louisville, which forced an massive civilian exodus and the destruction of the vital Union shipyards. The Confederates then retired back across the Ohio to Paducah, where Forrest remains poised to strike again into southern Illinois during the new year.

Sherman marched his army to Munfordville, Kentucky, after the Second Battle of Bowling Green, where they remain bivouacked at year's end. With the burning of Cairo and events further north, they seem likely to remain there until the Union leadership develops coherent responses to both. Sherman no doubt wants to continue his drive into Tennessee and lands beyond, but tangential events may have once again conspired against him.

Cleburne's army remains at Bowling Green, awaiting the fate of its commander. While he survived the immediate trauma of his wound, Cleburne still runs the risk of infection during the winter, which would likely prove fatal. No doubt losing the "Stonewall of the West" would prove as grievous to Southern hopes as the death of General Thomas Jackson proved years ago.

Bleeding Kansas

The first of Sheridan's cavalymen reached in Leavenworth, Kansas, two days before the election, and word of their arrival caused great excitement in the state, not all of which was of a happy sort. The arrival of so many Federal troops acted like a match thrown onto the Kansas powder keg, as violence between Jayhawkers and pro-Southern border ruffians escalated to heights unseen since the 1850s. The ranchers and farmers caught between them took up arms as well to protect their families and property, and the buffalo hunters, outlaws (such as the James Gang), Union Blue agents, and Black River operatives all operated with more than usual impunity. Though order was kept (barely) in a few places like Dodge City, anarchy reigned through most of the state.

After a particularly grisly massacre in Topeka perpetrated by the infamous Grimstead Gang, Sheridan and his men were pressed into service to try to restore a semblance of order in the state. This, plus the uncertainty of where Stand Watie's Cherokee Rifles would strike next, forced Sheridan to disperse his men throughout Kansas and served only to dilute their impact on events. Watie scattered his men

as well, and the stage was set for a series of wild skirmishes between all the various factions within the state, involving small groups of regular and irregular forces, with no clear winners or losers save for the dead.

Come the Horsemen

At year's end, there is no surcease in the bloodletting in sight, much less an end. The one clear trend is the arrival of Sheridan's men has slowly begun to turn the skirmishes in favor of the pro-Union factions. As a result, General Gano's Texas horsemen are being sent to Kansas, and the arrival of regular Confederate forces may yet restore the balance and stabilize the situation in the state.

However, should Gano's troopers board Black River trains, the relative calm in Dodge City is certain to explode. Further, these troops may be asked to intervene in the struggle between the Black River and Union Blue railroads as a "carrying fee," which will add fuel to the fire in the Great Rail Wars. Whatever the outcome, Kansas will continue to hemorrhage well into the coming year.

The Fall of Detroit

As Cleburne gathered his forces at Bowling Green, the bloody drama of the November Offensives took an unexpected turn when an unannounced player took the stage. In the predawn hours of November 5, a British line division advanced without warning from Windsor, Ontario, across the thinly guarded bridges into the city of Detroit. Despite overwhelming numbers, the British suffered a surprising number of casualties, as the Union defenders made the best of the city's fortifications, most of which dated from the War of 1812. However, the spirited resistance of two Yankee regiments could not hold off Her Majesty's troops forever, and they were eventually pushed back into the streets of Detroit.

The British forces, more used to fighting African natives, attempted a straightforward march into the city proper, hoping a display of force would render a demonstration of it unnecessary. They had anticipated that the mere sight of the Union Jack and their much larger numbers would demoralize their "reasoned and civilized" foes, but they were greeted on every turn of a corner by angry shouts, bottles and rocks, but mostly by gunfire from Union troops and the outraged citizenry. The Union

commander, Colonel Robert Harbaugh, knowing he had no hope of defeating the British in an open battle, had dispersed his



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Triumphant British forces march through the streets of Detroit.

forces throughout Detroit's buildings and alleys in an effort to make the British pay for every inch of Michigan soil they captured.

The fighting became house to house and street by street, and the British resorted to the brutal native-suppression tactics they had learned well in Africa. The people of Detroit were pulled from their homes, and those suspected of firing on the invaders were taken away to fates unknown. All major buildings and entry points into Detroit were seized, but the attacks upon British soldiers continued unabated.

Col. Harbaugh telegraphed a final report on his situation early on November 6, and then the city was heard from no more. The Union now faced a crisis unknown in over three generations: American land was now in the hands of a conquering European power.

From Behind the Lines

An odd silence has persisted in the weeks since this provocative action. The British claimed at the onset that the seizure of Detroit is a preemptive warning to the Union that no "adventurism" along the Canadian border would be tolerated, and then said nothing

more, at least officially. Unofficially, their remarks are more ominous, as if this were a demonstration of future aims toward both American nations. Certainly the continuing War Between the States has left both our nations much less able to fend off European threats than ever before, and it is almost certain the expanding British Empire has taken note of this.

While the Confederate government trumpets this as the long-awaited, full-scale, European intervention on the Southern side (although it seems a rather tepid maneuver to this viewer), the Union government is of course furious. Their response remained uncertain until after the votes were counted on November 7, but based on previous remarks, Grant was no doubt preparing for war with the Brits, even if he had to prosecute it as a lame duck.

General Maniha is attempting to gather his forces and retake the city, but he can do little that will not expose some other part of the border. With Union forces still skirmishing all along the Confederate border on New Year's Eve, it will be some time before any additional help reaches Detroit.

Inside the city itself, our British allies tell us the citizenry is well-treated despite continuing "resistance" and acts of American "barbarity." Reading between the lines, it would seem civilian resistance has intensified, perhaps aided by the remnants of Col. Harbaugh's men. The British will doubtless retain control of the city for the immediate future, but it seems the cost of doing so continues to be more than they anticipated.

Decision '76

As events unfolded on the battlefield, the election campaigns entered their final days. Those days were increasingly marred by violence in the North, as both candidates seemed to draw supporters and detractors in seemingly equal numbers.

The Republican Grant was already ill-at-ease so far from command of his troops, and the crowds gave him a reception that did little to calm his distress. Young men and women turned out in surprising numbers to jeer the President's speeches, waving Confederate banners and shouting their opposition to the draft and the war in general. The Secret Service, with Ford's Theater vividly in their minds, invariably stepped forth to quiet the rebellious youth, usually with swift brutality. These events drew considerable press attention and served to further polarize public opinion in the North.



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Northern Democrat Samuel Tilden, spokesman of the Union "peace movement," was rarely able even to begin a speech, lacking the incumbent's Secret Service protection. In Tilden's case, hundreds of wounded Union army veterans shouted down his every word and were all too zealous in their efforts to prevent his supporters from showing up in the first place. These outbreaks of "mobocracy" (as the British call our system of government) ensured the newspapers would control the election outcome, and the weight of their opinions was as sharply divided as the former United States.

The Confederate Choices

The Confederacy's candidates did do no personal campaigning, but with their virtues and shortcomings well-known to all Southerners, this was not unexpected. Southern Democrat Davis seemingly pinned all of his hopes on the November Offensives to carry him to victory, as he neither campaigned in person or by proxy, and his party's Congressional candidates wisely distanced themselves from him.

Robert E. Lee had received the unsolicited nomination of the reconstituted Whig Party, a loose coalition of factions united by their opposition to Davis, and they did most of the actual campaigning on his behalf. Though smaller in scope and numbers, the rallies organized in support of Lee by the crippled and maimed veterans of Lee's army spoke more poignantly for his election than anything else possibly could. Only public concern over the (soon-to-be) 70-year-old former general's health seemed to lessen Lee's chances of election, and the more partisan of Davis' supporters ceaselessly reminded voters of the general's near-death six years prior.

The Disputed Lands

The relative calm of the campaigns in the South was equaled in degree by the violence in the Disputed Lands. The Union (in Kansas, Colorado, and California) and the Confederacy (in those same states plus the Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma Territories) counted votes to legitimize their claims to those areas, but out of necessity almost all election functions were carried out by "unofficial government representatives"—mobs, by any other name.

From Kansas to the Great Maze, sabotage, fraud, intimidation, and outright violence increased as November 7 drew closer. While much of the rough treatment took place between mobs supporting opposing

candidates or warring countries, many innocent people were targeted or simply caught in the middle. By the time the votes were counted, people of all political persuasions had learned to dread the ruffians and their identifying phrase, "We're takin' a little survey," with the implicit threat of a beating (or worse) for those who responded incorrectly.

The Envelope, Please!

After the casualties and the ballots were all counted, the events of late 1876 seemed to have produced only unintended consequences. President Grant had sought to rekindle Northern support for the War by launching the November Offensives, but he succeeded only in triggering an international crisis. Nonetheless, the voters felt that if "the Limeys" wanted a fight, Grant would be the one to bring it to them, and he won by a substantial margin over the seemingly more-timid Tilden.

The problems Grant faced before the election remained and had indeed grown more serious. At the year's end, it remains unclear if the British seizure of Detroit is merely a warning or the beginning of a general war come spring. Sentiments opposed to continuing the war against the Confederacy can only grow, even as demands for military retaliation against the British increase. If Grant chooses war with the Empire, the Congress (still in Republican hands after the votes were counted) has pledged to back him, and the Union may have to face more than the loss of its former Southern states.

The results in the Confederacy are more controversial. The votes cast in the states went to Lee by a slight margin, but highly suspect votes from the territories and Disputed Lands tipped the election in Davis' favor by a razor-thin margin. Cries of fraud were heard from every part of the Confederacy, and only the published personal appeals from Lee himself averted a national uprising, and then only just.

Whether or not Davis can continue to stave off the erosion of his public mandate remains an open question. While the seeming British intervention in the War doubtlessly swung votes to Davis, charges of fraud continue to be made. Since convening in December, Congress' overwhelming Whig majorities have moved to investigate the results of the presidential election, focusing on the controversial votes from the far West. While the people await the results of these inquiries, Richmond braces itself for a pending intra-governmental clash which should tell us conclusively if Jefferson Davis is a misunderstood patriot or a true tyrant.



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A typical exchange between the forces of the rail barons. In this battle, Dixie Rails' forces squared off against those of Black River.

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Chapter Three:

The Great Rail Wars

In the *Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West*, I included a section on the railroads' race to the Great Maze. This proved to be immensely popular, and many readers have written requesting that I provide more information on this monumental competition. Most of these requests also asked me to post the current odds the saloons in Tombstone are giving each railroad, so I'm assuming that most of these readers aren't pursuing this knowledge just for their intellectual enlightenment. I'm a bit reluctant to contribute to this sort of morbid fascination with the rail barons' intensive elimination of each other, but the people should know this information.

Be that as it may, the Great Rail Wars has affected the lives of nearly every person west of the Mississippi in some way or another. Due to the great interest our readership has shown in the subject, I and a number of my intrepid colleagues have looked into the many colorful stories surrounding the participants. The results of our investigations and some predictions for the future are recorded here. I'll begin with a look at the Rail Wars in general and then address each individual railroad in turn.

Summers of Blood

The summer of 1875 was filled with some hard-fought campaigns between the competing rail barons. These struggles exacted a tremendous toll in men, machinery, money, and innocent lives. Losses mounted faster than the companies could make money or recruit new cannon fodder. It became obvious to all involved that the railroads could not sustain this pace for long. As the winter months set in, an uneasy and unspoken truce settled in between the feuding railroads.

It didn't last, of course, and the new spring flowers were fertilized with blood. Vicious fighting erupted in the south as Dixie Rails and Bayou Vermillion butted heads—and more money and rolling stock went up in smoke. Other railroads got into the act, and at first it seemed as if the summer of 1876 was going to be even bloodier than the last. But before the blossoms had fallen from the cherry trees in Washington, the fighting began to die down.

The Lull

The rail barons had simply gone too far, too fast, and they had reached the limits of their resources. Each railroad's manpower reserves were exhausted, and many company coffers, most notably Union Blue's and Black River's, were emptier than a whiskey keg at an Irish wake.

A period of relative peace followed. It was occasionally interrupted by the occasional raid or small skirmish, but for the most part the rail barons kept to themselves. Of course the rail barons hadn't actually learned anything from their costly wars. This brief interlude was just a chance for the railroads to catch a breather and rebuild their forces: the calm before the storm.

The Storm Breaks

The storm came in late August, and it was a doozy. Union Blue had accepted a contract from the US government to haul supplies and troops to Fort 51. It was an extremely profitable deal because the garrison at the fort was gearing up for a raid deep into Southern territory and needed large stockpiles of food, weapons, and ammunition.

It didn't take long for the other railroads to get wind of this deal. Dixie Rails and Bayou Vermillion immediately sent troops north to interfere with the operation. Both southern railroads were sure that any offensive by Jay Kyle's Flying Buffaloes was sure to disrupt their expansion plans, and they were determined to nip the attack in the bud. The two railroads which had been at each other's throats only months before suddenly had a common enemy.

This didn't mean they cooperated though. The forces of both railroads harassed and sniped at each other as they made their way north into Colorado. The two groups traveled into the foothills of the Rockies and ambushed Union Blue trains. They had an easy time of it at first because the trains had to traverse a number of switchbacks as they climbed up into the mountains and were traveling fairly slowly.

That changed quickly as Chamberlain put more guards and armored war cars on his trains. To help keep the train's speed up so it could blast its way through an ambush, a second locomotive was added to most trains. The wily general also added some disguised troop trains to the schedule and turned the tables on the ambushers a few times. The attackers would open fire on a train, and to their surprise it would stop, and Union Blue troopers would come pouring out of the boxcars.



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Strange Bedfellows

Union Blue also had some help from an unexpected source: Black River. Not long after Black River linked rails with the Denver Pacific, Mina Devlin approached Chamberlain about a truce. He hesitantly accepted her offer.

When the attacks began against the Union Blue trains, Mina immediately offered Chamberlain the services of some of her troops. He examined the teeth of this gift horse thoroughly before he accepted it, but accept it he did. Not long after, troops which had been plugging each other full of holes in Kansas were fighting side by side. (Some new facts have come to light regarding this odd alliance. More on this in just a moment.)

Wasatch Antes Up

With all of this fighting going on practically on his doorstep, it was only a matter of time before Hellstromme decided to throw his chips in the pot. Soon the professor's minions were ambushing not only Union Blue trains, but the troops of the other two railroads as well.

The fresh Wasatch forces scored heavily against all three opponents and came away with a respectable stack of loot which had been taken off of Union Blue trains. These early successes made Hellstromme's lieutenants a little overeager to continue their campaign, and they led to a blunder which added to the bodies piling up in the passes west of Denver.

Pride Cometh Before a Fall

The leaders of both the Dixie Rails and Bayou Vermillion troops in Colorado were cautious. Both groups were operating far from home in "enemy" territory. Wasatch troops were operating practically in their own backyard. This enabled them to get reinforcements and supplies on a regular basis and gave them a significant edge on the battlefield.

Unfortunately for all involved, it also made the Wasatch leaders cocky. Eager to sustain their early victories, they threw caution to the wind and began to attack Union Blue trains indiscriminately. This led to the deaths of over 20 civilians when a group of automatons let loose with their Gatlings on a crowded Union Blue passenger train bound for Virginia City.

This caused a tremendous public outcry, and the Wasatch forces became the target of a US Marshal and his posse. Hellstromme's troops refused to be taken into custody, and the Marshal and three of his deputies left Colorado in pine boxes.

Right on the heels of this incident, the Wasatch troops made a mistake that made the first look like a minor indiscretion. A Union Blue train was delayed by mechanical problems, and a Denver Pacific train was routed past it. It ran smack into a Wasatch ambush. The leader of the ambushing troops ordered his men and machines to open fire without bothering to confirm the markings on the train. The locomotive was destroyed, the train derailed, and the entire contents of the train (which included a number of expensive Smith & Robards delivery items, among them a custom built steam paddy-wagon for Long-Haired Tony, the marshal of Shan Fan) were stolen.

Denver Pacific Raises

Up until this point, the Denver Pacific had been willing to stay out of the fracas because its trains were not being targeted. The Union Blue trains which had been attacked were riding on DP rails, but the damage to Denver Pacific equipment had been slight, and Chamberlain's company had paid for the repairs. The only real effect the fighting had on the DP was an occasional scheduling problem caused by a UB train getting stopped in an ambush.

There is no love lost between Smith & Robards and Dr. Hellstromme. Once Hellstromme's troops took direct action against S&R's railroad, Robards decided to retaliate. Rail crews were dispatched to the passes where the ambushes occurred, and they posted signs along the DP right-of-way. The signs warned that any trespassers sighted on DP property would be shot on sight.

To enforce this ultimatum, a squadron of 12 ornithopters was formed from S&R's best delivery pilots. These pilots patrolled the passes every day and attacked any troops they spotted, without warning.

The ornithopter's Gatlings and bombs were a serious threat, but the wooded passes of the Colorado were not the flat, open railyards of Iowa. The ornithopters inflicted some losses on the troops below them, but not without losing a few of their number to automaton Gatlings. Robards was determined to punish those responsible for attacking DP trains though, and the aerial assault continued.

Iron Dragon Makes 7

At first, it seemed like Kang was more than willing to sit this battle out and let the other railroads bleed each other dry. Then he inexplicably sent troops south to join the fun.

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Reports from civilians in the area suggest that Kang may have lost something in the area and sent his troops to retrieve it. A number of people I talked to told tales of being visited by Kang's tong gangs. In all cases, the Iron Dragon troopers asked if the person had seen an ornithopter crash anywhere in the vicinity. I can only guess that an Iron Dragon courier carrying an important message or package must have gone down in the area.

Regardless of their reason for being there, Kang's troops didn't hold back. His men jumped right into the middle of things and got some good licks in on everyone involved.

The Cauldron

The Battle of the Cauldron, as this campaign came to be called due to the many swirling, multisided fights which occurred, raged on through September and into early October. The dead began piling up in the mountain passes like cordwood.

Not all of these dead stayed that way, it seems. Reports of supposedly dead men getting up and attacking their former comrades were common. Besides contending with each other, the rail gangs now had this to worry about.

Most of the rail barons continued to pour troops into this stalemated conflict simply because they had no idea what was going on. With the exception of Union Blue, whose motives for being there were obvious, each of the railroads mistakenly believed that the others had a hidden agenda and a good reason to be there. When Kang's troops arrived and began to obviously search for something, this only confirmed the rail barons' suspicions. They didn't know what the other railroads were after, but they were going to make damn sure that they didn't get it.

As the temperatures cooled in October (and both national elections approached), so did the rail barons' tempers. None of the railroads were willing to just up and leave the battlefield to their opponents, but they all began to slowly reduce the number of troops they had in the area. By the end of the month, all of the railroads other than Denver Pacific and Union Blue had recalled all of their troops.

The Butcher's Bill

The month-long battle west of Denver was the bloodiest fight of the Rail Wars to date. The rail barons aren't in the habit of posting their casualty lists, so giving any exact



CSA troopers are a standard part of Dixie Rails' forces.

numbers of the battle's cost is impossible. However, a source of mine within the Denver Pacific Railroad has told me that the crews sent into the area to clean up the right-of-way after the fighting had stopped buried over 300 bodies and disposed of an estimated 20 to 30 automaton casings.

The same source revealed that Union Blue lost four locomotives, over 30 pieces of assorted rolling stock, and nearly \$100,000 worth of cargo. The Denver Pacific lost a locomotive, 12 pieces of rolling stock, and nearly \$50,000 worth of cargo. Five Smith & Robards ornithopters were also lost in the fighting.

Restless Dead

I advise caution to anyone traveling in the area near where this bloody event took place. As regular readers of the Epitaph know, battle sites are often the spawning ground for creatures too hideous to imagine. Although Denver Pacific crews cleaned up the area along the right-of-way, the fighting sprawled over a much larger area, and many of the dead lie unburied and unmourned in the canyons that lie west of Denver.

You've been warned!

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Reward

As a final note on this bloody conflict, the *Epitaph* is offering a \$200 reward to anyone who can provide information leading to the location of Whorley Thompson. Whorley went to Colorado to cover the story when the fighting was its most intense, and he sent some truly amazing pictures back to our office. He has not been heard from since the fighting ended, and we are presuming he is among the many unclaimed dead. An additional \$150 reward is offered to anyone who can return his *Epitaph* camera and any exposed plates to our office.

Recent Developments

Before I discuss the individual railroads, I thought I'd talk about some recent happenings which have impacted the nature of the race to the Great Maze.

The Maze or Bust

Many people have asked me how the rail barons were able to replace the troops they lost in the early stages of the Rail Wars. The answer is that they have had a steady stream of willing recruits.

The ghost-rock rush going on in the Great Maze has sparked an enormous wave of immigration from Europe. Despite all the horror stories about the things lurking in the shadows of the western frontier, many Europeans have decided to travel to the New World and risk life and limb for a quick buck.

Most of them are in quite a rush to get to the Maze before anyone else does. As a result, they're not too keen on taking a slow boat around the tip of South America to California (not to mention the price of a ticket to the Great Maze is incredibly expensive—\$1,000 from New York City to the City of Lost Angels). Many of these newly arrived miners are more than willingly to spend a short time working for the rail barons in exchange for a free ticket to the end of the line. (Of course, a lot of them get their ticket punched before then).

Many of these would-be tycoons find that the dangers of the Maze and the risks and hard work involved in mining ghost rock aren't to their liking, and may return to the rail barons' service. After all, it's far easier to pull a trigger than swing a pick; easier to take ghost rock from someone than mine it honestly. These hired guns rapidly refilled the railroads' depleted legions.

Angels Among Us

As if the Great Rail Wars weren't bloody enough, a new party has gotten involved. Reverend Grimme has decided to practice what he's been preaching.

As regular readers of the *Epitaph* know, the rail barons have had a problem with their rail crews being attacked by fanatical suicide squads. Many of these diehard, anti-railroad zealots wear vests of dynamite, run in among the rail workers, and then detonate themselves.

The railroad gangs found it hard to defend against attackers who had no regard for their own lives, and losses to these attacks became costly for all of the railroads. Because of Grimme's numerous anti-railroad sermons, many believed these wackos were part of his Church of Lost Angels. No one has been able to prove it, and Grimme has denied all involvement.

In desperation, the railroads offered a bounty on anyone involved in anti-railroad activity. The average bounty offered was \$20 a head—literally!

Bounty hunters began accompanying the rail crews as they toiled across country. They ranged out in front of the crews and scoured the countryside for any sign of trouble. If they found any, no more fanatics.

Unfortunately, this strategy seemed to work a little too well, and true, died-in-the-wool fanatics became scarce. This didn't seem to stop the bounty hunters from finding them though. Anyone who voiced the slightest bit of anti-railroad sentiment suddenly became a "fanatic" and was taken into custody by the more ambitious bounty hunters. Oddly enough, most of these people died trying to escape before they were turned over to the railroads.

A prime target for these hard-working bounty hunters is any group which contains missionaries or traveling members of the Church of Lost Angels. These individuals can be counted on to parrot Grimme's anti-railroad philosophy. The second they do, the bounty hunters declare them fanatics and capture them. The results are rarely pleasant.

Expeditionary Angels

Grimme has taken exception to his people being targeted and he has taken steps to end it. He issued a warning that any further persecution of his flock will be met with force.

The Reverend has begun recruiting new Guardian Angels to back up his threat. These recruits are taken to a military-style training camp in the countryside near the City of Lost Angels.



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Unlike normal Guardian Angel recruits, these new enlistees are not all members of the Church of Lost Angels. The recruiters seem willing to sign up anyone who shows the slightest signs of interest.

The *Epitaph* managed to get a reporter inside one of these camps as a recruit. He was able to get the following report out:

8/12/76: Arrived at Camp Grimme today. We were assigned to squads and shown to our quarters, leaky canvas tents. Despite food shortages in Lost Angels, we recruits had plenty to eat at dinner.

Many of the recruits seem like desperate men who have little interest in religion.

8/14/76: The drill instructors here are all Avenging Angels, high-ranking members of the Guardian Angels. Discipline here is very strict. One of the recruits was given 20 lashes today for failing to follow instructions on the firing range. Ate well again today.

8/17/76: I have just returned from my first "Ethics Class." We were instructed (some might say indoctrinated, since no one graduates from training until they pass an ethics test) in Grimme's religious philosophy. As far as we recruits are concerned, it can be summed up in a single sentence: The railroads are the root of all evil.

8/18/76: There seems to be some kind of stomach ailment going around. A few of the recruits lost their supper. The camp doctor recommended they be taken to Lost Angels to avoid infecting the rest of the camp. I hope I'm not coming down with it. My stomach was a bit off after dinner tonight.

8/21/76: Marsh was badly beaten today for openly questioning some of Grimme's doctrine. He has confided in me that he was going to try to slip out of camp. I can only wish him all the luck in the world.

8/23/76: Marsh was executed before the assembled recruits this morning. He had been beaten so badly by the instructors that I hardly recognized him when he was marched to the gallows.

Colonel Prather addressed us after the execution. He claimed that Marsh had been an agent for the Pinkertons and was working to thwart the glorious work we were undertaking at the camp. He warned us to remain vigilant against any other unbelievers who may have infiltrated our ranks. I'll need to be more careful sending my reports out.

8/25/76: Despite the brutal discipline and demanding training, a new atmosphere of dedication and camaraderie has pervaded the camp. When I first arrived here, I would



A desperado turns in a cultist's head for the bounty.

have thought such a thing impossible. Many of my fellow recruits were stone-cold killers who joined Grimme's private army simply to get paid to do what they do best, killing. Now, they openly discuss topics like the moral degeneracy spread by the railroads and the need to protect the saints of Lost Angels from this vile filth approaching from the east. The change is quite remarkable and somewhat unnerving.

On the positive side, all this fresh air and exercise has put a few pounds on my otherwise scrawny frame. I'm getting very tired of stew every night, though. Just the thought of eating any more makes me feel ill.

A Stalwart Reporter

Unfortunately, our correspondent, Sullivan McCoy, lost his life uncovering this information. Shortly after we received his last report, his body was delivered to our offices in Tombstone. An official representative of the Church of Lost Angels accompanied it and explained that he was killed in a training accident. He extended the Reverend's personal condolences and an invitation to send another correspondent to Camp Grimme for a guided tour. We declined. You'll be missed, Sullivan!

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One of Grimme's high-ranking followers: an Avenging Angel.

On the Move

The first class of recruits has already left Camp Grimme and made its presence felt in the Great Rail Wars. A company-sized detachment of these Guardian Angels, accompanied by a number of red-robed Avenging Angels, descended on a Bayou Vermillion rail crew laying track only a few miles west of Tombstone.

The crew was well-guarded due to the threat of attack by Geronimo and his warriors, and these guards put up a hard fight against Grimme's men. The attacking Angels outnumbered the defenders almost two-to-one, however, and the guards were only able to hold on long enough to allow the rail crews to escape.

Survivors of the attack, some of whom I interviewed myself, report that Grimme's troops were well-disciplined and well-armed. A few accounts described the Avenging Angels striking down their foes with heavenly white light.

Whether this is true or only the product of a panicked survivor's imagination, the reality of the attack cannot be denied. I personally visited the site of the battle a few days afterward and saw the devastation firsthand. The tents and supplies left

behind by the retreating work crews had been heaped together into an enormous pile and burned. The camp's supply of rails had been heated in the fire and then bent around nearby boulders.

The railroad's dead lay where they had fallen, but there was no sign of any Guardian Angel casualties. Presumably they took their dead and wounded with them.

This is the first report I've had of Grimme's people ranging this far afield from Lost Angels. In the past, the Church has kept its operations closer to home. Personally, I suspect Reverend Grimme intends to expand his sphere of influence quite a bit.

It appears as if the railroads have yet another obstacle to overcome before they see the canyons of the Great Maze. I know of no other attacks of this size on other railroads, but there have been plenty of reports of parties of robed gunmen patrolling the hills around Lost Angels and the passes of the Sierra Nevadas.

War Parties

As if there weren't already enough factions in the Great Rail Wars, Sitting Bull has decided to put his paddle in the water. Sioux war bands have recently begun attacking the trains and rail crews of the rail barons.

Reports from sources inside the Sioux Nations indicate that these recent attacks are the result of growing pressure on Sitting Bull from the other *wicasas* in the Old Ways Movement. They were none too pleased with the deal he made with Iron Dragon and have been badgering him to do more to affirm his commitment to the movement. The wily old chief has refused to break his word to Kang, but he has given permission to his war leaders to strike at the other railroads.

The railroads which seem destined to suffer the most from this decision are Wasatch and Union Blue, the two railroads closest to the Sioux Nations' southern border. Sioux war bands recently destroyed some Wasatch track in southern Nebraska, then wiped out the first rail crew which showed up to repair the damage. When the second, heavily-guarded crew arrived, the Sioux warriors were long gone.

There are some indications that not all of Sitting Bull's warriors are honoring his arrangement with Iron Dragon. Trains passing through the Sioux Nations often arrive hours behind schedule and sometimes not at all. Passengers on these trains report being attacked by Sioux warriors.



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Iron Horses

A recent development in the Great Rail Wars is the increased use of vehicles created through mad science. (I'm sure I'll get some angry letters about that "mad" part, but I just call them like I see them.) The railroads have invested heavily in the latest contraptions to roll, trundle, or flap out of Smith & Robards' workshops.

This has given the rail barons' troops unprecedented mobility, and it's greatly increased the pace and intensity of the conflict. Trips which used to take days or weeks can now be made in hours or days. This has made it much easier for the railroads' forces to conduct hit-and-run raids against each other. As a consequence, it's much more difficult for each railroad to defend its rails from enemy raiders. Each new mile of track laid only makes the problem that much worse and forces the companies to tie up more and more troops patrolling their lines.

These new contraptions are expensive both to buy and maintain—and buy again as they get blown up. The other day as I traveled to Dallas on the BV, the train passed through a recent battlefield where I saw no less than four burned-out steam wagons.

This has had a profound effect on us noncombatants (if there is such a thing out here in the Weird West). The railroads have passed the cost along to us, of course, in higher ticket prices and freight rates. A ticket on the Union Blue from Chicago to Dodge City that used to cost \$10 now goes sells for \$18. The higher freight rates have also caused the price of many goods to increase. Combine this with the effects of the war Back East, and simple, everyday things can get mighty pricey out here. (See the section on the Disputed Lands in the next chapter for details.)

These new conveyances have also led to an increase in train robberies. Raiders no longer have to chance risky stationary ambushes that might be discovered by a passing patrol. They can simply wait in hiding for a train and then ride down and board it while it's still moving. If you must travel by rail, I heartily advise you not to carry cash or other valuables.

Race to the Rockies

Despite all the fighting, the railroads are still making progress west, albeit slowly. The next big hurdle, geographically speaking, is crossing the Rockies. The three railroads

slogging their way through the Disputed Lands—Wasatch, Union Blue, and Black River—are especially concerned about this. The best passes through the central Rockies have already been claimed by the Denver Pacific, and competition for those remaining is fierce.

Survey crews from these railroads are swarming over the mountains, trying to find the best possible routes. These crews spend more time fighting each other than they do surveying, so it may be some time before the first rails are laid through the Rockies. Since the passes are closed during the winter, most engineers I've talked to predict the first line won't cross those stony peaks until some time late in the summer of 1877. If the fighting between the railroads continues at its current level, many feel that we may not see any progress over the Rockies until the spring of 1878 or even later.

The Railroads

For you betting types (and I know you're out there, so don't try to look so innocent), here's the latest news on your favorite railroads.

Bayou Vermillion

Bayou Vermillion still holds the westernmost station in the Rail Wars, but that honor is in serious jeopardy. Baron LaCroix's railroad has been stalled since arriving in Tombstone.

Geronimo

Although BV troops have gotten into a fair number of scrapes with Dixie Rails forces and more recently with Grimme's robed goons, the main obstacle to expansion has been Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apaches. The Apache war leader seems to have taken special interest in preventing BV from moving any further west.

In the past year, the Bayou Vermillion line only progressed 10 miles from Tombstone, and every inch of that expansion was bitterly contested. Geronimo's warriors have raided and harassed LaCroix's crews at every opportunity, and judging from the number of graves I've seen along the BV right-of-way outside Tombstone, they've inflicted some serious casualties.

The beleaguered BV crews have actually gone to the effort to construct a stockade fort at the current end of the line. Armed patrols leave the fort on a regular basis and head up into the Dragoon Mountains to search for the Chiricahuas' hidden stronghold. More often than not, they return with a lot fewer men than they left with.



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All of this is good news for the Confederate garrison at Fort Huachuca. Geronimo's preoccupation with Bayou Vermillion has meant less raids against caravans on the Ghost Trail and less casualties for the Rebels. LaCroix has demanded that the garrison help protect his railroad from the Apaches, but Colonel Smythe has informed him that his troops' current patrol schedule along the Ghost Trail leaves him no men to spare to patrol the BV line. It seems to me that Smythe's men have been taking leave in Tombstone more often than they used to, but I could be mistaken. Given most Southern soldiers' sympathies for General Lee's Dixie Rails, I don't expect Smythe to have any men to spare for some time to come.

I've heard some disturbing rumors that the Baron has a plan to deal with Geronimo. I haven't been able to find out any details, but I have a sneaking suspicion that it has something to do with the late-night freight trains which have passed through Tombstone without stopping.

The Mojave

If LaCroix does somehow manage to defeat the Chiricahua, another major obstacle lies in the path of his railroad: the Mojave Desert. Laying a rail line through the shifting sands of a desert is hard enough, but the massive Mojave rattlers which inhabit the area make this a doubly difficult proposition.

The baron is obviously planning ahead for this. My sources in Salt Lake City tell me that representatives from Bayou Vermillion have been seen in the area, observing the techniques used by the worm-whalers there.

I also recently had an enlightening conversation down at the Oriental with a scientist in BV's employ. He's working on some sort of device he calls a "vibratory resonance inducer." In plain English, the contraption is some sort of giant, windup drum. My friend claims that, by planting these in the ground at regular intervals along the rails, they will create a blanket of sound that the rattlers find painful. This should cause them to avoid the tracks, preventing any damage. Personally, I think you'll just end up with some angry rattlers.

The Cowboys

As a final note of interest, it seems the Cowboys have actually become gainfully employed—by Bayou Vermillion, of course. They recently disappeared from sight for a while, and when they returned they had a number of new members in their gang—all Mexican.

This wouldn't normally be anything remarkable, except most of these new members are extremely well-mannered and hygienic. They usually keep to themselves and seem to find the rest of the gang distasteful (not that I blame them). If I didn't know any better, I might suspect that these new Cowboys were actually Mexican Army officers traveling incognito.

Black River

Black River is a railroad lucky to still be in the running. The railroad's campaign against Union Blue in Kansas was costly both in troops and money. It has recently come to light that Black River was actually on the brink of bankruptcy when its rails reached Dodge City. Only a last minute infusion of cash from some unnamed investors kept the railroad going.

Unholy Alliance

Black River's financial woes may explain the curious behavior of the company's top lady, Mina Devlin. Not long after her railroad linked up with the Denver Pacific, she went to Chamberlain with plans for a truce. Union Blue was also having money problems (more on that in a moment), so Chamberlain agreed.

Since that time, the two railroads have been working together. During the Battle of the Cauldron, Mina's Wichita Witches fought side-by-side with Chamberlain's troopers protecting Union Blue's trains from the other railroads.

There may be more to this alliance than meets the eye, however. During the Cauldron campaign, Mina spent a considerable amount of time in private meetings with Chamberlain. Many witnesses described Mrs. Devlin leaving Chamberlain's private train car with her clothing, to put it charitably, in disarray.

Many less reputable newspapers have irresponsibly printed stories suggesting that Chamberlain and Devlin are having an improper relationship. Having met Chamberlain and knowing his devotion to his wife, I find this very hard to believe. I grant that the situation does give the impression of impropriety though.

Be that as it may, the alliance has recently shown signs of unraveling. Black River has recalled most of its troops back to guard its stations, and Mina's visits to Chamberlain's headquarters have stopped. As we go to press, I've heard rumors of negotiations between Black River and the CSA government (which controls Dixie Rails, of course). I'd guess it's only a matter of time before these two railroads are at each other's throats again, perhaps even with more ill will than usual.

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Westward Bound

The brief peace between Black River and Union Blue seems to have given Mina's company a chance to get its books back in the black. BR trains have been running east from Dodge City, fully loaded with buffalo meat and hides.

Rail crews have begun laying a new line south of the spur which links the Black River tracks with the Denver Pacific line. It looks as if Mina has her sights set on getting to the Rocky Mountains ahead of Union Blue and Wasatch.

Dixie Rails

General Lee's railroad is currently facing some tough problems, including the failing health of the general himself, but if they can be overcome I feel this railroad has a shot at winning the race (gamblers take note).

The Texas Campaign

In mid-1876, Dixie Rails was gaining ground on Bayou Vermillion. LaCroix, however, was determined to maintain his lead. As the two railroads built across central Texas, the baron had an advantage. His southern flank was secured by the ocean, while Dixie Rails still had to keep an eye on Black River to the north.

The baron gathered his forces together, even though it meant he would have few troops left to patrol his tracks, and hurled them all at Dixie Rails' lead work crews. LaCroix figured that Lee's troops would be too busy defending their own track to mount an attack against his.

The Baron Attacks

Like many Union commanders had in the past, LaCroix underestimated Lee's aggressiveness. Like them, he suffered the consequences.

Lee himself came to Texas to command the Dixie Rails troops defending the company's western railhead. As he had in the past, Lee split his forces. While he remained at the railhead with the bulk of his troops, Lee dispatched his nephew Fitzhugh south at the head of a strong column of cavalry and light artillery.

Lee suckered LaCroix's troops in by sacrificing his railhead. His men made a short stand at the railhead, and then, at a prearranged signal, they broke and ran. The baron's undisciplined troops set off after them in full pursuit and ran straight into an ambush.

Lee's outnumbered troopers killed enough Bayou Vermillion fighters in the opening minutes of the ambush to even the odds and turn the situation into a stand-up fight. Fighting between



Did the alluring Mina Devlin and the stalwart Joshua Chamberlain have a "personal relationship?" Only the two of them truly know.

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the two railroads raged on for another four days before LaCroix's battered minions were recalled home to defend the Bayou Vermillion line against Fitzhugh's raiders.

Dixie Rails' victory was not without cost. The company's westernmost work camp had been destroyed, and nearly half of the defenders were dead or wounded.

The biggest cost may have been to the Confederacy itself. The strain of commanding troops in battle again had taken its toll on General Lee. Once the battle had been decided, Lee took to his bed and stayed there for four days. He has recovered, but as of the new year, his health is not what it was, and it wasn't good to begin with.

Later in the year, the elder Lee's (mostly unwilling) bid for the Confederate presidency failed, but the General seemed unperturbed. Doubtless Lee will return to the field soon to take a strong hand once again in Dixie Rails and the Great Rail Wars.

The Hell Ride

While Robert E. Lee was fending off the main Bayou Vermillion attack, Fitzhugh Lee and his horse soldiers blazed a path of destruction along the BV tracks. He and his men encountered only token resistance from the few scattered defenders which had been left behind to guard the railroad.

Taking a page from Sherman's book, Fitzhugh tore up track, demolished rolling stock, and burnt entire stations to the ground. At night, the path the Dixie Rails troopers had taken was lit by the fires they had left in their wake. Those who witnessed this Hellish glow dubbed Fitzhugh's raid the "Hell Ride."

The SF&EP

The fighting between Bayou Vermillion and Dixie Rails has died down, but now Lee's railroad faces a entirely new obstacle: the Santa Fe & El Paso Railroad. This smaller but important railroad's line runs north to south, directly across Dixie Rails' path.

As the Dixie Rails line neared Roswell, Fitzhugh began negotiations with SF&EP's owner, Nathan Ennis. Ennis initially agreed to a link up between the two railroads at Albuquerque, but then he suddenly reversed himself and said he wasn't interested. Shortly thereafter, he announced a connection with Bayou Vermillion in El Paso.

Both Lees were dumbfounded by Ennis' refusal to negotiate with them. They considered Ennis a reasonable man and

saw no reason why linking up with Bayou Vermillion should prevent him from linking his railroad with Dixie Rails.

My sources in Richmond tell me that Lee has filed a petition requesting that the government seize Ennis' railroad under eminent domain laws. Given the senior Lee's clout, this will undoubtedly be authorized, but it's doubtful Richmond can make it stick this far west. At best, it gives the Lees an excuse to cross the SF&EP right-of-way by force.

Iron Dragon

Iron Dragon's position far to the north of the other railroads has kept it out of much of the fighting. This doesn't mean it's been all easy going for Kang's rail crews.

The Anti-Railroad League

Kang's forces ran into trouble in Montana. Some of the ranchers there were either too dumb or too stubborn to listen to the threats of the Iron Dragon troops. They refused to sell their ranches and even went so far as to organize an Anti-Railroad League.

The League organized resistance against Iron Dragon and even sent a petition to Washington requesting the aid of a US Marshal and Federal troops against Kang's railroad. Ranchhands from a number of the ranches involved in the League even fought pitched battles against Iron Dragon troops.

Then things suddenly changed. The ranchers withdrew their petition and sold their ranches to Iron Dragon for below market value. No one knows exactly what caused the ranchers to change their minds, and they refuse to talk about it. Since that time, other ranches and towns in Iron Dragon's path have also sold the railroad the right-of-way cheaply.

I, for one, would like to know why this is happening, and so would the Epitaph. This newspaper is offering \$300 to anyone who can solve this mystery.

The Seven

I have also heard reports from up north of a group of seven samurai warriors. They reportedly are extremely courteous and pay for anything they need. I find it hard to believe that such honorable warriors would be working for Kang, but witnesses say that they have been traveling in advance of the Iron Dragon rail crews negotiating for the right-of-way. In contrast to Iron Dragon's dealings with the Anti-Railroad League, these warriors always offer a fair price for the land they purchase.



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Western Dragon

Iron Dragon's northern route has meant that Kang's railroad has had to cover more ground to reach Lost Angels than the other companies. Kang is taking steps to speed things up.

Reports from Shan Fan indicate that Kang has begun the construction of a rail line running east from that city, as well as others to the north and south. The obvious conclusion to draw is that he plans to meet his line coming from the east, also building down to Lost Angels and up to Sacramento (to meet the Great Northwestern line).

The same sources have pointed out a strange fact. Although the crews have laid over 10 miles of track, no one has yet seen a train on them. There is no place capable of manufacturing steam locomotives in the Maze, so Kang must be planning to import some rolling stock.

Union Blue

Chamberlain's railroad was also suffering financial problems after the long campaign in Kansas, but these seemed to have blown over. The company is making a bundle off the buffalo trade in Dodge City, and the link-up with Denver Pacific has proved extremely profitable.

Stuck in the Middle

Union Blue's biggest problem at the moment is its position between Black River and Wasatch. If the railroad hopes to expand west, it is going to have to actually cross at least one other company's tracks. Chamberlain is currently negotiating with Denver Pacific to do just that, but all reports seem to indicate that Robards is reluctant to grant his request for fear it will spark attacks from Black River and Wasatch.

If these negotiations fall through, Union Blue has no choice other than to cross another railroad's tracks by force. If this happens, it most likely means a fight to the death between the two railroads.

Passengers on Union Blue have reported some large-scale construction going on at stations near the western end of the line, but they could not confirm exactly what was being built.

Wasatch

Dr. Hellstromme is already busy laying track to the northwest to link up with the DP line in Cheyenne. Hellstromme's relations with Smith & Robards have never been good, so he didn't bother trying to negotiate a right-of-way across the DP tracks further south.



Samurai warriors in the American West? Sure enough, courtesy of Kang!

It might have behooved him to try. In the rush to reach Cheyenne, Wasatch's rail crews strayed a little too far north. They thought they were well south of the Sioux Nations' border, but the Sioux thought otherwise. The local Sioux war leader gave Hellstromme's men an ultimatum: They could either rip up the track they had laid and rebuild it farther south, or the Sioux would rip it up for them.

When this was reported to Hellstromme, he was furious. (He's never handled threats well.) He refused to remove the track and dispatched units of automatons to the area. He was confident the technology of his workshops would be more than a match for anything the Sioux could throw at him (He obviously had learned nothing from Custer's experience.)

The Sioux made good on their threat and attacked. Hellstromme's automatons inflicted some casualties but they were (amazingly) no match for the Sioux. The shamans had prepared their warriors for battle well, it seems. The doctor's mechanical minions were pounded into so much scrap metal, and miles of track were destroyed.

Hellstromme's crews are busy laying track again, but they are staying much farther south than before.

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Union soldiers fire on a Confederate observation auto-gyro somewhere near Fort Si. The War Between the States rages on in the Weird West!

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Chapter Four: Heart of the West

Those of you who are familiar with the *Guide* know that we here at the *Epitaph* use the term "heart of the west" to refer to the triangular chunk of land bounded by Deadwood, Dodge City, and our very own hometown of Tombstone.

Here's where we're going to step outside the confines of the *Guide* just a bit and include some information about places it covered in its other sections: the City o' Gloom and the Great Maze. There's also a special section about the Disputed Lands, since many folks these days seem to think that as the Disputed Lands go, so will the rest of the West.

You might want to have your copy of *The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West* handy while reading this section. The *Guide* contains additional information on many of the people and events mentioned within, and you might want to refresh your memory.

Deadwood and the Sioux Nations

Deadwood's every bit as rough and tumble as it was when we first reported on it in the *Guide*. Between disputes among the various ghost-rock miners, the activities of the Sioux, and agitators like Frank Bryant and Colonel George Custer, Deadwood and the surrounding area is a mighty lively place.

Hickok's Revenge

Guide readers may recollect that we reported about the death of famed gunslinger James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok on August 2, and the cowardly theft of his body by a person or persons unknown shortly thereafter. That incident was followed by the deaths of three of the 12 jurors that acquitted his killer, Jack McCall. Well, it appears that whoever's seeking to avenge Wild Bill is continuing his crusade. Since the *Guide* was published, five more jurors have wound up dead. McCall, fearing for his life, seems to have fled Deadwood entirely.

In each case, the victims were found shot at least twice, and sometimes as many as five times. Left with each body were a hand of cards: an Ace and Eight of Spades, Ace and Eight of Clubs, and a Jack of Diamonds—the now infamous "Dead Man's Hand" that Wild Bill held when he was shot. In each case, the cards were arranged in a circular pattern, but with a different card toward the top.

The McKittrick Robbery

One of the victims, general-store owner Amos McKittrick, was also robbed along with being murdered. McKittrick was found facedown in his store one morning after apparently being shot as he was locking up his store the evening before. Why no one heard the shots, I don't know, but I suspect it has something to do with the usual round of revelry that drowns out all other sounds in Deadwood about sundown.

After the killer shot McKittrick, he went through his selection of pistols, rifles, and ammunition, scattering it around the store like confetti. Sheriff Seth Bullock can't be sure what was taken, but it seems that only guns were of interest to the killer, for the money in the till wasn't even touched. The killer's trademark circle of cards was found next to the body.

The remaining four jurors have made themselves scarce. Two of them are miners, and they've stuck to their claims rather than coming into town. The other two were townsmen. One of them has hired the mysterious gunfighter known only as Maddox, about whom you'll read more below, as his bodyguard. Sheriff Bullock seems strangely unconcerned with solving any of these killings, and that certainly doesn't comfort the remaining jurors any.

There are still folks around town, including Calamity Jane, who claim that Hickok's alive, and is taking his own revenge while saving McCall and the man who hired him for last.

It's a bit hard to believe Hickok could be alive given the wounds McCall inflicted on him. These killings could just as easily be the work of a group of Hickok's many friends and admirers who have taken it upon themselves to see that justice is done. The only thing that's for sure is that people are dying.

Settlers & Indians

Relations between the Sioux and the Deadwood miners don't seem to have gotten any better. The Sioux continue to tolerate the white man's presence in the Black Hills to avoid a war with the Union, but they are continually frustrated by the damage being done to their sacred lands and the miners' refusal to abide strictly by the terms of the Deadwood Creek Treaty.

For their part, the miners still regard the Indians as heathen savages who are unjustly trying to limit their ability to strike it rich. The miners sometimes forget that the treaty is the only thing standing between them and the business end of a tomahawk.



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Stuffed

One of the Sioux's biggest complaints has been about miners not paying the \$100 prospecting fee and \$200 claim-staking fee. They finally seem to have done something about it. Larry Daughtridge, a miner from Colorado with a less than savory reputation, came to Deadwood about two months ago to make a fresh start. (Rumor has it that accusations of claim-jumping drove him out of the Rocky Mountains.) Like so many miners, he laughed at the treaty and the Sioux's threats and refused to pay any fees before he started mining. He also refused to join the Deadwood Miner's Alliance, figuring he could handle things himself—even after he reported striking ghost rock.

He figured wrong. A few weeks ago, he was found outside his mine by an Alliance patrol that was passing nearby. He'd been lashed to an odd-looking wooden frame with ropes made of twisted grass. Then his captors used a hatchet or knife to hack off his fingers one by one, followed by certain sensitive parts of his anatomy (if you catch my drift). Next they slit open his belly, pulled out his innards, and left him to die in the moonlight. Indian symbols were dug into the ground near the body.



Strangers in a Strange Land: The Deadwood Miner's Alliance on patrol.

Some folks have opined that Daughtridge was killed by the Chinese community in Deadwood, pointing out the similarity of how he was murdered to the infamous "Death of a Thousand Cuts" that the Orientals whisper about. But he never had any truck with the Chinese, and I hear that most people think it was the Indians that did it. If it was the Chinese though, you can bet it had something to do with that infernal opium trade they conduct up there.

The Miner's Alliance

Frank Bryant's Deadwood Miner's Alliance has been screaming for a matching quantity of Sioux blood ever since Daughtridge's body was found. As far as they're concerned, the crime was perpetrated by a band of Sioux, probably members of the Old Ways movement. They consider the incident to be the equivalent of a declaration of war by the Sioux, and they say they're not afraid to finish any war the Sioux care to start. Alliance patrols and Sioux patrols seem to run into each other about once a week and exchange gun and arrow fire, resulting in injuries and the occasional death for both sides.

As far as most folks are concerned, it's the Alliance, not the killing of Daughtridge, that's likely to provoke a war. If the Alliance would just leave well enough alone, and all the miners obeyed the treaty, the Sioux would let them go about their business in peace. But their greed makes them chafe under the restrictions imposed by Sitting Bull and the other *wicasas*.

Of course, the Sioux's meddling in the Great Rail Wars (see the previous chapter) hasn't really helped calm things down any.

Custer's Boys

One thing that probably makes Bryant willing to talk tough is the presence nearby of George Armstrong Custer and his "new army." Custer's actions of late are definitely not sanctioned by the Union.

Ever since surviving the Battle of the Little Big Horn, Custer has burned for revenge on the Sioux. The Union government refuses to sanction any more attacks on the Indians, so he's turned to "volunteers" to assist him.

His efforts to recruit a mercenary army have been pretty successful over the past few months. It appears that as many as 2,000 people may have joined up with him. I call them mercenaries because most are interested only in getting their hands on the gold and ghost rock of the Black Hills, and they know they have to remove the Sioux from the picture before any large-scale mining operations can begin.

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Custer's "army" is a motley collection of gunslingers, buffalo hunters, former cowboys, rustlers, bandits, and a few regular soldiers who decided to volunteer for the chance to massacre the Sioux. I expect that Custer has his hands full just trying to keep his camp in Wyoming under control. When he's got everyone under his thumb and is ready to march east, you can bet the Deadwood Miner's Alliance will take the opportunity to march west to meet him in an effort to trap the Sioux between them.

Not that they're likely to succeed, since the Sioux are no fools. They won't sit still and wait to be caught between two enemies. But if Custer or the Alliance attack the red men, I predict there will be a slaughter which makes the Little Big Horn look like a circus sideshow. More than a few Deadwooders are getting mighty nervous about the whole situation, since a war would jeopardize their ability to make a living even more than the treaty does. And I doubt the Sioux are happy about things either.

Despite this unauthorized sabre-rattling by the good colonel, the official response from Washington has been muted so far. I think the Union is reluctant to give up any competent commanders these days, even loose cannons like Custer.

The Sioux Response

In fact, the Sioux Nations have been more active than ever in the past few months. They've been patrolling the Black Hills more often and taking aggressive action against renegade miners and anyone else who violates the Deadwood Creek Treaty—though they've done nothing that equals the Daughtridge killing for barbarism. Most of the time, they simply beat and whip offenders half to death, smash their equipment, take any ore they've recovered, and make them hobble back to town. On a few occasions, they've killed miners who have repeatedly violated the treaty—panners, mostly—by shooting them full of arrows.

Note that I said, "full of arrows," not "full of bullets." The Old Ways movement, led by Hunkpapa chief Sitting Bull, is still firmly in control of the Sioux Nations. Lately they've been more and more zealous about rooting out members of the Order of the Raven and killing them. One of their ways of killing the Ravenites is to rip open their gizzards and let them die slowly, which is why so many people think that some Old Ways Sioux did in Daughtridge.

From a few miners and hunters who are on good terms with the red men, I hear that the Sioux Nations are increasingly unhappy



Lieutenant-Colonel George Custer: a thorn in his own government's side.

about the deal they struck with the people of Deadwood. As they've learned more about the outside world, they've begun to understand that the Union is locked in a big war and probably couldn't come to the rescue of any white men in the Sioux Nations for a while, if ever. It's thought that the four Sioux wicasas have been making friendlier overtures to some other peoples in their territory, like the Northern Cheyenne, in the hopes of gathering enough braves to wipe out Deadwood entirely.

Lieutenant Colonel Custer's volunteer army is one of their biggest causes for complaint. As far as the Sioux are concerned, those men are Union soldiers, because they're led by a Union officer, so their presence in the Sioux Nations is a violation of the Deadwood Creek Treaty. Even if the Sioux don't move against Deadwood, they're certain to move against Custer. The only question is who will move first.

I've heard recent rumors that President Grant is going to revoke Custer's commission and order him to disband his army sometime this Spring. If this is true, it may very well be the spark that sets the Sioux Nations aflame with war, since Custer isn't going to take kindly to such instructions.

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Raven's Role

The Order of the Raven hasn't been quiet either. Although they don't see eye to eye with the leaders of the Sioux Nations on many points, they agree that the white men have gone too far in the Black Hills. They just prefer to use the settlers' own weapons when they fight them. They have been conducting more raids than ever to steal weapons (or money with which to buy them) and seem to be stockpiling ammunition. Every now and then, they bring their guns out to practice with them by shooting at settlers and Alliance patrols. Needless to say, this only enrages Bryant and his men further.

Sheriff's Election

Deadwood held a sheriff's election in early November, at the same time as the presidential elections. For many months prior to the elections, incumbent sheriff Seth Bullock ran unopposed. Although many people in town were unhappy with his "relaxed" style of law enforcement, there was no one else who wanted the job, and the malcontent's main contender to replace him—Hickok—was (supposedly) six feet under.

A Stranger Comes To Town

Then Maddox galloped into Deadwood. In addition to his hat, duster, and Colt Peacemaker, he wore one of those newfangled "bulletproof" vests Smith & Robards sells in its catalog, declaring his profession louder than any calling card. He rode straight through town to the county courthouse and registered to run for sheriff, paying his registration fee in Union greenbacks.

When the word got out, supporters of Hickok headed over to the No. 10 Saloon to get a look at the new man. They liked what they saw and heard, though Maddox refused to give his first name or say anything about his background. Soon Maddox had backers, and Bullock had a challenge on his hands.

Maddox spent the next couple of months living in the Grand Central Hotel (where he got the money, no one knows, though I understand he's mighty good at poker) and making himself known around town.

He only got in trouble one time, when a drunken miner named Hobart tried to pick a fight with him over a gambling debt. Maddox kept trying to brush him off, but Hobart wouldn't back down. Finally he took a pop at Maddox, who deftly blocked the punch and sent Hobart stumbling back across the

saloon with a single blow from his big right fist. Hobart jumped to his feet and pulled his gun. Before he could fire, Maddox cleared his Peacemaker and drilled Hobart three times in the chest.

Sheriff Bullock showed up to investigate, but over a dozen men all stood up for Maddox and supported his claim of self-defense. The mysterious gunslinger's quick actions and Bullock's refusal to arrest him only bolstered his reputation in Deadwood.

Bullock Triumphant

Unfortunately for Maddox, it's hard to run against a man who owns a lot of property in town, serves on a bunch of civic boards, and is the incumbent to boot. As the first week in November rolled around, it appeared that the race was neck and neck, with Bullock maintaining a slim lead.

After the ballots were cast, Bullock won with about 55% of the vote. I'm sure that the allegations of ballot-box stuffing and threats made to voters by Bullock supporters were just sour grapes on the part of Maddox's men. Maddox is still in town, though, and seems to bear Bullock no ill will.

Weeding Satan's Garden

Satan's Garden continues to remain a blight on the Deadwood area. The light and eerie wailing from the fires deep in the mine shaft have led more than one person to leave Deadwood entirely. But now maybe someone has come up with a way to put an end to the fires and make the Chance mine profitable.

Hyrarn Burns is a "gentleman of science," as he refers to himself, who showed up in Deadwood just a few days after our *Guide* was published. He pulled into town in a large wagon powered by ghost rock and the back of the wagon was full of crates and boxes.

He claimed to have ridden in along the Iron Dragon tracks leading into Deadwood, and in fact his wagon had a separate set of wheels that would fit a railroad gauge, but most folks think he came in across country and was just lucky enough to avoid the Sioux patrols. He was accompanied by a pretty young woman, his daughter, who also seems to act as his assistant.

The Aetheric Vortex Generator

Burns immediately rented out the Langrishe Theater for what he termed "a presentation."

This got the whole town curious, and two nights later the theater was packed with folks who wanted to know what Burns was



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all about. When the curtain went up, the well-dressed Burns showed them several large diagrams and a model of something he called an "Aetheric Vortex Generator" (or, occasionally, a Phlogiston Extraction Engine; he uses the two terms interchangeably).

The generator resembles a very large, enclosed, armored wagon with a series of enormous fireproof hoses projecting from all of its sides. Burns claims that, when built, the generator can be used to put out the fire in Satan's Garden so that miners can extract whatever usable ghost rock remains.

Phlogiston

Burns believes that the essence of ghost rock resides in a vapor locked within it, which he calls "phlogiston." When phlogiston is set afire, it emits the weird wailing and smoke that is characteristic of burning ghost rock. Burns thinks that he can construct a device that can "suck" the phlogiston out of the burning layers of ghost rock in Satan's Garden, putting out the fires and leaving the unburned ghost rock underneath the topmost deposits to be mined. Of course, if his idea worked, the mine would be his to claim as "salvage" under miner law.

Burns and his ideas—not to mention his pretty assistant—

attracted considerable attention in Deadwood. Many of the town's wealthier citizens, and not a few miners, bought shares in Burns' venture in the hopes of profiting from his device.

Burns set up a workshop on the outskirts of town, from which loud clanging and banging is sometimes heard. He has also made several trips to other Union towns to drum up further financial support for his scheme. He seems to have little trouble obtaining funding, and he claims construction of the generator is proceeding on schedule.

In this reporter's opinion, it certainly can't hurt to try Burns' theories. It's not as if any of the other schemes to put out Satan's Garden have succeeded.

A Burning Question

Recently Burns has lost several of his backers, mostly among the wealthier miners. These miners all disappeared after buying into Burns' business. Rumored sightings of the "flame men" that the Indians say have emerged from Satan's Garden are probably just that: rumors. But that doesn't explain the mysterious disappearances—or the strange burnt footprints found on the ground near each victims' last known location.

But like I said, those are almost certainly just rumors.



Hiram Burns explains his Aetheric Vortex Generator to a crowd of potential investors. If Burns succeeds, the dividends could be enormous!

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Iron Dragons & Scaly Bears

While the Sioux don't care for the white man, they seem to have little difficulty working with the yellow man—Kang, to be specific. Ever since Kang supposedly defeated the paha wakansica ("mountain devils") near Devils Tower a few years back and was allowed to build a branch of his Iron Dragon railroad to Deadwood, he and the Sioux have been in bed together. Despite the fact that Kang's business empire involves some of the worst aspects of technology, even the Old Ways followers tolerate him (although just barely). I'm not sure why, but I guess that defeating a mountain devil is worth a lot in their eyes.

So much so, in fact, that he's made another deal with them. Rumors for the past few months have been hinting that the paha wakansica have returned, accompanied by some sort of scaly grizzly bear creatures that apparently serve them. The Sioux, both of Old Ways and new, have been helpless against them. Arrows and rifle bullets seem to bounce off of these terrible demons with equal ineffectiveness.

Up steps Kang. Seeing that his friends in the Sioux Nations are having some trouble, he volunteers to help them with it. In exchange for something (I'm not sure what he gave them), Kang received the right to patrol the area around Devils Tower. His responsibility is to kill any of the paha wakansica or their bear-servants he finds. He says that his men will be equipped with "special weapons" that can destroy even mountain devils. So far he seems to have been right. The Sioux haven't complained of paha wakansica attacks since they made the deal.

Excelsior

Those of you who remember your *Guide* may recall that I wrote briefly about a group of rogue shamans camped out in Yellowstone National Park near the Excelsior geyser. Since the *Guide* came out, I've learned more about them that I think the *Epitaph's* readers will want to know.

According to my sources, the group of shamans are actually performing some sort of strange rituals. Apparently they believe that the geysers, particularly Excelsior, are gateways to another world, and the steam from them is the breath of the gods themselves! The rituals are intended to appease the gods and gain power for the shamans.

One form that this power comes in is arcane servants granted them by the gods. Since they moved into Yellowstone, scaring

away even the local Union commander, there have been a number of sightings of some creatures you won't find in any zoological garden. An artist painting some pictures of other parts of the park told me that he saw something that looked like a cougar, but with obsidian claws, a row of obsidian spikes down its back, and a single glowing red eye in the middle of its head! Another source reported that he witnessed a pack of wolves being torn to bloody shreds by a thing that was just a mass of tentacles, claws, fangs, and eyes.

Other reports, though from less reliable sources, mention a giant serpent-lizard that breathes scalding steam, a "pine-tree man" with claws made out of rock-hard pine needles, and something described only as a "wolf demon." I hope to head north to Yellowstone again in the near future to delve into this mystery further. Look for more information in a future *Epitaph Update*!

Tombstone & the Great Southwest

Tombstone is as exciting as ever, friends. I can tell you that for certain because I'm here every day and get to witness the excitement firsthand—sometimes a little closer than I'd like to, frankly. But regardless of the danger, the *Epitaph* is going to continue to get the facts and bring them to you.

The Cowboys

The Clantons and their friends have been having a hard time of it lately, I'm pleased to say. It hasn't slowed them down much in their thieving and depredations, but they've been stymied a time or two at least.

A Graves Encounter

Their first problem arose when they decided to take a break from cattle rustling and rob a lone rider who was on his way into town. To hear them tell it, he probably had a group of men hiding nearby to back him up, but that's just their attempt to cover up the good old-fashioned whipping he gave them.

The man's name is Alexander Graves. Some of the *Update's* readers may have heard of him, since he's a bounty hunter who travels about as much as I do. According to some folks, Graves' success as a bounty hunter has less to do with his speed and skill with a gun than with certain strange powers he's reputed to possess. They supposedly guide his aim and quicken his draw.



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The report I received on the ambush, from local cowboy Howard Jenks, seems to bear out those reports. I'll take this whole brouhaha step by step so you can judge for yourself if there's something strange going on.

A Cowardly Ambush

Jenks told me that he saw Graves riding in from the north on a jet-black horse with a red blaze shaped, ironically, like a flame. Graves was minding his own business, heading towards Tombstone when six of the Cowboys, led by notorious Clanton hanger-on Mike McDermott, ambushed him, apparently intent on robbery. They apparently thought they had the drop on him, what with six to one odds, but he didn't see it that way.

Before any of them could pull their triggers, Graves drew his two Colts and started firing. His first shot put daylight through Jim Staunton, who fell over dead without getting to fire a single shot in return. The second shot clipped Bert Ramsey in the right shoulder; he dropped his rifle and crawled off behind a rock to bleed until the fight was over and he could flee safely. Jenks told me that Graves' pistols literally seemed to leap from their holsters into his hands, he drew them so fast, and when he started firing, strange "bits of lightning" surrounded them.

The Cowboys returned fire, but they didn't manage to hit Graves as he jumped off his horse and took cover behind some large rocks. The Cowboys decided that discretion was the better part of valor and took cover themselves. It was still four to one, and they weren't going to run, but a little shelter never hurt a man during a gunfight.

Things went downhill for them mighty quickly though. First, "Houston" Smith found that he'd apparently forgotten to load his gun. Next, Graves cleverly ricocheted a shot off of an overhanging rock and blew out Rick Whitman's brains. With shots whizzing all around him, Graves moved out from behind cover to get a clear shot at Jack Nelson and drilled him right between the eyes. Cover certainly didn't do Rick and Jack any good.

McDermott finally managed to wing Graves in the left arm, forcing him to drop one of his pistols. Graves paid him back in spades, though. He blew a hole in him so big it looked like it was made by a cannon rather than a Colt. At that, the remaining two Cowboys, Ramsey and Smith, ran for it, and Graves let them go. After binding up the wound in his left arm, he continued on into town, refusing Jenks' offer of help.



Alexander Graves deals with those miscreants, the Cowboys.

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Graves Comes To Town

When Graves got into town, he rode over to Sheriff Behan's office to turn himself in for the killings. Behan didn't arrest him, though. After all, why should he spoil a near-perfect record of neglect of office?) Most people say it's because Jenks backed up Graves' claim of self-defense. Personally, though, I think Behan was just intimidated by Graves and expected the Cowboys to take their own revenge on him.

Graves got himself a room at the Grand Hotel. He was only in town a few days and spent most of his time with Tombstone's own Doc Holliday. I don't know what the two of them were meeting about, but Hugh O'Farrell, an Irish cattleman new to town, often sat in with them. Sometimes Hugh's pretty daughter Colleen joined them as well. Whatever it is, it's their business, and they've decided to keep it quiet. Graves left town five days after he arrived.

I had a chance to sit down with Graves and talk to him before he headed out, and I have to agree with those folks who think that Graves may have just intimidated Behan into not arresting him. He's a disturbing fellow—just sitting near him gave me the willies—but he's a good talker when he feels like it. He's seen some

things that will set your teeth to chattering, things that I believe support my theory about the "Reckoning," which I detailed at the end of the *Guide*. I plan to follow up on some of what he told me and will bring you the details as soon as I can.

Graves refused to say anything about those strange glowing guns of his, but he let me look at them. As far as I could tell, they were ordinary weapons, but Jenks and others swear that they give off electrical sparks when fired.

The Cowboys' Revenge

The night before Graves left town, the Cowboys did indeed try to take their revenge, as Behan thought they would. Graves was playing faro with Doc Holliday in the Oriental Saloon (and losing, like most folks who play against Holliday) when Johnny Ringo came in and invited Graves out into the street for a short "discussion." Ringo said something to him about "the 10,000 several doors of death." Graves immediately put down his cards and went outside, and Holliday followed, scarcely able to conceal his hatred for Ringo.

Graves soon found out what Ringo was talking about. A dozen of the Cowboys were waiting for him, but not in the street. They'd



What really happened that night at the Oriental Saloon? The *Epitaph* artists pieced together this picture from eyewitness accounts.

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armed themselves with rifles and taken cover in doorways up and down the road. As soon as Graves was in the center of the street, they started firing. He drew his two guns and began firing right back.

I had the privilege of seeing the confrontation from inside the *Epitaph's* offices, and it was a sight to behold. Graves walked calmly down the street as if he were on a promenade, picking off Cowboys two shots at a time. None of them managed to hit him at all, though I'm not sure how. Then Johnny Ringo tried to shoot him in the back, and that might have been the end of him, but for the single "door of life"—the Oriental Saloon's. Holliday, standing there, saw what Ringo was up to and shot the gun out of his hand before Ringo could fire. With a snarl, Ringo fled. Again, Graves turned himself in to the law, but Marshal White didn't even bother to arrest him, since there were dozens of witnesses to prove that the Cowboys started it.

A Distressing Holliday

The Cowboys weren't willing to let things go at that, of course. Since Graves left town the next day, they decided to take out their aggression on his friend and their old adversary, Doc Holliday. A group of them, led by Johnny Ringo, cornered Holliday at his faro table a few days later and began making some mighty threatening statements. Two of them guarded the exits to keep Big Nose Kate or any of the other saloon patrons from running for Marshal White. Holliday reacted coolly, responding to their threats with sarcasm, insults, and a few not-so-veiled threats of his own, punctuated by the occasional consumptive cough. I'd accuse the Cowboys of picking on a sick man, but Doc's never had any trouble looking after himself, despite his disease.

The confrontation began to escalate pretty quickly, and before long the Cowboys clustered around Doc's table reached for their guns—only to find out that somehow they'd all managed to drop them out of their holsters! No one actually saw it happen or heard the guns hit the floor, but everyone saw that they were unarmed, and Doc was covering them with his revolver. The guard at the front door of the saloon still had his gun and tried to draw it, but Doc gave him a halo before he could even get his pistol clear of its scabbard. The rest of the Cowboys slowly backed out of the Oriental, Doc's gun on them the entire time, and then fled with their tails between their legs. Doc gathered up their guns and sold them to one of the general stores here in town for half price.

Vermillion Cowboys

There is one thing that's gone right for the Cowboys recently, though. As I mentioned in the last chapter, they've sold their "services" to the Bayou Vermillion. The Cowboys and the railroad first became acquainted when the Cowboys made arrangements to ship "their" cattle on Baron LaCroix's line, which has its western terminus here in Tombstone. Those arrangements have proven profitable for both parties, and when the Cowboys heard that the Vermillion was having difficulties in the Great Rail Wars, they saw a chance for even more profit. The Clantons and their followers have signed on to "assist" Baron LaCroix with the completion of his railroad. Little good will come of this alliance, I fear.

The Red Lantern Gang

A couple of months ago, we began to hear about a new gang of train robbers which was victimizing the Bayou Vermillion and Dixie Rails lines here in the Southwest. These gentlemen—and I use the term loosely—may not actually be men at all. Those who have seen them say that they operate by lying in wait for trains running at night, then bring their target to a stop by waving red hazard lanterns. Once the train comes to a halt, they board with guns drawn and take control from the engineer and conductor. After shutting off the lights, they proceed to rob everyone on the train, from the engineer to the poorest passenger, and take any valuable (and easily-carried) cargo as well. Then they melt away into the night. They never leave any tracks or other traces that they were there.

But they don't look quite human. They look like walking dead men. Their skin is gray, their clothes are tattered, and many of them have wounds or injuries that should be fatal—like gunshots to the head or knife wounds in the heart. They're still walking and talking though.

Rumor has it that stopping this gang is one reason why LaCroix teamed up with the Cowboys. If so, the Cowboys don't seem particularly concerned about the Red Lanterns. I have yet to see them take any steps to bring the robbers in (a professional courtesy, perhaps?).

Rangers Fail

The Texas Rangers have been pursuing the gang ever since its first appearance, but they haven't had much luck. The first man they put on the job, Corporal Roger "Slim" Braddock, pooh-pooed the whole idea that they were zombies, claiming it was simply a clever



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gang of robbers at work. He vowed to track them down and bring them in, but when he rode after them, he never returned. Folks around Tombstone whispered that the gang had captured him and eaten him alive. Two other Rangers arrived, but they didn't have any luck tracking the group down either. At least they're still alive though.

After the Rangers left, no one seemed willing to do anything about the gang, so I decided that it was my duty as a reporter and a citizen to find out the truth of what was going on. I began taking lots of nighttime trips on the Bayou Vermillion, hoping to get caught in one of their robberies. (I made sure I never had more than a few dollars in my wallet on these trips though.) It took a few weeks, but I finally got my wish.

One night, as I was staring out the window of the train, I saw a couple of red lantern lights up ahead. The engineer brought the train to a halt—and then all the lights (both gas and electric) went out. Before long a group of men carrying red lanterns entered the car I was in and began robbing everyone at gunpoint. The one who took my money wore a faded, tattered Confederate uniform and had a bleeding gash in his throat that I doubt any man could survive.



The Red Lantern Gang strikes! Are they bandits or something more?

My Encounter With The Gang

I marked the spot where the robbery took place and returned there the next day, determined to track the gang down. I didn't find much. There were no tracks or hoofprints to lead me to the thieves. I did find a few trinkets that they'd dropped along the way, though (including a nice pocketwatch which I'll return to its owner, if he will come to the *Epitaph's* offices and identify it). I lost what little trail there was about a mile from the tracks. At that point, I was not too far from Onawetec Valley, but I was running out of water and could not risk going further. I hope to return with a posse soon to see if the gang is holed up in the valley.

My personal feeling, based on what I've seen, is that the Red Lantern Gang is made up of the walking dead, as strange as that may sound to some of you. Perhaps the gang is made up of escaped Bayou Vermillion "workers," who, as you know from the *Guide*, are probably not doing a lot of breathing while they lay rail. Or maybe they are the ghosts of all those men who have died during the Great Rail Wars (but if so, why wouldn't they attack the other railroads, too?). What I want to know is, who are they working for? Ghosts and zombies don't have any need for money, after all, so there must be some more human motivating factor here.

The Turquoise Savior

Maybe the Red Lantern Gang will run afoul of a new force for justice that seems to be riding the trails of Arizona and New Mexico. Recently, several outlaws have been rounded up and turned over to the authorities by a black-cloaked young woman who calls herself *Turquesa*. That's "Turquoise" for those of you who don't speak Spanish.

One witness after another has told me that *Turquesa* rode out of nowhere on a sleek, gray horse to rescue them from robbery and worse at the hands of banditos, outlaws, and rustlers.

She wears black pants and boots and a black shirt with a rather daring décolletage loosely laced up with black leather thongs. Her features are hidden by a turquoise-colored domino mask, but her long black hair is left free to cascade down her neck and shoulders. Over this outfit she wears a black cloak clasped at her throat by a beautiful turquoise pendant. She carries a silver Colt revolver and a black whip and is unerringly accurate with both. When she speaks, it is with a soft, sultry, Spanish-accented voice that carries an unmistakable hint of menace for evildoers and solace for the innocent.

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Rescuing Martínez

I have received two reports of Turquesa's activities from potential victims she saved. The first is from cowboy Juan Martínez, who was beset by three cattle rustlers (no doubt from the Cowboy gang) as he drove a half-dozen beeves toward Tombstone for sale to the Crystal Palace Saloon. The rustlers stopped him, guns drawn.

Just as he was getting ready to hand over the cattle and hope to walk away with his life, Turquesa and her horse came leaping over a nearby group of rocks. She lashed out with her whip, stinging the lead rustler across the face so hard that he fell from the saddle. Simultaneously, she shot another rustler through the thigh, stinging his horse in the side. The horse threw its rider and galloped away. The last rustler took a shot at her and missed, but her whip did not. She caught his wrist and jerked the gun out of it, spraining his wrist as she did so. He lit out, leaving his friends behind. She tied the two injured men up and left them for a grateful Martínez to take to Sheriff Behan. They're in jail awaiting trial as of the time I write these words.

Thwarting The Legion

The other incident involved the French Foreign Legion. Turquesa apparently bears the Legion little love. She has clashed with Legion patrols north of the border on a couple of occasions, if rumors are true. This time she apparently found several Legionnaires planning to ambush a group of miners coming down the Ghost Trail. The miners suddenly heard a fight break out ahead, complete with pistol and rifle shots and the cracks of a whip.

By the time they arrived, it was all over. Four Legionnaires lay in the dust. One was dead, but the other three were only injured. Two of them had their uniforms—and skin—cut to ribbons by a whip, while the third had been shot. The miners saw a black-cloaked figure riding away over the horizon. When it turned and waved farewell to them, they could see that it was a woman with long, black hair.

Who Is She?

All of Tombstone is buzzing with speculation about who the mysterious Turquesa could be under that turquoise-colored mask of hers. If I ever find out, good readers, don't expect to see her name revealed in the *Epitaph*, for as devoted as I am to the truth, so long as she continues to do good for the people of the Southwest, I will not expose her to danger by shattering her secrets.



The mysterious and beautiful vigilante known as Turquesa!

Elsewhere In The Southwest

Don't think that Tombstone is the only interesting place in the Southwest. It's the best town in the region, certainly, but there are things happening elsewhere, too.

Confederates Versus Comanches

The first event of note was a battle that took place in September in a large valley north and east of Dallas, near the Chisholm Trail, between a detachment of Confederate soldiers and a group of well-armed Comanches. In the weeks prior to the battle, there had been an upsurge of Indian raids in north Texas. Ranches were burned, cattle stolen, and women and children massacred, again and again. In several cases, people were apparently kidnaped, for no bodies were found. It is presumed that these unfortunates were carted off into the wilds of Indian Country to live out their lives in slavery. Locals cursed the "Comanche Moon" which gives rise to Comanche attacks every September and they armed themselves.

Strident protests to the Coyote Confederation only yielded claims of innocence. The leaders of the Comanche

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Salineros labor away in the lakes surrounding Guadalupe Peak.

and other tribes all claimed that they knew nothing about these attacks and would punish the raiders if they found them. Unwilling to let it go at that, the Confederacy moved extra troops into the area and began patrols. Responding to another reported raid, this time on a group of cowboys driving some cattle north along the Chisholm, they managed to catch wind of their quarry much sooner than they'd expected. They followed the tracks into a valley where the Comanches ambushed them. Fierce fighting followed, but eventually the well-trained graybacks were able to defeat their less-disciplined foes and drive them away. Several dozen bodies littered the battlefield as the Confederates pursued the Comanches north. After many miles, the raiders split up into multiple small parties.

With no one major group left to follow, the Confederates turned around. When they returned to the battlefield, they were shocked to discover that many of the bodies were missing! In the intervening days, someone—or *something*—had looted the area of about half of its corpses. Neither the Confederate Army nor the Texas Rangers have figured out what happened yet, but the investigation continues.

The El Paso Salt Wars

Also of note is a conflict down south in El Paso. For many years, one of the chief sources of income in those parts has been salt mining.

Guadalupe Peak, about a hundred miles from El Paso (what's a little tiptoe like that to a Texan?), is surrounded by shallow salt lakes and springs. People, particularly Mexicans, drive two-wheeled carts out into those shallow lakes and shovel salt into them, allowing the water to drain out through the cracks in the floor of the wagon. What's left is a heap of dirty salt that can be cleaned and sold for a few "coppers," or Mexican pennies—a nice supplement to most folks' incomes.

These salineros, as they're know, haven't been regulated in any way, because the lakes were on public land. But earlier this year, a group calling itself the El Paso Salt Ring filed claims on the land where the salt lakes are located and announced a plan to charge a fee for every fanega (two and a half bushels) of salt mined. The leaders of the ring, W.W. Mills and A.J. Fountain, are prominent businessmen in El Paso and are widely viewed as being motivated by greed and a dislike of Mexicans.

Needless to say, this attempt to tax the salt-mining trade isn't sitting well with a lot of folks. Many Mexicans have chafed at paying the tax, and there have even been some episodes of violence against the property and employees of the Salt Ring's members. But Louis Cardis and Father Antonio Boraño, leaders of the local Mexican community, have blessed the tax as "lawful," so there's been no significant violence—yet.

So far the term "El Paso Salt Wars" is an exaggeration that some of my fourth-estate brethren in El Paso have been using, but unless some sort of agreement can be reached, that may not be the case for much longer.

California & the Great Maze

For better or worse, I've never spent too much time in California. I've been there a few times and seem some magnificent—and frightening—things, but something about the place just doesn't sit right with me.

Fortunately, I've got a corps of crack reporters covering things for me there, and here are some of the items they've brought to my attention since the *Guide* came out. First I'll cover events in the Great Maze itself, then the City of Lost Angels and Shan Fan, then anything of interest in the rest of the state.



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Fellheimer's Folly

North of Lost Angels, not too far from Lion's Roar, is an extremely tall, narrow island that looks something like a spike jutting into the air. Appropriately enough, everyone used to call it simply "the Spike," but a few months ago it acquired a new name, "Fellheimer's Folly," after its new owner, Augustus "Gus" Fellheimer.

Fellheimer is a German immigrant who came to the Great Maze to seek his fortune. No one had ever tried to mine the Spike before because its steep sides and relatively small size made mining impractical.

But they say that something about the place called out to Fellheimer, and he spent his last few dollars, all the money he had in the world, to stake a claim there with the Greater Maze Rock Miner's Association and purchase some mining equipment.

He didn't find much there, barely enough ghost-rock to keep himself going, and the term "Fellheimer's Folly" was soon coined to replace "the Spike." But he kept at it, stubborn as a mule, through poverty and all manner of difficulties.

At least, that is, he did until sometime on the night of October 31. The next morning (All Soul's Day, I might note), someone sailing past Fellheimer's Folly saw Gus, but he wasn't hard at work like usual. Instead, he'd been crucified to the side of his island.

Pinkerton Involvement

Somebody called the law, and pretty soon a marshal was brought out from somewhere. With some help from a few miners, he climbed up to take a look at the body. He came back down so fast he nearly fell. One of the miners said he looked like he'd seen a ghost, and he refused to talk about what he'd seen. He hightailed it back to town and sent word for the Pinkertons.

The Pinks have been swarming all over the site since then. At first, they tried to take the body down, but every effort they made failed. Their men fell off the cliff, their ladders collapsed, or their tools broke. One agent was almost killed in a fall. They couldn't explain it, but they knew when they were licked, so they've given up trying for now. They've settled for examining the body closely, which they seem to have no trouble doing.

The Pinks have set up an around-the-clock guard in a boat at the base of the island, and they've even built a crude staircase so they can get up and down easier. According to the *Epitaph's* fine reporter in the area, some people

have even claimed to have seen the mysterious Ghost himself, the leader of Pinkerton's Western Bureau, inspecting the body. The Pinkertons are being as closemouthed as usual about their activities, but when more information is available, the *Epitaph* will bring it to you as quickly as possible.

The Writing on the Wall

The walls of the Great Maze certainly seem to fascinate certain kinds of people—people with a taste for blood. In addition to the horrific fate of Augustus Fellheimer, some rather sanguine wall paintings were recently discovered.

Those of you who are familiar with the Great Maze are probably aware of the various indigenous rock paintings that can be found along most parts of the coast. The Chumash tribe tells a legend about how an ancient chief painted them in his daughter's blood to keep white men away.

I don't think that's true—if it is it certainly didn't work too well—but some new paintings, looking nothing like the ancient ones, were painted in October on some rocks between Lost Angels and the ruins of San Diego. And these drawings conveyed a sinister and foreboding message.



The body of Augustus Fellheimer still hangs on his namesake.

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The Children of Hasteli

The natives call the paintings the "Children of Hasteli," since they claim that an old shaman named Hasteli is responsible for them. They say that Hasteli vanished soon after California fell into the sea back in '68, but that he returned to his people earlier this year. He brought with him a message—that he now had strong allies in the spirit world and was going to drive the white men away from California forever. Some joined him; others spurned him. He left with his followers and hasn't been seen since.

The new rock paintings bear an resemblance to ones Hasteli painted years ago, before the quake. The only difference is, these are clearly done in human blood. Even more amazing, they are still wet! The local authorities believe, and I am inclined to agree, that someone keeps refreshing them every night or two. Although the paintings are highly symbolic, I have it on good authority from some of the area's most prominent Indian experts that they show magically-powerful Indians massacring white men and forcing them to leave California. I'd hate to think of what would happen if Hasteli and his followers joined forces with some of the more militant natives like the Warriors Trail.



Do these strange glyphs carry a message of doom for Californians?

Mother Russia's Sons

For some reason, there are a lot of Russians in the Great Maze. I suppose it's because California's so close to the east coast of Russia (relatively speaking). The awful living conditions over there are probably a big incentive to find a way to leave.

The most recent arrival of note from the Land of the Tsars is a group of, believe it or not, Cossacks. That's right, Cossacks, the most feared horsemen and warriors in Russia. A group of them, maybe two dozen strong or more, arrived in Lost Angels by ship. They came to serve Gregor Petrov, the owner of Felicity Peak. Supposedly Petrov used to be a count or a duke or something back in Russia before he came to America. He's been using Russian peasants to mine ghost rock ever since he arrived, and it seems he's losing a lot of them to accidents, disease, and even suicide. (Apparently working conditions there are not the best.) So he brought the Cossacks to California to serve as overseers and bosses of his work crews. I've seen pictures of a couple of them, and I expect they'll do the job.

They're not getting along all that well with the other miners, though. It seems that Petrov's expanded his holdings to allow for more mining now that he's got some better workers, and a few other miners have taken exception to this "encroachment" on their own claims. A few fistfights have broken out, and one of the miners has disappeared without a trace. Hopefully the situation won't get any worse—but, the Maze being the Maze it probably will.

Striking It Rich in San Diego

As I'm sure most of you know, salvaging is big business in the Maze. When California took a nose-dive into the Pacific, a lot of valuables got dumped into the drink. They're still there for anyone who can manage to dredge them up. Finders keepers, as the kids say.

It's the finding part that's difficult. Even assuming a salvager has a way to deal with pirates and other Maze menaces, pulling up anything valuable, much less a real treasure like a bank vault, is chancy at best. But one salvager working down in the Sunken City (as the locals call the ruins of San Diego) seems to have come up with a way to improve the odds. William Blumquist, salvager and part-time inventor, got himself a Smith & Robards diving suit. With the suit on, Blumquist can stay underwater indefinitely, picking through San Diego's bones.

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We here at the *Epitaph* hope that Williams Blumquist's endeavor doesn't meet with tragedy. Strange things lurk in the depths of the Great Maze

The suit already seems to have proved its worth. Blumquist says that he's found the famed Harriman mansion, former home of millionaire Richard Harriman and his family. Art treasures, jewelry, and other valuables Blumquist has shown off seem to support his story. However, after his initial report, Blumquist has had little to say. He's hired a lot of extra crewmen and guards for his salvage boat as of late, but otherwise is remaining mum. Keep your eyes on the *Epitaph* for the latest news about his discoveries.

The Travails of Sheriff Dunston

Things are as bad as always down in Lost Angels. There's not much food and even less hope. One of the few bright spots is the new city marshal, Job "Hogleg" Dunston. Dunston was elected a while back over a candidate supported by the de facto leader of Lost Angels, Reverend Ezekiah Grimme. Standing up to the most powerful man in town hasn't exactly helped Dunston get his job done. Things get even worse when you realize that Grimme's church has its own law enforcers, the Guardian Angels, who aren't much more than Grimme's private lynch mob.

Dunston has had repeated problems with the Guardian Angels. In early November, for example, he was in hot pursuit of a gang of daring, daylight bank robbers. He rounded a corner only to find the men he was chasing in the hands of the Guardian Angels. When he demanded that they be turned over to him, Michael Coulter, leader of the Angels, refused. When Dunston threatened to arrest him, Coulter threatened him back. When Dunston finally did try to arrest him, several of the Angels jumped him! The Angels beat Dunston bloody, but he managed to knock them all out eventually.

When he hauled them into court, though, Judge Scanlon referred the matter to the Church Court. You can guess just how hard the Church Court threw the book at some of its own Guardian Angels.

According to my sources, Dunston has also complained about the activities of a mysterious, black-robed Guardian Angel. He's told a couple of his deputies to be on the lookout for this fellow, who has a habit of dispatching "evildoers" without so much as a trial. He's shown no reluctance to take shots at lawmen or folks who speak out against Grimme either. I hear that Dunston's looking for help in dealing with these problems.

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Haunts...

There are worse things stalking the streets of Lost Angels than the Guardian Angels. In the Golden Circle, where the wealthiest and most powerful live, it's said that a ghost has recently taken up residence. Therein lies a tale. Some readers may recall the coverage in the *Epitaph* of the Wesley Guest case. Guest, a rich kid from the Caribbean, got himself lynched near Placerville, and his family offered a reward for all members of the mob that did it.

Freelance bounty hunters captured a few of them—who just happened to be "missionaries" from the Church of Lost Angels. The Church in turn put out the word that it would pay for the capture of the bounty hunters, dead or alive. Last September, they caught one. He was taken into the Church Court, and the way I hear it, he never lived to make it over to the Rock. They simply beheaded him on the spot.

Beginning with the next full moon, though, they learned that might not have been such a good thing to do. Those involved, and all the Church elders with the exception of Grimme himself, have since reported that a "ghost" is haunting their houses and giving them terrifying nightmares. If you ask me, that bounty hunter is taking his revenge from beyond the grave. I have to say, I don't think he could have picked a more worthwhile group of targets.

...And Heart-Rippers

The poor folks don't have it any better these days. Down in Ghost Town, that transient slum that exists on the fringes of Reverend Grimme's "celestial city," a lot of people are suffering from heart attacks in the worst way. Someone is dragging them into alleys, slashing open their chests, and ripping their hearts out! This has happened to at least a dozen people so far. Residents are becoming afraid to walk the streets at night, and I don't blame them.

If you want the opinion of this reporter, I believe the explanation is a simple one: Aztecs. You know, those human-sacrificing, blood-drinking heathens from Mexico's ancient past. I think some of them probably survived the Spanish conquest and continued practicing their wicked religion in secret. But things have gotten too hot for them recently, and perhaps in the guise of members of Santa Anna's army or Grand Admiral Cobo's fleet, they've emigrated to Lost Angels to start their cult anew. Look for future reports on this sinister activity in the *Epitaph*.

Bloody Sunday

Another event that we simply can't pass over is what's come to be called "Bloody Sunday" by the residents of Lost Angels. It seems that one of Reverend Grimme's sermons got a little out of hand a couple of months ago.

No one seems really sure what happened in the Cathedral of Lost Angels that day (as a matter of fact, reports about what day it was are unclear as well). What we do know is that at least 50 people died during Sunday services.

I've heard all kinds of rumors about what happened—everything from a fit of suicidal mass hysteria to a horde of demons pouring into the church and massacring the crowd. Reverend Grimme seems to come out the hero in most people's accounts though, protecting them from whatever it was that happened.

The official word from Grimme is that the "evil events" that occurred on Bloody Sunday were the direct result of the "Satanic incursions of the demon rail barons." That's as much as he'll say about it. As a result, Grimme has ratcheted up his anti-railroad activities (as mentioned in the previous chapter).

As usual, we here at the *Tombstone Epitaph* want to know the truth! We're offering a reward of \$250 to the first person that can present us with a coherent tale about what exactly happened on Bloody Sunday. Any takers?

Showdown in Shan Fan

Shan Fan's been mighty quiet since the *Guide* was published. Long-Haired Tony and the Triads have managed to keep the place running smoothly (note I didn't say "honestly"). However, I'm told they are getting ready for an exciting event: the Shan Fan Kumite, or martial-arts fighting tournament.

Most *Epitaph* readers have probably heard about the strange ways of fistfighting that the Chinese have. Martial arts, they're called (though frankly I've never seen much art in fighting, even their way). Every year, the best fighters supposedly gather in a secret arena located somewhere beneath Shan Fan for a knockdown, drag-out competition to see who's the best.

This has been going on for centuries in China, but it's just getting started here. As a concession to the sensitivities of their new homeland, this year the Cloud Dragon Fighting Society (the "sponsors" of the Kumite) are allowing non-Chinese to compete. In fact, I hear that a young, bare-knuckles boxer named John L. Sullivan stands a good chance of winning.



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Elsewhere In California

The cities of the coast aren't the only places where you'll find things happening in California. There are plenty of odd things going on inland.

Getting the Salt Out

One of California's biggest problems is the lack of arable land and fresh water. All the cracks in the landscape have let the Pacific Ocean work its way inland and taint the fresh rivers and lakes. This is a major problem not only for farmers, but for anyone who has to eat, drink, cook, or wash with water—in other words, everyone. A lot of scientists have been racing to come up with a solution, and it appears that one of them may have finally succeeded.

Professor Calvin Oxendine (I'm not sure exactly what college he claims to have a teaching post at, but he calls himself "Professor") has been going all around the state demonstrating his new "Hydro-Reversal Generator." He claims this wondrous device, which to my eyes resembles a cross between a water pump, a small steamship, and a gigantic mushroom, can reverse the flow of water in the Quake-created channels. The Pacific would be kept at bay at roughly the coastline, where it should be, and fresh water can flow down from the mountains uninhibited, perfect for irrigation or consumption.

Professor Oxendine has been touring the state, demonstrating a small "working model" of his invention and trying to drum up governmental and financial support. Installing his hydro-reversal machines along all, or even most, of the Quake channels would be a massive and expensive undertaking, he claims, so he needs backing. So far he's been to Lost Angels, Shan Fan, Sacramento, Shannonsburg, and a lot of smaller cities and towns (particularly those in the worst-hit farming areas).

He's gotten a lot of people to listen to him and to give him money. Knowing how valuable his devices will be if they work, a lot of rich folks have invested in his scheme in the hopes of obtaining a fat profit. Here's hoping that the Professor has found a cure for one of California's worst problems.

Mission of Mercy

Mountain men coming down out of the Sierra Nevadas have been carrying with them strange tales of an old Spanish mission up there. Their stories differ about where it's located, but they all agree that it's high in the mountains in a meadow among the pines.

They also agree about what happened to them there. Each one tells a story that's basically the same. Living in the mission is one person, an old Jesuit monk who claims to be ministering to the local Indian tribes. There's no one else helping him, but he seems to be doing all right, even if he does wear rather old-fashioned and worn robes. And, the mountain men say, he has miraculous healing powers.

The first one to tell these tales stumbled on the place after being mauled by a rogue cougar. The monk brought him inside, laid him down, washed his wounds, and then lay his hands upon them. The injured man said he suddenly felt a great fire fill him, but before he could scream in pain, it died away to a dull ache, then faded completely. And when he looked down, all of his wounds had healed! It was as if he'd never been wounded. There weren't even any scars. The monk refused to talk about it, saying only, "God's will be done here in His house."

Other mountaineers have told similar stories. One nearly severed his foot with a pickax but now walks just fine, thanks to the monk. Another got shot in the stomach by banditos, a sure road to death for most folks, but not for a man whose horse somehow manages to bring him to the mission in the mountains. A third claims to have been nearly mauled to death when something attacked him in a mine tunnel, but somehow the monk found him, took him to the mission, and put his body back together—all with the lightest touch of the hands, accompanied by a burning sensation that quickly fades.

Intrigued by their tales, I have sent veteran *Epitaph* reporters into the mountains to find the mission and interview the monk. However, none of them have had any luck finding the place. They go everywhere these mountain men tell them to, but there's nothing there but trees and rocks and wild animals. No missions, monks, or miracles to be found. But as long as these stories keep cropping up, the *Epitaph* will stay on their trail until we get the truth.

War in California

Although on paper it's a state of the Union, California doesn't really belong to the Yankees. It's the site of frequent clashes between the Union and Reb troops garrisoned there. The Great Maze in particular is the scene of many conflicts, since both sides have ships, sailors, and "privateers" working for them. Tensions and conflicts only increased as the elections approached this past autumn. Here's what has been going on lately.



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An Epitaph exclusive! The Confederate fleet assaults Fort Lincoln.

The Battle of Fort Lincoln

The biggest naval battle yet fought in California took place on November 2 and 3 at Fort Lincoln. While this battle could be technically regarded as part of the November Offensives, the fact that it took place deep in the Maze, far from the prying eyes of the press (except for the *Epitaph*, of course), sets it apart from the events Back East.

After months of maneuvering and skirmishing, the Confederates managed to get one of their enormous "leviathan" gunboats (huge ironclads with the amazing ability to submerge themselves beneath the water), the *C.S.S. Ouroboros*, along with the ironclads *C.S.S. Thor*, *C.S.S. Hercules*, and *C.S.S. Gilgamesh*, along with a small fleet of lesser ships in position to attack Fort Lincoln.

The battle opened with a volley of cannon fire from the ships, which succeeded in destroying one of the fort's wooden towers. The Union soldiers were quick to respond with cannon fire of their own. While their initial shots missed the leviathan, but they sunk a couple of the smaller ironclads.

The Union's knifeboats, led by Lieutenant Commander Oswald Locke, then entered into the fray, using their speed and maneuverability to get close to the Confederate ships and take a few shots at the sailors. They tried to board the *Ouroboros* but were repulsed.

Meanwhile, the Confederate bombardment continued. One of the Southern ships managed to land a small troop of crack soldiers, who began scaling the island's sides in an effort to capture the fort. The Rebels scored several major hits on the fort, keeping the Union from knocking the soldiers off the wall.

The Tide Turns

After these initial successes, though, the battle began to turn against the Confederates. The Union got a few of their larger ships into the fray, and the fighting soon switched from fort-to-ship to ship-to-ship. The Confederates did manage to destroy several Union ships, including three of the knifeboats. I understand that they also badly wounded Lieutenant Commander Locke.

However, the Confederates suffered their own losses. The *Ouroboros* was so badly damaged by cannon fire that it had to submerge and limp away about halfway through the battle, and the smaller ships were decimated. The attempt to capture the fort with a small force of soldiers failed when the infiltrators were discovered and

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killed to a man by Union troops. Eventually, discretion being the better part of valor, the Rebels withdrew. The Union forces, too badly battered to engage in an effective pursuit, let them leave.

A Pyrrhic Victory

The opinion of most folks was that the Confederates lost the battle. While they did accomplish some things—they showed that they could get close to and attack the Union stronghold, and they sank several ships—they also lost a lot.

First, they lost the element of surprise. Had they waited until they could assemble an extremely strong force, they might have been able to destroy Fort Lincoln entirely. Now the Union is ready for them and has blocked off some of the channels they used in the attack.

Second, they suffered major damage to a number of their ships, including the *Ouroboros*. Third, they lost a lot of experienced crewmen when a powder magazine on the *Thor* blew up. While the overall balance of power in the Maze War hasn't shifted that much, the Confederates should think long and hard before trying something like that again.

Shelburne's Grove

Land forces have fought as well. Shelburne's Grove, a small town between Placerville and Shan Fan, was the scene of a battle between Union and Confederate troops in late October. Shelburne's Grove is (or was, I should say) the home of a lot of Southern sympathizers, and they apparently did a little spying for the Confederacy whenever the Union forces came around.

Having learned the Union's movement patterns this way, the Confederates arranged to have some of their soldiers smuggled in and hidden around the town. Then they sent a small force out to be "taken by surprise" by a larger Federal force and chased into town. When the Union troops arrived in hot pursuit, the hidden Rebs opened up, and a vicious house-to-house battle began that left the town in ruins. Homes, businesses, and even the town hall were decimated by cannon and Gatling gun fire from both sides.

As soldiers ran out of ammunition, they turned to knives and fists and gunbutts, but even so, there was barely a solid building standing or window unbroken when the Confederates finally won the fight. Next time perhaps they won't plan any ambushes on friendly territory.

The Disputed Lands

As bad as it gets in places like the channels of the Great Maze, the lands around Deadwood, or the most desperate areas of Texas, the Disputed Lands may be the most dangerous place to live in the West. I've been there plenty of times, and I know whereof I speak. Those places are so eaten up with war, hatred, and other problems that sometimes your neighbors are your worst enemy.

The Disputed Lands encompass four territories: Kansas, Colorado, Utah, and those parts of Oklahoma which do not belong to the Coyote Confederation. (California also counts as disputed territory in my book, but it is usually discussed separately.) Each one has been claimed as a "state" by both the Union and the Confederacy.

Kansas was actually made a state by the Union back in 1861, just months before the war started, but it's never really functioned as a state, and the residents' opinions about statehood are, to put it mildly, mixed. Both the Union and the Confederacy take it upon themselves to establish governmental services and law enforcement in the areas of these territories that they control, and these "officials" often clash with each other, sometimes violently. "Fighting city hall" takes on a whole new meaning in the Disputed Lands.

The War

They're not called the "Disputed" Lands because of some mild disagreement. There's a war being fought between the States, and the Disputed Lands are one of the chief battlegrounds. The Southern Sentinel's report on the current status of the war describes where battles have been fought in the Disputed Lands. Here's where I'm going to tell you a little bit about the effects of the War on people and how things stand off the battlefields.

Bloody Kansas

None of the Disputed Territories is completely in favor of one side or the other. Kansas is clearly split along very definite lines, even though slavery was abolished by the Confederacy some time ago. Essentially, the "border ruffians" and their pro-South allies conveniently dropped the cause that got them into the fight in the first place. Now they're concentrating on settling old vendettas resulting from nearly two decades of raids,



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General Gano's troops are on the move to Kansas. Jayhawks beware!

assaults, and fights. The Jayhawks (pro-Union guerillas, named for a fictitious bird that combines the worst aspects of both blue jay and sparrow hawk) are fighting to stay part of the Union and to settle a few scores of their own.

As the Southern Sentinel mentioned earlier, The arrival of USA General Phillip Sheridan's cavalry force and the impending arrival of CSA General Richard Gano's forces, combined with the presence of Stand Watie's Cherokee Rifles, should add tinder to the smoldering fire that is Kansas.

Rebel Oklahoma

Most Oklahomans are in favor of joining the South. Their sister state, Texas, is one of the hearts of the Confederacy, and it's only natural that they'd want to follow her. But that's not to say that the issue's settled. In fact, there are some substantial contingents of pro-Union settlers out there, and even a couple of forts stocked with Union soldiers.

The United States Marshals seem to be the primary law-enforcement officers there, despite Oklahoma's proximity to the home of the Texas Rangers. I have no idea why the Rangers seem so complacent about the situation. The best thing I can figure is that they

plan to let the Marshals tire themselves out getting rid of the worst outlaws, like Ned Christie (or half the inhabitants of Perry), and then they'll come in and take over. But maybe there's more to it than I'm seeing.

Neutral Colorado

Coloradans don't much care about the war or which way it goes. The way they see it, as long as the winner leaves them alone, it doesn't matter who that winner is. However, there are extremists on both sides of the issue.

A group calling itself the Sons of Jefferson Davis promotes the Southern cause. They ride black horses and wear red hoods with the Confederate battle flag stitched on them. Their idea of a good Saturday night's entertainment is to ride down some Union sympathizers and bust their heads.

Those Union sympathizers are known as the Star-Spangled Soldiers. Their group includes more than a few veterans of the Union army. The Soldiers all wear a sort of blue uniform patterned after the standard Union garb. They do their share of beating on or shooting the Sons. The Sons and the Soldiers are most active around Denver, but there are little pockets of them all over the state, scheming for the day when their side's army comes marching in.

Uncaring Utah

Utah's a lot like Colorado—pretty apathetic about the War. The Mormons are more concerned about maintaining their religious and economic freedom when the war ends than they are about who is victorious. Both the Union and the Confederacy have expressed sympathy for the Mormons and their desires, but I suspect that the winner of the war may change his tune after he no longer has to worry about placating them.

Mormon leader Brigham Young has declared Utah, or the State of Deseret as he calls it, an "autonomous entity" until the war ends, though he has been quoted by my fellow reporters as saying Utah's sympathies lie with the Union. Personally, I think he'd be happier to stay "autonomous" and is just trying to pacify the side he thinks is going to win.

There aren't any pro-Union or pro-Rebel groups in Utah like there are in Colorado, as far as I can tell, and Professor Hellstromme doesn't seem interested either. However, I have heard that the Union has Secret Service men and

Pinkertons nosing around Salt Lake City in an effort to keep an eye on the professor, whom they consider to be a threat of some kind.

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Union & Confederacy Wooing

According to some of my friends in both State Departments, the Union and the Confederacy have both made offers to independent political leaders in the Disputed States—men like Brigham Young. To Young they make clandestine offers regarding independence for Utah, or at least a sort of "home rule" that grants the Mormons special privileges that no other state possesses.

To Colorado, the Confederates have offered an enormous amount of resources to develop something the territory really wants: ghost rock mines. The South is prepared to invest heavily in the search for veins of ghost rock in the Rockies. The Union, on the other hand, has promised that special economic concessions for Colorado will be written into federal law.

No offers have been made in Kansas, which is too divided for them to matter, or in California, a nominally Union state where each side is willing to take its chances on a military victory. Oklahoma, which lacks a territorial government, didn't get any offers either.

The Overall Effects of the War

The War Between the States has had a few effects on the Disputed Lands regardless of which way they lean politically. One is economic. Being in the middle of a war (two if you count the Great Rail Wars) has caused prices to rise dramatically in some areas, particularly Kansas and California.

In parts of both states, you can expect to pay up to twice the going rate for most goods, and as much as three times the price for more valuable things like food staples, guns, and ammunition. In the more war-torn parts of Kansas, the economy has broken down completely. Unwilling to trust either side's money, the few people still living there have reverted to a barter system. Don't expect to get very far offering greenbacks.

Lawlessness has also increased. Without a stable national government in these states, and with state governments that are often toothless, a lot of men have found the outlaw trail to be a profitable one to take. A good many of the outlaws are veterans who have decided they've seen enough battlefields and would rather try their hand at some other exciting occupation. Men like Sam Bass have become folk heroes by shooting and robbing their way to small fortunes. The bounty hunters that track these men down are also making good money if they do their jobs right. It's just the everyday folk who are suffering.

Goings-On in the Disputed Lands

There's always plenty happening in the Disputed Lands, and since the *Epitaph's* readers need to be kept informed about the weirdness that's infected the West, here are brief descriptions of each part of the Disputed Lands, as well as a few recent occurrences of note.

Kansas

Going from east to west, the first of the Disputed Lands is Kansas—"Bloody Kansas," as it's better known. When it was opened up for settlement by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, Kansas swiftly became one of the nation's chief battlegrounds over slavery. Pro-slavery "border ruffians," often from neighboring Missouri, moved in so that Kansas would become a slave state.

The Jayhawks, as the abolitionist settlers are known, were just as determined that Kansas be free, and the two sides decided to settle their differences with gunplay. Despite a nominal victory by the Jayhawks, the fighting still rages on, and it's not likely to come to a stop until the war is settled and the victorious government clamps down on the losing side. Actual skirmishes between Yankee and Rebel forces, aided by native sympathizers, have also been fought on Kansas soil.

That Rare Moment of Peace

When they're not fighting with each other, Kansans tend to make their living as farmers or cattlemen. For the most part, Kansas is flat. Real flat. Only a few ranges of hills and a couple of rivers and lakes break the endless prairie monotony—but it's good farming land.

As for cattle, both the Chisholm and Santa Fe Trails both run through Kansas, and cowboys from all over the West herd cattle up them almost year-round for sale to butchers Back East. Dodge City, Abilene, and Wichita are the biggest cowtowns.

Who's In Charge?

Government in Kansas is a toss-up. The Union has a strong presence, backed by minor garrisons at Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley, but Southern sympathies are equally strong in the areas near Missouri and in the southern part of the state. Confederate officials are more likely to be in control in those areas, and they have some soldiers, too.



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Gunfight Near Abilene

From freelance correspondent Frederick Halliburton, the *Epitaph* has received an account of an unusual gunfight which took place on November 10 northwest of Abilene. Since summertime, there have been an increasing number of murderous raids conducted by Indians thought to be coming down from the Sioux Nations or perhaps somewhere in Wyoming. In these raids, ranches and houses are burned to the ground and their inhabitants slaughtered to a man. The United States Marshals have been trying to track down the culprits, with little success. Since one of the few survivors, an eight-year-old girl, claimed that "stone men" had killed her family and destroyed her home, the Pinkertons were also called in.

Bear River Smith Steps In

Word came in to the US Marshal's office in Abilene that there had been another attack on an outlying settlement. My good friend Deputy US Marshal "Bear River" Tom Smith set out on their trail, accompanied by, according to reports, as many as half a dozen Pinkerton operatives from the Western Bureau. They rode for about a week before they found the raiders' trail. Smith

has told me that the tracks were unusually deep, as if all the horses were heavily laden. They also seemed to be traveling more slowly than horses and riders fleeing the scene of a crime ordinarily would.

Smith and his "posse" caught the bloodthirsty savages before they were able to make it out of Kansas. They brought them to bay in a rocky valley. Both groups took cover on the hillsides. The Indians refused demands to surrender. The posse managed to box them in, but it was a rough fight nevertheless.

Smith says that they had a hard time drawing a bead on the Indians, because they seemed to almost blend in with the surrounding rocks. And when Smith and his deputies did hit them, they didn't fall over! According to Smith, it was almost as if their skin was made of stone itself. He swears that he hit a couple of them dead center, only to have them shrug off the shots and keep firing.

Eventually the posse managed to win because of its superior numbers. The Indians were killed to a man, mostly with shots to the head. When Smith and the Pinkertons got up close to them, though, they looked like ordinary Indians. They weren't carrying any loot from their raids. Smith tells me that the raids have stopped, so his job is done, but he'd still like to find out what made the Indians so heavy and resistant to gunfire.

Seven Years' Bad Luck in Jayhawk Flats

Up in northern Kansas, along the Union Blue railroad, there's a small town called Jayhawk Flats. As you might guess from the name, it's a decidedly pro-Union place. I don't think there's a single Rebel sympathizer in the entire population of 2,000.

"JFers," as they sometimes call themselves, have been active in the guerrilla war against the border ruffians for years, and they're still at it. But unless you're there when a Southern raid is taking place, or you happen to say something nice about the Confederacy, it's not a bad little town.

Until recently, that is. For some reason, at 3 A.M. last Halloween, every single mirror in town broke simultaneously. They say the cracking sound could be heard a mile away. When I say every mirror, I mean *every*. From the biggest looking glass in town (the one behind the bar at the Northern Lights Saloon) to the tiny mirrors in ladies' boudoirs, none were spared.

As you might expect, a group of Pinkertons descended on the town like vultures on a corpse. They were led by one of the mysterious "men in black" from the Inner Council, a dark-



The Jayhawks Perch Saloon. Note the smashed mirror in the background.

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countenanced man who told everyone his name was "Colonel Abbingdon." They looked at every one of the broken mirrors and took pieces of glass from most of them. They interviewed about half the people in town and even arrested one fellow, a man named Thomas Merritt. Merritt was summarily hauled off to Denver without so much as a by-your-leave from the local sheriff.

As of this *Update* going to press, he still hasn't returned home. His wife and children are worried sick about him, and are eagerly seeking any word as to his whereabouts. The Pinkertons insist they interrogated him at their Denver office, then released him after determining he was not involved in the incident.

Dodge City

The biggest news coming out of Dodge City these days is the passage of a new law forbidding anyone to carry guns within city limits. Dodge City is a pretty wild and woolly place, and I think the Town Council decided that it might be a good idea to try to rein in rambunctious cowboys a little.



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No Guns Allowed

The law requires that anyone coming to town go immediately to the town marshal's office to check his guns (if any) with Marshal Larry Deger. Marshal Deger's office issues a claim slip that is brought back to claim the gun when the owner leaves town. Anyone who carries a gun in town is subject to arrest (with a jail term of up to three months), confiscation of the weapon, and a \$50 fine per violation. The more violations you have, the more time you spend in jail.

Earp Enforces New Law

The chief proponent of the law, Deputy Marshal Wyatt Earp, is also turning out to be the law's chief enforcer. Within a week after the notices about the new law went up around the town, Earp arrested a dozen different men for violating it, one three separate times. He had to break several of their skulls with the barrel of his gun to get them to come along peacefully, but when he was done, they were in jail less their guns and 50 bucks.

Needless to say, this hasn't done anything to improve Earp's popularity among the cowboys and other troublemakers that roam Dodge's streets. Twice in the month and a half since the law was passed, attempts have been made on his life. Once a cowboy who was about to be arrested for violating the law tried a "road agent's spin" on Earp, but it didn't work.



A Dodge City deputy posts a notice about the "no guns" law.

The good deputy gave him one of his trademark "earps" before he had a chance to disentangle his fingers from the trigger guard. Another time a cowboy who'd turned in his guns under pressure decided to get them back by leaping at Earp with a knife, but Earp drilled him in the shoulder, and that was the end of that.

The Claim Slip Trade

I've heard that the law has given rise to a lively trade in stolen or exchanged claim slips. Since there's no way, other than the numbers on the slips and a deputy's memory, to determine who owns which gun, the slips become a commodity. They've been stolen from hapless drunk cowboys, anted up in poker games, and used as a crude form of money in back-alley transactions. Gives a whole new meaning to the term "blood money," doesn't it?

Wild Irish Roses

Also new to Dodge is a, shall we say, house of pleasure called Wild Irish Roses.

Note the lack of apostrophe. This place isn't run by some lady named Rose. In fact, the madam is a woman named Alice who seems to be just old enough to make the

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transition from working to managing, if you know what I mean. Compared to most madams, she's young and pretty. They say she sometimes services customers when all the other girls are busy. She's also a fair hand at piano playing and singing and keeps the waiting customers entertained with music.

What isn't misleading about the name is that all the girls working there are Irish. Apparently they used to ply their particular trade back in Ireland, but left there when things became "hot," as they say in the underworld. How they ended up in Dodge, I don't know, but they look like they're there to stay.

They purchased a place on Bridge Street, had it painted white, and set up shop. Since then they've managed to cause a mild scandal by sitting on the front porch in what one could only call a rather scantily-clad state. Nothing illegal, mind you, but certainly quite daring, even compared to the other brothels in town. While this has left some citizens, mostly women and preachers, rather upset, it hasn't done a thing to hurt business.

Damsels in Dodge?

If what I've been told is true, I expect that one reason for Wild Irish Roses' success is the general beauty of the goods offered. Most of the fallen women working the towns of the West never had many pretensions toward beauty, and whatever they did have faded long ago.

The girls at the Roses are different by a long shot. Every one of them's a looker, whether you prefer blondes, brunettes, or redheads. As a result, they all seem to be busy just about every night. Wild Irish Roses has become one of the top stops in Dodge for lonely cowboys and travelers.

When the Roses girls first got to town, they were completely on their own. Since then, having seen how rough Dodge is, they've hired a bouncer to keep things quiet. Big Earl is his name, and he earns it. He stands about six and a half feet tall at least, and he's so broad-shouldered he has to walk through doors sideways. One angry glare from him is enough to calm rowdy customers down and settle any complaint.

Something about this place strikes me oddly, readers, and I suspect it does you as well. How could so many pretty "soiled doves" gather together and run a business on their own? Why has their business become such an overnight success? Why go to Dodge instead of New York or New Orleans? I don't know, but here's what I think: they're connected with

the Dodge City espionage networks. An lot of spying goes on in Dodge, as you'll read below, and these girls would make excellent spies.

An Invention Most Spectacular

While Dodge City is best known for its cowboys, gunfighters, and ladies of the night, there are plenty of more ordinary folks living there too—and some not quite so ordinary. One of the latter is Willie McCutcheon, better known around town as "Weird Willie."

Charitable people would call Weird Willie a dabbler in things scientific, or maybe a tinkerer. Cynics prefer the terms "lunatic" or "mad scientist." Given that his last "invention" is supposed to have been a "Steam-Powered Cloud Peeler" designed to shave off strips of cloud and make them into a light and tasty dessert, I'm inclined to agree with the cynics. Needless to say, most folks don't take Weird Willie too seriously.

Despite this, Weird Willie's attracted more than a little attention with his latest announcement. For the past two months, he's been going around Dodge, telling whoever would listen to him that he is about to finish "an invention most spectacular," which he will unveil at a public ceremony down at the train station. At first, most folks dismissed this story as Willie's usual deranged chatter, but the more he talked about it, the more people started to listen.

Thunderbolts & Wings?

Soon stories began to circulate about what the "invention most spectacular" might be. One rumor maintains that it is a "Jupiter Cannon," a device for calling down thunderbolts to smite one's enemies. Another says that McCutcheon has invented a flying suit which provides the same powers as a rocket-pack without the dangerous flames or extremely bulky backpack. The most incredible tale is that Weird Willie has devised a process for manufacturing artificial ghost rock, one which doesn't even cause rock fever!

All this talk has generated more than a little bit of interest in certain circles. I have it on good authority that a number of prominent businessmen and government officials (from both the Union and the Confederacy) have been to visit Weird Willie at his shop just outside of town.

What they came away with or promised to do, I don't know, but it's apparent to one and all that Weird Willie hasn't been lacking for money lately. He's placed substantial orders for what he calls "spare parts" at local general



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stores. He seems busier than ever in his workshop, staying up until all hours, pounding and banging.

Once there was a slight explosion inside. Willie staggered out, blackened but unhurt. We here at the *Epitaph* are quite eager to learn what he's building and who's supporting him, and since we're sure you are too, we'll tell you when we find out.

The Buffalo Man

Cowboys coming into town along the Santa Fe Trail have been telling some disturbing tales about something they encountered out there. According to the first man to talk about it, trail boss Art Spenser, it's a "Buffalo Man." It looks like huge man with the head of a buffalo and enormous, clawed hands. Spenser's name for the thing stuck. Everyone's called it the Buffalo Man ever since.

Spenser says that he and his five men were driving a herd of cattle up to Dodge City from Texas and had just crossed the Kansas border. They stopped for the night and made camp. Soon, the cowboys watching over the herd reported that the cattle seemed very restless. Then there came the bellow of a beeve in agony, followed by a different bellow—a long, high one of anger and triumph. More steers began to scream as the rest stampeded. Spenser and his men struggled to keep the cattle under control and to get close to where the bellowing was coming from to find out what was going on.

When they got there, they saw it: the Buffalo Man. Standing nearly 10 feet tall, it had torn two big steers to shreds and was working on a third. When it saw them, it let out another roar and charged. It plowed into Bob Carroll and his horse, trampling them to death. Spenser and the other four took shots at it with revolvers and rifles, but if they hit it, it shrugged off the bullets without flinching. It charged back again, killing another hand and his horse, and then ran off into the night. By then the cattle had run so far that it took the rest of that night and all next day to get the herd back together.

Other Attacks

Since then, several other cowboys have reported attacks by a similar creature. About half a dozen men have been killed when it charged and trampled them. At least 50 beeves have been killed, and not for their meat either. The only things getting fat off these attacks is the vultures. Several groups of buffalo hunters have reported similar attacks which were, if anything, even more savage.

Local Indian tribes claim that the Buffalo Man is a spirit that has arisen to stop the slaughter of the buffalo by white men and Indians alike. It has attacked Indian buffalo hunters on several occasions, though usually it contents itself with driving them off rather than killing them. The Indians say that it cannot be slain and will only grow stronger until the killing of the buffalo ceases (or at least returns to the level it was at when only Indians were hunting them).

The Stagecoach Robber

The last news item I have from Dodge is one which gives a whole new meaning to the term "stagecoach robbery." It seems there's an outlaw riding around Kansas in a stagecoach, robbing people! According to Marshal Larry Deger, he's robbed not only other stagecoaches, but travelers on horseback, trains, and even some outlying ranches. Most of his attacks have taken place near Dodge City, however.

Survivors of his robberies have all described the so-called Stagecoach Robber the same. They say that he comes riding up on them in one of those new steam wagons. The contraption is designed like a stagecoach, but with armor plating on the



The Stagecoach Robber in hot pursuit! Where will he strike next?

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sides and a sort of driver's box up top where the Robber himself sits. The box has a glass windscreen in front so that the Robber can clearly see (and be seen), and it's big enough for only one man.

The stage is fast, faster than other steam wagons. It can negotiate not only standards roads, but railroad tracks as well. No one has yet been able to outrun the Stagecoach Robber when he got on their tail.

A Stylish Thief

The Robber himself is certainly a man of sartorial style, if not of honesty or honor. He dresses like an old-time European footman, with an elaborate coat, waistcoat, stockings, and buckled shoes. His colors are bright red and royal blue, and he somehow manages to stay clean and neat despite the cloud of dust that his vehicle throws up. He completes his costume with a fancy tricorn hat and a black domino mask covers his face.

During his robberies, he is courteous, especially to women, and seems to want to use as little violence as possible. But while his clothes and manners are somewhat old-fashioned, his gun, a high-quality Smith & Wesson Frontier, is quite up to date. He's only used it a time or two, to wing uncooperative victims in the shoulder, arm, or leg, but it seems he uses it if he has to.

Typically the Stagecoach Robber waits in ambush behind some trees or hills, waiting for a good victim to come by on the road. Then he charges out and runs his target to ground in his steam wagon. He carefully dismounts from his driver's box, keeping his gun trained on the victim the entire time. Loot that he cannot carry, he has his victims load into his stagecoach for him.

He has engaged in a few sustained chases, mainly of trains, but he seems to prefer to avoid them. Perhaps he is trying to conserve fuel. I'm no expert, but I'd imagine that such a fast, heavy steam wagon uses a lot of ghost rock.

A Sixth Sense?

So far the U.S. Marshals and Texas Rangers have had no luck tracking this outlaw down. He seems to have a sixth sense for the law, knowing when and where they're patrolling so he can be elsewhere.

The *Dodge City Times* (a fine newspaper but not nearly as good as the *Epitaph*) has speculated that the Robber may be a peace officer himself, or at least know a lot of them, which would give him the inside information needed to avoid the law.

The Great Game

Although some of our readers Back East might not be aware of it, it's commonly known out here in the West that Dodge City is a hotbed of espionage and intrigue. Since it's in disputed territory and offers rapid access by rail to both the Union and the Confederacy, it's a perfect meeting place for spies. And that means counterspies, information brokers, tinkers who cater to the spies' love of odd little gizmos, and countless other people all wrapped up in what someone once called "the great game."

A Pro's Game

During the early years of the War, spying for both sides was performed mainly by amateurs, but the Union and the Confederacy both soon learned the value of putting professionals to work. The Union's Bureau of Military Intelligence and the Confederate Secret Service have both developed into skilled organizations that do their best to dig up the enemy's secrets. They employ anyone they think will be loyal and provide them with useful information. Man or woman, white, black, yellow, or red, old or young, the spymasters don't care. Results are all that matters to them.

A lot of spies are people you would never suspect. After all, that's what makes a great spy, someone who can blend into the background while finding things out. So the next time a housewife, society girl, or cowboy begins asking you questions, stop and think about why they might *really* be asking.

Gathering & Transmitting Intelligence

Spies use all sorts of methods to gather information and get it back home. Doctors, who are often called out to battlefields and camps to tend the wounded and can pretty much go wherever they want to unchallenged, are a favorite source of information. A doctor's black bag is sometimes enough of a disguise by itself to get a spy inside enemy lines.

Some spies simply put themselves in a position where they overhear useful information or can coax it out of those who have it (bartenders and saloon gals, working girls, and entertainers are good examples).

Surprisingly, newspapers reporting from the front lines or garrison cities are often allowed to publish militarily useful information—things like troop numbers and movements, supply

shipments, and technological developments! Neither the Union nor the Confederacy has been as good at censoring the papers as



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The Great Game plays out in the saloons and cathouses of Dodge City. Union and Confederate spies struggle against each other in a secret war.

they should be, though frankly, as a reporter devoted to printing the truth, I can't see this as an entirely bad thing. Likewise, newsboys are often allowed to roam at will through enemy lines, since all the soldiers are eager for news of home, and the observant ones can often make a lot of pocket change reporting what they see to the agents skulking around town.

The Juiciest Goods

Spies are of course most interested in military information. Things like the number of soldiers under a particular commander, the casualties suffered by a particular unit, troop movements and patrol routes and—most importantly—new weapons the other side is working on are extremely valuable to them. Spying on these subjects receives a priority, but it's not the only thing they're after.

The Great Rail Wars is something they want to know about, for example. The side that first gets a railroad out to California is likely to take control of that state and its valuable ghost rock. Similarly, any information about new ghost-rock strikes, supplies or stockpiles is worth knowing. Any sort of scientific breakthrough is also important, even if it doesn't specifically involve weapons or

vehicles. Sometimes the most innocent discoveries can be turned to military purposes by the military minds of the North and the South.

Spy Tricks And Gadgets

Spies have developed all sorts of tricks and gadgets to help them do their work. Codes, of course, have been an important part of espionage work ever since Biblical days. Each side seems to have several, and I suspect they change them frequently to keep the other side from breaking them. Ways of carrying information are also important, but since it's easy to hide papers in one's clothes, they haven't had to get too creative here.

As for gizmos, their favorites seem to be things like invisible inks and the like to hide information with, and concealed weapons. Smith & Robards is undoubtedly doing bang-up business to the spies in Dodge, selling them hat guns, cane guns, shoes with knives concealed in the soles, pocket watches that explode, cameras concealed in briefcases, and ladies' fans that spray clouds of knockout gas. Each government also has its own special bureaus which provide technological support to agents in the field.



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Oklahoma

Oklahoma's sort of a half-state, if you will. The original Oklahoma Territory has been split in two. The eastern half is part of the Coyote Confederation, so white men aren't likely to be taking back possession any time soon. The rest of the territory is up for grabs.

The entire region was originally established as Indian Territory back in 1834, but as whites continued to move west, the Indians got squeezed into the eastern part, because silver mines were discovered in the west and south.

The Walking Death of 1872-73 (mentioned earlier), coupled with years of Union raids, killed off most of the Five Civilized Tribes in the territory, as crowded together as they were, leaving mainly the Cherokee. Other tribes moved in, and what is now the Coyote Confederation was formed.

Recent settlers' hopes of finding ghost rock in Oklahoma have not been fulfilled, but some dichards keep looking. In addition to mining, there is also a lot of farming (mainly of wheat and sorghum) and ranching going on.

Confederacy Bound?

Oklahoma is pretty firmly in the Confederate camp. It would be hard for it not to be, since in so many things it is in orbit around the largest Reb state, Texas. The Coyote Confederation is also allied with the South. However, the Confederates aren't yet confident enough of their control over the territory to add another star to their flag when it comes down to it all they've got right now is a paper claim, when it comes down to it.

The Confederate governor, Stephen Drummond, has set up his capital in the town of Perry, located in the north-central part of the territory, hard on the border with the Coyote Confederation.

Because Confederate power is so strong here, Union intrigues are thick among Perry's saloons and dance halls. I've been told by certain highly-placed officials that the Pinkerton Detective Agency maintains a large clandestine office there.

There's a nominal Union governor, Wilbur Godwin, living in a town called Woodward in the western part of the territory, but he doesn't seem to control much besides that town. He does have a small detachment of Union Cavalry at his disposal, but he uses them mostly to keep his home base secure.

Hell's Half-Acre

I'm sorry to have to say that I was a bit remiss when I wrote the *Tombstone Epitaph's Guide*, friends, I unfortunately left out a place that no traveler in the West should miss: Perry, Oklahoma.

Located in north-central Oklahoma near the Coyote Confederation border, Perry is better known as "Hell's Half-Acre," even by its longtime residents. The reason is simple. It's a town with over a hundred saloons! And that doesn't even take into account the dance halls, cathouses, and other businesses tailoring to some of the worst sides of humanity. Just about everyone in the Half-Acre is dirty, and most of them actually seem to like it. One wag actually suggested renaming the place "New Sodom." (It seems the name "Gomorrah" was already taken by some town in the Great Maze.)

Spies in Hell

The Half-Acre is a lively, rollicking place, especially after dark. It's a gathering point for cowboys, miners from the western part of the state, Indians from the Coyote Confederation who like the white man's town, and more thieves, con artists, and two-bit operators than you could shake a stick at. To top it all off, it's second only to Dodge City as a center for espionage.

Although the Confederacy is stronger in Oklahoma than the Union, Perry offers a good starting point for Union agents seeking to penetrate the Deep South. It has connections to both the Black River and Dixie Rails railroads, as well as regular stagecoach service. Just hop a train, and before you know it you're in Little Rock or Jackson. Confederate counterspies work hard to detect the Union and Pinkerton spies before they get that far. They say that there aren't nearly as many bodies in the cemetery as there are scattered in shallow graves near the town.

Chris Madsen

The thankless job of governing the Half-Acre is given to Phillip Cromwell, who was appointed by Confederate Governor Stephen Drummond. Cromwell is an older fellow who isn't very effective as a mayor. Most people laugh at the laws he and his Town Council pass.

However, they don't laugh at the man who enforces those laws. His name is Chris Madsen, and he's been a lawman around those parts for years. He, Bill Tilghman, and Heck Thomas used to be called the "Three



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Guardsmen." Between them they just about tamed early Oklahoma single-handedly. Before becoming a lawman in the Weird West, Madsen fought in some of the wars back in his homeland in Europe. When he walks down the street, Oklahomans who'd sass a saint stop and tip their hats with respect, for Madsen can outride, outshoot, and outfight them all. And he's as honest as a man can be.

Entertainment Establishments

Perry's best-known for its 100-plus saloons though. They form the economic backbone of the town, and their owners are among the most influential men there. Some of the most (in)famous are listed below. If you get the chance and you're able to look after yourself, stop by Hell's Half-Acre and see what it's like. I don't think you'll be disappointed.

The Silver Star Saloon

Run by a one-armed Union veteran named Norman Karns, the Silver Star features one of the wickedest poker games in town. Karns' partner, Bill Daggett, is the dealer, and the cheating that goes on at his games is notorious. Still, there are many who can't resist the chance to try to cheat a cheat.

The Mustang Palace

Catering to cowboys, this place offers cheap drinks and cheap women. It won't win any awards for its food or its service, but it doesn't have any trouble bringing in business.

Vance's No. 12 Saloon

This is the biggest and fanciest of the 15 drinking establishments owned by George Vance, one of the wealthiest men in town. If you've got the money, go there. It's got the best liquor in town, as I can attest from personal experience.

The Spur

A rundown place in one of the poorer parts of town, the Spur is said to be a meeting place for Union spies. The proprietor, Gilbert Suggs, was reputedly a very active Jayhawk in Kansas a few years back.

The Great Serpent Mound

Here's another Oklahoma attraction. For years, white men have heard Indians in the Coyote Confederation talk about the "Great Serpent Mound" located in their territory. Supposedly it's one of their most sacred burial and ritual sites—so sacred they refused to show any white men where it was. Some whites

dared to sneak in and look for it, but they either came up empty-handed or got themselves turned into a pincushion by Indian arrows.

But finally the *Epitaph* is able to bring you new information about this important location. Recently an Oklahoma cowboy named Pete Brunner accidentally strayed into Confederation territory and was chased by some hotheaded young braves. Trying to escape, he rode deep into Indian land, into areas he'd never gone through before. Then, by the light of the moon, he came over the top of a hill and saw it in the valley below—the Great Serpent Mound.

Brunner's Report

Brunner says that the mound stretched for as much as a mile, with an undulating body about 12 feet high behind a huge, roughly triangular head. On top of the head, he could see a shaman standing before a fire, holding a snake up to the starry sky. Unfortunately, he had to keep going to get away from his pursuers.

Brunner returned to Perry not long ago. I understand he's trying to put together an expedition to explore the mound and loot whatever riches might be hidden there. Given the bloody revenge the Indians take on white men who violate their holy places, I expect that he'll end up in Old Scratch's living room not too long after he gets to the mound.

Colorado

Unlike Kansas and Oklahoma, Colorado isn't a very agricultural territory. Its lifeblood is gold and silver mining (though there are some big cattle ranches here and there). Prospectors, miners, and panners are scattered over the Rocky Mountains like fleas on a dog's back, looking for that one big strike that will set them up for the rest of their days.

Denver is the undisputed capital, though exactly who's capital it is happens to be subject to debate. Both the Union and the Confederacy have made Colorado a territory, and both claim it hotly. However, most residents are more concerned with making money than with politics.

No major battles and precious few skirmishes have been fought in Colorado between the blue and the gray. The Great Rail Wars hadn't really touched Colorado until recently. Smith & Robards' Denver Pacific has negotiated business deals with Wasatch and Union Blue. However, the summer of 1876 changed all that. See the previous chapter for more information on the battlefield known as the Cauldron.



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Time Marches On: The Tombstone Epitaph's 1877 Update

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The best known person in Colorado is probably the mayor of Denver, Caleb Hornsby. Elected by the city's residents alone and stubbornly refusing to answer to either state government, Hornsby ("Ol' Caleb," as he's affectionately known) has proven himself extremely popular with the citizens. Few of his laws, even the one against carrying guns within the city limits, are ever challenged.

Tallulah

Tallulah, Colorado, is a stop on the Denver Pacific Railroad. It's a mining boomtown, where just about everyone is engaged in yanking as much gold out of the ground as they can. But lately the mining equipment has been idle, for the miners say that there's a phantom stalking the mines. It's been around ever since mid-September. Since it started appearing, nearly a dozen miners have disappeared without any kind of trace.

The miners believe that the haunt is the ghost of Big Jim Frazier, one of their own who used to work the Red Rock Mine for its owner, Avery Pelton. Pelton's a notorious skinflint, they say, who didn't shore up his mine's tunnels properly as a way to save money. Big Jim died in a cave-in at the end of August, and Pelton weaseled his way out of paying Jim's widow the pension she'd been promised when Big Jim went to work at the Red Rock.

Since then, miners, most of them employees of Pelton's, have been disappearing. Pelton's offered a \$500 reward to anyone who can clear up the mystery.

Talk to the Animals

A strange story has reached me concerning a mountain man who is said to be able to control wild beasts. He's supposed to live somewhere in the Rockies south of Denver, in a log cabin high up in the mountains. Several explorers and prospectors have reported seeing him—a big fellow with a bushy, red beard who cavorts with cougars as if they were kittens and talks to bears about the weather. Redbeard, as he's known in local lore, is rumored to have received this remarkable gift after being struck by lightning on a stormy night.

Ordinarily I wouldn't report something like this without verifying it. However, I've heard several independent reports about this Redbeard, and they all agree to a remarkable degree about the man and his uncanny gift. I'm hoping that a reader will be able to provide further details or verification.

Utah

Utah, the last of the Disputed Lands, is well-known, not just in America but around the world, for its level of technological advancement. Thanks to the mysterious (dare I say, sinister?) Professor Darius Hellstromme, the capital, Salt Lake City, enjoys electric lights, running water, and heat. Factories provide employment for thousands, and for those who prefer to be involved in Utah's more traditional economic mainstay, mining, there are huge conveyor belts that carry ore from the Wasatch Mountains to sorting yards in the city.

But as strange as it may seem to some, there's more to Utah than the so-called "City Of Gloom." Away from that machine-choked place, there's Provo, a lovely town located between Utah Lake and the enormous Uinta Forest. I hear that there are strange forest spirits living in the Uinta that protect it from further encroachment by whites or Indians. Cedar City, located in the southwestern corner in the desert regions, is a frequent stopover point for those daring souls who travel to California on horseback.

The Battle of Vermilion Cliffs

The spectacular Vermilion Cliffs of southwestern Utah were the scene of a recent clash between the blue and the gray. The Confederates, tired of the success of the Flying Buffaloes of Fort 51, decided to meet them with some air assets of their own. A squadron of Confederate pilots in auto-gyros equipped with Gatling guns and bombs attempted to ambush the Buffaloes as they conducted a training exercise with a platoon of Union soldiers.

Unfortunately for the Rebs, their armament proved to be relatively ineffective against the more maneuverable Buffaloes, who simply flew rings around them and destroyed three auto-gyros while only losing two men. However, during the battle a "gray flyer" did manage to strafe the platoon and drop a bomb on their cannon, killing most of the Union ground troops. The Buffaloes have of course vowed to avenge the loss.

Cactus Spirits

And that's not the only thing going on in southern Utah. A few settlers and prospectors have been telling stories about "cactus spirits" attacking them. The stories started when a local character named "Skeeter" Crawford was found dead next to a cactus, with



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The new kid on the block: Rattler hunter Aloysius Daniels unleashes a mighty blast from his trusty gun Mathilda.

needles stuck into every part of his body. After the locals buried Crawford, they chopped the cactus down. Two days later, one of them was found dead in a small arroyo in the middle of a small grove of cacti. Like Crawford, he was stuck full of cactus spines.

Now, I've seen some strange things, and as my readers know I'm willing to accept some mighty strange explanations for the weirdness that's become a part of the West. But I have not been able to confirm this story or obtain any proof of the existence of such "spirits." However, the *Epitaph* is continuing to gather information, and in the meantime our readers would be well advised to avoid any cacti they encounter in southern Utah.

Salt Lake City

The City o' Gloom has changed very little since the our *Guide* to it came out a few months back. Professor Hellstromme is still regarded as the city's savior, the Danites still mistrust him, and a black cloud of soot and smoke still hangs over the city. Those looking for what they believe to be good jobs in Hellstromme Industries factories

beat a path to his door. So do people looking to get a hold of his interesting devices. Unlike Smith & Robards, which is also based there, he doesn't offer rush delivery.

Speaking of Smith & Robards, the firm is continuing to expand. It recently hired five new technicians and is eager to retain the services of even more. The general publication of their Fall/Winter 1876 Catalog has boosted profits to new heights, much to Mr. Robards' delight. Why, I've even purchased one of their spirit cameras to supplement my faithful *Epitaph* camera.

The Mighty Hunter

The most interesting recent news was the arrival in town of an eccentric character named Aloysius Daniels.

To look at him, you'd think a strong wind would blow him away. He's short, thin as a beanpole, and scrawny. But his size belies his strength and courage, for this fellow makes his living hunting salt rattlers! And he doesn't do it with a cannon-laden steam wagon or a landship or by dropping dynamite on them from above, either. He gets down and dirty and fights them on foot. His tool for doing this is an enormous shotgun he calls "Mathilda."



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Lacy O'Malley at work. The Bright Light of Truth shines on!

Mathilda looks more like a mad scientist's blunderbuss than a shotgun. It's got a widened mouth, some kind of canister mounted beneath the trigger, and all sorts of dials and levers and gauges attached to it. You wouldn't think Daniels could even lift the thing, much less hold it steady enough to fire—but when he points that thing and lets her rip, stand back!

The large shot the gun fires is enough to make a salt rattler yelp with pain. How it works, I don't know, but it brings down the rattlers. His success as a hunter has made Daniels quite popular around town, though not quite so much with other worm hunters.

The End?

Alas, good readers, I must now bring the *Update* to a close. There are many other subjects I could cover for you, but space unfortunately runs short. However, this is not the last of the *Updates*! The *Tombstone Epitaph*, as part of its continuing crusade to get the truth about what's happening in the Weird West out to our readers, is planning to issue other *Updates* in the future. Later *Updates* will hopefully cover the further events of the war and the Weird West. For example, I recently had quite an adventure escaping from a Montana rattler with the help of a well-trained Pinkerton, an agent of the Secret Service, and a slightly deranged tinkerer, and I think the outcome of that escapade would be of interest to our readers.

When I closed the *Guide*, I made mention of a friend of mine who calls himself "the Prospector" and his theory that the weirdness in the West derives from an event called "the Reckoning" which took place back in '63. I pledged to continue investigating his claims, and I have.

While I have yet to obtain direct proof that would substantiate the Prospector's version of the facts, I must confess that I am increasingly unable to provide any explanation for what's happened other than the one he offers. My investigation has uncovered very few supernatural events that occurred before July 3, 1863, the date of the so-called Reckoning. The increase in such strange happenings after that cannot just be coincidence.

However, an objective journalist such as myself has to have facts, and until I get them, I cannot wholly believe what the Prospector tells me. The quest to uncover the truth continues, friends, and I hope you'll continue to come along with the *Tombstone Epitaph* as your guide!

THE MARSHAL'S HANDBOOK







CHAPTER THREE: SECRETS & LIES: 1877



Welcome to the Marshal's section, pardner. Hang up your hat and sit a spell. Here's where you get the straight skinny on the news items Lacy O'Malley covered in the *Update*. As usual, he doesn't always know the whole truth or makes some mistaken assumptions. Unless it says otherwise here, either he's correct in his theories, or the incident is left as a mystery for you to explore in your campaign as you see fit.

Fear levels listed for the various regions in *The Quick & The Dead* have not changed unless otherwise noted below.

WAR WITHOUT END

Lacy O'Malley's Confederate informant, the Southern Sentinel, may have reached the right conclusions about the current status of the War Between the States, but there's a lot more to tell about the weird goings-on mentioned in the letter. What follows is the top-secret, unvarnished truth about the war, so if you're a member of the posse, you probably want to head back to your section of the book before the Provost Guard catches you and has you riding the rail or worse.

GETTYSBURG

General Meade never did give serious consideration to counterattacking Lee after Pickett's Charge, having already won the battle

and lost over 23,000 men, and other events soon rendered the point moot. The Confederate attack had just begun to falter when some of the dead on Cemetery Ridge rose again to attack the victorious Union troops and devour their brains. By the time Meade and his officers had grasped the situation and returned the last of these reanimated corpses to their rightful repose, Lee's army had made good its escape.

The Confederates had their own difficulties, but had no time to deal with them before they began their southward retreat. The Butcher who so callously carved up their wounded escaped after the battle and continued his activities elsewhere. For the full details of his bloody work, see the second sensational *Deadlands: The Weird West Dime Novel*, *Independence Day*, as well as *City o' Gloom*.

VICKSBURG

Fear Level 3

As the walkin' dead were first appearing at Gettysburg, the Reckoning was making its presence felt in Vicksburg. The Reckoners made abominations from the animals eaten during the siege, and as these creatures made reciprocal meals of the city's inhabitants they caused the chaos that facilitated Pemberton's escape from the city. Though Vicksburg is severely depopulated today, these abominations can still be found there, lying in wait for new victims.





MULESKINNER

Muleskinners are the remains of jackasses eaten by the people of Vicksburg as they desperately tried to satiate their hunger. They somewhat resemble a regular mule, though they walk upright, and their torsos are noticeably devoid of flesh or organs. The eyes of a muleskinner glow an unearthly red, and its forelegs end in long knifelike bones which it uses to disembowel its victims.

It is a solitary hunter, and it gets its name from its peculiar habit of lining its lair with the hides of its victims. Muleskinners attack anyone who seems vulnerable. If confronted by a group, a muleskinner ambushes any stragglers and drags them into the network of bombproof tunnels where they live, using its knowledge of the passages to its best advantage.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d10, N:2d8, Q:2d8, S:3d12, V:2d10
Fightin': bone knife 5d8, sneak 3d8
Mental: C:2d8, K:1d4, M:3d6, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d4
 Area knowledge: Vicksburg 3d4, guts 3d4, overawe 3d6, search 3d8, trackin' 3d8
Size: 10

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Bone Knives: STR+2d8

Night Vision: Muleskinners see in total darkness the same as daylight

Undead

RATCATCHER

Ratcatchers are the reanimated corpses of people forced to subsist on rats during the siege of Vicksburg. They look as they did during that desperate time: (dirty, gaunt and unkempt) and dress in long, tattered garments (such as coats) which cover most of their bodies. Underneath this outer covering, the flesh of the ratcatcher's torso is replaced by a swarm of live rats, with their heads protruding through the ribs. The ratcatcher attempts to grab and embrace its victims, so the rats can gnaw and devour them.

Though ratcatchers cannot speak, they use their beggarlike appearance to help catch sympathetic victims off-guard. Like the muleskinners, they nest inside Vicksburg's bombproof tunnels, but ratcatchers also venture into the city itself in search of prey. These abominations are usually found in groups of 2-12, and they attack any group of equal or smaller size. Much like real rodents, they scurry back to their bombproof lairs if endangered, and they use their intimate knowledge of those tunnels to thwart any pursuers.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d10, Q:2d8, S:4d6, V:2d8
 Dodge 4d10, fightin' wrasslin' 4d10, shootin' pistol, rifle 2d8, sneak 4d10, swimmin' 3d10
Mental: C:3d6, K:3d4, M:2d4, Sm:2d4, Sp:1d4
 Area knowledge: Vicksburg 4d4, search 3d6, scroungin' 5d4

Size: 6

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Armor of Rats: -6. The same rats that inhabit these corpses provide the ratcatchers with light protection against damage.

Gnawin': Ratcatchers use their *fightin' wrasslin'* Aptitude in an opposed roll against their victims to pull them to the rats' teeth. If the victim loses, she suffers 8d4 damage on each of the ratcatcher's actions until she breaks free by winning another opposed roll.

Night Vision: Ratcatchers can see in any amount of light as if it were full daylight.



THE WASTING

Animals and people were not the only things changed by the Reckoning, as the people of Vicksburg found out. The disease called the Wasting is an invention of the Reckoners, a product of the fear and despair felt by thousands of people starving at once, and it may appear and thrive any place where those conditions exist.

Any posse member in an area affected by an outbreak of the Wasting must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* roll to avoid contracting it. If he succeeds, he remains unaffected by that particular outbreak of the disease (though the Marshal may want to keep rolling dice just to keep the heroes nervous). Any posse member unlucky enough to fail the roll catches the disease and suffers the following game effects as his body gradually dwindles away to skin and bones.

A week after contracting the Wasting, the victim takes a light wound to the guts and loses a die type from every Trait, as well as 1d4 Wind. If a Trait is ever reduced below a d4, the victim is then unable to use any of its associated faculties (loss of *Deftness* would take away the ability to fire a gun or anything else that requires any degree of manual dexterity). If all Corporeal Traits ever fall below d4, the victim dies. If all Mental Traits ever fall below d4, or the poor sod's Wind is reduced to 0, then he can only lie comatose until death occurs or someone rescues him.

Every week thereafter, the afflicted takes an additional light wound to the guts and lose yet another die type from all Traits, as well as an additional 1d4 Wind. The only way to prevent these additional weekly losses is to make a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll. The wounds that the Wasting inflicts can't be healed until the victim makes this roll on two consecutive weeks. If this happens, the victim has beaten the disease and slowly regains his strength, recovering at the same rate as the losses occurred: +1 wound level, +1 die type, and +1d4 Wind per week.

NEW ORLEANS

The dark and secretive force at work in New Orleans is none other than Baron Simone LaCroix, the reclusive head of both the Bayou Vermillion Railroad and the city's resident voodoo cult. While LaCroix and his followers practiced their faith for years prior to the Reckoning, that event changed things considerably.

On July 3, 1863, the Union occupation forces in New Orleans announced that all public gatherings except for church services were forbidden without prior written permission. Since it was highly unlikely such permission would be granted to a pagan cult, Baron LaCroix gathered his followers and began a series of rituals intended to place the most dire curses upon the Yankee oppressors. It worked! The garrison's soldiers died in agony as their eyes bled and their flesh either rotted away or erupted with masses of snakes and spiders.

When people discovered these horrors the following day, decorum and propriety demanded they be disposed of as quickly and quietly as possible, and to this day almost all who witnessed the massacre's aftermath firsthand speak of it only in the confessional. They also keep silent their suspicions that Baron LaCroix was responsible, out of a justified fear of him. The Crescent City's general public was too happy about the Yankees leaving and foreign trade returning to ask any questions about how it all happened, and most of the citizens think too highly of the Baron LaCroix to suspect him in any event.

The baron's public respectability comes not only from the money and jobs Bayou Vermillion brings to New Orleans, but from the fact that his "tireless workers" (a.k.a. zombies) almost single-handedly built the city's defensive works, creating a fortress the Yankees have wisely never attacked. However, LaCroix did not do this out of any sense of civic-mindedness, but because he learned the limits of his newfound powers shortly after the massacre.

Almost all of the voodoo cult's priests (houngans) perished immediately after completing the ritual curse upon the garrison, but the significance of this was lost on the baron as he prepared to curse the remainder of his enemies. Only after the rituals failed the second time did LaCroix realize that all of his most powerful curses were only effective if paid for with the lives of his houngans, and the numbers required were more than the baron had at his disposal, then or now.

The baron has since recruited new houngans to replace those he lost, but they remain too precious a resource for him to throw away. Besides, as long as only he has knowledge of the rituals necessary for the death curse and his enemies don't suspect there are any limits to his powers, he really doesn't have to use it to maintain his covert control over affairs in the Crescent City.





The lost Union flotilla was not destroyed by the Baron or any other human, but was in fact surprised during the night by river leviathans who pulled the helpless crews to their dooms. For the full story on river leviathans, see page 110 of *Rascals, Varmints & Critters*.

MISSOURI

John Schofield found himself too often bored in his duties, so much so that he gave into his secret vice: playing cards. He had almost worn out his copy of *Hoyle's Book of Games* when the mathematician in him began to notice the text of the book seemed to contain cryptograms, which he eagerly began to decipher, unknowingly paving the way for those later known as hucksters. His first hex attempt, on the night of July 12, failed miserably, and the manitou he contacted drove him insane.

The heretofore patriotic and responsible general became a sociopath, and he began to use his position to foment lawlessness in the state. By the time his activities were revealed, Schofield had built up a well-organized band of marauders and turned most of the people of Missouri against the Union cause. Unfortunately for his pursuers, he has also continued to develop his knowledge of hexes and is now deadly proficient in their use. This has enabled Schofield and his outlaw band to elude capture all these years and continue their banditry.

Schofield and his marauders remain at large, preying upon vulnerable targets on either side of the Missouri River and staying one step ahead of both Union and Confederate authorities. Should your posse wish to collect the ever-increasing bounty on the former general's head, here's his relevant game info:

JOHN SCHOFIELD

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, Q:2d8, S:2d6, V:2d8
Fightin': sword, brawlin' 2d6, horse ridin' 2d6,
shootin': pistol 2d6

Mental: C:3d10, K:3d12, M:2d8, Sm:2d10, Sp:3d12
Academia: occult 4d12, mathematics 4d12, area
knowledge: northern Missouri 4d12, guts 4d12,
leadership 4d8, overawe 3d8, scrutinize 3d10,
streetwise 3d10

Edges: Arcane background

Hindrances: Outlaw 5, loco (murderous sociopath) 5

Gear: Two Colt Navy revolvers

Special Abilities:

Hexes: Bash 5, phantasm 4, soul blast 5, soul burst 5

SCHOFIELD'S MARAUDERS

Schofield men are a motley collection of army deserters, killers, and thieves. Schofield has shaped them into a highly mobile, efficient guerilla force. They love their work and are fairly loyal to Schofield. After all, he's kept them safe for years.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, S:3d6, Q:3d6, V:3d6
Climbin' 2d6, fightin': knife 4d6, horse ridin' 4d6,
lockpickin' 2d6, shootin': pistol 4d6, sneak 4d6
Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:3d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d6
Area knowledge: Missouri 3d6, gamblin' 3d6, guts
3d6, overawe 2d8, ridicule 2d6, search 2d6,
trackin' 2d6

Gear: The marauders carry a variety of firearms, like Winchester '76s and Colt Walkers.

CHARLESTON HARBOR

Fear Level 2

The *Hunley* was pulled to the bottom of the harbor along with the *Housatonic*, and the submersible did not free herself before her crew suffocated. This was not to be their last voyage, as Lieutenant Dixon returned to life Harrowed and his crew joined him as his *unholy host*. Dixon's manitou (which has a 3d12 *Spirit*) has always had dominion and shows no signs of losing it anytime soon, so the *Hunley* continues to stalk the waters of Charleston Harbor for victims.

The *Hunley* usually rests on the bottom of the Harbor until conditions permit use of the spar torpedo. It then attacks the nearest anchored vessel late at night, when it is least likely to spotted by ship's watchmen. Lieutenant Dixon steers by looking through a small window on the ship's low conning tower, so it runs just below the water's surface when approaching a victim. The *Hunley* operates as follows under the **Drivin' Lessons** rules in *Smith & Robards*:

LIEUTENANT GEORGE DIXON

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d10, Q:2d8, S:2d8, V:3d10
Drivin': submersible 5d10, horse ridin' 3d10,
shootin': pistol 2d6, swimmin' 4d10

Mental: C:3d6, K:2d6, M:4d8, Sm:2d8, Sp:1d10
Area knowledge: Charleston Harbor 5d6, guts
4d10, leadership 4d8, tinkerin' 3d8

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Harrowed

Harrowed Powers: Cat eyes 4, unholy host 5



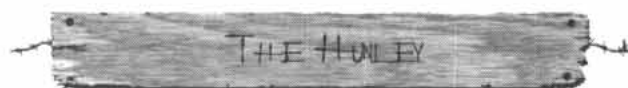


THE CREW

The *Hunley's* crew is similar to walkin' dead on except they have the Harrowed power *cat eyes* at level 4. They are armed with a variety of sidearms.

THE HUNLEY

The *Hunley* operates under the rules for the submersible boat in *Smith & Robards*, and it uses the same Malfunction Tables. It uses the following table for hit location and damage.



Durability	Pass	Pace*	Climb
50/10	9	14/7*	10
Max Depth	Turn	Travel*	Fuel
50 yards	5	12/6 m.p.h.*	N/A**
Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
20	+5	N/A	N/A

*Surfaced/submerged

**The *Hunley* is propelled by hand-cranks operated by her tireless undead crew

1d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod
1-10	Hull	4	+2
11-15	Hull (crew)*	4	+2
16-17	Torpedo Spar**	2	-1
18-19	Ballast Tanks	4	+1
20	Screw/Rudder	4	+1

* Roll randomly amongst the crew

** If the Spar takes more than 5 points of damage, consider it broken and treat future hits here as misses. The spar regenerates on the night of the next full moon.

THE TORPEDO SPAR

The torpedo spar that tips the *Hunley* has become a powerful relic that the undead crew uses to continues its reign of terror.

Power: The spar can produce an explosive charge once every night of the full moon. Located at the end of a 20-foot-long pole, the charge is attached to the hull of a ship (preferably someplace unarmored) and then detonated by pulling a lanyard inside the boat when it is a safe distance away.

The explosion does 10d20 damage to the target location, if successfully attached (resolve this as a ramming attack, but do not add the *drivin'* Aptitude level of the target vessel's helmsman if it rests at anchor).

Taint: None.



THE WILDERNESS

Fear Level 3

The men pulled into the burning Wilderness fell prey to an abomination known as a tangler. Unbeknownst to them, the skeletons they had seen before the battle were not simply unburied dead, but the previous victims of this plantlike horror.

TANGLER

A tangler is a carnivorous plant, consisting of a mass of tendrils extending in a 20-foot radius from an underground stem. The eight tendrils camouflage themselves as part of the Wilderness' dense underbrush until potential prey moves through them (a potential victim can roll her *sneak* Aptitude against the tangler's *Cognition* to avoid detection). The tangler then uses the tendrils to ensnare the victim and excrete a corrosive digestive enzyme onto her, which can dissolve a man right down to his bones.

While the tangler is a reactive monster rather than an intelligent one, it is persistent and attempts to recapture any who escape its grasp, to the extent of its reach.





PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:1d8, Q:1d8, S:3d8, V:3d12

Fightin': wrasslin' 4d8

Mental: C:4d8, K:1d4, M:2d10, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d4

Size: 6

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Corrosive Enzyme: 3d6 damage to each of three adjacent locations (six adjacent locations if ensnared by two tendrils) on the victim each action the tangler has her entangled in its tendrils.

Stem: The tangler's vital parts are buried, so any attacks directed at them do only half normal damage. This is the only way to kill the tangler itself.

Tendrils: Victims are ensnared by use of the *fightin': wrasslin'* Aptitude, and they must get a success and a raise in an opposed *Strength* roll to escape. The tendrils are destroyed after taking 15 points of damage. If a victim makes progress in freeing itself, the tangler attempts to ensnare her with an additional tendril. If the tangler succeeds in doing this, the victim must either destroy both tendrils or get a success and two raises on their opposed *Strength* roll to escape. A tangler can regrow lost tendrils in a week's time.

SPOTSYLVANIA

Fear Level 3

As if the tanglers in the nearby Wilderness were not problem enough for the residents of Spotsylvania, their town is the province of another abomination originating from the spring 1864 campaigns.

Mutilated bodies have been found in and around the town since that time, and the townspeople are growing desperate to halt the activities of the killer, whose supernatural origins they do not suspect. A brave posse passing through this part of Virginia could collect a sizable reward and the eternal gratitude of the townsfolk by ending the reign of terror of the Faceless Man.

SEDGEWICK'S LAST WORDS

Union General John Sedgewick's last words to his men at the Battle of Spotsylvania were, "Why, what are you dodging for? They could not hit an elephant at that distance!" A split-second later a Confederate sharpshooter put a bullet through the left side of the General's face, sending him,

his men believed, to meet his Maker. The Union Army hastily resumed its drive toward Richmond, and Sedgewick's body was assumed to have been lost in the confusion. In truth, the Reckoners and the general's fateful boast would not allow him his eternal rest, and he arose to revenge himself upon the world that destroyed his face and still remembers him as one who died a foolish braggart.

THE FACELESS MAN

Sedgewick looks as he did the day he died, save for the absent lower part of his face which gives him his new name. He stalks travelers along the many roads that meet near Spotsylvania, and though he kills at any opportunity he naturally has a fondness for Confederate soldiers.

The Faceless Man attempts to surprise his victims, usually hiding his disfigurement beneath a scarf until just before he strikes, so as to paralyze his victims with fright. He attempts to pin his victims to the ground with his superhuman strength and then tear off their jawbones with his bare hands (treat this as a called shot at -6).

The Faceless Man usually lies low for a time after a killing, using the more impenetrable parts of the Wilderness to hide from search parties. He is one of the few who can venture there without fear of tanglers. Inevitably he emerges once again to continue his insane killing spree.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:4d10, Q:2d10, S:3d12+2, V:2d8

Fightin': brawlin' 5d10, *fightin'* wrasslin' 5d10, horse ridin' 2d10, shootin': pistol 2d6, sneak 5d10

Mental: C:2d8, K:2d6, M:3d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d8

Area knowledge: Spotsylvania 5d6, guts 4d8, search 5d8, scrutinize 3d8, trackin' 5d8

Size: 6

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Claws: STR+4d6

Undead

Vulnerability: Weapons made from the legendary tree cut down by musket fire on the Spotsylvania battlefield affect Sedgewick normally.

Coup: Any Harrowed who absorb the essence of the Faceless Man gains +1 to their *claws* power (or gain the power at Level 1 if they don't already have it).



COLD HARBOR

Fear Level 3

Few generals understand the changes brought about by the Reckoning better than Ulysses S. Grant. It could scarcely be otherwise, as the Reckoners and their minions robbed him of ultimate victory after months of carefully planned campaigning at Vicksburg. He was quick to call on Allan Pinkerton and his Detective Agency to stop further supernatural interference, but at the Battle of Cold Harbor, Grant got the idea to use the Reckoning to help his plans rather than hinder them.

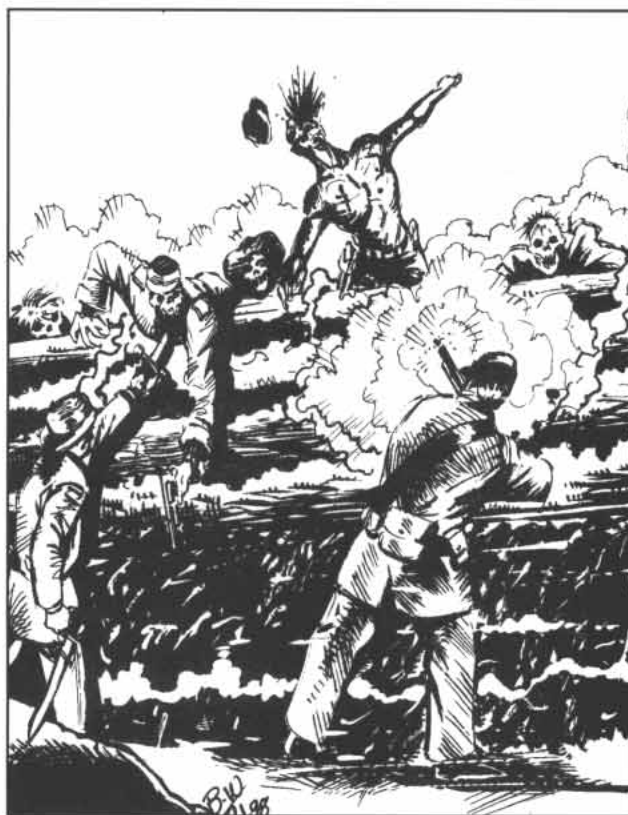
Grant was feeling remorseful over the bloody failure of the Union assault when the Pinkerton Agents asked to gather up the Union dead before any of them got back up again. The Confederates had offered a truce so as to remove their own dead. Suddenly, Grant was inspired. He ordered everyone to let the bodies remain where they fell. The desperate cries of the wounded and dying were heard for hours in the Confederate lines, and this shook even their battle-tested courage.

Before dawn, Grant's scheme took shape as the dead men arose and attacked the Confederate trenches, causing the desperate fighting and confusion he had sought. The walkin' dead enabled Grant to move his army to the gates of Richmond before General Lee knew he was gone. In any event, Lee had to move his army to guard his capital with all haste, and while he succeeded at that, his soldiers had no time to dispatch all of the hundreds of walkin' dead at Cold Harbor.

To this day, the overstretched Texas Rangers have been unable to gather sufficient force to deal with them fully. The area around the battlefield remains infested with the reanimated corpses of soldiers slain over a decade ago, and they remain a well-armed menace. They are organized into an army of the dead, living a grotesque parody of a soldier's life, making meals of human brains instead of salt pork, for instance. Travelers who encounter them often become their meals, and the Rangers are now looking for help in solving this problem once and for all.

RICHMOND

Lee's capture of the Union army's supply base at City Point was an unexpected bonus from the Confederate assault on Fort Stedman. The Fort was taken in a predawn assault by a small



handpicked group of soldiers who created the breakthrough which opened the way to City Point. The soldiers' courage ultimately carried the day for the South, but they were no doubt helped by the unusual skills of one man.

Lieutenant Errol Morton volunteered as the point man of the group that seized Fort Stedman, and he took that opportunity to reveal his skills as a huckster. Morton's arcane powers concealed the soldiers as they ambushed the fort and were instrumental in getting the rest of Lee's army through unnoticed to exploit the breakthrough. Hucksters are normally severely persecuted once they're discovered, so the young officer had acted at huge personal risk. However, Lieutenant Morton set events into motion which would ultimately save the Confederate capital. A far different fate awaited him.

General Lee commended Morton for his actions and soon employed him on other missions which called for his special skills. Major Morton continues to serve the Army of Northern Virginia in that capacity, officially as one of General Longstreet's staff officers. Heroes might encounter him in any part of North America, and he would make a formidable foe or useful ally for them. He is dedicated to the

Confederate cause and has been extremely resourceful in service to it. Major Morton's most remarkable trait remains his sense of honor, which he demonstrates even in the face of the greatest adversity.

MAJOR ERROL D. MORTON, CSA

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:2d6, Q:2d6, S:3d8, V:2d8
Dodge 2d6, fightin' brawlin' 5d6, saber 4d6, horse ridin' 3d6, shootin' pistol 4d8, sleight o' hand 5d8, sneak 4d6

Mental: C:2d10, K:3d6, M:3d8, Sm:2d10, Sp:3d12
Academia: occult 4d6, bluff 4d10, gamblin' 3d10, guts 4d12, leadership 3d8, overawe 3d8, scrutinize 3d10, search 3d10

Edges: Arcane background, brave, friends in high places (the Confederate government) 5, rank (CSA Army) 3, "the voice" (soothing)

Hindrances: Enemy (the North owes him a few) 3, law o' the West, loyal (to the Confederacy) 5

Hexes: Ear shot 4, graveyard mists 5, private eye 4, spirit coils 3, soul blast 5

Tricks: Copy, false face, groom, palm

Grit: 3

Gear: LeMat Grapeshot Pistol, .44 Derringer, Saber.



THE CRATER

Fear Level 4

Soldiers sent to die in a hopeless attack do not rest easy, and the men who were trapped inside the Crater, far from where their officers remained safe and drunk, were no exception. Confederate soldiers sent to man that part of the trench line after the battle refused to stay, for the Crater remained pitch black even in brightest daylight and smelled of foulest brimstone. Worse yet, when an overly curious few returned to investigate, they disappeared into the darkness, leaving no trace save for their anguished screams. They were the first to encounter the Crater demons.

These days, the Confederates can do little more than guard the huge hole. The Crater is permanently engulfed in a darkness impenetrable by mundane light, and no one sent in to explore its depths has returned.

CRATER DEMONS

These abominations are the twisted remains of the Union soldiers killed in the Crater in 1864. They now resemble demons of myth, with horns, forked tails, cloven hooves for feet, etc., but despite their appearance, their motives are not nearly as vile. The crater demons still want to fulfill their original mission (escape the Crater and create an opening in the Confederate lines), and to this end they still periodically climb out and attack the Crater's guards. They have been unsuccessful to date, but they are no doubt regrouping in the dark realm of the hole for their next assault. None of them are aware the Union armies were long ago driven northward, and thus they have never considered their attempted breakthrough may serve some other, unearthly purpose.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:3d8, Q:2d10, S:3d12, V:2d8
Climbin' 3d8, fightin' brawlin' 3d8, horse ridin' 2d8, shootin' rifle 3d8

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d6
Guts 3d6

Size: 6

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Claws: STR+4d6

Guns: Many still carry their Springfield Rifles

Night Vision: Crater demons see in total darkness (even that in the Crater itself) the same as daylight.

Undead



GEORGIA

Sherman's March to the Sea let loose plague and famine in Georgia, and those who lost their lives as a result knew fear and rage as few others have. The Reckoners enabled them to return and visit their pain upon the world of the living. They wander the path of Sherman's March, slaying any living thing that remains in those barren lands (Fear Level 4), and from the General's stated aims they are called howlers.

HOWLER

This Abomination is similar to walkin' dead, but these creatures are unique to Georgia's barren areas. They appear in groups of 7-13, and are characterized by the banshee-like scream they emit to bewail their earthly sufferings just before they attack, which boosts their Terror rating to 11.

Since none of the howlers died in a fashion that marred their appearance, their howl is likely to be the first sign a posse gets that something is amiss. Moreover, since most of them were women and children, a sympathetic posse might take pity on the "homeless widows and orphans," only to find themselves in a heap of trouble when they're attacked.

ANDERSONVILLE

Fear Level 5

The area around Camp Sumter today is home to one of the more vicious types of horrors, the raider. Becoming monsters totally befit these men, for as they brought only misery in life, they now bring greater misery after death. While the raiders make quite a challenge for any posse, defeating any one of them would go a long way toward reclaiming Andersonville from the Reckoners.

THE RAIDERS

As conditions inside Camp Sumter worsened, the prisoners soon found that their most serious problem was their fellows. Bands of so-called raiders routinely bullied and stole from other inmates, until the worst six of them were sentenced to hang by a tribunal of prisoners. These six men returned to continue their activities as abominations, and death has done little to mellow them.

The six raiders confront any travelers in the vicinity of Camp Sumter, and though all may not appear at once they always show up in superior or equal numbers. They threaten and bully those

they encounter and gradually demand all the victim's possessions, starting with their valuables and ending with their undergarments. The raiders do not rob for profit, but merely to terrorize their victims.

Should a person resist (and most folks do rather than be stripped naked), the raiders attack, content to rob a corpse. Those willing to part with literally all they have on their person are let go by the raiders, humiliated but unharmed.

The raiders look much like they did prior to their deaths, so they appear to most posses as disheveled Union deserters, though a pair of discerning eyes may notice the rope burns around all of their necks. While they currently limit themselves to the area near Camp Sumter, they are gradually widening their area of operations, and their number of victims continues to grow accordingly.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d10, Q:2d8, S:3d10, V:2d10
Fightin': brawl'n' 5d10, horse ridin' 2d10, shootin':
pistol, rifle 4d8, sneak 3d10

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:3d10, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d10
Area knowledge: Andersonville, Georgia 5d6, guts
2d8, overawe 4d10, ridicule 5d6, scrutinize 2d6,
search 5d6

Size: 6

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Club: STR+3d6

Spiritual Imprisonment: The raiders can project the mental image of their experience in Andersonville at those who oppose them. Those failing an opposed *Spirit* contest are paralyzed (may take no actions) and take 1d6 Wind per round as their minds are battered by the horrific vision of the starving hordes of the prison camp. Heroes can break out of this paralysis by succeeding in another *Spirit* contest. They can attempt to break free once per round, at the beginning of the round. The raider may attempt to *spiritually imprison* one person per round.

Vulnerability: Those who can resist an *overawe* attempt by a raider (or manage to successfully *overawe* a raider themselves) can affect them normally. Hanging harms them as well.

Undead

Coup: A Harrowed gets the raider's club as coup, but the weapons disappear from non-Harrowed hands in an hour or so.





ST. ALBANS

The Southern Sentinel's suspicions are true, and the same man, or rather the same abominations, are responsible for the New York draft riots as well as the border incident resulting from the St. Albans Raid. While these remain the agent provocateurs' most well-known accomplishments, they have countless other smaller upheavals to their discredit. As one might expect, the agents have been busy during the election campaigns, and rarely did they miss a campaign rally, especially in the Disputed Lands. An agent provocateur may be found anywhere a cauldron of hate and resentment is about to boil over, and is always eager to stir the pot.

AGENT PROVOCATEUR

These abominations look like immaculately dressed men in fine black clothes, including a stovepipe hat and walking stick, and they appear anywhere a crowd might be moved to violence. They maneuver themselves to address the crowd and use their abilities to convince people to take the most destructive course of action possible, using whatever hateful prejudices already exist to their advantage. Once a riot is underway, the abomination moves on to cause trouble elsewhere.

Should the heroes confront an agent provocateur, they have their work cut out for them trying to persuade a crowd not to follow the abomination's directives, and they might even fall victim to them themselves. If they opt for a physical confrontation, the agent uses its powers to convince any bystanders to come to its aid. If this fails, the agent defends himself as best he can until an opportunity to escape presents itself, as standing and fighting is definitely not his strong suit.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, Q:2d6, S:2d4, V:2d4

Dodge 2d6, fightin': brawl' 4d6, horse ridin' 4d6, shootin': pistol 4d6, sleight o' hand 6d6, sneak 5d6

Mental: C:2d10, K:3d10, M:4d12, Sm:4d12, Sp:2d8

Area knowledge (wherever he's at) 3d10, bluff 5d12, disguise 5d10, guts 3d8, language (audience's native) 5d10, overawe 5d12, persuasion 5d12, ridicule 5d12, scrutinize 5d10

Size: 6

Gear: .44 Derringer, walking stick (treat as large club).

Special Abilities:

Demagoguery: By using a Fate Chip, the agent provocateur can sap the wills of those who listen to him, persuading them into normally unthinkable courses of action. Apply the following penalties to everyone involved a test of will with him: White chip: -1; red chip: -3; blue chip: -5

THE NOVEMBER OFFENSIVES

The Southern Sentinel's accounts of the War and the election are mostly accurate, but as always in *Deadlands*, there's more than mere mortals suspect. For the curious, here's the truth behind the history-making events of November 1876, but even the insatiably inquisitive may not like what they find.

THE RECKONER'S PLAGUE

"The Walking Death" which drove the Five Civilized Tribes to near-extinction and General Watie down the path of vengeance is a product of the Reckoners, much like the wasting. The vector created for this disease is an abomination known as a plague rider, who set out among all the Indian lands. The Reckoners know all too well the Indians have knowledge of their existence and true nature, and they hoped the riders would kill off their ancient foes. However, the tribes who adhered to the Old Ways still knew of medicine powerful enough to ward off the plague riders, and the Reckoners' plans came to little among them.

Unfortunately for the Civilized Tribes, they had discarded such secrets when they adopted the ways of the white man, and they found themselves defenseless against the walking death. Thousands died and only a handful survived to know the truth of who was responsible.

Stand Watie knew of the prevalent weirdness since 1863, but when news of the plague reached him, he blamed the devil he knew, Union soldiers. Since that time, Watie and his fiercely loyal Cherokee Mounted Rifles have revenged themselves upon the wrong opponent, independent of any authority save their own. Watie's sole motivation now is vengeance on the Union, and he plans to continue his campaign of terror in Kansas until his own death or the deaths of his enemies. While the former is a greater certainty, Kansas will continue to bleed for years to come before the wily and determined Cherokee is stopped.



PLAGUE RIDER

The Indian peoples comprehend the Reckoning as few others do, and that makes them a great threat to the Reckoners and their plans. To that end, they have created the plague rider as the embodiment of the fears and agonies caused by the virulent diseases that have killed more Indians than the white men's bullets ever could.

They ride among Indian settlements, spreading the walking death to as many as possible, as is their mission. They are totally and ruthlessly dedicated, and they allow nothing to deter them from this end.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d10, Q:2d8, S:3d8, V:2d8
Fightin': brawlin' 3d10, **fightin':** wrasslin' 5d10,
horse ridin' 5d10

Mental: C:2d10, K:3d6, M:3d10, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d8
Area knowledge: Indian lands 3d6, guts 4d8,
overawe 4d10, **scrutinize** 2d10, **search** 4d10,
trackin' 4d10

Size: 6

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Horse: Though it looks emaciated, this pale-colored steed is quite capable of serving its abominable master's needs (treat it as an exceptional horse). The horse follows the riders orders without question.

The Walking Death: Anyone who comes within 10 feet of a plague rider must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* roll to avoid getting the walking death. Should a target be particularly threatening or important to a plague rider, the abomination attempts to grab her with its *fightin': wrasslin'* Aptitude, and this boosts the TN to avoid catching the disease to 9. Those unlucky enough to fail the roll suffer the following game effects. A day after contracting the disease, the victim begins to hemorrhage from the slightest impact, even from simply moving around. Walking and other normal movements inflict 1 Wind per round. Running and other strenuous acts increase this to 2 Wind per round. A serious impact (such as a punch) raises it to 3 Wind per round. Once the victim begins to hemorrhage, she continues to lose Wind until she either seeks medical attention and an appropriate medicine Aptitude roll is made or she bleeds to death. Every week after the disease is contracted, the afflicted



may attempt a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll. If the infected person can make this roll on two consecutive weeks, she beats the disease and is cured. Until this time, bed rest, extreme caution, and constant medical attention are the only ways to avoid bleeding to death.

Undead

Vulnerability: Weapons that have been treated with an antiseptic (such as alcohol) affect plague riders normally.

Coup: Any Harrowed who destroys a plague rider wins the services of the abomination's horse and may ride the animal without the usual penalties the Harrowed receive when dealing with critters. The steed does not obey non-Harrowed riders and flees from them at first opportunity.

INNER DEMONS

There's no doubt Nathan Bedford Forrest could be a hard man in his determination to see the South a free nation, but his recent ruthlessness has surprised even his ardent admirers. His extreme cruelty has even surprised him, for Forrest is no longer the master of his own soul.

He lost all control of his destiny in October of 1863, when a series of fevered nightmares led him down a road paved with good intentions. The general was haunted for seemingly endless nights by visions of a vanquished South, ruined and destitute under the despotic rule of the North. The visions also directed him to a place he'd never been before, where he felt he could find a tool to prevent his nightmares from becoming reality.

When the dreams finally became too much to bear, Forrest followed where they led and found the sword that would trade success on the battlefield for his immortal soul.

THE LURE OF POWER

Forrest did not realize the truth of the bargain he had unwittingly made until the long-standing tension between he and his superior Braxton Bragg led to a quarrel and ending with him threatening the Bragg's life before storming out of his presence. While threatening a superior (especially a close friend of the President) would have normally ended his career, Bragg was found dead of an unknown cause before anyone else learned of the argument.



Forrest was granted an independent command, and he proceeded to use both his natural gifts, along with the arcane ones granted by the sword, to become a legendary figure. His well-known genius camouflaged the bad luck his enemies suffered, and his previous reputation for hard-fighting disguised the relic's taint enough that few suspect he is anything different than he was before October, 1863.

However, Forrest knows the truth, and it's a truth he can barely live with anymore. Only his desire to see an end to the war and his fear of Perdition have prevented him from suicide, and he would give anything but his honor to be free of the sword and its taint. He has no idea how to even begin to do this, and has almost resigned himself to damnation.

FORREST'S SWORD

The relic in question was a sword passed through generations of soldiers in the Conner family and carried from victory to bloody victory in the succession of Indian wars fought on the frontier. The bearer of the sword could remain invincible in battle, but he had to periodically satisfy its bloodthirsty taint.

The last of the Conners had carried the blade off to war in Tennessee, but he lost his life after accidentally dropping the blade during a clumsy and ill-timed moment in the Battle of Chickamauga. While the Conners had relied on the sword alone to triumph in battle, it now belonged to perhaps the ablest military leader in America.

Power: Forrest's sword confers upon him the Harrowed powers *eulogy* and *jinx* at Level 5 (see *Book o' the Dead* for details on these).

Taint: The sword requires the bearer to massacre any and all enemies who would seek mercy. While the killings do not necessarily have to be personally carried out by the bearer, they must at least be done by men under the bearer's authority.

Over time, the sword pushes the bearer toward ever more brutal acts, and the bearer has to make an Incredible (II) *Spirit* roll, with a +1 to the Target Number for each year the cursed blade has been in the bearer's possession.

The same roll is required to voluntarily give up the sword, but you should lower the TN if the bearer has some extra personal motivation to rid themselves of the sword (they're *heroic*, or a *pacifist*, or some other "in-character" reason). It may just be up to your posse to help the general find such motivation, most likely by helping him discover there is a way off the road to Perdition.



BACK IN BLACK

The Second Battle of Bowling Green was decided in part by the intervention of the Reckoners. The mysterious soldiers who helped change the outcome of the battle were in fact the collective abomination known as the Black Regiment. For the full story on the Black Regiment, see *Rascals, Varmints & Critters*.

THE DAY OF THE JACKALS

Unbeknownst to most, the wounded Confederate hero Patrick Cleburne is recuperating in a boarding house near Nashville, Tennessee, hidden away from the determined few who might wish to revenge themselves upon him. There are still a rich and powerful few who feel that Cleburne helped destroy "the proper order of things" when he advocated emancipation, and they damn him to this day for that and for costing them a large part of their wealth and power. Such feelings can move men to murder, even of a convalescing foe. And who can be sure the North would not opt for a similar course of action at this critical juncture in the War?

However, the General is not without protection. A trio of war widows run the boarding house he is resting at, but these ladies are far removed from the stereotypical, swooning Southern belles they portray. Lynette Hill, Michelle Breaunix, and Tanith MacLachlan gave their husbands to the War, and when the Yankees invaded their home, they began giving information to the Confederate Secret Service. Though the Federals have been driven north, they retain the skills they learned during their time as spies behind enemy lines.

While the ladies can deal with most threats, you might see to it that a posse passing through Nashville winds up at that same boarding house in time to help them prevent a cold-blooded murder. The heroes can be chivalrous and earn a sizable reward from the Confederacy while they're at it, which is a tough combination to beat.

STREET-FIGHTING MAN

The situation in Detroit remains an unexpected nightmare for the British, as one resourceful officer and a handful of patriotic men have made the Brits wish they'd never set foot in Michigan. Colonel Harbaugh is a West Point graduate, well-versed in the tactics the Spanish used to thwart the larger numbers of

Emperor Napoleon, and he has instructed his men to follow suit and melt into the civilian population.

From there, the Union soldiers carry out a campaign of sabotage and assassination against the British, a type of warfare they neither anticipated nor seem to be able to counter. House-to-house searches and mass arrests have only driven more of Detroit's citizens to join Colonel Harbaugh's men in harassing the occupation forces, so the more the Brits attempt to stifle the resistance, the more it grows.

The Union government is aware that someone within the city continues to resist, and its currently looking for a way to get some sort of aid to them. Since it may be some time before a military campaign to retake the city can be launched, this has become an even greater priority for the North. Whatever form that aid takes or whether it arrives at all, Col. Harbaugh and the people of Detroit continue to carry the fight to the city streets.

DECISION '76

THE GHOST & THE DARKNESS

The Reckoners may seem unlikely players in American politics, but every election since 1868 has been influenced by them and their minions. Andrew Johnson's shadowy campaign advisors were none other than Allan Pinkerton and the now-Harrowed Abraham Lincoln, soon to be known as "the Ghost." While Johnson was surely a long shot, Lincoln realized he was the only announced pro-war candidate who had even a chance to win. The two conspired to help the unpopular Johnson defeat the antiwar candidate he was certain to face, and it was they who orchestrated his entire campaign, including the decision to put Grant on the ticket.

JEFFERSON DAVIS' DUPLICATE

As was revealed in *The Quick & the Dead*, the Confederate White House has been occupied since October 1871 by an abomination known as a doppelganger, which has taken the form of Jefferson Davis. The doppelganger's agenda has always been to prolong the war and inflict as much death and destruction as possible, and to that end it has ruthlessly guarded its political power.

The Southern Sentinel's suspicions are then, quite accurate. The deaths of Robert M.T. Hunter and many other Davis opponents were far from





accidental. Hunter was consumed by the dark minions of the doppelganger, and only the extreme mutilation of his corpse prevented the death from being recognized as a homicide. Several more of the President's foes have followed Hunter into their graves, but now that Richmond is under direct rule of the national government, "Davis" can easily quash any investigation the already overstretched Texas Rangers might launch.

Stealing the election was easy for the doppelganger, who saw to it the electoral votes assigned to the western territories were counted and recounted until they added up in his favor. However, it may find it difficult to continue covering its tracks, as more people than ever now believe something is amiss with the President.

THE DOPPLEGANGER'S PLAN

The Jefferson Davis doppelganger revealed some of its future plans for the war during the November 2 Cabinet meeting in Richmond. Its agenda includes the continued development and deployment of weapons of mass destruction, most of which would horrify the most ardent of

"fire-eaters." Most previous weapons research has been (and continues to be) done at the "secret" facility at Roswell, but increasingly "Davis" has turned to two men to carry out work known only to him. They are Gabriel Rains, head of the Torpedo Bureau, and his brother George, head of the Ordnance Bureau.

The Rains brothers had time and again proven themselves among the best men the Confederacy had for developing new scientific weapons, and they had begun work on the President's covert projects when they were asked to develop a counter to the Union air carriages. Gabriel Rains and Secretary of War Eric Michele devised the plan to use Gatling-gun-armed ornithopters to attack the Union vehicles, and George Rains provided lanterns fueled by an experimental alchemical mixture to enable them to fight in the dark of night.

LET LOOSE THE DOGS OF WAR

The Cabinet was stunned when Davis revealed the first of the new weapons designed at his behest by the Rains Brothers. Gabriel had developed a more efficient version of the elixir gun already in use by Confederate grenadiers, and George had developed a hideous new weapon for it to deliver: chlorine gas. When a hooded mask capable of shielding friendly forces from the gas' effects was added, the weapon which turned the tide at Sixth Manassas was complete.

The Rains Brothers saw themselves as only doing their patriotic duties for their country and its President, but most of the civilized world (outside of envious military planners) was appalled. This matters little to the doppelganger, of course, and the brothers continue to develop new methods of delivering poison gas (possibly through artillery shells), as well as even more lethal types of airborne toxins. Only time will tell what horrors are likely to result from their "patriotic work."

NEW TOYS

As the Southern Sentinel none too subtly alludes, both the Union air carriage *Meade* and its captain, Charles Gates, are now in Southern hands, along with the three land ironclads abandoned on the Manassas battlefield. The Union has samples of the chlorine gas weapon developed by the Rains brothers (taken from Union casualties evacuated from the field at Sixth Manassas), and now Yankee mad scientists are pursuing research along similar lines.





As a result, there is likely to be much intrigue surrounding these captured prototypes, as both sides seek to retake or destroy their creations, or least determine how much their enemies have discerned about them. While the odds are not great, clever action may yet deny the secrets of these new killing machines and deadly substances to the other side.

INVOLVING THE POSSE

The events of November are large-scale, but that doesn't mean your posse can't have a say in their outcome. While you may already have some ideas how to put them in the thick of things, here are a few suggestions that you might use or which could inspire something you like even better.

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

If your heroes support a side in the war, there are plenty of areas where they can contribute their own little part to the war effort. The supply trains to northern Virginia are guarded, but traveling over so many miles it's impossible to spare enough official troops to do the job by themselves.

People of well-known sympathies and unique skills can find work filling in those gaps. Both North and South are also looking for qualified ornithopter pilots to fill out their new volunteer squadrons, creating more opportunities for willing (and perhaps foolhardy) posse members.

CLEANING UP THE MESS

If your posse contains Texas Rangers or Pinkertons (or has worked with them in the past), the heroes probably be asked to help clean up the mess left after the clashes in Virginia and Kentucky. There are walkin' dead aplenty, but who knows what new horrors have been spawned by these latest slaughters?

DAVIS' SECRET

Rangers may get caught up in the investigation of President Davis, either officially or unofficially, especially if their suspicions match the Southern Sentinel's about the mysterious deaths of the President's foes. Rest assured, if they get close to the truth, they run afoul of pro-Davis elements within the government who also see themselves as above the law, and eventually they may come face to face with things not of this world.



BATTLING THE BRITISH

Up North, there are no shortage of folks looking for a way to send aid to the people of Detroit, and your heroes may just be the ones to get it there. They may be working for the Union government or somebody else, and they may be carrying humanitarian aid or guns. Either way, it's quite a challenge to get past the British garrison. The heroes may even wind up throwing in with Col. Harbaugh and the resistance if their feelings lean pro-Union.

WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS

If your posse is just looking to do right, there's no shortage of needy, innocent folks in Kentucky and Virginia, and those in Kansas could use some good men who are better shots.

If your campaign is set in the Disputed Lands during the time of the elections, there's plenty of need for somebody to stand up to the various "survey takers" roaming the land.

Regardless of their direction, there's plenty out there for your heroes to do and maybe a little profit to be made along the way. This should put the capper on an unforgettable year.



THE GREAT RAIL WARS

THE CAULDRON

Fear Level 5

The bloody and vicious fighting which raged here has raised the local Fear Level to new heights. This area covers a swathe roughly two miles on either side of the Denver Pacific right-of-way from the point it enters the foothills up to the Continental Divide.

The area within sight of the tracks has been cleared by DP work crews (they don't want paying passengers seeing any dead bodies). Beyond that, the entire region is littered with corpses, shattered automatons and clockwork spiders, and burnt-out vehicles.

The entire region has an eerie stillness to it. No birds chirp, no small animals rustle through branches overhead, nothing. You should emphasize to your heroes how loud their voices sound and how every little twig they step on sounds like a pistol shot. All *sneak* rolls made in this area suffer a -4 modifier.

The fighting here has given birth to two new abominations.



THE SCRAP 'GLOM

The scrap 'glom is a variant of the standard 'glom (see *Rascals*, *Varmints*, & *Critters* for details) A 'glom (short for conglomerate) is an undead creature formed from multiple bodies which have fused together into an unholy mass. A handful of these new 'gloms have formed from the awful carnage of the Cauldron.

The scrap 'glom is something unique to the battlefields of the Great Rail Wars. This is because the rail barons' troops tend have more mad scientist goodies than the regular foot troops of either the US or the Confederacy.

Scrap 'gloms cannot only add additional corpses to their mass but they can also incorporate bits and pieces of mechanical devices as well. The scrap 'gloms formed in the Cauldron have absorbed parts of Hellstromme's automatons and clockwork spiders and bits of wrecked steam wagons, velocipedes, and ornithopters.

Scrap 'gloms grow in size and power by grafting bodies and mechanical parts to themselves. Added corpses must have been dead at least 10 minutes before they can be grafted on. A scrap 'glom can graft a new body on in a single action. It can't attack or vamoose while doing this because this requires total concentration. It takes 10 minutes or more for a scrap 'glom to absorb a wrecked vehicle.

Each Trait listed in the profile that's marked with an asterisk increases by one step for each body or vehicle added beyond the first, up to a maximum of d12+8. The scrap 'glom likewise increases its Size by +3 and its Wind by +10 for each additional body or vehicle grafted to it. The 'glom has one *fightin'* attack for every two bodies or vehicles in the mass.

The mechanical portions incorporated into a scrap 'glom give it some armor protection. Whenever an attack hits the 'glom, roll 1d8. On a 1 to 4, the area struck has no Armor. On a 5 through 8, subtract -4 from the roll. This is the amount of Armor the creature has at the location hit. The armored sections of the creature are pretty obvious. A hero can avoid these by taking a called shot with a -2 modifier.

Scrap 'gloms can also make use of the contraptions they absorb. An absorbed Gatling gun works as long as it has ammo remaining, the 'glom can roll along on the wheels of the vehicles it's grafted, etc.

Small 'scrap gloms of two to five bodies have a Terror of 9. Those of six or more body grafts have a Terror of 11.



The largest scrap 'glom in the Cauldron has absorbed six bodies and two velocipedes. It has two working Gatling guns (30 rounds each) courtesy of Dr. Hellstromme. The two velocipedes allow it to roll along at Pace 15.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d6*, Q:3d8, V:2d6*

Fightin': brawlin' 6d6, shootin': any 3d6

Mental: C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d4*, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d8

Overawe 5d4*

Size: 9+

Terror: 9+

Special Abilities:

Undead: Like most undead, a scrap 'glom can be killed by a shot to the head.

Unfortunately, a 'glom has as many heads as bodies, and only one of them is used by the manitou animating the mass. Only a killing shot to this head can put the 'glom down for good.

Weapons: Scrap 'gloms can wield guns if available. In general, there is no more than one gun for every two bodies in the mass.

SLITTERS

Once the Smith & Robards ornithopters began patrolling the area, most of the rail warriors hid by day and moved by night. This led to quite a few night battles. These fights were particularly vicious and usually consisted of lots of sneaking around followed by a quick flurry of killing, and then some more sneaking around.

Troops who could move quietly and kill quickly were a real asset. Often the cowpokes who were good with a knife fared better than those who relied on their hoglegs, because they could kill without giving their position away.

Slitters are the reanimated corpses of these fellows' victims. They can be identified by the ear-to-ear slash across their throats.

Slitters have only one goal: to kill others in the same way that they were killed. They always carry a large, razor-sharp knife and try to cut their victim's throat.

Slitters are stealthy bastards. They prefer to attack from behind or from ambush. (Have your posse make those surprise rolls!) They often sneak into camps at night and slit the throats of sleeping victims or hide in trees and drop down on unsuspecting cowpokes.

Whenever a slitter gets a raise on its *fightin'* roll, it automatically hits its target in the throat. This gives a bonus of +2 damage dice, just like a noggin shot.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:4d10, S:3d10, Q:4d8, V:3d8

Fightin': knife' 5d10, sneak 6d10

Mental: C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:4d8

Size: 6

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Knife: STR+1d8. This knife is supernaturally sharp and never loses its edge. If the slitter is put down, it vanishes.

Supernatural Stealth: The slitter never suffers any negative modifiers to its *sneak* roll, regardless of the terrain. This includes the -4 modifier imposed on anyone in the Cauldron area.

Undead

Coup: A Harrowed who counts coup on a slitter gains 1 level in his *fightin': knife* Aptitude.

ELBOW ROOM

The Reverend Grimme has decided it's time to expand his already considerable influence in the Maze. The attacks on his followers by railroad-sponsored have given him just the excuse he needs to form his own private army. He can't be too upset with railroads. After all, he is behind the attacks on their rail crews.

CAMP GRIMME

Grimme has established a training camp bearing his name about two miles east of the City of Lost Angels. The camp can house about 150 recruits at a time. The original camp was little more than a tent city, but the recruits are hard at work building a more permanent facility, complete with a stockade.

The camp is run by Avenging Angels, high-ranking members of the Guardian Angels. Only the most ambitious and sadistic of Grimme's lieutenants are assigned here because they have been given orders to be utterly ruthless in their training methods.

Unlike the Guardian Angels who patrol the streets of Lost Angels, it is not necessary to be a member of Grimme's church to join the new units being formed (although almost all of them will be members by the time they finish training. Read on.). Most of the new recruits are down-on-their-luck miners, criminals only one step ahead of a posse, and deserters from the Union and Confederate forces in the Maze.

Maintaining discipline among a rabble like this requires draconian discipline and an iron will. Grimme's lieutenants have this and more.





MYSTERY MEAT

Like Grimme's faithful on Sundays, the troops at Camp Grimme are well fed. The source of their food is also the same, the abattoir beneath Rock Island Prison. The only real difference is the recipe used to prepare the recruits' food. The stew they eat each night is one of the Reverend's personal favorites.

Each night Grimme says "grace" over the stew and then flavors it with a dash of his blood. This simple, yet effective ritual has an interesting effect on those who consume it. Among those who are weak-willed or already disposed toward evil, it inspires loyalty to Grimme and his ideals. Strong-willed individuals and those who are inclined toward good are repulsed by the stew and become unable to eat it. Because Grimme uses only a small dose of his blood in each batch of stew, the effect is subtle and takes place gradually.

The camp instructors know what to look for and use this to weed out undesirables. Anyone showing signs of stomach trouble is taken to see the doctor—at Rock Island Prison! The next time they make a visit to Camp Grimme, it's in the stew pot.

INFILTRATING

If your posse should try to infiltrate the Guardian Angels, have them make a *Spirit* roll each week they are at Camp Grimme. The TN for this starts at each hero's *Spirit* die type -4, and increases by +2 each week. (Blessed characters start at their *Spirit* die type and go up from there.) If a hero fails one of these rolls, he can no longer force himself to choke down the stew served at dinner each night. Unless he can find a way to hide his problem, he soon receives a visit from his instructors and an all-expenses paid trip to Rock Island. Of course, none of this applies to characters which are not basically good in nature, but that's your call, Marshal.

Any character who completes the six-week training course increases their *shootin': rifle* and *fightin': brawling* Aptitudes by +2 levels. They also get +3 levels in *professional: theology* (Church of Lost Angels).

COLONEL PRATHER

The camp is run by Colonel Ludlow Prather. He was once an officer in the Union Army, but he was court-martialed for ordering his men to execute Confederate prisoners without cause.



Only the intervention of some high-ranking friends prevented his own execution. After leaving the Army in disgrace, he drifted for a few years before finding a home in the Church of Lost Angels.

Prather is a sadistic ogre of a man and is one of Grimme's most trusted lieutenants. He runs a tight ship and nothing delights him more than a recruit giving him an excuse to indulge himself. He has men flogged for the slightest infraction and loves to devise interesting tortures for more serious infractions. He loves to quote the portion of scripture which reads, "if thy eye offend thee, pluck it out," and many a recruit has finished training minus an eye, hand, or other portion of his anatomy. Desertion, of course, is punishable by death.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:4d6, S:2d8, Q:3d8, V:2d10
Dodge 4d6, fightin': sword 5d6, horse ridin' 5d6,
shootin': pistol 5d8, throwin': bolts o' doom 4d8

Mental: C:4d8, K:3d8, M:2d10, Sm:4d8, Sp:3d8
Academia: occult 3d8, artillery 4d8, faith: Church
of Lost Angels 4d8, guts 4d8, leadership 4d10,
overawe 5d10, scrutinize 5d8, search 4d8

Edges: Sand 3, the voice (threatening)

Hindrances: Mean as a rattler

Black Magic: Dark protection 3

Gear: Saber, Colt Lightning, set of bloody bones
(see *The Quick & the Dead*).

ANGELS ON PATROL

Although they sometimes assemble together into large units for things like the attack on the Bayou Vermillion camp, most of Grimme's new Guardian Angels patrol the countryside and the Maze around Lost Angels in small groups. A typical patrol usually consists of five to 10 Guardian Angels. Large patrols or groups with a specific mission are sometimes accompanied by an Avenging Angel.

The patrols look for anyone who might be causing trouble for Grimme's Church. The Angels definition of trouble varies widely and can include things like not showing proper respect to his anointed servants. Anyone they take a dislike to is taken into custody and hauled in front of the Church Court.

Although their arbitrary sense of justice hasn't won them any friends, there are many in the Maze who welcome their presence. Their patrols have actually forced outlaws around Lost Angels to look for greener pastures, and in a few instances the Angels have fought to protect

small villages from the depredations of General Kwan and other warlords. They sometimes escort Grimme's missionaries into neighboring towns and assist in distributing food.

ALTAR FRAGMENTS

The Avenging Angels who accompany these patrols all carry a small stone chip (about the size of a bullet) from the altar in Grimme's cathedral. The altar is the focus of the mystical ritual which allows the Reverend and his followers to disguise their black magic while inside the city's rings.

This same ability extends to those who carry a fragment of the altar, which allows the Avenging Angels to operate outside the city without exposing their true nature. *Bolts o' doom* look like heavenly beams, *dark protection* looks like a dim halo, and even bloody ones appear as angelic beings.

AVENGING ANGELS

Avenging Angels normally only accompany larger patrols, and these units tend to have a specific mission like bringing in someone Grimme has branded an outlaw.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:3d6, S:3d6, Q:2d8, V:3d8
Dodge 4d6, fightin': sword 4d6, horse ridin' 3d6,
shootin': pistol 4d8, throwin': bolts o' doom 4d8

Mental: C:4d8, K:3d6, M:3d8, Sm:4d6, Sp:3d8
Academia: occult 3d6, faith: Church of Lost
Angels 4d8, guts 4d8, leadership 3d8, overawe
4d8, scrutinize 3d8, search 4d8

Edges: "The voice" (threatening)

Hindrances: Self-righteous

Black Magic: Bolts o' doom 3, dark protection 3

Gear: Sword, Colt Peacemaker, 1 set of bloody
bones, and an altar fragment

LOAD OF BULL

Sitting Bull has allowed his war chiefs to attack railroads other than Iron Dragon as a gesture to show his commitment to the Old Ways movement. Any damage they inflict can only benefit his ally Kang, so he sees no harm in permitting the attacks.

Besides earning him good will among the Old Ways followers, the wily old chief has found another way to benefit from the situation. He has secretly contacted Black River and Bayou Vermillion and offered the services of war bands which are personally loyal to him.





So far only Mina Devlin has taken him up on his offer. She has hired Sitting Bull's warriors to harass Wasatch forces and keep them from interfering with her expansion plans. She also hired a band to attack a small Union Blue outpost, so her troops could show up in the nick of time to "drive the savages away" and earn Chamberlain's gratitude.

Sitting Bull has taken the money Mina paid him and given it to Kang in exchange for more guns for his warriors.

THE RAILROADS

Here's the real deal on all of the rail barons' deep, dark secrets.

BAYOU VERMILLION

The Apache attacks on BV crews are due to the Indians' hatred of the undead workers and warriors the railroad uses. As much as he would like to continue his campaign against the garrison at Fort Huachuca, Geronimo believes that destroying LaCroix's evil is a much higher priority.

LaCroix does have a plan for dealing with Geronimo. Soon all the graves lining the BV tracks will be empty. He's had his voodoo priests working overtime whipping up some more of his reanimation elixir. He's been shipping the stuff by the trainload to the fort at the end of BV's line.

When the time is right, he plans to use it to create a horde of undead and send them up into the Dragoon Mountains to find the Chiricahua stronghold. Even if they don't find Geronimo's hideout (and they probably won't), the Baron is hoping that having a horde of zombies on his doorstep may distract the Apache war chief enough that the Bayou Vermillion crews can push a line through the area mostly unopposed.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Lacy's observations on the newest "Cowboys" are on the money. LaCroix has been negotiating with Santa Anna for help against both Geronimo and Dixie Rails. They have not reached a firm agreement as yet, but Santa Anna has sent some of his intelligence officers north to get the lay of the land.

The Mexican general is favorably disposed toward the alliance though. He has asked LaCroix for a favor to show his good faith. The baron must recover Santa Anna's wooden leg from its resting place in Springfield, Illinois.

BLACK RIVER

The fighting in Kansas nearly knocked Black River out of the Great Rail Wars entirely. The constant battles and the loss of a number of trains carrying valuable cargoes drained the company's coffers almost to the breaking point. At one point, the railroad had only enough money left to cover one week's payroll.

Mina knew that if she couldn't pay her troops, most of them would leave her for a railroad that would. She turned to Violet Esperanza and the Wichita Witches for help.

She sent the gang south to find "investors" for the railroad. These investors were banks, stagecoaches, and any other repository of money the Witches could find. They went on a crime spree that put the James Gang to shame. The money they "raised" was enough to keep the company going until it reached Dodge City.

No one has made the connection between the Black River's investors and the terrible string of robberies for one simple reason: the Witches left no witnesses to their crimes. They were utterly ruthless and killed anyone they suspected might be able to identify them—all but one.

While robbing the bank in Gillespie, Texas, they overlooked a single witness, a man by the name of Booker Hage. He knows the identity of the robbers, but is terrified to tell anyone his secret because he knows what happened to everyone else who saw the Witches. Even the \$5,000 reward posted by the Texas Rangers isn't enough to loosen his tongue.

If your posse should look into these robberies, there are quite a few people, including the other rail barons who would pay handsomely to know what Hage saw. The Witches' crimes were so vicious that the Confederate government would be forced to take action against Black River if the connection could be made.

A WOMAN SCORED

Mina had two goals when she proposed the alliance with Union Blue. The first was to buy some time for her railroad to rebuild its forces and get its finances back in order. She succeeded at this.

Her second goal was to seduce Chamberlain. With the elections coming up in November, she hoped to cause a major scandal ("Union War Hero Linked to Southern Railroad Owner!"), that would force Grant to distance himself from Chamberlain. Without the support Union Blue received from the Union Army, Mina felt that her railroad would be strong enough to crush



Chamberlain's company and knock him out of the race.

Unfortunately for her, Chamberlain was able to resist her advances. The best she was able to do was create a minor stir by creatively rearranging her clothes as she left his rail car.

DIXIE RAILS

LaCroix is involved in the SF&EP affair of course. Before Dixie Rails linked with Ennis' railroad, LaCroix invited him to negotiations of his own. Being rather naive, Ennis agreed to attend this private meeting alone. The Baron drugged Ennis' drink, and before he hit the floor LaCroix's minions had him trussed up on an altar.

The Baron worked his hoodoo on the hapless railroad owner and made him his unwitting servant. LaCroix took Ennis' gold pocket watch to complete the spell. As long as LaCroix holds onto this watch, Ennis must obey his commands.

The Baron commanded Ennis to call off the proposed link with Dixie Rails and link instead with his own railroad. Now that it appears that Dixie Rails is preparing to resolve the issue by force, LaCroix has ordered Ennis to begin

negotiating with the Lees again. The voodoo master knows that the Dixie Rails owners are reasonable men and want to avoid a fight if possible. He hopes to stall them a while longer with this negotiation offer and buy time for Bayou Vermillion to break through the Apaches and establish a larger lead.

IRON DRAGON

Kang knew he had to break the Anti-Railroad League up quickly—both to prevent it from inspiring others down the line and to keep the government from becoming involved. He decided to try something a little more subtle (for him) and turned to his sorcerers for a solution. After some research, they were able to summon up some ogres from the Chinese Underworld.

Kang let these demons loose on the ranchers, and they did the trick. The ranchers could handle blasting martial artists and samurai warriors, but the mere sight of these vicious giants often caused them to turn tail and run. Most of them were so spooked by these bizarre creatures that they sold their ranches to Iron Dragon at well below their market value.





There were a few holdouts, of course, but Kang sent his ogres to do more than simply look in windows and spook cattle. The last few League ranchers sold out to Kang within the week.

Since then, Kang has sent his ogres out in advance of the railroad to terrorize those along its route. This suits the ogres just fine.

This strategy has worked well for Iron Dragon. Often by the time the railroad reaches an area the ogres have been operating in, the few remaining settlers that are still hanging on are more than happy to sell their homesteads and ranches to the railroad.

Reports of strange creatures terrorizing settlers has attracted the attention of the Pinkertons. The agency has sent a number of agents to investigate, but none of them have reported back yet—or ever will. Kang arranged for these agents to meet untimely ends. Not hard to do when you consider that two of them traveled to the area on Iron Dragon trains.

CHINESE OGRE

Corporeal: D:2d4, N:3d10, S:4d12+2, Q:1d8, V:3d10
Fightin': sword 4d10

Mental: C:1d6, K:1d4, M:1d6, Sm:1d6 (2d6 in rare instances), Sp:2d6

Guts 6d6, Overawe 5d6

Size: 8-10

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Big Weapon: Ogres carry enormous swords or pole arms too big for a human to use. They do STR+4d8, a Defensive Bonus of +2, and have a Speed of 1.

Black Magic: A really smart ogre might have black magic abilities.

SAMURAI

Iron Dragon's forces have benefited from the arrival of many samurai from Japan. In 1876, Japanese government outlawed the wearing of the daisho (the katana and wakizashi swords, the symbol of a samurai). In protest, many of the samurai have left Japan and come to the New World to swear allegiance to the new daimyo of the West, Kang.

Back in Japan, the samurai hear stories of the great warlord Kang, who has established his own kingdom in the New World. Most stories talk about his wealth and power and his need for good warriors. Few mention that he is a pirate and a scoundrel (perhaps because most of the stories were started by Kang's agents).

Many of these honorable warriors hear these stories and leave Japan to serve a new master. Once they arrive in America, they discover the stories aren't all they seemed, but by then most have already sworn allegiance to their new lord. A few samurai, once they learn the truth about their new master have committed seppuku.

THE SEVEN

A new group of samurai joined Kang's forces recently. Seven ronin appeared at Kang's fortress in the Maze and pledged themselves to his service. They told a tale of having rescued a small Japanese village from a band of desperate brigands, then being forced to flee their homeland.

These samurai are powerful warriors and have already made themselves felt on the battlefield. They fight with a ferocity which is unmatched by any of Kang's warriors.

Unfortunately these warriors are not entirely happy with their new boss. It took some time before they realized the truth that Kang and his men were often no better than the brigands they had fought back in Japan. They refuse to dishonor themselves by breaking their vows to Kang, but they also cannot take part in his more underhanded schemes.

The Seven, as they have become known, fight in battle for Kang, but they have made it clear to him they will not do anything which would violate their bushido code or bring dishonor upon them.

THE RAILROAD IS COMING

When not called upon to serve on the battlefield, the Seven have taken to riding ahead of Iron Dragon's advancing rail crews and visiting the towns in their path. They try to peacefully persuade the townspeople to grant Iron Dragon the right-of-way so that Kang isn't forced to resort to other methods.

The Seven try to keep ahead of Kang's ogres. If a town agrees to grant the right-of-way to Iron Dragon, the samurai send a message the advancing rail crews to inform them of this and to make sure the town is not visited by the ogres. In a few cases in which the news did not reach the ogres in time, the Seven have actually defended the town from them.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:4d12, S:3d10, Q:2d12, V:3d10
Fightin': katana 6d12, horse ridin' 5d12, shootin' bow 5d8





Mental: C:4d8, K:3d6, M:3d8, Sm:4d6, Sp:3d8
Guts 5d8, language: English 2d6, language:
Japanese, leadership 3d8, overawe 4d8,
scrutinize 3d8, search 4d8

Edges: Level-headed, nerves o' steel, tough as
nails 5, "the stare"

Hindrances: Vow: bushido code 5, vow: serve
Kang 4

Gear: Katana (STR+2d8), bow, 20 arrows, and
Samurai armor (Armor 1).

RAILS IN THE MAZE

Lacy is right on the money on this subject.
What he doesn't know is that Kang has already
tried to import locomotives and rolling stock by
ship. The other railroads got wind of this plan
and ordered their ships in the Maze to stop
these shipments at all costs. So far they've been
successful.

THE OLD WAYS

Members of the Old Ways movement have
been sabotaging Iron Dragon tracks in the Sioux
Nations and then ambushing the crews which
show up to repair them. Kang has protested to
Sitting Bull, but there is little he can do. Kang
has had to divert some of his troops to patrol
track in what is supposedly friendly territory.

UNION BLUE

Exactly how to expand west is Chamberlain's
biggest problem. Negotiations are not going well
with the Denver Pacific because Robards is
stalling for time. Robards has always planned to
sell the Denver Pacific to one of the rail barons
at some point, but he is not prepared to part
with it yet. He figures if he can trap Union Blue
in a desperate situation, he can jack up the price
for the DP when he finally does sell it.

Chamberlain's not waiting on Robards,
however. He's been busy recruiting the new
forces he needs if he attacks another railroad.

An attack is not his preferred option though.
He's been exploring a different path. The
construction going on at the Union Blue stations
are large warehouses meant to cover what he's
really up to.

Chamberlain has hired some mad scientists to
build some digging machines for his railroad.
They are being assembled in the warehouses,
and once finished they are to be used to dig a
tunnel underneath the Denver Pacific right-of-
way and emerge on the other side. Once past
the DP line, the Union Blue crews will proceed to
the Rockies as normal.

DEADWOOD & THE SIOUX NATIONS

HICKOK

Lacy's wrong about the deaths of the
members of McCall's jury. They're not being
caused by Hickok's friends. Hickok, is back from
the grave to take care of matters himself.

He lurks in the hills around Deadwood,
sneaking into town with a little help from
Calamity Jane whenever he figures it's time to
kill another juror. He isn't worried about the fact
that McCall rabbitted. He's more concerned with
finding out who put McCall up to the killing.
There'll be plenty of time to get McCall later.

Hickok tries to interrogate each juror before
killing him, but so far he has come up with
precious few clues as to his quarry's identity.
The one thing he is fairly sure of is that Sheriff
Bullock had no part in it. Not only would it have
been out of character for him, but Bullock would
be a lot more concerned about who's been
killing the jurors if he were behind Hickok's
murder.





The cards left on Hickok's victims are just his way of spooking the rest of the jurors. They have no other significance.

Hickok hasn't had any luck finding his guns, either. He thought that juror Amos McKittrick might have obtained them, but he searched McKittrick's store after killing him and found nothing. He's becoming convinced that the guns have left Deadwood entirely, so he's starting to listen for stories of people who claim to be using his pistols.

DAUGHTRIDGE'S SACRIFICE

Daughtridge's killing has all the trappings of an Indian sacrifice or ceremony, except for one: the participation of the Indians. Daughtridge was not killed by the Sioux. Instead, his killers were members of the Deadwood Miner's Alliance, an organization he'd frequently ridiculed.

Bryant and his men have been looking for ways to galvanize Deadwood into action against the Sioux, and they decided that murdering lone Indians in the dark and smashing mining equipment wasn't enough. They chose the despised Daughtridge as a good way to make an example of the "dangers of the Indian savages" that would shock the community. They carefully crafted a wooden frame, trying to make it look arcane and mystical, then caught Daughtridge, tied him to it, and tortured him to death.

Their hope was to make the killing look so savage that everyone would assume the Sioux did it. They even dug a few Indian symbols they'd seen into the ground near him to give credence to the illusion.

Unfortunately for them, anyone who knows anything about the Sioux could tell you that the signs they used represent positive, healing, forces, not dark powers. If a knowledgeable person looks into the matter, it soon becomes apparent that the killing is the work of someone other than the Sioux.

CUSTER & THE ALLIANCE

Unknown to the *Epitaph*, Custer and Bryant have formed an alliance with the intent of slaughtering the Sioux and taking their lands for the white man. They exchange messages by means of secret couriers and sometimes carrier pigeon to coordinate their activities. Though each man keeps a few of his own secrets, they still reveal a lot of their plans to each other (a fact which a lucky posse might be able to capitalize on).

ORDER OF THE RAVEN

The Ravenites are planning their biggest raid ever—an attack on Custer's camp to steal all of his guns, ammunition, and artillery if they can get away with it. This is why, as Lacy notes, their attacks have increased and they've been stockpiling ammo. If all goes according to their plan, they will be so heavily armed that it could easily shift the balance of power in the Sioux Nations, possibly with disastrous consequences for everyone there.

Succeed or fail, the raid should provoke Custer like a sharp stick in the eye. Either way, the result is complete mayhem.

MADDOX

Maddox (first name Victor) isn't much more than what he appears to be: a skilled gunslinger. He doesn't like to talk about his background because it's a little shady. He used to be a small-time outlaw in California.

He came to Deadwood in the hopes of leaving his past behind him and building a new and better life for himself. He'd like to settle down and raise a family.

Since he lost the election, he's stayed in town and supported himself as a bounty hunter while looking for other work as a lawman. As Lacy says, he holds no grudge against Bullock—but he does plan to run against him in two years if he hasn't found a better job.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d10, N:3d12, S:4d8, Q:2d10, V:2d8
Climbin' 1d12, dodge 3d12, fightin': brawlin' 4d12, fightin': knife 1d12, gunplay 3d10, horse ridin' 4d12, quick draw: pistol 5d10, shootin': pistol 5d10, shootin': rifle 3d10, shootin': shotgun 3d10, sneak 3d12, speed-load 2d10

Mental: C:3d6, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:4d6, Sp:2d8
Area knowledge: Weird West 3d6, area knowledge: California 2d6, language: English 2d6, gamblin' 3d6, guts 3d6, overawe 3d8, scrutinize 3d6, search 3d6, streetwise 2d6, trackin' 3d6

Edges: Level-headed 5

Hindrances: Habit (closemouthed) -3, outlaw -1 (a known, petty outlaw in California)

Gear: One single-action Colt Peacemaker, one Winchester '76 rifle, 50 rounds of ammunition for all his guns, Smith & Robards bulletproof vest (Light Vest, Armor 2), one speed-load cylinder, fast-draw holster, knife, rope, horse, and \$200 in Union greenbacks.





HYRAM BURNS

Burns is, indeed, a "mad scientist" with dreams of putting out Satan's Garden. That much is true. So is the existence of his "Aetheric Vortex Generator." It's what Burns isn't telling that counts.

Burns' theory about phlogiston is one he believes in strongly (though it is wrong; see below). But his generator doesn't work by "sucking" the phlogiston out of ghost rock. That's impossible, and he knows it. Burning phlogiston has to be dowsed, not sucked away, to put out the fire—and it's human blood that it has to be dowsed with. Water, liquor, and other liquids don't do the trick, according to his experiments. Blood is the key.

Burns' trips outside of Deadwood have not been just to get more money. He's been harvesting blood from unsuspecting investors who attend "private meetings" with him to learn more about his invention. He's also taken blood from a few of his Deadwood investors, causing their demise. He stores the blood in a refrigerated tank in the back of his motorized carriage. He's got a lot of it, but he needs much, much more before he can put his plan into action.

Burns is also using the Indian stories of "flame men" to keep people away from Satan's Garden. He's developed an "Infernal Suit"—clothes that can, through the use of ghost rock, burn without harming the wearer. His daughter Cynthia wears it to scare off and sometimes hurt or kill the curious or their competitors.

Anyone she touches suffers 1d12 damage every round, or 2d12 if she gets her opponent in a full bearhug. The suit also provides 3 points of Armor versus fire attacks. (Use the Buffalo Gal archetype from *Deadlands* for Cynthia if need be, but replace her *fightin': whip* with *fightin': wrasslin'*.)

Burns is, not to put too fine a point on it, stark-raving mad, and his madness has affected his daughter as well. Together the two of them are totally obsessed with the desire to prove Burns' theories and get rich in the process. Secretly the Reckoners support him and egg him on, hoping he'll provide them with a (literal) bloodbath before too long.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:2d8, S:2d6, Q:1d8, V:2d8
Drivin': steamwagon 2d8, shootin': flamethrower 2d6, sneak 3d8, teamster 2d8

Mental: C:4d8, K:2d12, M:3d6, Sm:3d8, Sp:3d6
Demolition 2d12, language: English 2d12, science: chemistry 3d12, science: engineering 3d12, scrutinize 3d8, search 2d8, tinkerin' 4d8

Edges: Arcane background: mad scientist 3, dinero 1, mechanically inclined 1

Hindrances: Curious -3, stubborn -2

Gear: Flamethrower, steamwagon with hidden refrigerated tank, and aetheric vortex generator.

USING & QUENCHING GHOST ROCK

A typical one-pound hunk of unprocessed ghost rock burns for about a week with a slow, steady flame hot enough to cook over. The processed cores used by many mad science gizmos have been drilled and shaped to increase the exposed surface area, so they burn hotter and faster. A lighted core (not being used in a device) burns for about three days.

The fireboxes of most gizmos which use ghost-rock cores are drafted so that a steady flow of air continually moves over the burning fuel. This greatly increases the speed at which it burns, and it normally gets hot enough to melt normal iron and steel (which is why ghost-rock boilers are made from ghost steel).

Ghost rock can only be extinguished by completely cutting off its air supply. Using water for this can be dangerous because, at the temperatures found in most ghost-rock fireboxes, the water can flash-boil, causing a steam explosion. (The steam explosion caused by attempting to douse the fire of a one-pound piece of ghost rock would do about 1d20 damage to any gizmos the rock is powering and anyone within 10 yards.) Instead, most ghost-rock boilers have an emergency sand canister on them. Yanking an emergency cord opens the canister and floods the firebox with sand.

Based on his research, Hiram Burns believes only blood can extinguish ghost rock safely. He's incorrect, but Heaven only knows how many folks he may convince—or what they'll do with the erroneous information.

KANG & THE MOUNTAIN DEVILS

Lacy is a bit off target on what's going on between Kang and the Sioux. While Kang is patrolling the area around Devils Tower, it didn't work out quite the way that Lacy thinks it did. If you really want to know the real scoop on what Kang's up to at Devils Tower, be sure to pick up the *Devils Tower* trilogy of adventures, especially part three, *Fortress o' Fear*.





What Lacy is unaware of is that Kang has struck a deal with the Order of the Raven, which was harassing his forces mercilessly. To get them to leave his patrols alone, he traded the Ravenites several crates of brand-new Winchester rifles and ammunition. The Order is now better armed than ever before and ready to make its raid on Custer's camp soon.

EXCELSIOR

Lacy's report on the monsters around Excelsior geyser has everything backward. It's true that there are rogue shamans in there, but they are trying to *contain* the creatures the geyser is spitting out, not summon them.

These wise men know that the geyser is a gate to the Hunting Grounds. When they realized that the creatures were coming through more often and staying for longer periods, they took it upon themselves to monitor the gates and protect their people from this threat. They've done a good job so far. While the *Epitaph's* sources have seen a few fiends that escaped, far more have been destroyed by the shamans. However, they may one day need the help of outsiders to fight off the evils to come.

TOMBSTONE & THE GREAT SOUTHWEST

ALEXANDER GRAVES

Graves is a hexslinger. He and his powers are detailed in *Law Dogs*. He came to Tombstone to meet with Doc Holliday, an old friend and former mentor who taught him a lot about hexslinging. Graves has recently encountered some walkin' dead that seem strangely resistant to gunfire, even gunfire enhanced by *bullseye*, *loaded for bear*, or *ammo whammy*. Graves wanted to get Holliday's opinion on this and find out if he'd ever encountered anything similar in his wanderings. Holliday had not, so he called in a new friend, Hugh O'Farrell.

O'Farrell is an Irishman almost fresh off the boat, who's raising a large herd of cattle on his new ranch near Tombstone. He's not a hexslinger—not yet, anyway—but he is a knowledgeable student of the occult. (It's his interest in such things that forced him to flee Ireland before superstitious farm folk decided to





come after him with pitchforks and burn him at the stake.) Holliday is working with him to see if he has the potential to become a hexslinger or student of Hoyle, and he's encouraged so far.

Unfortunately, O'Farrell could provide little information on the monsters Graves encountered, though he did speak of some dark voodoo rituals that might be able to create such horrors. Graves is considering making a trip to New Orleans to see if he can find out more.

THE RED LANTERN GANG

The esteemed Mr. O'Malley is right when he says that there are human motivations at work behind the Red Lantern Gang, but he's wrong when he writes that they are walkin' dead or ghosts. They're as alive as you or me. They just have a clever scheme going.

The Red Lantern Gang is the brainchild of Robert "Red" Covington, who used to fight with his gang in the Great Rail Wars on behalf of Dixie Rails. Although he and his gang were good, they never felt they got the respect or the money that Dixie Rails really owed them.

Fitzhugh Lee seemed to snub them, treating them sort of like servants rather than as the valuable business assets they were. They finally decided they could make more money on their own than they could by risking their necks for an ungrateful employer, so under Covington's leadership they left Dixie Rails and formed the Red Lantern Gang (a title given them by the people and the press; they had no name for their group).

COVINGTON'S SCHEME

Covington's plan was, and is, a simple one: take advantage of the weirdness in the West to make people think the gang was composed of walkin' dead rather than living men. One of the men in his gang, Fred Parrish, was a stage actor before falling on hard times and turning to outlawry. Using Parrish's talent with makeup, Covington was able to have all of his gang members disguised as "zombies" before their robberies. By acting like the popular conception of the walkin' dead (taking slow, shuffling steps; speaking in deep, slurred voices) and making sure the only lights they were ever seen in were the dim red lights of their railroad hazard lanterns, they have been able to maintain this illusion for nearly half a dozen robberies so far. They use their skill at tracking to hide their tracks, and they never steal anything that's too heavy or bulky to carry easily on a single horse.

For the typical member of the Red Lantern Gang (which is about two dozen strong), use the Desperado archetype from *Law Dogs*. Give four or five members *trackin' 3* so they can hide the gang's trail. Red Covington also has *gunplay 1* and an additional level with his *shootin': pistols Aptitude*. Fred Parrish has *disguise 3* and *performin': actin' 2*.

DISGUISES

Disguising a gang member as a zombie is difficult, but Parrish takes his time and does it right. Assume that any time a posse member tries to make a *scrutinize* roll to see through the disguise that Parrish rolled at least a 7 on his *disguise* roll. However, this provides a clue with which the posse may track the Red Lantern Gang down.

Parrish requires a lot of makeup for these disguises and can only purchase the appropriate supplies in larger cities like Shan Fan, Denver, or Lost Angels. Posse members who think that the "walking dead" routine is a hoax can try to track him down by checking with the few possible sources for acting supplies out West. One of them is sure to remember Parrish and the large amounts of makeup he purchases periodically.

TURQUESA

Turquesa is indeed a vigilante who's trying to uphold the cause of justice in the Southwest. No ulterior motives or mysterious background here, folks. She's the genuine article.

Turquesa is secretly Colleen O'Farrell, the beautiful red-haired daughter of Irish rancher Hugh O'Farrell. Since her mother died in childbirth, leaving only her father to raise her, she grew up as something of a tomboy, able to ride and shoot better than any boy she knew. Her father, busy trying to make a living in Ireland and America, has left her to her own devices since she was about 16.

Colleen has been looking for an appropriate outlet for her talents and energy for years. Ireland had little to offer her, so she was glad when her father decided to move to the American West. She briefly considered becoming a cowgirl, but she soon realized how boring that would be.

After reading in the *Epitaph's Guide* about the difficulties the authorities were having bringing renegade Legionnaires to justice, it hit her. She could become a vigilante (secretly, of course; her father would never consent to her becoming a lawman... err, lawwoman). She designed her



Turquesa costume, complete with a black wig to hide her distinctive red hair, and set out to lend the authorities a helping hand.

So far she's been very successful and is building up a substantial reputation as a crimefighter in the Southwest. Her father and the other citizens of Tombstone don't have a clue who she is. To them she appears to be a pretty and kind if somewhat forward young woman (and quite a catch as a bride, as far as many bachelors are concerned). Alexander Graves realized what she was up to almost immediately though, and he plans to keep an eye out for her. In truth, she could use his help, since she isn't entirely aware of what she's gotten herself into. To her, this is all a big adventure. She's never encountered anything "weird" and doesn't believe a lot of what's printed in the *Epitaph*, so she's in for a real shock sometime soon.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d12, N:3d12, S:3d6, Q:3d8, V:3d8
Climbin' 1d12, dodge 4d12, fightin': whip 6d12, gunplay 4d12, horse ridin' 5d12, quick draw: pistol 4d8, shootin': pistol 5d10, sneak 4d12, speed-load: pistol 3d8



Mental: C:3d8, K:2d6, M:4d10, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d8
Area knowledge: Arizona 3d6, language: English 2d6, language: Spanish 1d6, overawe 4d10, scrutinize 3d8, search 3d8, streetwise 4d6, trackin' 3d8

Edges: Belongin's 2 (Belinda, her exceptional horse [fast and smart]), brave 2, nerves o' steel 1, purty 1, the stare 1, tough as nails 2

Hindrances: Law o' the West -3, oath (capture lawbreakers; defend the innocent) -5

Gear: One silvered single-action Colt Peacemaker of quality, 50 rounds of ammunition for the Colt, one speed-load cylinder, fast-draw holster for the Colt, whip, knife, rope, mask (eliminates penalty for using silvered gun; see *Law Dogs*), and a cloak.

COMANCHE MOON

While the "Comanche Moon" is a real phenomena—Comanches seem to like to attack whites on full moons in August and September for some reason—it's not to blame for what's happening in north Texas. The raids are not being conducted by Comanches at all, but by Tonkawa secret society members who have disguised themselves as their hated enemies to obtain "long pig" for their feasts while throwing the whites off their trail. Walks in Two Worlds, the fallen Texas Ranger who leads the cannibalistic Tonkawa secret warriors, has been orchestrating the raids to keep his followers' larders stocked, so to speak. Framing the Comanches is just an added bonus.

The Texas Rangers have had little luck tracking down the Tonkawa because other fallen Rangers, who also indulge in the Tonkawa cannibalism ritual, are hampering their efforts. In fact, the Ranger in charge of the investigation, Lieutenant Gerald Coppington, is one of these corrupt Rangers. He knows what actually took place, but he stymies his underlings whenever they develop any solid leads. Perhaps a zealous young Ranger might turn to trusted outsiders (your posse) to help him when Lieutenant Coppington orders him off the investigation.

For more information on the Tonkawa and Walks in Two Worlds, see *Ghost Dancers*.

EL PASO SALT WARS

As usual in the Weird West, there's more simmering beneath the surface of the Salt Wars than can be seen from the surface. The real Salt War is brewing not between the Ring and the Mexicans so much as it is between the Ring's



leaders, Mills and Fountain. Each is supporting a different candidate for governor of Texas, and the Ring is under dangerous strain. Depending on who comes out on top in the election, the Ring may break, with most members following the supporter of the new governor. Then there's likely to be real fighting between the two factions. The Mexicans might attempt to take advantage of this situation too.

Cardis and Father Borajo are not entirely on the up-and-up in this situation. Both of them are being paid by the Salt Ring to support the tax. If the Mexicans find out about this, these two are likely to be strung up pretty quick, and some of the Ring's members too. The whole border area could explode with white-versus-Mexican violence if things go wrong—and with the Reckoners looking on gleefully, that's almost certainly what's going to happen.

CALIFORNIA & THE GREAT MAZE

FELLHEIMER & THE PINKERTONS

Fellheimer's Folly—Fear Level 3

What the marshal and the Pinkertons saw when they climbed halfway up the side of Fellheimer's Folly was that Fellheimer had been crucified to the side of the mountain. Spikes made of ghost rock were driven through his wrists and ankles. Then his killer used a knife to carve over two dozen arcane symbols into his body. The blood from the symbols, which are about an inch deep each, continues to run out of the wounds and down the side of the cliff.

The Pinkertons are unable to explain the significance of the symbols or how they keep bleeding even though Fellheimer's been dead for weeks. Nor can they explain how someone could hold Fellheimer up to the side of a sheer cliff to pound stone spikes through his body. There's nowhere for his killer to stand. Even the Ghost himself was called and came away perplexed. All efforts to take the body down have failed due to one accident or another.

VON STROESSNER'S SPELL

What the Pinkertons don't know could prove very costly for them. Fellheimer's killer is Gerhardt Von Stroessner, a German sorcerer whose family's occult roots go back centuries. Fellheimer, a weaker rival of Von Stroessner's, immigrated to America to get away from him, for

his powers are the darkest of the dark. But Von Stroessner, a vengeful, driven man, followed and found him among the twisting channels of the Maze. He performed a ritual which sucked out most of Fellheimer's life force.

Through certain arcane methods, Von Stroessner plans to combine that life force, which he has stored in a crystal vial, with the essence of ghost rock. Von Stroessner calls this new substance *silberessenz*, or "silver essence." According to Von his studies, *silberessenz* is an ingredient in a potent elixir which he thinks will boost his powers enormously.

FELLHEIMER LIVES!

Notice that we said "most" of Fellheimer's life force. The horrifying truth is that he's still alive! Von Stroessner's spell not only maintains Fellheimer's life, it prevents anyone from taking the unfortunate man down from the side of the Spike. Although to all outside observation he appears dead, Fellheimer is actually trapped within his body, unable to speak or move. He still feels the pain of the crucifixion and carving, and it is driving him insane. Having Pinkertons all around him but unable to help him is only more maddening. If the vial holding his life force were retrieved from Von Stroessner and opened near Fellheimer, he would be restored to life and healed in body and mind.

Von Stroessner is currently right under the Pinkertons' noses, in a cavern deep inside the island which can only be reached through a twisting, turning maze of tunnels that he has rigged with magical and mundane traps. There he has set up a laboratory where he plans to perform his rituals.

GERHARDT VON STROESSNER

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:3d6, S:2d6, Q:2d8, V:3d12

Horse ridin' 2d6, fightin': knife 2d6, sneak 5d6, throwin: bolts o' doom 3d8

Mental: C:4d8, K:3d10, M:2d12, Sm:3d10, Sp:2d8
Academia: occult 5d10, faith: evil powers 4d8, guts 4d8, language: English 2d10, language: German 3d10, overawe 3d12, persuasion 3d12

Edges: Arcane background: black magician 3

Hindrances: Enemy (forces of good) -3, intolerance (the blessed) -1, obligation (to his dark masters) -3, vengeful -3

Black Magic: Animal mastery 3, bolts o' doom 4, dark protection 4, forewarnin' 4, pact 4, scrye 3, spook 3, stun 3, zombie 3

Gear: Mystical and alchemical equipment and an athame (silver sacrificial knife).





THE CHILDREN OF HASTELI

Hasteli is real, and his paintings are done in human blood. They are the first in a long series of steps involved in casting a powerful ritual. Hasteli is a servant of the enigmatic Raven, and he has learned powerful magic at the feet of the author of the Reckoning. He holds a bitter hatred for white men (one raped and murdered his daughter) and is determined to slaughter as many of them as he can until they get the message and leave his homeland.

Hasteli's ritual, learned from Raven himself, is supposed to turn his followers into a race of super-warriors who are immensely strong and fast. The main part of it involves capturing one white person for each super-warrior he wishes to create, sacrificing her to the Reckoners, consuming parts of her flesh, and using her blood to create rock paintings.

Hasteli has set to his work with a relish. The magic in his rock paintings keeps the blood as fresh and warm as if it had just been drained from a white man's throat, and not even rain or high tides can wash it away.

Any white man who touches the Children of Hasteli is afflicted with a terrible wasting disease. From the day they touch the still-living blood, they have only ((Size x 6)+Wind) days to live. Each day they become weaker and more hideous-looking, until at last they perish in agony. The last thing they hear is Hasteli's laughter echoing in their ears.

Hasteli has not yet allied himself with the Warrior's Trail, but it's really only a matter of time. He has some contact with Papa Rattlesnake and the Rattlesnake Clan, and the two, may also work together sometime soon. See *The Great Maze* for information on both of those groups.

HASTELI

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d6, Q:1d8, V:4d10
Bow 3d6, fightin': club 3d6 horse ridin' 3d6,
sneak 5d6

Mental: C:3d10, K:4d8, M:3d12, Sm:3d10, Sp:2d8
Faith: Reckoners 3d8, guts 5d8, overawe 4d12,
persuasion 2d12

Edges: Arcane background: black magician 3,
eagle eyes 1, "the voice" (soothing) 1, "the voice"
(threatening) 1

Hindrances: Intolerance (non-Indians) -3,
obligation (to Raven) -3, vengeful -3

Black Magic: Bolts o' doom 4, cloak o' evil 3,
forewarnin' 3, puppet 4, scrye 3, stun 5

Gear: Mystical equipment, bow, and war club.

THE RUSSIAN MENACE

There's more to Gregor Petrov and his Cossacks than meets the eye. Petrov, who is indeed a former duke of the Tsar's court and a distant relative of Tsar Alexander II, is a ruthless businessman and a slavedriver to boot, and those are his nicer qualities. Additionally, he's an abomination in human form. He requires two things to survive: human suffering and the blood of children.

As long as people are suffering within a mile or so of his abode (his servants certainly qualify as "suffering people," given the terrible way he treats them) and he gets to drain the lifeblood of a child into his golden drinking bowls at least once a fortnight, he remains hale and hearty. Otherwise he slowly shrivels and die.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:3d10, S:3d8, Q:2d10, V:3d10
Climbin' 1d10, dodge 4d10, fightin': brawlin' 4d10,
shootin': pistol 4d8, sleight o' hand 2d8, sneak
6d10, swimmin' 1d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d8, M:4d10, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d8
Academia: Russian literature and folklore 2d8,
academia: Russian history and civilization 2d8,
language: Russian 2d8, English 2d8, overawe
4d10, ridicule 3d6,

Size: 7

Terror: 8 (only applies when Petrov's true nature is revealed)

Special Abilities:

Blood Boost: If Petrov has drunk the blood of a child from one of his golden drinking bowls in the past 24 hours, increase all of his physical Traits by +1 die type.

Gear: Petrov is rich—really rich. He has access to just about any piece of equipment he needs.

THE COSSACKS

Petrov controls the Cossacks, who were some of his vassals back in Russia, through a sort of blood-thrall. Although not abominations themselves, they have become addicted to sipping blood from his bowls because it induces feelings of euphoria in them. This only further ensures their loyalty. For statistics for the Cossacks, use the Desperado archetype from *Law Dogs*.

PETROV'S NETWORK

Petrov is as much to be feared for his business contacts as for his (literal) bloodthirstiness and Cossack retainers. He has done business with or knows dirty secrets about half the people in the



Maze, or so it sometimes seems. He is constantly looking for ways to increase his power and wealth. He is willing to use blackmail or violence or hired magical power to make sure that he gets his way. He is also cultivating contacts with Kang.

Petrov dreams of owning a huge section of the Maze and maybe even California itself one day. He wants to build as many towns as possible, since towns mean families, and families mean children. One of his major plans is a city to be named Felicity, which will be built on the tops of several islands he owns. The islands will be linked by enormous bridges. Getting money to start building Felicity is one of Petrov's primary goals at present.

SAN DIEGO SALVAGE

William Blumquist is on the up-and-up. He did invent the underwater breathing suit he uses, and he did find the Harriman mansion. However, his salvaging has slowed down because he keeps losing men. They vanish without a trace while diving for salvage or standing guard duty on deck. Blumquist has stopped posting lone guards at night, and he has slowed down his salvaging until he figures out what's happening to his crew. He suspects channel chompers are at work, and he's right.

Richard Harriman was, among other things, a dabbler in the occult, and in the chambers beneath his mansion he consorted with the chompers, including some unholy breeding experiments! When his mansion collapsed during the Great Quake, they were trapped beneath its ruins. Blumquist's salvage operation has freed them, and they are feeding off his crew to build up their strength.

CHANNEL CHOMPERS

Corporeal: D:2d4, N:3d10, S:2d4, Q:4d12, V:2d6

Fightin': brawl 3d10

Mental: C:1d6, K:1d4, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d6

Guts 2d6

Size: 6

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Claw: STR+2d4

Bite: STR+2d6

Poison: The chompers' poison can keep people alive but comatose underwater for weeks at a time. If an intact channel chomper corpse can be recovered, about 1-3 doses of this toxin can be extracted from it. This takes an Onerous (7) medicine roll.



DUNSTON & GRIMME

For more information about Sheriff Dunston, the Guardian Angels (including the black-robed Angel of Death), and the Church Court, refer to *The Great Maze*.

Grimme has become ever more infuriated with Dunston's "meddling" and has ordered his men to harass him at every opportunity. If the tension between the two gets too bad, he may even send the Angel of Death after him—secretly, of course.

THE GOLDEN CIRCLE GHOST

Lacy's supposition is right on the money here. The ghost haunting Lost Angels is that of Jeb Carruthers, the bounty hunter who was executed for his part in the Guest affair.

Carruthers has seen and heard a few things since shuffling off this mortal coil, and if the posse can manage to communicate with him it might learn a lot of useful facts about what's really going on in the city. However, the ghost cannot enter Grimme's cathedral and is not aware of the Reverend's true nature.

I LEFT MY HEART IN L.A.

We're not going to comment just yet on the accuracy of Lacy's thoughts about Mexico and the Aztecs. You'll have to wait for another book to learn all about what's going on south of the border. However, he's got it all wrong as far as what's going on in Lost Angels.

The real culprit in Ghost Town is Ernesto Silverio de Acevedo, a formerly living bandito and gunslinger. Silverio was killed in October when he took a shot to the heart in a gunfight. He came back Harrowed. At first he didn't realize what had happened to him, so he wandered home to his family in Lost Angels. Their screams brought him back to reality. Somehow, he got the idea that if he could replace his heart with a "good" one, he'd come back to life fully.

Since then he's been stalking the streets of Ghost Town, ripping out the hearts of unfortunate citizens and shoving them into his own chest. When each one starts to rot, he tosses it away and tries again.

Treat Silverio as a veteran walkin' dead (see *The Quick & the Dead*), but up his *Vigor* to 2d12, his *fightin'* and *shootin'* Aptitudes to 6 and give him the Harrowed power *claws* at level 3.

SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY

If you've picked up a copy of *Heart o' Darkness*, the second part of the *Devils Tower* trilogy, then you're all up to speed with what went down on Bloody Sunday. For those of you who haven't gotten a hold of *Heart o' Darkness*, here's the greatly simplified version of what happened.

During Sunday services, a horde of strange creatures, "demons" if you will, invaded the Cathedral of Lost Angels, slaughtering many of the churchgoers. Reverend Grimme appeared with holy powers to defend his flock from the demons, driving them off. What a hero!

What a crock, is more like it. Grimme engineered the entire thing from start to finish, using the power of an arcane gem called the Heart of Darkness. The people that the demons (who were under Grimme's control the entire time) killed, were actually sacrificed to fuel a ritual that has permanently expanded Grimme's sphere of influence out to about a 75-mile radius around Lost Angels. Grimme and his cohorts can now use their demonic powers freely within that radius, and they look like the work of the lord God Himself!





As mentioned previously, chips from the altar that the ritual was performed on now allow Grimme's forces an even wider range, which explains their increased anti-railroad activities.

As for the people that survived the massacre in the Cathedral, most of them are flat-out too scared of what happened and too grateful to Grimme to speak about the incident to anyone.

THE SHAN FAN KUMITE

The Shan Fan Kumite, or martial arts tournament, is due to be held during Chinese New Years in February. It is open to anyone who can find the Cloud Dragon Fighting Society and satisfy its masters that he is capable of standing up to the other competitors in the ring.

The Cloud Dragon masters are willing to let Westerners into their tournament, despite their usual lack of fighting skill or grace. However, they don't like the disrespectful gweilos, and test them especially rigorously before admitting them to the competition. Once they're in, though, they're treated with absolute fairness.

The Kumite is a single-elimination tournament. Each round involves randomly-chosen fights, with the winners advancing to the next round until only one remains. The winner of any given fight is the last warrior standing (or able to fight). Maiming and killing are allowed, though frowned upon. Some fighters actively despise Occidental competitors and try to injure them.

PROFESSOR OXENDINE

"Professor" Oxendine (the title is self-awarded) is a man with a mission—but not a helpful one. He started out with the best of intentions and a genuine desire to solve California's irrigation problems. But he pushed himself too hard while trying to develop his hydro-reversal generator, and dementia took over—and worse than dementia. Eventually he became so deranged that a manitou actually took control of his body.

The wily manitou has kept up Oxendine's work, but with a twist. Instead of pumping the salty Pacific back out to sea, "Oxendine's" generator, if properly built and installed in a quake channel, will actually pump the sea inland, completely ruining nearby freshwater rivers and lakes. Unless someone finds out about what's going on (perhaps by carefully examining Oxendine's blueprints, which show how the new generator works) and puts a stop to it, most of California may become permanently unaerable.

If you need a profile for Oxendine, use the Mad Scientist archetype from *Deadlands: The Weird West*, but increase his *sneak* to 4, remove his *dinero* Edge and *curious* and *stubborn* Hindrances, and replace his flamethrower with the blueprints to his generator. Because he is possessed, consider him to be Size 8 for purposes of taking wounds.

THE MALEVOLENT MISSION

The mountain men who claim to have been healed by a mysterious Jesuit monk in an old mission somewhere in the Sierra Nevadas are telling the truth. There is a mission and a monk, and he can heal people. But trust me, you don't want him to fix anything that's ailin' you.

Over a century ago, when the Spanish first came to California, their priests came with them. The priests, often Jesuits, built missions for the purposes of ministering to their flocks and converting the "heathen savages." Some of the most daring actually went inland, building their missions right in the middle of the Indian tribes.

FATHER GILBERTO

Father Gilberto Candaliero Escamilla y Madrozo was one such priest. He was young, filled with the energy of true faith, and willing to sacrifice anything he had, even his life, to spread the word of God.

With a small group of servants and other priests, he trekked into the mountains and built a mission there to serve the local Indians. He didn't have much luck, but every convert he won did his heart good.

Then the aches and pains and coughing started. It was soon apparent that Father Candaliero had some sort of terrible disease. Consumption, cancer, whatever it was, it was painful, and it was slowly killing him. He prayed every day to God for deliverance.

And God answered. One day as he was kneeling at the mission's altar, he felt a warmth as of fire filling his entire body. It only lasted a few painful seconds, but when it was done, all his other pains were gone. God had cured him!

As the padre soon found out, God had done more than just that. God had granted him a fraction of that healing power to cure the injuries and diseases that afflicted men.

Word soon spread of Father Candaliero's powers, and Indians and settlers alike came to the mission to be healed. But when those who were healed seemed to die early, people eventually stopped coming. One by one, the





mission's inhabitants died off—but not Father Candaliero. He stayed almost as young as ever, aging so slowly that wrinkles could barely be seen on his face. He figured it was something his healing powers did for him.

Eventually Candaliero was the only one left at the mission, alone but not lonely, waiting for more penitents to come seeking healing. But no one came, since the mission had purposefully been forgotten by anyone who'd ever gone there. Something about the place no longer seemed right.

ETERNAL LIFE

Year after year, Father Candaliero lived and waited. Then new men came to the mountains: Anglos, hunters, explorers, men seeking gold and something called ghost rock. Sometimes they got hurt and found their way to the mission or Father Candaliero found them, and they were healed. Father Candaliero, apparently now in his late 50s, is hoping that a new wave of prosperity is coming to the mission.

What Father Candaliero doesn't know is that he's being played for a cosmic patsy. Whatever healed the disease he had, it wasn't God. It was

Satan, or the manitous, or something decidedly less benevolent than even the Old Testament God. It cured him, granted him immortality, and gave him healing powers—but at a price.

When Father Candaliero heals someone, he is actually using dark powers and imperilling that person's soul. (His is already long damned, though salvation may be possible because he has not knowingly done anything evil.) The more healing Father Candaliero provides, the more the victim's soul is twisted, and the more evil the victim eventually becomes.

Father Candaliero almost never speaks. When he does, it is in hundred-year-old Spanish (or Latin), so he may be hard to understand. His mission does not change location, as Lacy's story implies, but instead is well-hidden in a pine-filled vale in the Sierra Nevadas.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:3d10, S:3d8, Q:2d10, V:3d10
Climbin' 1d10, dodge 4d10, fightin': brawlin' 4d10,
shootin': pistol 4d8, sleight o' hand 2d8, sneak
6d10, swimmin' 1d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d8, M:4d10, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d8
Academia: history 2d8, faith 4d8, language: Latin
3d8, language: Spanish 3d8

Terror: 6 (only when his true nature is revealed)

Special Abilities:

Immortality: Father Candaliero cannot die of old age or disease. Only wounds and injuries can kill him, but even those he heals at a vastly accelerated rate (1 wound level per round). He cannot heal damage from hexes, miracles, or sacred objects at this rate. Those he heals normally.

Healing Touch: The priest's touch heals 1 wound level per round, but for each wound healed, 20% of the victim's soul becomes corrupted. If Father Candaliero heals five wounds or more, the victim is eternally damned, with no hope for avoiding his fated downward spiral into evil. Otherwise, powerful hexes may be enough to reverse the effect, but with a great effort and sacrifice from the victim. In game terms, a hero's dementias and other evil tendencies are ever so slightly exaggerated, and if the healed character has *faith*, that Aptitude is reduced by -1 level (to a minimum of 1). However, any such *faith* lost is restored if the character helps solve the mystery behind Father Candaliero's immortality and provides Father Candaliero with a way to atone for his occult powers.

Gear: Anything from the mission.



THE DISPUTED LANDS

TEXAS RANGERS & OKLAHOMA

Lacy's guess as to why the Rangers aren't paying much attention to Oklahoma is accurate—they're happy to let the Marshals deal with the territory's criminals for now. Also, Oklahoma's a good source of information for them as it is. They have some undercover agents in places like Perry, and coming in and upsetting the applecart might make it harder for them to learn things.

BUM' STUFF

The *Update's* estimates on how the war is affecting prices are pretty much on target; Marshals should adjust standard prices to reflect this. Some goods may not be available at all in areas where fighting occurs frequently (like parts of Kansas). Soldiers, irregular or otherwise, tend to take whatever they need to survive, leaving little to be purchased by paying customers.

KANSAS

EARTH WARRIORS

The Indians that Deputy US Marshal Smith and his Pinkerton friends killed were allies or perhaps servants of the enigmatic Raven and his followers, the Last Sons. In the hope of stirring up trouble between the Sioux Nations and the United States, Raven recruited these braves and sent them out to plunder, destroy, and wreak havoc. To make them a more terrifying force, he bonded each one with an angry stone spirit. As a result of this bonding, their skin was turned to stone. They've proven so good at their assigned duties that Raven is planning to create more soon wherever he can find willing volunteers.

Deputy US Marshal Smith is very interested in getting to the bottom of this mystery. His other duties have kept him from investigating further, but he'd be willing to pay a small reward out of his own pocket to anyone who finds the answers he wants.

The earth warriors are both stronger and tougher than a normal human being. The stone spirit bonded to them increases their *Strength* by +1 die type, and they gain +2 points of Armor (which do not protect the head). However, they also become a lot heavier—subtract -2 from the

Pace of any horse they ride. Stony skin doesn't decrease their reflexes or personal running speed, but the warriors do lose their ability to swim, and they drown if they fall in any water which is over their heads. When an earth warrior dies, his stoniness immediately fades away, leaving him looking like a normal human being.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:4d10, S:3d12, Q:2d8, V:2d12
Bow 4d8, fightin': brawlin' 8d12, horse ridin' 2d10
Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:4d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d10
Overawe 5d8, trackin' 4d6

Size: 7

Terror: 6

Special Abilities:

Stone Skin: A earth warrior's rocky skin provides him with 2 points of Armor, but this Armor does not protect his head.

Gear: Bow and 20 arrows and a knife.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

The broken mirrors in Jayhawk Flats are the work of a Confederate huckster named Jeremiah Bass (no relation to the outlaw Sam Bass). He's been an active "border ruffian" for a few years now, along with his brother Richard, and has fought the men from Jayhawk Flats several times. His bitter hatred for them and all other Jayhawks only deepened when one of them killed Richard.

Jeremiah, at once wracked by sorrow and burning with rage, decided that there had to be a way to get revenge on every single person in Jayhawk Flats. His hexslinging powers weren't up to it, though, so he took a step down the path to damnation that he now wishes he could take back: He made a deal with a manitou. Rather than simply dueling it for power, as he would when casting a normal hex, he actually negotiated with it, agreeing to give up his soul (for the traditional seven years) for the power to curse everyone in Jayhawk Flats. Then he used that power to shatter all the mirrors, thus inflicting seven years' bad luck on all of the town's inhabitants.

WHAT GOES AROUND

The first two victims of the bad luck have been Thomas Merritt and, ironically, Bass himself. Merritt had the back luck of being near the "epicenter" of Bass' attack, causing him to soak up enough magical energy to make him



seem suspicious to the Pinkertons. They interrogated him in their Star Chamber in Denver, but determined that he was innocent. They gave him the money to buy a train ticket home. Unfortunately, his bad luck took over again, and he didn't get back on the train in time after a stop in western Kansas. He's now trying to get home by hoofing it and catching whatever rides he can. He'll be lucky to make it home without getting eaten by something—and you know what his luck's been like lately.

Bass is in even worse shape. He's calmed down and realized what he's done, and desperately wants out of the deal. He does anything he has to, even ask Yankees for help, if it will restore his soul to him. Unfortunately, the only way the manitou would agree to give back his soul is if every JFer affected by Bass's hex asks it to!

JEREMIAH BASS

Corporeal: D:4d8, N:2d6, S:2d6, Q:3d8, V:4d6
 Fightin': brawlin' 3d6, horse ridin' 2d6, quick
 draw: pistol 2d8, shootin': pistol 2d8, shootin':
 rifle 3d8, sneak 3d6

Mental: C:3d10, K:3d10, M:3d12, Sm:3d12, Sp:3d6

Academia: occult 3d10, area knowledge (Kansas)
 2d10, bluff 4d12, gamblin' 4d12, English 2d10,
 tale-tellin' 2d12

Edges: Arcane background: huckster 3

Hindrances: Intolerance (Yankees) -3, cursed (to
 lose his soul in seven years) -5

Hexes: Corporeal twist 3, helpin' hand 3, hunch
 2, Kentucky windage 2, phantom fingers 2,
 private eye 2, soul blast 3, Texas twister 3

Gear: Colt Frontier, Ballard '72 rifle, 30 rounds of
 ammunition for both guns, horse, one copy of
Hoyle's Book of Games, arcane paraphernalia,
 and \$200 in Confederate money.

DODGE CITY

WILD IRISH ROSES

Lacy is right to be suspicious, since Wild Irish
 Roses is indeed too good to be true. They're not
 spies, though; they're something far more
 sinister—baobhan sith (bavan-shee), a vampiric
 Irish monster. Baobhan siths look like beautiful
 young women, and they use their good looks to
 lure young men into their clutches so that they
 can drink their blood. Then they steal their
 victims' money and possessions.

This particular group of baobhan siths fled
 Ireland when a demon-hunting priest got too
 close for comfort, using their loot to finance
 passage to America. (At your option, they may
 even have sailed on the same ship as Hugh
 O'Farrell and his daughter Colleen.) They decided
 to settle in Dodge City in the hopes that the lax
 atmosphere would allow them to ply their trade
 without significant interference or fear of
 discovery.

BLOOD FOR BREAKFAST

Baobhan sith need blood to survive, but they
 do not have to drain all the blood from a man to
 get enough to live on. The "girls" at Roses make
 do by taking small sips from their customers
 while they are in the throes of passion. If one of
 them occasionally goes too far and kills a man,
 the body can easily be hidden and a cover story
 concocted.

Baobhan sith have several weaknesses. First,
 they dislike sunlight, though they can tolerate
 daytime if they stay in the shade or cover up.
 Second, they are repulsed by iron. They stay on
 the other side of the room from their customers
 until they take off any guns they are carrying.
 (They claim to be afraid of guns as an excuse.)
 Third, they are also repulsed by salt.





BAOBHAN SITH

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:3d8, S:4d6, Q:3d10, V:2d12
Climbin' 1d8, dodge 3d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8,
sneak 4d8

Mental: C:2d8, K:4d6, M:2d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d6
Language: English 2d6, language: Gaelic 2d6,
ridicule 4d6

Size: 6

Terror: 5 (only applies when true nature is revealed)

Special Abilities:

Drain Blood: Baobhan sith can drain 1 point of Wind worth of blood from an unsuspecting or helpless human per round. It does this by touch. The victim cannot feel the drain, and no sucker mark or puncture wound is left behind. However, someone watching the couple may notice blood dripping out of the victim. (This requires an Onerous (7) *scrutinize* roll.)

Undead

Vulnerability: Baobhan sith do not like sunlight, preferring to be active at night. In direct sunlight, they are -2 to all rolls. In indirect sunlight, such as the shady porch of Wild Irish Roses, they are -1 to all rolls.

Vulnerability: Baobhan sith cannot stand the presence of iron or salt. If they touch these substances, they take 1 wound per round to the part of the body touching them.

WEIRD WILLIE MCCUTCHEON

Invention? What invention?

Weird Willie's not really quite as "eccentric" as he seems. Although he is not exactly what you'd call a stable, "normal" person, he's no lunatic, either. If anything, he's crazy like a fox. He's been living in Dodge for some time now, making minor use of his tinkering abilities and carefully cultivating his image for eccentricity with stories such as the one about the steam-powered cloud peeler. But he had a reason for wanting to seem crazy: an elaborate con game. He's been planning this "invention most spectacular" scheme for some time now, and it's working perfectly.

A number of businessmen, as well as military officials from both governments, have come to see his "Jupiter cannon" powered by artificial ghost rock. Each of them has invested handsomely in his project, and he's built up a nice-sized bank account (though he's kept about half his money carefully hidden at his home). When he feels he's milked the scam for all it's worth, he's going to take all of his money and hightail it for parts more hospitable.

If you need stats for Weird Willie, use the Shyster archetype (*The Quick & The Dead*), but replace all of his *Deftness* Aptitudes and *disguise* Aptitude with *tinkerin'* 2, *shootin': pistol* 1, and *dodge* 3.

THE BUFFALO MAN

The Buffalo Man is, as the Indian tribes say, a guardian spirit of the buffalo. The constant slaughter of the buffalo by white men looking for thrills or to clear off the plains to make running the railroads easier has caused this spirit to assume corporeal form in the Weird West.

The Buffalo Man lives only to avenge and protect the buffalo, and he continues to kill white men (and their cattle) until the killing of buffalo returns to a more manageable level—say, not much more than what it was before the white men came.

It drives Indian hunters away from buffalo, but it does not kill them unless, like the whites, they kill buffalo gratuitously (not because they need meat or supplies, but just for fun or to get them out of the way). As long as the slaughter continues, the Buffalo Man continues to get bigger, stronger, and meaner. Buffalo hunters beware!

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:4d8, N:5d12, S:5d12, Q:3d10, V:4d12
Fightin': brawlin' 8d12

Mental: C:3d6, K:3d6, M:4d10, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d10
Overawe 5d10

Size: 8

Terror: 8

Special Abilities:

Fists: STR

Pace: 24

Charge and Trample: The Buffalo Man has a special fighting maneuver in which he runs his opponent down and tramples him. He needs about 30–50 feet of room to build up enough speed to do this. The charge and trample does normal *fightin': brawlin'* damage, but the wounds done apply to *all* six body locations simultaneously! That's six wounds at once, compadre.

Harvest of Slaughter: For every 1,000 buffalo killed by anyone within a 300-mile radius of Dodge City (or the Buffalo Man's current location, as you prefer), the Buffalo Man gains an additional die of *Strength*, +1 *Size*, and +1 *Terror*. This boost lasts until the next full moon.



THE STAGECOACH ROBBER

The Stagecoach Robber is a former rancher named Henry Stiles. After his cattle all died of Texas fever, he decided to try to make his living another way. He used his savings to buy the specially-designed steam wagon that he uses to commit his highway robberies, and he called upon his love of history to design a distinctive set of clothes to set him apart from all the other, "more common" robbers raiding across the Weird West.

The Stagecoach Robber's courtesy is not an act. Stiles is a friendly and likeable person who'd rather not hurt anyone (especially ladies). However, he's fully aware of the path he's chosen and knows that sometimes he's going to have to get a little rough.

Stiles' steam wagon is enclosed with armor plating, armored wheels, a special "driver's box," a Pace of 24, and a set of retractable "inner wheels" like those on a train so that he can ride the rails. Because of its weight and speed, it uses about 25% more ghost rock than a standard steam wagon, so Stiles watches his fuel carefully and breaks off a chase if he doesn't think he can catch his target in time.



HENRY STILES

Corporeal: D:2d10, N:4d10, S:3d6, Q:4d8, V:3d6
Climbin' 1d10, drivin': steam wagon 4d10, fightin': brawlin' 3d10, fightin': lariat 3d10, horse ridin' 3d10, quick draw: pistol 3d8, shootin': pistol 4d10, shootin': rifle 4d10, sneak 1d10

Mental: C:3d6, K:3d6, M:2d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d6
Academia: history 3d6, guts 2d8, English 2d6, overawe 2d8, scrutinize 2d6, search 2d6, tinkerin' 2d6

Edges: Belongin's (special steam wagon) 2, mechanically inclined 1

Hindrances: Outlaw -3, pacifist -3

Gear: Steam wagon, Smith & Wesson Frontier revolver of quality and 50 rounds of ammunition, tool kit, knife, and a spare wheel.

SPIES & SPYING IN DODGE CITY

Lacy is right that there's plenty of spying going on in Dodge. It's an ideal location due to the access it provides to both nations. A lot of the spies here are just passing through, but there are more than a few who call Dodge City home.

Larry "Lefty" Windleman has been tending bar at the Occident Saloon for the past couple of months. The Occident is favored by many Union sympathizers and spies. Lefty isn't adverse to supplementing his income by letting them know what he's heard around town—or by passing along Northern gossip to Confederate spies who see him after working hours.

Bill Sweeney is a ne'er-do-well who's been hanging around Dodge for years. Mostly he's just stirred up trouble, drank, gambled, and gotten into fights. Marshal Deger and his men are well-acquainted with him. Sweeney's a good hand with a knife, and he's taken to hiring himself out to spies who want to shake a tail in the most permanent sort of way.

One of the lights of Dodge City's social scene is Letitia Grady, who comes from a family of wealthy cattle owners and married into another such family. They've always stayed out of politics, but her daughter Melinda, who is 20, is an ardent Union partisan. She circulates throughout her mother's parties, where Northerners and Southerners come together peacefully, and wheedles information out of the Rebs so she can hand it over to the United States.

Two Hands Rising is a Sioux expatriate who's taken to the white man's ways. He often works with his friend Bob Sweeney. However, his real purpose in Dodge is to act as an agent for the Order of the Raven, of which he is a loyal



member. Whenever he can, he diverts weapons shipments or money to them through a contact in Deadwood.

Vernon Flynn is the desk clerk at the Dodge House. Spies usually have expense accounts, so they like to stay here where the living is easy. Between his own hotel's customers and the information he can find out from fellow desk clerks at other hotels, Flynn knows more about who's coming and going in Dodge than just about anyone except the railroad conductors.

Susie Jamison works as a "waitress" at both the Lone Star and Long Branch Saloons. (Hey, sometimes a gal has bills to pay.) She's a Southern spy who serves as a contact for other spies. They give her information, which she in turn passes on to couriers.

SMUGGLING INFORMATION

Transporting and transmitting information and other assets (like kidnapped officers or stolen technology) is the main business of Dodge City spies. Most of the time, it's just messages carried in the agent's head or on a piece of paper, but sometimes they go to greater lengths to conceal the information.

Confederate spies, knowing how concealed paper rustles when Union men search them, have begun writing their messages on the silk linings of the jackets, which don't rustle at all. Both sides have developed ways to etch messages (usually in code) on the backs of buttons, watch covers, and the like. Concealed pockets in coats or bootheels are another favorite method.

THE BM

Although space considerations prevent us from describing the competing spy agencies in detail, a few words are in order. The Union's spy efforts are two-pronged. The official government agency is the Bureau of Military Information. It's a part of the War Department and headed by Colonel George Sharpe, a cagey officer who fought at, among other places, Gettysburg.

However, the Bureau is really run by his trusted underling, Lafayette Baker. "Lafe" served the Union as a raider and spy himself for nearly 10 years before becoming involved in running the agency. He's still as clever and skilled as ever though, and he sometimes gets involved in field missions to keep his abilities honed.

The Union also employs the Pinkerton National Detective Agency to do spying for them. In fact, Allan Pinkerton was the Union's first

spymaster early in the war. (For more on Pinkerton spying, refer to *Law Dogs*.)

THE CSS

The Confederates have their Secret Service (usually just called the CSS, which they say really stands for "Cleverly Steals Secrets"). General Randolph Manville is in charge of the CSS. He runs things with an iron hand from his office in Richmond. He's said to review every report that crosses his desk and to know more about Union troop movements than the generals in the field. The CSS is particularly adept at gathering information from Northern newspapers, since the Union government basically does nothing to stop them from printing sensitive information.

SPY GADGETS

Here are brief descriptions of a few of the more common spy gizmos found in the Weird West. It requires a thorough examination of any of these objects and a Hard (9) *search* roll to detect that they are not what they seem.

BRIEFCASE CAMERA

This is a miniature (for the Weird West) camera concealed in a briefcase or suitcase. It contains enough plates for no more than half a dozen pictures, and often less. The briefcase camera has a Reliability of 15 and uses the Malfunction Table below.

MALFUNCTION

Minor Malfunction: The camera takes a poor picture.

Major Malfunction: The camera takes no picture and ruins any remaining unused plates in the camera.

Catastrophe: The camera takes no picture and ruins all plates in the camera, or it breaks in such a way as to expose its use.

EXPLODING POCKET WATCH

A common timepiece packed with enough explosives to make it the equivalent of a stick of dynamite. It is activated by depressing the handle on its top several times.

Two presses turns it into the equivalent of a hand grenade (it explodes upon contact when thrown). Three presses turns it into a time bomb (the amount of time until the explosion is set with the hands of the watch). The watch has a Reliability of 17.





MALFUNCTION

Minor Malfunction: The watch explodes, but divide its final damage total by 3.

Major Malfunction: The watch fails to detonate.

Catastrophe: The watch blows up in user's hand for full damage.

FAN GAS SPRITZER

Ladies often use fans to keep flies and odors at bay. This fan, which conceals a one-shot, knockout gas spritzer, is a good close-up weapon for female agents. It delivers a dose of slumber gas (*Smith & Robards*), but it cannot be thrown, and it can only affect one person.

SHOE KNIFE

This is a small, very sharp blade concealed in a shoe. When the wearer taps the shoe's heel just so, the blade pops out of the front of the shoe, turning an ordinary kick into a deadly attack (or providing a way to cut through ropes). The knife is Speed 1 and does STR+2 points of damage. The TN for any attacks with the knife is at +2 (it is awkward to use) unless the character has the *fightin': shoe knife* Aptitude.



OKLAHOMA

CHRIS MADSEN

Chris Madsen is every bit the tough lawmen that Lacy makes him out to be. However, he's a fair, just man all the same. Only the worst lawbreakers see his really bad side. If he needs help, he can call on Bill Tilghman and Heck Thomas, and they come running.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:4d8, N:3d12, S:2d6, Q:3d10, V:3d8
Climbin' 1d8, dodge 3d8, fightin': brawlin' 4d12,
horse ridin' 4d12, quick draw: pistol 4d10,
shootin': pistol 5d12, shootin': rifle 4d12

Mental: C:3d8, K:3d8, M:3d8, Sm:3d8, Sp:2d6
Area knowledge: Kansas and Oklahoma 2d8, guts
2d6, language: English 2d8, leadership 2d8,
overawe 3d8, scrutinize 2d8, search 3d8,
streetwise 2d8, trackin' 2d8

Edges: Law man 3, nerves o' steel 1, "the stare" 1
Hindrances: Enemy (outlaws) -2, obligation
(serve Perry as lawman) -2

Gear: Double-action Colt Peacemaker of quality,
.44-40 Winchester rifle, 50 rounds of
ammunition for his guns, quick-draw holster
for revolver, rope, horse, and a gold badge.

THE GREAT SERPENT MOUND

The Serpent Mound is an Indian burial site. In fact, it was there when the Indians arrived. They don't know who made it, and refer to its builders only as "the Ancients."

They're not sure what's inside either. They're afraid to dig into it. Every now and then, an Indian shaman somewhere in the Confederation has disturbing visions of what would happen if anyone violated the mound.

According to these visions, those who dig into the Mound may uncover great riches, but they won't live long enough to enjoy them before some unknown horror tears them to shreds and feasts on their screaming souls. Then this thing, whatever it is, begins preying on the Indians.

RAVEN & THE MOUND

Unfortunately for the Indians and the folks of Perry, not only has Brunner's attention recently been drawn to the mound, but so has Raven's as well. He's beginning to look at the mound in the same way he looked at the rock paintings out in California that he ultimately used to cause the Great Quake. Releasing the mound demon would





cause many Indians to die, but even more white men, so it might be just the project for him and the Last Sons to take up next.

COLORADO

THE HAUNT

The haunt that's stalking the mines of Tallulah is indeed the ghost of Big Jim Frazier, but its motives are not those that Lacy O'Malley suggests. Big Jim caused the cave-in that killed him as a way of committing suicide when he found out that his boss Pelton and his pretty young wife Sarah were having an affair. Now his restless shade takes out its rage on anyone it can find, able to know no rest until Pelton and Sarah are dead themselves.

The haunt's initial victims were miners who were unlucky enough to cross its path. Most of them were Pelton employees since the haunt was still tied to the place of its death. However, with each death it grew stronger until it was able to leave the Red Rock Mine and attack miners in other mines. It is still concentrating on mines owned by Pelton, since it hopes to lure him down into the shafts where it can revel in his screams as he dies a pain-filled death. But it needs to feed on the essence of the living to survive, so it takes any victim it can find. As it stalks the mines, only its red eyes can be seen until it steps into the light of a lantern and attacks.

For the haunt, use the statistics for a night haunt (see *Deadlands: The Weird West*), but it does not have a Bite attack.

REDBEARD

Redbeard is an old logger and mountain man who's spent most of his life in the Rockies. He was born there to a white father and an Indian mother, and he follows a curious mix of Christianity and the Old Ways. He believes in God but also in many of the spirits worshipped by the Indians. Somehow he is able to reconcile the two religions and come up with a synthesis that makes sense to him.

Maybe it's that flexibility of thought that gave rise to his ability to relate to animals. He's had a "touch" for animals most of his life. He can handle the toughest horse as if it were a gentle mare and make the stubbornest mule cooperative and friendly. But since the night a couple of years ago when he was hit by lightning, he's actually be able to talk to them,

too. Even fierce or skittish creatures (such as bears, cougars, and rabbits) stop and pass the time of day with him. Many of them even roughhouse with him, or take food from his hand. If he were threatened, they'd defend him, and he them.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d10, S:5d10, Q:3d6, V:4d10
Climbin' 3d8, fightin': brawl' 4d10, shootin':
pistol 3d8, shootin': rifle 4d8

Mental: C:3d6, K:2d6, M:3d10, Sm:3d8, Sp:2d10
Animal wranglin': bronco bustin' 5d10, animal
wranglin': dog training 5d10, area knowledge:
Colorado 5d8, guts 2d6, language: English 2d8,
overawe 3d8, search 4d6, trackin' 6d6

Edges: Nerves o' steel 1, tough as nails 3

Hindrances: Tinhorn (mountain man; doesn't
know much about how to act in society) -2

Knacks: Earth bond. Redbeard can use any of
this knack's abilities without spending chips.

Gear: Colt Dragoon, Colt Paterson Model 1836,
and 20 rounds of ammunition for his guns.

UTA-H

THE UTA FOREST

The citizens of Provo, along with all nearby Indian tribes, have learned to leave the Uinta Forest alone. Outside of a very little woodcutting and similar uses, they do not exploit the forest in any way. Anyone who has exceeded these boundaries has been found crushed to death, with splinters of wood pressed into his body as if with great force.

The Indians and not a few Provo citizens believe that forest spirits in the shape of great treemen killed those men—and they're right. The forest spirits just want to get along with their neighbors, and can even be helpful at times (such as when children get lost in the woods and are subtly guided home by the spirits), but do not tolerate anyone violating the limits they have established.

These tree-spirits are similar to the ones mentioned in *City o' Gloom*, but are much less malign.

CACTUS SPIRITS

There are no cactus spirits. Skeeter Crawford, a notorious lush, died five sheets to the wind when he mistook a saguaro for a girl he knew and tried to dance with it. He was too drunk to





feel the spines, but not too drunk to bleed to death from hundreds of needle wounds and the effects of exposure. The other man who died as the result of a "cactus attack" actually fell into an arroyo full of cacti and died from his injuries. The whole "cactus spirits" scare is simply the result of stress. The minds of people in the area are beginning to feel the strain of all the fear out there.

SALT LAKE CITY

ALOYSIUS DANIELS

Daniels is a salt-rattler hunter, true enough. And as some readers might guess from the description of his rifle, he's a mad scientist, too. But he's something else: a Secret Service agent. He is just one of several undercover agents sent into Salt Lake City to keep tabs on Professor Hellstromme and his various business interests. The Union government is extremely worried about the Professor, so it's sent one of its "tech-sperts" in to monitor his activities and find out what he's *really* up to.

Don't let Daniel's appearance fool you. He may be scrawny, but he's a lot stronger than he looks, both in body and in mind.

Daniels hasn't had anything to do with either the Salt Flats Worming Company or the airborne worm hunters. As a result, neither group likes him, and he sometimes has to fend off attacks from them (or drive fast enough to get away from the ones who try to drop dynamite on him). Most other hunters do seem to have a grudging respect for the man and give him a wide berth.

Daniel has had a few brief contacts with the other crack Union agent in Salt Lake City, the man of 1,000 faces, Nevada Smith. Smith and Daniel get along rather well, and the two know how to contact each other in an emergency.

Walter Jennings is considering contacting Daniels to recruit him for his team of "hunters," but he hasn't yet made up his mind to do so.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d12, N:4d8, S:3d6, Q:3d8, V:3d8
Climbin' 1d12, dodge 2d8, drivin': steam wagon 2d8, horse ridin' 2d8, shootin': pistol 3d12, shootin': shotgun 6d12, sneak 3d8

Mental: C:3d10, K:3d8, M:3d8, Sm:2d8, Sp:2d8
Academia: forgers and counterfeiters 1d8, academia: technology 3d8, arts: engravin' 2d10, bluff 2d8, guts 2d8, language: English 2d8,

leadership 2d8, overawe 3d8, persuasion 2d8, professional: law 2d8, science: chemistry 3d8, science: physics 2d8, science: biology 2d8, scrutinize 3d10, search 3d10, streetwise 2d8, tinkerin' 4d8, trade: printin' 2d8

Edges: Arcane background: mad scientist 3, belongin's (steam wagon and "Mathilda") 4, law man 3, rank (US Secret Service) 1

Hindrances: Curious -3, enemy (forgers; those opposed to the Union) -3, scrawny -5
Gear: Mathilda and 20 rounds of ammunition for her, steam wagon, double-action Colt Peacemaker and 30 rounds of ammunition, three Rattler Detectors, worm-skinin' knife, rope, chains, and \$376 in Union greenbacks

MATHILDA

Mathilda is Aloysius Daniels' worm-hunting shotgun. He invented and built it himself. It's specially constructed to blast out an enormous amount of large shot at a nearby target.

Daniels is careful to check the shotgun carefully before going out to hunt rattlers, and he keeps it in good repair, so he hasn't suffered from a malfunction yet. But there's always a first time. That's why he keeps his steam wagon properly conditioned too.

When hunting rattlers (and he really never uses Mathilda for anything else), Daniels uses a special ammunition (another of his inventions). Based somewhat on the Minie ball, each piece of shot is has a small hollow inside it which contains a substance poisonous to salt rattlers and their kin. A rattler hit with this shot takes an additional 3d10 damage from the poison for the next three rounds.

While it does a lot of damage, Mathilda's shot spreads quickly. Subtract a bonus die every 5 yards, not 10; this is why Daniels has to let worms get in close before blasting them.

Mathilda does a whopping 5d8+4d6 damage, has a *quick draw* modifier of -2, and a Concealment rating of 5. It's obviously a gizmo when you look at it (no mistaking it for a normal gun), and it uses the following Malfunction Table:

MALFUNCTION

Minor Malfunction: The weapon jams. A Fair (5) *tinkerin'* roll fixes the problem.

Major Malfunction: Mispressurization. The gun fails to fire, and it requires five rounds and a Fair (5) *tinkerin'* roll to repair.

Catastrophe: Overpressurization. The gun explodes, doing 5d8 damage to the user.

